

# The case of the missing plate number

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**W**HAT would the height of frustration be for an Admiral plate imprint collector? How about a nice block of 20 from the top of a sheet with no plate number or imprint whatsoever? Like the one illustrated in Figure 1 for example? An immediate but seemingly hopeless question pops up—what plate does this come from?

The American Bank Note Co (ABN) went through 170 plates to print the 1¢ green in sheet format. That is a staggering number by today's standards, but was par for the course for a stamp with a print run of 3.2 billion in the Admiral era. So, what plate does the block come from? It turns out that this question is not so hopeless after all.



Figure 1. Block of 20 1¢ green Admiral without plate imprint  
From upper left pane, type D plate layout.

After producing plates 1–30, ABN retouched the die. The block comes from a retouched die printing, eliminating 1–30. From the straight edge and cutting guide arrow at the right, we infer that the block came from a sheet of 400 subjects with no horizontal or vertical gutter between panes. Marler [M, 42–43] called this type D. On the 1¢ green, ABN used this layout beginning with plate 73. So the block did not come from plates 1–72.

Leafing through Marler's book [M], one finds on page 105:

There were no inscriptions for the upper panes of plates 163 and 164, but the plate number was punched on the plate; the inscription quoted [earlier on the same page] appeared below the band of lathework.

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In an earlier article, Harry W Lussey says that the upper left panes of both plates were completely blank and the plate number was punched in the upper right pane [L]. So presumably the illustrated block is from the upper left pane of plate 163 or 164.

A question that is less easy to answer—why is the plate inscription missing? ABN took a lot of care in preparing the Admiral plates, so why are the inscriptions missing on the top panes of plates 163 & 164? Whatever the answer, these plates are not unique. There was no inscription on the lower panes of plates 5 & 6 of the 2¢ carmine [M, 224], nor was there an inscription on the top panes of plates 64 & 65 of the 3¢ brown [M, 477].

## References

- [L] Harry H Lussey *The Admirals, one of Canada's greatest*, Canadian Philatelist, Vol 27, #3, May–June 1976.  
 [M] George C Marler *The Admiral issue of Canada*, American Philatelic Society (1982).

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