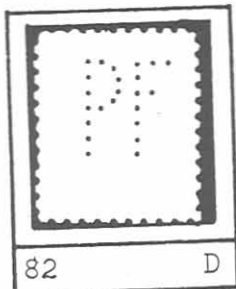


The Mystery of Perfin Pattern P82

Jacob Kisner (#2168)



Perfin pattern P82, shown to the left is attributed to the Pacific Fruit Exchange, San Francisco, California in *The Catalog of United States Perfins*. There is no further place of use given for P82 in the Appendix of the catalog.

And yet, a recent purchase of a cache of US perfins netted me a small group of P82 patterns clearly postmarked with twelve different cities other than San Francisco, apparently the home base of the Pacific Fruit Exchange. Alphabetically they are Buffalo, NY; Denver, CO; El Paso, TX; Fresno, CA; Houston, TX; Los Angeles, CA; New York, NY; Omaha, NB; Portland OR, Kansas City, KS; Sacramento, CA; and Saint Louis, MO.

Now, what is going on here? Were the P82 stamps, mostly punched in the early 4¢ browns, *Scott Catalogue* type A410, provided to customers for a business response -- or were they used by traveling representatives of the Pacific Fruit Exchange? And why was the 4¢ brown, a higher value stamp at the time, used instead of the usual 2¢ or 1¢ stamp which was in common use for first class or circular mail.

Here we have an obvious mystery; a perplexing puzzle which I pass on to other members of the Perfin Club to solve. Perhaps, those of you who have covers with pattern P82 can relate what "corner cards", if any, appear on the covers. Why was pattern P82 used in (at least) twelve other cities in addition to that of its home base in San Francisco?