

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

NEWSLETTER OF THE BNAPS FIRST DAY COVER STUDY GROUP

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Chair’s Note by Bob Vogel

Welcome back to the First Day Study Group. After a hiatus of two years Gary has offered once again to edit our newsletter. This is the third time he has stepped up to the plate and our sincere thanks go out to him for doing so. Now, it is up to us, this is not a one person show so please help Gary out by sending him articles. Dig into your collections and find something that interests you and prepare an article. Surprise yourself, it is easier than think.

As most of you are aware our website is no longer available. Leo Beaudet has been provided with the content of the Gallery and is working on transferring this information to the BNAPS website. Initially the content will be viewing only and hopefully sometime down the road it will be fully interactive such as our Gallery in the past. Our finances are in good shape, having over \$400 in the bank, enabling us to waive dues again for this year.

Editor’s Note by Gary Dickinson

Written contributions to First Impressions are sought and welcomed, and new issues will be published when warranted by the contributions received. They should be in Word format with each scan in jpg format at 300 dpi., and submitted to editor Gary Dickinson at gandbdickinson@shaw.ca.

After a two-year hiatus, this is the first of what hopefully will be a quarterly publication by and for the members of the BNAPS First Day Cover Study Group. Its success will depend on contributions from our members and might deal with any topic pertaining to Canadian and Newfoundland first day covers. Contributions could be as short as one and as long as twelve, or occasionally more, pages in length. Articles might deal, for example, with products of a single (or several) cachet maker, stamp issue, or postal marking or a book review or description of a favourite cachet. For our next issue, members are especially invited to send further information about cachet makers and FDCs produced by private makers for 21st Century stamp Canadian issues.

Privately Produced FDCs for Canadian Stamp Issues of the 21st Century

by Gary Dickinson

The entry of the Canada Post Office into the production of FDCs for new Canadian stamp issues in 1971 led to their dominance in the marketplace and the exit of many Canadian and American producers. The chief cachet makers of the 1950s and 1960s disappeared shortly after CPO's entry into the field and by the 1980s very few were left.

By the turn of the century the number of private producers of FDCs making substantial quantities was reduced virtually to zero, with the only remaining makers being "boutique" enterprises that produced covers in the dozens rather than in the thousands as had been the case in the heyday of FDC making and collecting.

The first 21st century stamp produced in the year 2000 that is listed in the 2024 Unitrade catalogue is #1822 and the last number assigned in 2023 is #3380. As an indicator of the CPO dominance in the marketplace early in the century, ten commemorative stamps issued in that period (Scott 1863, 2025, 2155, 2433, 2660, 2732, 2895, 3046, 3165, and 3307) were selected at random and searches were conducted of eBay FDCs to determine how many of the items listed had CPO cachets and how many were produced privately. The combined total numbers were 73 CPO and 3 private, representing a near-monopoly for the official products.

This article illustrates a selection of FDCs from the current century that can be attributed to the small number of makers known to have produced them, plus other covers whose makers are unknown. It would be helpful if you could review your own collection and either provide some information that would help identify the unknown makers or send scans of covers by other makers not represented here.

Calgary

An unknown maker in Calgary, possibly from a local stamp club, produced numerous FDCs with general purpose cachets starting in the mid-1970s, with the last documented cover postmarked in 2012. The maker initially "adopted" a general purpose ArtCraft cachet (Type H) without the company logo, as illustrated in Figure 1.

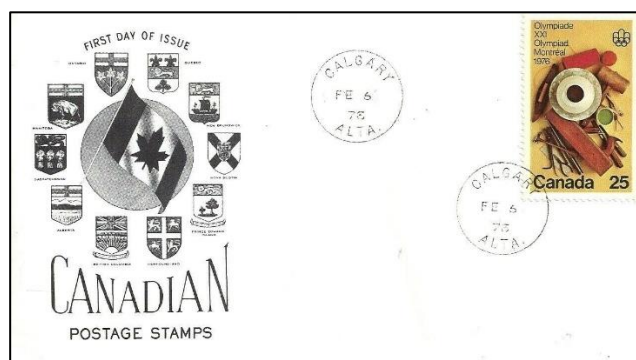


Figure 1. Early "ArtCraft" design with #685 in 1976.

This initial design was soon replaced by an original one showing crossed Canadian flags. Shown in Figure 2, this example was distributed in 2001. It is postmarked with two circular date stamps, one tying the stamp to the cover and the other free-standing, which is the usual pattern throughout the Calgary series.

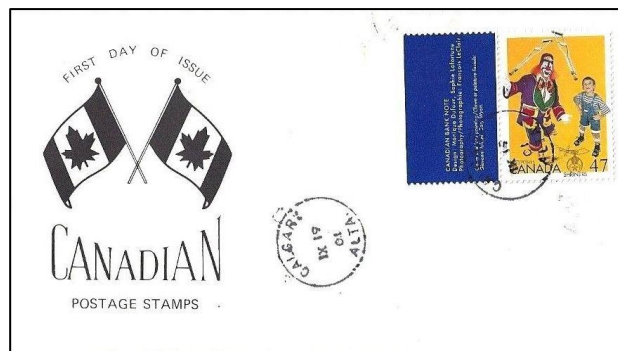


Figure 2. Calgary design for #1917 in 2001.

The Calgary circular postmarks were ultimately replaced by special markings applied by the Calgary post office as depicted in Figure 3 on what was one of the later FDCs mailed from this western city.

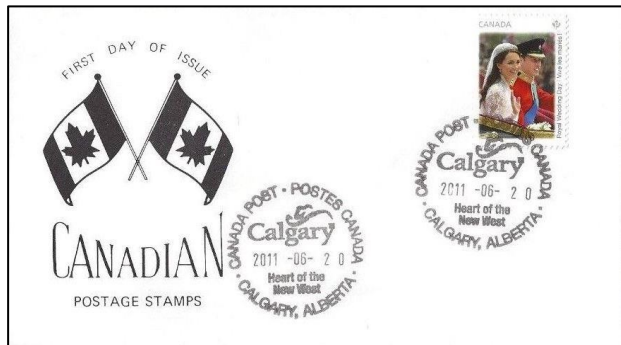


Figure 3. Calgary design for #2478 in 2011.

R.G.Sharpe

Kelowna, B.C. resident Robert G. Sharpe used a general purpose cachet printed in eight colours for numerous stamp issues starting in 1965 while living in Ottawa. Initially he produced FDCs for commemorative stamps but in the 21st century changed to making them for the souvenir sheets for which Canada Post did not produce official first day covers. Two such works are shown in Figures 4 and 5. Sharpe’s usual production run was less than 20 for each issue, and each envelope has his initials RGS and the serial number on the back of the envelope.



Figure 4. Sharpe general purpose design for #1688-1689 in 2005.



Figure 5. Sharpe general purpose design for #2206 in 2007.

3AngryCats

More recent entrants to the FDC marketplace are the products of Gary and Carol Ridge of Carrying Place, ON. Since 2016 they have been making a “Limited Edition First Day Covers” series under the brand name “3AngryCats.” They create a Photoshop design and make their own envelopes, then outsource the three-colour laser printing to a local printer.

The Ridges specialize in booklet stamps and souvenir sheets for which Canada Post does not create official FDCs. The back of each envelope includes information about the brand, the number of covers produced and its serial number, and the designer’s signature. They usually produce between five and 25 covers for each design. Two examples of their work are shown in Figures 6 and 7.

The former includes regular stamps and coils from the Daisies set issued on March 1, 2017, while the latter shows the five stamps in the Canadian Ferries set of July 12, 2023.

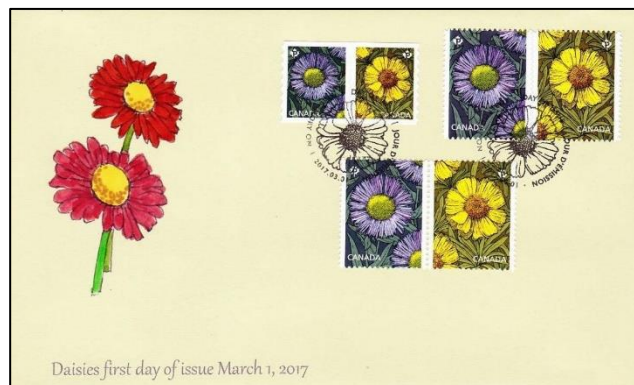


Figure 6. 3AngryCats FDC for #2976 in 2017.

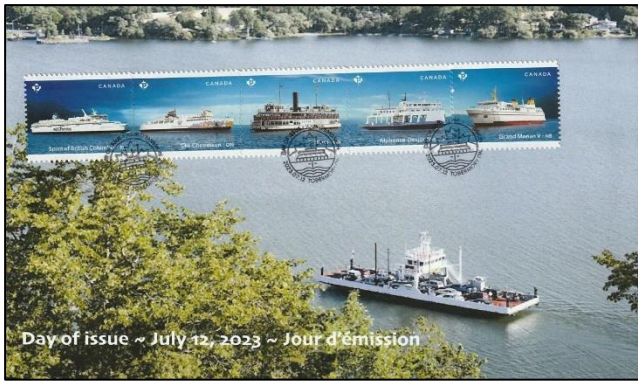


Figure 7. 3AngryCats FDC for Canadian Ferries issue on July 12, 2023.

Kevin Colton

Another relatively recent newcomer to the FDC marketplace is Kevin Colton of Seneca Falls, NY. He is a professional photographer who travels extensively for his work. His first cachet for a Canadian issue was for a Star Trek stamp, Scott #2911b in 2016, and he has made cachets for many issues since then.

The basis for his all-over KCS Cachets is often his own photographs or stock pictures, with very few hand-drawn or hand-painted cachets. They are designed on Photoshop and printed on inkjet printers.

Colton usually makes 20 copies of his designs for regular stamp issues but as few as 12 for higher denominations. Each cover has a serial number and total produced on the back. Two of his FDCs from 2017 and 2023 are shown in Figures 8 and 9 below.



Figure 8. KSC Cachet for #3022 in 2017.

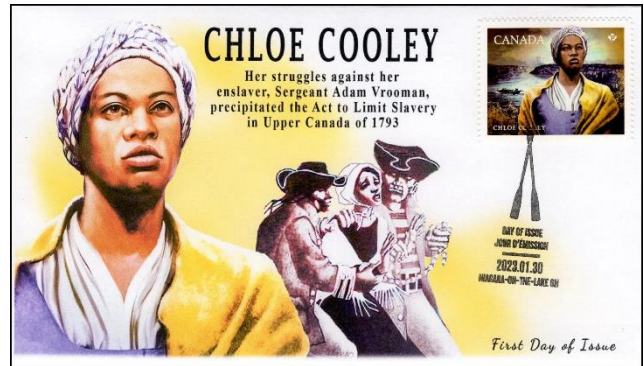


Figure 9. KSC Cachet for #3371 in 2023.

Dragon Cards

Virtually nothing is known about the identity and production of Dragon Cards, a brand name which first appeared on a Canadian stamp FDC in 2010, as shown in Figure 10. Since then, they have produced a few scattered cachets, including the recent stamp honoring hockey player Willie O'Ree shown in Figure 11 below. The Dragon Card cachets depict an image of a dragon near the bottom of the envelope as their logo.



Figure 10. Dragon Card FDC for #2348 in 2010.

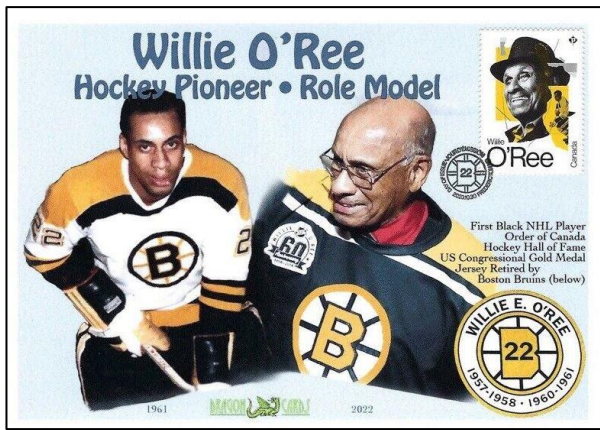


Figure 11. Dragon Card FDC for O'Ree stamp issued in 2023.

Peter Lepold

Peter Lepold is a Kelowna resident who has been creating stamps, FDCs, and postcards since the Canada Post Picture Postage program was introduced. Some of his creations have a European influence, while others respond to new Canadian stamp issues such as the Canadian Ferries set of 2023 shown in Figure 12. Still others mark local or regional events such as the 2021 Women's World hockey championship (Figure 13) and the opening of the new Okanagan Lake Bridge or the infamous mythical creature Ogoopogo.

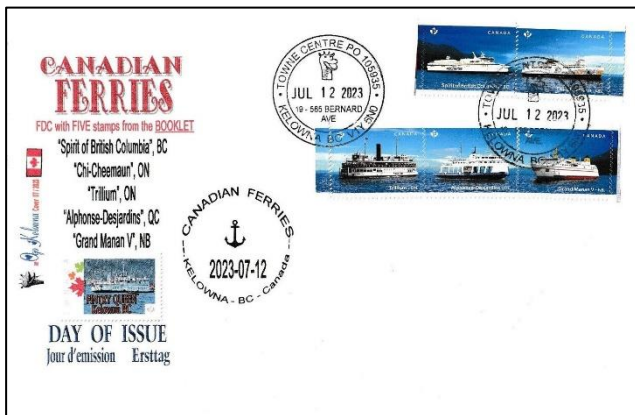


Figure 12. Canadian Ferries stamps issued July 12, 2023. (See Figure 7 for comparison of cachets for the Ferries stamps.)

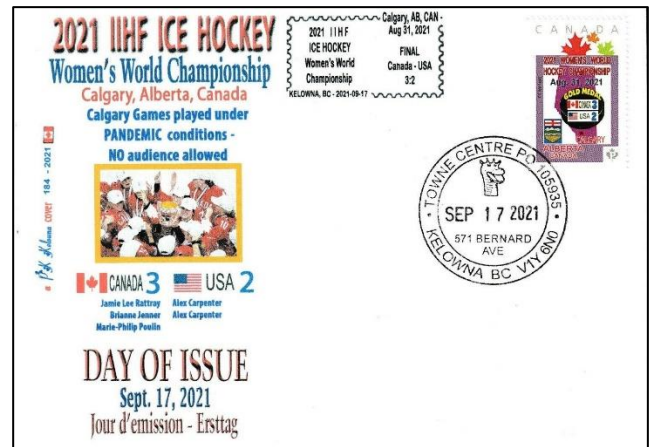


Figure 13. Lepold-designed stamp and FDC issued September 17, 2021 celebrating Canada's win at hockey championship.

Peter Lepold's products are identifiable by a small, scrolled logo and the wording "a PK cover" or "a PK Kelowna cover," and all of them are postmarked Kelowna.

Paired Unknowns

The makers of the following 21st century FDCs have not been identified. They are shown here in pairs, but additional examples of similar designs are identifiable from their presence in the marketplace.

The first pair appeared in 2023, with the first cachet (Figure 14) featuring one of the four Canadian Ferries and the second (Figure 15) showing photographs of two residential schools. No text accompanies either of these two FDCs.



Figure 14. Example of Canadian Ferries cachets issued on July 12, 2023.

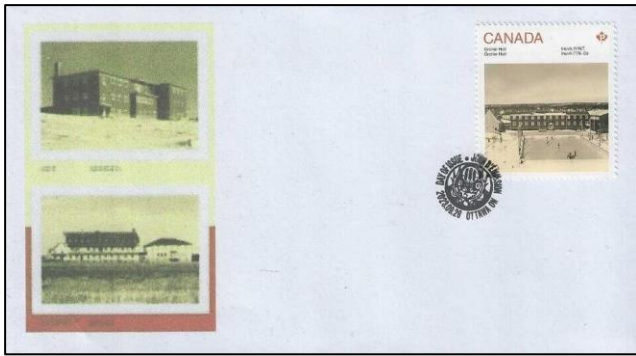


Figure 15. Example of residential schools FDCs issued on September 28, 2023.

The common elements in the next pair of FDCs (Figures 16 and 17) are the circular printing of bilingual text for “Day of Issue-Jour D’Emission” with a short statement of the stamp’s theme and a graphic symbol under the arched bilingual text. Both FDCs are postmarked on Vancouver Island, with the first of the pair at Victoria and the second at Campbell River.

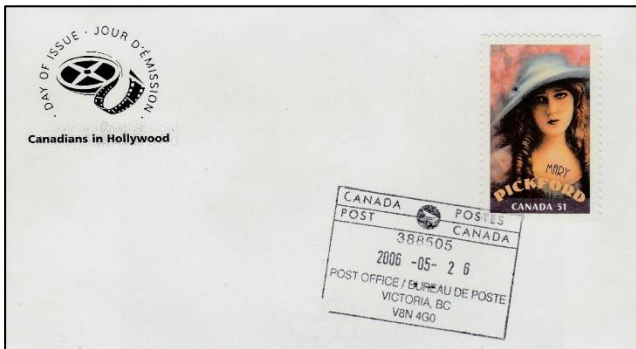


Figure 16. #2154b issued on May 26, 2006.

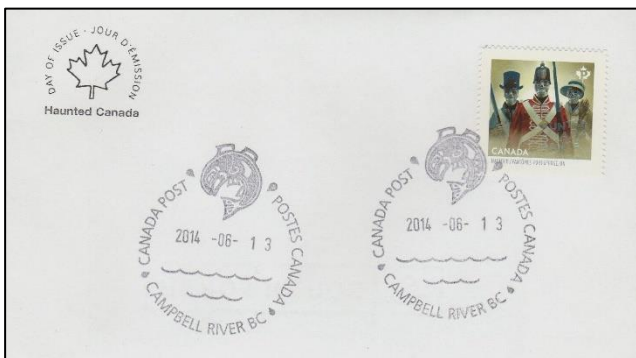


Figure 17. #2748c issued on June 13, 2014.

The following pair of FDCs (Figures 18 and 19) are both postmarked at Vancouver and have symbols descriptive of the cycle of Chinese New Years. They both have a very small “First

Day of Issue” note near the bottom left corner of the cover.



Figure 18. #2296 issued on January 8, 2009.

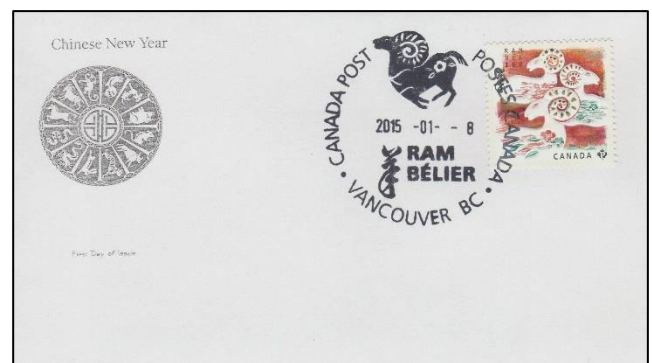


Figure 19. #2801 issued on January 8, 2015.

The next pair of covers (Figures 20 and 21) share some similarities with the previous pair in that they pertain to Chinese New Year and may have been designed by the same maker. However, the artwork in the upper left corner differs and both of the examples shown here were posted in Nanaimo.

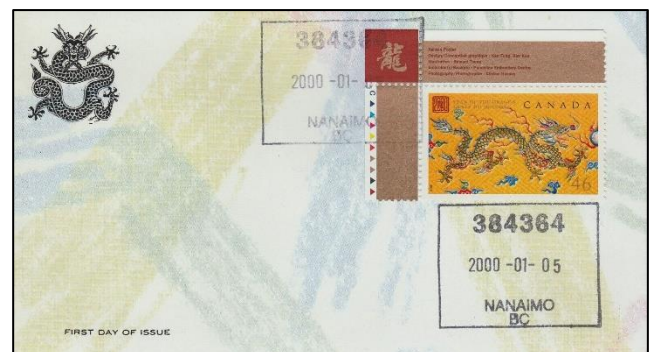


Figure 20. #1836 issued on January 5, 2000.

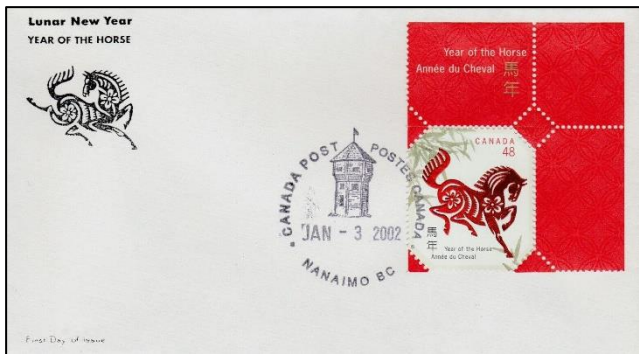


Figure 21. #1903 issued on January 3, 2002.

Single Unknowns

The remaining FDCs illustrated here are single examples drawn from eBay listings for 21st century stamps in February, 2024. They lack any apparent relationship with each other, or from other covers shown in this article.

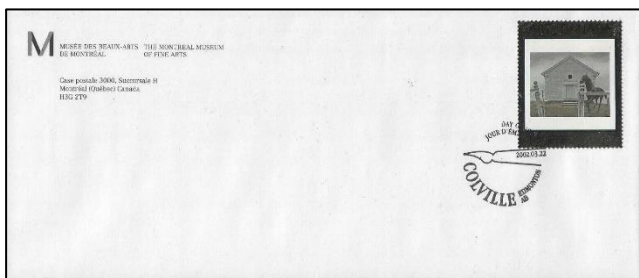


Figure 22. #1945 issued on March 22, 2002, on a business corner card for Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Posted at Colville, AB.



Figure 23. #2117 issued on August 2, 2005, with cachet consisting of a sketch map of the province of Saskatchewan in 1905. Postmarked at Entwistle, AB.

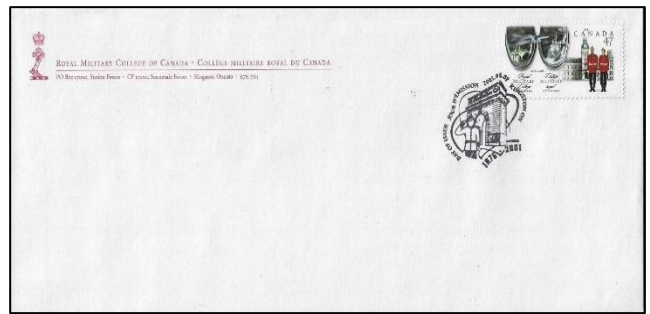


Figure 24. #1906 issued on June 1, 2001, on Royal Military College of Canada stationery and postmarked at Kingston, ON.



Figure 25. #3339 souvenir sheet of three stamps showing three indigenous leaders, issued on June 21, 2022 without official Canada Post FDC.

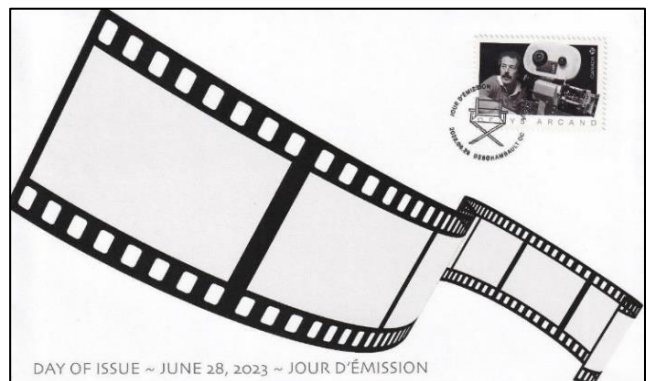


Figure 26. D. Arcand commemorative issued on June 28, 2023 and postmarked at his birthplace of Deschambault, QC.



Figure 27. #3349 issued on September 21, 2022 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Canada-Russia hockey series. Postmarked at Winnipeg, MB.



Figure 28. Stamps commemorating three Quebec feminists issued on August 28, 2023.



Figure 29. FDC honouring King Charles III issued on May 8, 2023, postmarked at Ottawa, ON.

Sources and Resources

Several issues of First Impressions include articles pertaining to the cachet makers whose works are presented in this article. All issues of our periodical are on the BNAPS website at:

[First Day Cover SG \(bnaps.org\)](https://bnaps.org)

With the cursor on the line above, press “Ctrl” and left click on the mouse simultaneously.

See the following issues for:

R.G. Sharpe: Issue 23 and 25

3AngryCats: Issue 38

Kevin Colton: Issue 44

Peter Lepold: Issue 25

The known cachet makers discussed here either have their own website or list FDCs for sale on eBay. Go to the eBay home page and choose “Stamps” as your category. Then search “fdc Canada.”

Once there you may search for specific cachet makers as follows:

Calgary: These cachets are often for sale at:

[Heritage Stamp Company | eBay Stores](#)

With the cursor on the line above, press “Ctrl” and left click on the mouse simultaneously.

Otherwise, search for Calgary items by Scott catalogue number.

Sharpe: His FDCs are rarely offered for sale, but you might try searching for “RGS” or “RGS Cachets.”

3angrycats: The cachets they produce are offered for sale on their website at:

[3 Angry Cats | eBay Stores](#)

With the cursor on the line above, press “Ctrl” and left click on the mouse simultaneously.

Kevin Colton: His Canadian FDCs are offered at:

[KSC Cachets | eBay Stores](#)

With the cursor on the line above, press “Ctrl” and left click on the mouse simultaneously.

Dragon Cards: From “fdc Canada,” search “Dragon Cards.”

Peter Lepold: From “fdc Canada”, search “Kelowna” and Lepold covers will be among those listed.

Some of the unknown cachets shown in this article may be found by searching the eBay data base, starting from “fdc Canada,” then either “limited” and/or ”private.”

Future

The future of FDC making and collecting has two possible directions at this point.

It may continue to be a sub-category of postal history, studying and collecting the covers that were produced in the glory days when dozens of individuals and firms were making them by the thousands.

Alternatively, there may be a gradual revival of FDC making as an art form which could develop a few boutique producers, some of which could expand into hundreds or thousands of covers for each new Canadian stamp issue.

The relatively small number of covers produced in the 21st century will need to grow and develop as abandoning the field to the “official” products of Canada Post will surely lead to strangulation of the hobby because of a lack of product variety.

In the meantime, those who collect the FDCs made in the current century may well benefit from their relative scarcity in the years ahead.

Help Wanted

1. Member Jon Berg submitted this FDC for the 1937 definitive issue, and asked if anyone had seen any other cachets by this maker, F.R. Rice of Ballston, Virginia. If you have, please contact the Editor, and send me a scan.



2. Richard Hoffman inquired as to whether anyone has seen a FDC for C9a, the booklet pane for Canada’s last airmail stamp. It’s unlisted in the second edition of the Editor’s *Catalogue of Privately Produced First Day Covers of Canada* although it is listed for \$75 in the 2024 Unitrade catalogue.

3. I’ve been asked to let you know that this year’s ORAPEX will take place at the Nepean Sportsplex on May 4-5, 2024. This year’s theme is “Marcophily Postmarks.” This is a non-profit event run by three local stamp clubs, with more than 100 exhibits and 30 stamp dealers. There is no admission charge and there is lots of free parking. Find out more about the show at its website, <https://www.orapex.ca/>

Discovery of “New” Cachet Printer A.W. Dicks by Bob Vogel

Recently I was given a small box containing FDC’s from a friend as he knew I collected them. I did not expect much, but to my surprise they contained a wealth of information on a previously unknown cachet printer, A.W Dicks of Toronto. Figure 1 shows a business envelope from this company while Figures 2 and 3 are the outside and inside of their business card showing services they could offer to their clients.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Now for the good stuff. Figure 4 is an unused FDC for the Charlottetown Conference with a notation it was printed by A.W. Dicks Graphics Inc. Note that it is printed in the same colours used on their business card. Figure 5 is a photographic proof of the banner portion of the cachet.

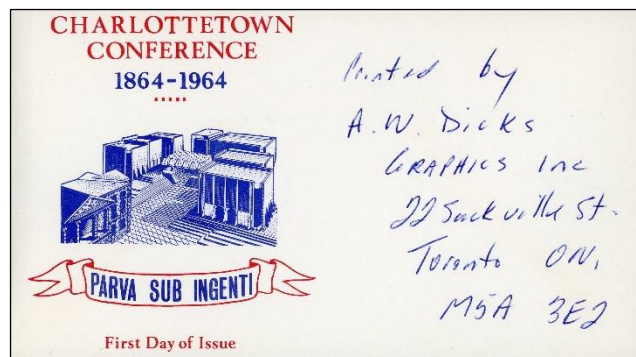


Figure 4

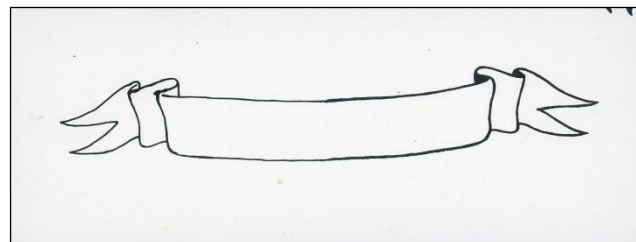


Figure 5

The next three covers are from the Floral Emblem series. Figure 6 shows the progressive colour proof (brown) for the Ontario Quebec cachet with the annotation OK HB in the top left corner. Figure 7 is the finished product.

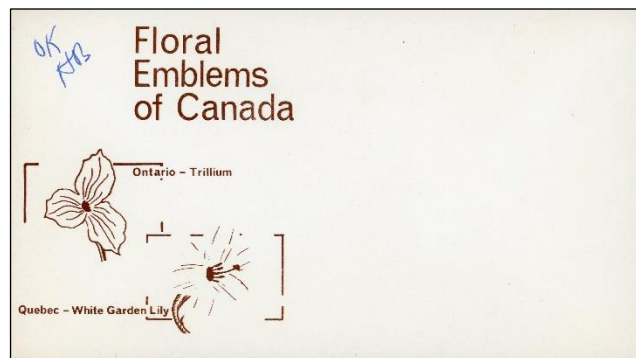


Figure 6

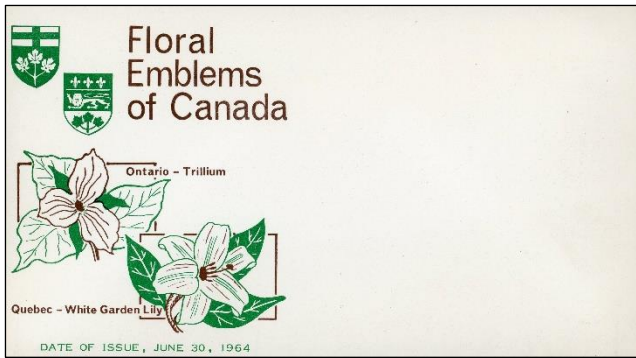


Figure 7

The finished cachet (Figure 8) for Ontario again has the OK HB notation at bottom right. Presumably, HB was the designer of these cachets. Similar designs were used for the Quebec and New Brunswick – Nova Scotia covers.



Figure 8

Figures 9 through 13 are covers addressed to members of the Dicks family. Presumably, they were also printed by the Dicks Company. Although I do not have absolute proof that the covers shown, except for the Charlottetown Conference, were printed by Dicks, there appears to be a similarity in style, but I am open to correction. Please contact me at berlinb@csolve.net with your comments.

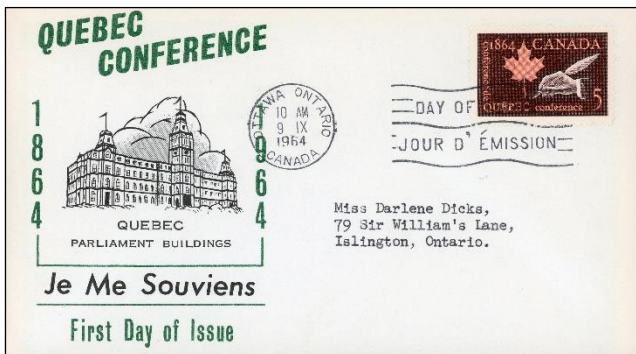


Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11

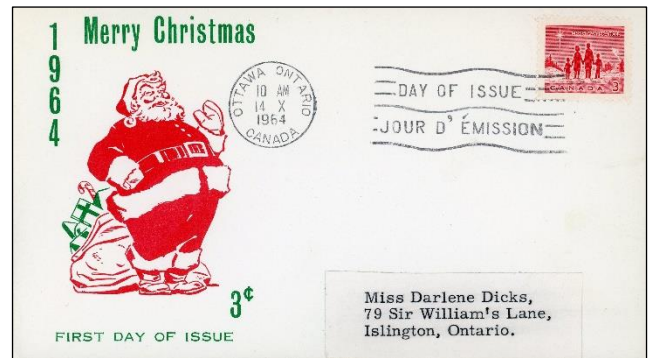


Figure 12

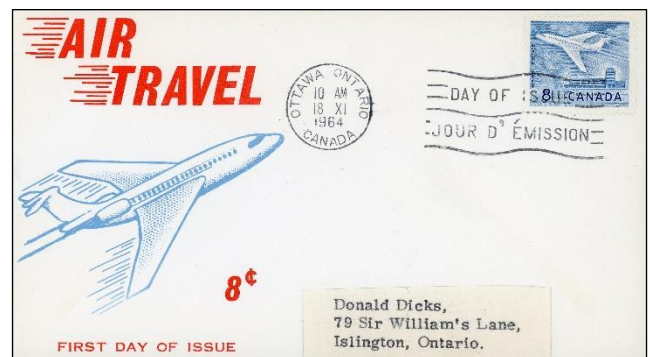


Figure 13