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Box 961, Boston, Mass. 02103

NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN SEMI-OFFICIAL AIR MAIL STUDY GROUP

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Robert W. Marcello, Editor



PROGRESS REPORT, SPRING 1990

After a hiatus of more than a year, the newsletter has been revived!

Several of you wrote to me, during the absence of newsletters after the "Summer 1988" issue, to ask questions or offer various bits of information about Canadian semi-official air mail, and thus some of us have kept the study group alive by corresponding.

I intended to write this sooner, as part of a newsletter in 1989 to everyone in the study group, but have been preoccupied with several pressing matters, including a career change. Time just seemed to slip away too quickly. And so, this letter to all members of our Canadian semi-official air mail study group is an update on not only my situation, but more important, it is an update on the state of the study group.

To begin, some background... Last year my regular job as a printer for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts became increasingly demanding (and a lot less satisfying) to the point where, in the summer I decided to retire July 5, after 26 years of state service. Now I am in the process of turning my part-time stamp business into a paying proposition, and that takes most of my attention each week. Anyway, the demands on my time and energy have made it nearly impossible for me to do everything I would like to do. One area that has suffered from neglect is the study group.

Originally, I had hopes of being able to publish a newsletter with about 10 to 15 pages every two months, and it was a noble goal; but the experience shows me that a more realistic approach would be to issue a newsletter with fewer pages, probably three times a year at most.

Also, it seems that a sensible solution to the problem of one person not being able to do everything that needs to be done (concerning the study group) is to have an assistant to

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help with details and responsibilities. Fortunately, Jim Davis, a new member from Durham, N.C., has volunteered to help. Jim's assistance will be most welcome, and I am delighted to accept his offer. The group still may need additional help in one way or another as we go along.

This year may be a good time for the study group to establish a couple of committees: one, to deal primarily with the annual BNAPS conventions, where we are invited to conduct a study group meeting or seminar; another, to take on a specific area of study or interest. This might include, or be in addition to, a committee of "experts" to help with problems of identification, genuineness, errors and varieties, and to give opinions on submitted items, as suggested some time ago by Haughton Sanguinetti, Basil Burrell, and Murray Heifetz.

Owing to a combination of stumbling blocks, the study group was more or less in limbo last year. However, the group had a good beginning in 1988, when we published three newsletters with a total of 38 pages. A renewed interest is evident now, in addition to an influx of new members, so 1990 certainly appears to be more promising than 1989 was.

Incidentally, the suggestions we sent to the publishers, for improving the semi-official air mail section of the Scott Specialized Catalogue of Canadian Stamps, were incorporated into their 1989 edition. This was a very positive result of the study group's interest and activity.

Finally, I hope that every member of this Canadian semi-official air mail study group will benefit from and enjoy being a part of the study group. Please feel free to write, contribute information, offer suggestions, and ask questions. Clear photocopies of anything of interest are always welcome. With your help, 1990 can be a productive year for the study group.

-Bob Marcello

DONALD G. COX

We were saddened to learn of the death of Donald G. Cox, of Australia. A notice of his passing was published in the November/December 1988 issue of BNA Topics (page 50).

Don was a devoted member of our study group. When we last heard from him, in February 1988, he was involved in identifying constant varieties on several different Canadian semi-official air mail issues. His passing is a loss to all of us.

LETTERS AND COMMENTS

Haughton Sanguinetti sent us some interesting comments in regard to the cover illustrated with Ed Christman's article in the "Summer 1988" study group newsletter:

"On page nine of the bulletin you showed a copy of a cover addressed to E.A. Colson in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, that evidently was flown a portion of the way by Patricia Airways Limited.

"E.A. Colson -- was Everett A. Colson, a well-known stamp collector whose family lived in Scituate, Massachusetts. He was also active politically. At the time of the cover illustrated, he was serving as Postmaster of Haiti.

"During the administration of President Woodrow Wilson, revolutions shook Haiti and the U.S. Marines landed. In 1916, the U.S.A. and Haiti signed a treaty which gave the U.S.A. supervision over Haiti's finances, the right to intervene to maintain order, and permission to have control over the Haitian police force. The puppet government and the presence of the U.S. Marines continued until 1930, when President Herbert Hoover had the U.S. Congress vote to end the treaty and withdraw U.S. forces from Haiti. During this period, the Post Office of Haiti was under the supervision of a postmaster appointed by the U.S. President. Mr. E.A. Colson was the appointee of President Hoover.

"It was the custom of A.C. Roessler, whose activities with Canadian private air lines were well known and whose reputation as a promoter of them was not all bad, to send several letters on a first flight by a private express company to correspondents or customers and have them keep one cover and return the others to A.C. Roessler. It would seem that this was one of those covers. Most of the first flight covers were legitimate and without them philatelists would have a hard time checking the routes of these private air lines."

"AIR MAIL SPECIAL DELIVERY"

Uncle Jeff (from Oklahoma) once crossed a carrier pigeon with a woodpecker -- producing a bird that not only delivered the message, but knocked on the door as well.

More Letters and Comments

David York sent us the photocopy shown here, of a Patricia Airways and Exploration Limited proof. He tells us it is green on white, perf. 11 3/4.



Dave writes, "It is mentioned in literature, but I did not find an example listed in any of the old semi-official air mail auction catalogues that I have. Sure enough, it did show up... in a 1989 Firby auction.

"Anyhow," Dave continues, "the story has to do with where the stamp was found. One would think that most of this type of item would rest respectfully in a collection. This was found at the bottom of an auction lot box of literature. Except for three copies of Sanabria catalogues, only one of about 50 books and magazines in the box indicated anything about airmails in general. In addition to the proof, two covers were found with Puerto Rican semi-official airmails, and there were two inexpensive European air mail sets stuck between some pages."

Dave concludes, "To make a long story short... There are still some interesting items lost out there, just waiting to be found!"

NAVAL AIRCRAFT -- THE "EYES" OF A SHIP

In 1922, the U.S.S. Langley became the first experimental U.S. aircraft carrier. The ship was named in honor of American scientist Samuel Pierpont Langley, a pioneer in heavier-than-air flight studies.

He had flown models successfully in 1896. In 1903, Langley's full-scale airplane (financed by the U.S. War Department) was used in an attempt at flight, but could not be launched. Reconstructed in 1914, it flew.

A primary duty of Allied aircraft in World War I was to find German submarines. By the 1920s, naval biplanes were regarded as the "eyes" of a ship, and served as the ultimate crow's nest.