

let's talk EXHIBITING

David Piercey,
FRPSC



PREPARING A SYNOPSIS

In addition to a Title Page, most exhibitions now expect exhibitors to also submit a Synopsis when applying to show their exhibit. A Synopsis consists of no more than two additional pages, but is not shown with the exhibit on the floor. Instead, they are “notes” that the exhibitor prepares to educate the judges about what the exhibit contains.

Synopses are sent by the show committee a few weeks in advance to the judges, and are meant to aid them in their preparation for judging your exhibit. It can be used to great effect to guide them in their understanding of your intent, developing an “expectancy set” for what they should expect to see when they finally view it in the frames at the show.

A well-crafted Synopsis is meant to engage the judges in understanding exactly what you are intending to show. It is different than a Title Page, as you have much greater scope to convince the judges from what you are showing merits their greatest consideration. Its impact can be measured by how well you make them aware of your intent and of exactly what the story of your exhibit entails.

Your Synopsis should “look and feel” different than your Title Page. Whereas the audience for your Title Page is both the interested viewer and the judges, the audience for the Synopsis is exclusively the judges. Consequently, you may wish to write the two quite differently, and emphasize different things in the Synopsis than you have in the Title Page.

One way to slant your writing for the Synopsis is to include titles and sections that correspond to the criteria by which exhibits are judged. That is, the Judging Exhibit Evaluation Form (commonly called the “Universal Exhibit Evaluation Form” (UEEF) in the United States) is organized

into major areas of Treatment, Importance, Philatelic/Subject Knowledge, Personal Study and Research, Rarity, and Condition. By explicitly writing sections of your Synopsis to correspond to these judging criteria you are demonstrating how your exhibit should be considered against each of these criteria.

The Synopsis is the place to “toot your own horn” and impress the judges. Don’t be afraid to state in your Synopsis why your exhibit material is important. If you have been studying the area for many years, say so. If you are using primary research well outside the normal philatelic literature for your topic, say so (and indicate a few references). If you have only the finest known material, say so. If you have particularly scarce or important material, include a short list of your most important pieces. If you have material that, even of moderate value, is most difficult to acquire,

say so. In these ways, the emphasis is on the philatelic importance of what you are showing, foreshadowing what the judges will see, and demonstrating you know your stuff.

Your Synopsis should also clearly state what TYPE of exhibit you are showing (i.e., traditional, postal history, thematic, revenue, etc.), how it is organized, and why you have organized it the way you have. In most cases, you probably know your area better than most judges. Don’t expect them to be the experts; instead, write the Synopsis in order to give them a reasonable background with which to form initial impressions of your exhibit.

Finally, if you want your Synopsis to stand out, consider formatting it in any way that you feel may make it more visually attractive. Too often Synopses consist of long paragraphs of closely spaced text, with little use of white space or of colour. Try instead

to break up your text into more manageable paragraphs, add the odd section title, or use font sizes to effect. The most visually effective Synopses I have seen all look more like small specialized brochures than pages otherwise from a manuscript. If you feel comfortable with the principles of desk top publishing or of graphic design, here is your chance to experiment, use some of the templates that often come with our software, get creative, and have some fun.

The small Synopsis illustrated with this article shows one approach to creating a Synopsis. Note that it has several sections each with a title (i.e., “Purpose”, “Scope”, “Organization and Treatment”, “Challenge”, “Significant Items”, “Knowledge, Personal Study and Research”, “Condition”, “Presentation”, etc.), and the use of columnar format to increase readability. Other example Synopsis pages may be found at http://www.aaape.org/title___synopsis_pages.asp on the AAPE website. ☒

MOVING THE MAILED POSTAL ROUTES IN THE EARLY DECIMAL PERIOD OF NEWFOUNDLAND 1865-1910 SYNOPSIS OF THE EXHIBIT		
<p>PURPOSE</p> <p>This is a postal history exhibit organized by postal routes, either within the island for domestic communication, or off the island, for communication with the rest of North America or with Great Britain to the rest of the world. Secondary emphases are placed on postal rates, and on postmarks or other postal markings contemporary with the period, and on usages of the postal issues of this period.</p>	<p>On coastal mail routes, I also indicate the name of the specific vessel(s) that conveyed each cover.</p> <p>Within each route I show, when appropriate, a variety of postal issues that were used during the period of the route. I also illustrate a variety of rates that occurred during the period of the route. Although not exhaustive of all postal issues or all postal rates (this is neither a usage or rate exhibit), they are included to enrich the challenge and variety of covers shown, and to give a more comprehensive treatment of each route.</p>	<p>As well, covers to outport towns are correspondingly more difficult to acquire than covers to St. John's. This exhibit also includes a significant number of outport destinations.</p> <p>The greatest traditional challenges in Newfoundland postal history are in the rates charged for non first-class letters (e.g., circulars) and special concessionary rates (e.g., soldier's and seamen's mail). Although this is not a rate exhibit, some of these rates are nevertheless included to enhance the story line, and are highlighted accordingly. When known, the provenance of such covers have been indicated.</p> <p>The greatest challenges have also been to determine and illustrate some of the lesser-known mail routes by which mail was occasionally conveyed off-island, as some routes were of only temporary expedience or shorter contracted duration. As well, mail to St. Pierre and Miquelon is particularly difficult to find as the market for it extends well beyond those interested in only BNA material. Both of these topics receive coverage in this exhibit.</p>
<p>SCOPE</p> <p>This exhibit begins at the start of the decimal period and the “Cents” issue of postage stamps in 1865, with the early contracted steamship services for domestic mails, and with the Cunard Line contracted services to Halifax for conveyance of foreign mails. I end when domestic postal communication has been fully integrated within the rail and coastal mail systems operated by the all encompassing Reid contract and when communications off island had become routinized by fully dependable steamship services scheduled to North America and to Great Britain. I thus end when the postal system was fully functioning and as envisioned, and before the disruptions of WWI, the nationalization of the Reid services, and the eventual financial insolvency of the island's government.</p>	<p>CHALLENGE</p> <p>Early Newfoundland postal history is eagerly sought after, and only occasionally comes on the market in any quality. This collection has been formed over the course of more than 25 years, and was infused by early “Cents” material from the Siverts collection (Maresch 1989), and later “Royal Family” material from the Walsh collection (Jamieson, 2006), among others.</p> <p>All early “Cents” covers of the ABNC issues (with the exception of the 12-cents rate Waterman correspondence to England) are scarce to rare, with few surviving examples of each usage recorded. I use Whaley's 2004 census to annotate rarity for the 35 or so of these covers shown in this exhibit.</p> <p>The challenge for the BABNC issues is primarily in the period 1880-1892, as the great St. John's fire of 1892 destroyed so much of the archived business correspondence from that period. Domestic covers from the outports in this period are uncommon. This exhibit shows a significant number of cancellations from smaller outport towns in this period.</p>	<p>SIGNIFICANT ITEMS</p> <p>This exhibit contains the following philatelicly significant and challenging items:</p> <p><u>Routes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. John's to Fogo, 1875. Only reported northbound Great Northern Mail Route cover (Coastal Mails/ Winter Mails/ Great Northern Mail Route) • Bay Roberts to Labrador, 1878. Only reported cover to Labrador in period 1865-1880. (Labrador Mails/ Bowring Bros. Contract) • Rose Blanche to Burgeo 1879. Only reported strike of Rose Blanche “Fleuron” date stamp on cover. (Coastal Mails/Coastal West/The Bowring Bros. Contract) • “Western Mail Boat” SS Harlaw covers, 1893 and 1900. (Foreign Mails/Cross Gulf Routes/Pickford and Black Contract)
<p>ORGANIZATION AND TREATMENT</p> <p>The development of postal communication on the various routes is treated in a chronological fashion within each chapter. Successive mail contracts and their routes are tabulated and shown and (if and when introduced) the various T.P.O. markings are included.</p>		