

Confederation

The Newsletter of the Large and Small Queens Study Group

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Small Queens for Beginners

More on the Significance of Color Changes

John E. Milks

Unraveling the details of the significance of color changes of the Small Queens and in particular the 3 cent Small Queen would appear to be an unending challenge. When one goes beyond relying mostly on differences in color but attacks the question of the identity of the organic and inorganic pigments responsible for a color, it becomes immediately apparent that looks can deceive.

It is unfortunate that everyone does not have access to x-ray analyses and to an understanding of the significance of an x-ray spectrum. With respect to Mr. Hillson's question about whether Orange Mineral is a mixture of yellow and red cadmium sulfides, the answer is not, it is not.

If either sulfide was present in a 3 cent stamp printed according to the recipe recorded by Boggs, a peak in the x-ray spectrum for cadmium atoms would have been visible. The spectrum for the Indian Red Small Queen perf 12 1/2x12 1/2 is shown in Maple Leaves, Vol. 22, No. 3, page 83 (1991) which exhibits strong peaks for lead as required for Orange Mineral.
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Canada Small Queens Re-Appraised

by John Hillson, FCPS,

Chapter 1

One of the main problems with the 1870 issue of Canada that seems to bother collectors, particularly newer enthusiasts, is that of identification. This chapter is intended to throw light on the subject so that even the greener aficionado should be able to identify the vast majority of the Small Queens encountered.

There are three printing periods with one sub-period:

(1) January 1870 to autumn 1873.....First Ottawa period

(2) January 1873 to March 1889.....Montreal period (sub-period September 1888 to March 1889 - Fourth floor of Montreal Gazette building as lease of previous premises had expired.)

(3) April 1889 to May 1897.....Second Ottawa period

It is of interest to note that the Ottawa premises, which should have been ready in 1888, were officially opened in May 1889 but there is evidence printing started there a month or so earlier.

The overlap at the end of the first Ottawa period is not the problem as it may

appear, so what are the clues one should look for?

First, the date, if any. A proven date before January 1873 has got to be first Ottawa, but beware, postal clerks were apt to forget to change date slugs, particularly at New Year. Any date after that can only be an indication and not positive identification because the Canadian Post Office Department issued sheets to postmasters on a "last-in, first out" basis - so one can find early printings with quite late dates.

Second, perforation measurement. Any stamp perf 11.5x12, or 11.5x11.75 is early Montreal. (NB at this point up to the end of the Montreal period, all perforations are approximate to one decimal place, e.g. 11.5 can be 11.6; and 11.75 (can be) 11.85; 12 (can be) 11.9 and so on. Early perforations were not exactly evenly spaced.) Any measuring 12x12.15+ is 1887/88 and is probably from the sub-period, too. A measurement of 11.75 all around (plus or minus) is first Ottawa as is 12 all around or more accurately 11.9. Perf 12 exactly is second Ottawa. If in doubt here, paper and colour should settle it.

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SQ's for Beginners

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Third, paper. As a rule of thumb, the earlier the printing the better the quality the paper. The early first Ottawa printings were on a high quality, medium thickness, wove; the backs of the stamps show a clear grain and are smooth to the touch. This paper was not used at Montreal. Two other papers are exclusive to the early Ottawa, one is the thick soft paper on which some One Cent and Three Cents were printed - and the Large Queen values which these two had not replaced. Because it is soft, perforation holes tend to be ragged with much confetti adhering; it has a fine horizontal grain as well as being thick and opaque. Some Canadians describe it as "blotting paper" not that one supposes they have ever tested it out as such, but blotting paper has no grain, this does. The other paper, known on the four Small Queen values introduced by February 1872, is a thin very white paper with a vertical grain.

The easiest way to find out if a grain is vertical or horizontal - and avoid developing a squint - is to breathe on the stamp; if the bottom (or top) corners curl toward each other it has a vertical grain; if it curls top to bottom, the grain is horizontal.

Montreal papers are not of such high quality as the first Ottawa. The grain is more marked, the backs therefore feel rougher. Thickness can vary from thin to stout but generally it is in the medium range. Grain, particularly in the 1880's, can be vertical or horizontal, but the only significance of this is the way the paper - which is identical - was

offered to the printing press. By 1887 quality had deteriorated to the rough ragstock used from this point to the end of the second Ottawa period; this is what makes the late Montreal and second Ottawa printings of the One and Two Cents values a bit difficult to separate.

Fourth, plate markings. All early Ottawa and Montreal plates had a position dot incised onto the plate to appear at the bottom left corner of every stamp except from the left vertical rows, so any stamp with this feature cannot be from a second Ottawa printing.

Briefly position dots on the early plates appear to the right of the stamp to which they were the guide, thus the first left vertical row shows no dot because it appears under the stamps of the second row; those properly belonging to the right vertical row appear in the selvedge. One plate, however, the Six Cents "A" plate - so-called because of the letter "A" punched above the top imprint - had extra dots added on the occasions it was repaired during the Montreal period. This would be due to the sidepoint on the transfer roller being a little loose, and springing during the intense pressure brought to bear when cutting into the plate. A similar phenomenon is found on the 1859 12 1/2 ¢ value. This plate was still in use well into the second Ottawa period but here color will positively identify it correctly.

Fifth, colour (in no particular order). Six Cents - yellowish brown is first Ottawa or Montreal; reddish brown, chestnut or chocolate brown is second Ottawa.

Five Cents - any shade of grey, may be brownish, but with no trace of green its mix, is second Ottawa. Any trace of green,

even the very wishy-washy shade to be found from the end of the period, and it is a Montreal printing. A lower-left position dot indicates early Montreal as this value was not introduced until after the original Ottawa plant was closed.

Ten Cents - Montreal shades tend to be magenta or lilac variations. Second Ottawa tend to be brownish, carmine pink, or flesh colored variations.

One Cent - bright red-orange and deep orange are first Ottawa. Lemon yellow and yellow ochre are Montreal. For other shades perforation and paper have to be checked as well as the presence, or otherwise of a lower left position dot.

Two Cents - blue green and dull sea green are second Ottawa. All others have to be checked as with the One Cent (remember perf 12x12.25 at the end of the Montreal period.

Three Cents - Indian and copper reds and any rose-red shade are first Ottawa. Rose-carmine is from the 1888 sojourn at the Gazette Building, Montreal. The majority of Montreal shades were orange red and dull red, occasionally brownish red. A Three Cent brown is simply oxidized and can be brought back to its proper shade by cleaning it with hydrogen peroxide. Nearly always it will reveal itself as a Montreal product.

Second Ottawa produced a vermilion of which there are many variations, from a clear bright shade to muddy. 1889 saw the introduction of aniline ink which tended to bleed through the paper, showing a pink tinge which glows yellow under uv light. Any such is second Ottawa.

(Maple Leaves, April 1986)

Editor's Column

Roy Sass

A Gold Mine of Covers

I have been trying to solicit members to send photocopies of interesting Large Queen and Small Queen covers to share with other members in the study group. Also, I wanted to see these myself to help me learn more about the postal history and usages of these stamps. To say I've been moderately successful would be exaggerating somewhat.

Lo and behold, I received Charles G. Firby's latest auction catalog with the S.J. Menich Collection of Postal History of the Victorian Era. Here in one place are some 265 Large and Small Queen covers, virtually (if not actually) all shown in "living color."

The catalog pictures interesting domestic usages of the stamps plus covers that were sent to varied and exotic locations. There are examples of double and triple rates, including Registration. There are covers sent on the different packet boats which show how the rates were different for transit via Halifax or New York, or via Cunard (British packet) or German lines. There are covers showing rates both before and after UPU membership.

This catalog will join my reference collection, and makes a nice addition to the 1997 catalog of the stamps of the Menich collection. By the time you receive this newsletter, I hope to have added one or two of these covers to my collection.

If you did not receive the catalog, you might want to call the Firby company at

(248) 666-5333 and ask if they have any remaining.

I am using Chapter 1 of John Hillson's "Canada Small Queens Re-Appraised" for two reasons. First is that I found this booklet extremely helpful in my beginner's knowledge of the subject. Beyond the first chapter, there are chapters on *Recess Printing, Basic Guide to Varieties and their Causes, The Lesser 5¢ on 6¢ Small Queen Varieties, Plates of the 6¢ value, Spotting Faked Cancellations* and others. John has shared his knowledge with me for previous newsletters and I heartily recommend this book to beginners (and others). It is available for C\$18.95 or US\$12.90, plus postage, from Saskatoon Stamp Center, PO Box 1870, Saskatoon SK S7K 3S2 or from the Canadian Philatelic Society of GB Handbook Manager for £6.50 postfree in the UK.

The second is because I am running out of items to run in the newsletter. I again ask for articles, photocopies of interesting covers, want ads and questions.

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Commentary

John Hillson

A couple of comments on Jim Watts' letter. The bulk of the Large Queens were perf'd in Ottawa, whereas the Five Cents was produced in Montreal, so I think this stamp is almost in a class of its own, only partly shared with the Half and the Fifteen Cents.

Second, I recently had a conversation with one of the members of the Royal Philatelic Society of London's expert committee who told me she was refusing certificates as "Perf 12" to Five Cent Large Queens that did not measure 12 all around - i.e. 12 x 11.9 wasn't good enough.

I wrote to her and pointed out that such stamps, or 11.9 all around, or even 12.1x12 or 11.9 may not be 12 all round but they should certainly be given certificates as SG 63a (Scott 26ii (now 26a - ed.)).

This and That

Dr. J Frank adds three listings to our bibliography:

Minkus, K. & Pratt, R.H., "Essays and Proofs of British North America", Sissons Publ 1970,

Harrison, H.W., "Canada's Registry System 1827-1911", American Philatelic Society 1971,

Watt, J. & Fawn, F., "Plate Varieties of the Fifteen Cent Large Queen of 1868", "The Canadian Philatelist" May-June 1996, Vol 47: 3: 203-226.

Significance of Color

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No peaks for cadmium can be seen.

In the same article it was also pointed out that Persian Red is not a synonym for Persian Gulf Oxide, an iron oxide. Persian Red is produced by boiling lead chromate, i.e. Lemon Chrome Yellow, with alkali. The commercial name of the product is Orange Chrome Yellow.

With regard to Mr. Hillson's comment that the same recipes given by Boggs were used for both the Large and Small Queens throughout the first Ottawa printing, information described in *Maple Leaves*, Vol. 22, No. 4, page 133 (1991) is contrary to his contention. For example, the recipe for the 6 cent yellow brown Large Queen which was also used for the 6 cent Small Queen beginning in 1872 is not the same as the recipe given by Boggs for a 6 cent stamp.

This is clearly seen from x-ray spectra for the recipe and the yellow brown color in *Topics* Vol. 50, No. 5, page 28 (1993). The change in the recipe was made at the time of an order, dated March 6, 1870 for 1 million stamps for the Post Office Department.

The reason for the change in pigments is obviously not known with certainty but was sufficiently satisfactory for the ink to be used for the next 19 years.

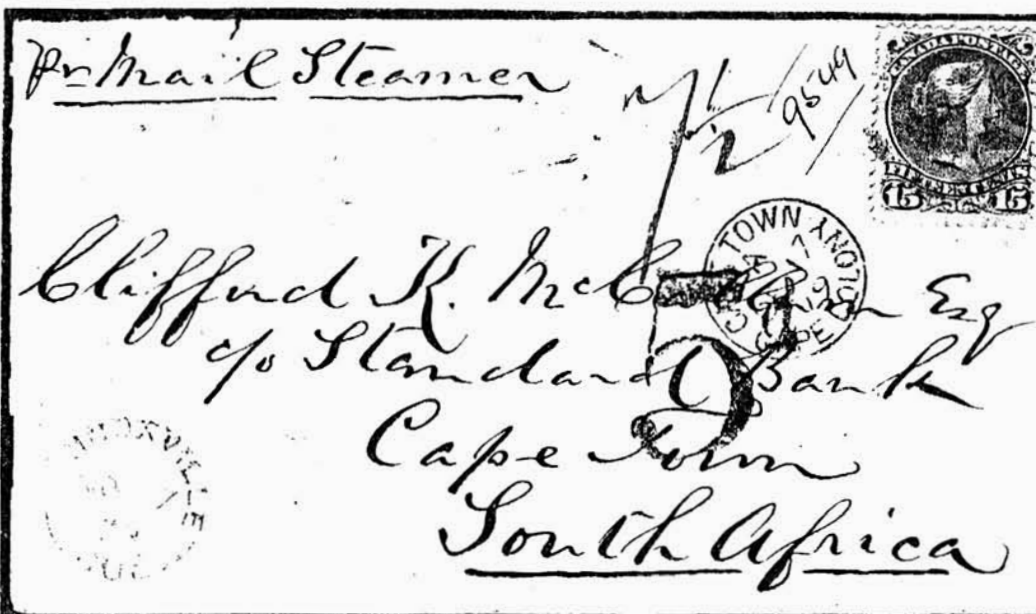
Finally I was pleasantly surprised to read about the "second Ottawa" vermilion shades, dated March 1899, by Bob Turkowski. I think his comments have solved a puzzle I've had for many years.

Cover to South Africa

Dr. J. Frank

Here is a copy of the only recorded Large Queen cover to Africa. It was sent from Lemonville, Quebec on November 7, 1879 to Cape Town, arriving on December 17, 1879. There are no back stamps on the reverse. The cover is not registered but bears a number (9549). The manuscript "7 1/2" appears to be the British portion of postage and the large "5d" is a Liverpool postage due marking (Tabcart).

The cover has received a clear Greene Certificate and has been seen by Prof. Duckworth at Capex '96. The cover was listed in Brian Murphy's excellent article on African Mails in *BNA Topics* No. 478 of May, 1999.



The problem is that I've had a 3 cent Small Queen dated 1889 with a vertical mesh, a color of a "second Ottawa" vermilion, but an x-ray spectrum the same as the unique and unmistakable type for the 1888-89 rose carmines. In other words, what happened to the organic dye which produced the rose carmine color? To add to the puzzle I also discovered that one of the 3 cent Small Queens in 1961 for comparison with their reference collection (*Confederation* newsletter, March 1999) was a "second Ottawa" vermilion, but the x-ray spectrum was also that of the rose carmines and not the Ottawa vermilions.

It would appear that the printers in Montreal must have substituted a different dye from the one in use at the time for the rose carmine color. For the stamps to appear in March 1889 an order for stamps would have to have been sent to the printers in late 1888 or early 1889. This would mean that a decision to terminate the rose carmine color and begin the vermilion color was started in Montreal and not after the operations had been moved to Ottawa as usually presumed.

More than that one organic colorant was used throughout the life of the vermilions, some of which fluoresce under ultra violet light.

Chairman's Column

Ron Ribler

May and June have been busy months. My Three Cents Small Queen exhibit went to London, without me unfortunately, where it gleaned a vermeil. It was my first international show and I could show only 5 frames, so I was pleased with the result.

The following week, I showed 8 frames at NAPEX in Virginia, where I did attend, and took gold. I will be showing again in Providence at the APS show and at BNAPEX at Schaumburg in August. I hope to see as many of you as possible at either or both shows.

From what I can see at my vantage point, our group seems to be growing, due in large part to the wonderful job Roy Sass is doing with *Confederation*. We all owe him a debt of gratitude. We also owe him input to the newsletter. No one in the group should be bashful about submitting items for publication. Letters or comments or research or opinions are wanted.

Send whatever you want and Roy will do his best to see you are in print. The newsletter has a broad circulation well beyond the study group and I have seen it quoted in other publications. Do not be reluctant to contribute to your journal.

For the past year and more I have been writing a book on the Three Cents Small Queen and hope to have it available before BNAPEX. The book will contain 192 pages, perfect bound in black and white. I plan to also produce a CD that will be in full color as a companion piece or as a stand-alone.

The Pawnbroker Variety



One of the plate varieties of the 15¢ Large Queens is called the "Pawnbroker" variety. Like the old sign of three balls which identified a pawn shop, this variety has three small dots at the upper right of the right-side 15.

Per Robson Lowe and others, the variety is found on stamp #10 of the plate and occurs in all of the printings of the issue. The Duckworth book quotes H.W. Harrison (on page 126) as having a copy dated October 25, 1868.

