

THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS



Vol. XVI, No. 2

October 1968

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THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS



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October 1968

Henry M. Goodkind, Editor
Philip Silver, Assistant Editor

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Air Mail Stamps With Inverted Centers

By R. HASBROUCK SHRADY, M.D.

In this article, an attempt will be made to list and describe briefly all the existing air mail inverted centers. I have a collection of these errors in printing and consider them the "stars" of all the known philatelic varieties. My collection is based upon the listings in the "1966 Sanabria Catalogue," so that

AERO PHILATELISTS

22nd Annual Convention and Dinner

Date: Saturday, November 23, 1968

(Please note the date. In the July number on page 6 the date was wrong.)

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All Members Are Invited

Place: The Collectors Club

22 East 35 Street, New York, N. Y.

Time: 2 p. m.

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Time: 6:30 p. m.

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Feature: Presentation of the Richard S. Bohn Memorial Award



The most famous of all inverted centers, the 24c United States air mail stamp of 1918.

the numbers used in this article are from this book.

Some may argue that not all of the items listed in this article are true inverted centers; perhaps some are inverted frames. But I shall avoid printing technicalities, and in a description of a collection of this kind, I think all should be classified as "inverted centers."

A Total of 39

In all, there are 39 stamps with centers inverted, of which 14 are in the semi-official category. One is a special flight label. The only one of the 39 I have ever actually seen used on a cover is the Italy semi-official (San. S3e), the 1926 Trans-Polar Flight with the stamp's frame inverted. Although I am fairly certain that a few Canada and France semi-official air mails probably exist on cover, I have never seen any. Also, the "Sanabria Catalogue" does not list any "on cover" inverted centers from Canada and France.

The No. 1 Inverted Center

The first stamp listed, of course, is the United States famous 1918 24-cent carmine and blue (San.1a) of which one sheet of 100 was found in a Washington, D. C. post office by a stamp collector. The editor of this quarterly magazine, Henry M. Goodkind, is considered to be the leading authority in the world on this glamorous stamp. For many years, he has kept a record of all the copies known out of the complete sheet of 100. At the time of this writing, not all of the 100 copies have been accounted for. Also, each copy can be identified by its position in the sheet. Originally, before the Philadelphia, Pa. stamp dealer, the late Eugene N. Klein, broke up the sheet for sale in 1918, he numbered in pencil every stamp on the back. With time and handling in sales, some of the numbers have worn off. But even the copies without numbers on the back can be plated, as Mr. Goodkind's records reveal.

1924 Bolivia Issue

The first inverted center listed in the "Sanabria Catalogue" after the famous U. S. error of 1918 is the 10c vermilion from Bolivia (San. 4a) issued in 1924 to mark the establishment of the National Aviation School. Only 50 were issued. In the same issue of Bolivia is the 2 Bolivares black brown (San. 9a) of which only one sheet with 25 is known.

Again in this same issue, the 2 Bolivares black brown exists imperforate, (San. 15a), of which it is said only 25 were issued with centers inverted. The



Bolivia's 1924 commemorative issue, San. 4a. (All photos by Boutrelle)

catalogue does not give the quantity issued of Bolivia San. 15a.

Canada Semi-Officials

In 1927, Canada issued 34 semi-official stamps, and nine of these come with inverted centers. All were used by the Patricia Airways and Exploration Ltd. for an air mail service between Sioux Lookout and the northern Canadian gold-fields, and also between Haileybury, Ontario and Rouyn, Quebec.

These stamps are all printed on yellow paper. In the center of the design is an airplane printed in red. Sometimes the plane is inverted. Also, some of the stamps were surcharged, and this, too, comes inverted on a few issues.

The first of these is San. S26b which is the stamp without any "Red Lake" surcharge. The airplane is upside-down. Then there are three of the same stamp (San. S26b) with the "Red Lake" surcharge. One has the surcharge reading up, a second one reading down and inverted, and a third with the "Red Lake" printed in black.

There are three more of the same stamp (San. S26b) with the "Red Lake" surcharge in red. This, too, comes with the surcharge reading up, reading down, and inverted.

Also, this Canadian semi-official stamp is known with a green "Red Lake" surcharge. But I have never seen nor heard of the green overprint existing on any copies with the inverted airplane. This stamp, however, also exists imperforate (San S26c) with the inverted plane of which only eight copies of this are said to exist.

France Semi-Officials

In the French semi-official air mail group, there is a 1922 Montpelier Aviation Meeting Issue. Three of these come with inverted centers—the 1 franc green and red-brown (San. S25d), the 2 franc red and blue (San. S26b) and the 5 franc blue and red (San. S27c).

There is a private label issued in 1925 for a special flight by Pilots Leraitre



Canada San. S26b with both the airplane and the surcharge inverted.



France's San. 526b.



A pair of France's 1925 special flight label with the pilots' heads on one inverted.

and Anachard to Dakar. This is not listed in the "Sanabria Catalogue." The adhesive has the portrait of the two pilots in the design with lavender and brown colors. No face value is indicated. It is known with the brown color inverted.

Italy's 1926 Polar Flight

In 1926, Italy had a semi-official stamp that has become rather well-known



Italy's San. 53e as a single copy looks as if the center is inverted. In a complete sheet, it is seen that the frame is inverted.



Liberia San. 101a, Lithuania San. 45c and Mauritania San. 15a.

in the past few years. It was for the Amundsen-Ellsworth-Nobile flight to the North Pole. This variety (San. S3e) truly is not an inverted center, because it is found only once in a sheet, and when viewed, it is really the frame that is inverted. But when seen as a single copy, it appears as an inverted center, so that by itself, no one would question its status as having the center inverted (see illustration).

This semi-official air mail stamp also exists imperforate, so that there is also an inverted center here (San. S3g).

Liberia, Lithuania, And Mauritania

A set of two stamps was issued in 1952 by Liberia to commemorate the founding of Liberia by Jehudi Ashmun. Both are known with the centers inverted, the 25c magenta and black (San. 101a) and the 50c ultramarine and red (San. 102a). There were only 80 of each of these issued.

Lithuania produced an inverted center in 1926. The 60c blue and black of the regular air mail issue comes with the center inverted (San. 45c). According to the catalogue, 200 are known.



The 1938 Nicaragua imperforate miniature sheet of four, each stamp with the head inverted. The sheet's actual size is $5\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ inches.



Nicaragua San. 299a.

The former French colony in Africa, Mauritania, was included in a series of air mail stamps that the Vichy Government in France issued for some of the colonies during World War II. There was a regular set of eight air mails without the initials "RF" in the design issued for Mauritania in 1942.

Of these, two denominations, the 10 francs, ultramarine, blue, and carmine comes with inverted centers. This is listed as San. 15a and the quantity is stated to be 50. Also, the 20 francs, carmine, magenta and buff has the center inverted variety. Sanabria lists this as No. 16a. But different from the 10 francs, no quantity issued is given.

Nicaragua

The Central American Republic of Nicaragua supplies twelve inverted centers, all from the same issue — the 1938 commemoratives for the 75th

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Spain's San. 85e, the head inverted, is not in the center.

anniversary of the Nicaraguan postal service. This issue comes many ways, perforated and imperforated, and also in miniature sheets of four, both perforated and imperforated.

The perforated miniature sheet has all four stamps with inverted centers. These are the 1c (San. 285a), the 5c (San. 286a), the 8c (San. 287a), and the 16c (San. 288a). One may collect these as four single copies or in one complete miniature sheet of four.

This same sheet also exists imperforate, which again has inverted centers. This one is not listed in the "Sanabria Catalogue." One may collect the imperforates from the miniature sheet as a unit or separate the four stamps into single copies.

In the same commemorative issue of 1938, there is another design with the then President of Nicaragua, A. Somoza. Here, too, a miniature sheet of four, both perforated and imperforate exist. Only the perforated sheet is listed in Sanabria as Nos. 298a, 299a, 300a, and 301a. As with the previous sheet, this can be collected as a unit or four stamps.

The imperforated sheet is not catalogued with inverted centers and I have never seen one.

Spain

The final inverted centers are found from Spain. In 1930, a Pan-American and Spain exposition was held in Seville. A set of nine air mail commemorative stamps was issued, one becoming well-known to American collectors because it showed Charles A. Lindbergh and his famous plane.

There are three prominent varieties on this stamp (San. No. 85) that I have placed in my inverted center collection. I admit that it is a little far-fetched to classify these three as inverted centers, because the head of Col. Lindbergh that comes inverted is in the lefthand corner of the design and not in the center. This 1 Peseta green stamp with the head inverted normally is perforated 14. 300 copies were printed of this one error (San. 85d). Also, it is listed with perf. 11 and 200 copies have the head inverted (San. 85f).

Again, this same stamp has another error—a double head; there is a variety of this with one head inverted (San. 85e). The quantity of this is 50, according to the "Sanabria Catalogue."

This concludes my list. Did I miss any air mail stamp with an inverted center? If so, let me know what I missed.

FOR BOOKS ON AIR MAILS

See Page 48

AUSTRIA

1914-15 Siege Of Przemyśl Air Post

By JEAN GRAVELAT*

If the correspondence during the Siege of Przemyśl is well-known to aero-philatelists, being the subject of a number of previous articles, then the same cannot be said about the mail sent to the Austro-Hungarian Forces surrounded by the Russian Army during two successive sieges that lasted from September 18, 1914 until March 22, 1915, except for a short interruption from October 10th to November 7, 1914.

The situation had been that the Austrian soldiers were taken prisoners and transported as captives to Russia for a long period of time lasting up to 1924. For those who survived this ordeal, it was not possible for them to preserve their correspondence which had reached them. Much of it had already been destroyed with their papers before the surrender. Furthermore, it seems that they received the contents without the envelopes. In such cases, it would be miraculous if any of their correspondence had been preserved. There is little chance that any of the covers from the air post going to the fortress of Przemyśl would have survived.

Extremely Scarce

There were a few pieces of mail addressed to Przemyśl, that because of

*Written in French and translated into English by H. M. Goodkind.

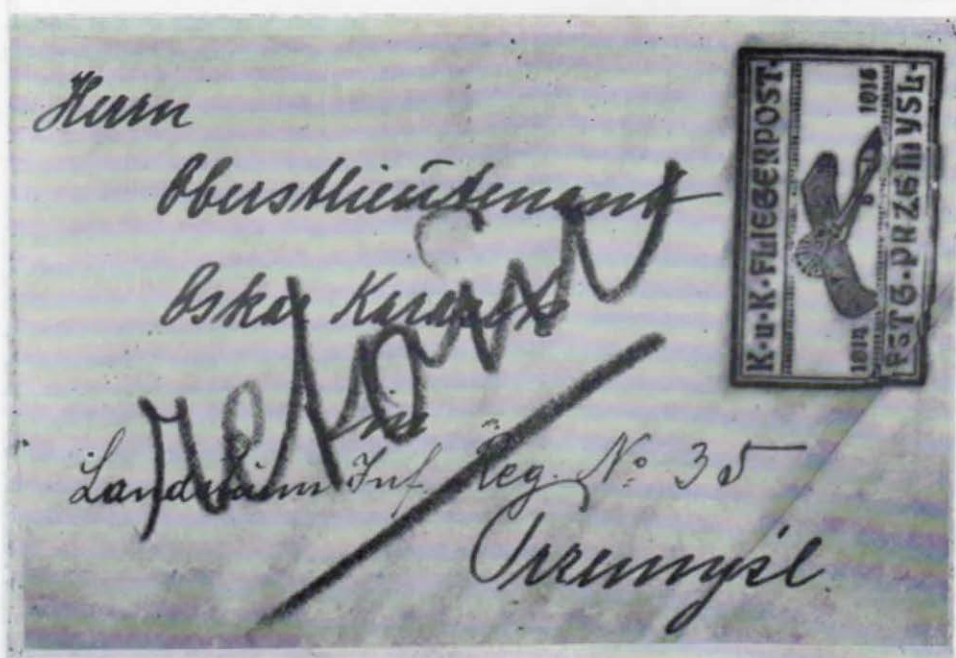


Fig. 1. This cover with the Siege of Przemyśl cachet, a very distinct hit, was returned to Vienna, Austria on March 22, 1915.

various reasons could not be forwarded. These were returned to the senders by air mail in their original enclosures. Only by the handwritten return address on the cover or, occasionally, the special postal markings permit the identification of these extremely rare covers.

Some mail — and this is the subject of this article — was sent to Przemysl with a special rectangular cachet as shown on the two illustrated covers (Figs. 1 and 2). There are only a few specimens that have survived for air mail collections.

There does not seem to be much known about the origin of this cachet, and it seems doubtful if it was put to great use. If one wanted such covers, it was necessary to attend the auction sale by Robson Lowe, Ltd. of the Marquis of Bute collection in London, England. It was several years afterwards when I obtained the two examples I show in this article. I have not seen any others. No more have been offered in auction sales nor have any been seen in all the international exhibitions held since 1950. I was hopeful that when I attended the International Air Post Exhibition in Budapest, Hungary in September 1967 that I not only would see other covers, but that I also could learn more about them in Hungary. There were a number of exhibitors from Central Europe. But I only saw one item; this was an unused post card that had this cachet, but applied much later than 1915 by favor.

Aero-Philatelic References

To obtain my information, I have searched through much literature. Most of my information comes from the following sources which I quote:

1. "Handbuch der Luftpostkunde" (Air Mail Handbook) by Alexander Berzowski with the collaboration of Dr. Paganini. Published in Germany in 1925. It has the following:

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Are you interested in completing your collection with unusual varieties? **YOU NEED A SPECIALIST!**

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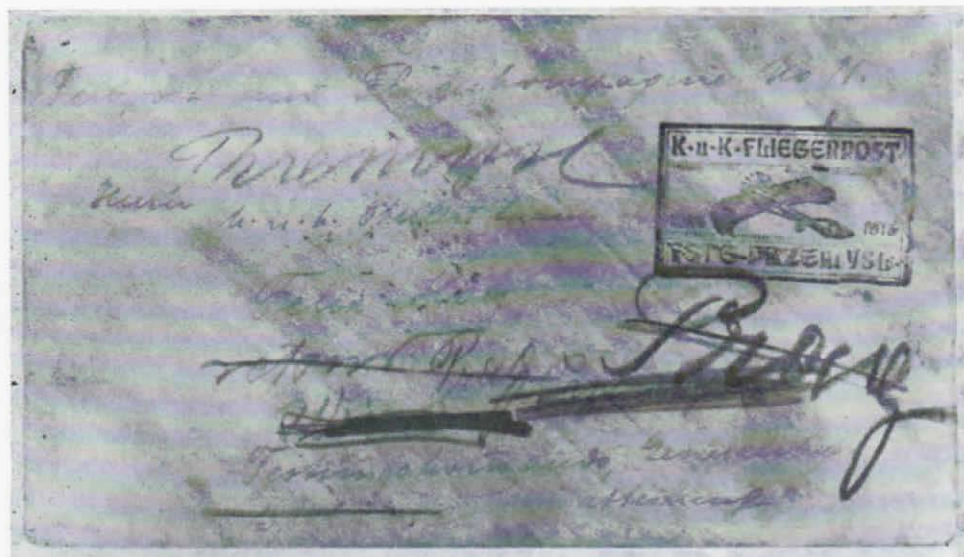


Fig. 2. A cover returned to Prague (then Bohemia). The dates are so lightly and poorly hit that they cannot be determined.

- "Unique flight within the fortress of Przemysl. After the fall of the fortress, the original device used for the cachet fell into the hands of a private party. Thus, one finds later cancelled-by-favor cachets in both black and violet on covers and postal cards, all with Austrian postage stamps. Genuinely used on legitimate air mail, this cachet is exceedingly rare."
2. "Theodore Champion — Catalogue Aerien" (1937 Edition) says:
 "This cachet belongs to the 101 Postal Section (Brzesko) situated in the besieged area. It is extremely rare on a card having actually flown. On the other hand, it has been used a great deal for favor cancellations by an unauthorized person who later procured the marking device."
 3. "Story of Austria Air Mail." (1948) Adolf Kosel, Vienna, Austria, editor wrote:
 "According to the references received, the air post cachet illustrated below (45x27mm. black/violet) is found in the Aviation Archives K.u.K. of the Vienna Arsenal X/2 (Post Office Branch No. 76). One cover from pyrotechnician *Kinsner* bearing a violet cachet with 3 lines (42x14mm.) (?) confirms this. The air mail cachet was used by a private carrier of the Army Postal Service addressed to Przemysl which arrived with other correspondence for the 'Fund For The Support Of Widows and Orphans Of The Fallen Aviators.' *Kinsner* also used this handstamp on unused military post cards and with it had the cancellation applied later to stamps of foreign countries."

A Propaganda Leaflet

In my opinion, another matter associated with the Siege of Przemysl seems to be little known. This is the propaganda leaflets from the Austro-Hungarians that were dropped over the Russian troops. The message is an eloquent testimony to the conditions and feelings that existed at the time of the Siege of Przemysl.

The leaflet illustrated as Fig. 3 is in Russian. It was translated into French by our good friend, Mr. *Ilia Braunstein* of Brussels, Belgium, the 1966 recipient

РУССКІЕ СОЛДАТЫ!

Переходите къ намъ!

Разказы Вашихъ офицеровъ, будто-бы наши чины съ Вами обращаются плохо, когда Вы къ намъ переходите, наглая ложь; не вѣрьте Вы имъ!

Подходитъ страшная зима, съ большими холодами и утомленіями; развѣ Вы хотите страдать отъ холода, а между тѣмъ могли-бы сидѣть у насъ въ тепленькой комнатѣ?

Сколько сотенъ тысячъ Вашего брата уже у насъ! Имъ живется хорошо, ихъ кормятъ какъ слѣдуетъ быть, получаютъ напитки, и многіе изъ нихъ не желаютъ уже возвращаться домой.

Приходите къ намъ!

Тогда эта война покончена для Васъ, всѣмъ страданіямъ конецъ. Всеравно нѣтъ болѣе надежды, выиграть эту войну; если Вы продолжаете сражаться, то Вы этимъ только зря умножаете свои страданія.

Переходите къ намъ!

Наши войска повсюду побѣдоносны: въ Россіи, во Франціи, въ Италіи и въ Турціи.

Отъ бывшаго сербскаго королевства уже ничего не осталось, все въ нашихъ рукахъ. Скоро и не будетъ уже и сербской арміи. Чего Вамъ еще ждать?

Будьте умнѣе и бросьте сражаться!

Вамъ лучше будетъ у насъ!

Приходите всѣ къ намъ!

За каждое, захваченное съ собою, годное ружье Вы получите по 5-ти рублей, за каждый годный ружейный патронъ по одной копѣйкѣ!

Fig. 3. The propaganda leaflet dropped to the Russian soldiers by the Austro-Hungarians.

of AERO PHILATELISTS' Richard S. Bohn Memorial Award for "distinguished services to philately." It reads as follows:

RUSSIAN SOLDIERS !

PASS OVER TO OUR SIDE !

The tales told by your officers of how badly we maltreat those in your ranks now among us are nothing but malicious lies; don't you believe this!

The fearful winter weather with its intense cold and exhaustion is about due to arrive. Do you want to suffer from freezing weather, or would you rather be comfortable in a warm room?

Do you really know how many hundreds of thousands of your brothers already are with us? They live well; one feeds them as they deserve; they receive drinks, and some of them do not wish to go back.

COME OVER TO OUR SIDE !

Thus, this war is finished for you and this will mark the end of your suffering. Don't you see it? There is no hope of your winning this war. If you continue your fighting, you will only multiply the degree of your suffering. This is your last chance. We repeat

PASS OVER TO OUR SIDE !

Our troops are gaining victory everywhere; in Russia, in France, in Italy, and in the ancient Kingdom of Serbia. Nothing remains for you; everything is in our hands. Soon there will be no Serbian Army. What do you hear about all this?

EVERYBODY COME TO US !

For each of your rifles in good condition that you will bring with you, you will be paid 5 rubles. For each bullet, 1 kopek.

Conclusion

From what has been written in the past, which I have quoted, it seems agreed that:

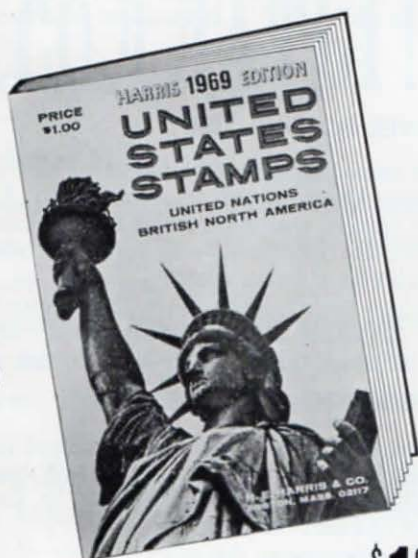
1. The cachet was used (no doubt after the Siege of Przemyśl) for making the fake material. Most post cards seen with this marking are unused.
2. Genuine covers having this cachet are extremely rare.

In my opinion, it seems doubtful that this cachet was applied only to mail addressed to Vienna. One of the two covers in my possession (see Fig. 2) both was mailed from *Prague* and returned to that city.

It is hoped that among the readers of the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS that some may possess covers with a cachet similar to the two I show from the Siege of Przemyśl. If anyone will contact me and send me the information with a photograph, I shall be very pleased to write about this in a follow-up article in our respected AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS.

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Our First Airmail Stamp 50 Years Old

By HENRY M. GOODKIND

In many respects, the 24-cent carmine rose and blue of 1918 (No. C3) has turned out to be a topflight stamp, practically unequalled by any other issued by the United States. Of course, its chief reason for great fame is due to the printing mistake made when the stamp was being first printed. This error, the one sheet of 100 with the centers inverted, produced one of the world's philatelic gems, popularly called the upside-down airmail stamp (No. C3a). A single copy currently is priced in the catalogue at \$20,000.

There are, however, other reasons that have made our first airmail stamp so outstanding.

10 Number Ones

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4. The FIRST airmail stamp of the United States.
5. The FIRST airmail stamp of the Americas, Africa and Asia.

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Fig. 1. The "Father of the U. S. Air Mail," Senator Morris Sheppard of Texas. (All photographs from the author's collection.)

6. The FIRST airmail stamp issued bi-colored.
7. The FIRST airmail stamp printed with an error.
8. The FIRST airmail stamp cancelled with a mistake.
9. The FIRST airmail stamp involved in a first flight accident.
10. The FIRST U. S. stamp to be commemorated on its 50th year.

Aviation In 1918

To more fully appreciate C3, let's try to set the stage as it was 50 years ago.

The United States was involved in its first global war. Our country declared war on April 17, 1917. In retrospect, this marked two extremely significant turning-points in our history. First, World War I ushered in a new life for the United States, culminating in our present position as a world leading power. Secondly, it saw aviation enter into our lives.

The Wright Brothers had made their first short flight. In the decade that followed, aviation was mainly experimental and a sport indulged in by a few stunt flyers, who wanted to thrill people with their first sight of "the flying machine." There were, however, some farsighted men, who visualized 2 essential uses for airplanes. In wartime, they could have great strategic value. During the more normal peacetime, the airplane could revolutionize our lives and our commerce by the fast transportation of people, freight and mail.

Airmail First Proposed in 1910

It is not generally known that as early as 1910, bills appropriating money for airmail were introduced in the U.S. Congress. They were greeted on the floor of the Congress with derision and laughter. One Congressman in a speech said that in view of the way the Post Office Department was operating, it should

"get down to earth rather than put its head in the sky."

But there were fortunately some who were not bothered by all this ridicule. They continued to urge the adoption of an airmail service in the United States. A few U. S. Congressmen and Senators persisted by introducing bills for a regular air post.

When in April, 1917, our country declared war, this seemed to forecast a long delay for civilian airmail until victory was achieved. It was generally believed in this country that the war would not be a short one. Our country was totally unprepared for a global conflict. "Preparedness" became our watchword. For the first time in our history, this country entered into a wartime economy. Also, for the first time since our Civil War, young men were being conscripted for our Armed Forces. This was the year the draft began.

American industry was being converted to produce the tools of war. Many people left their regular jobs for work in munition plants, shipyards and other wartime occupations.

In 1917, there was no U. S. Air Force. We had only a few planes and experienced men to fly them. This was in an Aviation Section, a branch of the Signal Corps of the U. S. Army. There were only 55 old training planes.

The European countries had been waging war since the summer of 1914. Great Britain, France and Germany had been demonstrating more and more the importance of the airplane as a wartime machine. Our enemy, Germany, had used some of her airships, the Zeppelins, to drop bombs over England. Aviation had brought the war to civilians.

We had to catch up. Industry was pushed to produce more planes. The Army's Signal Corps sought many more young men to train as flyers.

All attention was focused on winning the war. That victory would be denied the United States and its Allies was not the thought of one American.

Under such conditions, a U. S. Senator early in 1918 again introduced a bill to inaugurate and maintain a regular airmail service. He explained that this would make for faster communication, especially between the government in

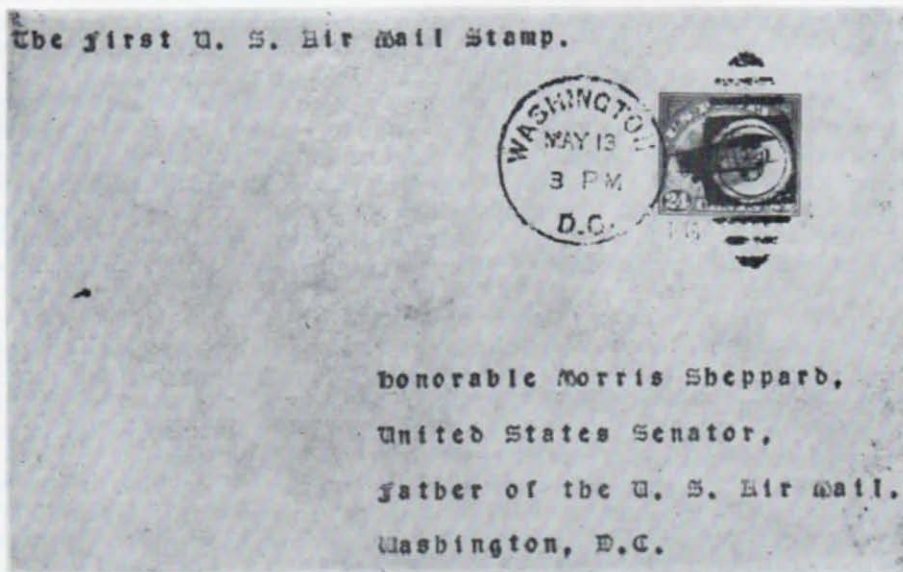


Fig. 2. The only known first-day, May 13, 1918, cover (the 2 other known first-days are postal cards). It was sent to the "Father of the U. S. Air Mail," Senator Morris Sheppard.

Washington, D. C. and the important industrial centers where the tools of war were being manufactured. The Senator was the Hon. Morris Sheppard of Texas; this explains the reason why he was called "The Father of the U. S. Air Mail" (see Figure 1).

On May 6, 1918, a bill was passed by both Houses of Congress to establish an airmail service in our country. On May 11th, President Woodrow Wilson signed the bill into law. 2 days later, on May 13, 1918, the first airmail stamp was issued.

A Rush Job

On May 9, 1918, the U. S. Post Office Department sent out its first postal notice for "a Special Stamp For Aeroplane Mail." At that time, it was called an "aeroplane." Seldom in the history of our country had a stamp to be produced in such a short time. It had to be ready for sale on May 13th (see Figure 2) and for the public's use on May 15, 1918.

The few philatelic students who study and know the history of United States stamps look back upon the first 2 decades of the 20th century as a most interesting one. The public demand for postage stamps was greatly increasing, and the government's printing facilities had struggled to keep up with the growing demand. Consequently, experiments constantly were tried to improve and speed up the printing, perforating, the inks, the gum and the paper used for our stamps.

Even in those days, people were pointing to the stamps of foreign countries to show how much more attractive their designs were than ours. But the government countered that this was impossible. A 2-color stamp took very much longer to print and also its production is much more expensive. Since 1901, there were only one-color stamps. The first change came in 1918 with the new high denominations, the \$2 (No. 523) and the \$5 (No. 524). Since the demand for such high face value stamps would be less, they could be bi-colored.

A Bi-Color Stamp

The new airmail stamp had to attract attention. A drab, one-color adhesive would not do this. This explains why C3 was printed with 2 colors. It is a tribute to America's industrial efficiency that the first airmail stamp was ready for use as planned—for the first flights on May 15, 1918 between New York and Washington with stops at Philadelphia to leave off or pick up mail.

The logical choice for an outstanding design on the first airmail stamp was an airplane. The type of plane chosen was the famous Jenny. Its technical name was a Curtiss JN-4 with a 150 h.p. engine, the one being used by the Army's Signal Corps as a training plane. It was decided to show the Jenny plane on the stamp in flight travelling from right to left.

The words "Air Mail" were not incorporated into the design. The picture of the plane was deemed sufficient to show it was to be used for the special airmail.

The First Printing

It is very important to know that C3 was printed and then sold in 3 different ways. The reason for this was the purchase of the error sheet of 100 with the inverted centers on the second day that the stamp was on sale—May 14, 1918.

Wanting to make the first airmail stamp distinctive, it was decided not only to have it with 2 colors but also using the larger size of the \$2 and \$5 stamps.

All other U. S. postage stamps in 1918 were the smaller size. They were printed on 400-subject plates which, in turn, were divided into 4 panes of 100 for sale to the public. (See *Scott's United States Stamp Catalogue, Specialized*, the Introduction, "Information For Collectors").

Because of its larger size, the first airmail stamp could not be printed on the usual 400-subject printing plates. The most authoritative reference book on the

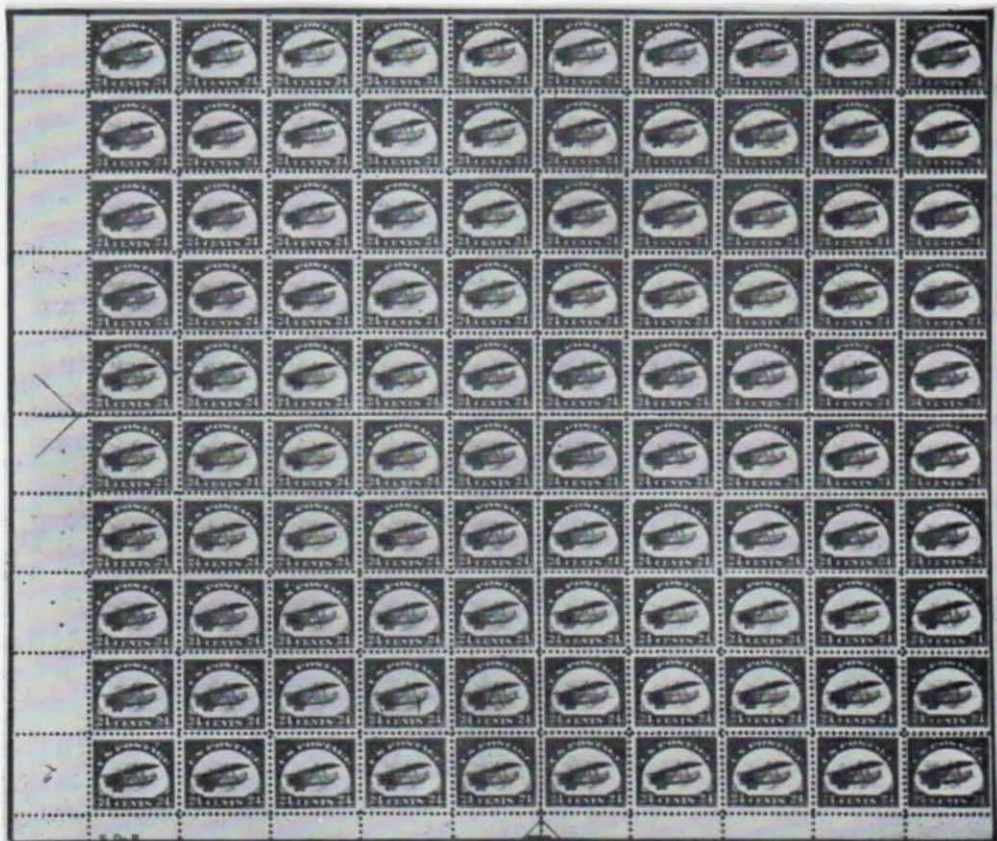


Fig. 3. Sheet of 100 of C3 FIRST PRINTING-FIRST CUTTING. There are no plate numbers, because the top margin was cut off.

stamps of this period is "Johl's U. S. 20th Century Postage Stamps." The printing of C3 is described as follows:

"This stamp was printed and issued in sheets of one hundred subjects. Being bi-colored, two plates were necessary—one for the frame and one for the vignette. The frame plate was divided into panes of twenty five by horizontal and vertical guide lines terminated by arrows. Inside the top arrows there was a solid arrow with the point facing the outside of the plate. There was a similar marker on the vignette plate which was used to properly key the design. There was only one plate number to each plate. On the frame plate the number was above the second stamp to the right of the top arrow, while the vignette plate number was in a corresponding position to the left of the solid arrow."

A practical problem arose. Due to experience with the new 1918 \$2 and \$5 stamps, post office clerks were complaining that the sheets were too large to fit their sale folders, causing them to curl. Consequently, it was decided to cut off 2 of the 4 sheet margins before sending out the sheets of C3 to the post offices for public sale.

At first, the top and the right sheet margins were cut off, leaving only the left and bottom ones. The top sheet margin had the 2 plate numbers. This was cut off, so that it was impossible to buy plate number blocks or singles of the first airmail stamp (see Figure 3).

(To Be Continued)

AERO PHILATELIST HANDBOOKS

One Going, One Gone

5 AVAILABLE

Because of requests from many members, it has been a longtime practice to bind some parts of our publications soon after they have been distributed. 50 copies of each number are bound together into an attractive handbook. Usually, three volumes of the magazine are bound and sold as a unit with an INDEX.

During 1968, the BLUE BOOK, the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS Volumes 1 and 2, was sold out. Also, only two copies of the BLACK BOOK, the AERO PHILATELIST'S NEWS, 1946-53, Vols. 1-8 Complete with a separate Index, are still available.

There is no longer a complete stock of back numbers to bind additional BLACK and BLUE BOOKS.

Furthermore, the stock of the RED BOOK, the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS Volumes 3-4-5, now is only 10. At the rate that the books have been selling, the RED BOOK probably will be sold out within a year or so.

Listed below are the books that are available.

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RUSSIA

Air Fleet Labels

A Revised Listing (Part 4)

By FRED W. SPEERS

(Continued from Page 28)

1923 Semi-Official Set

In addition to Chita having had an O.D.V.F. club, one also existed in Irkutsk and as early as 1923 in Vladivostok in the Coastal Province. Although no Air Fleet labels have been attributed to either of those chapters, Vladivostok was place of origin of a semi-official charity air mail set of twelve and four imperforates on July 28, 1923.

The set is erroneously described in most specialized catalogues as having been issued by Far Eastern Republic. This is not the case, because the two-year-old Far Eastern Republic was dissolved on November 17, 1922, when Maritime Province region passed under control of R.S.F.S.R.

Vladivostok O.D.V.F. is known to have cooperated in preparations for the issuance of the set and for the 144-mile round trip to Spassk-Primorsk. Set consists of old Tsarist stamps overprinted in red with a biplane flying to the left and Vladivostok, 1923, between it and the new value of 20 kopecks.*

FAR EASTERN DISTRICT

1. No face value stated. Circular format, 46 mm in diameter. Lithographed in black on square-cut paper sized about 48 mm on a side. Design somewhat resembles that of Zlatoust cachet. Name of Society of Friends of Air Fleet is on inside of rim of circle. Within this is another circle with design showing biplane flying toward upper right with sun's rays behind it. Beneath it are letters "C.C.C.P." and half the sun is visible above the horizon. Beneath the sun is another inscription reading "Working People Build the Air Fleet." These were printed on the backs of discarded forms. Imperforate. No gum. (Fig. 100) C-D

ADDITIONAL SEALS AND RECEIPTS

Mention has been made in the foregoing compilation of various seals and receipt forms used by Osoaviakhim chapters. (See sections headed Northwest District, Ukraine, Kremenchug, Odessa and Crimea.)

Seals for main part stated no face value. They were rectangular in format and came in various sizes. Usually, they bore some inscription like "Strengthen Defense of C.C.C.P." Many were used, starting in 1923, by aviation and chemical defense clubs as receipts for contributions or membership dues. Their designs have been described in the above-mentioned sections. Acknowledgement of payment was sometimes made by filling in of rubber-stamped form on reverse.

One rarely seen design, in black on orange colored paper, showed two persons wearing gas masks standing behind a crossed rifle with inscription

*The set is listed and illustrated in the Sanabria Catalogue under "Far Eastern Republic."



Figs. 100-110.

“Osoaviakhim Indivisible Defense” below. (Fig. 101)

Still other receipts appeared in different forms. Notable among these is series of small (10 x 15 mm) labels for pasting in membership booklets or sometimes even on larger labels. Their design included face values, and they were issued on white paper perforated 12 or imperforate. They probably made their first appearance in 1924. A summary of this series, all lithographed, follows:

- 1 Kopeck. Blue. Perforated. Soldier's head. (Fig. 102)
 15 Kopecks. Orange. Perforated and imperforate. Head in gas mask. (Fig. 103)
 20 Kopecks. Violet. Perforated. Gas mask over denomination between two vertical panels. (Fig. 104)
 50 Kopecks. Green. Perforated and imperforate. Worker's head with factory in background. (Fig. 105)
 75 Kopecks. Bluish black. Perforated. Airplane. (Fig. 106)
 1 Ruble. Black. Perforated. (Soldier's head, like 1 kopeck design, Fig. 102.)
 A smaller label (9 x 10.5 mm) also was issued. Its face value was 15 kopecks show beneath crossed rifle and propeller blade with circle bearing Osoaviakhim inscription behind them. It was printed in red and perforated 12. (Fig. 107) Examples of small R.S.F.S.R. O.D.V.F. receipts also may be seen in Fig. 11A and Fig. 78.

There also was a series of three, sized 10 x 14 mm. All had the same design consisting of seal of Osoaviakhim and denomination beneath, which were 20 and 25 kopecks and 1 ruble. These also were printed in red on white paper and were perforated 12. (Fig. 108)

Other receipts included one for 5 rubles inscribed "All-Russian Committee



Figs. 111-116.

to Help Invalids of All-Union Central Executive Committee Wounded Air-
men." It was black, red and yellow on white paper and had a face value of 5
rubles and alongside was year date, 1923. Its design showed airplane going
down in flames against night sky while another marked with red stars flies past.
Inscription mentioned above is in panel below that design. The label's size is
27 x 49 mm. It is perforated 11. (Known postmarked Tura 7 December 1923).
(Fig. 109)

There was also a square (15 mm on a side) 10 kopeck label issued by Russian
Red Cross Society. Printed in red and blue it showed a white airplane with
Red Cross on each wing and face value beneath each wing. (Fig. 110)

Still another seal or label in circular format appeared in the late 1920's in
the Eastern Siberia region. This was lithographed in greenish black and light
brown. The design, enclosed in a circle 34 mm in diameter, shows a youthful
appearing man holding a rifle while standing in a field of wheat. Behind him
at left are factories and, at right, a thatch-roofed cottage. Overhead fly two
biplanes to the left. No face value is given, but the lower half of the circle
consists of the inscription "Strengthen Defense." Printer's legends in light
brown are in lower corners. One at left indicates it was prepared at Ulety (a
small town about 40 miles southwest of Chita). No gum. Imperf. (Fig. 111).

An Osoaviakhim label with no face value stated was issued by the workers
of the Railroad Transport Union. Its design, measuring 18 x 24 mm, shows an
adaptation of the aerochemical aviation symbol (a five-pointed star, crossed
propellers, figure in gas mask beneath but instead of an airplane above the star
a railroad is pictured). This appears in a small circle at the bottom of the
rectangular design which consists of a heavy straight-line border enclosing the
letters "DTS" and the word "Osoaviakhim." In red letters on the black border
is an inscription to the effect that a strong transport system fortifies defense
of the land. It is lithographed in red and black on light brownish paper perforated
11¼. No gum. (Fig. 112)

Bank and Factory Labels

One of the largest labels (46 x 56 mm) was that issued in 1923 by the In-
dustrial-Commercial Bank of Moscow. It is lithographed in red, yellow, black
and blue. Centered at the top of its design is a large machine wheel with teeth

MEETING NOTICES

Every month except July or August

Chapter No. 1 — New York, N. Y.

**Meets second Thursday each month at 8:00 P. M. in the
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bearing the inscription identifying its source of origin. Across that is a single propeller blade. Beneath the wheel is a reproduction in blue of a 6 kopecks stamp of 1923. Five vertical broad yellow lines and four inverted chevron lines in red form the background. A printer's legend is at lower right. Perforated 11¼. (Fig. 113)

The Triangle factory, manufacturer of airplane tires and other aviation material, is credited with issuance of another large (41 x 55 mm) label. Lithographed in blue, gray, yellow and orange, it depicts an early-type monoplane flying to left against a background of colored clouds. A three-line inscription citing the products mentioned appears in white letters against a blue cloud beneath the plane. Clear gum. Perforated 11¼. (Fig. 114)

Two match factories also undertook to publicize the enthusiasm for aviation by adapting to it the designs for their match box labels. The Giant factory at Kaluga used a label 47 x 35 mm to depict a crudely drawn dirigible flying to left. It also stated the price per box of 3 kopecks. The label was lithographed in black on yellow paper colored through. (Fig. 115)

The second match factory to use such a label was the State Match Monopoly at Zlynka Station (a few miles east of Gomel). Its label was lithographed in green and red on white paper. The entire label measured 33 x 53 mm. Its design showed a two-engine monoplane in red flying toward upper left over a green wreath across which is the word of "Revpod" (revolutionary way). On the sides are inscriptions for "Government Standard 1820-45" and "50 Sticks." (Fig. 116)

— The End —

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Book And Catalogue Review

Balloon Posts. A World Catalogue, 1969 Edition by Drs. Jon Boesman of The Hague, Netherlands. 260 pages. Over 400 illustrations. Hard cover. Published by The Netherlands Aeronautical Museum, Statenlaan 2A, The Hague, Holland. Price \$10, but \$6.50 if for 10 or more copies.

Aero-philately really began many, many years ago with mail carried by balloon and pigeons. A popular and well-known specialty is the balloon mail from the 1870 Siege of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War. There have been some fine handbooks and catalogues on this. But one does not see many world-wide balloon collections these days. The reason probably is a lack of a competent up-to-date reference book.

The past specialized air post catalogues did list and price some balloon covers such as Austria's Siege of Przemyśl (see Mr. Gravelat's article in this magazine on page 37). But in this new catalogue, the greater portion of the listings of balloon material to collect is not in any other catalogue, to our knowledge.

The author, Jon Boesman, is a world-famous balloonist. So is his wife, Nini. LIFE magazine two years ago had a long, special feature about seeing Holland by balloon with Jon and Nini Boesman. Therefore, the compiler of this catalogue knows his field. Also, Jon Boesman has been the president of F.I.S.A. since its founding back in 1960; he has many friends in America.

A special attraction at international philatelic exhibitions, including those only for air post, has been a flight by the Boesmans with special balloon mail. This reviewer was invited by Drs. Boesman to witness three of these and took many color slides of the flights.

There are over 2,000 items listed and priced in this catalogue. Although authored by a Hollander and printed in Holland, it is in English and the prices are in US dollars. Many of the flights are unfamiliar to this reviewer. The few that are, seem to have been intelligently treated.

This catalogue devotes seventeen pages to the balloon mail of 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War. Some of the illustrations add much color. No new information was found that is not in previous catalogues and handbooks. The prices have been brought up-to-date, which is important.

Under United States, the famous 1859 Jupiter Balloon cover, now in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., commemorated in 1959 by Scott U.S. C54, is listed and illustrated. This reviewer was somewhat disappointed with the all-too-brief references to a real aero-philatelic gem, the 1877 Buffalo Balloon adhesive (Sanabria U.S. No. S1). Also, Drs. Boesman should have recorded that there are now three covers known with this adhesive, not two. Furthermore, the illustration of a tête-bêche pair of the stamp is not good, far below the better quality of most of the other illustrations throughout the catalogue.

This is a most attractive and informative book from cover to cover. It should be carefully studied by those aero-philatelists seeking a new field. One could even omit the 1870 Siege of Paris balloon covers and still find a vast amount of material to collect. This reviewer did not know that there was so much, and he believes others may have the same impression. One warning, however. The field is not for the stamp collector. It is aero-postal history; there are just a few Balloon stamps.

Over a period of many years, aero-philately has been blessed with the publication of some fine handbooks and catalogues. This latest reference book from Holland is a welcome addition. (H.M.G.)

UNITED STATES

A Real Mystery Cover

Figure 1 shows the front of an entire cover that has been in the possession of our member, Ezra D. Cole, the well-known professional in Nyack, N. Y. In spite of his many years of experience with U. S. stamps and covers, this item has stumped him.

The cover was mailed from Bermuda with two postage stamps seen at the left paying 9 pence postage. The cancellation on them is very indistinct, revealing nothing especially not the time of use.

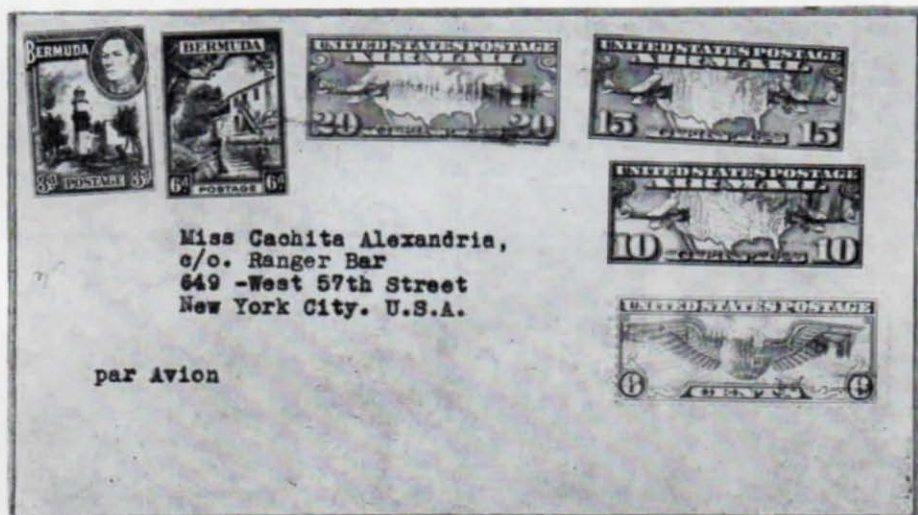


Figure 1. (Photos by Boutrelle)

The other four United States air mail stamps add to the mystery. The top three on the right are the complete set of the 1926 Map stamps (Scott C7-9). The bottom 6-cent stamp is the orange air mail issued in 1934 (Scott C19). All four stamps have the same straight-line cancellation "Received without contents at..." Figure 2 shows this with the color of the stamp reduced in order to see this cancellation.

The total U. S. air mail postage amounts to 51 cents. Even if these four stamps had a regular dated post office cancellation, who can explain the rate?

A Hindenberg Cover?

Mr. Cole has shown this cover to several philatelists who are known as top

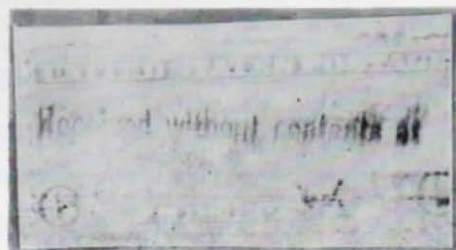


Figure 2.

students of U. S. air mail rates in order to find the proper explanation. He can report no success.

Mr. Philip Silver, the Assistant Editor of the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS and a well-known student of U. S. air mails, had one explanation, which he thought might be the answer but even he doubted if his explanation was correct. Mr. Silver reasoned that since the 6-cent orange air mail stamp was issued on June 30, 1934, the use of this cover must be dated after that time.

The cover could not have been intended for Graf Zeppelin mail, even though this German airship made flights in 1934 and 1935. There were no Zeppelin flights from the United States in 1934 nor 1935, only between Europe and South America.

There is a possibility that this cover was intended to be flown by the "Hindenburg." This airship made several flights to the United States both in 1935 and 1936.

But Mr. Philip Silver sees no evidence of this. If the writer of the Figure 1 cover had wanted it to fly from Lakehurst, N. J. to Germany, he surely would have marked it "via Hindenburg." Furthermore, the rate was 40 cents, not 51 cents as prepaid on this cover.

Can anyone solve this mystery cover?



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FOR BOOKS ON AIR MAILS

See Page 48



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The Scadta surcharges of Ecuador were listed in Sanabria back in 1936; Scott first listed them in 1958.

Chile #1-5, listed in Sanabria in 1936, appeared in Scott in 1948.

The famous Earhart & Sanabria issues of Mexico were first included by Scott in 1956 . . . some twenty years after Sanabria had listed them.

The Air Fund issues of Turkey, in Sanabria since 1937, appeared in Scott for the first time in 1965.

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