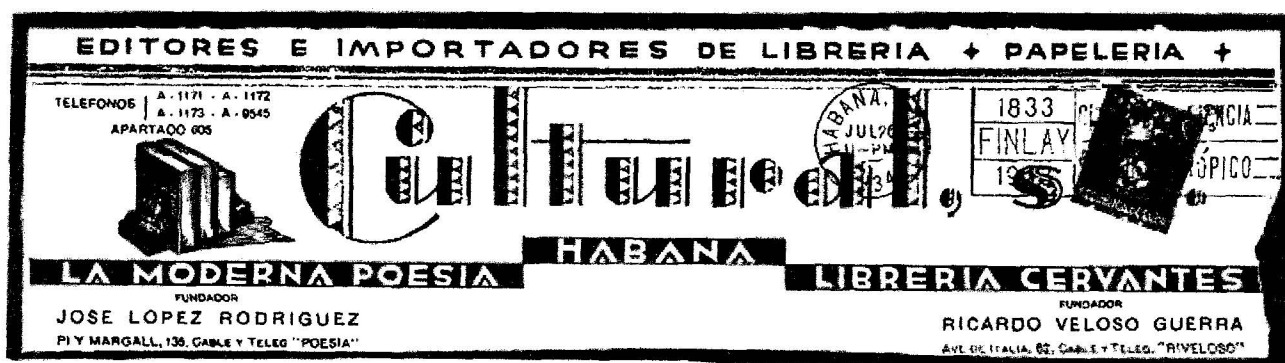


THE PERFINS OF CUBA by Rudy Roy



The story of Perfins from Cuba is largely one awaiting to be fully told, but I would like to tell what is known thus far, and, perhaps, enlist the readers' assistance in completing the study of Cuban Perfins.

The first use of Perfin devices occurred during the Spanish period, when Cuba was a colony. The Perfins seen, however, are on revenue stamps and, as such, most likely were cancellations or some other fiscal usage. How extensive this fiscal use was, is not known, for not many copies have been seen.

The first use of a Perfin in the Republic of Cuba was by the government, and then not for security purposes, but to revalue some left-over US postal cards. In 1904 the Cuban Postal Administration found itself with a large surplus of US postal cards (Scott UX2), and, being in need of postal cards, the government revalued these by perforating a large "1" through the 2c. of the "2c. de Peso" overprint on the postal card (see illustration below). Now, this

CUBA. - 2c. de Peso.

might seem a bit unusual, using the postal paper of another country, but the Republic of Cuba continued to use all postage items dating from 1899 until 1914, when everything issued prior to 1914 was demonetized.

The first Perfin pattern to be used by a private company appears about 1917, when the BNC pattern of the Banco Nacional de Cuba appears. This pattern is the only one I have seen on the Mapitas issue of 1914, the first stamps produced in Cuba. In spite of its name, the Banco Nacional de Cuba was a private concern, and it failed some time in the 1920's.

The majority of the Perfins patterns follow the US designs as to size of pattern and diameter of the holes in the letters. This suggests that the machines were of US origin, and most probably the regulations governing the use of Perfins in Cuba were adapted from our own. More information is needed in this area.

The total patterns found number only 19, yet this ranks Cuba as fourth among the

countries of Latin America in numbers of different patterns. As can be seen from those identified, many companies were American connected, which is reflective of the economic influence the United States had in Cuba.

Perfins are found on all stamps of Cuba except semi-postals and postage dues, though this is tentative, based on the copies I have seen or have had loaned to me. The latest use of Perfins would seem to be 1950, as I have in my collection a stamp issued in September of that year with the GE pattern on it.




















The most extensive use of Perfins would seem to have been by the Havana drug firm "SARRA." I have more copies of that pattern on various issues, plus the number of covers I have or have seen would indicate that it is the most plentiful pattern. Even though the firm shifted to meters, covers with meters and Perfined postal tax stamps are found, as the postal tax could only be paid by the special stamp.

The RV&/Co. pattern, used by a company titled Cultural, S. A., is second most common. This company has a long philatelic history in Cuba, as it printed the first stamps issued wholly by Cuba, and, while nationalized today, still continues as the printer of Cuba's postage stamps (see portion of illustrated cover of "Cultural, S.A." above).

Of the 19 patterns found, only 11 are positively identified. Several of the others can be tentatively identified, but confirming data is needed. If you can add to the story of Cuban Perfins, or can offer any information about Perfins from Latin and South America, please write to me at Box 5691, Virginia Beach, VA 23455. Much of the information on Cuban Perfins was developed with the kind assistance of Dr. Harvey Tilles, Barbara Kloss, Al Bartleson, Jack Brandt, R. W. Ward, Ken Aws, and Jan Prins. Additionally, the Cuban Philatelic Society of America provided another forum to seek information, and their assistance is acknowledged.

(continued next page)

IDENTIFICATIONS AND DESIGN DETAILS

	1. AC M 10-7.5 Avery and Co., Havana		11. NCB D 5.5 National City Bank of New York, Havana Branch
	2. A&C H 9.5-4-9.5		12. NL(Y) H-EX 5.5-9-5.5 New York Life, Havana
	3. BNC H 5.5 Banco Nacional de Cuba, Havana		13. NPT D 5.5
	4. CTC H 11 Cuban Telephone Co., Havana		14. O&C D 5.5
	5. DUN H 6.5-4.5-4.5 R. G. Dun and Co.; Dun and Bradstreet, Havana		15. PD H 10.5 Parke-Davis Co., Havana
	6. EL/SOL 2H 5.5 El Sol de Canada (Sun Life Insurance Co.), Havana		16. QHC D 5.5
	7. ENC D 5.5 (Tentative - Empresa Naviera de Cuba)		17. RV/&CO. 3H 4.5-4-5-3.5 Cultural, S. A., Havana
	8. FRCO D 5-5-4-3 (Tentative - Frank Robins Co.)		18. SA/RRA 2H 3.5 Drogueria Sarra, Havana
	9. GE H 6 General Electric - Havana, Camaguey, Santiago de Cuba		19. SEC D 5.5
	10. M/CO 2H 5.5-4 (Tentative - Monroe and Co.)	<p>Identifications are based on covers in the author's possession, or those loaned to him. In the case of patterns 12 and 15, identification made from US catalog.</p>	