

VOLUME V, No. 1

JULY, 1957

THE AERO
PHILATELIST ANNALS

★ ★ A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE ON AERO-PHILATELY ★ ★

This Issue Features:

- HONDURAS 1930 PROVISIONALS
- BULGARIA 1932 AIR POST EXHIBIT
- INDEX TO VOL. IV
- EDITORIALS

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Vol. V



No. 1

THE

AERO

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Henry M. Goodkind, Editor

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Already Volume Five

Time passes so quickly. Why, it seems that as if it were only yesterday when work upon the production of Vol. I, No. 1 of THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS was started. Now noting Vol. V, No. 1 on the cover of this number, one is reminded that it was back in 1953 when the initial work for this magazine began. Already it has reached its FIFTH volume. This seems hard to believe.

The editor has never tried to keep track of the total number of hours he has devoted to the writing, preparation, proofreading and production of this magazine. He would not even hazard a guess, but it might well run into thousands of hours. It has been hard work. But at the same time, it has been enjoyable, because this is the keystone of philately. Stamp collecting must first and foremost be pleasant. Anyone, who regards philately otherwise, is bound for disappointment and discontentment even if his livelihood depends upon it.

It is essential to remember that all who have written or worked for the AERO PHILATELIST'S publications have never received one red cent in payment. This is remarkable in a land whose citizens are alleged to be so "money mad". This, therefore, is a tribute to philately, a great hobby.

With Vol. V a reality, we can envision a Vol. X, XX or XXX of THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS with a continued quantity and quality of work. It will continue as a LABOR OF LOVE. Many work for good salaries, but still are dissatisfied because they do not enjoy their work. But here one sees nothing but voluntary efforts done for the enjoyment of collecting air mail stamps. Let no one ever forget that this publication is a completely amateur job.

With such a vivid memory of the first number of this magazine, the editor picked



THE highest price ever paid for a single air mail stamp, \$11,500, was paid in a recent Harmer Rooke auction for the 25c on 10c "Black Honduras." The previous record price, \$5,300 (paid in 1939 for this very stamp), was broken **twice** when Harmer Rooke sold the Oscar R. Lichtenstein collection in June. The other record-breaker was the \$6,250 paid for Newfoundland's Balbo Flight \$4.50 on 10c yellow (San. #31).

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EDITORIALS

up a copy of Vol. I, No. 1 of THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS to refresh his memory. The very first editorial was reread. Since action is said to speak louder than words, let us now repeat the final paragraph:

"The editor and his staff will strive to produce one of the finest philatelic magazines. We shall not heap self praise upon ourselves. Our reputation and standing will be established by the consensus of all opinions, not our own nor those of a few loyal members. THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS hopes to become *the authoritative source for information on air mail stamps*. Our greatest measure of success will be when people all over say: 'About this air mail stamp, let us consult what AERO PHILATELIST's wrote about it.' That is all sought. Our expectations are great. We anticipate a long and successful future for this magazine, if the policies and ideas expressed in this editorial are scrupulously carried out. H. M. G."

Thus after five years, we can only repeat our former words. What else can one do to produce a good philatelic publication than try to write accurately about stamps and related philatelic material? Other stamp publications may have a different approach. They too must render a service to their readers. But that does not shake our firm conviction that for a philatelic publication to be useful, it must devote itself to the bedrock of philately—THE STAMP.

Still The Champion

The American stamp market in 1956 and again in 1957 has seen some great philatelic rarities sold at auction. This has caused some to incorrectly print—"Record Prices Established". No, not yet.

An air mail stamp established the record auction price on the American market back in 1944 when the position block of eight of the 24c air mail with inverted centers of the United States from the Estate of Col. Green sold for \$27,000.00 by Harmer, Rooke. Incidentally, this piece is no longer in existence, the 1944 buyer having broken it into a plate number block of four, an arrow pair (shown in H. R. Harmer's advertisement on the inside back cover of this magazine, Vol. IV, No. 3) and two singles.

Furthermore as W. W. Wylie, editor of "Western Stamp Collector", wrote in his newspaper on March 15, 1957, since the 1944 record price of \$27,000.00 two other blocks of the U. S. 1918 inverted center air mails were sold at public auction, both bringing prices over \$20,000.00.

The only record so far established was by a single stamp. The Baden 9 Kr. error on cover fetched \$20,000.00 in one of the 1956 Caspary auctions.

It is possible that this \$27,000.00 top might be beaten in the next few years. But so far an air mail stamp is still champ. Also one must bear in mind the much lower purchasing power of our dollar in 1944 compared to now.

Certain partisans of classic issues like to debate with some collectors of 20th century stamps over the matter of which issues have more philatelic stability and worth. Although these arguments continue, and no doubt will continue, they strike us as silly. Both groups have much to recommend. No one should deny the enormous appeal of the older classic stamps. But no matter how intense one's interest, this should not blind him to other attractions. Certainly the modern stamps have a wide appeal.

But because the Caspary collections have no modern stamps, some have seized upon the outstanding price realizations as proof of the premier position in philately of classic issues. There is much to be said for this, providing that the modern stamps are not used as an unfavorable comparison. Classic issues have enough stability and appeal to stand upon their own merits. Therefore, the collector preferring 20th century stamps can proudly point to the record auction price of \$27,000 that was established by a modern air mail stamp. In addition, this same stamp, the U. S. 24c air mail inverted center of 1918, has established prices for the two runner-up positions.

HONDURAS

The 1930 Air Mail Provisionals

"A Comedy of Errors"¹

By IRVING I. GREEN

Introduction

For a better understanding of this episode in the philatelic history of the Republic of Honduras, here, first, is some basic information concerning the organization of the national executive branch, the administration of mails, the production and sale of postal values.

The President is the administrative head of the Government. The six Departments comprising the Executive Branch, each under a Minister and Under-Secretary appointed by the President, are Fomento (Development), which includes Agriculture; Public Works, and Labor; Government made up of Justice, Sanitation, and Charity; War, Navy, and Aviation; Hacienda (Treasury), which consists of Public Credit and Commerce; Public Education; and Foreign Relations.²

The Departments of Development, Government, and Treasury are directly concerned with postal affairs. The Minister of Development is nominally responsible for the administration of mails, although he delegates this authority to a presidentially-appointed Director General of Posts. The Department of Government prepares and promulgates the executive decrees that authorize the production and sale of postal paper. This same

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department controls the Litografía Nacional—National Printing Office—where the postage stamps are made.

The Treasury Department assumes a significant responsibility in postal matters through two of its agencies; the Tribunal Superior de Cuentas (T. S. de C.) and the Contaduría General de Especies (C. G. de E.) de la Dirección General de Rentas.

The T. S. de C. is the most important Treasury Agency. Its principal duty is the examination of the financial accounts of all government officials, who administer public funds. This includes those associated with the production and sale of postage stamps as well as the transmission and distribution of mails. This tribunal of eight qualified accountants is appointed by the unicameral Congress, not by the President.

The Contaduría General de Especies de la Dirección General de Rentas is the Auditing of Public Properties Section in the Revenue Division. Here both current and demontized postage stamps are stored. This agency is also entrusted with the distribution of the postal values to its own branches throughout the republic where they are placed on sale.

Postal Regulations

There are many regulations pertaining to the production, sale, and use of postage stamps. Some of special interest are:

Postal Regulations, Book 5, The Administrative Service.

Article 584. The postal values will be produced at the Litografía Nacional under the immediate supervision of the Treasury Department, and, in arranging for their printing, the following rules must be observed, if possible:

1. That the sizes, colors, inscriptions and other details of the postal values are the same as those which are specified in the Executive Decree.
2. That materials (ink and paper) which are used for such postal values are of such nature that their forgery is quite impossible and that they can withstand the action of weather without harm to color and paper.

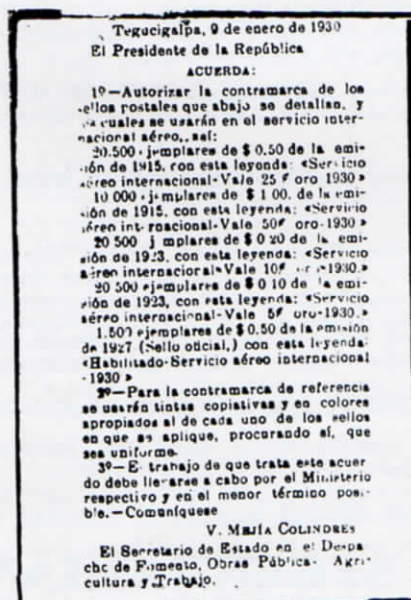


Fig. 1. The original decree in Spanish as it was published in "La Gaceta" of Sept. 8, 1930.

HONDURAS

3. That their printing be done on a single occasion and continuously, and in a quantity sufficient for at least one year of use.

Article 585. The Director General of Posts must suggest to the Department of Fomento (Development) the issue of postal values required at least six months before the date they are to be placed in circulation, bearing in mind the regulations of the Universal Postal Union.

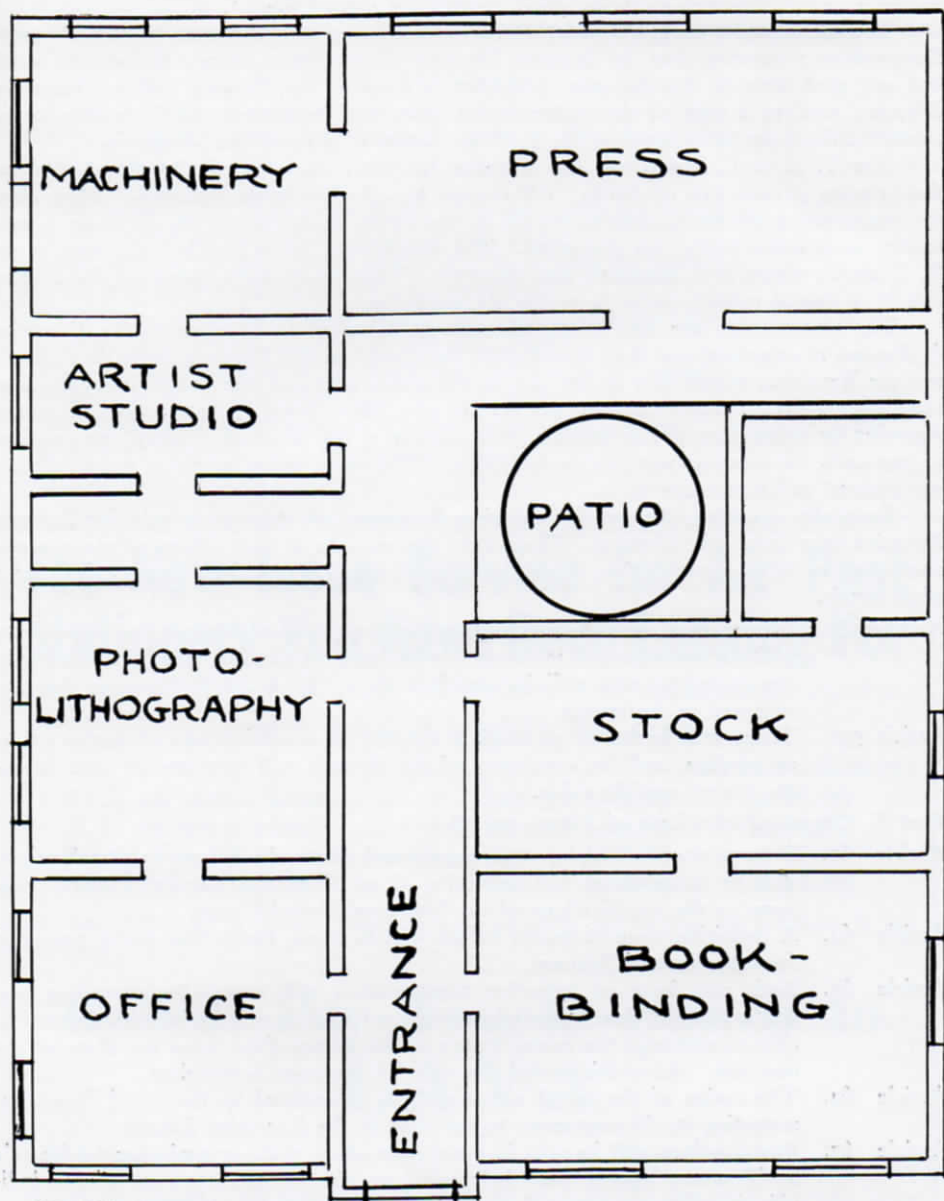


Fig. 2. Hand-drawn sketch of the floor plan of the National Printing Works in Honduras as it existed in 1930 to show how antiquated its quarters had become to produce satisfactory work.

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The Production and Distribution of Provisional Stamps

The Director General of Posts applies to his immediate superior, the Department of Development, for a new issue of stamps. If the application is approved, that department consults the inventory of stamps stored at the Treasury's *Direccion General de Rentas* (Revenue Division) and sends a request, listing stamps to be overprinted to the Department of Government for an Executive Decree. After the decree is prepared and signed by the President, one copy goes to the Department of Development and another to the Director of the National Printing Office (*Litografia Nacional*).

The Department of Development sends a transcript of the decree to the Treasury Department requesting that its Revenue Division release from storage the stamps specified and send them to the Revenue Inspector on duty at the Printing Office. Here the Director receives a copy of the decree direct from the Department of Government and submits a duplicate to an agent of the T. S. de C. also on duty at the *Litografia*.

The T. S. de C. Agent and the Revenue Inspector supervise the overprinting when the printing presses are available. All stamps are checked when received. Then after the overprinting all the quantities should be the same, as no defectives, trials or errors, known as printers waste, are discarded. The overprinted lot is bundled and sent to the T. S. de C. where it is examined and recorded. Then every sheet dated on the reverse side by a special rubber stamp to certify its inspection.⁴

The stamps now are sent to the *Contaduria General de Especies* in the *Direccion de Rentas*, re-examined and then stored until distributed to the Revenue Agencies throughout the Republic; where they go on sale to the public provided the quantity bought is at least twenty-five. Stamps intended for sale at post offices must be purchased at Revenue Agencies by authorized postal officials, who receive a 6% discount. They are required to pay cash, the same as any private individual. The same terms accorded postal officials are granted to *Estanco* operators.

Generally speaking, the provisional airmail stamps of 1930 were sold by Revenue Agencies near large city airports. They were not on sale at post offices unless a postal employee, as an accommodation, bought and sold some as a private transaction for a slight profit.

Article 586. After a new issue of postal values has been released for sale, correspondence will not be admitted if franked with those of the old issue, in which case the correspondence will be struck with a "T" mark for postage due and returned to the sender.

Article 592. There will be issued as small a number of denominations of postal values as possible, and the employees of the Branch will take special care to use the lowest possible value.

Part X, Organic Postal Law of March 23, 1898.

Article 61. Postage stamps, envelopes, wrappers and postcards, known as postal values, will be made under the authority of an Executive Decree and will conform to the specifications of the Universal Postal Union.

Article 62. A definitive issue of postal values will be made every four years computed from the first of January.

Article 63. Each new issue of definitive postal values will cancel the preceding one, and a term of three months will be fixed so that private individuals may be able to exchange the postal values of the demonetized issue for those of the new one. After this period the right of exchange is forfeited.

Article 64. The design of the postal values will be determined by the Chief Executive, according to circumstances, at the time of the Executive Decree.

Article 67. Postal values will be sold in every post office, without prejudice to the sale by Treasury agents, and their sale can also be entrusted to private individuals—*Estanco* owners⁸—by special arrangement with the government.

Article 68. Six percent on their receipts is allowed to those entrusted by the government with the sale of postal values.

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The Executive Decree

Early in 1930 a genuine need existed for air mail stamps for the recently inaugurated Pan American Airways (P. A. A.) service. A definitive issue, Scott No. C41/45, had been ordered from the American Bank Note Company of New York, but delivery was not expected for some months.⁵ The Executive Decree of January 9, 1930 provided authorization for emergency relief. This decree, as it was published in *La Gaceta* (the official newspaper) of September 8, 1930, is shown here. (Fig. 1) Translated, it reads:—

The President of the Republic

Tegucigalpa, January 9, 1930

DECREES:

1. Authorization to overprint the postage stamps specified below for use in the international airmail service:

20,500 copies of the \$0.50 value of the 1915 issue, with the legend:

"Servicio aereo internacional—Vale 25c oro—1930."

10,000 copies of the \$1.00 value of the 1915 issue, with the legend:

"Servicio aereo internacional—Vale 50c oro—1930."

20,500 copies of the \$0.20 value of the 1923⁶ issue, with the legend:

"Servicio aereo internacional—Vale 10c oro—1930."

20,500 copies of the \$0.10 value of the 1923 issue, with the legend:

"Servicio aereo internacional—Vale 5c oro—1930."

1500 copies of the \$0.50 value of the 1927 issue (official stamp.), with the legend:

"Habilitado—Servicio aereo internacional—1930."

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4) Iraq 1933 air letter,	San. \$10.00	at \$2.49

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HONDURAS

2. For the overprinting mentioned there shall be used reproducing inks in colors appropriate to each of the stamps to which they are applied provided, however, that they are uniform.
3. The work specified in this decree shall be performed by the proper Department and in the least possible time.—To be published.

V. MEJIA COLINDRES

The Secretary of State in the Department of Development, Public Works, Agriculture and Labor.

S. CORLETO

Decree Analysis and Comments

In 1930, the Honduras silver peso of 100 centavos circulated at a value of approximately 50 cents in United States currency,⁷ the U. S. then being on the gold (oro) standard. As a contribution to clarity, the Honduras values in the decree should have been expressed in centavos instead of the decimal system which conflicts with the customary U. S. nomenclature.

The letter rate via Pan American Airways (P. A. A.) to countries of the Pan American Union⁸ was 25c oro (50 centavos) for each 15 grams ($\frac{1}{2}$ ounce) of weight or fraction thereof, plus the regular surface rate of 6 centavos for the same weight. From the inaugural flight in September 1929 until June 26, 1930, Honduras paid P. A. A. a bulk rate of \$8.00 U. S. currency (gold) for each pound of mail serviced.

Honduras made, distributed, and sold the provisional airmail stamps of 1930 and enforced their proper use. For servicing thirty airmail letters weighing 15 grams each, a total of one pound, Honduras realized the equivalent of \$8.00 U. S. currency, exactly the amount paid P. A. A. Such profit as accrued to Honduras resulted from the "fraction thereof" clause in the rate tariff, plus the additional regular stamp sales as a consequence of the increased volume of mail.

The five provisionals authorized by the decree were not made in the order listed, but in the following sequence,—3, 4, 2, 1, and 5. Their confused production will be expounded chronologically in this article.

The legends specify gold (oro) values as "c" whereas the expression "cts." is used in the overprintings in every instance. Lower case letters are indicated for the words "aereo" and "internacional," but on the stamps they begin with capitals. This is minutiae to be sure, but nevertheless at variance with the letter of the decree.

The last item of the first paragraph specifies a current stamp (Scott No. O87) as its basic, whereas the basic stamps of all the other provisionals had been demonetized. Its legend, too, differs with HABILITADO signifying "qualified for use" which, with the remainder of the surcharge, converted the stamp into an air mail at its face value, 50 centavos.

The basic stamps denominations were not changed by the surcharges. It still cost 10 centavos to buy the 5 cts. oro stamp, 20 centavos for the 10 cts. oro, 50 centavos for the 25 cts. oro, 1 peso for the 50 cts. oro and 50 centavos for the overprinted 50 centavos official. This maintenance of basic values may have been prompted by a desire to comply with U. P. U. regulations as to color. Certainly it facilitated sales, as payment was made on the basis of face value without too much attention being paid to the overprint. This may explain the apparent ease with which errors of surcharge escaped detection.

Paragraphs 2 and 3 are quite explicit, and echo government regulations. Once a decision was reached with regard to the color of surcharge for a certain denomination, only that color was used throughout its entire overprinting. Furthermore, that overprinting was done at one continuous session, although, in some cases, days elapsed between these printing sessions, proved by the T. S. de C. datings rubberstamped on the back of the sheets. A trial printing in a different color was permissible. In the case of these provisionals, these were included and sold as part of the surcharged lot.

HONDURAS

The Litografia Nacional—the National Printing Office—is located in the capital, Tegucigalpa, and is controlled by the Department of Government.⁹ Here all governmental work of a typographical nature is done. Built in the mid-1890's, its facilities had become inadequate by 1930, so that long delays were the rule unless a printing order or decree specified urgency, as was the case in this instance. (See Fig. 2, which is a hand-drawn layout).

The Overprinting

The first group to receive attention was 20,500 stamps (410 sheets of 50 subjects each, arranged 10 x 5) of the 10 centavos 1923 issue (Scott 214). The 5 cts. of 1929 oro surcharge setting had been used a few months previous to make Scott C18. So still being intact, it was altered to read "1930" and applied in red ink, reading up, to make Scott C20. This printing resulted in two outstanding constant errors: "1903" for "1930" in position 39, and reversed "1930" in position 32. One full sheet, a trial, was done with yellow ink;¹⁰ one sheet was basic Scott O78;¹¹ four sheets received inverted surcharges; two sheets were overprinted double; and two sheets were overprinted double, one normal and other inverted. All sheets including the trial and the errors were sent to the T. S. deC. and dated Eno. (Jan.) 24, 1930. Then the entire lot was sent through the prescribed channels to be sold.

Check List

Description	Quantity	Scott No.	1957 Scott Cat.		San. No.	1957 San. Cat.	
			Value			Value	
			Mint	Used		Mint	Used
5 cts. oro on 10 centavos							
blue (R)	20500	C20	\$.25	\$.25	27	\$.25	\$.25
a. 1930 reversed	410	C20a	2.00	—	27a	3.00	—
b. 1903 for 1930	410	C20b	2.00	—	27b	3.00	—
c. Surcharge inverted	200	C20c	3.00	—	27c	5.00	—
d. Double surcharge	100	C20d	2.00	—	27d	10.00	—
e. Double surcharge, one inverted	100	C20e	2.00	—	27e	10.00	—
f. As a. and c.	4	—	—	—	27f	—	—
g. As b. and c.	4	—	—	—	27g	—	—
h. As a. and e. with a. in normal ovp't.	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
i. As a. and e. with a. in invert ovp't	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
j. As b. and e. with b. in normal ovp't	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
k. As b. and e. with b. in invert ovp't	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
l. As a. and d.	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
m. As b. and d.	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
n. Yellow surcharge	50	C20f	250.00	—	28	750.00	750.00
o. As a. and n.	1	—	—	—	28a	1000.00	—
p. As b. and n.	1	—	—	—	28b	1000.00	—
q. Basic Scott #O78	50	C33	250.00	250.00	40	250.00	—
r. As a. and q.	1	C33a	—	—	40a	1000.00	—
s. As b. and q.	1	C33b	—	—	40b	1000.00	—

Next group to be surcharged was that of 20,500 stamps—410 sheets of 50 subjects each, arranged 10x5—of the 20 centavos 1923 issue (Scott 215). The decree specified a

HONDURAS



Photos by Bontrelle.

Fig. 3. Block of 8 of Scott C25c (the inverted surcharge) showing the varieties C25d and 25e (San. No. 32c with varieties San. 32d and 32e).

10c oro surcharge. But after selecting a bright blue ink as best suited for the overprint, the 5cts. oro surcharge setting that made C20 was applied by mistake, errors and all. After some 200 sheets had been overprinted, the "1903" error in position 39 was noticed and corrected. After about 50 more sheets were impressed, the inverted "1930" error was rectified. Thus the remaining 160 sheets, approximately, did not contain these two typographical errors. Included in the overprinted lot was one sheet of the official stamps (Scott O79) which received the surcharge with both errors.

The use of the wrong value in the overprint setting was not noticed at the Printing Office. The lot was sent to the T. S. deC where all the sheets were dated ENE. (JAN.) 20, 1930. Then the mistake became apparent and the entire lot was delivered to the C. G. deE. to be stored until the Printing Office was ready to re-surcharge it with the correct value.

In the meantime a new lot of 20,500 basic 20 centavos 1923 issue stamps was correctly overprinted, dated Feb. 21, 1930 at the T. S. deC, and sent to the C. G. deE. This operation, which made C23, is described in detail later in this article. The reason for mentioning it at this time is due to the fact that six sheets of the 5cts on 20 centavos error lot stored in abeyance at the C. G. deE. were unintentionally mixed with the first bundle of C23's that were sent from that Agency early in April to the Tegucigalpa Administration de Rentas. Not having noticed the inclusion of the six sheets of the 5cts on 20 centavos, one of which was the sheet with the official basic, the bundle was placed on sale. Thus some copies of C20 were sold and used. However the ubiquitous Senor Membreno, about whom some comment will be made later, was able to gather the entire official sheet (C34), two complete sheets of the regular C22, and some of the part sheets.

On July 17, 1930, Membreno in Honduras wrote to Mr. John N. Luff of the Scott Stamp and Coin Company of New York, as follows: "You must make a correction; numbers 420a and 420b [420 corresponds to the present Scott #C22x] should be deleted as the 5/20 error sheets were of the kind without any of the original errors, whilst number 433 [present number C34] has both errors, 1930 reversed and 1903. So please make the correction."

On August 14, 1930, Luff acknowledged receipt of the above letter and wrote:

"I regret to say that in preparing the copy for the next Catalogue I had to make some rearrangement of Honduras air mail stamps and their varieties and I think numbers got considerably mixed so that I am not able to follow your suggestions for certain corrections. Apparently they refer most to the sub-varieties which few people will have, so that there will not be a great deal of harm if the corrections are not made. In fact I don't think it is possible to make any corrections because I know the plates for the Honduras section of the Catalogue have been made." The fact is the Sanabria catalog has continued to list numbers 29a and 29b, which, apparently, do not exist.

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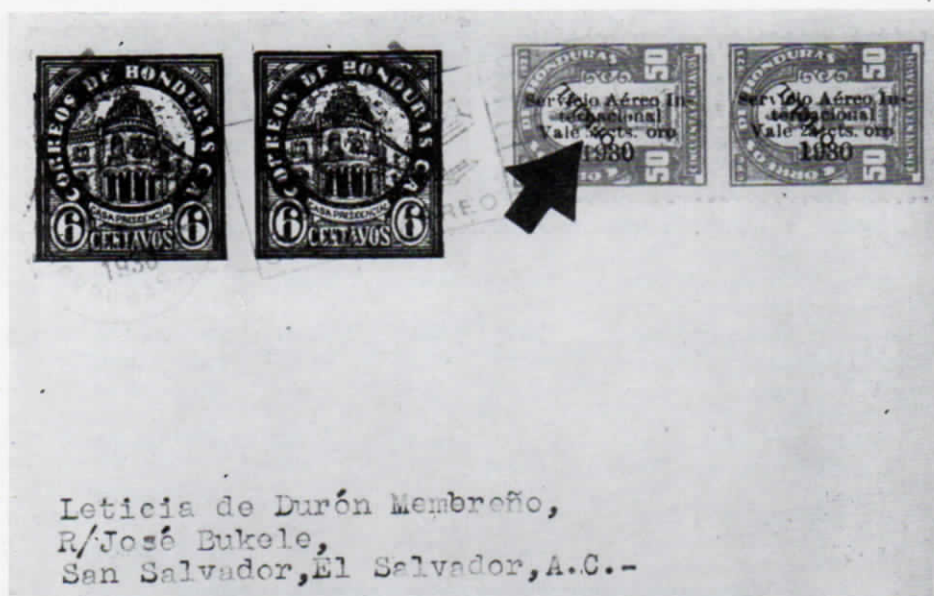


Fig. 4. A cover with a pair of Scott C35 (San. 42a) with the inverted overprint. The arrow points to the error, "55" instead of "25". This cover is backstamped San Salvador, Salvador June 5, 1930.

The next order of business called for surcharging 20,500 stamps—410 sheets arranged 5 x 10—of the 50 centavos 1915 issue (Scott No. 180) with a 25 cts. oro value. The C20 overprint setting that was used by mistake on the 20c centavos 1923 lot to make C22, was now realigned to fit the smaller format of the 50 centavos sheets. This adjustment produced its quota of constant typographical errors, the most important being "ternaioicnal" for "ternacional" in position 5, and "o" for "oro" in position 8. The overprint was applied horizontally in intense black, making Scott No. C25, Sanabria No. 32. (Fig. 3) Four sheets received inverted overprints. The T. S. de C. rear-dated all sheets Feb. 12, 1930, and also stamped them with an impression of its seal (45 mm. diameter). Then the lot was sent through the usual channels and eventually sold to the public.

Check List

Description	Quantity	Scott No.	1957 Scott Cat. Value		San. No.	1957 San. Cat. Value	
			Mint	Used		Mint	Used
25cts. oro on 50 centavos red (Black)	20,500	C25	\$.40	\$.40	32	\$.50	\$.50
a. ternaioicnal	410	C25a	3.00	—	32a	5.00	—
b. o for oro	410	C25b	3.00	—	32b	5.00	—
c. Inverted Surchage	200	C25c	3.00	—	32c	5.00	—
d. As a. and c.	4	C25d	—	—	32d	100.00	—
e. As b. and c.	4	C25e	—	—	32e	100.00	—

The 10,000 stamps of the 1915 one peso value (200 sheets of 50 units each, arranged 5x10) were the next to receive attention. The decree specified a 50c oro surcharge. But, by inadvertence, the 25cts. oro overprint setting that made C25 was used. This blunder provided the same two typographical errors, "ternaioicnal" and "o" for "oro", in position 5 and 8 respectively. Also two sheets received the surcharge in an inverted position.

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Membreno's contention that these two varieties do not exist is partially confirmed by two copies of Scott C22 in the writer's collection. These copies plate in positions 32 and 39, the error locations, yet the stamps have the normal C22 overprint. The check list hereto appended includes these apparently non-existent errors in the manner listed by Sanabria. If some reader is aware of the existence of either of these varieties, please so advise.

Check List

Description	Quantity	Scott No.	1957 Scott Cat. Value		San. No.	1957 San. Cat. Value	
			Mint	Used		Mint	Used
5cts. oro on 20 centavos							
yellow brown (blue ovpt.)	250	C22	\$ 60.00	\$ 60.00	29	\$ 75.00	\$100.00
? (1930 reversed)	—	—	—	—	29a	200.00	—
? (1903 for 1930)	—	—	—	—	29b	200.00	—
c. Basic stamp							
official, Scott O79	50	C34	100.00	100.00	41	400.00	—
d. As c. with 1903 reversed	1	C34a	—	—	41a	1000.00	—
e. As c. with 1903 for 1930	1	C34b	—	—	41b	1000.00	—



Fig. 5. Scott C29 and C29a (San. 36 and 36a) showing the "1930" reversed.

In the previous article "Scott C31 or San. 38," (April 1956 *AERO PHILATELIST ANNALES*), I wrote that half-way through the overprinting the "o" for "oro" error was corrected, but the "ternaicnal" error remained constant. Subsequent research has revealed that the "ternaicnal" error also was corrected at the same time as the "o" for "oro". This finding has considerable bearing on the quantity of some of the varieties, and will be discussed later.

Although the two typographical errors were corrected, nobody realized that the wrong overprint value was being used. The lot passed inspection at the Printing Office and was sent to the T. S. deC. where it received a Feb. 12, 1930 dating. In addition, the back of each sheet was stamped in magenta with the large seal of that agency. It was then that the mistake was discovered. At first, there was talk of destroying the entire lot and overprinting a new supply. But investigation disclosed that the remaining stock of one peso stamps in storage was insufficient.¹² Thus the entire lot with the wrong overprinted denomination was sent to the C. G. deE., to be held there until the presses at the Printing Office were available for the resurcharging to the correct value, 50cts. oro.

The overprinting of the first four values had now been effected, although two had been done incorrectly. As the 10 cts. oro value was not yet available, it was decided to overprint a new batch of 20,500 stamps of the 20 centavos 1923 issue, as decreed. As a preliminary preparation, the C25 overprint setting was re-realigned to accommodate the

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larger 1923 issue format. As could be expected, a constant error was present, this time "55" instead of "25" in position 20. A trial printing, probably by hand-press, was made on three sheets of the 50 centavos 1923 issue (Scott No. O80) that were included by mistake in the lot of 410 sheets of the 50 centavos 1915 issue. These three basic official sheets were noticed at the time of the C25 overprinting and set aside at that time to be surcharged when the setting was re-aligned. Thus, when surcharged, they became Scott C35 or San. 42. They have a dull black overprint, reading up. (Fig. 4) Actually just one sheet had the normal overprint, whereas the other two sheets had it reversed, or reading down. The three sheets were dated¹³ at the T. S. deC. and eventually sold to the public, verified by the fact that these stamps exist on legitimate air mail covers.

Description	Quantity	Check List Scott No.	1957 Scott Cat. Value		San. No.	1957 San. Cat. Value	
			Mint	Used		Mint	Used
25cts. oro on 50 centavos vermilion (Black)	150	C35	\$75.00	\$75.00	42	150.00	—
a. Surcharge reading down	50	—	—	—	42a	150.00	—
b. 55 for 25 in sur- charge reading up	1	—	—	—	—	*	—
c. 55 for 25 in inverted surcharge, reading down	2	—	—	—	—	*	—

* Sanabria lists No. 42 on cover at \$400.00. Sanabria also lists No. 42b as 55c/50c vermilion at \$300.00 but fails to indicate if this is the normal surcharge, reading up, or the inverted one, reading down.

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Next, the C35 overprint setting was altered in value from 25 to 10cts. oro and applied reading up in black to a new lot of 20,500 stamps of the 20 centavos 1923 issue (Scott 215) to fill the void caused by incorrectly overprinting a similar quantity when the C22 was made. This new overprinting which produced Scott C23, San. 30 also provided a constant typographical error, "O" for "10" in position 43. The following varieties were also reported: two sheets were double surcharged; two sheets received inverted surcharges; two sheets were double surcharged with one normal and the other inverted; and one sheet, a trial, was overprinted with violet ink. All sheets were sent to the T. S. deC. and (were) dated Feb. 21, 1930. The lot was then despatched to the C. G. deE. where it remained until early in April, when it was packaged in small bundles and sent to the Administraciones de Rentas (Revenue Agencies) at Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, Tela, and Amapala.

As already noted in the description of the production of the C22 error lot, six sheets of this latter variety, one of which had as its basic stamps the 20 centavos official (Scott O79), were unintentionally mixed with the C23 lot at the C. G. de E. They turned up in the first bundle of C23's sold at the Tegucigalpa Revenue Agency. It is known that some of these C22's were actually used on mail.

Description	Quantity	Check List						
		Scott No.	1957 Scott Cat.		San. No.	1957 San. Cat.		
			Value			Value		
			Mint	Used		Mint	Used	
10cts. oro on 20 centavos								
yellow brown (Black)	20,500	C23	\$.50	\$.40	30	\$.50	\$.50	
a. "O" for "10"	410	C23a	1.50	—	30a	2.00	—	
b. Double surcharge	100	C23b	2.50	—	30b	10.00	—	

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HONDURAS

*c. Double surcharge, one inverted	100	C23c	2.50	—	30c	10.00	—
d. Horiz. pairs imperf. between	10	C23d	—	—	30d	100.00	—
e. Violet surcharge	50	C23e	250.00	—	31	750.00	—
f. As a. and b.	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
*g. As a. and c. with a. normal	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
*h. As a. and c. with a. inverted	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
j. As a. and e.	1	—	—	—	31a	1000.00	—

The next undertaking was conversion of the current 50 centavos official stamps into air mails of the same value. The quantity of 1500, as published in "La Gaceta" some eight months after the overprinting was completed, doubtless differs from that in the original decree. The basic sheets were arranged 15 x 8 so that a number divisible by 120 must have been authorized. Assuming the four figures of 1500 to be part of the correct number, the addition of another zero would make the number 15,000, exactly 125 sheets. Certainly there existed a need for many 50 centavos air mail stamps as that value was the basic tariff rate. Then, too, there was no scarcity of this infrequently used official basic stamp as 100,000 were made under the decree of Oct. 27, 1926.

125 sheets of 120 subjects each (15 x 8) were overprinted horizontally in black in two operations. First an 8 x 8 block at the left side of each sheet was surcharged. Then followed the remaining block of 7 x 8 at the right side, omitting the eighth vertical row of the overprint setting. Errors "nacionai" for "nacional" and "Iuter" for "Inter" in positions 9 and 21 respectively were constant in the 8 x 8 overprint setting. Each error appeared twice in a sheet: "nacioni" in sheet positions 16 and 24, and "Iuter" in sheet positions 37 and 45. Two sheets were supposedly double-surcharged, and one basic sheet had the green and blue colors omitted. The entire lot was dated Feb. 21, 1930 at the T. S. deC. and eventually sold.

Check List

Description	Quantity	Scott No.	1957 Scott Cat. Value		San. No.	1957 San. Cat. Value	
			Mint	Used		Mint	Used
50 centavos yellow, green and blue (Black)	15,000	C37	\$ 1.50	\$ 1.50	46	\$ 1.50	\$ 1.50
a. "nacioni"	250	C37a	5.00	—	46b	7.50	—
b. "Iuter"	250	C37b	5.00	—	46a	7.50	—
c. Double ovpt	240	C37c	5.00	—	46c	15.00	—
d. Green & blue omitted	120	—	—	—	46d	30.00	—
e. As a. and c.	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
f. As a. and b.	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
g. As a. and d.	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
h. As b. and d.	2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Late in February the C. G. de E. sent the two error lots to the Printing Office with instructions to surcharge them again with the authorized values. The lot of 25cts. oro on one peso was the first to be corrected. It was overprinted horizontally in black with a two-line surcharge of large letters reading "VALE 50" in the top line, and "CTS. ORO" in the bottom one. Thus came into being Scott C31, Sanabria 38. During this new

* This writer questions varieties "c," "g," and "h," as all copies examined by him to date do not appear to be genuine.

HONDURAS



Fig. 6. Scott C29 and C29b (San. 36 and 36b) showing "1903" instead of "1930".

printing four sheets received the surcharge inverted. Also two sheets, that had the original 25cts. oro overprint inverted, were now impressed with the new 50cts. oro imprint in normal position.

As stated in the description of the 25cts. oro printing, the two typographical errors, "ternaoincal" and "o" for "oro", were noted and corrected about half-way through that printing. However, there appears to be no record to indicate how many of these six error sheets contained the two typographical errors. Having seen a photograph of variety "g", the "ternaoincal" error on a stamp that later received an inverted 50cts. oro re-surcharge (See AERO PHILATELISTS ANNALS, April 1956), we know there one copy of variety "h", the "o" for "oro" error, appears in the same sheet.

My collection contains a C31 with the 50cts. oro inverted, variety "d", whose basic stamp plates in position 8, the location of the "o" for "oro" error; but the 50cts. oro surcharge is normal. This is proof that one sheet lacked both the typographical errors, varieties "g" and "h". The status of the varieties "e" and "f" in the two sheets of variety "c", and "g" and "h" in the two remaining sheets of variety "d", is unknown to the writer. Information from owners of these varieties, if they exist, will clarify the situation.

Hieing back to the Printing Office; the entire re-surcharged lot was sent to the T. S. de C where it was checked but not redated. Then it was forwarded via usual channels to be sold to the public.

Description	Quantity	Check List		San. No.	1957 San. Cat.		
		Scott No.	1957 Scott Cat. Value		Value		
			Mint		Used	Mint	Used
50cts. on 25cts. on one peso green (Black)	10,000	C31	\$ 2.50	\$ 2.50	38	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.00
a. "ternaoincal"	100	C31a	7.00	—	38a	7.50	—
b. "o" for "oro"	100	C31b	7.00	—	38b	7.50	—
c. 25cts. surcharge inverted	100	C31c	10.00	—	38c	10.00	—
d. 50cts. surcharge inverted	200	C31d	20.00	—	38d	20.00	—
e. As a. and c.	*	C31a	—	—	38e	225.00	—
f. As b. and c.	*	C31f	—	—	38f	325.00	—
g. As a. and d.	*	—	—	—	—	—	—
h. As b. and d.	*	—	—	—	—	—	—

* No copies of the varieties "e" and "f" may exist, or, there may be a maximum of two copies of each. There exists at least one copy each of varieties "g" and "h", of which there may be a maximum of three copies each.

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Finally, early in April, the remaining error lot, the 5cts. oro on 20 centavos 1923 issue, was re-surcharged vertically, reading up, with a large, two-line overprint similar to that of C31 which had been pied. This new overprint read "VALE 10" in the top line and "CTS. ORO" in the bottom one. This made Scott C29, Sanabria 36. (Figs. 5 and 6) The new setting contained 55 subjects arranged 11x5 instead of the required 50 arranged 10x5, so that an extra row of five red overprints appear in the right sheet margin.

Two sheets received the red overprint inverted. Scott and Sanabria do not list the "1903" and "reversed 1930" sub-varieties of this inverted red overprinted stamp. The writer has never seen nor heard of these varieties so am inclined to believe that these two sheets were among those that had the typographical errors corrected during the blue overprinting.

Four sheets of C23, the 10cts. oro on 20 centavos, were inadvertently included with the error lot of C22, the 5cts. oro on 20 centavos, when it was delivered from the C. G. deE. to the Printing Office. These four sheets were also impressed with the red overprint giving us Scott C30, Sanabria 37. (Fig. 7)

Reported from Amapala via the Membreno grapevine were three sheets of C29 with an additional large "VALE 10 CTS. ORO" overprint in black, inverted. One of the sheets had the black overprint doubled. The writer has examined specimens and large pieces from each of these sheets and find that the black overprints had been impressed over the red ones. This finding would rule out the possibility that they were trials in black that were later overprinted with the regular red re-surge. Personally, I am inclined to believe that some of the original type fell into the hands of an unscrupulous person who made a fake overprint setting and, in this instance, could not resist the opportunity to make something new. Additionally were provided plenty fakes of the rare varieties of C29 and C30.

Check List

Description	Quantity	Scott No.	1957 Scott Cat. Value		San. No.	1957 San. Cat. Value	
			Mint	Used		Mint	Used
10cts. oro on 20 centavos, yellow brown (Red)	20,500	C29	\$.40	\$.40	36	\$.50	\$.50
a. 1930 reversed	250	C29a	10.00	—	36a	20.00	—
b. 1903 for 1930	200	C29b	10.00	—	36b	20.00	—
c. Red ovpt. invert	100	C29c	3.00	—	36c	10.00	—
d. Red ovpt. on C23	200	C30	60.00	60.00	37	75.00	—
e. As d. with O for 10	4	C30a	—	—	37	150.00	—

Senor Membreno

Perhaps you have wondered, and rightly so, why such a complete array of mint errors of these provisionals exist today for philatelists; and how such detailed knowledge of them has been acquired. Certainly, had most all of the errors been used on the regular air mail service, many would have been lost to philately. The answer lies in the activities of one man, Raul Duron Membreno, a native of Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Senor Membreno was a dentist by profession. He was educated at the University of Pennsylvania in the United States. He belonged to a highly respected family, one member being a past President of the Republic. In 1933 he was Secretary General of the Postal Department. In addition to following his profession, he was an avid stamp collector and dealer, acting as the Honduras correspondent and source of supply for Mr. John N. Luff of the Scott Stamp and Coin Company of New York from the early 1920's until the mid-1930's. Also Mr. Membreno supplied the Honduras requirements for the leading stamp concerns of Great Britain and Europe. Because of his intimate governmental connections, Membreno was accorded the unusual privilege of "first look and pick" of the various stamp

HONDURAS



Fig. 7. Block of four of C30 (San. 37) where the lower right stamp shows the variety "0" instead of "10".

issues before they were placed on public sale. In a letter to Mr. Luff dated March 25, 1930, he wrote:

"Most times the Administracion de Rentas (Treasury Agency) in Tegucigalpa receives the first consignment and it is easy for me to go over every sheet and pick out the errors if there has not been an earlier bird. But in some instances the packages containing the sheet errors are sent to other places and I have to either phone or wire to friends or agents to buy those sheets for me. I have to pay premiums and in many cases I am sent several sheets that in the minds of the senders are very fine errors but in truth they are only common stuff, most times badly centered surcharges. These I have to take as it would slight them if I returned the stamps. This is why I ask what it could appear high prices".

Falsifications

The basic stamps discussed in this treatise are now and have always been priced low in the catalogues. Being readily available, there has been no need to produce them illegitimately. However, the fact that a certain surcharge impressed on an inexpensive basic stamp makes it much more valuable, offered a lucrative and enticing field to irresponsible persons so disposed to exploit it. In every case, the unwary collector, not the government, was deceived. Although genuinely used covers franked with counterfeits do exist, their purpose was to deceive the collector, not to create postal forgeries. Postal regulations prescribed stiff penalties for the sale or use of forged stamps. But it was inevitable and excusable that many of these fakes went through the mails unobserved by the postal clerks, who were so bewildered by the multiplicity of provisionals that they could not be expected to distinguish the genuine from the counterfeits.

Every surcharge variety of this series, without exception, has been counterfeited, some exceedingly dangerous. In addition, many varieties, non-existent as genuine have been originated. A deceptive group has a fake imprint of the word "OFICIAL" over a genuine surcharge. Whereas to be correct, "OFICIAL" should be *under* the surcharge as the

HONDURAS

basic is the genuine official stamp. Generally, differences in surcharge alignment, ink, type, and impression enable the student to separate the genuine from the counterfeit. Doubtless many counterfeits repose unsuspected in some of the finest collections, according to my opinion and observations.

Conclusion

And so, in this involved manner, were the terms of the January 9, 1930 decree eventually fulfilled. It is a reasonable assumption that the many mistakes stemmed from lax supervision and poor workmanship rather than deliberate intent to create errors for stamp collectors. Perhaps the demand for haste, mentioned in the decree, contributed to the general confusion. But who can deny that this chapter of Honduran postal history constitutes—with apologies to The Immortal Bard—a colossal "Comedy of Errors".

Therefore, one should use caution before buying these stamps. But a collector need not pass them up because of a fear of buying counterfeited copies. There are some excellent Expert Committees available for opinions at moderate fees. Certainly this cost is the best insurance against a monetary loss through buying worthless counterfeits. The Philatelic Foundation, 22 East 35 Street, New York 16, N. Y., now the owner of "the Luff Reference Collection", is in a position to ably perform this service. The writer knows because he has been frequently consulted by The Philatelic Foundation for his opinion on Honduras items.

But counterfeits should not scare any collector away from these issues. The stamps are fascinating to collect. And because of all the abovementioned reasons, they sell very reasonably considering their scarcity.

FOOTNOTES

1. This story had been promised in the article, HONDURAS C31 OR SAN. 38, *AERO PHILATELIST*, *ANNALS*, April 1956.

2. The three-man military junta governing Honduras as the result of the bloodless coup of October 21, 1956 that ousted President Lozano, have set up the following Departments, each with its own Minister and Under-Secretary:—Foreign Affairs, Government and Justice, National Defense, Economy and Finance, Public Education, Labor, Development, Health, Public Welfare, and National Resources.

3. The Treasury Department had individual agents in various towns of Honduras, who sold for government account native rum, tobacco and powder. All were strictly enforced monopolies, being the chief source of internal revenue. These agents were also entrusted with the sale of postage values on commission. Customarily they transacted all government business in their homes known as Estancos, literally meaning the places where privileged goods are sold exclusively.

4. A double-lined circular mark 30 mm. in diameter usually struck in magenta or purple ink, reading at the top "TRIBUNAL SUPERIOR DE CUENTAS" and at the bottom "HONDURAS, C. A."

5. Scott C41-45, Sanabria 48-52—Issued on October 1, 1930.

6. The 1923 issue was printed by the firm of C. A. Nikolaus of Bremen, Germany. It was intended to place this set on sale January 1, 1923 for the usual four year period, but a serious revolution in Honduras delayed the issuance until May 23, 1924. The comparatively short period of use—two and a half years—accounts for the large remainder at the time of demonetization on January 1, 1927, and also explains its frequent use for the later provisionals.

7. As a result of the currency reform of 1933, the silver peso was superseded by the silver lempira of the same worth. Lempira had been a famous Indian Chief, who successfully defied the Spanish invaders until he was treacherously murdered by them in 1538.

8. The Pan American Union countries are: Argentine Republic, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Republic of Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, United States of America, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

9. The Director of the Litografía Nacional in 1930 was Sr. Cresencio F. Gomez, educated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Mass. Despite of the handicap of outmoded equipment, he introduced many reforms and improvements, notably in photo-engraving, lithography, and in the press department. Curiously, the temporary President, who had signed the decree of October 18, 1865 authorizing the first issue of Honduras stamps, was also named Cresencio Gomez. Possibly these two men were related.

10. Letter of Raul Duron Membreno to Mr. John N. Luff, dated July 17, 1930 stated: "There is no such thing as 'trials' or 'printer's waste', as the stamps to be surcharged are sent counted to the Litografía, and the same number, of course, must be returned from there, no matter if sheets are spoiled or

(Continued on Page 30.)

BULGARIA

The 1932 Air Post Exhibition Issue

The Mystery

Back in 1937—now more than 20 years ago—the writer attended an auction sale of a comprehensive air mail collection conducted by a leading New York air mail dealer. He was amazed to see the price realized by one lot. This was a cover with the complete set of three of the 1932 Air Post Exhibition Issue of Bulgaria (Scott C12-14, San. 12-14). After spirited bidding *this flown cover sold for \$27.50*. This seemed so incredible because then the three stamps cataloged mint or used at 75 cents each or a total of \$2.25 for the set. Upon inquiry after that auction, we were informed that flown covers with this set of Bulgaria were very scarce.

Being duly impressed, the writer kept on the lookout for a similar cover, but patience was required. Finally three years later another cover came up at a New York auction. When the lot was offered, up went our hand. But so did many others. Finally again after spirited bidding, *the lot was knocked down to the writer for \$36.00*. The cover bought in 1941 is illustrated as Fig. 1. Although not so described, fortunately it was a first day cover.

Since that time not many more of these scarce Bulgaria covers were seen by the writer. However, for some strange reason the price began declining after 1946 and has kept on going down. Instead of the anticipated rise in cover prices a sharp decline has occurred. The prices for flown covers had reached a point where in May, 1957 the writer



Fig. 1. Cover flown from Sofia the FIRST Day, May 9, 1932. The cancels are the special ones. (Bottom) the Paris backstamp May 10, 1932. Photos by Boutrelle.

BULGARIA



Fig. 2. Cover flown from Sofia to Munich, Germany on May 16, 1932. The backstamps read Berlin May 17 and Munich, Germany May 18, 1932.

could not resist buying in a second cover for his collection at a prominent New York City auction. This cover, shown as Fig. 2, was purchased for \$13, almost 60% less than their price 20 years ago. How can one account for this?

The reason, in our opinion, is the distribution of counterfeited material, which will be discussed later.

Special Flights

An International Air Post Exhibition was held in Strasbourg, France from May 7 to 16, 1932. The following is what the 1934 Champion "Catalogue de la Poste Aerienne" recorded:

"These stamps were issued for the occasion of the Aerophilatelic Exhibition of Strasbourg. They represent together the total tax to pay for air mail letters addressed respectively to Strasbourg, Paris, Lyon and Marseilles. The flights by air and the first day of sale of the stamps were cancelled with a special cachet including the time when the mail was posted."

D. Field's "Air Mail Catalogue, 1933 edition" states:

"Issued May 9, 1932 for a special flight from Sofia-Strasbourg on May 17th in connection with the Air Post Exhibition in that Alsatian city. Only on sale until 20th May. 50,000 sets issued."

A first day cover addressed to England is the one illustrated as Fig. 1. Notice the special "dated" large, circular Sofia cancellation. This cover is backstamped Paris, France May 10, 1932. The cover shown in Fig. 2 also has this same Sofia cancellation. This was flown to Munich, Germany on May 16, 1932. Obviously, the British "D. Field Catalogue", generally a most reliable reference book, is wrong about the May 17th date of flight. *But any covers with Bulgaria C12-14 properly used from May 9th through May 20th, 1932 are very scarce.*

BULGARIA

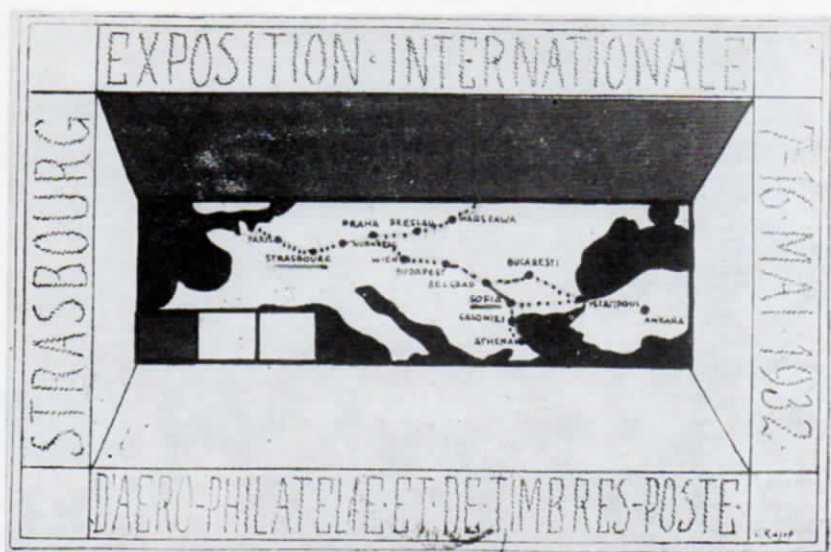


Fig. 3. Front of a post card specially printed for the 1932 Exhibition.

Special Post Cards

There is a post card in the writer's collection, which after study can provide us with much information about the postal use of this issue. The front of this card is illustrated as Fig. 3. This is the official card printed for this 1932 Air Post Exhibition. Notice all the route markings shown on the map of Europe. It shows many routes from Sofia—westward to Paris and further, eastward to Ankara, Turkey and south to Salonika and Athens, Greece.

The address side of this post card is even more interesting. (Fig. 4). Each card must have been numbered. The one illustrated bears No. 138. At the left-hand side are two red labels that were specially printed for the Exhibition. Fig. 5 shows them separately. Now let us commence studying the cancellations along with the printing on the card.

The earliest cancellation appears on the two French postage stamps in the upper right corner. This reads "Strasbourg, France May 12, 1932." The next date in chronological order is the Sofia cancellation located almost in the center of the card. This reads May 14, 1932. Thus this card must have gone from Strasbourg to Sofia. But now comes a surprise. The Bulgaria air mail stamps (the regular air mail issue, not C12-14) are cancelled October 25, 1932. The two other cancels are Vienna, Austria October 26, 1932 and the Strasbourg, France cancel in the bottom center of the card dated October 27, 1932. What is this? Here one finds usage in May, and other cancels dated five months later.

For the explanation, one must study the printed address. The upper portion of this card is well covered by the stamps so that little of the printing remains uncovered. But enough shows to determine that this was an Official Post Card printed for the flight from Strasbourg to Sofia. Thus this explains the May 12th and 14th cancellations. However, directly alongside the two red stickers at the left is a rubberstamped legend that was hit so lightly as to be almost illegible. It does not show on the illustration. But it is in French and translates as "Flight Not Undertaken because of negligence of the P. T. T. at Strasbourg/Exhibition Committee." Therefore one learns that the mail from Strasbourg to Sofia did not fly, and these post cards were dispatched by surface means. Also the lapse in two days between May 12 and 14 give evidence of no air mail. Whether there

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Fig. 4. The address side of the Official Exhibition Post Card.

were more slips by postal authorities for other routes is not known. But all covers examined emanating from Sofia westward did go via air mail.

Please examine closely the first Bulgaria air stamp in the center of the upper part of this card. This is the 12 leva denomination of the 1931 regular air mail series (C8, San. 8). See that the lower lefthand corner of this stamp is on *top* of the May 14, 1932 Sofia cancellation. This is the key to explain the October dates on the card. The Bulgaria air mail stamps were affixed later. All are cancelled October 25, 1932. Notice the printed word "Retour". The Return Flight from Sofia to Strasbourg occurred in October, 1932 stopping in Vienna after leaving Sofia and arriving in France as addressed on October 27, 1932.

The writer thinks that such post cards are very interesting to aero-philatelists. He believes that some older stamp journals from Europe must have written these up around 1932. But so far nothing has been found. If anyone knows of such information, notification will be greatly appreciated.



Fig. 5. The special red labels used for air mail at the 1932 Strasbourg Air Post Exhibition.

Counterfeits

Here again one faces the malignant cancer of a most enjoyable hobby—counterfeiting. The scarcity of Bulgaria C12-14 must have been better appreciated in Europe than in America, because shortly after World War II ended, counterfeited material began coming on the American market. It is alleged that the fakes were manufactured in Italy,

BULGARIA



Fig. 6. The counterfeit stamps on a faked cover as originally pictured in "the Aero Philatelist's News" of January 1, 1947.

and that the counterfeiting ring was arrested around 1949. We have no direct knowledge of this, except that there is one point about counterfeited covers that indicates an Italian job. The watermark on the paper of the counterfeited covers is in Italian, not with the Cyrillic letters of the Bulgarian alphabet.

These Bulgaria counterfeits seemed to have escaped the ever watchful eye of the U. S. Secret Service. No one over here suspected that C12-14 was being counterfeited, so that the faked material came in. It is alleged that the counterfeited stamps were first found in various stamp clubs' sales circuits.

But the writer can date when he first saw the counterfeited covers, because "the Aero Philatelist's News", Vol. II, No. 1 illustrated and described the first counterfeited cover seen. This was back in 1946. A reputable dealer, who was then a member of AERO PHILATELISTS, offered the writer a cover with Bulgaria C12-14, because he knew of his particular interest. The asking price was half of what was previously paid, so the writer took it on consignment. Being puzzled by this "bargain" price, he began studying the cancellations and markings to see how they compared to the few known genuine. Then the discovery of faking was made to his utter consternation.

Fig. 6 illustrates the same counterfeited piece shown in Vol. II, No. 1 of the former, "Aero Philatelist's News". The three stamps are counterfeits. It is well to repeat exactly how we analyzed this fake piece back in 1947. We had noticed the following four points that allowed one to distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit.

- "1. Although the air mail etiquette is Bulgarian, the stationery is Italian.
- "2. Cancellation date is wrong being "April" (IV) instead of "May" (V).
- "3. There is registration No. "000131" stamped, but no registration label as the genuine covers have. Also the fake covers are not backstamped.
- "4. The counterfeit stamps when placed alongside the genuine have a lighter color. Also the perfs. on the counterfeit stamps differ from the genuine."

Conclusion

It is not pleasant to relate, but it is the writer's firm belief that there is many a set of Bulgaria C12-14 in American collections that is not genuine. Many own the stamps

BULGARIA—THE AIR MAIL BAG

and covers believing that they are genuine and never for a moment suspecting that the material is counterfeit. So obviously the fakes have created the supply that satisfied the demand, and as recounted in the beginning of this article counterfeits have caused this price decline.

There were only 50,000 complete sets issued. Not many were used on cover. Of course, Bulgaria has never achieved great philatelic popularity, but this set of the 1932 issue should have great appeal to the air mail collector. Genuinely flown covers are exceedingly scarce. The writer does not believe in his many years of activity in air mails that he has seen more than 8 in America—perhaps 10 at the most. The records show that one cover sold for \$27.50 in 1937. Four years later the price in 1941 was up to \$36.00. By 1957 Bulgaria C12-14 on cover should be bringing \$50 or more at auction. Instead the writer bought a beautiful piece—the one shown in Fig. 2—at a very well-known New York City auction for \$13. The auctioneer, incidentally a stamp dealer who has known air mail stamps well for more than 30 years, remarked upon the bargain price of this Bulgaria cover, when he turned over the lot to this writer.

If one made up his mind to purchase every genuine cover of Bulgaria at the current price, the writer sincerely believes that not more than 4 or 5 would be bought within the next few years.

Here is an issue of great interest to the air mail stamp collector. It has not fared well in comparison to other air stamps. So we say loudly:

"Damn the counterfeits!"

THE AIR MAIL BAG

(Under this heading a regular feature will be run with correspondence from Members. Names in full will be used unless a contrary request is specified when a correspondent will be identified by initials only. Nothing unsigned will be used.)

In regard to the very fine series of articles in THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS on the "First Air Mail Issue of Uruguay", I would like to call your attention to Vol. IV No. 2 page 40, where you refer to an overprint variety, "Ala rotar". This used to be called in Spanish "Ala rota" which translates into English as "broken wing", not "bent wing", the name you used.

However, I think a better and more proper description is "perforated wing", because there is nothing bent or broken on the wing of the plane in the overprint. There is a big hole. I am enclosing a photograph taken from my catalog of Uruguay. You will easily discover the hole in the wing below the head of the goddess on the stamp.



These three varieties on the Green overprint—"Corrco", broken "o" and the "perforated wing"—are collected by specialists in South America. The variety broken "o" could be described as either "broken "o" in "Aereo", or second "o" in "Correo" broken, or both. This is better than broken "o" in "Correo", because there are two "o's" in this word, and only the last one shows the broken letter.

Robert Hoffman
Iriondo, Argentina.

THE AIR MAIL BAG—OBITUARY

Mr. Hoffman owns one of the greatest collections in the world. His exhibit of the classic issues of Uruguay gained the 1956 FIPEX GRAND AWARD. Also Mr. Hoffman has written several books on the stamps of Uruguay.

I have read with great interest your four articles on Uruguay first Air Mails. I would like to congratulate you for writing them as they are fine and represent a good effort to find the truth and to divulge it about many matters not sufficiently known. Very few people, for instance, realize that in 1921 communications with Rocha and the whole South-East part of the country were extremely poor as roads were not practicable for motor-cars and there were no railways, the terminal being in San Carlos more than 100 kms away. As a matter of fact this last tract was only inaugurated in 1928 as commemorated by the stamp issue of that year, and therefore the idea of establishing an air post service was well justified if a little optimistic for the times.

You are quite right when you say that it is not so easy to recognize the yellow-green overprint. It is certainly easy when compared to the majority of green shades of which there are several, deep green and even with some blue, but extremely difficult in some cases. In the second edition of my catalogue now ready and only waiting to be published to have all illustrations complete I mention the existence of a shade I have called "pale yellowish green" which resembles the first so closely that it is very easy to take one for the other without a copy of each in front of your eyes. I have seen it sold for the first and not for any dishonest purpose.

The variety "Ala rota" which means "Broken wing" consists of a big hole visible to the naked eye in the left wing of the plane. It is Nr. 14 of the sheet as stated in our catalogue, *not* Nr. 9, and it is a constant variety well known by our philatelists. As for "Broken O in CORREO" it refers to the second letter of the word and it is Nr. 9 of the sheet. There are several broken "O"s, but this one is constant and also the letter has three big flaws.

I think you underestimate the green overprint on flown covers. There are many of these used in the commemorative flights of 1923 and 1925 but the ones used in normal service are in my opinion very scarce although of course not so much as the blue one. By the way, covers with the inscription "Venta a beneficio del Centro Nacional de Aviación" are not the real thing as they never did fly. They were made at the Central Post Office and given to the Centro as present, several days after the flight to be sold to the public as sort of "facsimile" and that is the reason of the legend they bear.

To tell you the honest truth I have never felt quite happy about the ultramarine overprint and if we included it in our catalogue it was mostly due to the advice and insistence of some of our colleagues in the Club who say that they have seen it, but they do not have copies available for inspection. I have never seen one.

Dr. Estenio Hormaeche
Montevideo, Uruguay.

Dr. E. Hormaeche is a former President of The Club Filatelico of Uruguay and one of the editors of the authoritative "Catalogo de Correo Aereo de Uruguay", published by the aforementioned society in 1948.

Obituary

Theodore E. Steinway 1883-1957

AERO PHILATELISTS must go on record to acknowledge its indebtedness to one of its first members, who passed away in New York City on April 8, 1957 just as the last number of this quarterly magazine was going to press. Mr. Steinway had not been in good health for the last few years.

Memories go back to 1946 when the founder members of AERO PHILATELISTS had gathered to organize. By a co-incidence, some of the philatelic "greats" had met in the

OBITUARY—HONDURAS

same building to inaugurate the *Philatelic Foundation*. Suddenly the doors of our meeting room swung open, and in walked the late Alfred F. Lichtenstein, Theodore E. Steinway, George R. M. Ewing and Robert Graham, Jr. Each of these well-known philatelists asked then and there to sign up as members of AERO PHILATELISTS. It was one of the most encouraging things that have ever happened to this organization. Furthermore until his death Theodore Steinway kept up his membership.

Some people thought that Mr. Steinway was not an air mail collector. They were wrong. He had assembled many years ago one of the finest 1870 Franco-Prussian War Balloon cover collections. He decided to dispose of it a little over a year ago when his terminal illness had begun to demand a curtailment of his many philatelic activities.

Furthermore, few realized the contributions made by Mr. Steinway to AERO PHILATELISTS. Not only through his long affiliation, but by his encouragement and wise counsel to many of our members, he will be remembered. He told us time and again that he liked our spirit. He admired the way in which many of our members volunteered for philatelic duty as with the stupendous work in staging International Philatelic Exhibitions. He was exceedingly gratified to see the results from our chapters. As *Chairman of the Expert Committee of the Philatelic Foundation*, he called upon some air mail collectors for assistance. Later on he selected one of us to serve as a permanent member of this important philatelic body, because a good air mail man was needed.

Those, who had the pleasure to work closely with Mr. Steinway, were able to perceive the sterling character of this gentleman. He had great philatelic "horse sense". He continually encouraged the dedicated volunteers, held out a helping hand to the newer scholars, while at the same time never suppressing an expression of his disdain for the braggart, slacker and "the philatelic politician."

Theodore Steinway respected AERO PHILATELISTS because this organization demonstrated to him a proper attitude towards philately. Once he spoke to a small group of us substantially as follows:

"You know some years back I was invited to judge an exhibition of a stamp society during one of their conventions. I had a marvelous time. The company was fine, as were the food and drinks. The hospitality was 'par excellence'. But do you know something? During my entire stay, I never heard one person talk about stamps.

"That's what I like about you boys. You're good stamp collectors. When you get together, you discuss stamps."

It was a great honor for AERO PHILATELISTS to have had the membership of Theodore E. Steinway for so long. As *TIME* magazine wrote, he was one of the world's leading stamp collectors. It is hoped that among the fine, large family that survived him, at least one younger Steinway will become an air mail collector in the future. This is a fine name and philatelic tradition to carry on.

HONDURAS (Continued from Page 22)

what. Once these are sent out, or issued, every sheet, no matter how bad it looks, is O. K. The only instance that would produce 'printer's waste' would be when stamps are being made in the Litografia, not surcharges, when, of course, proofs must be taken etc., and unfinished sheets are not rare; at any rate, if any of these things are sent to the Contaduria de Especies and then issued to the Administraciones, then they are to be given full credit in the catalogue."

11. There is such a marked resemblance between the officials and regular stamps of the 1923 issue that they were often unintentionally mixed together after demonetization when stored at the Contaduria General de Especies de la Direccion General de Rentas. This explains the appearance of an occasional official sheet in a requisitioned lot of the regular sheets.

12. Proof of the insufficient quantity of the one peso of the 1915 issue is evidenced by the fact that the Decree of May 7, 1930 specified the overprinting of 15,500 one peso stamps (Scott 181) with the legend: "Servicio aereo Vale 20 centavos oro.-Marzo-1930". But when this quantity was not available, the 50 centavos value (Scott 180) was used instead, to make Scott C28, Sanabria 35.

13. Can some reader advise the dating on the rear of the C35 sheets? The seven copies of C35 in the writer's collection come from the border positions. For this reason, they are without rear dating, as the rubber stamp impression was hit near the middle of the sheet.

THE



AERO

PHILATELIST ANNALS

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FOR A BOOK ON AIR MAILS

Write to:

Stanley R. Rice
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