

FINLAND

The following article was first located by Keith Misegades, #63, and was published by your Perfins Club and distributed as a part of the November 1953 regular monthly Perfins Bulletin. Very few of our present membership have read this article, so it is now reprinted exactly as it appeared over fourteen years ago. It is quite doubtful if much additional information has come to light in the space of time since it was first published, - however, if any of our members can contribute any additional information pertinent to Finnish Perfins it would be appreciated if they would communicate with Dave Stump, of DEVON, Pennsylvania, 19333, so that it may be shared with all members.

Through every collector's hands, have at one time or another, passed stamps with perforated initials. With little hesitation, they have been rejected. Valuable stamps as, for instance, the Danish 5kr. Postoffice Building, which often appears with perforated initials, are set aside, but seldom put into the collection.

There exist Official Perfins, according to O. Teräsvoori's "Stamp Collector's Guide", Volume 2, page 118. Perforated initials on stamps at the present time can be seen mostly on Danish, German, or English stamps. On Finnish stamps, Perfins are no longer seen, but there have been several at an earlier time. In the following, I aim to deal with Perfins seen on Finnish stamps.

What are Perfins? In the "Postal Handbook", edited by Th. Alexejeff in 1912, we find the following explanation on Page 5, - "Big business concerns perforate stamps necessary for their business with their initials, or numbers, to prevent unauthorized use of their stamps." And further, the following guidance: " Ordinary and registered mail, postal cards and wrappers, domestic and foreign, may have perforations applied under conditions: (a) that the perforated letters or other marks may not obliterate more than one-third of the stamp; (b) that those parts of the stamp that show the value may not be perforated away, and (c) that on the consignment must be printed the sender's name and address. If these instructions are not followed, the perforated stamps are not considered valid."

Director S. Grönroos, in his writings in "Suomen Postimerkkilehti" 1941, No. 4, - which incidently is the only article about Perfins published in Finland, - (additions published in 1941, No. 5; 1942, No.2; and 1943, No.1), - explains that the Postal Administration, in circular No XI, of September 21, 1907, has given corresponding instructions. In the same article we read further that the Postal Rules issued April 26, 1924, IP-64, Item #5, state the following about Perfins. "Stamps which the user has provided by mechanical means with identifying perforations, - initials or other marks, - may use them for postal payment if, after perforation, the stamp value can be ascertained and that the stamps have not been used previously."

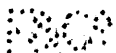
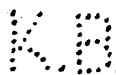
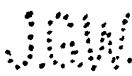

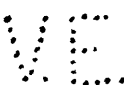
Here no such detailed instructions are given, as earlier. Perfins are therefore allowed to anybody as long as previous directions are followed.

PERFINS OF FINLAND -(Continued)

It is interesting to observe that the Postal Administration did not give instructions about Perfins until 1907, although stamps had been perforated with initials for ten years before that! Evidently business took its example from abroad. The Perfins are formed solely for protection against misuse, as they have no practical advertising value. For the most part, they are only plain initials.

Has this right to perforate been used much in Finland? Clearly, very little. The numeral perforations mentioned by Alexejeff, I have never seen, but have seen instead, many different combinations of the letter perforations. The following is a list of Finnish Perfins which I have actually seen. (Readers, please note that the personal pronoun refers to the original writer of this paper, Director S. Grönroos)

The listing is made up in chronological order according to when they have appeared. This order of appearance is possibly not altogether correct; the oldest cancellation, - 1896 - was seen on a Finlayson Perfin, but the scarcity of material makes it difficult to decide difinately, based on the cancellation, - so I consider this order best. The stamp numbers are the S.P. (Norma) 1953 numbers, main types only,

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. F&C° | Finlayson & Company.
Tampere. 13.2mm long by 5mm high.
On stamps of early and late emissions 1889-1901.
S.P. #37, #40, #58-60. |
|  | |
| 2. K.B. | Karl Boström.
Hanko. 14.5mm long by 8.5mm high.
Found on stamps of 1891 through 1901.
S.P. #57-59, #71.
Comes in all possible position. |
|  | |
| 3. J.G.W. | John Gust.
Wikestrom, Turku. 15.5mm by 7mm high.
Stamps of 1894-1901; also 10 penni postcard,
cancelled March 25, 1900.
S.P. #58, #65. Upright position. |
|  | |
| 4. S. | Keskinäinea vakuutus yhtiö (Mutual Insurance Co.)
Sampo, Turku. 6.5mm by 9.5mm high.
Stamps of 1911-1919.
S.P. # 77-85, 87-89, 93, 100, 101, and 108.
Found in all possible positions. When in pairs,
the perforations are tête bêche. |
|  | |
| 5. V.E. | Ab. Viktor Ek Oy.
Helsinki. 15mm by 9mm high.
1911 stamps.
S.F. #77-80, also Russia #65 (Zunstein) with a
Helsinki cancellation of June 15, 1914.
Varied positions; pairs are tête bêche. |
|  | |

PERFINS OF FINLAND - (Concluded)

6. ASEA



Allmanna Svenska Elektriska A.B.
Helsinki. 17.5mm by 5.5mm. high.
On stamps between 1911-1937.
S.P. #77-79, 83-89, 101, 103, 105-110, 112-116,
121, 122, 125, 130, 132-136, 140, 142, 143,
145, 146, 148, 158, 161, 162, 165, 168, 171,
173, 175, 187, 224, and Russia #65.
Found only in vertical position, but all pairs are
tête bêche. #224, 2mk/1½mk, is the most recent
seen perforated. ASEA Perfins have also been
found cancelled Porvoo (Borga), February 1918.

7. V



Vakuutusyhtiö Verdandi (???)
Turku. 9.5mm by 10mm high.
S.P. #77 and #78.
Cancellation, December 1914.

8. N



Notraco Huolintaliike Oy.
Helsinki. 5mm by 9.5mm high.
On stamps from 1919 - 1936.
S.P. #107, 125, 130, 131, 133-135, 137, 143, 146,
147, 149, 167, 169, 171, 173-175, 199, 201,
219.
Pairs are tête bêche. Earliest cancel: Dec. 1924.

9. TKT



User unknown.
Cancelled, almost without exception in Helsinki.
15mm by 5.5mm high. Perfed slanting.
On stamps between 1927-1930.
S.P. # 143-145, 168.

10. FORD



Oy Ford A.B.
Helsinki. 19mm by 6mm high.
On stamps between 1927-1930.
S.P. #157, 166, 169-171, 173-177, 189, 191, 195,
197, 199-201, 219.
Generally vertical, but pairs are tête bêche.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

In all, we have thus met with 130 different Perfins, and this number cannot be considered large when it is realized that Perfins have been in use for at least forty years! Of course, others may be found when more attention is given to them. The scarcity of high values is particularly noteworthy - only one 10mk, no 25 mark. There are many more items however, if we take into account the various perforations and watermark varieties. From the number of varieties of stamps used, we can deduce the commonness of each Perfin; the Wikeström (#3) and the Verdandi (#7) are the scarcest, while the ASEA is the commonest.

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B.E. Saarinen in Suomen Postimerkkilehti, for January 1953.
Translated by T. E. Jacobson, and reproduced by the Perfins Club with
the kind permission of the author.

Our PERFORATED INITIAL STAMPS *Stencil on file*

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