

Confederation

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Nixon Small Queens Post-Auction Summary

Compiled by: Glenn Archer, Editor and Bill Radcliffe, Chairman

First of all we would like to compliment Ted Nixon for his achievements in amassing such an impressive Small Queen collection. Ted provided us with an article for this newsletter, revised from the original 1999 BNAPS article and containing new information. Eastern Auctions is also to be complimented on publishing an excellent catalogue for the sale, presenting a fine, logical layout of the material available in the sale and achieving high standards in colour reproduction and accurate lot descriptions.

Rather than reiterate Eastern's Prices Realized list (which certainly will not be news to any of the serious collectors in the field!), we present an overview with general observations.

1. Prices were firm to strong in every area of the collection, i.e. anyone seeking a bargain was surely disappointed! The balance lots and collections apparently held some hidden gems, but these were competed for and sold for about twice estimate.
2. Proofs and essays were keenly competed for, and represented most of the "highlight" prices from the sale. With the possible exception of the commoner lower-value plate proofs of the issue, proofs and essays achieved prices above estimate and frequently doubled estimate.
3. Mint multiples, especially those with selvage, imprints and counters, generally sold well above estimates. The ten-cents multiples, especially the early printings which are almost never found larger than pairs, perhaps stood out for their impressive realizations. It is gratifying to see that such material has been kept intact over the years for research and appreciation by future collectors. Generally large multiples only survive intact when the stamps have centering or condition issues; overall the quality of this collection was outstanding and seldom comes available in one auction.
4. Though not the focus of the collection, several outstanding pieces of postal history were featured in the auction. The most sought-after seemed to be the scarce pre-UPU covers, with keen competition also seen for some of the advertising covers. Several of the covers available were earliest-date (or very early date) for issue; each of these brought extremely strong prices.

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Canada's 1870-97 Small Queen Issue Printing Plates

(Jan. 1999 article in BNA Topics as revised in 2012)

J. Edward Nixon

In 1991, while pursuing research on another subject at the National Archives, I requested a file of assorted material relating to the British American Bank Note Company[1]. In this file I discovered records of all plates, dies and transfer rolls for the printing of stamps, postcards and stationery, all of which were returned to the Government of Canada in 1903, under a signed agreement, several years after the company lost the contract in 1897 to the American Bank Note Co. Its Canadian operations ultimately became the Canadian Bank Note Co. It appears that the loss of the contract was not taken lightly by the British American Bank Note Company (BABNCo.). Several years of political lobbying were attempted before the printing materials were returned in 1903. This record is now probably the best single research document for Small Queen specialists.

Plate Characteristics

The record of printing plates compiled by the BABNCo. in 1903 obviously has the plates in their last state. Thus, if they were re-entered and identity marks added such as an "R", this is the state in which they are recorded in the agreement with the government.

The basic data about the number of plates is recorded on a large piece of cardboard on which the plates are grouped by value. The size of each plate is indicated as 11 ½ x 9 ½ inches or 18 ½ x 11 ½ inches. Any marginal letters or numbers on the plate are recorded, but not the imprint style.

We know from actual plate material that some of the 18 ½ x 11 ½ plates are a single pane of 200 subjects, whereas others are two panes of 100 subjects each. The 11 ½ x 9 ½ plates of 100 subjects tend to originate before 1876, followed by the large plates having two panes of 100 subjects until about 1889 and then the large single pane of 200 subjects was introduced. It is helpful when identifying plates to agree that an 18 ½ x 11 ½ plate having a left and right pane is a single plate and not two plates. Further a re-entered plate is still the same plate and not counted as an additional plate.

The tables in this article attempt to list all known Small Queen plates indicating the type of imprint, size of plate, location of imprints and counters, and any other unique letters or numbers. The imprint styles follow the types assigned in Boggs[3]:

Type III	- British American BANK NOTE Co. Montreal and Ottawa
Type IV	- BRITISH AMERICAN BANK NOTE CO. MONTREAL AND OTTAWA
Type V	- British American Bank Note Co. Montreal
Type VI	- BRITISH AMERICAN BANK NOTE CO. OTTAWA (large Ottawa-48mm.)
Type VII	- BRITISH AMERICAN BANK NOTE CO. OTTAWA (small Ottawa-40mm.)

Imprints were positioned across the top and bottom as well as up and down the left and right sides of most plates. In the tables this is indicated as "T,B,L,R". However the addition of imprints was not identical for all plates. In this article assumptions have been made about the positioning of imprints on a few plates based on observations of other plates.

The counters expressing the stamp value in words were used on the plates of all values except the half-cent and eight cent. Counters are placed in the top margins on the left or right side. They consist of shaded letters except on the 1, 2, and 3 cent plates issued from 1892 onward which used unshaded Gothic style letters.

The identification letters or numbers always appear in the top margin. Generally the two pane plates showing letters such as AB have one letter on each pane. However the plates using S1, S2, etc., record the letter and number together on the same pane.

Canada's 1870-97 Small Queen Issue Printing Plates contd.

A listing of all plates and their characteristics follows after some comments on each value. The identification letters or numbers and the plate size are taken from the Bank Note Co. records. All other information has been gathered from known plate material [2-5].

One-half Cent

There was only one plate for the half cent Small Queen. It consisted of two panes of 100 subjects each and the panes were lettered "1" and "2". The imprint style was Type V and the plate was apparently introduced in mid-1882. However, earliest known uses of the half cent seem to be much later, in October 1882.

The half cent plates were not always guillotined vertically by the post office and since the gutter is reasonably narrow it is possible to obtain cross-gutter pairs and blocks. Also the settings for the perforating machines were clearly a challenge given the odd size of the stamp, so that horizontal pairs exist that are imperforate vertically between the stamps.

One Cent

There were 15 plates of the one cent value. Four plates were single panes of 100 subjects each. Seven plates consisted of double panes of 100 subjects. Four plates were single panes of 200 subjects.

Imprint types IV, V, and VII were used. The first two plates are difficult to distinguish and no plate with numeral "2" has been seen yet to confirm the difference. All other plates have been seen. The counters always read ONE CENT. Although no counters have been seen on the "S" plates, there does not seem to be a plate with both left and right panes available to confirm the lack of counters.

The one cent value first appeared in late February 1870.

Two Cents

The Bank Note Co. records list 8 plates for the two cent value. But there is an additional known plate that is unlisted so there could be nine in total.

Two plates of 100 subjects each have Type IV imprint. One plate with two panes has Type V imprint. Two plates of two panes each have Type VI imprint. Supposedly four single pane plates of 200 subjects have the Type VII imprint.

The Bank Note Co. records list the 200 subject Type VII imprint plates lettered 1, 3, and 4. They do not list plate 2, however it clearly exists and imprint pieces from it are known. Conversely imprint pieces from the plates numbered 3 and 4 have not yet been seen.

The Type VI imprint plate lettered C and D on the panes appears to have been prepared in 1888 before the move back to Ottawa from Montreal since the only known imprint piece is an 1888 printing. The other Type VI imprint plate is lettered S1 over each pane but the lettering is not positioned the same on each pane.

The two cent value first appeared in early March 1872.

Three Cents

Twenty three plates are listed in the records but an additional Type VII plate with the letter "G" is known making 24 plates of the three cent value. At this time the existence of all but five plates has been confirmed. The unseen plates are 6R and 7R of the 100 subject plates with Type IV imprint, plates "JRK" and "MRRL" with the Type V imprint, and the "S5" plate with the Type V imprint.

One plate has the Type III imprint, six have Type IV, nine have Type V and eight have the Type VII imprint. The counters generally read as "THREE CENTS" but a few plates use only the word "THREE".

Canada's 1870-97 Small Queen Issue Printing Plates contd.

The greater availability of three cent plate imprint material permits us to understand that:

- (i) "R" was added to the plates later in the 1880's presumably following re-entering, or conceivably to indicate that the plate had been re-entered at some earlier time.
- (ii) A vertical guillotine line was generally used to divide the left and right panes on the twin pane plates. Evidence of the line in the side selvedge indicates the piece is from the inside margins of a two pane plate.
- (iii) Positioning of the counters is sufficiently inconsistent that it is difficult to make presumptions about the location of counters on panes or plates not actually seen.
- (iv) Identification numbers seem to be located in the top right corner selvedge on the Type III and IV imprint plates, whereas the identification numbers are positioned above the top marginal imprint on all other plates.

The three cent value was introduced in mid-January 1870.

Five Cents

The Bank Note Co records list one single pane 100 subject plate, one double pane plate and one large single pane 200 subject plate. There is a problem with this record of the single pane 100 subject plate.

The first plate, which produced the proofs, and seems to have been used for all printings until the mid 1880's, has no distinguishing letter or number. The records list the plate with an "R" added. A top strip of ten, an 1889-90 printing, exists from such a plate showing the "R". However, the counters "FIVE CENTS" are positioned differently from the counters on the plate used until the mid 1880's. It seems possible that the counters on the first plate, which had become quite worn, were erased and repositioned when the plate was re-entered and the letter "R" added in the late 1880's.

The first two plates have Type V imprints and the large 200 subject plate has the Type VI imprint. All counters read as "FIVE CENTS" in shaded letters.

The five cent value first appeared in February 1876.

Six Cents

Only one single pane 100 subject plate and one double pane plate are listed in the records. The first plate has the Type IV imprint. It acquired the letter "A" at some point and also an "R". The second plate has the Type V imprint. It had the letters "B" and "C" over the left and right panes. Counters read as "SIX CENTS" in shaded letters on each plate. However the shading wears off on the Type IV imprint plate by the 1890's.

The first plate of the six cent value, Type IV imprint or "A" plate, has been studied and analyzed more than any other Small Queen plate. In fact it has been suggested there was more than one plate with the Type IV imprint. Alternative theories regarding the so-called first plate were set out in Hillson and Nixon's book[2]. The issue is whether the first plate, having one position dot, was successively re-entered acquiring two then three position dots, and the letters "A" added in the 1870's and "R" added in the 1880's. Or conversely, the first plate was removed from service in the early 1870's and replaced with a plate having the letter "A" from the outset with two then three position dots and the letter "R" added later. Next, there is a mystery about the plate for a 3-4 month period from late 1873 to early 1874. It does appear that a new plate was introduced for this period then removed, never to be seen again. This plate is characterized by a bare chignon in the Queen's hair on some plate positions and a position dot that sits directly under the middle of the left numeral "6". These characteristics do not appear before or after this period. There now seems to be agreement that this "bare chignon" or "ghostly head" plate with the unusual position dot is indeed a separate plate that was used briefly.

The second recorded plate is known as the "B" and "C" plate and seems to have been introduced with the chocolate brown shade that appears first in December 1890. A vertical guideline divides the panes as it does on other twin pane plates and is visible on pieces with wide selvedge.

The six cents value was issued in January 1872.

Canada's 1870-97 Small Queen Issue Printing Plates contd.**Eight Cents**

Four large size 200 subject plates are listed in the Bank Note Co. records. However the plates have no recorded marginal imprints, counters or other identification markings to distinguish them from each other. This makes it very difficult to verify if four plates were actually used. In fact multiples with top selvage are very scarce so it is difficult to confirm pieces from the same plate positions. There is a full half sheet of 100 subjects with no marginal markings in the Postal Archives. Finally there is little evidence of re-entering of the plates which is reasonable given the short lifespan of this stamp.

The eight cent value was introduced in late August 1893

Ten Cents

One single pane plate of 100 subjects was used to produce all of the ten cent stamps. It has the Type V imprint and the counters are "10" on the left and "TEN" on the right

The ten cent value was issued in early November 1874.

In summary, probably the best accumulation of plate imprint material was put together by Bill Simpson from the Jephcott collection. However until the British American Bank Note Co. records of 1903 were discovered it was difficult to make an organized presentation of the plate material. This article focuses entirely on the plates. But the records also contain a wealth of information about dies, transfer roles and post card plates. Finally there is still some missing information about the plates so the research needs to be continued.

Table of Printing Plates

Imprint Type	Final State Identification	Imprint Location	Plate Size	Counter Location	Comments
ONE HALF CENT					
V	1" on right pane, 2" on left pane	T,B and outside sides	2x100	none	- imperforates exist
ONE CENT					
IV	R	T,B,L,R	100	left	- distinction between 1st and 2nd plates not yet confirmed
IV	2R	T,B,L,R	100	?	
V	3R	T,?	100	left	- exists without R; large "3" at right margin
V	4R	T, ?	100	left	- exists with R; "4" not actually seen, but plate has been
V	DE	T,B,L,R	2x 100	left and right on E	- letters indicate left and right panes - imprints on 4 sides of each pane for "DE" and "FG" plates
V	FG	T,B,L,R	2x100	left on F left on G	
V	HI	T,B,L,R	2x100	left on H left on I	- no side imprints between panes - proofs exist from defaced "HI" plate

V	S1	T,B,L,R	2 x 100	none	- no side imprints between panes on "S" plates
V	S2	T,B,L,R	2x100	none	
V	S3	T.B.L.R	2x100	none	
V	S4	T,B,L,R	2x100	none	
VII	A	T,Bx2	200	left and right	- imperforates exist for A plate
VII	B	T,Bx2	200	left and right	- imprints occur once at the top and twice at the bottom of A,B,C,and D plates
VII	C	T,Bx2	200	left and right	
VII	D	T,Bx2	200	left and right	
TWO CENT					
IV	RA	T,B,L,R	100	left	- proofs exist from defaced "A" plate
IV	RB	T,B,L,R	100	right	- counter reads "TWO" only
V	ARB	T,B,L,R each pane	2x100	left on A, right on B	
VI	CD	T,?	2x100	none	-
VI	S1	T,B	2x100	none	- Imperforates exist from S1 plates
VII	1	T,Bx2	200	left and right	
VII	2	T,Bx2	200	left and right	- not on BABN Co. list, but does exist
VII	3	?	200	?	- not yet confirmed
VII	4	?	200	?	- not yet confirmed
THREE CENT					
III	1R	T,B,L,R	100	left	- "1" in right margin

IV	2R	T,B,L,R	100	left	- top imprint slopes down to right - "2" in right margin
IV	3R	T.B.L.R	100	left	- cross above top imprint; counter "THREE"
IV	4R	T,B,L,R	100	left	- "4" not seen but plate exists
IV	5R	T,B,L,R	100	right	-small "5" in right margin
IV	6R	?	100	?	- not confirmed
IV	7R	?	100	?	- not confirmed
V	GRRF	T,B,?	2x100	left on "F"	
V	IRRH	T,B,?	2x100	left and right on "H"	
V	JRK	T,B,?	2x100	?	- not confirmed
V	MRRL	T,B,?	2x100	?	- not confirmed
V	S1	T,B, outside L,R	2x100	left on right pane	- guillotine line between "S" panes - no side imprints between "S" panes - counter reads "THREE" on "S" panes
V	S2	T,B, outside L,R	2x100	left on right pane	
V	S3	T,B, outside L,R	2x100	left on right pane	
V	S4	T,B, outside L,R	2x100	left on right pane	
V	S5	?	2x100	?	- not confirmed
VII	A	T,Bx2	200	left and right	- imperforates exist
VII	B	T,Bx2	200	left and right	- imperforates exist
VII	C	T,Bx2	200	left and right	
VII	D	T,Bx2	200	left and right	

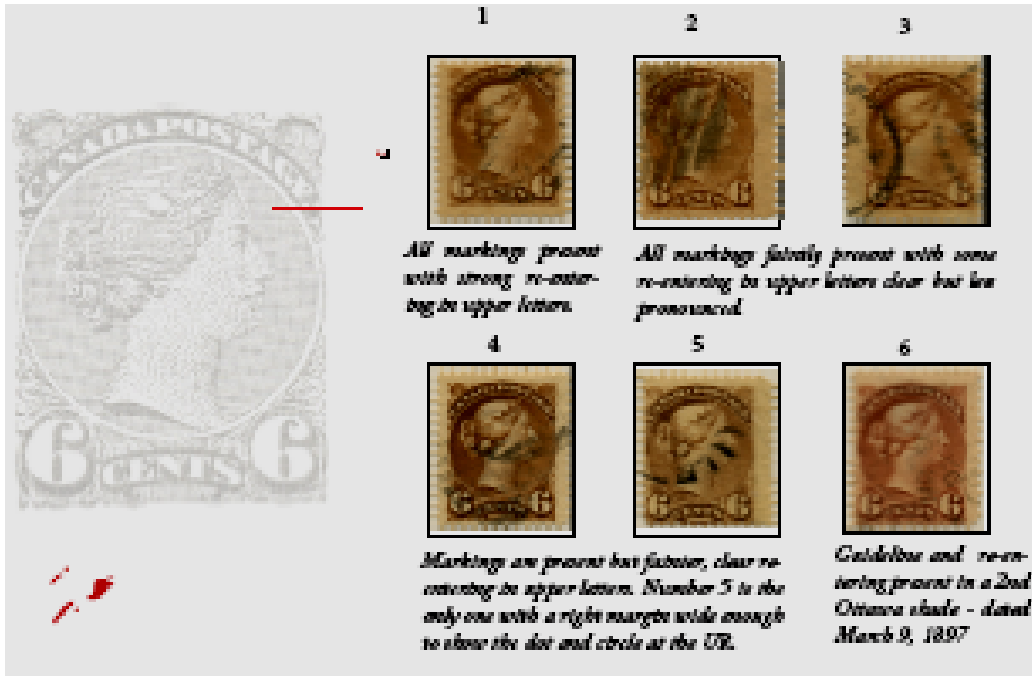
VII	E	T,Bx2	200	right	
VII	F	T,Bx2	200	right	
VII	G	T,Bx2	200	right	- not included in BABN Co. records but does exist
VII	H	T,Bx2	200	right	- imperforates exist
FIVE CENTS					
V		T,B,L,R	100	right	- proofs exist, used until 1884
V	R	T,B,L,R	100	right	- exists until late 1880s, possibly re-entered first plate
V	A,B	T,B,L,R	2x100	left on each pane	- imperforates exist - imprints on four sides of each pane
VI	I	T,B	200	left	- imperforates exist
SIX CENTS					
IV	A,R	T,B,L,R	100	left	- imperforates exist
V	B,C	T,B,L,R	2 x 100	left on B right on C	- imprints on four sides of each pane
TEN CENTS					
V	none	T,B,L,R	100	10 on left, TEN on right	- imperforates exist

References:

- (1) National Archives of Canada, RG3 acc. 86-87/396 Box 55 file 13-10-5. Dies, roles and plates cancelled by the British American Bank Note Co. and relevant correspondence to contracts during the period 1895-1928.
- (2) Hillson, J, Nixon, J.E. , Canada's Postage Stamps of the Small Queen Era 1870-97, Greene Foundation 2008.
- (3) Boggs, W.S. The Postage Stamps and Postal History of Canada, Chambers Publishing company, Kalamazoo, 1945.
- (4) Various Collections: Simpson 1980 and 1996, Lindsey, Jephcott, Wellburn, Bowen, Nixon.
- (5) Auction sales by Maresch, Eastern, Hennok, Firby, Sissons.

A New 5 On 6 Variety? Plate A, Position 10, Three-Dot State
Found on Montreal and Second Ottawa Printings

By Bill Burden



The lines at the lower left of this stamp are puzzling. They do not look like random scratches or plate damage. Continuing investigation has confirmed the existence of several copies and a plate position (A-10), but no accepted explanation. The following should be considered a working hypothesis until it has had time to be considered and studied by other students of the issue.

Given all the 5-on-6 information that has been determined over the past few years, it is reasonable to look in that direction when one sees extra horizontal lines in the upper portion of a six-cent. Notice the red marks near the top of the five-cent diagram (lower image, right). When these are raised and moved to the LEFT, one will see that they align very nicely with the marks found on the variety from Position 10. If one looks carefully at the markings on the lower left margin of Pos. 10, it is clear that the width of the band is the same as the band of colour above the "ADA" area of most of the SQ values, and that there seems to part of the space between letters printed. The shift to the left could also explain the horizontal line at the UR of Pos. 10 as *one of the horizontal corners of the five-cent*. The shift would also be consistent with the other 5-on-6 varieties.

Larger images are shown on the following page.



A New 5 On 6 Variety? Plate A, Position 10, Three-Dot State *contd.*



Figures 1 to 6: Magnified images of the stamps, States One to Six, pictured on Page 9.