

I. PURPOSES OF THE HANDBOOK

In 1981 Ed Richardson completed a project he had conceived and written himself to introduce the variety of collecting available in Canadian philately. One author (Vic Willson) participated marginally as a new collector of Canada but as an experienced editor and writer in social science research. That work, *Canada–B.N.A. Philately (an Outline)*, was intended for the neophyte, or the collector who collected “by Scotts” as Ed noted, to introduce them to the many collecting areas available to them. Ed was uniquely situated to write the pamphlet. No one, not even Fred Jarrett, collected more broadly than Ed Richardson, who once told Vic he had over 250 different, separate collections in all areas of Canada and its British North America (BNA) relatives, the colonies of New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Vancouver Island-British Columbia when they were separate stamp-issuing entities.

Ed’s product was supported and printed by the British North America Philatelic Society (BNAPS), Ed’s primary philatelic affiliation. BNAPS provided the 64-page booklet to new members. It became a classic soon after its issuance, and no other society or collecting group has produced anything comparable. Perhaps because Canada (and BNA) is sufficiently circumscribed yet still broad, it can be reasonably presented in such an overview form.

We have tried to summarize what can be found in each topic we have listed. This is *not* an encyclopedia—it does not give all information about the stamps or topics we discuss. We do try to give you the reader a sense of what will be needed to focus on each topic, including general statements about rarity, expense, or availability (these three are not the same thing; some very rare items catalogue for little because few people seek them out). Ed noted that Canada did not have the equivalent of the *U.S. Specialized Stamp Catalog*, but his booklet went far beyond what commercial specialized catalogues, even the U.S. specialized, have published.

II. SPECIALIZATION: What is it? An Example

The history of stamp collecting began with the pasting of 1d black stamps on walls in London, England in the 1840s. After a few other countries issued stamps, collecting progressed to pasting the stamps in ledger books. By the 1860s, sellers of stamps began advertising the sale of postage stamps of the world. Collecting became quite popular, and collectors tried to get an example of each stamp from issuing countries around the world, including both postage stamps and tax stamps. A few collectors in the 1800s began to require that the stamps remain on letters, called entires or covers. Some collectors only sought stamps from one country or political entity, such as the British Empire. This is how our specialization began.

Today specialization is a necessity for any collector because the time of being able to assemble a strong general, worldwide collection is past. Specialization means that one studies a particular aspect of collecting and seeks detail to the greatest possible extent. The choice of area is dictated by the availability of material, the costs associated with acquiring it, and the time and knowledge needed to make an in-depth study. In that sense, specialization has taken on the elements of research in

any discipline. One need not conduct research to have a successful specialization, but it is often the case that new discoveries are made in the process of finding and adding material. Consider specialization in the Edward VII issue of 1903–1911. A comprehensive collection could include the following:

Essays: drawings, compositions, die essays in various colors

Die proofs: trial colors, finished colors, in large and small formats

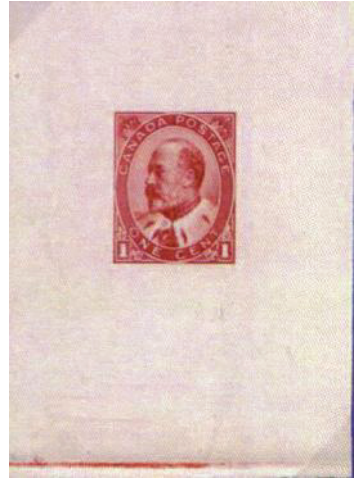
Plate proofs and imperforate printed stamps

Issued stamps, used and unused in single and multiple stamp formats

Specimen stamps, plate layout markings such as numbers and letters, multiples showing plate layouts

Plate varieties, re-entries, paper varieties such as paper type and color/tint, perforation varieties

Booklets and booklet panes, plate layout: imperforate tete-beche pane



Coil stamps: experimental coil stamp strips, paste-up pairs and strips

Cancellations on stamps, on multiples, and on covers used in period

Stamp usages on cover: principal uses for each stamp, make-up rates for covers showing changes in rates, and covers showing destinations and routes

Territorial and provincial usages on stamps and covers

Precancels and perfins on stamps

Postal stationery: envelopes, postal cards, postbands, wrappers, die proofs of envelopes

Permit mail examples

A number of Edward issue collections have been formed over the last 50 years, including those of George Marler, Ed Richardson, Harry Lussey, and most recently the “ASTOC” collection of Alan Selby. All included material from most of the listing above. Other specialty areas are quite different. For example, a specialization in squared circle cancellations will typically include for each cancellation:

Proof cancellations if they exist

Early and late dates of usage

Time markings

Significant wear or changes made to the canceling device

Usage on stamps contemporary to the period of use

Usage on covers contemporary to the period of use

Combination covers with two different cancels.

Since there are well over 300 different squared circle cancels spanning the early 1890s into the Edward period for some and much later for a few (some with many time marks), the number of possible items to collect is in the thousands. In the past, several very extensive collections have been formed, notably that of Jim Hennok as well as those of Nels Pelletier, Glenn Hansen, and Jim Moffat.

Specialization is what you make it. There are no rules for collecting, and

collectors are free to define their collections as they wish. They should have a moral responsibility to share things that they learn with others, although the idiosyncratic nature of collecting sometimes makes it a very solitary and contemplative effort. While we wish all the collectors would share their knowledge, it often is lost and it must be rediscovered.

Although one can accumulate a specialty

collection alone, this is much more difficult than collecting in concert with others through collector societies, study groups, stamp clubs, and newsletters, books, and stamp and auction catalogues. All of these provide information on the subject. No serious collector works without a reference library. It may consist of notes, articles, or the materials mentioned above, but such material is critical to understand and extend the specialty area. For example, knowing the proof dates for squared circle devices permits the search for early uses and the detection of flaws and breaks in devices.

This booklet elaborates some of the specializations the reader can study. The journey never ends, and there is no such thing as completion in any significant specialty field. New discoveries are still being made in every aspect of BNA philately. You are invited to join that exciting search. Even if you do not make a discovery yourself, you will participate in the understanding of Canadian history and development. Good hunting.



Exhibiting

A few comments on exhibiting: collecting is not the same as exhibiting. Collections often include multiple examples of the same type of item, while exhibiting requires selecting special examples from the collection. Some collectors mount collections



and exhibits separately, with reference material, duplicates, and unattractive but essential items kept in the collection but seldom displayed. Exhibiting may not be for everyone; it is usually competitive, and not all collectors have a desire to be competitive. While a collector can do as he wishes, when exhibiting the collector must follow certain rules and requirements for acceptance in a show, and further requirements if one desires high-level awards. For new exhibitors, there can be hard lessons to learn. They know their material well, and organize it according to their interests and knowledge. Unfortunately, that knowledge does not always translate into a meaningful visual display. Having every known cancel on one stamp is a wonderful collection but for general viewers it can make an incredibly boring exhibit. Major criteria considered by judges in making their assessments are—in order—material (its condition, difficulty of acquisition, and suitability), proper description of the material, and its organization. However, exhibiting is a visual activity. An exhibit should have visual attraction and tidiness as well as show the particular important elements of the chosen topic. Various national groups as well as the American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors have provided information on effective exhibiting. We note this as experienced exhibitors. While we have had our

share of triumphs, we also have had the experiences of awards significantly below what we expected. Almost invariably, our own limitations in conveying the intent and information have led to the level of award we received. Once you have specialized sufficiently, sharing your knowledge and philatelic material with others can be accomplished through exhibiting. Remember that all exhibitors had to start once—had to try that first, experimental exhibit.

Writing about Stamps

A note about writing: when you have achieved a level of knowledge about your collecting area so that you know what you have, what you do not have, and what there is to obtain, you might get the writing bug. Writing about your material can accomplish many purposes. One is to share your knowledge with others. Another is to promote your own material. Expertise usually requires significant investment. Inevitably your material will need to be sold or given away, perhaps for charitable contributions. Making more people aware of its significance has the potential to generate new collectors for it. The development of new collectors raises the competitive prices for your material, especially the items limited in number or availability. Finally, writing about your material can be its own reward. Even if you have never written before, editors of stamp magazines and society journals are generally very supportive of new writers and they can help you develop your skills.

Organization of This Work

This booklet follows the general principle that Ed Richardson began, to provide a brief summary of the collecting areas that we and our friends who reviewed the table of contents determined to be currently active. We changed the order of topics a bit from Ed's. For one thing, rather than start with reference information, we put it at the back, instead focusing on the kinds of things a new collector might choose. With that in mind, we reversed the stamp collecting topics, beginning with the most modern material and working back toward the earliest stamps. Since stamps are the area most collectors begin with, they precede more specialized kinds of collecting. With this modified order, we make no claim about importance or interest.

Acknowledgements

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