

Letters TO the EDITOR

I recently found reference to Canada's "first stamp" in "Pages from a BNA Scrapbook" in *BNA Topics* (Vol. 8, #5, Whole #80, May 1951, page 122).

This article is made up of small paragraphs of items clipped from older philatelic magazines and periodicals. Item #1 quotes from *The American Philatelist* of Jan. 10, 1893 which itself quotes from *Meekel's Weekly Stamp News* (#98, Nov. 16, 1892). All three reference the existence of a Canadian stamp prior to the 3d Beaver of 1851.

The illustration accompanying this letter shows what it is purported to look like.

It is found in both the *BNA Topics* and *The American Philatelist* articles. *Meekel's*, on page 2, describes it as follows: "The first stamp ever used for postage in Canada was that used on the Quebec & Richmond Railway, in Lower Canada in 1849. It is circular-shaped, black (engraved die), typographed on white wove paper, with open space in the center to write the value." John Reginald Hooper, president of the Canadian Philatelic Society provided the illustration to *The American Philatelist*.

Additional information is provided in that publication on this stamp (page 12).

They "were attached by wafers to letters handed to

the conductors of the trains, the railway authorities rendering accounts to the post office. Mr. Hooper knows of no specimen in existence other than the one from which our illustration is made, this being the property of Mr. Joseph Malo. This stamp was taken from a letter dated December 1850. The value is inserted in red."

I am seeking to find additional information on this "stamp," if it really did exist and if any of your readers know the whereabouts of any examples of it.

I would appreciate it if they could contact me by e-mail at vergecc@sympatico.ca by mail at PO Box 2788, Station D, Ottawa, ON K1P 5W8.

Sincerely yours,
Charles Verge,
FRPSC

Surely someone has more information on the elusive and interesting item. B.E.



AS I SEE IT

By Irving C. Whynot

Mail carriers have proud history

As a very young lad I remember going with my parents to the local general store in a small village to pick up our mail. The "post office" occupied a corner of the store and the man in charge was the store owner.

Later we moved to a town of about 3,000 and the mail was picked up at a beautiful stone, vine-covered post office building (long since demolished). At first we called at the General Delivery window, and later on we rented a box which was more convenient.

It wasn't until I moved to the city as a young adult that mail was actually delivered – twice daily Monday through Friday and once on Saturdays. That continued for a time after we moved to Toronto but it wasn't long before delivery was cut to once daily, Monday to Friday only. The postman (always a male in those days) was a part of the community, dispensing news of the neighbourhood as he made his rounds, chatting about the weather and gardening and other assorted topics, even stopping for a cup of tea on occasion.

That's the way it remains today, except that we now also have female carriers and there appears to be little or no time available for the

personal contact.

But while the routine has changed considerably, the basics are still the same. My mail arrives through all sorts of weather, the only change coming with some shuffling of the routes, affecting the time of delivery. Except for the occasional delivery of mail for some other address – understandable considering the volume being handled – my carriers over the years have been generally friendly, courteous and efficient.

I wonder if they know they are carrying out a proud tradition of mail delivery? The oldest postal document, from 255 BC, talks of the Egyptian system and mentions a post office employee. The Persians first used mounted messengers, covering 2,415 kilometres in six to eight days. In ancient Greece, the roads were so bad that foot messengers often arrived faster than mounted riders. One runner covered 230 kilometres in just two days.

As the Roman Empire expanded, communication was vital and a system of foot runners and riders was established. Runners could manage 71 kilometres a day and riders up to 201. In times of war it was a dangerous

undertaking – if captured, he had a thumb cut off.

All told, there now are more than half a million mail carriers around the world, labouring in all sorts of terrain and weather conditions. They deserve our recognition. ☐



A Canadian postman in 1894.

Signed sealed delivered



CSDA fun

The recent CSDA sale, held in Toronto, was a real hit. Among the pleasures for us was the appearance of the designer of the mountain stamps, who decided to check out CSN's booth. While there, we had him sign a few sheets, just to make our *Just For Kids* prizes a little more special.

What's in a name?

Effective Oct. 21, Canada Post officially changed the province designation of Newfoundland from NF to NL. The change apparently reflects the change in the name of the province from Newfoundland to Newfoundland and Labrador.

Test your knowledge

The folks at the West Suburban Stamp Club, of Plymouth, MI, sure know how to spice up a meeting. Their September event was billed as a mystery night, but turned out to be a philatelic quiz. The club even put the quiz online, so you can see how your knowledge stacks up. The best score so far is 12 out of 25. Check out the site at <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/wssc.htm>.

A good image

One of the interesting articles in the issue concerns a young collector who had the opportunity to share her stamp collection with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Not only is that great news for our young stamp collector, but it is also great news for stamp collecting. What could be cooler than getting a chance to hang with the Queen?

Do you like topicals?

One of the more interesting fields of collecting is the area of topicals, or thematics. We've been so impressed in the number of collectors following this specialty that we'd love to know just what you collect. So let us know, by mail, e-mail, or even fax. Tell if you collect by theme, and if so, which theme. The answers will help us decide which articles to run in future editions of CSN. You can contact us at 103 Lakeshore Rd., Suite 202, St. Catharines ON L2N 2T6, by fax at 905-646-0995, or by e-mail to bret@trajan.com.