PUNCHED CONTROL MARKINGS ON SCHERMACK STAMPS: We are fortunate this month in being able to publish a fairly complete account of the use of punched control markings on the Schermack Type III coil stamps. In addition to an article by one of our own members, Lester Littlefield, we are printing excerpts from a letter from George P. Howard, another authority in this field. Also included is a list of the known varieties of control markings together with what identifications are known; this list should be considered as part of our serial catalog.

Since Schermack coil stamps are not common and are even scarcer with the punched control marks, let us begin with a few lines of introduction. In 1906, the government began issuing imperforate sheets of 400 stamps to meet the demands of the manufacturers of vending and affixing machines. These private companies punched and cut the imperforate sheets into coil strips. The Schermack Company was one of these concerns. This company used several varieties of perforated coils, all "unofficial." One of these, labeled Type III, is of interest to us. These Type III Schermack coil stamps are similar to ordinary coil stamps except that they have two rather large rectangular perforations instead of the familiar line of round holes. However, what interests us as perfin collectors is the fact that these stamps are also found with additional holes punched through the stamp proper. These additional holes, though not arranged as initials, are perfins in a sense and do have a place in our collections. The following paragraphs from George P. Howard serve to elaborate on the history and character of these "perfins."

"The Schermack Company and Mailometer Company are actually one and the same company. J.J. Schermack invented, developed and produced an electrically operated stamp affixing and envelope sealing machine. By 1909, his company, then called the Schermack Co., was "perforating" coils with two slots and supplying them in rolls of 3000 at 50 cents over face to the owners of their affixing machines. However, Schermack's interests were later bought out and the name changed to the Mailometer Company. The "new" company experimented with some large round hole perfs in an attempt to get the Bureau to produce a special coil for them, then dropped the idea when the Bureau backed out. Meanwhile their offices went on using the two slot perforation and continued to use it over a period of 20 years. Collectors have always called this perf the Schermack Type III perf, although all stamps so perforated after July 1909 were prepared by the Mailometer Co. for use in MOM affixers-which were still the same Schermack machines under a new name. It was still the same machine when Pitney-Bowes bought Mailometer out and produced the machine as their Model M-O-M.

"The gadget that punched the control marks was an "extra" on the affixing machines. That is, there were no "perfins" on the coils before they were placed in the machines. When the knife blade severed the stamp being affixed, the same operation punched the control marks on adjacent stamp. Since the stamps were locked in the machine and registers counted every stamp applied, there was hardly any need for the control markings to prevent the pilfering of stamps. However perforated identification marks were popular in that era and the Company had to meet the demand."

The Mailometer Co. produced several experimental control markings,which are listed on the catalog page, but they finally settled on a nine hole arrangement which is described by L. Littlefield in the next article.

"MAILOMETER COMPANY DESIGNS" by L.N. Littlefield

This group of designs makes a very interesting sideline to the collecting of the many other types of perfins.

The patent application for the machine attachment that punched the designs was filed Oct.9,1909 by Bennett D. Straight. He assigned the rights to the Mailometer Co., Detroit, Mich. The patent was granted Feb.9,1915 and was numbered #1127543.

The basic design consists of nine holes, three horizontal rows of three holes each, forming a square 7mm on a side. By eliminating one or more holes from the basic design, a number of different combinations of holes was accomplished; designs having four holes being the smallest number of which I have a record in my collection.

The Mailometer Co. sold their mailing service to concerns having large subscription or advertising mail, such as magazines, publishing houses, etc. Each concern subscribing to this service was assigned a separate design using a combination of from four to nine holes. In this way each concern had its own distinctive design.

The postage stamps used by the Mailometer Co. in the machines using the extra attachment were Schermack Type III coils, and the only values that I have seen have been the one and two cent denominations.

The covers using these Mailometer designs which are in my collection show only the year dates 1909 and 1910, the earliest being Dec.18,1909. I have no record of how long this concern did business or how late the designs were used. To my knowledge this concern was the only one using Schermack coils exclusively with punched designs.*

To "read" the designs correctly, the stamp must be held face up and head up, for this is the position in which the stamps were punched as the coils were fed through the machines. This is also the logical way to read any perfin since 90% of the time the design reads correctly when read with the stamp's face up.

To form a simple way of numbering these designs for classification in the perfin catalog, the holes are numbered thus: (not to scale)

	. . .	1 2 3		
The holes	. . .	are numbered 4 5 6	with the stamp's face and head	
	. . .	7 8 9		up.

The number assigned to each design is determined by the positions of the eliminated holes; the unpunched positions, that is. Thus a design having all nine holes is given the number 0. Other examples follow:

. . . . is no. 25 . . .	. . . . is no. 4578 .	. . . . is no.24568

The lowest number is always used first.

*Several other companies did perforate Schermack coils, but they are very rare. T.W. Blinn reports a strip of 4 of the 3 cent coil with the perfin S(PS), the P and S are in the loops of the S. (B)star has also been reported in the Bureau Specialist.

SECRETARY'S NOTE: The Club now has 57 paid up members. The roster will be continued next month. A summary of catalog conventions will be published soon.