

Confederation

The Newsletter of the Large and Small Queens Study Group

Number 21

May 2002

The Imperforates of the 8 cent Small Queen

Chairman's Column

Ron Ribler

Stamping on the Internet can be an interesting and varied experience. Just about everyone is familiar with ebay and other auction sites that carry large volumes of stamps, covers, literature, supplies, and lots of other things stamp collectors want. Other sites, such as Stampfinder and Zillionsofstamps are retail outlets where dealers display their wares.

All the sites carry BNA material. Some show more than others, but even with my advanced Three Cents Small Queen collection, I find things I did not know even existed.

The Internet can be an adventure as interesting and fruitful as your favorite bourse or auction house. Rarities appear with greater frequency at the traditional auction houses, but the occasional rarity shows up on the net as well. The more you know your material, the better chance you have of finding something of value. Prices are generally low to moderate compared to the more traditional venues, but it is often worth the time and effort to find those elusive items.

Many of our mem-

Continued on Page 2

R. W. Cumming

Imperforates exist for one of four reasons:

1. They are plate proofs, or other kind of sample delivered to the Postmaster General.
2. They are favor stamps taken off the press and given to a notable person.
3. They were made for sale to collectors, sometimes in a special color.
4. They are waste material that was stolen from the printer.

Two imperforates of the 8c Small Queen are listed in the Unitrade Scott Catalogue, a blue-grey issued in 1895, gummed, and a violet-black issued in 1897, ungummed. Jarrett lists an imperforate issued in 1893, and fails to mention the other two.

In fact, there seem to have been three issues, and the so-called blue-grey may come both gummed and ungummed.

The first issue seems to have been a colour trial plate proof taken before production began, probably in or before May '93. The evidence for this can be found in a single copy in my possession, postally used November 6, 1893 in Ontario, displaying the Plate 1 reentry. This stamp is clear of the wear that can be found on thirty or so other Plate 1 reentries seen to date.

Fears that the stamp might be a trimmed jumbo can be dismissed out-of-hand, given the lack of plate wear.

It is doubtful whether more than one sheet of 200 was printed in the first light blue-grey colour, given that it was printed before production started, and that the originally chosen colour of issue was reported to be mauve or maroon. No imperf pair of this issue has yet been seen by me. If any do exist in mint form it will be the rarest of the imperfs.

The second imperforate issue is a somewhat grayer blue-grey than the first, and may have been printed at two different times; one with slightly darker ink than the other. The stamps were printed from Plate 3, so may have been printed early in 1894.

A block of four and a pair of these stamps are without gum. I have no way of telling whether or not there was gum on them originally. That will require testing.

Continued on Page 2

Imperforates

Continued from Page 1

The third imperforate issue is in dark grey, not violet-black. At least that is what the block of four and two pairs seen by me to date have been. It makes sense too, because they were printed from Plate 4. Most of the stamps from Plate 4 are dark grey; none are violet-black. None of these stamps have gum.

The editors of the Unitrade Catalogue estimate that no more than 800 imperforates can exist. Based on the numbers of blue vs. black seen by me to date, it would appear that there are at least twice as many blue-grays as dark grey. It would then be reasonable to guess there were originally 200 Plate 1, 400 Plate 3, and 200 Plate 4. It would be helpful if people reported their holdings of these because collectors may favor the dark grey imperforates and thus those do not come on the market as often.

It is impossible to predict how many light blue-grey imperforates exist today because many must have been used postally. As many as 2% of all postally used stamps may survive in accumulations and collections. Does that percentage hold true for imperfs? I have one, and I have less than one half of one percent of the stamps issued. Could there be three more in other collections? Did the owner of the sheet sell any to collectors, or did he mail all 200? Did he have 200 to begin with?

Commentary

John Hillson

Hardening Steel Plates

It has long been my understanding that printers began to harden Canadian plates starting after 1914 because of steel shortages. Where the idea came from I cannot say, but apparently the practice did indeed begin several years earlier.

Not knowing much about the ins and outs of Canada Edwards, I asked David Sessions, who used to specialize in them, what Marler had to say about it in his book on the series. "The consensus of philatelists is that hardening began in 1905" although no corroboration is given.

Boggs on page 346 of "Postage Stamps and History" states categorically that "around 1905 it became

the practice to harden plates." Similarly, he gives no backup to the statement.

Marler in his major book on the Admiral issue is more helpful. On Page 33, "It is not known exactly when it became the practice to harden plates. Though it is believed by some writers that it was in 1905, the manufacturers, without being able to fix the time more precisely, believe the practice was started at an earlier date" - presumably than 1905. Apparently an important guide as to the date can be inferred that re-entries abound on the early Edward plates and then suddenly cease.

So the best can be said is that it happened sometime after 1903 and before 1906. Incidentally, the British printers had been hardening plates since 1840, through sheer necessity, but that is another story.

Similarly with my postally used Plate 3 stamp. It was posted in 1897 in Manitoba. Was only one used postally, or did a sheet of 100 somehow find its way to a post office? I hope to learn answers to my questions some day soon. Write if you have answers.

WANTED

Want Ads from
Members seeking
stamps, covers or
other philatelic
material.

Remember, the want
ads are FREE!

Chairman's Column

Continued from Page 1

bers still do not use computers or do not have access to the Internet. I have been using both for many years and I can assure those of you who are timid or reluctant to take the plunge that it has gotten so easy that even the neophyte can profit from tapping into its universe of information, education, and entertainment.

I will go out on a limb and offer to any member who wants it, specific help and assistance in getting on the net and using it to find, buy, or sell stamps and covers. Don't be bashful. Call, write, or e-mail to me and I will be happy to give you the best info I can. See you on line!

Letters

I would like to reply to Dr. Steven Perch's "Ball in Corner": the little blob which inadvertently wasn't included in Hans Reiche's and my book. There are really many reasons why it wasn't included and I will attempt to address them.

In my reference collection it is numbered as # 81. I only have 3 undated copies and these are from issues that are from the early nineties. All three are different and one has some doubling of the left side up to and including some of the left oval.

I had never realized that this variety started out in the mid seventies. Perhaps if Dr. Perch is willing we can make a study of his favorite variety by examining the perfs, colors, size and states of this variety. Submitting it to your newsletter complete with drawings can then take place.

Over the past decade I have been making revisions to the book which really was outdated by the time it was printed. The numbers of extensive varieties has increased considerably.

Mike Sendbuehler

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On page 9 of Confederation #20 John Hillson points out that the printers had considerable difficulty reproducing the colour with the 1859 10c, the 15c LQ and the 8c SQ. To this list we could add the 6d stamps (Scott #5, #10) which were printed in greyish purple, slate violet, slate grey, brownish grey, greenish grey, grey violet, reddish purple (two shades), brown violet and grey violet again in a total of eight printing orders.

Richard Thompson

Editor's Column

Roy Sass

Jack Gordon asked me to review the photocopy of the cover that was used in the last newsletter to illustrate the use of the 8c Small Queen to pay the combined postage and registration fee.

Both sides are shown as illustrations with his comments in this newsletter. The reverse side shows two postmarks of Nanaimo, B.C dated DE 20 97 PM, two partial postmarks of C P RY (Canadian Pacific Railway?), and a barred circle postmark at Montreal dated DE 28 97. There is also a purplish oval Portland, Maine, Registered postmark, dated Dec 29 1897.

The BNAPS convention will be in Spokane this year, from September 26 to September 29.

I have asked for a meeting room so that we can have a time and a place to discuss our LQs and SQs. Personally, I would like to meet and compare my 2c greens with others so we can

decide what shades we actually have and what shades we need.

BNAPS will post details for the convention on its web site www.bnaps.org.

Dues are due for 2002. I have enclosed statements for those members who owe dues at this time. Dues remain at US\$5 or C \$8 for another year. If your membership expired in 2000, this will be your last newsletter unless you bring dues current.

I've learned how to put some illustrations directly into the newsletter rather than to actually cut and paste photocopies onto the page before final photocopying. If you can send scans in JPEG format, I can use this new ability in my decade-old publishing program.

One last thing. My e-mail has changed. It is now roywcca@earthlink.net

And as always, please send in articles, questions, and want ads.

In the next newsletter, we have another article from R. W. Cumming on the 8 cent Small Queen. This will discuss the vignette of the Queen.



Half-cent SQ on Cover

Guillaume Vadeboncoeur

This note is in reply to John Burnett's insightful article entitled "The Half-Cent Small Queen" published in the March 2001 issue of The Newsletter.

In the article, Mr. Burnett mentions that no dated covers are known to exist before 1883. This is a statement which I have also read on multiple occasions in various articles and books.

After reading the article I remembered that a few years ago I purchased an interesting Half Cent single franking cover. The cover in question was part of a lot of about 20 single franking covers which had apparently not been previously offered on the philatelic market.

I was lucky to acquire a single franking

cover (see Figure 1), with an attractive segmented cork cancel, addressed to Mess. T & E Taylor, Moncton. The backstamp (see Figure 2), appropriately from Moncton, N.B. clearly shows an October 23, 1882 date!

The stamp has the crisp and finely detailed impression from the early printings as well as being on a good quality thicker paper, also characteristic of the early printings.

Finally a Half-Cent used in 1882! Appropriately, the flap was not sealed and retains it's original gum.

I would be interested in hearing from other collectors who have early usages of the Half-Cent Small Queen.

I can be contacted by email at gvaadboncoeur@videotron.ca or via regular mail at 22 rue du Solstice, Hull, Quebec, J9A 3E2, Canada.

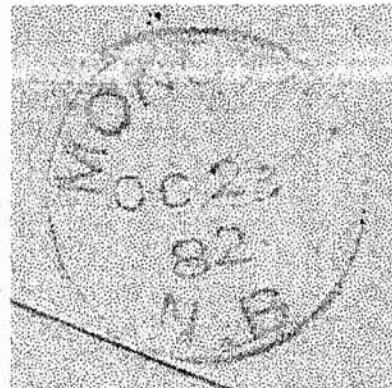


Figure 2 - The Backstamp
Moncton OC 23 82 N.B.

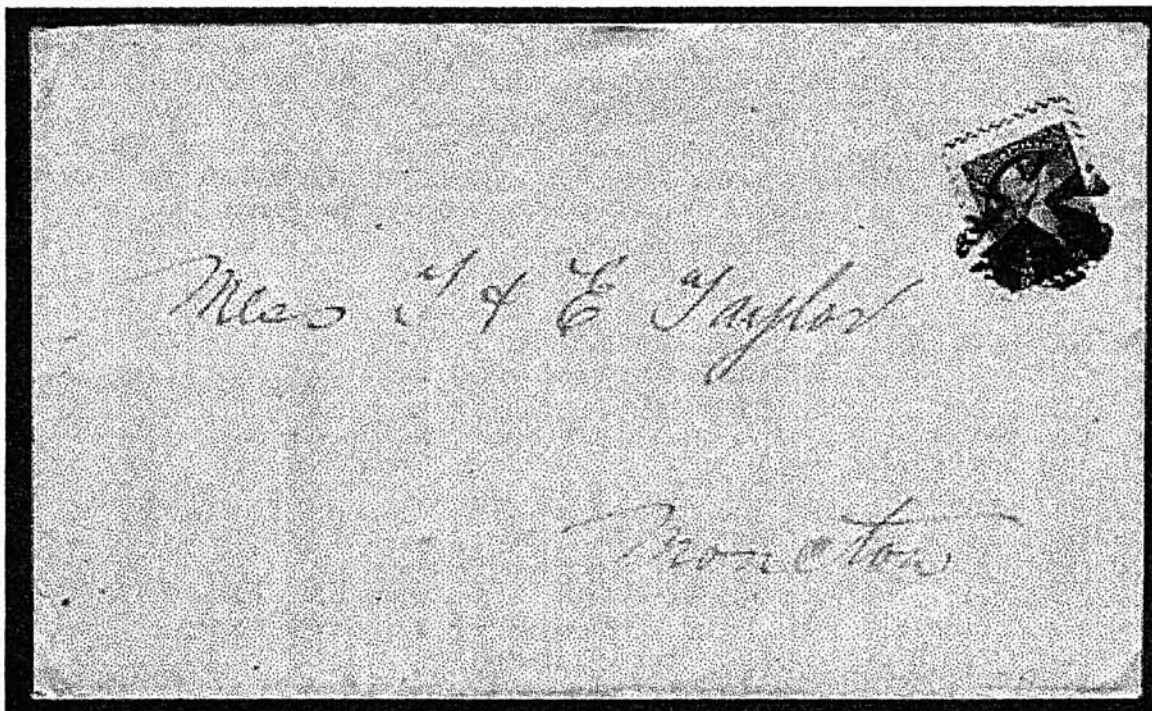


Figure 1 - front of cover

SMEARS

Ron Ribler

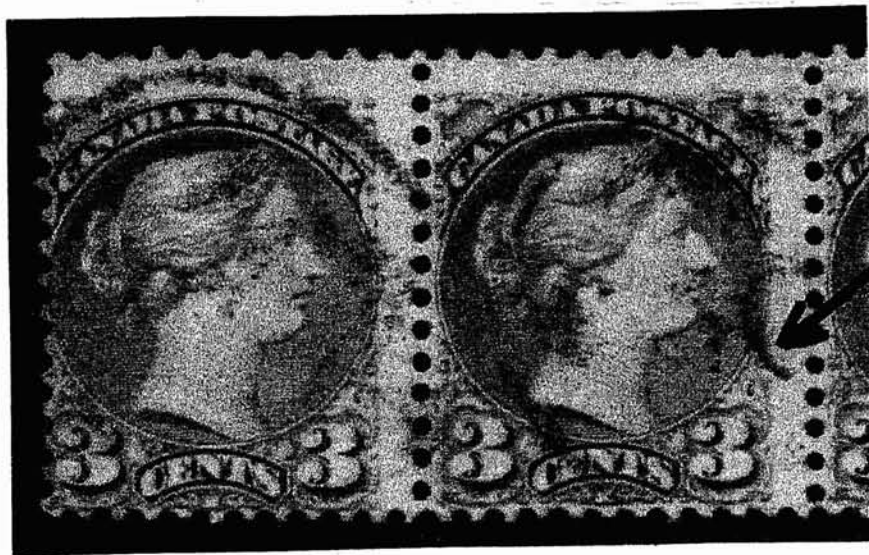
Sometimes we find extra color on stamps. From where does it come? Some is from re-entries, some from foreign matter on the plate, some from scratches or pits on the plate, some from incomplete wiping of the plate, and perhaps some from poor quality control.

Other factors could explain the extra ink on the stamps. When these stamps are seen in their actual color, the smears stand out better than on a black and white copy. The arrow shows where the extra ink is.

Perhaps some of our printing expert members have other explanations for this phenomenon.

While such examples are not rare, they are not plentiful either. Often it is not easy to see the extra ink because it may blend in so well with the rest of the stamp. The examples shown here are from a strip of four, and the two stamps to the right of those shown are free of extra visible ink.

Whatever the causes of extra ink on the Small Queen stamps, they are often interesting and worthy of collecting as a specialty area. What has been your experience with such printing anomalies?



Letters

The illustration on page 1 of the last newsletter bears no explanatory text. The date of the strike is not legible.

It is of interest because Nanaimo registered mail after 1896 almost always used a circular date stamp, not the State 2 broken circle.

The State 2 is probably known on more different Canadian stamps than any other postmarking device (any of our members care to quibble with this?) having

been in use from 1896 to the 1950's.

The picture is the first report I have of State 2 on a 8c Small Queen, although I have several State 1's on the 8c. Canadian registered covers to Maine often have a Montreal barred circle transit backstamp. If you have one, can you tell which of the hammers it is? Sometimes the routing will be through St. Paul in which case there will be no Montreal transit.

Jack Gordon

