

Confederation

The Newsletter of the Large and Small Queens Study Group

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Earliest Use of the 5 cent Large Queen

Dr Joachim Frank

In reply to John Jamieson's inquiry regarding the earliest usage of the 5 cents Large Queen, I believe it to be 28 September 1875.

The postal rate to the United Kingdom by Canada Packet was 6 cents per half ounce from 1 January 1870. Via the United States ports the rate was 8 cents as this included the U.S. 2 cents surcharge.

The half ounce rate to the United Kingdom by either route was reduced to 5 cents on 1 October 1875. This required the introduc-

tion of the new 5 cents value on the same date to cover this rate. An example off-cover of the 5 cents neatly postmarked 1 October 1875 was in the Stanley Cohen collection.

However, some years ago I acquired a mourning cover from Montreal to Liverpool, England, bearing a 5 cents Large Queen, as well as a 3 cents Small Queen, clearly postmarked 28 September 1875. It has a Liverpool 11 October 1875 backstamp proving the Montreal date to be credible.

What is likely to have happened is that the postal official in Montreal applied

the "new" 5 cents stamp, already in stock, to the cover three days before the stamp was to be released.

Subsequently realizing that the reduced rate had not yet been introduced, and the letter was to go though the United States on the basis of "First Packet practice," he added the 3 cents stamp.

The cover was carried by the "City of Berlin" of the Inman Line, which left New York on 2 October 1875 and arrived at Queenstown on 10 October 1875. The letter reached Liverpool the following day.

Incidentally, the 5 cents stamp is perforated 11.6x12.



Commentary

John Hillson

Couple of points. John Jamieson has probably given you the answer to his query, but if not, he sent me a scan of the LQ 5c illustrated and asked if I knew whether or not it was the earliest recorded use, which it isn't though it is probably the earliest dated copy (which John subsequently flogged me).

Malcolm Montgomery bought a cover from an auction house in Shrewsbury dated 28 September 1875 for c.£40. I had turned my nose up at it because it was awful looking, but if I had known it was going to go as cheaply as that I might have had a go. Malcolm eventually sold it to Bill Longley, both of whom probably did quite well out of it! Anyway that cover, to England, is probably the earliest known.

Re the Nicaragua Arms cancel, I believe it is known on cover, hence the town of origin identification. I am sure I had a similar rubber stamp in my 'John Bull' printing kit, but as I was three years old at the time, I can't be positive, but the first time I saw the cancel it rang a bell. Like Quasimodo. John Hillson

Letters

In the last issue of our newsletter Ron Ribler asked a question about the origin of the Nicaraguan coat of arms on Small Queens? Attached is a copy of the cancel I have "3c fancy" and my best explanation.

Fancy cancels came about because of an unprecedented growth in demand for postal services during the era of the Small Queens.

The Canadian post office could not keep up with the demand for canceling devices and so many smaller

post offices (and some big ones) had to become creative in what was used to kill the stamps on an envelope.

Many postmasters created cancels from corks, gutta purcha, or even children's rubber stamp sets.

I believe the Nicaraguan cancel falls into this later group. It was part of a children's rubber stamp kit that contained not only coats of arms but also flags of many countries. In fact, I remember having such a set some sixty years ago when growing up in Canada.

John Burnett



1895

St. Genevieve Batiscan, Quebec

In Memoriam

ALLEN B. HOPKINSON

former chairman of
BNAPS
Golden West
(California) Region

In Addition...

Dave Lacelle wrote regarding the Nicaraguan Coat of Arms cancel.

It is listed as number 1453 in his book on fancy cancels. It is listed on page 191 in the index.