

# THE BNA PERFORATOR

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## Editor's Post:

¶ As I write this my home Province of Nova Scotia has declared a COVID-19 'state of emergency', introducing forced closures, prohibiting gatherings of over 5 and special hours at the grocery stores for seniors, of which I, as are many Study Group members, am one. Gas prices are at a low not seen for decades and here at least you cannot buy a gas can for love nor money. Surreal times. I do hope you are all well and staying safe.

¶ COVID-19 has claimed 2 big stamp exhibitions. Both the ORAPEX, the Ottawa stamp show usually held the first week in May and the Royal Canadian Philatelic Society's even for the end of June in Fredricton New Brunswick are cancelled. Locally we are still hopeful that the crisis will have subsided to allow BNAPEX, scheduled for the first weekend in September, to go on as planned.

¶ The distribution of January's issue of the Perforator had several email "undeliverables", and of the four mailed to the USA one prompted an email reply to me requesting that the recipient be deleted from our membership role and second was returned as undeliverable with no forwarding address. With this and the recent deaths of Gary Nummelin and Kurt Ottenheimer the membership total is now 76; the email list 63 and the postal list at 13; 11 domestic, 1 to the USA and 1 International. All but 2 on the mailing list have BNAPS membership numbers but none are listed on the member-

ship list on the BNAPS website which is logical when I think about it. The 2 non-members are Conrad Tremblay and Jack Brandt. I will continue to mail them a copy, Conrad because of his past association with the Study Group and Jack because of his contributions to the Perforator from time to time to time.

¶ The costs for printing and mailing of the last 2 issues was \$54.99 CDN. Barry Senior has transferred all of our funds to our Treasurer, Russell Sampson, who is in Connecticut. Russell and I have worked out a fairly simple method of dealing with this—I send him an invoice for printing and postage in Canadian dollars and he will convert that to US dollars and send me a cheque. I can deposit that in a USD account and withdraw it as US cash. Cindy and I do travel to New England from time to time (surely at some point the border will re-open to casual travel) so it will come in handy.

¶ Bob Szymanski's auctions continue to forward 5% of the sales of Canadian material to our Treasurer Russell; currently there is \$2845.00 USD in our account. Printing costs for the newsletter are minimal and while the cost of mailing is increasing the number being mailed is decreasing so these funds will last a very long time.

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## Perfin Covers with World War II Canadian FECB Authorized Cachets

Russell D. Sampson

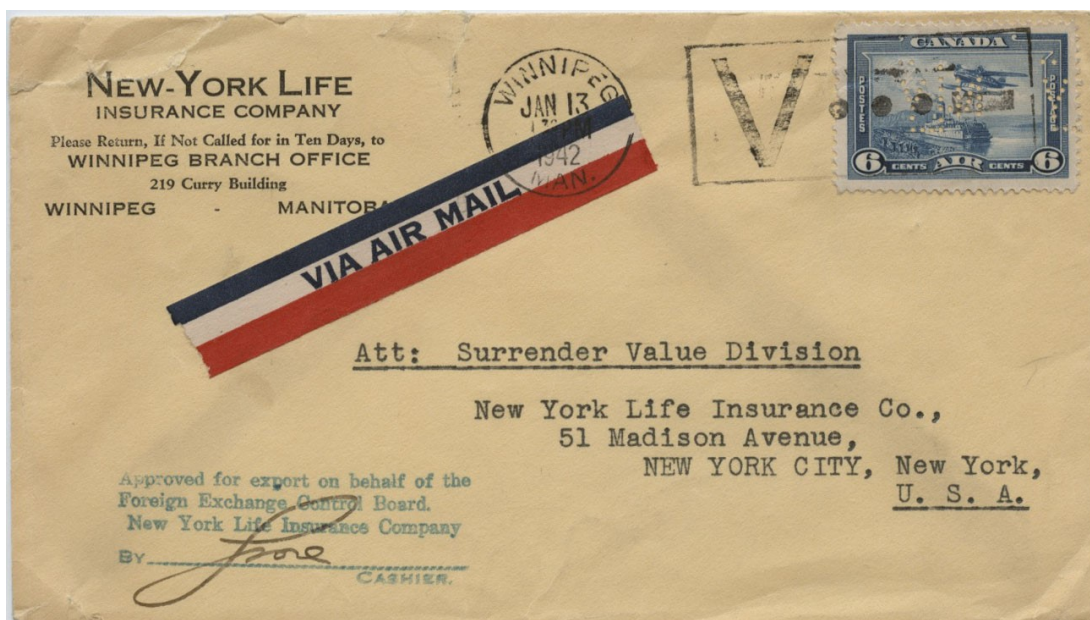
As philatelists we are part of a huge and diverse community made up of many disciplines and sub-disciplines. We are perfin collectors, yet each perfin and each perfin cover can have a deep and multifaceted story to tell.

While doing research on my CBC perfin covers I came across one with WW II censor tape that led me on a fascinating and fruitful journey. To learn more, I picked up the latest edition of Peter C. Burrows' catalogue of Canadian and Newfoundland WWII censorship devices<sup>1</sup>. In it, I found a section on Canadian Foreign Exchange Control Board (FECB) authorized cachets and labels that may be of some interest to the perfin community.

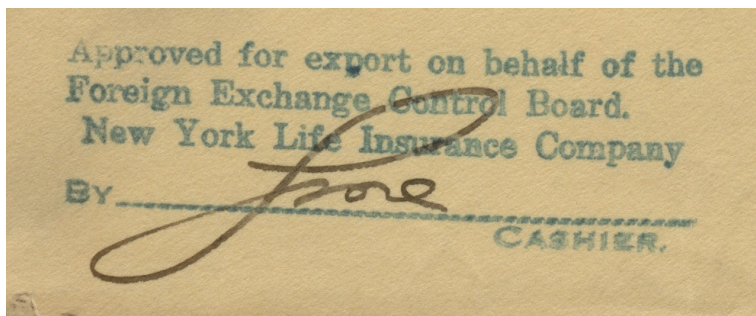
With the onset of war, the Canada government and industry soon realized that it needed to dramatically increase exports to Britain and at the same time it needed to fund its own military buildup. The escalation of the Canadian economy meant that imports from the United States suddenly became crucial. Yet, at the same time the then neutral United States government passed a law forbidding loans to "belligerent" states – including Canada. As a result, all

U.S. imports to Canada were to be paid for in cash, either in U.S. dollars or gold. This meant that Canadian foreign currency reserves – especially U.S. dollars – became vital for the war effort<sup>2</sup>. To help monitor the cross-border movement of foreign currency the FECB essentially deputized many larger private financial institutions to self-examine their international mail. Strict limits were placed by the FECB on the amount of foreign currency (especially U.S. dollars) that could be mailed across the border<sup>1</sup>.

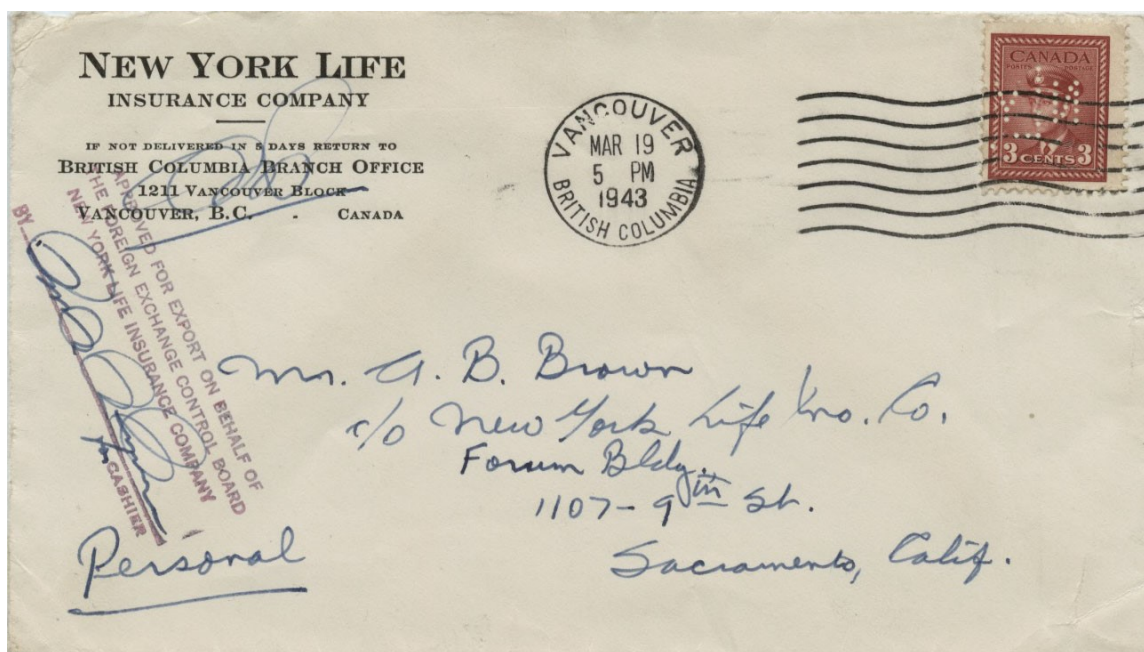
Cachets or labels were authorized by the FECB and applied by company staff (usually the "Cashier") to indicate mail that was approved for export. It appears from the Burrows' catalogue<sup>1</sup> that the majority of these corporations were major banks, trusts and insurance companies and many of these companies would be familiar to the perfin collectors. Table 1 lists those financial companies that used perfins during WW II and may have exported currency and therefore those that also used or potentially used FECB authorized cachets or labels.



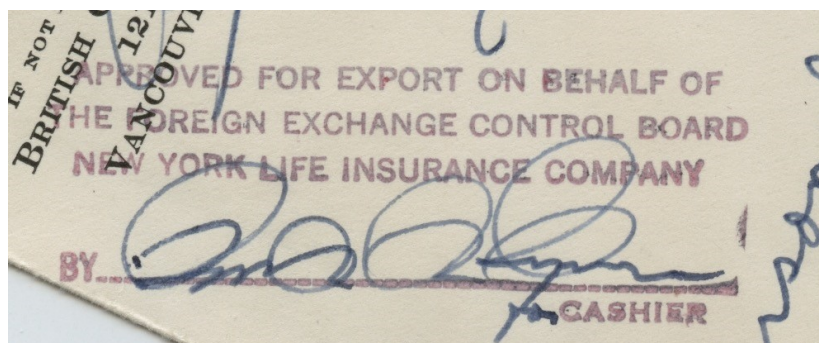
**Figure 1:** A cover from the New York Life Insurance branch office in Winnipeg, Manitoba mailed to New York City, New York. Machine postmark is dated JAN 13 1942, 1<sup>30</sup> PM. The stamp is a 6-cent dark blue airmail issued in 1938 (Scott C6) with an N24 perfin that has been reported between the years of 1939 and 1955<sup>4</sup>.



**Figure 2:** A cropped and magnified image of the FECB authorized cachet from the Winnipeg branch office of the New York Life. The cachet is blue-green, measures 53 x 17 cm and has received the designation of VF 9.2 in the Burrows catalogue.



**Figure 3:** A cover from the New York Life Insurance branch office in Vancouver, British Columbia mailed to Sacramento, California. Machine postmark is dated MAR 19 1943, 5 PM. The stamp is a 3-cent dark carmine King George VI "War Issue" (Scott 251) with an N18 perfin that has been reported between the years of 1917 and 1951<sup>4</sup>.



**Figure 4:** A cropped and magnified image of the FECB authorized cachet from the Vancouver branch office of the New York Life. The cachet is purple, measures 54 x 19 cm and has received the designation of VF 9.1 in the Burrows catalogue

The two perfin covers in Figures 1 through 4 show a pre- ing World War II. Therefore, this discovery provided the  
viously unreported authorized cachet from the New York censorship collectors with potential future FECB cachet  
Life Insurance Company<sup>3</sup>. As we know from our own per- or label discoveries. At the same time, it points the way  
fin catalogue, New York Life was headquartered in New to possible new discoveries in our perfin collections  
York, NY but had numerous branch offices in Canada dur-

It should be noted, that from an examination of the perfin catalogue it appears that the Calgary, Alberta branch office of New York Life, had one reported stamp that was issued during the war (Scott 249). However, an examination of the 1939 to 1945 city directories for Calgary<sup>5</sup> clearly suggests that New York Life Insurance was no longer present in Calgary during this period. Therefore, it is unlikely that New York Life covers from Calgary will be found corresponding to this era. It is also interesting to note that the two covers illustrated in this article came from branch offices that should have produced relatively few covers compared to branch offices that

produced more perfins (i.e. Montreal, Toronto and Quebec). Continued research into the WW II activity of the companies listed in Table 1 may further constrain or expand the possibilities of discovering FECB cachets or labels on perfin covers.

Collectors are now encouraged to re-examine their WW II perfin covers for these uncommon and interesting cachets and labels.

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#### References:

Burrows, Peter C. (ed.) (2010), **British Empire Civil Censorship Devices, World War II, Section 7, Canada & Newfoundland**, Published by the Civil Censorship Study Group.

Powell, James (2005), **A History of the Canadian Dollar**, Bank of Canada, pages 53-60 (available online at: <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/1939-50.pdf>)

Sampson, Russell D. (2020), **World War II Canadian FECB Authorized Cachets on New York Life Insurance Covers**, Civil Censorship Study Group Bulletin, Vol. 47, No. 1, pages 26-27

Johnson, Jon and Tomasson, Gary (ed.) (2019) **Canadian Stamps with Perforated Initials, Positions**, Sixth Edition, Published by the British North American Philatelic Society.

**Henderson's City Directory (1939-1945), Calgary**, available at Peel Prairie Provinces Library: [peel.library.ualberta.ca](http://peel.library.ualberta.ca).

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## The Identity of the H3 Perfin - HEV/Co

Russell D. Sampson

The story of this discovery deserves telling since it is a tale of blind alleys, perseverance and good-fun sleuthing.

Since moving to Connecticut in 2001 I've been interested in the identity of the H3 perfin (HEV/Co). The pattern is found on both US and Canadian stamps. On Canadian stamps it is only found during the King Edward VII and Admiral issue eras (1902-27) – and sadly my Canadian perfin collection lacks a specimen. According to my old 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Perfin Catalogue [1] one of the only other clues to its identity was the entry "Stanford [sic], CT" as a possible location. While at the Hartford public library I conducted a futile search for information on Stanford, CT but later realized the perfin catalogue probably meant Stamford, a city on the southwest coast of Connecticut near New York City.

The perfin is more common on American postage. On US postage it has a D+ rarity factor and is called the H66 according to the 2018 edition of the Catalog of United States Perfins [2].

The first breakthrough came at the 2015 meeting of The Perfin Society in Boxborough, Massachusetts – the infamous "Tornado Meeting".



Figure 1

**Figure 1:** H66 perfins (Canadian H3) on early 20<sup>th</sup> Century United States stamps showing New York City cancels.



Figure 2

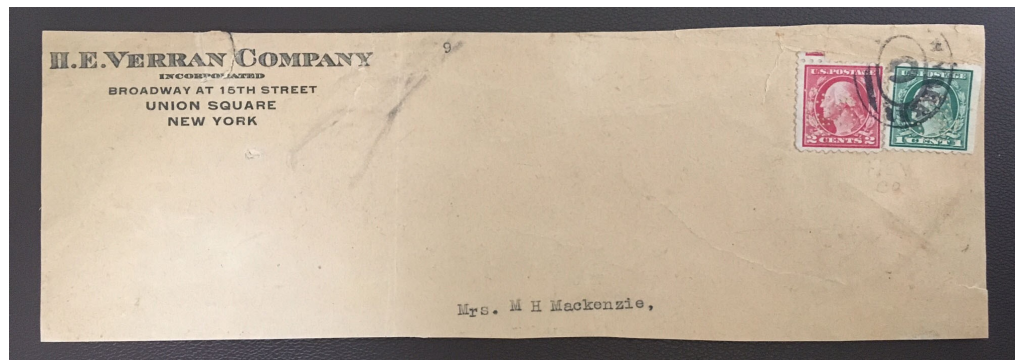
**Figure 2:** Cancels of the stamps in Figure 1 extracted using the Battleship Revenue Society's online cancel extractor [3]. The right-hand stamp has been inverted in order to make the "NEW" in New York more legible.

Before the storm induced blackout, I saw a small number of HEV/Co patterns on US stamps being sold by Jerry Hedjuk. There was not a single Connecticut cancel on them, but instead were cancels from New York City (see Figures 1 and 2). So, my investigations turned towards the Big Apple.

Once safe at home, I scanned the online New York City directories available on the NYC Public Library web site [4]. I started searching the entries under “H” which might as well have stood for “*Hundreds and hundreds*”. After hours of squint-reading, the only possible hit came from a single tiny 1909 entry for *Henry’s Express and Van Company*. This was progress, but was not very satisfactory.

From the size of its entry in the directory, the single year of the company’s apparent existence and the total lack of any additional online evidence, it appeared likely that the company was too small and too short-lived to have justified a perforator.

The final “ah-ha!” occurred three years later at the 2018 Columbus, Ohio meeting of The Perfins Society. While sitting at Bob Szymanski’s table we started talking and I told him about my interest in this perfin, my hypothesis on its New York origin and my frustrating attempts at its identification. From the depths of a box Bob produced a bundle of covers, pieces and fronts labeled “New York”. Within minutes the solution appeared (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3:** The cut piece showing the return address and identity of the H66 and thus the H3 Canadian perfin.

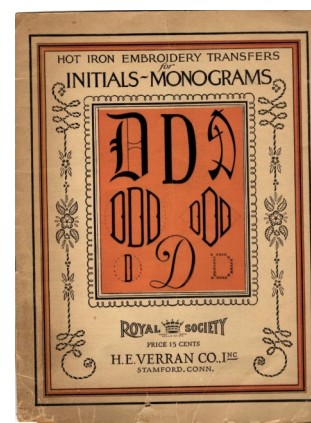
My memory is a little fuzzy, but I believe at that moment angels began to sing. When I showed Bob, he took out his edition of the Catalog of United States Perfins and there in pencil – to his surprise – he had written beside the H66 entry “H. E. Verran”.

Bob had made the discovery first, but after searching his memory, recalled that his communiqué must have somehow failed to produce a change in the catalogue. I asked if he would mind me informing the Canadian perfin community and then writing it up for the BNA Perforator. He agreed.

### The H. E. Verran Company

Once properly identified all the historical pieces fell into place. The company was started by Harry Eugene Verran (1869-1930) who was born in the city of Platteville, Wisconsin. H. E. moved to New York City in 1900 where he worked for Bentley’s Lace and Embroidery factory on lower Broadway. During the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the availability of inexpensive silk and mail-order patterns caused a bit of a boom in embroidery and other needlework. Around 1912 H. E. bought-out Bentley and renamed it H. E. Verran Co. where it specialized in “art needlework” [5] (see Figure 4)

Verran moved the company to 19 Union Square West, a stately building on the corner of 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway (see Figure 5). This building still stands today and on its side a painted sign of the company can be faintly seen [6]. From there they manufactured knitting, crochet and embroidery patterns and supplies. The company was most famous for their “Royal Society” line. The perforator was most likely located in this building to explain the use on the piece in Figure 3.



**Figure 4:** Embroidery pattern book from H. E. Verran. Notice the company address in Stamford, Connecticut.

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**Figure 5:** New York City location of the company. Notice the painted sign on the side of the building. This image was cropped and enhanced from a scanned image available from the New York City Library Digital Collection [7].

In 1924 the company and the perforator apparently moved to Stamford, Connecticut where their building still stands at 1937 West Main Street. There the company ramped-up their silk embroidery manufacturing\*. When H. E. passed away in 1930 the company was dissolved and the building was sold to a carpeting company. The mill is now considered the largest surviving example of a daylight factory loft for textile production and is currently the home of the American Cyanamid Company [5] (see Figure 6).



**Figure 6:** Contemporary image of the Stamford Connecticut building that once housed the H. E. Verran Co. Screen shot from Google Maps.

\*I live in Mansfield Center, Connecticut, which is famous for three things 1) UConn Husky's basketball, 2) being the site of America's first silk mills and 3) having one of the world's most sacred rock 'n roll burial grounds. I can barely tell a basketball from a cantaloupe – baseball's my game. However, I *can* tell you that the first powered silk mill in America, the “Hanks Silk Mill” of Mansfield, Connecticut (est. 1810) was actually purchased by Henry Ford, then dismantled and moved to his Dearborn Museum – you can still see it there [8]. Some of us want it back. I can also tell you that my condominium lies on the charred remains of one of the largest of those old silk mills. In the 1960's and 70's that then bankrupt silk mill was turned into a rock 'n roll club and hotel – *The Shaboo Inn* [9]. Before all the Interstate highways were completed, just about any rock, jazz or blues artist going between Boston and New York stopped here to hone their gig. The Shaboo line-up was a veritable Who's Who of 60's and 70's popular music – Muddy Waters, Miles Davis, Aerosmith, Lou Reed, Leonard Cohen, AC/DC, The Police ... to name just a few. Then, in 1970 someone burnt the damn thing to the ground. On calm summer nights I swear you can still feel the ground shake-to-the-beat beneath my home.

#### References:

1. Johnson, J. C. and Tomasson, G. (ed.) (1985) *Canadian Stamps with Perforated Initials*, 4th Edition, The Unitrade Press, Toronto
2. Endicott, S. (2018) *Catalog of United States perfins*, The Perfin Club Inc.
3. Robert Mustacich, **Cancel Extractor**, battleship revenue Stamps, Santa Barbara, <http://www.battleship-revenues.com/extract.xhtml>
4. **Trow's General Directory of the Boroughs of Manhattan and Bronx**, Available online at the New York Public Library Digital Collections, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/new-york-city-directories#/?tab=about&scroll=124>
5. American Cyanamid Co. Building, Connecticut Mills web site <https://connecticutmills.org/find/details/american-cyanamid-co/>
6. New York City Signs – 14<sup>th</sup> to 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, **H E Verran Company New York, New York** <https://www.14to42.net/15street0.5.html>
7. **Manhattan: 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue – 15<sup>th</sup> Street**, Image available online at the New York Library Digital Collections, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47dc-e1d8-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>
8. **The Hanks Silk Mill**, Henry Ford Museum web site: <https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/103865/>
9. Mill Museum – The Windham Textile and History Museum, **Shaboo Inn History**, <https://millmuseum.org/2010-shaboo-legends/>

The fun I had of sorting out the Lethbridge IHC perfins (19) led me to bid on some broken IHC patterns from Ron Whyte collection on auction through Bob Szymanski's monthly perfin auctions. I was successful which in turn has led to this contribution to our collective knowledge of the subject IHC broken dies.

First a little history. Figure 1 is from the Perforator Volume 4, Number 5 of October 1983. Jack Bennington's note to the image is "provided no other indicators are present, stamps with at least all three of the missing die punch holes ...may reasonably be considered to be of the Edmonton Office origin." In addition to the code hole, the C5 and the H13 holes are missing.

Figures 2 and 3 is Scott 164 from that lot of broken dies. The abbreviated slogan cancel is clear and the full text is "HAVE STREET ADDRESS ON ALL STATIONERY". This slogan was used in 22 different locations between 1923 and 1934 and these locations 6 had IHC offices with perforating machines. The 2nd Edition of the Slogan Postmarks of Canada (Catalogue and Guidebook)<sup>1</sup> lists these 6 locations with known dates of usage of this specific slogan (added in parenthesis)-Calgary (1926), Saint John (1923-24), Ottawa (1924), Edmonton (1929-30), Regina (1923) and Vancouver (1924-26, 1934). The Scott 164 fits neatly into the Edmonton and Vancouver timeframes. Vancouver is a possibility; however, 3 things make this unlikely:

- the Arch 2c green was replaced by the 2c red in December 1932 and the Arch series replaced by the Medallion issue in 1934. Given the normal volume of mail it is unlikely this stamp was still in the Vancouver IHC office in 1934.
- Both holes 15 and 16 and the code hole (13) would have to be missing and there are no reported instances of this on a Vancouver IHC pattern in the

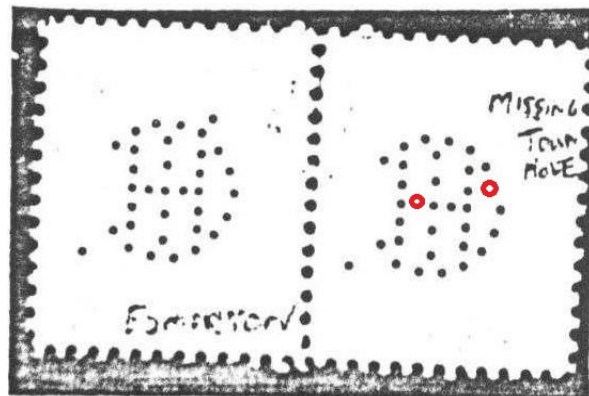


Figure 1 From The Perforator Volume 4 Number 5



Figure 2 Scott 164

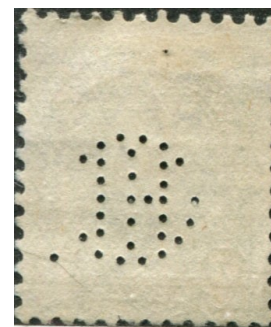


Figure 3 Scott 164 back

early Study Group research on the broken IHC dies.

- To date Arch 2c green has not been found with the Vancouver IHC pattern.<sup>2</sup>

On the face of the evidence I agree with Jack Bennington's conclusion that this broken die originated in Edmonton

#### References:

1. Postal History Society of Canada, **The Coutts Slogan Cancel Database**, [www.postalhistorycanada.net](http://www.postalhistorycanada.net)
2. Johnson, Jon and Tomasson, Gary (ed.) (2019) **Canadian Stamps with Perforated Initials, Positions**, Sixth Edition, Published by the British North American Philatelic Society.

Eastern Stamp's Public auction held in Halifax on February 29th included the stamp in Figure 1 with the following description:

**223ii, 1935 10c RCMP** Reasonably centered example with light CDS postmark, showing the very elusive "**Broken Leg**" variety - the early stage of this sought-after plate variety, well clear of the "BT" (Bell Telephone Co.) perfin; additional perforated initial letter at left and along perfs on right side. A rare stamp in sound condition, F-VF; clear 2015 Greene Foundation certificate.

It was listed at \$1,925, opened at \$2,100 and sold for \$2,500. This surpasses the previous highest I have seen for a Canadian perfin, that being a cover with 3c small



Figure 1 Eastern Auction 223ii B15 perfin Queen and a \_\_\_\_\_ 5c registration stamp on a Intercolonial Railway Cover (Figure 2), There were two such covers of in a 2015 Eastern Stamp auction each of which sold for \$1900.



Figure 2 ICR perfin cover 2015 Eastern Auction

I did as Bob Szymansk if he know of perfins from other countries that have fetched comparable prices. His reply follows.

## Not Your Usual Bid!

Bob Szymanski

About 15 years ago, I used to put US “B” rated perfin in auction. I rarely do that any longer because I fill want list with “B” rated presently. I had a “Rex/all” which is punched in a script and is listed as R058, a very nice looking perfin pattern. I had put a \$10.00 estimate on this lot. Imagine my surprise to receive a phone call from one of the bidders asking me to put an “unlimited” bid on this lot. I explained that I did not accept unlimited bids. I was asked why not? I returned the question with the answer as to what would happen if I accepted “unlimited” bids and had two of them on the same lot?

A quick answer was forthcoming. “Well I would be the first and I would win on a tie bid!” To which my retort was “...and at what price?” I think the bidder under-

stood my dilemma as an auctioneer so he immediately offered a bid of \$10,000.00! I asked the bidder why he wanted this perfin so very much. He said he had been looking for it as long as he had been collecting and had never seen it. His father had worked for the Rexall Drug Company and he really wanted this perfin!

I asked him to put that bid in writing because no one would ever believe that such a bid was made. He did. At the end of the auction, surprise, he won at 10% over the estimate which ended up being \$11.00. ...and, that is the highest bid I have ever received for a single perfin.

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## New Earliest Report Usage of the J6 – John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company

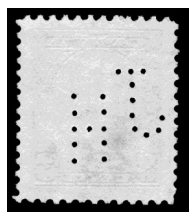
Russell D. Sampson

This specimen of the J6 on a Scott 219 (figures 1 and 2) was purchased from Gary Tomasson in 2019 and appears to predate the earliest reported usage<sup>1</sup> of the perfin by about a year. Figure 3 shows a partial R-440 slogan cancel on the specimen. For comparison, a complete sample of the R-440 slogan from my cancel collection appears in Figure 4.

At the bottom right corner of the slogan in Figure 2 it clearly states “1937”. Using the member’s only online Coutt’s Slogan Cancel Database on The Postal History Society of Canada’s web site<sup>2</sup> the date range of

this version of the slogan (Figure 3) was stated to be between September 11 and November 24, 1937 (the last day of the fair). This then establishes that the J6 perfin was used between these dates in 1937, thus extending the earliest reported usage by almost a full year.

It is interesting to note that there is no record of the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company in the 1937 Toronto city directory<sup>3</sup>. This suggests that the perfin may have been used by a travelling salesperson, rather than from a Toronto office of the company.



FIGURES: 1 and 2 Front and back of the J6 perfin specimen on Scott 219



FIGURE 3: Extracted cancel from the J6 perfin specimen.



FIGURE 4: Sample slogan showing the full R-440 from 1937.

The first appearance of this large Boston insurance company in the Toronto directory occurs in 1952. At the same time a huge number of Canadian insurance companies disappeared. This was brought about by the liberalization of the American and eventually the Canadian insurance laws, which allowed companies to offer “multiple line” insurance policies, where a single company could insure for multiple risks. Before that, each company could only offer specialized insurance. In the old days, to be fully insured a company or an individual would need separate insurance policies for fire, life, health, boiler failure, window glass breakage, riots, tornados, etc. There were even separate policies for “golf”. So before the late 1940’s company’s like Royal & Queens owned “fleets” of insurance companies in order to insure its customers for everything under the sun<sup>4</sup>. This sea change in insurance laws appears to have prompted John Hancock to make its move into Canada.

## References

1. Johnson, Jon and Tomasson, Gary, (ed.), (2019), Canadian Stamps with Perforated Initials, Sixth Edition, BNAPS Perfin Study Group <http://www.bnaps.org/PerfinHandbook/PerfinHandbook.htm>
2. Postal History Society of Canada, **The Coutts Slogan Cancel Database**, [www.postalhistorycanada.net](http://www.postalhistorycanada.net)
3. Toronto City Directory, Might Directories Ltd., Toronto. Available online at the Toronto Public Library <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/history-genealogy/lh-digital-city-directories.jsp>
4. Sampson, Russell D. (2017), **Usage of the Canadian Royal & Queen Insurance Co. Perfin – The R3, R5, R6 and R7**, The BNA Perforator, Vol. 38, No. 1 (October) pages 4 – 14.