

COLLECTING AND EXHIBITING PERFINS

Collecting - As mentioned previously, there are two basic methods of collecting - By TYPE and By ISSUE. These methods can be done with a single country, geographic area, or the world, though a world ISSUE collection would be a daunting task. There are other areas that one can specialize in, and in fact, are probably as many as there are perfins collectors, but a few areas that have numerous advocates will be mentioned.

Topical perfins - perfins that feature an industry (music, railroads, insurance companies, to name a few) can be pursued, both in a single country as well as worldwide. A single company, such as New York Life, could be pursued for its uses of perfins worldwide. Collecting perfins in the form of designs and monograms, those that make up words, those that were used by governments - the possibilities are nearly endless.

Stamp Issues - collecting perfins on a specific stamp issue (or series) of a country can be challenging - Great Britain's "Penny Red" issue (Scott # 33) that was in use when perfins were introduced; the U.S. 1902 issue, available when U.S. perfins were first introduced; perfins on air mail stamps, parcel post, revenue stamps - again, almost an unlimited area for building a collection.

Perfins Covers - many countries and postal administrations using perfins either kept no records, nor did perforating machine manufacturers (the war in England destroyed many of the Sloper firm's records), so determining who the user of a perfins pattern has relied mainly on obtaining a cover with identifying corner card. Add to this that the majority of perfins covers were commercial or government official mail, and perfins can present an opportunity for the postal historian as well as the researcher of the identification of a pattern's user.

PREPERS - an acronym for PREcancel PERfins, this specialty area combines two collecting interests. Many commercial firms used precanceled postage for their mailings, and their precanceled postage also included their company's perfins.

Revenue Perfins - this area of perfins collecting has only recently begun to attract a wider following. While perfins were used to cancel revenue stamps already affixed to a document, perfins were also punched into revenue stamps the same as postage - before being affixed to a document - and development of catalogs of revenue perfins are now in progress.

Exhibiting Perfins - although perfins collecting is a specialized area of philately, the same basic rules applicable to exhibiting any philatelic subject apply. Assembling the best quality material possible, arranging it in a manner that will appeal to the viewer, and developing the story so that it proceeds in a logical flow from the first page to the last - all essential to a perfins exhibit as well as that of any other philatelic subject. Perhaps unique to a perfins exhibit is that the subject does not readily lend itself to being seen, in which case either the perfins is mounted face down on a black background, or a copy of the pattern is shown alongside the stamp/cover/document.

One asset just now coming into wider use in preparing an exhibit is the computer and associated peripherals (scanner, printer). Not only can exhibit pages be developed to display any type of material, but they can also be stored on disk for revisions, updating, etc. A device such as a scanner can add images to an exhibit page that heretofore required the exhibitor to manually prepare. (This Handbook was prepared using a computer, and the perfins images were all scanned and inserted into the pages using a word-processing program).