

The Dawn and Dusk of 'Streets': Gottingen Street, A Case in Point

Background: Rapid growth of Canada's population in the latter part of the 19th century prompted the Post Office Department to open a large number of new post offices. In cities, they were established as branch or sub offices *vis-a-vis* the main office and, following a practice that had been in use in England and France for decades, they were usually named on the basis of their street locations.

Naturally, those offices have become known to philatelists as 'street offices', or simply 'streets'. Likewise, their distinctive cancellations have become known as 'street cancels' and they are a current focus for collecting interest. Some 'streets' had very short operational lives and most, if not all, were re-named with generic designations to facilitate administration of office closures and re-locations.

Purpose: Halifax's Gottingen Street post office was typical of that process. This exhibit illustrates its 9-year life as a 'street office' from its inception in 1894 to its demise as such in 1903 and its subsequent generic names up to 1958. Although it was Halifax's first sub office, Gottingen Street was never given the designation 'Sub No. 1'. In fact, although later Halifax sub offices were numbered up to No. 28, Halifax never did have a Sub No. 1.

Treatment: In this exhibit Gottingen Street is introduced with a map showing its location and a post card giving a representative view of its immediate neighbourhood. The intro includes examples of its CDS and roller cancellations and the stamp issues in common use during its operation. Covers carry the rest of the story, starting with a registered cover postmarked on the 1st day of business. Advertising covers of various customers, business reply covers, stamp dealers' covers to foreign destinations, and special event covers follow in that order - all indicating a busy post office with a significant commercial element in the neighbourhood. When rapid cancelling machines were installed in the main office, all regular mail was cancelled there instead of in branch offices like Gottingen Street. However, registered mail continued to be cancelled in the branch offices where it originated, so the sequence of registered covers on the final page shows Gottingen's demise as a 'street office'.

Exhibit Plan:

- Page 2 - Location Map - Street Scene - Cancellations - Stamp Issues
- Page 3 - 1st Day Cover
- Page 4 - A Busy Neighbourhood
- Page 5 - More Busy Neighbourhood
- Page 6 - Business Reply Covers & Receiver Usage
- Page 7 - Stamp Dealers' Mail to Foreign Destinations
- Page 8 - Special Event Covers
- Page 9 - Subsequent Names