

The Perkins, Bacon & Co. "Cancelled" Overprint on the Early Stamps of Newfoundland

by Dan Meyerson



The Specialist in Newfoundland who is always on the lookout for the odd and interesting from that country can readily do himself and philately a favor by examining his used copies of the early Newfoundland #'s 11-23 inclusive in relation to the ensuing article.

In the May 1929 issue of the 'London Philatelist' there is a report of a paper that Sir Edward Bacon, K. C. V. O. read before the Royal Philatelic Society of London May 9, 1929. It is entitled "The Stamps of Messrs. Perkins, Bacon & Co's Printing obliterated with a handstamp showing 'CANCELLED' between Bars." In this report the author takes up the history of these stamps and their origin. This article is drawn entirely from the report mentioned and a subsequent follow-up written by the same author in the January 1935 issue of the London Philatelist.

In the course of some research that Sir Edward Bacon was doing amongst the early records of Perkins, Bacon & Co., he came across the following correspondence and I quote "In April 1861, Mr. Ormond Hill, of Somerset House wrote to Perkins, Bacon & Co., to inquire whether they could let him have a few specimens of postage stamps they printed other than those of Great Britain, for himself and two or three friends who were collectors. In August of the same year a similar request was received by the firm from Mr. Pearson Hill, the son of Sir Rowland Hill.

On the fifteenth of August Messrs. Perkins, Bacon & Co., forwarded six copies of each stamp they possessed specimens of to Mr. Pearson Hill with a letter in which they said that one of each kind was for himself and his father respectively, and they asked him to forward to Mr. Ormond Hill the remaining four copies of each description.

The specimens were obliterated in deep black ink with a handstamp bearing the word 'CANCELLED' as per illustration herewith.

As the specimen shows, the obliteration was generally struck across a pair of stamps, and only part of the word 'CANCELLED' and a portion of the bars appear on a specimen.

Among the Newfoundland stamps reported with this obliteration by Sir Edward Bacon in May 1929, were the 4d Orange, #12, the 1 shilling Orange, #15, and the 5d red brown, #19. Specimens of the 1 sh and the 5d were in the Royal Collection, and the 4d had been offered at auction in the first sale of the Ferrari collection held in Paris on June 23, 1921.

In the same May 1929 issue of the London Philatelist there is a report of the April 11th meeting of the Royal Philatelic Society, London, before which Alfred F. Lichtenstein exhibited his early Newfoundland, and amongst the items mentioned in the exhibit were a 4d Orange and a 1 sh Orange with the 'CANCELLED' obliteration.

In the January 1935 issue of the London Philatelist, Sir Edward Bacon writes of the appearance at auction of an extraordinary collection which contained sixty-two stamps with this 'CANCELLED' obliteration. Amongst them were two previously unlisted Newfoundland, namely the 6d Rose, #20, and the 6½d Rose, #21. Both were purchased and added to the Royal Collection.

The next appearance of a Newfoundland stamp bearing this obliteration was at the recent 'Pack' sale held by Harmer, Rooke & Co., on December 6, 1944. At this sale a copy of the 4d Orange was offered for sale and purchased by Mr. Alfred F. Lichtenstein.

Only recently, since the turn of the year I came across still another value with the 'CANCELLED' obliteration, the 3d Green on thin paper, #11a, which copy is reproduced in the above illustration. As far as I can ascertain, this is the first time that this value has been reported with the 'CANCELLED' obliteration. The story of its discovery is rather interesting.

While examining the individual lots that were being offered at an auction, I had time to spare and decided to look at the large lots of British America on album pages included in the same sale. I collect only the stamps of Newfoundland so I idly turned the pages past Barbados, Bermuda, Canada, Dominica, etc. until at last I came to the page of Newfoundland stamps. There were perhaps ten stamps of the early issues from 1861-1876 inclusive, and none of them were of any interest except the copy of the 3d triangular stamp. My eyes actually bulged, here it was, the stamp whose existence had been suspected but not reported, and it was included in a lot for clearance. There was no doubt as to the genuineness of the stamp so for three weeks until the day of the sale I trusted myself to talk to no one, afraid lest in my exuberance I would divulge what the lot contained. Finally after what seemed to be years of impatient waiting the day of the sale arrived and I made it my business to be in attendance. This was one lot which I intended to buy. With bated breath I waited for that lot to be put up for sale and when the time finally did arrive I was really in a cold sweat. However I resolutely put my hand up to signify that I was bidding and my relief knew no bounds when the lot was 'knocked down' to me at a price that I considered reasonable for the lot even if it had not included the 3d with the rare 'CANCELLED' obliteration. I anxiously waited until the end of the sale, picked up the lot, and did not rest easy until I reached home and added that one stamp to my collection. The balance of the stamps were sold to a dealer the following week for exactly what I paid for the entire lot.

There is still pioneer work and research to be done if any article written by Sir Edward Bacon in the November 1894 issue of the London Philatelist is used as a guide, and it is checked with the stamps known to exist with the 'CANCELLED' obliteration, we have two alternatives. Either the handstamp was applied to all of the values included in the shipments to Newfoundland made on June 15, 1860, and again on July 11, 1861, or just a single set of the different denominations was obliterated and this set would include both the Orange shade and the Lake shade indiscriminately. The shipment of June 15, 1860, has been recognized as the Orange shade while the shipment made on July 11, 1861 has been recognized as the Lake shade. However when Perkins, Bacon & Co. invoiced these two shipments to the Colony, they were all invoiced as Red. The shipments were as follows:

June 15, 1860	July 11, 1861
5,000 2d Orange	5,000 2d Lake
6,000 3d Green	20,000 3d Green
5,000 4d Orange	15,000 4d Lake
20,000 5d Reddish Brown	20,000 6d Lake
10,000 6d Orange	5,000 6½d Lake
1,000 1sh Orange	10,000 1sh Lake

A recapitulation of the copies known to exist would indicate the following:

3d Green 1 copy	4d Orange 2 copies
5d Reddish Brown 1 copy	6d Lake 1 copy
6½d Lake 1 copy	1sh Orange 2 copies

If we are to follow the first premise and assume that all of the stamps in both shipments were obliterated, then we still have to prove the existence of the handstamp on the 2d Orange, the 2d Lake, the 4d Lake, the 6d Lake and the 1sh Lake. However if we assume that only one complete set of different denominations was obliterated, then we have only to prove the existence of the 2d value in either the Orange shade or the Lake shade.

All of the other values are known with the exception of the 1d and the 8d, and since no stamps of these denominations were included in the 1860 and 1861 shipments, we may reasonably assume that the handstamp does not exist on these values.

As the reader can see, a good deal of the theories advanced in this article are based on assumption or deduction, and any further information on the subject would be greatly appreciated.