

Newfoundland Revenue Stamp Watermarks

The Watermarked Stamps of the 1907 King Edward VII and 1910 King George V Issues

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It is common knowledge that a watermark can be found on some values in both the 1907 King Edward VII and the 1910 King George V revenue issues of Newfoundland. It is reported in various catalogues [1, 2] that the 25¢, 50¢ and \$1 values of the 1907 King Edward VII issue have been observed 'with watermark.' The 5¢, 10¢, 25¢, 50¢ and \$1 values of the 1910 King George V (with imprint) issue are also known 'with watermark.' What hasn't been reported is the style or nature of this watermark!

The search for watermarked stamps has to be a challenge. First, these two issues are usually found on piece. Seldom, if ever, does one find mint, gummed (implying not used) values from these two issues. Those used stamps found in the marketplace had to be removed from documents. To get a document and then remove the stamps causes great concern to many serious collectors. "The stamps should be left on the document pieces" is the most often heard comment. Fortunately for researchers, many of these soaked-off stamps are still in the marketplace. Several holdings numbering into the thousands were viewed in this study, thereby establishing a large search base. All the stamps from this base were dipped into watermarking fluid. The fluid used was 'Super Safe Watermark Fluid', which contains trichlorotrifluoroethane and is distributed by Unitrade Associates. This large search base, however, offered no findings of watermarked stamps.

A request to several collectors and dealers resulted in a small collection of twenty watermarked revenue stamps. Those who helped were: Rex Andrews, Joseph Pike, Terrance Harris, Gary Lyon, Erling van Dam and Harry Lussey (via Robert A. Lee Auctions). Imagine how many thousands of stamps originally had to be examined to find these. It had to be a tremendous effort!

In the above study group a pair was found that has three letters of a word. This would prove to be the key piece to figuring out the word in the watermark (Figure 1).

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



The word was reconstructed from this pair and additional single stamps having letter combinations as follows:

COL LU UM MB BI IA

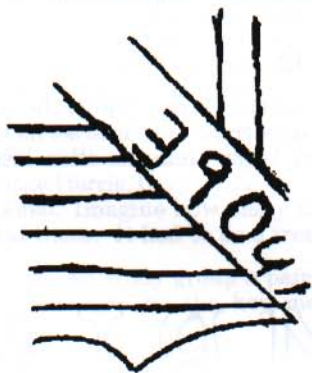
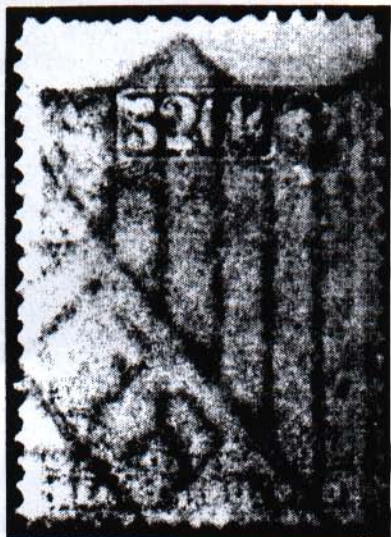
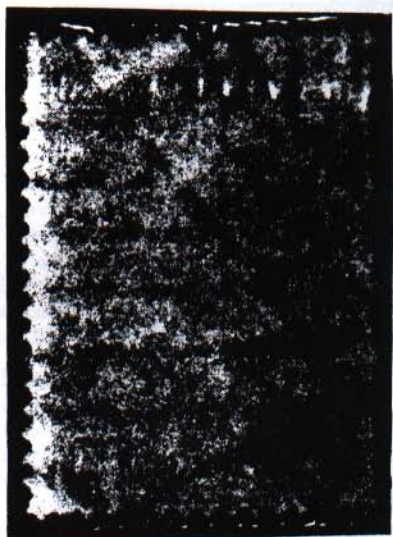
and two of these combinations are shown above in Figures 2 and 3. Thus, the word in the watermark is "COLUMBIA". The letters are uppercase and have serifs with the "C" being somewhat ornate in design and much larger than the other letters (Figure 4).

Figure 4

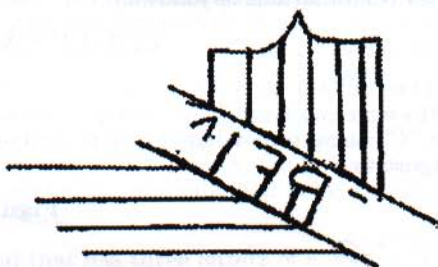


However the mystery deepens! Often when a watermarked stamp gets listed for sale in a dealer's price list or in an auction lot, the watermark is not described. When enquires are made as to the nature of the watermark, the most common reply is "...some part of a design." Several stamps in this study group were received that had parts of a watermark differing from the above word. These stamps showed a completely new type or style of watermark. Several fragments of this same watermark style were seen (Figure 5). This design is somewhat akin to a branding iron motif. There are parallel lines running at 90° angles and within these lines at a 45° angle is a block that has uppercase letters within it. What constitutes the remainder of this part of the watermark I am unable to discern at present. I hope there are others with watermark examples who will be able to fill in the remaining parts to this puzzle.

Figure 5: Portions of an as yet Unidentified Watermark



25¢ Edward VII (Joseph Pike)



25¢ George V (Joseph Pike)

25¢ George V (J. Don Wilson)

