



Figure 1: Canada's stamp to honor the 125th anniversary of the UPU will be issued August 26.

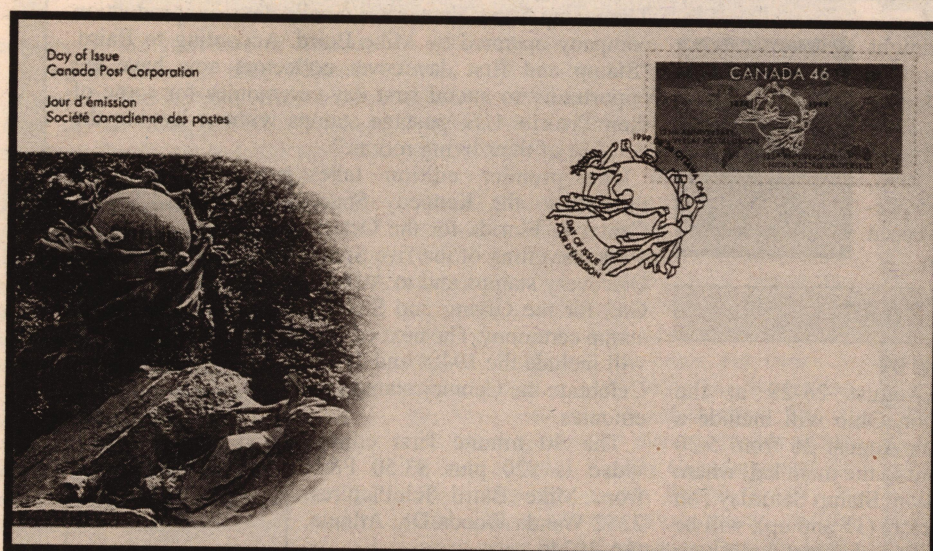


Figure 2: Canada Post's official first day cover showing, as a cachet, Saint-Marceau's sculpture that was the basis for the logo of the UPU approved in 1967.

Canada and the UPU

▼ CHARLES J. G. VERGE

In 1999, Canada along with many other countries celebrates the 125th anniversary of the Universal Postal Union (UPU). Founded in 1874 as the General Postal Union (GPU), it changed its name to Universal Postal Union in 1878.

The UPU owed its beginning to the initiative of United States Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, who helped organize a conference in Paris, in 1863, to discuss postal reform at the international level. Fifteen European and American countries drew up a number of general principles for the conveyance of international mails.

Unfortunately these had a limited scope and were not very useful. The American Civil War (1861-65) and then the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) intervened before any other improvements could be put forward for the international handling of the mails.

Heinrich von Stephan of the North German Postal Confederation took the next steps. His plan for an international postal union was discussed at an international conference set up by the Swiss government in Berne. The treaty of Berne of Oct. 9, 1874, now celebrated as World Post Day, was signed on that day by 21 of the 22 countries present (France signed later) and took effect July 1, 1875. It is this October 9, anniversary that Canada commemorates with the issue of a single stamp (Figure 1) on Aug. 26, 1999.

The design of the stamp represents the UPU logo superimposed upon a map of the world. Pierre-Yves Pelletier explains his design by saying "the logo of the UPU dominates the map of the world on the stamp and the single color (green) illustrates the single territory created by the UPU, permitting the free flow of mail."

The UPU's logo, its official emblem, takes its inspiration from a monument erected in Berne at the beginning of the century. French artist René de Saint-Marceau's sculpture depicts five messengers, representing the five continents, passing letters around the globe. Although this sculpture and its graphic representation have long been seen as representative of the UPU, it was not adopted as the UPU's official emblem until 1967. A photo of the sculpture is used as the cachet for Canada Post's official first day cover (Figure 2).

The stamp was printed by the Canadian Bank Note Co. and is wider than the normal horizontal commemorative to accommodate the map of the world. It measures 56 x 27.5mm and is printed in six color lithography on Tullis Russell paper, tagged on four sides and perforated 13. It is available in sheets of 20 stamps.

Canada did not join many of the other countries of the British Commonwealth in celebrating the 75th anniversary of the UPU in 1949. In 1974, with virtually all the other postal issuing entities, it did issue two stamps for the 100th anniversary (Figure 3). The stamps (Canada Scott 648-649) were issued on the exact date of the anniversary, Oct. 9, 1974.



Figure 3: Canada Scott 648-649 issued for the 100th anniversary of the UPU in 1974.

The design represents Mercury and winged horse on the left and the logo of the UPU on the right. The 8¢ stamps paid the domestic letter rate for up to one ounce in effect from Jan. 1, 1972, to Aug. 31, 1976.

The second stamp, a 15-cent value, paid the airmail rate for up to 1/2 ounce to Europe and the Caribbean in effect from July 15, 1964 to Dec. 31, 1975.

There are at least three recognized varieties in this issue. A red vertical hairline and a "ghost print" ("Canada" and "8" doubled) are found on the 8¢ stamp. The third variety is a printing of the 15¢ on hibrite paper. All the varieties are fairly common and do not command major premiums.

Four years later, the centennial of Canada's admission to the UPU was the prime theme for Canada's second World Philatelic Exhibition, CAPEX '78. On June 10, 1978, the exhibition's opening day Canada Post issued Canada's first souvenir sheet (Canada Scott 756a, Figure 4). The sheet, like all the stamps issued for CAPEX '78, had a stamp-on-stamp motif.

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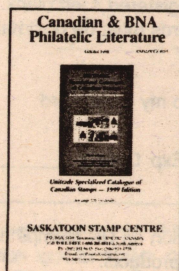
Cat#	Description	Single
454iii var	1¢ vert perfs shifted 9mm right as above, block 4 @\$105.00	27.95
454iii var4	1¢ vert perfs shifted 3mm right	8.95
457piv var2	4¢ vert perfs shifted 3mm right as above, block 4 @\$27.95	7.65
460pii var1	6¢ black vert perfs 7mm to right & horiz perfs 12mm up	65.00
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Figure 4:
Canada
Scott 756a.
The CAPEX
'78 sou-
venir sheet
issued for
the World
Philatelic
Exhibition
and the
100th
anniversary
of Canada's
entry into
the UPU.



Three pairs of the Province of Canada stamps graced the souvenir sheet (Canada Scott 2, 7 and 8). The souvenir sheet is the only source of the untaxed \$1.25 stamp (the registration fee for up to \$100 value in effect April 1, 1978, to March 31, 1979).

In addition, the souvenir sheet includes the logos of CAPEX '78 and the UPU. The only reference to the UPU anniversary was the "CANADA 1878-1978" below the UPU logo.

Canada did not attend the 1874 conference as Dominions and colonies were not invited. It was represented by Great Britain. The delegates were concerned about voting rights. Should each colony have the right to vote on GPU affairs?

They were also concerned about the imagined costs of lengthy overseas transit. Perhaps because of these two reasons and the additional maneuvering for individual national advantage, Canada's admittance was objected to by France and Spain.

In response to this refusal to admit Canada, the United Kingdom extended the new, lower five cents per 1/2 ounce UPU rate to Canada (Figure 5) without any surtax for the lengthy Atlantic passage. This was known as the preferential rate and came into effect on Oct. 1, 1875, and continued until Canada joined the UPU on July 1, 1878.

Preferred rates also existed between Canada and Newfoundland and Canada and Germany. The Newfoundland five-cents preferred rate came into effect on Jan. 1, 1877, as a result of a unilateral reduction in rate to five-cents by Newfoundland on Aug. 29, 1876. The five-cents rate with Germany was negotiated by Canada to match the five-cents United Kingdom preferred rate and the UPU's five-cents rate.

UPU regulations allowed member countries, in this case Germany, to enter into bilateral agreements with other member or nonmember countries. This rate came into effect April 1, 1877.

Even after joining the UPU in 1878, Canada maintained special rates below the five cents per 1/2 ounce prescribed by the UPU. These reduced rates with the United States were: three cents per 1/2 ounce that had been in effect since Feb. 1, 1875; three cents per ounce that came into effect on May 8, 1889 and two cents per ounce in effect on Jan. 1, 1899. With Newfoundland, the five-cents rate in effect since Jan. 1, 1877 was reduced to three cents per ounce on July 1, 1893. Finally Canada joined the other members of the British Empire to reduce the letter rate to one penny sterling or two cents per 1/2 ounce on Dec. 25, 1898.

The admission of Canada to the UPU in 1878 reduced some of the rates for Canadians quite considerably and can partly account for the vast increase in the use of the mails from that time on. Examples of very high rates prior to 1878 are a 23-cent rate per 1/2 ounce to Australia (Figure 6) and a 10 cents per 1/2 ounce to France (Figure 7).

In addition to the letter rate, many other rates were reduced by the creation of the UPU, and the conveyance of mails was improved dramatically.

Still today, 125 years later, the UPU serves the world community extremely well and continues to improve the delivery of mail. When postal administrations created the UPU in 1874, they started the world's largest distribution network. Despite new modes of communications and computers that have invaded the preserve of letter writ-



Figure 6: The 23 cents per 1/2 ounce pre-UPU rate to Australia via England.

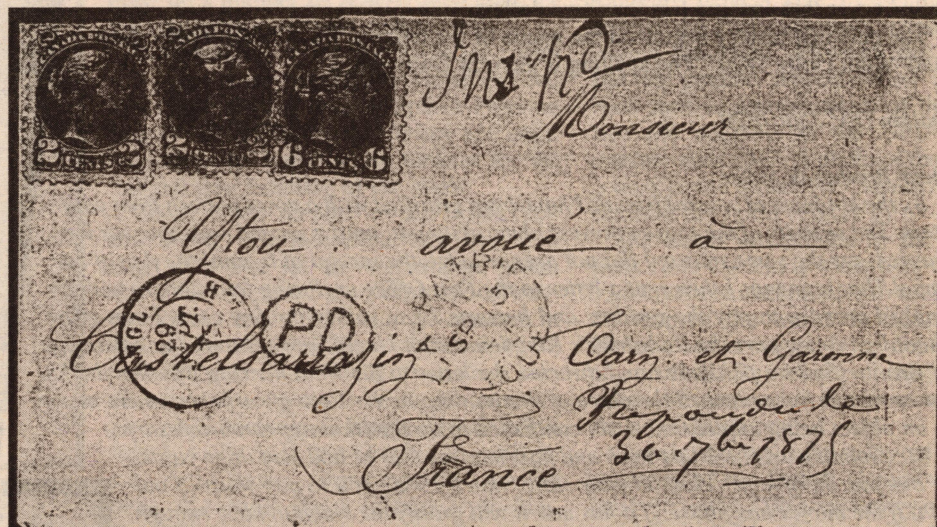


Figure 7: The 10 cents per 1/2 ounce pre-UPU rate to France.

ing, mail volumes in real terms, continue to increase.

The UPU maintains that the need for their organization is "as great (today), if not greater, than when it was created." In 1948, the UPU became a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) and maintains

close ties with other UN programs and agencies. The UPU, in Berne, Switzerland, provides secretariat and support facilities, promotes technical cooperation among members and acts as a clearing house for the settlement of accounts between postal administrations.

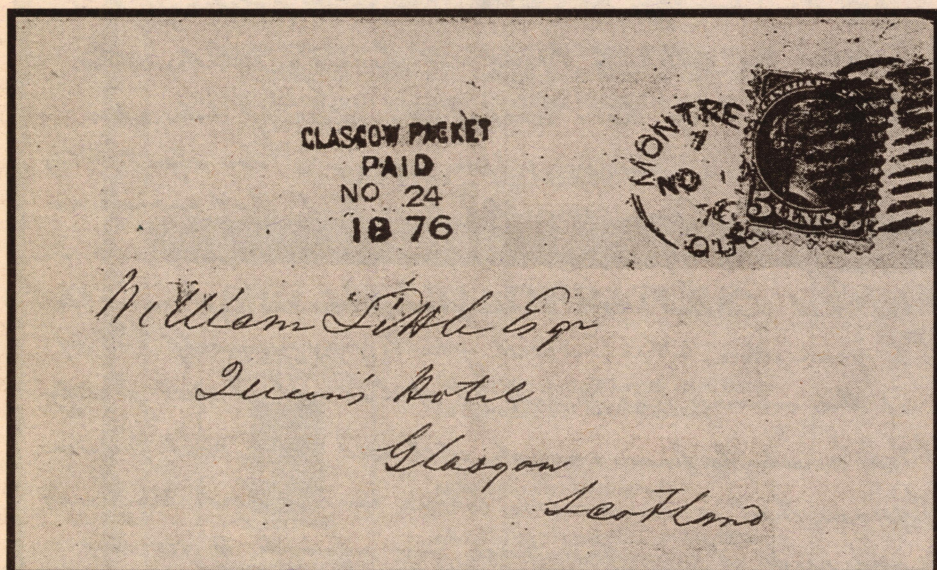
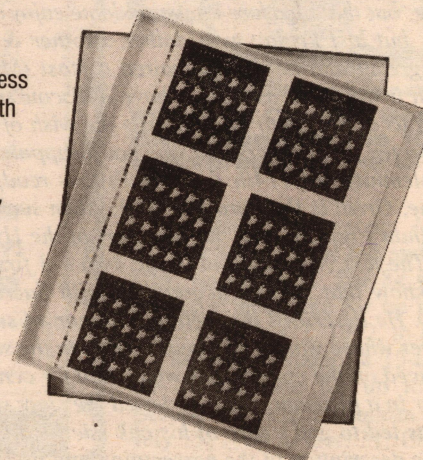


Figure 5: An example of the preferential rate given to Canada by Great Britain after Canada had been refused entry into the UPU in 1874. This five-cents rate came into effect on Oct. 1, 1875 and continued until Canada joined the UPU on July 1, 1878.

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