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Sandafayre News



Rare Titanic Cover Find

Sandafayre have discovered an extremely rare item of Titanic postal history, an envelope bearing French stamps and a "TITANIC" cachet which was intended for the liner's original maiden voyage. Titanic's maiden voyage was infact originally scheduled for the 20th March 1912, but was postponed until the 10th April because the liner was not ready to put to sea. Four days later Titanic struck an iceberg and sank off the coast of Newfoundland with the loss of 1503 lives. Found in a carton lot from North America consigned to auction, the cover was posted in Bordeaux, bears one French "Sower" 5c and two 10c stamps and carries the distinctive "TITANIC" cachet hand stamped in violet. The cover is one of only three of its kind to be found (one is in private hands, the other in a prized exhibit at the Manitoba Museum of the Titanic), all from the same Washington correspondence with a US arrival postmark and the White Star Line's company boxed received/date hand stamp. Andrew Morris of Sandafayre takes up the story, "For her original March maiden voyage, Titanic was due to call at Cherbourg in France for passengers and mail. Mail bound for the USA was hand stamped with a violet straight line "TITANIC" (37x6 mm) presumably at the White Star offices in Cherbourg, as she was the next ship due to make the crossing. When she failed to make the March crossing the mail was switched to another White Star liner, one of six others that hosted joint American and British Post Offices". "Original covers from the Titanic are rare; those that come to the market are fiercely contested at auction by bidders, private & institutional, from both sides of the Atlantic. This cover is probably rarer than those that actually travelled on the Titanic". Sandafayre will be offering the cover in their Sandafayre #550 sale, closing on Tuesday 30th January 2001.





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News and Articles

James MacKay Speaks...

Raise the Titanic



The discovery of a cover from France to Washington, which was marked for transmission by the ill-fated RMS Titanic, has created an immense stir on both sides of the Atlantic. Intended for despatch on the original maiden voyage, which had been scheduled for 20 March 1912, it was sent across the Atlantic by another ship when the Titanic's maiden voyage was postponed until 10 April. It is only the third of these Titanic cacheted covers ever to come to light and one of these is in the Manitoba Titanic Museum, Canada.

Philatelic mementoes posted on board the Titanic are understandably also of the utmost rarity and consist of a handful of covers and cards which were dropped off at Cherbourg or Queenstown (now Cobh, Ireland), after the liner left Southampton but before she set out on her date with the iceberg.

Most of us therefore have to settle for the stamps and souvenir sheets that have appeared in recent years. Great Britain featured the Titanic on a 60p stamp honouring Guglielmo Marconi in 1995, with the distress signal SOS, which was first used at that time. In 1997 St Vincent produced a miniature sheet containing a strip of five stamps that showed the great liner sinking.

However this theme did not really take off until the following year when the release of the latest Hollywood blockbuster devoted to the subject won no fewer than 11 Oscars.

There have been stamps from Palau and Guyana showing the discovery of the wreck, 70 years after the event, and a six-country omnibus which portrayed the heroes and the villains of the epic as well as the glitz and the glamour of the world's most luxurious ship of her day. Ireland even produced a miniature sheet reproducing a sepia postcard of 1912 published at the time of her maiden voyage. Other stamps show some of the poignant relics salvaged from the wreck.

The most recent sheetlets show a view of the ship in photomosaics - thousands of tiny photographs which form an overall impression. Clearly this is a subject that is destined to run and run.

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Footnote

The cover will be offered in Sandafayre auction 550 closing on Tuesday 30th January 2001.

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