



"Helvetia"

SOCIETY FOR COLLECTORS OF SWITZERLAND

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Philatelic Calendar

- Feb. 15 -- Helvetia Philatelic Society monthly meeting, Fair Lawn Arts Center, 12-56 River Road, Fair Lawn, N.J., 8 p.m. Program: Mounting of club exhibit for BEPEX. A.P.S. slide program "Collecting Postal Stationery" Part II.
- Feb. 24 -- SASS New York Chapter monthly meeting, Collectors Club of New York, 22 E. 35th St., NYC, 8 p.m. Program: Helvetic Republic covers by Harlan Stone.
- Mar. 11-13 -- Helvetia exhibit in BEPEX club competition, Paramus, N.J.
- Apr. 15 -- SASS regional meeting hosted by Helvetia at SOJEX, Atlantic City, N.J. Program: three films on Swiss philatelic subjects.

SWISSAIR'S SILVER JUBILEE OF THE "CIPEX FLIGHT"

Philately's Most Exciting Inaugural To Be Marked in 1972
By Ernest A. Kehr

The 25th anniversary of Swissair's inaugural trans--Atlantic flight will be observed officially with a number of special ceremonies, according to word from Zurich, Geneva and Bern. Although all details have not yet been released, it is certain that they will be worthy of an event that ranks as probably the most exciting trip ever planned and staged in connection with an important philatelic occasion.

And while it was a tremendously successful aviation milestone, that 1947 journey across the ocean from Geneva, over New York, and a final landing in Washington, it also was accompanied by problems that never were fully revealed -- until now.

The fantastic odyssey had its original beginnings in 1945, when the Association for Stamp Exhibitions, Inc., was hard at work to make the International Philatelic Exhibition the finest staged until that time, and a fitting tribute to the centennial of the first two United States adhesive stamps.

The late Alfred F. Lichtenstein, who headed the show committee, knew of Switzerland's keen interest in promoting all undertakings to further interest in stamp collecting. Moreover, he intimately knew all of the officials who were in a position to consider

and approve an invitation to participate in the centennial show in New York.

During his quarterly trips to Switzerland, as chairman of the board of the CIBA Company in Basel, he made preliminary inquiries and later helped work out the details. As is customary, the Swiss never do things by half measures, so by mid-1946 he was assured that nothing would be spared to make the Swiss participation outstanding. The thoroughness of the undertaking could not be imagined until the display actually was seen by the more than 210,000 people who came to Grand Central Palace the following May. Those few of us who enjoyed Mr. Lichtenstein's confidence were literally staggered by what Bern had promised.

For the connoisseur the Swiss would send all of their most precious philatelic treasures: reconstructed sheets of the Zurich "fours" and "sixes;" magnificent mint strips, blocks and covers of the same pair; unique items such as the sparkling mint block of 15 Basel "Doves;" a mint block of 7½ "Double Genevas;" a mint sheet of the Geneva "Large Eagles;" and hundreds of other cantonals, transitionals, rayons and classic Swiss rarities.

For popular appeal they would send an innovational "moving table" at which visitors might comfortably sit as page after page of modern gems passed before them under glass panes transported by an endless belt beneath the sloping panels. Each of the 60 pages of this display contained original drawings, essays, proofs, color trials and finished examples of pictorials.

From the outset it was to be a challenging project in which the Swiss PTT, the Swiss Postal-Philatelic Museum and Courvoisier-Helio would cooperate wholeheartedly. And just as plans were being put into the works at Bern, Swissair entered the picture.

The airline had been in existence since 1931. As early as June 22, 1922, Henri Pillichody flew the first international, commercial flight between Zurich and Nuremberg for the Swiss carrier Ad Astra. While war still raged in Europe, this same pilot, now a director of Swissair, came to New York to conduct studies and surveys to determine future Swissair services to America. (He subsequently left the airline to replace F. Dossenbach as head of the Swiss National Tourist Office in New York.)

After the end of the war, as larger, long-range planes were developed, international, intercontinental routes were plotted by Swissair's energetic, visionary executives for the future. By early 1947 it was certain that the delivery of the first two DC-4's would be made before the Centenary International Philatelic Exhibition (CIPEX) would open its doors. The idea of scheduling the first trans-Atlantic flight to coincide with this important event seemed especially appropriate.

Plans went forward, and early in 1947 the Swiss PTT announced that it would issue a 2½-franc stamp for exclusive use on covers carried on this flight. That press release stated that the flight would have several purposes: to offer the first Swiss trans-Atlantic air service to America and "to bring greetings to the people of the United States from their Swiss friends, especially those

concerned with or visiting the international philatelic exhibition."

The stamp, designed by Bernhard Reber of Bern, would depict the HB-ILA aircraft flying between St. Peter's Cathedral of Geneva and the Statue of Liberty and a portion of New York's famous skyline. Printed by Courvoisier-Helio in gray-blue, dark blue and red, the stamp was inscribed "May 1947 Maiden Voyage Swissair Switzerland-USA" to make it the first Helvetican design with an English text in the more than 104-year history of Swiss adhesives. In addition, the PTT prepared distinctive envelopes with a neat three-color cachet and authorized the use of a postmark showing the em-pennage of the Douglas plane. Unlike any other Swiss stamp up to that time, this one would be valid solely for the first flight covers. Unused specimens could be bought at all Swiss post offices only until May 3; at the Philatelic Service Office only until May 17. (The "Pro Aero" stamps of 1949 and 1963 also were valid only for special anniversary flights.)



(To be issued this month is a special 2+1 franc semi-postal stamp, also illustrated above, to mark both the first Swissair trans-Atlantic flight in 1947 and the first Swiss international flight of June 22, 1922, between Zurich and Nuremberg. The design shows one of Swissair's new Boeing 747 Jumbo Jets against lines representing longitude and latitude of the earth. The realizations of the 1 franc sur-tax will be divided between the Pro Aero Foundation, which will use 80 percent for the training of junior airmen, and the Swiss Air Rescue Service.

Issue of 1854-1862 (Strubel)
By Josua Buhler

(Editor's Note: In preparation for the March meeting of the Helvetia Philatelic Society on Switzerland's Strubeli stamps, Werner Vogel has translated page 28-29 of Mr. Buhler's 1968 book Altschweiz -- was nicht im Katalog steht, which roughly translates as "Early Swiss -- Beyond the Catalog.")

The issue of a new stamp series was planned for Jan. 1, 1852, the date of adoption of the tariffs to the uniformed Swiss value. The Swiss government mint, which was given an order in plenty of time to print the stamps, had in the fall of 1851 not even the necessary installation. Very late the printery of the University of Munich (Weiss) got the order to print the stamps. An immediate delivery was impossible.

These conditions, that the same stamp designs were printed partly in Munich on the so-called Munich paper and later in Bern on the Munich paper and on paper of the paper mill Sihl (Zurich), gave a multitude of differences which made the collecting an almost impossible task.

In cooperation with catalog producers and well-known special collectors, in the course of tens of years of collaboration a classification was reached with subdivisions, which were acceptable to most collectors. Serious-minded specialists became more deeply absorbed into the study, because there are either many different paper thicknesses, or uncountable variations in color and, not the least, the differences in the printing.

All suggestions, even the most well-meaning, which came from collectors fortified the opinion that it is not advisable to go off from the known system. They confirm always the same facts of the collaborators of the Zumstein Handbook, that you can not establish a typical regularity.

Even by reorganizing the PTT collection it was decided to renounced all classifications of the print and paper varieties which were not documented. The buildup was made as far as possible after the Zumstein Special Catalog with a statement of the thickness of the paper and the color of the silk thread. The year of the issue complements both these points.

A detailed study will give, besides a regular collection, a convincing inside in the work of a specialist, concerning the small variations and the separation of the paper species. The measuring of the paper of often washed stamps and of issues with very little or no relief will give no certain clues. Even the use of the quartz lamp can only be right theoretically. You have to take into consideration that the stamps, which are more than 100 years old, may have been stored in a damp place or been washed frequently, often with not too clear water. Therefore, even the same stamps will show different fluorescence.

You will see from time to time in exhibitions the so-called color of error of the 5 Rappen blue instead of brown. In the year of 1942 the Schweizer Briefmarken Zeitung (SBZ) published an article about this stamp. SBZ tried to prove the error with two letters which were supposed to be genuine and 13 loose stamps. In conclusion of all this evidence about the genuineness, the writer hoped that the only Swiss color error of the 5 Rappen blue would be as appreciated as the errors of other countries. The Strubel specialists found just these reasons to doubt it more. Therefore, it should be expected with greater positiveness that these stamps were essays with trial cancellations.

SWISSAIR'S SILVER JUBILEE OF THE "CIPEX FLIGHT"
(Continued)

(The latter operates a fantastic aviation service. Not only does it carry on the normal civilian search and rescue missions involving lost aircraft in all parts of the land. It also flies planes and helicopters to the summits of the Alps when mountaineers find themselves stranded and cannot be brought back to safety by more traditional lifesaving methods.)

(This stamp may be used to frank any mail, but it is compulsory for use on covers dispatched on the special flights to be made from Switzerland to the United States and Germany on the anniversary dates in May and June respectively.)

But now to return to the 1947 journey itself.

(To Be Continued)

Helvetia to Hold Auction May 16

Almost 100 lots of Swiss and related material are already on hand for the Helvetia Philatelic Society auction May 16, Steve Pomex, society president, reports. The deadline for lots, which must each have a minimum estimated retail value of \$3, is March 1. The seller can submit a reserve bid on each of his lots. There will be no minimum starting bids in the auction. The society will distribute the auction catalog in April to all known collectors of Switzerland in the U.S. Collectors wishing to submit material for sale, obtain the auction rules or submit bids should write:

Mr. Steve Pomex
P. O. Box 402, Gracie Station
New York, N.Y. 10028