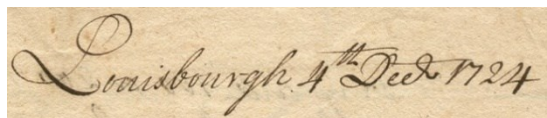


The Nova Scotia Post: Early Mail and Markings

SYNOPSIS:



Louisbourg 4th Dec 1724



Ship



PURPOSE OF EXHIBIT

This exhibit attempts to show the **development of the postal history of Nova Scotia** from its earliest beginnings through to the period surrounding Confederation when Nova Scotia became a part of Canada.

It includes very early precursor military dispatches and civilian mails prior to the introduction of postal markings and then to the beginning of the official postal system in 1754 with the introduction of manuscript and handstamp markings, including those of new post offices as necessitated due to the arrival of new settlers predominantly from Great Britain, other parts of Europe and the American Loyalists.

The long coastline of Nova Scotia made it a natural for mail transportation by sea. The influx of new settlers led to the growth of the postal system, a land communication network of roads and trails travelled by private citizens carrying the mails on foot, horseback and coaches and eventually railroads.

Postal markings are a highlight of the exhibit from their first introduction through to the 1870's, the period under study. Postal rates are thus of secondary importance.

SCOPE

The exhibit begins with the earliest recorded Nova Scotia letter in private hands, followed by several examples of additional very early precursor letters, predominantly military. Some of these are marked with foreign handstamps on incoming mail or were struck on arrival at a foreign destination. I include several examples of military conflict covers as this played a large roll in the early development of Nova Scotia and particularly Halifax. I continue with select examples of the **Halifax markings followed by pre-1842 postmarks**, the earliest recorded **Post-Masters Bills, Way Office Letters, Way Mails and Emergency handstamps**, selected postmarks issued from 1842 to 1867 (Canadian Confederation), **Forwarding Agents and Express mails** and conclude with **Nova Scotia Ship Letters**.

TREATMENT:

Items are broken down mostly chronologically into separate sections of importance and if possible, by type and city. Details and use of each are further conveyed on the importance and history involved. I begin with the earliest precursor mails moving to major areas of study broken down into sections for easy comparison.



BACKGROUND & IMPORTANCE

This exhibit represents more than **40 years of searching for the best and rarest material representing Nova Scotia Postal History.**

The topics are many and diverse. This exhibit covers a portion of my collection and is concentrated on the earliest military and private dispatches from 1724 to about 1800, Manuscript markings, Way Letters and Way Offices, Forwarding Agent and Express company handstamps and manuscripts, as well as early letters to and from the West Coast of the US and British Columbia, pre-Confederation advertising covers, the upgrading of Way Offices to post offices, the transportation of mails, the Nova Scotia involvement in the American Revolution, the War of 1812 including rare letters to and from prisoners at Melville Island prison, the Halifax connection to the US Civil War, mails to and from the West Indies and scarce and exotic destinations.

It is important to point out that in this exhibit the emphasis is more towards stampless material than stamped covers because many are scarcer and are often accompanied with letter contents which in some cases can be of **greater postal history significance** and general history interest than the stampless folded letters or cover markings.

This is the most comprehensive and complete exhibit of this material in existence, including several unique examples and numerous items known in 10 or fewer examples.

KNOWLEDGE, PERSONAL STUDY AND RESEARCH

The hunt for these special treasures has taken many years and a lot of patience but has provided countless hours (actually thousands of hours) of entertainment and knowledge through research in libraries, archives including NSARM, the British Archives at Phoenix Place in London, the National Archives at Kew Gardens also in London, philatelic journals and books, the internet, and philatelic friends.

For several decades now, **I have maintained a census of most of the scarcer handstamps along with photocopies and scans, when possible, details of ownership or auction house and prices,** etc in thousands of pages of notes and records, as well as an extensive philatelic library.

This exhibit represents only a portion of the collection, albeit the majority of the best items I have been able to acquire, many of which have rarely or have not been seen within the past 20 to 30 years or more. Here you will see examples of material which once graced the collections of **Glassco, Lichtenstein, de Volpi, Steinhart, Arnell, Eichele, Nickle, Montgomery, Sanderson, Wood (Dubois Collection), the Guggenheim 'Halifax Collection', Geoffrey Osborne, Dr. Sandy Clark, Hugh Rathbun and several others.**

WHAT IS NOT SHOWN IN THIS EXHIBIT

The topic of Nova Scotia Postal History is very broad and complex. It would take several additional frames to cover the complete range of material just for the time frame chosen here – 1724 to the 1870's. A complete exhibit could be done on the Pence and Cents rate handstamps alone, for example. For this reason this exhibit is limited to what I consider to be the most important covers and markings known. There are a few stamped covers (many rare) included mainly for their postal markings.

PHILATELIC IMPORTANCE

There are many unique items with only one copy currently known, from the earliest recorded Nova Scotia letter in a private collection, the earliest recorded letter written from Halifax some 2 months after its founding in July, 1749, earliest and latest recorded dates of handstamp and manuscript town usages including several new town manuscript discoveries along with a new handstamp discovery on a letter to Australia including the original hammers for the cancellation and mail bag seal. Finally, the sections on **Way Office Letters** and **Way Mail** as well as the **Forwarding Agents and Express Mails** have never been shown previously in such detail.

It is safe to say that there has never been such a complete and comprehensive collection of rare and elusive Nova Scotia Postal History material shown together in one exhibit.

PREVIOUS AWARDS

This is a new exhibit; however, the **Nova Scotia Ship Letter covers** were shown in one frame at the Halifax 2022 National Show and received a LARGE GOLD.

REFERENCES

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