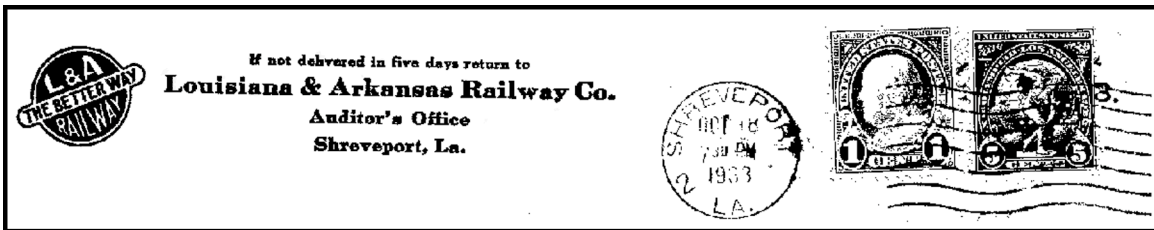

What's in a User's Name for Perfin L164

Steve Grabowski (#3409)

The verification of a perfin user is usually made by a cover with the return address of the user, as in the case of the perfin L164. However there are some complications with railroads due to the flux of the railroad business, mergers, acquisitions, bankruptcy, and the other financial manipulations of the 'railroad barons'. The

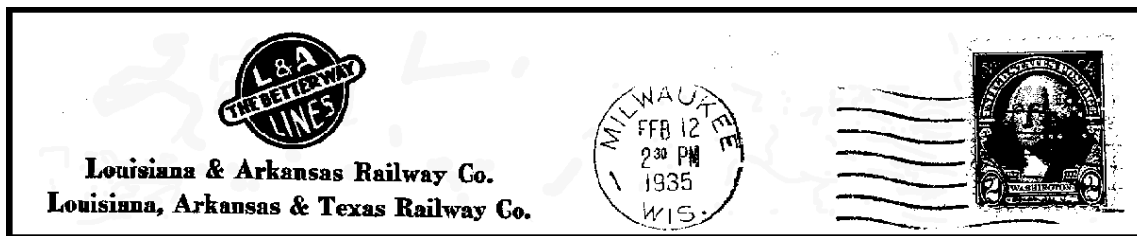
Louisiana & Arkansas Railway Co. is one of the many interesting user identifications.

The confirmed user of perfin L164 is the Louisiana & Arkansas Railway Co. and it is the correct perfin design for the user (L&A). A good example of this verification is the cover strip shown below:



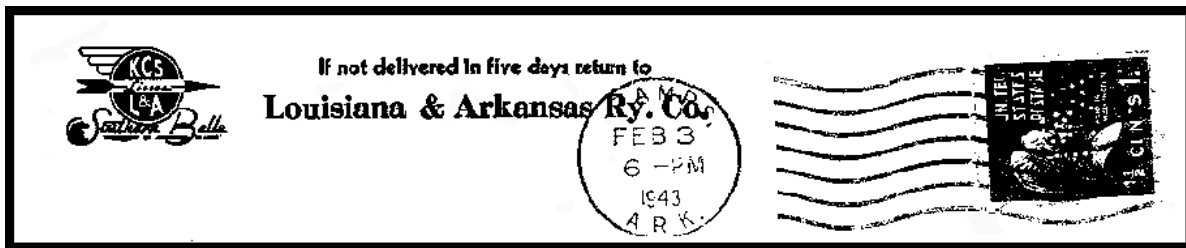
The CDS shows the date as 1933 which is five years after the formation of the L&A **Railway** Co. Prior to this time it was the Louisiana & Arkansas **Railroad**. The change from railroad to railway was a means to differentiate a reorganized company from the previous company; this was a common practice with

railroads when they merged or when they reorganized after bankruptcy. The new railroad was a merger of the original L&A RR and the Louisiana Railway & Navigation Co. In 1930, LR&N was renamed the Louisiana Arkansas & Texas Railway Co and continued to operate as a separate entity.



The above cover strip, dated 1935, shows dual use by the merged companies. It also shows that the LA&T operated independently, evidenced by need for the dual return address on the cover strip. This cover was probably sent by the LA&T using the L&A perfin. The Milwaukee, Wis. CDS shows that the LA&T probably had an agent in Milwaukee.

In 1939, the Kansas City Southern, concerned about their system and the Louisville & Nashville's expansion ambitions, decided to purchase the L&A to solidify their system in the mid-south. Despite the legal maneuvering, the L&A continued to operate independently until 1992 when it was finally completely absorbed into the KCS system. The 1943 cover strip following is an example of the post-merger, independent operation of the L&A.



This cover strip is for the L&A, but if one carefully looks at the logo at the left, one can see both KCS and the L&A. The strip is franked with the L164 perfin. This has been a very interesting study for me, with a lot of enjoyment.

On a personal note, the first two cover strips were provided by the late Chuck Spaulding,

who was my mentor, critic, and advisor for the last 10 years. He piqued my curiosity by providing these and other similar strips to research. I will miss him and I'm sure the Perfin Club will as well. Since my source of interesting usages of railroad perfins is no longer available, can anyone fill in the gap. I would be appreciate any and all assistance.