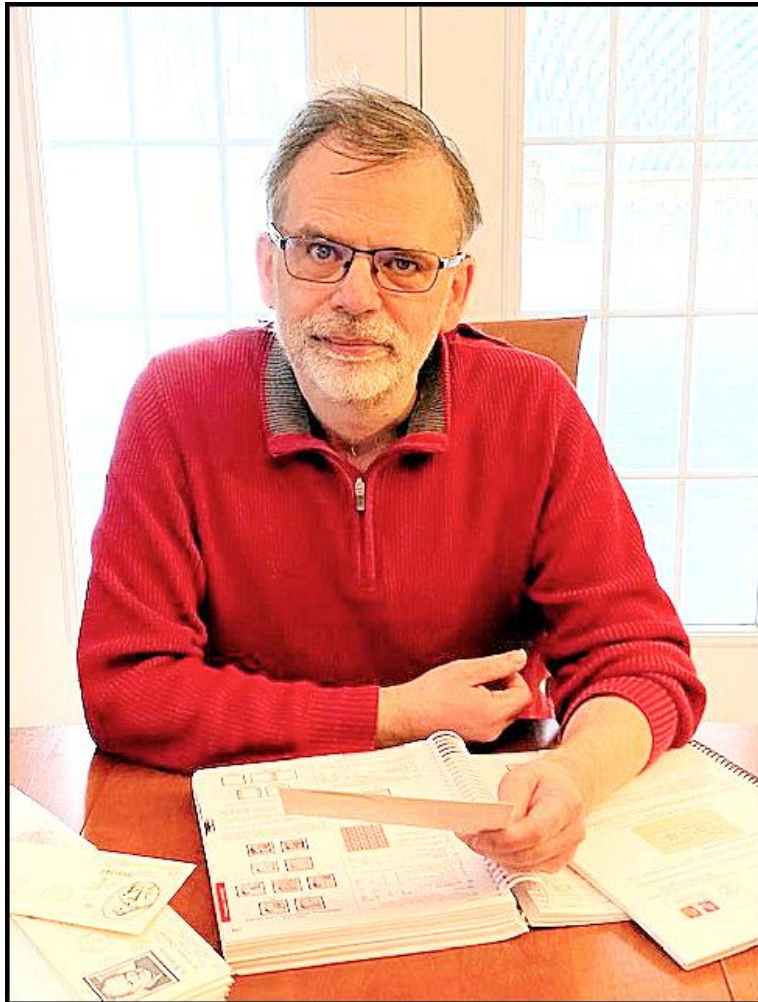




Pascal LeBlond – 21 February 2024 PSSC Presentation



Pascal has been involved in philately for almost 50 years. What started as a hobby, collecting first day covers, became a full-time job at Library and Archives Canada (LAC) 24 years ago. His first assignment at LAC was to verify and validate the information related to each Canadian stamp issued since 1851 for the new Canadian Postal Archives website.

Since 2014, he manages the Visual and Sound Archives at LAC. His responsibilities include archival fonds and collections from private sources related to philately, including the Yves Baril fonds.

Pascal is a member of BNAPS since 2007 and of the Académie Québécoise de philatélie since 2021.



Yves Baril: Master Engraver

ZOOM Presentation to the PSSC by Pascal LeBlond - 21 February 2024-

The work of stamp engravers in Canada was largely unknown and uncredited until the 1970s. The most prolific of them is Yves Baril who worked for 43 years (1953-1996) at the Canadian Bank Note Company (CBNC) in Ottawa, engraving not only stamps, but also bank notes, shares and bond certificates, labels, and coupons.

Much of what we now know about the stamp engravers working at the CBNC from the 1940s to the 1970s we owe to Yves Baril through his notebooks and his personal and unique collection of first day covers which he donated to Library and Archives Canada (LAC) between 2009 and 2015. This presentation will demonstrate how his own records enhance our understanding of the creation of Canadian stamps and complements Canada Post's official records.

Yves Baril started his apprenticeship with Silas Robert Allen (1888-1958) at CBNC on January 3, 1953. At the time, it usually took 10 years of training before an engraver could submit a first die for approval. Baril learned quickly: his first stamp engraving was approved by Canada Post in 1955. With the retirement of Allen in 1957, Yves Baril continued his training with visits to the American Bank Note in

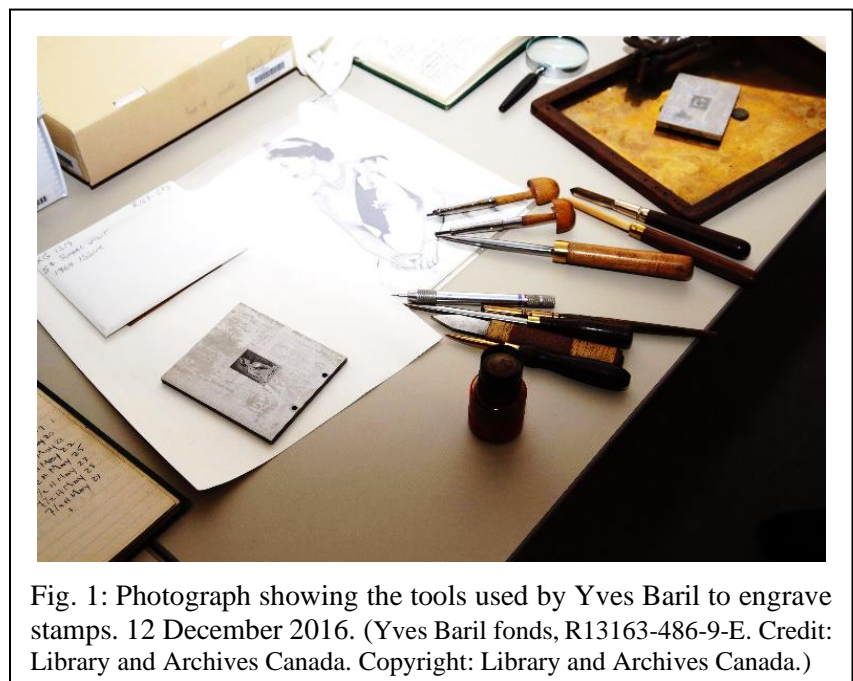


Fig. 1: Photograph showing the tools used by Yves Baril to engrave stamps. 12 December 2016. (Yves Baril fonds, R13163-486-9-E. Credit: Library and Archives Canada. Copyright: Library and Archives Canada.)

New York. During his career at CBNC (1953-1996), Yves Baril engraved more than 146 Canadian postage stamps, more than any other Canadian engraver.

When I was hired in 2000 by National Archives Canada (now LAC) to work on the Canadian Postal Archives website, I realized that there was limited information on stamp engravers prior to the 1970s. Contrary to other countries like France or Sweden, engravers' names don't appear on the stamps themselves. Their initials are not even on the die proofs used by Canada Post in Ottawa to approve their engraving. The first engraver recognized by Canada Post was Arthur Gundersen in 1971 for the Pierre Laporte stamp. However, the marginal imprint only mentioned his contribution as the designer. We must wait until the Church Leaders' issue in 1975 to see an engraver's name printed in the margin. For Yves Baril, he had to wait until the Diefenbaker stamp in 1980 for that recognition (his 120th Canadian stamp).

The first major article devoted to Yves Baril was written by Jacques Nolet in 1987 in *Les cahiers de l'academie*.



Based on discussions with the engraver, the information provided in the article is supported by the detailed notebooks kept by Baril during his career. These notebooks present a vivid firsthand account of Baril’s work at the CBNC predominantly in the 1950’s and 1960’s. They provide key information missing from official records of the era such as the name of engravers who worked on specific stamps (picture engraver, portrait engraver, letter engraver), the time spent by Yves Baril on each die and the period he devoted to it. Here is an example:


	5¢ NATO, Tenth Anniversary, issued on April 2, 1959			
	Die Number	Start Date	End Date	Duration
	XG1213	1959-01-16	1959-01-30	69.5 hours

Fig. 2: “NATO, tenth anniversary, 2 April 1959, 5 cents”, stamp, item number 1989-565.000384-005, reproduction number [POS-000437](#). (Credit: Library and Archives Canada, Canada Post © 1959.)

Additionally, Yves Baril put together a unique collection of first day covers which document the CBNC employees who participated in the engraving of a specific stamp. For example, the first day cover of the NATO stamp of 1959 is signed by Yves Baril as the engraver. There are also initials in the lower left corner, “DM” which refer to Donald J. Mitchell, one of the letter engravers. These FDCs also document stamps engraved by other engravers like Allan Carswell.

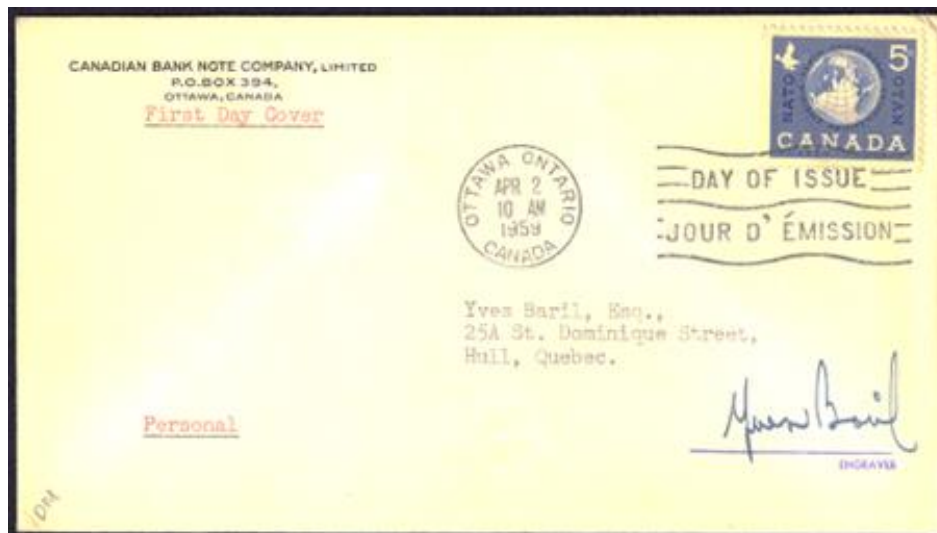


Fig. 3: “NATO, tenth anniversary, 2 April 1959, 5 cents”, first day cover. Yves Baril fonds, [R13163-8-6-F](#). (Credit: Library and Archives Canada, (stamp) Canada Post © 1959.)

References

- Yves Baril fonds, [R13163](#), Library and Archives Canada
- Nolet, Jacques, [Yves Baril le dernier de nos graveurs](#), *Les cahiers de l’académie*, Opus V, 1987, pp. A1-A26.
- Baril, Yves, [Quarante-trois ans à graver sur acier avec les mêmes outils utilisés par Albert Durer \(1471-1528\)](#), *Les cahiers de l’académie*, Opus XIX, 2022, pp.