The 1917 3¢ Confederation Commemorative

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Admiral Study Group meeting, BNAPEX 2008
(revised in 2018)
Introduction

- Based on a study by Richard M. Morris of the 1917 3¢ Confederation commemorative
- With few exceptions, the stamps illustrated come from Richard’s collection
- Richard made most of his discoveries while sorting through bulk lots of used stamps
- I augmented Richard’s discoveries with information from the plate proofs at Library and Archives Canada
Outline

- Printing
- Plates
- Design types
- Re-entries, retouches, and other plate flaws
Printing

- **Design**
  - “The Fathers of Confederation”
  - From a photograph of an oil painting by Robert Harris
    - 8 people in the original painting were omitted from the stamp
  - Engraved by Edwin H. Gunn, American Bank Note Co.

- **Printer**
  - American Bank Note Co. Ltd., Ottawa
Printing

- Quantity
  - 98,650,000

- Date of issue
  - Saturday, 15 Sept. 1917
  - Baron and Lum recorded first day postmarks from [*BNA Topics*, Vol. 50, No. 1, Jan.-Feb. 1993]
    - Trois-Rivières, QC
    - Winnipeg, MB
    - Calgary, AB
    - Edmonton, AB
  - Post Office Dept stock exhausted in Jan. 1918 [Boggs]
    - Few postmarks after March 1918
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Printing

1917

- 27 Jul – plates 49, 50
- 17 Aug – plates 1, 2
- 6 Sep – plates 51, 52
- 10 Oct – plates 11, 12
- 20 Oct – plates 53, 54
- 23 Oct – plates 55-58
- 26 Jul – plates 5, 6
- 28 Jun – plates 3, 4
- 10 Jun – plates 1, 2
- 8 Aug – plates 7, 8
- Late Jan – Post Office Dept stock exhausted
- Plates 57-60 believed not used
- 27 Apr – plates 59, 60

1918

- 6 Aug 1918
  Date of issue

15 Sep 1917
Date of issue

6 Aug 1918
Date of issue
Plates

- **Die**
  - O-G-194
  - Die proofs in olive-brown and black

- **Transfer roll [Boggs]**
  - 2 rolls manufactured
  - 3 reliefs per roll
Plates

- Plates manufactured: 1 to 12
  - Approx 41,000 sheets or 8.2 M stamps per plate on average
- Sheets of 200 stamps (4 panes of 50)
- Imperforate stamps from plates 7, 8
  - 100 pairs reported
  - The philatelic literature reported that J. O. Labrecq (a prominent Montreal collector) got one pane, Frederick T. Norris got two panes, and a friend of Norris got one pane [The Admiral’s Log, Vol. XIII, No. 1, Dec. 2013, p. 23]
  - Sacks argues 200 pairs may exist [BNA Topics, Q1 2005] [BNA Topics, Q1 2013]
The plates were approved in pairs.

- Plates 9 – 12 were approved after date of issue.
- There is roughly a 1 week interval between 1st 3 pairs of plates and 2 weeks thereafter.
Plate Layout

- 4 panes of 50
- No gutter between panes
  - The sides of the stamps touching adjacent panes have straight edges
- Imprint and Printing Order no. in bottom margin only
- Horizontal guide arrows in pane margin between upper and lower panes
- Vertical guide arrows in pane margin between left and right panes
Plates – Imprint and PO Number

- Plate 5 LL & LR
- Note vertical guide arrow on LR block
- Note corner fold on LL block

- Imprint in column 2 of LL and LR panes
  - OTTAWA – N°-A x

- Printing Order no. in column 4 of LL and LR panes
  - Plates 1-6: 943B
  - Plates 7-8: 943C
  - Plates 9-12: 943D
Plate Guide Dots

- There are guide dots in the bottom sheet margin
  - Plate was laid out row by row, starting with the row at the top
- Distance from bottom of design to guide dot
  - Plates 1 – 6: 3.2 to 3.4 mm
  - Plates 7 – 8: 4.7 mm
  - Plates 9 – 12: 6.5 mm
    - Guide dot is “off centre” – in the “C” in “CANADA”
    - ERD: 25 Nov. 1917
Plate Guide Dots

Plates 1 – 6
Dot in arc

Plates 7 – 8
Dot in P

Plates 9 – 12
Dot in C
Design types – Breaks Above “POST”

Normal – no breaks

Break in horizontal lines at S and T
Note the guide dot
Plates 3, 4, 6?

Breaks above P, O, S, and T
Note the guide dot
Plate 5
Major Re-entries
Retouches

Retouch to RVL. Line is very irregular.
Re-entry? “17” is thin and lines in flame are doubled.

Retouch to RVL. Line is very irregular.

Retouch to bottom of left vertical line (LVL). Note the thick line and the extension into the white area.

Retouch to right vertical line (RVL). Line is irregular and horizontal lines extend beyond it.
Straight edge at top.
Retouch or Heavy Transfer?

Plate 5 LL 9/1 (UL stamp in corner block)
The horizontal and vertical shading lines are very thick, probably due to retouching.

Plate 5 LL 10/1 (LL stamp in corner block)
Note the contrast in the shading lines. Stamps 9/2 and 10/2 are similar.

Note the break in the 2nd horizontal line from bottom. This is common.
Plate Flaws

Defective transfer, LL corner, from plates 1 – 6

1UL1/2 - Engraver’s slip in the arc over the “O” in “POSTAGE”

Spur, UL corner

Spur, LR corner

One of the best of the many examples of broken lines