

JOINT ISSUES WITH FRANCE

Canada and France have combined in three joint issues over the years.

In 1984 Canada Post announced Scott #1011 to commemorate the 450th anniversary of Jacques Cartier's first voyage to Canada. The 32-cent stamp, as well as an identical 2-franc covering the home country's postage requirements was printed in France. 22 million makes for a very low catalogue price. and they are still easily obtainable.

Explaining to Cartier that he was to bring home riches in addition to finding a new passage to China, King Francis I of France commissioned him in 1534 to cross the Atlantic Ocean and either go through or around North America. Failing that, he was to bring back gold just like the Spanish had.

Searching for a way by water to guide him to the Orient he found he was barely able to penetrate the east coast. According to his comments Cartier's first impression was less than favourable. However he made a lot of friends as the natives swarmed their canoes around his vessel ready and willing to trade. The French arrival came 37 years after John Cabot had left his mark in Newfoundland.

These early 17th century explorers could not claim to be the first visitors to Canadian shores as the abundant fishing and hunting grounds had attracted travellers for over 5,000 years.

Again commemorating a 400th anniversary with France the second joint issue was Scott #2044 acknowledging the first French Settlement in Acadia.

The Wikipedia encyclopedia tells us the colony was established in 1604 by French nobleman Pierre Dugua de Monts, who accompanied cartographer Samuel de Champlain along the North American coast in what is now Eastern Quebec, the Maritimes and parts of present day State of Maine to the Kennebec River.

It appears there are various spellings of his name--Pierre Dugua de Monts; Du Gua de Monts, and as shown on the stamp Pierre Dugua de Mons.

According to various Internet sites French King Henry IV had apparently granted wealthy merchant de Monts a title equal to Lieut.-General in New France which provided him an exclusive commercial monopoly of the shores, lands and borders of Acadie, of Canada and other places in New France. (an area said to roughly cover present day Philadelphia to Newfoundland.).

In return he was to repay the king by covering the expense of establishing settlements with 60 colonists per year on the new lands. To achieve this aim he formed a company of merchants. some of whom travelled on his ship. His first attempt was located at St. Croix Island, later moved to Port-Royal, today Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, following a disastrous early winter during which several settlers died.

Port-Royal, chosen as capital, was depicted by 2005 Canada Post release (Scott #2115). British troops burned the town in 1613. However it was rebuilt and continued to serve as capital until 1710, becoming the first European settlement north of Florida.

Tied in with another joint issue this time from the United States is Samuel de Champlain 400th anniversary commemorative, the text noting he had mapped and explored the east coast in 1606 (Scott #2156). .An almost identical matching \$2.00 souvenir sheet shows two stamps from each country. They were individually printed by Canada Post (51-cent) and the United States Postal Service (39 cents). Easy to distinguish as the Canadian sheet has a barcode on the lower left bottom.

The court of King Henry of France was not a happy place during these years as various influential merchants and courtiers objected to the exclusive commercial concession granted de Monts. Eventually the king was forced to revoke this monopoly in favour of more open trade.

With the withdrawal of support many of the colonists decided to return home to France in 1607 leaving only a few inhabitants in Port-Royal. Understanding how ill-equipped these new settlers were to deal with their environment a neighbouring chief, who had supported their settlement, Chief Membertou, took charge of their welfare.

Chief Henri Membertou, was described as an elder statesman, spiritual advisor, and Grand Chief of the Mi'kmaq Nation (Scott #2226), and worthy of the same courtesy in rank as the colony's governor. The Chief, and a number of his family, later became the first natives baptized in New France.

One source claimed that in his own right he was of equal rank to the French king but no proof.

The final joint issue with France came in 2008 acknowledging the founding of Quebec City 400 years earlier.

In efforts to make maintenance of new settlements cost effective, de Monts had previously subcontracted a portion of the land area to a fellow merchant shipmate, Baron de Poutrincourt, who reintroduced a form of feudalism. He parcelled out land to peasants and in order to create an income for himself charged them a portion of their agricultural production. It was a fortunate move as having some solid investment in the land enabled the Quebec settlement to survive and prosper.

The 52-cent stamp depicts the native population in their canoes greeting Champlain's ship. The souvenir sheet, featuring both Canadian and French stamps, was printed in France.

For those collectors having access to an ultraviolet light the souvenir sheet is said to have a pink Chateau Frontenac visible on the cliff in the top right hand corner. The regular 52-cent stamp printed for postal use in Canada lacks such a feature and is merely valued at \$1.00 mint, never hinged.



Jacques Cartier



Pierre Dugua de Mons



Port-Royal



Champlain sur la Côte Est

