

Fancy Cancels on Canadian Stamps 1855 to 1950

Third edition

David Lacelle

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Appendix 10, Fantasy or Joke “cancels”

(Reprint due to illustration scale problems)

(Also published as an attachment to
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Appendix 10, Fantasy or Joke “cancels”.(Reprint in NL 79 due to illustration scale problems.)

Most of the material below was first reported in the Fancy Cancel and Miscellaneous Markings Newsletter 46, Dec. 2007. This was a very popular item, and indicates that many of our members do not take their hobby too seriously. Personally I find this pleasing and am also pleased to end this edition on a sort of “light ‘n frothy” note.

I would also like remind readers that the Post Masters in the fancy cancel era also had a sense of humour. It takes a certain “light ‘n frothy” attitude to carve and use (for example) a Halloween “face” such as # 1346 (illustrated at end), they would be very pleased to find out that over a hundred years later people still appreciate their efforts.

Some of the fancy cancels may also have joke (or perhaps very serious) meanings between Post Masters if each were members of fraternal or religious organizations. These meanings may have been lost in time. The world-wide nature of mail post also functioned as a sort of fraternity with inside jokes and meanings. Search for “Owney” the (USA) mail service dog for example. (Owney was in Canada several times [Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg etc.], went around the world at least once and is currently stuffed and on display at the Smithsonian.)

The paragraph below, and first seven items are from Newsletter 46 referenced above.

Fantasy or Joke Cancels

The following items are a unique class.They were produced (probably) as jokes between stamp collectors, with no real intent to defraud or (seriously) fool. Unfortunately over time sometimes the “joke” part is lost. I probably should be preparing this as an Apr.1 st newsletter.

1. Thissill (a.k.a. Lacelle D620a). this item arrived recently in response to my listing it as a deletion in the second edition of our fancy cancel book. It is self explanatory. Pronounce the name of the wee little place out loud. *“...and can tell you of the history of Thisill, the town of origin, or to give its full title ‘Thisillinaedae’l. A village in Aberdeenshire it was cursed for all eternity by a fourteenth century oil prospectpr who it is said actually named the place, but cursed it afte being turned down by the local barmaid – a most unusual occurence as that was the first time she had ever been known to turn down anybody. Anyway the curse meant that the village would disappear and only reappear once every 80 years – a bit like Brigadoon, but 60 years was the said oil prospectors life span. So it appeared for example in 1836, in 1896 when the postmaster pinched some current Canadian stamps of a proninant Aberdeenshire stamp collector, one Mr. Mackie by name, again in 1956 when these stamps were used, and it is of course due to reappear in 2016. To see it all one has to do is to travel to the centre of Aberdeenshire, down a bottle of highland malt in one go, and it will be amazing what will be revealed to you.”*



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(2018 update. Somehow parts of the “cancel” appeared on mailed copies of one of the Fancy Cancel Newsletters in 2016.)

2. “Indian medicine man mask” (a.k.a. Lacelle 1363). The only example of this i have seen was sold “... with letter about Indian medicine man boasting that he could walk towards a mountain and it would move aside. It didn’t and the collision resulted in his nose being pushed to one side.” I suspect that was a prize in some children’s scavenger hunt or similar game.
3. Snowmobile (not listed anywhere). The first one or two person snowmobiles were mass produced in the late 1950’s. While some would say this was a wonderful



Canadian invention (others would disagree), the 1935 stamp is a tad too early. The ‘cancel’ is a strange joke by someone.

4. Atlantic City Bedbug (a.k.a. Lacelle D661). This wee little mite was created at a BNAPS convention in Atlantic city (196?) and was facetiously presented to “Doc Day” (1/2 of Day and Smythies fame) as a new finding. His comment has been recorded; *“Too good to be true. Sigh.”*



5. Marvelous modern “M” made in Merlin Ont. (a.k.a. Lacelle D2800. This cancel was probably produced as a joke in late 1931. A cover addressed to Fred Jarrett (Author of “Stamps of British North America”, 1929.) has survived. Fred was the first to write extensively about Canadian cancels and postal markings, his comments about this cover are unknown but can be imagined. There are unfortunately a few other strikes, one of which is on a three cent Small Queen. The “joke” is less funny when on an out of period stamp from the fancy cancel era. (This is probably coincidental however “Merlin” was the magician (mentor?) to King Arthur of yor.)



6. The “B Day Jan.1st.” (a.k.a. Lacelle D142) was apparently another joke on ‘Fred’ by members of the Toronto Stamp Club later in Fred’s life (born 1889). At the time he was president of the club.



7. Palmer Cox “Brownie” (a.k.a. Lacelle 1454). This one may be genuine, I have seen the one strike used for the illustration in our fancy cancel book, and another as a backstamp with Toronto Ont., 1896 CDS. The stamp example looked “good” in that the ink penetration was OK, there were no other cancels, and it was a poor strike. This item was first reported in “Postal Markings” Oct., 1934 (as in the cut), did not appear in Jarrett (1929) and was panned (as bogus) by Boggs in 1945. Boggs used the same illustration as in Postal markings. Boggs also described the “Nicaraguan Shield” cancel L 1453 bogus, yet a postally used cover does exist as illustrated in newsletter 45. For the record, Palmer Cox was a soap company which sponsored the “Brownies” cartoon strip in the 1890’s. There were about 40 different “Brownies”, children could buy various Brownie items such as rubber stamps, pictures etc. they were the “Mickey Mouse” of their day. The character on L1454 (a policeman) is called “Officer Moveon”. (2018 comment, Why would it not be unlikely that a postmaster would use one of his children’s toys as a joke cancel, many other rubber stamps were used?)



The items below are later examples of this class, and were not in Newsletter 46.

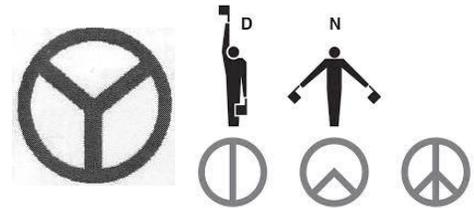
8. Merville BC “Gumboot Capital” cancel. (“Gumboot” aka rubber boots, or Wellingtons, Lacelle D633a). This is a modern commemorative cancel from the thriving rural area where I live. Unlike many of this type of cancel this one is intended to be humorous. It refers to our many small fields, rainy season and cows. (I did not have any input to the design or selection of this cancel.)
9. Small Queen “Airplane” cancel. (not listed) There were a great many “first flight” air plane covers some of which were philatelic inspired and were also quite elaborate. This later official machine cancel promoting the then new “Air Mail” program was in use for several years starting around 1920. Someone with a sense of humour carefully placed a Small Queen stamp – then about 20 years out dated exactly where Queen Victoria would get an airplane cancel. She would probably not be too amused.



10. "Santa" slogan cancel. This is similar to the above, but was created by me using a paint program. I have seen a genuine example on appropriate King George V stamp. Looks ghastly...



11. "Peace Symbol" cancellation. A report and line drawing of this "cancel" was sent to EA Smythies in late 1964 so as to be a new listing in his second edition of the fancy cancel handbook. Source unknown. It was described as on a cover from Rockland Ont.,



1881. It was listed as D&S 802a and L 1631. It has never been seen since. I suspect that someone was "messing with our heads" as we hippies used to say. The "Peace Symbol" was invented in 1958 as a combination of the semaphore symbols for "N" and "D" (Nuclear Disarmament).

12. Modern "Quartered Cork" cancel. Received here in 2011, no other cancel. PM's were allowed to use the CDS stamp as a canceller in 1896, and many "official" cancel hammers were also issued by Ottawa. Machine cancels also soon predominated, but was there ever any official order that corks could not be used?



13. Finally, a modern "FAKE" cork cancel. (a.k.a. Lacelle 202a). In 2014 I found this large cork in my driveway. I had often wondered how difficult it would be to actually hand carve a cork cancel. I did not want it to be mistaken for a "real" cork cancel, and was tempted to use "E=MC2" or "HTTP://" so it would obviously appear as a modern production. However to be certain I chose "FAKE". This was used as a stamp, but not as a cancel on some study group correspondence in 2014.



So, to end the third edition of this book, i would like to remind our readers (to paraphrase someone else) that...

A journey of a thousand smiles beguines with but a single one.



Dave.Lacelle

Newsletter 79 Cont.,

Almost out of space...

Apologies again for the lateness of this newsletter.

And have a good Spring

Dave. Lacelle

PS Regarding the cut from the 1793 book top of page 5. Please do not try this at home.

PSS Regarding the 3rd item on page 6, the "snowmobile cancel". I have been unable to obtain a good scan of this item. Does anyone out there own it? Please send scan if so.