



THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS

★ ★ A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE ON AERO-PHILATELY ★ ★

This Issue Features:

- U. S. A. FIRST AIR MAIL STAMP
- GERMANY FIRST SEMI-OFFICIAL
- ITALY'S FIRST AIR MAIL STAMP
- URUGUAY'S FIRST AIR STAMP
- COLOMBIA 1923 SCADTA DOTS
- HONDURAS 1930 ISSUE

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New York 36, N. Y.

Vol. III

THE

PHILATELISTS

No. 4

AERO

PHILATELIST ANNALS

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TWO AERO PHILATELIST'S PUBLICATIONS

In addition to this quarterly magazine issued in January, April, July and October each year, members receive "the Aero Philatelist News", published six times a year to keep the members informed of the organization's activities as well as news of individuals.

Are you receiving BOTH publications? If not, please write to:

Sol Whitman, Secretary
1462 Taylor Ave., New York 60, N. Y.

Aero-Philately 1956

The appearance of this number of our quarterly magazine so near to the Fifth International Philatelic Exhibition (FIPEX) in the United States happens to have evoked a good amount of nostalgia within us because aero-philately is playing such an influential and essential role in this 1956 Exhibition. Air mail is finally accepted as a vital part of philately and thus is receiving full consideration. But it was not always like this. In former years, aero-philately had to battle for its proper place in the general philatelic picture. But by now, all this seems nothing more than a dim memory. Looking back, it may be of interest to the present group of aero-philatelists to summarize as concisely as possible what had transpired.

We date the birth of air mail collecting back to May 1918, when one of philately's brightest stars, the U. S. 24c red and blue air mail with inverted center, was purchased at face value by a collector in a Washington, D. C. post office. At a future time, we shall explain more fully just what this meant, not only to aero-philately, but to all philately. From that date on, people became fascinated and interested in air mail stamps.

The First International Philatelic Exhibition in the United States had been held five years previously. Obviously in that exhibition, there could have been no air mail section. Therefore, the Second International Philatelic Exhibition of 1926 offered aero-philately its very first opportunity for a display. But our specialty, being new, was not much of a factor in 1926. There were only a few hundred air mail stamps issued by that time. The air mail highlights then were the 1870 Siege of Paris Balloon covers and later Pioneer Flight material. Outside of a few stamps like the Newfoundland "Hawker" and "Martinsyde", or the aforementioned U. S. 24c inverted center, there was not much else that could be exhibited with air mails. Thus only a few lesser awards went to air mails. The 19th Century issues dominated that exhibition.

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S. SEREBRAKIAN

15 Park Row

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Until the time of the Third International Philatelic Exhibition (TIPEX), aero-philately acted and was treated just like a teen-ager. A look at the stamp publications during this 1926-36 decade will confirm this. Many a prominent collector or dealer looked with disdain upon what they liked to call "this 20th century trash". These were the actual words often applied in print to air mails. Besides, air stamp collectors were regarded as "fools with lots of money, but no philatelic appreciation", who were spending ridiculous sums of money for unworthy labels like the "Red" or "Black" Honduras, the Newfoundland "postmasters' creations" or "tailored-made printing errors". It was maintained that the real test of a stamp—postal necessity—was lacking in most of the air mails issued. It was alleged that insignificant flights and side trips were commemorated by meaningless paper, that every time a barnstormer wanted to try to break an aviation record, he financed his flight by issuing a very limited amount of stamps that immediately were bought by crazy collectors at fantastic sums. In less than 40 years, the then-called barnstormers like Hawker, Alcock, Byrd, Lindbergh, Ross Smith and Amelia Earhart have become universally respected as pioneers of aviation. Thus the stamps issued and used on their famous flights need not be glorified because every collector and dealer now wants them.

Another decade had passed until the next United States International Philatelic Exhibition (CIPEX) was held in 1947. Again let us refer to the stamp papers during that 1936-47 period. Those Honduras air mails were still being subjected to ridicule by many a stamp writer, who did not collect air stamps. The early Newfoundland air mails were condemned as fantasies created by some profiteering postmasters, who cleaned up thousands of dollars by limiting and controlling the small supply. Mexico's "Amelia Earhart" was cited as another horrible example, as was Colombia C1. Despite all this, in time all these stamps found their way in the most widely-used general stamp catalogs of the world.

Before us are many yellowed press clippings from that decade in which the uninformed writers delighted in poking fun at the reckless spending air mail stamp collectors as well as the "robber baron" air mail dealers. Please do not take our word for all this, but, if interested, read some of the stamp papers from those years.

Our memories of CIPEX are still fairly sharp because this was only nine years ago. Being both a participant and an eye-witness, we recall some of the struggles that aero-philately had in 1947. First of all, the Exhibition Committee wished to limit the number of frames allowed to the air mail section. After a compromise was reached, we then had to contend with a location of a proper place for our frames. Some old-time philatelists on the Committee wanted air mails placed out-of-the-way on the upper floors of the former Grand Central Palace. Although aero-philately was not successful in crowding 19th century issues off the main floor, we ended up with a fine location at CIPEX. The next struggle was during the exhibition when we were told that it was unheard of for air mails to receive more or higher awards than 19th Century Africa or Asia. But we were not easily persuaded, and many a fine air mail collection came out in 1947 with its just award. In fact, before the end we vividly recall the Judges deliberating on the Grand Award, when two of the great philatelic classicists made a suggestion for two top awards—one for the 19th Century and one for the 20th Century. This proposal has been adopted for the 1956 FIPEX!

By this time, exactly what has happened? The storm and prejudices against air mails seem to have died down. From the moment that FIPEX was planned, we have heard not one word against air mails, either their place in the exhibition, any limitation upon the size of this section nor the number of awards to go to aero-philately.

Only very occasionally do we read a revival in a stamp paper of the old blasts against air mails. The most recent was a silly short squib in the British, "Stamp Collecting Fortnightly", in its Christmas 1955 number. And a Merry Christmas to the ill-advised

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UNITED STATES

The Grounded Plane Variety on the 24c Air Mail of 1918



Fig. 1. An unusual block of four showing a most pronounced shift into the word "cents".

In an auction sale on February 17, 1956 (Irwin Heiman, Inc.), seven lots—Nos. 811 to 817—were described as follows:

"24c variety PLANE GROUNDED INTO CENTS.

"Only a small quantity (one sheet) of this interesting variety exists. Infrequently offered mint copies have realized from \$50 to \$75 at auction. None have been offered for several years to the best of our knowledge. The following group of covers is from an original holding. All are very scarce.

- "1918 Lot 811 24c carmine and blue (C3) variety PLANE GROUNDED INTO CENTS, used on first trip Boston-N. Y. cover AAMC #105, very fine
" 812 Same used N. Y. - San Francisco Trans-Continental Night Flying cover, AAMC #166, to Rawlins, Wyo., very fine (Photo)
" 813 Same, to Rock Springs, Wyo., very fine
" 814 Same, to Salt Lake City, very fine
" 815 Same, to Elko, Nev., very fine
" 816 Same, to Reno, Nev., very fine
" 817 Same, to San Francisco, very fine"

The writer has been interested in this variety for many years. To the best of his knowledge, only a very few short references to this pronounced shift can be found recorded. No descriptive article has been written about it. There is a cover in his specialized collection of the first air mail stamp of the United States similar to one described in the above-mentioned lot 813, which is illustrated as Fig. 2.

In order to show more clearly how pronounced this shift is, Fig. 3 is an enlargement of the stamp on the cover shown in Fig. 2. The writer's comments on this variety now follow.

UNITED STATES



Fig. 2. One of the few covers known with the "GROUNDED PLANE INTO CENTS" variety flown upon one of the legs of the first Trans-Continental Night Flight. Photos by L. W. Giles.

This shift is not cataloged, because in the true philatelic sense it is not an error due something being wrong on the plate or with the printing. It is simply an example of improper printing. As will be explained later, under normal conditions, the writer feels sure that any stamps now found printed as poorly as these would have been rejected by the government inspectors and destroyed as "printer's waste". This does not imply, because it is uncataloged, that "the Grounded Plane" variety is not a very desirable collector's item. It is!

The history known about this variety depends mostly upon the writer's recollections of past conversations with collectors and dealers, who knew about this freak of printing. It is claimed that one sheet of 100 came into the stock of the old Nassau Stamp Co. New York City shortly after the stamp had gone on sale in May, 1918. One of the proprietors of this well-known former stamp firm was Mr. Jack Kleeman, who later became very interested in aero-philately. Although now retired for some years, he had earned the reputation as an aero-philatelic authority through his years of dealing and collecting of air mails. Other dealers told us that they remember Mr. Kleeman saying that he experienced difficulty selling copies with "the Grounded Plane" variety in the beginning. Thus a few years later he decided to use some on interesting flights, which explains why many copies from this sheet that had belonged to Mr. Kleeman, are now found on covers from the first Trans-Continental Night Flight.

However, this writer knows that a second sheet exists, because about ten years ago he purchased one. Later on this sheet was exchanged in trade for other air mail material needed for our collections. Included in the items received in trade was the cover shown in Fig. 2. This sheet may still be intact in a collection in this country, because the dealer, with whom the trade for the sheet was made, told the writer at that time that he had a customer for a full sheet with "the Grounded Plane" variety.

There is one very significant fact to mention about the sheet the writer had owned. *It was from the first printing, first cutting* (see the booklet, "The First Air Mail Stamp of the U. S.", distributed by AERO PHILATELISTS in 1950). Sheets with no margins on top, and no plate numbers are at once identifiable as being some of the few sold the first day of sale, May 14, 1918. Due to the very famous sheet with the inverted centers being purchased on this same day, history tells us that all such sheets were withdrawn from sale on this first day. In order to prevent any further errors, new plate markings were ordered and the top margin was no longer cut off. Therefore, the two sheets known with this



Fig. 3. Enlargement of the stamp on the cover to show better how pronounced the shift of the center design.

"Grounded Plane" variety, being from the first printing sold only for a few hours on May 14, 1918, can be proven to have been included with the supply that contained the sheet with inverted centers.

Nor is it difficult to account for such poorly printed copies being put on sale. History shows also that this 24c air mail was prepared and printed exceptionally quickly—in less than one week's time. Furthermore, being done during wartime, the customary precautions and inspection of the sheets were not exercised.

Furthermore, a knowledge of the printing process used for this 1918 air mail will explain just how these pronounced shifts of the central design occurred. The following is quoted from a portion of an article by Mr. Joseph B. Leavy, a well known authority on Bureau Issues, in "the Philatelic Gazette" of June, 1918 (page 191):

"Bi-colored stamps are printed on the hand presses used for printing the bank notes. The border or frame is printed first, the sheets then examined and counted and delivered to the presses to have the center or medallion printed; any defective sheets having been thrown out, the sheets are dampened the same as if they were blank and are ready to be fed to the press. In printing from a hand press the plate is removed after one impression, placed on a heated block, re-inked, wiped, and then



Fig. 4. Block of four with examples of the shift to the TOP.

UNITED STATES



Fig. 5. Plane shifted to the LEFT.

returned to the press for the next impression; this is all done by the plate printer. The plate printer's assistant feeds and removes each sheet to and from the press, her hands being clean; in feeding, the sheet is taken between the thumb and forefinger with the thumb just below the registering T and placed on the plate with the thumb just below the registering T on the plate; this is the only method yet devised for correct registering of the medallions and naturally causes many variations."



Fig. 6. Vignette shifted to the RIGHT in the four copies of this block.

A collector, specializing in the first air mail stamp of the United States, can form a fascinating collection showing various copies with the central portion shifted in many positions. Of course, the most pronounced shift of the blue vignette with the airplane is this "Grounded Plane", where the register has been so low that the blue design was printed right on top of the word "Cents" in the red frame. (Fig. 1) Illustrated in this article are also examples of other shifts such as to the top (Fig. 4), to the left (Fig. 5) or to the right (Fig. 6).

(Continued on Page 101.)

GERMANY

The World's First Air Mail Stamp San. 501

In "*The Aero Philatelist News*" of 1952 (Vol. 7, page 65), we wrote about the Semi-Official stamp of Germany (San. No. 501) being considered by eminent aeronautical authorities the first air mail in the world. We quoted from the book on aviation, "*The World in the Air*", by Francis Trevelyan Miller, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1930.

Now let us illustrate the page from the book which we quoted back in 1952 because seeing this page is the best visual evidence that can be offered. (Fig. 1)

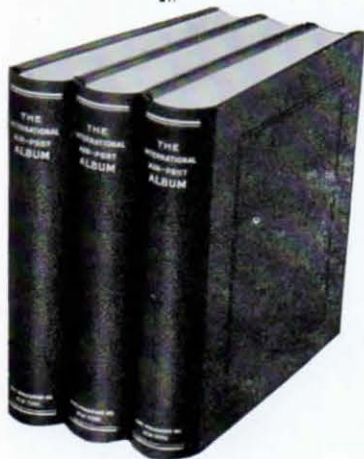
But many philatelists still seem to consider other air mails as the first in the world. So we thought that the time had come again not only to refer back to our previous articles, but to offer further interesting information about these Pioneer *Bork-Brueck* Semi-Officials of Germany, that came recently, to our attention.

If one studies the design of the stamp (San. No. 501), he will notice a large blank space in the center of the stamp (see design Sanabria SO1). This space was for use of the regular German postage stamp. It was when a national postage stamp was affixed to this space that the mail could be delivered, thus making the air mail stamp a Semi-Official.

Notice that the German stamp sometimes is the 5pf. green denomination of the "Germania" series. Illustrated is a cover that has a 3pf. brown German stamp affixed. (Fig. 2). Why the two different rates?

The 5pf. stamp was for the letter rate, while the 3pf. stamp was for printed matter.

The second cover illustrated, property of Dr. R. H. Shradly, had an enclosure and this printed matter is shown (Fig. 4). The 3pf. has perforated initials "G R". Obviously reading the printed matter, one finds it is a business letter of Georg Rothgiesser, explaining the perfins as coming from this firm's correspondence.



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GERMANY



Fig. 1. The full page in the Book "The Work in the Air" showing the history of the Bork-Brueck flights and THE FIRST AIR MAIL LETTER carried on one of the flights.

GERMANY



Fig. 2. A Bork-Brueck flight cover with San. 501 with a 3pf. postage stamp to cover the printed matter rate. The enclosed advertisement is dated March 3, 1912. Collection of Dr. R. H. Shradly.

Through the courtesy of Mr. Alfred Maier of N. Sanabria Co., Inc. he has supplied us with an English translation of this letter which reads as follows:

(TRANSLATION)

Berlin W30
Martin Luther Str. 91
Bork, March 3rd (1912)

AIRFIELD "MARS"
Close to Bork Station near Berlin
Proprietor: Georg Rothgiesser
Berlin Office:
W30 Martin Luther Str. 91
Telephone 6 (Luetzow) 7879
Cables: Rothgiesser Berlin W30
Bank: Dresdener Bank Berlin W30
Postal checking a/c: Berlin 763
Telephone on Airfield:
Brueck (Mark) No. 7

Dear Sir:

At the beginning of the new season we take pleasure in drawing your attention to some advantages of our airfield which recently has been considerably enlarged:

GERMANY

- 1) Unsurpassed, excellent surface
- 2) Favourable wind condition, due to location surrounded by miles of woods
- 3) Close to railroad station
- 4) No disturbance by onlookers
- 5) Comfortable, heated sheds
- 6) Low rates for buying and renting of real estate and use of airfield



FLUGFELD „MARS“ AM BAHNHOF BORK BEI BERLIN EIGENTÜMER: GEORG ROTHGIESSER

Geschäftsstelle in Berlin:
W 30, Martin Lutherstr. 91
Fernspr.: Amt 6 (Lützow), 7879
Telegr.-Adr.: Rothgässer, Berlin 30
Buchdruck: Christian Tsch. Berlin W 30
Postfach - Karte: Berlin Nr. 263
Fernsprecher auf dem Flugfeld:
Amt Bork (Markt) Nr. 1

Berlin W 30,
Martin Lutherstr. 91

Bork, den 3. März 1912

Sehr geehrter Herr!

Zum Beginn der neuen Saison erlauben wir uns,
Sie auf einige der vielen Vorzüge unseres seit kurzem bedeutend
vergrößerten Flugfeldes aufmerksam zu machen:

1. Unerreicht vorzügliche Bodenoberflächen
2. Günstige Windverhältnisse, da mitten in weiten Waldungen gelegen
3. Unmittelbare Nachbarschaft der Eisenbahnstation
4. Keine Belästigung durch Zuschauer
5. Bequeme Heizbare Schuppen
6. Niedrige Preise für Landkäufe, Landpachtung und Flugfeldbenutzung
7. Flugzeugführer können Privat-Startplatz erhalten
8. Nächste Nähe von Berlin. Eisenbahnmonatskarte 20, bzw. 16 Mk.
9. Gesunde Gegend für Ansiedlung

Etwa 25 % aller deutschen Flugzeugführer sind auf dem
Flugfeld „Mars“ ausgebildet.

Prospekte auf Verlangen.

Respektvoll

Direktion des
FLUGFELD „MARS“ AM BAHNHOF BORK

Durch Flugpost Bork - B 400 k!

Sämtliche Korrespondenzen sind nach Berlin zu richten.

Fig. 4. The very interesting advertising flyer contained in the cover shown in Fig. 2.

GERMANY



Fig. 3. An enlargement of the stamp on the illustrated cover.



Fig. 5. The commemorative post card issued in 1952 to mark "40 Years of German Air Mail".

GERMANY — EDITORIAL

- 7) Private starting areas available to airplane factories
- 8) Excellent health conditions for settling.

Approximately 25% of all German plane pilots have received their training at "MARS" airfield.

Prospectus on request.

Yours sincerely

Airfield "MARS" near Bork Station
Director

All correspondence to be sent to Berlin by Airmail Bork - Brueck!

The above is dated March 3, 1912, only 8-years after the first attempt by the Wright Brothers to fly heavier-than-air machines. It represents, of course, a very early period in aviation, and is all the more remarkable when one reads the text. Mr. Rothgiesser was advertising his airfield near Berlin mentioning features that today one would not believe were thought of back in 1912.

German philatelists have not forgotten these early *Bork - Brueck* flights because in 1952, a special card was issued commemorating 40-years of German air mail (Fig. 5). We wrote of this as a new issue in the "*Aero Philatelist News*" under our code number 86G. (Vol. 7, page 84).

It certainly seems to be the opinion of many that the history connected with these German Semi-Official stamps of 1912 has been little-known for too long a time to the English language aero-philatelists. Certainly with all the air mail collecting activity in this country and England, more should be recorded and known about the world's first air mail stamp.

AERO-PHILATELY 1956

(Continued from Page 88.)

writer of those misconceptions. One now reads such ignorance with a tolerant smile. The thinking in this article was outdated, while the so-called facts were nothing but mistaken opinions. No one now bothers to refute all the misstatements. The better policy is to leave it go unnoticed, and then probably soon it will be forgotten. Furthermore, things like this are now written so very seldom that they make no impression or bear no influence.

One must confess that with aero-philately in 1956, occasionally a new issue of air mail stamps becomes enmeshed in some form of philatelic manipulation. But the results usually do not seem to be harmful but healthy. Such schemes immediately become public knowledge, and a hue and cry is broadcast. But after a few months' time, the tumult dies down and then the issue is practically forgotten. The "suckers", the collectors whom the stamp writers call this name because they want and buy such issues, do seem to learn. Contrary to the reports by some of the "sob-sisters" stamp writers, collectors do seem to learn fast, and then turn to new collecting ways much more enlightened.

All of these views should not be regarded as showing an attitude of complacency towards aero-philately. Although a pleasant hobby, we must be aware that temptations still exist for sharp operators. There always shall be those with the human frailty anxious to "make a fast buck". But if we are alert, if we work to keep well-informed, the cumulative effect of all such evil-doing will not be a factor unless one's disposition is to see nothing but faults.

Thus by 1956 aero-philately has become a respected member in the family of philately. A comparison with the general attitude towards air mails from 1926 to 1956 shows this. Also a careful reading of the 1926, 1936 or 1946 stamp papers also manifests a different regard of air mail stamps. We have come a long way in 30 years!

HONDURAS

C31 or San. 38

By IRVING I. GREEN



Illustration, courtesy of Mr. S. Serebrakian.

Illustrated are two strips of genuine Honduras air mail stamps, Scott C31d (Sanabria 38d), the variety with inverted 50 cts. surcharge. Both strips of three are from the same sheet. The one on the left has basic positions reading down of 5, 10 and 15 with the inverted surcharge positions 36, 41, and 46. The right strip has basic positions 4, 9 and 14 with the inverted surcharge positions 37, 42 and 47. The basic one peso stamp (Scott 181) was printed in sheets of 50, (5 x 10).

The top stamp of the left strip shows the "Internaoicnal" error with the inverted 50 cts. surcharge, which is an unlisted variety in the Scott and the Sanabria catalogues of 1956. Being a genuine variety, and, in addition, a rare one, the story of C31 (San. 38) and its varieties, is given for the record.

The Executive Decree of January 9, 1930 gave authority, among its many other stipulations, to overprint 10,000 one peso stamps of the 1915 issue with the surcharge, "Servicio Aéreo" Internacional. Vale 50 cts. oro. 1930". The production of provisional air mail stamps of various denominations was legitimately and urgently required at this time for use in the international airmail service that had recently been inaugurated by the Pan-American Airways, Inc. The public acceptance of this service far exceeded the most optimistic prior estimates. Therefore, a large quantity of provisional air mail stamps was needed to fill the gap until the first definitive set,* then on order, could be printed and delivered by the American Bank Note Company of New York.

The provisional air mail, C25 (San. 32), was also made by authority of this same decree of January 9, 1930. Then, by mistake, the surcharge plate used for the C25 printing was used again on the one peso stamps. So naturally the typographical errors "Internaoicnal", and "o" for "oro" showed up in positions 5 and 8 respectively. However, about half way through this printing, the "o" for "oro" error was noticed and corrected, but the "Internaoicnal" error remained unchanged (and seemingly undetected).

When the use of the wrong plate was discovered, there was talk, at first, of destroying the entire stock and overprinting a new supply. But then it was learned that the one peso

* Scott 41-45, Sanabria 48-52—Issued October 1, 1930.

HONDURAS

stamps were in very short supply,** so it was decided to re-surge the incorrectly printed lot. This was subsequently done, together with another incorrectly printed value that was made under the same decree.***

The second surcharge was the large "Vale 50cts. oro". During this printing four sheets were unintentionally printed up-side-down, thereby creating inverted surcharges. Also two sheets that had inadvertently received the first (25cts.) surcharge inverted, were overprinted with the second (50cts.) surcharge in normal position. These six sheets with inverted surcharges were not detected until the stamps went on sale at the Tegucigalpa and North-coast post-offices from where most of the air mail letters originated.

Now comes these two "big" questions!

a.) How many of the four sheets with the inverted 50cts. surcharge had the "o" for "oro" error?

b.) How many of the two sheets with the inverted 25cts surcharge had the "o" for "oro" error?

It seems logical to assume that the insertion of the six sheets into the press in an up-side-down position occurred at intervals during the two overprintings. Knowing that the correction of the "o" for "oro" error took place about half-way during the first (25cts.) printing, it seems likely that some of these six sheets contained the "o" for "oro" error and some did not. If all six sheets had fallen into the hands of the same person, and he had recorded the errors, we would then have a true record. Actually one person, Mr. R. Membreno, the late Mr. John N. Luff's correspondent in Honduras, did secure most of the inverted surcharges but, by his own admission, many others were sold at the post offices in the regular manner. Thus estimates as to the number of "o" for "oro" errors with the 25cts. surcharge inverted, and also those with the 50cts. surcharge inverted must necessarily be conjectural.

There are pertinent statistics, nevertheless, from which definite conclusions can be deduced, and these now will be discussed.

The 1947 Sanabria catalog contained a reasonably adequate listing of Honduras air mail stamps. However, with the adoption of their two-column-to-a-page format in the later editions, many important varieties were unfortunately deleted. The 1947 listing by Sanabria of its number 38 (Scott 31) was as follows:

Number	Description	Quantity	Mint Price	Used Price	Block of 4 Price
San. 38	50c on 25c on 1p. green	10,000	1.00	.80	5.00
a.	"Internaoicnal"	200	7.00	—	—
b.	"o" for "oro"	200	7.00	—	—
c.	25c surcharge inverted	100	20.00	—	—
d.	50c surcharge inverted	50	50.00	—	—
e.	as a, inverted	2	300.00	—	—
f.	as b, inverted	1	600.00	—	—
g.	as a d, inverted	2	300.00	—	—
h.	as b d, inverted	1	600.00	—	—

Some of the above listings are confusing and should have been corrected to read:

e.— As a c
f.— As b c

g.— As a d
h.— As b d

** C29 (San. 36).

*** Proof of this is that the Decree of May 7, 1930 provided for the overprinting of 15,500 stamps of one peso (Scott 181) with the legend: "Servicio Aereo - Vale 20cts. oro-Marzo 1930". When it was found that an insufficient quantity of the one peso stamp was available, the centavos stamps of the 1915 issue (Scott 180) was used instead of the one peso, to make C28 (San. 35).

HONDURAS

Thus the variety pictured in this article at the top of the left strip is identified as Sanabria 38g as listed in the 1947 catalog. As previously stated, neither the Scott nor the Sanabria catalogs of 1956 contain a listing of this legitimate error.

Now let us check the quantities. The first inaccuracy is the quantity of San. 38b, for which an amount closer to 100 would be more realistic. San. 38d should be 200 instead of 50; and San. 38g should be 5, not 2. San. 38f is shown as being unique, although 2 could be possible. San. 38h is also shown unique, but it seems that more than a single copy was made. The writer believes 5 is a more correct amount, but he would compromise on 3 at least, unless definite proof to the contrary is available.

Regard pricing—the present editions of the catalogs price C31, San. 38 at \$2.50 unused and used respectively. Rest assured, at that figure, the stamp is greatly undervalued because here is an issue made in the limited quantity of 10,000 and one that did actual service during a period when air mail stamps were obligatory and in small stock for all values. Besides, a considerable quantity was used and/or destroyed, never to find their way into collections. The errors, because of their scarcity, are entitled to the status of rarities. And as such, their prices should necessarily reflect this.

It is hoped that in some future article, I can go into further detail concerning the other printings authorized by the Decree of January 9, 1930, which the writer has facetiously named a "Comedy of Errors".

U. S. A.

(Continued from Page 92.)

The writer has become more and more intrigued with all the interesting things that can be found and collected with this 24c air mail stamp of 1918. In his opinion, besides the extensive collections that can be formed with this stamp, there is also its significant position in the history of aero-philately. One should never forget that this was THE FIRST DEFINITIVE STAMP ISSUED AND USED FOR AIR MAIL upon a regular scheduled civilian service. This stamp should have a tremendous future.

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CATALOG AND BOOK REVIEWS

Scott's Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue, 1956, Vol. I.

Because of a delay in sending our customary review copy, these remarks could not appear until this time.

MEXICO C74, C76 and C93A constitute "the big news" for this 1956 edition. For 20 years Scott printed the following bold-face notes:

"We do not recognize the variety created by overprinting No. C68 with the words 'Vuelo de Amelia Earhart, Mexico, 1935' as a stamp issued primarily for postal purposes".

Or the same about "Type AP34 of 1939, 20c blue & red, with the engraved overprint reading 'Sarabia Vuelo Mexico-Nueva York' . . ."

These notes now are gone. The "Amelia Earhart" stamp becomes Scott C74, the "Sarabia" C93A. C76B is the recently discovered watermark variety described for the first time in this magazine (*AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS*, Vol. 2, No. 3). It is pleasing for aero-philatelists to see Scott listing this find so shortly after it had been verified rather than delay a listing for years, a rather general practice of this catalog in the past.

Another listing of interest to air mail specialists is the addition of the scarce *Harrison* printing of Papua C1. This is listed as C1d. However, Scott still makes no distinction between the Cooke and Ash printing of this stamp, although the latter is by far the most common variety.

These new listings are further evidence of the more recent liberal catalog policy of Scott, a move that every air mail enthusiast will applaud. Nevertheless, much still could be done. Specifically Scott should list the "Inselpost" of Germany and the "RF" overprints of the United States, both very popular items with collectors. Also nothing has been done with the wholly inconsistent listings of Souvenir Sheets. And finally Honduras former C21 and C24 should be restored. These latter two stamps were put in Scott by perhaps its greatest editor, the late Mr. John N. Luff. Agreeing with this keen student of Honduras, no present authority of the stamps of this Central American Republic can understand the reason for the revisions and amendments made a few years ago.

The size of this volume has increased from 862 to 878 pages. It still sells at \$4, a bargain as books are priced today.

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ITALY'S 1917 STAMP

The First Government-Issued Air Mail

Many members of AERO PHILATELIST'S believe that one of our most authoritative articles published by us was the one in the former "Aero Philatelist's News" (Vol. 1, No. 8) on the 1917 air mail stamp of Italy. There is good reason for this belief, because the author was Mr. S. L. Bayer, presently the owner of the Penny Black Stamp Co., New York, N. Y. Before coming to this country about twenty years ago, Mr. Bayer had been a resident of Italy, where he not only dealt in air mails, but was both a student and news reporter of early aviation in Europe, especially Italy. Consequently, he was exceedingly well-versed in his topic, and much of his information was based upon first-hand knowledge.

Now we quote from the first portion of his 1946 article:

"THE WORLD'S FIRST AIRMAIL STAMP

By S. L. Bayer

"The first airmail stamp officially recognized as such was issued by Italy in 1917. The then current red special delivery stamp (Scott E1) was overprinted:

**ESPERIMENTO POSTA AEREA
MAGGIO 1917
TORINO-ROMA — ROMA-TORINO**

which translated into English reads:

Experimental Air Post
May 1917
Turin-Rome Rome-Turin



Fig. 1. A post card with the No. 1 air mail stamp of Italy flown on the first return flight from Rome to Turin on May 27, 1917. The cancel happens to be the scarce one with the wide spacing between the numerals of the date. But the feature of this piece is the stamp with the second "Torino" missing from the last line of the overprint. Collection of Sam Rodvien.

ITALY

"The overprinting was done by the Government Printing Office, then located in Turin. 200,000 stamps were overprinted, of which only a part were used on the mail. The remainders were kept on sale at the Philatelic Agency of the Italian Postal Administration until shortly before the outbreak of war in 1939, and were sold at a slight premium over face value. Much care was given to the overprinting and no errors were found, except for some heavy lettering due to excessive inkage".

Up to the present time, the statement about no varieties of the overprint being known has not been amended. But *Sam Rodvien*, our Vice President, while preparing his material for exhibition in FIPEX, suddenly came upon an error in the overprinting, which he hardly could believe. We shall let the picture tell the story. Notice on the illustrated card (Fig. 1) that almost all of the second "Torino" at the end of the last line is missing. This shows far clearer in the enlargement of the stamp (Fig. 2).

Seeking to learn how this error occurred, we were unable to find two essential points of information ever recorded by anyone, who wrote about this first air mail stamp. It would help to know the method of overprinting as well as the setting of the overprint. "The Sanabria Air Post Catalogue" states that the overprint was applied by typography. Our examination of many copies confirms this fact that the overprint was typeset.



Fig. 2. An enlargement of the copy of Italy C1 showing the second "Torino" almost completely missing. Photos by L. W. Giles.

As for the missing word, "Torino", the writer is inclined to believe that this may not be a constant variety. Very likely some foreign matter came upon the type and caused this perhaps only once or a few times until it worked loose. Proof of this theory must await further study.

All, who have examined this copy with the word, "Torino", almost completely missing, think that this was quite a find because it had gone unnoticed for almost 40 years. After the news of the discovery, those, who heard of it, went through their material with Italy C1, but as yet no other similar errors have been noted.

The reason for the excitement about this discovery becomes apparent, when one realizes the historical status of this Italian air mail stamp. It is universally accepted by philately as the first air mail stamp ever issued by a government. Every collector, especially one specializing in air mails, should feature this stamp in his collection for this reason. Copies are readily available unused, or on first flight cards and covers. One can form at a modest cost a fine specialized collection with Italy Sanabria No. 1. Using Mr. Bayer's article as a base, one can seek the scarcer cancellations and usages. Many dealers have cards and covers with this stamp in stock. But unless one is an air mail or Italian specialist, he probably does not separate the scarce usages from the common ones. Some have had the exciting experience of buying a scarce usage, worth considerable more, at the average price for Italy C1. And as more become interested in this NUMBER ONE air mail stamp, perhaps further errors in the overprint like the one shown here will be found.

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COLOMBIA

Secret Dot on the 1923-1929 Scadta Air Mails

By JACOB S. GLASER,



Fig. 1. 5 copies of the 30 centavos blue stamp each showing a different position of the secret dot as well as the degree of variation in size and shape.

In F. W. Kessler's excellent handbook "The Air Posts of Colombia", 1936 edition, on page 83, there is the following reference to "Dot Varieties" or the 1923-29 SCADTA company air mail issues.

PROVISIONAL ISSUES—1923-1929, DOT VARIETIES

"The steamer 'Christian Horn' left Hamburg on September 1st, 1923 with a supply of stamps and arrived in Pto. Colombia about the middle of October. A shortage of one package of 640 sheets of the 30c blue was discovered. In order to detect the stolen stamps, the Scadta ordered the remaining stamps to be overprinted with a small 'dot' on the face of the stamp. This surcharge was done by machine, overprinting a whole sheet in one operation. The color of the dot is the same as the stamp itself and oftentimes it is difficult to see them. The following values have been reported with the dot: 10c, 15c, 30c, 60c.

"The thieves, fearing the discovery of their stolen goods, burned them, and the Scadta discontinued the 'dot' surcharging

on subsequent shipments.

"Through the theft of the above mentioned 640 sheets, aggravated by the strike in the German seaports during the late summer of 1923, the 30c value ran out in a short time and provisional issues had to be made."

This writer, as a long time specialist on the stamps of Colombia, has accumulated over the years a sizable amount of material, stamps and covers having these "Secret Dots". The following article presents further information that has come to my attention.

DENOMINATIONS OVERPRINTED

Mr. Kessler stated that few denominations out of a long set of 14 were overprinted. The "Sens Briefmarken Journal No. 11 of June, 1932" has an article on the same subject. It mentions only the 30 and 60 centavos values being overprinted with the secret dot, but omits any word about the 10 and 15 centavos values.

Having examined thousands of stamps of this 1923 issue, this work resulted in the finding of many secret dots on the 30 centavos blue denomination, a far lesser number on



Fig. 2. 60c brown. Left: a copy without dot; Right: pair, both with dots.

the 60 centavos. But I found only one copy of the 15 centavos stamps. And only three 10 centavos with secret dot.

Despite this, other Colombian specialists have informed me that the secret dots do exist on many 15 centavos denominations. Mr. F. G. Larsen of Bogota, Colombia, who had owned one of the most extensive collections of Colombian air mail stamps and covers, wrote me that the secret dots were overprinted on the 10 and 15 centavos. Mr. Robert J. Lyon, editor of the "Sanabria Air Post Catalogue", who previously owned a fine collection of "Scadta" stamps and covers, assured the writer that he had one or two copies of the 10 centavos value with secret dots. (Fig. 3) However, in all my many years of collecting, I have found very few copies of the 10c. and only one 15 centavos with a "secret dot". (Fig. 4)

TWO DIFFERENT ACCOUNTS

Both Mr. Kessler and the "Senf Briefmarken Journal" state that "the thieves, fearing discovery of their stolen stamps, burned them". In recent years, I have been informed by Senor Doctor Ignacio Lopez, one of the former attorneys of the *Scadta* company, that the stolen stamps were recovered and not burned.

THE OVERPRINTING

During the examination of my material, notice was made that the "secret dots" could be seen on the stamps in a number of different varieties. They were overprinted in different positions; some dots being high and others much lower on the stamps. The dots varied greatly in intensity; some were almost perfectly round and easy to see. Others were faint or broken; their detection being pos-



Fig 3. 10c green. The left stamp is without dot. The right is one of the three copies found with a "secret dot".



Fig. 4. 15c carmine. The only one copy found with a dot is the one at the right. The copy at left is a normal one.

sible only by magnification. Also, their size varied from about $\frac{1}{4}$ m.m. in diameter to a small spot impossible to measure.

There is agreement, as Mr. Kessler wrote, that the overprinting was done in one operation. The stamps were printed in Germany in sheets of 25 (5 x 5). The overprinting of the secret dots was done in Barranquilla, Colombia. This writer would account for the varieties on these dots through the plate wearing down as the overprinting progressed.

Records state that a total of 3,766,700 of the 30 centavos blue stamps were printed. Consequently, this denomination lent itself

best to study purposes because it offered the most material. I happen to own thousands of copies of the 30 centavos stamp. The different locations of the dots on this denomination were probably caused by individual sheets of the basic stamps being fed into the printing press for the overprinting not always in the same manner. Illustrated are five 30 centavos stamps which plainly shows the varieties in the position of the secret dots on individual stamps. (Fig. 1)

Another interesting matter in connection with these dots comes to light when covers are studied. Those with multiple rate frank-

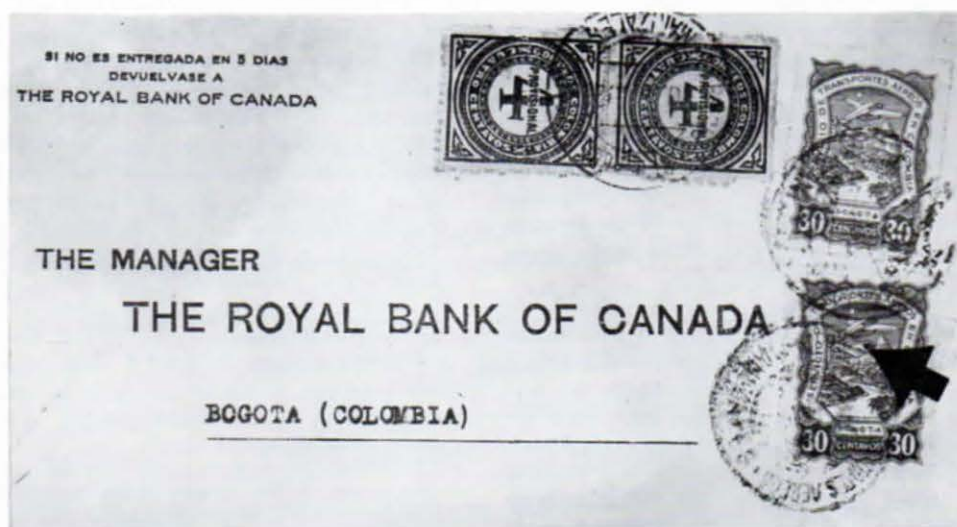


Fig. 5. Front of a commercial cover flown from Barranquilla to Bogota in March, 1926. The top 30 centavos stamp is without a secret dot but the one beneath it has the secret dot.



Fig. 6. An interesting cover flown from Cartagena to Bogota on December 15, 1924 with a multiple franking. The two 30 centavos blue and the 60 centavos brown all have "the secret dot" variety.

ing needing two or more stamps of the same value show some stamps having the dot but others without it. (Fig. 5)

FURTHER COMPLICATIONS

As previously mentioned, a total of 3,766,700 of these 30 centavos blue stamps were printed. Mr. Kessler stated the quantity stolen as 640 sheets. Others confirm this amount. Each sheet having 25 stamps, the total of the stamps stolen, therefore, amounts to 16,000 or less than $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1% of the entire printing of the 30 centavos stamps.

The stamps were issued on June 4, 1923. The theft is reported as discovered about the middle of October, 1923. The dots were overprinted about the same time; but previously received stocks of the stamps had been widely distributed to cities throughout Colombia. Of course, the use of any stamps without dots could be identified as the stolen shipment.

Studying the cancellations on material, we have noticed usage of the stamps with dot as late as 1929. This, therefore, would explain the use of stamps on cover where one had a secret dot and the other did not. After the missing box or boxes of stamps were found, the secret dot became obsolete as there was no longer any chance of the missing stamps being used illegally. Then stamps with or without the secret dot were used indiscriminately.

DOT VARIETIES USED MOSTLY IN BARRANQUILLA

The port of entry was *(Porto Colombia) Barranquilla. The overprinting was done in this city. Although one finds cancellations of stamps with secret dots from other cities in Colombia, the majority of cancellations in the material we studied were from Barranquilla. This, in our opinion, shows that most of the stock of the stamps with secret dots was distributed in this city.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In seeking the foregoing information, I am indebted to a number of philatelic friends for their fine cooperation and assistance. Mention should be made of the Editor, Henry M. Goodkind, for his kind assistance in compiling this article, Mr. F. G. Larsen of Bogota, Colombia, Mr. R. J. Lyon of New York, Dr. J. Pringle of Manchester, England, Senor Edward de Caicedo of Colombia, and my daughter, Senora Estelle Glaser de Escobar of Bogota, who made an effort to get a 15 centavos SCADTA with a secret dot overprint, but was unable to locate one after a year of search in Colombia.

* Ships now dock at Barranquilla. But in 1923, the channel was not deep enough to permit ocean-going ships to enter the Barranquilla harbor. Then they had to enter at Porto Colombia that had a pier about 8000 feet long. Porto Colombia is about 20 miles from Barranquilla.

URUGUAY

The First Air Mail Issue of 1921

(Part 1)

Preface

Each of the four stamps of the 1921 air mail issue of Uruguay will be studied separately. This (Part 1) covers the first stamp, the blue overprint (Scott C1, San. 1). The other overprints, the red (C2), the green (C3) and the controversial black (San. 4) each will be the subject of an article by itself. Our decision to do this was based upon our experience as a philatelic writer. Collectors desiring information seem to better absorb more through shorter than lengthy articles that have a tendency to offer too much information at one time.

History

The first government in the Western Hemisphere to issue a special stamp for air mail was the United States on May 13, 1918. Newfoundland followed in April, 1919 with the famous "Hawker" and "Martinsyde" special flight stamps. Then Colombia came with the controversial "Knox Martin" stamp on April 30, 1919. There was an interruption until March, 1921 when Uruguay issued its air mail stamp with the blue overprint.

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 air mail back in 1921.

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URUGUAY

In 1947, the writer wrote on the air mail stamps of Uruguay, which was published in *"the Aero Philatelist's News"*, Vol. 2, Nos. 11, 12 and 20. The first air mail issue of 1921 was included. However, since then, having become far more interested in Uruguay air mails, much more has been learned. So we believe the time had come to record further information, most of which was not in our 1947 *"Aero Philatelist's News"* articles.



The Blue Overprint

It is definitely established from the existence of the Official Decree that the first air mail stamp of Uruguay was issued on *March 20, 1921*. Some air mail catalogs like Sanabria incorrectly give the date of issue as March 22. This can be explained. Years ago this wrong date was given in an old catalog because the first day of use was confused with the first day of issue. Later catalogs copied this wrong date and have not changed it.

The basic stamp came in sheets of 100 (10 x 10). According to reports, the overprint was applied in a very efficient manner. The writer agrees with this because our examination of many copies discloses no great variation or distinct varieties. This is exceptional with overprinting in Latin America, and it speaks very well for printing facilities in Uruguay. Studying the overprints of the blue closely, the only slight variation noticed was the centering, which has very slight philatelic significance. It was noticed that the blue overprint was found well-centered, shifted to the top, bottom, right or left, but not to any marked degree.

The writer sought in vain to find any record of the method by which the overprint was applied. Our study leads to the opinion that the overprinting was done by typography, but we have no idea of the setting. It seems likely that the sheets of 100 stamps were overprinted in one operation, but there is no documentation known to us to substantiate this theory. We have examined a number of large multiple pieces as well as many single copies, but this work has as yet led to no definite conclusion as to the setting of the overprint.

In a fine specialized catalog on the air mails of Uruguay published by the Uruguay Philatelic Club in 1948, there is a color variety, "ultramarine", listed. One sheet of 100 with this color variation is stated as known. There is no desire on our part to start a controversy, but we believe that this variety is of minor significance. *In our opinion, it is a shade rather than a color difference.* The few copies we examined of this so-called

URUGUAY

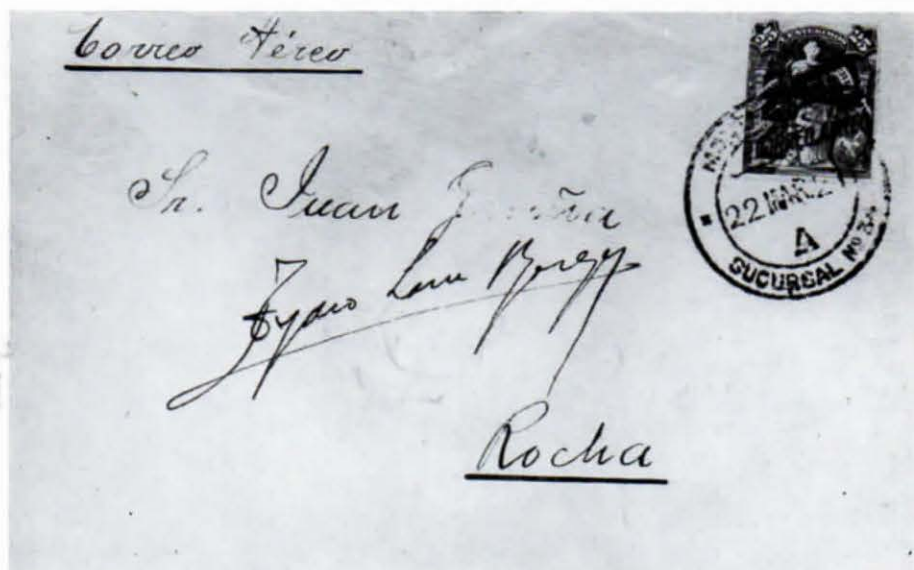


Fig. 1. One of the very few covers known to the writer showing genuine use on March 22, 1921 when the first flights Montevideo-Rocha took place. It is stated that only about 200 letters and cards were carried on the airplane that left Montevideo. (Photos by L. W. Giles.)

"ultramarine" seem only a lighter shade than the normal darker blue color. We do not see how this lighter shade could properly be classified as the color "ultramarine", there being no purple cast visible to us. At best it is a lighter shade of blue. But we do not think it is of sufficient philatelic note to warrant a special listing, even as a minor variety.

The total printing, according to official records, was 9,900. This we would interpret as meaning that 100 sheets were overprinted, but for some reason only 9,900 were placed on sale, one sheet, perhaps because of defective work, was destroyed. Also according to the records, 500 copies were overprinted "Specimen" (Muestra) for the U. P. U. This leaves a net amount of 9,400 copies, which is a comparatively small quantity.

Lee's book, "The Postage Stamps of Uruguay", pp. 271-2, states the following:

"CHAPTER XLI

"FIRST AIR STAMP, 1921.

"Emitted 9,900.

"Soto 1. S.G. 450. Overprint in blue on the stamp of 11th February, 1901 (Soto 865).

"*Revista*, No. 203: "El Centro Nacional de Aviacion de Montevideo was charged to inaugurate the new service on the 22nd of March of this year with a trial journey to Rocha, departing from Montevideo and with a halt at the bathing resort of Piriapolis, a halt which was not able to be effected. Captain Berisso, the pilot of the machine with which the journey was accomplished, took to Rocha 10 copies of each of the newspapers of the capital and rather more than 200 letters; on his return journey, he brought only a few letters from Rocha.

"This trial of a postal transport system was carried out under the auspices of the Uruguayan Post who seized the opportunity to issue 10,000 special stamps for a service which they were not certain was going to materialize, but which enabled them to get rid of a surplus of stamps.

"This measure of issuing stamps for a service not definitely established seems to us rather imprudent.

URUGUAY

"The stamps overprinted with an aeroplane and the wording 'CORREO AEREO' are those of 25 centesimos, dark coffee colour, engraved, issued 11th February, 1901; although belonging to the second printing of a darker colour which circulated just a little later. The overprint is very well done and pretty. The stamps have been used also independently of the service for which they were intended.

"The idea of improving the services of the transport of correspondence is very laudable, but we are not of the same opinion regarding the issue of stamps under any pretext whatever and without further use than that of swelling collections.

"It is practically certain that the Consejo Nacional de Administracion in view of the cost of this new service will decide not to establish it, and all that will be left to us of the affair will be the stamps in question, a souvenir of a very laudable, but too premature attempt.

"I have here the resolution which the Consejo Directivo y la Direccion General have published on the Air Mail stamps.

"The execution of the overprint was excellent and one of the finest examples of surcharges so far used by the Uruguayan postal authorities.

In the Collection

is a mint sheet of 100, 10 x 10, perf. 14, and a block of 4. An entire used in conjunction with a set of the Sarando issue of 1923 with obliterations as per Figs. 351, 352, 353".

It is the writer's belief that some of the above remarks are much too critical and sarcastic. We think that too often philatelists are prone to apply too strictly the standard "postal necessity". Instead we see those responsible for the first air mail like the Newfoundland "Hawker" or Colombia's "Knox Martin" as men of vision, who saw great possibilities for a fast mail service by airplane, and thus started early to prepare and try to use special stamps for air mail. There were so many trying conditions to overcome, and often these early air mail attempts were unsuccessful, so that later some mocked the whole idea. Consequently, they jumped at the conclusion that such early stamps were issued primarily for philatelic sales, and not postal requirements.

In the case of the first air mail stamp of Uruguay, we think that we can dispute any critical contention made against this issue. At no time was the supply not freely available to philatelists, and the prices of single copies have been modest so that nearly every collector can afford to buy a copy of Uruguay C1. Instead of levelling any criticism, the writer is inclined to bestow praise upon those responsible for this 1921 issue because of the vision and foresight shown, which was confirmed by events only a decade or so later, when air mail became so generally accepted and used.

No Counterfeits Known

The fine work by Roberto Hoffman, whose title in English translates, "A Study of the Counterfeits of the Postage Stamps of Uruguay", is a most thorough writing describing all the known counterfeits—and there are many.

Regarding the first air mail issue (San. 1 to 4), Mr. Hoffman describes and illustrates two counterfeits—the red and the black overprint. None are known of the blue overprint.

Extremely Scarce on First Flight Covers

About 20 years ago, when the writer first began to specialize intently upon air mail stamps on cover, he had been offered a FIRST FLIGHT cover with Uruguay C1 by a New York dealer for \$50.00. (Like the one shown in Fig. 1). We recall becoming speechless because the stamp cataloged then about \$2.50 unused or used, being unpriced on cover. However, this experience left such a sharp impression upon our mind that we kept on the lookout for a similar Uruguay C1 cover.

Some years passed, but oddly enough no similar pieces were found. During this period,

URUGUAY

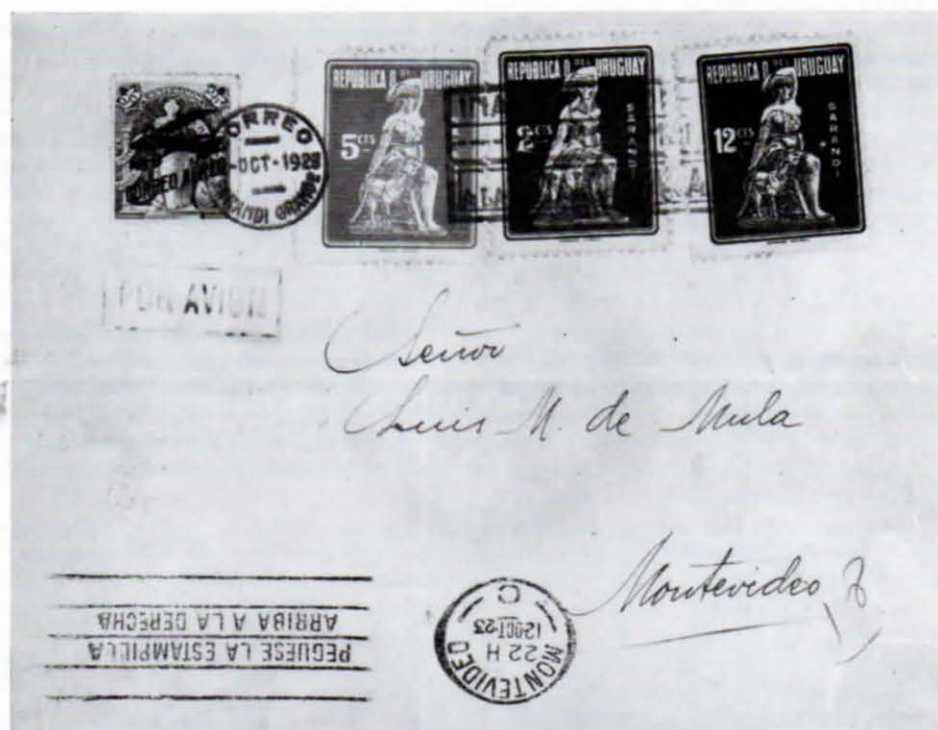


Fig. 2. The first air mail stamp of Uruguay used on the special October 12, 1923 Sarandi-Montevideo special flight. It is stated that 880 pieces of mail were transported.

we had begun to assemble a rather comprehensive collection of air mail stamps of the world on covers, but somehow this Uruguay item eluded us.

About 1942 or 1943, we finally came across the first Uruguay C1 cover that we had seen since our initial experience. Now being more experienced, we happily bought this cover at what we considered a "bargain price"—\$25. Subsequently we became better educated. The cover we had bought with the blue overprinted air stamp was used a special October 12, 1923 flight from Sarandi to Montevideo (Fig. 2). A similar cover is illustrated in the 1934 "Field Air Mail Catalogue" (England), listed as No. 6 and priced at £2 (then about \$10). But this fine catalog also lists a No. 3, which is the March 22, 1921 First Flight used from Montevideo to Rocha. This is priced at £10 (then about \$50). "Champion Catalogue de la Poste Aerienne, 1934 edition" states that only 300 letters and post cards were carried on the 1921 flight, but 880 pieces of mail on the 1923 flight. Lee, quoting "la Revista", gives the quantity of mail on the 1921 flight as 200, not 300, the amount Champion specified. Judging by the few covers seen with the March 22, 1921 date, we believe that Lee's 200 is more accurate than Champion's 300. But as far as the writer was concerned, the cover he had with the blue overprint was on the much more common flight of 1923. A March 22, 1921 flight cover was the item he wanted to secure.

A few years later, around 1946 as we remember it, the first 1921 flight cover, since the one we saw about 10 years before, was located. It was included in an auction sale of a well-known New York dealer. It was an individual lot, but the description did not read as if it were considered anything scarce or exceptional. The listed price was \$3.50 plus, which figure represented the then catalog price for the stamp used (or unused).

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It will be a long time until our experience with this lot is forgotten. We think the complete story is so interesting that we shall include it in this article. Our only interest in this auction sale was the Uruguay cover. So for this reason, we did not wish to plan to attend this auction sale just for the one lot. We contacted a stamp dealer friend, who usually attends sales like this in person, to see if he could handle our bid. As usual, he was very happy to oblige us. Now this friend deals mostly in stamps. He is familiar with covers and some of their values, but his knowledge is far superior on stamps. We gave our friend a bid of \$35 for this cover. Looking back, we often have wondered what determined this price in our mind? Perhaps our thinking went like this. Previously when inexperienced, we had rejected a similar cover for \$50. So we wanted the satisfaction of now purchasing a Uruguay C1 cover for less.

This is what followed. Our friend phoned us just before he was ready to leave his office to personally attend the sale. He was concerned about our \$35 bid on a lot that only cataloged-priced for \$3.50, and reasoned that perchance we had made a mistake by bidding on the wrong lot. No, we assured him that our \$35 bid was correct. It was for a stamp on a cover that we had been seeking for many years, we told our friend. Before he hung up, he confidently assured us that he would conscientiously execute our bid, and no doubt save us some money. Famous last words!

After the sale had concluded, a report was received. The lot with the Uruguay March, 1921 Flight cover had opened at \$30. Before our agent could get into the bidding, the price had already gone to \$40. The lot was finally sold for \$45!

After learning this, we reasoned as we are sure many of our readers often have. We regretted that we had not bid \$50 for this cover and had our agent buy it in. Then we learned that we still would not have been able to buy this cover. There was a competing bid of \$60. Thus our frustration with a 1921 Uruguay cover continued.

A few more years passed, and no other Uruguay cover came to our attention. We were offered some 1923 covers, but had to refuse these explaining that we were seeking the stamp on a 1921 flight. According to our memory, we think it was a very hot summer day in 1949 or 1950, when we were walking along the New York City side-walks. Suddenly an afternoon thunder storm broke. So we had to duck into a nearby building to keep dry. Looking around, we saw that we were in a building where several stamp dealers had their offices. Thinking that we had 10 or 15 minutes until the hard rain stopped, we decided to visit one of the dealers. Walking into the office, we were surprised to see an auction sale going on. We picked up one of the auction catalogs and sat down for a while. Being summertime, the floor was not very crowded and the material being sold was of slight interest to us. After about 10 minutes—it was still raining—a lot came up described as follows:

"South America: 25 miscellaneous covers, mostly airs, high cat. stamps—Estimated value \$20."

The auctioneer, noting our presence, more or less jokingly tried to get us to bid, because he knew of our interest in air mails. We ventured a bid of \$15 and bought this lot "blind" at this price. Yes, you guessed it, the lot upon inspection contained the 1921 flight cover shown as Fig. 1. Incidentally, the other covers in this lot were rather nice, but nothing like this Uruguay C1 cover. That was a thrill that comes all too seldom.

Obviously, even this experienced auction dealer had not realized the extreme scarcity of a Uruguay 1921 flight cover. And this statement still applies today, because outside of a few Uruguay or air mail cover specialists, many are unaware how scarce these 1921 flight covers are. The Sanabria catalog just recently set the cover price for No. 1 in this catalog at \$35. So against the current \$3 list price in this catalog of Uruguay No. 1 unused or used, those now consulting Sanabria may receive a better indication of the relative scarcity of No. 1 on cover. The writer suggested to the editor of this catalog of this cover price, which was accepted. Some may think that even a \$35 listing for a cover in view of the few previously known sales at higher prices is too low. This would

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be true, if the catalog price referred to the 1921 flight only. But the 1923 flight covers also have to be taken into consideration.

As further proof of the extreme scarcity of this first air mail stamp of Uruguay on the March 22, 1921 First Flight cover, we refer back to the last paragraph in Lee's book. It was that author's practice to close his descriptive text with a reference to the material in his collection. Notice that the famous E. J. Lee Collection of Uruguay had only the blue overprint on a 1923 Flight cover, *not one on a 1921 First Flight cover*. Lee's Uruguay collection was considered one of the finest ever assembled and was awarded many "grand prix" at international philatelic exhibitions, before his collection was sold at auction in England a few years ago.

Since the writer had purchased the cover shown in Fig. 1, he has seen only a few more 1921 flight covers. Counting his own and the one first seen about 20 years ago, the total number of March, 1921 Flight covers seen is SIX. Although, all six were not closely inspected, there was something about two of them that created certain doubts in the writer's mind whether these showed genuine usage or were fake covers. The temptation must be great for a cover faker. He can buy an unused copy of C1 for a few dollars, affix it to cover, apply a fake cancel and have imitated a piece for which he could get \$25 or more. The writer has a strong suspicion that this has been done.

Bibliography

Fortunately there are a number of very helpful references works that may be consulted for information on the first air mails of Uruguay. A few have already been mentioned in the article. But many more have been read, and mention of as much source material as known to the writer should be made.

First of all, there are any number of catalogs, general and specialized, that were consulted. Most of them offer scant information outside of the customary listings and prices. There are, however, two air mail catalogs that have proven very helpful because they offer more detailed information. These are the "D. Field Air Mail Catalogue, 2nd (1934) edition", and the Theodore Champion "Catalogue de la Poste Aerienne, 1930 edition".

Uruguay has produced some very helpful source material. There are two periodicals, that have been published regularly for a number of years. One is the "Uruguay Filatelico", the other "Revista del Centro Coleccionistas del Uruguay". Both have run articles that supplied data not found in other sources. Also two booklets by Roberto Hoffman "Catalogo de las Variedades mas importantes de Uruguay" and "Estudio de las Falsificaciones de los Sellos Postales del Uruguay" are useful. A specialized catalog on Uruguay air mails edited and published by the Philatelic Club of Uruguay called, "Catalogo de los Sellos Aereos del Uruguay", should be consulted by all interested in air stamps. A fine older catalog of Uruguay called "Catalogo de Sellos Postales, 1922" by Soto Hermanos (Soto Bros.) was a standard reference work for specialists in Uruguay stamps. However being issued so soon after the first air mail stamps, this contains little more than a listing and the 1922 market prices.

Throughout the article, references were made to Emmanuel J. Lee's "the Postage Stamps of Uruguay", which has become to be ranked as one of the great philatelic reference books. For instance, it is now housed in the rarity section of the Collectors Club Library, New York. Lee's studies on the first air mail issue are confined almost exclusively to quotations from the periodical "La Revista". But this is most advantageous because important information has been translated from the original Spanish into English.

Many periodicals from America and England were read, if their indices showed that there was an article on the first issue of Uruguay's air mails. In most cases, the English articles were found to be translations from the periodicals of Uruguay. But these too proved useful because they had translated from the original Spanish. The British weekly, "Stamp Collecting", during the years 1923 to 1930 was especially helpful. In this country, the old "Mekeels Weekly Stamp News" in the middle 1920's ran a few similar articles as well as a good new issue coverage.

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