

## THE THEATRE IN IRELAND

By Neil Stack

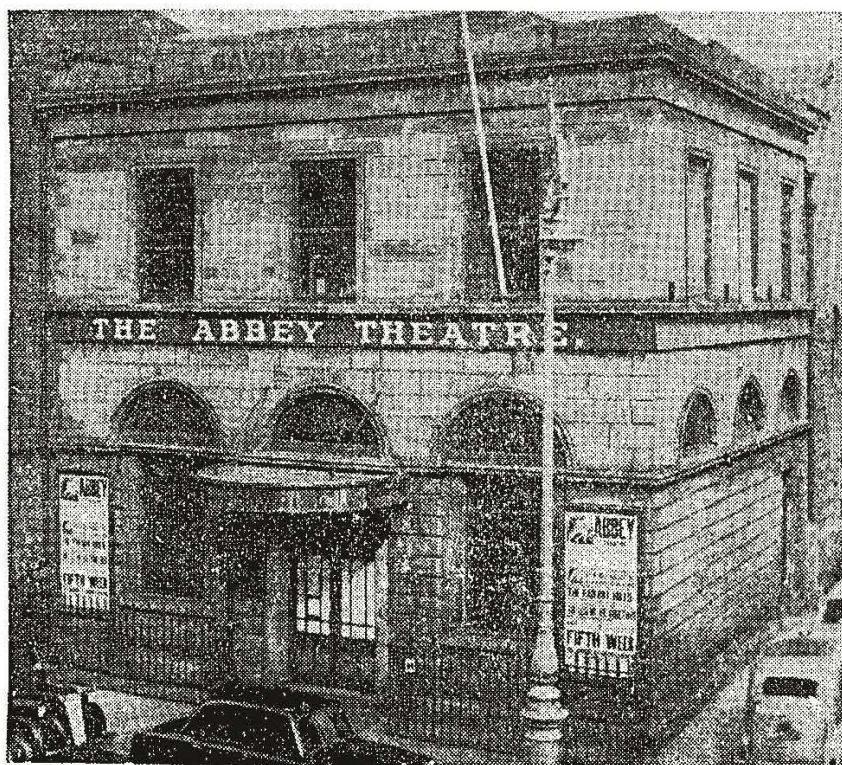
In the later part of the 19th century, after the Parnell split, politics had begun to lose its appeal for the younger generation in Ireland; they turned toward the cultural movements. In 1891 William Butler Yeats founded the Irish Literary Society in London and the following year the National Literary Society in Dublin. In 1893 the Gaelic League was founded by a small band of poets and scholars in which Douglas Hyde and Eoin MacNeill were prominent. This active group had in mind the restoration of Irish as the vernacular of the country. The movement had interested itself also in the production of plays in Irish as a medium of publishing the works of Dr. Hyde, Father Peadar O Laoghaire and others. In these groups were laid the foundations for a new literary movement and a national theatre in Ireland.

Between 1892 and 1899 Yeats had discussed with many people the possibility of founding a small theatre in London or Dublin to produce romantic drama. Among those with whom he discussed the question were Augusta Lady Gregory and Edward Martyn, a landlord and a nationalist who was also a playwright. Their discussions resulted in the formation, in January 1899, of the Irish Literary Theatre. The first production of the group was announced for May 8th at the Ancient Concert Rooms in Great Brunswick St., Dublin. The plays selected were

Edward Martyn's, "The Heather Field" and W. B. Yeats', "Countess Cathleen". The work of organization was done by Lady Gregory with the assistance of George Moore, who assembled the players and supervised the rehearsals in London. The production was a success and was acclaimed by the critics who praised both the plays and the actors.

As an omen of things to come the play "Countess Cathleen" outraged the sensibilities of the public. The play was attacked in a pamphlet and public demonstration was feared but the first night passed uneventfully.

In 1900 an English company was brought to Dublin to produce three plays at (Please turn to page 369)



DUBLIN'S OLD ABBEY THEATRE DESTROYED BY FIRE.

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- #295 John L. Geddes  
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Switzerland, General Foreign)
- #296 Clarence G. Doty  
731 West Third St., Elmira, New  
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land FD covers)
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38 Paul Ave., Guelph, Ontario,  
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- #298 James E. Dwyer  
614 Monterey Avenue, Pelham  
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Israel, Trieste, British Empire)
- #299 John F. O'Brien,  
5501 Monalee Avenue, Sacramento,  
California (Mexico, Mexican rev-  
enue, Central America)
- #300 H. Harper McKee  
60 Tennis Place, Forest Hills 75,  
New York (General and Venezuela)
- #301 Miss Nora Kathleen Wright  
30 St. Helens Road, Booterstown,  
Dublin, Ireland (Great Britain,  
USA, Austria, British Colonials)
- #302 P. B. Redmond  
204 So. Indiana Avenue,  
Kansas City 23, Missouri  
(Ireland)

#303 Vincent Dunne  
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San Diego 4, California  
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**Corrections & Additions to Membership List:**

- # 5 W.A. McDonnell  
413 New York Building,  
St. Paul, Minnesota (Used single,  
blocks, pairs & Gaelic Post Marks  
on Eire stamps)
- #124 Nat Peshkin  
318 So. Orange Drive,  
Los Angeles 36, California  
(USA, Israel, Palestine)
- #160 William J. Splaine (change of  
address to) P.O. Box 987  
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**SUPPLEMENTAL MONTHLY REPORT**

**New Members:**

- # 304 Albert F. Carney  
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**Change of Address:**

- # 52 James M. Roberts (changed to)  
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## THE THEATRE IN IRELAND

(continued from 367)

the Gaity Theatre. The plays selected were Edward Martyn's, "Meave", George Moore's "The Bending of the Bough" and Alice Milligan's, "The Feast of the Fianna". Their reception was enthusiastic.

During October of 1901, Sir Frank Benson carried the work of the Irish Literary Theatre. His company produced the play Diarmuid and Grania which was written by W.B. Yeats in collaboration with George Moore. (This was the last occasion in which English actors appeared in the plays of the new Irish Theatre.) It is important too, to note that a play in Irish written by Dr. Hyde, "The Twisting of the Rope", as included in the production. It marked the first time that a play in the Irish language had ever been presented in a theatre.

### THE FAY BROTHERS & YEATS

The Irish theatre movement could have died in 1901 had it not been for the meeting of Frank Fay and W.B. Yeats. Willie and Frank Fay had their own company of amateurs which, under various names the best known of which is the Ormond Dramatic Society, had been acting since 1891. Yeats, accompanied by George Moore, saw a number of plays produced by the Fay Brothers. Impressed by the serious acting of the players, Yeats consented to allow them to produce his "Cathleen Ni Houlihan". Russell had written and published two acts of his "Deirdre". He promised to write a third act and allow the Fays to use it.

### IRISH NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY

Early in 1902, The Irish National Theatre was founded, "to continue--if possible--on a more permanent basis--the work begun by the Irish Literary Theatre". Its quarters was a little hall on Camden Street in Dublin. It gave its first performance on April 2, 1902 when the National Dramatic Society presented "Deirdre" and "Cathleen Ni Houlihan" in St. Theresa's Hall on Clarendon Street, Dublin. This performance marked the beginning of the Irish National Theatre. The plays were a great success and marked world-wide attention to the Irish Theatre.

### NEW PLAYWRIGHTS MAKE APPEARANCE

Six plays were staged in 1902 and two new playwrights made their appearance. They were Seamus O Cusin (James Cousins) and Fred Ryan. In 1902 the Society presented

two new plays by Yeats with the first plays by Lady Gregory and Padriac Colum, entitled respectively --- "Twenty-Five" and "Broken Soil". In addition, the Society examined a play by John Millington Synge entitled, "In the Shadow of the Glen".

Synge had been discovered in Paris by Yeats who convinced him that his future lay in Ireland. Synge first went to live in Wicklow, where he associated with gypsies and wanderers, and later he moved to the Aran Islands. The introduction of Synge's play gave rise to some antagonism within the Society but the day was saved by a visit to London in May of 1903.

### IRISH COMPANY'S VISIT TO LONDON

The visit to London was arranged by the Irish Literary Society. Since members of the group were amateurs, it had to be made at a time when they could leave their places of employment. The company left Dublin on a Friday evening (May 1st) and gave two performances in the Queen's Gate Hall on Saturday--returning to Dublin on Sunday.

### PLAYS AND ACTORS WELL RECEIVED

The plays and acting made a deep impression on the London critics. A.B. Walkey, writing in The London Times, had this to say:

"The Queen's Gate Hall... can boast none of the glories of the ordinary playhouse and it was there that only a day or two ago a little band of Irish men and women, strangers to London and Londoners gave some of us... a few moments of calm delight quite outside the range of anything which these houses have to offer... As a rule they stand stock-still, the speaker of the moment is the only one who is allowed a little gesture... The listeners do not distract one's attention by fussy 'stage business', they just stay where they are and listen... Add to that the scenery of Elizabethan simplicity, not more than a mere backcloth, and you will see why this performance is a sight for sore eyes---eyes made sore by the perpetual movement and glitter of the ordinary stage."

### YEATS RECEIVES THEATRE PROMISE

More important than the critics praise was a promise of Miss A.E.F. Horniman, a friend of Yeats, that she would probably give the company a theatre for themselves.

Meanwhile the Society continued to work. In October 1903 it produced in the Moleworth Hall--where public performances were usually given--"The King's Threshold" by (please turn to page 373)



# OFFICIAL ENVELOPES & GOVERNMENT FRANKS

By William Kane, E.P.A.#214



As in the case of the adhesives, stocks of British official envelopes were overprinted for use by the Provisional Government of Ireland and the Irish Free State. A rubber stamp was used for this purpose and was applied at each office of each department on all outgoing post. This stamp blocked out the title on the envelope and imprinted a new title.

1. British envelopes with "On His Majesty's Service" "O.H.M.S." overprinted with rubber stamp,

Type A      ///////////////////////////////////////////////////////////////////  
RIALTAS SEALADAC na hEIREANN

2. British envelopes with "O.H.M.S." etc. overprinted with rubber stamp,

Type B      ///////////////////////////////////////////////////////////////////  
SAORSTAT ÉIREANN

## Definitive Envelopes (Official) of Ireland To Present

3. The definitive official envelopes printed by the Irish Free State were printed with the words, "Saorstat Eireann" in various type sizes, depending upon the size of the cover:

SAORSTAT EIREANN.      No. 219.      SAORSTAT ÉIREANN.

Type C

4. In order to use up the remaining stocks of the Irish Free State envelopes after the establishment of the permanent government, these envelopes were overprinted, "EIRE" with "Saorstat Eireann" blocked out as illustrated,



EIRE.



Type D

5. When the stocks were used up, the government then printed official envelopes with the word, "EIRE" on the back flap, again in various sizes,



Type E

6. More recently, the government printed official envelopes are distinguished by the imprinted Harp on the front and sometimes on the rear flap in black. These official envelopes since 1955 have had the National Economy label attached to the back flap to seal the envelope. The recipient is requested to cut the label instead of tearing the envelope so that it may be reused.

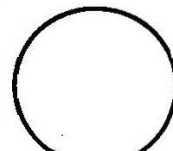
X3032.7782.5 55.3,000,000.W.&S.M.(I.)Ltd. G37C.

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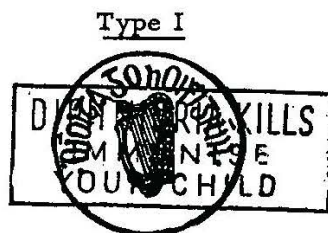
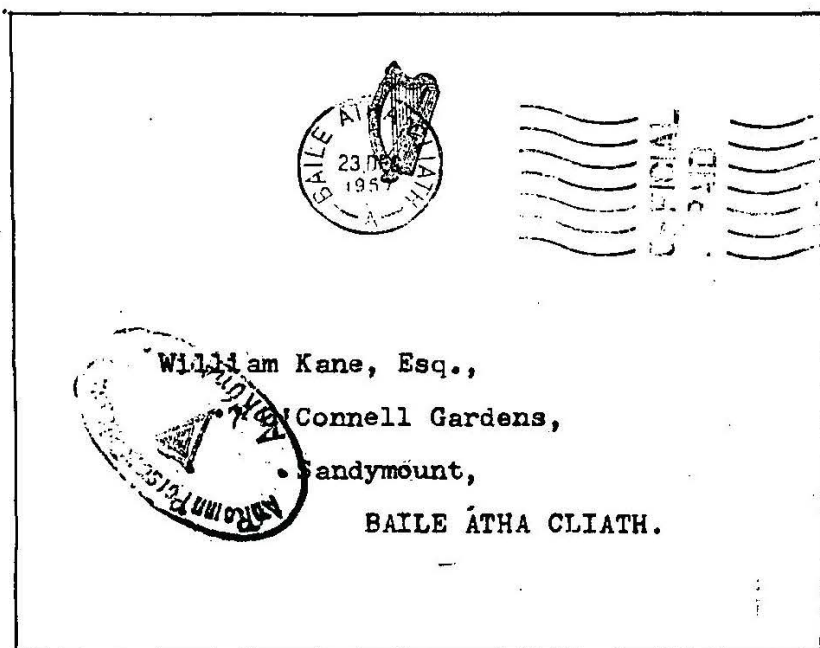


Each government department has an individual and distinctive oval rubber stamp with which all correspondence from that department is franked, usually in the lower left hand corner. Correspondence that is not delivered can thus be returned to the sender without opening same. Another use of this frank is to prove that the letter is official, and is a safeguard against private individuals who might use official stationery to avoid paying postage.

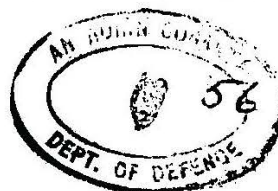
### The PRINTED FRANKS

There appear to be at least two types of printed franks on official envelopes:

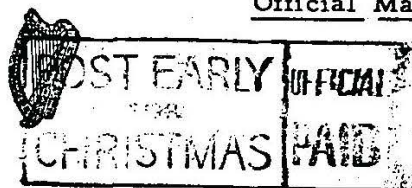
- (a) "Díolta Go hOifigúil" with a harp in the center. Type I
- (b) "Díolta Go hOifigúil" with a larger and more ornate harp in the center of the circle and below in English, "Official Paid". This type appears in two forms, first, with a heavy circular border, and second, with a thin border. Type II.



Type F envelope with rubber stamp frank & official machine cancel.



### Official Machine Cancels



(Postal Stationery will continue in our next issue with Envelopes-Registration)

THE 1932 MOLLISON FLIGHT STAMP  
Two Forms of the Overprinted 1/-  
By Perry Adams, E.P.A. #84

Apparently, very little official philatelic preparation was made for the flight from Dublin to New York on Aug. 18th, 1932 by the well known pilot, J.A. Mollison.

Privately, the Irish 1/- of the definitive series with SE watermark then current (Scott #76, Gibbons #82) was overprinted for the occasion. An undetermined number so treated were back-initialled "J.A.M." by the pilot. Robson Lowe's Encyclopaedia, Vol. I (2d edit. 1952) states that some of these were cancelled by favor. The whole business had a highly unofficial background.

Until recently, the writer had accepted the overprint on the 1/- as illustrated by Lowe, as the unvarying cliché. This was in four lines, upper in upper case type, the final for the date

ATLANTIC/AIR MAIL/AUGUST/1932

However, a Shanahan (Dublin) auction catalogue dated March 15th, 1938, offered a mint copy of the overprinted 1/-, and the specimen illustrated varied from that published by Robson Lowe, since the Shanahan copy is without the final line, "1932". While it thus presents a three line cliché, it appears otherwise identical. Shanahan noted that the stamp was accompanied by "B.P.A. Certificate stating that it is 'Genuine' but an unofficial issue," thus putting the case in slightly stronger terms than Lowe, where the "Genuineness", though implied, is not actually stated.

The two slightly differing versions from what obviously seems the basic setting, raise some confusion. Confronted by the setting with date, as in the Lowe copy, would the highly respected B.P.A. also call the four line overprint legend 'Genuine'? Conversely, if confronted by the three line overprint as shown by Shanahan, would Lowe label it as the accepted form of this cliché? Are both forms equally valid as private printings?

Which version came first, which is scarcer, and what does the variation signify? The two forms of this overprint may or may not be equally scarce.

If any member is able to explain the questions raised by the photographic discrepancies cited, a somewhat confused situation might well be clarified. Also, since it is the stamp alone almost always discussed, without question THE REVEALER would welcome an oppor-

tunity to illustrate the full cover involved, if one could be briefly sent to the Editor for that purpose.

FLAWS AND VARIETIES

We continue the series of reports on the flaws and varieties with the next commemorative series of stamps.

Constitution of Éire 1937

Issued December 29, 1937 in two values, 2d ruby and 3d blue, to commemorate the inauguration of the new Constitution. The design by King represents Éire as a young woman, seated with her right hand resting on a Harp and having just written the words, "In Ainm na Tríonoide Ro-Naomhtha."

There are no reported notable varieties. The background of solid color behind the word "Éire" in the top left corner of the stamp and the legend panel at the base lend themselves to numerous inking varieties.

Father Mathew 1938

Issued July 1, 1938 in two values, 2d agate and 3d blue to commemorate the centenary of the Temperance Apostolate by the famous Capuchin friar.

There are reports of two or three shades of the 2d. Mr. F.C. Barnard reported in the Philatelic Adviser, December 1938 and in the Stamp Lover, March-April 1957 that he discovered on the first day of issue, several copies of an error on the second stamp of the second row from the top left corner (Stamp # 8), consisting of a reversed comma appearing directly beneath the "1" of "1938". He also reported that the subsequent supplies received by the post offices, failed to show the error. We wonder if more than one plate was used in the printing, or, if the error was corrected.

FIRST FLIGHT ORIGINATED IN DUBLIN

The facts are: Seaboard & Western Airlines, who lease the planes to Aerlinte, had to deliver the plane to Dublin for the First Flight westward. The celebrities who made the crossing to New York were flown over on the plane in order that they would be in Dublin for the First Flight westward. The First Flight by Aerlinte Éireann originated in Dublin. See article by Neil Stack on page 374.

TELL YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT THE E.P.A.

## THE THEATRE IN IRELAND

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Yeats which introduced Sara Allgood to the stage.

Synge's play, "In the Shadow of the Glen", was also staged and bitterly attacked in the public press. In February of the following year the play by Synge, "Riders to the Sea" was first produced.

### THE ABBEY THEATRE

In 1904, Miss Horniman offered to purchase an old theatre on Abbey Street for the Society. The theatre, known as "The Mechanics", and along with it she purchased an adjoining building which had served as the City Morgue. After difficulty in securing a license (Crown Patent), the theatre opened on Dec. 27, 1904. All seats---562--- were filled. The audience included such notables as: Yeats, Edward Martyn, Hugh Lane and John Mansfield.

### THE EARLY YEARS OF THE ABBEY

The first years of The Abbey were difficult ones. Fewer than 50 people were in the house at the opening on Oct. 2, 1905. Prices of one, two and three shillings were too high at that time, for the ordinary Dubliner. In that year a number of tours to English cities were successful in every way. That year saw the name of the National Theatre Society changed to the National Theatre Society, Ltd.--known more familiarly as "The Abbey". By 1906, the Abbey had a brilliant group of players such as Willie and Frank Fay, J.M. Kerrigan, Fred O'Donovan, Sydney Morgan, Sara Allgood, Marie O'Neill, Arthur Sinclair and J. A. O'Rourke.

Early in 1907, in January---to be exact---the production of Synge's play, "The Playboy of the Western World", drew riots in the theatre. Public feeling ran high while the press urged a withdrawal of the play. The play was not withdrawn and The Abbey vindicated its claim for freedom. World attention was focused on The Abbey and the plays of J.M. Synge as a result of riot and public feeling.

In the course of years The Abbey evolved into a theatre different in many ways from what Yeats had in mind. The Abbey became a popular, realistic theatre, exploiting the comedy and the tragedy of everyday Irish life--particularly rural life. The change did not however, completely obliterate the original intentions of the founders. Yeats remained a director of the theatre until his death in 1939.

Among the recent playwrights is Sean O'Casey whose first successful play, "The Shadow of a Gunman" was produced in April

1923. This success was followed by a tragedy which he called, "Juno and the Paycock". It played to packed houses. "The Plowman and the Stars" was his next successful play and dealt with the 1916 Rising. The cast included Michael Scott, Maureen Delaney, F.J. McCormick, Arthur Shields, P.J. Carolan, Barry Fitzgerald and Eileen Crowe.

One of the Abbey's most popular playwrights was the Ulsterman, George Sheils. From his first play produced in 1922, until his death in 1949, he wrote a long series of successful plays for the theatre. Thousands saw his "Professor Tim" in 1925 and "The New Gossoon", produced in 1930. Also notable are his plays: "Grogan and the Ferret", produced in 1940 and "The Rugged Path" which ran for twelve continuous weeks.

In 1924, a Government subsidy was granted to the Abbey Theatre and thus it became the only State-subsidized theatre in the English-speaking world.

### NEW THEATRE IS PLANNED

In July 1951 the Theatre was destroyed by fire. But true to the unwritten law of the theatre, the company carried on at the Queen's Theatre on Pearse Street--across the River Liffey in Dublin.

The old Abbey was the most inadequate National Theatre in Europe. Its stage, only sixteen feet in depth, gave directors nightmares. Crowd scenes were virtually impossible, while one blind side made quick changes of scenery out of the question. All of this will be changed in 1960 when the new Abbey Theatre is scheduled to open on the ruins of the old. There will be 700 seats and the most modern of stages will lend flexibility. The modern new building will be of native stone and marble with decorative effect. (The End).

### NOTES AND NEWS

The 3d and 1/3 Father Wadding stamps come in sheets of 240 stamps (two panes of 120) with plate numbers 1A and 1B under stamp 110 of each respective pane, and the DeLaRue imprint under stamps 114/115 of each pane. Perforation is by single-row comb moving upwards.

A. Lester Taylor (#280) reports that stocks of the 6d SE watermark postage dues are now exhausted and that it has now appeared on E paper. Also the following stamps are no longer obtainable at the Philatelic Section of the G.P.O.: ---SE 5d, 9d, 10d, 1/- and 5/-; 3d. airmail; Father Mathew (1938) 3d, U.S. Constitution (1939) 2d, 3d, and Easter (1941) 3d.

# AERLINTE FIRST TRANSATLANTIC FLIGHTS

By Neil Stack

Inauguration of transatlantic service between Ireland and the United States was formally begun on April 28, 1958. The first westward flight left Dublin at 10:00 pm, stopping at Shannon Airport 50 minutes later. Christened "St. Patrick", the Super-H Lockheed Constellation departed from Shannon at 11:55 pm and arrived at Idlewild International Airport, New York at 10:50 am April 29th.

Approximately 800 First Flight Covers, serviced from Dublin by the Irish Airlines (AerlinTE Éireann) were carried on this flight. About twice this number were serviced through the G.P.O. in Dublin.

The American flight crew supplied by Seaboard & Western Airlines, who operate the planes under contract to AerlinTE Éireann, consisted of: Capt. William Donahue, Relief Capt. Joseph O'Dwyer, Co-Pilot Robert J. McAllister, Navigator Michael Green and Flight Engineers Daniel Patrick Breen and Robert Emmett O'Donnell. Flight Hostesses were Irish: Josephine McCarthy, Sally MacEgan and Joan Talbot.

Aboard the St. Patrick on its maiden flight were: Mr. Sean Lemass, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry and Commerce, Mr. F. Coleman, Assistant Secretary, Department of Posts & Telegraphs, Concillor James Carroll, Lord Mayor of Dublin, Hon. John Conway, Consul for Ireland at New York, Hon. Donald Scully, Trade Consul at New York, and the Hon. Robert F. Wagner, Mayor of New York City. The remainder of the party consisted of Irish and American officials and a party of press and radio representatives of the United States and Ireland.

New York's famous "Fighting 69th Regiment" band and color guard greeted the St. Patrick and its passengers on its arrival at Idlewild Airport.

Ireland is the 24th nation to serve New York and the Irish Airlines becomes the 40th airline operating to and from New York.

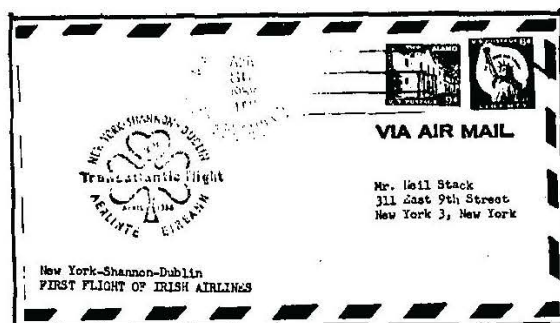
## The First Eastward Flight

The eastward flight to Dublin left Idlewild Airport, New York, at 3:30 pm on April 30th. At 7:00 am, May 1st, the St. Patrick arrived in Shannon International Airport, Ireland. Departing at 7:50 am the plane touched down at Dublin Airport at 8:30 am.

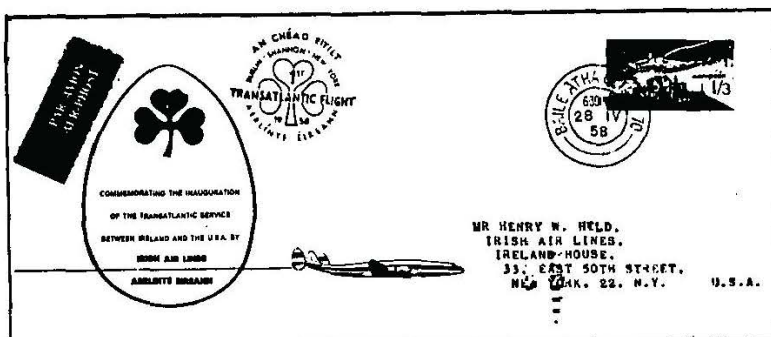
Approximately 300 First Flight Covers were serviced by the Irish Airlines from New York, while about 7 times that number were processed from the U.S. Post Office at Idlewild in New York.

Contrary to the general belief of philatelists---no first Day covers were serviced at Limerick, Ireland on either the westward or eastward flights.

Two First Flight Covers are illustrated. The one from Dublin, cancelled on April 28th, is cacheted by the Irish Airlines and shows the cancellation "Baile Átha Cliath". The First Flight Cover from New York is cancelled on April 30th by the Air Mail Field Postal Service at Idlewild and is an individually prepared cover.



Backstamped May 1st: Machine Cancel  
Baile Átha Cliath J (Dublin)



Machine backstamped April 29th, New York, N.Y. 2pm