

Uncovering the history of two classic Canadian issues

The Eastern Auctions sale of Oct. 21, 2011, included production files for Canada's 1898 Imperial Penny Postage and 1908 Tercentenary issues.

On Oct. 21, 2011, two American Bank Note Co. (ABN) production files were offered for sale at Eastern Auctions Ltd. The production files of the 1898 Imperial Penny Post issue (Scott 85-86) and the

1908 Quebec Tercentenary set (96-103) had been in private hands since they were originally bought at the ABN Archives sale on Sept. 13, 1990.

The Imperial Penny Post pair depict the same design: a map of the British Empire, in two different color schemes (Scott 85 is black, lavender and carmine, and 86 is black, blue and carmine), and the eight stamps of the Quebec set show various royalty, explorers, military persons and Quebec historical scenes.

If you are a serious collector of an issue of stamps, whatever country might pique your interest, and you wish to exhibit and receive high awards, items from production files, when available, are a must for the display. In general, such files visually describe the whole process that a stamp

goes through from its creation to its printing.

Sometimes the files also contain correspondence or annotations to help in setting the time frames and order in which designs were produced and considered by the printers and postal authorities.

In Canadian philately, production files in private hands are rare, although recently some production files from the 1950s have appeared on the market.

However, in the last few years, dealers and auctioneers have shown a tendency to remove much of the valuable artwork, die proofs and plate proofs in these files to sell them separately, as more people are interested in owning a single item rather than the whole file with the paperwork associated with the stamp's production. This is a pity, because the two – artwork and paperwork – are hand in

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Figure 1. Warren L. Greene's preliminary sketch of the 1898 Imperial Penny Postage map stamp sold for \$4,000 Canadian at auction last October.



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glove when putting together a serious exhibit.

The 1898 map stamp file was owned by Hugh Westgate, who used it in his exhibit to demonstrate the development of the concept of the issue by Sir William Mulock (1844-1944; Postmaster General of Canada, 1896-1905) to its production by artists and engravers of the ABN.

Sir William wanted the stamps to promote the successful realization of his dream for Imperial Penny Postage. They were issued on Dec. 7, 1898, with Imperial Penny Postage coming into effect on Christmas Day of that year.

The very first item one would show in an ex-

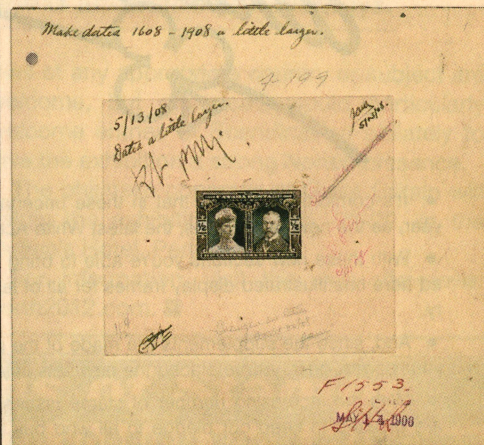


Figure 2. The Prince of Wales is in civilian dress in this artist's model of the 1/2c stamp of the 1908 Quebec Tercentenary set; the lot of nine models of the issue brought \$55,000 Canadian at auction.

hibit of the map stamp would be the original watercolor and pencil sketch (Figure 1) prepared by Warren L. Greene (lot 202, \$4,000; all values cited here are hammer prices in Canadian dollars).

On June 7, 1897, Greene became the chief executive officer of the Canadian subsidiary of the ABN. He had started as an apprentice engraver with ABN in New York in 1882 and had moved to ABN's office in Ottawa in 1887.

Two of the many other lots that would be important in creating a great collection of the map issue were the unique complete set of mint sheets of all four issued plate numbers (Plates 1-3 and 5, Lot 235, \$8,500) and the 25-stamp part proof sheet of the unissued Plate 4 (Lot 234, \$7,500).

The most valuable item in the sale was Lot 221, a unique zinc progressive plate proof sheet printed on wove paper. It sold for \$29,000.

The 1908 Quebec Tercentenary set was the first Canadian stamp issue to have some of its wording in French. The ABN production

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