

THE NEWFIE NEWSLETTER



OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND STUDY GROUP OF BNAPS

Number 165

October/December, 2016

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Note re NN 164: due to an oversight, the credit line for the Lobster stamp article was omitted. It should have the following credit line: Image copyright East Coast Coins on E-Bay. Used with the kind permission of Mel Boone



1893 Advertisement, from Robert Pratt files (see pages 5-8)

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MISTAKE... MISTAKE!

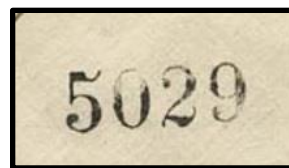
by Jean-Claude Vasseur, AEP, RPSL

In my book « Newfoundland Air Mail 1919/1939 », I have made an exhaustive study of the Balbo Mail in Newfoundland. I have demonstrated that, not only all covers bearing a number in the range 1,000+ were covers requiring forwarding to non-Italian destinations (mainly UK and Newfoundland) but that these covers were sorted by destination, likely associated with a mail bag and a plane.

About all covers with small numbers (1 to 150) or large numbers (5,000+) were covers with final destination in Italy – few exceptions, obviously by error. The last category was puzzling me as including also covers from Chicago with same destination. Puzzle became doubt when I discovered that covers do exist with the same number. See below example:



(cover seen on eBay)



(cover seen Vance Catalog 2014)

Actually, observation of several covers of both origins demonstrates that, while the hand stamp for numbering is the same, the method for striking the numbers is different. All covers from Chicago (or New-York) carry the number vertical in blue at left of the cover, while covers from Newfoundland carry the number horizontal in black on the central part of the covers.

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It is of interest to say that all covers from Chicago with such numbers had Italy as destination. Existence of covers going to the same destination with the same number is disturbing as departing from what was done elsewhere. Meanwhile the above differences demonstrate that it should be considered as different numbering.

I have recently acquired the below cover, with the highest known number: "5092"

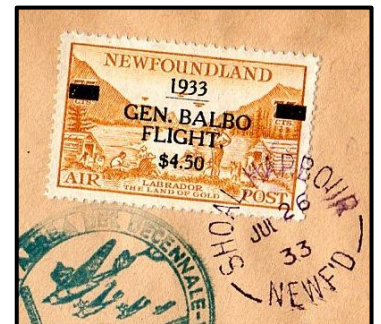


The fact that the numbering in Newfoundland includes only local covers is of importance.

Note: The cover carries the usual "LIDODIROMA 12/8/1933" and "ROMA DISTRIB. 17/8/1933" hand stamp (on reverse). This cover was mailed in Shoal Harbour on July 26th – a scarce cancellation -, day of arrival of the "Armada", obviously by a US citizen (a journalist?) on



a NEWFOUNDLAND RAILWAY form (!?). Interesting is the fact that the Shoal Harbor hand stamp is in deep violet (instead of black) ... as only seen on letters written by the US citizen, George E. Reynolds of NY (covers 121,122 and 1014 known and a stamp on piece, with cancellation same date)... which were likely presented at once by the same person that day.



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It should be considered that the batch (5,000+) was including not far from 95 covers in Newfoundland. Actually, I am making the assumption that the above cover – with, may be, a couple of similar covers, is the last one in this batch. This is based on the idea that all covers to Italy were numbered according to LIFO (last in/first out) principle, as shown on the batch of covers with small numbers, showing the similar covers cancelled July 26th in violet on the top of the pile with numbers 121, 122, ... with the exception of the covers cancelled in Harbour Grace, cancelled July 25th ... which received a higher number (131, 132, ...)!

The distribution of known covers presents in the mail at date of July 30th (1st attempt to take-off) must be revised:

70 (numbers 51 to 120) + 885 (numbers 1,001 to 1885 last known cover in this batch) + about 95 (numbers 5,000+) = about 1050 including letters from SJ and Shoal Harbour, while it is known that 1,078 covers were mailed in St John's ("The Mass Flights of Italo Balbo", R. Lana, page 52) and estimated 70 in Shoal Harbor

This last number needs some comments:

Mentioned by Robert Lana, it is not said if this is the initial quantity, as in the planes on July 30th when the take-off of the "Armada" was cancelled at the last moment, or the final count after further additions on August 2nd and 7th.

Meanwhile my database shows 11 covers – out of 157 recorded – in the range 1,000+ ending with number 1885. Thus about 7% of known covers between numbers 1,000 and 1,885. If proportion is correct, this means that there was about 60 covers from Shoal Harbour in this batch, to which should be added a small quantity of covers with cancellation in deep violet, as mentioned above. In no case this quantity supports the addition of the 40 to 50 covers added in August. As a consequence, I am considering that the quantity of 70 covers added in Shoal Harbour is a correct estimation of the quantity at the date of July 30th.

If this is true, about 1050 out of about 1150 covers – as mailed before July 30th reached Rome August 12th, 1933. The missing covers – not far from a hundred-, likely with numbers above 1,885, were in the I-RANI seaplane which capsized at take-off in the Azores Island.

Note: All covers from Chicago with the usual number 4,000+ carry a request for return to USA – and were returned by ship from Genoa to New-York - (21 known by the author).

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NEWFOUNDLAND BISECTS ON COVER, 1893-1920

(From the Pratt slides, courtesy of the Collectors Club of Chicago)

by Bob Dyer, OTB, Editor

I will show covers first and comment afterwards, if I can find any reference to them in the literature. Any text adjoining the items is by Robert H. Pratt.

1893



I can find no references to this in the literature. Curiously, the rate to Canada was lowered to 3¢ on 7-1-93.

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BISECTS

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1897



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BISECTS

-continued

1897



"Robson Lowe wrote (1973) " The 2-cent bisected for use as 1-cent is known on cover used from St. John's 2.10.1897...this bisect was accepted..."

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BISECTS

-conclusion

1901



There is no mention of this 1901 cover, either. It may have been one of the philatelic covers created by James Cox, a clerk on the Conception Bay Railroad, mailed ashore.

1920



Lowe mentions a bisected 6¢ from 1920, but (again) “unauthorized”.

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VARIETIES OF NWF 268 – THE TWO CENT SURCHARGE

by W. Joseph Schlitt

As had happened several times earlier, in 1946 the Newfoundland Post Office found itself short of a low value stamp. In this case it was the 2-cent value. Therefore the Post Office once again made the decision to surcharge a higher value stamp with the needed value. The stamp selected was Scott 267, the 30 cent university issue, as there was a significant stock available. Accordingly, one million¹ of the stamps were surcharged with the two line overprint reading TWO/CENTS (see Figure 1). These were released on March 21, 1946 and are listed as Scott 268. In spite of the large number, the entire printing sold out on the first day, making the date of usage tricky.



Fig. 1 - The Basic Stamp, Scott 268 (Ref. 2)

Probably because of the large number printed, the mint stamp has a low catalog value (<\$1). In fact, covers franked with 268 have higher catalogue values than the mint stamps. As a rather common stamp, 268 does not seem to generate much interest amongst collectors of Newfoundland material. The fact that there are no significant varieties listed in the specialized catalogues probably contributes to the lack of collector interest. Unitrade² only lists a spacing variety. Similarly, Walsh & Butts list only a spacing variation in the alignment of the two words. Catalogue values for these varieties are low, only two or three times that of the normal stamps.

However, there are unlisted varieties that should add to the interest in this stamp. One of Gary Lyon's recent auctions included a lot described as 268 with a double impression of the surcharge. I had the winning bid. When I received the stamp, there was indeed a second impression of the complete surcharge shifted up and to the right. However, I also noticed an additional kiss print of the surcharge at the top of the stamp. My next step was to submit the stamp to the Greene Foundation for verification that the surcharges were genuine. A certificate has now been issued stating that the stamp is a triple surcharge and genuine in all respects (see Figure 2). The stamp also has a nearly complete offset of the surcharge verso, a fact not mentioned on the certificate.

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VARIETIES OF NWF 268 – THE TWO CENT SURCHARGE

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No. G 24104

VINCENT GRAVES GREENE PHILATELIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION
10 Summerhill Avenue, Toronto, Canada M4T1A8
Member A.I.E.P.

DATE: July 27, 2016

COMMENTS: Newfoundland Scott No. 268 variety, mint, OG, NH, variety with triple surcharge, genuine in all respects.

ISSUED TO:

VINCENT GRAVES GREENE PHILATELIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION

By: _____

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ANY TAMPERING WITH THIS CERTIFICATE RENDERS IT VOID

Fig. 2 – The Greene Foundation Certificate for the Stamp with the Triple Surcharge

This is not the only known example of a multiple surcharge on 268. John Jamieson of Saskatoon Stamp Centre kindly provided information on two similar items that he has sold over the years. One was quite recent. It is a 3x2 block of 268, where the middle column of stamps has kiss prints of the word CENTS. Earlier this year the block was also certified as a triple surcharge by the Greene Foundation (see Figure 3). In addition, there is a broken “T” in the TWO on the LL stamp, which represents an additional unlisted variety. This is actually a constant flaw, position 26, left pane, first printing³. Some 20 years ago, he sold another 3x2 block. In this one the top center stamp also had a kiss print of CENTS. In addition, that stamp had a broken W. To give some idea of price increases, the earlier one sold for \$95 and the last, for \$795!

Given these different unlisted varieties, perhaps 268 deserves more attention by collectors. Further studies may well turn up additional varieties.

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VARIETIES OF NWF 268 – THE TWO CENT SURCHARGE

- conclusion

No. G 23610


VINCENT GRAVES GREENE PHILATELIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION
10 Summerhill Avenue, Toronto, Canada M4T1A8
Member A.I.E.P.



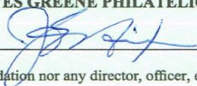
DATE: February 2, 2016

COMMENTS: Newfoundland Scott No. 268 var., mint, OG, block of six, NH except top centre stamp, variety with kiss print of surcharge producing triple printing on centre two stamps, genuine in all respects.

ISSUED TO:



VINCENT GRAVES GREENE PHILATELIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION

By: 

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ANY TAMPERING WITH THIS CERTIFICATE RENDERS IT VOID

Fig. 3 – The Greene Foundation Certificate for the Block with Additional Unlisted Varieties
(Courtesy of Saskatoon Stamp Centre)

¹ Walsh, J. M. and Butts, J. G., Newfoundland Specialized Stamp Catalogue, Walsh Philatelic Services, St. John's, NF, Canada, 6th Ed., 2006, p. 50.

² The Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps, The Unitrade Press, Toronto, ON, Canada, 2016, p. 690.

³ Norris R. (Bob) Dyer, private communication.

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**MAJOR SIDNEY COTTON, A FELLOW ANTIPODEAN, AND HIS ROLE
IN NEWFOUNDLAND'S EARLY AIRMAIL SERVICES.**

Capt'n Bruce (A.K.A.) Bruce Robertson

Major Sidney Cotton



Fig 1 A young air force Cotton, aged c 25.

Source: <http://afleeingpeace.org/afp/aerial-derby-aviators>

Sidney Cotton was a dashing young Australian, ex WWI pilot aged 25 when he arrived in Newfoundland in 1920. He had already begun to demonstrate a flamboyant streak. Before arriving in Newfoundland he had unsuccessfully attempted to fly from London to Cape Town and destroyed his D.H.14a in the English Aerial Derby.

By the time he left Newfoundland three years later for New York and onward to London, he had acquired a new young 18 year old Newfoundland school-girl fiancée and \$25,000 – although his short stay in Newfoundland may not be judged the highlight in Newfoundland's aeronautical history.

The best known episode in Cotton's involvement with Newfoundland's early airmail, was the attempted flight to Halifax which started in December 1921, the mail finally being postmarked in Halifax in February 1922. The story behind the attempt was explored by Greg Pope in *Newfie Newsletter* in 2008¹

A fuller record of Major Cotton's activities are given in a well illustrated web site <http://botwood.tripod.com/aviation.html> (author not identified). Cotton and his partner Captain Sydney Bennett established the first facilities for aircrafts at Botwood during 1921- 1922 as headquarters for Cotton's Aerial Survey (Newfoundland) Company. He constructed hangars for his planes, a *deHavilland 9*, a Rolls Royce powered *Martynsyde* and a *Westland*

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MAJOR SIDNEY COTTON

- *continued*

Napier. The planes were equipped with skis made locally by Nathaniel Hart for winter use on the frozen Exploits River and Bay. In other seasons the planes were equipped with pontoons. Cotton chose Botwood because it was sheltered and easily accessible, suitable for both summer and winter. Few people in Botwood had ever seen an airplane and crowds came out to see the spectacle.



Fig 2 Cotton's first airmail service, 1921.
Source: <http://botwood.tripod.com/aviation.html>

The Tripod article goes on to report that on February 26, 1921 Cotton flew from St. John's to St. Anthony, landing on ice at Botwood Harbour to refuel his aircraft. This plane carried the first air mail to the seal hunt and the Fogo area. The Fogo mail was subsequently delivered on a flight from Botwood on March 28, 1921. This date is problematical. The cover illustrated at Fig. 3 from this flight is indeed back-stamped Fogo March 28, but the originating postmark is that of St John's March 10, 1931.

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Fig 3 Cover with straight line 'AIR POST FOGO' hand-stamp and hand-written 'Per Air Mail' endorsement. St John's cancel March 10, 1921. Back-stamped FOGO March 29, 1921. Source: Author's collection.

The 'definitive' description of Cotton's contribution to early Newfoundland's internal air mail history, and the difficulty in identifying flights and dates is described quite succinctly in Peter Motson's award-winning exhibition: *Newfoundland Air Mail Stamps and Air Mail Flight 1919 – 1948*.ⁱⁱ

"Flight Mail Identification

- *Records of Cotton's 1921 to 1923 Mail Flights are non-existent.*
- *Newspaper Announcements or references did not cover many of the flights flown and gave scant details in any event.*
- *Post Office mail records are unknown.*
- *Letters intended to be carried by Air Mail, often accumulated at outposts and were cancelled by the date received, not the date of the flight. Very often, such postmarks complicate flight identification especially if letters were mailed well in advance of the flight or, if the flight was delayed or postponed, etc.*
- *Many of the smaller Post Offices were manned by in-experienced local personnel as "Part-Time" Post Masters and wrong date slugs were not unusual.*
- *Most flights were "Round Trip" flights flown in stages and mail was delivered and collected at various points along the route, conditions permitting".*

It must be remembered that Cotton's main interest in setting up his operation at Botwood was to carry out seal spotting sorties. Of course seals were not in the habit of sending of sending airmail letters!

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A happier customer was Fogo's Mrs Thomas Humphries, the recipient of the cover shown in Fig 3, who is shown in Fig 4 holding the mail sack dropped by Cotton.

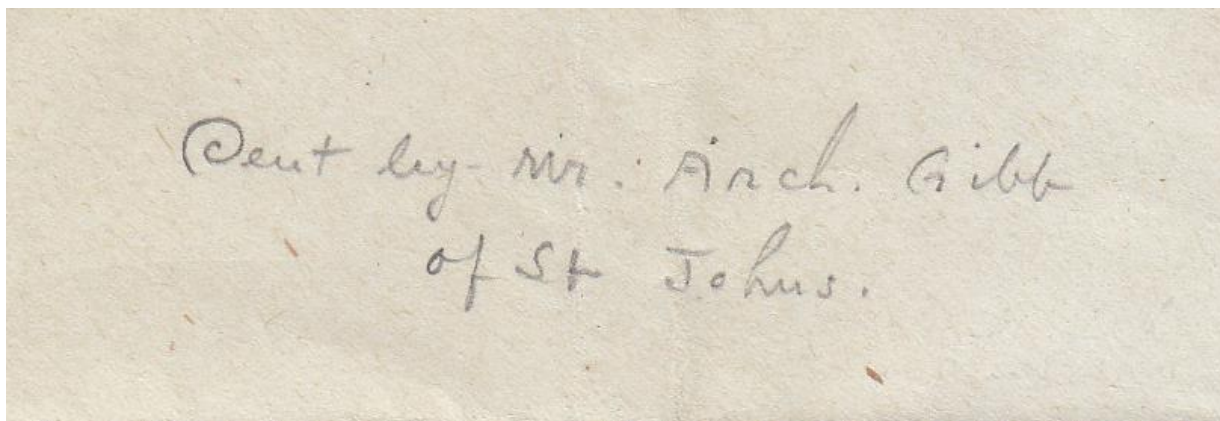
Figure 4: Florence Newell (Humphries) with bag of mail just dropped from Cotton's plane over Seldom Come By, Fogo Island. 1921.

© Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN).

http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/sgc-cms/histoires_de_chez_nous-community_memories/pm_v2.php?id=story_line&g=English&fl=0&ex=00000639&sl=5163&pos=1

Motson observes that the number of letters flown per flight during Sidney Cotton's era were relatively few, and very few have survived. It is therefore an added bonus to find the pencilled note on the back of the Fig. 3 cover:

Figure 4



Back of Figure 3 cover

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MAJOR SIDNEY COTTON

- conclusion

“Archibald Gilchrist Gibb was born around 1858 and grew up in St John’s. As a young man he was employed as a shop walker (sales assistant) in Ayres department store. He married Fanny Toussaint in 1888. Their only child William died at six months of age. A good businessman, he went into partnership and built up Gibb & Calvert, tailors. Finally he went into business in his own right at 160 Water Street, St John’s as ‘gentlemen’s furnishings’. Although there is no record of Gibb pursuing any art training, he was to provide the artistic frames to R E Holloway’s photographic images for the Newfoundland 1923 Pictorial issue”.ⁱⁱⁱ



Examples of different boarder frames on the 1923 Pictorial Issue.

There is not room here to cover Cotton’s later career and colourful escapades and WWII wartime adventures. Needless to say they included espionage and varying tales of daring-do, leading to speculation that he was the model for Ian Fleming’s James Bond.^{iv}

ⁱ A two-part article ‘Halifax Air Mail’ by Greg Pope appeared in the *Newfie Newsletter* Number 131 (July/August 2008) and Number 132 (Sept/October 2008)

ⁱⁱ Motson’s exhibition *Newfoundland Air Mail Stamps and Air Mail Flight 1919 – 1948*. Aerophilatelic Exhibit May 2010. London. <http://petermotson.co.uk/index.html>. However, for the reader who relishes a challenge, you might like to take a look at http://nl.canadagenweb.org/nd_freepress1922.htm which suggests some degree of finer information and dating.

ⁱⁱⁱ Newfoundland Postage Stamps, 1857–1949 : A Brief Historical and Iconographic Study by Thomas F. Nemec: “The next issue, the ‘Pictorial’ set, celebrated Newfoundland’s natural beauty, resources, landmarks, outport communities and Newfoundlanders who had fought in the Great War. Based largely on photos taken by R.E. Holloway and published in 1905, Archibald Gibb, a St. John’s businessman, produced designs, some of which were chosen by government officials. Engraved and printed in London, the stamps were released on July 9, 1923, except for the two highest values which were released in April, 1924. If the purpose of the issue was in part to advertise Newfoundland’s natural assets, the purpose was defeated somewhat by the small size of the stamps, and thus smaller than usual frames and captions”.

^{iv} Cotton, Sidney as told to Ralph Barker. *Aviator Extraordinary: The Sidney Cotton Story*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1969; Watson, Jeff. *Sidney Cotton: The Last Plane Out of Berlin*. Sydney, Australia: Hodder Headline Australia, 2004.