

THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS



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JAN. 1964

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THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS



Vol. XI , No. 3
JAN. 1964

Henry M. Goodkind, Editor

Philip Silver, Assistant Editor

UNITED STATES

The 5c Beacon Air Mail Stamp of 1928

By HENRY M. GOODKIND

Preface

This article will not be short. The author has given careful deliberation as to its method of presentation. If run serially in a quarterly magazine as the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS — and it will be — the longtime gap between the individual parts might prove somewhat disadvantageous to the readers.

Judging, however, by the method of handling a previous work* by the author and its subsequent success as a handbook, a decision was reached to follow the same course.

*"United States R. F. Overprints On Air Mail Stamps and Stationery (1944-45)" by Henry M. Goodkind. Handbook No. 5 of the Theodore E. Steinway Memorial Publication Fund, The Collectors Club, 22 East 35 Street, New York, N. Y. 10016.

Therefore, first this will be run serially in the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS. Later, the entire will be offered for consideration for publication as one book to another philatelic organization.

There was a second reason for the decision to run this first as series in this magazine. Many members of AERO PHILATELISTS have been of great assistance to the author during the years that he was forming a specialized collection of the United States 5c Beacon air mail stamp. This, then, also represents an expression of gratitude by the author.

Finally, as with the RF handbook, many, who are not members of AERO PHILATELISTS, will want to read about the U. S. 5c Beacon air mail stamp. Thus, when the series is later published as a monograph, it should have wide appeal among stamp collectors and dealers, because this is not only about an air mail but also a United States stamp.

A Change Of Pace

A wealthy American philatelist, who had exhibited and won one of the top awards at the 1926 International Philatelic Exhibition in New York, N. Y. happened to be standing before his exhibition frames, when two spectators came along. After they had examined this exhibit, one remarked to the other: "My goodness, if I had his money, I could assemble a collection like this."

This wealthy exhibitor did not forget the comments he had overheard. Shortly thereafter, he decided to form a new collection, choosing an inexpensive stamp — one that at the time catalogued for a few cents, both unused and used. He wanted to show that stamp collecting required much more than the ability to spend money.

The hunt was on. By the time that TIPEX arrived in 1936, this millionaire philatelist had formed an extensive collection of *one cheap stamp*. It gained a high award.

Beaming with great satisfaction, this exhibitor's pride would have been complete except that he never saw the two 1926 spectators nor overheard any remarks at TIPEX — either pro or con.

This writer remembers, when he was a young, budding philatelist, seeing in exhibitions in or around New York a number of one stamp or one stamp issue collections, many of them concentrating on inexpensive material. In recent years, collections of this type seemed to have disappeared.

Nowadays, many fear that a collection of United States, Canada or British Colonies is far beyond their means. Therefore, they turn to a new, popular field such as topicals, maintaining that this affords one all the pleasure to be derived from collecting stamps and is, at the same time, within their means.

Why the inexpensive stamp or set specialty was abandoned cannot be explained by this writer. It is his belief that the constant public notice gained by a field such as topicals has simply pushed all other types of collecting as, for example, one inexpensive stamp into the background.

A One Stamp Specialty

Around 1953, an interest began to take hold in the 1928 5c Beacon air mail stamp (Scott C11)* which catalogued then for 30 cents unused and 8 cents used. Now — eleven years later — the 1964 Scott prices are 60 and 20 cents, certainly still inexpensive for a United States stamp.

The reason for the 5c Beacon air mail's attraction was never hard to determine. Ever since 1918, the writer had been very interested in the first air mail stamp of the United States — the 1918 24c carmine and blue (C3). In the first half of the 20th century, the United States had issued only a few bi-colored

*In the "Sanabria Air Mail Catalogue," it is also United States No. 11.

stamps. Most of them happened to be air mails, the first in 1918, the Beacon ten years later. The "Eagle" (Scott C23) came in 1938 and the second Air Post Special Delivery stamp (CE2) in 1936.

When a philatelist concentrates on one stamp, he should assure himself in advance that there will be a wide scope to collect. First of all, the production and printing should not be monotonous, as with so many of the more recent U. S. commemoratives. This writing will show so many interesting angles involved in the printing of C11.

The second portion of a one-stamp collection concerns its postal history. Cancellations and covers of a specific stamp should be available in good supply. Also necessary is a wide diversification of postal use. Later on, we shall see how ideally the 5c Beacon air mail fits into this concept.

The First Research And Writings

As material of the 5c Beacon air mail was secured, one obviously wished to learn what had been previously written about this 1928 stamp. Articles about it were found in the American stamp periodicals starting in 1928 and continuing for approximately fifteen years, although around 1932 these reports began tapering off.

Of all the written records on this stamp, one stands out. The writer's old friend, the late Max G. Johl, in his book on "The 20th Century Stamps of the United States" in Volume 3 devotes over ten pages to C11. Studying Johl's writings, one perceives that he was almost an eye-witness at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington, D. C. He was told practically everything that transpired during the Beacon air mail's printing, and he fortunately recorded it.

But as our own studies of the stamp progressed, some of Johl's information had to be amended and increased. This newer research will be recorded here. But the foundation of the writer's knowledge of the preparation, production and printing was laid by Max Johl's original studies. The main matter not covered by Johl was the stamp's postal use. Most of this appears to be new research.

Of all the others, who wrote on the 5c Beacon air mail, only one is worthy of mention in the writer's opinion. This is the late George B. Sloane, who occasionally devoted one of his weekly columns to this air post stamp. But Sloane's writings do not begin to measure up to Johl's.

CHAPTER 1 — The Stamp

Why A Bi-colored Stamp?

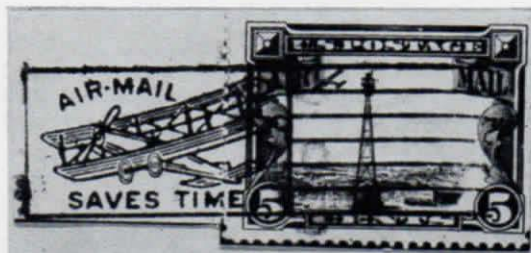


Fig. 1. The special "Air-Mail Saves Time" slogan used on the 5c Beacon air mail stamp of 1928. Notice that "air mail" is spelled with two words on the stamp, but is a hyphenated "air-mail" on the cancellation. (All photos by Boutrelle.)

For many reasons, bi-colored stamps were avoided as much as possible by the United States until the Giori presses were ready in 1957. Before this, printing of two-color stamps had to be done in two operations on flat bed presses.



One of the three photographs used for the Beacon design. Fig. 2a was taken at Sherman Hill, Wyoming.

Few stamp collectors appreciate the large quantities of stamps needed for U. S. postal needs. Fast production is a top requirement. Thus, the rotary presses had to be used. The flat bed presses were too slow to keep up with the enormous demand for postage stamps.

Nor had the very famous error with the 1918 24c air mail stamp been forgotten.* When two press runs are needed, the chances of the occurrence of inverted centers are great. Much to the surprise and discomfort of the United States Post Office Department, this was proven to be true again in November, 1962 with the Hammarskjold Memorial stamp.

Also printing bi-colored stamps is more expensive, and the percentage of inferior printings that must be rejected is far greater with a two than a one-color job.

Under these circumstances, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing along with the U. S. Post Office Department must have had very compelling reasons to order and print a bi-colored stamp from the period 1910 to 1957, when the Giori press was ready.

The reason for the 1918, 1928 and 1938 (every ten years) air mail stamps (C3, C11 and C23) was salesmanship. The government wanted the public to use air mail far more than it was doing. Therefore, a striking stamp would help to achieve this.

Furthermore, the rate for air mail was more than for regular postage. For easy identification to render a speedier mail service, air post stamps must be as outstanding as possible.

Never Less Than A Nickel

A survey of the domestic air rates from the first in 1918 to date reveals some interesting facts. It started out at 24-cents an ounce in May 1918. But this was reduced to 6 cents per ounce within about six months.

There was a short period of years after July 18, 1919 when the air mail rate was 2 cents. But actually there was no regular U. S. air mail service until

*"United States, 24c Air Mail Inverted Center of 1918" by Henry M. Goodkind. Handbook No. 1 of the Theodore E. Steinway Memorial Publication Fund, The Collectors Club, 22 East 35 Street, New York, N. Y. 10016.

1924, so this lowest historical rate is, in a way freakish. All first-class mail then cost 2 cents. If air mail service was available, then a 2 cents first-class letter would go via airplane. It is important to repeat that there was no regular schedule. This arrangement was on a "hit-or-miss" basis.

On June 30, 1924, new air mail rates were established on a zonal basis, the greater the distance, the more was paid — from 8 to 24 cents.

Per act of February 2, 1925, Congress provided for legislation setting the air mail rates to be carried by Contract Carriers at not less than 10 cents an ounce.



Fig. 2b and Fig. 2c were photographed near Omaha, Nebraska.

Post Office Order No. 3817 of January 19, 1926 set the contract air mail rates as follows:

- (a) 10 cents per ounce for distances up to 1000 miles;
- (b) 15 cents per ounce for distances exceeding 1000 miles, but less than 1500 miles;
- (c) 20 cents per ounce for distances in excess of 1500 miles.

On February 1, 1927, a new uniform air mail rate of 10 cents a $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce was instituted on both the government operated as well as the contract air mail routes.

Then, on August 1, 1928, the air mail rate was slashed from 10 a $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce to 5 cents an ounce for the first ounce or fraction thereof.

The Beacon air mail stamp was issued for this new 5 cents rate. After that, the air mail rate climbed again, reaching 8 cents, the present rate. From 1946 to the end of 1948, air mail letters cost 5 cents per ounce. On January 1, 1949, it went up to 6 cents and has increased every few years since then.

Consequently, one can state that 5 cents for the first ounce was the lowest ever charged for the transmission of domestic air mail and the Beacon stamp rendered much service at this low rate.

"Use Air Mail"

Not only a bi-colored stamp, which was both more expensive and slower to produce, but also a special slogan cancellation (Fig. 1) was also put into use to induce the U. S. public to patronize air mail. Also mail boxes were marked advertising air mail, while mail chutes in large buildings had stickers pasted on them, all with the slogan reading — "Use air mail, it saves time."

Therefore, the first page in the writer's 5c Beacon air mail stamp collection has a copy of C11 with a clear slogan cancellation "AIR-MAIL SAVES TIME."

It is not surprising to observe that this 1928 bi-colored stamp had a life of less than two years. On February 10, 1930 a single-color violet 5c air post adhesive (C12) was put on sale to replace the Beacon stamp. As a philatelist studies the manifold difficulties and problems faced with printing C11, one can imagine hearing officials at the Bureau telling the U. S. Post Office Department: "Let's get rid of this headache with the two-colored job and use a one-color air mail stamp."

The Stamp's Design

One of the writer's first acquisitions was a specialized collection of C11 that had three photographs (Figs. 2a-2b-2c) and an article by Harley G. Moorehead, Postmaster, Omaha, Nebr. from "The Bureau Specialist," magazine of the Bureau Issues Association.

These photographs were the originals taken of the air mail beacon tower located on Sherman Hill in the Rocky Mountains near Cheyenne, Wyoming. In 1924, when transcontinental air mail started (C4-6 were issued for this), air mail service became a reality because the difficulty of flying by night had been solved. Lighted beacons used as directional markers for the flyers became an important navigation guide. One of these was the tower near Cheyenne, Wyoming.

All that Mr. Moorehead wrote will not be repeated (see "Weekly Philatelic Gossip," March 12, 1938). Looking at the three photographs, one sees how they were used as models and then changed to become the stamp (Scott design AP7).

The interesting matter about these photographs is that only the first (Fig. 2a) shows the tower at Sherman Hill, Wyoming. The other two photographs (Fig. 2b) and (Fig. 2c) were taken at Wann, Nebraska about ten miles west of Omaha because the original U. S. Post Office Department photograph (Fig. 2a) did not show the top of the tower with the revolving beacon light nor a flying

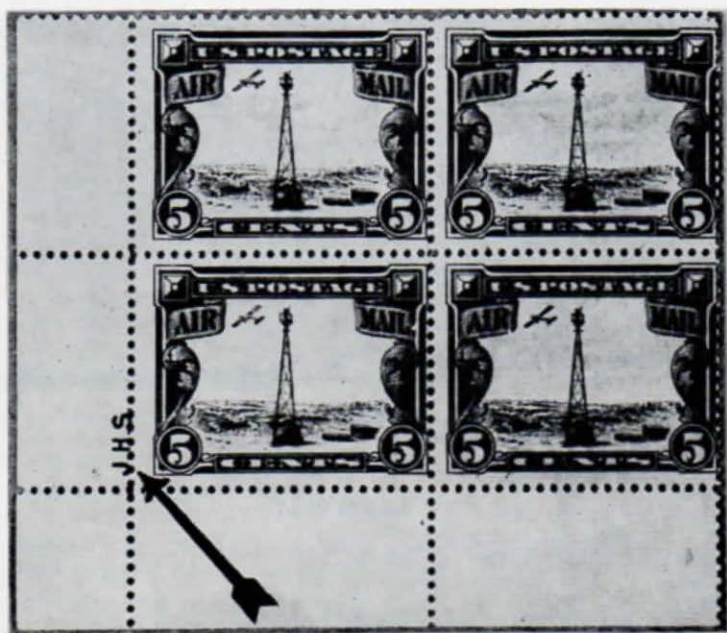


Fig. 3. Position No. 46 with siderographer's initials in the sheet margin.

airplane. The stamp's design had taken something from all three photographs.

The designer was A. R. Meissner of the U. S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing. He made a number of changes, such as with the house on the ground, the type of plane and its position when flying past the tower. According to Johl, the engravers were L. S. Schofield and E. Hall.

Siderographer's Initials

At this point, some research was undertaken not done by the previous writers. When the make-up of the sheets is discussed later, the reader's attention will be called to initials appearing in the left and right sheet margins at the bottom of the sheet. What do these initials signify?

It had been the custom for some years to have the skilled craftsmen at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, who make the transfer roll from the original die to place their initials on the plate. The 24c air mail of 1918 (C3) had "S. De B." (Samuel De Binder) in the lower left sheet corner margin. The one making the transfer roll — the siderographer — is a very important person in a stamp's production. He requires great skill for rocking-in the single die onto the transfer roll so that a sheet of 50, 100 or 400 subject stamps will have every single stamp registered as evenly as possible.

Furthermore, a major error due to carelessness on the part of the siderographer or platemaker occurred in 1917 when one 5 cents transfer with design Scott A140 of Washington's head was used on the 2 cents plates, creating Scott 467, 485 and 505. This was one of the reasons for having the siderographer's identity registered on the plates. The siderographer's initials usually were engraved in the lower left sheet margin (Fig. 3). On the 5c Beacon air mail there are four siderographers' initials as follows:

- A. B. — Andrew Black
- A. E. F. — Albert E. Fischer
- G. F. H. — George F. Henlock
- J. H. S. — John H. Silbert

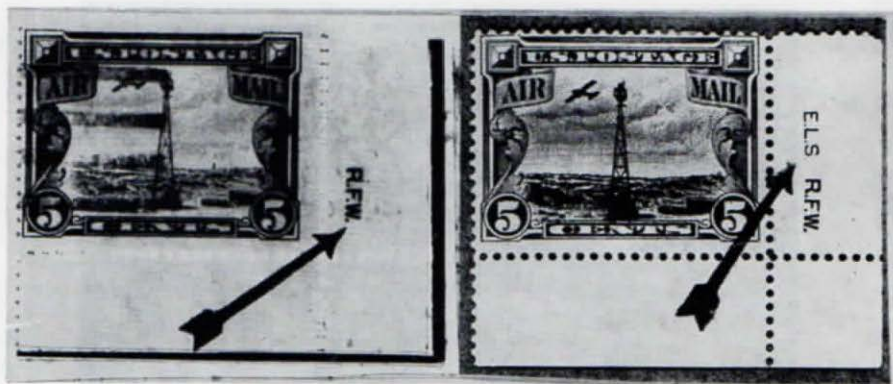


Fig. 4. Position No. 100 copies have the platemaker's initials in the adjoining sheet margin. Sometimes there was only one platemaker's initials, other times two, but never more than two.

Platemakers

Another important step in a stamp's production is making the plate that prints the stamp. The transfer roll with several reliefs from the original die is forced under great pressure on a soft piece of steel to make the printing plate. The ones doing this are called the platemarkers. Their initials appear in the lower right sheet margins on C11 (Fig. 4).

A few years ago, the writer and his friend, Philip Silver, who share an interest in the United States air mail stamps wrote to Mr. H. J. Holtzelaw, Director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington, D. C., asking if information about the names of the platemarkers on the earlier U. S. air mails was available. A prompt reply supplied this information. The names and initials of the five platemarkers of the 5c Beacon air mail are as follows:

J. M. B. — James M. Butler
 J. A. C. — Joseph A. Clark
 E. L. S. — Edward L. Shankle
 W. E. S. — Walter E. Spring
 R. F. W. — Ralph F. Wurtz

The Printing And Its Problems

Two plates, one for the red frame and the other for the blue central design, were used to print the stamps in one sheet of 100 subjects.

The sheet of 100 was then divided vertically in half (Figs. 5 and 6), and the two panes of 50 were sold thus at the post office. In order to indicate clearly the vertical guideline where the 100-subject sheet was to be separated, a heavy arrow was placed between positions 5 and 6 in the top sheet margin, as shown in Figs. 7a and 7b.

There was one precaution that the printers insisted on having engraved on the plates. Vividly recalled was the 24c air mail stamp of 1918 with the one error sheet having inverted centers. Because each sheet had to be fed into the printing press upside-down on the second run, necessary steps were taken to avoid this with the 1928 Beacon stamp. The word "TOP" was engraved on both of the 1928 plates in the top sheet margin over the fourth stamp in red on the left pane, and the seventh one in blue on the right pane.

This succeeded because no inverted centers of the Beacon air mail are known. According to official records, 106,887,665 of C11 were sold. This means that approximately 107,000 sheets of 100 were printed; not one had inverted centers.

As the printing of this air mail stamp progressed, a number of problems were encountered. Although they troubled the Bureau, they ultimately became a delight for the philatelist, because these problems later offered so much interesting material to collect.

The Printing

The printing plates may be divided into three distinct groups, each determined by the different markings in the top sheet margins.

The basic pattern of the plates, however, did not change. Fig. 6 shows a typical layout. The top sheet margin has no markings over positions 1, 5, 6 and 10.

In the left pane, the red (frame) plate number is printed over position 2, the blue (vignette) over position 3 and the red (frame) "TOP" above position 4.

In the right pane, first comes the blue (vignette) "TOP" over position 7, followed by the blue plate number above position 8 and then the red (frame) number over position 9. Notice that on the right pane only the letter "F" appears with the two plate numbers, but not on the left pane.

Regarding the significance of this letter "F," there has been a difference of opinion about it among philatelic students. The writer, on a visit to Washington, D. C. in 1960, asked the Assistant Superintendent of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing about it. He said that "F" signifies "Finished."

In the years when plates were being hardened and treated to give the maximum possible use, a chrome finish was applied. When a plate was so treated, the small letter "F" was placed on the plate for the printer's convenience. When the latter went to the racks where the printing plates were stored, he could select a finished plate more easily by spotting one with the identifying "F."

As for the other portions of the Beacon plate, these are apparent on the illustrated reconstructed sheets of 100. There is a horizontal red guideline be-

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tween the fifth and sixth rows (See Figs. 5-6). This was done not for the purpose of separating sheets, but rather as a guide for registration of the horizontal perforations.

Finally, on only the earlier printings, the siderographer's and platemaker's initials were placed in the lower left and right corner sheet margins respectively, as mentioned before. So far, it has not been determined when these initials were discontinued. It is believed from examining sheets of C11 that the initials were no longer put on the plates shortly after the third printings started. This means that position copies or multiple pieces with either the siderographer's or platemaker's initials are not as common as other markings that appear on all three printings.

According to Johl, there were side markings in the sheet margins located about one and a half inches from the stamps, but these were cut off in trimming the sheets before sale. An untrimmed sheet has never been seen, so that these side markings cannot be described. Also since no sheets were ever sold like this, such markings will remain unavailable to philately.

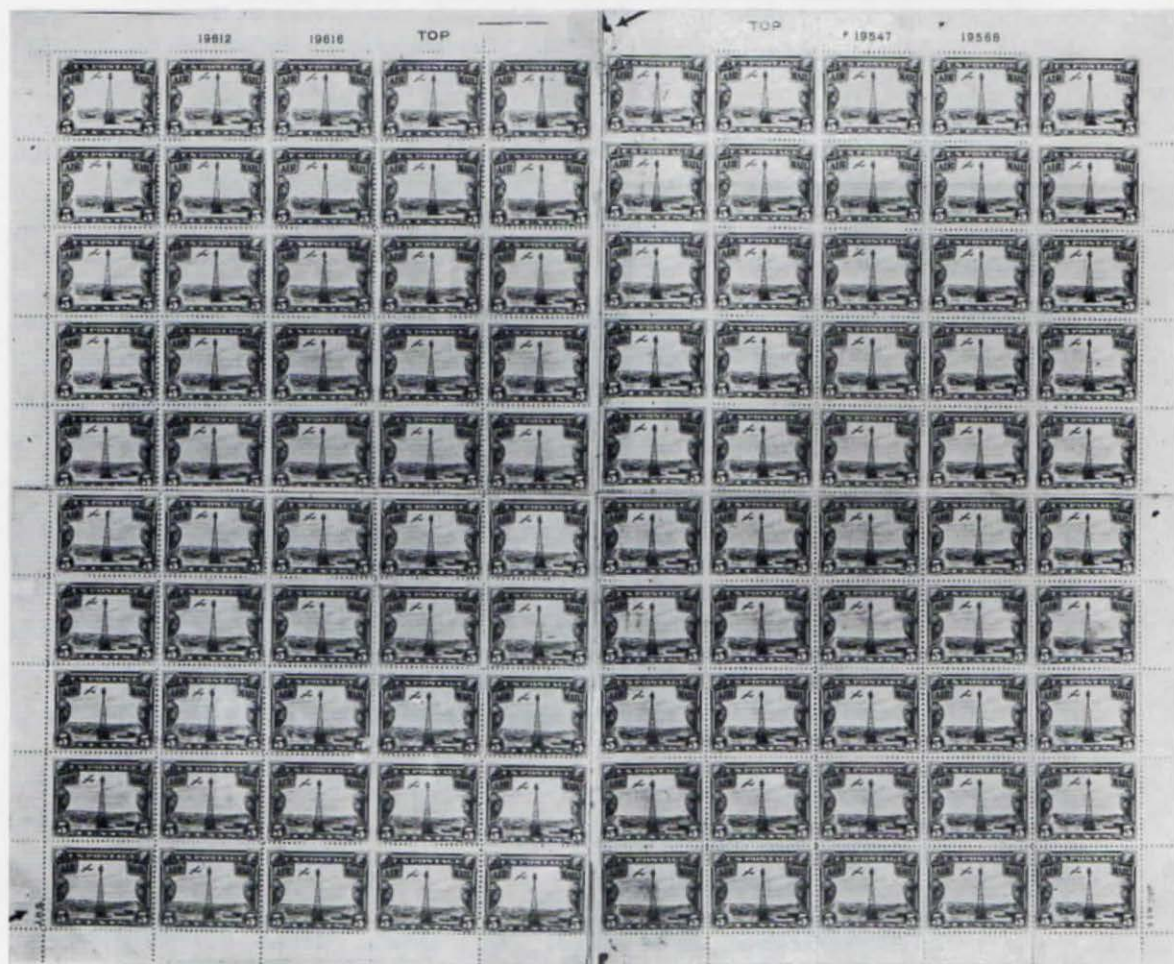


Fig. 5. A complete reconstructed sheet of 100. The pane of 50 on the left is from the second printing, having the siderographer's initials. The pane on the right is from the first printing with two platemakers' initials alongside Position No. 100.

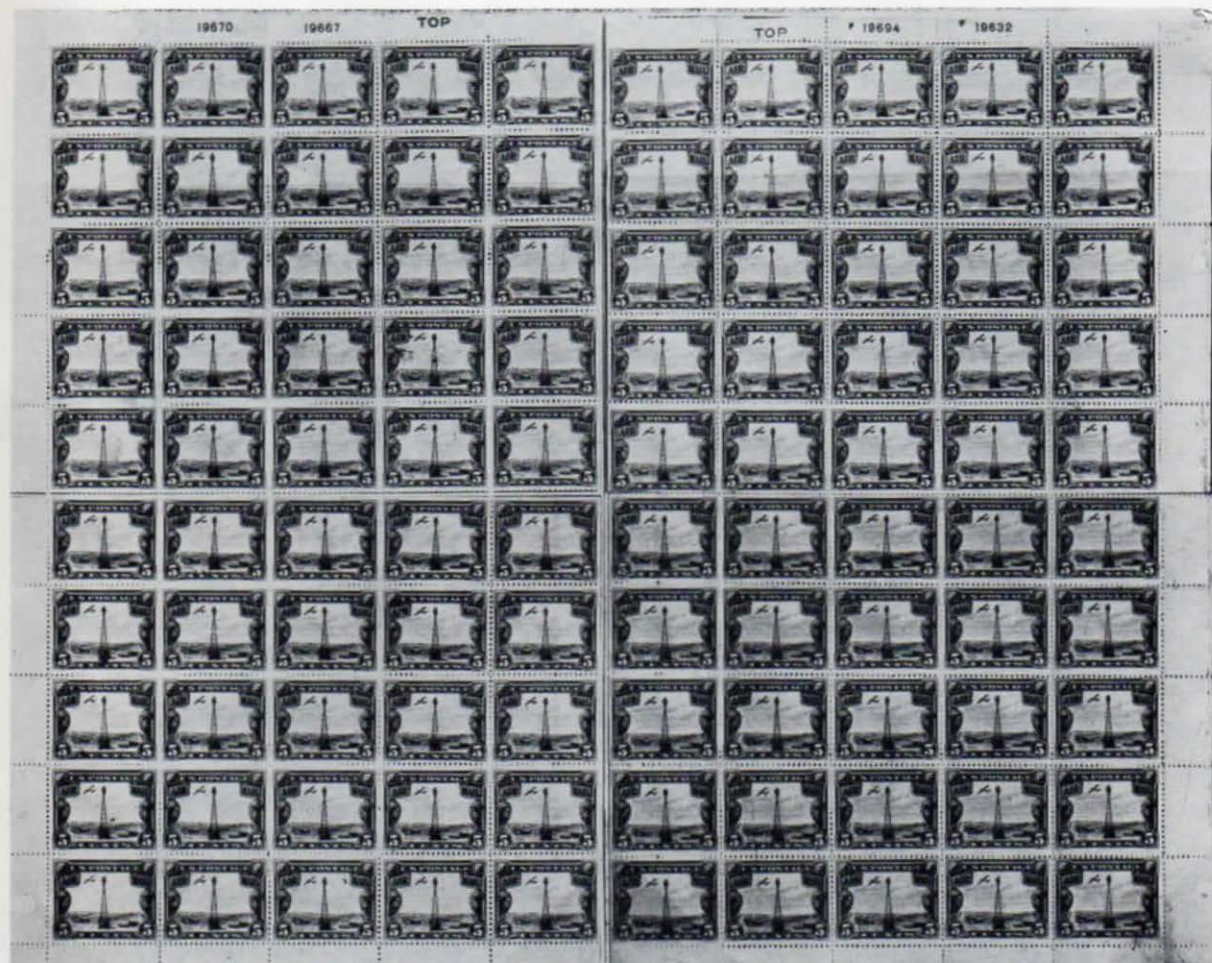


Fig. 6. Another reconstructed sheet of 100 from the third printing. No siderographer's nor platemaker's initials appear on the later printings.

Plate Number Collecting

The writer has not been able to understand why a mature philatelist can be intrigued with plate number block collecting unless a certain philatelic phenomenon is associated with a specific printing plate. Plate number collecting *per se* seems nothing more than an idle pastime. Certainly, it is very popular with the present generation of U. S. stamp collectors, but this does not demonstrate that it has any philatelic significance. For many years, the U. S. Post Office has released information on all plates from which stamps were printed, so that securing such data and then trying to assemble the matched positions is *not* philatelic research, because such information is readily available.

With the Beacon air mail stamp, however, seeking certain plate number blocks has a definite philatelic connotation, as will be revealed. Specific varieties and oddities occur only on a specific plate and printing, identified only with specific plate numbers.

Consequently, only those plate number blocks that have a story to tell about the stamp have been sought. There was no desire to play "the number game,"

attempting to secure every possible plate number combination. In Johl's book there is a table showing all the possible plate combinations known when he was writing (January 1, 1938). *These total 1,064 combinations.* No question but that one who has been able to assemble a complete collection of all plate number blocks of C11 has done a difficult job. In the Walter McCoy collection, there is a unique plate number combination.

The reason for all these plate number combinations and why some are not known on stamps is explained by the printing processes.

The red (frame) was printed first. Four plates were in operation at once, producing about 2,200 sheets daily per press. A few days lapse then occurred while the red (frame) sheets were permitted to dry in order to be in proper condition for the second printing. If this were not done, there would have been too much spoilage.

Later the blue (central design) was printed also with four plates to one press. But this second run proceeded much more slowly because care had to be taken that the sheets were fed correctly into the press, avoiding inverted centers. Also it took more time to get the vignette properly centered. This caused a daily production of only 1,700 sheets per press and, furthermore, is one of the explanations for the irregularity of plate number combinations, and why certain ones were not used.

The First Printing

Two heavy arrow markings were placed in the center of the top sheet mark-



Fig. 7a. A block of ten of the first printing. Notice that the heavy arrow at the right over Position No. 5 is not evenly registered.



Fig. 7b. A block of ten of the first printing from the right pane with the heavy arrow at the left over Position No. 6.



Fig. 8. A block of eight from the First Printing showing the heavy red (frame) arrow with a blue disc around it, caused after the blue (vignette) marker had been burnished from the plate.

ings (Figs. 7a and 7b). This was originally engraved on the plate for ease in separating the 100-subject sheet into two panes of fifty. But soon trouble began to develop. Notice in Fig. 7a that the arrow is not evenly registered.

It was found that a better registration could result from a plain line than with the heavy arrows. Consequently, the latter were *gradually* removed from the plate. This was done by burnishing out that portion of the plate where the heavy markers had been. Of course, this removal operation thinned the plate at that point, so that soon after use, a hollow colored circle about 15mm. in diameter appeared on the sheets. Since the removal of the heavy arrows was a gradual process, the first sheets show both the arrows and a disc, one from the red (frame) and the other from the blue (vignette) plate or vice versa (Fig. 8).

As mentioned before, the first printings also have the siderographer's and platemaker's initials, as shown with Figs. 3 and 4.

The first red (frame) plate used was number 19549 and the first blue (vignette) plate 19545 (Fig. 9). A study of blocks with the first plate number combinations is important because these then can be compared to later plate number combinations for the clarity of impressions and appearance.

The red (frame) plate number for the first printing with the heavy arrows commences with plate number 19549 and continued through No. 19606. The first blue (vignette) plate number is 19545 and the last one is 19580.

With the first red (frame) plate No. 19549, one may collect twelve combinations with blue plate numbers — Nos. 19545-48 and 73-80 inclusive. Using the blue (vignette) first plate number, 19545, a combination of twenty-nine with the red plate number exists — Nos. 19549-52, 65-72, 85-92 and 19605-07. Consequently, if one just wishes to collect the *first printing* Beacon plate numbers, there are a total of forty combinations to be had in order to form a complete showing of only the earliest printings.

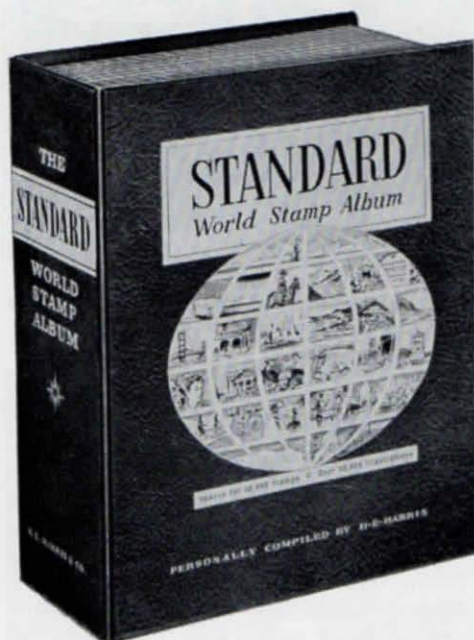
The Second Printing

There are only two blue (vignette) plates in this group with plate Nos. 19597 and 19598. Both show a round blue disc. Of course, in sheets of fifty,

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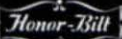
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Fig. 9. The first red and blue plate numbers used are on this block of six.

this appears as only half a disc (see Figs. 10 and 11). These two vignette plates come with seventy-one red (frame) plate combinations.

The latter is mentioned because the blue plate No. 19597 produced the only important error on the 5c Beacon air mail stamp. The blue "TOP" was not entered on plate No. 19597 over position 7, but by mistake over position 4. Thus, the plate shows a *double red and blue "TOP"* over position 4 (Fig. 10). Obviously, the right pane of 50 on plate No. 19597 has no "TOP" (Fig. 11) over position 8, where it should have been.

When the writer met with the late Max Johl, during the time both were serving on the Expert Committee of the Philatelic Foundation, this error was discussed. Since the double "TOP" in the sheet margin above position No. 4 is so obvious, many collect it. But the missing "TOP" on the right pane is an equally desirable error. Not being obvious, however, most collectors pay no



Fig. 10. The Second Printing with the blue (vignette) plate number 19597 that has a blue disc on the right. Also this shows the error, double TOP.



Fig. 11. The right pane of the Second Printing has a light blue ink disc at the left over Position No. 6, as shown with this block of ten. There is no "TOP" on this pane over Position 7, where it should have been.

attention to it. Also it seems that everyone retained a block or single with the double "TOP." But pieces with the missing "TOP" were overlooked. Consequently, the latter has become far scarcer, although it is in less demand, because it is not obvious and must be pointed out (Fig. 11).

Third Printing

With blue (vignette) plate No. 19600 no center arrow markings appear for



Fig. 13. The Third Printing. These show three examples of the variations with the vertical guidelines used for the Third Printing.

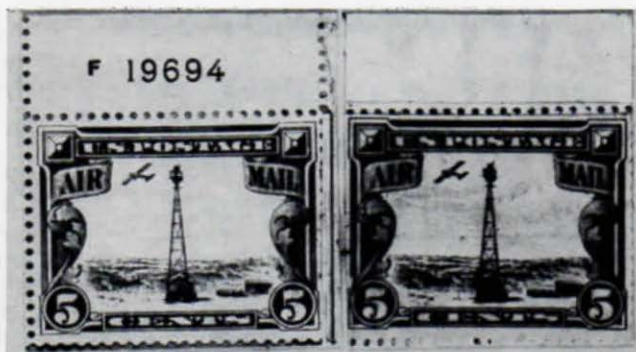


Fig. 12. (Left) The final Blue Plate Number 19694. To show how much sharper the first printings were, a copy from the first Blue Plate Number 19545 has been placed alongside at the right.

the rest of the printings. The last blue plate No. is 19694 (Fig. 12) and the red No. 19703.

All plates from the third printing have a thin vertical red guideline over the words "TOP" in both the left and right panes. This line varies greatly, from very short and thin to a length over a inch and also its thickness to over 1 m/m. Three examples are illustrated (Fig. 13). There are many more variations.

(To Be Continued)

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CHINA

Essay and Proofs of the First Air Mail Stamps

By H. D. S. HAVERBECK

The recent gift to the Smithsonian Institution of the personal collection of proofs and essays of the postage and revenue stamps of China during the period 1912-1928 formed by the engraver, William A. Grant, has brought to light many interesting things. This gift was made by Mr. and Mrs. Robert O. D. Hopkins, Mr. Grant's daughter and son-in-law. The author was permitted to study this collection with a view to recording its contents for the China Stamp Society. The complete catalogue will appear in the "China Clipper." The portion of it here given is that which will have interest and importance for those collectors who specialize in air mail stamps.

William A. Grant was born in the Bronx, New York City, on August 10, 1868 of Scottish parents. For six years he attended night classes at Cooper Union to qualify in art before learning engraving under the tutelage of Lewis Delnoce, one of the outstanding engravers of his day.

In 1908, the Imperial Chinese Government sent Chen Chin Tao to visit Germany, Russia, Great Britain and the United States to investigate the manufacture of postage stamps that were the least subject to counterfeiting.

Chen decided that the methods used in the United States were the best. He invited William A. Grant and Lorenzo J. Hatch to come to Peking to found the Chinese Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Grant, who had been in charge of the engraving room at the American Bank Note Company for twenty years, was expert in lettering, script, vignettes, geometrical lathe work, scrolls and



Fig. 1. Essay drawing signed by William A. Grant.

cycloid twirls for background. Hatch's work was limited to vignettes. They worked together until the death of the latter in 1914.

From then until his retirement in 1928, Grant remained as the sole technical advisor to the Chinese Bureau. At one time, he taught as many as 300 Chinese students steel engraving and printing. He was greatly beloved by the Chinese, rich and poor, who surrounded him. Although he did not learn a word of Chinese in the twenty years he resided in Peking, he could always make himself understood by drawing pictures, which inevitably drew a round of laughter and admiration. He also served as a consultant to the Chinese Postal Service, his duties consisting chiefly in authenticating stamps, genuine and counterfeit.

Of all his work on stamps, Grant was especially proud of the air mail stamps, which he designed and engraved, and about which he had received many commendations, both official and philatelic.

He was decorated by the Chinese Government three times, receiving the highest award that could be given to a foreigner, in appreciation of his work and teaching. After he retired to his Ridgewood, N. J. home, the Chinese tried their best to persuade him to return, but he would not do so. He later moved to Contoocook, N. H. where he died in 1954 at the age of 86.

Grant was bitterly disappointed with the designs and engraving of the stamps done by his students after he left China. Although he had designed and engraved banknotes and all the postage and revenue stamps for the Chinese Government, his keenest interest was in stamps.

The following is a list of the material on the first Chinese air mail stamp contained in this collection:

Essay. The engraver's model of the first and rejected design — 15 cts. — showing a head-on view of a bi-plane. This is signed "Wm. A. Grant" (Fig. 1), the accepted design for the stamps which were issued on July 1, 1921. A pen and ink drawing used as the engraver's model for the accepted design. The denomination is 15 cts. (Fig. 2).

Small die proofs:

Vignette only in black

Composite small die proofs, Frame and Vignette:

15 cts. Blue green and black

15 cts. Scarlet and black

15 cts. Orange and black

15 cts. Dark blue and black

30 cts. Scarlet and black



Fig. 2. Pen and ink engraver's model for the accepted design.



Fig. 3. Proof impression of the special wooden chop used to cancel covers on the first Peking-Tsinan-Shanghai flight.

- 45 cts. Violet and black
- 60 cts. Blue and black
- 90 cts. Olive green and black

It is, of course, impossible to determine whether these proofs are unique or whether more copies are known.

There were also in the collection proof impressions of the special wooden chop used to cancel mail on the first Peking-Tsinan-Shanghai flight.

The collection has these applied to issued stamps as follows:

- 15 cts. Blue green and black
- 30 cts. Scarlet and black (Fig. 3)
- 45 cts. Violet and black
- 60 cts. Blue and black
- 90 cts. Olive green and black

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ACE ART COMPANY

CANADA

A Mystery "Jack V. Elliot" Semi-Official Air Mail Stamp

By JEAN GRAVELAT

One of the few private transportation aviation companies that carried air mail using its own semi-official air post stamps was the Jack V. Elliot Air Service Company. It actually only issued and used one stamp and this was in use for a very limited time, only during the month of March, 1926.

The "Sanabria Air Mail Catalogue" lists two stamps for this company, but actually Sanabria No. 511 is a variety or second printing of the only Jack V. Elliot Air Service Company stamp, Sanabria No. 510.

As for the mail carried, one finds the following on the top of page 505 of the "American Airmail Catalogue (1940), Vol. I:—"

"Jack V. Elliot Air Service"

"The only first flight of this company was between Rolling Portage and Red Lake. However as there was no P. O. at Red Lake at that time covers bear an oval blue rubber stamp 'Kenora — Received — Mar. 6, 1926 — Red Lake.' Some also . . ."

There is a cover in my collection with Canada Sanabria No. 510. But one day carefully examining the Jack V. Elliot Air Service Company stamp on the back of my cover (all the semi-official air mail stamps had to be affixed on the back of covers), it appeared as if something else was under it. The copy of Canada Sanabria No. 510 was carefully removed from the cover and another stamp — see illustration — was found underneath it.



This illustrated stamp is a mystery. Nothing has been found recorded on it. Therefore, it is believed that writing about it and showing it in this maga-

(Continued on page 83)

UNITED STATES

Air Mail Covers Flown On Both Contract and Government Routes

By PHILIP SILVER

When Order No. 3817, dated January 19, 1926 was promulgated to provide rates for the contract air mail routes, provision was made for added charges to be imposed on letters which flew additionally on Government-operated routes before delivery to final destination:

"The rates of postage on mail carried by airplane on contract air-mail routes shall be 10 cents for each ounce or fraction thereof on each route or part thereof not exceeding 1,000 miles in length; 15 cents for each ounce or fraction thereof on each route or part thereof exceeding 1,000 miles and not exceeding 1,500 miles in length; and 20 cents for each ounce or fraction thereof on each route or part thereof over 1,500 miles in length, direct air mileage to control in each case, with 5 cents for each ounce or fraction of an ounce additional for each airmail zone or part of such zone the mail is carried over Government-operated air-mail routes. Such postage includes any necessary transportation to and from the contract airmail routes except by airmail.¹"

Covers flown on both contract and Government routes are not too common. They must have been used *only* during the period from January 19, 1926 to January 31, 1927 inclusive. Practically, the period would start on February 15, 1926, the first date on which contract mail was carried. New rates of 10 cents a half ounce regardless of distance flown became effective on February 1, 1927 per Order No. 4961 dated December 23, 1926:

"The rate of postage on mail carried by airplane on either Government-operated or contract air mail routes *or on both* shall be 10 cents for each half ounce or fraction thereof regardless of distance."²

The cover shown in Fig. 1 is franked with a strip of three of the 8c air mail stamps of 1923. Additional franking of 1c is provided by the 1c stamped

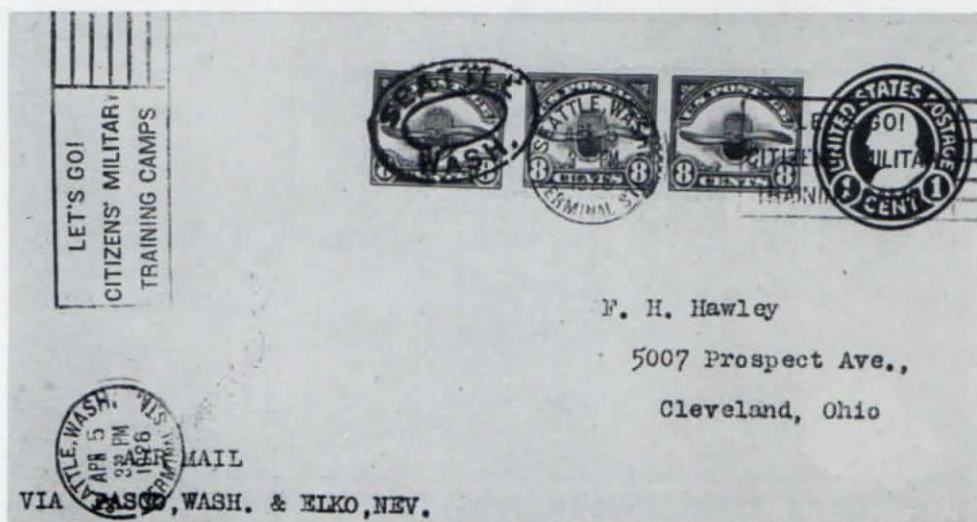


Fig. 1. A 25c rate cover. The rate is 10c for the contract route from Pasco, Wash. to Elko, Nev., plus 15c for the several zones or part zones of the Government route from Elko to Cleveland.



Fig. 2. A 15c rate cover. The rate is 10c for the contract route from St. Paul, Minn. to Chicago, Ill. plus 5c for the Government route from Chicago to New York.

envelope. Thus, the full rate is 25c. The stamps are cancelled April 5, 1926, at Seattle, Wash. In the lower left corner is the typewritten legend "Air Mail Via Pasco, Wash. & Elko, Nev." The cancelling date of April 5, 1926 is just one day prior to the inaugural flight from Pasco, Wash. to Elko, Nev. made on April 6, 1926. The cover appears, then, to have been sent via train from Seattle to Pasco, Wash. There, it probably was placed aboard the plane which flew the first C. A. M. 5 mail to Elko, Nevada. Actually, this is the only flight it could have made from Pasco, Wash. because service on the Pasco-Elko route was suspended the next day, April 7, 1926, because of a series of mishaps and equipment troubles. Service was not resumed until June 1, 1926.

In 1926 the only Government-operated route was the transcontinental route between New York and San Francisco, Calif. Elko, Nevada was one of the intermediate stops on the zone between San Francisco and Cheyenne, Wyoming. The contract route from Pasco, Wash. to Elko, Nevada was inaugurated to serve the Northwestern states with fast service to the East via the Government Transcontinental line, the connection being made at Elko. Therefore, after arrival in Elko, the letter flew the balance of the distance to its destination on the Government route. This necessitated 15c additional postage as follows:

part zone - Elko, Nev. to Cheyenne, Wyo.	5c
full zone - Cheyenne, Wyo. to Chicago, Ill.	5c
part zone - Chicago, Ill. to Cleveland, Ohio	5c
total air mail charge on Government route	15c

Thus, the total air mail rate is 25c consisting of 10c for the contract route and 15c for the Government route.

The cover shown in Fig. 2 is franked with the 10c Map air mail stamp of 1926, together with a 5c postage stamp to make a 15c rate. It is cancelled June 15, 1926, 3 p. m., St. Paul, Minnesota and backstamped June 16, 1926, 5 p. m., New York, N. Y. C. A. M. 9, the contract route from St. Paul, Minn. to Chicago, Ill. was inaugurated on June 7, 1926. Thus, on June 15, 1926, the contract rate of 10c was required for the flight from St. Paul to Chicago. At Chicago, the letter was transferred to the Government-operated route. There-

fore, 5c additional was required for the Chicago to New York zone on this route, making the total air mail postage required 15c.

The cover shown in Fig. 3 is franked with a pair of the 10c Map stamps of 1926, cancelled with the roller marking of Los Angeles, California. There is an additional Los Angeles handstamp in the lower right corner dated October 13, 1926, 9 p.m. The cover is backstamped Chicago, Illinois, October 15, 1926, 7 a.m. It probably was sent via C. A. M. 4, the contract route between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City, Utah. C. A. M. 4 was inaugurated on April 17, 1926 by Western Air Express, Inc. The purpose of this route was to provide Los Angeles with a direct connection to the East and New York by way of a link with the Transcontinental route at Salt Lake City. The 20c rate would, thus, be made up as follows:

Contract rate Los Angeles to Salt Lake City, Utah	10c
Part zone on Government route, Salt Lake City to Cheyenne, Wyoming	5c
Full zone on Government route, Cheyenne, Wyoming, to Chicago, Illinois	5c
	20c

It is also possible that this cover may have flown by way of San Francisco, as follows:

Contract rate, Los Angeles to San Francisco via C. A. M. 8, inaugurated September 15, 1926	10c
---	-----

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Air Mail

Fig. 3. A 20c rate cover. The rate is 10c for the contract route from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City, plus 10c for the part zone and full zone on the Government route. (Photos by Boutrelle)

Full zone on Government route San Francisco to Cheyenne	5c
Full zone on Government route Cheyenne to Chicago	5c
	20c

The likelihood is that it went by way of Salt Lake City since that was the most direct route.

The three commercial covers illustrated in this article, showing usage on both contract and Government routes are the only ones found in almost five years of searching. They are not common. However, more may be within your reach. The trick is to be able to recognize them since none are specifically marked to indicate this type of usage. A thorough knowledge of air mail rates and routes is necessary for such recognition.

Reference Notes:

1. United States Domestic Postage Rates 1789 - 1956, p. 77. P. O. D. Publication 15, published by the Post Office Department, Washington, D. C.
2. Ibid, p. 78.

CANADA (Continued from page 79)

zine might bring forth some information. Notice in the of the large oval cancellation on this mystery stamp the word, "Kenora." This definitely ties it in with the information about the first flight published in the old specialized catalogue. The cancellation's color is blue.

But what about the illustrated stamp that was under the copy of Canada Sanabria No. 510? If any reader can offer some information, please write to Jean Gravelat, 25 Place Jules Ferry, Montrouge (Seine), France. My thanks to my friend, Henry M. Goodkind, the editor of the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS, for his assistance in preparing this article for publication.

ISRAEL

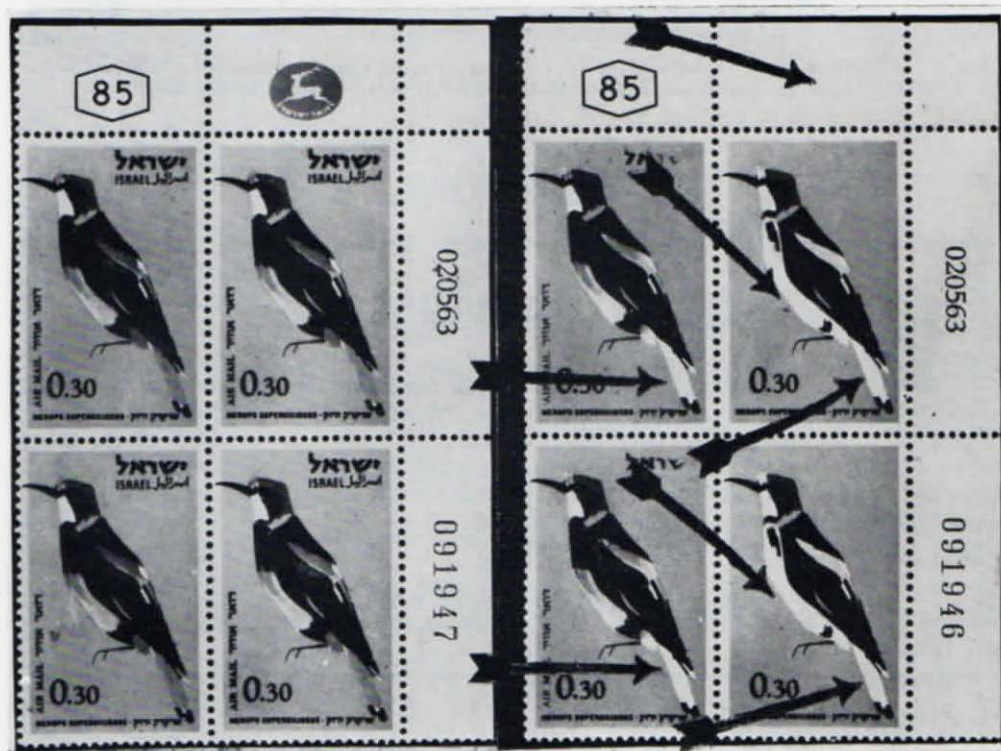
Error — Missing Blue Color On New 1963 Air Mail Stamp

By S. L. BAYER

In 1963, Israel issued a set of three air mail stamps, showing different kinds of birds (Scott C31 to C33). Each design was printed with multi-colors.

The lowest denomination, C31, with a bird called a "bee eater," was found *without the light blue color*. This is shown in the accompanying illustration.

The normal stamps are in the block of four at the left. On the right sheet margin are the plate numbers, 020563 and 091947. On the top sheet margin is the number "85" framed in a hexagon and over the second stamp in the top row, the symbol of the Israel Post Office, the "running stag." This latter is printed in light blue with the stag in white.



The error in a block of four with the missing light blue colors is at the right. This has plate numbers 020563 and 091946 in the right sheet margin, and also the "85" over the first stamp in the top sheet margin. But notice that *over the second stamp, no blue "running stag" appears*. The arrow points to this.

Also marked with black arrows are the missing light blue colors on the bird's breast and tail. In the normal stamp, the tail is green. In the error block, the tail is yellow. This is because the green color was made by mixing yellow and blue. But where the blue color is missing, obviously the tail remained yellow.

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