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THE
**ONTARIO
PHILATELIST**

A Monthly Magazine
published in the interests
of Stamp Collectors

....WIDDICOMBE & BEATTY....

PUBLISHERS

ST. CATHARINES, ONT., CANADA

The Ontario Philatelist

A MONTHLY FOR STAMP COLLECTORS

VOL. I

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Reminiscence of the Pony Express

What a strange history the postage stamp has had in the United States. If a record of all the bloody events, tragedies and delights this little invention has brought about could be condensed and written up, what interesting reading and how many volumes of such matter would be added to the libraries of the world. The great system of mail transportation of the ocean greyhounds, lightning expresses, pony, buckboard and runner mail carriers, can be traced indirectly back to the postage stamp. Not that the postage stamp is the cause of all these events, but it is part and parcel of each, and unquestionably the most adjunct of them all. The postage stamp and the mail are so intimately associated that it would be hard to separate them. Of course the mail system could go without postage stamps; yet something would have to take the place of the latter, and what, after all, would that be but a postage stamp under a new name? There are some readers of this paper who remember the time when this country was in the hands of the hostile Indians. No white people dared to make long journeys or to risk themselves far from the settlements unless unless under strong guard and well armed. Even in those dangerous days the buckboard mail—the true

advance guard of civilization—was in full operation, although surrounded with dangers scarcely dreamed of by people living east of the Mississippi river. It was a time of adventure and danger. A mail carrier, either mounted on a plains cayuse pony, or else driving a light buckboard (the lightest servicable vehicle extant), from the time he left the confines of civilization simply carried his life in his hands. Many a poor fellow has been killed of whom no trace has ever been found, and many a poor bruised, scalped body has been discovered weeks and months after he had met his fate, with the mail sacks cut open and the contents scattered to the winds. A curious post-office system was in vogue during those early days. Far out on the prairie, miles and miles from civilization, you might chance to see on the treeless plain a post with a dark object on top of it. Riding up to the object, it would develop into a prairie post-office. The prairie post-office consists of a single post stuck in the ground, surmounted by a rude wooden box, in which passers-by would drop letters for posting. The element of chance was very great in the possibility of such mail matter ever reaching its destination. The lonesome weather-beaten box contains about a dozen letters; many of them without envelopes and without postage prepaid, the majority of the lot having

been deposited from sixty days to ninety days previous. Wanderers and travellers had dropped them in at odd times, trusting to the luck of Uncle Sam in the possibility of them ultimately reaching the friends and relations in the States or Canada to whom addressed. Trappers and hunters in the country wishing to communicate with each other used these means of doing so. Not being a salaried nor a regularly established office, it cannot be said that the government lost anything by the operation. Everyone who passed the spot had a right, or at least thought he had, to look over the mail to see if there might be a letter for him; and when some scout or hunter was on his way to the settlements, without leave from anybody, as a sort of implied understanding with all, he would gather up the accumulation and carry it off to be regularly posted. There seemed to be an unwritten law on the subject that the first one bound for the settlements should do as above stated. Remarkable as it may seem, the Indians never disturbed these embryo post-offices. They have a wholesome fear of mysterious things, and generally steer clear of things they do not understand. They fancied these lonesome boxes were in some manner associated with the telegraph wires and poles, of which all redskins from time immemorial have had the most superstitious dread. In the days before the war, St. Joseph, Missouri, was the western terminus of railroad communication; beyond that the stage coach, the saddle-horse and the ox trains were the only means of commerce and communication with the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific coast. Of course, such transportation of

necessity became carriers of the mail, and you can depend that it must have been a long time reaching its destination, too. Fancy now, in the days of telegraphy and express trains, of the United States mail even being entrusted to bull trains as a means of locomotion; but such was actually the case as late as the year 1860. There are no doubt many readers who have heard the story of the Pony Express and its long race against time across the plains? It was indeed a wild and dangerous ride, has perhaps never been equalled in the world. The story is of the mail, and may, therefore, very properly be classed among philatelic literature. In the winter of 1860 there was a broker in Washington trying to get \$5,000,000 for carrying the overland mail one year between New York and San Francisco. The proposition was so cheeky, and Wm. H. Russell, backed by Secretary of War Floyd, resolved to give the broker a wide berth. He therefore offered to bet \$200,000 that he could put on a mail line from Sacramento to St. Joseph that would make the distance, 1950 miles, in ten days. The bet was taken, and the 8th of April was fixed for the starting. Mr. Russell called upon his partner and general manager of business upon the plains, Mr. A. B. Miller, and stated what he had done, and asked him if he could perform the feat. Miller replied: "Yes, sir, I will do it, and do it by the pony express." To accomplish this, Mr. Miller purchased three hundred of the fleetest horses he could find in the West, and employed one hundred and twenty-five men. Eighty of these men were to be post riders. These he had selected with reference to their light weight and their knowing, daring and

courage. It was very essential that the horses should be loaded as light as possible, therefore the lighter the man the better. It was also necessary that some portions of the route should be run at the rate of twenty miles an hour. The horses were stationed from ten to twenty miles apart, and each rider would be required to cover sixty miles as his share of duty. For the change of animals and the shifting of the mails two minutes were allowed. Where there were no stage stations at proper distances, tents sufficient to hold one man and two horses were provided. Indians would sometimes give chase; but their cayuse ponies made but sorry show in their stern chase after Miller's thoroughbreds. Many of them could make a mile—that is a single mile—in a minute and fifty seconds. All arrangements being completed, a signal gun on the steamer *Sacramento* proclaimed the meriden of April 8th, 1860, the hour for starting, when Border Ruffain, Mr. Miller's private saddle horse, with Billy Baker in the saddle, bounded away toward the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas, and made his ride of twenty miles in forty-nine minutes. The snows were deep in the mountains, and one rider was lost for several hours in a Rocky Mountain blizzard. It was found on reaching Salt Lake that additional speed would be necessary in order to reach St. Joseph on time. From here on all went well until the Platte river was to be crossed, at Julesburg. The river was up and running rapidly, but the rider was a plucky fellow, and unhesitatingly plunged his horse into the boiling waters, when the quicksands soon swallowed both out of sight. The animal was drowned, but the courier succeeded in reach-

ing the shore with his mail bag in his hands, and travelled ten miles on foot in a dripping condition to meet the next relay. It was a curious conglomeration of hardship, adventure and hairbreadth escapes from start to finish, and much too long to relate in detail. However, the whole route had been passed over except the last sixty miles, which was to be finished by Johnny Fry, the most daring broncho rider of his day. He had, as remarked, sixty miles to ride, with six horses to do it. When the last courier arrived at the sixty-mile post out from St. Joseph, he was one hour behind time. A heavy rain had set in, and the roads were slippery. Two hundred thousand dollars might turn upon a single minute. Fry had just three hours and thirty minutes to win. This was the longest race and for the largest sum ever run in America. When the time for his arrival was nearly up, at least five thousand stood upon the bank, with eyes turned towards the woods from which horse and rider were to emerge into the open country in the rear of Elmwood, one mile from the finish. Tick, tick, went thousands of watches. The time was nearly up; but a fraction over seven minutes remained. Hark! a shout goes up from the assembled multitude: "He comes! He comes!!" The noble little thoroughbred, Sylph, the daughter of Little Arthur, darts like an arrow from the bow, and makes the run of the last mile in one minute and fifty seconds, landing upon the ferryboat with just five minutes to spare. The race is won; and the mail is victorious. Score one for the postage stamp, and credit the account with \$200,000.—*Philatelic Journal of America.*

THE - ONTARIO - PHILATELIST

W. A. BEATTY, Editor

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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To Foreign Countries, 35c.

Subscriptions must begin with Current number. Payable in Advance. Back numbers 5 cents each.

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1 inch, 1 insertion \$ 40
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All copy must reach us by the fifth of the month to secure insertion. To change standing ads. copy must be in by the first.

We wish to exchange two copies with all philatelic publications.

Address all communications relative to above to the Business Manager,

R. G. WIDDICOMBE,
St. Catharines, Ont.

A 15-cent Canada, 1868 issue, has been discovered on thick-ribbed paper.

Mr. L. S. Graham of Merriton has succeeded in procuring some fine specimens of Canadian and U. S. stamps, while on a recent visit to relatives at Niagara Falls, Ont.

With the next number we intend to begin the history of B. N. A. and U. S. Stamps, which will be beneficial to all collectors who make a study of these interesting countries.

Since we have commenced the

publication of our journal we have sent regularly two copies to all philatelic publications, but we regret to state that the majority do not apparently feel disposed to place us on their exchange list, and in the future if they neglect us we will cancel them from our list, and send such copies to collectors, who will make better use of them.

As you will notice, in this issue of our journal there is a change in our advertising rates, of which we gave timely warning, as the business has increased with such rapidity that we are compelled to take this course. We give full value for the money spent with us, as ours is the paper that takes with the people. If you are not already a subscriber or advertiser, you should fall into line at once.

You will probably notice with this issue that there has been a marked change in both the appearance and make-up of this journal. We have been much encouraged by the way subscriptions have come in, and promise a much better paper in the future if things continue in this way. Do not think twice about sending us an advertisement or a subscription, as the success of this magazine depends chiefly upon you.

In the Canadian notes by "Jep," in *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News* of April 30th, concerning "The Notes" from a leading Toronto

"Dealer," he complains that they are misleading, and that they were probably made up in the editorial rooms of the paper. We may state that we never do anything of this kind, and that they were received from one of Toronto's leading Philatelists, whose name is known all over the philatelic world, and "Jep" should make enquiries before he makes such an assertion again.

Notes and Comments

Have you sent us your subscription?

The *Southern California Collector* has been refused second-class rates.

Good articles and live notes wanted in exchange for advertising space.

It is reported that the 1c. and 2c. letter cards are having a very small sale, and may be withdrawn.

Dealers holding auction sales will much oblige by sending us a list of prices realized for publication.

A year's subscription to this paper and a copy of Jones' check list for 35 cents. Regular price 45 cents.

The postmaster in this city notified us lately that private post cards were only eligible for postage when mailed to points in Canada.

The *Philatelic Free Lance* is announced from Bellaire, Ohio, the first number to appear in June, with Ben L. Morris as editor and H. B. Taylor as business manager.

We have received one of J. R. McDowell's magazine binders, which is a very handy article indeed for the preservation of papers and pamphlets. Address J. R. McDowell, Guelph, Ont., for particulars.

After having published one number of the *Junior Philatelist* in a very small size the publishers decided to enlarge, and so commenced a new series, beginning with number one again to make it convenient for those wishing to keep a file.

There are now four philatelic papers published in Canada: The *Ontario Philatelist*, the *Canadian Philatelic Magazine*, the *Canadian Philatelist* and the *All-around Stamp Advertiser*. Two other stamp papers are announced to appear from London: The *London Stamp and Coin Journal* and *Stamp Lore*, the former of which is to be published quarterly.

Exchange Column

Free to subscribers. Limited to 30 words. All others half a cent a word each insertion. Notices must be written on separate pieces of paper, and the same notice cannot be inserted twice unless paid for. No display allowed.

Collectors, I desire to exchange stamps with you. W. A. NICHOLSON, St. Catharines, Ont.

Canadian Envelopes

Postage stamps were first used in Canada in 1851, and at this time money was counted in a somewhat similar system as in the mother country, there being a slight difference in value. For instance, 1s. 2d. in English money was equal to 1s. 4d. in Canadian currency. This state of affairs continued in force until 1859, when the decimal system was introduced, and in consequence a new "cent issue" of postage stamps appeared.

During this period of some eight years Canada had been without a stamped envelope, nor did she have any until a year later, viz., 1860, when the first issue appeared. In this year two envelopes of different values were issued, the values being five and ten cent. The stamps were somewhat smaller than those of the present issue, but nevertheless quite similar in design. Both stamps were of the same size and design, differing in value and color.

The 5-cent had the Queen's head facing to the left in oval, with "Canada Postage" above, and "Five cents" below, these words being enclosed in another oval on the outside. Color, vermilion.

The 10-cent stamp was the same as the 5-cent in design. Color, brown.

These stamps are catalogued on both "yellowish white laid" and "bluish white laid" paper.

The above two stamps continued in use until 1877, when a reduction in postage rates took place, and were followed by a one and

three-cent envelope which were placed on sale. In design these stamps were similar to the previous issue, but slightly larger. They were printed on white laid paper, though an occasional specimen is found on wove paper, which variety is exceedingly rare. It is quite likely these stamps will continue in use until the Queen ceases to reign.

Strange to say, the one-cent variety is catalogued at a higher price in used condition, while in an unused state it is vice versa, as would naturally be expected.

Within the past year a new variety in the form of a two-cent envelope has appeared. It has the head of the Queen facing to the left enclosed in an oval. Inside of another oval is "Canada postage" above, and below is the word "cents" on each side of a large "2," while maple leaves adorn the sides of the stamp. On the very top of it is a beaver, which taken together makes a very pretty stamp. It is printed on a white laid envelope. Color, green.

The above is on sale only in the large cities where the mail is delivered by carriers, where the drop letters are two cents. In all probability this stamp will be soon withdrawn from sale, as the demand for it is very light, which occurrence would most likely make it one of Canada's rarest stamps.

Envelopes as a rule are very seldom used, the majority judging it easier to use the adhesives on their own envelopes.

It would no doubt be a profitable investment for anyone to buy a large quantity of the two cent envelopes and hold them till they become obsolete (provided they do), and even if they do not there would be nothing lost, as they could be used for postage at any time.

PHILLIMUS.

Obituary

It is with feelings of deep regret that we chronicle the death of Capt. J. Gamble Geddes of Toronto, which took place on April 4th. The deceased was born in Montreal in 1860, and consequently was a comparatively young man at the time of his demise. The history of Capt. Geddes was an eventful one, having been aide-de-camp and private secretary to Hon. John Beverley Robinson during his term as Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. He was an entomologist of considerable note, and last but not least of the various studies in which he was engaged was that of a philatelist, his collection of stamps being one of the largest. He was also an active member of the Toronto Philatelic club. The philatelists in Canada and other places will deeply regret the death of their companion, and to the bereaved children the philatelists of Ontario will extend the most tender sympathy, being left at very tender ages bereft of both father and mother, the latter of whom died about a year ago.

Papers Received

The *Columbian Philatelist*, the *Philatelic West*, the *Post Office*, the *Dixie Philatelist*, the *Washington Philatelist*, the *Texan Philatelist*, the *Stamp* (Groveland, Mass.), the *Junior Philatelist*, the *Canadian Philatelist* and *Pennsylvania Stamp*.

We have also received W. F. Gregory's auction sale catalogue from New York.

Mention THE ONTARIO PHILATELIST when answering ads.

Chance for Some Collecting Agency

The *Express* of Valley Junction (Ia.) has outstanding accounts to the amount of \$150 against persons who are believed to be solvent and known to be exasperatingly slow. Editor Emory H. English says he needs the money but cannot spare the time necessary for collecting it. Desirous of getting some of the cash before the Day of Judgment, Mr. English announces that he will compile a list of the claims, and sell them to the highest bidder. As the list will appear in the *Express*, it is probable that some modest citizens, who are not looking for notoriety, will open their pocket books.

Printing Office Etiquette

A lady asks us whether etiquette requires one to knock at the door of an editor's sanctum before entering, says the *Telluride (Colo.) Journal*. We hasten to reply. If you are coming to pay your subscription or bring in a nice, juicy item of news, don't stop to knock, but just walk right in as if you owned the place. If, on the other hand, you are out on a collecting tour, you should make the fact known through the window, and then knock at the door until the editor opens it. You may sink down from exhaustion before he does so, but you will be adhering to the printing office etiquette that is bound to please the average editor.—*News-papardom*.

Advertise in THE ONTARIO PHILATELIST.

COLLECTORS, ATTENTION!

Are you a Stamp Collector?

Do you live in California?

If you do, you should send your name and address on a postal card to Facts Publishing Co., Riverside, California, and have it inserted in the "Directory of California Stamp Collectors," which they are going to issue before long. If you should send them the names and addresses of five or more active stamp collectors in California which they have not secured, they will send you a copy of the book free. The price of this book is 10c. per copy. Ads. \$1.00 per page.

Send your name and address anyway, if you live anywhere in California, as they need it to help complete the book.

They publish "Philatelic Facts" every month, for only 25c. per year.

FACTS PUBLISHING CO., RIVERSIDE, CAL.

To Advertisers

Send in your subscription at once. Only 20c. per year.

At the fourth annual auction sale of the Boston Philatelic Club, a \$1.00 Columbian brought \$4.60.

As a special inducement to advertisers, we will accept any advertisements received before June 1st at the old rates, after which time no ads. will be accepted at old prices. So advertise at once, before it is too late.

WANTED—Old Postage Stamps. Pence issues of Canada and Maritime Provinces. Offer in exchange good U.S. and foreign, or cash. W. H. ALLISON, 295 Princess avenue, London, Ont. 3

My 1896 Price List

of nearly 300 Cheap Packets and Sets free on Application. Send for a free sample copy of "The Canadian Philatelist," Canada's Oldest Stamp Journal. Rare Stamps Purchased for Cash.

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London - - - Canada 3

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