

Modern postal history is not as easy to collect as you might think. Fewer people use stamps and fewer post offices apply stamps at the counter. Finding these stamps properly used in period to foreign destinations is a very challenging task because commercial mail is most commonly franked with meters. Meter covers are certainly collectible, but such mail does not have the wide interest that stamped mail does.

Other Collectible Elizabethan Era Material

As Canada delved into the technique of phosphorescence on stamps, the initial trials were less than successful because the phosphor bled into the stamps, creating an unreadable bar. These early stamps were put in “Cello Paqs” (see section X), and these packed stamps have become very collectible.

The earlier stamps of the Elizabethan era saw a number of stamps overprinted either OHMS or G for official use. Some of these overprints are quite hard to find because there are some printing varieties.

Many collectors like to collect the four corner plate blocks of stamps. We do not find plate numbers on all stamps but there is usually some form of mark in the selvedge of the stamps. With the advent of very high value stamps such as the \$8 grizzly bear, the sheet quantity has been low. This stamp was issued in a sheet of four only.

In the later period of the Elizabethan era, Canada Post has issued stamps that are neither square nor rectangular. These include balloon stamps that are triangular, mountain stamps that have the profile of a mountain, a round stamp in the shape of a golf ball, some miniature panes that require the selvedge to complete the picture, and both the Year of the Ram and the Youth Sports stamps that defy description.

IV. 20TH CENTURY EDWARD/ GEORGE V/ GEORGE VI STAMP ISSUES



The Stamps and Philately of King Edward VII

Stamps. Stamps for the era of Edward’s reign were delayed for several years after his accession, probably to use up the many Victoria stamps already in stock. The only definitive series was issued between 1903 and 1908. Values of 1, 2, 5, 7, and 10¢ were issued in 1903, while 20¢ and 50¢ values were delayed until 1904 and 1908 respectively, until stocks of high value Victoria stamps

were used up. Essays, die proofs in black and in various colors, and plate proofs are found for these values in different numbers and variety. Stamps are collected as singles, blocks, and plate number blocks. Many plates were used for the 1¢ and 2¢

values. Booklets were printed from special plates and are expensive. Coil stamps were first experimented with for the 2¢ value, and most are great rarities. The lower values have some printing varieties to collect.

The second commemorative series was issued in 1908 for the tercentenary of the discovery of Canada by Cartier. A series with ½, 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 15, and 20¢ stamps was issued. Essays, die and plate proofs, and imperforate varieties are collected. There also are plate number blocks to collect.



Postage due stamps were introduced in 1906. There have been excellent collections formed from the various issues, produced until 1978.

Postal History. As with Victoria material, Edward definitive covers to destinations other than the U. S., United Kingdom, Germany, and France are generally scarce to rare. As in the Victorian era, covers to exotic destinations are

hard to find. Registered material to foreign countries is a bit more obtainable than in the 19th century but still scarce. Domestic mail includes special delivery, registration, and rare insured mail. Insurance became available at a varying fee depending on value, and covers with either Insured or Assuré stickers, or manuscript docketing, are expensive. The 20¢ and 50¢ are scarce to rare on cover. Registered bank mail for bundles of bank notes or gold are the most common domestic usages. The 20¢ can be found used overseas paying triple UPU rate with registration. Few examples of the 50¢ used on overseas mail exist.

Tercentenary Issue. The Tercentenary issue celebrated 300 years of Quebec's founding through a set of 9 commemorative stamps, including ½, 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 15, and 20¢ values issued in July 1908.

Preproduction. Essays of the ½¢ and 2¢ exist. Trial color die proofs exist of all values, as well as small and/or large die proofs of all values.

Production. Stamp sheets were 10 x 10 with an imprint at the top. Imperforate stamps exist for all values, both ungummed and gummed, probably one sheet of each. Re-entries are found on the ½¢, 1¢, and 5¢ stamps. The ½¢ stamp only had real postal purpose for a short time, as the under-1oz newspaper rate was eliminated in May 1909.



Postal history of this issue is difficult to collect because there was little usage to foreign countries; it is expensive when located. The 15¢ and 20¢ are particularly difficult to find on cover for non-philatelic use.

The Stamps and Philately of King George V

Admiral Issue. During its 17-year life, the Admiral issue saw major advancements as well as a few setbacks in stamp-printing technology, and many innovations in postal operations. Including color changes, there were just 22 designs, but with booklets, coils, new and modified dies, over 700 plates, overprints, new printing techniques, and postal rate changes, there is a wealth of material to collect and study. Even today, almost a century after the first stamps in the series were issued, significant new discoveries are being made. Although more than 15 billion Admiral stamps were produced, many varieties are amazingly scarce and a challenge to acquire.

The Admiral period starts in December 1911 with the 1¢ green and 2¢ carmine. Nominally it ends in 1928, when the KG V Scroll definitives appeared, but the Admirals were not entirely replaced by their Scroll counterparts until 1929, and one Admiral stamp, the 3¢ carmine perf 12 by 8, was issued in 1931 (printed in 1926).

The design, common to all values, shows King George V in an admiral's uniform, hence the name of the issue. The King's vignette is based on a composite of two photographs, one by W. & D. Downey and the other by H. Walter Barnett. The vignette was engraved by Robert Savage of American Bank Note Co. (ABN) in New York. ABN printed the stamps at its facilities in Ottawa, which became a subsidiary, the Canadian Bank Note Co. (CBN) in 1923.



The initial issue (in December 1911 and January 1912) consisted of seven values (1¢ green, 2¢ carmine, 5¢ blue, 7¢ bistre, 10¢ plum, 20¢ olive, and 50¢ black) that replaced the KE VII issue. As a result of postal rate changes, four new denominations were issued and some existing stamps underwent color changes. In an unsuccessful experiment, the 3¢ carmine was overprinted 2¢ in 1926.

Several Admiral stamps were issued to pay war taxes imposed by the Special War Revenue Act that took effect on April 15, 1915. A 1¢ green War Tax stamp was issued to pay the war tax on first class mail, both domestic and to preferred-rate destinations (U.S., Mexico, and British Commonwealth). On January 1, 1916, this stamp was replaced by a 2¢+1¢ denomination that covered both the domestic rate and the war tax. Some Admiral stamps were issued to pay war taxes on other than postal services. A 2¢ carmine War Tax stamp paid the "stamp tax" on cheques and other financial instruments. Its postal usage was quite small. The Inland Revenue Department overprinted the 5¢ blue, 20¢, and 50¢ Admiral stamps with the words "War Tax" and "Inland Revenue War Tax" for fiscal usage, and in a circular to

postmasters dated May 20, 1915, the Post Office stated that these stamps were not acceptable for the payment of postage.

ABN prepared a master die containing the design elements common to all values. The printer then produced a secondary die for each value on which the missing features (primarily the denomination) were engraved. During the course of making plates, ABN found that the upper right vertical line inside the frame grew progressively weaker on the secondary dies. To correct this defect, ABN strengthened the line by retouching many subjects of many plates, notably plates 19 and 20 of the 5¢ violet and plate 9 of the 20¢. For the 1¢ green and 2¢ carmine, ABN retouched the die itself. Stamps from the original die and the retouched die are readily distinguishable. ABN also produced new dies during the course of printing the 1¢ yellow, 3¢ carmine, and the 2¢+1¢ War Tax. The 2¢+1¢ War Tax was printed in carmine and brown. Both colors exist in Die I and Die II printings.

A variety of die proofs exists although quantities are very low. There are proofs created both before and after the die was hardened, proofs of dies that were never used in production, proofs in unissued colors, proofs in black, and proofs of unissued stamps.

Admiral stamps were issued in three formats: panes of 100, booklets, and coils. Most of the panes were printed from plates of 400 subjects. The initial printings of the 5¢ blue, 7¢ bistre, 10¢ plum, 20¢, and 50¢ were from plates of 200 subjects. Two plates of the 1¢ green, plates 43 and 44, also had 200 subjects. Some sheet stamps were produced from plates manufactured expressly for coils.

Initially the plates of 400 had a horizontal and vertical gutter separating the panes. At the beginning of 1914, ABN did away with the gutters. The sheets were guillotined into panes before they were perforated so the space between adjacent panes was not perforated. As a result, from 1914 onwards, the stamps bordering an adjacent pane had a straight edge along the border.



The stamps were printed on unwatermarked, vertical wove paper. At least three values, the 2¢ carmine, 2¢ green, and 10¢ blue, also exist on a horizontal wove paper, but are scarce. Initial printings of the 1¢ green and 2¢ carmine booklet stamps were issued on horizontally wove paper, but they are scarce too. The consistency and thickness of the paper varied over the life of the issue. There are well-known,

fairly common thin paper varieties on the wet printings of the 2¢ green and the 5¢ violet. This paper is readily distinguishable by the grain of the paper, which appears

as a lattice pattern when held to the light. There are less well-known and relatively scarce thin paper varieties on the dry printings of the 2¢ green and 7¢ red brown.

The Admiral sheet stamps were perforated by a line perforator after they were guillotined. The gauge varied from 11.7 to 12.0. The value quoted in the catalogues, 12, is a nominal value.

With such a large number of stamps printed over such a long period, there were inevitable color shades. Among the most elusive are the 2¢ pink and the 7¢ sage green. ABN imported the ink used to print the stamps from Germany. This source was cut off during the First World War, so ABN had to switch to other suppliers and ink formulas. This gave rise to some of the shade variations. It also gave rise to an interesting but little known fluorescent ink variety on the 2¢ carmine and 2¢ War Tax. The 3¢ carmine exists only with this fluorescent ink.

The Admiral plates featured several sought-after marginal markings. During the KE VII period, ABN started punching printing order numbers on the plate, usually near the plate imprint, and this practice continued for several years into the Admiral period. If a plate was used to fulfill more than one order, the previous number was typically defaced and the new number added. A few plates have three to four of the order numbers.

Until 1916, plates had an imprint in the top margin of each upper pane and in the bottom margin of each lower pane. In late 1916, ABN began putting a band of lathework or engine turning at the bottom of the sheet and the plate imprint below the lathework. When the sheet was guillotined, the bottom of the lathework and the bottom plate imprints were cut off. The lathework was probably added as hold-down strips, holding the sheet onto the plate during printing. Six different lathework patterns were used, ten if inverted designs are also counted. In 1922, ABN began adding pyramid lines (a long horizontal line with six vertical lines of decreasing length) in the middle of the left or right margin of the pane as a perforation guide. Towards the end of 1922, ABN also added an inscription that read R-GAUGE in the top right margin of the lower right pane. The lathework, pyramid lines, R-GAUGE inscription, and imprints in the bottom margin of the lower panes were all done away with when ABN switched from the wet to the dry printing method beginning in 1923. Many of the marginal markings are quite scarce and highly sought.



The Admiral issue saw some major advances in stamp production during its 17-year life. As already mentioned, some initial Admiral printings were made from plates of 200 (on a flat bed press). The move to larger plates of 400 subjects and a sheet-fed rotary press began with the low values of the Edward VII period. Except for the 50¢, ABN moved exclusively to plates of 400 by the end of 1913.

In 1915, ABN experimented with the use of multiple-subject dies and transfer rolls. ABN produced a transfer roll of ten subjects, two along the axis by five around the circumference, that it used to manufacture plates 87 and 88 of the 2¢ carmine. ABN also produced a transfer roll of five subjects to manufacture plate 90.

The experiment was apparently unsuccessful because ABN reverted to the traditional single-subject die. CBN repeated the multiple-subject experiment for plates 171–173 of the 3¢ carmine in October 1925; however these plates were manufactured near the end of the Admiral period and were never put into production.

Prior to the Admiral era, the normal printing technique was to print stamps on moistened ungummed paper. After printing, the paper was dried, gummed, guillotined, and perforated. This is the wet method of printing alluded to above. In 1905, during the Edward era, ABN experimented with printing the 2¢ value on dry, gummed paper; however it wasn't until 1922 that ABN began using the dry method in production and 1926 before the switchover was complete. The 1¢ yellow, 2¢ green, 3¢ brown, 4¢, 5¢ violet, 7¢ red brown, 10¢ blue, 20¢, 50¢, and \$1.00 sheet stamps, the 1¢ yellow, 2¢ green, and 3¢ carmine coil stamps, and the 2¢ green booklet pane of six were printed by both methods. Stamps printed by each method can be identified by their width. Paper shrank perpendicular to the grain as it dried. Since, with very few exceptions, the paper was vertical wove, stamps printed by the wet method are narrower than those printed by the dry method. Although this is a classic method of distinguishing between the two methods, it can be tricky because stamps printed by the wet method, especially those printed shortly before the transition, vary in width.

Initially, ABN affixed one or two plates to the press. Around 1923, the newly formed CBN gradually began affixing up to three plates on the press. One can deduce when the switchover occurred by the date of approval of the plates. Plates were mostly approved in pairs until 1923, at which point they began to be approved in triplets.

In 1927, CBN began chrome plating the plates. A thin layer of chromium was deposited on the plate by electrolysis to protect its surface. The chromium could be removed and re-deposited several times during the life of the plate. This reduced plate wear, which meant that plates could be used for longer print runs, thus cutting down on the number that had to be manufactured.

The 1898 QV Numeral and 1903 KE VII issues each saw one booklet variety, consisting of two panes of six of the 2¢ value. The Admiral period heralded many more, all selling for 25¢, 1¢ above the face value of the stamps. There were booklets with four 1¢ panes of six, two 2¢ panes of six, two 3¢ panes of four, and a combination booklet with one 1¢, one 2¢, and one 3¢ pane of four. For the first time, booklets with French text were issued. Most booklets are scarce. Besides the stamp panes, the booklets had covers, glassine interleaving, and “information pages.” The booklet contents were stapled together. Early booklets had tape over the staple.

Some 1¢ and 2¢ King Edward VII stamps from sheet stock were issued in roll format as an experiment, but the mass



production of coils began in the Admiral period. There were two formats, endwise rolls and sidewise rolls. Endwise rolls, in which the stamps were wound vertically, were intended for stamp vending machines and some stamp affixing machines. Initial 1¢ green and 2¢ carmine endwise coils issued in 1913 were perforated 8 horizontally. The gauge was subsequently increased to 12. Sidewise rolls were issued in far greater quantities than were endwise rolls. The stamps were wound horizontally, and were intended for stamp affixing machines. The sidewise coils all were perforated 8 vertically.

Most coils were prepared from sheets of 400 that were perforated in one direction only and guillotined in the other. Strips of 10 or 20 were joined together at the pane margin to produce rolls of 500 stamps. Although special plates were manufactured to facilitate coil production, ordinary sheet stock was sometimes used. In fact, the 2¢ green and 3¢ brown endwise coils were produced entirely from sheet stock. There were also two stamps from coil stock issued in sheet format, the 2¢+1¢ carmine in July 1916 and 3¢ carmine in 1931. Both stamps came from sidewise coil stock that had been perforated 8 vertically and subsequently perforated 12 for release in panes of 100. In addition, a small quantity of the 2¢+1¢ carmine from coil stock was perforated 12 by 12.

In July 1918, some 1¢ green endwise coils were punched with two large holes on top of the regular perforations. This was done as an experiment to facilitate dispensing in stamp vending machines. This experiment was not successful, and it was suspended after only two days. So-called provisional 2¢ carmine coils were produced from fully perforated sheet stamps. It has been argued that these coils were produced for philatelic purposes.

In January 1924, 250 sheets (100,000 stamps) of the 3¢ carmine and, in October 1924, 125 sheets (50,000 stamps) of the 1¢ yellow and 2¢ green sheet stamps were released through the Philatelic Agency in imperforate format. Two hundred copies of the 4¢, 5¢ violet, 7¢ red brown, 8¢, 10¢ bistre brown, 20¢, 50¢, and \$1.00 were also issued imperforate by favor. Some imperf sheets of the 1¢ yellow from coil stock were also released.



In 1924, 2,200 stamps of the 1¢ yellow, 2¢ green, and 3¢ carmine coils printed by the wet method were issued in sheet format, imperf by perf 8. In 1925, the Post Office released another 100,000 stamps of the 1¢

yellow and 2¢ green coils in the same format, but these were printed by the dry method, so they are readily distinguishable from the first release. Imperforates and part perforates of the coil stock of the 2¢+1¢ brown were also released by favor. Finally, an imperforate part sheet of three booklet panes was released by favor and cut up to produce imperforate tête-bêche booklet panes. The panes are the 1¢ yellow and 2¢ green in panes of six and the 3¢ carmine in panes of four.

Postal History. The Admiral period includes World War I (with military, POW, and censored mail), and shows rapid post-war inflation with several rate changes. It has perhaps the most advertising covers available. Machine slogan cancels started in 1912, bringing a new collecting area. New rate structures such as money packets were added, and rural route and parcel post mail was extended, as was insurance for parcels. Special delivery rates increased, and were extended to the U. S. The registration fee increased. Pioneer airmail was flown, and special stamps were printed for airmail.

Confederation Issue of 1927

A set of five ordinary stamps and one special delivery stamp was issued to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Confederation of Canada with the two Maritime Provinces, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The set featured 1, 2, 3, 5, and 12¢ stamps plus a 20¢ special delivery (SD) stamp. The latter is probably the most attractive of all the Canadian SD stamps with its depiction of Mt. Robson with a biplane overhead, train below, a rider, and a dog sled team, all depicting carriage of the mails. The 12¢ stamp paid registration and domestic 1 oz. letter postage, and it has a map of Canada with the three original provinces bolded in dark blue while the rest of Canada is in a lighter shade. This was the second map stamp of Canada, and map stamps are a highly collected topical area worldwide. Quite a few other maps of Canada and its provinces can be found in later stamp issues.

In addition to plate number blocks and First Day Covers (FDCs, covers postmarked on the day of issue), imperforate, horizontally imperforate, and vertically imperforate varieties exist for all values. FDCs are fairly expensive, and are among the first to be found with special envelopes privately produced for the occasion. Collectors had begun to take notice of dates of issue of stamps, and what became a major collecting area and source of revenue for post office administrations worldwide began.

Historical Issue of 1927

At the same time the Confederation Issue was placed in post offices, another issue of three stamps, values 5, 12, and 20¢ with busts of various politicians, was issued. Since these values duplicated those of the Confederation issue, the reason for issuance was clearly political. The set actually was developed for release earlier, in 1926, but was delayed to coincide with the Confederation date of issue. As with the Confederation stamps, plate number blocks, FDCs, and the imperforate varieties are available for collectors.

Scroll Issue of 1928

The series that replaced the Admirals as the definitive set of stamps for ordinary postage use is termed the Scroll issue due to the design, with its scrolled ribbon at the top of each stamp. Values were created for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 20, 50¢, and \$1. In addition, the first airmail stamp was issued in a scroll format in 1928 in a 5¢ value. The 50¢ stamp is called the Bluenose, shown here, based on the famous racing yacht of the same name. It has consistently been considered the most beautiful Canadian stamp, only recently disputed by the \$8 Grizzly Bear stamp. The lower values up to 8¢ depict a bust of a mature King George V in royal regalia in a size the same as the Admirals, while the higher values are larger in size. They depict a variety of Canadian scenes.

This series is very collectible, with plate number blocks, FDCs, imperforate and part perforate pairs, and blocks all available. Coil stamps of the 1 and 2¢ values were produced, and these are collected in strips of 4. Paste-up strips (where the coil strip from the end of one printing strip was glued to the end of another) are collected on these coils.



Booklet panes of the 1, 2, and 5¢ stamps were produced, and tete-beche blocks can be obtained, although they are expensive. A few complete tete-beche two-pane blocks exist, one pane inverted with a gutter between the two panes. John Cooper recently exhibited a highly complete showing of this issue with virtually all such material included.

Arch Issue of 1930

Another definitive set was produced with an almost identical bust portrait of King George V surrounded by an arch with “postage,” “Canada,” and “postage” in the arch. At top left and right were maple leaves. The arch motif was maintained only for low values of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8, and 10¢ values, while higher values included the maple leaves and a scroll at top. These values were 12, 20, 50¢ and \$1 as well as a new 5¢ airmail stamp.

Other King George V Issues

The George V Medallion issue of 1932 consisted of low-value stamps (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8¢) with a portrait of the King and a 13¢ stamp showing the Quebec Citadel. The 1, 2, and 3¢ stamps had coil versions. The George V Pictorial issue appeared in 1935. Again, the 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8¢ stamps bear a portrait of the King. The 10, 13, 20, and 50¢ and \$1 stamps are pictorial, with the 10¢ stamp depicting a Mountie on a horse, the 13¢ the Founding Fathers at the Charlottetown Conference, and the other three Canadian scenes. This issue set the style for future definitive issues, with portraits used for low-value stamps and pictures for high-value stamps. Commemorative stamps were issued in the 1930s depicting a number of different

subjects. The George V Silver Jubilee in 1935 was celebrated by the entire British Empire and Commonwealth countries, and Canada issued a set of stamps with 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, and 13¢ stamps. The commemoratives are much more limited in additional material available, and essays and proofs are rare.

The Stamps and Philately of King George VI

The reign of King George VI commenced December 11, 1936 and concluded upon his death on February 6, 1952. The King George VI era was dominated by the



events of WWII. Wartime actions disrupted postal services worldwide. The war created a sense of urgency needed to quickly advance airmail services for both official mail and mail to and from troops overseas.

Stamps. The first stamps featuring the image of King George VI were issued on April 1, 1937 (the 4, 5, and 8¢ values were issued on May 10, 1937), the so called “Mufti” series.

These low value stamps were followed in

1938 by high-value stamps required for parcels and expensive airmail rates to places like India and Australia. Many highly regarded collections have been put together using these issues. Also issued on May 10, 1937 was the stamp commemorating the coronation of King George VI. Three stamps that commemorated the visit of the King and Queen to Canada were issued in 1939. These Royal Visit stamps and their postal history are great collectibles, and many first-class exhibits have been put together around the Royal Visit. Two further series of stamps, the 1942–43 War Issue and the 1949–51 set, were issued during the George VI era.

Six other commemorative stamps were issued in the 1947–49 period, including one stamp to mark the occasion of Newfoundland’s joining the Dominion of Canada in 1949. Four stamps were issued in 1951 to commemorate the centennial of the first postage stamp in Canada. Various lower-value stamps were available to the public, in booklet and coil form in addition to sheets of 100. Postage stamps were also overprinted for government use, and precancelled for use by private-sector companies. Stamps were also perforated with initials for both government use and private companies. Each of these sectors represents a really interesting collecting area for the collector interested in a new specialty.

Postal History. The pursuit of postal history aspects of the George VI period is similar to the study of any other period. It starts with the identification and study of postal rates to Canadian and overseas destinations for the different types of services available. These include the differentiation by delivery methods (surface and airmail, parcel post, special delivery, etc.), requests for registration to provide proof of delivery or indemnification if lost, and other specialized services. From this base, you may delve into further detail of mail routes, post office cancellations and markings, and treatment of undelivered mail.

The George VI era spans the disruptive times of WWII, and therein lie many areas of in-depth study. It has long been recognized that mail delivery to the troops in wartime contributes to their morale, so many efforts were made to ensure the timely delivery of mail to the armed forces. War also creates prisoners of war and internees, and mail to and from these unfortunate people has a special meaning, as does mail whose trip was interrupted by the war. In a sense there is no limit on the direction postal history may lead or the depth of research or detail any particular study may evolve.

Specialized organizations such as the George VI, World War II, and Military Mail Study Groups of BNAPS provide a venue for stamp collectors and postal historians to expand their knowledge.

