

# Americana Obscura

by David A. Kent

*Being a tribute to the late Art Carver, one of our founders, who coined the term "Americana Obscura," referring to a stamp that has an Americana connection that is not immediately apparent, and that requires some research to reveal it.*

This Boeing 757 of Icelandic Airlines clearly belongs in an Americana collection, as



Boeing is one of the United States' major aircraft manufacturers. The WACO ZKS-7 floatplane is a different story. It is named not for the city in Texas, but rather for the Weaver Aircraft Company, organized in 1921 in the city of Troy, Ohio. WACO produced more than 80 models of aircraft between the years 1919 and 1946, including the large troop-carrying gliders used in all the major invasions during WW II. The best-selling WACO was the Model 10, with more than 1,100 being produced from 1927 to 1930. During the years 1939 to 1942, WACO also built just over 600 Model UPF-7's for the Civil Aviation Administration and its Civilian Pilot Training program. WACOs were also popular around the world, and the company sold airplanes to 37 different countries, with Brazil being the largest buyer. Iceland used two different models of WACO floatplanes, the one pictured on the stamp being a 1940 acquisition of IcelandAir, used to carry passengers and mail to remote locations.

A different situation is represented by these four stamps from the Philippines, released in May of 2008, part of a set of eight picturing bridges built in the Philippines during the American administration period, 1898-1946. Since they were designed by American engineers, and probably constructed at least in part by American construction companies, should we include them in an Americana collection? Of course we encourage you to set your own rules of what to include in a topical collection, and what to leave out, but one consideration is that a great many of the stamps from the Philippines issued after independence in 1946 reflect some degree of Americana connection. This might lead to a collection that becomes overwhelmed by stamps of just one country that has an all-too-obvious Americana connection.



We are on more solid ground with these recent stamps from the Vatican, tributes to the worldwide trips made by Pope Benedict XVI. His April 2008 visit to this country brought two stamps from the Vatican, one released at the time of his address to the United Nations General Assembly on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the other released last September, part of a set of three that also noted various other travels as well. The Americana design pictures him in Washington in front of the White House

