

INTRODUCTION

NEWFOUNDLAND'S 1897 ROYAL FAMILY ISSUE

Purpose of the exhibit: The purpose of this traditional exhibit is to show the eight postage stamps and their usage featuring the royal family issued between 1897 and 1901. The exhibit includes die and plate proofs, preproduction proofs (specimens), the issued stamps including imperforates, and the use of the stamps to local, inland and foreign destinations including Canada, the United States, Great Britain and Europe. These stamps followed on the heels of the fourteen stamps of the commemorative Discovery of Newfoundland Issue of June 24, 1897, and were succeeded by the John Guy issue of eleven stamps on August 15, 1910.

A strong part of the exhibit is the showing of all of the 11 types of *SPECIMEN* overprints found on the **publicly-held** preproduction plate proofs, some 57 stamp and type combinations. The punch holes location is examined, something not discussed in the literature. Besides the single specimen stamps there are numerous blocks providing additional production information such as plate number, printing order number, and/or date when the specimen sheet placed in the American Bank Note Company (ABNCo) files.

Background: The American Bank Note Company (ABNCo) printed the eight stamps in New York from 1897 to 1910 and again in 1918 (3-cent value). For each printing order at least one preproduction printing proof sheet was made. The one-cent carmine and the two-cent orange stamps were ordered once while the one-cent green had fourteen printings (the preproduction proofs of three of the printings are in the Canadian Postal Archives). Each sheet was overprinted *SPECIMEN* in **capital letters** in red or blue ink, and punctured with punch holes of either 2mm or 4mm in diameter. A date when the sheet was added to ABNCo's archives was usually rubber stamped in the top margin.

Studying the stamps, photographs and scans of the sheets shows that there are 57 specimen combinations if one takes into account the location of punch holes and placement of the overprint: the catalogues mention only 44. The punch holes are located in the center, right or left sides of the stamp. However there are 11 stamps that have punch holes alternating left and right by column or row. This increases the possible printing order/*SPECIMEN*/punch hole combinations to 57. Major varieties include stamps where the punch did not penetrate the paper, a double punch hole, and missing overprint. punch hole, and missing overprint.

Knowledge of Subject: The universe of the specimen material is not large. Of the 44 printing orders with publicly-held preproduction proofs three had preproduction proofs totaling 400 stamps, four had 300

stamps, 19 had 200 stamps, and 17 had 100 stamps, and one sheet had 98 stamps (positions 99 and 100 were missing from the ABNCo archive material). A difficult task is finding some of the rates on cover. The solo use of the half-cent paying the printed matter rate for postcards with no personal message remains elusive. The one-cent carmine on cover has been exceedingly difficult to acquire, either as a solo use or in combination with other values, especially used prior to the issuance of the one-cent green. The single use of the four-cent stamp is another seldom seen item. In the latter two cases there was only one printing of each amounting to 400,000 and 500,000 stamps, respectively.

The stamps served legitimate postal needs and could be used as of their dates of issuance to pay the basic rates as follows: ½-cent, post cards with no personal message; 1-cent, local drop letter; 2-cent, postcards to Canada, the United States, Great Britain and other foreign countries; 3-cent, Inland and Canadian letters; 4-cent, registration fee to Great Britain and registered local letter, and 5-cent, letter rate to the United States and foreign countries. It was also the foreign registration fee. Mail above the initial weight stage and that with extra services usually required multiple copies of the particular denomination or other denominations to make up the necessary postage.

Exhibit Plan and Highlights: The exhibit is arranged by denomination and not by issue date. Each section starts with die and/or plate proofs and the issued stamps followed by the *SPECIMEN* overprints and finally covers showing the various rates. Items of note are highlighted with a six-point grey frame.

Frame 1	½-cent: large die proof 1-cent carmine
Frame 2	1-cent green specimens: missing punch hole, missing specimen overprint
Frame 3	1-cent green, continued 2-cent: pair of imperforate stamps on cover, double punch hole on specimen.
Frame 4	2-cent, continued. 3-cent: block of four with printing order number, single stamp paying the inland parcel rate, Canadian postage due on overweight letter
Frame 5	3-cent, continued. 4-cent: imperforate pair (one of seven recorded), octuple rate registered cover to the United States 5-cent,

SYNOPSIS

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The Twelve Specimen Types *

(Not to Scale)

					
Type I	Type II	Type III	Type IV	Type V	Type VI
15.5 x 4 mm	15.5 x 2.5 mm	17.5 x 2mm	11.5 x 4 mm	14 x 1.5 mm	11.5 x 1.5 mm
					
Type VII	Type VIII	Type IX	Type X	Type XI	Type XII
13.5 X 2 mm	14 x 2 mm	20 x 3.5 mm	23 x 4.5 mm	20 x 4 mm	14.5 x 2.5 mm

* Type XI was only used on the 1908 Map stamp.

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The stamps served legitimate postal needs and could be used as of their dates of issuance to pay the basic rates as follows: ½-cent, post cards with no personal message; 1-cent, local drop letter; 2-cent, postcards to Canada, the United States, Great Britain and other foreign countries and Imperial penny postage rate; 3-cent, Inland and Canadian letters; 4-cent, registration fee to Great Britain, registered local letter, and double rate Imperial penny postage, and 5-cent, letter rate to the United States and foreign countries. It was also the foreign registration fee. Mail above the initial weight stage and that with extra services usually required multiple copies of the particular denomination or other denominations to make up the necessary postage.

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Frame 1	½-cent: large die proof 1-cent carmine
Frame 2	1-cent green specimens: missing punch hole, missing specimen overprint. NOTE: a number of the <i>SPECIMEN</i> pages may look the same but each is a different printing order or type of overprint.
Frame 3	1-cent green, continued 2-cent: pair of imperforate stamps on cover, a cover with a single and bisect paying the three-cent rate, double punch hole on specimen.
Frame 4	2-cent, continued. 3-cent: block of four with printing order number, single stamp paying the inland parcel rate, Canadian postage due on overweight letter
Frame 5	3-cent, continued. 4-cent: imperforate pair (one of seven recorded), octuple rate registered cover to the United States 5-cent

Selected References (suggestions for jury members are in bold face):

Rate information was obtained from *The Yearbook and Almanac of Newfoundland* (various volumes), *The Newfoundland Quarterly*, and the Walsh's *Newfoundland Specialized Stamp Catalogue*.

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