

A Bulletin encore article

The Perfins of Ayre & Sons of Canada

By Al Pearson (#65L)

In June 1981, Al Pearson wrote an article in the Perfins Bulletin about the owners of the AYRE perfins. The information is still timely and is presented again for the benefit of newer members.

Ayre & Sons Limited (Canadian catalog numbers A8 & A9) had its beginnings in 1856 when Charles Robert Ayre left the firm of B. Bowring & Son to form a business with John Steer. The partnership dissolved two years later and on January 1, 1859, the Ayre name was installed over a store on Water Street in St. Johns, New-

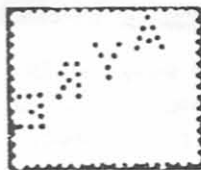


foundland. The “& Sons” was added in 1884 when three of Charles Ayre’s sons joined the business. A fourth son joined the firm in 1889.

Ayre and his sons formed a modern department store in St. Johns, carrying at first a large stock of furniture and later adding additional merchandise and

services as demands developed.

In 1892, fire destroyed a large portion of St. Johns, including the Ayre & Sons premises. But the brothers quickly rebuilt and continued to do business even through the financial crisis of 1894 when the



commercial banks in Newfoundland went bankrupt.

In 1903, the firm was legally incorporated as Ayre & Sons and began an expansion phase that included a mail order service and even a radio station.

VOAS (the Voice of Ayre & Sons) was licensed on May 28, 1931, one of the earliest radio stations in Newfoundland.

{In 1981, nearly 130 years after the firm was founded, Ayre & Sons continued to be an influential voice in the business community of Newfoundland.}