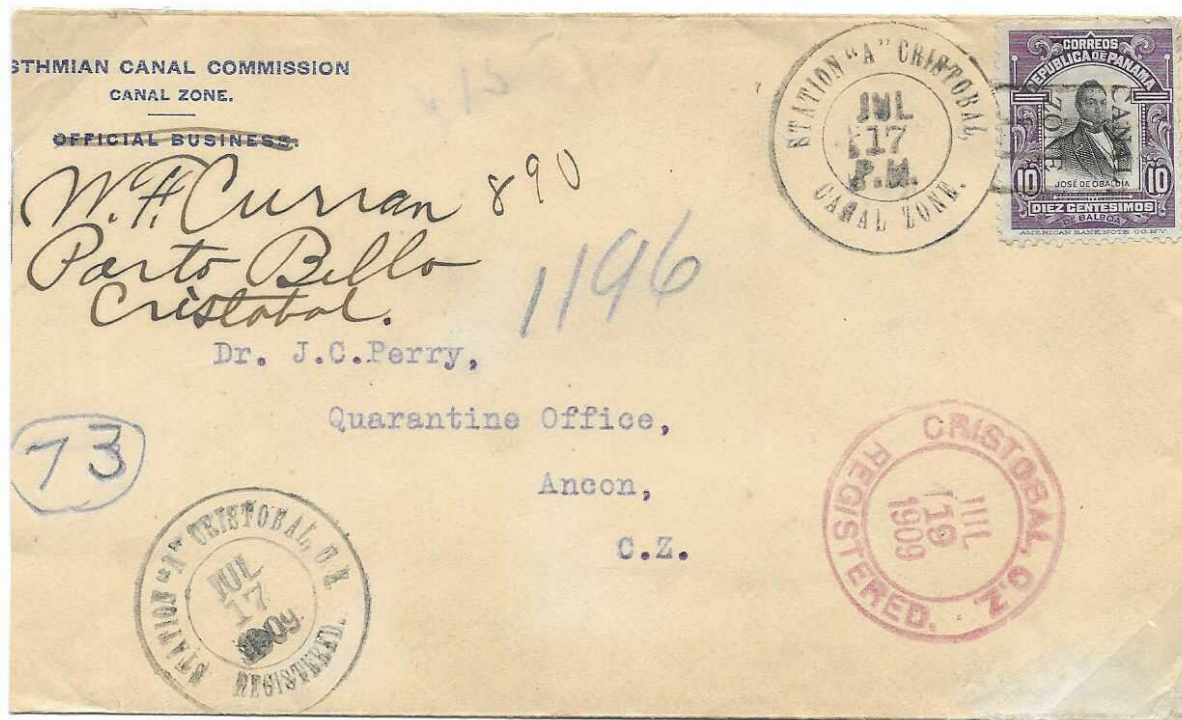


PANAMA CANAL ZONE REGISTERED MAIL The Early Years 1905-1922

This exhibit shows examples of registered mail from the Canal Zone during the early years of the U.S. postal service in the territory, with emphasis on registration markings and the special labels produced by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing for use on international registered mail. According to the *Annual Report of the USPOD for 1906*, registry service in the Canal Zone began in August 1905 (ERD from Gorgona on August 19), which explains why no examples exist of registered covers franked with the first two sets of Canal Zone overprints. As a result, all of the covers shown in this exhibit are franked with overprints on Panamanian stamps, which were those current during the period covered. Commercially used covers have been emphasized, although collectors of the day were highly interested in Canal Zone issues, and a few attractive philatelically-influenced items have been included.

The exhibit is organized in alphabetic order by post office, with one or two pages for each location, depending on the availability of different markings. As might be expected, markings found most frequently are those of major centers of activity, i.e. Ancon, Balboa and Cristobal. However, one can seek out covers with the markings of the smaller offices, and a substantial number of these have been included as obtainable. Basic information was derived primarily from *The Postal Markings of the Canal Zone* by Lawson P. Entwistle, published by the Canal Zone Study Group in 1982.



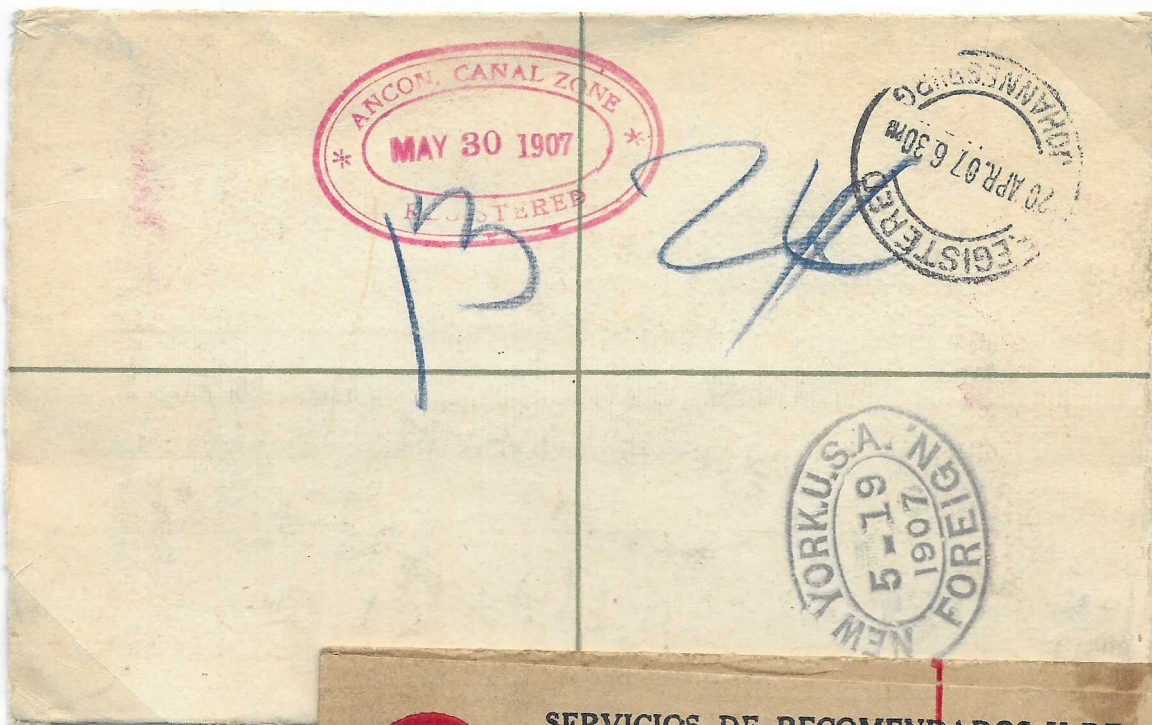
This registered cover was sent from Porto Bello, located 17 miles northeast of Cristobal where a branch post office was in operation from 1908 to 1911. The strike in the lower left corner of the envelope is the discovery example and still the only recorded copy of the registry postmark of Station "A" up to the present time. The cover has a transit marking of Cristobal and a receiving mark of Ancon.

A problem that one encounters in collecting Canal Zone registered mail is that it is a highly competitive pursuit. The supply of unusual items is limited, and there is a substantial number of active collectors seeking them. As a result, assembling a reasonable showing can only be done with a good deal of effort and patience over an extended period of time. Nevertheless, the material is attractive and creating an exhibit is a rewarding enterprise.

ANCON
P. O. open from June 24,
1904 to December 31, 1956

Ancon, C. Z.
May 30, 1907
February 24, 1921

Ancon Registration Markings used as
Receiving Marks on Inbound Letters

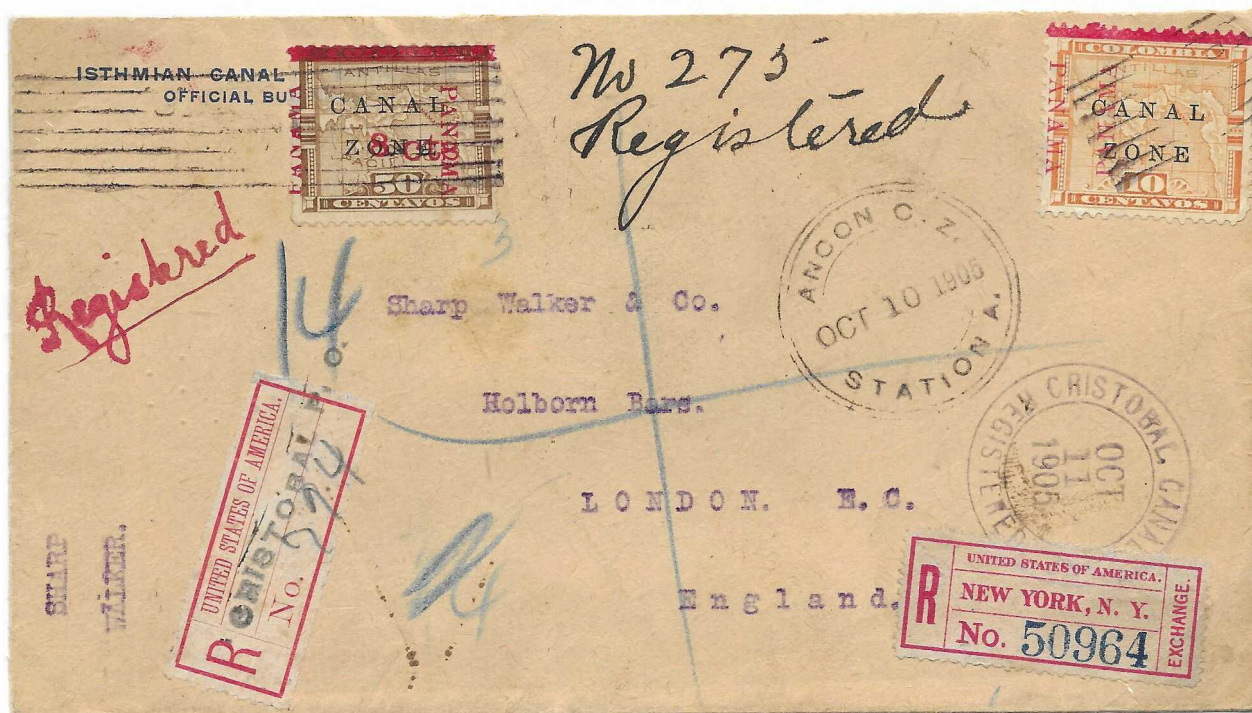


Upper example shows an Ancon oval registration marking struck in red on the reverse of an inbound cover from South Africa. Lower example is a Panamanian registration postal stationery envelope sent from the small village of Sixaola and backstamped for receipt with a circular Ancon registration marking.

ANCON - STATION A
Branch open from Sept.
1905 to April 30, 1908

Ancon C. Z./Station A
October 10, 1905

**Earliest Recorded Example of Registration
Label with Handstamped "Cristobal P. O."**



For convenience, the Isthmian Canal Commission accepted mail for the U.S. at its office in Panama City, which was then turned over to the Canal Zone post office in Ancon. However, this practice ceased on August 27, 1905, with the post office opening a branch known as Ancon Station A the following month. The attraction of this arrangement was the availability of domestic postage rates on mail addressed to the U.S., as opposed to the U.P.U. rates charged by the Panamanian post office.

Registration labels are reported to have been used by the Cristobal P. O. starting in October 1905.

ANCON - STATION A
Branch open from Sept.
1905 to April 30, 1908

Sta. A, Ancon, C. Z.
July 23, 1908

Rubber Registration Marking of "Cristobal, C. Z."

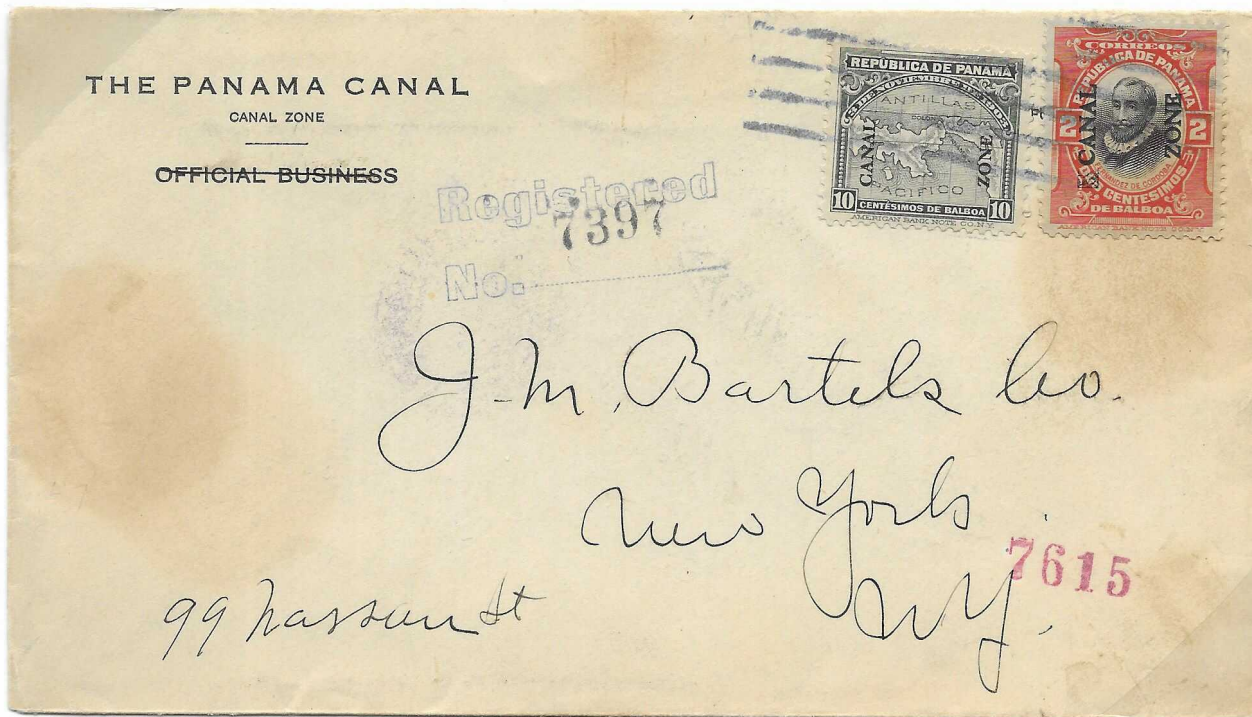


A new oval registration marking was used at Ancon - Station A with an ERD of April 10, 1906.

This overfranked cover (26 cts. postage) was used philatelically to Germany with all five of the 1904-1905 overprints, making one of the most colorful Canal Zone pieces.

BALBOA
P. O. open from May 5,
1909 to September 30, 1979

Balboa, C. Z.
March 27, 1916
September 14, 1922



Balboa was the new name given to La Boca in 1909. It was noteworthy for its harbor terminals, ship repair facilities and warehouses. Upper cover shows unusual type of "Registration No." marking used at Balboa and Cristobal. Lower cover shows box registration marking used by the 1920s.

BAS OBISPO
P. O. open from December
28, 1905 to February 5, 1914

Bas Obispo, C. Z.
October 29, 1906

Registration Label with Printed "Cristobal C. Z."



Bas Obispo was one of the original stations on the Panama Railroad and was particularly active during the excavation of the Culebra Cut. However, when the waters rose in Gatun Lake, the town had to be abandoned.

In the case of this cover, the postage stamp was improperly canceled with the Bas Obispo steel cds instead of a killer, although the double-circle registration marking was appropriately applied nearby.

BOHIO
P.O. open from June 25,
1904 to Feb. 14, 1912

Bohio
November 26, 1906

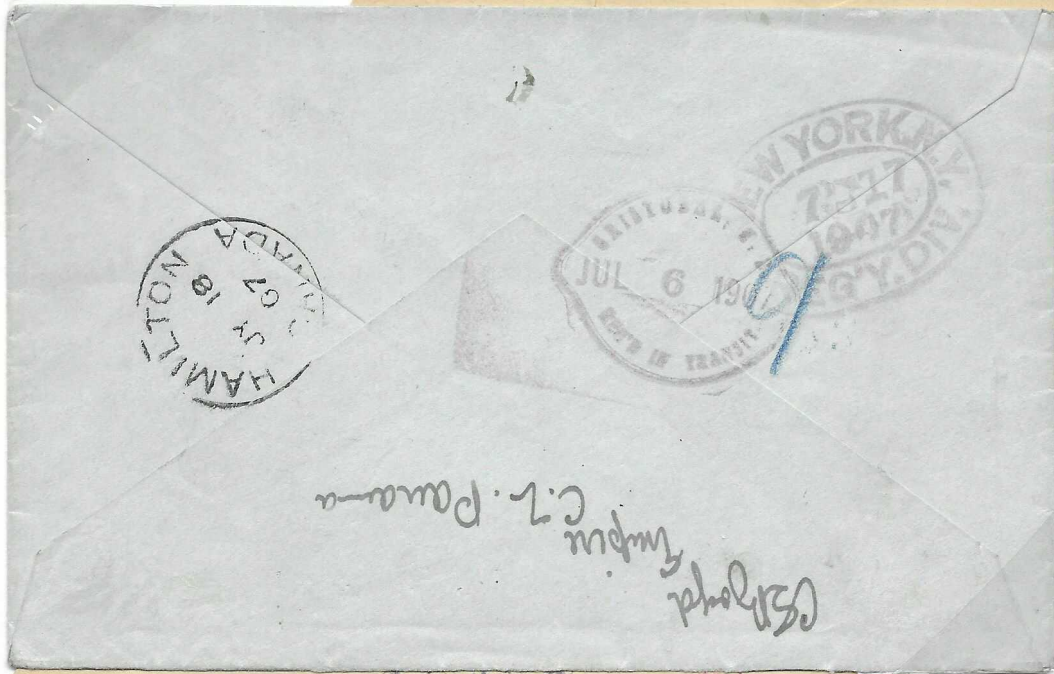


Bohio was the location of the major machine shops for the Panama Canal Zone authorities. However, when Gatun Lake was created, the area was inundated and the town disappeared under the waters.

Registration labels with the inscription "Cristobal, C.Z." were applied to outgoing registered mail handled through the transit office during 1905 and 1906. To date, a total of 34 examples have been recorded by Lombardi.

CRISTOBAL
P. O. open from June 24,
1904 to September 30, 1979

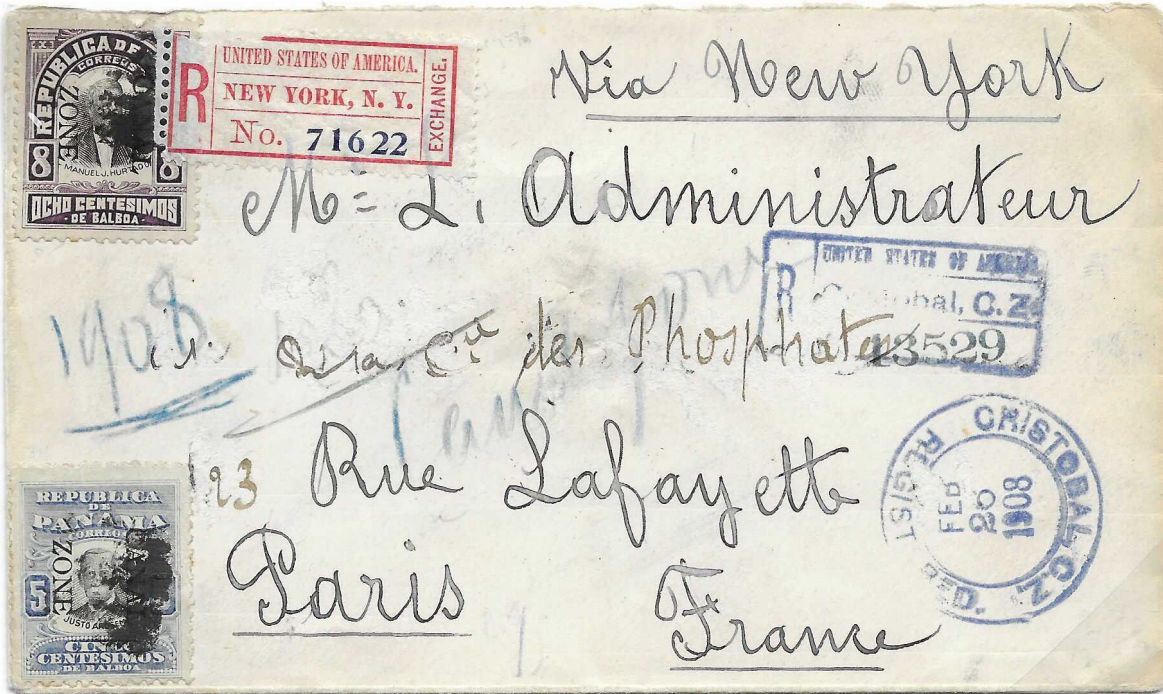
Cristobal, C. Z.
May 30, 1906
July 6, 1907



Because Cristobal was the designated exchange office for registered mail in the Canal Zone, many covers from other post offices were backstamped in transit via that city. Among the more unusual markings are those shown above, i.e. "Reg. Div. Rec'd." and "Rec'd. in Transit," the latter enroute to Canada.

CRISTOBAL
P. O. open from June 24,
1904 to September 30, 1979

Cristobal, C. Z.
February 26, 1908
December 15, 1916



Cristobal is located on Manzanilla Island at the Atlantic entrance to the canal and served as the administrative and commercial center of the Canal Zone in the early days.

Upper cover to France has the postmark and registration marking struck in blue, as compared to the normal black and occasional purple examples. Lower cover has unusual "Registered No." marking and the postage is cancelled by an undated double oval killer.

CULEBRA
P. O. open from June 24,
1904 to September 30, 1927

Culebra, Canal Zone
May 1, 1906

Rubber Registration Marking of "Cristobal C. Z."



Culebra was located at the summit of the Panama Railroad and served as the administrative center for canal construction from 1905 to 1914. Later, it was the site of U.S. Army Camp Gaillard from 1915 to 1927.

Note the use of the small straight-line marking "Registered" at the top of the cover -- not seen from other offices.

EMPIRE
P.O. open from June 24,
1904 to March 31, 1921

Empire, Canal Zone
December 11, 1906

FORT AMADOR
P. O. open from October 20,
1917 to April 30, 1921

Fort Amador, C.Z.
March 2, 1920

Registration Label with Printed "Cristobal, C.Z."



Empire was the largest town between Colon and Panama City when the Americans took over, and it became the repair center for steam shovels as well as the headquarters for the Dept. of Accounts. Note the use of the straight-line "Registered No." at the top, not seen from other offices.

Fort Amador was named after the first president of Panama, Dr. Manuel Amador Guerrero. The type of cancel (Rg-16a) used on this cover as a backstamp is unlisted for this office in Entwistle.

FORT SHERMAN
P. O. open from May 1,
1916, to January 31, 1950

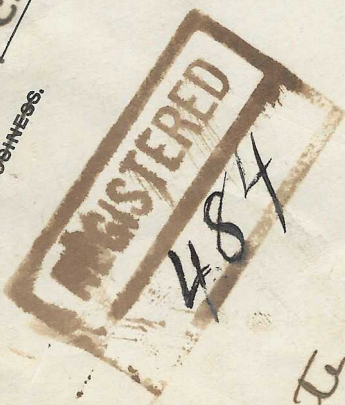
Fort Sherman, C. Z.
June 18, 1921

Rectangular "Box"
Registration Marking



*Wrenn Bros and Co.
53 State Street
Boston
mass. 47676*

WAR DEPARTMENT.
Majors L. C. Brinton, W. S. Murray
Fort Sherman, C. Z.



*Registers
Return receipt*

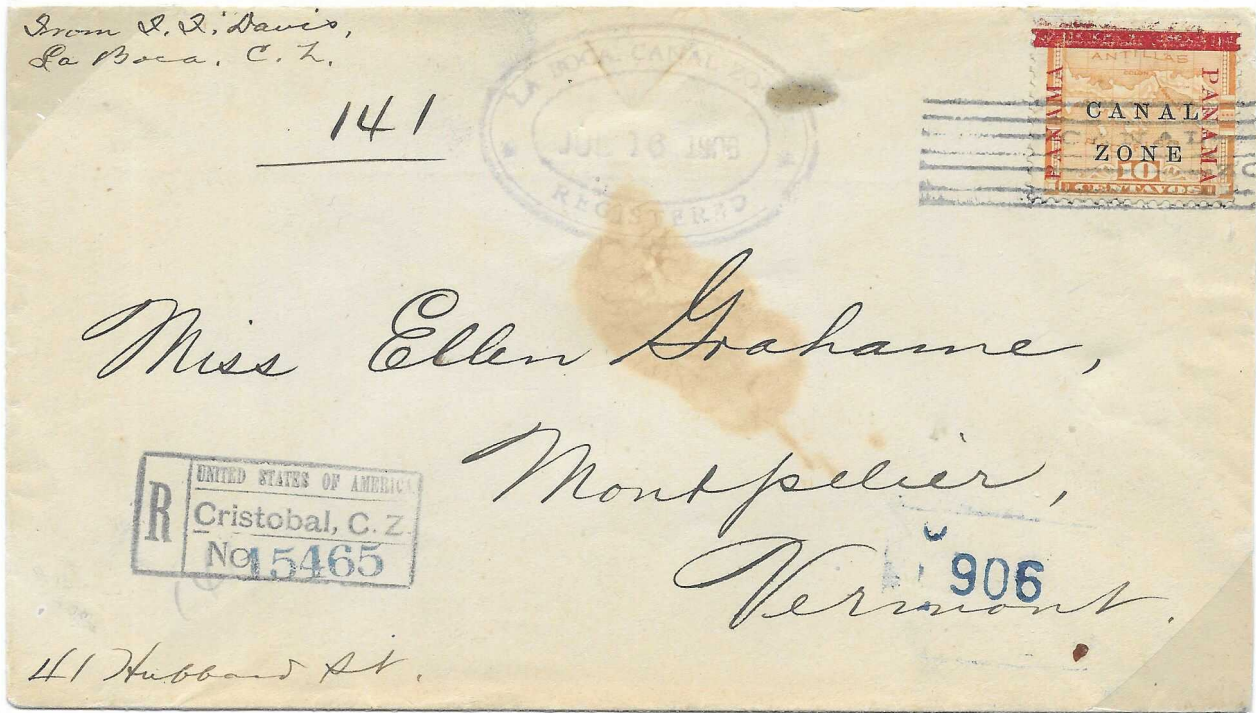
Fort Sherman was activated prior to the entry of the U.S. into World War I.

By the 1920s the "box" registration marking used widely in the U.S. was introduced in the Canal Zone.

LA BOCA
P. O. open from June 24,
1904 to May 5, 1909

La Boca, Canal Zone
July 16, 1906

Rubber Registration Marking of "Cristobal, C. Z."



La Boca is located at the entrance from the Pacific on the eastern end of the canal. The name of the town was officially changed to Balboa on April 30, 1909.

Transit marking of Cristobal, C.Z./Reg. Div. Rec'd" on reverse.

LAS CASCADAS
P. O. open from January 20,
1906 to February 28, 1919

Las Cascadas, C. Z.
November 14, 1910
November 25, 1918

Special Registration Postal Stationery



Las Cascades was named for a waterfall on the Obispo River. During construction of the canal, it was the location of a large engine house and yards for the trains working in Culebra Cut.

Upper example of the registration marking was used as a backstamp for a stationery envelope from Grenada. Lower example shows the use of the special 10 cts. postal stationery envelope overprinted for the Canal Zone.

MATACHIN
P. O. open from June 25,
1904 to August 23, 1913

Matachin, Canal Zone
December 30, 1905

Rubber Registration Marking of "Cristobal, C. Z."



Matachin town was on the railway line and the locus of locomotive sheds as well as various branches and sidings.

The above cover has typical franking with Canal Zone overprints (2 cts. plus 8 cts. surcharged on 50 cts.) to pay postage and registration.

PARAISO
P.O. open from April 5,
1905 to April 15, 1921

Paraiso, C.Z.
April 24, 1909

PEDRO MIGUEL
P. O. open from August 12,
1905 to October 14, 1955

Pedro Miguel, C.Z.
September 6, 1907

Rubber Registration Markings of "Cristobal, C.Z."



Paraiso was the location of an engine house and railway yards; later it became dredging headquarters. The upper cover was sent from there to Palm Beach via New Orleans and then forwarded to Miami.

Pedro Miguel was located at what would become one of the primary sets of locks on the canal. The lower cover was sent from the postmaster there with a pair of 10 cts. overprints, suggesting valuable contents so that a surcharge for insurance was paid.