

April 2016

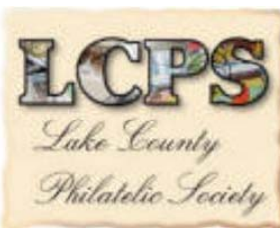
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Newsletter of the Lake County (IL)

Philatelic Society - Established 1933

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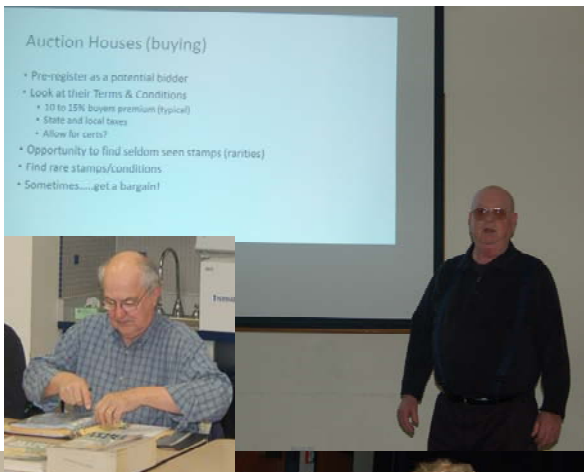
Perforations



Chuck Skittino's talk on "Auction Houses and Procedures" was very interesting and informative. He touched on how to take advantage of the process and what to avoid. This opened into an interesting discussion on "knowing" the rules and not a few questions concerning the liquidation of collections in general.

There were also quite a number of "free-bees" available.

This month, we'll be discussing the online auctions (ebay, Bidstart, etc) in a round-table format since we will be in the library's small "C" meeting room.



Air Mail – A Case Study in the Art of Bureaucracy. Last month, using articles from the US Postal Department's Postal Bulletins we established the intent to establish air mail service and authorized a new breed of stamps to support and track the services financial viability.

This month we will start looking into the events leading up to these orders as of the result of that historic flight on 15 May 1918 — when the world's first regularly scheduled airmail route was inaugurated under U.S. government auspices between New York and Washington, DC, with a pit stop at Philadelphia. The distance of the route was 218 miles, and one round trip per day was made, six days a week or so the story goes.

Treasures' Report: Total – \$ 3,329.07

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| Local Stamp Shows | MSDA STAMP SHOW Country Inn and Suites 600 Milwaukee Ave Prospect Heights IL April 23 and 24 | Compex 2016 Forest View Education Center 2121 S Goebbert Rd Arlington Heights IL May 20-22 | MSDA MILWAUKEE SHOW Crowne Plaza Milwaukee Airport 6401 South 13th St Milwaukee WI June 25 and 26 | MSDA STAMP SHOW Country Inn and Suites 600 Milwaukee Ave Prospect Heights IL April 23 and 24 |
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Next meeting:
7-PM on Tuesday, 26 April 2016
at the Grayslake Library
100 Library Lane - Grayslake, IL 60030



Officers:
Dr Tom Willer – President
Bill Schultz – Vice President
Dave Sadler – Secretary
Ed Pieklo – Treasurer

Leading up to this first flight, was an interesting tale of how it all fell into place.

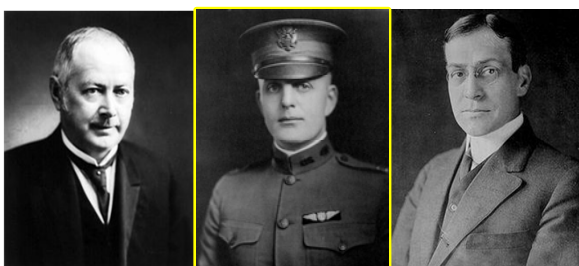
Enter the Army — much to the surprise of the Post Office Department, Colonel E.A. Deeds, head of the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps, offered to operate the postal route with military planes and pilots. The offer had developed because of a request from Europe that pilots be given more cross-country experience before being sent overseas (World War I still had six months until the Armistice). Flying the mail over a fixed route system would give pilots valuable experience.

This led the Post Office Department made an agreement (01 March 1918) with the War Department '... to inaugurate an Aerial Mail Service between Washington D.C., and New York beginning May 15th.' Nothing happened until three months later when ...

Major Reuben H. Fleet, the executive officer to Colonel Henry H. 'Hap' Arnold in charge of planning instruction at Army Air Service schools, was concerned about training pilots let alone setting up an experimental airmail service. Consequently, when he saw the War Department order dated 03 May 1918, he paid little attention to it — Major Fleet had enough problems without worrying about what he considered unrelated responsibilities until three days later he received a summons from Secretary of War Newton D. Baker and was told that Arnold had recommended him for the job of getting the airmail route started.

Baker said, 'The first plane will leave Washington for Philadelphia at precisely 11 a.m. on May 15th. President Wilson will be there.'

In true military fashion, Fleet responded. 'Mr. Secretary,' he said, 'we don't have any planes that can fly from Washington to Philadelphia and New York. The best plane we have is the Curtiss JN-4D Jenny, and it will fly only an hour and twenty minutes. Its maximum range is 88 miles at a cruising speed of 66 miles per hour.' As Fleet explained (with Baker listening patiently) the many problems in order to implement the "request". In the end, Secretary Baker reiterated that Postmaster General Albert S. Burleson had already issued a national press release announcing that the airmail route was going to be inaugurated at 11 a.m. on May 15th, and he was not going to back down. The schedule, has already announced: daily flights five days a week between Washington, Philadelphia and New York — make it happen



Postmaster General Burleson

Major Fleet

War Secretary Baker

The good major was not a happy camper, but he knew he could not waste a minute (169 hours and counting) — he'd been given a task that if not done would embarrass a good many highly placed individuals (and ruin his career).

First item — the planes. Fleet then made arrangements with the Curtiss Aeroplane Corporation on Long Island, NY, to convert six JN-4Ds to JN-4Hs, which involved replacing the standard 90-hp OX-5 engines with 150-hp Hispano-Suizas. In addition, he told Curtiss to 'leave out the front seat and the front set of controls and make a hopper to carry mailbags up there, that the gas capacity be doubled by hooking two 19-gallon gas tanks and two 10-quart oil tanks in tandem for longer range operation (a total 12 modified Jennies would eventually be required).

Next came the three landing fields — he made arrangements with the owner of Belmont Park, a racetrack on Long Island, to use the infield as a terminus so that the training of Army pilots would not have to be interrupted at nearby Hazelhurst Field. The midway point became Bustleton Field, located near the railroad station in north Philadelphia. The Washington, DC, field would be Potomac Park's old Polo Grounds, a 900-by-300-foot grassy area surrounded by (big, old and tall) trees between the Tidal Basin and the Potomac River despite Fleet wanting to use the airport at College Park, MD., but Burleson objected because it was nine miles outside the city, too far from the main post office.

Finally, operation, service and maintenance — mechanics were hurriedly located and ordered to report to the three fields. Fleet asked for six Army Air Service pilots and was told he could have four (Lieutenants Culver, Webb, Miller and Bonsal); the Post Office Department would (politically) choose the two other Army pilots (Lieutenants Edgerton- son of POD Comptroller and Boyleof son-in-law of Commerce Secretary; both just out of flight school).

Major Fleet now has only 72 hours to get everything assembled and into position to begin operations — what could go wrong? Next month — the saga will continue.



Curtiss JN-4Hs "Jenny"



"Jennys" ready at Potomac Park DC