

Canada-U.S. St. Lawrence Seaway: Its Commemorative Stamps and Major Varieties

Ron Majors, May 20,2023

Introduction

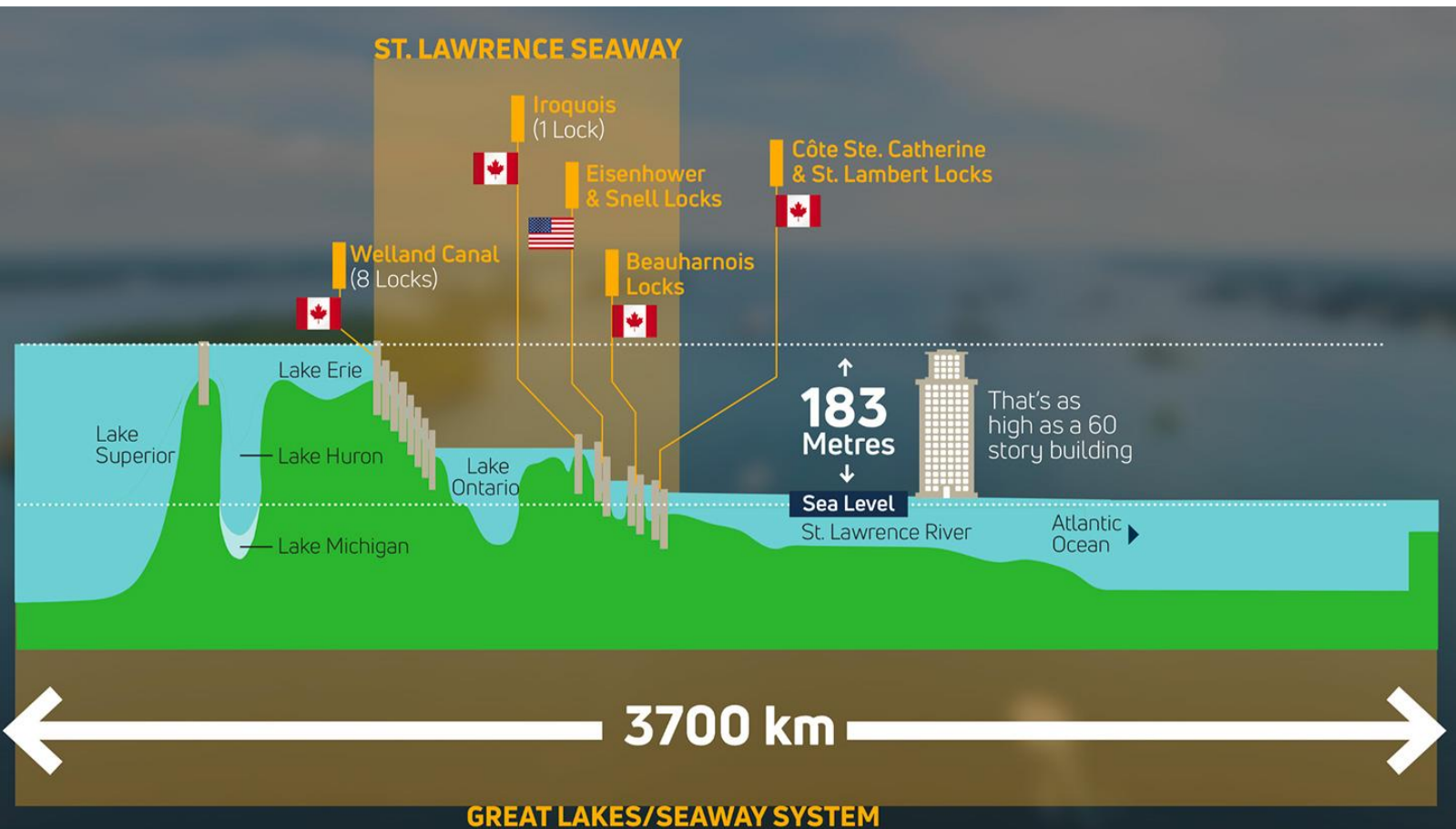
The St. Lawrence Seaway project was a massive undertaking in the 1950's. The goal was to open up boat traffic-- the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean. It was a joint development project between the United States and Canada. A series of locks made this possible. The St. Lawrence Seaway was officially opened on June 26, 1959. This major event was commemorated by a joint issue of stamps by Canada and the U.S. The first day ceremony took place on the same date Ottawa in Ontario, Canada and Massena, NY. Many cachets showing various portions of the water route were published.

Unfortunately, as we shall see, a problem in the Canadian Bank Note Company printing process created some interesting stamp varieties including center invert (both providing examples on/off cover) and "kiss" print (also known as a double printing). Behold, Canada's First Inverted stamp in 108 years of stamp production.

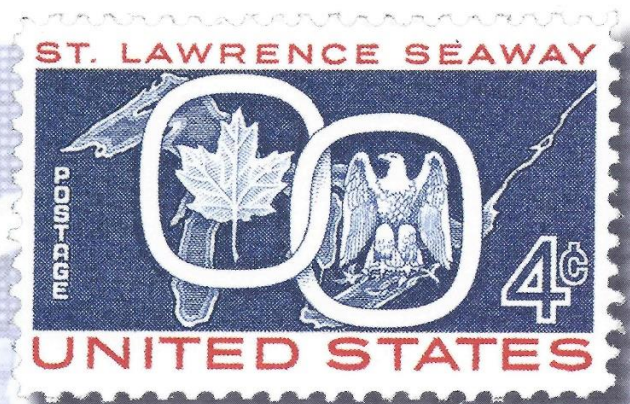
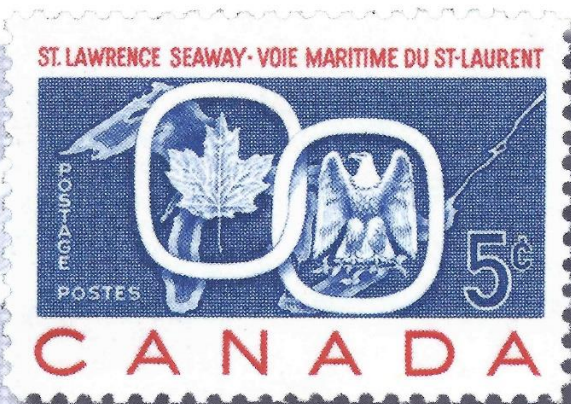


Map of coverage of St. Lawrence Seaway System

Elevation Gain/Loss from Lake Superior to Atlantic Ocean



THE 1959 ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY JOINT ISSUE AND ITS INVERT



Charles J. G. Verge, FRPSC, FRPSL

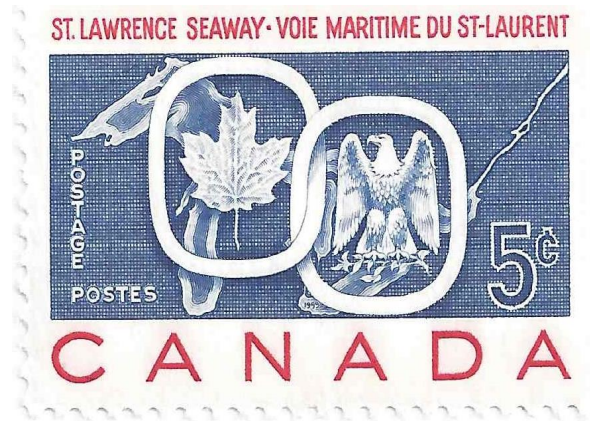
Estimated to be 212
Seaways Inverts in private
hands



Stamps Commemorating Opening of St. Lawrence Seaway



U.S. St. Lawrence
Seaway, Mint
Scott #1131



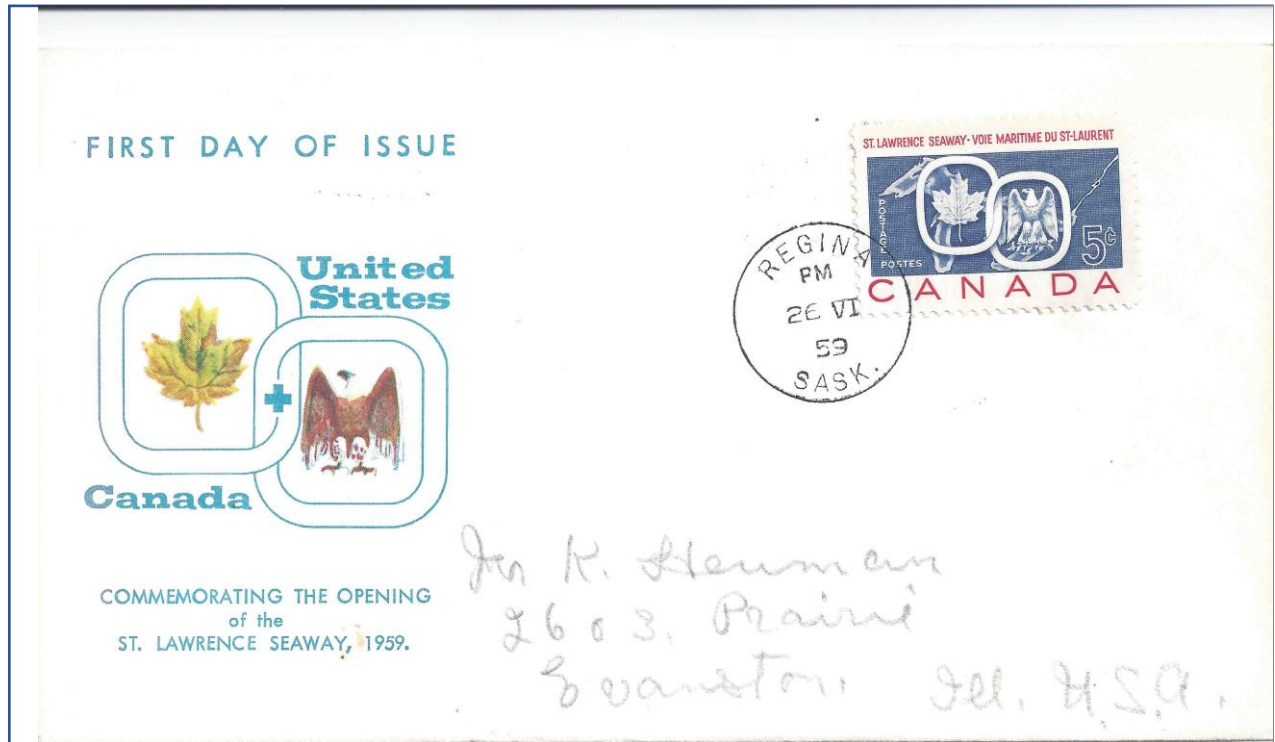
Canada. St. Lawrence
Seaway, Mint
Unitrade Scott #387

The stamps showed national icons:

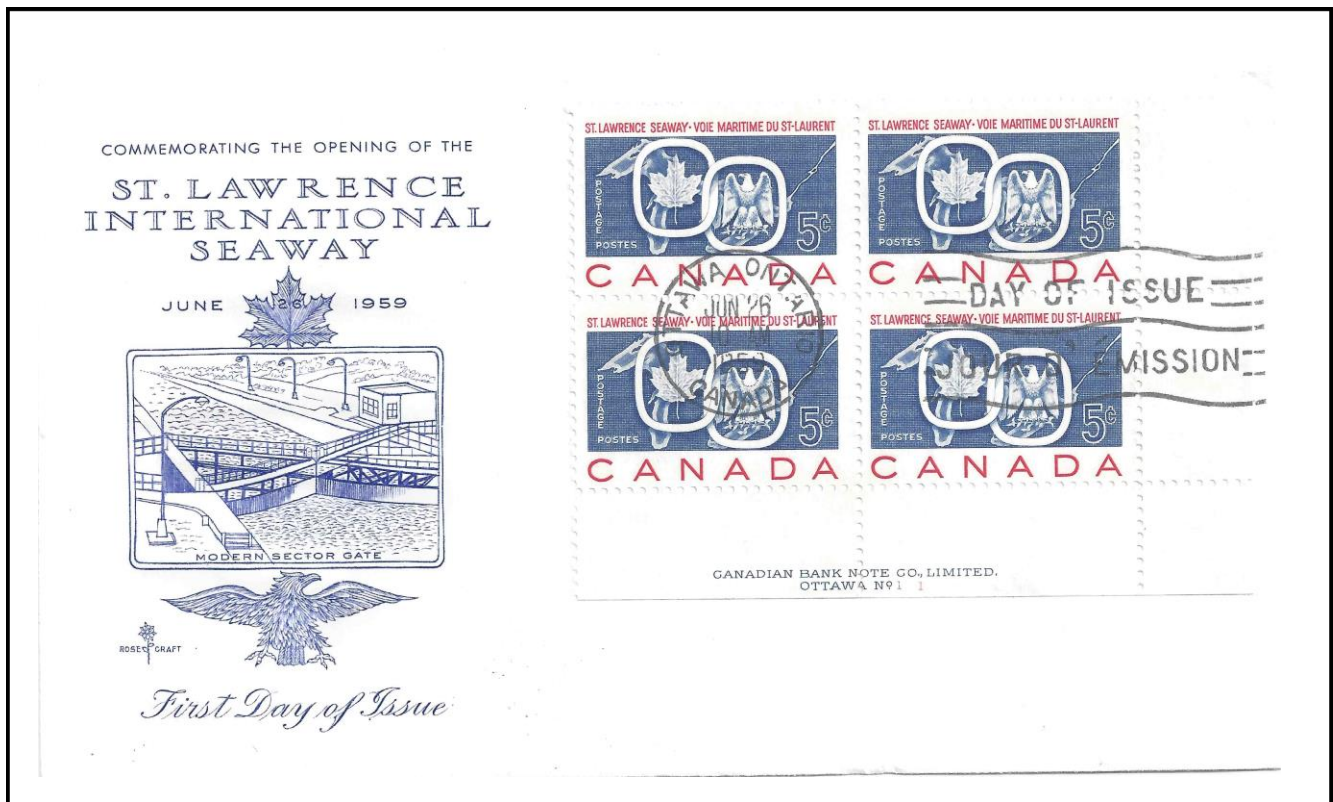
- ☐ Canada, the maple leaf symbolizing duty, pride, and ingenuity. Printed in two languages by Canadian Bank Note Company.
- ☐ United States, the bald eagle representing strength, courage and freedom. Eagle holding olive branch in talons represents peace.
- ☐ Interlocking chains represents strength of centuries-old friendship
- ☐ Shared waterways dominate background of stamp design
- ☐ Value represents first class mail rate in 1959.

First dual issued stamps between Canada and United States

First Day Cover with Canadian Stamp



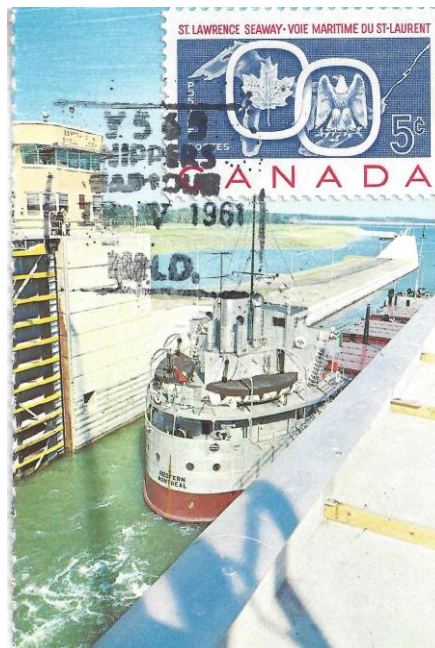
First Day Cover with Canadian Stamps (Ottawa Issue)



First Day Cover with Canadian and US Stamps



Cancelled in U.S. only. Canadian stamp should not have also been cancelled.



Mini-postcard showing boat in a typical lock

Examples of St. Lawrence Seaway Usage on Cover



First day cover for 25th Anniversary Stamps for St. Lawrence Seaway



Recent U.S. letter with plate block of St. Lawrence Seaway

Production Processes

U.S.: the US Post Office used a one pass two-color Giori printing press and therefore no errors were reported for the U.S. version.

Canada: the Canadian printing process (flat bed press) required the sheets to be put through the press twice. Once for the blue plate (vignette) and once for the red plate (lettering). For the 2nd printing, the sheet was placed in a pile but upside down (in reverse position) before being run through the press. This resulted in a number of sheets having an inverted vignette, the so-called Seaway Invert, the first ever printing error in the 108-year history of Canadian stamps.

Three versions of St. Lawrence Seaway Stamps



Normal Stamp
Mint, NH



Inverted Vignette
Unitrade & Scott #387a
Mint, NH



Inverted Vignette
Unitrade & Scott #387a
Used

There are an estimated 212 mint Seaways invert stamps in private hands. Within that number are mint multiple large blocks that are mostly in Canadian collections. Used stamps are scarcer with an estimated 48 off cover and 22 stamps on cover or piece existing.

Blue Vignette Press Sheet of 200



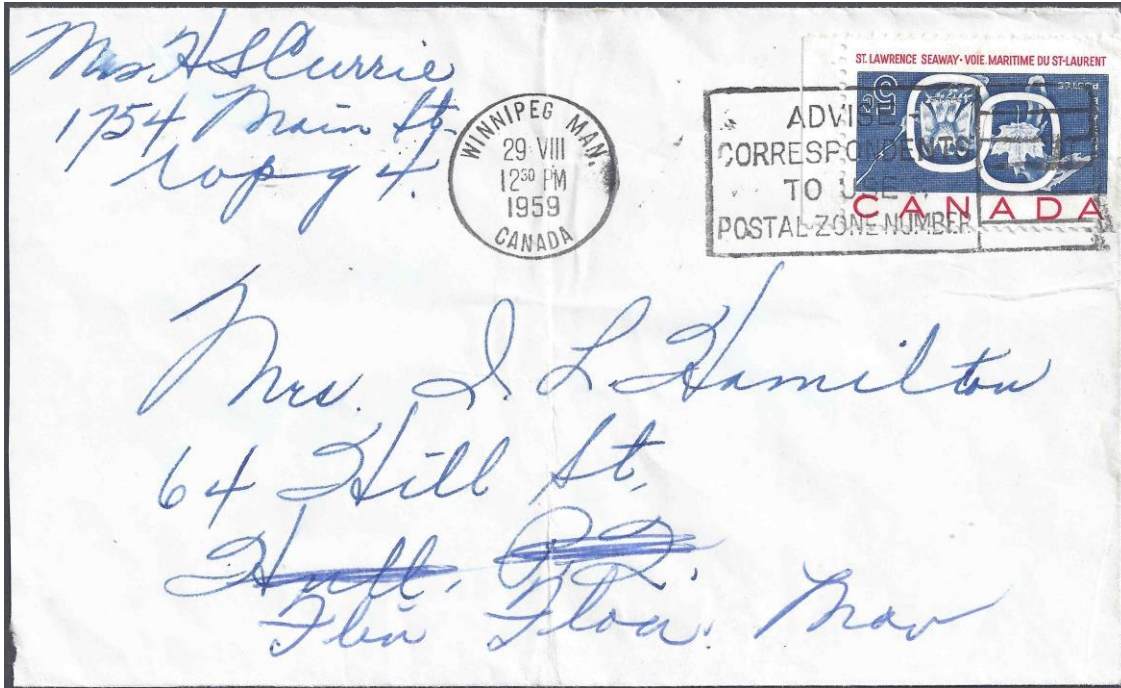
031 580

Due. O.K. Jm MAY 1 1959

Complete Two-Colour Press Sheet of 200



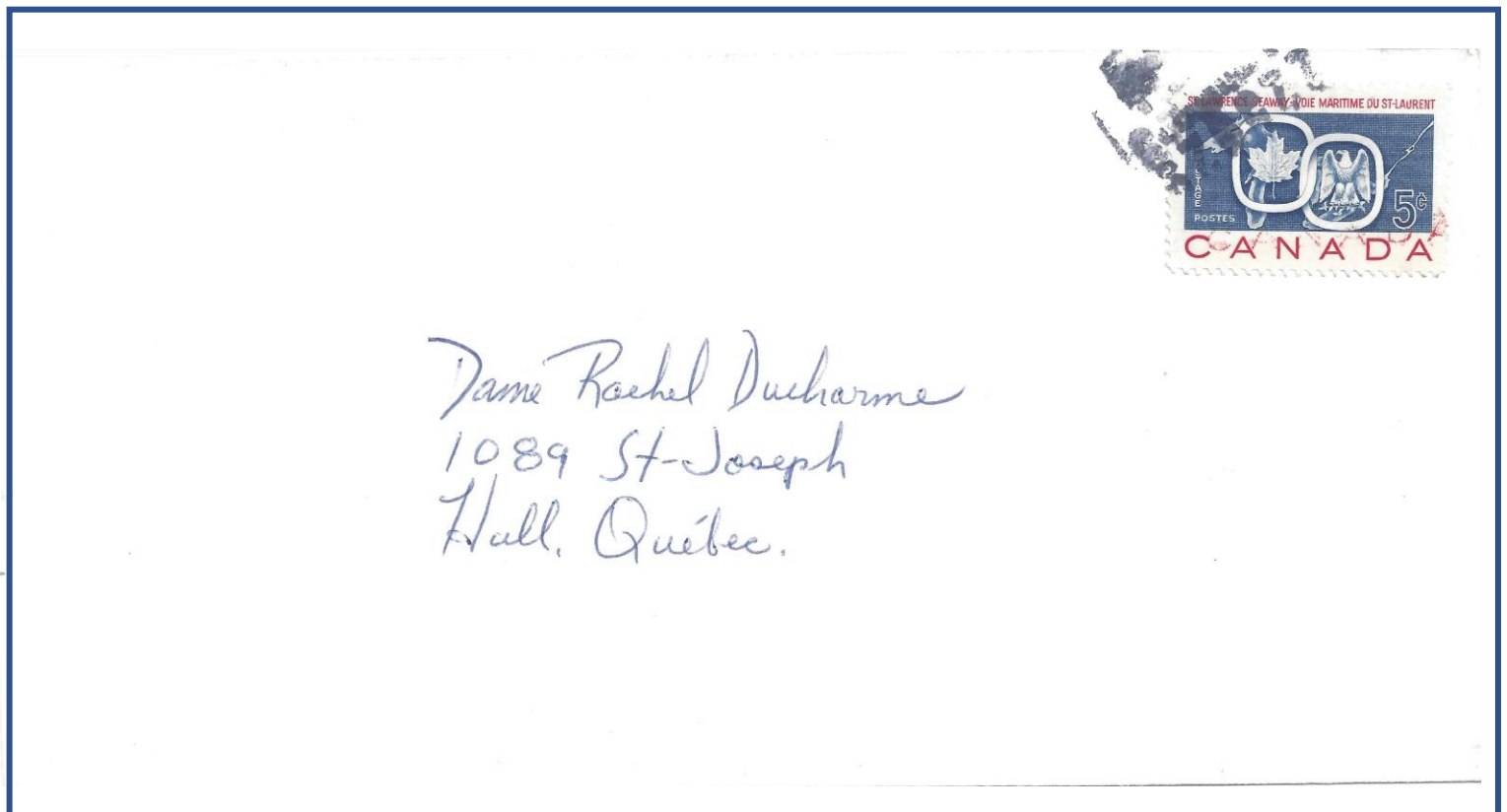
Seaway Invert on Cover



- ❖ One of 22 documented Canadian Seaway Inverted Stamps on Cover (or Piece).
- ❖ My cover is number 7 in Charles Verge's book, "The 1959 St. Lawrence Seaway Joint Issue and its Invert", The Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation, Toronto, 2009.

Other Variety on Cover: “Kiss Print”

Also referred to as double print, a number of mint kiss print stamps have been reported, less than 10. On a flat-bed press, a kiss print occurs when a slanting second impression results from the paper jumping up and skimming the printing cylinder a second time, really a double printing.



There are only two reported “kiss print” Seaways stamps on cover and one on piece, truly a rare happening (Scott #387i)

Kiss Print Seaways Stamp

M, NH



Realized \$3500 in 2022 Maresch Auction

A Recently Discovered Kiss Print Variety on Cover



Sold for
\$800.00
Kellerher
Auction
May 16-18,
2023

Unitrade 387i & Scott, Catalog \$1000 (USD)

Toronto Aug. 8, 1864 c.d.s. at bottom



No. G 30185

VINCENT GRAVES GREENE PHILATELIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION

10 Summerhill Avenue, Toronto, Canada M4T1A8

Member A.I.E.P.

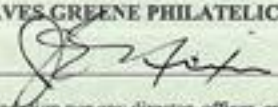
DATE: November 14, 2022

COMMENTS: Canada Scott
Specialized No. 387i,
used, with kiss print
of CANADA inverted
across top of stamp,
genuine in all respects

ISSUED TO: Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions



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A Recently Discovered Kiss Print Variety on Cover: Block of 4



Unitrade 387i & Scott
Kelleher Auction #781

Sold for
\$1500
Kelleher
auction
May 16-18,
2023


 No. G 30186

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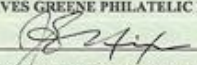
DATE: November 14, 2022

COMMENTS: Canada Scott Specialized No. 387i, used block of four with small amounts of CANADA kiss printed across top of all four stamps, genuine in all respects.

ISSUED TO: Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions



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