



BNAPS
AIR MAIL
STUDY
GROUP

VOLUME 5 - NUMBER 2

APRIL 1997

BNAPLEX '97 - ST. JOHN'S:

Our annual meeting will be held August 28th to 30th, 1997 in Newfoundland. A suggestion came to the study group officers that there would be a one frame exhibit by each group as we did in Edmonton. We have nothing definite as yet, but will you please see if you have a page or two that you would be willing to send to us for this show. Perhaps Newfoundland Air Mails and/or covers would be appropriate. When we hear further we'll let you know. Perhaps the August issue will be early again.

WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS - "COLLECT 10¢".

In the December 1996 issue of the Newsletter Ed Christman asked for an understanding of what the company cachet on the back of one of his covers stood for. The front of the cover said "from Rainbow Lake" and was cancelled at Rolling Portage in July 1928.



A reply from Derek Rance came saying he had no definite answers but he would like to make a few comments.

1. Rainbow Lake never had an official Post Office. This is why the government air mail route did not include this site. (Rainbow Lake mail was processed at Jackson Manion. (See AAMC 121)
2. Rainbow Lake appears on no maps that I have seen. This site is not mentioned in the Ontario Department of Mines 1928 geological report on the Woman, Narrow, and Confederation Lakes area. I suspect from the flight route described in AAMC 121, that Rainbow Lake was an unofficial renaming of Rowe Lake, which lies between Woman Lake (Jackson Manion) and Clearwater Lake (Confederation Lake). Possible misunderstanding of name - Rowe = Rainbow? In any event, Rainbow Lake was obviously a short lived prospect.
3. In mid 1928, W.C.A., having absorbed Patricia Airways no longer accepted air mail payment other than by W.C.A. stamps - hence the 10¢ collect charge. This would be payable to W.C.A.

Note to Ed: This seems to be a late usage and with PA&E stamp +50% .

WHITEHORSE STAR:

Jim Longbourne wrote that he visited Col. Fred Eaton's store 35 to 40 years ago and he was selling the Whitehorse Star with stamp for about 50¢. He had about 50 at the time Jim got his. A bundle of 50 for \$25 would be interesting today, wouldn't it?

THE AIR MAIL STUDY GROUP is sponsored by the BRITISH NORTH AMERICA PHILATELIC SOCIETY. The Study Group News Letter is published three times a year. (December, April, August). Membership dues \$5.00 (US) or \$6.00 (CDN) and are payable to the Treasurer or BNAPS Study Group.

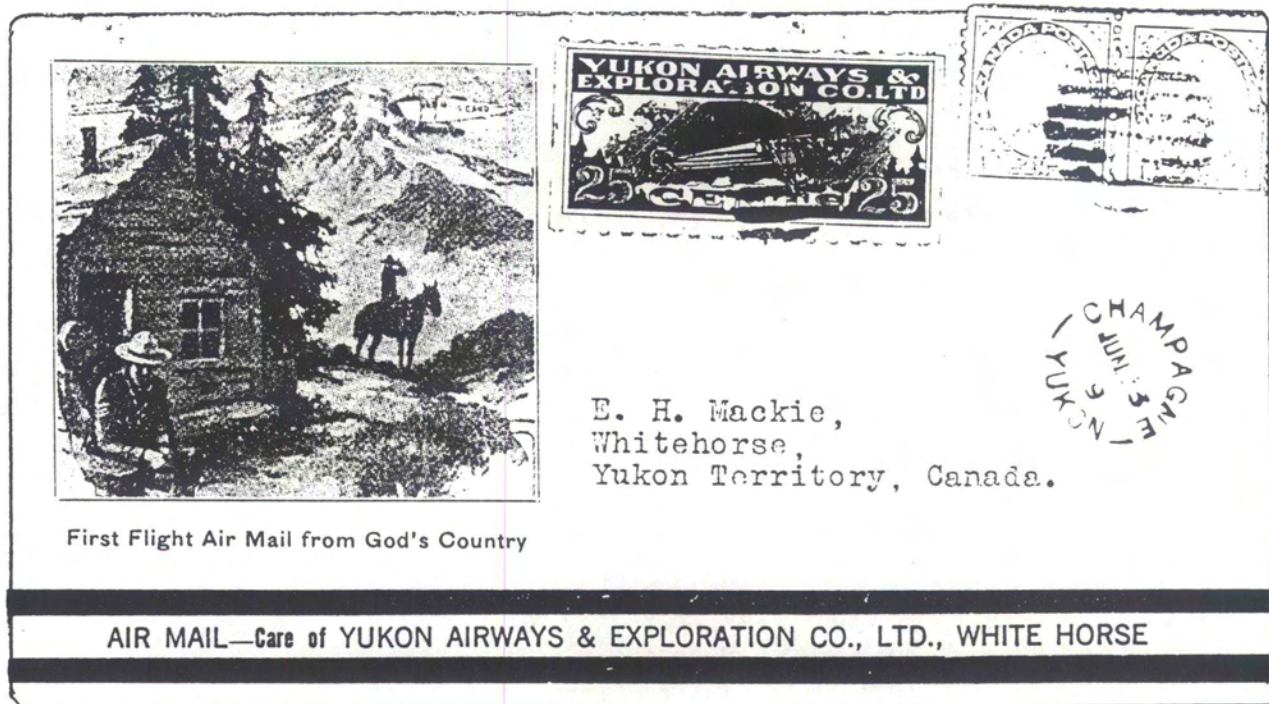


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A Doubletake Cover:by Fred Dietz

A doubletake happens when you have the sensation that you didn't see or comprehend all the details of something at first glance. Its like watching a video tape of a Marilyn Monroe movie, say *Seven Year Itch*, or *Some Like it Hot*, where you have to replay a scene to make sure that you've really seen what you think you've seen. To be sure, a second look doesn't always reveal something you didn't notice at first, but here's a Yukon Airways, CHAMPAGNE-WHITE HORSE, 23 JUN 29, semi-official first flight air mail cover that made me do a doubletake and led to a second look that was worthwhile.



The Yukon Airways stamp on a printed cacheted envelope seemed unusual to me and impelled my doubletake. I found that I missed much on first glance. A second, more discerning look at the scene in the cachet revealed that the mounted RCMP Constable is watching an aircraft fly by. Not any aircraft, mind you, but Western Canada Airways', "City of Toronto", G-CAGQ! But why doesn't the outpost's Sergeant look up from his whittling to witness this remarkable event? After all, Western Canada's Fokker Universals operated in the Prairie Provinces, not the Yukon Territory. Does he not look up because he knows that his mate is just seeing a mirage after another long winter in the Yukon? Why should he interrupt whatever he might be contemplating (Jeanette MacDonald?) to try to see something that can't possibly be there?

Then, on third look, I saw that the original scene didn't include anything unusual for the Sergeant to look at. It's clear that the airplane that appears in the cachet printed on the envelope wasn't in the original picture because it is drawn to a different scale. In fact, measurements disclosed that the airplane is an exact copy, perhaps a tracing, of the depiction on Western Canada Airways' semi-official air mail stamp, Scott #CL 40.

I discover new facets of the covers in my collection whenever I do a doubletake. Maybe it's time to rerun that old Clara Bow movie. Doubletakes might happen.

ZEBULON LEWIS LEIGH:

Forwarded by Mike Street.

Another of the famous barnstorming bush pilots who made our collection of first flight covers so interesting was laid to rest late last year. (See obit at right.)

You will see his name connected to the AAMS #577, July 4-6, 1935 when he flew the mail because because of washouts along the Northern Alberta Railways.

Note also that he flew the first flight from Fort Chipewyan to Goldfields, #579.

On your FFC's you may find: Z. Lewis Leigh, Lewis Leigh, L. Leigh, Z.L. Leigh or Z. Leigh. According to Dick Malott he used them all.

LEIGH, Group Captain Zebulon Lewis RCAF (Retired), OBE, C.M., D.S.O. - Lewis Leigh passed away in his 91st year, on Sunday, December 22, 1996, at West Lincoln Memorial Hospital, Grimsby, Ontario. Son of the late Lewis and Sarah (nee Rowbotham) Leigh, brother of Bert, Dick and the late Eric, brother-in-law of Frank Bowker, Mary Campbell and Elizabeth Richards. Beloved husband of Edna Leigh (nee Ewart) and the late Lillian Jane Leigh (nee Bowker). Born in Cheshire, England, on June 19, 1906, Lewie, as he was known, had one of Canada's most distinguished aviation careers. He was a pioneer flier on the prairies, in Atlantic Canada, in the far north and was the first pilot with Air Canada. Lewie served in the RCAF during and after W.W. II, where he was recognized as the father of Air Transport Command. After retiring from RCAF in 1957, Lewie settled in Grimsby. His many interests included charity work, hospital volunteering and fundraising, music, writing and fruit farming. In 1985, his autobiography, "And I Shall Fly", was published. Besides his formal decorations, Lewie's many honours included, McKee Trans - Canada Trophy, Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame, Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem and the U.S. Legion of Merit. Friends are invited to call at the STONEHOUSE-WHITCOMB FUNERAL HOME, 11 Mountain Street, Grimsby, on Monday, December 23rd from 7-9 p.m. The Funeral Service will be held on Tuesday, December 24th at 11 a.m. at the Funeral Home Chapel. Interment to follow in Queen's Lawn Cemetery, Grimsby. Those wishing to express their sympathy, may do so by making a memorial donation to the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital Foundation, 169 Main Street East, Grimsby, L3M 1P3.



W.M. Willson,
Grande Prairie,
Alta.

Thos. D. Kelly
Inspector of Postal Service
Z. Leigh
Pilot

CREATIVITY:

Our air mail associate in the old Soviet Union with the left pointing mounted Canadian Airs had only 3 hinges left to move three stamps to make the exhibit point right. Shown to the right are the 3 stamps that were moved. He will live to collect for a long long time.

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WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS, LTD.

From December 1926 to November 1930 Western Canada Airways, Ltd flew the mail from Sioux Lookout to Red Lake, Narrow Lake and the Woman Lake regions. There was one basic stamp used by the Air Line with a special stamp used on July 1st, 1927, the Diamond Jubilee of Canadian Confederation.

Here is a cross-reference that may be of help in studying WCA.

<u>Regular Issue</u>	Scott	1995 Dames	1982 Dames	Sis- sons	For- rest	Hol- mes	Sana- bria	Canada Splizd
10¢ black with pink background (thick paper)	CL40	S031	30	CS46	29	23	S33	CS36
Pale rose back- ground	CL40a	S031a	30a				S33a	
Dark Red back- ground	CL40b	S031b	30b				S33c	
Vertical pair imperf between	CL40c	S031c	30c	CS46a			S33d	
Horizontal pair imperf between	CL40d	S031d	30c				S33e	CS36a
Misplaced perf. variety	CL40e							
Vertical pair, imperf with one- line vert perf through middle	CL40f	S031f						
Two vertical rows of perfs through the design		S031e						
Black & Pink yellow paper							S33b	
<u>Jubilee Issue</u>								
10¢ black with orange background	CL41	S032	31	CS47	30	24	S34	CS37
Vertical pair imperf between	CL41a	S032a	31a	CS47a			S34a	
Intense black	CL41b							
Misplaced perf variety	CL41c							
Intense black vertical pair imperf between	CL41d							
Single row of perfs through the design		S032b						
Imperf horiz- ontal pair								CS37a

WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS, LTD.

I regret that the differences on the shades of the CL40, CL40a, and CL40b are not more easily differentiated, but please know that the originals are recognizable. Our hope is for better copies in the future.



CL40 (PINK)



CL40a (PALE ROSE)



CL40b (DARK RED) CL40e (SO31e)



CL41



CL41b

The basic stamp was CL40 printed with a pink background and delivered in two orders of 21,600 and 15,000 stamps. Printed in sheets of 200 the sheets were guillotined into panes of 50. A second order of 10,000 stamps was printed on a thinner paper and had a pale red background. (CL40a) A third order for stamps was delivered with a deeper red background at a later date. (CL40b) This was also for 10,000 making a total of 56,600.

WCA was one of several companies asked to bid on a proposal to have a stamp for the 75th anniversary of the Confederation. The plan was aborted but WCA asked for permission to issue and use their stamp (CL41) for the one day of the anniversary, July 1, 1927. Permission was granted and the company ordered 10,000. All WCA stamps were perforated 12.

One recently recognized variety is the "Intense Black" stamp CL41b.



CL40c



CL41a



CL41c

AIR CANADA'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY FLIGHT, 1986:

Canada Post Corporation issued a set of 50 flight covers to mark the beginning of the 50th year celebration of Air Canada's operation. Covers were postmarked in 50 cities starting in Montreal, east to St. John's, and then west to Vancouver and Seattle.

Canada Post issued only 5,000 sets. They showed a map on the back of each cover with an arrow showing where the city was located. On this map there is a red dot to show the city.

In setting this group of covers up for exhibit at COMPLEX '97, I came across the fact that there were only 49 cities mentioned on the card that came with the set explaining the series. I also found out that the three letter city codes were wrong when comparing the code on the map and the card. So they slipped - BUT I then found that Calgary was included and this made the 50 covers. However, on the map there is a red dot in lower central BC with no 3 letter code. On the card there is "YYF - Penticton". There is not a cover from Penticton.

Since this is only about 10 years old, can someone fill in the gaps as to what Canada Post intended, omitted, or mishandled?

Perhaps our Penticton member will be able to shed some light on this.

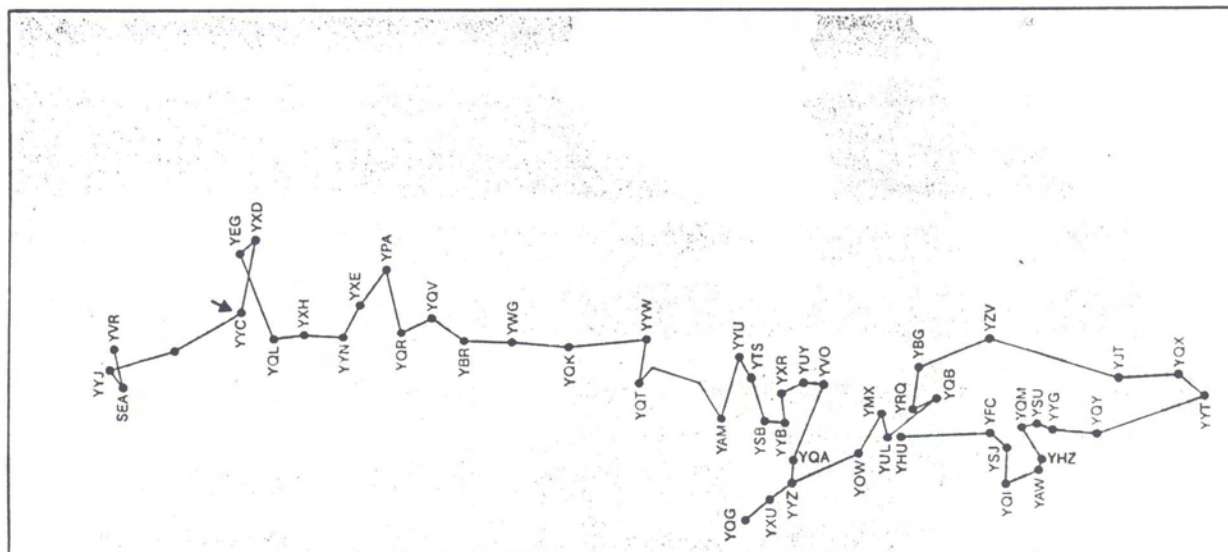
En route to Expo 86

En route vers Expo 86



To commemorate 50 years
of airmail, passenger
and cargo services.

Commémoration de 50 ans
de services de poste,
passages et fret aériens.



We are privileged to again have the history behind a series of first flights. This time AAMS # 537. Our sincere thanks to the author.

THE TOWN THAT NEVER WAS

By Derek Rance



Figure 1. Detail of cachet map on AAMC 537a

For those collectors of aerophilately who like to plot the routes over which air mail was flown, trying to locate the site of Great Bear Lake, subsequently renamed Cameron Bay, is an exercise in futility. A federal map of June 1932, does show a deep rugged inlet named Cameron Bay, that trends North off the larger Echo Bay, situated on the east shore of Great Bear Lake, but the location of the town of the same name is not shown - as this is a town that never really was. However, those who use magnification to study the map cachet on AAMC 537a (Fig.1) can roughly establish where the Great Bear Lake post office had been located.

The "town" of Great Bear Lake originated when Gilbert LaBine started the Eldorado radium mine. As a consequence of this mine being opened, the whole area became a hotbed of prospecting activity. By 1932, some 4000 claims had been staked in the Great Bear Lake area. The Eldorado Mine housed their mining staff in bunkhouses on the property. This left the remainder of the community, some 300 hopeful prospectors, traders and trappers to set up a tent town around the R.C.M.P. post that lay some 4.8 kilometers to the South-East. Signs of permanence in this makeshift community quickly started to appear. The police built a log warehouse beside their original cabin and were starting a frame house, and Murphy Services were operating a small hotel and restaurant as well as a log general store (and a thriving bootlegging business).



Figure 2

Western Canada Airways, who had played such an instrumental part in the discovery of Eldorado, had established an air and radio base at Cameron Bay and were running an almost daily air service. The first trial mail was flown into the area on June 20, 1932. At that time no official post office existed at Great Bear Lake. As a result the mail was handled by Murphy Services, who proclaimed this unofficial mail service on their cachet stamp. (Fig. 2)



Figure 3. The R.C.M.P. log cabin

Letters to, and editorials in, the Edmonton Journal protesting the lack of mail service caused a post office to be established. The first official air mail service arrived on December 7, 1932. Originally this first air mail flight was scheduled to coincide with the December 1, 1932 opening of the Great Bear Lake post office, but the plane was delayed. The Great Bear Lake post office was housed in Gerald G.D. Murphy's store, and he was appointed postmaster on 25 October, 1932. The cachet on AAMC 537d (Fig. 3) portrays the R.C.M.P. log cabin. The two figures standing in front of this cabin according to W.R. Patton are a R.C.M.P. constable and the radio operator.

The Great Bear Lake post office had a short existence. On March 1, 1933 the Great Bear Lake post office, was renamed the Cameron Bay post office, as the Post Office Department felt the name was not distinctive, being the same as that of the very large lake. Expectations for this newly named site ran high, as many felt that the other local discoveries of silver and copper, would surely cause Cameron Bay to evolve into an important central supply point. Consequently a town had to be planned. The task of laying out the town was given to McKay Meikle, the resident Dominion land surveyor. His townsite plan for *Cameron Bay Settlement* was formally presented on August 29, 1933, given final approval on December 9th by Surveyor-General F.H. Peters and registered on January 4, 1934. The plan included 81 waterfront lots, which lots enclosed a downtown core of 28 commercial properties. The main street was to be named LaBine Avenue. A crescent-shaped street named Radium Street, intersecting LaBine Avenue, was designated to be the north boundary of the business section. Waterfront access into the residential section was

provided by Cobalt, Cameron, Radium, Silver and Cliff Streets. These streets divided the residential area into five individual sections.

Cameron Street, like Cameron Bay, was named after an early area pioneer. Although the name had been suggested by another land surveyor, W.A. Spence, there is no official record of who the particular Cameron was. It could have been prospector Don Cameron, fisherman Archie Cameron, or Prof. Allen E. Cameron of the Geographic Survey of Canada. Apparently it was named after Frederick Cameron, a Hay River trader, who, in earlier days, had flown in and staked some mineral claims in the locality.

It really doesn't matter, as on November 23, 1937, the name of the town was changed to Port Radium to aggrandize the area as being the Radium Capital of the World. (Originally the name was to have been Radium City, but the Geographic Board of Canada objected to conferring the title *City* to a bunch of tents.)

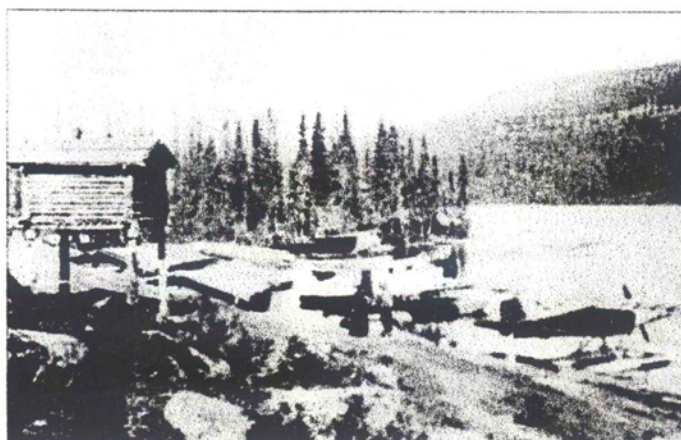


Figure 4. Cameron Bay in 1933



Figure 5. Cameron Bay as depicted by AAMC 537c cachet

the high grade ore ran out. After shut-down the mine was acquired by Echo Bay mines and worked again until 1979. (the post office was again moved to this company's new office site) When the mine was shut down for the final time, following the then new environmental dictates, the Eldorado minesite was leveled. Nothing now remains of the minesite except for some concrete floors and a cairn.

But there is a memorial at Cameron Bay - the town that never was. In 1959 the site was purchased, by an American couple, for the construction of a luxury fishing lodge. As the R.C.M.P. log cabin still stood on the site, it became part of the purchase. Since construction, the lodge has changed ownership a few times, but the old police post is still there; now transformed into a pretty three-room cabin.

In the year that Cameron Bay became renamed a final notable event occurred. This was a visit by the Vice-Regal Party Arctic Tour (see AAMC 599A). Governor-General Lord Tweedsmuir (better known as spy novelist John Buchan - *The Thirty Nine Steps*) flew from Aklavik to the Eldorado Mine. After supper with Harry Snyder, a Montreal based oilman, Lord Tweedsmuir left by boat for the Cameron Bay R.C.M.P. log cabin with his Mountie escort and a foreman from the Eldorado mine. While docking the boat, the foreman fell into the frigid waters and drowned. This tragedy was never reported in the media. Snyder later, however, rather unfeelingly related the event in a Canadian Geographic article "It is generally accepted that if a man goes clear under in Great Bear Lake, the chill of the water paralyses him and he never comes up. Such are the risks and hazards of the North."

The Eldorado Mine is famous for having produced the uranium for the Manhattan Project which ushered in the Atomic Age. The mine continued in production until the commencement of World War II when due to market disruption, the mine was closed. As a consequence, on August 22, 1940 the post office was closed as it was then only used by four families, a store and three businesses.

Eldorado was re-opened in 1942 by the Canadian Government. However, the re-opened post office was moved to the minesite at Labine Point. The mine worked until 1959, at which time

Here is another illustration of the Canadian Presentation Booklets furnished by Jerry Jarnick. Note the inclusion of the C6 Airmail. Do any of you have this booklet from AAMS 1940 Convention? Or can you shed any light on the number of booklets produced and distributed ?

THE AMERICAN AIR MAIL SOCIETY PRESENTATION BOOKLET

by
Jerome C. Jarnick

The United States had not yet entered Word War II when the American Air Mail Society held their 11th annual convention in Toronto on August 16-17th, 1940. The Canadian Post Office Department supported the meeting with a special slogan cancellation (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. American Air Mail Society Convention cancel

In addition to the special cancel, a special presentation booklet was presented to the members of the society who registered at the convention. The booklet measures 145mm x 122mm and is bound in light blue cloth. The cover is embossed in silver with the Canadian Coat of Arms in the center and **CANADA**. (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Cover of Presentation Booklet

The title page (Fig. 3) reads:

WITH COMPLIMENTS OF
HON. WILLIAM P. MULOCK, K.C., M.P.
POSTMASTER GENERAL OF CANADA
AUGUST 1940

Inside the booklet, there is one page, without printing, with three linen pockets to hold the stamps. The stamps are the 1¢ through 8¢ of the 1937 King George VI issue (Scott No. 231-236), the 10¢ through \$1.00 1938 pictorial issue (241-245), the 1938 6¢ airmail (C6) the 1939 10¢ special delivery (E7), and the 1¢, 2¢, 4¢, and 10¢ postage dues of the 1935 issue (J15-16, J17, J20). (Fig. 4).

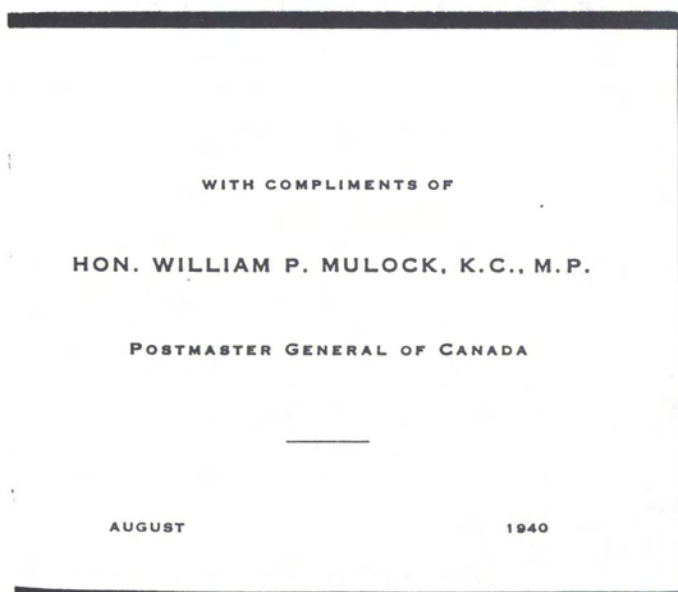


Fig 3. Booklet title page

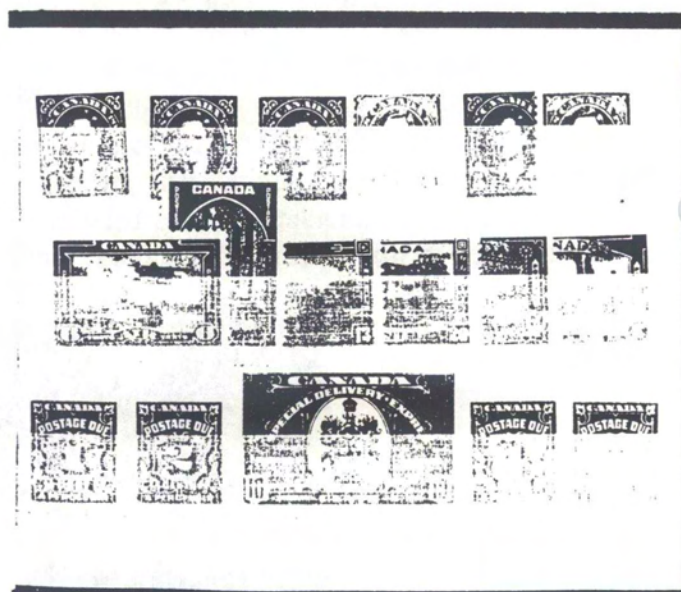


Fig 4. Interior page of booklet

Barraclough gives the number of booklets manufactured as "Over 750", however, in the authors opinion this is grossly inflated figure. These booklets, unlike most of the presentation booklets, were given to collectors, and therefore more likely to reach the philatelic market than those presented to diplomats and Members of Parliament. Considering the number which have reached the auction block in the past fifty years, and the membership of the American Air Mail Society in 1940, it would seem that a more likely quantity produced would be around 250.

REFERENCES

Barraclough, Reg. *An initial listing of the presentation booklets of Canada.* BNA Topics, Vol. 6, No. 7 pp. 159-60. (1949).

Jim Taylor has been kind enough to provide us with another article he wrote for **SCOTT STAMP MONTHLY**, JULY 1996. Since it is about Newfoundland, the site of this year's meeting I thought you'd be interested.

Ruth Nichols, American aviatrix 1931 solo trans-Atlantic attempt: the stamps real & bogus

by James R. Taylor

Ruth Nichols is shown, dressed in helmet, goggles, scarf and flying jacket, on a Grenada Grenadines stamp. Scott 447 (Figure 1). Her aircraft, a Lockheed Vega, is pictured in the bottom left. The stamp inscription reads "Solo flight of Atlantic Attempt, 1931." She was only 30 years old at the time.



Figure 1: Ruth Nichols and her Lockheed Vega on Grenada Grenadines Scott 447.

first flight was with the famous Eddie Stinson, brother of another prominent avi-

atrix, Kathrine Stinson. Two years before graduating, she made the first non-stop flight from New York to Miami. By 1927, after starting a banking career and a trip abroad, she turned to a full-time aviation career becoming the first woman sales executive for the Fairchild Aviation Company. In 1930 she set two transcontinental speed records and in 1931 an altitude record.

In early 1931 she announced an ambitious plan to be the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. She had been using her string of speed and altitude records to gain recognition and financial backing for the more difficult and daring trans-Atlantic flight. Her intention was to fly from New York City to Portland, Maine, continuing on over New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, to Harbour Grace, Newfoundland. Harbour Grace would be the North American departure point for the trans-Atlantic flight.

Trans-Atlantic flights were not without danger. Serving as co-pilots, several women had tried the difficult aerial crossing: Francis Grayson, Princess Lowenstein-Werthiem, Elsie MacKay, and Beryl

Harte — all died or disappeared in the attempts. Ruth Elder was rescued in 1927, along with her pilot, when they were lucky enough to ditch their aircraft close to a Dutch merchant ship.

Irrepressible in her enthusiasm and a dashing figure in her flying gear, Nichols' announcement was greeted with great interest by the aviation-crazed American press and radio of the day. Breaking of aviation records by a man was old hat and held little news value by this time. Record breaking by a capable, photogenic young woman was front page copy. Although dismissed by some as a "New York society girl" or the "Flying Deb," her achievements certainly compared favorably with many of the male aviation daredevils and aviation boosters of the time.

Lucrative sponsorship contracts were offered by commercial firms and organizations — contingent, of course, on a successful flight. The Crosley Radio Network was one of her sponsors. Another financially rewarding commitment was the carrying of souvenir mail for collectors prepared by cover dealer A.C. Roessler. A bag of this specially prepared mail, com-



Figure 2: United States 1c postal card with a bogus overprint on a Newfoundland stamp in the upper left. The bogus overprint is not tied to the cover by a postmark. A printed cachet, with an attractive photograph of Ruth Nichols, is inscribed "First Trans-Atlantic Solo Flight by a Woman." Postmarked at East Orange, N.J. on June 18, 1931.

Figure 3: 1931 Bogus Airmail Overprint on 5c ultramarine Caribou stamp of 1919. The bogus overprint reads "Trans-Atlantic/Airmail/Ruth Nichols/1931." The bogus overprinted stamp is attributed to A.C. Roessler, a well-known dealer.



plete with Newfoundland stamps with bogus overprints, was prepared on June 18, 1931, in anticipation of departure of the flight which was waiting on a favorable North Atlantic weather forecast.

Roessler prepared a postal card with a United States 1¢ green Thomas Jefferson imprinted stamp, Figure 2. Affixed to the upper-left corner is a Newfoundland 5¢ ultramarine stamp of the 1919 Trail of the Caribou issue with a bogus typeset overprint, Figure 3. The stamp is overprinted in black ink in five lines. The overprint, in the style of the earlier Newfoundland Hawker stamp (Scott C1), reads "Trans-Atlantic/Airmail/Ruth Nichols/1931." This overprint was not authorized by the Newfoundland Post Office and was done privately in the United States.

The printed postcard design or cachet is in black ink on the card front. It shows a full-faced photograph of a smiling, confident pilot, Ruth Nichols, with her hair blowing in the wind. She is wearing a high collared, dark-colored flight jacket. The coarse screened, half-tone of the photograph makes it appear like a newspaper clipping. The inscription in quarter inch high capital letters on the bottom of the card reads "FIRST TRANS-ATLANTIC SOLO FLIGHT BY A WOMAN."

The postal card is machine postmarked "EAST ORANGE N.J./JUN 18/1931-7:30 AM" and seven wavy lines. It is rubber stamp addressed to A.C. Roe, General Delivery, East Orange, N.J., near New York City. "A.C. Roe" is well known to airmail collectors as the alias used by A.C. Roessler, an East Orange cover dealer. He was known for his inventiveness in concocting exotic or unusual airmail covers for sale to collectors. The back of the card, Figure 4, is franked with an uncanceled Great Britain

King George V, brown, 3-halfpence stamp. It is rubber stamp addressed to A.C. Roe at the same Newark address, who obviously expected the postcard to be returned by surface sea mail after a successful flight.

It was prepared for carriage on the solo trans-Atlantic flight attempt piloted by Ruth Nichols; to be carried as an unofficial airmail item in spite of the efforts to get legitimate postmarks by passing it through the United States mail service a few days ahead of the flight. The overprinted stamp is not tied to the card by a postmark so it may have been added after the item passed through the mail. The trans-Atlantic leg of the flight was to be attempted, from Harbour Grace, Newfoundland on or about June 24, 1931. At 3:30 on the clear, sunny afternoon of June 22, 1931, Ruth Nichols lifted off in the single engine, supercharged, Lockheed Vega aircraft from Floyd Bennett Field, New York, to the cheers of a crowd of mechanics, pilots and friends. The Vega was named *Akita*, an Indian word meaning discovery. It was powered by a Pratt and Whitney Wasp engine. The plane was built for speed with an aerodynamic undercarriage and the latest variable pitch propeller. It had been stripped down, and equipped with extra instruments, navigation equipment and extra fuel tanks.

A formation of U.S. Navy Helldiver aircraft escorted the *Akita* over the skyline of New York City. The escort aircraft soon turned back and Ruth Nichols was on her own, heading northeast. Making good time in the excellent flying weather, she decided against stopping at Portland, Maine, and flew on to Saint John, New Brunswick in Canada, arriving later that day.

The landing field on the outskirts of Saint John was lined with a small curious

crowd, waiting to welcome her. Ruth banked the Vega aircraft to make a complete circle of the field. Her experienced eyes surveyed the situation in the low-angle, high-latitude, evening sunlight and to her horror, she realized that she had been misinformed about the length of the runway. It was too short for the fast landing speed and light-duty landing gear of her Lockheed Vega!

She had no choice but to land even if it meant "pancaking" (a heavy landing onto the runway) with possible damage to the wheels. Hoping that enough speed could be lost in the descent, she set the plane down on to the landing strip. Ahead of her at the end of the runway was a wooded rocky hill. Her momentum was too great — in spite of corrective maneuvers. The landing gear was completely sheared off and the plane finally came to a stop in the rocks and trees. Ruth, afraid of an explosion and fire, lucky to be alive, dragged herself out of the plane. She was helped to the ground and away from the crash site by shocked spectators. Although she indicated that she was just a bit shook up, it was obvious that her injuries were more serious and an ambulance was called.

Her condition, on closer examination at hospital, was not good: Five fractured vertebrae and a lacerated knee. Ruth wired her mother in Rye, N.Y., from the operating room: "All I did was wrench my back and wreck the ship. Everything under control. Awfully sorry about crashing, but will not do it next time!"

Painful injury and an expensive airplane smashed — a disappointing result to a venture that had stirred so much public interest. Letters and cards to be carried over the Atlantic also survived the crash landing and were returned with regrets to the senders. Today they survive as tangible reminders of long ago prospects for personal prestige and financial gain. They also give us an awareness of the very real spirit of adventure and courage of the early flyers.

The disastrous aircraft crash could not keep the plucky and determined Miss Nichols down for long. Three months later, still in a plaster cast and in spite of doctor's orders, she was setting a women's long distance world record from San Francisco to Louisville, Ky. Her plane was a repaired version of the one she put into the trees at St. John. She had hoped to try a trans-Atlantic flight again, but public interest to sponsor such a flight during the depression had waned. In the meantime she had found other aviation records and challenges to pursue. Many more collector's souvenir airmail covers were carried on her later aeronautical adventures. ☐

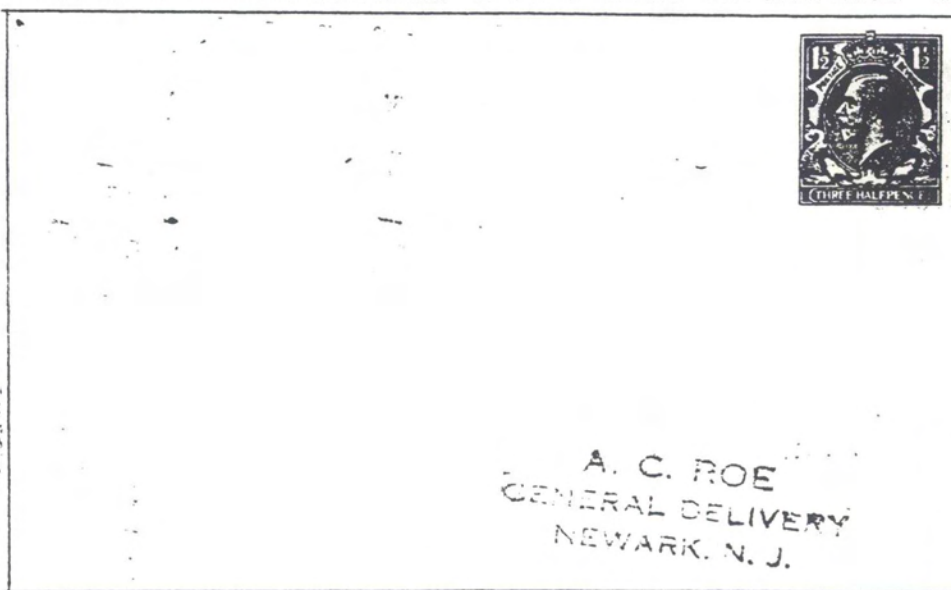


Figure 4: The back of the postcard is franked with an uncanceled Great Britain King George V, brown, 3-halfpence stamp. It is rubber stamp addressed to A.C. Roe at the same Newark address as the front of the cover. Roessler obviously expected the postcard to be returned by surface mail after a successful flight. It was salvaged from the wreck of the *Akita* at Saint John, New Brunswick.

Here is a follow-up to the December 96 article on Jim Brown's book.

Books

'Forgotten' flier chronicled

Aviation stamp collector spins fascinating tale of air pioneer

By DIANE WRIGHT

Herald Writer

When Eddie Hubbard had the airmail run from Victoria, British Columbia, to Seattle back in the 1920s, he ran an aerial taxi business on the side. It flew sightseers and honeymooners from Victoria to Seattle, and also the occasional oddball cargo: a washing machine to Tacoma, tires to Everett.

But the delivery system on the tires was a little unorthodox. Hubbard had to dive bomb Everett.

Seems a tire company in Everett needed some in a hurry. So Hubbard tied them on the lower wing of the plane with rope, and when he got to the city, he dove down, cut the rope and the tires landed precisely in the vacant lot across the street from the tire company.

"I call him Bomber Hubbard," says Jim Brown, his chronicler, with a chuckle.

Hubbard's exploits even made the Everett Daily Herald, which marveled at the then-astonishing speed of 95 miles an hour on the airmail route.

Ironically, Hubbard's career was relatively brief. He survived plane crashes, more than 1,000 mail crossings from Victoria to Seattle, and scores of test flights for Boeing, only to die in a hos-

pital of an infection following stomach surgery at age 39. The year was 1928.

Had he lived, he would not have been "Hubbard, the Forgotten Aviator," which is the title of Jim Brown's book about the flier. Brown comes to Everett on Friday to sign copies of his book, which tells a fascinating chapter in the world of commercial aviation. Published by Peanut Butter Publishing (\$19.95), it's a must for anyone interested in aviation or Northwest history.

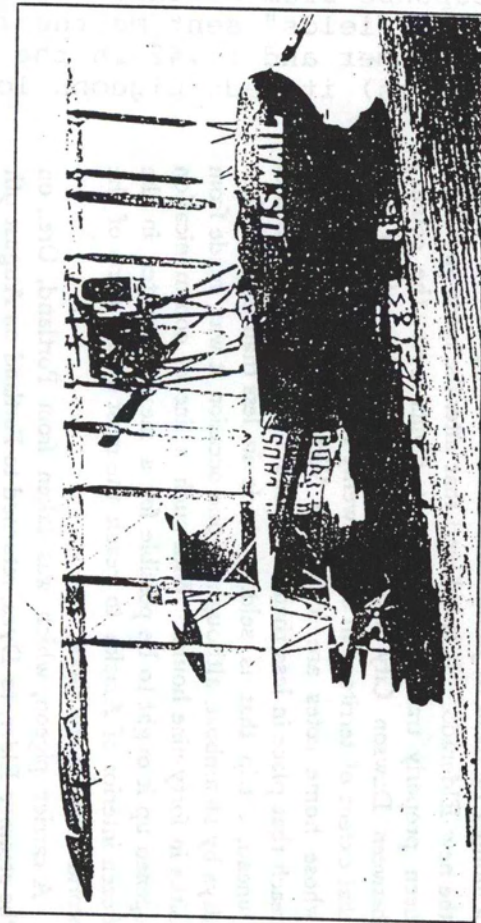
And it took an offbeat hobby to send Jim Brown on his eight-year hunt to discover the truth about the flier.

Retired 12 years ago from Chevron, Brown backed into his new career as an author. He's been a lifelong stamp collector, most notably of stamps with aircraft on them. That's called aerophilately, and Brown particularly specialized in airmail covers.

"I had some covers that Hubbard flew on the Boeing B-1, a little flying boat," he says. "There was only one made. He never flew very high and in 1921, he crashed after takeoff in Victoria and he was knocked out, and three fishermen rescued him along with 11 bags of mail going to Seattle."

"They took it (the plane) back to the Boeing plant and it was rebuilt in 57 days. It now hangs at the Museum of History and Industry," Brown says.

From his home on Canada's Pender Island, Brown devoted eight years to sifting through documents, interviewing people and researching the history of this



Eddie Hubbard's B-1 mail plane, which flew from Seattle to Victoria, British Columbia.

transcontinental run to bid from private organizations, Hubbard, who had been delivering mail from Seattle to Victoria (and who ran an aerial taxi service with Boeing), suggested that Boeing bid the San Francisco to Chicago run.

Boeing nibbled, they resurrected a prototype mail plane, the Model 40, and Boeing was in the commercial aviation business.

"Up to that time they'd only been building military planes," Brown says. "They built 25 of these and this was the first mass produced commercial aircraft that the Boeing company had ever built. In effect, it was Eddie Hubbard that got Boeing into the commercial aircraft business."

Hubbard and Bill Boeing remained close; the post office contract was signed by both Hubbard and Boeing, and he made Hubbard vice president of operations for Boeing Air Transport, Inc. to handle this aspect of the business. "He and they made money the first month, it was such a successful venture."

Meanwhile, Brown continues his stamp collecting career. He notes that a first flight airmail cover sold recently by auction for more than \$7,300.

Jim Brown will sign copies of "Hubbard, the Forgotten Aviator" from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Friday at Port Gardner Bay Books and News, 2820 Colby in Everett. He'll be at the Museum of Flight at Boeing Field on Jan. 25. For more information, call the bookstore at (206) 339-2626.

HUBBARD THE FORGOTTEN BOEING AVIATOR



JIM BROWN

remarkable man.

In his career as an aviator and airmail pilot, Eddie Hubbard also worked with William E. Boeing as a test pilot in 1916 for Navy training float planes. In 1927, after the U.S. Post Office put up its

PIGEON POST IN THE YUKON:

It is truly wonderful when the mention of something like pigeon posts in the December 96 issue brings a response from another quarter. The author of "Alaska and the Klondike Gold Fields" sent me the following excerpt from his book. At 42¢ in the summer and \$1.42 in the winter for a month to deliver a letter, (1897 prices) it made pigeons look good.

The Canadian mail to Dawson City will be carried by the mounted police from Dyea to Skagway.

In the expectation that the boom in Alaskan and North British mining stocks will be one of the wildest in the history of the world, and that the stock exchanges of London, New York, Chicago and San Francisco will be willing to pay handsomely for inside and speedy news from the centre of excitement on the Klondike, some capitalists have conceived the idea of establishing a carrier-pigeon service between Seattle or Victoria and Dawson and Circle Cities, with Juneau as the "way station" in the flight. The experience of Nansen, the Arctic explorer, with carrier pigeons in the ice fields surrounding the North Pole, has demonstrated the practicability of using these birds in Alaska during the coldest months.

Plan of the Service.

The idea is to transfer a number of "breeders" to Victoria, the nearest telegraphic station to the Klondike district, and also a number of them to Juneau and Dawson City, in the heart of the new Eldorado. It is believed that after the birds shall have been properly trained by frequent flights over the country between Dawson City and Juneau, they will be able to cover that extent of territory in about twenty-four hours. The birds, whose home cotes are located in Victoria, it is believed, can reach that place in less than thirty hours after being released at Juneau, a trip that is seldom made in less than three or four days by steamboat, although on one occasion it was made from Sitka in forty-nine hours. With such a line of communication opened up it ought to be possible for a message written in the frozen interior of Alaska to reach the most distant parts of the world within a few days.

A carrier pigeon, which was taken from Portland, Ore., on the steamer Elder, to Dyea, returned to Portland on August 9th with the following message:

"Dyea, Aug. 7th. Arrived safely here last night. All well on board. T. CAIN."

The Dominion Government has made application to the United States Government to be permitted to build a telegraph line from a navigable point on Linn Canal, Alaska, to Tagish, across the summit, a distance of nearly 100 miles, so that communication may be had with the interior of the Yukon all the year around. It is said that the application will raise a new question only comparable to that which was involved in the establishment of the mixed mail route in Alaska, which gave rise to so much talk.

The Klondike will not be so badly off for mails this winter. The monthly letter mail which was started by the United States Government the first of July, 1897, will be continued, and there will be one round trip a month to Circle City until July 1, 1898. The Canadian Government has also arranged for postal service to Dawson City.

The scheme of the United States postal service is interesting. Between Seattle and Sitka the mail steamers ply regularly. Between Sitka and Juneau there is a closed pouch steamboat service. Seattle makes up closed pouches for Douglas, Fort Wrangel, Juneau, Killisnoo, Ketchikan, Mary Island, Sitka and Metlakatlah.

Service from Sitka.

Connecting at Sitka is another sea service between that point and Unalaska, 1400 miles to the west. This service consists of one trip a month between Sitka and Unalaska from April to October and leaves Sitka immediately upon arrival of the mails from Seattle. Captain J. E. Hanson is acting clerk. From Unalaska the mails are dispatched to St. Michael's and thence to points on the Yukon.

The Postoffice Department has perfected not only a summer but a winter star route service between Juneau and Circle City. The route is overland and by boats and rafts over the lakes and down the Yukon, and is 900 miles long. A Chicago man named Beddoe carries the summer mail, making five trips between June and November, and is paid \$500 a trip. Two Juneau men, Frank Corwin and Albert Hayes, operate the winter service, and draw for each round trip \$1700 in gold. About 1200 letters are carried on each trip.