

Pipeline took down a government

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Natural resources are major elements of Canada's economy, and at this time, there might be no more important industries than oil and gas. Canada celebrates two major events in the history of the oil and gas industries in 2008 with two stamps to be issued May 1 (Figure 1).

Fifty years ago, the 4,000-kilometer (2,485-mile) TransCanada Pipeline was completed and brought the first of Alberta's natural gas to the eastern markets. This success story came with a price: the downfall of the government of Louis St. Laurent (1882-1973), prime minister of Canada from 1948 to 1957.

The 1956 parliamentary debate on the pipeline led to the widespread impression that the Liberals had grown arrogant in power. The government invoked closure on numerous occasions to curtail debate and ensure that its Pipeline Bill passed by a specific deadline.

St. Laurent is pictured on a 7¢ definitive stamp issued April 8, 1974 (Scott 592). I wrote about former Canadian governors general and prime ministers honored on stamps in the July 2001 O Canada column in *Scott Stamp Monthly*.

Another event commemorated this year is the 150th anniversary of the sinking and beginning of operation of the first commercial oil well in Canada.

Contrary to expectations, this discovery was not made in oil-rich Alberta but in Enniskillen Township, Lambton County, in an oily swampland area now known as Oil Springs. Located in Ontario, Oil Springs is bordered by the St. Clair River, Lake Huron and Lake Erie.

Figure 2 shows a cover addressed to "Mr. Allan/Oil Refiner/Oil Springs/Ont." A 5¢ Beaver stamp (Scott 15) on the cover pays the domestic letter rate. The cover was postmarked at Moore, Upper Canada, December 13, 1862, with a faint red marking on the front. It was received December 15, via Sarnia and Wyoming.

Three backstamps on the cover are from the post offices of Moore, Sarnia and Wyoming, all in Lambton County and located a few miles from each other.

Charles Nelson Tripp of New York first explored the area in the early 1850s but was more interested in his discovery of asphalt than the oily bitumen. He soon ran out of money and sold his lands to James Miller Williams, a carriage mak-

er and businessman from Hamilton, Ontario, who hired Tripp to help with the quest for oil. Both men are pictured on the new stamp, with Williams in formal attire and Tripp dressed more like an adventurer.

For more information on the celebration of the 150th anniversary discovery of oil at Oil Springs, visit www.2008celebrate.com.

The two self-adhesive stamps will be sold in booklets of 10 (five of each stamp) at the 52¢ domestic letter rate. The stamps were printed by Lowe-Martin on Tullis Russell paper with serpentine die cuts.

Fifty years ago, on September 10, 1958, Canada issued a 5¢ stamp to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the oil industry (Scott 381, Figure 3). The Canadian Bank Note Company printed 24,660,000 of the engraved bi-color stamp in sheets of 400 subjects divided into four post office panes of 100 stamps. The stamp has gauge 12 perforations.

The stamp's release coincided with a sectional meeting, as a follow-up to the Fifth World Power Conference that convened September 7-11, 1958, in

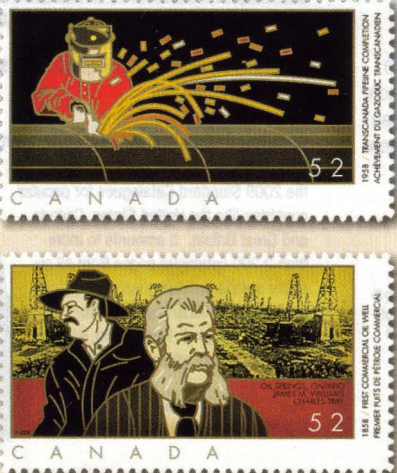


Figure 1. This pair of 52¢ domestic-rate commemorative stamps will be issued by Canada Post May 1 to honor the 50th anniversary of the TransCanada Pipeline and the 150th anniversary of the commercialization of oil.



Figure 2. This early cover was sent to Oil Springs, where the first commercial oil well was established in Canada. The 5¢ Beaver stamp satisfied the domestic letter rate at the time.



Figure 3. The Canada Post Office issued this 5¢ stamp in 1958 to commemorate the centennial of the oil industry.

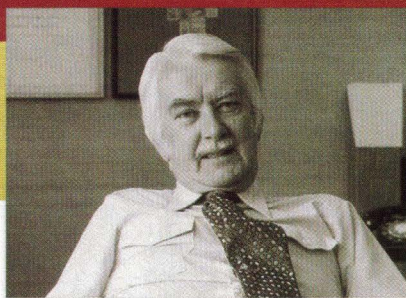


Figure 4. Alan L. Pollock, designer of Canada's 1958 5¢ Oil Industry Centennial stamp.



Figure 5. An unadopted essay by Elizabeth Fritz for the 1958 Oil Industry stamp.

Montreal, with 1,700 delegates from 52 countries in attendance.

The stamp was designed by Alan L. Pollock and engraved by Donald Mitchell. Pollock (Figure 4) was born in North China. His parents were of Scottish descent, and he was raised in Glasgow. He enrolled in art school at the age of seven, after winning a scholarship. He joined the Royal Navy during World War II and returned to a career as a graphic artist at the end of the war.

During a trip to Canada in 1950, he submitted designs for a Canadian stamp. One of his designs was accepted for the first stamp issued by Canada during the reign of Queen Elizabeth II (Scott 316). The 20¢ stamp, issued in

1952, honors Canada's paper production and shows symbols of newspaper production. The stamp also was overprinted "G" for use as an Official stamp (Scott O30). The "G" stands for "Government" or "Gouvernement."

Pollock moved to Canada and was employed in the graphic design industry in Toronto for the remainder of his career.

Donald Mitchell was born and educated in Ottawa. He joined the Canadian Bank Note Company in 1949 and served as an apprentice under John F. Mash. Mitchell created the engravings for 44 Canadian stamps. He retired from CBNC in 1996.

In the files of the Canadian Postal Ar-

chives are a number of essays for the Oil Industry Centennial stamp, in addition to essays created by Pollock. One essay is the work of Elizabeth Fritz (Figure 5). Her design shows the original 1858 oil rig next to a modern rig.

The other essays were produced by Sampson-Matthews Co. Ltd. without attribution to any artist (Figure 6). Sampson-Matthews was established in Toronto by Ernest Sampson, a pioneer of silk-screen printing, and Charles Matthews.

The firm was one of four established printing houses in Toronto. During its heyday from the 1920s to the 1940s, the company employed many of Canada's great artists, including Group of



Figure 6. These unadopted essays for the 1958 Oil Industry stamp were created by unknown artists from the firm of Sampson-Matthews Ltd. The company employed many of Canada's great artists.

Seven members Frederick Varley, Arthur Lismer, Frank Carmichael, A.J. Casson, J.E.H. MacDonald and A.Y. Jackson (Scott 1559-1561), as well as painter Tom Thomson (Scott 733-734).

Matthews was a close friend of many of the artists employed by his firm. He was a member of the Arts and Letters Club in Toronto, which celebrates its centennial this year. Virtually all the Sampson-Matthews essays for the Oil Industry Centennial stamp show rigs and/or a map of southwestern Ontario with the location of Oil Springs. One essay diverges from this by showing a portrait of Williams. This essay is not shown in Figure 6.

Pollock's preliminary design was rejected. He produced a simple pencil-on-paper sketch before preparing a gouache and colored pencil version mounted on a dark blue paper mat. The design shows an oil rig and includes a shovel in the foreground because, in earlier times, oil wells were dug by hand.

Presumably this is the second drawing prepared by Pollock for this stamp because the notation at the bottom of the pencil sketch reads, "Alternative layout for large size vertical format" (Figure 7). The first version was not found in the files of the Canadian Postal Archives.

Pollock's next essay became the accepted design (Figure 8). The essay differs from the finished stamp in the ty-



Figure 7. This pencil sketch and color pencil sketch were prepared by Alan Pollock but were not retained. The designs show a shovel because, in earlier times, oil wells were dug by hand.

pography used, the shading around the kerosene lamp, the lines in the oil drop behind the oil processing plant, and the design of that plant.

On February 25, 1958, a photo of the essay was submitted to William Hamilton (1919-1989), postmaster general of Canada from 1957 to 1962, for his approval.

Once the design was engraved and a die prepared, a die proof was submitted

to Hamilton. The postmaster general gave his approval "for colour and design" on April 10, 1958 (Figure 9).

The use of the kerosene lamp in the design recognizes Abraham Gesner's discovery of kerosene in 1846. Gesner was honored with his own 46¢ stamp in 2000 (Scott 1832b). The stamp is included in one of 17 sheetlets in Canada's Millennium issue.

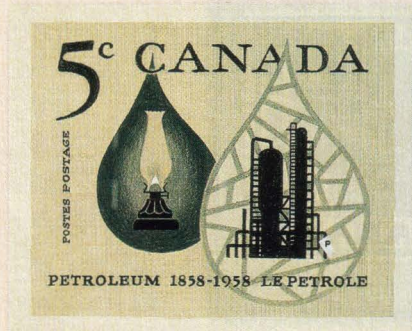


Figure 8. This is the accepted design by Alan Pollock for the 1958 5c Oil Industry stamp.



Figure 9. Postmaster General William Hamilton approved this die proof April 10, 1958.