

# THE 1898 CHRISTMAS MAP STAMP NEWSLETTER

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## THE EVOLUTION OF PENNY POST

When Mulock initiated the discussion for a uniform "Penny Post" postal rate throughout the Commonwealth, it was not a novel idea, the "Penny Post" had been a long standing and traditional tariff which had existed within Great Britain for some time.

The **London Penny Post** was a creation that grew out of necessity, and was established in 1680 by a London entrepreneur, William Dockwra, who determined that there was a need for a local delivery system of letters and documents as between persons and businesses. What Dockwra set up was a local post wherein he charged a uniform rate of one penny for delivery of packets up to one pound in and around London proper. Within short order he began making several deliveries a day within the city, and soon expanded this service to deliver items within radius up to ten miles outside London for an additional extra charge of one penny.

It wasn't long before the merchants and the landed gentry of the day decided that the local service was far too essential for one person to control, and in 1683 Dockwra was forced to surrender his business to the government who began the operation of a General Post Office. The business of course expanded greatly and within the next century increased to include much of the surrounding area and by 1764 Parliament had authorized the creation of Penny Posts in any town or city of the UK. It was not too long before the service began identifying the parcels they handled and by the beginning of the 19th century there were a number of identifiable marks on covers and parcels with markings such as "PP", "Py Post", or "Penny Post" along with the name of the town.

On 10 January 1840, the **Uniform Penny Post** was established throughout the UK, and several months later letters and parcels could be prepaid with the postage stamp which was to become known as the Penny Black.

As the colonies spread throughout the world and mail had to travel greater distances, the central Government in Great Britain began increasing the rates, and did so without much regard for the plight of the masses who were

desirous of maintaining contact with relatives abroad.

It was in this regard that Mulock perceived the unrest that was developing within the British Empire, and sought to settle this growing dilemma. And so it was in 1898, that the scheme for the **Imperial Penny Post** was created with the idea to revert to an historic rate for mail delivery as well as extend the rate throughout the British Empire, with a secondary purpose of preserving what was threatening to become a diminished world power.

This was a very meaningful purpose, and met with general acceptance throughout the Commonwealth, and even spread to other countries once introduced, but within the next quarter century the Penny Post would become fini, and accelerated by the Great War in 1914-18, the British Empire itself would begin a rapid decline.

## QUEEN VICTORIA & CATHERINE THE GREAT

Were there any similarities between Queen Victoria and the somewhat infamous Russian Czarina, Catherine the Great?

Aside from the fact that both were females, as well as great reformists, they both ruled for the longest period of any other rulers of their countries. They both had similar middle names, Queen Victoria being christened Victoria Alexandria after her godfather Tsar Alexander II of Russia, and Catherine's middle name Alexeyevna, which she assumed when she married Peter.

Each of these monarchs were descended from the same German aristocracy, and they were each eventually succeeded by their eldest sons. Unfortunately Victoria's grandson eventually refused to grant his cousin, Czar Nicholas II, refuge from the Bolsheviks which tragically ended the Romanov dynasty in 1917.

Although Victoria had wed her Prince consort and Catherine had courted hers, both of these monarchs were strongly influenced by equally influential male figures. In Catherine's case it was the devoted confidant Potemkin, an impressive army officer, who was the trusted confidant while Victoria

relied heavily on Prince Albert, and both of the monarchs were devastated when their partners predeceased them.

Although Victoria herself remained a Hanover, following her father's lineage, the family retained the German surname Saxe-Coburg Gotha and their children bore the family name up to the onset of World War I, when Victoria's grandson George V, decided it would be more prudent to adopt a surname with a more British appearance, hence the House of Windsor. The Saxe-Coburg-Gotha name, however did survive in other European monarchies, up to and including the current Belgian Royal Family as well as the former monarchies of Portugal and Bulgaria.

Queen Victoria's reign over the British Commonwealth stretched from 1837 when she was just 18 until her death in 1901 at the age of 82, while Catherine was Czarina from 1762 until her death in 1796. Victoria had ruled for a total of 64 years, and in Catherine's case her reign had totalled 34 years<sup>1</sup> which ended with her death in 1796, however she had been part of the royal household which ruled Russia since 1745, as the 14 year old wife of the Czar-in-waiting.

Both of these monarchs had profound and lasting impacts on world events in their time, and on their country's roles and the shaping of their country's destinies for sometime after their passing.

Catherine had presided over a great reformation and expansion of the Russian Empire to create one of the largest European domains<sup>2</sup>.

The monarchs of Europe in the 19th century were a highly competitive group, and Victoria had an urgent desire to emulate her great aunt, and lead the march to an equally impressive growth and expansion of the British Empire,

<sup>1</sup> Peter the Great may arguably be the longest ruling monarch of Russia. He ruled with his brother Ivan from the age of 10, but was proclaimed Emperor of Russia in 1721.

<sup>2</sup> This expansion did require an unusual alignment with the equally dominant Habsburgs of the Austro-Hungarian empire.

What has all this to do with Canada's Map Stamp?

The global revolution, as envisioned by McLuhan, that has engulfed the world and the worldwide events which have transpired since Victoria's reign, have dramatically reduced the perceptions which once pervaded the various "colonies" of the British Empire during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Imperial Penny Postage or the Map Stamp, as it has come to be known, was issued towards the end of Queen Victoria's reign in 1898. During the next century the world experienced some phenomenal transformations.

It is sometimes difficult to envision just what the world and/or Canada and Great Britain was like at the time of Victoria's coronation. It is not easy to imagine a world without such things as telephones or recording disks, when automobiles were barely dreams. In fact these all came into being during Victoria's tenure.

One of the major philatelic events which occurred in the year of Victoria's coronation was the initiation of the first postage stamp by the United Kingdom (Great Britain). The creator was a schoolmaster from England, Rowland Hill, who introduced the adhesive postage stamp in 1837, an act for which he was knighted. Through his efforts, while he was an employee of the British Post, Hill also created the first uniform postage rates in 1840 which were based on weight, rather than size.

Yet there was another significant achievement shortly after her coronation. The date was May 6, 1840 when the "Penny Black" bearing a likeness of Queen Victoria was issued and Queen Victoria's image was to remain on the stamps for the next 60 years, during which time hundreds of stamps appeared throughout the commonwealth.

Many more changes appeared during Victoria's reign. The revolution of air travel for short durations began by way of fragile balloons, with electricity and radio waves creeping into the dreams of eccentrics. Horseless carriages threatened the peace and tranquility of the countryside, but the most significant contribution of the Victorian era was the attitudes towards race, gender, and class which were best expressed by Lewis Carroll in his lasting story of Alice in Wonderland. What Carroll attempted to

illustrate in this enduring fairy tale was that Great Britain was still very much a class conscious society, with the Upper Class, the Middle Class, The Ambiguous Class, and The Lower Class.

Throughout Great Britain, and the rest of the world, there was absolutely no protection for the working class, and as a result, the costs of mailing letters was almost beyond the means of much of the population. Many modern people mistakenly imagine the Victorian period to have been a time of tranquility and peace, far different from our own supposedly more violent age. In fact, parts of London were so dangerous no policeman would enter them, and thieves would think nothing of murdering people, simply for their handkerchiefs.

The infancy of photography was emerging in the form of the daguerreotype, and Singer developed the first practical sewing machine during this era while Darwin was espousing his theory on evolution. Eiffel built the Tower, and Aspirin was found as a pain reliever, while Nobel found a better way to blow up the world.

As we are well aware, Postal stamps in Canada first appeared in 1851, with the issuance of Sandford Fleming's famous Beaver making its debut.

During the next fifteen years, Canada would issue 18 more stamps,

- 4 of which would bear the illustration of a beaver,
- 2 would carry the likeness of Canada's first explorer Cartier,

and the rest would bear the images of the reigning monarchs Queen Victoria - 7 and Prince Albert - 6 excluding those stamps which had been issued by the Provinces during that time.

During the next thirty years 1868 - 1898 Canada would issue another sixty-five stamps, and all except one would bear the profile of Queen Victoria in six different poses. That one exception was of course the Map Stamp. Thus the introduction of a special stamp by Canada to celebrate the introduction of Imperial Penny Post became a very special "cause celebre" in more ways than one.

As was previously mentioned, stamp designs for the colonial countries had to be approved by Queen Victoria, herself, thus achieving

this objective required skilful diplomacy by William Mulock through his communications with both Queen Victoria and her entourage and particularly her son Prince Edward.

There is no doubt that the use of the motto "*We Hold a Vaster Empire Than Has Been*" played a very important role in persuading the royal family to approve the stamp. This combined with the liberal use of red colouring of those areas both within and without the Empire on areas such as German South Africa, Portuguese East Africa and the Republics of the Transvaal together with the Orange Free State, as well as Borneo became part of the literary embellishments that enhanced the image created.

The adoption of the "Imperial Penny Post" was not implemented by the Commonwealth as a "Carte Blanche", and in fact it took another ten years before there was universal acceptance among the majority of the British colonies.

expand

The implementation date was to be officially earlier

How Canada's Imperial Penny Postage stamp, which has also been referred to as the Map Stamp, received the alternate description of the "Xmas Stamp" is an interesting piece of Map Stamp lore.

As history has recorded, Queen Victoria was not only very matriarchal, but she was also very possessive of the postal tradition which required that any and all designs of any postage stamp used throughout the Commonwealth required ultimate approval by the Crown. A propos of this, William Mulock was conferring with her majesty and her approved advisers in order to attain Royal assent both for the use of the stamp design as well as the introduction of the Penny Post rate, which he anticipated initiating on the Prince of Wales birthday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1898. As one of his selling points he suggested that this event would make a fitting tribute to the Prince, and when the Queen queried in a most assertive tone "Which Prince?", Mulock quickly responded, "Why, the Prince of Peace of course". Thus the requirement to introduce the inscription on the stamp, "Xmas 1898" combined with the changed release date<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> There had already been a one year delay in this schedule, since Mulock had initially proposed the one penny rate in November 1897.

## THE STAMPS AND THEIR COLOUR

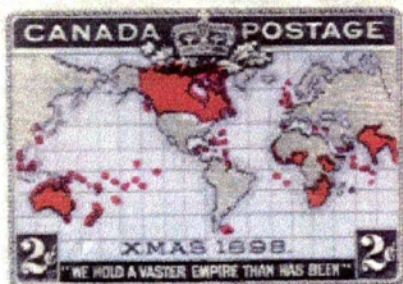
The specifications in the original order for the 20 million stamps to be printed by the American Banknote Co. stipulated that there were to be two colours divided equally, 100,000 sheets in Red & Blue and 100,000 sheets in Red & Green.

Why was there to be a green colour for oceans? It is also curious to note that there is no mention as to a lavender shade, so we are left to conjecture as to who conceived of the varying shades and the diverse colours which were finally used for the actual printing of the stamps.

### COLOUR VARIETIES:

Most philatelists will acknowledge that indeed, there were two shades of colour as defined in the initial order for The Map Stamps, however Whit Bradley in his publication on plating<sup>1</sup> lists nine colour varieties among the various plates, and in fact there are perhaps more than these.

Most catalogues list two basic colours, as for instance Unitrade list what is commonly referred to as No. 85, being the Lavender shade, and No. 86 the Blue shade, both of which refer to the colouring applied to the "Oceans" portion of the stamp.



### THE RED & BLUE

WHICH BECAME NO. 85 THE LAVENDER SHADE



### THE GREEN & BLUE

WHICH BECAME NO. 86 THE BLUE SHADE

The actual modus operandi for printing this unique stamp was a three phase process, in which the black areas used to outline the land masses and the cable border including the lettering for the

value tablets and the "Motto" was applied first. This was followed by the application of the red or crimson colour defining the Commonwealth countries and the "Blues & Greens" of the oceans was applied as a final step in the procedure.

One plausible explanation that was originally introduced as a theory, as to why there were such a variety of colour shades, has to do with the ingredients which were combined to produce the stamp's colours. The printers of that era produced the initial colours by combining certain ingredients in varying quantities, much the way an artist mixes the shades on his palette.

Many students are familiar with the colour mixing process when we would experiment with the three primary colours red, blue and yellow in our art and/or chemistry classes. With great abandon we would produce the orange, greens, and violet as well as the multiplicity of other shades and we would watch with fascination as the mixtures underwent the transformation to produce the various kaleidoscope of shades.

In the case of the Map Stamp printing which extended over twelve months, from December 1898 to December 1899 it is highly unlikely that there was any documented formula as to the various quantities of colour for the guidance of the printers which undoubtedly could have provided a standard for each of the colours utilized from day to day during the various production runs of the Map Stamp, and there was probably more than one printer involved in the process, who would each proceed to apply the various blues and/or greens to the final production run.

It therefore stands to reason that more or less of one colour or ingredient could have changed the shade, and because of the duration of time as well as lighting conditions the colour differences would not be as apparent as they now seem.

### THE DELIVERY RATES OF STAMPS

The delivery schedules of the stamps was obviously very heavy in the early stages of the Stamp's issuance in December 1898 and January 1899. Production then settled out over the next 4 months to very few in the summer months, and then a rush to fill the order total towards the latter months of 1899.

#### SCHEDULE OF STAMPS DELIVERED

December	1898	30,100 <sup>2</sup>
January	1899	51,500
February		11,500
March		14,000
April		14,000
May		8,000
June		4,000
July		NONE
August		5,000
September		15,000
October		19,000
November		17,000
December		10,175
		<u>1,992,750</u>

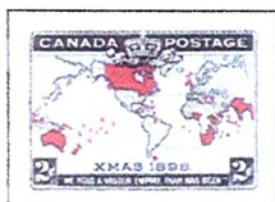
<sup>1</sup> THE CANADIAN MAP STAMP OF 1898-A PLATING STUDY, BNAPS, 1989, Whiney L. Bradley

<sup>2</sup> Includes the Imperfs issued on Dec 2, 1898

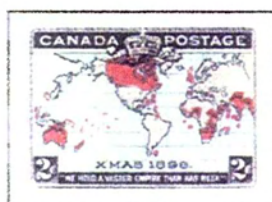
## COPY OF THE PAGE of COLOURS FOR VARIOUS PRINTINGS FROM BRADLEY'S BOOK

Figure 1: COLOURS OF THE OCEAN

## BLACK PLATE 1



LAVENDER

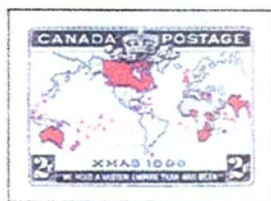


LIGHT BLUE

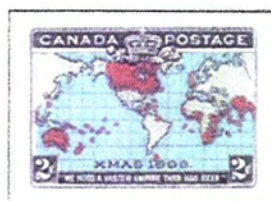


DEEP BLUE

## BLACK PLATE 2

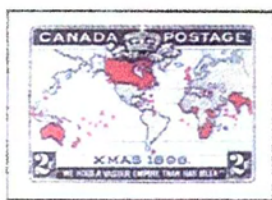


LAVENDER



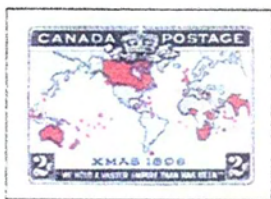
VERY DEEP BLUE

## BLACK PLATE 3



LAVENDER

## BLACK PLATE 5



LAVENDER



BRIGHT BLUE GREEN

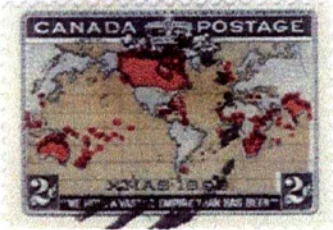
## BLACK PLATES 1, 2, 3 &amp; 5

DEEP LAVENDER  
(rare)

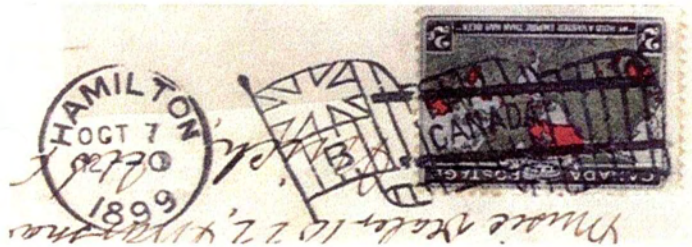
### COLOUR CHANGELINGS

Subsequent to the issuance of the Map Stamp in its various colours and shades of Blue and Lavender, a strange phenomenon occurred. As if by some bizarre happening and almost as though there were supernatural powers at work, certain of the stamps began changing colours. Some of the resultant colours have been termed "Muddy Waters" while others have been described as "Golden Oceans", yet the transformed colours are not consistent, and they can be found both in mint stamps and on postal history documents, with varying colours from shades of grey and gold to deep bronzes and burnt umber as well as shades of silver or almost aluminum tones.

There is a kaleidoscope of colour when the various transformed shades are grouped together, and the tones may vary from light to dark even within the same sheet of stamps.



A GOLD OR BRONZE OCEAN CHANGELING



A MUDDY WATER CHANGELING ON 1899 ENVELOPE



A CHOCOLATE TONE CHANGELING

This strange phenomenon entreats the question, what caused the transformation? In response to this question, many theories have been advanced, as this experience is not solely unique to the Map Stamp, although the variety of colours that have been produced within the changelings for this particular stamp has been much more prolific.

One possible scenario suggests that the original ingredients which were combined to develop the shades of colouring to produce the original Map Stamp Colours were not as stable as once believed, and it was suggested that there was an ongoing chemical transformation which produced the changed colours over an extended period of time. However this theory does not explain why only certain stamps undergo the transformation, while others remained as the original blue or lavender. This premise however does not explain why certain sheets of stamps can develop various tones from one area to

another and/or some of the stamps on the sheet will change while others remain constant.

Another premise which has been advanced which focuses on atmospheric conditions that subsisted in Ottawa during the era when the stamps were printed. This theory suggests that the air within the nation's capital at the turn of the century were somewhat less than idyllic, especially in the locale adjacent to the America Banknote Plant in Ottawa.

To understand this hypothesis, one has to appreciate the method which was used to manufacture the stamps, as well as the time interval over which they were produced.

Dry printing was not introduced in the manufacturing of stamps until 1911, and prior to that time the process utilized was referred to as "Wet Printing". This procedure required that the paper upon which the image was being applied had to be dampened to about 15% - 30% moisture content prior to the actual image being applied. The theory behind "Wet Printing" believed wet paper would enable the inks to permeate the document and thereby provide a more indelible and durable impression, as well as enable both mediums to dry at similar consistencies.

The actual printing of the Map Stamp was a three stage process,

The black engraving encompassing the outlines of the land masses and the borders as well as the motto and the value tablets were printed first,



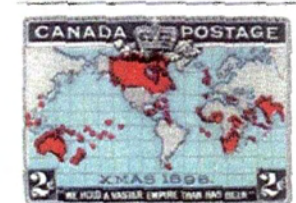
STAGE I BLACK PRINTING

This was then followed by the carmine or red areas of the British Empire being applied in the second printing, once again utilizing damp paper:



STAGE II RED PRINTING

The third and final stage in the printing of the stamp was the application of the blues or lavenders in the ocean areas.



STAGE III FINAL PRINT

## THE PRINTING PROCESS

In previous issues of the newsletter we expressed some theories as to how the four black plates were used to print what we refer to as the first or black stage of the printing progression. In this issue we examine the application of the Blue oceans.

The Blue Ocean plates consisted of ridged or contoured plates which had been laid out so as to print in only those areas requiring a blue colour. These were laid out using ridged dies in contours as follows:

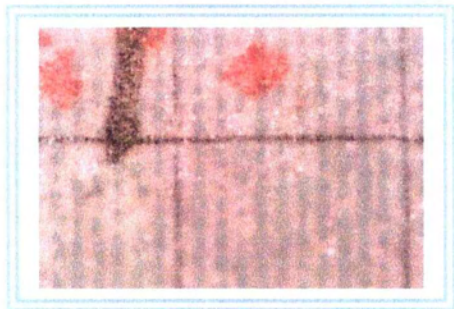


The roller would pass over the ink supply and the required ink would be picked up in the grooves, and the higher areas would be wiped, to remove the ink where there was to be no colour. As the press rotated the paper would feed between the printing plate and the pressure bar so that the ink would be deposited in the appropriate location on the paper. The paper did not always feed dead centre, and hence the red or blue shifts which are evident in many of the finished stamps.

### EXAMPLES OF THE RIDGES USED IN THE BLUE PRINTING

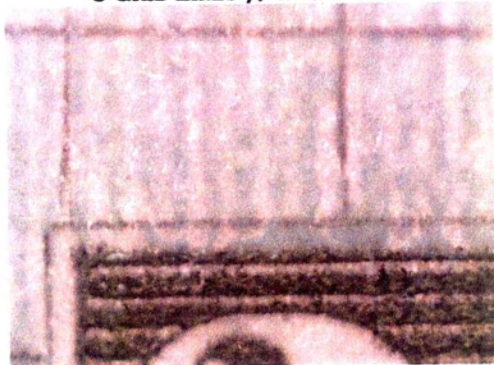
The ridges are not always evident in all of the stamps, especially when there was adequate ink on the printing plate, however the following examples from some of the lighter blue shades, as well as some of the red areas where the ridged lines are evident.

#### 60 X MAGNIFICATION



Magnified sections of Various Map Stamps providing examples of varying blue ridges between the lines of latitude at different sections of the stamp.

#### 8 GRID LINES // LATITUDE



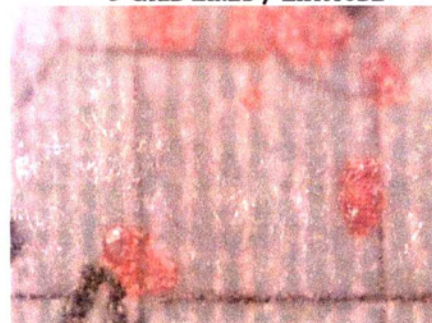
#### 10 GRID LINES / LATITUDE



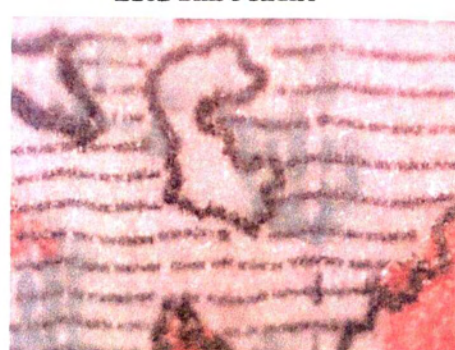
#### 10 GRID LINES / LATITUDE



#### 9 GRID LINES / LATITUDE



#### BLUE SHIFT RIGHT



## COLOUR CHANGELINGS (Cont'd)

In the Wet Printing process, it was required that the stamps be dried after each of the various stages. This also necessitated a re-dampening after each printing/drying stage to ready the paper for the next printing. When the sheets had the 100 black positions applied on each page, it was then required that the resultant 21" X 22" sheets be laid out on racks and then be introduced into the drying ovens where the ink which had been applied dried. Subsequent to this process having been completed the sheets were then dampened once again prior to being fed into the rotary presses for the application of the colours. At these stages that the printers utilized the alignment marks that are still apparent today so on the margins in order to ensure that the red areas as well as the Blue oceans would be printed in the correct positions. The placement was not always successful, and we have evidence of this with some rather dramatic colour shifts and misalignments.

Finally, after the printing was completed the glue was applied, and the sheets were then perforated.

The production process was obviously tedious as well as very time consuming, and it is a tribute to the printers that they were able to meet the schedules established for the first month and a half when 80,000 stamps were produced within thirty-five days of production.<sup>1</sup> Subsequent to the initial orders to distribute to all of the postal offices across the country, the production schedule levelled out over the next six months<sup>2</sup>, with a shutdown in July, then surged again for the last three months of the year to almost complete the order by November of 1899, except for two more shipments in early December of that year.

And so what about the alternative theory of:

**"Why the Colour Changelings?"**

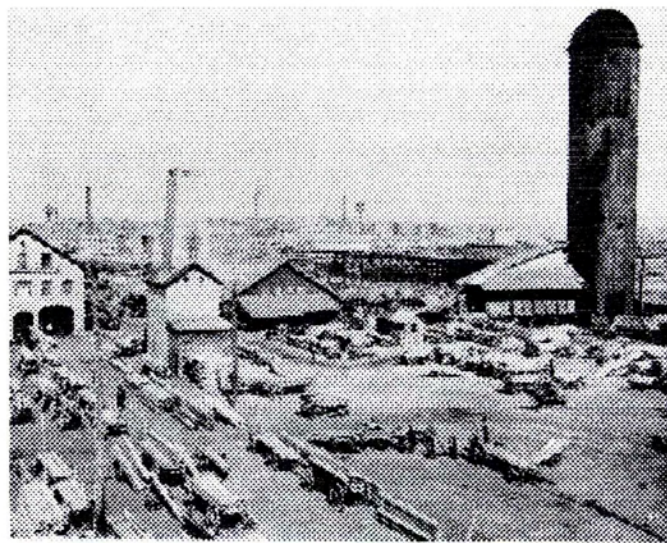
It is generally accepted that the colour changes which have transpired in the Map Stamp were the result of some form of chemical reaction within the ingredients which comprise the blue shades of the oceans. The greater frequency of changes appear to have arisen within the blue shades, or the "Green" Oceans as the order specified, rather than within the Lavender or "Blue" oceans, although there is some incidence of changes in both shades.

Was the chemical change within the ingredients themselves which were used to produce the colour of the ocean, or was there an external element that reacted with the components, or was it a combination of factors that produced the variety of colours we experience years later.

One theory suggests that there could have been an internal reaction within the ingredients, however if this was the case, why is the colour change sporadic, another theory suggests that the reaction of the ingredients with the gases within the ovens could have affected the mixtures, but again there is no explanation for the sporadic

nature of the end result. And so we move on to another theory of external elements which may have impacted the system.

In 1858 the E.B. Eddy company had set up a sulphide plant in Hull, across the river from Ottawa. This plant was established to produce both pulp paper, and among other items, that amazing new device on the market in the late 1880's called a "match". As many residents from Ottawa will attest, the fumes from this plant were offensively pungent and as we now realize highly toxic.



**E.B. EDDY  
SULPHIDE PLANT & MATCH FACTORY  
HULL, QUE. 1856 - 1901**

The alternative supposition about the changing colours in the Map Stamp suggests that the prevailing winds caused the toxic fumes from this plant to drift over Ottawa, and the ingredients in the fumes were absorbed by the dampened sheets of Map Stamps drying in the premises of the American Banknote facilities. This could have happened at each stage of the process being completed, and would also co-mingle with the blue dies used in the final process of the printing. The resultant mixtures could have caused colour changes to take place sometimes years later. It is also entirely plausible that the chemicals within the fumes could have affected the colouration of the pigmented dies while the ink was still damp. It was probably those sheets at the upper levels of the stacks of drying stamps which were mostly affected, and quite possible that those stamps around the edges of the other sheets would be affected more than the interior rows.

Do you have any thoughts about this strange phenomenon?

**WHY THICK PAPER?**

Ever wonder why some stamps are thicker than others. Paper was sold by weight, and when 1,000 sheets were ordered, they may not have had enough mass to meet the required weight. The paper makers always had thicker sheets around to add to the pile, albeit it was thicker paper. When the order reached the printer they used the paper the way it arrived, and did not sort by weight, thus the sheets were fed into the press the way they came.

<sup>1</sup> Between the dates of December 5<sup>th</sup> 1898 & January 20<sup>th</sup> 1899, with a Xmas shutdown, and one week off in Jan/89.

<sup>2</sup> See the shipment schedule table under the colour printing article.

# MAP STAMP STUDY GROUP MEMBERSHIP 2005 -06

	<u>MEMBERS NAME</u>	<u>Residence</u>	<u>BNAPS #</u>
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	HARNSBERGER	Scott Hunstville	USA R - 6054
	HASID	Ariel G. Weston	USA
	JAMIESON	John L. Saskatoon	SK L - 2395
	KERSHAW	Kenneth A. Ancaster	ON R - 5953
	LAMB	Richard M. Kitchener	ON R - 1255
	LATCHFORD	David Brighton	UK
	LONGLEY	Bill Waterdown	ON R - 5118
	LYON	Gary J. Bathurst	NB R - 2918
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	NIXON	J. Edward Toronto	ON R - 2233
	OSBORNE	Orville F. Toronto	ON R - 5972
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	QUINLAN	Marian Hamilton	ON
	SMITH	Joseph Rocky Mountain House	AB R - 4461
	SPENCER	Peter Sunderland	ON R - 3290
	TRIMBLE	Ralph E. Markham	ON R - 3290
	VOSS	Dr. Harry J. Saskatoon	SK R - 3904
	WATT	Dr. Jim Hamilton	ON L - 3825
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Unfortunately Harry Sutherland deceased in 2006