

Birmingham - Ferndale Stamp Club Newsletter



December 2024



Scott #WX6

Christmas Seals have been long associated with the postal service because of their use on letters and packages, but they were sometimes mistaken for real postage stamps. This prompted the US Post Office to adopt a policy requiring seals to be affixed on the reverse side of a postcard or envelope, but the policy was generally unfavorable and often ignored, ultimately resulting in withdrawal. Christmas seals exist in several varieties, most notably those first issued by the Red Cross and later by the National Tuberculosis Association.

Notes from our club meetings: President Rusch expressed concern over the club's

financial status and asked for ideas or suggestions for improvement. Although there is no immediate issue, steps need to be taken to ensure the club's future viability. It was agreed that the club would purchase collections and break them out by country for resale at club auctions. In addition, it was recommended that the club fall show be rescheduled in an attempt to attract more dealers and collectors. Fall 2025 show date to be determined.

Merry Christmas!

Club Meetings –

December 3rd and 17th, 6:00 p.m. at the NEXT Senior Center, Birmingham.

Upcoming Events –

Modern Stamps Public Stamp Auction #524, December 7th, at their Oak Park facility.

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Ken Rusch, President
Fred Como, Vice-President
Phil Kwasny, Secretary
Robert Helbig, Co-Treasurer
Faisal Qureshi, Co-Treasurer
Michael Swope, Editor

Pilot-Signed First Flight Covers

Walter Koster



Featured here is a First Flight Cover (FFC) signed by Canadian Airways pilot Archie M. McMullen and issued to announce a new post office opening at Embarras Portage, between Fort McMurray and Fort Chipewyan, Alberta. Two deep-red King George Arch and Maple Leaf Issue, 3¢ stamps (Scott #167) prepaid the 6¢ first ounce air rate of that time to the United States. Front post marks include triple “Fort Chipewyan, Alberta, Dec. 18, 31” circular date cancels. *The Air Mails of Canada and Newfoundland* identifies this cover as #3177b and notes Archie M. McMullen made the first flight in each direction, a distance of 235 kilometers (146 miles).

During the early 1930’s, interest in both aviation and stamp collecting reached new heights. Most early pilots were veterans of the First World War. They flew hundreds of kilometers without charts, radio, or heated cabins. They often flew through blinding snowstorms, heavy rain, and fog.

Newspapers and stamp magazines eagerly promoted upcoming first flights and special events. Stamp clubs and enterprising individuals offered specially prepared envelopes, called “covers,” for sale to collectors. More elaborate covers were offered by N.P.G. Ltd. of Winnipeg, A. C. Roessler of East Orange, N. J., and M. Robertson Arlidge of Edmonton, operating under the name “Bob of the North Land.”

Covers were sent to a designated post office near the start of the flight where Post Office officials applied a commemorative design or inscription, called a “cachet,” and were then held until the flight. After the flight, covers were normally backstamped to show that they’d been flown. They were then sent on to the address on the cover.

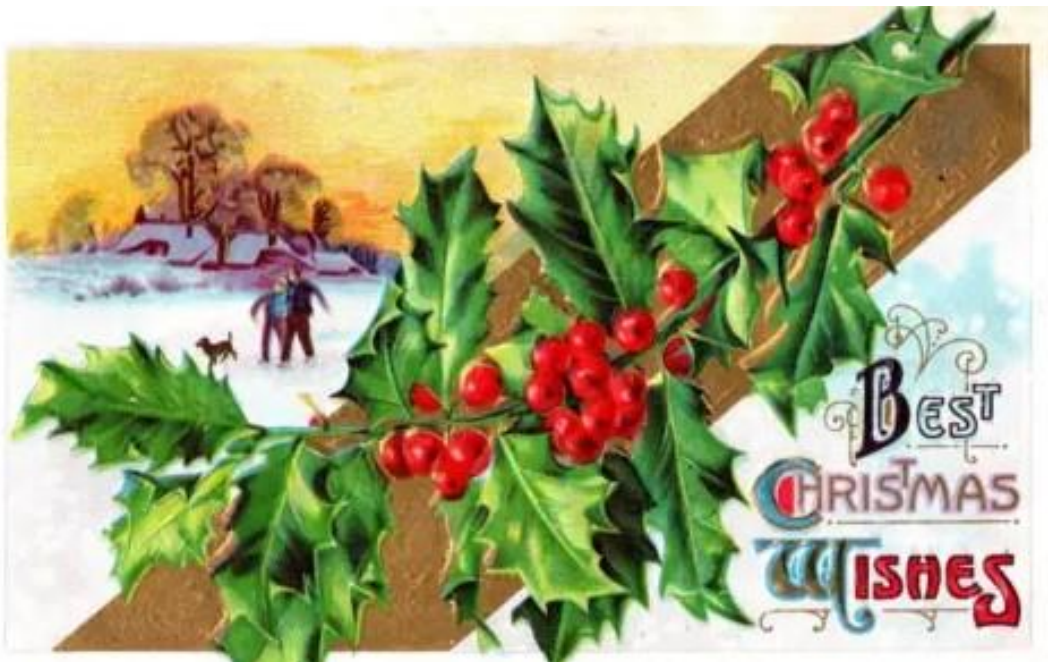
First Flight Covers signed by pilots became highly prized possessions. Don Amos, writing in *The Canadian Aerophilatelist*, June 1998, *The Golden Age of Air Mail*, explains how pilot signatures were often obtained: *"After receiving the cover back, we sometimes tried to get them signed by the pilot. There were various ways of doing this. I lived in Winnipeg, so could go out to the airfield, and walk in to a Company's office. If the pilot was in, they would sign the cover. If the pilot was away on a flight, you could leave the cover with the Company, and the pilot signed it when they got back. You could also mail your cover to a Company's office at another airfield, and they would get it signed for you. Another method was to mail your covers to "Bob of the North Land" (M. Robertson Arlidge of Edmonton) and he would arrange to get them signed. He charged fifteen or twenty cents (and) gave five cents of this fee to the pilot, to at least give them a smoke for their trouble."*

As more and more air routes were opened, stamp dealers began offering collectors flown cachet covers for sale. Don Amos mentions A. C. Roessler of East Orange, N.J., as one of the early innovators of the day: *"He sent covers all over the place. He would send a shoe box full of covers, with a blank cheque enclosed, up here to the Canadian Airways Limited office in Winnipeg, and ask them to send them on the next flight. There was also Marks Stamp Co. of Toronto, B. Hill-Tout of Victoria, B.C., Fred Jarrette of Toronto, and a few others."*

Ref: Cover from Author's collection.

The Air Mails of Canada and Newfoundland, published by the American Air Mail Society (AAMS)

The Canadian Aerophilatelist, June 1998, *A History of Aerophilately*, Part 4, Canada, *The Golden Age of Air Mail*, Don Amos (www.aerophilately.ca/ca-199806-v014n02-w035.pdf)



Woodward Avenue

Michael Swope



The Polychrome real-photo post card (above) features trolley cars on Woodward Avenue, north of Davenport Street, in Detroit. It was published by the Detroit News Company in 1905.

Woodward Avenue was named after Augustus B. Woodward (1774-1827), who was appointed by President Thomas Jefferson as the first Chief Justice for the Michigan Territory. Woodward's first duty was to help rebuild Detroit following a widespread fire that devastated the city in 1805.

Woodward laid out the streets of Detroit in the shape of wagon wheel spokes, with downtown Detroit as the hub. Saginaw Trail (now Woodward Avenue) was a Native American path that ran from the city in a northwesterly direction to Pontiac, Flint and Saginaw. By 1820, it was a gravel road that linked Detroit to Pontiac. In 1848, Woodward Avenue became a wood-planked road. Woodward Avenue, known as "Detroit's Main Street" has the distinction of being the first street in America on which a traffic ticket was issued for street racing in 1895; the first mile of concrete highway laid in 1909; and, the first tri-color traffic signal installed in 1919. It is designated as an "All-American Road" in the National Scenic Byways Program.

The post card bears the 1¢, blue-green, Franklin postage stamp (Scott #300), cancelled at Detroit on December 12, 1907.

Ref: HistoryNavigator.org; Scenic.org; Hotrod.com

