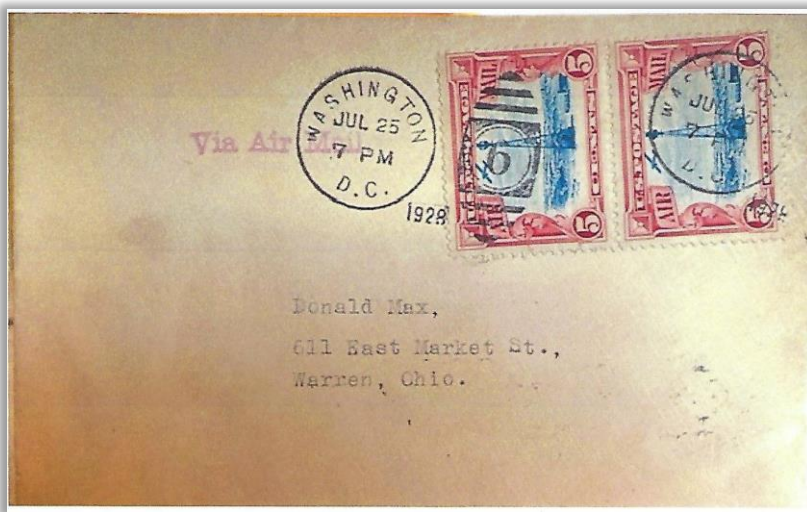


# The New U.S. Airmail Rate of 1928

By Tom Reyman

In the early 1920's, the postage rate for Air Mail correspondence was based on how far the mailing would travel. The Post Office had established postage zones and flights within a zone were the least expensive, typically 10¢ per ½ ounce. Zone to Zone or heavier letters required more postage. Since regular, ground-based mail was only 2¢, people tended to use Air Mail for only the most important correspondence. In an attempt to increase Air Mail usage, it was clear that the Post Office needed to reduce the postage charges for this service to encourage more use of Air Mail.

As a first step towards this goal, the C11 "Beacon" 5¢ stamp was issued on July 25 of 1928 even though the base rate was still 10¢ per ½ ounce. At a minimum, two C11 stamps were required on a letter when the stamp was issued. Finally, on August 1, 1928, the Post Office changed the base rate for Air Mail to 5¢ per ounce. This rate applied to mail sent anywhere in the U.S. and did away with the previous rate zones.



This is a First Day Cover for the C11 Air Mail stamp dated July 25, 1928. On that date, the basic rate was 10¢ for ½ ounce, so two C11 stamps were needed to meet the postage rate. Washington, DC to Warren, Ohio.  
(Scan courtesy of Jack Sheldon)



An August 1, 1928, cover with the single 5¢ C11 stamp. The envelope is imprinted with the information about the rate change. The route was from Lansing, MI to Detroit, MI.



Another August 1, 1928, cover. This one has the C11 5¢ stamp on a typical regular Air Mail envelope. The route was from New York City to Washington D.C.

*Tom Reyman is a Nevada Stamp Study Society member whose collecting interests are U.S. FAM covers, general Air Mail covers, Canadian Semi-Official Air Mail stamps and covers, and Cape Breton (Nova Scotia) covers.*