

The Confederation Bridge

by John Latter

When Prince Edward Island negotiated joining the Canadian confederation back in the 1880s, they demanded that the Canadian government establish and maintain a service to convey mail, commerce, and passengers to and from the island; a permanent link to the mainland. This was intended to be covered by a ferry service but the harsh conditions – high winds, ice bergs and storms – made this an expensive and unreliable option.



Figure B1

In 1885 PEI suggested a rail link in the form of a tunnel resting on the sea floor, but Ottawa would have none of it. The islanders remained frustrated.

The propaganda label on this 1905 cover [Figure B2] indicates the passion of the Islanders for a permanent link. The ferries struggled on, but costs were rising and the Ottawa government considered a bridge back in the 1960s. Again, costs cancelled that endeavor. Eventually in the 1980s the federal government requested private companies to submit proposals for the design; construction, operating and maintaining a permanent link.

This led to much controversy – laid off ferry workers on the one hand versus increased tourism & other commercial opportunities on the other. In a plebiscite over 59% of Islanders voted for the bridge.

In 1993, a contract was signed where the private company – SCDI -- would commence work;

Ottawa would subsidize the operation for more than \$40 million (Cnd) per year and SCDI could also charge a toll.

The construction brought much needed work to the area, ferry workers were retrained by Ottawa, a public competition resulted in the completed bridge being named THE CONFEDERATION BRIDGE [Figure B1] which was opened in 1997. It is the longest bridge in the world crossing ice-covered waters.

Editor's note: "The Confederation Bridge is the longest bridge in the world crossing ice-covered water. The toll bridge spans a 12.9 km (8.1 miles) stretch of the Northumberland Strait connecting Borden-Carleton, Prince Edward Island, to Cape Jourimain, New Brunswick. Although the bridge would provide a faster and more reliable link to the mainland, the decision to proceed sparked heated debate on the Island. The \$840-million bridge opened on 31 May 1997." [<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/confederation-bridge>]



Figure B2

OH, The Things You Can Learn Stamp Collecting!

American Topical Association (ATA) by Mike Schumacher

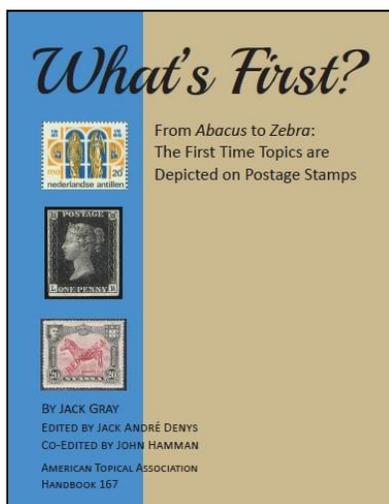
The ATA was founded in 1949 by 17-year old Jerry Husak from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He realized he would not be able to collect all the stamps of the world, so he settled on collecting his favorites. It is now the world's largest thematic stamp collecting group. It has nearly 500 hundred members who live in 63 countries outside of the United States. It ranks number one in size of stamp collecting groups affiliated with the American Philatelic Society. Since its' beginning it has had over 58,000 members!

The Mission Statement is to promote: "...topical stamp collecting and the educational and recreational aspects of this hobby by...

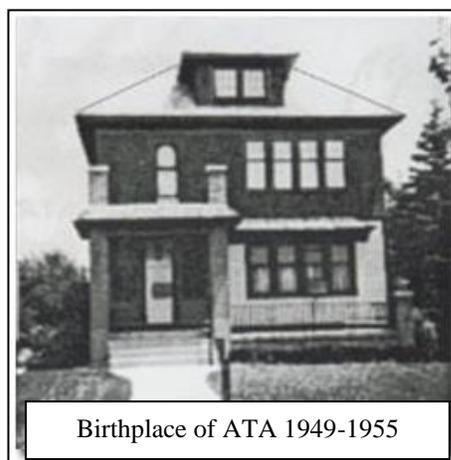
- encouraging the collection, research, and study of topical stamps and their subjects
- providing for the exchange of ideas among members, worldwide
- developing and publishing books, checklists and audio-visual programs and other educational material
- holding or participating in philatelic exhibitions
- assisting members in acquiring and disposing of collections" (ATA website)

The ATA has:

- published over 400 issues of its' bi-monthly magazine *Topical Times*
- over 37,000 pages in the *Topical Times* archives (searchable pdf files)
- published 167 handbooks on various topics
- 52 affiliated study groups
- nearly 1300 checklists available in their database
- 174 free topical album pages for youth and
- over 500 philatelic activity pages for youth posted on their website.



Their newest published book is: *What's First? From Abacus to Zebra: The First Time Topics are Depicted on Postage Stamps* by Jack Gray [image to left] and edited by Jack Andre Denys and John Hamman. It "illustrates and describes more than 800 topical firsts. They range from common topics, such as the first ship to more esoteric ones such as the first handshake. What's First? Is arranged by decade, with the year of issue specified for each stamp. The arrangement makes it a fascinating



window into the history, culture, and events of each decade. Jack Gray's entertaining narrative gives us people and events as we move through the decades. In the 1860s we are introduced to the railroads, ocean liners, and Abraham Lincoln. Dragons, astrology, and many other topics are featured on the stamps of the 1870s. As we head into the 20th century, there is an incredible variety in the topics, but lots of scenery (mountains, glaciers, icebergs) and animals of every description. Throughout it all, we see Queen Victoria go from young to old! The book has two comprehensive indexes, one by topic and the other by country and Scott number." (ATA website)

Check out their website <http://AmericanTopicalAssn.org> to see what they have available and currently they have some added incentives to becoming a member. Carry on and enjoy your collecting interests!