



# *The Prexie Era*

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

## **Combined Edition**

### **Part 4**

**Issues No 88 to Present**

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**With PDF Bookmarks**

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No. 88 Winter 2020

# The Prexie Era

Publication of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

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## Manuscript Censor Markings on Post Cards

by Dann Mayo



The two postcards shown here have unassuming censor markings; both are uncommon, but one is pricey while the other will likely be inexpensive when found.

Manuscript censors 351, 1361, 1534, 1897, 4628, 4629, 5175, 7629 are recorded<sup>1</sup> for Bermuda from mid-July to mid-August 1942. These are rated as 10 out of 10 points for scarcity. The P.C. 90 preceding the number is the British designation for a Postal Censorship form used in the UK and many overseas possessions that reads OPENED BY EXAMINER usually with a printed censor number.

Note on the first postcard that number 4344 is not on the list, and it was sent a year and a half before the CCSG's earliest recorded date. As with any manuscript marking, a degree of skepticism is healthy, and one ultimately has to rely on gut instinct. Here, to me, this marking just feels right. First, we have the other examples of Bermuda manuscript recorded in the CCSG catalog. Second, the database of examiner numbers composed by Konrad Morenweiser and published on the CCSG's website<sup>2</sup> shows that a British censor was using PC 90 labels numbered 4344 in Bermuda from mid-November 1940 through early July 1942.



While I have seen US censor tapes used in lieu of handstamps on postcards, I do not recall seeing a similar usage by British censors, and only a small number of handstamps brought in with examiners transferred to Bermuda from Gibraltar in late 1940 are recorded. So, a resort to a manuscript marking seems normal.

A second card, from the same correspondence, bears a New York handstamp with added manuscript number 6007. This marking is recorded in Broderick and Mayo<sup>3</sup> as type S 3.1.2, used in New York between August and November 1942. 6007 is from the block of numbers (5001-10000; not all of which were used) assigned to NY in February 1942. This marking is not common (B&M assigned 50 points on a scale of 2 to 250); and while I have not kept a detailed census my best guess is that I have seen under a dozen examples over the past 40 years of collecting, vs. thousands (possibly

over 20,000) of covers with common US tapes – not that great a difference in the count for the Bermuda manuscript PC 90 markings. But Bermuda censorship collecting is still hot, while a general lack of interest in WWII US censorship collecting keeps the value of B&M S 3.1.2 at a very minor fraction of that of the Bermuda manuscript marking.

#### Footnotes

- 1 Peter C Burrows, ed: *British Empire Civil Censorship Devices World War II*, Section 6, *British West Indies & Falkland Islands*, Civil Censorship Study Group, (2016)
- 2 At <http://c-c-s-g.org/forum/viewtopic.php?f=25&t=88>. Unfortunately viewing of this database is restricted to CCSG members.
- 3 *Civil Censorship in the United States during WWII*, Civil Censorship Study Group & War Cover Club (1980)

## 55-Cent Airmail Letter Rate from the United States to the Cook Islands

by Gordon Eubanks



This August 1943 cover shows airmail correspondence from a Coast Guard Service Lieutenant Commander at FPO 49 (San Juan, Puerto Rico), to Rarotonga, Cook Islands. There are no postal markings on the reverse. Since the letter was to a foreign country the 6-cent airmail concession rate for military personnel did not apply.

The August 1943 *Official Foreign Air Mail Guide* indicates intermittent service and a 50-cent rate. Since all commercial FAM routes in the Pacific were suspended due to the war, transport was by military transport, and military mail, including this piece, took priority.

The Cook Islands, a group of 15 islands in the South Pacific, are located about 2,000 miles northeast of New Zealand. A British protectorate from 1888, the islands became part of the British Empire in 1900; in 1901 they were within the boundaries of New Zealand. This status continued until 1965 when the islands became self-governing. Thus, the islands were part of New Zealand in 1943. The letter is addressed to Rarotonga (*sic*), the

largest island in the chain.

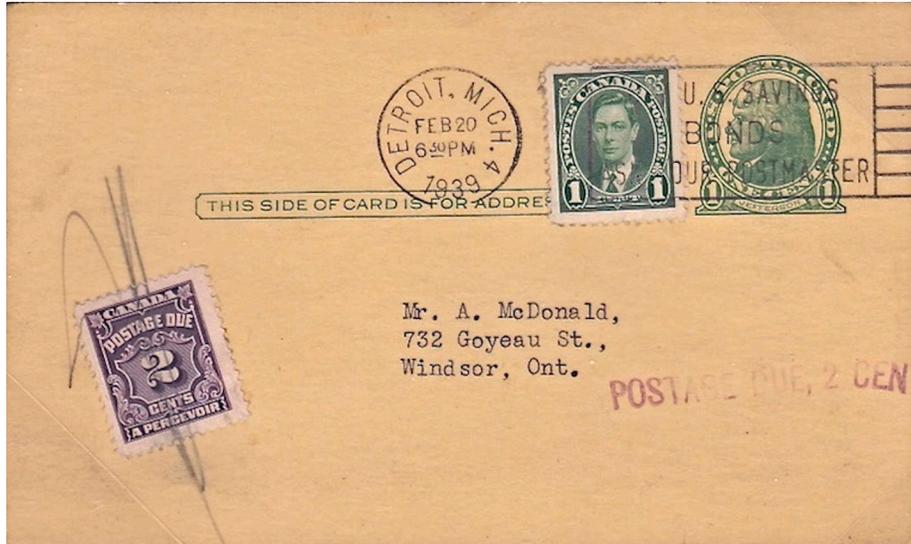
The most interesting aspect of this letter is the application of a 5-cent airmail surcharge for onward air service to the Cook Islands. The surcharge was intended to expedite service, especially between the North and South Islands. Such letters were to be indorsed "By Air in New Zealand." While no posted United States 55-cent airmail rate to the Cook Islands exists, it is reasonable to conclude the surcharge also applied to the Cook Islands. Certainly, the endorsement "by air in New Zealand", applied in Puerto Rico, indicated a belief that the surcharge applied to the Cook Islands in 1943 when the letter was mailed.

Interestingly, evidence of censorship on the letter is lacking. Coast Guard mail was subject to examination, usually by naval censorship, less often by the Coast Guard, itself. In this case, because the writer was an officer, he was entitled to self-censorship.

I want to thank Louis Fiset for suggesting this article and providing invaluable assistance.

## The 2-Cent Convention Rate for Post and Postal Cards during the Prexie Era

by Stephen L. Suffet



*Figure 1* An unsuccessful attempt to use a Canadian 1-cent stamp to pay half the 2-cent convention rate. Detroit, Michigan, to Windsor, Ontario, Canada. February 20, 1939. Rated 2 cents postage due, with the deficiency doubled as a penalty for underpaid international mail.

In previous issues of this newsletter (Nos. 86 and 87), I discussed the 3 cents per ounce surface letter rate from the United States to certain foreign countries. Effectively 2 cents per piece less than the surface letter rate to most foreign countries, this convention rate, often incorrectly referred to as a “treaty rate,” was the same as the basic domestic first class letter rate. It was already in effect when the Presidential Series was introduced in 1938, and it continued through July 31, 1958, to Canada and Mexico, and through October 31, 1953, to all other members of the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain.

The convention rate was also in effect to Newfoundland (including Labrador) from before 1938 until that British Dominion became a province of Canada just before midnight on March 31, 1949. The 3-cent rate to

Newfoundland thus continued through July 31, 1958, although Newfoundland was no longer a separate entity.

In addition, the 3-cent convention rate was in effect to the Republic of the Philippines from October 1, 1947, through October 31, 1953.

*Whenever the 3-cent convention rate was in effect, the surface post and postal card rate to the same countries was 2 cents. When the Presidential Series appeared in 1938 the surface postal and postal card rate to non-convention rate countries was 3 cents, while the domestic post and postal card rate was 1 cent. The 2-cent convention rate was therefore right in the middle.*

While mistaken overpayment sometimes occurred, mistaken underpayment was

particularly common before the U.S. domestic surface post and postal card rate increased to 2 cents on January 1, 1952. Many people apparently reasoned that since the letter rate to convention rate counties was identical to the domestic letter rate, the same must be true

for the post and postal card rate. That was an erroneous presumption.

This article shows six examples of the 2-cent convention post and postal card rate during the Prexie era. Two were underpaid.

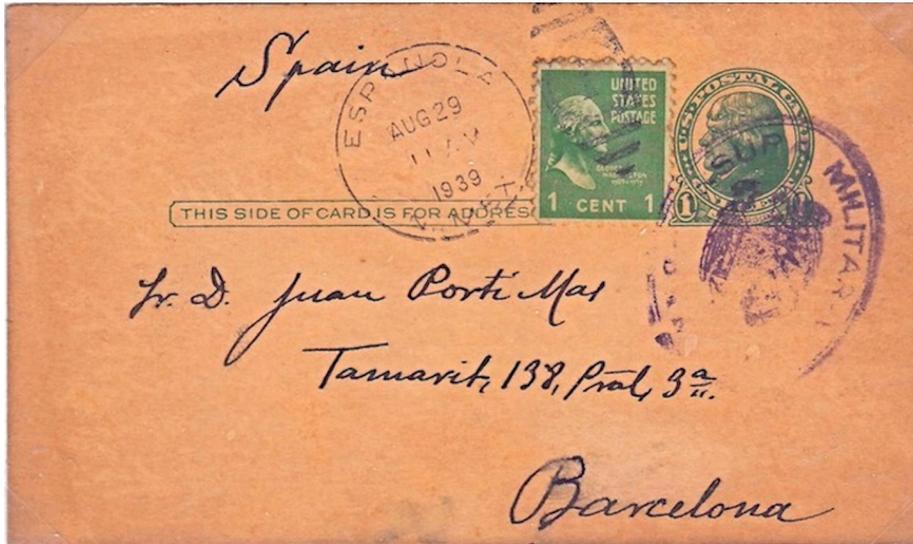


Figure 2: The 2-cent convention rate. Espanola, New Mexico, to Barcelona, Spain. August 29, 1939. Spanish Civil War era censorship applied by the victorious Nationalist (Fascist) regime.



Figure 3: 2-cent convention rate. Laredo, Texas, to Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico. April 18, 1940.



Figure 4: 2-cent convention rate, 1-cent underpaid. Christopher, Illinois, to San Jose, Costa Rica. June 17, 1949. Rate 10 international gold centimes postage due, supposedly equivalent to twice the deficiency. This was an error on the part of the U.S. post office. With the publication of the July 1948 issue of The United States Official Postal Guide, Part II, the value of the U.S. cent was reduced from 5 to 3 international gold centimes, so two times the 1-cent deficiency should have been 6 international gold centimes, not 10. The Postal Bulletin of October 14, 1948 (No. 19175), reminded postmasters of this reduction. Somehow word had not reached the exchange office in New York by the following June! There is no indication on the post card what if any postage due the San Jose post office collected in Costa Rican centimos.

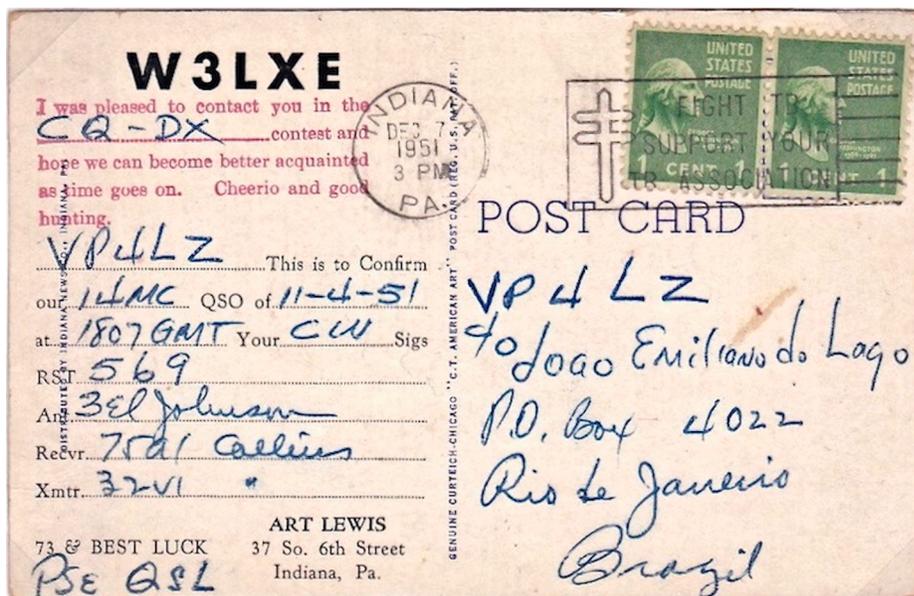


Figure 5: 2-cent convention rate. Indiana, Pennsylvania, to Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. December 7, 1951.

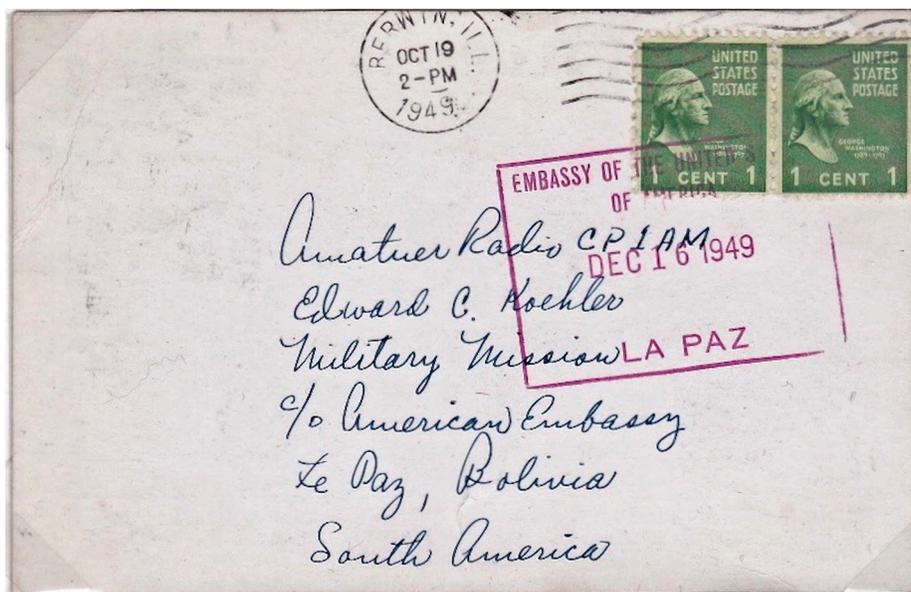


Figure 6: 2-cent convention rate. Berwyn, Illinois, to La Paz, Bolivia. October 19, 1949. The December 16, 1949, receiving marking shows it took the post card 58 days to reach its destination, the U.S. Embassy. For 10 cents it could have gone by air and likely would have arrived in a few days.

### Prexie Era Exhibits at Sarasota, 2021

The Prexie Era Study Group will be gathering at the Sarasota National Stamp Expo February 5-7, 2021. Yes, 2021. That seems a long way away, but not too early to finish or polish exhibits. The show has initially committed 50 frames to our group and there is a possibility of more if we commit well in advance. The Sarasota show typically fills its frames 6 months or more in advance. That's one of the reasons for this early notice. For you authors in the *Prexie Era* Newsletter or the *U.S. Specialist* or any publication, Sarasota also sponsors a literature exhibit restricted to articles only. The literature also fills quickly. We will have a call for exhibits shortly after the first of the year along with more information. Sarasota is a great place to be in February and offers plenty to do for non-philatelic spouses. So, start your exhibit engines now and save up those airline miles for February 2021 in Sarasota.

# The Trans-Pacific Route to Germany and Poland in 1940

by Ken Lawrence



Figure 1: September 13, 1940, Dallas to Berlin, endorsed “Via Pacific Ports and Siberia,” censored at Berlin, forwarded to a Berlin address, sent by surface mail at the 5 cents per ounce Universal Postal Union rate.

For one month in 1940 — from September 6 to October 5 — senders in the United States could mail letters to Germany and Poland by a trans-Pacific route. The September 3, 1940, *Postal Bulletin* (#18022) carried this announcement dated August 29:

#### MAILS FOR GERMANY AND POLAND

Commencing with the sailing of the S.S. *President Cleveland* from San Francisco, September 6, 1940, Postal Union (regular) mails (ordinary and registered) for Germany and Poland will be dispatched via Japan and the trans-Siberian railway. Consequently, all mails for the countries named should be routed via San Francisco or Seattle until otherwise instructed.

SMITH W. PERDUM  
Second Assistant Postmaster General

Even before the S.S. *President Cleveland* departed with the first load of mail to Germany and Poland over that route, Perdum had amended his order with this September 4 notice published in the September 9 *Postal Bulletin* (#18026):

#### MAILS FOR ESTONIA, GERMANY, LATVIA, POLAND, AND UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

In connection with the notices appearing in the August 8 and September 3 issues of the *POSTAL BULLETIN*, relative to the routing and dispatch of mails for Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics via Japan and the trans-Siberian railway, it is directed that mails for the countries mentioned be hereafter routed exclusively to San Francisco.

SMITH W. PERDUM  
Second Assistant Postmaster General

That one was followed in short order by this September 10 notice in the September 11 *Postal Bulletin* (#18028):

#### MAILS FOR ESTONIA, GERMANY, LATVIA, POLAND, AND UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

Referring to the notices appearing in the August 8 and September 3 issues of the *POSTAL BULLETIN*, relative to the routing and dispatch of mails for Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics via Japan and the trans-Siberian railway, attention is invited to the fact that the trans-Pacific Clipper mail service is not available for the dispatch of air mails to the countries mentioned. Postmasters will cause due notice of the foregoing to be taken

at their offices.

**SMITH W. PERDUM**  
Second Assistant Postmaster General

The Figure 1 surface-rate cover from the United States to Germany complied with all those instructions and restrictions. Canceled SEP 13 1940 at Dallas, Texas, it was posted in time to catch the S.S. *President Garfield*, which departed San Francisco on September 17.

Finally, this October 4 notice appeared in the October 7 Postal Bulletin (#18046):

**MAILS FOR GERMANY AND POLAND**  
The notice of August 29 printed in the **POSTAL BULLETIN** of September 3 providing for the forwarding via the trans-Pacific route of surface mails for Germany and Poland is rescinded effective immediately. Consequently, all such mails for the countries named, whether or not specifically addressed for dispatch by some other route, will be sent to New York for dispatch by steamships sailing from that port.

**SMITH W. PERDUM**  
Second Assistant Postmaster General

No explanation accompanied the notice, but it probably represented the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration's agreement with Great Britain to allow British censorship of

U.S. mail addressed to Axis and Axis-occupied destinations in Europe, and, to the extent possible, to restrict foreign mail from routes that could have evaded interception at British censorship stations.

The Figure 2 combination-rate cover from the United States to Germany bears a SEP 27 1940 cancel of Hartford, Connecticut. Postage included the 5 cents per ounce surface rate to a foreign destination, a 3 cents per ounce surcharge for domestic air transport to San Francisco, and a 3 cents per half ounce surcharge for air mail transport in Europe, in this case from the terminus of the trans-Siberian railway at Moscow onward by air to Berlin.

The cover was posted well ahead of Perdum's termination order. The S.S. *President Coolidge* departed San Francisco for Japan on October 5, the day after Perdum signed his order, but two days before notice was sent to postmasters. It is therefore virtually certain that the letter sailed on the last trans-Pacific departure that carried U.S. letters to Germany and Poland.

Prepayment of U.S. postage for a wartime flight from Moscow to Berlin is probably rare, but in my opinion is overshadowed by the significance of the route.



Figure 2: September 27, 1940, Hartford, Connecticut, to Franzensbad, Egerland, Germany (part of annexed Czech Sudetenland), endorsed "via San Francisco" and "via Japan & Siberia S.S. President Coolidge," censored at Berlin, forwarded to Landsberg am Lech, Bavaria, sent by air mail "To - EXCHANGE OFFICE - Only" at the 5 cents per ounce UPU rate plus 3

cents per ounce air surcharge within the continental U.S. plus 3 cents per half ounce air surcharge within Europe.

# Maximum Postage, Special Handling, and Insurance Fees

by Bob Hohertz



This shipping card, sent from New York in May of 1952, was part of a package sent both insured and with special handling. It was part of Bob Rufe's special handling collection until recently, and all of the following commentary is based on his write-up.

So far as special handling goes, as of January 1, 1949, the rate for handling a package weighing more than ten pounds was 25 cents. Trouble was, the highest denomination of special handling stamp available was 20 cents. Accordingly, special handling shipments over ten pounds began to use regular postage stamps to pay the fee.

The package this card was part of weighed well

over ten pounds, so the special handling fee was set at the maximum 25 cents.

In May 1952, the maximum weight allowed for a parcel post package was 70 pounds. If we assume a package of that weight went to Zone 8, the maximum distance, the postage would amount to \$9.93.

The maximum insurance coverage allowed at the time was \$200, costing 35 cents.

The postage paid was \$10.53. This was made up of  $\$.25 + \$9.93 + \$.35 = \$10.53$ . Thus it paid the maximum postage, maximum special handling fee, and maximum insurance fee. As Bob put it, "A true 'Chart Buster.'"



No. 89 Spring 2020

# The Prexie Era

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## Prexie Era Non-Standard Postmark: Camp Swift, Texas

by Stephen L. Suffet



Figure 1. 1-cent local non-carrier usage within Camp Swift, Texas, with non-standard postmark. February 13, 1945.

Figure 1 shows a cover with a 1-cent stamp canceled with a most unusual postmark. It is a double line oval device measuring 31 by 25 millimeters. Inside the oval along the top is the name of a person, IRIS ROE KIMBROUGH, while inside the oval along the bottom are the words CAMP SWIFT, TEXAS. On three lines in the center of the oval are the month and day, time, and year: FEB. 13 / 2:00 PM. /1945. This non-standard postmark is struck in magenta ink.

Located in Bastrop County, Texas, approximately seven miles north of the town of Bastrop, Camp Swift was built early in 1942 as a U.S. Army transit and training center. The camp was later used as a facility for German prisoners-of-war, and during the war it housed as many as 10,000 POWs at one time, as well as up to 90,000 American soldiers. Camp Swift still exists today as a Texas National Guard training facility. The Texas Wing of the Civil Air Patrol uses it as its home base, and FEMA



Figure 2. Part of Camp Swift, Texas, circa 1942-1945. Photographer unknown. The post office was located in the left end of the long building closest to the front.

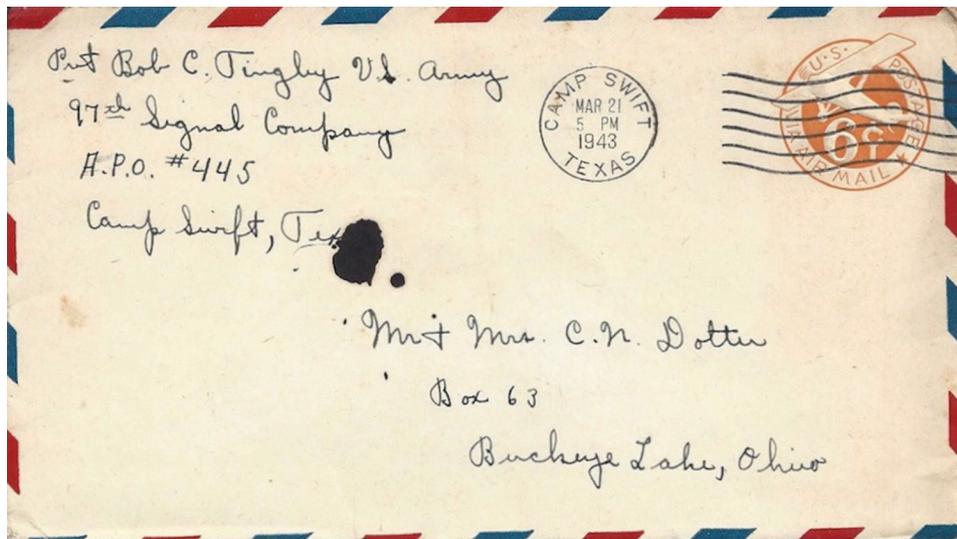


Figure 3. 6-cent airmail stamped envelope with Camp Swift, Texas, machine cancellation. March 21, 1943. A.P.O. #445, in return address. This Army Post Office served only units of the 97th Infantry Division while in training at Camp Swift, and it departed at the end of January 1944 when the 97th was relocated.

has designated it as a primary staging area for Central Texas.

The Camp Swift post office, visible in Figure 2, opened on or about June 1, 1942, as an independent branch of the Bastrop post office.

As such, it was a civilian post office under the jurisdiction of the Post Office Department, rather than an Army Post Office run by the War Department. Nevertheless, from February 25, 1943, through January 31, 1944, Army Post Office 445 served the 97th Infantry Division

while it was in training at Camp Swift. Figure 3 shows a cover mailed during that period, with a Camp Swift machine cancellation and A.P.O. #445 in the return address. While both were at Camp Swift, the APO and the civilian post office most likely operated side-by-side. The civilian post office remained after APO 445 was relocated along with the 97th Infantry Division to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

As a branch of the Bastrop post office, the Camp Swift post office did not have its own postmaster, so its employees were at least nominally under the supervision of the Bastrop postmaster. How much supervision that postmaster exercised I do not know. What I have been able to find out is that Iris Kimbrough, whose name is in the return address of the cover in Figure 1, was a postal employee at Camp Swift. Perhaps she was even the employee in charge.

Why did Iris have her own postmark made up? One can only speculate. Maybe she used it only on mail within Camp Swift. Then again, maybe not. We do know that the Camp Swift post office had a Universal canceling machine, so we could reasonably guess that it had been issued one or more standard devices for hand

stamping postmarks. If so, I have not been able to find an example of any such postmark, so it could be that the devices were lost, damaged, stolen, or never even issued.

In any case, additional examples of Iris Kimbrough's non-standard postmark should exist. Has any reader of *The Prexie Era* seen one? I have not.

Here are two final comments:

- The cover in Figure 1 is addressed to a soldier at Camp Swift, so the 1-cent stamp paid the one-ounce first class rate for a local letter deposited for pickup at a post office without carrier service. In practice, a company clerk would pick up mail for his unit and then distribute it at mail call. That, however, was not considered carrier service since the company clerk was not a Post Office Department letter carrier.
- One can still address mail to Camp Swift, Texas. The ZIP Code is 78602, which is also the ZIP Code for Bastrop. There is, however, no longer a Camp Swift branch office on base. Mail addressed to Camp Swift is delivered from the Bastrop Carrier Annex in town.

### **Prexie Era Subscription Renewals Now Due**

It is time to renew your annual subscription to *The Prexie Era*. The cost is \$10 for the print version and \$5 for the electronic version. These modest fees barely pay the cost of reproducing and mailing out a year's subscription.

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Jeff can be reached at: **[dirtyoldcovers@aol.com](mailto:dirtyoldcovers@aol.com)**

# The Missing 23-Cent Benjamin Harrison Stamp

by Ken Lawrence



Figure 1. A total of 23 cents postage, paid by one 3-cent Thomas Jefferson sheet stamp and one 20-cent James A. Garfield stamp, paid 8 cents double letter ( $\leq$  two ounces) UPU surface postage plus 15 cents registry fee on this December 6, 1939, cover from Sacramento, California, which transited New York City December 10 and arrived at Schattdorf, Switzerland, December 26.

United States presidents numbered in order from one through twenty-two (George Washington through Grover Cleveland) appeared in portrait and inscription sequence on consecutive whole-cent denominations of 1938 Presidential series postage stamps.

Benjamin Harrison was the 23rd president of the United States. Breaking rank in the set, his image and name are on the 24-cent denomination. The real 24th president was Grover Cleveland, who, as noted, had already been featured on the 22-cent stamp.

After the 23rd level lapse, the series resumed with 25th president William McKinley as

the subject of the 25-cent stamp. The rest of the progression advanced by leaps to higher useful round-number denominations: Theodore Roosevelt on the 30-cent; William Howard Taft on the 50-cent; Woodrow Wilson on the \$1; Warren G. Harding on the \$2; and Calvin Coolidge on the \$5, completing the roster of former presidents who were no longer alive.

I haven't read or heard a plausible explanation or an implausible excuse\* for giving Cleveland's second number to Harrison instead of Harrison's own, nor do I see why whoever made that choice thought a 24-cent stamp might have been of greater interest or use than a 23-cent.

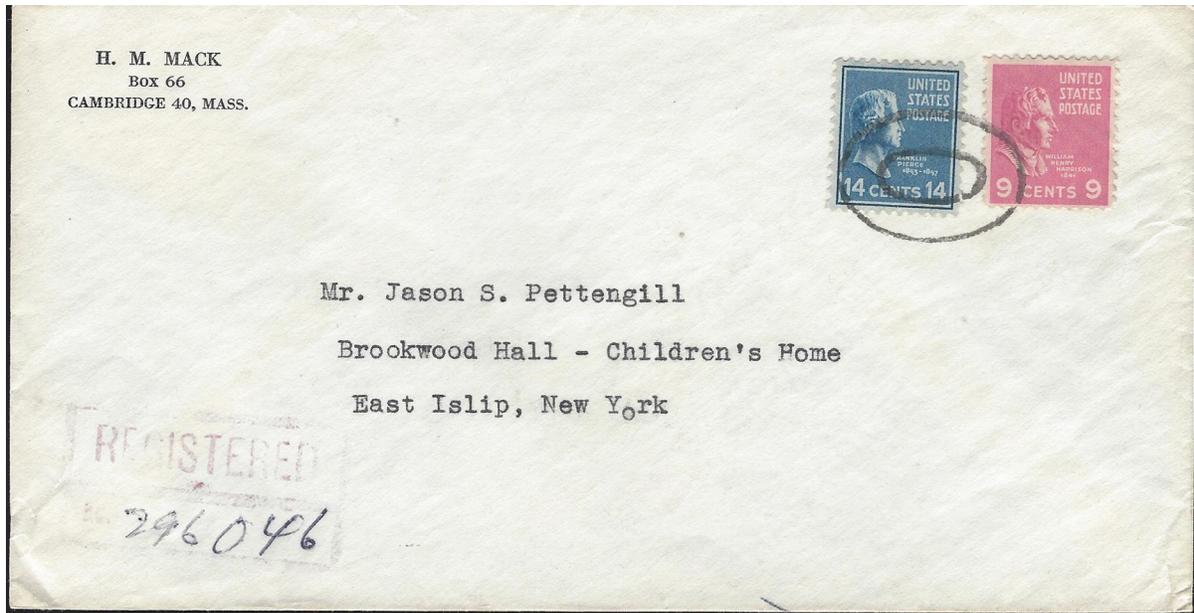


Figure 2. A total of 23 cents postage, paid by one 9-cent William Henry Harrison stamp and one 14-cent Franklin Pierce stamp, paid 3 cents single letter surface postage plus 20 cents registry fee on this December 16, 1946, cover mailed at Cambridge, Massachusetts, which arrived at East Islip, New York, the following day.

(However, the 24-cent Prexie was a more useful stamp than Roland Rustad’s list of uncommon rate and fee combinations to pay single-stamp uses suggested. Intuitive solo uses were four times the various 6 cents per ounce and per half-ounce, and three times the various 8 cents per ounce and per half-ounce, air mail rates, typically on large envelopes.)

My Figure 1 cover shows that from the very outset a 23-cent Harrison stamp would have been handy to have (8 cents double foreign letter plus 15 cents registry to a Universal Postal Union member country destination), and my Figure 2 cover demonstrates that it would have become a commonly used denomination (3 cents single domestic letter plus 20 cents registry) after the 1944 rate and fee increases.

The thrust of these observations is that the 22-cent Grover Cleveland stamp was the Post Office Department’s mistake. My Figure 3 cover — another that required 23 cents postage to pay for the same common rate and fee

combination as the Figure 2 cover — illustrates the absurdity of the denomination. It is as near to a “common” use of the 22-cent stamp as one is likely to find.

Cleveland’s stamp had so few practical uses from 1938 until 1985, when 22 cents became the single domestic letter rate (introduced by non-denominated D-rate stamps and stamped envelopes), that collectors of single Presidential series stamps on cover have a difficult time finding examples that pay exact combinations of postage and fees.

But if the POD had issued a 23-cent Harrison stamp and a 24-cent Cleveland stamp, assigning correct sequential denominations to both presidents, the series would have remained true to its premise, and would better have served those of us who learned the presidents’ numbers from our stamp collections, with the gap at number 22 placing the asterisk for Cleveland’s detached terms at our first encounter with him.

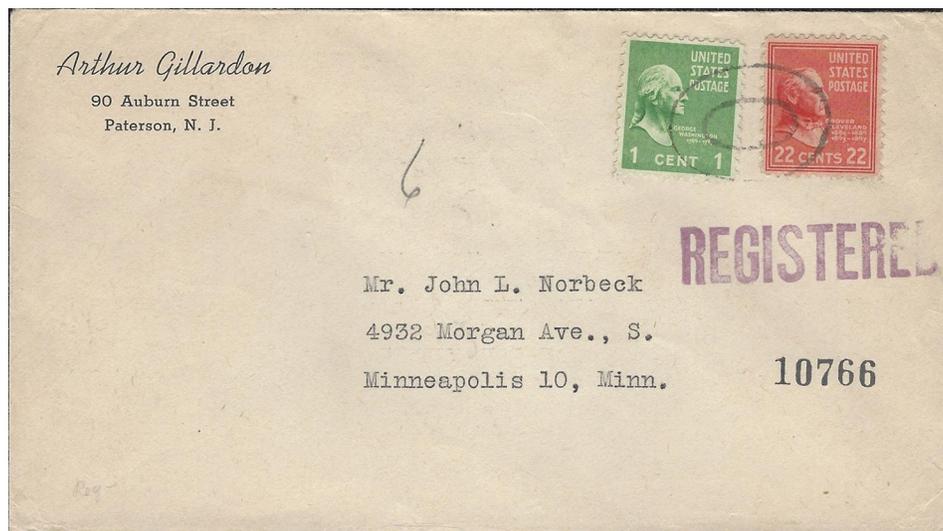


Figure 3. A total of 23 cents postage, paid by one 1-cent George Washington sheet stamp and one 22-cent Grover Cleveland stamp, paid 3 cents single letter surface postage plus 20 cents registry fee on this October 15, 1947, cover mailed at Paterson, New Jersey, which arrived at Minneapolis, Minnesota, two days later.

To confirm this article’s conjecture, collectors who have passed the point of diminishing returns in pursuit of solo-use Prexie covers might benefit from reversing the challenge: Try to collect as many Prexie era whole-cent exact-rate and exact-rate-and-fee combination cover steps from 1 cent to 25 cents as possible, without regard to the stamps, postal indicia, or meter imprints that paid their postage. Which ones are truly scarce, besides exact-rate combination 19-cent and 22-cent frankings? Not 23 cents, I can assure them.

\* Elmo Scott Watson, in a contemporaneous end-of-the-year retrospective syndicated news

story on the Presidential series, wrote: “It will be noticed that there is no 23-cent stamp. That’s not because of any superstition in regard to that number or any desire to avoid perpetuation of the ‘23-skidoo’ tradition. Grover Cleveland, who appears on the 22-cent stamp, served two terms in the White House, but they were not consecutive. He was defeated by Benjamin Harrison, who served one, then ‘staged a comeback’ and was elected for another four-year term. So it seemed the logical thing to place his portrait with the dates of his two terms on the 22-cent stamp and place Harrison on the 24-cent issue.” Logical to place Harrison on the 24 cent, or goofy thinking?

### Complete Run of *The Prexie Era* Available Again

Subscribers who don’t yet have a complete run of *The Prexie Era* can obtain it from your editor via the file transfer protocol, WeTransfer. Post Jeff Shapiro \$10, then send me your email address. The folder you receive will be fairly large and may take a couple of minutes to download.

You can pay via PayPal ([dirtyoldcovers@aol.com](mailto:dirtyoldcovers@aol.com)), but if so, add a 50-cent surcharge.

# Repatriation of Enemy Nationals on SS *Drottningholm*, 1942

by Louis Fiset



When the U.S. entered World War II, diplomats of enemy nations and their staffs and families were detained pending safe repatriation to their homelands.

On May 7, 1942 the Swedish American Line ship, SS *Drottningholm*, under charter by the State Department, sailed for Lisbon from New York harbor with 948 passengers, all members of the diplomatic corps and officials from Germany, Italy, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, American Republics, as well as their families and staffs.

A second diplomatic voyage left New York on June 3, 1942, with 949 enemy “non-officials” aboard.

The message on the postcard, showing the ship in its prewar livery, was written in Spanish on June 3rd as the passenger awaited her departure for Lisbon later in the day. Likely she was a German national who played a lesser diplomatic role in Bolivia, or a family member of a diplomat repatriated on the first voyage. The postcard was held by U.S. censorship and not released until September 12, 1945

## A Deceptively Unusual Occurrence of UK/US Censorship

by Dann Mayo



Figure 1. Correspondence from the U.S. to England, posted 11 days before an agreement between the U.S., UK and Canada to avoid duplication of censorship. Shown here, censorship at Los Angeles (1630) and London (373).

[Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the *Civil Censorship Study Group Bulletin*, 47:1(Jan 2020), p40.]

The cover shown in Figure 1, sent four weeks after the United States began censoring civilian mail, bears an early Los Angeles censor handstamp (Broderick and Mayo C 1.3, recorded used January-March 1942) and a British PC 90 tape. The GB tape is common and the LA handstamp is not particularly scarce, but their appearance together is.

On January 21, 1942, censorship officials the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom entered into an agreement that established procedures for sharing information, and further,

that provided for a centralization of records, and measures designed to avoid duplication of effort by allocating primary responsibility for examination to the various signatories.

Under this agreement, a cover censored in the US would not be re-opened for examination in the UK unless there was something about it that caught British censorship's attention (most likely the presence of the name of the sender or addressee on a watch list). The duplication of effort shown on the above cover is just the sort of thing they wanted to eliminate. Subsequently, one tends to find US-GB covers censored in one country or the other, but not both.

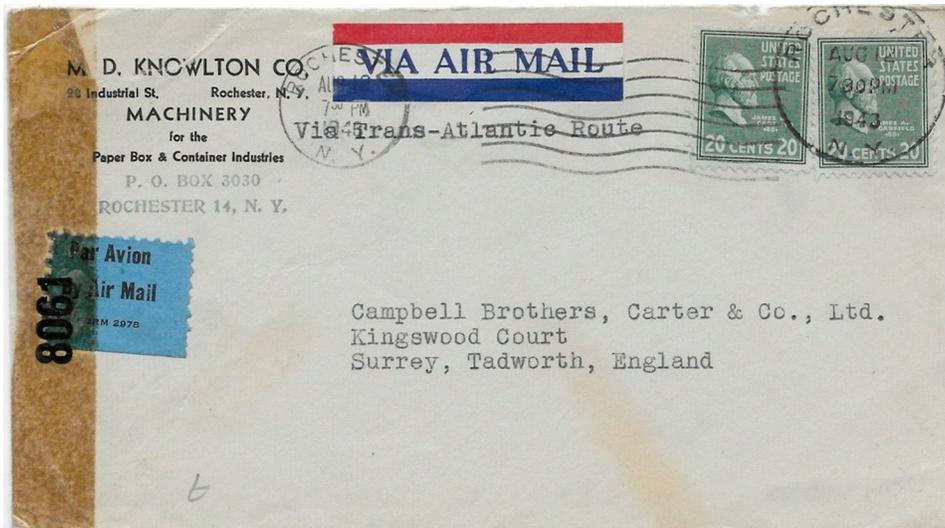


Figure 2. Airmail correspondence from the U.S. to England, postmarked August 12, 1943, showing single censorship, at New York. Over franked by 10 cents.

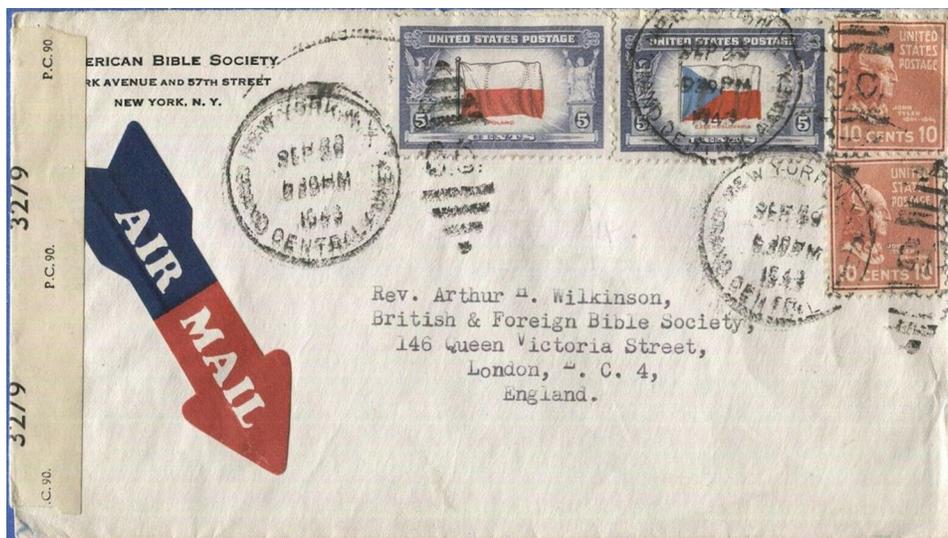


Figure 3. 1943 correspondence from the U.S. to England showing British censorship (3279), at London.

The standard treatment for US-UK airmail would have been censorship in the US, as international airmail was supposed to be 100 percent censored before transmission.

When a cover missed being examined in the US it was fair game for the British censors. (Surface mail received less scrutiny on the US, so that GB-only censorship is more common on such covers.)

*Note:* The brief but useful post-war official Report on the Office of Censorship, which was reproduced in Broderick and Mayo, is now available for free at:

<http://bl-libg-doghill.ads.iu.edu/gpd-web/historical/Reportontheofficeofcensorship.pdf>

## Two Ill-fated *Prince George* Passenger Ships

by Jeffrey Shapiro



Canadian National Steamships' S.S. "Prince George"



While a John Adams Prexie paid the common domestic postcard rate, I was struck by the ship's purser's improvised provisional cancel. But there was more to be discovered about the SS *Prince George* pictured on the reverse side. This was the second passenger ship of that name to cruise the Inside Passage Route between Skagway, AK, Prince Rupert and Vancouver, BC.

The first *Prince George* was in service for the Grand Trunk Steamship Company from August 1910 until September 22, 1945. The second, launched in 1947, initiated service for the successor to the bankrupt Grand Trunk Line, the Canadian National Steamship Company.

Besides passengers, both ships carried bad luck. Not only did the ship run aground four times (December 1910, July 1920, December 1933 and December 1937), on September 22,

1945, the first *Prince George* caught fire while docked at Ketchikan, Alaska then ran aground at nearby Gravina Island while being towed. The ill-fated ship languished there until 1948 when it was towed to Seattle for scrap.

The second *Prince George* also sailed the Inside Passage, and the bad luck continued. In September 1950, off Prince Rupert, the ship collided with its sister ship, SS *Princess Kathleen*. Then in October 1953, in heavy fog, the ship ran aground in Johnstone Strait, off Vancouver Island.

After repair, the *Prince George* resumed summer cruises to Southeast Alaska until 1976 when the ship was sold for use as a floating restaurant. In October 1995, the ship caught fire in Britannia Beach, BC, was destroyed then sold to China for scrap. As it was being towed across the Pacific, the burned-out hulk sank.



No. 90 Summer 2020

# *The Prexie Era*

Publication of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

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## **Robert Schlesinger Sale of Prexie Postal History**

by Albert “Chip” Briggs

Substantial collections of Presidential Series postal history have made infrequent appearances in the philatelic marketplace. Prior to this year, the last significant collection to be dispersed was Dickson Preston’s wonderful exhibit collection which was handled by dealer David Grossblat of Phoenix, Arizona in 2015. One would have to go back to 2010 when Larry Paige’s accumulation was sold (also by Grossblat) and well before then, to the early to mid-2000’s when Randy Neil’s (auction), Leonard Piszkiwicz’s (net price and ebay), and Steve Suffet’s (auction) collections were dispersed to find other large exhibit level collection sales.

Current collectors have been fortunate to have two collections sold at public auction in the past year; the Richard Levy collection by the Kelleher firm, and the Robert Schlesinger collection in 84 lots by Rumsey Auctions of San Francisco this past June (Sale 92).

Like most postal historians, Bob began by collecting stamps. He first developed an interest in postal history in the early 1980’s. The intellectual challenge of “having to know what you are looking at” ignited his passion and prompted his first foray into exhibiting, at the Rockford, Illinois show in 1980. His first exhibit was on United States parcel post,

which, by his own admission, was “not very good.” He continued to hone his exhibiting skills, looking forward to participating in Ameripex 86, the large international show held in Chicago.

In the mid-1990’s Bob gravitated to collecting the Presidential Series with an emphasis on rates. His early collecting benefitted from Richard Drews’ purchase of the Roland Rustad collection sold by the Siegel firm. The single lot was resold as individual items, and the collection widely dispersed. Bob became a more serious buyer around the time of Pacific 97, the large international show he attended in San Francisco. While most people trade or sell items during their collecting career, a number of interesting and scarce pieces have resided in his collection for almost the entire duration of his interest in the Prexies. Some of the items that Bob has kept since his early days of collecting include 11-cent, 17-cent, 19-cent, and 22-cent solo uses he obtained out of the Rustad collection as well as the 10-cent insured Grace Coolidge free frank, which he purchased in a Kelleher auction in 2001.

Mentorship played an important role in Schlesinger’s success. Bob (as most all Prexie collectors) benefitted from the knowledge and advice of other authors, collectors, and

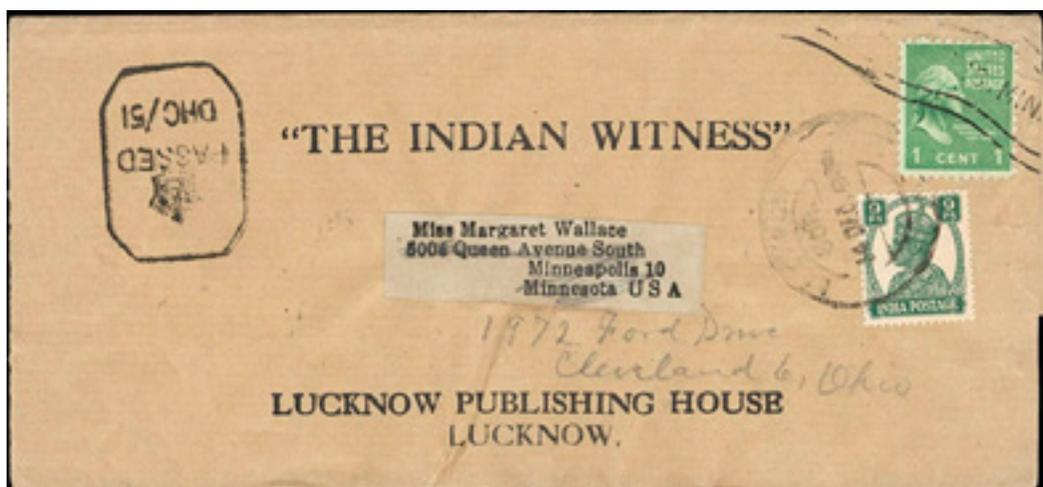


Figure 1: Second class transient rate to remail a newspaper wrapper initially mailed in India. Lot 1370, realized \$525.

exhibitors such as Steve Suffet, Dickson Preston, and Louis Fiset. With perseverance and an eye for important and high quality material, Bob created a 10 frame rate study exhibit that has garnered numerous gold medals and special awards. He has also shared his knowledge and experience by writing numerous articles appearing in *The Prexie Era*, *United States Specialist*, and *The American Philatelist*.

Exhibit fatigue set in after more than two decades of collecting, writing, and exhibiting. Remounting a gold medal display demands a lot of time, so with a planned a move from Chicago to Denver area to be near family, the time seemed right to sell.

A number of options exist for selling a substantial exhibit collection, and Bob considered all of them. He felt that selling individual items on eBay would be too time consuming. He considered selling to a nationally known dealer but ultimately settled on public auction. After consulting with friends in the Chicago collecting community he selected Rumsey Auctions. Even after the decision was made it was difficult to part with what had provided so many rewards over the years. On the way to FedEx to ship his collection to San Francisco he asked himself "should I really do this?"

Scheduled to be held at WESTPEX 2020 in April, the sale was postponed until the second week of June due to the coronavirus pandemic. The delay did not dampen enthusiasm nor, in the end, realizations.

Presented in 84 lots, with an estimate ranging between \$42,725.00 and \$57,250.00, the sale realized 74,565.00. Only four lots remained unsold -- a sale rate of over 95 percent.

The sale started with a bang. Lot 1370 (Figure 1), a one-cent Prexie tied by a Minneapolis, Minnesota roller cancel used to pay the second class transient rate of one cent per two ounces to remail a wrapper on a newspaper initially mailed in Lucknow, India to Cleveland, Ohio, realized \$525.00. It had been estimated at \$100.00 to \$150.00. Second class transient rate uses are uncommon, and this one is exceptionally rare.

Covers mailed to or from undercover addresses related to the Manhattan Project did exceptionally well. Lot 1375, franked with a three cent Presidential and mailed to P.O. Box 1663, Sante Fe, New Mexico realized \$700.00 against an estimate of \$200.00 to \$300.00. Another undercover address use was knocked down two lots later for \$2,100.00. This one,

franked with five 3-cent Prexies plus a 1 cent Prexie, paid the 16-cent air mail special delivery rate on an outbound cover from P.O. Box 1539, Sante Fe, New Mexico in August 1943. While none of the Manhattan Project undercover addresses can be considered common or easy to find, an outbound use from P.O. Box 1539 is rare. While incoming mail typically has evidence of censorship, mail originating from employees, scientists or family members of people working on the Manhattan Project was submitted unsealed to censors and bore no

cancel markings. Lot 1377 is a prime example of a cover with a rather mundane appearance representing a true postal history gem.

An early opportunity for collectors of solo uses came with a number of 11 cent covers, beginning with Lot 1391. This lot, shown in Figure 2, as well as the next four, were all single stamp uses of the James Polk definitive. The first offering, an August 22, 1939 use to Poland, paid the scarce air mail surcharge in the United States of three cents, five cents surface



Figure 2: An 11-cent James Polk solo use paying combination air-surface-air rate to Poland in 1939. Lot 1391, realized \$1,200.



Figure 3: An 11-cent single stamp use illustrated on the cover of Roland Rustad's *The Prexies*. Lot 1393, realized \$1,050.

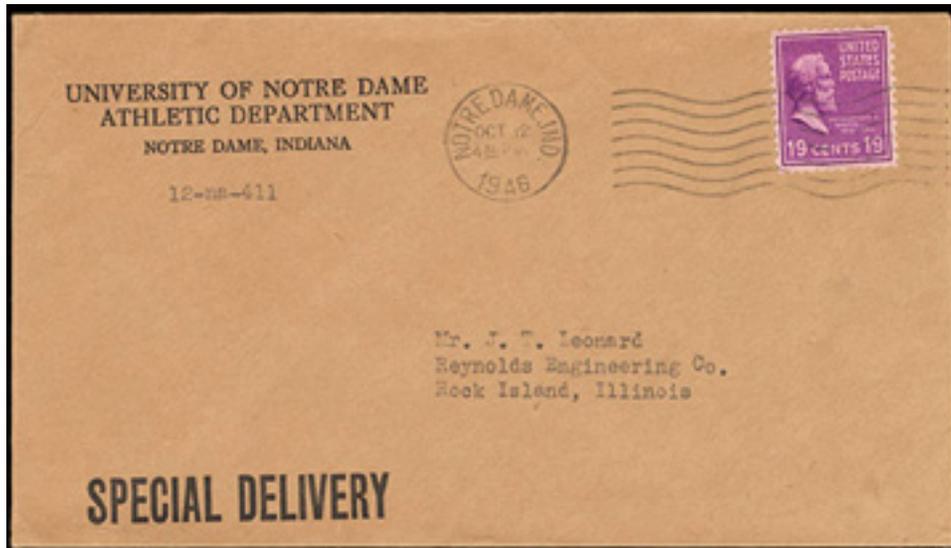


Figure 4: A 19-cent solo use, ex-Roland Rustad. Lot 1407, realized \$1,900.

carriage across the Atlantic and three cents surcharge for air mail service in Europe. It had the added attraction of a receiving stamp on the reverse applied the day Germany invaded Poland. Estimated at \$1000.00 to \$1500.00, it was hammered down for \$1,200.

Lot 1392 featured an 11 cent solo triple UPU surface rate to England in 1943. This cover realized \$525.00 following an estimate of \$750.00 to \$1000.00.

While not noted in the catalog, close observers will recognize Lot 1393 (Figure 3) as one of the items illustrated in color on the front cover of Roland Rustad's *The Prexies*. From Denver stamp dealer A. E. Pade to a collector in Czechoslovakia, the cover pays the air-surface-air rate very early in the Prexie era. The cover has very clear hand stamp endorsements of AIR MAIL TO NEW YORK and VIA AIR MAIL IN EUROPE (partial manuscript) and PER S/S *Europa* making it a very attractive and eye-appealing cover. It realized \$1,050.00 against an estimate of \$750.00 to \$1,000.00.

Lots 1394 and 1395 provided scarce uses of the Polk definitive, as well. The first was on an uprated four-cent air mail post card to Berlin in

1949 realizing \$270.00. The second was a solo use on an air mail post card to Sweden in 1962. It realized \$190.00.

Most specialists recognize as solo uses single stamps uprating postal cards and postal stationery. A key attraction of Lot 1395 was the fact that, despite late use, it paid the exact rate for air mail post card service to Europe; the 11-cent Polk stamp had yet to be replaced by the same denomination of the Liberty Series.

Solo uses of the 19-cent value also did well in the auction. As long time collectors will attest, none are easy to find. Lot 1407 showed another ex-Rustad cover (not described as such), illustrated on page 261 of *The Prexies*. See Figure 4. This is a beautiful 1946 use from the University of Notre Dame Athletic Department paying double the three-cent first class postage rate plus 13 cents special delivery fee to Rock Island, Illinois. This cover realized \$1,900.00, estimated earlier at \$1,500.00 to \$2,000.00.

Another super scarce 19-cent use was Lot 1408, a 1953 insured cover from stamp dealer H. E. Harris. The stamp paid 4 cents for third class postage and a 15-cent insurance fee. That this cover was commercial stamp dealer mail did

not prevent (nor should it have) from realizing \$750.00, five times its low estimate.

Other outstanding solo use realizations resulted. A single one-dollar stamp on a Postal Form 3547 used to notify a change of address

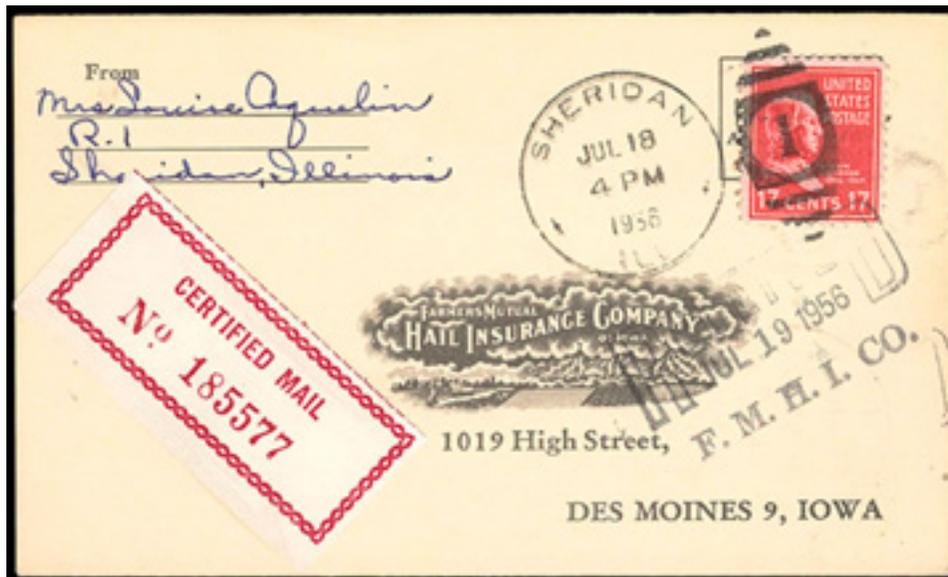


Figure 5: A 17-cent certified post card use. Lot 1406, realized \$2,200.00.



Figure 6: A 1941 registered reply card to German occupied Poland, held by the British until after the war. Lot 1422, realized \$1,450.00.

fetched a whopping \$2,200.00 (Lot 1436). A 2-dollar solo air mail registered use to French Cameroons, West Africa went for \$1,600.00 (Lot 1438), while a domestic, 2-dollar solo registered cover addressed to Robert A. Siegel sold for \$1,450.00 (Lot 1440).

Two other stellar solo performers are notable. Brisk bidding on a post card with a 17-cent definitive paying certified mail fee of 15 cents in addition to the current domestic post card rate (Figure 5) was not done until it hit \$2,200.00.

Similarly, bidding on a 10-cent solo coil use did not stop until reaching \$2,800.00 (Lot 1451). The coil use is listed in Scott Specialized at a current value of \$1,200.00.

Covers with strong historical connections also did very well. In addition to the aforementioned Manhattan Project covers, Lot 1422, a registered reply card to German occupied Poland, intercepted by the British and held for the duration of the war, found a buyer at \$1,450.00 (Figure 6). A two ocean registered cover mailed from Hawaii less than a week after Pearl Harbor was bombed found a new home at \$1,250.00.

Finally, a cover carried on the last pre-war westbound flight of the *Anzac Clipper* franked with \$2.80 was hammered down for \$7,500.00, the highest single item realization of the sale (Lot 1437).

Only four lots went unsold. Lots 1404 and 1413, both illustrated in *The Prexies*, did not find buyers. In my opinion, Lot 1404 failed to sell due to an overly optimistic estimate. Lot 1413, while a rare use, has a lot of markings on the front, some of them reducing eye appeal.

This sale represents the most significant sale of Prexie postal history in several years as reflected in strong realizations and high percentage of lots sold. Scott Catalog editors will no doubt be busy re-evaluating values for on-cover uses for the next edition.

While Bob felt some of the covers in the balance lot could have been individually lotted, perhaps boosting overall realization, he was very pleased with the results. Reflecting on the second thoughts he was having on the way to FedEx to ship the collection to San Francisco, he said “but now I’m glad I did.”

### **Complete Run of *The Prexie Era* Available Again**

Subscribers wishing to have a complete run of *The Prexie Era* can obtain it from your editor via the file transfer protocol, WeTransfer. Send Jeff Shapiro \$10, then send me your current email address. The folder you receive will be fairly large and may take a couple of minutes to download. Just open the email from WeTransfer and follow the instructions.

You can pay via Paypal ([dirtyoldcovers@aol.com](mailto:dirtyoldcovers@aol.com)). If you use this payment method, add a 50-cent surcharge.

## Honolulu to Corregidor 1942, Delivered Australia

by Joe Bock



Rec'd Melb Aust 8/24 from  
OPNAV Washington

"Rec'd Melb (Melbourne) Aust 8/24 from  
OPNAV (Naval Operations) Washington"

The cover illustrated here was postmarked January 13, 1942 and sent from Honolulu to Corregidor, Philippine Islands correctly franked with 30 cents postage for airmail to Manila. It bears the typical "RELEASED/BY ICB" Honolulu censor marking on the reverse. Airmail service was suspended since Pearl Harbor. Thus delayed in transmission, the addressee was no longer at Corregidor (blue pencil strike). Ordinarily, such mail would be returned. However, a pencil docketing on the reverse states "Rec'd Melb (Melbourne) Aust 8/24 from OPNAV (Naval Operations) Washington". Thus, we know the correspondence was delivered, although it was eight months in transit.

Chief Yeoman Victor J Knutson was part of the 75 man Fleet Radio unit on Corregidor that escaped to Australia before Corregidor fell to the Japanese in May 1942. Prior to coming to Australia, these were the U.S. Navy code breakers that had moved from Cavite Naval Station to a tunnel on Corregidor after the Japanese began their attacks in the Philippines.

When the situation became desperate, again they were evacuated, this time by submarine. Knutson was part of the second group evacuated by the submarine USS *Permit* on the night of 15-16 March 1942.

This unit was part of the joint RAN/USN Fleet Radio Unit, Melbourne and one of two Allied Sigint organizations in the South West Pacific area (SWPA), code named "Ultra". "Sigint" (signal intelligence) operations were so secret that they were given their own special classification of "Ultra Secret". The word "Ultra" was used as a code name for intelligence derived from interception and decoding of Japanese military and naval messages, which proved pivotal only three months later in the Battle of Midway.

Unclear is how this correspondence reached Knutson, by military air transport or surface. Likely it was transported among an accumulation of letters that had been held and released (sent to Melbourne) in late July 1942.

## Cover To A German Jewish Refugee Interned In Canada

by Stephen L. Suffet



*Figure:* 3-cents per ounce U.S. letter rate to Canada. The Base Army Post Office address in Ottawa served as a central address for routing mail to the various civilian internment camps. Camp N was actually located in Sherbrooke, Quebec.

As any serious collector of postal history quickly learns, a seemingly ordinary cover often has a fascinating back story. Such is the case with the cover shown here. The 1-cent Prexie and 2-cent National Defense Issue stamps teamed up to pay the exceptionally common 3-cents per ounce U.S. letter rate to Canada. Since the postmark date is November 3, 1941, and Canada was then at war, the cover was subject to censorship upon arrival in that country. There is nothing unusual about that.

Look, however, at the address:

Mr. Joseph Bachrach  
Camp "N"  
Base Army Post-Office  
Ottawa, Canada

Camp N was one of more than two dozen facilities established throughout Canada to house civilian internees of war. A number of those camps later housed military prisoners of war as well.

The Ottawa address is misleading. The Base Army Post Office, located in the Canadian capital, merely served as a central address for routing mail to the various camps. Camp N, which opened in October 1940, was actually located in Sherbrooke, Quebec, about 300 kilometers to the east. Among its earliest residents were German merchant seamen who had been in Canada or elsewhere in the British Commonwealth or Empire at the time the Second World War broke out.

Other internees would arrive later, including Joseph Bachrach, who was among approximately 2,300 German and Austrian Jews living in the United Kingdom whom the British government detained in 1940 and sent to Canada. About 1,000 of those 2,300 went to Camp N.

At first, other internees, including some actual Nazis and many Nazi sympathizers, taunted and threatened the Jews. After several fights broke out, the camp commandant ordered the guards,

many of them veterans of the First World War, to keep the two groups apart.

By July 1941, both British and Canadian authorities came to realize that the Jewish camp population posed no serious security threat, and their status was changed from civilian internees (i.e., civilian prisoners of war) to refugees. As refugees they could be released to work or to go to school, provided they could find Canadian sponsors. All eventually did.

Born in Papenburg, Germany, on February 9, 1918, Joseph Bachrach came of age as the Nazis gained and consolidated their power. Fearing that worse was yet to come, his parents, Moritz and Flora Bachrach, sent him to England in 1934 to complete his education and to keep him safe from the rising anti-Semitism of Nazi German society.

Moritz Bachrach, M.D., was the person who sent the cover. He, his wife, and their 16-year old daughter Ruth managed to escape Nazi Germany in 1937. They made their way to South Bend, Indiana, where Moritz set up a medical practice while Joseph remained in England.

Joseph Bachrach was a 22-year old university student in 1940 when the British government took him into custody and sent him to Canada.

Some time after the cover arrived in late 1941, the Canadian authorities permitted Joseph Bachrach to leave Camp N, by now redesignated Camp 42, and attend Queen's College in Kingston, Ontario. He graduated

from there in 1944 with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. He then received a master's degree in the same subject from Queen's College in 1945.

In 1946, after the war ended, Joseph Bachrach migrated to the United States to complete his graduate studies at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, where he received his Ph.D. in chemistry in 1950. He then pursued an academic career, eventually becoming the chairman of the chemistry department at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago. By that time Professor Bachrach had become a U.S. citizen.

After retiring from Northeastern Illinois University, Joseph Bachrach continued to teach part-time at Loyola University, also in Chicago. He passed away from a heart attack on December 3, 1998, at the age of 80, leaving behind his sister Ruth, a wife also named Ruth, two grown children, and four grandchildren.

Camp 42, formerly Camp N, finally closed in July 1946. All of its approximately 1,000 Jewish internees/refugees had been released by the end of 1943. So had all of the other German and Austrian Jews that the U.K. had sent to Canada in 1940. Many of these former internees remained in Canada after the war and made important contributions to Canadian society.

Joseph Bachrach, however, made his own life in the United States, as did his parents and his sister.

### **2021 Sarasota National Stamp Exhibition Dates Have Changed**

Prexie era collectors planning to attend and/or exhibit at SNSE 2021 should note that the dates have changed. The show will take place **January 22-24** rather than the usual first weekend in February. SNSE will be hosting the Prexie Era study group and has therefore reserved frames for exhibitors. The prospectus and entry form are available on the website.

## Fifty-Five \$1 Prexies Help Declare \$630,000 Value

by Ed Field



Ordinarily I do not collect \$1 Prexies, but I could not resist the item shown here. Posted May 24 1941, the cover bears fifty-five \$1 Prexies, along with other assorted values, for a total franking of \$63.27. The Zone 3 supplemental fee was 10 cents per ounce; assumed weight is 3 ounces.

The inferred declared value is \$630,000, equivalent to around \$9 million (give or take) today. The relatively small envelope indicates it contained cash rather than, say, bearer bonds. Sixty-three \$1,000 bills would have weighed approximately 2.2 ounces and would have fit. Other combinations of bills are also possible.



No. 91 Autumn 2020

# *The Prexie Era*

Publication of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

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## Scarce Upated Return Receipt (RR) Cards

by Daniel S. Pagter

Some Prexies usages are sought after for their extreme scarcity; some for their revered “solo” stamp use; and others for their destination or origination locations. Combinations of two of these reasons make for postal history that a serious student of the Prexie Series seeks if they don’t have an example. One that incorporates all three, scarcity, solo and good location are must have items, especially for the exhibitors.

When you don’t have one, you want one. When you have one you don’t need more. Of course you and your postal history buddies gather around to ooh and ahh over your one example. We do not often have the luxury to have more than one example, we have our “tree” and are happy. Others have their trees, similar but different from ours. We focus on what our “tree,” our Prexie goodie, has that makes it special and interesting to us. Others do the same for their example enjoying what their tree has.

However in this article, I will look closely at some difference between the six “trees” I discuss. But I also step back to take a look at the “forest” so to speak those six “trees” provide. From that vantage point the “forest” takes on a greater interest than the individual “trees” can provide and leads to new questions.

Interesting domestic locations can generally be broken down into locations ringed by water -- islands or ships, and territories neither ringed by water nor directly connected to the lower 48 states. In general, the lower 48 are the hum locations. Finer divisions and specialized locations exist within all three groupings, but for purposes of this article, such detail is too fine. I am speaking broadly of forests and trees, not with a detail of branches, needles nor leaves regarding locations.

Solo is also a good descriptive term limited to a single stamp on the postal history item, and one that works well here even while avoiding the fine detail of branches, needles and leaves.

Having discussed location and solos, I am left with items of scarcity as the last of the three facets I am considering. Return Receipts (RR) uprated to be returned by airmail are scarce items by any measure used for determining scarcity. I illustrate four in this article and reference two other examples not illustrated because they are not Prexie usages. Rather, they are Liberty Series usages illustrated in Chapter 38 -- Return Receipt (RR) of Beecher and Wawrukiewicz’ *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates* (Figures 38-6 and 38-8 in the revised 2nd edition; Figures 38-7 and 38-9 in the 3rd edition.)

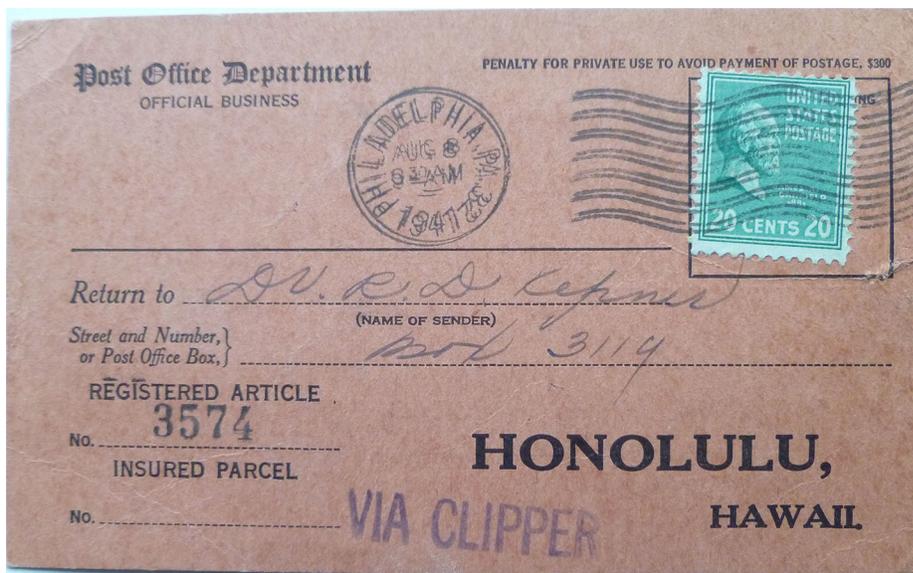


Figure 1. RR card updated to the 20-cent airmail rate from Honolulu to the mainland, acknowledging a registered letter to Hawaii.

Registered mail brought with it the first RR on July 1, 1863. Then use expanded to include Insured mail January 1, 1913. A RR was free of cost when requested until April 15, 1925 when a fee started. Fees were then increased and expanded to include various types of restricted delivery. This is where the RR, USPOD Postal Form #3811, stood at the start of the Prexie era. Prior to the end of the era, Certified Mail arose June 7, 1955 and was included in RR use.

Surface mail return of the RR was provided when requesting and later purchasing the return receipt, as indicated by the “Official Business” and “Penalty For Private Use...” text. That worked well for 75 years until 1938 when RRs returned by airmail were allowed. But to have the RR returned faster by airmail required payment for the full airmail postage by affixing postage to the RR postal card. No postage amount was credited nor discounted for the “free” surface return, which was provided as part of the purchase of a RR.

The RRs have always been a “card” or postal card. At first, return by airmail required the prevailing airmail letter rate postage through December 31, 1948. Except for the August 15, 1929 post card rate for carriage on the Graf Zeppelin, there was no special rate for airmail

postal cards until January 1, 1949, when both postal cards and postcards were provided a special reduced airmail rate of 4 cents. The cost of postage for this service during both the Prexie era and Liberty period was equal to a face value of a single stamp, solo usages could pay the appropriate airmail fee. All shown or mentioned examples sport a “solo” stamp paying the cost except for one Liberty item for which the postage was six cents paid by a pair of three cent Liberties crowded on the card rather than a 6-cent solo. The other Liberty example had a 5-cent solo usage. Each item illustrated or discussed is a wonderful “tree” for a collector, together making a forest. Now for the forest observations.

Each example did not arise in the lower 48. Half returned to Islands, Hawaii, Puerto Rico as well as Guam and half to Alaska (including the two referenced Liberty Era cards), pre- and post statehood. Here we see the surprise outcome of looking at the entire group, the forest, to see that the cards are overwhelmingly and completely from the better originations/destinations rather than the “common” lower 48. Likewise the solo usage is the common one with the pair of threes paying six cents to Alaska the uncommon one.

Figure 1, courtesy of Jeff Shapiro, shows a Registered RR to Hawaii at the then 20-cent Clipper airmail letter rate in effect August 1941.

Figures 2a and b show a December 1953 usage to Puerto Rico at the airmail postal card rate of 4 cents with both Insured and Registered spaces having the same number. This suggests an Insured RR. The reverse provides a generic example of the second side of Form 3811.

The Alaska example, shown in Figure 3, again from the Shapiro collection, is a Registered RR used in January 1954, at the 4-cent airmail card rate to Alaska.

Lastly, Figure 4 shows a Registered RR used

in August 1956 that was returned to Guam at the 4 cent airmail card rate. This is a late Prexie usage, as the 4-cent Liberty (Lincoln) stamp was released November 19, 1954. Notice it is the latest version of the RR, Postal Form 3811, July 1955, with space for a Certified number for use with Certified Mail, a service which began June 7, 1955. This example is from the Robert Schlesinger Collection recently sold in the Scuyler Rumsey Auction (Sale 92). The two referenced Liberty items, both Registered RR, one used April 1959 and the second February 1963, were returned by airmail to the same P.O. Box in Ketchikan, AK.

In summary, while each individual card is a nice solo (save one), returning to a “good”

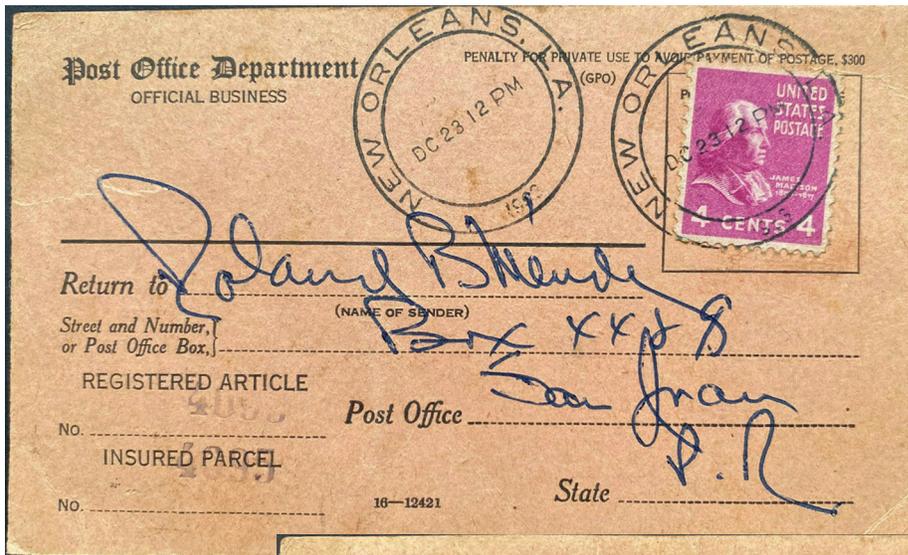


Figure 2a. Up-rated RR card sent at the airmail postal card rate to Puerto Rico, acknowledging an insured, registered item to San Juan.

Figure 2b..A generic RR card showing the back of Form 3811.

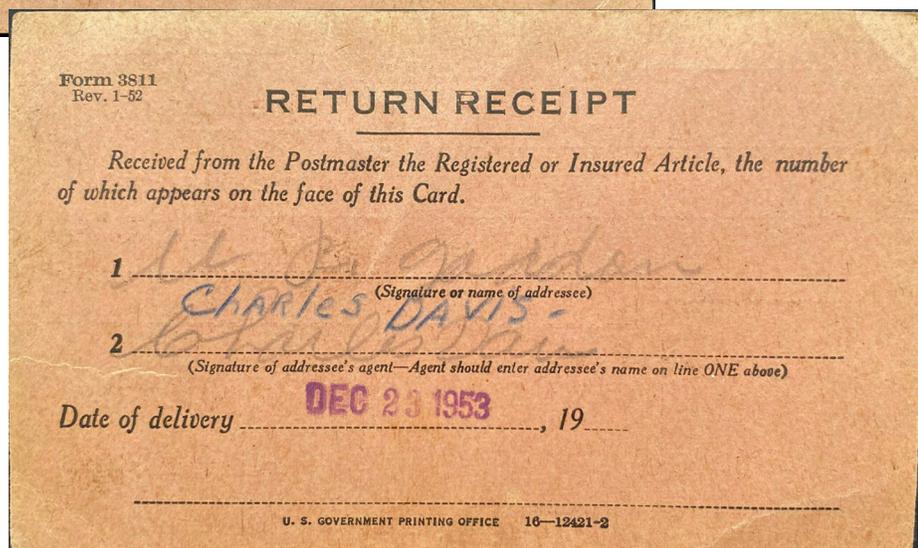


Figure 3. An RR card from Provo, Utah, to Anchorage acknowledging a registered article. Uprated to pay the 4-cent postal card airmail rate to Alaska.

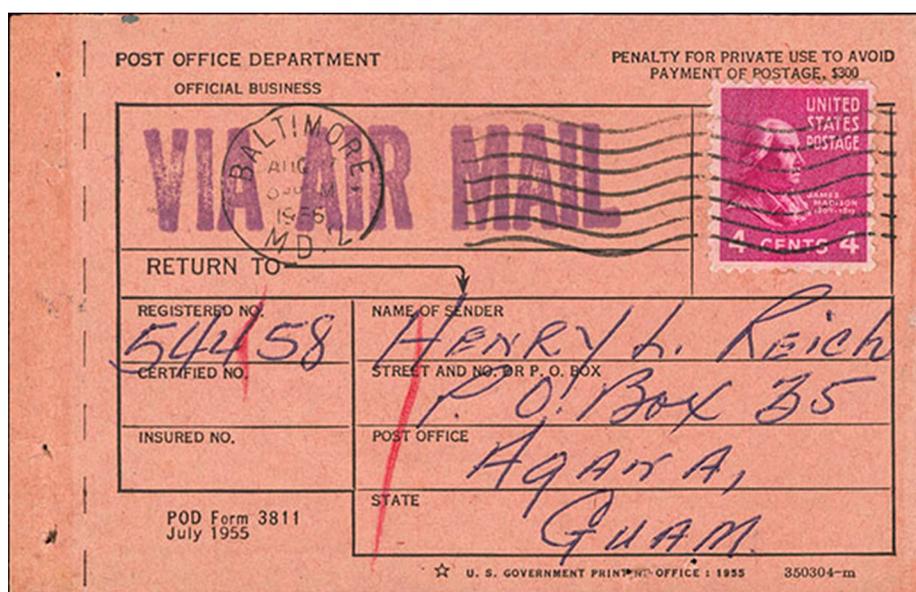
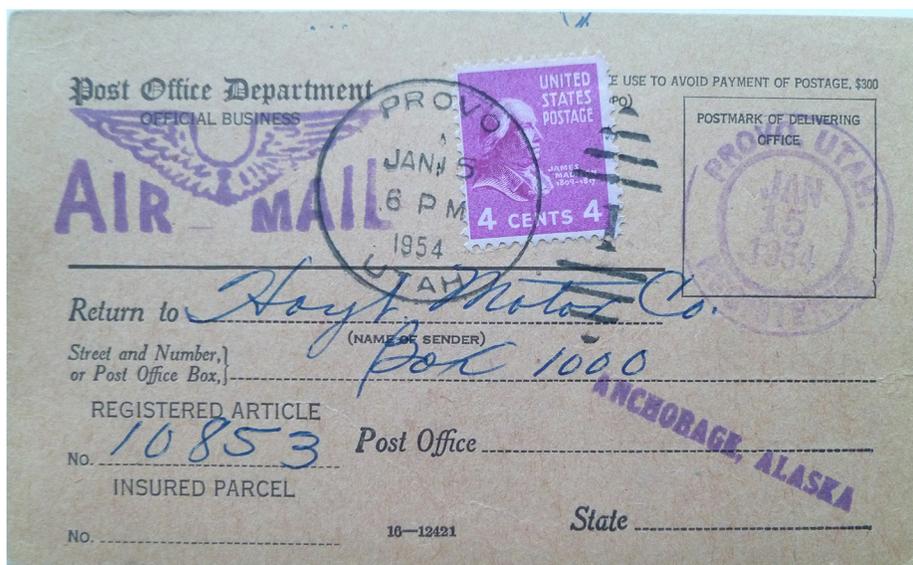


Figure 4. Registered RR card returned to Guam at the 4-cent airmail rate in effect in 1956.

destination and each is a scarce usage all of these uncommon items share the common attribute of not being from anywhere in the vast majority of the USA, that is, the lower 48 states. That is a surprise. This may be simply due to the fact surface return within the lower 48 was quick enough to satisfy most customers or a distance not serviced by airmail.

Can anyone report a RR with a different airmail postage rate during the Prexie era? There are more than a dozen other domestic airmail letter rates not shown; the 5 cent card airmail rate beginning August 1, 1958 paid by a Prexie or Prexies, a RR card returned to the lower 48 or to a different island?

## Piece of String on A \$1 Prexie EFO Block

by Francis Ferguson



Figure. Presence of a string remnant producing an EFO on a \$1 Prexie block of four.

This article is about a very odd production anomaly that is rather unique in many ways – a wayward piece of string that was in the wrong place at the wrong time, causing an interesting looking piece. Random pieces of paper can block the printed image; even bugs can be found mashed into the paper, although I have been looking for a bug-piece for a long time with no success.

The three dollar values of the Prexie Series were printed by flat bed press throughout their whole production life. They were produced in two steps; first the purple, green or red frame, then the center black vignettes with a second pass through the press. This two-step process caused a lot of anomalies, as the registration of the central vignette often wandered greatly from the true center location. That's a whole other area of Prexie EFO collecting that has been well documented by other writers in

recent years.

The example shown here is a prime example of what can go wrong in the production process when stray foreign pieces enter the process. The purple frame lines can be seen totally intact on this block of four – no problem there. What appears to be a piece of string can be seen clearly affecting the upper left and right stamps, and less clearly the lower left one. Additionally, there appears to be a tiny affect on the lower right stamp to the left of the shoulder, showing as a thin white diagonal line progressing upward.

One must wonder how a piece of string could just appear on a press plate. But in the production process it appears anything can happen. We collectors of EFO material are all thankful for that!

## Prexies on I.C.B.-Censored Mail of Hawaii, 1941-1942

by Lawrence Sherman



Figure 1. Typical Information Control Branch I.C.B. censor markings applied at Honolulu.

In the Summer 2020 issue, Albert “Chip” Briggs skillfully reviewed the Robert Schlesinger Sale of Prexie Post History in June’s Schuyler Rumsey Auction No. 92. So compelling was his coverage that I was inspired to review Prexie usages in my collection of I.C.B.-censored civilian mail originating in or passing through the Territory of Hawaii in the first months after the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.

Readers may recall that all civilian mail in the Territory of Hawaii was subject to censorship, formally beginning on December 13, 1941. The Information Control Branch (I.C.B.) of the army’s Military Intelligence Division (G-2) was charged with implementing censorship. Soon two censor handstamps appeared together

on Hawaiian mail: “Released by I.C.B.” and a number from 1 to 240 indicating the censor who handled each piece of mail. The handstamps were usually placed on the back of the cover, overlapping the tan sealing tape placed at the right or left edge of the envelope. Figure 1 shows an example of this arrangement.

The I.C.B. handstamps were in universal use until about the end of February 1942, when they were replaced by censor-numbered resealing tapes. Occasional use of I.C.B. handstamps, especially on postcards and postal cards, lingered into summer 1942. Prexie usages appeared during this short-lived period of I.C.B.-censored mail. Among these are the Prexie-only covers illustrated here. Figure 2 shows a reply postcard paid by a 1-cent Washington perfin, initialed “T.H.” The card, postmarked June 22, 1942, was mailed from the Territorial Tax Office in Honolulu, accounting for use of the Territory of Hawaii perfin.

To pay the prevalent 3-cent domestic surface rate from Hawaii before issuance of the Win the

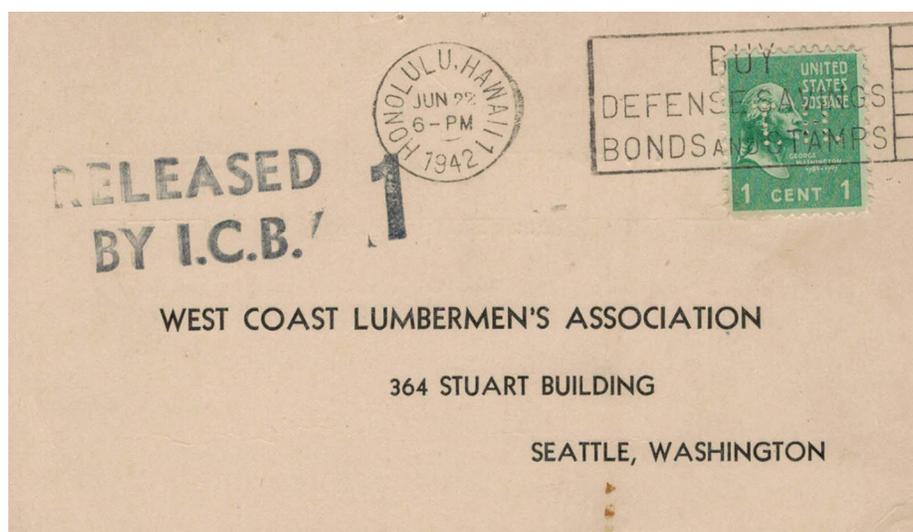


Figure 2. Reply postcard paid with “T.H.” perfin Prexie, showing the I.C.B. censor markings, applied separately.

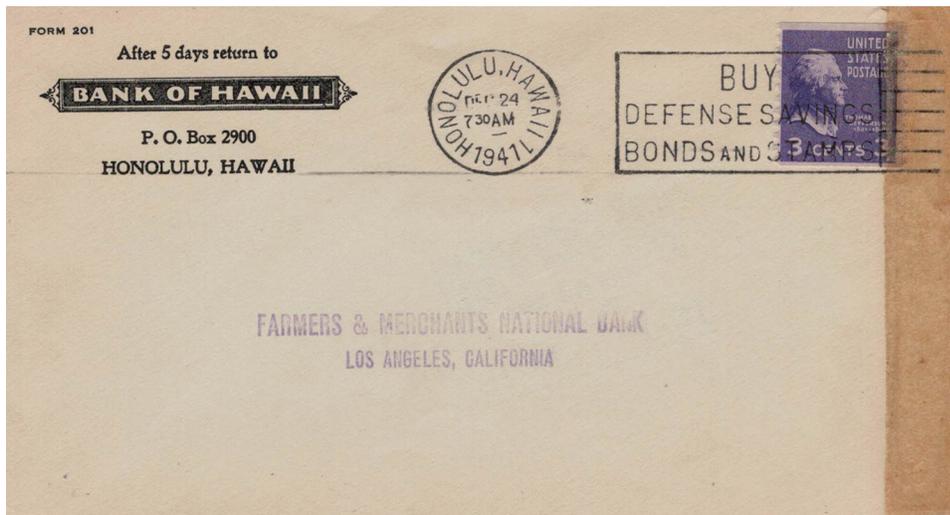


Figure 3. Surface mail to the mainland, showing brown resealing tape as part of I.C.B. censorship.

War stamp (July 4, 1942), the 3-cent National Defense Issue stamp was most frequently used. Occasionally a 3-cent Prexie can be found. The cover shown in Figure 3 features a 3-cent coil stamp perforated vertically paying the surface rate to the mainland.

destination, mail from Pepeekeo and all other localities in the territory, no matter how remote, traveled first to the censorship office in the Federal Building in Honolulu to be examined. The brown resealing tape can be seen on the left side of the cover.

The cover in Figure 4, mailed in April 1942, features an uncommon Hawaiian town cancel; Pepeekeo, on the island of Hawaii. Pepeekeo was then an unincorporated village in the South Hilo District, population approximately 700. Three copies of the 2¢ Adams paid the one ounce airmail rate from the west coast to the New England Mutual Life Ins. Co. in Boston. But before traveling onward to its final

An example of Prexie use on mail from Hawaii to a foreign destination is shown in Figure 5. Here, on a cover sent from Waiialua, Oahu, to Basingstoke, England, a 5-cent Prexie paid the UPU letter rate. The letter was examined twice; at Honolulu and Liverpool (Examiner 9100). Although a US-UK agreement was in effect to avoid double censorship, occasionally a British censor did not trust or recognize the American

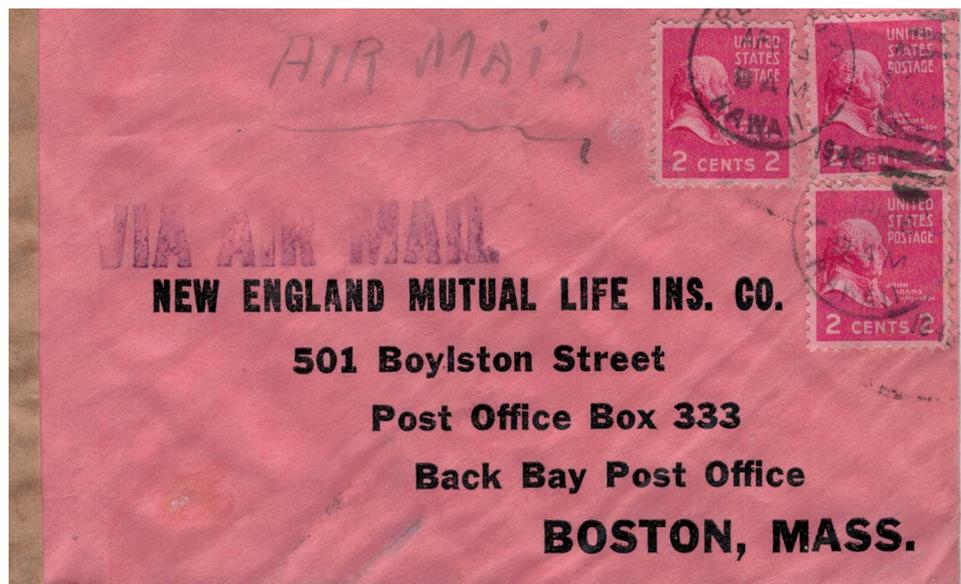


Figure 4. By surface to the west coast and onward by air to Boston. Brown I.C.B. resealing tape may be seen at left.



Figure 5. Double-censored, 5-cent UPU surface mail from Hawaii to England with I.C.B. and Liverpool (9100) censorship evident.

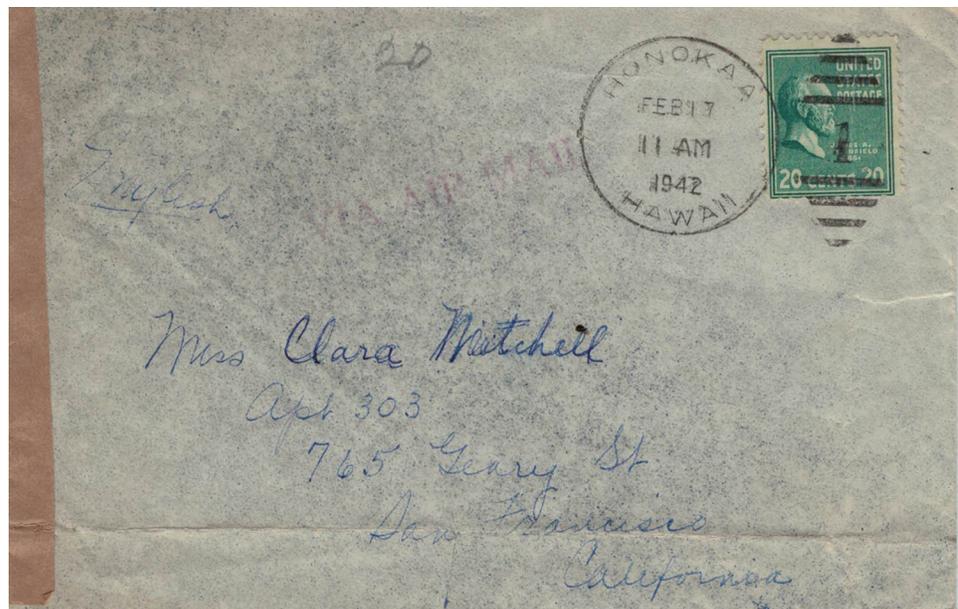


Figure 6. A 20-cent Prexie pays the half-ounce airmail rate to the mainland. “English” alerts the I.C.B. censor, who applied brown resealing tape after examination.

source, as in this case, apparently.

Airmail from Hawaii to the mainland was carried in the belly of Pan Am’s transpacific Clipper seaplanes at 20 cents per half ounce. Though usually paid by a 20-cent Transport Series stamp, Prexies also found their way onto mainland-bound airmail. In Figure 6, a 20-cent Garfield graces a cover featuring an uncommon Hawaiian town cancel: Honokaa, also on the

island of Hawaii. In February 1942 Honokaa, with a population 1132 recorded in the 1940 census, was an unincorporated village in the Hamakua district of the island. Note the lightly inscribed word, “English,” near the sealing tape at left, which indicated the language of the enclosed letter. Foreign language letters were to be noted on the front of the envelope to help direct the letter to a censor conversant with the language. English language letters did not



Figure 7. A February 6, 1942 airmail letter “Written in Japanese.” Brown resealing tape.

require any notation.

“Written in Japanese,” proclaims the cover shown in Figure 7, which also illustrates another way Prexies were used to pay the 20-cent airmail rate. A block of four of the 5-cent Monroe paid the rate on a cover from the Fukuda Seed Store in Honolulu to the Hollister Seed Co. in Hollister CA. This was the “mother store” for many farmers and gardeners in Hawaii. Since airmail stationery was not used, the “Via Clipper” handstamp called attention to the requested airmail service.

In Postal Bulletin 18354 (December 26, 1941), an airmail concession rate of 6 cents per half ounce was established for members of the US armed forces stationed outside the continental United States. As the Postmaster General wrote in his 1951 report, “A Wartime History of the Post Office Department”,

This beneficial reduction in air mail cost definitely helped morale overseas, awakened the general public to the possibilities of air mail service, and proved to be the principal source of postal revenues from servicemen throughout the war years.

Figure 8 shows that on December 27, just one day after the concession rate’s promulgation, an Army corporal missed an opportunity to use

the new rate but found a way to combine seven 3-cent Prexies to overpay the 20-cent civilian rate by one cent.

On February 20, 1942, a PFC at Hickham Field paid the armed services concession air mail rate with two 3-cent Prexies, carefully writing at the top of the cover, “Via Clipper/Soldier’s Mail.” This is shown in Figure 9. The I.C.B. censorship incurred signifies that the letter was likely not mailed from the airfield but carried to a US post office or dropped in an off-post mailbox, allowing it to be handled by civilian, not military, censors.

The association of Prexie usage with I.C.B. censorship reaches its apotheosis (at least in my collection) in the legal-size registered airmail cover shown in Figure 10. Registry handstamps tied to the flap indicate the mail left Honolulu on August 7 and arrived at Los Angeles on August 10, 1942. A profusion of Prexies overpaid the 35-cent airmail + registry fee by one cent. Evidence of I.C.B. censorship on the cover has nearly vanished; only the number “10” remains. This cover is one of two reported with only the censor number attesting to I.C.B. censorship.

My thanks to “Chip” Briggs for helping me discover this convergence of postal history interests within my collection.

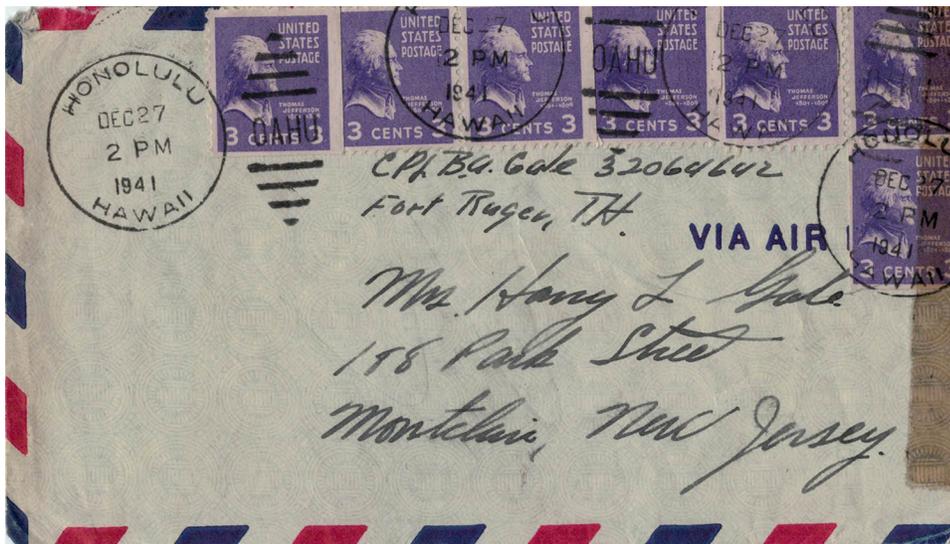


Figure 8. Army corporal unaware of the 6-cent airmail concession rate for military personnel stationed overseas, overpays the 20-cent civilian airmail rate.

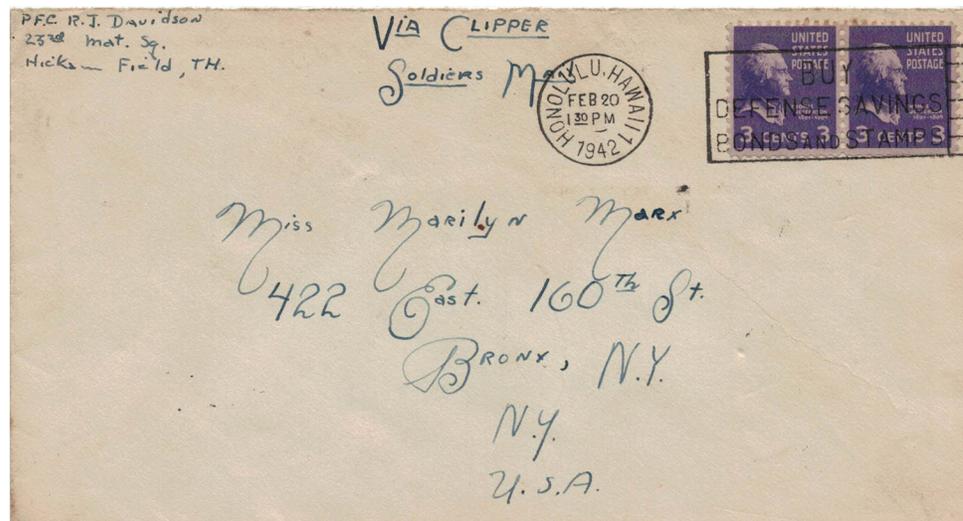


Figure 9. Army PFC at Hickham Field pays the 6-cent airmail concession rate.



Figure 10. Registered letter receives I.C.B. censorship, but only the censor's ID number (10) is visible.



No. 92 Winter 2021

# The Prexie Era

Publication of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

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## Privately Cancelled Prexie Puzzle

by Richard Matta

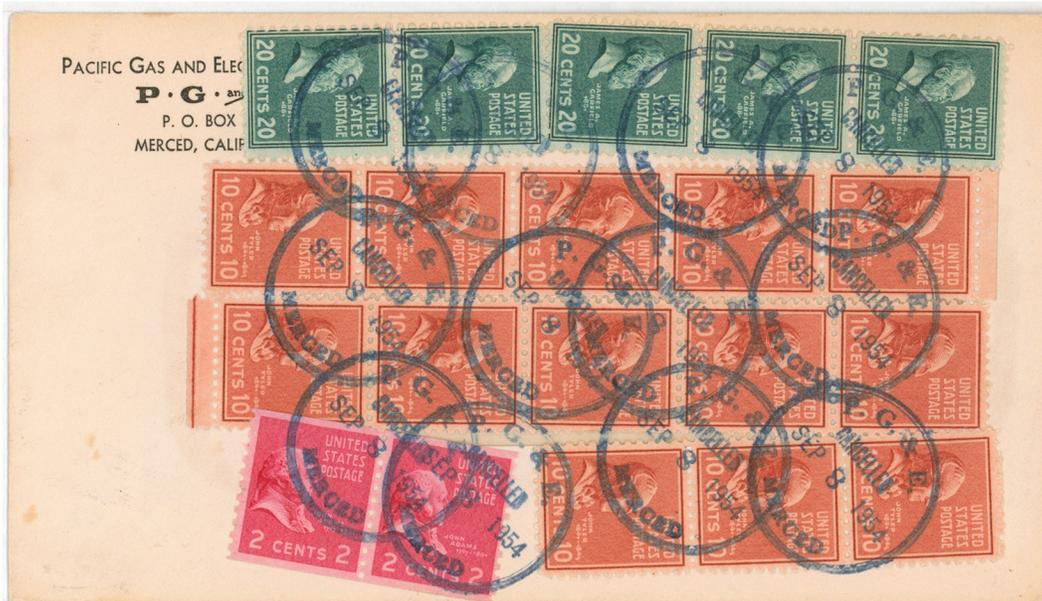


Figure. Unexplained private cancellations on Pacific Gas and Electric Company correspondence; “P.G. & E./CANCELLED/SEP 8 1954/MERCED.”

Attached is a purported “out of mails” item recently purchased on eBay. I understand it is “ex-Shapiro.” It is a standard utility-bill sized window envelope (empty and unsealed) with the corner card “Pacific Gas and Electric Co., P.G. and E., P.O. Box 719, Merced, California,” and bearing \$2.34 in Prexies. The stamps are canceled with a circular datestamp bearing “P.G. & E.” at the top, “MERCED” at the bottom, and “CANCELLED SEP 8 1954” in

two lines in the center. There appear to be no other marks under the stamps. The item was accompanied by a written note:

\$2.34 canx w P.G.+E. private hand stamp – to account for postage on 78 bills left in customers’ mailboxes by PG+E meter readers (no charge on hand over bills) these customers not at home.

The explanation on its face sounds plausible. On reflection, however, there are at least two problems with it. First, the private express statutes (PES) prohibited any private delivery of “letters,” including bills, whether handed over in person or put in a mailbox. (The related “mailbox rule” is not relevant here.)

Second, the PES were clear that letters carried outside the mails should be placed in a sealed envelope with the appropriate (cancelled) postage placed on each item. Specifically:

§ 91.3 Requirements when letters are carried out of mail. All letters enclosed in envelopes with embossed postage thereon, or with postage stamp or stamps affixed thereto, by the sender, or with the metered indicia showing that the postage has been prepaid, *if the postage thereon is of an amount sufficient to cover the postage that would be chargeable thereon if the same were sent by mail, may be sent, conveyed, and delivered otherwise than by mail, provided such envelope shall be duly directed and properly sealed, so that the letter cannot be taken therefrom without defacing the envelope, and the date of the letter or of the transmission or receipt thereof shall be written or stamped upon the envelope, and that where stamps are affixed they be canceled with ink by the sender.* But the Postmaster General may suspend the operation of this section or any part thereof upon any mail route where the public interest may require such suspension. (E. S. 3993, as amended; 39 U. S. C. 500.) [Emphasis added].<sup>1</sup>

The last sentence may provide a clue. Interpretive regulations under the PES were only first adopted by the Postmaster General in December 1954, more than two months after the

date of this item. Before that, it is possible the Postmaster General or a local postmaster (with or without approval) may have granted informal exceptions to the single-envelope requirement for accounting or other reasons. Although the 1954 regulations on their face did not provide for exceptions, later regulations (circa 1974) did expressly authorize “alternative arrangements” to the above requirements, perhaps reflecting existing practice rather than new leniency.

The question still remains – what does this item represent? There is little reason to suspect it is a fake, though that remains a possibility. It also remains possible that PG&E meter readers did hand over bills in person without proper postage, and this item really does only account for mailbox deliveries, though that would be a risky proposition for a big utility.

On the other hand, it is possible that meter readers delivered bills either in person or via mailboxes when convenient; if on a rural route, the mailbox might be distant from the meter – a utility worker likely would not take the time to go out of their way to deliver or even to individually stamp letters. It is plausible the meter reader left for the day with a stack of bills; upon returning to the office, the number delivered were accounted for in bulk and any bills not delivered could be sent through the mails later. However, this is mere speculation.

The author invites comments or examples of similar uses, or individually stamped PG&E envelopes from this era. I have contacted the PG&E archivist to see if they may be able to shed light on this, but with the current pandemic and PG&E’s bankruptcy, it is likely not a priority.

<sup>1</sup> 39 C.F.R., Chapter 1--Post Office Department, Section 91.3 (1949). See: <https://tinyurl.com/yyshtjtd> [accessed October 28, 2020].

## Commercial/Philatelic Use of a Solo \$2 Prexie

by Bob Hohertz



\$2.00 = 20¢ surface (5¢ + 5 x 3¢) + \$1.65 air supplement (11 x 15¢) + 15¢ registration fee.

This cover, acquired recently on eBay, proved to be an interesting combination of commercial and philatelic use. It was sent from the Milo Bar Bell System, of Philadelphia, to a Mr. Mina R. Sanjana in the Auditor's Office of the Bombay, Baroda & Central India Railway Company.

The \$2.00 franking, made up of three components, correctly pays the 1938, five to five-and-one-half ounce rate going first by surface to London then onward by air to India, with registration fee added.

Surface postage was 5 cents for the first ounce and 3 cents for each additional ounce (20 cents). The air supplement rate was 15 cents per half ounce (\$1.65). Finally, registration cost 15 cents.

This franking, accompanied by the rough opening of the letter at the bottom, suggests a commercial, rather than philatelic, use.

However, there are also several philatelic

aspects to the cover. First, at least two other covers to Mr. Sanjana are known with obvious philatelically-inspired frankings. One was franked with plate number blocks of the first six airmails; the other with a plate block of six of the Lindbergh airmail. One was sent by the Milo Bar Bell System, while the other was not.

A second philatelic aspect is that the \$2.00 Prexie was posted on September 29, 1938, the day the stamp was issued. What are the chances this cover was packed enough to weigh just over five ounces and mailed on the very day a new \$2 definitive was issued? And third, why was a Philadelphia firm posting mail from the first day post office in Washington, D.C.?

While the suspicion is strong that the cover weighed close enough to the full weight to require \$1.85 in postage, but might have fallen somewhat short, it likely held real correspondence. As an example of a very unusual rate, plus being a commercial first day cover, I figure it's worth about what I paid.

## 1940 Airmail to India: Rate & Route Mismatch

by Louis Fiset



From April 21, 1937 until Pearl Harbor, airmail service from the U.S. to India consisted of transpacific service from San Francisco via Hong Kong or Singapore and onward air service via BOAC to and within India. The postage required was 70 cents per half ounce. Transit time for the weekly service was 10-12 days.

For part of this period, from May 23, 1939 until June 14, 1940, an alternative, transatlantic route was available, from New York to Lisbon and onward by air via BOAC from Europe to and within India. The cost was 50 cents per half ounce for this twice-weekly service. Average transit time on this route was 9-10 days

The cover shown here shows postage paid for the transatlantic service, while the Hong Kong censor marking documents transpacific carriage. The letter was posted on April 1, 1940, transited Hong Kong on April 12, 1940, and reached Bombay on April 17.

The letter was addressed in care of an Italian ocean liner or American Express office, at Bombay. The addressee could not be found, so the letter was returned from Bombay on May 4, arriving at New York on June 21, 1940.

The total transit time for this “around-the-world” cover was 72 days.

## More Updated Return Receipt Cards

by Dickson Preston

It was a pleasure to read Dan Pagter's article "Scarce Updated Return Receipt (RR) Cards" in the Autumn issue of *The Prexie Era*, with such a fine range of uses on display. Air delivery for return receipts was also available on international mail, as explained by Tony Wawrukiewicz in "Return Receipts by Airmail," in the December 1998 *United States Specialist*. In it, Tony quotes the international segment of the first *Postal Manual* (October 18, 1954); "If

you desire that your return receipt be sent back to you by airmail, you must pay for this return, in addition to the return receipt fee, the airmail postage applicable to a single post card to the country of destination."

Tony shows an example of this usage with the receipt card returned by air from the independent Philippines, the only example known to him at that time. Here we see another example, an



Figure 1. International RR card uprated to pay the equivalent to the foreign airmail postcard rate.

Figure 2. U.S. Domestic RR card uprated to pay the 5-cent airmail postcard fee from New York back to the Canal Zone



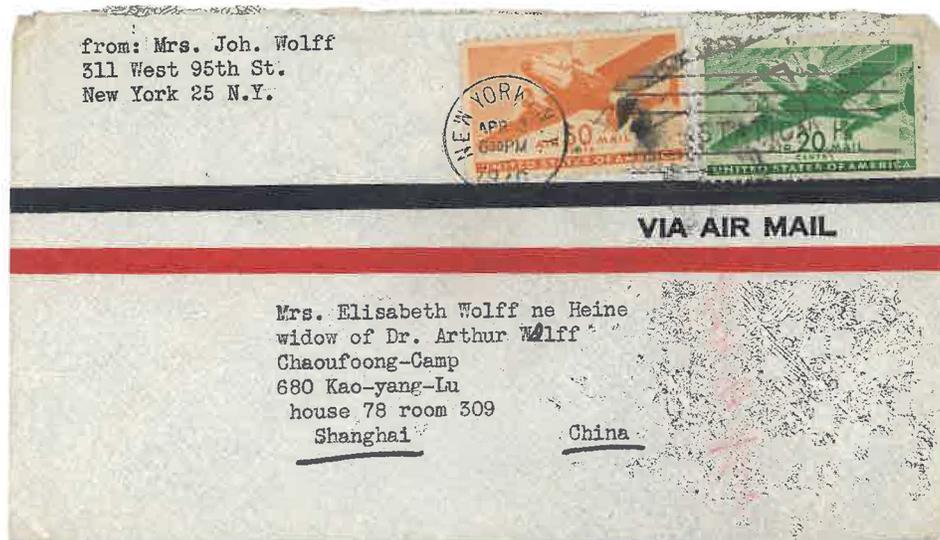
international return receipt card flown back from Guatemala to the U.S. The airmail fee of 10 cents was applied by the sender when requesting the return receipt. This fee was equivalent to the postage for an international airmail postcard to any destination worldwide, in effect from 1954 to 1961. The receipt card was flown from Guatemala in July 1957, arriving in the U.S. 19 July. The Guatemala post office did not cancel the U.S. stamps, which received a dumb oval postmark after the receipt reached the U.S.

Although the Canal Zone Postal Service, as a part of the Canal Zone Government, was separate from the United States Post Office

Department, return receipts could be sent by air between these two postal entities. The example shown is a standard domestic return receipt card flown back from New York City to reach an address in Balboa in 1959. In this case the rate was the 5-cent domestic airmail postcard rate in effect from 1958 to 1963, franked by the sender with a Globe and Wing Canal Zone airmail stamp. Under normal circumstances, Canal Zone stamps should not have been cancelled in the U.S., but for this use it was allowed. Several similar flown return receipt cards from the Canal Zone show that the use of U.S. cancels on these cards was the accepted practice.

## Jews in Shanghai

by Jeffrey Shapiro



While small numbers of Jews had lived in China for centuries, many more Jews fled Europe for sanctuary in China, specifically Shanghai, starting in the early 1930s. While the Chinese welcomed the Jews for the talents they brought, the Japanese occupiers and their allies, the Germans, saw the Jews as a threat and insisted the Jews be thrown out of China. As a compromise, however, the Jews were ordered

to move into the crowded neighborhood of Hongkou, where a so-called Ghetto was created.

At the end of World War II, the newly created UNRRA initiated programs to rehabilitate war-torn China, including assisting the Jewish refugees. To alleviate overcrowding of the Hongkou section, in 1946 UNRRA established

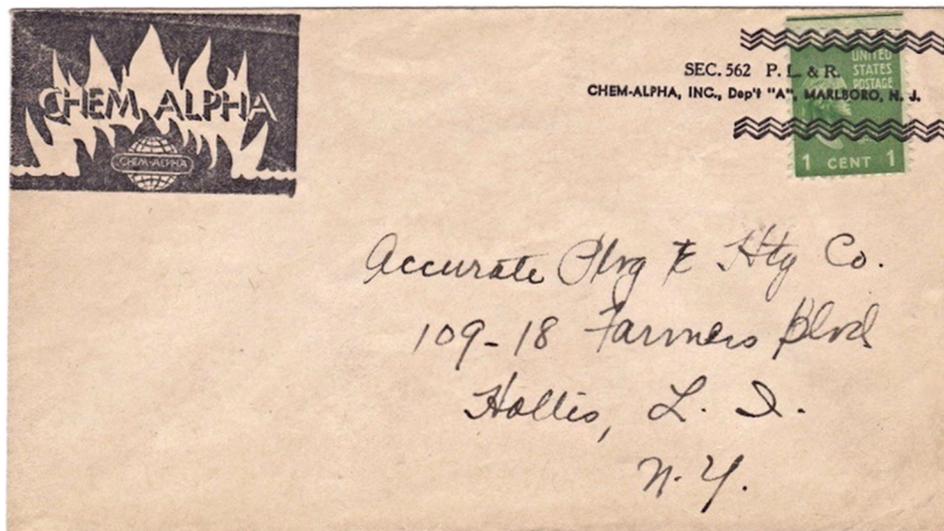
the near-by Chaoufoong Camp, as shown in the illustration. UNRRA and other international relief agencies provided needed nutritional, medical and educational services.

With the imminent takeover of the government

by the Communists, most Jews understood it was time to leave China. As a result, the Chaoufoong Camp was emptied and closed by early 1948. Many of them emigrated to the United States, Canada, Australia and the newly-created State of Israel.

## Private Prexie Precancellation

by Stephen L. Suffet



The cover shown above bears a 1-cent Presidential Series sheet stamp paying the minimum 1-cent per piece third class bulk rate. The stamp is precanceled with a nonstandard device applied by the mailer, Chem-Alpha, Inc., of Marlboro, New Jersey.

From the time the third class bulk rate category came into being in 1928, the postal regulations specified that postage had to be paid either “without postage stamps or with precanceled stamps...”<sup>1</sup> The term “without postage stamps” referred to mail bearing permit indicia showing the postage had been paid in money at the time of mailing, and it also referred to mail for which the postage had been paid by postage meter. The term “precanceled stamps” included adhesive stamps sold by the post office with standard precancellations, postal stationery likewise sold by the post office with standard precancellations, and postal stationery

canceled with mailer’s permit postmarks.

As far as I can tell, by the beginning of the Prexie era there was no authority for individual mailers to precancel adhesive postage stamps, other than postage stamps that had already been precanceled and were being used on first class mail.<sup>2</sup> In fact, an order from the Postmaster General dating back to 1911 explicitly stated, “Stamps may be precanceled only under the supervision of the postmaster or other sworn employee of the post office.”<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the United States post office in Marlboro, New Jersey, apparently accepted the cover for mailing. On whose authority I cannot say.

Several other examples exist of Prexies precanceled with nonstandard devices applied by mailers. The best known were mailed by or on behalf of the American Philatelic Society. All others are scarce.

I could find very little information about Chem-Alpha, Inc. According to United States Patent Office records, the company was located in Brooklyn, New York, when it filed a trade mark registration on February 19, 1938. At the time, according to the registration, the company dealt in “soot destroyers for oil burning systems, boiler scale removers, water cleaning compounds, etc.” The trade mark registration was published on August 15, 1939, and the trade mark was granted on October 31, 1939.<sup>4</sup>

Some time afterwards, Chem-Alpha apparently moved some or all of its operations to Marlboro, a sprawling township in Monmouth County. On March 28, 1947, the *Asbury Park Press* of Asbury Park, New Jersey, carried a classified ad from the Chem-Alpha Company offering a Brockway 1½ ton truck for sale or trade. The company gave its location on the Freehold–Marlboro Road, what is now known as New Jersey Highway 79.<sup>5</sup> (Asbury Park is a seaside community, also in Monmouth County, about 20 miles southeast of Marlboro.)

Some time around then it appears the main and possibly the only products of Chem-Alpha were Pickwick Paints, and there is much documentation that the location of the Pickwick Paint Factory was also on the Freehold–Marlboro Road. The one other reference to Chem-Alpha that I could find is a brief notice

appearing in the *Asbury Park Press* on April 1, 1956. The notice reported that the Pickwick Paint Factory, a division of the of the Chem-Alpha Company of Marlboro, had opened a retail outlet the previous week in Asbury Park.<sup>6</sup> While I could find the Pickwick Paint Factory mentioned several more times in various New Jersey newspapers between 1957 and 1960, I could find nothing else about Chem-Alpha per se. After 1960, I could locate nothing about the Pickwick Paint Factory as well. Perhaps someone reading this who is familiar with New Jersey can tell us what became of either Chem-Alpha or Pickwick Paints, or both.

Meanwhile, this nonstandard bulk rate Prexie cover is among the scant evidence that the Chem-Alpha Company ever existed.

#### Endnotes

1. *The Postal Bulletin*. June 13, 1928 (No. 14714), p. 2.
2. *The Postal Bulletin*. August 7, 1924 (No. 13540), p. 1.
3. *The Postal Bulletin*. December 6, 1911 (No. 9689), p. 1.
4. *Official Gazette of the United States Patent Office*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, Volume 507, October 1939), p. 1064.
5. *Asbury Park Press*. March 28, 1947, p.27.
6. *Asbury Park Press*. April 1, 1956, p.8.

## No Solo Uses of the \$5 Prexie Stamp? How About FSW (Franked Solely With) Uses?

by Ed Field

To qualify as a solo or a franked-solely-with (FSW) use, a non-philatelic \$5 Prexie cover or tag should meet the following three criteria:

1. Franked only with \$5 Prexies. No other stamps or meter tapes allowed.
2. Be posted between 11/17/1938 and 5/18/1956. No late uses allowed

3. Stamps must exactly pay a plausible U.S. postal rate.

To date, no known solo uses of \$5 Prexie stamps exist either on cover or tag. Lot 751 in the December 3-5 2019 Kelleher Auction was described as a solo use. It showed a parcel piece franked with a single \$5 Prexie, but that



Figure 1.

piece did not satisfy criterion 3, because it was apparently over-franked by at least 2 cents or under-franked by at least 4 cents. (Pagter, 2019). Probably for that reason, it hammered for only \$3500, substantially less than its pre-auction estimate of \$5000-\$7500.

Despite years of searching, I have never seen an FSW \$5 Prexie cover. However, tags bearing \$5 Prexie stamps far outnumber such covers, and the chance of finding a FSW \$5 Prexie tag is therefore greater than for a cover. I show two such tags here. (First class postage was three cents per ounce for the Figure 1 and 2 tags. All rates used for analysis are from Beecher and Wawrukiewicz, cited below.)

Figure 1 shows a tag dated April 30 1953 from a bank in Arvada, CO sent to the Denver Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. It bears a pair of \$5 Prexies and no other stamps. The tag clearly satisfies criteria 1 and 2, so we

must find a plausible combination of weight, registration, and declared value that indicate a total franking of \$10.00. The distance was well within parcel post Zone 1, so the supplemental surcharge was 12 cents per \$1000. Assume the registration fee was \$1.75, including \$1000 postal insurance, the declared excess value was \$60k, and the total weight was 35 ounces. For that combination, the total franking would have been exactly \$10.00 (\$1.75 registry + \$7.20 surcharge + \$1.05 postage). There are several other plausible combinations of weight and value compatible with the \$10.00 franking.

Figure 2 shows a tag dated December 21 1940 from Travelers Insurance company in Hartford, CT to Chase National Bank in New York City. The Zone 2 supplementary fee was 9 cents per \$1000 of excess value. Assume the registration fee was 20 cents, including \$50 postal insurance (perhaps to cover a commercial insurance deductible). As was the

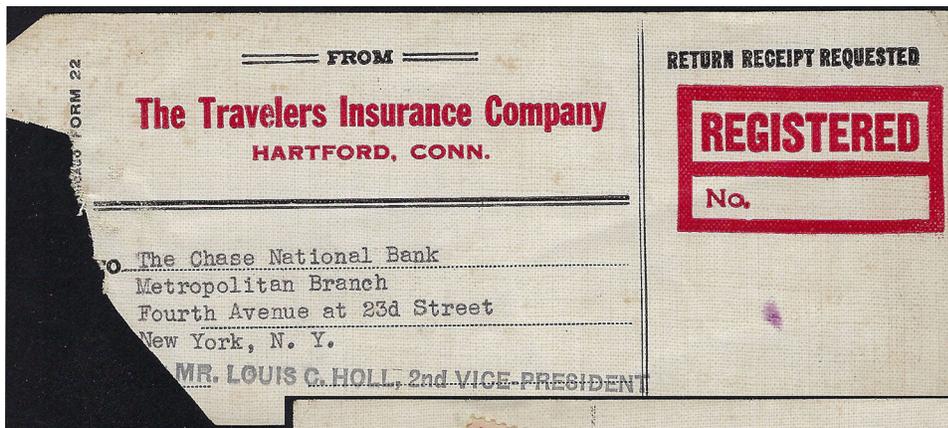


Figure 2.



case for the tag shown in Figure 1, a number of combinations of weight and declared excess value are exactly consistent with the \$20.00 franking. A likely combination is 60 ounces and declared excess value of \$200k (\$0.20 registry + \$18.00 surcharge + \$1.80 postage).

While the rates used for the calculations above are plausible, they may not reflect actual reality. Other combinations of value, weight, and registration fee are certainly possible. Or, the tags might simply have been over franked.

How rare are FSW \$5 Prexie tags? I have collected \$5 Prexie tags for years and have about fifty in my collection. I have seen scans of at least that many more. The two tags shown above are the only ones I know of that are franked only with \$5 stamps and pay a plausible rate\*. I would appreciate hearing about any others.

\*In the recent Schuyler-Rumsey sale of the Robert Schlesinger collection (Briggs, 2020), Lot 1447 showed an airmail tag from California

to Guam franked only with a block of fifteen \$5 Prexies. Apparently an FSW use. But the tag was not date-stamped and might not have been the only tag attached to the parcel. If the tag was the only one attached, and if the posting date was between 10/1/46 and 1/1/49, the basic registration fee would have been 20 cents and the surcharge 18 cents per \$1000. In that case, a weight of 56 ounces and declared value of \$400k would require a franking of exactly \$75.00. Definitely an FSW use! In my opinion, the italicized rate analysis given in the Rumsey catalog is incorrect. The supplementary fee for \$14-15 million declared value was \$2290, not \$22.90 as assumed in the catalog analysis.

### References

- Beecher and Wawrukiewicz, *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-2011* (Third Edition)
- Pagter, Daniel, "\$5.00 Prexie 'Solo' Piece Up For Auction," *The Prexie Era* (No. 87 Autumn 2019).
- Briggs, Albert "Chip", "Robert Schlesinger Sale of Prexie Postal History," *The Prexie Era* (No. 90 Summer 2020).



No. 93 Spring 2021

# *The Prexie Era*

Publication of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

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## Prexie Local Letter Uses

by Albert “Chip” Briggs



Figure 1. Non-carrier local letter from Cut Bank, Montana.

The phrase “local letter” refers to a letter both mailed and delivered within the service area of a single post office. This type of mail has existed since the mid-19th century. Two distinct types of local letter mail have been in use but are no longer available today. The first type, carrier office local letters, refers to mail deposited at a post office for delivery by a mail carrier to an

addressee within the service area of that same post office or mailed from and to an address within the same post office and delivered by a post office mail carrier. The second type, non-carrier office local letter, describes mail dropped off at a post office for the addressee to pick up there. Patrons of non-carrier post offices typically had a post office box. In fact,

non-carrier office letters are frequently referred to as “drop” letters.

At the beginning of the Prexie era, rates charged for local letters were two cents per ounce for carrier office mail. This service was eliminated on March 25, 1944. Non-carrier office letters cost one cent per ounce until January 1, 1952 when it was raised to two cents per ounce, then raised again on August 1, 1958 to three cents per ounce. Non-carrier local mail service discontinued on January 6, 1968. While some covers may appear to be a local letter use, the only way to be certain is to consult the *United States Postal Guide*. The Guide contains alphabetical listings of all post offices in each county of every state. Post offices lacking carrier delivery have a notation

showing the number of post office boxes at that facility. This notation is in the form of a capital “P” followed by a number. Another source of this information in the Guide is the listing of post office classifications (first, second, or third class). In this alphabetical arrangement by state, a post office name followed by a capital “F” denoted offices having city, or carrier delivery.

**Non-Carrier Local Letters:** Figure 1 illustrates the one cent per ounce non-carrier office rate in effect at the beginning of the Prexie era. This example, used in December 1944 in Cut Bank, Montana has a very minimal address: Ingram Family; City; Bx 651. This is typical of address information found on these covers, in this case specifying only the post office box



Figure 2. Two cents per ounce non-carrier local letters from Stayton, Oregon and Entiat, Washington.

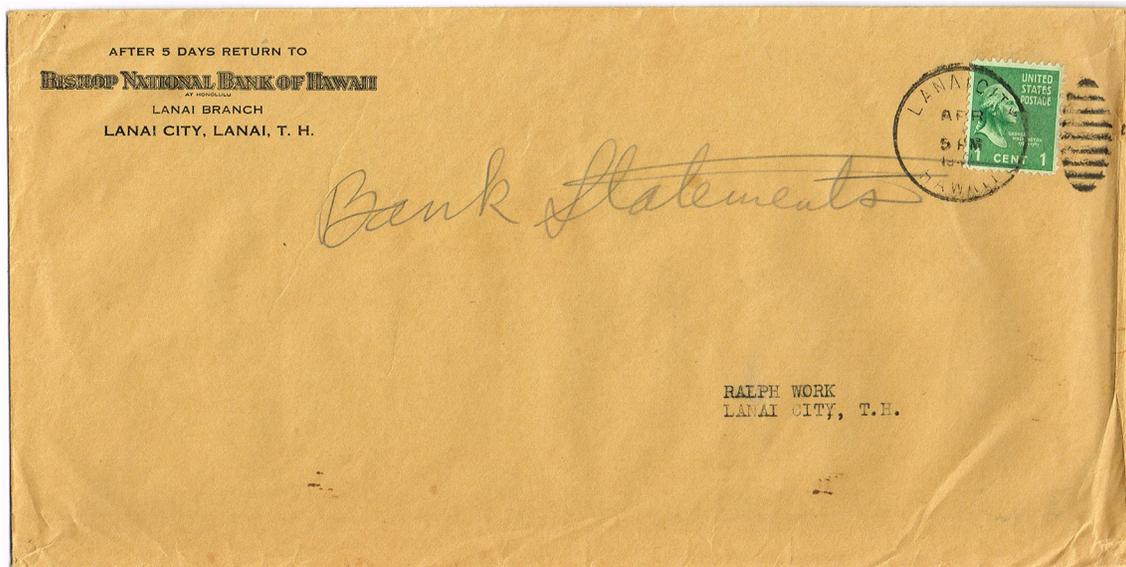


Figure 3. Non-carrier local letter in Lanai City, Hawaii.

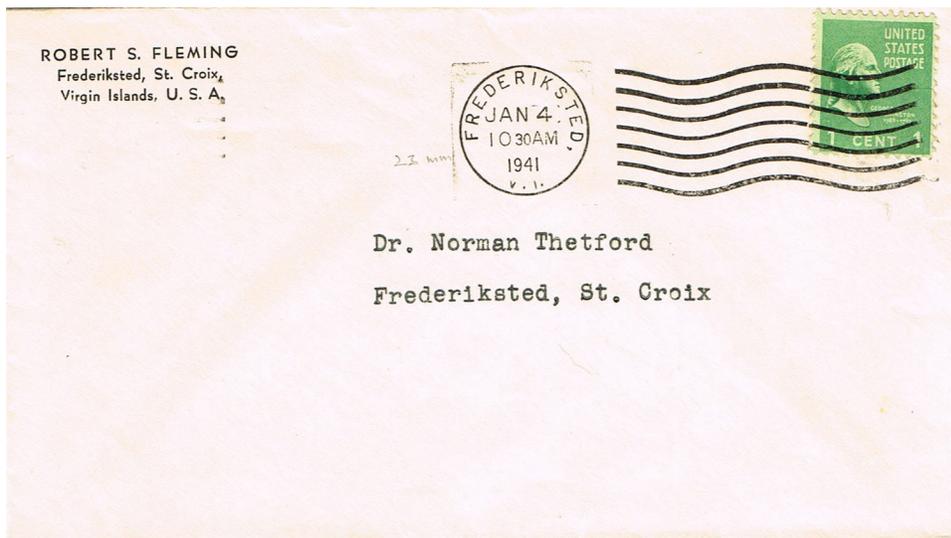


Figure 4. One cent per ounce non-carrier local letter use from St. Croix.

number. The 1941 *United States Postal Guide* documents Cut Bank, located about 30 miles south of the Canadian border, to have 912 post office boxes available for patrons.

The rate for non-carrier local letters increased to two cents per ounce on January 1, 1952, as reflected in the covers shown in Figure 2. These covers, from Stayton, Oregon and Entiat, Washington also show the paucity of addressee information.

Just as in the continental United States, local letter uses may be found from various

possessions and territories. The same postal rates applied. Figure 3 illustrates a non-carrier use in 1942, in Lanai City, Hawaii. Lanai City was developed to provide housing and support for employees of the Dole pineapple plantations. In fact, at one time James Dole owned the entire island of Lanai.

Similarly, Figure 4 is an example from the U. S. Virgin Islands, in 1941. This cover was in use within the Frederiksted, St. Croix post office.

One of the most scarce uses of non-carrier local letters may be seen in Figure 5. This



Figure 5. Heart Mountain Relocation Center non-carrier local letter.



Figure 6. Early carrier office local letter use from Springfield, Massachusetts.

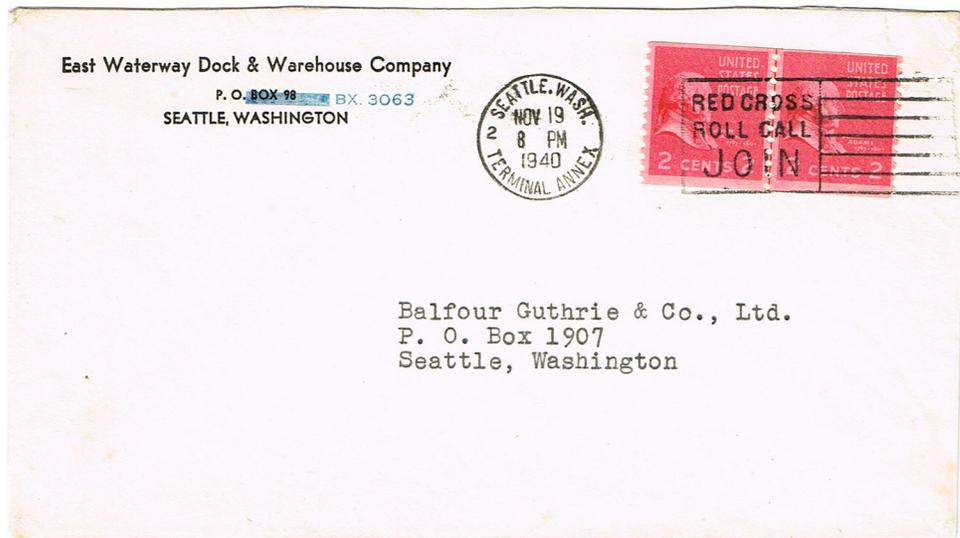


Figure 7. Double weight local letter from Seattle.

cover was accepted at the one cent per ounce rate for mailing within the Heart Mountain Relocation Center. There is a Heart Mountain return address, a February 8, 1945 Heart Mountain machine cancel, and addressed to the Community Christian Church, Block 22, Local. Heart Mountain Post Office, a branch of the Cody, Wyoming Post Office was the only relocation center branch office to accept the one cent per ounce non-carrier local letter rate. The reason was that mail was delivered by relocation center residents, not employees of the Post Office Department.

weighing less than one ounce could be mailed for two cents if placed in the mails within the delivery area of the post office serving the addressee and provided said post office had carrier service. This two-cent local letter rate ended on March 25, 1944. Figure 6 shows an early example of this rate from Springfield, Massachusetts, while a double weight cover paid by a horizontal coil line pair is seen in Figure 7.

The San Juan, Puerto Rico Post Office offered carrier delivery, as shown in Figure 8.

**Carrier Office Local Letters:** When the Presidential Series was issued in 1938, a letter

Two unusual covers with a naval connection are illustrated in Figures 9 and 10. The first

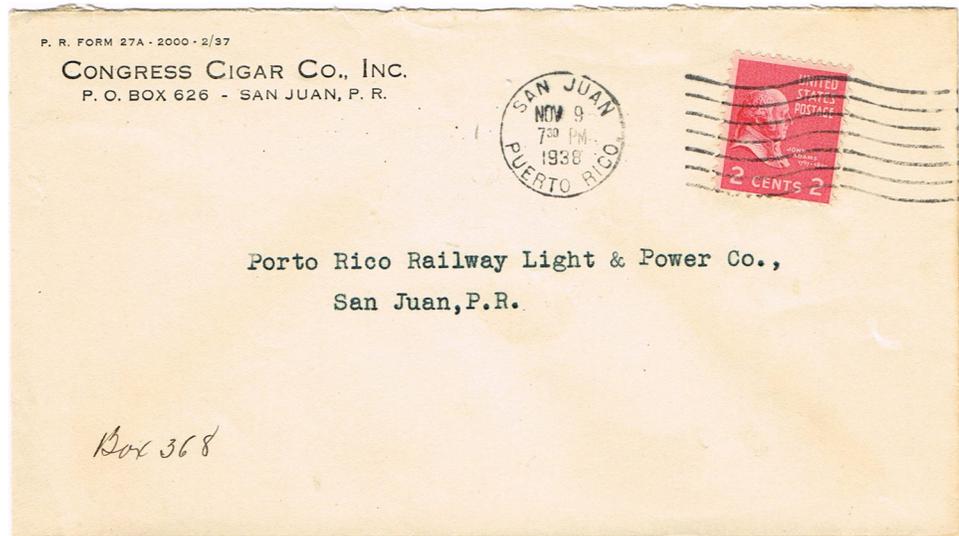


Figure 8. Carrier office local letter within San Juan, Puerto Rico post office in 1938.

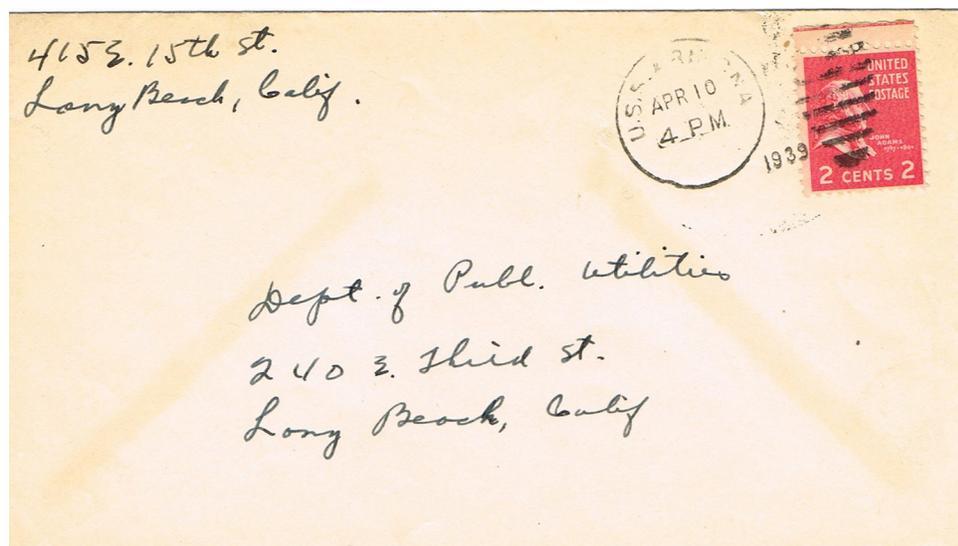


Figure 9. USS Arizona local letter.

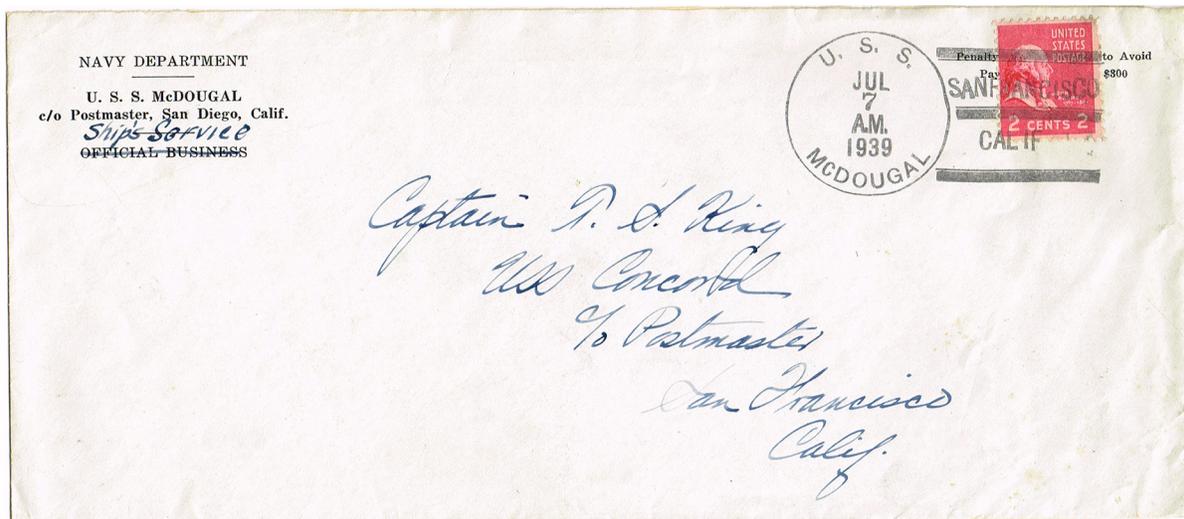


Figure 10. Ship-to-ship local letter in San Francisco.

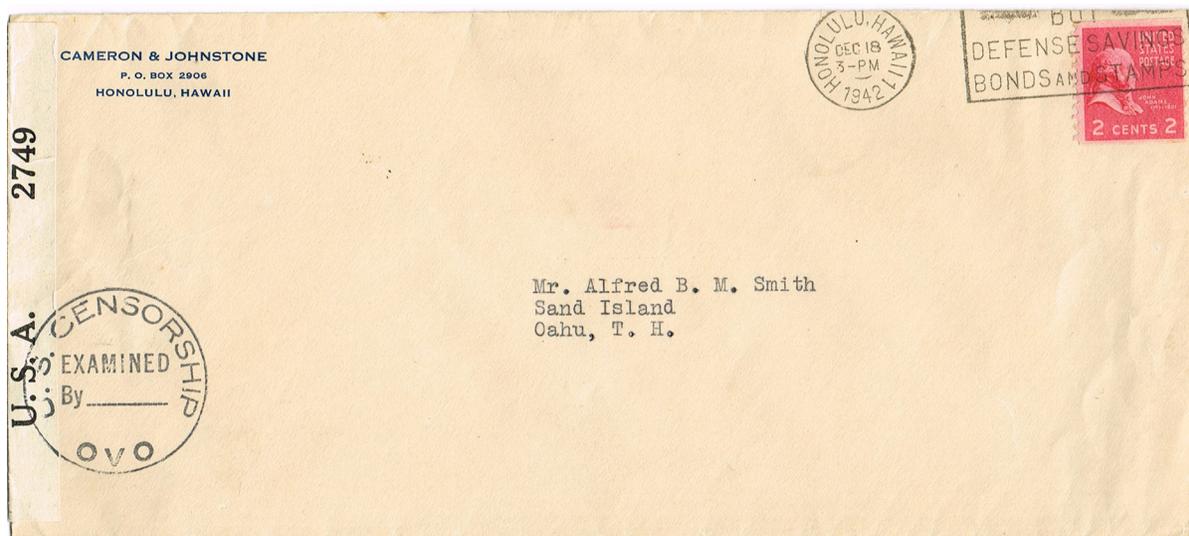


Figure 11. Local letter to German-American internee at Sand Island.

was postmarked April 10, 1939 on board the battleship USS *Arizona*. The ship was in port at Long Beach, California; a crew member was perhaps making a bill payment or application for utility service to the Long Beach Dept. of Public Utilities. While docked at Long Beach, the writer took advantage of the two-cent local letter rate. The Figure 10 cover, instead of a ship-to-shore local letter, is a ship-to-ship local letter. A crew member from the USS *McDougal*, a destroyer in port at San Francisco, mailed a letter on July 7, 1939 to the Captain of the USS *Concord*, a light cruiser, also at San Francisco. Notice the San Francisco, California location

between the killer bars of the ship's cancellation device.

Alfred Smith and his wife Susan were naturalized American citizens with strong pro-Nazi sympathies. They were arrested on December 8, 1941 and detained at various internment camps in the early part of the war. They were paroled in 1943. Figure 11 is a carrier office local letter from a public accounting firm in Honolulu, Hawaii to Alfred Smith during his detention at the U.S. Army's Sand Island internment camp. Sand Island is a small island located at the mouth of the harbor and entirely

within the city limits of Honolulu. Thus, this letter, franked with a two-cent horizontal coil, was entitled to the local letter rate.

Another carrier office internment camp use is shown in Figure 12. This letter travelled 200 miles all for the two cent per ounce local letter rate. This August of 1942 letter originated at the Manzanar, California relocation center built months after the war began to incarcerate Japanese Americans. Each relocation center had a post office that operated as a branch

of a parent post office. Letters originating at branch post offices in the centers intended for delivery within the service area of the parent post office were eligible for the two cents per ounce carrier office letter rate. While examples have not been found from every camp, postal patrons at all centers were able to mail letters in this manner.

The table in Figure 13 shows the names of the branch and parent post offices of each relocation center.<sup>1</sup>

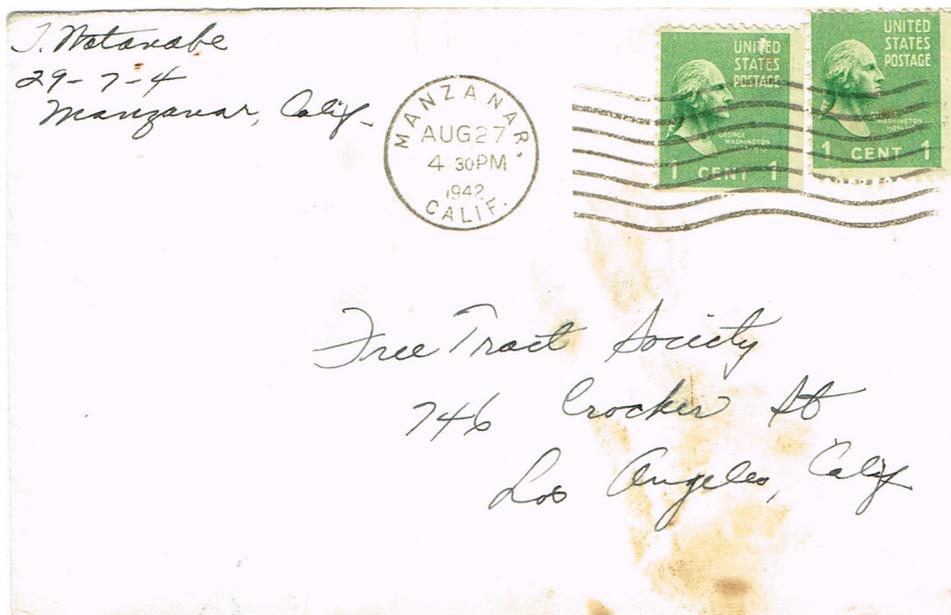


Figure 12. Local letter from Manzanar Relocation Center to Los Angeles.

Figure 13. Table listing branch and parent post offices of World War II relocation centers.

Table 9.1  
WRA Relocation Centers, Peak Populations, and Branch Post Offices, 25 March 1942 through 30 April 1946

<u>Relocation Center</u>	<u>Peak Pop.</u>	<u>Parent Post Office</u>	<u>Branch Post Office</u>	<u>Branch Established</u>	<u>Branch Closed</u>
Central Utah	8,130	Delta, UT	Topaz	1 Sep 1942	30 Nov 1945
Gila River	13,348	Phoenix, AZ	Rivers	1 Jul 1942	15 Dec 1945
Granada	7,318	Lamar, CO	Amache	15 Sep 1942	30 Nov 1945
Heart Mountain	10,767	Cody, WY	Heart Mountain	1 Aug 1942	18 Nov 1945
Jerome	8,497	Dermott, AK	Denson	16 Oct 1942	31 Jul 1944
Manzanar	10,046	Los Angeles, CA	Manzanar	25 Mar 1942	30 Nov 1945
Minidoka	9,397	Twin Falls, ID	Hunt	1 Sep 1942	30 Nov 1945
Colorado River	17,814	Phoenix, AZ	Poston	13 Apr 1942	15 Dec 1945
Rohwer	8,475	McGehee, AK	Relocation	1 Oct 1942	30 Nov 1945
Tule Lake	18,789	Tulelake, CA	Newell	16 Jun 1942	30 Apr 1946



Figure 14. Local letter originating in Chile, censored at Miami, posted in New York.

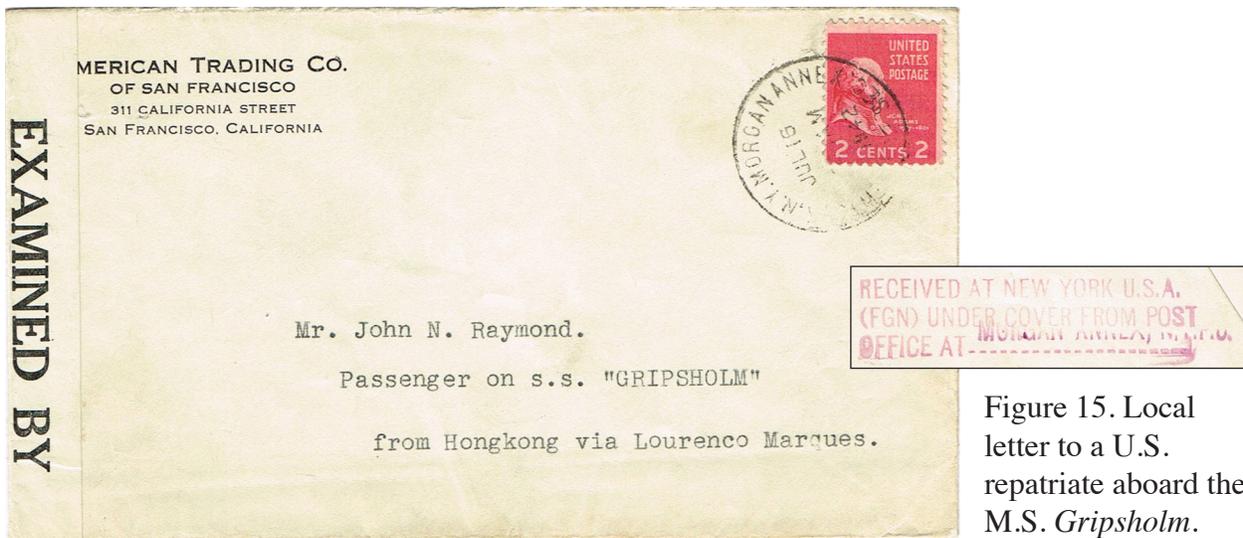
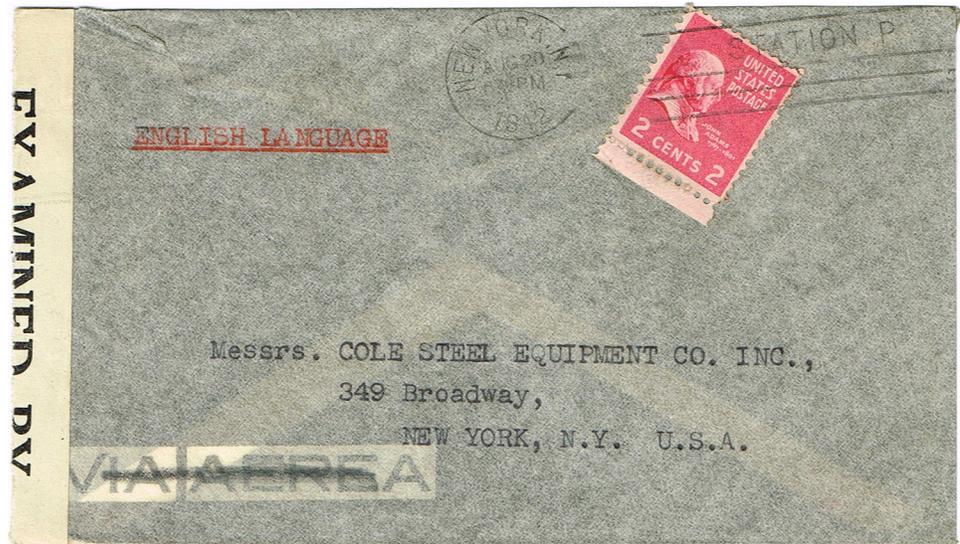


Figure 15. Local letter to a U.S. repatriate aboard the M.S. *Gripsholm*.

Two additional carrier office local letters that travelled a great distance may be seen in Figures 14 and 15. The first cover originated in Valparaiso, Chile. It is franked with a two-cent sheet stamp and tied by an August 20, 1942 New York machine cancel for delivery to a steel equipment company on Broadway Avenue. Transmitted under separate cover and censored in Miami, Florida, this cover was not placed in the mail stream until it reached New York.

The other long distance local letter was mailed under separate cover in San Francisco to a person being repatriated from the Far East aboard the MS *Gripsholm* in 1942. This letter

to a confirmed passenger was censored in Chicago and resealed with censor tape number 3083. It reached New York and bears a violet hand stamp on the reverse attesting to that fact. It was postmarked July 16, 1942 and held for the arrival of the *Gripsholm* which docked in New York on August 25th.

While the rate for a local letter did not reach three cents until 1958, there was an occasion to find many local letters franked with three cent stamps in the early 1940's. This only occurred in Newark, New Jersey. The United War and Community Chest, a charitable organization, was holding a fund drive. As part of this drive letters soliciting donations were to be

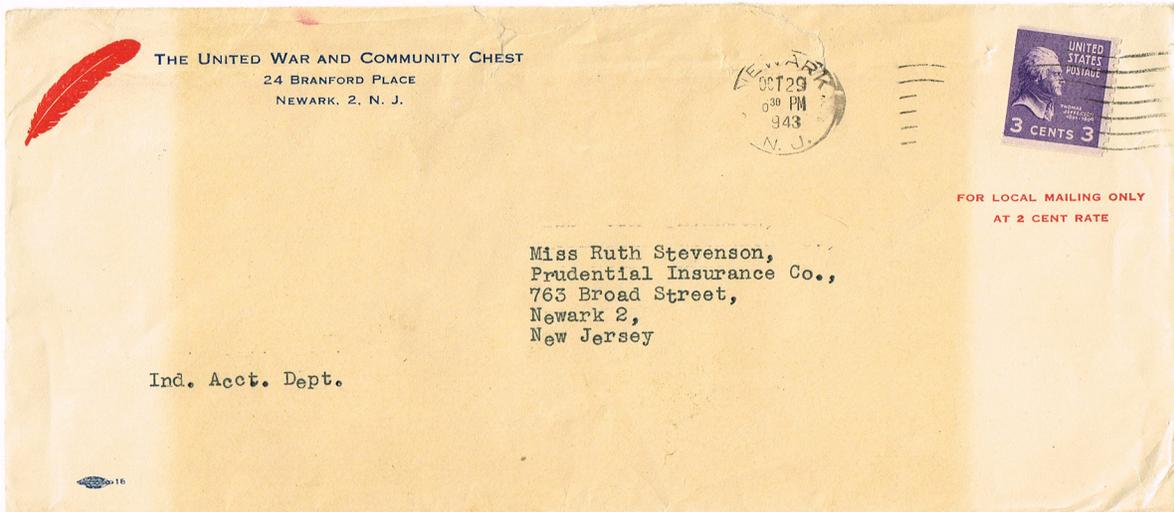


Figure 16. Pavey Envelope Company cover.

Milk Delivered	Test	Pounds Butter Fat	Price Paid for Butter Fat	Amount Due
3184	4.6	146.5	72	105   48
Hauling @ 10 Cwt.		3   8		
Butter Taken 10 Lbs.		4   90		
Skim & B. Milk		1   60		
Cheese				
Advance				
Orders				
Powder				
Strainer Pads				
Calf Food				
Hog Supplement				
390 Lbs		10		
Total Deductions			Amount Due	95   70

No. 241  
**GALLOWAY-WEST CO.**  
 AMHERST, WISCONSIN  
 PATRON *Fred Schmalzer*  
 MONTH OF **May 16 - 31 1943**  
 4-20M

UNITED STATES POSTAGE  
 AMHERST, WIS.  
 2 CENTS 2  
 Price paid per cwt based on your test 3.31  
 Actual Trucking Cost 15 cents per cwt.

Figure 17. Privately carried local letter.

mailed both in Newark and the surrounding area. 50,000 envelopes were printed by the Pavey Envelope Company of Newark, 15,000 intended for local use. Three cent stamps were inadvertently applied to the envelopes intended for local mailing, a mistake that would have cost the charity an extra \$150.00. As a solution to this dilemma, the Post Office agreed to refund \$150.00 to the charity but insisted the printer add the endorsement “For local mailing only at 2 cent rate” in red underneath the three cent stamps already on the envelopes. In the end everyone was happy, the Community Chest avoided unnecessary postage costs and, despite

their three-cent franking the specified envelopes bearing the red imprint were valid only within the Newark Post Office service area.

Perhaps one of the most intriguing and difficult-to-find local letter uses is correspondence carried privately outside the mails. The Postal Laws and Regulations state that letters could be transmitted by private means provided they were franked with the proper amount of postage as if being delivered by the Post Office Department. Figure 17 shows a cover franked with a two-cent horizontal coil and tied with a non-standard straight-line Amherst, Wisconsin

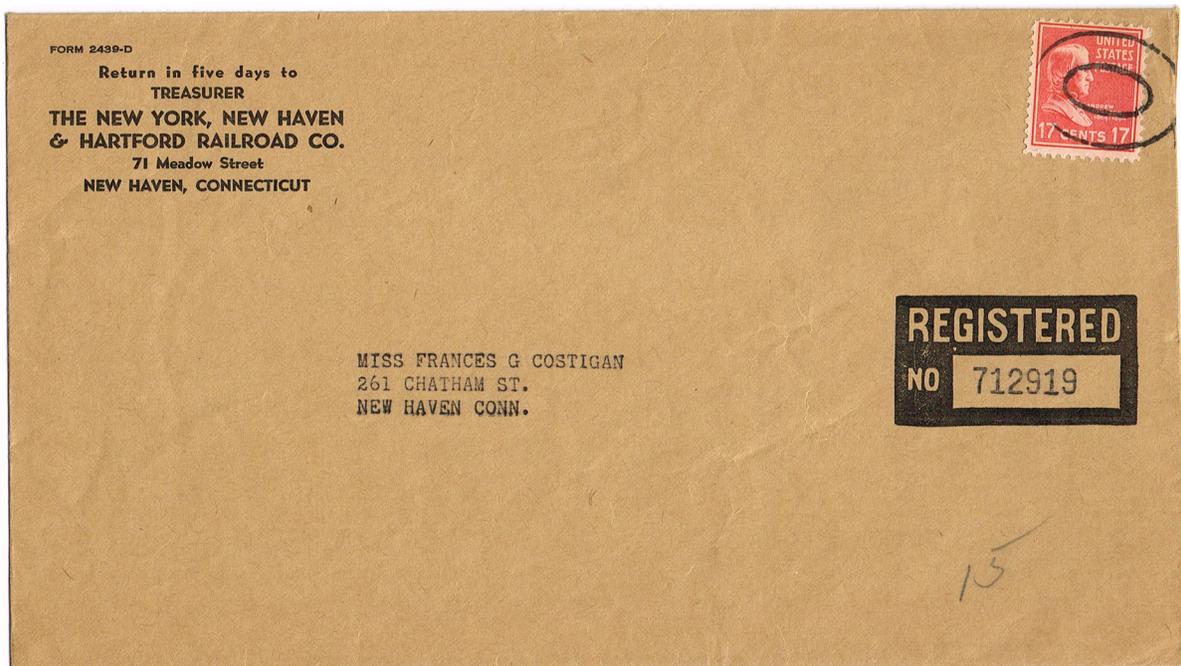


Figure 18. Registered local letter.

cancel. From the dairy Galloway-West to dairy farmer Fred Shanklin in May of 1943, this cover contained payment for milk and butter fat as well as test results regarding butter fat content and quality. This envelope would have been carried by an employee of the dairy, likely on their scheduled rounds, and delivered to the dairy farmer. It still required proper postage just as if mailed at the post office.

**Relationship with Other Services:** Virtually all postal services available for first class mail were available for local letter mail. Local letters could be sent registered, insured, certified, special delivery and return receipt could be requested. The cover in Figure 18 illustrates a registered local letter mailed December 18, 1942 from the treasurer of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railway Co. to a resident in New Haven. The postage paid on this letter mailed and delivered within the New Haven Post Office included the two cents local letter rate plus 15-cent minimum registration fee.

Another registered local letter, this one double weight (2 x 2 cents), is the subject of Figure 19.

A single, 22-cent Grover Cleveland stamp pays the four cents local rate, 15 cents minimum registration fee, plus three cents return receipt fee. This is a 1940 use.

Special delivery service for local letters is a seldom seen use. In the Fall of 1939, the San Francisco Local of the American Communications Association went on strike. Western Union messengers were members of this union; as a result delivery of telegrams in San Francisco suffered. To get around this loss of messenger delivery men due to the strike Western Union paid the Post Office Department for special delivery of telegrams.

The cover in Figure 20 is a postal artifact of this strike-breaking attempt by Western Union. The 12-cent Zachary Taylor stamp pays the two-cent local letter rate plus 10 cents special delivery fee then in effect. The reverse has a 9:00 PM October 1, 1939 special delivery postmark. Despite being a window envelope, there is a straight-line San Francisco, Cal. hand stamped address beneath the window and a hand stamped directive beneath the corner card

specifying special delivery, with instructions to leave under the door if no response.

A resident of the Bronx posted the cover in Figure 21. This letter was a double weight local letter with special delivery service requested. The letter was sent in response to a help wanted advertisement in the *New York Times*. This March 12, 1940 use of the 14-cent Franklin Pierce stamp is a very seldom seen franking and combination of fees.

The 40-cent franking on the 1938 cover in Figure 22 is certainly high and somewhat

unusual for a local letter. Postage included not only the 15-cent minimum registration fee but a 23-cent fee for return receipt showing the address where delivered. These fees plus the two-cent local letter rate were paid by the eight 4 ½-cent White House stamps plus single four-cent James Madison stamp.

Local letter rates for mail at non-carrier post offices continued until well beyond the era of the Presidential Series. Carrier office service ended on March 25, 1944. A last day of service cover is shown in Figure 23. This New York City cover is postmarked at 2:30 PM on March

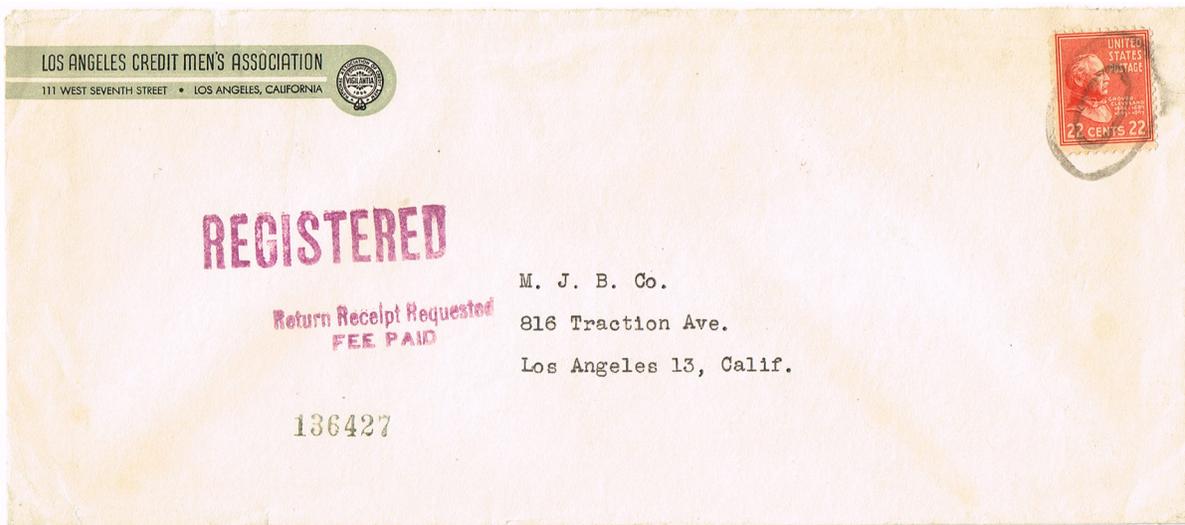
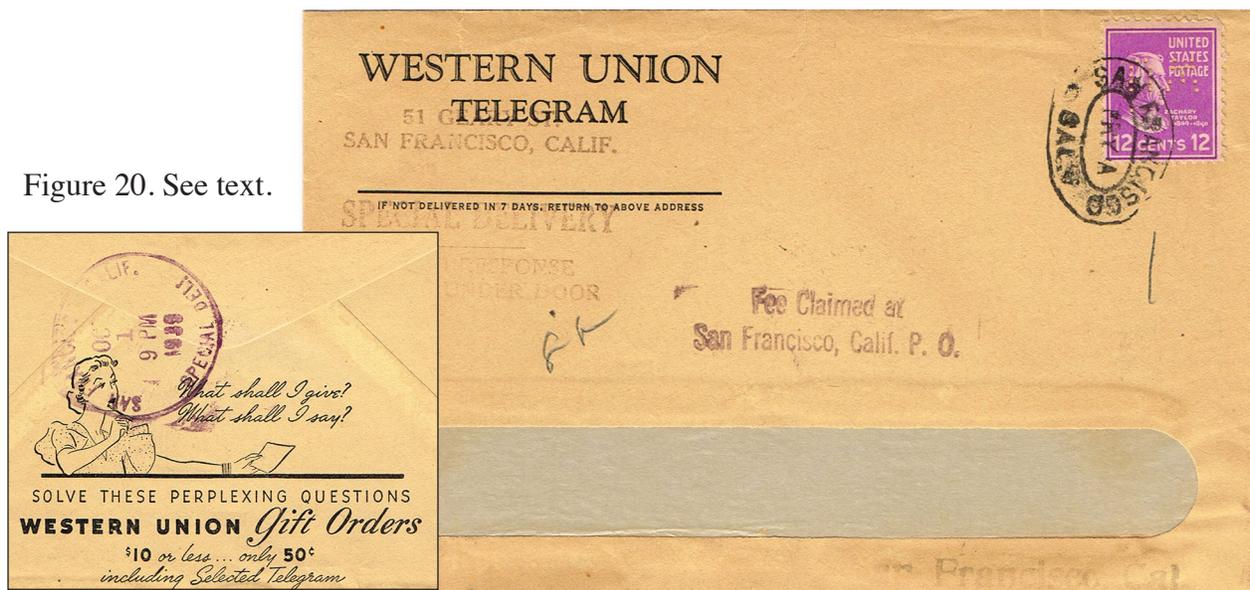


Figure 19. Double weight registered local letter.

Figure 20. See text.



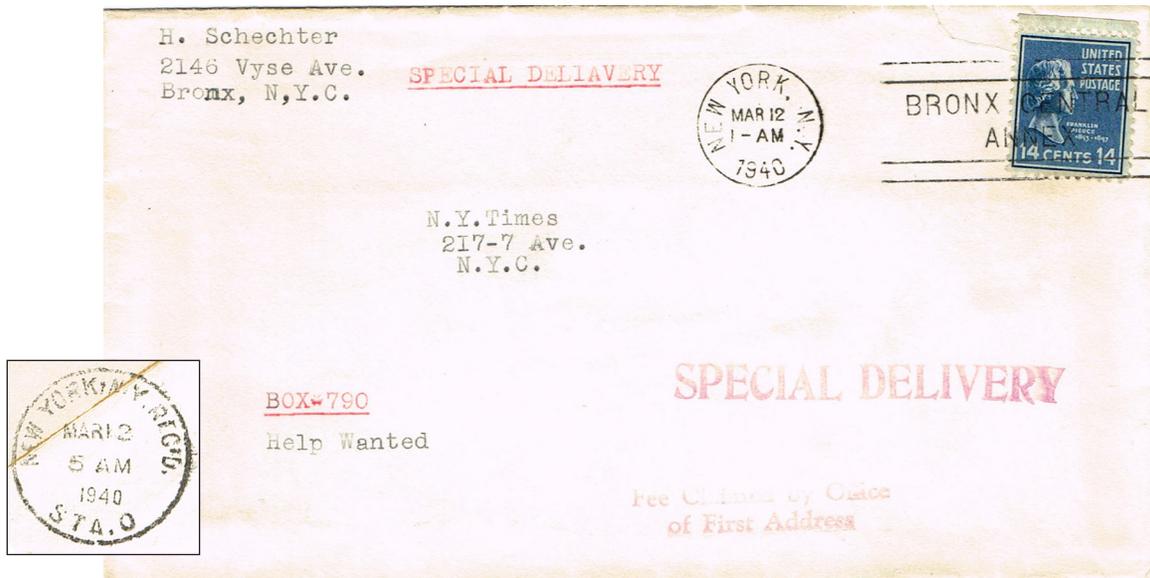


Figure 21. 14 cent stamp paying double weight local letter plus special delivery.

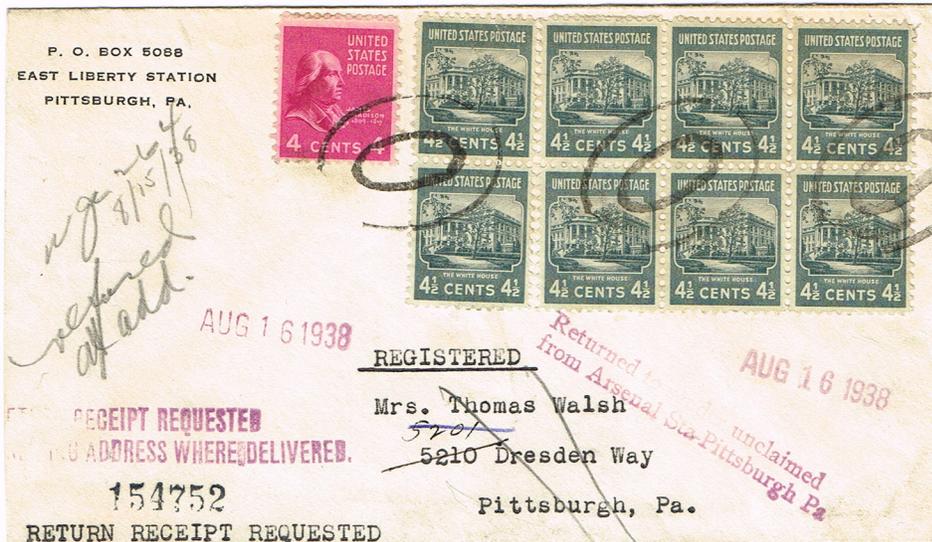


Figure 22. 40-cent franking on a registered local letter.

25, 1944 and paid by a horizontal pair of the one cent George Washington coil stamp.

**Forwarding:** When the addressee of a letter intended for local delivery had moved out of the service area of the post office of mailing, the letter was assessed postage due and forwarded at the prevailing first-class letter rate, in most cases three cents. The cover in Figure 24 was mailed in Springfield, Massachusetts and addressed to a resident there. The addressee had relocated to Leominster, Mass. so the letter was charged one cent postage due for the

difference in carrier local letter fee and standard first-class postage. It was then forwarded on to Leominster.

The two-cent circular die stationery cover in Figure 25 was mailed May 30, 1938 in Bristol, Tennessee to an addressee in Bristol, Tenn. Unbeknownst to the sender, the recipient lived in Bristol, Virginia and the letter was assessed one cent postage due, received a second Bristol, Tenn. machine cancel on May 31, 1938 and was forwarded on to Bristol, Va. The one-cent George Washington sheet stamp applied for

forwarding postage dodged cancellation.

**Queens County Local Letter Rate:** A local letter rate mentioned in *U. S. Domestic Postal Rates* by Beecher and Wawrukiewicz deserves special mention. A two cents per ounce local letter rate between post offices in Queens County, New York is referred to. The specific legislation authorizing this rate (Figure 26) does not mention Queens County by name. It states that any county with a population of one

million or more persons contained within the limits of a city was eligible for this local letter rate between post offices. Queens County was the only county qualifying for this rate at the time. Kings County met the population criteria but only had the Brooklyn Post Office. New York County and Bronx County also met the population requirements but were serviced only by the New York Post Office. Queens County had (and still has) four separate post offices: Long Island City, Flushing, Jamaica, and Far

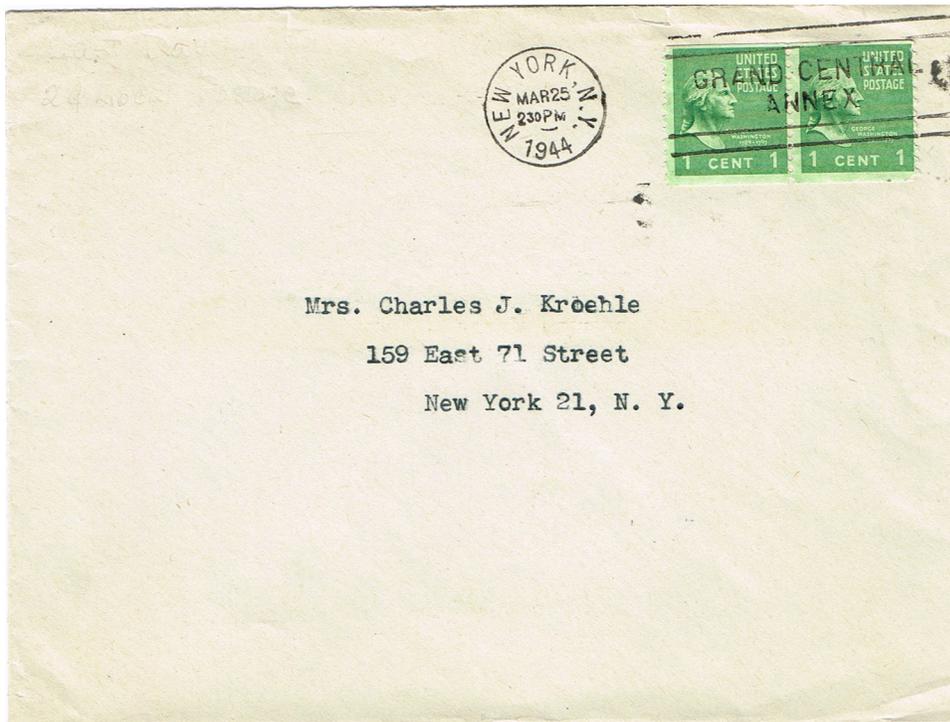


Figure 23. Last day of carrier office local letter service.



Figure 24. Forwarded local letter.



Figure 25. Letter forwarded from Bristol, Tenn. to Bristol, Va.

54 STAT.] 76TH CONG., 3D SESS.—CHS. 414, 415—JUNE 24, 1940 505

[CHAPTER 414] AN ACT

To provide for the local delivery rate on certain first-class mail matter.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the proviso in section 1001 of the Revenue Act of 1932 (relating to postal rates) is amended to read as follows: "Provided, That such additional rate shall not apply to first-class matter mailed for local delivery or for delivery wholly within a county the population of which exceeds one million, provided said county is entirely within a corporate city".*

Approved, June 24, 1940.

June 24, 1940  
[S. 3667]  
[Public, No. 652]

Revenue Act of 1932,  
amendment,  
48 Stat. 254, § 3.  
39 U. S. C. § 280  
(note); Supp. V, § 280  
(note).  
*Proviso.*  
Additional postal  
rate, restriction.

Figure 26. Legislation authorizing local letter rate between different post offices in counties of one million or more persons contained within a city.

Rockaway. The legislation meant that a local letter could be sent between any two of these four different post offices in Queens County for two cents. Unfortunately, no examples have yet been reported.

A surprisingly wide variety of local letter mail can be found, with some examples exceptionally scarce and interesting. Territorial uses, internment camp local covers, privately carried local letters, single frankings paying

multiple services, and covers mailed between post offices in Queens County, New York as well as any post-August 1, 1958 local letter would be a “local jewel”.

**Endnote**

1. Louis Fiset. *Detained, Interned, Incarcerated: U.S. Enemy Noncombatant Mail in World War II*. (Chicago: Collectors Club of Chicago, 2010), p. 158.

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