

THE BNA PERFORATOR

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Editor's Post

¶ We have the pleasure of adding two new members to our Study Group, Denis Lecompte and David Talbot. This increases our membership to 71, 5 of whom still receive the Perforator through the postal services.

¶ Congratulations to SG member Patrick Durbano for the Gold Medal awarded his 5-frame exhibit 4-Hole OHMS Perforated Mail to Foreign Destinations at BNAPEX 24 in Kingston ON August 23-24. The perfin Study Group session at BNAPEX 24 was sparsely attended and many therefore missed Russell Sampson's thoughtful and insightful presentation entitled The Future of Perfin Studies. Fortunately an expanded version of the presentation is included in this issue of the newsletter. Russell's essay gives us much to think about.

¶ Last year I circulated David Biltek's monograph on the beginning of the use of 4-hole perforated OH/MS stamps by all government departments and agencies. His initial work spurred me on to write the complete story of the 4-hole OH/MS perfins, from its beginning in 1939 to the replacement of government perfin usage with stamps overprinted O.H.M.S. in 1949. Its title is The History of Canada's OHMS Official Perforated Postage Stamps 1939-1949. It is much too long for our newsletter and BNAPS has included it on its website (<https://bnaps.org/ore/ore-index.php#articles>) and also in The Perforator section of the BNAPS study group newsletters. It is likely not the last word on the subject of 4-hole OHMS perfins however, as Russell Sampson is exploring the origins of the philatelic material associated with both

the O9 and the O10 machines. We look forward to reading that.

¶ The table of the earliest and latest known dates of usage for each of the 19 individual Sun Life perfors are currently not included in the Handbook. For those of you tracking this information we have a new EDU for Saint John (S22-2) to report, December 5th, 1923. The CDS cancel is on a Scott 105f. The Table is in Issue #169 which is available on the BNAPS website. (<https://bnaps.org/studygroups/Perfin/newsletters-perfin.htm>)

¶ I am working on an article relating to the Sun Life Assurance Company S22 perfin. I would appreciate scans (at a minimum of 400ppi), of the backs of large format stamps with 2 or more partial strikes and/or any horizontal tied multiples from both Halifax and Saint John, The examples should be identified by CDS cancels or identified on the back with one of Conrad Tremblay's neat notations. Thank-you.

¶ The costs for this issue were \$15.00 for printing. The mailing costs for the 5 Study group members who receive a paper copy would have been \$7.69 but donated postage took care of.

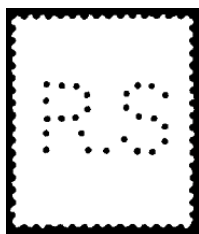
¶ The annual Royal Philatelic Society of Canada's annual show opens this Friday in Fredericton. Perhaps I'll see you there.

¶ And finally, as always, I am looking for articles or ideas for articles for our newsletter.

Happy end of Summer!!

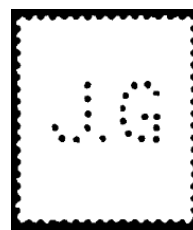
Treasurer

Russell Sampson
48 B Eastbrook Heights
Mansfield Center CT
USA 06250-1654
rsampson314@gmail.com



Editor

Jim Graham
2 Grandview Drive
Dartmouth Nova Scotia
Canada B2W 1X5
jdgraham2@gmail.com



The Future of BNA Perfin Studies – Some Ideas and Challenges

Russell D. Sampson, August 31 – September 17 2024

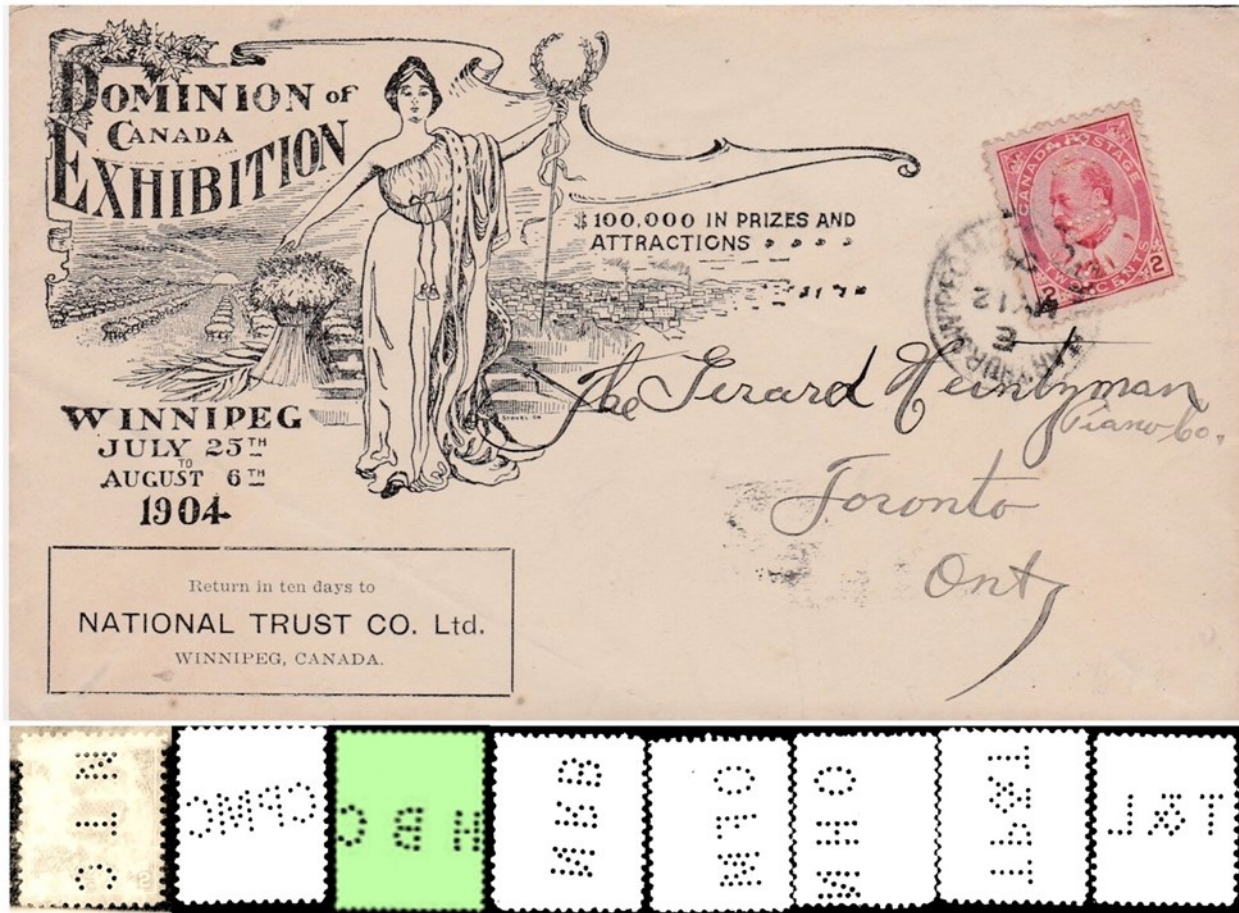


Figure 1; This cover was recently added to the author's collection and finally connects the previously unknown N29 (NTC) pattern with its rightful owner – the National Trust Company in Winnipeg. This pattern also shows striking similarities with other early Winnipeg perfins (i.e., C31; CPMC, N26; NRB, O4; OFM, O11; OHN, T3; T&L, and T5; TP&T – from the author's collection). Evidence suggests that these patterns were produced by a Cummins Model 14 which is one of their only models that has an interchangeable die-head. This further suggests that a singular source may have perforated all these perfins – akin to a Sloper-like system. Consistent with this conjecture and its evidence, the still-unknown H1 perfin (HBC – image from the perfin handbook) may have been the Winnipeg office of the Home Bank of Canada. Further research is needed to confirm or refute these conjectures.

ABSTRACT

This author outlines ideas regarding the future challenges facing BNA perfin studies. One of the key issues is how to reconcile the BNA perfin handbook with the stamp varieties listed in the accepted stamp catalogues like Unitrade. Since many of these varieties are best identified on mint stamps and – almost by definition – perfin collecting is confined to used stamps the identification of these varieties on perfined stamps is challenging. This is particularly important with those subtle shade varieties like the Unitrade 223i which according to research by the author, appears to be caused not only by differences in ink colour but also by differences in paper shade and a resulting optical illusion called the Bezold Effect. This effect is produced when the ink is seen next to varying paper shades. Other future challenges and opportunities are outlined including; the need for online postal history resources, the need for historical references, how to encourage new perfin collectors, the development of new perfin research tools, the access to rare perfins for the purposes of research, and finally an overarching goal – the development of a coherent Theory of Perfins. These goals are intended to improve the enjoyment of perfin study and protect the integrity of the hobby.

INTRODUCTION

This article is based on a presentation given at the Perfin Study Group meeting at BNAPEX '24 in Kingston. As the reader will see, it presents the perfin collector and perfin researcher with many fascinating and important things to do (see Figure 1). It also means the future of our study group is indeed very bright. But, as the reader will learn, an important question is how do we as a study group keep it that way?

THE HANDBOOK VS. THE STAMP CATALOGUES

With the publication of the fifth edition of the perfin handbook [1], BNA perfins are now linked to the stamps and stamp varieties listed in such catalogues as the Unitrade. One of the key challenges facing perfin study is reconciling our BNA perfin handbook with the stamp varieties listed in these stamp catalogues. If the editors of the perfin handbook are to accept discoveries of perfin patterns on shade varieties, re-entries, hairlines, wet vs. dry printing, etc., then it is essential that the perfin collector, and the handbook editors agree upon the identification criteria of these Scott and Unitrade varieties. Maybe more importantly, since perfin collecting is – almost by definition – confined to used stamps, if the positive identification of these Scott and Unitrade varieties can only be confidently achieved on mint stamps, then these stamp varieties may need special attention in the perfin handbook or even their removal.

Progress has been made by Jim Graham and the author (with the generous help from other specialists) to put hairlines on both KEVII and Admiral issues plus straight-edges of the Admiral issues on a solid footing [2, 3]. Also, research into the correct identification of re-entries like the Unitrade C9ii (7-cent Peace Issue Airmail) and suspected ribbed paper varieties in the Wilding issues have also been initiated by the author [4].

As Mike Behm suggested [5], other philatelic areas still in need of BNA perfin authentication tools may include 1) Admiral wet/dry printing, 2) Admiral lathe-works, 3) paper thickness varieties, and 4) imperforates (e.g., the KEVII Scott 90a). If any of these challenges are of interest for the reader, please consider stepping up and helping out.

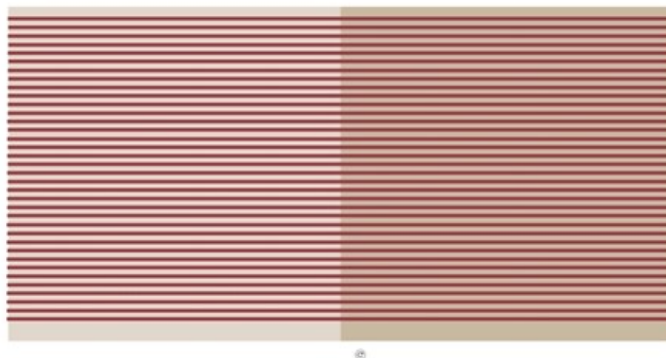


Figure 2: An illustration of the Bezold Effect. Here the carmine strips representing intaglio lines, are the exact same colour shade while their background is of two different, tan-colored shades. The eye is fooled into perceiving the shade of the carmine on the right half to be darker than the same colour on the left. This illustration uses the average carmine ink shade digitally extracted from the nine test samples in the publication by the author and cited in [6]. The two background tan-colored shades are extracted from the darkest and brightest ink-free papers from the same nine test samples in [6]. These results clearly suggest that the perception of intaglio colour shade varieties may be strongly influenced by the shade of the paper. This may be problematic in perfin studies since almost all perfin – by definition – are used stamps and such stamps are susceptible to staining due to aging and handling.

AN IMPORTANT EXAMPLE

Yet, one of the most vexing issues in our philatelic field is intaglio colour shade varieties. For example, as demonstrated in a recent research paper by the author [6] the Unitrade shade variety 223i (10-cent RCMP – deep carmine rose) may be visually difficult to correctly identify in used samples of this stamp due to variations in the shades of the paper and not the shade of the ink. These investigations demonstrate that discoloration of the paper produces an optical illusion called the Bezold Effect where the observer can perceive a change in the shade of stamp when the intaglio lines are seen next to paper of a darker or lighter shade – thus fooling the eye of the collector (see Figure 2).

Using the specimens seen in Figure 3, a group of experienced perfin philatelists were asked to identify the brightest and darkest shade of the nine used samples of Unitrade 223 all with L1 perfins. The group – including the author – agreed that sam-



Figure 2: These are the nine test samples used in the author's research paper cited as [6]. As mentioned in the body of this paper, the group of philatelists chose sample 7 as the brightest and sample 3 as the darkest shade, while digital RGB measurements of the ink clearly showed that sample 4 was the brightest while sample 1 was the darkest ink shade. Those samples selected by the philatelists were the samples with the brightest and darkest paper shade thus lending support to the Bezold Effect hypothesis.

ple 7 appeared the brightest shade while sample 3 appeared the darkest shade. Afterwards, however, digital measurements of the colour of the ink (i.e., red, green and blue or RGB) found that the brightest ink was found on sample 4 and the darkest was on sample 1. Furthermore, in support of the Bezold Effect/Illusion hypothesis those stamps identified as brightest (sample 7) and darkest (sample 3) by the philatelists turned out to have the brightest and darkest paper. The conclusion is inescapable, the shade of the paper appears to cause the same colour intaglio ink to appear to be a different shade. Therefore, since paper shade in used stamps (i.e., perfins) is very much affected by age, postal markings, mishandling, storage, etc. – it is evident that identifying subtle shade varieties in perfins may be sus-

ceptible to such an optical illusion and thus may be suspect.

Further to this result, unpublished research by the author regarding the Unitrade 223 vs. 223i variety, suggests that the apparent shade variety of the stamp may be partially due to variations in the thickness of the paper and on the reflectivity (i.e., bright vs. dark) of the surface the stamp is placed on. The result of this research is clear; that the apparent stamp shade varieties may be caused not by the ink but by the paper.

This being said, some shade varieties (e.g., Scott 241 vs. 241i) are well documented and more obvious and therefore may be less susceptible to this optical illusion. However, some of the Admiral shade varieties on used (i.e., perfined) stamps may prove to be more susceptible to the Bezold Effect and thus their identification on per-

finned stamps more problematic.

Since, it is common knowledge with stamp collectors that used stamps suffer the risk of staining through a) their handling through the mail (e.g., postmark inks), b) their contact with the paper on the envelope or wrapper, c) their improper removal from the cover, d) their improper storage and e) their normal dis-coloration from environmental exposure, it then begs the question, should the more subtle shade varieties be excluded from the perfin handbook, or de-emphasized within the handbook?

The same could be said for paper fluorescence varieties such as those found on the QEII issues (e.g., Wilding and Centennials). If a used stamp can have its paper brightness affected by age, handling or environmental exposure – then how can the perfin collector and the perfin handbook editors be confident in their identification – especially considering the optical illusion produced by the Bezold Effect?

Unless more objective methods are developed to circumvent the effects of such effects, it appears the removal or at least the de-emphasis of these stamp varieties may be necessary in the perfin handbook.

Yet, it is always a sad day in philately when such well-loved collecting avenues as colour shades and paper varieties are removed from our hobby. Therefore, this should be seen not as a threat but as a challenge – a gauntlet thrown down, if you may – to the members of the study group to energetically investigate and hopefully solve these puzzles. Who shall join us in rising to this occasion.

OTHER CHALLENGES

Now on to what is hoped to be those lesser vexing issues. In the cause of brevity these shall be listed with lesser detail than the above. The author would like to thank Michael Behm for his thoughtful contributions to this section.

POSTAL HISTORY AND PERFINS

The rates, routes and markings on our perfin on and off of cover are vital in telling their story. The author and Jon Johnson have initiated a feasibility study [7] into the scanning and uploading to

the Internet of all the 20th Century Official Postal Guides – vital tools in any postal history research.

Finding the date and town of origin of our perfins is also a vital piece of data. For example, the author has begun using slogan cancels in the analysis of perfin usage [8]. New tools are needed to extend this analysis and these tools need to be tested on our perfins to reveal their limitations as well as their abilities. Mike Behm has suggested [5] that vital discoveries may be gleaned from careful and systematic cancellation studies into such perfins as 1) SUN/LIFE and the location of its presumptive machines, 2) the rural postmarks on Bell Telephones perfins, 3) the relocation of International Harvester perforating machines (i.e., I7 and I14 Toronto to Weyburn to Winnipeg), 4) the meaning behind unexpected town or RPO cancels on some railway perfin covers (i.e., did some railway stations or RPO's sell perfinned stamps?).

HISTORY AND PERFINS

There is an interdisciplinary connection of our perfins and the complex and exciting realm of human history. The history of our covers – who sent them, who received them, and why – adds life-affirming colour to our hobby. These stamps with their perforated initials are not just collectables but tiny windows into the sometimes fascinating history of the individuals, the companies and those governments that used them. Recent advances on the Internet have made available key research tools for this study such as directories for the major cities in Canada, online genealogy sites, and online access to libraries – and more importantly – expert professional librarians willing and waiting to help. Perfin studies needs an online list of these resources. Recent examples of this include a comprehensive history of the 4-hole OHMS perfins by Jim Graham [9] and a perfin franked cover connected to two famous Canadian scientists [10, 11].

One of the key tools of any area of historical study is a proper indexing of its resources. A reference book without an index is just an academic source of frustration. A library without a cataloguing and indexing system is just a heap of books. A newsletter without an indexing system is just a collection of unsearchable information that slowly dies away. Researchers need to efficiently and ac-

curately access past research – otherwise they are doomed to either repeat someone else’s work, or worse, not benefit from the work done by those that came before. Therefore, the author has initiated an indexing project for the BNA Perforator [12] and encourages the members of the Study Group to use it, check it, and add to it.

PERFIN OUTREACH

Our active membership needs to constantly renew itself – otherwise our study group shall perish like so many other study groups. An examination of the BNAPS Study Group website reveals just how many still vital areas of our hobby have dormant study groups. It is the author’s firm belief that this is not because there is no longer anything to collect, study and discover in these study areas – NO – these groups lie dormant because people have ceased to write and to organize. To prevent this, our study group may need to reach-out to the wider philatelic world to entice and excite would-be “perfinators” to take-up this holey mantle. Not only that, we need to encourage them to write, exhibit and to organize. Recent examples include Patrick Durban’s OHMS perfin exhibits that have succeeded for the first time in breaking the gold medal barrier in BNA perfin exhibits [13].

One of the most important aspects of perfin study is perfin collecting. Deep down we are all collectors and as such there is a deep and profound psychic itch that needs to be scratched – we need to fill spaces in an album. To this end, the author would like to propose that the study group design freely downloadable BNA perfin album pages to be housed on our BNAPS website. These pages do not necessarily have to follow our semi-alphabetical perfin handbook, but can be pleasantly thematic in nature. For example, they could be organized by business types (e.g., railroads, banks, manufacturers, governments, etc.) or by region (e.g., provinces or even cities) or by era (e.g., QV, KEVII, etc.). The author firmly believes that one of the initial attractions of a philatelic specialty for a novice

is its collectability and that collectability is defined by its ability to be simply, neatly and attractively ordered within an album or similar device. The author also firmly believes that it is the novice collector that forms the foundational future of our Study Groups and hopefully in the years to come, will become the active researchers, writers and editors. They are our future.

PERFIN STUDY TOOLS

As researchers and collectors, we are only as good as our tools. We have entered the digital age and our tools should reflect this brave new e-world. We now use the Internet, spreadsheets, digital microscopes, digital cameras and flatbed scanners, ... and this list is ever-growing. As such, we need to publish “how-to” articles on how best to employ these new tools and make sure we don’t fall prey to the computer-age bugbear of “garbage-in equals garbage-out”. Once again, as a study group we must publish our methods, connect with our members and assist where needed.

There are also non-digital tools. To give an example, Mike Behm and the author are currently working on a new statistical tool called “Perfin Usage Rate” where one uses the stamp issue periods (e.g., for KEVII between mid 1903 to late 1911 a period of about 8.5-years) as a time scale in measuring the rate of perfin usage by a particular company. One simply counts the number of perfins found on a particular stamp issue and divides by the period of that stamp issue. For example, if a collector had 35 KEVII issues of a particular perfin they would then divide that by 8.5-years giving a PUR of 4.1 perfins per year. This could then be repeated for the other issues found with that perfin; the Admirals, the Scroll, the Leaf, etc. Once plotted on a graph, these PUR values might then help reveal the history of usage of that company’s perfins and may further reveal the company’s financial history (i.e., its booms and busts) and—most importantly its mailroom evolution of postage methods (e.g., perfins to meter mail). The early results of this investigation, as applied to the Gordon, Mackay & Co per-

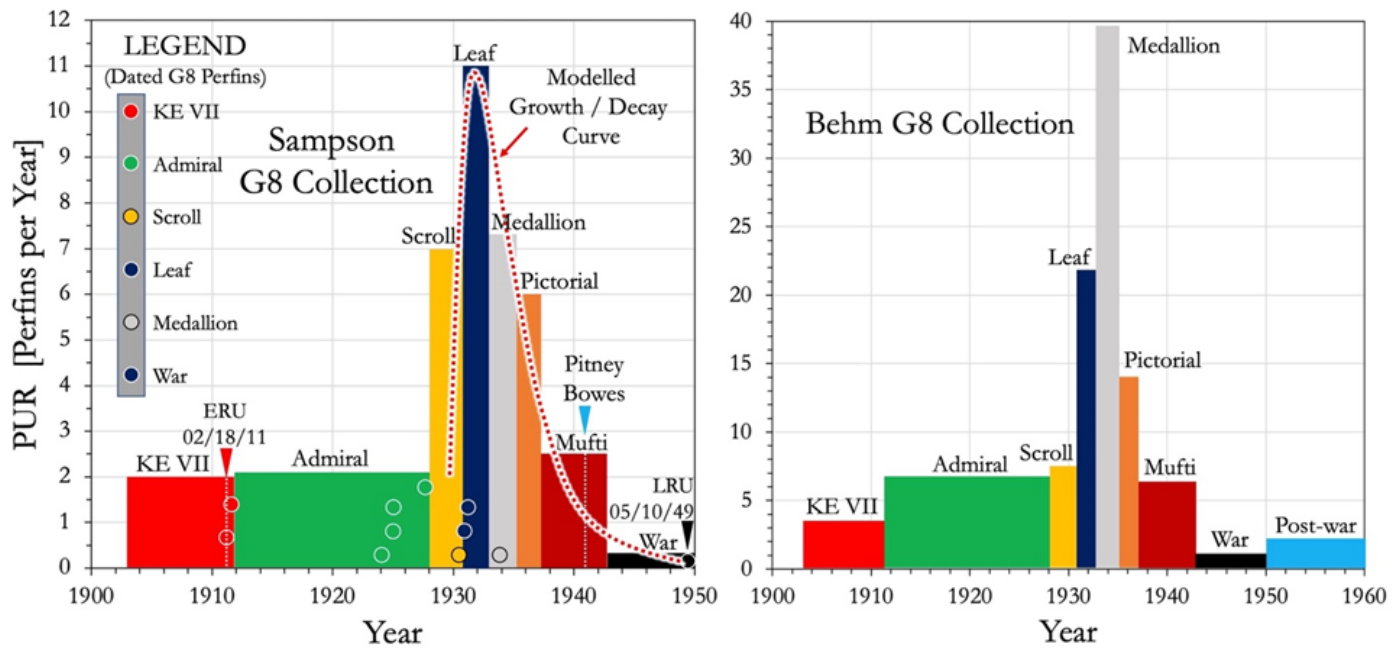


Figure 4; A plot of the perfin usage rate (PUR) for the Gordon, Mackay & Co perfin (G8) from the collections of the author and Michael Behm. The agreement between the two collections appears to suggest that the analysis technique is revealing true behavior relevant to the company's business cycle and/or the evolution of the mailroom postage technology (i.e., conversion from perfin usage to meter mail). This result further suggests that selection bias due to preferences in philatelic collecting may not have a major effect on these results.

fin (G8), are very promising and show a dramatic increase in the company's perfin usage in the early 1930's suggesting it follows the company's transition from wholesale to retail and its subsequent fall the 1940's to ultimate perfin-extinction in the late 1950's may be a result of the company final – and reported – transition to meter mail (see Figure 4).

Other examples include oblique lighting techniques to identify ribbed paper varieties, the use of digital microscopes to identify re-entries and hairlines, employing a "poor-person's X-ray" machine to image and measure perfins on covers, and PowerPoint techniques to overlay one perfin on-top of another. It should also be mentioned that we still stand on the shoulders of the giants of perfin study and therefore, much of the foundational methods of perfin study like plating perforator machine dies, have been laid-down by some of the founders of our study group and should not be forgotten [14]. Once again, it is essential to preserve this information and improve its access through proper indexing.



Figure 5; This Lehigh Valley Coal Sales Company perfin on Scott 142 appears to show both the L11 and the L12 version of the perfin. This strongly suggests that the L11 and L12 were not produced by separate machines but were a die variety from a single machine. Therefore, if this initial finding stands up to further scrutiny, the Handbook will have to be amended. Specimen was recently added to the author's collection.

PERFIN RARITIES

This is one of the more interesting and challenging aspects of all of philately. How does one understand something when it occurs so rarely (see Figure 5)? This is where the vast power of the

Internet and “crowd sourcing” comes in. One does not need to own a perfin to study a perfin. That being said, sharing data comes with its own limitations. Not all Perfin Study Group members own a flatbed scanner, or a digital microscope, or know how to calibrate such a device. Nonetheless, there is power in our numbers – a collective power in collectors. The members should try to expand and refine our efforts to reach-out to, and assist these collectors in order to encourage them to share information from their prized rarities. To this end, the author would like to propose a “Gems of Perfin Philately” appendix to the online Handbook. This website would serve as a kind of art gallery and museum of the masterpieces and rarities of BNA perfins. Not only that, but it could also serve as a vital research tool.

PERFIN THEORY

This all leads to the final challenge – establishing a Theory of Perfins. How were they made? How were they used? How are they collected? Each collection, each article, each exhibit contributes to our understanding, but some vital questions still remain unanswered. For example, why is the four-hole OHMS the only – the ONLY – machines to have their inter-die spacing such that to properly perforate those common King’s portrait definitives (e.g., the Mufti and War Issue) that they needed to be put through the 10-die machines SIDEWAYS [15]? Why?

Progress has recently been achieved in the development of this theory. For example, Jim Graham and the author have written research on what causes perfin positions [16]. The author has also presented an evidence-based model on how perfin perforation diameters can vary due to the stacking of sheets of the stamps [17], and how partial perfin patterns and random perfin holes could be caused [18]. In addition, Jim Graham [19] and John Mathews [20] have employed crowd-sourcing to perform studies into the progressive loss of perforations (i.e., possible constant perforation die varieties) in the C29 (CNR – Montreal) and the C42 (Caterpillar Tractor – Peoria, Illinois).

Also, there is slam-dunking-good evidence that the Montreal Stencil Works Ltd. (i.e., perfin M24) were servicing and altering perforating machines like the C34 (CPR of Montreal). Could this mean they also

manufactured or modified the dies of these machines? There is also evidence to suggest that Dennison Manufacturing Company of Montreal and Framingham, Massachusetts (i.e., perfins D2, D5 and D6) may have made their own perforators. Therefore, could there be other perforating machine manufacturers to add to the rather short list in our Handbook?

Finally, the author has unearthed tantalizing – but so far circumstantial – evidence for a Sloper-like perforating service in Winnipeg during the first couple decades of the 20th Century (Figure 1). These hypotheses need to be tested by the discovery of evidence – either for or against – and the careful analysis through peer review publication. There is still so much more work to be done!

This search for understanding and a coherent Theory of Perfins also leads to one very important objective. The better we understand perfins, the better we arm ourselves against the specter of unscrupulous persons trying to fake their way into perfin profits or perfin fame. Our hobby’s history (i.e., the notorious OHMS perfin fakes of the middle of the 20th Century and the ignominious tale of Roy Wrigley) bears witness to these dangers and the need for our continued vigilance. In fact, a recent article in the Perfins Club Bulletin [21] outlined how improving LASER technologies have been used to perforate stamps and the author then forensically describes how they can be identified by their tell-tale burn marks. Buyer beware.

CONCLUSIONS

Our tiny branch of philately is strong. To give the reader an idea, the author’s current perfin project “To-Do” list stands at 42 projects – and those are just on my priority list. That simply says there are many more discoveries waiting to be found and thus there is so much work still to be done.

Yet, this is by no-means an exhaustive study into the future of our study group. The author is firmly convinced that the hive-mind of our collectors and our perfin researchers is full of pent-up ideas. If the reader finds fault in anything in this article or finds that the author has neglected a vital part of our hobby – then stand up and let your voice be heard.

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Gordon, Mackey & Co Ltd (G8) – A New Latest Reported Usage and the Decline in G8 Usage

Russell D. Sampson

ABSTRACT

A new latest reported usage (LRU) of the Gordon, Mackey & Co Ltd perfin (G8) was extracted from the cancel on a 5-cent blue War Issue specimen (Scott 255). Microscopy of the year indicia was needed to confidently identify the last numeral of the year. This analysis confirmed that the date was May 10, 1949. Evidence is presented to suggest that this specimen may have originated from an up-rating of the company's mail from their Pitney Bowes J Series postage meter.

INTRODUCTION

The end of the perfin era was a slow, stuttering slide into postage oblivion. The competitive introduction of more efficient methods like meter mail eventually pushed the perforator out of the mailroom. Did some institutions bite-the-bullet and made the quick evolutionary step, while others chose to slowly morph their way into modernity? This investigation offers tantalizing and tentative evidence for the latter.

The Toronto dry goods wholesaler Gordon, Mackey & Co Ltd started punching the company's initials "GM/Co" into their postage in early 1911 [1]. However, in late 1940 the company started using a Pitney Bowes J Series postage meter machine with

serial number 94026 [2]. At this time their perfin usage appeared to go into slow decline and therefore by the time of the mid KG VI to early QE II issues (i.e., Scott 249 to 306 [1]) the G8 perfin had all but vanished from the postal scene and our collections. This suggests that the perfins and meter mail lived for time side-by-side in their mailrooms.

NEW LATEST REPORTED USAGE

In Figure 1 and 2 is a G8 perfin on a 5-cent blue Scott 255 from the author's collection. These images are from a flatbed scanner set at 1200 ppi resolution. The day of the year is obviously MAY 10 but what of the year? The final numeral in the year's indicia has unfortunately fallen on the first perforation of the "C" and, in addition, parts of this numeral have fallen on the dark-blue inked areas under the King's chin thus camouflaging vital parts of the numeral. As a result, these effects have produced some frustrating ambiguity with regards to the year's identity. Is it a "0", an "8" or a "9"? The year 1940 can be confidently eliminated since the Scott 255 was not issued until July 1, 1942. That still leaves 1948 and 1949 as possible years. An online cancel extractor [3] provided some clarity (see Figure 2) but the 1200 ppi image is still not of sufficient resolution to unambiguously distinguish between an "8" and a "9".



Figure 1 and 2: Flatbed scanner images at 1200 ppi of a Gordon, Mackey & Co Ltd perfin on Scott 255 with cancel extracted on right. Perfin from the author's collection.

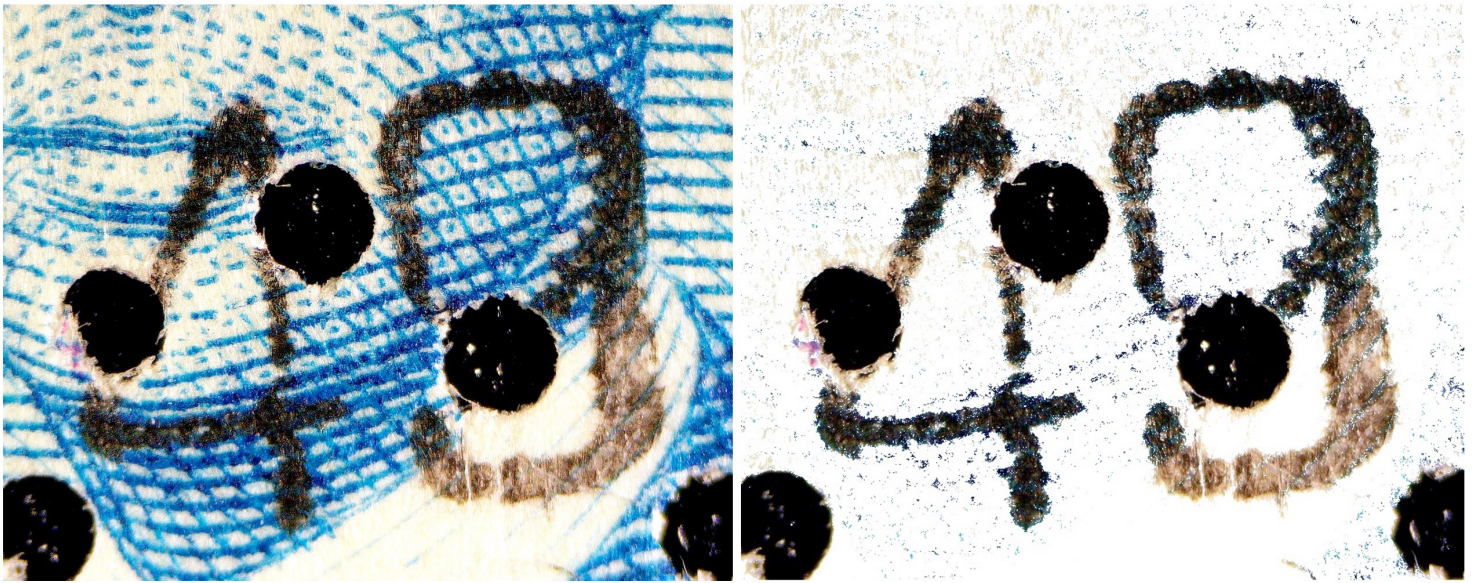


Figure 3 and 4: Digital microscope images of the cancellation's year indicia from the Gordon, Mackay & Co Ltd perfin in Figure 1. Figure 4 is after having the contrast enhanced in Preview and cancel extracted [3].

The final identification of the year required the higher magnification and resolution provided by a digital microscope (see Figures 3 and 4). The image from the microscope required additional contrast adjustment in order to optimize the clarity provided by the cancel extraction algorithm. Since the cancel extractor algorithm deletes specific red, green and blue values (RGB) defined in a user-selected area of the stamp, it is vital to maximize the colour differences between the black ink of the cancel and that of the stamp's ink and paper. This colour contrast optimization was performed using a computer application called "Preview" which is found on all Apple computers. From this enhanced and extracted image it is now apparent that the year was 1949.

Thus, this appears to confirm a new latest reported usage (LRU) of the G8 as May 10, 1949. This LRU is fully 3-years, 4-months and 10-days later than the previous LRU (Jan. 18, 1946 [1]) and presents an interesting enigma. What was it doing on their mail so long after they had apparently abandoned perfins as the company's postage of preference? Also, as indicated in the Handbook [1] and through correspondence with Michael Behm, the G8 continued to be found up until at least the QE II Karsh issue and Scott 330 (i.e., at least until the issuance date of these stamps which were in May and June of 1953).

DECLINING G8 PERFIN USAGE

There appears to be one possible scenario that could explain this late usage. Could perfins have been used in the mailroom to up-rate an insufficiently franked meter mail cover? Without the attached cover, one

can only speculate if the scenario is correct. However, it is instructive to see what this up-rated postage train-of-thought leads to.

To add evidence to this hypothesis, this stamp has oddly received a relatively rare "socked on the nose" cancel from a machine dater hub. At the time the Toronto postal sorting plants were employing Pitney Bowes machine cancellers and their cancelling dies were made of two changeable components; 1) a circular dater hub, and 2) a "killer" die that was either a slogan or the philatelically unattractive wave-line obliterator [4]. The feeding mechanisms of these machines were designed to position the envelope so that the postage stamps are cancelled with the "killer" part of the cancel and not the dater hub (see Figure 5). This fact would suggest that one of two things occurred with this particular envelope franked with the stamp in Figure 1. Either a) the envelope was misfed through the machine (see Figure 6) or b) this perfinned stamp was placed a significant distance to the left of the usual location of a single stamp upon the envelope.

The second scenario appears logical given a) the rarity of the necessary mis-feed of the envelope in the cancelling machine (i.e., out of 966 slogan cancels counted in the author's collection, the sample in Figure 6 is the only one of its kind found), and b) the unusual denomination of the stamp (i.e., 5-cents) given that the common domestic letter rate of the period was 3-cents. This lesser-used denomination suggests that the cover was up-rated, after receiving its initial – and possibly incorrect – postage from the Gordon, Mackay & Co meter mail machine. To give this conjecture addi-



Figure 5: Toronto slogan cancel dated MAR 31 1949 showing a typical configuration of the Pitney Bowes machine canceller used on the G8 sample in this investigation. This slogan cancel is a Couatts B-655 [4] and is from the author’s collection.



Figure 6: This machine cancellation sample shows the stamp in its normal position on the cover, but unexpectedly struck by the Montreal machine’s dater hub. This is due to the cover being mis-fed through the Montreal machine. According to a survey of the author’s collection, this appears to be a rare occurrence. Cancel from the author’s collection

tional support, a sample of this kind of perfin plus meter postage scenario was found in the author’s collection (see Figure 7).

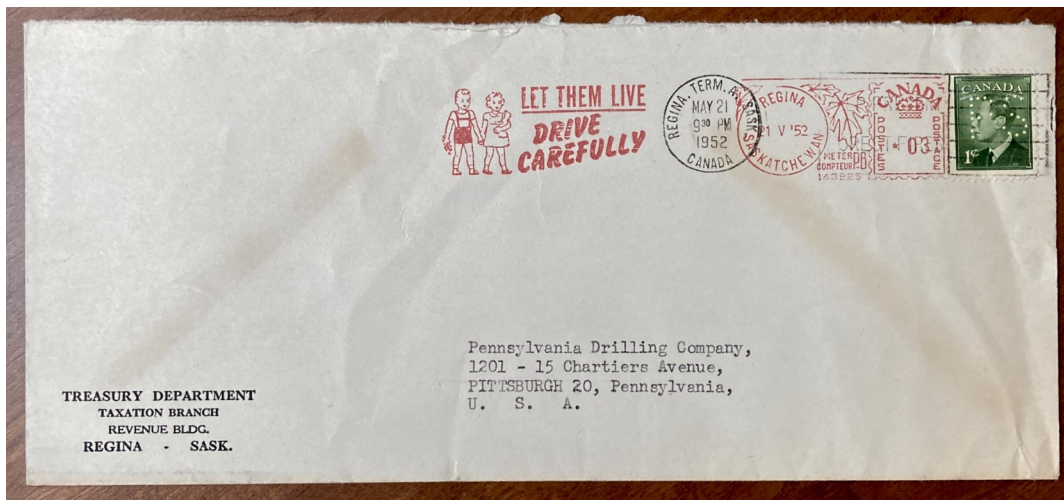


Figure 7: A Province of Saskatchewan Pitney Bowes meter mail cover dated May 21, 1952. The meter mail postage has been updated using a 1-cent green King George VI “Postes-Postage” Issue (Scott 284) with a P19 (PS) perfin. Letter rate postage increased from 3-cents to 4-cents on July 1, 1951. Cover from the author’s collection.

CONCLUSIONS

After a detailed image analysis, it appears that the Gordon, Mackay & Co Ltd perfin in Figure 1 to 4 was cancelled on May 10, 1949 – thus establishing a new latest reported usage of this perfin pattern. Furthermore, the lesser-used denomination, plus the presence of the dater hub of a Pitney Bowes machine cancel, both suggest the cover was possibly

up-rated from an original metered postage. Since the G8 perfin has been found on issues up to the June 1, 1953 QEII Coronation issue (Scott 330) this further suggests that Gordon, Mackay & Co Ltd had for about 12 ½-years (late 1940 to at mid 1953) been using perfin and meter postage side-by-side.

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Western Union Telegraph Company

Where Was the Perforating Machine?

Jim Graham

Addendum A of the Canadian Stamps with Perforated Initials Handbook lists chronologically the Canada Post approval dates for some 160 patterns to be used on Canadian postage. The preface to this list states that the ‘place’ is the location of the office applying for perfin approval and is not necessarily the location of the perforating machine. The Western Union Telegraph Company office in Saint John NB applied for and received Post Office approval on June 16 1911.¹ (Figures 1 and 2).

Companies were not necessarily consistent with how they used their perforated stamps, but generally there are only a few variations. Some usage was basically in one place, such as the Robert Simpson Company in Toronto; some such as Travellers Insurance perforated stamps in one location (Montreal) and then distributed the perforated stamps for use in other Provinces; and some machines are known to have moved—the International Harvester machine in Weyburn SK (I14) was moved to Winnipeg MB in circa 1935.²

I was born and raised in Dartmouth NS (and still live here) and have some knowledge of the Western Union Telegraph Company’s presence on the East Coast. This personal knowledge and cancel infor-



Figure 1



Figure 2

Figures 1: The W16 pattern has an LRU of April 12, 1912 and an LTU of May 11 1952. It is known on 69 issues with the latest reported issue being the 1958 La Verendrye Statute (Scott 378).

Figure 2: The W17 pattern is reported on Canada’s first Special Delivery issue of 1898.

mation from my own collection (Figure 3 an example and Table 1) were enough to make me somewhat sceptical that the perforator’s home was Saint John NB. Some years ago I circulated an article suggesting the perforator was actually in Halifax. In response, the CDS cancel information I received from Michael Behm and Jack Brandt from the stamps in their collections and a little more research, has prompted me (finally!) to include a revised version of the article in the Perforator. Tables 1, 2 and 3 present the identifiable cancel location from the three collections.

Location	Date Range	#of cancels
Halifax	1918-1930	8
Saint John	1917	2
Truro	1920's-1952	4
New Glasgow	Admirals	14
HFX & CAMP RPO*		1

Location	Date Range	#of cancels
Halifax	1916-1928	3
Saint John	1914-1928	6
Truro	-	0
New Glasgow	1925	1
HFX & CAMP RPO*	1947	1



Figure 3: Close inspection of the slogan cancel on this Scott 107 clearly reveals the words “OFTEN”, “KEEP”, “FAMILY”. This identifies the slogan cancel as Coutts W-465 “WRITE OFTEN AND KEEP FAMILY TOGETHER”. This cancel was used in Halifax from February 20th to April 7th 1923 and nowhere else in Eastern Canada.³

Halifax	12
Saint John	11
Truro	8
New Glasgow**	47
RPO's	2
Total	80

Location	Number of CDS Cancels	Date Range
Halifax	1	1930
Saint John	3	Admirals
Truro	4	1933—1948
New Glasgow*	33	Admirals
HFX & CAMP **	1	1938

*Twenty-five of the New Glasgow cancels are from 1918, only cancels from July and August are missing

**My understanding is that RPO's can enter the mail system at any of these major locations or perhaps an altogether different one.

Discussion—Halifax

Western Union had a prominent presence on the Halifax waterfront. Known simply as the “cable wharf” it was located next the Halifax/Dartmouth ferry terminal which prior to the completion of the first harbour bridge was the most convenient connection between the 2 centres. The cable wharf was the home of the cable ship, the Lord Kelvin (Figure 4). The wharf itself was substantial, almost 455 feet long and in addition to berthing spaces for the cable repair vessels, the warehouse held hundreds of kilometers of cable in large drums ready to on-boarded for repair work at sea⁴.

The Guide to the Western Union Telegraph Company Records is in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC. In some 400 pages of material Halifax is mentioned but 4 times, 3 references to the establishment of the Cable wharf in 1913 and the 4th to the Halifax employee wage cards, 1914-1922. Neither Saint John nor any other New Brunswick location is referenced⁵.

A lack of Halifax covers alone suggests the perforator was not located there and the one Halifax cover in this survey does not appear to have been used by Western Union (Figure 5). I could find no connection between Western Union and the Mu-

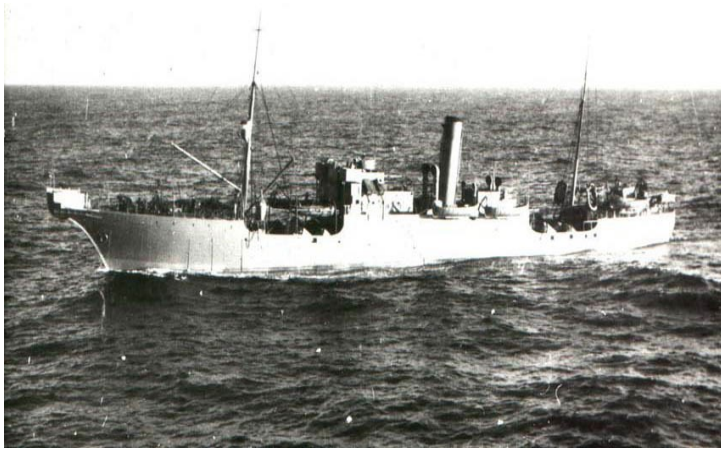


Figure 4: The Lord Kelvin during World War II. The cable spool is at the bow of the ship.

nicipality of the County of Halifax.

The McAlpine Halifax City Directory for 1912-1913⁶ has this listing for Western Union:

Western Union Telegraph Co. 140-142 Hollis G Laidlaw Manager. Branch Office Furness Withy Building 75 Upper Water Phones 1400 and 1401.

The 1919 McAlpine Halifax City Directory repeats the listing above but also includes the following

Western Union Cable Co. (Captain Decarteret) supt wharf 215r Lower Water

With this second listing there is a clear distinction between the “Cable” company and the “Telegraph” Company. The Lower Water Street is the location of the cable wharf and the Western Union Cable Co; the Hollis Street location may have

been the Telegraph Co., or the “Head Office” for the Cable Company or was perhaps where telegraphs were sent and received. The addressees on any existing covers may provide some clues as whether the envelope contained a telegram or correspondence related to cable activities.

On the basis of the current research there is not much evidence to suggest the perforating machine was in Halifax.

Discussion— Saint John

Western Union at one time had a telephone business in Saint John but this was before the era of perfin use in Canada. In 1879 Dominion Telegraph started a telephone exchange using Bell telephone patents. At the same time Montreal Telegraph started a competing telephone exchange using Edison patents. The two systems were incompatible. Dominion Telegraph was bought by American Telegraph Union which in turn was bought by Western Union. Bell Telephone bought Montreal Telegraph and the Western Union telephone system but Western Union did maintain its telegraph business in Saint John?⁷This

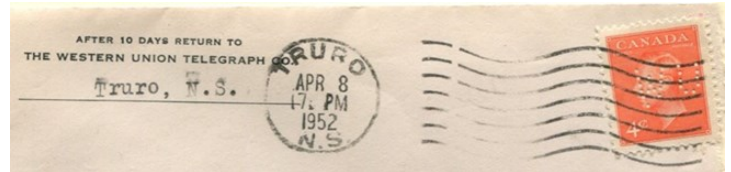


Figure 6: Corner card from Western Union Telegraph Co, in Truro April 8th 1952. It is addressed a resident of Willet Hall, a residence at Acadia University in Wolfville NS.

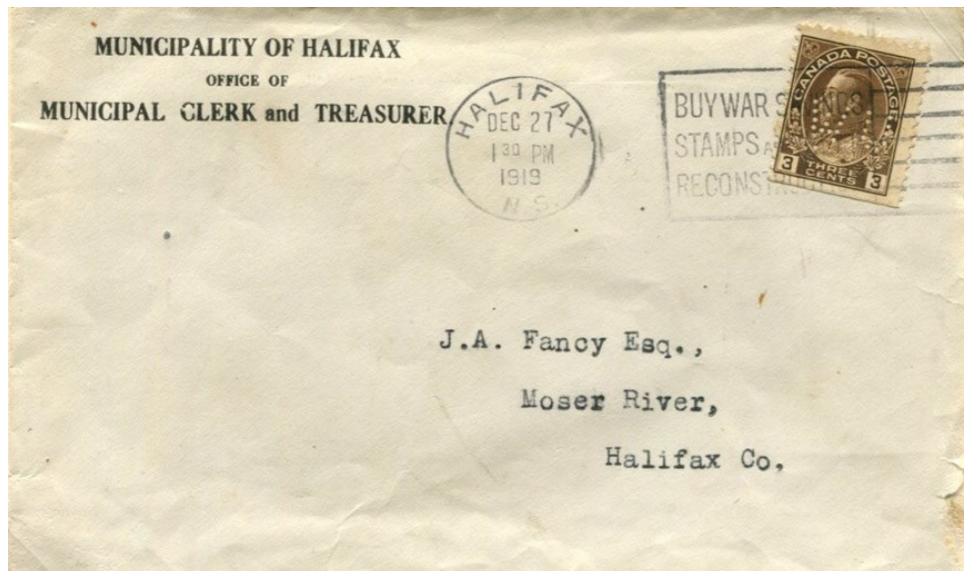


Figure 5: KGV 3¢ Admiral (brown) pays the forward letter rate from Halifax to Moser River Halifax County December 27, 1919. At this time the Municipality Halifax was not the City of Halifax—they were two separate municipalities, with the Municipality encompassing the rural areas. The author can find no connection between Western Union and the Municipality.

entry is from McAlpine’s Saint John Directory from 1900.

Western Union Telegraph Co D C Dawson Superintendent for NB and NS 1 to 5 King

From this listing the Saint John office can be seen logically as the “Head” office and if this remained the case up to and including 1911, it is this office which would have applied to the Post Office for perfin usage approval. The McAlpine City Directories for 1921, 1925 and 1927 show Western Union maintaining this address. In the 1931 Directory there is a significant change— Western Union is no longer at the King Street address; in fact there is no listing for any office, a district superintendent or a manager. The only listing is the following:

Western Union Cable Repeating Station, Lancaster Rd;

This location is away from the business district, on the other side of the Saint John River and on what was then the main highway to the Saint Stephen and the USA.

Of note is the lack of other New Brunswick CDS cancels from other communities—no Moncton, Fredericton, Edmundston, etc. Other directories from New Brunswick would be helpful in this but 1900 is the last McAlpine to be found on line and the New Brunswick Archives do not appear to have any.

The Post Office records are definitive—the Western Union Office in Saint John sought approval to use a perforating machine. In the current survey the earliest CDS cancel, February 14, 1914, is from Saint John and this is suggestive that the machine was located there.

Discussion—New Glasgow & Truro

There are 45 cancels in the survey from these two communities, 37 of which are from New Glasgow and 30 of these with CDS cancels in 1918. There are two covers from Truro in 1952, one from 1948 (Behm) and author’s from 1952 (Figure 6); both clearly identified as from the Western Union Telegraph Company. To date no covers from New Glasgow are known but it does have the earliest known cancel*. Given the date range of CDS cancels in Table 5 it does not seem at all likely that perforated stamps were distributed from either of these offices to the others.

* Jack Brandt reports a pair of #104’s cancelled in New Glasgow February 28, 1912 the current earliest known date of use.

Table 5	
Date range of CDS by locations	
Halifax	1919-1948
New Glasgow*	1912-1918
Saint John	1912-1928
Truro	1933-1952

The Competition Factor

To date this perfin pattern is known to be used in only these 4 communities– Saint John, Halifax, New Glasgow and Truro. What role did Canadian National Telegraph/Canadian Pacific Telegraph play in limiting Western Union’s reach in the Maritimes? In 1906 a story in the Toronto Star reported that Western Union “*has controlling circuits from Vanceboro, Maine to Halifax and New Glasgow, N.S. and through New Brunswick and Intercolonial Railways*” and was hoping to block CP Telegraph’s ambition to run coast to coast. The attempt failed as CP was the first to establish a coast to coast network.⁸

And what of locally owned competition—in 1910 Maritime Telephone and Telegraph purchased all of the locally owned telephone and telegraph services in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. As of now there are no reports of Western Union CDS cancels from Moncton, Fredericton, Sydney, Yarmouth, or other major maritime Centres. The 1930 Moncton Might City Directory lists both CN and CP Telegraph companies and does not include a listing for Western Union.

A possible explanation is that Western Union’s focus was managing the overseas cable business, and its telegraph service in the Maritimes became a sideline. Rather than continue to compete with CP, CN and MT&T it simply maintained the status quo until the business decision was made to close down various offices in their turn (Figure 7).

Discussion—The Perforator Moved from One Location to Another

There is some suggestion from the Dates of Usage (Table 5) that perforator spent some time in more than one location. Although the Halifax cancels range from 1919 to 1948 there is a pattern to the usage in the other three communities. When the telegraph office closed in Saint John sometime between 1928 and 1931, moving the perforating machine to the closest most viable office—Truro—is plausible. There are no New Glasgow cancels

beyond 1928 and the first Truro cancel is 1933. This is more or less at the same time the “head office” nature of the Saint John McAlpine City Directory listings end and are replaced with the 1931 “repeating station” listing. Is it possible the machine moved to Truro when the Saint John telegram offices closed and the Company’s activities there were restricted to operating the cable repeating station? The CDS cancels do seem to support this theory, and if correct, the perforating machine went to Truro with a few perforated stamps forwarded to Halifax.

museum and archives located in Truro, on the off-chance it had a Cummins Model 14 tucked away in its basement. Staff there kindly took the time to search but came up empty. Pity!

2. I do wonder if all those New Glasgow perfins from 1918 were telegrams related to WW1. New Glasgow was the home of the Pictou Highlanders which won “Battle Honours” 4 times, the last at Amiens which began on August 8, 1918⁹; it is known as the Hundred Days Offensive and is the battle which effectively ended the War.

ENDNOTE

1. I did check with the Colchester Historem, a

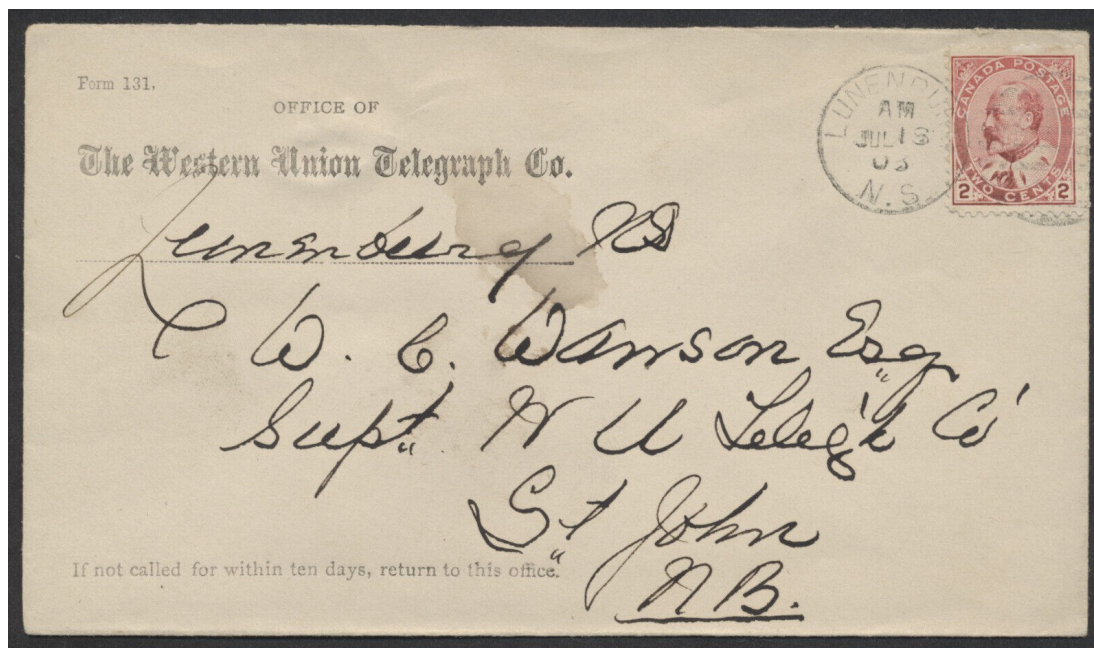


Figure 7: A 2¢ KDVII pays the forward letter rate from the Western Union Office in Lunenburg NS to the Western Union offices in Saint John NB July 18, 1903

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Michael Behm and Jack Brandt for their respective contributions to this article and to Andrew Hennan at the New Brunswick Archives in Fredericton for facilitating the inter-library loan which gave me access to the Saint John McAlpine City Directories .

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SUN LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY OF CANADA

S22-3 QUEBEC CITY

Jim Graham

Figures 1 and 2 present a strip of 5 2¢ KGV green Arch issue in position 1. From Conrad Tremblay's work of plating the 19 different Sun Life S22 perforators we know this strip is from Quebec City, the key being the missing hole in Die 3¹ (red arrow in Figure 2). It is presented here to give you the opportunity to find the characteristics which distinguish the other 4 dies from one another. If you would like a scan of this strip please let me know.



Figure 1: A strip of 5 KGV 2 green Arch issue. The CDS cancel is unreadable.

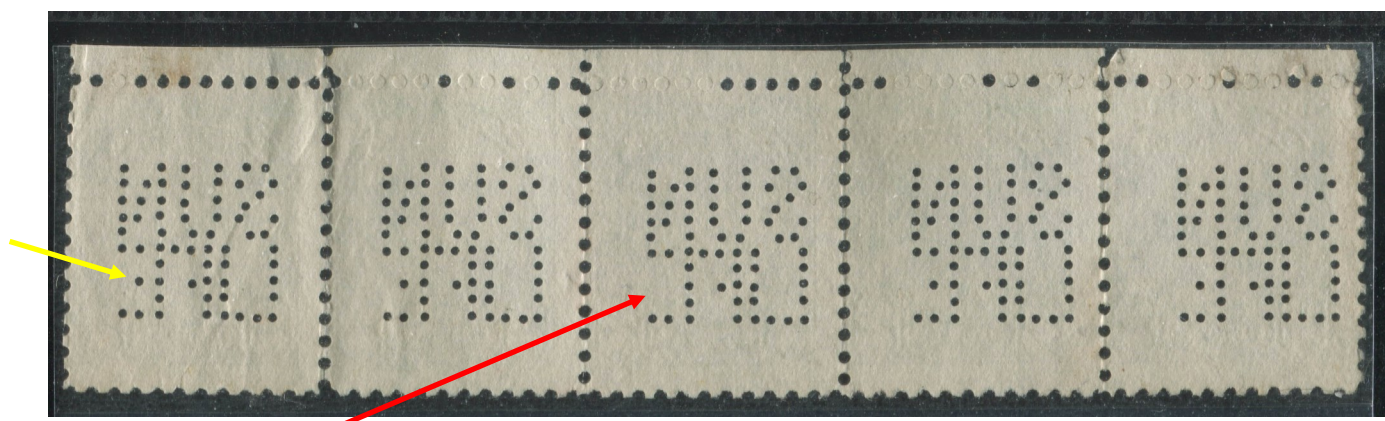


Figure 2: The reverse of the strip showing the missing hole in the middle horizontal bar of the 'E' in die 3. In Tremblay's numbering scheme this missing hole #E6. My contribution to further distinguishing characteristics is this: in die 5 the angle of E₅, (yellow arrow) is at an upward angle from hole E6. in dies 1,2,and 4 there angle is sharply downward

References:

1. Tremblay, Conrad: Sun Life Perforators, List of Agencies With Their Own Perforator, Study in Stamps from the Year 1930 to 1935. The Perforator 1984 Volume 5 No. 2 Page 5