



JOURNAL OF THE
CANADIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY
OF GREAT BRITAIN

Maple Leaves

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Whole No. 212

Vol. 20 No. 8

April 1987



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MAPLE LEAVES

Journal of

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Vol. 20 No. 8

APRIL 1987

Whole No. 212

EDITORIAL

Our warmest congratulations are offered to Canadian members Dick Malott and Bill Robinson who have been elected Fellows of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada. Fellowship is awarded to members who have served philately at large and provided outstanding service to the Royal. Dick and Bill are both Directors of the Royal and are well known for their services to philately in Canada. The honour is not given lightly, the latest additions to the roll bringing the total to 51, of whom 34 are living.

I am sure members will join me in thanking our immediate Past President, Margaret McGregor, for the generous donation of £200 in memory of her late husband Alan, who was for many years our Treasurer.

Members in the west of Scotland are asked to contact our Treasurer, John Hillson, for details of a proposed meeting at his home some time in May or early June. John has succeeded Jim Merrylees as contact member for the area. Whilst on the subject of meetings, elsewhere in this issue will be found a notice concerning the London Group's one-day seminar to be held in June. If last year's event is anything to go by then it will be well worth attending. For members in the West Country a

room has been booked at the Bristol and District Federation Convention in Portishead on Sunday 9 August. Details will appear in the next issue; meanwhile if you are within reach of Portishead (near Bristol) please make a note in your diary.

A number of members were inconvenienced by omitting to pay their subscription by 31 December, thus incurring a 'late payment fee' and experiencing a delay in receiving 'Maple Leaves'. If you have a current bank account with a U.K. bank or the British arm of a Canadian bank then please consider payment by direct debit if you have not already done so. Forms can be obtained from our Treasurer, John Hillson.

By the time the next (June) issue of 'Maple Leaves' appears CAPEX will be almost upon us. Your President and Editor both plan to be there and look forward to making and renewing acquaintances and to enjoying a feast of Canadian (and other) philately.

CONVENTION AUCTION 1987

Members are asked to note that all lots for the Convention Auction, which will be held at the George Hotel, Lichfield, Staffordshire on Saturday 26 September, 1987, should be sent to:-

Mr. John M. H. Parkin, C.P.S.
c/o Cavendish Philatelic Auctions Ltd.
Progressive Buildings,
Sitwell Street,
DERBY, DE1 2JP.

NOT LATER THAN the 25 April, 1987. It is most important that all envelopes or packages containing material for the Convention Auction are clearly addressed EXACTLY as above in order to avoid confusion.

Only B.N.A. material is acceptable and lots must be accompanied by a brief description and estimate of value (minimum £2.00). Lots received after 25 April may not be included in the Auction catalogue but they will, however, be disposed of at the conclusion of the sale. Prospective vendors are urged in their own interests, therefore, to ensure that their material is in Mr. Parkin's hands by 25 April at the latest.

No responsibility can be accepted for material which is either loosely mounted or badly packaged. A stamped addressed postcard will ensure a prompt acknowledgement of receipt of your material.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN McCRAE

by The Yellow Peril¹

Photos by K. Salonen

Collectors buy covers for various reasons such as dates, destinations, dues, frankings, postmarks, rates, registration, routings, special delivery etc. In this unusual instance the reason for the purchase was the signature of John McCrae. Fortunately, competition for this cover (fig. 1) was only with philatelists and not with philographers.²



Fig. 1. Cover certified "Free" by Lieutenant McCrae.

The above letter, sent to Miss Hattie Chaplin, "Orchard House," St. Catharines, Ontario appears to have been written by Lieut. McCrae. The ink and handwriting in the address; the annotation "On Service/Postage not available" at the top right; and the "Free" certification and signature "J. McCrae, Lieut. R.C.A. Com'dg Section Machadodorp" at the left of the envelope is identical. The postal markings on this cover consist of a partial strike of the double frame octagonal "ARMY POST OFFICE/NATAL FIELD FORCE" and a purple "CANADIAN CONTINGENT OCT 24 1900 SOUTH AFRICA" oval handstamp. Field post offices did not carry stamps and soldiers' mail could pass without postage. These letters were stamped with the Contingent handstamp to indicate their origin with the Canadian Contingent.

John McCrae, soldier, poet and physician was born on November 30, 1872 in a stone cottage beside the Speed River at Guelph. He was

the son of Lt. Col. David McCrae and Janet Eckford. David McCrae had trained a field battery in Guelph so young John grew up in a military environment but his ambition was to become a doctor. In 1888 John McCrae entered University of Toronto and graduated in 1896 with a gold medal and a scholarship in physiology and pathology. He entered the medical profession serving in the Toronto General Hospital then at Johns Hopkins, Baltimore. When the Boer War broke out, he volunteered for the South African War and was commissioned a Lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Artillery. He attained the rank of Captain and was awarded the Queen's medal with three clasps. On his return to Canada, he spent fourteen years in medical practice, writing and lecturing at McGill University, Montreal. When World War I broke out, McCrae was appointed Brigade Surgeon (with the rank of Major) to the 1st Brigade Canadian Field Artillery in France.

It was in Flanders where the unforgettable sight of poppies growing in great profusion inspired McCrae to write about these wild flowers. He wrote "In Flanders Fields" on 3 May, 1915 during a lull in the Second Battle of Ypres. The British Magazine "Punch" published the immortal poem, using it as little more than a filler – fifteen lines that occupied an inconspicuous corner of a page. But it attracted immediate attention and was reprinted in several more magazines, becoming known throughout the English-speaking world.



Fig. 2. Stamp issued on the 50th Anniversary of the death of Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae. It reproduces the poet's own handwriting on the original manuscript the first two lines of "In Flanders Fields."

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky

The larks, still bravely singing, fly
 Scarce heard amid the guns below.
 We are the Dead. Short days ago
 We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
 Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
 In Flanders fields.
 Take up our quarrel with the foe:
 To you from failing hands we throw
 The Torch; be yours to hold it high.
 If ye break faith with us who die
 We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
 In Flanders fields.

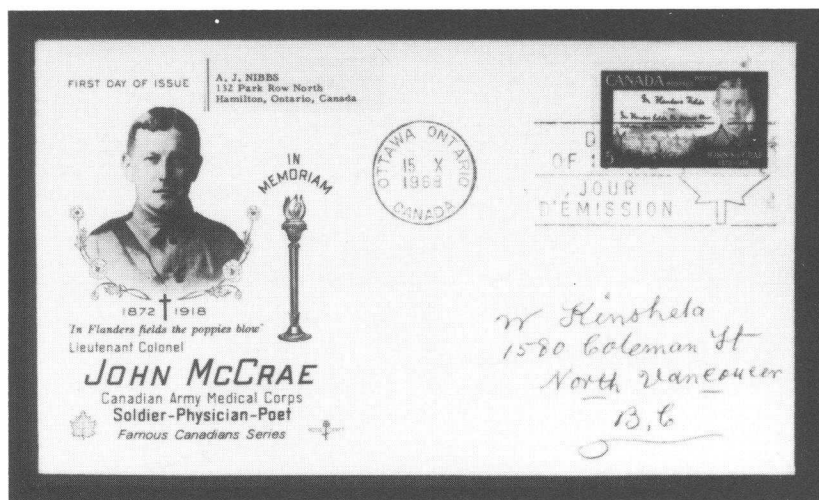


Fig. 3. A first day cover of the John McCrae stamp.

McCrae did not live to learn of the reaction of his poem. He succumbed to pneumonia at Boulogne, France on 28 January, 1918 – just five days after his promotion to Lieutenant Colonel and transfer to the First General Hospital to be consulting physician to all British Armies in the field.

The poet's birthplace has been restored to its 1875–1890 period and contains many of the original furnishings, personal belongings and a museum of his writings, including a copy of *Punch* – opened at the page on which his poem appears. A visit to this National Historical Site is



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recommended to anyone visiting Toronto. Guelph is about an hour's leisurely drive from Toronto. The opening hours are 1 to 5 p.m. daily except Saturdays.

Visitors to CAPEX '87 are invited to view the above cover (fig. 1) at the Harmer booth and, if so inclined, recite some poetry. It's not for sale, however!

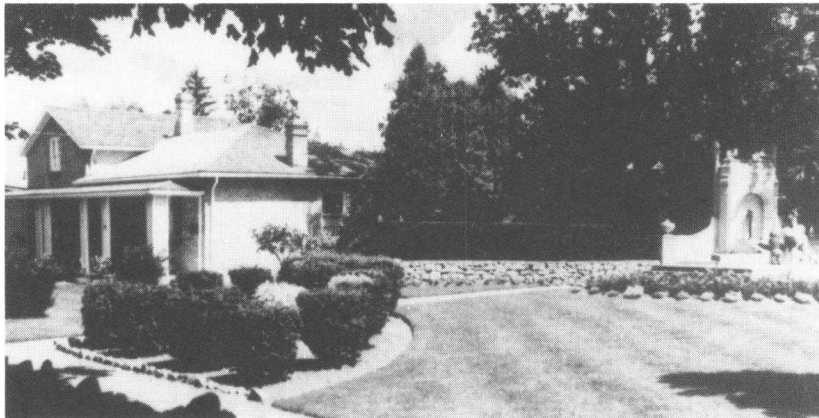


Fig. 4. *John McCrae's Birthplace at Guelph, Ontario (Portion of Kitchener News Co post card)*

References

1. The Yellow Peril is the Canadian Representative for Harmers of New York.
2. Philographer is a collector of autographs, signed philatelic covers, letters, manuscripts, documents etc.

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The Toronto Star, November 3, 1984/H 13.

Canada Post Office Department announcement of John McCrae and Armistice stamps.

CANADIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

Invite all members to a

ONE DAY SEMINAR

on

Saturday, 13th June, 1987

at the

VICTORY SERVICES CLUB

63/79 Seymour Street

London W2 2HF

in the

ALLENBY ROOM & PLUMER ROOM

Programme of Events :-

10.00 - 10.15 a.m.	REGISTRATION
10.15 - 10.30 a.m.	COFFEE and BISCUITS
10.30 - 12.00 a.m.	1st SESSION – 2-3 DISPLAYS
12.00 - 01.15 p.m.	LUNCH BREAK
01.15 - 02.45 p.m.	2nd SESSION – 2-3 DISPLAYS
02.45 - 03.00 p.m.	TEA BREAK
03.00 - 04.30 p.m.	3rd SESSION – 2-3 DISPLAYS

THERE WILL BE A CHARGE OF £2.80 (approx.) PER PERSON

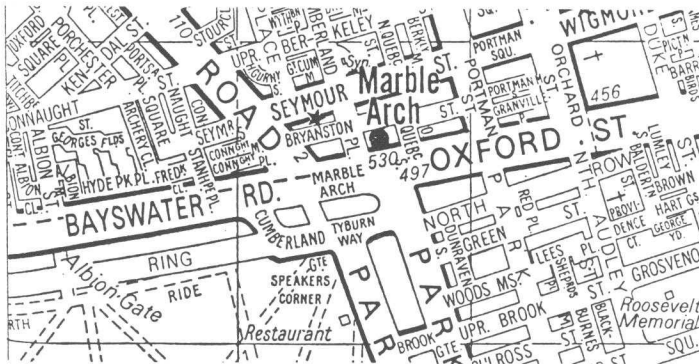
Lunch is obtainable from either the 'Buttery' a self service restaurant on the ground floor, which offers a wide choice at very reasonable prices or in the 1st floor licensed restaurant where a good selection of varied courses are available with a recommended house wine but it is always necessary to make a reservation. The bars are open to those who prefer a wet lunch. A price list for both restaurants will be made available to those attending.

Members are invited to take part and give a display of any aspect of B.N.A. subjects. A minimum of twenty sheets, up to any number, provided that when accompanied by the presentation talk, this should last a maximum of 45 minutes. The display can be part of a working study and therefore need not be of Exhibition standard. Our intention is to cover as wide a field as possible – volunteers please advise of your chosen subject.

A small section of the West End of London road guide is shown and gives an illustration of the central position that the venue enjoys. It is on a main route from most main line stations, has car parks within a few minutes walk, the largest being the Hyde Park underground and is ideally situated for a days shopping in Oxford Street or across the park to Knightsbridge.

DON'T BE DISAPPOINTED – BOOK EARLY

For information write or phone 0903-64170 Evenings or Weekends
WARREN, L. E., 82 Cleveland Road, Worthing, Sussex BN13 2NE.



CONVENTION 1987 – The President reports

At the time of writing there are eight months to go before Convention '87 and it would seem that there is still plenty of time to complete arrangements without panic but, allowing for six weeks in Canada with our daughter, my breathing space is cut to six and a half months.

This accounts for my requesting from members, and others to whom I have written, an early reply to appeals for help. As a result I can now give details of the philatelic programme which, I hope will entice you to Lichfield.

Newfoundland – N. Clifford Jones;
Prince Edward Island – M. Cusworth;
Revenues – J. Parkin;
Centennial Issue – A.E. Jones;
Postal Stationery – D. Avery;
Royal Tour 1939 – D. Sessions (Short display to supplement Competition).

Having whetted your philatelic appetite, you will be well advised to complete and return the inset booking form and so ensure that you will be staying at the GEORGE Hotel. Latecomers may find they are booked in for bed and breakfast at the SWAN Hotel across the road.

We have the option, until 3 August, on 15 twin/double and 10 single rooms, plus 3 suites suitable for families of three persons at the George, with 10 twin rooms at the Swan. So – it is now up to YOU, because by the time you receive this issue of Maple Leaves there will be only four months option time left



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In recent years we have been entrusted with many important Canadian stamp collections. Sir George Williamson's, Matthew Carstairs', Stanley Cohen's, to name but a few

We are now planning another important B.N.A. sale for early autumn. If you have items which you would like included in this superb auction, contact Frank Laycock or Geoffrey Manton. We are prepared to travel to any part of the world for suitable properties.

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For Newer Members . . .

The following article seeks to guide members in the collection of the 'Pence' issues and early covers. An outline of the 'Small Queens' and 'Jubilee' issues appeared in the April and the June to October 86 (incl.) issues of Maple Leaves respectively. It is intended that a whole series of such articles, covering both stamps and postmarks, will run in Maple Leaves. While they are intended as introductory articles, no doubt our more seasoned members can still learn a thing or two!

FORMING A COLLECTION OF EARLY CANADIAN STAMPS AND COVERS

By Geoffrey Whitworth, FRPSL, FCPS

In 1840 Great Britain inaugurated the use of adhesive stamps to pay for the charges of a postal service. It was not until 1851 that a similar system was introduced into Canada. The first services started around the area of the St. Lawrence river, which was known as Lower Canada but, by 1851, settlers had spread westward to what is now known as Ontario, then called Upper Canada. Rivers were the main highway, in summer by boat, in winter by sled on the frozen ice. Newly opened land was supported by pack horses and coaches, or even by runners, whichever proved most reliable.

The Rates

At the time postage stamps were introduced the charges were based on Canadian money and the rate was 4½d. for a letter weighing up to ½ oz. and carried for a distance of 60 miles. The cost increased for extra weight and distance. This worked out at:—

Not exceeding: ½ oz. = 1 rate
1 oz. = 2 rates
2 oz. = 4 rates
For each additional 1 oz. add 2 rates

Not exceeding 60 miles 4½d. per rate.
61 to 100 miles 7d. per rate.
101 to 200 miles 9d. per rate.
201 to 300 miles 11½d. per rate.
For each additional 100 miles add 2½d. per rate.

Letters from any post office in Canada to any part of the U.S., except California and Oregon, were carried for a fixed rate of 6d. per ½ oz. letter. For the west coast the rate was 9d. per ½ oz.

When letters had to be sent to Europe the relationship between the value of the Canadian currency and British Sterling had to be taken into consideration. In 1851 this was fixed, for postal purposes, at 1/4d. Currency to 1/2d. Stg. and this was the rate for a ½ oz. letter sent via New York or Boston and carried on a Royal Mail Packet boat to Liverpool

At this time it was not compulsory to prepay letters and the cost was no greater when sent unpaid. However the intentions had to be clearly marked. All letters had to be rated at the post office and the rate was written in RED when prepayment had taken place. If the addressee had to pay then all markings had to be in BLACK ink. Transatlantic mail was prepaid at the rate of 1/4d. Canadian Currency but if the recipient had to pay then it was 1/2d. Stg.

A Canadian Company was giving an unsatisfactory service for Montreal and Quebec, sailing up the St. Lawrence and calling at Halifax. In 1852 two Allen brothers asked to be allowed to run this route and in 1853 they started a much more satisfactory service. In winter, when the river was frozen, they were able to start at Portland, Maine, as a railway connection from Montreal had just been opened. They called at Derry to offload mail for Scotland before landing at Liverpool.

Covers from this pre-adhesive period are many and varied. Those bearing simple handstamps are not expensive, but those showing new rate handstamps around 1854–55, before the postage stamps were available, are much sought after. The illustrations show some of the handstamps of this period:—



PAID

Early PAID markings.

1/2 Stg. PAID 1/4 C
6^d Stg 8^d Stg. Paid 10 C

Transatlantic markings.



Canada-US border markings.

The First Postage Stamps – ‘The Pence Issue’

In 1848 the first moves were made to take the Canadian postal administration away from the Colonial Office in London. It was not until 1850 that the way was cleared to do this and immediately plans were put in hand, at the same time, to simplify the rating system. It was on 6 April 1851 that new rules were passed in the Canadian Legislature but stamps were ready to be put on sale on the 23rd. The first values were 3d., 6d. and 12d., all being in Canadian currency. In January 1855 there followed a 10d. stamp and in June 1857 a 7½d. one to cover new transatlantic rates. A ½d. value was added in August 1857. These were all issued imperforate as no perforating machine was available at that time. However in November 1858 a machine was ready for use and, upon reprinting, the ½d., 3d. and 6d. stamps were perforated with a gauge of approximately 11¾. They were all withdrawn from use on 1 July 1859 when a currency change took place.

Condition

Many collectors have displayed their Canadian stamps at a local Society but only after seeing the interesting designs and features of earlier issues do they consider putting together a simple collection to add to their shows. A word of warning. However desirable it is to include rarer material do wait until you can find a stamp in such condition that you will be proud to include it in your show. None of these stamps are easy to find in perfect condition and cheap stamps usually have a flaw. What is good condition in these stamps? They were printed with only 2 mm. between the frame lines and had to be separated by means of scissors. For convenience some clerks cut a sheet into strips, only cutting off ones or twos as demanded. To find stamps with four complete frame lines is unusual. Try to get reasonably complete stamps. By now most copies have been mounted in albums many times over and careless removal of hinges may have resulted in a slight thinning at this point. This may not detract from the face appearance but it is as well to hold the stamp up to a light and look for such possible damage. Similarly, look for tears that may have been closed and held together with a touch of gum. The general appearance could be grubby and dirty. This may be only the dust of years or greasy fingers handling the stamp. The ink for these stamps was made from natural minerals and is not affected by a light washing in warm water and a detergent using a camel hair brush and gentle action. Swill clear and dry thoroughly between blotting paper or a tissue. Vermillion and brownish red colours have been affected by time and a light sulphurization. The stamps appear dark brown and the original colour can be restored by soaking in a weak solution of hydrogen peroxide (2 volumes). Again wash clear and dry. Some early gums have caused the edges of stamps to look rust stained. This can be cleared with a very weak solution of Milton, but be careful to wash out completely. Another word of warning, never use any chemicals on violet or purple coloured stamps, – they will turn green! Another problem with early stamps is the smudged cancels that are so prevalent. The first cancels were seven ringed targets and are often quite clear. These were changed to four ringed numerals at certain large towns. Some are very acceptable but some soon became made up with old ink and gave a cancel that is not good to see in a display. The purchase of a sound stamp will never be regretted and will often command a good return on the purchase price. A damaged stamp cannot be given away.

(to be continued)

AN INTERESTING POSTAL ARTIFACT

by R.B. Winmill

One of the most interesting finds in recent years, in the field of postal artifacts, is a letter book of Gilbert Griffin, Post Office Inspector for the London Division.

This letter book, a heavy bound volume, measures $10\frac{1}{4} \times 16 \times 2$ inches and contains blue pages of a fine quality, watermarked, paper. At the beginning there is an index of letters contained.

The story of how this artifact was obtained by the UWO Weldon Library Regional Collection is of some interest.¹ The letter book was originally a nondescript auction lot, probably in a sale conducted by Mr Wally Allen of Strathroy. Here it was acquired by a local dealer for a nominal sum. In turn he made it available to the Library, around 1977/8, for \$200.

The first letter recorded is dated October 6, 1854 and is addressed to W.H. Griffin, then Secretary to the Post Office.² This initial letter relates to the establishment of a new Post Office at Lobo Station on the G.W.R.

Indeed a cursory examination of the letter book reveals that the letters during the first eighteen months are addressed to W.H. Griffin. However, the reporting relationship must have been altered because from May 19, 1856, all correspondence is addressed to one Robert Spence.³

The final letter (number 831) was dated May 29, 1857, to the Honourable R. Spence and related to the contract for the conveyance of mail between Woodstock and Otterville, in Oxford County, Canada West.

This letter book is far more than merely an interesting curiosity to the postal historian. It provides a vibrant, living, contemporary account of the Post Office as it was constituted shortly after Canada assumed control on April 6, 1851. This was a period of particularly rapid expansion of the service.

Appended are typical examples of material included in the letter book.

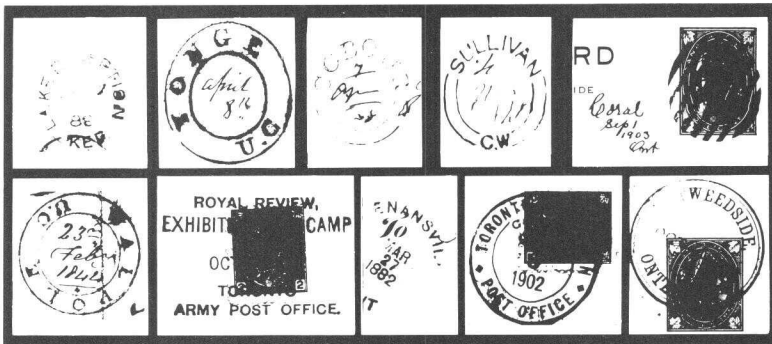


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The sale features individual items, specialized studies and county collections all mounted and extensively annotated. In addition to much material from well-known collections of the past (Campbell, Goodwin, Pelletier, Reford, Rosenthal, etc.), the collection includes a tremendous selection of original finds from individual covers to major correspondences including both items of historical and philatelic significance. All lots are fully cross referenced and feature a wide range of specialized categories.

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W.H. GRIFFIN ESQ.
P.O. DEPARTMENT
QUEBEC

(4)

LONDON, 13th Oct.

Sir:

I beg to submit for the consideration of the Post Master General the written letter from (the) Post Master of Port Sarnia, requesting permission to remove his Office.

Not having as yet visited Port Sarnia I am unable to say whether the proposed removal would be advisable or not.

I am etc.

*Gilbert Griffin
P.O. Inspector*

W.H. Griffin Esq.

250

9 Augt. 1855

Sir:

I have to request that the following Post Offices may be supplied with new Dated Stamps:—

<i>Aylmer</i>	<i>Eden</i>	<i>Port Maitland</i>
<i>Brantford</i>	<i>London</i>	<i>Ridgetown</i>
<i>Brucefield</i>	<i>Newbury</i>	<i>Seneca</i>
<i>Chesterfield</i>	<i>Oakland</i>	<i>Tuscarora</i>
<i>Dereham</i>	<i>Port Stanley</i>	<i>Woodstock</i>

Some of these stamps are worn out. At other places they have not yet been supplied and they are much needed.

I am etc.

*G. G.
P. O. I.*

Hon. R. Spence

709

9 Feby 1857

Sir

I regret to be compelled to report to you that the Postmaster of St. Catherines is deserving of a very serious reprimand from you for the irregularities occurring in his Office . . . (illegible) . . . and he will not carry out the instructions I address to him.

Letters are missent from St. Catherines. Letters are delayed at St. Catherines. Letters are not Stamped at St. Catherines and it is impossible for me to obtain a satisfactory reply to any reference to the Postmaster or to keep the office up to that efficiency which ought to prevail at so important a point. I have had such frequent cause of complaint in the last few months that I believe my duty forbids me to abstain from reporting this Postmaster to you lest still greater irregularities should occur.

The last instance of Mr. Merritt's inattention is in the enclosed case. A very important letter addressed to (the) Rev. Mr. Fuller, Toronto was received at St. Catherines on 31st January and not forwarded to Toronto until (the) 2nd Feby.

I have instructed Mr. Merritt to send two mails every day to Thorold one in the morning by the Courier to Port Colborne, the other at night by G.W.R.P.O. going East. He has thought proper to neglect sending any mail to Thorold at night and consequently as Mr. Fuller complains much inconvenience and delay takes place. Mr. Merritt's excuse is that he does not consider the Railway conveyance safe and with the approbation of the Postmaster of Thorold he has therefore not sent any mail by 'the Cars'.

I have respectfully to request your interference in this matter –

I am etc.

G. G.

P. O. I.

Hon. R. Spence

827

26th May, 1857

Sir:

With reference to your letter No. 523, I have the honor (sic) to recommend that an immediate change may be made in the Postmastership of Caistorville – Mr. D. Tice, the incumbent being perfectly incorrigible with regard to his accounts and Balances.

His accounts are wanting now for nearly three Quarters and an appeal to his Sureties to whom I have written twice, has had no effect.

The Caistorville Post Office is kept at a Farm House and no great inconvenience would be felt by its being closed at once, which I should suggest may be done, in order that Mr. Tice and his Sureties may know that you cannot permit such indifference as they have shown in the correct management of the office to continue.

I am etc.

G. G.

P. O. I.

The four letters set out above are indicative of the general nature of most which are included in this book.

Letter 250 is of great interest to county collectors and those concerned with issuance of new handstamps for Post Offices. Letters 709 and 827 are concerned with an ever present problem of the era – incompetent and/or dishonest Postmasters.

The Letter Book is as important a Post Office relic as has been uncovered in recent years and is full of interesting and significant material for the postal historian, regardless of his particular field of expertise.

References

1. This story is as related by Mr. E. Phelps, Chief of the Regional Collection at the U.W.O. Weldon Library.
2. W.H. Griffin assumed the post of Secretary on April 6, 1851, upon the resignation of Stayner. The post of Deputy Postmaster General was abolished on this date, however, upon its being resurrected, W.H. Griffin assumed the office on June 12, 1857 and did not leave it until 1888!
3. Robert Spence was Postmaster-General of the Canadas from September 11, 1854 until February 1, 1858.

CANADIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

Annual Subscription £7, payable to Treasurer John Hillson.

Canadian members may settle in \$CAN (\$14) via Wayne Curtis and US members in \$US (\$10.50) via John Siverts. North American members requiring airmail service should add \$5CAN or \$3.75US. Please make your cheques payable to Wayne or John respectively.

Members who have not paid the current year's subscription by 31 December will be removed from the *Maple Leaves* circulation list and reinstatement will incur an additional fee of £1 or its \$ equivalent.

SOCIETY TIES

The ties feature the Society's logo on a plain ground and can be obtained from Brian Stalker, the Secretary, at £5 each. Overseas members should add 30p postage (sea mail) or 80p (Airmail). A choice of green or navy blue background is available.

**THE STORY OF A CANADIAN STAMP
COLLECTION (Part 5)
by Stanley F. Cohen, F.C.P.S.**

Then, just as David was about to knock down the lot, I was so angry at what was going to be a frustratingly wasted trip to London, I put up my hand for a last final fling at £105. To my surprise, the man in the front kept his hand down. The stamp was knocked down to me. After the sale, the man came up to me and said 'You know, you would never have got that stamp if it had not been thinned'. I felt like saying to him, 'Well, just show me a mint copy of it that hasn't got a thin spot' but I just smiled. He was, and still is one of London's biggest dealers. It was to be years later that I was to see two more superb mint copies.

With a mint example to go with my several used copies, I was annoyed that Gibbons Empire catalogue priced both mint and used at much the same level. I wrote to the catalogue editor stating that, whilst hardly any mint copies were known to me, I had seen or heard of at least 50 used copies, and why did they not therefore price the mint far higher than the used? I received a courteous enough acknowledgement, saying the matter would be looked into, but for many years the prices remained unchanged. I decided the reason was that Gibbons catalogue was, after all, nothing more than a glorified sales list, and, since there was absolutely no hope of their being able to supply a mint example to anyone who might order one, there was little point in their pricing it correctly or highly. I think my point was proved without doubt a few years later . . .

The Firth 15 cents

Stanley Gibbons had acquired the whole range of just the 15 cents value of the quite magnificent and famous Firth collection. They telephoned to say that if I would come to London they would be delighted to show it to me.

I think I took the next train up to town as I knew this collection was going to be something else. It turned out to be as marvellous as I had anticipated and I went through each page of the two albums with delight, but Gibbons' asking price was just astronomic and there was simply no way I could reach anywhere near their figure. So, reluctantly I had to decline the purchase. It was offered intact and though I would much have liked to buy some of the individual stamps and covers, they were not for sale separately. As it turned out, Gibbons did later split the collection up, unknown to me, otherwise I would have bought some parts of it.

In the process of the viewing, I was able to repay Gibbons in some large measure for their sale to me of the two used copies so many years earlier, although, of course, I never did tell them about that. Viewing a page of mint copies in the Firth collection I had spotted two more Pirie watermark varieties. Both superb full gum and with huge watermarks very clear. They had not been noted as such in the collection at all and Gibbons had not spotted them. Before leaving their offices, and having unsuccessfully tried to buy these two and other stamps and covers, I told them what they were. They thanked me and I left.

But there was a strange sequel to the story. From that year onwards, the price in the Empire catalogues of Gibbons SG.72a mint began to rocket. Each year at least £1000 was being added to the mint price. It was, of course, now 'in stock' and suppliable. My theory about all this was being proved. In this year's catalogue the price for a mint example of SG.72a has reached no less than £11,000. I suppose I should be quite happy . . . that slightly thinned full o.g. copy which had cost me £105, and yet so nearly only £12, at less than one-hundredth catalogue can't be too bad.

I cannot end the 15 cent Pirie watermark story without warning collectors that it is amongst the most blatantly faked examples of any early Canadian stamp. When one has handled as many copies as I have, it is so distinctive a stamp in shade and in so many ways that I have no hesitation in recognising it almost at a glance.

Alas, normal perf. 12 copies in all kinds of wrong shades have been played around with and have been offered as a rare variety. It is quite simple by the process of using an electric needle to indent any wrong paper copy with a curved line that looks, to the uninitiated, like a Script watermark.

I can recall so many copies that have been sent to me by collectors for an 'opinion' and so many that I have had to return as faked. One becomes most unpopular in the process. Collectors just hate to be told that one of their stamps is a fake. They feel they have been fooled, which they have, and somehow pass on some of the blame to whoever it is that tells them so.

On one such occasion, I became most unhappily involved to my regret. A collector had sent me a 15 cent for my opinion as SG.72a. It was the wrong colour, the wrong perforation and the indented watermark clearly filed across the stamp, whereas the true watermark is embedded within the paper itself and very distinctively so. Apart from this the copy was dreadfully torn and mutilated. I returned it to the owner, stating its true designation regretfully, and thought no more about it.

(to be continued)

BOOK REVIEWS

The Canadian Revenue Stamp Catalogue 1987

E.S.J. Van Dam. Pub. Unitrade Press, Toronto at \$8.95.

The third edition of Van Dam's Revenue catalogue is softbound, in full colour and runs to 80 pages against the 64 pages used in the previous, 1984, edition. The numbering system used in the first two editions has been retained and a new typeset format utilised.

Prices, based upon auction realisations and the current retail price of E.S.J. Van Dam Ltd., cover all known series of Canadian revenue stamps. As with most catalogues, only basic issues are listed; students wanting more detailed information will have to await publication of Van Dam's promised Revenue Handbook.

The colour illustrations obviously lend eye appeal although in a number of cases the result is somewhat muddy and does less than justice to some beautiful stamps. However, it must be realised that, at the present time, colour printing is still an expensive business and if catalogues are to be printed in colour and kept to a price that collectors find reasonable then a certain amount of compromise is necessary.

Confirmed Revenue collectors will need no recommendation from me, but for those who have only dabbled in such material as a sideline, a modest outlay could open up a whole new world. Our Handbooks Manager will be holding a few copies at £4.50, including U.K. postage.

Records of the Post Office Department (RG3) by Thomas A. Hillman Federal Archives Division – General Inventory Series.

It's not often that one has the opportunity to acquire something worthwhile for nothing but here's your chance! The Federal Archives Division of the Public Archives of Canada is publishing a series of inventories describing archival material currently held within the public domain and this inventory of Record Group 3 concerns the Canadian Post Office.

The object of this 100 page, 11" × 8" volume in English and French, is to assist researchers in finding the material they seek and indeed alerting them to the fact that it is available at all. While this may not be too relevant to students outside Canada it is a boon to those within.

However, the publication is not just a dry-as-dust recitation of references. The first 21 pages give a potted history of the Post Office in

Canada. The second section, of 15 pages, gives narrative detail of the various heads under which information can be found and Appendix 1 lists all the senior Post Office officials from 1753 to 1984.

Such a publication is invaluable to those with access to the records and the inclination to delve into them. Even for those of us who are further afield, the ancillary information in the book makes it well worth the trouble of applying for a copy.

There is a snag! Whilst no doubt everyone in Canada knows the address of the Public Archives, there must be a few, like me, outside Canada who do not. No address appears in the publication so I can only suggest that a letter to 'Public Archives Canada, Federal Archives, Ottawa,' may bear fruit. If it does you will consider yourself well rewarded.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR . . .

Dr. J. Frank

I wonder whether someone can enlighten me regarding the 'Northern Pacific Express Co.' postal stationery cover (Webb EN 8b) illustrated. The black company frank is rather reminiscent of the 'Wells Fargo & Co' ones in that it states "Paid over all routes of the . . ." and shows a Pacific Coast design.

I have found no reference to it in Canadian philatelic literature and several Canadian postal history collectors could give me no information about it. The company may, of course, be an American one.



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Commander Scott-Fox

Re – Stained War Issue Booklet Panes

I read my Canadian colleague's letter on stained War Booklet Panes with great interest and a certain degree of disappointment – for him rather than myself. I had a mint booklet stained in the manner he described (CS Book 39) which I had split into individual panes when I changed by collection from booklets to panes. I recently replaced the panes with undamaged ones and put the stained (worthless) stamps into a job lot for sale (as individual stamps for anyone wanting these items).

That having been said perhaps I can throw a little light on the problem. The transparent interleaving was unusually heavy and greasy in feel and I was convinced that if the booklet had been subjected to any degree of heat (a warm summer perhaps would suffice), this greasiness would have been absorbed by the stamps and thus stained. The stain on my booklet was extensive and wider towards the straight edge. There was no staining on the selvage. All three values were stained and I seem to recall that the 7c was the most affected and the 3c the least.

Gib Wallace:

I am looking for information regarding the special Paquebots which sent the pilgrimage for the unveiling of the Vimy Ridge Memorial. I have some covers posted from the S.S. Montrose, all with Canadian stamps, but one is cancelled Quebec July 18, the second Le Havre on the 25th and two others at Antwerp the same day. As the boat sailed on the 16th the first must have been taken back by pilot's boat, but how come the Canadian stamps are valid in both France and Belgium? Was there a special arrangement for this occasion? I can find nothing in 'Maple Leaves' or 'Topics' and no information in any of my reference books. Help!

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