



The Canal Zone Philatelist



Vol. 22, No. 4

Fourth Quarter, 1986

Whole No. 81

President's Report

Richard H. Salz
60 Twenty-seventh Ave.,
San Francisco, CA 94121

This report will be like many others produced over the years and it is hoped that you will be able to glean something of importance from all the verbage!

I would like to note the many stamp shows which have taken place around the country and which hosted CZSG meetings. The AMERIPEX meeting was, of course, the largest with 67 in attendance. STaMpsHOW '86 in Washington, D.C. (a much smaller show) brought in 32 participants to its gathering. I had the pleasure of attending this meeting and talking with many CZSG members from the surrounding area who had not appeared at AMERIPEX. Vice-president Dick Bates chaired the gathering and his report is elsewhere in this issue of the *CZP*. Other shows around the country that either have been reported in our publication, or will be at a later date are: WESTPEX (San Francisco), BALPEX (Baltimore), CIAPEX (Des Moines), and SESCAL (Los Angeles). All of these meetings have been held during the 1986 year and point to the fact that Canal Zone Philately is very much alive. It is my hope that 1987 will produce at least as many meetings, if not more; so should you wish to put one on, please contact either the secretary, or me, for any help or details that we can provide.

* * *

Possibly you are wondering what 1987 might bring in publications other than the quarterly *Canal Zone Philatelist*. As has been hinted here and there in the *CZP* we do have some things on the back-burner: an

(Continued on page 30)

Dues Notice

We sing the same old refrain: **please pay your dues now.** Prompt payment will materially help our paper work flow, as well as the treasury. Thank you.

John C. Smith
408 Redwood Lane
Schaumburg, IL 60193

Identifying Canal Zone Booklet Stamps on Cover

By Richard Larkin

(This article is an adaptation of a similar article, covering all United States and possessions booklet stamps, which appeared in the *United States Specialist*, published by the Bureau Issues Association. An article on the booklet panes of the other possessions appears in *Possessions*, pp. 16-19, Vol. 9, No. 1 [1986].)

How many collectors of booklets and booklet panes have extended their collection to include postal uses of booklet stamps? I hadn't, until a judge at a show piqued my interest by commenting that my exhibit lacked booklet stamps on cover. So I trotted upstairs to the bourse to scout out the territory.

Some ground rules and problems were immediately apparent: almost all booklet stamps have at least one straight edge, some have two — but so do some sheet stamps of the flat press era, so that is not a sure way to tell whether a stamp is a booklet stamp. A full pane with or without selvage must be from a booklet but, except for philatelic creations (such as FDC's, FFC's, and other souvenir covers) a full pane on a contemporary postally-used cover is a very scarce commodity, and a collection of these wouldn't go far. I needed to identify singles and pairs.

There *are* some reliable rules, however, as I have discovered in the course of looking at, I cannot imagine how many, tens of thousands of covers. These rules differ depending on which stamp one is looking at, and will be discussed under the following headings:

- A. General rules
- B. Panama overprints
 1. Handmade — 31c-39g
 2. Machine-made — 38b-61f
- C. U.S. overprints and other panes through 1935
 3. Flat press — machine-made — 71e-84d, 106a, 117a
 4. Rotary press — machine-made — 97b, 101a
 5. Handmade — 102a, 115c, 117b

General Rules

Since all Canal Zone booklet stamp plates were made from the same dies as the corresponding sheet stamp plates, the question which must be answered is whether a given stamp or group of stamps was originally part of a booklet pane or part of a sheet.

Thus, the design of stamps will not determine their origin. Other features must be used, such as straight edges and guidelines. Yes, but didn't I just say that flat press sheet stamps also exist with straight edges? They also can have guidelines.

True, it is not possible to tell, for every straight-edged stamp, whether it is a booklet stamp; but many of these stamps can be identified. Here's how:

- With some exceptions, every booklet stamp has at least one straight edge. Exceptions are stamps from the Canal Zone handmade panes (some of these can be identified — see below).
- No stamp (prior to C48 and 163) with a straight edge at the "top" can be a booklet stamp.
- Only stamps with a straight edge at left or right (not both) can be booklet stamps. They may or may not have a straight edge at the bottom.
- The presence or absence of a guideline is not determinative except when considered in combination with other factors. Guidelines are discussed below under the various flat press issues.
- A piece of selvage attached to a stamp is not determinative since sheet stamps also can have selvage (whose width varies) attached. The same logic applies to staple holes and arrows in the selvage. A top plate number is determinative pro or con for flat press stamps; check the number in Durland or other lists.
- A horizontal pair with straight edges on the left of the left stamp and the right of the right stamp is always from a booklet pane (Figure 1). (Check to be sure the right edge wasn't trimmed straight while cutting open the envelope.) This rule can obviously be expanded to cover "blocks" of 3, 4, 5, and 6 (full pane). Note that a *vertical* pair or strip of 3 must be checked according to the rules for single stamps.

— Only certain denominations were issued in booklet form — mostly 1¢ and 2¢ — so except for 102, 115, 117, 163, and C48-50, no other denomination stamp can be a booklet stamp.

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Auctions
 By Gilbert N. Plass

Only a small number of better Canal Zone stamps were sold at auction during the summer season. In the following list the price realized is given with the catalogue price in parenthesis as listed in the auction catalogue. The name of the auction house follows. All items are unused and without serious defects unless mentioned otherwise. All prices have been rounded to the nearest dollar.

Scott No. 1, used, f-vf, \$350 (\$375) Apfelbaum; 2, used, \$160 (\$200) Ivy; 2a on cover, CANAL ZONE inverted, \$575 (\$500) Apfelbaum; 9d, double ov., on card, \$2800 (\$800+) Siegel; 12, used, bar at bottom, f, \$80 Wolffers; 39c, booklet pane, f-vf, \$325 (\$500) Apfelbaum; 58, \$240 (\$325) Apfelbaum; 59, \$100 (\$165) Apfelbaum; 67, \$425 (\$475) Ivy; 84 var., pr., 11 and 9 mm spacing, \$100 Apfelbaum; 87, \$55 (\$40) Wolffers; 94, \$425 (\$300) Ivy; U15, \$400 (\$550) Ivy; UF1, used, large size, \$1150 (\$1250) Siegel; 120P1, 146P1, 147P1, C17P1, 4 large die proofs, \$3500 Siegel.

Addresses of above auctioneers. Earl P.L. Apfelbaum Inc., 2006 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19015; Steve Ivy Philatelic Auctions, Inc., 2121 N. Akard, Dallas, TX 75201; Robert A. Siegel, 160 E. 56th St., New York, NY 10022; Richard Wolffers, Inc., 127 Kearny St., San Francisco, CA 94108. Auctioneers wishing to be listed should send catalogues and prices realized to the editor at the address listed on the inside cover page. Collectors writing for catalogues should mention *The Canal Zone Philatelist*.

Booklet Stamps —

(Continued from page 25)



V.O. Stephenson,

Fig. 1. Horizontal pair on cover with straight edges at left and right.

Panama Overprints

1. Handmade panes

—These stamps were made from sheet stock, so the only way to identify them as booklet stamps is to look for features unique to stamps which have been through the booklet manufacturing process. This consisted of assembling sheets of stamps and covers, sewing or stapling them together and then cutting this package apart into booklets. There are two possible features:

—An attached piece of selvage with sewing machine holes where the thread passed through. (It is very unlikely that any of these exist, as the booklet would have had to have been disassembled first.)

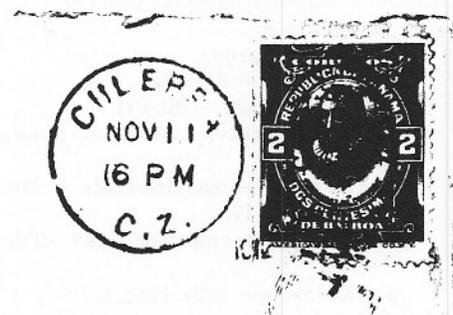


Fig. 2. Handmade booklet stamp with close-trimmed edge at left.

—Either close or wide trimming of the outside perforated edges (Figure 2), due to the cutting line not matching the perfor-

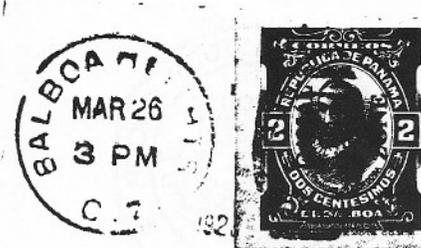


Fig. 3. Machine-made booklet stamp.

ations. (This can appear on any side, as these panes exist with selvage on any one of the four sides.) It is sometimes hard to decide whether a side is close or wide trimmed or merely roughly torn apart. I always assume a stamp is not a booklet stamp unless the trimming is very evident. A trimmed stamp will have the ends of each perforation smoothly cut, and the ends will all lie along a fairly straight line (which may or may not be exactly parallel to the edge if the stamp design.) These only exist with Type I and II overprints.

2. Machine-made panes

—Since the corresponding sheet stamps were issued with selvage on all four sides, any straight-edged stamp must be a booklet stamp (Figure 3). These only exist with Type II, IV, and V overprints.

U.S. Overprints and Later

3. Flat press — machine-made panes

Consider the relationship of guidelines and straight edges. The general rules are:

—A stamp with a *wide* straight edge at left, right or bottom and *no* guideline on at least

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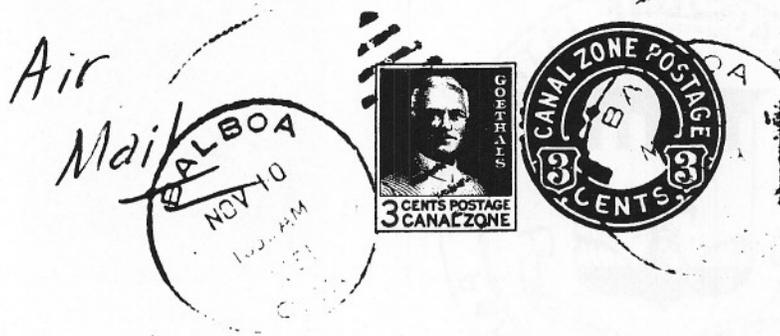


Fig. 4. Wide straight edge with no guide line.

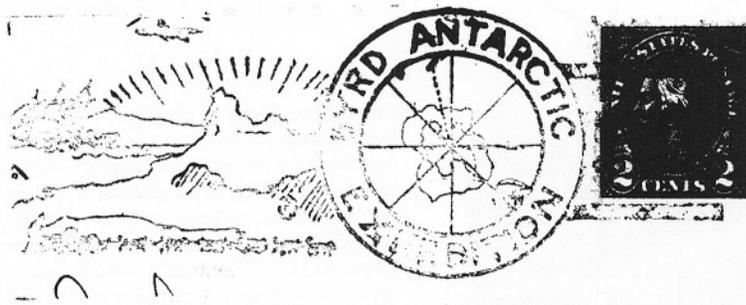


Fig. 5. Rotary press stamp with straight edge.

one of the wide straight edge(s) is a booklet stamp (Figure 4). Why? Consider how 1¢, 2¢, and 3¢ sheet stamps of the 1924-1935 period were printed: in sheets of 400 with guidelines horizontally and vertically through the center. The sheet of 400 was cut along these two guidelines into panes of 100 resulting in 2 straight edges on each pane. These straight edges, if cut wide enough, *always* have guidelines on them. Only booklet panes were cut in places not marked by a guideline on the sheet. (Some booklet panes do have guidelines of course; see below.)

—A stamp with a straight edge at left or right and a guideline on the straight edge cannot be identified unless it meets one of the other conditions. Such a stamp could be, in the case of a right side guideline for example, either Position 10, 20, 30, etc. from an upper left pane of 100 or Position 2 or 4 from a position H booklet pane of 6.

—For discussion of horizontal guidelines, see below.

—A stamp with a narrow straight edge usually cannot be identified unless it meets one of the other conditions.

—If your stamp has a horizontal guideline along a bottom straight edge, measure the distance between the guideline and the bottom of the stamp design. If this distance is small (about 1/2 mm.) it is a booklet stamp. On sheet stamps the distance is about one mm.

—All Position M, N, and O panes show a horizontal guideline in the selvage, while the top selvage of sheet stamps never has a horizontal guideline. Thus, if the buyer exploded the booklet before using the stamps of the pane, positive identification

of stamps with selvage, from the top row of M, N, or O panes can be made.

—There is an additional way to distinguish sheet stamps with straight edges from booklet stamps of the flat press U.S. overprints (71, 73, 84). After printing, stamps shrink slightly, perpendicular to the grain of the paper. Because paper used to print booklet stamps was fed into the press at right angles to the way sheet stamp paper was fed, booklet stamps shrank slightly in a vertical direction, while sheet stamps shrank in horizontal direction. Thus booklet stamps are very slightly shorter and wider than corresponding sheet stamps. This difference is small and a very accurate measuring gauge is required to identify stamps in this way.

4. Rotary press — machine-made panes

—Rotary press sheet stamps were issued with selvage on all four sides. Thus any stamp of No. 97 or 101 with any straight edge must be a booklet stamp (Fig. 5). The straight edge should be wide enough that the possibility of a trimmed stamp from a sheet can be eliminated.

5. Handmade

—Since sheets of these stamps were separated into blocks of six prior to being inserted into previously-cut booklet covers, I do not know of any way to identify stamps of these issues once removed from the booklet. Even identification of full panes is not always certain.

Bibliography

Canal Zone Booklets, James T. DeVoss, Canal Zone Study Group Handbook No. 2, 1953.

Identifying Booklet Stamps on Cover, Richard F. Larkin, The United States Specialist, October 1982; Bureau Issues Association; updated May 1983.

Identifying Possessions Booklet Stamps on Cover, Richard F. Larkin, Possessions, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 16-19, 1986; United States Possessions Philatelic Study.

Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps; Scott Publishing Co.

First Day Covers By Bradley Wilde

(Continued from p. 21, Whole No. 80)

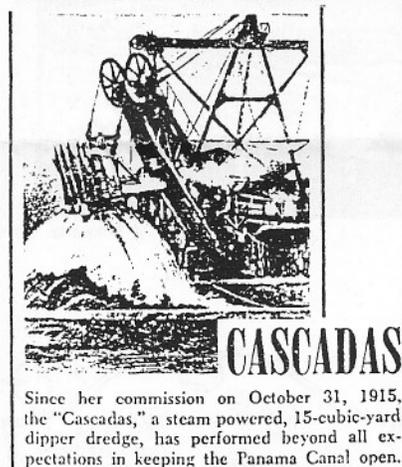
163. 13¢ "Las Cascadas" — February 23, 1976.

Postmarks: Machine Cancel — Balboa.

Hand Cancel — Balboa

Cachets: Fig. 103 illustrates the black ink cachet produced by Al Sprague. 3,000 were made of which the majority were signed by the artist. Artopages manufactured the cachet illustrated in Fig. 104. The drawing of the Las Cascadas is in black and the rest of the cachet is in blue. See also Fig. 98a.

FIRST DAY OF ISSUE



Since her commission on October 31, 1915, the "Cascadas," a steam powered, 15-cubic-yard dipper dredge, has performed beyond all expectations in keeping the Panama Canal open.

Fig. 103.

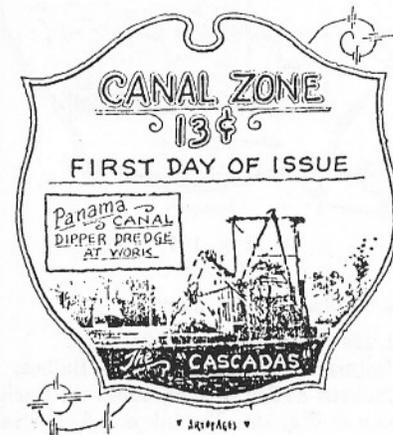


Fig. 104.

**CANAL ZONE
FIRST DAY COVER**

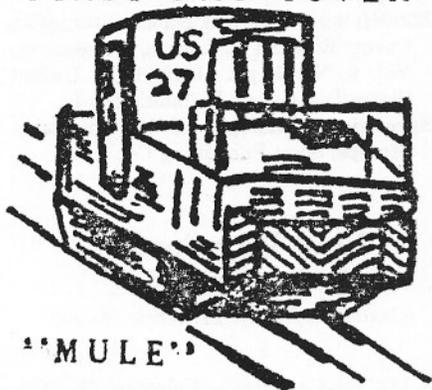


Fig. 105.

FIRST DAY OF ISSUE



LAST STAMP a Schwartz cover
Fig. 106.



Fig. 107.

164. 5¢ "Stevens"— Unknown.

165. 15¢ "Mule"— October 25, 1978.

Postmarks: Machine Cancel — Balboa.

Cachets: Al Sprague produced the Cachet shown in Fig. 105. The ink is red. The vast majority were signed by the artist. Approximately 3,500 were printed. Rick Schwartz produced the cachet shown in Fig. 106. The



Fig. 108.

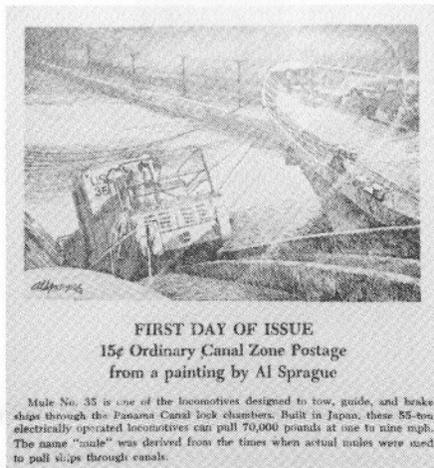


Fig. 109.

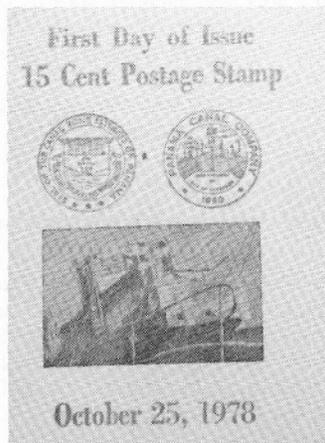


Fig. 110.

in black while the rest is in green. Fig. 108 is by an unknown maker and is in black ink. Figs. 109 & 110 are also by unknown makers. The first is in black ink. The second has the mule in black, the seals of the Canal Zone in blue and the writing in green. The House of Farnham produced the cachet shown in Fig. 111. The writing is in green while the seal and upper cachet are in gold.

Certainly some of you out there have town cancels that have not been mentioned, cachets



Fig. 111.

ink is blue. Fig. 107 illustrates the Artopages cachet and has the mule and 15¢ Canal Zone not illustrated, or knowledge of some of the unknown makers. Please take the time to write and let me know so that an update can be produced. During a series of moves from New York — Panama — California — Virginia — Bolivia my xeroxes of FDC 120-135 were lost. Please send me xeroxes of cachets and town markings you may have. Many thanks to you who have taken the time to write. Brad Wilde, 1011 Arlington Blvd., Arlington, VA 22209.

**A Dangerous
Forged Overprint**

An insidious forged overprint seems to be popping up with alarming frequency these days. It is an innocuous appearing overprint on the flat A series, and it appears most often (but not exclusively) on the inexpensive members of this series. At the STaMpsHOW in Washington, DC in August 1986, I spotted an example on an unused block of four of the 10 cent, purportedly Scott number 75, that was part of a large collection of blocks being shown informally. In discussing these forged overprints with CZSG member Albert Chang, he revealed that he and George Stilwell (former CZSG President) had spotted a large lot of these at an auction held in New York in the seventies, but that the prominent auction house involved would not withdraw the lot. This, I am sorry to say, happens far more often than is desirable.

Canal Zone collectors should beware. These fakes can easily pass muster if they are not

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President's Report —

(Continued from page 25)

updated and priced catalog of Canal Zone precancels, and *Supplement No. 2 Rom. The Postal Markings of the Canal Zone*. Both of these publications are being written by Lawson P. Entwistle, to whom your society is most grateful for all his many contributions to C.Z. philately. Many thanks to you Lawson for your many hours of research which bring us information of tremendous interest and importance.

Of course you realize that publishing costs money and at this writing the treasury is rather depleted (that is putting it mildly), but with timely payment of DUES we will be able to bring you the two back-burner items in the not too distant future — like maybe next year if all goes well. Having had my neck in the noose for some 11 years over the book *Canal Zone Stamps*, I make no promises.

By the time this is in your hands, the 15th Mail Sale will be concluded and the groundwork will start for the 16th sale. It is hard to believe that the glimmer in George Stilwell's eye way back in 1972 has become such a bright light. If it had not been for George's foresight we never would have accumulated enough money (greatly helped by high interest rates) to print *Canal Zone Stamps*, not to mention *The Postal Markings of the Canal Zone & Supplement*, plus the distribution of *The Postal Stationery of the Canal Zone*, all this in the space of five years. The high interest rates mentioned are a thing of the past — money market rates are now in the lower-level basement, to put it mildly, at 4.75%! We used to have a 15% return! So

again, please pay your dues NOW!

That winds up my comments for this year (even though this is September 1st). To quote a song: *Its Been a Very Good Year*, and much progress has been made. Thanks to everyone who has helped paddle the canoe, and to all our members a Happy Holiday Season and happy hunting in 1987.

Membership Distribution

By John C. Smith

My computer has come up with the following information on membership distribution by state and country. It should be of interest to our readers.

California —	144	Rhode Island —	5
New York —	96	Kansas —	5
Florida —	64	Hawaii —	4
New Jersey —	50	Nebraska —	4
Texas —	46	Vermont —	4
Pennsylvania —	43	Kentucky —	3
Ohio —	39	Maine —	3
Illinois —	37	Mississippi —	3
Massachusetts —	30	Oklahoma —	3
Washington —	27	Arkansas —	2
Maryland —	26	Alaska —	2
Virginia —	25	Delaware —	2
Michigan —	25	S. Dakota —	2
Connecticut —	19	West Virginia —	2
Indiana —	15	Utah —	1
Arizona —	12	Idaho —	1
Wash., D.C. —	12	Montana —	0
N. Carolina —	11	Nevada —	0
Oregon —	10	N. Dakota —	0
Alabama —	9	Wyoming —	0
Colorado —	9	Panama —	12
New Mexico —	9	England —	5
S. Carolina —	9	Canada —	4
Georgia —	8	Japan —	3
Iowa —	8	W. Germany —	3
Louisiana —	8	Netherlands —	3
Missouri —	8	Neth. Antillas —	1
Wisconsin —	8	Norway —	1
Tennessee —	7	Denmark —	1
Minnesota —	7	Ecuador —	1
New Hampshire —	5		

STaMpsHOW 86

The American Philatelic Society held its 100th Annual Convention (termed STaMpsHOW to highlight the APS) in Washington, DC in August 1986. The Canal Zone Study Group meeting on Saturday August 23rd was hosted by the Potomac Chapter.

The meeting led off with each person in the room introducing himself. The tally reached 32 including several who had been members since the reorganization in 1968. David Leeds, who had an exhibit on Panama Overprinted "Canal Zone" 1904-1924 in the World Series of Philately, was present. For the first time in years, the discussion did not focus on when The Book would appear! Rather the accolades for *Canal Zone Stamps* were the cry of the hour, and were modestly received by co-author Dick Salz who was present. Dick also summarized some up-to-date statistical information, mentioning that the paid-up membership exceeded 900 for the first time, and that the number of unsold copies of *Canal Zone*

Stamps continues to diminish. A brief discussion of the advisability of preparing and distributing a membership list followed. A consensus was that this would be a worthwhile effort. Jim De Voss related that the APS had discontinued distribution of such a list because of fears that it could be used by thieves to pinpoint the location of collections. A summary copy of the booklet pane survey was distributed by Dick Larkin, and a discussion ensued. A slide presentation followed, with items from the collections of several of the local Canal Zone members being featured. The meeting concluded with a general discussion and a bit of horse-trading. Many members also attended a picnic at Bob Karrer's that evening.

R.D. Bates, Jr.

Double Transfer —

(Continued from page 29)

Thus, an original entry was first placed too far to the east in the upper left corner, and another entry was too far to the west of north in the upper right.

Neither the plate number nor position of the stamp is known, but as only the lower right panes from plate numbers 15334, 15358, 15359 and 15437 of the first printing were used for the 1¢ overprinted postage due stamp, the search is narrowed.

The above find prompted me to refer to Max Johl's *The United States Postage Stamps of the Twentieth Century*, Volume III. Although I did not find this variety listed, I did find that certain other denominations, with plate numbers used for Canal Zone overprinting, were listed and illustrated. The specialist can have a field day with the 12¢ and 14¢ flat plate stamps of the 1922 issue.

The 12¢ Cleveland from plate number 14404 has a double transfer in Pos. 2 of the UR pane and from Pos. 63 of the UL pane. Triple transfers have been recorded from Pos. 73 and 74 of the UL pane. Numerous double transfers, especially in "CLEVELAND", exist from unknown plates and positions.

For the 14¢ Indian flat plate, Johl states on page 118 that "On plate 14515, right panes, one row was entered out of line resulting in blocks of six showing 2mm. vertical spacing between the right pairs and 3mm. spacing between the left pairs, the latter being between the fourth and fifth rows." This is a new variety for the specialist. The same 14¢ also has double transfers, shifted transfers, and relief breaks from unknown plates, so possibly some could occur on the plates used for Canal Zone overprints. I have a copy that shows a prominent plate scratch that extends from opposite the right "14" upwards in the margin to at least opposite the "T" of "POSTAGE". This copy has the 7/8mm spacing between "CANAL" and "ZONE".

Undoubtedly, a detailed search through *The Bureau Specialist* would yield interesting results. For example, a continuing series was written by Orville H. Milburn on the 3¢ Stuart, and Mrs. Carolyn P. Kuhn wrote on the 2¢ Washington of the 1922 series.

Postally Used By John C. Smith

Table 1 gives an interesting look at the postally used Canal Zone prices. Listing them in order has shown the used Postage Due stamps are the winners for the largest increase over six years.

The totals were taken from the Scott Specialized catalogue using all numbers, except the errors and variations, which are not included.

Scott No.	1980	1986	Growth
J1-29	\$ 165	\$ 366	122%
1-165	3,117	5,796	86%
C1-53	112	201	79%
UX1-21, UXC1-5	1,034	1,757	70%
U1-23, UC1-16	1,046	1,705	63%
01-09, C01-14	1,172	1,649	41%
Total	\$6,646	\$11,474	73%

表3. 1922年シリーズへの加刷によるC.Z.切手の種類

印刷	台切手の種類		加刷	C.Z.切手の種類数	
	目	スコットNo.		タイプ	スコットNo.
平面	11	551-571	タイプA	70-81	12種
平面	11	554-571, 623	タイプB	84-95	12種
輪転	10	583, 584, 591	タイプB	97-99	3種
輪転	11×10 ^{1/2}	632-642 695, 720	タイプB	100-104 115-116	7種
平面	11	552, 554, 562	タイプA	不足料切手 J15-J17	3種

注: 台切手に示したスコットNo.の切手の中で実際に台切手として使われているのは、C.Z.切手と同じ新刷のもののみ

Fig. 1.

YUSHU

The philatelic magazine *YUSHU* is a 100-page monthly published by the Japan Philatelic Society, Inc., Tokyo, Japan. CZSG member Takahiro Ohta sent me a copy which includes an article written by him titled *Canal Zone Postage Stamps*, which states: "... is an overview of C.Z. and its postage stamps, relationship between U.S. and Panama [stamps], how to collect its stamps, and classifications of overprinted stamps on U.S. 1922 series." It is a four-page article with 18 illustrations, four tables (Fig. 1 shows Table No. 3) with Scott numbers, measurements (length of CANAL and ZONE) and perforation differences which are in arabic numerals; so it is possible to come up with some understanding.

For years Americans have collected the beautiful Japanese stamps; how nice it is to know that a part of our history is being studied in Japan. This is an example of the international scope of philately and its ability

CANAL ZONE

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to bring different peoples together — for it was indeed my pleasure to meet Takahiro a few years ago when he was in San Francisco. Congratulations to him for dispensing C.Z. information to the philatelists of Japan.

R.H. Salz

Earliest Date for Scott No. 93

The 30¢ sharp A, Scott No. 93, was shipped to the Canal Zone from the BEP in Washington on May 19, 1925. As there was a considerable supply of the 30¢ flat A stamps in the Canal Zone at that time, the new shipment was placed in the back of the vault. The earliest record of use for the sharp A stamp was in December 1926. Lawson Entwistle has found a cover with a much earlier use. The cover (addressed to Providence, R.I.) bears a single copy of Scott No. 93, has a registered mark, and postmarks of Balboa Heights, May 7, 1926; New Orleans, May 14th; and Providence, R.I., May 16th.

Gilbert Plass

Meeting Notice

CZSG meeting at ARIPEX '87 in Tucson, Arizona on Saturday afternoon, January 24, 1987. For time of meeting please check at the show. Details from Lawson Entwistle, 10,000 East Broadway, Tucson, AZ 85748.

Winners

At AMPHILEX '86 the Grand Award was presented to RAYMOND W. IRESON for his exhibit *The Panama Canal Story*. The show was put on by La Federation Quebecoise de Philatelie and L'Amical des Philatelistes de L'Outaouais, in Hull, Quebec, Canada. This is a 14 frame (16 pages per frame) exhibit and will be shown at FLOREX '86. Stand by to find out what a blockbuster thematic exhibit can do in the U.S. I have seen photocopies of this exhibit and it is really something!!!!

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Book Reviews

By David L. Farnsworth

Ships of the Panama Canal by James L. Shaw (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1985) (ISBN 0-87021-629-5), 269 pages, \$29.95.

The book is designed around about 150 photographs of ships in canal waters. On the page facing each full-page picture, a brief history of the ship is given. Naval, passenger, cargo, and work ships are included. The photographs were taken between 1907 and 1939, mostly by Ernest "Red" Hallen, official photographer of the canal commission.

Each ship is interesting in its own way. The photographs and histories are crammed with fascinating details. Among the more well known ships are the HMS *Hood*, the battle-cruiser HMS *Renown* photographed in January 1927 with the Duke and Duchess of York aboard, the U.S. cruiser *Houston* in July 1934 on the occasion of President Roosevelt's crossing which was the first passage by a president in office, the USS *Constitution*, the huge *Bremen* in February 1939, and the USS *Texas* in July 1919 during the historic transit of 33 ships of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

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