

Confederation

The Newsletter of the BNAPS Large and Small Queens Study Group

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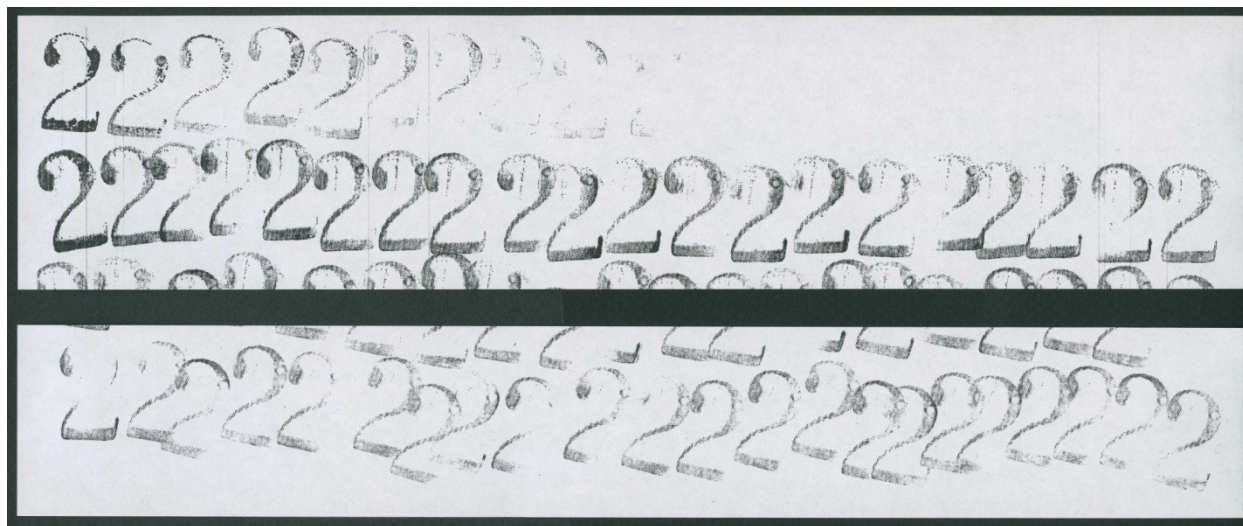
The Use of Silk on 2-Ring Obliterators in 1869 and Later

Alec Globe (alecglobe@gmail.com)



Distinctive patterns are found on many strikes of Montreal's 2-ring 1, Toronto's 2-ring 2, Hamilton's 2-ring 5, Whitby's 2-ring 39, and Paris's 2-ring 57 hammers, which were brought into use to obliterate the Large Queen stamps issued in 1868 (1). The texture has been interpreted as the imprint of cloth covering the brass hammers, or offprint from a dry ink pad.

The *Report of the Postmaster General for the Year Ending 30th June, 1870* (Ottawa, 1871, p. 175), records an expenditure of \$1 for "Silk for dated stamp" paid to the Toronto Postmaster, Joseph Lesslie. As an experiment, I purchased some brass numeral handstamps from the stampless period at John Sheffield's auction of November 22, 2015 (lot 566). Fewer than ten legible strikes could be made from the bare metal with one inking (first line of the illustration). Once silk was tied around the hammer, more than 140 strikes with ribbing were possible without returning to the ink pad. The second line of the illustration shows the first twenty strikes of the hammer when covered with silk, the third line shows strikes 121 to 140 from the same inking. No offprint was made from the cloth on any areas except the number.



In 1869, Montreal's 34 clerks processed around four and a half million of the forty-two million pieces of mail sent in Canada, Toronto's 23 clerks cancelled around three million pieces, and Hamilton's 8 clerks handled around one million pieces (2). That meant approximately 12,800 items cancelled daily in Montreal, 8,700 items daily in Toronto, and 3,300 items daily in Hamilton. Given those volumes, covering hammers with silk to prolong strikes would make work much more efficiently. In England, clerks were expected to cancel around a hundred letters per minute (3). That number would decrease significantly with frequent returns to the ink pad.

The Use of Silk on 2-Ring Obliterators in 1869 and Later *contd.*

Silk was very expensive, running between \$6.75 and \$10.50 per pound wholesale at New York in 1869. However, silk thread is very strong. By contrast, less durable cotton cost only 27 to 35½ cents per pound (4). The 2-ring 2, 5, and 39 strikes above all show the distinctive linear ribbing of fine grades of silk, then and now. The Montreal 2-ring 1 above and the Toronto 2-ring 2 below all show a markedly different speckled texture, which could be from either low grade silk, or from the coarse muslin and poplin cottons popular in the nineteenth century.



1869 non-ribbed cloth 2-ring 2 strike



Recent strike
through coarse
cotton towel

Recent strike
through 1 layer
of cheesecloth

Recent strike
through 4 layers
of cheesecloth

Some say that cheesecloth was used to cover the hammers. The thin cotton of that material is woven in open squares that let moisture through. When placed over a hammer, it leaves irregular hatchwork, not the textures seen on 2-ring strikes. It is unlikely that the soft, separated threads of cheesecloth could withstand the pounding of thousands of strikes per day. Both modern cotton and cheesecloth leave some speckling away from the number; silk does not.

Some philatelists have proposed that the pattern comes from dry ink pads. A dry ink pad is just that—dry. How could a dry pattern transfer to a metal hammer and be sustained? The majority of 2-ring 1s and many 2-ring 2s—not just one or two strikes—have textured patterns. Could hundreds of thousands of cancels be made from dry ink pads? Eagle-eyed postmasters and inspectors would insist on replacing dry pads quickly to follow Ottawa's directive that stamps be cancelled to prevent reuse.

I have found cloth strikes only on 2-ring 1s, 2s, 5s, 39s, and 57s. (Do any other collectors have cloth strikes on other hammers?) Significantly, Toronto, Hamilton, Paris, Whitby, and Montreal all lay a few hours away from each other on the Grand Trunk Railway. The technique probably originated at one of those places, then spread along the line. Toronto is the likeliest possibility, because postmaster Joseph Lesslie and Inspector John Dewé were constantly exploring imaginative options, such as the Toronto fancy 2 corks. Montreal is less likely as the origin, because its postmaster relegated 2-ring 1 use to the circulars desk and decreased use after 1870 (5). It is easy to understand why large post offices like Montreal, Toronto, and Hamilton would pay for relatively expensive material to speed cancellation. Small Whitby and Paris were simply copying a progressive post office. Those two offices also followed Toronto's lead by having additional 2-ring and fancy number obliterators made locally (6).

References:

1. H.E. and H.W. Duckworth, *The Large Queen Stamps of Canada and Their Use*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Vincent G. Greene Philatelic Research Foundation, 2008), p. 218-9. The earliest recorded date for Montreal's 2-ring 1 is April 16, 1869, for Toronto's 2-ring 2 is March 27, 1869, for Hamilton's 2-ring 5 is April 5, 1869, for Whitby's 2-ring 39 is Aug. 28, 1869, and for Paris's 2-ring 57 is April 16, 1870. An example of a Paris 2-ring 57 struck through cloth is illustrated in *Maple Leaves*, 11.5, no. 101 (June 1966), p. 129.
2. *The Report of the Postmaster General for the Year Ending June 30th 1869* (Toronto, 1870), pp. 49-53, lists post office employees by name, position, and salary. Page 11 of the same report totals 42,382,720 pieces of mail sent in Canada during that calendar year. The *approximate* number of items sent by individual offices is estimated by using the percentage of each local post office's revenue of the total Canadian revenue for the year (*Report... 1869*, pp. 11, 58-94). The monthly reports of revenue and mail volume that were sent by local postmasters to the Post Office Department in Ottawa have not survived, because they totalled tens of thousands of sheets of paper per year.

The Use of Silk on 2-Ring Obliterators in 1869 and LaterReferences *contd.*

3. William Lewins, *Her Majesty's Mails: A History of the Post-Office, and an Industrial Account of Its Present Condition*, 2nd ed. (London, 1865), p. 267. A much less detailed description of operations in Canada was produced by the Post Office Inspector of the Toronto district, John Dewé, "Description of the Practical Working of the Post Office," in his *Canadian Postal Guide Containing Calendars for 1867 and 1868* (Montreal, 1867), pp. 11-18.
4. *Shipping and Commercial List and New York Price Current*, vol. 55, no. 62, Wednesday, August 4, 1869, page 246, columns 1 and 3.
5. Wayne Smith, "Latest Known Usages of Two-Ring Numeral Hammers," *Confederation*, vol. 61 (Dec. 2015), pp. 9-10. In an unpublished census of 5,845 covers with Large Queen stamps, Wayne Smith notes that Montreal 2-ring 1 strikes appear only on circulars, mainly with the 1¢ yellow LQ stamp. Specialist collectors have searched in vain for 2-ring 1 cancels on domestic and foreign letters that originated in Montreal.
6. For a locally made Whitby 2-ring 39 hammer, see Jim Hennek's copy in the Hennek sale of October 2005, lot 681. For Paris's 2-ring 57s and fancy 57s, see Stanley F. Cohen, "Not So Much a Postage Stamp... More a Way of Franking. Part I—The Numerals '57'," *Maple Leaves* 11.5, no. 101 (June 1966), pp. 128-31; and Graham Searle, "The Different Two Ring Numeral 57's of Paris, Ontario," *Maple Leaves* 34.6, no. 340 (April 2016), pp. 323-27. I am currently writing articles on 2-ring numbers with multiple hammers, and Toronto's 2-ring 2 and fancy 2 obliterators.

Perforation Varieties On The 5¢ Large Queen And 6¢ Small Queen

Richard Thompson

The Five Cents Large Queen:

- Unitrade lists 26 perf. 11½ X 12 vert. mesh and 26v horiz. mesh; I have found 11.6 X 11.9 and 11.6 X 12.1 each in with vertical and horizontal grain, vertical by far the most common.
- Unitrade also lists 26iv perf. 11¾ X 12; I have found 11¾ X 11.9 and 11¾ X 12.1 each with vertical and horizontal grain, again vertical being by far the most common.
- Unitrade also lists 26a perf. 12 X 12, in a footnote it is explained that 26a must measure at least 12.1 on the perf gauge and should be the same perf. on all edges; here I have found 11.9, 11.9 X 12.1 and 12.1 X 11.9, all with vertical grain.
- In an email exchange with Ted Nixon of the VGG Foundation Ted stated that he believed that a stamp perforated 11.9, 11.9 X 12.1 or 12.1 X 11.9 all would receive a clean certificate as 26a. He also stated that he had never seen a copy perforated 12.1 - this despite a persistent rumor that when Steve Menich was a member of the VGG expert committee he would not let them issue a certificate as 26a unless the perforations measured 12.1 all around.
- In my quest for a copy perforated 12.1 I estimate I have measured more than 1,000 copies (although some undoubtedly were repeats) and have found; 3 copies 11.9, 2 copies 11.9 X 12.1 and one copy 12.1 X 11.9. I would estimate that about 33% are perforated 11.6 X 11.9 or 12.1, 66% are perforated 11¾ X 11.9 or 12.1 and less than 1% are perforated any combination of 11.9 and 12.1. Additionally I would estimate that 99% have vertical mesh and less than 1% have horizontal mesh.
- If any member has a copy he or she believes is truly 12.1 on all four sides I would really like to see this item. I regularly attend major stamp shows (*editor's note*: Richard intended to have this article prior to the 2016 ORAPEX stamp show).

The Six Cents Small Queen:

There is a persistent rumor that an early printing of the 6¢ Small Queen exists perforated 12 X 11.5 *Maple Leaves* June, 1965; 11.95 X 11.6, *Confederation* January, 1997; 11.85 X 11.6 Hillson and Nixon 2008 and 11.85 X 11.6 *Maple Leaves* January, 2014 and others. This last reference states that the two known covers and other dated copies all come from 1873.

I have a copy perforated 11.85 X 11.75 dated MR/28/73 (see right). If any member has a copy he believes is truly 11.85 X 11.6 (or any other variation on 12 X 11.6) I would really like to see this item. Could a member bring forth a copy?



Comments on 'More Plating of the Six Cents Small Queen', Confederation Vol. 61

John Hillson FRPSL, FCPS

Editor's note: I encourage open dialogue and am happy to allow interested parties to air their differing opinions here but I reserve the right as editor to delete any content I think is offensive to others. I removed the last paragraph for brevity otherwise am publishing this in full, sarcasm and all, but had my reservations on reading it. Let's try to all get along shall we – GA.

I do have to wonder why in putting forward the oft repeated claim that the 'A' plate was simply a later state of the one and only 6c plate made in 1871, its protagonists completely ignore facts that can be checked. According to their lights although the BABNC knew two 6c and two 2c plates would be needed, in 1871 they made two 2c plates but only one 6c plate which had such remarkable properties that no other plate would be needed until after 1890, and even then that one plate was still in such good condition that it continued to give excellent service. There was a second plate, the 'ghostly head' which like a spirit appeared from nowhere at the end of 1873 and just as promptly disappeared, never to be heard of again but it did not really affect the 1871 plates time in service. How did it happen?

The answer apparently is that the impressions were burnished off, all except the position dots which were so heavily inscribed that they survived the process. At least that is how I read the explanation as to why the guide dots are generally touching, or almost touching the design lines on the 1871 plate, but are quite clear of the design lines in its 'A' plate re-incarnation. I hope that is a fair and accurate summary of the author's position. I presume also that the 'A' added 'sometime in the 1880s' was after the original images had been burnished off and re-entered.

First it stretches credulity that a man wielding a hammer and punch would strike such heavy blows that the indentations would be deeper than a transfer press exerting many tons pressure. Well I suppose Superman might, but I don't think he was on the payroll.

Second, burnishing off. Early collectors talked about burnishing off because they thought stamp plates were made of copper, similar to the material artists used in engraving their pictures, or copying those of the Masters. It is further confused because we talk about 'burnishing-off' – to clean a new plate with a hand tool to get rid of minor blemishes in the spaces between the stamp impressions.

Burnishing off the impressions from a mild steel plate is another matter entirely, as I have pointed out before, so let's look at what is involved. The POD has to give permission, because it is their property. Next, for accuracy, a grinding machine is needed, a piece of kit which would not be carried by the printers, so it would have to be sent to an engineering firm, under the supervision of the said POD. Finally, on its return to the printers, who would be responsible for meeting the engineer's invoice, the plate would be completely re-entered, and they would be able to charge the POD for only a repaired plate, instead of a brand new one, which under the terms of the contract, and in view of the numbers of stamps printed, they would be entitled to do. Commercial lunacy.

It gets even more interesting. An illustration of the 1871 plate Row 1/10 is shown with what is described as a re-entry, (though it appears to me to be slight under inking) along with 2 example of Row1/10 with what I have to assume is meant to be progressive stages of the same variety. Perhaps the author could explain how this phenomenon also survived the burnishing process along with the miraculous guide dot, or should it be dots?

Actually one is looking at part of one of the most compelling pieces of evidence that the 1871 plate and the 'A' plate were quite separate plates – even the position dots on the illustrations show no relationship to one another. On page 160 of Ted Nixon and my book is an illustration of the misalignment that exists between Row 1/10 and Row 2/10 of the 'A' plate, a misalignment that does not occur on the same rows of the 1871 plate. If one looks carefully at that illustration it will be seen why the siderographer entered R 2/10 where he did – it was because that is where the major guide dot – i.e. the heaviest one, is. Incidentally it is also directly above R 3/10, 4/10 etc. Similarly when he came to enter the very last impression on the row, i.e. R 1/10, he followed procedure again, resulting in the appearance of 2/11 being shifted to the left in comparison with that of the 1871 plate. Now this is fact, not ill-thought out fancy.

Comments on 'More Plating of the Six Cents Small Queen', Confederation Vol. 61 contd.

On page 159 is an illustration of the complete sheet where you can see that the only impressions aligned with 1/10 are Rows 9 & 10/10. This was of no moment to the printers, the POD, or to the public. But collectors like us jolly well should be bothered, because it is one piece of hard evidence. I will give you another - In my article in Vol 58, which I had hoped would end what is becoming an ever sillier argument, I pointed out that I have several 1st Ottawa examples, that is with perforations gauging 11.85 all round unique to 1st Ottawa, of stamps with 2 dots, as well as with one showing beyond argument, I would have thought, that two plates were in commission at that time. A strip of 3 is illustrated in that article, I have a single dot copy in exactly the same shade and perf on the same page in my collection. (*Illustrations of the page and details attached*) Look at the article and the two examples shown perf 11 ½ x 12, note that in both cases the position dot – the heavy one in the case of the 'A' plate example are so similarly placed. Ted Nixon has seen my material, as well as I don't know how many members of BNAPS who have been at one of the CPS of GB conventions when I have had the privilege of displaying Small Queens. I repeat, in the 1st Ottawa period, two plates were being used, one with a single dot, the other with two. Read Chapter Two in our book and note how the plates were prepared and you will see why it is not surprising that the position dots on different plates sometimes show similarities of position.



Finally let me deal with the illustrations. Beyond dispute, I hope, is that the norm was for plates to wear in use, be repaired as per contract, and finally be discarded and replaced as long as the contract for stamp printing lasted. The Six Cents was no different to any of the other denominations. By the time the 1871 plate was sufficiently worn to need repair, the 6c paid the 1/2oz cross-border rate, the same to the U.K. and double the domestic rate. When it was taken out of service for repair, it is clear that the 'A' plate did not have sufficient capacity to meet demand on its own so the ghostly head plate was used as the stop-gap solution. Of course by the time the 'A' plate had to be withdrawn, the only one of the three rates just mentioned that still existed was the double domestic, so no panic. I have pointed out elsewhere, that when the 1871 plate was re-entered it acquired its second dot. Figure 1 in Jim McCormick's article is actually of the 1st and 2nd state of the 1871 plate, When the 'A' plate was re-entered, as in its original state it was a two-dotter, it acquired a 3rd and sometimes a 4th dot. You will still find some single dot and some two dot examples 1874/ 1875, but after that mostly two dots are found until the early '80's when two and three dot examples appear in roughly equal quantities.

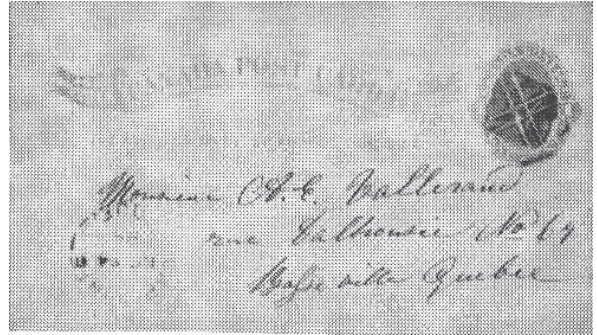
As to figure 4 the assumption is that both pieces are from the same position, but upward shifts are not uncommon on Six Cents plates – including the twin-pane Montreal. A quick glance at the complete 'A' plate sheet will reveal such shifts at Rows 2/2, 6/5, & 9 & 10/1, as well as 5/8 and 7/7 mentioned in the article. A longer look might well reveal more. Perhaps more to the point is that the pattern of position dots on the two strips is not consistent throughout.

It must be almost 45 years since I pointed out in print significant differences in the layouts of the 1871 and 'A' plates. Since then more and more evidence has emerged confirming that early essay. Why the argument rages on in view of its illogicality, i.e. the one plate theory, is to me a mystery, where there should be no mystery. They say there are none so blind as those who won't see. Perhaps that is the answer.

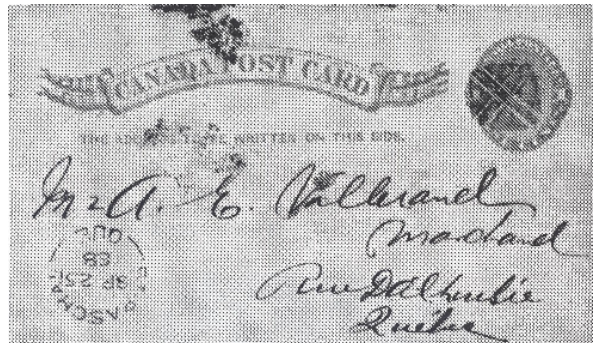
Fancy Cancels on Post Cards – Caveat Emptor

Ron Smith

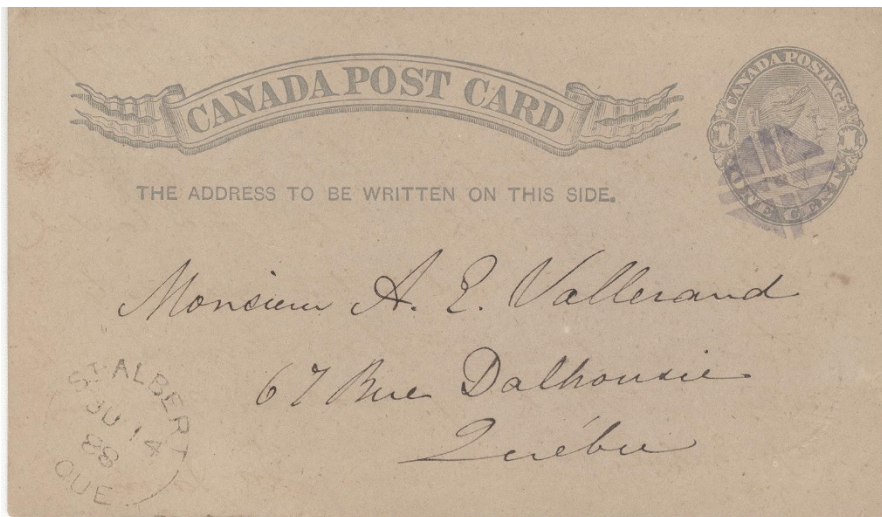
In an article in Topics 55(1) (1998) the author Christopher Anstead describes two postcards mailed to A. Vallerand in Quebec City. Both of the cards showed the same fancy cancel in violet. Of particular note however, was that the cards originated from two different post offices; St. Pascal, Quebec dated Sept 25, 1888 (left) and Cap Santé, Quebec dated Nov 24, 1884. Reduced scans of the cards from the original article are shown in Figure 1 to right.



Reduced scans from the article in Topics 55(1) of two post cards with the same fancy cancel originating from two different post offices.



The conclusion of the author was that the most likely origin of the cancel was that the cards, mailed to the same address had the fancy cancels applied after-the-fact. They had been found in a dealers stock in the UK. The Topics article ended asking if the same cancel was used more than twice. Here is a short, albeit delayed answer to that question: "At least once more!" The card illustrated in Figure 2 pictured below was mailed from St. Albert, Quebec to the same address as the two aforementioned postcards, and it too is adorned with the same fancy cancel.



What is the likelihood of the same fancy cancel having been provided to three different post offices and used for over four years? In summary: Are there any more copies of this cancel out there?

Three Early State Large Queen Die Proofs

Vic Willson (lloydwill@aol.com)



Recently I was able to acquire die proofs in black of three values of the Large Queen issue, 1¢, 12½¢, and 15¢. They were among a page of Large and Small Queens, revenues, and a cutout of the P1 card, all on india paper or thin wove. The Large Queens were all on india in black ink. Most had an X in ink on them, including those discussed here. That X appears to be quite important to the interpretation I will give. I scanned all proofs at 2400 dpi to see fine detail. Because of differences I am able to see in the X'ed proofs, I am terming them initial or trial die proofs.

Since I have die proofs of the higher values and plate proofs of all, I am able to compare them under high resolution. Each of these trial die proofs either has lines that are weaker than the finished die proof or are essentially absent compared to the finished proof. On the 1¢ (I only have plate proofs for comparison) this is most noticeable on the columns to the left and right of the circle around the head, which in the die proof are incomplete and poorly defined. Many of the lines in the leaves of the die proof, on the other hand, are finer and less inked than on the plate proofs. This might not be definitive for one item, but it shows up in the others also that are compared to other die proofs. The finished plate proof of the 1¢ has far bolder and complete lines in the various leaves.



The 12½¢ shows fewer differences between the trial die proof and the other. As I have multiple plate proofs of this issue as well, all show the same effect. The trial die proof has finer lines in the hair and less white space than the others and is noticeable. As with the 1¢, some lines in the various leaves have been removed to show more white space. The differences are subtle.

The 15¢ differences in die proofs appear to be strengthening of lines in the leaves at bottom, absent or weak in the trial die proof. The outside lines on the sides are also stronger than the trial die.



My conclusion is that the BANBC personnel reviewing the initial engravings rejected these proofs as inadequate and reworked the dies. It would be wonderful to find others with an X of the issue to see if they exhibit similar characteristics to these. In my exhibits of the three stamps I am tentatively labeling these early state die proofs. There may have been even earlier pulls, but until they are discovered or collectors with other die proofs of the issues review and compare theirs, these are new and unique discoveries in the stamp production process of the Large Queens.

A Discovery During the Re-mounting of My Exhibit for NY2016

Guillaume Vadeboncoeur (guillaume@vadeboncoeur.ca)

My Small Queen exhibit was accepted for the NY2016 international stamp show. Due to a number of acquisitions since the last time I updated my exhibit, a full re-mount was required. In any event, I wanted to change my approach based the story I am attempting to tell through my exhibit.

I always tell collectors that one learns something new every time that an exhibit is significantly re-worked or re-mounted, and this time around is no exception. Pictured below is a photographer's wrapper sent from W.H. Edwards of St. Stephen, New Brunswick to Mr. John P. Armstrong in Palmerston North, New Zealand. This item formerly graced the collection of Victor Willson and is pictured on the front cover of his BNAPS Exhibit Series book entitled "Canada 19th Century Non Letter Mail". In his exhibit, it was described as paying the 1¢ per 2 oz. UPU printed matter rate for an item weighing 10 to 12 oz.



Figure 1: 2¢ Small Queen, three examples on a photographer's wrapper to New Zealand

This item was offered by Eastern Auction in their October 2013 auction where they sold Vic's Non Letter Mail collection where it was also described at paying the 1¢ per 2 oz. rate for 10 to 12 oz. I was successful in purchasing this item at the sale and, other than checking the condition of the item, did not pay too much attention to it after receiving it.

Jumping ahead to earlier in April of this year, I prepared the digital exhibit page which included this item (I now initially prepare all of my exhibit pages using scans) and actually pulled out the item at that time to physically inspect it. The first thing I noticed was that the wrapper did not have "sides" which would have been needed to send a thick group of pictures weighing 10 to 12 oz. I found this odd, as I had just mounted a similar item which did have such "sides" which supported the weight of the items that were included in it.

A Discovery During the Re-mounting of My Exhibit for NY2016 contd.

The second thing I noticed was that the stamps have guide dots at lower left, the telltale sign of a Montreal printing. Alas, the item did not have any dated postmark which is not unusual for printed matter items. It then dawned on me that this item had, in all likelihood, been sent in the 1880s. I compared the colour of the stamps to dated examples and they match copies from the mid-1880s.

Now for the good part: most postal history collectors will be aware that New Zealand was a late member to the UPU, actually joining the organization on October 1, 1891. A usage prior to October 1, 1891 would mean that this wrapper was sent during what I and others are calling the non-UPU period (being after Canada had joined the UPU, but before the receiving country joined the organization) – exciting!

The next step was to figure out if the non-UPU printed matter rate to New Zealand was different than 1¢ per 2 oz. After some painfully long searching online for the Canadian Postal Guides, I found the answer in the 1891 Postal Guide, which provided the rate to New Zealand prior to it joining the UPU. It listed the rate for printed matter at 3¢ per 2 oz. for routing via San Francisco (transpacific route), and 6¢ per 2 oz. for routing via Brindisi (longer transatlantic route). For all practical purposes, there was no reason for sending items on the transatlantic route via Brindisi, as it would result in higher postal charges and slower delivery times. Thus, the rate for the 6¢ wrapper to New Zealand was 3¢ per 2 oz. rate, or a total rate of 6¢ for a weight of 2 to 4 oz. – a weight that is supported by the lack of “sides” on the wrapper.

Very few items are recorded for such a rate. At least two Pre-UPU wrappers to Cuba are recorded at a 3¢ rate (but both are overpaid and bear 4¢ in postage). Other pre-UPU printed matter items that I am aware of were sent at a 4¢ per 2 oz. rate (to France, Holland, Italy and Norway), or at a rate of 2¢ (St. Thomas, Danish West Indies). I know Vic enjoyed this item. I now enjoy being its current custodian, and I’m glad that the re-mounting of my exhibit led to the identification of the proper rate for it.

Chairman’s Column

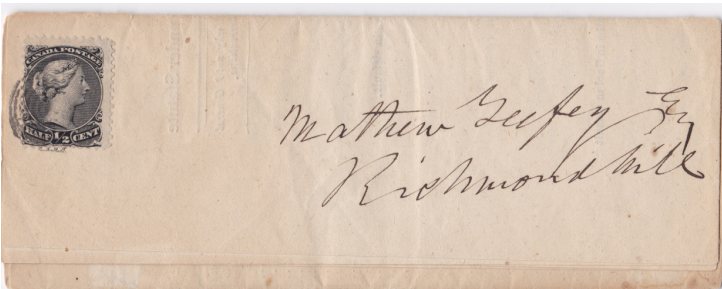
Bill Radcliffe (bsbvp88@hotmail.com)



I would like to start this newsletter hoping that everyone had a happy and healthy New Year. This newsletter is late getting out for various reasons, if anyone has something for us please send it so we can get the spring newsletter out on time.

The two covers I’m including in this newsletter were sold to me by fellow collector friends who knew what I collected. This is part of the reason I’m the Chairman of the Study Group and exhibit at stamp shows. It pays

to advertise. The first cover is a registered plus five times rate cover to the US from Clifton with a 4-ring #52 cancel mailed October 3rd 1874 to New York, NY. The second cover is franked with single half cent Large Queen on a ‘Schedule of Return of Convictions’ used internally to Richmond Hill dated June 9th 1875. We all know how hard it is to find a single used half cent Large Queen.



My recommendation is to participate in the study group by sending in articles or comments,

questions and trying your hand at an exhibit. The free advertising will lead to some nice additions to your collection as well as finding potential new friends with the same interest as you. If anyone has any inquires I can be contacted by phone at (609-617-0644) or email bsbvp88@hotmail.com.

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