

INTRODUCTION TO PERFIN COLLECTING

WHAT ARE PERFINS? PERFINS are PERFORated INInitial stamps. They are stamps which have been punched with initials and designs by large organizations to discourage stamp theft. Railroads, governments, banks and similar organizations typically use perfins on their mail. In fact, well over 5000 such concerns have perforated our U.S. postage, revenue and special service issues with their distinctive initials and designs. In addition to this, over 70 foreign countries also use perfins. Thus perfin collecting offers practically unlimited opportunities to the collector.

ADVANTAGES OF PERFIN COLLECTING: Perfin collecting is one of the few remaining fields where it is possible to build up an imposing collection without spending much money. Usually your collector acquaintances will be more than glad to trade or give you the stamps which they would otherwise throw away. Perfins are also easily obtained from dealers and accumulators for a few cents per hundred as well as from cheap mixtures. Another thing about perfin collecting which makes it more than usually enjoyable is the fact that it is an unknown and comparatively unexplored field. It is not uncommon for a beginner to turn up a new uncataloged variety, and there are many other fields waiting for original researchers. So, if you feel that ordinary stamp collecting is too expensive and over-crowded with experts, perfin collecting is the field for you.

But before you begin to hunt for perfins, you must face the fact that you will be collecting for enjoyment and not for profit. Perfins have little monetary value, but are measured instead by the fun and satisfaction you obtain from your collection.

KINDS OF PERFIN COLLECTIONS: There are three basic types of perfin collections, though most perfiners collect them in any way that they wish. (1) You can collect types. That is, one example of each set of initials or design. (2) Issues may be collected. Here one attempts to get all or a group of types on as many possible different stamps as he can. (3) Perfins can be collected on cover or on partial cover (strips). In many ways this is the most interesting kind of collection for the user of the perfin can usually be immediately identified from the cover. In addition to these few basic collections, practically unlimited opportunities await for the topical fan. Typical fields for the topical collector are railroads, colleges, insurance companies, etc.

MOUNTING PERFINS: Perhaps you are now saying to yourself that even though perfins are easy to acquire and do form a most interesting branch of philately, how can I ever exhibit them? Well, there are as many ways of mounting as there are collectors. Some prefer to mount their perfins face down on black paper in order to show up the perforations. Others mount the stamps face up and illustrate the design nearby together with its identification. Still others exhibit two copies, one face up and the other face down. There are limitless possibilities and a well mounted and well written up perfin collection is a really beautiful sight.

THE PERFINS CLUB: The Perfins Club was formed for the purpose of advancing and popularizing perfin collecting. The Club provides its members with a monthly Bulletin which features articles on perfins plus a serial catalog of U.S. perfins with their identifications. Thus, members not only add to their store of information through the joint efforts of the whole Club, but also make valuable exchange contacts. If you are sincerely interested in perfins, we invite you to join us.

CATALOGING PERFINS: Obviously the perfect perfin catalog would illustrate each design. This, however, is too expensive at present, though acceptable blueprinting and photographing systems have been developed. The Perfins Club has therefore developed a catalog system which is quite satisfactory for the majority of perfins. There are three quantities which are used to describe a perfin in this system. (1) The letters and geometrical designs used in the perfin are listed. See below for illustrations. (2) The configuration of these letters and designs is given by a code symbol. For example: H=one horizontal line, 2H=two horizontal lines, etc. D=one diagonal line. (3) A third number gives the heights of the various letters and designs in millimeters. Following these three quantities, the identification of the perfin user will be given if known.

In order to promote perfin collecting, the Perfin Club is giving you 20 different U.S. perfins with which you can begin a collection. These are cataloged below and will help familiarize you with the catalog system and perfins themselves.

AGI	H	5½	Alco Gravure Inc., Hoboken, N.J.
ANP	H	8	Acme Newspapers, New York
B&O	D	5½, 7, 5½	Baltimore and Ohio R.R.
BE/NY	2H	5½/4½	Board of Education, New York City
CNW	H	11, 4, 4	Chicago and Northwestern R.R.
DU/PONT	2H	3/6, 3, 3, 3	duPont de Nemours and Co., Chicago
GTR	H	5½	Grand Trunk Western R.R.
I (in outline of Illinois)			State of Illinois
I/WILL	2H	5½/4½	City of Chicago
I/WILL	2H	6/4	City of Chicago
L&N/RR	2H	5½, 4, 5½/4	Louisville and Nashville R.R.
M (in circle)		5, 11½	State of Michigan
NYC	H	5½	New York Central R.R.
NYT	H	5½	New York Telephone Co., Brooklyn
PRR	H	5½	Pennsylvania R.R.
PRR	H	6	Pennsylvania R.R.
SFE	H	5½, 10½, 5½	Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe R.R.
STP	H	11½, 6, 11½	Chicago, Minneapolis and St. Paul R.R.
TRAV	H	6½, 5, 5, 5	Traveler's Insurance Co.
WIS	D	6½	State of Wisconsin

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE PERFINS CLUB

If you are interested in the collecting of perforated initial stamps, you should be a member of The Perfins Club. Dues are \$1.50 per year and include subscription to the Perfin Bulletin, a monthly publication with valuable information and lists of perfins. Fill this form out and send it with your dues to the Secretary: William Corliss, 1015 Pleasant Street, Boulder, Colorado.

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ADDRESS -----

What phases of perfin collecting interest you particularly?
