

BANK NOTE COMPANY COUPON WRAPPERS

by Peter Wiedemann CM 0000152

From our membership roster, I know that a number of our members are also stamp collectors, philatelists and/or postal history collectors. Some of these may remember the wonderful series of articles written by the now retired master BNA postal historian and philatelic researcher Dr. F. G. Stulberg and that were published in *The Canadian Philatelist* under his running series "What's New In Old Canada"

In tribute to Fred and his series, I am borrowing somewhat from his column title, and am herewith inaugurating my series of articles on CTC coupons with this first installment of "What's New In Old Canadian Tire".

So.....what is new in Old Canadian Tire that hasn't previously been covered in *The Collector*? I'm sure we have each at one time or another heard the movie making term "it's a wrap". Well, that phrase accurately describes how new batches of Canadian Tire coupons are currently received by the retail stores.... small bricks in a thin clear plastic wrap. But looking way back in time, say about 25 years or more, CTC cash bonus coupons were packaged differently.

There are other members besides myself who have seen and acquired complete bricks of new CTC coupons, but to my knowledge this aspect of the coupons has never been described in print. In speaking with other members I discovered they were not aware of how coupons had been packaged in the so-called pre-plastic wrap era. Consequently and for the record I thought I would record my very limited knowledge of this aspect. Who knows, this might prove to be

useful information should anyone besides myself want to start collecting CTC coupons in complete "bricks", just as coins are saved by the roll, although I don't believe for a second that a collector actually collects coins by the roll. Sure, lots save them by the roll, but there is a difference between "saving" and "collecting" by the roll. I do however collect CTC coupons by the brick, in a limited way.

Possibly up to about 1980, Canadian Bank Note Company, Ltd., Ottawa supplied Canadian Tire with the store coupons in boxes of 500 coupons. In my view, these boxes form a very collectable adjunct to any CTC coupon collection.

I was very fortunate to have been able to acquire one of these attractive collectible boxes, complete with its 500 "second" store issue 3-cent coupons inside, the S4-A, prefix AN series. I say its coupons because the box was sealed across its lid, from side to side, shown as "A" in Fig. 1, with a white paper sealing strip on which its exact contents are identified including the serial numbers of the coupons contained in it.

Overall, the box is 5.75" wide, 2.75" high and 2.5" deep, the latter being its front to back measurement. The top flips opens to the back. The coupons are stored standing on their long bottom edge and the lowest numbered note at the front. The box itself is made of a folded single piece of heavy card stock about .0204" thick. A kraft paper sealing strip, about .0053" thick (counting its glue) and about 2" wide is wrapped around the entire middle of the box (top, back, bottom and front) and overlapped about 2" at its ends to ensure a complete box wrap.

On this paper seal is printed in a brownish ink the seal of the Canadian Bank Note Company (about 1.5" diameter) as shown in Fig. 2. This company seal repeats on about four-inch centres and consequently a portion of this seal is evident on each of the four sides of the box bearing this sealing strip.

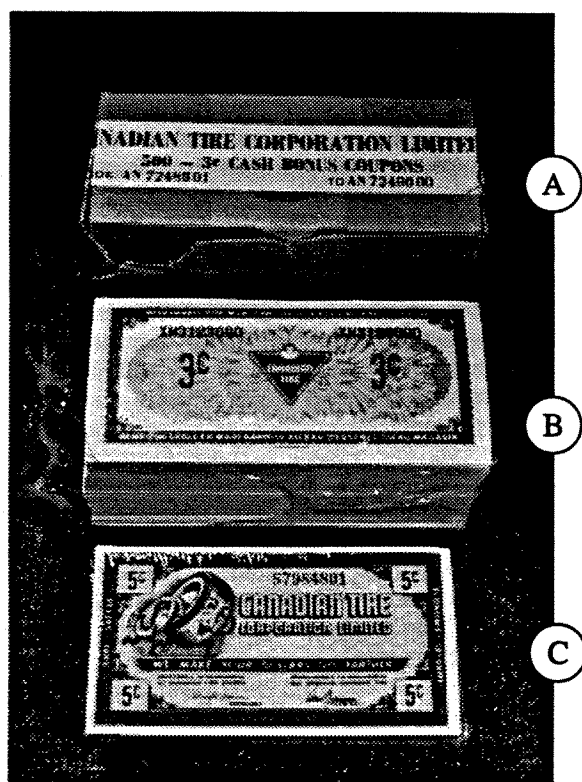


Figure 1



Figure 2

Across the top of the box lid for the full 5.75" width of the box and with about 3/4" wrap over its two small ends, is a white paper label strip that is about .0036" thick (including its glue), that is used to seal the box lid lengthwise over top of the CBN kraft sealing strip. Printed on this white label seal are:



Figure 3

CANADIAN TIRE CORPORATION LIMITED
500 - 3¢ CASH BONUS COUPONS
NOS. AN72486501 TO AN7249000

The numbers only portion of the serial numbers shown on this label are in red ink, the rest is all in black. A photocopy of the first and last note from this box along with its label strip are shown in Fig. 3.

Aside from the red numbers on the label having a bit more horizontal unevenness and irregularity in spacing of the numbers, in appearance at first glance these red numbers look to be from the same numbering device as was used on the coupons. However, under microscopic examination sufficient small differences are evident between the label numbers and the coupon numbers that it is clear the label numbers originated from a different numbering device than that which was used for the coupons. There were no asterisk or radar numbered notes in this lot.

This was my first "brick" acquisition and regrettably I have never seen another nor know of no others in existence. Based on its specific contents, I would guess that it probably dates back somewhere in the early 1970's.

With discontinuation of these cardboard boxes possibly sometime in the late 1970's or possibly early 1980's, store coupons from Canadian Bank Note Company Ltd., Ottawa came heat-sealed in clear plastic wrap, still as bricks of 500 coupons. The plastic wrap measures about .0018" thick, bears no printing or other identification and is not much of a collectable unless saved as an entire brick.

Since these low grade cheap plastic wraps are not manufactured for longevity or archival use, it is probably best to remove the coupons before chemical deterioration of the plastic becomes a problem....something that can slowly develop undetected - similar to the stealthy deterioration that occurs with rubber bands. Hopefully none of our members use either for coupon storage.

My only example from this group is shown as "B" also in Fig. 1. It contains 500 of the "second" last 3-cent store coupon issue (S4, prefix XN, large numbers), and are serial numbers XN3122501 to XN3123000. There was no asterisk

or radar note in this run either. I believe I acquired this brick about mid-1991.

About a half year later I acquired an loose "brick" of 500 of the "last" 3-cent note issue (S12, prefix XN3602501 to XN3603000, small numbers) and containing no asterisk or radar note. Availability and use of the 3-cent store coupons was terminated in January 1992.

I understand the store coupons currently come in bricks of 200. It is not clear when the brick size changed from 500 down to 200 coupons. Possibly change in brick content down to 200 coupons may have occurred as a result of or following the introduction of the \$2 coupons in 1989 as one brick of 500 two-dollar coupons would have been a \$1000 outlay to the store. And it could have been confusing to employees to have 200-coupon bricks of the high denomination(s) while the 500-coupon bricks for the lower denominations continued.

I am aware that from about 1990 and possibly a bit earlier that the British American Bank Note Inc., Ottawa gas coupons were supplied in "bricks" of 200 coupons, shrink wrapped in a somewhat thin polyethylene type plastic. My only example from this era is shown as "C" in Fig. 1, a brick that I acquired sometime about early 1992, having rescued it from impending current use at the time.

It contains 200 of the last 5-cent Gas coupons (#10A-serifs), serial numbers S7984801 to S7985000. Yes, radar serial number S7984897 is included in this run but I have not as yet checked for the possible presence of replacement notes or errors. The plastic wrap measures about .0013" in thickness....and also is not really much of an identifiable CTC collectible for the coupon collector, unless again of course the entire brick is saved intact!

Bricks of coupons are not intended to and actually don't circulate. They are a bit difficult to "mount" in an album with other coupons, but they do help to quickly fill a box! So why do I collect bricks?....because they are there! And, you guessed it....it's a wrap for this installment! I can be reached by: phone: 519-621-7417, fax: 519-622-5055, e-mail: peter@wiedemannpj.com, or mail: Box 519 Stn. Galt, Cambridge, Ontario N1R 5W1.