

Smith Gray & Co. Schermack

By Rudy Roy (1124)

I recently made two purchases, several months apart, of Smith Gray advertising postcards. Both were

described as used but not described as to the stamp used or that the stamps were Schermack perfins.

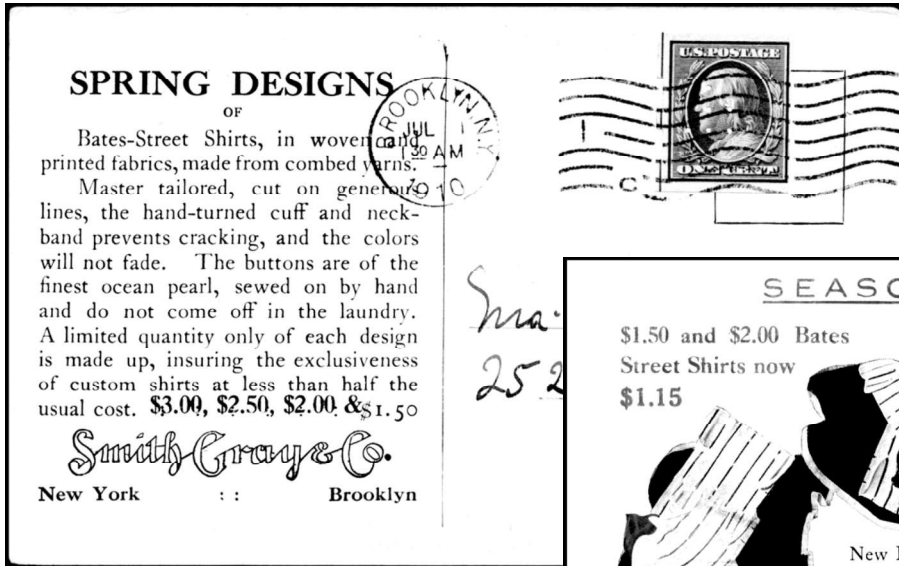


Figure 1. Used Smith Gray & Co. advertising postcard, franked with a perfinned Schermack (former Des.90-28).



Figure 1 was the first post card I obtained, and on examination I determined that the Schermack pattern was 1-3-4 (Figure 2)



Figure 2. Enlargement of stamp in Figure 1.

I went to the U.S. Catalog and it was not listed! My initial reaction was that I had finally found a new pattern and, best of all, it was on cover and the user

could be identified! However, in checking further in the catalog I found that this was listed as deleted pattern Des. 90-28. The reason stated was: "Deleted as a probable broken pin variety of Des 90-3; same user for both patterns, and #28 is the same as #3 with two more pins missing (1 and 4)". In any event I reported my find to the Catalog Chairman.

I just recently acquired the post card in Figure 3, and it has pattern Des. 90-3 (Figure 4,) as listed in the catalog. This confirms the catalog listing, but poses some questions.

Note the dates of the two cards - the one with 90-3 is postmarked June 1, 1910, and the one with 90-28 is postmarked July 1, 1910. At some point in the month between these mailings a change occurred in the Schermack pattern.

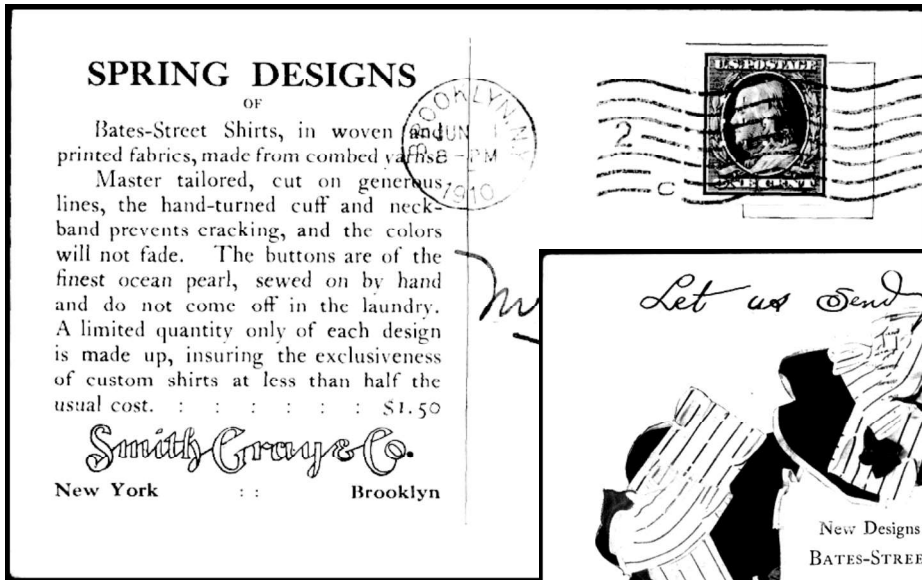


Figure 3. A second used Smith Gray & Co. advertising postcard also franked with a perfinned Schermack (Des.90-3).



Figure 4. Enlargment of stamp from card in Fig. 3

As noted in the catalog supplemental information, 90-28 could be a 90-3 with two pins missing. Most likely the pins broke off during that period, but,

since the operation of the machine was not affected, the people who did Smith Gray's mailings may never even have noticed (or cared).

With both 90-3 and former 90-28 confirmed on cover, does this support re-listing 90-28 as a separate pattern? The pattern 90-28 was originally listed by Lougee in his initial article listing Schermacks, and was in both the 1966 and 1979 catalogs. In the Lougee article it was identified as being used by Smith Gray and in the subsequent catalogs. (90-3 was also listed by Lougee, etc., as being a Smith Gray Schermack). Although the cover (or postcard) that was the basis for the initial listing 90-28 does not appear to have been recorded, I believe my two examples now provide the evidence supporting re-listing 90-28 as a separate pattern.