

Using the . . .

PHILATELIC COLLECTIONS

at

Library and Archives Canada

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With approximately 1,000,000 items, the philatelic collections are composed of postage stamps and related materials, including all aspects of original stamp design up to final production. There are also a number of related archival collections in various media (e.g. photographs, manuscripts and papers, maps, broadsides, circulars, posters, etc.) which document the history of the postal service and the hobby of stamp collecting in Canada.

Mandate

The *Philatelic Collections* section is a part of Library and Archives Canada (LAC). The section is responsible for the appraisal, acquisition, arrangement and description of enduring historical and documentary value and of national significance to all Canadians, in order to provide for their orderly care and maintenance and to facilitate their long-term preservation. It also provides specialized reference to these records. The section is also responsible for the selection of printed publications relating to philately and postal history.

Library and Archives Canada

Library and Archives Canada's rich and varied collection reflects the diversity of the Canadian experience and the achievements of Canadians over time. In addition to philatelic records, the overall collection includes the following:

- Over 71 000 hours of short and full-length films, documentaries, silent films and "talkies", in black and white and in colour. The oldest film in the collection was made in 1897;
- Over 2.5 million architectural drawings, plans and maps, some of which date back to the beginning of the 16th century;
- About 3.18 million megabytes of information in electronic formats, including more than 9500 Canadian periodicals and books available online;
- Millions of books in various languages for all tastes and ages, from rare first editions and livres d'artiste to children's classics and popular fiction;
- Over 21.3 million photographic images;

- Textual records and publications for federal, provincial, territorial and foreign governments;
- Over 270 000 hours of video and sound recordings;
- Over 343 000 works of art, including watercolours, sketches, miniatures, oil paintings;
- The largest collection of Canadian sheet music in the world, documentation related to music in Canada and about 200 000 recordings on disks and records of all formats, piano rolls, reels and spools, and eight-track tapes;
- An impressive collection of medals, seals, posters and coats of arms;
- Textual archives for various individuals and groups who have contributed to Canada's cultural, social, economic and political development;
- National, provincial and territorial newspapers from across Canada, from dailies to student newspapers, and from Aboriginal magazines to ethnic community newsletters;
- Periodicals, microfilms, manuscripts and theses;
- Portraits of over one million Canadians since 1710.

Specificity of the Philatelic Collections

The Philatelic Collections area of LAC is unique in that it comprises ALL relevant types of records relating to the philatelic and postal history of a given country, in this case, Canada.

One can research all components of the varied aspects of philately under ONE roof. One can research and consult the stamp designs for stamps received from Canada Post Corporation (CPC), the production records (essays and proofs), the products themselves along with the >production file= created by CPC, relevant papers and illustrations received from stamp creators, all of the administrative papers created by the Post Office Department, manuscript, postal maps, as well as postal covers. In addition, a specialized philatelic library is available for consultation.

Research

The basis of research is carried over two aspects: obtaining information and consulting original records. These aspects can be carried simultaneously in many cases. The initial step is to consult LAC web site and specifically the Philatelic Collections area web site, known as *The Canadian Postal Archives*. It can be found at:

http://collectionscanada.ca/postal_archives/080608_e.html

In addition to offering an overview of the philatelic collections preserved by LAC, the *Canadian Postal Archives* site allows visitors to find information about every postage stamp issued by Canada and British North America since 1851. The site includes search engines that are linked to the Philatelic Library's catalogue database, to a database

relating to post offices, to a database on Canadian stamps, and to a database on stamp creators as well as other databases to Post Office official publications and a philatelic bibliography. The site provides access to 16,400 digitized documents and 26,000 scanned pages of printed publications printed before 1900.

Specific databases to pursue research

General Inventory

An excellent starting point to any research, the *General Inventory* presents the whole of the archives' holdings at the fonds, collection and accession levels, including those of public and private origin and covering all media.

Selected philatelic and postal history collections: Here is a selection of the most important fonds and collections, from official and private sources, dealing with philately and postal history. The related archival collections contain items in various media (e.g. photographs, manuscripts and papers, maps, broadsides, circulars and notices, posters, etc.), which document the history of the postal service in Canada and in the world. Among these lie the files of the government archives including the very important Post Office Department fonds. A geographical index of the *Selected philatelic and postal history collections* is available.

Philatis

The philatelic collections, which bring together nearly one million items, include stamps and archival documents on philately and the postal service primarily acquired from Canada Post and private individuals. This search engine provides documentary information on nearly 2,400 stamps released by Canada and British North America and approximately 40,000 individual descriptions of documents. It also allows on-line consultation of more than 16,400 digitized documents. The number of these documents is expected to increase regularly. Please notice that records related to stamps recently issued may not have yet been described at the item level. Descriptions are generally written in the language of the creator or donor, and English largely predominates. Two different research tools are offered: Visual search screens or the conventional keyword search.

Visual search screens: More than 90 screens display Canada's and British North America's postage stamps issued between 1851 and 2004. The stamps are arranged by postal administrations and, in most cases, within the chronological date of issue.

Keyword search: Simple search or detailed search options are available in addition to 3 types of approach: Stamp directory and records [searches for information on stamps, related archival documents and other archival documents], Stamp directory [searches for information on stamps] and

Records [searches for *Philatelic Collections* area documents]. One can limit the search to records with a digitized image.

Consult the Online Help button for additional information.

Biophil

The database on the creators of Canadian and British North American stamps contains biographical information on more than 200 individuals responsible for creating stamps. This database also includes administrative notices on the printers of stamps.

Stamp creators include artists, designers, as well as those in the employment of printers, such as draftspersons, graphic artists, and engravers. These may also include the creators of the works that are the main subject of individual stamps, such as painters, photographers, sculptors, etc. An alphabetical list of the names contained in the database is available for consultation. This research tool complements the reference documents for individual Canadian stamps. It provides links to more than 1,700 of these stamps and constitutes a solid information base on stamp creators. The database also provides a link to descriptions of the original works conserved by Library and Archives of Canada.

Canadian Post Office Publications

This online database provides access to about 26 000 pages of official administrative directives concerning the Canadian Post Office. Published between 1759 and 1900, these directives come primarily from three types of publications: the Canadian Official Postal Guide (1863 to 1900), administrative circulars (1812 to 1900) and a few federal government publications. These publications, digitized in both official languages when they are available, provide access to over 675 documents. An exhaustive list of publications, by type or chronological order, is accessible from the *Choose a document search screen*.

The database allows users to not only consult the original documents online (choose a document) but also to search full-text digital publications (search by word, phrase and date). This makes it possible to locate a post office, find the postage rate for a specific period, obtain instructions for mailing dangerous goods, etc.

Post Offices and Postmasters

The Post Offices and Postmasters database documents changes of postmasters at individual post offices located across Canada. The data relate to approximately 30,000 open and closed post offices located in the ten provinces and territories.

The data used to create the Post Office Index database originated from the series entitled Divisional Inspectors Reports (Series D-3). The Divisional Inspector was responsible for the observance of postal laws and regulations, the establishment of new offices and routes, the

regulation of existing routes, the investigation of robberies and abstractions, enquiries into complaints and misconduct, making regular personal visits to each post office and generally overseeing the performance of mail service. By 1861, each Divisional Inspector was responsible for between 200 and 400 post offices within his district. Initially, there were only two divisions, Canada East and Canada West, but by 1870 that number had grown to seven: Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, Toronto and London. As postal service expanded, additional Postal Divisions and Inspectorships were created.

The database has been created from a series of postal history record cards (vols. 3484-3536) documenting changes of postmasters at individual post offices located across Canada. Beginning in the early 1950s, the preparation of the cards was undertaken by the Public Affairs Unit using the files and letterbooks that were eventually turned over to LAC (series B-2 and D-3). Postal history cards for all provinces have been entered into the database and originals have been withdrawn from consultation for preservation purposes. The original register to the reports for the years 1875-1902 has not survived.

Government of Canada files

The database contains about 1,2 million descriptions of files created by departments and agencies of the Federal Government of Canada including over 50,000 digital images. These lists are useful for anyone interested in the federal government records held by Library and Archives Canada. Descriptions are written mainly in the language of the creator, with most descriptions in English. When using the keyword search, restrict your research to the Post Office Department.

The Philatelic Library

Through bequests, donations, and other means, the *Philatelic Collections* have acquired a collection of philatelic works comprised of more than 20 000 titles, published from 1623 to today. This collection includes a variety of documents such as monographs, specialized catalogues, brochures and series on philately, as well as numerous works about the history of Canadian and international postal services. This research tool is essentially a catalogue of the philatelic library. It can be used to conduct searches of the 8,000 catalogued titles, including monographs, catalogues and periodicals. It should be noted that auction catalogues are not yet described in the database. It is possible to borrow these publications from the Interlibrary loans.

The Periodical Collection

The periodical collection on philately and postal history is comprised of more than 1, 500 different titles published from 1863 to the

present days. This collection has been formed through bequests, donations, and other means and represents the most important collection of its kind in Canada. The collection includes most of the philatelic periodicals published in Canada and a wide range of publications from all over the world. One will find serials, older and current publications, those published by the Post Office Department and Canada Post, local bulletins of stamp clubs as well those published by national and international philatelic societies.

The listing, organized by title of the periodicals, represents an exhaustive inventory of the holdings, titles' changes if applicable and identifies, where appropriate, the organization behind its publication. Most of the publications are also catalogued in the Canadian National Catalogue Amicus and the Philatelic Library Database. It is possible to borrow these publications from the Interlibrary loans

Philatelic Bibliography

This database on Canadian philately provides access to the 3 volume publication *Canadian Philately: Bibliography and Index* by Cimon Morin. The database represents more than 10,000 bibliographical references published between 1864 and 1993 and compiles the titles of publications on stamps, postal stationery, postal history and postal markings in Canada and British North America. This bibliography covers published monographs, brochures, specialized catalogues and auction catalogues, as well as articles that have appeared in periodicals, exhibition catalogues and more general works. It provides bibliographic references for English and French language publications. The vast majority of these publications are available within the Philatelic Library. It is also possible to consult the Periodical collection for further details about the holdings. Texts of the articles are not available on this site, but can be obtained through interlibrary loan at your local library.

Additional databases

In addition to Digital Collections and Virtual Exhibitions, search AMICUS and ArchiviaNet for access to further materials.

Amicus: Provides bibliographic information about books, periodicals, music, video and other published materials in Library and Archives Canada's collection. AMICUS also shows holdings for other Canadian libraries.

ArchiviaNet: Provides access to archival holdings from governmental and private sources, including textual documents, maps, works of art, photographs, videos and films, sound recordings, architectural drawings and medals. There are more than 25 specific databases available.

Visit Library and Archives Canada

The main public building of Library and Archives Canada is located in downtown Ottawa at: 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, ON K1A 0N4 CANADA. Telephone: (613) 996-5115 or 1-866-578-7777 (toll free in Canada and the US).

What are the hours of Library and Archives Canada's collection and services? 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (except statutory holidays).

Consulting the Collection

Our on-site services are available to all registered users without appointment. Simply visit the reference desk on the second or third floors to get started! In some cases, reference staff may determine that consultation with a specialist is necessary to help answer your question. An appointment can be booked with a subject specialist at that time. When you use the reading or reference rooms you should only bring with you the things that you need for your research — research notes, pencils, laptop computer or tape recorder. You must leave your coat, umbrella, briefcase, etc. in a locker. Lockers are located on the ground floor and keys are available at the commissionaire's desk. There is no fee to use the lockers.

You need a user card to consult Library and Archives Canada material on site. You can apply for a card at the registration desk in the main lobby.

Once you place a request to consult material at Library and Archives Canada, it will be retrieved for you and made available for consultation in the Reading and Consultation rooms. Some library reference materials and self-service microfilm are available in these rooms and can be consulted without placing a request. To maintain the integrity of the collection, material may not be removed from the building.

If you expect to use Library and Archives Canada material outside of service hours, or you will need to consult the collection over a long period of time, you can apply for a book locker. Consult the Circulation Services counter next to the Library Reading Room on the second floor or staff in the Consultation Room for more information.

Please note that certain materials may not be available for consultation due to restrictions of the *Copyright Act*, the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act*, as well as limitations imposed by donors. In order to preserve the quality of our collection, you may be asked to use consultation copies, where they exist, instead of original documents.

Library and Archives Canada provides a comprehensive range of services based on our collections and the expertise of our staff specialists. Our reference specialists are always available to help you with your research, to help you find answers for your questions, and to

assist you in using our collections and resources. We can assist you with your subject and bibliographic requests, show you how to use our automated systems and CD-ROM products, help you conduct online searches or refer you to other specialized collections.

Contact us for help through our toll-free telephone number, online, by e-mail, fax and mail. We offer services in English and French and will respond to your questions within 2, 5, 10 or 30 days, depending on the nature of the question.

The reference collection for published materials is found in the Library Reference Room on the second floor of Library and Archives Canada. Published reference materials include indexes, abstracts, biographies, directories, bibliographies, atlases, dictionaries and almanacs. You will also find public workstations for using our online catalogues and CD-ROM products. Reference materials for special collections such as music, children's literature, literary manuscripts and rare books can be accessed through the Reference Room on the second floor.

For unpublished archival materials, visit the Archives Reference Room on the third floor. There you will find finding aids (printed paper and electronic inventories, file lists, indexes and card catalogues) that describe our multimedia holdings.

The reference rooms are open from 8:30 to 5:00, Monday to Friday.

Send inquiries via e-mail and prepare your visit ahead of time:

reference@lac-bac.gc.ca

Consult the web site: www.collectionscanada.ca

