

## Chairman's Message

Welcome to the first issue of the Report for 2022! It appears that the COVID pandemic has been waning in the first few months of the year and, as a result, in person stamp exhibition meetings will be possible for the first time in 2 years! I am planning to attend some of the major Canadian stamp exhibitions this year and hope to meet many of you at ORAPEX (April 23-24, Ottawa), CAPEX (June 9-12, Toronto) or BNAPEX (September 2-4, Calgary).

Note that my latest Map stamp cover census, entitled *Barred Circle Postmarks of Canada on the 1898 Canadian 2¢ Imperial Penny Postage Issue (The 'Map Stamp')*: A Cover Census, was made available in February from the BNAPS Map Stamp Study Group web page at: <https://bnaps.org/studygroups/Map/newsletters.htm>.

Thanks to those members who have contributed articles for this Report. Please continue to send your comments (especially those related to the "Reader Feedback" section of the Report) and articles. I would love to read about your particular in-depth study on the Map stamp, your favourite cover, or your favourite plate position! Enjoy this issue and please send your feedback.

**Rick Friesen, Chairman and Report Co-editor**  
Kirkland, Quebec  
[rickfriesen5@gmail.com](mailto:rickfriesen5@gmail.com)

## My Two Cents – From Your Editor

This issue begins with a very interesting article from Yves Drolet that explores how the Map stamp was covered in the philatelic press at the time it was released. It seems that not all of the contemporary journals had positive things to say. Rick chimes in with a fascinating Map cover showing a peculiar simultaneous use of both an Ottawa Crown and a squared circle cancel. Next, I provide what I believe is the first ever published article on varieties of the Map stamp lavender/blue ocean plates. In this first of a series, I present a striking variety that was brought to my attention by Vince Chermishnok. Finally, we conclude with a selection of reader feedback that includes some nice Map examples, an official first day of issue debate, and some research on aniline ink and its possible usage on the Map stamp.

My article and several topics of the reader feedback section cry out for comments, opinion, or further information from members of the study group. Please get back to Rick or me with your ideas.

**Scott Robinson, Report Editor**  
Pierrefonds, Quebec  
[scott@flyspecker.com](mailto:scott@flyspecker.com)

### Contents

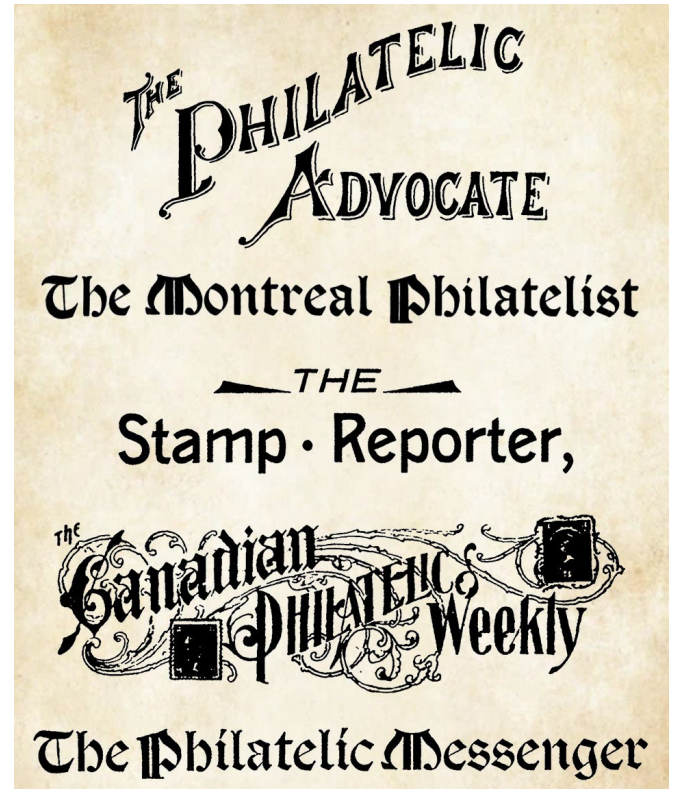
Chairman's Message .....	1
My Two Cents – From Your Editor .....	1
The Map Stamp in the Contemporary Philatelic Press By Yves Drolet .....	2
A Unique Map Stamp Cover Co-Canceled with an Ottawa Crown and a Squared Circle By Rick Friesen .....	5
Flooded South America: A Lavender/Blue Plate Variety By Scott Robinson .....	8
Reader Feedback.....	13

# The Map Stamp in the Contemporary Philatelic Press

By Yves Drolet

The Canadian Imperial Penny Postage stamp (the Map stamp) issued in December 1898 was definitely not meant to go unnoticed. Innovative in design and making with its three-colour world map, it has attracted the attention of philatelists ever since, and remains a favourite of collectors. Few stamps have called forth such a vast literature, with many books and countless articles detailing its plating, colour varieties, or the location of every speck of the British Empire on the miniature map. One aspect of this highly original stamp that has not yet been studied is how contemporary philatelists viewed its issuance and gradually found out about the wealth of printing varieties. Such a study is now possible thanks to the availability of digitized copies of old philatelic journals.

Five philatelic journals were published in Canada in the late 1898 to early 1899 period: *The Philatelic Advocate* edited by the Starnaman brothers in Berlin (present-day Kitchener), *The Stamp Reporter* edited by George Bradley in St. Catharines, *The Canadian Philatelic Weekly* edited in Toronto, *The Montreal Philatelist* edited by Rudolph Cornelius Bach, and *The Philatelic Messenger* edited by Matthew Knight in Oak Hill NB.



## Initial Reactions

Upon its issuance, the Map stamp elicited a variety of reactions among the editors of these journals. The *Weekly* was the most enthusiastic, calling it “a beautiful stamp, superior (Canadians think) to any stamp heretofore issued” and “the prettiest and cheapest map of the world ever published.” The journal specified that Postmaster General Mulock also intended to issue a card bearing the impress of the stamp with a table of figures “indicating the important elements in Canada’s claim to greatness” that would be distributed in Canada and Great Britain. This promotional aspect of the stamp was noticed on the other side of the Atlantic, with *The London Philatelist* explaining that through a stamp showing the extent of British possessions with Canada positioned front and centre, Mulock wanted to impress upon the British public both the vastness and solidarity of the Empire, and the value of the Dominion as an integral part of it.

The *Weekly* erroneously ascribed the motto *WE HOLD A VASTER EMPIRE THAN HAS BEEN* to a Canadian poet, a mistake also made by the *Advocate*, that more soberly described the stamp as “a neatly executed map of the world in miniature” and described Mulock’s personal involvement in its design. The *Reporter* gave a cursory review of the issue, while the *Messenger* entirely ignored it.

The *Montreal Philatelist* dissented from the common opinion and expressed a negative view of the stamp, although it correctly ascribed the motto to British poet Lewis Morris. The journal reprinted a highly critical letter published in the *London Daily Graphic* by British Admiral Algernon de Horsey, who called the inscription *WE HOLD A VASTER EMPIRE THAN HAS BEEN* silly braggadocio that would only incite the dislike and ridicule of other nations, and suggested that the stamps bearing this vainglorious motto be withdrawn from circulation and sold to collectors, “who would quickly buy them up as monuments of bad taste.” A testament to the Admiral’s fears, the inscription was not well received in France, where the celebrated philatelic pioneer Arthur Maury called it devoid of all modesty in his journal *Le Collectionneur de timbres-poste*.

The *Montreal Philatelist* also derided the stamp by describing it as “too large for a postage stamp and too small for a wall map” and posting the following fictitious dialogue between a post office clerk and a client:

Party (at the Post Office) - A 2 cent stamp, please.

(Clerk hands out a 2¢ Imperial).

Party (indignantly) - Here, I say! I asked for a postage stamp, I don't want an atlas.

Additionally, Bach criticized the poor printing quality of the red part of the design, exclaiming “no wonder we hold a vaster Empire than has been, on some stamps we have annexed about half of the United States.” This was echoed south of the border by *The Virginia Philatelist*, otherwise complimentary of the stamp, with the following friendly warning: “of all our laws, there’s one we enforce most rigidly: Keep Off the Grass.” This contrasted with the favourable opinion of the *Weekly*, that mentioned that while a copy was found where the red was printed out of place, careful research among several thousand other copies had not revealed another similar misprint.

## Varieties

The first hints of varieties came out within weeks of the stamp issuance, when the colour of the sea area apparently went from lavender to blue. The *Reporter* announced this change in its chronicle of new stamps, implying that there were now two differently issued Imperial stamps. The *Montreal Philatelist* more aptly spoke of distinct shades (lavender, gray, white light blue, Prussian blue) that could in some cases be found all on one sheet, and advised that getting two or three hundred copies of the stamp would keep a minor varieties collector busy for a year. In the summer of 1899, James Wurtele, a leading Montreal stamp dealer, showed Bach a stamp with the sea area in an entirely new colour, a mixture between sea and olive green, cancelled Brockville & Westport M.C. May 27<sup>th</sup>, '99, specifying that this was the first one he saw after handling over 200,000 Imperial stamps.

In April 1899, the *Reporter* published a lengthy article on Canadian varieties by Amy Swift, an American philatelist who was one of the few women who wrote in stamp journals. On the Map stamp, Swift noted that the first lavender printing had been speedily followed by light bluish green, a much paler bluish green and a deep striking shade of blue, pointing out that these tints were not due to fading as they were found on unused stamps. She judged severely the red printing:

The red part of the design was put on so carelessly that hardly any two stamps have it exactly in the same (or in the correct) places; if these varieties were counted as differences, there would be almost as many varieties as there are stamps, but they are wholly unworthy of attention and it is not likely that even the most devout of devout specialists will consider it necessary to make a collection of them, for which let us be thankful.

Another critic of the red printing was Herbert L'Estrange Ewen, a British stamp dealer and philatelist. In the March 17, 1900 issue of his *Ewen's Weekly Stamp News*, he wrote that “whoever designed the stamp did so very carelessly, as the various islands appear to be dotted down haphazardly.” However, far from considering the topic unworthy of attention, he devoted four columns of his journal (roughly equivalent to 6 pages of the current *Xmas 1898 Map Stamp Report*) to the minute varieties of the Imperial stamp. Every student of the Map stamp should have a look at this remarkably detailed article that can be downloaded for free from the site of the Royal Philatelic Society, London:

[https://www.rpsl.org.uk/gplstatic/BL\\_CrawfordDocs/016676789/016676789\\_EwensWSN\\_1900.pdf](https://www.rpsl.org.uk/gplstatic/BL_CrawfordDocs/016676789/016676789_EwensWSN_1900.pdf)

**Editor's Note: This PDF is a compilation of many issues of Ewen's Weekly Stamp News. It is 330 pages long and more than 57MB. The specific article mentioned here begins on page 88.**

## The Map Stamp Trade

As most philatelic journals were edited by stamp dealers and devoted much of their space to advertisements, they provide a lot of useful information on the trade activity surrounding the Map stamp during the first months following its issuance. Thus, we learn from the *Canadian Philatelic Weekly* that when the stamp was put up for sale in Toronto on December 7, the demand was not great as no one knew of the stamp's early appearance, but it was expected that the stamp would be

comparatively scarce. One Toronto dealer who bet on this expected scarcity was John Hulme Lowe, who was first in line at the post office to buy an entire sheet. The Map stamp was indeed a hit with collectors, prompting two Montreal dealers to include a cutting of it in their ads in the *Montreal Philatelist*: Peter Eastman Lunn, who offered a free Imperial stamp to anyone asking for his approval sheets, and William Willson.

As soon as varieties emerged, dealers started pricing them differently, with the rarer lavender commanding a premium. For example, in January 1899, F. R. Nicolle from Kingston was selling a lavender used for 5¢ compared to 4¢ for a light blue unused. Scarcer varieties fetched higher prices, with the gray termed “rare” sold 15¢ unused by A. R. Magill from Montreal in May and the greenish sold 10¢ unused by Wurtele in December.

In April, the *Montreal Philatelist* reported the issuance of Plates 3 and 4 in light lavender. This decision of the Post Office Department to re-issue the stamp was criticized by Bach, who felt that this would devalue the holdings of dealers. Back in January, Bach had also been critical of the decision announced in *The London Philatelist* that unused copies of the Imperial stamp would be sold at the London offices of the Canadian High Commissioner almost as early as in Canada, claiming that such practice would deprive Canadian stamp dealers of orders from Britain.

## Conclusion

Postage stamps are often studied scientifically as objects. However, contrary to a rock or a piece of wood, a stamp is a man-made artefact designed, manufactured, used, traded and collected by people. All these activities must be investigated to gain a full understanding of a stamp. This brief survey of the first months in the life of the Imperial Map stamp will hopefully serve this purpose.

## References

- *The Canadian Philatelic Weekly*, December 10, 1898
- *The Philatelic Advocate*, December 1898
- *The Stamp Reporter*, December 1898-April 1899
- *The Montreal Philatelist*, January 1899-April 1899
- *The London Philatelist*, December 1898
- *The Virginia Philatelist*, January 1899
- *Le Collectionneur de timbres-poste*, January 1899
- *Ewen's Weekly Stamp News*, March 17, 1900



# A Unique Map Stamp Cover Co-Canceled with an Ottawa Crown and a Squared Circle

By Rick Friesen

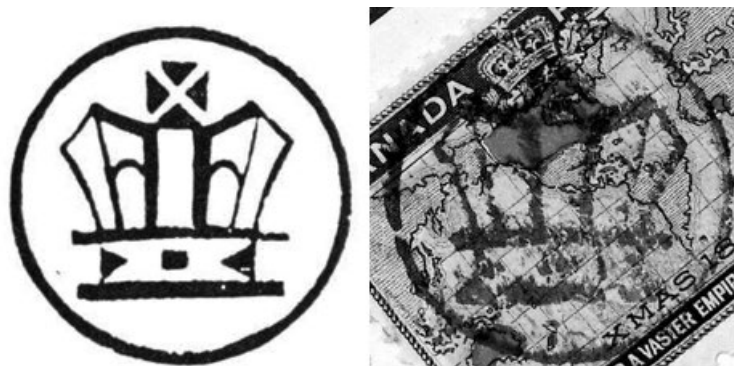
Shown in Figure 1 is a domestic Map stamp cover front with a Powassan squared circle cancel dated -/JA 12/00, first listed in a Robert A. Lee auction in 2002<sup>1</sup> and now in my collection. It is one of five documented Map stamp covers with a Powassan squared circle postmark.<sup>2</sup> It is addressed to Mrs. W.H.A. Fraser in Ottawa. William H.A. Fraser is listed in an Ottawa city directory from the period<sup>3</sup> as residing at 135 MacLaren St., and he is listed as a partner in Fraser & Co., a wholesale lumber business located at 74 Napean St. and co-owned with John B. Fraser. In addition to the Powassan squared circle, the Map stamp is co-canceled with a SON Ottawa Crown postmark.<sup>4</sup> This cover is unique in that it is the only cover documented in the Census of Squared Circle Map Stamp Covers<sup>2</sup> with an Ottawa Crown postmark. Since the Ottawa Crown was known to be extensively forged, the question is whether this is a fake Ottawa Crown cancel or whether it is an authentic use of the Ottawa Crown postmark as a canceling “receiver”.



*Figure 1: Map stamp cover with Powassan squared circle and Ottawa Crown cancellations.*

The Ottawa Crown postmark (see Figure 2, left) is a “fancy cancel” (Lacelle fancy cancel #1284) that was proofed in April 1880 and used until the early 1900’s.<sup>4</sup> Smythies published a study of this postmark and its forgeries based on an examination of the authentic strike from the Pritchard and Andrews proof book. The characteristics of this postmark, as reported by Smythies, can be found in the accompanying table. Both genuine and forged postmarks are known on the

Map stamp and examples of each were displayed by Anders in his Map stamp exhibit.<sup>5</sup> Also included in the table are several characteristics of the postmark that were identified by Anders.



*Figure 2: Proof strike and cover strike of Ottawa Crown cancel*

### Characteristics of the Ottawa Crown Postmark

Crown	Smythies	Anders	This Cover
Diadem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 small triangles forming a Maltese Cross ~4 mm square</li> <li>square between triangles makes a neat intaglio Cross</li> <li>diadem rests on top of the frame</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>four symmetrical triangles with a clear "X" between them</li> <li>fakes have triangles too close together</li> </ul>	conforms to Smythies
Frame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 sectors with vertical lines that meet the top and bottom of the frame</li> <li>central rectangular sector - <b>thick border lines</b>, measures ~6.5 x 2.5-3 mm, closed at the top by the lower triangle of the diadem</li> <li>internal sectors - each similar in size, has a small curved arch (the top of which is 4.25-4.5 mm from the base), top line is <b>thick</b> and vertical line is 7.5 mm and <b>thin</b></li> <li>outer sectors - narrower than internal sectors, <b>thin</b> lines with outer lines curving slightly outward, vertical line 6 mm</li> <li>outer frame - unbroken line at sides and top, measures 15 x 8 mm (maximum)</li> </ul>		conforms to Smythies
Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 thick horizontal lines measuring 14 (upper) x 13.5 (lower) mm separated by 2.5-3 mm</li> <li>in between is a short horizontal bar and 2 triangles pointing inwards that typically block the ends and are in line with the outer framelines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>centre ornament at the base of crown is a short rectangle 2 mm long</li> <li>fakes are too long, 2.8 mm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conforms to Smythies</li> <li>rectangle ~2 mm</li> </ul>
Outer Circle	regular, unbroken circle with diameter nearly 21 mm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>diameter 22 mm</li> <li>fakes ≤20.5 mm and not a true circle</li> </ul>	regular circle with diameter ~20.5-21 mm

As can be seen by comparing the proof strike and the cover strike from Figure 2, the characteristics of the cancel compare favourably with both the Smythies and Anders descriptions in the table. The use of the Ottawa Crown as a "receiver" can be rationalized in two ways. D.B.T. Davis published a study of the postmarks used by the Ottawa Main post office<sup>6</sup> on behalf of the federal government. Although the Ottawa Crown is included in this list of government handstamps, Davis suggests that the "outlined crown OH-2" (Davis' nomenclature) probably does not belong in the list since "no government-specific use has been noted for it". However, examples of its use are known for "recancelling lightly-cancelled stamps on covers directed to Ottawa". It could be argued that the cover shown in Figure 1 exemplifies this practice. Alternatively, it is possible that the Ottawa postmaster viewed the use of the Powassan squared circle to cancel the Map stamp as an

incorrect use of a “dater”, and then applied the Ottawa Crown as a “correct” obliterator.<sup>7</sup> Either of these explanations would be appropriate and, taken together with the favourable postmark characteristics, suggest that this is an authentic use of the Ottawa Crown on a squared circle Map stamp cover.<sup>8</sup>

## References

1. Robert A. Lee March 2002 auction #103, Lot #3609
2. R. Friesen, *Census of Squared Circle Map Stamp Covers*, BNAPS website, pg 278 (2020)
3. *The Ottawa City Directory 1901*, Ottawa: Might Directories Ltd.
4. E.A. Smythies, “The Ottawa Crown Cancellation and its Forgeries”, in *Maple Leaves*, Vol. 9, No. 10, Whole No. 82, pg 171 (1963)
5. J.T. Anders, *Imperial Penny Postage 1898*, ORAPEX 2002 Exhibit (note that all 3 of the genuine examples exhibited by Anders are SON strikes on off-cover Map stamps and would therefore not have tied the stamp to the cover)
6. D.B.T. Davis, “Ottawa Post Office Official Handstruck Free Markings”, in *PHSC Journal*, No. 97, pg 2 (1999)
7. Explanation offered by members of the BNAPS Large and Small Queens study group
8. David Lacelle (Chairman of the BNAPS Fancy Cancel Study Group) notes that “Yours (referring to this cover) has two of the primary “Correct” details I look for in this cancel.”



# Lavender/Blue Ocean Plate Varieties – Part 1: Flooded South America

---

**By Scott Robinson**

Over the last couple of years, I have been researching several aspects of the Map stamp. One area that has always interested me is the lavender/blue ink plates used to print the oceans. While the numerous varieties visible on the red plates used to print the British Empire territories are a key facet of study and plating for the Maps, the ocean plates have largely been ignored as a source of varieties other than the shade of the ink.

Varieties of the two red plates, arbitrarily named plate A and plate B, used to print the Map stamp have been observed and documented since the stamp was first released more than 120 years ago. During the latter part of the twentieth century, philatelic writers such as Frederick Tomlinson and Whitney L. Bradley published detailed studies outlining the varieties of the red plates. Bradley's plating study remained the gold standard until earlier in this century when Kenneth A. Kershaw expanded on Bradley's work with his own plating study using high-magnification images of each plate position.

These writers were characteristically silent on plate varieties of the ocean plates. Tomlinson notes that an "unknown number of electrotype plates" were used to print the oceans. He mentions that the solid ocean colours were visible as closely spaced vertical lines on some copies but also states, "No constant markings or even varieties have been noted in respect of the printings of the seas." Bradley expands on Tomlinson by providing details of the ocean shades used for each black plate and theorizes that separate ocean plates (5 in total) may have been used for printing each of the major shades. Bradley also mentions the vertical lines in the oceans and describes their frequency of appearance for the various shades. He makes no mention of plate varieties for the ocean plates except for one specific example that I will discuss in a future follow-up article. Kershaw's writings concentrate heavily on plating the Maps via red and black plate varieties. Although he does equate the evolution of some red plate varieties with the timing of the printing based on oceans shades, he provides little comment on the ocean shades or plates and does not mention any varieties.

As any Map collector knows, the misalignment of the colours on the stamp frequently results in red territories that are out of place and oceans that intrude over the shores of the various continents. These phenomena are related to the alignment of the plates and paper during the printing process and are not generally the result of plate varieties. The situation is complicated even further by the fact that most of the lavender ocean copies are too faint to detect small plate varieties. The combination of poor colour visibility, misalignment of colours, and the likely additional blurring or spreading of the ocean ink for some copies of the Maps from exposure to chemicals and moisture over the last 120 years caused me to ignore most anomalies I may have seen regarding the oceans over the years.

In recent years, I have noted a small number of ocean plate oddities that I put aside for future study. I have not yet had enough time or material to determine how these may be correlated to a specific number of ocean plates used to print the Maps. I can confirm that multiple plates were almost certainly used to print the oceans and that there are some constant varieties that appear with specific ocean shades and black plate combinations. In this first of three planned articles, I present one of the most interesting and certainly the most spectacular of the varieties I have observed for the lavender/blue ocean plates.

Back in August of 2020, Vince Chermishnok, an email friend living in Portugal with whom I had shared and plated several Map scans, sent me a scan of an interesting Map stamp that showed the ocean ink covering almost the entirety of South America. Looking at the low-resolution scan, I plated it to position 50 from plate 1 or 2 and noted that the ocean ink did indeed cover most of South America and a significant area of western Africa and Europe. I felt this was typical of some other Maps I had seen and suggested to Vince that it was likely that "the blue ink has simply spread from soaking or some other chemical process."

During our ensuing emails on the subject over the next few weeks, Vince was able to confirm that the stamp was from plate/position 2A50 and that he was able to observe "strong vertical lines that make up the colouring with obvious gaps between them in the various locations including South America, parts of Europe and into the Middle East." He was also able to send me a high-resolution scan of his stamp that is shown in Figure 1 on the next page.





*Figure 1: Vince Chermishnok's Map stamp from 2A50 showing extra ocean ink over South America plus parts of western Africa and Europe.*

The fact that traces of the vertical lines were visible for the ocean ink was, indeed, a good sign that the misplaced ink had not simply spread or been smudged. This led me to examine a very pale lavender ocean copy that I had from 2A50. To the naked eye, there was only a hint of colour over South America. However, by enhancing only the lavender colour using Photoshop, I was able to see that my lavender copy also had similar ocean ink covering most of South America.

Vince and I continued to correspond via email about this variety with each of us reaching out to other collectors to see what their holdings might show for 2A50. Over the next few months, it became clear that the variety exists for both the lavender and blue shades. However, it does not exist on all or even most copies. Fellow study group member, Simon Taylor-Young, reported that only three of his 15 copies showed the variety. The ink over South America is also quite variable with some copies showing almost total coverage and others showing a blotchy partial coverage. Some copies only show a hint of the extra ink via some mottled strands of ocean colour.

Interestingly, stamps from 2A50 with the flooded South America variety also share an additional ocean plate variety. There is a distinct fuzzy area of missing ocean ink about the "AS" of "XMAS 1898" that is common to the copies we have seen in both ocean colours. This variety does not seem to appear on copies without the flooded South America.

Various examples of the varieties are shown in Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 shows a highly visible blue ocean ink example plus another copy where the varieties are barely discernable. Figure 3 shows lavender ink copies where strong varieties are present but obscured by very faint ink.



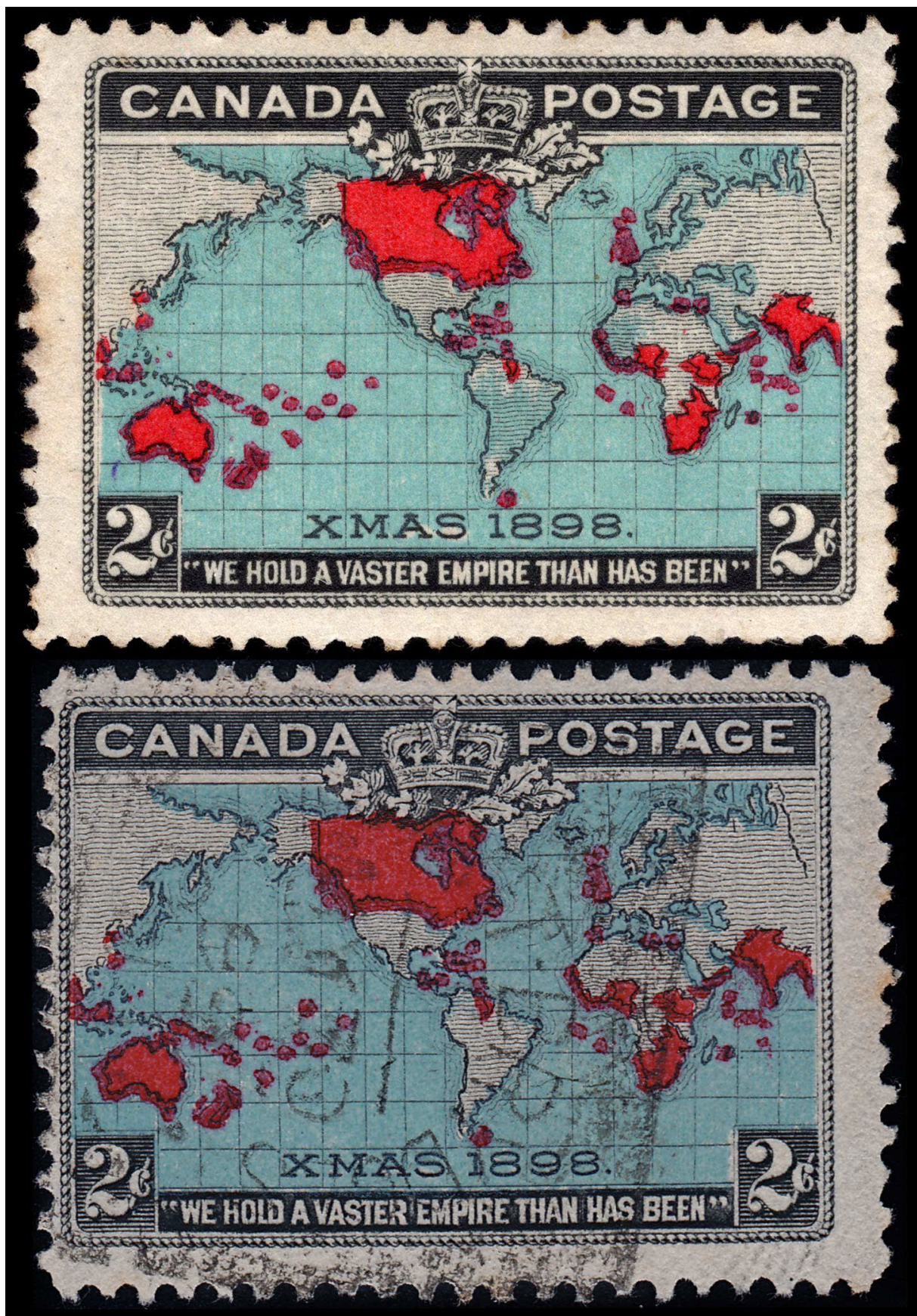


Figure 2: Upper stamp, courtesy of Simon Taylor-Young, shows strong ocean ink over South America, western Africa and Europe. The missing ocean ink at the end of "XMAS" is also obvious. The lower stamp, courtesy of Rick Friesen, shows only the slightest hint of ocean ink marks at the top of South America and Africa. The white area in "XMAS" is also barely noticeable.



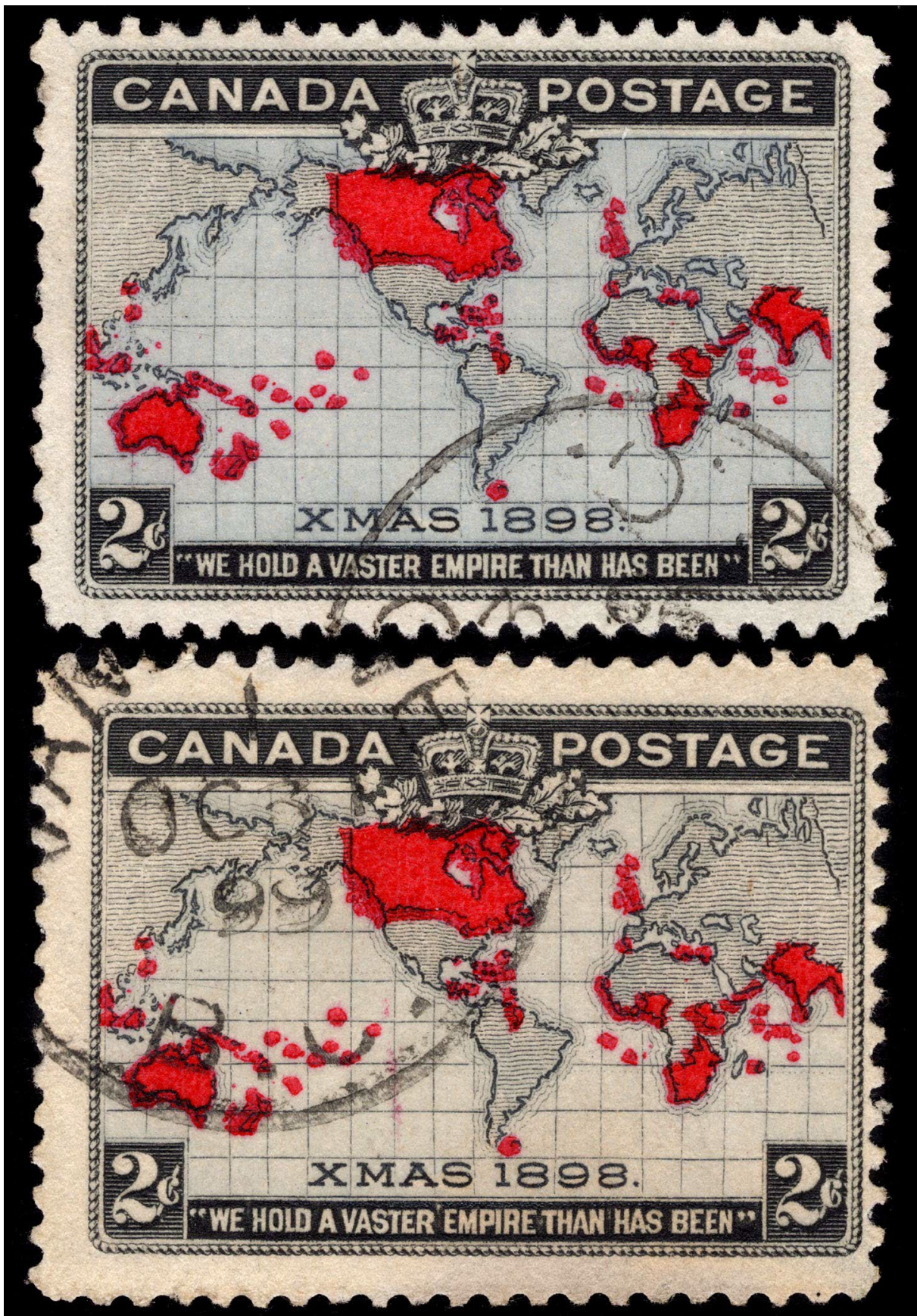


Figure 3: Two lavender examples, courtesy of Simon Taylor-Young, actually have strong ink coverage over South America and western Africa, but this is very hard to see because of the faint shade of the lavender ink. The missing ocean ink in "XMAS" is also visible under close inspection.



It would seem that the flooded South America variety (and its much more minor flooded areas in west Africa and/or Europe) plus the white area at the end of "XMAS" are constant ocean plate varieties of position 50 for at least some of the printings with black plate 2. They do not appear on all copies from this plate/position and do not appear on copies of position 50 from black plates 1 and 3 that also share the same red plate. Unless these rather strong varieties evolved on the ocean plate during printing, which seems unlikely, this clearly suggests that there may be two different ocean plates used to print Maps stamps from black plate 2. The plate with these ocean varieties does not appear to have been used for the other black plates.

While the use of multiple plates to print the ocean colours for the Map stamps will not come as a surprise to most Map specialists, the fact that there were more than one plate used for a single black plate is unexpected given that the same red plate was used for black plates 1, 2, and 3. It is also unexpected that this change in the ocean plate does not coincide with a change in the red plate or a change to the ink colour of the oceans.

Finally, it must be stated that these findings are not certain proof of two ocean plates used with black plate 2. While this seems like a reasonable deduction, it is also possible that position 2A50 has simply suffered plate wear resulting in a weak area where the oceans around South America are not elevated very high and the lower non-printing areas of the plate can also print if a heavy amount of ink is applied to the plate. The fact that the variety can appear in different forms and strengths is suggestive that it may be the result of a weak or worn area rather than an outright constant plate difference. On the other hand, the fact that the variety does not persist on Maps printed later with black plate 3, does suggest that the ocean plate was changed at some point.

The Map from 2A50 does at least exhibit some very interesting semi-constant varieties involving both extra and missing ink areas on the same stamp. More research is needed to determine whether this is definitively proof of an extra plate. I welcome feedback from other collectors who have plated copies or sheets showing position 50. Specifically, I would like to know:

- Do your copies of 2A50 show evidence of the flooded South America and/or partially flooded West Africa?
- Do these copies also show the white area about the end of "XMAS"?
- Do you have copies that show one of these varieties but not the other?
- Do you have copies from position 50 of black plate 1 or 3 that show these varieties?

In the next issue, I will follow-up with more ocean plate variety observations including some particular discussion of black plate 5 and a related variety which appears intermittently across many plate positions.

## 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 Vince Chermishnok for bringing the flooded South America variety to my attention. Also thanks to Simon Taylor-Young for sharing scans and information from the multiple copies in his collection.



## Reader Feedback

---

Several study group members have emailed your editor in the new year with comments, questions, and interesting Map stamp information. This issue, I am pleased to offer a few of the highlights.

### December 7, 1898, SON Copy of 1A54

First up is my friend, Dr. James Watt, who sent along a photo of his own copy of the Map from plate/position 1A54 after reading my article about varieties and an unreported re-entry on this stamp in the previous issue. His stamp, shown below, features a sock-on-the-nose Hamilton cancel dated Dec. 7, 1898, which is generally cited as the first recorded date of use for the Map stamp. Says Jim, “I found it in Goderich at a little stamp store and got 50 cents change from a five-dollar bill. I didn’t even collect maps then but remembered something about Dec 7th — what a find and who soaked the cover? We will never know!”



### Official First Day of Issue Debate

Study group member and Report contributor, Vince Chermishnok, emailed to call out my use of the phrase “official first day of issue on December 25, 1898” in my discussion of ongoing research concerning earliest dates of use for Map plates and shades. This prompted a brief email exchange between Vince, our Chairman Rick Friesen, and me concerning the different release dates associated with the Map stamp. Vince pointed out that Dec. 7, 1898 is generally listed as the “issue date” for the Map stamp and that Dec. 25 is when the new Imperial Penny Postage rate of one penny (or 2¢ CAD) came into effect as the new letter rate for much of the British Empire. Vince is, of course, correct with both of these statements, but the question remains as to an “official first day of issue”.

Rick chimed in with the information that the Post Office Department had officially sanctioned the new stamp for regular use and sale in a department circular dated Dec. 2, 1898. In that same circular, it stated that the stamp would be available “forthwith”. Rick also mentioned the existence of a documented cover bearing a date of Dec. 6 and that he had also seen



off-cover examples with the same date. He expressed his belief that the day on which a stamp is authorized for use by the stamp issuing authority should be considered its first day of issue and that Dec. 2 should be this date for the Map stamp.

While I am unsure if all parties finally agreed on dates and terminology, I think it can be stated with some confidence that:

- The official date of a new postage rate (Dec. 25 Imperial Penny Postage rate for the Map stamp) should not be equated with the official first date of issue for a new stamp even if it is linked to the new rate.
- The earliest recorded usage of a stamp (Dec. 6 or 7 for the Map stamp) should also not be equated with its official first date of issue since post offices may receive their stock before or after the official date. It is not uncommon, even today, for stamps to be used postally before their official first date of issue. It is also common for some post offices to not have received any stock for use by the official first date of issue. It is certainly possible that no post offices had any stock of the Map stamp on Dec. 2.

While it seems reasonable to consider Dec. 2, 1898 to be the official first date of issue for the Map stamp, I would argue that, although it was sanctioned for use on this date, its certain unavailability at most post offices and possible unavailability at any post office makes it at least awkward to consider this to be the official first date of issue. Perhaps the decision by the Post Office Department to move up the date for sanctioned sales of the stamp to before stock was readily available prevents the Map stamp from having a true “official first day of issue”. What do you think? Readers are invited to share their comments on this debate. We hope to provide more information in an upcoming article.

### An Interesting Map Block

New study group member, Steve Hellsten, recently shared a scan of a block of Maps he had acquired. Steve was interested to know the plate/positions and if the black mark visible on the top right stamp above the “AG” of “POSTAGE” was constant. The block is shown below.



Although the red ink has been applied fairly lightly to Steve's block is easily plated to 1A61, 1A62, 1A71, 1A72. The most obvious clues are the extra red colony shown in the centre of Africa and the large black Tonkin dot visible on the bottom right stamp, making it 1A72.

The black mark shown between the top cable and the "AG" of "POSTAGE" is probably not a constant variety. This stamp from plate/position 1A62 is not documented as having a mark similar to this and I was not able to see any evidence of it from three reference copies. It is likely a printing anomaly caused by a stray blob of ink or artifact on the plate that was wiped away before the next printed impression. If any readers have seen a similar mark on a stamp from this plate/position, please reach out and let us know.

### **Aniline Ink for the Map Stamp?**

Study group member, Gordon Demke, emailed me about the possible use of aniline ink for the red colour used to show the British Empire territories on the Map stamp. Gordon noted that all of the thousand or so Maps that he had accumulated show some suffusion of the ink on the reverse side of the stamp, except for a single mint copy that he had recently acquired.

Gordon also shared some facts from a detailed literature search he had done about aniline ink. The general consensus seems to be that most stamps printed with aniline ink will show some evidence of the suffused printed ink on the reverse side of the stamp and that the ink will exhibit some fluorescence when examined with an ultraviolet lamp.

I examined a dozen or so of my own Map stamps under an old ultraviolet lamp that I have handy and could not readily detect any fluorescence from the red ink.

If any readers know more about this subject and can offer some insight about the use of aniline ink on the Maps, please reach out.

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

**Chairman & Report Co-editor: Rick Friesen**  
Kirkland, Quebec  
Email: rickfriesen5@gmail.com

**Report Editor: Scott Robinson**  
Pierrefonds, Quebec  
Email: scott@flyspecker.com

This newsletter and previous issues are available as PDF files from the BNAPS website.  
Submissions for and feedback about the newsletter should be sent to the Editor, Scott Robinson.  
All other correspondence should be addressed to the Chairman, Rick Friesen.

All articles and images are copyright ©2022 by the author and/or study group.