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THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION ISSUES OF CANADA



SAINT-PIERRE-
ET-MIQUELON



HIDDEN DATES
ON CANADIAN STAMPS



THE GREAT GRAY OWL

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Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon

THE 5/2C OF 1885. THE FIRST STAMP OF THIS ARCHIPELAGO.

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Former French Colony and currently French Territorial collectivity, the archipelago of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, with an area of 242 sq km, is located on the East coast of Canada, 22 km south of Newfoundland (Figure 1).

Today, the philately of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon is the most renowned of the former French colonies.

Following a shortage of stamps needed to frank mail, the colony decided, at the beginning of January 1885, to transform postage stamps into stock.



Figure 1. Saint-Pierre at the end of the 19th century.

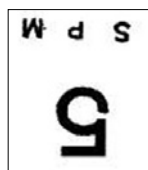


Figure 2. 5 / S P M Surcharge.

The solution was quick and simple: to put a manual overprint on general colony stamps used in all French colonies. Thus was born a variety specific to this archipelago.

The "Alphée Dubois" lilac-brown on grey 2c type was chosen to receive two strikes in black (Figure 2).

These overprints were made with a wooden cachet for the number and a composter type cachet for the "S P M" letters. These two strikes are strangely reversed. No official explanation for this choice has been found.

Two prints were made: the first made in two times from January 7 (these overprints present two different appearances), the second in March or April (with the broken "5" and the large "S P M" 14mm cachets) (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Left: First print. Middle: Second print. Right: Broken '5' variety.

However, the first day of issue in January is not known.

A reprint (Figure 4) was subsequently carried out on the new 2c in brown on straw.

The total number of stamps issued is not precisely known. However, a study carried out by the author over forty years makes it possible to certify the existence of approximately 125 copies - including varieties and reprints. Only 28 have been found in unused condition (either mint or not). Around a hundred used stamps still exist today.



Figure 4. Reprint.



Figure 5. Left: Used with black ink. Middle: Used with red ink. Right: Used with blue ink.

The cancellations are generally black and dated 1885. Only three examples were struck in red when this ink was used intermittently in 1885 and 1886. A few pieces were also used a little later in 1887 and are canceled with blue ink.



Figure 6. Used in Miquelon.



Figure 7. Used on piece from selvage edge of the sheet. Ex. Ferrari.

The cancellations are almost all struck by the Saint-Pierre office. However, two come from the rare small office of Miquelon (Figure 6).

A copy with the selvage edge of the sheet is often appreciated by collectors. It allows, among other things, to preserve the perforations. Only one copy on piece, cancelled from 1887, is reported (Figure 7). No covers are known to date.



Figure 8. Left: Variety - two "S P M", one vertical. Right: Variety - two "S P M", one right side up.

Very few varieties are known. This observation increases interest in the pieces concerned. The majority of them are only pieces known to this day. Among these few varieties, two are international rarities (Figure 8).

CONCLUSION

This mythical stamp enjoys a high catalogue value. This explains its absence in many collections. The values in the *Tillard Catalogue de cotation des timbres et entiers postaux de Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon 2024-26* are:

Unused: €26,000.00

(approximately \$38,000 Canadian; Scott catalogue value is US\$7,250.00)

Used: €7,600.00

Used "Miquelon": €13,500.00

Double SPM, one vertical: €42,000.00

Double SPM, one right side up: €47,000.00

REFERENCES

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Catalog of the Ferrary auctions.

Unpublished personal studies.

CANADA'S HIDDEN SECURITY FEATURES

Having you been studying Canada's definitive stamps over the last few years? A magnifying glass and an ultraviolet light will open up another world, hidden within certain stamps.

Illustrated here is the \$1.15 Point Prim Lighthouse definitive issued May 6, 2024 for the rate change that went effect that same day.

Hidden within the image is microprinting that notes the name (in English and French) and the location (PE) of the illustration.

When viewed under an ultraviolet light, the top and bands of tagging include small lighthouses, to tie in with the theme of the stamp.

By the way, these features are not limited to just definitives. From time to time, Canada Post will include similar "security" elements in commemoratives as well.

