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## Spotted Here & There

### & Speculation About US Design 10

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Two items appeared in Linn's Stamp News during early March. The more recent is a straightforward note in the Collectors' Forum (March 8, 2004; p. 38) which displays and briefly discusses perfin in general and the perfin used by the Board of Trade of Great Britain (Crown/B.T) specifically. Noted in the discussion is the fact that there are more than 7,000 patterns found in the 1d rose-red Queen Victoria issue alone. Both the Perfins Society and the Perfins Club get good mention in this note as does [www.perfins.com](http://www.perfins.com).

The second item was found in John M. Hotchner's column 'U.S. Notes' (March 1, 2004; p. 6). At first glance "Commercial covers bear interesting perfins" is a straightforward article about two US corner cards on envelopes bearing perfined stamps. And indeed, the first graphically cropped strip that is illustrated and discussed is. It is a strip showing "Ford Motor Company // Detroit, U.S.A." as the return address. The two cent red stamp (Scott type A129) is perfined with Ford's perfin (F145) and the stamp is canceled August 31, 1908.

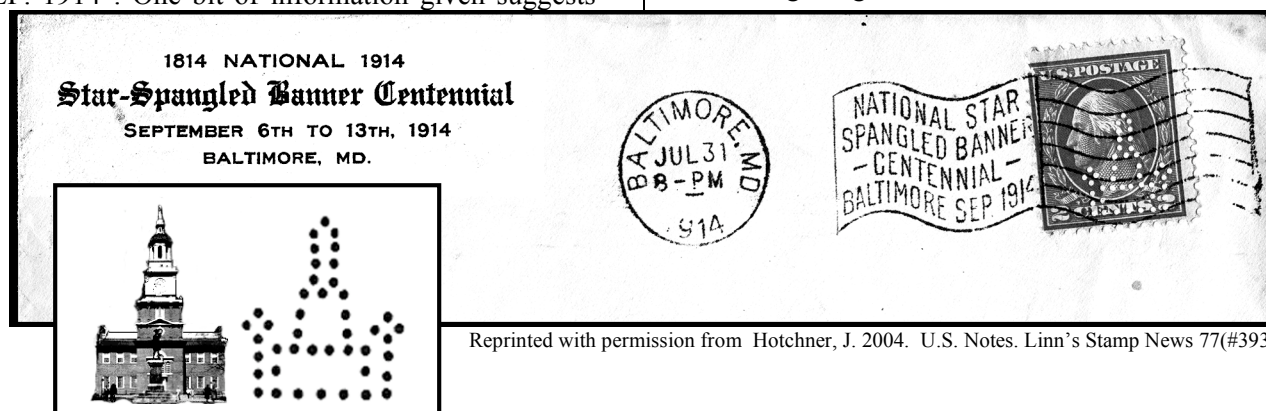
The second graphically cropped strip (illustrated below) presents an interesting new user ID that led me into a speculative mood. The strip shows the use of a 2¢ red Washington (Scott type A140) perfined with pattern Design 10. Canceled July 31, 1914, this stamp franks an envelope with a return address which reads as follows: "1814 NATIONAL 1914 // Star-Spangled Banner Centennial // September 6<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, 1914 // Baltimore, MD." The cancel also reflects the "NATIONAL STAR // SPANGLED BANNER // - CENTENNIAL - // BALTIMORE SEP. 1914". One bit of information given suggests

that this pattern is a crown, while the US catalog has consistently identified it as a castle. And there began my wild flight of fancy (see inset)..

I had never questioned the description of this pattern as a castle – but look at the shape of the castle and make allowances for the limitations of design imposed by pin size and location in a perforator head. Add to this that this cover is clearly an attempt to stir patriotism and a sense of history while celebrating a national symbol (the Star Spangled Banner). And here's the speculation –allow that the two diamonds at the top corners of the building represent brickwork that extends above the roofline at both ends of the building,, is the 'castle' a representation of Independence Hall, Philadelphia,?

Before I saw this cover in Hotchner's column I never even speculated as to what could possibly have caused the choice of a castle as a design for a perfin. This pattern has been previously reported as having been used by four different groups, all also located in Baltimore, MD: the Highway Engineers (the currently listed primary user); Marbury, Gosnell & Williams; the Municipal Journal; and, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. There is no obvious linkage, to me at least, among these four identified users. So, more speculation – what are the chances that the common link is the Star-Spangled Banner Centennial organization?

Do we have any members in the Baltimore area who are looking for something to do in their spare time? Is there a Baltimore Historical Society that might have information about this group's activities? Can the two get together??



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