

# 20th Century Newfoundland Bisects

by Dan Meyerson

In the October issue of "Topics" I discussed at length the bisects that were used on August 26, 1902, to prepay letters sent via the Conception Bay Travelling Post Office to Avondale. The stamps used at that time were the 2c Cabot #62, the 6c Cabot #66, and the 2c King Edward #82. This use of bisect stamps was not the only evidence of this practice to turn up during the past 44 years. I have three other covers with bisected stamps in my collection and I imagine that several others may and probably do exist.

In the case of the covers bearing bisects that I am referring to, each of the covers bears the correct amount of postage that is necessary to do postal duty. I am not referring to any covers that may bear bisected stamps in excess of the correct postal rate.

Subsequent to 1902 the first evidence of a bisect is found on a cover posted at Harbor Main, Newfoundland on May 25, 1913 and addressed to Barrington, Illinois. The stamp used is the 4c violet #85, and it is bisected vertically to make the 2c rate. The cover bears the left vertical half of the stamp beautifully tied over the cut by the circular Harbor Main cancellation. It was backstamped upon receipt at Barrington, Illinois on May 30, 1913. Although I can find no record of the authorization for the use of this bisect, its use may have had official sanction since it bears the correct rate of 2c, and it served to do postal duty between Newfoundland and the United States as evidenced by the postmarks.

We then have a lapse of 24 years before we have our next Newfoundland bisect and this one seems to have some legal right for existence. Boggs in his book on Newfoundland says, "The bisected 2c were used at various post offices by consent of the Postmaster General for use on envelopes containing Christmas Cards for delivery within the town or settlement of mailing. All are postmarked Dec. 24, 1937."

The cover in my collection franked by a bisect of this description bears the right diagonal half of the 2c King George V #186, tied by a circular postmark from Curling dated Dec. 24, 1937. It is addressed to Corner Brook. According to Boggs #186 was not the only stamp used for bisecting at this time, he also lists the use of the 2c Coronation on the same date. In the case of this stamp however he lists vertical and diagonal bisects as being used to frank letters on that date. This is readily understandable since this bisecting was done at several post offices and for that reason couldn't be expected to be uniform in result.

The last instance of a bisect that I have any record of was used during 1938. Again as in the case of the 1913 bisect I can find no instance of its use being authorized by the proper authorities. However it too served to properly prepay the postage between the point of origin and the ultimate destination.

In this case the cover franked by the 3c red brown #174 and the left diagonal half of the 2c Coronation #230, to make the 4c rate was posted at Clarke's Beach on March 3, 1938 and the stamps in question are tied with a violet rectangular postmark. The letter is addressed to Granville Ferry, Nova Scotia, and the postage rate is correct.

There are probably many more instances of bisects used during the 20th Century and I would be interested in hearing about them from any of our members. I would also like to have further records of the towns that used the bisect on Dec. 24, 1937 to deliver Christmas Cards.

---

## THANKS TO TWENTY

for that 6c Air Booklet Pane, top stamp canceled Franklin, middle Delano and bottom Roosevelt. All are towns in Minnesota, Twenty's home state.

---

BUY WAR BONDS -- BUY WAR STAMPS