

III. 20TH CENTURY ELIZABETHAN STAMP ISSUES

Queen Elizabeth II Era

Starting in 1953 and still today, the stamps and postal history of the era of Queen Elizabeth II are the most popular and largest collecting area within Canadian philately. We have elected to break this Elizabethan era into three time periods.

1953–1978, the Early Years

During the early years of Elizabeth's reign, six sets of definitive stamps were issued.



Each is readily available and there are no real rarities in the group. There are many recorded instances of mis-perfs, missing colors, and other small printing irregularities. This was the era when phosphorescence made its debut, so a black light (ultraviolet lamp) becomes a requirement for the collector.

Commemorative stamps abound for the collector who wishes to form a topical collection. One particular series that has continued into today's stamps is the "Wildlife" series. Canada also issued its first se-tenant commemorative stamps, a block of four dedicated to recreational sports.

There is one big rarity in the commemoratives—the famous St. Lawrence Seaway invert. This is an expensive stamp for a collector to obtain.

One particularly popular set of stamps was issued in 1967 to honor Canada's Centennial. Study groups in several societies support research on this Centennial Issue alone.

In 1976, the Olympics were held in Montreal and there are many collectible stamps honoring this event, including Canada's first semi postal stamps. These semi postal stamps are not very expensive but finding them on cover is a tough search because they were not very popular with Canadians.

1979–1994, the Middle Years

Four new definitive series of stamps were issued in the middle years, and many of these definitives included the new Canadian flag. Canada's new flag first made its appearance on a stamp in 1967, and the use of the flag in designs for definitive stamps continues. Canadian stamps with her new flag are an area of Canadian philately that begs some serious study. These stamps are colorful, some are quite small, and many designs are found with multiple values on them. These stamps were produced as booklets, coils, and sheet stamps.

Canada Post averaged thirty-some commemorative stamps per year during this period, and many of these stamps have ongoing themes. One could collect stamps dedicated to subjects such as aircraft, the arts, or Canadian Indian Artifacts. Some of the stamps produced for the art series are wonderful oversized examples that present a terrific page display. The celebration of Canada Day on July 1 each year has seen on occasion as many as 12 commemorative stamps issued as a se-tenant block at one time.

The collector who is trying to figure out what topical they might look into would be wise to use a catalogue such as *The Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps*, where they will find a handy listing of the various topicals available to them for study. A number of other catalogues are available for this purpose.

A number of high-value definitive stamps were issued. These stamps are relatively easy to find on cover or parcel wrapper because the postage rates in Canada have risen regularly, making the use of such high-value stamps a common occurrence. Many varieties such as imperforate or part perforate stamps, missing colors, misprinted or doubled printings, untagged errors, etc. occurred during this period due to quality control problems in printing.

During the Elizabethan era, we saw a great jump in the number of miniature panes and souvenir sheets issued by Canada Post. We fear many of these were created for the stamp collector; finding them used correctly for postal purposes and in period is very difficult.

The Elizabethan era has seen a surge in the number of booklets issued. Some are what Canada Post calls "Prestige" booklets; these honor a particular company such as Canadian Tire and have a number of pages telling the story of the company. These have not proven particularly popular with the general collector but the companies honored have used the stamps and they are out there to be collected.

Regular booklets are also being produced at an ever-increasing rate. The collector who elects to collect booklets should consider two copies of each booklet, one to show it as it was sold closed and one to show it in exploded (taken apart) form. Used panes can also be collected on- and off-cover, but are difficult to find except as collector-generated items.



1995 Onward, the Later Years.

One of the most significant issues of this later era was the “Historic Land Vehicles” issue that came out over a four-year period (from 1993 to 1996) with individual souvenir sheets of six. The difficulty with this series is that there were 25 stamps



issued and only by purchasing the final full pane could one get the Bricklin SV-1 Sports Car stamp. This stamp will prove to be a difficult find for the collector.

Another great series was started in 1997; the Lunar New Year stamps ran annually through 2007. These stamps won many awards for design over the years, and generally were well accepted by the public. There are some minor varieties available but none would break the bank.

The International rate stamp of the Lunar New Year commemorative stamps was available only on the souvenir sheet from 1999 onward. This makes them hard to find properly used postally on mail going overseas. Collectors of modern Canadian stamps will find that there are stamps that are less common than most.

In 1998 Canada started issuing some very well designed and oversized high value definitive stamps, including the \$8 grizzly bear definitive stamp. This stamp was recently voted Canada’s best designed and most popular stamp. This was the first time a new design had replaced the venerable Bluenose stamp as Canada’s most popular stamp.

Canada’s issues for the Millennium could create a full collection. On September 15, 1999, Canada Post issued a limited edition book containing 2 stamps per page, limited to 200,000 copies. A few of these stamps have found their way onto mail, so used stamps and covers can be found but they are not common. The cataloguing companies were not going to assign catalogue numbers to these stamps because of their limited release. As a result, Canada Post reissued these stamps in 17 blocks of 4 over a 3-month period in 2000.



Canada Post continues to issue great numbers of good looking stamps as single stamps, coil stamps, booklets, souvenir sheets, and miniature panes. There are many new theme stamps being produced today: Canadian universities, movie stars, entertainers, hockey players, and the very popular birds series to name a few.

Modern postal history is not as easy to collect as you might think. Fewer people use stamps and fewer post offices apply stamps at the counter. Finding these stamps properly used in period to foreign destinations is a very challenging task because commercial mail is most commonly franked with meters. Meter covers are certainly collectible, but such mail does not have the wide interest that stamped mail does.

Other Collectible Elizabethan Era Material

As Canada delved into the technique of phosphorescence on stamps, the initial trials were less than successful because the phosphor bled into the stamps, creating an unreadable bar. These early stamps were put in “Cello Paqs” (see section X), and these packed stamps have become very collectible.

The earlier stamps of the Elizabethan era saw a number of stamps overprinted either OHMS or G for official use. Some of these overprints are quite hard to find because there are some printing varieties.

Many collectors like to collect the four corner plate blocks of stamps. We do not find plate numbers on all stamps but there is usually some form of mark in the selvedge of the stamps. With the advent of very high value stamps such as the \$8 grizzly bear, the sheet quantity has been low. This stamp was issued in a sheet of four only.

In the later period of the Elizabethan era, Canada Post has issued stamps that are neither square nor rectangular. These include balloon stamps that are triangular, mountain stamps that have the profile of a mountain, a round stamp in the shape of a golf ball, some miniature panes that require the selvedge to complete the picture, and both the Year of the Ram and the Youth Sports stamps that defy description.

IV. 20TH CENTURY EDWARD/ GEORGE V/ GEORGE VI STAMP ISSUES



The Stamps and Philately of King Edward VII

Stamps. Stamps for the era of Edward’s reign were delayed for several years after his accession, probably to use up the many Victoria stamps already in stock. The only definitive series was issued between 1903 and 1908. Values of 1, 2, 5, 7, and 10¢ were issued in 1903, while 20¢ and 50¢ values were delayed until 1904 and 1908 respectively, until stocks of high value Victoria stamps

were used up. Essays, die proofs in black and in various colors, and plate proofs are found for these values in different numbers and variety. Stamps are collected as singles, blocks, and plate number blocks. Many plates were used for the 1¢ and 2¢