

O.K., I Confess

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The Perfins Bulletin of February 2008 contains an article by Bob Szymanski entitled "Personal Perfins (and Friends) Survey Results". The first thing I need to do is apologize to Bob for not having participated in his survey. Secondly, I confess that I am responsible for some of the "(and Friends)" portion of the title.

In fact, *the Perfins Bulletin* of January 1996 told some of my travails in obtaining my anchor perforator (punches US pattern D611P; Fig. 1). However, prior to obtaining that device (and apparently after) I utilized some check punches from my antique office gadgets collection. In addition to three check punches that accumulation consists of a number of company seals, hole punchers, inkwells, pen stands, etc. A Cummins and an Ace machine document marker are also part of that accumulation. I had hoped to convert these to stamp perforators, but that was way beyond my capabilities.



Figure 1. Des 611P

I admit that for a time, I did use transportation coils supplemented by older commemoratives for postage. Bob's article shows a #1 punch which has a partial postmark "MD" and "212" (Fig. 2). This may be compared to the numeral "1" from one of my check perforators. Even a casual glance shows that there is a major difference in the two "1"s. Bob's has two holes in the top row and mine has only one.

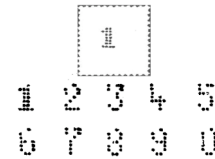


Figure 2. Comparison of "1" in Bob's article and that from my Chicago Check Perforator, The B. R Cummings Company, Chicago.

However, I really thought that it was one of my creations. Check the ZIP code to determine where it was posted. My current ZIP code is 20904 and our previous residence had code 21114. Maryland ZIP codes ending in 212 are limited to Baltimore and Govans. State ZIP codes starting with 212 range from Baltimore to Towson, all well north of where I live. But, wait a minute. Zip 21240 is the zip code of BWI Marshall Airport, which is co-located with the Maryland Department of Transportation. Since I went there frequently for early morning meetings when I was the state's Director of Driver Licensing, that is a possible explanation for the "212" in the cancel.

Next I speculated that perhaps there was a broken pin on the perforator. I carefully punched the number 1 again. There appeared to be an indentation where the hole was missing. Ah, turning the device over I attempted to remove the chad. A movable cover designed to stop the chads from falling out was no longer movable. Fortunately, I was able to move it without breaking anything. The chute was packed! Using my handy stamp tongs, I dug out some of the compacted contents. It was like digging

out solid paper. The more I dug, the more there was. Finally I disassembled the device. Other than being amazed by the quality workmanship, I was greeted with a curved tube that was intended to lead the chads away from the punch. I removed this in hopes that I could see the pins. No luck, but I was able to clear all the debris from the machine. After reassembly, I carefully produced another "1".

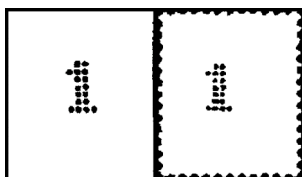


Figure 3. New punch (left) and Bob's (right)

Okay, Bob the "1" was me.

Next we have the number "2" illustrated by Bob's article. No doubt, it was me. After all he has a cover for proof.

That leaves the 33¢ Los Angeles Class submarine stamp. If you compare the "2000" with Fig. 2 above it is obvious that I was the one, "playing around with a check canceling machine". The misplaced last zero is caused by the stiffness in the feed mechanism of aged check perforators. In order to assist future

researchers a number of samples are provided below.



Figure 4 - Samples from Esley MFG. Co., New York circa 1900

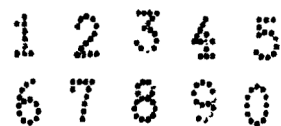


Figure 5 - Samples from The S. & P. Manufacture Unknown

[Ed. Note: John indicated that inexperience with his scanner had led to the submitted scans possibly not being accurate 1:1 reproductions of the patterns. So, I have taken the liberty to use the possible scale problem and emphasized it by making his illustrations fit the 2-column format I use for the *Bulletin*. Thus the illustrations here are only for shape and not size comparisons with other punched patterns.