



Stamps by Larry McInnis

"Cinderella" Stamps Are Not For Use As Postage

When is a stamp not a postage stamp? When it's a revenue stamp. When it's a "cinderella." Especially when it's a cinderella made from a revenue stamp. Confused? Let me briefly define the terms.

A postage stamp is obvious. A revenue stamp (referred to as "back-of-the-book" items because they are listed separately in stamp catalogues) are - or were - used for tax purposes, such as on legal documents (tax

stamps). A cinderella is generally considered as anything issued by someone other than a government, such as a stamp like label to publicize a stamp show and such.

One famous American dealer and philatelic writer, Herman Herst Jr., issued a 2-cent "Shrub Oak local post" cinderella. The two-cent "stamp" plus regular postage got Herst's dog, Alfie, to carry the letter to the Shrub Oak, N.Y., post office for regular mailing

A witty and innovative Canadian dealer, Kasimir Bileski of Winnipeg, has carried cinderellas past the midnight pumpkin to past the glass slipper stage. Here's the story.

Saskatchewan issued law stamps from 1907 until recently, when they were rendered useless by a cash-meter system.

Bileski bought the huge unused stock from the provincial government for \$65,000. Face value of the stamps is \$3,600,000.

In postage stamp circles, these would be called "remainders" where the remainder, or unsold, portion of an issue would be sold at firesale prices to a dealer.

In Canada, as in many other countries, "remainders" are a thing of the past, after six months, unsold commemorative stamps are destroyed.

Bileski went through his newly bought stock. He said he could put together only 1,700 sets of the low value stamps (5, 10, 25 and 50 cents) because none had been ordered from the printer, American Bank Note Company of Ottawa, for some 15 years.

He has some 20,000 of the high value stamps, the \$1, \$2, \$3, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 denominations.

Bileski, as I said, is innovative. He has put one of each of the high values with one of each of the low values. Total face is \$91.90. Catalogue value, according to the "1987 Canadian Revenue Stamp Catalogue", the bible of revenues, is \$169.

He is offering the 11-stamp set at \$100, only a few bucks over face and \$69 below catalogue. If Bileski moves the 1,700

complete sets, it will bring him \$170,000, or a profit of \$105,000.

So what's Bileski going to do with some 20,000 sets of the high value stamps he has remaining? He's going to turn each and every one into, not a pumpkin, nor even a glass slipper, but a cinderella.

The first set of cinderellas will be the seven high value stamps overprinted "Camington Manor" in honor of a Canadian museum in southeast Saskatchewan, a baronial estate constructed in the wilds during the late 1800s to bring a bit of British gentrification to the prairies.

Only 2,000 sets will be sold in various configurations, such as singles at \$10, blocks of four at \$40 and plate blocks at \$100. Next on his schedule is an

overprinting of 2,000 sets featuring the Saskatchewan lily. Bileski says the overprinting of the high values protects the integrity of the 1,700 complete sets.

The Winnipeg mail order dealer goes into painstaking details in ads in every philatelic publication imaginable to explain what he's doing, and why.

Bileski has come down a long, hard road. He was born in Poland, became a stamp dealer in Britain before the Second World War, met and married a Canadian, moved to Canada and discovered it was truly the land of opportunity, health and wealth.

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