

Chairman's Message

This issue of the Map Stamp Report, the first of 2025, comes to you on the eve of ORAPEX 2025, one of the highlights of the stamp collecting year. I'm happy to report that this issue contains some interesting stamp scans and an article submitted by study group members not named Scott or Rick! Thanks to those of you who have contributed material, and hopefully this encourages more of you to submit an item or two on your Map stamp collecting interests. It's a breath of fresh air that I don't have to beg for member input once again - let's keep up the momentum!

Although there is not a scheduled Map stamp study group meeting at ORAPEX, I look forward to meeting many of you there. If there is any interest in holding a meeting at BNAPEX in Vernon, BC, later this year, let me know and I will try and schedule something. Until then, have a great summer (once it gets here)!

Rick Friesen, Chairman
Stittsville, Ontario
rickfriesen5@gmail.com

Contents

Chairman's Message	1
My Two Cents – From Your Editor	1
The Latchford Correspondence By Rick Friesen	2
Red Plate Debris in the Margins of Map Stamps By Jim McCormick	9
Featured Maps By Scott Robinson	15

My Two Cents – From Your Editor

This issue begins with a very interesting article from Rick about the Latchford Correspondence, which involves a very early attempt to assemble a collection of Map covers at the launch of the new Imperial Penny Postage rates at the end of 1898. The article provides some new insights and also poses new questions.

Next up is a great article from Jim McCormick that shows numerous examples of the semi-constant red plate debris that is seen in the margins of some Map stamps. Very little has been published on this phenomenon, so many readers may be learning about these for the first time.

Finally, we conclude with an extended Featured Maps article where I try to describe and explain some very interesting Map stamps that were scanned and shared by Vince Chermishnok, Rick Widdifield, and Steve Hellsten.

I write this as I am preparing to leave for ORAPEX 2025 in Ottawa. This is a great show that I used to attend regularly until COVID messed everything up. So, I am looking forward to seeing many fellow collectors who I have not seen in years.

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

The Latchford Correspondence

By Rick Friesen

The Imperial Penny Postage (IPP) scheme was implemented on December 25, 1898, and resulted in a reduction of the postage for letters between 38 participating countries/colonies in the British Empire from 5¢ to 2¢. Francis Robert Latchford, an Ottawa lawyer and friend of Postmaster General William Mulock, the designer of the Map stamp and proponent of IPP, attempted to assemble a collection of envelopes commemorating the introduction of IPP. He sent out covers, all franked with a single 2¢ Map stamp, to the various postmasters of the colonies that participated in the IPP scheme and requested that they return the outgoing cover in a self-addressed envelope supplied by Lankford and franked with a single penny (or equivalent) stamp. It is not known how many letters Latchford sent out, but 22 covers from the “Latchford correspondence” have been documented. They include 13 outgoing covers addressed to the Postmaster (or Commandant) of cities in various Empire countries, canceled with an Ottawa machine postmark (Type M4) dated December 25, 1898, and 9 reply covers addressed to Latchford at 19 Elgin St. in Ottawa (each franked with the equivalent of 1 penny stamps). The covers are accompanied by 2 reply letters from the postmasters in Natal and Scotland.

This unique piece of Map stamp postal history came to light around 1960. The collection was purchased by a Canadian stamp collector in 1984 from close friends or relatives of Latchford and was subsequently described in a 1985 *Maple Leaves* article.¹ The covers in the correspondence have since been broken up and are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1: The Latchford Correspondence

Cover To (Map Stamp Plating Position)	Cover From (Date)	References
Aden, Arabia (1A39)	No cover	Spinks Shreves 2005 Sale #96 of the Fawn collection, Lot #1462
Ascension	No cover	None Found
Nassau, Bahamas	Nassau (JA 4/99)	1. Brigham Auctions 2014 Sale #2 of the Brigham collection, Lot #945 2. Hugo Deshayé 2024 Sale #577, Lot #45
Bridgetown, Barbados	Barbados (JA 13/99)	3. Eastern Auctions 2011 Sale of the Westgate collection, Lot #295 4. Brigham Auctions 2014 Sale #2 of the Brigham collection, Lot #946
Pambele, British Central Africa (1A50)	Zomba (MR 2/99)	Spinks Shreves 2005 Sale #96 of the Fawn collection, Lot #1463
Georgetown, British Guiana	Georgetown (JA 12/99)	1. Phillips Auctions 1993 Sale, Lot #243 2. R. Maresch & Son 1997 Sale #318, Lot #1433 3. R. Maresch & Son 1998 Sale #327, Lot #1103 4. Brigham Auctions 2014 Sale #2 of the Brigham collection, Lot #947
Belize, British Honduras	Belize (JA 12/99)	Brigham Auctions 2014 Sale #2 of the Brigham collection, Lot #948
Karachi, India (1A27)	Karachi (FE 1/99)	1. R. Maresch & Son 1990 Sale #238, Lot #680 2. Sparks Auctions 2018 Sale #28 of the Lunn collection, Lot #378 3. Eastern Auctions 2021 Sale of the Cantor collection, Lot #510
Kingston, Jamaica	Kingston (JA 12/99)	1. Sparks Auctions 2018 Sale #28 of the Lunn collection, Lot #377 2. Eastern Auctions 2021 Sale of the Cantor collection, Lot #511
Durban, Natal	Durban (JA 30/99) (with letter)	Spinks Shreves 2005 Sale #96 of the Fawn collection, Lot #1465
Birnin, Niger Coast	No cover	1. Eastern Auctions 2011 Sale of the Westgate collection, Lot #296 2. Brigham Auctions 2014 Sale #2 of the Brigham collection, Lot #949
Sarawak, Borneo (1A40)	No cover	Spinks Shreves 2005 Sale #96 of the Fawn collection, Lot #1466
Dunnet, Scotland (1A29)	Thurso (JA 13/99) (with letter)	Brigham Auctions 2014 Sale #2 of the Brigham collection, Lot #950

Shown below is a representative set of the original Latchford covers to and from Scotland in my collection (Figure 1). The outgoing cover to Dunnett (misspelled), Scotland, was mistakenly sent to Dinnet, Scotland (backstamp receiver dated January 5, 1899), and then forwarded (Dinnet dispatch on front dated January 5, 1899) to Dunnet (Thurso and Dunnet backstamp receivers dated January 6, 1899). The return cover from postmaster Wm. Taylor in Thurso, dated January 12, 1899, is franked with a 1d Great Britain stamp and was received in Ottawa on January 25, 1899. The covers are accompanied by the reply letter from postmaster Taylor (Figure 2). The letter reads, in part: "...I trust the Penny Post arrangement will prove a success and be still further extended."



Figure 1: Latchford covers to and from Scotland

Dunnet
Thurso
Scotland
12 Jan'y 1899

Dear Sir

I received your letter
enclosing one of the new
Canadian Stamps, and
also a view of a scene
in your city, for which
I beg to thank you.

I now return your
envelope as requested.

I trust the Penny Post
arrangement will prove
a success and be
still further extended

Wishing you the
Compliments of the season.

Yours faithfully
W^m Taylor

Figure 2: Reply letter from Dunnet, Thurso, Postmaster Wm. Taylor

I have always had a question about one of the sets of covers in this correspondence: those to and from Jamaica. Why? Let's trace the origins of the Latchford correspondence. It is suggested¹ that it was Mulock who inspired Latchford to commemorate the introduction of IPP and it is clear that he was attempting to do so by obtaining a set of covers from each of the countries participating in the IPP scheme since this is indicated in his letter addressed to each Postmaster² (see facsimile below).

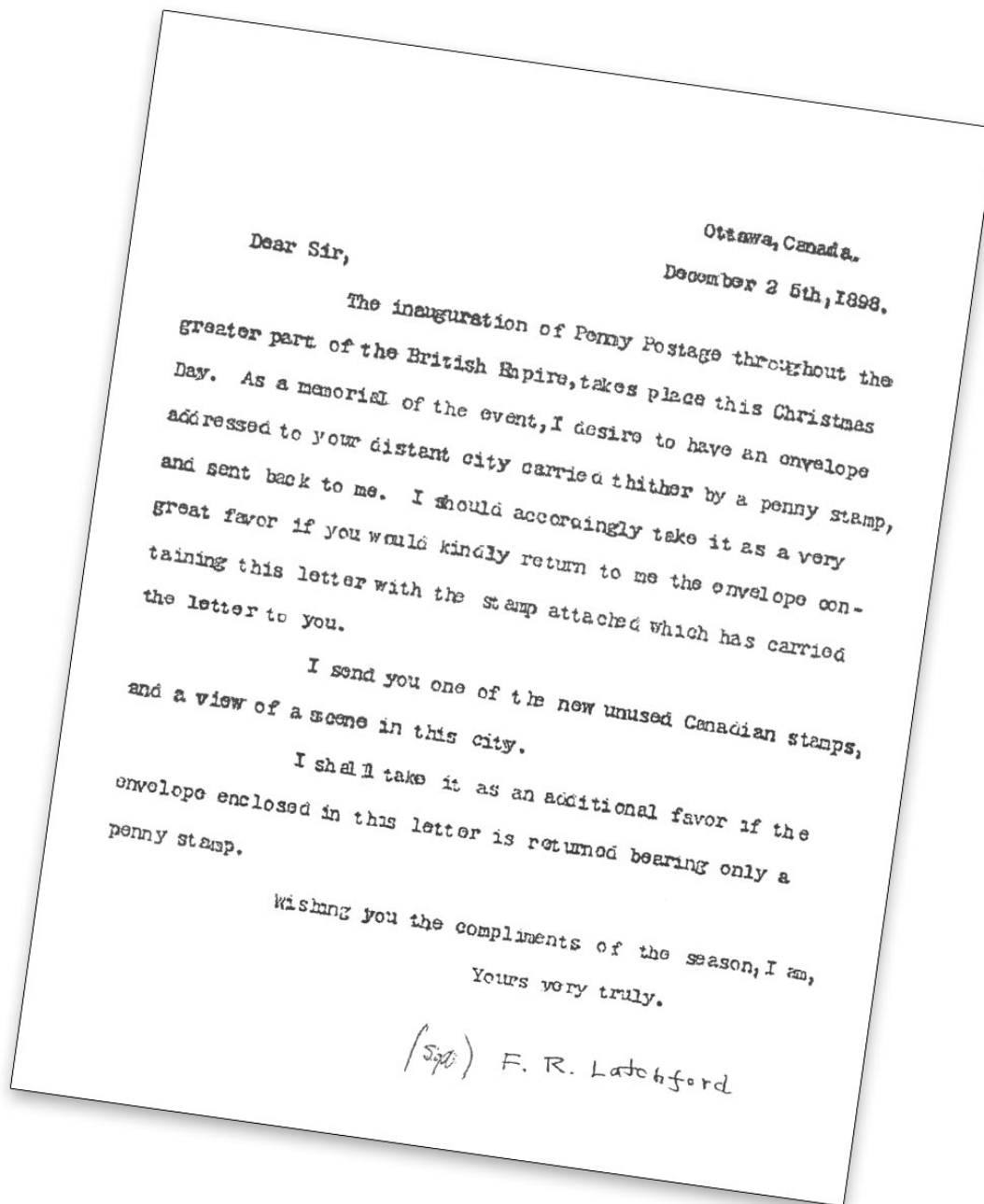


Figure 3: Facsimile of letter sent by Latchford to Postmasters

Where did he get a list of the countries to send his letters? The assumption is that Mulock provided Latchford with the list, and this list was the same as the list in the Canadian Post Office Department Circular of December 31, 1898, entitled "Reduction of Postage to Possessions of the British Empire".³ The circular reads: "The following is a complete list of the countries embraced in the British Empire with which the reduced rate of *Two Cents per half ounce* is now in force, viz:-". It then lists the 38 Empire countries/possessions that Canada had an agreement with for a reduced postage rate, a list that includes Jamaica (see Table 2 and Figure 4).

Table 2: List from the Post Office Department Circular of December 31, 1898

1	Aden	20	Johore
2	Ascension	21	Lagos
3	Bahamas	22	Leeward Islands (Antigua, St. Kitts, Nevis, Dominica, Montserrat, Virgin Islands)
4	Barbados	23	Malay States (Perak, Selangor, Negri-Sembilan, Pahang)
5	Bermuda	24	Natal
6	British Central Africa	25	Newfoundland
7	British East Africa	26	Niger Coast Protectorate
8	British Guiana	27	Niger Company's Territories
9	British Honduras	28	Sarawak
10	British India	29	Seychelles
11	Ceylon	30	Sierra Leone
12	Cyprus	31	Straits Settlements (Malacca, Penang, Singapore, Dinding)
13	Falkland Islands	32	St. Helena
14	Fiji	33	Tobago
15	Gambia	34	Trinidad
16	Gibraltar	35	Turks Islands
17	Gold Coast Colony	36	Uganda
18	Hong Kong	37	Windward Islands (Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent)
19	Jamaica	38	United Kingdom (a-Scotland, b-Ireland, c-England & Wales)

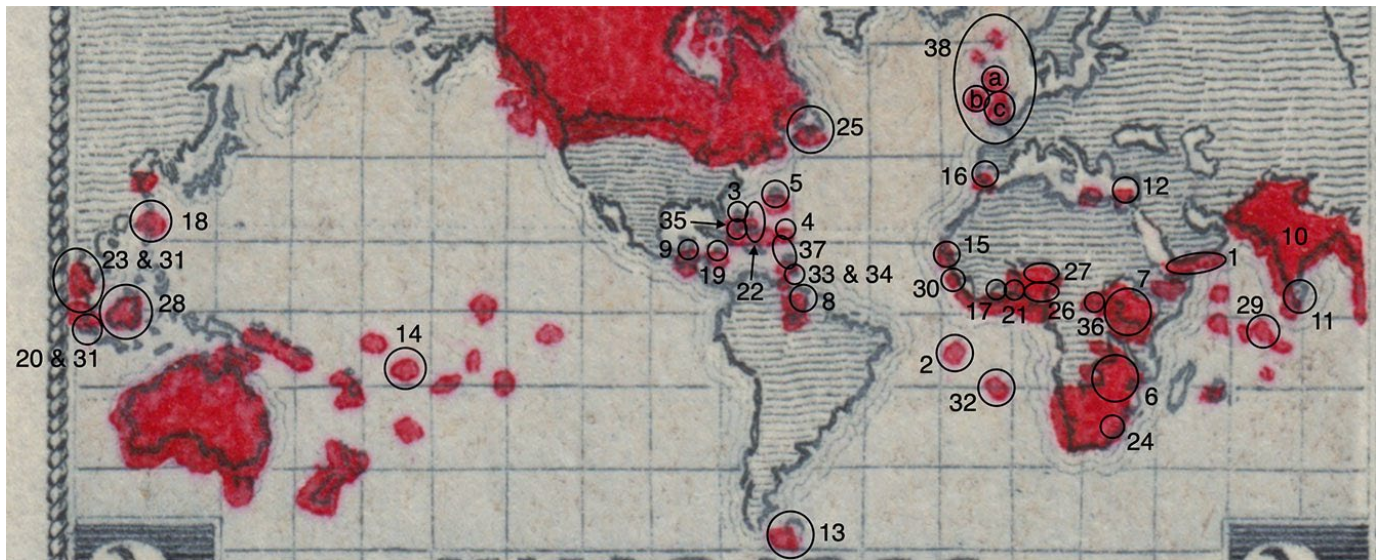


Figure 4: Suggested locations of countries/possessions identified in the Post Office Department Circular of December 31, 1898 on a typical Map stamp

However, Jamaica was not one of the original adherents to the IPP scheme! This fact was confirmed by the absence of Jamaica in the lists of IPP adopting countries published by numerous newspapers throughout the UK in December 1898,⁴ and also confirmed during a debate in the British Parliament in February 1899⁵ in which it was stated that “The principal British Colonies which have not yet signified their assent to the Penny Postage Scheme are the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, Cape Colony, **Jamaica**, Malta, and Mauritius” (boldface is mine). According to a Jamaica Post Office notice published in the *Jamaica Gazette*,⁶ and confirmed during a debate in the British Parliament,⁷ Jamaica did not join the IPP

scheme until May 24, 1899. So the question that has puzzled me is why was Jamaica listed as one of the countries in the Canadian Post Office Department Circular of Dec 31, 1898, and thus qualifying for a reduced rate, if it was not an original adherent to the IPP scheme? I have not seen a reasonable explanation in the philatelic literature.

I believe a reasonable explanation can be found in the *Annual Report of the Jamaican Post Office Department*, dated August 14, 1899.⁸ In the report, we read: “The Imperial Penny Postage system came into force between the mother country and most of her Colonies on the 25th December last, but this Colony was not able to give its adherence to the scheme on that date because in view of the generally depressed state of the finances of the Colony, the question of the resultant loss of postal revenue, became a matter for the most serious consideration. It has however been decided after careful consideration that it is not in the interest of the Colony that Jamaica shall not be included in the scheme, which it joined on the 24th May last, Her Majesty’s birthday.” This explains why Jamaica was not an original member of the IPP scheme, but a subsequent sentence provides clarity to its inclusion in the Canadian Post Office Circular list. “To meet the expressed wish of the Canada Government, however, which joined the penny postage scheme on the 25th December last, **this Colony agreed to the reduction of the letter rate of postage between Jamaica and Canada from 2½d. to 1d. per half ounce.**” (boldface mine) Therefore, it turns out that even though Jamaica did not join the broad IPP system until May 1899, it had a unique agreement with Canada to adopt the reduced rate on December 25, 1898. As a result, Jamaica was included in the Canadian Post Office Department Circular list - 38 countries in the list, 37 of which were participants in the IPP scheme, plus Jamaica. Note that nowhere in the Circular is it specifically mentioned that the list of countries are solely those adhering to the IPP scheme, they are referred to as “the countries embraced in the British Empire with which the reduced rate of *Two Cents per half ounce* is now in force”.

On a related point, it has been suggested by one author that the Latchford covers both to and from Jamaica were underpaid since they were sent prior to Jamaica's adherence to the IPP scheme and therefore the prevailing UPU rate of 5¢ should have been used.⁹ The same author suggests that, since the Map stamp cover to Jamaica was accepted into the postal system without postage due, possibly because it was simply missed as part of a large batch of letters,¹⁰ it is not a “first day of a new rate cover”, but in fact a much rarer cover - “an underpaid Map cover sent to exotic Jamaica prior to its adherence to the Penny Postage scheme”. As it turns out, based on the information provided above, the covers both to and from Jamaica were rated appropriately even though Jamaica was not officially part of the IPP scheme, and the Latchford Map stamp cover to Jamaica is a legitimate “first day of a new rate cover”.

Finally, I believe there are several other outstanding questions regarding the Latchford correspondence that could be addressed. First, how many letters did Latchford actually send out? Although it is not definitively known how many letters Latchford sent out, several authors/collectors suggest that the number is 38 based on the list in the Departmental circular.^{1,11-13} However, several of the entries on the list (as shown in Table 2) are composed of multiple countries. For example, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland includes the countries of Scotland, Ireland, England and Wales. We know that one letter was sent to Scotland. How likely is it that this single country was chosen to represent the UK, or is it more likely that additional letters were sent to the remaining UK countries of Ireland, England and Wales? Similarly, for example, the Windward Islands include Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. Did Latchford send a letter to each or did he choose only one to represent the Windward Islands? A similar question can be raised for the Leeward Islands, the Malay States, and the Straits Settlements. Since no covers have been discovered to or from countries that are part of these “multiple country” entries, we may never know the answer. However, it seems possible, and maybe even likely, that Latchford dispatched more than 38 letters as suggested by previous authors. Second, why did Latchford choose to address his letters to the cities he did? For example, why choose Dunnet, Scotland, rather than one of the larger, and presumably more well known, Scottish cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee or Aberdeen? One possible reason can be found in a line from his letter in which he writes “...I desire to have an envelope addressed to your distant city...” (underlining mine). Indeed, Thurso (the post town for Dunnet) is the most northerly town on the mainland of Great Britain. I suggest that Latchford was attempting to get as wide a distribution of letters as possible throughout the Empire and this most northern “distant” city was chosen for that reason. Note, however, that a town in the Shetland Islands would have been more northerly! I would be interested to hear other opinions. And finally, is it possible to plate all of the Map stamps on the covers that are known and does this shed any light on the first question about how many letters were sent? Although the

auction listings for these covers over the years have included images of the covers, few are of sufficient resolution to carry out plating of the Map stamps. For this reason, I have been able to plate only 5 of the 13 Map stamps on the covers (as shown in Table 1). If a reader owns one of these covers, or has a high-resolution image of a cover to enable plating of the Map stamp, please send me a scan. Hopefully a future issue of the Report will shed more light on this issue.

References

1. F. Fawn, "The Tantalizing "Latchford" Covers" in *Maple Leaves*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Whole No. 205, pg 7 (1985)
2. F. Fawn, "Maps to the World's Four Corners", in *The 1898 Christmas Map Stamp Newsletter*, Vol. 4, No. 4, Whole No. 14, pg 125 (2003)
3. R. Winmill, "Imperial Penny Postage", in *Maple Leaves*, Vol. 21, No. 7, Whole No. 223, pg 217 (1989)
4. For example, this is an excerpt from the *Northern Guardian*, a newspaper from Hartlepool in Durham County, England, on Saturday Dec 24, 1899, pg 3: "PENNY POSTAGE. On and after Christmas Day next, the postage to be prepaid on letters from this country for the undermentioned British possessions and Protectorates will be 1d per oz., instead of 2½d as at present: Aden, Ascension, Bahamas, Barbadoes, Bermuda, British Central Africa, British East Africa, British Guiana, British Honduras, Canada, Ceylon, Cyprus, Falkland Islands, Fiji Islands, Gambia, Gibraltar, Gold Coast Colony. Hong Kong, India, Johore, Lagos, Leeward Islands, viz.: Antigua. St. Kitts, Nevis. Dominica, Montserrat, and the Virgin Islands, Malay States (federated), viz.: Perak, Selangor, Negri-Sembilan, and Pahang, Natal, Newfoundland, Niger Coast Protectorate, Niger Territory, St. Helena, Sarawak, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Straits Settlements, Tobago. Trinidad, Turks Islands, Uganda, Windward Islands, viz.: Grenada, St Lucia and St. Vincent. Letters and from Her Majesty's Ships abroad will be transmissible at the same rate of postage. The postage payable on letters addressed to any other British Possession, or to any foreign country, and that payable on postcards, printed papers, samples, etc., for any part of the world will remain unchanged." Similar announcements were published in newspapers throughout the United Kingdom including *Evening Mail* (London), *Globe* (London), *Belfast Weekly News* (N Ireland), *Dundee Evening Telegraph* (Scotland), *Orkney Herald* (Scotland), and *Western Mail* (Glamorgan, Wales), to name but a few, in late December 1898. Each list the countries participating in the IPP scheme and, in each, there is no mention of Jamaica. (see *The British Newspaper Archive* website: www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/).
5. *Hansard of British Parliament*, Feb 9, 1899 (Vol 66)
(website: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1899/feb/09/imperial-penny-postage>)
6. *Jamaica Gazette* 11, May 3, 1899, No. 166-2: The Governor directs it to be notified, for general information, that on Her Majesty's Birthday, the 24th May instant, Jamaica will join the list of Colonies who have adopted the scheme for an Imperial Penny Postage. (website: jamaicaphilately.info/jamaicapoguides)
7. *Hansard of British Parliament*, Apr 25, 1899 (Vol 70): The Government of Jamaica has decided to adopt on the 24th May the Penny Postage Scheme which is in force between this country and various British Colonies and possessions; (website: hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1899-04-25/debates/2584e00c-524e-433c-9e86-120fe1711abc/ImperialPennyPostage)
8. *Supplement to the Jamaica Gazette*, Vol. 23, No. 6, pg 114, March 29, 1900
(website: jamaicaphilately.info/jamaicapoguides)
9. R. Lunn, "A Subtle Rarity", in *Maple Leaves*, Vol. 22, No. 6, Whole No. 234, pg 195 (1991)
10. F. Fawn, Comment on "A Subtle Rarity", in *Maple Leaves*, Vol. 22, No. 7, Whole No. 235, pg 257 (1991)
11. R. Brigham, "Canada - Imperial Penny Postage 1898", The Brigham Collection Map Stamp Exhibit
12. F.G. Fawn, "Imperial Penny Postage of 1898", *BNAPS Exhibit Series No. 32* (2004)
13. R. Lunn, "1898 Imperial Penny Postage Stamp", Map Stamp Exhibit

Red Plate Debris in the Margins of Map Stamps

By Jim McCormick

For years I have been collecting plate varieties. I generally toss unrecognised ones into an album page until some sense can be made of them. Sometimes they turn out to be constant plate varieties, and other times they may be simple ink blotches or other sorts of printing anomalies. This includes red markings in the margins of Map stamps.

Where is the literature on this subject? Scott Robinson put me on to Whitney Bradley's book, page 34, which documents "RED DOTS IN CABLES OR DEBRIS IN BORDER" on several plate positions. With the help of Bradley and Kershaw's plating books, I was able to identify the position for each one in my collection showing such debris.

For each, I have at least two examples of the position as proof (to myself) that the varieties are constant. The other interesting thing that became obvious was that the red "debris" almost never looks the same despite being from the same plate position.

I do not have any of Bradley's "RED DOTS IN CABLES" varieties to show. However, I do have all but one (missing position 2A18) for the "DEBRIS IN BORDER" varieties, plus additional examples which are not documented by Bradley. Of course, these varieties are from red plate A, and may exist on stamps printed using black plates 1, 2 or 3. However most of the examples shown here are from black plate 2 (or less so from plate 3), which is also consistent with Bradley's descriptions.

I hope that readers will find the illustrated examples on the following pages useful and will check their own collections for these varieties. Perhaps someone can confirm the same red plate varieties on stamps printed from different black plates.

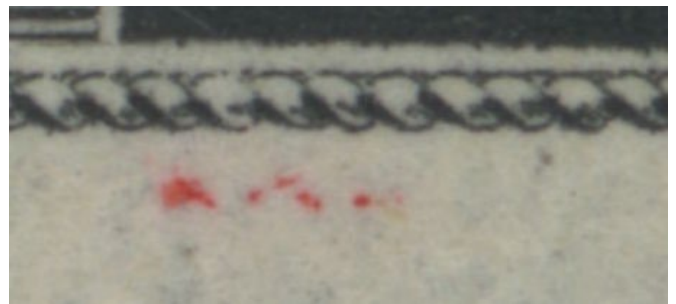
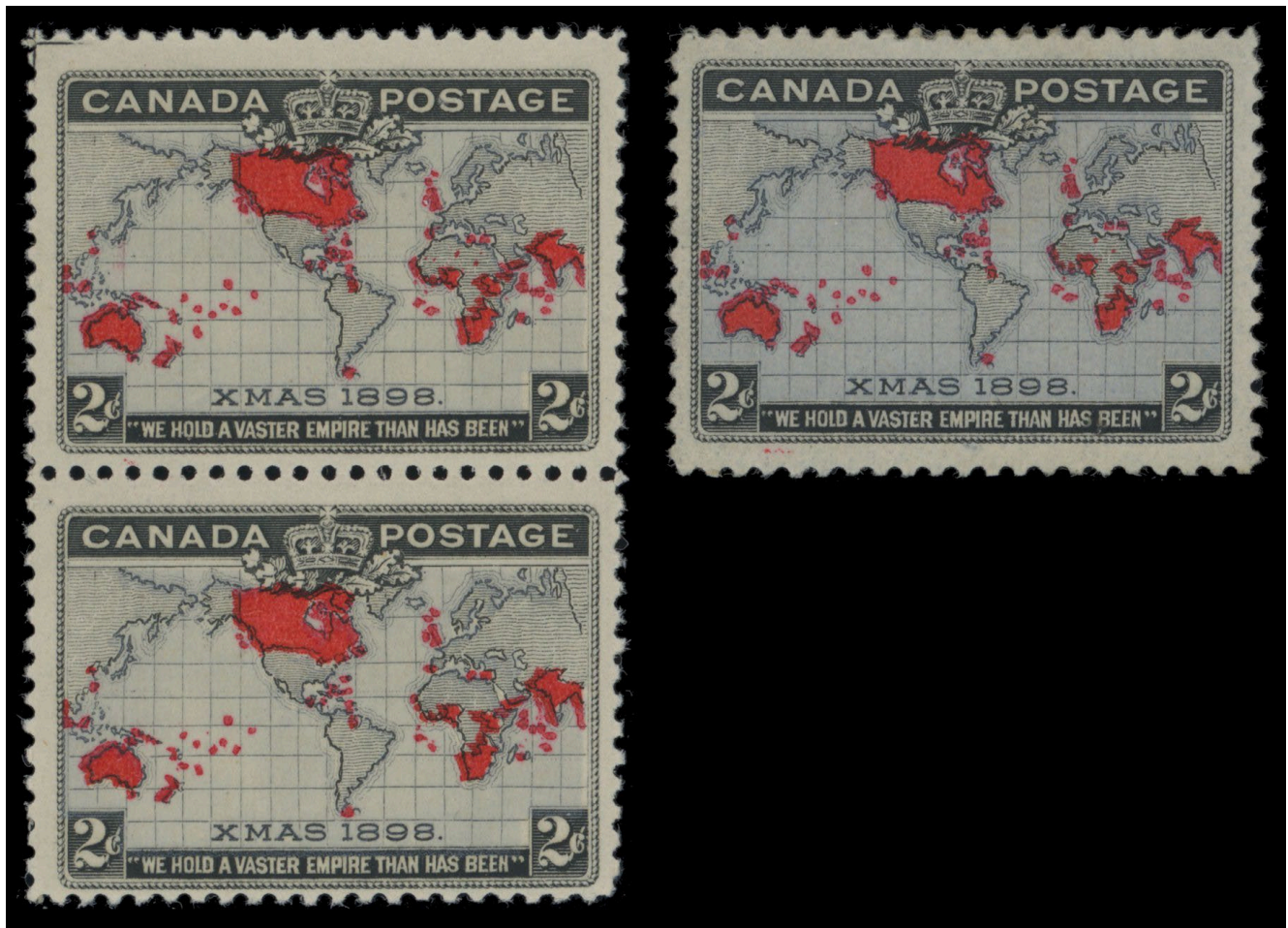
Editor's Note: Many of Jim's examples of marginal red debris on Map stamps in this article illustrate some of the more significant and better-known examples. I have seen many examples from several other plates/positions. They can vary greatly in strength and appearance between copies. As Jim's examples prove, these varieties definitely persist between printings with different ocean colors. Whether they persist between different black plate printings is still to be determined.

References

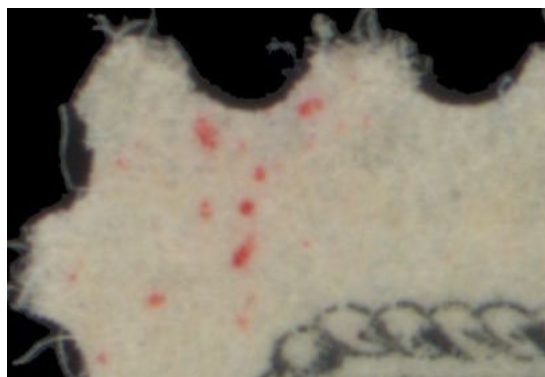
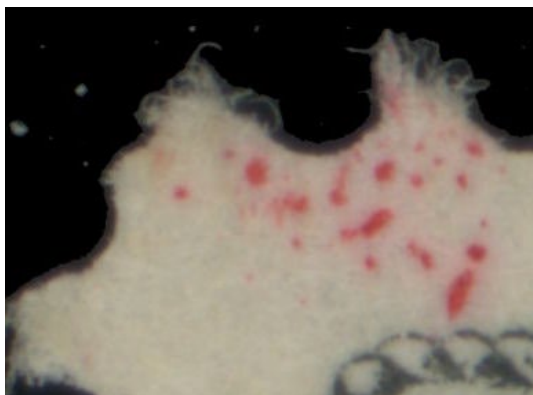
1. "The Canadian Map Stamp of 1898 - A Plating Study" by Whitney L. Bradley, British North America Philatelic Society, 1989
2. "The Canadian 1898 Christmas Map Stamp - A Definitive Plating Study" by Kenneth A. Kershaw & Roger Boisclair, Reprinted by the British North America Philatelic Society, 2009



The large block shows red debris clearly in the centre of the block in the margin between positions 38 and 48. The single stamp with centering ideal for displaying the variety looks similar, being on an angle, yet somewhat different, and is shifted to the right by comparison.

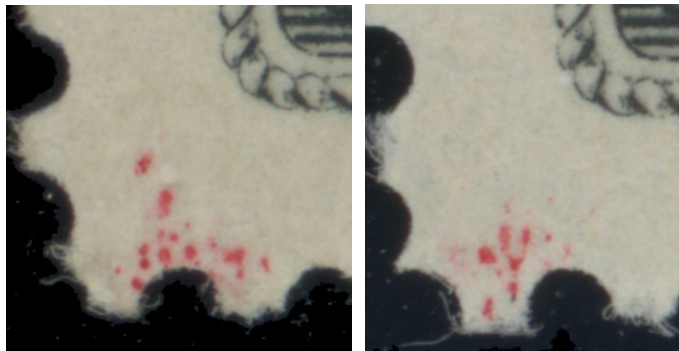


The examples here show the variety in the margin between these two plate positions. It is interesting how the marks are subtle on the pair, and stronger (yet different) on the single.

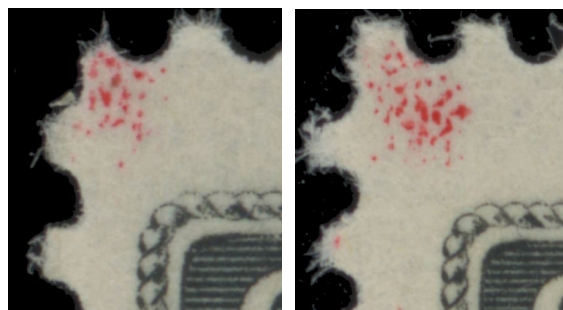


The examples here are from 2A59 showing the red debris in the top left corner. Once again, the marks are quite different between the two. Bradley does not document this variety.

Editor's Note: Bradley does not document this variety in his summary of border debris but does mention it as occurring on lavender ocean copies of plate 2 on his details page for this position. Jim's examples here show clearly that it also exists for green oceans.



The examples above are from 2A69 and show red debris in the lower left corner. Once again, the debris appears different.



The examples above show the same variety, but from the position 2A79 where it appears in the upper left corner. So now we have four examples on display where the red ink debris appears somewhat different.

Positions 3A40 / 3A50 (new find)



The block is from plate 3 and the variety is very subtle in the margin between 3A40 and 3A50. It is stronger on the single stamp. Bradley does not document this variety.

Featured Maps

By Scott Robinson

This issue, I am pleased to feature scans of several very interesting Maps stamps that were shared by several study group members.

Full-Featured 5B44

First up is a very nice re-entered 5B44 Map shared by Vince Chermishnok. In addition to the prominent re-entry that shows some extensive doubling on the left side, the stamp features an interesting purple cancel. Vince felt that this might be a Parcel Post Oval cancel. To me it looks more like a regular Target cancel. Either way, the colour makes it a very attractive stamp. However, the main reason that Vince sent the scan was because he wanted to know about some unusual red plate features.



These red plate features all revolve around Canada. There is a small extra island above the Vancouver and Queen Charlotte Islands, a series of red dots and marks along the Canada/US border, and a distinct diagonal white area of missing red ink across lower British Columbia. I initially suspected that all of these features were likely the kind of non-constant marks that are often seen with the red ink on Maps. However, a quick review of my own copies and some reference scans revealed that the white slash of missing ink was present on all of them including copies with both ocean colours and in both the original and re-entered states of the black plate. This is a very striking feature of the red plate that is surprisingly not mentioned by the plating books of Kershaw or Bradley. I would consider it the defining red plate characteristic of this plate/position.



The other extra red marks, though likely caused by some imperfections of the red plate, are more typical of the transitory red marks that appear throughout the Maps. Most of my reference scans did not consistently show these features. I would say that about half of my references have what I would call a “rough” border west and south of Canada. This can show as some dots of extra ink in the USA or a small bulge above the Vancouver and Queen Charlotte Islands. None of my copies showed the bulge as a separate island.

Two States of 3A30?

Rick Widdifield has shared a number of very exciting scans from his Map stamp collection. Rick is an unofficial member of our study group since he was not yet a BNAPS member when I last corresponded with him. A while back he shared some pre-re-entered plate positions from plate 5 that may not have been reported previously and certainly had not been published with images. I am saving these for a future article on plate 5 re-entries.

More recently, Rick shared some scans of two Map copies from plate/position 3A30 that he felt might be from two different states of the plate. For a long time, I have made note of many plate 3 Maps that have a weak impression in the upper cable. I have also noticed several positions that show evidence of very minor re-entry that have not been documented. So, the idea that some black plate 3 Map positions might have two states is not new to me. Rick’s scans of his two 3A30 stamps provide some strong evidence that that some plate 3 stamps may indeed have more than one state. His copies are shown on the next page.



Both of these copies show some typical red plate characteristics (such as the extra dot west of New Zealand) from position 30 of red plate A. The black plate shows the heavily retouched right cable and lower right corner margin position dot that are to be expected for this plate/position. What is unexpected is the significant differences at the top of the stamps as shown in the closeup views below. Notice how the top stamp has a normal looking top cable and crown. The bottom stamp shows how many of the lighter strokes in the upper cable have almost completely disappeared. There are also definite signs of poor impression and missing black ink in the crown, the top right leaf, the hatch lines in Greenland, some parts of the frame lines, and the water lines between Alaska and Russia.



In examining my own two copies of this plate/position, I was amazed to find that they exactly paralleled Rick's copies. I also have what appears to be two distinct states of the stamp. Determining the nature of these "states" of the plate is somewhat difficult. Could they indicate a poor impression on the plate that was later repaired via re-entry to form a new state? Or could this position have initially appeared correctly and then suffered from plate wear during production? The latter would not really be a new state but only a gradual deterioration of the plate during printing. It would be interesting to see if other copies show intermediate weakening of the impression that would point to plate wear as the cause for the differences.

Early Plate 1 Stamp

Some time ago, study group member, Steve Hellsten, shared a scan of a Map stamp that he noticed had some distinct marks in the left margin. Steve was interested to know the plate/position and whether or not the marks were constant. It turns out that Steve's stamp is a very early printing of 1A9. The lavender ocean colour and the strong impression of many minor varieties on the black plate would indicate that Steve's stamp is likely one of the first Maps to come off the press during initial production of the stamp. His stamp is shown below (top) along with my own copy for comparison.



The plate position is easily identified from the red plate where there is a large extra island above Australia. The black plate is determined from a number of characteristics. Many of these are barely perceptible on most copies but show up well on Steve's early copy. Below is a marked up copy and description of the black plate varieties that are constant or at least semi-constant for this plate/position.



Marginal dots are key for identifying black plate 1 for position 9. (1) There are two dots at the middle of the right margin. These show very clearly on all copies I have examined. Although these are described in Bradley's book, for some reason Kershaw ignores them in his own later book. (2) Kershaw does make note of "two faint dots outside the left-hand cable" not mentioned by Bradley. These are also seen on most copies but are quite fuzzy and usually include some suggestion of additional debris. (3) The lower triangular cluster of dots that look like a "Pawnbroker" variety is also constant but is usually significantly fainter on most copies. (4) There is also a small dot in the space inside the left cable that is very faint on most copies. Neither of these is mentioned in the published literature.

Steve's stamp also shows some additional lines used in the layout of the plate that are only hinted at on my own copies, such that I have never been able to confirm them as being semi-constant until now. (5) There is a very light horizontal arc that goes through the strong position dot in the Tonkin gulf. (6) There is also just the hint of a very long vertical arc that also goes through the position dot. (7) Finally, there is a faint vertical line that rises from the ocean left of Australia up through the Tokin gulf area where it also passes through the position dot and then proceeds upward such that it is intermittently visible in the China/Russia regions. I have noticed that some traces of this type of vertical line appear at many plate positions on early printings from plate 1 but usually disappear with plate use and are only occasionally visible at specific positions for most copies such as the later blue ocean printings.

Thanks to all friends and study group members who have taken the time to scan a stamp or two and share them with the group. This issue of our newsletter would not have been possible without your help. Although I have two new articles in the works, these require a great deal more research before they will be complete. Please continue to share your material and/or discoveries so that Rick and I can get the newsletter out on a more frequent basis.

In addition to stamp scans showing plate varieties, we welcome scans with notable cancels or covers that tell an interesting story. We are also interested to answer any questions or share them with the group in case another member has an answer or some insight.

BNAPS Xmas 1898 Map Stamp Study Group

Chairman & Report Co-editor: Rick Friesen
Stittsville, Ontario
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 ©2025 by the author and/or study group.