

# Confederation

The Newsletter of the BNAPS Large and Small Queens Study Group

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## New Largest Mint Block and Imprints of the Twelve and One Half Cent Large Queen

Vic Willson ([lloydwill@aol.com](mailto:lloydwill@aol.com))

The largest recorded mint block of the 12½ cent Large Queen was last auctioned to my knowledge in the Firth sale Nov. 17, 1971, by Sissons. It consisted of a 3 x 5 bottom left corner block, shown below:



It was probably saved because of the misperfs in the corner. In the Brigham sale of 2014 I purchased lot 485, a mint block of 4 with part imprint across the left stamp and into the right. After getting it and reviewing all major sales over the last 60+ years to see how many partial imprint pieces on blocks were around, I noticed that it looked like the continuation of the imprint of the right block of 6 from the block of 15.

In the Spink (New York) sale in December 2017 I looked at the mint 3 x 2 bottom imprint block and saw immediately that it was the right section of the Firth block. Sometime after the Firth sale the block of 15 was split, making the several known blocks of 8 the largest. The combined block is shown below:

The incomplete perfs match perfectly to the Firth block. Putting the two blocks together easily shows that they match, including bits of the design from the rightmost stamps of the left block matching the design of the right block. Spacing of the stamps top to bottom and right to left matches, as does the imprint. The selvedge is longer on the right block, but I have to believe that the left was trimmed sometime previously. Putting the blocks together makes a block of 10, now the largest mint piece for the stamp.

The other interesting thing, which could have been pointed out some time ago, is that the top and bottom imprints are 50mm in length, Duckworths Type A, while the side imprint known from Menich's block of 4 (Firby, Feb. 6, 1997, lot 1140) is the 48mm Type B, fitting within the height of two stamps. In all the examples I have seen the top and bottom imprints are slightly offset to the left with respect to the stamps, with a slight greater length of the imprint over the leftmost of the 4 stamps compared to the rightmost, as can be seen here. Another block of 6 sold by Sissons, lot 294 of the Aug. 1995 sale 561, appears to be the bottom right corner, 88-90 and 98-100, given the spacing and incomplete perf removal. The selvedge looks to be the same as the right block above.



New Largest Mint Block and Imprints of the Twelve and One Half Cent Large Queen contd.

The A and B scheme is not reported correctly in Duckworth. This result also leads to a review of other Large Queens. The 15 cent Large Queen, of which I have either full or partial imprints of all 4 sides, is similarly Type A top and Bottom, Type B on the sides. The partials or full imprints of the ½, 1, 2, 3, and 6¢ all confirm this common arrangement for the plate.

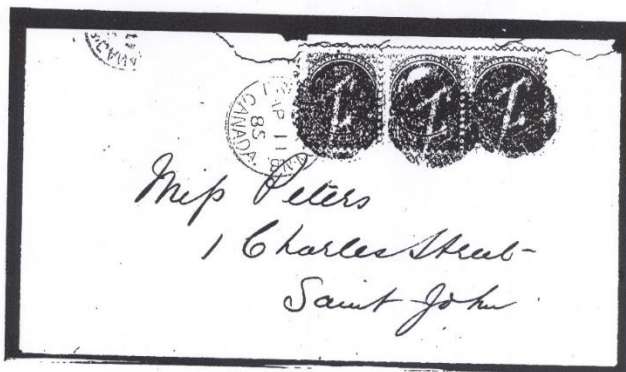
The 5¢ top imprint is known from a mint block of 8 in the Dale-Lichtenstein, Sale 10 of December 1970, lot 606. After scanning and reducing it to stamp size, it appears the imprint, "British American Bank Note Co Montreal", measures about 55mm, thus differing significantly from the rest of the Large Queens. The side is known from the Lussey sale by Sissons #329-30 of November 1973 lot 249, which appears to be about the same length using the same scanning technique.

As far as I can tell only complete top or bottom imprint blocks or strips for the ½, 12½, and 15¢ Large Queen stamps are known, all mint, and mint side imprint stamp blocks or strips for the 2, 6, 12 ½, and 15¢. The 2 and 6¢ are unique, and no full stamp imprints of the 1¢ are known, only a plate proof block in red brown. I know of no complete used imprint blocks or strips of any Large Queens. Only singles are known for used imprints for all stamps, with the possible exception of the ½ cent. The existing plate proof blocks have not been studied thoroughly by me yet. Any updates or corrections are welcomed, please send to the editor.

**The Fredericton 'F' Lacelle L409 – Spurious or not?**

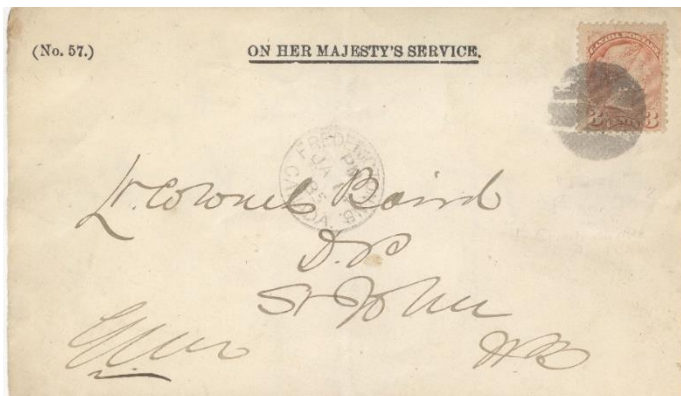
Ron Smith ([pigotsmith@gmail.com](mailto:pigotsmith@gmail.com))

Building a story to question whether or not a specific 'single' example of a cancel is spurious or not can be a fun if not frustrating exercise. I have been collecting New Brunswick fancy cancels for some 20+ years now and have continually been on the search for Lacelle number 409, a Fredericton 'F'. This cancel was listed in Day & Smythies, (481f) and a cover with three nice strikes was part of the Smythies collection (Figure 1 below).



**Figure 1.** Scan of a photocopy of a cover dated April 11, 1885. This cover was in the Smythies collection and the photocopy was taken from that. It shows three nice strikes of what has become to be known as a Fredericton 'F'.

Over the past 20 years I have managed to accumulate some 20 covers cancelled in Fredericton in 1884 and 1885 as well as examined many others. However I have never seen the elusive 'F'. As I understand it, the Smythies cover is the only reported example.



Much to my pleasant surprise, this spring, in our club show, I came across a front that was in the possession of a friend. This front was dated January 1885. It appeared to be a solid cork with a few almost random ins. However, my imagination started to catch up to me and I began looking to see how these lines closely resembled those for L409. (Figure 2 to left).

The Fredericton 'F' Lacelle L409 – Spurious or not? Contd.

The two cancels do not necessarily jump out at you as being the same until you take a closer examination. Specifically, when the cancels are rotated to have the intaglio lines in the same orientation, they start to definitely look alike (Figure 3 right).

**Figure 3.** Close up scans of the cancels, the intaglio lines oriented in the same direction.

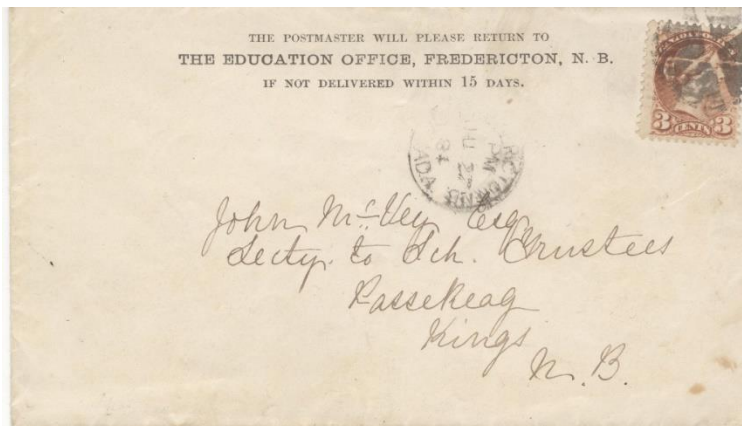


The CSI case is not quite fully solved but here are some additional points for consideration:

1. If some of the white was filled with ink, the cancel on the left could easily closely resemble the one on the right, i.e. become an 'F'.
2. Examining covers with Fredericton cancels before and after the period of January to April 1885, provides some additional insights. Between the period August 1884 and August 1885, all the killers from Fredericton I have seen are quartered corks (see Figs. 4a & 4b below for two examples). I own five such covers, one from 1884 and four from 1885. I note three others from various sales all in 1885.



Covers prior to August 1884 show a clearly different pattern (Figure 5 below). Admittedly there is a gap (September to December 1884) in which I have not seen quartered corks. So then the question warrants asking, was a different cancel, for example the Fredericton 'F', used either JUST in April 1885 or is it a spurious cancel from a solid cork showing deterioration?



Fredericton covers from this period are not scarce. Although during the three month period January to April 1885, a new 'F' cancel could have been introduced and used, but if one had, I would have expected to have seen one given my 20-year serious search in auctions, dealers stocks, written requests to postal history dealers, etc.

If anyone reading this article has any covers that could contribute to this mini-study, I would love to hear from you.

### Small Queen 6 Cent “Ghostly Head” Plate

Jim McCormick (jim@jimmc.ca)

Little has been written about a printing of the 6 cent issue using the so called “ghostly head” or “rejected” plate. The first reference I could find on the subject was in John Hillson’s “Small Queens Re-appraised” from 1999, and there is also a section in Ted Nixon / John Hillson’s Small Queen book from 2008.

90 examples were scanned and analyzed from different collections in attempt to bring new information to light. There are several distinguishing features which are useful for identify this scarce printing:

- Shallow impression around the Queen's hair giving it a “ghostly” look to it.
- Guide dot directly below the middle of the left “6”.
- A faint horizontal guide line is sometimes visible through the guide dot.
- Printing is clear and crisp showing fine detail, as one may expect from a new plate.
- Some examples have a second guide dot below the lower left corner.
- Dated examples are found between November 1873 and early 1874.
- Perforations measure 11.5 x 12.
- Shade is always yellow brown.
- Paper is always high quality with a horizontal weave.

Figures 1 and 2 highlight the most prominent distinguishing features.



Figure 1: Weak impression in hair, dot under 6, guide line

Small Queen Six-Cent Ghostly Head Plate Contd.

**Figure 2: Example with a strong horizontal guide line**

From the analysis of about 50 dated 6 cents between 1872 and end of 1874, stamps dated prior to use of the ghostly head show a single guide dot in the lower left corner, and stamps dated after show two guide dots in the lower left corner. The left most column of the sheet is the exception showing no guide dots. This is strong evidence that the poor quality "ghostly head" plate was put into service temporarily while the preferred plate was out for repair.



**Figure 3: Ghostly head is middle stamp; compare to non-ghostly heads left and right.**

To discover more about the make-up of the plate, multiples and position pieces are necessary. But these are very scarce. So far, the multiples known to exist are:

- Mint block of 20, illustrated in BNA Topics Vol 4 No 9 from October 1947. It was believed to be the largest known block of the 6 cent yellow brown, perforated 11.5 x 12. It has since been broken into smaller pieces, two of which are illustrated in Figure 4.
  - Block of 4 from LL corner of the block, illustrated in the Nixon / Hillson book
  - Block of 6 from UR corner of the block, see the Simpson sale (Maresch sale 307, lot 201)
- Used block of 8, dated JA 26 74, illustrated in Figure 5.
- Block of 4 on cover from Niagara to London, England, dated JU 25 74.
- A couple of used pairs.

Small Queen Six-Cent Ghostly Head Plate Contd.



Figure 4: The big block of 20, and the known pieces of it

The used block of 8 (Figure 5) is important for several reasons. For one, it shows how column #4 most strongly exhibits the “ghostly” look. Column 3 is a little less so, and so on until the first column looks pretty much like the normal (non-ghostly) stamp. This demonstrates how stamps printed from the plate may not be easily identified. One may say this disqualifies a stamp as a ghostly head, but we have other tools to identify stamps from this plate.



Figure 5: The used block of 8, courtesy Ted Nixon

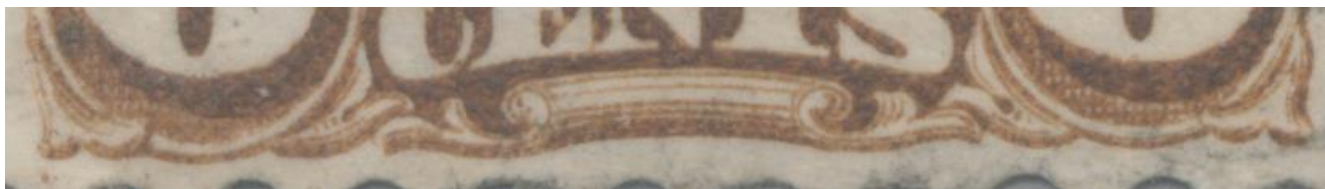
Small Queen Six-Cent Ghostly Head Plate Contd.

The third column of the used block is interesting in that both stamps show a second guide dot in the lower left corner. The block of 4 from Figure 3 also shows this on the left two stamps. From examining sixty-seven other singles, four show the second dot. The orientation of the dots is slightly different, suggesting that several plate positions have this feature. It is reasonable to conclude that most or all stamps in the third column of a sheet will show two guide dots. Have a close-up look at figure 6.



**Figure 6: Three examples showing two guide dots with different orientation**

Another great find from the block of 8 is that the stamps in the left column both show a single guide dot in the lower left corner. This breaks the rules! Figure 7 shows a close-up. Note that for earlier (non-ghostly) printings, the single guide dot is always to the right of the LL corner, making this one distinguishable.



**Figure 7: The first column shows a single dot below the LL corner**

The left column stamps from the sheet are easily confused with a "normal" 6 cent. Figure 8 demonstrates how normal it looks. The impression is strong around the Queen's hair. There's no dot under the left 6, and no visible guide line. The JA 30 74 date may be a slightly late usage for an earlier printing. But the pattern on this stamp follows the two margin stamps from the block of 8, and the single dot on the earlier printings is always further to the right than on this stamp.



**Figure 8: Not so ghostly looking 6c from the ghostly plate**

There are no known re-entries or significant flaws on this plate. This should hardly be surprising as the plate was barely used and there was no need for re-entry. There are several very minor plate flaws that appear as small flecks of ink, possibly from burrs or pitting. Duplicates would be necessary to prove that these are constant.

To summarize new information on the “ghostly head” plate:

- Most or all stamps in the first column show a single guide dot below the LL corner
- Most or all stamps in the third column have a second guide dot by the LL corner
- Not all plate positions exhibit the “ghostly” look, especially the first column on the sheet
- No known re-entries or plate flaws of significance

It is useful to make a comparison to the Large Queen issue. As described in Duckworth, there were two plates for this issue. Printings from Plate 1 show a single guide dot in the LL corner of each stamp, and from Plate 2 show the guide dot directly below the left “6”. Plate 1 has a number of positions showing re-entries, while Plate 2 has none. The Plate 2 printings appeared some time after the first Plate 1 printings. Also it is worth noting that Plate 1 had imprint type A (Boggs Type IV), and Plate 2 had type B (Boggs Type III). It seems clear that two different



Small Queen Six-Cent Ghostly Head Plate Contd.

siderographers were responsible for the Large Queen plates each using their own technique, and the same two techniques were used for the initial Small Queen 6 cent plates. No imprint copies are known for the ghostly Small Queen for comparison. Have a look at Figure 9, noting the location of the guide dots and the different imprints.



**Figure 9: Large Queen imprint stamps for plates 1 and 2**

With some 20+ years remaining in the life of the 6 cent issue, why was this plate not cleaned up and put back into service? The original plate was re-entered several times, so why not this one too? We can only speculate.

What are we missing? Imprint pieces! More multiples! Who will be the first to determine which imprint was applied to the plate? Can we pull together enough multiples to identify some positions? Please check your collections.

Special thanks to Ted Nixon and Guillaume Vadeboncoeur for their contributions!

**References:**

1. BNA Topics Vol. 4 No. 9, October 1947, article by Ed Richardson
2. Canada Small Queens Re-Appraised by John Hillson, FCPS
3. Canada's Postage Stamps of the Small Queen Era, 1870-1897 by John Hillson and Ted Nixon
4. The Large Queen Stamps of Canada and Their Use, second edition, by H.E. & H.W. Duckworth
5. R. Maresch & Son Auction Sale 307, May 14, 1996

**In Memoriam – ed.**

I regret I haven't able to put together a newsletter for a while. I had intended to publish before BNAPEX 2017, and though time has passed – hope I remembered all contributors - I wished to remember two special people here.

John Hillson was a passionate philatelist and generous contributor to this newsletter. Small Queen collecting continues to thrive; as collectors evolve, they thirst for knowledge. Diligent and intelligent people like Mr Hillson, who see their study through to published works, are the foundation for coming generations of stamp collectors.

John Beddows passing last July saddened me too. I always had time for John at a show, we shared stories and while we did a little business sometimes, the transaction always seemed secondary to the friendship. I recall him

thanking me once for a small pile of modern covers, because “he got two new people collecting” from them. I’m grateful to have known him a little.

### Small Queen Mark on Neck Query

Tom Meyerhof ([meyerhof@magma.ca](mailto:meyerhof@magma.ca))

Recently I acquired this copy of a 3¢ Small Queen with an X-shaped mark on the Queen's neck. The date on the cancel appears to be ?R 19 94. The Watford ON squared circle hammer itself was proofed on FE 16 94. The location of the mark is slightly removed from the well-known 'vampire bite' variety and is



not shown on Bill Burden's Small Queen constant plate varieties website or in Guy Jeffries article in the February 2014 edition of Confederation on Small Queen constant plate varieties.

I circulated this stamp to the members of the Large and Small Queen Study Group present at the BNAPEX 2017 meeting in September 2017, but no one could recollect seeing a similar copy. Can anyone confirm that this is indeed a constant plate variety?

### A Third Copy of The "Earring Variety" on #23 Reported

Michael Smith



Brian Hargreaves first reported this variety in Confederation Vol. 56, page 4. He described the plate scratch and illustrated a single and pair with the variety.

I discovered a third example of this beautiful plate scratch, dubbed the "earring variety". This is an easy scratch to see provided that the cancellation on a used stamp does not hide it. Included here is a close up scan of this slightly curved plate scratch.

This example was found in an APS circuit book. The stamp is perforated 12 X 12, paper thickness 0.00315", no distinct grain. The impression is fairly clear on this relatively

smooth paper. Keep your eyes open for this as there should be other copies out there.

#### References:

- Confederation, the Newsletter of the Large and Small Queens Study Group, Vol. 56, April 2014, page 4.
- 2017 Unitrade Specialized Catalog of Canadian Stamps, ed. D. Robin Harris, The Unitrade Press, Page 48.

**1¢ Small Queen from Plate 4?**

Guillaume Vadeboncoeur ([guillaume@vadeboncoeur.ca](mailto:guillaume@vadeboncoeur.ca))

I recently acquired the strip of seven pictured below of the 1¢ Small Queen. It is an attractive piece with imprint Type V over plate positions 4 to 7, with shaded ONE CENT counter above plate positions 1 and 2 and with a reversed R marking at upper left indicating that the plate was re-entered.



**Figure 1, 1¢ strip of 7 believed to be from Hillson and Nixon's plate #4**

I had not researched this item prior to purchasing it other than to verify that I did not already have an example of this specific counter/imprint combination. Surprisingly, based on a review of important auction sales and collections of Small Queens in my library I was not able to locate another example of the 1¢ value showing the exact same position for the ONE CENT counter.

Hillson and Nixon list no fewer than 15 different plates for the 1¢ Small Queen but mention that additional plates not listed in the 1903 plate-destruction records could have been prepared for this value<sup>1</sup>. Their listing includes nine different plates (Hillson and Nixon's plates #3 to #11) as having Type V imprint, but this includes three "double lettered" plates (Hillson and Nixon's plates #5 to #7) and four "S" plates (Hillson and Nixon's plates #8 to #11) where the plate identification (letters/numbers) D/E, F/G, H/I, S1, S2, S3 or S4 is clearly inscribed above the middle of the imprint at the top of the sheet between plate positions 5 and 6. This would then only leave Hillson and Nixon's plates #3 and #4 as the remaining possible plates from which these stamps were printed from. Plate #3 is noted as having a "large 3 in right margin" while plate #4 is described as "plate exists, four not seen yet". During my search I located a complete top imprint strip of 10 from plate #3 showing the "large 3 in right margin". This strip, illustrated below at Figure 2, was previously held in the Clare Jephcott, Bill Simpson and Ted Nixon collections. This strip was described as being from a printing from 1881-1882 which I agreed with when I viewed it at the Eastern Auctions Ltd.'s sale of the Nixon collection.

For my current purpose, I noticed that the alignment of the counter on plate #3 was markedly different than on the strip of seven illustrated at Figure 1, with the counter effectively positioned above plate positions 2 and 3. Despite the plate being described by Hillson and Nixon as "3R", which would indicate that in its final state the plate had been re-entered, the strip from plate #3 lacked a reversed R marking. This likely simply indicates that the strip of 10 is from a printing prior to the re-entering of the plate.

<sup>1</sup>Canada's Postage Stamps of the Small Queen Era, 1870-1897, John Hillson and J. Edward Nixon, Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation, p.95.

1¢ Small Queen from Plate 4? Contd.



**Figure 2, 1¢ strip of 10 from Hillson and Nixon's Plate #3  
Image courtesy of Eastern Auctions Ltd. Red circle added for emphasis.**

By deduction and logic, it would thus appear that the strip of 7 illustrated in Figure 1 is from Hillson and Nixon's plate #4, unless it is from another unrecorded plate not listed in the 1903 plate-destruction records. The stamps appear to be from a mid-1880s printing in deep yellow on vertical wove paper perforated 11.9x11.9. As always, I would like to hear from anyone who may have material that would either corroborate the above findings, or refute them by demonstrating the existence of additional plates not listed in Hillson and Nixon.

### **2017 ORAPEX Gathering, Invitation for 2018 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gathering**

Guillaume Vadeboncoeur ([guillaume@vadeboncoeur.ca](mailto:guillaume@vadeboncoeur.ca))

I just wanted to thank all of the individuals who attended my 2017 ORAPEX Gathering this year (the 9<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of this gathering). It seems to be growing every year and I am quite happy with the decision to move it to my Macleod Street's condo building party room.

In 2017 a total of 22 persons attended representing Canada coast-to-coast, several US states and even the United Kingdom: Glenn Archer, Dr. Mark Berner, Alec Globe, Chris Green, Paul Grimm, Mike Halhed, Brian Hargreaves, Ariel Hasid, Ian Kimmerly, Ron Majors, Jim McCormick, Ted Nixon, Bill Radcliffe, Scott Robinson, Mike Smith, Wayne Smith, Gary Steele, Ian Sutherland, Richard Thompson, Guillaume Vadeboncoeur, Dr. Jim Watt and Victor Willson.



**Left to Right: Richard Thompson and Alec Globe; Bill Radcliffe and a recent acquisition; Ariel Hasid, Mike Halhed and Dr. Mark Berner discussing Florida weather and Pence issues**

Orapex Gathering 2017, Invitation for 2018 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gathering *Contd.*



**More Pictures. Left to Right: Wayne Smith and Brian Hargreaves taking pictures of 4-rings under the watchful eye of Alec Globe; Richard Thompson and Ted Nixon talking about perforations and shades, or was it shades and papers?**

In an informal setting everyone discussed their purchases from earlier in the day, shared items they wanted second (or third or fourth) opinions on. It seems that everyone had a good time as I did not hear any complaints other than time going by too quickly and the need to get a few hours of sleep before the show opened on Sunday. Next year will be the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of the gathering. I invite collectors to attend Orapex and the gathering, especially if you are interested in 19<sup>th</sup> century Canadian stamps, postal history and cancels.

**Newsletter contact information:**

General enquiries: [confederationbnaps@gmail.com](mailto:confederationbnaps@gmail.com)

*Chairman:*

Bill Radcliffe, 478 Media Rd., Oxford PA 19363 U.S.A.  
Email: [bsbvp88@hotmail.com](mailto:bsbvp88@hotmail.com), Ph. (856) 589-1945

*Editor:*

Glenn Archer, 2114 Lawrence Ave. W, York ON M9N 1J1 CANADA  
Email: [glennarcher@hotmail.com](mailto:glennarcher@hotmail.com)

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