

# FINALLY CLOSURE TO THE “2015 MYSTERY”

by Roger Fox #009



A little more than 5 years ago I wrote an article in the April 2003 issue of the COLLECTOR (page 26) entitled THE “2015” MYSTERY.

In re-reading my article and theory, several things I suspected about this strange “insert” series was correct but my theory was indeed wrong.

In case you are wondering what I am talking about, it was the last of an order of \$1.00 coupons from the British American Bank Note Company (now B. A. Banknote Inc. or International) and is recognized in the BILODEAU GUIDE as CTC-S20-F ‘2’ PREFIX, and dated 1996.

Canadian Tire’s original order to B.A. BANKNOTE was for 14 million coupons. We knew this in advance when collectors started finding ‘out of sequence 2014’ prefix coupons as replacements. The printer preprinted these unidentifiable ‘2014’ notes intentionally above CTC’s ordered limit to be used as replacements or insert notes in the ordered series. This practice is similar to how Bank of Canada ‘replacements’ is now done. The idea is that once the coupons are in circulation, they become ‘invisible’ as a replacement since there is no identifiable marking or code to indicate same. However, since CTC has an ordered limit, and Bank of Canada does not, it is easier to tell even so-called unidentifiable CTC replacements once they are found in regular bundles, and then know what to look for later once they are in circulation.

This was the norm and up to about 8 million of the 14 million coupons there was nothing unusual about this series.

Then collectors started discovering \$1.00 coupons in the 2015 prefix range. There were none in new bundles, only in singles or small groups in circulation.

In the beginning, only a window of 20,000 notes was identified, and that window was at the very end of the 2015 range. i.e. 2015980000 to 2016000000.

To quote my earlier article: “So what are they? Why were they printed? Are they part of the original order, or are they the beginning of another order? Were they replacements?”

I then developed a theory to try and answer these questions. I suggested they were regular notes, not replacements since ‘2014’ prefix coupons continued to show up as replacements in regular bundles. I also did not feel that they were

the beginning of a new order as all of the ‘2015’ coupons were signed by Stephen Bachand and Mr. Wayne Sales was already into his 3rd year as president, and B.A. Banknote were already printing 5¢ & 10¢ (CTC S25 and S26 series) with Mr. Sales signature.

My theory then evolved to a possible serial numbers

printing error since the 20,000 coupons only represented 400 sheets of 50 which in today’s technology and high speed presses could easily be missed. My idea was that perhaps B.A. Banknote added a “1” to the last 20,000 coupons in the ‘2005’ range, thus creating the ‘2015’ range. Well time, research and patience can solve the deepest mysteries.

It wasn’t long before both 200598/99nnnn and 201598/99nnnn began to appear so part of my theory had disintegrated fairly quickly.

A second nail in my scenario was the fact that CTC issued the balance of 1,000,000 ‘2015’ coupons in 2005 which proved that this was not a small ‘window’ of only 20,000 notes, but indeed an overrun of an extra million coupons bringing that order to 15 million and not 14 million as the replacements indicated.

A third confirmation that my theory was wrong was when I found ‘2014’ replacement coupons in new bundles of ‘2015’ notes once they became common.

Then finally, with the help of President Thayer, I came across two notes numbered 2005984998 and 2015984998 proving beyond a doubt that both series existed right down to the same number.

In conclusion, I believe the printer released the small window of 20,000 ‘2015’ notes prematurely at about the ‘2008’ range, which, considering the small quantity, really confused things and got everyone wondering.

So I was wrong. Also naïve to even think B.A. Banknote would ever make an error like this, in the first place!

But, at the time, and given the circumstances it is very easy to let your mind speculate.

Anyway, with the evidence so stated and the 2 notes with identical serial numbers except the ‘ten million’ number, we can now put closure to the ‘2015’ MYSTERY. As it turned out, it wasn’t really a mystery at all!