

## V. 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY DOMINION PERIOD: CANADA, NS, NB, PEI, NF, & BC STAMP ISSUES

### Canada: Large Queen Period, 1868–1872



*Stamps.* On April 1, 1868, Canada issued its first Dominion set, called the Large Queens (or Large Cents) stamps. This series included a ½¢ (black), 1¢ (red brown), 2¢ (green), 3¢ (red), 6¢ (brown), 12½¢ (blue), and 15¢ (gray lilac), all with the same portrait of Victoria. They were to be used in the newly united provinces of Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. Their use in British Columbia barely took place with its joining Canada in 1871, and use in PEI was limited by its Confederation in 1873. The newly acquired Manitoba and

North-West Territories saw little use since the next stamps, the Small Queens, were already issued for some values. In 1869 the 1¢ was reissued in yellow since the brown color was often confused with the 3¢ red. In late 1875 the need for a 5¢ stamp arose with the reduction in letter rate to the U.K. Therefore, a 5¢ stamp, prepared earlier but not issued, was put into usage.

*Preproduction.* This issue has many proofs. There is a ½¢ essay in several colors. Die proofs of each value are known in black and various colors; few exist and they are expensive. Plate proofs in a variety of colors are more affordable. The British American Bank Note Company produced trade sample sheets in brown, black, red, green, and blue, so that 1¢, 2¢, 3¢, 5¢, 6¢, 12½¢, and 15¢ values are found cut from them. Only a few intact sheets remain. Progressive die proofs exist of the 5¢. An essay by the National Bank Note Co. of NY is found in various colors and can be considered with this issue.



*Stamps.* The stamps are found in distinct printings. Sheets were produced in a 10 x 10 format. About 6.7 million ½¢ stamps were produced, about 9.6 million 1¢, split between the red and yellow printings (probably 4.6 to 5 million), 10.3 million of the 2¢, 22 million of the 3¢, perhaps 5 million of the 5¢, 9.4 million of the 6¢, just under 2 million of the 12½¢, and 2.4 million of the 15¢. The first printing occurred on a thin paper. Later printings used

various papers, of which about 10 are listed, including a watermarked paper for all values. The ½¢ is by far the rarest, with fewer than a dozen copies known, of which only 3 or 4 are mint. Laid paper is also found the 1¢, 2¢ (only 3 examples recorded), and 3¢; the latter the commonest. In the 1870s another watermark with “Alex. Pirie & Co.” is found on the 15¢, rare and expensive, especially unused. Plate varieties exist for most issues, some of which are catalogued, including major re-entries for the 2¢, 6¢, and 15¢, as well as other dots, missing lines, extra lines, etc. Stitch watermarks are known on some issues.



Mint stamps are inexpensive for the ½¢ and 15¢ (except for early printings of the latter), and moderately expensive for 2¢, 3¢, and 12½¢ stamps without gum. Original gum generally raises the price significantly. The 6¢ is perhaps the rarest to find mint OG, with the 5¢ close behind, even though the latter was used several years after the 6¢ was exhausted. The ½¢ was used into the 1880s, the 12½¢ and 15¢ even longer, with 15¢ usages found into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mint or used blocks of the 2¢, 3¢, 5¢, and 6¢ are rare and expensive, mint blocks of the 12½¢ only slightly less so, while the ½¢ and 15¢ can be obtained relatively easily except for early printings. The scarcest is the 1¢ yellow, with only 3 mint blocks and 2 mint strips recorded.

*Cancels:* The duplex cancels issued late in the Pence period were commonly used, along with 7-ring cancels. A few of the 4-ring cancels of the late Pence period were also continued. In 1869 the 4-rings were replaced with 60 2-ring cancels allocated to



the 60 largest towns in order. Most were used into the 1870s, with the town for one number (17) still not known. A few others, such as 20 and 50, are rare on any Large Queen. Town dated cancels can be found on stamps, even though supposed to be struck only on the cover. Many fancy cancels were used starting in 1868. The towns Toronto, Ottawa, and Kingston quickly replaced their 2-rings with carved cancels using their number. Other towns adopted many designs. Many of these cancels were carved into corks or wood and did not last long. This is a highly collected and sought aspect of Large Queen collecting. Railroad cancels are also highly sought.

*Rate studies:* Domestic, Other BNA Colonies, U.S., U.K., Worldwide Covers. With the relatively short period of use of Large Queen stamps, rate covers other than simple 3¢ domestic covers tend to be expensive. A comprehensive collection of rates can include envelopes (covers) to the U.S. (moderately expensive), to B.C. (only a few 6¢ covers known), to California before the intercontinental railway (scarce), to the U.K. (moderately expensive), and to European countries (rare and expensive), Australia

(rare), or a handful of other destinations such as India, Siam, and China. Surprisingly, quite a few 15¢ covers to New Zealand are known due to a correspondence of a publishing company. A recent survey of 15¢ covers has produced over 300 items spanning 30+ years. Wrappers or circulars are relatively common domestically, primarily using the 1¢ yellow, but all other such usages and destinations are rare and expensive. For example, the ½¢ is not hard to find used as a pair or part of a larger rate, but single usages properly paying the newspaper rate for items under 1 ounce can be listed on one hand.

*Auxiliary Services.* Domestic registered letters can be found, although they are not cheap, while those to the U.S. are scarce, and to other destinations quite rare. Registration paid with stamps adds a significant cost to any domestic items over paid cash items. Registered covers to the U.K. are very scarce in the primary Large Queen period, and even into the early 1870s are scarce to rare as the rate changed and the Small Queen stamps replaced the Large Queens.

### **Canada: Small Queen Period, 1870–1897**

Similar in design but smaller than the Large Queens, the Small Queen stamps feature the young Queen Victoria on the design. Why small, you might ask? These stamps first introduced in 1870 were made smaller as a cost savings measure, as well as providing additional printing capacity to satisfy increased demand for postage stamps due to the newly introduced requirement to prepay letters. By 1875 letters had to be prepaid only with stamps. In fact, the new small size of the stamps became pretty much the size of all future definitive stamps until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.



*Preproduction.* Essays were produced by the Canada Bank Note Company in a bid to obtain a printing contract for the new issue to be produced. These include 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, and 15¢ values. They are not particularly scarce. The British American Bank Note Co. also produced essays in ½, 1, 2, and 12½¢ values. The BABN got the contract to print the new series of stamps, and produced die proofs in various colors. Impressions on a card stock were printed by BABN to advertise their printing capabilities, and single values as well as combinations of various stamps of the Large and Small Queen issues and Canada revenue stamps can be found in red, black, and green. A few complete sheets are known. Other colors also are known for various denominations.

*Stamps.* Of all the stamps produced by Canada, the Small Queen definitives are one of the most popular sets collected over the last 150 years. The original set was available in denominations of ½, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 10¢, an 8¢ value was added in 1893, along with two higher value 20¢ and 50¢ stamps called the “Widows Weeds.” These are sometimes grouped with the Small Queens, but these stamps are larger and of a completely different design that is almost identical to revenue stamps issued in the 1870s. Adding Widow Weeds to your Small Queen collection is a collector’s choice.

The Small Queens were the longest-lived stamps in Canadian postal history. Over their 27-year life, many printing orders were let, and this resulted in many identifiable colors and shades of those colors. This wide difference in colors and shades was because there were three distinct printings of the Small Queen stamps. First printed at Ottawa from 1870–1873, the stamps were then printed in Montreal between 1874 and 1889. The government contract required the printing move back to Ottawa in 1887, but a fire at the printer's building there delayed that move until 1889. This resulted in the 1888–1889 printings made at the Montreal *Gazette* newspaper. These include a noticeable carmine shade of the 3¢ stamp. The final printing of this 3¢ stamp occurred at Ottawa between 1889 and 1897.

Another consequence of having various printing locations is the fact that different gums and papers were used at each site. These can be valuable tools to help the collector identify their stamps by period of use. Similarly, because changes occurred to perforating machines, numerous perforations exist. The most important is the 3¢ perforated gauge 12½, one of the two or three jewels in the crown of any Small Queen stamp collection.

A person wanting to put together a collection of Small Queen stamps is faced with major challenges: does he or she collect all the stamps, preproduction items (essays and proofs), just one stamp (including color varieties and shades), perforations, paper differences, just one printing, or probably the hardest of all—examples of the various plates which in most cases requires acquiring multiples of



the stamps? All the collecting possibilities exist and are available through dealers and fellow collectors. The great variety of material itself has been daunting to potential authors of a comprehensive work on the set, so the book has never been produced. The mint stamps for the early printings have become expensive, and imprint and marginal number inscriptions even more so. Used stamps remain very affordable, even in multiples, as do on-cover usages for all but the 10¢. It is possible to put together a very respectable collection of all the stamps used,

with all major perforation variations (except the perf 12½) for under one hundred dollars by judicious purchasing from dealers and online auction sources.

Among the errors and varieties among the different issues, none is more dramatic than the 5 on 6¢ error found in the Ottawa printings of the 6¢. In correcting flaws or wear in plates at the time, it was a general practice to use a master die on the existing plate. By mistake, the 5¢ master was somehow struck onto the 6¢ plate, misaligned so that the top part of the 5¢ die can be seen somewhat below the top of the 6¢ design. Only a few examples have surfaced, since this error existed in only a couple of the 6¢ impressions. Other errors and plate flaws exist in most other values, but none is as dramatic.

One of the interesting and least studied topics is the correspondence between production of the Small Queens and concomitant production of revenues. Many of



the issues of both have paper, color, and perforations in common for similar times of printing. This remains an active area for investigation.

*Cancels.* The early Small Queen period also coincides with the height of the fancy cancel production by postmasters. This area is popular, with numerals, geometrics, letters, leaf designs, crowns, and names and initials all found on stamp and cover. The 2-ring numerals started in the Large Queen period are all found in the 1870s on Small Queens, and even a few of the 4-rings from the Pence and Decimal periods were still in use. The most popular cancellation-collecting area began in the early 1890s with the so-called Squared Circles. These cancels include over 300 towns or variations in some towns in two types, the “thin bar” and “thick bar” versions. Collectors seek the cancels with time (hour or AM or PM designations), year of use on various stamps, and on-cover use.

A similar intense interest is found in collecting railroad cancels, which reached their height of variety during the Small Queen period. Railroad Post Office (RPO)



collectors seek varieties of the cancels, usage on various stamps, and usage between towns on the routes, for example.

Within BNAPS, there is an active Large and Small Queens study group and membership is advised. This forum allows members to share information and publish latest discoveries (there are always new discoveries being made, discussed, and written up for the collector). There are many articles on the Small Queens available to help the collector; these can be found on the internet and in various hobby journals.

*Postal History.* Collecting postal history from the Small Queen era (1870–1897) is a joy, and a never-ending quest. The era spans the period from 1870 to about 1897. There are both domestic and foreign rate covers to be found; this is the first era for which an extensive showing of destinations and rates can be made. Rates were

classified as first class (letters), second class (newspapers), third class (printed matter), fourth class (parcel post), and fifth class (samples and material open to inspection). After admission into the UPU in 1878, there were a whole bunch of new letter and 3<sup>rd</sup> class rates to the various countries. Since there is much less material available before 1878, such covers are much more expensive, except to Great Britain. Because of the extended life of this issue, most rates are available through dealers and auctions; acquiring out-of-the-ordinary covers is a challenge. Covers to the U.K., France, and Germany after 1878 are common, most of the other European countries are affordable, but covers to Asia, Africa, South America, or Oceania are expensive throughout the 19<sup>th</sup>-century period.

Each value of the Small Queens has its own collecting challenge. The ½¢ was used on newspapers and junk mail, and single usage examples of the stamp are not common and moderately expensive. The 1¢ was used mostly for drop letters (kept at the post office for pick up) and advertising material. The 2¢ was used for letters delivered to addresses in the larger cities, for registration in the early period, and as a make-up stamp. The 3¢ was the basic letter rate stamp, while the 5¢ was the foreign letter rate stamp after 1878. The 6¢ paid the early rates to the U.S. and England, later the double letter rate, while the 8¢ was issued in 1893 to pay the registered domestic letter rate. The 10¢ paid double UPU letter rates and registered foreign letters, and was a make-up for higher-rate material such as parcel post. The 20¢ and 50¢ Widow Weeds stamps were used as make-ups for high value mail or for paying newspaper bulk rate mail fees, parcel post fees, or mailing of large volume advertising-rate mail.



There are many philatelic gems in the Small Queen postal history era and they are expensive. A good example of a gem would be the 5¢ UPU rate addressed to the Canadian Voyageurs in Egypt (see Section XIV on military mail). One might also look for *soldier's and sailor's mails*, which were reduced-rate letters sent from the field by members of the armed forces. Prior to Confederation with Canada, one can find *preferred rate* covers to Prince Edward Island (before July 1873), British Columbia (before 1871), and Newfoundland (before 1877), and for a short period in the mid-1870s to France and Germany. All of these are scarce to rare, but can sometimes be discovered in dealer stocks, as the authors have done over the years. Canada was growing at a tremendous rate during this time, and the volume of mail increased

exponentially from 1870 to 1897. Illustrating this growth can be a good learning experience and an enjoyable project.

During the Small Queen era, the West was just opening up and territorial mail to both Canada and the United States is very collectible. Until the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885, mail to the western U.S. and Canadian West from Winnipeg onward had to go through the U.S. via Chicago and St. Paul. Some mail went by steamboat up the Missouri River to Fort Benton, Montana, then by wagon into the interior of the North-West Territories. Such mail evokes the romance of the historic American West.

Another seminal event in the history of western Canada has postal history memorabilia. The Riel Rebellion of spring 1885 (there was an earlier rebellion in 1870, but only a handful of covers are known) produced letters and a few post cards to and from soldiers sent to put down an attempt by the mixed-blood Métis and Native Peoples of the prairie region to establish a separate government. At this time, most of the mail had to travel through the U.S., demonstrating the need for an all-Canada transportation system. The CPR was almost complete then, and indeed was finished later in the year.



One of the really nice things about a collection of Small Queen covers is the number of advertising covers one can find. This is an era when advertising on envelopes came into its own due to improved printing methods, and one can put a nice collection together of such covers. Similarly,

many fairs and exhibitions were beginning to use covers as advertising, and one can start this area in the Small Queen period, although the peak occurred in the Edwardian period.

A collection of advertising covers is an area of the Small Queens that is not necessarily expensive. Collecting “non letter mail” from the era (the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Class rates), things such as circulars, parcel post, and newspaper wrappers, can all add to a collector’s enjoyment. Generally speaking, every good dealer in Canadian material can support your collecting needs from the Small Queen era. Major auction houses regularly sell higher priced material, and internet auctions now provide yet another source of material.

## Canada: Leaf and Numeral period (including the Jubilee and Map Stamps), 1897–1903

*Jubilee Issue.* In 1897 Queen Victoria celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> year of her reign, and Canada honored this event with a commemorative set of stamps, its first foray into commemorative stamps. The values included ½, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 15, 20, and 50 cent values, and 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 dollar values. The total value was quite expensive



for the time, and even though the numbers issued ranged from 13,500 for the \$3 to 20 million of the 3¢, sales of the complete set languished even into the 1930s. Speculators made a run on some values such as the 6¢, so getting complete sets was not easy. The first day of issue was June 19, and first day covers are known for some of the values. While the lower values had ordinary postal usages, few of the values over the 20¢ could be

used to pay anything other than bulk rates for newspaper mailings. Philatelic uses of all values are known on cover. Recently, a complete receipt book containing almost all values paying mailings of newspapers around the time of the Jubilee was discovered. Collectors seek the low values with cancellations such as squared circles and town cancels.

*Leaf Issue.* Beginning in late 1897, the long-used Small Queen definitives were replaced by a new set termed the Leaf issue, so called because maple leaves are in each corner of the stamps. Values of ½, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10¢ values were issued for the most-used rates. If needed, higher rates could be paid with 20¢ and 50¢ Widow Weed stamps or Jubilees. The series was quickly criticized by French Canadian writers, who noted there were no numeric values, only written English text for each stamp value. This caused the series to be quickly replaced by a revised set, the Numeral issue discussed below. Most values had an effective usage of about a year.



The short life-span of the Leaf issue produced some hard-to-find usages of the various higher values, particularly in the time-frame in which they were the primary definitive. As with the Small Queens and Jubilees, cancel collectors focus on squared circles, town cancels, and other less-used cancel types. A few plate errors can be found on some values, as well as plate proofs and imperforate stamps (one or two imperforate sheets of each value were released, either by accident or as favors to selected officials).

Due to the reduction in domestic letter rate, many 3¢ values were stocked in post offices with little use. These were overprinted **2¢** or **2 CENTS** in 1899. A similar situation and overprinting occurred with the 3¢ of the Numeral issue. There



are some spacing variations in the overprinting. An enterprising postmaster at Port Hood, NS cut up 3¢ values he had on hand in early 1899 and handstamped them with 1¢ and 2¢ purple values, claiming he had no stamps available. These were not authorized but are still collected (at expensive prices) as the Port Hood provisionals. Exhibit judges have mixed views about their validity, since there was significant philatelic tangling of the whole situation by certain stamp dealers.



*Numeral Issue.* The replaced values were slightly different, since the domestic letter rate dropped from 3¢ to 2¢ on Jan. 1, 1899. Values included the ½, 1, 2 (in two colors, red and violet), 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 20¢. The color change was required when the domestic basic letter rate dropped, because red was being commonly used by UPU countries to denote the basic domestic rate. The purple 2¢ stamp was used from September 1898 to late August 1899, when the red value was introduced. All values except the 20¢ can be found on cover, although certain values are expensive used singly on covers.

In addition to plate proofs and imperforate stamps, a new format for booklets of the 2¢ red stamp was introduced in 1900. Booklets and panes are quite expensive due to scarcity. The production format led to tete-beche panes, which are extremely rare. Booklet stamps on cover also are highly sought, but they are much more affordable. Cancells on stamps follow the earlier issues. Plate markings in selvedge on strips and blocks are collectible. There are plate errors on some low values.

*Map Stamp.* Perhaps the most interesting stamp from the 19<sup>th</sup> century for Canada, if not the whole of collecting, was printed in December 1898 to frank the upcoming

“Penny Imperial Postage” movement. The basic postage rate from Canada to Great Britain and certain British Possessions was reduced to 1 penny, equal to 2¢, beginning December 25, 1898. The stamp had been promoted by Postmaster William Mulock as a map of the British Empire in red on a



background of black outlines of the continents with blue or lavender oceans. The effect was striking. This stamp is a must for Christmas topical collectors and map stamp collectors worldwide. Canadian collectors seek early uses of the stamp, usage on cover to various Empire countries, and usage on cover to foreign destinations. The stamp was printed on five plates, and plate numbers are sought. Many plate

varieties due to the complex printing process of three colors are sought and collected. There are plate varieties due to re-entry and retouching, including doubling of some areas, as well as imperforate stamps. Design proofs, die proofs, and plate proofs in various states are recorded and collected. Full sheets are still available, although scarce to rare, and blocks can be purchased without great expense. Cancels include squared circles, town cancels, and precancels.

## VI. 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY DECIMAL PERIOD: CANADA, NS, NB, PEI, NF, VI & BC

### Canada

*Stamps* were changed from pence to cents on July 1, 1859, with 1¢ (newspapers, printed circulars, and drop letters), 5¢ (domestic, letter rate), 10¢ (U.S. letter rate), 12½¢ (letter rate to the U.K. via Canadian ship), and 17¢ (letter rate to U.K. via New York) issued. In 1864, a 2¢ stamp was issued for soldier's letters and for circulars to the U.K.

*Preproduction (Proofs and Essays)*. A variety of trial color die proofs for all stamps exist in brown, red, blue, green, and black, as do trial color plate proofs and plate proofs in issued color. Some have SPECIMEN overprinted in red or black. One can build an extensive showing of these, but they are not cheap.

*Production (Plating, Errors, Varieties)*. Several researchers have done extensive plating of these stamps, and they have recorded many plate varieties. These stamps were all perforated about 11¼ to 12 depending on the printing order. Imperforate sheets of all except the 5¢ were issued; the few remaining examples are rare and expensive. The stamps were printed on sheets of 10 x 10 stamps. Mint blocks and multiples are rare and expensive, while used blocks are more common, although scarce. Imprints



of the printer can be found on stamps from all four sides of the sheet. The 2¢ is the most expensive, as about 850,000 were issued, compared to 27.5 million of the 1¢, almost 40 million of the 5¢, 5.7 million of the 10¢, 3.2 million of the 12½¢, and 600,000 of the 17¢. While one might expect the 17¢ to be more costly, apparently many more were saved on mail to England than

the 2¢. Mint copies of the 17¢ are generally tougher to find than any other stamps except the first printing of the 10¢ issued in a black-brown ink. These are often confused with the much more common brown 10¢ stamps, and buying a true 10¢ black-brown should be either accompanied by a certificate or after experience in seeing them.