

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

NEWSLETTER OF THE BNAPS

FIRST DAY COVER STUDY GROUP

ISSUE 43, JULY-SEPTEMBER 2020

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Donald LeBlanc reviews a beautiful set of cachets made by Catherine Schnurr for the 1939 Royal Visit issue as a prelude to a book currently in press. The BNAPS announcement of the book follows Donald's article.

Our constant contributor John van der Ven provides a study of two cachets made by Robert Bolton who designed many U.S. cachets but only this pair of Canadian FDCs. An ad for Sparks Auctions announcing their October sale which will include John's pre-1960 covers is featured on the last page of this issue.

I've made a couple of minor changes in the newsletter format for this and subsequent issues. As always, I'd appreciate receiving any new material you may have to offer. I'm also interested in hearing from anyone who would be willing to take on the editorship of *First Impressions*.

SUBMITTING ARTICLES

Articles may be submitted in MS Word and scans should be separate attachments in JPEG format at 300 dpi. E-mail submissions should be sent to the Editor, Gary Dickinson at gandbdickinson@shaw.ca.

TWO EARLY COMMERCIAL FIRST DAY COVERS

by Bob Vogel

One of my favourite side collections is comprised of commercial first day covers. These are covers sent out by businesses using their letterhead. They usually describe the stamp issue and promote one of their own products. The 1950s and 1960s were the heyday of commercial first day covers but finding them from the 1930s and 1940s is quite uncommon.

Two FDCs from the earlier period are illustrated here. The first is from the Imperial Bank of Canada and commemorates the 1939 Royal Visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. (Figure 1)



Figure 1

The bank logo is in blue on the envelope back flap and black on the letterhead sheet. (Figure 2) Curiously, the letter is dated two days after the postmark date. It indicates that the writer had placed it “in the hands of the Post Office Department for mailing on the Royal Train,” and trusts that “it will reach you in good order.”

The second cover (Figure 3) commemorates the one-hundredth

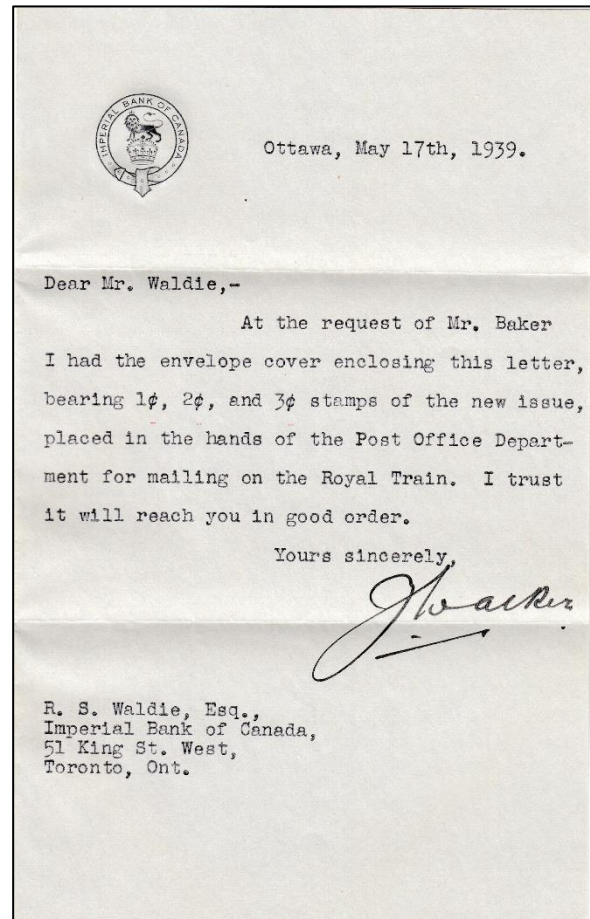


Figure 2

anniversary of the birth of Alexander Graham Bell. It is from the Green & Low Paper Co. Inc. of Hartford, Connecticut and is postmarked at Brantford, ON on March 3, 1947, the official city and day of issue for the stamp (Scott 274).

That one Hartford company (Green & Low) would send a Canadian FDC to another Hartford company (Hartford Fire Insurance) is explained in the enclosed letter (Figure 4)

which notes that “Because of his (Bell’s) contribution to our way of life and to

American progress, we felt this cover should be in your collection.”

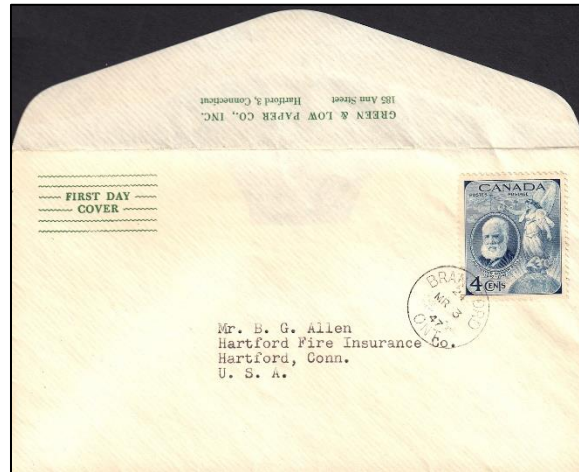


Figure 3

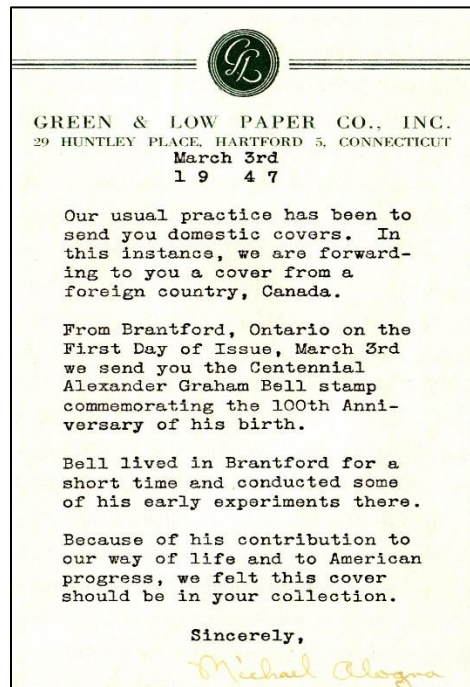


Figure 4

REAL WRONG, REGAL

Charles Verge forwarded this pair of Regal FDCs for Scott 373, the Mining and Metallurgical Congress issue of September 5, 1957. The upper version is the correct one, with black text above and below the red artwork showing a map and a pair of miners at work.

The lower cover, however, illustrates an error in the printing process where apparently the envelope was rotated 180 degrees so that the stamp appears where the artwork would normally be. It appears that the addressee, who was also the sender of the cover, knew what he or she was doing as both address labels are oriented the same way and the stamp is neatly positioned.



FIRST DAY COVERS BY ROBERT F. BOLTON

by Jan Pieter (John) van der Ven

Robert Frederick Bolton was an American FDC designer who did not start producing cachets until 1946 when he was 45 years old. The bulk of his work was for U.S. stamp issues although he did create at least two designs for Canadian stamps early in his cachet-making career.

Bolton was born in 1901 and taught art for one year in New York City before joining the New York Edison Company where he served eighteen years as chief designer, responsible for all their interiors, exhibits, and displays. He subsequently was Head Art Director for Franklin Spear Advertising Agency where he designed more than 900 Revlon commercials for which he won awards four years in a row.

Bolton designed more than 150 trade show exhibits for some of the largest companies in the U.S. and won more than 100 medals for them.

He was an avid painter with many of his works being acquired by the likes of Princess Grace of Monaco and Peggy Rockefeller. He painted murals for the Chicago Worlds Fair and the New York Worlds Fair.

Besides his many design awards, Bolton received many art awards including the Elliott Silver Medal, the Sydham Gold Medal, six Hallgarten Awards, the Luis Comfort Tiffany Award, and two gold medals from the Beaux Arts Institute of Design.

He also found time for an acting career, appearing in more than 50 silent movies most of which were filmed in Fort Lee, New Jersey.

Bolton's first cachet was for the stamp (U.S. Scott 940) issued on May 9, 1946 to honour the veterans of World War II. He

was still designing and making cachets at age 95.

I first encountered Robert Bolton's work at a Mississauga stamp show in September 2018 when dealer Frank Hoyles showed me some material he had recently sold. It consisted of some correspondence with a client in Ontario and included two American covers from 1947 and one Canadian FDC from 1948. The correspondence and U.S. covers had been purchased by a visiting American dealer and Roy Houtby purchased the Canadian one.

Bolton's tie to the FDC publisher Limited Edition Covers is firmly established by the exhibits shown below. Thus, Figure 1 is the business corner card on an envelope containing a note to a customer signed by Bolton (Figure 2). This is dated in 1947 and refers to a forthcoming FDC ("your Doctors cover") for the Doctors Issue (U.S. Scott 949) of June 9, 1947.

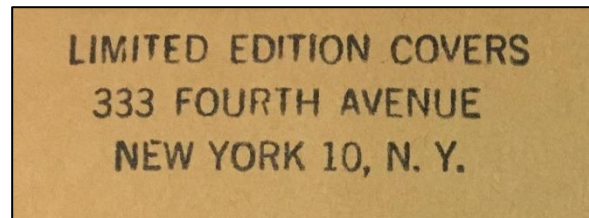


Figure 1

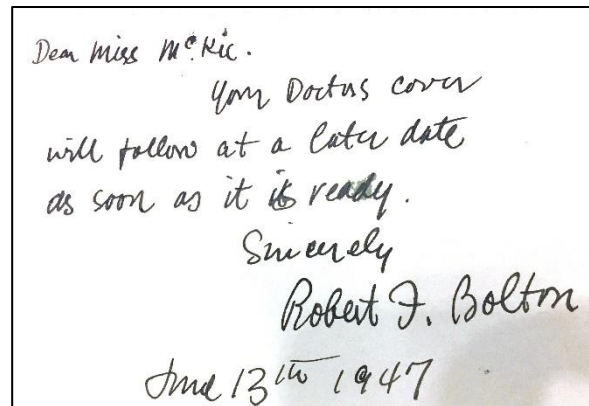


Figure 2

One of the U.S. FDCs that I photographed at the Mississauga show helps to establish the Bolton style and the front (Figure 3) and back (Figure 4) of the envelope are illustrated here. The block of four stamps (U.S. Scott 947) was issued on May 17, 1947 to mark the centenary of American postage stamps.

Characteristics of the Bolton FDC style for U.S. stamp issues include a printed cachet and text, with hand-coloured artwork, text along the top and left side, a larger than usual envelope, and a rubber-stamped publisher's name and serial number on the back.



Figure 3

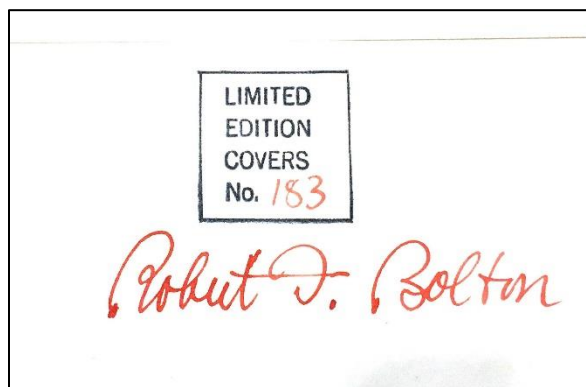


Figure 4

There are two known Bolton cachets for Limited Edition Covers for Canadian stamp issues. His first Canadian product was for the July 1, 1947 Citizen issue (Scott

275) commemorating the 80th anniversary of confederation. Two examples of the Bolton cachet are shown in Figure 5. A close inspection of the hand-coloured artwork illustrates the differences between serial numbers 540 and 521 (see Figure 6). Although the variations are relatively minor, the brown Canada banner below the shields is much darker on the upper version than on the lower, and subtle differences in the colouring of the maple leaves is also apparent.

The second Canadian Limited Edition cover by Robert Bolton is illustrated in Figure 7 (front) and Figure 8 (back). It was the next commemorative stamp (Scott 276) issued by Canada following the Citizen offering and marked the marriage of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip. The stamp appeared on February 16, 1948 although the wedding occurred on November 20, 1947.

The examples shown here are serial numbers 506 and 527. Variations between the two FDCs illustrated are most easily discernable by a close examination of the blue shading on the wedding dresses.

Given the scarcity of Bolton's Canadian cachets and that the four FDCs shown here range between serial numbers 506 and 540, it seems unlikely that he would have produced more than 500 of each type. It's possible that his numbering started around 500 and the total production was in the dozens rather than hundreds.

Robert Bolton and Ralph Dyer had similar backgrounds in art education and work experience, and both made outstanding contributions to FDC cachet making in North America. They also were the only known cachet makers to become centenarians. Although the date of Bolton's death is unknown, I know that he lived to at least 104.

References

Richard A. Monty. "First Cachets Update 117. *First Days*, Vol. 45, No. 6 (September 2000), pp. 470-472.

Richard A. Monty. "Robert Frederick Bolton: The AFDCS Centurion." *First Days*, Vol. 46, No. 6 (September 2001), pp. 438-440.

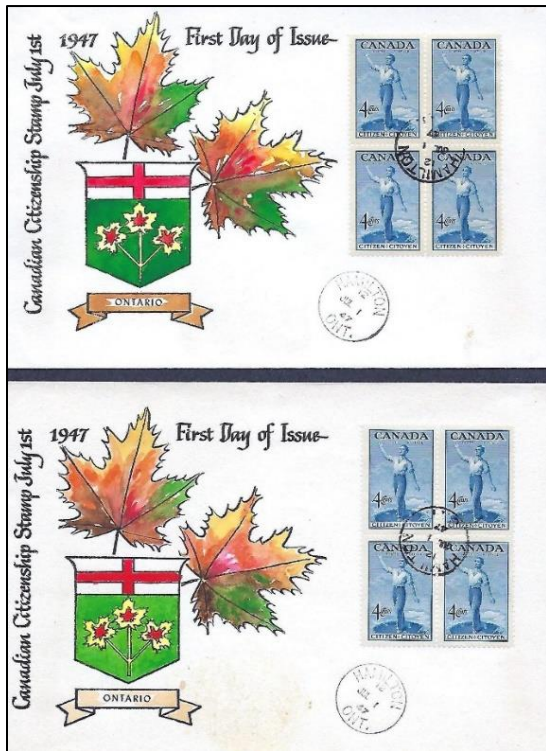


Figure 5

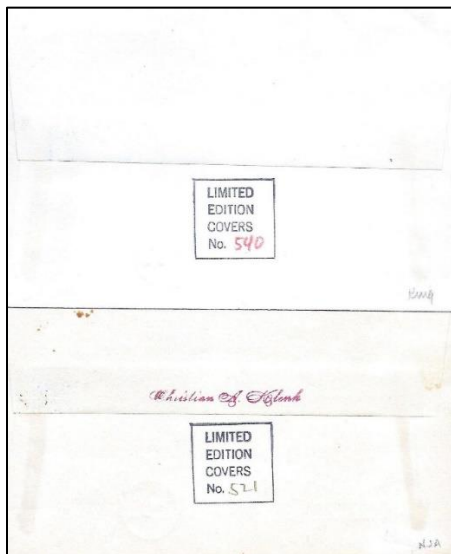


Figure 6



Figure 7

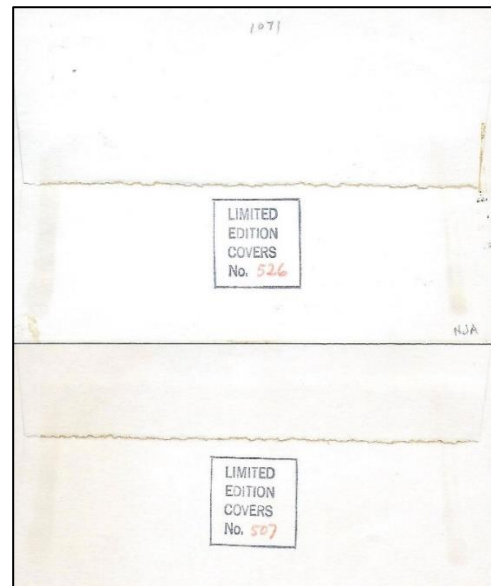


Figure 8

SCHNURR CACHETS FOR THE 1939 ROYAL VISIT ISSUE

by Donald LeBlanc



Figure 1. The One That Got Away

I have been collecting FDCs of the Royal Visit of 1939 issue (Scott 246-248) for the last 30 years, and about four years ago decided to share my collection with others through a handbook in the BNAPS publication program. This book is now in print and available through the BNAPS bookseller, Longley Auctions.

The collection is divided into fifteen categories of covers and some 265 different types of cachets. Including colour and text varieties there are a total of 502 different covers plus 62 different postcards.

Among the more beautiful cachets represented in the book are 26 different “Schnurr” cachets that were once part of Melvin Baron’s collection.

I acquired the Schnurr FDCs in an Eastern Auctions sale of Baron’s collection in 2016. It was lot 335 with the following description:

“246-248, May 15th 1939, 1c-3c Royal Visit: Nice lot comprising 23 of 24 “Schnurr” addressed and cacheted city/town FDC, (missing Ottawa), plus four different Royal Train cancelled FDC, as well as 12 different cacheted FDC....Est. \$250.00.”

Although my winning bid was more than the estimated selling price, it was less than I had been prepared to pay.

At the end of the auction I spoke with Yohann Tanguay, the chief lotter with Eastern Auction, who had written the Schnurr lot description. He said he believed

that the cachet maker was Miss Catherine Schnurr simply because her name and address were printed on the cachet at the same time and with the same font as the commemorative message. He indicated that it was common knowledge that collectors would address their cachets to themselves for their own collection. Dealers or professional cachet makers, on the other hand, would write their own address with a light pencil and later erase it for resale to clients. Tanguay isn't 100% certain that Schnurr was the maker, so stated "Schnurr addressed" in the lot description rather than identify her as the maker, but the evidence pointed in her direction.

The stamps for which Catherine Schnurr produced her FDCs were announced in March 1939 by the Post Office Department (POD). The official announcement mentioned that the 24 official cities would have a supply of the new stamps on May 15, 1939 and would respond to requests for FDCs. Part of the notice read as follows:

"Persons desiring to obtain First Day Covers should forward under cover to the Postmaster at one or more of the above mentioned points, covers intended for transmission on the First Day of Issue, (15th May, 1939), of these stamps, together with remittance by Postal Money Order (not personal cheque), for the face value of the stamps desired to be used, payable to Receiver General of Canada..."

In April 1939 the POD sent a second announcement to advise that a post office would operate on a special train that would convey the Royal Party across Canada. Part

of the announcement, important for this article, reads as follows:

"An opportunity will be afforded interested persons to secure the special postmark of the Royal Train Post Office.... Persons desiring to avail themselves of this opportunity...should comply with the following directions:

- (1) Prepare such addressing them and enclosing a "filler" such as a piece of thin cardboard or other suitable material.
- (2) Send a remittance sufficient to cover the face value of stamps, together with the covers, to The Philatelic Division, (Royal Train Covers), Financial Branch, Post Office Dept, Ottawa.
- (3) Remittance must be made by Postal Money Order....
- (4) Enclose a brief letter stating your requirements as to the stamps to be used on the covers....
- (5) Covers must reach the Philatelic Division not later than 12th May."

To summarize the POD requirements, all collectors requiring a FDC from each official city and the Royal Train would have to send 25 separate requests along with 25 money orders to 25 postmasters including the Ottawa address.

Miss Schnurr had apparently been a member of a Cleveland FDC club (her address was in Lakewood, a suburb of Cleveland) and had been inspired by other club members who had made cachets for the 1937 Coronation issue. (See Figures 2 and 3) The club had received the POD announcements, and she prepared her own cachets with the assistance two other club members, one of whom was a printer by trade

and helped Schnurr and others make their own cachets.



Figure 2. Scott 233.



Figure 3. Scott 237.

A lot of work went into preparing her cachets and covers. All the following tasks need to have been completed, although not necessarily in this order:

1. Acquire 26 airmail envelopes. These envelopes already had the message “VIA AIR MAIL” printed on them. The “VIA” is always hidden by the bottom part of the 2¢ stamp.
2. Prepare the printing press to print the commemorative message, then the first official city of Calgary, Alberta, then her name and address, all in the same font.
3. Change some letters in the printing press at least 24 times, to identify

every subsequent official city and province.

4. Change the font to print in italic type “First Day of Issue” on all envelopes.
5. With different rubber-stamps of different British symbols and different coloured ink pads, add a distinctive central design for the different cachets, although the symbols have nothing to do with the cities mentioned.
6. Superimpose the green maple leaf above the symbol either with another rubber-stamp or with the printing press.
7. With a light pencil, draw three rectangles to help the postal employees properly place the stamps in order by writing 1¢, 2¢ and 3¢.
8. Prepare 24 letters of instructions for each Postmaster and one for the Philatelic Division.
9. Purchase 25 different money orders for the purchase of the stamps, that is at least 6¢ per envelope to cover the air mail rate.
10. Mail out 24 separate covering envelopes to each Postmaster, plus another envelope to the Philatelic Division.
11. Pray that each postal employee, assigned by the Postmaster, follows the instructions exactly.

An interesting omission from Schnurr’s set of FDCs is an Ottawa postmark. However, as shown in Figure 1, she had intended to have that city as one of the 24 official day of issue locations as “Ottawa” is printed just above her address, but the cancellation is a Royal Train flag. What may have happened is that the cover

was sent to the Postmaster in Ottawa, who passed it on to a clerk to place the required stamps and postmark the letter. The clerk who saw this beautiful cachet may have decided to walk over to the Philatelic Division to have a special Royal Train cancellation applied. The clerk couldn't have known that Miss Schnurr had already sent covers to that department. Thinking he or she had done Miss Schnurr a favor, instead the clerk had deprived her of obtaining a complete set of the 24 official cities. Her prayers were only partially answered since one clerk did not follow her instructions.

A selection of covers from Catherine Schnurr's production follows. The two Royal Train cancellations are shown in Figures 4 and 5, and the other FDCs follow in alphabetical order by city. These covers were selected for inclusion to represent all of the different symbols enclosed by a maple leaf.



Figure 6. Calgary.



Figure 7. Charlottetown.



Figure 8. Edmonton.



Figure 4. Royal Train flag cancel.



Figure 5. Royal Train orb cancel.



Figure 9. Fort William.



Figure 10. Kingston.



Figure 14. Regina.



Figure 11. London.



Figure 15. Saskatoon



Figure 12. Medicine Hat.



Figure 16. Windsor

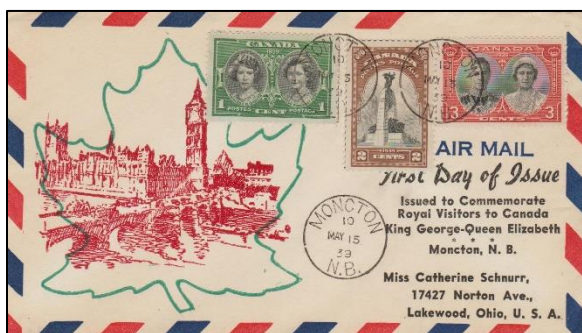


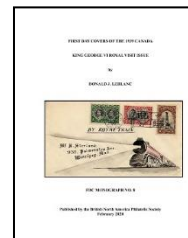
Figure 13. Moncton.



Figure 17. Vancouver.



Figure 18. Winnipeg.



BNAPS BOOK RELEASE NOTE

BNAPS is pleased to announce the release of a new book on the many Canadian First Day Covers prepared for the 1939 Royal Visit stamp issue and another, the 107th volume in the BNAPS Exhibit Series, on Canadian Air Mail rates to different parts of the world between 1925 and 1954. Our sister society, the Société d'histoire postale du Québec (SHPQ), has released a new book on the Postal History of Québec. A note at the end of this article reminds readers of BNAPS' new book distribution arrangement with Longley Auctions.

First Day Covers of the 1939 Canada King George VI Royal Visit Issue, Donald J. Leblanc. Over 450 pages illustrating and describing the myriad First Day Covers that were issued in for the set of three 1939 Royal Visit stamps. 2020, Spiral bound, 464 pages, 8.5 × 11, colour. ISBN: 978-1-989280-07-2. Stock # B4h103-1. Price: C\$81.00

The voyage to Canada of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in the spring of 1939 was not the first to the country by a Royal, but it was the first by a reigning Monarch. The fact that their Majesties travelled coast-to-coast by train provided citizens with an unprecedented opportunity to see them, and gave rise to an incredible number of First Day Covers for the three stamps that were issued in honour of the tour. *First Day Covers of the 1939 Canada King George VI Royal Visit Issue* is a profusely illustrated and amazingly detailed catalogue of all the different First Day Covers that were issued in 1939.

Donald LeBlanc was born in Moncton, N.B. in 1949. After completing his early education in Dieppe and Moncton, he went on to obtain his Bachelor of Commerce degree from University of Moncton in 1971. He then continued his education to obtain a bachelor of law degree from the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton in 1974.

Moving to Caraquet, N.B. in 1975, he practiced law with his own law firm for 26 years until 2000. He was then appointed a Provincial Court Judge, a position that he still holds in 2020. He is married and has 2 adult children.

On the philatelic side, he has collected stamps ever since his childhood. Over the years he specialized his Canadian interest and heavily researched the Royal Visit Issue of 1939 and the War Issue of 1942. Rather than exhibit, he preferred writing articles to document his research.

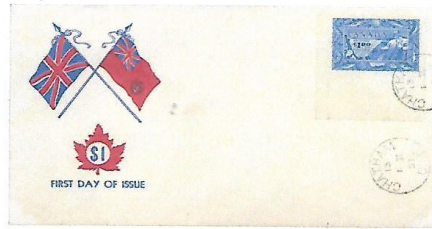
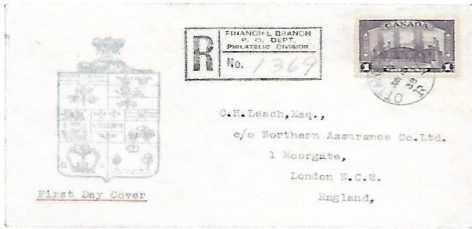
From 1993 to 1998 he was a regular contributor to the *Canadian Philatelist*. His column, "Don's Corner," consisted of fairly long studies of Canadian Plate Blocks. In 1998 his writings earned him The Geldert Medal for Philatelic Authorship from the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada.

After 1998 he put his pen aside for a period of time, but not his passion for collecting plate blocks and First Day Covers. In 2010, he started writing articles again for the George VI Study Group of the BNAPS and continued these articles on the War Issue and Royal Visit Issue until 2018. He has been an active member of BNAPS for over 45 years. This venture is his first complete study in book form.

SPARKS

★ AUCTIONS

Sparks Auctions is pleased to offer the Jan (John) Pieter van der Ven Canadian 1959 First Day Cover Collection in our October 2020 auction



Most Canadians will know John as an avid FDC collector who has been active in this field for the last 30 years. He strived to obtain as many different covers as possible, either for cachets, cachet colours or types and varieties, different frankings and different postmarks, and is known for his numerous contributions to "First Impressions" the newsletter of the BNAPS First Day Cover Study Group.

The comprehensive collection will be offered in our October 2020 auction. The collection contains all his better pre-1959 material, lotted mostly by stamp issue, and we have tried to have no duplication in any lot. The values given are the retail prices John paid over the years for his treasures. Some were bargains and some he paid whatever it took to secure the items, as many of the gems in his collection are either the only one he has seen in 30 years, or one of very few. We hope you will find something of interest in this rarely offered group.

Our sales are conducted in Canadian dollars with a low 17% Buyer's Premium. Thousands of full colour scans and live online bidding can be found on Stamp Auction Network.



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