

UPDATE ON THE “D.W.” COVERS - Part 1

Chris Hargreaves



Cover 9. - Numbers refer to a specific cover, and remain constant from article to article.

What does “D.w.” stand for?

Who applied the handstamp? When? Where? Why?

Review: The mystery of the D.w. handstamp was studied in two articles, in the September 2010 and June 2011 issues of *The Canadian Aerophilatelist*.

At one time the handstamp was thought to be a pilot's mark, but it turned out that for the Winnipeg - Pembina flight the pilot was A.E. Jarvis.

Another theory is that it is a private collector's mark, such as some people use in approval books. Trelle Morrow had seen a cover with the return address of W.C. Diment, Sintaluta, Sask, and suggested the D.w. endorsement might be that of Mr. Diment. However, it seems strange that a collector would place a mark partially over a stamp, when there was ample “white space” on the cover, as occurred on Cover 2 to Captain Emslie, shown on the front page of this journal.

Don Amos, who worked in the Winnipeg Post Office after World War II, suggested the handstamp was a Post Office marking that stood for “Delayed-Weather”. But it seems odd that the Post Office would use a handstamp that just says “D.w.”, as Post Office handstamps normally state the reason for which they are applied in full. People also questioned why there would be a marking for “Delayed Weather”, when flights were also delayed for other reasons? Also, when abbreviations are used, the letters are normally the same size.

The two articles illustrated and studied 14 covers with the D.w. handstamp:

- All 14 covers were mailed between March 25th 1930 and February 22nd 1932.
- They were mailed by 3 or more people, (based on return addresses), in Canada (10), Germany (2), Newfoundland (1) and England (1).
- The covers were to 12 different addresses in 3 Provinces in western Canada: Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.
- 7 were Canadian First Flight Covers, 1 was a Newfoundland First Flight, and 1 had a Zeppelin cachet.
- Two were from the Amos - Siscoe First Flight to different addresses, and two were from the Winnipeg - Pembina First Flight to different addresses.
- There were covers from both legs of the Amos - Siscoe First Flight to the same address
- Two covers from different flights (and countries) were addressed to A.B. Stuart in Estevan.
- E. Symons in Rocanville was the addressee of Cover 9, and the return address on Cover 1.

It was also learned that Ihor Rudyk, a dealer in Calgary, once sold some Post Office facing slips with a D.w. handstamp on them.

The articles in *The Canadian Aerophilatelist* were followed up with articles in the *Jack Knight Air Log* of the American Air Mail Society, *BAMS News* published by the British Air Mail Society, and in *BNA Topics* of the British North America Philatelic Society. - A compendium of the articles is being posted on the CAS website at www.aerophilately.ca

These articles led to copies of more covers with the D.w. handstamp, which give more information about its use.

Continued

UPDATE ON THE "D.w." COVERS [Part 1] by Chris Hargreaves continued:**Cover 15**

This was received from Denny May who commented:

Here is another one!! Also mailed during the time period mentioned.

Similar to cover 12 but addressed to Bertha Crowhurst, Binscarth, Manitoba & backstamped there on February 4th.

We do know that this particular flight was delayed by weather. However that being the case, almost every cover flown between 1918 and 1939 should be similarly stamped - weather was rarely kind to pilots and planes.

I have to question, too, if this was the handstamp of a collector why were the locations different? - I have other covers with collectors personal stamps - usually on the back, but always in the same location. This suggests to me they were, in fact a P.O. marking for some reason.

The cover would have been flown from Winnipeg to Pembina on the First Flight, (which was delayed to February 3rd due to fog, but the covers had been postmarked in anticipation of the flight leaving on schedule), then been flown from Pembina back to Winnipeg, where it was put in the regular mail to Binscarth in Western Manitoba.

This is the third D.w. cover from the opening of the Winnipeg - Pembina air mail route. But over 17,000 covers were carried on the First Flight, and most didn't get a D.w. handstamp.

**Cover 16**

From Neil Hunter, who commented:

Here is my only example which is a Commercial Cover that would likely be of no interest to a collector.

The cover is postmarked WINNIPEG 2AM May 11 1931, and is addressed to Vancouver.

It is the first example of a D.w. cover sent to British Columbia.

**Cover 17**

From David Reynolds in New Zealand, who thinks it came from an auction in Melbourne about 1998.

It is a First Day Cover for the 6c overprinted air mail stamp. (Scott c3.)

Postmarked WINNIPEG 7AM FEB 22 1932.

David notes in his write up that: "Prairie Air Mail Service Westbound left Winnipeg 21.00hours arrived Regina 23.40"

The cover is backstamped JANSEN FEB 23 32 SASK.

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UPDATE ON THE "D.w." COVERS [Part 1] by Chris Hargreaves continued:**Cover #18**

This cover was purchased on eBay from a seller in Texas. - It is another c3 First Day Cover, like cover #17, but was postmarked later in the day: WINNIPEG 9 AM FEB 22 1932. There is no backstamp.

This cover is almost identical to Cover #2, (on the front cover of this issue), which was also addressed to Captain Emslie in Calgary, and was also postmarked WINNIPEG 9 AM FEB 22 1932

However, I also have in my collection two other c3 First Day Covers from Winnipeg, neither of which has a D.w. handstamp - one is to Lethbridge, Alberta - postmarked WINNIPEG 7 AM FEB 22 1932 ,
backstamped LETHBRIDGE 11.30 PM FEB 23 1932

- the other is to Regina, postmarked WINNIPEG 12.30 PM FEB 22 1932, no backstamp.

My thanks to Dale Speirs and Gray Scrimgeour for sending me some information about Captain Emslie to whom Covers 2 and 18 were addressed:

Captain Emslie was a stamp dealer, who started in Edmonton, and then went to Calgary in 1930. He was the first full-time stamp dealer in Calgary, and traded under the name Emslie & Co. He was an early member of the Calgary Philatelic Society (founded 1922) and was elected Honourary Life Member #4 in 1937. In the mid 1940s he wound up in Vancouver.

Gray added that, "a couple of BC friends remember buying from him about 1945."

**Cover #19 - From Jim Miller in B.C.**

The cover is postmarked CHATHAM 8.30 AM JUN 7 1930 ONT and addressed to Yorkton, Saskatchewan

All the D.w. covers so far have been mailed during the period in which the Prairie Air Mail Service operated: March 3rd 1930 to March 30th/31st 1932.

The Prairie Air Mail service initially operated a nightly service between Winnipeg and Calgary via Regina, Moose Jaw, and Medicine Hat; and a daytime service between Regina, Saskatoon, North Battleford and Edmonton. Lethbridge was added in January 1931.

There were no airmail flights south or east of Winnipeg, until the Winnipeg - Pembina route opened in February 1931, connecting the Prairie Air Mail Service with the U.S. airmail system.

Since cover 19 was mailed in Ontario on June 7th 1930, it would have arrived in Winnipeg by rail, and then been flown to Saskatchewan.

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