



PERF-DISPATCH
GREATER MOUND CITY STAMP CLUB
 Established 1884
 Saint Louis, Missouri



Volume XXX Number 7  **July 2024**

Where Kirkwood Community Center
 Room 200
 111 South Geyer Rd.
 Kirkwood, MO 63122

When 4th Monday each month at **7:30 PM**

Membership \$15 for Regular members
 \$10 for email only

WORDS FROM EL PRESIDENTÉ

Greetings and salutations club members. Is it hot enough for everyone? It is for me. I guess it could be hotter, but let's hope it doesn't get hotter. At least we haven't had those long 10 or 12 or more day stretches where the heat index is over 100, yet that is.

JULY 22 MEETING

This will be the meeting where we prepare the notices to go out concerning StampFest. Come prepared to do the big job of "Lick 'n Stick". There will be no additional program. Please come since the more workers we have, the quicker it's done.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

August....How and When Part 2...David Mahsman
 September.....Confederate Stamps.....Ron McVay
 October.....Philatelic Jeopardy.....Guy Gasser
 November...Auction Bux Auction.....Jerry Schultz

Thanks to everyone who volunteered to fill out our programs for this year. Katrina is already working on the programs for next year. Sign up now and you will have plenty of time to prepare.

WHAT YOU MISSED

Last month Tom Minor gave us an in depth look at the building of the Eads Bridge. He explained why it was built – a railroad bridge was needed to compete with Chicago using bridges further north – how it was financed, and all the complicated steps that were needed to actually build the bridge. Do you know how they were able to push the supports down to bedrock, well below the river level, and some of the ways in which that affected the workers? If not, you should have been there.

It's official now. There will be no StampFest this year. Try as I may, I couldn't find another venue. Every venue I tried it was either not available, not big enough, or their policies made holding a show impractical. Did I try every possibility in the metro area? No, but I don't know how feasible, or possible, that would be, and then I simply ran out of time. So, we start back up next year. Based on the renovation schedule, the CC told me that it will more than likely be February or March before they will start scheduling the west gym for next summer and beyond. Since we are a prior user of the gym, we will have the first opportunity for our weekend in August. I already set next year's dates for StampFest provided something else at the CC doesn't rear its ugly head. Everyone put 9-10 August 2025 on your calendars now. I would think that knowing the dates this far out should allow everyone to plan accordingly to support and attend the show. I have let all of the dealers who do our show know that there is no show this year, and that we will see them next year.

While I was talking to the CC about the gym, I also asked if there was any update on when our meeting room will close. I was told that all of the meeting rooms will be shut down the first part of September. That means that starting with the September meeting we will move to our alternate site. I don't know how long we will have to use our alternate site, but at least through April 2025. That may change. I'll just continue to keep everyone posted as we go along. I asked the CC if the renovation was on schedule. I was told that it was running about 2 weeks behind at this point in

time. Given projects of this nature, I'm surprised that it's not more than that.

The alternate site for our meetings will be the conference room at Michael Karasick's office in Clayton. I thought that I had the address written down, but I can't find it if I do. The address will be in next month's newsletter for sure along with a map to get us where we need to go. Thank you, Michael, for allowing the club to use your facility and at no cost!

Since StampFest is a No Go this year, we are looking at having another club event in its place. We have thought about having a pot luck picnic in August during the weekend that would normally be StampFest. When the VP asked the members in attendance at last month's meeting, the response was a resounding yes. While this sounds easy, it is turning out not to be easy. The biggest concern with holding an outdoor event in August is not knowing just how hot it will be, and we all know that August can be brutal. Therefore, we are exploring more options. I am going to ask for suggestions at the meeting. Please come with ideas to include dates, times, and locations.

Now that StampFest is out this year, that means that the next show of any size will be the second MSDA show in October. This show is also going to be at the Westbury Center (Knights of Columbus), 20 Westbury Drive, St. Charles, MO 63301. The dates of the show are 5-6 October. Show hours are Saturday 10-5 and Sunday 10-3. The MSDA executive director is also exploring other venues for future shows. I have told him the Kirkwood CC, and he likes that idea. The question is of course availability.

This month's program is still going to be lick and stick. Even though we are not holding StampFest, we are going to send postcards to everyone letting them know that the show is postponed this year, and that we will see them back at the Kirkwood CC 9-10 August 2025. This year's lick and stick will be easier too. We only have to put two stamps on the postcard, and we are only sending out postcards, no letters.

The VP has filled the program list for this year! Now she is working on 2025. Let's get next year scheduled before the end of the year, please. Who wants to sign up for 2025? That is all!

Guy

■ DID YOU KNOW? ■

Did you know: The 15 cent Z grill, Scott #85F, hammered down last month at a Siegel auction for \$2.65 million, \$1.05 million less than the 1 cent Z grill, Scott #85A. There are only two of these known too, but unlike the 1 cent Z grill, both stamps are available to the public. One stamp makes a million-dollar difference!

■ OPEL ■

The "Old Philatelists Eating Lunch Plus gathering will be on August 12 at Mike Duffy's Pub and Grill, 6662 Clayton Rd in Richmond Heights. Good friends, good food, lots of talk – what's not to like? We hope to see you there.

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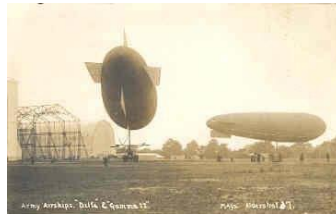
U.S. Zeppelin stamps

By Douglas Files

A few years ago this newsletter featured an article about the history of Zeppelins in Ohio and showed covers from our state. Next let's turn to the famous U.S. Zeppelin stamps, with their interesting history. Zeppelin stamps are not scarce – most dealers seem to have some for sale and they appear regularly at auction. But demand has outpaced supply for decades, keeping their prices steeper than we might otherwise expect. Zeppelins were steerable balloons with rigid frames. More properly these airships are called dirigibles, meaning their direction could be set. Only airships made by the Zeppelin company of Germany were technically “Zeppelins”. But some brand names are so common that people generalize their names (such as Jello for gelatin or Xerox for copiers). Zeppelin is one of these brand names.

The first Zeppelin airship was launched in July 1900 and their use increased in popularity through the next several decades. Dirigibles were used in combat in World War I and later they carried passengers and mail across the Atlantic Ocean. These airships garnered much media attention; many stamp collectors saved covers which had flown on a Zeppelin.

In the United States many people sent Zeppelin mail to Europe since dirigibles offered the only Trans-Atlantic airmail available in the 1920s and 1930s. Initially high-denomination U.S. definitive were used to send these covers. Several stamps were often needed to make up the unusual rates which were charged. But Zeppelin airmail service became so popular that the U.S. Post Office Department decided in 1930 to issue high-denomination stamps with denominations which conveniently met the Zeppelin postal rates of that period. These included a 65-cent green stamp
The production of the Zeppelin stamps was



showing a Zeppelin over the Atlantic Ocean, a \$1.30 brown stamp showing a Zeppelin between continents and a \$2.60 blue stamp showing a Zeppelin “passing a globe”.

The release of the Zeppelin stamps was timed to coincide with a special Graf Zeppelin flight which was scheduled to travel from Friedrichshafen, Germany to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to Lakehurst, New Jersey in the U.S. These three destinations are all marked on the map in the background of the \$1.30 stamp. The three U.S. Zeppelin stamps were issued April 19, 1930, approximately one month prior to the special flight. The “Zepps” as they were called were each produced in a single color and the designs were engraved, as was common at that time. The degree of skill which engraving required made it difficult for counterfeiters to reproduce the complex designs on these high-value stamps. The Zeppelin stamps were issued in a large horizontal format in sheets of 50. The elongated shape of the stamps was intentional to aid postal clerks in identifying them as airmail stamps. One plate number appeared in the margin of each sheet and selvaige appeared on all four sides of the sheets. This meant that stamps from this issue did not regularly have any straight edges.

The Post Office hoped that stamp collectors would flock to buy the Zeppelin stamps. But after the stock market crash in late 1929 the Depression set in. Many workers were laid off or fired. Most collectors lacked the money to spend several dollars – a large amount at that time - for one stamp set. Some people didn't even have money for food. So fewer than one tenth of the Zeppelin stamps which had been printed were ever purchased from the Post Office. In total only 227,000 stamps were sold. One million examples of each denomination had been produced. The fact that 93% of the print run was destroyed in 1930 contributes to the Zepps' consistently high prices in the philatelic marketplace.



Finances of the Zeppelin issue:

The production of the Zeppelin stamps was not planned as a money-maker for the U.S. Post Office Department. Instead, it was a good-will gesture toward Germany. More precisely, the stamp series was expected to publicize the dirigibles' trans-Atlantic routes and defray the costs of running the trans-Atlantic route. Accordingly, over 90% of revenues from the stamps was paid to the Zeppelin company. The other nations which would host the Zeppelin (Germany, Spain, Bolivia and Brazil) also issued Zeppelin stamps to help subsidize the famous flight.

Postal History

As stated above the first Zeppelin flight took place in Germany in 1900. By 1910 passengers were flying between several German cities in Zeppelins. While on the flight passengers would write postcards to their friends. So souvenir Zeppelin mail already existed in the first decade of the 20th century. The first dirigible to land in the United States was a British craft named R34 in 1919. Five years later the first German Zeppelin flew into the U.S.

In 1927 Charles Lindbergh gained fame for flying alone across the Atlantic. Of course he flew in a small airplane, not a dirigible. But two years after his legendary flight Zeppelins were already carrying passengers and cargo across the Atlantic Ocean. This was before any passenger airplanes made the long trip. In the 1930s dirigibles were the main long-distance aircraft and their primary route ran between Germany and Lakehurst, New Jersey. The U.S. Navy purchased some dirigibles and they carried some mail, but they were not used for civilian passenger transport. Thus it was mostly the German trans-Atlantic Zeppelin routes which attracted mail. Some flights carried as much as 80,000 letters and post cards.

The U.S. Zeppelin stamps were only valid for postage on Zeppelin flights. They were not supposed to be used on any other mail. The green 65-cent Graf Zeppelin stamp (Scott#C13) covered the cost of sending a post card by Zeppelin. The \$1.30 brown stamp (Scott #C14) covered the letter rate for the May 1930 Pan American The U.S. Zeppelin stamps were only valid for postage on Zeppelin flights. They were not supposed to be dirigible flight. This flight originated in Germany, and then went to Brazil and the United States. Specifically the two lowvalue Zepps paid the rate for post cards and letters to go on the last leg of the Zeppelin flight from the U.S. to Seville, Spain and Friedrichshafen, Germany. The precise

postal rate depended on how much distance the item travelled. The \$2.60 blue stamp (Scott #C15) covered higher rates for heavier items and longer distances.



For a letter to complete a round trip from Lakehurst, New Jersey cost \$3.55 to \$3.90, equivalent to more than \$50.00 in 2024 dollars. The average American during the Great Depression simply could not afford these stamps. Mail sent by Zeppelin received special diamond-shaped cachets and cancels. Wealthier collectors purchased Zeppelin stamps and created flight covers.

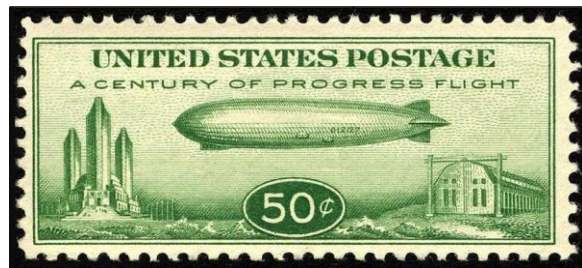
The Graf Zeppelin was the most famous German airship – at least until the Hindenburg crashed and burned in 1937. Its name celebrated the founder of the airship company, Graf (Count) Ferdinand von Zeppelin. Starting in 1928 the 775-foot long Graf Zeppelin carried over 18,000 passengers and thousands of pieces of mail. The Graf Zeppelin was only retired from service after the Hindenburg disaster.

Collector attitudes

Among collectors in 1930, the Zeppelin series was not popular due to its large cost. Many U.S. collectors liked to save at least one of each U.S. stamp, and this set alone cost \$4.55. In today's dollars that is over \$75.00 and during the Depression hardly anyone had that kind of money to spend on a hobby. This being said, most collectors find these stamps attractive and they are still highly sought today.

Hindenburg mail

When the Hindenburg crashed in 1937 it was carrying 17,000 pieces of mail. Most of these were destroyed, and only about 150 items made it through the fire. Many of the Hindenburg envelopes currently in existence bear burn marks. Forgers have attempted to cheat stamp collectors by burning letters and presenting them as Hindenburg items. So beware if you plan to buy a Hindenburg cover.



1933 Baby Zeppelin stamp

A new U.S. Zeppelin stamp was issued in 1933. It carried the lower denomination of 50 cents and it was sold starting on October 2, 1933 at the Century of Progress expo (i.e. the Chicago World's Fair). Nearly 325,000 of this lower value stamp were issued so it is much more common than the other Zeppelin definitive. Four of these 50-cent stamps would cover the round-trip cost of a letter going from New York to Germany (by ship) then to South America, Chicago and Germany by Zeppelin, then back to the U.S. by ship. You could also post a letter on just one leg of the Zeppelin flight for less than

\$2.00. The rate depended on the distance the letter was carried on the dirigible.

Philately

The Scott's Stamp Monthly magazine's U.S. Graded Stamp Report in August 2023 listed the Zeppelin stamps as follows:

In mint, never hinged condition, fine to very fine (grade 75) the 65-cent green is \$175.00, the \$1.30 brown is \$400.00 and the \$2.60 blue is \$650.00. In extra-fine condition (grade 90) their catalogue values are \$450.00, \$750 and \$1200.00. Meanwhile gem (grade 100) copies can sell for several thousand dollars.

Overview

U.S. Zeppelin stamps have developed a reputation as the most desirable and the most expatiation, Caransive, commonly-seen U.S. stamps. Whether this is deserved or not, the reader can decide. The stamps were produced at a time when fine engraving was the rule rather than the exception and they are certainly attractive. The Great Depression occurred just as the stamps were being issued, which fueled collectors ire with such an expensive issue. And the main purpose of the stamps was to promote the Zeppelin flights and to keep them coming to the United States. After the burning of the Hindenburg in the late 1930s Zeppelin flying greatly declined. But this was okay since large airliners could take over transporting passengers quickly across the Atlantic Ocean. These high-denomination definitive still add luster to U.S. collections today. So maybe you will be able to add some to your collection.

Philately

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The model used for the \$2.60 U.S. Zeppelin stamp: the 1928 Graf Zeppelin D-LZ-12 .



Die proof of 65¢ 1930 Graf Zeppelin stamp, signed by Postmaster General Walter Brown. References:

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Editor's Note:

Thanks to Bill Smith, Editor of the Dayton Stamp Club, for allowing me to use this article from their club newsletter. Any problems with the article in the Perf-Dispatch, including less than perfect layout, are the fault of your GMCS editor and not of the Dayton club.