

Zion Church Designers and Builders of Zion, IL

Number 9 in Floyd Walker's series on philatelic, vanity, and personal perfins

A half-dozen new U.S. perfins were born in 1986. Most of them were distinctly personal or philatelic. One, however, was both commercial and philatelic.

The ZC/DB pattern (Z1.2) was first used on February 1, 1986, by Zion Church Designers & Builders of Zion, IL. It carries a B rating in the 1998 U.S. perfins catalog but given the amount of use the pattern saw, that rating is probably somewhat inflated.

We recently wrote to the Zion organization and received a nice letter from Robert D. Balcome (#106L), the retired senior partner of the firm. Balcome filled in the history of the pattern and its use on company mail over a period of ten years.

Zion Church Designers and Builders was founded in 1964 for the specific purpose of developing a building program to help churches reduce the cost of obtaining a place of worship that would meet their specific needs. The company was and is highly successful.

Because Balcome was a perfins collector, he thought it would be nice to have a perfin for the company's use. He turned to Baddeley Brothers of London for help and approved artwork for the pattern in September 1985. When the perforator arrived a few weeks later, the finished product didn't match the artwork and the perforator was returned to Baddeley Brothers. A reworked 10-head

perforator was received in January 1986 and placed into service on February 1 of that year.

The plan was to use the perfin on all correspondence originating from the company's Zion office. However, because of the tremendous amount of correspondence generated by field and sales representatives as well as "on the job" project superintendents, the firm decided to use the perfin on the self

centrate on the construction end of the business. The name of the firm was changed to reflect the new focus and the company became known as Zion Church Builders. The use of the pattern was continued. In 1995, for legal reasons, the firm name was changed to Zion Church Builders, LLP, but once again the perfin remained in use.

W h e n

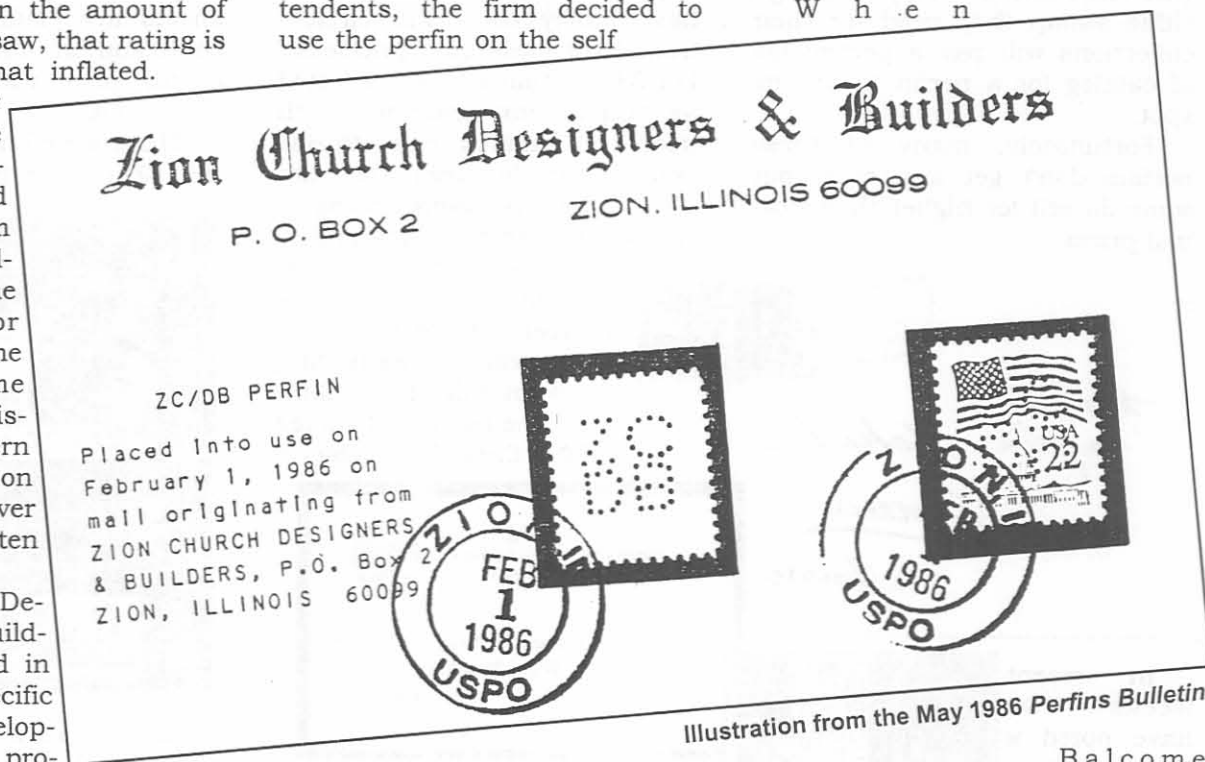


Illustration from the May 1986 Perfins Bulletin

addressed stamped envelopes provided to those employees.

Mail from the Zion office may exist with Zion, North Suburban, or Palatine, IL, postmarks. The perfin may also exist with postmarks from anywhere in the U.S. that the firm did business. Balcome's records show that the perfin was used on more than 100 current postal issues between 1986 and the end of 1996.

In 1994, the company decided to spin off the design portion of the company and con-

Balcome retired at the end of 1996, the use of the perfin was also retired. Existing perfins were used up and no further stamps were perforated. The perforator was placed in storage along with all the pertinent records of the firm while Balcome was the senior partner.

ZC/DB is very much a commercial perfin, but it surely has philatelic origins.

We are deeply indebted to Robert D. Balcome for his generosity in supplying the information for this article.