

THE AERO
PHILATELIST ANNALS

★ ★ A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE ON AERO-PHILATELY ★ ★

This Issue Features:

- U. S. SECOND AIR MAIL STAMP
- CANAL ZONE PART PERF.
- NEWFOUNDLAND ALCOCK-BROWN
COVERS
- RAREST 20th CENTURY STAMP

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Vol. V



No. 2

THE PHILATELIST AERO ANNALS

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Henry M. Goodkind, Editor

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UNITED STATES

The Second Air Mail Stamp

16c Green of 1918

Preface

All of the books and articles consulted on the 20th century stamps of the United States, dealing with the 1918 air mail series, confine most all of their information to the printing and production of the stamps. These books omit references to the stamps' postal history, which, in many respects, is more interesting than learning about the plate layout, printing details, perforations and other production methods.

It is well known that the first U. S. air mail stamp was placed on sale May 13, 1918 in Washington, D. C. This was the 24c red and blue. Less than a month and a half later, a Post Office Order dated June 26, 1918 called for the reduction of the rate from 24 to 16 cents. This was to go into effect on July 15, 1918.

There were some highly significant philatelic events that transpired during this short May-July 1918 period. The issuance of the first air mail stamp produced one of the most sensational events in the history of not only U. S. but all philately. The immediate purchase on the first day of sale on May 14, 1918 of one sheet of 100 with the inverted

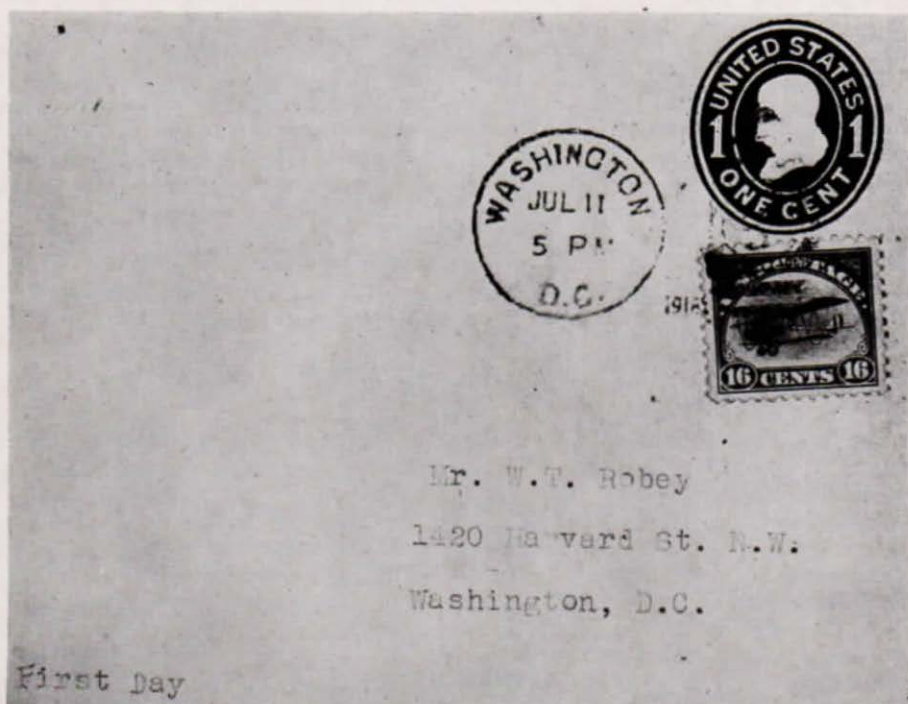


Fig. 1. An exceedingly scarce cover cancelled Washington, D. C., July 11, 1918, the first day of issue. This was not flown, because the air mail rate still was 24 cents. This cover, one of the three known with the July 11th date, is addressed to the famous W. T. Robey, the original purchaser of the sheet with the 24c air mail inverted centers.

Photos by Boutrelle

UNITED STATES



Fig. 2. First Day Cover cancelled New York, N. Y. July 11, 1918 when the rate was still 24c. The postage prepaid was 21c, so that 3c Postage Due was collected. But curiously, the Philadelphia, Pa. backstamp reads July 15, 1918 when the reduced 16c rate had gone into effect. (Courtesy of Philip Silver.)

centers made history.* But secondly, the idea of the first regularly scheduled air mail service by any government in the world stimulated action for covers by many collectors and dealers. Consequently, many first flight covers were prepared to remain as historical souvenirs of this event. In fact, it was soon discovered so many had made covers for the first trips on May 15, 1918 with 24c stamp that the philatelic supply far exceeded the demand.

Faced with this situation, obviously far fewer were willing to bother with first flight covers with the second U. S. air mail stamp that followed so shortly. Years later, as collectors sought to have a good representation of U. S. first day covers, they found that the 16c green was far scarcer on first day covers than the more historical 24c red and blue.

First Day Covers

The Post Office directive of June 26, 1918 stated that the 16c green air mail stamp was to be placed on sale July 11, 1918. However the reduced rate was *not* to go into effect until July 15th.

The present-day collector must understand conditions as they existed back in 1918. First of all, collecting first day covers was relatively slight, certainly nothing compared to the present volume. Furthermore, the U. S. Post Office Department had not started the custom of a well-publicized advance notice for collectors to service first day covers. Then with the experience of the oversupply of the 24c stamp on May 15, 1918 covers, fewer were going to bother. And finally 1918 was wartime.

Obviously very few first day—July 11, 1918—covers were prepared. To have them fly via air mail, the 24c rate had to be prepaid. Although the writer has been interested in the 1918 air mail issue of the United States for many years, he has seen only THREE covers with the July 11, 1918 cancellation. Thus they are not only scarce; *they are rare.*

* The author has written a handbook on "The United States 24c Air Mail Inverted Center of 1918" that has recently been published by The Collectors Club, 22 East 35 Street, New York 16, N. Y. Price \$1.00.

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UNITED STATES

Oddly enough these three July 11th covers re-appeared on the market recently. They were sold at auction by Irwin Heiman, New York, on October 18, 1956 and February 13, 1957. They brought \$130.00, \$105.00 and \$59.00 respectively. Two of them are illustrated (Figs. 1 and 2).

These 16c air mail first day covers are real "collectors' items" now. Two active groups of specialists seek them creating an enormous demand with an exceedingly short supply. Both the U. S. First Day cover specialists and aero-philatelists want these.

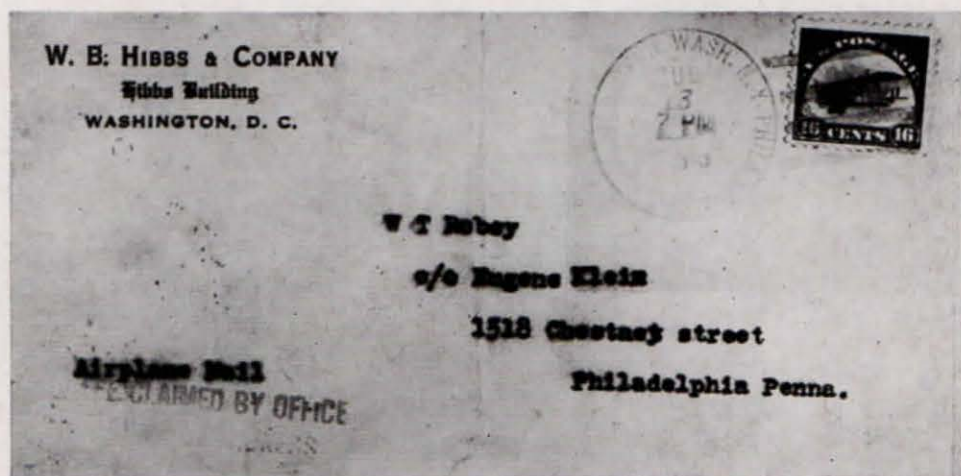


Fig. 3. Cover cancelled two days before the reduced 16c air mail rate went into effect. This cover also is addressed to W. T. Robey, but this time care of Eugene Klein, Philadelphia, Pa., the dealer who purchased from Robey his sheet with the inverts. The Washington cancel is July 13 and the Philadelphia backstamp July 15, 1918, showing that this cover flew on the latter date at the 16c rate.

Pre-First Flight Use Covers

As stated the 16c air mail was first sold on July 11, 1918. It was first used on July 15, 1918. But for some unexplained reason, some covers that flew are known with the *July 13, 1918 cancellation*. Figs. 3 and 4 illustrate two of these. Notice that both are cancelled July 13th, Washington, D. C. The Fig. 4 cover is illustrated with the receipt mark on the back dated July 15th, proving that it went by air mail. What probably happened was that these covers were prepared and cancelled on July 13th, but held for air mail until July 15th, when it could go at the 16c rate.

The reader's particular attention is called to the name and address on these July 11th and July 13th covers. (Figs. 1 and 3). Both are addressed to *W. T. Robey*, the man who found and purchased the sheet of 100 with the inverted centers. The July 13th cover was sent care of *Eugene Klein*, the Philadelphia stamp dealer, who bought Robey's sheet for \$15,000.00. The corner-card address of *W. B. Hibbs & Company* also is known to the writer as a student of the 24c air mail inverts. This was the name of the stock brokers, where *W. T. Robey* was employed. So no doubt Robey himself prepared this cover and addressed it to himself care of dealer Klein. Therefore, these two covers have a special value for the writer. They not only have the scarce "July 11th" and "July 13th" cancellations, but represent philatelic history with the handmark of *W. T. Robey*.

There are a few statements in our files saying that "only three covers with the July 13, 1918 date exist". These are printed in stamp dealers' auction catalogs. Over the years we believe that we have seen at least ten July 13th covers, so obviously this statement is wrong. Our guess would place the amount somewhere between 20 to 25.

UNITED STATES

Covers with the July 13, 1918 date average about \$25.00, when sold at auction these days unless the copy is straight-edged, when it, of course, brings less. Fig. 4 shows the type of cover cancelled July 13, 1918 most seen.

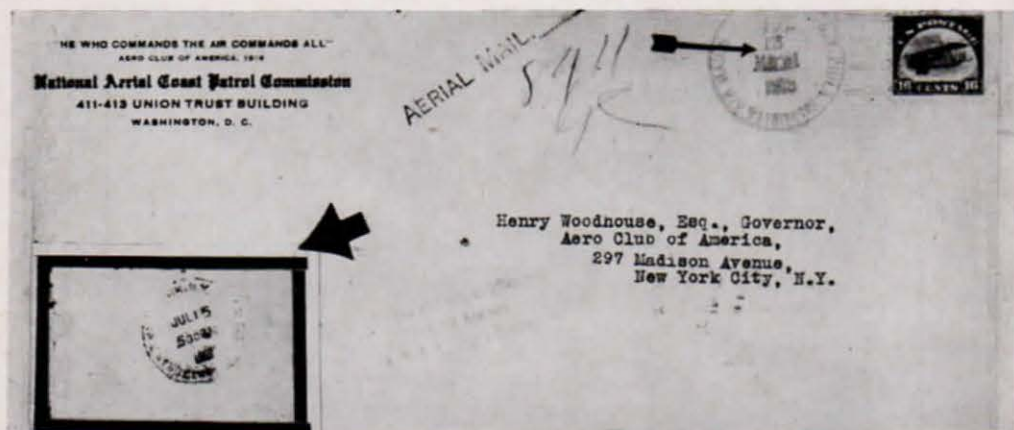


Fig. 4. Another cover cancelled Washington, D. C., July 13, 1918, two days before the new rate took effect. The New York July 15th receiving mark, that appears on the back of this cover, is shown in the lower left corner insert marked with arrow.

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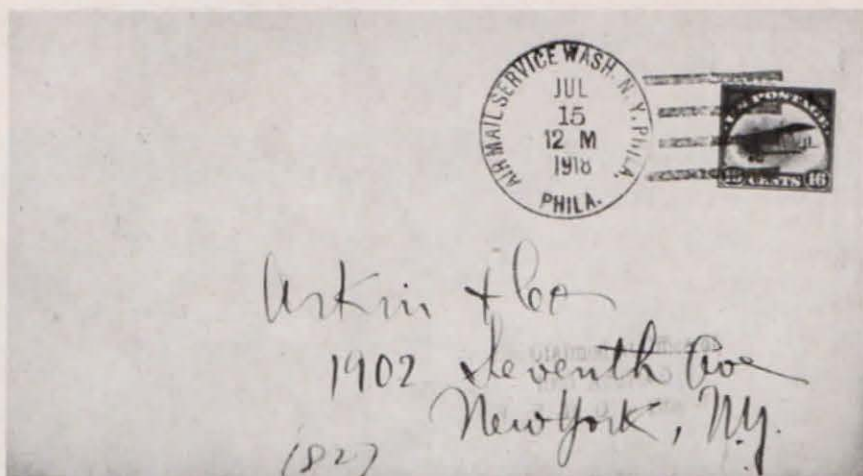


Fig. 5. Cover cancelled in Philadelphia, Pa. July 15, 1918, the first day of the new 16c. air mail rate.

First Flight Covers

As stated before the official day for the new 16c air mail at this reduced rate was July 15, 1918. Fig. 5 illustrates one with this use. The air mail service was still confined to the east coast cities of Washington, Philadelphia, New York and Boston. There seems to have been no record kept of the amount of mail carried on July 15th. But we do know that *First Flight covers with the 16c air mail are far scarcer than those with the 24c.* In recent years we have brought this information to the attention of some of the catalog editors. Yet we still believe that most catalogs do not properly reflect the price differences between First Flight covers. The 16c on July 15, 1918 should be priced for more than the 24c on May 15, 1918.

Later Uses

The most historical usage with the second U. S. air mail stamp took place on September 5, 1918, when the first air mail link between our two largest cities, New York and Chicago, Ill., was attempted. A special oval cachet in violet was applied to the mail (Fig. 6).

Two planes piloted by U. S. Army flyers took off with the mail from New York early on the morning of September 5th. (It is well to remember that the War did not terminate until November 11, 1918.) Bad weather was encountered, so that both planes had to interrupt their flights enroute. One plane arrived in Chicago on the evening of September 6th, as shown by the backstamp on the First Flight cover illustrated as Fig. 6. The second plane arrived later. Then both planes prepared again to return from Chicago to New York. They left on the return flight September 9, 1918 (Fig. 7) and arrived with the mail in New York on September 10th, as the backstamp shows.

There is a personal connection with these 1918 flight covers that the writer would like to disclose. One will see that the cover shown in Fig. 7 is addressed to the late Martin Goodkind, father of the writer. Back in 1918, father and son were collecting stamps together. Father was doing most all the buying, while the son was placing the material in albums. So the existence of this cover dates your editor as a very early aerophilatelist. Incidentally, the cover flown on September 5th (Fig. 6) was prepared by the

UNITED STATES

writer's father. The corner card shows the sender as J. S. Bache & Co., New York, a well-known Wall Street Stock Exchange firm. Their address in 1918 was 42 Broadway, New York. The late Martin Goodkind took his covers for the first New York-Chicago flight to the Bache offices located in his office building, because he knew that this firm had a correspondent in Chicago. A friend with the firm of J. S. Bache attended to his favor. He instructed Clement, Curtis & Co. in Chicago to return these covers for our collections, which was obligingly done.

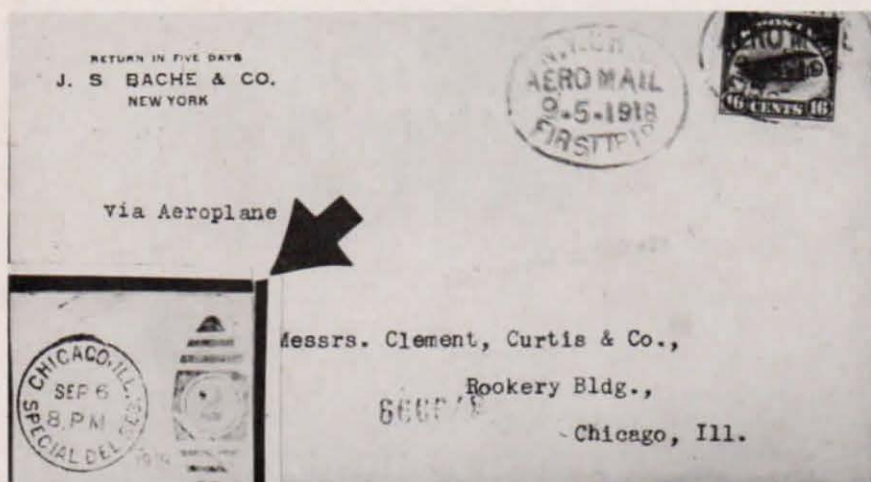


Fig. 6. Cover flown September 5, 1918 on the First New York-Chicago Flight. The lower left inset with arrow shows the September 6th Chicago, Ill. receiving mark that is hit on the back of this cover.

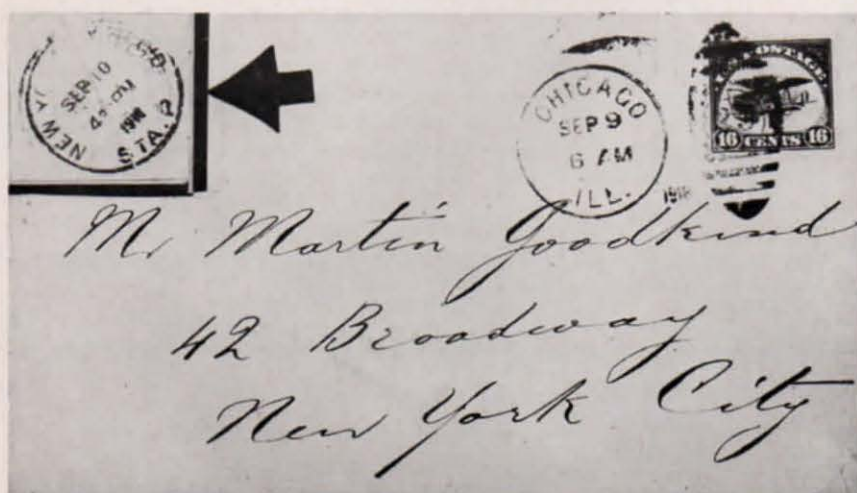


Fig. 7. The Return Chicago-New York Flight on September 9, 1918. The New York receiving mark on the back of this cover appears in the inset in the upper left corner. The addressee is the author's late father.

UNITED STATES

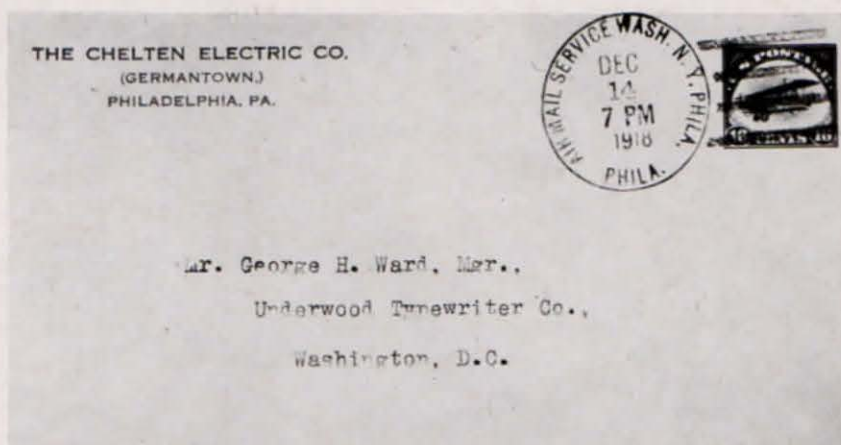


Fig. 8. Cover used on December 14, 1918, the last day before the new 6c air mail rate went into effect.

Last Day Of Use

Late in November, 1918, the air mail rate again was ordered reduced, this time from 16 to 6 cents. The new rate was to become effective on December 15, 1918. Thus December 14, 1918 was officially the last day of use of the 16c green air mail stamp. Of course, this stamp remained valid for postage, and one finds this stamp with later usage on many covers. (One can use it now). But the specific purpose for which it was issued on July 15, 1918, the 16c green's last official day of use was December 14, 1918. Fig. 8 shows a cover used on the last day.

Conclusion

The records state that less than 4 million copies—3,793,887 to be exact—of C2 (San. 2) were sold. For a U. S. stamp this is a relatively short supply, when one considers the hundreds of millions of the more recent U. S. stamps printed. We recall a great deal of furor a few years ago when the 1948 New York City 5c air mail (Scott C38) was the rage because it was reported that less than 30 million copies were printed. Official word from the U. S. Post Office showed the final figures were much more. Thus one should compare the values of C2 and C38,—past and present, and then try to determine future prices.

As for covers with C2 used between the first day, July 11th and December 14, 1918, "pickin' taint so easy". If a collector is interested in early U. S. air mails, he would be well advised to go for the covers now rather than delaying.

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C141/44 (San. AS175/78, \$12.) with MUESTRA opt.	2.50
C148/53 (San. AS182/87, \$15.) with MUESTRA opt.	3.00
C154/58 (San. AS188/92, \$18.) with MUESTRA opt.	3.00
C159 (San. AS201, \$10.) with MUESTRA opt. LOCOMO-MOTIVE	2.50
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CANAL ZONE

31c Air Mail Imperforate Vertically

By LT. COL. JAMES T. DEVOSS

The Cristobal (C. Z.) Post Office refused to accept the return of a quantity of 31c air mail stamps which contained the imperforate vertically sheet that recently fell into philatelic hands. (Fig. 1) Yes, the story is an amazing one, but the 31c error sheet which was first noticed by Peter F. Curtis in a small stock of Canal Zone stamps carried aboard the R. M. S. Ruahine had actually been returned to the Canal Zone where Norton, Lilly & Company attempted to return them to the post office for refund.

This much traveled sheet was actually aboard *three* different British vessels and made at least *four* trips across the Atlantic before it was "discovered" by the British Merchant Navy writer, who worked in the Purser's office aboard one of the vessels operated by the New Zealand Shipping Company, Ltd., London, on their England to New Zealand service. But let's unravel this most unusual episode and arrange the facts in chronological order. Considerable new information has come to light since the author's first article on this error appeared in the May 11, 1957, issue of "Stamps", and George W. Brett's article in the May issue of "the Bureau Specialist".

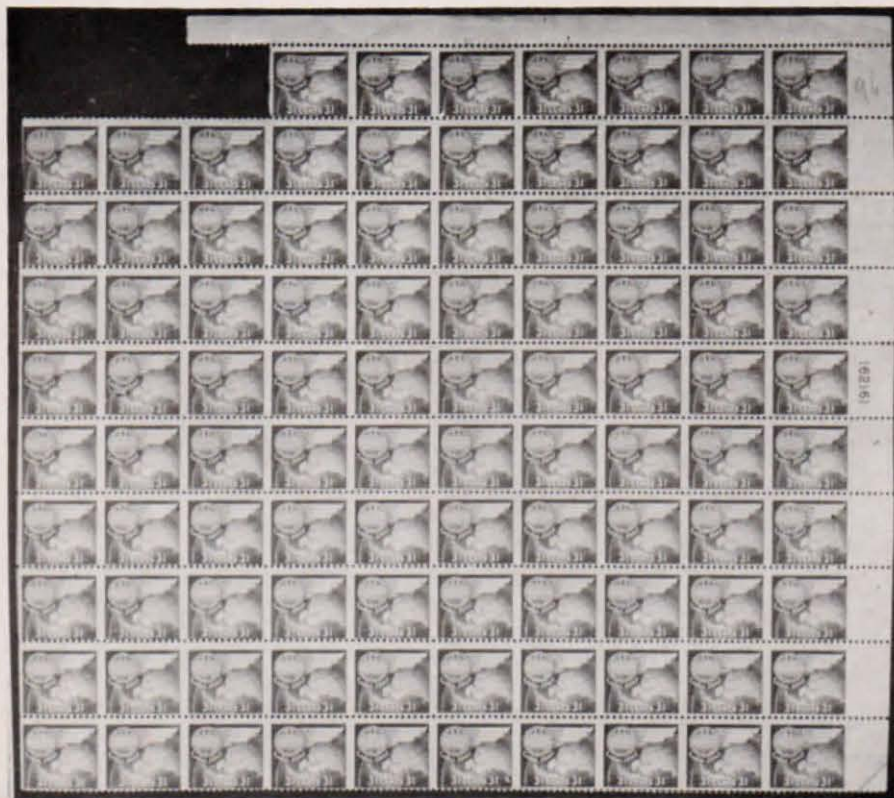


Fig. 1. The complete sheet of 97 stamps. (Photographs by the author, J. T. DeVoss.)

CANAL ZONE

Bureau Printing

At the request of Canal Zone postal authorities, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Washington, D. C., shipped 190,000 air mail stamps of the 31c denomination to the Canal Zone during June 1951. This denomination was part of a six-value series that was first placed on sale July 16, 1951. Although this series is still current, only one additional printing of the 31c value has been accomplished to date since the original order. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing shipped a second printing of 165,000 stamps of the 31c value to the Canal Zone in April 1954.

The 31c denomination, which was printed in a shade of red termed "lake red" in the official release but called "cerise" by Scott's, was needed to pay the half-ounce air mail letter rate from the Canal Zone to Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and other Far East countries; the 6-cent rate between the Canal Zone and the United States being added to the 25-cent rate from the United States to destination.

The two different printings of the 31c air mail, although printed from the same engraved plate, 162161, (Fig. 2) can be distinguished. Because of a slight difference in paper and the gum, the second printing is whiter and more translucent than the yellowish gum of the first printing. This difference is quite important to the facts of this story as will be revealed later, since two separate purchases each from a different printing actually came together on November 3, 1955, in the London offices of the New Zealand Shipping Company approximately six months prior to the "find" at sea aboard the R. M. S. Ruahine.

Cristobal Shipping Agents

Norton, Lilly & Company, Cristobal, Canal Zone, are shipping agents for both the London firms of Orient Steam Navigation Company, Ltd., and New Zealand Shipping Company, Ltd. The Orient Lines operate primarily between Australia and England via the Suez Canal, and between Sydney and Vancouver with stops at Honolulu and San Francisco. Once a year a vessel on the Sydney/Vancouver run goes on to London via the Panama Canal instead of returning directly to Australia. This vessel returns to Sydney via the Suez Canal. Also once a year a vessel on the Australia/Suez/England run makes the return voyage via the Panama Canal instead of the Suez Canal.

At the request of the New Zealand Shipping Company, in April 1954 Norton, Lilly & Company purchased 10,000 stamps of the 31c value from the Cristobal Post Office and shipped them to the London firm. Although the second printing of this value was delivered to the Canal Zone during the same month, personal inspection by the author reveals that these stamps were from the first printing. The partial bundle remaining in the vaults of the New Zealand Shipping Company with the wrappings, bands, and Treasury Department seals still attached carries rubberstamped dates, which indicate that these stamps were printed in June 1951.

It is customary for many foreign vessels using the Panama Canal to maintain a supply of Canal Zone stamps aboard for the convenience of the passengers, who wish to mail letters while transiting the Isthmus. The ledgers of the New Zealand Shipping Company reveal that an average total of 3600 stamps of the 31c value are used annually by the five vessels on the London/Panama/Wellington service.

On March 14, 1955, Norton, Lilly & Company acknowledged receipt of a March 7th letter from the Orient Steam Navigation Company requesting them to purchase 2250 stamps of the 31c denomination for use aboard the R. M. S. Orsova. These stamps, together with 750 of the 21c denomination, were purchased by Norton, Lilly & Company from the Cristobal Post Office on June 1, 1955, and were forwarded to Los Angeles where they were put aboard the R. M. S. Orsova on June 25th. The vessel was then enroute to London via the Panama Canal.

Since a sister ship, the R. M. S. Orcades, was to make the westbound trip from London to Sydney via Panama and would also be needing Canal Zone stamps, the Orient Steam Navigation Company made arrangements for the Purser of the R. M. S. Orsova

CANAL ZONE



Fig. 2. Enlargement of the portion of the sheet with the vertical perforations missing.

to purchase a further supply of stamps to be carried back to London for use aboard the R. M. S. Orcades. On July 1, 1955, Norton, Lilly & Company made another purchase of stamps from the Cristobal Post Office which included 1500 of the 31c denomination. These were turned over to the Purser aboard the R. M. S. Orsova on the same day while the vessel was transiting the Canal.

Subsequent events prove that the sheet with vertical perforations missing was a part of one of these two purchases—2250 on June 1, 1955, or 1500 on July 1, 1955, both of which were in the possession of the R. M. S. Orsova Purser enroute to England. Since the error sheet is from the second printing, it may be safely assumed that the balance of the sheets purchased in these two lots also came from the second printing especially since this printing had been delivered to the Canal Zone better than a year earlier.

Returned for Credit

Not knowing exactly how many Canal Zone stamps would be used on each voyage, the Orient Lines in a letter dated March 21, 1955, asked Norton, Lilly & Company if they could return for credit any stamps ultimately unsold. Three days later the Cristobal

CANAL ZONE

firm replied that they were "pleased to confirm that it will be in order for the 'Orcades' to land with us any unsold stamps, for which we will give you credit."

The Orient Lines greatly overestimated their requirements, because on September 2, 1955, the Purser of the R. M. S. Orcades on its westbound voyage via Panama enroute to Sydney returned \$1490.25 worth of Canal Zone postage stamps to Norton, Lilly & Company for credit. Among these stamps was the part-perforate error sheet of 31c airmails.

Sometime during the few weeks that followed September 2, 1955, a Cristobal postal employee missed the opportunity of a lifetime. In a letter dated October 21, 1955, Mr. Noonan of Norton, Lilly & Company wrote, "We endeavoured to turn these over to the Post Office for cash refund but unfortunately the Post Office here have discontinued making refund of such large amounts and refused to comply with our request." Although still resting peacefully unknown among many normal sheets, imagine a part-perforate error sheet going unwanted.

A buyer was soon found, however, as Norton, Lilly & Company in an exchange of letters between themselves, Orient Steam Navigation Company, and New Zealand Shipping Company, arranged for the latter firm to purchase the Orient's supply of unused Canal Zone stamps. With one of its five vessels transiting the Panama Canal every month, the New Zealand Shipping Company had a continuing need for Canal Zone stamps.

Norton, Lilly & Company returned the stamps to the Orient Lines office in London and on November 3, 1955, Thomas O'Meara, Cashier for the New Zealand Shipping Company, purchased from them a lot of Canal Zone stamps which included 3,192 of the 31c denomination. The error sheet still traveling incognito. Mr. O'Meara stated that the sheets purchased from the Orient Lines were loose. Therefore he used them up first leaving his own Canal Zone bundle intact until the Orient Lines' sheets were exhausted.

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CANAL ZONE

The eleven New Zealand voyages between November 24, 1955, and September 27, 1956, would have exhausted the 31c sheets purchased from the Orient Lines.

Fateful Voyage

It was on the voyage of the R. M. S. Ruahine, which departed London on May 11, 1956, that the sheet with the missing perforations was "discovered." The usual quantity of 31c stamps, 300, had been placed aboard the vessel one day before it sailed. On May 23rd, one day out of Cristobal, Mr. Curtis returned from lunch and noticed that his superior, William Thomson, the Assistant Purser, was having difficulty separating the stamps from a sheet of 31c air mails. Although Mr. Curtis was not a stamp collector, he noticed that the sheet was unusual as the vertical perforations were missing. He purchased the balance of the sheet, 97 stamps, and laid them away for the remainder of the voyage to Wellington and back again to London.

After rejecting a £25 offer from a prominent London dealer, Mr. Curtis turned the error sheet over to Robson Lowe for sale at auction. With no one apparently realizing that this error was previously unknown, the conservative auction catalogue description failed to attract a single mail bid in excess of the £30 estimated valuation. The floor bidding was a different story, however, and the competition was keen. Being the only Canal Zone specialist present and realizing the uniqueness of this error, the author kept his hand raised until the auctioneer's hammer dropped.

Second Sheet Possible

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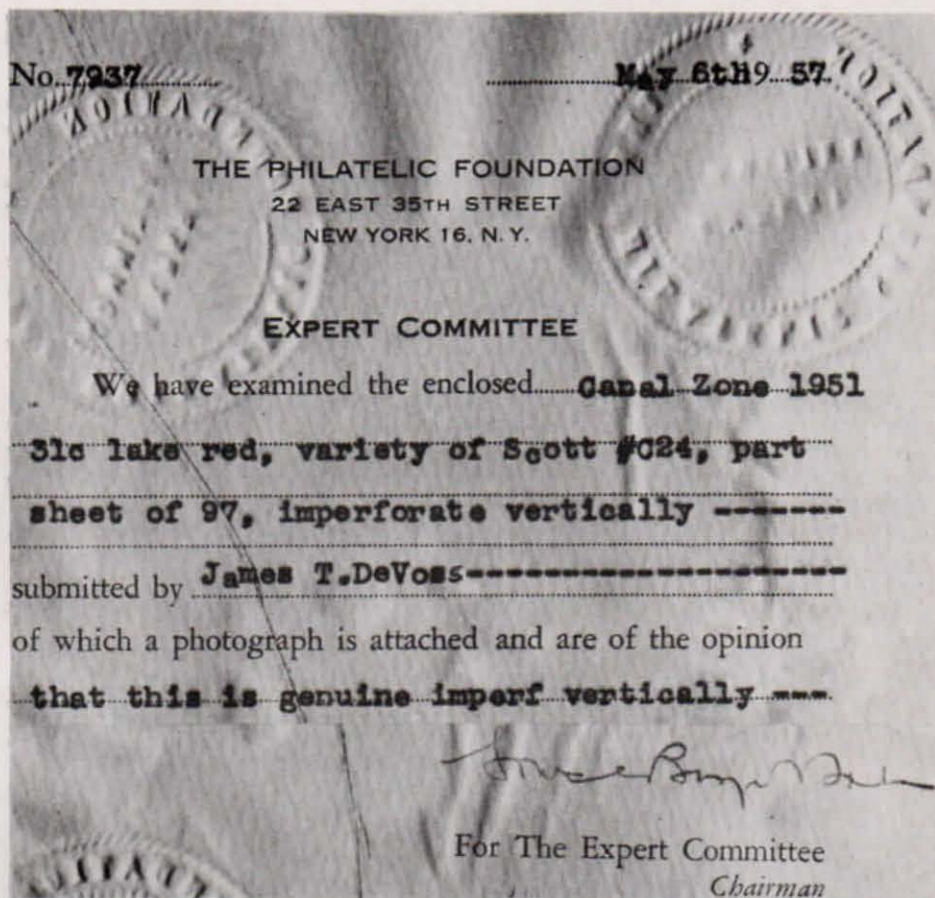


Fig. 3. A portion of The Philatelic Foundation Certificate. (Courtesy of The Philatelic Foundation, New York, N. Y. and L. W. Giles.)

Bureau Issues Association, reports that the current Canal Zone air mail stamps were first perforated horizontally, then separated by hand into two portions of 200 stamps each, next perforated vertically, and finally separated again by hand into post office panes of 100 stamps, checked, counted, bundled and sealed. Another sheet imperf vertically must have existed at one time. But how this one, whose uneven left margin tends to indicate that it was cut apart from the left hand pane by scissors, ever got out of the Bureau will probably always remain a mystery.

In reply to the author's letter of April 8, 1957, Mr. E. F. Unruh, Director of Posts, Canal Zone Postal Service, states that the part-perforate sheet of 31c air mail stamps had not been previously known by the postal authorities in the Canal Zone and that there was no record of similar errors being found by postal employees and returned to Balboa Heights for destruction. Mr. Unruh further stated that only 70,000 stamps of the 31c denomination remained in the Canal Zone Treasurer's vault and that, although it was possible, to the best of his knowledge no additional part-perforate sheets still lie undiscovered in this unused stock.

London Stock Examined

The author had the opportunity to examine the balance of the Canal Zone stamps remaining in the vaults of the New Zealand Shipping Company on two different occasions—March 29 and June 3, 1957. On the latter date 59 sheets of the original purchase of 100 were still held intact by the original staple as assembled by the U. S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The bundle had been opened from the bottom and sheets removed as needed without disturbing the balance. In addition to the difference in paper and gum, which differentiates between the first and second printing, it was obvious from the position of the staple still holding the 59 sheets together that the error sheet could not have been included in this original bundle. Since the New Zealand Shipping Company's only other purchase of 31c Canal Zone stamps was from the Orient Steam Navigation Company, it is accepted that the sheet with missing perforations came from that source.

A permanent record of this new variety was made when the *Philatelic Foundation's Expert Committee* examined the sheet and issued Certificate No. 7937 attesting to its genuineness. (Fig. 3)

A seasoned voyager, this error sheet of stamps has been aboard three British vessels, R. M. S. Orsova, R. M. S. Orcades and R. M. S. Ruahine, having to date made at least eight trips across the Atlantic and two trips across the Pacific Ocean. It has been in the United States, the Canal Zone, England, New Zealand, and France where it now rests in the author's specialized collection of Canal Zone.

Acknowledgment

The history and interesting story of this error sheet in such complete detail has been the most remarkable part of the entire episode. Only because of the splendid co-operation of so many people has this completeness been possible. It is a pleasure to write a story when so many have cooperated so willingly. The author's gratitude and heartfelt thanks are extended to those who played a part in this unusual story and in particular to Peter F. Curtis, British seaman who "discovered" the error; L. Gillingham, Purser aboard the R. M. S. Ruahine; Thomas O'Meara and Derek Archer of the New Zealand Shipping Company, Ltd.; M. Poiney, A. Taylor, and H. F. Jackson of the Orient Steam Navigation Company, Ltd.; Robson Lowe, Ltd., the auctioneer; E. F. Unruh, Canal Zone Director of Posts; and George W. Brett, Vice President, Bureau Issues Association.

Editorial

The "Black" Honduras

Your attention is directed to the long, authoritative article by Irving I. Green in the July, 1954 *AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS* on the "Black" Honduras of 1925, the world's rarest air mail stamp. A careful reading will disclose that originally *four* copies of this stamp had been known. Evidence showed where two unused copies were "lost" in Honduras back in 1927. With all the publicity about this very valuable stamp, it is hard to believe that these copies, if only mislaid or in hiding, would not have re-appeared within 30 years time.

A third copy was enmeshed in a big mystery. It first came to notice in 1938 when on a cover. This was described and illustrated in *Stamps*. When working on his article, Mr. Green went to considerable trouble to trace the whereabouts of this copy on cover. Curiously, this too has disappeared since 1938. A report was given that this copy on cover had been subsequently removed and cleaned to simulate an unused stamp. Rumor had it that it was then sold to a collector, who owned only mint air mails. Mr. Green tried

EDITORIAL

unsuccessfully to contact this collector. Recently this collection was dispersed at auction. But no copy of Honduras C12 was in it, although many other copies of valuable Honduras airmails were. So obviously this was a false report. But the mystery of copy No. 3 remains. What has happened to it since all the 1938 publicity?

The fourth copy, unused and reputed to be the best conditionwise, was in the collection of the late Oscar R. Lichtenstein, a Director of AERO PHILATELISTS from its inception until his death in 1955. His collection was sold in June, 1957. His copy of Honduras C12 established the record high price—\$11,500—for a single air mail stamp.

The Oscar Lichtenstein copy originally came from the Dr. Philip Cole collection, when in 1939 it brought \$5,300 at auction. At that time, this too was the record high for a single air mail stamp. This remained until 1957, when the new high more than doubled the previous one. Consequently, the "Black" Honduras in a period of less than 20 years has re-affirmed its standing as the rarest air mail stamp in the world. It is of interest to the members of this organization to note that the new owner, Thomas A. Matthews, also is a Director of AERO PHILATELISTS.

But this "Black" Honduras can gain a rank beyond the title of the world's rarest air mail stamp. With this new high of \$11,500 for a single stamp now established in America at public auction, the "Black" Honduras earns the title of the WORLD'S RAREST 20th CENTURY STAMP.

Now can it vie for the "big" title—the rarest stamp in the world? This cannot be answered at this time. Possibly one of the missing copies will turn up. But if they do not, then "the Black" Honduras is unique and it can challenge any stamp that claims the right to be called "the rarest stamp in the world".

The true status of the "Black" Honduras should not remain known only to a relatively limited number of air mail specialists. It must become known to every collector here and abroad. The philatelic press in recent years has not publicized this rarest of the 20th century stamps to any great degree. Then the popular newspapers and magazines also should inform the non-stamp collecting public about this rarity. This "Black" Honduras deserves to become far better known.

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URUGUAY

The First Air Mail Issue of 1921 More on The Blue Overprint

By PHILIP SILVER

In my article on the Blue Overprint in the April 1957 issue of THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS, (Vol. IV, No. 4), the authenticity of various cancellations used on the first flight of March 22, 1921 was discussed. Two criteria for genuineness were stated:

1. Covers should emanate from the Main Post Office in Montevideo with cancellations of March 20, 21 and 22, 1921.
2. Covers should bear the receiving postmark at Rocha, March 22, 1921.

Illustrated on page 98 of that issue, was a cover from Mr. Goodkind's collection. The writer concluded that this cover could only be considered in the nature of a curiosity since it lacked both pre-requisites for genuine usage.

There is, in addition, a further circumstance, not stated in said article, which mitigates against its use on the first flight; it does not bear a five (5) centesimos postage stamp which was required to be affixed to all letters in addition to the airmail rate of twenty-five (25) centesimos. This is clearly seen in the official notice which appeared in the Gazette:



Post card cancelled March 22, 1921 from Sucursal (Branch Office) 34.
Collection of Mr. Stanley R. Rice.

URUGUAY

"Correspondence sent by air mail, must carry, in addition to ordinary postage, one of the 25 centesimos stamps which will be issued and which will be available to interested persons in the Central Post Office."

Examination of other covers carried on this flight indicates that the ordinary postage rate for a letter was five (5) centesimos.

An additional piece from the collection of Mr. Stanley R. Rice, which appears to lend added weight to the conclusions previously reached has since come to the writer's attention. (See illustration)

The item illustrated is a post card with the blue overprinted stamp affixed tied by the identical branch post office cancellation seen on Mr. Goodkind's cover. The necessary receiving mark at Rocha is also lacking. Thus, coincidentally or otherwise, it lacks both criteria for genuine use on the first flight. The card bears a two (2) centesimos imprinted stamp for the post card rate, probably sufficient to comply with the requirement of ordinary postage in addition to the air mail stamp. However, it is also embellished with a registration label. The registration fee during this period was fifteen (15) centesimos for a letter. (See registered cover Fig. 4, page 101, Vol. IV, No. 4. In addition to the twenty-five (25) centesimos air mail stamp, the cover bears an ordinary postage stamp of twenty (20) centesimos. This is five (5) centesimos for ordinary postage and fifteen (15) centesimos for registration.) The writer is in no position to know whether the registry fee for a post card was less than for a letter, but, even if this were true, the cover bears no additional postage to pay for such registration.

So, this item, too, must be considered in the nature of a curiosity, a courtesy cancelled item not carried on the first flight of March 22, 1921. Its appearance, at this time, seems to bolster the thesis stated in my preceding article.

Saturday, November 23, 1957

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NEWFOUNDLAND

Fake Alcock-Brown Covers

The first non-stop flight across the Atlantic Ocean was made by the famous British flyers, Alcock and Brown in June 1919. The story of this flight often has been written, not only by aero-philatelists, but aeronautic and other writers. It has become a popular story. Two years ago, a very fine book about this flight was published in England.* Although practically nothing is mentioned about the special stamp Newfoundland produced for this flight, this book is recommended, because anyone who owns a copy of Newfoundland Scott C2 or has a cover with San. No. 8 will be thrilled by learning of the exciting background history to this issue.

* "The Flight of Alcock & Brown, 14-15 June 1919," by Graham Wallace. Published by Putnam, 42 Great Russell St., London, England. Price \$2.80.



Fig. 1. Top: GENUINE Alcock-Brown cover

Bottom: COUNTERFEIT Alcock-Brown cover. The stamp is genuine, but all the cancels are fake. Notice also the "Weybridge" receipt mark.

NEWFOUNDLAND

Your attention is directed to the Sanabria Catalogue listing of Newfoundland No. 8. It is priced at \$30 unused, \$35 used, *but covers dated from June 9-13 are priced at \$200.00.* Thus one notices that copies of the stamp are worth only a fraction of the value of a stamp on cover.

A second book is highly recommended**, because this is the finest work ever published on Newfoundland air mail stamps and covers. It is written by philatelists for philatelists. According to Dalwick-Harmer, there were 9,970 of Newfoundland C2. But *only 196* covers with this stamp were flown by Alcock-Brown.

Alcock-Brown flight covers are very scarce and extremely desirable pieces. The

** "Newfoundland Air Mails 1919-1939", by R. E. R. Dalwick-C. H. C. Harmer. Available from H. R. Harmer, Inc., 6 West 48 St., New York 36, N. Y. Price \$2.75.

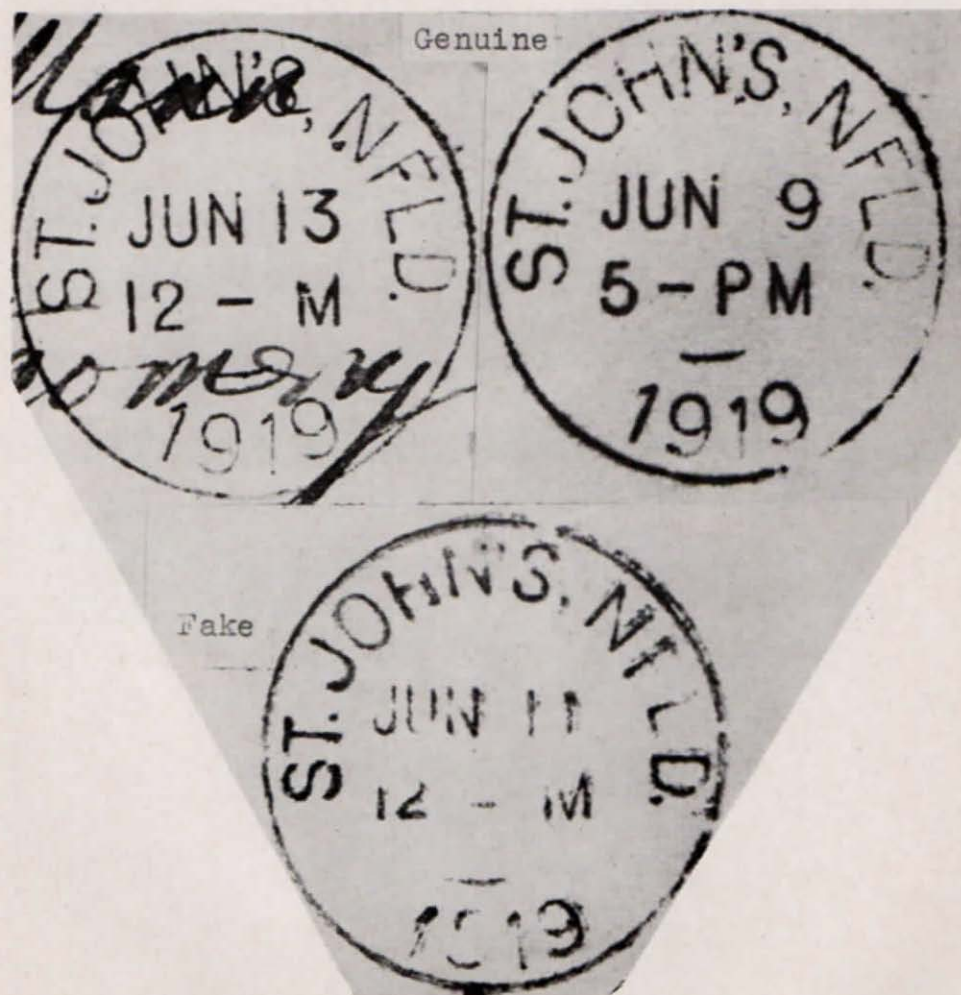
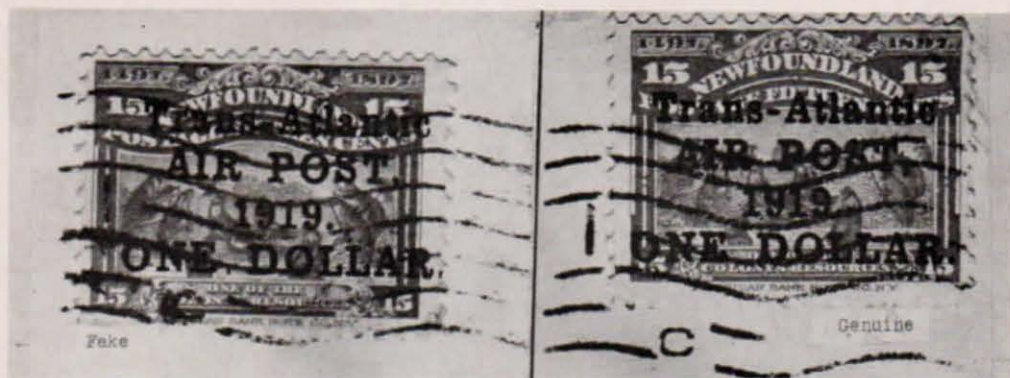


Fig. 2. Enlargements of the St. John's, Newfoundland cancel.
 Upper left: GENUINE Alcock-Brown
 Upper right: GENUINE Handley-Page
 Bottom: FAKE cancellation

NEWFOUNDLAND



Photos by L. W. Giles

Fig. 3. Left: The FAKE wavy line cancellation on the stamp. Right: The GENUINE St. John's wavy line cancel.

writer's records show that the last cover sold in America was in 1955 auction. This fetched \$245.00. The few sales of which the writer has kept record since the end of World War II all show the Sanabria catalog cover price of \$200 being exceeded. Outside of this country, especially in England, Alcock-Brown covers bring even more.

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NEWFOUNDLAND

Fake Alcock-Brown Covers

Since the stamp brings far less than when on a cover, obviously the temptation is great for a cover faker. He can take a genuine unused copy of C2, which would cost less than \$20 in the current market, affix it to an envelope, make a counterfeit cancellation, hit it on the stamp, perhaps add another mark to simulate authenticity and write in an address. Thus a hoax is produced, which could be sold for \$200 or more, netting the faker a handsome profit. But usually a faker is not that greedy. To more readily sell his imitations, he will capably price them somewhat under the market to appeal to the "bargain hunter". It is this lesser price that first arouses the philatelist's suspicion. Furthermore, when a stamp or cover, which has been very scarce for years, suddenly commences coming on the market at more frequent intervals (and at lower prices), some experienced collectors and dealers begin to suspect that something may be underhand.

This has happened in England. Mr. A. L. Michael of H. E. Wingfield & Co., 392 Strand, London, England became suspicious about some Alcock-Brown covers being marketed in his country. He had them closely studied, and his suspicions were confirmed. *Alcock-Brown covers have been faked.*

Thanks to Mr. Michael, he was kind enough to send an example of the fake cover over here, to have it photographed and then illustrated in this article, so that American air mail specialists may know of these fakes through this publication. Contact of some of the leading U. S. air mail dealers and auctioneers disclosed that to their knowledge no fake Alcock-Brown covers have appeared as yet on the American market.

The fake cover is illustrated in the bottom of Fig. 1. Directly above is a genuine Alcock-Brown cover in the writer's collection and so authenticated on the back in the handwriting of Arthur Whitten Brown, the navigator.

Comparison Of The Genuine And Fake Covers

Many no doubt will wish to learn how to spot these fake Alcock-Brown covers. The two covers shown in Fig. 1 have different dates. The fake one is cancelled June 11, 1919, the genuine June 13, 1919. *But the dates are not the key.* According to Dalwick-Harmer, Alcock-Brown covers were cancelled June 10-11-12 or 13. So obviously the date on the fake cover was copied from a genuine cancel.

What about that "Weybridge" (England) receipt mark of June 18, 1919 hit near the center of the fake cover? This does lead to suspicion, but is not final evidence. According to "the Newfoundland Air Mail" book: "the only mail backstamped upon arrival in England on June 17, 1919 was that addressed to the London G. P. O. Mail for the provinces usually was NOT backstamped, with the exception of a small mail addressed to Scotland". So the "Weybridge" mark on the fake cover raises a question.

However, Newfoundland C2 was used on mail other than the Alcock-Brown flight. One should read Dalwick-Harmer's Chapter 5 on "the Handley Page Mail". As far as we know, C2 on a Handley-Page cover has not been faked. It would be surprising to find one for an obvious reason. Handley-Page covers are worth far less than those of Alcock-Brown. Yet a fake Handley-Page cover is not impossible, because now their price too is far, far more than the stamp C2. But as long as a faker is going to the trouble of taking a genuine stamp worth about \$20 to mutilate it for use on a fake cover, he is much smarter to imitate the more expensive Alcock-Brown cover, so that he can make more money dishonestly.

It is the writer's opinion that the best way for one to recognize a fake Alcock-Brown cover is by studying the cancellations. This has been done by Fig. 2, where the fake cancel enlarged is placed alongside the two genuine cancels. Figs. 2 and 3 should be closely examined.

Dalwick-Harmer wrote on page 47 of their very fine book the following:

"We have not encountered any good forgeries of either the stamp or mail".

This was published back in 1953 and no doubt written before that. This statement now needs amendment. (H. M. G.)

AUSTRALIA

"Herald" and "Pals" Semi-Official Air Mails

This magazine in its April, 1954 number (AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS, Vol. I, No. 4) on pages 113-15 described and illustrated two semi-official air mails of Australia (Sanabria Nos. 503 and 504). As the author of this "little" article, we knew at the time that we wrote it that it did not offer much information. This was another instance of an attempt to "smoke out" information through publication, as discussed in our April, 1957 editorial.

Further information has now come directly from Australia. The quarterly magazine of the Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria and the Royal Sydney Philatelic Club, *Philately From Australia*, in its June, 1957 issue on pages 58-60 offers far more details about these vignettes than our "little" article did. Those interested in these semi-officials are advised to read this article. The final paragraph is quoted:

"A writer in THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS of April 1954 suggests that the *Pals* and Geelong labels were printed in sheets of 20 (2 x 10) or 10 (2 x 5), but a Melbourne philatelist believes both *Herald* and *Pals* perforated labels were in sheets of four (2 x 2)."

The correction is accepted. Perhaps sometime in the future a full miniature sheet of one of these items will appear to confirm the belief of "a Melbourne philatelist". It has happened before, and, therefore, may occur again. (H. M. G.)

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Catalog Review

Scott's 1958 Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue Vol. II. Published by Scott Publications, Inc., New York, N. Y. 1300 pp. Cloth Bound. Price \$6.00.

The air mail specialist can lift his head high when he looks at the latest Scott catalog. This is best reflected in the general Press Releases that the publishers sent out with their latest edition. The heading read:

*"Scott's 1958 Vol. II Catalogue Shows
Airmails Revised, 33,588 New Prices"*

Then the text of this Release began:

"Airmail stamps as a group received particular attention in the editing and repricing of the new Volume II of Scott's 1958 Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue, according to Scott Publications, the publishers. Prices of many airmails have been raised, and a total of 33,588 prices were revised in the entire 1,300-page book, which covers the issues of Europe, Asia and Africa.

"Among the airmails, a few listing changes are also noted:

"In Lebanon a 1926 semipostal set, #B13-16, was moved into the airmail camp as #CB1-4. In Liberia, the three high values of the 1944-46 provisionals were shifted to the airmail section as #C46A, C48A-B.

"In Romania, the watermark position sets of 1928 and 1930, #C1a-3a and C7a-9a, reassumed the major numbers of C4-6 and C10-12. And two Russian sets picturing aircraft (dirigibles of 1931-32, #441-451, and the Soviet Aviation Day overprints of 1939, #738-742) were moved to "Air Post," becoming #C15-25 and C76-76D."

The restoration of Romania C4-6 and C10-12 deserves some comment, because it indicates an important recent change in the Scott listing policy. During the more puritanical period of Scott catalog editorship (as we chose to call it), sometimes major numbers of air mail stamps, that had been so listed for years and had spaces provided in the companion Scott albums, were either demoted to minor variety status or occasionally deleted. This reviewer in past *AERO PHILATELIST*'s publications questioned the propriety of this policy, pointing out that the main one hurt was the innocent collector. When a stamp is listed as a Scott major number and has a space provided in the printed albums, many collectors will seek such stamps. Demoting them to a minor variety, at once removes a good part of the demand and diminished the commercial value. It is this reviewer's belief that the present editors of Scott do not approve of such past actions and are doing their best to restore former Scott major listings. It is expected that when Vol. I is reviewed later this policy also will show in this part. This is something for which the present editors of Scott deserve full praise.

It is not possible within the space requirements for this reviewer to itemize every point that warrants his approval or criticism in this 1958 edition. The big disappointment was with the continued policy of still keeping the German *Inselposts* in the Tentative Listings instead of transferring them to page 440 after Germany MC1 and MQ1-3, where they properly belong.

Too many seem to forget that Scott is a GENERAL catalog. They, therefore, tend to find fault mostly from a high-powered specialist's view. In the field of general catalogs, this reviewer ranks Scott among the top. And equally important is the marked improvement shown by each edition over the past few years. (H. M. G.)

FOR A BOOK ON AIR MAILS

See Page 44

LATVIA

Can You Identify This Stamp?



Illustrated is one of the triangular air mail stamps of Latvia. Please study the illustration carefully. It was made from an enlarged photograph. Do you have any opinion about it?

A hint is offered. First of all, one should consult either the Sanabria or Scott catalogs. One will notice that there are two issues listed; one in 1928 with a line watermark and a 1931 with the infamous swastika watermark. Of course, one cannot determine the watermark on the illustration, so the question of watermarks can be disregarded.

Next one must compare this illustration with some copies of the actual stamps.

After this has been done, please drop a line to the Editor (a post card will serve), 22 East 35 Street, New York 16, N. Y. of your opinion of this illustrated stamp. A good response is hoped for. Then at a future date the results will be tabulated and published.

So test your philatelic knowledge. This could turn out to be a lot of fun for a lot of collectors.

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