

Dots and Scratches

Re-entries and Constant Plate Varieties

Study Group of the BNAPS
Edited by Michael D. Smith



"Feather in Hair"
Variety
Unitrade #38iv
Montreal Plate of 200, Pane ?, Position 60

Dots and Scratches

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FROM YOUR EDITOR

May I present the 3rd issue of Dots and Scratches for this year. ORAPEX 2016 proved to be a very fun event again this year. Many of our readership were able to attend and many reported finding interesting Items at the dealer tables. I present a find I made in the article "An Update on the One Cent Decimal E-flaw" as I found an interesting vertical pair to share.

Many of us are sharing information through e-mail and this is broadening our knowledge and bringing new information to light. This has brought about more discoveries and Scott Robinson writes about one such incident in his article "Finding a Little-Known Variety on the 10-cent Albert Stamp".

Jimi Langlois found two nice re-entries on the 3-cent Large Queen and shares these with us. Scott Robinson furnished the text and Jimi the stamp images. One of the re-entries is apparently a new discovery.

Another article developed through sharing has images from many contributors. I sent out an e-mail of a flaw on 3-cent Small Queen that generated several similar images of flaws that I feel may be related. You will see these in the article "3-cent SQ "Hickey" Flaw Heals".

Jim McCormick has contributed another article on plating the 6-cent Small Queen. It presents more information on the similarities of the plates from which this denomination was printed.

Thanks to all of you that have contributed to this newsletter. If anyone wishes to contribute an article about a stamp they have found interesting please feel free to share it with a small write up of your research. I would appreciate hearing from you and having you contribute to the newsletter.

Hope you enjoy this issue.

Mike



Dots and Scratches

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Study Group of the BNAPS

Vol. 3, Number 3 Whole Number 9

Finding a Little-Know Variety on the 10-Cent Albert	Page 4
An Update About the One Cent Decimal E-flaw	Page 6
Two Re-entries on the 3-cent Large Queen	Page 8
3-cent SQ “Hickey” Flaw Heals	Page 10
Two Key Positions on the Six Cents “A” Plate	Page 15

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Finding a Little-Know Variety on the 10-Cent Albert

By Scott Robinson, FlySpecker.com

Readers of this newsletter may have noticed that your editor, Michael D. Smith, has a keen eye for finding and identifying constant plate varieties. The stamp shown below is an eBay purchase of Mike's with an interesting story. Back in May, I was browsing through Geoffrey Whitworth's *The First Decimal Issue of Canada 1859-68* when an interesting variety caught my attention. This publication is one of my favourites and I thought it might be interesting to try to match up some of the varieties described in the book that I had not seen with some scans I have of plate proofs. A diagram by Mr. Whitworth for plate position 97 of the 10-cent Prince Albert stamp showed a before-and-after illustration for what looked like a mild short entry in the bottom right corner of the stamp that is later corrected. The description of this position in the text on the previous page sounded a little more enticing. Whitworth wrote, "*The south east corner retouch. When the plate was made the south east corner of this position must have shown a marked short entry. This, and the inner frame line at the east side were recut by hand prior to the pulling of the black proofs. This variety was constant until order 17a when the repair to the plate made the hachuring normal, but still left a strong inner frame line.*" A quick review of my plate proof references revealed that there was indeed quite a noticeable retouch on an early proof that was mostly corrected on the later proof.

Like many variety collectors, I will occasionally send a tip to my collecting friends about a possible online auction bargain or a new variety I have noticed that they should look out for. After emailing an image of the early proof scan with the variety highlighted to some of my fellow variety specialists, I was shocked to get a reply from Michael D. Smith only a few hours later informing me that he had just found and purchased a copy on eBay! Apparently "Eagle-Eye Mike" had spotted the variety on the second page of his eBay search despite an auction image that was considerably less than high resolution. Although Mike's stamp (Fig. 1) is not a very sharp printing, it does show how a weak area at the bottom right corner has been retouched resulting in some thickening to several of the horizontal and vertical crosshatching lines and to the outer frame line.



Evidence of short entry

Hand retouch of crosshatching and bottom frame line

Fig. 1

Shown below (Fig. 2) is a close-up of the retouch on Mike's stamp followed by the early plate proof and finally the later proof showing the repaired state of position 97. Notice that the inner frame line is not actually stronger in the earlier retouched state as mentioned by Whitworth. It is in fact the outer frame line (particularly at the right bottom) that has been strengthened by the retouch and that remains in the later repaired version.



Fig. 2

So a little teamwork resulted in a nice find that I was pleased to add to my FlySpecker.com website. The timing of the plate repair to this retouch means that the variety exists at position 97 on almost half of the total sheets printed for this issue. Hopefully this article will help another collector locate this little-known variety, but not before I find one for my own collection!

References and Credits:

The First Decimal Issue of Canada 1859-68, Geoffrey Whitworth, The Royal Philatelic Society, 1966, pages 76-77.

Stamp images adapted from a scan courtesy of Michael D. Smith.

Proof images adapted from scans courtesy of John Jamieson, Saskatoon Stamp Centre.

An Update About the One Cent Decimal E-flaw

By Michael D. Smith

At ORAPEX 2016 a nice vertical pair from positions 54 and 64 of the One Cent Decimal with E-flaw was found in a dealers stock (Fig. 1). The E-flaw is hard to see but the upper right frame line extension from position 54 is visible (Figs. 1 and 2). This feature had me taking a close look at the E in CENT to see if I could see the flaw and it is discernible (Fig. 3).

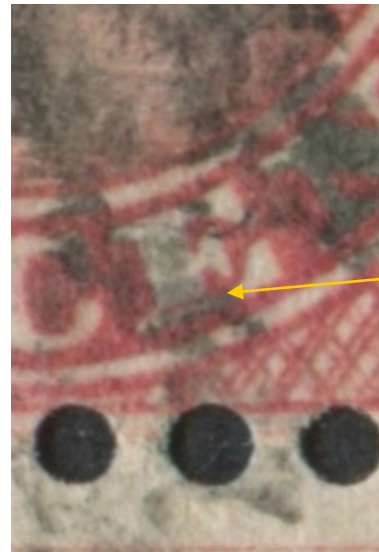


Fig.1



Arrow points to extended frame.

Fig. 2



Arrow points to E-flaw which can just be seen under the cancellation.

Fig. 3



No E-flaw is present on position 64.

Fig. 4

Figures 1 and 4 on the previous page show there is no trace of an E-flaw on stamp position 64. In my presentation at BNAPEX 2015 Re-entry Study Group Meeting, I stated some of my E-flaw copies were from position 64. I have decided now that they are position 44 copies. I will be working on a revision of the written presentation shortly and will distribute it when completed.

CONCLUSION:

With the new information from this pair I feel that the E-flaw was only present on positions 34, 44, and 54. I hope some day someone will find a vertical strip of the fourth column with E-flaws present or finds multiples that would allow the reconstruction of the fourth column so this can definitely be verified. Even a proof strip would be nice to find. Unitrade only lists the position of the E-flaw as position 34. Whitworth may well have seen such a multiple as his latest information given in *CANADIAN STAMP HANDBOOKS* edited by Michael Milos, 1982 states that "Plate flaw No. 2 is a transfer roll flaw showing on positions 34, 44, 54 and 64." If this is true then the E-flaw at position 64 was repaired before the one on position 54 as there is no trace of it on the bottom stamp of this pair. This could be possible as we know the E-flaw at position 54 was repaired because copies of the extended frame line from that position exist without the E-flaw. See Dots and Scratches #8 article "One Cent Decimal With Whitworth's Flaws 2 and 6" for information on the E flaw at position 54.

REFERENCES:

Canadian Stamp Handbooks, edited by Michael Milos, 1982, The First Cents Issue 1859-1868, Geoffrey Whitworth.

2016 Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps, Ed. D. Robin Harris, The Unitrade Press, pg. 43.

BNAPEX 2015 Re-entry and Constant Plate Variety Study Group Presentation, *Whitworth's Plate Flaws on the One Cent Decimal Issue*, Michael D. Smith.

Dots and Scratches Newsletter of the Re-entry and Constant Plate Variety Study Group, Vol.3, No.2, Whole No.8, April 2, 2016, *One Cent Decimal with Whitworth's Flaws 2 and 6*, Michael D. Smith.

The First Decimal Issue of Canada, 1859-68, Geoffrey Whitworth, The Royal Philatelic Society, London, White Crescent Press Ltd, Luton, Bedfordshire, 1966.

Two Re-entries on the 3-cent Large Queen

Images courtesy of Jimi Langlois
Text courtesy of Scott Robinson - flyspecker.com

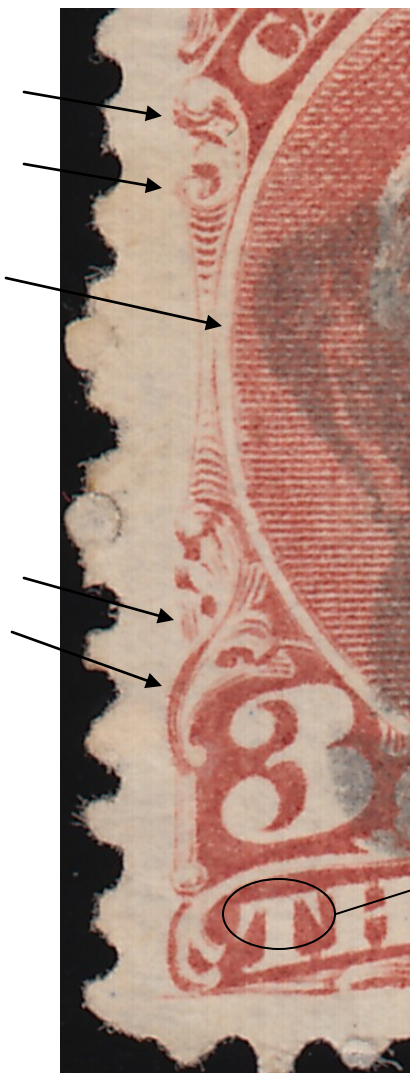


Fig. 3



Fig. 1

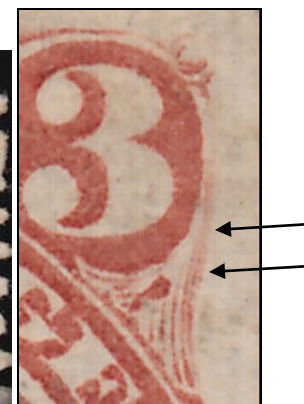


Fig. 2



Fig. 4

Most significant feature is the doubling under the cross bar of "T" of THREE

Figure 1 shows a nice twisted re-entry reported by Jimi Langlois, who has two copies proving its constancy. Like several re-entries on this stamp, the top right side shows rightward doubling in the curved lines to the lower right of the top "3" value (Fig. 2). However, it is the leftward doubling on the left side of the stamp that provides the highlights of this twisted re-entry. There is doubling of the left edges in most of the left frame lines and ornamentation (Fig. 3). This is strongest to the left of the lower left "3" value, but also shows in the curved ornamentation above the middle of the stamp and very slightly to the inner circular portrait frame behind the Queen's hair bun. A distinct highlight of this re-entry is the doubling of the "T" in "THREE" that shows extra points beneath the horizontal arms at top (Fig. 4). This stamp does not appear to show a position dot in the lower left corner, indicating that it likely comes from the first column of the sheet, although there is evidence of an un-erased guideline at the bottom that protrudes just into the left margin.

Another re-entry Jimi shares with us is on the next page.

Illustrated below (Fig. 5) is a good example of one of the re-entries reported by Horace W. Harrison in his 1961 *Maple Leaves* article. The key element to look for is the fairly sharp doubling of the right borders and ornamentation including the curved lines to the lower right of the top "3" value (Fig. 6, a), the outer arc-shaped frame line near the middle of the stamp (Fig. 6, b), and each of the curved ornaments above and below the middle frame line (Fig. 6, c). There are also subtler signs of doubling throughout the stamp including compression of several of the letters that is most obvious with the shortened appearance at the top of the "TS" in "CENTS" (Fig. 6, d). Harrison notes in his article that there are several other right side re-entries similar to this one but showing less significant doubling or only some of the features displayed for this position.



Fig. 5

REFERENCES:

Scott Robinson, FlySpecker.com.

Constant Varieties of the 1868 Issue of Canada, Horace W, Harrison, *Maple Leaves*, Journal of the Canadian Philatelic Society of Great Britain, Vol. 9, No. 1, Whole No. 73, October 1961.

Fig. 6

3-cent SQ “Hickey” Flaw Heals

By Michael D. Smith

In the next few pages I would like to present a theory about a plate flaw and its appearance as it may be affected by plate wear as it slowly disappears. I refer to this flaw as the “Hickey” on the Queen’s neck. I think there is enough evidence to support this theory but the stamps could also be from different positions. I leave it to my fellow collectors to draw their own conclusions. If anyone has evidence to the contrary please send it along for inclusion in a future Dots and Scratches.

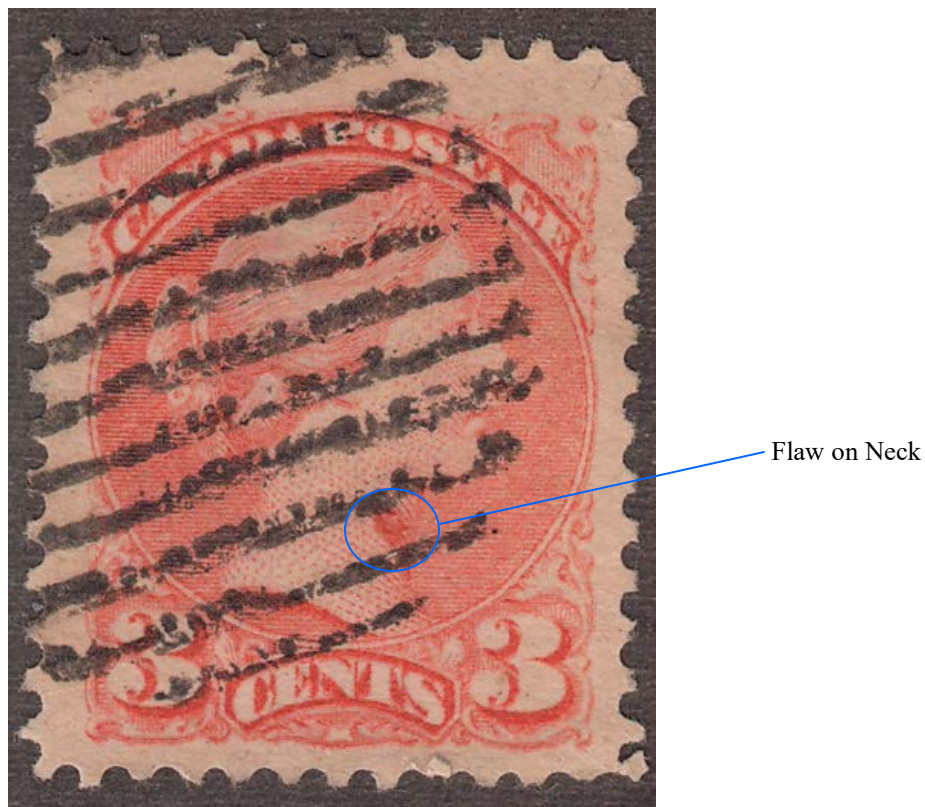


Fig. 1

Image courtesy of Guy Jeffery

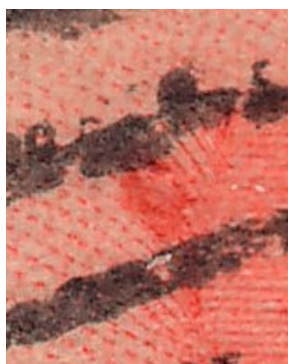


Fig. 2

The stamp in figure 1 and the enlargement shown in figure 2 show a large flaw located in the front center of the Queen’s neck. This is an early example of the flaw and it is large and well defined.

The next stamp (Fig. 3) is dated MR 16, 94. It shows a flaw in the same location but it is reduced and looks to be two separate marks. The reduction in size is believed to be due to plate wear..



Flaw looks like two marks.

Fig. 3
Image courtesy of Earl Noss



Fig. 4

A comparison of figure 2 on the previous page and figure 4 above one can see similarities in these flaws. This seems to indicate that a portion of the original flaw may have worn away.

The first stamp (Fig. 5) is dated MY 3, 94 and could be a later printing than the previous image in Figure 4. The stamp in figure 6 appears to show the same state of the flaw so these two stamps were probably from the same or very close printings.



Fig. 5
Image courtesy of Guy Jeffery



Fig. 6
Image courtesy of Michael Smith



Fig. 7



Fig. 8

The flaw at this state looks similar to a reversed 7 and has been reduced even further by wear on the plate. Figures 7 and 8 show the flaw detail at this state.

The hickey is healing nicely. We now have a single mark on the neck. There is a small area under this mark that remains unprinted (Figs. 9 and 10). This stamp is dated JU 2?, 94.



Fig. 9
Image courtesy of Earl Noss



Fig. 10

Here we have the almost completely healed hickey as just a small mark remains. Figure 11 with '95 year cancellation seems to have the mark at a slightly different size and direction of angle than Figure 12 dated MY 20, 96. They are still in the same relative position and may have just taken the inking of the plate differently. See the detail images Figures 13 and 14 for a better look.



Fig. 11
Image courtesy of Guy Jeffery



Fig. 12
Image courtesy of Guy Jeffery

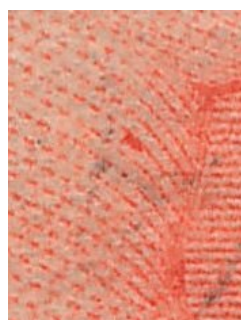


Fig. 13

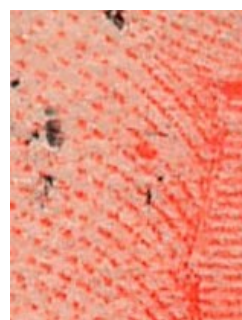


Fig. 14

Although I can't prove these flaws are from the same plate and or position they make an interesting and fun group, I feel that they are the same flaw because of their relative position on the stamps. Even if they are not from the same flaw it still makes a great presentation and story. I wonder who gave the Queen a HICKEY???

Two Key Positions on the Six Cents “A” Plate

By Jim McCormick (jim@jimmc.ca)

A few months back I wrote about the 6 cent Small Queen issue, and provided several correlations between the early printings from what has been called the “1871” plate, and the late printings from the “A” plate. These correlations strongly suggest that the original plate from 1871 went through several states of repair and was actually in use over a span of 25 years! During the initial entry of the plate, a first guide dot appeared in the lower left corner of the stamp design to its right. During the first repair, a second guide dot appeared to the left of the first. During the second major repair, a third guide dot appeared to the right of the first. During the final repair, a faint fourth dot appeared in a few positions. The lack of a third guide dot in the second column of the sheet suggests that the first column was not re-entered during the second repair.

The guide dots are valuable for determining the plate position of stamps. Ralph Trimble's web site shows blow-up images for each stamp from a full sheet in the final state of the “A” plate. From the same scan of the sheet, I produced a 10x10 “map” (see figure 1 below) showing the bottom left corner of each stamp including the guide dots on a single page. It also shows the guide dots in the right selvedge with the sheet imprint. You may send me an email to request a higher resolution copy suitable for printing. I must give credit to Jim Watt for producing a similar “map” decades ago from actual photographs. I recreated his work, but used a high quality scan (courtesy of Mr. Trimble) and the photo editing technology of today to produce a higher resolution image.

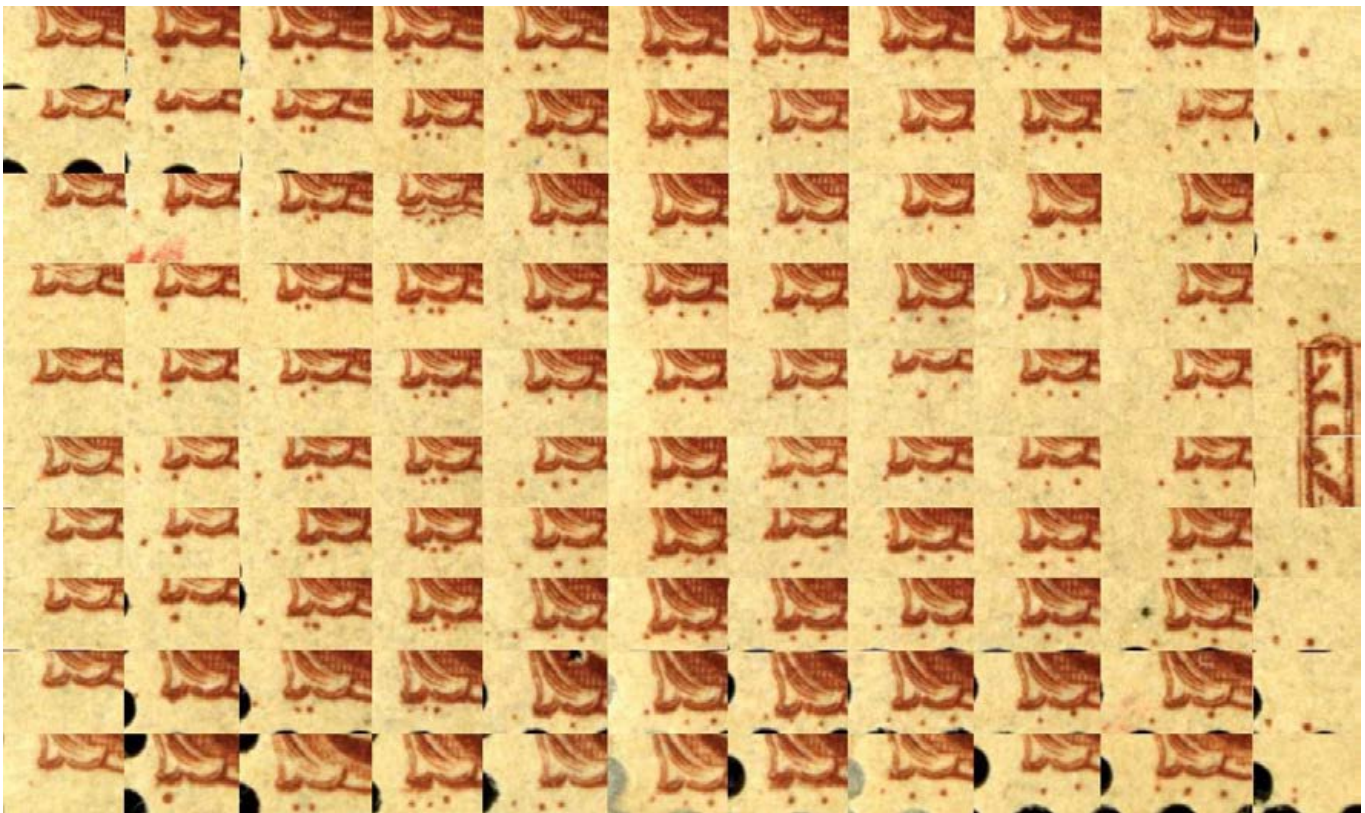


Figure 1:
guide dot
map

The different plate states and observed date range can be summarized as follows:

- 1-dot state (the middle of the three) between 1872 and early-1874 (yellow brown).
- 2-dot state (the left dot appeared) between mid-1874 and 1884 (yellow brown).
- 3-dot state (the right dot appeared) between mid-1884 and early 1892 (yellow brown).
- repaired 3-dot state from mid-1894 through to the end of printing (red brown).

During the major repairs, the stamp designs sometimes shifted upwards. This was most evident during the third major repair in 1884, when most stamps shifted up significantly and a little to the right. When comparing stamps from known plate positions but different plate states, it gives the false impression that the guide dots travelled downwards, while rather the guide dots remained fixed and the stamp design travelled upwards. How did the guide dots remain while the stamp designs moved? The best theory we have is the “deep hole” theory where guide dots made a deeper impression in the plate than the stamp designs.

Progression of Plate Position 10 – A Strong Re-entry

Plate position 10 shows a re-entry into the top part of the stamp design in all four states. Each attempt at repair improved upon the previous, but left traces of the previous entries behind.

Brigham Auctions was kind to provide a blow-up scan of lot 342 from their April 16, 2016 auction. This upper right corner margin block of 10 is from the 1-dot state and is the key to proving the plate position of the re-entry in its early state.

Figure 2 displays this block of 10 above the same plate positions from the repaired 3-dot state. The “A” was added in the top margin during one of the repairs, although it is unclear exactly if it was present in the 2-dot state. Using the images, the guide dots from the 1-dot state for all positions were simultaneously transposed just below the middle of the three guide dots from the repaired 3-dot state. Zoom in on the picture to see how the middle dots on the bottom image match perfectly with the transposed yellow-brown dots.

Figure 3 shows examples of position 10 from all plate states. The top and bottom of each stamp has been blown up to show the re-entry and the guide dots. Descriptions are as follows:

1-dot state:

- Single guide dot is close to the bottom frame line
- Strong twisted re-entry showing doubling at top left and right frame lines, and through “DAPOST”

2-dot state:

- Second guide dot added to the left of the first.
- Stamp design shifted up giving the impression that the first guide dot shifted down.
- Remnants of re-entry still appear in “D P O T” and new marking in “G”
- Left / right frame line doubling has been repaired

3-dot state:

- Third guide dot added close to the right of the first guide dot.
- Stamp design shifted up slightly again, leaving remnants of the previous stamp's bottom frame line
- Remnants of the re-entry still appear in “D P O T G”

repaired 3-dot state:

- Three guide dots remain the same as the previous state
- Stamp design shifted up and to the left.
- Remnant of the previous state position is visible in the bottom right corner
- Remnants of the re-entry in are barely visible in “PO T”
- Over rocking of the transfer role created the “minor 5c on 6c” entry in position 20



Figure 2: Comparison of pp 6-10/16-20 between 1-dot and repaired 3-dot states



Figure 3 - Position 10 re-entry in each of the four plate states

Progression of Plate Position 2 – “Dot in P” variety

Plate position 2 is another important one showing the “dot in P” variety through all four states. Guillaume Vadeboncoeur allowed me to scan his 1-dot state top left margin block of 6. This block is key for confirming that the “Dot in P” variety exists in plate position 2 from the early 1-dot state.

The theory is that the “Dot in P” is related to the SIX CENTS counter in the top left margin of the sheet.

Figure 5 on the next page shows a comparison of Guillaume's special block to the same plate positions from the late repaired 3-dot state. I suggest zooming in on the image to see the subtle markings on the image.

There are several markings that are constant across the plate states:

- The SIX CENTS counter is visible in both the 1-dot and repaired 3-dot states. Only a small hint of the shading remains in the late printing due to plate wear.
- A faint dot is present near the lower left corner of the SIX CENTS counter. That dot appears in both the 1-dot and the repaired 3-dot states.
- The “Dot in P”, although it shifts upwards suggesting the SIX CENTS counter may have been re-entered.
- The guide dots in the lower left corner of the stamp design.
- There is a dot in the margin above the “O” from “POSTAGE” that appears in all states. This dot is often removed by perforations.

The letter “R” was added at some point to indicate that the plate was repaired. It is present in the yellow brown 3-dot state (see figure 4). It remains unknown if the “R” was present in the 2-dot state. If a top margin block showing counter in the 2-dot state exists, someone please bring it forth!



Figure 4 - Position 2, Dot in P, in 3-dot state block/6



Figure 5: Comparison of pp 1-3/11-13 between 1-dot and repaired 3-dot states

“Dot in P” variety (continued)

Figure 6 shows examples of of position 2 from five different states of the plate. This includes two from the 2-dot state (the later of the two with a significant re-entry). The top and bottom of each stamp has been blown up to show the transition between each state. Descriptions are as follows:

1-dot state:

- Large single guide dot is close to the bottom frame line.
- Strong dot in the P.
- Dot in margin above the O (partially obscured by perforation).

2-dot state (initial):

- Second guide dot added to the left of the first.
- Dot in the P is still strong, but shrinks a little in size giving the appearance that it moved upwards slightly.
- Dot in margin above the O remains (partially obscured by perforation).
- Stamp perforations measure 11.5x12 (only the 1-dot and 2-dot states exist with this perforation).

2-dot state (re-entered):

- Position is re-entered slightly higher, leaving doubling of the complete lower frame line.
- Dot in the P weakens and travels upwards slightly. Possibly the SIX CENTS counter was re-entered at the same time resulting in the upwards shift of this dot.
- Dot in margin above the O is completely hidden by perforation.
- Stamp perforations measure 11.5x12.

3-dot state:

- The two guide dots and position of stamp design remain unchanged (column 2 does not gain a 3rd dot).
- The horizontal perforations measure 12.1, which exists from the late 1880's printing (3-dot). Should anyone doubt this one, then the 3-dot state block/6 displayed in figure 4 can be examined.
- Doubling in lower left frame line has become weak.
- Dot in P remains as before in the 2-dot re-entered state.
- Dot in margin above the O remains.

repaired 3-dot state:

- The two guide dots remain unchanged
- Stamp design shifted up slightly (typical for most positions in this plate state)
- Dot in P shifts up slightly, possibly due to re-entry of the SIX CENTS counter again (although that does not explain the worn shading around the counter)
- Dot in margin above the O remains.



Figure 6 - Position 2 progression through 5 states

Addendum: 25 years for the A Plate - Myth or Fact?

After completing my draft article, I read with interest John Hillson's recent write-up "The Small Queens Six Cents – The Enduring Myth" in the 8th edition of Dots And Scratches. So the debate continues on whether or not a single plate was responsible for the majority of the 6 cent printings. I will address here several points of contention raised by his article.

To start, there were remarks about plate positions 2 and 10, which I have already addressed by showing the movement of the stamp designs (with fixed guide dots) with each major plate repair.

There was concern that a single plate of 100 could produce more than 25 million stamps between 1872 and 1890, and then more during the 2nd Ottawa printing. The numbers in the table below demonstrate that each of the 1 cent and 3 cent plates were just as heavily used.

Denomination	Total number of stamps printed	# plates with 100 impressions	# plates with 200 impressions	Total number of design impressions	Number of stamps produced per design impression (e.g., 701.7 million divided by 2600)
1 cent	701.7 million	4	11	2600	270000
3 cent	1.35 billion	7	17	4100	329000
6 cent "A" plate	27 million (estimated)	1	0	100	270000
6 cent "B/C" plate	1.5 million (estimated)	0	1	200	7500

The question was raised about the true plate position for the early printing "major re-entry". Position 67 can be confirmed from lot 154 in the Daniel Cantor Small Queens sale by Sparks Auctions in November 2015. The strip/4 displayed in figure 7 shows the bottom tip of the imprint in the margin, identifying the piece belonging to positions 67-70, unequivocally proving that the major re-entry belongs to position 67. The sharp upwards shift in the stamp design relative to its neighbors exists in both the first Ottawa printings (1-dot state) and the final repaired 3-dot state.



Fig. 7

The point was made that re-entries tend to survive through the life a plate, with references to the 5 cent Beaver and the Penny Black. However it is clear that the 6 cent major re-entry was repaired, as described on Ralph Trimble's web site, www.re-entries.com. It shows a cover bearing positions 66-67 dated March 1874 showing very fine remnants of the major re-entry. Certainly all traces would be gone after additional plate wear and repair.

The claim was made that a new plate in 1872 or 1873 was created with the check letter "A" added to distinguish it from two earlier plates. Is there evidence of the "A" check letter being present on any piece in the 2-dot state? If so, then please bring it forth. Without evidence, the claim is speculation. I will speculate that the "A" check letter was added to the plate in the 1880's at the time when the B/C plate of 200 subjects was created.

A beautiful early six cent strip of 3 was displayed clearly dated HAMILTON JY 8 75, with the claim that it is from the "A" plate and showing a third guide dot in the right most stamp. I suggest to the readers to zoom in on the blow-up image with three arrows pointing to dots. The middle of the three is a black dot, part of the cancellation! There are only two dots on that stamp as should be expected given the third dot state did not appear until 1884. Using the guide dot map, I am reasonably certain that the three are from positions 61-63. The guide dot map also shows the different place where the third dot would be if it were from a much later printing.

A reference was made to my article "More on Plating the 6 cent Small Queen" in Dots and Scratches #7, which compares two blocks/10 from the early and late printings. It was noted that on the late printing, the stamp impressions are further from the bottom imprint than on the early printing. Excellent point! Upon creation of the 3-dot state, most of the stamp impressions moved up and a little to the right. But the guide dots remain fixed in position, and show equal distance to the imprint when comparing early and late printings.

A nice 2-dot state strip of 4 was displayed with cork cancels. The second stamp from the left displays a single guide dot, and an upwards shift in the stamp design. It was stated that this is the late state of the 1871 plate. But rather, let's use the guide dot map to plate it. The two dots on each stamp align perfectly with positions 47-50 on the guide dot map. Position 48 shows only one guide dot because the second is hidden right in the bottom left corner of the stamp design. That second guide dot is revealed in the 3-dot state when the stamp design shifts upwards (and slightly to the right).

Wrap-up

Credit goes to Dr. Jim Watt and Glenn Archer for first documenting the relationship between the single guide dot from the early printings and the middle of the three guide dots from later printings. We now have a technique for plating large multiples of the 1-dot and 2-dot states.

My gratitude goes to Guillaume Vadeboncoeur for his thoughts and for allowing me to scan many important multiples of his early printing 6 cent material.

Enjoy the guide dot map and feel free to send me scans of large 6 cent blocks, especially from the 2-dot state. I will enjoy them, and help you plate them.

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