

Lindbergh Kidnapping Mail (Continued from Page 1)

government or archival hands, collectors can only “own a photocopy of it or some similar medium. The piece illustrated here is only one of many postally-used items in the evidence files of one of the most infamous crimes in American history.

Was this a legitimate communication from the kidnapper? Here is some background: Bruno Richard Hauptmann was eventually arrested, tried and convicted and executed as kidnapper. But the story doesn't end there. Many experts believe Hauptmann was not, in fact, the kidnapper though he was caught after passing bills from the ransom money.

Handwriting analysts were unanimous in their verdict that this written communication was received by the Lindberghs from the kidnapper. But this much is known: this post card postmarked March 3, two days after the crime. Though not taken seriously at the time it was received

(many crackpots tried to send messages to the victim's family), the card turned out to be in the handwriting of the actual kidnapper, whoever he was.

More attention was paid to a letter received by the Lindberghs' attorney, Henry Breckinridge, on March 5. However, handwriting comparisons between that and the message appearing on this card and on other kidnapper correspondence turned out to be the same.

Subsequent to Hauptmann's arrest—and after he had been directed to duplicate in his in his hand some of the words and phrases from the kidnapper correspondence—several experts agreed that the handwriting of Hauptmann and examples received from the kidnapper were one and the same. This, however, was disputed at the trial by other experts.

In essence, we have a philatelic gem photocopied from a secondary source for us by postal historian Stephen Suffet. Other messages received from

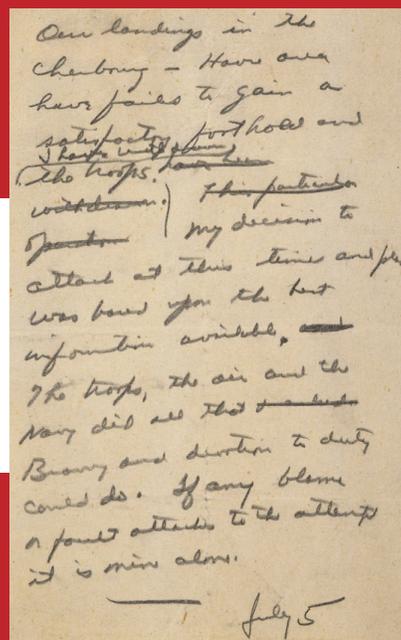
the kidnapper(s) were determined, by virtue of information only the real kidnapper would know, to be legitimate and in fact, were in the same hand on this card.

But the question may always remain: was Hauptmann the kidnapper or was he the victim of one Isador Fish, the man who he said gave him the ransom money for safekeeping before Fish left the country only to die of natural causes in his German homeland? In private hands, the postcard would be a major philatelic rarity perhaps more intriguing than any mail from the RMS Titanic or any Lindbergh flown cover—and perhaps worth as much as \$500,000. For now, we can only marvel at it because we can only picture it here. Trivia sidebar: the chief investigator for the NJSP was a Col. H. Norman Schwartzkopf, who had an even more famous son.

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Louisiana Purchase Treaty,
April 30, 1803



A note, in case of failure, by Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, June 5, 1944, but misdated July 5.



“Landing on the coast of France under heavy Nazi machine gun fire are these American soldiers, shown just as they left the ramp of a Coast Guard landing boat.” Photograph by CphoM. Robert F. Sargent, June 6, 1944

