



The Young Collector

By Joseph Perrone

ONE MAN'S JUNK – IS NOW MY TREASURE

I often purchase a small collection or album at a stamp club auction that has already been picked through by previous owners for stamps of rarity and value. The early section of most popular countries will be well-scoured, made obvious by the marks left by removed hinges, and the presence of only low-value stamps. Something rather striking may have been missed, although it is not always valuable. Frequently, there will be flaws and errors uncovered with a little effort.

My younger brother James and I spend many hours looking through these so-called ‘junk lots’ in search of oddities, and it pays off. We have found stunning re-entries, retouches, misplaced guidelines, double perforations, tagging errors, and plate flaws from a variety of different countries.



Paraguay misplaced guideline.

People sometimes just give stamps the once-over and they end up in discarded lots. But I enjoy examining every stamp, and have learned there are certain stamps which offer the most varieties.

I first seek out engraved stamps since they tend to yield the most errors. Looking along the framelines where there is supposed to be no ink is usually a quick indicator of whether there is a flaw. James and I were once looking through a box of unwanted material that a collector had picked through and had given to us when all of a sudden James exclaimed, “Joseph, you might want to see this one!” At a quick glance, the cheap Mexican airmail stamp seemed normal, but a closer examination revealed lines everywhere that



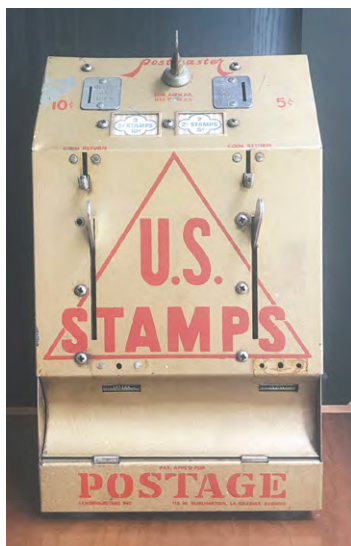
should not be present. It turns out we had found a jaw-dropping major twisted re-entry.

Knowing what to look for is a key part of our hobby. Finding varieties is invigorating. Young collectors who are interested in errors and varieties should acquaint themselves with not only the images in the catalogue, but also with philatelic organizations such as the British North American Philatelic Society (BNAPS) and its study groups, including Dots and Scratches.

I was looking through one of Dots and Scratches older newsletters and I found an article by Ralph E. Trimble about the retouch on the major re-entry on the five-cent blue, of the Canadian 1932 George V (Medallion) issue. He described the retouch in great detail and explained how to tell it apart from the regular stamp, showing images of exactly what he meant. Excited by my new knowledge, I thought I would check the seven stamps I own, just in case, unlikely as it may be that one was lurking in my collection. To my great delight, there was an example clearly showing the retouch!

The term ‘junk,’ by the way, means something discarded because of its small value or irrelevance to a collector or an individual. But once again, wherever you find stamps available, remember that one man’s junk can be another man’s treasure! I recently went to a flea market in Keady, Ontario, a treasure-

hunter's paradise, where I bought an incredibly interesting item. It is an American postage stamp vending machine made by Stampmasters Inc. The machine still works and is in good condition. Yet, I cannot find any information about it, even after extensive searching, and would be interested to learn more about this neat find. This piece of postal memorabilia fits in well on display in my room, which is getting oh-so-close to being clean and organized.

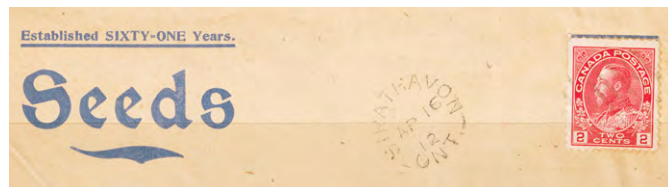


Searching for knowledge and treasure, I also attended the Postal History Society of Canada symposium in Hamilton in July. It was my first major stamp show, which proved to be a prime hunting ground for prized items and quality material. The symposium was impressively well run. The exhibits were amazing, and there were many good dealers. My favorite exhibit was "A Special Study on Canadian Confederation" put together by Christine Faucher and Jacques Poitras. Their exhibit contained interesting material sent by various famous Canadians of Confederation, including Sir John A. Macdonald. It was amazing to see letters signed by the great men who made Canada the country we know today. I was also delighted to find an item I have searched for since I started collecting Canada's 1942 War Issue. A single 13-cent Ram Tank definitive on cover is a scarce item and, before the symposium, I had only seen one example.



After the symposium, I owned two. These are scarce because the rate for a registered letter changed from 13 to 14 cents after only nine months. The cover shown was canceled on July 7, 1942, only six days after the stamp was issued, on July 1.

Most of the purchases I made at the symposium were destined for my growing local cancellation collection. One of my favorites was a cover bearing a scarce Strathavon, Ont. (split ring) cancellation. This post office was located well north of Toronto in the middle of nowhere. The hamlet flourished for some time. It had flour, shingle, and saw mills, a church, and a school. Unfortunately when the railway came to the area, Strathavon was not located near enough to the tracks for the businesses to survive, and the community declined. I live nearby, and while driving through the area, a weathered baseball diamond and several scattered homes are all that remain.



The post office was open between 1877 and 1914, but my postmark on my cover is the only cancellation that I have heard about or seen. I also found postmarks from other small outlets in Grey Bruce County, including Inglis Falls and Formosa, in addition to larger ones such as Bognor, Chatsworth, and Owen Sound. I consider all of the local covers, business mail, personal letters and postcards acquired while at the Hamilton show to be treasures that were once somebody's discards. ☒

