

Confederation

The Newsletter of the Large and Small Queens Study Group

Number 18

March 2001

A Cache of 100 Year Old Mysteries

The Rennie Covers

This note is in reply to Richard M. Lamb for his excellent article on "The Rennie Correspondence" in the November 2000 issue of The Newsletter. In it, he mentions that he has not seen any of these covers from 1870 to the early 1890's.

In a quick check of my BNA railway post office collection, I found a grand total of 66 such covers. As Mr. Lamb is aware, they come in a variety of commercial printings and paper colors as well as hand written ones. I did check the dates on each of these and found the earliest to be 1896 and the latest 1904. The early ones are most likely to be on colored envelope paper.

While going through the collection, I could not help but notice the large numbers of four other commercial covers: The Globe Suspender Co., Rock Island P. Q.; The Sawyer Publishing Co., Waterville, Maine (mostly children's writing); John Lewis Childs, Floral Park, N.Y.; and Campana Corporation, Caledonia Rd., Toronto. I am sure there are many other such groups of covers, but these are the major ones I noted.

Ted Bowen

The Eight Cent Small Queen

R. W. Cumming

The Canadian 8¢ Small Queen is a fascinating stamp. It has attracted little attention in the 108 years since its introduction. Nevertheless, for many reasons it is the strangest Canadian stamp issued and we don't have answers to all our questions.

The stamp was printed by the British American Bank Note Company (BABN) and the earliest known date is 26th August, 1893. That was three and a half years before the last SQ stamps were printed. The latest date of use (other than later philatelic) may be 2 December 1899. The colour of issue was a light bluish grey, but it was later printed in various shades of blue, green, purple, grey and black. Some of the shades are rare and are seldom found even in large accumulations of the stamp.

The 8¢ SQ differs from the other low value stamps in the series in a number of ways. The most obvious is that Victoria faces left instead of right (Mystery #1). Other differences occurred in the plates which lacked imprints (Mystery #2) and may have been of unhardened steel (Mystery #3). The contract between BABN and the government for purchasing the 8¢ has not survived in government archives but the main contract required hardened plates.

Contemporary philatelic news (early 1893) said that the stamp was to be issued in mauve or maroon and a later report said that it was being printed in July 1893. The Postmaster General's report for the period of July 1892 to June 1893 says that 100,000 of the stamps had been delivered to him by the end of the period. So why the delay in issuing them and why the change of colour? (Mystery #4).

The 8¢ SQ replaced the combination of a 5¢ registration stamp and a regular 3¢ stamp to make up the 8¢ registered letter rate. The new stamp reduced the number of stamps used and thus reduced costs. Several years before the 8¢ stamp was issued, the regulations which required a special registration stamp were changed to allow postage stamps to be used for registration. (The RLS was no longer required after January 1, 1894 - editor)

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The paper is the usual range from soft newspaper-like quality to hard vellum-like. The thinnest paper is of two types: one used in the first printings has a vertical weave which is quite distinctive, and one was used for printings some time after the spring of 1893 using black ink.

Some stamps of the earlier issue have the palest ink to be found. A vertical weave with the same distinctive appearance also exists on slightly darker shades and thicker paper. The vertical is not unusual in other SQ values, but can only be found on 1/2% of the 8¢ and only with early dates.

There were two printings where a significant number of silk fibers can be found in the paper (Mystery #5). Was this a test of granite paper or was the paper batch made right after a batch of granite paper and became contaminated?

The new stamp was not used in large numbers until March 1894. This is reasonable because Ottawa kept a four to six month supply on hand and the local post offices had up to a two month supply of older stamps to use. Thus a six month lag can be expected during the switch over.

Let's look at the mystery (#2) surrounding the printing plates which may be the most interesting of all. As stated before, the plates had no inscriptions or numbers, which was contrary to standard practice at the time. There is a statement to be found in the Archives in Ottawa, dated 1905, that four

plates of 200 subjects were prepared. This can be checked by studying a few dozen random copies of the stamp. Yet, in all the literature on the subject, only two plates of 200 subjects are mentioned.

What does this suggest to us? The first two plates were used in the initial printings, the third replaced the first late in 1894, and the fourth was used briefly in 1897. Although the first plate was supposed to be sidelined, it was put back into service for some of the printings in 1896.

Adding to the mystery (#6) surrounding the plates is the quality of impression on the first stamps issued. Most appear to have been printed from a worn and retouched plate. Such a thing should be impossible in a new stamp.

There is a mystery (#7) concerning the die from which the transfer roll was prepared. A similar vignette of the Queen's head was owned by the American Bank Note Company (ABN) and dates back at least to 1860 when ABN printed the Nova Scotia 1860-1863 issue of three stamps. It was also used for the second Canadian revenue stamps issued in 1865 (also by ABN) and the 12¢ Newfoundland issue of 1864-1894. Thirty-three years after its appearance a copy shows up on the rival BABN 8¢ stamp.

Although it is obvious the vignette was reengraved, is it possible that the die for the 8¢ SQ was prepared by ABN on a rush order from BABN? Could they have also made the transfer roll and even the first plate? To add to the mystery, a vignette from a

BABN proof book, probably made around 1870, has the Queen facing left. Why didn't BABN use it instead?

The plates of the 8¢ SQ, all with 200 subjects, are the only ones made from 1857 to the present without at least an inscription of the maker's name. Could the mystery of the missing imprint be a simple case of ethics, where BABN would not put its imprint on the work of another company, yet didn't want to advertise that it was getting help from an arch business rival?

Is there an explanation in the matter of the originally reported colour and a worn plate? Since 100,000 8¢ stamps were delivered to the Postmaster General before the end of June 1893, it can be assumed that these were maroon or mauve as was reported by two contemporary philatelic magazines. The best guess to fit the known facts is that the ink proved to be highly corrosive to the plate causing more wear in 500-plus impressions than would normally occur in 50,000. It can be expected that BABN tried to find some way to produce the colour without destroying the plate but, eventually, with the implied approval of the government had to settle on the blue grey shade.

The next question is what happened to the 100,000 stamps in mauve or maroon? It was uncharacteristic of the Post Office to destroy good stamps. Some violet and maroon stamps were issued in 1896 but the perforations do not match the early dated blue grey ones.

In all probability they

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were destroyed, although the number delivered would have been included in the total for the number of stamps printed. In his annual reports to Parliament, the Postmaster General did not start reporting the number of stamps destroyed until 1895.

I have found no evidence so far that the stamps were put to use. In fact, on checking the total number produced against the number sent to the post offices, and cross-checking with the number destroyed in later years, there is some indication that a large number of stamps was destroyed in the early years.

The second plate, also used for the first printings, gave clearer impressions than the first, but still seems to be somewhat worn. Plate 2 seems to have been used during almost the entire printing period.

A survey of engraver guide markings on dated copies shows that the third plate was first used for printing in mid-1894. One copy showed up on mail in July 1894 although most of the stamps with the markings are dated from April 1895 on. The first plate was basically retired in 1895, but it was used for several printings in 1896 using dark green (slate) and black ink.

For years it has been known that the 8¢ has a reentry. Some people know that the reentry can be found on stamps in virtually all the colours released. Since Plate 2 was the only one in use for most of the period, it was logically assumed that the reentry occurred on Plate 2. This has proven to be false.

Plate 1 and Plate 3 have almost identical reentries. Of course the ones from Plate 3 tend to be sharper.

Perforations present another mystery (#8). The usual combs used were 12, 12 1/8, and 12 1/4. An 11 7/8 comb was occasionally used to the end of 1894 and a 12 3/8 comb vertically can be found starting in July 1895. What is especially strange is that a number of stamps have been found with perfs on one side different from perfs on the other. How did this happen?

It has been over 100 years since these mysteries were slipped by an unaware public. Published information is sketchy, erroneous and incomplete. Records vital to the task of unraveling the questions are unavailable or have been destroyed. I hope to hear from the people who have information that will help answer the mysteries, and correct or add to the deduction and theories presented here.

Can we let these mysteries continue to puzzle another generation? I think not. Each year that passes takes us further from the source of our answers. It would be unconscionable to allow these mysteries to remain unsolved for another 100 or even 10 years. Now is a good time to act.

(Mr. Cumming's article on identifying the plates will be in the next newsletter. - Ed.)



Half-cent Freebie

Stanley W. MacLeod writes:

Some years ago, I purchased at a public auction in Toronto, a Half-Cent Large Queen, used singly on a wrapper. At a later date, I submitted the item to the RPSL for expertization. They issued an unfavourable certificate which I questioned quite extensively but unsuccessfully in subsequent correspondence with them.

I sent it to the Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation in Toronto in the spring of 2000, and received another unfavourable certificate. I still believe that the item is genuine.

I have disposed of all my other philatelic holdings. I have come around to wondering whether there would be an active member of the BNAPS Study Group who would be interested in taking "the whole ball of wax" (wrapper, certificates, and related correspondence) off my hands on a no-cost basis.

It is quite possible that the material would be of interest to an individual who was attempting to write up the use of the Large Queen stamps.

If anyone is interested, please contact :

Mr. Stanley W. MacLeod
Sterling Place - Room 115,
2716 Richmond Road,
Ottawa, ON K2B 8M3

Chairman's Column

Ron Ribler

Three Cents Small Queen Perfins

Specializing in a single stamp over time leads to a level of understanding and the compilation of a vast amount of information. Sometimes the information is trivial and sometimes it can be valuable.

For almost 25 years I have been searching for perfins on the Three Cents Small Queen and have found them to be among the most elusive of all varieties of the stamp.

The books tell us that four different perfins were used on the stamp: WJG (W.J. Gage Co.), ICR (Intercolonial Railway), SLA Co (Sun Life Assurance Co.), and JHS (J.H. Stiles). I have never seen the latter two and I suspect they do not exist on the Three Cents Small Queen.

Finding these stamps on cover has been even more difficult. Until recently, the only WJG perfin I had ever seen on cover is the WJG perfin on an advertising cover showing the Gage building, as in Figure 1. While these are not plentiful, they appear occasionally in auctions.

I have seen perhaps half a dozen over the years. Figure 2 shows the only WJG perfin I have encountered on any stationery other than the one in Figure 1. Since the company was in the printing business, it is reasonable to expect a variety of formats, but to date, this is the only one I have seen. Both covers are



Figure 1

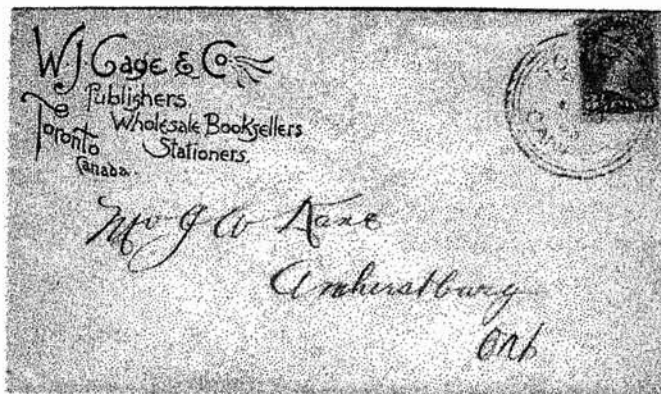


Figure 2

postmarked 1892

Complicating the collection of these stamps is the large number of variations that exist because the holes were produced upside down, backwards, sideways, doubled, etc. The variations are almost limitless.

If anyone has other information about Small Queen perfins, please write about them or let me hear from you.

WANTED

Any Small Queens with
Split Circle Cancels
with dates 1870-1897.

Will buy or trade.

Contact Richard at
rcreighton@img.net

The Half-Cent Small Queen

John Burnett

Similar in design but markedly smaller than the Large Queens that preceded them, the Small Queens were introduced to help reduce printing costs during a period of recession in Canada.

The smallest of the Small Queens is the 1/2¢ black low value definitive. This stamp (Scott 34) came into being in July 1882 although no dated covers are known to exist before 1883.

This diminutive stamp is physically smaller than the other Small Queens, measuring approximately 17x20mm while the other Small Queens measure approximately 20x25mm.

The 1/2¢ stamp is available in a number of shades from jet black to shades of grey. You can also find the stamp printed on

thick paper. Pre-canceled stamps are known. In addition, imperforates are found in multiples and pairs and imperforate between, both horizontal and vertical.

The basic 1/2¢ stamps were printed in sheets of 200, consisting of two panes of 100 separated by a gutter. Blocks of these stamps are known with the gutter.

Figure 1 shows a gutter pair used on cover. There are only three used postally correct gutter pairs known to exist on cover. Like a lot of my material, this cover fits into one of my other collections as it has a duplex cancel. I always get a kick out of showing this cover in a duplex exhibit, as the judges never know what to say, if they recognize the rarity.

This pair was affixed to a cover addressed to

Emerson, Manitoba, between two 1¢ Small Queens to pay the 3¢ letter rate. All four stamps are neatly canceled with a June 27, 1893, Berlin, Ontario, duplex hand-stamp.

One of the difficulties we face as serious collectors is identifying the rates a particular stamp was intended to pay. We in BNAPS are lucky, as we have had some very serious students document their studies.

George Arfken's book on the Small Queens is a gem that belongs in every collector's library. The late Allen Steinhart was one of my most important sources as are a number of other great BNAPS collectors, too numerous to mention here.

The 1/2¢ Small Queen served a variety of roles. To begin with, it paid the postage on an unsealed envelope sent within Canada. Figure 2 shows such a cover sent to Liverpool, Nova Scotia. The cover does not have a readable cancel for at

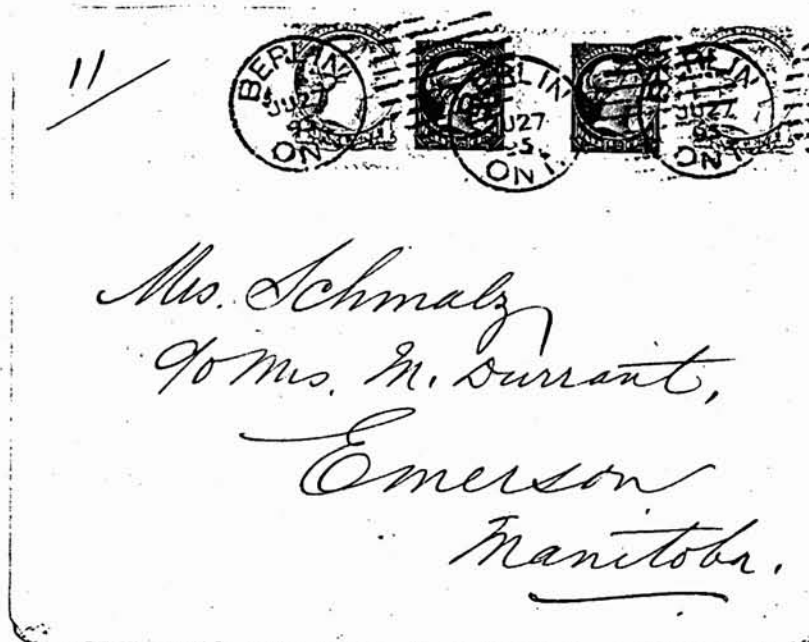


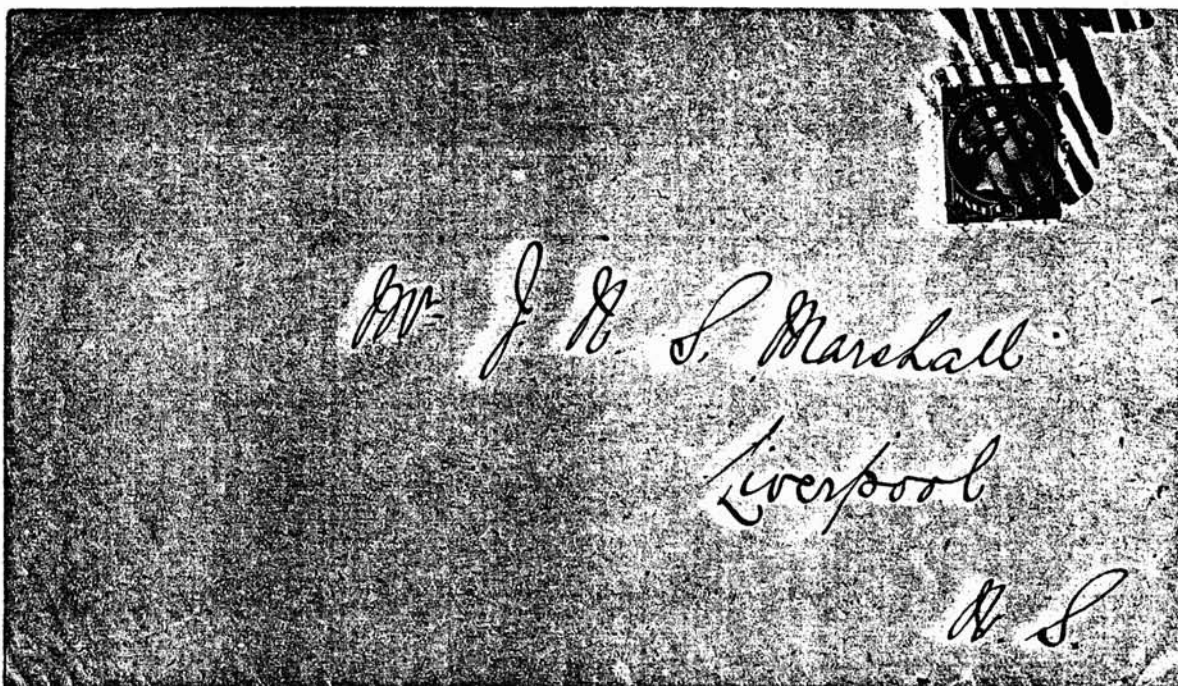
Figure 1

June 27, 1893; pair of 1/2¢ with gutter help to make up the 3¢ first class rate. One of only three known covers to exist with a gutter pair.

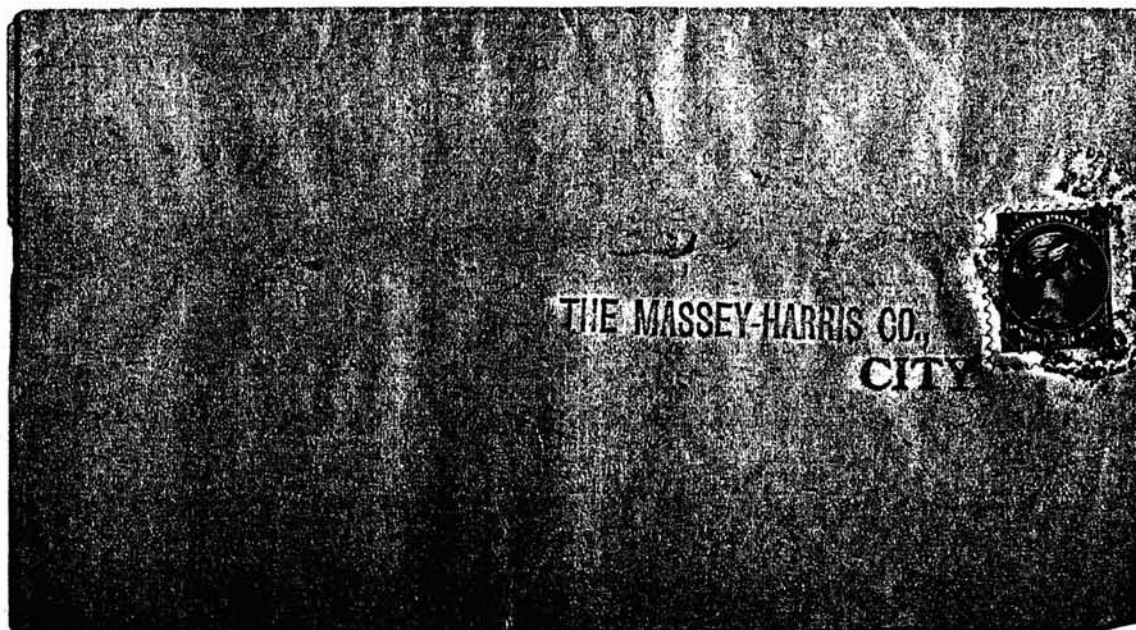
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on Page 7

The Half-Cent Small Queen

Figure 2



Domestic mail - unsealed envelope



A wrapper for a newspaper or periodical

Figure 3

The Half-Cent SQ

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the 1/2¢ rate the stamp was only obliterated or killed and not eligible to be cancelled with a dated postmark.

Rarely will you find a 1/2¢ Small Queen used on cover with a readable cancellation, unless it was simply convenient for the postal clerk to apply one.

Another designated use of the 1/2¢ Small Queen was to pay for a newspaper or periodical being sent through the mails. Figure 3 shows a wrapper from a periodical simply hand stamped addressed to "Massey Harris Co. City"

One of the more difficult uses to find is the "to

every householder rate" which is actually an unaddressed circular rate. This is a mailing without an address and not needing one as the same item was sent to every householder on a given postal route. Figure 4 shows a particularly nice example of the "to every householder rate." It is an advertising post card with a reply card attached.

This St. John, New Brunswick, post card has a nice printed advertisement on the back extolling the virtues of Ira Cornwall Bearings. The most common use of the "to every householder rate" was a political or election circular that was sent to everyone.

As you might expect, a very common use of the 1/2¢ Small Queen was to

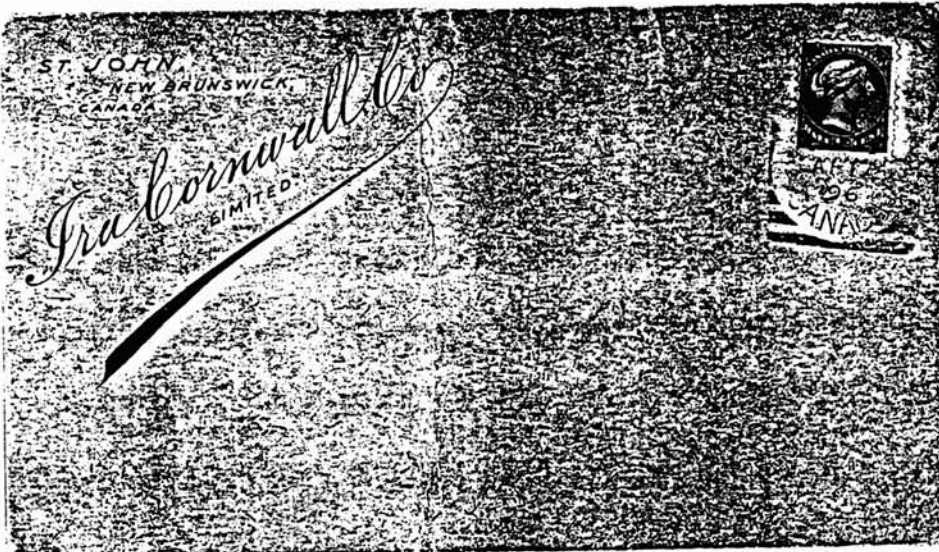
"make up" postage. There are an infinite number of covers out there to find.

Figure 5 shows one of the most spectacular of a number of covers in my own collection, a registered 1¢ stamped envelope to the Latvian capital of Riga. The rate has been made up with 18 1/2¢ Small Queens. The envelope value and the value of the stamps made 10¢, 5¢ postage and 5¢ registration fee.

The unusual foreign destination on the Baltic Sea makes the cover more alluring to me and enhances my Small Queen collection.

The 1/2¢ Small Queen may be small but it is an example of how you can start small and end with a large collection.

The 1/2¢ unaddressed circular rate, also known as the "to every householder" rate



April 17, 1896

Figure 4

The Half-Cent Small Queen



March 20, 1894 - used to make up 5¢ UPU rate to Russia and 4¢ of 5¢ registration

Figure 5

Editor's Column

Roy Sass

We've turned the calendar over again, and I am happy to report that our little study group is growing and we are getting participation from more and more members. At last count we had 78 members, 36 in Canada, 35 in the US, 3 in Australia and one each in the UK, Poland, Germany and South Africa.

As I was typing John Burnett's article on the 1/2¢ Small Queen, I wondered whether there was a 1/2¢ coin at the time. Was a 1/2¢ Large Queen or Small Queen given as "change" when someone bought one 12 1/2¢ stamp?

Financially we are quite solvent. In the year

2000, we received \$283.03 in dues and \$101.88 from BNAPS. Our expenses to publish 4 newsletters was \$112.04 for photocopying, \$39.77 for envelopes, and \$176.41 for postage for the newsletters and other correspondence. We started 2000 with \$444.41 in the treasury and end with \$501.10.

Dues for 2001 are due from most members. We will keep the dues at US\$5 and C\$8 for the year. While the treasury is flush, I think the dues are a good expression of your interest in the study group.

FREE DUES

A better expression of your interest would be to send in an article, a question, a photocopy of your favorite

cover, a letter to the editor in response to a previous article and the like. Those who do, will get a year's FREE MEMBERSHIP. So please send back your dues notice with something for us to share.

I'm pleased to report that Tim Morgan of Australia exhibited his Large Queens at the New Zealand National Exhibition in Christchurch in October and received a silver medal. Tim reports that there are very few LQ or SQ exhibits in Australia and New Zealand, which is probably understandable. Tim will be exhibiting in New Zealand again in March so we wish him well.

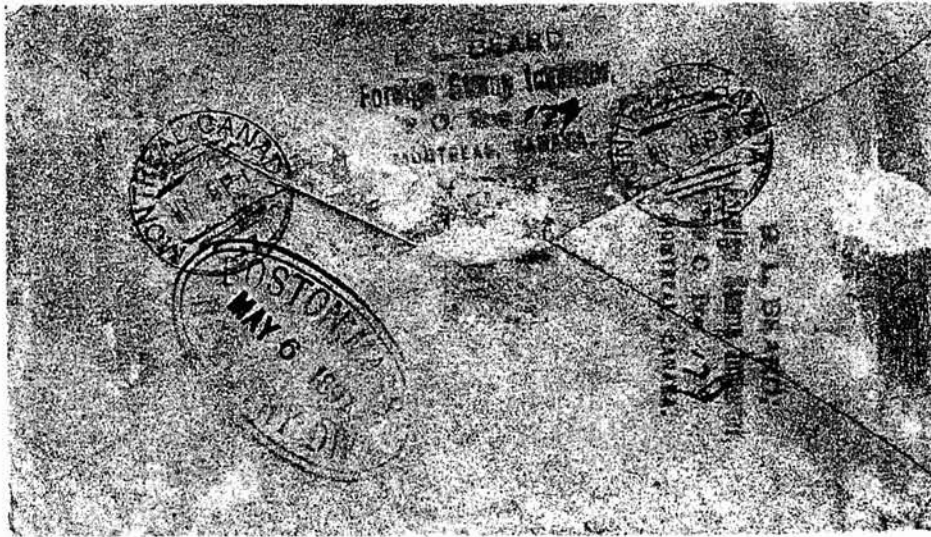
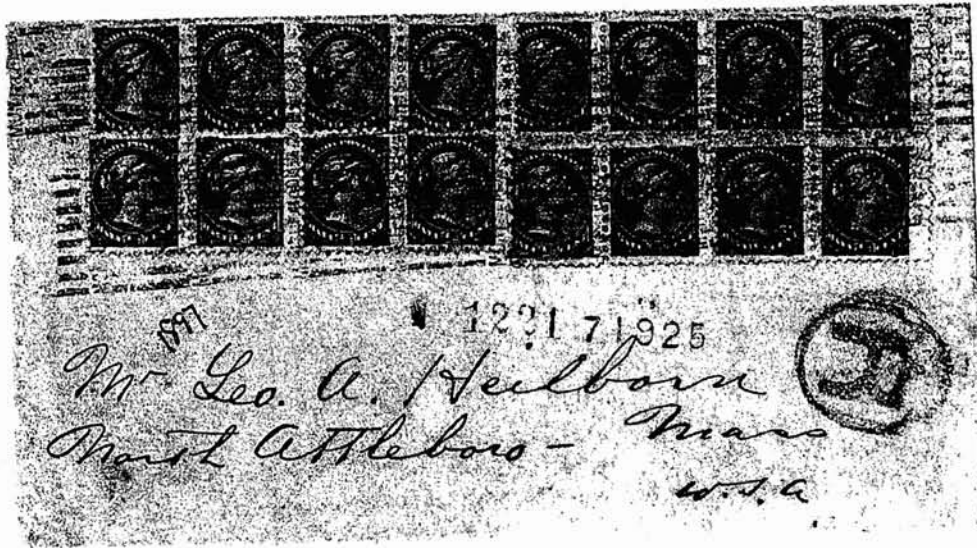
My Favorite Cover

Jack Gordon

Here is a cover with 16 Half-Cent Small Queens, which I bought because it has two stikes of the Montreal Hammer 2 Barred as dispatching cancels.

Normally the dispatching cancel would go on the front but because the stamps took up all the space it had to go on back. The roller to smash the stamps was normal practice in Montreal at the time.

Note: the sender B. L. Beard was a "Foreign Stamp Importer."



Letters to the Editor

Alexander E. Hutton, Jr, who has spent 36 years in the paper industry, writes

In Confederation Number 17, November 2000 John Hillson stated, "Secondly, manufacturers when using mechanical gauges - it may be different with electronic ones - always measured papers in stacks and averaged the answer." This is absolutely not true.

Averages are not helpful. Strips of paper are taken across the machine and individual tests are made across the web to determine a profile. The Small Queens have a good system as shown by Shoemaker and revised by Ron Ribler but the Large Queens have a problem.

The Duckworths have set up pictures to separate the Large Queens. Unfortunately the system is flawed. It is impossible to determine formation of paper

by looking at a sample as small as a stamp and part of his system relies on this. In order to determine formation, large sheets are required. Even an 8x11 only gives a fair idea.

Mr. Hutton then enclosed a copy of the "TAPPI" standard (Technical Association of the Pulp And Paper Industry) which is used by all mills in the U.S. and correlated with other major countries that make paper." It defines "thickness" or caliper of paper, paperboard, or combined board as "the perpendicular distance between two principal surfaces of paper or paperboard under prescribed conditions."

The standard goes on to explain the method for taking the measurement with a micrometer attached to two flat opposable surfaces of at least 0.3 square inches and then subject to a pressure of

approximately 7.3 pounds per square inch. The micrometer dial is graduated to 0.002mm (0.0001 inch) or less, readable to at least 0.001 mm.

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This and That

Saskatoon Stamp Centre had this block of 8 up for sale recently. It's dull rose in shade on vertically wove paper, with quite nice centering. The block is one of the largest multiples in this shade. I thought it would be a nice illustration.

