

THE BNA PERFORATOR

Published by the British North America Philatelic Society – The BNA Perfin Study Group

Volume 43 Number 2

February 2022

Whole Number 160

Editor's Post:

¶ There are some changes to report in the membership. Long time member Dr. Bruce Nesbitt has advised of his resignation from the Study Group for health reasons. He wrote ***"Although my collecting days are over, I have the consolation that I once exhibited examples of my arcane interest—perfins on Canadian special delivery stamps –at Napex in Washington, DC, and the bemused judges awarded me a silver. Perhaps out of politeness to a foreigner."*** I am sure it merited the award.

¶ We do however welcome one new member to the study group this month with the addition of Chris Granger leaving the membership total unchanged at 75. I had occasion to look through some older issues of our newsletter; in 2015 the Study Group had 104 on the membership list—86 with email addresses and 18 who received the Perforator through Canada Post. That is a 30% decrease in 7 years—not encouraging.

¶ Last month I was too quick to assume that issue 159 would escape the 30g threshold and in the Editor's Post said that it did; it did not. I had 2 weighed before mailing and they both came in at 32g. So the mailing costs increased to \$16.22. and I had just enough donated postage to meet the need

so there is no extra charge to the Treasury. With the resignation of Dr. Nesbitt the costs for this issue are reduced; \$11.11 for printing and \$14.92 for postage (Issue 160 weighed in at 33g); making total costs \$26.03CDN (which is approximately \$20.30USD).

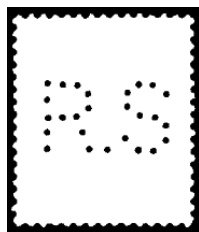
¶ Sharp eyes will have noted that Issue 160 starts with Page 13. I mentioned in the final issue for 2021 that I believed the proper practice of periodicals using the volume, number, and issue number format was to have the pages in a Volume numbered consecutively. Volume 42, which comprises Issues 155 to 158 totalled 50 pages. Last months newsletter, Volume 43, Number 1 had 12 pages so Number 2 starts at page 13.

¶ Once again I am appealing to the readership of our newsletter to make a contribution to its content. A really simple one would be to follow up on a previous suggestion—a scan of one of your favourite perfin cover and a word or two about what makes it special to you. I will do a draft of how it would appear in the newsletter and you will have the final say on whether to include it or not. Because I know everybody has more than 1 favourite, the series could run for a while.



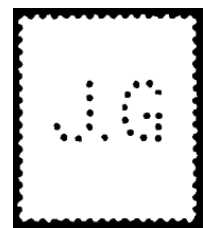
Treasurer

Russel Sampson
48B Eastbrook Heights
Mansfield Center CT
USA 06250-1654



Secretary/Editor

Jim Graham
2 Grandview Drive
Dartmouth Nova Scotia
Canada B2W 1X5



The Robert Simpson Company - Perfin R8

A Case for Handbook Changes

Jim Graham

The COVID infested Holiday Season reduced our normal visiting to zero and , with my work shut down, gave me time to “clean up” my perfin collection. I keep my perfins in binders on 8 line pocket pages with any covers in 4 pocket pages. I was way behind in updating information from the Handbook and for no particular, picked the letter R. to start My R8 collection has one cover (Figure 1), one that I have had since my the beginning days of my interest in Canadian perfins. Out of curiosity I checked the cancel date against the date listed and found September 11, 1915 was some 7 months later than the date currently in the Handbook—February 2nd, 1915. I read the accompanying note to Simpson’s customers about the necessity of a “WAR STAMP” (Figure 2.)and in doing this noticed that the 1c War Tax overprint on the cover had not been perforated with the R8. This was 6 months after the War Tax had been introduced. Back I went to the Handbook to find no War Tax stamps of any kind have been reported to date. Curious I thought.

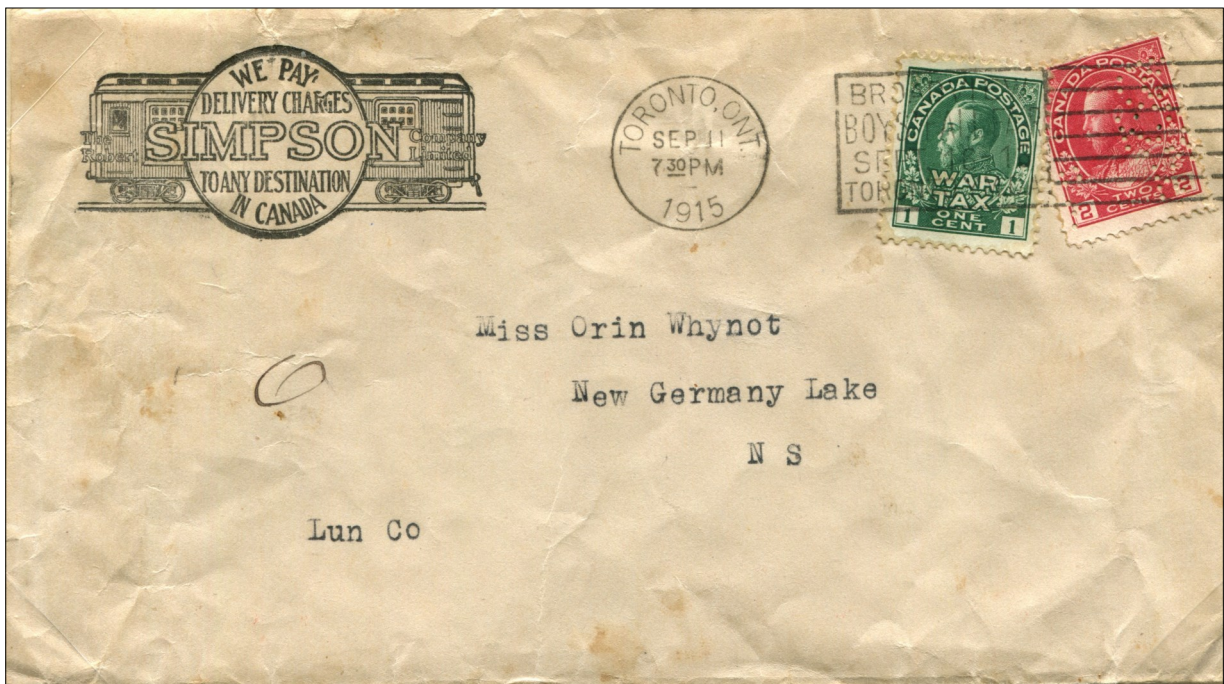


Figure 1: Robert Simpson Company Corner Card mailed from Toronto, SEP 11 1915 new Germany Lake NS.

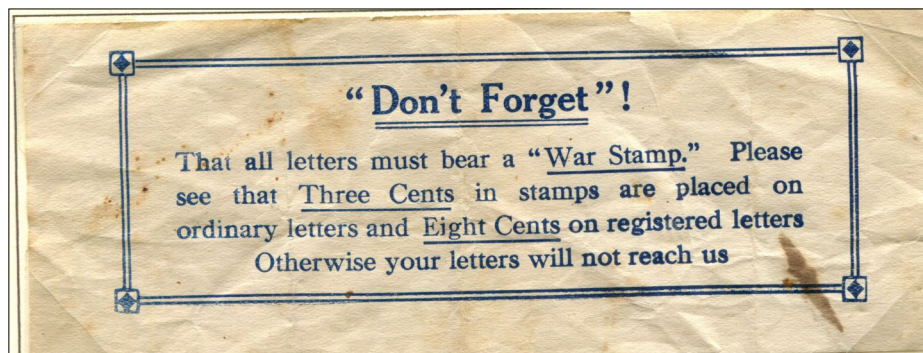


Figure 2: Enclosed reminder to customers that mail now required 1c additional postage.



Figure 1: Simpson's building at the Yonge and Queen Streets in Toronto as it was about the time that the Company started using perforated stamps.

1. The Robert Simpson Company¹

Robert Simpson's original store (Simpson & Bogaart after 1861), was opened in 1858 in Newmarket, Ontario at what is now 226-228 Main Street South (original building since demolished). It was co-founded with William Trent as *Simpson & Trent Groceries, Boots, Shoes and Dry Goods*. A fire destroyed the store in 1870, and a new dry goods store was opened two years later in Toronto. The company was renamed the Robert Simpson Company Limited in May 1896, not long before Robert Simpson's sudden death on 14 December 1897, at the age of 63. With no male heir, Simpson's death placed a heavy burden on his wife, Mary, and daughter, Margaret. They sold the business for \$135,000 in March 1898 to a syndicate of three Toronto businessmen, Harris Henry Fudger (1852-1930), Joseph Flavelle, and Alfred Ernest Ames (1866-1934).

In 1905, Simpsons acquired Montreal's John Murphy Company. The same year, it erected its first mail-order building on Front Street to handle orders and outbound parcels. In 1913, the mail-order operations moved to a bigger building on Spadina Avenue. This coincides with the Company's use of perforated stamps. From the SG survey King Edward VII issues comprise 32% and King George V issues 68%.

After several attempts to remain viable (a merger with Sears Roebuck to create Simpson-Sears followed by acquisition by the Hudson's Bay Company) The Robert Simpson Company finally succumbed to a changing retail market and the name "Simpson" was retired in 1991.



Figures 2 and 3: Simpson's delivery conveyances of the perfin use period²

2. Robert Simpson Company Postage Usage

Given the business of the Robert Simpson Company, a large department store with a successful mail order business, we would expect to see outgoing business mail to its customers and parcel post deliveries to its customers. The table on Page 16, a survey of the R8 perfins in the hands of Study Group members would support this.

2. Survey Responses: Table 1 summarizes the Study Club member's response to the request for their R8 inventory

R8 (Robert Simpson Company) Positions Survey				
Scott Number	Description	Position 1	Position 3	Total
89	KEVII 1c Green	23		23
90	KEVII 2c Carmine	49		49
91	KEVII 5c Blue	62		62
92	KEVII 7c Bistre	0		0
93	KEVII 10 Purple	22		22
104	KGV 1c Green	12		12
106	KGV 2c Carmen	202	1	203
108	KGV 3c Brown	0		0
109	KGV 3c Carmen	0		0
111	KGV 5c Blue	26		26
112	KGV 5c Violet	0		0
115	KGV 8c Blue	0		0
116	KGV 10c Plum	26		26
120	KGV 20 Black Brown	0		0
	TOTAL	420	1	421

Table 1: Summary of the Reported Issues and Positions (the survey did not request responders to differentiate among the different varieties of the same issue. The lines highlighted are 6 issues listed in the Handbook for which there were no reported copies. For the record, the Tremblay survey in distributed in Volume 23 No 1 (February 2002) included the Sc 93,108 and 112 but not the other 3.

Figures 4,5 & 6 illustrate what would seem a very typical example of the company's daily business. A corner card envelop with a company promotion paying the 2c forward letter rate franked with a 2c KGV carmen having the R8 perfin insignia. Enclosed, letterhead correspondence informing the recipient her parcel is in the way



Figure 4: KGV 2c carmen on Robert Simpson corner card cover Toronto July 25 1912 to Melbourne Ontario. 1912 was the first year of slogan cancels - this is Coutts C-0310



Figure 5: Letterhead from correspondence found in the Figure 4 cover.

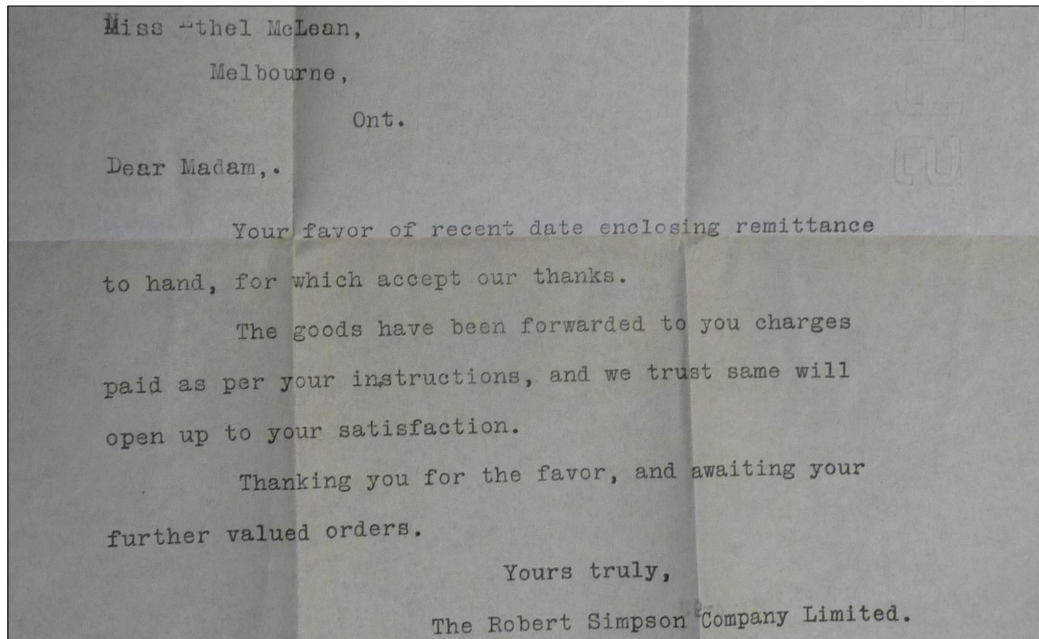


Figure 6: Correspondence from the Figure 4 cover

3. Postal Rates for the Period Perforated Stamps Are Known: The Post Office's authorization to the Robert Simpson company to use perforated stamps is dated July 25th 1910 so I am using this as the start date for determining the postal rates for the perfin use period.

Local and Forward Letter Rates³

Local Letter	Duration of Rate	Rate
July 25 th 1910	April 14 th 1915	1c for each ounce
April 15 th 1915	End of perfin use	1c for each ounce + 1c War Tax
Forward Letter Rate		
July 25 th 1910	April 14 th 1915	2c for each ounce
April 15 th 1915	End of perfin use	2c for each ounce + 1c War Tax
Registration		
July 25 th 1910	End of perfin use	5c
Special Delivery		
July 25 th 1910	End of perfin use	10c

Table 2: Local and forward letter rates for the period of confirmed perfin usage.

Of course Simpson's was in the mail order business, shipping many different products all over the Country. Table 4 gives the parcel post rates from Toronto for local delivery, to other Ontario destinations and to the other Provinces.

28
CANADA OFFICIAL POSTAL GUIDE
Rate Card C.
PARCEL POST.
Rates of Postage on Parcels mailed in the Province of Ontario.

Addressed to	1 lb.	2 lbs.	3 lbs.	4 lbs.	5 lbs.	6 lbs.	7 lbs.	8 lbs.	9 lbs.	10 lbs.	11 lbs.
Any post office within 20 miles* including place of mailing.....	\$0.05	\$0.06	\$0.07	\$0.08	\$0.10	\$0.12	\$0.14	\$0.16	\$0.18	\$0.20	\$0.22
Any post office beyond 20 miles but within the Province of Ontario.....	.10	.14	.18	.22	.26	.30	.34	.38	.42	.46	.50
Any post office in Quebec or Manitoba.....	.10	.16	.22	.28	.34	.40	.46	.52	.58	.64	.70
Any post office in Saskatchewan or Maritime Provinces.....	.12	.20	.28	.36	.44	.52	.60	.68	.76	.84	.92
Any post office in Alberta.....	.12	.24	.34	.44	.54	.64	.74	.84	.94	1.04	1.14
Any post office in British Columbia.....	.12	.24	.36	.48	.60	.72	.84	.96	1.08	1.20	1.32

The maximum charge on any parcel shall not exceed 1 cent an ounce.
* This rate also obtains in cases where the 20 mile area extends into an adjacent Province.

Table 3: Page 28 of the Canada Official Postal Guide for 1915 show the parcel post rates for mailings from Ontario to other areas of Canada ⁴

A study of the rates coupled with Robert Simpson's mail order business gives a plausible explanation for the results of the survey; 60% are Scott 90's and 106's which would pay the forward letter rate; the next most reported are Scott 91's and 111's, the 5c, making up 21% of the returns. The 5c stamp would have paid both the registration fee and for parcels up to a pound in weight within most of Toronto at the time. Parcel post rates to Quebec and Manitoba were 10c and to the Maritimes and destinations west of Manitoba, 12c . The blocks of stamps in Figures 7 to 10 which follow, with discernable roller cancels (with TORONTO clearly visible on the block of Scott 116) would have paid some rates on their own and, aided by the addition of the more common 2c stamps, to many more.⁵



Figure 8: a block of 10 KGV 2c carmen with discernable roller cancel markings. On its own the block would have both local or inter-provincial parcel post rates and with added pairs or singles, there are many more possibilities.



Figure 7: block of 4 KEVII 5c Blue



Figure 8: tied pair of KEVII 2c Carmen



Figure 9: block of 4 KGV 10c Plum

4. Stamp Survey Including Date of Issue Release, the EKD and LKD

Table 4 gives the date Canada Post released each of the stamps that are recorded in the 6th Edition of the Canadian Handbook of Stamps with Perforated Initials. Also in the Table are the Earliest and Latest recorded date of usage (EKD and LKD).

Scott Number	Stamp	Date of issue	Survey Result	Scott Number	Stamp	Date of issue	Survey Result
Scott 89	1c green	1903/07/01	23	Scott 104	1c dark green	1911-12-22	12
Scott 90	2c carmen	1903/07/01	49	Scott 106	2c carmen	1911-12-22	204
Scott 91	5c blue	1903/07/01	63	Scott 108	3c brown	1918-08-06	0
Scott 92	7c bistre	1903/07/01	0	Scott 109	3c carmen	1923-12-18	0
Scott 93	10c brown lilac	1903/07/01	22	Scott 111	5c blue	1914-01-/	27
				Scott 112	5c Violet	1922-02-02	0
				Scott 115	8c blue	1925-09-01	0
				Scott 116	10c plum	1912-01-12	26
				Scott 120	20c black brown	1912-01-26	0
Earliest Recorded Date		1911-02-02					
Latest Recorded date		1915-09-11					

Table 5: the dates listed are from the Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps⁶ (2015)

5. Conclusion and Discussion

I believe the evidence presented supports the conclusion that the Robert Simpson Company stopped perforating its postage shortly after the introduction of the War Tax April 15th 1915⁷. This proposition is supported by several things. Most telling is that no War Tax stamps with the R8 pattern have been reported. Given the volume of mail the Company used I think the Company would have used the proper War Tax issue for local and forward mail rather than continue to add KGV 1c stamps the its stock of KGV2c . Convenience and efficiency for the mailroom staff would dictate it.

Currently the Latest Known Date is September 1915. The KGV 2c carmen would continue to be used for local mail rather than forward mail as in the pre War Tax period, suggesting that if the perforator continued to be used this would be supported by local mail covers franked with perforated stamps⁷. The LKD has not advanced. There is also the following:

- The KGV 3c brown was released on August 6th, 1918 to replace the War Tax issue for the forward letter rate. Although reported in the 2002 Tremblay Survey, it was not reported in this one
- The KGV 10c plum was replaced February 20th, 1922 by the 10c blue. No copies reported, ever. Given Simpson's parcel post business this is also highly suggestive that it had stopped perforating stamps.

It is possible both the KGV 3c carmen, and 8c blue were perforated with another pattern (or perhaps not perforated at all) and accidentally mistaken for KGV 2c carmen and 5c blue. The KGV 5c violet (1922) is an outlier as it couldn't really be mistaken for something else

Since I began to think along these lines I have searched eBay for Robert Simpson Company cover listings. To date there has been one (Figure 10.), KGV 3c carmen dated Jan 8 1925. I will continue this search.

The 6th Edition of the Canadian Stamps with Perforated Initials currently uses symbols to identify some type symbol to provide additional information about a reported stamp. A contrived perfin stamp is identified with an "o", a mint perfin with an asterisk *. Perhaps a symbol, such as this "§" or some other, could be added to the Handbook to identify reported stamps that need confirmation. Another example of this would be perfin stamps that are reported from booklet panes⁸.



Figure 10: Masthead of Robert Simpson cover paying 3c forward letter rate, January 8th, 1925. It is franked with KGV 3c carmen, not perforated with the R8 pattern.

Contributions, Footnotes and Endnotes

Contributions: First and foremost this article (and the newsletter itself) would not be possible without the active participation of the membership. My thanks to Andre Giguere, Karl Giroux, Jon Johnson, Dave MacLellan, Geoff Meyer, Tony Parker, Ron Pazdzierski, Russell Sampson, Bob Szymanski and Kyle Taylor.

Footnotes

1. HBC Heritage—The Robert Simpson Company www.hbcheritage.ca
2. Figures 2 and 3—The Department Store Museum <http://www.thedepartmentstoremuseum.org/2010/05/robert-simpson-company-ltd.html>

3. The Postal History Corner—<http://postalhistorycorner.blogspot.com/>
4. University of Princeton Library, Barr Farree Collection www.book.google.ca
5. I could not find a Canada Official Postal Guide for any year from 1910 to 1914.
6. All references to Scott numbers and issues varieties are from the Unitrade Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps (2015) Editor D. Robert Harris FRPSC
7. A history of the Government's use of a war tax on postage is available at <http://postalhistorycorner.blogspot.com/p/canada-domestic-local-letter-rates-1851.html>
8. This article suggests there is a way to differentiate between a booklet pane and a sheet straight edge <https://bnaps.org/ore/VanSomeren-AdmiralStamps/VanSomeren-AdmiralStamps-StraightEdge.htm>

Addendum

The following varieties of the stamps are reported to have been used by the Robert Simpson Company. If the premise of the article is true; that the Company stopped perforating stamps in 1915, some of these varieties are more than possible and some are likely not.

Reported Varie-	Scott Variety Description	Scott's Attributed	Comment
KEVII 1c green	89i - Deep green	None	Possible to likely
KEVII 2c carmen	90i - Rose carmen	None	Possible to likely
KEVII 5c blue	91b - Blue on white paper	None	Possible to likely
	91i - Indigo on bluish paper	None	Possible to likely
KEVII 10c brown	93i - Dull lilac 93i	None	Possible to likely
KGV 2c carmen varieties	Variety Description	Scott's Attributed Year of Use	Comment
106a	Single from a booklet pane of 6	none	Given the rate at which the company used this particular stamp it is highly probable this is a 2c carmen with 2
106b	pink	1911-1912	likely
106v	Deep red	1923-1925	Given the evidence, highly unlikely, but may
106vii	red	1917-1918	Marginally possible
106ix	hairlines		High probability given the volume of KGV 2 carmen the Company
KGV 5c blue	111i – redrawn frame line	None	Dependent on touch-up
KGV 10c plum	116a – reddish purple	First printing	likely
	116i – redrawn frameline		Dependent on touch-up

A Common Perfin on an Uncommon Stamp

A Bell Telephones B15 Perfin Unreported on the “Broken X” Scott 203i

Russell D. Sampson

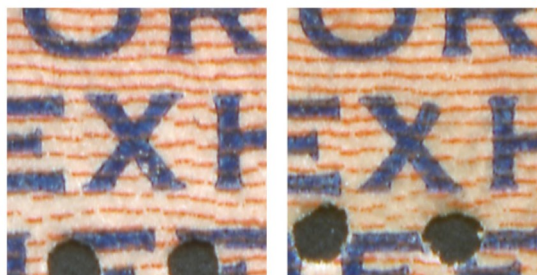
THE PERFINS

The first perfin pattern of the Bell Telephone Company of Canada pattern (B15) is one of the most common in the catalogue (Rarity factor I). However, one has never been reported on the Scott 203i – also known as the “Broken X” variety (Figure 2). This stamp comes from the former collection of Ron Whyte as purchased by the author through the 110th perfin auction of Bob Szymanski of September 2021.



Figures 1 & 2: Sampson B15 on Scott 203 and 203i

As many of the readers probably know the Scott 203 (Figure 1) is an overprint of the Scott 175 and depicts a wheat harvester pulled by a tractor. The overprint was to advertise the much touted “World’s Grain Exhibition and Conference”. The “Broken X” variety (Scott 203i) is found at position 19 of a sheet of 50. Figure 3 and 4 shows a magnified comparison of the “X” on the 175 and the 203i from my collection – both of which sport B15 perfins.



Figures 3 & 4: Sampson B15 on Scott 203 and 203i Normal and Broken X

THE 1933 GRAIN EXHIBITION

The purpose of the 1933 Regina Grain Exhibition was to celebrate and promote the settlement and agriculture of the Canadian prairies (Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, 2021). Grain producing countries from around the world were invited and 19 countries responded. Prizes as great as \$200,000 (about \$3 million in today’s dollars) were to be awarded to the country with the best wheat, barley, corn and other grains. Agricultural scientists from around the world also presented their latest research in grain production.

The exhibition was originally set for 1932, to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the founding of Regina. However due to the Great Depression and subsequent fall in grain prices, the date of the event was moved to the following year. It occurred between July 24 and August 5 and was timed to take place along side the annual city fair. With the substantial loss in jobs, the construction of the exhibition venue was turned into an employment relief project. The last traces of the grand exhibition pavilion burnt down in 2009.

IS THIS A DIE 1?

Perfin enthusiasts are often interested in plating the perforator machine. Successful plating can be assisted by finding and carefully verifying dies at the beginning and end of a multi-die machine (i.e., Die 1 and 5 in a five die machine, and die 1 and 10 in a ten die machine). Larger format stamps – like the 203 and 203i – often provide an opportunity to find such dies since the presence of excess space after a perfin pattern may reveal whether it is such a die. In the case of the 203i in this article, it appears it could be a die 1.

The usual way of checking for this is to hold another large format stamp with two patterns against the suspected end-die stamp. Then by simply displacing the pattern over to the side one can see if the next pattern should appear on the stamp but does not, thus strongly suggesting it is a die 1, 5 or 10. If, on the other hand, the offset pattern is completely off of the stamp the test is inconclusive (see Figure 5).). The black arrow locates the perfin perforation of interest. Notice how close this perfin perforation is to the stamp's perforations on the 203i; so close in fact, that it required a much more accurate second test.

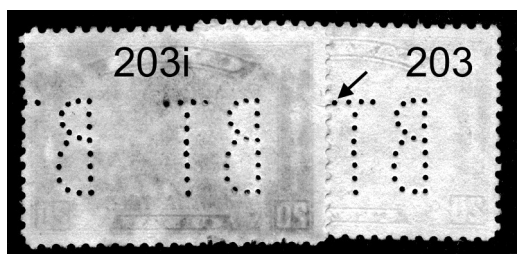


Figure 5: Sampson B15 on Scott 203 and 203i end die test

To get a more accurate answer I made careful pixel measurements off of 1200 ppi scans of the 203i perfin. I starting by measuring from the top right perforation of the left hand “B” in Figure 6 to the top left perforation of the next “T”. This distance can then reveal, through extrapolation, whether or not the spacing on the right of the complete pattern provides enough room to more conclusively suggest that this pattern is a die 1.



Figure 6: Sampson B15 on Scott 203i back

Extracting the pixel coordinates from the scan for the above dimensions indicated that the likely location of the upper left hand perforation of the next “T” would be found where I’ve placed the white dot (see arrow in Figure 6). From my experience, if this perfin perforation was placed in this location it is highly likely that the stamp’s tear-line along its own perforations would be altered since the tear may instead pass through the perfin perforation.

Evidence for this is found in the length of the “tooth” of paper found between the stamp’s perforations along the right side of Figure 6. First, the extrapolated perfin perforation lies exactly at the edge of the tooth. Secondly, the tooth of paper at the likely location of the next BT perfin perforation pattern is longer than almost all of the rest of the teeth on that side of the stamp. This suggests that the tear-line was altered at this point – passing more through the perfin perforation rather than the stamp’s perforation. Note how close the extrapolated perfin perforation is to the tooth.

This evidence supports the hypothesis that the top-left perforation of the “T” was at this location and therefore, the complete BT pattern in the center of the stamp in Figure 6 is probably not a die 1.