

Covers to and from the Panama Canal Zone (A Philatelically Dead Country) To Other Philatelically Dead Countries (1904-1979)

What Constitutes a Philatelically Dead Country? It is a country or entity that featured:

1. An absolute monarchy overthrown e.g. Imperial Russia became Soviet Union
2. Overthrow of or withdrawal of colonial rule e.g. India independence
3. Annexation of a country into another country e.g. Soviet annexation of Latvia
4. Joining of two or more political entities e.g. The creation of the United Arab Republic
5. Occupation or control by an external entity e.g. Nazi occupation France
6. The dissolution of a large political entity into smaller countries e.g. Austria-Hungary Empire
7. Small entities within large country with special rights e.g. The Canal Zone or Treaty Ports China

The Panama Canal Zone

The Panama Canal Zone was created by treaty in 1903 between the newly birthed nation of Panama and the United States. The treaty gave the U.S. sovereign power over a 10-mile strip of land between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The Panama Canal was built within this 10-mile strip. The Canal Zone operated an independent mail system from June 1904 until September 1979. This exhibit will showcase covers between the Canal Zone and fellow philatelically dead countries.

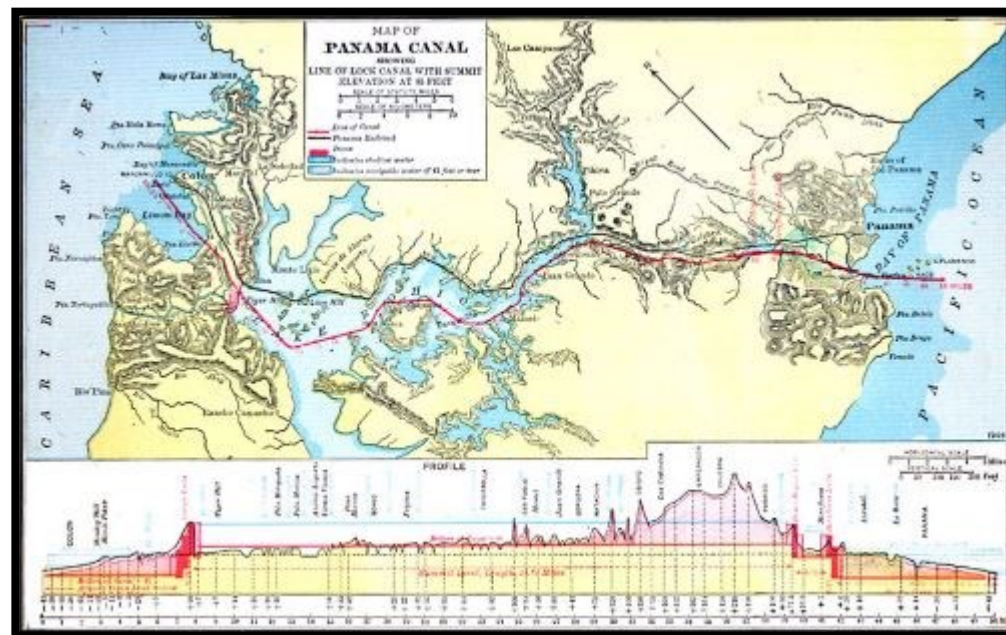
Canal Zone Post Offices

The Canal Zone Post Offices opened two weeks after President Theodore Roosevelt ordered that a Postal System be put in place. The first post offices were in the train stations and the first postmasters were the head of the train station. The first three stamps were early Panamanian stamps that were Columbian stamps with Panamanian overprints to which the Canal Zone postal authorities hand stamped Canal Zone.



A very early example of Canal Zone Usage

This is a letter from the Canal Zone, almost at its birth, to Imperial Germany. Imperial Germany ceased to exist after World War I and the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm. Germany was destined for many changes in the ensuing 87 years.



Above: Panama Map

Left: 1937 Panama Canal Map, note the Panama Canal runs north to south.

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Covers surrounded by red are covers that are difficult to acquire. It could be because the stamp is rare. In most cases it is because there is very little mail between the Panama Canal Zone and that particular country.