

Synopsis: The First Decimal Issue of Canada 1859 - 68

PURPOSE: This is a used stamp collection supported by plate proofs, constant plate varieties and covers. A used stamp has done its postal duty and then becomes collectable. You will not find here large multiples of stamps nor covers to exotic locations.

IMPORTANCE: The first decimal issue paid both domestic and international mail rates from the end of the Pence era to the introduction of the large Queens.

CHALLENGE: The combination of small margins between stamps and inaccurate early perforating machines resulted in well centred stamps being elusive and dated copies are distinctly rare.

PRESENTATION: Printing orders are presented chronologically by value as laid out by Whitworth, Number of sheets delivered colour of ink, perforation and period of use are noted for each printing order.

METHOD: Care has been to establish reference collections for the shades of the printing orders of each value.

DIE PROOFS: Whitworth states "No contemporary die proofs are known... In 1878 a re-organization of the printers took place and Albert G. Goodall was elected President and it is believed that in 1879 he ordered proofs to be made of all dies and plates for record purposes." Some of these eventually came into the hands of collectors. The Essay-Proof Society records the following values, all printed in five colours; black, brown, red, green and blue. The 1 cent as a die proof with a cross hatched background and the 2, 5, 10, 12½ and 17 cents as full sheets of stamps." Some person has removed some of the 2 to 17 cents proofs from their original card and remounted them on larger card to market them as die proofs, see Firby auction of, 2004/JA/24 and Grosvenor auction of 2017/JU/21.

PERFORATIONS: Whitworth noted that there were four perforating machines used on this issue; machine 'A' average gauge 11.7 (range 11.6-11.75), machine 'B' 11.8 (11.75-11.85), machine 'C' 11.9 (11.85-11.95) and machine 'D' 12.1 (12.05-12.15). Then he lumped 11.7 and 11.8 together as 11¾ and 11.9 and 12.1 together as 12. This collection separates 11¾ into 11.7 and 11.8 and 12 into 11.9 and 12.1 the better to assist collectors to identify individual printings. Although most people think that in the compound perforation era all stamps with the long axis vertical will be perforated 11.9 or 12.1 X 11.8 this collection will show four exceptions to this rule.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF A STAMP WHEN ONE SIDE GAUGES 11.75 or 11.85: Because both machines 'A' and 'B' could produce perforations gauging 11.75 you may wonder how a stamp gauging 11.75 would be classified. This collector has not found a stamp gauging 11.75 on more than one side. If the stamp gauges 11.75 on one side and 11.7 (or less) on the other three sides, then it has been classified as 11.7. And a stamp that gauges 11.85 on one side and 11.9 on the other three sides has been classified as 11.9.

SHADE AND PERFORATION: Every attempt has been made to find stamps of the shade and perforation Geoffrey Whitworth reported. When stamps with dated cancels were found that met his description of shade and perforation and the date of the cancel was in the period Geoffrey listed, they were preferred.

IDENTIFICATION OF SHADES: Many of the shades identified are illustrated exactly on the Stanley Gibbons Stamp Colour Key No. 2530. Each colour "chip" has a hole approximately 5 mm in diameter. When placed on the stamp such that the only part of the stamp showing is the oval and part of the white background this will eliminate most of the colour "noise" resulting from many degrees of shade and the cancel. The oval is the most densely coloured part of these stamps and you can train your eye to ignore the white. When comparing a new stamp to a stamp in a shade reference collection, compare an uncanceled part of the oval of each stamp.

Collection Highlights:

ONE CENT:

- A copy dated JY/ 6/59 which is the earliest surviving use of the 1¢ stamp.
- An example of the stamps of Printing Order 16 which are perforated 11.8 X 12.1.
- An example of the stamps of Printing Order 19 which are perforated 11.8 X 11.9.
- Examples of the 'E' flaw at each of the three plate positions where it occurs.
- A complete set of 1¢ stamps showing the IMPRINT at each of the eight places it occurred around the plate.

TWO CENTS:

- Although Unitrade has only one listing for the 2¢ green proof this collection will show two shades of the green proof.
- Whitworth listed the second printing as Pale carmine red, perforated 12, but this collector found the pale carmine-red stamps to be perforated 11.9 X 11.8 and has re-assigned them as a "B" printing of the first Printing Order. He has placed a stamp dated AU/21/1865, and perforated 11.8 X 11.9 in a Brown-lake shade at Printing Order 2. Note that Whitworth was working with covers and it is very easy to make a mistake when measuring perforations of a stamp on cover or on piece.
- For lack of a dated copy Whitworth was unable to describe the stamps of the 3rd Printing Order. This collection will show a stamp dated DE/ 7/65 and perforated 11.9 in a Carmine-lake shade at Printing Order 3.
- During the summer of 1866 perforating machine 'C' (11.9) suffered four broken pins in a row and was taken out of service for repairs and temporarily replaced by machine 'B' (11.8). The vast majority of stamps printed in response to the 6th Order for 2¢ stamps were perforated 11.9 whilst a few were perforated 11.8 X 11.9. See also the 23rd order for ten cents stamps

FIVE CENTS:

- Example of the 'Double log in the waterfall' plate variety which occurs in Plate State 2.
- In the ninth printing of the 5¢ stamp, which is the earliest use of the 11.9 perforating machine Whitworth's earliest example was June, 1863. This collection will show an example dated March 25, 1863.

TEN CENTS:

- This collection will show seven shades not mentioned by Whitworth in his monograph: 1A Pale brownish black, 1B Pale deep chocolate-brown, 5A Dull yellowish brown, 10B Dull red-brown, 15C Pale red-brown, 19B Dull deep dark reddish violet and 23AA Bright clear brown-red.
- All of the stamps of sub printing 23AA (Bright clear brown-red) were perforated 11.9 horizontally, however, during the summer of 1866 when perforating machine 'C' (11.9) was taken out of service for repairs and temporarily replaced by machine 'B' (11.8) some of the stamps of sub printing 23AA were perforated 11.8 vertically. Geoffrey Whitworth wrote about this perforation variety in *Maple Leaves* April 1995 but this exhibitor has found a similar occurrence happening to machine 'B' during the perforating of Printing Order 15. A discovery copy of printing 15B showing four blind perforations in a row has been found and although I do not have a copy to prove this it is assumed that perforating machine 'A' (11.7) was brought out of retirement to finish perforating printing 15B.

TWELVE AND ONE HALF CENTS:

- This collection will show a copy from each Plate State of both Major re-entries; plate positions 61 and 94

SEVENTEEN CENTS:

- This collection will show a copy of the elusive 'Burr over shoulder' plate variety.

THE PALE BLUE PLATE PROOF OF THE SEVEETEEN CENTS STAMP: This proof shows the 'Burr over shoulder' flaw at plate position No. 7. Whitworth stated, "...it is probable that these were printed at the commencement of the 11th order of December 1866". Since the 'Burr over shoulder' flaw has only been observed on the 11th and 12th printings, this collector is of the view that Whitworth was right and that these proofs are contemporary. However since the plate was not destroyed until 1902 it is possible that they are post contemporary.

NUMBER OF PRINTINGS OF THE SEVENTEEN CENTS STAMP: A thorough literature search has shown that there were exactly 12 printings of the 17 cents stamp. See Whitworth, the First Decimal Issue of Canada pages 13 & 14 and Boggs Volume, II page 3 - J.

Bibliography:

- Calder, Senator J. A., Some Phases of the Canada '59 Issue, reprinted from the London Philatelist, 11 May, 1939
- Calder, Senator J. A., 17¢ Canada 1859, The Stamp Specialist - Red Book, H. L. Lindquist, New York, 1942.
- Boggs, Winthrop S., The Postage Stamps and Postal History of Canada, Chambers Publishing Co., Kalamazoo, MI, USA, 1945.
- Chapman, G. A. E., Canada 1859 Ten Cents. American Philatelist, Vol. 64, No. 5, February 1951.
- Saxton, Henry G., That Ten Cent Albert. 1951 Yearbook of the British North America Philatelic Society, 1951.
- Allen, J. Miller, Some Aspects of the Canada 1859 Issue. Maple Leaves, Vol. 6, No. 7 to 10, December 1956.
- Whitworth, Geoffrey, Some Features of the First North American Perforating Machines. Maple Leaves, Vol. VII, No. 2 to 4, Feb. 1958.
- Whitworth, Geoffrey, The Printings of the Ten Cents Consort. Maple Leaves, Vol. XI, No. 1 to 5, October 1965.
- Whitworth, Geoffrey, The First Decimal Issue of Canada, 1859-68. The Royal Philatelic Society, London. 1966.
- Whitworth, Geoffrey, The Printings of the 12½ Cents Value, Maple Leaves, Vol. XVIII, June, 1982.
- Boggs, Winthrop S., Early American Perforating Machines and Perforations, Unitrade reprint, June 1882.
- Whitworth, Geoffrey, Perforation Variety on the 10c Consort, Maple Leaves, Vol. XXIV, No. 2, April, 1995.
- Thompson, Richard, The 1859 Cents Issue, Maple Leaves, Vol. XXX, No. 5, 6 & 8, January 2008.