

Confederation

The Newsletter of the Large and Small Queens Study Group

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A Tale of Three Registered Covers Or Why I Have Almost Come to Like Postal History

John Hillson, FCPS

As a simple dyed in the wool traditionalist, I have looked with awe and disbelief at displays of stampless covers, all looking exactly the same and all covered in squiggles, with highly improbable explanations annotated as to their meaning like "2/4" means the letter travelled a distance of umpteen miles and was quadruple rated, or some such, when deep down one knows that actually what it meant was that the recipient made a note on it that the milkman was owed 2/4d. Or that the mail carrier had lost two out of the original four pages the letter consisted of originally. But one has to admire the diligence and ingenuity of the owner of the exhibit in going into such detailed and fanciful explanations *on every page displayed*.

So much for stampless, but what about postal history bearing postage stamps? Is it an exaggeration to say that the more travelled it is, the more addresses and forwarding addresses that have been scored out, the more desirable a cover seems to be? And if it has been



2¢ RLS perf. 12 x 11.5 cancelled with fancy 8-petalled flower of Blyth (D/S 62a), postmarked 13 Jan 1882.

Figure 1

chucked on a fire and hastily rescued the postal historian is in seventh heaven. Well, perhaps not. But it is true to say that, while they may exult over the denominations of the stamps on cover, particularly to exotic and far flung places, they rarely look at the stamps.

Which brings me to my tale and three auctions, all of which took place in 2003. Having received the expensive catalogue from Maresch advertising their January auction - expensive not only in their production but because they usually wind up costing you money (in fact one can sometimes heave a sigh of relief when on examination you find nothing you want - this time). Among other tempting items I noticed two attractive registered covers bearing 2¢ Registered Letter Stamps. *continued on Page 2*

Registered Covers

Continued from Page 1

Why would I want another one, you may ponder, I already had one. But both these had pretty, fancy floral cancellations (lots 781 and 798) and not even traditionalists are totally immune from P.H. I decided to hazard a couple of bob, though I was surprised that #781 had a higher estimate than #798. The latter appeared to be more desirable, the stamps being better centred, but then what do I know. Anyway 798 (Fig. 1) fell to me but not 781, which fetched a price beyond what I thought it was worth. A mystery. Anyway, I was pleased with my purchase.

Late summer and Chuck Firby's expensive October Sale catalog arrived, and there was, to my surprise, the cover, now lot #571. Why was the lot being disposed of so quickly? The answer astounded me and for once I am serious.

Apparently its new owner had built up quite a formidable collection of money letters and registered mail but had been told by an American judge that Canadian Postal History would never win a top award so he was selling it all. To me that is about the silliest reason for collecting anything, but I suppose people are just pot hunters.

I digress; I bid, I succeeded (at about the level I was prepared to go in the Maresch sale), and I found out why it had been more highly regarded than the Blyth cover. It had scarceish R.P.O. backstamps. (Figure 2). The R.L.S. is the usual

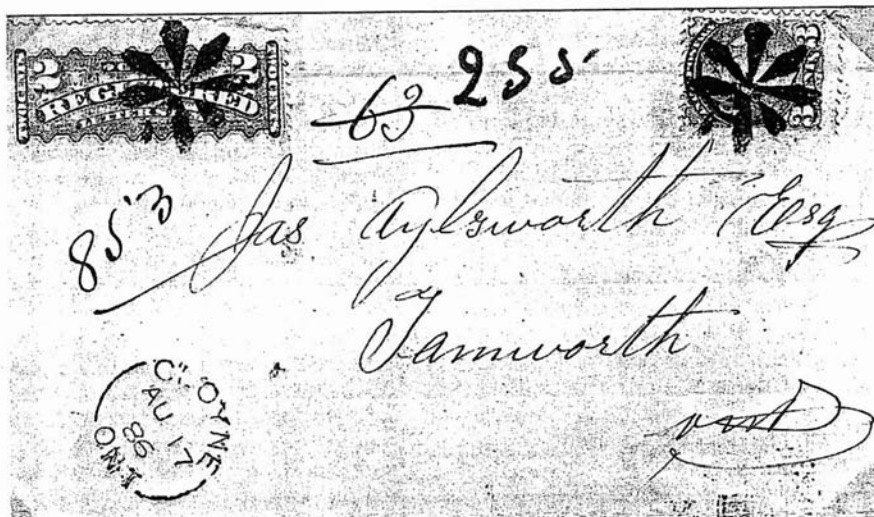


Figure 1: RLS, perf 12, cancelled with fancy 8-petalled flower similar to D/S 56. P.O. backstamps include RR-59 and O-175 but the latter reads 'NORTH'.

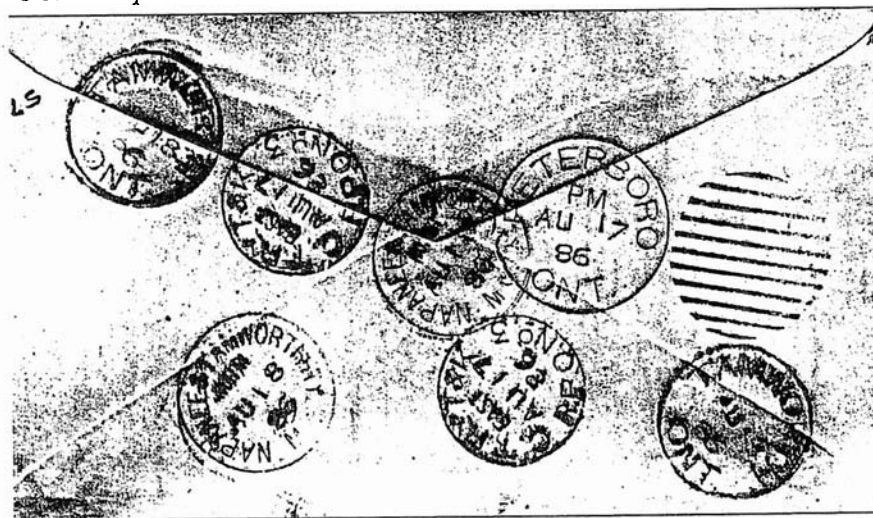


Figure 2

perf 12, but it does have all these backstamps, which the Blyth cover does not. But the Blyth cover has a 2¢ R.L.S. which gauges 12 x 11.5 and, as a stamp collector, that is the more desirable. The owner who put the two covers into the Maresch sale certainly could not have known; one assumes he or she had not looked.

Bob Lee also issues

expensive catalogues. (I used to tell my wife whenever I bought anything that "it was money in the bank," only recently has she discovered that it was not *my* bank to which I was referring.) This time it was the Horace Harrison sale.

I was interested in acquiring one of the four examples in the sale of the

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Commentary & Corrections

John Hillson

See you used some of my illustrations, but you made a mistake with the major re-entry. It is from the same 1871 plate as the bisect, is in yellow brown, not chestnut brown, and is of course the well known position 67, or as I prefer the Row 7/7 variety.

I have all the majors on the 6c and examples of all the 5c/6c. but if there is anything also you want let me know. Incidentally apart from the right stroke on the 10c, I have all the listed varieties on the Small Queens. John

(Sending color copies across the internet seems not to be as reliable as I had hoped. Maybe I need a new printer. --ed.)

QUESTIONS

I collect covers with Montreal-printing Small Queens and have a few with postmarks without year dates. I was wondering if study group members knew how long Montreal postmasters used these "yearless" date stamps.

Thanks for your help.

Robert Pinet

I would like to hear from other members their tips for sorting Large Queen papers. Duckworths' photo plates can only do so much.

*Paul Young
Bracebridge, ON*

--- Me, too. --ed.

Answers

To answer Dr. Frank's questions about his cover (figure 1) in the last newsletter, a check of the Postal Archives web site for Norton NB provides the following information:

Name of Office : Norton
Federal Electoral District: Kings (New Brunswick)
Subsequent Office Information:
Way Office to Regular Office - 1895-03-01
Changed to Raymond 1900-01-01

Postmasters

John Hays (PM in 1868) until 1874-10-12 Death
A. B. Hays 1875-03-01 until 1893 Death
E. F. Hays 1893-11-31 until 1899-08-15 Resignation
John Raymond 1899-10-01

Thus the P.O. name was "Norton" and the postmaster's name was "Hays" (Hays in the official record and not "Hayes"). The address then is to "J.G. Hayes" at the Hayes P.O." a way office of Norton.

Robert Lemire



6c red brown Imperforate Upper Left "Six Cents" counter block of six with reversed "R" at upper left.

Chairman's Column

Canada's First Perfins

Ronald I Ribler

Perfins were unofficially in use from 1885. In 1895 Canada officially authorized their use for identification purposes.

The timing of their use coincided with the Small Queen issue (1870-1897). The history and technical details of perfin production are treated in "Canadian Stamps and Perforated Initials" by Johnson and Tomasson (2), so will not be detailed here. Rather, the purpose here is to expand on some of the information described in that reference.

The first perfins were:
W. J. Gage Co., Toronto (W.J.G)

Intercolonial Railroad, Montreal
(ICR on 2 lines)

Sun Life Assurance Co. of Canada,
Montreal (S. L. A Co. on 2 lines)

J. H. Stiles of Montreal (J.H.S. on 2 lines)

The W.J.G perfin was first seen in 1889, the others in 1893.

Rarity Factors:

The rarity factors listed in Johnson & Tomasson of all the early perfins are much too conservative, since they include perfins on stamps other than the Small Queen issue. If we consider the scarcity of the perfins on the Small Queens, consider these factors:

The W.J. Gage is the most common, with fewer than 1,000 in total, most of which are not on the Small Queens.

The Intercolonial Railway has a rarity factor of C, or no more than 30 reported.

The Sun Life perfins have been reported to have a rarity factor F, or less than 1,000, almost all of which are not on the Small Queens..

The JHS (J.H. Stiles) perfin also has a rarity factor of C, or 30 or fewer reported.

The SLA and the JHS perfins are, in fact, so scarce on all except the 1-cent Small Queen issue that few collectors report ever having seen either of them.

Complicating Factors Affecting Rarity

The numbers are virtually meaningless because there are so many variations (they come inside out, upside down, backwards, and in many positions) and they are not found on all values, so the relative scarcity of some is much greater than others. Considering those variables, it is easy to describe at least 20 possible variations. Precancels on perfins of the issue also have been reported.

The most common are, naturally, on the low values, but I have never seen a JHS on any but the 1c SQ stamp. I have seen the 1c on a cover, which is also rare. I believe Mr. Stiles used only the 1c stamp to send drop letters in the Montreal area to people he wanted to attend the fair he was promoting.

I have also never seen the SLA perfin on a 3c stamp - or any other for that matter. I have been looking for years. These are among the scarcest of the SQ stamps, but perfins have had such a bad name for so long that many collectors don't bother with them. Even the judges at shows often do not understand the SQ perfins.

They are quite scarce on the higher values as well. I have seen a couple of 6c WJG, but that is about it. I am not saying they do not exist, but they sure are hiding if they do. I have seen a couple of fakes, but they are not hard to detect.

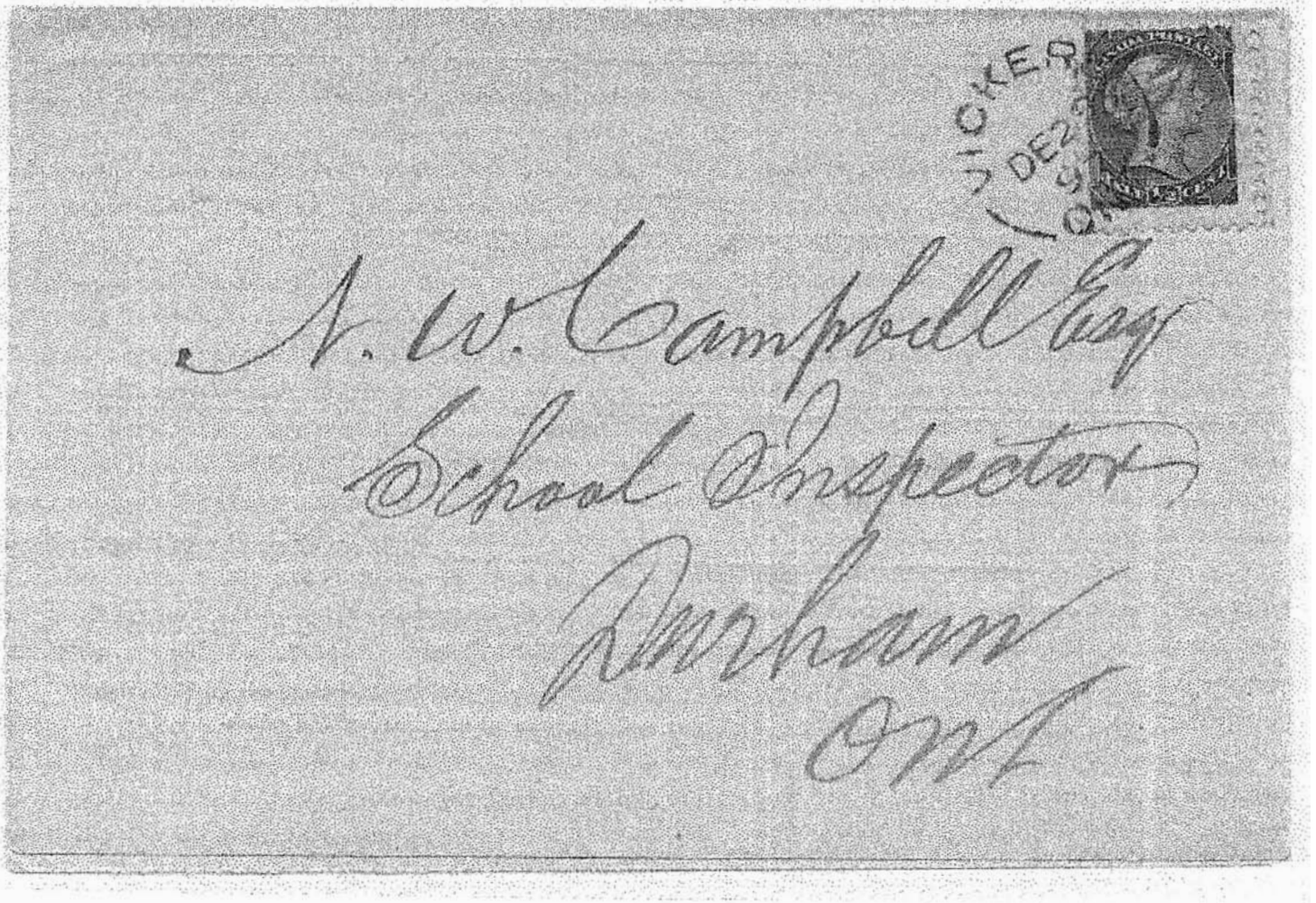
Any of the Small Queen perfins on cover are scarce or even rare, probably having a factor of B (fewer than 30 reported) or better.

References

1. Arfken, George B., Canada's Small Queen Era 1870-1897, 1980, Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation, pp. 408-411.
2. Johnson, J.C. & Tomasson, G., Canadian Stamps With Perforated Initials, 4th Ed., 1985, The Unitrade Press.

An Interesting Half-Cent Rate Cover

Bill Burden



I recently acquired the attached item. Note the date, DE 29 97.

This is a 1/2 cent usage that has me confused. I showed it to several people at the Royal in Halifax recently, but no one seems to be certain about it.

Any help you, or other members, may be able to provide would be most appreciated.

Editor's Column

Roy Sass

Only TWO #32's

Back in October, Ron Ribler and I were contacted by the folks at Shreves Philatelic Galleries. They told us that their November 5-6, 2004, auction had some interesting Large and Small Queen stamps available for sale. They asked for a list of our membership so they could send us the auction catalog.

When I received my copy of the catalog, I was disappointed by the relatively small number of LQ and SQ stamps that were actually available.

What caught my eye, and gave my pulse a big jump, was the last part of the description of a 1-cent LQ on laid paper, "...exceeded in rarity only by the 2c Green on laid paper of which there are only three used examples known."

THREE?

Everything I've read about the 2-cent on laid paper said there were only two. Had another one been found while all of us weren't looking?

I e-mailed John Jamieson to ask if he knew of a third copy. John also caught the description in the catalog, mentioning to me that he only knew of two: the one he sold to the "Bingham" collection (the Ferrari-Kanee- "Bayfield" copy) in 1998 and the Firth- "Foxbridge" copy which is in a Los Angeles collection.

John contacted Rex Bishop at Shreve's for a clarification.

Mr. Bishop replied that there are only two. He had a conversation during which he got the impression a third copy had been found, which led to the catalog description.

Alas, he jumped to a incorrect conclusion and acknowledged that only two copies are known.

Bill Burden sent in a scan of a 1/2-cent rate cover about which he has some questions.

It was postmarked on December 29, 1897 at Vicker (or Vickers) Ontario. It was addressed to Durham, Ontario.

From what I've learned since I became editor of the newsletter, a half-cent rate was applicable for "Any Householder" along a carrier's route. A letter in-city or, unofficially, to an adjacent city, was 2 cents.

Could the fact that the letter was going to the school inspector have any bearing?

One of the things I like about the illustrated list of stamps available from Saskatoon Stamp Centre is that I can clip pictures of interesting items to use as space fillers in the newsletter.

The block of 6 cent stamps was available for C\$3,500 or US\$2,940. My wallet can't afford it but my eyes can still appreciate it.

Letters

I suspect that you have had many others write to you already about the photo on page 3 of the June newsletter.

The right stamp is one of the major re-entry positions - the weak bottom frame line looks to be approximately in alignment with the left stamp - the "bit high" presumably is the misalignment. Note the line in the letters "NADA POS".

That is a tremendously interesting pair!

*L. Frederick Moose
MacLean, VA*



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Registered Covers

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anomalous 2¢ registered fee rate to the U.S.A. that existed between 1 March and 30 April 1888, but typically as there were four I could not make up my mind which one to go for and wound up not even bidding. However I did get a nice registered drop letter franked with a 3¢ Small Queen posted during the correct period, that is before use of Registered Letter Stamps became compulsory, and a cover posted during the two month period of the 2¢ U.S.A. rate mentioned above but franked with a 5¢ R.L.S., in other words three cents overpaid

(Figure 3). The late lamented Horace had been quite excited by this overpayment and the lot was well written up, except for a rather important detail which I shall come to.

Because the drop letter is dated July 1876 I checked that the perf of the 3¢ was 11.5 x 12 which with that date it most likely would be - that is the sort of useless information we stamp collectors carry around in our heads - and so it proved. I then decided to check the 5¢ R.L.S. on the other cover expecting it to be around 12.25 x 12 because of its date of use. Well, it wasn't, it turned out to be 12 x 11.5, a stamp so scarce I do not even

have it off cover, so I suppose, being a stamp collector and not a postal historian, I will just have to wash it off.

Do you really think that would be daft? But is it not daft to ignore what just might be lurking on your precious covers? On second thoughts, please don't bother to check, please, please don't.

This article is reprinted from "Maple Leaves," The Journal of the Canadian Philatelic Society of Great Britain, April 2004 issue, by the kind courtesy of the editor and also the author.

Figure 3



5¢ RLS, perf 12 x 11.5, on cover dated 2 April '88 i.e. during the period of the anomalous 2¢ registration rate to USA (1 March - 30 April 1888).