

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

NEWSLETTER OF THE BNAPS FIRST DAY COVER STUDY GROUP

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Editor's Notes:

Greetings to all our members! Kelowna, B.C. has been relatively free of wildfires and smoke this summer. As I write these notes on September 6, the temperature is 30 degrees Celsius and should continue at that level for at least the next week. This summer has made up for terrible fires and smoke in two of the last three summers.

The lead article in this issue is a continuation of my studies of ArtCraft's Canadian FDCs, this time focusing on special purpose cachets that were designed for unique usage with Canadian stamp issues and on special purpose cachets used for issues of two or more countries including Canada.

John van der Ven then rescues from obscurity an English woman, Midred Hodson, who produced a small number of Canadian cachets during the 1950s. Her work was aided and abetted by an "enigmatic philatelist" and one-time Polish army officer Aleksander Stocki.

Study Group member John Berg presents a look at Canadian and American Christmas stamp FDCs produced by ArtCraft and Rosecraft, concluding with an invitation to other members to forward additional examples.

The issue concludes with a tribute to FDC maker Kevin Colton who has been producing marvelous cachets for new Canadian stamp issues for the last few years. His initial submissions to the American First Day Cover Society annual awards program for 2023 included first place in three categories and for "best in show." Congratulations, Kevin!

Contributions to First Impressions are sought and welcomed, and new issues will be published quarterly or when warranted by the contributions received. They should be in Word format with each scan in jpg format at 300 dpi. Each scan should be a separate attachment rather than imbedded in the article's text. Submissions should be made to editor Gary Dickinson at gandbdickinson@shaw.ca.

Single and Multiple Uses of ArtCraft's Special Purpose Cachets

by Gary Dickinson

The majority of ArtCraft cachets for Canadian stamp issues used one or more of their ten general purpose cachets. However, they did produce eleven special purpose cachets that were unique to Canadian stamp issues, while other cachets were used with United States stamps as well as with Canadian issues and a small number were shared with United Nations and Great Britain stamps. The uniquely Canadian cachets are shown here first in chronological order and followed by the joint use ones.

Canada Only

All but three of the cachets that were used exclusively with Canadian stamps included the words "Canada" or "Canadian" in their text. The exceptions were Figures 2, 3, and 8, all of them concerning Princess or Queen Elizabeth. The use of wording associated with Canada was probably considered by ArtCraft to render a cachet not credible for use with stamp issues of another country. The three cachets lacking a country reference suggested that they might have been used for another country or countries, but a search for such applications was unsuccessful.

The extensive listing of ArtCraft cachets by Martin Severe (2021) did not indicate the existence of three of the FDCs identified here. The additional ones are illustrated in Figures 5, 9, and 10.



Figure 2. #276 February 16, 1948

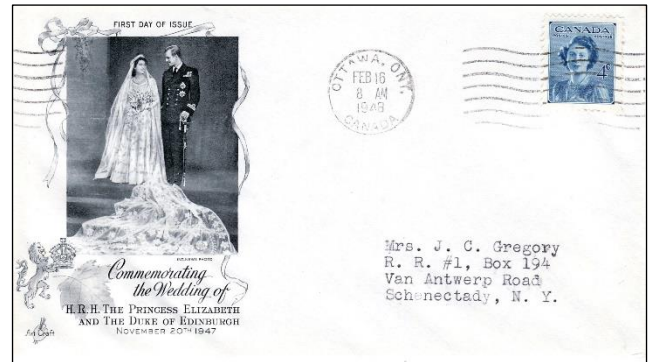


Figure 3. February 16, 1948

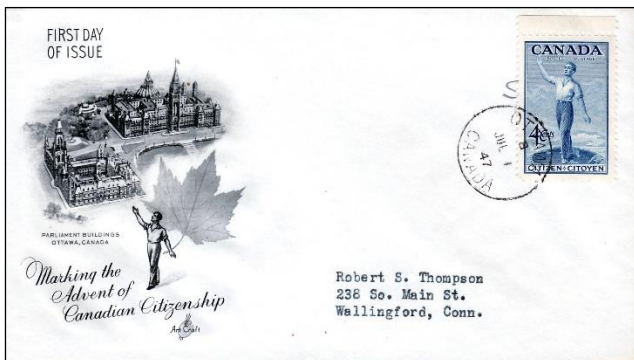


Figure 1. #275 July 1, 1947



Figure 4. #311-314 September 24, 1951



Figure 5 #365-368 March 7, 1957

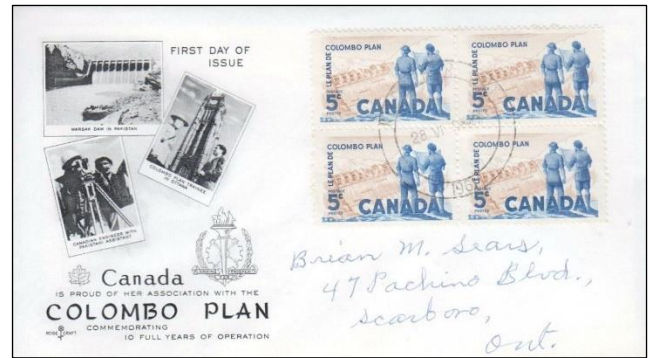


Figure 9. #394 June 28, 1961

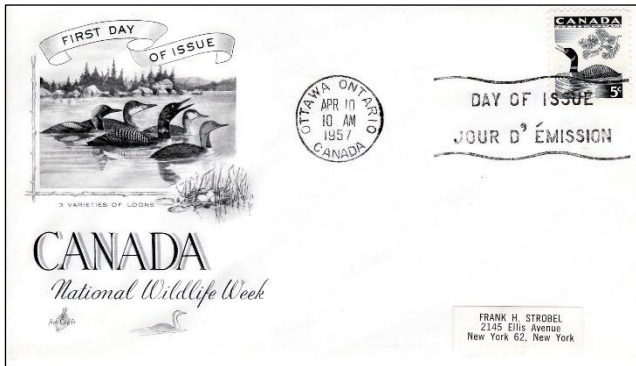


Figure 6. #369 April 10, 1957

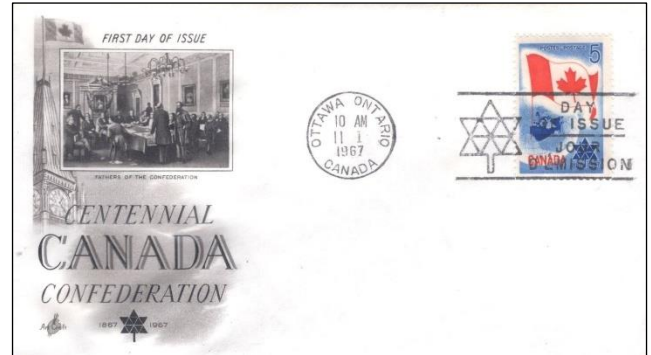


Figure 10. #453 January 11, 1967

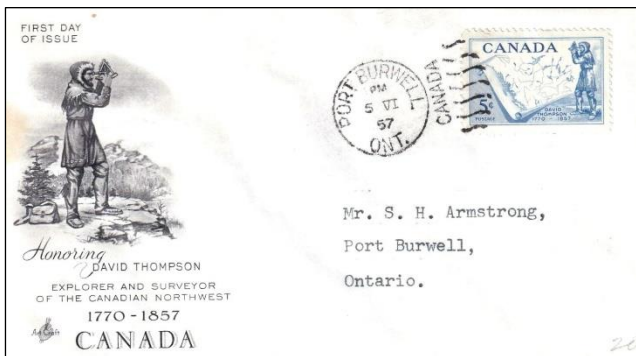


Figure 7. #370 June 5, 1957

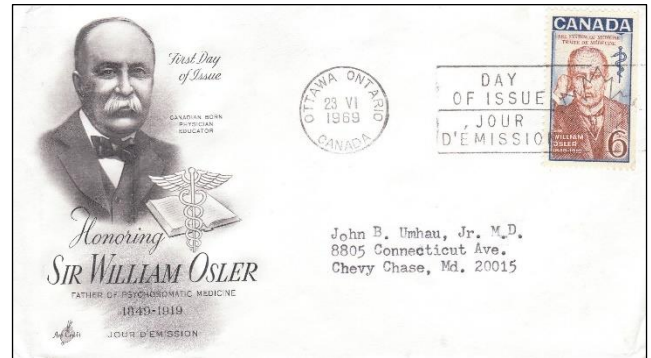


Figure 11. #495 June 23, 1969

Canada and the U.S.

The first two joint uses of ArtCraft cachets for Canadian and American stamp issues occurred during the 1940s and are shown below as Figures 12 through 15.

The U.S. War Issue stamp (U.S. Scott 905) appeared on July 4, 1942. Unlike the Canadian War Issue, it was a single 3-cent stamp with a large V dominating the design, as shown in Figure 1. Food production, aircraft production, and shipbuilding were illustrated and named within the V while the text affirmed that it was a “Win

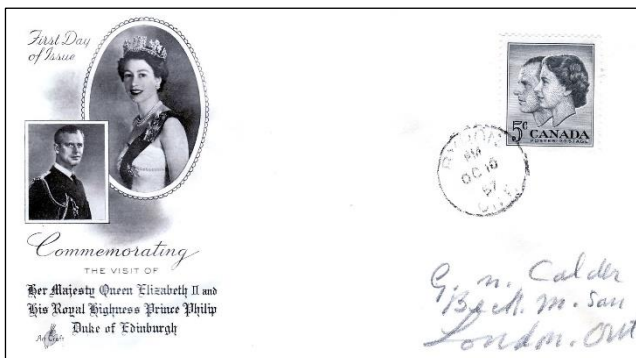


Figure 8. #374 October 10, 1957

the War Stamp.” The Canadian War Issue was a lengthy definitive series that was current for much of the decade from its initiation on July 1, 1942. The same U.S. cachet was used by ArtCraft without alteration as shown in Figure 12 with a block of four stamps (Can. Scott 253). This was the first use of the ArtCraft brand and logo on a Canadian stamp FDC. Although the Canadian set was issued three days before the American stamp, the jointly used cachet was clearly designed principally for the latter given the use of the singular word “stamp” in the text.

There was a much wider separation in time, about seven years, for the two uses of the ArtCraft Bell cachet. The U.S. stamp (U.S. Scott 893) honouring the inventor was issued on October 28, 1940 whereas the Canadian version (Can. Scott 274) is dated March 3, 1947. The FDCs are shown in Figures 14 and 15. The artwork and lower portion of the text is identical on the two cachets, however the text at top left differs. The American portion reads “Famous Americans Series—Inventors” while the Canadian counterpart is “100th Anniversary, 1847-1947.”

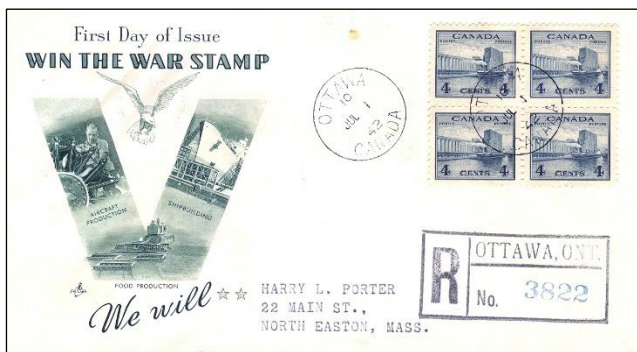


Figure 12. #253 July 1, 1942

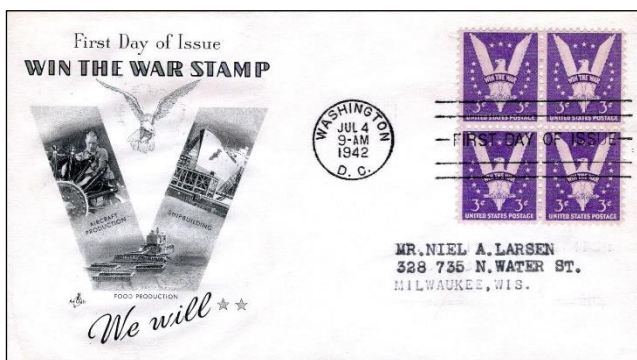


Figure 13. #905 July 4, 1942

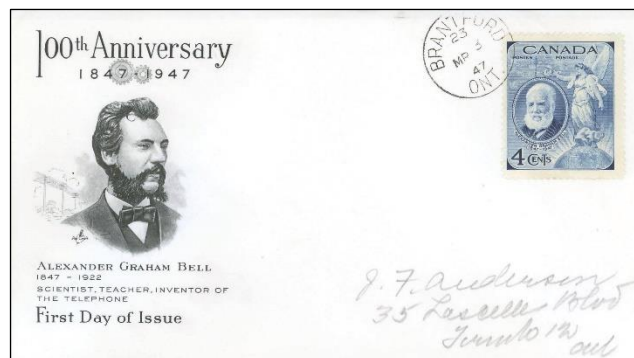


Figure 14. #274 March 3, 1947

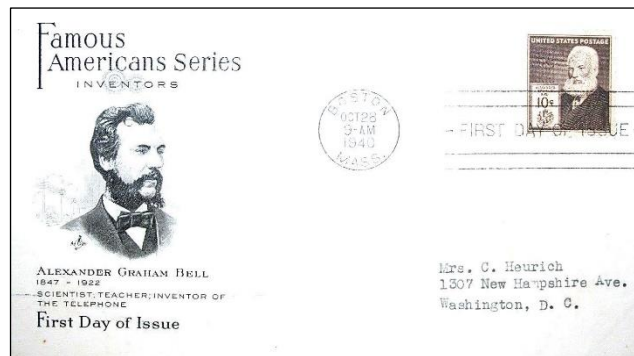


Figure 15. #893 October 28, 1940

Beginning in the 1950s there were a number of stamp issues where ArtCraft used the same cachet for both countries when two stamps dealt with the same topic. In most of those cases neither country’s name was on the cachet. Those double uses are presented here in chronological order with the Canadian stamp shown first.

The first issue of the 1950s using the same cachet for Canadian and American issues was the Red Cross stamp of 1952. The Canadian stamp appeared on July 26, some four months ahead of the U.S. stamp released on November 21.

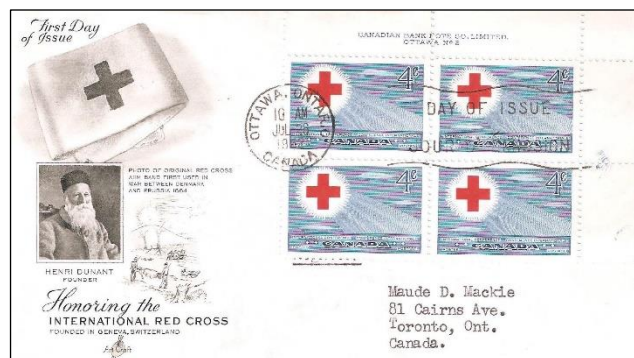


Figure 16. Red Cross, #317, July 26, 1952



Figure 17. Red Cross, #1016, Nov. 21, 1952

Four years later the Pronghorn Antelope was featured on an ArtCraft cachet for the Wildlife Conservation series. The Canadian stamp preceded the American by two months in this case.



Figure 18. Antelope, #361, April 12, 1956



Figure 19. Antelope, #1078, June 22, 1956

The International Geophysical Year was the topic of the next joint-use cachet, with the Canadian stamp again being issued before the American one by about three months.

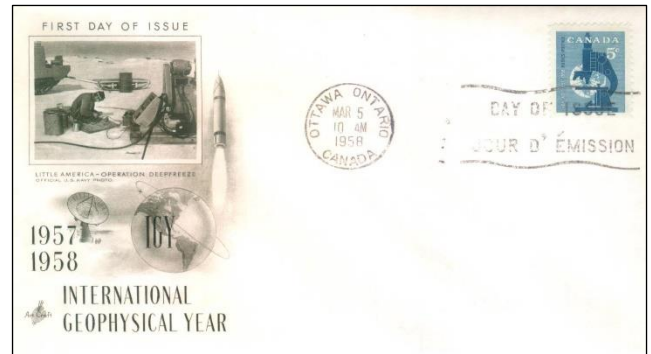


Figure 20. IGY, #376, March 5, 1958



Figure 21. IGY, #1107, May 31, 1958

The tenth anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty was marked by another twin use of an ArtCraft cachet, with the U.S. version postmarked on April 1, one day ahead of the Canadian issue.

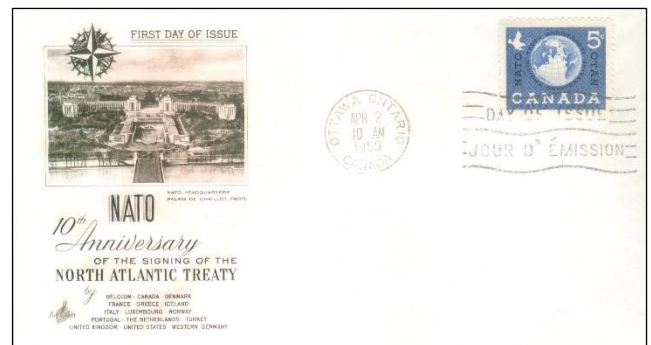


Figure 22. NATO, #384, April 2, 1959

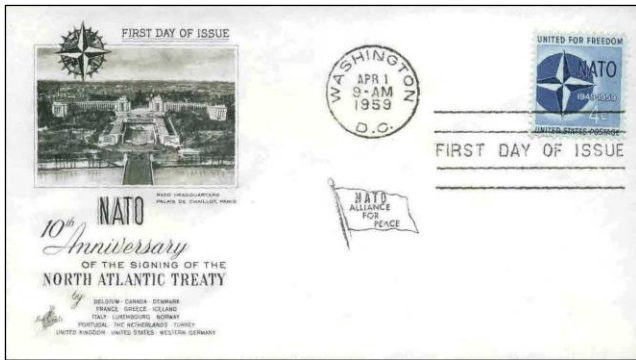


Figure 23. NATO, #1127, April 1, 1959

The first joint stamp issue between the U.S. and Canada marked the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway on June 26, 1959. The artwork of the two stamps shared a common design, and a common ArtCraft cachet. Some FDCs have both stamps affixed and were postmarked on the same day in two different countries.

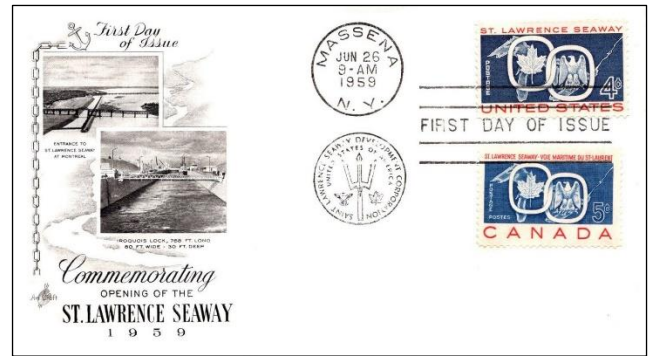


Figure 26. Seaway, #387 and 1131

Canada and the U.S. issued stamps about four months apart to celebrate Canada's confederation year in 1967. The Canadian stamp came first on January 11 followed by the American issue on May 25. Canada issued a second celebratory stamp marking the occasion of a Royal Visit on June 30 using the same cachet.

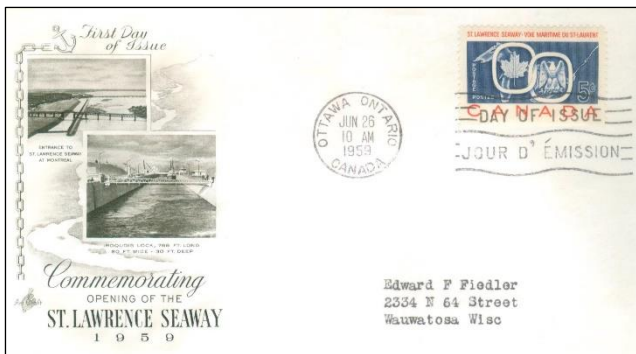


Figure 24. Seaway, #387, June 26, 1959

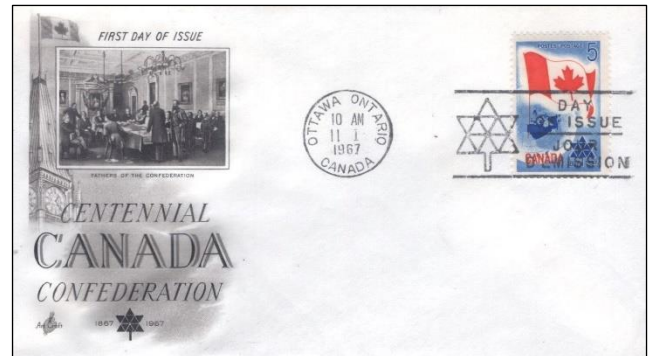


Figure 27. Confederation, #453, Jan. 11, 1967

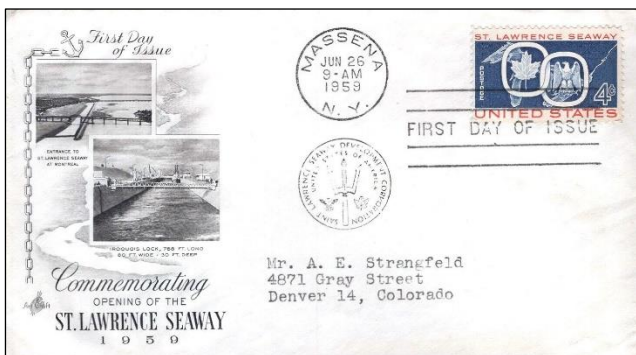


Figure 25. Seaway, #1131, June 26, 1959

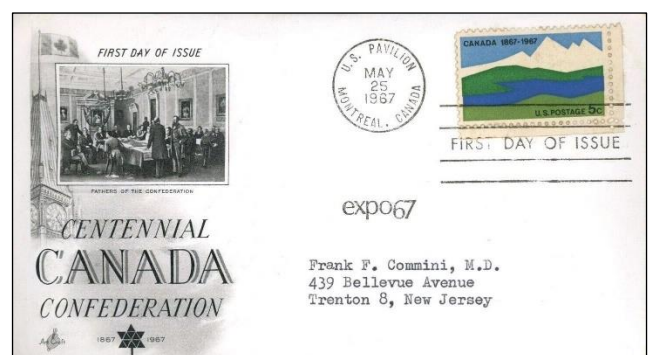


Figure 28. Confederation, #1324, May 25, 1967

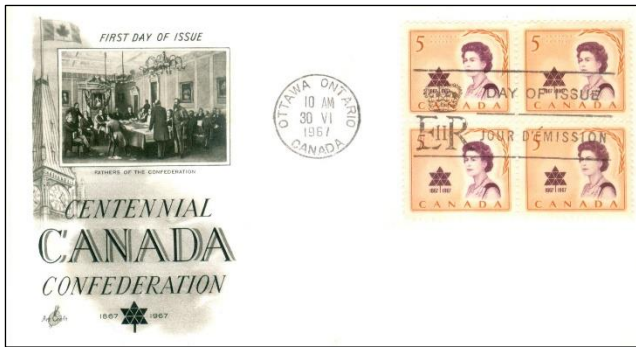


Figure 29. Royal Visit, #471, June 30, 1967

The second joint stamp issue by Canada and the U.S. occurred on June 1, 1976 and marked the U.S. bicentennial. As was the case with the 1959 Seaway issue, the stamp design was basically the same for both countries and the identical ArtCraft cachet was used, but the Canadian stamp was issued on June 1 and the American on July 1. Some FDCs carried both stamps, as in Figure 32.

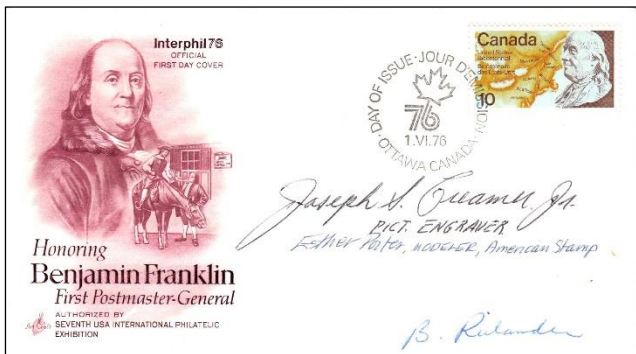


Figure 30. Franklin, #691, June 1, 1976

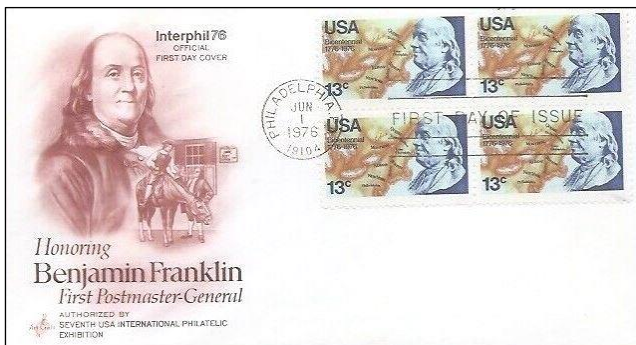


Figure 31. Franklin, #1690, July 1, 1976

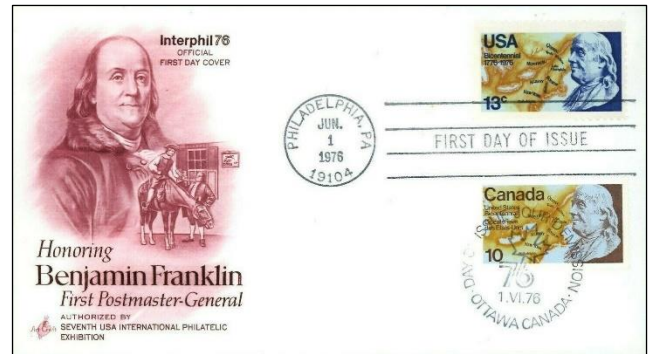


Figure 32. Franklin, #691 and 1690

The next joint issue with the U.S. took place a year later to mark the 50th anniversary of the Peace Bridge linking the two countries. The two stamps were of completely different designs but the FDCs used the same ArtCraft envelopes. Both stamps are shown in the cover as Figure 35.

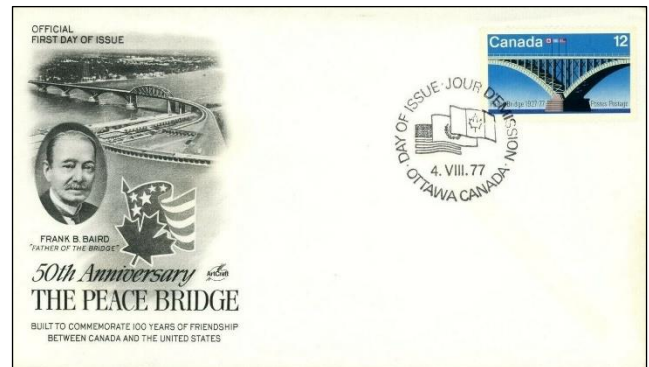


Figure 33. Peace Bridge, #737, August 4, 1977

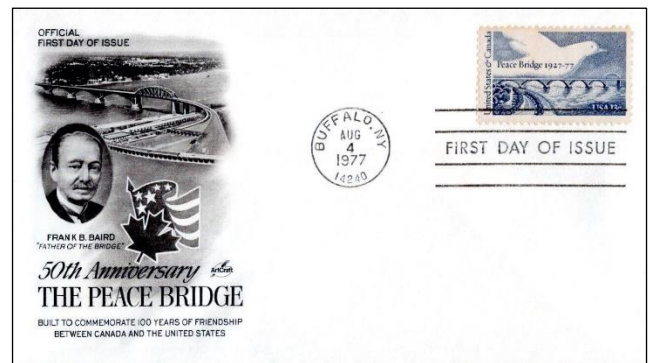


Figure 34. Peace Bridge, #1721, August 4, 1977

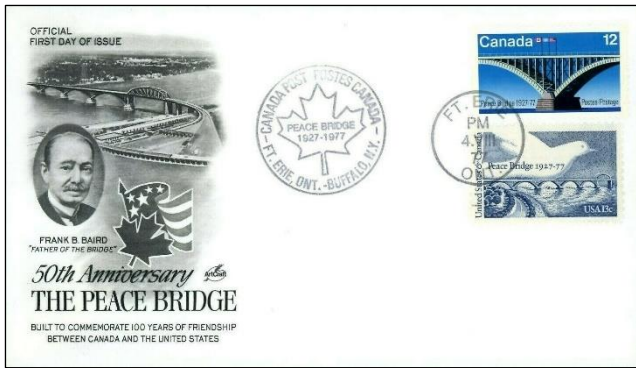


Figure 35. Peace Bridge, #737 and 1721

The international philatelic exhibition CAPEX 78 was held in Toronto and both Canada and the United States issued souvenir sheets to mark the event. The ArtCraft cachet was the same for both sheets but the stamps were quite different, with the Canadian set featuring three varied denominations and the American one having eight stamps of 13-cent value.



Figure 36. CAPEX, 756a, June 10, 1978

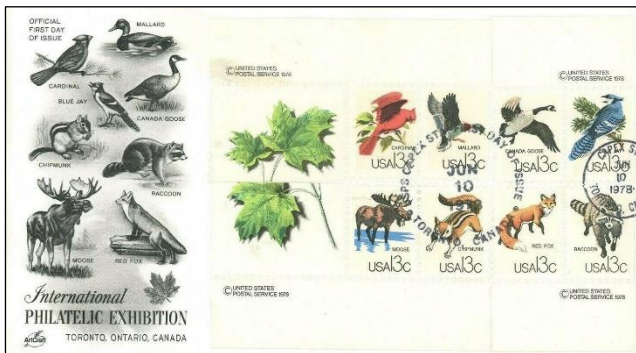


Figure 37. CAPEX, 1757, June 10, 1978

The 25th anniversary of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1984 offered a superb opportunity for collectors to take advantage of another joint stamp issue as well as invoking the 1959 stamps as

companion pieces. ArtCraft further complicated its cachet by producing it in several color varieties. Both stamps had the same designer and color scheme but different artwork.

The Canadian stamp is shown in Figure 38 with the addition of a 5-cent definitive for no apparent reason and the U.S. issue is featured alone in Figure 39. The stamps of both countries are shown in Figure 2.36 on a sepia cachet.

Figures 40 and 41 show the U.S. issues from 1959 and 1984, first on a black cachet and then on a blue one, while Figures 42 and 43 have the Canadian equivalents from those years on blue and green ArtCraft cachets.

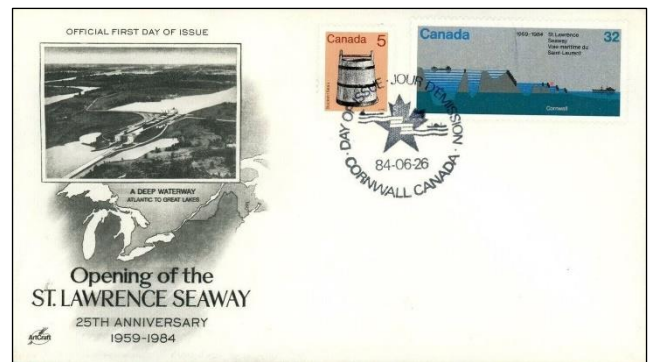


Figure 38. Seaway, #1015&920, June 26, 1984

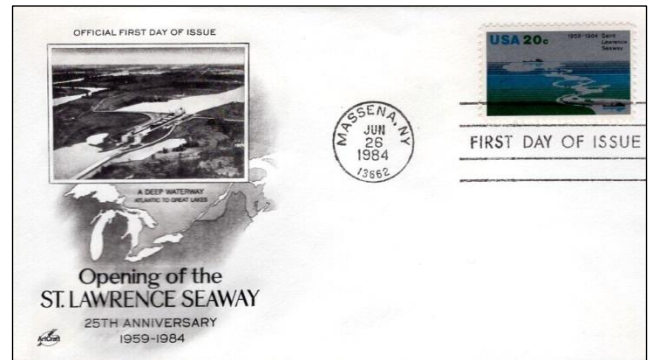


Figure 39. Seaway, #2091, June 26, 1984

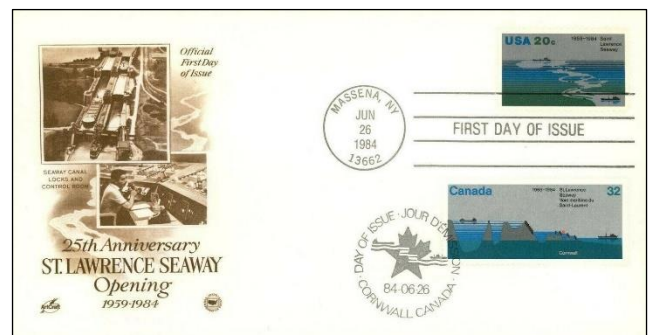


Figure 40. Seaway, #1015 & 2091



Figure 41. Seaway, U.S. #2091 & 1131

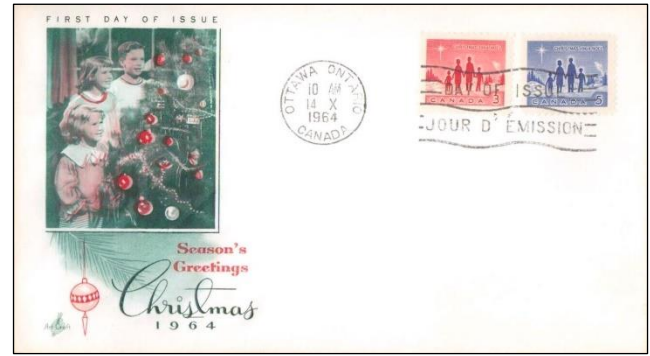


Figure 44. Christmas, #434-435, Oct. 14, 1964

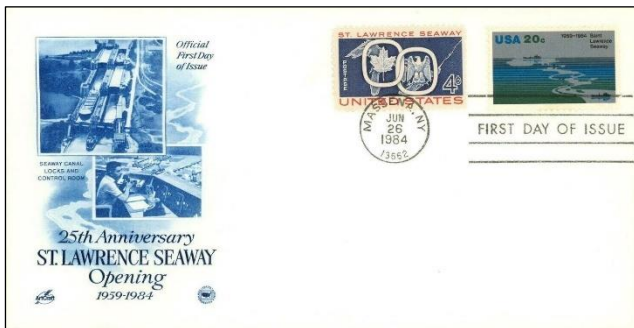


Figure 42. Seaway, U.S. 2091 & 1131



Figure 45. Christmas, #1254-7, Nov. 10, 1964

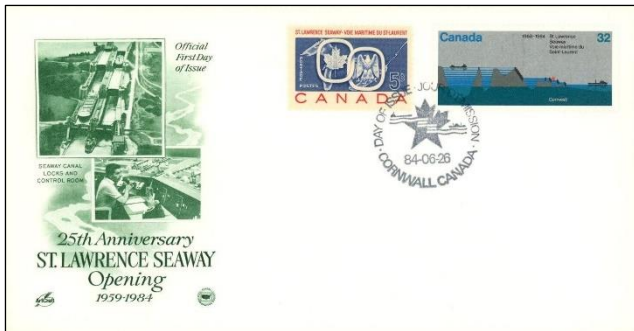


Figure 43. Seaway, Canada, #387 & 1015

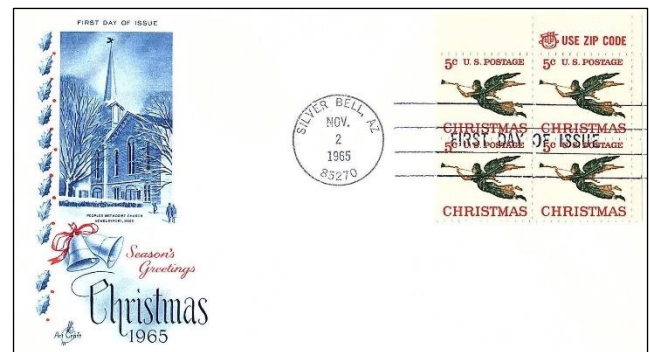


Figure 46. Christmas, #1276, Nov. 2, 1965

Canada issued Christmas stamps for the first time in 1964, and for six years until 1969 ArtCraft used the same colored cachets for both Canadian and American issues. The paired Christmas issues during that period are shown below, however the Canadian versions for 1965 and 1967 were not available. The cachets may be seen in the catalogue of Canadian private FDCs (Dickinson, 2023).

In a departure from its normal practice, ArtCraft's Christmas cachets used color throughout this period, with a multi-colored 1964 design followed by mono-colored green in 1967 and blue in all the other years.

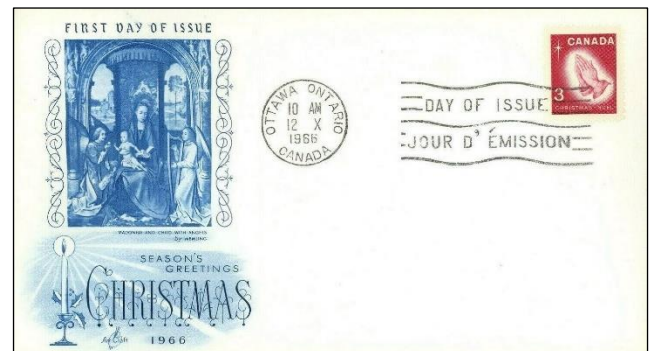


Figure 47. Christmas, #451-2, Oct. 12, 1966

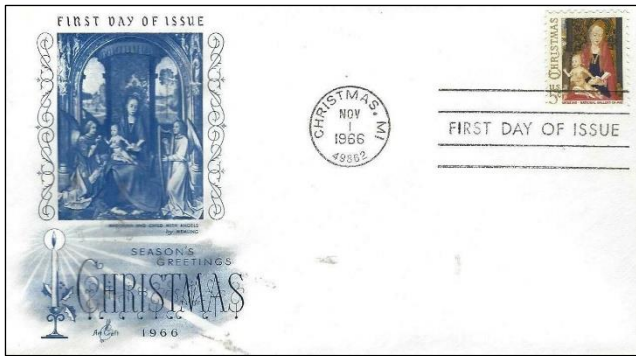


Figure 48. Christmas, #1321, Nov. 1, 1966



Figure 52. Christmas, #502-3, Oct. 8, 1969



Figure 49. Christmas, #1336, Nov. 6, 1967



Figure 53. Christmas, #1384, Nov. 3, 1969



Figure 50. Christmas, #488, Nov. 1, 1968

Canada and the U.N.

Two United Nations agencies, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) were honored by Canada with its issuance of one stamp, Scott #354, on June 1, 1955. The U.N. stamps featured on the identical ArtCraft cachets included Scott #31 through #34. One of the cachets was printed in blue (Figure 57) while the others were black.

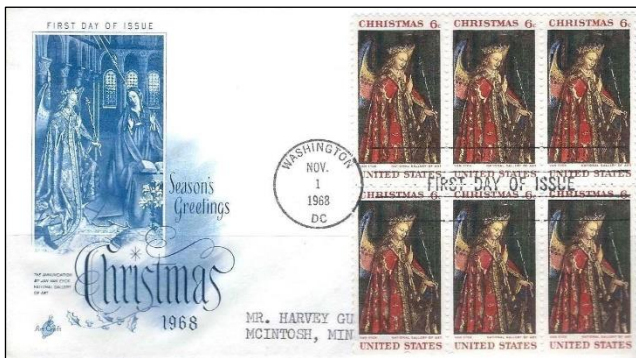


Figure 51 Christmas, #1363, Nov. 1, 1968



Figure 54. ICAO-A, Can., #354, June 1, 1955

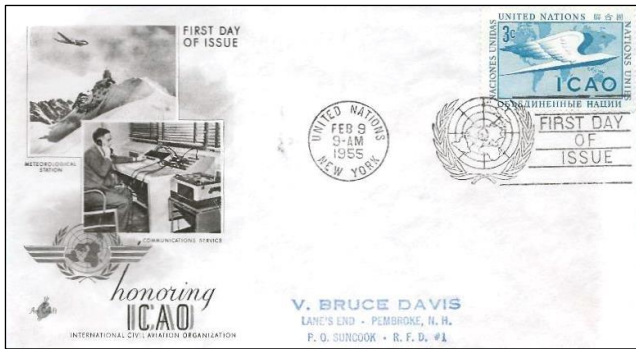


Figure 55. ICAO-A, UN, #31, February 9, 1955



Figure 59. UNESCO, Can. #354, June 1, 1955



Figure 56. ICAO-B, Can., #354, June 1, 1955



Figure 60. UNESCO, UN, #33-4, May 11, 1955



Figure 57. ICAO-B, Can. blue #354, Jn. 1, 1955

Sir Winston Churchill died on January 24, 1965 at the age of 90. He was best known as the leader of Great Britain during World War II but was a writer and painter as well as a politician. He was honoured by many different countries around the world upon his death, with at least five of them issuing stamps in his honour either in the year of his death or the centennial of his birth. The same ArtCraft cachet was resurrected for second uses a decade after its introduction. As shown in Figures 64 and 65, the later cachets marked the centennial of his birth rather than memorializing his death.

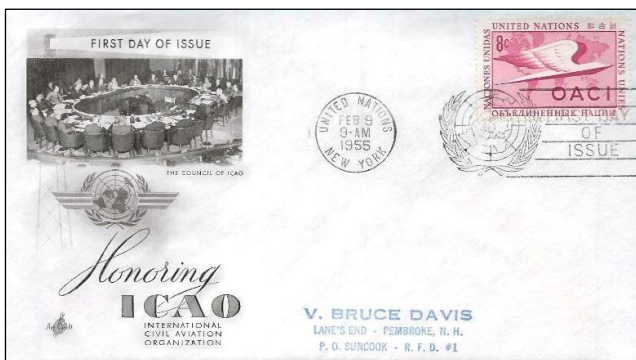


Figure 58. ICAO-B, UN, #32, February 9, 1955

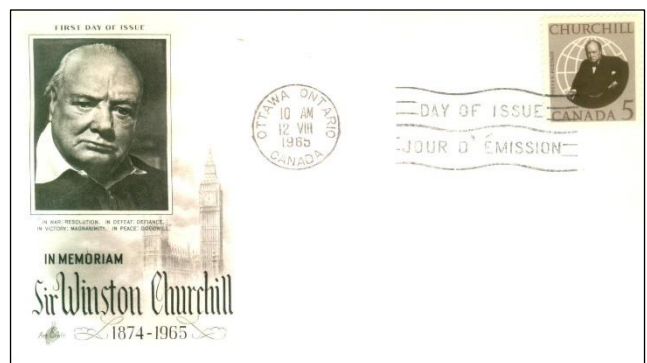


Figure 61. Canada #440, August 12, 1965



Figure 62. U.S. #1264, May 13, 1965



Figure 65. Antigua #349-52, Oct. 15, 1974

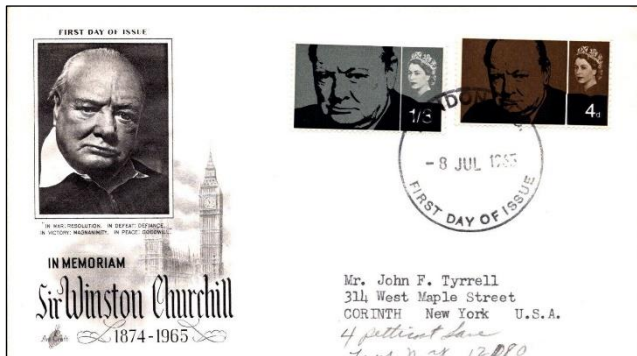


Figure 63. Great Britain #420-1, July 8, 1965



Figure 64. Grenada #571-2, Oct. 28, 1974

The ArtCraft FDCs featured in this article appear to be the only ones that were published exclusively for Canadian stamps or for two or more stamp-issuing entities including Canada. Most other issues during ArtCraft's active period were covered either by the ten general purpose cachets they produced themselves, or are found on FDCs prepared by collectors using ArtCraft envelopes.

There is no pretence here that all of the multi-use ArtCraft special purpose cachets have been documented, and there may be many more identified by active collectors of FDCs from countries other than Canada.

References

Dickinson, Gary. *Catalogue of Privately Produced First Day Covers of Canada, 1927-1989 (Second Edition)*. British North America Philatelic Society, 2023. (351 pp.)

Severe, Martin L. *The Comprehensive Listing of ArtCraft Covers: Their Varieties and Values (1939-2015)*. Rockville, MD, Poppygun, Inc., 2021. (Seventh Edition)

Mildred Hodson's Canadian First Day Covers

by Jan Pieter (John) van der Ven

Mildred Hoole Hodson was born in 1904 in Lancashire England. Mildred lived with her father, Henry Hodson, who was a piano salesman, at 55 Grange Road, Edinburgh 9, Scotland and moved on July 10, 1945 to 29 Viewforth, Edinburgh 10. In August 1943, an initial advertisement appeared in the *Philatelic Magazine* under her name offering to sell stamps from Great Britain, Morocco, and other French areas. She was a member of several philatelic organizations. She never married and died of leukemia in 1961 at the age of 57.

On the surface she appeared to be an enterprising businesswoman selling stamps, covers and aerogrammes to a small market of collectors, however the scope of covers and countries involved eventually went worldwide and included more than one hundred countries ranging from Aden to Zanzibar.

Hodson's expanded scope began in 1943 when she connected with a Polish Army officer and "enigmatic philatelist" Aleksander Stocki who was born in 1897.(1) He studied topography and became a topographic officer in the Polish Army. During the early years of his life, he also collected stamps, covers, labels, vignettes, and cards. While living in Warsaw in 1926 he opened a mail order stamp business using his wife's name as the name of his business.

When Poland was invaded by the Germans in 1939, Stocki escaped to France but left his wife in Warsaw while he continued to work in exile for the Polish War Office. While in France he produced perfins on French stamps with the initials WP which stand for Wojsko Polskie, or Polish Army. He sold his perfins through advertisements and agents, and they show up in old Polish collections from time to time, usually as a complete mint set.

Stocki was also involved in many other aspects of philately which are well documented, but which also got him in trouble with his army superiors. When France fell to the Germans, he

was transferred with his unit to England and landed in Perth, Scotland. In 1943 his unit was transferred to Edinburgh where he found lodging with the Hodson family at 55 Grange Road. This became a perfect fit for him and he started a new philatelic business using Mildred Hodson's name, just as he had done in Warsaw with his then wife. As an active officer, and with his position and knowledge, he managed to build a good circle of business contacts all over the world. An early Hodson cover from 1949 is shown in Figure 1, with a photograph of Stocki and Hodson in Figure 2.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Stocki had retired from the Polish army in 1946 and was then able to devote all his time to expanding his philatelic business. Hodson and Stocki worked together until he died of cancer in 1960. Mildred carried on the business for another few months to dispose of the stock still on hand.

Apparently, he had changed his name to Stocks and then for convenience's sake to Hodson. They never married but were often called Mr. and Mrs. Hodson. She died of leukemia in 1961.

Many of the Hodson covers were addressed to 29 Viewforth, Edinburgh 10, Scotland which was her business address, as attested to by the order form on the back of her self-addressed postcard shown in Figures 3 and 4. Other agents were also addressees for her covers.

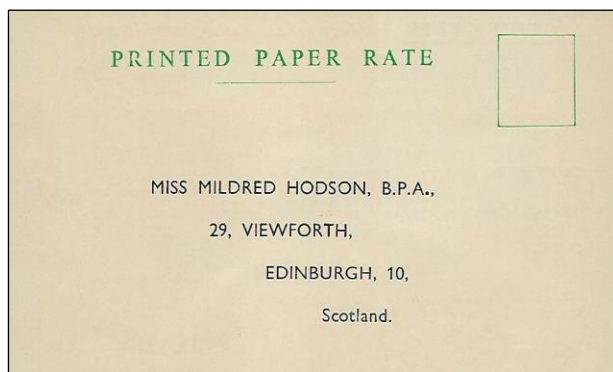


Figure 3

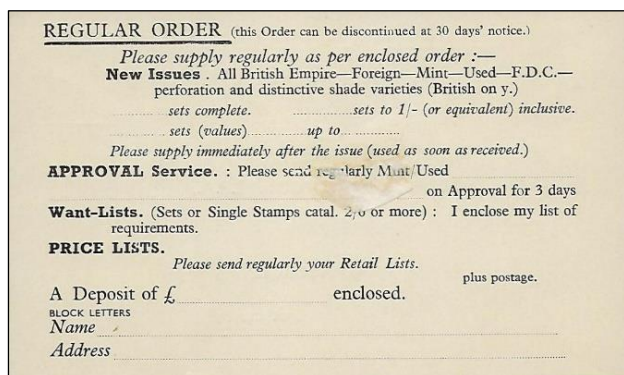


Figure 4

It appears that H.G. Fisher from St. Rose, Quebec was an agent for them in Canada according to the first Canadian Hodson cover produced in 1953. Besides the Hodson covers, Fischer also serviced many other cachet maker brands.

Only five Hodson covers have been documented for Canadian stamp issues, with one of them marking the first stop on the 1953 Royal Visit (Figure 5) starting at Gander, NL. The other four are first day covers for stamps issued between 1953 and 1957 (see Figures 7-10). As most of the Hodson covers from 1953 to 1959

were designed by Jerzy Kwiatkowski (also known as George K. Kay, see Figure 6), it is likely that he designed the four Canadian cachets. He is believed to have included his initials (JK) in many of his works, hidden in the design imagery.



Figure 5

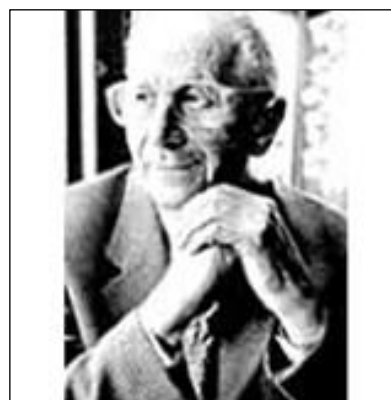


Figure 6. Jerzy Kwiatkowski

Worthy of note is that two of the covers were addressed to Fisher in St. Rose, QC and one was addressed to Hodson at Fisher's post office box. The two other FDCs were sent to M.M. Wallace in Colquitz, BC, a suburb of Victoria, who may have been a Hodson customer.

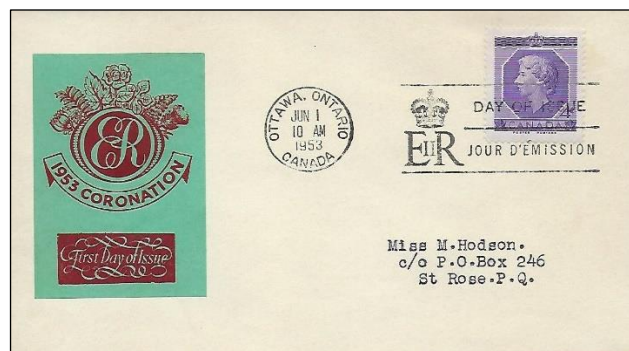


Figure 7. FDC for #330, June 1, 1953

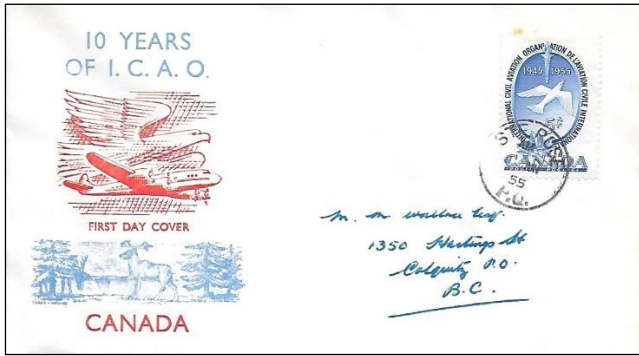


Figure 8. FDC for #354, June 1, 1955

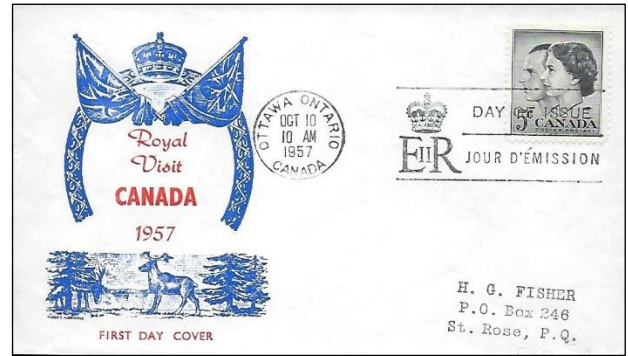


Figure 10. FDC for #374, October 10, 1957



Figure 9. FDC for #355, June 30, 1955

The brand name “Three Arrows” is included on many of the Hodson covers at the bottom of the artwork, including Figures 8 through 10 above, but its significance is not clear.

Reference

1. Most of the background on Mildred Hodson and Aleksander Stocki came from the publication: Reader, Roy E, and George K. Kay, *Aleksander Stocki Enigmatic Philatelist Army officer, stamp dealer, prolific producer of pseudo-military labels and publisher of philatelic literature*. (Second Edition 2013) Published by the authors.

A Cross Border Christmas

by John Berg

People in Canada and the United States have been using holiday-themed postage stamps for sending greetings at the Christmas holidays for years, yet the first stamps specifically for Christmas were not issued by the U.S. until 1962 and Canada until 1964. Canada did issue the well-known 2-cent Imperial Penny Postage in 1898 with the inscription “ XMAS 1898”, but the intention then was to adapt to the empire domestic postage rate.

In the U.S., controversy over separation of church and state caused the U.S. Post Office to hesitate in releasing a Christmas stamp until the public demand was such that an innocuous, non-religious design came out in 1962. Over one billion stamps were sold , and 255 different yearly Christmas stamps have been marketed since then.

Canada waited until 1964 before issuing its first Christmas-themed stamps, and like the U.S., the design was a simple, somewhat non-religious one. Having both 5 and 8-cent values, 400 million copies were sold. Like the U.S., Canada has also issued Christmas-themed stamps yearly since then.

I want to focus on what I will call “ cross-over” cachets from ArtCraft in the U.S. and Rosecraft in Canada. For the year 1964, when for the first time both countries issued Christmas stamps, Mellone’s catalogue lists 52 different cachets for the U.S. stamp, of which none are from Canadian private cachetmakers.(1) Dickinson lists 39 cachets in his catalogue, of which eight are from American cachetmakers. (2) Figures 1 and 2 are the Rosecraft cachets with both U.S. and Canadian stamps applied and cancelled first day at Bethlehem, PA. Figures 3 and 4 are the ArtCraft cachet with both Canadian stamps cancelled at Ottawa.

Figure 5 is a table of US and Canadian Christmas FDCs from 1964 to 1973, the last year

that Rosecraft produced cachets under its logo. Since I have these covers in my collection, or have seen scans of them, I hope that others can fill in the “holes” and add additional years with other private cachet makers. Happy hunting and Merry Christmas!

References:

1. Mellone’s *Specialized Cachet Catalog of First Day Covers of the 1960s, Volume 2-3*. FDC Publishing Co., 1985. (Note: the American First Day Cover Society has received Permission from Mellone’s estate and will be reissuing all the catalogues soon.)
2. Gary Dickinson. *Catalogue of Privately Produced First Day Covers of Canada, 1927-1989*. BNAPS, 2023.

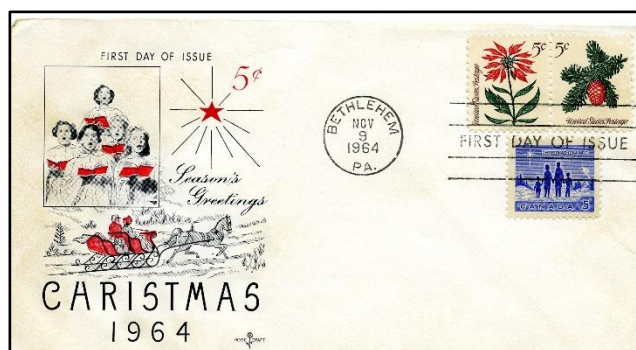


Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.

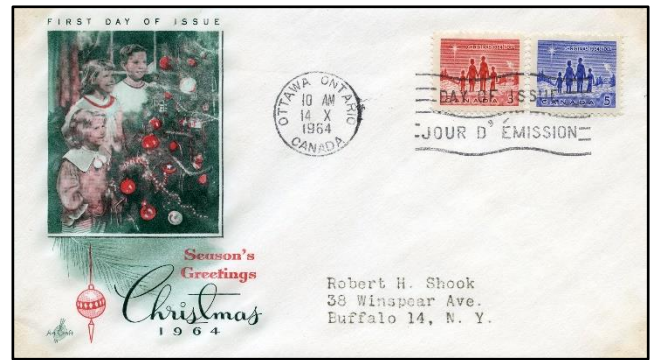


Figure 4.

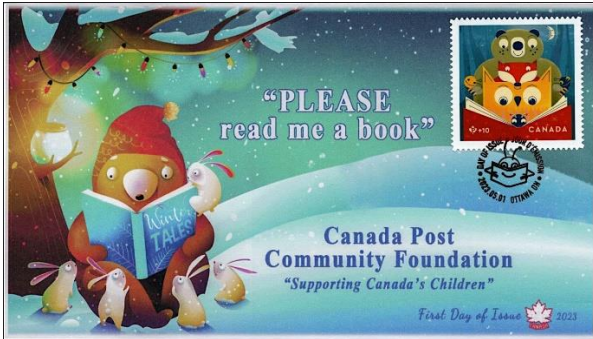
FIGURE 5
CROSS-OVER CACHETS FROM ARTCRAFT AND ROSECRAFT
FOR CHRISTMAS STAMPS

YEAR	ARTCRAFT	ROSECRAFT
1964	both US and CA	both US and CA
1965	both US and CA	US
1966	both US and CA	US
1967	both US and CA	US
1968	both US and CA	US
1969	both US and CA	US
1971		
1972		US
1973		

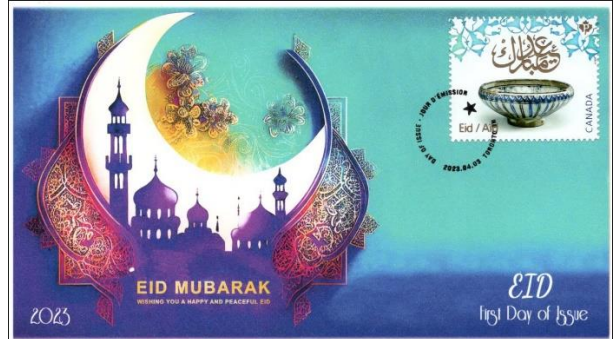
Kevin Colton Cachets Win Awards

The American First Day Cover Society runs an annual contest to determine the best cachets of the year in sixteen different categories. Kevin Colton, a professional photographer living in Seneca Falls, New York has designed cachets for several hundred Canadian stamps since 2016. We introduced him to our members in Issue 51 in our survey of private makers of FDCs for Canadian stamp issues in the 21st century.

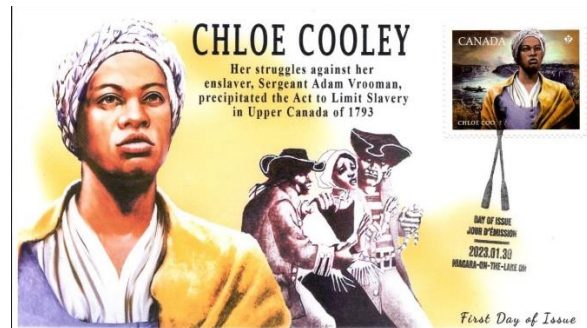
Kevin entered the 2023 AFDCS contest for the first time, and was awarded the Top Cachet of Year for a U.S. cachet, and took first place in three categories, including the category “Foreign Covers.” The three FDCs shown here were awarded first, second, and a tie for third place in that group.



First



Second



Third (tie)



Top Cachet of 2023