



EDITORIAL

Foreign or Not?

There is a peculiarity in this hobby, and it has to do with how we define “Foreign” covers. Even my seventh graders (well, most of them) could tell you that Canada and Mexico constitute separate, and thereby foreign, countries. Yet, within the hobby, we have a tradition of considering covers from these two countries as NOT “foreign” covers. Why?

Is it because they share the same continent with us? So do all the Central American countries, but they’re considered “foreign?” Is it because we don’t consider English and Spanish as foreign languages? But, then, England and Australia speak English *[well, sort of]*...and Spain speaks Spanish...and we consider them “foreign” countries.

Is it because Canada and Mexico are our neighbors, and we don’t want to offend them with this tag of “foreign?” We basically stole Texas and the West from Mexico *[sorry, Texans, but it’s true; of course, the Mexicans stole it from the Indians before that]*, and we tried to invade Canada during the War of 1812, and now we’re trying to placate them by not considering them as “foreign?”I don’t think so.

Is it because they’re right next door, and their covers are easily obtainable? Possibly, but what’s that got to do with it? No, it sounds to me as if someone somewhere either made an arbitrary decision some time ago in the past, and through the years it’s just become a tradition, or, perhaps, there was a real reason for it at one time, but it’s since disappeared, and the tradition has been carried on anyway.

It’s my opinion that covers from both Canada and Mexico should be considered “foreign.” Granted, we have an open border with Canada *[and for all intents and purposes, we have an open border with Mexico, as well!]* and Canadian government and culture are similar to our own...but we don’t pay domestic postage to mail anything to Canada, Canadians don’t pay U.S. taxes, we don’t have Canada’s socialized medical system...and *[I’ve saved my ace-in-the-hole argument for just this moment]*...what about all them French covers that no one can read!!

Mexico: Here, we’ve got a different language, different culture; different religion *[they’re predominately Catholic; we’re predominantly Protestant]*; different postage...forget it!

On the other hand, you could make a good argument for this country becoming an extension of Mexico within the next 50 years...so, under my personal criteria, I’d have to classify the United States as a foreign country, as well!

Hmmmm!....So from now on, I’m counting any cover from my home of Auburn, California, as a domestic cover, and everything else as “Foreign.” *[...and I’m not so sure about Auburn]*

You can handle yours any way you chose to, but you should at least be aware of these inconsistencies in nomenclature within the hobby.