

Canada issued 1962 stamp to stimulate awareness of importance of education

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In 1962, the Canadian government wanted to stimulate public awareness of the importance of education. The Canadian Post Office Department (CPO) decided to promote this endeavor by issuing a 5¢ commemorative stamp (Scott 396, Figure 1). It was generally believed that the more Canadians became interested in the quest for higher education, the greater the growth in the strength of the country. The stamp design contains a wealth of thematic items.

In fall 1961, the CPO approached one of its regular artists, Helen Roberta Fitzgerald (Figure 2), to prepare a series of sketches for the proposed stamp.

Fitzgerald graduated from the Ontario College of Art in 1945 and taught there from graduation until 1980. She also worked as a freelance graphic designer, calligrapher, layout artist and textile artist. In 1959, she was the first woman to design a Canadian stamp, a 5¢ stamp honoring Associated Country Women of the World (Scott 385).

Fitzgerald's essays for the 5¢ Education stamp were prepared with colored inks and pencils, and drawn on paper. Her first drawing, titled "Advance through education," employed the elements that would carry through

to the final design: a student and symbols representing the varied fields of education.

Her second drawing incorporated the new wording chosen by the CPO: "Strength through education." She superimposed the word "Canada" on a ribbon. Her third design shows a male and female student holding degrees; she gave it a circular look rather than the square used for the previous essay. These three essays are shown in Figure 3.

The CPO considered the third design to be too reminiscent of Fitzgerald's 1960 5¢ Girl Guides stamp (Scott 389, Figure 4). They asked her to revise her design again into a rectangular shape and to remove the ribbon. While preparing the new essay, she increased the number of education symbols to include, among many others, a clarinet in the lower left corner. Another revision was called for, and in her penultimate design, the symbols were refined, and some were removed, added or redesigned. The final drawing softened the shadow between the outer symbols and the wording (Figure 5).

Although black had been chosen as one of the inks, the final brown shade was a matter of discussion between the CPO and the engravers and print-

er, the Canadian Bank Note Co. Ltd. (CBN). The CPO and CBN had their own numbering system for colors, and they discussed four shades of brown



Figure 3. Three of Fitzgerald's preliminary essays, in order of production from top to bottom, promote "Advance through education" and "Strength through education." The third shows students holding degrees.



Figure 1. Canada issued this 5¢ commemorative in 1962 (Scott 396) to promote Strength through Education.



Figure 2. Helen R. Fitzgerald, designer of the 5¢ Strength through Education stamp.



Figure 4. One of Fitzgerald's preliminary designs for the Education stamp was rejected because it too closely resembled the 1960 5c Girl Guide 50th Anniversary stamp.

(numbered 4, 13, 13Y and 14). Starting December 12, 1961, CBN pulled a number of proofs using these browns. Deputy Postmaster General W.H. Wilson approved a die proof with 13Y brown for engraving December 21. On December 17, Postmaster General William Hamilton (1919-89, PMG 1957-62) selected 14 brown as the color for the stamp. Wilson approved the die proof in this color for engraving December 29 (Figure 6).

Three other essays are known by unrecorded artists. They are all simple gouache-on-card designs and are shown in Figure 7. The French spelling of "Éducation" may indicate that a French-Canadian artist prepared the design. The lines scratched through the gouache technique on the third essay are an unusual feature.

Yves Baril engraved the approved design for the 5c Education stamp, and the lettering was created by Donald J. Mitchell. Both men were employees of the CBN. CBN printed 33,260,000

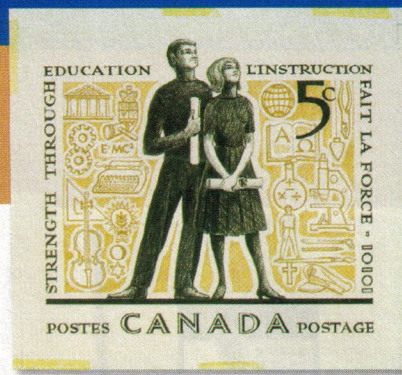


Figure 5. Fitzgerald continued to refine her designs in these three essays for the Strength in Education stamp, by adding, removing and redesigning symbols.



stamps perforated 12 in sheets of 400 with plate information in each corner of the sheet. The sheet was later cut into post office panes of 100.

Although there are no major recurrent varieties reported, there are a number of stamps that show misregistration of the colors because the sheet had to be fed through the printing press twice. One stamp is recorded as having the yellow-brown symbols missing. This was caused by a unique corner fold.

One of the more important facets of this stamp is the abundance of thematic designs it contains. Because most of them are small and in the background

in a pale color, they are listed here for the benefit of readers who are interested in the detailed description of a stamp and its thematic possibilities.

Behind the male figure on the left are the following iconic symbols, starting at the top left and going clockwise, and their meaning in the education world:

1. Greek temple: respect for the achievements of past history.
2. Coat of arms and gavel: law and government.
3. $E=MC^2$: Einstein's theory of relativity and the atomic age.
4. Typewriter: business management.
5. Sun with planets, earth and water: study of life and matter.
6. Moon and star: study of outer space and the universe.
7. Violin: music
8. Set square: architecture and other forms of structural planning.
9. Gear wheels: engineering and industry.



Figure 6. Deputy Postmaster General W.H. Wilson approved this die proof for color and engraving December 21, 1961.

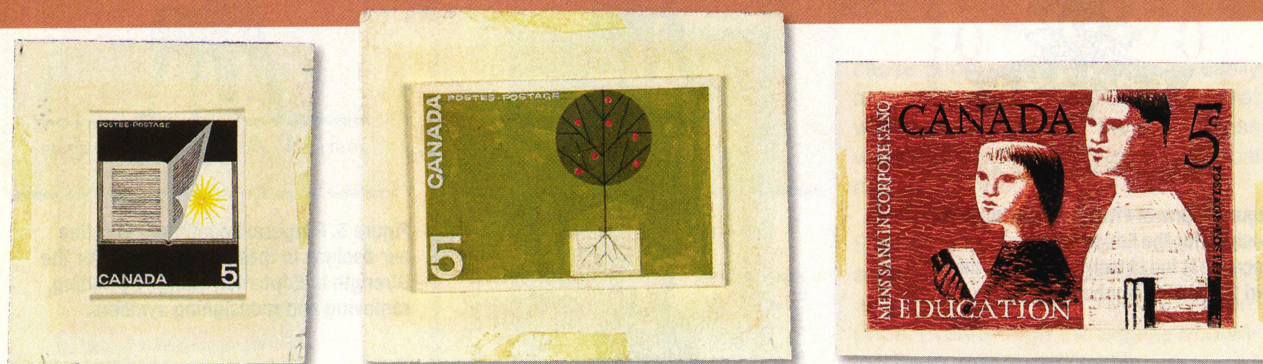


Figure 7. These three essays for the Education stamp were created by unrecorded artists. They are all simple gouache-on-card designs.

In front of the female figure and starting at the top left and going clockwise are:

10. Globe: international relations, political, social and geographical.

11. Carpenter's plumb and pliers: skilled trades.

12. Microscope: scientific research.

13. Sculptor's tool, pencil and brush: visual arts and design.

14. Officer's cap: armed services.

15. Cross: the church as a vocation.

16. Man: physical, mental and spiritual study of the human person.

17. Flask: chemistry and skilled sciences.

18. Plus, minus, multiplication and division signs on the flask: mathematics, economics and banking.

19. Alpha and Omega superimposed on a book: literature and written languages.

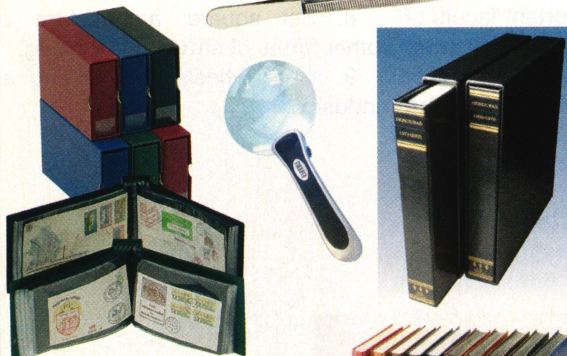
If one looks closely at the symbols, they are not proportionate to one another. Fitzgerald used artistic license to ensure a balance between the male and female figures and the symbols, and between the symbols on the left and the right. ■

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