

THE AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS



Vol. XVII, No. 1

July 1969

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HONDURAS

1932 Interior Air Mail Surcharges

Solving A Mystery

By Irving I. Green

One of the big puzzles of Honduran philately concerns the existence of interior air mail stamps of 1932 overprinted similar to, *but in larger type*, than those listed by the Scott and the Sanabria catalogues as numbers C73/76 and 113/116 respectively, (Figure 1). Scott makes no reference whatever to the larger overprints, whereas Sanabria lists as its Number 117 "a slightly larger overprint, 15c/6c red violet." Minkus notes "a slightly larger overprint is known but its status is doubtful." The purpose of this two-part article is to clarify the status of the larger overprinted air mail stamps of 1932.

In the September 24, 1932 *La Gaceta*, the official newspaper of Honduras, appears an Executive Decree of June 14, 1932, that reads:—

"The President of the Republic authorizes:

"(1) 20,000—10 centavos 1923 official stamps to be overprinted

Aereo Interior VALE 15 Cts. 1932

"20,000—6 centavos 1923 official stamps to be overprinted

Aereo Interior VALE 15 Cts. 1932

"10,000—2 centavos 1923 official stamps to be overprinted

Aereo Interior VALE 15 Cts. 1932

"(2) The overprint to be legible.

"(3) The Decree of May 26, 1932 is hereby invalidated.

Mejia Colindres, President."

The overprinting authorized by the above decree was done at the Litografia Nacional in Tegucigalpa, the capital. Full sheets of the three basic denominations specified, as well as the overprint designated, comprised 50 subjects each (10 x 5). The same setting was used throughout the overprinting on the basic 2 and 6 centavos postage stamps done in black, and on the 10 centavos the



Figure 1. (Left) the 1932 Interior Air Mail surcharge with the smaller type numerals and (right) an example with the larger type.



Figure 2. A TACA airfield office located in the interior of Honduras in the early 1930s when the airline was starting. (Photo by Boutrelle)

overprint in red. Each full sheet was rubberstamped on the back with the dates June 22, 1932 or June 23, 1932 at the Tribunal Superior de Cuentas. Thus, the stamps were not put on sale until after that time.

Rear-dating by stamping was done at the Tribunal Superior De Cuentas (Head Accounting Division) when the overprinted stamps were received from the government printing office, the Litografia Nacional. A circular rubber marking device, 30 mm. in diameter, was used. Close to and within its entire outer circle read in small capitals, "TRIBUNAL SUPERIOR DE CUENTAS-HONDURAS C. A." In the center, three lines of larger type gave the month, date and year, indicating when the sheet had been accounted for, but not when it was overprinted. The inked impression on the reverse of the sheets was done with blue or magenta ink. A piece of thin, coarse granite paper was used as an interleaf between gummed sheets of stamps to prevent adhesion when they were stored in piles at the government warehouse. This procedure had been applied to the remainder stock of 1924 Official stamps that were used as basics for both of the interior air mail issues of 1932. At times, the interleaf itself adhered to a sheet, in which case the rear-dating was applied to the interleaf. Customarily, there were five rear-dating impressions to a sheet, one in each of the four corners and one in the center.

Interior Air Mail Service In Honduras

Now, briefly, some comments will be made relative to the advent and development of interior air mail service in Honduras. In 1925, Dr. T. C. Pounds, an American, pioneered air mail flights with his C.A.A. (Central American Airlines) between Tegucigalpa and Puerto Cortes, on the North Coast, a distance by air of some 125 miles. Flying time then was about an hour and a half as compared with a week by muleback over a very rugged, mountainous terrain. Dr. Pounds' effort covered a period from April 28 through December 22 of that year when he temporarily discontinued the service*.

The log of the pilot of these flights, Sumner Morgan, indicates that starting

* The first air mail issue of Honduras (Scott C1-13, Sanabria 1-15) was used on the 1925 flights.

with, and after the flight of December 4, 1925, San Pedro Sula was substituted for Puerto Cortes.

Though Dr. Pounds' air mail contract was valid until July 12, 1927, and was renewed several times after that, until February 20, 1932 under the name T.A.H. (Transportes Aereos Hondurenos), his mail flights were sporadic and never fulfilled contract specifications. During this period, he also engaged to some extent in passenger and freight flights throughout Central America and even to Mexico.

Lowell Yerex was a New Zealander who saw service with the Allies during World War I. He was made a prisoner of war by the Germans, but later escaped and reached the United States. Here he worked for some years barnstorming. Then he moved on to Mexico City where he worked as Operations Manager for the C.A.P. airline. There he was dismissed for some reason and went job-hunting. He learned that a Mr. Henshaw, an American, in charge of bringing down a four-place Stinson Jr. plane from the United States to Honduras, was stranded in Mexico City as his pilot had quit, and needed a replacement. Yerex applied for the job and was hired. He successfully brought the Stinson down to Tegucigalpa, Honduras where Dr. T. C. Pounds, Henshaw's business associate, employed Yerex to pilot the Stinson that he had flown to Honduras in their VANSIA airline. This was about October in 1931. Little did Pounds, or for that matter Yerex, dream that the Stinson would become the "grand-daddy" of a world-famous airline — TACA.

TACA Is Organized

Late in 1931, Dr. Pounds was forced to discontinue all flights when his pilot, Lowell Yerex, legally attached the four-place Stinson, Jr. plane and took possession of it because of unpaid back salary. Dr. Pounds' contract was to expire shortly, on February 20. He believed at that time he would be able to repossess the plane, and renew his air mail contract with expanded schedules.

Yerex not only was a capable pilot but also a shrewd businessman. He promptly organized TACA (Transportes Aereos Centro Americanos) as its sole owner (Figure 2). During the brief period when he worked for himself under



Figure 3. More than 30 years ago, TACA International Airline used this Ford tri-motor airplane as a cargo carrier. (Photo by Boutrelle)

Pounds' contract, he proved his ability to maintain all scheduled air mail flights to the satisfaction of the Honduran government. As a result, Yerex was awarded a favorable air mail contract by Decree 110 of February 14, 1932 (see page 10 for complete Decree). This contract became effective one month later.

Clause 14 of Decree 110 reads:—"The government will pay the contractor L.8.00 for each gross kilo of correspondence to be transported to the different points mentioned in the itineraries, with the understanding that the payments will be made within the first ten days of the following month."

L.8.00 indicates 8 Lempiras, a Lempira being a coin in Honduran money equivalent, roughly, to 50 cents U.S. currency. Lempira, an ancient Indian chieftain, ruled in Honduras when it was being overrun by the Spanish Conquistadores. Lempira and his warriors withstood the violent Spanish onslaughts until, by treachery, he was captured and slain. His memory is still revered by all Hondurans.

The Decree continues: "This payment will be made out of the proceeds from the sale of the stamps made for that purpose."

This writer concludes that the expression in Decree 110, Clause 14, "the stamps made for that purpose" refers to the slightly larger overprinted air mail stamps of 1932, and therefore names them "the TACA stamps," and the series "the TACA issue." It appears that the Honduras government never made public the extent of the TACA issue as it had in mind using the TACA stamps to pay off air mail obligations to Yerex in view of the existing financial depression. Indications are that the TACA issue was not a large one.

The Decree concludes: "leaving the contractor the option to receive this payment, be it in cash or its equivalent in interior air mail stamps which the

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Figure 4. Map showing TACA's international links with the Dutch K.L.M. and the British B.W.I.A. that operated from 1933 to 1940.

contractor will be authorized to sell to the public, enjoying the discount offered to sellers."

In Honduras the customary discount allowed by the government to sellers of stamps is 5%. Post offices must buy their stamps from the Treasury Agency in their Department (State), receiving the 5% discount, and selling the stamps at face value.

TACA Successful

TACA prospered; Yerex bought more and more planes (Figure 3). Gaining prestige by his great success in Honduras and his novel idea of "Deferred Cargo," he organized more TACA companies in the other Central American countries. Then Yerex linked each of them with TACA INTERNATIONAL, based in El Salvador, which ultimately became the world's largest cargo carrier (see map — Figure 4).

Yerex's TACA charged express rates for goods to be moved immediately, and a much lower rate for "deferred shipments." This provided a pool on which to draw for a perpetually full payload. This plan was the key to TACA's success. The deferred shipments were stored temporarily in TACA warehouses until cargo space on TACA planes was available to fly them to destination.

Dr. Pounds, on the other hand, lacked the funds and the business acumen necessary to achieve success. After seeing Yerex win over the air mail contract by Decree 110, Pounds secured some limited financing that enabled him to buy several planes. Then he continued for a while with his passenger and freight business under the name VANSÁ (Vías Aereas Nacionales, Sociedad Anonima). But some serious crack-ups and the loss of a new plane enroute to him from the United States wrote "finis" to his air business. He returned to the practice of medicine.

In Pounds' words is the sad tale told to this writer some years ago about "the troubles I seen" that culminated in his worst plane loss. He said: "A three motor Kreutzer job we were bringing from Baton Rouge, La. got into a chubusco near Tonalá, Chiapas, Mexico (chubusco means a severe wind and rainstorm) and had to land on the beach because we couldn't see the field (Pan-Am) at Tonalá in the face of a high wind and incoming tide and the plane was ruined. We tried to carry on but couldn't make the grade with one ship against three or four that Yerex had 'promoted' and had to write *finis* at the bottom of the page."

Added information from another source is that the pilot, Chapman, landed safely, set the plane way up on the beach, then walked to the town for a night's rest. The next morning he found the plane inundated by a record tide and battered to a total loss.

Yerex Flies A Sortie

Towards the end of 1932, the recently elected president of Honduras, General Tiburcio Carias Andino, was scheduled to take office on the following February 1st, and Vicente Mejia Colindres, the incumbent, were holed up in the presidential palace due to a serious rebellion in the not-too-distant interior. The Liberalist rebels, mostly Indians, were advancing on Tegucigalpa with the avowed intention of ousting the Conservative, Carias, by force, if necessary.

Vicente Mejia Colindres was a distinguished doctor and surgeon. He filled many important posts with the government on his way up to the presidency from 1929 through 1932. He was a member of the Liberal Party and believed firmly in uncorrupted politics. Though his successor as president, General Tiburcio Carias Andino, was of an opposing party, the Conservatives, Dr. Mejia Colindres cooperated with him since he believed the election had been an honest one. Thus, when the Conservative Indian rebels attempted to oust the General shortly after his election, late in 1932, Dr. Mejia Colindres joined him in vigorously opposing them.

Yerex volunteered to personally reconnoiter the enemy by air; his offer was promptly accepted. He then removed the doors from one of his four planes, strapped Guy Molony inside with a submachine gun and ammunition, tossed in a few bombs just in case, and proceeded on his mission. So accurately did he pinpoint the rebels that shortly thereafter the government troops annihilated them.

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Figure 5. A 1932 photograph showing a single-engine TACA airplane being loaded with freight in the interior of Honduras. In the foreground is a hand-drawn cart that was used for loading the airplane.

Guy Molony — a true "Soldier of Fortune" — was famed as an expert machinist, who "could take 'em apart in the dark and toss 'em together in the same way." At seventeen, he left his native New Orleans and enlisted with the British in the Boer War in South Africa, where he was severely wounded. He returned to New Orleans and promptly saw service with the United States Cavalry in the Philippines. In 1911, he joined a revolution against President Davila of Honduras led by ex-President Manuel Bonilla, Lee Christmas (The Incredible Yanqui) and Sam Zemurray, later the president of the United Fruit Company.

The revolution successfully ousted Davila; Bonilla replaced him as president. Molony returned to New Orleans and was appointed Chief of Police there. Later, he went back to Honduras where he still resides as a respected friend of the government.

Unfortunately for Yerex, during the maneuver a bullet struck the center of the plane's windshield and deflected a splinter of glass into one of his eyes, resulting later in permanent blindness in that eye. Despite this awful handicap, Yerex piloted his plane on the twenty minute return flight to a safe landing at Tegucigalpa's Toncontin airfield.

When Carias Andino assumed the presidency, he felt obligated to reward Yerex for his bravery and help. Also, considerable money was due TACA for past air mail services. But the government was then in financial straits resulting from the world-wide depression. Therefore, in a gesture of appreciation and good faith, at least, TACA was awarded more air mail contracts at muleback rates for additional routes.

Contract For Air Mail Stamps

In addition, an arrangement was agreed upon with Arturo Pineda Arias, manager in Tegucigalpa for TACA and also Yerex's personal lawyer, whereby all the "stamps for that purpose" mentioned in Decree 110 were turned over to TACA with the proviso that TACA could dispose of them to stamp dealers with 40% of the proceeds realized retained by TACA and the remaining 60% reverting to the government.

Prompting this arrangement was the fact that the sale of the TACA stamps had been slow since the public was accustomed to buy its requirements at post offices. Furthermore, President Carias A. did not approve the use of stamps to pay government obligations.

This practice dated back to President Medina and the first postage stamps of 1866. For that reason, Medina never let it be known how many stamps were printed and subsequently issued. The matter was brought to light by a later president, M. A. Soto, who spoke of it during an address to the Congress in the early 1880's.

Certainly, by Clause 14 in Decree 110 of February 14, 1932, President Mejia Colindres spelled out such an arrangement with Yerex. True, the contract gave Yerex "the option to receive payment be it in cash or its equivalent in interior air mail stamps." But bear in mind that this was Yerex's first government contract; he was smart enough to let the government use its own discretion in the manner of payment — and it was with stamps. Actually, the main source of cash income for Yerex then was from his ever-increasing business of transporting passengers and freight by air (Figure 5), so he could afford to allow the government to pay him with its air mail stamps.

TACA then sold the stamps to three individuals: Raul Duron Membreño, (Figure 6) at that time General Secretary to the Post Office Department; Karl Snow*, who had overprinted the 1925 air mail stamps and Miguel Brook, a wealthy local merchant who later owned the TAN (Transportes Aereos Nacionales) based in Honduras. These three men, in turn, sold their stamp holdings to stamp collectors and stamp dealers throughout the world.

Stamps Ordered By Decree

In view of the aforementioned, this writer considers "the stamps for that purpose," as so mentioned in Clause 14 of Decree 110 dated February 14, 1932, constitute a part of a legitimate governmental issue of interior air mail stamps and, as such, merit recognition and listing in postage stamp catalogues.

To substantiate this opinion about the government connection with this 1932 Interior air mail issue, the entire Decree No. 110 dated February 16, 1932 that is translated into English, now follows. Thus, all interested can read exactly what had been stipulated regarding the transmission of air mail and how the stamps for this service were to be issued and used.

There will be a second installment to this article. In this, the stamps will be carefully studied, explaining the different overprints along with the many varieties and errors that occurred because of the more or less primitive printing facilities available in 1932 in Honduras.

Decree No. 110

THE NATIONAL CONGRESS

Resolves:

Only Article: Approve the agreement of the Executive Power of February 16, 1932, according to the following terms:
"Tegucigalpa February 16, 1932. The President of the Republic resolves: 1) To approve in all its parts the contract which says:

* Twenty-two years ago, this writer received a reply to one of his want-ads for Honduran stamps from a Mrs. Margaret Snow of Hendersonville, N.C. She was a Seventh Day Adventist interested in missionary work; had a small stamp collection; and could supply Honduran stamps in exchange for other foreign ones.

So began a casual exchange of correspondence and stamps until 1954 when Mrs. Snow died. The highlight of our correspondence came when Mrs. Snow advised she was the divorced wife of Karl Snow, and was living with him in Tegucigalpa when he made the 1925 air mail stamps in their home. By bits, here and there over the years, she revealed much information about the printing and events that transpired at that time. As for stamps, there was one very large quantity of the TACA issue with its various settings that Karl Snow had given her, mute evidence that he had more than a casual interest in that issue. (Figure 7).



Figure 6. A cover mailed by Dr. Raoul Duron Membreno on October 9, 1933 to Mr. Hugh M. Clark, well-known as the editor of the Scott Catalogues. In the lower righthand corner of the cover is a pair of the 1932 Interior air mail stamps with the overprints both inverted and shifted.

"Saúl Zelaya Jiménez, General Post Office Master of the Republic, as one party, which hereafter will be called the Government; and Arturo Pinedo Arias, attorney of legal age, single and of this vicinity, on his behalf and on behalf of Messrs. Lowell Yerex and James E. Woodburn, have convened to enter into a contract and hereby make the following contract: 1) The Contractors obligate themselves to establish in this country a reliable service for the transportation of the first class correspondence, by air, between Tegucigalpa and the following places: North: San Pedro Sula, Puerto Cortés, Tela, La Ceiba, Yoro and Trujillo; West: Comayagua, La Paz, La Esperanza, Marcala, Gracias, Santa Bárbara, Santa Rosa de Copán and Ocotepeque; South and East: Nacaome, San Lorenzo, Amapala, Choluteca, Danlí, Yuscarán and Juticalpa. It is understood that the service to Puerto Cortés, Comayagua, Amapala, Yuscarán, Danlí and Juticalpa will be initiated after the airfields are conveniently prepared. 2) The Contractors obligate themselves to make two complete trips weekly to each of the places indicated, subject to the itineraries issued by the General Director of the Post Office. The Contractors will use in each of the services indicated in the preceding clause ten working hours. 3) In every trip the Contractors will carry all the first class correspondence delivered to them, consisting of ordinary and certified letters, post cards, business documents and samples, measurements not to exceed 30x30x20 centimeters. 4) The carrying planes will remain stationed in each of the airfields where they will land, strictly the necessary time to deliver and receive the correspondence. 5) The Contractors will deliver the correspondence according to the schedules that will be extended by the masters of the post offices, giving to the terminal offices, as well as to the intermediaries, a receipt stating the number of sacks and the state in which they are delivered, mentioning in addition the gross weight and the address stated in the ticket. If instead of sacks, packages are received, duly sealed, these will be handled in the same manner as the sacks. 6) If in case of accident or because of bad weather the carrying airships should not be able to land in anyone of the airports indicated in the itinerary and should they have to change route or be obligated to land in other place not covered by the respective itinerary, then the Contractors obligate themselves to carry the correspondence to its destination in the next trip. 7) Whenever the shipment will consist of bank notes, the Contractors will obligate themselves to carry all the money remitted by the Government to the places stipulated in the corresponding itinerary, charging for said service one per cent, and when the shipment will consist of metallic currency, two per cent; with the understanding that the amount to be charged



Figure 7. A cover franked with the 1932 Interior Air Mail stamps that was mailed by Karl Snow, the printer of the valuable 1925 Honduras air post stamps (Scott C1-C13, Sanabria Nos. 1-15), to his divorced wife, who was then living in Hendersonville, North Carolina. The postmark reads "October 23, 1933."

will not exceed four thousand Lempiras for each trip, being responsible for any difference that may exist in the delivery or because of complete non-delivery, except in cases of force majeure, legally determined. 8) The Government obligates itself to receive and deliver the correspondence to the Contractors at the stations or airports, except in Tegucigalpa, where the Contractors will carry it for their own account, between the Post Office and the Toncontin Airport. 9) In the event that the respective postal employee could not be found at the station or at the airport of the places mentioned in the itinerary, then the airplanes will wait fifteen minutes and after such a wait, will proceed without delivering or receiving correspondence from such places, with the obligation to deliver and receive it in the next trip. It is understood that upon receipt of the correspondence the Contractors are responsible in solidum for the damages the correspondence should suffer while in their hands, unless force majeure or unforeseen circumstances, duly established; but neither the faulty conditions of the airplanes nor the illness of the pilots will be considered under these circumstances. 10) The Contractors are subject to the Organic Law and By-laws of the Post Office and to the special dispositions given by the General Direction of the Post Office, relating to the transport of the correspondence. 11) In case of serious accident of the planes or total loss of same, occurred in connection with the service rendered or because of other justified reason, legally established, the Government will give to the Contractors a period of sixty days, with the purpose to make arrangements to receive other planes. 12) The non-compliance of the engagements on the part of the contractors, empowers the Director of the Post Office to levy penalties in amounts not less than ten Lempiras and not exceeding two hundred Lempiras in each case. 13) The Contractors obligate themselves to offer a guarantee in accordance to the wishes of the Postmaster, in the amount of L.600.00 (six thousand Lempiras), which will be given before this contract is legally established. 14) The Government will pay to the Contractors L.8.00 for each gross kilo of correspondence to be transported to the different points mentioned in the itineraries, with the understanding that the payments will be made within the first ten days of the following month. This payment will be made out of the proceeds of the stamps issued for that purpose, leaving to the Contractors the option to receive this

(Continued on Page 20)

UNITED STATES
1911 Vin Fiz Air Mail Stamp
Third Unused Copy Found

In our January number, on pages 77-78, the well-known professional philatelist, Herman Herst, Jr. wrote about finding a second unused copy of the valuable pioneer air mail semi-official stamp, the 1911 Vin Fiz, issued for the historic Calbraith Rodgers first Trans-Continental flight across the United States. As Mr. Herst wrote:

"The stamp had been reposing, unrecognized as the rarity that it is, in a rather nondescript stamp collection which recently came into the possession of a collector in El Toro, California."

The price this copy realized in the Herst February 26, 1969 auction in New York City was \$5,750.00!!

California and Texas Only

For many years, I have been interested in this pioneer air mail stamp and have been trying to compile a census of the actual number of Vin Fiz copies, unused and used, known to philately.

While doing this work, a most interesting fact became evident to me that perhaps other students may have overlooked. I say this because I found nothing written that of the five copies known used on post cards, three were from Texas and two from California.

The flight in 1911 began in Brooklyn, N.Y. went to Upstate New York and across the Midwest to Illinois. From there, the Vin Fiz plane flew south

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Vin Fiz flight cover mailed from San Antonio and addressed by the pilot's wife to the Dallas Morning News is a valued item in Henry Goodkind's collection of airmail stamps.

The Stamping Ground



Early Flight Carried Gems

By H. ROWLAND

Lured by a \$50,000 offer from publisher William Randolph Hearst for the first coast-to-coast airplane flight, a young pilot took off from Brooklyn Sept. 17, 1911, in a Wright biplane and landed in Long Beach, Calif., almost three months later.

Few recall the airman was Galbreath Perry Rodgers, but many stamp collectors are familiar with the "Vin Fiz flight" because of the superscarce labels stuck to postcards carried at intervals on the trip.

Scott doesn't list the labels which were issued to promote a popular soft drink, but there is growing sentiment to include them among locals or provisionals in Scott's U.S. Specialized. Two mint copies are known, one going on the auction block this week, and the other bringing \$4,400 some years ago.

Illustrated is a card addressed by the pilot's widow and mailed from San Antonio Oct. 22 to The Dallas Morning News. It is from the collection of Henry Goodkind of New York City. Of the five known covers or cards, three are from Texas. One was posted in Dallas and another in Waco when the frail plane made stops for repairs. A total valuation of the five covers is about \$5,000.

In the cover shown, the Vin Fiz label had been saddled across the top, but Goodkind had loosened it so it could lie flat for better display.

How many Vin Fiz cards or labels remain in the attics of Texas and Oklahoma? No one knows. How much are they worth? One card bearing the label but which was not carried on the flight turned up in a recent London auction. Not knowing what he had, the auctioneer valued it at around \$20. Wiser American collectors bid up its value to almost \$1,000.

Figure 1

to Texas. No Vin Fiz stamps are known used until the later third of the flight when the plane flew in Texas. Then, there is a gap until the very last leg of the Vin Fiz flight in California; two post cards with stamps are known from there (a cover mailed in California has just come to my attention).

Furthermore, I noticed that the second mint copy known, the one sold in the Herst auction sale, was found in a collection in California.

Post Card Addressed To The "Dallas News"

In June, 1968, I was invited to be the guest speaker at the 75th Annual Convention and Exhibition of the Texas Philatelic Association in Dallas. Consequently, I had made some friendships with Texan philatelists, including the one who writes a weekly stamp column for the "Dallas Morning News."

When the Vin Fiz stamps made news earlier this year as a result of the \$5,750. copy in the Herst auction sale, I happen to have remembered that the copy of the Vin Fiz stamp I own is on a post card mailed from San Antonio, Texas October 22, 1911. It is addressed to:

Dallas News
Dallas, Texas

This sparked an idea. I had Adrien Boutrelle make a photograph of my Vin Fiz post card and sent it to my newspaper friend, the philatelist, who writes the weekly stamp column for the "Dallas Morning News." Also, I sent him a copy of the January, 1969 AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS that had Mr. Herst's article.

Consequence No. 1 is illustrated by Figure 1, which shows what appeared in the stamp column of the "Dallas Morning News" of February 10, 1969.

Consequence No. 2 appears in Figure 2. This photograph was sent to me from my friend in Dallas early in April of this year with the following letter:

"Dear Henry:

"As you expected, the article in the 'Dallas Morning News' did turn up another Vin Fiz and I am enclosing the photograph of it which will be run with my column on Monday. As you can see, it is still sticking to the torn part of a post card and the picture that remains on the other side is of part of an airplane with a man's portrait — the pilot (?) — in a circle.

"The owner is a longtime stamp collector, a retired insurance man with a heart condition, and an occasional dealer and dealer's helper. The fragment with the Vin Fiz stamp attached was discovered in another one of those old collections. This one was a single album which he had purchased for \$35, not because of any stamps therein but because his wife had admired some first day covers it had contained and he had hoped her interest would tone down some of her complaints about his own affliction.

"Actually, the label is none too impressive as you can see. There are scruffs at the top right border and in my estimation it is trimmed too close.

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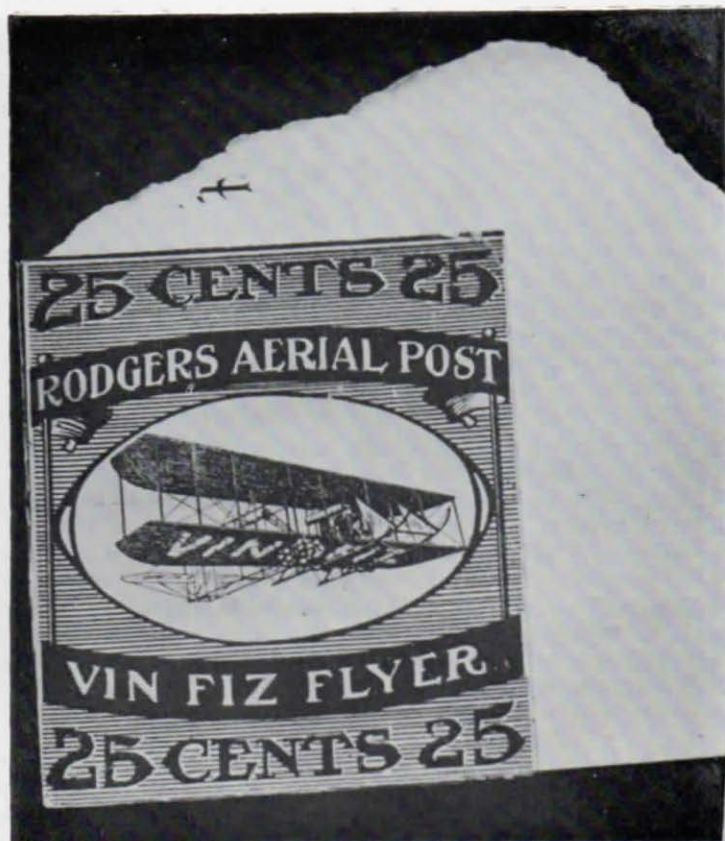


Figure 2

What the destruction of the post card will mean, I cannot say, but the stamp appears sound and whole."

The Third Unused Copy

This third known unused Vin Fiz copy unfortunately has a wide tear in the upper righthand corner, which shows in the illustration. Considering the treatment that this piece must have undergone in close to sixty years, this copy is rather well preserved. The owner can be assured that when sold, it will bring far, far more than his original investment of \$35.

Word has just reached me that this newly-found Vin Fiz copy has been sold by private treaty for \$2,500, by a New York auction firm that had handled some of the past sales of this 1911 air mail rarity. Upon inspection, this copy from Texas showed that the tear in the upper righthand corner practically separated the corner from the rest of the stamp. Thus, if one tried to remove the stamp from the torn piece of post card, the corner would probably fall off. This defect obviously affected the price of this copy. But the news from Texas is that the owner is exceedingly happy with the price he secured for his Vin Fiz stamp and only hopes he can come upon another stamp like this one.

Now, already in the first few months of 1969, two previously unknown copies of this valuable Vin Fiz stamp have appeared — one in Texas, the other in California. I would not be surprised to see a few more Vin Fiz stamps, either unused or used on post cards, come to light in the next year or so in collections that have been laying around in California and Texas. (H. M. G.)

UNITED STATES

Errors Of 1930 Graf Zeppelin Cachets

By Henry C. Dupont

The Graf Zeppelin on its 1930 Pan-American flight carried post cards and covers, for which Germany and a number of American countries issued special stamps, including the United States with its set of three (Scott C13-C15). The mail that left Lakehurst, New Jersey received special cachets. These diamond-shaped cachets were different and carefully applied, so that each one would indicate exactly how the individual item was transported. To find a mistake in these cachets is very unusual.

The United States cards and covers franked with either C13, C14 or C15, or multiples and combinations are cancelled from April 19, 1930 up to June 2, 1930 with different types of cachets as follows:

Type I. Round Flight, Friedrichshafen, Germany — Lakehurst, N. J. — Friedrichshafen, Germany.

Type II. Return Flight, Lakehurst, N. J. — Friedrichshafen, Germany.

Type III. There is a very scarce third type of cachet that was applied only to the small amount of mail that made the *Complete Trip*®. This cachet is the small one with two circles. The inscription in the outer circle reads: THIS ARTICLE MADE THE COMPLETE ROUND TRIP. The smaller one reads: VIA GRAF ZEPPELIN.

The Use Of The Cachets

The three types of cachets appear on different mailings, as follows:

Type I is found on post cards prepaid with \$1.30 in postage and also on covers with \$2.60 or more. The diamond-shaped cachet shows a map with a dotted line indicating the route — Friedrichshafen (Germany), Seville (Spain), Pernambuco (Brazil), Lakehurst, N. J., and Friedrichshafen. Also, there is a solid line from Lakehurst to Friedrichshafen. This signifies that the mail with the Type I cachet went first by steamer to Germany. It did not fly via the Graf Zeppelin at the start of the 1930 Pan-American flight (Figure 1).

* AERO PHILATELIST ANNALS Vol. XIV No. 2, pp. 35-45 "U. S. Graf Zeppelins" by Henry M. Goodkind.



Figure 1. Type I Round Flight diamond-shaped cachet.

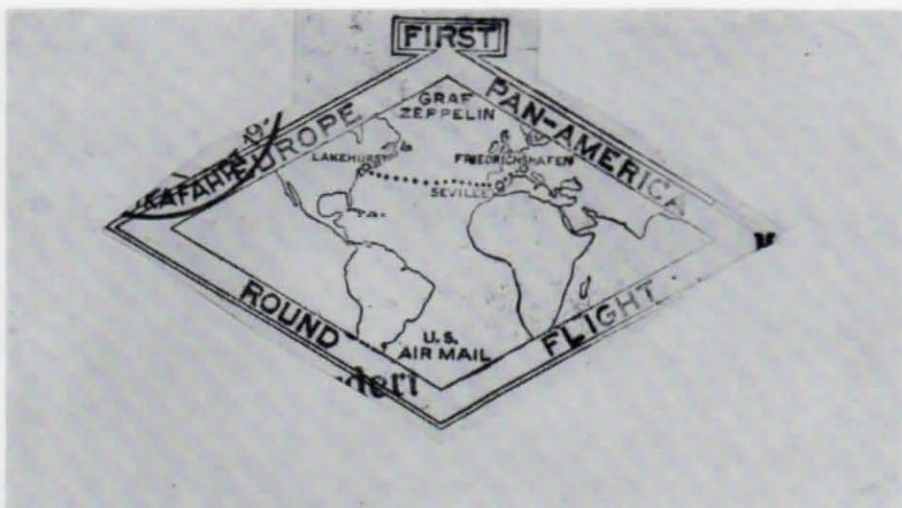


Figure 2. Type II cachet for the Lakehurst-Friedrichshafen leg.

Type II is seen mostly on post cards having the 65-cent stamp (Scott C13) or on covers with the \$1.30 stamp (Scott C14). The same map appears in the cachet except that there is a dotted line from Lakehurst to Friedrichshafen, which signifies that such mail only flew via the Graf Zeppelin from the United States to Germany (Figure 2).



Figure 3. Type III. The scarce Complete Round Trip cachet.

Type III. The "Complete Round Trip" cachet required \$1.95 postage for post cards and \$3.90 for covers. Type I cachet had to be used on such mail along with the small circular *Complete Round Trip* cachet (Figure 3).

The Cachet With Error

There exist a few cards and covers that should have had the Type II cachet, because the prepaid postage was only for the Lakehurst-Friedrichshafen leg. These have the wrong cachet, as seen in Figure 4.

This Figure 4 cover is franked with the \$1.30 stamp (Scott C14). But by a mistake, it has the Type I instead of the Type II diamond-shaped cachet. Also, it has the Complete Round Trip (Figure 3) cachet, which does not belong on this cover.

These cachet errors seem to be very scarce and often when offered for sale in auction are not noticed. I hear that a German collector about a year ago bought a post card with the 65-cent stamp (Scott C13) that had the cachets similar to those on the Figure 4 cover. He paid \$620 for this lot, which indicates how desirable such a piece is for a Zeppelin specialist in Germany.

Perhaps some of my fellow-members in AERO PHILATELISTS, who collect Zep-

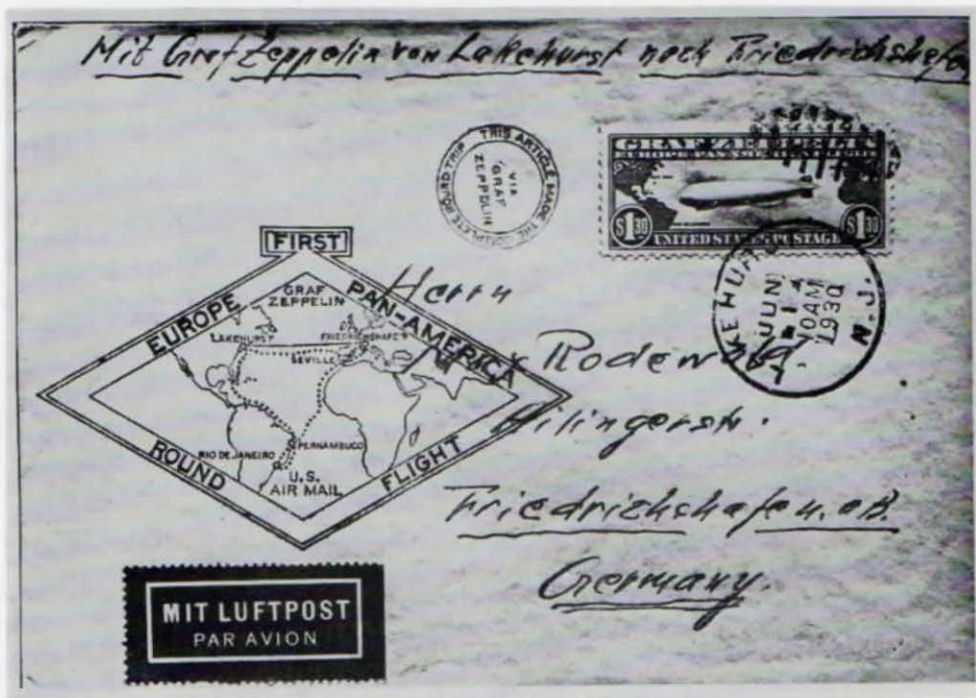


Figure 4. The cover with the ERROR CACHETS.

pelin mail, might be lucky enough to own one of these very scarce error cachet post cards or covers. Or in the future, another might come up for sale without the seller knowing that the item has the wrong cachets. Then, one may be able to buy this at the normal price. I wish you all such good luck.

HONDURAS

(Continued from Page 12)

payment, be it in cash or its equivalent in stamps, interior airmail; stamps which the Contractors will be authorized to sell to the public, enjoying the discount offered to the sellers. 15) The Government grants to the Contractors the introduction of the planes free of duties, with the exception of those considered irredeemable, up to three airplanes for each year, and also for all kinds of accessories to be used for the planes. 16) This contract will last five years immediately after approval by the Sovereign National Congress.

Thus done and signed in Tegucigalpa the twelfth day of February, 1932. Seal (Sgd.) Saúl Zelaya Jiménez (Sgd.) A. Pineda Arias. Seal. M. A. Flores".

2) To communicate this agreement to the National Congress for the necessary dispositions. Communicate. Mejía Colindres, Secretary of State in the Office of Foment, Agriculture and Labor, Rafael Medina R.

Given in Tegucigalpa in the board room the twelfth day of March, 1932.

Antonio Bográn
President

Jesús M. Rodríguez
Secretary

Cornelio Mejía
Secretary

Therefore: Execute
Tegucigalpa, March 14, 1932, Secretary of State in the Office of Foment, Agriculture and Labor.

(To Be Continued)

Book and Catalogue Reviews

Kessler's Catalogue of Aerogrammes Volume 3. 171 pages, approximately 600 illustrations. Loose-leaf three-ring with plastic cover. Published by A. Lewandowski (trade-name LAVA), P. O. Box 1, New York, N. Y. 10040. Price \$10 postpaid.

It probably is no longer well known, but among the first collectors of air letter sheets, now called "airgrams," or "aerogrammes," were two past presidents of AERO PHILATELISTS — Stanley R. Rice and Jules L. Wacht, and the editor of this magazine, who is reviewing this new catalogue. We began collecting together over twenty-five years ago. We did it mostly by foreign correspondence. There were then no specialist dealers in airgrams.

In 1949, we decided to try to establish some uniform classification for this type of air mail postal stationery. In the *Aero Philatelists News* Vol. IV, Nos. 3-4-5, (1949), Jules L. Wacht wrote a series setting this forth.

Also, we had been cooperating closely with the editor of the "Sanabria Air Post Catalogue." Stanley R. Rice and this reviewer were Advisory Editors. We urged that the Sanabria Catalogue add a section on airgrams, as we believed it was warranted in a specialized catalogue. We pointed to the "Scott U. S. Specialized Catalogue" that listed all the United States postal stationery.

But as time went on, matters in the air mail postal stationery field developed differently. Separate airgram catalogues began appearing here and abroad. Then, the late Fred W. Kessler, the well-known New York City air mail stamp dealer and auction house, commenced selling airgrams. He felt that the field was so interesting that it deserved a real fine priced catalogue. But what he had in mind would be very costly to produce. Fortunately, his best client, Thomas A. Matthews of Springfield, Ohio, was willing to assist with the financing.

After years of work, the Kessler aerogram catalogue finally appeared in 1961. The material to collect had grown so vast that it required two volumes.

This reviewer had been a good friend of the late Fred W. Kessler for many years. One thing that was admirable about this air mail stamp dealer was that he was so punctilious about issuing attractive literature, whether it was a price-list, an auction catalogue or a handbook like his "Colombia Air Posts." Well, Fred Kessler no longer is with us.

Now, in 1969, Mr. Lewandowski, who has been dealing in airgrams for some years, has updated the previous Kessler two volume catalogues. This makes the air mail stamp collector very envious, because it has been almost five years now since a current air post catalogue, like Sanabria, has been published. A great aid in collecting is a priced, up-to-date catalogue. The airgram collectors can thank Mr. Lewandowski.

Of course, upon receipt of the 1969 book, a comparison was made with the previous two Kessler books. It must be candidly said that in many respects there was disappointment. First of all, the printed type is smaller and the layout much more crowded. Secondly, the text notes are neither concise nor too clear. Thirdly, the illustrations in many instances are not clear and much too small.

Right in the beginning on page 4, the new Volume 3 adds to the Kessler Great Britain and British Commonwealth type (C-1 to C-9) airgrams. This updating is very commendable. But the Kessler method with illustrations is not followed. This puts the user at a disadvantage when he wishes to identify the new types. Also, Kessler's book tied in each type with its use by Great Britain and the British Colonies that also used this. A reference here to the previous Volume I would have been helpful.

Let us now look at the new United States listings. It was an excellent idea to add the "semi-official" airgrams introduced in 1927. One example is illustrated and described on page 43 (Figure 61) in this reviewer's book "United States, The 5c Beacon Air Mail Stamp of 1928." Unfortunately, the new listings were not clear. It reads as if a 5c imprinted stamp appeared on these forms; it does not. Also, all three types are (and are so inscribed) from the Pacific Northwest.

The treatment of first day cancellations on airgrams is puzzling. There are boxed notes throughout the catalogue to the effect first days are worth the equivalent of mint prices and often more. Why not include all first days in the prices? Airgrams' first day of use are important items that should be included in a specialized catalogue and not treated as this book does with a general but insignificant statement.

Furthermore, premium pricing for specific cachets can be questioned. At least, that they also should be unaddressed was not mentioned.

Very interesting is the listing of Australian essays on page 19. But their illustrations were so tiny that this reviewer could not identify the matter mentioned in their text notes.

The listings under many countries of Official aerogrammes baffled us. It is this reviewer's opinion that an Official airgram should be so identified with the printed legend such as "On Her Majesty's Service." The application of a postmark or meter marking without any inscription is not what could be properly classified as an Official airgram. No question that it had official use, but if Official stamps are so inscribed; so it must be with airgrams.

To sum up, as a book with philatelic information, this latest volume falls down in many places. As an up-to-date pricelist, it is most useful. A great deal of work went into this Volume 3. It shows that it was done by a stamp professional but not by one who has had great experience in philatelic scholarship and editing. A philatelic authority should have been consulted to overcome this work's defects. This reviewer hopes that Mr. Lewandowski will continue issuing more catalogues and he wishes to encourage him to do that. Consequently, it is hoped that these critical remarks will be taken as constructive in order that many improvements along the lines cited will be made in future volumes. (H. M. G.)

MEETING NOTICES

Every month except July or August

Chapter No. 1 — New York, N. Y.

**Meets second Thursday each month at 8:00 P. M. in the
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UNITED STATES

Engravers of the First Air Mail Stamp

By Philip Silver

This writer long has been intrigued by the inaccuracies encountered in many of our stamp catalogues and other philatelic publications. Research, as carried out by scholars in the good old days, has become a lost art. In writing a book, catalogue or article, one simply copies what has been written, the assumption being that it is accurate because it had previously appeared in print. Thus, many errors are copied and perpetuated.

Another favorite stratagem of some of the so-called philatelic students is to write a piece for a popular stamp magazine. The extent of the author's ignorance is quickly laid bare in his recital of the few meager facts available to him, which he has, no doubt, lifted from another source, usually without proper acknowledgement. A plea is then made for assistance from others in "digging up" additional information. No attempt is made by such writers to "dig up" the information themselves. This would require long periods of research which they are not about to do, nor for which they are endowed by nature or inclination. A pox on all their pens!

Marcus W. Baldwin's Diary

What brought these latent feelings to the fore was a meeting of the Essay-Proof Society held at The Collectors Club of New York on Friday, February 21,



Figure 1. Marcus W. Baldwin, engraver of the vignette of the twenty-four cent air mail stamp of 1918 (Scott C3). Courtesy of Thomas F. Morris.

1969. Mr. Thomas F. Morris and the writer showed die proofs of some of the air mail stamps of the United States. In Mr. Morris' showing were several pages of a diary kept by Marcus W. Baldwin (Figure 1), one of the engravers of the twenty-four cent air mail stamp of 1918 (Scott C3).

Now, this last sentence should cause us to pause. Was Mr. Baldwin really one of the engravers of that twenty-four cent stamp? Not according to Johl! When Max G. Johl wrote his book, "The United States Postage Stamps of the Twentieth Century"¹ in 1935, he had available to him the files of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. In the foreward to Volume III, he gives full credit to Mr. Alvin W. Hall who was then the Director of the Bureau, stating that Mr. Hall was "...most helpful in furnishing pertinent information and without his assistance much of the historical information would not have been available." Thus, we have always believed that J. Eissler and E. M. Hall executed the engraving for the first air mail stamp, as stated by Johl on pages 188 and 189 of Volume III.

Repetition Of The Mistake

The 1940 edition of the "American Air Mail Catalogue" published by the American Air Mail Society repeats this same information². This is not surprising. That catalogue was issued but a scant five years after Johl's book had been published, and it included much of Johl's information. Indeed, a note on page 13 under Section 1, United States Air Mail Stamps, states in part, "Much of the material used herein has been adapted from the 'United States



Figure 2. Edward M. Weeks, frame and letter engraver of the twenty-four cent air mail stamp of 1918 (Scott C3). Courtesy of Thomas F. Morris.

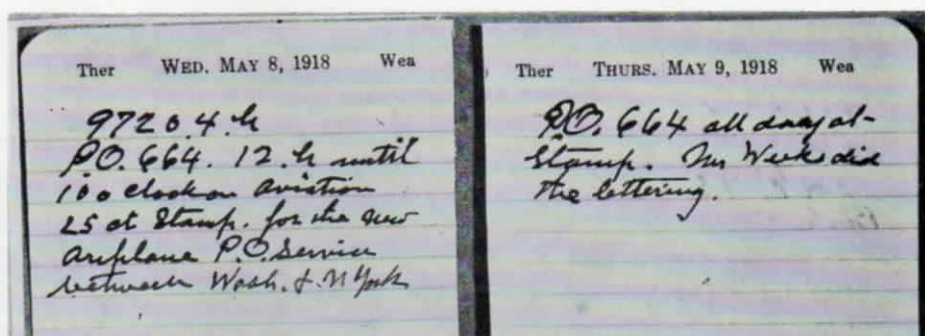


Figure 3. Diary pages kept by Marcus W. Baldwin, vignette engraver of the twenty-four cent air mail stamp of 1918. Courtesy of Thomas F. Morris and photo by Boutrelle.

Stamps of the Twentieth Century' by Max G. Johl, with the kind permission of the author . . ."

This information about the engravers was repeated in the 1947 edition of the "American Air Mail Catalogue" and again in the extensively revised 1966 edition. The fact that no change had been made in the 1947 edition should occasion no surprise. Apparently, no information was available then in published reports to require any correction. The July 1955 issue of the "Essay-Proof Journal"³ published by the Essay-Proof Society made correct information available for, perhaps, the first time. This was in an article by Mr. Thomas F. Morris entitled "Marcus Wickliffe Baldwin, Bank Note Engraver." On page 123 of that July 1955 issue, Mr. Morris states:

"Baldwin engraved the first air mail stamp used in this country. Thirty-four years passed before proper recognition was given him for engraving the vignette of this 24 cents stamp. When writing on the subject, philatelic writers checked the Bureau records and found that other engravers had been accredited the work and so published it. Definite proof that Baldwin engraved the airplane vignette and Edward M. Weeks (Figure 2) the balance of the stamp is contained in two pages of Baldwin's diary record."

The writer accepts part of the responsibility for the lack of correction in the 1966 edition of the "American Air Mail Catalogue." He was one of the members of the editorial committee responsible for Section 1 where the statement is made, "J. Eissler and E. M. Hall were the engravers."

The pages from Mr. Baldwin's diary (Figure 3) are now quoted in full:

"Ther WED. MAY 8, 1918 Wea

9720. 4h

P. O. 664 12h until

10 o'clock aviation

25 ct stamp, for the new

airplane P. O. Service

between Wash. and N. York.

"Ther THURS. MAY 9, 1918 Wea

P. O. 644 all day at

stamp. Mr. Weeks did

the lettering."

By way of explanation, it should be stated that the top line of each diary page is printed. The day and the date are self-explanatory. The abbreviations

"Ther" and "Wea" are for "Thermometer" and "Weather." The remainder of the diary pages is in manuscript, ostensibly written by Mr. Baldwin.

25-Cent Air Mail Stamp

Mr. Baldwin's reference to the "25 ct stamp" requires some explanation. As originally contemplated, the rate was to have been twenty-five cents. At the time Mr. Baldwin made the entries in his diary, however, the rate had already been publicized as twenty-four cents in a Post Office Department announcement dated May 9, 1918. Thus, Mr. Baldwin incorrectly stated he was working on a twenty-five cent stamp. He should have known by May 8th that the rate had been changed to twenty-four cents. It is fortunate for us that Mr. Weeks was not laboring under this error while doing the denomination for the stamp. Otherwise, he might have incorrectly engraved the numerals "25," and another major error would have been born.

Government Proofs

Plate proofs of the frame and vignette in full sheets are on file at the Smithsonian Institution's Division of Philately and Postal History in Washington, D. C. Examination of these proofs indicates that the plates were approved by James L. Wilmeth, Director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing* as follows:

frame plate — May 10, 1918

vignette plate — May 11, 1918

As can be seen, this left very little time for the printing of the sheets so that they could be available for sale at the Post Office windows on May 13, 1918.

Also, there is in the archives of the U. S. Post Office Department a complete die proof printed on card with Postmaster General A. S. Burleson's approval dated May 11, 1918 (Figure 4). A photograph of this proof was given to Mr. Henry M. Goodkind and is used here for illustration.

This information from the plate proofs is interesting in one other respect. In his book "United States, The 24c Air Mail Inverted Center of 1918" Mr. Henry M. Goodkind⁴ states on page 5:

"From the above one can deduce that the production and printing of this special air mail stamp had begun, certainly before May 9th."

Thus, since the plates were not approved until May 10th and 11th, printing from these plates could not have been done "before May 9th" as Mr. Goodkind states. It is only fair to point out, however, that Mr. Goodkind's book which was published by the Collectors Club of New York in 1956 correctly quoted Mr. Morris' article in the July 1955 issue of the "Essay-Proof Journal" with reference to the engravers of the twenty-four cent stamp.

The next edition of the "American Air Mail Catalogue" should, therefore, contain the following correction:

Vignette Engraver — Marcus W. Baldwin

Letter and Frame Engraver — Edward M. Weeks

Bibliography

1. *The United States Postage Stamps of the Twentieth Century* by Max. G. Juhl, published by H. L. Lindquist, New York, N. Y., 1935.
2. *American Air Mail Catalogue*, 1940, 1947 and 1966 editions, published by The American Air Mail Society.

* The dates on these two large plate proofs were applied with rubberstamp, but the inked impressions are too lightly hit to show in an illustration.

3. *Essay-Proof Journal*, July 1955, pp. 123-4, published by the Essay-Proof Society.
4. *United States, The 24 Air Mail Inverted Center of 1918*, by Henry M. Goodkind, published by The Collectors Club, New York, N. Y., 1956.

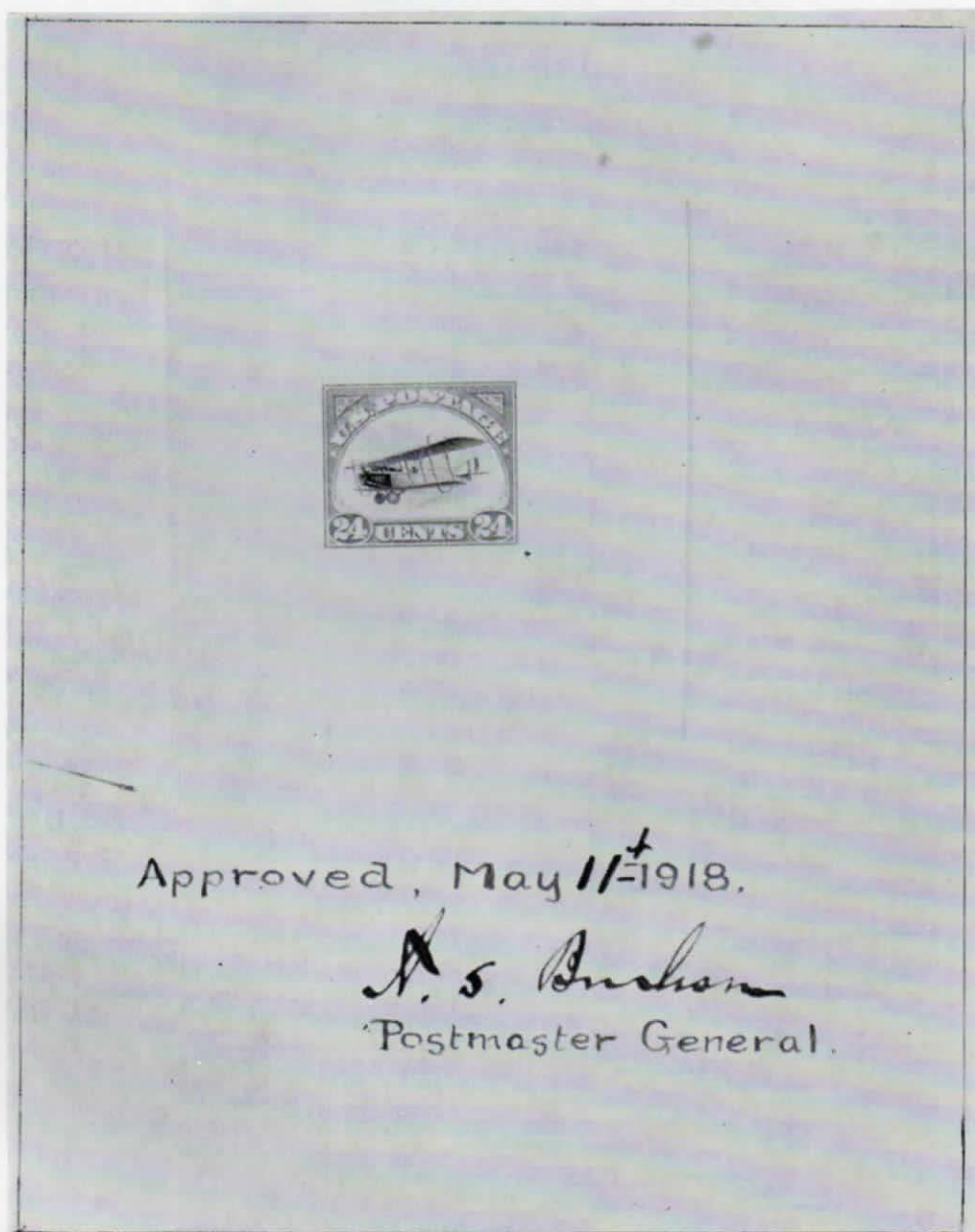


Figure 4. Die proof of the first air mail signed as approved by the U.S. Postmaster General on May 11, 1918. [Courtesy U.S. Post Office Department]

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(July, 1968 to April, 1969)

(Compiled by the Editor)

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