

Transpacific Ship Mail on the Eve of Pearl Harbor

Notes for the Jury Sarasota National Stamp Expo 2022

Treatment: The story of suspended outbound transpacific ship mail remains poorly documented, with surviving postal evidence often confusing and difficult to interpret. The objective of this article is to bring some clarity a mode of transport that involved numerous shipping lines, long transmission times, disconnects between scheduled and actual ship departures, and multiple ports on both sides of the Pacific serving as points of embarkation and debarkation. An explanation is offered why U.S.-generated mail with postmarks a month before Pearl Harbor was suspended and returned to senders.

The article ends with questions to be answered with further research based on both historical and empirical evidence.

Research: Much of the information used in the article came from contemporaneous sources, such as newspapers, as well as the historical and philatelic literature that touched on the subject obliquely. Many of the questions I posed for myself in undertaking this article derived from 35-years of collecting international mail on the eve and during World War II.