

Herman “Capt.” Fluegel’s First Cachet: Synopsis

by Steven Altman

In late 1968, shortly after the death of its sole remaining founder, the home-based, “mom and pop” Fluegel Covers business ceased operations, disposed of its assets, and formally dissolved. Fluegel first day covers (FDCs) were still avidly collected but the people responsible for their creation were forgotten.

This changed in 1978 when it was finally “discovered” that the mom and pop behind these FDC gems were Herman ‘Capt.’ Fluegel and his wife Ida Fluegel. This discovery sparked a flurry of research into many aspects of Fluegel family and business history, with particular emphasis on identifying the first Fluegel cachet to appear on an FDC.

In time, most FDC collectors accepted as fact that the first cacheted FDC indisputably attributed to Capt. and Ida Fluegel was the one they produced for the 1945 3¢ Roosevelt Memorial stamp, Scott 932. It was after all enshrined as such in all available FDC catalogs. However, in the August 1983 issue of *First Days*, another candidate for the honorific title of “Fluegel’s First Cacheted FDC” was put forward. The candidate cachet was the one that appeared on the FDCs Capt created in 1937 for the 20¢ and 50¢ China Clipper air mail stamps (Scott C21 – C22). Since no evidence to support this claim was forthcoming, the cachet appearing on the 3¢ Roosevelt Memorial FDC has retained its title as Fluegel’s First.

This article reports an intriguing, potentially history-altering discovery. It provides strong, circumstantial evidence in support of the 1983 contention that the cachet appearing on Fluegel’s 1937 C21 – C22 China Clipper FDCs was indeed the very first one he produced.