

“Faux Offset” of the One Cent Small Queen

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The Small Queens (SQs) Issue remains an intriguing study on a variety of fronts. In the process of evaluating a collection of One Cent SQs, I have noticed something that I would like to share with this Study Group.

For the purposes of this article, an offset printing “occurs when sheets of stamps are stacked while the ink is still wet. An offset shows a reverse impression on the back of the stamp, i.e. everything is backwards.”¹ Of the lower denomination SQs (1/2, 1, 2, and 3 Cents), the One Cent SQ seems to have the lowest frequency of offsets. Offsets amongst the One Cent SQs are more commonly seen, however, on and after mid-1895 and are frequently associated with the poorer “J” paper group (medium weight, poor quality, toned yellowish paper). When I noticed a stamp labeled as an “offset” amongst a recently purchased collection of One Cent SQ fancy cancels, my curiosity was piqued as this particular stamp’s paper is whiter, minimally toned and with better quality compared with “J” paper offsets.

Characteristics:

On first inspection, this stamp has a relatively nice appearance (Fig. 1). The most obvious feature is the “quartered” cork cancellation – Jarrett No. 1351²; Day & Smythies No. 848³; Lacelle No.1176. “Napanee ON DE75-?80”⁴. Quartered corks were popular in other post offices during the SQ era, not just Napanee⁵.

The variation in paper thickness is not unusual for this Issue: Top Left (33/10000”), Top Right (31.5/10000”), Centre (31/10000”), Bottom Left (33/10000”) and Bottom Right (33.5/10000”).

The Richard M. Morris Color Guide System reveals the shade as *Orange Yellow*⁶.

Digital perforation determinations using an Epson™ Perfection V600 Photo Scanner at 1200 dpi and Adobe Photoshop™ are Top 12.32, Bottom 12.31, Left 12.33, and Right 12.36.

The paper seems to have characteristics of both Shoemaker⁷ E and F Groups – “Design shows through” consistent with Group E and “Toned white pebbly surfaced” consistent with Group F. The

¹ Reiche, Hans *Offsets*, **BNA Topics**, March 1971. p 98.

² Jarrett, Fred. **Stamps of British North America**, 1929. Quarterman Publications, Inc. pp 536-7.

³ Day, K.M. and Smythies E.A. **Canadian Fancy Cancellations of the Nineteenth Century, 2e**, 1981. Mission Press pp 112-3.

⁴ Lacelle, D.M. **Fancy Cancels On Canadian Stamps 1855 to 1950, 2e**, 2007. The British North American Philatelic Society Ltd. pp 108-9.

⁵ Pugh, K and Leith, R. Expert opinion. Discussion. October 25, 2019.

⁶ Morris, Richard M. **Color Guide System for Large & Small Queens & Widow Weeds & Registration Stamps of Canada**, 2000. Pittsboro Philatelics.

⁷ Ribler, Ronald I. **Canada’s Three Cents Small Queen 1870-1897 Reflections of a Generation**, 2000. Philatelics Unlimited. pp 47-8.

overall paper quality is far superior compared to Group J types where virtually all true offsets are seen in this issue as discussed above.



Fig. 1

On closer inspection, the stamp has a left centre guide dot⁸ (Fig. 2). In my collection, the earliest recorded left centre guide dot is JA 4 1880. Left centred guide dots rarely are accompanied with lower left guide dots.



Fig. 2

The above pieces of evidence are helpful in dating this stamp. I would surmise this stamp is a Montreal Printing from the 1880's.

The "Faux" Features

When the stamp is turned over, there appears to be a relatively strong offset throughout consistent with the previous owner's opinion (Fig. 3). However, on closer inspection, and especially under

⁸ Kershaw, K.A. **A Summary of the Known Flaws, Guide Dots and Cork Cancels in the 1 Cent Small Queen**, 2013. The British North American Philatelic Society Ltd. pp 59-62.

scanned magnification (Fig. 4), the appearance of colour is only seen on the indented areas from mesh (horizontal in this circumstance) used in the paper manufacture. The ink bleeds in and around these individual areas and, in many areas, blends with adjacent colour to give the appearance of a striking offset. This phenomenon is somewhat more pronounced in the embossed areas of the stamp such as the outer and inner circles. This variety is distinct from the diffuse generalized bleeding of analine dye seen in other denominations especially the Three Cent SQ.



Fig. 3

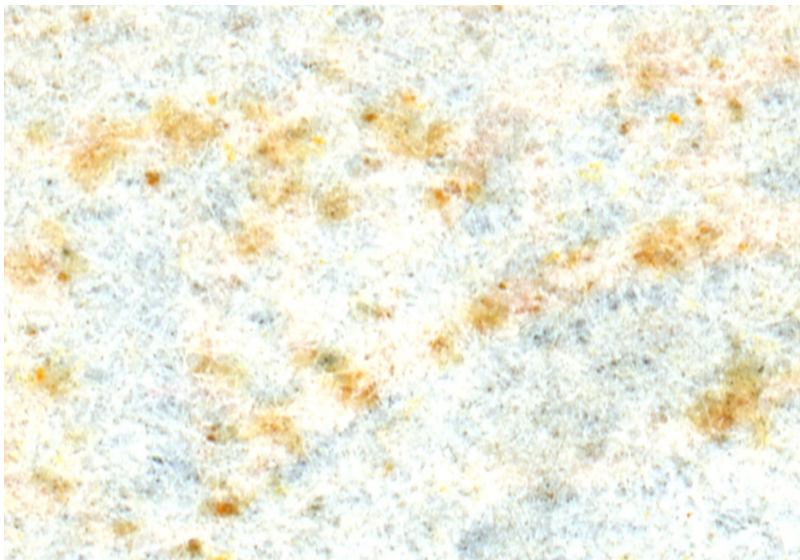


Fig. 4

My suspicion that this was a “faux offset” was confirmed upon holding up the stamp to the light at an angle (Fig. 5). The colour almost completely disappeared!



Fig. 5

This particular “faux offset” variety appears to be quite uncommon and can easily be mislabeled as a true offset. This variety should neither be confused with the design showing through, especially thinner paper varieties, nor with true offsets seen at the latest stages of the SQ era. Further study is required to determine the printing period(s) during which this “faux” variety occurs. A subsequent article will be published to help answer this question.

Please feel free to forward your comments and/or questions directly to me. I would be happy to publish any follow-up responses in a subsequent newsletter.

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