

## Yesterday in USSN:

# High Flying Fourth Bureaus

## Introduction, Fractional and Low Values (1/2¢-4¢)

by Steve Turechek

(From *U.S. Stamp News*, September-October 2005)

(Back in 2005 and 2006 we ran this excellent eight-part series by Steve Turechek. Back then, however, we were essentially a black & white publication—all but the covers—so in researching for “Yesterday in USSN” material, this series in full color was a natural option. To present them in color, the text is on pages 34 and 34 and the figures on pages 36 and 37. JFD.)

Have you ever stumbled upon something that did not exactly fit within the boundaries of your collection, but was so intriguing you had to have it anyway? I like airpost covers, and thus have spent years poring through the American Airmail Society’s six-volume catalog, adding covers to my collection as I could, always on the lookout for something unusual.

A couple of years ago at OKPEX I ran across a dealer who had a selection of commercial airmail covers for sale. Now these were not your normal, garden variety flight covers. Many of the covers did not even have airmail stamps affixed. I thumbed through his box and landed upon one franked with a single 11¢ light blue Fourth Bureau issue. As I marveled at the cover, Rutherford B. Hayes stared back solemnly from the confines of the stamp. Addressed to Germany, the 11¢ stamp paid for airmail service in the U.S., a boat ride to the shores of Europe, then airmail service from France into Germany.

The cover was shamefully expensive I thought—in excess of \$100. But I had never seen an airmail usage like this before. These sorts of covers are not documented in the AAMS nor Scott’s catalog. It was, to use the 21st-century catchword, an Extreme example.

Come to think of it, I had not seen any but the most common of the U.S. 1922-1936 definitive stamps (known as the Fourth Bureau issues) on cover, let alone airpost covers. As I continued to peruse the box, a new collecting idea began to form in my head. Would it be possible, I wondered silently, to put together a collection of airpost covers franked with each and every face-different Fourth Bureau issue?

(I was, and still am, quite foggy when it comes to flat plate, rotary press, perf-this-and-that differences amongst the Fourth Bureau issues. Throw in coils, overprints and pre-cancels and I’m overwhelmed.)

So I set out to hunt down airpost covers franked with solo, multiple, and/or combination usages of each of the colorful Fourth Bureau definitives, from the half-cent Hale to the \$5 America. Little did I know that day, but I had opened a new door to rates, routes, and usages I never knew existed.

Fortunately there is help for the novice. Beecher and

Wawrukiewicz have authored two amazing books: *U.S. International Postal Rates* and *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates* which perfectly capture all the data you need to answer the inevitable question “What was the correct franking?” And there are dealers who will help, too. One of the finest is Jim Forte in Las Vegas. He has a comprehensive Internet website <[www.postalhistory.com](http://www.postalhistory.com)>, and won’t sell a cover without answering all your questions about the proper postage rates first.

That brings us to the purpose of this series of articles: to survey the various usages of the Fourth Bureau issue on airpost covers, from the fractional cents to multi-dollar values. To the maximum extent possible I’ll use commercial covers, including business and personal correspondence. An occasional first flight, first day, or other philatelic cover might slip in due to its appeal as a scarce or historical item.

Since trans-oceanic airmail service did not exist until the later 1930s, many covers will have part airmail and part surface delivery. That often spices up the rates and frankings. I have observed that many Fourth Bureau covers were over-franked, but whether by convenience or mistake is impossible to determine. I have made every attempt to avoid illustrating such covers. On the other hand, under-franked covers are not uncommon either. These represent a bargain to the sender and a clear oversight by postal authorities.

Where possible, I’ve tried to show solo and multiple usage of each stamp. When franking an envelope, it is easy to imagine postal clerks or the sender beginning with one or more airmail stamps, and finishing up with definitives to make the proper rate. You can see this from the placement of the stamps on the cover. Thus many Fourth Bureau airpost covers have combinations of different values and different types of stamps.

But enough with the observations. Let’s begin the survey.

### **The Fractional Values** **1/2 cent Hale, 1-1/2 cent** **Harding (profile and portrait)**

The Fourth Bureau definitive series was the first to introduce fractional cent issues. Designed to pay domestic third class rates, the half and one-and-a-half cent stamps were nevertheless soon airborne. They are found only as multiples or in combination with each other on airpost covers since at no time did domestic or international airmail rates include half cent fractions. Nice commercial usages are scarce.

One of the more interesting release dates in the history of the Fourth Bureaus was April 4th, 1925. Both the Hale and imperforate Harding (profile) stamps share this first day of issue. The domestic airmail rates depended on origin and destination zone, 8 cents paying for airmail service within one zone, 16 cents for two zones and 24 cents for three zones. Thus the cover in Figure 1 (page 36) is not only a philatelic first day cover, but a scarce usage of fractional stamps to pay the required eight cents for one zone of domestic airmail service, in this case New York to Chicago.

The cover in Figure 2 contains both a half-cent Hale and a one-and-a-half cent Harding (profile) plus 34 cents additional postage to properly pay the 5 cents per half ounce overseas + 16 cents per ounce airmail (London to Moscow) rate to Russia + the 15 cents registry fee.

This cover was mailed by a stamp dealer to the U.S. Consul in Moscow, the letter contents asking if the staff would send additional covers back to him. This was a common business strategy stamp dealers used to obtain foreign stamps and covers mailed to the U.S. from exotic destinations.

However, there are unusual manuscript notations on the cover, not the least of which is a clear purple pen line drawn through the typed "Moscow." Matching purple notation of "retour" suggests the cover was never delivered, instead returned to sender. Normally such a cover would be scorned for its crass philatelic flavor; however this was simply a way of business for the stamp dealer, and thus the cover in fact makes for great aeropostal history.

A real "milk and honey" of a cover is shown in Figure 3. In this case, a basic 2¢ postal stationery envelope was up-rated in 1935 for airmail service from a honey producer in Los Angeles to a creamery in England. A strip of four of the 1-1/2¢ Harding (portrait) issue was added since a total of 8 cents was required to pay for airmail service within the U.S. only, plus surface delivery to England.

Another nicely franked airpost cover is shown in Figure 4. Paying the correct six cents domestic airpost rate in 1938, the cover was franked with a joint line coil strip of the 1-1/2¢ Harding (profile) issue, and flown from Ohio to California.

## **The Low Values**

### **1¢ Franklin, 2¢ Washington, 3¢ Lincoln & 3¢ Washington**

The low values of the Fourth Bureau series were intended to pay domestic surface postage rates. They are so common as to be of very little value used, off cover, and only slightly more on ordinary covers.

When it comes to airpost covers, these stamps, with one very rare exception, are found either in multiple uses or in combination to make up proper airmail rates, either domestic or overseas. Airpost covers with any of these four stamps are common.

Usage of these stamps varies from one lone stamp added to a postal stationery envelope, to envelopes

covered front and back, with blocks, strips and single after single. On the minimal side, consider the cover in Figure 5. Postal rates to Canada from the U.S. were kept lower than any other foreign country by special treaties. For a mere penny extra in postage, the sender of this cover got airmail service from Philadelphia all the way to Vancouver, British Columbia (Canada).

In 1939 the U.S. domestic airmail rate had climbed to six cents; the cover in Figure 6 is franked with a 10¢ Great Smoky Mountains Farley souvenir sheet and a pair of 1¢ Franklin Fourth Bureau booklet pane stamps totaling 12¢, double the basic domestic airmail rate. Postmarked in White Plains, N.Y., it is addressed to Barrett, California.

When it comes to the 2¢ Washington stamp, airpost covers abound. Finding unusual rates and frankings becomes the challenge. The cover in Figure 7 (page 37) shows a 2¢ issue upgrading the basic 1926 3-zone airmail rate (paid for with airmail stamps), to pay for overnight airmail service from New York to Chicago. This cover is an excellent example of a commercial usage, with a return address for the Eastman Kodak Company, mailed to their agent in San Francisco.

Another very unusual usage of the 2¢ stamps can be seen on the cover in Figure 8. Posted on the first day of contract airmail service from Peoria, Ill. to Chicago, this cover was flown by Charles Lindbergh, chief pilot of Contract Airmail (CAM) Route 2. Lindbergh routinely flew the early morning southbound leg of the route from Chicago through Peoria, and Springfield to St. Louis. In the late afternoon he made the return trip to Chicago.

It is possible to have an airpost cover franked with a solo 2¢ single Fourth Bureau issue. From the day the 2¢ stamp was issued, January 15th, 1923 through June 30th, 1924 there was no true airmail service in the U.S. However a transcontinental route was under development and some first class mail was carried aloft during this route-proving period. Such covers are usually found with 2¢ stamps from the previous, or Third Bureau issue, making a Fourth Bureau 2¢ solo airpost cover a great prize.

There are two face-different 3¢ Fourth Bureaus. The first, issued in 1922, pictures Lincoln.

The 1931 cover in Figure 9 sports a single 3¢ Lincoln, in combination with a 5¢ winged globe airmail issue, that were added to the 5¢ blue aeropostal stationery. The total of 13 cents postage included 5¢ for surface overseas + 4¢ air supplement in the U.S. + 4¢ air in Europe.

In 1936 a new three cent stamp was issued, replacing Lincoln's portrait with a full face portrait of Washington. This stamp was one of the shortest lived of the Fourth Bureau definitives. The next U.S. definitive series, the Prexies, came on the scene beginning in 1938. Yet many Fourth Bureau issues would see



Figure 1. Blocks of 1/2¢ Hale and 1-1/2¢ Harding imperf issues pay 8 cents single zone airmail rate on FDC.



Figure 2. Stamp dealer business request to U.S. Consul in Moscow; airmail service provided London to Moscow. Total postage 36¢.



Figure 3. "Milk and Honey" in 1935. Flown via airmail in the U.S., then surface ship to England. Total postage 8¢.



Figure 4. Joint line coil strip of four Harding 1-1/2¢ pays 1939 domestic 6¢ rate.



Figure 5. An added penny secures airmail service from Philadelphia to Vancouver, Canada, in 1937. Total postage 6¢.

widespread use into the early 1940s as post offices and citizens gradually exhausted their supplies.

The cover in Figure 10 shows the results of this long transition period. Requiring 11 cents in postage (8 cents combined domestic airmail with surface overseas, plus 3 cents airmail service in Europe) for delivery to Finland, a 5¢ Prexie is combined with two of the 3¢ Washington Fourth Bureau issue amidst an eye arresting airline label.

All in all, the low face value Fourth Bureaus were workhorses of the series. Airmail stamps were normally only issued in values of multiple nickels or dimes, or the current basic domestic rate. Yet airpost rates into Europe were far more apt to require a few odd extra pennies per ounce. Airmail rates to South America ran up to more than ten times the U.S. domestic rate.

Post offices generally had the low value stamps on hand in large quantity. So it's no surprise that colorful airpost covers plastered with rows of stamps, like the cover in Figure 11 have survived in the hands of collectors. Eleven stamps were added to the 3¢ postal stationery to pay the proper total of 20¢ for this cover to fly from New Orleans south to Costa Rica in 1934. Today the Extreme collector can scout for those covers that made it aloft thanks to stamps never meant to leave the ground.



Figure 6. Double weight domestic airmail with pair of 1¢ Fourth Bureau booklet pane stamps and Great Smoky Mountains souvenir sheet. Total postage 12¢.



Figure 7. 2¢ pays for night airmail service from Rochester, N.Y. to Chicago (added to 24¢ airmail 3-zone postage for delivery in San Francisco). Total postage 26¢.



Figure 8. Contract Airmail Route 2 cover flown by Charles Lindbergh on the first day of service, franked with five 2¢ Fourth Bureau issues. Total postage 10¢.



Figure 9. 3¢ Lincoln pays part of the airmail service (Calif. to N.Y.) and by ship to France, thence air from France to Germany. Total postage 13¢.



Figure 10. Two 3¢ Washington Fourth Bureaus plus 5¢ Præxie pay 11¢ airmail to Finland in 1939.



Figure 11. Plastered with low-value issues to achieve 20¢ airmail postage from New Orleans to Costa Rica in 1934.

To be continued

## Yesterday in USSN:

# High Flying Fourth Bureaus

More Low Values (4¢–9¢)

by Steve Turechek

(From *U.S. Stamp News*, November-December 2005)

(We continue to convert this series by Steve Turechek from the black & white images we used in 2005-2006 to full color, with the text on pages 34 and 35 and the figures on pages 36 and 37. JFD.)

### The 4¢-6¢ Values

**4¢ Martha Washington and William H. Taft;  
5¢ Theodore Roosevelt; 6¢ James A. Garfield**

The lower values of the Fourth Bureau issue also include two 4¢ designs, and two stamps that could fly solo on their own, the 5¢ Roosevelt and 6¢ Garfield. While the 4¢ issues are found on airpost covers only in multiples, or combinations with other issues, both single 5¢ and 6¢ stamps at one time or another fully paid the domestic airmail letter rate.

The original 4¢ stamp pictured Martha Washington. Airpost covers with her are not all that easy to find. Figure 12 shows a 1926 cover that made a journey from San Francisco, western terminus of the Government operated transcontinental airmail route, to Washington, D.C. (Actually New York was the eastern terminus and the letter would have gone by truck or rail to the nation's capitol.) The 3-zone airmail transcontinental rate was 24 cents per ounce, in this case paid for by a pair of 10¢ Monroe Fourth Bureaus and the single 4¢ Martha Washington. Since airmail stamps of the appropriate face value were in sufficient supply, it is unusual to find a cover like this franked with definitives only.

The cover in Figure 13 shows international airmail service from Kansas City to Germany. It is franked with two 4¢ M. Washington issues plus a 5¢ Beacon airmail issue, postmarked in 1930. The proper rate was 5¢ overseas + 4¢ air supplement in the U.S. + 4¢ air London to Germany for a total of 13¢ postage. The cover includes purple U.S. "Via Air Mail", red boxed German "Mit Luftpost..." and the blue adhesive label in both French (Par Avion) and English (By Air Mail) which could leave little doubt as to the desired means of delivery!

In 1930 former President Taft, who had died, replaced Martha Washington as the subject of the 4¢ definitive stamp. Airpost covers with Taft are much easier to find than with Martha Washington. The first day cover in Figure 14 shows five Taft stamps paying the 5¢ per ounce domestic rate plus 15¢ registry fee for correspondence from Cincinnati to Newton, Kans.

The long cover in Figure 15 shows a couple of 4¢ Taft issues paying the one-ounce domestic rate of 8¢ in 1933. The cover, mailed from West Point, Georgia, to New York City, traveled via railroad from Montgomery, Ala. to

Atlanta, Ga., where it entered the airmail.

The 5¢ Roosevelt Fourth Bureau was a true workhorse of the series. Airpost covers with this stamp abound, primarily because so many postal rates, surface and airmail, domestic and international were set by treaty of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) at multiples of five cents. Our first example is the international usage shown in Figure 16, a cover sent via airmail from New York City to Kingston, Jamaica (British West Indies) in 1934. The postage rate was 10 per half ounce letter, paid with a pair of the 5¢ Roosevelt issue.

Another fine example is the cover in Figure 17. Franked with eight 5¢ stamps, it properly paid the 40¢ airmail postage for a half ounce letter to Peru in 1937.

The 6¢ Fourth Bureau pictures Garfield, who was assassinated in 1881 after just four months as President. Airpost covers bearing this 6¢ orange stamp are not common, even though the U.S. domestic airmail rate was six cents from 1934-1944. The lack of Garfield airpost covers can be attributed to the use of 6¢ airmail stamps, especially within the U.S. Nevertheless, solo usages of the 6¢ stamp do exist. One scarce example is shown in Figure 18, a 1934 commercial airpost cover mailed in New Britain, Conn., to Milwaukee, Wis. This particular cover was postmarked on the second day of the 6¢ rate, so it is likely that the New Britain post office did not yet have the appropriate airmail stamps and thus Garfield got the duty.

In 1935, survey flights were conducted prior to the Post Office Department establishing an airmail route from San Francisco, Calif. to Honolulu, Hi. The survey flights were assessed airmail postage of 6¢ per leg, the prevailing domestic rate. (Rates were considerably higher once scheduled service actually began.) The survey cover in Figure 19 was postmarked on April 16, 1935 in San Francisco, addressed to Pan American Airways (PAA) in Honolulu. The cover was then posted back to San Francisco on the return trip. From there it was sent to a PAA official in Miami, Fla. The cover has the added feature of Edwin Musick's signature, PAA pilot on the survey flight. Postage for each major segment of the flight was paid with a 6¢ Garfield stamp.

On the international scene, a rather interesting use of a single 6¢ Garfield can be seen on Figure 20. This cover, posted in 1925 from San Francisco to Italy, included 5¢ for surface transport within the U.S. and to London; for 6¢ the sender had pre-paid for airmail service to Rome from London. Back in San Francisco either the Post Office or Bank of Italy applied a purple handstamp with three line endorsement "Air Mail, London to- Continent" and an

outlined box for the sender to place the proper stamp to secure the desired service. Thus the postage totaled 11¢. (California's Bank of Italy would eventually become today's very well known Bank of America.)

Multiples of the 6¢ Garfield on airpost cover are somewhat easier to find than singles. The cover in Figure 21 has been franked with six Garfield and two 2¢ George Washington Fourth Bureaus to correctly pay the 40 cents per ounce rate to Brazil in 1938. These stamps each have three initials perforated into the middle of the design hence they are known as "perfins."

The initials, HKC, stand for H. Kohnstamm & Company, Inc. The stamps were perf initialed specifically for use by the company. Perfins are commonly found on Fourth Bureau issues.

## **The Last of the Low Values**

### **7¢ McKinley, 8¢ Grant, 9¢ Jefferson**

The final three low value Fourth Bureaus, the black McKinley, olive Grant and salmon Jefferson are stamps found sporadically (at best) on airpost covers. The 7¢, 8¢, and 9¢ values are usually found on postal stationery, supplementing the printed indicia to make up correct airpost rates. The 9¢ Jefferson is the most difficult of these, the 8¢ more abundant.

First Day stamp dealers were just beginning to really blossom in the mid-1920s. The multitude of values of Fourth Bureau issues presented a problem, and we began to commonly see over-franked FDCs. This makes

the cover in Figure 22 somewhat unusual. In 1926 the domestic airmail rate system was more confusing than ever, with Government zones, CAM routes, and combinations of these making airmail letters cost anywhere between 8¢ to 30¢ per ounce.

The cover shown has the correct 24¢, 3-zone transcontinental airmail postage for a cover carried by the Government service only (N.Y.C to San Francisco). In this case single 7¢, 8¢, and 9¢ Bureau issues were affixed (on May 29th, 1926, their first day of issue) by C. E. Nickles, a pioneer FDC servicer, and sent via airmail to San Francisco.

Another nice domestic use of the 7¢ McKinley is shown in Figure 23. Posted in 1926, this cover also traveled the transcontinental airmail route. This time one airmail stamp combined with two 7¢ McKinley's to correctly pay the 24¢ postage.

The cover in Figure 24 shows the common approach to up-rating basic postal stationery for airmail service. Given the letter would receive airmail service at a rate of 20¢ per ounce from Providence, R.I., to a ship arriving in the Panama Canal Zone in 1936, the sender began with their company's basic 3¢ postal stationery. A postal clerk then added an airmail stamp, as preferred by the Postal Service, plus a 7¢ McKinley totaling the necessary 20¢.

The 8¢ Grant is also usually found up-rating postal stationery for airmail service. One example is shown in Figure 25.

The airmail postage was 11¢ and the cover was flown from Minnesota to New York, sailed the Atlantic to England, and then flew from London to Finland ("Suomi"). The registry fee was paid by the addition of a 15¢ Statue of Liberty Fourth Bureau issue.

Solo airpost usage of the 8¢ Grant is difficult to find, although domestic and international rates were at times set at 8¢, or even multiples thereof. An example is shown in Figure 26. This cover included 5¢ surface overseas to France from the U.S., plus 3¢ for airmail service from France to Prague, Czechoslovakia and final delivery in Bilovice.

The 9¢ Jefferson Fourth Bureau is most likely to be found in combination with other issues to make up correct airmail postage or pay fees for additional services. An interesting example is pictured in Figure 27. This cover was mailed in 1927 to then-President Calvin Coolidge's personal secretary, Everett Sanders. The sender took every precaution to ensure the letter made its way into the White House, including registry and return receipt service, endorsing the cover "personal" and "deliver to addressee only."

The letter was heavy (over three and a half ounces) which cost the sender seven times the basic airpost letter rate of 10¢ per half ounce. The postage was paid with airmail stamps; the 15¢ registry fee and 3¢ return receipt fee were paid with the two 9¢ Jefferson stamps.

*Color images, pages 36-37.*

*To be continued.*



Fig. 12. 1926 24¢ domestic transcontinental airmail rate. The 4¢ Martha Washington completes the 24¢ definitive franking.



Fig. 13. 1930 13¢ rate includes surface to London, then air to Germany. Two 4¢ M. Washingtons flank the 5¢ Beacon.



Fig. 14. 1930 FDC of the 4¢ Taft. The domestic rate of 5¢ + 15¢ registry paid with five Taft stamps.

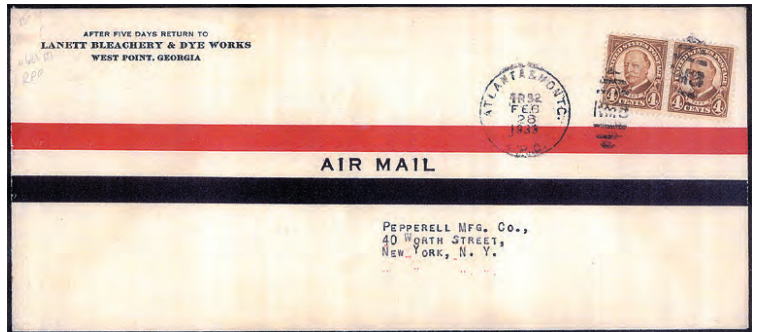


Fig. 15. 1933 8¢ domestic airmail rate. Cover travelled via railway to Atlanta, then air to New York City.

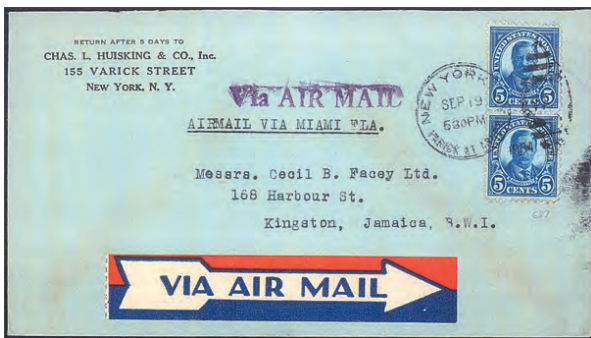


Fig. 16. 1934 10¢ foreign airmail service New York City to Jamaica, paid with a pair of 5¢ Roosevelt Fourth Bureaus.



Fig. 17. Eight 5¢ Theodore Roosevelt stamps pay 40¢ per half ounce letter to Peru in 1937.

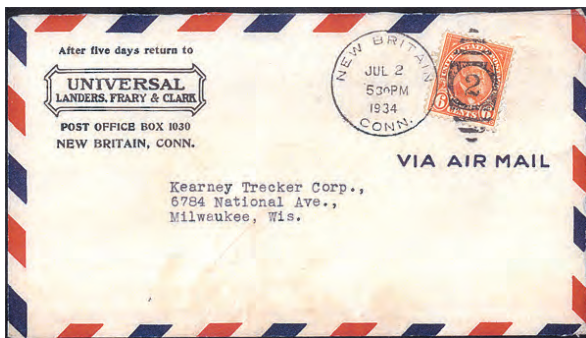


Figure 18. 1934 second day solo use of 6¢ Garfield from Connecticut to Wisconsin.



Fig. 19. Pilot autographed 1935 Pan American Airways survey flight to Hawaii. Postage set at 6¢ per leg.



Fig. 20. 1925 11¢ rate to Italy. Note purple boxed "Air Mail London to-Continent" handstamp.



Fig. 21. Six Garfield perfins plus two George Washington 2¢ stamps pay 40¢ rate to Brazil in 1938.



Fig. 22. FDC for three Fourth Bureau issues paying the 24¢ transcontinental postage rate.



Fig. 23. 7¢ McKinleys flank 10¢ airmail issue, paying the 24¢ transcontinental rate in 1926.

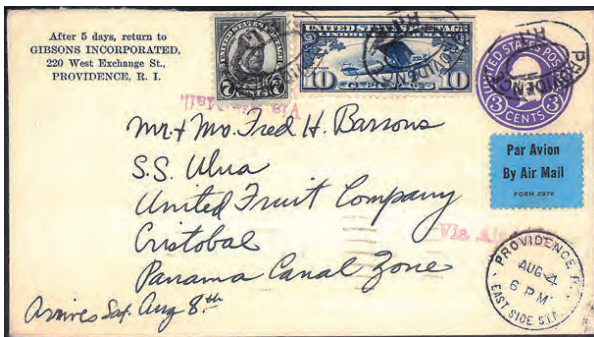


Fig. 24. 1936 7¢ McKinley up-rates 3¢ postal stationery with 10¢ airmail issue to 20¢, with destination being a ship passing through the Panama Canal.



Figure 25. 193\_ registered airmail cover requires 11¢ + 15¢ registry fee to Kauhava, Suomi (Finland).

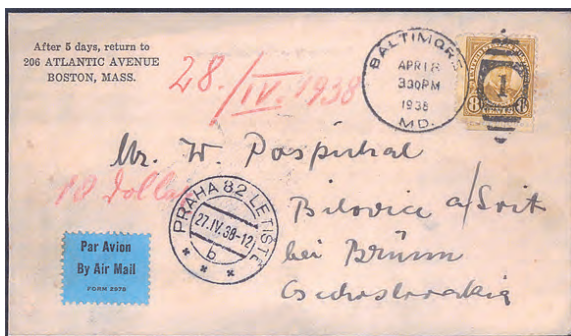


Fig. 26. 1938 8¢ solo Grant pays 5¢ surface to Europe, then 3¢ air supplement to Czechoslovakia.



Figure 27. 1927 pair of 9¢ Jefferson stamps pay registry and return receipt fees on 7-times rate cover to the White House.

To be continued



## Yesterday in USSN:

# High Flying Fourth Bureaus

## The Low and Middle Values (10¢–17¢)

by Steve Turechek

(From *U.S. Stamp News*, November-December 2005)

(We continue to convert this series by Steve Turechek from the black & white images we used in 2005-2006 to full color, with the text on pages 34 and 35 and the figures on pages 36 and 37. JFD.)

### The Last of the Low Values

#### 10¢ Monroe, 11¢ Hayes, 12¢ Cleveland and 13¢ Harrison

The 10¢ yellow Monroe Fourth Bureau is so abundant on airpost covers of the 1920s and 1930s, its ease of collectibility rivals the large number of covers franked with actual airmail stamps in the average dealer's inventory. From solo to multiples, commercial to philatelic, the 10¢ Fourth Bureau issue traveled everywhere that airplanes flew from the early '20s to the early '40s.

The cover in Figure 28 sports a solo 10¢ Monroe stamp. This cover received airmail service from San Francisco to New York, then surface delivery to London, England. It was as good a postal value (as judged by distance) as one could get for a dime in 1933.

Just seven years later, the world was a changed place. Mail from the U.S. to Europe could travel all the way by air on a transatlantic clipper aircraft in just one day, as did the cover in Figure 29. Even though a 30¢ airmail stamp was issued especially for the transatlantic service, three of the 10¢ Monroe stamps did the job equally well. Already one year into WW II, this cover's contents were examined by a British censor, and the envelope was resealed along the left side.

Franked with a block of four of the 10¢ issue, plus an 8¢ Grant, the domestic cover in Figure 30 traveled the transcontinental route in 1925 from New York to San Francisco for delivery to West Berkeley, Calif. This is a double-weight example of the 24¢ per ounce 3-zone rate.

Back to the international scene. Figure 31 shows a cover posted in 1938 from New York to New Zealand. The 50¢ per ounce letter rate breaks down to 5¢ per ounce for overseas surface travel to Amsterdam plus 40¢ per half ounce airmail from Amsterdam to Australia plus 5¢ per ounce internal New Zealand airmail service. The total of 50¢ for the cover was paid with five of the Monroe stamps.

With eight of the same 10¢ stamps paying twice the 40¢ per ounce airmail rate, the double weight cover in Figure 32 flew from Texas to Argentina in 1938. Such a large number of stamps probably indicated the Sherman,

Texas post office was not well stocked with a variety of different face-value definitives, especially the higher values. It apparently lacked airmail stamps too.

If the 10¢ stamp is the easiest to find on airmail covers, the next few values of the Fourth Bureau series of definitives are among the most difficult. Solo usages of the 11¢ and 12¢ are known, but singles and multiples in combination with other stamps are encountered somewhat more often. Pairs are found on domestic covers with other stamps or on stationery to up-rate such covers for airmail service. The 13¢ Harrison Fourth Bureau is extremely difficult to find paying a correct rate or fee on non-philatelic airpost covers. I have seen just three commercial usages, and the 13¢ stamp is always combined with other values.

Every cover you might stumble upon in a dealer's box with an 'airmail' endorsement and one or more of the middle values (11¢-14¢ and 17¢) of the Fourth Bureau issue invites close inspection for route, rate and proper usage. Many covers with these values are overpaid, or sometimes of philatelic contrivance. But sorting through the chaff always exposes the good wheat.

An international solo usage of the 11¢ issue is shown in Figure 33. Posted in 1939, the cover sailed the Atlantic for 5¢ per ounce and flew onward to Cairo for an additional 6¢ per half ounce. Note the sender's endorsement "Foreign Air Mail Service Only From Europe". The circular magenta hand-stamp reads "Censorship Dept" in both English and Arabic. Willys manufactured the very famous 'Jeep' used throughout WWII and popularized on such TV shows as M\*A\*S\*H.

A nice example of an 11¢ Hayes used to up-rate postal stationery on an international letter is shown in Figure 34. Posted in 1937 in Los Angeles, it is addressed to Denmark. A total of 14¢ postage was required, 8¢ per ounce for airmail service in the U.S. plus 3 cents times two half ounces, or 6¢ for airmail service in Europe.

A third example is shown in Figure 35. This registered cover is franked with 26¢ postage, including a pair of the 11¢ Hayes and a pair of the 2¢ Washington Fourth Bureau stamps. The postage paid 15¢ for registry service, 5¢ surface overseas plus 6¢ air in Europe to Prague, Czechoslovakia. This particular cover also has a privately applied red and black inked "via US airmail" wings handstamp.

The 12¢ Cleveland Fourth Bureau is usually found in combination with other values on airpost covers. How-

ever, it did serve to pay twice the U.S. domestic airpost rate of 6¢ per ounce in the late 1930s. This rate was also good throughout Canada, as can be seen on the cover illustrated in Figure 36. This cover went from Alhambra, Calif. to Toronto, Ontario in 1938.

A cover franked with four of the 12¢ issue plus a 2¢ Fourth Bureau is shown in Figure 37. In this case the rate to Brazil in 1935 was 50¢ per half ounce from the U.S.

The 13¢ green Harrison issue is such an odd value for a U.S. stamp, its usage on commercial airpost covers is quite scarce. A bright and colorful example is shown in Figure 38. This is a card carried by ship-to-shore catapult airplane off the steamer S.S. *Bremen* to Germany for eventual delivery to England in 1929. The postage rate for such service was set at 15¢ for the catapult service plus 3¢ air in Europe, with the total 18¢ paid with a single 5¢ Beacon airmail stamp and a 13¢ Harrison Fourth Bureau. Catapult airmail service off the *Bremen* was scheduled weekly during the summer months and early Fall from 1929 to 1935. Catapult airmail service enabled letters that arrived at the pier up to a day or so late to be flown out to the ship which had previously set sail, and for mail to be expedited by a day or more by launching the airplane from the ship while it was still some distance from its destination port.

A commercial cover with the 13¢ Harrison stamp is shown in Figure 39. This domestic airmail cover also received registry and return receipt service. The cover is franked with a single 13¢ Harrison and a single 11¢ Hayes, totaling 24¢ postage. This can be broken down as 6¢ domestic airmail, plus 15¢ registry, plus 3¢ return receipt service. The usage of these two out of the ordinary stamps on a purely commercial airpost cover makes it an exceptional example of Fourth Bureau aerial postal history.

As you can see, we've crossed into difficult territory. With so few usages to study, it's nearly impossible to make broad generalizations about the middle values of the Fourth Bureau series on airpost covers. Yet the rockiest ground is yet to come!

## **The Middle Value Fourth Bureaus 14¢ American Indian, 15¢ Statue of Liberty & 17¢ Wilson**

I believe the 14¢ American Indian Fourth Bureau issue may be the single most difficult stamp of the whole series to find on commercial airpost covers. It has taken me the better part of three years to find just one cover, and then within a few weeks I found a second on e-Bay. The first cover, pictured in Figure 40, was mailed in 1929 from New York to Syria.

The cover traveled via steamer to Amsterdam, then via air to Aleppo, Syria for delivery in Beirut. The proper postage for such a journey was 14¢ total, 5¢ per ounce surface to Amsterdam, plus 9¢ per half ounce by air to Aleppo. The 15¢ airmail stamp paid for the registry service.

The second commercial cover with a 14¢ Indian stamp

is pictured in Figure 41. This 1935 cover, postmarked in San Benito, Texas, was flown via airmail from Miami to Cristobal in the Panama Canal Zone, for delivery to a sailor aboard the U.S.S. *Pennsylvania*. The postage rate was 20¢ per half ounce. The letter, weighing in excess of half an ounce, required a total of 40¢ postage, paid by a 6¢ airmail stamp, and two Fourth Bureau issues: a 20¢ Golden Gate and the 14¢ American Indian.

The 15¢ Statue of Liberty is easily one of the most plentiful Fourth Bureau issues on airpost covers. Domestic solo usage will be encountered, but the majority of the surviving covers seem to be destined overseas. Registered airpost covers often contain the 15¢ Liberty as it fully paid for registry service.

An interesting domestic use of a 15¢ Liberty stamp is shown in Figure 42. Mailed in Los Angeles to Worcester, Mass., the cover was overweight, requiring postage for a second ounce. In 1931 such letters were discouraged, if not practically penalized by the airmail postage rate of 5¢ for the first ounce and 10¢ for the second and each additional ounce. The sender would have been better off economically to send two letters rather than one!

Another interesting domestic use is shown in Figure 43. In this case a pair of 15¢ Fourth Bureaus frank the registered airpost cover sent from New York to Washington, D.C. in 1937. The basic airmail rate was 6¢ per ounce, but the letter was double weight, requiring 12¢ airmail postage. The sender also paid 15¢ for registry service, and 3¢ for return receipt service, a total of 30¢.

The 17¢ Wilson Fourth Bureau is altogether different from the rest of the series. This stamp was introduced in 1925 to pay the ordinary surface letter rate of 2¢ plus the 15¢ registry fee. It is difficult to find on airpost covers, and is invariably combined with other values. This was the first and last of the Fourth Bureaus to feature a portrait of a former president in the horizontal format. All others featuring presidents, including the 13¢ Harrison which was designed and issued at the same time as the Wilson stamp, were done in the vertical format. All of the other horizontal format stamps portrayed buildings, scenic panoramas, or animals.

The Wilson Fourth Bureau, as shown in Figure 44, was added to a very basic 3¢ postal stationery to fully pay the 20¢ per half ounce airpost letter rate to the Panama Canal Zone in 1936. The cover never reached its intended recipient, at least not at Balboa, nor aboard the steamer *Pennsylvania*. The cover was eventually returned to New York as indicated by the forwarding arrow.

The 17¢ issue, like the other odd and unusual middle values, is quite scarce on commercial airpost covers. I have seen but one other usage with a 5¢ airmail stamp on cover to Czechoslovakia, and that particular cover was underpaid. As the 17¢ stamp did not correctly pay any of the common domestic or international airpost (nor combination surface + airpost) rates, nor did it properly pay for any of the extra services such as registry or special delivery, there are very few examples to draw from that illustrate much more than the concept of up-rating postal stationery or low-value airmail stamps. Of course the same applies to the 13¢ and 14¢ issues, and to a lesser extent, the 11¢ issue.

*Color images, pages 36-37*

Figure 28. 10¢ Monroe solo, San Francisco to London, pays domestic airmail plus surface treaty rate to England.

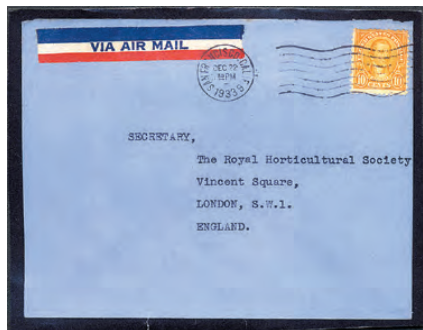


Fig. 29. Three x 10¢ Monroe, NYC to London, 1940 via Clipper airmail.



Figure 30. Four x 10¢ Monroe plus 8¢ Grant pay double weight trans-continental 3-zone 24¢ rate.



Figure 31. Five x 10¢ Monroe pay 50¢ NYC to New Zealand in 1938.



Figure 32. Eight x 10¢ Monroe pays double rate letter, Sherman, Texas, to Argentina in 1938.



Figure 33. Solo 11¢ Hayes, Toledo to Cairo (surface to Europe, air to Egypt).



Figure 34. 11¢ Hayes used to up-rate 3¢ stationery for air-sea-air service to Denmark.



Figure 35. Pair of 11¢ Hayes + pair of 2¢ Washington pay 26¢ postage and registry fee from San Francisco to Prague, Czechoslovakia.



Figure 36. Solo 12¢ Cleveland pays for double-weight letter from California to Toronto, Canada in 1938.



Figure 37. Two pair of 12¢ Cleverlands pay 48¢ of the 50¢ postage from NYC to Brazil.



Figure 38. A single 13¢ Harrison plus 5¢ Beacon airmail pays for catapult service (15¢) and surface overseas postage for this postcard.



Figure 39. Very scarce airpost usage of 11¢ Hayes and 13¢ Harrison to pay postage, registry and return receipt fees.



Figure 40. Commercial use of 14¢ Indian to pay 5¢ surface to Amsterdam plus 9¢ airmail to Aleppo, Syria. Airmail stamp pays registry fee!



Figure 41. Double weight letter required 40¢ postage for airmail service to the Panama Canal Zone, including the 14¢ Indian.



Figure 42. 15¢ Liberty stamp paid unusual double-weight postage of 5¢ per first ounce plus 10¢ per second ounce in 1931



Figure 43. Pair of 15¢ Liberty issues handle postage—12¢ for double weight letter, 15¢ registry and 3¢ return receipt fee.



Figure 44. Single 17¢ Wilson up-rates the 3¢ stationery to 20¢ for airmail delivery to Panama.

To be continued

## Yesterday in USSN:

# The High Cents Value Fourth Bureaus

20¢ Golden Gate, 25¢ Niagara Falls, 30¢ Bison & 50¢ Arlington Memorial  
by Steve Turechek

*(From U.S. Stamp News, April 2006)*

*(We continue to convert this series by Steve Turechek from the black & white images we used in 2005-2006 to full color, with the figures on pages 36 and 37. JFD.)*

The advent of airmail service throughout Central and South America in the 1930s, did not lead to issuance of airmail stamps of sufficient face value to pay the postage. Before the Zeppelin stamps, which were intended specifically for airship mail, the 20¢ green map airmail of 1924 was the highest value airmail stamp commonly available. Yet the 20¢ map airmail was more than 10 years old by the time airmail service was catching on to South America. Hence, as a rule of thumb, we see covers requiring 20¢ and more in postage increasingly franked with Fourth Bureau issues only, and to a lesser extent with airmail stamps.

The 20¢ Golden Gate Fourth Bureau is relatively common on airpost covers. The stamp can be readily found in solo, multiple and combination usages. During the mid-1920s when the U.S. transcontinental airmail route was operated by the Government, 24¢ was required for a coast-to-coast airmail letter. Thus, as the 1926 example shows in Figure 45, the 20¢ Golden Gate can be found paying the bulk of the postage, with the addition of a 2¢ Fourth Bureau to up-rate 2¢ postal stationery in order to pay the 24¢ per ounce single letter rate.

International usages to South America abound. The 20¢ Fourth Bureau fully paid the half ounce airmail letter rate to most countries in Latin or Central America; one example can be seen in Figure 46. This cover was posted in 1937 from Oakland, California to the Pacific Refrigeration Company's agent in Costa Rica. Also posted in 1937, the cover in Figure 47 catches your eye thanks to three red ribbon-bordered Air Mail markings. Addressed to Havana, Cuba from New York, the pair of 20¢ Golden Gate stamps on this cover, plus the 10¢ Monroe, pay 5 times the 10¢ per ounce airpost rate.

The next stamp of the Fourth Bureau series is the green 25¢ Niagara Falls issue. This stamp is somewhat more difficult to find on airpost covers than might be expected. Throughout the mid-1920s era of domestic Contract Air Mail (CAM), combined rates for two CAM legs plus one Government zone, or one CAM leg plus three Government zones required 25¢ postage. (Each CAM leg cost 10¢, and each Government zone cost 5¢, when combined with one or more CAM legs.) Twenty-five cents was about the upper limit citizens were willing to pay to expedite a personal letter, and very few non-philatelic usages reside in collections.

An example of a domestic, CAM-era, solo use of the 25¢ Niagara Falls is shown in Figure 48. This is a first-flight cover from Seattle, Wash., flown on the inaugural flight from Pasco, Wash., to Elko, Nev., by contract operator, thence to New York via the Government transcontinental airmail route for delivery in New Jersey. The sender

dressed up a plain envelope with blue crayon in order to catch the attention of postal officials since an airmail stamp was not used. A special red cachet was also applied, indicating the cover was flown on the first airmail flight from Pasco to Elko.

Such covers are generally considered philatelic in nature, but this one is somewhat different. Philatelic first-flight covers prepared by collectors and dealers were commonly franked with airmail stamps on standard size envelopes with the red and blue lozenge border, and returned to the sender, often in care of the postmaster at the end of the flight segment. This cover is an odd size, plain, and full of manuscript markings, including crayon lines, "Via Air Mail" endorsement and a "recd 10 AM April 9-1926" docket. From any collector's point of view, this cover is messy at best. The heavier paper stock, unusual size, feathered backflap edge and overall envelope design suggests it contained personal correspondence, perhaps a greeting card. It is addressed from a married woman in Seattle to a married woman in New Jersey. Most "first flights" were opportunities for stamp collectors to create a cover; I believe Mrs. Barnes merely saw this first flight as an opportunity to expedite a personal message to a friend living on the opposite coast. What's your opinion?

The mid-1930s saw expansion of airmail service across the Pacific Ocean to the Philippines and beyond. Pioneered by Pan American Airways, airmail letters going to the Philippines from America cost the sender 75¢. Although special airmail stamps were issued for this trans-pacific service, the Fourth Bureau issues were equally valid. An example is pictured in Figure 49.

This cover likely carried personal correspondence. Mailed in 1936 from Denver to Manila, it is franked with a strip of three of the 25¢ Niagara Falls issue. How long did it take to hopscotch halfway across the continental U.S. and the Pacific? This cover was postmarked on July 20th and was backstamped in Manila on August 4th.

By 1940 the world was at war yet again. The cover in Figure 50 is an example of a solo international airpost use of the 25¢ Niagara Falls stamp. Posted in 1940 from New Jersey to the Caribbean island of Aruba (Netherlands West Indies), this cover was flown by Pan American Airways. Upon arrival in Curacao the cover was censored, resealed, and a red rubber stamp cachet added on the back which reads "Remember, when reading news dispatches from Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Arnhem or elsewhere in Holland, that our Democracy is temporarily in the hands of the enemy."

As we work into the increasingly higher face value stamps, it is obvious that each cover required a greater amount of postage for airmail service. By way of transition from the 25¢ to the 30¢ Bison issue, consider the cover in Figure 51. Franked with a single of each of these two

stamps, this cover was posted in New York City in 1932, destined for Montevideo, Uruguay. The airmail rate was 55¢ per half ounce. Each stamp has a sideways perfin design of a C surrounding an H—initials of the Central Hanover Bank and Trust Company.

The 30¢ Bison issue is somewhat more common on airpost covers than the 25¢ issue. Solo usages, including domestic and international, are also somewhat more abundant than usages with additional stamps. The cover in Figure 52 illustrates the 30¢ per half ounce rate to Surinam (Dutch Guiana) in 1936. In 1939 trans-Atlantic airmail service became available at the basic rate of 30¢ per half ounce to many European countries.

A nice commercial example can be seen in Figure 53. This cover was mailed in 1940, a rather late use of any Fourth Bureau issue, from New York to Lisbon, Portugal. The 30¢ bison stamp correctly paid the half ounce rate for carriage aboard a giant Boeing 314 'Clipper' flying boat.

Domestic solo airpost use of the 30¢ Fourth Bureau stamp is not common, as airmail stamps were generally available, especially in New York. So when an example similar to the cover with all the markings in Figure 54 comes along, it is generally well worth your time to seek out the underlying story. In 1928 the domestic airmail rate was 11¢ per half ounce. This cover must have been heavy, i.e., triple weight, as no other services were endorsed besides 'air mail.' What's unusual is that the cover was mistakenly addressed to Sioux City, Missouri, rather than Iowa.

This cover departed New York City and flew to Chicago, where it was backstamped and re-addressed to Iowa. A circular marking states "Address changed or completed by N.S.M.D., No. 42, Chicago, ILL P.O." Fixing the address obviously took time, because, whether from Chicago or Iowa City, the cover was "Forwarded by Train to Advance

Delivery". That's probably a polite way of saying the letter missed its connecting flight. By plane and train this cover was eventually delivered.

The final cents-denominated Fourth Bureau issue is the 50¢ Arlington Amphitheater. Again, we are far more apt to encounter solo usages than multiples of this stamp on airpost covers. The 50¢ stamp characteristically paid for a combination of postage and extra services, paid for heavy weight letters, or paid for very long distance. Our first example is shown in Figure 55. This 1928 domestic cover postmarked in Santa Clara, Calif. is addressed to Lancaster, Pa. It required 50¢ postage because the contents weighed in excess of two and a half ounces; at a rate of 10¢ per half ounce, this cover cost five times the single-letter rate.

The second cover featuring this stamp also shows a solo usage. Mailed from Toledo, Ohio to Barranquilla, Colombia in 1937, this cover was registered in addition to receiving airmail service. The half ounce postage rate was 35¢, plus the 15¢ registry fee for a total of 50¢. See Figure 56.

One final example of the 50¢ issue is shown in Figure 57. In 1933 when the cover was mailed, the postage rate was 50¢ per half ounce to Chile. As it appears, a postal employee or the sender began affixing airmail stamps. Quickly discovering that real estate was getting scarce, the postal person looked for a little more 'bang for the buck', and decided to use the smaller but more potent 50¢ stamps. After applying a pair of 50¢ Arlingtons, no doubt the postal clerk lost track of the postage needed for the remaining half ounce. Five 8¢ airmail stamps paid 40¢, leaving the cover 10¢ short. Yet postal officials let the letter slip through, making it quite a bargain for the sender.

*Images, pages 36-37*

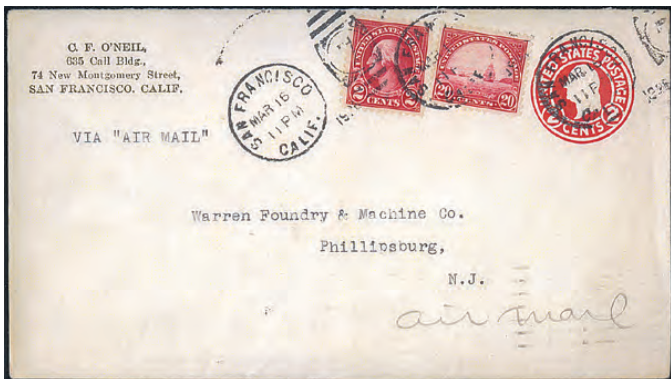


Fig. 45. 1926 Transcontinental route, 24¢ 3-zone rate.

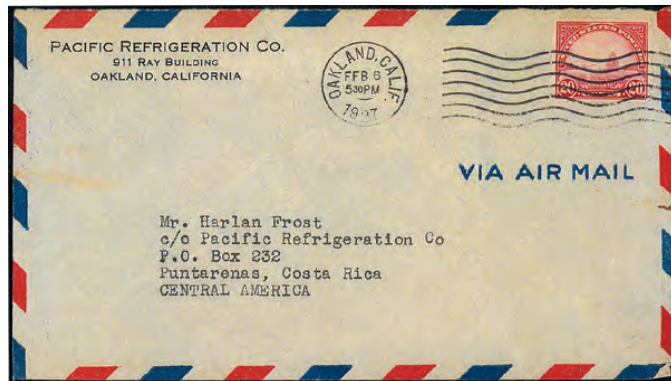


Fig. 46. California to Costa Rica: 20¢ per half ounce rate in 1937



Figure 47. Five times 10¢ per half ounce rate to Cuba in 1937

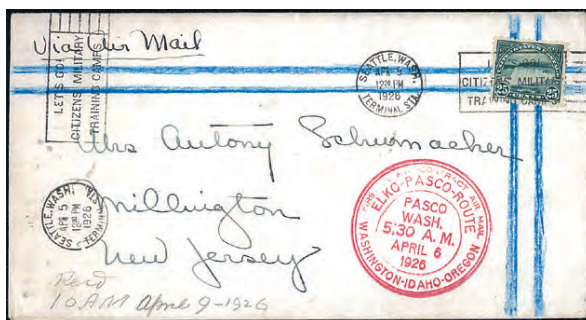


Fig. 48. 1926 CAM first flight cover, Seattle to New Jersey, 10¢ CAM leg plus 15¢ for three government zones



Fig. 49. Trans-pacific airmail, Colorado to the Philippines, cost 75¢ in 1936.

Fig. 50. Early WW II censored cover, New Jersey to the island of Aruba, 25¢ rate

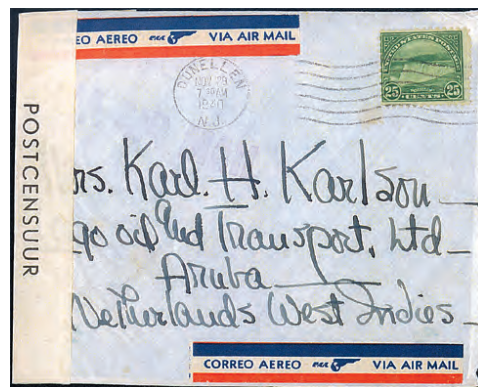


Fig. 51. 55¢ pays the half-ounce rate to Uruguay in 1932. Stamps have sideways perfin design of "C" surrounding "H".



Fig. 52. 30¢ FAM airmail to Dutch Guiana in 1936



Fig. 53. Trans-atlantic airmail to Portugal via Clipper flying boat



Fig. 54. Triple weight air and train letter to Sioux City, Iowa, mis-addressed to Missouri and corrected enroute.



Fig. 55. Five times single letter rate California to Pennsylvania in 1928



Fig. 57. Triple weight air and train letter to Sioux City, Iowa, mis-addressed to Missouri and corrected enroute.



Fig. 56. Combined postage and registry total 50¢ to fly this cover from Ohio to Colombia

To be continued



## Yesterday in USSN:

# The Fourth Bureau Dollar Values

**\$1 Lincoln Memorial, \$2 Capitol, \$5 America**

by **Steve Turechek** (From *U.S. Stamp News*, May and June 2006 Issues)

(We conclude this series by Steve Turechek.)

The dollar value Fourth Bureau stamps are found on airpost covers in extremely limited numbers. Most of the \$1 stamps paid multiples of a basic rate to a given South American country. The \$2 stamp is severely limited to Zeppelin or other philatelically inspired covers requiring high postage. There is only one known airpost use of the \$5 America stamp, and it is on piece; it passed through dealer Jim Forte's hands a number of years ago.

A nice commercial use of the \$1 Lincoln Memorial stamp can be seen in Figure 59, page 28. The cover, mailed from Boston, Mass. to Sao Paulo, Brazil, and weighing in excess of one half ounce, required postage of \$1, the basic rate being 50¢ per half ounce.

The cover of a wooden box that carried film reels documenting the crash of the American airship *Shenandoah* was franked with 64 of the \$1 stamp and sent via airmail from Chicago to New Brunswick, N.J. This "cover" is illustrated on page 17 of *Via Airmail*, edited by Simineg Short and Cheryl Ganz and published in 1992 by The American Air Mail Society. This is probably the largest surviving multiple use of the \$1 stamp.

In 1934 the airpost rate to Uruguay was 55¢ per half ounce. The cover in Figure 60 weighed over a half ounce, thus requiring \$1.10 in postage. This commercial banking cover has two stamps, a single \$1 Lincoln Memorial and a 10¢ Monroe. These particular stamps are also, "perfins", having the uppercase alphabet letters "C" and "H" punched into the center. The "C" is larger, nearly surrounding the smaller "H". The perfin letters are simply abbreviations for the Central Hanover Bank and Trust Company, the source of the correspondence.

Finding any airmail usage of the \$2 Capitol stamp is extremely difficult. However during the 1930s Germany conducted a large number of ocean crossings with their Graf Zeppelin. Many countries were visited, and many countries issued special airmail stamps to pay the extremely high postage rates for souvenir or commercial covers carried aloft.

Until the Hindenburg disaster, Germany had a fairly regular and successful trans-Atlantic airmail service via airship. The colorful example in Figure 61 is but one example. The light blue cover was carefully prepared by the sender, to include the hand-painted edge stripes in yellow, red and black on the left edge for Germany, and red, white and blue on the right edge for the United States. This and more than 19,000 cards and covers were prepared

for that flight.

Covers were dispatched by steamer from New York to Germany, where the Zeppelins flight began. The airship proceeded on May 18th, 1930 to Rio De Janeiro, Brazil and departed there on May 28th bound for Lakehurst, NJ. Graf Zeppelin arrived in Lakehurst on May 31st, thus completing this cover's carefully scripted "New York to New York via Friedrichshafen Graf Zeppelin to Lakehurst N.J." routing endorsement.

The postage for covers was \$2.60. An additional 5¢ was required for return airmail service from New York to the addressee in Cleveland.

This is the flight of the Graf for which the U.S. issued its famous set of Zeppelin airpost stamps. These stamps should have been used to completely pay for the postage. Yet for some reason a \$2 Fourth Bureau was used to pay the bulk of the postage. It's doubtful the Post Office simply ran out of the preferred stamps. Perhaps a momentary shortage in his drawer led the postal clerk to affix the Fourth Bureau instead of the preferred Zeppelin issue.

I have personally seen just three additional covers franked with the \$2 Fourth Bureau issue come up at auction. All were on philatelic Zeppelin flights. If any reader knows of a \$2 commercial example, be it solo, multiple or combined with other stamps, correctly paying postage (and/or extra service fees), please send a photocopy to the author. I'll reimburse your postage and copy costs.

The final Fourth Bureau stamp in the series was the bi-colored \$5 'America'. It is probable that some packages and boxes sent via airmail during the 1922-1940 time frame required \$5 or more in postage. But such items rarely survive in collectors' hands due to their unwieldy size and constitution. Such items are nearly impossible to exhibit.

So we are left with the long-term challenge of finding a \$5 'America' stamp on a commercial airpost cover. (Even a nice used single or used multiple with an airmail field cancel or wings postmark would be a great item in an airpost collection.)

But that is not the only potential area for expansion from the ending point of this survey. In this and preceding articles in this series I have presented examples of 27 face-different denominations flown via airmail; there remain perforation, printing, imperforate, pre-cancel, perfin, overprint, coil, booklet pane, and color shade varieties for the enthusiast to chase that would greatly expand on the few examples presented here.

## Fourth Bureau Airpost Combos

### A Few Eye-popping Examples Conclude Our Series

In completing the current survey of Fourth Bureau issues on airpost covers, I have come across several covers that did not fit well into the discussion of any one particu-

lar denomination. Yet I think you will agree some of these covers deserve a bit of discussion.

To set the stage, the following covers contain unusual

combinations of Fourth Bureau denominations and/or other stamps. The common thread of course is that these covers were flown either part, or all the way to their various destinations.

The first cover we have to examine is shown in Figure 62, and it fully qualifies as a “problem cover.” I’m not referring to the tattered right edge, but rather to everything else! The cover was mailed April 18, 1938 from the Mennonite mission in Newton, Kans., to India. Three different Fourth Bureau stamps were added to the basic 3¢ postal stationery, up-rating the postage to 30¢.

In their book *U.S. International Postal Rates, 1872-1996*, Wawrukiewicz and Beecher indicate the surcharge for an airmail letter from Amsterdam to India was 15¢ per half ounce in addition to the postage to get the cover to Amsterdam. Here is where we run into difficulty. The cover is manuscript endorsed in two distinct handwriting styles, “Air Mail (Via Holland)” and “From Amsterdam + in India”. For surface transit to Amsterdam, 5¢ postage was required. For air in the U.S. plus surface to Europe, 8¢ was required.

The cover could be overpaid by 7¢, if it weighed a half ounce or less. But it appears more likely to be underpaid by at least 5¢ (equating to free surface delivery from Kansas to Amsterdam), and it may even have received a free airplane ride from Kansas to New York (another 3¢ forfeited by the Post Office Department).

As if that isn’t confusing enough, delivery to the addressee in India became a major challenge. The cover is addressed to Janjgir, but appears to have been intentionally forwarded to Panjgur, as evidenced by two different manuscript “Try Panjgur” endorsements, yet never delivered. The cover has Panjgur backstamps dated May 21 and May 24; June 9 (on the front) and again on June 14, 1938. It was apparently returned to the post office where an exasperated official wrote in red ink “Janjgur (Bilaspur)” three times on the front, and on the back, “It is intended for Janjgir (Bilaspur) and not for Panjgur”. The carmine, purple, green, and orange colors of the postage, blue airmail label, and the red forwarding manuscripts all combine for a colorful rainbow effect. What a mess!

The cover in Figure 63 shows airpost usage of four different Fourth Bureau issues, the 2¢, 6¢, 9¢ and 12¢ paying a total of 55¢ postage to Argentina in 1936. Of course there is always more than one way to skin a cat.

The cover in Figure 64, also sent to Argentina while the same rate was in effect, shows airpost usage of 9¢, 10¢ and 30¢ Fourth Bureaus to up-rate a 6¢ airmail postal stationery, again to 55¢.

As discussed in a previous installment of this series, the 17¢ Wilson presents a most difficult challenge to find commercially used on airpost covers. Sometimes you just can’t help but wonder how two scarce items can emerge from the woodwork in an impossibly short period of time, after years of diligent, though fruitless searching.

The cover in Figure 65 is a registered airpost usage of the 6¢ and two 17¢ Fourth Bureaus, combined with five 15¢ map airmail stamps. The cover was sent from New York to Chile in 1930. The postage required was 50¢ per half ounce. Registry service was 15¢. The stamps pay a total of \$1.15 for the double weight letter.

The second cover sporting a 17¢ Wilson is shown in

Figure 66. This 1933 cover was mailed from Puerto Rico to the President of Paraguay. Flown via Foreign Airmail (FAM) route to the Canal Zone, and thence to South America, it required 55¢ postage, same as if it had been mailed from the continental U.S. In addition to the Wilson Fourth Bureau, a 3¢ Washington, 5¢ Beacon airmail and three 10¢ map airmails complete the franking.

The runner up for most extreme use of Fourth Bureau issues on an airpost cover is shown in Figure 67. Although the cover is obviously philatelic, it shows a very scarce combination usage of the 6¢, 8¢, 11¢, 12¢ and 13¢ Fourth Bureaus to pay the required 50¢ postage for covers flown via the Graf Zeppelin airship from Friedrichshafen, Germany, to Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. Although the airship completed its journey to Chicago and back to Germany, the cover traveled on via surface mail back to Chicago. To get to Germany for the flight, covers were funneled to New York and sailed to Europe ahead of the flight. The actual flight departed Germany on October 14th, arriving in Brazil four days later. It has a Brazilian backstamp. You can see the cover is really more a souvenir than anything else.

The undisputed winner for the most extreme use of Fourth Bureau issues on an airpost cover is displayed in Figure 68. Also philatelic, this cover documents a significant event in aviation history.

In 1933 the Italians, under the visionary leadership of Air Force General Italo Balbo, embarked in a squadron of seaplanes and headed for America. In a stunning display of operational skill, the Italians completed their journey, winging their way to Chicago and landing on Lake Michigan.

Registered covers were flown on the return trip from New York to Rome, Italy. The postage required was a hefty \$3.60, a huge sum for any philatelic souvenir at the height of the Great Depression.

This cover has ten face-different Fourth Bureau issues, plus two 6¢ Washington bicentennial commemoratives. There is a large round, purple flight cachet, plus a smaller blue circular flight cachet. The cover was backstamped in Torino and Rome.

Balbo’s flights showed just how advanced the Regia Aeronautica was compared to the air forces of the world’s leading powers. Neither America nor Great Britain had a fleet of seaplanes capable of crossing the Atlantic. Clearly the Italians might just as easily have carried bombs and torpedoes in place of postal cachets. Their spectacular aerial achievement served as a wake-up call for army and naval aviators alike in America.

And while airplanes were slowly eclipsing ships in terms of military might, they were also advancing the speed of international letter mail.

Although a Fascist, Balbo argued for Italy to side with England during WWII. He served as governor of Libya, and flew patrols over North Africa. Military flying is a dangerous business; Balbo was shot down and killed by the anti-aircraft gunners assigned to his own base in 1940.

Collecting the stories behind all the airpost covers in the nine parts of this series has proven a worthy and rewarding challenge. I would love to carry on the dialogue with other collectors similarly smitten. My email address is <turecheks@ hotmail.com>.

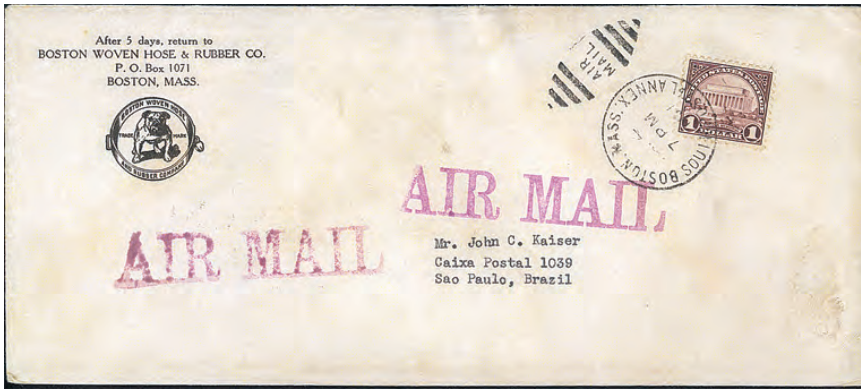


Figure 59. \$1 pays double weight letter, Boston to Brazil.



Figure 60. Double weight to Uruguay in 1934. \$1 perfin plus 10¢ perfin for bank pay twice the 55¢ per half-ounce airmail rate.



Figure 61. \$2 Capitol pays bulk of \$2.65 Zeppelin airship postage, Germany to South America to Lakehurst, N.J., in 1930

## A Few Eye-popping Combos Conclude Our Series



Figure 62. 30¢ to India via Amsterdam. Forwarded twice.



Figure 63. 55¢ via FAM to Argentina.



Figure 64. 55¢ to Argentina—odd value 9¢ to up-rate 6¢ stationery to even nickel!



Figure 65. Two 17¢ Wilsons plus 6¢ Garfield and five airmail stamps pay \$1.15 for double-weight Registered letter.



Figure 66. Note 17¢ Wilson and three other issues pay 55¢ rate from Puerto Rico to Paraguay.



Figure 67. Five different Fourth Bureau issues pay 50¢ for Zepelin airship service to Germany to Brazil to Chicago in 1933.



Figure 68. Mother of all Fourth Bureau airmail covers: ten face-different, plus two Washington Bicentennials.