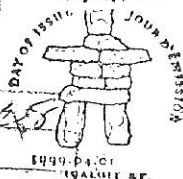
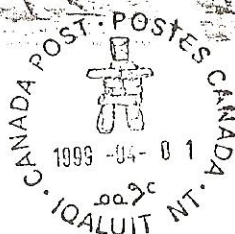


CALGARY PHILATELIST

Issue #38

October 1999



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(see page 15 for list of committee chairpersons)

NUNAVUT: A NEW NAME ON THE MAP OF CANADA

by Georg Gerlach

On April 1, 1999, the map of Canada was redrawn to reflect the creation of the Territory of Nunavut, the result of settling the largest land claim in Canadian history. The new territory covers approximately 2 million square kilometres and occupies the eastern portion of the former Northwest Territories. Nunavut is almost completely north of the treeline and is inhabited by about 25,000 people. Of these 25,000 people, about 80% are Inuit. The capital of Nunavut is Iqaluit on Baffin Island.

To mark the event, Canada Post issued a 46-cent stamp showing the vast expanse of Nunavut in the background with the faces of five smiling Inuit children in the foreground. A total of 7,000,000 stamps were printed. The official First Day cancellation was at Iqaluit and showed an inukshuk as the central motif. As a collector of stamps from north of 60, I anticipated that in addition to the First day cancel used by Canada Post, each of the post offices in Nunavut would receive a new cancel on April 1st showing the name of the new territory. Canada Post elected to leave the cancels as they were and none of the settlements used cancels showing Nunavut.

In addition to the First Day cancellation, a second commemorative was also used at Iqaluit on April 1st. This cancel was larger than the First Day cancel and showed a smaller inukshuk above the date. It also has the Inuktitut letters for Nunavut below the date. A photocopy of the two cancels on a registered cover are shown on the bottom half of the front page of this bulletin.

One post office in Nunavut did have a changed cancel that showed the new territorial name. That location was Canada's most northerly post office, located at the weather station at Alert on the northern tip of Ellesmere Island. The post office at Alert is a military post office with the designation MPO 310. In order to send mail to this post office, it was necessary to first send the mail to Belleville, Ontario. From there the mail is forwarded on to Alert.

As it turned out, the Alert cancel was unique in marking the creation of Nunavut, as no other Nunavut cancels were created. An illustration of this cancel is shown on the top half of the front page of this bulletin. From a collector's standpoint, the clean round cancel is a joy to have in one's collection, and rightfully marks the change to the new Territory. I learned in July that the post office at Alert had been closed and Canada's most northerly post office was no longer open. A case of too little mail coming and going at the top of the world.

It will be very interesting to see when Canada Post changes the postmarks for the various communities in Nunavut to indicate the new Territory's name. Canada Post tends not to inform collectors of changes in postmarks. It will be a challenge to obtain a collection of commercially used mail or even collector-instigated covers with early uses of the new cancels when they come into use.

A small controversy has arisen over the postal abbreviation that has been proposed for Nunavut. Namely the abbreviation NU to replace the old NT, which of course is still in use in the Northwest Territories. It seems that Canada Post is embarrassed about using NU as the abbreviation because it means nude or naked in French. Based on what I've read in northern magazines, Canada Post seem to be the only ones concerned.

Perhaps later this year or as Canada enters the new millennium we'll see the other 27 post offices in Nunavut receive and begin using their new (or should I say NU) cancellations.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

All 1999-2000 dues are now due. Please pay before December 1.

We still have some name badges to be picked up. Sorry, we are not able to mail them; you must pick them up at the meetings. If you recently joined the club, you will have a badge with your name engraved on it waiting for you at the front table at meetings. Please wear them at meetings. Thanks.

BEGGING LETTERS (PART 2)

by Dale Speirs

A Catalogue Of Victims.

Families of deceased persons were targeted, the begging letter falsely implying that the deceased had been giving alms before, that the letter writer was unaware of the person's death, and was confidently expecting another donation as promised. Such letters included one from a supposed doctor asking the defunct for "another" donation to support the hospital [14] and an American woman to a deceased noble asking why he had not written and where was the half-yearly stipend he had been sending [33]. A Birmingham man received two letters to his recently deceased father in 1860 asking why "the usual remittance" had not been sent. One letter came from Kate Ramsay of North Carolina, and a second identical letter from a Mary E. Bruce, an American whose address was not specified in the report of the case, but who undoubtedly had no more of a corporeal existence than Ramsay [49].

Begging letters commonly included forged references from vicars or nobility attesting to the truth of the letter's story. Everything in the letter was, of course, fictitious except the accommodation address where the money was to be sent. The supposedly-attesting reference was from out of town, so as to make it difficult to personally verify it. Beggars in the county of Surrey in 1842 produced letters with such forged references, all of which were found on investigation to be false [4]. Some victims eventually found out their names were being taken in vain by begging-letter writers. The Rev. Bowyer had to resort to a newspaper notice in 1882 that he did not support the veracity of the numerous beggars circulating his name in their letters as a voucher for their honesty [25].

In 1860, the Duke of Beaufort received a letter from the Rev. William Howard, Cottingham, near Hull, asking for money for the widow of a drowned sailor. The Duke contacted Rev. Howard by personal courier and discovered that the letter was a fake. When police investigated, the Cottingham postmaster told them he had received a letter from 'Howard' directing letters be forwarded to Brick-lane, Spitalfields. The police then traced this accommodation address to an Isaac Oxley, who was subsequently identified by the Mendicity Society as having been a begging imposter for two decades. Oxley was tried in court and sentenced to three months [48].

Another put-upon vicar was driven to the columns of THE TIMES (London) to explain that: *"Some days ago I published in your columns an advertisement warning my friends against certain imposters who have long been soliciting in my name contributions for pretended charitable purposes ... A female imposter has*

for months been sending up a card with the address "Miss Sinclair, Vickerage, Vickerage-place, Kensington" and, notwithstanding her bad spelling, has often succeeded ... " [38].

One method of getting plausible references to lull the mark was to steal calling cards. This was, it must be remembered, at a time when visiting friends was a more formal procedure than today; one left one's card at the homes visited. With this in mind, the beggars operated with the following method [37]: *"The begging-letters sent out by this gang usually refer to names and addresses well known to the parties applied to, and which are too readily accepted as a guarantee for the veracity of the tale. These are obtained in a way little suspected, namely, by abstracting the cards lying on hall-tables while a servant goes in with a letter, or by bribing servants to give them. In some cases even visiting cards are forged. This occurred to ourselves. The baker who served the house was induced by the presentation of our card to lend the bearer, purporting to be a relative, L2. The card proved to have been printed from a plate engraved for the purpose, for it differed slightly from the only one in use."*

Methods Of Operation.

It was quite common to send the same begging letter to different people. A Boer War veteran wrote begging letters under five aliases. The investigator of that case remarked that he was *"... one of a great army of men and women who work their living in this way."* [30]. One specialist who preyed on grieving families sent the same letter to the son of a deceased clergyman and to the family of a deceased noble [9]. Conversely, one Member of Parliament received letters in the same hand with the story of a young lady stranded in France, differing only in details [6].

It was common for a begging-letter writer to assume multiple identities. This was the case of Harry Hensler, reported in 1880. He was known to Dublin police for sending begging letters under various women's names to prominent London people, masquerading as a soldier's wife who had been on the way to join him at his posting when she was shipwrecked on the Irish coast [29]. Hensler made the mistake of sending a begging letter to a Member of Parliament, who had him hauled into court on fraud charges. The court heard that Hensler had L5 on him at the time of his arrest, and had deposited L18 in his bank account the previous month, all reasonably good sums of money for the times. At sentencing, it was mentioned that he had six prior convictions for false begging letters, and had been at that activity since 1848. He was then sentenced to seven years in prison [19].

A high-pressure technique was to send a book or other item unbidden, which would be more likely to force a reply [7]. One begging letter, circa 1750, was from a writer trying to sell books, mentioning that he was almost blind [12]. One editor commented on the method of soliciting donations for fictitious fetes: *"Among the begging-letter dodges of the present season is a form of application for contributions of articles to be sold at Fancy Fairs for charitable purposes. We have been solicited by a circular to send all sorts of miscellaneous effects, for some of which it would be necessary to refer to our regular dustman, as we should certainly include them in the category of rubbish. It is possible that when put upon a stall, with a fashionable lady behind it, who would tout with all the energy that a fashionable lady can throw into the task, the rubbish might fetch high prices, and in obedience therefore to the request that we will furnish a coin, a bird, or an insect, we beg to offer a bad sixpence, a lady-bird, and a flea, to the attention of the Committee. As we find that original poetry and flowers are taken in, we shall have much pleasure in presenting the parties with a distich, and a daisy, if a regularly-authorized individual will call with a receipt for the same at the Committee's earliest convenience. Perhaps on some other occasion, if we are favoured with a long notice of the intended Fancy Fair, at which Poetry and Flowers will be acceptable, we shall have the honour of offering to the fete a ballad and a buttercup."* [40].

Some beggars asked not for a grant of alms but only a loan. The likelihood of the loan ever being paid back was best illustrated by a 1906 *HARPER'S WEEKLY* cartoon in which a begging-letter writer says, truthfully, that if the loan were granted then he would be forever indebted for the help [31].

Stories To Rend The Heart.

There were innumerable stories in begging letters. Daughters of generals killed in the Crimean War. Wives writing on behalf of husbands too proud to appeal for help and vice versa [10]. Low-paid parsons asking to money to encourage people cohabiting in sin to pay the marriage fee and take benefit of clergy [13]. A divinity student needed a new coat in which to preach his trial sermon. A gambler wanted \$10 for a sure thing, a winning lottery number seen in a dream. A young lady wanted \$1000 for jewelry to help snag a rich husband. A flying machine inventor (this was in 1875) needed \$600 for his device, and by way of return, offered the first ride in the device off a church steeple. This, no doubt, would have eliminated any problem about the inventor having to pay back the investment.

An 1848 court case dealt with William Edwards, who had a previous record as a begging letter writer over the past seven years. At his trial, he was shown to have been sending a letter from a widow of Crayford, Kent, whose shop was burgled

while she was in church with her fatherless brood, leaving her penniless. The begging letter was 'signed' by numerous nobility. Enquiry revealed no such widow or robbery, but did uncover L120 collected by Edwards with the letter. He was sentenced to three months hard labour [57].

Baron Rothschild, not surprisingly, received large numbers of begging letters, and once published a collection of them. One letter offered to show him how to live to 150 years in exchange for a payment of 50,000 francs. Rothschild replied to the sender that he had received lots of death threats over the years, but this was the first one proposing to prolong his life. The Baron declined the offer on the grounds that it was only given to God to set the years of a person's life [11].

Perhaps not a begging letter per se, but too amusing to pass by is the 1862 story of a beggar girl standing outside the Post Office with a folded sheet of paper in her hand: "*Please sir, give me a penny to buy a postage stamp to post this letter to my mother.*" [45].

Dealing With Begging Letter Writers.

The numerous cases of begging-letter writers investigated showed no truth to their stories. Letter writers blatantly lied about wayward sons or being homeless. Charles Dickens received a letter about a dying wife, and immediately investigated, not giving the beggar time to set up a staged routine. The wife was found to be alive and healthy [27]. One vicar noted in the press that he received queries about beggars in his parish and had to advise that they "*... are most unworthy of any help.*" He cited an alcoholic woman who got and spent on drink L1 a day from her begging letters [26].

An 1846 begging letter [35] read as follows: "*This is to certify that the bearer is in great distress, having occupied for many years a highly respectable station in society, where the leading merchants of New York gave me much employment and dismissed your unfortunate petitioner on account of illness, which the doctors advised me to return to England, and sold the last shirt for the passage, which he has relations in Newcastle to pay, if the lady or gentleman of the house will be so good as to give some charity and a pair of old shows to go home, and I will ever remain your grateful debtor.*" Upon investigation, it was discovered that only the last seven words were truthful.

One logical method of dealing with begging letters was to keep them on file, then compare newly received letters with them to see who was applying under different names and stories. This was considered unfair by the beggars, who did not keep a list of what name and stories they had used against which recipients [46]. One

recipient of begging letters liked to tease his victims by sending a reply which was written in such a way that the last sentence on the first page was "*I have much pleasure in subscribing*", and here the beggar would have to turn over to the other side of the letter, "*myself, yours faithfully, F. Jeffrey.*" [47].

Servants of households were often instructed to refuse admission to the manor of beggars no matter what their story or what kind of letter they presented. This sometimes backfired, if the person at the door was not faking it. One man, involved in English politics in the 1820s, was almost arrested for treason because of this policy [53]. Denis O'Bryen was being investigated for his part in the publication of seditious posters. Two examiners in the case arrived at the house to search it for evidence, and were denied entry because the servants thought they were just spinning a story to get their foot in the door. The master of the house found out about it in time and allowed the investigators inside: "*... I am very much annoyed by applicants, in real or pretended want, and that I have, during my 42 years residence in this street, been obliged, perhaps 42 scores of times, to threaten my servants with dismissal, on the score receiving begging letters ...*"

[to be continued]

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PHILATELIC LITERATURE REVIEWS

by Leanteri Polvikoski

Topical Time V50#4 (Sample copy US\$7 from American Topical Association, Box 50820, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87181-0820. Annual membership is US\$25) This is the July/August 1999 issue of a bimonthly devoted to philatelists who collect stamps by topics. Each issue has articles on a variety of subjects, with something for everyone, as well as the usual help departments and society business. In this issue are discussed the Great Wall of China, the monastery of Monte Cassino, Italy (whose bombing in WW2 is still a matter of controversy), opera librettists on stamps, Roman Catholic Jubilee Years, and lights in the sky (from sunrises to auroras to rainbows).

American Philatelist V113#8 (US\$28 from American Philatelic Society, but application form must first be obtained from the APS at Box 8000, State College, Pennsylvania 16803) A full-colour 8.5 x 11 monthly, with articles on all aspects of worldwide philately, as well as society news and services. The August 1999 issue at hand has articles on last-day-of-use of postal currency in Oklahoma, Tin Can Island mail, German paratroopers, insulin on stamps, modern rate changes, and Irish advertising stamps.

[continued next page]

BNA Topics V56#2 (C\$24 plus initiation fee of \$5 from British North America Philatelic Society, but first obtain application form from Alec Unwin, Box 1686, Bellevue, Washington 98009) Illustrated quarterly on coated paper, devoted to all aspects of Canadian philately, both old and new. Some people have the misapprehension that BNAPS is a group of stuffy old snobs who consider anything after Small Queens as wallpaper but not so; there are also reports on modern Canadian stamps. This is the Second Quarter 1999 issue, with topics such as Canadian mail to Mexico 1882 to 1951, Newfoundland shipwrecks, Canadians serving in the R.A.F. during WW1, United Nations stamps valid in Canada (Expo 67), and a Canadian postcard used in St. Pierre.

Trident Visnyk #91 (Information from George Slusarczuk, Box 303, Southfields, New York 10975-0303) Photocopied newsletter of the Ukrainian Philatelic and Numismatic Society, devoted to Ukrainian philately. Since Ukraine regained its independence in 1991 and began issuing stamps again, this newsletter has come alive with a flow of reports from the homeland about the latest issues. Much of this information is not reported in the general philatelic press. Starting with the flood of Trident overprint provisionals, hyperinflation, and finally regular commemoratives, there is lots for a philatelist looking to get in on the ground floor of a "new" country. A lively newsletter on the cutting edge of philately for those who would like to put a bit of excitement back in their collecting.

La Catastrophe V5#2 (Sample copy US\$5.60 from The Wreck and Crash Mail Society, c/o Henry Berthelot, 132 Livingston Place West, Metairie, Louisiana 70005) Admit it; we all like to slow down and rubberneck as we drive past a car crash. Satisfy your schadenfreude with this nicely-printed quarterly. The April-June 1999 issue discusses mail salvaged from trains swept away in 1910 by avalanches in Washington state, a cover from a 1936 Spanish ship wreck, and letters recovered from the ill-fated 1996 TWA Flight 800.

Postcard Collector V17#8 (US\$23.95 for 12 issues from Postcard Collector, Box 1050, Dubuque, Iowa 52004-1050. Visa and Mastercard accepted.) Commercial monthly magazine whose purpose is obvious from its title. Articles on small town view cards, Labour Day collectibles, help columns, and reviews.

Mekeel's V185#9 (Sample copy US\$3 from Mekeel's, Box 5050, White Plains, New York 10602) Weekly newsmagazine of worldwide philately. The August 27, 1999, issue has articles on computer postage, UPU's 125th anniversary, an 1866 postcard from a farmer looking to buy cows, Australian states first issues, and lots of news and reviews. My favourite part is the cachets column, listing event covers put out by various groups and available for a dollar or two, such as the 70th anniversary of the Graf Zeppelin flying over Texas.

CALGARY PHILATELIC SOCIETY PRESENTS THE ANNUAL STAMP EXHIBITION

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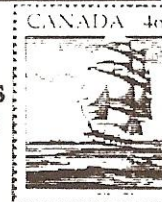


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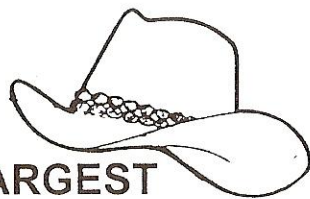


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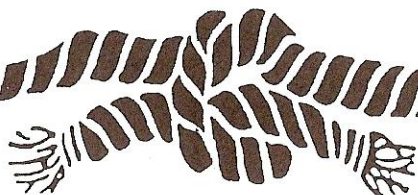
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NOTE TO INTERNET VIEWERS: Unless stated otherwise, telephone numbers are area code 403. Alberta is on Mountain Standard Time.

WANTED: Private collector pays cash for larger stamp collections. Phone Willi at 239-2273.

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.

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MEETINGS AND SPECIAL EVENTS FOR 1999

September	1	General meeting
	1	Deadline for October bulletin
October	6	General meeting
	8 to 10	CALTAPEX
	20	Auction
November	3	General meeting
	3	Deadline for December bulletin
	17	Auction
December	1	Christmas social

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

CALGARY REGIONAL GROUP OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA PHILATELIC SOCIETY meets on the second Wednesday of the month except July and August. For details about meeting places and times, contact Ed Harris at 274-0021.

CALTAPEX is at the Coast Plaza Hotel (formerly Marlborough Inn). Details from Minaz Ramji at 280-0770.

SUNDAY BOURSE is at Rosscarrock Community Hall, 4410 - 10 Avenue SW, from 10h00 to 16h00. For details and table rentals, call Phil Wolf at 259-8750.

ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF CANADA CIRCUIT BOOKS: The CPS is a chapter of the RPSC. Among other benefits, circuit books are now available through the new manager Sandra Foss. What makes these circuits especially convenient is that she is based in Cochrane. For details about the books, you can contact her at 932-2947, e-mail rpscsale@cadvision.com, or real mail at Box 1109, Cochrane, Alberta, T0L 0W0.