



HELVETIA BULLETIN

SOCIETY FOR COLLECTORS OF SWITZERLAND

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Note of the Editor:

Our members are asked to graciously accept this issue of our BULLETIN that combines exceptionally the months of June, July and August.

Lack of important events, reduced activity in our Branches because of vacations and some other minor circumstances have caused the delay. However, with the forthcoming issue for September we shall resume the monthly publication of the HELVETIA BULLETIN.

VACATIONS:

For the past two months we have been receiving from Mr. and Mrs. Fred Loeliger beautiful postal cards marking the international itinerary of their European trip. Some are real collector's items because of the interesting cancellations and have found their way into their proper place. While we are grateful for their thoughtfulness, we expect to hear from Elsie and from Fred about their trip at the next Northern New Jersey Branch meeting.

Another European traveler is our member Karl Pesch, who remembered us in Nuremberg, Germany, with a beautiful card from that artistic and historic city.

OUTING:

The yearly outing of the Northern New Jersey Branch will take place on Saturday, September 12, on the pleasant and spacious grounds of Kracker's Restaurant and Grove in Ledentown, New Jersey.

The arrangements are in the able hands of Mr. Walters and of Mr. Spinden so that all members and their guests are assured of day of relaxation and of good fellowship.

It is expected that at least some members of our New York Branch will come for that occasion to New Jersey.

An invitation has also been extended to the members of the nine Clubs of Bergen County Philatelic Ass.
ALL ARE WELCOME.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Our members are cordially invited to follow the example of Dr. Max Kronstein and to send to the editor some article or original information relating to our philatelic interests.

We are again indebted to Dr. Max Kronstein for the contribution of the following interesting articles on early Swiss Airmails. We are very grateful for this continued cooperation and shall appreciate comments from our readers.

It is with great pleasure that we take this opportunity to inform our members that Dr. Max Kronstein participated recently at the "TAMPSPA", (Soc. of Philatelic Americans 59th Airmail Convention Exhibition at Tampa, Florida with "Pioneer Airmails of Switzerland" and received the well deserved Silver Award. Our sincere congratulations to Dr. Kronstein.

SOME ADDITIONAL FACTS about SWISS FOREIGN AIR MAIL
in the EARLY TWENTIES

by A. Schmidli, Luzern (Switzerland) and Dr. Max Kronstein, New York.

The HELVETIA BULLETIN has brought a series of articles about various aspects of the development of Swiss Air Mail to foreign countries in the early twenties. A group of them was concerned with experimental Air Mails between Switzerland and Germany in 1926.

But before the actual air services between Switzerland and the various foreign countries had been established, there was a period when Swiss Mail was dispatched by ordinary means to foreign countries from where foreign air services to other more distant countries existed already. An example for this procedure is found in the Swiss Mail Dispatches for the German-Russian Airmail service between Koenigsberg (Germany) and Moscow (Russia) that were made since 1923.

It is quite difficult to locate these early dispatches. This is not surprising since the Ad Astra organization, that handled these dispatches to Koenigsberg gives the total amount of the Swiss Air Mail Dispatches for the Koenigsberg-Moscow service throughout the year 1923 as amounting to barely 794 kilos.

This includes also mail that had to be redispached in Moscow to other parts of Russia or to Siberia and to China by other existing services. As an example can be mentioned a cover that was cancelled in Basle on Sept. 10, 1923, was backstamped at Moscow on Sept. 13, 1923, and has additional cachets of Tientsin (China) dated Oct. 4, and Hankow (China) on Oct. 6, 1923.

Another foreign air service that carried Swiss airmail without flying through Switzerland was the French Air Service Strassbourg-Pragua-Varsovie-Budapest. But here too the amount of mail was small in that period. The annual total, that ~~the~~ Astra handled from Switzerland amounted to only 1176 kilos for the year 1923. These covers are difficult to identify since no special cachets were used for these dispatches in Switzerland.

When Swiss Mail was dispatched to foreign centers there were in use on some routes, special brown and yellow envelopes of a large size. Some of these are known to have imprints for dispatches to Nuernberg, Munich and Frankfurt. They do not have any Swiss stamps attached and do not bear a Swiss Airpost label.

When such closed Airmail dispatches were used from Germany to Switzerland, those covers show the German yellow air label of that period.

Finally ought to be mentioned some facts about a foreign Air Service that operated through Switzerland in 1923. This was the French CIDNA Air Service Paris-Strassbourg-Zurich-Innsbruck-Vienna. However, the Swiss Airpost Catalog of 1949 does not list Swiss Airmail of this Service before June 2, 1925. But according to the Aero Revue of that period the Service as a whole, that is from all countries concerned and in both directions carried 2506 Kilos of mail already in 1923.

This annual total was even smaller in 1924 when it amounted to only 1008 Kilos. It may be well worth to study at some later date, whether this Service included Swiss dispatches or whether Switzerland did not use this Service before the date indicated in the catalog.

In the meantime these data show how the early Swiss dispatches to foreign Air Services are an interesting and rewarding field of collecting. Sometimes these covers show a foreign airpost cachet from the terminal of the Air Service that was used abroad. As an example may be mentioned a registered letter with Swiss Airpost stamps, air label and the following cancellation: "Zurich - 13.V.25 - Flugpost to Kiev (Russia)". This cover was backstamped at Kiev on May 18, 1925 with the three lines Russian Airpost confirmation cachet that was used at that time at Moscow. Since no German interim cachets are on the covers, it can be assumed that the letter was carried in one of the official closed postal envelopes from Zurich to Koenigsberg from where this official envelope was flown unopened to Moscow.

There the outside envelope was evidently opened, the individual items received the Airpost confirmation cachet and then they were re-dispatched to their final destinations.

ACCIDENTS in the history of the 1913 SWISS PIONEER AIRMAILS

by Dr. Max Kronstein

Collectors may sometimes wonder why so many of the 1913 Swiss Pioneer Airmails were flown by one single man, that is, by Oscar Bider. It looks sometimes like a one-man initiative behind the whole development.

But it was not that way. Bider's role as the most successful Swiss Pioneer Airpost Pilot had not been scheduled that way. It developed because of circumstances when other pilots met with accidents before they could carry the mail.

The official monthly magazine of the Swiss Post, Telegraph and Telephone Administration, the "Revue des P.T.T." commemorates the Airposts of 1913 with an interesting article in the April issue of this year of that postal magazine. (Vol. IV, No. 4, Berne, April 1953). The article in question is written by Hans Rychner of the Postal General Management in Berne and gives also some details on the various flights.

From these records it becomes evident that it had not been planned that Bider should have carried the two airmails from Aarau to Olten and from Aarau to Lenzburg on April 6, 1913. It had been planned that he should carry only one while the other should have been flown by Rene Grandjean (Swiss Pilot License #21 of Aug. 29, 1911) But just before mailtime Grandjean developed a defect in his engine or on the plane. Therefore, Bider took over and made both flights.

In other cases Bider's post flight was simply the successful conclusion of an otherwise less successful aviation day. Even at the first of such events, at the Basle aviation day of March 3, 1913, one of the other pilots, the well known pioneer Robert Gsell (Swiss License # 12 of May 30, 1911) did not succeed in getting his hydroplane off the Rhine.

However, other pilots were very successful during the Basle Aviation Day; for instance: Edmond Andemass (License # 7 of June 1, 1910), Attilio Maffei (License # 23 of February 12, 1912), who later on carried the Lugano Airpost (June 8, 1913) and Charles Ingold, the Chief Pilot of the Aviatic Construction Co. of Mulhausen (Alsace). Therefore, it was evidently merely a coincidence that it was Bider, who was selected to carry the mail in the "Postal Air Ship" as his plane had been named.

The Rychner article mentions also another detail of a Bider Post Flight: at the Sion - Siders Post Flight (May 18, 1913) the airmail boxes had to be improvised on the airfield and consisted of Army Fieldpost bags, that were hanging on trees. The public mailed cards and letters by dropping them into these bags.

But accidents were not limited to Bider's post flights. Charles Favre (License # 46 of February 28, 1913) had not been scheduled at all to carry the Herisau Airpost on March 31, 1913. It should have been flown a

week earlier on March 24, 1913 by Boby Zuest (License # 33 of Jan. 30, 1913), who was scheduled to fly it from Herisau to Teufen and to drop it there over the Armory Place. But bad weather and Zuest's accident made it impossible. The aviation day took place on March 30, and Favre was selected to carry the mail.

Favre announced this post flight for the next morning as a flight from Herisau on the route Zurich-Baden-Aarau-Solothurn-Avenches-Yverdon and then along the Jura Mountains to Geneva. But this ambitious project came to an end already at Niederglatt, where Favre's plane had to come down and the mail was handled from there by "ordinary means" by the Postal Direction of Zurich.

The last Swiss Crash-Airmail is the Laufën Airmail (Sept. 27, 1913) that was flown by Theodore Borrer (License # 38 of June 3, 1913). His plane had engine trouble when carrying the mail and he had to make an emergency landing in a small alpine valley between Rohrbachgraben and Propstenberg. The plane crashed on that occasion. However, the pilot and the mechanic remained both unharmed and carried the mailbags on their backs on a hike to Welschenrohr, where they found a carriage that took them and the mail bags to Gransbrunnen. From there the mail was transported by train to Solothurn.

It is interesting to review on this occasion what became later of these courageous pioneer airpost pilots in Switzerland. (The late W. Eckinger gave data on these details in his book: "Schweizer Flug Chronik, 1909-1914, from which have been taken the dates of the licenses that have been mentioned in this report).

Oscar Bider crashed to death on a flight on July 7, 1919.
Theodor Bossler " " " " " " " " March 22, 1914.
Charles Favre " " " " " " " " in France.
Attilio Maffei died on July 18, 1931.

Only H. Kramer, who carried airmail from Vevey to Villeneuve on June 22, 1913 and fell into the Lake of Geneva on that occasion, is still a line. But he too is retired from public life.

So it is not at all surprising when we learn that in the spring of 1915 the Swiss Aero Club felt quite hopeless for the future of airpost transportation and firmly believed that all future developments of the airplane would be limited to military aviation.

Only four years later did the Swiss Airmail recover when the first regular service was inaugurated on April 30, 1919.

Another "SUPPLEMENT" on the subject of the EARLIEST AIRMAILS
between Germany, Holland and Switzerland in 1926.

by Dr. Max Kronstein

In the HELVETIA BULLETIN of February/March 1953 (Vol. XVI # 2/3) Mr. R. Kohl of Wiesbaden, Germany had pointed out (page 7, par. A/II), that according to some sources the first flight Nuernberg-Stuttgart-Basle on April 12, 1926 was part of a joint Swiss-Balair-German Lufthansa route:

Dresden-Chemnitz-Plauen-Nuernberg-Stuttgart-Basle".

He submits now another cover that shows that the two routes: Dresden-Chemnitz-Plauen-Nuernberg and Nuernberg-Stuttgart-Basle were indeed started on that same date. The cover in question was flown from Plauen to Nuernberg on April 12, 1926 and has the Plauen cancellation timed at 7-8 A.M.

The Nuernberg Airpost Cachet of that year did not give a time indication. But the Basle Airpost backstamp on the Nuernberg-Basle covers of that day is timeclocked at 7 P.M.

The two flights may well have been parts of the same trial or inaugural route.

This is in agreement with the fact, that the write received recently a cover also of the first return-flight from Basle via Nuernberg-Plauen to Chemnitz of June 1, 1926 of which only 36 covers have been reported.

This date followed the first return-flight Basle-Nuernberg so closely as to give indeed another indication for Mr. Kohl's form of listing this route as a joint Balair-Lufthansa service.

QUESTION BOX

We shall gladly publish any question that our members may submit concerning philatelic matters covering the various departments of Swiss and Liechtenstein collecting of stamps, covers, and of their postal history.

Editor's Note

To all our MEMBERS we extend again the cordial invitation to send to our editor, Henry A. Gieffers, 283 Union Street, Hackensack, N. J. articles relating to the philately of Switzerland and Liechtenstein for publication in our BULLETIN under their own name. Please share your findings with our fellow Members.