

Chapter 2

THE USE OF PERFINS IN CANADA

The problem of preventing pilferage of stamps by employees was apparently as serious in Canada as it had been in England and the measures taken for the correction of this abuse seem to have followed much the same lines.

Although we have no record of any firm officially printing its name or other identification on postage stamps, we do occasionally come across a stamp, generally of the Small Queen period or earlier, which has been rubber stamped with the name of the user. This practice was unauthorized, and no doubt discouraged by the Post Office due to the disfigurement of the stamp design, and the fact that many similarly coloured cancellations were in use in that period.

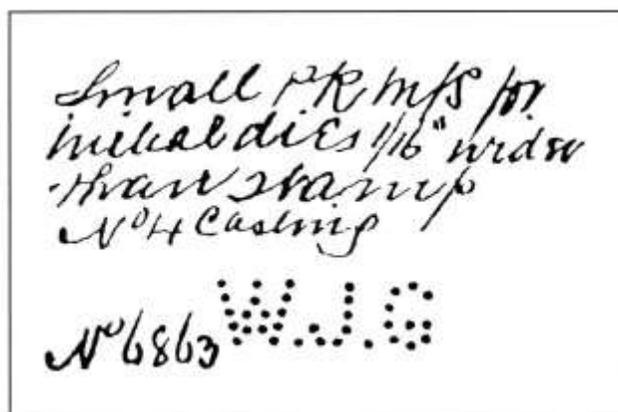
The first official notice of perforating stamps in Canada appeared in the Canada Official Postage Guide in January 1895. It reads:

Persons or firms using very large quantities of stamps may also arrange with the Department to have the stamps they purchase perforated with their initials at their own cost.

From the wording of the above paragraph, it is not clear whether or not it was the intention of the Post Office to do the actual perforating, but it did give permission, after receiving official sanction, for a firm to adopt the practice if it so desired. In 1896 the regulation was changed to read:

Perforated Stamps: No object is made by the Department to the perforating of postage stamps with the initials of the individual or firms using them.

With this change, permission was no longer required, and this situation lasted until 1910. Prior to 1910, no record was kept by the Post Office of users who took advantage of these regulations, and no limitation was placed on the size of the holes or on the area to be covered by the design.



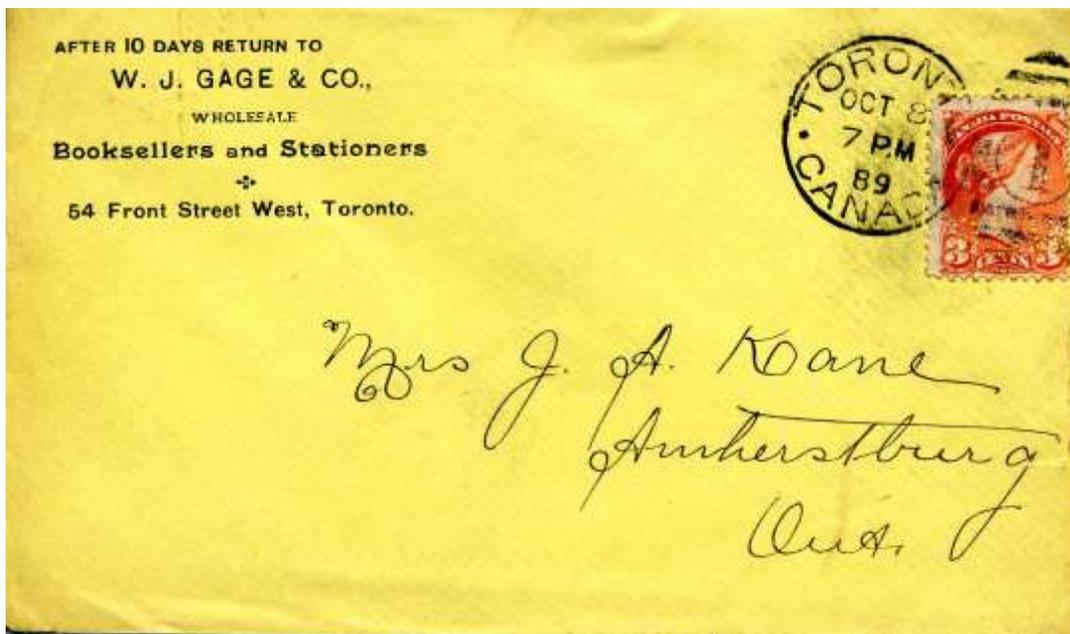
Sloper W.J.G Proof

The first perforator used in Canada was a Sloper Model #4, single die, serial number 6863, machine proofed by J. Sloper & Company in London, England, in

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1887. Perfin W.J.G (W10), ordered by W.J. Gage & Company, has been found used on October 2, 1887. The earliest use of a Gage perfin on a postcard is January 31, 1889. On cover, earliest use of a Gage perfin is October 8, 1889. The (W10) perforator was destroyed in the Great Toronto fire of April 19, 1904, which destroyed much of the business center of Toronto. On March 14, 1905, Sloper shipped a replacement single die machine (W9), S/N 9274, to W.J. Gage.

W.J. Gage & Company were text book publishers and stationers also carrying office equipment and supplies. It is believed that they also were distributor for Sloper perforators. The Sun Life Assurance perforator S.L/ACo. (S15), first used in 1899, is a four die (2x2) perforator most likely from Sloper. On December 18, 1912, Sloper shipped a four die (2x2), S/N 61871 to William Tyrrell & Company (W15), Toronto. A fair number of Canadian perfins have traits of Sloper dies but the loss of much of their records when their factory in London, England, was destroyed during World War II may prevent identification of all their perforators in Canada.



Earliest Reported Canadian Perfin Cover, dated October 8, 1889

The other perfins which have been found in the Small Queen era are J.H. Stiles (J7) of Montreal, first used January 21, 1896. J.H. Stiles was the Director-General of The British Empire Exposition, 1896. IC/R (I1), used by the Intercolonial Railway at Moncton, NB, was used as early as January 31, 1889. The fourth user was S.L/ACo. (S15), first used by Sun Life Assurance Company of Montreal on December 20, 1889 and has been found in both the Queen Victoria Widow Weed stamps.

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The quarterly supplement of the Postal Guide for April 1910 states:

No objection is made by the Department to the perforation of postage stamps with the distinctive marks (initials or other) of the individual or firm using them, but it must be understood that the designs employed should be for the purpose of identification and not for advertising. The perforations shall not exceed one thirty-second of an inch in diameter, and the hole space occupied shall not exceed one-half inch square. The perforating must not be done in such a manner as to prevent the stamp being easily recognized as genuine and not one that has been previously used. The use of ink or other coloring matter in connection with the perforating is prohibited. Individuals or firms desirous of using perforated postage stamps must first make application to the Postmaster General, submitting their proposed designs, and obtain permission for their use.

The Canada Official Postal Guide 1944-1945, under section 230 states:

No objection is made by the Department to the perforation of postage stamps or post cards with the distinctive marks (initials or other) of the individual or firm using them, but it must be understood that the designs employed shall be for the purpose of identification, and not for advertising. The perforation shall not exceed one thirty-second of an inch in diameter, and the whole space occupied by the identifying device shall not exceed one-half inch square. The perforating must not be done in such a manner as to prevent the stamp being easily recognized as genuine and not one that has been previously used. The use of ink or other colouring matter in connection with the perforating is prohibited. Individuals or firms desirous of using perforated postage stamps or post cards must first make application to the Postmaster General (submitting their proposed designs) and obtain permission for their use.

According to Post Office records, 80 applications have been approved since 1910. For a detailed listing, see Addendum A. The number in each year is as follows: 1910-twelve; 1911-eleven; 1912-twenty; 1913-eight; 1914-six; 1915-four; 1917-two; 1920-three; 1922-one; 1923-three; 1924-one; 1925-two; 1926-two; 1927-one; 1928-one; 1931-two. Since 1931 there has only been one approval although the regulations remain in force.



Earliest Reported Canadian Perforated Stamp, dated 1887

The first firm to receive Post Office approval for its perforation was Ryrie Brothers of Toronto, accepted on March 23, 1910, which is before the Post Guide for April 1910 came into effect. It is noteworthy that several Government departments and

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agencies did not obtain approval for their perforations. In the Federal Government, the following sectors do not have Post Office approval: MD (M9) Militia Department; ND (N3) Department of National Defence; CBC (C6) Canadian Broadcasting Corp.; and 4-hole OH/MSs (09, 010) Canada Post Office. The perforations used within Provincial Governments without approval are: PEI (P8) Province of Prince Edward Island; Q/CLQ/C (Q1) Quebec Liquor Commission; and W/CB (W5) Workmen's Compensation Board of British Columbia. The last Government perfin approval was given on October 26, 1931, to the Province of Ontario's LA (L1). The last business perfin approved was Bees Stamps' BB (B4) on July 17, 1989.

The only change that has been made to the perforation regulations since 1910 is that permission was granted for the similar perforation of postcards (1928).

Although no mention has been made of postal stationery in the Post Office regulations, three perforations are found in postal stationery. The Sun Life Assurance Company is the only private company, so far reported, as perforating stationery. The 1897 postal band, 1¢ Q.V., Webb's W6 was perforated S.L/ACo (S15). The 1938 1¢ George VI issue postal bank was perforated OH/MS with both the 5-hole (08) and 4-hole (09), Webb's DW20b and DW20c respectively.



Earliest Reported Canadian Perforated Stationery.

The progressive use of postage meters has made the security function of perforations now obsolete for both firms and Government sectors. The 4-hole OH/MS (010) was replaced by the OHMS overprint which itself was soon replaced by the G overprints. Although the security of postage remains a concern to many firms, the use of perforated stamps in Canada has stopped.

At last report (2011) no perforations are in regular use, although a few machines still remain accessible in accounting departments and could potentially be used.