



Stamps by Larry McInnis

Few Postmasters General Were Featured On Stamps

Deputy Postmasters General were, until the position disappeared in October, 1981 when Canada Post became a Crown corporation, paid, full-time assistants to politically-appointed Postmasters General.

It is almost beyond imagination to think one would be pictured on a stamp. Yet one was, and another was such an accomplished artist that one of his watercolors was featured on a Canadian stamp 132 years after his death.

And a Postmaster General had his portrait put on a New Brunswick stamp, which raised such a political outcry, he was forced to resign.

Prior to 1851, when Canada became the Province of Canada, consisting of Ontario and Quebec, Postmasters General were British and lived in London. Those doing the actual work out here in the colonies were called Deputy Postmasters General.

Probably the most famous of these was Benjamin Franklin.

In 1763, four years after the Battle of the Plains of Abraham gave Quebec to the British, Franklin had the newly acquired territory added to the vast territory for which he was already responsible. He had been appointed British North America's first Deputy

Postmaster General on Aug. 10, 1753. Appointed with him had been William Hunter as Joint Deputy Postmaster General, who served until his death in 1761.

On June 10, 1763, Franklin appointed Hugh Finlay as Postmaster at Quebec. The original appointment document survives and can be seen at Canada's national postal museum in Ottawa.

Franklin was fired in January 1774 for his American revolutionary activities, to be succeeded by Finlay.

On June 1, 1776, Canada issued a 10-cent stamp (Scott 691) showing Franklin and a map of British North America indicating places served by post. On the same day, the U.S. issued an almost identical stamp (no French on the American version) as a 13-center (Scott 1690).

Finlay, too, was to get fired, on Oct. 18, 1799. It seems one of his postmasters had some "irregularities" in his accounts, and the boss paid the price - and the debt from his estate in 1809.

George Heriot succeeded Finlay on Oct. 18, 1799 and served until March 1816 when he was forced to resign because he couldn't get along with Governor Gordon Drummond.

There's a touch of tragic humor here. Another George Heriot came to Canada in 1802 as a British officer, stayed to become a major-general and a politician. In 1816 he founded a town near Montreal and named it - Drummondville!

The Heriot from the post office was a renowned artist. He travelled throughout Canada, writing two books, which he illustrated.

On Sept. 17, 1976, Canada issued four 10-cent stamps honoring Iroquoian Indians. One of them, Scott 579, reproduces "Iroquoian Encampment," from Heriot's book, "Travels through the Canadas", published in London in 1807.

The Postmaster General on a stamp was Charles Connell of New Brunswick. The 5-cent in a six-stamp set that was to have been issued May 15, 1860, showed his portrait.

The outcry was such that the stamp (Scott 5) was never issued and Connell ordered the printing destroyed. He saved some, though, and there are copies in collections today, several in the Royal collection in London.

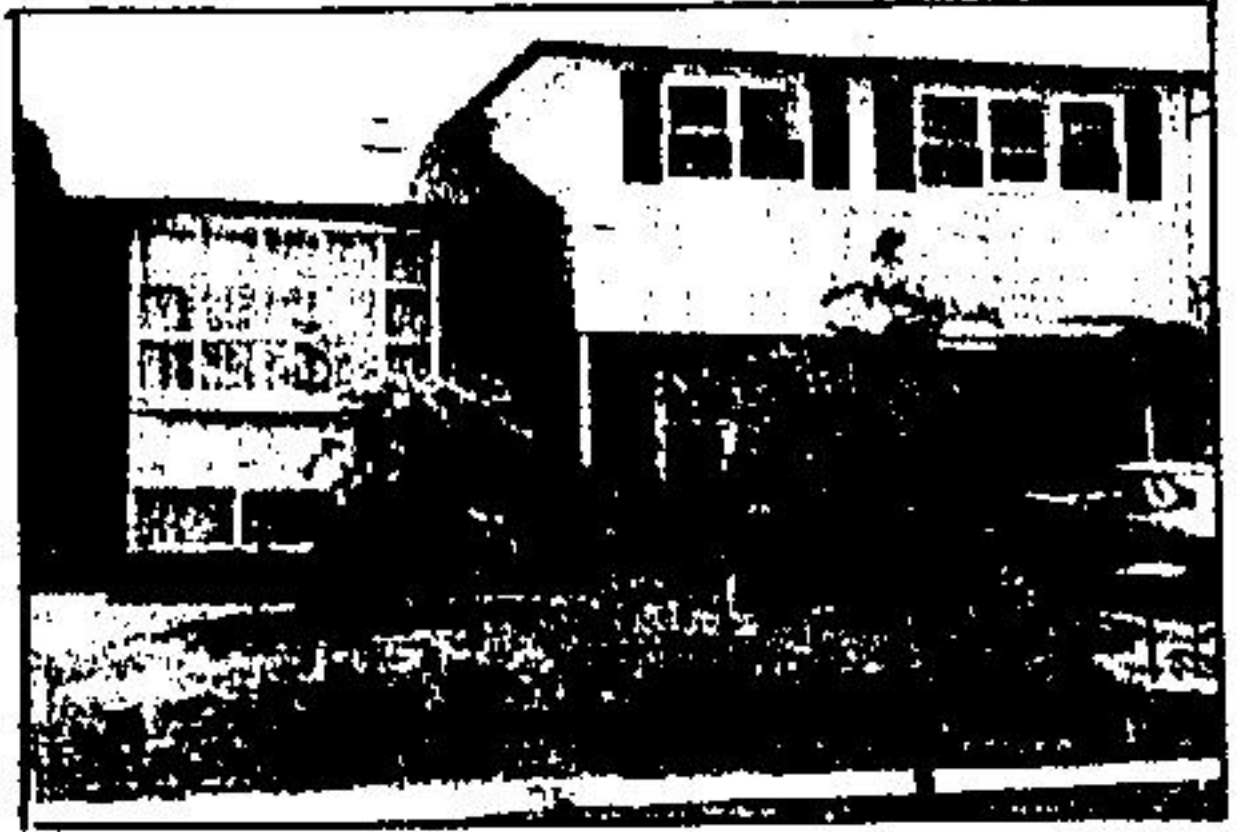
It is, however, one of British North America's most famous stamps - or non-stamps.

There have been Postmasters General on Canadian stamps, of course, but not for that reason.

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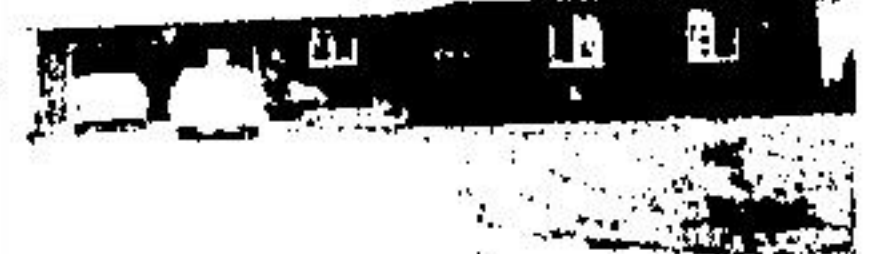
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