

Any Interest in Collecting Zepps ?

by Stan Cronwall

If you have ever toyed with the idea of collecting Zeppelin stamps in one form or another. What stopped you?

Yes, there is always the problem that it can drain your bank or savings accounts faster than the IRS on steroids.

But there are ways to get started other than the pricey U. S. Zepps C 13-15, or even the so-called “baby Zepp” C 18, and be sure to give a wide berth to those premium priced covers and cards.



Where does one start? Do you want stamps that include an image of an airship, or will you settle for just an overprint with the word “Zeppelin”?

Do you want stamps of the period when the Zeppelins were actually in service or will you be satisfied with the later tributes such as those which commemorate the so-and-so flight from X to Y.

For me, the stamps from the time when the Zepps actually were flying are far more collectable than the commemoratives of the modern era. The modern era stamps are generally much cheaper but seem to be riding the coattails of the original airships.

I checked my set of Scott Catalogs (circa 2011) and see that probably the least expensive “toe in the water” would be to look at the airmail stamps of four countries – Brazil, Germany, Paraguay and Russia (USSR).

What is your price tolerance level on buying a given stamp or set?

For purposes for this exercise, let’s just say between \$ 10.00 and \$ 50.00 and maybe a few that are even cheaper even though they are over 80 years old.

Here are a few stamps for reference to get your heart started:

Country	Description
Paraguay: C 54 & C 55	Regular issues overprinted
C 74-78	showing airship “Graf Zeppelin”)
C 79-83	showing airship “Graf Zeppelin”)
C 88-92	showing airship “Graf Zeppelin & overprinted “1934”)
C 93-97	showing airship “Graf Zeppelin” & overprinted “1935”)
Russia (USSR): C 12-13	showing “Graf Zeppelin” & call to complete 5 Year Plan in 4 years
C 15- 19	showing un-named airship
C 20-25	showing un-named airship
C 26-29	“Graf Zeppelin” and Soviet icebreaker “Malygin”
C 30-33	“Graf Zeppelin” and Soviet icebreaker “Malygin”
C 53-57	Soviet airships
Brazil: C 26	surcharged “ZEPPELIN” in blue on C 18 un-named early airship
C 27	surcharged “ZEPPELIN” in red on C 19 un-named early airship
C 29 and C 30	surcharged “ZEPPELIN” on regular issues of 1928-1929

Germany: C 35-37	“Graf Zeppelin” flying over the earth
C 57-58	“Hindenburg” (<u>NOTE: acidic gum problems</u>)
C 59	Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin airship inventor & builder
C 60	Airship gondola
C 59 & C 60	issued to commemorate the 100 th birthday of von Zeppelin

Depending on your tolerance for pain, you can venture into the German overprints for the “Graf Zeppelin” service to Brazil, the “Polar Flight” to the North Pole in July, 1931 and the airship’s 50th crossing of the Atlantic to the World’s Fair in Chicago in 1933, with stops in Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Miami, Akron, Chicago then back to Akron and on to Seville and finally returning to Friedrichshafen.

Prices for postal cards and covers for these flights can be heart stopping. Let the buyer beware.

For example, a cover flown on a short flight around the grounds of the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin can easily run \$80-100.



This postcard has three Rhein-Main strikes, the magenta Olympic Flight cachet and the Berlin Central Airport receiving mark.

If you have an appetite for sleuthing, here are some other countries that have issued Zepp stamps “back in the day:”

Argentina	C 20-24, and C 25-29	Italy	C 66-72
Cyreniaca	C 12-17	It Aegean Islands	C 20-25
Egypt	172-176 and C 3 & C 4	Latvia	CB 20-24
Greece	C 5-7	San Marino	C 11-16
Hungary	C 24-25	Tripolitania	C 21-26
Iceland	C 9-11		

Maybe you’ve got a Zepp “goodie” laying around in your stamp den buried in that pile or stack of things you intend to get to one of these days.

Isn't it at least worth dusting off the top layer?

And, there are always the NSSS "Penny Boxes" to filter through. You never know what you will find until you look .

Stan Cronwall is a member and his collecting interests include Germany: Third Reich 1933-45 and the areas it occupied (stamps covers & cards). He also collects U.S. World War II Patriotic Covers and Cards; Civil War Patriotic Covers (both U.S. and CSA); U.S Naval Covers; DDR stamps; and, Post WW II Soviet Zone Hitler Head Obliteration stamps, covers & cards.