

CANADIAN PERFINS WITH NOVA SCOTIA CONNECTIONS

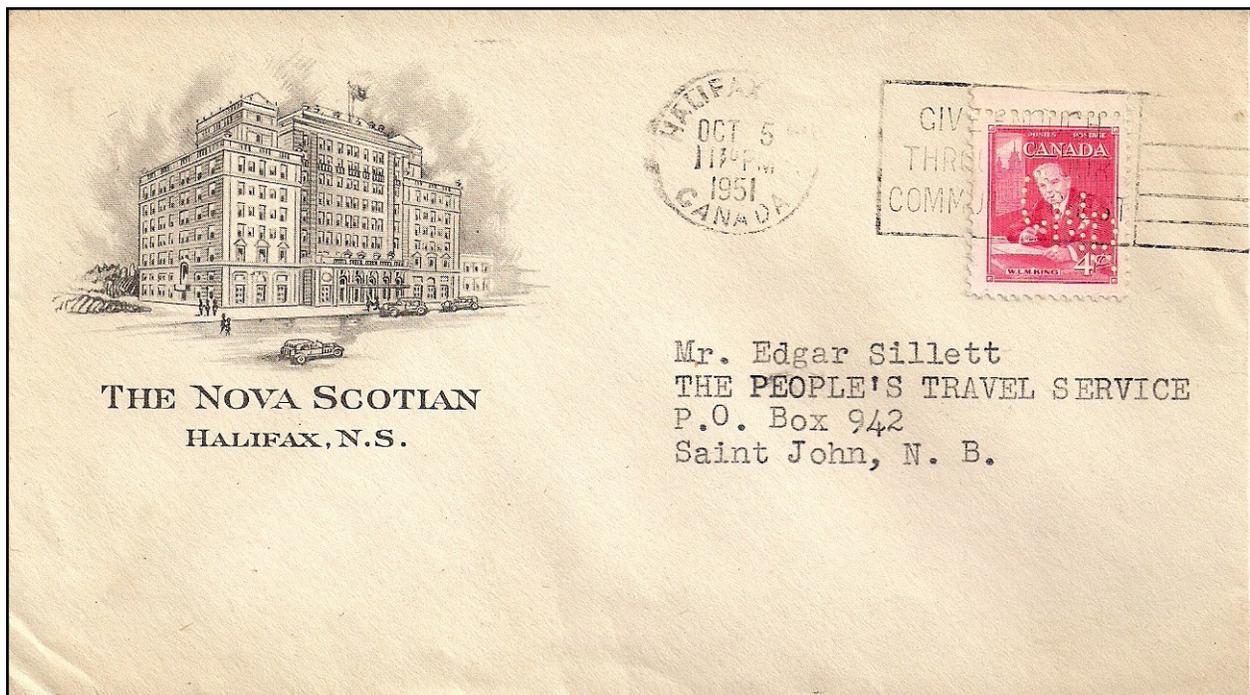
INTRODUCTION

“Perfins” is the term commonly applied to postage stamps with “perforated initials”, small holes forming letters or insignia which can identify the user. Perfins originated in England about 1870 as a way for businesses to control their postage inventory at a time when unused stamps could be redeemed at the Post Office for the face value. Various attempts at both over and under printing proved unsuccessful, these giving way to perforating machines. Joseph Sloper of England was the first to hold a patent for a perforating machine and in spite of competition Sloper’s company continued to perforate postage for customers in the UK into the 1960’s.

In Canada the first perfins appeared in the mid 1880’s although the Canadian Post office didn’t acknowledge their use until 1895 and it was not until 1910 that Post Office approval was required before use was officially permitted.

There are 325 different perfin patterns known on Canadian postage and of these only 2 companies had perforating machines located here, both in Halifax. Two others with Head Offices in offices in Montreal and the Federal Government distributed perforated stamps for company use in Nova Scotia. To date only a handful of other patterns are found to have been used in Nova Scotia or on mail to Nova Scotia locations. This exhibit has examples of 11 patterns which were used in Nova Scotia including some analysis of the 2 machines installed in local offices :

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CNR Perfin on an advertising envelope of the CNR owned Nova Scotia Hotel, franked with the 4¢ MacKenzie King Prime Ministers issue