

Charlotte Lloyd: The First Female Philatelist of Quebec City

By Luc Frève

In the early days of mail, the cost of sending a letter was written on the front of the envelope by the postmaster. In 1841, Great Britain introduced a major change by releasing the one-penny stamp, which was affixed on the front to indicate prepayment. Other countries subsequently adopted that system, including Canada. Our postal authority issued its first stamps in 1851. It did not take long before stamps attracted the interest of collectors—philately was born. Philately, the collection and study of stamps, was promoted through networks of dealers, exchange circuits, and dedicated societies.

In 1892, Ernest F. Würtele, a local accountant and then President of the Canadian Philatelist Association, started the first stamp club in Quebec City. During its short existence, the Quebec Philatelic Club, which met on a regular basis, included thirty philatelists, mainly from the bilingual bourgeoisie of the city.¹ It is not surprising to discover that members of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec joined the club. The names of LHSQ members Gaspard Lemoine, Montefiore Joseph, William Brodie, and John S. Fry appear in the Club's minutes.

Men represented the vast majority of philatelists at the end of the 19th century. Most clubs and societies were restricted to men, and even when women were allowed, only a few became members. The Quebec Philatelic Club was no different. The minutes of its

March 1895 meeting, however, show that the club was ready to include women.² Unfortunately, no names are listed and we do not know if the resolution was passed because no minutes from the subsequent meetings exist.

While reviewing old philatelic publications, I found a brief article in *The Canada Stamp Sheet* that discussed an unusual event involving a Miss Charlotte Lloyd (1840–1930) from Quebec City. According to my research, she was the first woman known to collect stamps in Quebec City.

The story begins on Sunday, December 14, 1902, when Quebec City's Victoria Hotel burned down. This was a major event, reported in all major newspapers across the province.³ The fire started in the basement around 3:30 p.m. After a furnace explosion, it quickly reached the main level, preventing anyone from exiting. Clients and employees then moved to the upper floors and waited by the windows to be rescued by firefighters. Unfortunately, not everyone escaped: two employees died in the blaze. Losses would have been greater if the fire had occurred at another time of the day, but since it happened mid-afternoon, most guests had left the hotel to go about their business.⁴

Charlotte Lloyd was in her room when the fire broke out. She was the daughter of Catherine Pozer (1815–1890) and Thomas Lloyd (1803–1885), a lawyer and



Figure 1: Postcard sent in 1911 by Charlotte Lloyd to a correspondent in Spain (front)
Collection of Luc Frève



Fig. 2: Postcard sent in 1911 by Charlotte Lloyd to a correspondent in Spain (back).
Collection of Luc Frève

clerk of the Journals of the Legislative Council. From 1884 onwards, she lived in several apartments in the Upper Town.⁵ In 1902, she took a room at the Victoria Hotel while she was between apartments.

She later related the events of the Victoria Hotel fire to *The Canadian Stamp Sheet*:

"I had made all arrangements for removal from the Victoria to Henchey's Hotel on Saturday, everything being packed, when I suddenly decided to remain over where I was until Monday morning. Sunday afternoon I went out to see a friend, and on my return to the hotel passed through the office, and asking the clerk for my large stamp album, which I invariably kept in the safe, I took it up to my room intending to lock it in my trunk with other valuables for removal next morning. I had been but a short time there, and wanting something I rung [sic] for a maid, who after attending to the message left the room, returning almost

immediately with a terrified face and the news that the building was on fire. I caught up my album, which lay on the bed, and rushed out into the passage which was already filled with thick black smoke. Seeing that there was no chance of exit by means of the stairs, I was for a moment bewildered as to what to do, when suddenly I thought of a window in an adjoining room from which a back roof might possibly be reached. Finding the door locked, I threw all my weight against it and the panels gave way. A couple of girls who were almost suffocated and had given themselves up for lost seeing my action followed me through the panel, and between us we managed to break open the two sashes of the window. Whether I was slower in my movements than the other two I cannot now say, but in any case they managed to escape the fire and get out before me. As I climbed over the window[,] still the flames rushed out, making me lose hold of the album which tumbled back into the room, and badly scorched my face and neck. I then fell on the roof where several others had already

escaped, and after the lapse of half an hour was rescued with the rest and taken away. Although my loss is an irreparable one, and has grieved me very much, I feel that my providential escape from a cruel death amply compensates for all. Outside of the album referred to I had packed in my trunks two other albums filled with Canadian revenues and post cards, not to speak of thousands of loose duplicate stamps, stamp literature, etc. So far as I can remember, the most valuable single stamp of my collection was the Twelve Pence Canada, which Scott catalogues at five hundred dollars."⁶

Other than this sad event, little

is known about Lloyd's philatelic activities. Her name is not found on any member list of philatelic associations active in those years. It seems that she began collecting stamps around 1887, and by 1902, she had built an impressive collection valued at \$15,000, which represents \$450,000 in today's dollars!⁷ The loss of her collection in the fire did not discourage Lloyd, since we know that she continued collecting. In 1906, when she was 66 years old, she donated a Canadian stamp collection to the LHSQ.⁸ A postcard sent to Spain in 1911 (fig. 1 and fig. 2) proves that she was still actively exchanging postcards via the Universal Correspondence Club.

Only one other item remains today of her philatelic activities: a letter card sent to her in 1896 (fig. 3). A letter card is a small piece of thick paper folded so a short message can be written on the inner face. The sender can seal it and write the recipient's address

on the front. The recipient opens the letter card by detaching the sides along the perforations. The cost of sending a letter card was the same as an ordinary letter, which, in 1896, was one cent for local delivery or three cents when mailed elsewhere within Canada.⁹



Fig. 3: Letter card sent to Charlotte Lloyd from Rat Portage (now Kenora), Ontario, and received on April 19, 1896.

Collection of Luc Frève

This one-cent letter card was sent from Rat Portage to Miss Charlotte Lloyd, but the postage was insufficient by two cents. Following the *Canada Official Postal Guide* directives, the postmaster charged double the deficiency to the recipient (noted with "Due 4 c"). With no message written inside the letter card, we can presume the card

was used to send thin objects, such as stamps.

It is likely that Lloyd was among the candidates in question when the Quebec Philatelic Club contemplated opening its membership to women in 1895. As a part of Quebec City's bourgeoisie, Lloyd surely was in contact with members of the Club. Moreover, her important stamp collection represented a major asset if the Club wanted to increase its prestige.

In 1900, the distinguished Philatelic Society, London (known since 1906 as the Royal Philatelic Society, London) included only six women among its 268 members.¹⁰ The same year, two women were collecting stamps in Montreal: Mrs. C. Bale was accepted into the Canadian Philatelic Club in May 1900, and Mrs. Elvira Oughtred joined the League of Canadian Philatelists in June 1900.¹¹ We do not know, however, when they began collecting or the size

| Transactions

of their collections. To have begun collecting stamps in 1887 qualifies Charlotte Lloyd as a pioneer of Canadian philately. She was the first woman known to be a philatelist in Quebec City and perhaps in the province of Quebec. ■

Endnotes

1. Yves Drolet, *Notice historique sur les philatélistes du Québec à l'époque victorienne* (Montreal: n.p., 2018).
2. *The Dominion Philatelist* VII, no. 75 (March 1895): 45–46.
3. "Incendie de l'hôtel Victoria, à Québec," *La Presse*, December 15, 1902, available at: <http://bilan.usherbrooke.ca/bilan/pages/evenements/20752.html>
4. *The Quebec Daily Mercury*, December 15, 1902, 1; *Le Soleil*, December 15, 1902, 1.
5. T.L. Boulanger, and E. Marcotte, *L'indicateur de Québec & Lévis* (Québec: Boulanger & Marcotte, 1887–1892; 1901–1902).
6. Cited in Rockmaple, "Quebec Jottings," *The Canada Stamp Sheet* IV, no. 6 (March 1, 1903): 189.
7. *The Quebec Daily Mercury*, December 15, 1902, 1
8. In the 1906 Librarian's Report for the Annual General Meeting, Frederick C. Würtele wrote: "A fine collection of Canadian postage stamps has been offered to the Society, on certain conditions, by Miss Charlotte Lloyd." "Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, Annual General Meeting, 9th January, 1907," *Transactions: Sessions of 1906–07*, no. 27 (1908): 7.
9. *Canada Official Postal Guide* (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1896), available at: <https://www.postalhistorycanada.net/php/Library/references/POD1896-01-00COPG.pdf>
10. *The London Philatelist* IX, no. 102 (June 1900): 172.
11. *The Jubilee Philatelist* 1, no. 8 (May 20, 1900): 59; *The Montreal Philatelist* 2, no. 12 (June 1900): 151.

Society Pages Art Contest: A Tie!

By Kathleen Hulley

This past winter, the Morrin Centre held an art contest. The contest was open to all types of visual arts, from watercolour and oil painting to drawing, mixed media, and photography. We were in particular looking for scenes related to Quebec City or works that feature the Morrin Centre and its surroundings.

We were thrilled with the submissions that we received, and picking a winner was a difficult task for our committee. In the end, we had a tie and the winners will have their images on the cover of two different issues of *Society Pages*. Congratulations to Alina Sarsebekova and France Dupuis!

Alina Sarsebekova's work, *Memories from the Past*, appears on the cover of this issue of *Society Pages*.

Her striking image captures the dynamic spirit of the Morrin Centre's literary activities and the library. Moreover, it is a fitting cover illustration for an issue that features our upcoming Imagination Writers' Festival.

Stay tuned for France Dupuis' painting *Kirk Hall, St. Andrews' Church, and the Manse*, which will be on the cover of the Summer 2021 issue of *Society Pages*. It beautifully depicts the Morrin Centre's surroundings.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those who submitted their work and, above all, to encourage everyone to keep creating! ■