



# THE YOUNG COLLECTOR

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## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CANADIAN PROVINCES WHICH ISSUED STAMPS

This past summer I came to realize just how important the collection of the stamps and postal history of the Canadian Provinces is.

There were five colonies that were independent from the colony of Canada which issued stamps. These are New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, British Columbia, and Newfoundland.

The first thing I realized about my knowledge of this important topic was that, like Socrates, the only thing I knew was that I knew nothing. I visited all of the Canadian Provinces except for Newfoundland as a child, but did not take any of their history home with me.

Of the previously stamp-issuing colonies, only New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Canada joined in Confederation on July 1, 1867. Later additions to Confederation were British Columbia, in 1871, Prince Edward Island, in 1873, and finally Newfoundland, the last to join Confederation, in 1949.

New Brunswick released its first set of stamps in September 1851. It featured the design of the Royal Crown surrounded by “stylized versions of heraldic flowers or floral emblems of the United Kingdom: English roses, and Irish shamrock, and a Scottish thistle.”

Interestingly, this same type of design was used on the first definitives of Nova Scotia in 1851 and Newfoundland in 1857.

When the stamp is face up and its head and tail are correctly oriented, the crown is right-side-up. This means having a diamond-like shape for the stamps of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and a square design for Newfoundland.

As far as I know, it is the earliest stamp to feature flowers as an integral part of its design and I personally think that this issue is among the most beautiful of Canadian stamps.

New Brunswick’s strangest philatelic story has to do with that of its infamous Postmaster General, Charles Connell. In 1860 New Brunswick changed from sterling currency – pence, shillings, and pounds, to a new decimal currency, cents and dollars – in order to aid growing trade with its American neighbors. Of course, this meant changing the postage stamps and subsequently a new set was produced.

Connell shocked the world by putting his own portrait, instead of Queen Victoria’s, on the face of the most commonly used stamp, the five-cent.

This audacity was not received well, and in embarrassment he offered to buy all the stamps, although there is no proof that he ever did. In the end, he made a show of burning them on his lawn and his portrait was replaced by a five-cent Queen Victoria definitive.

It was subsequently discovered that not all the stamps had been destroyed. Today, roughly 75 copies are known to exist, and it is a dreamed-of rarity.

An unused Connell is seen so much as an indispensable part of New Brunswick’s history that it was even featured on a beer bottle from the Picaroons Brewing Company of Fredericton, which is the capital of New Brunswick.

Nova Scotia, which joined Confederation at the same time as New Brunswick, exhibited various portraits of Queen Victoria

by multiple artists on its stamps. If someone is interested in collecting the portraits of Queen Victoria on stamps, Nova Scotia offers some interesting examples. The first design reproduces the 1837 painting by London-based Swiss artist Alfred Edward Chalon, used on the 1853 one pence issue.



The 1860-63 definitives featured the work of two different artists. The one-, two-, and five-cent stamps were based on an image from a Nova Scotia halfpenny coin engraved by Leonard Charles Wyon. This image was taken from an earlier drawing by British engraver, Charles Henry Jeens. The portrait on the stamp was engraved by artist James Bannister of ABN New York.

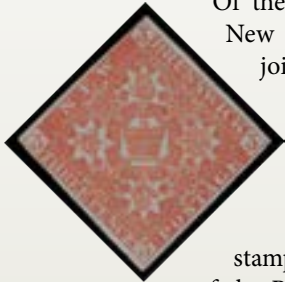


The eight-, ten-, and twelve-cent stamps were based on the 1843 portrait of Queen Victoria by German painter and lithographer Franz Xavier Winterhalter. Interestingly, the portrait on the stamp is actually a reverse mirror image.



Jumping to the west coast of Canada, the next province to join was British Columbia. Stamps of the mainland bear the Seal of British Columbia and most had overprinted denominations.

The overprints were added because they were prepared for use with the Sterling currency, but by the time they were going to be put into use, British Columbia had switched to a dollar-based currency. In order to save



the production efforts, the printers overprinted the pence stamps with dollar values.

Vancouver Island, Canada's 11th largest island by landmass, and currently with about 870,000 inhabitants, once issued its own stamps. It later joined British Columbia and its definitives are now included in the listing for British Columbia stamps in the Uni-trade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps.



The stamps of Vancouver Island are very scarce and extremely hard to find in good condition. Even harder to find are examples with margins, since they were printed closely together and when cut or perforated it was difficult to leave any margins behind.

Speaking of islands, Prince Edward Island issued all but one of its stamps printed by typography. Typography, also called letterpress, is a form of printing in which printing is produced by an ink-coated raised-image plate contacting a sheet of paper. The end product is generally unrefined and of poorer quality than engraving. This process is the same once used to print most newspapers.



This process can easily result in a double print. All that has to happen is the ink-type has to touch the sheet twice, resulting in a doubling of the stamp's image. The three-pence value of the Prince Edward Island 1861 issue is known with a double print variety.

This now brings us to Newfoundland, the last of the Canadian provinces to join Confederation. One of my favourite aspects of this province's stamps is its connections to animals. The Cod and Dog stamps are among my favourite designs.



Also notable is the triangular design of the Newfoundland three-pence 1857-1860 issue.



They were the only triangular stamps issued in the provinces and indeed in Canada until Scott 1811, featuring a Master Control sport kite, issued in 1999.

It was common practice in the provinces to bisect a stamp to pay a certain

rate. If someone ran out of six-pence stamps but still had a one-shilling stamp, they cut the stamp in half and used half of its value to pay for postage. Covers with such bisects are rare, desirable, and expensive, and attract fakers.

Many faked covers were made by cutting a stamp in half and applying fake cancels to fool collectors. A major part of expertizing Canadian material deals with proving the authenticity of bisect covers.

Also interesting to note is that forgers, including Erasmo Oneglia and Philip Spiro, made extensive bogus items of the stamps of the provinces. These are now extremely collectible and are an interesting field of study. ☒

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