

A Look at the Origins of Canadian Philately

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To help collectors who are interested in the stamps and postal history of Canada, here is a short introduction to the beginnings of organized philately in Canada, as well as information about the major philatelic organizations that support Canadian philately today. It is really impossible to date when stamp collecting began in what is now Canada. George Dill of Prince Edward Island is credited in the May 1892, issue of the *Toronto Journal of Philately* as being the first recorded collector in America having begun "a collection in 1859."

Unfortunately, the editor does not back up his statement with facts. However, it is known that in the colonies of Upper and Lower Canada, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, the hobby was well established by the mid-1860s. Dealers' price lists, albums and European philatelic periodicals are known to have been in use as early as 1863.

It is impossible to determine when formal or informal meetings of stamp collectors were first held, but, since Montreal and Saint John each had several stamp dealers who advertised in philatelic journals in Europe as early as 1863 and in North America by 1864, it is highly likely that informal meetings were held in Montreal, Saint John (then known as St. John), and Halifax by the mid-1860s.

At the time collectors and dealers were often teenagers. This support of the young for new ideas was not much different then than it is today. Such new ventures seem to start with and be nurtured by young people. Today's computers and software are classic examples.

One early collector and stamp dealer in Canada was John Appleton Nutter (Figure 1) who, as a young boy in the 1850s, moved with his family to Montreal from the United States. Nutter had an advertisement in the first stamp periodical to be published in North America, Samuel Allan Taylor's *The Stamp Collector's Record* (Figure 2).

Taylor (Figure 3) who only lived in Montreal for a three year period (1861-1864) was best known for the creation of many bogus stamps and locals such as Ker's City Post (Figure 4), Bell's Dispatch, Whitteley's Express and the British American College (Toronto).

After its early beginnings, the hobby continued to flourish vigorously throughout the Dominion of Canada (formed in 1867).

The initial number of the first series of *The Canadian Philatelist*, dated January 1872, and published in Toronto, had a lead article that concluded on an upbeat note: "A new era is dawning: we find that collectors are springing up in every town and village."

By the 1870s, Toronto had become the main publishing center of philatelic periodicals. Most were short-lived and had more than just philatelic content. Toronto can also lay claim to being the site of an early association of stamp collectors.

Figure 1: John Appleton Nutter (1846-1910) was born in New Hampshire but later moved to Montreal. He started dealing in stamps in 1863 at age 16. Influenced by S. A. Taylor's bogus stamps, he is known to have issued his own, including the Bancroft's City Express. Photo taken in Venice, Italy, circa 1900, by the Court photographer Fratelli Vianelli.

The November 1876, *The Canada Beaver* reports on the first meeting of the Canadian Stamp Association. Because no other information is available on this group it is considered to be a local and not a national group despite its name. A first successful attempt at creating a national Canadian organization for stamp collectors did not happen until 1887.

The creation, in 1886, of the American Philatelic Association (APA), now the American Philatelic Society, may have spurred the formation of a similar national society in Canada a year later. Communications between collectors, dealers and writers across the Canadian and American border were frequent.

A few Canadians were among the early members of the APA. By comparison, a much larger proportion of Americans joined the Canadian Philatelic Association (CPA) and later philatelic associations in Canada that were international in membership. The CPA was created in 1887 by John Reginald Hooper (Figure 5) who, in association with other Canadian collectors, formed a "Board of Organization in June" (J.R. Hooper, *Toronto Philatelic Journal*, February 1888).

Notices about the creation of the CPA were sent to a number of Canadian and American stamp journals. Applications for membership were to be sent to Hooper, a postal employee in Ottawa. By 1888 there were 104 members and Canadian dealer Henry Heckler became president.

The first identifiable woman member of the CPA was Julia S. Mason of Toronto. She joined late in 1887 as member number 70, was active in Toronto philatelic circles and was at least a part-time stamp dealer. In 1889, she moved to the United States and in 1890 was expelled from the CPA for nonpayment of dues.

A tabulation of the ages of the first 108 CPA members, made by Hooper early in 1888, shows the youthfulness of many of the members. Of 103 whose ages were known, 35 were

THE STAMP COLLECTOR'S RECORD.

No. 1. MONTREAL, FEBRUARY 15, 1864. PRICE 5c.

To our Readers.
In presenting the first number of this miniature sheet to the public, devoted as it is to such a peculiarly unique pursuit as the collection of Postage Stamps, we would beg leave to apprise those who are pleased to term the collection of Postage Stamps a "mania," a juvenile ridiculous amusement, and other delicate and complimentary designations, that this is not by any means the first organ distinctly devoted to the promotion and extension of the aforesaid (so called) mania, which has yet appeared. Upwards of a twelve-month since a Journal devoted to the business made its appearance in England, and since that time various others have sprung up, and we are not aware that any of them have as yet become defunct; on the contrary most of them appear to be in a highly prosperous condition, and look likely to outlive their defuncts, a result which, we trust all Stamp Collectors will fervently pray for. Of course, the foregoing remarks are not intended for collectors. Those interested in the business will we trust favor us with that patronage and support which we shall endeavour to deserve, in an humble way. We shall be happy to receive original articles on the subject of Postage Stamps, and we shall also be glad to offer any assistance in our power to Collectors, through the medium of the column devoted to correspondents. We shall devote our attention more particularly to the notice of matters of more direct interest to Collectors on this side the Atlantic than in Europe, but we shall duly notify our readers of all new issues which may be chronicled in the European Publications.

Canada 1c. Newspaper Wrapper Stamps.
This Stamp is entirely fictitious, no such Stamps ever having been issued by the Government of Canada. We are at a loss to understand why any person should have interested themselves in manufacturing such a Stamp, and that to before the collection of Postage Stamps became general in Canada. As only one or two specimens are known to exist, we presume the Stamp is hopelessly obsolete. It is a poorly engraved imitation on wood block of the present 1c. Stamp, and having the words "Newspaper Wrapper" irregularly engraved across the face of the Stamp.

New Brunswick 2c. Yellow.
This Stamp made its appearance about December first, it is in the corresponding style of the 5c. and 10c. of that Province, and was intended like the Nova Scotia 2c. for the convenience of soldiers letters. It was engraved we believe by the American Bank Note Company, New York.

Answers to Correspondents.
J. K., Kingston.—The only Stamp used in British Columbia is the 24c.
A. L. D.—The Danish Envelope Stamps have not yet appeared in America.

Figure 2: The cover of the four-page, Feb. 15, 1864, issue of Samuel Allan Taylor's *The Stamp Collector's Record*. Only four copies are known to exist today (Courtesy Canadian Postal Archives).

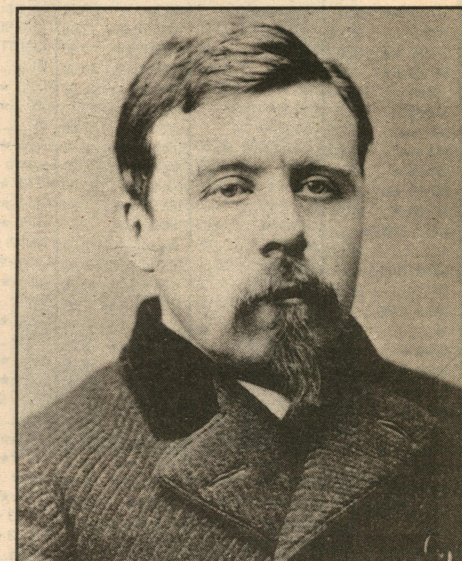


Figure 3: Samuel Allan Taylor (1838-1913) was born in Scotland and died of apoplexy at Watertown, Mass., on Feb. 1, 1913. One day, Taylor's stepfather, reputed to be a cruel man, sent young Taylor to the barn for a childish prank. He got kicked in the face by a horse and that is why he wore a goatee (Courtesy Canadian Postal Archives).

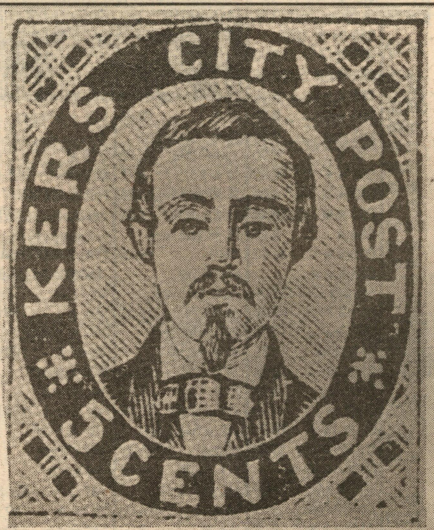


Figure 4: An example of Samuel Allan Taylor's 5c Kers City Post. Taylor said the stamp portrayed a "Mr. Ker." In fact, the portrait was copied from a carte-de-visite of Taylor himself. (Courtesy Canadian Postal Archives)



Figure 5: John Reginald Hooper (1859-1944), founder of organized philately in Canada and one of the leading lights of Canadian philately in the 1880s and 1890s, and an 1879 UPU first issue postal card sent by Hooper in 1887 to a stamp exchange correspondent in France.

under 20, 25 were 20 to 25 years old, 37 between 25 and 40 and only 6 over 40. Philatelic politics soon got involved in the CPA and Hooper left to form a rival society, the Philatelic Society of Canada, in 1892. He was to be its only president as it was considered defunct in 1894.

A third national organization was formed in 1894. The Dominion Philatelic Association (DPA, Figure 6), owed much of its short-lived success to the energy of the Starnaman brothers of Berlin (now Kitchener) Ontario, publishers of a magazine called *The Philatelic Advocate*. Ernest F. Wurtele is listed as the president of the DPA in 1899. The Canadian Philatelic Association must have been inactive by then since Wurtele had been its president in 1895. At the turn of the century the DPA was the largest philatelic society in Canada. It ceased operations in 1908.

The following years were quite turbulent in Canadian organized philately and there is no record of any national society surviving into World War I. In 1919, the well known Canadian philatelic author, Fred Jarrett (Figure 7) and other members of the Winnipeg Philatelic Society reorganized the Canadian Philatelic Society (CPS, Figure 8).

The CPS was slow in growing during its infancy but by 1942, when it chose A.L. McCready's *Popular Stamps* as its official journal, it started to grow by leaps and bounds. In the 1950s a move was made by the executives of the CPS to obtain the predicate Royal to enhance its status. After many years of hard work by its then-President, Dr. G. M. Geldert (Figure 9), the CPS obtained the right to use that august title and was renamed The Royal Philatelic Society of Canada (RPSC); the fourth "Royal" in the world.

Today, The RPSC is the national bilingual society for stamp collecting in Canada and represents Canadian collectors around the world. It offers many services to its members including insurance, exchange packets and *The Canadian Philatelist*, a six-times a year publication for members which will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2000. Membership is composed of individual members, affiliates and some 100 chapters across the country and in the United States. It holds a national convention each year, the May 1998 Hamilton Convention being the 75th. Others are scheduled for Fredericton, New Brunswick in 1999, Winnipeg, Manitoba in 2000 and Montreal, Quebec in 2001.

The RPSC has a national office which can be reached by contacting the administrator, Andrew D. Parr, at POB 929, Station D, Toronto, ON, Canada M4T 2P1; phone (416) 979-7474, FAX (416) 979-1144.

You can also reach the RPSC by e-mail at <rpsc@interlog.com> and through its website <<http://www.interlog.com/~rpsc>> which, in addition to offering much information on Canadian philately and the RPSC, has an innovative on-line library where original articles are published. Membership is Can\$25 for residents of Canada and US\$25 for other countries.

Another general Canadian society is the Fédération québécoise de philatélie. It was created in 1965 under the name Fédération des sociétés philatéliques du Québec to serve as a coordinating organization for the many active stamp clubs in the province of Quebec. Its magazine, *Philatélie-Québec*, has been published in French since March 1976 and is available six times a year as well.

The Fédération is a very active group with a high incidence of youth participation. It offers expertizing services for Canadian stamps and postal history and is particularly strong in the expertization of modern issues. Membership is Can\$25 for members residing in Canada, Can\$35 for American residents and Can\$50 for residents of other countries. The Fédération can be reached by writing: Aline Girard, Director General, C.P. 1000, Succ. M, Montreal, QC, Canada H1V 3R2.

For those of you who wish to belong to a society that specializes only in Canadian philately there are two other groups to consider.

The British North America Philatelic Society was founded at The Collector's Club of New York on Oct. 28, 1943, by a U.S. citizen, Jack Levine. Its first 40 members indicated the cross-border interest in a specialist society that continues to this day: 29 from the US, 10 from Canada and 1 from Cuba.

BNAPS covers the gamut of all aspects of the philately of Canada, British North America and Newfoundland. It has annual conventions that alternate between Canada and the United States. The next conventions are scheduled for the weekend of October 8-10 in Orlando, Fla., and Sept. 15-17, 1999, in Vernon, British Columbia. Its award winning journal *BNAPS Topics* has been issued since 1944.

In 1993, BNAPS launched BNA PortraitS, to remove the administrative information from BNA Topics and ensure more frequent contact with its members. Both publications are published four times a year in alternation. Membership in BNAPS is \$24 Can, \$18 US or £12 sterling. Contact the Secretary, Jerome Jarnick, 108, Duncan Drive, Troy, MI 48098, USA.

The Canadian Philatelic Society of Great Britain (CPS of GB), although headquartered in England, has many North American members. Incorporated in 1946 under the presidency of its founder A. E. Stephenson, the CPS of GB is a very active society with annual conventions and regional meetings throughout the British Isles. As an interesting footnote, Stephenson's daughter, Miss A. E. Stephenson, was president of the CPS of GB 40 years later, in 1995-96. Its journal, *Maple Leaves*, has been published since September 1946 and is full of erudite articles on Canadian stamps and postal history. Membership is £11 by contacting the secretary, T. E. Almond, 2 Filbert Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5DZ, UK.

For anyone interested in postal history there are societies too.

The Postal History Society of Canada has been around since 1972 and concentrates on the postal history of Canada during the French Regime and of British North America. Its members are very active in research, writing and exhibiting. The *PHSC Journal* is published four times a year. Membership is CAN\$15 for Canadian residents, US\$15 for American residents and £12 or Can\$25 for other countries. Contact is Roger F. Narbonne, Secretary, 216 Mailey Dr., Carleton Place, ON, Canada K7C 3X9.

La Société d'histoire postale du Québec was established in 1980 to serve people interested in Quebec postal history, to promote the study of this area of philately and to publish the results of such studies. This society also owns and preserves documentary archives and postal artifacts including the insides of a full 19th century working post office. Membership is Can\$18 and with that comes the society's quarterly journal: *Le Bulletin d'histoire postale et de marcophilie*. Contact Jacques Poitras, Secretary, 265 rue du Chalutier (#306), Quebec, QC, Canada G1K 8R3.

When writing any of these societies ask them for their list of available publications.

The logos of the main societies involved in Canadian philately are shown in Figure 10. ▼

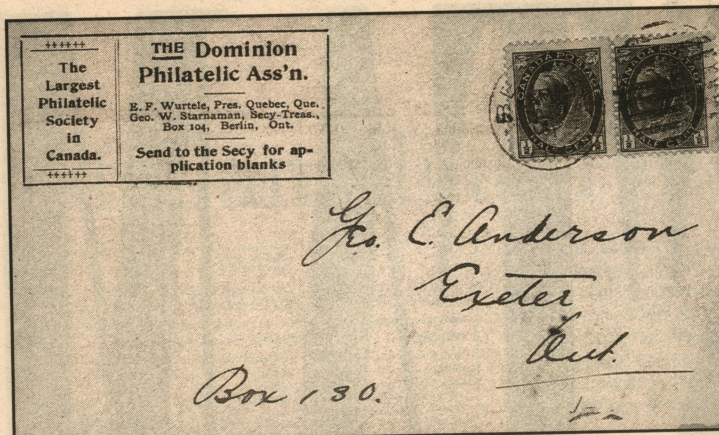


Figure 6: A 1901 one-cent printed matter rate envelope bearing a corner card from The Dominion Philatelic Association, the third national philatelic organization in Canada. It flourished at the turn of the century.

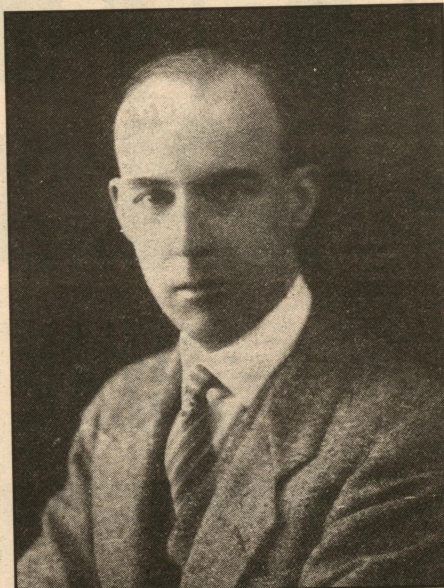


Figure 7: Frederick L. Jarrett (1888-1979), author of *Stamps of British North America*, is the first Canadian to sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists (1935) and the only person to have been given the Order of Canada for his service to philately.

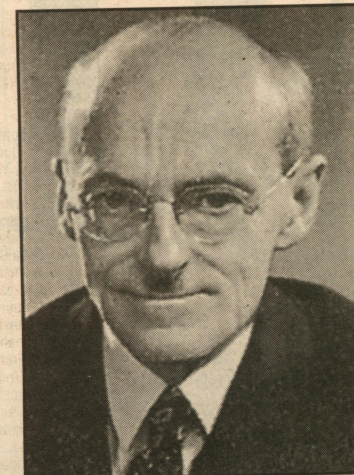


Figure 9: George MacKintley Geldert (1886-1967), born in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, graduated from McGill University's medical school in 1913 and moved to Ottawa the following year where he had a distinguished career in the fields of medicine, civic affairs and radio. He was president of the Canadian Philatelic Society/The Royal Philatelic Society of Canada from 1958 to 1967.

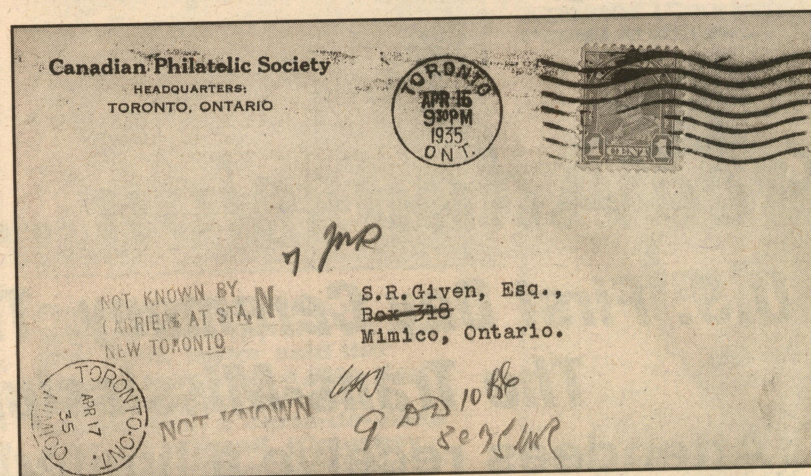


Figure 8: A business envelope mailed in 1935 at the one-cent printed matter rate and bearing a corner card of the Canadian Philatelic Society, reactivated in 1919, and renamed in 1959 as the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada.

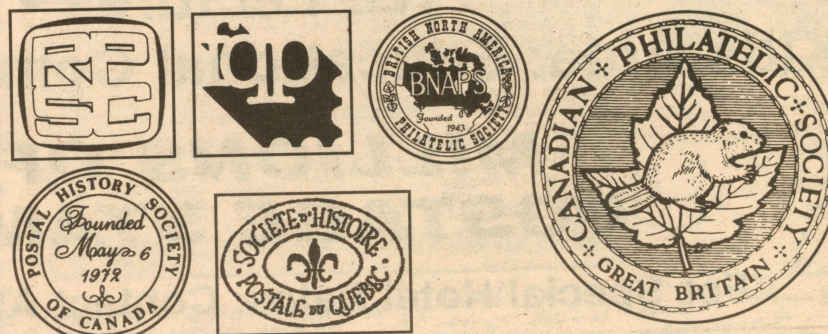


Figure 10: The logos of the main societies involved in Canadian philately. From left to right: The Royal Philatelic Society of Canada, la Fédération québécoise de philatélie, the Canadian Philatelic Society of Great Britain, the Postal History Society of Canada and la Société d'histoire postale du Québec.