

Canadian
Re-entry
Study
Group

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Whole No. 19

JULY - AUGUST 1985

Vol. 4 , No. 4

THE 5¢ ENTRY ON THE 6¢ SMALL QUEEN



The above photograph (L.W. Giles, The Collectors Club Philatelist, Vol. 38, No. 2, p.69) shows the exact relationship between the two entries of Canada's "Most Remarkable Variety" (Boggs p.297).

THE 5¢ ON 6¢ SMALL QUEEN

This issue is entirely devoted to another splendid article submitted by our prolific writer, George Arfken. This time he is examining the literature that has appeared over the years on what is likely THE most sought-after variety in Canadian philatelic history: the 5¢ entry on the 6¢ Small Queen.

This is quite a coincidence, as I was preparing to do an article on this very subject for this issue myself ! Luckily, George's article arrived before I got very far on mine, and his is far more complete than mine would have been. My heartiest thanks, George !!

I do have a couple of points of interest, though, to add to what George has presented. (You may wish to wait to read the following until after you have read George's article.)

On George's first point (1.) where he mentions the U.S. 5¢ "error of colour", it is interesting to note that this error occurred not once, but three separate times, all on the same plate of 400! (Plate #7942 U.L. #74, U.L. #84 and L.R. #18.) As you can see, the first two positions are located one above the other and the third is by itself. These are usually collected in blocks of 12 and 9 respectively, with the errors in the centre. Examples on other foreign issues also exist of this type of error. There are several "foreign relief" stamps, as they are called, to be found on U.S. Revenue stamps as well, where details of two different designs exist on one stamp, similar to our 5 on 6. (I do not believe there is any evidence of the 2¢ design remaining on the 5¢ U.S. "error of colour".)

Contrary to the very final paragraph of George's point 8, in March of 1960, also in the Collectors Club Philatelist (Vol.39, No.2, p.70 & 103), Boggs published another short article, as a follow-up to his March 1959 article, in which he postulated the position of the 5¢ on 6¢ to be #25 on the left pane of the Montreal plate.

And finally, George examines the startling information about the possibility of 5¢ on 6¢ varieties existing in four different positions spanning both the 'Montreal' and 'Montreal & Ottawa' plates. I would like to add a fifth position to this list !!

Mike Bednar, President of the Golden Horseshoe Regional Group of BNAPS, recently showed me a mint block of 20 of the 6¢ S.Q. with partial M & O imprint, pane 'A' (left pane). The positions in the block of 5 X 4 are # 11-15, 21-25, 31-35 & 41-45. (#24 being the beautiful major re-entry Reiche #75) As in George's point 6, I did indeed see a weak example of a 5¢ on 6¢ re-entry in position #21. BUT ALSO, directly above it in position #11, there was clear evidence of yet another 5¢ on 6¢ variety !!! This was even weaker than that of #21, but the arc cutting through the tiara, some of the dots in the hair below 'A P' , a faint mark in 'G' and the curved line through 'D' (a scratch on the transfer roll ???) were clearly there (see George's illustrations), albeit in a slightly different position than the same marks on #21. As this one is so weak, relatively, it could not possibly be Hurst's supposed "stage II" (point 9) as Lea (point 10) describes this 'unknown' position as "strong".

So there you have it !!! FIVE possible positions for a 5¢ on 6¢ ! Your chances of finding one have suddenly increased greatly, haven't they ?? I'm searching for mine ! Thanks again, George !

"The Most Remarkable Variety of Canadian Stamps"

George B. Arfken

Canada's 5c on 6c re-entry burst upon the philatelic world in 1945. Since then controversy has swirled around it. How was it produced? What plate? What position? In the form of an annotated bibliography in chronological order this article attempts to present the saga of "the most remarkable variety of Canadian stamps".

1. The Postage Stamps and Postal History of Canada, Winthrop S. Boggs. Chambers Publishing Company (1945), Quarterman Publications, Inc. (1974).

On pages 297 and 298 (Quarterman reprint) Boggs discussed the re-entry and showed one photo of the re-entry with a second photo showing the 2 1/2 mm displacement of the partial 5c impression down from the 6c impression. Boggs was the first to recognize that the additional lines on the 6c Small Queen came from a 5c Small Queen impression on a transfer roll. He mentioned two possibilities for producing the re-entry: (1) use, by mistake, of the wrong transfer roll and (2) application, by mistake, of the 5c impression on a roll carrying both the 6c and the 5c impressions. Boggs opted for the first alternative, use of the wrong transfer roll.

In a footnote Boggs mentioned the U.S. 5c "error of color". In 1917 a workman used the wrong transfer roll and entered a complete 5c impression on a 2c plate. Escaping the eagle-eyed inspectors the plate was put into production and 5c stamps were printed in 2c carmine, Scott #467. This might be "the most remarkable variety in U.S. stamps". Certainly it showed Boggs that use of the wrong transfer roll could happen.

Boggs expressed his belief that the re-entry was created on a late state of a Montreal plate in about 1895. [In reference 8 Boggs changed this date to 1896.]

For about 4 years everything was quiet. Then in 1949 two articles appeared in Maple Leaves. First, Lees-Jones.

2. Small Cents Varieties, R.W.T. Lees-Jones. Maple Leaves 2, 103, July 1949.

Lees-Jones reviewed Boggs' discovery of the 5c re-entry lines and Boggs' theory of their production. His verdict: "Boggs' explanation that the first impression was that of the 5c seems correct, but how it occurred is not conclusively proved." [From the writer of this article - Conclusive proofs are few and far between. Usually we have to weigh the plausibility of competing alternatives.]

In that same issue of Maple Leaves Studd proposed an alternate theory for the creation of the re-entry.

3. The First Four Issues of Canada, M.A. Studd. Maple Leaves 2, 107-112, July 1949.

On page 112 Studd mentioned that he "knew and wrote about this stamp many years ago, but Mr. Boggs' discovery that the first impression was from the 5c value is new information." As was customary Studd did not give any reference to his earlier writing.

Studd suggested that in the interest of economy an old, unneeded 5c plate (of unhardened steel) was burnished off and used for a new 6c plate. Incomplete burnishing left a portion of an old 5c entry and led to the 5c on 6c re-entry. In addition to the idea of economy Studd based his theory on his stated belief that no workman would have displaced the 5c impression so far from the intended location of the 6c impression. [Studd's alternative theory received no support from any later writer. Blois, reference 6, presented evidence to discredit it. Further objections to it were listed by Boggs, reference 8.]

In 1951 the 5c on 6c re-entry entered BNA Topics. Allison published an enlarged photo of the re-entry and also a photo of a horizontal block of six having the re-entry as the middle stamp on the bottom row. The stamps were identified as the chocolate shade. [The position in the block will be seen to be important in two respects: (1) providing support for Lea's theory, reference 5, and (2) eliminating possible plate positions, references 6 - 9.]

4. 5c Re-entry on 6c Small Queen, Russell Allison.
BNA Topics 8, 69, 1951

The real controversy erupted the following year when Lea published his theory of the re-entry in BNA Topics and in Stamp Lover. (The Stamp Lover article was reprinted in Maple Leaves 18, 33-34, 1981.)

5. Canada - 5c Re-entry on 6c Small Queen, W.E. Lea.
BNA Topics 9, 188-189, 1952.

In 1951 Lea obtained a single copy of the re-entry and later a used horizontal block of six with the re-entry on the middle stamp of the bottom row (In reference 6. Blois stated that this was Allison's block, reference 4.) Lea made two points. First, he asserted that if the 5c lines had come from the wrong transfer roll, an impression of the entire 5c design would have been made, it being impossible to stop the transfer roll. [Hillson, reference 11, disputes this impossibility.] Lea found no evidence of the lower part of a full 5c design nor any sign of its being burnished off.

Second, Lea noted that the end stamps on the top row of his block had been re-entered - to strengthen the worn plate impression. The middle stamp, above the 5c on 6c re-entry, had been re-entered but only on the bottom. The lines in the bottom portion were strengthened. Those in the top portion of the stamp remained "weak and worn". Lea concluded that a mixed transfer roll, one bearing both a 5c relief and a 6c relief was used. Due to the carelessness of the siderographer the roll pressed the bottom part of the 6c relief onto the bottom part of the top 6c stamp in the block and the top of the 5c relief onto the top of the lower 6c stamp creating our 5c on 6c re-entry. The upper stamp became a "short transfer", easily distinguishable, according to Lea, "by the coloured mark which joins the frame and the vignette through the white circle immediately below the third A of CANADA."

Two years latter, in 1954, attention shifted to include the question of the plate position of the re-entry.

6. 5c Re-entry on 6c, E.M. Blois.
BNA Topics 11, 290-292, 1954.

Blois reported that B.K. Denton and Clare Jephcott had examined a medium to light red brown Montreal and Ottawa imprint, pane "A" and had found two examples of a 5c on 6c re-entry, one in position 20, the other in position 21. Denton and Jephcott further commented "The positions immediately above 20 and 21, namely 10 and 11, are both weak at the top; this confirming the too-far rocking down of the 6c transfer in these positions immediately below..." Blois proceeded to examine a part-sheet lent by Charles deVolpi and confirmed the existence of the position 20 and 21 re-entries. Blois gives a very detailed description of these two stamps. With the aid of the position dots Blois found a position 20 stamp printed in the earlier yellow brown. It showed no sign of the 5c re-entry and in Blois' words "effectively disposes of Major Studd's theory", reference 3.

The re-entered stamp in the Lea - Allison block could not be in either position 20 or 21. Its position was different and remained unknown. Blois advanced the conjecture that it was in the left, "B" pane, of the 6c Montreal plate. [This plate assignment was confirmed 15 years later by Hurst, reference 9.]

So now we have three 5c on 6c re-entries: positions 20 and 21, pane A, Montreal and Ottawa plate and an unknown position, probably on pane B, Montreal plate. The situation was summed up in Maple Leaves two years later.

7. The Small Cents - The Six Cents Double Entry, (no author listed).
Maple Leaves 6, 104-105, June 1956.

Boggs, reference 1, is quoted in full. From Blois, reference 6, it is noted that there are three re-entries. The conclusion: "It appears, therefore, that the error could not occur easily through the selection of a wrong roll, but more likely through using a mixed roll and rocking down too far."

This article included an enlarged photo of the re-entry, the clearest to appear in any of the seven references listed so far.

Boggs' response to all this criticism appeared in very detailed form in 1959.

8. Canada The 5c Entry on the 6c "Small Queen" Plate, Winthrop S. Boggs.
The Collectors Club Philatelist 38, 59-72, March 1959.

Boggs noted that the earliest mention of this 5c on 6c known to him was in Fred Jarrett's B.N.A. Record, January 1931. Jarrett described the re-entry but did not recognize that the re-entry lines came from a 5c relief.

At this point in time (1959) Boggs was aware of three unused and seven used copies of the re-entry. He included photos of seven of these ten examples, three that occurred in block and four singles. The stamp that appears in Figure 1. at the beginning of this article was in Boggs' Fig. 8, P.64. (An eleventh example of the re-entry, not on Boggs' list of ten, appeared ten years later in reference 9.)

Boggs believed that the 5c on 6c re-entry was not produced during the general re-entering of the plate in 1892 but occurred during the repair of this specific position in 1896.

Turning to competing theories as to how the re-entry occurred Boggs dismissed Studd's reused plate theory for three reasons: "1. Reputable bank note companies do not erase old plates to re-use them for other purposes. 2. The plates were paid for by the Canadian P.O. Department, remained the property of the Canadian P.O. Department and under the control of the agent of the P.O. Department 3. In this instance we are dealing not with a new plate, but with one that had been in use since 1875 or 1876, which was being re-entered to prolong its usefulness."

In rejecting Lea's theory of a mixed transfer roll Boggs went into a long and very detailed discussion of the size and nature of a transfer roll and of the mechanics of making a plate. One major point was that the reliefs on a transfer roll are always spaced at least 10 to 12 mm apart "to obviate the dangers of over-rolling." The distance from the top of the 5c entry to the bottom of the normal 6c entry is 5.5 mm - far too close for the spacing on a mixed transfer roll.

As a second major point he noted that the 5c impression is displaced 0.5 mm to the left of the 6c impression. Boggs argued that since spacing tolerances were small any 5c relief on a mixed transfer roll would have been precisely centered on the roll, that no 0.5 mm displacement would have been tolerated.

Boggs concluded that the only acceptable theory was that of the use of the wrong transfer roll. Regarding the misalignment he expressed the belief that the answer might never be known but thought that "some mechanical failure is the most logical explanation."

Boggs made no mention of Lea's short transfer and, surprisingly, showed no awareness of the position 20 and 21 re-entries of references 6 and 7.

Ten years passed with no significant developments and then came the identification of the position of the re-entry on the Montreal plate.

9. Canada's '5 on 6' Variety of the Small Queens Series. The Plate Position Established and Two Stages Identified, Peter J. Hurst. London Philatelist 78, 55-59, 1969.

The discovery of the re-entry on the fifth stamp from the left, bottom row on a mint block of twelve (6 x 2) with blank margin at the left permitted Hurst to conclude first that the re-entry occurred in the fifth column. Then, from the absence of an imprint in the margin, he concluded that the re-entry could only be in one of six positions: 5, 15, 25, 75, 85, 95. [The blocks described by Boggs, reference 8, eliminated positions 5 and 95.] Hurst compared the block of twelve with a complete pre-re-entered "B" pane. Minor misalignment of positions 15 and 25 relative to the impressions to their left permitted Hurst to conclude that the 5c on 6c re-entry was in position 25 (of the B pane of the Montreal plate). At long last the re-entry was plated.

This critical mint block of twelve later appeared in the Simpson Small Queen sale, November 18, 1980 and in Maresch's Private Treaty Sale, July 1982.

Hurst noted that the re-entries in positions 20 and 21 of the Montreal and Ottawa plate, pane A, were "extremely weak, to the point of being barely visible". Then he proceeded to illustrate and describe two "stages" of the strong 5c on 6c re-entry. Hurst made a very real and major contribution in determining the plate position of the re-entry but his concept of two stages of the re-entry was an error. The correction came in a Letter to the Editor

from W.E. Lea appearing in the same London Philatelist 64 pages after Hurst's article.

10. Canada's '5 on 6' Variety, W.E. Lea.
London Philatelist 78, 124, 1969.

Lea congratulated Hurst on identifying the plate position of the re-entry and then proceeded to point out that Hurst's two stages were actually two different re-entries, two different stamps! Lea pointed to a difference in the horizontal displacement of the 5c impression in Hurst's two illustrations. (The present writer finds it easier to observe a small but distinct vertical difference where a strong horizontal 5c line crosses the N of CANADA.)

So now we have two strong 5c on 6c re-entries on the Montreal plate, pane B. One is in position 25, the position of the second unknown. (An example of this strong, unknown position re-entry appeared as lot 529 in the Simpson Small Queen auction, November 18, 1980. This same stamp was shown in Boggs' Fig. 6, reference 8.)

Lea also used this opportunity to restate the arguments of his 1952 article, reference 5. Unfortunately he presented no new evidence nor any response to Boggs' arguments, reference 8. There the matter rested for twelve years. Then in 1981 in a Letter to the Editor, Hillson made an interesting new observation.

11. 5 cents re-entry on 6 cents S.Q., N.J.A. Hillson.
Maple Leaves 18, 80-81, June 1981.

Boggs had pointed out (reference 8) that the Small Queens were printed from plates of unhardened steel, unhardened so that they could be re-entered without any softening required. If the plates had been hardened to give them somewhat longer life, it would have been necessary to anneal at least the surface layer to permit re-entering. Boggs noted that this was not done because the heat treatment would risk damaging the plate. Hillson applied this same reasoning to the transfer roll. The 6c relief was presumably created in 1872 and the transfer roll hardened so that the 6c could be rolled onto the first 6c plate. The 5c relief was made three to four years later. (Had the 5c die or transfer roll been available earlier there would have been no need for the provisional 5c Large Queen.) Hillson argued that it was most unlikely that the 6c relief would have been jeopardized by heating and softening the transfer roll so that a 5c relief could be added.

In conclusion - a personal reaction. In 1945 there was one re-entry to worry about, one (unknown) position. The re-entry was created by one mistake. Now we have the 5c on 6c re-entry in four different positions. It is a little bothersome that the mistake apparently occurred four times. Despite this Boggs' geometrical arguments in reference 8 seem quite compelling. And, unless refuted, Hillson's point in reference 11 almost certainly rules out the mixed transfer hypothesis. Personal evaluation: the 5c on 6c re-entries, all four of them, were created by careless use of the wrong transfer roll.



Figure 1. The Five Cent on Six Cent Re-entry

The strong horizontal line through the N of CANADA and the A of POSTAGE is the top frame line of the 5c Small Queen. The cross hatching (first A of CANADA, G of POSTAGE) comes from the triangles in the upper corners of the 5c Small Queen. In the left margin of the six cent stamp one can see the upper left ball ornament of the five cent. Here the ball is marked by a small black triangle from the cancellation. The 5c impression is displaced about 2.3 mm down and about 0.5 mm to the left. Photograph by Lee Ha.

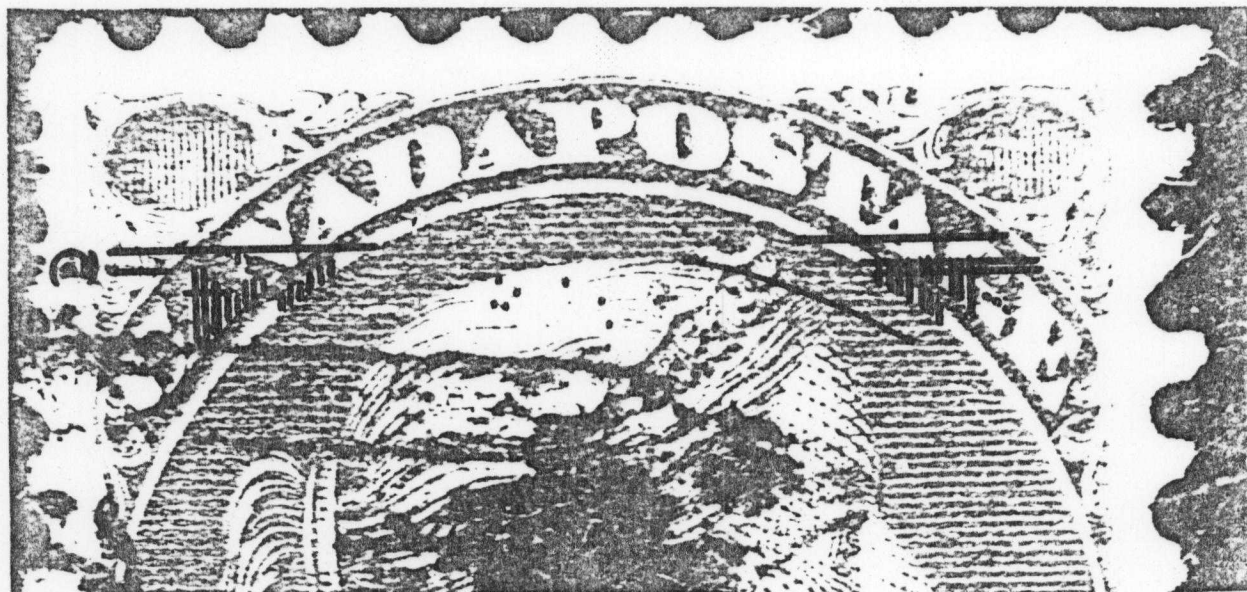


Figure 2. A Xerox of Figure 1. with the main re-entry lines drawn in for clarity.

