

Chairman's Message

We come to the end of our first calendar year for the newly reactivated BNAPS Map Stamp Study Group. And what a year it has been! After years of inactivity from the old group, I worked with some other interested collectors to reboot the study group less than 10 months ago. I am pleased to report that our study group has grown to more than 30 members. We have held two Zoom meetings (one during the COVID affected VIRTUAL BNAPS 2021 exhibition), launched and updated several Map stamp postmark censuses on the BNAPS website, and released four newsletters.

One of my first acts as Chairman was to get the newsletters that had been published by previous incarnations of the Map Stamp Study Group onto the BNAPS website and to recruit an editor for the development of our new newsletter. I was fortunate that Scott Robinson stepped up to become our editor. Thanks Scott! Scott is a Map stamp enthusiast and a specialist in Canadian plate varieties. He was already the editor of Dots & Scratches, the newsletter for the BNAPS Re-entry and Constant Plate Variety study group. Together we launched the Xmas 1898 Map Stamp Report back in April. Although feedback for the Report has been very positive, member participation and contribution has remained low. Scott has done a superb job of formatting, editing, recruiting and, in many cases, writing articles for the Report but the burden on him to do this has been a heavy one.

With that in mind, I would like to request members of the study group and readers of this Report to send in contributions, whether they be the results of a study you have conducted, a request for information on a study you are currently conducting, a favourite stamp/cover, or an example of your "presentation pages". We will publish any and all contributions that are Map stamp related. As we come to the end of this year, I hope that you will make the effort to find some time to participate in your Xmas 1898 Map Stamp Report during 2022.

I wish you a happy and healthy remainder to the holiday season and a prosperous New Year.

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

This month we have an interesting article from Vince Chermishnok attempting to identify all the red British Empire territories on the Map stamp, information on a cover with a Map tied by a unique cancellation from Rick, a new plate 1 re-entry find from me, and a Map re-entry on cover submitted by new study group member, Arnold Janson. Finally, we close the issue with information for study group members to participate in some ongoing research studies. Happy New Year!

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Canada's Map Stamp - A Lesson in Geography

By Vince Chermishnok (vchermis@ibinx.com)

Editor's Note: The size, shape and location of many of the red territories shown on the Map stamp do not correspond very accurately with actual British Empire possessions of the time. It has even been suggested that the exaggerated size of some of the red islands and territories was a way for the Postmaster General, William Mulock, to appease his British colleagues. This article provides the author's researched opinions as to the identity of the various territories. In the case of some of the small island groups, these opinions can be quite subjective. Let us know if you have other ideas.

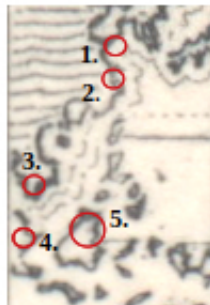
Canada's Map Stamp, based on the Mercator Projection of the globe provides a fascinating study of geography and the political boundaries of the day. The stamp and the map upon which it is based were both innovations of their times. The map is a design based on Gerardus Mercator's layout which he devised in the 16th century and represented sailing courses as a constant bearing using straight lines; a concept still in use today.

The stamp was issued to inaugurate Imperial Penny Postage, a reduced letter rate of 1 penny (2 cents) to Great Britain and parts of the British Empire. The rate came into effect on December 25, 1898. The stamp acknowledges this with the inclusion of "XMAS 1898" front and centre, and this is why the stamp is considered by many to be the first Christmas stamp. As Canada's first stamp printed in multiple colours using multiple printing methods, the Map stamp was also Canada's most expensive stamp to produce at the time. This lavish expense, the stamp design, and the motto "WE HOLD A VASTER EMPIRE THAN HAS BEEN" were clearly as much a political statement to celebrate British patriotism as they were a commemoration of the new postal rate.

Delving into the geography lesson, let us begin by dividing the map into smaller sections where attention can be given to distinct regions of the globe and the countries that they contain. We start in the Southern hemisphere where we find Australia, New Zealand and a number of the Asia-Pacific colonies.

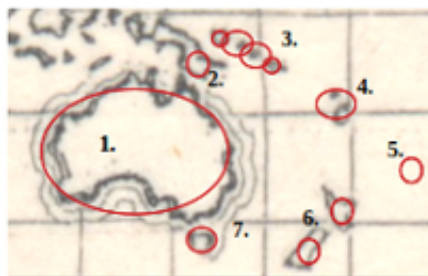
A. Singapore, Hong Kong & Region

1. Wei Hai Wei
2. Hong Kong
3. Malay
4. Singapore
5. Sarawak & North Borneo



B. Australia and New Zealand

1. Australia
2. British New Guinea
3. British Solomon Islands
4. New Hebrides
5. Kermadec Islands
6. New Zealand
7. Tasmania



C. Pacific Islands Group (PIG)

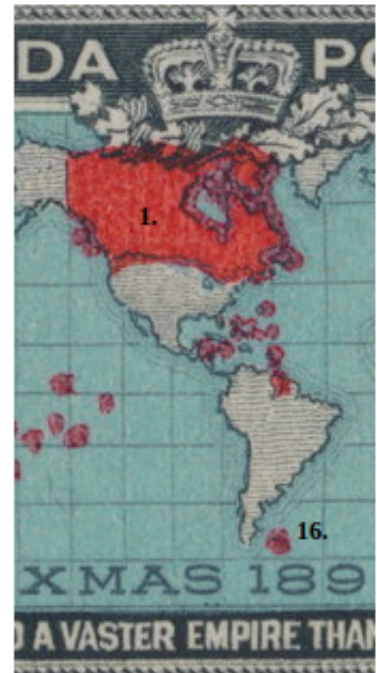
1. Gilbert Island
2. Ellis Island
3. Cook Island
4. Pitcairn
5. Nauru
6. Fiji
7. Tonga



Following on in an eastward direction, one encounters the continents of both North and South America with the highlighted colonies of Canada at the top and the Falkland Islands at the bottom of the stamp. The Canadian portion clearly shows the Arctic islands, Baffin Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, the Gulf Islands and Vancouver Island to the right. The island nations of the Atlantic region are located in the middle and form an interesting archipelago of then, British territories and protectorates.

The Atlantic Region

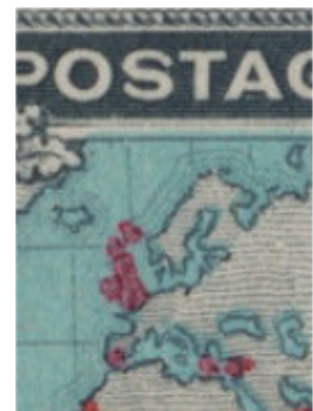
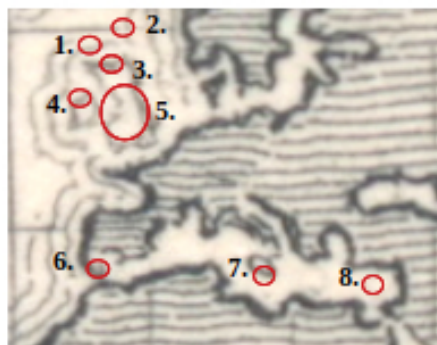
1. Canada (see colour portion)
2. Bermuda
3. Bahamas
4. British Virgin Islands
5. Turks & Caicos
6. Leeward Islands
7. St Lucia
8. Antigua
9. Barbados
10. Grenada
11. The Cayman Islands
12. Jamaica
13. British Honduras
14. Trinidad & Tobago
15. British Guiana
16. Falkland Islands (see colour portion)



Continuing the journey, the British Isles and colonial claims of the Mediterranean come into focus including Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus.

The British Isles and The Mediterranean

1. Orkney Isles
2. Shetland Islands
3. Scotland
4. Ireland
5. England & Wales
6. Gibraltar
7. Malta
8. Cyprus



Returning to the centre region of the stamp, the emergence of Africa and its components are visible.

Africa and its components

1. Gambia
2. Sierra Leone
3. Gold Coast (Ghana)
4. Lagos
5. Nigeria
6. Ascension Island
7. St. Helena
8. Union of South Africa
9. British East Africa (Kenya)
10. British Somali-land
11. Aden (Yemen)
12. Mauritius



The final section or region to examine is that of India and the island nations located in close proximity to the Indian Ocean.

India Ocean Grouping (IOG)

1. Laccadive Islands
2. Socotra
3. Maldive Isles
4. Seychelles Isles
5. Amirantes
6. Chagos Isles
7. India
8. Burma (Myanmar)
9. Ceylon (Sri Lanka)



The Map stamp provides a simplified visual overview of the state of the British Empire in 1898. It should not be viewed for its historical or geographic accuracy. However, it does provide modern armchair explorers and travelers with a view of the world and the British Empire as it was perceived by many at the time. I hope this article will encourage readers to investigate further. Lesson concluded.

References

- Map Room, The British Empire website, <https://www.britishempire.co.uk/maproom/maproom.htm>
- *The Canadian Map Stamp of 1898*, Frederick Tomlinson, The Canadian Philatelic Society of Great Britain, 1960
- *The Postage Stamps and Postal History of Canada*, Winthrop S. Boggs, Quarterman Publications, Inc., 1974 (annotated reprint of original publication from 1945)

Note: This article is a revised version of an article that appeared in *The Stamp Forum Newsletter* (Volume 4, Issue 3, April-June 2020), a publication of Chapter 1591 of the American Philatelic Society.

A Unique Hamilton Duplex Cancellation on a Map Stamp Cover

By Rick Friesen

Duplex cancelling devices were used by postmasters in Canada beginning in 1860 to both postmark/date and cancel the stamp(s) on outgoing mail with a single hammer strike. A good introduction to these postmarks, and a database that classifies all known Canadian duplexes, can be found on the Postal History Society of Canada website. Duplex devices were routinely used during the Map stamp period and are quite commonly found on used off-cover Map stamps and on Map stamp covers. However, the duplex strike shown in the accompanying figures is anything but common. The Hamilton duplex DON-723a (see PHSC website for nomenclature) was used from January 9, 1883, to April 12, 1897, well before the issuance of the Map stamp in early December 1898. Apparently, for some unspecified reason, it was brought back into service for a single day on May 22, 1899. The Map stamp cover (front only) shown in Figure 1, addressed to Toronto from a bookseller in Hamilton, bears a DON-723a cancel from this day, 2/MY 22/99.



Figure 1: Map stamp cover bearing a unique late date for the Hamilton DON-723a duplex cancel.

To add to the novelty of the cover, the Map stamp itself is an example of a major re-entry from plate position 2A47. This re-entry can be identified by the strong spurs outside the cable at bottom right, slight rightward extension of the background lines of the right value tablet, a doubling mark inside the cable at the top left corner, and sporadic marks at the bottom of "WE HOLD A VASTER EMPIRE THAN HAS BEEN" including a clear shortening of the letters in "BEEN".

All in all, an interesting and likely unique Map stamp cover.

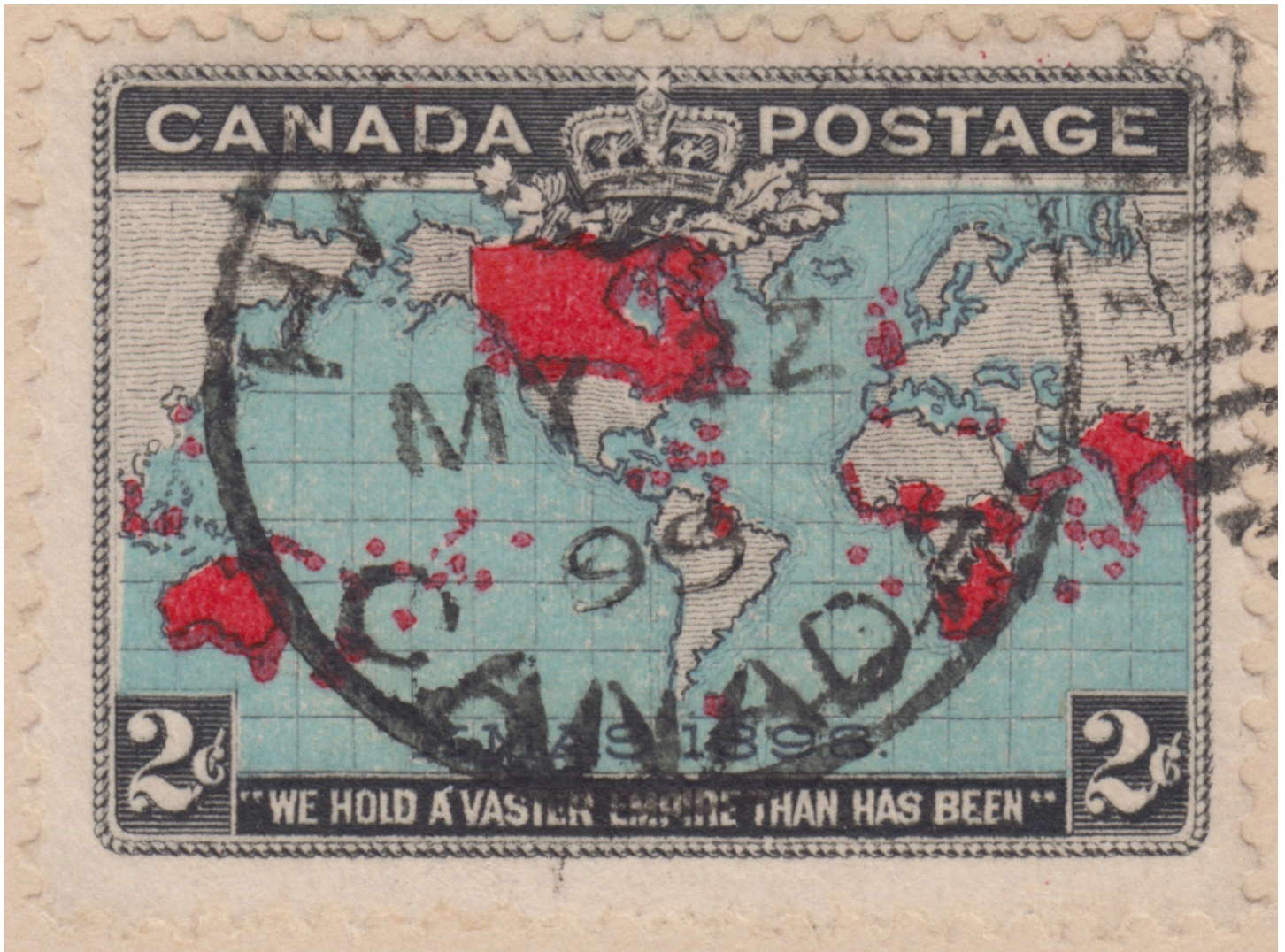


Figure 2: Close-up of the Map stamp showing a major re-entry from plate position 2A47 and details of the Hamilton DON-723a duplex cancel.

References

- *Duplex Cancellations of Canada Introduction*, Postal History Society of Canada website, <https://www.postalhistorycanada.net/php/Duplex/intro.php>,
(The complete database of duplex cancellations is only available to members.)
- *The Canadian 1898 Christmas Map Stamp - A Definitive Plating Study*, Kenneth A. Kershaw & Roger Boisclair, Reprinted by the British North America Philatelic Society, 2009

An Unreported Re-entry on an Interesting Map Stamp from Plate 1

By Scott Robinson

Recently, I have been studying Map stamps from black plate 1. This plate is not known for the many re-entries and cable retouches that can be found on the other black plates, but it does include a much more extensive assortment of faint unerased guide lines. This is likely because it was the first plate prepared for the issue.

The stamp from position 54 of this plate (1A54) is particularly interesting. In addition to a prominent guide dot and arc line in the Tonkin Gulf area, the stamp is also noteworthy for a long scratch across the Pacific Ocean, a small dot in the top margin, and a weak area at the right of the top cable. Careful examination of this position using my Celestron digital microscope has also revealed traces of two unerased vertical guidelines and a previously unreported re-entry. An illustration showing an exaggerated version of these constant plate varieties is shown below.

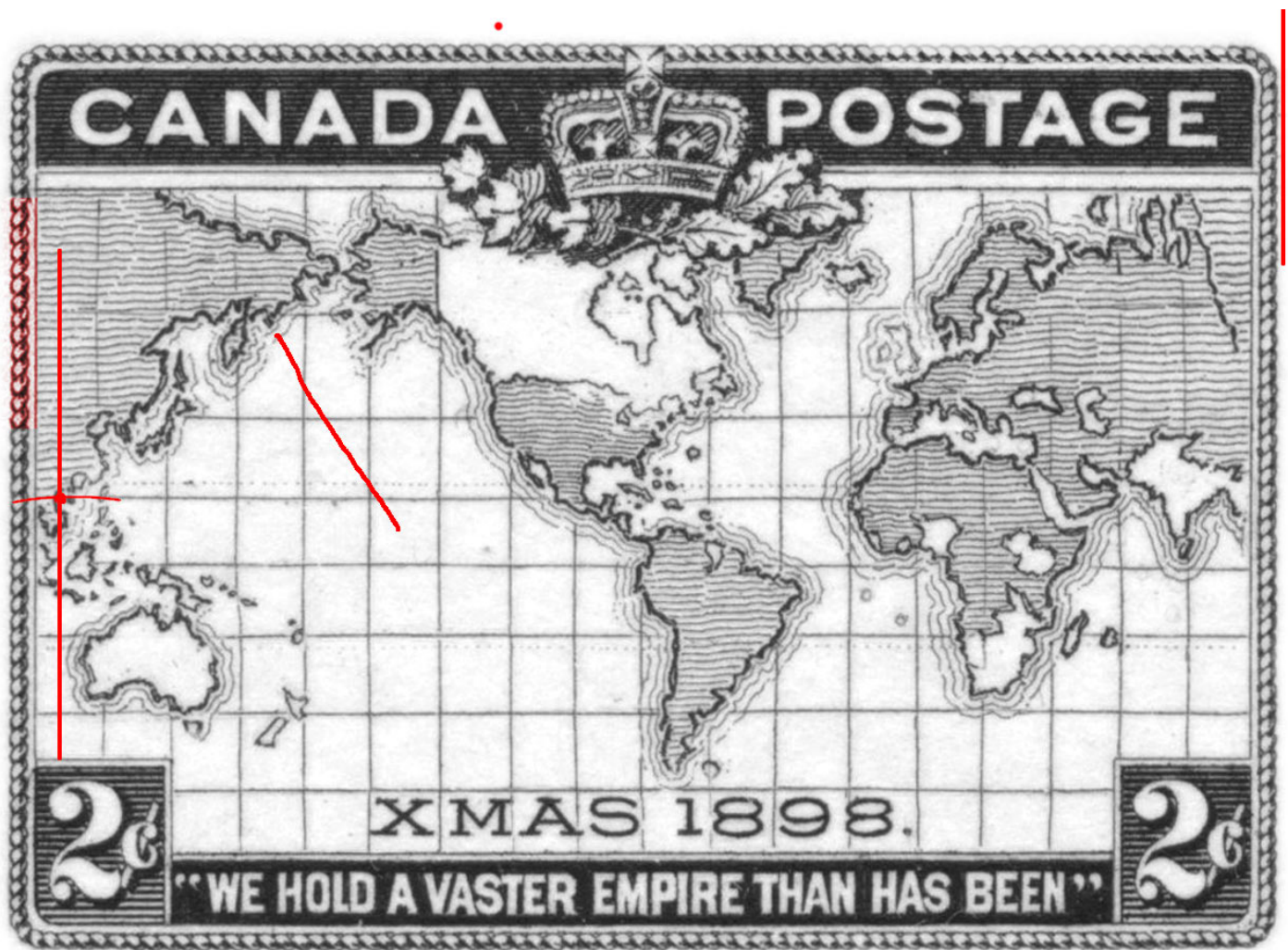


Figure 1: Exaggerated illustration showing the many constant plate varieties from the Map stamp from plate position 1A54.

Since my two copies of this plate position had heavy cancels, I reached out to fellow Map stamp plate collector, Simon Taylor-Young, for some scans of better copies. Compare the two copies on the next page to see if you can discern all of the varieties. You will need to zoom in to see some of the more subtle ones.



*Figure 2: Two examples of plate position 1A54 in contrasting ocean shades.
Images courtesy of Simon Taylor-Young.*

The previously unreported re-entry at this plate position shows doubling of the upper left cable and the inner vertical frame line to its right. There are also traces of doubling to the horizontal shading lines across Russia and China. Although the doubling is sharp, it is also very faint and subtle. This re-entry has probably gone unreported for so long due to the very high magnification needed to see it.



*Figure 3: Two examples of the plate position 1A54 re-entry in contrasting ocean shades.
Images courtesy of Simon Taylor-Young.*

References and End Notes

- *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

Many thanks to Simon Taylor-Young for sharing scans and stamps from his collection with me for my plating research.

Featured Maps

This issue, I am pleased to feature a lovely cover submitted by new study group member, Arnold Janson. He is a Canadian who has been living and working in Qatar for over a decade. He submitted images of the cover shown below along with close-up scans of various features of the Map stamp at the right corner of the cover. Arnie was interested to know more about these features. Our ensuing email conversation revealed a number of interesting aspects of the cover and stamps.



Figure 1: Cover from Rat Portage, Ontario to Uddevalla (Uddewalla?), Sweden dated April 16, 1900.

The stamps are tied by two duplex cancelations from Rat Portage, Ontario, dated April 16, 1900. They pay the standard international letter rate of 5¢ to countries outside the British Empire. The cover is probably addressed to Uddevalla, Sweden, although the town appears to read “Uddewalla”.

The two Map stamps used on the cover are interesting because of the difference in the shades of the oceans. The rightmost stamp is from position 2A95 and the leftmost stamp appears to be from 2A85, although it does not show the weakness in the top cable usually associated with that position. These stamps would appear one above the other in the post office pane. This makes sense since they were probably taken from the same pane of stamps at the same time. The interesting thing is that the left stamp appears to show early signs of the “muddy waters” colour change with its encroaching greenish gold hue, while the right stamp shows no sign of this.

The right stamp is easily recognised as coming from plate position 2A95. The red plate features include an extra island in the Pacific Ocean Group between islands 9 and 10, a small curled tip to the north island of New Zealand, and a dot in the southern USA. While these features and others are well established for this position and mentioned in the standard plating books by Whitney L. Bradley and Kenneth A. Kershaw, there is also an additional constant red plate feature for this position that has not been documented. There is usually a red dot in or about the “R” of “EMPIRE”, although this can sometimes be very faint or obscured by the black ink depending on the alignment of the plates. See figure 2.



*Figure 2: Stamp exhibits the typical features associated with plate position 2A95.
Close-up reveals the additional constant red dot in “R” of “EMPIRE”.*

The black plate for this stamp from 2A95 is also quite distinct because it features two horizontal lines that were used to retouch and strengthen the bottom cable. Although this type of retouch is common to all the stamps from the bottom row of plates 2 and 3, each has subtle distinctive characteristics that can be used to identify the specific plate and position. The close-up views shown in figure 3 reveal how the added horizontal lines stray from both the top and bottom of the cable. The left corner also features two distinct spurs that protrude below the cable and a small dot in the margin.



Figure 3: Retouch to bottom cable includes two horizontal lines that deviate from the cable to appear as doubled lines or spurs.

The stamps with retouches to the bottom cable on plates 2 and 3 are also often supplemented by some more minor retouching to the bottom of the side cables. This usually consists of the retouched horizontal line at the top of the bottom cable curling up to strengthen the first few links of the side cables. For plate position 2A95, these retouches to the side cables are fairly subtle and do not attract much attention. However, as the closeup supplied by Arnie clearly shows (figure 4), the bottom of the left side actually includes two vertical lines, one on each side of the cable, that extend upwards past the value tablet. Although this feature is subtle and requires high magnification to see, it is an unusual feature of position 2A95 that has not been documented until now.



Figure 4: Close-up view showing the two vertical lines used to retouch and strengthen part of the left cable of plate position 2A95.

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 - A Plating Study*, Whitney L. Bradley, British North America Philatelic Society, 1989

Map Stamp Research: New and Ongoing Research Requests

Your faithful editor was a little disappointed by the very limited response to the ongoing research requests mentioned in the last Report. This issue, we repeat the two previous requests and add a new one related to the new “black plate 2 / red plate B” plate combination mentioned in your editor’s article on the subject in the last issue. If you have plated copies of the Map stamp or even some early cancel dates, we would be glad to hear from you regarding these research projects. Perhaps we can setup a Zoom conference in the new year to provide more details of what we are researching and how you can contribute.

New Research Request

Map Plate 2B Combinations

The recent discovery of Map stamps printed from black plate 2 and red plate B throws a new wrinkle into our understanding of how these stamps were printed. More study is needed to determine if this plate combination is an extremely rare printing anomaly or just another combination that is scarcer than the others. The key for finding examples of these Map stamps is to look at copies that have been identified as coming from black plate 5 based on the red plate characteristics, and to see if they do, in fact, have features from black plate 2. Typical things to look for would be major re-entries as well as the Tonkin Gulf dots and arc lines that are rarely seen on plate 5 stamps. If your collection includes a significant quantity of plated Map stamps, we would love to hear from you. Please contact the editors using the information shown on the bottom of this page.

Ongoing Research Requests

Earliest Dates for Map Plates and Shades

As mentioned in our previous report, several study group members are currently researching the earliest appearance of the various Map stamp plates and ocean shades. While it is well known that the stamp was available and used before its official first day of issue on December 25, 1898, the specific first use of the various black plates and appearance of the various ocean shades is only anecdotally documented.

If you are interested to participate in this research or if you have scans of early dated Map stamps or covers to contribute, we would be eager to hear from you. We are also interested to learn of any existing published information on this topic. Please contact the editors using the information shown on the bottom of this page.

Lavender/Blue Ocean Plates and Varieties

Some recent discoveries of constant or at least semi-constant varieties on the plates used to print the lavender/blue oceans of the Map stamp have opened up the possibility for further exploration of the number of plates and their pairing with the black plates. If you are interested to participate in this research or if you have scans of Map stamps with unusual ocean marks or anomalies to contribute, we would be eager to hear from you. We are particularly interested in collectors who have large quantities of plated Map stamps in order to compare specific plate positions to establish constancy and determine black plate usage. Please contact the editors using the information shown on the bottom of this page.

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