

# SYNOPSIS for the 2022 exhibit

## **Title –**

**THE POSTCARD FACTORY® CARDS OF THE RCMP**

## **Purpose of Exhibit –**

To show the multiple variations in the two RCMP Prepaid Cards issued by THE POSTCARD FACTORY®.

## **Historical Background –**

Since July 1997, THE POSTCARD FACTORY® has been issuing Prepaid Postcards in Canada. These cards are sold both in some Post Offices and some retail shops often in tourist areas. Not all Post Offices, Corporate or Retail Postal Outlets, sell these cards. These are sold in the Post Offices at a fixed price – initially \$1.49 and now \$2.71. They are prepaid to anywhere in the world. Thus they are a reasonable deal with postage overseas now at \$2.71. Retail outlets are free to sell them at whatever price they want from \$2.79 to \$5.00 (recently found.)

Some cards have only been sold in Post Offices and some only outside the Post Office. Some have appeared with two separate barcodes to satisfy the Post Office, who want to track every design and the non-post office card shops who want only to know a prepaid card was sold. At some cards were produced specifically for one user – African Lion Safari and Versions in Niagara-on-the-Lake and now some of the cards for Fairmont Hotels. .

The cards have a grey Canadian Flag design printed on the address side, except for the two RCMP cards which have their own grey RCMP overall designs on the address side in 4 types.

THE POSTCARD FACTORY® prints the cards and sends them to the Security Printer who prints the stamp indicia. All we know is the current Security Printer is – Lowe Martin. When I enquired about the past, Canada Post told me to ask The Postcard Factory® and they told me to ask Canada Post.

Thus, we have The Postcard Factory® making changes in the appearance or the wording – such as borders on their pictures to no borders, addition of SKU (Stock Keeping Unit numbers) and changes in fact (1497 instead of 1947.) Then we have the Security Printer(s) who make many changes in the stamp indicia.

In 2004 The Postcard Factory® introduced two prepaid cards with RCMP pictures under licence from The Mounted Police Foundation. These two pictures have remained constant throughout the life of these cards, thus far, but the address side has been changed both by The Postcard Factory® and the Security Printer(s?).

## **Scope-**

We show the progression through (SMALL SIZED 1995 FLAG) DIE I with variations, the Maple Leaf DIE, DIE IIIa, DIE IIIb with one misprinted card and DIE IIIc and DIE IIId with variations. During the DIE IIIc period The Postcard Factory® added a SKU, changed their logo (some with and some without TM) and changed the font in some of the numbers in the barcode on one of the two cards. We will show only the dies that were used on the RCMP cards. The 1965 LARGE SIZED FLAG DIE and DIE II were never used on the RCMP cards.

Misprinted and error cards are rare. We know of five – two with only the stamp indicia on the address side, one misaligned colours on the picture and two cards in this exhibit. As they were not printed singly on a sheet there must have been others.

## **Availability –**

With exception of the misprinted card all the cards could be found in some quantity with enough looking in card stocks as they were currently available. As the RCMP cards are a popular subject no old stock can currently be found.

## **Philatelic Elements –**

The Stamp Indicia is printed by the Post Office's Security Printer. This is currently Lowe Martin who prints the coils and booklets for Canada Post. Changes made by the Security Printer affected the appearance of the work done by The Postcard Factory®. When the Security Printer made changes in the size of the stamp indicia and The Postcard Factory® didn't change the overall background, this produced a white space between the stamp indicia and the background. The Security Printer appears to have tried to partially correct this (DIE IIIb instead of Die IIIa) by moving the stamp higher in relation to the top of the indicia rectangle.

DIE IIIc and DIE III d with its variations appears to be an attempt to improve appearance of the stamp indicia.

## **Philatelic Significance –**

These cards are widely used especially by tourists. One card shop in Lake Louise was willing to check their Postcard Factory sales for the calendar year of 2006 and told me total sales of the Prepaid Cards were over 42,000. Canada Post, in 1972, had gave up on trying to sell Prepaid Picture View Cards (Canada Cards) but after selling quantities of The Postcard Factory® cards, went back to issuing 22 cards of their own in 2009. Canada Post has continued to produce many cards each year. The store manager in Lake Louise told me that she frequently has sold 100 Prepaid cards to Japanese tourists who apply self-adhesive preaddressed labels and messages right in her shop to send them home. She sold them in 2006 for \$1.99 tax included which means the customer was paying 29 cents before tax for the actual card excluding the postage. She didn't sell anything at that time in a non-prepaid postcard for less than 50 cents and usually 95 cents. Prices have continued to escalate until now they are a minimum of \$2.79 plus GST and PST where applicable for Prepaid PCF® cards. COVID-19 has greatly affected the tourist industry.

## **Philatelic References –**

WEBB'S Catalogue of Postal Stationery of Canada and Newfoundland – the 8<sup>th</sup> Edition by Walton and Covert with the help of Robert Lemire has a listing of the Postcard Factory Cards up to October of 2018. The 8<sup>th</sup> Edition and The Postcard Factory® card listings are proving a challenge to keep up with variaties. POSTAL STATIONERY NOTES of the POSTAL STATIONERY GROUP OF THE BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY contains multiple articles by Robert Lemire, with the help of others, on The Postcard Factory® cards. There is an update on the BNAPS website from Robert Lemire regarding the variations in these cards. Robert Lemire headed a distribution group for these cards which had 25+ members. The group has bought over 48,000 cards to fill the requirements for the 1600+ so far known cards.

Covid-19 has created challenges to get out and find the variations.

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