

McCREADY on McCREADY

(Arthur L. McCready, 1892-1967)

by Charles J. G. Verge

Author, editor, publisher, collector, songwriter, musician are some of the many words that could describe Arthur L. (Mac) McCready. He was born in August, 1892 at Chatham, Ontario and raised near Sarnia, Ontario. His first ambition was to be a doctor but after a few years he settled for the printing trade. In 1928 he became editor and publisher of the *Cobden Sun* and retired in 1958.

In 1939, he purchased the periodical which was to make him famous in the philatelic world: *Popular Stamps*. He wrote for it, edited and published it until ill health stopped him in 1958. Complete runs of this magazine are extremely rare and fetch high prices at philatelic literature auctions. During his long tenure at the helm of *Popular Stamps* he also published other well known Canadian philatelic publications and handbooks such as: *Canadian Philatelic Literature*, *Canadian Flag Cancellations* (2 editions) and *Dinky Damus Varieties*.

Mac McCready was a former councillor at Cobden. He took a leading part in the organization of the Cobden Horticultural Society, and was a member of the Grace United Church of Cobden. Aside from horticulture, McCready's hobbies were bank notes of the Chartered Banks of Canada, Canadian pottery, cast iron toys, 19th Century Penny banks and, of course, stamp collecting -- a hobby in which he became a recognized authority, and whereby he became well known to thousands of philatelists throughout Canada, the United States and the British Isles.

In the January 1945 issue of *Popular Stamps*, Phil Atts (the late R.A. Jamieson of Almonte, Ontario) complained that McCready did not let escape any titbit about himself in his publication. In response, in the February issue, Mac McCready published an autobiography. It is tongue in cheek and is reproduced here as a memorial to a great booster of philatelic literature.

An Autobiography

So Phil Atts last issue said the Editor doesn't tell much about himself! Well, as this issue begins his fifth year at the helm of P.S. -- here goes: At a very early age he was born in Western Ontario. First few years rather hazy. At age of six, went to school; came home first night all beaten up, nice bloody nose, beautiful black eye -- all because "Gentlemen don't fight", was mater's morning injunction. Surveying the wreck that night she revised the advice: "Gentlemen DON'T START fights -- they finish them." We did -- next day. Thus mothers make men; and wives make 'em or break 'em.

Never had a spare dollar -- don't expect to. Raised on a farm I've seen the hogs hog around, the cows cow down, little lambzies eat ivy, as the song

writer wrote. Have hoed corn and 'taters, beets and carrots. Fell in love at twelve. Criticized school teacher at thirteen for strapping a beginner. (Remembered my own first day). Result: Fired from school for balance of term. Returned at fourteen and picked up from there. Boyhood ambitions alternately: storekeeper, train engineer, (nearly said train robber), cowboy, detective, globe-trotter, politician, doctor, clergyman, musician, poet, or what have you. An early forebear may have been knighted in Ireland -- we doubt it. Used to hang around printing offices -- finally it "took". Married at twenty-four, the neighbours all marvelled. Collected stamps when a button -- succumbed again thirty years later. Am six foot, one -- longest printer in Ottawa Valley -- sometimes the shortest. Tried living in city -- like Great Outdoors better. Started business career sweeping the floors ... now fifty-two -- still sweeping floors. Never got anywhere ... apparently ... Just holding my own. -- McC.

He was preceded in death by his wife Florence. They had three children: two sons, Howard and Arthur, both now deceased and one daughter, Dorothy Carpenter, now living in Boulder, Colorado. There are now nine grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren.

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