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Editor’s Notes

This issue of Tencito features the penalty for reusing stamps in Peru, and the questions around a censored cover that originated in Peru before the U.S. officially declared war in 1941, but arrived in New York City after war was declared. In addition to many questions posed by the cover, its markings, and the apparent fact that it was held in New York for four years, it provides an interesting look into censoring at the onset of the war.

This issue is being sent at the time of two major philatelic events, the APS Stampshow in Richmond, Va, and Seapex in Seattle (in September). If anybody finds something of interest at these shows to share, please send them to me.

Congratulations to Henry Marquez, whose exhibit will advance to the Grand Prix International. See the picture of the ceremony and the Peru entries on page 14.

Congratulations also to Tom Myers for his exhibit of “Peruvian Airmail, 1927-1941”, which received a gold award at the APS Stamp Show in Richmond.

We have no more articles in the pipeline for publishing and need more material for future newsletters in either Spanish or English. Please send submissions to dnpaddock@hotmail.com. Note that this is a new e-mail address for me. Thank you. David Paddock, Editor.

Please notice we have a vacancy for the Secretary position. If you can serve as Secretary, please contact Chuck Wooster.

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Rediscovered Estampilla Usada Penalty
by Chuck Wooster

Six years ago, in Trencito 2, Vol. 2, No. 1, February 2011, I wrote an article on Estampilla Usada markings. The article included a census of 18 covers, the earliest dating from the late 1870's. Most of the covers had special Estampilla Usada handstamps indicating that used stamps had been reused. All the covers were assessed a penalty of ten times the normal postage rate.

Since that article, two more examples have been recorded. The first is currently in the collection of Guillermo Llosa (Figures 1a and 1b). The letter was franked with a used 10 centavos green stamp that was issued in 1876. The stamp was recognized as being used and received an italicized Estampilla Servida handstamp (Figure 2). This marking was not reported in my earlier census. It was assessed the usual 100 centavos postage due by application of two 50 centavos postage due stamps, which were canceled with a Lima CDS of October 15, 1880.
Last year I acquired another cover sent from Lima to Ayacucho on September 20, 1875. It was evidently franked with a used stamp, although that stamp is missing from the cover. The remnant of the same italicized Estampilla Servida handstamp is clearly visible. However, this cover was only assessed a penalty of 40 centavos. The front of the cover received a 40 Centavos due marking and the back of cover has two 20 centavos postage due stamps, each with a 20 Centavos due marking. All three of these markings were applied in Lima. The cover also has an Ayacucho CDS receiving cancel dated September 30, 1875. All cancels are extremely fine impressions, indicating that they were carefully applied. My first impression of this cover was that it was forgery, because the cancels looked too good and the penalty was incorrect. However, a little more research was in order.

Article 357 of the 1876 Reglamento states;
El que emplee estampilla ya usada ó inutilizada pagará una multa diez veces mayor del valor de la estampilla usada.

Anyone who uses an already used or disabled stamp will pay a fine ten times higher than the value of the stamp used.

This is the penalty that we see assessed on these types of covers. However, this last cover is dated September 1875 prior to this Reglamento. Looking back further we find Article 185 of the 1866 Reglamento which states;

Para proceder el despacho de todo Correo, se sacarán a presencia de los jefes de Ia oficina, las cartas depositadas en los buzones, que deben permanecer siempre cerrados con llave. Antes de inutilizarse las Estampillas, se examinarán si han sido usadas, lo cual se conocerá por el sello de inutilización que deben haber tenido antes; y si se encontrasen algunas de esta naturaleza, se les pondrá porte doble.

In order to proceed to the dispatch of all Mail, the letters deposited in the mailboxes, which must always be locked, shall be removed in the presence of the heads of the office. Before the stamps are rendered unusable, they shall be examined as to whether they have been used, which shall be known by the cancellation stamp which must have been previously applied; and if there are some of this nature, they will put on double postage.

An even earlier discussion of this subject can be found in Circular Number 39, issued on April 29, 1863. It goes on at great length to explain how letters with forged stamps, used stamps or unauthorized bisected stamps should be handled. I won’t reprint the entire Circular here, but the following paragraph is most pertinent to this discussion;

En cuantas operaciones se practique en las oficinas con las cartas, bien sea que se reciban o despachen, entren o salgan, en otras tantas los jefes y empleados fijarán la atención sobre las estampillas, y las reconocerán si son o no servidas, partidas o falsificadas. Uno y otro es fácil advertirse a primera vista; pero si hubiese duda se consultará el voto de dos o tres empleados de la oficina, quienes imparcialmente lo darán en el acto, y de este modo quedará resuelta la duda. Si la resolución es de que la estampilla o estampillas son servidas, se dejarán estas intactas y no se inutilizarán, para que quede manifestado el fraude: se anotará y firmará en la cubierta la circunstancia en que se encuentra la estampilla: se le pondrá el porte doble que corresponda, según el artículo 7 de la Tarifa, el marchamo de la Estafeta, y se cargará en la guía el valor, al remitirse a su destino.

In many operations it is practiced in the offices with letters, either received or dispatched, entering or leaving, in many others managers and employees focus their attention on the stamps, and recognize whether they are reused, bisected or counterfeits. The second infraction is easily noted at first sight; but if there are doubts on the other two, you shall consult the vote of two or three office employees, who will immediately render an impartial judgement, and so the question will be resolved. If the resolution is that the stamp or stamps are reused, those intact will be left alone and shall not be rendered as invalid, but for those on which it is
agreed that there is express fraud: it will be recorded and signed on the
cover the circumstances that the stamp is encountered: twice the postage
will be stated as appropriate, under Article 7 of the tariff, the cancel of the
Postal Office, and the deficiency amount is to be recorded into the
directory, to be remitted to its destination.

I have presented both the original Spanish and an English translation of both
documents (done primarily with Google Translate) and both seem to refer to some
application of double postage for the reuse of stamps. Such a penalty seems too low,
considering that an unpaid letter was assessed double the postage. Wouldn’t a letter sent
with a reused stamp that is attempting to defraud the post office be subject to a higher
penalty? I think a better interpretation is that the letter with a used stamp is treated as a
deficiency of double the value of the used stamp and then is assessed a double deficiency
of that higher value. Therefore, a letter with a used 10 centavos stamp attempting to pay
the rate for a single weight letter sent within Peru would be escalated to a rate of 20
centavos. Since the stamp is invalid, the deficiency of 20 centavos would be subject to a
double deficiency of 40 centavos to be paid by the addressee.

This is the only cover that I have seen with a reused stamp before 1876. I would be
interested to know of any other examples with or without postage due stamps.

Censored Mail from Lima to Oslo, Norway held in New York for Four Years
and
An Addendum on Searching for “Undercover Mail”
by Ed Fraser and David Paddock

The following article is based on a discussion from the Yahoo member page. It
illustrates the value of using the member page for items you may have questions about.
The editor found the dates on the reverse side of the cover to be intriguing, since the
letter was sent prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, but received in New York after the
United States officially declared war.

The cover below (Figure 1, next page) is franked with four official 10 centavo stamps
(Scott O29, Gibbons O384) that were issued in 1914. It is the proper surface registered
rate to any UPU country (20c postage and 20c registration fee). The number to the right
of the postage is the internal memorandum tracking of the Postal Administration (#346-
128-941) related to the official communication sent inside. There are no accessible
records at the post office administration to relate to the exact content.

Ed Fraser, a collector of WWII “undercover mail”, came upon and submitted this cover
because of his interest in wartime mail that crosses enemy lines, or somehow could
circumvent rules stopping mail from crossing enemy lines. While he specifically focuses
on civilian mail that was able to use the British Thomas Cook and Son Mail Scheme, and
this cover is not related to that scheme, it is an example of how even mail from neutral
neutral Peru can get not only censored but inadvertently stopped, and in this case just
held, because of routing that would cross lines with and between belligerents. And note,
in this case it got held without sender or addressee knowing it was held until after the
war was over.
A note about mail to Norway: Germany invaded Norway on April 9, 1940 and occupied it until May 9, 1945. Mail service between the Allies and Axis generally stopped, so when the U.S. entered the war after Pearl Harbor, the U.S. initiated censorship and stopped Axis bound mail, which until then was allowed from a neutral U.S.

During World War II, Peru stayed neutral until February 12, 1945, so again, its mail should not have been censored and held, either by the U.S. or the British.
Great Britain, its Colonies and Dominions, to create a way around complete civilian mail stoppage between combatants, as basically a humanitarian consideration (odd during war, of course), officially authorized an intermediary to use a “neutral country” to forward mail into an enemy country, and use a neutral country address to receive any replies. In Europe, the travel company Thomas Cook and Son was officially selected by the British Government, and initially used Amsterdam, Holland as a neutral place for sending mail to Germany and occupied countries. After Holland was occupied, Thomas Cook used Box 506, Lisbon, Portugal (and a few other boxes there). In North America, Thomas Cook in Toronto, Canada, was authorized to forward mail for Canadians from November 24, 1939, Canada having declared war on Germany on September 10, 1939, two years before the United States. The Canadians used Box 252 at the Grand Central Station, NY post office in the neutral U.S. (Of course, they could have used neutral Peru, in theory, but the mail routing would have taken longer and cost more.)

While the Thomas Cook scheme was authorized by the British Government for people in British areas, people in other countries apparently did learn of the service. Perhaps this was from word-of-mouth, or the various announcements made in British publications and British official newspapers. There are reports in U.S. official censorship records documenting that some letters were sent from, for example, Mexico, to Thomas Cook in
Figure 2
Front and back of August 1940 cover from Occupied Norway addressed to Box 252, Grand Central Annex, New York. The U.S. did not arrival or transit cancel ordinary mail, nor did Canada, at that time. The only clue that it went to Canada is the Canadian sealing tape (as used in Ottawa). That was the clue that three decades after their usage led philatelists to the subsequent identification of hundreds of these Box 252 covers—all Canadian censored and to different people—and finally their Thomas Cook scheme story that philatelists had overlooked.

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London to have them forward a letter into Nazi Europe per their Scheme. After U.S. censorship initially held up such a letter, it was decided by U.S. censorship that since it was not U.S. originated, the U.S. had no right to stop such a Mexican letter, and did mail it onward. However, to date no collectors have reported finding such a cover, or any examples of such mail usages from any country south of the U.S. in the Western Hemisphere. (That happens to include British colonies as well, and the service was undoubtedly openly announced in such places.). Examples may sit unidentified somewhere, awaiting discovery. As you can see from Figure 2, addressed only to a neutral country address from Norway with no clue of addressee person’s real location, it can be all but impossible to recognize a cover for some specific addressee’s country. Contents might help, but without the cover coming from a known correspondence, it can be a real challenge. Unfortunately, there are no lists of users of the service that have been saved—another limitation.

Sometimes one gets lucky, though. The Danish cover in Figure 3 has four different censorings, but only the Denmark to Box 506, Lisbon travels are documented by postmarks. The British censoring is understood to have probably been in London for Box 506 addressed mail, but the specific details of where censor numbers were at
specific dates are still sealed by the British Government (as are those from WWI as well!). This addressee was recognized by a collector as having an Icelandic name, and an Iceland collector was contacted and recognized the addressee as a woman he and his wife knew in Iceland. When contacting her in Iceland with a Xerox copy of the cover, her immediate response was “How did you get my wartime mail from my mother in Denmark?” A true story, and of course, that was not quite the case. The envelope had no contents, and the cover was in another collector’s German censorship exhibit collection. In many cases it is known that often Thomas Cook only forwarded the contents, not the outer envelope. To date, this is only one of two reported Thomas Cook scheme usages identified as going to an addressee in Iceland – where the British had actually advertised the service during WWII. Serendipity can be key?

There is no evidence that the United States played any role in Thomas Cook’s mail schemes, especially that which operated out of Toronto by using the Thomas Cook office in midtown Manhattan.
Figure 3
Danish cover addressed to Box 506, Lisbon, Portugal.
Where was the addressee really located? What is the clue here?
(An unusual name!)

Figure 4
Cover from Argentina addressed to Box 506, Lisbon, Portugal.
Probably someone in occupied Europe passed along the address on a letter they got, where the reply was Box 506, Lisbon. Hence the person in Argentina then also writes to the Lisbon address! Back flap missing, so no names to research further.
Only after the U.S. entered the war, Axis bound mail was stopped. This would and did include Thomas Cook scheme mail out of NYC bound for Nazi Europe, and any other mail scheme routing of any Allied countries’ mail via mailing from the now-not-neutral U.S. for any Nazi controlled area. Unlike the British, the United States officially declined to allow direct mail into Nazi Europe throughout WWII, and included any “undercover mail schemes” as well. There even exists correspondence with Thomas Cook, which proposed a service in the U.S. for Americans after Pearl Harbor, which the U.S. Government refused to consider. (POW’s, Internee’s, and Red Cross routed mail were censored and subject to all censorship rules, but the mail was allowed under international agreements. Such mail is not “undercover”.)

Mail in transit from (or to) neutral countries like Peru was another story. There was of course no legal basis for U.S. censorship of such mail, but it was done anyway. War makes its own rules, one might say. I am not aware of a neutral country ever agreeing to having its mail censored! Additional research may clarify what rules U.S. censorship actually followed to stop, seize, or just hold up such neutral country mail. Here of course, the Figure 1 cover has a service suspended hand stamp, later changed to the article being held by the office of censorship. “Service Suspended” mail was typically returned to sender for possible later re-mailing by the sender. Objectionable contents were another story, and perhaps when from a neutral country the mail was probably held by censorship with the reason being to prevent the sender re-mailing via another routing?

And some final thoughts: How do these dates play into the markings of this letter? Why did this cover go to New York City? My opinion: As soon as the Peruvian Government realized that their mail was being delayed for U.S. censorship, they would have sought other routing for their mail. Having the U.S. detain or hold mail would upset any foreign country, especially a neutral one, and one would expect official protests to be made. Here this letter was likely routed through the U.S. while, and because, the U.S. was still neutral, but when it arrived here, that had changed and all mail was censored.

However, maybe something else was involved, and the contents showed that to the U.S. censor. For example, one person suggested that Chile had close trading ties with Germany, and because the letter was addressed to the director of communications in Norway, there may have been some reference to information, etc., from or for Chile. My thought- Rather, information being routed from an Allied country to an Axis country, rather than another neutral country (like Chile), and using Peru routing, would be a serious Allied censorship issue.

Another member speculated that the circular date stamp of Bergen may have had the wrong date set, but I think that is unlikely.

A third member commented that had the letter been sent by airmail, it would almost certainly have been sent by the South Atlantic route (Lati-Italian airline) until December 1941 and would have avoided British censorship which usually would have taken place in Bermuda. (Of course, British censorship was very diligent in also stopping, and sometimes holding or just seizing, mail it did not like.)
Small slips (2 ½” x 1 5/8”) stuck on returned mail within Nazi Europe by German censors forbid any communication via undercover schemes, and threatened as treasonable if repeated. Only communications via the German Red Cross were permitted.

Finally, what was the German position on “undercover mail schemes”? German censorship was initially not put in place to handle undercover mail issues, but within about a month of the Thomas Cook schemes starting in earnest in NY and Amsterdam, on 2 April 1940 Germany issued draconian laws forbidding any such communication. Coincidence? However, although obviously known throughout German censorship, it is not known why they tolerated such usage throughout much of WWII. It is assumed they found its existence of some use, perhaps also for information gathering? No German files have ever been found about such “tolerance”, or any records they surely made of such mail. See Figure 5, a German censor slip.

This Figure 1 cover provides a wealth of speculation about the functioning of the U.S. censoring of mail during World War II. If anybody has any additional information, please send it to the editor, or contact Ed Fraser at edfraser@gmail.com

Questions one could ask – and do they have answers?
While there apparently is no record showing what contents might have been in this item listed in Peru records by its tracking number 346-128-941, is any information recorded anywhere? Destination? Reply received? Etc? Was there other mail to Nazi controlled Europe from Peru, and what was its route?

The editor wants to thank Mr. Fraser for his significant contributions in this area. He has published several articles on undercover mail in Posthorn and elsewhere, including The World War II “Thomas Cook” Undercover Mail Service between Canada and Norway, May 2008.
## Bandung 2017 World Stamp Exhibition Competitive Exhibit Listing of Peru Entries

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Candidates whose exhibits will be represented in the Grand Prix International including Henry Marquez’s Peru: Lima 1821-1884, Republican Postal History Until Early UPU