

## Chairman's Message

Welcome to the first issue of the newly re-established BNAPS Map stamp study group "Report" (more about the nomenclature later). The impetus for this endeavour grew out of a realization that the study group, although listed as being active on the BNAPS website, was in fact inactive and had been so for many years (the last newsletter was released in 2008). During the past year, a number of enthusiastic Map stamp collectors have been carrying on an informal email communication regarding a variety of things Map stamp related. After discussions between several of us, it was felt that these musings should be shared with the larger Map stamp collecting community. What better way than to restart the study group and use the new communication tools available to us (emailing of newsletters, zoom meetings, etc.) to accomplish that goal! To get the ball rolling, I have assumed the position of both the study group chair and co-editor of the Report. Scott Robinson has generously offered to serve as editor. Thanks Scott!

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My first priority was to get all of the back issues of the Map stamp study group newsletters (from each of its first two incarnations) uploaded to the BNAPS website. Thanks to Charles Livermore and Leo Beaudet, this goal has been accomplished. The back issues are full of interesting and otherwise unpublished information on the Map stamp. They are available for viewing and download at the Map stamp study group webpage on the BNAPS website (<https://bnaps.org/studygroups/Map/newsletters.htm>). Please visit and take a look.

My next action as chair, after consultation with Scott, was deciding that the name of the newsletter will be "XMAS 1898 MAP STAMP REPORT". The "MAP STAMP" wording comes directly from the common description of the stamp while the preceding "XMAS 1898" portion of the name serves to differentiate this Map stamp from any other Map stamps. And, after all, "XMAS 1898" is seen front and centre on the stamp itself! And finally, a "REPORT" rather than a "newsletter" since I hope that the contents of this publication will be more a reporting of discoveries, favourite covers, postal history etc., rather than "news". I am happy to receive any and all comments/criticism regarding this name choice, but I think it accurately and succinctly describes a publication focussed on the activities of collectors of this stamp issue.

Looking at the initial membership list of the study group, I see that it reflects many facets of Map stamp collecting. The success of the study group and the Report will ultimately be determined by the extent of involvement of each of you in submitting material to be reported. Since my Map stamp collecting interests are focussed on the postal history and the postmarks associated with the Map stamp (primarily squared circles, barred circles, RPOs, and duplexes), it would be a big stretch to expect that I could make contributions regarding plating discoveries, for example. Not that I am uninterested in such things, but it is not my primary collecting focus. I am relying on each of you to contribute articles, long or short, in your collecting sphere. My goal is to publish this Report quarterly so please contribute!! How about a short article about your favourite cover, your most interesting plate position find, or a new discovery regarding printing dates of plate 2. Or maybe you are researching a particular aspect of the Map stamp and would like input from other Map stamp collectors.

What better way than to use the Report to request that information. I think you will find that Map stamp collectors are interested in almost anything related to the issue!

Finally, in this unprecedented time of restricted “in person” meetings, virtual meetings have become extremely popular and successful. Therefore, the first Map stamp study group meeting will be a virtual Zoom meeting. It is scheduled for April 24, 2021 at 1:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada). At this point, the meeting outline is still in development and so if you would be interested in sharing anything with the group, even if only a single page item, please let me know and I will add you to the schedule. Whether you like to actively participate in the discussion or simply to lurk and listen, everyone is welcome. It should be fun and informative. I hope to see as many of you as possible online.

So here it is, the inaugural XMAS 1898 MAP STAMP REPORT. I hope you enjoy it and, as always, happy collecting!

**Rick Friesen, Chairman and Report Co-editor**  
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## **My Two Cents – From Your Editor**

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Welcome to the first issue of the XMAS 1898 MAP STAMP REPORT. Since the Report is published and distributed to members only in digital format as a PDF document, we have tried to use high resolution images as much as possible so that readers can peruse these at different levels of magnification. While some articles may require separate close-ups to show specific characteristics described by the authors, most of our images will show the full stamps or cover so that readers can get the big picture and then zoom in to see details. While this does make for large file sizes, we hope that the format will be convenient for all members.

In this issue, we are pleased to bring you my introductory article about the plates and states of the Map stamps, a nice article from Simon Taylor-Young on his musings and some interesting questions from his 4-year plating project, plus Rick’s summary of Map stamp auctions. The Report ends with the first of our ongoing Featured Maps column where we invite readers to share an interesting Map stamp/cover/proof with the rest of the study group. In this issue, Paul Grimm shares two interesting Map covers with Squared Circle cancels.

I reiterate Rick’s invitation to all members of our study group to submit articles or scans of material for publication in the Report. If you have some knowledge or expertise on a specific aspect of the Map stamp, examples of interesting cancels or plate varieties, or even an opinion or question you want to share, please do not hesitate to forward them. I am also glad to work with you to create an article for other members to enjoy. Please share your knowledge and discoveries with the rest of the study group.

Cheers!

**Scott Robinson, Report Editor**  
**Pierrefonds, Quebec**  
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# Understanding the Plates and States of the Map Stamps

By Scott Robinson

As many readers of this article will already know, the Xmas 1898 Map stamp was extremely innovative in that it was the first Canadian stamp to use multiple colours and multiple printing techniques. This article provides an overview of the plates and states of the issue for those collectors who may specialise in the postal history aspects of the stamp but want to know more about its production. The stamp features an attractive map of the world on Mercator's projection printed in black with lavender/blue oceans and the British Commonwealth territories highlighted in red. Much has been written about the different colour varieties of the oceans with some writers stating that the stamp was never intended to have more than one ocean colour. However, there is good evidence to suggest that the stamp was intended to be printed in equal quantities with green and blue oceans. The green oceans never materialized, and catalogues have long divided the issue into two distinct stamps with oceans shown in shades of lavender and grey (Unitrade #85) and in various blue shades (Unitrade #86).



Figure 1: Typical lavender and blue Map stamps

Extensive study of the stamp for more than 120 years has led to the consensus that four black plates were used with two separate red plates and an unknown number of Lavender/Blue plates for the ocean colours. The relationship of these plates is summarised in the diagram below and they are described in detail in the paragraphs that follow.

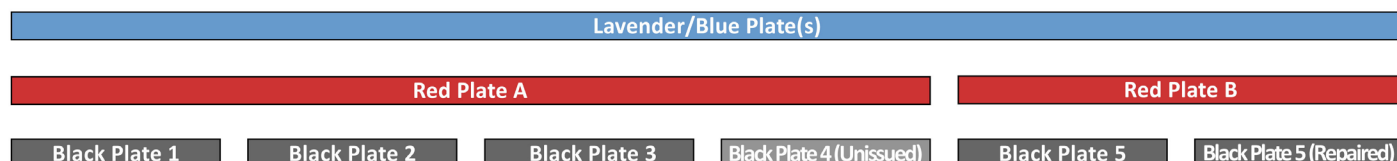


Figure 2: Graphical representation of Map stamp plates

## The Black Plates

The main black portion of the stamp design was printed by the usual intaglio process from four engraved plates numbered 1, 2, 3 and 5. A plate 4 was also produced but never used, although imperforate proofs from this plate exist in the Canadian Postal Archives and are known in the collector community from the 1990 sale of the American Bank Note Company archive material and other sources. The reason why plate 4 was never used to print stamps is not clear since the proofs do not suggest that it had any serious issues. It seems likely that it may have been damaged and replaced by plate 5 which shows some evidence of being produced in a hurry.



All of the black plates were laid out for a single pane of 100 stamps in 10x10 format. The plate number is indicated by a numeral in the top selvedge centred above the gutter between stamps 5 and 6. The printer imprint, AMERICAN BANK NOTE CO. OTTAWA, is located in the top selvedge above stamps 3 and 8, and in the bottom selvedge below stamps 93 and 98. In addition, there are short but reasonably thick guide lines that appear at the center of the selvedge on each side. There is also a cross caused by the intersection of similar short guide lines at the very centre of the pane layout in the gutter between stamps 45, 46, 55 and 56. These latter guide lines can frequently be seen on actual stamps, especially if the perforation is conveniently off-centre. Figure 3 shows a simulation of a complete black plate layout. Figure 4 shows some of these features on a top row strip of stamps with selvedge from plate 2.

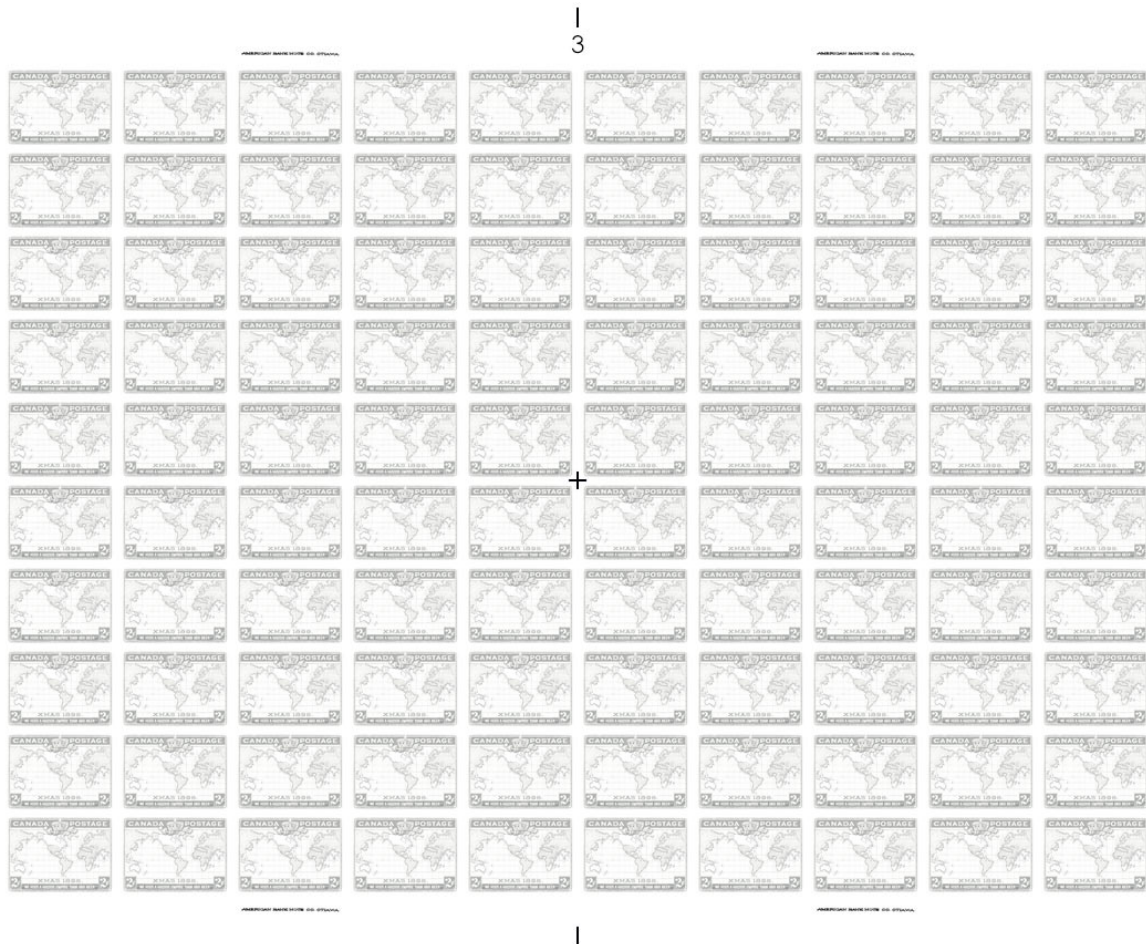
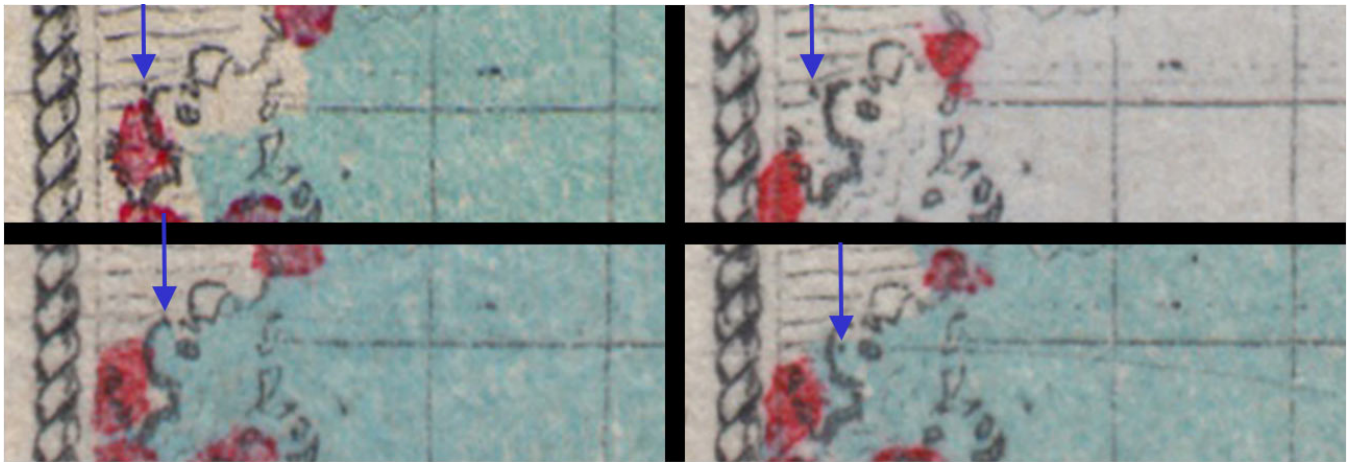


Figure 3: Simulated black plate layout



Figure 4: Top strip with selvedge showing printer's imprint and plate number with guide line.  
Image courtesy of Deveney Stamps.

In addition to these standard markings of the plates, many of the individual stamps feature faint guide dots, guide lines, and small compass arcs that were used by the siderographer to setup the plate and position the impressions. Most of these appear or intersect in the area of the Tonkin Gulf at the far-left side of the stamp. While these markings can be very useful in plating a stamp, they are not particularly remarkable or collectible in and of themselves.



*Figure 5: Tonkin Gulf guide dots, arcs, and lines. The arrows mark the various guide dots. Zoom in to see if you can spot the faint arcs or lines that usually intersect them.*

The detailed design of the stamp and the many fine lines that make up the cable that borders the stamp must have been problematical for the siderographer when rocking the stamp impressions into the plate. There is considerable manual retouching of the cables and a significant number of re-entries throughout the black plates. There are also some interesting tool marks and other examples of plate damage. This is where the fun begins for Map stamp variety enthusiasts. These will be discussed in detail in future articles but can be summarised as follows:

- The cable at the bottom of the design is significantly retouched for the entire bottom row of stamps printed from plates 2, 3 and 5.
- The cable at the right of the design is also significantly retouched for the last column of stamps printed from plate 3.
- At least four positions from plate 2 show specific sections of the cables that have been recut by hand and others show slight strengthening of the cable.
- There are numerous re-entries sprinkled throughout the plates that are arguably of the major variety including two on plate 1, nine on plate 2, two on plate 3, and at least five on plate 5. Other minor re-entries also exist.
- Plate 2 includes a spectacular misplaced entry where the doubling is misplaced by almost half the height of the stamp.
- Almost all the retouches and re-entries were present on the original state of the plates when they were first used for printing. The exception is plate 5 where the plate was heavily reworked and re-entered after a small quantity of stamps had been printed. Although several re-entries including the well-known major re-entry from position 91 (Unitrade #85ii and #86iii) and all of the bottom cable retouches existed on the initial state of plate 5 to print issued stamps, more than forty positions were re-entered after the plate was used in production. Most of these are minor re-entries where the cabling and the horizontal shading lines behind the word and value tablets look blurred or darker than normal. Early copies without re-entries from these positions that were later re-entered are quite scarce.

## The Lavender/Blue Plates

The lavender/blue oceans and the red territories on the Map stamps were printed separately using the letterpress relief printing process (also known as typographic printing) from electrotype plates. The number of plates used to print the oceans is speculative and impossible to deduce from the stamps themselves because the oceans are printed in light shades

and their boundaries are obscured by the black ink. The details of the oceans are generally indistinguishable from copy to copy except for the colour.

Some philatelic writers have assumed only one plate was used while others have attributed a separate plate for each colour and shade variation available. This writer does not believe that there should be any consistent correlation between the ink mixture used in production and the plates used. Some copies of the stamp with various ocean shades show a distinct series of vertical lines that make up the colour of the oceans. This has been attributed to different plates by some specialists. This writer believes that all the lavender/blue plates were created with vertical lines, but that these were meant to blend together as long as sufficient ink is applied to the plates when printing.



*Figure 6: Blue plate printing showing vertical lines*

The number of distinct shades that can be identified for the oceans on the Map stamps is very subjective. Although available documentation suggests that the stamps were originally ordered with a 50/50 split between green and blue oceans, the end result seems to be a similar split between shades of lavender and shades of blue. Either through poor ink mixture or discolouration, many of the lavender copies have very little colour left in their appearance, giving them a dull grey look. Several writers and Map stamp specialists have pointed out that the ocean shades do have a limited correlation with the black plates used to print the stamps as follows:

- Black plate 1: Lavender, light blue, deep blue
- Black plate 2: Lavender, very deep blue
- Black plate 3: Lavender only
- Black plate 5: Lavender, bright blue green

Noted Map stamp specialist and writer, Whitney L. Bradley, also refers to a deep lavender shade that is quite rare but seen across all the different black plate printings.

Complicating matters even more is that this issue also suffers frequently from latent chemical processes (similar to the oxidization seen on other issues) that cause the oceans to appear in a light brown or golden shade, or even a horrible dark grey brown. These so-called "muddy waters" varieties are actually colour changelings and should not be considered as printing varieties.

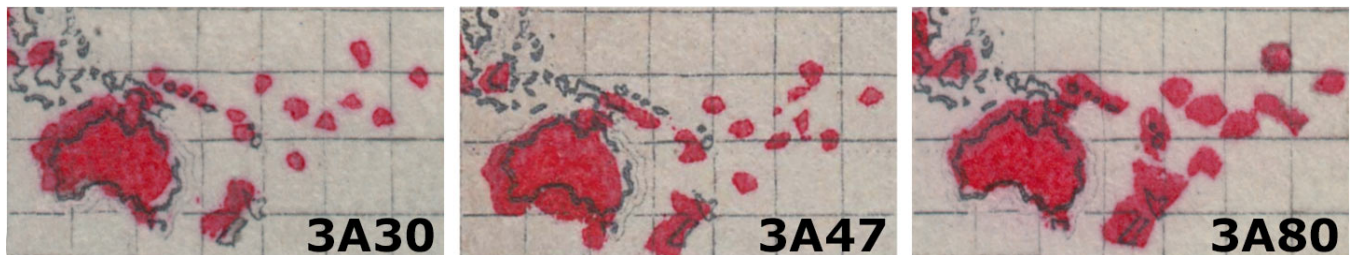
## The Red Plates

Like the lavender/blue oceans, the red territories on the Map stamps were also printed from electrotpe plates using the letterpress relief printing process. Unlike the oceans which show many shades but virtually no differences that can be attributed to plate varieties, the red territories show no significant differences in shade but are chock full of plate varieties. These varieties include numerous instances of missing, misplaced, or added islands and territories. These variations occur not just between plates but also between the various positions on each plate. In fact, these variations between positions enable a seasoned Map collector to identify the plate position of most Map copies by only examining the red plate.



The interesting thing is that, since the Map stamp has unique red plate characteristics for almost every plate position, these varieties are not as collectible as the rarer re-entries and other constant plate varieties of the black plates. However, it is the red plate varieties that make it easy to plate the stamps and find the black varieties. This is particularly important if you are casually looking through a dealer's stock or viewing an online auction that does not have high-definition scans of the stamps. You can often find that elusive black plate variety by spotting the more obvious red plate variety.

Two distinctly different red plates were used for printing the Map stamps. The so-called red plate A was used with black plates 1, 2 and 3 (plus the proofs of black plate 4), and red plate B was used with black plate 5. Although red plate B is a little more consistent than red plate A, both plates have enough distinct characteristics to plate most positions. Some positional varieties of red plate A do evolve somewhat during its usage with the three black plates, but for the most part the varieties are constant enough for plating with each plate.



*Figure 7: Examples of typical red plate variation in the areas of Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific islands. These samples are all from red plate A and black plate 3.*

Note that, because of their vibrant colour and the method of printing, the red plates will occasionally show characteristics that are transitory in nature and may be related as much to printing varieties as they are to plate differences. Not every red mark on the Map stamps is constant.

Hopefully, this introduction to the plates and states of the Map stamps will encourage some of you to explore this interesting aspect of the issue further. The issue presents an incredible opportunity for new or experienced plate variety specialists because of its specific red plate variations at each position, and numerous retouches and re-entries on the engraved black plates. I will explore more of these details in future articles.

## References

- The Canadian 1898 Christmas Map Stamp - A Definitive Plating Study, Kenneth A. Kershaw & Roger Boisclair, Reprinted by the British North America Philatelic Society, 2009
- The Canadian Map Stamp of 1898, Frederick Tomlinson, The Canadian Philatelic Society of Great Britain, 1960
- The Canadian Map Stamp of 1898 - A Plating Study, Whitney L. Bradley, British North America Philatelic Society, 1989
- The Postage Stamps and Postal History of Canada, Winthrop S. Boggs, Quarterman Publications, Inc., 1974 (annotated reprint of original publication from 1945)
- The Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps, Ed: D. Robin Harris, The Unitrade Press, 2021

***Note: This article is a revised version of an article that appeared in Dots & Scratches (Vol. 7, No. 1, Whole No. 24), the newsletter of the BNAPS Re-entries and Constant Plate Varieties Study Group.***

# The Map Stamp - A Tale of Mild Obsession

By Simon Taylor-Young (simonty1962@gmail.com)

I have at last finished Plating the 1898 Map stamp. After about four years, and a vow to find each position by luck, rather than buying specific stamps, it is achieved. However, for 400 plate positions, I have accumulated 3750 stamps! A statistician would explain why I have 23 copies of 2A83, but only (at last) one copy of 3A15! Something to do with normal distributions.

A quick comment on method. I started this through a sheer stroke of luck. I bid on eBay for a lot of 200 Map stamps, paying about \$250. It turned out that the seller had rather miscounted and almost 950 Map stamps arrived! That made me wonder how many plate positions would be included. I had a copy of the Tomlinson book from 1960, now I am afraid made redundant. So I started with Bradley's plating book from 1989 and I was doing well. Then the superb, unrivalled, doorstop of Kershaw and Boisclair arrived. This large volume, reprinted from separate books in 2009, is superb, not only for the quality of the photographs, but also for the way it is set out. I reckon to identify a plate position within about 30 seconds now. It transformed my speed, and accuracy. I was now under way!

My work has led to a few questions and observations I would like to make. First, I have recorded each stamp on a vast spreadsheet. I have not tried to record the colours. Even after all this time, I find differentiating Lavender and Deep Lavender most tricky. Tomlinson divides the Blue-Green shades into Pale, Deep, Very Deep, and Bright. It was too subjective, so I stopped. I am interested though in the plate distribution percentages where my numbers varied significantly from those described by Tomlinson (as originally reported by Colonel Adams in the London Philatelist back in 1946). These are summarised in the table below.

Author (Sample Size)	Plate 1	Plate 2	Plate 3	Plate 5
Tomlinson/Adams (~5,000)	26%	31%	24%	19%
Taylor-Young (~3,900)	32%	34%	21%	13%

While the percentages for plates 2 and 3 are similar, in my sample plate 1 was almost as common as plate 2, and plate 5 was considerably scarcer.

Secondly, I would ask if anyone knows if progress has been made in separating the "impossible to tell apart positions"? There are a few red plate A positions where even Kershaw/Boisclair struggle to identify the black plates. These include 1A16 and 2A16; 1A21 and 2A21; 1A27 and 3A27; 2A45 and 3A45; 2A73 and 3A73; 1A81 and 2A81. From blocks, and occasionally the ocean shade, I am sure I have accumulated and identified a complete set, but a more definitive way of separating the black plates at these positions would be a useful addendum to their book.

Thirdly, I can share new earliest recorded dates from cancelations for several plates. The table below summarises my findings compared to ERDs as reported by Colonel Adams via Tomlinson's book and by Ken Kershaw as reported in 2003 issues of the old BNAPS Map study group newsletter. The earliest dates across all reports are highlighted in grey.

Author (Sample Size)	Plate 1	Plate 2	Plate 3	Plate 5
Tomlinson/Adams (~5,000)	December 7, 1898	January 1, 1899	March 7, 1899	March 27, 1899
Kershaw (~1,000)			February 23, 1899	February 2, 1899
Taylor-Young (~3,900)	December 12, 1898	December 23, 1898	February 22, 1899	March 15, 1899

Interestingly, I have two plate 2 copies from 1898: a plate/position 2A12 dated December 23 and a 2A29 from December 30. Similarly, for plate 3, I have a 3A22 dated February 22, 1899 and a 3A96 dated February 23, 1899. Are these errors made by a postmaster when preparing the date stamp or do we need to reconsider when some of these plates became available? It is interesting to note that even with my earlier date for plate 3, it still appears to be first used after plate 5.



Lastly, I have often wondered what percentage of certain stamp issues would have survived. Of 20 million Map stamps produced, how many are still in existence? 10% of the issue? 40% of the issue? And of those, how many are MNH? Has anyone ever speculated? Take the case of the elusive 1868 2¢ Large Queen on laid paper for which only 3 copies are known. Assuming that just one sheet of 100 was produced in error on laid paper, how many of the other 97 undiscovered copies still exist, unknown in a current collection or sitting at the back of a cupboard in Grandad's forgotten collection? Surely more than 3% of all Large Queens generally survive?

Consider the famous Map stamp major re-entry from position 5B91. If only 13% of 20 million Map stamps are from plate 5, that makes 26,000 sheets of stamps. If 10% survive, and only 10% of those are mint unhinged, that means there are about 2,600 copies extant of the major re-entry and only 260 that are MNH! I feel fortunate to have 4 copies, one of which is mint.

In my plating project, I have tried to be very disciplined about buying, trying to pay less than \$1 per stamp, but often paying £1. It has taken a while, but that has been part of the fun. If there is anyone out there trying to achieve the same, I almost certainly have an extra copy of the position you are missing (unless it is 3A15!!!). Get in touch. But what do I do now? Every shade of every plate position? Mint copies of every position? Where does this obsession end?

## References

- The Canadian 1898 Christmas Map Stamp - A Definitive Plating Study, Kenneth A. Kershaw & Roger Boisclair, Reprinted by the British North America Philatelic Society, 2009
- The Canadian Map Stamp of 1898, Frederick Tomlinson, The Canadian Philatelic Society of Great Britain, 1960
- The Canadian Map Stamp of 1898 - A Plating Study, Whitney L. Bradley, British North America Philatelic Society, 1989
- The 1898 Christmas Map Stamp Newsletter, comments by Kenneth A. Kershaw, Whole # 13 and 14, 2003

***Note: This article is an updated version of an article first published in the April 2020 issue of Maple Leaves, the Journal of the Canadian Philatelic Society of Great Britain, and is repurposed here with their kind permission.***

***Editor's Comment: Simon raises some interesting questions in this article about the percentage of total Maps printed from each plate, the earliest dates of usage, and the ability to differentiate the black plates for specific positions. If readers have answers or opinions on any of these issues, please reach out to Simon or your editors.***

# Map Stamp Auctions

## By Rick Friesen

For those of you who are interested in the provenance of the Map stamps in your possession, I have put together a list of auctions that have dealt almost exclusively with the Map stamp. Almost every online auction these days lists a number of lots of Map stamps. However, the list I have compiled here is limited to those auctions that, for the most part, are dedicated to the Map stamp issue. I will expand on this list as I come across additional auctions - please send me your additions as well.

Year	Auction House	Sale #	Named Auction	Lots with Maps	Comments
1960	J.N. Sissons	178	Fred Jarrett	421-459	mint, used & covers
1972	J.N. Sissons	416-417	Nels Pelletier	539-604	squared circles
1982	Robert Laird	November	John Siverts	492-505	squared circles
1982	J.N. Sissons	423	unnamed	1228-1250	December 1898 covers
1983	J.A. Hennok	December	private treaty	601-799	squared circles
1984	R.A. Lee	32	Ron Winmill	449-635	squared circles
1989	J.A. Hennok	44	Stewart Kenyon	500-682	essays, mint, used, covers
1990	R. Maresch	238	unnamed	636-739	mint, Dec 1898 & registered covers, squared circle covers
1990	Christie's Robson Lowe	September	American Bank Note Archives	1828-1835	production file, plate proofs
1994	J.A. Hennok	91	Alan Selby	793-868	Dec 1898 and other covers
1995	J.A. Hennok	103-104	Whit Bradley	1-300	squared circles, early covers
1998	R. Maresch	334	Beverlie Clark	696-810	proofs, mint, used, covers
2005	Spinks Shreves	96	Fred Fawn	1397-1535	proofs, mint, used, covers
2009	Eastern Auctions	October	Roger Boisclair	301-492	proofs, mint, used, covers
2011	Eastern Auctions	October	Hugh Westgate	201-355	proofs, mint, used, covers
2014	Brigham Auctions	2	Ron Brigham	863-957	proofs, mint, used, covers
2018	Sparks Auctions	28	Rob Lunn	312-409	proofs, mint, used, covers
2021	Eastern Auctions	April	Daniel Cantor	496-516	essay, proofs, mint, covers

## Featured Maps

This regular column is aimed at featuring member submissions of Map stamps, multiples, covers, proofs, etc. If you have a favourite piece with an interesting cancel, plate variety, or just an interesting story, please email us a scan (ideally 1200dpi or higher) together with a brief description and we will share it with the group.

To get us started, in this issue we feature two covers from **Paul Grimm**. The first was the inspiration for his specialised Squared Circle Map collection. The second is the latest edition to that collection more than forty years later.

*I got my very first map cover by accident amongst a large lot of business mail I purchased from a neighbor collector who lived in Windsor NS in the late 70's. It was a Prescott Ont. Squared Circle. At the time, I thought, "Wow! This is such a terrific combination of a great stamp and an amazing cancel that it would make a neat specialized collection." Over the years, I kept my eye open for new Map/SC covers and I have gradually put together a collection of about 185 different towns. And...there are still likely 40 or 50 I don't have.*



*Figure 1: Prescott Ont. Squared Circle dated February 27, 1899.  
The Map stamp is a major re-entry from plate position 2A7.*

*Over the last pandemic year there has been a resurgence in demand for stamps and covers as many folks rediscover the hobby. This supply/demand imbalance has pushed up prices. Good news if you have, but bad news perhaps if you are still searching for that elusive item. For most serious collectors, that search never ends.*

*With Squared Circles on Map covers, the absolute rarity of these gems is incredible. For many towns, only 1-10 copies are known. Although it has been more than 120 years since the Map stamp was released, there are still treasures lurking out there in the attics of the world. It is not always about how much money you have. Finding these treasures is about patience and determination to keep up the hunt until the treasures you seek turn up!*



*It was thanks to a tip from a friend that I acquired my latest cover: A registered combination cover showing four Maps and a 1¢ Victoria Numeral complete with a Milltown NB Squared Circle. I think you will agree to its worthiness!*

*So...bottom line, whatever your passion in philately, keep searching. "There is Gold in Them Thar Hills!"*



*Figure 2: Milltown NB Squared Circle dated January 1899.  
Paying the double letter rate (4¢) and registration (5¢) for delivery to the United Kingdom.  
The Map stamps are from plate positions 2A66, 2A67, 2A68, and 2A69.*

### **BNAPS Xmas 1898 Map Stamp Study Group**

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This newsletter and previous issues are available as PDF files from the BNAPS website.  
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