

A Census of Squared Circle Postmarks of Canada on the 1898 Canadian 2¢ Imperial Penny Postage Issue (The ‘Map Stamp’)

2nd Edition

by Rick Friesen, PhD



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This census will be updated periodically as new data becomes available. Please quote the following when referring to it:

Rick Friesen, *Census of Squared Circles on the Map Stamp*

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1. General Introduction

This publication provides a census of Squared Circle postmarks on the Canadian 2¢ Imperial Penny Postage Issue of 1898, the 'Map stamp', including strikes on off-cover Map stamps as well as covers franked with the Map stamp. Both are updates to the 1st editions of the censuses that were presented as separate publications in 2020 on the BNAPS website.¹

The Map stamp was issued in early December 1898 and used primarily in the 14 month period to the end of January 1900. In one study, 98% of used Map stamps were found to be from this period.² Squared Circle hammers were issued starting in 1893, but by the time the Map stamp was available to prepay postage in December 1898, approximately 1/3 of the 313 towns/RPO's that had been issued these hammers³ (some of these towns/RPO's had multiple hammers or states) had stopped using them in favour of alternative postmarking implements. Thus, the short period of time in which the use of Squared Circle hammers overlapped with the use of the Map stamp has contributed to a relative scarcity of Squared Circle postmarked Map stamps and covers compared to, for example, Squared Circle postmarked 3¢ Small Queen stamps and covers. Currently, Squared Circle postmarks from 206 different hammers have been documented on Map stamps and/or covers.

The first mention of collecting Squared Circle postmarks on specialized stamps, including the Map stamp, can be found in the 2nd edition of the BNAPS Squared Circle Handbook published in 1959.⁴ However, there is no Map stamp roster/checklist and there is no evidence that a formal census was taken. The first roster/checklist and population report of Squared Circles known to exist on Map stamps and covers was compiled in 1971 by W.G. Moffat and can be found in 3 sequential issues of *BNA Topics*.⁵ Moffat published updated checklists in the *Roundup Annex* in 1977⁶ and again in 1982⁷. R.B. Winmill also published a checklist in his 1982 book *The Evolution of Imperial Penny Postage and The Postal History of the Canadian 1898 Map Stamp*.⁸ There were no population reports associated with these updated checklists. The second population report of Squared Circle strikes on Map stamps and covers appeared in Appendix A of Hansen and Moffatt's 1981 4th edition of the BNAPS Squared Circle study group handbook, *The Squared Circle Postmarks of Canada*.⁹ Data collection for a third population report took place from 1996 to 2000 and was included in Appendix A of Gordon's 2001 5th edition of the BNAPS Squared Circle Handbook, *The Squared Circle Cancellations of Canada*.¹⁰ Each of the population reports in the handbooks simply list the number of Map stamps and covers for each hammer and provide no further details.

In this 2nd edition of the census, as in the 1st edition, source materials were public auction listings (starting with the 1960 J.N Sissons auction #178-179 of the Fred Jarrett collection, the earliest auction

catalogue in which I have been able to find specific mention of a Squared Circle canceled Map stamp cover), internet auctions (such as eBay), philatelic literature (including books and journals), exhibits, dealer stocks, and my own personal collection. I have also received numerous personal communications from fellow collectors. Special thanks are given to Harry Acheson, George Basher, Mike Behm, Laurent Bélisle, Vince Chermishnok, Brian Copeland, Richard Cromwell, Pat Delmore, Rich Deshais, Paul Grimm, Shawn Gryffy, Aaron Gulliver, Kathy Hartley (dec.), Bruce Kalbfleisch, Malcolm Leitch, Ron Majors, Bill Pawluk, Bill Radcliffe, David Robinson, Terry Sitch, Colin Smith, Derek Smith, Joe Smith (dec.), Simon Taylor-Young, Scott Wiggins, Bill Wegman, Vic Willson and Eugene Yount for their contributions to the database, including detailed lists and the generous provision of images of the stamps and covers in their collections. Similarly, many auction houses (including Bow City Philatelics, Eastern Auctions, R. Maresch & Son, Sparks Auctions, and Vance Auctions) have generously sent me scans of covers when they haven't been included in the primary auction catalogue listings.

1.1 Introduction to the Census Tables

The census in **Section 2** is organized according to hammer Type, with the Type 2 hammers ordered by province/RPO and town as in the handbook. Hammers not documented on Map stamps or covers have been omitted. Each provincial section opens with a table listing the Squared Circle hammers from that province and the number of documented strikes on Map stamps and covers (a full population report summary table can be found in **Appendix 1**). For a number of hammers, the population number reported in the 6th edition of the handbook³ is greater than the census number. In these cases, the population number that is listed in the handbook is reported in brackets after the census number.¹¹ This table also lists the current earliest reported date (ERD) and latest reported date (LRD) of use on a Map stamp/cover for each hammer (cover strikes highlighted in blue). This introduction is followed by the listings for each town which begins with a period map¹² showing the location of the town (red dot). Next, a brief description of the town includes the population (in 1895),¹³ the railroads that served the town,¹⁴ the post office and postmaster during the Map stamp period,¹⁵ and other general information about the Squared Circle hammer.³ This is followed by tables of detailed descriptions of the Map stamp off-cover strikes and covers for that town (arranged by date of the Squared Circle strike, with 'undated' strikes preceding dated).

With respect to **off-cover** Map stamps, detailed descriptions (strike date, the reference(s) to the report, and an image of the stamp where available) of the stamps are provided only for the Squared Circle hammers documented to have ≤ 10 off-cover strikes since I felt that detailed information and data on the postmarks from the hammers with few examples would be the most desirable.¹⁶ Although strikes from

197 different hammers are documented on off-cover Map stamps, 88 have ≤ 10 off-cover Map stamp strikes. For hammers with >10 off-cover strikes, only stamps of special interest (strikes with indicia errors, rare TM, coloured ink strikes, date matched time mark sets, etc.) are tabulated, with images where available. Also included in the detailed listings are the ERD and LRD strikes for that town if they exist on off-cover examples, but only if images are available. If the ERD strike does not have an associated image, the next earliest strike that does have an associated image is listed.

In contrast, for Map stamp **covers** (complete envelopes, postal stationery, cover fronts, government-issued postal cards, private post cards, but not pieces or partial cover fronts lacking origin or destination information), all of the available information about every cover is tabulated (franking, postmarks on front and back, advertising, and addressee/destination). Where possible, the information was extracted from the cover image. Unfortunately, early auction catalogues tended to overlap low resolution images of multiple covers on a page in order to save space. Typically, only the stamp/cancel of interest was illustrated rather than the whole cover, and they invariably lack addressee information. In these instances, and in the absence of an image, the cover details were obtained from the published auction listings or were supplied by the current owners. A number of the reported covers bear Squared Circle postmarks from 2 or 3 different hammers and a description of the cover can be found under each hammer listing. In order to assemble a hammer population report, these covers were counted as 2 or 3 covers, respectively. The current number of covers in the census is 1272 (113 more than in 2020) from 164 hammers.

“Cover listings, like one’s own collection, are often by their nature both incomplete and incompletable. The primary purpose of such a census is to share the compiled information with other collectors and readers. An equally important by-product is that publication of the census will hopefully elicit additional information. In that sense, such listings have a life of their own, constantly expanding through the mere fact of their existence.”¹⁷ These words penned by Forster, and equally applicable to off-cover stamps, have been true since I began this research and compilation of Squared Circles on Map stamps and covers. I hope the census will continue to expand - to make new submissions or to provide corrections and updates to the census lists, you can contact the author by email at: rickfriesen5@gmail.com.

1.2 How to Read the Census Tables

The columns in the **off-cover database tables** include:

1. **Description & Reference:** detailed descriptions of the stamps appear under the following sub-headings:
 - **SC Hammer:** the town/RPO name in the Squared Circle hammer
 - **Date:** standard listing of indicia, typically TM/MM DD/YY. The notation ‘?’ represents an unreported or unreadable date. A ‘?’ in an indicia listing is an unreadable entry (for example, -/? 25/99 is the 25th day of an unknown month in 1899; -/FE 2?/99 is the 2?th of February in 1899; -/FE (3?)/99 is possibly the 3rd day (could be another day) of February 1899). A ‘-’ notation means that the letter/number is off-stamp unless it refers to the time mark in which case it is the normal ‘not used’ notation. Entries in **Section 2** that have interesting indicia (such as errors, rare TM, coloured ink etc) are highlighted in blue. Stamps highlighted in grey are not included in the population report. In many cases they have an unreported or unreadable date and thus may actually refer to one of the other stamps detailed in the census.
 - other interesting information about the stamp, including the identification of ERD/LRD strikes, can be found in this section
 - **References:** the source of the database entry (auction, literature and exhibit). Where warranted or informative, the full auction catalogue description of the stamp is provided. A report from the current owner is designated as ‘current owner’. Reference is also made to ‘Jack Gordon notes’.¹⁸ If there is more than 1 reference, the source of the image is indicated as **(Image)**.
2. **Image:** included where available

The columns in the **cover database tables** include:

1. **Description & Reference:** detailed descriptions of the covers appear under the following sub-headings:
 - (a) Squared Circle Postmark**
 - **SC Hammer:** the town/RPO name in the Squared Circle hammer followed, in parentheses, by the use type of Squared Circle postmark found on the Map stamp cover (cancel, dispatch (free-strike(s) on cover front, may also include a dispatch backstamp(s)), transit (typically a backstamp, but indicated as ‘transit (front)’ if on front), receiver (typically a backstamp), or an unknown/unreported postmark type). Map stamp covers that bear Squared Circle strikes from 2 (or more) different hammers are highlighted in yellow.
 - **Date:** date of the Squared Circle postmark, typically listed by the 3-line indicia TM/MM DD/YY. Unreported or unreadable strike dates are entered as ‘?’. Often, these entries are not included

in the population reports (Census entries excluded from the population report are highlighted in grey and an explanation for their exclusion is included in 'Notes'). A '?' in an indicia listing is an unreadable entry (for example, -/? 25/99 is the 25th day of an unknown month in 1899; -/FE 2?/99 is the 2?th of February in 1899; -/FE (3?)/99 is possibly the 3rd day (could be another day) of February 1899). A '-' notation means that the letter/number is off-cover unless it refers to the time mark in which case it is the normal 'not used' notation. Covers with Squared Circle postmarks having interesting indicia or indicia errors are highlighted in blue.

(b) Stamps and Cancellation

- **Franking**: a description of the stamps making up the franking
- **Cancel**: a description of the canceling postmark(s) (SC = Squared Circle, CDS, split circle, duplex, flag, etc). The classification/nomenclature systems used to describe the various types of postmarks that are observed on Map stamp covers, in addition to the Squared Circles, are found in the following references: split circle,¹⁹ duplex,²⁰ city carrier,²¹ flag,²² barred circle,²³ and RPO.²⁴

(c) Details of Envelope

- **Advertising**: descriptions of the corner cards and/or cover/backflap advertisements, illustrations
- **Addressee/Destination**: the addressee & address (as written on the cover) or the destination city/country. A lack of manuscript legibility may lead to errors in the reporting of names.
- **Postmarks on Front**: postmarks, other than the canceling strike(s), on the cover front
- **Backstamp(s)**: where available, backstamps, typically transit or receiver postmarks, are described

(d) Notes & References

- **Notes**: other interesting information about the cover, stamp or cancel is noted, such as the identification of an ERD/LRD strike, a description of the envelope if other than standard (such as legal sized), an incorrect auction catalogue listing, an indicia error, or Map stamp ocean colour changes (see 'Image' below). The postage amount on the cover (usually in ¢) and the rate it paid is included if it is not the standard 2¢ first class rate to destinations in Canada or the USA (from January 1, 1899), or Empire countries adopting the Imperial Penny Postage scheme on December 25, 1898. Covers with combination frankings (Map stamp(s) used in combination with other Canadian stamp issues), or multiple copies of Map stamps, used to pay postal rates >2¢ are highlighted in green.

- **Reference(s):** the source(s) of the census entry is listed, such as auction, literature, exhibit, website (Squared Circle Cancellations website: <https://www.ece.uvic.ca/~agullive/squared.html>; Squared Circles of Canada website: <http://squaredcirclesofcanada.com>) or a personal communication from the 'current owner'. The full auction catalogue listing for the cover is provided if available and if it contains information other than just the indicia of the Squared Circle postmark. If the cover has been offered in several different auctions, each lot description is included if the information is not redundant. The description given by Jack Gordon in his notes¹⁸ is listed - in many cases it is very minimal. If there are multiple references, the source of the image is noted as **(Image)**.

2. **Image:** an image of the cover is shown if available. Multiple images of the cover may be included when they are appreciably different. For example, the ocean colours on the Map stamp are known to change over time (referred to as colour changelings) due to a chemical reaction(s) of the ink constituents with the air or air contaminants. When multiple images are available that illustrate this change, both images are included. Partial black and white images of the cover front or back are typically from early auction catalogues which tended to have low resolution pictures of covers with overlapped images, and presented only the portion of the cover containing the Map stamp and postmark. If no image of the cover is available, this is indicated by 'No image available'.