



Paris Past

By
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History of Paris Graphic Submitted by: Dwight Stanley

Through the 1950's a young William (Bill) J. Stanley turned his hobby of stamp collecting into a business. The stress of working in the textile industry from the young age of 14 had taken a toll on him, and he sought out an alternative to the unsatisfying workload. He became the president of the Brantford Stamp Club and through those connections began to sell some of his stamp collection to local members, as well as a few commercial outlets. These outlets consisted of a few stationary stores and hobby shops. Bill would make consignment boxes of packages of stamps. Requests for other stamp items from these shops had Bill seek out the hobby's stamp manufacturers and set himself up as a distributor of their products. Bill was advised that he should also get involved into the coin market. He was told that the two hobbies went hand-in-hand, and that usually when the stamp market was soft, the coin market would be hot.

The early 1960's saw Bill's marriage collapse. Shortly

afterwards, with his second wife Nora, Bill acquired a small abandoned Root Beer stand on the outskirts of Brantford in a community called Cainsville. While still supplying a small group of stores with items, Bill and Nora renovated the property to include a retail store, as well as living space for themselves. This store was branded as Stanley's Stamp and Coin. Nora would look after the store while Bill would travel around southern Ontario servicing old clients and always seeking new customers. His Econoline van was his mobile warehouse for these trips. Returning home in the evenings, it was a nightly ritual to restock the items in the truck that had been sold throughout the day. The businesses continued to grow.

By the time the late 60's arrived, the business was facing a tremendous growth. There were publications at that time which listed prices of stamps as well as others for coins. At that time these were produced once a year, in quantities which often sold out quickly. This left a severe shortage of books for the remainder of the year. Customers kept asking Bill for these books over and over, to the point where Bill thought, "maybe I should print my own books?". So, to test out if there was a market, Bill purchased a small hand cranked Gestetner press and produced his own handmade booklets. These

were just the thing that the stores required.

Armed with the knowledge that there was a profit to be found in printing, Bill purchased his first AB Dick printing press. This press allowed him to produce more professional looking publications.

This led to even more business, and just in time for that, Bill's daughter Linda and Nora's children Lorenda (Laurie), Wendell and Dwight all joined a few others to work together in a family business. Laurie worked as secretary and Linda, Wendell and Dwight in the manufacturing and printing aspects. The 1970's saw the creation of separate companies for the supplies and the manufacturing.

Canadian Wholesale Supply was formed as the wholesale division and Canadian Press Printing was the new manufacturing company. To maintain an 'arms-length' operation from CWS, the printing company began to produce items for various other companies. Business cards, letterheads, envelopes, and such were all printed, alongside of the stamp and coin publications. CWS also produced some of its own stamp albums, designed to compete with the U.S. based firms that were all that was available at that time.

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THE WALKER PRESS BECOMES PARIS GRAPHIC

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Continuing on to the late 1970's, growth had become so large that Bill no longer could service his routes by himself and had hired more staff and trucks to keep up. The printing production had gotten to be so great that outside sources were found to help produce the items in the quantities needed. A firm called Melrex Limited Printing Company in Paris was called upon to help with the required film and printing needs that Canadian Press Printing could not produce with its two small printing presses. Another company, Brown-Hexamer Trade Bindery would do the finishing work needed for the books and albums. As manufacturing space was limited, and the need for more capacity was evident, Bill arranged for these three companies to combine their efforts. So, in late 1977, early 1978, Bill approached Vern Martin with the news that these companies were seeking a new location. Both Melrex and Brown-Hexamer were currently renting space and operating out of the Walker Press Building. Over the years of the 1960's, Walker Press had reduced its size and no longer used most of the building. The printing equipment from years previous was still in the building as Walker Press was operating as Kaumagraph Limited, producing t-shirt transfers in the

far back end of the building. An agreement was reached where the building and equipment was sold to Bill and his partners. This allowed the space and equipment to become available for the newly created Paris Graphic Industry Trade Service Limited. The Walker Press building was in really poor condition and needed so much work to get it back to a comfortable and welcoming workspace. Old broken windows and doors were replaced. Much need insulation was added and the whole building exterior was clad in steel siding. The old boiler heating system was replaced with gas fired furnaces. The interior painting was so extensive that there was a painting crew in the building every workday for well over one year. The combining of the three companies meant that Paris Graphic and Canadian Wholesale Supply had almost 70 workers in its early formation. The majority of the employees were in the bindery end of the business. The bindery did a large trade only business for the surrounding printers in the area, including such things as books, maps and brochures. The next few years saw Paris Graphic adding new specialized equipment such as folders and large collating and book binding machines. New printing presses were added to the existing equipment which

expanded the capabilities to a massive 38" x 50" sheet size. One of the specialties brought from Melrex was the printing of drafting papers and mylars. This market served almost every company in Canada which used drawings from small architects to the Ford Motor Company. Four colour capabilities allowed Paris Graphic to also produce everything from fine art prints to brochures. Manufacturing advances with electronics and newer processes allowed new equipment to reduce the cost, time and labour required to produce print items. Old process such as hot metal type was replaced with electronic type setting, manual coating of printing plates was automated and time extensive colour separations were done using scanners instead of cameras. As such, the labour force was constantly reduced while production was maintained and, in most cases, actually increased. The 1980's saw a major recession in Canada. This resulted in the hard decision to abandon the often profit-losing trade bindery services. The bindery department was always in trouble, trying to deal with other printers' errors and delays, which usually resulted in extra hours or overtime completing jobs with little ability to change quoted prices.

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THE END OF AN ERA

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The bindery equipment was mostly sold off, keeping just a few key pieces needed to produce our own work. Staff was constantly being reduced to maintain the company's ratios. Bill was able to buy out his partners as they reached retirement ages and guide the companies through this very difficult time. The 1990's were a booming time for CWS and Paris Graphic. The Canadian Mint released 12 commemorative quarters in 1992 for the 125th anniversary of Confederation. Paris Graphic designed and manufactured a coin card and vinyl envelope for these coins. Demand was so high for this item that additional area printers and finishers were required to help keep up to the demand. Around this time, CWS added machinery to perform vinyl welding. This equipment allowed the company to produce its much-needed vinyl items, including binders, pages and stamp and coin supplies. The vinyl room took over the mostly vacant bindery area and was in use from that period on. Although other releases of coins by the mint were produced in subsequent years, nothing came close to that first multi-quarter issue. The 2000's saw much of the same previous print and manufacturing industry trends. More specialized and automated electronic equipment allowed the same or more production use less and less workforce. The employee base at both companies declined over the next many

years while production was maintained. New products were constantly being added to the CWS inventory. A full line of Canada, United States and Worldwide stamp albums had been developed in-house and maintained with yearly supplement pages. CWS pioneered the industry with the first full-colour stamp catalog and followed with full-colour Canada and United States Postage Stamp Albums. The rapid increase in internet use allowed CWS to open a retail branch, Collectors Supply House. An online listing of items for sale to the stamp and coin collector proved very popular. As more and more small hobby shops and stationary stores closed, customers were still provided with a way to enjoy their hobby and use CWS products. Over the next two decades more changes to the lithograph printing market saw diminishing orders as companies changed to digital information delivery. Conventional printing presses had come to an end for us with the last of the presses being sold and moved out of the building. The newer digital production printing machines served the company needs for the last few decades. Through all of this time Bill and Nora, along with the family, managed the day-to-day operations of the companies. For almost 50 years, Wendell Stanley had been the General Manager, Linda Stanley was the Plant Manager and Dwight Stanley was the Graphics Manager. Laurie had left the companies back in

the 1980's to raise her family in Kitchener. Bill and Nora enjoyed the ability to spend winters in Florida since they were in their 50's. The ability to use fax machines and then the internet allowed them to maintain control and contact with the office and provide direction all the time they were out of the country. An apartment in the building was the Canadian home for Nora and Bill for much of the time. Bill Stanley passed away on December 22, 2020 at the age of 89. He was working right up to this point with no intention of ever 'retiring'. He would often say, "If I wasn't doing this, then I would be doing something else. I know how to do this, so why would I stop?". Paris Graphic was closed. Canadian Wholesale Supply was sold and this business is continuing. Trajan Publishing, who publishes the Canadian Stamp News and Canadian Coin News, is keeping the CWS products available for collectors. The family is proud of this continuation of the legacy of Bill Stanley's vision of stamp and coin supplies by Trajan.

The 'Walker Press' building served as HOME for the Stanley's for 44 years. The Stanley's are looking forward to seeing the next evolution of the building by Foster & Forge (*see future design concept below*).

