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**Edited by
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Introductory Note: This year of 1977 marks the 100th anniversary of the "Buffalo" Balloon flight of June 18, 1877 from Nashville, Tennessee. It is fitting, therefore, that an article should appear in the philatelic press to remind collectors of the centenary of that famous flight by "Professor" Samuel Archer King.

The "Buffalo" Balloon Story

By Philip Silver

The U.S. SOUVENIR HISTORICAL FLIGHTS section last appeared in Volume 4, Fourth Edition of the *American Air Mail Catalogue* published in 1971. Heading up that section is catalogue number SH500, the flight made by Samuel Archer King in the balloon "BUFFALO" on June 18, 1877.

Several articles have already been written about the "BUFFALO" stamp, Scott CL1, and the three known covers so the present story will not retrace the steps of previous authors. But I will attempt to set forth some of the historical background about the balloon itself. In the process, there will be developed a revision for a future catalogue listing.

The catalogue listing for SH500 indicates the balloon was named "BUFFALO" because Prof. King "first flew his balloon from Buffalo, N.Y. on Sept. 16, 1873." In a correspondence with Admiral Jesse G. Johnson, section editor, I stated this was incorrect. My source for that statement was the grand old man of world air mails, the late Nicolas Sanabria. Writing in Sanabria's *Air Post Journal*, Number 2, February 1936, he states on page 6:

It is interesting to note that the word "Buffalo" seemingly has misled some of the scribes on stamps, for they inferred the word related to the city of that name in New York State. The word "Buffalo" refers to the name of the balloon and the newspaper reports show that King was giving public exhibition in the 1873-77 period, at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. **There is nothing to indicate any "flight" was made at Buffalo, N.Y.** (emphasis added)

I suggested, accordingly, that the language for SH500 be revised to eliminate the reference to the naming of King's balloon "BUFFALO" because it was first flown from that city in 1873. Admiral Johnson demurred. He first wanted to check with one of his Buffalo, New York friends.

In due course, he was advised by his friend, Mr. Boris B. Joffe that the catalogue information was correct; the balloon had first been flown from Buffalo and the actual flight took place on September 16, 1873.

The next step was to contact Mr. Joffe myself. He had stated the story

had appeared in the Buffalo newspapers of the day. Thanks to his assistance I now have before me photocopies of the Buffalo Morning Express for September 17 and 18, 1873 and of the Buffalo Commercial Advertiser of September 18th and 19th. The following facts, gleaned from those newspaper accounts are deemed worthy of recording:

1. The balloon was actually constructed in Buffalo, N.Y. with funds supplied by its citizens.
 2. The ascension took place from Terrace Park, Buffalo on September 16, 1873. This was King's 169th ascension.
 3. The balloon, when fully inflated with 91,000 cubic feet of hydrogen gas, stood 84 feet high.
 4. The name "BUFFALO" had been painted on the balloon by a Mr. Stanfield, a scenic artist of the local theatre.
 5. Take-off was at 2:40 p.m. In 12 minutes, at 2:52 p.m., it had reached a height of 5,251 feet.
 6. Included in the party with King were James Albro of Buffalo, Walter T. Chester of the Buffalo Courier, Luther L. Holden of the Boston Journal and George H. Nicholas of the New York Herald. Also taken along was a basket with 4 carrier pigeons.
 7. The pigeons were released at various intervals with messages giving the time of release and the location of the balloon.
 8. The balloon was finally dragged to earth at 9:15 by a farmer, Thomas Oldfield, assisted by his two sons, Gideon and Samuel. This was on the farm of a Mr. Ferenbaugh, Post Creek Valley in the town of Hornby, Steuben County, six miles northeast of Corning, N.Y.
 9. The balloon had traveled approximately 140 miles in roughly 6 hours.
 10. Other persons, among whom were George and Daniel Wolever and Charles D. Wakelee, helped tow the balloon to a spot near Oldfield's house where the basket was loaded with stones to anchor it safely. It was not until 1:00 a.m. on the morning of September 17th that the balloon was finally made secure.
 11. The height of the balloon, as recorded on its barometer, had varied from 2,050 to 8,799 feet during the flight.
 12. The morning of the 17th, King treated the assembled crowds to captive balloon ascensions.
 13. Shortly after 12:00 noon on that day, he took off alone.
 14. The balloon landed safely near Oxford in Chenango County between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m.
 15. The next morning, September 18th, the balloon was finally deflated.
- There probably would have been no necessity to tell the story of King's Buffalo, N.Y. flight of September 16, 1873 if he had not named the balloon, "BUFFALO," if in 1877 there had been no flight from Nashville, Tennessee and if a Nashville reporter, John F. B. Lillard had not designed that famous "BUFFALO" BALLOON adhesive stamp.
- But the "BUFFALO" was not the first balloon built by Samuel Archer King. According to the biographical reference in Appleton's *Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, King had built at least three others, "The Queen of the Air," the "Hyperion" and the "Colossus." Nor was the September 16, 1873 ascension the first that King had made from Buffalo. He had made a prior flight from that city on July 4, 1868, probably in the "Hyperion." In addition,

he made a later flight from the same city on July 4, 1874, this time in the balloon "BUFFALO." As will be deduced, these were part of the annual Independence Day activities in that city.

As a matter of additional interest for our story, the citizenry of Buffalo had originally invited Prof. King to bring his balloon, the "Colossus," to their city for the July 4, 1873 festivities. For reasons sufficiently explained in the September 18, 1873 dispatch from the Buffalo Commercial Advertiser, his visit was postponed. That dispatch reads in part:

Parties connected with the Commercial Advertiser and Courier had encouraged Prof. Samuel A. King to believe that an arrangement would be made whereby a balloon ascension by him should constitute a feature of the celebration of the last Fourth of July in this city; but it having been decided to leave this out of the programme, the parties alluded to concluded to get up an ascension, if possible, at a later date. Having satisfied themselves that the requisite amount of funds to defray the expenses of the undertaking would be cheerfully subscribed by our liberal-minded citizens, they opened a correspondence with King, inviting him to come on with his monster balloon "Colossus," of about ninety thousand feet. But the "Colossus" had proved an unlucky balloon, having been twice reeked by storms when fully inflated — once on Boston Commons and again at Lowell — and though repaired as well as possible, she was not considered by Prof King to be just the thing. He therefore replied that he would accept the proposition made to him, but instead of using the "Colossus" would come to Buffalo and build a new balloon, **to be named after the place of residence of those through whose liberality the means for the construction were to be forthcoming. The result was the completion of the "Buffalo,"** which is, without doubt, the most beautiful as well as the best-constructed balloon that ever left American soil to soar beyond the clouds. (emphasis added)

As noted previously, my interest in this story stemmed from a desire to revise the catalogue listing for SH500. If accepted by the catalogue editor, it will read as follows:

500 1977, June 18—Samuel Archer King in balloon "Buffalo." Starting from 1851, King had made 168 ascensions in a number of American cities. For these he had built at least three balloons, "The Queen of the Air," the "Hyperion" and the "Colossus." His flight from Buffalo, N.Y. on September 16, 1873 was in the balloon, "Buffalo," named quite aptly after that city because it had been constructed there with funds furnished by its citizens. King had planned an 1877 ascension at Nashville, Tenn. For that occasion, a Nashville reporter, John F. B. Lillard, designed the "Buffalo" adhesive stamp, named after the balloon itself. Lillard, in an 1894 correspondence, stated that 300 of the stamps were issued and 23 used. The engraving was done by Mrs. J. H. Snively. The ascension took place at Nashville on June 18, 1877 and the balloon landed at Gallatin, Tenn., 26 miles away on the same day. Three covers are known.

\$15,000.00

(Continued on page 13)

More on Carl Myers and his "Sky Cycle"

By David W. H. Pickard

141 Casterton Ave., Burnley, Lancs., England BB10 2PB

When researching for the Carl Myers article published in the November 1976 issue of *The Airpost Journal*, I came into possession of two advertising or publicity items for the Kewanee, Illinois Mid Summer Carnival scheduled for June 29 to July 4, 1903. One of these was illustrated in the article with the caption: "Publicity card of 1903 illustrating the Sky Cycle." It appears that after Carl Myers and his wife, Madame Carlotta, had given an exhibition at the St. Louis exposition in 1900, when Carl first demonstrated his hand-propelled airship, they were in great demand for displays at various fairs and festivals. Thus, it was that prior to the engagement at Kewanee in 1903, they stayed some weeks in the locality in preparation for the event.

It appears that Madame Carlotta had written to a Miss Vida Parke in Princeton, Illinois during the month of June, a city east of and 25 miles distance from Kewanee. Perhaps, for publicity purposes, Myers may have decided to deliver the messages via his "Sky-Cycle," which was capable of 25 MPH with a slight tail breeze.

In order to get postal evidence of his achievement, he got the postmasters at Kewanee and Princeton to date stamp the dispatch and arrival postmarks. On one item, the word "BLUFF" appears, which presumably is a sub post office of Kewanee. This is dated June 1, 1903 and backstamped Princeton, Illinois, June 1, 1903, 11:00 AM, Rec'd. (see photo on page 46 of November 1976 *APJ*) The second item is dated and time stamped at Kewanee June 24, 1903 at 10:30 AM and backstamped Princeton, Illinois June 24, 1903, 11:30 AM, Rec'd. (see illustration on page 71 of this issue).

Mr. Philip Silver informs me that time slugs were usually changed at half hour intervals. So, conceivably, the aerial delivery could have taken up to 1½ hours and still have received the 11:30 AM backstamp at Princeton.

Although conclusive evidence is lacking, one may reasonably assume that Madame Carlotta wrote the address herself because it is similar to that of a "flown" balloon cover of 1885 bearing the two distinctive cachets of both Carl Myers and Madame Calotta which they used for a letter to the Secretary of the Agricultural Fair at South Korlright. The handwriting of Carl Myers is different and appears on the reverse of the Balloon Farm illustrated card as shown in the November 1976 *APJ*. Incidentally, the date of the motor airship should be 1908, not 1900, as Myers developed his "Sky-Cycle" for use with an engine later.

In conclusion, therefore, may we dare hope that the two Kewanee 1903 letters were the first to be delivered in the U.S.A. by means of aerial transport provided by Carl Myers' steerable "aerostat" or airship? Only time will tell whether the assumptions expressed in this article can be confirmed. But it seems improbable that mail could have been backstamped an hour after it had been posted 25 miles away.

EDITOR'S ADDENDUM: After Mr. Pickard sent his article, he received two pieces of information which are of extreme importance to the story as de-

veloped by him. These items sent to your editor will be noted in this addendum with some comment:

1. A letter dated March 15, 1977 from Ms. Marjorie Olson, Reference Librarian at the Kewanee Public Library. It encloses a clipping of a newspaper story from the June 17, 1903 issue of the "Kewanee Weekly Star-Courier" describing Myers' "Sky-Cycle air-ship," and indicating that a speed of 33 miles an hour had been attained by it. The letter also gives a clue to the word "BLUFF" to which Mr. Pickard refers in his article:

"Mr. Walter Shilgalis, our Postmaster, tells me that the Railway Mail Service operated for many years on the Chi Council Bluffs trains. These trains were on the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, running between Chicago, Illinois and Council Bluffs, Iowa. Mail deposited on the railway mail car may have been postmarked 'Bluffs Sta.' "

2. A letter dated March 17, 1977 from Mr. Walter T. Uhls of Battle Creek, Michigan. Mr. Uhl states:

"Both Kewanee, Ill. and Princeton, Ill. are on the railway between Omaha, Nebraska and Chicago, Ill. The train departure point was Council Bluff, Iowa and continued to Burlington, Iowa before crossing to Illinois enroute to Chicago, Ill. Hence, the cancel."

Mr. Uhls also kindly enclosed a drawing of what he apparently believes is the full cancellation for the June 1, 1903 cover illustrated in the November

1976 APJ article. This is shown here. I can state, however, that I have made a close examination of the cancellation and I see it somewhat differently. Instead of "BLUFF," I see "BLUFFS." This is followed by "R." which probably is the abbreviation for Railroad.

From these two letters submitted by Mr. Pickard, I believe that several conclusions may be drawn:

(a) The June 1, 1903 cover cancelled on the train was probably not flown. It was probably sent via rail from Kewanee to Princeton, the letter having been deposited at the Kewanee post office to await the arrival of the train on its way east to Chicago.

(b) The June 24, 1903 cover illustrated here was probably flown. The elapsed time between the postmark and the receiving mark is exactly 1 hour. Yet, as previously noted, this may have been as long as 1½ hours, from 10:30 AM up to 11:59 AM in Princeton before the time slug was changed at 12 NOON.

(c) If the speed of Myers' "Sky-Cycle" was 33 miles an hour as noted in the "Kewanee Weekly Star-Courier" story, rather than the 25 miles an hour stated by Mr. Pickard, then the time span could easily have accommodated the flight between the two cities. Even at 25 miles an hour, there would have been sufficient time for the flight if the elapsed time between sending and receiving marks approached 1½ hours as noted.



Carl Myers' publicity cover cancelled Kewanee, Illinois June 24, 1903 at 10:30 AM and backstamped Princeton, Illinois June 24, 1903, 11:30 AM, REC'D.

VALIDITY OF AIR MAIL CATALOGUE PRICES

Frequently, I have heard criticism about the validity of some of the prices for items listed in the **American Air Mail Catalogue**. The tenor of the remarks is that the inflated prices bear little or no resemblance to reality. In some areas, there may have been some basis for the criticism.

I have often wondered if the critics were correct for one specific listing for which I was completely responsible. I refer to U.S. Governmental Flight No. 101 (b), Washington to New York, May 15, 11 AM, FIRST TRIP. That item was first included in Volume 1, Fourth Edition at \$350.00. That was in 1966. In Volume 1 of the Fifth Edition of 1974, the price remained unchanged. There was a reason why no change had been made in the pricing. No such item had appeared in the stamp auction market in the hiatus between editions. Even the \$350.00 catalogue value may have been considered suspect. But, if the 10 AM handstamp variety, catalogue number 101 (a), was worth \$175.00, then the 11 AM error had to be worth twice as much. In any event, that was my reasoning. To my knowledge, only two examples of that error were known.

On November 16, 1976, a third example appeared on the philatelic scene. It was shown in the sale catalogue of Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc. as lot number 668 at the \$350.00 value listed in the **American Air Mail Catalogue**. A photograph was provided as well. I inspected the lot and found the cover to be genuine in all respects.

The realization was \$425.00, almost 15% above the catalogue price. In retrospect, it appears we erred on the side of conservatism. The next edition of the **Catalogue** will consider an increase in the price. Perhaps the voices of our critics will now be stilled.

— P. S.

THE O.W.I. BOMBER POUCH

By Joseph L. Eisendrath

For some time, this writer has been trying to learn more about a War Department service during World War II, through which photographs were sent from London to Washington and New York for use by newspapers. This service seems to have been rendered by bomber planes carrying mail, which passed through United States post offices, was subject to military censorship and was later released for publication by the Bureau of Public Relations, War Department, Washington, D.C.

This mail came to our attention some time ago when a Chicago stamp dealer offered for sale a collection of 30 to 40 covers. These had various markings, as will be described below and illustrated in the accompanying photo. All were addressed to Bruce Rae, then the Picture Editor of the New York Times. Some also had the added label reading "U.S. Air Transport (Attention of Colonel Hinton)." All envelopes had the corner card of the New York Times Company, Ltd., at London, England.

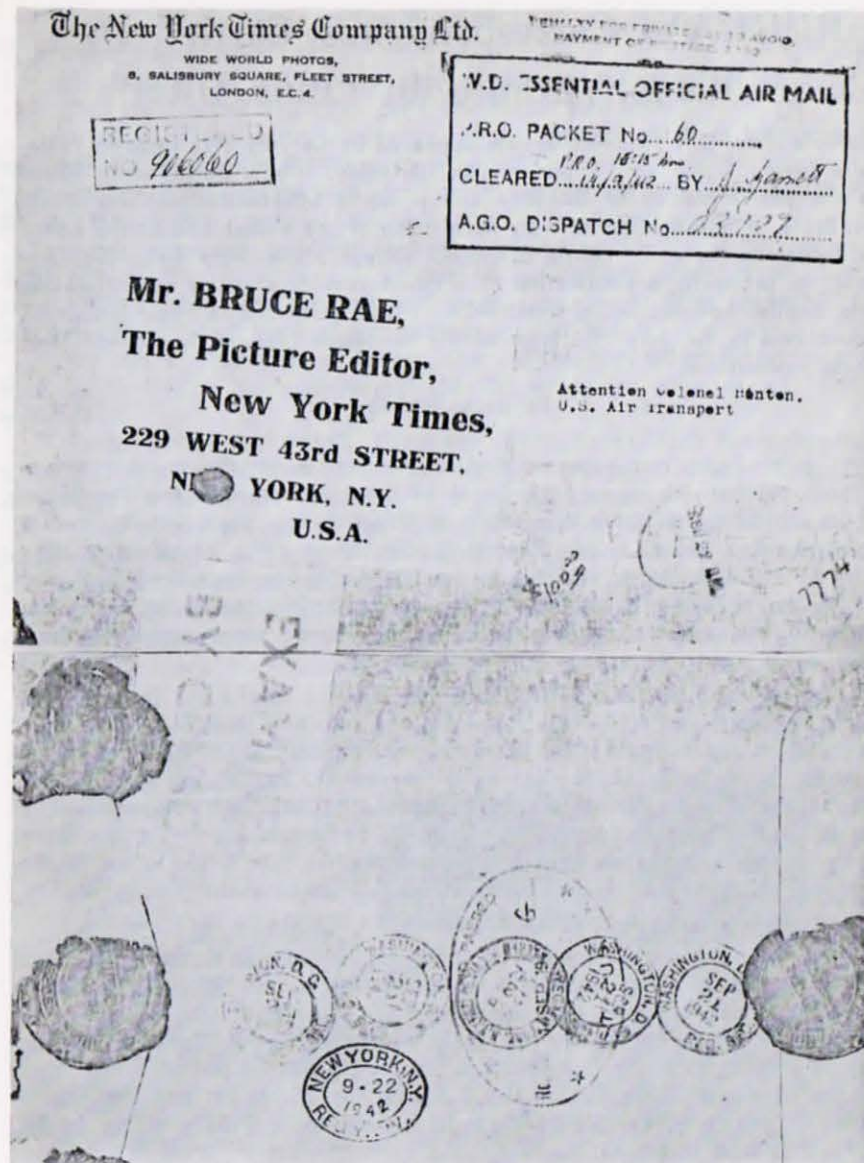
Getting information about these items has not been easy. A letter to the Times brought the information that reproductions of some of these covers had been shown around; however, only one old-timer remembered anything about them. He vaguely recalled that he remembered them coming in, and that Rae had selected some photos to be used for publication. There the trail ended, and it is hoped that some of our readers can enlighten us about this service.

Some covers had no postal markings; all had censorship labels. That this was an extensive service may be inferred from the fact that the P.R.O. (Public Relations Office?) packets were numbered. Some have date marks or registry postmarks ranging from September 1942 to June, 1944. Several have wax seals reading "Press and Censorship Bureau, Postal Sub-Section." Censors' marks range from printed labels — "EXAMINED / BY CENSOR" — to various rubber stamps, as for example, "REVIEWED AND PASSED / U.S. ARMY / 27 NOV. 1942 / PRESS CENSOR / NO. 22 / E.T.O. U.S.A." Evidently, this particular censor was in England, as E.T.O. probably stands for "European Theatre Operations."

To trace one cover: Registered No. 906060, which was cleared September 14, 1942, has a received time stamp dated September 22, 4:30 P.M. It contains Washington, D.C. registry post office backstamp of September 21, applied six times along the edge of the envelope flap. Then, a New York Registry Division backstamp is dated September 22. Probably, the envelope was turned over to the Army Transport service in London on the 14th, had arrived in Washington by the 21st, went through the mails to New York (either air or train), where it arrived on the 22nd, and was delivered to the Times at 4:30 that afternoon. Transit time was eight days. (See illustration)

Another cover was censored in London November 27, 1942, but wasn't released in Washington until December 28. This one had no postal markings and wasn't registered.

Still another passed the London censor on June 17, 1944, went by O.W.I.



Front and back of registered cover carried by official airmail in Sept. 1942. (Office of War Information?), Bomber Pouch 2701, and has no other markings.

We believe no postal service was given until Washington released these envelopes, and that all previous service was rendered by the army outside the mails.

Who can come up with more information about this wartime service?

URUGUAY: Correspondence Carried by Cmdr. Ramon Franco in "Plus Ultra"

Editor's Note: The following article appeared in the July 1976 issue of "Filatelia Juvenil," published in Montevideo, Uruguay. It is a worthy contribution to the postal history of Uruguay and presents information not previously available. It is reprinted here by permission of the author and of the editor of "Filatelia Juvenil," Jorge I. Meza. Though "The Aero Philatelist Annals" is primarily a publication of original record, a policy of translating into English and reprinting worthwhile articles published in other languages enunciated in the July 1953 issue of the magazine (volume 1, number 1) is being reinstituted.

By Jorge Ebbeler

In his flight from Palos de Moguer to Buenos Aires, Commander Ramon Franco carried only three letters each of them addressed to the Presidents of Brazil, Arthur da Silva Bernardes; of Uruguay, Ing. Jose Serrato; and of the Argentine Republic, Dr. Marcelo T. de Alvear, from His Majesty King Alfonso XIII of Spain. In addition, he brought a message from the Postmaster of the Canary Islands to the Director General of Communications of Argentina. These letters were not posted in the mails but, instead, were carried personally.

After the flight, the "PLUS ULTRA" made a final flight from Buenos Aires to Montevideo on February 25, 1926 and return on March 1st to receive the plaudits and homage of the people and government of Uruguay and of the Spanish colony in the latter city. When Commander Franco left from Montevideo on March 1st, the Director of Posts, Dr. Cesar Miranda, personally handed him a packet of letters to be carried to Buenos Aires. We now know there were only 14 letters because of a handwritten note found in one of the covers by Don Nicolas Socorro Guerra of Las Palmas in the Canary Islands.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LETTERS

1. All letters were registered with date of "March 1, 1926 - 13." The air mail postage of 10 centesimos was paid with a red "Ravioli" stamp of that denomination, (Scott C5), issued January 2, 1924. In addition, the registration fee of 10 centesimos was paid with the 10-cent "Terutero" stamp issued July 26, 1924, (Scott 291 with A. Barreiro y Ramos at bottom), or with a combination of 2 centesimos and 8 centesimos, (Scott 287 and 290 respectively). On one cover, the 12 centesimos Legislative Palace stamp issued August 24, 1925 was used.

2. Ramon Franco delivered the letters to the Argentine Post Office on March 2, on which date they were backstamped.

3. The known registration labels vary between numbers 023626 and 023644 which would indicate 19 instead of 14 letters. However, that same March 1st and at that same window, letters were posted for the inauguration of air service between Montevideo and Buenos Aires by the Junkers organization using hydroplanes. It is possible that:

(a) People had queued up at that window and their mail intended =

for the Junkers flight was mixed with the few that Ramon Franco would carry.

(b) The Director of Posts may have presented his covers from behind the counter and have done this more than once.

It should be noted that the covers of the Director of Posts have registration label numbers higher than those of the Centro Nacional de Aviacion. I have covers of the Junkers flight from the same Director with label numbers 023646/7/8, only two numbers after one of the "Plus Ultra" covers.

4. The signatures that Ramon Franco placed on the "Ravioli" stamps differ slightly from one cover to another. A handwriting expert states they were made by the same hand as well as the signatures which appeared in the February 11, 1926 issue of the newspaper, "El Pais."

5. There are two types of covers: those of the Post Office Director and those of the Centro Nacional de Aviacion (of which Dr. Miranda was also a member).

A. **DIRECTOR OF POSTS.** These are official covers with the caduceus symbol applied in the lower left corner and imprinted: "Director General de Correos / Telegrafos y Telefonos," 173 mm. by 133 mm.

These covers are handwritten by Dr. Miranda. In the upper left corner, in blue-black ink (now black) is the legend Por Hidroavion / "Plus Ultra," the last heavily underlined in red.

In red ink, obliquely at the left side: "Gentileza del / heroico aviator / Comandante Franco."

In blue-black ink originally (now black) in the middle lower part the



Cover prepared by the Director General of Posts. (Author's collection)

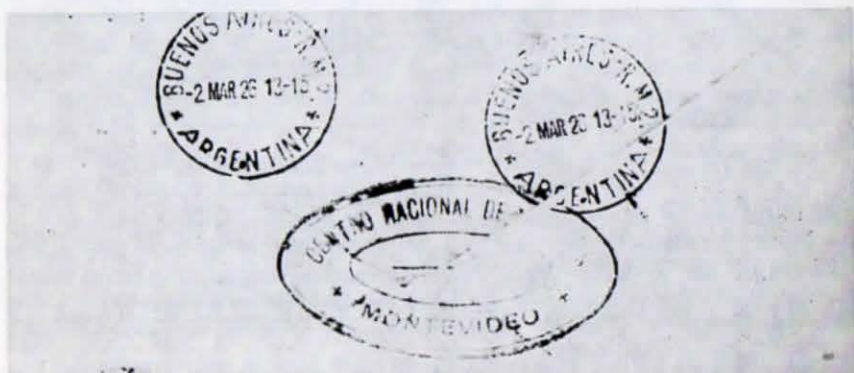


Front of cover prepared by Centro Nacional de Aviacion. Back is shown below. (Herman Kerst collection)

name and address in Buenos Aires, the last underlined twice.

Stamps cancelled with a duplex handstamp: at left a 22 mm. circle inscribed Montevideo-Uruguay with March 1, 1926 date in the center, separated by 9 mm. from a 50 mm. rectangle containing 5 lines, each 20mm. long. The inscription between the lines reads: "Republica O. del Uruguay / Correos / Servicio Aereo / Montevideo-Buenos Aires." This is the same handstamp used from January 2, 1924 for **non-registered** covers flown on the flights of the Compania Nacional de Aviacion (second stage) and later from March 1, 1926 for **non-registered** covers of the Junkers air service.

Registration Label: cancelled with a 27 mm. circular handstamp with a



smaller circle inside (the outside one). Between both circles the legend is "Recomendada - Montevideo." In the center between 8 thick lines cut by the date "1.III.26 - 13." This handstamp is repeated again at left of the cover.

Reverse Side. As a seal (it was customary during that period to impress a wax seal on registered letters) the official green (adhesive) seal measuring 30 mm. by 42 mm. with multiple uneven points. Around the perimeter the words "Correos de la Republica Oriental del Uruguay - Cierre Oficial (official seal)." At the center, the caduceus lacking the flower design at each side found on other issues of this seal. Symbol and letters in white, embossed.

Backstamp: at Buenos Aires: circular 32 mm. handstamp reading "Buenos Aires RM 2 / Argentina." In the center: "2 MAR 26 13-15."

B. CENTRO NACIONAL DE AVIACION covers imprinted "Centro Nacional / de / Aviacion" with a winged symbol underneath, all of the foregoing in the upper left portion. Size of covers 156 mm. by 121 mm.

Typewritten: above the printed title "(CORREO AEREO)." At top center "PLUS ULTRA." Address, also typewritten, to Sr. Angel S. Adami or Cesar Adami Villar, without street or number. Added with ink (by the Argentine Post Office), "Vease El Hogar / Rio Janeiro 252." Registration label cancelled and a second cancellation added similar to the covers of the Director of Posts. Rubber stamp of the Centro Nacional de Aviacion.

Reverse Side. A double oval, rubber handstamp measuring 60 mm. by 32 mm. used as a seal. Between ovals, "CENTRO NACIONAL DE AVIACION - MONTEVIDEO." In the center, a typographed mustache.

Backstamp same as on the covers of the Director of Posts except (the handstamp) was applied twice.

I estimate there were from 4 to 6 covers of the Director of Posts and from 8 to 10 of the Centro Nacional de Aviacion.

ERRATA

Several errors were noted by your editor in the January 1977 issue of the **Annals**. In the interest of complete accuracy and because in one case the entire meaning was changed, the following corrections should be made:

Page 54 "Short Paid" Markings - 1932: Not paid **for** (rather than "in") United States Air Mail Service

Page 64 In the quote from "Goddens's Gazette," in the second line of paragraph two: "... until you are certain of **their** knowledge." Substitute "your own" for "their."

"BUFFALO" BALLOON STORY —

(Continued from page 4)

As a further note concerning Lillard's letter of February 9, 1894, we might ask what happened to the other 20 copies of the "Buffalo" balloon stamp. Three, of course, are known on cover. With his letter, Lillard enclosed a pen-cancelled copy of the stamp. Will the remaining 19 used copies show up on cover someday?

U.S.: C3 Precancelled Used on Cover

By Philip Silver

In the April 1962 issue of the Aero Philatelist Annals, Volume IX, Number 4, there appeared an article by John R. Boker, Jr. entitled "Precancels On the 1918 Air Mails (C1-3)." Mr. Boker states on page 85 that most precancelled 1918 air mail stamps were not used on air mail but rather used up on parcel post in later years because, after the change in air mail rates in 1925, these three denominations, apart from the 6-cent, were in little demand. The 16-cent and 24-cent stamps could be used and were indeed used on the government route. They were of little use, of course, on the contract feeder lines which came into existence in 1926. On those routes, the most common rate was 10 cents.

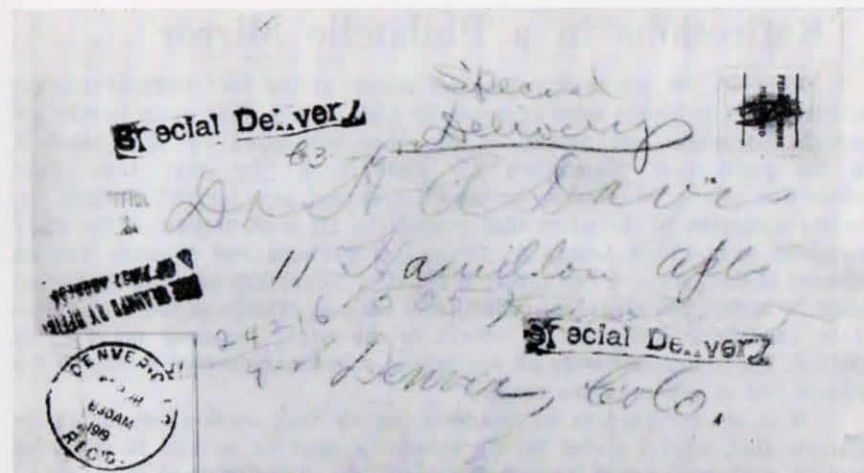
Boker indicates further that, because of collector interest in precancelled stamps in the early 1920's, many postmasters precancelled the C1-3 air mail stamps to supply the demand engendered by that interest.

Precancelled air mail stamps were also discussed much earlier in Sanabria's Air Post News, No. 10, June 1938. On page 10 of that issue, in "Air Post Stamps Precanceled," H. Preston Hoskins indicates that large quantities of the 16-cent and 24-cent air mail stamps of 1918 remained in stock, especially in the large post offices, after the successive rate reductions of July 15 and December 16, 1918. In many instances, Post Office Department inspectors instructed the postmaster to use such remainders on fourth-class mail. In some cases, while complying with those orders, the postmasters precancelled the air mail stamps on hand.

Mr. Hoskins gives another insight for the reason why precancelled stamps of the 1918 issue are found with town names which did not have air mail service. He states that postmasters in those towns requisitioned supplies of air mail stamps to satisfy the demands of local philatelists. After satisfying such demand, the postmasters were stuck with the remainders. These were precancelled and used on fourth-class mail, apparently without the necessity of complying with inspectors' orders. It was more advantageous to use up the air mail stamps that way than to turn them in for credit with all the required accounting forms that would be entailed.

Hoskins indicates that examples of the use of precancelled air mail stamps for strictly air mail service are few and far between. Boker, on the other hand, lists 48 instances in which precancelled stamps "are believed to have been used on occasion, but not exclusively to prepay air mail postage. Newsreel pictures, vaccine, and baby chicks were among the bulkier mailings franked with air mail precancels at that time." I must say, though, that it is difficult to envision air mail service from some of the cities he indicates from which air mail service was given. Did Frenchtown, New Jersey, for example, ever boast of an airport?

It is unfortunate that examples of such precancel air mail use are not available for collectors. Whether used on letters or parcels, the precancelled stamps would not have been tied by postmarks. That would belie the very nature of precancelled stamps. Yet, one can conceive that some air mail markings would have been placed on the parcel wrapping or en-



Federalsburg cover bearing precancelled example of C3. Backstamp is shown in lower left inset. (Photo by Boutrelle)

velope by the postal clerks, at least to indicate the service to be given.

I know of one instance where precancelled air mail stamps were used in connection with an air mail flight. This was on May 12, 1926 on the occasion of the opening of the Chicago to Dallas Contract Air Mail Route. Covers are known bearing the C4-6 air mail stamps precancelled Kansas City, Missouri. The stamps are tied by the Kansas City, Mo. Federal Reserve Station machine canceller in red.

Recently, I acquired the cover illustrated. It is franked with a C3 stamp precancelled Federalsburg, Maryland. The cover is made from heavy Kraft paper and is somewhat reduced in size. It is addressed to Dr. H. A. Davis, 11 Hawillon Apts., 1505 Humboldt, Denver, Colo. There are two "Special Delivery" handstamps on the face plus two "Fee Claimed By Office of First Address" markings as well. The cover is backstamped Denver, Colorado, **September 28, 1919, 8:30 A.M.** (emphasis added)

Now, how can it be proved that the C3 precancelled stamp belongs on that cover? We know that Federalsburg, Maryland is the most common precancel found on the air mail stamps of 1918. That is because they were used extensively by one large concern located in that city, the Stowell Printing Company. Stowell used the stamps on its fourth-class mailings.

A clue to the addressee was furnished by Mr. Boker. He indicated he believed Dr. Davis was an official of the American Philatelic Society at that time. So, a letter of inquiry was sent off to Dr. Robert L. D. Davidson, the A.P.S. historian. Dr. Davidson answered the two questions I had raised. First, Dr. Holland A. Davis was secretary of the American Philatelic Society from 1917 to 1946. Second, Stowell Printing Company has published the "American Philatelist", official organ of that society, continuously since 1913.

Now, the mystery may be unravelled. Stowell sent something to Dr. Davis, probably galley proofs for the magazine. The item illustrated, it will be recalled, is an envelope, not a piece of wrapping paper. So, it most

(Continued on next page)

Reflections in a Philatelic Mirror . . .

Although the air mail collections shown at the 1976 INTERPHIL exhibition in Philadelphia were of generally high caliber, they could hardly approach the scope and quality of the ones mentioned by Mr. Sanabria in the publication "Sanabria's Air Post News" for May 1936. Your editor was privileged to serve on the international jury for INTERPHIL '76. As the chairman of the panel that judged the air mail section — the other members were Frank Lemos da Silveira of Portugal and Maurice Van de Moortel of Belgium — I can report that out of 35 exhibits only one was what could be considered a general collection of air post stamps of the world. Two other collections contained air covers of the world including many great rarities. The remainder were all specialized collections devoted mostly to the stamps and/or covers of one country.

It is not my purpose to denigrate the air mail section but merely to indicate that what I stated in my column a year or so ago is still true and will probably be true in the foreseeable future. The likelihood of a general air mail collection of the world being formed, one that would approach the scope of the almost unbelievable collections of the past, is somewhat remote.

A summary of the awards given in the INTERPHIL '76 air mail section is as follows:

Large Gold	2	Vermeil	6
Gold with special award	1	Large Silver with special award	2
Gold	7	Large silver	8
Vermeil with special award	3	Silver	6

At the meeting of the Aerophilatelic Commission of the F.I.P. held recently in Milan, Italy, which I was privileged to attend as the U.S. representative, the matter of assigning points for philatelic knowledge, presentation, rarity, etc. to be used in judging collections in the air mail section was considered by the delegates. I cannot divulge the conclusions that were reached. That would be a breach of confidentiality. I can tell you, though, that I indicated points were not necessary and that experienced judges knew the level of medal attainment without the strictures of a point system. If the judges for other sections could operate without a point system, why was it required for the air mail section?

May I request our readers' viewpoints?

— P. S.

C3 PRECANCELLED —

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likely represents first-class rather than fourth-class usage. The rate, in that case, would be explained as follows:

First-class service	7 ounces at 2 cents each ounce	= 14 cents
Special Delivery service		= 10 cents
Total fee		24 cents

All in all, it is a most unusual cover for the 1918 air mail buffs. The use of the C3 precancelled stamp in 1919 makes the cover that much more desirable.