

Dots and Scratches

Re-entries and Constant Plate Varieties

Study Group of the BNAPS

Edited by Michael D. Smith



Unitrade 208i “Burr on Shoulder”

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FROM YOUR EDITOR

This is the first issue of Dots and Scratches after attending a very interesting ORAPEX show and attending a really fun and interesting Large an Small Queens and Re-entries and Constant Plate Varieties Study Groups get together hosted by Guillaume Vadeboncoeur. Guillaume, thank you for a wonderful evening.

Geoff Browning contributed an article where he has plated some varieties of the 1/2-cent Large Queen. He is in the process of trying to find plate varieties in this issue which will help determine the various plate position. This is a very interesting start on this project.

Guillaume Vadeboncoeur has contributed two interesting articles on the Small Queens. The article on the 2-cent Small Queen was a discovery made at the Study Groups get together. The article about the 5-cent Small Queen identifies the position of a prominent plate variety which is hoped will help determine the plate. Both are must reads.

The 5-cent Small Queen mentioned above was auctioned by Paul Chiles. Paul contacted me right after he listed the stamp to let me know about it. I immediately recognized the significance of this stamp. I placed a sizeable bid but was over bid by at least two other people one being Guillaume. Congratulations on your win.

Guy Jeffrey sent a cover that has a copy of the 3-cent Small Queen Re-entry shown in the previous edition of Dots and Scratches. Some additional information on this nice re-entry is also included.

Scott Robinson has furnished an article about a major re-entry on the 5-cent Edward VII stamp. He has also put a new web page online to illustrate cataloged varieties with better images. Feel free to visit: <http://flyspecker.com> . You will not be disappointed as he is making a terrific tool to use in identifying these varieties. If you have images he might use contact information is available on the web page.

Thanks to all who let me know you enjoyed the last issue. I hope you find this one equally enjoyable. Feel free to contact me and let me know where I can improve this newsletter. Your comments are always welcome.

Mike Smith



Dots and Scratches

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Varieties on the 1/2-cent Large Queen (Part 2)

By Geoff Browning

This article is the second in a series on the half-cent Large Queen. (See BNA Topics fourth quarter – whole number 541, volume 71, number 4 – for first article.) In this article we examine further the block of nine discussed in the first article, noting those identifying features which will allow positioning of other examples from this corner of the sheet.

Position 1 of the block (also position 1 of the sheet) exhibits a number of features besides the re-entry discussed in the first article. The first of these for our purposes (shown below in Figure 1) is a black dot off the upper left corner of the design. This may be a guide dot but it is not mentioned by the Duckworths in their discussion of the laying down of the Large Queen plates (2nd edition, pp.41-42). As will be seen below in Figure 8, this dot also exists on pre-re-entry copies of sheet position 1.

Figure 1: Black dot off the upper left corner of the design at sheet position 1 (post-re-entry example)



The second feature to be noted on sheet position 1 is the absence of a guide dot off the lower left corner of the design (shown below in Figure 2). This feature is mentioned in Duckworths and is shared by all ten positions in sheet column 1 in both pre- and post- re-entry printings.

Figure 2: Absence of a black dot off the lower left corner of the design at sheet position 1 (post-re-entry example)



The third feature to be noted is a black “spur” extending upwards from the “reversed C”-shaped curl above the “H” of “HALF” (shown below in Figure 3). This feature is referred to as progressive as the angle by which the spur separates from the curl increases gradually until it doubles over at sheet position 4 and then has broken off entirely at sheet position 95 (the next to be laid down by the transfer roll). See Duckworths (2nd edition pp.47-49) for a discussion of the order in which the sheet positions were laid down. This feature first makes its appearance at sheet position 11, then at sheet positions 1, 92 up through 2 (that is, column 2), 93 through 3 (that is, column 3) and finally 94 through 4 (that is, sheet column 4). This “spur” occurs on both pre- and post- re-entry printings.

Figure 3: Black “spur” extending upwards from the “reversed C” shaped curl above the “H” of “HALF” and shorter black “spur” extending from the black shading beneath the “reversed C”-shaped curl above the “H” of “HALF” at sheet position 1 (post-re-entry example)



Figure 3 also shows a much shorter black “spur” extending from the black shading beneath the “reversed C”-shaped curl above the “H” of “HALF”. As will be seen later, this feature also occurs on both pre- re-entry printings.

Figure 4 on next page shows the salient portions of the re-entry at sheet position 1. This is repeated here from the first article for comparison purposes with pre-re-entry copies from this sheet position discussed later in this article.

Figure 4: Manifestations of the re-entry at sheet position 1



Moving on to block position 2 (which is also sheet position 2), there is, of course, the black “spur” extending upwards from the “reversed C”-shaped curl above the “H” of “HALF” (shown below in Figure 5), though at a somewhat greater angle from the design.

Figure 5: Black “spur” extending upwards from the “reversed C” shaped curl above the “H” of “HALF” at sheet position 2 (post-re-entry example)



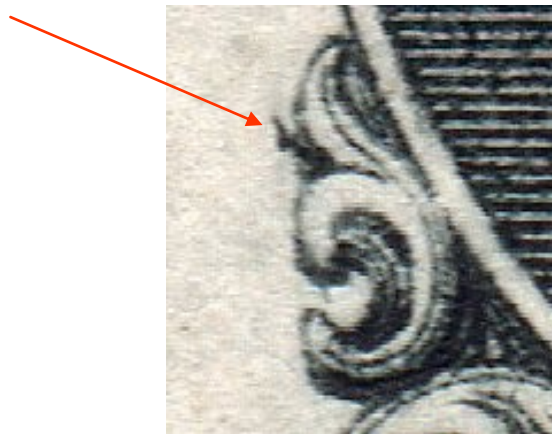
Block position 2 also exhibits a curved black line extending diagonally upward to the left from the frame line above the “P” of “POSTAGE”. This feature is also referred to as progressive as it occurs in slightly different shape and position on the sheet positions below sheet position 2. This feature exists on both pre- and post-re-entry printings though, as will be seen below, not in exactly the same shape. This feature may have resulted from mis-attempts to strengthen the frame line in the original laying down of the plate. In support of this theory is the noticeable gap in the frame line to the left of the curved black line (also indicated by an arrow in Figure 5 below).

Figure 5: Black “spur” extending upwards from the “reversed C” shaped curl above the “H” of “HALF” at sheet position 2 (post-re-entry example)



Moving on to block position 3 (also sheet position 3), there is, again, the black “spur” extending upwards from the “reversed C”-shaped curl above the “H” of “HALF” (shown below in Figure 6), though again at a somewhat greater angle from the design.

Figure 6: Black “spur” extending upwards from the “reversed C” shaped curl above the “H” of “HALF” at sheet position 3 (post-re-entry example)



Block position 3 (also sheet position 3) also shows a black triangle extending into the scroll area below, and to the left, of “1/2” (shown below in Figure 7).

Figure 7: Black triangle extending into the scroll area below, and to the left, of “1/2” at sheet position 3 (post re-entry example)



Having established a number of identifying features for sheet positions 1, 2 and 3 using a post-re-entry block with selvedge, it is now possible to identify these positions on other multiples, including pre-re-entry multiples, as some of these features remained in place after the re-entering of the plate which probably occurred between 1874 and 1876.

The first feature considered above for block position 1 of the post-re-entry block was the black dot off the upper left corner of the design. This is shown below in Figure 8 as it appears on the upper left stamp of a five-by-two block of ten. As can readily be seen from a comparison with Figure 1 above, this stamp does not exhibit the re-entry in the upper left scroll.

Figure 8: Black dot off the upper left corner of the design at sheet position 1 (pre-re-entry example)



The second feature considered above for block position 1 of the post-re-entry block was the absence of a black dot off the lower left corner of the design. This is shown below in Figure 9 as it appears on the upper left stamp of the same five-by-two pre-re-entry block of ten.

Figure 9: Absence of a black dot off the lower left corner of the design at sheet position 1 (pre-re-entry example)



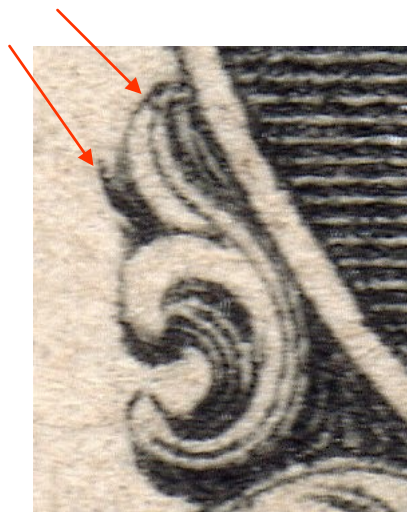
The third feature considered above for block position 1 of the post-re-entry block was a black “spur” extending upwards from the “reversed C”-shaped curl above the “H” of “HALF”. Figure 10 below shows how this feature appears on block position 1 of the pre-re-entry block of ten. Figure 10 also shows a much shorter black “spur” extending from the black shading beneath the “reversed C”-shaped curl above the “H” of “HALF”.

Figure 10: Black “spur” extending upwards from the “reversed C” shaped curl above the “H” of “HALF” and shorter black “spur” extending from the black shading beneath the “reversed C”-shaped curl above the “H” of “HALF” at sheet position 1 (pre-re-entry example)



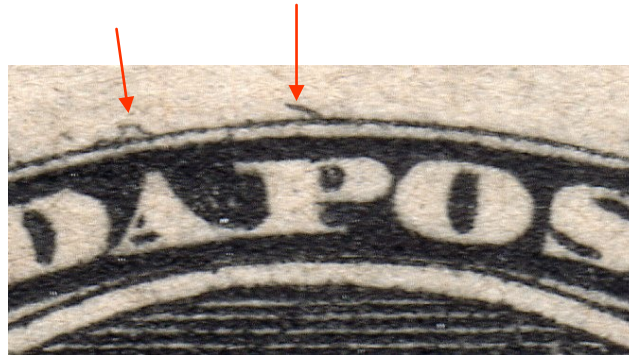
Moving on to block position 2 (also sheet position 2) of the pre-re-entry block of ten, Figure 11 below show how the black “spur” appears at this position on the pre-re-entry block. Also indicated by an arrow in Figure 11 is an inverted “T-shaped” black line cutting diagonally across the upper tip of the ornament containing the “reverse C-shaped” curl above the “H” of “HALF”.

Figure 11: Black “spur” extending upwards from the “reversed C” shaped curl above the “H” of “HALF” and an inverted “T-shaped” black line cutting diagonally across the upper tip of the ornament containing the “reverse C-shaped” curl above the “H” of “HALF” at sheet position 2 (pre-re-entry example)



Block position 2 also exhibits a curved black line extending diagonally upward to the left from the frame line above the “P” of “POSTAGE” but a comparison with Figure 5 (the post-re-entry version) above will show that the pre-re-entry version is much stronger. Also evident in Figure 12 are two squiggly black lines extending diagonally upwards from, and forming a “pyramid” on, the upper frame line above the third “A” of “CANADA”.

Figure 12: Curved black line extending diagonally upward to the left from the frame line above the “P” of “POSTAGE” and two squiggly black lines extending diagonally upwards from, and forming a “pyramid” on, the upper frame line above the third “A” of “CANADA” at sheet position 2 (pre-re-entry example)



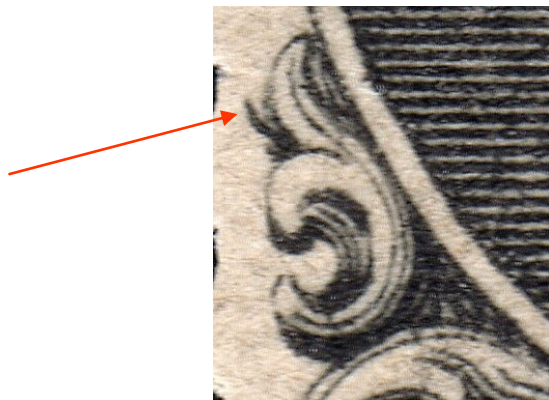
Also occurring at block position 2 is a black dot just to the right of the upper edge of the design (see Figure 13 below).

Figure 13: black dot just to the right of the upper edge of the design at sheet position 2 (pre-re-entry example)



Moving on to block position 3 (also sheet position 3), of the pre-re-entry block of ten, Figure 14 below shows how the black “spur” appears at this position on the pre-re-entry block. (see Figure 6 above for the post-re-entry version).

Figure 14: Black “spur” extending upwards from the “reversed C” shaped curl above the “H” of “HALF” at sheet position 3 (pre-re-entry example)



Also appearing at block position 3 of the pre-re-entry block of ten is a black triangle protruding into the scroll line area to the left of “1/2” just below the base of the “1” (see Figure 15 below).

Figure 15: Black triangle protruding into the scroll line area to the left of “1/2” just below the base of the “1” at sheet position 3 (pre-re-entry example)



This concludes our examination of sheet positions 1, 2 and 3 in their pre- and post- re-entry states – this re-entering being in reference to sheet positions 1, 11 and 21 but affecting other positions as well, for example, sheet position 2 as detailed above. I hope that you have found this examination of the first three sheet positions interesting and that you will look forward to further articles covering the rest of the sheet. However, I should add that I do not believe that every sheet position is amenable to plating.

I should also note that some of the varieties identified in this article are listed in catalogues (e.g., Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps) and handbooks (e.g., The Large Queen Stamps of Canada and Their Use, Second Edition, by H.E. and H.W. Duckworth). Those covered in this article include the “line over P of POSTAGE” – Unitrade 21ii), “spur’ in scroll left of H” – Unitrade 21 1v) and “re-entry in UL corner (pos 1, pos 11)” – Unitrade 21ix). However, most of the varieties identified in this and subsequent articles have not, to the best of my knowledge, been identified in the philatelic literature.

Geoffrey R. Browning

This article can also be found in Confederation Vol. 59.

2¢ Small Queen with “Extra Nostril” Variety

By: Guillaume Vadeboncoeur (guillaume@vadeboncoeur.ca)

I want to thank everyone who attended the informal Large & Small Queen Study Group and Re-Entry and Constant Plate Variety Study Group gathering during ORAPEX. It was well attended with a total of 15 people this year. It seems that every year a discovery is made within the material discussed, and this year was no exception.

Illustrated below as Figure 1 is a single 2¢ Small Queen from the 1st Ottawa printing period (perf. 11.85×11.85 using the yellowish Instanta gauge) which I have had for several years. It was included in my exhibit of the Small Queen issue described as “extra nostril variety”. I had always assumed that it was a non-constant ink blob.



Figure 1: 2¢ with “extra nostril” variety (and detail)

During the informal ORAPEX gathering, I usually set up a television to display scans of stamps and covers in a slide show format. While going through scans of 2¢ Small Queen items, the item illustrated at Figure 2 came up on the screen. This block of 6 was offered by Eastern Auctions as part of the Ted Nixon collection. I acquired it as a nice mint multiple from the 1st Ottawa printing (is anyone aware of a larger intact mint multiple of the 2¢ value from the 1st Ottawa printing?). What everyone overlooked, myself included, is that the lower middle stamp shows the exact same “extra nostril variety” as the single stamp illustrated at Figure 1 – wow!

As luck would have it, I ran into Michael Rixon the next day at the stamp show. Michael was at one time a serious collector of the 2¢ Small Queen. Michael had a look at the single from Figure 1 and confirmed having previously seen this variety as he apparently owned “two or three” examples. Michael does not know where these stamps now reside, but he indicated they were used examples. Given the two examples illustrated here, and Michael’s recollection of having seen this variety, there is thus little doubt that this is a constant variety

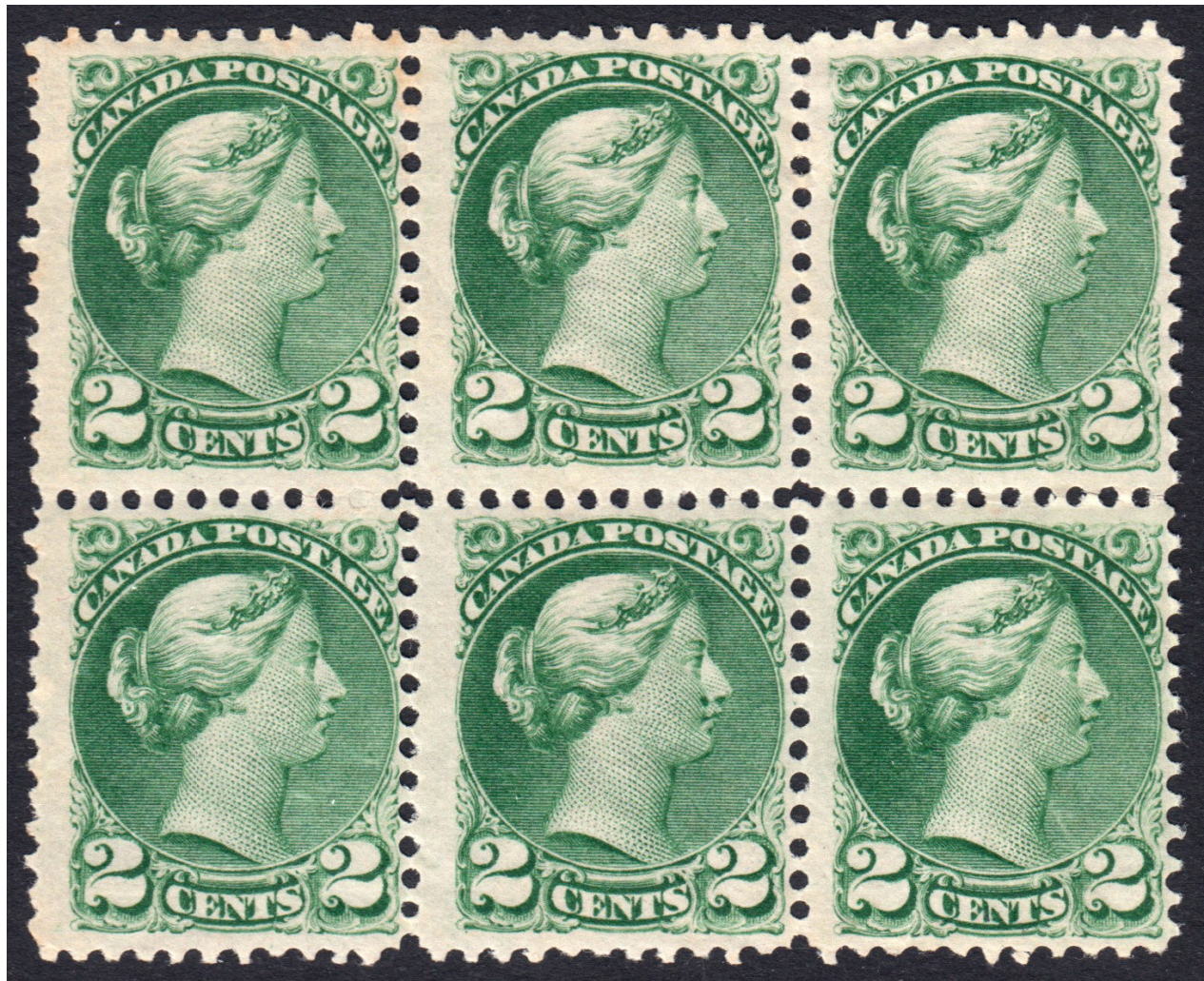


Figure 2: 2¢ block of 6 showing “extra nostril” variety on lower middle stamp

After doing a little more research, I noted that this variety is actually listed in *“Plate Varieties of the Canada 2 Cents Small Queen”* by Ron Waldston as #2PF835, but without any information other than a drawing of the variety. It was not included in *“Constant Plate Varieties of the Canada Small Queens”* by Reiche & Sendbuehler, or on Bill Burden’s website. The variety is similar in size to the “goatee” and “shaving nick” varieties on the 3¢ Large Queen or the “vampire bite” on the 3¢ Small Queen.

The limited awareness of the existence of this variety means one thing, and that it is a scarce constant plate variety. The primary reason is that it is from the 1st Ottawa printing period. According to Nixon and Hillson, only 3.3% of 2¢ stamps were printed during this period and that *“First Ottawa printings are noteworthy for their relative scarcity”*. So the basic stamp is already a challenging stamp to find in any condition (mint or used), and it would not be unusual for the plate flaw to only appear in the later portion of the 1st Ottawa printing period, which would further limit the number of examples printed. This should provide you with one more reason to re-check your 2¢ stamps as other examples are out there. Let’s see how many other examples we can find!

(Submitted for publication in both Confederation and Dots and Scratches newsletters)



Fig. 2

5¢ Small Queen “Feather in hair” plate position confirmed

Guillaume Vadeboncoeur (guillaume@vadeboncoeur.ca)

The “Feather in hair” is one of the most sought-after constant plate varieties of the Small Queen issue. It has been documented in literature since at least 1951, having graced the front cover of BNA Topics where it was described as a new variety by A.L. Pemberton, as follows:

“The flaw, which might be aptly be described as the “feather in hair” variety, is most marked. It consists of a diagonal mark, which is heavily printed, extending from the centre of the Queen’s head at the top, through the “D” of Canada, where it is most clearly visible, to the thin white line surrounding the words “Canada Postage.”

In 1989, Hillson described it as follows:

“The most noticeable variety on this value resulted from damage to the second Montreal plate, and is known as the “Plume in Hair” which aptly describes it as it extends from the Queen’s head to the edge of the vignette. It is scarce.”

In 1991, Reiche and Sendbuehler added some information about shade and potential printing period:

“A variety which has been recorded for some time is the so called “Feather in Hair” Variety. This plate flaw gives the appearance of a feather in the Queen’s hair. It is a constant variety and comes from the Montreal-Ottawa printing period. The flaw appears on a grey not grey-brown shade, as suggested. The period of the flaw is around 1887 to 1889.”

Finally, Hillson and Nixon provided yet more information in their 2008 book:

“The one variety that is really prominent is the so-called “Plume of Hair” or Straw in Hair.

Caused by damage to the plate, the variety is from the twin-plate “Montreal” plate, but neither the position nor the pane has been identified. The damage is a 6 mm gash, which extends from just to the rear of the centre, approximately, of the Queen’s tiara, to the upright of the “D” of “CANADA.” It is a scarce stamp, and the damage must have been repaired before the move to Ottawa. Certainly, no Ottawa printing with the variety has been reported. It is known with the 12 x 12.25 perforation of an 1888-89 printing”. [emphasis added].

Well, the stamp illustrated at Figure 1 has just been found, providing us with an exact position for this constant plate flaw. Indeed, the stamp has a sheet margin at right showing a portion of the Type V imprint, confirmation that the flaw is located as position 60.



Figure 1: 5¢ “Feather in hair” with plate inscription

In addition to the feather, there is also what appears to be a plate scratch to the left of the imprint (next to “nk” of “Bank”) which I have not previously seen, and which is likely to have occurred at the same time as the damage on position 60.

Confirmation of plate and pane

As was noted by Hillson and Nixon, the “Feather in Hair” stamp comes from the twin-pane “Montreal” plate, that is a plate with two panes of 100 stamps, each having the Type V imprint on each side of the pane, with plate number 1 and 2 at the top of the pane. Thus, that leaves two possibilities for the actual plating of this stamp. In order to confirm this I have reviewed images of other 5¢ right imprint pieces.

Figure 2 is cropped from a picture of the sheet pane of 100 which was recently offered at auction. This is from the first single plate of 100 (No. 1 in the Hillson & Nixon list of 5¢ plates). I have added a black line along the top frame line of the stamp in order to better gauge the alignment of the plate imprint (with the line intersecting the left leg of “n” of “Bank”). In addition, note the wide spacing between the stamp and the imprint:



Figure 2: Detailed from position 60, Plate “1”

Figure 3 is cropped from a right imprint block of 4 which had previously been identified, and which I believe to be, from the second single plate of 100 (No. 2 in the Hillson & Nixon list of 5¢ plates). It is in a pale olive-green shade of 1887. I have added the same black line. The black line intersects the right leg of “n” of “Bank”. There is also a narrower spacing between the stamp and the imprint.



Figure 3: Detail from position 60, plate “2”

Figure 4 is cropped from the single stamp showing the “Feather in Hair” flaw depicted at Figure 1. Again, I have added a black line in the same position. It is definitely not from either of the single plates of 100 as the black line is not a match to plate “1” and the spacing between the stamp and the imprint is wider than in plate “2”.



Figure 4: Detail from position 60 with “Feather in Hair” flaw

Therefore, it has to come from the twin-pane “Montreal” plate (No. 3 in the Hillson & Nixon list of 5¢ plates). But due to a lack of high-quality scans of right imprint material, I have not been able to confirm whether the flaw is from the left or right pane. I would appreciate receiving high quality scans of 5¢ right imprint pieces, especially from the imperf printings as they were printed from the twin-pane “Montreal” plate. Some have indicated that due to the small size of the sheet margin, it would have to come from the left pane, but caution is required as sheet margins were often and easily trimmed. I will wait until definitive proof is obtained before passing judgment on whether the flaw was from plate A or B (together representing the twin-pane “Montreal” plate).

Printing period

In recent years, Eastern Auctions has described the “Feather in Hair” plate flaw as being printed in “grey, hint of olive, Montreal “Gazette” printing, perf 12x12¼”. The stamp illustrated at Figure 1 is perforated 12x12¼, as is the example #5 illustrated at the end of this article. Of note is that this specific perforation combination was used during the temporary “Montreal Gazette” printing.

Based on the examples I have examined (#3 to #6 illustrated at the end of the article), the colour tends to be much closer to grey than olive green. I would describe it as “olive-grey”.

I am only aware of one dated example, being the ex-D. Roberts and Dr. Frank (“Jura”) example postmarked in St. Pierre & Miquelon in January 1890. This would tend support a printing from 1888-1889.

My opinion is that the stamp, illustrated at Figure 1, is indeed from a “Montreal Gazette” printing. And based on my examination of about six examples of this plate flaw, I believe that all examples I have examined were from a “Montreal Gazette” printing. It is quite conceivable that damage was made to the plate (to position 60 and the plate scratch in the imprint) during a move (in haste?) of the plate following a fire at the Montreal printing facility. It is also quite conceivable that a limited number of the 5¢ value was printed while in the temporary “Gazette” facility before the move back to Ottawa. It can be assumed that after moving the plates from Montreal to Ottawa, it is likely that the plates were re-entered, repaired or otherwise checked to ensure the plates were suitable for printing after such a move. In any event, the damage to the plate was noticed and fixed as the “Feather in Hair” does not exist in a true grey shade from the 2nd Ottawa printing period.

Known examples

There have been few examples of this flaw found by collectors. I have illustrated below some of the known examples (courtesy of the auction houses as noted underneath the images):



#1. Spink, June 2007, ex-Bill Simpson, Dr. Frank ("Jura")



#2. Spink, June 2007, ex-D. Roberts, Dr. Frank ("Jura")



#3. Eastern Auctions, March 2012, ex-Ted Nixon



#4. Eastern Auctions, October 2012



#5. Eastern Auctions, October 2012



#6. Newly found example

Now that the plate position of the plate flaw is known, we should all be on the lookout for right imprint pieces of the 5¢ value. Who will be the first one to find it mint or on cover? I urge collectors who have more information to share about this plate flaw, the plate imprints (especially imperf plate imprints) or illustrations of other examples (I am willing to maintain and update census) to contact me at guillaume@vadeboncoeur.ca.

References:

BNA Topics, July-August 1951, volume 8, number 7, whole no. 82, p.190-191.

The Small Queens of Canada, John Hillson, Second Revised Edition,, 1989, p.61.

Constant Plate Varieties of the Canada Small Queens, Hans Reiche and Mike Sendbuehler, Third Revised Edition, 1991, p.74.

Canada's Postage Stamps of the Small Queen Era, 1870-1897, John Hillson and J. Edward Nixon, 2008, p.145.

Re-entry Portrait Doubling on a 5 Cent Edward

By Scott Robinson



The typical re-entry exhibits doubling where the darkest printed points in the design are misaligned slightly so that they print where there should be no ink. In most minor re-entries this results in slight doubling of the frame lines into the margins of the stamp. More significant major re-entries usually have portions of the solid colour around reverse text printing within the text so that white text areas have various dots and lines appearing within them. Since the portrait area of most stamps has a fairly even dispersion of printed details, it is rare that the portrait shows much evidence of doubling.

The 5¢ King Edward VII stamp (Sc #91) is known for a number of re-entries and retouches. However, it is my opinion that the re-entry at position 27 of the left pane on plate 4 (Unitrade #91iv) has never received the acclaim it deserves for some of its startling doubling in the portrait. This misplaced entry shows the remains of a misplaced image that is almost a millimeter above the final stamp image. The doubling is most evident through the centre portion of the stamp. The most obvious evidence for this is the strong doubling (1) of the upper frame line including part of the curved frame junction into the upper margin of the stamp. There is also the usual marks in most of the lettering but particularly in the central "ADA POS" section (2) of CANADA POST. These aspects of the stamp are mentioned and pictured by Ralph Trimble at re-entries.com and not coincidentally in the latest Unitrade catalogues. George C. Marler, in his excellent treatise on this issue, *The Edward VII Issue of Canada*, only shows an image of the top half of the stamp, although he adds mention of the line (3) in the inner white oval below "POS" and doubling (4) that appears with the numerals in the value tablets on both sides of the stamp.

What amazes me is how the significant doubling in the portrait area of this stamp is never mentioned. In the King's coronation robe, each of the ermine tails shows significant sharp upward doubling (5) as does the top of the circular tie/ornament (6) in the center of the robe. Additional lines are visible in the collar and the diagonal lines of the left-side of the collar appear strongly doubled in the King's beard (7) just above. There are other minor examples of doubling throughout the King's portrait with the most significant being the doubling of the arc of his nostril (8) into the center part of the nose.

Finally, it should be noted that this stamp includes the speckled margins that are found on many copies of the 5¢ Edward. Marler has concluded that these "spotted margins" are indeed constant although they seem to be caused by a "deterioration of the plates" since they are not present on the plate proofs.

I believe that the significant doubling in the portrait area of this stamp makes it a most significant major misplaced re-entry that deserves a little more love with collectors and in the philatelic literature. I hope this article can help in that respect. (Image on next page)



Image provided by Paul Chiles of The Stamp Fridge.

References:

2015 The Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps, Ed. D. Robin Harris, The Unitrade Press, page 91.

The Edward VII Issue of Canada, George C. Marler, The National Postal Museum, 1975, pages 161-73.

Ralph Trimble, www.re-entries.com