

Casualties of war: Canada's unissued stamps of 1914

▼ CHARLES J.G. VERGE

Building on the popularity of the 1908 Quebec Tercentenary issue of six stamps (Canada Scott 96-103), the Canadian postmaster general decided that since 1914 was a year of two significant anniversaries, the Post Office should issue two new series of commemorative stamps. The first would celebrate the centennial of the birth of Sir Georges-Étienne Cartier, while the second would commemorate 100 years of peace between Canada and the United States. Neither set was issued, as politics got involved in the first and delayed the issue, and then



Figure 1. The Harris painting *The Fathers of Confederation* was used twice on Canadian stamps: on a 2¢ stamp in 1917 for the 50th anniversary of confederation (Scott 135) and a 3¢ stamp in 1927 for the 60th anniversary (Scott 142).



Figure 4. Sir John A. Macdonald, the first prime minister of Canada after confederation, was in office from 1867 to 1874 and again from 1878 to 1891 (Scott 586).

both were canceled with the advent of the Great War.

Cartier (1814-73) was one of the fathers of Canadian Confederation (Figure 1), a former premier of the Province of Canada and Sir John A. Macdonald's right-hand man during the first Conservative ministry after confederation (1867-71). Work began on the stamp issue in February 1914 and a first set of essays (proposed designs) was sent to the postmaster general for approval in early March (Figure 2).

On March 22 the postmaster general asked that the dates 1814 and 1914 be added in the upper corners of the stamps in almost



Figure 2. The first essays for the proposed "Centenaire de Cartier" commemorative series were created early in 1914.



Figure 3. The second essays for the Cartier series included year dates in or near the upper corners and a new 50¢ design.



Figure 5. The third essays commemorated Sir John A. Macdonald's birth centenary, in what had become the "Macdonald-Cartier" series.

the same place as they appear on the Quebec Tercentenary issue. A new set of essays was prepared (Figure 3). At the same time, senior Post Office officials made other suggestions

and the essays were changed to reflect these. On the 2¢ design the inscription was amended to read "Monument de Cartier" instead of "Champ de Fletcher." The 5¢ design used a more contemporary photograph of Cartier's house, replacing the homestead photograph found on the original essay.

Two different 7¢ essays are shown in Figure 2. The original had statues at the left and right of the Prince of Wales (future king Edward VIII), while the revised version featured numerals on each side. This essay also had the most revisions, and at least nine progressive die essays are known for this value.

An American Bank Note Co. index card indicates that the 7¢ die was engraved by E. T. Loiseaux and rejected by Mr. Green. The head of the Prince of Wales was then re-engraved

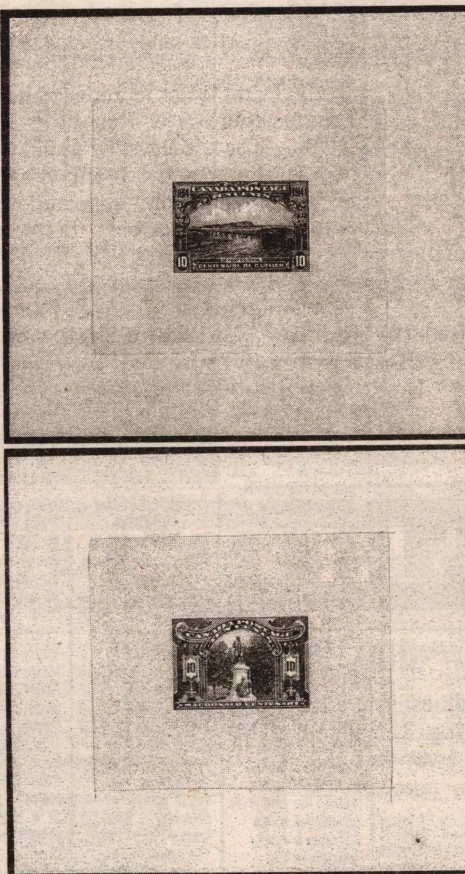


Figure 6. Only one set of Macdonald-Cartier die proofs exists that contains both versions of the 10¢ essays.

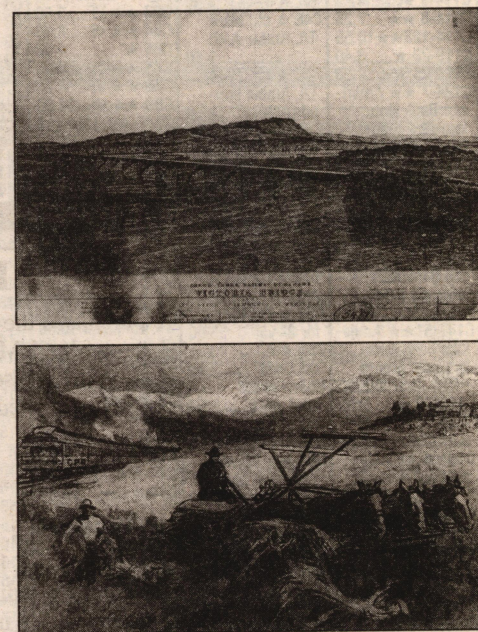
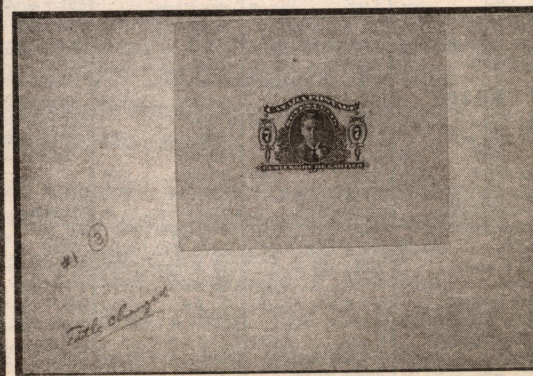


Figure 8. At top, a print showing the Victoria Bridge in Montreal (National Archives of Canada, POS 3636). Below is a sketch of a western farm scene (National Archives, POS 3621). Both illustrations served as models for proposed stamps in the Macdonald-Cartier series.



Figure 7. At left, the Downey studios photograph of the Prince of Wales, from the Canadian Postal Archives of the National Archives of Canada (archives reference No. POS 3622). The vignette on the progressive die essay at right (also from the CPA holdings) is based on the photograph.



by Robert Savage. In addition, the index card indicates that the die itself was not canceled until Dec. 21, 1931.

Finally, the original choice of the photograph of a train to the West for the 20¢ design was not kept, and a farming scene was selected instead. When the second set of essays was received, five of the original six designs were retained with a 50¢ value replacing the 20¢ value.

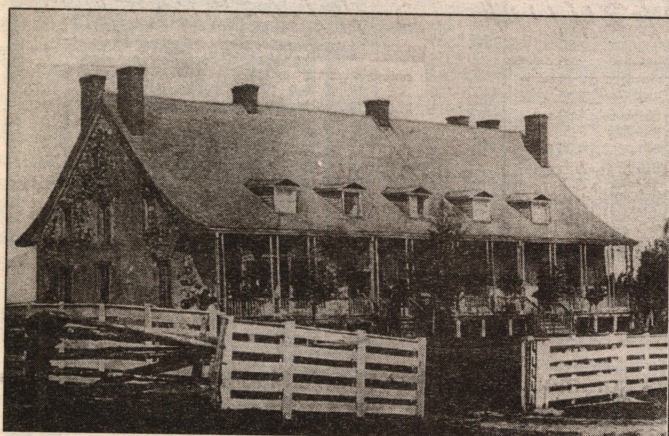


Figure 9. The two prints considered for the stamp showing Cartier's home. The one on the bottom won out (National Archives, POS 3639 and 3635).

In midsummer, language politics reared its head as it frequently does in Canada, and the Cabinet became interested in the series. As 1915 was the 100th anniversary of the birth of Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald (1815-91) — pictured on the 1¢ definitive of 1973 in Figure 4 — the government decided to amend the Cartier series and make it a Macdonald-Cartier series. The two essays in Figure 5 show the 1814-1914 dates

had to be removed, and scenes from Macdonald's life had to be included. The 10¢ design was changed to that of a statue of Macdonald and the 50¢ central design was changed to show Macdonald's home in Kingston, Ontario.

On Sept. 10 the 50¢ Macdonald design was the last to be approved by the postmaster general. The series was canceled shortly thereafter because of the outset of World War I.

Archival material for this issue in private hands is extremely rare. Most of it is in the Brigham Collection. The illustrations of the Macdonald-Cartier and Canada-U.S. Peace essays used with this article are reproduced here courtesy of Ron Brigham. The essays found in Figures 2, 3 and 5 are unique and appeared on the market only this year. They are from the American Bank Note Co. archives.

Two sets of black essays are recorded in private hands. They do not include

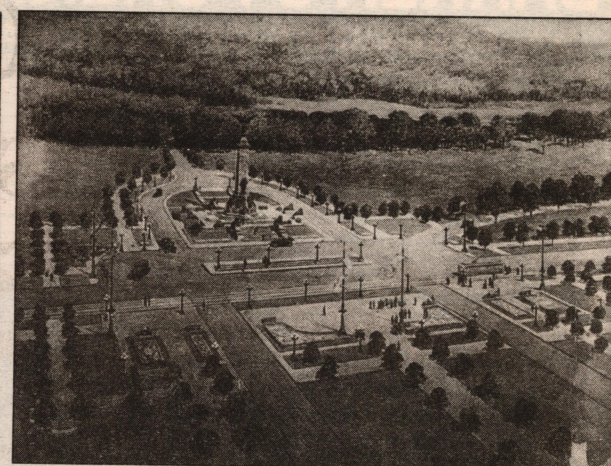


Figure 10. At left, a sculptor's model of the Cartier statue (National Archives, POS 3637). An architectural rendering of the park to be created in Fletcher's Field is shown at right with the Cartier monument near the center (National Archives, POS 3638).

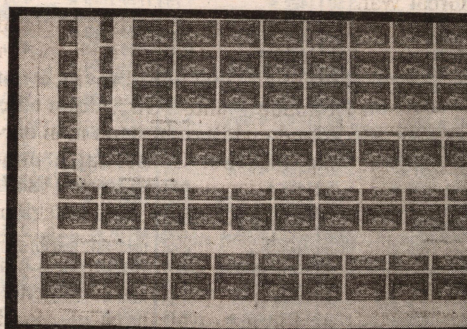


Figure 11. Only three values (1¢, 2¢ and 3¢) went to the printing plate stage, from which the sheets of proofs were pulled. The 2¢ stamp, as shown here, had four plates laid down.

the two Macdonald designs shown in Figure 5, although they bear the Macdonald-Cartier Centenary labels. A complete set of die proofs, in approved colors, is in the Brigham Collection. It is not unique but it is the only set to have both 10¢ values (Figure 6).



Figure 12. Sir Georges-Étienne Cartier (1814-73), minister of militia and defense from confederation in 1867 until his death (Scott 190).

The Canadian Postal Archives (CPA) has some interesting material for this issue. This includes an original photograph of the Prince of Wales by W. & D. Downey Studios of England that the ABNC likely purchased from Charles L. Ritzmann at 228 Fifth Avenue in New York City (shown at left in Figure 7) and a unique progressive die essay of the 7¢ Prince of Wales proposed stamp (at right in Figure 7).

The CPA collection also includes two prints: one of Victoria Bridge (Figure 8, top)

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A small corner of Manson's office, with stamps piled to the ceiling

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on which the first 10¢ design was based and one of a western farm scene for the 20¢ design (Figure 8, bottom).

In Figure 9 are the prints from the Cartier home — from an unknown book or pamphlet — that were considered for the 5¢ stamp. The 2¢ design was based on a photograph of the model of the Cartier statue, shown at left in Figure 10, and an architect's drawing of the proposed Fletcher's Field Park on the eastern slope of Mount Royal where the statue was to be installed (Figure 10, right).

Before it was canceled, work had progressed sufficiently on the issue for certain values to have been laid out in plates of 200 subjects and gummed proof sheets pulled. The CPA has a full sheet of the 1¢ Queen Mary and King George V stamp printed in black and a full sheet also in black of the 5¢ Cartier home stamp. Four plates numbered 1 through 4 were laid down for the 2¢ Cartier monument stamp. Full sheets exist with cutting guides printed in the margins (to be used for the preparation of post office panes of 50). They were printed in

vermillion. Overlapping portions of the four printer's sheets of 200 are shown in Figure 11.

While Macdonald received postal recognition on Scott 141 and 147 in the 1927 series issued for the 60th anniversary of Canadian Confederation, Cartier had to wait until Sept. 30, 1931, before finally showing up on a Canadian definitive stamp (Scott 190, Figure 12). In 1914, the only postal tribute given to Cartier was a slogan cancellation used to promote the Cartier Centennial celebrations scheduled for Sept. 6-13, 1914 (Figure 13).

Very little preparation work was done on the second commemorative issue for 1914. This was to be a three-stamp series celebrating the 100th anniversary of peace between Canada and the United States and the end of the War of 1812. The 1¢ design showed the Canadian Coat of Arms surrounded by Liberty and Britannia; the proposed 2¢ would have included the Coats of Arms of Great Britain and the United States; and the 5¢ value was



Figure 14. The essays for the proposed Canada-U.S. Peace Centennial series.

planned as a reproduction of a painting depicting the signing of the Treaty of Ghent on Dec. 24, 1814, which effectively started the long period of peaceable history between Canada and the United States.

Only one copy of progressive die essays for each value is known in private hands (Figure 14). Once again they are in the Brigham Collection.



Figure 15. A single design was considered for at least three different proposed stamp series. Shown from left to right are essays for the 50¢ stamp from the "Centenaire de Cartier" series, the 1¢ stamp from the Canada-U.S. Peace Centennial issue, and the proposed 3¢ stamp in a 50th Anniversary of Confederation set.

The CPA has very little material for this issue. It has photographs of the three essays mounted on a single card in 1937 for display purposes. It also has three preliminary artwork essays for the 1¢ (two small ones in black and one in chocolate and a large bicolor version in black and brown). The only items for the 2¢ design are a large green and black bicolor artwork essay and three copies of a photographic essay in black. The CPA holdings do not seem to have any material for the proposed 5¢ issue.



Figure 16. Another reuse of a design, but one that resulted in a stamp issue: the Harvesting Wheat design appeared on Canada Scott 157 from the 1928-29 issue.

One of the interesting things that I found in studying these proposed issues was that the American Bank Note Co. did not like the work of its engravers to remain unused. The design for the 1¢ stamp in the Peace Issue had been proposed earlier for the 50¢ stamp in the Macdonald-Cartier series and was again proposed for a Special Delivery stamp to be issued in 1917 for the 50th anniversary of confederation. This stamp, like the others, was never issued (Figure 15).

The engraver for the proposed design for the 20¢ Macdonald-Cartier set showing a western farm scene was luckier. His design was used on the 20¢ stamp of the 1928-29 Scroll issue, bearing the title "Harvesting Wheat" (Figure 16).

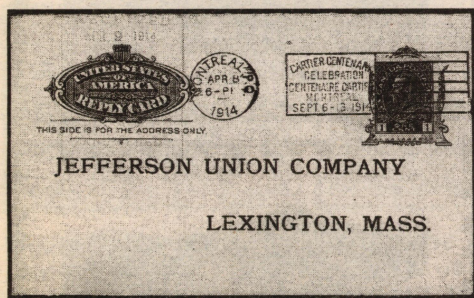


Figure 13. Slogan cancellation promoting the Cartier Centennial Celebrations in September 1914 (courtesy of the Brigham Collection). Postage on this example is paid with a 1¢ green King George V definitive (Canada Scott 104) applied over the 1¢ Sheridan stamp on a 1904 reply postal card from the United States, Scott UY4r.

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