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The Prexie Era

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3-Cent Convention Letter Rate to Non-PUAS Countries during the Prexie Era

by Stephen L. Suffet

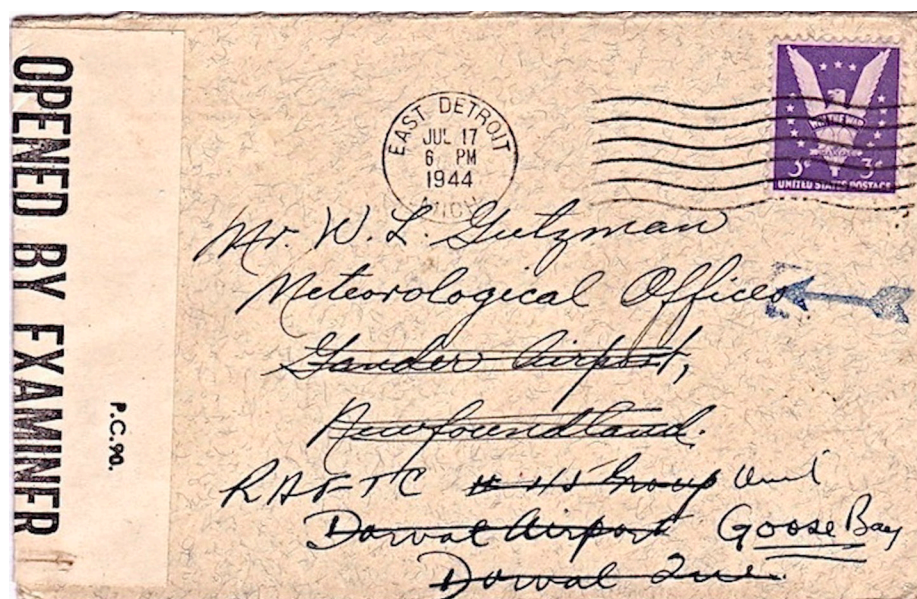


Figure 1

In Issue No. 86 of the newsletter, I discussed the 3 cents per ounce surface letter rate from the United States to members of the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain (PUAS). This convention rate, often incorrectly called 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 remained in effect through July 31, 1958, to Canada and Mexico, and through October 31, 1953, to all other members of the PUAS. Those countries included the fully independent nations of the

Caribbean, Central, and South America; Spain and Spanish possessions; and Andorra via its Spanish post office.

The surface letter rate to almost all other foreign counties at the time was 5 cents for the first ounce plus 3 cents for each additional ounce. In effect it was 2 cents per piece higher than to PUAS countries. *There were, nonetheless, two non-PUAS countries to which the 3-cent convention rate applied for part of the Prexie era. One was Newfoundland; the other, the Republic of the Philippines.*

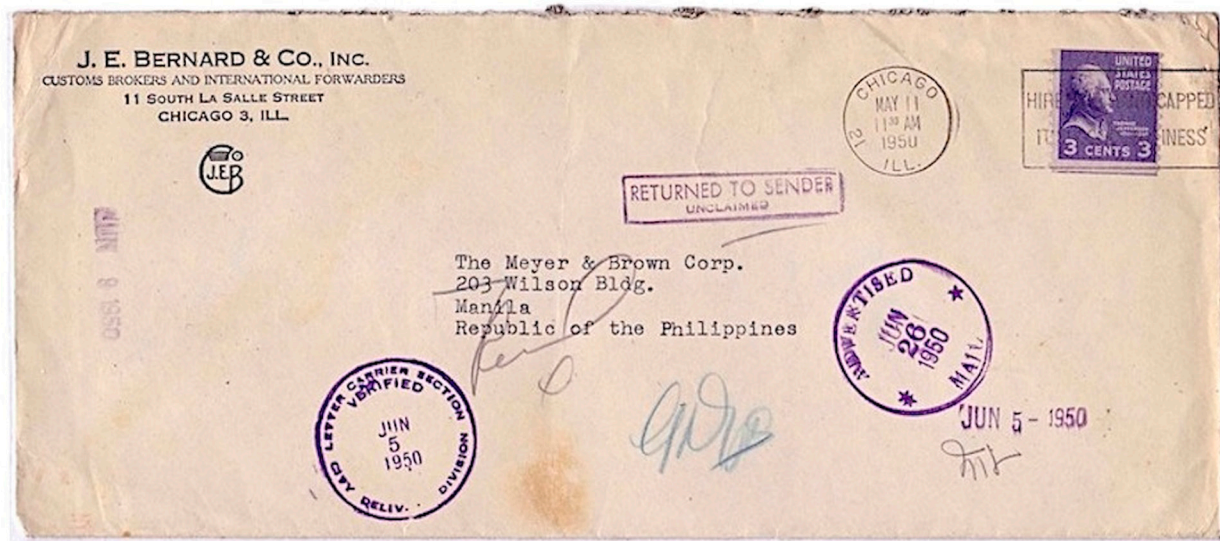


Figure 2

Newfoundland

The surface letter rate of 3 cents per ounce to Newfoundland went into effect on September 1, 1931, the same day it went into effect to Canada. At the time, both Newfoundland, which included Labrador, and Canada were self-governing British Dominions. However, on February 16, 1934, facing crushing debts it could not repay, Newfoundland surrendered the right to govern itself. In effect, it became a British Crown Colony ruled by the United Kingdom, although it was still nominally a Dominion. So it remained until just before midnight on March 31, 1949, when Newfoundland joined Canada as its tenth province. The 3-cent rate to Newfoundland thus remained in effect through July 31, 1958, although as of April 1, 1949, Newfoundland was no longer a separate Dominion.

Figure 1 pictures a 3-cent rate cover postmarked on July 17, 1944, from East Detroit, Michigan, and addressed to someone working in the Meteorological Office at the airport in Gander, Newfoundland. In an attempt to reach the addressee, the cover was forwarded to the Royal Air Force Training Command at the airport in Dorval, Quebec, within Canada proper. It was then forwarded a second time to Goose Bay,

Labrador, the site of a large Allied air force base. Although located within the Dominion of Newfoundland, the Goose Bay Air Force Base was under the overall operational control of the Royal Canadian Air Force. For the duration of World War II, it was used jointly by the Royal Canadian Air Force, the British Royal Air Force, and the United States Army Air Force.

The Republic of the Philippines

Except for the 1942-1945 period of Japanese occupation, the Philippine Islands were under control of the U.S. from 1898 until becoming an independent republic on July 4, 1946.

Beginning November 24, 1899, U.S. domestic postal rates applied to mail sent to the Philippines, so when the Prexie era began in 1938, the U.S. surface letter rate to the Philippines was the domestic letter rate of 3 cents per ounce. When the Republic of the Philippines came into existence in 1946, the letter rate from the U.S. became what it was to non-convention rate countries: 5 cents for the first ounce plus 3 cents for each additional ounce. Effective October 1, 1947, however, the letter rate to the Philippines reverted to 3 cents per ounce, and it continued as such through October 31, 1953.

Figure 2 shows a 3-cent rate cover postmarked on May 11, 1950, from Chicago, Illinois, and addressed to Manila in the Philippines. The addressee could not be found, so on June 26, 1950, the mail piece was advertised by the Manila post office. Eventually it was returned unclaimed to the sender.

Effective November 1, 1953, the U.S. surface letter rate to all foreign countries other than Canada and Mexico became 8 cents for the first ounce plus 4 cents for each additional ounce. The 3-cent convention rate to the Philippines thus ended after only six years and a month.

My own collecting experience is that 3-cent

letter rate covers to Newfoundland before it became a province of Canada in 1949 are not hard to find, especially covers addressed to the Rev. E.A. Butler, a well known Newfoundland philatelist. On the other hand, 3-cent letter rate covers to the Republic of the Philippines during the 1947-1953 rate period have proven surprising difficult to locate. In fact, the one illustrated herein is the only example I have been able to acquire even though I have been searching since 2009. I have no idea what accounts for the scarcity, but I would not be surprised if there are many 3-cent letter rate covers still in the Philippines that have never been repatriated to the United States.

1942 Holocaust Mail to Vichy France

by Jeffrey Shapiro



Although this ratty appearing cover will not meet the quality standard of all collectors, postal history gems are often found in less than perfect condition. In the case of the cover shown here, it's amazing it survived at all !

Basic information shows 20-cent and 25-cent

Prexie stamps paying the 30-cent transatlantic airmail rate plus the 15-cent international registration fee on May 1942 correspondence from Eric Meyer in Missouri to a relative, Israel Meyer, in Vichy (unoccupied) France. Auxiliary markings show this multi-censored cover was first sent to Camp Les Milles, then



forwarded to Camp Rivesaltes.

Originally built as a tile factory on the outskirts of Marseille, in September 1939 Camp Les Milles was transformed to a facility housing illegal aliens and “undesirables” (i.e., Spanish refugees and Jews). After Vichy authorities took over in July 1940, Camp Les Milles added other groups (Gypsies, Armenians, homosexuals) to its inmate population. By the time this letter arrived on June 10, 1942, the Camp had closed and the inmates transferred to Rivesaltes.

Camp de Rivesaltes, located 40 kilometers from the Spanish Border in Southeast France, was established in 1935 to house refugees fleeing the Spanish Civil War. By 1939 the area, now a haven for Jews fleeing Nazi persecution on their way to neutral countries, the French Third Republic built separate facilities to house various ethnic groups as these displaced persons awaited exit visas.

The Vichy regime transformed Rivesaltes into an internment camp for “undesirables” including not only Jews but also Armenians and Gypsies. By late 1940 3,500 artists and

intellectuals were detained at the facility. By early 1942, 6,400 individuals were housed there. In the Summer of 1942, Camp Rivesaltes was closed; the remaining 2,000 Jews (including Israel Meyer) were transferred to the Drancy Internment facility (near Paris), then onward to the Nazi concentration and extermination camps at Auschwitz in Occupied Poland.

Epilogue

After 1944 thru 1948 Rivesaltes became a “guarded residence center” for POWs from Germany and Italy. In the mid-1950s the facility became a detention center for refugees from Algeria and the former French Indo-China. By 1986, it reverted back to its original purpose, to house Spaniards fleeing General Francisco Franco’s regime. The facility closed in 2007.

Camp de Milles reopened in 2012 as a museum to keep alive “the memories of racism and fanaticism of World War II.” In October 2015, the facility was designated as the new headquarters for UNESCO’s Center for Education for Citizenship, Human Services and Shared Memories of Genocide.

Richard Levy Collection Auction Preview

by Albert “Chip” Briggs



Figure 1

Collectors of Presidential Series stamps and postal history will have an opportunity to add to their collections the first week of December when Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions LLC offers the Richard Levy collection of Prexie material. The auction, Keller Flagship Auction #731, will be held December 3-5. The collection is being sold in 21 lots (Lots 733-753).

This collection was initially offered as a single lot in a special catalog prepared by the Kelleher firm for their private treaty sale offerings at the international show, STOCKHOLMIA 2019, earlier this year. The asking price was \$27,000.00. As of this writing, it is still listed and viewable on the firm's website as Lot 66 in the Private Treaty Sale Catalog.

The collection has now been broken down into 21 lots, with many of the better postal history items listed individually. Included is a large

balance lot with numerous stamps and covers. A number of the covers will be recognized as illustrations in *The Prexies* by Roland Rustad and/or as ex-Suffet by long time collectors of this material.

The first lot is an eye catcher; folded open for display, it is a five times the 50-cent air mail rate cover to the Philippines franked with 50 copies of the 5-cent James Monroe stamp and used in June, 1939. This very cover is illustrated as figure 5-C on page 174 of *The Prexies*. It carries an estimate of \$400.00 to \$600.00 with an opening bid of \$200.00. While air mail uses to the Philippines are not scarce, a multi-weight use franked with 50 copies of the five cent Prexie is certainly unusual.

Also illustrated in Rustad's book (figure 11-C on page 214) and ex-Suffet is lot number 735; an 11 cent single franking used to pay for a three



Figure 2

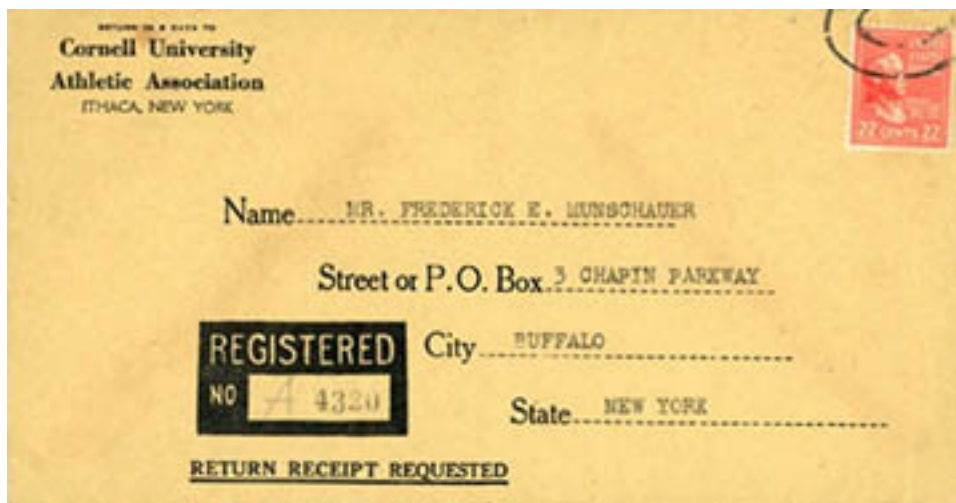


Figure 3

ounce surface mailing to Denmark. (Figure 1.) The catalog describes it as “one of the rarest 20th century stamp solo usages paying an exact rate”. This lot was also illustrated in color on the card insert as lot 1157 of the Nutmeg Sale #62 of the Steven Suffet collection in 2003. It’s sale price in that auction is not known as Nutmeg did not publish prices realized. (Some prices realized were compiled and published by contributors of this newsletter after the sale but this covered only a small fraction of the items sold.)

Eleven-cent single frankings on mail to foreign destinations can be found in several varieties. The three ounce UPU surface letter rate (5 cents first ounce plus 3 cents for each

of two additional ounces) is one way and 11 cents paying three cents air mail surcharge in the United States plus five cents UPU surface letter rate plus three cents air mail surcharge in Europe is another way for an exact rate franking. Others exist as well. Both of these types are listed in the *Scott’s Specialized Catalog*. The auction estimate is \$750.00 to \$1000.00 with an opening bid of \$375.00.

Two 13 cent stamp uses are lotted individually; a pair on cover used in 1955 paying correctly the then current 6-cent air mail fee plus 20 cents special delivery, and a single franking on a University of Notre Dame Athletic Department corner card cover. The pair on cover is illustrated on page 225 of *The*

Prexies. The single stamp use is ex-Suffet and was highlighted in his outstanding exhibit. Thirteen-cent pairs paying correct rates are not common and while thirteen cent single stamp uses on special delivery covers can be found, this particular cover was postmarked on October 31, 1944, the last day of the 10-cent special delivery fee.

Nineteen-cent and 22-cent single stamp uses are difficult to find, as reflected in their catalog values. Both are represented here (Figures 2 and 3). Both are ex-Suffet and interestingly, occupied the same page in his exhibit. Quite a page! Each usage pays for registered mail service and rely on 1-cent surcharge for unindemnified value to make the exact rate. Some specialists argue it is difficult to prove the 1-cent surcharge absent documentation. An argument for this exact rate could also be made by noting there were 18 cent and 21 cent stamps available at the post office and asking why would anyone intentionally overpay. These covers were lots 1165 and 1167 in the 2003 Nutmeg Sale of Steve's collection and carried estimates of \$700.00 and \$800.00 respectively at that time.

An item with an ambitious estimate is lot

number 743. It is a solo 22 cent stamp use paying combination air mail and special delivery fee and postmarked Nov. 3, 1945. The air mail rate at that time was eight cents per ounce and special delivery fee was 13 cents for less than two pounds, requiring payment of 21 cents and thus represents a convenience overpayment of one cent. It is estimated at \$1500.00 to \$2000.00 with an opening bid of \$750.00. Time will tell if the desire to own a 22 cent solo use representing an overpayment of required fees will support a realization anywhere near this lofty estimate.

Attractive uses of the 17 cent stamp are also featured in the individual lots. Lot 738 is a single franking used to pay the local letter rate at a carrier post office of two cents and 15 cents minimum registry fee. An interesting and attractive feature of this cover is the fact that it is a territorial use having been mailed on June 10, 1941 within Honolulu. This was lot 1163 in the Nutmeg sale and the lot description is almost identical. The estimate however was \$600.00 in 2003 and this time it is \$3500.00 to \$5000.00. This cover was also used as an illustration in *The Prexies* and appears as figure 17-B on page 249. Lot 739 is another 17 cent single stamp use paying the same registered



Figure 4

local letter rate in Cleveland, Ohio in August of 1940. It is estimated at \$1000.00 to \$1500.00. This combination of fees can be found on mail during the Prexie Era from the date of issuance of the stamps in 1938 until March 26, 1944, when the local letter rate at carrier post offices was eliminated and the registry rate was raised from 15 cents to 20 cents for no indemnity. It will be interesting to see how these estimates fare against a Scott's Specialized Catalog value of less than \$100.00 for this specific usage.

Lot 746 features a frequently under appreciated, possession-to-possession air mail use. (Figure 4) This August 1940 mailing from Puerto Rico to the Philippines is franked with \$2.40 in postage including two one dollar Prexies. As there was no stipulated air mail rate from Puerto Rico to the Philippine Islands, a summation of rates was used to arrive at proper postage. In this case the 10 cents per half-ounce rate from Puerto Rico to the continental United States and the 50 cents per half-ounce rate from the states to the Philippines was added together and multiplied by the requisite weight factor (in this case between 1- 1/2 and two ounces yielding a four times 60 cents per half-ounce rate). This cover is illustrated on page 318 of *The Prexies* as figure 100-G. It carries an estimate of \$400.00 to \$600.00 with an opening bid of \$200.00.

Two five dollar stamp uses, both ex-Suffet, round out the individual lots of postal history: the single Scott # 834 on parcel piece and a small registered cover franked with a single five dollar stamp and pair of two cent Nations United for Victory stamps. Perhaps the most intriguing of the two is the single five dollar stamp on piece, which is highlighted by Dan Pagter elsewhere in this issue.

The registered cover is also illustrated on page 330 of the Rustad book as figure 500-B. It is tantalizing to think, had return receipt service not been requested on the small registered

cover it would represent a fabulous \$5.00 solo use. These two items were lots 1173 and 1234 in the 3003 Nutmeg auction.

Lot 753 is the balance lot and it contains an impressive amount of both covers and stamps. There are reportedly over 360 covers which includes a small number of first day of issue items. There may be one or two first days for each denomination. The bulk of the covers are commercial type uses, including a number of interesting, scarce and attractive uses. There is an air mail cover to Switzerland in 1941 with a strip of six 4 -1/2 cent coils paying the bulk of the postage (Figure 5); a 5 cent single use to England censored by the Board of Economic Warfare (Figure 6); a double weight air mail use to New Caledonia (Figure 7); a postal penalty use (Figure 8); and two one dollar single frankings (Figure 9). This is just a small sampling of the better looking covers in the last lot.

There is a bonanza of stamps in the collection lot as well. Each denomination is represented by numerous plate blocks, collected as different plate numbers. A perusal of the six cent, seven cent, and eight cent values showed a plate block of every plate number used in the printing process. Even scarce plate numbers such as 24076 and 24107 used to print the eight cent Martin van Buren stamp are present. Both of these plates were only used for 12,100 impressions, a low number as Presidential Series plate usage goes. A dozen plate blocks of the one dollar stamp including both 832 and 832c were noted, with two of these being plate strips of 20 stamps. Complete sheets of the Canal Zone overprints are also in the lot.

Although the section of the sale devoted to Presidential Series materials is relatively small there should be something of interest for just about everyone.



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

\$5.00 Prexie “Solo” Piece Up For Auction

by Daniel S. Pagter



This wonderful \$5.00 Prexie single franking (solo) is a problematic item. There is no correct exact \$5.00 rate with what is shown, as I explain below. I welcome someone offering an exact rating based upon what is shown on the piece.

This does not display the correct markings to be Air Parcel Post (APP) as suggested in the Daniel Kelleher December 3-5, 2019 Auction, Sale 731, lot 751 description. Now if I overlook the deficient marking regarding APP Service there is another brick-wall roadblock. From March 15, 1952 until June 30, 1958 the maximum APP weight was 2 pounds. Thus, a zone 8 APP item was limited to a postage charge of \$1.60 (80 cents per pound or fraction). Japan (APO location) to the US mainland is over 1800 miles which is the minimum distance for zone 8. The exception was Official Mail but even with that at 80 cents per pound you hit \$4.80 for six pounds or \$5.60 for seven pounds not that this piece displays any reason to consider it as qualifying as Official Mail or APP.

With the “AIRMAIL” marking this was airmail at the then “airmail letter rate” of 6 cents per ounce, valid January 1, 1949 to July 31, 1958, which produces \$4.98 for 83 ounces (5 lbs 3 oz) or \$5.04 for 84 ounces (5 lbs 4 oz).

The regulations for APP stated if postage was paid at by least half, send it postage due without delay. If Airmail paid at 6 cents or over send it postage due without delay.

Given the current information as shown on this piece, it appears to have a convenience overpayment of 2 cents or more or be underpaid (postage due) by at least 4 cents.

Now I must ask, how is this different from and better than the single \$5.00, 834, used with a single meter tape, a combination that does exactly equal a properly paid rate?

Beecher and Wawrukiewicz, *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-2011* (Third Edition). Table 8-1, footnote a.18, page 87 ; Table 10, footnote e-p. 2, page 100.

Customs Service for U.S. Armed Forces Related Items

by Tony Wawrukiwicz



Figure 1

Prior to World War II customs declaration tags were required on parcels of merchandise mailed at U.S. military bases. The first officially announced handling of a type of U.S. Armed Forces-related customs mailing appeared in mid-1941. The July 7, 1941 issue of the *U.S. Postal Bulletin* (PB 18233) stated that customs declaration tags were required on parcels of merchandise mailed at American bases, effective immediately. Specifically:

Although the domestic rates and conditions apply to mail matter exchanged between the United States and its possessions and the leased defense bases where the United States mail service is in operation, and no customs declaration tags are required in connection with parcels mailed from the United States to American forces at such bases, merchandise mailed from the bases to the United States is subject to custom duties. Therefore, parcels of merchandise mailed at the bases referred to must be accompanied with the customs declaration tags as prescribed by paragraph 9 (a), section 2229, 1940 PL&R.

Figure 1, above, shows a double weight 1943 letter from APO 788 (Heliopolis, Egypt) near Cairo, to Duluth, Minnesota. It was mailed at

the 6 cents per half-ounce airmail concession rate for military personnel stationed overseas. It was short paid 6 cents as indicated by the POSTAGE DUE 6 CENTS marking. Initially there was concern at St. Paul, the customs city, that the heavy letter contained dutiable matter. However, inspection revealed it contained only written material. Thus, St. Paul customs placed the 'DUTY FREE' handstamp and sent the letter on to Duluth. The 6 cents due was collected from the addressee, as indicated by the postage due stamps placed and cancelled. The 10-cent custom clearance fee was not collected.

Figure 2 illustrates a January 1945 airmail parcel from the Pacific Theater to Cleveland, Ohio, weighing 2 pounds 7 ounces. At the 6 cents per half ounce airmail concession rate, the \$2.35 postage affixed includes a convenience overpay of 1 cent. Since it was 'PASSED FREE' at Cleveland, delivery went duty free. Again, no clearance fee was collected.

Figure 3 shows an 8-ounce first-class parcel from APO 630 (Gaya, India) to Santa Maria, California, sent in September 1954. The 89 cents paid includes 24 cents postage (8 times 3¢) and 65 cents registry fee (\$25 to \$50 indemnity). Philadelphia, the customs



Figure 2



Figure 3

city, placed the 'PASSED FREE' handstamp. Thus, no duty was collected, and, as usual, no clearance fee collected (on military mail).

I've found no reference regarding collection of clearance fees on pre-1957 military

customs use, and I've never seen an example.

This article is adapted from Chapter 3 of my newest book, *Further Insights into U.S. Postal History, 1794 - 2019*, available from the American Philatelic Society.

US to Barbados: A Nice Little Cupcake with Lots of Icing

by Dann Mayo



Figure: New York 23 January 1942; Barbados 28 January. Paying 2 x 25-cent rate. Via FAM 5 to Castries, St. Lucia, and onward via British West Indies Air (replaced KLM service on 27 November 1940).

I try to do daily searches on eBay for the term “censor.” While I do not collect Prexie covers, even I can recognize a solo 50 center on cover to Barbados, which turned up on one of those searches, as unusual. A look at the back side revealed that the censorship is also unusual. The tape is a scarcer provisional used by the New York field station of the Office of Censorship (Broderick and Mayo L 1.2.2), recorded used December 1941-January 1942.

When it looks as though it might be interesting, I also search the names of senders and/or addressees. Given that we were at war, and the sensitivity of censorship to coded messages “Acme Code Company” certainly looked promising. A Google search led to a delightfully titled article “Before LOL and BTW, There Were KUBIT and PYTUO” and a brief but a useful Wikipedia synopsis.^{1,2}

The addressee, W.S. Monroe & Co., had its fingers in a wide range of pies, from insurance and shipping agencies to a dress shop,³ and so would have been a likely heavy user of economically coded messages.

1 <https://www.saturdayeveningpost.com/2016/10/lol-btw-kubit-pytuo/>

2 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acme_Commodity_and_Phrase_Code [in which it was noted that “The Acme code consists of one hundred thousand five letter codes each intended to stand in for a phrase,” and that “This code was one of the few telegram codes permitted by the Allied powers during the Second World War.”]

3 https://archive.org/stream/westindiescaribb1953unse/westindiescaribb1953unse_djvu.txt