

## XVI. THEMATIC, CARD, AND COVER COLLECTING

### Topical Collecting

Collecting a specific topic on stamps generally isn't restricted to a single country, but Canada is one country where a restricted topical collection is very easy to assemble. For some people this is an interesting area to start a stamp collection, or to tutor a child or grandchild on stamp collecting.

I would certainly recommend going to a current stamp catalogue such as *The Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps*, where in the back of the book one can find a list of over 115 various topics that can be collected. The largest topics



include but are not limited to: Airplanes, Animals, Buildings, Centennials, Christmas, Emblems and Logos, Flags, Flowers, Hockey, Maple Leaf, People, Ships and Boats, Sports, Transportation, Trees and Water (ocean, rivers, bays etc). One of the most impressive areas one could collect is the "Animals" area. Most of Canada's animal stamps commemorate her endangered species. This very important area has many beautiful stamps associated with it. Recently voted

Canada's most beautiful stamp, the \$8 Grizzly Bear stamp probably is the crown jewel in a Canadian animal topical collection.

Another great topic, and one for which there are many inexpensive and colorful stamps available, is Canada's flag. Most of the Canadian stamps depicting her flag have been very colorful and a joy to behold on a page. Such a collection has a known start date, June 1, 1965, and the designs continue to be issued.

If you want to include postal history in a topical collection, you could look to the Royal Visit of 1939 or flag cancels on envelopes. There have been gold medal-level collections formed around these two topical ideas. Another area of study involves the first flights of the various airmail routes within Canada. Here again is an area of study where high-level awards have been garnered with such a collection. Topical collecting can be a lot of fun and an educational experience for the collector as the collection builds.

### Mourning Covers

Mourning covers are envelopes with black borders around the perimeter to indicate a death in the sender's family. There are also examples of mourning covers with a black border around the stamp. These are quite difficult to find because a 'collar' as it is known to the post office was not allowed by them. The placing of a black border around the envelope is a tradition started in Victorian England.



When the Prince Consort to Queen Victoria died, she went into mourning (this was to last for the rest of her life) and she ordered that all her stationery have a black border to signify her mourning. This practice was soon picked up by the general public. Canada was no exception. The use of mourning covers passed from favor during the reign of King George VI and seems to have

totally disappeared today. One protocol seems to have risen during the period of use of such covers and that is that the width of the border tends to indicate the closeness of the person being mourned. Illustrated at the left is a Small Queen cover with a very thick border, which would tend to say that the person being mourned was extremely close to the letter writer. A good collection of mourning covers would be a very colorful collection indeed!

### Patriotic Covers

An interesting and newly developing area of study is the collecting of patriotic cacheted covers. A patriotic cover is one that offers an advertisement in support of the country in time of war or danger. Some of the earliest patriotic covers of



Canada are from the Boer War. Many were produced by a company called J. C. Wilson Company. These are very colorful and complex in design. These early patriotic covers were often used to enhance a collection that was devoted to the study of the war. Many are hard to find and are expensive when they are found.

Patriotic covers from much more modern times, especially WWII, are more moderately priced and more readily available. One of the growing areas of patriotic cover collecting is that of the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Series put out by McMillan in the early 1940s. Over 170 of his various covers have been identified. A list of these covers can be found on the BNAPS web site at [www.BNAPS.org/Education](http://www.BNAPS.org/Education). An example of a McMillan patriotic is at the top of the next page.

There are a tremendous number of WWII patriotic covers with different cachets. Collecting them would be both a lot of fun and provide a colorful collection.



In the subject of patriotic covers, one could also include those covers that have a patriotic slogan cancel. Included might be the V ●●●—, the “Enlist Now,” or the myriad of other slogan cancels developed during

the war. Many of these cancels were used at numerous cities across Canada, and collecting one from each city would be a nice challenge. You might even extend your collection to include the earliest and latest recorded dates in each city.

Collecting areas such as these require back up information, and the BNAPS book department is a likely source for all your needs. Remember that as a member of BNAPS, you can get a significant discount on the books of your choice.

## XVII. SPECIALTY STUDIES

**Registration and Acknowledgement of Receipt Studies.** In 1855, the Canadian Post Office began registering mail, particularly mail with money, contracts, or other valuable paper instruments, as well as parcel post items, to better track them and reduce theft. This service cost extra. Initially paid with stamps, in 1875 stamps were issued specifically for registering domestic mail, mail to the U.S., and mail to England, with three differently colored stamps. The stamps were required until 1889; their use was largely discontinued by the mid 1890s. Registration remains to this day an optional service, and collectors specialize in the rates and types of mail that could and can be registered. Registration was available after 1878 for mail to UPU countries, and collectors look for examples sent to various destinations. Airmail and special delivery were additional services that could be added to the registration, but are uncommon.