

LETTERS

INDEX TO ALL VOLUMES OF BNA TOPICS

With the help of a few members, I have begun indexing the entire run of *BNA TOPICS* - from Volume 1, Number 1 to the present - on an IBM compatible personal computer. It is anticipated that the project will take another 3 to 4 years to complete.

Under each subject heading the index will list all articles assigned to that heading, and will indicate the article's title, author(s), volume, date, issue, page number, length, and information related to whether or not the article has illustrations, a bibliography and/or tables.

Additional items being considered for inclusion in the index are: a personal name sub-index to *all* names appearing in *TOPICS*; a listing of columns and series and when they appeared; and a glossary of philatelic terms pertinent to BNA philately.

More volunteers, who can give at least two to three hours a month, are needed to assist in the project. Each volunteer will receive a list of the subject headings being used and will then be asked to double-check the subject terms that have been assigned to the articles in a specific issue of *TOPICS*. To volunteer and/or receive more information please write to me at the address below. Include your name, address and telephone number, and a list of the issues of *TOPICS* you own. Please note that it is not essential to have a computer to take part in this project.

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(Editor's note: the group working on the TOPICS index project will have a scheduled meeting at BNAPEX '89.)

REVISION TO THE AMERICAN AIRMAIL CATALOGUE

The American Air Mail Society has commenced work on the 6th revision of its world famous *American Air Mail Catalogue*. I have the honour of serving as the Chairman of the revision of the sections on Canada and Newfoundland. We have seven committee members who would be pleased to receive any recommendations for changes to these two sections. All correspondence should be directed to R. K. Malott, Chairman, AAMC Revision Committee, Canada and Newfoundland Sec-

tion, 16 Harwick Crescent, Nepean, Ontario, K2H 6R1, Canada.

Recommendations should be sent to me by 1 August 1989. The Committee will dedicate the revision of the Newfoundland Section to the late Cyril H. C. Harmer, the noted researcher and collector of Newfoundland aerophilately. For the Canadian Section five noted Canadian deceased aerophilatelists will be recognized - James N. Sissons, Major Ian C. Morgan, W. R. Patton, Narcisse Pelletier, and O.W.R. Smith. An appropriate portrait photograph of each of the Canadian aerophilatelists is being sought. Anyone who may be able to provide a photograph of any of these five Canadians (one of Cyril H. C. Harmer has been obtained) is requested to contact the Chairman of the Committee. Your support would be appreciated.

R.K. Malott FRPSC,
Nepean, ON

NEWFOUNDLAND 5¢ CARIBOU PLATE SUBJECTS

The January-February 1989 *TOPICS* carries a Letter to the Editor from John Walsh, in which he rebuts some points made by Robert Pratt in an earlier article, *The New Professionals and Us*. An illustration of a block of four of the 5¢ Caribou, which has a line of perforations to the left of and parallel to a vertical lathe mark line, is given as proof that this stamp was printed in sheets of 200, with a center gutter.

Unfortunately, in the January-February issue Mr. Walsh is doing exactly what Bob Pratt is accusing 'The New Professionals' of doing, drawing conclusions without adequate fore-study. The 5¢ Caribou with lathework in the left margin used to illustrate his point does not prove it at all. The 1932 Resources issue was printed by two firms, both named Perkins Bacon. The original Perkins Bacon firm was a failing company during the 1930's. It officially went out of business at the end of 1935. A new firm using the same name and much of the same equipment, but with new management, immediately started-up. The archives of the original Perkins Bacon firm eventually went to the Royal Philatelic Society, London. Nowhere is it documented that the original Perkins Bacon firm used 200 subject plates for the stamps of Newfoundland. With all the proof material from this era around, a plate

proof with a center gutter would surely have turned-up. The successor Perkins Bacon firm was managed by a stamp collector, John Hubbard, who was president of the Royal Philatelic Society, London for a time. So far, no center gutter plate proof is known to have come from his holdings. All this does not disprove Mr. Walsh's assertion of a 200 subject plate with a center gutter between the two panes, but it does make it suspect.

Without any corroborating evidence of a 200 subject plate, I offer the following explanation of the extraneous perforations to the left of Mr. Walsh's 5¢ Caribou. It is normal to place lathework at the edge of a plate, not down the middle of a gutter. More importantly, this 5¢ Caribou is comb perforated with the teeth pointing to the left. The comb perforator that both Perkins Bacon firms used was a single comb which advanced one stamp after each stroke. The left margin of Mr. Walsh's 5¢ Caribou was so wide that an extra stroke of the perforator was required to free the sheet from the perforator. It is not misperforated. This explanation is consistent with the known production techniques of the two Perkins Bacon firms.

C.A. Stillions
Washington, D.C.

(Editor's note: C. A. Stillions has submitted an article which offers an explanation of another Newfoundland stamp with an apparent center gutter. It will be printed in TOPICS in the near future.)

MISLEADING PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs of early covers can often be very misleading. Two remarkable examples have been featured in the last two issues of *B.N.A. TOPICS*.

The letter from D. Lacelle (March/April) illustrates a 15¢ Large Queen cover to India posted from Cobourg in May 1870. Each of its two stamps appears to have a different two-ring numeral strike.

The concept of this small office using two distinctive Numerals, '20' and '29', is imaginative but, in my view, totally incorrect.

Even were this to be remarkably true, why would the stamper cancel one of the stamps with '29' and the other with '20'? From the impressions made, which are at precisely identical angles, they must have been applied in quick succession. If two different devices had been used, then their state of wear would

differ, apart from the angles, whereas both strikes are well-worn and badly inked.

All the many Cobourg covers of this period that I have owned show the same 2 ring '29' and never a 2 ring '20'. Meanwhile Port Hope at this time was using its own distinctive numeral type.

This cover has two strikes from the same '29' device, one of which has ink distortion to give the eye the impression of a figure '20'.

The second, perhaps even more remarkable cover illustration creating an optical illusion, is featured in the Jan-Feb '89 issue of *TOPICS*, where, on page 19, C.R. McGuire illustrates a re-directed letter posted from Hamilton.

The cover front has an apparently clear strike of a London W.C. Squared Circle receiving mark dated JU. 16. 03. This date ties with the Hamilton posting date of JU. 4. 03.

Astute readers will see what seems to be the numerals '25' at the base corners of the Squared Circle. The number '25' is a Post Office identification for this particular hammer whenever used, to distinguish it from other very similar hammers of the same office.

Keen collectors of British Squared Circles will know that a June 1903 date for this clearly Type I (three arcs) hammer is totally impossible. My recently published book on G.B. Squared Circles (page 362) shows that this hammer was so completely worn by late January 1902 that it was recut down to a Type II (two arcs) by April 1902.

As my co-author, Daniel Rosenblat, another keen BNAPS member, recently wrote me, "If this cover were true, we would have to rewrite our book." Fortunately the solution is quite a simple one.

By carefully comparing the minute design differences, it is found that the cover strike is not '25' at all, but exactly fits the very similar die that has the numerals '26'. The dates for this type I die are shown to be AP. 02 to DE. 03, so that the cover is correctly within those dates.

The photograph distorts the figures '26' so that they both appear to be '25' almost without question. But the photograph really only accentuates the difference, which will be there on the cover itself, caused through under-inking and worn characters as well as a slightly smudged strike.

"What the eye beholds"

Stanley Cohen, F.R.P.S.L.
Spain