

NORTHERN TERRITORY – The Squared Circle Cancellations 1881 – 1913

Purpose

Presented is a ~~traditional (marcophily)~~ display of the squared circle postmarks of the Northern Territory of Australia. The postmarks are shown in the order of opening of the post offices and then in the order of issuance of the various postmarks within that post office.

Background

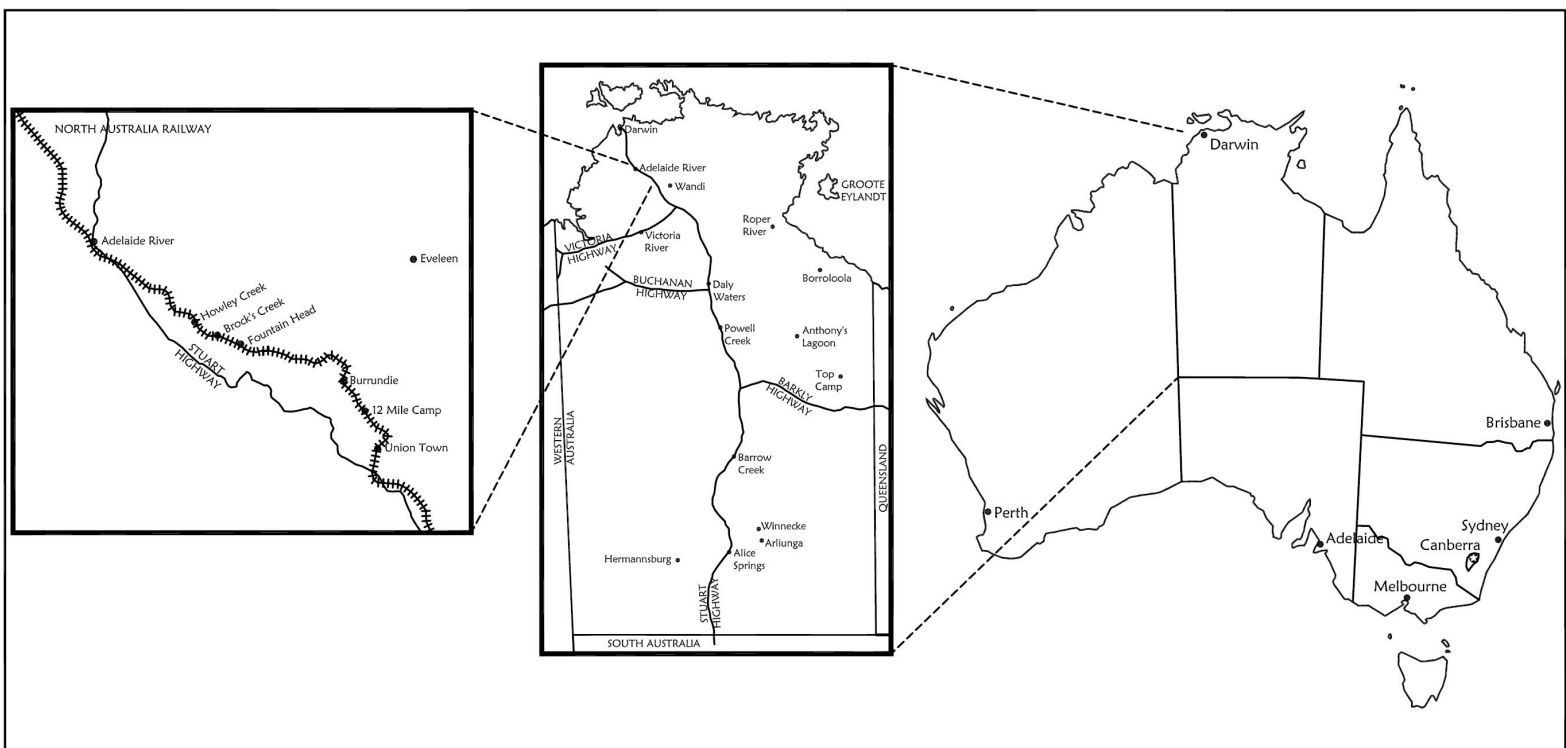
The Northern Territory of Australia was and remains a sparsely populated area with small intermittent mining operations and large cattle stations. In 1901 the total population of the Territory was 4,765. In 1908 the permanent white (i.e. letter writing) population of Alice Springs was 15. With postal receipts for some post offices recorded in archival sources of 4d or 4/1 per year it is not hard to see that these markings will be of extreme rarity.

What is Shown?

32 different cancellations have been recorded from the 26 post offices that operated in the Northern Territory. Of these, 23 different types are displayed, representing 18 different post offices. As noted in Williams, “*Because of the extreme rarity or even uniqueness of certain covers and postmarks on stamps, the assembling of a totally comprehensive Northern Territory postal history collection is impossible*”. Only 1 or 2 examples have been recorded from many of the smaller offices.

Postmark Details

The squared cancels of the Northern Territory (and South Australia) have a code number above the date line. In the Northern Territory these are usually 18 or 19 and represent the century. These are occasionally omitted, inserted inverted into the handstamp, or only the 1 remains visible due to damage or omission. There are no reported examples of the use of colored inks. The dates shown in the page headings are the earliest and latest reported dates of use of the cancels. In many cases the post offices were open before and after the period of use of the squared circle cancels and used other cancels.



References

Williams, E. A., *The Postal History of the Northern Territory, 1824 – 1988*, The Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria, Melbourne, 1992.

Williams, E. A., *Northern Territory Handbook: Corrections and Updates*, Philately from Australia, June 1993, September 1993, December 1993, December 1994, June 1996, September 1997, September 1998.