

Canada's specialized catalogs from 1889 to present

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The study of the stamp hobby in an analytical and scientific way had its beginnings in the middle of the 19th century, when collectors and stamp dealers started publishing magazines, catalogs and albums.

However, specialization to the degree we see today only came about in the middle of the 20th century, when more people became students of the hobby and publishing became easier. Money was available, there was growth in the middle class and the markets became large enough for publishers to make a living printing philatelic literature at an affordable price.

The hobby wasn't yet 50 years old when collectors demanded more specialization in their philatelic literature. The worldwide annual general catalogs introduced by Scott, Gibbons, Yvert et Tellier and others were — and are still today — sufficient to meet the needs of the majority of stamp collectors.

But some advanced collectors wanted more. Among them were many collectors of British North America (BNA), which includes Canada and the stamp-issuing provinces.

In the beginning, definitive handbooks were prepared. In addition to listing and

sometimes valuing the stamps of BNA, they provided background information about stamps, their designers, the printers, the production methods and, in some handbooks, quotes from official documents. The first of these was the 68-page *The Postage Stamps, Envelopes, Wrappers and Post Cards of the North America Colonies of Great Britain*, compiled and published in 1889 by the Philatelic Society, London (later to become the Royal Philatelic Society, London).

Sir Edward D. Bacon (1860-1938) authored most of the book. In 1913, he became Keeper of the Royal Collection (or Philatelist to the King, as the position was then known). The book was a compendium of every issue produced by the colonies of BNA to that date, and included rate information, extracts from postal notices, and six pages of black-and-white autotype illustrations.

The next publication was the erudite *Canada – Its Postage Stamps and Postal Stationery*. Published by the New England Stamp Company in 1911, this 287-page book, with 15 separate plates mounted in the front cover, contained detailed information laid out in a more narrative form than its predecessor, and with interesting anecdotes related to, and reasons behind, stamp production in Canada. It was authored by Clifton Howes (1873-1936) and was the definitive authority on Canada for years.

Howes was President of the American Philatelic Society from 1915 to 1917. Although now severely out-of-date, the book still has much appeal, particularly with philatelic literature collectors and historians of the hobby.

In 1929, Fred Jarrett (1888-1979) published *Standard British North America Catalogue*. It included all of the stamps of BNA and the revenue stamps of Canada, and had an extensive section on postmarks and cancellations. Many auction houses still use it today, to identify postmarks by Jarrett numbers in their lot descriptions.

Jarrett had begun publishing smaller limited versions of his magnum opus in 1923 under the name *Postage Stamps of Canada*.

Then, in 1943, came L. Seale Holmes (1884-1961), who compiled the *Holmes Handbook and Catalogue of Canada*

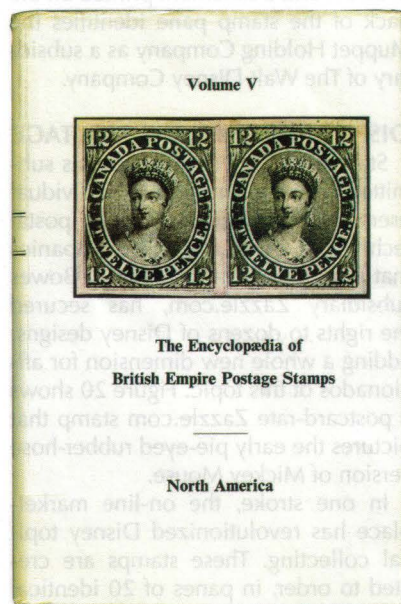


Figure 2. Robson Lowe included specialized listings for British North America in *The Encyclopædia of British Empire Postage Stamps*.

and *B.N.A.* It ran to 11 editions, the last being issued in 1968.

In the mid-1930s, Holmes, a medical doctor and stamp dealer, started publishing a dealer's price list that turned into his handbook. Although it had a following, it never attained the popularity of Jarrett's handbook or of *The Postage Stamps and Postal History of Canada*, published in 1945 and authored by Winthrop S. Boggs (1902-1974).

In his book, shown in Figure 1, Boggs was able to use the extensive collection of Alfred Lichtenstein to prepare his two-volume work, for which he was awarded the Crawford medal by the Royal Philatelic Society of London in 1947. Although it is out of date in many ways, the book still stands the test of times and is consulted regularly by specialists.

Published in 1973, the last of the all-encompassing handbooks to appear was *Volume V: North America* in Robson Lowe's *The Encyclopædia of British Empire Postage Stamps* (Figure 2). Part I of Volume V addressed "The Posts of the American Colonies 1606-1783," which became the United States of America. It was a subject not covered in previous BNA handbooks.

Although much of the Jarrett and Boggs information was updated, Lowe's

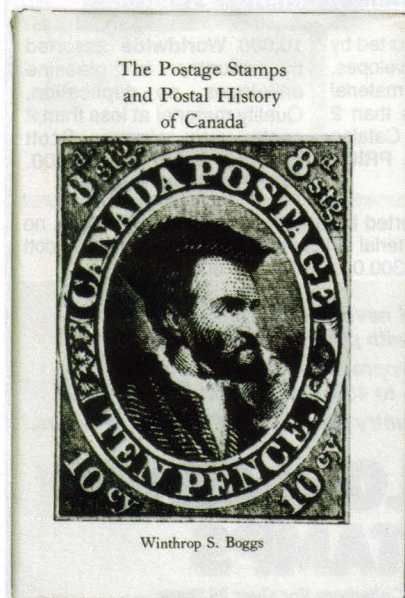
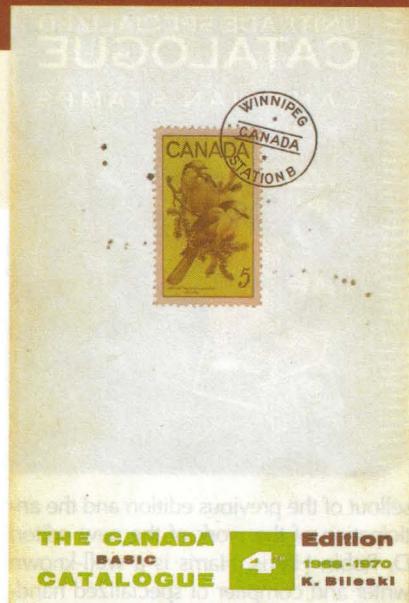
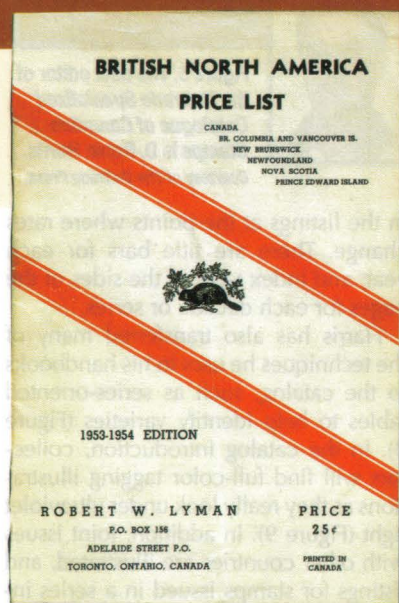


Figure 1. *The Postage Stamps and Postal History of Canada* by Winthrop S. Boggs was published in the 1940s and is still consulted by many specialists.



Volume V did not garner much support, as it did not cover the Elizabethan Era, an area that was becoming popular with collectors at the time because of the complexity of the 1967 Centennial issue and the 1973 Caricature definitives. The Howes and Boggs catalogs were reprinted in 1974 by Quarterman Publications, proving that there still was a demand by collectors for these classics.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, a few attempts were made to produce new catalogs by Robert Lyman, Kasimir Bileski, Will Gandley and Dwight Stanley, and Glen Hansen (Figure 3). In the case of the first three, basic catalogs were produced, although the ninth edition of the Gandley-Stanley effort was the first Canadian catalog published in full color.

Lyman, a Toronto dealer, published his *British North America Price List* in the early 1950s. His retail catalog was published in 40 editions between 1958 and 1985. Because of the volatility in the stamp market, the Lyman catalog was published twice yearly between 1978 and the summer of 1984.

Hansen published two editions (in 1970 and 1973), paying particular attention to the Elizabethan era (beginning in 1952), which had not been cataloged in a specialized way before.

The forerunners of today's specialized catalogs were introduced in 1974 and 1982.

In 1974, Toronto dealers Bill Maresch and Art Leggett published the *Canada Specialized Postage Stamp Catalogue*. Twelve editions were printed, using the Scott numbering system at first and later the Canadian numbering system that had been introduced in the Lyman catalogs. The catalog became popular and more

specialized as time went by, and was the authority used by the Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation (VGG) to authenticate BNA material.

Unfortunately, there are repercussions of that decision still today, since many certificates prepared by the VGG at the time still bear numbers from a numbering system not in use for more than 15 years. This is confusing to potential buyers and new dealers who are not aware of the history behind the numbers used on older VGG certificates, and who may not have access to the catalogs that used these numbers.

In 1982, George Papaspyrou, who had been the editor of the Lyman catalogs, convinced Charlton Press (the printers of the Lyman catalogs) that there was a need for a specialized catalog more like

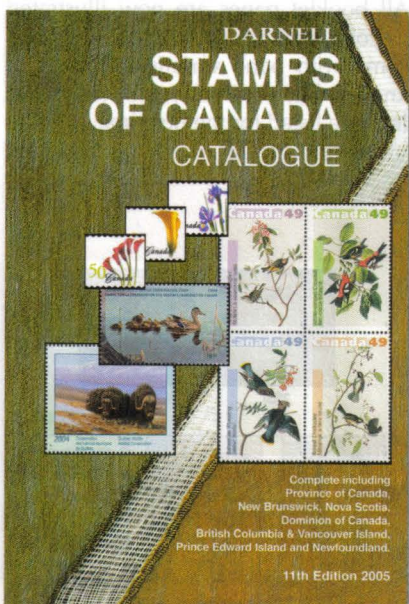


Figure 3. Catalogs issued from the 1950s to the 1970s include these efforts from Robert Lyman and Kasimir Bileski.

the handbooks of the past. He intended to publish it in three volumes, but only Volume 3 — *Elizabethan Era of The Charlton Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Postage Stamps* — was completed, and only one edition was ever printed.

The first of the two extant BNA specialized catalogs made its appearance in 1979. The *Darnell Stamps of Canada* was first published in black and white and was the first bilingual catalog ever published in Canada. Darnell had another first in 1985 when it published a French version of the catalog. The 2005 version of the Darnell catalog is the 11th edition.

Editor Lyse Darnell recently introduced a new catalog on the subject of errors, freaks and oddities: *Specialized Edition Canadian Philatelic E.F.O.'s*. The third edition of this catalog was published in 2005 and, like the Darnell Canada catalog, it is published in separate English and French editions (Figure 4).

Darnell catalogs use a different numbering system based on the premise that Canada prior to 1868 was a colony just like the other BNA colonies, and should be treated in the same fashion. Therefore, Darnell's Canada 1 is the ½¢ black Large Queen of 1868 (Canada Scott 21), while the Province of Canada comprises numbers 1 to 17 in a separate section.

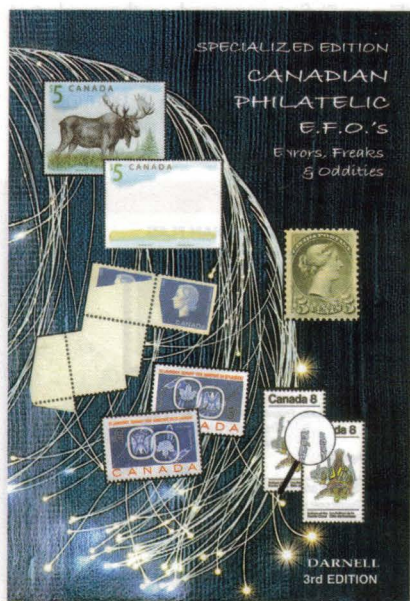


Figure 4. The Darnell catalog line includes *Darnell Stamps of Canada* and *Specialized Edition Canadian Philatelic E.F.O.'s*. Courtesy of Darnell Publishing Inc.

The quality of the color reproductions in both Darnell catalogs is outstanding.

The second Canadian specialized catalog developed from a joint effort between Scott Publishing Co. and The Unitrade Press of Toronto.

In 1982, Scott entered the Canadian specialized market with the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps*. It joined with Unitrade from the outset, and the catalogs were published under the Scott name until the 1992 version, although Unitrade assumed the copyright from 1984 on.

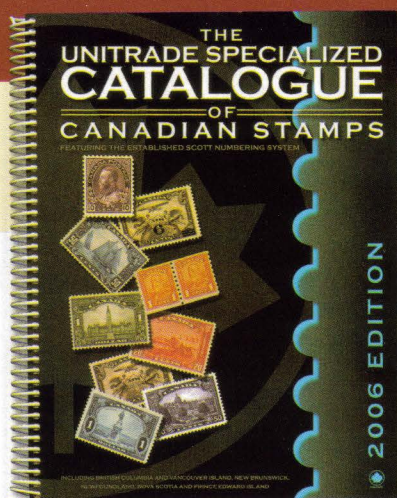
For the first three editions it was held by Scott Publishing Canada Ltd. of Montreal. The company had been around for at least 10 years since, in 1972, it had published *Canada: Les Belles Histoires des Timbres-poste/Canada: Stamps and Stories*.

From 1984 until 1992, the catalog bore the Scott name. When Scott and Unitrade began using different methods for valuing items, the title was changed to *Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps* with the 1992 edition, though the catalog continued to use Scott catalog numbers under license.

French versions have been produced of both the Scott (at least once for the 1987 edition) and Unitrade catalogs, but not on a regular basis.

The 2006 edition of *The Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps* (Figure 5) first appeared on the market at the end of September 2005 and was an instant success, with more than 50 percent of the printing presold — a printing that had been increased by 45 percent.

The reason for the increase was the



sellout of the previous edition and the anticipation of the work of the new editor: D. Robin Harris. Harris is a well-known writer and compiler of specialized handbooks on the definitive issues of the Elizabethan era of Canada. His award-winning treatises have been credited for increased collector interest in these stamps.

Doug Robinson of Unitrade says that when catalog editor Bill Boynton retired he knew that Harris "would be the right person for the job."

Robinson said, "Robin seemed very excited about taking on the project," and added that Harris had a number of great ideas to revamp the catalog. The final product is spectacular. Harris re-scanned 90 percent of all illustrations. Each stamp listing now includes information about the method of printing and the name of the designer, where available (Figure 6).

Dozens of new constant plate varieties, modern definitive varieties and re-entries have been added (Figure 7). All booklet panes are now illustrated in color, and the entire pane is shown, some with pane varieties. Dozens of known, but previously unlisted booklets, are listed for the first time.

Selected postal rates are included



Figure 5. The new editor of the *Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps* is D. Robin Harris. Courtesy of The Unitrade Press.

in the listings at the points where rates change. There are title bars for each year, and index tabs on the sides of the pages for each decade or series.

Harris has also transferred many of the techniques he uses in his handbooks to the catalog, such as series-oriented tables to help identify varieties (Figure 8). In the catalog introduction, collectors will find full-color tagging illustrations as they really look under ultraviolet light (Figure 9). In addition, joint issues with other countries are illustrated, and listings for stamps issued in a series include references to other stamps from the same series that were issued at different dates, where applicable.

The catalog introduction has doubled in size from six to 12 pages, a huge amount of new information has been added, and a full year of new issues was listed, but at 576 pages, the 2006 catalog is only eight pages longer than the previous edition, and the price remains the same: \$42.95 (Canadian).

How was this done? Harris explains, "some subtle reformatting of the pages allowed us to save a tremendous amount of space by getting rid of wasted white space."

The Darnell and Unitrade catalogs are available from many retail stamp dealers, or direct from the publishers.

The Darnell catalogs can be ordered by telephone at 1-800-561-9977; or by mail from Rousseau Inc., 230 St.-Jacques, Montreal, QC, Canada H2Y 1L9.

The Unitrade catalog is available from The Unitrade Press, 99 Floral Parkway, Toronto, ON, Canada M6L



Figure 6. Unitrade catalog listings now include the method of printing and the name of the stamp designer. Courtesy of The Unitrade Press.



Figure 7. Constant varieties on Canadian stamps are fully illustrated by Unitrade. Courtesy of The Unitrade Press.

Flowers							
Format	Sheet			Booklet		Precancel	
	Method	Lithography	Photo	Photo	Litho	Photo	
	Perf	12x12½	13x13½	13x13½	12x12½	13x13½	
1¢ Gentian	705 (PI 1)		781 (PI 2)	781a	705xx		
2¢ Columbine	707 (PI 1)		782 (PI 2)	782b			
3¢ Lily	708 (PI 1)		783 (PI 2)		708xx		
4¢ Hepatica	709 (PI 1)		784				
5¢ Star	710 (PI 1)		785 (PI 2)		710xx		
10¢ Slipper	711 (PI 1)	711a (PI 2)	786 (PI 3)		711xx		
12¢ Jewellweed			712 (PI 1)			712xx	
15¢ Violet			787 (PI 1)			787xx (PI 1)	

Figure 8. Tables in the Unitrade catalog help identify stamps in specific series. Courtesy of The Unitrade Press.

Figure 9. Tagging varieties are now identified by full color images in the Unitrade catalog introduction. Courtesy of The Unitrade Press.



2C4; or by phone at 1-416-242-5900.

The Unitrade catalog is also available from Amos Hobby Publishing by calling 1-800-572-6885, or visiting online at www.amosadvantage.com. Scott Stamp Monthly subscribers receive a price discount through the Amos Advantage program.

Collectors should also be aware that there are specialized listings for Canada and the provinces in the *Scott 1840-1940 Classic Specialized Catalogue*. The 2006 edition of the hardcover color catalog was published in November.

Although it is a single-volume worldwide catalog covering the first 100 years of postage stamps, it contains many specialized details not found in the six-volume *Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue*, including values for classic stamps

on cover, as well as some first-flight covers and first-day covers, plus listings for many varieties, plate blocks, perforated Officials and post office seals.

Another specialized reference work for collectors is the *Newfoundland Specialized Stamp Catalogue* written and published by John M. Walsh (Figure 10). Walsh believes that Newfoundland deserves a separate catalog, as the province issued more than 300 stamps from 1857 to 1949, and has become a popular collecting area.

The Walsh catalog is probably the most specialized of all, since, along with stamps, it covers postal history, postal markings, first flights, revenues, post cards and corner cards, and advertising envelopes. In addition, the catalog comes equipped with a magnifying glass, a perforation gauge and a 20

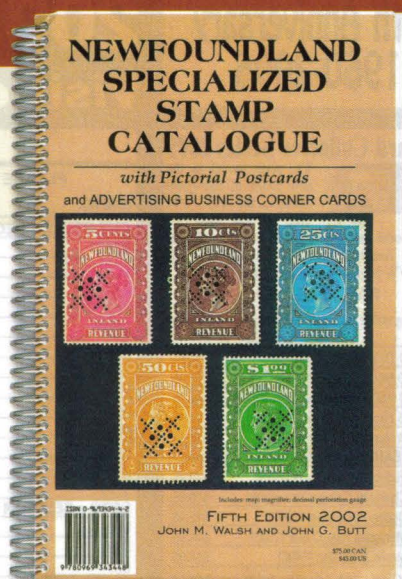


Figure 10. The *Newfoundland Specialized Stamp Catalogue* by John M. Walsh provides detailed Newfoundland listings for the collector.

inch x 24 inch map of Newfoundland and Labrador. Walsh plans to produce a 2006 version of his catalog that will include all BNA provincial stamps, plus Canada for the period of 1851 to 1951.

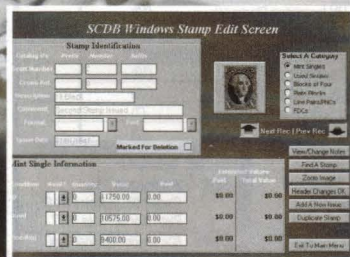
The Walsh catalog can be obtained from Walsh Philatelic Service, 9 Guy Street, St. John's, NL, Canada A1B 1P4; or call 1-709-685-0560.

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