

Confederation

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Discovery of a 10¢ Small Queen UPU Surtax Rate Cover to Trinidad

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George B. Arfken has previously described in great detail the mechanics behind the UPU surtax^{1,2,3}. In addition, Arfken also authored⁴ the first published survey recording usages of the 10¢ Small Queen, a survey later updated by Charles J.G. Verge⁵.

Of the 70 surtax covers bearing at least one example of the 10¢ Small Queen recorded in the original Arfken survey, 69 were sent to India – virtually if not all from the Baskerville and Fitch correspondences – leaving only a single cover to all other destinations. The Verge update includes a December 1885 cover from Toronto to Falmouth, Jamaica, potentially paying a 10¢ surtax rate.

The cover illustrated in Figure 1 has recently been acquired by the author and does not appear to have been recorded in any literature.



Figure 1: 10¢ Small Queen cover to Port of Spain, Trinidad – A new find?

The envelope was shipped by a Member of Parliament (MP), as initialed in the lower left corner, and was addressed to the Auditor General in Port of Spain, Trinidad. The envelope was originally postmarked by a HOUSE OF COMMONS / MR 9 / 1883 CDS cancel. If you look closely at Figure 1, the House of Commons postmark is clearly struck under the 10¢ stamp. Members of Parliament were provided with free franking privilege, but this privilege only extended to letters sent within Canada. As such, this letter was not mailed free of charge.

¹ *Canada's Small Queen Era 1870-1897*, George B. Arfken, Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation, 1989, pp. 368-369.

² *Canada and the Universal Postal Union*, George B. Arfken, The Unitrade Press, 1992, pp. 55-65.

³ "The UPU Surtax", George B. Arfken, PHSC Journal #133 – March 2008, pp. 16-24.

⁴ "Postal Usage of Canada's 10¢ Small Queen", George B. Arfken, BNA Topics, No. 5 1993, pp. 32-46.

⁵ "More uses of the 10¢ Small Queen", Charles J.G. Verge FRPSC, BNA Topics, Vol. 57, Number 3, July-Sept 2000, pp.4-9.

Discovery of a 10¢ Small Queen UPU Surtax Rate Cover to Trinidad contd.

A 10¢ stamp was added and cancelled by a duplex cancel [Cloutier DON-1205, used from 1881 to 1886⁶] on the same day.



Fig. 2: New York backstamp dated MAR 11



Fig. 3: St. Thomas backstamp, 20/3/1883

The envelope was sent overland from Ottawa to New York, arrived there two days later on March 11 (Figure 2) and started its journey by sea, reached St. Thomas, Danish West Indies on March 20 (Figure 3) and finally arrived in Trinidad on April 7.

For what rate was this cover liable? A quick survey of Arfken's *Canada's Small Queen Era 1870-1897* does not detail the applicable rates to Trinidad; the book generally details rates for destinations for covers known at the time of publishing. Another potential source is the *Tables of Rates of Postage in Canada* as at August 1st 1878, the date Canada joined the UPU. This table has been reproduced by John Hillson⁷ and others. Trinidad is listed as a destination at the rate of 10¢ per half ounce via New York (as is the case with this cover) or 12¢ per half ounce via Halifax, further stating that mails were sent from New York direct to St. Thomas about twice a month, and via Havana or Bermuda about also twice each month. The 10¢ per half ounce rate is also mentioned in an article from Brian Murphy⁸.

The next question is: When did these rates change? The answer to this question appears to be less certain. Arfken does mention that "*for the Caribbean area, Central America and both coasts of South America, all surtaxes disappeared July 1, 1887*". I am not sure whether this means that all surtaxes disappeared exactly on that date, or simply by that date – i.e. could the 10¢ surtax rate to Trinidad have been reduced prior to March 1883? At the moment, I do not have any information that would lead me to believe the rate was reduced to 5¢ per half ounce prior to this letter being mailed. The envelope is made from a thin brittle paper stock and, had it weighed more than a half ounce, would likely show much more edge wear and damage having contained multiple sheets of paper.

In conclusion, I believe this cover represents the first recorded 10¢ surtax rate to Trinidad as well as being one of only a few 10¢ Small Queen values on cover paying a surtax rate to a destination other than India. Ironically, it seems that most of the 10¢ surtax covers other than to India are paid with a combination of values rather than the single 10¢ Small Queen stamp.

I would appreciate any comments or information which would add to, support or question any part of this research project.

⁶ *Catalogue of Canadian Duplex Cancellations*, Stéphane Cloutier, Third Revised Edition, 2005, Conestoga Press.

⁷ *The Small Queens of Canada*, John Hillson, Second Revised Edition, 1989, Southbourne Printing Co. Ltd., pp. 91-98.

⁸ "The West Indian Mail: Late 19th Century Covers between Canada and the British West Indies by the Halifax Packets and by other Routes: Part I", Brian Murphy, BNA Topics, Jul-Aug-Sep 1999, No. 3, pp.29-44.

Census of Perforations Used in the Small Queen Period – Part 2

Jack Forbes (jafrebs@aol.com)

The attached table is additional data provided at BNAPEX 2008 by Jack from his perforation study (old Instanta gauge) of blocks. The number in parentheses represents the total number of stamps while the first represents the number of blocks. It includes RLS stamps and some of the Large Queens used in the Small Queen period.

Horiz.	Vert.	12.5 Cent LQ	15 Cent LQ	20 Cent WW	50 Cent WW	2 Cent RLS	5 Cent RLS	8 Cent RLS	DLO
11.5	11.75								
11.5	11.85								
11.5	11.9								
11.5	12		2 (8)						
11.55	11.9								
11.55	12								
11.6	11.8								
11.6	11.9								
11.6	12								
11.65	11.85								
11.65	11.9								
11.65	12								1 (4)
11.7	11.8								1 (4)
11.75	11.65								
11.75	11.75								
11.75	11.85								
11.75	11.9								
11.75	11.95								
11.75	12								
11.75	12.15								
11.85	11.75								
11.85	11.85								
11.85	11.9	1 (6)	1 (4)					1 (4)	
11.85	12								
11.9	11.8								
11.9	11.85							1 (6)	
11.9	11.9	7 (30)		1 (4)					
11.9	11.95	1 (4)							
11.9	12		1 (4)	1 (4)			1 (4)		1 (4)
11.9	12.1								
11.9	12.15								
11.9	12.2								

Census of Perforations Used in the Small Queen Period – Part 2 contd.

11.9	12.25								
11.95	11.75								
11.95	11.9	2 (8)	1 (4)						
11.95	11.95								2 (8)
11.95	12				2 (8)				
11.95	12.05				1 (4)				
11.95	12.1								
11.95	12.15								
12	11.75								
12	11.8								
12	11.85					1 (12)	1 (4)		
12	11.9		4 (16)	1 (15)	3 (20)		2 (10)		
12	11.95		1 (12)		2 (10)				
12	12		51 (233)	10 (52)	14 (70)	2 (18)	7 (28)		
12	12.05								
12	12.1		1 (4)			2 (8)			
12	12.15								
12	12.2								
12	12.25								
12.05	12		3 (18)						
12.05	12.1								
12.1	11.95						1 (10)		
12.1	12		3 (17)		1 (4)	9 (42)	1 (4)		
12.1	12.05								
12.1	12.1		1 (12)						
12.1	12.15								
12.1	12.25								
12.15	12					4 (16)			
12.15	12.05								
12.15	12.1					1 (4)			
12.15	12.15								
12.2	12								
12.25	12.15								
12.25	12.25								

Foreign Cancels on Canadian Stamps – Any Reader Interest? *Glenn Archer, editor.*

Dave Lacelle (email_address@swmpatico.ca) has an excellent and very “exotic” collection of foreign cancels on Canadian stamps, for which he is entertaining offers either for the whole collection or individual items until the end of February. Both Bill and I have scans of these available on request, or you may contact Dave directly if interested. Having seen the collection, I can assure you many of these are quite unusual and would spice up any early Canada collection.

A Return to the Eight Cents Small Queen

John Hillson

Some time back (possibly Confederation No. 23) I pointed out that very little about this stamp makes any sort of sense, particularly the fact that four plates were made, two paid for by the Post Office Department, when one would have met the entire requirement. I suggested then, and still hold the opinion, that the whole thing smacked of being a rush job, and that two of the plates made were probably duff...

Of course one may never know how many plates were actually used in printing the Eight Cents SQ, but there is one piece of evidence in my collection that shows at least that one plate was in use for the entire four years or so the stamp was in production.

I have five copies of the major re-entry, one on cover, showing the range of shades from the frankly awful early, to the creditable late. I had not realised until recently that those with computers can get *Confederation* in full eye-watering and mind boggling colour, but as they can, it is actually possible for those lucky ones to see the examples in all their colourful glory. So here they are.



The Major Re-entry
Left '8' 'CENTS' and
Bottom of oval show
Doubling, also top left

Does that prove only one plate was used?

No. Nothing is ever that simple. Nevertheless it is strong evidence that once production was under way, only one indeed was in commission.

Registered Letter to USA rated 1 oz. Postmarked at Maitland MY 3 95
Adhesive has the major re-entry; note also nude 'R'



The “Vanishing Left Lower Corner” On The 3 Cents Small Queen

Yannick Cartier (yaca@sympatico.ca)

Most collectors know of the missing left lower frame line on the 12 ½ cents Large Queen. The purpose of this article is to report a similar variety found the 3 cents Small Queen which demonstrates a fine example of progressive loss of design elements in the left lower corner. This variety consists of apparent progressive “vanishing” of the frame line, scroll work, and part of the quadrille mesh around the left numeral (Figure 1).



on

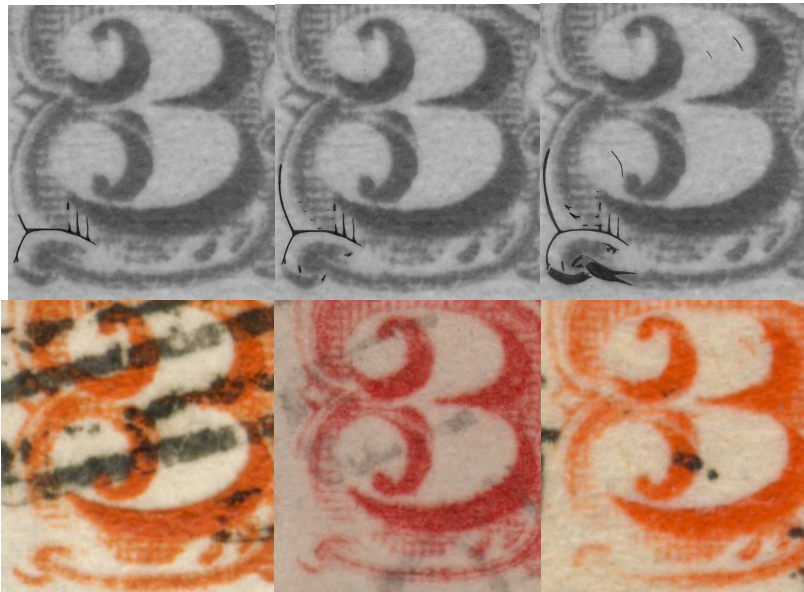


Figure 1. Magnified views of the left “3” in three different examples of the three cents small queen which seem to demonstrate progressive “vanishing” of the frame line, part of the quadrille mesh, and scroll work around the three. Upper row is a schematic representation on which the missing areas have been highlighted. Third stamp also seems to demonstrate scratches in the left three which may indicate further plate damage.

At first glance, the above observations are interesting and would seem to indicate a progressive plate wear in a constant and specific position. However, it raises a significant question with a complex answer: how can one prove that this abnormality is constant and comes from a specific position on an issue having a life span of about 30 years when it is estimated that up to 33 different plates were used from the early to the late Ottawa printings?

So far, after careful examination of several thousand copies, the following observations can be made:

1. *In general, when the overall printing quality is poor, the design in left lower corner tends to be affected on all printings.*
2. *The combination of a missing frame line, scroll work, and part of the quadrille mesh is uncommon and has not yet been observed on early Ottawa printings.*
3. *Other patterns of apparent and usually lesser plate wear in the left lower corner are relatively common but usually spare the quadrille mesh (cross-hatching).*

It is interesting to note that the more striking left lower corner printing abnormalities are often found on the 1888 rose carmine shades, suggesting that this abnormality arises from a plate used late in the Montreal printing period.

One would expect more significant plate wear to be found at the end of a printing period. However, my observations indicate that the abnormality is also found on orange vermillion shades of the second Ottawa printing period. In order for this flaw to arise from a constant and specific position one would have to assume that this particular plate was transferred from Montreal to Ottawa.

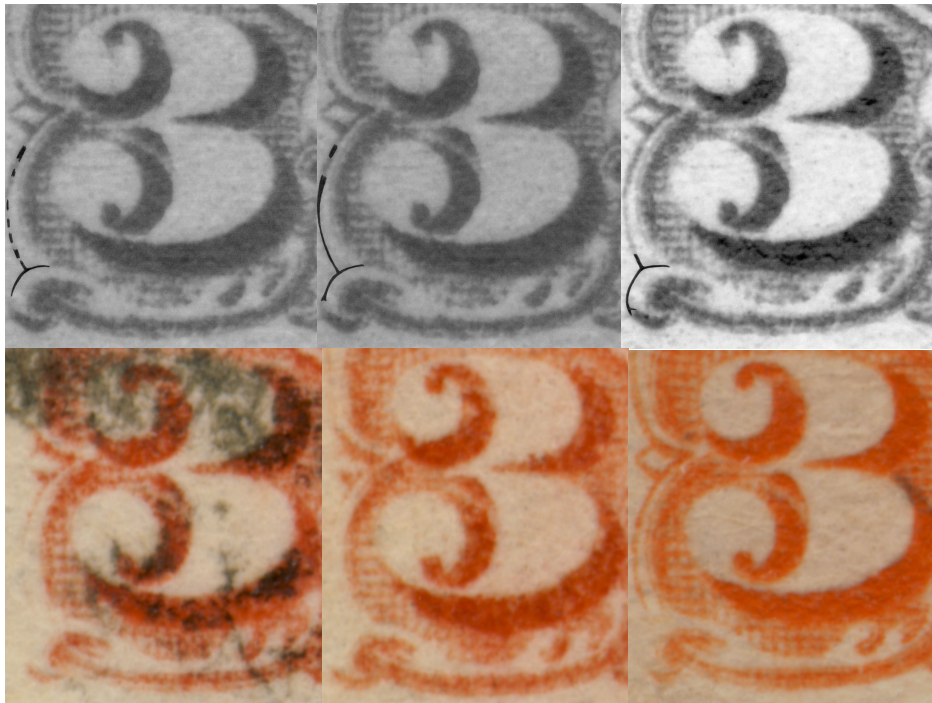
The "Vanishing Left Lower Corner" on the 3 Cents Small Queen contd.

Figure 2. Schematic representations and magnified views of three different stamps demonstrating apparent plate wear in the left lower corner. In all cases, the frame line is more or less absent. Note preservation of the quadrille mesh on all three examples which is different from images depicted in Figure 1.

In summary, left lower corner printing abnormalities are common on the three cents Small Queen issue and almost certainly indicate some degree of plate wear in several different positions. However, a more pronounced "short transfer" variant demonstrating a combination of a missing left lower frame line and part of the quadrille mesh and scroll work is uncommon and not found in the early Ottawa period. My preliminary findings are that this variety arises from a specific and constant position and from a plate used during the Montreal era. However, finding the variety also on some copies from the second Ottawa printing period implies that a particular plate transferred from Montreal to Ottawa for further use. More research would be required, however, in order to prove these facts beyond reasonable doubt. I would appreciate, as always, the input and commentaries of other collectors.

Misc. Comments and Editorial

Glenn Archer, Editor (glennarcher@hotmail.com)

Please accept my best wishes to you all for the Holiday season and for 2009.

I was saddened to hear of the passing of two senior members of our collecting fraternity late in 2008 – Harry Duckworth and Tom Southey. I would like to offer my condolences here to their families and friends.

On the suggestion of one of our readers, I made a few judicious changes to this newsletter. Firstly we decided for several reasons to issue electronic copies in PDF format – just about everyone with a computer seems to have a compatible version of Acrobat Reader, and the (free!) online conversion software from Word to PDF format works well. It also cuts down on memory size – some editions have come perilously close to exceeding the ~10 MB cap for email attachments. (Please excuse the technical jargon). Secondly, I changed the header to first-page-only so to save a bit of space.

I thank those who contribute to the newsletter, and hope they can excuse our occasional prodding for interesting fresh articles. It took some doing to fulfill our promise of four newsletters for the 2008 calendar year!

This edition is heavy on the Small Queens. I have a few promises for more Large Queen articles, including one or two that I resolve to put together on my own, space permitting.

Chairman's Corner

Bill Radcliffe (bsbvp88@hotmail.com)

Here is a cover I bought in the Talman auction. I believe it is the largest use of # 23 one cent large queens on cover. It pays the 4 X domestic rate from Belleville to Toronto. It has a strip of 3, 4, and 5 for a total of 12 cents. What makes it fit my collection rather well is the fact it has 12 strikes of two-ring 13's on it. Which I believe is the most 2 ring strikes on one cover as well. I was quite happy to start the New Year by adding this cover to my collection.

