

Confederation

The Newsletter of the Large and Small Queens Study Group

Number 24

May 2003

Forwarded Mail

Chairman's Column

Ron Ribler

Among the many aspects of postal history is mail not delivered to the original location but to at least one more address. Mail that does not leave the mail stream but is redirected to an alternate address is called Forwarded Mail.

In today's mail system, mail is forwarded free if the postal authority has change of address information, or if the mail is delivered and a forwarding address is available at the original location.

In the era of the Small Queens, mail was forwarded free if the post deliverer retained possession

of the letter. If the letter left the mail stream additional postage was required. That is called re-mailing.

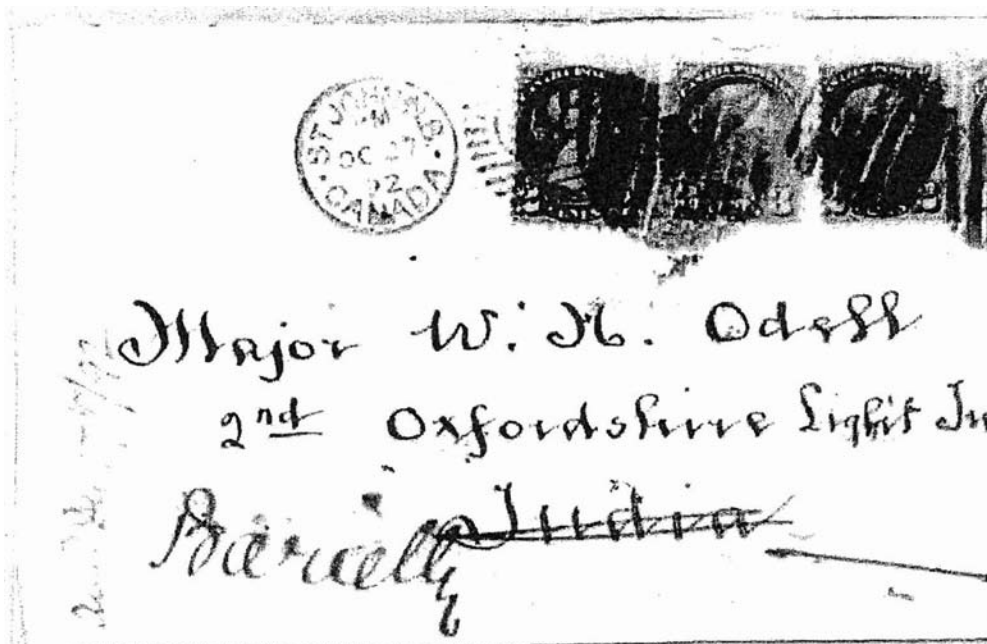
Collecting redirected mail can be a most interesting and challenging element of postal history. All covers tell a story if one is willing to investigate. Covers are a written record and often lead to interesting ancillary knowledge.

For example, the double rate UPU cover shown here was mailed from St. John NB on October 27, 1982, to Major W. H. Odess of the 2nd Oxfordshire Light Infantry in India. No city is included in the address. It appears someone penned an address in red ink and then another. The first was

scratched out.

The major was apparently on the move. The back-stamps indicate the letter was sent via London, arriving in India via Sea Post Office C, then to the Bombay DLO, on to Tuongo, Rangoon, Burma and finally to Barielly, India. The docketing on the left side indicates the mail finally was received and answered December 27, 1992.

The curious collector might ask what was happening in the region at the time and who was the Major? Researching archives and other sources could reveal that this is a historically important document but it is more likely just an unusual example of the diligence and reliability of the postal service.



COMMENTARY

By John Hillson

Some Reflections on the Eight Cent Small Queen

One of the major attractions offered by the Small Queens, whether one is a postal historian or, like me, a mere stamp collector, is the intellectual stimulation derived from trying to work out what happened and why. Until Bob Cumming's recent articles in *Confederation* on the 8-cent, I had regarded it as a rather dull and uninteresting short-lived stamp. Yet as circumstances turn out, it is anything but.

Why, asks Mr. Cumming, do the plates have no imprints? A good question though his answer that they were farmed out to the British American Bank Note's major rival is a bit of a non sequitur. But what about the other questions? Why were four plates made? Why did the Post Office actually pay for two of them? Why were all four sent for destruction in 1903 when the Post Office could lay claim to only two?

Let's look at the background for the moment. In 1891 when the printers were fighting to keep the contract they so nearly lost to the Canadian Bank Note and Engraving Co. not only did they have to reduce their charge for printing but, and I am indebted to Bob Cumming for pointing this out, the specification for the capability of the plates was increased to 7 million before repair and 5 million after.

That is three times the Post Office's original figure of 4 million in total, a figure that 100-subject plates had shown were well within their capacity, so the new

figure for 200-subject plates was not unreasonable.

Sometime in 1893 the decision was made to issue a new 8-cent stamp and this is the crux of the matter. The only reference I can find to that is in Howe's 1912 book where he says it was taken four years after the May 1889 Postal Act. We know 8-cent stamps must have been being printed in July 1893 at least, to meet the official issue date in August.

We also know the lead time to produce a postage stamp was around four or five months. The clearest example of this is the time it took to get out the Five Cents Small Queen. The decision to produce the Eight Cents with an August deadline would have to have been taken before May, but perhaps only a month or two before. What we have is a rush job.

The printers had a suitable vignette, facing left instead of right, to draw attention to the stamp's unique dual purpose. They had indeed had it since their early days at Ottawa and it had been used to adorn various publicity sheets, one of which is illustrated in Boggs on page 225. So that was a help.

But why, having imposed a new requirement of plate capability, did the Post Office go ahead and pay for two new plates for an annual requirement of something like one and a half million stamps? It makes no sense, except in the context of time.

To produce the initial requirement two plates were needed; one could not have been enough. So why did the printers make four plates? This makes no sense as they

were not altruists and would have had a pretty good idea of the annual requirement and knew better than anyone else just what they could get out of a plate.

The original printings, not to put a fine point on it, were lousy, and that is from plates that later produced good work. Clearly the ink gave problems. My guess is that in the rush to meet the deadline two unsatisfactory plates were made and rejected. Which is why, in due course, all four were sent to the knackers yard. Two of them were useless anyway.

One could argue that early printings were from the two less satisfactory plates, and later ones from two replacements. The difficulty I find with that is the same characteristics are to be found in both early and late printings, such as the constant position on all printings of the position dot to be found just off the tip of the extreme lower right ornamentation and the fact that the plate proofs are perfectly satisfactory. However it is just possible, perhaps some hard evidence is needed.

And why no imprints – or counters for that matter? There was not enough time for frills and as I have pointed out elsewhere, once a plate was in production its periphery was never touched except to stamp in the letter "R" indicating it had been repaired. (In two instances of the Two Cents, plate check letters were added – but that had been twenty years before.)

One other thing. Usually three transfer tools were made for each denomination but only one was made for this stamp. A rush job.

Question and Answer

I came across an unusual looking stamp in my accumulation of Small Queens recently. It is the 6-cent and by its paper and color appears to me to be a second Ottawa printing. It is poorly centered and I had put it with other star/flower cork cancelled stamps.

As I looked at it, I noticed that the vertical perfs on the left side are odd. The perforation holes are smaller than usual and, according to my perf gauges, the left side is perf 12.5. The top and bottom are perf 12. The right side perfs about 12.2.

I measured the width of a dozen or so 6-cent Small Queens and the range (from inside of perf hole to inside of perf hole) is 18.0mm to 20.5mm. The perf 12.5 stamp measures only 17.5mm across, so it could have been faked from a large margin copy.

I have attached a scan of the stamp along with another of about the same coloring for comparison. The stamp on the left is normal, perf 12 all around. The stamp on the right is the odd one.



Any opinions out there?

I did get fooled by a very large margin 5-cent that was cut down to resemble an imperf. I paid \$65 at a mail-order public auction for it in 1979, and only looked at it carefully after it was too late to return it. I should have realized how unlikely it was to find a used 5-cent imperf, but it was a good lesson.

David Ross

My guess is that the odd looking perfs are the result of someone playing with the stamp. They are not from the printer. I would be interested to hear what others say. 12.2 is the normal perf 12.

Ron Ribler



Letters

Thanks for the efforts in putting out an interesting newsletter! I'm sorry that I wasn't able to arrange my schedule to get out to Spokane, as it's always nice to see fellow Large & Small Queens collectors.

The inclusion of some of the pages from Herb McNaught in the last issue was a real treat and I look forward to seeing more of his and other collections reproduced in the newsletter. I have seen Herb's exhibit on several occasions, but it's nice to have the hard copies in front of me.

Along those lines, I was wondering whether it would be feasible to set up a schedule (in much the same way as some service clubs arrange for speakers) of the study group members who would, in rotation, provide one or two items from their collections for inclusion in the newsletter? It could be done in alphabetical order, with, say, two members "appointed" ahead of time for each newsletter. If you think this is a possibility, why not make an inquiry in the next issue of *Confederation*?

In the meantime, I'd appreciate your reactions.

All the best!

J. A. (Jack) Forbes, Jr.

Editor's column

Roy Sass

In this newsletter, we continue with copies from Herb McNaught's award-winning Half-Cent Small Queen exhibit. These are pages showing the "Imperforate Between" pair, some of the re-entries, and the stitch watermark. I'll try to draw what the stitch watermark looks like.

Jack Forbes has suggested that members make photocopies of several pages from their collections for publication in the newsletter. I like that idea as I would like to see how others prepare and write-up their album pages. My guess is that very few of our study group members limit their collections to pre-printed pages.

Also, we have members who have exhibited some of their Large and Small Queens. Ron Ribler has written several times about the fun one can have by exhibiting. I invite you to make some photocopies and send them to me.

I know that novices like me tend not to exhibit because we don't know what our pages should look like and

what we should or should not include. Those of you who have exhibited can be our "mentors" if we can see what you have done.

Who are our experts on the other values from these series? Herb McNaught is an expert on the half-cent; Ron Ribler is an expert on the three-cent; Ted Bowen is the expert for the ten-cent. Who specializes in the two-cent, the five-cent or the six-cent?

The BNAPS Book Department has now completed copying Herb McNaught's exhibit and has issued it in the BNAPS Exhibitor's Series. It is available from:

Auxano Philatelic Services,
207-525 11th Ave SW,
Calgary, AB T2R 0C9.

In color, the price for BNAPS members is CDN\$53.05 or US\$34.05. The black and white version is CDN\$25.15 or US\$16.15. I've ordered my copy!

I'm out of things to put in the newsletter. I need articles, questions, letters, pictures, and comments. The next newsletter is up to you.

How To Reach Us

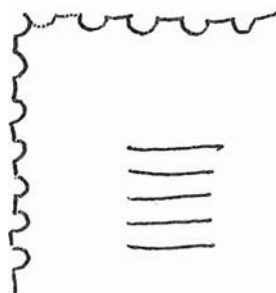
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