

Postcards - the old Gander terminal

The postcard below is the most common shot of the terminal. This one was posted from Gander to Germany on 05 Oct 1949 and states that the passengers were on the ground for ½ hour.



The next is an older sepia style postcard of the same area. It was sent a bit earlier than the last one, on 14 May 1947.



This next card was found after a lot of looking. I have been looking for terminal photos for about 20 years and this is the only time I've ever seen this particular one. The date and the postmark are unreadable, but from the printing quality, the colour scheme and the fact there is no lunch counter way down on the right hand side, it is probable that this is early 1946, before the redecorating prior to the official opening.

Inside the card it says: "So this is Gander. If you have been here you know what I mean. Nevertheless it is remarkable to have such a large clear terminal with every facility."



The postcard below shows the Old Gander Lounge, looking roughly west towards the inside of the terminal. It is unused but has a hand written note inside : "Gander- in heavy fog - 8h45 PM Wed, July 2 - left 9:45. Returned "engine trouble" 10:30. boarded 1:20 AM Thurs, July 3 - take off 2:30 AM". One can imagine they were happy to have Gander as a place to return to! I looked up the calendars from that period and the only year with a Wednesday, 2 July, is 1952.

PLIEZ ET DETACHEZ

MAIN LOUNGE AT AIRPORT TERMINAL

The Terminal Building at Gander is one of the largest airport terminals in the world as may be seen from the view of the Main Lounge shown below. This building also houses the offices of the large American, Canadian and European airlines. Travellers of every nationality meet here daily enroute to their destinations in all parts of the world. The terminal, open twenty-four hours daily, offers every facility for the traveller's comfort including a bar and restaurant.

Photo by H. J. Fraige,
Carboncar, Newfoundland.

ADDRESS ONLY

Message inside

LETTER
RATE

TO OPEN FOLD AND TEAR OFF

TO OPEN FOLD AND TEAR OFF



FOLKARD COMPANY OF CANADA LIMITED DRUMMOND BLDG., MONTREAL,
CANADA, COPYRIGHT CANADA 1929 REG' D U.S.A. PATENT OFFICE



(954) THE LOUNGE IN THE AIRPORT TERMINAL BUILDING, GANDER, NEWFOUNDLAND

Below is another shot of the same area. It is hard to say much about it except the date, because it was sent to Yugoslavia and written in Croatian. It was sent on 28 May 1954.

However this postcard gives a fairly accurate idea of the interior colours. In news coverage of the official opening of the terminal, the restful but bright colour scheme was frequently applauded.

The photo below also is colour-accurate. It is a mint and fairly hard to find postcard. The first ticket counter is Trans Canada Airlines while the second is Trans World Airways. This looks like a pre-April 1949 because the sign at the end says "Newfoundland Posts and Telegraphs".



The next postcard is interesting because there are people at all the counters. This was not the norm because there were not many passengers who originated their flight in Gander and normally transient passengers would have been informed of their flight plan. It is therefore likely that several aircraft got held over at the same time, possibly due to bad weather, causing a lot more questions than usual.



I was happy to come across this wonderful postcard which, in a sense, really brings out the essence of Gander Airport in the 40s-50s. Here we see travelers at the counter way down at the west end of the terminal, as they fill out postcards and telegrams. The pre-1949 sign says "Telegraph and Telephone Connections to All Parts Of The World".

One chap seems to have headphones on and the fellow next to him might be using a telegraph key. How many people have described their flight across the Atlantic and their happiness to see Gander's runways !



And if the stress of flying was too much, after a long flight over 2000 miles of water in a piston engine plane, there always was a place to relax - the famous, world-renown "Big Dipper" !



And if the Big Dipper didn't work, a walk outside would probably do the trick.

Below is "the" standard outside photo of Gander where one can see the terminal area quite well. The passenger terminal itself is the narrow one-story section built onto the right hand side of the bottom hanger. Across the street can be found the transient passenger quarters which were considered as being high in creature comforts for the period.

The photo is partly hand coloured and shows the set-up in the early to mid 50s. An interesting point - if you look closely, you can see overhead pipes from the steam plant that were the basis for the heating of just about all the buildings in Gander. Wouldn't be legal today as they were covered with 4-5 inches of pure asbestos!

PLIEZ ET DETACHEZ

GANDER AIRPORT

Gander is one of world's largest airports located on the Great Circle Route between Europe and North America.

Some 400 planes weekly stop at Gander on their Trans-Atlantic service carrying over 11,000 passengers. Twenty three airlines use the services of the airport with its longest runway of 8,500 feet. Offices of large Canadian, American and European airlines are in the terminal building.

Trans-Atlantic airplanes stop here for refuelling before taking off for United States or other Canadian airports on their western trips or when travelling east before taking off for their European destinations.

Photo by Jerry Wakehorn.

ADDRESS ONLY

Message inside

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FOLKART COMPANY OF CANADA LIMITED DRUMMOND BLDG., MONTREAL,
CANADA. COPYRIGHT CANADA 1953 REG'D U.S.A. PATENT OFFICE



(987)

GANDER AIRPORT, GANDER, NEWFOUNDLAND.

This next postcard is a really wonderful shot of the back of the hangers, the side opposite the tarmac. The official entrance is the porch underneath the building number on the closest hanger.

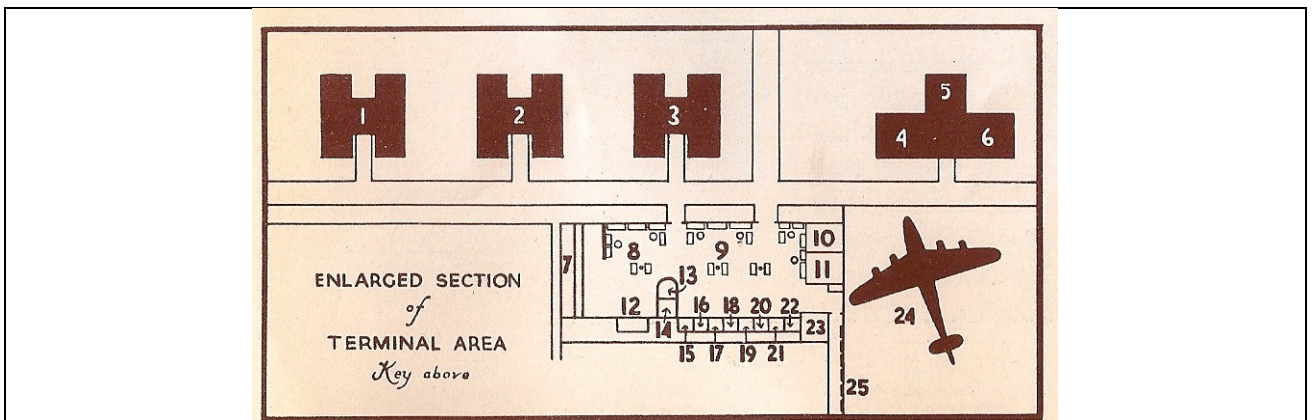
The usual entrance for workers and locals was near where the two hangers were joined by a lower section. This entrance also gave access to the Greasy Spoon, the best lunch counter on this side of the Atlantic – passengers and crews flying frequently through Gander who learned about its Coke floats and fries always put it on their list. This photo dates from 1950.



The photo shows Hangar 22 as one would come into the terminal area from the Circular Road that went around the runway. From the cars and the newly planted trees, this would be probably late 40s.



The diagram on the next page shows the exact layout inside the terminal area as of late 1940's, with a list below it with identifying the occupants.



**KEY TO ENLARGED SECTION
OF TERMINAL AREA**

- 1, 2, - Saturn (Accommodation)
- 3, - Jupiter (Accommodation, Offices)
- 4, - Skyways Club dining room
- 5, - Skyways Club bar
- 6, - Skyways Club lounge
- 7, - Terminal lunch bar
- 8, 9, - Terminal lounge
- 10, - Ladies' rest room
- 11, - Men's rest room
- 12, - Big Dipper bar
- 13, - Novelty booth
- 14, - Terminal Post Office
- 15, - Air France
- 16, - Scandinavian Airlines System
- 17, - KLM Royal Dutch Airlines
- 18, - Pan American Airways
- 19, - American Overseas Airlines
- 20, - British Overseas Airways
- 21, - Trans-World Airlines
- 22, - Trans Canada Airlines
- 23, - Customs and Immigration office
- 24, - Parking ramp
- 25, - Passenger entrance to Terminal

It is to be noted that the above sketch and table were revised and explained in another article. For more info:

<http://bobsganderhistory.com/key.pdf>