

Chairman & Editor: Malcolm Back, 97 Stuart Street, Stouffville, ON, L4A 4S4, mback1217@rogers.com
 Treasurer/Circulation: Martin Goebel, 13 O'Mara Place, St. John's NL, A1A 5B7, goebel@nf.sympatico.ca

From the Editor: Just a reminder, I need articles for the January Newsletter and beyond. I have nothing in the way of Member articles in the Bank. Please consider writing something: a recent acquisition, a favourite cover, a favourite stamp issue, etc. Also, if you have something you would like to present at one of our ZOOM sessions, please let me know, and I will schedule a meeting.

From Blair Ashford: Recovered from Fire: The Mystery of the 1948 St. John's Crash Cover

Several years ago, I purchased a crash cover from St. John's to Halifax, marked "RECOVERED FROM FIRE" (figure 1). My initial searches of online databases and crash cover websites yielded nothing. Another cover surfaced on eBay with the same marking, this one sent from Burin North to Halifax, but it, too, lacked details about the fire's location (figure 2).



Figure 1. Scan of cover postmarked St John's 17 Dec 1948. The envelope contained a Christmas card from the St John's Telegram, paying the 2¢ printed matter rate, which applied if a card had fewer than five hand-written words.

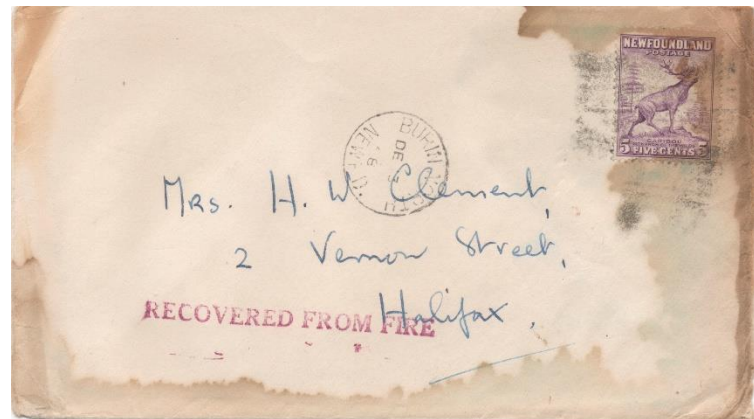


Figure 2. Scan of cover postmarked Burin North 13 Dec 48. No contents, but the cover pays the normal letter rate of 5¢ to Canada.

Seeking answers, I sent scans of my covers to the *Newfoundland Study Group News*. They were featured in Edition #2 - November 2022, but no new insights emerged. The covers joined the ranks of my other mystery items, filed away but not forgotten.

This summer, a breakthrough came when I received Brian Demien's searchable archive of past *Newfoundland Newsletters*. To my surprise, David Handelman had asked the same question almost twenty years earlier about a similar cover from St. John's to Halifax (NN#98, Jan/Feb 2003). It is nice to not be alone in wondering about mysteries, but it does not help solving them.

The resolution came this fall. A German auction house listed another "RECOVERED FROM FIRE" cover (figure 3), accompanied by an explanatory insert (figure 4). The insert revealed that the fire occurred on December 21, 1948, in Car #8, en route between Truro and Halifax. Finally, the mystery was solved: these Halifax-bound covers were indeed recovered from a train fire in Nova Scotia.

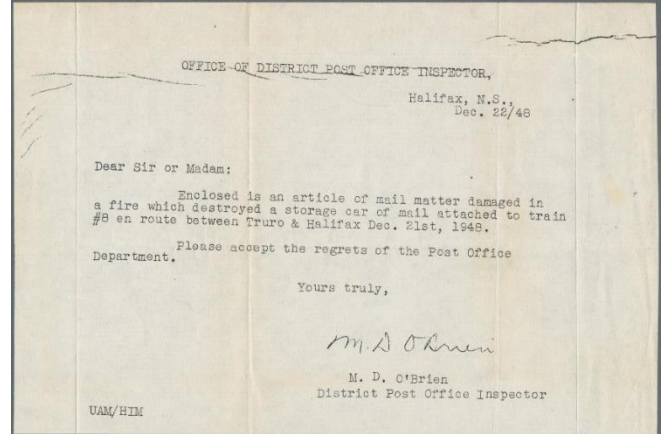
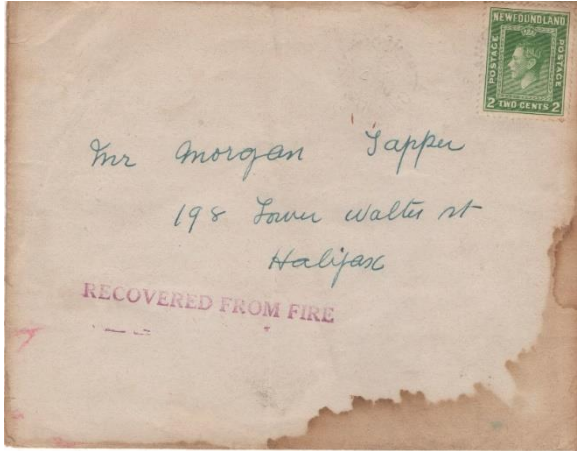


Figure 3 Scan of cover postmarked Grand Bank 7 Dec 1948. No contents (less the letter explaining the damage), but also paying the 2¢ printed matter rate, so it also presumably contained a Christmas card.

Figure 4 Scan of the insert explaining the damage to the envelope. The insert is a half of a page an 8 1/2" x 11" page.

But as one mystery ends, another begins. This fall, I acquired a scorched and damaged cover from an auction house lot (figure 5). Despite being postmarked only 50 km apart, it took three days to travel the distance. A new enigma: what caused this delay and damage? Once again, the trail has gone cold.



Figure 5 Scan of a new crash cover: Codroy 31 Aug 1929 to Channel 2 Sept 1929. The cover pays the 3¢ inland rate with a surcharged 6¢ stamp, eight days after issue. This is a very uncommon in-period, non-philatelic use - and a crash cover?

If anyone has another cover like it or information about other Newfoundland crash covers, I'd love to hear from you.

Also From Blair: Reviewing my sub-post offices covers, I am missing three cancels:

"Quidi Vidi" (spelled with an 'I' - I have the "Quide" version)

The 'long' King's Bridge cancel from the late 20's: "King's Bridge St John's Newf'd"

And of course the "Battery" cancel, which I don't think exists outside of the proof books.

I would appreciate any help. Cheers, Blair