



AIR POST AND SPECIAL SERVICE STAMPS

STAMPS ISSUED FOR A SPECIAL SERVICE or exclusive function are listed in the back of the Scott Catalogue and for this reason are known as back-of-book issues. Air Post, Registry, Parcel Post, Offices in China, Postage Due and Officials are the back-of-book stamps used to pay postal fees or special-service postage. Newspaper and Periodical stamps and Revenues, which were never affixed to letters, are excluded from the Zoellner collection.

Air Post

On May 6, 1918, Congress passed a bill authorizing the first official air post service. The rate was set at 24c, and the first route authorized was between Washington D.C. and New York with a stop in Philadelphia. Postmaster General Albert Burleson, under the Wilson administration, had pushed for the new service. The airplane proved to be a useful fighting tool during the First World War, and Secretary of War Newton Baker was looking to expand the peacetime applications for flight. The Army furnished planes and pilots for the first service. The 24c Air Post stamp was prepared in less than two weeks for use on the inaugural flight on May 15, 1918. This hurried production contributed to the creation of one of philately's most famous stamps, the Inverted Jenny.

Flights prior to May 15, 1918, are referred to as pioneer flights. Two stamps used in connection with semi-official mail service on these early flights are listed in the Scott Catalogue. The first is the Buffalo Balloon stamp, Scott CL1, which was used for mail carried by balloon on June 8, 1877, from Nashville to Gallatin, Tennessee. Only 300 were issued. The second is the Rodgers Vin Fiz stamp, Scott CL2, which was used in 1911 on mail carried by Calbraith Rodgers between legs of his attempted transcontinental flight. Rodgers was attempting to win the \$50,000 prize offered by publisher William Randolph Hearst to the first person to cross the United States in 30 days or less.

Special Delivery

In March 1885, on the last day of President Chester A. Arthur's term, a bill establishing a Special Delivery service was passed by Congress and signed into law. Postmaster General Frank Hatton, who was replaced four days later, was the guiding force behind the effort to establish this new service. Special Delivery was intended to provide speedy delivery of mail to recipients for an extra fee and was implemented to combat the

many private companies that were taking away revenue from the Post Office Department by providing such service. The first stamps issued for the Special Delivery service depicted a running messenger and were printed by the American Bank Note Company. As with regular-issue stamps, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing printed Special Delivery stamps beginning in 1894. As new, faster forms of delivering mails were implemented, the stamps came to picture bicycle and then motorcycle messengers. The major reference work on the subject is *The Speedy: A History of United States Special Delivery Service* by Henry M. Gobie.

Postage Due

Postage Due stamps were issued during the Hayes administration to systematize the collection and accountability of short-paid letters. Prior to July 1, 1879, local postmasters were responsible for the collection of unpaid postage. There was no formal system for accounting for cash collected. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) also allowed for the sending of unpaid letters, with postage to be collected by the receiving post office. Postage Due stamps in 1c, 2c, 3c and 5c denominations were provided by the American Bank Note Company, to be affixed and cancelled as normal stamps on collection of unpaid postage. The 10c, 30c and 50c stamps were issued some months later. One of the challenges collectors face is identifying the many subtle color differences between issues. The Special Printings, Scott J8 to J14, were issued concurrently with the First Issue Postage Dues and are very rare.

Office in China

The United States' economic interests and presence in China had expanded to the point that, by the beginning of 1919, the U.S. Postal Agency in Shanghai requested a supply of stamps that could be used at the local post office. At the time, the exchange rate between U.S. and Shanghai dollars was 2:1, and a series of Washington-Franklin stamps was overprinted with local values, equal to twice the face-value of the U.S. stamps. These officially overprinted issues, printed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, were placed on sale on July 1, 1919. In 1922, due to delays in supplying new stamps, a quantity of 1-cent and 2-cent values were locally surcharged with "Cts." instead of "c". These are Scott K17 and K18. The only major variety of the Offices in China stamps is the double-surchARGE error on the \$2 on \$1, Scott K16a.