

Dots & Scratches

Re-entries and Constant Plate Varieties

Study Group of BNAPS



Something Missing?

This lovely block of ten purple 2¢ Victoria Numerals was shared by Peter Spencer, author of numerous BNAPS books on the Victoria Numeral issue. This block is from the top centre of the left pane from plate 2.

What makes this block interesting to plate variety collectors is not an extra mark or plate scratch, but something that is actually missing. Can you spot the missing element that would normally be associated with this block? See page 31 for more information.

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My Two Cents – From Your Editor

Welcome to the final edition of Dots & Scratches with me as your editor. For the last six months I have struggled with some very difficult family issues related to the declining health of my elderly parents. The pressure on my time has been unrelenting and I have not been able to find the hours to work on our newsletter. This continuing issue has also been complicated by some unexpected competitiveness and a lack of cooperation with another editor in sharing content that overlaps between our newsletters. So, I have decided to step down as editor of Dots & Scratches in the hope that another study group member will have the time and energy to dedicate to it that it deserves. It has been my honour and privilege to edit this newsletter for you for the past few years. Thank you to everyone who has contributed articles, ideas, or scans of interesting re-entries and constant plate varieties. Thanks also to Deveney Stamps Ltd. for sponsoring the newsletter and enabling me to distribute it without requiring membership dues for our study group.

In This Issue

This issue is chock-full of new information and plate varieties. It begins with another article from John Breukelaar highlighting additional constant plate varieties he has discovered on the Nova Scotia 8½ Cent Queen Victoria issue from 1860.

Next up is an article from your editor about Canada's first postage stamp, the Three Penny Beaver. This in-depth article presents new information linking "N-flaws" that are sometimes seen on the left side of the stamp with the well-known transfer roll crack that normally appears across the right side of the stamp.

In this month's *Pagination* column, I share a few of my own custom album pages for displaying constant plate varieties.

Also included is our latest *Show & Share* featuring some interesting varieties contributed by Earl Noss, Arnie Janson, and Jim McCormick. Several of these varieties are newly reported or published with an image for the first time.

We close with details of our cover image from Peter Spencer showing a plate block with a missing variety.

To all my fellow collectors and seekers of the answer to the ultimate question of life, the universe, and everything, I say so long and thanks for all the fish.



More Constant Plate Varieties on the Nova Scotia 8½¢ Queen Victoria

By John Breukelaar BNAPS, ASNP

In my last article in the previous issue of Dots & Scratches, I discussed some original findings of constant plate varieties (CPVs) on the Nova Scotia 8½ Cent Queen Victoria. I have, since then, acquired three more complete sheets of this stamp and can report that these sheets support my previous work and have provided some new information as well.

In this article, I would like to report on a few more CPVs and comment on some work done by Nicholas Argenti and Ralph E. Trimble. I will discuss their notes on the plate position 34, 44 and 92 stamps. To do so with increased precision, I will use the Thirkell Position Finder with a slight addition. I have divided each grid square into nine smaller squares as shown in figure 1. This allows me to be more precise in stating the location on the stamp design.

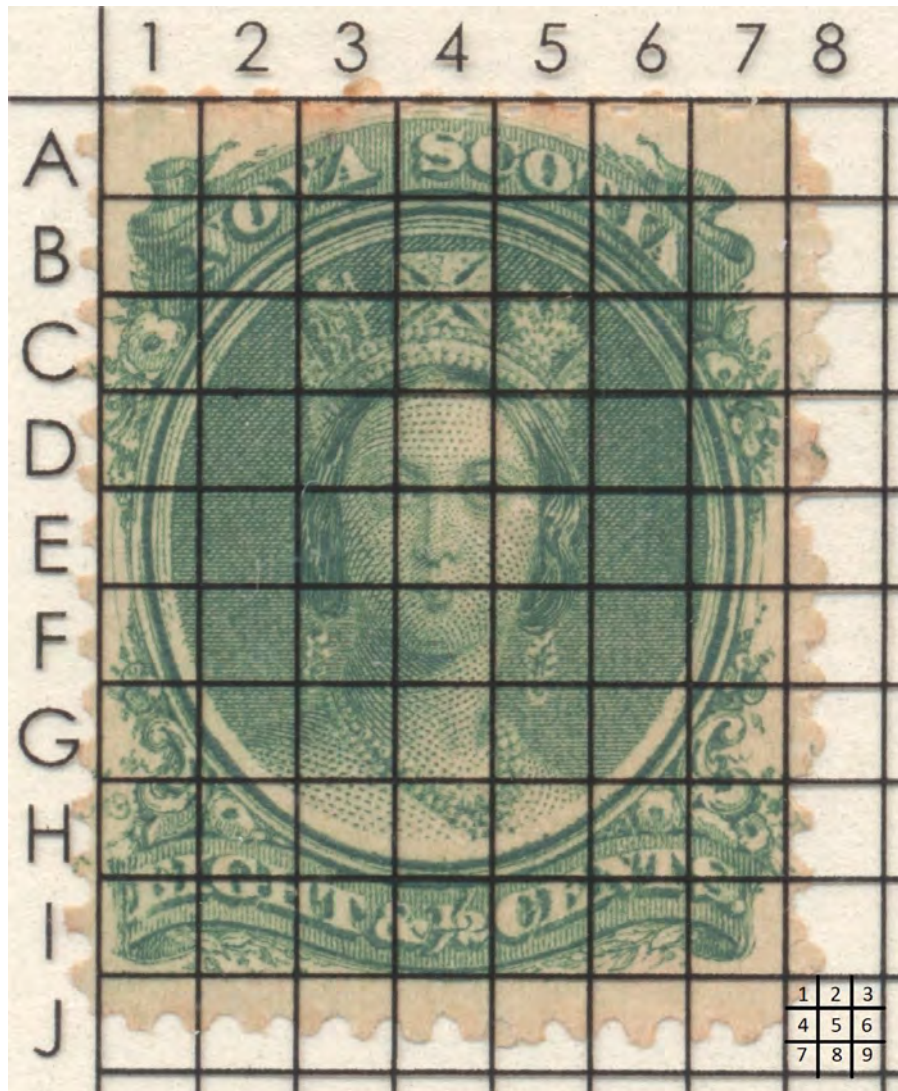


Figure 1: The appropriate position (intersection of the 3-4 line and D-E line at the pupil of the left eye) for using the Thirkell Position Finder (TPF) for locating the varieties reported in this article. Note the example at bottom right of how each TPF square is sub-divided into nine smaller squares.

Varieties from Plate Positions 34, 44 and 43

Figure 2, on the following page, shows a pair of stamps from positions 34 and 44 with several constant marks indicated in yellow. Argenti mentions the curved marks in the bottom margin of position 34 at 34J1.5 and 34J7.3 which Trimble (at re-entries.com) identifies as part of a misplaced entry. Trimble also discusses some marks on stamp 44. I will go into a little more detail. I use an enlarged transparency of the stamp image that I can overlay over enlarged images of the stamps on my computer screen. Doing this allows me to detect marks from constant plate varieties and to identify the source of where these marks might be doubled from in the case of re-entries or misplaced entries.

So, Argenti's two curved broken lines at 34J1.5 and 34J7.3 are likely marks of doubling from parts of the oval at E1.5 and E7.5 of the original design. The additional lines at 34J3.2 and 34J5.2 are part of the hair design of D3 and D5. The whole misplaced entry is rotated clockwise by a few degrees.

For position 44, the curved line at 44E1.2 matches up with the scroll of I1.5. The scar on the nose at 44E4.2 matches the bottom of the number 1 in the fraction at I4.5. The lines on either side of the nose at 44E4.4 and 44E4.6 look like parts of the scroll at I4.8/J4.2. Additional shading lines in the flower at 44D1.7 are consistent with vertical lines in the scroll at I1.1/1.4. The dots at 44B1.1 and 44B1.7 are consistent with the petals sticking out at F1.7 and G1.1. The mark at 44A7.9 could be the petal of F7.5. The curved line at 44E7.5 that goes up to 44E7.1 is consistent with the end of the scroll of I7.5. The small line at 44E5.1 matches the bottom of the C in CENTS. I don't see Trimble's left-side temple mark at 44D3.5 that he mentions on his website for position 44. His "vertical marks in the white oval below the S of SCOTIA" at 44B4.1 and 44B4.2 would be part of the F4.7 design, but I don't see them either on my sheets.

Figure 2 does show a constant plate variety at position 43 indicated in red. It is the smudge at 43A7.8. It shows up on all my reference sheets.

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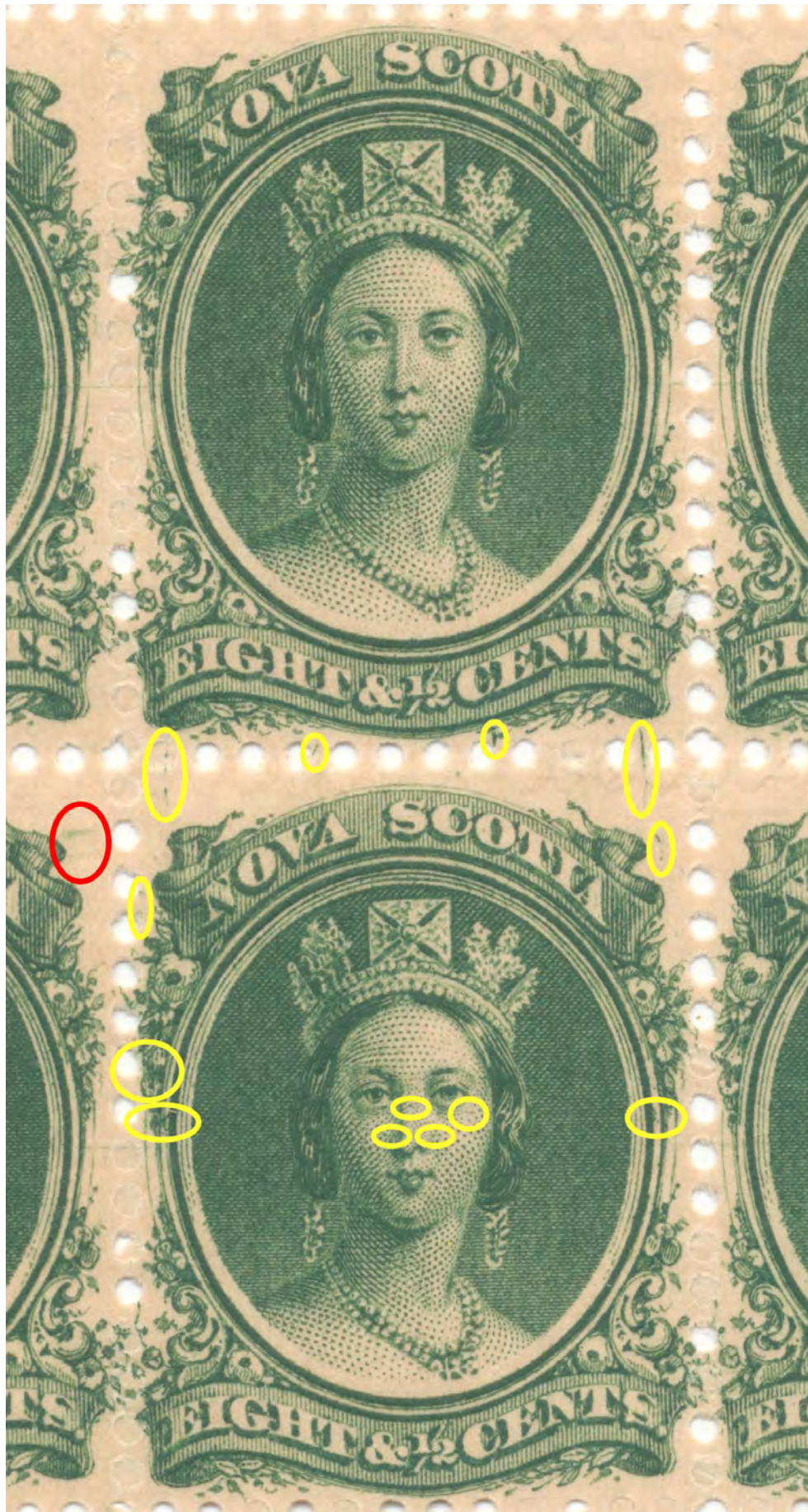


Figure 2: Constant marks from a misplaced entry at positions 34 and 44 are indicated in yellow. An unrelated constant mark from position 43 is also indicated in red.

Varieties from Plate Position 92

For position 92, Argenti reported a small vertical dash in the I of EIGHT. Trimble shows that the curves at 92E8, 92H4.8, 92B6.6 and 92C7.6/9 are all consistent with doubling of the oval engraving. This is also clearly visible on my computer screen when my transparency is aligned with the long arc at 92E8. What is new is a prime example of the prediction of the transparency; the small curve at 93I1.7 is part of the scroll of I7.8. It lines up perfectly. There is a small dot at 92J6.3 that is consistent with J5.3. Each of these marks is illustrated in figure 3.

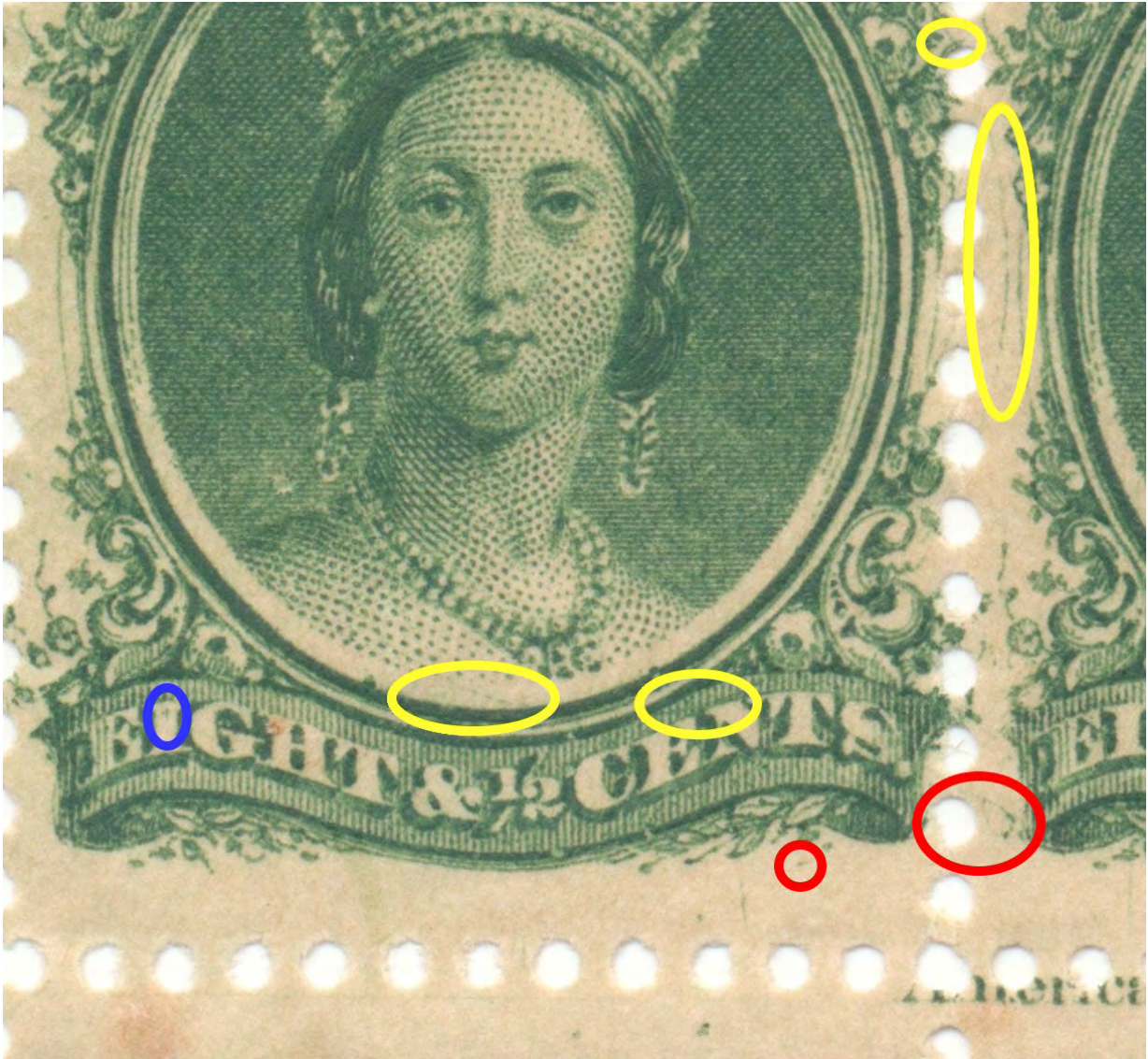


Figure 3: Constant marks from plate position 92 as reported by Argenti indicated in blue, by Trimble in yellow, and by the author in red.

More Varieties from Plate Positions 1, 4, 39, 49, 59, 69 and 79

I will now point out a few new CPVs that I have discovered on my reference sheets. Each of these varieties is shown in the figures below along with a description and their plate position and TPF location.

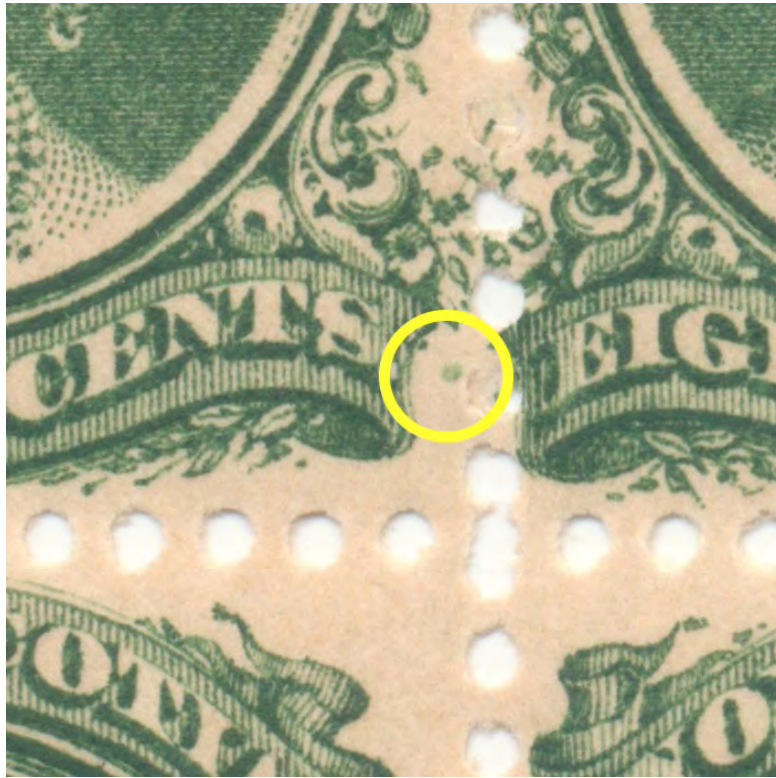


Figure 4: Although Argenti mentions a dot at A1 of plate position 1, he did not identify the additional constant dot at 117.3 illustrated here.



Figure 5: A small constant mark at B1.4 from plate position 4.

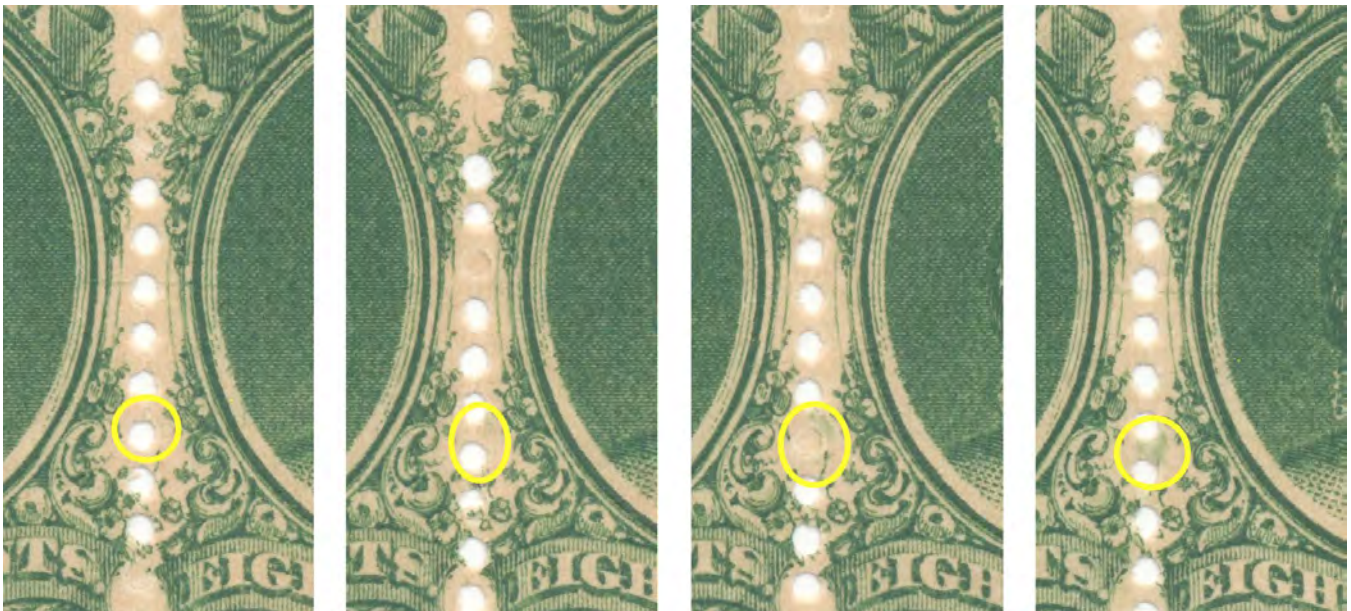


Figure 6: Plate positions 39, 49, 59 and 69 all show a smudge at G1.1. The smudge gets darker as the position number increases. The reason for the change in intensity and then disappearance of the smudge could be associated with a defect on the transfer roll that was discovered and repaired, or with the appearance of some foreign matter that wore off.



Figure 7: A faint but persistent smudge mark at 79D1.7 from plate position 79.

This article has documented constant plate varieties for 12 separate plate positions. My previous article identified 6 plate positions and Argenti notes 12 positions; 2 of which are discussed here. I have a few more to report and have not finished looking yet but I don't think I'm going to find constant plate varieties for all 100 plate positions. In the meantime, I would welcome comments and can be reached at jbreuk3@gmail.com.

References

- *The Postage Stamps of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia*, Nicholas Argenti, The Royal Philatelic Society, 1962 (Also Quarterman Publications Inc., 1976)
- [Re-entries.com](http://re-entries.com): Ralph E. Trimble's visual database of re-entries for Canada, the provinces, USA, and worldwide stamps.

N-flaws and the Transfer Roll Crack on the Three Penny Beaver

By Scott Robinson

The August 2022 newsletter of the BNAPS Pence-Cents Era study group included an interesting article by Michael D. Smith titled *The “N-Flaws” on the 3d Beaver Stamp*. The article updated some previously published information and provided a plated series of close-up views of a smudgy mark that appears on the left-hand side of the stamp in the white oval frames above the “N” of “CANADA”. The mark is particularly interesting because it appears at many different positions on the plate in both the upper and lower panes. Even more remarkable is that the mark looks different and is located slightly differently within the stamp impression at various plate positions. This N-flaw is also semi-constant in that it does not appear at all on some stamps and proofs from positions where it has been documented.

I had never heard of the N-flaw before Mike’s article, but I was determined to study it in a little more detail in an attempt to understand it and possibly explain its origin. This article presents my thinking on the flaw and its relationship to the well-known transfer roll crack that appears to some extent on virtually all clear copies of the 3d Beaver stamp. Note that this article uses “left” and “right” to refer to directions as they would appear on a printed sheet of stamps even when it discusses characteristics of the plate where these directions would be reversed.



*Figure 1: Contemporary black proof of the 3d Beaver clearly showing the famous “transfer roll crack” and a strong “N-flaw”. The inset highlights the location of these elements in red.
Original scan courtesy of Ian Kimmerly at Sparks Auctions.*

Figure 1 shows a contemporary proof of the 3d Beaver that has graced the top of my FlySpecker page for this stamp (www.flyspecker.com/4.html) for more than 7 years. I use this image to illustrate the famous transfer roll crack that shows as a jagged line that passes upward across the body of the beaver and through the flora and “R” below and to the right of the crown. This line splits just below the “P” of “POSTAGE” where it branches into two elements: (1) the leftward part of the line rises through the “P” and flows through the arc line to the right of the crown and out through the upper frame lines, (2) the rightward part of the line passes through “OST” and then follows through the white oval frame lines, the triangular section below the upper right “3” and out through the right frame lines.

The other significant aspect of this proof is that it shows a very clear N-flaw on the left side of the impression. Having never heard of the N-flaw, I had always ignored this smudge mark on the assumption that it was just some extra ink on the proof or an anomaly specific to a single position on the plate.

History of the N-flaw in the Philatelic Press

Descriptions of the N-flaw have appeared in the philatelic press for almost a century. However, these descriptions have usually focused on a few isolated plate positions where the flaws are treated as random plate varieties without any suggestion that they are associated with each other or have a common cause. My 1929 copy of Fred Jarrett's *Stamps of British North America* book/catalogue mentions a smudge or line in or above the "N" of "CANADA" at eleven different plate positions across the two panes (which Jarrett refers to as plates). Like much of Jarrett's work, this information is repeated almost verbatim in various editions of *Holmes Handbook of Canada and British North America*. Very similar details are also provided in the Greene Foundation's 1997 book, *Canada's Pence Era, The Pence Stamps and the Canadian Mail 1851-1859*.

Although variety collectors and Pence specialists may have known about the existence of some of these N-flaws for some time, published information remained scant. Interestingly, Winthrop S. Boggs does not describe any N-flaws at all despite allocating several pages to re-entries and varieties on the 3d Beaver in his classic book on Canadian postage stamps and history. Collectors had to wait until the 21st century for more information to come to light in a series of self-published books on the Three Penny Beaver by Kenneth A. Kershaw. In volume 1 of this series (circa 2009), *Plating the 3d Beaver, the Criteria Used and the Developmental Background*, Kershaw describes how he first came to know of these flaws through some unpublished notes from distinguished stamp collector and researcher Clayton Huff. Kershaw goes on to illustrate 21 plate positions with N-flaws using a combination of Huff drawings and his own stamp scans.

In addition to providing the first published scans of actual N-flaws, the Kershaw book was also the first to explore the likelihood of an association among them and a common cause for how they occurred. Kershaw had been working with later plate proofs that featured the imprints that are believed to have been added in 1857. Since the N-flaws appeared to be quite rare and they did not occur on the plate proofs Kershaw was working with, he surmised that the flaws must have occurred even later in the life of the plate when it was cut into two panes of 100. An image was also provided of a perforated Three Penny Beaver showing an N-flaw as proof that it existed on even the very last printings. He provided a rather elaborate theory for how clamps holding the plate during the cutting process could have caused the flaws to appear at the same location of the stamp design at multiple positions across both panes of the plate. His theory has a number of significant problems in my opinion.

Since Kershaw's works on the Three Penny Beaver were self-published in very limited quantities, most collectors remained unaware of the N-flaws. The Michael D. Smith 2022 article mentioned earlier is illuminating in several respects. In addition to bringing the N-flaws to the attention of a wider audience, Mike also provides images of N-flaws on stamps or proofs for 29 separate plate positions. Some of these are admittedly faint and subjective.



Figure 2: N-flaws with plate position from a pane B proof before imprints were added.
Original scan courtesy of Eastern Auctions Ltd.

Even more importantly, Mike’s article provides conclusive proof that the N-flaw exists on stamps and proofs from much earlier in the printing of this stamp. He provides examples of copies showing the N-flaw from specific marginal plate positions where the imprints that should be visible from late printings are clearly not yet on the plate. He also shows images of two copies with N-flaws where the shade and laid paper clearly indicate that they come from the earliest printings. Mike’s findings suggest that it may be the late printings where N-flaws are rare.

In summary, published philatelic articles have shown that:

- The N-flaw has appeared at a minimum of 39 different plate positions (some of these subjective) across the two panes of the plate(s). See the table in figure 3 for a summary of these locations and the philatelic writers who have observed them. The table includes some locations identified by Michael D. Smith since his N-flaw article was published.
- N-flaws can have different strengths and appearances. Even the location of the flaw within the stamp impression can be slightly different from copy to copy.
- All plate positions that have shown N-flaws are also known without any trace of the flaw.
- The flaws have been observed on copies from the earliest printings on laid paper to the final printings with perforated stamps, although evidence of N-flaws on later printings is very scant. Kershaw’s single perforated copy may not be legitimate since many copies of this stamp exist with faked perforations.

These facts are somewhat contradictory and suggest that, although the N-flaws are at least semi-constant and appear in the same general location of the stamp impression, they cannot be caused by a simple flaw on the transfer roll when the plate was laid down. A normal transfer roll flaw would cause the N-flaws to appear more uniform, identically positioned within the stamp impression, and consistent for all plate positions.

Pane B									
		S				S			
		J/S				S			S
					J/K/S			S	S
							S		
					K/S	S		S	J/S
			K/S	S					
				J/S	J/S	K/S			
		J/S		J/K/S		K	K/S		
	K/S			K/S					
					S		K/S		

Pane A									
			K						
	J/K			K	K/S	K/S			
					K/S				
		J/S			K/S	K/S	S		
						K/S			
	J/K			J/K					

J = Jarrett K = Kershaw/Huff S = Smith

Figure 3: Illustration of positions for panes A and B where N-flaws have been reported by Fred Jarrett, Kenneth A. Kershaw/Clayton Huff and Michael D. Smith.

The Famous Three Penny Beaver Transfer Roll Crack

In their classic books, both Jarret and Boggs make mention of what they say has historically been called a “cracked plate”, “flaw”, or “cut” which shows up to a greater or lesser degree on stamps printed from all subjects of the plate. Both authors explain that what appears as a plate crack on stamps is actually the result of damage to the transfer roll impression that is then reproduced at each position of the plate. Jarret refers to this damage as a “crack in the transfer roll” and he describes two such cracks that appear on the 3d Beaver. Boggs’ description and accompanying image links the two cracks into a single T-shaped flaw that he refers to as a “relief flaw” or “relief break”. The flaw is best seen on the early plate proofs printed with black ink of which the proof shown in figure 1 is a great example.

In their 1997 Greene Foundation book about the Pence stamps and era, authors Arfken, Leggett, Firby, and Steinhart discuss the “transfer roll flaw” that they describe as a “crack” in the transfer roll. I notice that this famous flaw is often referred to in recent literature and in my own stamp friends’ correspondence by the Boggs term, “relief break”.

Whatever term is used for the recurring flaw, most authors recognise that the resulting “cracks” observed on printed proofs and stamps are not the typical cracks that are seen on some other stamps of the era. The issue with the T-shaped transfer roll crack is that portions of it tend to show up as missing ink (typically below the upper right “3” to where it exits the right frame lines) and other portions show up as extra ink (typically the marks in “POST”). The largest and often most prominent element of the scratch (that typically passes upward across the body of the beaver to the “P” of “POSTAGE”) can show up as a jagged line of both missing ink and extra ink at the same time. Figure 4 highlights these various areas of missing and extra ink on a single proof.

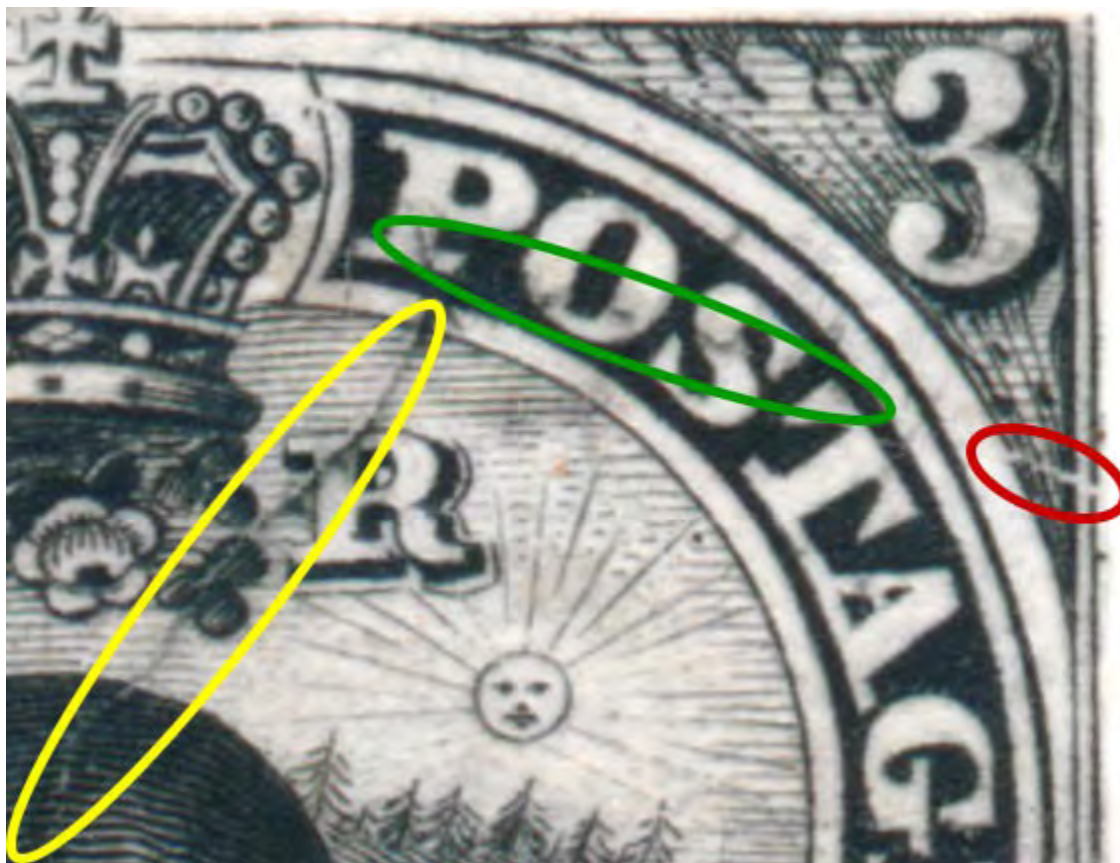


Figure 4: Transfer roll crack lines on a black proof showing how they can simultaneously show elements of missing ink (highlighted in red), extra ink (highlighted in green), and both missing ink and extra ink (highlighted in yellow). Original scan courtesy of Ian Kimmerly at Sparks Auctions.

Philatelic writers have tried to explain this phenomenon of both missing and extra ink in a variety of ways, but most of the explanations come down to the fact that the extra ink is related to some residue or ink smudging that remains after the plate has been wiped. I agree with this assessment but have my own theory of what has specifically occurred to create this famous flaw.

It is generally stated that the flaw is caused by a crack on the transfer roll impression used to lay down the plate. Some experts have suggested that this crack appeared when the original die was impressed onto the transfer roll. Others have suggested that it may have occurred later when the transfer roll was hardened or when a flat transfer impression was later bent for use on the transfer roll. I believe that the crack did appear during the process of transferring the die impression to the transfer roll. However, I believe that it was the master die, itself, that was cracked during this process and that the flaws on the transfer roll were the result of working with this badly damaged die. My logic is that if only the transfer roll was cracked, then the workmen (the siderographers) would surely have prepared a new transfer roll, rather than let such a pronounced flaw appear on Canada's first postage stamp. Unfortunately, having a cracked and possibly almost crumbling master die prevented them from easily making a new transfer roll.

Some writers have suggested that the documented existence of a clear undamaged die proof and the fact that the same die was later used to create the 5 cent Beaver die are proof that the die survived intact. The first argument makes no sense since die proofs are created for finalising and approving the die, itself, and would be done before the die had any contact with the transfer roll. The second idea has some merit, except that the method for reusing a die or parts of a die to create a similar new die for another issue (sometimes called the Perkins method) is quite a complicated process involving transferring part of the original die impression and reworking it by hand to create the new die. There would be ample opportunities during this process to fix or re-engage any parts of the original die that were damaged.

Whether the damage originated from the master die or from the transfer roll, it is clear that it resulted in more than a simple relief break on the transfer roll. The fault lines of missing ink on the 3d Beaver stamps are sharp and consistent in their appearance and location within the stamp design. This is entirely consistent with a relief break on the transfer roll. Conversely, the lines of extra ink have a much more fuzzy appearance, vary in their intensity and even slightly in their specific positioning within the stamp design. These lines of extra ink are also much more variable between different positions on the same pane of stamps and between stamps from the same positions over the production life of the plate. This is consistent with a problem wiping the ink from the plate due to uneven or raised areas in the stamp impressions.

I suspect that the master die was damaged so badly when the transfer roll was created that it had severe cracks and was almost falling apart. The subsequent impression on the transfer roll left obvious cracks and an impression that was not perfectly flat. In other words, the stamp impression rises and/or lowers slightly at these crack points. Similarly, this uneven impression would then be transferred to each position on the plate. When the plate was used on the printing press, this uneven surface caused issues with the final stamp impression that were dependent on how well and in what direction the ink was applied and wiped from the plate. So, in addition to missing recessed areas on the plate (caused by broken reliefs at the cracks on the transfer roll) that should normally hold ink during printing, there were also uneven surfaces (caused by the shifted areas around the cracks on the transfer roll) that would trap ink from being wiped away correctly.

It should be noted that areas of the transfer role crack that feature missing ink are much more common and visible on many more copies of the stamp and proofs of the stamp than areas that show extra ink. Earlier copies tend to show the extra ink much more than later copies. This may be due to normal plate wear that has flattened the plate somewhat and eliminated some of the uneven impression caused by the transfer roll, or it may also be due to polishing of the plate during production in a deliberate effort to reduce the unevenness of the plate surface.

The Relationship Between the N-flaws and the Transfer Roll Crack

After reading Michael Smith's "N-flaws" article I noticed something interesting in the few reference scans I had access to that showed N-flaws. So, I reached out to Mike to see if he could share the complete plate proof scan he had been working with. After obtaining permission from Eastern Auctions Ltd., who had provided Mike with the scan, he sent me a lovely high-resolution scan of a complete pane B with green "SPECIMEN" overprint but no imprints in the margins. The specifics of when each plate proof of the 3d Beaver were prepared are still largely speculative at best, however the lack of imprints on this proof mean that it was prepared before the imprints were added and the panes split into two separate plates in the 1856-57 period.

Examination of this proof confirmed my initial observation that the N-flaws were aligned almost as if they were an extension of the transfer roll crack that appeared on the stamp to the left. If one follows the sloping line of missing ink that appears on the right side of a typical stamp, it is easy to see that the N-flaw on the stamp to its right appears as an extension of this line except that it shows extra ink. Figure 5 shows a typical example of this.



Figure 5: Typical missing ink from transfer roll crack on left stamp and extra ink from N-flaw on right stamp follow the same trajectory.

My next thought was to determine why the N-flaws do not appear in exactly the same location within the stamp impression at each plate position. I suspected that this may be associated with the alignment of the stamp impressions on the plate relative to each other. A close examination of the pane B plate proof confirmed this suspicion. Although the N-flaws change position relative to their own stamp impression they always keep their relative position to the transfer roll crack on the stamp impression to their left. For example, when a stamp impression is lower than the stamp impression to its right, the N-flaw in the right stamp will appear lower in the design. Conversely, when a stamp impression is higher than the stamp impression to its right, the N-flaw in the right stamp will appear higher in the design. This is illustrated in figure 6. This relationship was constant for all positions showing N-flaws on the pane B proof sheet, although the fuzzy and smeared ink nature of the N-flaws can make precise interpretation of their position somewhat subjective.



Figure 6: Examples of how the position of the N-flaw within the impression of the right stamp depends on the relative position of the stamp impression to its left. The shift in position of the N-flaw is best observed by noting its position relative to the “N” of “CANADA”.

So, what is the most likely explanation for the many similar N-flaw appearances throughout the plate but with slightly different positioning within the stamp impression? The answer is that the N-flaws originate from a common source that enables them to shift slightly in location or not appear at all for each of the plate positions. I believe the explanation is that the N-flaw is part of the transfer roll crack damage that extends far into the right margin of the stamp impression so that it appears within the impression of the stamp to its right. Figure 7 illustrates this process.



Figure 7: The first relief impression (in red) is rocked into the plate with its characteristic crack plus the small extension into the far-right margin. The second impression (in grey) is rocked in leaving the extended crack to show through as the N-flaw in the non-printing areas above the “N” of “CANADA”.

When the transfer roll relief with the flaw in the right margin (the extended crack) is rocked in far enough and with sufficient force, it transfers the regular impression of the stamp along with the flaw at the extreme right onto the plate. This is illustrated by the red impression in figure 7. When the stamp immediately to the right is rocked in, it transfers a new impression but with the flaw from the impression of the left stamp showing through in the non-printing white space above the “N” of “CANADA”. The location of the N-flaws may shift slightly depending on the accuracy of the horizontal and vertical alignment between the impressions for each plate position. The N-flaw may also appear much weaker or not appear at all if the relief on the transfer role is not rocked in far enough or with sufficient force to also reproduce the flaw to the right of the intended impression.

Another interesting fact supporting this theory about the N-flaws is that the only column where Fred Jarrett, Kenneth A. Kershaw, Clayton Huff, and Michael D. Smith have not reported the appearance of any N-flaws in either pane of the plate is the first column (see figure 3). This is to be expected since the stamp impressions of the first column have no impressions to their left that could transfer an N-flaw.

My detailed examination of the pane B proof sheet confirms no trace of an N-flaw in the stamps of the first column. The right margin of the sheet is unfortunately quite narrow so that it is not reliable for detecting the extra flaws that could potentially appear in the far-right margin of the stamps from the last column. I did not observe any evidence of flaws in this margin.

The pair of stamps from positions 65 and 66 of the Pane B proof sheet (see figure 8) is of particular interest. Position 65 shows a strong but otherwise normal N-flaw. It also features a very strong re-entry with rightward doubling of many areas of the impression. The stamp at position 66 shows a particularly strong and messy N-flaw which is interesting for a few reasons. Since this N-flaw would come from the impression of the re-entered stamp at position 65, this messy flaw may be an example of a re-entered N-flaw. Most of the flaw is also more

rightward in the impression so that it shows mostly within the “N” of “CANADA” rather than in the white oval frame above it. Of further interest is the fact that the stamp at position 66 is a short transfer where everything on the left side of the impression is weak or missing. Yet, despite this weak impression, the N-flaw is extremely strong. This is very suggestive that the flaw originates from the strong re-entered impression of the stamp from position 65 to its left.



Figure 8: Position 65 and 66 from the pane B proof sheet. The right stamp shows a short entry for most of its left side, yet it still features a very strong and misplaced N-flaw that may be the result of the strong re-entry in the left stamp.

Summary and Conclusions

N-flaws on the 3d Beaver have been observed and reported on an ad hoc basis for almost a century, but it was not until recently that they have been documented as a group with the idea that they are related and could have a common origin. At least 39 different positions across the two panes of the plate(s) have been documented to have N-flaws, but each of these positions is also known without any trace of the flaw. The flaws have been observed on proofs and stamp copies from the earliest printings on laid paper through later wove paper printings and even on a late perforated stamp. Although N-flaws appear in the same general location of the stamp, they can have different strengths and appearances, and their specific location within the stamp impression varies slightly from copy to copy. These characteristics indicate that N-flaws cannot be caused by a normal flaw on the transfer roll when the plate was laid down.

The well-documented transfer roll crack that appears to some extent on virtually all 3d Beavers includes areas with missing ink caused by broken reliefs on the transfer roll, and areas with extra ink caused by the shifted areas or uneven surfaces around the cracks on the transfer roll that trap ink when the plate is wiped. Many early stamps and proofs show strong evidence of this crack with obvious areas of both missing and extra ink. Later proofs and stamps tend to show mostly the missing ink. This is likely due to polishing of the plate during production and/or normal plate wear that has flattened the plate somewhat and eliminated some of the uneven or raised surfaces.

The N-flaws are similar in appearance to the extra ink areas of the transfer roll crack in that they are blurry marks that diminish in frequency over the production life of the stamp. The N-flaws differ from the transfer roll crack in that they do not occur consistently across most positions of the plate, and they are not identically located within the stamp impression at positions where they do occur.

This article postulates that the N-flaws are actually caused by an extension of the transfer roll crack that appears far into the margin of the stamp impression on the transfer roll. When this impression is rocked in and transferred to the plate, this section of the crack might also be transferred to the right margin of the regular

stamp impression. This marginal crack could appear very faintly or not at all for each plate position depending on how far the transfer roll was rocked in at each position. When another stamp impression is rocked in to the right of an existing impression, the marginal crack from the existing impression can show through in the non-printing white space above the “N” of “CANADA”. The reason that the N-flaws appear at slightly different locations within the stamp impression is due to the inaccuracy of the horizontal and vertical alignment between the impressions for each plate position. Close examination of a complete pane B proof sheet has shown that the variable vertical position of all N-flaws within the stamp impression is entirely dependent on the vertical position of the stamp impression to the left.

Further support for this theory is also provided by the stamp from position 66 of the proof sheet that shows a very strong N-flaw despite also having a short entry that causes other features of the left side of the stamp to be very faint or missing. Another important piece of evidence is that the first column is also the only column where N-flaws have not been reported for both the A and B panes of the stamp. This is to be expected since the first column is the only one not to have any stamp impressions to the left that could cause the N-flaw.

The idea of a flaw in the margin of the stamp impression on the transfer roll causing the flaw to appear in the impression of an adjacent stamp on the plate is not new. George C. Marler described a similar situation in his book, *The Admiral Issue of Canada*, as the explanation for dashes appearing on the 7¢ red brown Admiral value. My own article from *BNA Topics* in 2017 showed a similar explanation for the “Dash in 2” variety on 2¢ value of the First Cents issue.

The reality of the N-flaw as an extension of the well-known transfer roll crack on the 3d Beaver shows just how extensive the crack must have been on the transfer roll and possibly the die used to create it.

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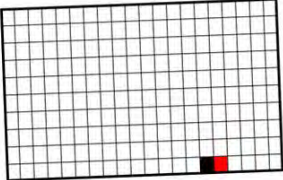
Pagination – Samples of Imaginative Album & Exhibit Pages

This recurring column features a few custom album or exhibit pages from variety collectors that illustrate their own unique display style. The idea is to provide some inspiration to other collectors to get those stamps out of the stock book and mounted into a custom album page.



This issue I am pleased to share some of my own variety pages. Although I do specialise in a few areas of Canadian philately, my plate varieties are very general, and I normally do not display them with other stamps from the same issues. I wanted to display my major varieties in a bold way that would tell a story even to other collectors who might not be familiar with plate varieties.

Queen Victoria - Small Queen Issue 5¢ - Late Ottawa Printing - Major Re-entry

This major re-entry occurs on the first new plate with a single pane of 200 stamps from the later Ottawa printings. This unusually sharp copy exhibits strong doubling throughout the design but is strongest towards the bottom portion of the stamp. The key elements include doubling of "CENTS" with strong marks in the "N" and "S", marks in both numerical values including sharp downward doubling of the outline of the upper part of the right "5" value into the ball below, and extensions of the horizontal lines from the portrait area into the lower left of the white circular frame. There are numerous other features including general downward doubling of the lines in the Queen's neck and the shadow of "5 CENTS 5". Unitrade lists this major re-entry as #42iii. The adjoining stamp on the left of the pair shows evidence of a minor re-entry plus a short entry at the top left corner.



Late Ottawa Plate 1
200-Subject Plate
Position 196



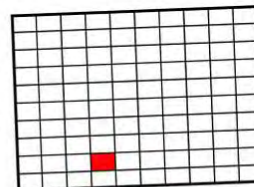
42iii on right of used pair

In designing my pages, I wanted a banner that would make it easy to identify the era and specific stamp issue. I also wanted to include an enlarged image of the entire stamp design with the variety highlighted. Finally, I wanted to include a plate/pane diagram showing the location(s) of the variety along with ample room for a detailed textual description.

Imperial Penny Postage - Xmas 1898 Map Stamp 2¢ Deep Blue - Misplaced Entry



This stamp is not a typical re-entry but a misplaced entry that was likely caused by a dropped transfer roll resulting in a series of marks at the top of the design. The top margin shows upward extensions of both the left and right cables. Several small marks also appear just above and below the top cable. The most distinctive of these are some hairline patterns across the left top margin. There are also faint marks in most letters of "POSTAGE" with a stronger arc-shaped mark in the "O".



Black Plate 2, Red Plate A
Position 84 (2A84)

These misplaced entry marks come from the centre of the stamp design. The hairline marks in the top margin are from parts of the coast of lower Europe, the Black Sea, and the Caspian Sea. The marks in "POSTAGE" are from the upper coast of Africa. Other more minor marks in the top cable and margin come from the coasts of North America and Asia. So, this black plate variety is caused by a partial misplaced entry that is almost half a stamp too high. The image indicates the misplaced entry marks in blue and their original locations highlighted in red.



86 Deep Blue Mint Single

Although each of my pages requires changes to the layout to accommodate different aspect ratios and sizes of stamps, I have made an effort to keep all of the various information areas consistent between pages. Most pages include only a single copy of the variety housed in a clear mount on a black background. Since I print my pages on 65lb card stock and keep them loose in an archival presentation box instead of an album, I do not need to allow extra space to accommodate for three-hole punching.

King George V - Medallion Issue 5¢ - Retouched "Blue Nose" Re-entry



The well-known "blue nose" re-entry of this issue is named for the blue horizontal lines of doubling that show in the white area at the front of the King's nose. Extensions of the portrait's horizontal lines into the white oval frame at the lower right side are also an obvious characteristic. The re-entry was later retouched to remove these marks. However, several more subtle aspects of the original re-entry remain. These include subtle horizontal lines at the front of the King's moustache and beard, extensions of his sideburn rightward almost to his ear, additional shadow behind his ear, and even slight doubling of the back of his head. This retouched version of the re-entry is listed in Unitrade as #199iv. Although it is valued less than the original re-entry and likely more common, it is an extraordinarily subtle variety that is very hard to identify, poorly documented in the philatelic literature, and very seldom offered for sale.

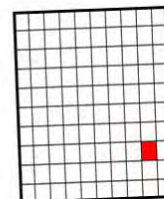
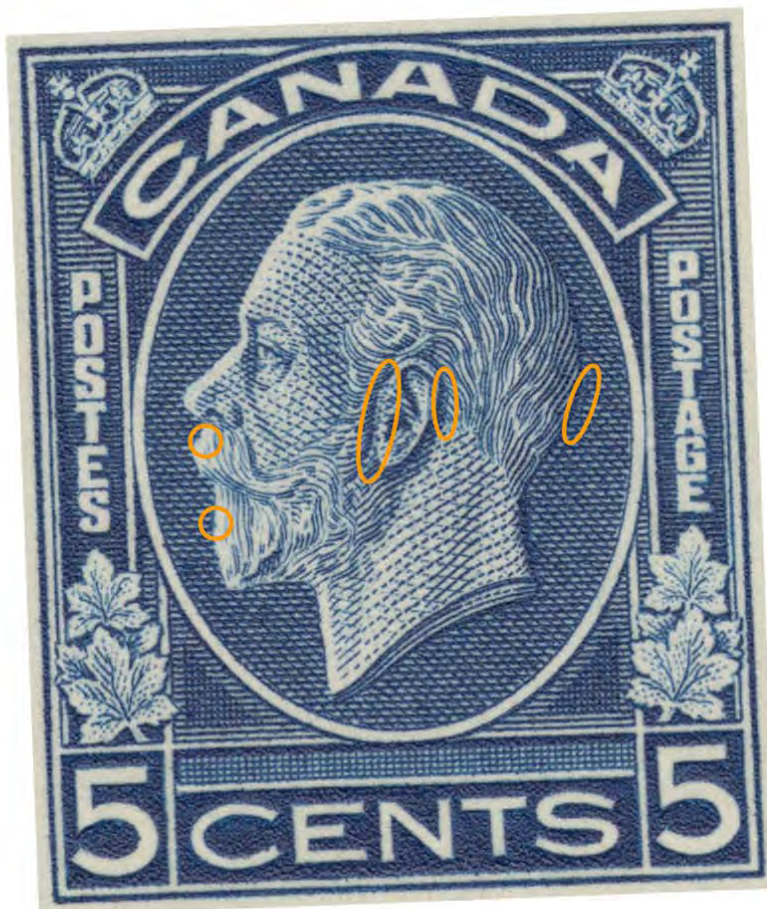


Plate 2
Upper Left Pane
Position 79



199iv MNH Single

Show & Share

This issue we begin with a set of three 1¢ stamps from the First Cents issue shared by Earl Noss. These stamps all show two small areas of missing ink near the right centre of the stamp plus a small mark of extra ink in the outer white oval just to the right of the period after “CENT”. This set of features is not visible on any proof scans I have seen. However, the wide left margin on one of Earl’s copies makes it clear that the stamp must come from the first column of the plate. By comparing guide dots and some other very minor features of the stamps from the first column of a proof sheet, my best guess is that the stamp comes from either position 11 or 41. With three copies, Earl has certainly found an exciting new constant variety with elements of both missing and extra ink.



Earl Noss also shared an interesting 2¢ First Cents scan showing a small spur above the oval frame line of the left numeral. This mark is mentioned in Arthur H. Groten's old BNAPS handbook, *Plating Canada's 2c Stamp of 1864*. The mark is likely a remnant from a small relief break on the transfer roll impression. Most positions on the plate (except for the first column) show a small gap or weak area in the oval line at this spot. Plate positions 42, 52, and 62 all show a similar small spur to Earl's stamp. However, only position 52 also features the downward extension of the outer left frame line into the bottom margin as Earl's stamp. Shown below is an image of Earl's position 52 stamp along with some proof images showing a column 1 stamp with no relief break, a typical stamp with relief break, and spur stamps from positions 42, 52, and 62.



No relief break
(first column)



Typical relief break
(many positions)



Position 42



Position 52



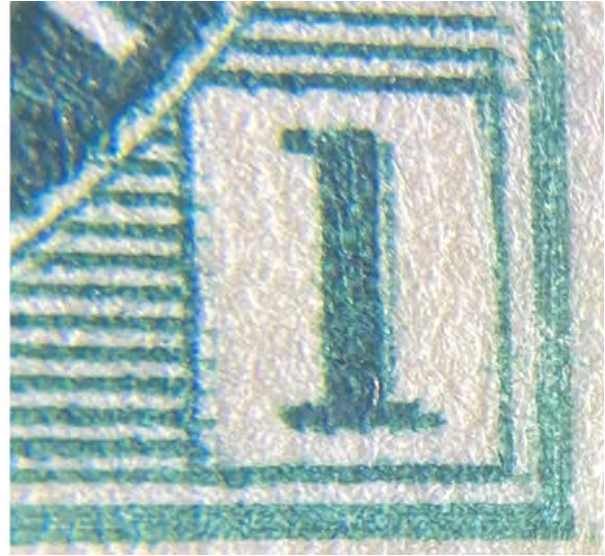
Position 62

Our third share this month is a lovely pair of 1¢ Victoria Numerals from Arnie Janson. Both stamps in the pair feature major re-entries that I have not seen published before. With 12 plates and numerous plate repairs, there are many major re-entries and misplaced entries to be found on this stamp. Despite this, it is nice to see two majors side-by-side in a pair. According to Peter Spencer, a leading authority on the Victoria Numerals, this pair of stamps comes from the fourth state of repair for plate 7 or plate 8.

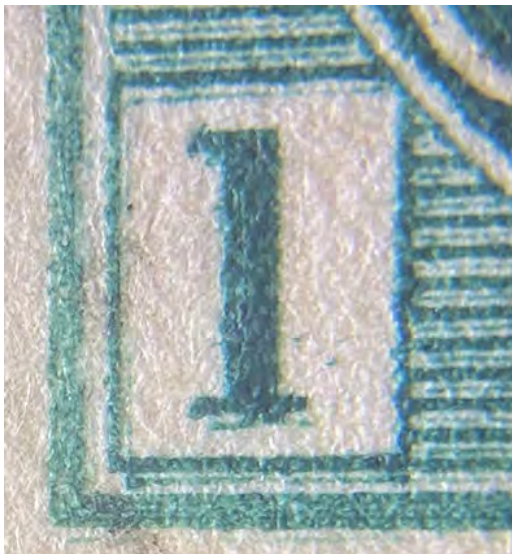


At first glance, both re-entries look very similar with rightward and downward doubling that is heaviest at the bottom of the stamp. Looking at the close-up images on the next page, it is clear that the left stamp of the pair shows heavier rightward doubling, particularly in the right numeral box where the "1" is heavily doubled and there are also extensions of the horizontal background lines into the left side of the box. Elements of vertical doubling also show on the left numeral box, but they are not as strong as that of the right stamp.

The right stamp shows heavier vertical doubling with very strong doubled impressions on the left side of the stamp including the background horizontal lines, the "1", both the top and bottom frames of the numeral box, and the lower outer frame line. The top right corner of the right stamp also shows vertical doubling of the top frame line, the horizontal background lines, and the veins in the maple leaf.



Close-up views of left stamp.



Close-up views of right stamp.

Our final set of shares comes from Jim McCormick who has been looking through his stock of 5¢ Beavers and preparing new album pages. He recently shared scans of four positions showing significant varieties that are not listed in the Unitrade catalogue and consequently not as well known to the non-specialist.

The first variety is from plate position 45, state 1. It consists of a strong arc-shaped stroke that appears above the second "A" of "CANADA". A striking variety that is not often seen.



The second variety is a nice re-entry from plate position 31, state 9. It shows sharp rightward doubling at the right side of the stamp. This includes the inner and outer right frame lines, the oval frame, and the shadows of both the right upper and lower "5" values.



The next variety is another re-entry from plate position 95, state 5. This re-entry shows marks from downward doubling in many of the letters and some areas of the oval frames. The most significant aspect of the re-entry is the strong doubling that is easily visible below three of the "5" values.



Our last Beaver variety from Jim McCormick is another re-entry from plate position 96, state 5. This re-entry shows strong marks from leftward doubling in many areas of the design including many of the letters, parts of the crown, and even above the Beaver's neck area. The distinct doubling of the arc-lines at the right of the crown and the very sharp doubling of "VR" are probably the easiest characteristics of this re-entry to identify.



Cover Image Information

Peter Spencer's block of ten purple 2¢ Victoria Numeral stamps shown on this issue's cover is interesting because it is missing a famous variety that appears at position 14 from the left pane of plate 2. The prominent C-flaw (Unitrade #76iv) is a popular variety that has long been plated to 2L14. The variety has the appearance of a strong dig or gash from plate damage just below the "C" of "CENTS".



Figure 1: Mint example showing a typical C-flaw as it appears on purple shades of the 2¢ Victoria Numeral stamp from 2L14. Stamp image courtesy of Earl Noss.

As the result of plate damage, it makes sense that the variety may have occurred after the initial printings from an undamaged plate. However, this is difficult to prove without plateable copies or blocks showing the position without the variety. Library and Archives Canada have a proof of plate 2 in its holdings that presumably shows the original state of the plate (assuming the proof is a normal proof contemporary with the original stamp production) and that does not show the C-flaw variety. The block shown on the cover of this issue makes it clear that actual stamps also exist from position 2L14 without the variety.

The plate number shown at the top of Peter Spencer's block reveals that it comes from plate 2. The dots shown at the top right corner of two stamps from the top row are proof that it comes from the left pane. These dots do not exist for stamps from the right pane. Figure 2 shows magnified views of the dots from the first row and the bottom of position 2L14 with no sign of the C-flaw.



Figure 2: Magnified view of dots above stamps in the first row of the plate that indicate the block is from the left pane of plate 2. The magnified view of the bottom of the stamp from position 2L14 shows that there is no trace of the C-flaw that is known at this position.

Another interesting facet to this variety is that it has never been reported on the carmine shades of the stamp that were printed after the purple shades. Although Winthrop S. Boggs in his classic book, *The Postage Stamps and Postal History of Canada*, indicates that the carmine shades of the 2¢ Victoria Numeral were not printed from plate 2, this is incorrect. Although quite scarce, blocks or strips of the carmine shades showing plate 2 in the margin do exist. The complete lack of any reported C-flaws on the carmine printings suggests that either carmine printings from this plate are very rare and the flaw has just not survived or been noticed and reported, or that the plate was eventually repaired in such a way that the C-flaw was removed. My thinking is that it would be difficult to remove such a flaw completely. Whatever the explanation, as Peter has mentioned in my correspondence with him, finding a C-flaw or signs of its repair on the carmine shades “would be quite an event”.