

THE CENTS ISSUE: 1859-1868

RATES, USAGE AND VARIETIES ON COVER

On July 1, 1859 the Government of Canada issued a set of definitive stamps to reflect the change in the monetary system from sterling (pounds, shillings and pence) to dollars and cents. This stamp issue became known as the "Cents Issue" since it was the first to use the new currency system. These stamps were only replaced after Confederation - on April 1, 1868. The "Cents Issue" is also notable as the first truly perforated issue in Canada; prior to 1859, people used scissors to separate stamps from the sheet. Over the almost nine years of its existence, stamps in the "Cents Issue" were reprinted many times; this fact accounts for the many different colours and shades and also differences in perforation gauge that can be found in the issue.

The purpose of this exhibit is to display covers that illustrate
A) the most important postal rates (domestic, U.S. and international) used in this period including variations of franking for these rates
B) registration rates and C) other usages such as under-paid covers, missent letters, cancels or rare routings, D) a sampling of some important varieties related to paper qualities and re-entries.

Rarity factors are indicated in the detailed descriptions provided as well as by placing a double frame (scarce) or red frame (rare) around the cover. In certain cases, scans have been made to point out and clarify remarkable features of a particular stamp. All examples are displayed as they were originally used - on cover.

A complete set of the stamps that were issued is shown below. The 1, 5, 10, 12 1/2 and 17 cents were released on July 1, 1859, the 2 cent on August 1, 1864.



1 Cent Rose



5 Cent Vermilion



10 Cent Red Lilac



12 1/2 Cent Green



17 Cent Blue



2 Cent Rose