

Cachets

Newsletter of BNAPS

First Day Cover Study Group

Volume I, Issue 3, August 1998

The earliest First Day Covers Of Canada

Technically, the earliest First Day Covers produced in Canada were made on April 23rd 1851, when the first Postage Stamp of Canada (the 3 pence Beaver Imperforate Stamp on laid paper) was made available for sale. Two such covers are known to exist at the present time. One of them was bought about a year ago by a Collector specializing in First day of issue of first stamp. The cover was reportedly sold for about \$100 000 to an anonymous American buyer.

There does not appear to be any evidence that collecting Stamps on cover cancelled on their first day of issue was seriously undertaken as a practice until more than four decades later.

The Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897 was accompanied by an unheard amount of festivities, fairs and special events. The Canadian Post Office decided to issue on June 19th 1897 an unprecedented series of 16 stamps and one postcard. This was perhaps inspired by the American 1892 Colombia Series of 16 stamps celebrating the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus.

The postmaster General at the time, Mr Mulock, made it clear in a series of directives and memo that this was a limited issue series and that it was not destined to replace the current definitives (what we call small Queens). Great care was taken to ensure that all important Post-offices were supplied with their share of stamps before the day of issue. Offices were forbidden to sell any of these stamps before June 19th. As can be expected, at least one uninformed or careless clerk sold some before the authorized date. There is an example of a cover posted at Rock Island, Quebec, a town on the border between the province of Quebec and Vermont.

The number of stamps issued were as follows:

1/2c	150 thousands
1c	8 millions
2c	2.5 millions
3c	20 millions
5c	750 thousands
6c	75 thousands
8c	200 thousands
10c	150 thousands
15c, 20c, 50c	100 thousands
\$1, \$2, \$3, \$4, \$5	25 thousands
1c postcard	7 millions

This made a whopping \$16.21. To put these amounts in perspective: \$16.21 was an amount of money

that unqualified labor would have considered themselves lucky to make inside of 2 weeks. It was adequate money to fully maintain a small family living modestly for two complete weeks. And enough to mail 540 standard letters (which would cost over \$275 with today's rates and GST).

The need to disburse this small fortune for the complete set of Jubilee drew considerable criticism. The Post office was even accused of printing values (such as the \$5 stamp) of a value superior to the the highest amount that could possibly be required on the heaviest allowed parcel sent registered (\$3.59).

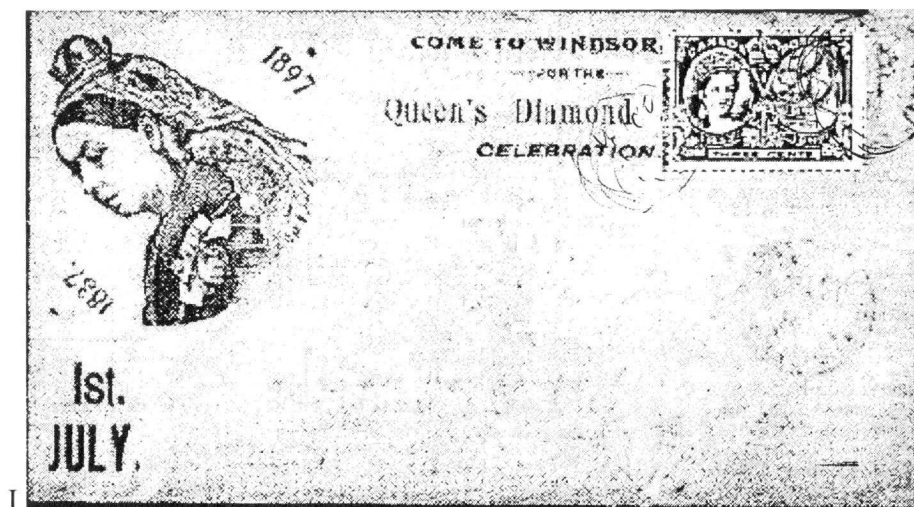
Canadian Post office officials defended their position by indicating second Class matter (newspapers and periodicals) at the bulk rate of 1c a pound regularly passed through Toronto franked with \$10 to \$20 of stamps. Someone even quoted an unofficial record shipment where of \$63 in postage had to be paid.

Nevertheless, a populace in "unprecedented numbers" literally besieged Post Offices across the country on the day of issue. The advance publication of the quantity of the various denominations to be issued prompted speculator to hoard some more desirable values. As a response the Post office issued a memo within a week of the issue, directing Postmasters to sell 1/2c and 6c issues whose quantity remained dangerously low, only with full sets of Jubilee stamps.

Just as the Canadian Post office did not foresee the tremendous demand for the Jubilee stamps when they were issued, they did not foresee the advent of First Day Cover collecting. If they had, they would have ensured that the special Jubilee Flag cancellations would have been in used for the day of issue (Just as they have a special cancellation on today's first day of issue). The First Flag cancellations occurred on March 10th 1896 and the last ones on July 10th 1897. Beautiful Flag machine cancellations are found shortly after the day of issue. But it does not appear that any of those were operational until about a week after the day of issue.

Probably two or three dozens of First Day covers of the Jubilee issue are known to still exist. Possibly more await to be discovered, sleeping in someone's attic or old trunk.

Some entreprising collectors affixed stamps on envelopes bearing a patriotic Cachet or commemorating Diamond Jubilee celebration (such as the Montreal or Hamilton Fair).



MONTREAL EXHIBITION

Do Not Fail to Come!



MONTREAL FAIR

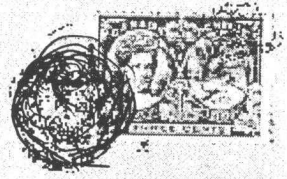
19TH-28TH August, 1897



IF NOT DELIVERED IN 30 DAYS RETURN TO



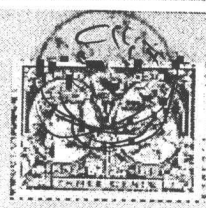
(HEAD OFFICE)
(Hamilton Ont.)



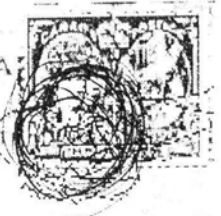
God Save The Queen



MARSH WARDEN JEWELL
1897

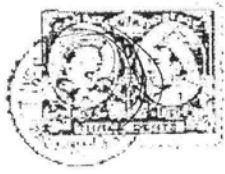


Hotel Carlsbad



NOBILISSIMA FIDELIUM OMNIUM

1837 1897



Order that in respect to the Queen of England
 nothing shall be done for the purpose of
 placing any golden piece of plate or ware
 in the hands of a woman without leave
 WILLIAM WATSON.

J. M. HUMPHREY & Co.,
 BOOTERS, SHOES AND RUBBERS,
 12 KING STREET,
 SAINT JOHN, N. B.



All first day covers cancellations I have seen bear a regular machine or hand cancel. Most of them are of the circular type.

Melvin Baron and Stan Lum in an earlier issue of BNA Topics ((May June 1992) recorded having located first day Covers for the 1c, 2c, 3c, 5c, 8c, 10c and \$1 issues. They also located 1/2c, 6c and 50c stamps cancelled on the first day, but off cover.

Since Bulletins issued by the Postmaster General clearly and explicitly state that all offices were to be supplied with stocks of complete sets, one can only assume that cities where First Day Covers are known, also sold stamps of all denominations on th first day of issue. Theoretically First Day Covers of every denomination from those cities are possible.

The cities are

Prince Eward Island: Charlottetown, Harbour South

Nova Scotia: Halifax, Truro

New-Brunswick: St-John

Quebec: Quebec, Montreal, Richmond, Coaticook, Sherbrooke, Laprairie, Stanstead

Ontario: Carleton Place, Cumberland, Hamilton, London, Ottawa, Toronto, Windsor, Brookville, Listowell, Guelph, Clinton, Garret, Palmerston,

Manitoba: Winnipeg, Oak Lake

British Columbia: Victoria, Kaslo, Sandon, Vancouver



Dear Fellow FDC enthusiast,

This is the third issue of the Canada FDC Study Group Newsletter.

It is coming late, but I have organized myself to be able to put the subsequent issues, monthly.

I have decided to start at the very beginning of FDC Collecting in Canada (1897) and move forward from there. Next issue will cover the period from 1897 to 1927(The First Commercial Cachet).

I welcome your comments.

I also welcome any article or historical information.

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