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# *The Prexie Era*

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### Editor's Notes

In response to my article in the last newsletter, “U.S. Mail to Turkey in World War II,” in this issue Joe Bock provides another airmail cover to Turkey. Millard Mack and Robert Markovitz also provided illustrations for the study, the latter from his extensive collection of the 30-cent trans-Atlantic Globe stamp. I greatly appreciate this input. Dickson Preston downloaded from ebay the majority of covers from the Luther Fowle correspondence as they were being offered several years ago. This has resulted in 90 airmail covers available for study. The vast majority of this horde is back stamped, providing valuable information on routing and transit times. I am currently examining these scans and will provide an update in the next issue.

Arizona dealer David Grossblat has recently acquired Larry Paige's Prexie collection, amounting to more than 1,000 covers. The collection, organized by denomination, will be available at CHICAGOPEX, which meets November 19-21. As many Prexie collectors know, Paige limited his acquisitions to single frankings and multiple frankings of the same value. His holdings spanned the life of the Prexie series. The collection has extensive coverage of domestic usages and rates, as well as significant foreign usages, both surface and airmail. The covers are mounted on pages where Larry made extensive notes about each item. He was an astute collector. That Larry's collection will be widely dispersed rather than falling into the hands of a single collector bodes well for the vitality of our collecting specialty.

### Air-Surface Combination Route to Turkey

by

Joseph Bock



This cover, illustrating the 70-cent per half-ounce airmail rate to Turkey, was posted January 28, 1943 and received March 19, 1943, 50 days later. Likely it flew the South Atlantic route to Lagos, West Africa, then to Cairo by the trans-Africa route operated by

BOAC. Back stamps confirm the main routing: January 28-Washington D.C; March 3-Cairo; March 16-Izmir (Smyrna, Turkey a port city on the west coast); March 19-Ankara, located 300 miles inland. The balance of the route from Cairo remains unclear, as Germany still controlled much of the Aegean Sea. It may have traveled surface from Cairo (by sea and rail). Egypt and U.S. (New York) censor markings.

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### 3-Cent Airmail Fee to Tunisia

by

Louis Fiset



Airmail service for mail generated in the U.S. was available from Europe to countries in Africa and to the U.S.S.R. in Asia for an airmail fee. This fee, to pay for BOAC service, was assessed in addition to regular postage, such as the 30-cent trans-Atlantic airmail rate or 5-cent international surface rate. The fees ranged from 3 to 30 cents. This service remained in effect until Italy entered the war on June 10, 1940, thereby severing the trans-Mediterranean routes BOAC employed to carry the mail.

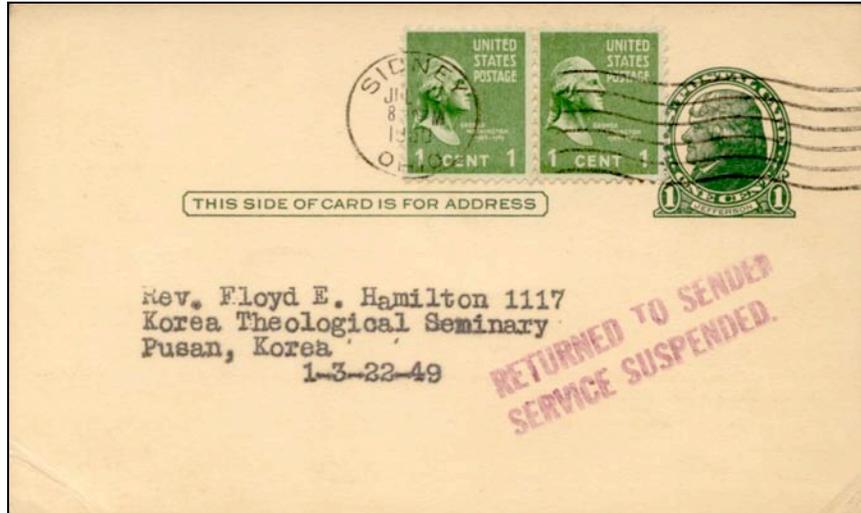
As seen in the illustration, which shows correspondence between International Red Cross officials, the airmail fee from Europe to Tunisia was 3 cents. Unlike most air fees for service beyond Europe, this rate to Tunisia remained in effect from July 1, 1939 until March 27, 1946. In the interim service to Tunisia was suspended from November 7 (?) 1942 until January 6, 1944 due to the North Africa Campaign.

This cover, in addition to showing an interesting rate for airmail beyond Europe, provides an early example of resumed airmail service after a service suspension.

## Returned to Sender: Korean War

by

Bob Hohertz



A bit more to this postcard exists than meets the eye at first glance. It bears an unusual use of the “RETURNED TO SENDER/SERVICE SUSPENDED” auxiliary marking in 1950, in connection with the Korean War. We are accustomed to seeing it on World War II mail.

The postmark is Sidney, Ohio, July 12, 1950. At this time the North Korean Army was advancing southward the length of South Korea, and by September 5 occupied most of the country except for the Pusan perimeter. The Reverend Hamilton luckily was located in Pusan, but his mail was not getting through.

And what was the important message that was not delivered?



**Section 571 ½ P. L. & R.**

by

Albert L. “Chip” Briggs

The envelope illustrated below, bearing a single 9-cent Prexie value, contained a product catalogue. The hand stamped “Sec. 571 ½ P. L. & R.” (faint in upper right corner) prompted a search for provisions of this section. While not mentioned or referenced specifically by this section number in Beecher and Wawrukiewicz, *U. S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-1999*, it does discuss the rate to which this section pertains (Chapter 34).

§572 POSTAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

INSERT No. 476. Order No. 13098. JUNE 29, 1939.

The Postal Laws and Regulations are amended, effective July 1, 1939, by addition of the following as section 571½:

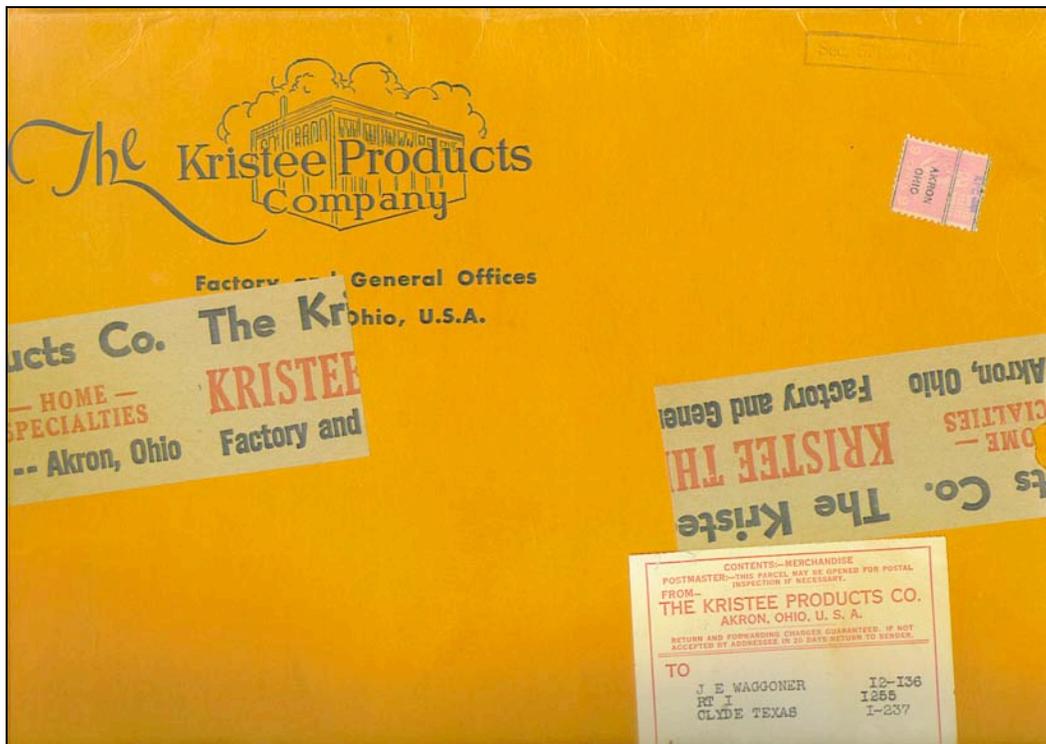
“571½. The rates of postage on individually addressed catalogs and similar printed advertising matter in bound form, consisting of 24 or more pages and not exceeding 10 pounds in weight, shall be as follows:

Zones

Rates	Local	1st	2d	3d	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
First pound.....	4¢	4¢	4¢	5¢	6¢	7¢	8¢	9¢	10¢
Each additional pound ..	½	1¢	1¢	2¢	3¢	4¢	5¢	6¢	7¢

(Scan courtesy Len Piszkiwicz)

Insert number 476 (Order No. 13098), dated June 29, 1939, and shown above, states that effective July 1, 1939 a special discount rate by zone would apply for individually addressed catalogues and similar printed advertising matter in bound form consisting of more than 24 pages and weighing less than 10 pounds.



Prior to this date, similar matter was subject to parcel post rates. Items mailed at this new rate were to be endorsed with “Sec. 34.77, P. L. & R.” to prevent being assessed postage due. The item in question, however, is endorsed Sec. 571 ½ P. L. & R.

The envelope contained a 40 page catalogue listing products for sale by The Kristee Products Company. The 9-cent stamp paid the special discount catalogue rate postage for Zone 7 from Akron, Ohio to Clyde, Texas. The envelope was endorsed above the stamp with Sec. 571 ½ P. L. & R. While the stamp is a proprietary dated precancel, the date is not legible.

The rate for this particular item was effective from July 1, 1939 until March 26, 1944.

### San Francisco to San Francisco – By Airmail

by

Bob Hohertz



On the surface, this 1944 cover looks like 8 cents domestic rate postage was paid to send a letter airmail from San Francisco to San Francisco. Closer inspection reveals no stamped indication that it did not or could not go by air. Although airmail stamps were invalid to send surface mail, the 2 cents postage would have paid the correct in-city rate.

The letter was also censored at San Francisco (61352). On the back side is the key to the cover, a handstamp reading: “This communication referred to District Postal Censor by U.S. Customs.” It was probably brought into San Francisco by ship or air by the writer or his agent, who thought it would enter the mail stream somewhere else, perhaps Los Angeles or Seattle. It was turned over to Customs at the port of entry. However, instead of censoring it themselves Customs agents sent it on to the District Postal Censor. An odd cover with a reasonable explanation.

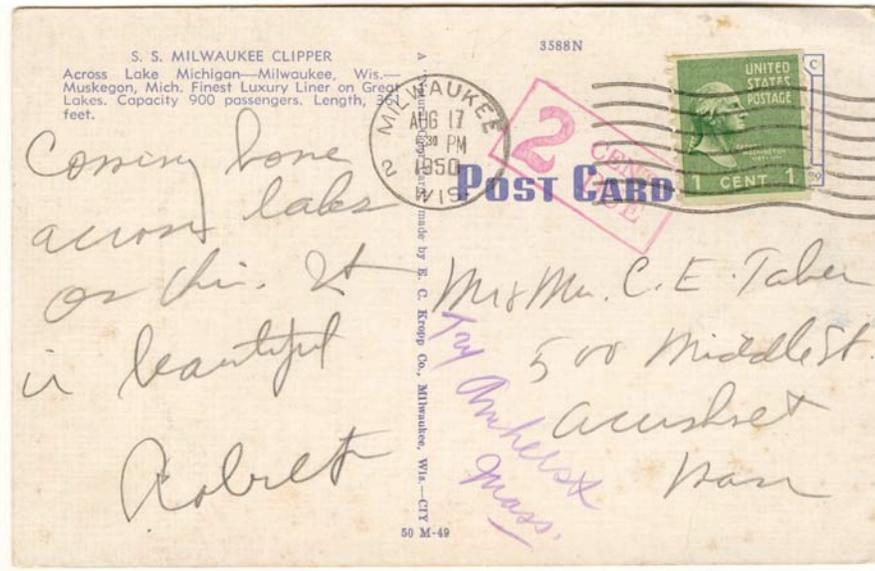
## “2 CENTS DUE” on a Domestic Penny Postcard

by

Leonard Piszkiwicz

The illustrated postcard with a 1-cent Prexie horizontal coil stamp shown here, was postmarked August 17, 1950 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It looks like an ordinary domestic penny postcard of the time except for the magenta boxed “2 CENTS DUE” marking. Why was this marking applied? At first glance, there’s no good reason apparent. But one explanation seems plausible by studying the card and the poor handwriting of the sender.

Quickly looking at the city address, “Acushnet, Mass.,” the last word can look like “Man” – the abbreviation for Manitoba (a Canadian province, for our geographically-challenged readers, if we have any.)



The postcard rate to Canada at the time was 2 cents. Since the card was only paid 1 cent, and therefore theoretically underpaid 1 cent, the deficiency was doubled and the clerk marked the card with the boxed “2 CENTS DUE.” The card got sent on its way to wherever mail is sorted in Manitoba. Upon arrival, the receiving clerk recognized it wasn’t addressed to Manitoba at all, but to Massachusetts, and wrote “Try Amherst Mass.”

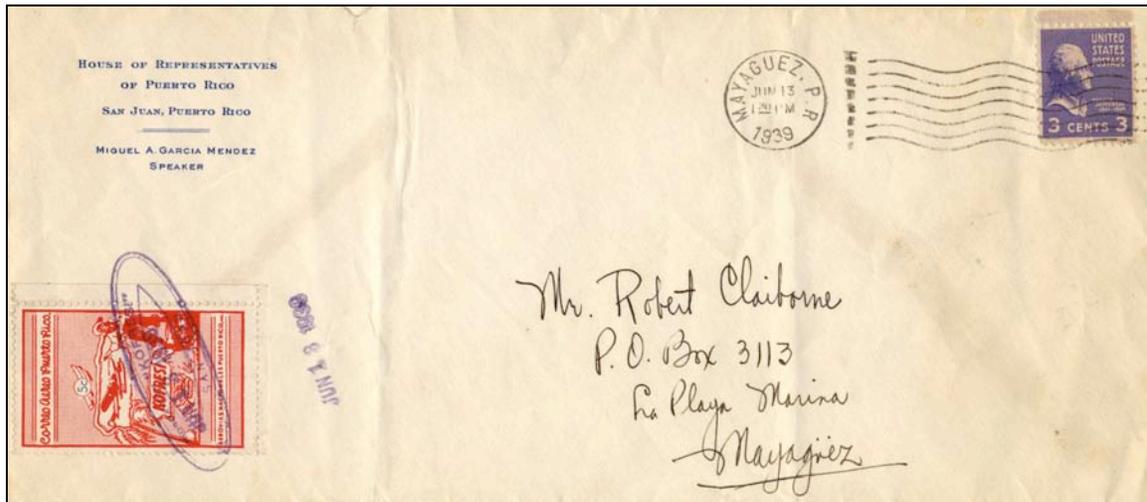
Amherst is about five times the size as Acushnet, and one might conclude the clerk had never heard of Acushnet or tried to look it up. Likely the card was eventually delivered, but it would have been informative to see any auxiliary marking or backstamp that might have been added to document this card’s travel.

In any case, there’s a reasonable explanation for the “2 CENTS DUE” marking.

## Private Airmail Service in Puerto Rico

by

Jeffrey Shapiro



The cover illustrated here shows a 3-cent Prexie stamp used in combination with a 5-cent Aerovias Nacionales Puerto Rico private adhesive to pay for delivery by the U.S. Post Office following air service within Puerto Rico.

Aerovias Nacionales Puerto Rico, Inc, operated a small airline to provide passenger service around Puerto Rico and the neighboring Virgin Islands. In addition, the airline offered private local airmail service; the company issued labels in 1937 to indicate payment of fees.

Post Office regulation initially forbade use of these labels on the front of envelopes because they too closely resembled postage stamps. However, in 1938 the order was rescinded. Even so, the U.S. Post Office never officially recognized the air service.

The Post Office held a series of races between Aerovias Nacionales and its chief rival, Powelson Airlines as part of the National Air Mail Week celebration in May 1938 (see *The Prexie Era* Issue No. 49) to see who would control the coveted air routes within Puerto Rico. Aerovias Nacionales lost the competition.

In the example shown above, a Puerto Rico House of Representative cover was sent via Aerovias Nacionales from San Juan to Mayaguez on June 13, 1939 and then dropped in the mail stream for local delivery by the U.S. Post Office. While 2 cents would have paid for local carrier delivery service, a 3-cent stamp was affixed to pay the domestic first class delivery charge for the letter having been sent across the Island.

## Airmail to Shanghai, Returned from Hawaii

by

Louis Fiset



Questions have arisen as to how long overseas mail generated around the time of Pearl Harbor and processed in Hawaii was held before release by Honolulu based censors (I.C.B.). Except for registered mail, most was not backstamped, leaving the question unanswered. The cover illustrated here is an exception and provides one data point of evidence to answer the question.

This correspondence, addressed to Shanghai, was postmarked New York December 2, 1941. The letter likely reached San Francisco in time to be placed on the Anzac Clipper bound for Honolulu on December 6<sup>th</sup>. Upon arrival Japanese forces were attacking Pearl Harbor and the pilot therefore diverted the plane to Hilo. The mail was off loaded, and the plane returned to the mainland without incident.

This mail, as well as mail with overseas addresses accumulating at Hawaii post offices since the last Clipper flights out of the Islands, was held for an indeterminate time before their release by censors. In this illustration the letter was returned to sender because all trans-Pacific flights, to Hong Kong/Singapore and Auckland, were immediately suspended after the attacks on Hawaii and the Philippines.

The backstamp reveals a July 10, 1942 Honolulu cancellation. Because the mail was being returned, there was no hurry to process the letter. All mail destined for countries where service was suspended may have been processed on this day. This would be in line with return of trans-Atlantic mail in the wake of declarations of war against Germany and Italy. Unlike most returned mail during the period, this cover bears no trace of U.S. censorship.

## Tales from the Other Side: Perforation Slips on a 1-Cent Sheet

by

Francis Ferguson

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Collecting EFOs is truly interesting, as one never knows what will turn up in the most unlikely of places. I was at a very small local show in early July and one of the dealers had this interesting piece at a very reasonable price. Sadly the pane of 100 had been broken in half some time before I purchased it, but it is still a great showpiece. The first 8 vertical rows of perforations are off a full 2mm to the right. Row 9 starts the major shift with 3mm and row 10 with a full 4mm offset. The right-most row of vertical perforations closest to the plate number is so far off that the 7mm shift has resulted in a captured plate number --- and a series of progressively odd stamps as the not-so-vertical row of perforations run down the sheet.

How did this occur? I am not really sure -- there are no creases evident anywhere on the sheet of 100, so that pretty much rules out a fold-over. It is easy to see that the adjustment of the perforation wheels was off or experienced some degree of “slip” because of an unsecured mechanical part.

This piece should have been red-lined for removal and discarded, but it escaped such a mark. A lucky break for us collectors.