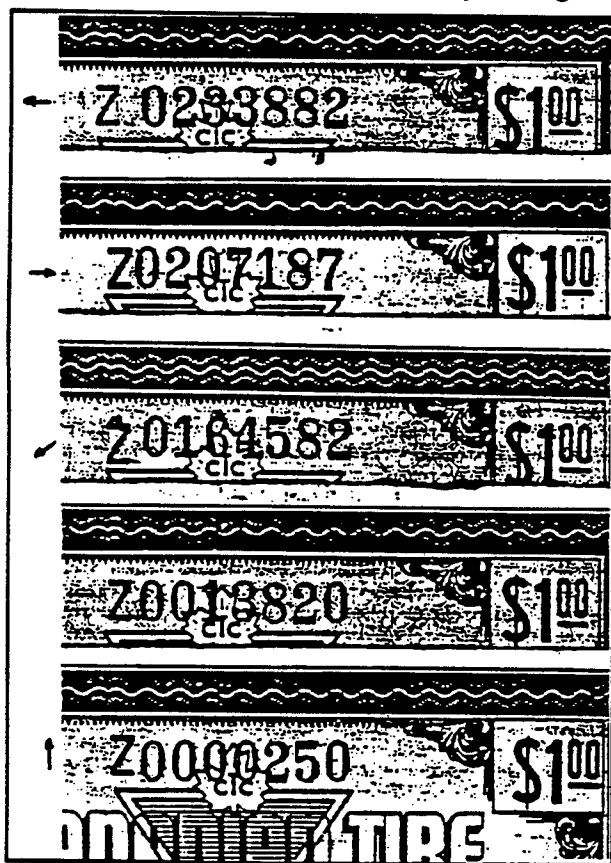


## The Wandering Z Prefixes of the Green Dollar Gas Coupons ©

by Peter J. Wiedemann

This is the first of a series of articles that I will be offering in coming months, detailing interesting notes and discoveries from my study of the CTC coupons. At times, my articles may deal in greater detail with discoveries other members have reported. My running title will be *Through the Loop*, which is a play on words, and primarily intended to imply looking through a small magnifying glass or *loupe*. However other interpretations are possible, some even with humorous connotations, but I leave that to your imagination. This particular article has been in the planning stages since one year ago and this was to be my first article for CTCCC, when I promised Mike Hollingshead late last summer to write articles. So here goes, Mike!

Of all the CTC coupons, the \$1. green gas coupons (Bilodeau CTC 7-L; Charlton CT-6-18; Wiedemann G100-2) is the only note that has in its serial number, a very erratic prefix letter which seems to be out of location literally throughout the entire run of the 1/4 million coupons issued!



I first learned of the existence of these dollar coupons, thanks to Wilf Becker's exhibit of Canadian Tire coupons in the ONA Annual Exhibition held in Kitchener, two years ago.

Until that time, I had little occasion to see any of this plain green series of boring all-look-the-same gas coupons in any denomination because in Cambridge I had no Canadian Tire gas bar conveniently located. I rarely used gas from Canadian Tire gas bars even when one was convenient to my needs. (*This would change!*)

Hence the reason I did not know there were even any dollar gas coupons at all, let alone these green ones. In the conversation with Wilf and I had at that time, I also learned of the Z prefix mis-alignment that was seen with these notes. Five different positions are shown at left, as described below:

| Note     | Position Shown                         |
|----------|--|
| Z0233882 | Z to left (West)                       |
| Z0207187 | Z to right (East) <i>only slightly</i> |
| Z0164582 | Z to left & down (Southwest)           |
| Z0013820 | Z normal position                      |
| Z0000250 | Z higher (North)                       |

Over the following two years, I managed to acquire 186 copies of this one issue, or nearly 0.075 per cent of all that were printed...naturally I bought a lot of gas! Included in this hoard were some pretty rough copies that I would be embarrassed to display. I kept them only for study purposes. Surprisingly a fair number were found to be in fine and better condition, including my lowest note of this issue which I found only last Spring, Z0000250, a portion of which is shown above. This highest one which I found early in April this year, was Z0249968, only 32 numbers below the highest number printed! The notes acquired were found to cover this entire range.

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## Two Red inks!

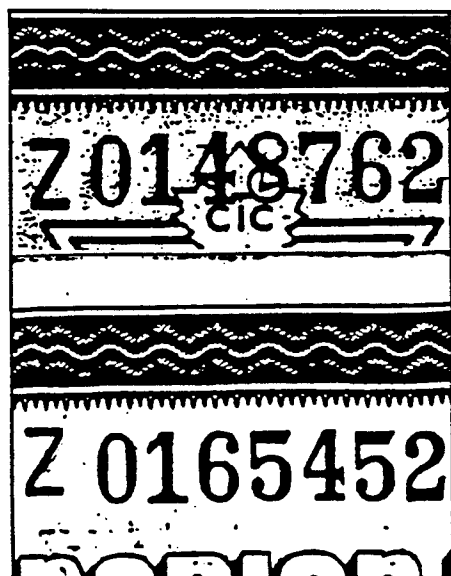
As I searched for these notes and examined them closely (yes, through the loupe, my 10X magnifying glass), I soon discovered why these Z's wandered as they did! **The Z's were printed with a very different red ink than was used for the rest of the serial number!** and therein was the first clue to this mystery!

I've examined 186 notes carefully under both long and short wave ultraviolet light, a technique used in philately to detect ink differences (and other purposes) but I found only a very minor difference in appearance under this lighting. The numbers looked very slightly redder than the Z's.

However under room light and natural daylight, the difference is clear when examined under ten power magnification. The numbers are a normal dark red as seen on most other coupons of this green series and time period (except for the pale washed-out red commonly found in the early green series coupons) while the Z is a more transparent slightly lighter red. When examined at an oblique angle so as to see light reflecting across the red surfaces, the Z looks distinctly redder (brighter red) having more orange pigment than the numbers. All numbers also clearly show a slight ink smudge accumulation around all of the edges of each individual number, almost like an edging while the Z's do not. For a forthcoming CTCCC meeting, I will make some very close-up colour slides that will hopefully show these differences.

The mystery is over! Apparently during the printing of these notes, they were completed through the printing process, but for some unknown reason, were printed *without any letter prefix* in the serial number! When this oversight was discovered, *the Z was then added with an additional printing operation*, but with the method used to do this, exact placement of this prefix letter with the rest of the serial number was either not possible or not economically practical.

By taking many precision measurements of the distance of the Z's to specific reference locations elsewhere on these notes and compiling this data, it was possible to conclude without any doubt that the coupons were still uncut at the time when the Z's were added with the supplementary printing operation. It would consequently seem improbable that any could exist without the Z. It would also seem improbable that any exist with more than one Z. Any found to have this condition would certainly be highly suspect to having been altered. It is probable that some *may exist* with the Z partially printed over the serial number, although I have not seen one. These would be rare.



## Thick & Thin Z'S

Another visually apparent variation found in these Z's, was the thickness of the Z's. The thickness referred to here is not the width of the letter itself, but the thickness of the actual printed line of the letter. The normal *general* width of the line comprising the Z was found to be 0.022" (0.56mm), measured across the top, while on 30 of the 186 notes, this width was only 0.0165" (0.42mm).

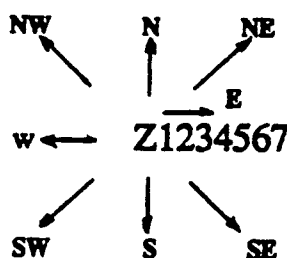
Several notes were found with a minor variance with their line thickness being 0.020" (0.51mm), but this thickness variance was not visually detectable. At left are shown, greatly enlarged, a normal and thin variety:

|                   |                  |          |
|-------------------|------------------|----------|
| THICK Z (normal): | on note Z0148762 |          |
| Line width:       | 0.022"           | (0.56mm) |
| THIN Z (variety): | on note Z0165452 |          |
| Line width:       | 0.0165"          | (0.42mm) |

cont'd....

## Through the Loop, No.1 (cont'd)

And now to what everyone wants to know...which position is the scarcest? With these many notes available to study and covering the entire series, I naturally attempted to determine this, I proceeded to establish the *approximate* position frequency of the Z's in relationship to the balance of the serial number. However I discovered that a such a great variation in actual positions occurred that using an hour clock recording method would have been quite useless. I have therefore created the nine general positions shown here and as were used in the illustration on page one of this article. Very minor variations were ignored for this study. I have classified the "East" sample illustrated on page one, as being minor (not *very* minor). It may seem like splitting hairs, but the shift to the "East" is clearly apparent, especially when one has seen 184 others without this shift.



| POSITION  | QUANTITY | %    |
|-----------|----------|------|
| Normal    | 19       | 10.2 |
| North     | 37       | 10.9 |
| Northeast | 0        | 0    |
| East      | 1        | 0.5  |
| Southeast | 1        | 0.5  |
| South     | 12       | 6.5  |
| Southwest | 26       | 14   |
| West      | 29       | 15.6 |
| Northwest | 61       | 32.8 |
| Total     | 186      | 100% |

A simpler method would be to classify each Z's position as being up, down or to the left of the normal position, resulting in the following information. When number crunching this way, the NW, NE, SE and SW totals have to be used twice, causing a higher total than 186 and creating over 100% total. But in reality, it makes sense, when for example we can say that of all these coupons, 62.4% were shifted left (West), 52.7% were shifted up, and only 21% were shifted down.

Per cent (based on 186 notes)

|                     |     |       |
|---------------------|-----|-------|
| Z correct           | 19  | 10.2% |
| Z to left (NW+W+SW) | 116 | 62.4% |
| Z higher (NW+N+NE)  | 98  | 57.7% |
| Z lower (SW+S+SE)   | 39  | 21. % |
| Z closer (NE+E+SE)  | 2   | 1.1%  |

With this view, it is clear that the Z's closer to the numbers are *rare*, with the normal positioned Z's in second place, being quite scarce as well. The following perspective is even more enlightening:

|                       |     |       |
|-----------------------|-----|-------|
| Z in correct position | 19  | 10.2% |
| Z mis-aligned         | 167 | 89.8% |

So there we have it. If any of our readers have one of these with the Z missing, with two Z's, with the Z partially printed over the numbers, or spaced 4mm or more from the normal position, would you please send me a clear photocopy... and I would appreciate being able to examine it at a future CTCCC meeting. Information received from you, will be shared in forthcoming *Loops*.

Although I cannot guarantee that I will answer all letters, or even immediately, your comments and assistance will be appreciated... and will ensure future articles from this corner! I can be reached most easily as follows: Peter J.Wiedemann

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