

Confederation

The Newsletter of the Large and Small Queens Study Group

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The 8-cent Small Queen Vignette

LQ/SQ Study Group to Meet at BNAPEX

The 2002 BNAPS convention will be held in Spokane, Washington, from September 27th until the 29th. The convention will be at the Spokane Convention Center, which is next door to the Double Tree Hotel in Spokane's City Center.

The convention is being hosted by the Inland Empire Philatelic Society in conjunction with their annual Apple Harvest Show.

Our Large Queen/Small Queen study group will have its meeting on Saturday, September 28, between 10:15am and 11:30 am in the "Large Room."

During that time, we will have a general discussion of our collecting interests. We will also have time for a "show and tell" for members to show off their proudest possessions in the LQ/SQ field.

Nothing is scripted so the more members who attend the meeting, the more fulfilling it should be.

There will be 22 dealers at the convention with their BNA and worldwide stocks for our perusal and purchase. If our dealer members will bring 2-cent Large Queens identified by paper and shade, your editor will be pleased to exchange cash for stamps.



Figure 1

Robert Cumming

In Memoriam

I received a note from Mrs. Drewe advising that Dan Drewe of Kelowna, BC, passed away suddenly about a year and a half ago. The condolences of our Study Group go out to Mrs. Drewe.

There are three known Canadian vignettes of a left-facing Queen (all from the same painting); one from the American Bank Note Co (ABN) about 1862, one proofed by the British American Bank Note Co. (BABN) about 1870 but not used as far as I know, and the one used for the 8c SQ by BABN. The ABN vignette was used on three Nova Scotia, one Newfoundland, and the entire second Canadian Revenue series. I have a proof copy of the first two vignettes, but have not heard about a proof of the

one used for the 8c (fig. 1 and 2).

The engraving for the 8c is sharp and clean (fig. 3). It can be seen that although the engraving detail of the BABN vignette is different from the ABN vignette, the engraving on both of them is rougher than the 8c. In attempting to find engraving that is similar to the 8c, I checked the contemporary Widow's Weeds (BABN), and the slightly later Jubilee, and Maple Leaf series (both ABN). Only the Maple Leaf series by ABN has the clean, sharp engraving style similar to the 8c.

In case it is suggested that the left-facing Queen is a transfer from the die for the others in the SQ series, it isn't so. A prominent point of comparison is the upper lip, where the engraving is clearly not the same.

A similarity in engraving style is not enough evidence to prove that ABN made the vignette and plates for the 8c. After all, both companies would have had more than one engraver. So what evidence is there for my suggestion that the ABN may have done the engraving? It is the lack of imprints on the plates. If the plates were produced by BABN, why would the company abandon standard procedures? Every other plate they ever made had imprints.

If ABN did indeed provide the die, the transfer roll and all the plates, that could explain why there was no imprint on any of the plates.

I believe that all four plates were made within a 12

- 15 month period. (I will discuss the evidence for it in another article.) At least the first three plates were made hurriedly, without taking the time to harden them or, particularly with Plate 3, erasing the scribe lines. It would make sense that ABN would make all of them if they made the first one. I have no proof to offer that would convince a jury, but in the absence of any other evidence I lean in that direction.

I am looking forward to receiving comments on my ideas. It will be difficult

to hurt my feelings by disagreeing with me. The worst thing as far as I am concerned would be to have someone after I have published a book on the subject of the 8c say, "I meant to tell you earlier but....." I hope you will tell me now. I can be reached at 45 - 150 Fermanagh Ave, Toronto, Ontario, Can. M6R 1M3. Email is, rwc@dickeng.com

Bob Cumming



Figure 2

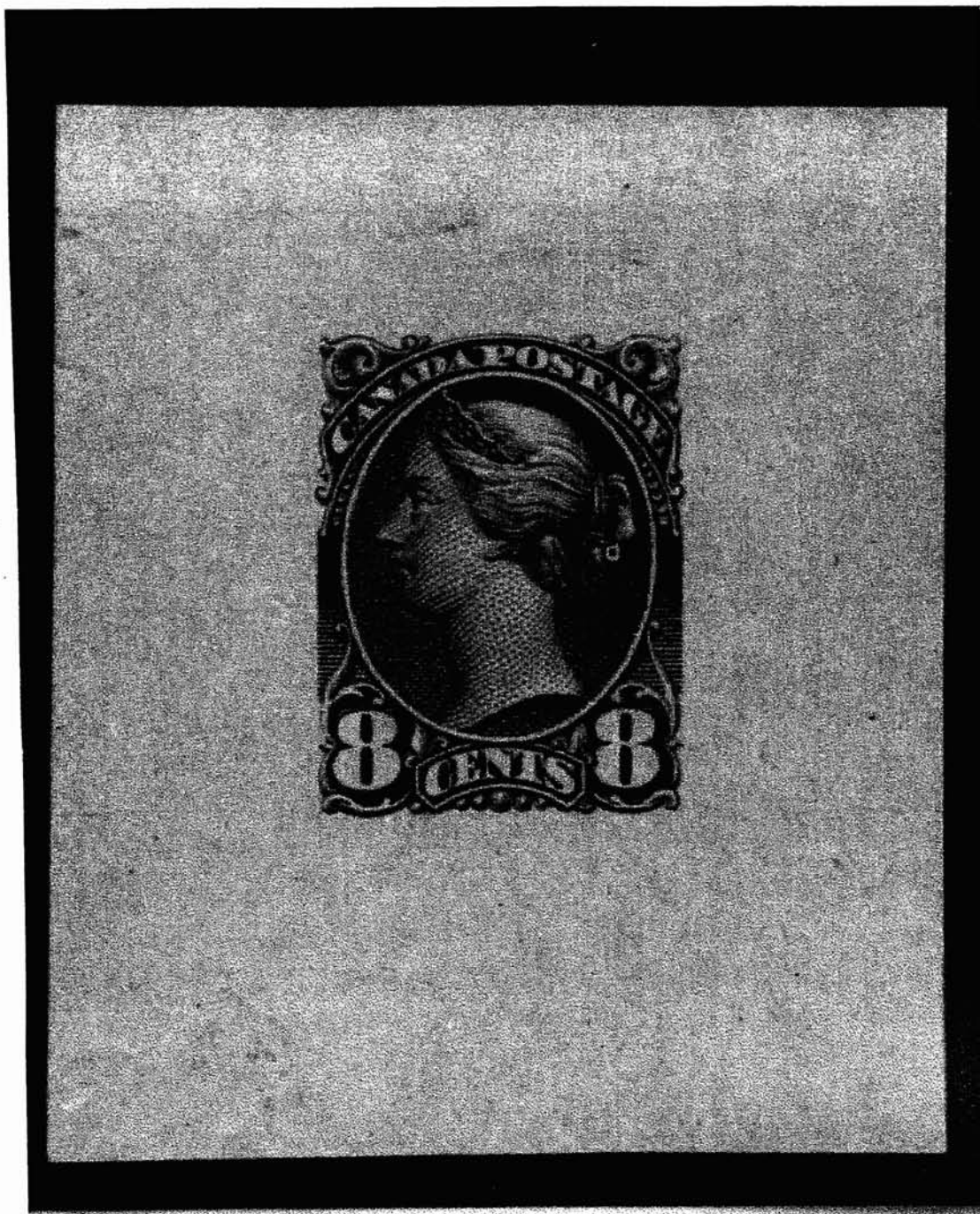


Figure 3

Commentary

John Hillson

While Mr. Cumming is to be commended on his attempt to identify plate printings from anonymous plates, a considerable amount of what he has written appears to be based on speculation and occasionally with touches of naiveté.

For example, the stamp was issued on August 1, 1893. He describes an "imperf" dated Nov 6, '93 which must be genuine because of lack of plate wear. One would hardly expect to find plate wear on a stamp so recently issued. I must confess I have yet to see a genuine used single imperf; the usual give away is one close margin together with three good ones. The only undoubtedly genuine mint ones seen have all been selvage copies, and Mr. Lawrence Gibb, who is the only likely source of used, always used pairs.

The New England Stamp Company who "acquired" all the imperfs other than the single sheets of each value presented to Mr. Gibb, did not use any of their stock on correspondence.

But to continue, what facts are actually known about the Eight Cents? There was one master die, as for all Small Queens*, one transfer roller instead of the usual three, on which one presumes there were the usual two reliefs, four plates, and an issue of just over 6,660,000 stamps during its life. And that is it.

First question, why were four plates made? Eight 3-cents plates made in 1892

had nearly 319 million stamps produced from them in the same period while at the same time two 2-cents plates took care of the bulk of over 50 million. Clearly four plates were not needed for such a low quantity actually produced. So how many were actually used, one? Or two?

Perhaps Boggs gives a clue when he stated in his major work the two plates were made for this value. This was the wrong figure but he must have based his conclusion on something, possibly information on how many plates were actually used - but now I am speculating, but it seems reasonable.

Differences are alleged that help to identify printings from the four plates. It is suggested that one of the reliefs was used to make the first two plates, and the other the second two. There is no way of telling if that is correct, or if one relief was used for all four plates, or even if both reliefs were used alternatively subject by subject, on each and every plate. The reliefs would be identical twins. No record of procedure exists.

The characteristics of Plate 1 are described and it is then said it wore quickly and was retired, though here the author makes the quite unsubstantiated statement that it "was used later, but that may have been accidental." The problem I have is that apart from colour, identical characteristics can be found in some of the slate and blackish slates of 1896 and 1897, and there is no sign of wear.

Nor do plate proofs which were presumably pulled from the first plate

evince the rounded "E" top described, although one can find this in printings scattered throughout the period. What may have been overlooked is that not only was the original colour weak, probably too viscous, but the paper used in 1893 and 1894 was very poor quality and did not print well. It is this that gives the worn appearance of the earlier stamps, rather than actual plate wear.

Regarding the suggestion that two plates would be used together as "probable" - why? This is pure guesswork. If the printers had wanted to print off four hundred subjects at a time they would have made the necessary plates - they had only just got round to a single pane 200 subject plates, and in any case as already pointed out, the numbers printed were low in comparison with the lower value stamps. Furthermore, all these plates were the same size - 18.5" x 11.5" so "setting up" a press was a simple matter of taking one plate off and putting another plate on. And what is the "unique shade" that the putative plate 4 gives rise to - if in fact that plate was actually ever used?

Could I also point out that corrosion gives rise to pitting, as on the 10-cents and the "B" pane of the Montreal 6-cents. It does not make lines broader. What does is either overinking or re-entering. The Half-cent is a notable example of the coarse lines of shading to be seen after its repair.

To sum up, while Mr. Cumming is to be applauded on a valiant attempt, he presents little fact that cannot be

disputed. It remains a mystery as to why four plates were made for such a low output, unless it was in anticipation of the printing contract being renewed yet again, also as to how many were actually employed. Flights of fancy are fine, but perhaps a little caution should be exercised before rushing into print.

* One master die per denomination. The so-called "rejected essays" of the 2-cents and 6-cents recorded in the Pratt and Minuse book on proofs are not the work of the British American Bank Note Co. which even cursory examination will show. They are either essays from an unknown source who was angling for the printing contract, or facsimiles, and rather poor ones at that, or out and out forgeries. I incline to the view that they were the last.

Bob Cumming's Reply

Dear Roy:

Thank you for forwarding the criticism of my article by John Hillson. I am surprised by his attitude, but it makes some sense if he feels that I am usurping his territory. One thing I have been sure of from the start is that he has done no research of the 8c. He has been parroting information published by others. It was partly the paucity of information that attracted me to the stamp and partly the wide colour range.

Mr. Hillson's remarks are valid concerning the lack of corroborating

evidence, and perhaps we should discuss it. Except for colour, I can provide enlarged photocopies of the stamps that have led me to the tentative conclusions that are the basis of my articles. I don't know if it would satisfy a sceptic like Hillson though. He doesn't want to admit that the first plate could be badly worn and the second slightly worn. Is his mind fully closed, or can he be persuaded? I guess we will find out.

Chairman's Column

Ron Ribler

"BLOTTING PAPER" AND THE THREE CENTS SMALL QUEEN

Perhaps the least understood and rarest of the three cent Small Queens is the one described as on thick, soft, almost blotting paper, Unitrade 41i. Almost all the representations of this stamp in auctions and dealer stocks are wrong. Identification of the stamp is not difficult if you know what to look for in the paper.

The paper has no mesh and is thicker than the regular papers about .040 inches thick as compared to .032 for the usual papers of the issue.* The color is a dark rose and the stamps are off center.

A further complicating factor is that another variety exists that is not listed in Unitrade. That is the

stamp on thick, soft paper, the one most often described erroneously as 41i.

If this variety were listed, we would have less confusion and more accurate description of the varieties. Most people apparently pay no attention to the footnote in the listing.

Part of the confusion arises from the fact that many collectors and dealers are unaware of the mesh on the wove paper. The mesh can be seen by holding the stamp oblique to the light and appears as small lighter colored dashes. Meshes on the issue are horizontal, vertical and diagonal.

The reason for the differences is that the paper was cut differently, but apparently not intentionally to produce the resulting varieties.

It is apparent that very little of the blotting paper was used on the Small Queen issue. Further, it is probable that no more than one sheet of the stamps was used for each of the one- and three-cent stamps, which would make the variety scarcer than even the perf. 12.5.

In my 25+ years of collecting this stamp, very few have surfaced that can be described as Unitrade's 41i. How many have you seen?

*- This appears to correspond with Duckworth's Paper 8 in the Large Queens-ed.

Editor's Column

Roy Sass

I received a copy of the e-mail that Steven Perch sent to Bill Burden regarding Bill's web site on Constant Plate Varieties of the Small Queens. I took a look and I must say it is most impressive. Bill has posted many of the plate varieties listed in the R&S book and in a size large enough for us to see clearly the dots, lines, scratches and such.

The web site is organized by denomination. A click in the box labeled for a value brings up a table of the R&S numbers. The dark numbers indicate the varieties that Bill has posted and the ghost numbers are there for varieties still to be obtained. Click on an active number and a screen comes up with the photo of the stamp, earliest known date of use and last known date of use, shade and other details.

Bill describes the site as a work in process. However, as it is now, it is a valuable resource tool for collectors of these varieties. Check it out at www.wgburden.com.

When I was in Paris in July, I strolled through the open air stamp dealers' market and found the pictured one-cent Small Queen post card. It is postmarked Halifax JY 12 82 and delivered to the Industrial School in Halifax. I don't think there's anything particularly exciting about it. I bring it up to illustrate the point that material for our collections can be found anywhere in the world.

One of our members must be a high school math teacher. Along with his dues for the next 15 months, he gave me the algebraic proof that if C\$8 pays for 12 months, C\$10 is correct for the 15 months' term.

We are dropping three members from our study group for failure to pay dues. The code above your name on the mailing labels is not a membership number but the date your membership expires - 0702 means July 2002, 0103 is January 2003 and so forth. There are some members whose codes end in 01 whose memberships have expired. If this applies to you, please remit your dues to me as soon as possible so you can remain a member of the study group.

CORRECTION

Roy:

I note that you added (Scott #5, #10) to my letter in response to John Hillson's article in Confederation #20, this should of course have been (Scott #2, #5, #10 and #13).

Richard Thompson

AND THIS JUST IN.....

Ron Ribler Wins
Gold at BALPEX

Collection to be Auctioned

Study Group Chairman Ron Ribler took home the gold medal at BALPEX for his exhibit of the 3-cent Small Queen. The exhibit also took the BNAPS award.

Ron has been collecting and specializing in the 3-cent SQ for some 25 years. In 2000, his work was described and illustrated in his book "Canada's Three Cents Small Queen 1870-1897," published by Philatelics Unlimited, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

Ron has decided to put the collection up for auction sale. He said, "After 25+ years, it was like giving up a child, but I felt I could do little more with it."

The 3-cent SQ collection has been consigned to Matthew Bennett Auctions to be sold in the November or December sale in New York City.

Ron has also consigned other material to Robert A. Lee for auction.

Collectors interested in obtaining some of Ron's "children" should contact the auctioneers for catalogs.