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# THE MYSTERY BOX

## Part 1 --- "THE STRIP"

By Bob Szymanski (LM#145)

All stamp collectors, but especially perfin stamp collectors, are always on the lookout for the "mother load". This is the box of material that will keep you going all winter long. It will present you with little surprises along the way and will be something to talk about whenever stamp stories are swapped with fellow collectors. I would like to share my "mother load" story with you.

I receive several catalogues from different auction houses. Maybe one day I will no longer be on the mailing list of several of these as there is never anything in my collecting interests and usually nothing that is ever described as "perfin"! However, early in 2002, a Regency catalog arrived. This is a Stamp auction house located in St. Louis. Since I am a stockholder in the company, maybe they feel compelled to mail me a catalog. Although not a big purchaser, at Christmas 2001 they had mailed me a dividend of sort - a \$25.00 gift certificate good toward any purchase, even the auction! Well, the certificate certainly did give me reason to try and find something reasonable in the auction catalog. What I found, however, was particularly intriguing.

The description of the lot read as follows:

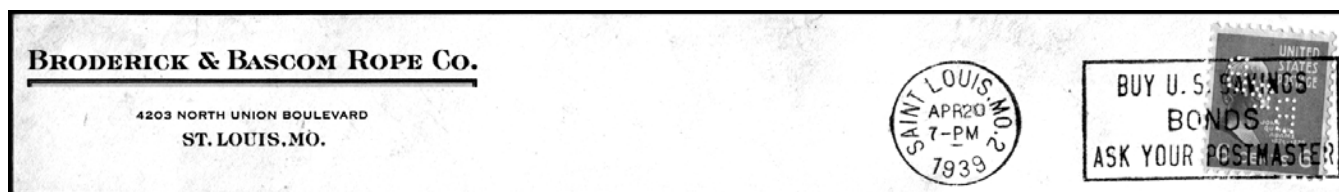
1920s-50s    IMPORTANT    PERFIN  
COLLECTION --- An estimated 2300  
perfin collected on full strips from the  
top of the cover showing full corner card  
or return address at left identifying the  
perfinned stamp at right. Approximately  
700 mounted alphabetically in three

looseleaf binders, the balance stored flat. Also includes approximately 100 full perfin covers. Fine to very fine or better throughout. An important accumulation of interest to the beginner or advanced perfin collector.

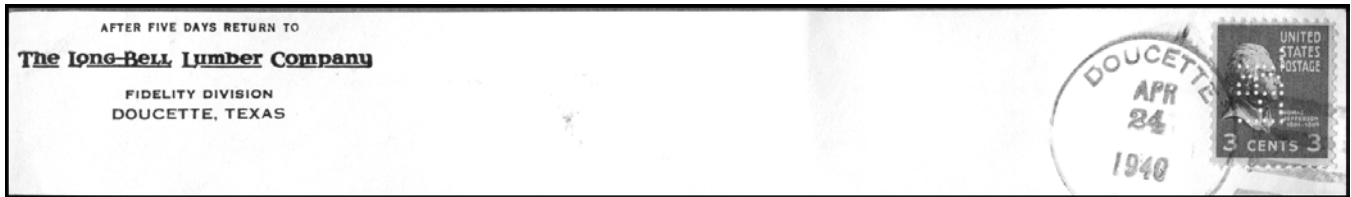
Well now that says a mouthful! There is nothing "full" about a strip. The balance stored flat should at least mean that the strips are not all crumbled up! Fine to very fine to better - that really narrows it down! Important for the beginner and the advanced collector - well, what is it? So with all that information, I not so carefully entered a bid on who knows what and waited until the auction ended. I could hardly wait! Wow, I was high bid and at somewhat less than my bid! Now, I could hardly wait all over again!

What arrived in this box is the subject of this and three more articles to follow. Strips galore were there, just as promised. Why, oh why, did some old timers find it too cumbersome to collect the whole cover? They must have all lived in yesteryear's small homes, with no room for the nonessentials! Here, nonessential means the bottom of the cover!

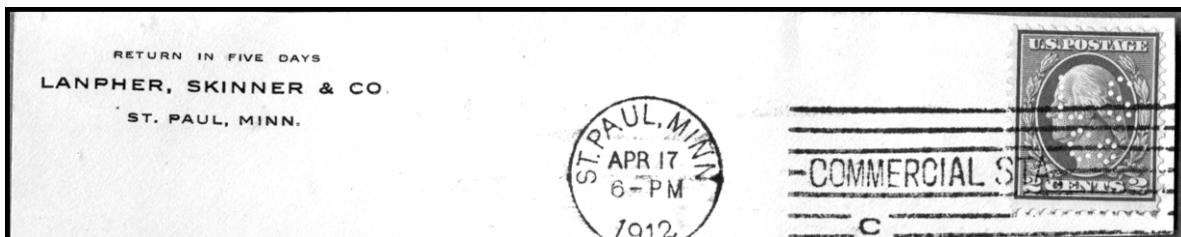
Seven hundred strips later I can only dream about how nice some of these strips would have been on the whole cover! But the following strips were able to add something. Six strips and six new US Catalog IDs!!! Gaze on the following new information as substantiated in the pictured strips.



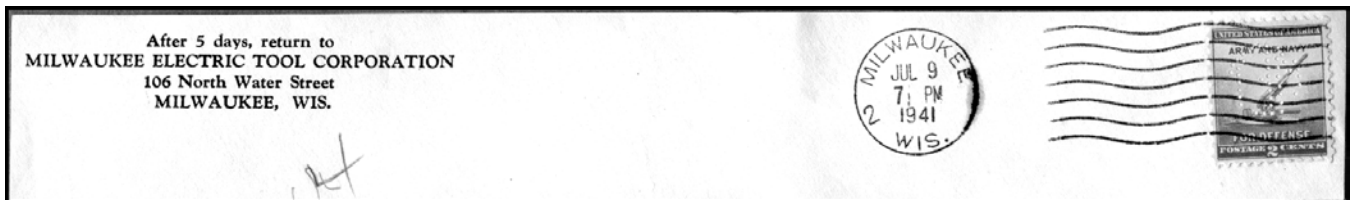
B260A [C] is the Broderick & Bascom Rope Co. of St. Louis, Missouri.



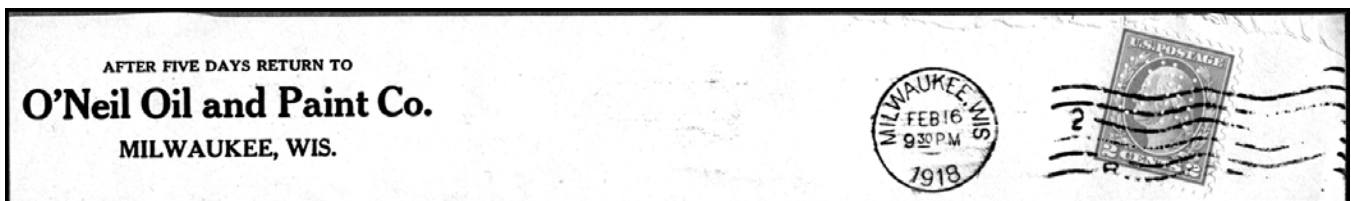
L47.5 [C+] is The Long-Bell Lumber Company of Doucette, Texas, showing also a later date of usage than is listed in the catalog.



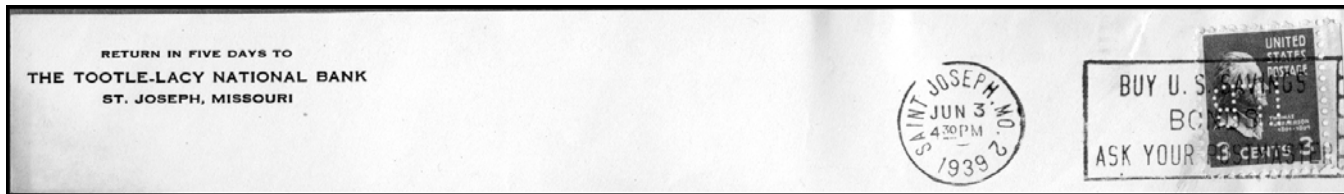
L140 [B] is Lanpher, Skinner & Co of St. Paul, Minnesota.



M105 [B] is the Milwaukee Electric Tool Corporation of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



O51 [B] is the O'Neil Oil and Paint Co. of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



T64 [D+] The Tootle-Lacy National Bank of St. Joseph, Missouri. (I did find it hard to believe that a bank would not have been previously identified!)

Six new identifications and all cities are right down the center of the country - no East Coast, no West Coast. This is a very strong pattern

throughout all of the material present!

Does anyone out there need any strips?