

Wayzata air labels commemorate flight that never was

In his Stamp Market Tips column in the July 25 *Linn's Stamp News*, Henry Gitner recommended the purchase of the 1932 Newfoundland \$1 Wayzata air mail "label."

It is an item that has been of interest to collectors for years, but many do not know the full story behind it.

The romance of trans-Atlantic flight had not died out, even though the Great Depression was causing financial havoc in the early 1930s.

Patrick T. McCarty (sometimes cited in publications as McCartney), purported to be ex-British Royal Flying Corps, had dreams of great financial rewards by making commercial trans-Atlantic flying a reality.

McCarty reportedly was Australian by birth, but the story of how he arrived in the United States is not

known. He made his way to Minneapolis, Minn., where he found another dreamer, stamp dealer Lawrence S. Clark (1901-1992), who specialized in airmail covers.

McCarty's plan was to devise a seaplane flight that would carry not only mail but passengers. McCarty intended the flight to link the Midwestern United States — with its many recent Scandinavian immigrants — to the far reaches of northern Europe.

Clark's role was to look after the philatelic aspects of the project, and he commissioned the design of a stamp from Charles Ray, a Minneapolis philatelist and artist.

Ray's preliminary artwork is shown in Figure 1.

Clark believed that a large quantity of stamps should be issued, "so as to give everyone a chance to purchase copies at



Figure 1. A preliminary drawing of the 1932 Wayzata label created by artist Charles Ray. The drawing was sent to Newfoundland for official approval, and was used as a model for the printed labels.

face value."

McCarty and Clark chose Newfoundland as the most likely country to produce their stamp, because of its record since 1919 of issuing stamps for special flights. McCarty, Clark and others created a company called Aerial World Tours (AWT) to manage the flight project.

The proposed flight

would begin in Wayzata Bay on Lake Minnetonka, Minn., on Aug. 25, 1932, hence the nickname for the label.

The route would continue to Toronto, Ontario; Montreal, Quebec; St. Pierre et Miquelon (with the hope that this French colony would issue stamps for the flight); St. John's and Holyrood, Newfoundland;

and then on the Northern Sea Route with stops in Greenland, Iceland and Norway.

The return flight would go to Sweden, Germany and Denmark, and conclude in England, where plans were to sell the plane.

The proposed stamp was to be printed in blue with a red center but ended up (as shown in Figure 2) in blue only, on white wove unwatermarked paper in sheets of 25 (five across by five down) with no marginal inscriptions.

W.F. Nolting of the Nolting Engraving Co. engraved the stamp and the Bureau of Engraving in Minneapolis printed 400,000, on instructions received by telegram dated July 23, 1932, from J.C. Puddester, Newfoundland's Secretary of State.

The printing was to be under the supervision of

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27	44	8.95	44	30	8.95	74	20	11.25	127	10	10.75
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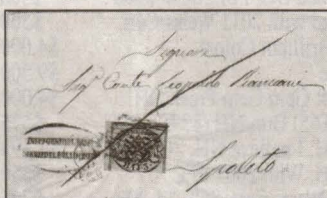
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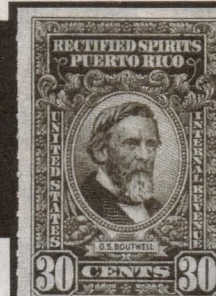
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a representative of the Northwestern National Bank, with the dies destroyed on completion of the printing and all stamps handed over to the bank.

Puddester also directed that, "All expenses and charges are to be paid by Aerial World Tours (AWT), the Government assuming no responsibilities."

One-quarter of the stamps (100,000) were to be shipped to Newfoundland for sale in post offices. The bank was to distribute the remainder to AWT in packages of 25,000 stamps, upon payment of \$5,000 per package to the account of Newfoundland. In fact, AWT purchased only one package and sold only 5,000 stamps from it before the flight was canceled.

AWT was in financial difficulty as it was unable to acquire the necessary funding from investors, and the sale of stamps was

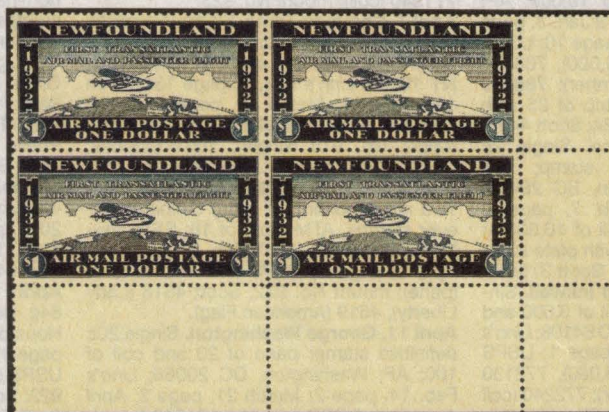


Figure 2. A corner block of four of the Newfoundland \$1 Wayzata air mail labels. Image courtesy of Saskatoon Stamp Centre.

sluggish. The AWT partners had expected pre-flight sales of 300,000 \$1 stamps, yielding \$240,000: 80¢ per stamp to AWT and 20¢ to the Newfoundland government. This would have given AWT a profit of \$32,500 over the \$207,500 budgeted for expenses.

The company reduced its expectations and purchased a smaller aircraft than the one originally

planned, and went on to promote the flight at county fairs throughout Minnesota.

By mid-September 1932 it was evident to the Newfoundland government that AWT would be unable to proceed with the flight. Without officially informing AWT, Newfoundland issued a press release on Sept. 13 withdrawing its support of the flight.

The release said, in part, "The Newfoundland Government has cancelled its special issue of 400,000 stamps...because the flight has not started."

Newfoundland subsequently refused a plea from Clark to process the covers already prepared for the flight, although Clark managed to get a few covers addressed to him canceled in Twillingate and Bonaville, Newfoundland, in October 1932. A few more covers were processed in St. George's through the help of Newfoundland's best known stamp dealer, the Rev. E.A. Butler, who added a 5¢ Newfoundland stamp to ensure delivery.

Other attempts were made in 1949, 1952 and 1979 to legitimize the stamps through the post. As in 1932, a few covers were processed through the mails, not because postal clerks specifi-

cally identified the labels as legitimate issues, but because they knew that Newfoundland stamps in general still had franking privileges throughout Canada after Newfoundland joined the Confederation in 1949.

Sometime in the fall of 1932, contrary to instructions from the Newfoundland government, the Northwestern National Bank destroyed the original drawings, the printing plates and the 375,000 stamps in their possession.

Until his death in 1992, Lawrence Clark continued to promote the Wayzata label as a genuine Newfoundland stamp issue. He had some support within the hobby, but catalogs such as Scott and many leading dealers such as Robson Lowe and Cyril Harmer insisted that the 1932 item was simply a label. ■

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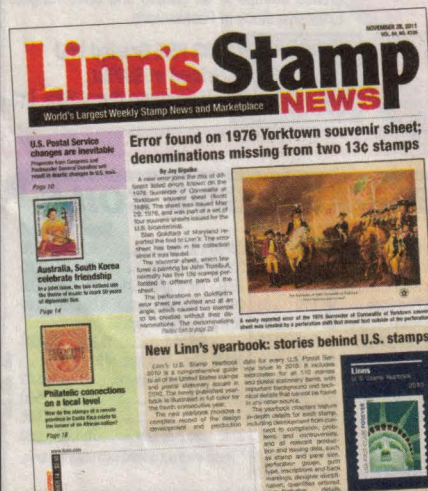
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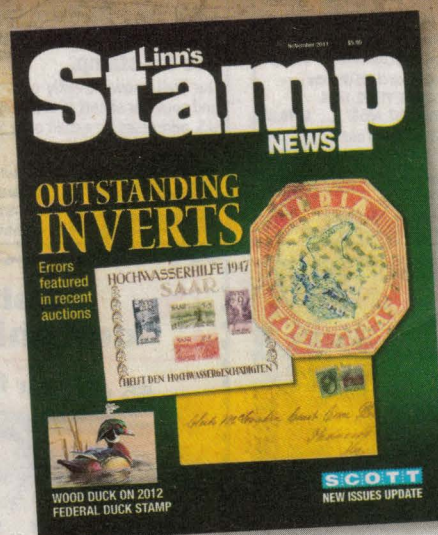
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