

THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS



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A Review of United States Air Mail Markings Since 1918

By Philip Silver

The United States air mail specialist, looking for an interesting and inexpensive collecting facet, might consider air mail markings. Those that will be considered here will not usually be found listed in the catalogues. Yes, there are a number of special handstamps listed in the **American Air Mail Catalogue** and other catalogues as well. Outstanding, of course, is the circular handstamp plus four bars at right first used on the May 15, 1918 flights between Washington, Philadelphia and New York. A quick glance at the U.S. Governmental Flights Section in the **American Air Mail Catalogue** will disclose a number of interesting handstamps used to designate service on the new routes as they were opened. Most of these handstamps were used as cancelling devices. Others applied what might be termed cachets. None of these are the markings that are considered in this article.

Air Mail Service Designation Markings

What is especially surprising about the 1918 period which ushered in the modern Governmental air mail period, as contrasted to the pioneer era, is that the Post Office Department provided few handstamps for marking letters to indicate that air mail service was being provided. As a consequence, patrons of this service marked their letters with a wide variety of manuscript, typewritten or rubber-stamped legends. Thus, during 1918 and 1919, the following will be found:

Aerial Mail	Aviation Mail
Aerial Post	Via Aeroplane
Aeroplane Mail	Via Aero Mail
Airplane Mail	Via Aeroplane Mail Service
AIRPLANE MAIL	Via Airplane Post
Airplane Service	

Others may exist; they are, of course, strictly private markings.

There are also a number of what appear to be official handstamped markings found on covers, some used in only one city:

Year

1918	AERIAL MAIL (with or without dot after "MAIL")
"	AERIAL MAIL----- (ten dashes followed by dot)
"	AERIAL MAIL-----VIA NEW YORK (15 dashes)
	AERO
"	MAIL (in box; wings at right and left) 2 sizes
"	VIA
"	AEROPLANE MAIL (with wings at right and left)
"	By Airplane Mail
"	VIA, AEROPLANE (Lock Haven, Pa.)

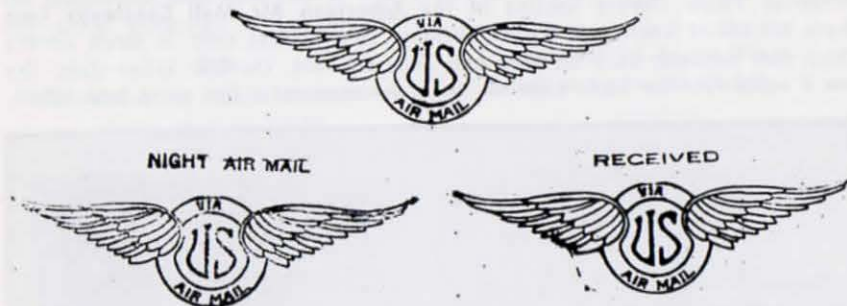
"	VIA AER O PLANE (Lock Haven, Pa.)
"	BRYAN CLEVELAND, N.Y. AERO MAIL EAST (Bryan, Ohio)
1919	VIA, Aeroplane (Cleveland, Ohio)

It is quite possible that some of the above markings may be of private origin.

Starting in 1920, the words "air mail" appear with combination lower and upper case letters and in upper case letters only. Other markings make their appearance too:

Air Mail	(several sizes)
AIR MAIL	(several sizes)
AIRPLANE MAIL	
VIA	(in box; all letters in italics)
Via Air Mail	
VIA AIR MAIL	(several sizes)
Night Air Mail	
NIGHT AIR MAIL	(several sizes)
AEROPLANE SERVICE	
AEROPLANE MAIL	

In addition, the familiar winged "US" is noted on covers flown in the early 1920's. Three basic types may be distinguished, and these are shown



in the accompanying illustration. In addition, a sub-type, 2a, is known with the words "NIGHT AIR MAIL" below the handstamp.

With the start of air mail service in 1935 across the Pacific Ocean to Hawaii, the Philippines and, in 1937, to the Asian mainland, new markings are found:

AIR MAIL	CLIPPER AIR MAIL
VIA CLIPPER	VIA CLIPPER MAIL
Via Clipper	TRANS-PACIFIC
Air Mail	TRANS-PACIFIC AIR MAIL
Via Clipper	BY TRANS-PACIFIC ROUTE
VIA CLIPPER (double letters)	BY AIRMAIL - Trans Pacific Route
CLIPPER	VIA TRANS-PACIFIC AIR MAIL

After the successful flights across the Atlantic Ocean in 1939, most letters received only the basic "AIR MAIL" or "VIA AIR MAIL" markings. I have seen one marking, however, which specifies the route, to wit:

TRANS ATLANTIC ROUTE

A number of military markings may also be found during the World War II period:

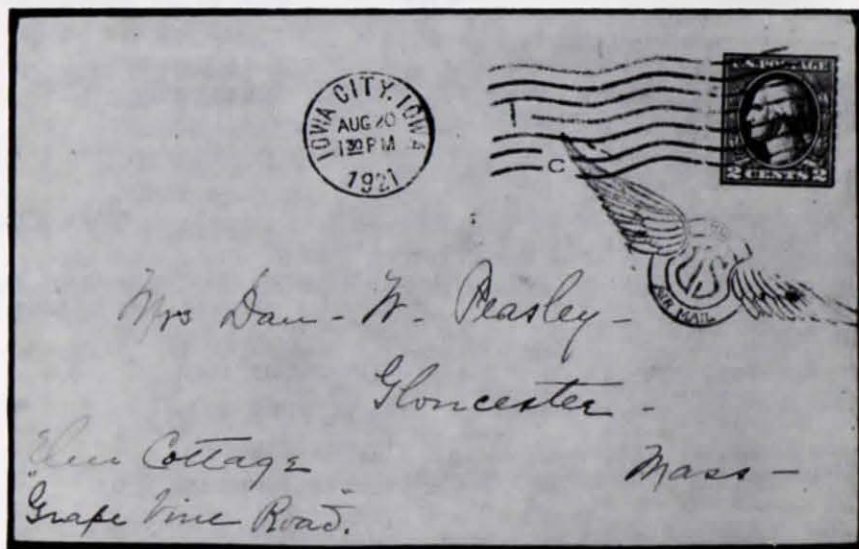
Certified Essential Official
War Department Air Mail

W. D. ESSENTIAL OFFICIAL AIRMAIL
VIA MILITARY PLANE

"Expedited" Markings

On July 18, 1919, air mail service ceased. Postmaster General's Order No. 3336, July 18, 1919, and effective as of that date, stated that mail carried by airplane would be charged at the rate of 2 cents an ounce or fraction. This order did not establish a new air mail rate. It merely meant that on the planes, which continued to fly with a view towards the eventual establishment of a transcontinental system, mail franked at the then current 2-cent first-class rate would be flown if space was available.

How, then, can one identify a flown 2-cent rate cover? Occasionally, such mail received the winged air mail handstamp. (See illustrated cover.) A second way to identify such first-class covers is if they bear a Post Office Department "crash" marking. A number of these may be found in the Interrupted Flight Covers Section of the **American Air Mail Catalogue** (see pages 317-389 of Volume 1, Fifth Edition). This applies only to those covers which flew between July 18, 1919 and June 30, 1924. On that latter date, the new 8 cents rate for each zone on the transcontinental line went into effect.



A first-class cover with Type 1 winged VIA / US / AIR MAIL handstamped marking. (All photos by Boutrelle)

A third method of identification is to find first-class letters with "expedited" markings such as the following:

12/10/19 Delivery of this letter
advanced by Air Mail.

1/8/20 Delivery of this letter
expedited one business
day by Air Mail.

3/8/21 ADVANCED BY AIR MAIL

6/23/23 ADVANCED BY AEROPLANE

Such "expedited" markings are also found on regular air mail covers subsequent to June 30, 1924. Some examples are noted:

1928 Forwarded by train to
expedite delivery

1930 By Air Mail to Exchange Office

1932 Dispatched by rail from Dallas, Tex.
to advance arrival at destination.

"Late" or "No Connection" Markings

In the middle to late 1920's, when time schedules for the Government and contract routes had been firmly established, a new type of marking came into vogue. These were applied to letters which were received after the announced time schedule or where planes were late in arriving or departing. Some examples are shown below:

1926

Forwarded by train account of
delay to mail plane.
(all letters in italics)

Received at Chicago, Ill.
too late for air dispatch
Forwarded by train

Received too late
for AIR MAIL.
Dispatched by rail
to save delay.
(in box)

Forwarded by train from
Chicago, Ill. account of
delay to mail plane.

1927

Forwarded by train to Chicago
account delay to plane.

Forwarded by train from
Chicago, Ill. account no
connection with mail plane

Dispatched by train: Plane
failed to arrive or depart

FORWARDED BY TRAIN
Account no connection with Mail
plane from Omaha, Nebr.
Burlington Sta.

Received at St. Louis, Missouri
too late for Air Dispatch.
Forwarded by train.

1928

Received too late for
Air Mail. Dispatched by
Train to save delay.

Sent by rail to avoid delay

1929

Dispatched via train
to avoid delay.

RECEIVED TOO LATE
TO CONNECT WITH
GRAF ZEPPELIN FLIGHT

TOO LATE FOR
GRAF ZEPPELIN DESPATCH

TOO LATE
VARICK ST. STA., N.Y.

1930

DISPATCHED BY TRAIN TO AVOID
DELAY
(on one line)

RECEIVED TOO LATE
FOR
GRAF ZEPPELIN DISPATCH
1938

Flight Delayed on
Account of Storm

"Short Paid" Markings

Frequently, a letter would be endorsed "via air mail" by the sender but insufficient postage was affixed. For such letters, a variety of markings have been noted:

1924

Insufficient postage
Not in Air Mail
(this is a manuscript P.O.D. marking)

1929

NOT IN THE AIR MAILS

1930

Insufficient Postage
For Airplane Mail
Chicago, Ill., N.S.M.L.

INSUFFICIENTLY PREPAID
FOR AIR MAIL SERVICE
(in box)

1932

Not paid in United States
Air Mail Service

Not in AIR MAIL

1933

NOT IN THE AIR MAILS
SHORT PAID
G. P. O. N. Y. (D.M.)

NOT IN AIR MAIL

Because of insufficient Postage.

1937

Insufficiently paid for
Clipper air mail

1942

Not In Air Mail

1960

Insufficient Postage Via
Airmail Dispatched by
Ordinary Mail

Miscellaneous Markings

A number of miscellaneous markings are known; some are possibly of private origin:

1925

Not mailed in Airplane box
Time

1944

Via Air Mail
From Coast Onward To Destination

1926

CARRY ONE ZONE ONLY BY AIR

1968

Air-Mail stamps not permissible
for use on other than air mail

The 1944 marking above needs some clarification. The cover on which it appears is franked with an 8-cent air mail stamp, Scott C26, postmarked at Honolulu, Hawaii May 25, 1944. Obviously, this was insufficient to pay the full air mail rate from Hawaii which was 20 cents a half-ounce at that time. This included the Clipper flight to the mainland and air service to destination.

tion. By limiting the air mail service to 8 cents, the sender got the following: boat service to the west coast, air mail service from coast to point of address at the then current 8 cents an ounce rate for non-military personnel during part of the World War II period.

A marking seen in the late 1920's and early 1930's is: AIR MAIL LONDON TO CONTINENT. During that period, air mail service was supplied from London to various points in continental Europe, Turkey and northwestern Africa. Mail from the United States would be sent by boat to London at the foreign rate of 5 cents an ounce. Per Post Office Department instructions, if the sender wanted air mail service from London, the letter had to be endorsed as noted above. Rates varied according to the distance from London. But, since the sender added the endorsement, it is obviously of private origin. This service, of course, was in use prior to the time air mail was first flown across the Atlantic Ocean on a regular basis starting in 1939.

Lastly, I include an interesting marking found on some 1918 covers. This, too, is most likely of private origin:

SEND A LETTER BY AIRPLANE
ESPECIALLY TO ONE "OVER THERE",
IT WILL BE A REAL TREAT

What is laughable about this legend is that in 1918 there was no air mail service over the Atlantic Ocean to Europe. The Post Office Department was hard pressed enough to maintain the fledgling air mail route between Washington, New York and Philadelphia.

This article is intended as an introduction to what this writer considers an interesting facet of U.S. air mail collecting. It is relatively inexpensive but finding the covers will take a bit of searching. Readers are asked to supply information, preferably photocopies, of additional markings in their collections. If enough are gathered, there may be a sequel published in a future issue. Perhaps, too, these markings will some day receive catalogue listing.

(The writer acknowledges the receipt of several examples in the collections of Roy F. Dodd, Harry L. McDowell, Dr. Perham C. Nahl and George T. Turner. The March 28, 1921 "ADVANCED BY AIR MAIL" marking was taken from Dr. Max Kronstein's article on pages 286 and 287 of the May 1975 issue of *The Airpost Journal*. The 1930 "short paid" marking from Chicago is shown on page 250 of Delf Norona's "Cyclopedia of United States Postmarks and Postal History" reprinted in 1975 by Quarterman Publications of Lawrence, Mass. The 1926 boxed "late" marking is in the collection of Mr. Julius F. Mueller and was illustrated in Fred Boughner's "Airmail Antics" column in an early 1974 issue of "Linn's Stamp News.")

I have recently received a number of solicitation letters from so-called investment counselors touting stamps as the investment panacea of all time. Frankly, having spent more than 35 years in organized philately, I must say I've never heard of these financial "whiz kids." I can understand, though, after reading their slick patter, that many may fall into the trap and end up with enough colored tid-bits to paper a wall. Knowledgeable collectors may know enough to be careful. But those neophytes who have just become part of the philatelic fraternity will be lost forever to our hobby! Beware!

— P. S.

URUGUAY: THE FIRST AIR MAIL ISSUES OF 1921-22

By Herman Kerst

Henry Goodkind and Philip Silver, in *The Aero Philatelist Annals* from April 1956 to April 1957, published and discussed all the then known information about the first airmail issue of Uruguay. This is the group of three stamps issued at separate times in 1921 and 1922, consisting of provisional overprints in three different colors on remainders of the 25 centesimos stamps of February 11, 1901. The stamps are listed as numbers C1 to C3 in Scott and numbers 1 to 4 in Sanabria. Goodkind defended this issue most eloquently, "One should remember that March 1921 was just a few years after World War I, when aviation was still in its infancy. It is the writer's belief that too many collectors, when handling a copy of Uruguay C1, treat it simply as just another stamp without giving further thought to its exceptional history and background, marking, as it did, an attempt at airmail back in 1921."

The blue overprinted stamp, C1, was issued for an attempt to establish an airmail service to Rocha. Why Rocha? Rocha is the capital of the Department of Uruguay known as the Riviera of Uruguay, a stretch of resorts, casinos, beaches, etc. which extend along the northern shores of the Rio de la Plata and the coast of the Atlantic. These resorts are patronized by wealthy Argentines, Uruguayans and others. Some people are attracted to the Uruguayan Riviera because the shores are fine sand, while most of the beaches on the Argentine side of the La Plata River are much less desirable. The only way that Rocha could be reached from Argentina was by boat, or from Montevideo by train or car. It was believed the wealthy would pay for improved communications to get their newspapers, business reports and stock quotations as soon as possible. It was thought that this would be a good place to make a start at setting up the interior airmail service which, for some time, had been one of the goals of Dr. Cesar Miranda, head of the Uruguayan postal service at that time.

There were only two flights, one each way, between Montevideo and Rocha. Dr. Estenio Hormaeche, one of the major experts on Uruguayan airmail stamps, in his unpublished notes on this issue, states categorically that there was only one set of flights between Montevideo and Rocha. Why no more flights? There was not much mail carried in either direction and, especially on the return flight from Rocha, only a few pieces. Most of the mail was philatelic. Evidently, it was felt that the public was not yet ready for this service.

As mentioned above, Dr. Hormaeche's notes on the early Uruguayan airmails have never been published but, through the kindness of Senor Ruben Aguiar, who purchased Dr. Hormaeche's collection after his death, I was supplied with a copy. These notes cover the Uruguayan airmails from 1921 to 1925. In addition, Senor Aguiar made available to me some of the information about the early philatelic happenings in Uruguay which he learned from conversations with the dealers and collectors who were active then.

Goodkind, in his first article in the April 1956 issue of the *Annals*, reported that he had not been able to find any record of the method of application of the overprint. He concluded that it had been done by typography. My own studies tended to support this opinion, but modern lithography is less distinguishable from typography than it used to be, so I left this question open in my mind. Dr. Hormaeche states definitely that the overprint was applied by lithography at the Imprenta Nacional and that the plate for the overprint was laid out by Senor Guillermo Schroeder, the lithographic designer of the Imprenta.

Goodkind further discusses the so-called "ultramarine" shade of the first overprint. In his opinion, this was simply a light shade of the blue, rather than a different color. My own studies confirm this and Senor Aguiar states there are a number of shades of this overprint, varying between light and dark blue. The ultramarine shade is distinguishable and probably deserving of listing but it was caused by variations in the amount of ink fed to the plate.

The 25 centesimos stamps used for this issue were not the chestnut shade of the issue of 1901 but rather the coffee shade of a later reissue. The story of the stamp printings, issues and reissues of 1900 to 1910 is a complex one and this is not the place to tell it. It is sufficient to state that these stamps appeared in a second printing in a darker shade, probably in the latter part of 1909 or the early part of 1910. However, the registration fee, for which the 25 centesimos denomination was used, had been reduced to 23 centesimos. Evidently, not many of the new 25 centesimos stamps were used, the stock being left in the hands of the Contaduria. It was these which were brought out of storage and used for the provisional airmails.

Waterlow printed stamps are notorious for the variety of perforations they display. The company had a number of perforating machines and used them indiscriminately. However, neither in Uruguay nor anywhere else has anybody reported anything other than a perforation of 14 for these stamps. If one of my readers can show one of these stamps with a perforation other than 14, there are many Uruguay specialists who would like to see it.

The major controversy connected with this issue is the legitimacy of the black overprint. For a long time, neither this nor the yellow-green shade of the 1922 green overprint were accepted or catalogued outside of Uruguay. The Uruguayans knew about them but nobody would pay any attention. As it is now well-known, the yellow-green shade of the green overprint occurred when the first two sheets of the stamps were produced in that color and submitted to Dr. Miranda for approval. The decision to use a darker green was made and the rest of the stamps printed that way. The two sheets with the yellow-green overprint fell immediately into the hands of collectors. If dealers had had some to offer and submit to the cataloguers, there might have been no question about them. But, they were closely held and very slow to appear on the market.

The same thing happened with the black overprint. Goodkind, in his article in the January 1957 issue of the *Annals*, very shrewdly guessed that this is what happened. The first sheet was overprinted in black and submitted for approval. However, the administrative order covering this issue

specified that the color was to be blue. It was decided that the black color was too "funereal" and that the overprint should be a little higher on the stamp. The rest of this overprinted stamp was done in blue. The sheet with the black overprint was not returned to the Imprenta Nacional. Thus, their records only show that the remaining 9,900 stamps which they overprinted were delivered to the postal authorities.

The sheet of black overprinted stamps was kept by Dr. Miranda who was a stamp collector. He and a few of his friends broke it up eventually. The important thing is that its existence was known to the postal authorities and that it was not declared invalid for postal use. All of the overprinted provisional issues, including the black, the yellow-green and the inverted red overprints were valid for postage up to the time the imperforate Albatross stamps were issued on March 3, 1926.

Stanley Gibbons had a representative in the La Plata area at that time who reported new issues, flights and other data to them. Apparently, he was unable to ascertain anything about this black overprint or any official notice of its issuance, so he reported it as bogus. Gibbons duly indicated this in their catalogue for a long time and, undoubtedly, their opinion influenced other cataloguers. On the other hand, Sanabria has gone overboard the other way, giving the black overprint separate status with a number of its own. Essentially, the black and the yellow-green overprints were color trials, not proofs or essays. The important thing is that they were valid for postage and were actually so used. In the eyes of the Uruguayan Post Office, they were legitimate stamps.

It was stated, at the time of issuance, that proofs had been made in black on white paper and destroyed. Somebody, as usual, did not destroy all of them because, if my memory is correct, an exhibitor at the EXFILMO show in Uruguay in the fall of 1975 had some of these black proofs in his frames.

I have stated that these shade varieties were actually used. Such usage was purely philatelic. At least one copy of the black overprint was put on a cover, cancelled, carried by the owner to Buenos Aires and backstamped there. A few copies of the black overprint are reported to have been used on the Montevideo-Florida flights of August 25, 1925. These flights were very favorable for such usage. The distance was so short that the sender could be at the other end to receive his letters, thereby minimizing the chance of loss of the valuable stamp.

We will never know for certain everything that happened in Uruguay in the early days of aerophilately there. The published records are incomplete and the participants have been somewhat cagey about talking. The story, as it unfolds, doesn't picture Miranda in the best light but he was actually a well-liked and respected person who protected the value of his holdings and those of his friends. To his credit, on the other side of the picture, when the surcharged airmail issue of November 22, 1944 was in the making with several of the denominations scheduled for between 1,300 and 4,300 copies each, Miranda stopped it in the interest of philately.

Random Thoughts on U.S. Air Mails

By Philip Silver

I have just finished looking over most of the previous issues of **The Aero Philatelist Annals**. This was a monumental task; it will be remembered that the first issue was published in July 1953. In this 22-year period, more than 70 separate numbers appeared.

In spite of the enjoyment engendered by this excursion into the past, one nagging thought kept intruding itself. Most of the stamps and covers illustrated in the articles could be classified as fairly expensive. If that was true at the time of publication, how much more expensive would they be today, given the interplay of supply and demand and the creeping inflation of the past several years? How many collectors, therefore, were discouraged because they believed it was not possible to collect air mail stamps and covers unless they had unlimited funds available?

This is true in the realm of U.S. Air mail stamps as for many other countries. It is for that reason that these random thoughts are published. Can one collect inexpensive covers with U.S. air mail stamps, for example, and have a great deal of enjoyment in the process? The answer is definitely yes! But to do that you have to amass at least a modicum of knowledge not generally found in the catalogues.

The 15-cent "Map" stamp of 1926

The 15-cent Map air mail stamp issued September 18, 1926 is relatively inexpensive. The cost of a fine used copy is approximately \$1.25. Can you find it properly used on cover. Not frequently! Why? First, you must have some knowledge of the history and development of the United States air mail service.

In 1926, there was a spectacular growth in non-governmental air mail service. This was the contract or C.A.M. period. The Kelly Bill, approved by the Congress and signed into law in February 1925, provided for air mail routes to be flown by commercial carriers. The routes assigned to these contract carriers were usually feeder lines which hooked-up with the Government-operated transcontinental route that ran from New York to San Francisco.

The Post Office Department by Order No. 3817, dated January 19, 1926, set the following rates on the contract air mail routes:

10 cent an ounce on routes not exceeding 1,000 miles in length.

15 cents an ounce on routes in excess of 1,000 miles but not exceeding 1,500 miles.

20 cents an ounce on routes in excess of 1,500 miles.

During 1926, thirteen contract air mail routes were established. Most were under 1,000 miles in length. So, most contract air mail covers — first flight or commercial — are franked with 10 cents in postage, usually the 10-cent Map stamp issued February 13, 1926. Only one route of the thirteen inaugurated during 1926 exceeded 1,000 miles. That was C.A.M. 8 from Seattle to Los Angeles. It was 1,099 miles long. So, for this route, the Post



Upper portion of two covers with 15-cent and 20-cent Map stamps properly used in 1927.

Office Department issued the 15-cent Map stamp. The route was inaugurated on September 15, 1926 by Pacific Air Transport. The stamp was issued on September 18th. Thus, it is not possible to find this 15-cent Map stamp used on the inaugural C.A.M. 8 flight. But it can be found used commercially during the short period from September 18, 1926 to January 31, 1927. On February 1, 1927, a new rate of 10 cents a half-ounce for air mail was established. This rate was applied regardless of distance and whether flown on a Government-operated or contract route.

The 15-cent Map stamp will usually be found on commercial covers flown from Seattle to Los Angeles. They are quite scarce because few people saved commercial covers, first-class or air mail. Occasionally, this 15-cent air mail stamp will be found used on covers flown on other 1926 contract routes. There it usually pays part of a combined fee for Government-operated and contract routes. Fifteen years ago, a collector offered to pay 10 times catalogue for a properly used 15-cent stamp on cover. Since the stamp catalogued 50 cents then, his offer was \$5.00. To my knowledge, he received very few covers. Were he to make that offer today, he would have to pay \$15.00.

The 20-cent "Map" stamp of 1927

There never was a contract route that exceeded 1,500 miles in length during the period prior to February 1, 1927. So, no need existed for a 20-cent air mail stamp until then. On that date, as noted previously, the air mail rate became 10 cents a half-ounce regardless of distance and whether carried on Government-operated or contract routes. Since many letters weighed more than a half-ounce, the Post Office Department issued the 20-cent Map air mail stamp on January 25, 1927, seven days prior to the new rate. Thus, the 20-cent stamp could pay for a one-ounce letter.

This 20-cent Map air mail stamp can be purchased for about \$1.25 in fine used condition. Is it easy to find on commercial air mail covers? No! But it is worth searching for especially on covers used during the early months of 1927. Just remember the date, February 1, 1927, when the rate changed and start searching.

I might add that the 15-cent and 20-cent Map air mail stamps may also be found on later covers, especially in the late 1930's and early 1940's. But these are not as desirable.

The 5-cent "Beacon" stamp of 1928

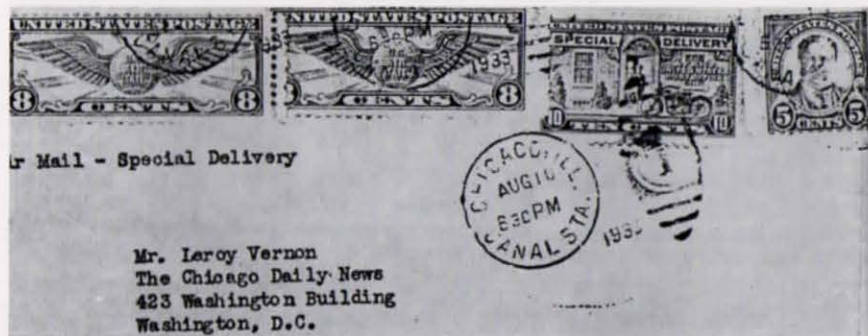
A first day cover of the 1928 Beacon air mail stamp is catalogued at \$37.50. It is not known how many such covers were prepared but they are relatively plentiful. At \$37.50, however, they may be out of reach for many philatelists with modest budgets.

The Beacon air mail stamp was issued on July 25, 1928. On that date, the air mail rate was still 10 cents an ounce regardless of distance. Thus, first day covers are usually franked with a pair of these Beacon stamps. Some are found with only a single copy but they are usually rated 5 cents postage due. On August 1, 1928, there was another rate change. The first ounce for air mail was 5 cents; each additional ounce cost 10 cents.

This change in rate produced two fine chances for the philatelist of modest means to enjoy the hobby at small cost. First, he can search for covers franked with a pair of Beacon stamps to pay the 10-cent rate in the relatively short period from July 25 to July 31, 1928, inclusive. Such covers will not be found in the bargain first-flight boxes displayed by many dealers. That is simply because there were no first flights in that short period. You



Top — A 10-cent rate Beacon cover postmarked Cincinnati, Ohio, July 31, 1928. Bottom — A 15-cent rate cover postmarked Des Moines, Iowa, November 7, 1928.



A 21-cent rate cover franked with two copies of C17 plus 5 cents in postage, and mailed from Chicago August 10, 1933.

will find such items, however, in batches of commercial covers if, first, you can find a dealer who has commercial or other covers to sell. But you will have to remember the dates noted above.

Second, you can look for 15-cent rate covers used during the period from August 1, 1928 to July 5, 1932, inclusive. On July 6, 1932, the air mail rate was changed to 8 cents an ounce. Again, the dates must be remembered when you go searching for these items. In the process, you may find examples of other multiple rates. Thus, a three-ounce letter would cost 25 cents, 5 cents for the first ounce plus 10 cents for each of the two additional ounces. You will find these covers franked with the Beacon stamp or the 5-cent Globe stamps of 1930 and 1931. Both of the latter were issued in the above-noted period.

21-cent rate covers

The higher rate for the second or subsequent ounces of air mail matter is not confined to the period of the 5-cent Beacon and 5-cent Globe stamps, although August 1, 1928 marked the first time in United States air mail history that such a rate came into existence. On July 6, 1932, when the air mail rate was increased to 8 cents an ounce, the rate structure also provided higher costs for the second and subsequent ounces. Only this time, it was 13 cents additional for the extra ounces. But don't expect to find a 21-cent rate cover prepaid with the 8-cent air mail stamp issued on September 6, 1932 plus a 13-cent air mail stamp. The Post Office Department simply neglected to issue an air mail stamp with a 13-cent denomination. Such covers, when found, will usually be franked with one or two 8-cent air mail stamps plus sufficient postage added to complete the 21-cent rate.

So, you may now search for 21-cent rate air mail covers. The period of use of this rate will be from July 6, 1932 to June 30, 1934. On July 1, 1934, the rate was changed to 6 cents for each ounce.

I cannot guarantee that you will find too many of the covers described above. For most, the period of use was relatively short. But the search will be interesting because you must come armed with knowledge. And, because of that knowledge, each "find" will be that much sweeter. And the cost will be modest which is what I started out to say in the first place.

A Suggested Correction to American Air Mail Catalogue

By Philip Silver

One of our sharp-eyed readers, Donald B. Holmes of New Canaan, Conn., has brought my attention to two errors in the listings of the U.S. Governmental Flights section of the **American Air Mail Catalogue**. The listings are for flight numbers 101(a) and 101(b) on page 55 of Volume 1 of the Fifth Edition.

The incorrect listings appear as:

101(a) Washington to New York, May 15, 1918,
10 A.M.—"First Trip"

and

101(b) Washington to New York, May 15, 1918,
11 A.M.—"First Trip"

What is wrong with the above is that the year date "1918" should not be included. 10 AM and 11 AM actually take the place of the year, 1918.

Writing in the April 1962 issue of **The Aero Philatelist Annals**, Volume IX, Number 4, I set forth seven types of May 15, 1918 handstamp cancellations known as of the date of the article. Included were the two that are the basis of the present article:

Type 2 MAY/15/10AM/FIRST TRIP

Type 3 MAY/15/11AM/FIRST TRIP

It will be noted that the year "1918" does not appear in these two types. Yet, when they received a listing in the Fourth Edition of the **Catalogue**, the year date was inserted. It is immaterial at this time to determine who was at fault; what is important is that the errors be brought to the attention of interested collectors and corrected in the next edition of the **Catalogue**.

Over the years, new May 15, 1918 handstamp varieties have been discovered by the writer or reported to him. As a consequence, the present Fifth Edition of the **Catalogue** now contains 16 types. To these should be added the information contained in my article in the January 1976 issue of the **Annals**.

In the process of examination engendered by Mr. Holmes' discovery, it was noted that all the handstamp type listings in the **Catalogue** contain periods for A.M. and P.M. That is also incorrect. Examination of handstamps for the 1918 flights prepared by the Post Office Department and those used in subsequent years indicates that periods or "stops" were not used in such places. Accordingly, the **Catalogue** listings should read AM or PM and these corrections will appear in the next edition of the **Catalogue**, as well.

In the meantime, all collectors who have covers bearing May 15, 1918 handstamps are asked to examine these to determine if they contain unlisted varieties. The writer will be grateful for such information which will then be reported, with acknowledgements, for the benefit of all.

The Editor Says . . .

Miss W. Penn-Gaskell, who once formed one of the great air mail collections of all time, wrote the following piece for the April 1934 issue of "Godden's Gazette":

Airpost collecting requires study and much discrimination. But granted these two factors, it is one of the most delightful hobbies in the world — of unflagging interest and exhilaration.

To the novice I recommend due caution in buying only from approved dealers until you are certain of their knowledge. But especially I emphasize the point — study your catalogues from cover to cover, from hour to hour, from day to day.

Assimilate the immense amount of information that is gathered therein.

To which we say amen! And add that there exists today a vast compendium of knowledge which has been lovingly placed before us by a host of authors who painstakingly researched their respective fields of interest. Read and study the catalogues, yes! But also take the time to search out what was written in the past. It will add to your own store of knowledge and make more enjoyable the hobby we love.

— P. S.

As this is being written, I have before me an auction catalogue of the items to be sold on October 30, 1976 by the firm of David Feldman of Geneva, Switzerland. Illustrated are two exceedingly rare covers of the 1928 ILE-DE-FRANCE air mail stamps of France. Each of the covers is franked with a block of four stamps of this issue, the 10 Fr. on 90c and the same denomination on 1.50 Fr. The catalogue describes these as unique and notes that the blocks show both the narrow and wide spacings. Such covers are indeed great air mail rarities and will be added to some lucky air mail collector's holdings. The point is that they are available for purchase and are not part of some great collection permanently housed in a museum. Most collections bequeathed to museums never see the light of day. Even if displayed occasionally, how can most collectors avail themselves of the opportunity to study them if they are to be found half way around the world? In my opinion, it is far better for collections to be sold at public auction so that all may have an opportunity to own a fine piece. A collector may only be a temporary custodian of such pieces. His ownership may only be transitory. But it is the joy of that ownership, however temporary, that keeps up interest in the hobby.

— P. S.