

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA'S NEW WEB SITE: www.archives.ca

by Cimon Morin

The National Archives of Canada, in cooperation with Canada Post, launched the Canadian Postal Archives web site on August 31, 2001.

The new Canadian Postal Archives web site – accessible at www.archives.ca – contains the first 5000 philatelic documents to have been digitized for easier access by all Canadians. The site will be fully developed over the next three years to reflect the core philatelic archival collection and library of the National Archives and will eventually contain some 16,000 digitized items. This new site would not have been possible without the support and cooperation of Canada Post.

The Canadian Postal Archives web site will provide a single point of entry, in both official languages, to information on stamps and postal history. It contains information on the history and production of each stamp issued by Canada since 1851. There are also descriptions of more than 35,000 documents from the philatelic collections, as well as thematic virtual exhibitions and a research device accessible by both visual and keyword screens. In addition, several thematic games allow visitors to discover and explore the treasures of this philatelic heritage.

The site includes search engines that are linked to the Philatelic Library's catalogue database, to a database relating to post offices, to the general inventory of collections, to descriptions of historical files from the Post Office Department, and other databases of photographic, documentary art and audiovisual records. Some of the features which will be of interest to postal historians include:

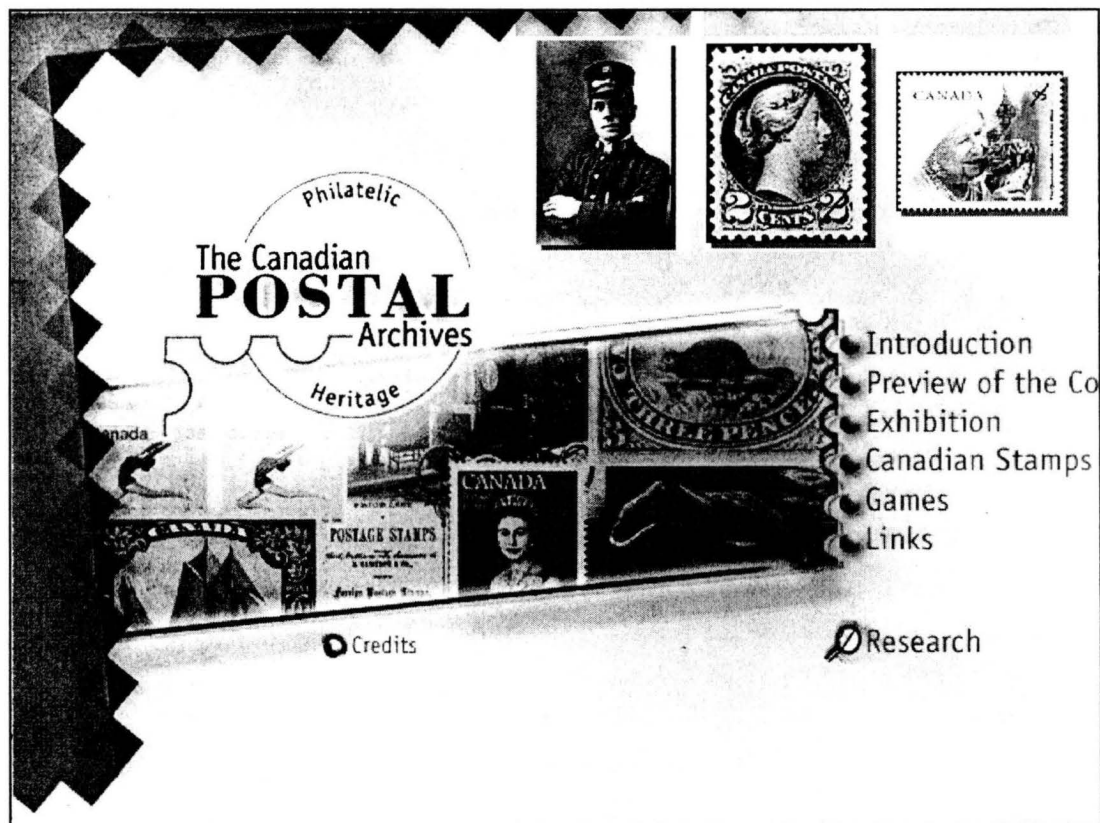
- *General Inventory*: An excellent starting point for any research, this presents the entire holdings of the National Archives, including about 900 philatelic acquisitions.
- *Philatis - Postal Archives*: Information about Canada's postage stamps and descriptions of records from the Canadian Postal Archives collection. The search engine provides documentary information on nearly 2300 stamps released by Canadian and other British North American postal administrations, and about 35,000 descriptions of documents, with on-line consultation of more than 5000 digitized documents possible; this number is expected to increase regularly.
- *Philatelic Library*: Detailed inventory of the 6500 monographs, brochures, and catalogues in the collection of the National Archives philatelic library.
- *Post Offices and Postmasters*: Information regarding Canada's post offices and postmasters in all provinces and territories, with tens of thousands of records.
- *Government of Canada Files*: Over one million descriptions of files created by departments and agencies of the Government of Canada. Searches restricted to RG3 only will turn up the files related to the Post Office.
- *Photographs*: Several hundred thousand descriptions of photographs, of which some thousands are digitized and available for viewing on line. Some are related to postal themes.
- *Documentary Art*: Several hundred thousand descriptions of works of art related to Canadian history, some of which are postally related.
- *Film, Video, and Sound*: Hundreds of thousands of descriptions of film, video, and sound recordings held by the National Archives, hundreds of which are related to philately and postal records.

Visitors to the Canadian Postal Archives web site will also have links to related sites such as Canada Post Corporation, the Canadian Postal Museum, the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada and the British North America Philatelic Society.

With approximately one million items, the philatelic collections are composed of postage stamps and related materials, including all aspects of original stamp design up to final production; postal stationery;

selected postally-used covers; postmark proofs; philatelic labels and revenue stamps. The philatelic collections continue to grow due to the regular addition of original documents from Canada Post and, to a lesser extent, to the acquisition of philatelic documents from the private sector. The foreign stamps received from the Universal Postal Union and the hundreds of thousands of postal markings and cancellations, which represent an important source of information for postal historians, should also be mentioned.

The National Archives of Canada is located at 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0N3. Visitors are welcome during regular business hours.



The National Archives web site is optimized for Internet Explorer 5 and Netscape Navigator 4.7.

