

NEWFOUNDLAND PLATE NUMBERS

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Part 1 — 1897 to 1931

Sheets of Newfoundland stamps, issued over the years from 1857 to 1949, have had several interesting markings located in the margins or selvage, placed there by the particular printing firm hired to design and print the issue in question. Several ideas exist as to why this was done.

In some cases it was used to identify or promote the name of the printing firm, i.e., the company name appears as an imprint or inscription (American Bank Note Co., New York; National Bank Note Co., New York; British American Bank Note Co., Ottawa; Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co., LD, New Malden, Surrey, England; Canadian Bank Note Co., Ottawa). In another case the markings were used to determine when the engraved plate was wearing out, i.e. lathe scroll work or solid color bars.

In other instances, a numeral is found in the margin. Collectors have come to call this a plate number. With Newfoundland stamps it is interesting to note that this numeral or plate number is not found prior to 1897, nor is it found on all values of issued stamps.

Before tackling the study of the Newfoundland plate numbers it is necessary to state what perforation gauge is being used, because Meyerson states that not all gauges give the same perforation readings. In this study a Stanley Gibbons Instanta Perforation Gauge with the perforations going from 9.8 to 18.2 was used.

Sources that have assisted me in my research include Winthrop S. Boggs, *Postage Stamps and Postal History of Newfoundland*, Chambers Publishing Company, 1942, reprinted by Quarterman, 1975; Robson Lowe, *The Encyclopedia of British Empire Postage Stamps, Volume V, North America*, Robson Lowe Limited, 1973; John Aysford, *The Last Stamps of Newfoundland*, Robson Lowe Ltd., 1978; and Daniel C. Meyerson, *The Trail of the Caribou*, British North America Philatelic Society, edited by R.J. Woolley.

The earliest use of a plate number that I know of appears in connection with the 1c blue green value of the 1897 Royal Family Issue. It

has a reversed numeral 3 in the upper left corner margin, and is perforated 12 x 12. Neither Boggs nor Lowe mention the existence of any plate number for this stamp. Lowe, however, reports that plate 2 exists for the 2c orange, while plates 3 and 4 appear with the 3c orange.

Meyerson reports that the 2c orange has a reversed numeral 2 in the upper right corner. Meyerson also reports that the 3c orange has a 3 in the upper left and that the reversed numeral exists in the upper left. He also reports a reversed numeral 4 with F 5610 (a control number?) in the upper right corner. I have not seen these.

Plate numbers for the Map of Newfoundland Issue, the lithographed John Guy Issue, the engraved John Guy Issue and the 1911 Royal Family Issue have not been reported in the literature.

The Caribou Issue of 1919 is the next issue to have plate numbers. I have found the 1c green value has plate 1 at left center, opposite the 41st



A reversed '3' on the 1c value of the 1897 Royal Family Issue.

stamp, plate 2 at right center, opposite the 50th stamp, and plate 3 at left center, opposite the 41st stamp. All are perforated 14.1 x 14.1. Robson Lowe stated that the 1¢ green plate 1 was unnumbered; this is obviously incorrect.

The 2¢ scarlet value has plate 1 at left center, plate 2 at right center, and plate 3 at left center. These too were perforated 14.1 x 14.1

The 3¢ brown value has plate 1 at left center, plate 2 at right center and plate 3 at left center. Again these were perforated 14.1 x 14.1.

Meyerson reports that a 1¢ green Caribou plate exists on a 1923 cover. I have not seen this item.

The next issue to have a plate number appear in the selvage is the Pictorial issue of 1923;

the 3¢ brown value with plate 2 is known.

It has been reported by Boggs that the 3¢ value was printed in sheets of 100. The plates of this issue that I have found are located in the lower left corner, with a line located below the upright numeral — most likely an indicator for cutting the sheet apart. A cover has been found bearing the 3¢ value with the same numeral style located in the upper left corner still, with the same line located below the numeral. For this to happen there must have been two panes of 100 subjects, or a sheet of 200, printed contrary to what Boggs has reported. The perforation 13.7 x 14 has been found on these examples.

The Publicity Issue of 1928 has not been reported as having any values with plate num-

Plate Numbers on Newfoundland Stamps 1897 to 1931

Issue	Perforation	LC	UL	LL	UR	LR	RC
1897 Royal Family							
1¢ blue green	12 x 12		3(R)				
1919 Caribou							
1¢ green	14.1 x 14.1	1					
1¢ green	14.1 x 14.1						2
1¢ green	14.1 x 14.1	3					
2¢ scarlet	14.1 x 14.1	1					
2¢ scarlet	14.1 x 14.1						2
2¢ scarlet	14.1 x 14.1	3					
3¢ brown	14.1 x 14.1	1					
3¢ brown	14.1 x 14.1						2
3¢ brown	14.1 x 14.1	3					
1923 Pictorial							
3¢ brown	13.7 x 14			2			
3¢ brown	13.7 x 14		2				
1929 Pictorial							
2¢ deep carmine	13.8 x 13.5			2			
2¢ deep carmine	13.8 x 13.5			3			
2¢ deep carmine	13.8 x 13.8			3			
3¢ red brown	13.8 x 13.8			3			
3¢ red brown	13.8 x 13.8						2(Imperforate Bottom Margin)
3¢ red brown	13.8 x 13.5					3	
3¢ red brown	13.5 x 13.8					3	
3¢ red brown	13.8 x 13.8					3	
1931 Publicity							
2¢ red	13.8 x 13.8			2			
3¢ red brown	13.8 x 13.8					3	

Legend: LC - left center; RC - right center; R - numeral reversed

bers on them.

In the Publicity Issue of 1929 both the 2¢ deep carmine and the 3¢ red brown are reported to have plate numbers. I have found the 2¢ deep carmine with plate 2 at the lower left corner, with 13.8 x 13.5 perforation, and plate 3 at the lower left corner, with 13.8 x 13.5 and 13.8 x 13.8.

I have found the 3¢ red brown value with plate 2 at the lower left corner, perforated 13.8 x 13.8. Another plate 2 lower left corner, perforated 13.8 x 13.8, has been found with the bottom sheet margin imperforate horizontally. Lowe makes no mention of a plate having this feature. To date I have seen only one example of a plate with this variety. The 3¢ value is also found with plate 3 at the upper right corner, with three different perforations, 13.8 x 13.5, 13.5 x 13.8 and 13.8 x 13.8.

In the Publicity Issue of 1931 the 2¢ red value with plate 2 at the lower left corner is perforated 13.8 x 13.8. The 3¢ red brown value with plate 3 at the upper right corner is also perforated 13.8 x 13.8.

The table shows the plates, locations, and perforations I have found associated with the issues from 1897 to 1931.

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