This book covers pioneer (Milestone or First) flights involving the carrying of mail from 1910-1916. When I first started reading this book, I needed to define what a “Pioneer” was...I thought this was a biography of individual flyers and pilots...it is NOT. Don’t get me wrong, there is biographical information about flyers and the pilot’s, but the book REALLY is about the famous EVENTS involving flying the mail, as well as covers generated by the events.

Many of the early flights involving mail were staged events intended to make money and advertise the beginnings of the early aviation industry. This book covers those early events like Earl Ovington’s first mail flight, the Rochester NY Flying Exhibition, a Savannah GA aviation meet etc. The main thing to remember is that when flight was in its infancy, just going to a local track or field to see someone fly an aircraft was a notable and interesting thing! Promoters were holding flying activities like air races, air meets, and air competitions all the year round. Mail being stamped with handwritten notations; signatures of pilots and various hand stampings were one way the promoters could recoup expenses.

The cachets we know and see today were still just ideas, so it is rather difficult to identify these flight and event covers. This book helps identify the covers. There are tons of great pictures of mail items flown during these events to give readers an idea of what kinds of things to search for while establishing or increasing their collections.

There are 93 separate events covered in this book. I purchased this book through the APS and I am glad I did. It's actually a wonderful insight into the beginnings of flight and early airmail history. A must read for Aero philatelists.

Review by Rick Karlslyst