

# THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY PERFIN



BY PAUL T. JACKSON

Today many states and local governments are facing crisis budgets and tightly budgeted items, so cutting postage cost and controlling its use is becoming necessary. Limiting the use of government postage to official business is difficult and becomes more so as the size of the organization grows.

One method of controlling the use of postage by a great number of offices and/or departments is to "Perfin" that postage purchased for official use. The State of New Jersey, with its many official postage users, has such a system. A department requests the postage it needs to function from the Capital Post Office, which purchases its stamps from the Trenton Post Office. The staff of the Capital Post Office then perforates each stamp purchased. The impression is made by a device consisting of a set of pins which punch through the body of the stamp in a pattern and a template which functions as a guide. The initials S. N. J. in two rows (S in the top row made up of 11 holes, the N and J in the lower row with 13 holes in the N and seven in the J) are used to identify the stamps purchased by the State of New Jersey for its use.

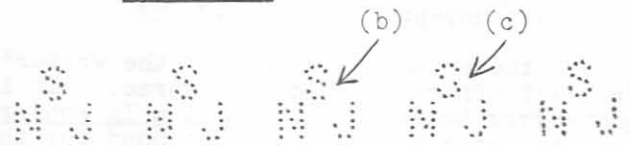
The State of New Jersey owns two devices to perforate the stamps they purchase. Both were manufactured by the Cummins Perforation Co. of Chicago, Ill. (now the Cummins-Allison Corp. of Glenview, Ill.) These machines are numbered 55 and 69 by the Cummins Co., and the second is used predominantly while the other is held as a spare.

Mr. William Hendrickson of the Capital Post Office estimates that some 35,000 stamps each year are processed by his department, amounting to about \$30,000 a month. The majority of the 3,000 stamps perforated each month are regular issue. Commemoratives are only used when the denominations needed are not available or at the end of the year. With this large amount of stamps, it is easy for a collector to obtain an excellent copy on almost any regular issue.

However, due to repair of the devices, there exist some major varieties in the current State of New Jersey Perfin:

From Machine No. 55 (used less often):

- (a) a shift in the last hole in the verticle stem of the J down
- (b) in the eighth column a hole missing in the S (extreme right of the lower curve of the S)
- (c) in the ninth column the center hole of the S is missing.



From Machine No. 69:

- (d) in the first column the last two holes of the S are missing
- (e) in the sixth and seventh columns a slight shift from vertical in the left stem of the N



Varieties (b), (c), and (d) are major ones, caused by missing pins. Varieties like (e) could be caused by the way the operator feeds the sheets of stamps into the perforator. (a), (b) and (c) are of course less common because the device No. 55 is used only occasionally.

While discussing rarity of State of New Jersey Perfins, the existence of mirror pairs is extremely rare, again because of the way in which the sheets of stamps are processed. Finally, since the stamps are generally Perfinned face up, the Perfin, when viewed from the back of the stamp, appears as in the opening illustration, not as above.

Does the system work? --Yes. Recently, an employee of one of the departments, while mailing a package to a relative, tried to use State Perfinned postage to pay for added weight. The postal clerk, noticing that the stamps were perforated S/NJ and therefore were the property of the State of New Jersey. He called the matter to the attention of the Capital Post Office. After a short investigation and a discussion with the employee, the funds were returned and because the employee was new and unaware of the ban on the use of State postage, a reprimand was deemed sufficient -- thus proving that control of postage is possible and that an effective method is Perfins.

(Editor's note: the original drawings of S/NJ designs shown above have been re-linked by the editor for better printing. This may give the effect of some variation that does not actually exist in the perforated designs.)