

# Admiral Plate Flaws ~ Scratching the Surface

**Purpose:** This research exhibit shows that the Constant Plate Flaws of the Canada's 1911 Admiral issue presents an exciting opportunity for research, even after more than a century of philatelic attention.

It presents 56 recent discoveries with two examples of each flaw shown. All of these constant flaws are significant and some deserve 'catalogue status' consideration.

**Background:** Constant plate varieties of stamps produced by steel engraving (e.g. The Admirals), are easily assigned to one of three groups.

These are basic definitions of the three groups:

- 1) Re-entries show design lines that are doubled.
- 2) Retouches show design lines that have been strengthened.
- 3) Plate Flaws show constant marks that are not part of the design.

Examples of each group are illustrated to the right.

The first two groups are quite well documented by Marler, Reiche, Matte and others. In his seminal work, *The Admiral Issue of Canada*, Marler lists many hundreds of re-entries and retouches found on the plate proofs of the issue. It is significant that Marler mentions only a few plate flaws.

Re-entries and retouches are quite straightforward and are constant by definition. By comparison, identification of a constant plate flaw presents a much greater challenge. A constant plate flaw is the result of damage to the plate and will occur each time the sheet is printed. Finding a possible flaw on a stamp requires effort and time. Finding another example of the same flaw is much more difficult, but a second example is necessary to prove that an item is constant.

The odds against finding a second example can be staggering. For example, there are over 65,000 different plate positions of the 1¢ Green sheet stamp alone. Plate damage could also occur later in the printing life of the plate, making the odds even more challenging.

The work of earlier students was impressive, but was not focused on constant plate flaws. There is much left to explore in this neglected area.

## Re-entry



The 3¢ Brown Coil of position 8UR34 showing strong doubling in and below ANA.

## Retouch



The 2¢ Carmine of position 113UR28 showing the primitive retouch of the left crown.

## Plate Flaw



A 5¢ Blue from an unknown plate position showing a strong plate flaw near the 'E' of Five and extending to the 'S' of Cents. Described, but not pictured by Marler, this stamp was the first confirmed example outside Marler's personal collection.