

## THE PERFIN BULLETIN

July 21, 1952

**PERFIN PITFALLS:** There are numerous instances where experienced collectors as well as the beginner make errors in classifying and identifying perfins. For the record then, we are presenting a short list of these pitfalls; which, obvious though they may be, still present problems for the cataloger.

1. **Missing holes:** It is quite common for the pins in a perforating machine to break off. This event sets the stage for the production of defective perfins which have one of several holes missing. Usually such "missing hole" varieties are easy to spot, but it frequently happens that an R is transformed into a P, or an O into a C. Sometimes these accidentally created "new" letters may be distinguished by their distorted shapes; just as often the metamorphosis is complete and the "variety" will be reported and cataloged. In fact, it even happens that whole letters are sometimes eliminated from the design when many pins become defective.. An experienced collector who has many designs memorized can sometimes purge these interlopers, but still they persist in slipping past all safeguards. The moral of this paragraph is: Be sure to examine your new perfins carefully before reporting them.

2. **Bent pins:** It might be well to mention here the myth of "bent pins." Some perfin designs, apparently unique, have been said to be created from another design by the accidental bending of a pin in the perforating mechanism. However, one can easily understand how untenable this concept is when it is explained that for each pin in the machine there is an identically placed hole in the steel baseplate. It is obvious that the machine could not operate properly if a pin were bent and could not fit into its hole. Bent pins are possible, but not bent holes.

3. **Off-center perfins:** When stamps are not properly centered under perforator, it sometimes occurs that the perfin design will not appear as a unit on the stamp. Most frequently it will be split into two complementary parts; creating what is logically called a "split." It also happens, however, that letters or other portions of the design will not appear anywhere on the stamp giving rise to a new kind of pseudo-type. Precaution must be used in reporting perfins where the initials are placed close to the edge of the stamp.

4. **Identifications:** Do not under any circumstances ever guess an identification. Many correct guesses have been made, but the few bad guesses can reduce the integrity of a whole catalog. Covers are the best way to identify perfins, but even they are not infallible. Precancels are valuable in specifying locations, as are cancellations. The latter however are very treacherous because business mail is sometimes transported to other cities before mailing.

**PERFORATING MACHINES:** The Cummings Perforator Company builds most of the perforators used in the U.S. There are two important types: a. The kind with five sets of pins and holes which is capable of punching through four layers at one stroke or 20 stamps. b. The second kind has 10 sets of pins and holes and is capable of handling up to 40 stamps a stroke. Approximately 400 and 800 stamps can be perforated per minute by the two machines respectively. At the operator's discretion, perfin designs may be placed in almost any position and "mirror images" may be created by folding the stamps or sheets properly.