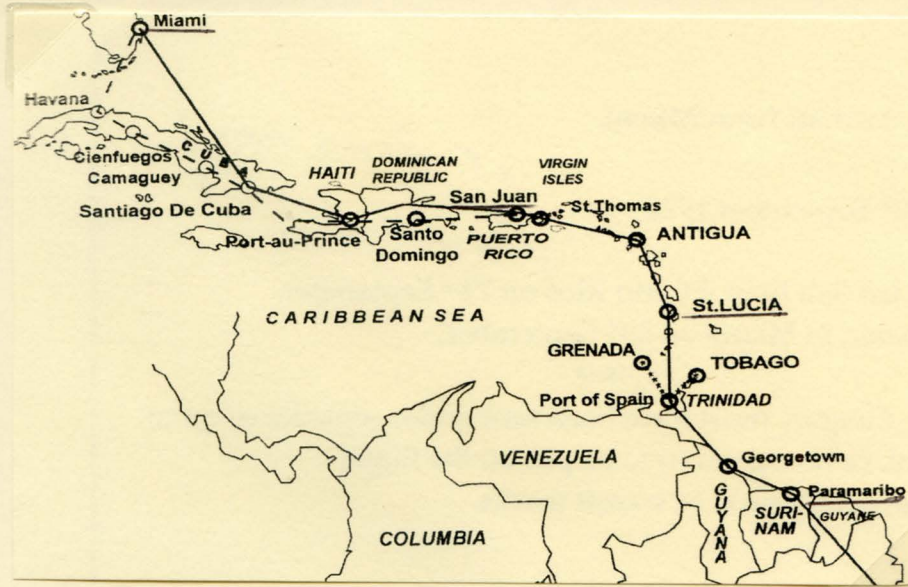


Saint Lucia's First Airmails

The first airmail was carried on the extension flight of FAM 6 from San Juan, Puerto Rico to Paramaribo, Dutch Guiana in September 1929.

[FAM = Foreign Air Mail contract of the United States Post Office]

This exhibit shows mail from both the Southbound and Northbound flights.



Pages 2 to 7: Southbound covers

Pages 8 and 9: From intermediate stops

Pages 10 and 11: Southbound from Saint Lucia.

Pages 12 and 13: Northbound to Saint Lucia.

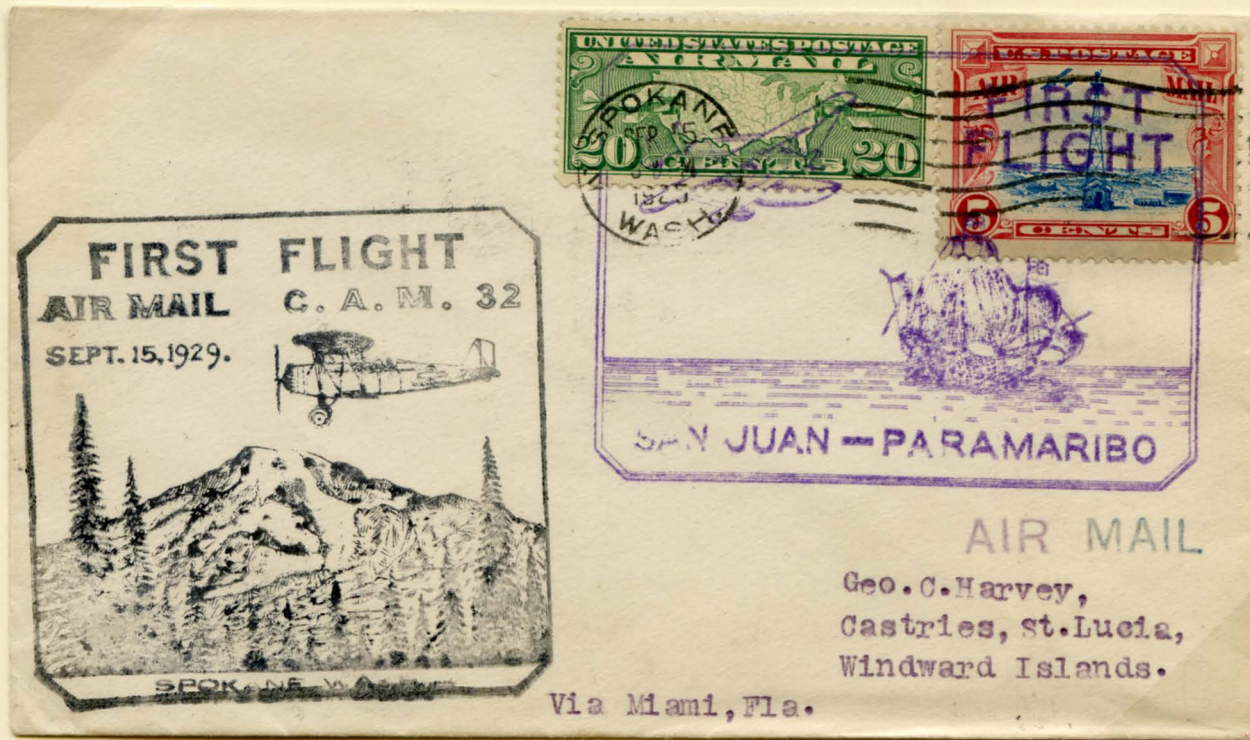
Pages 14 to 16: Northbound from Saint Lucia

Air Mail

First southbound airmail flight to St Lucia

15th and 22nd September 1929, *twin* first flight covers.

First flight of CAM 32 from Spokane and Tacoma to Seattle to connect with CAM 5 then CAM 18; 30 and 25 to Miami to connect with FAM 6 first flight to San Juan and Castries.



Southbound

Dispatch from Canada

Posted at London, Ontario on 16th September 1929,

Flown to Montreal on the Canadian Airways flight which had originated in Detroit,
a route established only on 15th July.

Then on the Eastern Airlines FAM 1 flight from Montreal to New York,
where it was backstamped at 11-30 pm. on 17th September.

Transferred onto CAM 19 flight to Atlanta,
thence by CAM 25 to Miami, where it was flown to San Juan and on to Castries by FAM 6.



It is unusual for first flight covers to originate other than in the U.S.A. or points on the route.

Stamps recess printed by the Canadian Bank Note Co. On paper without watermark; perf 12

Southbound

This cover from a sender in Portland, Oregon must have been sent under separate cover to Miami, to be put on the flight as it has no Portland postmarks.

The Postmaster in Miami has signed it.

Charles Lindbergh piloting a Fokker F 10 landplane, left Miami just before 10 AM on Friday 20th September 1929 for San Juan, where the mail was to be transferred to the Sikorsky S 38 amphibian.



Note the guarantee of return postage from 1st Lieut. Shoemaker.

The stamps are all printed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Washington DC. on unwatermarked paper.

The one cent stamp is from a rotary press printing, perforated 11 x 10 the others are flat plate printings, perforated 11.

Four are cancelled with a dumb 3 ring handstamp, the fifth with the Miami duplex.

Crash cover

The sender, from Winchester, Mass., used the CAM 19 flight from New York to Atlanta, Georgia, which was the principal east coast route for mail destined for southbound air mail flights, to send his cover to Castries.

The aircraft called at Wilmington, Mass. to pick up mail but on approach to Atlanta it crashed into a radio mast at Fort McPherson and caught fire.

The pilot, Sid Malloy was killed.



About 100lbs. of the 317lbs. of the mail on board was recovered and forwarded to its various destinations.

It is not known how much of the mail recovered was intended to catch the first FAM 6 extension flight.

This cover is re-postmarked at San Juan on 22nd September and is backstamped at Castries on the same day.

It is one of very few crash covers flown to Saint Lucia by the first air mail service.

The stamps are from a flat plate printing, on unwatermarked paper, perf. 11

Southbound

The first air mail flight left San Juan on Sunday September 22nd but 2 days earlier Captain Basil L. Rowe flew the route in Sikorsky S 38B, serial NC 75K to position a spare aircraft at the southern end in case of trouble.

Basil Rowe had founded the West Indies Aerial Express airline, which had been bought by Pan American on 28th November 1928.



This postal stationery cover from San Juan to Castries is signed by Basil Rowe and Rafael Del Valle, the San Juan postmaster and was carried on the first air mail flight.

On the reverse are a one penny and a penny halfpenny St Lucia stamps, cancelled with a three ring dumb handstamp.

There is a manuscript notation
"Return to David J Tucker by the first flight airmail from Castries"

stamp printed on unwatermarked paper, perf. 11

Trans-shipment

This cover is from The International General Electric Company
Of Porto Rico, addressed to Bogota, Colombia and is annotated "via Barbados".

It was posted in San Juan on September 13th and held there awaiting the southbound flight.
The cover bears the flight cachet.



The cover was off-loaded at Castries and sent by boat to Barbados
where it was backstamped on September 22nd.
It then went by ship to Baranquilla on the Colombian coast where it arrived on October 11th
and thence overland to Bogota where it arrived on October 24th.

Trans-shipment covers from this flight are unusual.

The four "Lindbergh Commemorative" stamps are from booklets printed by
the Bureau of Engraving and Printing on unwatermarked paper, perf 11 x 11.3

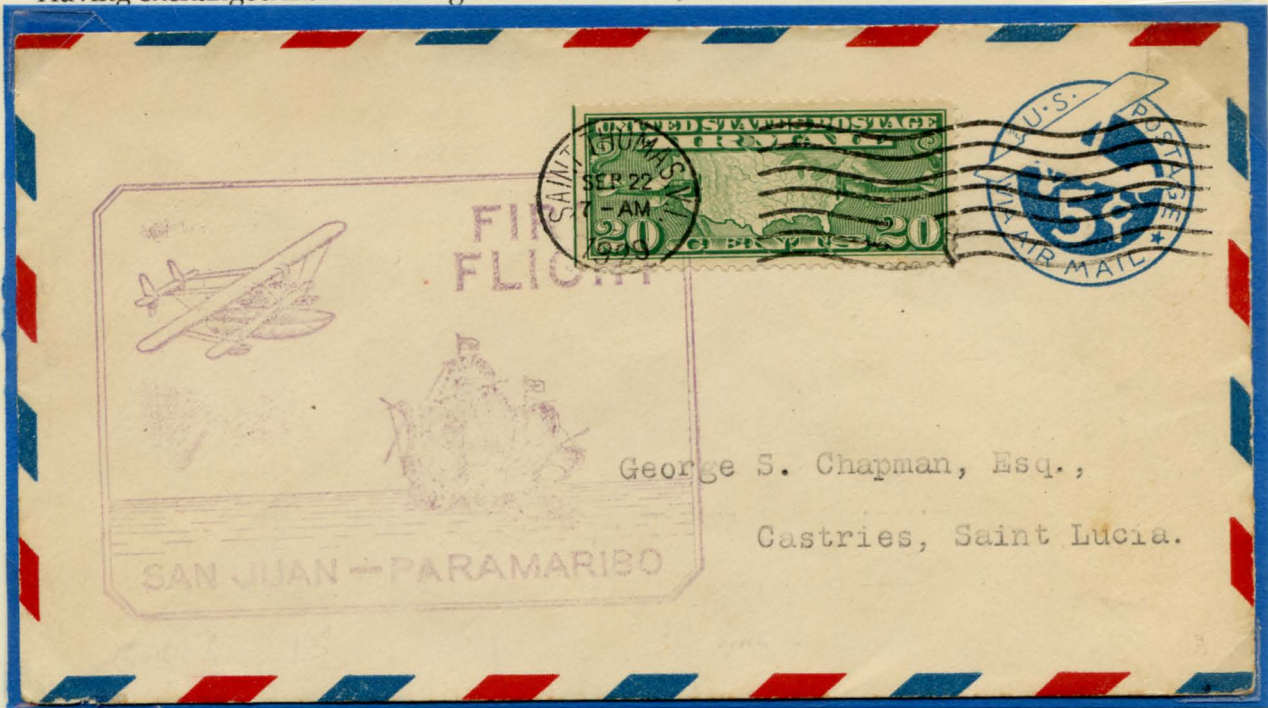
Saint Thomas

The first stop on the extended flight was at Saint Thomas in the U S Virgin Islands.

The flight consisted of two Sikorsky S 38 aircraft, piloted by Charles Lindbergh and Juan Trippe, the president of Pan American Airways.

They had left san Juan at 6.02 AM and arrived at Saint Thomas at 6.52.

Having exchanged mail Lindbergh took off at 7.19, with the second aircraft a few minutes later.



These covers mailed at Saint Thomas show the flight cachet tying the stamps and thus must have been carried on the aircraft.

Antigua

The next regular stop on the route was at Saint John's, Antigua where the aircraft arrived at 10.35.

The Sikorsky flown by Charles Lindbergh, serial NC 9776 and called "Spirit of Progress" was first to arrive as it was carrying the mail.

Mail was exchanged and the aircraft departed at 11.46.



Fewer than 150 pieces were addressed to Saint Lucia and there was no cachet.

The stamps were printed by Thomas De La Rue in London the 4d on multiple crown CA paper and the penny on multiple script C A paper, perforated gauge 14.

Southbound from St. Lucia

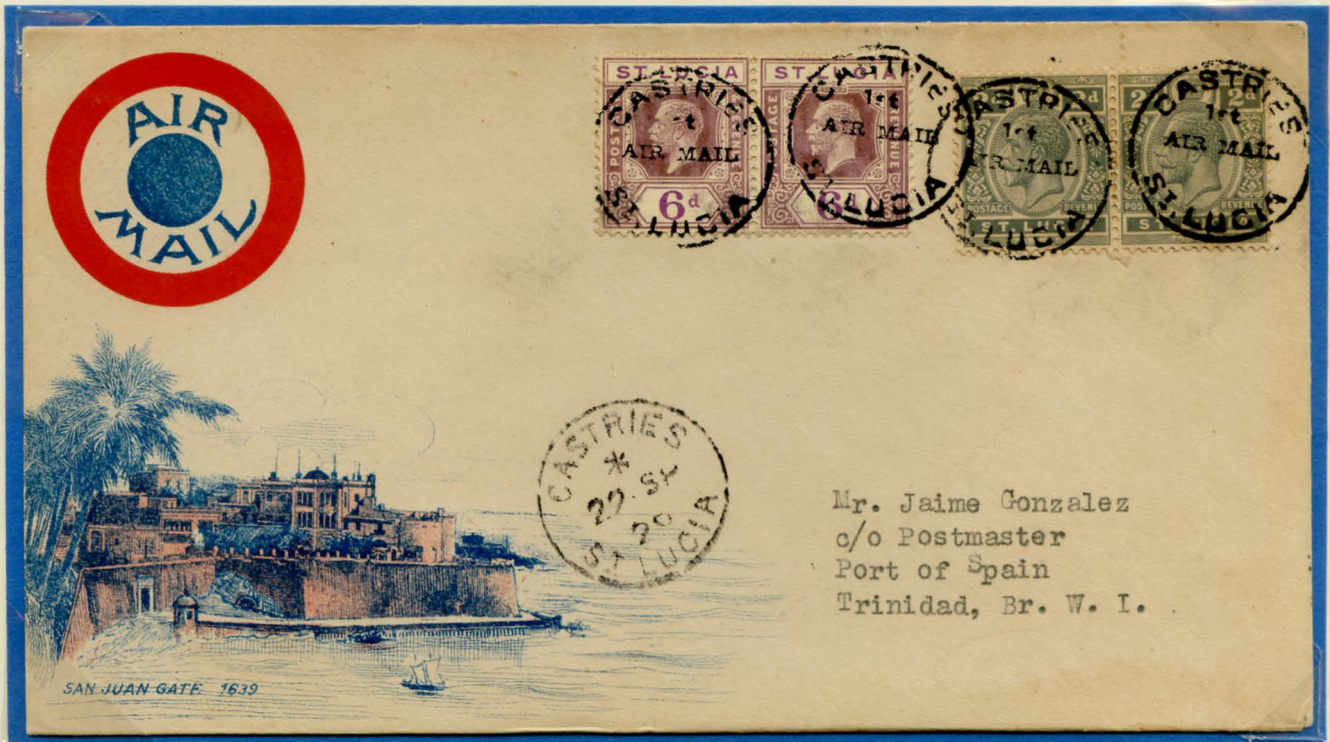
Lindbergh's aircraft touched down in La Toc bay, just south of Castries at 13.59
to be greeted by the island's Governor.

To mark the first air mail, the postmaster had a special canceller made.

It read "Castries / 1st air mail / St. Lucia"

It was used to cancel the stamps with the datestamp struck elsewhere on the cover.

After exchanging mail the aircraft left at 14.45.



One of 318 pieces addressed to Trinidad



Only 50 covers were flown from St Lucia to British Guiana

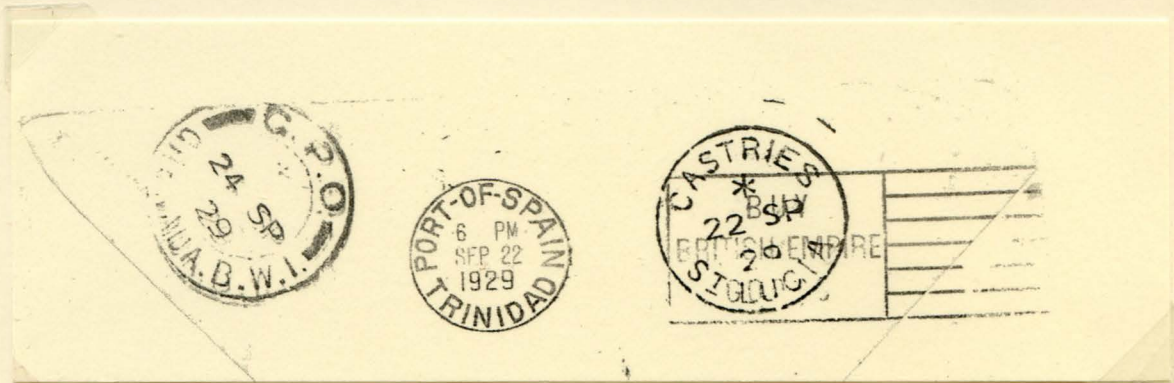
No covers from St Lucia to Paramaribo have been recorded.

Stamps printed by De La Rue & Co on Multiple script CA paper, perforated 14

St. Lucia to Grenada

Having arrived at Port of Spain, Trinidad at 16.52, the mail was unloaded and sorted.

This cover is the only one so far recorded that was addressed to Grenada. It was forwarded from Trinidad by boat.



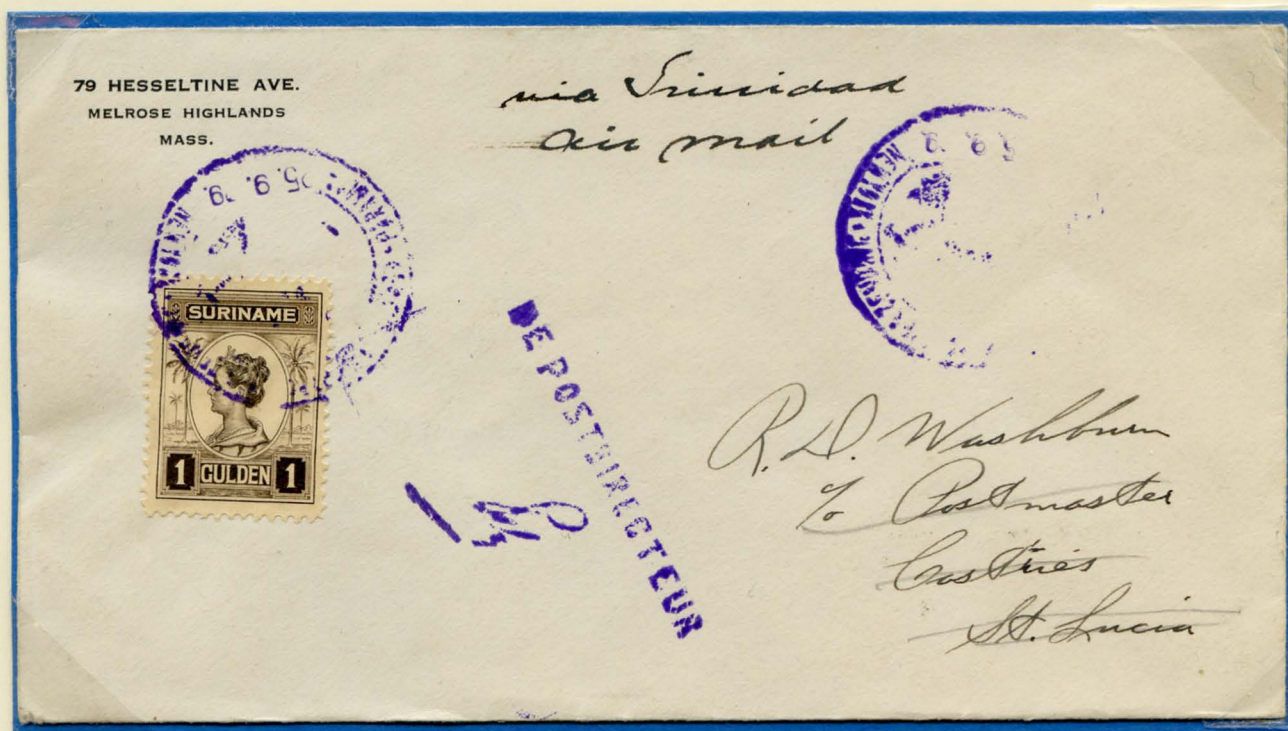
It arrived in Grenada on 24th September

North from Paramaribo

The return flight left Paramaribo at about 6.20 AM on 25th September 1929 with Lindbergh piloting the aircraft carrying the mail as far as Trinidad.

The Dutch Colonial Postmaster had a cachet produced which read
"EERSTE LUCHTPOSTVERZENDING"
"PARAM. 25.9.9 NEW YORK"

This is technically incorrect as the airmail flight was from Paramaribo to Miami.



This cover has two strikes of the first airmail cachet and one of "DE POSTDIRECTEUR" with initials and is one of only 31 addressed to Saint Lucia.

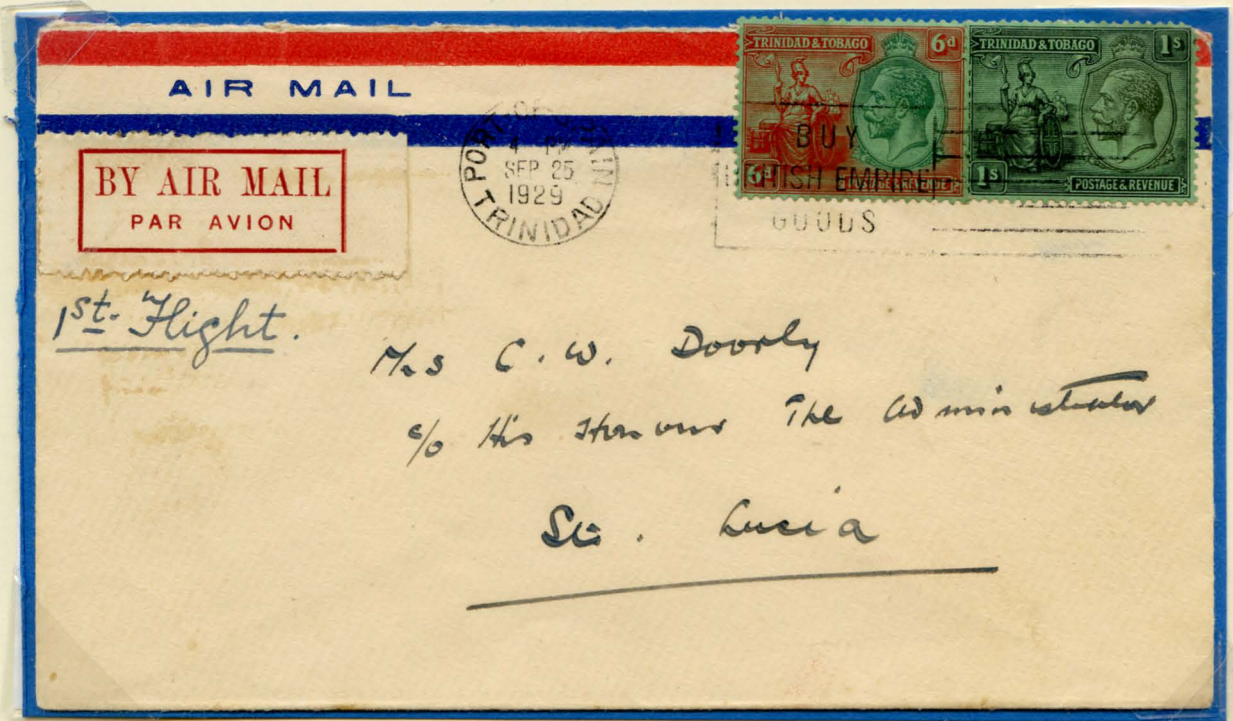
The stamp was printed by J. Enschede on unwatermarked paper, perf 11

Northbound

The aircraft from Paramaribo called to deliver and collect mail at Georgetown, British Guiana and Port of Spain, where it was delayed overnight by a fault. The postmaster at Georgetown had an air mail cachet made.



Only 97 pieces were addressed to Saint Lucia



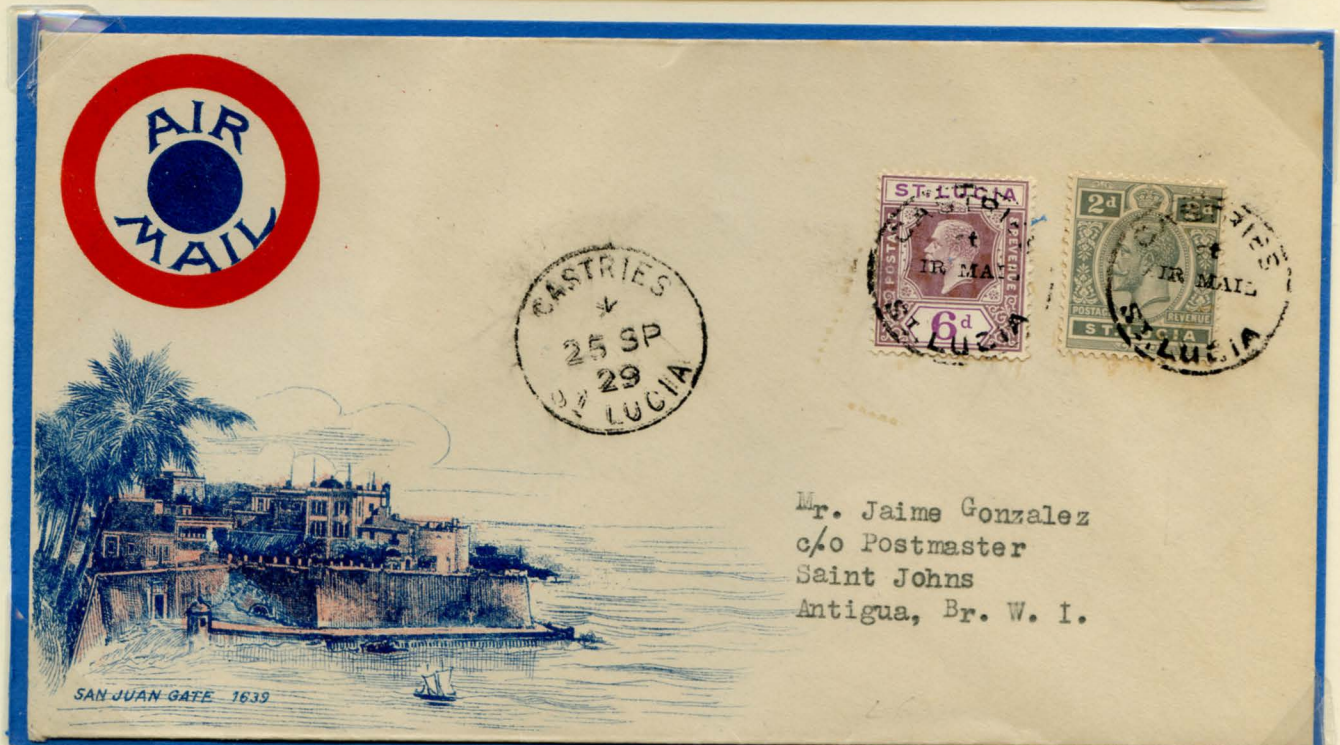
One of 266 covers recorded as being addressed from Trinidad to Saint Lucia.

All stamps printed by De La Rue & Co on Multiple Script CA paper, perforated 14.

To Antigua

Having spent the night at Port of Spain, the aircraft, now NC 8020 and piloted by Jack Tilton, [as Lindbergh had undertaken a route proving flight along the coast of Venezuela] left Trinidad at 7.00 and landed in St Lucia at 8.30.

About 1900 items were loaded at Castries for northerly destinations and the aircraft departed after an hour to Antigua where it arrived at 11.55 and unloaded 251 pieces of mail.



The airmail rate to Antigua was 1/4d but some letters were carried for 8d which was the rate to American Islands.

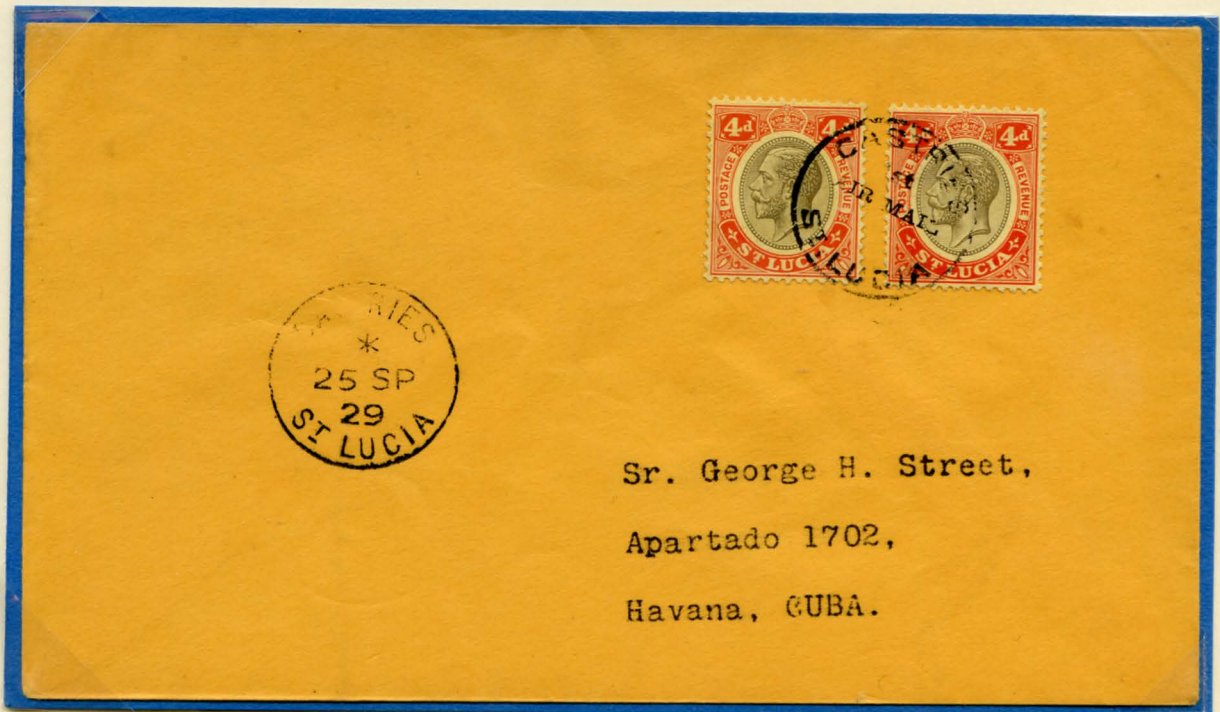
The rate was reduced to 8d in November 1929

To P.R. and Cuba

After leaving Antigua at 12.30 and calling at Saint Thomas,
Jack Tilton landed the Sikorsky at San Juan at 16.32



541 items were addressed to San Juan from Saint Lucia.
This cover is signed by Jack Tilton.



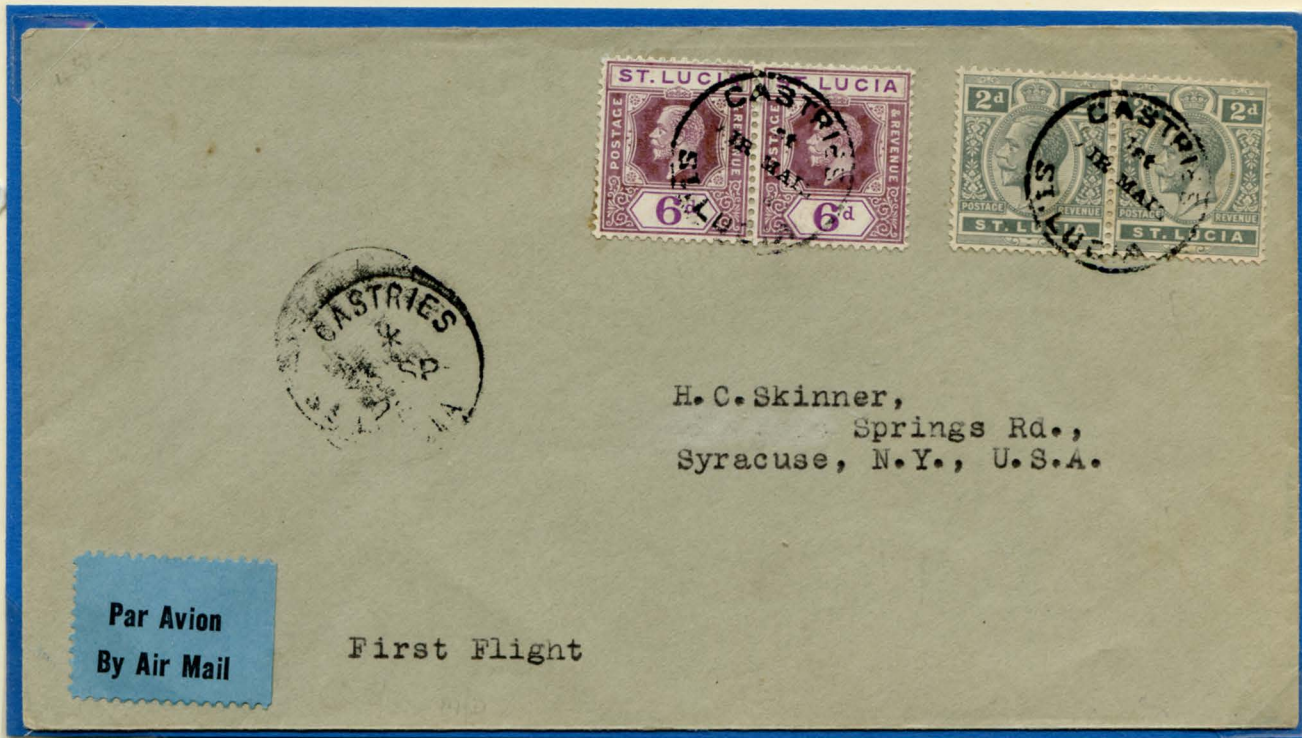
The remaining mail was off-loaded at San Juan and held overnight
awaiting the Fokker F 10 landplane for onward carriage.
Only 22 items were addressed to Havana.

To U.S.A.

The remaining mail, amounting to some 796 pieces
arrived in Miami, Florida two days later in the late afternoon of September 28th.



Cover addressed to an officer on the USS Brooks, a Clemson class destroyer, naval code DD 232.



Air mail etiquette supplied by the writer as at this time Saint Lucia did not have any.