

The Beacon Shines on Air Mail

DEVELOPMENT OF AIR MAIL IN 1929

PURPOSE: This exhibit shows the progress and development of air mail service in 1929 through usages of the Beacon air mail stamp (Scott C11).

A SHORT HISTORY:

1929 was a keystone year in the development of air mail service in the United States. The American Air Mail Society Catalog records close to 1,000 commemorated events in that year, an increase of 23% over the previous year. It was a total that would not be surpassed until 1933.

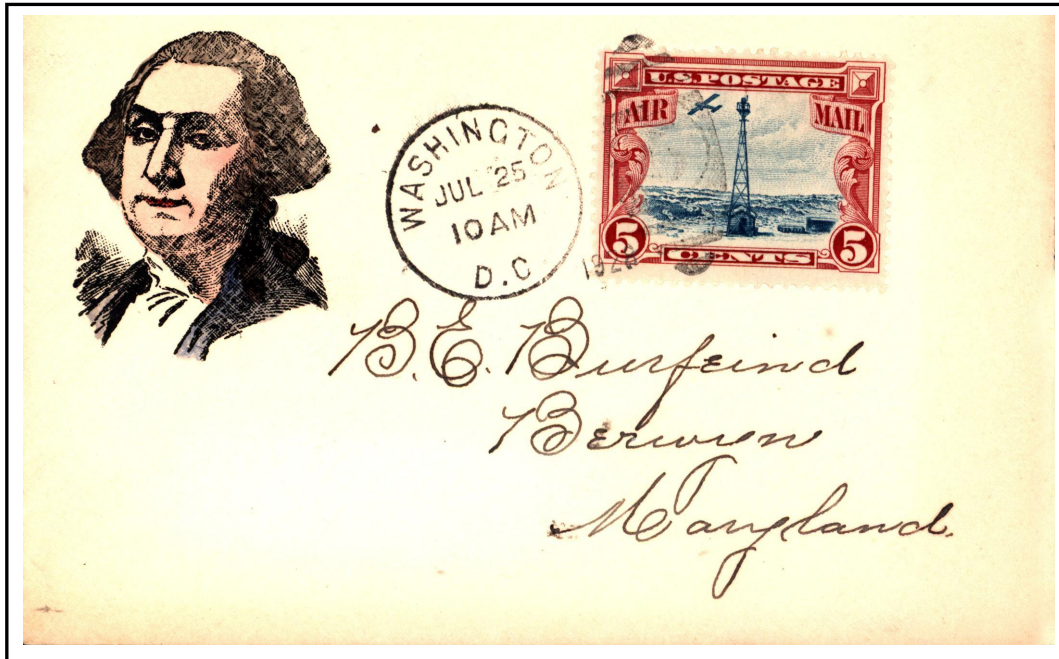
As a result of the 1925 Kelly Act, the country transitioned to the commercial transport of the mail. By 1929 there were 47 airlines of various sizes in mail delivery. The government was losing money paying for transport, and the airlines were abusing the system to maximize revenue.

1929 saw rapid CAM & FAM expansion, especially to South

America and the Caribbean. Night flights were added, new and larger aircraft developed along with improved safety measures and new airports.

For the air mail customer, the rate was lowered in late 1928 to a uniform 5¢ domestic rate and as a result volume increased ten-fold from 1926.

It was a chaotic time. In 1929, Walter F. Brown was appointed Postmaster General with a determination to improve efficiency. This led to the Air Mail Act of 1930.



The Beacon stamp was issued for the nation-wide 5¢ air mail rate. The rate was a key factor in the substantial increase of air usage in 1929. The stamp was issued July 25, 1928 while the rate was still 10¢. This required two stamps on first day covers. ***Solo covers without a request for postage due are very scarce.***