



The Young Collector

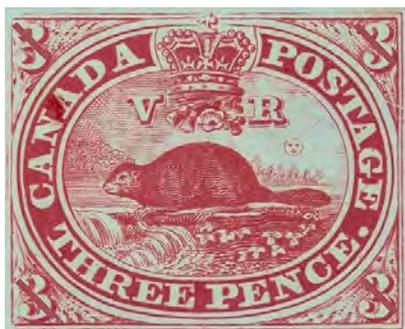
By Joseph Perrone

CANADIAN STAMPS: Da Bomb**

In this column, I would like to share what I think makes collecting Canadian stamps so exciting! There are many different highlights in the history of Canadian stamps, and although I would love to tell the stories of the many issues that interest me, it would take the entire magazine.

Historically, Canada was the 22nd country to produce stamps. However, six German city-states preceded Canada in that list. They are all now part of Germany. So, if you consider the world map as it is today, Canada was actually the 16th country to produce stamps.

The first issue for Canada was the three pence Beaver from April 23, 1851. Notably, this was also the first stamp in the world to portray an animal! It was aptly chosen. The iconic Canadian image is the perfect example to represent a young nation, especially one whose early pioneers and explorers were fur traders. Beaver pelts were used to make fashionable top hats for men in Europe. They were also one of the first articles of trade between the French and the Natives. The beaver is also known for its industriousness, building skills and tenacity, which are characteristics reminiscent of the early pioneers. The beaver was the wild creature most essential to the Canadian economy in the 1800s.



The three pence Beaver stamp is scarce in mint condition, and is listed in the 2017 *Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps* at 10 thousand to 50 thousand dollars each, depending on condition.

A second Canadian stamp, which is so renowned that every collector gets a tingly feeling when they hear about



one, is the 12 pence Queen Victoria, best known as the 12 penny black, which was issued on June 14, 1851. Originally, the printers ordered 50 thousand, but only 1,450 were ever issued. These days, only about 100 are known to exist, with very few in pairs. As a result, the 12 penny black is famous worldwide.

Because of its rarity, even a 'space-filler' will cost somewhere in the range of five thousand dollars. A very fine used example will set a collector back about 225 – 250 thousand. This stamp may not be the scarcest, but it is still on my wish list!



The next stamp I would like to come across one day, which is the rarest of all Canadian issues ...drum roll...please... is the number 32: the famous two cent Large Queen printed on laid paper. Only three are known to exist! Amazingly, the latest one was found in the U.S.A., and was purchased in 2013 by a clever collector for less than 100 dollars U.S. What a deal! Even though it is the finest known example, it has a small tear and a crease. Yet, this rare stamp sold for approximately 215 thousand Canadian dollars. That is a profit of over four thousand percent. Not too shabby!

Not all interesting old Canadian stamps are expensive, however. On December 7, 1898, Canada's first mul-

ticaloured stamp, and the first commemorative, was released. This stamp depicts the British Empire in red, the rest of the world is an unflattering gray, and the ocean ranges from light lavender to a beautiful blue. There is, however, some controversy surrounding this stamp. Many people claim that it was the world's first Christmas issue, because it has the abbreviated form of Christmas: XMAS; at the bottom. It was not actually intended to commemorate Christmas, however. Instead, it was issued to announce a decrease in the postal rate from three cents to two cents, domestically and to the USA, as of January 1, 1899. The rate change took effect six days after Christmas, so officials decided to put XMAS on the stamp.



William Mulock was the Canadian postmaster general, and he reportedly told Queen Victoria the release date would be Nov. 9, to 'honour the prince,' meaning the Prince of Wales. The Queen apparently expressed displeasure over her not-so-favourite son, demanding 'what Prince?' Mulock diplomatically replied, "Why, madam, the Prince of Peace." The commemorative is not difficult to find in mint or used condition, but it's more fun to own when you know the story. I have several used copies in my personal collection.



Some Canadian stamps are notable for their errors, and can be tremendously valuable. Two definitives, the most recognized varieties of the Victorian era, are the 1859-1864 series: 10 cent black-brown, and 10 cent red-lilac Prince Albert, the Queen's husband. Listed in the catalogue as the 'string of pearls' variety, 16iii, 17iv; and the 'double epaulets' variety, 16iv, 17v, these have misplaced engravings. The re-entries were made while the printing plates were being repaired, and are far off their correct positions, especially the 'string of pearls.' Listed only in used condition, an example of 16iii or 16iv is listed around five thousand dollars, while a used 17iv or 17v is listed between 250 to a thousand dollars, or 15 hundred to four thousand in mint condition.

The most recognized and highly sought-after re-entry variety of the King George V era is the one cent green of the 1911 Admiral issue. Much of the lower engraving is spectacularly doubled. Caused by major re-entry work, this enormous flaw (104vii) is among the greatest re-entries of all time. This rarity catalogues at \$2,250 for a very fine used example. I have never passed over a group of Admirals without looking for this re-entry.

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And, of course, collectors are aware of the 1959 five cent St. Lawrence Seaway with inverted text. This stamp error is possibly the world's most recognized invert. The incredible Canadian commemorative error is highly documented, and was the stamp that made late Winnipeg dealer Kasimir Bileski famous in the philatelic collecting world. It's almost as well known as the 24 cent Curtiss Jenny aircraft stamp, which was produced by the Americans for airmail usage. Buyer beware, though, for the Canadian stamp. If you want a very fine mint never hinged St. Lawrence Seaway invert, it is listed at 10 thousand to \$12,500. Ouch!



By the way, if you are interested in this topic, I would suggest reading: *The 1959 St. Lawrence Seaway Joint Issue and Its Invert*; by Charles J.G. Verge. His book goes through every minute detail of the U.S. and Canadian printings, and how the same two-colour design was applied differently in each country, with a full explanation of how the invert occurred... Everything you ever wanted to know about this issue.

So, to the well-intentioned folks who produce our stamps, "To err is human." Collectors have no qualm about taking advantage of those errors so, please, keep on being human.



Another stamp, that interests me personally, is the Toronto Blue Jays commemorative issue from April 9, 2001. It intrigues me, not only because I'm a big Jays fan,

but also because I was nicely surprised to discover that the stamp was issued on the day that I was born. Oh, that wonderful day! Not many people can say they had a stamp issued on the day they were born. How lucky am I. An added bonus is that the Jays stamp does not cost a pile of wings and feathers to collect. It is listed at only 35 cents for a very fine used example.

For me, these stamps are just a fraction of what makes collecting Canadian issues so captivating. Knowing that there are deals out there, like the two-cent Large Queen on laid paper, proves that you never know what you will find. So, to all my friends in the hobby, keep your eyes open and good luck collecting in this 150th year of Canadian Confederation. ☒

** *Da Bomb* simply means: *The Best*