

# let's talk EXHIBITING

David Piercey, FRPSC

## DISPLAY EXHIBITS: PART II

This issue's column will look at postal history exhibits that include a range of documents, and the like, to augment the philatelic elements shown. Traditionally, these exhibits consider 'rates, routes or markings,' and generally consist of a preponderance of covers, and only incorporate rate tables, or route maps on an occasional basis.

A display, built on postal history on the other hand, has much greater latitude to go well beyond such supplemental material to develop the story. It can, in fact, incorporate a larger quantity of original documents, and other ephemera, to the point where they may become almost as important as the exhibit's philatelic material. Note, I say 'almost' as this becomes somewhat subjective to each viewer; but the philatelic material should still carry the story line so that we continue to recognize the philatelic importance of the exhibit.

Let's look at this in greater detail. Our exemplar is the exhibit *In Defense of the Border – Canadian Military Mails, 1628-1885*, by David Hobden of Ontario. This eight-frame exhibit won the Grand Award at FILEX 2015 in Boucherville, Quebec, and went on to compete in the A.P.S. Champion of Champions at StampShow last year.

His title gives an idea of what to expect. We should anticipate a significant amount of pre-stamp postal history from the first 200 years of early Canada, with a similar expectation of seeing this mail as it relates to the various wars and military campaigns that occurred on Canadian territory leading up to, and just after, our Confed-

eration. What becomes apparent upon viewing, however, is that he has incorporated much more than just covers carried through the mails – his exhibit includes letters, dispatches, and other documents related to the campaigns: maps; contemporary engravings; and even an example of playing card money, used by the French as script to pay troops in Quebec.

Reading the text leads to an understanding of military material carried by favour, by courier, and by the emerging North American, and Canadian postal systems. His material is from French, British, American, and Canadian troops, or their militias, on various campaigns. Its scope, then, is quite ambitious, though quite necessary in fully developing his story.

The first page (a double-sized 11x17 sheet), from his chapter 'Battle for a Continent, 1628-1760,' and its subsection 'King George's War, 1744-1748,' shows a 1746 military dispatch written at the fortress of Louisbourg (Cape Breton) during its capture and



occupation by British troops, and a contemporary example of French playing card money. There's nothing obviously philatelic on the page (a military dispatch carried by courier may not necessarily be a strictly postal item.) The page does demonstrate that an individual page in a display exhibit need not show philatelic items to be acceptable, as long as the full exhibit is primarily philatelic.

The second page, also double-sized, and from the same chapter, shows a portrait and a letter from Benedict Arnold, the American general. (He did not defect to the British until 1780.) Written at 'La Chine' (Lachine), Lower Canada, during the American occupation of Montreal in 1776, the folded letter is augmented with an enlarged reproduction of the dateline indicating place of origin, as well as with an enlarged reproduc-

**Battle For a Continent 1628 - 1760**

---

**King George's War 1744-1748**

King George's War 1744-1748: King George's War encompassed the North American actions of the European War of Austrian Succession. The French and their Indian allies raided British settlements in Nova Scotia, Massachusetts and New York. After a six week siege British Colonial force captured the French Fortress of Louisbourg in a single day, June 16, 1745. The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle ended the war in 1748 with Louisbourg returning to New France.

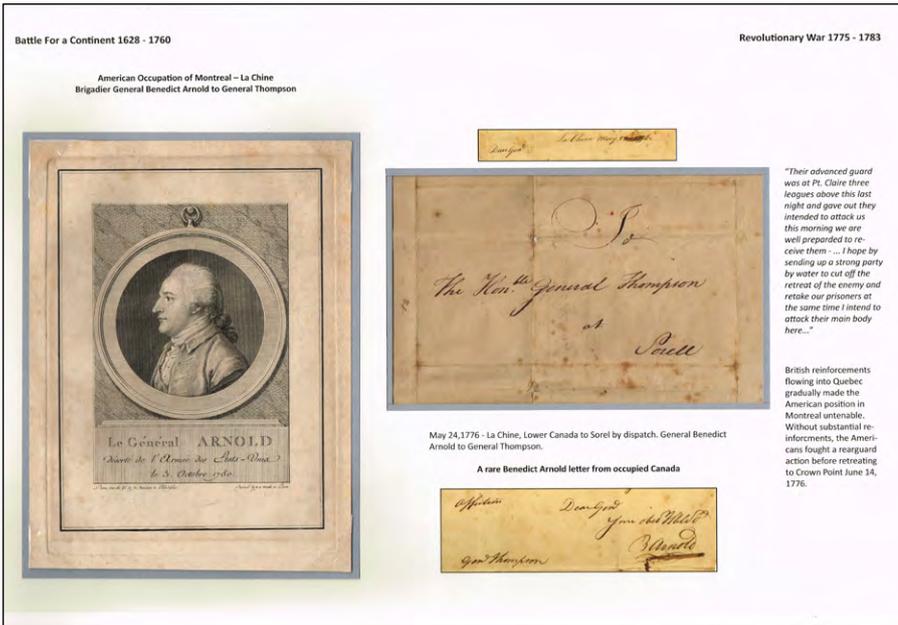
---

**First Capture of Louisbourg - British Occupied Louisbourg Cape Breton**

November 22, 1745 - folded Military dispatch from William Cosby, Colonial Officer and past Governor of New York to William Peppercall Commander of the Louisbourg Expedition, now returned to Massachusetts, British North America. Forwarding of early Trans-Atlantic packet mails.

"I enclose the Packet from London which I saw on board a ship and thought it my duty to forward it accordingly"

1685-1759 - French Regime Playing Card Money - Due to an acute lack of specie French Colonial leaders issued playing cards, similar to this 17th century example, counterigned by the Intendant as legal tender in New France.



Finally, the fourth page shows an 1885 Hechler 'Service' postal stationery cover, sent from Swift Current to Halifax while Hechler was serving as a major during the second Riel Rebellion in Western Canada. Hobden also includes a map to give us a better appreciation of the extent of the Canadian militia's campaigns out west.

Taken together then, these four pages serve to illustrate the variety of philatelic and related material that can be included within a display, which is still based on the postal history of a particular topic. The collateral material simply complements the philatelic material. What Hobden does, to great effect, is to integrate important historical documents to develop and support his exhibit's story line. He was fortunate to find, and incorporate that important archival material; but one doesn't necessarily need that exotic information. Exhibitors need only use their intuition, ingenuity, and ability to determine what congruent collateral material to include, demonstrating their collecting interests, and that should put them in good stead. Ultimately, it could result in a prize-winning display. ☒

tion of Benedict Arnold's signature contained within the letter. Certainly, the historical importance of this letter, let alone its philatelic importance, should be indisputable.

The third page, from his chapter 'Towards a Permanent Force, 1866-1885,' shows an 1868 free frank cover with its enclosed letter sent from Ottawa by Sir John A. MacDonald, Prime Minister of Canada. The let-

ter comments briefly on the Fenian raids at the time. The Fenian connection makes this cover, and its letter, quite legitimate to include within the topic of his display exhibit; and Hobden's comment, that it is the, "only reported free frank and letter from Canada's first Prime Minister in private hands" certainly adds to an appreciation of its rarity and difficulty of acquisition.

