

ROUND-THE-WORLD COVERS

In 1873, Jules Verne published his best-selling novel *AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS*. The novel immediately touched off a fad of people trying to circumnavigate the globe in 80 days or less. The improved transportation network also made it possible for the first time for postal systems to reach around the planet at a reasonable price. It thus became realistic to travel the globe by proxy. Philatelists leaped on the idea of round-the-world mail.

Two other developments appeared at the same time. The first postal card was issued by Austria in 1869. It was so successful that within a few years most other nations followed suit. One advantage of postcards traveling internationally was that they were less susceptible to theft, whereas letters might be stolen and opened to look for valuable contents. For that reason, round-the-world philatelists found postcards better suited for the job. Another development was continually declining postal rates for international mail. It no longer cost a day's pay to send a letter or postcard overseas.

Plan Of The Exhibit.

- 1. Pseudo-circumnavigation:** An example of this would be a postcard or cover canceled at all the Treaty Port foreign post offices in China without actually having left the country or even the Treaty Port.
- 2. Hand-carried:** The postcard or cover was carried by one person, who stopped in at post offices along the way, bought stamps for the postcard and had them postmarked on a handback basis.
- 3. Single carrier:** The postcard or cover was carried around the world in a single vessel, such as a Zeppelin or a private aircraft.
- 4. Round Robin:** The most difficult type to pull off. A subdivision can be made between those addressed by multiple hands and those apparently directed by a single person.

1.1: Pseudo-Circumnavigation.

There are circumstances in which a cover could give the appearance of being a world traveler without leaving home. Below is a 1901 Chinese postcard with a view on the other side of Tientsin (modern-day Tianjin). It is decorated with stamps of Russia, Japan, France, India, China, and Germany, all properly postmarked. Since Tientsin was a Treaty Port occupied by the European powers, each country had its own post office within the city. The postcard thus never left the city in its apparent round-the-world trip.



View side of postcard.

2.1: Hand-Carried.

Hand-carried round-the-world covers can be distinguished by having only a single address or none at all, unnecessary stamps, and a routing of postmarks that no reasonable postal route would follow. These were produced by a tourist or sailor who hand-carried the card and went into post offices along the way for a souvenir stamp and handback cancel.

Below is a 1909 postcard ostensibly sent from Turkey to Germany, supposedly routed through Greece, Italy, Egypt, Spain, France, and Norway. It also has an uncanceled Austrian stamp; the Austrian postie probably refused to cancel such a confection. Reverse side is a view.

At bottom is a 1933 postcard with stamps from Switzerland, Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Germany, Austria, and Newfoundland. The reverse side is blank so it was obviously hand-carried.



2.2: Hand-Carried.

Below is a hand-carried postcard whose creator took most of the year 1934 to travel to the places shown on the stamps. Probably not all one trip.

At bottom is a blatant fake. The New York postmarks appear to be genuine but many of the foreign postmarks are doubtful, even if a postie would hand cancel an already cancelled stamp.



3.1: Single Carrier.

Zeppelin mail was the only practical airmail until 1937 for round-the-world mail. Below is one such cover that made the trip in 1929 from Lakehurst, New Jersey, to Lakehurst again via Friedrichshafen, Tokyo, and Los Angeles. These covers traveled in closed bags and thus only have stamps and postmarks of the USA despite having been around the world.



3.2: Single Carrier.

The card of explanation was prepared by the originator of the cover.



AROUND THE WORLD BY AIRPLANE

When the Trans-Pacific air mail route was completed, in April 1937, to Hong Kong, it was possible, for the first time, to send a letter entirely around the world by regular commercial air mail lines. This letter was carried on the first trip. It was registered in order to have a record of the time it arrived at the junction points. No agents or friends were employed to assist in dispatching the letter; the courtesy of the postmasters concerned made the trip possible.

All the postage stamps on the letter were put on before the trip began. Below is a record of the trip with such data as is considered of interest

Left New York April 17, 1937 by United Airlines - Arrived San Francisco April 19, 1937	2860 miles
Left San Francisco Apr. 21, 1937 by Pan American Airways Arrived Hong Kong Apr. 28 1937	8650 miles
Left Hong Kong by British Imperial Airways Arrived Delhi India May 4, 1937	4250 miles
Time New York to Delhi, India 17 days - Distance 15,760 miles Cost 85¢	
Left Delhi, India, May 5, 1937 by British Imperial Airways Arrived Paris May 14, 1937	5000 miles
Time Delhi, India to Paris 9 days - Distance 5,000 miles Cost 20 annas or 46¢	
Left Paris May 14, 1937 by Air France - Arrived Natal, Brazil May 17, 1937	4500 miles
Time Paris to Natal, Brazil 3 days - Distance 4,500 miles Cost 14 francs or 39¢	
Left Natal, Brazil May 18, 1937 by Pan American Airways Arrived San Juan P.R. May 31, 1937	3000 miles
Left San Juan, Puerto Rico by Pan American Airways to Miami Florida	
By Eastern Air Lines from Miami Florida - Arrived New York June 2, 1937	2350 miles
Time Natal, Brazil to New York 14 days - Distance 5,350 miles Cost 4.500 milreis or 26¢	
Total elapsed time 46 days. Total distance traveled about 30,610 miles. Total cost \$1.96	

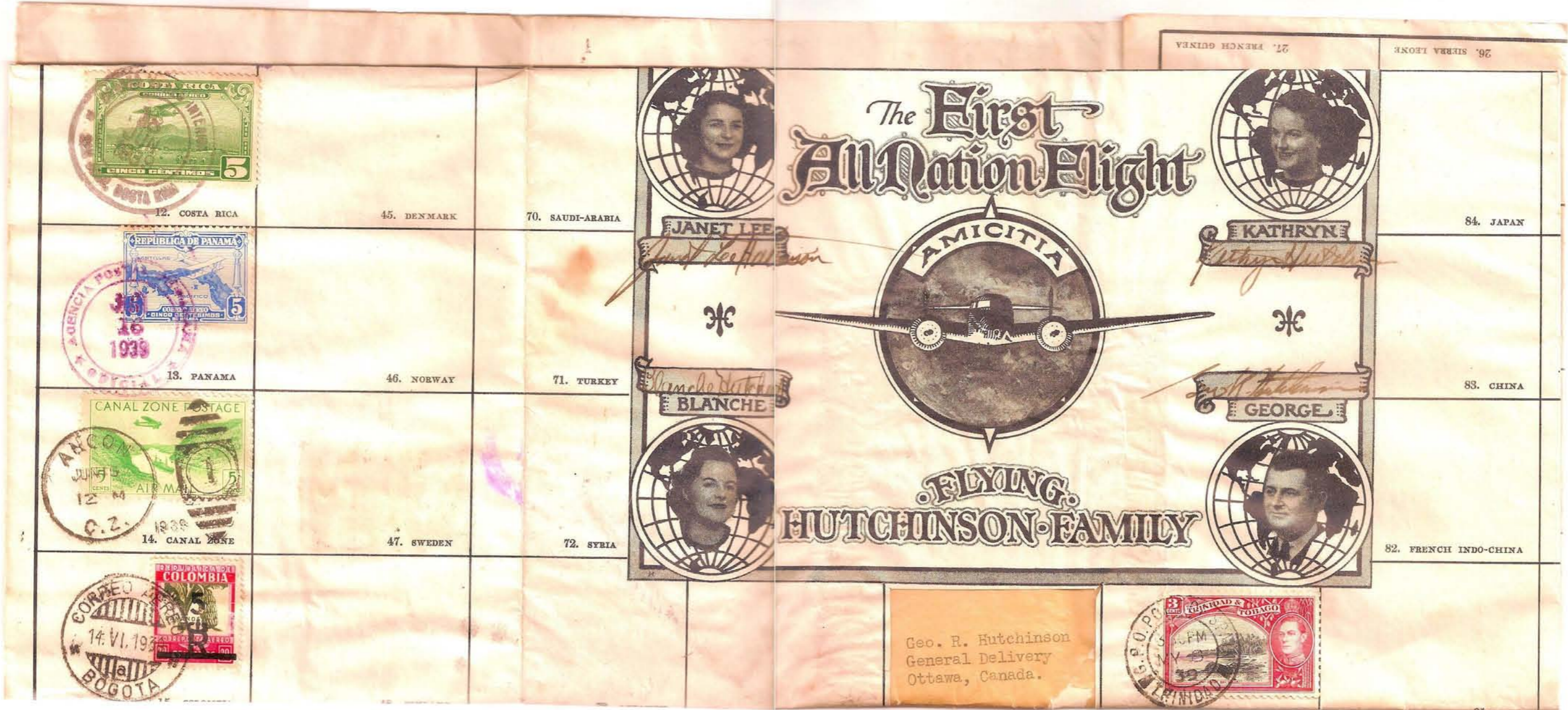
3.3: Single Carrier.

This sheet of paper is too large to fit unfolded in a display frame. A photo of the sheet is at right.

George R. Hutchinson (1902-1989), wife Blanche (1902-1995), and daughters Kathryn and Janet Lee, were record-flight aviators who toured the USA and made celebrity flights as the Flying Hutchinsons. They attempted a 1939 flight around the world in a Lockheed Electra but had to abandon the flight due to the impending World War Two.

Stamps on the sheet were not always postmarked in the numerical order of the labeled rectangles. The postmarks of Paraguay, Venezuela and Ecuador are unreadable.

- | | |
|---------------------|------------|
| USA | - April 24 |
| Canada | - April 25 |
| Cuba | - April 26 |
| Haiti | - May 2 |
| Dominica | - May 3 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | - May 8 |
| Suriname | - May 11 |
| Brazil | - May 16 |
| Argentina | - May 23 |
| Uruguay | - May 25 |
| Chile | - June 1 |
| Bolivia | - June 6 |
| Peru | - June 9 |
| Columbia | - June 14 |
| Canal Zone | - June 15 |
| Panama | - June 16 |
| Mexico | - June 17 |
| Costa Rica | - June 18 |
| Nicaragua | - June 20 |
| Honduras | - June 20 |
| El Salvador | - June 21 |



This is a 1902 postcard that started out in Russia on April 19, and then went through France, India, and Australia. It was also addressed to Hong Kong and British Columbia, but never went past Australia.



Reverse side of postcard.

4.2: Round Robins.

Below is a 1907 postcard titled "Le Tour du Monde" sent along a pre-arranged route. The recipients used address labels pasted ovetop each other. It is a rare example of a registered postcard. The cover started out in France on June 15, thence to Sierra Leone, England, and the USA, before terminating in Australia. The reverse side is a view

At bottom is a 1907 postcard circulated by Esperanto enthusiasts. Round-the-world postcards were popular with them. Note the hand-stamped name Carlos Charrier along the top edge. He generated hundreds of these postcards. Look for his name on the following pages.



4.3: Round Robins.

Round robin postcards from 1907 (left) and 1908 (right).



4.4: Round Robins.

Two round robin postcards from 1910.



4.5: Round Robins.

Postcards from 1910 (left) and 1911 (right). Notice that the stamps are out of order with the addresses.



4.6: Round Robins.

These are on thick cardboard. The top piece is self-explanatory. Most likely forwarded in envelopes, then taken by hand to the post office.

JAN. 11. 11. Casey M. LIVENs. President. Y.M.C.A.
 Burton on Trent. England.
 Sends hearty greetings and sincerest
 NEW YEAR'S Wishes round the World.
 Will the Secretary to whom this card is sent
 kindly cancel his City's name and fill in below it
 the next on the following list, and add the necessary stamp.
 On its return a photo of this card
 and of the one sent the reverse way
 together with stamps for postage
 will be sent to each Y.M.C.A.

~~CAPE TOWN~~
~~MELBOURNE~~
~~WELLINGTON~~
~~SAN FRANCISCO~~
 NEW YORK
 BURTON ON TRENT
 ENGLAND.

PEACE AND GOODWILL.



4.7: Round Robins.

Postcards from 1909 and 1911.



4.8: Round Robins: Finis.

Multi-address postcards were outlawed by the Universal Postal Union in 1925 for international mails. Apparently there were enough philatelists and Esperanto enthusiasts sending round robin covers to annoy postal officials to the point of complaining to the UPU.

The practice faded into history, but there is still no objection to hand-carried postcards with handback cancellations. These do not annoy mail sorters. The example below came a century after the peak of round-the-world covers, albeit only three European countries with handback cancels.

