



THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS

★ ★ A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE ON AERO-PHILATELY ★ ★

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TWO - OUT OF THE PAST

During the late 20's and early 30's, I developed and carried on an auction sales service specializing in Airmails, but broadening into the entire field of philately as the service developed and prestige grew. In 1937, demands for this service from sellers had grown to a point that required a decision as to giving it full time thereafter, or handing it over to someone else who could. As a result, I closed out the business with Sale No. 76 and for most of the time since then I have been engaged in University personnel administration.

During those years the Reverend D. A. Kearns-Preston, a good friend and customer then well along in years obtained my promise that when he passed on I would personally handle the sale of his collection. Now, long after his departure, his son has just now found me and I have been asked to redeem that pledge. I have decided to do so as effectively as possible, taking into account the long gap since I last was professionally active in this field.

I am therefore presently classifying and preparing for sale in Chicago on **May 13**, an outstanding air mail collection, one of a type that seldom becomes available. This collection was built by a man of discrimination and high regard for condition. He bought carefully and much preferred an outstanding piece at a good price to a bargain lot of doubtful quality.

The collection is especially strong in the period of the 20's and 30's, those years of aviation growth and extension. It is broad in variety, including U. S. and Foreign Stamps; Air Post Stamps, both mint and on cover and including **many** Zepps; U. S. Government's; Historical Flights; Trans-Oceanics; Lighter than Air; CAM's; FAM's; Navy and Foreign Flights. It has many of the classics of aerophilately and many items truly unique, including one of the finest — if not the finest — existing Lindbergh collections.

The catalog of the first sale should be ready for release by April 1st. A request will bring you a copy of this and those of other sales as they are ready.

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Vol. VIII

NO. 4

THE AERO
PHILATELIST ANNALS

Henry M. Goodkind, Editor

Philip Silver, Assistant Editor

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UNITED STATES

The 24c Air Mail Stamp of 1918

Used block of four with fake

FIRST TRIP cancellation, May 15, 1918

By PHILIP SILVER

The writer recalls a meeting of the New York Chapter of Aero Philatelists held several years ago at the Collectors Club. Mr. Henry M. Goodkind was the speaker and he showed covers flown on May 15, 1918, the date of the *First Trip* of the United States 24c air mail stamp of 1918. Included in his showing was a cover with a genuine stamp but a counterfeit *First Trip May 15, 1918* cancellation. It struck the writer, at that time, that the subject might be of some interest to the out-of-town members to whom this kind of educational material is not readily available. The thought was to publish something on this subject in THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS. Unfortunately, as with many other ideas that have occurred to the writer from time to time, the matter was almost completely forgotten; in any event, it lay dormant for a long time.

Several months ago, the writer received from Mr. William P. Laird of Minneapolis some multiple piece covers which were photographed and shown in the October 1960 issue of THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS, (Vol. VIII No. 2). Included with the material sent by Mr. Laird was a used block of four of the

UNITED STATES

24c air mail stamps of 1918 with a May 15, 1918, *First Trip* cancellation. The first thought that occurred to the writer was that this block, off cover, was mute evidence of the philatelic crime of the century. Why would anyone be foolish enough to remove a block of four from a desirable first flight cover when, on cover, it had a monetary value many times in excess of the used block? But, this was not the first time that such a thing had happened. Many collectors have soaked stamps off covers in order to fill a space in an album. Later, however, they have literally kicked themselves when they realized what they had done. No doubt, this will be repeated many times in the future.

Closer examination, however, of the block shown in Fig. 1 shed an altogether different light on the matter. There was something about it that aroused suspicion. The writer can definitely state, after careful study, that the cancellation on the stamps is a counterfeit! So, a second thought came that this would be a good time to make up for the previous lapse and write an article delineating the points of difference between the genuine and the fraudulent cancellations.

Previously, it was stated that the date of the cancellation on this block of four is May 15, 1918. The "15" and the year 1918 show quite clearly in the photograph (Fig. 1). Note, however, that the only clue to the month is the letter "Y." Now, four months end with the letter "Y:" January, February, May and July. The writer concluded that the "Y" must be from May for the following reasons:

1. Since the 24c air mail stamps were issued on May 13, 1918, and the year 1918 shows in the cancellation, January and February must be automatically eliminated.
2. On all covers emanating from New York—note that the block has the words *New York* in the lower part of the cancellation—the "Y" of July is always missing. July is always abbreviated *JUL*; as late as July, 1924 this was true of all New York air mail handstamped cancellations.
3. The words *First Trip* were only used on three occasions, i. e.: May 15, 1918 first flight covers from New York, Philadelphia and Washington; on about only six May 16, 1918 covers from Washington, in error; on June 3, 1918 on the first flight from New York to Boston.
4. On all May 15, 1918 covers examined, the "Y" appears in exactly the same position in the cancellation as on the block shown in Fig. 1.

Thus, the "Y" must come from May, and the words *First Trip* plus the number "15" and the year "1918" indicate that the date of the cancellation is May 15, 1918.

Now, take another look at the block in Fig. 1. Note that this is a *top arrow block of four*. Students of this 24c air mail stamp of 1918 know that the *top arrow* is found only on the second and third printings of the stamp. The top and right sheet margins had to be cut away on the first printing so that the sheets of 100 stamps would fit the Post Office folders. After the stamps with inverted centers were found on the afternoon of May 14th, the Post Office Department immediately ordered a second printing of the red and blue air mail stamps from the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The word *TOP* in serif capitals in blue was added to the vignette plate number 8493. Thus, the top margin of a sheet of 100 stamps has the word *TOP* in blue over stamp number 3, the plate number 8493 in blue over stamp number 4, a red arrow and a red and blue slug over stamps five and six, and plate number 8492 in red over stamp number 7. After thus taking precautions to make sure that another

UNITED STATES



Fig. 1. Top arrow block of four with a COUNTERFEIT cancellation of MAY 15, 1918, FIRST TRIP, NEW YORK. (Photo by Boutrelle). Collection of William P. Laird.

error would not happen, the bottom and left sheet margins were cut away so the sheets of stamps would fit the Post Office folders. This second printing was in use for only a very short period.

A third printing was then made; this time the word *TOP* in red capital letters without serifs was added to the frame plate number 8492. This *TOP* appears over stamp number 8 on the sheet. Again, the sheet margins were cut away, this time both the bottom and right margins.* So, this proves that a

*The First United States Air Mail Stamps by Henry M. Goodkind, p. 7.



The highest price

ever paid for a 24c invert, \$9,200, was paid in a December, 1960, Harmer Rooke auction (the T. Charlton Henry "U. S." sale). The error, Scott - priced at \$7,000, had previously sold for a high of \$6,400.

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UNITED STATES

block showing a top arrow can only come from either the second or third printings.

The next question is whether stamps from either one of these later printings could have been finished in time to be used on the first flight of May 15th. We can eliminate the third printing from such consideration since it was made much later, probably during the month of June 1918. Let us not forget, too, that the second printing was not ordered until after the afternoon of May 14th when the sheet with inverted centers was discovered.** Assuming that the order to add the word *TOP* was sent immediately thereafter to the Bureau, it does not seem likely that it could have been added to the vignette plate by the letter engraver and the sheets printed and inspected in time to be used on the first flights the very next day, May 15th. Remember, the Fig. 1 block is cancelled New York, so, in order for a stock of stamps to get there from Washington in time for the flight which left at 11:30 the morning of the 15th a miracle would have had to taken place. Also, one must allow time for the affixing of the stamps, their cancellation by hand, the sorting into bags and the delivery to the air field at Belmont Park, N. Y. We can safely state that no second printing stamps could have arrived in New York in time for use on the first flight the morning of May 15th. Also, all the covers to be flown on the flight from New York to Philadelphia and Washington were prepared well in advance of the time the flight was scheduled to leave, according to accounts by those who did this.

So, in all probability, the fact that the block in Fig. 1 has a top arrow in the margin, rules it out as being available to receive the May 15, 1918 *First Trip* cancellation at New York.

But, there are other factors which mitigate against this Fig. 1 cancellation. Note that the cancellation has *three heavy bars* about 2mm. thick at the right. These are spaced about 8mm. apart. On all genuine cancellations, there are *four bars* spaced as shown in the illustration Fig. 2.

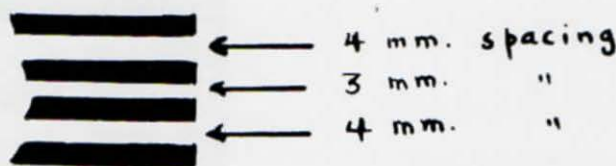


Fig. 2. Measurements of the bars and their spacing as applied with all GENUINE air mail hand-stamped cancellations.

The formation of the letters in the cancellation shown in Fig. 1 is also suspect. For comparison, we illustrate in Fig. 3 a cover with a typical *genuine* New York, May 15, 1918 *First Trip* cancellation. Note the four bars at the right tally exactly with the measurements on Fig. 2. Some of the more striking differences in the formation of the letters are set forth in tabular form as follows:

Genuine cancellation, Fig. 3

1. The words "*First Trip*" and "*New York*" are in serif capitals.
2. The height of the numbers in "*1918*" is $3\frac{1}{2}$ mm.
3. The height of the "*5*" in "*15*" is $3\frac{1}{2}$ mm.

***United States. The 24c Air Mail Inverted Center of 1918* by Henry M. Goodkind. Published by The Collectors Club, New York.

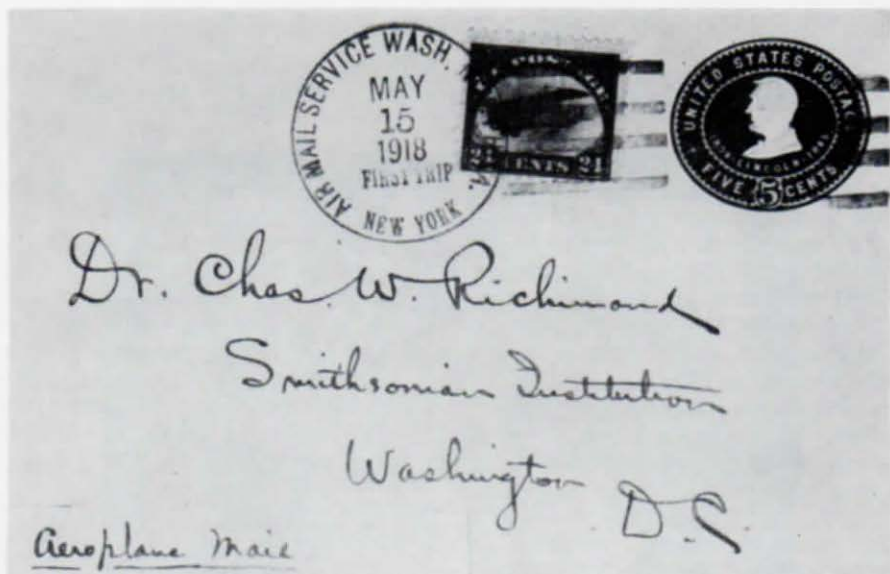


Fig. 3. A cover flown on the May 15, 1918 first flight from New York to Washington. (Author's collection).

4. The "5" in "15" is slanted to the right.
5. The "5" in "15" has a long tail almost meeting the downstroke.
6. There is a small round ball at the end of the tail in "5."
7. The "K" in "York" extends slightly to the right of the "P" in "Trip."
8. All letters in "New York" and "First Trip" are narrow.

Counterfeit cancellation, Fig. 1

1. The words "First Trip" and "New York" are in capital letters without serifs.
2. The height of the numbers in "1918" is $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm.
3. The height of the "5" in "15" is approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ mm.
4. The "5" in "15" is upright.
5. The "5" in "15" has a short tail.
6. There is no round ball at the end of the tail in "5."
7. The "K" in "York" extends slightly to the left of the "P" in "Trip."
8. The letters in "New York" and "First Trip" are much wider than in the genuine cancellations.

While other small differences between the genuine and the counterfeit cancellations can be pointed out, we feel that sufficient number of points of variation have been noted above to make the detection of the fraudulent cancellation fairly simple. The writer wishes to state that recourse, for this comparative study, has been made with much material, more than just the one cover and cancellation shown in Fig. 3. We used this because it is the clearest cancellation available for illustration. Also we have consulted with Henry M. Goodkind and other students of the 1918 air mail issue, who agree that the Fig. 1 block of four bears a counterfeit cancellation.

(Continued on Page 95)

HONDURAS

The "Black" Booms, The "Red" Rests

On February 28, 1961, the newspapers all over the country reported the highest price ever paid for a single stamp at a public sale in America — \$24,500 for the world's rarest air mail stamp — the "Black" Honduras.

Past records show that until the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS in 1954 published a comprehensive study of the rarest air mail stamp, Honduras C12 (Sanabria 14) had remained practically unknown. How can one determine this?

First of all, it was Irving I. Green's 1954 article that brought this stamp to the attention of air mail collectors and dealers. In the second place, just about three years later, in June 1957, Thomas A. Matthews, a Director of Aero Philatelists, gained headlines for the "Black" Honduras when he paid \$11,500 for the only known existing copy in a New York City public auction sale. This copy had been in the collection of the late Oscar R. Lichtenstein, a founder and also a Director of Aero Philatelists.

In the third place, this year, 1961, Thomas A. Matthews began selling his foreign air mail stamp collections. This copy now brought over double the price he had paid for it in 1957.

Finally, it has been a custom for us to retain a stock of back numbers of the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS. After the February 27, 1961 auction, requests were received for Vol. II, No. 1, the number that featured the "Black" Honduras story. Just as "Old Mother Hubbard went to the cupboard to find it bare," we went to the cabinet with the back numbers of this magazine; not one of Vol. II, No. 1 was there. This is the first number of the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS to be sold out.

\$5,300 — \$11,500 — \$24,500

Having attended the Dr. Philip Cole auction in October 1939 when F. W. Kessler sold this copy of the "Black" Honduras for \$5,300; next, the Oscar R. Lichtenstein sale by Harmer, Rooke & Co. when C12 brought \$11,500 and also this year's auction that saw the \$24,500 record price reached, we realized that we are probably one of the few, who has been an eye-witness to this sensational "Black" Honduras price climb.

After this \$24,500 auction sale last February, we got out all the back numbers of the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS and the *Aero Philatelist's News* with articles on the 1925 Honduras air mail stamps and read again each one of them. Since much of the information was not too clearly recalled, this certainly proved to be a beneficial refresher course. One fact stood out. Until the 1954 article in this magazine, the "Red" Honduras had held the limelight, while the "Black" remained in the dark. This was clearly shown by the manner in which Irving I. Green began his article, "The Black Honduras — The Rarest Air Stamp" (AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS, Vol. II, No. 1, July 1954). He wrote:

"After my article, 'the Red Honduras' had appeared in the *Aero Philatelist's News* of October 15, 1952, the editor, Mr. Henry M. Goodkind, advised me that a member upon reading it, had remarked:

"Why all the fuss about the Red Honduras? The Sanabria Catalogue says there are nine of these, but only *two* of Sanabria No. 14. Have you seen a genuine Sanabria 14, Scott C12 in all the years you have been collecting? I never have. Does it exist?"

A WORLD'S RECORD

The "BLACK HONDURAS"

SCOTT C12, CAT. VALUE \$17,500.00



was sold for

\$24,500.00

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HONDURAS

In The Black, In The Red

Seeing that the "Black" Honduras had soared from \$5,300 to \$24,500, we wondered what had happened to its companion, the "Red" Honduras. We have in our possession copies of the F. W. Kessler 1939 Dr. Philip G. Cole auction catalogue and the 1961 Matthews auction catalogue, both with the prices realized. While the "Black" increased almost 500% in price from 1939 to 1961, the "Red" had remained stationary; \$3,900 in 1939 and the same in 1961.

The "Little" Black

Some air mail collectors and dealers may have forgotten that there is another "Black" Honduras air mail stamp in the 1925 issue. This is Scott C5, Sanabria No. 7, of which only two sheets of 12 (4x3) or a total of twenty-four copies were overprinted. This, too, formerly was a famous Honduras air stamp. In the 1939 Cole auction a copy unused brought \$600 and we were surprised to see that it only realized \$20 more — \$620 — in 1961.

To avoid confusion, aero-philatelists may call C12, the \$24,500 stamp, the "Big Black" Honduras, and C5, the "Little Black" Honduras.

Consequently, it became apparent that while the "Big Black" Honduras, of which there is *only one copy now known* (not three or four as all the newspapers incorrectly stated), has shown this sensational price increment, its two former famed companions, the "Red" (C3) and the "Little Black" (C5) were marking time. One must take into consideration the inflationary trend in the dollar's purchasing power from 1939 to 1961. Then, these contrasting price movements become all the more remarkable.

The Other Ten

The Scott Catalogue lists thirteen stamps in the 1925 Honduras air mail issue. Actually Sanabria is more correct by listing fifteen, two more than Scott. After having noticed the comparative 1939 and 1961 auction prices of Honduras C3, C5 and C12, one became curious about the other ten 1925 Honduras air stamps. All are scarce. The greatest quantity known of any one is 500 copies. The lowest current Scott Catalogue price is \$40. Only 100 copies are known of the highest denomination, the 1 Peso Green (C9).

The following table shows in the first two columns the 1939 Scott Catalogue and Dr. Cole auction realizations of Honduras C1 to C13. The last two columns shows the 1961 Scott Catalogue and the Matthews auction prices.

Honduras 1925 Air Mail Stamps

Scott No.	1939 Cat.	1939 Auction	1961 Cat.	1961 Auction
C1	50.00	21.00	40.00	26.00
C2	100.00	42.75	125.00	82.50
C3	10,000.00	3,900.00	7,500.00	3,900.00
C4	50.00	22.50	65.00	38.00
C5	1,750.00	600.00	1,200.00	620.00
C6	50.00	18.00	75.00	31.00
C7	125.00	46.00	65.00	77.50
C8	250.00	77.50	100.00	58.00
C9	500.00	122.50	350.00	145.00
C10	50.00	20.50	75.00	21.00
C11	75.00	35.50	150.00	105.00
C12	15,000.00	5,300.00	17,500.00	24,500.00
C13	80.00	43.00	150.00	68.00
Total	28,080.00	10,249.25	27,395.00	29,672.00

HONDURAS

Conclusion

One may venture a few opinions on the above comparative tabulation. As for the quality of the material, it was very similar. All the copies are unused, many with gum. They are about the best conditionwise in this series. In fact, many of the Matthews copies were ex-Cole.

In the first place, notice that the total 1939 Scott Catalogue prices were almost \$1,000 less in 1961 than in 1939. One notes, for instance, that the 1 Peso green (C9) dropped from \$500 in 1939 to \$350. But the market seems to ignore the Scott new valuation, because the auction realization went from \$122.50 to \$145. The next stamp, however, C10 increased from its 1939 catalogue price of \$50 to \$75 in 1961. The auction prices showed an increase of only fifty cents — from \$20.50 to \$21.

The Scott catalogue value of the "Black" (C12) rose from \$15,000 in 1939 to \$17,500 in 1961 (Sanabria values this at \$25,000, close to the \$24,500 auction price). But the "Red" (C3) declined by \$2,500, dropping from \$10,000 in 1939 to \$7,500 in 1961.

As for the auction realizations, the entire 1925 series without the "Big Black" (C12) brought a little over \$200 more in 1961 than in 1939.

Several have asked if one could account for the phenomenal increase in the value of the "Black" Honduras, while the "Red" and the "Little Black" have done absolutely nothing. It is our opinion that in 1939, twenty-two years ago, there were many more collectors of wealth interested in general air mail stamp collecting. Most all of them have departed from the aero-philatelic scene, the great majority by death. In recent years, the number of world-wide air mail stamp collectors has declined. The economic trend against concentrated wealth plus the vast increase in stamp prices and the number to assemble appear to have caused this. The 1961 aero-philatelist specializes in a more limited field rather than seeking to collect all air stamps. Thus, seven copies of the "Red" Honduras seem to be sufficient for the demand of general air stamp collectors. Unless a general postage stamp collector (and their number, too, has been dwindling fast) seeks a "Red" Honduras, the demand will not go up. But there is only one "Black" (C12) available. Probably every one of the seven owners of the "Red" wanted the "Black." Therefore, this very strong, spirited competition for the "Big Black" Honduras was evident in F. W. Kessler's February 1961 auction. Thus, within the last seven years, the situation with the "Black" and the "Red" Honduras has reversed itself. Now the former is the star air mail stamp, while the latter has quietly receded into the background.

Also we think this all proves again the foolishness of having people write or talk about investment advice with postage stamps. Such writings as "How To Make Money In Stamps" are a waste of time for the reader and the writer. No one knows what will happen, nor can anyone foretell future stamp prices. If this were true, then someone would have advised selling Honduras C3 and C5 in 1940 and buying C12. Obviously no one did. (H. M. G.)

UNITED STATES (From Page 91)

The points of difference noted in this article apply, of course, to New York May 15, 1918 *First Trip* cancellations only. It would be interesting if our readers can supply counterfeit cancellations May 15, 1918 from Washington and Philadelphia, as well. We believe that a study such as this merits the attention of all United States as well as air mail stamp collectors. Thus, we shall publish future articles on the subject if new counterfeit cancellations should be forth coming.

International Air Mail Exhibition and Congress

The Hague, Holland, August 4-14, 1961

An international aerophilatelic exhibition and an air mail congress will take place in The Hague, Holland from August 4-14, 1961. The Congress will be conducted by The Federation Internationale des Societes Aerophilateliques (F. I. S. A.). Early this year an invitation was extended to AERO PHILATELIST'S to join this federation and participate in The Congress of all the air mail societies in the world. It is reported that the main matter to bring up is the handling of air mail exhibits in international philatelic exhibitions and to try to set up a panel of recommended judges, who are competent students of aerophilately.

The international exhibition is being conducted by the Netherlands Society of Aerophilatelists in celebration of the 25th Anniversary of their publication, "De Vliegende Hollander." An invitation has been extended to the editor of THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS to be the United States Commissioner and also to serve as one of the International Judges. The second Judge from the United States will be Mr. Herbert J. Bloch, of the Mercury Stamp Co. and the Friedl Expert Committee, New York, N. Y. The other Judges, who will serve with Messrs. Bloch and Goodkind, are: Walther von Adelson, Switzerland, ir. I. Braunstein, Belgium, Kurt Dahmann, Germany, H. E. J. Evans, Great Britain, Reg. Mario Onofri, Italy and Capt. C. de Vos Klootwijk, Netherlands.

There will be twenty-five (25) air mail exhibits from the United States. Certainly the U. S. exhibits alone will surpass the entire air mail sections at past international philatelic exhibitions in Europe. The following members of AERO PHILATELISTS have entered these collections:

World-Wide Air Mail Stamps

Used air stamps, both on and off cover from the collection of Sam Rodvien, New York. This won the FIPEX Air Mail Trophy in 1956. *Rare air mail stamps on covers*, Stanley R. Rice, New York, and another *air mail rarities* to be shown (Not-for-competition) by Henry M. Goodkind, New York.

Country Specialized

United States, including the 1918 24c inverted center and the 1859 Jupiter Balloon cover from the Gold Medal, Thomas A. Matthews, Springfield, Ohio collection. Also the *1918-38 air mail stamps, covers and proofs* by Philip Silver, Brooklyn, N. Y., and the *early air stamps*, Edward P. Bender, Woodside, N. Y.

Newfoundland, Dr. James J. Matejka, Jr., Chicago, Ill.; *Australia*, Frank E. Adams, Havertown, Penna.; *Austria*, Harry A. Holman, Astoria, N. Y.; *Brazil*, Herbert A. Feist, Glenside, Penna.; *France & Germany Semi-Official airmails*, Dr. R. H. Shrady, Englewood, N. J.; *India Rockets*, John R. Dilworth, Philadelphia, Penna.; *Papua*, Jules L. Wacht, Searsdale, N. Y.

Zeppelin Collections

LZ-127 Flights, Bernard Fink, West Hempstead, N. Y.; *1930 Graf Zeppelin Pan-America Flight*, Max Gold, New Rochelle, N. Y.; *Zeppelin stamps and covers*, Florence Ortale Brown, New York.

Air Mail Specialities

Proofs and Essays, John J. Britt, New York; *Aerogrammes*, Thomas A. Matthews, Springfield, Ohio; *Rocket Mail and 1870 Siege Of Paris*, also by Mr. Matthews; *Pioneer Flights and Aero-Philatelic History*, Herbert Rosen, Forest Hills, N. Y.; *Allahabad, India, 1911 Flight*, Albert P. Cohen, New York. *F. D. Roosevelt Air Mails*, Jan Bart, Belle Harbor, N. Y.

FRANCE

The World's First Air Mail Stamp?

1910 Nantes Aviation Meeting, San. No. 501

Introduction

In the AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS of October 1959 (Volume VII, page 31), Dr. R. H. Shrady's article on "France. Semi-Official Air Mail Stamps" said the following:

"The first semi-official air mail stamp of France is the 1910 *Nantes Aviation Meeting (Sanabria 501)*. Although Germany claims to have had the first semi-official air mail stamp, (see AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS, April, 1956, page 93) this 1910 French adhesive was used earlier. Illustrated is a cover cancelled August 16, 1910. Incidentally, these Nantes Aviation Meeting covers are extremely scarce, and furthermore only a few of them have the stamp tied by the cancellation."

It cannot be recalled whether a claim had been made for this French air mail being the world's first in an English language stamp periodical until the abovementioned statement in 1959. Germany's Bork-Brueck stamp has not only been claimed as the first, but commemorative philatelic cachets have appeared in Germany to further this claim. Considering the hostilities between France and Germany for the past 100 years, it is difficult to understand why the French have not done more, especially since the Germans regularly mention their Bork-Brueck stamp as the world's first air mail.

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FRANCE

Why The Silence ?

An interested aero-philatelist not only has been puzzled by the attitude of French philatelists, but in attempting to find an answer about which stamp is the first, he has been frustrated by a lack of writings on this 1910 Nantes Aviation Meeting stamp—particularly by the French themselves. This is hard to explain. Is this stamp so obscure, of such limited interest, or so little-known in France? Judging by an examination of French stamp periodicals over the past 50 years, the foregoing question must be answered in the affirmative.



Fig. 1. The largest block known (twenty-four) of the 1910 Nantes Aviation Meeting semi-official air mail stamp.

FRANCE



Fig. 2. A cover dated August 14, 1910. The air stamp in the center is not cancelled. The cover illustrated in Vol. VII, page 31 of this magazine is cancelled August 16, 1910 — two days later, but the cancellation ties the stamp to that cover.

The First French Article Seen

Finally after years of disappointment, an article was called to our attention by our member, *Adrien Boutrelle*. The journal, "Cahiers Philateliques," published by Yvert & Tellier, Amiens, France, No. 5 dated September 1946, has an article on this 1910 Nantes Aviation stamp.

The late *Agnes Burlingame*, at our request translated this French article into English. Then we wrote to *Mr. A. Brun* of Paris, France, who is the editor of "Cahiers Philateliques," requesting permission to publish the English translation of this in the *AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS*. Mr. Brun not only graciously granted us this permission, but also sent the three original photographs used in the French magazine for the translated version.

The preparation of this article for publication, however, was far from complete. *Agnes Burlingame* had told us that she had encountered much difficulty in translating because of the flowery French literary style. She had rendered a literal translation, and believed that this needed further editing and revision. Later, *Ira Seebacher* undertook this task.

Acknowledgements

Consequently the following appears as a result of the efforts of many. First of all, there is the editor of the *AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS*, who has been seeking information on this 1910 Nantes Aviation Meeting Semi-Official air mail stamp for many years. Second, *Adrien Boutrelle* called our attention to the original French article. Third, we are indebted to *Mr. A. Brun* of Paris for his coöperation, both with his permission to reprint and the gift of the photographs. Fourth, the difficult English translation was done so neatly and efficiently by the late *Agnes Burlingame*. Finally, *Ira Seebacher's* finishing touches placed the following article in the form that you now read it. (*H. M. G.*)

Philately in Aviation*

1910 NANTES-AVIATION

By Georges Fouminet

President of the "Societe Historique de Documentation Aerienne"
(Historical Society of Aerial Documentation)

We shall confine ourselves to the framework of this study concerning some of the statistical details of 1910 aviation, already recognized as a new form of locomotion. This realization had been brought home in the wake of the great stir caused by Louis Bleriot's memorable exploit of July 25th, 1909 (Ed. flying the English Channel).

The recently demonstrated flight not only proved flying was practicable but it gave impetus to the idea it was a new way of locomotion and this conception was soon put to practice. Organizing committees were created, mainly made up of sportsmen interested in the possibilities of flight, in exploring, step-by-step, whatever improvement could be made, and in bringing flying to the attention of the general public.

Various aviation meets, well-known and listed by specialists, then followed. During these shows, our bird-men, with their well-known fervor and will, proved themselves to be masters.

However, if the lowly and timorous mail carrier might seemingly have

* "Cahiers Philateliques" Page 271 of No. 5 of September 1946 by Yvert & Tellier, Amiens, France.

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FRANCE

counted for little and surely for less than the "moneyman" or "angel," he was ultimately to prove, not a stumbling block, but a 100% assurance of the financial success of these early operations.

The names of these festivals or meetings, destined for varying degrees of success, and which ran from 1909 through 1914, will not be mentioned further in this article but reserved for listing in a more extensive work in which each of these events will be accorded its proper place in the story of the development of our national aviation.

The first aviation meeting in France took place at Argentan (Orne) on June 7-10, 1909 at which Delagrance was carried in triumph by enthusiastic spectators. Douai followed on June 28-July 18, a meeting at which the first commemorative vignette appeared.

Vichy followed shortly thereafter, July 12-25. We shall stop enumerating these in order to touch upon the motives and spirit that created the semi-official stamp, the use of which became fortunately possible by the P. T. T.'s exception to its ruling against special postal cancellations.

I implied at the beginning of this article that the financial situation of participants in these meetings, was often dismal and that even so banal an accident as the disablement of a plane would reduce to nil the hopes either of victory or some compensation to the unlucky flyer.

It was with the idea of minimizing this two-fold risk that certain organizers had the generous thought of raising money through the sale of stamps to spectators—and to non-spectators, too. These first aviation souvenirs were intended for collectors of that era, were sold at a moderate price, and the proceeds used to give so-called "consolation" prizes, thus compensating for any last-minute misfortunes of the meetings in question.

Each organizer found the system paid off and the lucky buyers, in on the purchases from the start, have no cause to regret today their gesture in aid of aviation. They have but to check current quotations for these stamps.

Just as did France's large cities—Paris, Reims, Rouen, Lyon—so did Nantes play a contributing part in the spread of aviation. The Nantes organizing committee called upon all authorities and enlisted all possible means of support to assure the success of the meeting: senators, deputies, counselors, industrialists, etc., all joined forces. And each contributed his initiative, a new point of view, or understanding. All of the large cities had contributed something new. Now Nantes, in its turn, searched and came up with something never before known.

An issue of Nantes aviation commemorative cards had already been prepared. Additionally, the PTT had authorized a special Nantes-Aviation postal cancellation. By combining the two, it was easy to envisage the air transportation of these cards, even if for only a short time.

To interest the public and encourage it to entrust its letters to airplanes which were to take part in the competitions, it was deemed necessary to give the public a special feature.

It was then that the Nantes-Aviation stamp came into being. It was later to be listed in the airmail catalogue of Theodore Champion (1937) as the No. 1, semi-official airmail stamp of France. Because its design resembled the Swiss classic, the Basel Dove, the Nantes stamp was similarly and currently dubbed the "Basel Dove."

This semi-official stamp was sold at the windows of the committee, it was used on mail, and gave that mail which it graced the right to fly. Today we would call that the baptism of the air post.

The stamp was sold at 10 centimes to those who wished to pay this extra to see their "documents" flying around over their heads. Indeed, few thought

FRANCE



Fig. 3. Mr. G. de Passorio-Peyssard.

of the future that would be the result of their gesture. From an administrative standpoint, this stamp did not represent a postal receipt; it was merely a symbol of the aerial flight arranged by the promoters. It was in light of this, that explicit instructions were given the postal clerks in their handling of this mail: they were not to apply the special cancellation to the Nantes stamp since it did not have the power to pay postage.

That also explains the great rarity of these stamps cancelled. Nevertheless a certain number were cancelled during this eight-day show, probably because they were struck in carelessness by the postal clerks. However, it wasn't this element of a chance cancellation that has made this stamp France's No. 1 aviation semi-official.

We would like to recall within the framework of these philatelic, and at the same time literary studies, the name of the creator to whom we owe this first honor in our aero-philatelic pages.

Among the technicians of the committee interested both in aviation as well as in the problems of creating a stamp for the Nantes meeting was one stamp specialist who was attracted by the problem. He was an ardent collector of first rank (he can justly claim this rank, for as I write, he has already rounded out a quarter century under the philatelic banner).

The very beginning of the idea of "The Dove of Nantes" came to him as an extension of a childhood memory. One day, while still a student, he had passed a shop where a dealer was "polishing up" his stock of stamps; he entered the shop. The dealer had just found in his attic two old newspapers, each of which bore a Swiss "Basel Dove." My collecting friend paid five francs for one copy but his joy was tempered somewhat by the belief he would be scolded for his prodigality.

This memory of the Basel Dove was recalled when it became his plan to recreate the design for the "Dove of Nantes." An appropriate inscription was made for the stamp, the dove was transformed to a plane, the posthorn changed to a heraldic mark, the value added in centimes and, we guarantee, the success, in toto, was unquestionably due to the fact the old stamp, which served as its model, was basically artistic.

At this present time, and for the sake of philatelists and image worshippers,

FRANCE

Mr. G. de Passorio-Peyssard, of Nantes, who lives in a world of research, has graciously consented that I may lift the past's veil and give the details of the creation of the "Dove of Nantes."

The stamp was lithographed—perforated $11\frac{1}{2}$ —and issued in sheets of 192 subjects in 16 horizontal rows of 12 stamps each. The sheet was in the form of a vertical rectangle (0.35x0.45m.). It was printed by Etablissements Guist'bau Dugas & Cie. Suer., Nantes. No artists' proofs were made. There were only proofs before printing sent to Mr. de Passorio-Peyssard, who then added the secret marks, which the printers had forgotten in making the plate of 19,200 printed stamps, 9,800 were sold, the remainder destroyed.

With the passing years, these semi-officials have become rare. They are to be found sometimes on contemporary cards, sold as such at the window and at the printers, but the philatelic document—the franked and specially postmarked card or cover with the 27mm circle-type Nantes Aviation postmark is not common. In time, as collectors become more numerous, the ratio between demand and supply will grow. They will be much more sought after.

Parenthetically, on the first day of the cancellation service, an interchange of the numeral slugs gave the date as 8-14-10 instead of 14-8-10. As soon as this error was noted, it was corrected. But letters already mailed could not be recovered and, today, are regarded as very fine philatelic rarities.

Now that we have given to posterity the name of the creator of these beautiful stamps in our collections, we must also mention the man who was one of the first air letter carriers of that time.

He is René Thomas, the famous pilot of the plane "Antoinette", a former motorcycle racer, winner of Grand Prizes both in France and America, and winner again with Morane, at the Nantes Meeting. He transported these fore-runners of postal aviation, so artistically conceived under the aegis of the Dove of Basel, in the height of "totalization" tests.

FOR BOOKS ON AIR MAILS

See Page 111

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URUGUAY

The Salto to Montevideo Flight of August 25, 1912

By Robert Hoffmann and Philip Silver

Most catalogs, which list the early flights of Uruguay, show the Salto to Montevideo flight of August 25, 1912 by the Italian aviator, Bartolomé Cattáneo, as the number two pioneer flight of that country. They are wrong on two counts. It is really *the first pioneer flight*, and the flight did not take place on August 25th.

Our readers may recall Mr. Hoffmann's article in the January 1960 issue of *The AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS*, Volume VII, Number 3. There, the point was made that the December 18, 1910 flight made by the same aviator, *Cattáneo*, was not a flight, at all. Rather, it was an *attempted flight*. After a thorough preparation, the flight from Colonia, Uruguay to Buenos Aires, Argentina was cancelled at the last minute, and an announcement was published in the Colonia newspapers to that effect. The 1910 mail was sent to Buenos Aires by ordinary river boat and Cattáneo, together with his plane, returned to Buenos Aires aboard the steamer "Adriatic." Thus, *this 1912 flight must be considered the first Uruguayan pioneer flight*, not the second.

This 1912 flight, however, was not made on August 25th. Cattáneo actually took off from Salto on September 3, 1912 and he did not arrive at his *final destination* until September 8th, a lapse of six days. Although Montevideo was certainly the final destination of this interesting flight, there is some evidence



Fig. 1. Cover addressed to Sr. Alberto Gardo y San Juan, cancelled August 23, 1912 at Salto, two days in advance of the scheduled flight of the 25th. All illustrations are from the collection of Robert Hoffmann.

URUGUAY



Fig. 2. Cover addressed to the Minister of War and Marine, Brig. Gen. Juan Bermaria y Jerez, cancelled August 25, 1912 at Salto, the day the flight was originally scheduled to leave. Backstamped at Montevideo, September 8, 1912.

to show that the aviator had other intermediate destinations in mind. True, these were not stated in advance, but there is every reason to believe, because of the events that followed, that Cattáneo never intended to fly non-stop the entire 500 km. distance from Salto to Montevideo. However, to dramatize its hazardous nature, the flight was announced as one without stops. This electrified the populace. The distance was a great one for those early days when most fledglings were first trying on their wings for size and the date coincided with the 87th anniversary of the establishment of Uruguayan Independence on August 25, 1825.

In the 1912 period, however, the people of Uruguay gradually lost most of the admiration and respect they had felt for Cattáneo because of his 1910 flight from Buenos Aires to Colonia and the attempted return flight between those cities. A most interesting book written in 1944 by Juan Carlos Pedemonte¹ highlights these feelings and analyzes Cattáneo's character as it unfolded in the days preceding and during the 1912 flight. These may be summed up as follows:

1. Cattáneo was a dandy, who tried to capitalize on the aura of admiration, which surrounded aviation pioneers in those early days.
2. He was quite willing to obtain money for his efforts, but acted as though he was above all the necessary commercial details connected therewith.

URUGUAY



Fig.3 . Cover addressed to Sr. Alberto Gardo y San Juan, cancelled at Salto on September 2, 1912, one day prior to the actual flight take-off.

3. He never intended to complete the flight non-stop from Salto to Montevideo but, rather, to make several landings, en route, and to capitalize on his stays at the various cities to promote aeronautic festivals.

If this analysis is correct, it would seem to explain the events that took place with relation to the flight. It was stated, at the outset, that the flight did not take place on August 25, 1912. Indeed, covers are known cancelled on August 23, 1912, August 25, 1912 and September 2, 1912 at Salto. (See Figs. 1, 2 and 3.) The August 23rd date should occasion no surprise. Covers were frequently cancelled in advance of a flight; the entire history of the early flights in Uruguay abounds with such pre-flight cancellations. It was merely a method of insuring that a flight would leave at a scheduled time and not be delayed because of the necessity to apply post office cancellations to the stamps. Also, the August 25th cancellation, which was the intended date of departure, would seem to be a normal happenstance. But, the September 2, 1912 date on the cover in Figure 3 is proof that the flight did not take place on August 25th as the catalogs would have us believe. There is an interesting enclosure in the latter cover. (See Figure 4.) Translated, the note reads:

Alejandro R. Lerena, Administrator of Revenues, is pleased to salute his distinguished friend, Dr. Alberto Gardo y San Juan, on the occasion of the first air mail flight from "Salto to Montevideo."

Salto, September 2, 1912.

So, we can see that on September 2, 1912 the flight was still to be made. Note that the cover shown in Figure 3 is addressed to Sr. Gardo y San Juan, the person mentioned in the enclosure shown in Figure 4. Note, also, that the cover shown in Figure 1 is addressed to the same person. It is unfortunate that neither of the covers shown in Figures 1 and 3 bears the receiving back-stamp at Montevideo. This circumstance may be explained as follows: When Cattáneo finally arrived near Montevideo, he dropped the pouch containing the letters on the grounds of the Presidential country residence near Piedras

URUGUAY

Alejandro R. Lerena
 Administrador de Rentas
 se en saluda a su distinguido
 amigo Sr. Alberto Gard, San
 Juan en el primer correo aires
 // 'Salto - Montevideo'
 Salto 2/9/12

Fig. 4. The enclosure found in cover shown in figure 3. It is a card from Alejandro R. Lerena, the Administrator of Revenues to his friend Sr. Gardo.

Blancas. As a result, letters which were addressed to distinguished persons were delivered directly and were not afforded the arrival backstamp of the Post Office in Montevideo. An exception, of course, is the cover shown in Figure 2. This cover, cancelled August 25, 1912 is addressed to the Minister of the Army and Navy, Brig. Gen. Juan Bermaria y Jerez, and bears a Montevideo arrival backstamp of September 8, 1912.

Now, this is a rather surprising lapse of time for a flight of approximately 300 miles. The chronology of the flight may be detailed, as follows:

September 3rd Take-off from Salto. Passing over Paysandu, a motor failure caused a descent at that point. The journey was then continued until, arriving over Mercedes, Cattáneo tried to take out a bottle of cognac. This was carried to preserve the aviator from the intense cold. Inadvertently, in reaching for the cognac, he dropped the pouch containing the mail. This caused a descent at Mercedes. But, when the pouch was recovered, Cattáneo suddenly realized that he was short of fuel. This necessitated a delay until it could be brought from Buenos Aires. So, Cattáneo seized upon the delay to organize an aeronautic festival during the two-day waiting period.

September 5th The flight is resumed but, on the pretext of strong headwinds, another landing is made at San José. Next day, another air festival is organized.

September 8th The last leg of the journey takes place with Cattáneo's arrival at the Maroñas Hippodrome after first dropping the mail pouch on the grounds of the Presidential summer residence at Piedras Blancas.

The reaction of the Uruguayan populace to all of the aforementioned delays in the execution of the flight was most hostile. Indeed, Cattáneo felt constrained to answer his critics by writing a complete defense of his actions for the local newspapers. However, we do not feel this is the place for a complete history of these unfortunate events. Enough has been said herein to acquaint

URUGUAY

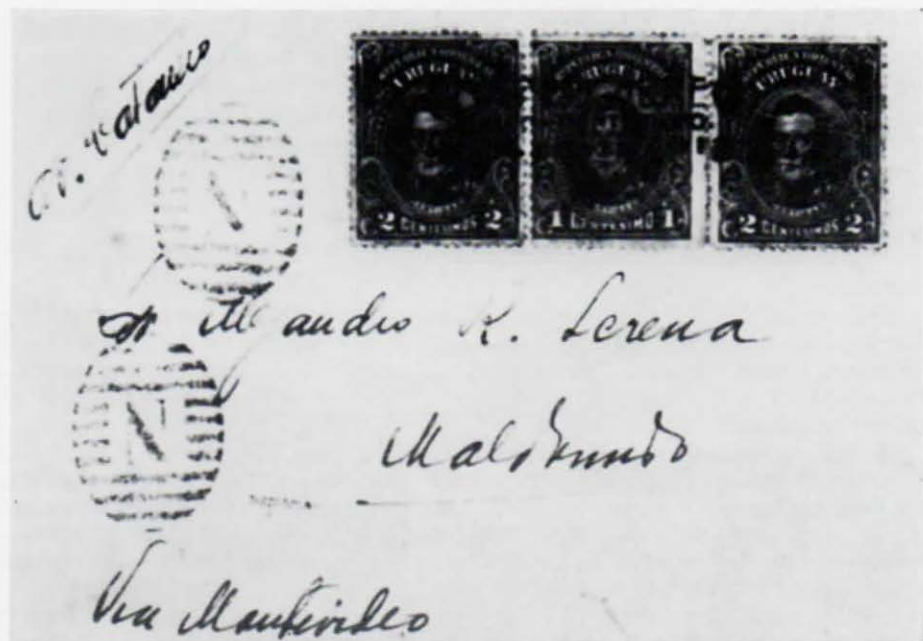


Fig. 5. Cover addressed to Sr. Alejandro R. Lerena at Maldonado, Department of Maldonado. No Salto cancellation; the N in oval grid is an arrival cancellation of the Department of Maldonado.

the reader with the most necessary details. Those who wish a more detailed account, are referred to Sr. Pedemonte's excellent book on the subject.¹

An interesting cover is shown in Figure 5. It is addressed to Sr. Alejandro R. Larena at Maldonado, Department of Maldonado. Mr. Lerena was the correspondent whose name appears on the enclosure shown in Figure 4. In the lower left corner of the cover is the inscription "Via Montevideo" (By way of Montevideo). Upon arrival at its destination, the face of the cover was struck twice with an "N" in oval gridwork. This is the postal designation of the Department of Maldonado.

Although the story of this historic 1912 flight might seem to be an indictment of the character of the aviator, Barolomé Cattáneo, it cannot gainsay the fact that, in those early days of aviation, a flight of 300 miles was indeed an historic event. Cattáneo's personality failings *cannot obscure his achievement*. He fashioned an historic milestone in the early history of powered flight and in the carrying of the air mail.

(1) *Half Century of Aeronautics. History of Aviation in Uruguay. (1868-1918)* by Juan Carlos Pedemonte. Published by the Civil Aeronautics Administration, 1944, Second Edition. Montevideo, Uruguay.

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UNITED STATES

1918 Air Mail Slogan, Probably Of Private Origin

This magazine on page 65 of Vol. VIII (No. 3, January 1961) illustrated and described an unusual slogan found on some 1918 air mail covers, usually franked with either the 16c or the 6c air mail stamp (Scott C1 and 2, Sanabria 2 and 3). This is a three-line slogan all in capital letters reading:

*Send a letter by airplane,
Especially to one "Over There"
It will be a real treat*

Following this article's publication, a number of letters were received from collectors all over the country, especially after Editor Wm. W. Wylie of "Western Stamp Collector" mentioned this AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS article in his column, "It's Worth Mentioning." This correspondence disclosed two matters as follows:

1) Although covers with this slogan are not plentiful, there are more than the original estimate. Now about fifteen are known, thus confirming what had been previously written — "We know of three only; there must be more."

2) Information from sources considered most reliable stated that this slogan was applied privately by a stamp dealer active in air mail in its earlier years in the United States. He was the late A. C. Roessler of East Orange, N. J. During his years as a dealer, Mr. Roessler was very enterprising with a number of aero-philatelic stunts, many of them are still remembered by veteran air mail collectors and dealers. One done in 1928 with a private Graf Zeppelin overprint on the then current 1c postage stamp got him in trouble with the U. S. Government. But nothing seems to have happened with Roessler's 1918 private slogan. At least no record of a U. S. Post Office objection is known, nor has anyone told us of such action. (H. M. G.)

CORRESPONDENCE

More on Germany, Sanabria Nos. 5-6

In the January 1961 number of your magazine, I read the comments upon Dr. R. H. Shrady's article in the October 1960 number. When Dr. Shrady wrote about the German Semi-Official air mails, in reference to the E.EL.P surcharge on the 1912 Rhine-Main Flights, he was not sure what these initials signified, because there are various different versions.

The true significance of the E.EL.P. initials have never been satisfactorily explained. It is my opinion that this surcharge was made in connection with special prizes offered by the members of the House Of Hesse. Therefore, the initials stand for their names as follows:

EL Ernst-Ludwig
E Eleanor
P Preis (Prize)

The above slightly modifies the original views expressed by Dr. Shrady. But this discussion still remains open until someone can supply the actual meaning. I am happy if I could throw some light on the matter, and think that it is extraordinary that this question still remains undetermined.

*J. Gravelat,
Monrouge, France*

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