

BELGIAN CONGO



STUDY CIRCLE

Secretary:

P. S. Foden,
5 Ascham Lane,
Whittlesford,
Cams. CB2 4NT,
U.K.

Bulletin Editor:

R. E. Jacquemin,
4132 E. Minnezona,
Phoenix,
Arizona 85018,
U.S.A.

BULLETIN NO. 65

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President: Mr. A. Vindevoghel
Boite 4, 19A Avenue Marnix
1050 Brussels, Belgium

Exchange Packet Secretary
B. P. Hudson
92 Oakley Street, London SW3, U.K.

Vice President and General Sales Secretary: R. H. Keach
25 Kingswood Road
Tadworth, Surrey KT20 5EE, U.K.

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NEWS AND VIEWS

To the membership list furnished by our Secretary, please add the following new members to our rapidly growing Study Circle:

R. Allegaert	Braine-l'Alleud, Belgium
V. Schouberecht	Brussels, Belgium
D. N. Stanmore	Oxford, U. K.
Torbjorn Bjork	Westfield, NJ 07090, U.S.A.

PRICES REALISED - CHRISTIES'S ROBSON LOWE 'BRABANT' SALE - ZURICH 13 May

I prepared the list which appeared in Bulletin No. 64 in great haste from computer print-out sheets and, in order to catch the post so that it would appear in the June Bulletin, without checking. I much regret and apologise for four errors and the following corrections should be made:

Lot 1358 - 650 S. Fr.
1367 - 550
1373 - 600
1384 - 350

R. H. KEACH

LITERATURE LIST

Through the kindness of Mr. Ernst M. Cohn, the internationally known postal historian, a very extensive list plus a Supplement dated 17 June 87 was sent to your editor. This list including prices is printed by the firm of Hector Raassens, St. Katelijnevest 34 & 47 2000 Antwerpen Belgium. While the list is mostly on the stamps of Belgium, there is a considerable number for the Belgian Congo, Zaire, Ruanda-Urundi, Rwanda and Burundi. Those interested should write for the lists as a means of knowing how complete your philatelic library is. Your editor came out with about 90% of the listings for the Congo.

BULLETIN COPIES

Mr. Arthur I. Heim, our immediate past president, has written to your editor stating he has the following issues available:

Nos. 10, 20, 21, 23, 25, 29, 32 to 63 inclusive
 Index for 1 to 50
 News letters 1, 2 and 3

Those interested should write to Mr. Heim, P. O. Box 528, Fishkill, New York 12524 USA. Needless to say, there will be costs.

STUDY CIRCLE COMPETITION

As a supplement to this Bulletin are two pages - one giving the rules and the other the Entry Form. It is hoped there will be widespread interest in this project. Your editor has made up a 12 page display to show this can be done. The following two pages are shown to give members examples. Naterally, this display will not be in competition.



POSITION NO. 26



POSITION NO. 22

"UNILINGUES"



POSITION NO. 37



POSITION NO. 37

AFTER LEOPOLD II'S PRIVATE DOMAIN BECAME A BELGIAN COLONY, THE STAMPS IN USE WERE OVERPRINTED "CONGO BELGE" BY USE OF HANDSTAMP AND LATER BY TYPO. IN 1909 THERE APPEARED FOUR VALUES OF A NEW AND, APPARENTLY, PERMANENT ISSUE WITH "CONGO BELGE" INCORPORATED IN THE FRAME DESIGNS. THE FLEMISH PEOPLE OF BELGIUM OBJECTED TO THIS SLIGHT, AND THE 1910 AND LATER ISSUES BEAR BOTH FRENCH AND FLEMISH INSCRIPTIONS.

HEREWITH ARE SHOWN POSTAL USAGE, FULL SHEETS AND PLATING STUDIES OF THE SUBJECT STAMPS.

THE PLATES REFERRED TO ARE ACCORDING TO GEN. J. DU FOUR'S DESIGNATIONS AND UP-DATED BY B. P. HUDSON. THE STAMPS WERE ENGRAVED AND PRINTED BY WATERLOW AND SONS, LIMITED OF LONDON.

APRIL 20, 1909

PLATES II + B2

INSCRIPTION IN FRENCH ONLY

PERF. 14



POSITION NO. 19
EARLY PRINTING WITH
FORGED CANCEL

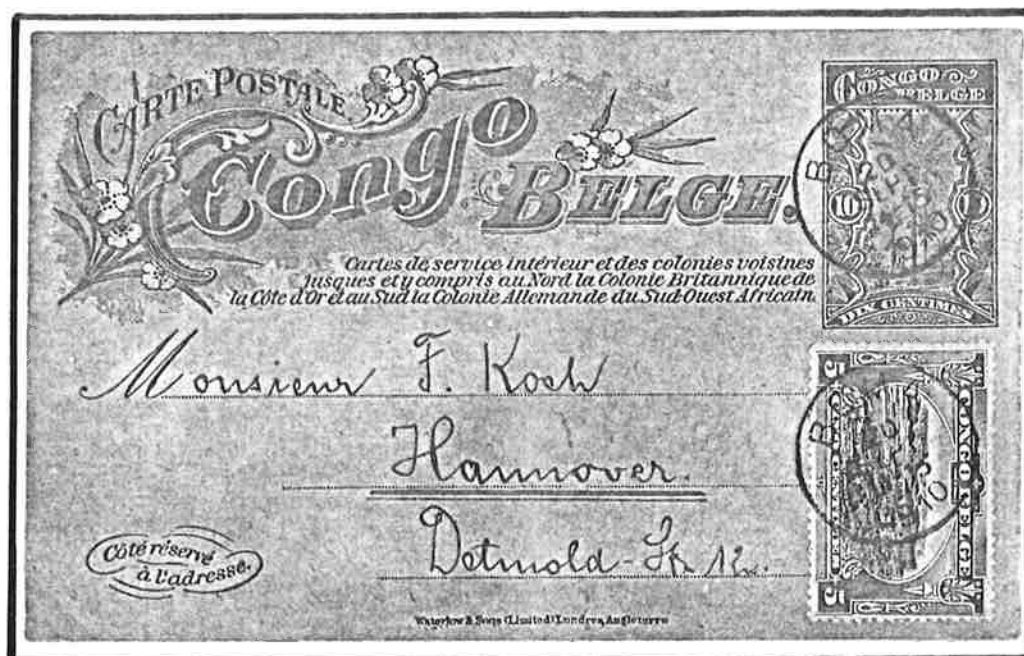


POSITION NO. 23



POSITION NO. 35

USED AS ADDITIONAL POSTAGE ON "UNILINGUAL" INTERIOR POSTAL CARD
OF 1909 FOR OVERSEAS MAILING.



POSITION NO. 18

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 6 JUNE 1987.

Eight members managed to be present at the Annual General Meeting held at Esher, including both the outgoing and incoming Presidents. Four other members had previously sent apologies for non-attendance.

The meeting was officially opened by the outgoing President, Mr. A.I. Heim, who had come from New York. In his introductory remarks, Mr. Heim noted that he had little opportunity of contact with members in the U.K. and Belgium, although he had considerable contact with a number of the U.S.A. members; these were generally enthusiastic supporters of the Study Circle, but few were really involved in serious study aspects of Belgian Congo philately - at least, so far. He felt that he had had an easy time as President, with few official duties, but had thoroughly enjoyed the honour of the post, for which he was most grateful.

The next item on the Agenda was the Annual Accounts, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting. It was noted that the Study Circle had had another successful year in financial terms and the Secretary mentioned that paid-up membership had reached 85 world-wide. The only question on the Accounts was why, for the second year running, the Study Circle had received less for books and documentation than its costs. It was explained that the difference was more than covered by stocks of books in hand, which, at cost, amounted to some £320. The Accounts were then accepted. During the year, there had been fewer instances than in other recent years of members falling into arrears and failing to pay subscriptions, however, it was agreed that those still in arrears for 1986/87 had forfeited membership.

Reports of the various office-bearers were then taken. Sales had had a most successful year, with total material valued at more than £11,000 changing hands, and providing £567 of income for a cost of only £98. More than half of the sales value arose from the collection of Mr. Barstow-Smith, an ex-member, who had asked the Study Circle to dispose of it on his behalf. Both Mr. Barstow-Smith and the many present members who had purchased parts of his collection appeared to be extremely satisfied with the result. In addition, Abbé Gudenkauf's good offices in keeping a constant flow of material coming to the Sales Secretary should be recognised. More material was always welcome and all offerings should be sent in to Mr. Keach. Mols stamps, overprints and cancellations, in particular, are always in demand.

No formal report had been received from the Bulletin Editor. Mr Jacquemin's efforts were greatly appreciated and the Secretary was asked to write expressing this. It was noted that Mr. Jacquemin was willing to continue in the post. As usual, it is necessary to ask members to support the Bulletin by submitting articles and news items for publication.

The Exchange Packet Secretary reported a reasonably successful year. 16 booklets from 6 vendors had been circulated, with material valued at £455, out of which sales of £203 were made to 11 purchasers. Mr. Hudson also intimated his willingness to continue if requested, in which case it would be his intention to circulate a further packet in autumn, 1987.

Speaking as Secretary to the Expert Committee, Mr. Keach reported that only 36 certificates had been issued during the year (including 2 in respect of forgeries) to 5 members. In fact, since the Expert Committee had been set up in 1978, only some 371 certificates had been issued, and only 18 members and 1 non-member had ever used the service. As it required about 20 stamps to fill a photographic plate, it was impractical to issue such small numbers of certificates. The Study Circle needed to consider whether perhaps the Committee had fulfilled its task and satisfied the demand for its services, in which case it could be discontinued. Alternatively, certificates could be issued bearing only Xerox copies of stamps instead of proper photographs; this would make it much more economic where only a small number of submissions were received at one time. Those present felt that the Expert Committee performed an exceptionally valuable service and that every effort should be made to ensure that it continued as presently set up. It was not thought that a certificate which had only a Xerox copy of its subject would be of any value. Further, the continued submission of material could bring new information to light, particularly as regards previously unrecognised forgeries and this was most worth while to Study Circle activities generally. It was agreed that the Expert Committee should continue for one more year and members should be made fully aware of the position. If there is no improvement in the situation during the next year, it may be necessary to cease operations. The matter will be reviewed at the next Annual General Meeting. In the meantime, Mr. Keach would draft a note for the Bulletin explaining the position in full, noting the Expert Committee's charges, and detailing the types of material which members should consider worthy of authentication. In any case, there will be an issue of certificates in October and members who do have material for expertising are requested to send it to Mr. Keach before then.

Election of Officers:- Having completed his 2-year term as President, Mr. Heim stood down and was thanked for his services to the Study Circle, not only as President but as a Founder-member. The Study Circle Committee had previously asked Mr. A Vindevoghel if he would undertake the next 2-year term as President and he had accepted. However, Mr. Vindevoghel then asked Mr. Heim to complete the chairmanship of the present meeting, which he agreed to do. At this point both Presidents asked the meeting to recognise the sterling work done by all the officers of the Study Circle. This was immediately translated into a blanket re-election of the officers by acclamation of those present, as it was noted that all the officers had already signified their willingness to continue in post. The full list of Office-Bearers of the Study Circle is thus:-

President	A. Vindevoghel
Vice President	R. H. Keach (life appointment)
Secretary/Treasurer	P. S. Foden
Bulletin Editor	R. E. Jacquemin
Sales Secretary	R. H. Keach
Exchange Packet Secretary	B. P. Hudson
Secretary to Expert Committee	R. H. Keach

The other members of the Expert Committee, who also continue in office, are Abbé G. Gudenkauf and P. S. Foden.

With regard to subscriptions, the Treasurer stated that, for the main part of the membership, i.e. those in Belgium, the U.S.A. and the U.K., there was no reason to increase subscriptions and this could be applied also to the very few members in other European countries, where, for the most part E.E.C. postal rates were the same as for internal U.K. It had to be realised, however, that postage costs were a very significant part of the costs of servicing overseas members and the time had come to consider reducing the subsidy which had traditionally applied to other members. In view of the present costs of sending out Bulletins, it was proposed that from 1987/88 subscription year, commencing September 1987, the subscription to members outside Europe and U.S.A. should be increased to £8. It was noted that this was still less than the cost of sending Bulletins to such members, but all shared to some extent in the benefits of receipts from sales. This was agreed by the meeting. For 1987/88, therefore, subscriptions will be as follows:-

Members in U.S.A. & Canada	\$11 payable to R. E. Jacquemin
Members in Belgium	400 Belgian francs, payable to Abbé G. Gudenkauf
Members in U.K.	£5 payable to P. S. Foden
Members overseas (Africa, Asia, Australasia)	£8 payable to P. S. Foden

The meeting then discussed the programme for 1987/88. As usual, there will be two meetings of the Study Circle, as follows:-

- 31 October, 1987 - Postal History, presented by Mr. C. V. Spurgeon and to be held at his home, 1 Holly Hill, Vauxhall Lane, Southborough, Kent.
- 7 May, 1988 - The Mols 10 centimes value, presented by Mr. R. H. Keach. Preceded by the Annual General Meeting and to be held at 5 Ascham Lane, Whittlesford, Cambridge.

It is hoped that there will also be the usual weekend meeting jointly with the Belgian Study Circle, but no venue or dates have as yet been fixed for this.

Under "Any Other Business" discussion centred on the idea for a Study Circle Exhibition/Competition using photocopies, as mentioned at some length in Bulletin No. 62. It was agreed that it should be worth trying such a competition and guidelines were agreed. Mr. N. Clowes agreed to act as Competition Secretary and will draft a detailed set of rules and entry form. (Both of these should accompany this Bulletin).

The business of the meeting being concluded, those present adjourned to the obligatory nearby source of rest and recuperation (the local pub!). The meeting re-convened in the afternoon for a presentation by Mr. Keach of the Mols 5 centimes value. Despite the loss by theft of his album containing, inter alia, much of his 1915 5 centimes material, Mr. Keach gave his usual masterly display and once again amazed those present by the complexity of these, comparatively common (except when you try to find some of the plate combinations), stamps and the sheer depth of study necessary to form a comprehensive collection of them.

THE JOINT MEETING AT BOURNEMOUTH - 27 & 28 JUNE, 1987.

A round dozen of the Study Circle members were able to attend the joint meeting with the Belgian Study Circle. In total, with the two Study Circles, plus guests, the total number present was about 50, a most impressive turnout. On our side, we were happy that Messrs. Heim and Hirdler had both been able to get over again, and to welcome Mr. Lavitt, also from the U.S.A. to his first meeting. Our President, Mr. Vindevoghel had again travelled over from Belgium, as had Mr. Jeukens, another old friend. On the U.K. side, we welcomed Mr. Nailer to his first Study Circle meeting.

The meeting had been arranged at Bournemouth specifically to allow Harry and Doris Green to be present and to congratulate them upon their Diamond Wedding. In return, they had agreed to provide displays for the entire Saturday afternoon, in a combined joint session. Doris led off with a display from her outstanding collection of postal history from the East African Campaign and Harry then followed with a comprehensive display of the stamps and postal history of Eupen and Malmédy, together with a miscellany of private posts from the WW1 German Occupied part of Belgium. It is absolutely impossible to attempt to detail specific items in these displays. Those present will not soon forget the experience.

On the Sunday, the two Study Circles went into separate session and on the Belgian Congo side we had further displays covering the East African Campaign, including yet more material from the indefatigable Doris

Green, who apologised for bringing "rubbish" on this occasion. Most of those present viewed it differently - it could qualify as "rubbish" only when compared to the quite outstanding show the day before. Ed Hirdler followed with a comprehensive display of the 1886 and 1887 Portrait Issues, while, in the afternoon, Peter Foden showed an overview of the Mols issues 1894-1923.

On the Saturday evening, more than 40 people sat down to an excellent dinner, preceded by a sherry reception provided by Harry and Doris. The enjoyment of the evening was enhanced by some excellent, and brief, speeches, purportedly congratulating the Greens on their long-lived marriage, and including one from our chief guest, Robson Lowe, who contrived to draw his material from the early 16th century.

We also have to thank Robson Lowe and his staff for providing us with their Bournemouth auction room and display frames for all the actual meetings and for looking after us while we were there. Above all, thanks are due to Geoffrey Wood, who made all the arrangements for a most successful and enjoyable weekend.

BOOKS FOR SALE

As noted above, the Secretary still holds stocks of some books. In most cases, prices to members are at a significant discount. Those available are:-

Mailboat Services from Europe to the Belgian Congo - by Abbé G. Gudenkauf, £4-00

Mailboat Steamers on Congo Rivers & Lakes - by Abbé G. Gudenkauf, £4-50

Postal History of the Lado Enclave - by Abbé G. Gudenkauf, £8-00

Les Timbres du Congo Surchargés à Boma en 1922-23 - by Abbé G. Gudenkauf, £1-00

Les Entiers Postaux du Congo et du Ruanda-Urundi - by Dr. J. Stibbe, £6-00

Etat Independant du Congo - Emission Dite de 1887 - by E. & M. Deneumostier, £8-75**

** This is a postage-inclusive price. In all other cases, postage is extra.

ONLY A FEW COPIES ARE NOW LEFT OF THESE BOOKS.

DO YOU HAVE THIS VIEW CARD CONCERNING GOLF AT ELISABETHVILLE?

In the August 10, 1987 issue of Linn's Stamp News Mr. John M. Hotchner wrote a brief note on the International Philatelic Golf Society and gave the name of their secretary and this included an address. This was a chance for your editor to check out information given a number of years ago by James M. Chemi, a long time editor of The American Philatelist. It was Jim's contention that view cards 77 and 78 issued in 1922 were the "first" sports on stamps and would be highly prized if this were widely known. So off went a letter and it does seem that Jim was correct, at least as far as golf is concerned. According to the records of IPGS, the earliest they had was a Swiss view card circa 1925 and the earliest stamp was 1953 by Japan. By all means hang on to the two Congo cards - the values will only go upward!

THE ONLY CIRCUS OKAPIS

While the following article is not philatelic, it should be of interest to our membership as the okapi is depicted in the masthead of the Bulletin. Your editor contacted Mr. Richard J. Reynolds, III and he has very kindly given permission to copy his article that appeared first in the March-April 1987 issue of Bandwagon, the Journal of the Circus Historical Society. Judging by the long list of footnotes, the material has certainly been well researched.

THE ONLY CIRCUS OKAPIS

by Richard J. Reynolds, III

An abridged edition of this paper was presented at the 1986 Circus Historical Society convention.

By 1900, the modern age was at hand. Homes were illuminated by electricity and connected by telephones. The automobile was here and motion pictures were already impacting the entertainment business. Circuses were at the zenith of their Golden Age. Their menageries had already exhibited most of the world's more imposing land mammals. Though several notable rarities, like the gorilla, were yet to appear with circuses, they were nevertheless well known to naturalists. Even the mysterious giant panda, which would not appear anywhere in captivity until 1936, had been identified from skins and skulls obtained from China in the mid-nineteenth century. Given the scientific precociousness of the era, esteemed naturalists and explorers had long since solemnly pronounced that there were no more major undiscovered mammals, particularly not one as large as a horse.¹ They were in for a shocking surprise, for the Congo rain forest still held a spectacular secret. That was the okapi, the subject of this theme.

The okapi is the giraffe's only living relative but is much smaller. Adults stand five feet at the shoulder, measure six to seven feet from nose to tail, weigh 400 to 500 pounds, and have giraffe-like horns.² Okapis are exquisitely beautiful. The top of the head, ears, neck, and body are velvety chestnut which in some individuals looks almost purplish-black. In stark contrast, the face is pale, looking as though the animal is wearing a mask. The lower legs are mostly white with the upper parts distinguished by an intricate pattern of thin, wavering white stripes on a chestnut background, particularly pronounced on the flanks and buttocks. Though conspicuous in the open, the color scheme is perfect camouflage for the gloom and shadow of the rain forest's floor. This might explain, at least in part, how this large animal managed to escape scientific detection for so long.

Credit for discovery of the okapi goes to Sir Harry Johnston, a British colonial officer stationed in Uganda at the turn of the century. The story actually begins somewhat earlier, however, and involves no less a personality than Henry Stanley, the British born American journalist turned African explorer, famed for his long search for Dr. Livingston. Stanley's 1890 book, *In Darkest Africa*, makes vague reference to an animal the pygmies called "Atti," which Stanley thought to be some sort of forest dwelling donkey. Johnston was intrigued by this description, particularly since horses (including



"Congo," America's first okapi at Bronx Zoo shortly after his arrival in August, 1937. c. New York Zoological Society Photo.

zebras) were not known to frequent dense forests, preferring open plains instead. The place where Stanley said the "atti" lived was in the Congo rain forest, not far to the west of Sir Harry's Uganda post. So, the British officer took the occasion of a

Early 1920s Barnes ads like this claimed as an okapi an animal that in truth was nothing but a donkey-zebra hybrid. Joe Bradbury collection.

AL G. BARNES' BIG 4
WILD ANIMAL CIRCUS RING

EVERY ACT AN ANIMAL ACT—EVERY ANIMAL AN ACTOR

30 AL G. BARNES' \$50,000 CHALLENGE GROUP 30
LIONS IN ONE BIG ACT 30
THE ONLY REAL WILD ANIMAL CIRCUS IN AMERICA

Performing Lions, Tigers, Leopards, Jaguars, Pumas, Bunnies, Shrikes, Grackles and Polar Bears, Elephants, Camels, Zebras, Hippos, Yaks, Zebras, Zebras, Giraffes, Dogs, Monkeys.

20 The Most Amazing Animal Act Ever! Full of Lion, Tiger, Leopard, Jaguar, Puma, Bear, Elephant, Camel, Zebra, Hippo, Yak, Zebra, Zebras, Giraffes, Dogs, Monkeys, including KILLER IN THE WILDING! 20

LOTUS SEE THE ONLY OKAPI IN CAPTIVITY

40 AN EQUESTRIAN ACT SUPREME! 40
DANCING HORSES—DANCING GIRLS 40

THE ONLY EDUCATED ZEBRA IN THE WORLD SEE THE AWAY-GOING SAMSON

WE BARNES OFFERS AS AN ATTRACTION FOR THE WORLD A MOST NOVEL, SPECTACULAR AND ENTERTAINING GIGANTEOUS TRAPDOOR OF UNUSUAL PRESENTATION

THE FAIRYLAND FANTASY
HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE
MAGNIFICENT OF HORSES
CANTERLAND ANIMALS

ALICE IN JUNGLELAND

20th Ave. 1 and 2 P.M. PERFORMANCES 1 and 2 P.M. STREET PARADE 10:30 A.M. & 4 P.M.

visit to the neighboring Belgian colony to make inquiries. He learned to his surprise that natives, as well as local colonial officials, were very familiar with an animal they called "O-api," the pronunciation being somewhat like the "atti" of Stanley's book.³ From all that appears, the few Europeans in the area assumed, albeit erroneously, that the beast was known to science as well.

During 1900, Johnston obtained two strips of skin said to have been taken from one of these forest dwelling animals. Noticing their peculiar striping and color, the persistent Englishman dispatched them to the Zoological Society of London, suggesting that if they were from a zebra, it was certainly not any of the known types. The Zoological Society was impressed and, based on the two skin pieces, provisionally identified the animal as a previously unknown type of zebra. But, the big shock came the next year when the British Museum received from Sir Harry a complete skin and two skulls. Expert analysis of the latter settled it. The animal was not a member of the horse tribe at all but a totally new critter whose nearest relative was the giraffe. On November 19, 1901 this "new" animal was officially assigned its formal Latin label "Okapia johnstoni", the first name from the native dialect and the last for Sir Harry.⁴

The okapi's habitat was thought to be very limited, consisting of a narrow strip, perhaps 700 miles long east to west and 140 miles wide north to south. This narrow band lies north of the mighty Congo River in the heart of the jungle, including the dense Ituri rain forest. Efforts to obtain living okapis were soon underway. A collecting expedition to the Congo, sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History and lasting from 1909 to 1915, actually succeeded in obtaining a newborn example which it hoped to send to the Bronx Zoo in New York. Alas, the captors were ill equipped for its care, and it died after only a few days. However, the expedition did return with some delightful photographs of the beautiful baby, which must have excited those in the animal trade.⁵

In 1915, just as the American expedition was heading home, another calf was captured and brought to the Belgian colonial outpost at Buta, northwest of Stanleyville. This youngster was placed in the care of the residing commissioner's wife. She raised it on the bottle, and it became the village pet, wandering about at will, ever foraging on its own in the surrounding jungle. This animal was kept with a view toward sending it home to Belgium and permanent residence in the Antwerp Zoo. However, World War I then held Europe in

turmoil, and the western world would have to await its termination before seeing a living okapi. In due course, however, the good lady of Buta did ship her charge to Belgium. The now fully grown okapi arrived at the Antwerp Zoo on August 9, 1919, the first specimen ever seen alive outside its native haunts.⁶

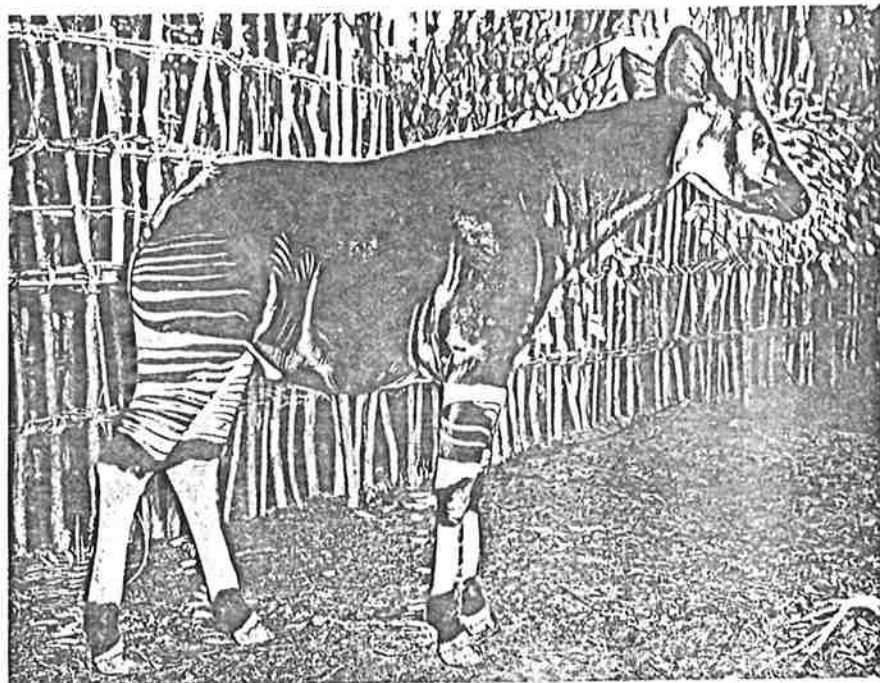
Unfortunately, the first zoo okapi was not seen by many, for it lived less than two months.⁷ Okapis are prone to severe infestation by intestinal parasites which proliferate when the animals are confined in shipping crates during long ocean voyages. This problem caused the early deaths of several of the first examples to arrive in Europe.⁸

Nine years were to pass before the next okapis came out of Africa. This time, 1928, there were two of them. One, a male, was supposed to go to the London Zoo but never got there, dying after only 13 days in Antwerp quarantine. The other, a female, went into the Antwerp Zoo and was the first to be successfully maintained. She lived there 15 years.⁹

The pace of importation now picked up, but the animals did not survive. Males arrived in Antwerp in 1931, 1932, and 1935 but were short lived, dying either in quarantine or after a short time at the Antwerp Zoo. The London Zoo finally got an okapi, a male in 1935, but it too succumbed in short order from problems caused by heavy parasite infection.¹⁰ Then on July 20, 1937, the S.S. *Thysville* arrived at the port of Antwerp from the Congo bringing a shipment of three okapis.¹¹ These, like most others from the pre-war years were obtained from Brother Joseph Hutsebaut of the Premonstratensian Order, which operated a Roman Catholic mission in the village of Buta. Brother Joseph was an accomplished naturalist to whom came such okapis as were captured in the neighboring jungle.¹²

Of the okapis in the 1937 shipment, two were for European zoos (again London and Antwerp) but the third would become the very first example ever seen alive in America. This animal, a beautiful male appropriately named "Congo," arrived at the New York Zoological Park (Bronx Zoo) on August 2, 1937. Typical of the species, he proved to be docile and gentle. Unlike some of the others, however, "Congo" was very healthy.¹³ This was fortunate, for he was America's only okapi until well after World War II.

Your writer saw "Congo" in New York in August, 1947. At that time, the Bronx Zoo had on display an impressive array of great rarities, including gorillas, giant panda, snow leopard, Indian rhino, bongo antelope, and platypus. None impressed me more, however, than the beautiful, velvety "Congo." Knowing he was America's only okapi, he was at the top of my "must see" list. But, I almost missed him. The day we were there he was inside the antelope house, and the building had a "Closed" sign posted. Luckily, the door was not locked, and I with my family slipped quickly inside. There he was, facing us, standing motionless in his stall, head



"Aribi" (also spelled "Arabi") Ringling-Barnum's male okapi at Epulu, Belgian Congo. Photo probably taken in late 1954. Richard Reynolds collection.

extended, dreamy liquid eyes watching the strangers he knew should not be there. What a thrill it was to see an animal that had not even been discovered 50 years earlier!

Europe torn by World War II and its aftermath meant that no okapis left the Belgian Congo between 1939 and 1948 save an ill-fated animal that died en route to America in 1941. During this time, however, twenty okapis were captured and lived, for varying periods, at zoos in Stanleyville (Kisangani) or Leopoldville (Kinshasa) without ever being exported.¹⁴ With the western world finally recovering from the war, and improvements being made in the care and transportation of animals, okapis would again be leaving the Congo, this time in ever increasing numbers. The Belgian government decided to improve the knowledge of these animals, studying their ecology and biological requirements, breeding them, and controlling their capture and export. So, in 1946, an acclimatization station was installed at Epulu, in the Ituri forest northeast of Stanleyville. Between the end of the war and 1958 more than 100 okapis were captured, evidence that the animal was, at least in those days, fairly plentiful despite its very restricted range.¹⁵ And, now to the circus okapis.

During 1954, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus decided that for the following season it would improve and enlarge its menagerie. Beginning with 1951 the big show had done away with the separate menagerie tent. Instead, the animal display had been crowded into one end of the big top.¹⁶ This arrangement had not proven satisfactory. The sounds of the ani-

mals and the tearing down operations (during a final evening show) were distracting to patrons.¹⁷ It was decided that for 1955 they would go back to the separate menagerie tent per the tradition of 1950 and earlier years.

The size of the traveling elephant herd was increased from 27 in 1954 to 52 in 1955, including the purchase of a small male African elephant who would grow into the mighty "Diamond," rivaling "Jumbo" in size and siring the first African elephant calves ever born in the new world (at the Knoxville Zoo). A new Nile hippo was obtained as were pairs of African black rhinos and Grevy zebras. All of these toured in 1955 except the zebra which were not delivered until the show returned to quarters and had to await 1956 before going on the road.¹⁸

To obtain new attractions for the 1955 show, Henry Ringling North dispatched his agent, McCormick Porter Steele, to Africa.¹⁹ He was to bring back the biggest male forest elephant he could locate, to secure a group of native tribesmen, apparently for an ethnological exhibit,²⁰ to purchase some rhinos and hippos, and of significance to this paper, to obtain for the Ringling-Barnum menagerie none other than the rare okapi.²¹

Steele departed for Africa in early summer 1954. Scouting about, he located several big forest elephants but could never secure one of them.²² Trying for both big-lipped Ubangis and Ituri pygmies, he failed there too, which may have been just as well given the emerging social consciousness of the mid-1950s.²³ However, he succeeded in obtaining the rhinos and a hippo. And, he got the okapi.²⁴ Steele went to Epulu in the Ituri forest, and was received by the Captain Jean de Medina, manager of the now famed okapi station. Arrangements were made, and Steele purchased for the circus a four year old male

that had been captured on March 31, 1954 and was named "Aribi," also spelled "Arabi."²⁵ The Greatest Show On Earth was now the owner of probably the rarest animal in its history. At that time, there was but one other okapi in America, the Bronx Zoo's second specimen.²⁶

The Ringling okapi was flown by Sabena Belgian World Airlines direct from Stanleyville in the Congo to Europe and quarantine in Hamburg. From there it was flown to America²⁷ and a second stage of quarantine at the U.S. Dept of Agriculture's station at Clifton, New Jersey.²⁸ It was there that problems arose. But, let me divert for a moment.

During the winter of 1954-55, *Billboard* was full of news about Ringling-Barnum's coming okapi.²⁹ By the spring of 1955, your writer was regularly visiting a retired trouper living in Atlanta named E. W. Adams. "Old Man Adams," as fellow circus historian Joe Bradbury and I called him, lived in a small house on the back of a homeowner's lot. There he stayed amid relics of circuses long gone, among which was an unbelievable collection of newspaper ads and clippings. I was the neophyte, he the veteran. I was naturally excited about the prospect of the okapi for Ringling-Barnum's 1955 menagerie. I told the old man what a novel attraction it would be. He was not impressed. Pronouncing the animal's name "Oh-key-pie," he stated: "That ain't nothing new, Al G. Barnes had an Oh-key-pie in the 1920s." I begged to differ. Adams wheeled and went to one of his old trunks, lifted the lid, thrashed around, and produced an ad for the '23 Barnes show which, sure enough, claimed "The Only Living Okapi In Captivity" with a reasonable drawing of the beast [see accompanying illustration].³⁰ I just knew that could not be correct. A living okapi in America in 1923 would have

been far more celebrated than an obscure clipping in Adams' old trunk.

Joe Bradbury became interested. He consulted the expert, the late Col. William Woodcock, Sr., who probably knew more about circus animals of the 1920s than anyone. Bradbury's question, "Did Al G. Barnes have an okapi in the 1920s?," brought a humorous response. The Colonel said that Barnes no more had an okapi than did the early 1920s Christy Bros. Circus have a "Baby Pterodactyl," which a painting on the cover boards of one of its cage wagons proclaimed. The Colonel sardonically remarked that the famous flying reptile had been extinct for millions of years.

News of the arrival in Antwerp of the first living okapi was widely reported. This no doubt caught Al G. Barnes' eye. Ever alert for new animal features, Barnes obtained, in February, 1920, a donkey-zebra hybrid which he decided to exhibit as an okapi. The faint body stripes of the hybrid lent a modicum of authenticity to the claim. After all, had not the experts first thought the okapi to be a forest dwelling zebra?³¹ The Barnes Circus continued to advertise the "okapi" for several seasons.³² It was not the real thing. The first circus okapi was "Aribi" sent out of the Belgian Congo for the Ringling Show in 1955.

On February 27, 1955 *New Yorkers* opened their Sunday *Times* to find a half page ad proclaiming the forthcoming March 30th opening of the Greatest Show On Earth in Madison Square Garden. Featured and pictured was "... the rare African OKAPI strange blend of giraffe and zebra never before taken on tour." A

Unidentified man (Howrad Y. Bary?) and okapi in corral at the Epulu Station, Circus Gallery, John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.



similar ad appeared the following Sunday, and the March 5th *Billboard* said the animal was expected to arrive in America shortly.³³ At that time, your writer was concluding the winter quarter at Emory University and was looking forward to "spring break" in Bradenton, Florida and the nearby circus winter quarters. I had seen both the *Times* ad and *Billboard* announcement and hoped I might see the okapi in Florida, though I suspected it would not be received until the circus got to New York for the Garden date. I visited the winter quarters on March 13th. The okapi was not there, and none of the show folks I talked to seemed to know much about it, except that it was supposed to eventually join the show. I remember wondering how the rarity would be transported and exhibited. The giraffe wagon method comes to mind, but I cannot now say whether that was my own notion or whether I picked it up from a circus employee in Sarasota. *Billboard* for March 12, 1955 said that a cage for the okapi would be one of four new ones in the menagerie, but I saw no evidence of it at the winter quarters.

Despite the uncertainty sensed in Sarasota, Ringling-Barnum's press department was counting on the okapi. It was emphasized by the above mentioned *New York* ads, and the 1955 program was already at the printer featuring "African Jungle Freak," a story by McCormick Steele about "Aribi," the Ringling okapi.³⁴ Alas, those looking for it in the menagerie would not find it, not at the *New York* stand nor anywhere else, for applicable law and regulations prevented its being transported by the circus.

As a cloven hoofed ruminant (giraffe, camel, deer, cattle, goat, sheep, and antelope families) the okapi could transmit hoof and mouth disease and rinderpest. Federal law and Department of Agriculture regulations prohibit the importation of such animals except under strict conditions involving extensive quarantine, after which they can be released only to permanent facilities that pass rigid tests.³⁵ Well managed zoos could qualify but not a traveling exhibit like a circus. This is still the case. Ringling-Barnum tried mightily to obtain a certificate for the release of its okapi, and the 1955 route book even held out hope for "next year."³⁶ However, the Agriculture Department would not budge.³⁷

Henry Ringling North was a friend of Robert Bean, Director of Chicago's Brookfield Zoo. It was qualified to receive and exhibit imported wild ruminants. When it became obvious that the circus could not exhibit "Aribi" in 1955, North arranged to loan him indefinitely to the Brookfield Zoo.³⁸ The okapi arrived there on August 13, 1955.³⁹

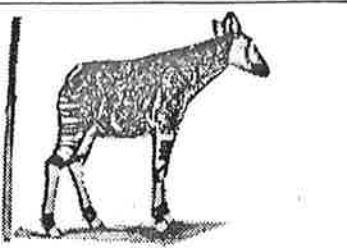
Having obtained "Aribi," the Brookfield Zoo looked for a mate. On November 2, 1956 they got a female named "Museka."⁴⁰ Ralph Graham, the Assistant Director at Brookfield, told your writer that an agreement was reached whereby "Aribi" would

THE PALACCIOS, SABREJETS AND FALCONS—WORLD-FAMOUS FLYING QUARTETTES AND THEIR AERIAL ARTISTRY.

See the rare African OKAPI strange blend of giraffe and zebra never before taken on tour. Mrs. Gargantua the Great and the famous young gorillas, Gargantua the Second & Mlle. Toto and other rare wild animals in the

WORLD'S LARGEST TRAVELING MENAGERIE

Amazing New Congress of Freaks



continue to stay at the zoo and the first offspring of "Aribi" and "Museka," if any, would go to the circus. This would be possible because the prohibition against a circus' having cloven-hoofed ruminants applies, then as now, *only to imported animals*. Those born here can go to circuses. That is how they now exhibit giraffes, camels, and llamas. While all this was transpiring, the Ringling-Barnum show discontinued its traveling animal exhibit. Hence, whatever happened, it was no longer possible for an okapi to be a Ringling menagerie feature in the traditional sense.

The first okapi bred and born in captivity came into the world on April 19, 1941 at the Stanleyville Zoo, Belgian Congo, but it lived only four and a half months.⁴¹ The western world was then preoccupied with the great war, and this blessed event, significant though it was, went largely unnoticed. The keeping of healthy, compatible pairs of okapis in the west did not commence until after the war, but by the mid-1950s it was apparent that the okapis would soon be established as breeding zoo animals. A female impregnated at the Antwerp Zoo had produced a premature fetus in January 1953. A second calf was born to the same female in 1954, but she unfortunately trampled the youngster to death. The same thing happened again in 1956. Finally, on June 6, 1957, the first okapi to be bred and successfully reared in a zoo came into the

Ringling's "Aribi" at U.S.D.A. quarantine station, Clifton, New Jersey, summer 1955. Reprinted from the *Saturday Evening Post*, c. 1955, The Curtis Publishing Co.



Ringling's okapi was featured in the lead-off ad for the 1955 New York date. Richard Reynolds collection.

world at the Parc Zoologique du Bois de Vincennes, Paris.⁴² Back at Brookfield, Ringling's "Aribi" was introduced to "Museka." After a number of matings, the female was impregnated and following a gestation period of approximately 13 months, gave birth to a healthy male, on September 17, 1959, the first such blessed event in America. The youngster was given the name "Mister I" (later changed to "Mister G").⁴³ On March 1, 1960, your writer made his first visit ever to the Brookfield Zoo. The ground was covered with snow and visitors were almost nonexistent. In the giraffe house I was able to gaze upon the happy family, featuring the only circus-owned okapis.

Ringling-Barnum was, by 1960, exhibiting a menagerie only at Madison Square Garden during the long New York engagement. They decided they wanted the baby okapi in New York. On March 28, 1960 "Mister G" left the zoo for the circus.⁴⁴ Ringling-Barnum vet Dr. William Y. Higgins was then in charge of its animals. He told your author (in litt), that the okapi was flown from Chicago to New York accompanied by Zoo Director Bean and several attendants. The animal was exhibited in a corral erected on the floor of the exhibit area.⁴⁵ Dr. Higgins said that for a while there was no proper identification on the pen. Then, Jimmy Ringling had an adequate sign painted. Dr. Higgins was very concerned about crating the okapi for shipment at the end of the New York date. He was afraid something would go wrong in all the excitement. However, the youngster walked into its box with no trouble at all. A trucking concern picked up the okapi and took it to its next location.⁴⁶

At the end of the 1960 Garden date, the Ringling menagerie animals did not go back to the Pawtucket, Rhode Island Zoo where they had previously been loaned.⁴⁷ Instead, they seem to have been sent to Bob Dietch's Kiddie Zoo at Fair Lawn, New Jersey.⁴⁸ Whether the okapi went there directly following the New York date is unknown to me because later in the summer "Mister G," together with two Ringling-Barnum giraffes and the hippo "Chester," turned up on loan at Zoorama, a tourist attraction at New Market, Virginia, operated by Rider Animal Co.⁴⁹ This zoo was in the Shanandoah Valley near Luray Caverns. Circus historian Don, Francis told me that he visited it in September, 1960 and saw the Ringling okapi.

Zoorama appears to have been open only during the summer season, and for the winter of 1960-61, the okapi and giraffes were sent to Dietch's zoo in Fair Lawn.

During the spring of 1961, the okapi made its second appearance with the big show's Madison Square Garden menagerie, at the conclusion of which it went back again to Dietch's place.⁵⁰ William Elbirn then visited Fair Lawn and took the picture shown here.⁵¹ Whether it spent part of that summer in Virginia your writer cannot say, although the proprietor of Zoorama, Mr. Rider, said (in litt), that he had the okapi for "two seasons." Be that it may, however, it was with Dietch for the winter of 1961-62.

In a 1967 conversation with your writer, Mr. Dietch said that he brought "Mister G" to Madison Square Garden for Ringling-Barnum's 1962 spring engagement. There was a long delay in unloading the animal. This concerned Mr. Dietch as the okapi was becoming highly agitated. When the okapi finally stepped from the crate, it dropped dead. On April 3, 1962, its remains were delivered to the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, and assigned catalogue no. 188304.⁵² "Mister G's" demise closed the book on the exhibition of okapis by circuses.⁵³ But, the story does not end here.

Ringling-Barnum still owned "Aribi." When Robert Bean retired as Brookfield Zoo Director, Henry Ringling North had the animal sent to Busch Gardens at Tampa, Florida.⁵⁴ That was in April, 1966, and "Aribi" then became a feature of the popular Florida attraction, though still owned by the circus.⁵⁵ Finally, in August, 1974, C. P. Fox, who was then working for the Ringling organization, arranged a trade under which Busch Gardens got title to the old okapi; and the circus got a young giraffe that had been born at the beer garden.⁵⁶ "Aribi" lived at Busch until his death on August 17, 1978, setting a near record captive life for the species of 24 years, 4 months, and 18 days.⁵⁷

Will there be more circus okapis? Not likely! The Belgian government withdrew from the Congo in 1960 leaving a new nation, now known as Zaire. Independence brought turmoil and civil war which lasted for years. There were many okapis at Epulu when the fighting started, and it is thought that most were slaughtered.⁵⁸ Westerners were excluded from the area, and the future of the animal in its native land seemed bleak indeed. In time, however, the government stabilized, and the Epulu okapi station was reopened.

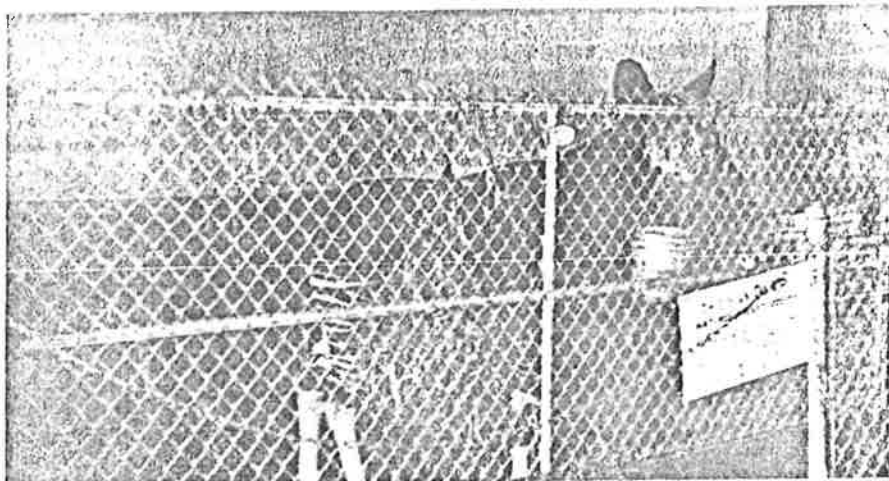
Since 1970, a few okapis have actually been sent out of Zaire,⁵⁹ only one of which, however, has come to America, a female that arrived at the Cincinnati Zoo on October 15, 1986.⁶⁰ This animal was acquired through the dealer Mark Smith who invested a huge sum and spent several years working on the project.⁶¹ Given the high cost and difficulty in bringing new animals out of Africa, zoo professionals generally agree that if okapis are to continue as zoo exhibits, it will only be

through successful propagation of animals already in captivity. As of February 18, 1987, there were said to be 71 okapis in zoos throughout the world, of which 22 were living in the United States.⁶² They are being carefully maintained, and it is highly unlikely that one of them could be made available to a circus.

With fond memories of both "Aribi" and his offspring "Mister G," we close the story of the only circus okapis.

Footnotes

1. Bernard Heuvelmans, *On The Track of Unknown Animals* (New York: Hill and Wang 1959), p. 38.
2. Dr. David Macdonald (Ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Mammals* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1984) p. 534.
3. William Bridges, "An Okapi Comes To The Zoological Park," *Bulletin*, New York Zoological Society, XL, 5 (Sept.-Oct., 1937), p. 135 at 136. Also see Sir Harry Johnston "The Okapi" included in *Animals of the World* (Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., 1947) pp. 241-244.
4. Bridges, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-139.
5. Herbert Lang, "In Quest of the Rare Okapi," *Bulletin* New York Zoological Society, XXI, 3 (May, 1918), pp. 1601-1613.
6. Bridges, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-142. Bridges gives August 10 as the arrival date, but Antwerp Zoo records show August 9, 1919 as the date.
7. Bent Jorgensen, "The Story of the Okapils in Zoos," *International Zoo News* (Zeist, Holland: Zoo-Centrum) VI, 3 (May-Sep., 1959) p. 52.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 53; Bridges, *op. cit.*, p. 143; and James Fisher, *Zoos of the World—The Story Of Animals In Captivity* (Garden City, N.Y.: The Natural History Press, 1967), pp. 197-198.
9. Marvin L. Jones, "The Okapi (Okapi johnstoni) In Captivity" (San Diego: unpublished manuscript, 1977). Mr. Jones is registrar for the San Diego Zoo. His paper rationalizes into a single list all the captive okapis identified in the studbook kept by the Antwerp Zoo and in the *Bulletin* of the former Congo Forestry Department.
10. *Ibid.* Also see Bridges, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
11. Bridges, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
12. William Bridges, "A Visit To Brother Joseph," *Animal Kingdom* (New York Zoological Society) L, 2, pp. 37-44.
13. Bridges, "An Okapi Comes To The Zoological Park," p. 135 and 143-146.
14. Jones, *op. cit.*
15. Lee S. Crandall, *The Management of Wild Mammals In Captivity* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1964) p. 619. Also see Jorgensen *op. cit.* (p. 53).
16. *Billboard*, March 27, 1954, pp. 1 and 44.
17. See, for example, *Billboard*, June 2, 1951, p. 47 reporting that difficulty in loading a giraffe during menagerie teardown distracted the Washington, D.C. audience in that end of the big top. From personal observation (Atlanta, 1954), your author can attest that the menagerie teardown diverted attention from the show.
18. *Billboard*, June 18, 1955, p. 58. Additionally, the writer made detailed lists of animals in the Ringling-Barnum menagerie in Atlanta in 1954 and 1955. The arrivals of the new animals in 1955 were further described by menagerie Supt. C. R. Montgomery and show vet Dr. Wm. Y. Higgins in 1966 conversations with the author. Also see C. P. Fox, *A Ticket To The Circus* (Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1959) p. 128 with a copy of April 3, 1955 letter from Henry R. North to F. J. Zeehandelaar confirming order for animals including the Grevy Zebras and small male African elephant that would turn out to be "Diamond."
19. Henry Ringling North, in litt, April 22, 1967.
20. *Billboard*, Nov. 13, 1954, p. 118.
21. *Billboard*, Dec. 25, 1954, p. 50.
22. *Ibid.* Also see *Billboard*, November 13, 1954, p. 116 and January 29, 1955, p. 78.
23. *Ibid.* Also, North *op. cit.*
24. North, *op. cit.* and *Billboard* December 25, 1954, p. 50
25. McCormick Steele "African Jungle Freak" in *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Magazine & Program*, 1955 Edition, pp. 13 and 66. Also see Jones, *op. cit.*
26. Male "Bilota" came to the Bronx in 1949. "Congo" the Zoo's first one died in 1952. See: Jones, *op. cit.*
27. Steele, *op. cit.* and *Billboard*, March 5, 1955, p. 52.
28. Bill Wolf "Uncle Sam's Ark" *Saturday Evening Post* (Philadelphia: Curtis Publishing Company) Vol. 228, No. 23, Dec. 3, 1955 p. 31. The Ringling okapi is pictured at the Clifton, N.J. quarantine station but is not identified as the circus animal. See accompanying illustration.
29. See above *Billboard* references.
30. This ad is one and the same as that shown me in 1955 by Adams Joe Bradbury obtained it from the old man's estate.
31. Chang Reynolds "The Al G. Barnes' Big Four-Ring Wild Animal Circus—Seasons of 1919 and 1920," *Bandwagon* XXVIII, 2 (Mar.-Apr. 1984) p. 11.
32. Chang Reynolds "Al G. Barnes' Big Four-Ring Wild Animal Circus—1921 Season," *Bandwagon* XXVIII, 5 (Sept.-Oct., 1984) p. 5.
33. *New York Times* March 6, 1955, p. 2x.
34. Steele, *op. cit.*
35. This regulation is mentioned in *Billboard* June 4, 1955, p. 58, but the story erroneously says the Ringling okapi was in quarantine at the National Zoo, Washington, D.C. when in fact it was at U.S.D.A.'s Clifton, N.J. farm.
36. Anonymous "Nature's Oddest Oddity," *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows—Route, Personnel and Statistics for the Season of 1955* (Sarasota: R.B..B.B., 1955) p. 100.
37. *Billboard*, March 10, 1958, p. 63.
38. North, *op. cit.* Also see *Billboard* Aug. 27, 1955, p. 82.
39. Robert Bean "America's First Okapi Baby," *International Zoo News* (Zeist, Holland: Zoo-Centrum), VI, 4 (Oct. Dec. 1959) p. 137.
40. *Ibid.*
41. Jones *op. cit.*
42. Crandall, *op. cit.* pp. 620-621.
43. Bean, *op. cit.* Also Sandra Kruczek, Chicago Zoological Park, in litt, Feb. 26, 1969.
44. Kruczek, *op. cit.* Also see Tom Parkinson in *Billboard*, April 25, 1960, p. 166.
45. Circus historian Albert House of Oakland, N.J. told the writer that he saw the okapi displayed at Madison Square Garden and that it did not do justice to such a great circus rarity. The animal was shown in a crudely constructed corral made of rough wide boards akin to a livestock holding pen with the result that visitors had to peek through the slats to see the okapi.
46. Dr. William Y. Higgins, in litt, January 25 and February 3, 1968.
47. Anonymous, "Ringling Animals To Remain Near New York," *The White Tops*, XXXI, 3 (May-June, 1958), p. 18.
48. Conversation with Bob Dietch May 1, 1967.
49. *Billboard* August 15, 1960, p. 50 and V. D. Rider, Jr., in litt, May 9, 1967.



Ringling's second okapi, "Mister G," born at Brookfield Zoo and shown here in 1961 at Bob Dietch's Kiddie Zoo, Fair Lawn, New Jersey. William Elbirn photo.

50. William L. Elbirn "Operation Followup" *Bandwagon* V, 3 (May-June, 1961), p. 22 and "Operation Followup Part Two, R-B 1961 Menagerie" *Bandwagon* V, 5 (Sept.-Nov., 1961) p. 12.
51. William L. Elbirn, in litt, June 15, 1969.
52. Richard G. VanGelder, American Museum of Natural History, in litt, March 24, 1967.
53. The okapi studbook lists a wild born male (No. 138) named "Manvu," that arrived at the Leopoldville Zoo on August 31, 1959 and was said to have been sent to the Ringling circus in March 1962. Marvin Jones and the writer believe the circus part of this statement is incorrect because we have no corroborating evidence of any okapi being sent to America in 1962. Further, U.S.D.A. regulations would not have allowed Ringling Circus to exhibit an imported specimen.
54. North, *op. cit.*
55. Jones, *op. cit.*
56. C. P. Fox, in litt, April 10, 1983.
57. G. Lentz "Longevity Record Set For Okapi" *Newsletter*, American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums, XIX, 12 (Dec., 1978) p. 12.
58. Jones, *op. cit.*
59. *Ibid.*
60. Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp "Okapi—Current Population As Of February 18, 1987," printout from okapi studbook.
61. Marvin Jones, conversation, March 23, 1987.
62. Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp, *op. cit.*

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THE NATIVE SAVINGS BANK STAMP.

In Bulletin No. 60, we showed a copy of this stamp, together with all available details of its physical characteristics, and asked if any member could provide further information. At the time, no such information could be found. However, due to the extreme trouble taken by Mr. André Coine - a friend of Mr. Cooremans - who is not even a stamp collector himself, it appears that we have made some real progress on this query. Our most grateful thanks are due to Mr. Coine, whose letter to Mr Cooremans is reproduced below (translated from the Flemish - any blame for faults in translation must rest with our Secretary).

"Recently I had brought to my attention the existence of an extensive collection of documentation relating to our former colony. This consists of a large quantity of books and magazines and a considerable accumulation of photographs and negatives on plates. All this was kept in rooms of the Belgian Colonial Union in Stassartstraat, Brussels, and its existence is only known to insiders, although even they have been unaware of the actual contents. In fact, owing to shortage of help, it had not been possible to classify the collection.

As a result of having to move from Stassartstraat, the photographic material was removed to Antwerp (to the Photographic Museum, Sterckshof, Deurne), where it was submitted to a systematic inspection. I vaguely remember reading something about this in 'De Standaard'.

An old ex-colonial colleague, Mr. Roger Gallant, pointed out to me that the books and magazines concerned had been removed to the regimental museum of the 1st. Lancers in Namur, where an inventory was made and the collection was classified under the title "Musée Africain de Namur, a.s.B.1."

I wrote to the curator of this museum and asked if anything had been found among the documents which pertained to the Belgian Congo; this was in the hope that there would be some information about the 1 franc stamp Mr. Foden had written of. Indeed, I now think I have found the solution.

I received a letter from Mr. R. Pire, a retired colonel, who wrote on behalf of the Musée Africain de Namur. He informed me that he had been able to find an order dated 24 March, 1915, signed at Boma by the Governor General F. Fuchs, and entitled:-

'Ordonnance du 24 mars 1915, No58/s.g., portant création d'une caisse d'épargne pour les indigènes sous la garantie de l'Etat.

Verordening van 24 maart 1915, Nr58/a.s., tot instelling van een spaarkas voor de inboorlingen onder waarborg van den Staat.'

Article 5 of the order reads as follows:-

'Tout gestionnaire du service de Caisse d'Epargne tient un registre de justification des timbres-acquits qui sont d'une valeur uniforme de un franc et qui doivent être collés aux livrets sur les cases appropriées à cet effet jusqu'à concurrence du versement effectué. Ces acquits sont estampillés dès leur apposition sur le livret au moyen d'un timbre à date.

En cas de prélèvement sur dépôt, il est enlevé du livret le nombre de timbres-acquits correspondant au retrait effectué et un cachet à date est appliqué au verso des timbres-acquits qui tiennent lieu de titres valent espèces dans la caisse du gestionnaire de la Caisse d'Epargne.

Ieder beheerder van den Spaarkasdienst houdt een bewijsregister voor de post zegels-kwijtingen die eene gelijkvormige waarde van een frank hebben en die in de boekjes op de daartoe geeigende ruiten moeten geplakt worden tot beloop der gedane storting. Deze kwijtingen worden aanstonds na hun aanhechting op het boekje met eenen dagstempel gestempeld.

In geval er van de bewaargeving voorafgenoemen wordt, ontnemt men aan het boekje het getal postzegels-kwijtingen overeenstemmend met de gedane voorafneming en een dagstempel wordt geplaatst op de keerzijde der postzegels-kwijtingen die als bewijzen met muntwaards dienen in de kas van den beheerder der Spaarkas.'

Order No.58 of 24 March 1915 for the creation of a savings bank for natives under State guarantee.

Article 5.

'Every manager of a savings bank must maintain a register of receipts in respect of sales of savings bank stamps, which have a uniform value of one franc. These must be affixed to a receipt book and cancelled by a date stamp.

In a case of a handover of responsibility, a check must be made of the total of the receipts as shown in the book, and a datestamp applied to the reverse of the stamps held, as proof that the monetary value is in the charge of the administrator of the Savings Bank.'

Colonel Pire added 'it is possible, even probable, in our opinion, that the design of the stamp varied between 1915 and 1950 and that other stamps exist which performed the same function. However, the face value remained at 1 franc. This is confirmed in that the wording of the 1915 Order about this is still repeated in the 1948 edition of the "Codes et Lois du Congo Belge". (I was not aware of this, but will follow it up).

I am convinced that this is the solution to the problem. Could you report it to the Belgian Congo Study Circle?

What is of great importance is that it is now clear that the Order relates to an adhesive stamp like a postage stamp, which was not known before. The Flemish text makes this clear, whereas the French text simply uses the vague expression 'timbre-acquit'. This may be worth some discussion, but the Flemish text is official thus.

If I go to Namur, I will search for any further traces of the Savings Bank Service. In any case, it seems from the text of the Order that the officials of the Post Office and Savings Bank worked in co-operation under the control of the Director of Finance (Article 2). The Savings Bank Service commenced operations on 1 October, 1915 (Article 8)."

BELGIAN CONGO AIR MAILS 1925-1935PETER FODEM

This note describes a display given at the Solihull Meeting, May 1987, which covered what I would term the "middle period" of Belgian Congo air mail. The "early period" was from early-1920 to mid-1922, when there was an internal only air service, the Congolese "Ligne Aerienne Roi Albert"- not to be confused with the Belgian version - which carried mail by way of flying boats up and down the Congo River itself between Kinshasa and Stanleyville, while the "late period" commenced in 1935 with the start of regular Sabena services between Belgium and the Congo.

The "middle period" was one of extensive development of internal air services in the Congo, but these were not the main subject of the display, which concentrated on commercial mail carried by air between the Congo and Europe. (As in the "early period", commercial internal covers appear to have a very low survival rate, insufficient to give much assistance in establishing air mail tariffs). From June, 1925, there was a French air service, Dakar (Senegal) - Casablanca - Toulouse, which became much used for mail to Europe from the Congo, starting with a steamer trip from Léopoldville to Dakar. Covers are known dated 4 July, 1925, although the earliest I have seen are from late-October, 1925. Until 1931, this was the only route by which a regular air mail service between the Congo and Europe existed, although quite substantial quantities of mail, virtually all philatelic in nature, were carried on a succession of "raids" and proving flights; again, these add little information on tariffs, which seem to have been set separately for each such flight.

The emphasis on air mail tariffs, which for external mail from the Belgian Congo were always a special surtax over and above the standard surface mail rate until 1951, is the interest underlying the building up of an extensive collection of commercial air mail covers (unfortunately including many items in deplorable condition - there must be a corollary of Murphy's Law which says that the more interesting a cover is, the worse its condition). From the early 1920's, Congo postage rates are relatively unknown and scarcely studied. A few Belgian Government Decrees have so far been unearthed, but I have been unable to find any continuity as regards postal rates in the Congo; at best, the Decrees afford snapshots at points in time to confirm information gleaned from the study of large numbers of covers and, while these quantities are probably sufficiently great to provide a reasonably complete picture of the basic surface mail rates for the period, commercially flown covers are less common. Also, in later years, the air mail surtax was applied per 5 gm. increment, compared to the 20 gm increment for surface letters, so that there is a much greater chance of differential air mail rating within the normal surface letter band. The extent to which this is also true of the 1925-35 period is one area which still requires further study. Captain M. Stern suggests that, in 1929, the air mail

surtax was per ½ ounce, but other evidence shows this to be highly unlikely.

As a starting point, it is worth showing the basic surface rates in operation between 1925 and 1935, bearing in mind that some of the dates of change may not be precisely correct.

A. Internal Mail.

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Postcard</u>	<u>Letter</u>	
		<u>1st 20gm.</u>	<u>per 20gm.+</u>
1924 - 31/3/26	0,30fr	0,50fr	?
1/4/26 - 31/1/27	0,45fr	0,75fr	?
1/2/27 - 30/4/27	0,45fr	1,00fr	0,60fr
1/5/27 - 30/11/30	0,60fr	1,00fr	0,60fr
1/12/30 - 1936	0,60fr	1,25fr	0,75fr

B. TO BELGIUM.

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Postcard</u>	<u>Letter</u>	
		<u>1st 20gm.</u>	<u>per 20gm.+</u>
1924 - 31/3/26	0,30fr	0,50fr	?
1/4/26 - 31/1/27	0,45fr	0,75fr	?
1/2/27 - 30/4/27	0,45fr	1,00fr	0,60fr
1/5/27 - 30/11/30	0,60fr	1,00fr	0,60fr
1/12/30 - 31/1/34	0,60fr	1,25fr	0,75fr
1/2/34 - 1936	0,75fr	1,50fr	0,90fr

C. TO OTHER COUNTRIES.

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Postcard</u>	<u>Letter</u>	
		<u>1st 20gm.</u>	<u>per 20gm.+</u>
1924 - 31/3/26	0,45fr	0,75fr	?
1/4/26 - 30/9/26	0,60fr	1,00fr	?
1/10/26 - 31/1/27	0,60fr	1,25fr	?
1/2/27 - 30/4/27	0,60fr	1,50fr	?
1/5/27 - 30/11/30	1,00fr	1,75fr	1,00fr
1/12/30 - 31/1/34	1,25fr	2,00fr	1,25fr
1/2/24 - 1936	1,25fr	2,50fr	1,50fr

Note: throughout this period, the registration fee was equal to the basic "other countries" letter rate.

Rates of 1/5/27 confirmed by Decree 12/4/27.

Rates of 1/2/34 confirmed by Decree 7/12/33.

Rates to Luxembourg present a special problem. From time to time it appears that the Belgian Authorities remembered that there was a case for preferential treatment for mail to Luxembourg and issued special decrees bringing it into line with mail to Belgium. These dates are ignored for present purposes.

The first mention found of an air mail surtax for mail to Europe is in a decree dated 22 November, 1927, which states that internal and foreign mail to go by air will be subject to a surtax of 1,50fr per 20gm. - surely a bargain, given that savings of up to 10 days could be achieved on the internal service alone, with probably another week, depending on the flight timetable from Dakar, on mail to Europe. As far as can be seen from covers, the air mail surtax covered the service regardless of the number of flight stages - i.e. it cost no more to send a letter air mail all the way to Europe than it did for the initial stage within the Congo. This rate was confirmed in a further Decree of 21 May, 1929, which also specified a rate per item for postcards, again 1,50fr. It thus appears that, in a period of high inflation when surface rates were increased by almost 200%, there was no change to the air mail surtax. Of course, the Belgians themselves were extremely keen to commence regular air connections with the Congo and had started proving flights in 1925, so the relative cheapness of air mail may have been a quite deliberate policy at the time, although this is not borne out by the special fees, 5fr per item, charged on the Fabry & Van Der Linden proving flight in December 1930. The only subsequent information relating to the Dakar - Toulouse service must be inferred from a Decree of 25 January, 1934, which stated that all letters sent internally or to other countries by air would be subject to an air mail surtax of 1,00fr. per 5gm.; as this repeals the 21/5/29 Decree, there is a continuous list of air mail tariffs to Europe, via Dakar, and internal, as follows:-

Prior to 22/11/27	?	(most mail seen is philatelic)
22/11/27 - 25/1/34	1,50fr	per 20gm.
25/1/34	1,00fr	per 5gm.

This is generally borne out by covers seen - e.g. a rate in excess of 1,50fr between 1927 and 1934 (by this route) is uncommon (fig. 1).

An interesting by-way of the development of internal Congo routes was that, with the opening of services between Tshikapa and Léopoldville, it became practical to accept mail sent from Angola for onward air transmission to Europe. A number of such covers are known, mainly dating 1929 and 1930, although I have seen one dated 12/10/28. These covers were sent to Tshikapa from Dundo, presumably by road, and normally bear Angola franking of 1Esc.60c, cancelled by a single line rubber stamp showing the date, but nothing else. In addition, each cover is franked with the requisite 1,50fr in Belgian Congo air stamps, invariably cancelled at Tshikapa (fig. 2).

In 1931, however, a new regular air service became available, at least to the inhabitants of the Eastern Congo, with the opening of the Imperial Airways route, first to East, then South Africa. In March, 1931, the first mail reached the Congo via this service, the possible connections then being by road to Juba in the Sudan from the North-east Congo, by road to Port Bell (Kampala) and by lake steamer and rail through Kigoma to Mwanza, then the terminus of the air route. When the route was extended to Cape Town, the Mwanza connection ceased, but was replaced by the stop at Dodoma, while a new connection was provided at Broken Hill, used for mail from Elisabethville and environs, originally with a rail connection, but this was soon replaced, in September, 1932, by an air mail feeder service, run by the Aeroclub du Katanga, using 2-seater Moth aircraft; this feeder service was not superseded until November, 1935, when the Régie Malgache service from Madagascar was extended to terminate at Elisabethville, with a stop at Broken Hill.

Unfortunately, the first information on postal rates on mail from the Congo using the Imperial Airways service appears to be in a Decree dated 25 February, 1933, which refers back to that of 21 May, 1929. The rates shown are as follows:-

Europe	3,00fr per 5gm.
Egypt	3,50fr per 10gm.
Sudan	3,00fr per 10gm.
Kenya-Uganda	3,00fr per 10gm.
Tanganyika Territory	3,00fr per 10gm.
Northern Rhodesia	3,00fr per 10gm.
Southern Rhodesia	3,00fr per 10gm.
South Africa	3,50fr per 10gm.
India (British)	4,00fr per 5gm.

Given this variety of rates, it is understandably difficult to reach any conclusion as to the rates ruling from the inauguration of the service up to February, 1933. In addition, in the early days of the Elisabethville - Broken Hill feeder service, there was a special rate of air mail surtax of 7,00fr, of which 2,00fr paid for the Aeroclub du Katanga leg, but this appears to have been subsumed into the standard rates later - when is unknown, but may have been contemporary with the February 1933 Decree. As can be seen (fig. 3), it seems to have persisted at least until December, 1932.

These air mail surtax rates for both services, via Dakar and Imperial Airways were, in any case, short-lived. In February, 1935, the joint Belgian/French scheduled service to Léopoldville commenced and the rates were again revised, to give preference to the new service, while 1936 saw the start of the African Postal Union and further revision. That is another story, and probably just as complex in the telling. Finally, I show both sides of one more cover (fig. 4), which has defeated me to date.

Belgian Congo.

65/23

LEOPOLDVILLE TO FRANCE.

FLOWN DAKAR - EUROPE.



LEOPOLDVILLE 1 : 26 MARCH, 1929.

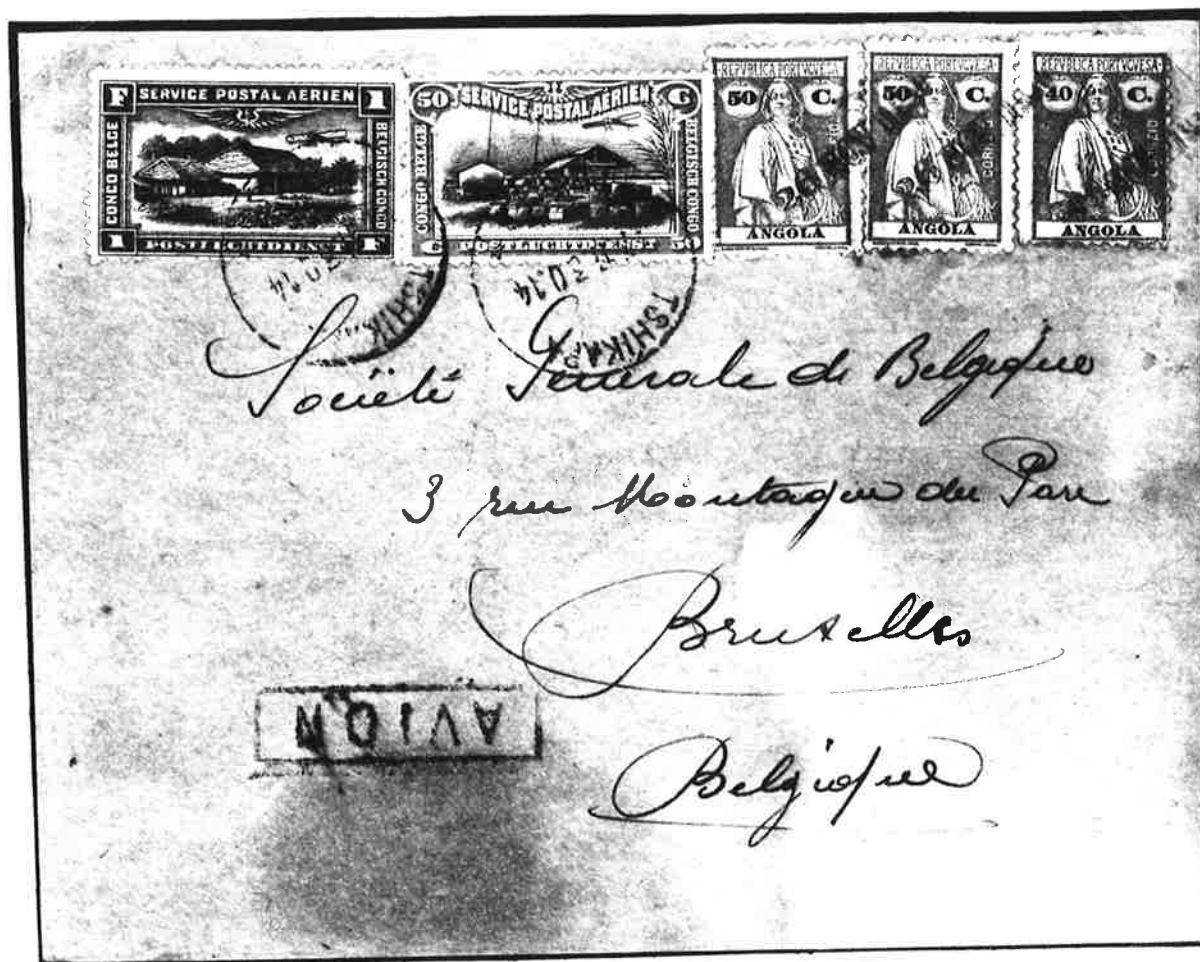
OVERSEAS POSTAGE	-	1,75	FR.	{ 20 gm. }
"	-	1,00	FR.	{ 21-40 gm. }
REGISTRATION FEE	-	1,75	FR.	
AIRMAIL SURTAX	-	1,50	FR.	{ 20 gm. }
"	-	1,50	FR.	{ 21-40 gm. }
		7,50	FR.	

fig. 1.

Belgian Congo.

ANGOLA TO BELGIUM.

FLOWN TSHIKAPA - LEOPOLDVILLE, AND DAKAR - EUROPE. NO AIR SERVICE FROM ANGOLA.



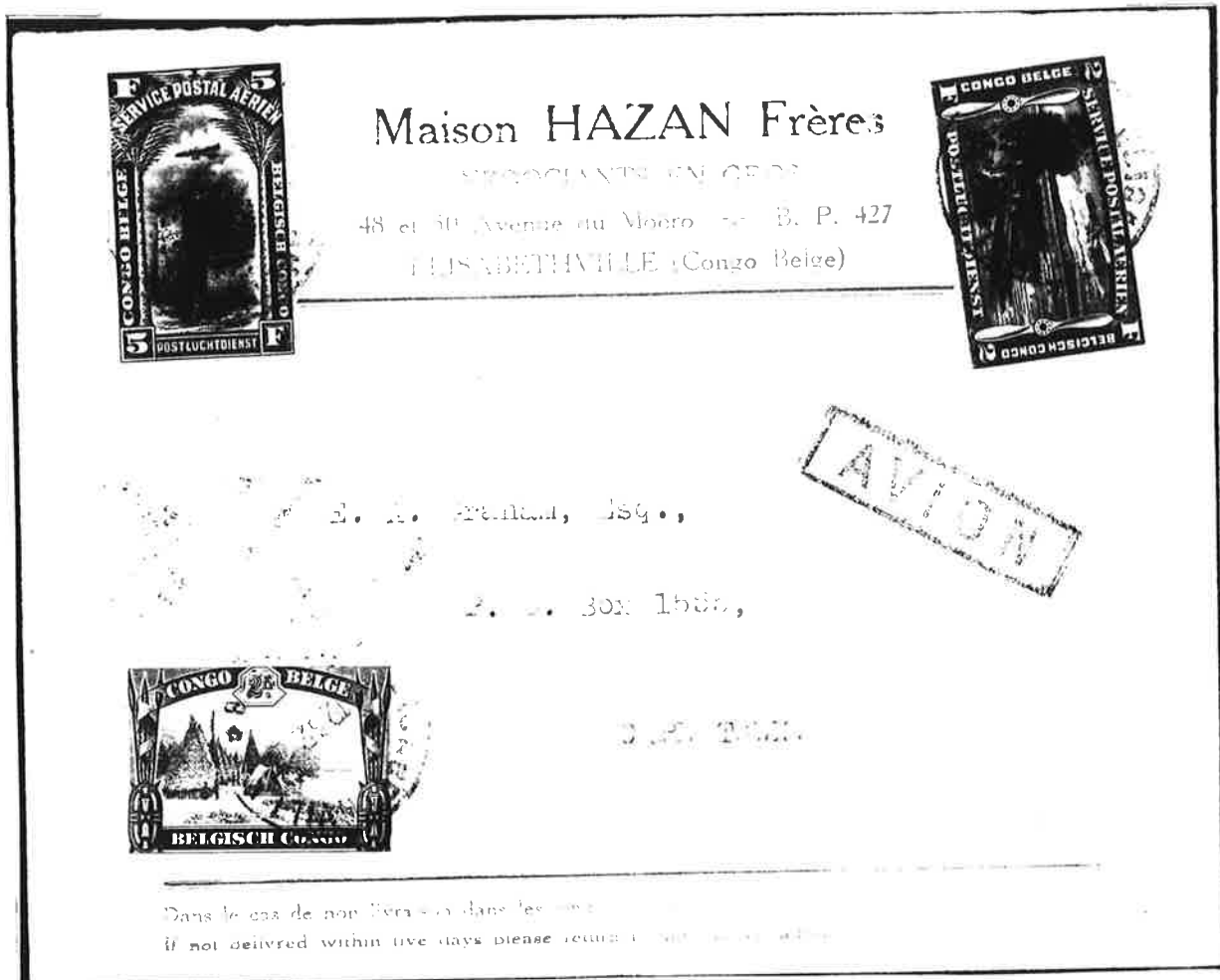
ANGOLA : 26 NOVEMBER, 1930.
 TSHIKAPA : 27 NOVEMBER, 1930.

AIRMAIL SURTAX - 1,50 FR.

fig. 2.

Belgian Congo.

AERO CLUB DU KATANGA FEEDER SERVICE TO BROKEN HILL AND IMPERIAL AIRWAYS TO CAPE TOWN.



PF 16



BACKSTAMP (26MM).

ELISABETHVILLE - 1500 HRS. 1 DECEMBER, 1932. (THURSDAY)
BACKSTAMPED BROKEN HILL - 2 DECEMBER, 1932.

EXTERNAL POSTAGE	-	2,00 FR.	(20 GM.)
AIRMAIL SURTAX	-	7,00 FR.	OF WHICH 2,00 FR. FOR FEEDER SERVICE
		9,00 FR.	

fig. 3.

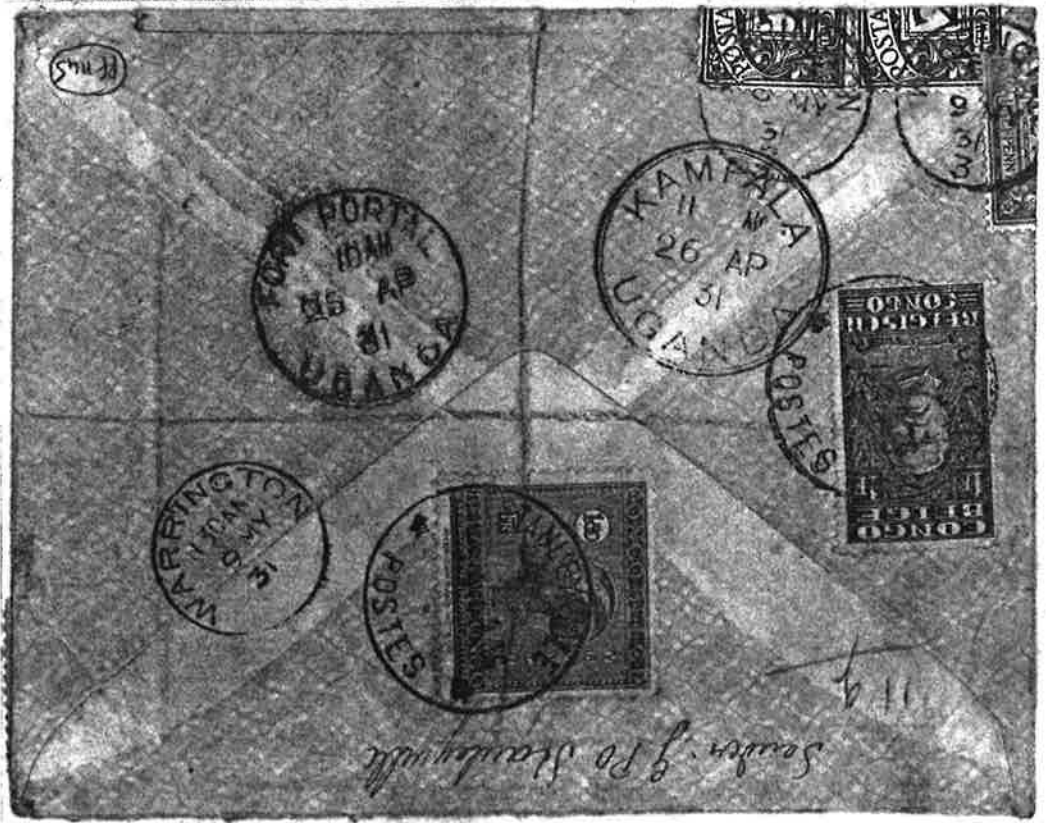
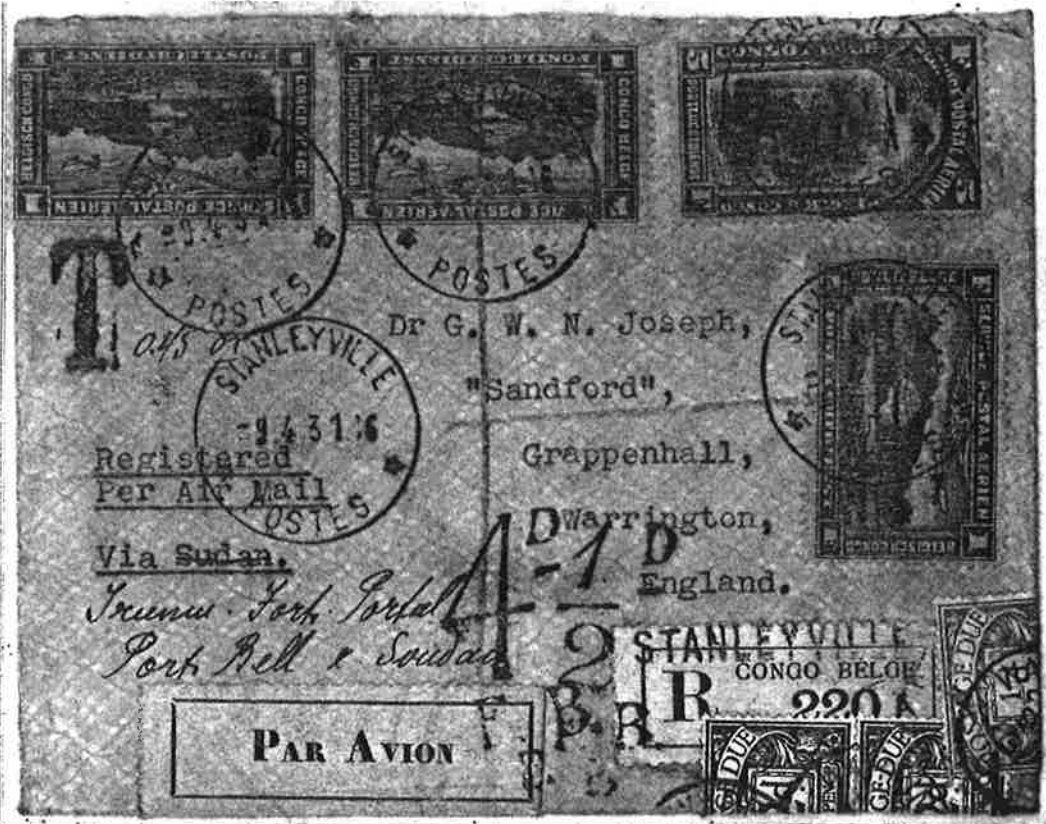


fig. 4.

ESSAY FOR THE MOLS IOFR

The following copy was furnished to us by Geoffrey Wood who found this in the "Illustrated Philatelic Record - 1939", the author being E. F. Hurt:

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This unique item is the actual Artist's work in water-colour for the first suggested design for a 10 fr. Belgian Congo of the 1894 Waterlow issue. The issued stamp, of course, had the design of the Stern Paddle riverboat. At first it seems likely King Leopold would wish to have his portrait on one stamp of the series for his territory just as the previous issues had all borne his head. It is probable, however, that the design was turned down, as Leopold was not too popular in Europe at that time on account of the Slave Trade and alleged atrocities in the Congo and he probably thought it best not to advertise himself.

The figure of Leopold in the above appears to have been worked up on a photograph by the artist, in brown and white watercolour, cut out and applied to a painted background shading. The rest of the design is a pale and deep blue watercolour picked out in black with lettering and figures in white.