

Postal Inflation in the Canal Zone

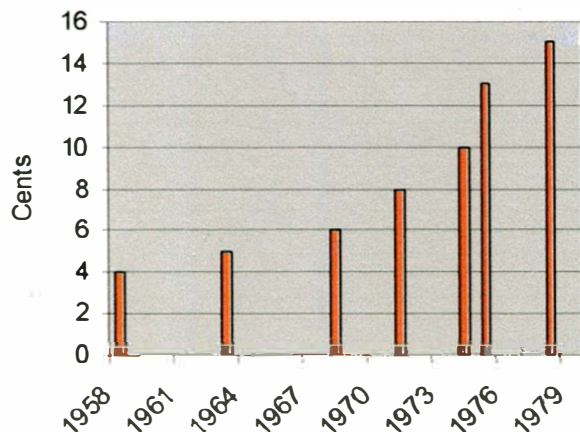
1958 – 1979

Purpose: Show the measures taken by the Canal Zone Postal Service to meet the frequent increases in first class and foreign air mail rates from the domestic letter rate increase to 4 cents in 1958 until the Service closed in 1979.

Thesis: During this period the Canal Zone Postal Service worked to reduce the number of postal issues, simplify the rate structures, and find more flexible means to issue stamps and stationery for the new rates.

Importance: Although small in size, the Canal Zone offers a microcosm of postal services around the globe struggling with ever increasing postal charges. Examples of scarce late Canal Zone postal history are of special interest, since Canal Zone is a popular collecting area.

First Class Postage



Rates: By law, Canal Zone rates to the U.S. had to equal the same rates from the U.S. to the Canal Zone. Thus the Canal Zone had to match the rapid increases in U.S. domestic rates as best it could.

Foreign rates were set by the Governor of the Canal Zone. The calculation of foreign air mail rates was simplified to ease the burden of postal inflation.

Stamps and Stationery: Starting in 1958 new values were issued only for the most frequently used domestic and foreign letter and post card rates. Stationery was issued for domestic rates only. New stamps were no longer issued for multiple rates, non-first class rates, foreign surface rates, and special service fees, which were franked with existing stamps.

Scarcity: Correct uses of many rates are quite scarce, since the amount of Canal Zone mail was miniscule compared to the U.S. Multiple rates, non-first class mail rates, air rates to foreign destinations, and special fees, which are common in U.S. postal history, may be very scarce from the Canal Zone.

Chapters

1.0	The 4 Cent Letter Era	1958-1963
2.0	The 5 Cent Letter Era	1963-1968
3.0	The 6 Cent Letter Era	1968-1971
4.0	The 8 Cent Letter Era	1971-1974
5.0	The 10 Cent Letter Era	1974-1975
6.0	The 13 Cent Letter Era	1975-1978
7.0	The 15 Cent Letter Era	1978-1979

Blue borders and text flag the most significant items.