

Winter 2005



Issue No. 31

# *The* Prexie Era

*The Newsletter of the USSS/BIA 1938 Presidential Era Study Group*

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## “C” Marking on the Presidential Issues

by

Doug D’Avino

Chairman, USSS Marginal Markings Committee

The article “C” For Chromium” in the August 2004 issue of The United States Specialist updated a February 1980 article on the occurrence of the letter “C” (for chromium) in the margin of U.S stamps. The USSS Marginal Markings Committee has found additional examples, including on the Presidential issues, and is soliciting the assistance of the Presidential Era Study Group in identifying examples of this marking.

**Figure 1** and **Figure 2** illustrates the “C” marking on the \$1 and \$2 Presidential issues. It also appears on the \$5 issue. The marking is from the black vignette plate (\$1 – 22120 and \$2 – 22099).



Figure 1



Figure 2

The \$1 Prexie (**Figure 3**) shows three ‘C’ markings two of which was cancelled by dot patterns; the \$2 Prexie (**Figure 4**) shows two ‘C’ markings, one of which was cancelled by a dot pattern. The \$1 Prexie has a 5 x 5 4.8 mm-square dot pattern; the \$2 Prexie has a 4 x 4 3.8mm-square dot pattern and its two ‘C’ markings were different sizes and fonts. The ‘C’ to the left is 3 mm high; the other ‘C’ is 3.5 mm high with what appears to be a serif at the top. In each case, the black vignette’s plate number also shows an adjacent “F” marking, indicating the plate has been hardened.

[Figures 3 and 4 on page 3]

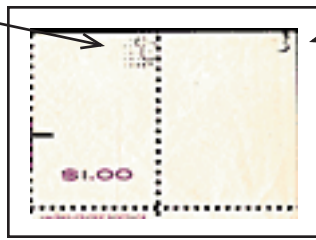


Figure 3

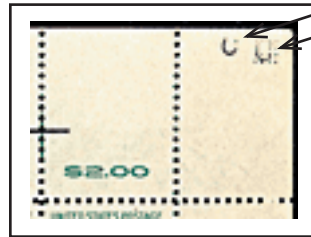


Figure 4

Two proofs for vignette plate 22099 were found at the National Postal Museum. **Figure 5** illustrates the original proof (with arrow) and a single small 'C' in the UR corner. This proof is dated August 17, 1938. The second proof (**Figure 6**), dated January 28, 1946, shows four 'C' markings in the UR corner. Note in the blowup **Figure 6** of the later proof that the original small 'C' is now behind a larger 'C' and a grid. Comparing these markings to **Figure 3**, which contains three 'C' marks, a fourth 'C' has been added, indicating that the plate has undergone the chroming process four times. Re-chromed in 1946, this is the latest date of use I have seen for a sheet marked with the 'C' marking.

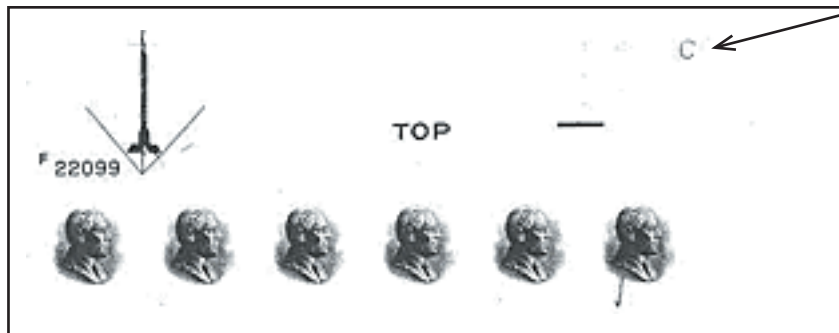


Figure 5



Figure 6

Two proofs for frame plate 22095 were found at the National Postal Museum. **Figure 7** illustrates the original proof (with arrow) and a single small 'C' in the UR corner. This proof is dated August 17, 1938. The second proof, dated January 25, 1946 (**Figure 8**) shows three 'C' markings in the UR corner. Note in the blow-up in **Figure 9** of the later proof compared to the lack of markings in **Figure 3**. The ink must have been wiped off the plate prior to going to press because if the markings were inked, though marginally higher than the markings on plate 22099, at least the bottom of the 'C' markings should be visible.

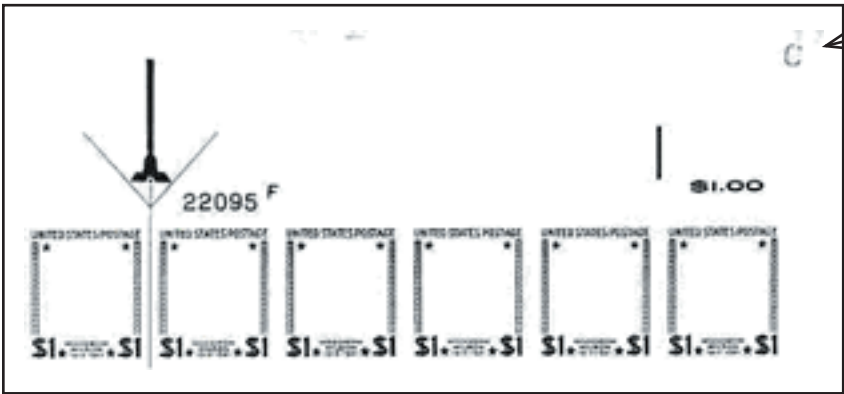


Figure 7

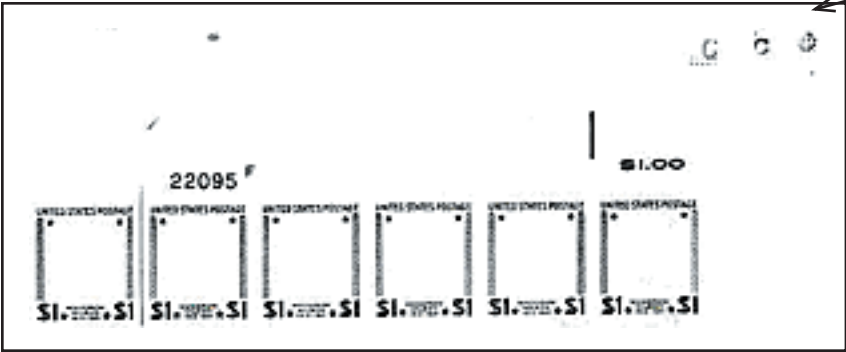


Figure 8



Figure 9

To date I have seen the "C" marking on the following plates:

Value	Plate Vignette	Marking Black
\$1.00	22096	C + 2 Cs with grid
	22097	C with grid
	22098	3 Cs with grid
	22099	C + C cancelled by 5x5 grid
\$2.00	22120	C + C cancelled by 4x4 grid
	22121	C + 2 Cs with grid
	<b>Frame</b>	<b>Violet</b>
\$1.00	22086	C
		<b>Red</b>
\$5.00	22169	2 Cs with grid

The markings are typically over stamp 10 or in the UR margin adjacent to stamp 10. Could you please examine your collection and report:

- a. Any examples which show a 'C' marking from a Frame plate?
- b. Any other plate numbers on which the marking occurs?
- c. Whether the 'C' has a serif?
- d. If the 'C' has a grid over it, is it a 4 x4 or 5 x 5 grid? Other?
- e. If any other dot patterns occur?
- f. If any other fonts occur?
- g. If this marking is on any of the lower value Prexie issues? Has anyone ever examined the plates?

Please send 300dpi JPG images (color preferred) or photocopies of the marking & plate numbers to me at: [davinod@earthlink.net](mailto:davinod@earthlink.net).

### **Time to Renew All Subscriptions**

If you have not yet renewed your subscription, now is the time. The cost is as follows: For the print edition - \$10.00; for the digital edition - \$5.00. Send your checks to Jeffrey Shapiro, PO Box 3211, Fayville, MA 01745-3211. Please do not send them to me. Indicate which subscription format you want.

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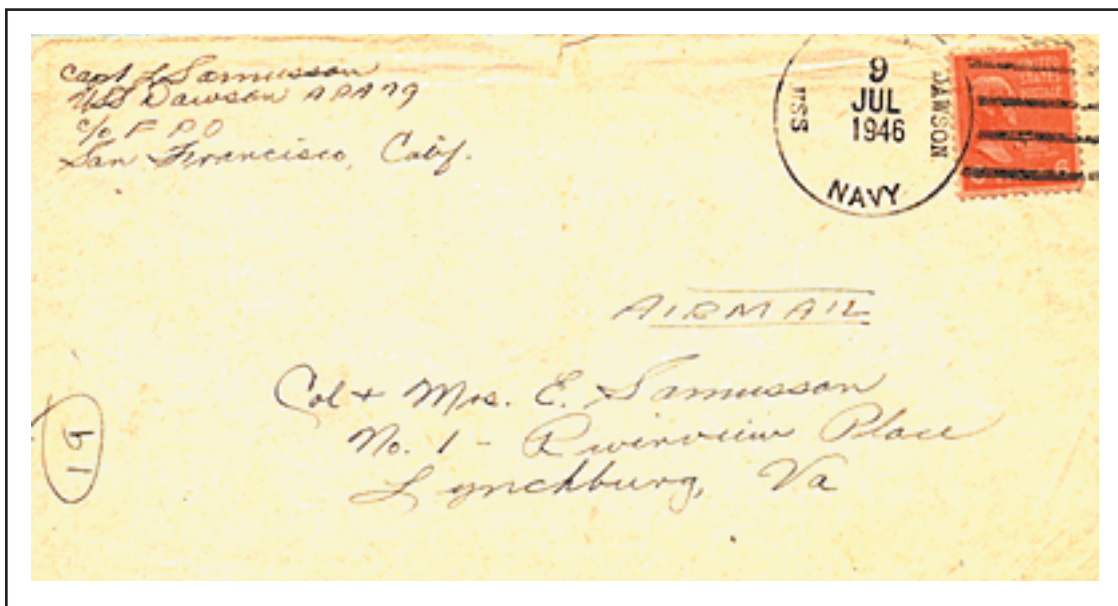
## The Ship That Was a Target of An Atomic Bomb Test!

by

Jeffrey L. Shapiro

A solo 6c Prexie paid the 6c per half ounce military concession air mail rate (in effect December 25, 1941 thru September 30, 1946) on this July 9, 1946 cover from the Attack Transport USS Dawson. (I recently purchased the cover, which was described as being at the atomic bomb tests at Bikini Atoll. Not only was the ship there, it was one of the targets !) After successful service at the end of World War II, the Dawson was ordered to serve as one of the targets in the atomic bomb tests of Operation Crossroads at Bikini Atoll in the Pacific. On July 2, 1946 the Dawson survived the dropping of a 21 kiloton bomb (roughly the same size as "Fat Boy", the bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan). The ship was deemed safe and on July 25, 1946, the Dawson survived the underwater blast of a second 21 kiloton bomb, but was deemed too radioactive for further military use. (Note: The cover was cancelled on July 9, between the two tests !)

The Dawson was then towed to the Marshall Islands for study by scientists for the effects of radiation. When the study was completed, the Dawson was scuttled off Kwajalein by gunfire from the USS Helena on April 19, 1948.



### A Reader's Response to an Inquiry

Lawrence LaLibertie responded to Terry Hines' inquiry concerning the marking "CPNY" by sending in relevant selections from the now defunct newsletter, Machine Cancel Forum [MCF No. 199, January 2002 and No. 200, April 2002]. According to the articles appearing in MCF, the marking was a machine service marking used by the International Postal Supply Company from 1943-1945. It was applied by the Armed Guard Center Postal Unit. It was applied to both censored and uncensored mail. The "CP" stood for Closed Pouch. The recorded covers were addressed to the Naval Armed Guard units rather than to particular ships. **Editor's note:** Terry Hines' inquiry appeared in Newsletter No. 30.

## A Good Rate, But a Better Cover

by

Robert Schlesinger

Sometimes you buy a cover for whatever reason - a good rate, a good stamp on the cover, or whatever reason - and sometimes that cover turns out to be a better cover than anticipated. Such is the case about the subject of this article.

This cover is a 4 x 70 cents per half ounce air mail rate cover from New York to Egypt. The 70 cents rate would be in effect, via different FAMs, from August 6, 1940 through October 31, 1946, when the unified rates became effective. But there is quite a lot 'going on' with this cover that makes it quite an interesting cover!

The cover was mailed in New York on December 1, 1941, a date of some significance. The next day saw FAM 22 take off from Miami, handling eastbound mail to Africa and the Middle East. Postal Bulletin 18336, dated December 2, 1941, detailed the flight pattern and which mail would be handled on that flight. Had this cover actually taken FAM 22, its history would have been quite different.



As it happens, the cover traveled on FAM 19, with its intended route of San Francisco to Hong Kong, and the cover would have traveled by air to Egypt. But history intervened! As far as can be determined, this cover made it to San Francisco in time for the December 6 flight over the Pacific. One major factor in feeling that it made the December 6 flight was the fact that the mail on the December 3 flight was caught up in the fracas in the air over Hawaii and was destroyed at Wake Island. The ICB marking on the reverse of this cover indicates that the contents were censored IN HAWAII.

My feeling is that the flight that carried this cover WAS in the air over Pearl Harbor, or in the vicinity, and was diverted to Hilo, mail off loaded there, with the clipper returning to San Francisco. The mail would be taken to Honolulu for censorship, hence the ICB marking. Postal Bulletin 18348, dated December 18, 1941,

advised that mail for Africa should go to Miami for processing on FAM 22. The postal authorities in Honolulu were probably waiting for such instructions before processing this piece of mail.

In all likelihood, this cover made it to Miami and FAM 22. As noted on the backstamp, it finally arrived in Egypt on March 22, 1942, just shy of a 4 month trip! And all because it was mailed one day too soon.

### **Some Thoughts On Reading Robert Schlesinger's Article**

by

Steven M. Roth

Bob Schlesinger's interesting article sent me back to my files and library. His article raised some questions for me since, as I read his piece, I found myself wondering, based on my prior reading in this subject, if I agreed with all of his statements.

Here are the most significant questions Bob's article raised in my mind:

1. Did FAM 22 flights actually begin on December 2 as Bob asserts?
2. Would his cover have been carried over FAM 19, but for the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7?

With respect to question "1", I believe the answer is "No". Even though the POB indicated flights were to begin over FAM 22 on or about December 2, the available evidence suggests that the first flight occurred on December 6, and that commercial mail was not carried until May 1942. For authoritative discussions of this subject, I refer readers to articles by Bob Wilcsek, "FAM 22: The First Six Months/When Did It Start, Where Did It End and Who Flew It?", *The Airpost Journal* (January 1999), pages 9-17, and by Richard Beith, "FAM 22 and Beyond", Part I, *The Airpost Journal* (October 1997), pages 407-458, and, Part II, *The Airpost Journal* (December 1997), pages 489-502. Note, too, the cover lacks a Miami Post Office transit handstamp.

As for the 2nd question, it is my understanding that FAM 19 offered a route to the South Pacific, to New Zealand and Australia, not to Hong Kong as a means to the Middle East. That route, if I understand Bob's contention correctly, would have been FAM 14, not FAM 19.

What do other readers think about Bob's interesting cover and subject?

### **A German Reply Card with Prexies Added for Return to Europe**

by

Dickson Preston

One popular collecting field is the use of Prexie era stamps paying the extra postage to send United States surface postal cards by air mail. Cards rated up -n this way to foreign destinations are especially interesting. In this unusual example from 1941, a mixed franking between the postal issues of two countries is created as well. The postal card is the reply half of a German 15 pfennig international reply card issued in 1933, Michel number P231A. The sender chose to reply to his correspondent in Germany by air mail.



Since the German 15 pfennig UPU post card rate was equivalent to the United States 3¢ UPU post card rate, the sender of this reply card added 27¢ in Prexies to the card to make up the 30¢ transatlantic air mail rate to Europe. The blue air mail sticker, Post Office Form 2978, shows that the New York office accepted the mixed franking as payment for the air mail postage.



### Non-Philatelic Patriotic Covers

by

Louis Fiset

Often collectors shun twentieth century patriotic covers for their philatelic contrivance. World War II patriotics offer no exception. However, with a little search non-philatelic usages can be found that will dress up any war related collection or exhibit that attempts to convey the postal history of the era.

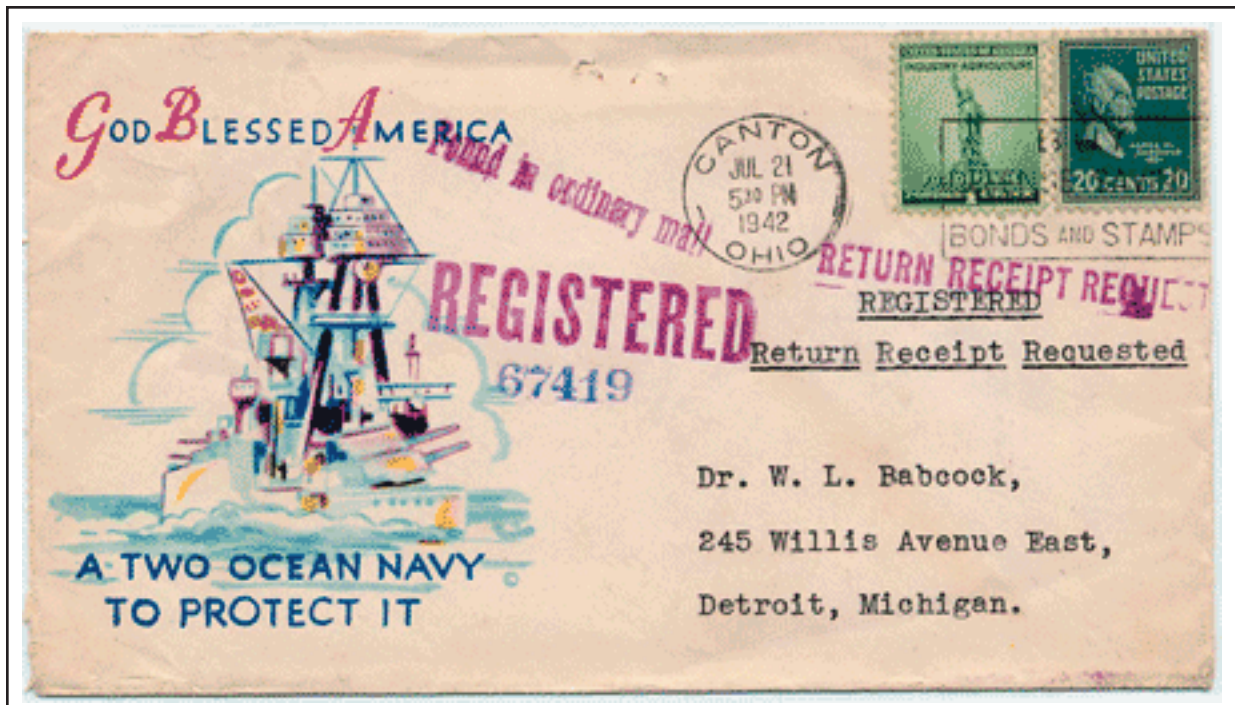
Two covers here illustrate my point. Both cachets were produced by Jacques Minkus, the New York stamp dealer, who hoped people would use his envelopes on general correspondence during World War II. Minkus produced 52 wartime patriotic cachets.

The first cover may readily be seen as third-class mail, with two half-cent Prexies paying the regular, bulk quantity-discount rate. To qualify for this rate a permit holder had to mail two hundred or more identical pieces of mail. The sender also had to cite the section in the Postal Laws and Regulations on each piece of mail: "Sec. 563 P. L. & R." In this case the mailer, in Gloversville, NY, chose to employ a patriotic cover for this particular commercial mailing.

[Covers appear on page 10]



The second cover shows a piece of ordinary looking registered mail, with return receipt requested. An auxiliary marking indicates it had not been properly handled by the post office as registered mail. It subsequently received registration service. Philatelic mail? Unlikely.



Lawrence Sherman, in his fascinating book, *United States Patriotic Covers of World War II* (Collectors Club of Chicago, 1999) identifies more than 9,200 patriotic cachets. He devotes a chapter to patriotic covers used on non-philatelic mail. It is available through the APS library.