

Canadian First Day Covers by Rev. Nathaniel Cole

by Gordon Smith

Nathaniel Cole was born in Victoria, Carbonear, Newfoundland on 22 November 1888. He was received on trial as a Methodist minister in Britannia Cove, NL in 1911, Carmanville, NL in 1912, and Glovertown, NL in 1913. He then attended Victoria College in Toronto before serving in the First World War with the 9th Field Ambulance in France and Belgium from 1916 to 1918. Upon return from the war, he was ordained in Trinity NL in 1919 and served in the Methodist Church and United Church after amalgamation in:

- New Aberdeen NS from 1920 to 1921
- La Have NS from 1922 to 1926
- Springhill NS from 1927 to 1929
- Onslow NS from 1930 to 1931
- Red Bank NB from 1932 to 1935
- Granville Ferry NS from 1936 to 1939
- Port Hood NS from 1940 to 1943
- Renfrew ON from 1944 to 1946
- Rawdon ON from 1946 to 1947
- Hastings ON from 1948 to 1954 and
- Windsor ON from 1954 to 1967

In 1968, he retired to London ON where he passed away in 1977.

Rev. Cole was also a stamp dealer. He created first day covers in the late 1930's and 1940's related to stamp issues from Canada and Newfoundland, where he was originally from. Advertisements in *Maple Leaves*, the Journal of the British North American Society of Great Britain, show that he was still selling first day covers in the 1970's, although I have not seen any examples from these later sales, so I am unsure if he was selling his own creations or those of others. Rev. Cole was not the creator of the "Cole" cachets from 1966 to 1971, which were created by Robert Cole in Ottawa (Dickinson, 2016).

While efforts have been made to obtain the best quality illustrations, I will also apologize in advance for any poor-quality figures. Some of the illustrations have been obtained from the internet and digital copies of books and articles where higher resolution images are not available.

The initial first day cover from Rev. Cole of which I'm aware is for Scott 211, the one cent Princess Elizabeth stamp in the King George V Silver Jubilee issue issued on May 4, 1935. Figure 1 shows a block of four postmarked from Sunny Corner, NB to himself in Red Bank, NB. Rev. Cole was likely the minister at St. Stephen's United Church in Red Bank, NB, living in the manse on the property. Sunny Corner is another village located less than a kilometre away directly across the Northwest Miramichi River. According to Wikipedia, a post office has existed in Red Bank since 1854. The postage overpays the local letter rate of 2-cents. The cover also contains a manuscript "Registration" that has been crossed out, perhaps since the stamps applied were not enough to cover the postage and the 10-cent registration fee.



Figure 1

The second set of first day covers by Rev. Cole were created in his next posting in Granville Ferry, NS. These covers were for the King George VI Mufti issue. Figure 2 is franked with the one, two and three cent stamps, Scott 231, 232 and 233 issued on April 1, 1937. The cachet is a professionally printed “God Save the King” with a triangular hatched pattern below. Dickinson (2023), page 16 shows this cachet being used on first day covers Scott 231 to 236. The cover is postmarked Ottawa on April 1, 1937, with a professionally printed address to Miss M.I. Cole, Granville Ferry NS. Margeret Iris (M.I.) Cole was Rev. Cole’s daughter, and would have been 16 years old at the time. Granville Ferry is located in western Nova Scotia.



Figure 2

Figure 3 shows the four, five and eight cent stamps from the King George VI Mufti issue, Scott 234, 235 and 236, also issued on May 10, 1937. The cover has a professionally printed cachet “Coronation, May 12th, 1937, God Save the King” in blue with triangular hatched pattern below. Dickinson (2003) does not show this cachet for this issue. The cover was postmarked in Parker’s Cove, NS and has a professionally printed address to Rev. N. Cole, Granville Ferry. Parker’s Cove is located approximately 6 km. north of Granville Ferry as the crow flies.

Figure 4 shows a lower right corner block from the King George VI Coronation issue, Scott 237, also issued on May 10, 1937. The cover has the same cachet as Figure 3 but has a professionally printed address to Lloyd E. Cole, Granville Ferry, NS rather than to Rev. N. Cole and is postmarked Granville Ferry rather than Parker’s Cove. Lloyd was Rev. Cole’s son and was 11 years old at the time. Dickinson (2008), page 48 lists this cachet also being printed in red although no example is shown or has been seen by the author.



Figure 3



Figure 4

Figure 5 has the same cachet as Figure 4, but it contains only one stamp from the Coronation issue and has a professionally printed address to Rev. N. Cole, rather than Lloyd E. Cole. The cover was sent from Parker's Cove. Dickinson (2023), page 18 uses the cachet from covers printed in this manner to illustrate that the cachet was used for Scott 237.

Figure 6 uses the lower right corner block from the same issue as the previous two covers. However, the cachet only states "God Save the King" with a hatched triangle below like the cover in Figure 2. The address, typewritten rather than professionally printed, is to "Miss M. I. Cole" in Granville Ferry, and is postmarked from Granville Ferry. This cover provided the illustration that was used in for the Cole cachet related to this issue in Dickinson (2023).

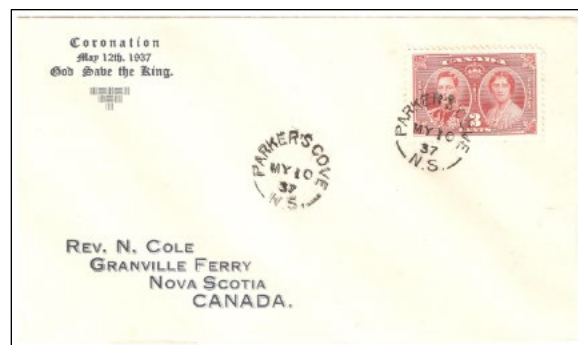


Figure 5

Source: Dickinson (2008), p. 47



Figure 6

While the cover illustrated in Figure 7 does not contain a cachet, it is a first day cover for the 13-cent Halifax Harbour stamp of the 1938 Pictorial Issue, Scott 242, issued on November 15, 1938. It is a registered cover postmarked Granville Ferry, NS containing a professionally printed address to N. Cole, Granville Ferry. The cover pays the appropriate rate of 3 cents for domestic postage plus ten cents for registration.



Figure 7

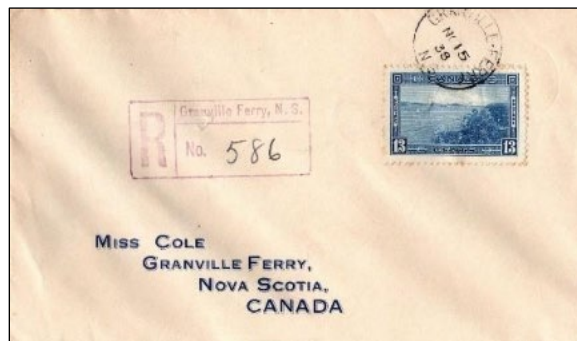


Figure 8

Figure 8 illustrates a cover that is similar to the one in Figure 7, except that it has a professionally printed address to Miss Cole, Granville Ferry rather than N. Cole. The numbering of the registration mark, when compared to the previous cover, would suggest that Rev. Cole created at least one other first day cover for this series.

Rev. Cole created at least two cachets for the Canada Royal Visit issue, Scott 246 to 248, issued on May 15, 1939. Figure 9 illustrates a printed cachet "Commemorative of Royal Visit,

King George and Queen Elizabeth, Canada, May 1939” with a handwritten address to Miss M.I. Cole, not in Rev. Cole’s handwriting. The postmark is from the ROYAL TRAIN POST OFFICE. Figure 10 shows a portion of a similar cover, but interestingly the cachet states the location is Newfoundland rather than Canada despite being a first day cover for Canadian stamps.



Figure 9



Figure 10

Source: Dickinson (2007b), p. 22



Figure 11

Rev. Cole produced a large number of first day covers commemorating the War Issue of July 1, 1942. Looking at the numbers provided in the registration handstamps applied to a number of the covers (257 to 276) and assuming that they were all marked as a group, and then adding the two unregistered covers of which I am aware, Rev. Cole looks to have produced at least 21 first day covers for this issue. All the covers are postmarked Port Hood Island, which are favour cancellations, as the post office would have been closed for the national holiday of Dominion Day. Almost all Rev. Cole’s first day covers from this issue, illustrated in Figures 11 to 16, have a typewritten cachet of “First Day Cover”. Many of the covers also contain one of Rev. Cole’s “signatures”, bisected airmail labels.

Figure 11 shows a first day cover for Scott 249, the King George VI one-cent stamp and 258, the 13-cent Ram Tank. I wonder if the cachet was typewritten rather than printed due to war shortages or lack of access to a print shop in Port Hood. The cover, marked with a Port Hood Island keyhole registration handstamp, was sent to England.



Figure 12



Figure 13

The first day cover illustrated in Figure 12 contains Scott numbers:

- 249 to 151, the King George VI War Issue, one, two and three-cent stamps,
- 256, the eight-cent Farm Scene stamp,
- C7, the six-cent Airmail British Commonwealth Air Training Plan stamp, and
- E10, the ten-cent Special Delivery War Issue stamp.

It also has the diagonal bottom half of airmail etiquette, pointing right. The cover contains a Port Hood Island keyhole registration handstamp and was sent to the same company as Figure 11.

Figure 13 shows a first day cover for Scott 261, the War Issue 50-cent Munitions stamp, and E10, the ten-cent Special Delivery War Issue stamp along with the diagonal top half of an airmail etiquette, pointing right and down. The cover containing another Port Hood Island keyhole registration handstamp is addressed to an individual in Lancashire, England. The cover is also a corner card from Rev. Cole's address in Port Hood, NS.



Figure 14

Figure 14 is also a corner card from Rev. Cole's address in Port Hood. As a first day cover, it contains Scott numbers:

- 255, the War Issue five-cent stamp,
- 253, the War Issue four-cent Grain Elevators stamp,
- 256, the eight-cent Farm Scene stamp, and
- CE1, the 16-cent Airmail Special Delivery stamp.

It also contains the diagonal top half of airmail etiquette, pointing right and up. It is addressed to an individual in Scotland.

Figure 15 illustrates a first day cover containing a lower right corner block of Scott 260, the 20-cent Covette stamp. It too is a corner card from Rev. Cole's address and has a Port Hood Island keyhole registration mark. It contains the diagonal bottom half of airmail etiquette pointing right, and is addressed to an individual on the Isle of Wight in England.



Figure 15



Figure 16

Figure 16 illustrates a first day cover with a single War Issue Grain Elevators stamp, Scott 253. The cover has a professionally printed address to “N. Cole, Port Hood”. The typewritten text for “FIRST DAY COVER” is in all upper case and is the same blue as the printing as opposed to the upper and lower case and black lettering of the previous examples. The lettering of the address is in fancy italic as opposed to sans serif lettering of earlier Rev. Cole covers with preprinted addresses.



Figure 17

Figure 17 is a first day cover with a single 13 cent Ram Tank stamp, Scott 258. However, unlike the other covers that Rev. Cole produced for this issue, it does not contain a typewritten indication that it is a first day cover. The cover contains the diagonal bottom half of airmail etiquette pointing left. The professionally printed address is the same as the one shown in Figure 16.



Figure 18

Source: Dickinson (2002), p. 44

The first day cover illustrated in Figure 18 is for the stamp commemorating the centenary of the birth of Alexander Graham Bell, Scott 274 issued on March 3, 1947. Based on an analysis of other covers that Rev. Cole created, this cover is addressed in his own handwriting to himself. The cachet appears to be a handstamp that the Bell Telephone Co. would have applied to invoices that were paid.

The last Canadian first day cover made by Rev. Cole of which I am aware is for Scott 275, the Confederation issue of July 1, 1947. The cover, shown in Figure 19 is postmarked Stirling, Ontario and addressed to “Rev. N. Cole, Stirling, Ontario” in Rev. Cole’s handwriting. It contains a small professionally printed cachet with the text “Canadian Citizenship, July 1, 1947” with a textured line underneath.



Figure 19

Source: Dickinson (2007a), p. 57

I am always interested to share and obtain more information about Rev. Cole and the covers he created. Please feel free to reach out to me at gs@postalhistory.ca.

References:

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FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Newsletter of the BNAPS First Day Cover Study Group

ISSUE 58 JANUARY-MARCH, 2026

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Editor's Notes by Gary Dickinson

Two philatelists who are not members of the FDC Study Group have contributed articles to this issue of *First Impressions*. The major article for the issue is a study by Gordon Smith of the FDCs for Canadian stamp issues produced by Rev. Nathaniel Cole who had a lengthy career as a minister at more than a dozen different congregations in eastern Canada, and who also worked as a stamp dealer in his "spare time." Cole's FDCs for Newfoundland stamps will be presented in our next issue.

Hugh Rathbun, the other non-FDC Study Group member, produced a very nice set of five all-over cacheted covers for the stamp marking the 400th anniversary of the settlement of Port Royal/Annapolis Royal in Nova Scotia.

Gary Denis asks for information regarding the launching ceremony of the Legendary Creatures set issued in 1990, while Gary Dickinson requests information about the producers of several 21st century FDCs.

Finally, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and for a healthy and productive 2026.

Written contributions to First Impressions are sought and welcomed, and new issues will be published when warranted by the contributions received. They should be in Word format with each scan a separate attachment in jpg format at 300 dpi. Contributions may be submitted to editor Gary Dickinson at gandbdickinson@shaw.ca.