



The RPO Cowcatcher

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Over the years, we have always been awed by the investigative talent of some of our well-known specialists. Their ability to turn over the rocks for new discoveries is what makes collecting railway cancellations so interesting and enjoyable. During our experience in this field, it is undoubtedly Allan Steinhart who has led this distinguished group, but he certainly has had plenty of company in the finds of Ross Gray, Bill Robinson, Graham Noble and many others.

In this column we want to acknowledge the efforts of J. D. Wilson, Reporter 197. Wilson specializes only in Newfoundland, but within this area — and in a relatively short period of time — he has contributed enormously to our knowledge of the T.P.O.s and R.P.O.s of Newfoundland.

We have always had the philosophy that when anyone can find an unlisted railway cancellation that is more than 50 years old, after all of the detective work done by our specialists in the last half century, then it has to be a very rare strike indeed! Over the last four years, we have recorded for Wilson six new Newfoundland listings, four new Newfoundland ticket stamps and two new Newfoundland steamers; eight of these twelve were used more than 50 years ago. It is a pleasure to share herewith three of Wilson's reports.

RARE TRACK

The cross-channel (Cabot Strait) listing N-118 SYDNEY & Pt. AUX BASQUES T.P.O./NEWF'D, Type 17F, 1905-1922, has been known for years, and is comparatively common. Some time ago Bill Robinson submitted a partial strike obviously different from N-118, but not sufficient for identification; Bob Soper then sent another with more of the same strike, and we knew we had something different. Soon thereafter Wilson came along with a full strike on card and we were able to list with certainty N-117 SYDNEY N. S. & Pt. BASQUE N F'L'D. T.P.O./-, Type 4D, 1905-1907.



J. D. Wilson

At the same time, Wilson submitted the cancellation above with the thought that perhaps this might be something different from the previous two. Indeed it was! This new listing, N-119 SY• PORT AUX BASQUES T.P.O. / NEWF'D, Type 4J, is known for a period of only one month, February/March, 1908, and certainly must be one of the rarest of the Newfoundland T.P.O.s.



J. D. Wilson

At about the same time these three Nova Scotia to Newfoundland T.P.O.s were in operation, there was another, going in the opposite direction — Newfoundland to Nova Scotia. Illustrated is another of Wilson's important discoveries, the first one on cover or card, N-58 N'F'L'D -N- SYDNEY T.P.O. / ., Type 4H, 1909-1912. This listing was known to the Meyersons, but we had never seen one until Dave McKain submitted a faint but full strike for recording; then Wilson sent in the illustrated cancellation to define this listing more precisely.

The three listings — N-117, N-118 & N-119— have been included in the Newfoundland Section for completeness; however, since they emanated from Nova Scotia and are found most frequently on Canadian stamps, cover or cards, they would fit equally well in the Maritime Section. Specialists in Maritime railway cancellations should include these three listings for thorough coverage of their field.



J. D. Wilson

Although not 50 years old, Wilson's latest discovery, namely N-30A FOGO DISTRICT T.P.O. / NFLD, Type 7D, 1941, was used more than 40 years ago. The single known strike that is illustrated above was used on a commercial cover to St. Johns from an unknown origin. N-30A apparently preceded N-33 (DISTRICT vs. DIST.) of the later period of 1947-1949. Both are the same type of rubber hammer, Type 7D. With all of the wartime correspondence of Newfoundland already known and researched, Wilson's discovery of this only recorded stike is all the more remarkable.

MORE RARE TRACK

Illustrated is a spectacular strike of O-367



Maggie Toms

TOR. & MONT. M.C. / ASST., Type 9B, on a 3d Jubilee, which was sent to us by Maggie Toms. Of this rare bird, there are only four recorded strikes. The first, our own of some ten years ago, is dated 11 November 1899. Subsequently, Jim Lehr sent a strike dated five months earlier, 29 June 1899. On our recent trip to America Dave McKain showed us the same cancellation on 3d Small Queen, date unclear but probably 1898. Now we have the strike from Toms, by far the best of the known four, dated 9 August 1897. Who can tell us the meaning of ASST? This abbreviation is quite unfamiliar to us. There is a companion strike, Q-167 MONT. & TOR. M.C. ASST. / ., Type 10, of which there are only two recorded strikes, from Bill Robinson and Dave McKain, both dated 3 May 1900, just after the date spread of O-367 of 1897-1899. Were these listings consecutive or concurrent? We hope that future reports will clarify this point.

UNKNOWN TERRITORY



Frank Waite