

# *Newfoundland*



*Fakes and Forgeries*

*By Ed Wener*

# Introduction

I vividly recall the day my interest in Newfoundland forgeries was born. Naya and I were vacationing in France visiting friends and relatives. On October 25<sup>th</sup> 1977 we were in Besancon, only 120 km from Basel where I knew there would be a very unusual auction. Robson Lowe was selling the Paul A. Freeland Reference collection consisting of 445 lots of fakes and forgeries of the world.

We left early that morning not realizing that the lot we were about to purchase would change the direction of our recently formed stamp business. The auction was held in a large hall at the Hotel International. There were television cameramen but only six room bidders. One of these was Col Allen, the New York agent, and the auctioneer had staff taking phone bids so the interest was there despite the low attendance and prices were generally strong.

There were seven Newfoundland lots, two collections and five lots of Sperati forgeries. We purchased lot 420 which was described as follows:

*Newfoundland 1857-1932 an outstanding collection (274, part ex Bainbridge), including Sperati 1857 4d and 1/ die proofs in issued colour and 4d used. Panelli combination sheets of six values (6x6) and a block (4x6) from an earlier printing; bisects (5, four on piece), covers (2) with original stamps removed and remainders added, forged cancellations on genuine stamps; 1866-76, a remarkable range of forgeries of most values; a rather crude Hawker overprint and other surcharges on genuine stamps; bogus essays circa 1900 and Aerial Service essay; some genuine (21) unused and used mainly with faults.*

As we drove back to France that evening I thought about what to do with this collection: keep it, sell it or expand it. I remembered a conversation I had not long before with the late Jim Sissons in Toronto. I was viewing some Newfoundland lots from his then current auction. We were alone. He said two things that caught my attention. Newfoundland stamps were not being given the respect and marketing they deserved. This niche was open for the taking. He also said it was more and more difficult for collectors and dealers to handle as many stamps as he had. The early stamps were now more widely dispersed. Getting to know them meant more than buying and quickly selling them. This required time, more stamps and a reference collection.

Over the next decade I quietly reorganized and built upon the Freeland/Bainbridge collection adding items from the Harmer collection and others. By the spring of 1981 we had included a first Newfoundland forgery article in our sales catalogue. It began: "We have about 25 examples of fakes and forgeries of the 5c Seal and they are all different but can be grouped into four basic types". In December 1990, I had to rework the original article as we now had eight basic types. Are there other types? Can a forgery collection ever be said to be complete?

In 1992 we moved to New Zealand. Our interests shifted too. In 1996 we stopped selling BNA material and sold our stock to concentrate on the French Colonies which also has its own personal Forgery Collection. Our Nfld forgeries were neglected. The timing was unfortunate because it coincided with the birth of the World Wide Web. The Spiro Brothers and Erasmo Oneglia now have Wikipedia pages. Collectors can get together to maintain specialized websites to display their stamps (and forgeries) and gather information about them. This has been taken to its logical conclusion by my good friend Dave Herendeen who along with others has set up the Institute for Analytical Philately (IAP) where paper, ink and gum and many other aspects of philately are looked at using the latest scientific equipment and methods. This has obvious implications for the study and identification of forgeries. Visit their site at <http://www.analyticalphilately.org/>

I have taken this collection as far as I can and now it is time for it to pass on to others. The information in the pages that follow, limited as it was at the time by space considerations, can now be corrected and added to using the limitless space of the Web and the new technological resources available at such sites at the IAP mentioned above.

All the forgery articles are included here in their original forms with some editing where necessary and colour photos which definitely is an improvement. There are more photos as space is less of an issue and where possible the forgeries have been integrated into the text. The original publication dates are mentioned in the chapter headings.

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# Newfoundland Fakes and Forgeries Part I

Introduction September 1988

With this catalogue we begin a series of articles on Newfoundland Fakes and Forgeries. Our aim is twofold. For those who collect fakes and forgeries we will provide detailed descriptions of the examples we've examined. For the general collector of Newfoundland stamps we will point out a few tips on how to avoid fakes, forgeries and misidentified stamps. In my experience the average collector is more likely to have misidentified stamps than forgeries (eq. Scott#28a for the rarer #28 or #11a for #3).

We will examine Newfoundland stamps issue by issue. The genuine stamps and their characteristics will be described. We will then detail what is known about the forgeries. Finally the fakes associated with each issue will be discussed.

However, to begin, it might be a good idea to look at the subject from the forger's point of view. To imitate a genuine stamp the forger requires a Die to duplicate the design, chemicals to make the ink, the proper paper and tools to perforate the stamps. For mint stamps gum must be made and for used ones a cancelling device is required. The forger who can eliminate any of these steps makes his work much easier and less subject to detection. For example, since the Newfoundland Pence were issued imperforate, forgers do not require any perforating tools.

Another peculiarity of the Pence is that many are worth more Used than Mint. There were remainders of some of the values when Decimal currency was adopted in 1865. For the faker the situation was ideal. The mint stamps were readily available and the cancellations easy to fake because they were relatively primitive. In fact many early Newfoundland cancellers were homemade of cork or wood.



The most interesting "fake" used Pence are the ones illustrated. Not only are the stamps genuine but so are the postmarks. The problem is that the stamps were not cancelled on the dates indicated. Someone got hold of the original cancelling devices in the 1890's and reversed the "9" to make it a "6". The initial basis of suspicion was the existence of high face value blocks like the one illustrated. It filled no contemporary postage rate. In the 1940's a small hoard of these "used" blocks and strips was discovered in St. John's. Some were pasted on old envelopes or portions thereof to allay suspicion. Although most of the postmarks are from St. John's a few are known from Grand Falls. These fakes are often sold as genuine used stamps today. They usually command a premium because of their beautiful appearance.

Forgers also love to make surcharges especially if the surcharged stamp is cheap and readily available. Scott#77 is a perfect example. Beware when buying this stamp for there are many forgeries. We will describe them in detail in a later article. Fortunately, Newfoundland does not have many surcharged stamps of great value. I have seen forgeries of #75-7, #128, C1, C4-5 and C18

Forgeries are seldom found in multiples. Sperati, of course, made each example individually although I have seen a pair (two singles glued together) that was given a Certificate of authenticity. The more common Fournier and Spiro forgeries were made in sheets but these have almost all been split up. We have seven blocks in our reference collection including the ones illustrated.

Most forgers take the easy route to "riches" by faking cancels or surcharges. Sperati was one of the few exceptions. He started from scratch and produced such dangerous forgeries that they are still receiving Certificates today even though his method was exposed thirty years ago.

In the next article we begin with the Pence.

## Forgeries of the 1d December 1988

As I mentioned in the first part of this Series I will describe the characteristics of both the genuine stamps and the forgeries of Newfoundland. We will begin with Colour that is without doubt the most striking difference between most stamps and their forgeries. An experienced philatelist can often label a stamp a forgery simply because the colour is so obviously wrong. The only forger of Nfld. Pence who consistently produced accurate colours was Sperati. We will discuss his work in separate articles. The other forgers sometimes came close but, if we judge by the variety of colours they used, this was probably by accident.

Reproducing colours accurately requires great skill. We just have to look at the recent Colour Stamp Catalogues of Canada to see how difficult this is. Most forgers knew they could not fool the experts. Their market was the large group of inexperienced collectors who only had black and white catalogue illustrations as reference. They may never have seen the genuine colours. As long as the colour reasonably matched the written description it was acceptable. Although colour is a very useful tool in weeding out forgeries I cannot use it here. The differences just cannot be described in words. Unusual colours will be mentioned such as the green One Penny from “Newkornuland” listed below.

CLASSIFICATION: When examining forgeries one has to avoid the tendency to over classify the material. Many forgeries were made using inferior equipment and the result was uneven quality. The plates were used over and over again and deteriorated from normal wear and tear. We will try to classify forgeries according to their basic design. Subtypes can then be listed according to method of perforation, type of cancel etc. It should be remembered that imperforate sheets of the forgeries might pass through many hands before being marketed. The type of cancel or method of perforation used might not have been under the control of the original forger. We have a total of 18 forgeries of the 1d and these can be classified into five basic designs.



TYPE I: This is the only Engraved forgery of the 1d. It was made by Oneglia. The paper is a buff wove. Unlike the genuine, the letter “J” of “JOHN’S” has a short tail. The bottom rectangular box that contains “ONE PENNY” is a solid colour in the genuine. In the forgery, it has a discernible FRAMERLINE surrounding a box of a slightly paler colour.



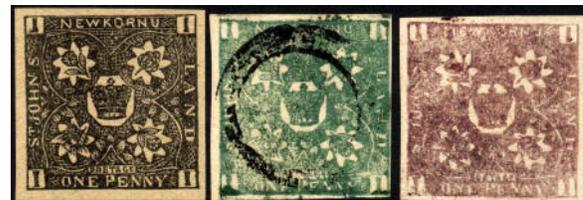
TYPE II: Lithographed, this forgery, as well as TYPES III and IV, was probably made by the Spiro Brothers of Hamburg. In the genuine design there are four large arches which each form a point that meets the inside corner of the adjacent box that contain the numeral. In Forgery Type II the top right arch does not meet the corner box at its tip. Also the Scrollwork under the “FOU” is missing. Finally, the apostrophe of “ST.JOHN’S” is a thin line. The perforated example of TYPE II is rare.



TYPE III: Also lithographed, this forgery has an apostrophe that is too large as are the letters of “ST.JOHN’S”. The bottom left arch does not touch the corner box at all. There is an attempt at some scrollwork under “FOU”. Note the unusual cancel on the TYPE III on the right.



TYPE IV: Lithographed, this forgery has a large period under the “J” of “ST.JOHN’S”. The arches touch the corners, as they should. There is a fine guideline that surrounds the design. Note the cancel which seems to read “CHARGE”



TYPE V: This lithographed forgery deserves a prize for originality. I have 3 examples in black, pale green and plum. The last two are so poorly done that most of the letters are unreadable. The black one must be an early printing for the quality is much better. It reads “NEWKORNU LAND”. On the back, in pencil, there is the date “1872” and name “Y. Fr—edl’.

## Forgeries of the 2d Winter 1989

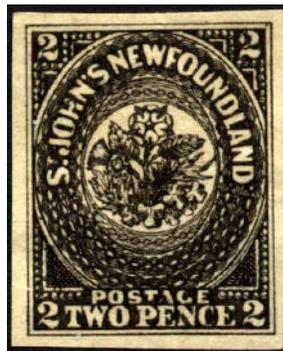


**Spiro Forgery Very unusual strip of five**

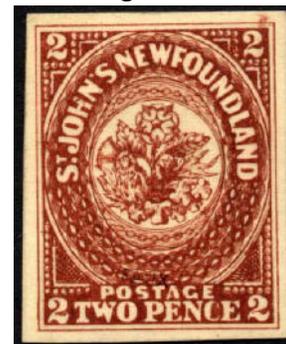
As I mentioned in Part I, Newfoundland forgeries are seldom found in multiples. Large multiples and complete sheets are particularly rare. With the exception of the block of 19 of the Spiro 3d forgery illustrated in Pugh's book, the only large items I've seen are the Oneglia sheets of 36. I've had three sheets in the past ten years. The Oneglia forgeries are actually quite common. Most sheets have been cut up into singles or strips of six. The plate for the Oneglia forgeries, was prepared in the following manner. A master cliché was photoengraved for each value (i.e. the 2d, 4d, 6d, 6½d, 8d and 1'). These were then used to make a cliché of three across of each value. These cliché of three were then used side by side to make a row of six. The same was repeated for each value and the result was a sheet of 36-the first row being all 2d stamps, the second row 4d stamps, etc. The plate was used several times with different paper or ink. Two printings are known on a medium thick soft wove paper of poor quality. One is in scarlet the other a red orange shade. The third printing is on a semi-translucent paper which is sometimes found with a watermark. The colour is a faded venetian red that can be confused with the genuine rose shade. The one-shilling value in particular can be dangerous. Since these forgeries were photoengraved the designs are fairly accurate. However, the size of the forgeries is not exact especially the 4d which is too small. In addition, there is the loss of white space phenomenon. This refers to the thickness of the lines of the design and is due to the bleeding of the ink from one fine line to the next. It depends on the amount of ink used. Some of the genuine Rose printings have this problem. I have a few Oneglias that do not bleed but most do and this is one more test to use to weed out forgeries.



**Genuine 2d**



**Type I Engraved forgery in black RARE Type I on thick card Broken W variety**



**TYPE I.** These engraved forgeries come from the Oneglia sheet. There is a simple test. The forgeries have a large period instead of a comma as the apostrophe in St. John's. Note the circle of bars and "N35" cancels.



TypeII This is a new discovery and closely resembles the 6½d TypeIII we will look at later. The forgery is engraved and the same size as the genuine whereas the Oneglia is a fraction smaller. It is on a thin paper that most closely resembles the later printings. It has an oval six bar cancel unlike the genuine. The colour is neither scarlet nor orange vermilion, perhaps something in between. Below we show blowups of the bottom of the design for the genuine first, then the Oneglia and finally this new Type.



This is the genuine 2d Rose. Notice the six small balls above the left and right numerals as well as the shape of the numerals themselves. The Rose printings always have a foggy appearance because the paper did not take the ink as well as earlier Pence Printings. Finally look at the “O” of “TWO” and “C” of “PENCE”



This is an engraved Oneglia Forgery-TypeI previous page. It is much clearer than the genuine. The six balls are fairly accurate but look again at the differences in the “O” of “TWO” and “C” of “PENCE”



This is TypeII-the only one I've seen. There are many obvious differences. The balls on both sides are uneven. The shapes of both numerals “2” do not resemble the genuine. Many of the letters are badly formed. In particular look at the base of the “T” of “TWO” and the hanging serif on the “N” of “PENCE”.



**TYPE III.** Lithographed by the Spiro Brothers these common forgeries are known in many colours. We have ten-none of which resemble the genuine. The plate was used over and over again eventually deteriorating to such an extent that worn plate varieties hardly resemble earlier printings. Type III forgeries have seven white circles to the left of POSTAGE whereas the genuine have six.

**TYPE I.** Like the 2d, these Oneglia forgeries can be distinguished by the large period used as an apostrophe. Note the 'F' in 'POSTAGE' and the "N35" cancel which is typical of Oneglia forgeries. Less common is the eight bar cancel with the numeral "3" (see bottom of page).



**TYPE IV.** Lithographed in black this forgery was made by the same person who made Type V of the 1d we described in our previous article. This time the country name is "NEWFOUNDIANO".

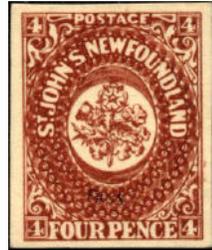
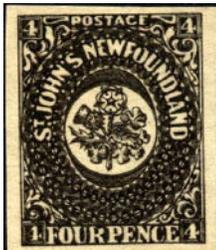
**TYPE II.** Lithographed by the Spiro Brothers these are known in a wide range of colours from deep lake to bright orange. The top flower touches the frame of the center circle whereas in the genuine it does not.



**TYPE V.** A new discovery (added January 1995) this lithographed forgery is pink. All the letters are misshapen or the wrong size but at least "NEWFOUNDLAND" is spelled correctly.

**TYPE III.** This crudely lithographed forgery could not have been made by the forger of Type III of the 2d because "Newfoundland" is correctly spelled. The letters are too large. We have 2 examples, one in purple (see below). Both have a Star of David cancel with a "5" in the center.

### Forgeries of the 4d



Genuine 4d

Type I Black

Type I thick card

**TYPE IV.** A new discovery (Jan 1995) this lithographed forgery is in pink. It is crude, too narrow, the letters too thin and tall. The numerals are badly formed (too tall). Similar to Type IV of the 2d.



Spiro Strip of five



**Cancel:** An unusual group of cancels including one on a genuine 4d plus N35, 3, Spiro 853 and Type III with Star of David Numeral 5.

## Forgeries of the 3d Spring 1989



**Spiro Forgery block of Six**

There are two questions that we get asked concerning the Newfoundland Three Pence stamps: how can we distinguish the different printings of the genuine stamps and what do the forgeries look like? These questions are very important, especially the first for it's been my experience that 75% of the stamps classified as #3 are in fact the more common #11A. To answer these questions we will begin with the genuine stamps.

Because the stamp is triangular two impressions were taken from the original Die and these were worked over by hand before the resulting square Die was used to make a plate of 40 impressions (80 stamps). The stamps were first printed in 1856 on a thick white, unwatermarked opaque paper. This paper (used for Scott #1-9) has a fine cross wire mesh that can best be seen by holding the stamp edgewise towards a strong light. This mesh is unfortunately difficult to see on the 3d. The colour of the #3 is yellow green and most copies show a strong offset of the design on the back.

The #11A stamps actually consist of three printings that are indistinguishable. However, they all differ from #3 in the following ways: The paper that was supplied by STACEY WISE is a semi-transparent wove paper which varies in thickness from very thin to medium thick. The watermark of the papermaker appears on about 5% of the stamps. There is no mesh and usually no offset on the back. The colour varies from Green to Deep Green—none have the yellow characteristic of #3.

There are many forgeries of the 3d. We list the 7 Types in our collection. Most of these were poorly done on plates that deteriorated badly during use so later printings often show wear and do not look like earlier printings.



Spike in "J"



TYPE I. Typographed, this forgery can be distinguished by the spike at the bottom of the "J" of "John's". We have copies in green, orange and lake and a perforated copy with a fake *HEARTS CONTENT* cancel.



TYPE II. Lithographed, this forgery has a tiny dot instead of a period under the "ST". It is in green with a boxed PF cancel!



TYPE III. This Spiro lithographed forgery is quite common. Note the two dark wavy lines in the interior scrollwork. Later printings have a dash in the “o” of “John”.



TYPE IV. This crude forgery shows many of the defects characteristic of Typography. None of the lines or letters in the design is clear. The ink runs all over the place. In addition, the “3” of “John” has a curved back and no top serifs.



TYPE V. This lithographed forgery is in blue. The letters are quite well formed but there are tiny dots under the “ST” and between “POSTAGE” and “THREE”.



TYPE VI. This typographed forgery can be distinguished by a white horizontal line just above “POSTAGE THREE PENCE”. We have three examples in BROWN, ORANGE and PINK.



Genuine

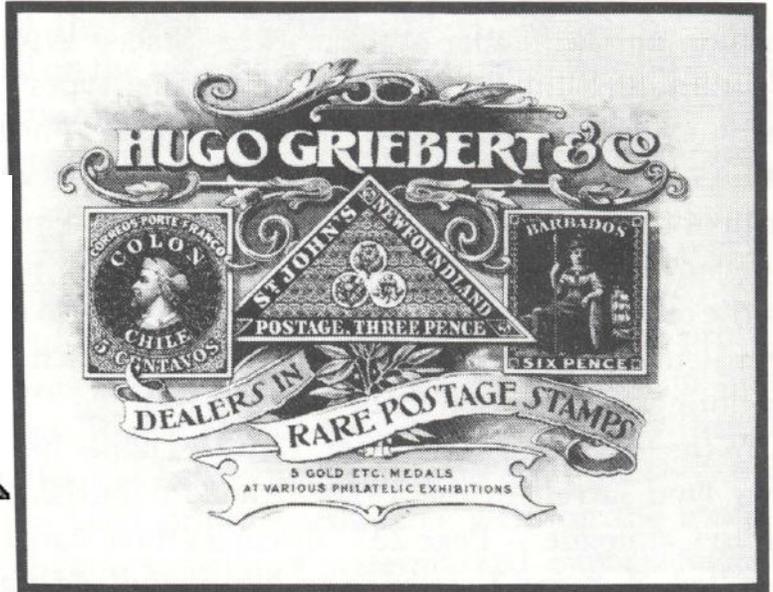


Forgery

TYPE VII. We leave the best for last. This engraved forgery in yellow green can be distinguished by the central scrollwork that consists of a series of irregular dots. The cancel resembles a New Brunswick grid.

**2012 update:** Looking at this again today leaves me dumbfounded. The paper and colour seem right. There is even a bit of offset on the reverse where it has been identified as a presumably genuine #3. But check the details in the letters “PENCE” on both the genuine and this stamp, especially the space between the letters “CE” and the letter “P”.

## The Griebert Plate



In 1919 London stamp dealer Hugo Griebert somehow convinced Perkins Bacon to prepare a plate with stamps from Barbados, Chile and Newfoundland. As Robert Pratt in his *The Pence Issues of Newfoundland* relates the story Perkins Bacon used the rare unused Die I of the 3d that differs from the Die used to make the plates for the issued stamps. The main difference between these Dies is the left numeral '3' which is slanted to the left. Unfortunately (or perhaps deliberately) the stamps on the Griebert plate were overlapping such that this numeral is covered. However there is another difference, a scratch is the right center trefoil. See above at 400%.

## Newfoundland Fake Bisects

As we mentioned earlier, there were legitimate reasons for bisected stamps. These should be purchased with great caution and expertised. We illustrate a few faked bisects. Three of these are bisected genuine stamps tied to small pieces of old covers by fake cancels. The bisected 8d illustrated includes a fake G.B. transit mark, a fake PANAMA TRANSIT cancel, a fake oval of bars, and a manuscript "2" in red. It was sold in March 1923 by a resident of St. John's for \$75 (or the price of a set of Canadian Jubilees in Blocks of four!!!). The 6d illustrated is actually a bisected Oneglia engraved forgery tied by a numeral "9" in a circle of bars



## Forgeries of the 5d Summer 1989

Before we look at forgeries of the 5d stamp a couple of points should be made concerning the genuine stamps. The Die Proof of the 5d was derived from the 1d Die by changing the numerals and the lower label to read "Five Pence". The 1d in turn was derived from the New Brunswick 6d Die which was made by the same firm in London.

It seems the forgers had the same idea. Instead of making a complete new forgery of the 5d they reworked their designs of the 1d. As you read the descriptions below you may find it useful to have at hand the article on the 1d forgeries that appeared in our December 1988 list.

We have about a dozen 5d forgeries in our collection. They are more difficult to find than forgeries of any other value. The Oneglia forgery is especially rare-I've seen less than 6 in twelve years.



TYPE I: This is the only Engraved forgery of the 5d. It was made by Oneglia and as always is on buff wove paper. The design is the same as for the 1d except for the necessary changes. Once again, the "J" of "John's" has a tail. I have not seen multiples of the 1d or 5d. It may be they come from a single plate.

Type II Penny



Type IIa



TYPE II: Lithographed, this forgery as well as Type III were probably the work of the Spiro Brothers. This forgery obviously comes from the Type II forgery of the 1d we described in our earlier article. The forgers changed the numerals but left the label to read "Five Penny" instead of "Five Pence"

TYPE IIa: The mistake is corrected to read "Five Pence". Note that in Types II and IIa the scrollwork is missing below "FOU" just as in TYPE II of the 1d.



TYPE III: This is similar to Type III of the 1d. Note that the bottom left arch does not touch the corner box at all. We have examples that seem to have slightly different numerals in the corners. This may be the result of overinking or plate wear. We have not seen multiples of these forgeries.

TYPE IV: This is a poorly made lithographed forgery. The letters of "FIVE PENCE" are more spread out. The letters of "POSTAGE" are more compact.

## Forgeries of the 6d November 1869

The 6d is probably the most interesting of the Pence stamps. The rate for letters to Britain was Six Pence. For accounting purposes separate 5d and 1d stamps were required because the rules stated that 5d had to be forwarded to the British Post Office to cover their costs. The remaining 1d was kept by the Newfoundland Post Office. However, on January 1, 1857 when the stamps were issued this rule was changed and a single 6d stamp could be used on a letter. The accounts were calculated on the basis of weight of letters sent rather than the number of stamps sold. The result of all this was that the number of 6d stamps printed (5000) was too low and they soon sold out. Unused copies of the 6d are very rare. On the other hand, one would expect covers to Britain to be fairly common. However, none have been found so far. To make up for the shortage of 6d stamps combinations of the other values were used. For example, three 2d stamps, a 1d and a 5d, or even bisected copies of the 1/ stamp.

The 1860 printing of the 6d in Orange Vermilion was 10,000. These were sold out by late 1861. Two printings of the 6d in Rose followed in late 1861. 20,000 copies were printed in Deep Rose. Most of these were used. As a result unused copies are scarce. Used copies are not common but they are much more plentiful than used copies of the last printing in Pale Rose. 50,000 copies were printed and sixty percent were still in stock three decades later. It is because of these remainders that unused copies are so inexpensive today.

We have about a dozen forgeries of the 6d in our reference collection. There are two basic types that we have in a number of shades.



**Genuine**



**Type I thick card**



TYPE I. This is from the Oneglia Sheet of 36. It is engraved and can be dangerous if the shade is close. I found one in a forgery collection labelled “genuine”! The best test is to look at the letters “F” and “O” in “Newfoundland”. These letters almost touch in the genuine. They are distinctly apart in the forgery. We illustrate various shades.



**Note difference in flower on right of ST**

**Genuine**



**Type II**

TYPE II. This is a crude Spiro lithographed forgery. The design is too large. The colours range from Orange to Lake. The flower in the central oval to the right of “ST” is much too wide in the forgery. In addition, the letters “FO” are not close enough together.

## Forgeries of the 6½d, 8d and 1/ Winter 1990

We now turn to the high values of the Newfoundland Pence. These each have interesting stories to tell. The 6½d stamp was issued to pay the rate to Nova Scotia or New Brunswick for other than Port to Port mail. Only 2000 copies were printed in 1857. Of these only 122 were sold in 1858. The 6½d was not reordered in 1860. Eventually the 6½d Scarlet stamps sold out and today it is a rare stamp both mint and used. There were two Rose printings of the 6½d stamp-a total of 15,000 stamps. Two thirds of these sold but 4,776 were still on hand in 1889. It is for this reason complete sheets are still available today.

The 8d stamps had a curious history. In 1855, when the Postmaster wrote his recommendations for the various denominations to be issued, the rate to the U.S. was 8d. This was a compound rate-4d for the Port to Port rate from St.John's to Halifax and 4c from Halifax to Boston. 8000 8d stamps were ordered. However, on Jan 1, 1856 this rate was reduced to 4d. So when the stamps arrived they were obsolete. Almost none sold in the first two years. By August 1859 all the 4d stamps were sold out and the Post Office required stamps to meet the 4d rate. Pairs of the 2d were used and then bisects of the 8d. This continued until August 1860 when new supplies of the 4d arrived. There were some remainders of the 8d but these were all sold by 1886. A few complete sheets have survived.

The One Shilling stamp was denominated in Canadian currency and worth 10d sterling. 2000 One Shilling stamps were issued in 1857 to pay the rate to Canada. Only 84 copies were sold in 1858. The following year, after the 6d was exhausted, it was decided to upgrade the stamp to One Shilling sterling and use it bisected to pay the 6d rate to England. Most were sold in this way. In 1860, 1000 One Shilling orange vermilion stamps were delivered. These suffered the same fate. Many were used bisected after the 6d orange vermilion sold out. As a result both of these Shilling stamps are great rarities mint and used. For some unknown reason, 25,000 more One Shilling stamps were delivered in the Rose printings of 1861. Over half of these were remaindered. Mint stamps are quite common but genuinely used copies greatly undervalued.

### FORGERIES OF THE 6½d.



**Type I Thick card**

TYPE I. This is from the Oneglia sheet of 36. It is engraved and found in three shades. The best test is to look at the "H" of "HALF". In the genuine there is a dot in the "H" but not in the forgery. The unused example we illustrate is a particularly "clean" impression. If only the quality of some of our current stamps was as good.



TYPE II. This is an lithographed forgery of very poor quality by an unknown forger. Our copy is in a scarlet vermilion shade. The letters are poorly formed and the central "scrollwork" a series of dots and blobs.



Specks



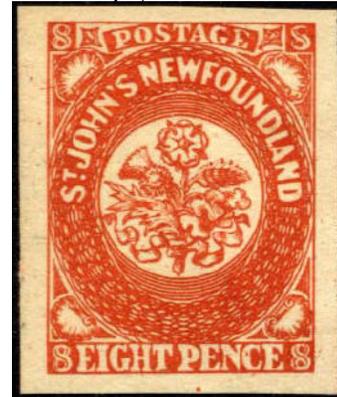
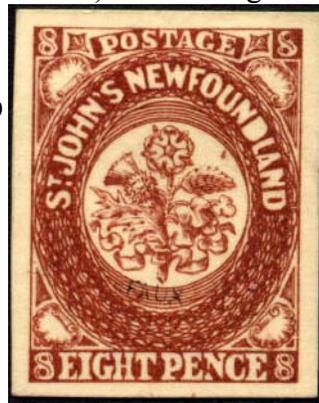
Curved Spine



TYPE III. This is a rare forgery of excellent quality. It appears engraved yet it has tiny ink specks characteristic of lithography. The height at 25.5mm, is less than the genuine (26mm) and Sperati (26.5mm). The colour is close and the paper similar to the genuine but later printings. The ten bar cancel has thicker bars and there are many small design differences when compared with the genuine. We illustrate two of these. There are ink specks in the “6” and left corner margin of the forgery which are not in the genuine. The spine of the “E” of “PENCE” is curved in the forgery (on the left) while straight in the genuine stamp (illustrated at the right).

FORGERIES OF THE 8d.

No shading in D

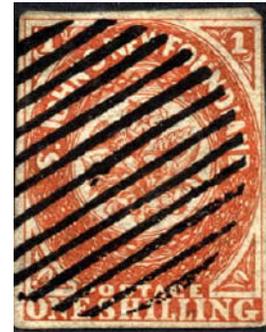


TYPE I. The only forgery we have of the 8d (we will discuss the Sperati 8d in a later series) is from the Oneglia sheet of 36. It is engraved and known in three shades. There are many minor differences not only with the genuine but also with other Oneglia forgeries. For example the forgery at left on thick card is missing the shading at the centre of the first “D” of “NEWFOUNDLAND” whereas the other one has this area shaded. Should these be classified as two different forgeries? I think not for they have one characteristic in common and that is the space between the “F” and “O” of “NEWFOUNDLAND” is too wide. Recall this was also true of the 6d value.



FAKE CANCELS: We mention these because genuinely used 8d rose stamps are exceptionally rare and require expertization. The copy we illustrate has a Sandy Point cancel dated 1940.

FORGERIES OF THE 1/



TYPE I. The three illustrated forgeries are all engraved Oneglias from his sheet of 36. Yet they each appear very different from the other. The used one with the fake cancel is a very convincing forgery indeed! The colour is just about right. What's the test? In this case it is quite easy. The forgeries are all too short at approx 24.75mm compared to 25.25 for the genuine.



TYPE II. This typographed forgery with the FALSCH! overprint is by SENF. How do we know? Well, below is the original 1884 Journal page with the same forgery or Facsimile as he calls it.



## Jean de Sperati: His Method March 1990



Before discussing Sperati's method we have to make some general comments concerning philatelic forgery. What follows is my summary of a 1949 article by Edwin Mueller published in the Mercury Stamp Journal and quoted extensively in the BPA Handbook on Sperati.

Whether the forger is out to humiliate the expert as Sperati wished to do or simply wishes to profit from his work, the forgery must pass for something it isn't. A stamp consists of various components: design, paper, ink, gum (if mint) or cancellation (if used) and sometimes perforations and watermark. The greater the number of these components to be duplicated the greater the chance the forgery will be detected. It is for this reason that forgers prefer surcharges. They are very easy to duplicate. All that's required is some type and ink. Surcharged stamps have to be examined very carefully often with extremely accurate measuring devices.

Sperati's method did not differ significantly from his predecessors. His skills in photography and chemistry allowed him to duplicate the designs and colours of genuine stamps. He avoided those areas where his skills were weakest. For example, he was not good at making gum. Most of his forgeries are either used or unused without gum. Sperati did not attempt to produce fake perforations or watermarks.

His greatest asset was his ingenuity. He discovered a way of dissolving printing ink. He could remove the design of a stamp completely, leaving paper, cancellations, perforations and watermark intact (and of course genuine). He would then print a different denomination or different design of a more valuable stamp on this paper. A large number of Sperati's forgeries, many dangerous, were created in this way.

Perhaps the best examples of his ingenuity were his forged Inverted Heads of Sardinia. In 1855, a set of stamps was printed with a coloured frame and a colourless embossed head of the King of Sardinia in the center. In a small number of cases the embossed head is inverted. Some of the printer's waste consisted of stamps with frame only-the centers were blank. This waste paper was acquired by forgers who added inverted embossed heads. The experts soon discovered these and the game was up. Sperati proceeded differently. He took the genuine stamps, dissolved the frames and was left with genuine paper and genuine embossed heads (remember the heads were colourless). He then printed the new frames upside down. The experts were fooled. When they examined the stamps they did not even pay attention to the frames.

Sperati used the same technique to create forgeries of valuable surcharged stamps. He would dissolve the ink of the design of a cheap stamp in a set of surcharged stamps-leaving the genuine surcharge. He then added the design of the most valuable stamp in the set. Once again, the experts would only examine the characteristics of the surcharge.

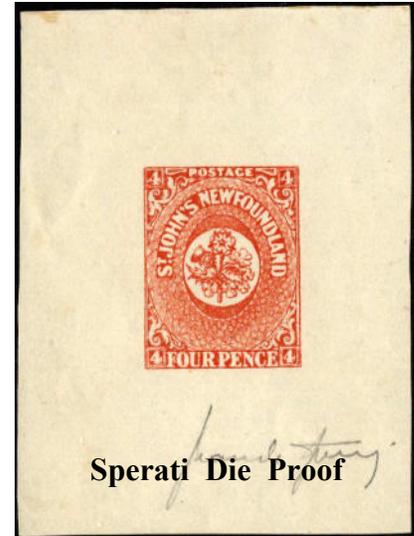
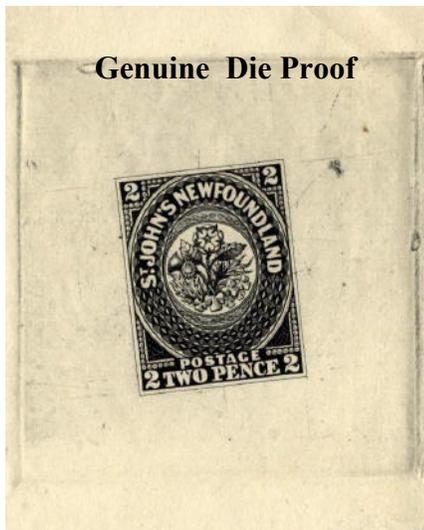
The paper Sperati used for his forgeries was also obtained from the margins of genuine sheets or from paper of the period. The printing inks he used are remarkably similar to the genuine. In fact, it is the colour of a forgery that most often gives it away. Sperati's strength in this area perhaps lulled the experts into a false sense of security.

He made his dies using a photographic technique. This gave his designs great accuracy in detail and size. Many of the tests used to detect forgeries refer to the number of lines here or dots there. These tests were often ineffective against Sperati's forgeries. His forgeries are quite often cancelled and in many cases the cancellations were genuine-obtained as we mentioned above by dissolving the ink of the designs of genuine stamps. In other cases, he used photography to copy genuine cancels. Although the ink used for these cancels was different in colour and texture from the genuine inks of the period the overall appearance of the cancel was adequate. Given all this, you say wonder how he was ever exposed. That is what we will discuss in the next part of the series especially with respect to the Newfoundland forgeries Sperati made. One final point. During the last few years of his career after he became famous, Sperati made copies of his forgeries to fill orders from collectors. These copies were made from his original dies or clichés. However, he did not have the same papers he used in his earlier work. Many examples of this period were "in stock" when the British Philatelic Association acquired his assets in the fifties. These were hand stamped on the back, numbered, and sold in sets to collectors along with a book. The Newfoundland forgeries from this period are on thin hard white paper that in no way resembles the genuine. Much scarcer are the dangerous forgeries Sperati made in the twenties and thirties.

### Jean de Sperati: His Newfoundland Forgeries

Sperati is known to have made forgeries of the following Newfoundland stamps: 1857 Scarlet Vermilion: 2d, 4d(3), 6d, 6½ d, 8d and 1/(3); 1860 Orange Vermilion: 2d, 4d(2), 6d and 1/; 1861 Rose: 6d. The numbers in brackets refer to the number of different dies or clichés that he made of that value (if more than one). In addition, Sperati made at least thirteen different eight or ten bar grid cancellations. In one case the cliché of the stamp was left unfinished and a matching cancellation was made to fit exactly over the missing area of the stamp.

It is difficult to establish exactly when each cliché was produced. It is thought that the 6d of 1857 was made about 1920. Forgeries of the 6d and 1/ of 1860 were not recorded until 1939 and 1943 respectively. Information of this sort about any forgery is hard to authenticate. The forger did not really want announcements in the philatelic press concerning his latest creations. We can tell from the quality of his Newfoundland forgeries that Sperati made them during his prime. It should be pointed out that we are referring to the clichés or dies from which the forgeries were made. Once these clichés were made Sperati could make as many forgeries as required to meet the demand. During the last five years of his career (1948-53), Sperati only produced 29 new clichés—none of these were of Newfoundland stamps. He spent most of his time making copies of his earlier work.



#### The Characteristics of Sperati's Newfoundland Forgeries

**Printing:** The genuine Newfoundland Pence were engraved. One of the features of engraved stamps is the raised surface of the inked areas of the design. This can be seen under magnification or by using the aluminum foil test such as we did as kids when we traced the raised surface of coins. Sperati's Newfoundland forgeries were photolithographed. They have a flat appearance. The raised effect is entirely missing. This single test is sufficient to weed out Sperati forgeries from the genuine. The fact that some of his forgeries were (and perhaps still are) authenticated confirms Sperati's charge that experts could be sloppy and unscientific.

**Paper:** The 1857 Pence were printed on a handmade white unwatermarked thick opaque paper. This paper has a fine cross wire mesh (on the front or back or both) that most people find difficult to see. Once you understand what to look for, the cross wire mesh can be a good test in separating forgeries from the genuine and also 1857 printings from the later ones. The later printings are on a paper supplied by the firm of Stacey Wise. It is a wove, semitransparent paper of greyish tone and variable thickness (usually very thin but sometimes quite thick). There is no mesh. The paper is watermarked but less than 5% of the stamps show any trace of it. Some of the Sperati's in Orange Vermilion are on a paper that resembles the Stacey Wise paper. These can be very dangerous if you forget to check for engraving.

**Colour:** Colour was one of Sperati's strengths. It is probably the accuracy of colour that gives his forgeries the appearance of genuine stamps. However, these colours have a tendency on some values to be a little too intense. This is probably caused by the effect known as the "loss of white space" which we will discuss next time. In addition, many of his forgeries have tiny black spots on the paper. This was probably caused by some chemical treatment and can be seen under magnification.



**Cancellations:** Sperati's ten bar cancels are very dangerous. Without sophisticated equipment I doubt that they would give away his forgeries. He used photography to copy genuine cancels. The ink differs in colour and texture. However, Sperati knew that cancels were useful in hiding details of his design. Two of his Newfoundland cancels would raise more suspicion than the ten bar grids. The first was an eight bar grid with the letters "CANCEL(LED)" between the fourth and fifth bars. The second is a circular ST JOHN'S NEWFOUNDLAND PAID cancel dated FB 5 1859. These cancels are rarely seen on stamps. The stamps of the period were supposed to be completely obliterated by the grids and not town dated. Town dated Newfoundland Pence are either fakes or were applied non-contemporaneously.



## The Characteristics of Sperati's Newfoundland Forgeries

Design and the Loss of White Space: As we mentioned in an earlier article Sperati used a photolithographic technique to reproduce the designs of the stamps he was copying. This method ensured great accuracy in detail and size. Lithography is based on the principle that oil and water will not mix. The design is put on a lithographic stone or metal plate in a greasy oily ink. The stone or plate is wet with an acid fluid causing it to repel the printing ink in all areas not covered by the oily ink. This process is not perfect. **The oily ink can splash and under magnification these tiny splashes appear to be tiny flaws. Sperati was aware of this shortcoming so he did his best to clean up the tiny splashes. However, he couldn't eliminate them all.** In the process he also removed tiny spots that were characteristic of the genuine stamps (such as guide dots) and their absence is an indication a stamp is a forgery.

Genuine 4d  
Plate Proof



Sperati Die



Sperati 4d



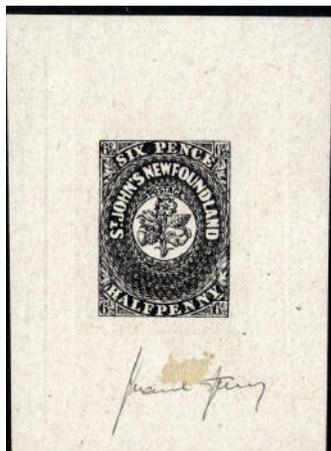
Another characteristic of lithographed stamps can be seen by examining the fine lines of the design. They are not as sharp or clear as the engraved especially at the corners. They can appear spotty as if they were broken or not continuous.

Loss of White Space is a factor that is discussed in great detail in the BPA work on Sperati. It can be seen not only when comparing forgeries with the genuine but also when comparing Die Proofs with Plate Proofs. The basic principle of Loss of White Space is that a reproduction cannot perfectly match the original. The process itself of copying introduces inexactitude-however small. The Loss of White Space refers to the spaces between the fine lines of the design. See three photos above of the details of a 4d Genuine plate Proof, Sperati Die Proof and Sperati forgery.

The Newfoundland Pence were engraved. The engraving process begins with a Die. An impression on paper of this Die is a Die Proof. A Transfer Roll is prepared from the Die and is a reverse image of the Die. This Transfer Roll is then used to make as many impressions as are required on the plate from which the stamps are to be printed. Most Newfoundland Pence were printed from plates of twenty impressions, some had forty and the 1d had 120. An impression on paper from this plate is a Plate Proof. The impressions from the plate are not as fine as those of the Die. The fine lines have become very slightly thickened. There is a loss of space between these lines. Where the lines are close together on the Die Proof they may now merge in the Plate Proof. The design appears to be more heavily inked.

Sperati's forgeries are copies of copies of copies. There is the Die, the Transfer Roll, the Plate, the printed stamps from the Plate, the photograph, the cliché, and finally the forgery (and perhaps a bunch of steps I forgot). By the time we examine the forgery the fine lines are so thick that the white space is often gone. The Newfoundland Pence are wonderfully fine engravings. The test for Loss of White Space is one of the more valuable means of identification of the forgeries.

**SPECIFIC TESTS:** I will not list all the flaws mentioned in the BPA book. Instead let us look in detail at the Sperati forgeries of the 6½d. We illustrate below both Die Proofs as well as three Sperati forgeries. Here is what the BPA had to say about this stamp:



“Sperati is known to have made “Die” proofs in black and in colour (see above) as well as unused and used reproductions. For comparison use the 1861-62 6½d rose-lake.”

The BPA continues with specific details listed below. We present portions of the design of a genuine 6½d Rose Lake plus the Sperati Black Die Proof as well as three different Speratis, the last one not having the flaws listed. The height of the genuine Rose Lake measures 26mm, the Speratis all 26.5mm while for comparison we also measured the Oneglia 6½d discussed earlier at 25.5mm. The contrast has been computer enhanced in all cases except one Rose Lake scan to show how this affects the colour of the stamps. The dots and dashes mentioned by the BPA are meant to be constant. However there are many more tiny specks and splashes on the Speratis as you can see (best seen by magnifying page).



No dots in "S" and "X"

No Dots here either

- (i) There is a coloured dot in the head of the "S" and the right leg of the "X" of "SIX" and a white stroke under the "I"
- (ii) There is a defect in the background above the first "E" of "PENNY" and the "C" and "E" of the same word are roughly joined together at the foot.



Notice all stamps have frame breaks at bottom plus dot in bottom right leg of "H"

- (iii) The frame is broken below the "F" of "HALF"
- (iv) There are dots between the "P" and "E" and the "N" and "Y" of "PENNY".

### The 1/ Sperati:

We will now look at the Sperati 1/ forgeries. The BPA book describes three reproductions that are labelled as Types A, B and C. It mentions Die Proofs in Scarlet (Type A) and Orange Vermilion (B) but not black. Illustrated below are Die Proofs in Orange Vermilion(B) and Black(B). The Type B Sperati can be recognized by a break in the frame above the "W" of "NEW" and a slanting "N" of "NEW". See below.



Break in top frameline above W  
Slanting top right leg of N



Before we discuss the 1/ Sperati forgeries we should mention the different categories. There are the photo forgeries in black, back stamped as Sperati Reproductions (see below). Then we have one of the more common scarlet vermilion forgeries on thin hard paper. Finally we have three different on paper that comes somewhat closer to the genuine. Of these one is still signed in pencil on the back. The other two were probably also

signed but the signatures could easily have been erased. These are the most sought after of all the Sperati Newfoundland forgeries as they are the most dangerous..



1 Black Photo      2 Thin hard paper      3 Thick soft paper      4 Thick Soft Paper      5 Signed Sperati

The BPA listed specific tests for the three Types.

TypeA There is a dot in the “J” of “JOHN”

TypeB: Five tests, we mentioned two above. The other three are: The “O” of “JOHN” is irregular at top, the “L” of “LAND” is rough and finally there is a smear on the right leg of the “N” of “SHILLING” .

TypeC: Six tests as follows: a) Doubling of the letters of “POSTAGE”. b) There is a dot in the right of the “H” and in the top of the “S” of “JOHN’S”. c) There is a dot in the top of the “O” and a coloured spot in the cheek of the first “D” of “FOUND”. d) There are two dots in the “O” and one in the “S” of “POST”. e) The bar of “A” of “AGE” is weak and sometimes missing. f) There is a dot in the upper diagonal of the “N” in “SHILLING” and a heavy dot in the right leg.

None of our stamps have a dot in the “J” so TypeA is ruled out. The Black photo forgery has the break in the frame so it is TypeB. The four scarlet vermilion forgeries are TypeC but notice that the BPA gives six tests. Why six? It must be because one or two are insufficient. That is either because the cancel sits over the spot in question or not all examples fulfil all the tests. In our case three of the forgeries have cancels that really do block from view some of the test areas.

Forgery#3



Forgery#5



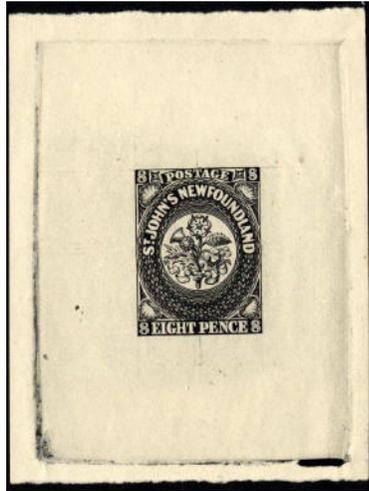
Look at the high resolution images of forgeries #3 and #5 above. Both have dots in the “O” of “POSTAGE” and “N” of “SHILLING”. However #3 has spots at the top of the “N” and “E” of “ONE” while #5 has a dash in the bottom right of the “N” of “ONE”. These are lithographic splashes rather than constant dots. Notice also how different the letters “N” look in each forgery. So different, in fact, that one might argue they are not the same. However, I think they are the same but that Sperati overinked forgery #3 (witness the smudge at top right of stamp) leading to ink bleeding and more loss of white space than in forgery #5. In this sense each Sperati is unique.

### Conclusion

The BPA estimates that Sperati made between 50,000 and 70,000 worldwide forgeries during his long career. This consisted of 358 designs from over 30 countries. This fantastic total includes the many examples produced in the late forties and early fifties on thin hard machine made paper and sold in collections of 195 or even up to 281 different forgeries at a time. These are not the ones to fear especially as many have identifying handstamps on the back. No, it is those made earlier in his career on matching paper with only a pencil signature that are the real danger.

## The Mystery of the 8d Sperati Forgery

I had to approach Sperati's 8d forgery in a different manner because for some reason Robson Lowe's BPA article failed to even mention it. It is listed in Ken Pugh's 1977 *Reference Manual* but that just refers back to E.A. Smythies handbook *BNA Fakes and Forgeries*. However, Smythie's reference circles back to the BPA book. In 1973 Robson Lowe did include a Sperati 8d in his *Encyclopaedia of British Empire Postage Stamps* but again without a photo or description. In fact none of the reference books in my library includes a detailed description. So I had to find some identifying flaws that would enable one to pick out the Speratis from the genuine. In doing so I came to realize how good a forger Sperati truly was. One has to marvel at his skill. Let's begin with two Die Proofs. On the coloured Die Proof we can just make out where Sperati's signature was erased.



Genuine Die Proof



Sperati Die Proof(signature erased)

We illustrate below high resolution scans of the genuine Die (stamp only) and Plate proof, an Oneglia engraved forgery and two Sperati forgeries.



To see what I am going to describe next, you will have to increase the size of the five scans to 400% and scroll from stamp to stamp. The first thing to notice is the clarity of the design in the Die Proof at left that is also evident in the Plate proof next to it. There are fine guidelines at the center (top and bottom) of the Die Proof that are no longer seen on the Plate Proof. Next scroll over to the center stamp that is an Oneglia engraved forgery. It has many flaws including dots in the first two "N"s of "NEWFOUNDLAND", a slash in the "T" of "EIGHT" and a dot in the "C" of "PENCE". There are others. Both Sperati's are relatively free of such flaws. They are almost perfect copies. However continue looking. Notice the long fine slanting line outside the left top margin on the first Sperati but not on the other. However, what we are really looking for are flaws common to both and hopefully also present on the Sperati Die Proof at top. We will describe three. There are tiny spikes on the right side of the "A" and left side of the "D" of "NEWFOUNDLAND" and there is a small flaw at the right base of the "E" of "PENCE". These are also on the Sperati Die Proof but not on the genuine. One final thought: Why is so little said about these 8d forgeries in the literature? Are they that elusive? The genuine 8d is much more common than the other scarlet vermilion pence. Perhaps Sperati gave up making them for lack of demand. Or is there a more sinister answer? Could it be that the philatelic community has been less vigilant precisely because the genuine 8d are not as rare. If so, then there may be quite a few Sperati 8d forgeries laying dormant in collections, their owners unaware of their presence.

## Forgeries of the 2c Codfish October 1990



In 1865 the Newfoundland Government adopted decimal currency. As a result the Post Office decided to replace the Pence Issue with decimal denominated stamps. Six values were chosen-2c, 5c, 10c, 12c, 13c and 24c. Each was to pay a specific postal rate. Postal rates are determined by a number of factors including the destination and the distance travelled, method of transportation, the weight and type of object carried.

Most rates refer to a standard letter weighing less than ½ oz. However, the Post Office also carried books, parcels, magazines, circulars and newspapers. Books, for example were sent at the rate of 2p/oz. Newspapers, addressed within Newfoundland were carried FREE until 1868 when a 1c rate was introduced. The government subsidized the movement of these objects because it believed they helped unify an isolated and scattered population.

In 1857, when the Pence were first issued, the 1d stamp had two main uses. It paid the rate for circulars and the newspaper rate to England. Only four covers bearing a single 1d stamp have survived-all to Nova Scotia. In 1863 a drop letter rate for local delivery was introduced for St.John's. When the Cents Issue replaced the Pence in 1865 the 1d rate became a 2c rate. There are no known covers paying the Drop Letter Rate.

Needless to say, we would not expect newspapers to survive. They were either thrown out or used for kindling. Also a large number of newspapers were shipped in bulk through Halifax at a freight rate bypassing the Post Office entirely. There were three printings of the 2c stamp. The first in 1865 consisted of 100,000 stamps printed on a fragile pelure paper we will describe in a future article. In 1870 a second printing was required. This appeared on a thicker white wove paper. The final printing was in 1879 with the Rouletted Issue. As is true of most early stamps, the plate layout did not allow sufficient space for the perforations. As a result most of the Newfoundland Cents stamps are poorly centered.

**FORGERIES:** The 2c stamp is not rare yet there are a remarkable number of different forgeries. We compare the shading of the circles containing the numerals and the lines above the tail. Multiples of these and other forgeries are rare.



Type I Solid shading behind 2



Type II seven lines of shading



Type II Missing scroll at top



Type III fancy tail numeral "2"

**TYPE I** Spiro forgery with solid circle of shading. Fourteen lines of shading above the tail.

**TYPE II** Solid circle of shading around "2" but only seven lines of shading.

**TYPE III** Solid circle of shading but only five lines of shading. Also fancy numeral "2"



**TYPE IV** Fournier forgery with shading of fine lines and a dot in the Lower Right "2".



**TYPE V** Unknown forger. The shading consists of a series of thick lines. The base of the upper right "2" is much flatter.



TYPE VI Unknown forger. The right hand numerals both have a dot in the center. The shading consists of very fine lines.

TYPE VII Engraved by Moens in black. The numerals are larger than the others.

Finally we show a genuine stamp with fake perfs.

## Forgeries of the 5c Seal December 1990



When we last described our forgeries of the 5c Seal we had four basic Types and about 25 Forgeries. We now have 9 basic Types. When examining forgeries there is a tendency to over classify the material. As we mentioned in Part II of this series we intend to classify forgeries according to design differences or Types. Subtypes can then be listed including differences of perforation, shade, and cancel. The 5c Seal forgeries can best be classified by examining the tail, claws and whiskers of the Seal as well as the overall size of the stamp and shape of the letters.



TYPE I Spiro lithographed forgery 26½ x 20½ mm-with usual guidelines in the corners, in various shades of black or brown. The tail is divided as in the genuine but there are five uneven claws on the right foot. The “U” of “Newfoundland” is flat on the bottom.

Below are three Type III forgeries in different colours



TYPE II Fournier lithographed forgery 26½ x 20mm-with the usual guidelines all around the design-easily seen on the strip above. Found in various shades of brown (I have none in black), mainly imperf or very crudely perforated. The tail is undivided and the left foot has one claw not three. The “D” of “Newfoundland” has no top serif.

TYPE III An extremely dangerous photolithographic forgery by an unknown forger. It is often found in collections described as genuine. The detail is excellent but it is only 26mm wide (instead of 26½ mm) and usually perf 14 (instead of 12). We illustrate three examples above in black, brown and blue. The main giveaway is that the bottom frameline of the genuine is either very faint or entirely missing on these forgeries



TYPE IV This engraved forgery (27½ x22mm) may be the work of Oneglia. Besides being too large, it is perf 11½ and there are many design differences because it is not photoengraved. One example: the left foot has six claws.



TYPE V This engraved forgery (26½ x20½ mm) was done by Moens. It is dark brown, imperf and like Type IV, there are many design differences because it is not photoengraved. For example, the left foot has four claws and there is no shading below the whiskers.

TYPE VI We have two examples of this unrecorded forgery in blue and black. It is 27x20mm. The tail is divided extending to the frameline! The most amazing thing is that it is a photolithographic forgery of Moens' forgery Type V-see above. Moens was an early stamp dealer who in 1864 published one of the first illustrated catalogues. Forgers were able to see for the first time what certain stamps looked like and they copied these as we see!

Type VII



Type VIII



TYPE VII This lithographed forgery (27x21mm) is in bright red! There are many design differences-the most striking being the huge "5"s at the bottom.

TYPE VIII Lithographed in black and only 25x19mm this forgery has gum. Perhaps because of its size part of the tail has been lopped off and the "5"s at the bottom are tiny.



TYPE IX. This photolithographed forgery from the Harmer collection is rouletted and unlike Type III above one can see the bottom outer frameline.



Finally we illustrate several genuine 5c Seals perf 12x12. We also have one perf 12½ x13. These seem to have genuine cancels and may have been privately perfed because the rouletted stamps were difficult to pull apart. It is a mystery.

## Forgeries of the 10c Albert February 1991

The 10c Consort like the 12c Queen can be found on a very thin yellowish pelure paper from a 1865 printing. Unlike the mint 12c pelure stamp which enjoys a deservedly high premium, the early 10c printing does not. This is unfortunate because in my opinion the 10c thin paper is also a very scarce stamp in mint condition. The last time I described these was in 1981. Since then I have found a Fournier block and several variations of existing types but no new types.



**TYPE I:** This is a crude lithographic forgery by the Spiro Brothers. It has the usual Spiro characteristics: guidelines in the corners, Spiro cancels and sewing machine perforations (with the odd straightedge). The crown on the collar looks like a Fleur de Lys and the “T” and “E” of “TEN” almost touch. The first example at left is on a thin paper while I recently acquired an example on thicker whiter paper with a blurred impression.



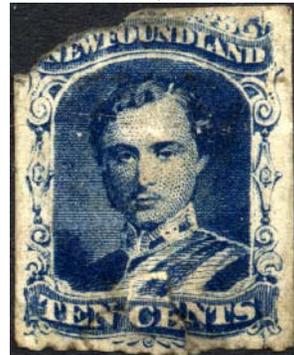
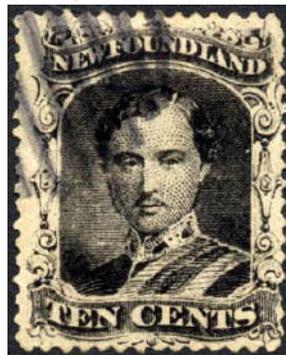
Various perforation types

Worn Plate



Imperfs

**TYPE II:** Also crudely lithographed but by Fournier. It has the usual Fournier giveaway a guideline all around the design. The detail is poor, eg. the lips are long and curl down, the crown on the collar is missing and the “T” and “E” of “TEN” are far apart. We illustrate four perforated (or part perforated) examples plus three imperf varieties showing various degrees of plate wear. Fournier was obviously a busy man. These 7 forgeries could easily be classified as different types even though they come from the same source.



**TYPE III:** The only dangerous forgery is a photolithographic attempt by an unknown forger. This forgery is obviously the work of the same person who made Type III of the 5c Seal we described last time. Since it was made from a photo the detail is excellent. However, the genuine stamps were engraved so this forgery looks flat and lacks the clear fine lines of the original. The perforation is 14 rather than the genuine 12.

## Forgeries of the 12c Victoria May 1991



**Fournier Forgery Typell strip**

Newfoundland's first 12c stamp had a long and complicated history. The design includes a portrait of the Queen that had previously been used for the Nova Scotia 1c, 2c and 5c stamps. The portrait is framed by an oval with a buckle at bottom. The 12c was first issued in November 1865 to replace the 6d value. It paid the rate for letters to Britain, a popular destination.

By 1870 all 100,000 copies of the first printing were sold out. Very few mint stamps have survived. I know of only one mint block and this recently sold at auction for \$5000-a hefty premium over the price of a single stamp. Even used examples are not common. The stamps were printed on a very thin (pelure) yellowish paper. It was easily torn and creased during use. The second printing of 1870 was on a thicker white paper and in a slightly different shade. These printings are often confused. Many collectors end up with two stamps from the second printing and may never see an example of the first. If all 12c stamps were properly identified the demand and price of stamps of the first printing would increase.

On Jan 1, 1873 the rate to Britain was reduced to 6c. The 12c stamp could still be used on double weight letters. However, these were uncommon and the 12c effectively became obsolete. Large numbers remained in stock. These were slowly purchased by dealers and collectors until 1890 when the stock was finally exhausted.

The Post Office was well aware of this demand from the philatelic community. By the mid 1890's it had issued, in the form of a postcard, a price list of stamps available for sale. One such card, dated May 25, 1896, lists sets of stamps and includes the 12c of 1894. This stamp (Scott#29) was made using the old American Bank Note Co Plates of 1865. There was no postal need for these stamps. The odd rate that required 12c could have been made by using combinations of low values. They were printed to complete sets of old stamps listed on the postcards. Reprints of other values soon followed. The Post Office filled its coffers. It also caused a scandal that reached its culmination in 1897 when the long Cabot Set was issued. The Government was thrown out. Post Office policy was reversed and the obsolete stamps were burned. This included 69,653 of the estimated 100,000 12c stamps of 1894 that were printed.



**TYPE I:** This forgery was made by the Spiro Brothers. Our examples are on a white paper with the usual Spiro guidelines in the corners. The Queen's mouth is open slightly and the letters "L" and "A" of "LAND" are joined. We have both imperf and perforated examples. Most are the correct colour, however, we have two that are a bright orange red shade. I have never seen a multiple of any Spiro 12c forgery.

**TypeII**



**Frame  
Double  
TypeIIa**



**TYPE II:** Fournier is responsible for this forgery. There are guidelines all around the design. The colour is close to the original. The paper used is very thin and white. It is toned yellow by the gum. Both this toning and the guidelines can be seen on the marginal strip illustrated at the top of the page. The "L" and "A" of "LAND" are not joined. There are two Subtypes of this forgery which may or may not come from the same plate. The second has a partial doubling of the circular frameline just above the letters "ND.TW". We have three examples of Type IIa but the strip illustrated is TypeII.

## Forgeries of the 13c Ship July 1991



Newfoundland's only 13c stamp was issued in November 1865 to replace the 6½d value. In order to understand the need for a 13c stamp we must look at the Postal Rates. At the time Postal Rates were determined by a number of factors: the method of transportation, the agreements and conventions between countries and the distance. Newfoundland, being a Colony, benefited from a subsidy on all incoming and outgoing mail. The cost of this service was 4d and was known as the Port to Port Rate. Letters from St. John's to ports such as Boston, Baltimore, Halifax and Bermuda were charged this Port to Port Rate.

Letters from an Outport had to first travel to St. John's. They were charged an additional 3d (the Colonial Rate) that was equal to 2½d Sterling (the local currency being worth slightly less). The 6½d stamp, therefore, paid a combination rate: 4d plus 2½d. The recipient country was entitled to add a further charge to letters addressed to inland destinations. Nova Scotia added such a charge. New Brunswick did not because it had an agreement with Newfoundland.

On April 8, 1865 the Port to Port Rate was increased to 5d of which the British Post Office took the 4d it was entitled to. Newfoundland kept 1d to cover the Drop Letter Rate in St. John's. When the Decimal stamps were introduced in November the set included a 10c Port to Port Rate stamp and the 13c stamp to replace the 6½d. These rates were very confusing. The public demanded reform.

On Jan 1, 1873 the Port to Port rate was reduced to 6c. Furthermore, letters mailed from an Outport were no longer charged the additional 3c. A letter mailed from Harbour Grace to any place in the United State required a 6c stamp only. These reforms made the 13c stamp obsolete.

A small number of 13c covers have survived addressed to places in Canada, Cape Breton and even St. Pierre & Miquelon. To understand the true rarity of these early covers we need only look at the numbers. Only 2000 6½d (Scott#7) were printed in 1857. We know 122 of these were sold at the G.P.O. in St. John's in 1859, perhaps more in the Outports, but not enough to use up the supply until late 1861. 15,000 more 6½d (Scott#21) were delivered in 1861. Of these 4,776 were still in stock in 1899 a full 23 years after they were replaced by the 13c. The 13c had a single printing of 100,000. It was much too large. It could have supplied Newfoundland's requirements for half a century. Dealers and collectors slowly purchased the remainders. Some were used on philatelic covers. The stamp was available as late as 1895. However, in 1900, when an inventory was taken before all remainders were burned, the 13c stamp was not present.



**TYPE I:** This is a Spiro forgery with the usual guidelines in the corners. The box which contains "NEWFOUNDLAND" does not have the fine vertical lines of the genuine and the letters are too large.



**Fournier: Matching cork cancels**

**TYPE II:** This Fournier forgery has guidelines all around the design. The letters of "NEWFOUNDLAND" are much smaller than the genuine and the Spiro forgeries. Note the numeral cancel "1602" on the strip of five. Multiples of any of these forgeries are rare.



TYPE III This lithographed forgery has the perforations printed right on the design and is PINK! The letters “NEWFOUNDLAND” are very large against a solid background.

TYPE IV: This lithographed forgery is printed on cardboard paper. Note the break in “NEW FOUNDLAND”.

## Forgeries of the 24c Victoria Autumn 1991

When the Newfoundland Post Office adopted decimal currency in 1865 a 24c stamp was issued to pay the double weight letter rate to Britain. 100,000 stamps were printed of each of the new decimal values. The logic here is hard to understand. Some values, such as the 5c, were in great demand and sold out quickly. The 24c was almost never used. It represented a lot of money in those days and if something could be said briefly for 12c there was no reason to be longwinded for 24c. Quite a few 12c covers to Britain have survived. The Lichtenstein collection had a double weight cover bearing two 12c stamps. I know of no cover with the 24c stamp paying this rate. There were a few other unusual rates that could have been paid with a 24c stamp alone or in combination with other values. For example, the rate to Rome was 28c, to Australia 34c and the Registered rate to Britain was 24c. I’m not aware of any covers paying these rates with a 24c stamp.

On Jan 1, 1873 the letter rate to Britain was reduced to 6c. Other rates were also reduced effectively rendering the 24c stamp obsolete. It remained in stock and was sold to collectors and dealers until 1899. The public was given thirty days to make their purchases and on Jan 4, 1900 over 27,000 24c stamps were burned. The 1890’s were great years for stamp speculators. There were the U.S. Columbians of 1893, and the Canadian Jubilees and Newfoundland Cabots of 1897. Almost all the surviving 24c covers come from this period. These usually bear four or five stamps and are addressed to exotic places in Europe or elsewhere. They are obviously philatelic and very popular.

### FORGERIES:

The Spiro Brothers made forgeries of the 24c stamp many years before the remainders were burned. Why would anyone forge a stamp that was still available at the Post Office? The high face value meant the forgery could be sold for much less than the genuine. Also these forgeries were not really meant to fool collectors. They were sold as facsimiles. The Spiro Brothers made over 500 different forgeries beginning in 1864. Given their low prices, the difficulty in locating genuine stamps from far off places and the absence of accurate illustrations of the genuine they were able to compete very effectively with legitimate dealers. In 1871 the Philatelic Trade struck back with the publication of the “SPUD PAPERS”. This was a series of illustrated articles giving detailed descriptions of many of the Spiro forgeries. These articles increased the demand for genuine stamps at the expense of the forgers and the Spiro Brothers ceased producing their forgeries by 1880.



TYPE I Lithographed forgery by the Spiro Brothers with the usual guidelines in the corners and cancellation (see photo). These are found Imperf or poorly perforated.



TYPE II Lithographed by Fournier, these forgeries have guidelines all around the design. Most are imperf but some have rough sawtooth perfs or sewing machine perfs. Note the forgery (2nd from left) made from a worn plate.

## Forgeries of 1c Prince of Wales February 1992



Newspapers circulating within Newfoundland were allowed to travel Post Free until 1868 when a 1c rate was introduced. The Government had been willing to subsidize the dissemination of information on the grounds that the population of Newfoundland was sparse and scattered. However, the sheer quantity and bulk of the papers in circulation caused tension within the Post Office.

The National Bank Note Company prepared a 1c stamp, the only time they worked for the Newfoundland Post Office. It was issued in November 1868 and supplies lasted until May 1871. New stocks were ordered from the American Bank Note Company. They prepared a new Die of similar design. The colour was also different being Brown Lilac rather than the Violet shade of 1868.

We do not know how many printings were made of this new 1c stamp but assuming similar order sizes and rates of use we can guess there were printings in 1868 (National Bank Note Co), 1871, 1873, 1875 and 1877 (rouletted issue). My guess is that at least 500,000 stamps were printed in total, perhaps more. Of these almost all were used. Mint multiples of these 1c stamps are scarce. On the other hand unused examples of #32 are quite common and cancelled stamps quite scarce. This leads me to suspect that the stamps placed on newspapers were often not cancelled and then soaked off by the recipient. This practise was probably corrected by the Post Office because we see more cancelled rouletted 1c stamps.



**TYPE I.** The most common of the 1c forgeries was lithographed by the Spiro Brothers. It has the usual Spiro guidelines in the corners. We have both perforated and imperf copies in two distinct shades which I'll call violet and grey violet. Multiples of this forgery are scarce. The strip of five illustrated above is the only multiple I've seen. This is not a dangerous forgery. There are differences in design, perforation, paper and colour.



#32



#32A



Type II

Type III



**TYPE II.** This rare forgery is engraved probably by Oneglia. It is similar in colour (brown) and style to the forgery Type IV we described of the 5c Seal earlier in this Series. The example illustrated is not a very clear impression but I would say the forger used a photographic technique to prepare his forgery rather than engrave the design from scratch. The margins are too large and perforations slightly off at 11.5. The paper is much heavier than the genuine.

**TYPE III.** This poorly lithographed forgery is in blue. The letters are badly formed. For example, the "D" of "NEWFOUNDLAND" is smaller than the "N" beside it. There are white spots all over the design due to underinking. If you have a similar forgery I'd like to know because this is the only example I've seen.

## Forgeries of 3c and 6c Victoria December 1991



As travel within and between nations improved and the volume of mail increased, governments were able to reduce the rates charged. In May 1870 the Newfoundland Government reduced the domestic letter rate from 5c to 3c per ½ oz. (Imagine a 40% reduction Rates today) Two new stamps were prepared probably from the same Master Die. Secondary Dies with the value tablets filled in were then made from this Master Die. The 3c stamp had Die #386A, the 6c Die #386. The newly printed sheets arrived in July 1870 so for two months the 3c rate was made up of combinations of the available 1c and 2c stamps including the occasional bisect. In Sept 1870 the Post Office announced that bisects would no longer be accepted. All Post Offices had adequate supplies of the new stamps. At first the 6c stamp could only be used on double weight domestic letters but in late 1872 the letter rates to Canada, PEI, the USA and UK were all reduced to 6c. The Post Office records for this period have been lost including the number and size of each printing. We do know that the previous domestic letter rate stamp had printings of 100,000 and that this was sufficient for three years. We can safely assume similar quantities for the new stamps. In April 1873 the colour of the 3c stamp was changed to blue and in late 1877 another shipment arrived with rouletted perforations. I suspect these three were the only printings. Certainly there were no remainders because the stamps are quite scarce in mint condition. Mint multiples of the 3c stamps are rare. On the other hand the 6c stamp is quite common in mint condition indicating the existence of remainders. There seem to be two distinct shades pointing to two printings (or possibly a change in the ink during printing). We can assume that very few were used before late 1872 when the new rate to the UK came into effect. But this only lasted until August 1876 when the rate was again reduced this time to 5c. In 1894 the 6c stamp was reprinted in a new shade (Scott#36) along with the 12c (Scott#29). This was done for purely philatelic reasons. The Post Office realized that with these two values in stock they could get 18c more from each collector who placed an order. Probably 100,000 of each were printed. In the end 70% of the 12c stamps and 35% of the 6c stamps were burnt to get rid of obsolete values.



**TYPE I** These were most likely made by the Spiro Brothers. They are poorly lithographed and lack the detail and definition of the engraved originals. There are the usual Spiro guidelines at the corners but these are quite faint. The 3c forgeries can be found in vermilion and blue. They all have typical Spiro cancels. The blocks above are rare.



**TYPE II** This forgery is very similar to Type I although the colour and perforations are different. The huge margins could not fit on the plate from which the blocks above were printed.

**TYPE III** Finally there is the 2c Bogus stamp made by Moens. It is similar in design but much smaller than the genuine. The stamp illustrated is in black printed on greenish paper. I'd be interested to know if anyone has a second example

## Forgeries #75-7 Summer 1992



In Sept. 1897 the Newfoundland Post Office was virtually sold out of all 1c stamps. It was decided to surcharge 40,000 of the 1890 3c stamps (Sc #60). The surcharge, which consisted of the words ONE CENT and two horizontal bars, was done by the printers of the Royal Gazette. A setting of 50 was used because of a limited supply of type. The 3c stamps came in sheets of 100 with Imprints in the Top and Bottom margins. These sheets were cut in half for the surcharging.

It has been argued that only the bottom halves of the 3c sheets were used. The argument rests on the fact that TOP Imprint sheets of 50 of the surcharged stamps have never been seen. However, a coincidental purchase of a complete setting of 50 of the surcharged sheet (without Top or Bottom margins) and a Top Imprint strip of 20 of Sc #60 with full Imprint has allowed us to prove otherwise. By examining the stamps carefully we found a plate flaw in Position #1 of Sc #60 and a similar flaw on Pos #1 of the surcharged sheet. This proves that the surcharged sheet we had was a Top half sheet. It seems obvious that the Top margins were removed by the Printer so that the stamps could fit in the Press. The Bottom margins were left intact since they probably didn't interfere with the work.

There are many shades of the 3c stamp, probably because there were several printings but also because of the fugitive nature of the ink. We once had a sheet of the surcharge which had been folded in such a way that two columns were not exposed to light. These two columns are now dramatically different in colour having remained violet grey while the other eight columns are now grey.

TYPE A Surcharge: The first four rows of the setting consist of TYPE A letters. The two bars of the surcharge on the Top Row are 17mm apart (8000 printed). The next three rows are also TYPE A but the bars are 18mm apart (24,000 printed). We can call these TYPE A NARROW BARS and TYPE A WIDE BARS.



#75 Forgery



#76 Type I



#76 Type II



#76 Type III

TYPE A Forgeries: It is surprising that anyone would bother forging this TYPE A surcharge but we have one in our collection. There are minor differences in the letters, the bars are too thin and 19mm apart.

TYPE B Surcharge: The first 8 stamps of the fifth row were surcharged with TYPE B letters. Of these, the first (Pos #41) has the "ONE" set 2½mm from "CENT". The space is 1½mm on the other seven TYPE B stamps (5600 printed). Only 800 Pos #41 stamps were printed so it is quite a scarce item and worth looking for.

TYPE B Forgeries: We have three different forgeries (note they are all used):

1st Forgery The letters are smaller than the original and are 4mm above the Bottom Bar instead of 3mm. The two bars are 17mm apart.

2nd Forgery: This is more dangerous than the 1st forgery. The letters are not as clear (especially the "T") nor the ink as black as the genuine but the overall effect is quite good. The top bar is too thin but is 17mm from the bottom bar.

3rd Forgery: This one is a joke. There are no bars! The letters are too large.

## Forgeries of #77

We now turn our attention to Scott #77-the scarce TYPE C Surcharge. Of the 40,000 stamps surcharged only 1600 have TYPE C letters. Fake surcharges are very easy to make and forgeries can be found everywhere: in collections, at auction and in dealers' stocks. The profit is enormous. A used #60 is worth 50c, a used #77 a thousand times more. At least half the copies I've examined are forgeries.

Forgeries of #77 can be distinguished from the genuine with a magnifying glass and ruler. We include previously unpublished measurements carried out for us on an Electron Microscope by a collector friend. The measurements are accurate to within 0.05 mm. The bars' thickness was measured at both the left and right ends and these were averaged. Measurements for two genuine stamps are included-the first being from Position #49 and the second from Position #50.

	Genuine	Genuine	Forg#1	Forg#2	Forg#3	Forg#4	Forg#5	Forg#6
Thickness-Top Bar	1.37	1.40	1.12	1.49	1.43	1.45	1.45	1.54
Thickness-Bottom Bar	1.33	1.33	1.09	1.43	1.45	1.52	1.36	1.52
Space Between Bars	17.54	17.60	19.10	18.21	16.98	16.94	18.25	17.36
Space between Bottom Bar and Bottom of ONE CENT	2.20	2.26	4.50	3.41	2.33	2.30	3.02	2.30

  
**Genuine**

  
**Forgery Type I**

  
**Type II**

  
**Type III**

  
**Type IV**

  
**Type V**

  
**Type VI**

**COMMENTS**

Most of the forgeries of #77 that I've seen were used. A few were unused without gum. I can't recall seeing one which was mint with gum. There is a reason for this. The forger requires genuine examples of Scott #60. Mint examples cost much more than used ones but mint and used examples of #77 are worth about the same. Why invest in a mint #60 if a cheap used stamp will do? We illustrate below six #77 forgeries. We've also scanned part of each forgery above along with the Table of Measurements. This can best be viewed by blowing up the page size.



**TYPE I.** This is a poor attempt and not at all dangerous. The letters are too small and the spacing is all wrong (see Table above). The amazing thing is that it is a pair

**TYPE II.** Very dangerous-found in a collection. Careful measurement required.

**TYPE III.** Very dangerous-measurement required.



**TYPE IV.** Dangerous. The letters of "ONE CENT" are not as clear as the genuine. In the word "CENT" the "C" is almost an "O" and the "E" is filled in so that it appears to be a rectangle.

**TYPE V.** This surcharge is in red ink-a forgery of the rare essay prepared in that colour before black was chosen. It is very dangerous & must be measured.

**TYPE VI** Extremely dangerous as can be seen from the Table. Measurement must be done very carefully. In addition, the letters are not the right size. Both the letters "E" are too narrow, the "N" malformed and the "T" a bit offcenter.



**Misplaced Surcharges:** Finally we include several varieties of misplaced surcharge. The bars were made to obliterate the "3"s of Scott #60. On these examples the bars are shifted up or slanted. The last variety #77 has a partial Double Surcharge. We can just see a straight bar at the top of the stamp.

## The William B. Hale Paris Labels Spring 1992

Note: This article is presented as it appeared twenty years ago even though new information has since come to light thanks to Clarence Stillions and David Sessions. Their article *“The Bogus ‘Paris’ Labels* in a 1992 edition of *Maple Leaves* showed there were more designs from different plates than recorded here. However I do not think there are any new designs with ‘Newfoundland’ than Winthrop Boggs illustrated in his 1942 book *The Postage Stamps and Postal History of Newfoundland*.

The same strip Boggs used in his 1942 book



It’s been ten years since I last wrote an article about these stamps. At one time I had four or five sets in stock but since then I’ve seen very few and added only one stamp to our reference collection. Before further discussing this set let’s summarize what we know about the stamps.

Designs: 1c-Pony Express Rider, 3c-Sailing Ship, 5c-Train (also appears without value or Newfoundland), 10c-Steam Ship, No Value-Child Riding Fish.

Colours: Black (strip), Purple, Blue, Brown, Blue Green, Red and Olive (block).

Perforation: Perf 11 approx.

Printing Method: Lithography



The same designs as in Boggs’ strip but in colour



Imperf between



Imprints: WILLIAM B. HALE-above 3c stamp; WILLIAMSVILLE, MASS, USA-above 5c stamp. These Imprints only appear above the red pair at right, which I assume would be at the top center of the plate. There is a long but unreadable imprint to the left of our new addition-the 10c red. All I can make out is the letter “Y” at the end of a word. Finally, there is an inscription at the bottom of the 5c stamp that reads A.BACUST CO.CYGASBOURG, PARIS.

In his book, “Philatelic Forgers” Varro Tyler devotes a few paragraphs to William Hale of Williamsville Mass. It seems that Hale was at one time a stamp dealer known to fake cancellations and postal markings. He eventually died in a Federal Penitentiary. Although these stamps were once described as Paris Essays there can be little doubt that they are entirely bogus. But why create bogus stamps rather than forgeries of genuine ones and how could their creator hope to sell them to collectors? To answer this we must go back to the beginning.

Stamp collecting began as little more than the gathering of as many different designs from as many-countries as possible. Little was known about the technical side of philately such as printing method, perforations etc. Issuing Governments did not publicize new issues as they do today. New stamps would “appear” or “turn up”. They were also difficult to obtain even when current. Imagine trying to order British Columbia stamps in 1860 when ships would take half a year to deliver a letter. Collectors would often make do with facsimiles which were extensively advertized. The dealers in facsimiles only had to go one step further and create bogus designs for their eager customers. These bogus “new issues” were often treated as official issues in the journals.

There were other reasons for bogus stamps beside the obvious addition of a new product line. They were easier to make. One did not have to copy someone else’s design. (The odd part is that these Paris bogus stamps do resemble the U.S. 1869 Pictorials). Finally, bogus stamps were very profitable. A genuine new issue cost the dealer face value plus expenses. A bogus design could have a high face value and if passed off as genuine could be sold at face value or more.

I have never seen nor read about a complete sheet of these stamps. We have five designs (sometimes without value or country name) in seven colours. All the multiples are in a single colour. My theory is that the plate was run off in various colours, then the sheets were perforated or cut up into singles to make sets of different colours. Why seven colours? Perhaps there were seven designs.

Imprint in the Side Margin



## Newfoundland Airmail Forgeries March 1993

### FAKE OVERPRINTS of the “HAWKER” C1:

Forgeries of this stamp are relatively common. I’ve had ten or so over the years. Both of the fakes illustrated here are easy to spot because the type used is wrong. In the first case all the letters are too large and in the second the type used has no serifs.



### 1933 General Balbo Flight

In July 1933 the Italian General Italo Balbo landed in Shoal Harbour on his way back to Rome. He was leading an armada of twenty three Savoia Marchetti airplanes which had flown to Chicago for the Century of Progress Exhibition. The Newfoundland Government had arranged to have mail carried on the flight to Europe. A rate of \$4.50 was agreed upon. Of this, General Balbo was to receive \$3.75 per letter carried. At first it was thought that a printing of several hundred stamps would be sufficient to carry the mail. The Post Office soon realized that the demand was there for a much larger number. The Post Office Officials also realized that for each stamp sold that did not carry mail the government (not the General) received the \$3.75 .

The stamp was put on sale July 24th after Robinson & Co. had surcharged 2010 blocks of the current 75c Airmail stamp. The surcharge was prepared in a setting of four which we will discuss in more detail when we describe the forgeries. The Printers used a Caslon Linotype machine. Ten of the blocks were defective and destroyed. One block was later found to have an inverted surcharge and is considered to be an error. Later two 10c Airmail blocks were found with a genuine surcharge. Their status is unclear.

Within a few days the Balbo stamp was sold out at the Post Office and selling for up to \$10 a copy—a considerable sum during the depression. However, the original 75c Airmail stamp was still available at face value at the Post Office and there were five Caslon Linotype machines in the city. It did not require much skill to calculate the profitable return an investment in 75c stamps and the use of one of those machines might make. The forger, however, made the mistake of trying to sell his “Balbos” to an expert. He was caught, sent to prison and the forgeries were confiscated but not destroyed. One of the expert witnesses at the trial was Cyril Harmer of London. Harmer was also author of *Newfoundland Airmails*, a book that recounts the history of the Colony’s early airmail flights. In the May 1979 *American Philatelist* Harmer updated the story concerning the “Balbo” forgeries. He described the characteristics of the genuine stamps as well as the two classes of forgeries, the St John’s Forgery (those from the trial) and New York Forgeries that came to light later. We illustrate below a St John’s forgery block along with a summary of Harmer’s description:

We list the differences for each position for the Genuine (G), St.John’s (ST) and New York (NY) forgeries.

**Position#1:** (G) The “L” of “BALBO” is slightly above the “A”. (ST) The rectangles are closer together. (NY) Bar under 1933 curves slightly down.

**Position#2:** (G) Spots or dots in lower portion of “E” of “GEN”. (ST) Bar under 1933 thin and curved down. (NY) “I” of “FLIGHT” has no serif top right.

**Position#3:** (G) The “L” of “FLIGHT” has a break at top. (ST) Left vertical of “N” thin almost broken at bottom. (NY) “A” to left of “H” Left vertical of “N” thin almost broken.

**Position#4:** (G) The “I” of “FLIGHT” is almost directly below the period of “GEN”. (ST) There is a break in the “G” of “GEN”. (NY) The point after “GEN” is exactly above the “I” of “FLIGHT”.



St. John’s Forgery Block

Notice break in ‘G’ of ‘GEN’ in Pos#4 bottom right

It is important to remember we are dealing with fake surcharges. Comparison is made with the genuine setting that in this case consists of four positions which are plateable. The type used to make this setting had certain characteristics. The forger must try to copy the setting as best he can either by a photographic technique (which hasn't been used for the Balbo yet as far as I know) or by putting together a setting similar to the genuine with the same type. Since each letter in the setting is set a fixed distance from the others these must be measured. Each letter in addition has characteristics, such as breaks or shape, which are unique to it.

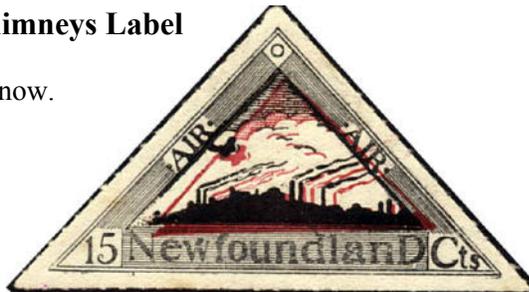


### The 10c Balbo Essay Forgery

Harmer states that two blocks of the 10c Labrador issue were surcharged with the Balbo overprint. Harmer considered these to be trial surcharges. The forgery illustrated above is very dangerous. It is the only forgery of the Balbo surcharge on a 10c stamp that I've seen. There are minor differences between this forgery and the forgeries described above as well as the genuine Balbos. Notice the shift to the left so that the left bar is partially off the design.

### The 15c Smoking Chimneys Label

What is this? I do not know.



### #60 Queen Victoria

This is a surprising stamp to see forged. Perhaps the idea was to eventually add a surcharge for it look like a #77.



### The 2c Pink Codfish Forgery

This is an amazing stamp. I imagine it was made to resemble Scott#46-8 which were issued in Green and Orange. Perhaps at one time it was orange and subsequently chemically treated. There are faint guidelines in the corners and a guideline to the left of the design. The paper is very thin-almost pelure. The perfs at the top seem to be of the sewing machine type and are different from the other three sides. Is there a second example of this out there? I've been looking for one for a long time with no luck.

### FAKE SURCHARGES of #127 Inverted and #128

Both these forgeries are unusual, the only ones I have seen. The stamps are both genuine and fake surcharges have been applied. In the case of #127 the words "TWO CENTS" are too close to the horizontal bar. The bars of the #128 are correctly placed. In both forgeries the ink used is grey black instead of jet black. Unlike the genuine, the letters and bars of the forgeries appear watery with many underinked areas. The letters do not have square edges as they should and some of the letters (eg. the "H" of "THREE") are the wrong shape.



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