



# The Prexie Era

Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

No. 75 Autumn 2016

Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher  
fiset@uw.edu

## Paying Postage Three Different Ways On One Parcel Post Item

by Daniel S. Pagter



Figure: Partial wrapper containing a catalogue forwarded twice with three postage assessments.

The registered trademark of The Allbright-Nell Co., of Chicago, marks this corrugated container top as a Prexie era postal history rough gem. The container originally contained a company catalogue. The company name, present in both long form and as ANCO, has a century-long history of mechanized innovation

throughout the USA and world. William B. Allbright, an MIT graduate, spent his early career developing and processing the means to convert oil, fat, grease and other animal by products into useful products, such as soap. His employer gave him complete control to develop new processes and invent new machinery.

In 1902 he left his employer to partner with Mr. B. F. Nell and start the ANCO business. Initially, his company produced many industry standard machines for the meat processing industry. During World War II Allbright and Nell doubled the company's output for the meat industry. In addition, its ability to adapt its machinery for a war footing allowed it to profit greatly in defense work, including machining and assembling parts for the Army's Sherman Tank.

The Allbright-Nell Company is relatively unknown to philately. Addressee Lawrence T. Berliner, his brother, and father, however, are known to collectors for the extensive postal history they left behind, especially fourth class and parcel post material, mostly raw fur mailing tags.

To fully appreciate the illustrated parcel post wrapper, we must know something about the addressee and his family. In the late 1880s Meyer Berliner started a tallow rendering business in Corry, PA, which failed after five years. Meyer died in 1895. In 1900 son Jacob and his sons, Lawrence and Manfred, founded the Corry Hide Company. In 1914 they also founded the Berliner Leather Company, shortly renamed the Berliner Company. Both family-run companies flourished beyond Jacob's 1917 death and until Manfred's death in 1924.

Lawrence soon moved to New York City, but continued to head the companies in Corry. Company operations slowed considerably. Lawrence remained in the industry as a member of the New York Hide Exchange. In the late 1930s he began to spend time in Florida in addition to New York and Corry, relocating to Florida permanently by the 1940s.

The wrapper shown here, as implied by the Sec. 571½ P.L.&R. imprint, contained “. . . a bound catalog of greater than 24 pages and no more than 10 pounds subject to a special parcel

post rate of postage by zone for the first pound and lower rate for the each of additional second to tenth pound, if any.” This special, newly created rate went into effect July 1, 1939 when added as an amendment (Section 571½) to the 1932 Postal Laws and Regulations (P.L.&R.) The 1940 P.L.&R. incorporated that section into Section 571 as paragraph 5. The rates will also be found in the annual POD postal guides. Unlike the guides, the P.L.&R.s are issued as needed, usually not less than five years apart.

The reason Sec. 571½ P.L.&R. is needed is to differentiate these special parcel post rate items from the similar looking normal parcel post matter items, which required higher postage rates. The imprint was placed to prevent the mail matter from being reassessed as a short paid normal rate parcel post item and erroneously “Held for Postage,” as such short matter was normally handled. The 1940 and 1941 endorsement required was “Sec. 571 P.L.&R.” While the short lived Sec. 571½ P.L.&R. became obsolete in less than a year, it adequately conveyed the necessary message on this wrapper, enabling the company to use its remaining stock of preprinted mailers.

**Postage for the first leg:** This item entered the mail stream in Chicago destined for New York City, in Zone 5. The first pound or fraction was 7 cents with each additional pound or fraction at 4 cents up to the tenth pound, a rate in effect from the July 1, 1939 inception until March 24, 1944. Based upon the presence of the 7-cent Jackson stamp, cancelled and tied by mute Chicago roller, this item weighed one pound or less and, as shown later, was seven ounces.

Arriving in New York City, the addressee, Mr. Berliner, had left a forwarding address of Corry, PA but failing to provide instruction regarding forwarding third class or parcel post mail matter. The New York City post office contacted Berliner, advising him of seven cents postage due at the normal third class catalog



Figure 2: Enlarged detail of the address label showing POD-applied markings prior to first forwarding.

rate of one cent per ounce, to be prepaid prior to forwarding to Corry, PA.

Corry, PA to New York City was a Zone 3 distance. However, the item was now no longer eligible for the special Section 571 P.L.&R. parcel post zone and weight rate as a single item. Rather, postage was only weight driven, at third class catalog rates. While the special Sec. 571 P.L.&R. rate would be 5 cents for the one pound Zone 3 distance, the single piece third class catalog rate from April 15, 1925 to January 1, 1949 was one cent per ounce or seven cents for a seven ounce mailing.

**Postage for the second leg:** Berliner sent seven cents as forwarding postage, including a 2-cent Adams, 3-cent Jefferson and 2-cent Sousa Famous American, all of which were affixed and cancelled by a mute New York Station H oval paying for this now seven ounce third class item on its second leg of the journey. The 7-cent adhesive originally canceled in Chicago was re-cancelled as well. Two strikes of "THIS IS THE ITEM FOR WHICH YOU SENT POSTAGE" and a straight line "JAN 27 1941" were added (Figure 2) and the mail matter forwarded to Corry, PA. This date was a gift to the postal historian because dates were neither required nor expected for held-for-postage matter, and

third class and parcel post matter was specifically not to be dated. The date likely appeared so the postal clerk could monitor how long the item sat awaiting forwarding postage. If none arrived, the item was to be returned, postage due, to the sender who would have to pay the return postage upon its return. The "Return Postage Guaranteed" endorsement (Figure 1) in the printed corner card was formal notice to handle the return in that manner without first securing return postage from the sender while holding the item for postage.

**Postage for the third leg:** From Corry, PA, the item was again forwarded, this time to Miami, FL, now Zone 6 mail. Had the item still qualified for the Sec. 571 P.L.&R. rate it would have required 8 cents to forward. The forwarding order on Lawrence's mail to Miami must have included a pledge to pay for forwarded third class or parcel post matter when presented for delivery in Miami. This promise was cheaper, as it would avoid the 7 cents additional forwarding postage at the regular rate of 1 cent per ounce, plus a notice card fee and the 3-cent cost to send the forwarding postage back to the post office holding the item. The final postage payment for this third leg was collected as a postage due payment (undocumented), likely bulk for a stack of items forwarded to Lawrence in Miami.

During any parcel post era, including the Prexie era, by most measures a forwarded non-military parcel post item is scarce. A twice-forwarded item is even more so. Like a diamond, this unexpected item was dug from a large group lot of Berliner fur tags and envelopes. This find shows the value of sifting through the muck accompanied by basic philatelic knowledge. It allows us to recognize a diamond in the rough when it appears in that muck. Happy hunting!

# Air Despatch Letter Service/Bomber Pouch Mail

by Louis Fiset



Figure 1: ADLS cover, from the European continent to New York City, via London, Prestwick, Scotland and Washington, D.C. Postage was required for domestic transport of the mail.

Figure 1 shows what appears to be a rather ordinary cover bearing an 8-cent Prexie paying the domestic airmail rate on May 21, 1945, from Washington, D.C. to New York. What drew my attention is the underlined, “via ADLS” notation. Closer inspection also reveals three dates in May 1945 – 13, 14, and 15, set within rectangular and oval press censorship markings applied by U.S. [Supreme Headquarters Allied Forces (SHAEF)] and British censors. A fourth date “15 May 1945 P.M.” forms part of a “PRO Air Dispatch” clock dial stamp, in red, (PRO = Public Relations Office). Finally, the cover is addressed to the editor (Rédaction) of a Hungarian American newspaper, published in New York.

Here is what I’ve learned about this cover, with help from Ken Lawrence and Richard Martorelli. The ADLS notation stands for Air Despatch Letter Service, a quasi courier service established by the Royal Air Force to ferry important dispatches between Europe’s battlefields and London. The RAF re-outfitted

Hawker Hurricane fighter planes, earlier heroes of the Battle of Britain, to shuttle the mail in modified fuselages and torpedo pods. The service started at the beginning of the war when a squadron was formed to transport personnel and dispatch important communications. Following the invasion of Normandy the service increased in importance as ADLS pilots flew dispatches for home from all over wartorn Europe.

This cover was addressed to *Amerikai Magyar Nepszava*, a U.S.-based, anti-Axis newspaper targeting Hungarian Americans seeking news on the course of the war in the homeland. German and Hungarian troops, on the defensive against invading Soviet troops, were finally expelled from Hungary on April 4, 1945. Formal surrender took place on May 8th, VE Day, one week before the posting of this cover.

Figure 2 shows a contemporaneous print advertisement providing information about the publication.



Figure 2: Print advertisement promoting the Hungarian-American newspaper.

The question arises how this non-APO letter reached the U.S. within a week, given the postage paid. Figure 3 may help provide an explanation.

This cover, bearing several markings similar to the first one, also has a typed directive, BOMBER PACKET. The U.S. Air Transport Command operated a free transatlantic shuttle service using stripped down, long range B-24 bombers to transport important military, diplomatic, and business communications between Washington and London, via Prestwick, Scotland. Eligible mail was to have some directive indicating it should be included as “bomber mail.”

While the Office of War Information underwrote this service, correspondents were required to affix postage for onward postal service in the U.S. Hence, the postage paid on the two covers.

The cover in Figure 3 appears to provide a link between ADLS and bomber pouch mail. This cover was sent from APO 755 (Namur, Belgium) with airmail concession rate postage affixed. Both covers bear SHAEF press censor markings applied a day apart, as well as dated PRO Air Dispatch clock dials. The two covers share pencilled “A4230” and A4309” docketing markings, perhaps applied to all mail being dispatched. Finally, both covers were postmarked at Washington, D.C. on the same day, May 21, 1945.

These similar markings suggest the first cover, flown to England via ADLS, continued its journey to Washington from Prestwick as bomber pouch mail. Now, can anyone show a single cover bearing both ADLS and bomber pouch markings?

#### References

Richard D. Martorelli. “Bomber Mail and Newsgathering,” *Postal History Journal*. 151(Feb 2012):30-34.

Ken Lawrence. “U.S. mail across the Atlantic by land-based aircraft: Part 2, 1942-46,” *Linns Stamp News*. Sep 15, 2015.



Figure 3: “Bomber Packet” mail correspondence bearing similar markings to the ADLS cover in Figure 1. [Richard Martorelli collection, courtesy of the Postal History Journal.]

## Fourth Class Mail: American Locker Co. Tags

by Richard Pederson

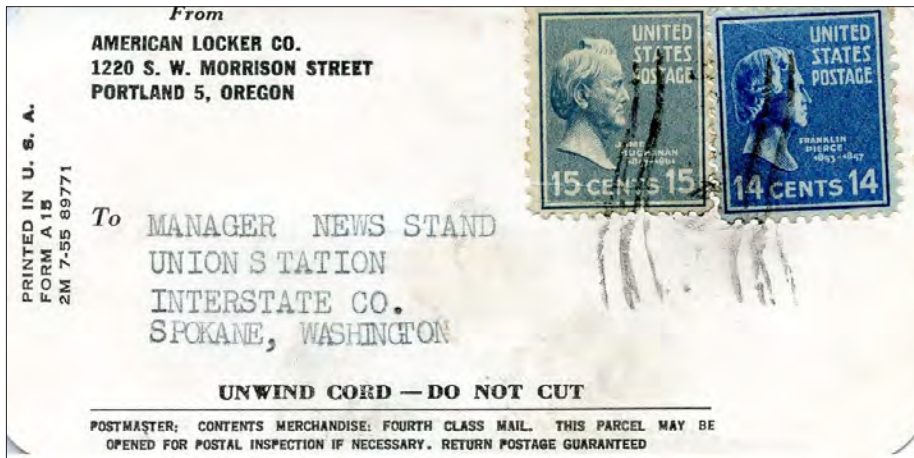


Figure 1: Front and back sides of a fourth class parcel tag, possibly paying for advertising brochures for the American Locker Co.

Over the years I have accumulated a number of American Locker Company fourth class mailing tags franked with Prexie stamps. Although acquired from several different sellers, they may all have originated from the same source. Each tag has postage affixed on both sides, one side paying outbound postage from the American Locker Company and the other with return postage from the original addressee. All tags are cancelled but, as expected with fourth class mail, only two have date stamps, both of them faint or nearly illegible.

Figure 1 shows the front and back of a tag used to affix postage for a parcel sent between the American Locker Company's Portland, Oregon

office and the Interstate Company news stand at Union Station, in Spokane, Washington. Both sides contain 29 cents postage paying for up to 2 pounds for a Zone 3 destination.

This group of tags poses two challenges -- first, to speculate on the contents of the attached parcels and; two, to determine the time frame in which the tags were used in order to confirm the rates were correctly calculated. I will tackle these questions one at a time.

Determining what was being mailed might provide a clue as to why return postage was needed. An internet search on the American Locker Company resulted in the advertisement

for public lockers shown in Figure 2. A follow-up search on the Portland street address revealed the company was located in what is now known as the Terminal Sales Building in the downtown area. The building, constructed in 1926, is a well-known landmark and represents the only high-rise art deco building in the city. It is currently on the National Register of Historic Places.

Next, I looked at the addressees on the tags for clues to what was being shipped. I also read the descriptions of those items I purchased on eBay and those Bob Hohertz has for two American Locker Company tags included on his Prexie web site.

Each of my tags was sent from the American Locker Company to one of the following destinations:

- Young Women’s Christian Association, Portland, Oregon
- Northwest Greyhound Bus Depot, Pasco, Washington
- Spokane Union Bus Depot, Spokane, Washington
- Continental Trailways Bus Depot, Seattle, Washington
- Great Northern Railway, Havre, Montana
- Pacific Trailways Bus Depot, Redmond, Oregon
- Northern Pacific Railway, Yakima, Washington
- Coeur d’Alene Hotel, Spokane, Washington
- Greyhound Bus Depot, Tacoma, Washington
- News Stand at Union Station (Interstate Co.), Spokane, Washington
- Trailways Bus Depot, Portland, Oregon.

Also, each tag contains the statement/warning, “UNWIND CORD – DO NOT CUT.” This implies the packages were bound with cord



Figure 2: Print copy advertising public lockers for travelers located in train stations, bus depots, etc.

tightly wrapped around whatever was being shipped.

Based upon the destinations and warning, my first thought was that the contents included newspapers and/or periodicals being shipped to newsstands located throughout the Pacific Northwest region. However, analysis of the tags’ postage suggests the heaviest weight shipped was between 3 and 4 pounds, with the majority paying up to 1 pound. Most bundles of newspapers or periodicals would exceed four

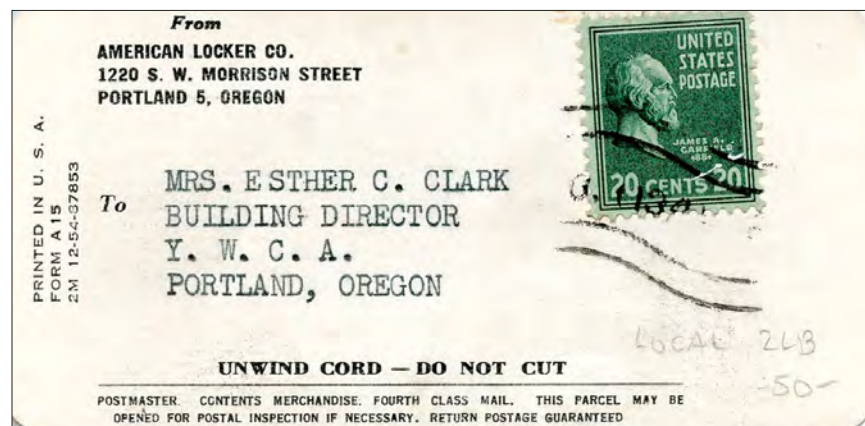


Figure 3: Two American Locker Co. tags with local zone (Portland, Oregon) postage paid.

pounds – and certainly more than just a single pound.

The advertisement in Figure 2 may shed light on the contents of the packages. It suggests the company provided lockers for temporary storage of parcels and luggage located in public places, such as bus terminals and train stations. Perhaps the packages contained advertising brochures for the lockers, with surpluses being returned to the company.

Determining the approximate period of use for the tags proved relatively easy. Bob Hohertz pointed out that the tags were date-coded to indicate when created. According to the coding, the tags were all printed on one of the following dates: December 1954; July 1955; December 1955; and June 1956. Furthermore, two of them were date stamped when the cancel

was applied, one of which clearly shows the year, 1955. Based upon this information, the fourth class rates applying to all 12 of the tags in my possession were in effect from October 1, 1953 through January 31, 1960.

Both tags with local zone (Portland) bear solo Prexie frankings. See Figure 3. The first, with an 18-cent Grant stamp, pays the up-to-one-pound rate between the American Locker Company and the Trailways Bus Depot; the second, with a 20-cent Garfield stamp, pays the up-to-two-pound rate between the American Locker Company and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).

I welcome additional information from other readers on the American Locker Company and the contents of what may have been shipped via fourth class mail. Please contact the editor.



# Supplementary Registration Fee on Foreign Mail

by Ed Field



The figures above show the front and reverse of a cover sent from the Bank of Manhattan to Medan, Sumatra in the Dutch East Indies (DEI). It was posted in New York City on October 29 1941 and arrived in Medan on December 12 1941. Its transit thus spanned the Pearl Harbor attack. Its many markings are of interest to World War II postal historians, but my goal here is simply to determine what the cover's contents might have been.

The franking totals \$7.70 plus 15 cents registry fee. Because the airmail rate to DEI was 70 cents per half ounce, one might conclude the cover plus contents weighed 5.5 ounces and the \$7.70 went entirely for postage. The contents would therefore have been five ounces of paper stuffed into a roughly half-

ounce cover. My purpose here is to offer an alternative interpretation; namely, that part of the franking was to pay the supplementary fee the USPOD charged for delivering valuable contents under the registry system, assuming this would also apply to UPU mail matter.

For one thing, the sender was a large Wall Street bank that routinely transferred negotiable securities such as bearer bonds via the registry system. They were required to declare the value of the contents and had to pay a surcharge proportional to that value. Moreover, try as I might, I could not stuff more than 3 ounces of paper into the cover without risk of bursting it. Unless there is some kind of heavy paper I don't know about, the cover with contents did not weigh more than 3.5 ounces, and it surely

weighed more than a half ounce. So, the airmail postage would have been at least \$1.40, but no more than \$4.90. Any franking above those values would have been for the surcharge.

The surcharge for Zone 8 was 13 cents per thousand dollars declared value. Several possible combinations of weight and value

exist, but simple math shows that declared values between \$21K and \$48K are consistent with the franking. One appealing possibility: If the declared value were \$43K, the postage plus surcharge would have totaled \$7.69. The bank could well afford the penny over payment.

Does anyone have an alternative explanation?

## Diplomatic Mail Air Parcel Post Service

by Robert Schlesinger



I recently purchased an interesting tag with a corner card that reads FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA and was sent air parcel post to Washington, D.C. It bears \$30.77 in postage, all of it Prexie usage.

The handstamp reads EMBASSY - APO 928, c/o Postmaster San Francisco, California. From June 1, 1950, through December 31, 1964, APO 928 was located in Manila, Philippines. Thus we know the American embassy in Manila sent the package back to the Department of State in Washington, DC.

In terms of rating the parcel, the handstamp on the bottom of the front is useful. It gives the date of mailing (August 17, 1954) and weight of the parcel (38 pounds). Zone 8, the applicable zone for this parcel, required 80 cents per pound airmail postage. Thirty-eight pounds times 80 cents per pound comes up to \$30.40. Added was a 30-cent no indemnity registry fee, and 7-cent supplemental fee covering \$400-\$600 in value for Zone 8. These additional fees, added to the postage paid comes to \$30.77, the total amount paid by the Prexies on the tag.