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1998 BIRDS OF CANADA PRESS SHEET COMBINATIONS by Georg Gerlach

1998 marks the third year that Canada Post has issued a press sheet associated with the Birds of Canada issue. The 1998 Press Sheet has an identical pane layout to the 1997 Press Sheet and was issued on February 10, 1998. [Editor's Note: See CALGARY PHILATELIST #29 for Georg's article on the 1997 sheets.] It again provides stamp collectors with numerous gutter pair and block combinations. As in 1997, 8500 of the 10000 press sheets were unsigned and sold at face value. The remaining 1500 press sheets were signed and numbered and were priced higher. Unlike the 1997 issue which sold out very quickly, neither the signed nor the unsigned 1998 press sheets were sold out as of mid-June 1998, and were still available from the Philatelic office in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. The press sheets were printed in a 3-horizontal by 2-vertical sheet of 20 stamps each format. All the press sheets have the stamp colours printed on the top selvage as colour bars in two primary rows with a grey-tone row in between.

Based on my own press sheet purchases, there are two distinctly different printings of the press sheets, noticeable on the upper row of colour bars. Type 1 was purchased in Calgary from both the main postal outlet as well as the outlet on 4 Avenue and 3 Street SW on the first day of issue. Type 2 was purchased from Canada Post in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, and arrived approximately three weeks after the stamps were issued. Another press sheet was purchased from Antigonish in mid-June 1998 and was also Type 2. Based on the few sheets I've seen, Type 1 appears to occur only on unsigned sheets sent to local post offices, whereas Type 2 occurs on both the signed and unsigned sheets supplied from Antigonish. The variation between the two types occurs in the upper row of colour bars in both the upper left and upper right corners of the press sheets. The two types can be collected as corner blocks.

The following is a description of the colour bar variance between both types. It is useful to look at the Canada Post COLLECTIONS booklet (spring/printemps 1998) as it clearly shows Type 2 on page 3. The difference between the two types can be seen on both the upper left and upper right corners.

Type 1: Upper left corner - Beginning from the left above the light grey bar there is a 1/4 width pink bar adjacent to a 1/4 width purple bar adjacent to a full width medium grey bar. The remaining colour bars are the same for both types.

Upper right corner - Beginning from the right sheet edge, there is a 1/4 width black bar adjacent to a 3/4 width medium grey bar, adjacent to a salmon coloured bar, adjacent to a dark grey bar adjacent to a white bar. The remaining colour bars are the same for both types.

Type 2: Upper left corner - Beginning from the left above the light grey bar there is a 1/2 width light blue bar adjacent to a 1/2 width purple bar adjacent to a full width medium grey bar as in Type 1.

Upper right corner - From the right edge the colours are 1/4 width black bar adjacent to a blue bar, adjacent to a grey bar. The remaining bars are the same.

This discovery was quite unexpected and raises a number of questions about how these stamps were printed, and what would make the printers change the colour bar order. I would very much like to hear from anyone who can shed some light on this unusual occurrence.

It may be that one type represents the normal press run and for some reason a second press run was needed to supply philatelic needs. Why anyone would go through the work of making this colour bar change for such a small number of sheets is truly a mystery to me. Having said that, the quantities of each type make these much rarer than the 1997 issue.

I would suggest that Type 1, which was acquired locally, is the less common of the two types. This is at least partly supported by the fact that I was able to acquire Type 2 both on the date of issue and in mid-June 1998. I have not been able to confirm whether other cities such as Toronto, Montreal, or Vancouver received Type 1 or Type 2 in their local post offices. If anyone has some more information, please let me know.

Apart from the press sheet differences described above, my primary interest in this issue revolves around postally-used gutter pairs and recognizable press sheet combinations on cover. It is hard to estimate how many press sheets were broken up to create gutter pairs and blocks, but based on only a handful of dealers offering them, I would say that less than 500 of the unsigned sheets were broken up. Given this small number Table 1 represents my estimate of the potential number of various combinations that may exist.

Table 1: Quantities of 1998 Birds Of Canada Press Sheet Combinations

unsigned press sheets	8,500 issued
signed press sheets	1,500 issued
Total	10,000

Without knowing the exact number, I would estimate that around 500 press sheets (signed and unsigned) still remain unsold as of the middle of June 1998.

If we assume only about 500 of the total 10,000 Press Sheets have been broken up by collectors and dealers to obtain gutter pair and block combinations, the following represents the quantities of the various gutter pairs and blocks available to collectors.

gutter centre blocks (2 per Press Sheet)	1,000
vertical gutter pairs (Hairy Woodpecker)	500
vertical gutter pairs (Great Crested Flycatcher)	500
vertical gutter pairs (Gray Crowned Rosy Finch)	1,500
vertical gutter pairs (Eastern Screech Owl)	1,500
horizontal gutter pairs (Rosy-Finch - Woodpecker) with colour dots	2,000
horizontal gutter pairs (Rosy-Finch - Woodpecker) without colour dots	2,000
horizontal gutter pairs (Flycatcher - Screech Owl)	4,000

In addition, there would be a total of 500 matched sets of corner blocks. However, given that there are two different colour bar types, I would estimate that of the total perhaps 100 are Type 1 and 400 will be Type 2. My estimate of the number of vertical gutter pairs assumes that all the gutter centre blocks are left intact.

As can be seen from the summary in Table 1, the quantities are very small. I have further assumed that most will remain MNH and that only a very small number will be cancelled. Of the 500 press sheets I've assumed may be broken up, I believe fewer than 20% of these stamps will be cancelled. I also believe that less than a quarter of the cancelled combinations (5% of the total estimated) will be used "in period" and remain on cover. In period, for me, represents the period within the first year of issue or until a rate change occurs, whichever comes first.

These numbers are extremely small and as with the 1997 issue will no doubt mean high prices in the coming years for good used (with discernable date) as well as on cover material. Based on the numbers above, it is likely that there will be combinations where fewer than 50 in-period postally used covers will exist. Even the common Flycatcher - Screech Owl horizontal gutter pairs will likely be used on fewer than a hundred covers. A modern rarity in the making and one that catalogues should definitely include in their listings.

The reason I find these combinations so interesting on cover is that they can readily be used on overseas mail. As of mid-June 1998, the overseas letter rate remains at 90 cents (less than 20 grammes) and thus lends itself to the use of all gutter pairs to pay the proper rate required. Used gutter pairs could also be obtained from postally used oversized envelopes mailed within Canada which require 90 cents. Gutter blocks and corner blocks could also be obtained postally used on heavier letters to overseas destinations where the current rate is \$2.25 for 50 to 100 gramme items. It is also possible to use these combinations on registered or special delivery covers. Thus, getting these stamps on cover having paid the correct rate is certainly feasible. Whether you'll ever see any is the question, and yet these combinations are available at face value and could be used by anyone to mail their letters.

Other interesting items will be covers with individual or pairs of stamps having the colour bars attached. Such stamps will be from the top selvage of the press sheets and, while being an awkward size, are feasible to use on larger envelopes. Such colour bars have long been popular with collectors in other countries, and offer another opportunity for collecting stamps from this issue. Even stamps from the lower, left, and right edges are distinguishable from the normal stamps because they have a white bar on the selvage.

It will be very interesting to see whether the Darnell and Unitrade catalogues capture these combinations, mint, used, and on cover. They will definitely be scarce. I am very interested in hearing from anyone who has these stamp combinations on cover or postally used, and those who were lucky enough to purchase some of the Type 1 press sheets. At this juncture I would estimate that only a small percentage of the total number of press sheets printed are Type 1. Could someone confirm or contradict that assumption? Once again Canada Post confirms the old adage: Never a dull moment.

[Georg can be contacted c/o the CPS, Box 1478, Calgary, T2P 2L6.]



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THE CHAIN LETTER FAD OF 1935 (PART 2)

by Dale Speirs

Come The Revolution, We Know What Is To Be Done.

One interesting take on chain letters, written during the 1935 fad (ref. 138), mixed in class warfare with the chains: *"Three per cent of the people in the United States and Canada control all the financial resources ... The centralization of money into control of a limited class is just about complete."*

"You are mistaken in thinking that gambling is illegal. Any form of gambling which directs money into the control of the limited class is absolutely legal. You can adopt the sky as the limit in gambling on the stock exchanges or the mining exchanges or the grain exchanges, and not come into conflict with law or society."

"Any form of gambling which tends to divert money outwards from the control of the limited class and into the hands of the general public is criminal and illegal; all the forces of state and church unite to stamp it out."

"Canada and the United States are fermenting with financial revolution, and in the course of any revolution strange things are certain to happen. One of these strange things is the send a dime craze, which has been multiplied in many instances to a send five dollars craze."

"Analysis shows that it is basically an attempt to divert money outwards into the hands of the general public, instead of inwards into the control of the limited class."

"It is a danger signal, because it shows that a sufficient body of the general public is ready to travel along any revolutionary line which will break up the present monetary control."

Supporters of Chain Letters.

It was also suggested that welfare clients start chain letters and get themselves off relief that way (ref. 34). This was tried by one welfare officer in Tarboro, North Carolina, who in 1936 telephoned five friends to start a \$1 chain letter for Edgecombe County relief work (ref. 116). He got \$15 after one day, but his subsequent success is unrecorded.

The letters-to-the-editor columns of newspapers during the May 1935 fad had their share of supporters, some speaking with tongue in cheek, others perhaps serious. The most obvious reason to support chain letters was that they would increase post office revenue. It was calculated by a Fergus, Ontario, woman that by the time a Canadian chain circulated up to the top of the initial list of six names, the post office would have received \$385.90 in revenues (ref. 12). From there, the writer went on to suggest that unemployed could be hired to handle the workload and that people be fined for breaking the chain. A New York writer took this point further and pointed out that if the letters were kept going to the 23rd link, the U.S. Post Office would gross about 250 trillion dollars (ref. 16). Big money even today, and in Depression dollars enough to wipe out all debts and hand out money to everyone. An anonymous Calgarian, writing to the *CALGARY HERALD* (ref 30), said chain letters were no worse than lotteries or gambling, and besides the revenue to the post office, kept the people entertained.

An Edmontonian who signed himself "One Of The Chain Gang" wrote (ref. 135): "*Surely a few extra postmen in this fair city of ours would help the unemployment situation, and if we can triple the sales on postage stamps, would that help any?*"

The actual effect on post office revenues is variable. Since some chain letters operate person-to-person with cash transfers to avoid mail fraud charges, postage use does not always increase noticeably. The 1935 chain letter had mixed results. The May 1935 report for the Regina post office actually showed stamp sales down \$5000, while money orders were up because of mail-order businesses, not the chains (ref. 31). The original Denver chain letter, which operated by mail, however, almost doubled the post office volume (ref. 32). As against this, the post office there had to pay 1400 extra hours to posties to handle the workload. The final effect was to boost net revenues by \$30,000 in a two-month period (ref. 33). St. Louis mail volume doubled during its craze (ref. 23). Edmonton posties noticed an increase in mail volume on May 13 and subsequently (ref. 149), with a similar increase in stamp sales (ref. 150).

In short, post offices made money if the chain was sent by mail, but did not profit where the letters moved person-to-person to avoid mail fraud charges.

Et tu, Reverend?

Church ministers should be above such things as chain letters, and most of them are. No doubt the occasional sermon has been preached on the subject of getting rich quick. Some clergy, alas, cannot resist. During the 1935 chain letter fad, in Texarkana, Texas, the Rev. Walter Cannan of the Hardy Memorial Methodist Church, proposed a fundraising scheme for the church treasury based on chain letters. There would be six chains for as many age groups. The children, for example, would play the penny chain. A somewhat more respectable chain letter was used by the Rev. W.H. Allison, of the Argentine Baptist Church in Kansas City, who used it to promote Sunday attendance (ref. 35). It seemed to have worked, as the congregation was up 75%, but he complained that the chain must have been broken because there were only 300 present instead of 900 by his calculations. He also claimed that the first chain letter in the world was Apostle Paul's "Epistle to the Galatians".

Joke Letters and Oddball Descendants.

Chain letters start off in earnest, but as they die out, they often switch to oddball types. At the end of the May 1935 madness, when the public was sick of chain letters, one letter appeared that may be classified either as a joke or sharp practice, depending on your viewpoint: "*The latest chain letter scheme, it appears, is for a purchaser to buy a letter for a dime with the assurance it is not a chain letter. When opened, a note says: 'This dime will be used to transport mules to Arabia. Don't be an ass and ask for your money back.' Very few people, it seems, ask for their money back.*" (ref. 64).

Hollywood was saturated with chain letters in 1935, and as always with any hot topic, thought about making movies about them (ref. 65). Paramount Studios was planning to make a movie about the chain letter fad. (Can readers advise if such was done?) Meanwhile, five Columbia scenarists started a chain letter asking for film ideas. One wonders why they didn't just visit the local library and browse the shelves.

Other variations that appeared during the 1935 madness were for golf balls and cigarettes

(ref. 47). A chain letter from Concord, New Hampshire, asked for quilt pieces to be made into "world friendship" quilts (ref. 66). If they had gotten all the pieces from an unbroken chain, the textile industry would have had to work overtime, and the quilts could have covered the entire state of New Hampshire. Meanwhile, the Protective Club of America Against Utility Monopolies started a \$1 chain for the purpose of "*breaking the shackles of light and telephone companies who have the city of Concordia, Mo. in their clutches*" (ref. 59).

The Liquid Assets Club was a 1935 chain letter for a pint of whiskey. A Denver man started a hay bale letter. He got at least one (ref. 67). One chain letter, albeit not intentionally, sparked a romance that led to marriage. The blushing bride was 72 years old (ref. 68).

Even the Dionne quintuplets were not immune. Comedian Fred Allen wrote to the U.S. Postmaster General and suggested "*the only five people in the world today who can start a chain letter involving money and come out even are the Dionne quintuplets. The girls can write their five names and circulate one dime among themselves until the cows come home. As soon as the quintuplets see the cows, they will cry for milk, and the entire chain-letter business will be forgotten, which it should have been in the first place.*" (ref. 69). Fred Allen spoke too soon. The quintuplets had in fact been getting stacks of letters. One printed chain letter had written on it: "*As a tribute to your marvelous work we have started this. Please keep it going.*" Their guardian, Dr. Allan Roy Dafoe, was annoyed by the influx, and was discarding them all (ref. 70).

In Berkeley, at the University of California, the May 1935 chain letter produced a send-a-dame variation (ref. 145). The dames were co-eds whose names appeared on the chain letter, and then: "*Men students were directed to make a date with the top girl, scratch her name from the list, add a new one, and send copies along to five friends. ... each of the 6,000 co-eds at the university would be dated approximately 26,000 times if each of the 10,000 men students co-operated by seeing that no link was broken.*"

The ultimate in chain letters appeared in Augusta, Kansas, in May 1935 from the Good Riddance Club. It read: "*When you receive this letter, buy yourself a gun and shoot the guy at the top of the list. Have the faith your friends haven't in you and this will be the best chain yet.*" (ref. 35).

Postage Stamp Chain Letters.

During the final days of the May 1935 resurgence of chain letters, numerous variants of the money letters were used, including stamps. At Chatham, Ontario, a report reads: "*A new chain-letter stunt is operating here designed to effect a quick cleanup of the issue of 13-cent Jubilee stamps. The chain letter asks recipients to send five registered letters with the 13-cent stamp. If the chain is unbroken, it will yield the sender 15,525 registered letters with canceled 13-cent Jubilee stamps on the envelope at the sixth turnover. The originator apparently believes the stamps will eventually be valuable.*" (ref. 73).

This chain quickly spread to Saskatchewan in two days, but one doubts its ultimate success. A 1935-05-22 news item, which, incidentally, was adjacent to a report on a man committed to trial for counterfeiting revenue stamps on travelers' cheques, read as follows:

"... as the chains widened, buyers were becoming scarce. The chain letter scheme, applied to stamp collectors, made its appearance in Regina. This plan adopts the 13-cent jubilee

stamp. The receivers of the letters are supposed to send it on to another stamp collector, using a 13-cent stamp and registered mail. A Regina collector received one of these from Ottawa." (ref. 74).

One newspaper stamp columnist reported that not only the 13-cent Jubilee chain was circulating but that others at the same time were asking for 50-cents to \$5 catalogue value of any kind of mint or used stamps (ref. 144).

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155) Anonymous (1935-05-25) Chain letter mail again on increase. *EDMONTON BULLETIN*, page 1

IN MEMORIAM: WALTER JACKSON (1911-1998)

Walter Jackson passed away August 4, 1998. He was a longtime supporter of the CPS, and was named as Honorary Life Member #17 in appreciation for services rendered. He was Vice-President 1973/74, Circuit Books Director 1974/78, Show Chairman 1972 and 1973, and Director 1971/72 and again from 1978 to 1980. He was given the Founders' Award in 1976. In the past several years he was involved with the Sunday bourse. Walter had also been active in encouraging youth philately, and held a variety of behind-the-scenes jobs on various committees.

Our condolences to his wife Wynne and family.

SMALL ADVERTISEMENTS

These ads are free to paid-up CPS members, and will also appear on the CPS Website at no additional cost. Mail your ads to Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta, T2P 2E7, or hand them to me at meetings. Next deadline is September 2 for the October issue.

NOTE TO INTERNET VIEWERS: Unless stated otherwise, telephone numbers are area code 403. Alberta is on Mountain Daylight Time.

WANTED: Booklet singles or multiples used on cover, any era. Price individually, as a batch, or ask for my offer. Will give generous trade of MNH Canada for items I need. Call Ed Harris at 274-0021 or see me at meetings.

WANTED: Better India stamps, especially up to the Archaeological set. Contact Geoff Butt at 242-3260.

FOR SALE: "History of the Calgary Philatelic Society" for \$2 each from Dale Speirs at meetings, or add an extra \$2 for postage and send to CPS, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2E7.

WANTED: Calgary Gocard postcards. I will pay for those I don't have. Phone Julius at 282-7982.

WANTED: Would like to buy larger German, Canadian, or worldwide stamp collections. Phone Willi at 239-2273.

WANTED: Energy-related covers and stamps, especially covers from defunct Calgary oil companies. Call Dave Russum at 284-4775.

WANTED: Postmarks of Canada on cover, piece, or stamp. Phone Al at 282-1030.

FOR SALE: Breaking up 50-year-old stamp collection from all over the world. Many sets and lots in circuit books of the CPS. I have used and mint Newfoundland, some early issues of QV, KGV, and KGVII mint. If interested, contact Bob Perry at 282-4520.

CALGARY REGIONAL GROUP OF THE BRITISH NORTH AMERICA PHILATELIC SOCIETY meets second Wednesdays of the month at the Museum of the Regiments (Crowchild Trail off Flanders Avenue). Call Ed Harris at 274-0021 for details.

MEETINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

1998

September	2	.....	General meeting
	2		Deadline for October bulletin
	14		Executive meeting
October	7	.....	General meeting
	16 to 18		CALTAPEX '98
	21		Auction
November	4	.....	General meeting
	4		Deadline for December bulletin
	18		Auction
December	2	.....	Christmas social

1999

January	7	.....	General meeting
	7		Deadline for February bulletin
	21		Auction
February	4	.....	General meeting
	18		Auction
March	4	.....	General meeting
	4		Deadline for April bulletin
	18		Auction
April	1	.....	General meeting
	15		Auction
May	6	.....	General meeting
	6		Deadline for June bulletin
	20		Auction
June	3	.....	Election meeting

MEETINGS and AUCTIONS are at Kerby Centre, 2nd floor, 1133 - 7 Avenue SW, at 19h30. Auction lots should be in before 19h30 to allow bidder viewing.

CALTAPEX is at the Chinese Cultural Centre, 197 - First Street SW. Contact Walter Herdzyk at 238-8150 or Bruce Irvine at 938-7027 for details.