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N.S.S.S. meets on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month at 10:00 am
in the Sparks Heritage Museum at Pyramid and Victorian Avenue

N.S.S.S.



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December 13, 2003

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The Winter Season is on us again. And along with come the holidays, Hanukkah, EID and Christmas and, for some, the Winter Solstice. Well whether Jew, Muslim, Christian or Pagan, have a happy Holiday season.

In the first meeting of November, the timing of next years **Greater Reno Stamp and Cover Show** and whether or not we would have it was put to the vote by a show of hands. I was agreed, unanimously, that a show would be held. The timing of the show was between October, as it was this year, and June as it has been in the past. The vote was close. 14 voted for June and 14 for October. The tie was broken by Stan Cronwall and October was the decision. Now to find a place to have it.

Good news! Dee Dreiling is reported to be doing well and is recovering reports her husband, Dick. Ed Hartley, also may be returning to us soon. He is out of the hospital and hopes to attend the club's season party.

401 Peckham Lane is in Reno not Sparks as reported in the last issue. That is where the club's season party is to be held on December 13th. It will start with a social hour at 6:00 pm. Dinner will be served at 7:00 pm. Don't forget to bring your side dishes (hope you signed up for them at the last meeting). Also bring set-ups (knives, spoons and forks) for all the

members in your party. You don't have to take them home with you, Dick Dreiling is trying to build a new set.

A woman goes to the post office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards.

She says to the clerk, "May I have 50 Christmas stamps?"

The clerk says, "What denomination?"

The woman says, "O my God, has it come to this? Give me 6 Catholic, 12 Protestants, 32 Baptists."



The picture is from a Norman Rockwell painting done in 1942 for the Saturday Evening Post from the Curtis Publishing Company.

OUT IN THE UNIVERSE . . . STAMPS: *On the Magic of Christmas*

Michael O. Nowlan - October 29, 1999

The 1999 flood of Christmas stamps is beginning to strike the marketplace, so it is timely to set the stage for what could be one of the biggest finds of the year. Special finds are always lurking in most unsuspecting spots, but this week's celebrated stamp is most likely somewhere in the United States.

The story begins very innocently during the spring/summer of 1994 when Canada Post Corporation anticipated a postal increase to go into effect around the first of November which would have coincided with the release of the annual Canada Christmas issue. As it turned out, the anticipated postal increase did not get federal government approval until almost a year later in mid 1995, and it only went into effect on August 1.

Consequently, it paved the way for what is unfolding as a significant stamp story. On November 3, 1994, Canada Post launched its special Christmas stamps in the usual four denominations. One was the undenominated stamp designed for domestic greeting cards and often referred to as GREET MORE stamps. They were available at a discount price to encourage more card greetings by mail. Canada's GREET MORE stamps were discontinued with the 1995 issue.

The other 1994 Canada Christmas stamps included a 43-cent item for domestic mail, a 50-cent stamp for mail to the United States, and an 88-cent stamp for other international mail. The stamps were a commemorative issue to celebrate carolling and choirs, considered essential elements of the wonderfully festive music enjoyed during the holiday season. The stamps especially honored the 100th anniversary of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and the 100th anniversary of Massey Hall, the Mendelssohn Choir's home and where it has performed the *Messiah* faithfully since 1942.

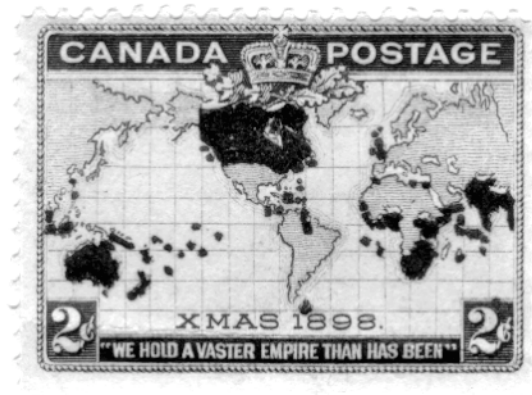
Now that you have the introduction, it is time to test your wits. The illustrations that accompany this column provide a good glimpse at what we are looking for. Because of the proposed price increase, there were actually two printings of the 1994 Canada Christmas stamps - one for the proposed rate and one for the actual rate at the time.

There is considerable evidence of the two printings. The GREET MORE booklets, for example, had a peelable cover affixed to the original. By careful peeling the adhesive cover, one could see the proposed price increase for those stamps. Since the GREET MORES were undenominated, all that the postal authority had to do was replace the booklet cover.

As the plot thickens, questions arise as to how some of the proposed rate stamps get into public hands. Ah, t'will always be a mystery because the best laid plans of stamp issuers oft go awry. Good stories always take time to season, but this one took longer than usual. The true proof of the existence of the proposed rate 1994 Christmas stamps only came to attention four years later in 1998.

A prominent Canadian dealer reported recently that a Mr. Holmes of Halifax, Nova Scotia approached him in September 1998 to sell a sheet of the 1994 Christmas choir stamp in an unusual denomination of 52 cents, which he could not find in Scott or any other catalogue. Then in the November-December issue of *The Canadian Philatelist*, the same Mr. Holmes wrote the editor his complete story of buying the stamps at a Halifax flea market. He had purchased three sheets. Mr. Holmes' letter traces the kind of background with speculation that I outlined above.

The dealer, however, was not deterred. He refused to pay Holmes what he thought "his treasures



Christmas stamps

The first Christmas stamp was issued in Canada in 1898. On this stamp with the Mercator map the words "XMAS 1898" were inscribed. Collectors had to wait till 1964 before Canada commenced a regular run of Christmas stamps.

The first Christmas stamps:

- * Canada (1898)
- * Austria (1937)
- * Brazil (1939)
- * Hungary (1941)
- * United States of America (1962)
- * The Netherlands (1987)

Christmas stamps are issued in many countries today and often Christmas greetings can be sent at a lower postal rate.

In 1987 the Dutch PTT Post were forced by local postal services to issue Christmas stamps, because in the former year in several cities many letters and cards were delivered by private services at much lower costs than PTT rates.

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The history of Tuberculosis and Christmas Seals

By the end of the last century, the disease called tuberculosis was the most dreaded disease known to mankind. It was also known as "TB" or the "White Plague." As the disease worsened, its victims became pale in skin color, hence the term. Tuberculosis is a disease that is caused by a bacteria. It is spread from person to person by the inhalation of the germs in the air in which an infected person has coughed or sneezed. At that time, there was no cure for this terrible disease that was known for claiming the lives of its victims.

Makeshift sanitariums were put up in those days so the tuberculosis patients could be isolated and cared for. One such place was located in Delaware. Doctor Joseph Wales treated patients there, and he knew that the sanitarium had run out of the funds it needed to keep it going. So, he contacted his cousin, an active woman by the name of Emily Bissell. Bissell was an experienced fund-raiser for the American Red Cross. However, at this time, her quest at raising funds for the hospital was not successful. Finally, she remembered reading about how money was raised in Denmark for children who were afflicted with tuberculosis and decided to try the same method.

The story goes, that in December of 1903, a postman by the name of Einar Holboell was sorting a huge pile of Christmas mail inside a post office near Copenhagen. Holboell took a break from his work and looked out of the window. He spotted a young girl and a young boy who were trudging slowly through the snowy weather. All they had to protect them were the rags they were dressed in. This sight inspired the postman so much, that he came up with the idea of selling special stamps that could be put on every piece of mail in addition to the required postage. The stamps would be inexpensive too. And, the revenue collected from the sales of the stamps could be donated to help poor children.

The next year, over four million stamps were sold. Some of the money was used to help build hospitals to treat children who suffered from tuberculosis.

Bissell created her own Christmas stamp. She worked for the Red Cross, so the picture was a red cross in the middle of a half of a wreath of holly. Below the wreath, she wrote the words, "Merry Christmas." Bissell was successful in convincing the national headquarters of the American Red Cross to allow her to use its red symbol, and thus, the Christmas Seal was born in the United States.

In the year of 1907, the first Christmas Seals were sold at a fund-raising table which was located inside the Wilmington, Delaware post office. The sale made over three thousand dollars in revenue and the money was used to help in the fight against tuberculosis.

Since that time, the sales of Christmas Seals has become the official source of fundraising revenue for the battle against the tuberculosis disease. While it has not been completely eradicated, the disease is much less prevalent since the introduction of the BCG vaccine by the French scientists who developed it.

Title: The history of Tuberculosis and Christmas Seals

Description: The history of Tuberculosis and Christmas Seals. Many people still use the ever-popular Christmas seal on their cards and letters!!

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The USPS is releasing a stamp that "honors" Muslims message claims, so let's boycott it! - not exactly.

The stamp does not "honor" Muslims. It is a commemorative stamp for two Muslim holidays. **The USPS has already issued a Christmas stamp and a Hanukah stamp.** The message would lead us to believe that a branch of the U.S. federal government is acknowledging and honoring only one of the major religions prominent in the U.S, which is obviously untrue. The stamp doesn't honor Muslims or their holiday anymore than a Christmas stamp "honors" Christians or Christmas. These stamps are simply available to each religion for the sending of their holiday cards. **The stamp has been out for nearly two years.**

These kind of stamps have a specific purpose. No one is ever forced to use these kind of stamps anymore than they are forced to use a Christmas stamp. **Do Jews "boycott" the Christmas stamp?** Perhaps they should according to this message. After all, people claiming to be Christians killed millions of Jews during WW2. Of course Jews don't boycott Christmas stamps. They realize that most Christians don't hate Jews. They simply do not purchase the holiday stamp for a religious holiday they do not celebrate. **Do Christians "boycott" the Hanukah stamp?** Of course not. These stamps are sold only by request, so there can be no such thing as a "boycott." Only those with an interest in purchasing a holiday stamp will do so. Some Christians will purchase the special Christmas stamps at Christmas, some Jewish people will purchase the Hanukah stamp during Hanukah and some Muslims will purchase the Muslim holiday stamp during their holidays. No one is ever forced to take any religious holiday stamp. During the EID holidays, Muslims usually send cards just as we Christians do during Christmas.

If we ask the USPS to pull one religious stamp because of the fact that some who follow the religion are terrorists and murderers, **then we must also ask them to pull the other religious stamps for the same reason.** There will always be people who will do anything in the name of their religion. **Should all Christians be called terrorists because of certain groups responsible for violence and racism that call themselves Christian?** I don't think we'd care for that (although it is already happening). Meanwhile, the masses do not follow these fringe, radicals and yet we want the U.S. federal government to make sure the entire religion is censured. Someone seems to have forgotten that the U.S. Constitution forbids the U.S. government from censoring any religion or promoting any one religion. If one stamp is pulled, all must be pulled, but that is playing into the hands of those who wish all religion to be censured from all public life. **If we promote freedom from one particular religion - watch out - Christianity is next because of fringe groups. I wonder how we would like people demanding that Christmas stamps be pulled due to the actions of some?**

How The First Christmas Stamp Came To Be

Michael O. Nowlan - *July 14, 1999*

There are now thousands of Christmas stamps from around the world, but the origin of the first Christmas stamp continues to be a mere curiosity. Nonetheless, the story is still intriguing 100 years after the stamp's issue. The stamp is the 1898 Canada two-cent with the Mercator map. (Gerhardus Mercator was the most notable geographer of his time, and his world map of 1569 won lasting fame.) Most often called the 'Map' stamp or the Imperial Penny Postage issue, the stamp also gets credit for being the first ever Christmas stamp.

At the Universal Postal Union conference in Washington, in 1897, British Empire delegates, especially Canada's Postmaster General Honorable (later Sir) William Mulock, lobbied to get an overseas penny postage rate among Empire nations. He lost that battle, but in July 1898, he was in Britain with a new proposal and much determination. The decision was not exactly what Mulock wanted, but a resolution at the July 1898 conference allowed Empire countries to opt into an Imperial Penny Postage rate if they chose to do so. Canada made the move to be effective on Christmas day 1898. That, however, did not cause the two-cent to be the first Christmas stamp.

At the time, stamp designs for the colonial countries had to be approved by Queen Victoria. The story goes that a post office official in discussing the new Canadian stamp for the Imperial Penny Postage rate (two cents) with Her Majesty said the new stamp could serve as a tribute to the prince. The official was referring to the then-Prince of Wales whose birthday occurred on November 9, the original date selected to release the stamp.

Queen Victoria, who had her gruff moments, is said to have replied "Which prince?" in a tone that suggested she would not be pleased with a royal connection other than herself. The official quickly said "Why, madam, the Prince of Peace," referring, of course, to the Christ child. As a result, the stamp when it was officially released on December 7, 1898, bore, not only Mercator's map, but also the words "XMAS 1898". It now ranks as the first Christmas stamp in the world, and it was not until 1964 that Canada commenced a regular run of Christmas stamps.

The map stamp was reissued as a stamp-on-a-stamp by Canada Post for its centenary last year. The same stamp commemorated the memory of Sir William Mulock.

Countries were slow to issue specifically-designed Christmas stamps. The next nation with Christmas stamps was Austria in 1937 with two stamps referred to in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue as *Christmas Greeting Stamps*. The stamps feature a rose and zodiac signs. Brazil issued four semi-charity stamps in 1939 depicting the three Kings and the star, an angel and child, a southern cross and child, and mother and child. Hungary gets next in line with a *Soldier's Christmas* semi-postal depicting a soldier and emblem (1941).

It would be 10 years before Cuba issued its two-stamp set of *Poinsettia* and *Bells*. Haiti followed in 1954 with two stamps - *Fort Nativity* and *Star of Bethlehem*. As the 1950s progressed, Luxembourg and Spain produced Christmas stamps in 1955 while Liechtenstein, Korea and Australia started what has become a fashion with Christmas issues in 1957.

The United States got on the roll in 1962 with its four-cent *Wreath and Candles* stamp, a tradition with the U.S. post office that has not been broken since. Today, the USPS issues several Christmas stamps each season. The Christmas stamp has a rather unusual beginning, but it is a story worth relating because it was the start to one of what has become a very popular topical interest today. There is a Christmas Philatelic Club, a Christmas Stamps of the World handbook published by the American Topical Association, and countless other efforts to promote the sale and collection of stamps that relate to the biggest celebration of the year.

Michael O. Nowlan was born in Chatham, New Brunswick Canada. He grew up on a nearby farm, was educated, and became a teacher. In retirement, he follows his life-long avocation of writing. His credits include 16 books (four books of poems, two children's titles, and anthologies for schools). In recent years, he has written extensively about stamp collecting for *Canadian Stamp News*, *Gibbons International Stamp News*, and other philatelic publications.

This quiz is the one quiz of the year that I try to make the toughest that I can. All of you philatelist out there should give it a try. At the least you should look it over to see how you might have done. Surround yourself with all your Stamp books, get the reference librarian on the phone and keep her (or him) on hold til you finish this one.

1. How many stamps are there in a five stamp series?
A) 5 B) five C) Six, with one missing
2. On what denomination stamp does green appear on most earlier American Stamps?
A) One cent B) 1 cent
3. Who is honored with a 15 cent mourning stamp in 1866?
A) Abraham Lincoln B) "Honest Abe" C) President Lincoln
4. How many questions are usually found on this test?
A) Mostly, ten B) 10 C) 100 Auction Bucks worth
5. True or False, it cost three cents to mail a first class letter in 1954.
A) True B) True
6. In what year was the stamp showing the Iwo Jima flag raising issued?
A) 1945 B) 1945 C) The last year of WWII
7. How much wood could a woodchuck chuck?
A) As much wood as a woodchuck could chuck (if a woodchuck could chuck wood).
B) I dunno.
8. The Arctic Exploration issue of 1959 (#1128) pictures what?
A) Dog Sled B) Atomic Submarine C) Both
9. What former President appears on an American stamp?
A) George Washington B) James K Polk C) Thomas Jefferson
10. In which year was the last Christmas stamp issued ?
A) 2003 B) This year C) Shortly before 2004

Merry Christmas and good tidings to you all. May the coming year bring good things, including another one hundred auction bucks.

I threw a little curve ball at you with number ten. I apologize for that. Had I not included 1861 as one of the answers, you may have gone to the books. Be careful. Sometimes the answer may seem too easy.

1. - B. Ten flags were shown that were used by our forefathers as colonists and citizens of the newly formed United States of America in #'s 1345 to 1354.
2. - A. #879 was one of the Famous American issues. Stephen Collins Foster was an American Composer and was so honored on a one cent stamp.
3. - A. John Quincy Adams. #811 of the "Prexie" issues.
4. - C. Will Rogers was given his place in American history on #975. You may have noticed a quote from him at the bottom of last months answer page.
5. - B. In 1937 both the Army and the Navy were the subject on one, two, three, four and five cent stamps in two sets. The Naval Academy was on the five cent stamp in the second set, #794.
6. - B. On July 11, 1945 a stamp using the most famous photograph to come out of WWII was issued to commemorate the taking of Iwo Jima by the US Marine Corps.
7. - C. William McKinley was on the five cent stamp, #326. Thomas Jefferson was on the two cent stamp, #322
8. - C. #1585 shows us books, bookmark, eyeglasses. Its a definitive issue and the stamps are small. You may need those eyeglasses to see the subjects.
9. - B. In US Airmail stamps, there are only three stamps picturing government entities. One shows the presidents on Mount Rushmore while another gives us Abraham Lincoln. Montgomery Blair is in good company on # C66.
10. - A. Some of you may have been thinking about the the de-monetization of postage at the start of the Civil War, but the correct answer is July 1, 1851 when Congress decided to limit the time a postage stamp was valid. Since the end of the Civil War all stamps are still valid., so you can still use your inverted Jenny for postage.

The only clue you had to work with on question number two was that it was a one, three or four cent stamp. Was that enough to get you to the right answer? Maybe a reference to Swanee River might have helped.