

# Confederation

The Newsletter of the BNAPS Large and Small Queens Study Group

Number 37

October 2008

## The So-Called “Thick Soft”, “Blotting” or “Almost Blotting” Paper on the Small and Large Queens

Yannick Cartier and Jim McCormick

A blotting paper is a type of paper commonly used to absorb an excess of substance from the surface of an object. There are two papers found on the large queens (LQ) and small queens (SQ) issue which are sometimes referred to as “blotting” or “almost blotting” paper. The first of these two papers is more commonly referred to as the “thick soft paper” (TSP) or sometimes “soft white paper” and is so far known only on a few small queens. The other paper is found on the ½ cent LQ. We have observed several similarities between these papers and therefore the purpose of the current article is to describe and compare these papers in an effort to provide the reader with a more comprehensive knowledge.



**Figure 1. First stamp: “TSP” on three cents red carmine SQ. Second stamp: “almost blotting” paper on ½ LQ.**

**Figure 2. Magnified view of two stamps shown in Figure 1 demonstrates a large number of fibers at the edge of both copies sometimes referred as “hairiness”.**

Both papers should be classified as wove papers and almost invariably display a horizontal grain, which varies from fairly distinct to barely visible. The surface is slightly rough and the tone usually varies from off white to yellowish (Fig.1). The paper not as white or soft as some prior reports would have led to believe and both papers are more prone to toning and not as soft as Duckworth paper 8, which is often referred as the “soft white paper”. One of the most noticeable characteristics of these papers is the highly fibrous appearance found on most examples, which is sometimes described as “hairiness” (Fig.2).

So far our observations would seem to indicate that the “blotting” or “thick soft” paper found on the SQ issue and “almost blotting” paper found on the ½ cent LQ is the same paper. However, the paper found on the SQ issue is almost invariably thicker and more opaque in comparison to the ½ cent LQ. As a result of a combination of relative softness, thickness, and fibrous nature of the paper, a large number of copies are found with retained perforation discs, sometimes described as “confetti” (Fig.3). Individual stamps were difficult to separate which explains why the perforation is often incomplete and/or irregular. On several examples a characteristic “beveled” appearance of the perforation is seen, indicating that the pins had a tendency to push through the paper rather than make a clean cut. Most examples are also poorly centered (Fig.3).



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**Figure 3. Three cents example on "TSP" demonstrates clipped perforations, which is either the result of an impatient postmaster or frustrated sender. Magnified view of another copy demonstrates characteristic beveled appearance of the perforation with part of the design missing.**

So far most copies of the ½ cent LQ we have examined are fairly well centered. The paper is usually thinner, the design is clearly visible from the back, and the characteristic "beveled" appearance has not been observed. A range of thickness is observed on almost all papers and therefore this finding on its own does not necessarily imply a different paper. Under magnification, embedded brownish fibers and/or inclusions are often seen on the ½ cent LQ (Fig.4). So far we have found a similar appearance on a single SQ copy out of 24 examined. The shades on both the SQ and LQ denominations are deep but a sharp impression and presence of a definite grain would suggest that the term "blotting" or "almost blotting" paper should be abandoned.



**Figure 4. Half-Cent LQ on the so-called "almost blotting" paper. Magnified view of gum side shows embedded brownish fibers and/or inclusions.**

In conclusion, the so-called "thick soft" or "blotting" paper found on the SQ issue and "almost blotting" paper found on the ½ cent LQ is very similar and possibly the same paper. We believe that some of the terms sometimes used to describe these papers are more historical than accurate and as such should probably be discarded. The "TSP" has been reported on other LQ denominations. However, we suspect that some prior reports are possibly due to confusion with thick copies of Duckworth Paper 8. We would greatly appreciate the opinions and commentaries of other collectors in that regard.



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## A Great New Addition to My Western Cover Collection

John Burnett

Pictured here is a recent addition to my Small Queen collection. It is mailed from Cornwall, Ontario and addressed to Germanson Creek, Ominica, British Columbia. The envelope has been franked with three 3¢ and one 1¢ Small Queen stamps. The transit strike at New Westminster gives the date as November 14, 1871. This date is critical in analyzing this cover.



First the 1871 date is after British Columbia joined Confederation but before the promised railway had reached BC. The cover is overpaid as mail within Canada was 3¢ per half ounce. Without other markings, we have to start making some assumptions and here are mine as concerns this cover.

The letter left Cornwall, traveled down the Grand Trunk through Detroit and onto Chicago where it connected to the Union

Pacific to San Francisco. At San Francisco, it took a steamer north to Port Townsend in Washington Territory. From Port Townsend it was forwarded to New Westminster (see a copy below of the New Westminster Colonial strike from the back of the envelope). This strike has caused some of my BC collector friends to swallow so I guess it's a pretty scarce cancel.

Why New Westminster you ask? 1871 pre dates a post office at Vancouver! At this point the letter would have normally been taken up the Fraser and Thompson Rivers to Cache Creek and from there overland by horseback to the Omenica section of BC. (Omenica was an area in Northern BC where placer gold mines were in operation). Now the date becomes critical, November, all the roads in the north are closed for the winter.

It is probable the Postmaster at New Westminster knew the miners went west to Skeena to work the fish factories for the winter, and so he forwarded this letter to Skeena.

In checking sailings for coastal steamers I found the SS Otter sailed from New Westminster, just a couple of days after this letter arrived there.

Even though this letter greatly overpays the rate it is a terrific addition to my western mails section of my Small Queen collection.



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## Census of Perforations – Small Queen Issue

Jack Forbes (jafbrs@aol.com)

The attached table is a census of the perforation combinations (measured with old Instanta gauge) observed through the study of the blocks in my exhibit and the remainder of blocks in the collection. The first number in each column indicates the number of blocks; the second indicates the total number of stamps in those blocks.

HORIZ.	VERT.	½¢ SQ	1¢ SQ	2¢ SQ	3¢ SQ	5¢ SQ	6¢ SQ	8¢ SQ	10¢ SQ
11.5	11.75		2 (10)				1 (6)		
11.5	11.85		1 (4)	1 (6)	2 (8)	1 (4)	1 (6)		
11.5	11.9				3 (18)	1 (6)	2 (10)		
11.5	12		3 (17)	2 (13)	9 (38)		3 (12)		
11.55	11.9				3 (12)				
11.55	12				1 (4)				
11.6	11.8		1 (12)		1 (4)				
11.6	11.9				5 (20)	1 (4)			
11.6	12		1 (4)		1 (4)				
11.65	11.85		1 (6)		1 (6)				
11.65	11.9				2 (10)				
11.65	12				1 (4)				1 (10)
11.7	11.8								
11.75	11.65		1 (4)						
11.75	11.75		1 (4)		1 (6)				
11.75	11.85		1 (4)						
11.75	11.9		2 (14)						
11.75	11.95				1 (4)				
11.75	12				1 (4)	1 (6)			
11.75	12.15				1 (4)				
11.85	11.75					1 (8)			
11.85	11.85		4 (22)		9 (40)		1 (10)		
11.85	11.9								
11.85	12			1 (4)	2 (10)				
11.9	11.8					1 (4)			
11.9	11.85			1 (8)	1 (4)				
11.9	11.9	3 (24)	1 (5)		5 (22)	2 (10)	6 (30)		1 (4)
11.9	11.95	6 (94)	1 (6)	1 (4)		1 (6)	1 (6)		
11.9	12	7 (38)		5 (41)	2 (10)		3 (12)	1 (4)	2 (12)
11.9	12.1			1 (6)		4 (24)			2 (14)
11.9	12.15			1 (4)	1 (9)	2 (8)		1 (4)	
11.9	12.2					2 (10)			

Census of Perforations – Small Queen Issue contd.

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HORIZ.	VERT.	½¢ SQ	1¢ SQ	2¢ SQ	3¢ SQ	5¢ SQ	6¢ SQ	8¢ SQ	10¢ SQ
11.9	12.25				1 (8)				
11.95	11.75					1 (4)			
11.95	11.9	5 (30)		1 (4)			2 (13)	1 (4)	
11.95	11.95	8 (46)			1 (4)		1 (4)		1 (6)
11.95	12	5 (24)		1 (4)	1 (5)	2 (16)	1 (6)		3 (14)
11.95	12.05								
11.95	12.1					1 (6)			
11.95	12.15					1 (6)			
12	11.75			1 (4)	2 (12)				
12	11.8		1 (6)						
12	12.15		20 (128)	8 (94)	66 (309)	3 (22)	1 (4)	22 (125)	5 (22)
12	12.2		1 (8)			2 (8)		1 (4)	
12	12.25		1 (6)	2 (10)	20 (152)	3 (12)		2 (8)	
12.05	12	1 (6)			1 (6)				
12.05	12.1				2 (12)	1 (8)			
12.1	11.95								1 (4)
12.1	12	2 (8)			2 (12)	1 (8)			1 (4)
12.1	12.05								1 (4)
12.1	12.1		3 (22)	1 (4)	2 (10)	5 (22)			5 (26)
12.1	12.15				1 (4)	1 (6)			
12.1	12.25				1 (4)				
12.15	12					2 (8)			1 (4)
12.15	12.05								2 (4)
12.15	12.1				1 (4)	1 (8)			
12.15	12.15		1 (4)		1 (4)		1 (5)		
12.2	12					1 (4)			
12.25	12.15				1 (5)				
12.25	12.25					1 (8)			

*Editor's note: Jack's original spreadsheet contains information on the 12 ½ cent and 15 cents LQ (used in SQ period also), the RLS and the Widow Weeds. To fit this in the newsletter we reduced the table to include only the Small Queens. Space permitting, we will publish the balance of the table with the next newsletter. In the meantime, the entire table of raw data is available electronically on request.*



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## The 3 Cents Small Queen: Rose Shades on Shoemaker's Paper B

Yannick Cartier

The first printings of the 3 cents issue on Paper A were progressively replaced, somewhere at the end of 1870, by the well known shades on thick soft paper as well as a paper known as Shoemaker's paper B. This particular paper is a thin to medium crisp paper which has a tone usually varying from off-white to yellowish. It was used during the end of 1870 and most of 1871. The appearance is slightly rougher than paper A and the grain is usually faint and almost invariably vertical in orientation. Probably due to similarities of shades with earlier and later printings, this paper has been slowly forgotten and the roses shades of 1870 and 1871 have been lumped together as "37 a".



**Figure 1. Shoemaker's paper B**



**Figure 1. Bright rose shade on Shoemaker's paper B dated Nov 30 1870**

Much earlier reports of "37a", however, are probably due to confusion with earlier "pale rose" or "pale Indian red" shades on paper A which is the earlier high quality horizontal wove paper found on the 3 cents SQ issue. This should come as no surprise, since the shades are similar and difficult to distinguish based on description alone or correlation with color charts (which do not fully reflect the complexity of this particular issue). Some printings on Shoemaker's paper B also share similarities of shades with copies on the well-known thick soft paper as well as slightly later printings on the so called "thin soft paper".

In my opinion, for the purpose of accurate classification and/or dating, the rose shades

of the 3 cents SQ printed on Shoemaker's paper B should be considered distinct printings. To date, the earliest report of a rose shade on Shoemaker's paper B is uncertain. Only two different printings have been originally reported by Shoemaker on this particular paper - a "rose" shade on a copy dated Dec 24 1870 as well as a "rose red" shade on a stamp dated Dec 29 1870. However, I personally own a cover dated Nov 10 1870 as well as a cover dated Nov 30 1870 exhibiting a rose shade on Shoemaker's paper B. Slightly earlier dates on vertical grain paper, possibly Shoemaker's paper B, have also been reported.



**Figure 3. First stamp: Earlier printing on high quality horizontal wove paper. Second stamp: Later printing on Shoemaker's paper B.**

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Further research is needed in order to clearly establish how many different printings can be found on Shoemaker's paper B. One thing for certain is that there are several more distinct printings than the original two reported by Shoemaker. As for most of the SQ issue, the classification of different printings is rendered difficult by the scarcity of some shades as well as expected variations found on the same printing. Allowing for this, at least two distinct pale rose or pale rose magenta shades are found; in my opinion a paler rose shade is also a distinct printing.



**Figure 4. First stamp: Pale rose magenta.  
Second stamp: Pale rose.**

At least four and probably additional printings ranging from a "deep bright rose" to a "bright rose orange" shade are also found. I do believe that all these shades are genuine and distinct. In fact I have been able to almost perfectly duplicate all of them within the acceptable variations encountered for the same printings.



**Figure 5. Rose shades on  
Shoemaker's paper B**

As previously noted, further research is needed in order to more accurately classify these printings and record the earliest known dates for each individual printing. I would be happy to have the input of other SQ collectors in that regard.

## Miscellaneous Items

Glenn Archer, Editor ([glennarcher@hotmail.com](mailto:glennarcher@hotmail.com))

We have relatively few articles "in the can", so to speak, so any questions or items you wish to share are welcome. We have had a few of these articles waiting for a while – I prefer to allot one article per person per issue but both of Yannick Cartier's contributions are related, specifically to that fascinating transition period of Large Queens to Small Queens. I think you'll enjoy the read.

I could not attend BNAPEX 2008 but should be able to make the convention in Kingston next year. Bill attended and has more to add in his column. Additionally I'd like to add that Guillaume Vadeboncoeur compiled a 20+ page census of four-ring cancels, far more than I could summarize here but it's available in .pdf format on request. We are still looking for newsletter dues and a complete email list; please forward to Bill Radcliffe at your convenience.



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## Chairman's Column

Bill Radcliffe ([bsbvp88@hotmail.com](mailto:bsbvp88@hotmail.com))

First I would like to thank everyone who attended the Study Group meeting in Halifax. We had 14 members attend where Vic and I gave a talk on the 15 cent Large Queen census and showed fifteen-cent covers from our collections. There was, among other topics, a discussion on the periods of use of the three-cent rose carmine shade of 1888-89. All 14 members gave me an email address, so instead of mailing the newsletter I can email it and save a good deal of money for the group. If anyone would like to receive the newsletter via email please (re)send me an email to the address above.



The Small Queen cover I'm showing is a cover I almost passed by. I found this cover in a dealer stock at BNAPEX in Edmonton. I thought someone was playing a game with it until I took a closer look and realized that the rose carmine 41a was added later to the cover. The cover was first mailed to Mariville Quebec around November 8, 1888, which would require 5 cents postage - three cents first class and two cents for the registration.

The recipient was not at Mariville and the letter was redirected to Chicopee Mass. USA. It was returned to Beebe Plain and required 5 cents instead of 2 cents registration. The postmaster should have removed or covered the 2c registered stamp and added a 5 cent registered stamp but chose to add the 3 cent 41a to make up the 8 cent rate to the US. This makes the cover an illegal usage of the 2 cent registered stamp to the US. With two different 41's on the same cover, I think is quite a nice find.

