

First Mail Flights Miami to The Bahamas

By Tom Reyman

The distance from Miami, Florida to the islands of The Bahamas is only about 190 miles. The Bahamas has for many years been a popular vacation and business destination for visitors from Florida and elsewhere. The tropical setting surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean made the Bahamas attractive and drew a great deal of attention from United States vacationers and provided the Bahamas with a good business base. Before 1929, mail between Miami and Nassau was transported by boat. As air travel became more reliable, the possibility of an air connection between Miami and Nassau in the Bahamas became a reality.

On January 2, 1929, Pan American Airways officially began first regular flights from Miami to Nassau and return using Fokker Tri-motor aircraft under the FAM-7 contract. There had been three FAM-7 survey flights in October 1928 to verify the route and assess airport issues before the official first flights were approved. One issue that was unresolved on January 2 was the official postage rate between the two destinations. Since the postage rate had not been established, all mail was carried regardless of the postage applied.

Only 83 first flight covers were carried on January 2 to Nassau. Here are two of those 83. The purple cachet was applied to all the covers on this flight. Notice that a variety of envelope designs was used.



This cover flew with seven cents postage while the next cover had ten cents worth of stamps.



Apparently, Nassau was much more prepared for the first flight from Nassau to Miami as 2,000 pieces of mail were carried on the return flight to Miami. These are two examples.



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.