

U. S. Airmail
Kenneth Pruess

(Slide 1 - Title)

(Slide 2 - Kinds of Stamps)

This program will take a brief look at the types of air mail items listed in Scott's U.S. Specialized catalog. Note that all Scott catalog numbers include the letter "C" as part of the number.

(Slide 3 - C3)

The first airmail stamp was the 24-cent value which paid for service between Washington D.C., Philadelphia, and New York. This service began May 15, 1918.

(Slide 4 - C3a)

The most famous of all air mail stamps is probably this stamp with inverted center, commonly known as the "inverted Jenny".

(Slide 5 - C2)

The fee was reduced to 16 cents for this tri-city service on July 15.

(Slide 6 - C1)

The fee was again reduced to 6 cents on December 18. So these stamps are numbered in the reverse order to that in which they were issued.

(Slide 7 - C4-6)

On July 1, 1924 service began between New York and San Francisco. This was divided into 3 zones with 8 cents per zone. Thus the complete trip cost 24 cents.

(Slide 8 - Omaha to California)

This cover went through 2 zones, requiring 16 cents postage.

(Slide 9 - To Germany)

This cover did not go by air. But the stamps were valid for all postage and covered the cost of postage plus registration to Germany.

(Slide 10 - C10a Lindberg)

The 10 cent stamp was issued in both sheet form and as booklet panes of 3. This paid the domestic 10-cent rate now in effect in 1927.

(Slide 11 - C11 Beacon)

On Aug. 1, 1928 the fee was reduced to 5 cents for anywhere in the U.S. This is referred to as the "Beacon" stamp.

(Slide 12 - Beacon Uses)

The Beacon stamp was widely used for first flights and airport dedication covers, either of which could be the subject of an entire exhibit.

(Slide 13 - C13-15 Zeppelins)

Another famous set is the Zeppelins which were issued for the first Europe-PanAmerica round trip flight. They were on sale for less than 3 months.

(Slide 14 - Zep Cover)

Each leg of a trip cost 65 cents. Here we have a round trip which had 4 legs and thus required \$2.60 postage.

(Slide 15 - Baby Zep)

The so-called 50-cent "Baby Zep" was issued as part of the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition in 1933. The Zeppelin Company got 42½ cents for each stamp used on covers flown by them.

(Slide 16 - Airport Dedication)

Here is another airport dedication cover. It was not required that airmail stamps be used and perhaps the Red Cloud, Nebraska did not have airmail stamps since prior to this date they had no direct airmail service.

(Slide 17 - CE1-2)

Special stamps were used for a short time to pay the combination of airmail plus special delivery fees for maximum speed in delivery. These were in use for only a few years.

(Slide 18 - CE2 First Day)

Here is a First Day cover of CE2 with a famous Dorothy Knapp hand-painted cachet.

(Slide 19 - Buffalo Balloon)

Listed by Scott as a semi-official stamp, this 1877 balloon flight didn't go very far.

(Slide 20 - Balloon Cover)

This is the only known copy of the stamp used on a cover. Note that it also required U.S. postage to get it to its final destination.

(Slide 21 - Vin Fiz)

The only other listed semi-official airmail stamp actually did carry mail. Vin Fiz was a popular soft drink in 1911 and gained some publicity with this stamp. Only 1 copy is known on cover.

(Slide 22 - Vin Fiz Use)

But about 8 post cards are known which used the stamp.

(Slide 23 - RF Overprint)

With a catalog number prefix of RM, airmail stamps were overprinted with a handstamp for use by French Naval personnel on mail to the U.S. or Canada.

(Slide 24 - RF Overprint)

Quite a few varieties of this overprint are known. These stamps should be collected only if used on cover. Mint copies exist but most may not be genuine.

(Slide 25 - Postal Stationery)

Stamped envelopes can be collected mint, used, or as first day covers. The UC listings follow the other stamped envelopes in Scott.

(Slide 26 - Mint Envelopes)

The 5-cent UC1 is the first envelope in this category. There are many more, including a revalued envelope UC31 when the rate went from 6 to 7 cents.

(Slide 27 - Canal Zone)

Expanding our horizon, the Canal Zone was also covered under U.S. postal regulations.

(Slide 28 - Air Letter)

Air letters which did not include any contents other than that written on the inside of the folded cover received special rates to anywhere in the world.

(Slide 29 - Postal Cards)

UXC is the prefix for airmail postal cards. Most are inexpensive and readily available in either mint condition or as First Day Covers. But only a very few are easy to obtain postally used.

(Slide 30 - UXC1)

Here is a First Day of the first airmail postal card.

(Slide 31 - UXC2)

And a mint copy of the second card when the rate was increased from 4 to 5 cents.

(Slide 32 - First Days)

Cacheted First Day covers can be created only by adding the cachet after the card has been cancelled.

(Slide 33 - To Yemen)

Here is an attempted actual use to Yemen but it never got there because service was suspended.

(Slide 34 - End of Air Mail)

Domestic air mail service officially ended on October 11, 1975 and almost all mail going any distance went by air after that date. Separate foreign service ended in 1991 when all mail went by air. But the U.S. still includes small planes in the design of stamps for basic first class mail to foreign countries and Scott still lists these stamps in the Air Mail section.

This is the end to what has been only a brief introduction to U.S. air mail stamps.