



# THE PREXIE ERA

*The Bulletin of the BIA 1938 Presidential Series Committee*



Issue 16  
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## NOTES FROM THE CHAIRMAN.....

This past year has been a generally good one for Prexie Era collectors. Two more exhibits joined the small, but growing circle of national gold level award winners: Jeff Shapiro's "Collecting Prexie Postal History" at the Philatelic Show in April and Bill DiPaolo's "The Prexie Coils" at NAPEX in June. My own exhibit, "U.S. Presidential Series Postal History: Rates and Usages" picked up its second international large vermeil at Pacific - '97.

During the summer, the late Roland Rustad's Prexie collection went on the auction block at the Robert A. Siegel Auction Gallery in New York. Chicago-based stamp dealer Richard Drews purchased the bulk of Rustad's covers as a single lot and reoffered them to individual collectors via personal contact, stamp shows and through Drews' own auction. *For a report of his Nov. CHICAGOPEX auction see the next page..ed.*

Also during 1997, a December 7, 1941 Prexie cover from Honolulu came on the market through one of Dann Mayo's auctions. The cover bears six 1-cent horizontal coils and was postmarked at 8 AM. The return address is from a sailor aboard the U.S.S. Medusa and was likely mailed while he was on leave the previous day. As far as I know, only one other Pearl Harbor Day cover from Honolulu has surfaced.

Finally, I should mention that the rarest of all Prexies — the unique 1.5-cent tagging essay — is now part of a competitive exhibit which features all the U.S. stamps portraying Martha Washington. This exhibit, by Bill Rader, won a vermeil medal in its debut at MILCOPEX — an impressive start!

*Steve Suffet*

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## EDITORIAL CHATTER.....

As you have probably noticed by now, an overwhelming majority of our members expressed their preference for "The Prexie Era" as the new name of our newsletter. It does seem more inclusive of the many interests of our members.

Even though the snow is still be on the ground in our northern climes, it's not too early to begin thinking and planning our annual PREXIEPEX gathering — to be held this year with the BIA annual meeting at AIRPEX XXIII in Dayton, OH on September 25-27. You can write the Show Committee, % Dayton Stamp Club, P.O. Box 1574, Dayton, OH 45401 for further information. I'll also drop them a note to ask if we can have 40-50 frames set aside for our use.

A special thanks to Bill DiPaolo for responding to my request for help on the small holes/large holes Prexie coil controversy. You can read Bill's comments on page 3.

We'll try to conclude our rate series next issue with the dollar values. Any examples before then would be greatly appreciated.

*John Grabowski*

**RICHARD E. DREWS CHICAGOPEX (NOV. 22, 1997) AUCTION OF ROLAND RUSTAD PRESIDENTIAL SERIES POSTAL HISTORY.....**

From the time Rich Drews purchased the Rustad Prexie Postal History lot at Siegel's auction in July, until the time of this auction in November, most of the original 324 covers had been sold to individual collectors. Rich brought the collection to Stampshow in Milwaukee in August, but many sales had already been made by then.

There remained 55 covers which appeared in the Drews CHICAGOPEX auction, including many scarce and unusual usages. I attended the auction, bought three of the covers (at a average hammer cost of \$90 each) and will give you my impression of the sale.

Of the 55 covers, 25 failed to attain opening minimum bids. Floor participation was light, most of the 30 lots which were sold went to mail bidders.

Some of the sale highlights (in order of decreasing hammer prices), with auction catalog descriptions in quotation marks:

Lot #2275 (est. \$2,600-\$3,000) — a \$1.6 million indemnity bank cover franked with 57 \$5 Prexies, et al. "....the ultimate Presidential Series cover and the must-have for competitive exhibition..." Hammer: \$2,200.

Lot #2230 (est. \$350-\$500) — probably the highest price ever paid for a 3-cent Jefferson cover (excl. any 'Pearl Harbor' discoveries) — origin Swan Islands in the Caribbean, Tampa, FL, transit. Hammer: \$575.

Lot #2270 (est. \$150-\$200) — \$2 Harding + 50c Taft + 30c Roosevelt, paying 4X .70 1942 airmail rate to Egypt via the Congo. Hammer: \$170. A similar lot, same franking, paying the last day of the quad 70-cent air mail rate to China brought \$140 (Lot #2273).

Lot #2240 (est. \$100-\$125) — "7c Jackson single tied to 1953 or later movie film address card (same as book rate: 4c for 1st lb., 1c for each add'l lb.)" Hammer: \$160.

Lot #2254 (est. \$150-\$200) — 30c Roosevelt paying July, 1941 airmail rate to Nebraska from Midway Island with "3rd Defense Battalion" postmark. Hammer: \$150.

Lot #2265 (est. \$100-\$125) — "\$1 Wilson + 50c Taft + 5c Monroe, all tied to 4/41 reg. airmail cover to Straits Settlements (2X .70 airmail rate + 10c international registry" All OK, except the international registry rate was 15c as shown by the correct stamp franking. Hammer: \$145.

The remaining lots were in a hammer range of \$75-\$135.

My favorite purchase? Lot #2250 (est. \$125-\$150) — "1943 registered airmail, Hawaii to Canada", 6c serviceman's airmail + 15c int'l registry, franked with a 21c Arthur. Hammer: \$105.

I think Rollie would have been pleased that his many carefully accumulated covers have been well spread around the hobby to foster continued interest in his chosen field.

*John Grabowski*

**SMALL HOLE/LARGE HOLE PREXIE COILS.....**

In response to Dilmond Postlewait's article concerning large hole/small hole Prexie coil precancels:

Collectors of the Presidential coil series have known for some time that there is a definite variation in the perforation holes of these stamps. I had begun to investigate this about five years ago, particularly in light of the Liberty series perforation varieties. Unlike the Liberty series, as Mr. Postlewait points out, there was no change in production equipment for the Presidential series that could explain a "variety."

This variation in holes is not confined to the precancels. In fact, precancels were all run on the same press and from the same plates as the regular coils. After personally reviewing thousands of pairs of all coil denominations, it is apparent that, while there is a definite variation in the size of the holes, there is no real consistency in the size of the holes. Not only are there large holes and small holes, there are medium holes and really large holes and very tiny holes. Because of the lack of consistency of hole sizes and because there was no recorded press change, I concluded, after a review with perforation and rotary press experts, that the hole sizes were minor production varieties that could be caused by the speed of the web (that might vary pressure on the pins) and/or the sharpness of the pins.

Dilmond's work in this area actually lends support to this conclusion. He has dated his examples according to the precancel as being issued from mid-1939 to mid-1944. This was the war years period. During that time, presses were not maintained to perfection and so they could account for production variances. There are many other minor perforation varieties such as missing pins and blind perms which are due to faulty maintenance that can be documented from this war years period.

My conclusion is that while hole sizes may not be a real major variety, it is still fun to search for the extreme examples which exist in all denominations.

A couple of additional comments are worth mentioning with respect to the July, 1997 "Specialist" article:

1. The article states that most Presidential coil precancels were issued in the period from mid-1939 to mid-1944. Most Prexie precancels were actually issued between 1945 and 1951.

2. Dilmond also raises a question about finding information on early precancel uses. When the coils were officially issued in January, 1939, there was still such a large supply of the previous issue coils, that widespread use of the Prexie coils did not occur until 1940. Early 1939 commercial uses of Prexie coils are relatively hard to find.

*Bill DiPaola*

**PREXIE ERA NEWS.....**

November 17, 1997, "Linn's Stamp News": "When learning the presidents was more fun" by Rob Haeseler — a very funny look at modern education methods, contrasted with older methods augmented by stamp collecting.

December 1, 1997, "Linn's Stamp News": "Outlined digits (Collectors' Forum)" letter by Bill Trump — a concise explanation from Rustad's book of the "ghost" or "hollow" plate numbers seen occasionally — the hollowing effect was due to recessed plate numbers which were partially wiped clean of printing ink.



**(A CALL FOR) E-MAIL ADDRESSES.....**

As you may have already noted, your editor has a new e-mail address:

minnjohn@concentric.net

While my AOL address is still active, the new address above is my preferred address as Concentric's system seems to be much easier and faster to use.

We also need to update the e-mail address listing of our members as I was reminded of last month by Steve Roth. If all our "wired" members would take a moment to send me their current addresses (and collecting Prexie Era interests: postal history, cancellations, by denomination, etc...), I will include such list in our next newsletter.

**THE 30-CENT "DEEP BLUE" ROOSEVELT SUMMARIZED.....**

The "deep blue" variety of the 30-cent Prexy series has been in the news this past year. I had an opportunity to view part of Roland Rustad's collection, which included this stamp, at Rich Drews' Chicago store after he purchased it in last year's Siegel sale of Rustad material. For those members who have never seen the actual shade, all I can say is that the color is a stunning deep blue. There are many examples of "near" deep blue (I have several myself), but the real thing is truly eye-catching.

I believe this part of Rustad's collection was subsequently sold to PSC member John Hotchner, who then wrote a very good overview of this stamp variety and its history in "Linn's Stamp News" on October 20, 1997. If you haven't seen John's article, it is well worth a visit to your nearest philatelic library. John states in his writing on the stamp: "The 30c is different (*from other Prexy denominations-ed.*) only in that the range of color is much wider than most other values, and its extreme of color — the deep blue — has more value than any other variety except the \$5 red-brown (Scott #834a)."

Other good reference sources for the deep blue variety include the chapter on the 30-cent stamp in Rustad's "THE PREXIES" book and the recent article on the variety by George Brett which appeared on pages 29-32 in the recent January, 1998 BIA periodical, "The United States Specialist". George notes that the deep blue shade exists on plate number (paired) printings: 22164-22165, 22833-22834, and 23116-23906. The only plate which has not yet been seen by either the Philatelic Foundation or the American Expertizing Service is plate 23116. George also references the earliest article to appear on the deep blue variety, that by David Lidman and Louis Shelby, "A unique 30c Deep Blue, T. Roosevelt 'Presidential'" which appeared on page 497 in the 1960 series of "The American Philatelist."

The key to understanding how the deep blue shade was produced was obtained by Roland Rustad, shortly before his death, from the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The response from the Bureau to Rustad's inquiry is reproduced on the following two pages, as well as in Brett's article. Thanks to Rich Drews for allowing me to photocopy this letter while the Rustad collection was in his possession last summer.

*John Grabowski*



## DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20228

FEB 27 1992

REGISTERED RETURN  
RECEIPT REQUESTED

Mr. Roland Rustad  
521 Sawmill Road  
Durango, CO 81301

Dear Mr. Rustad:

We have completed the examination of the 2 - 30¢ Theodore Roosevelt stamps which you submitted for examination and a report of our findings is as follows:

One of the stamps is reddish and appeared to have the normal ultramarine shade, while the other stamp appeared to have a less common blue shade.

As examined microscopically, the two stamps are printed on different papers, and the ink thickness of the printed image is different. The reddish postage stamp image appears to have been printed on paper which is less porous than that upon which the blue image has been printed. The ink thickness appears to be greater on the stamp which appears bluer. On the bluer appearing postage stamp, there is evidence of considerable feathering, i.e., spreading of ink between printed lines.

Spectrophotometrically, there appears to be a slight difference in the blue pigmentation of the ink for these stamps, since there is a ten nanometer difference in the reflectance maximum in the blue region of the spectrum. The reflectance maxima for the bluish stamp occur at 485 nanometers of the blue region and 750 nanometers in the red region of the spectrum.

As analyzed by X-Ray fluorescence spectrometry, the ink on the two stamps is composed of pigments and extenders of the same inorganic chemical elements.

A review of ink formulations used for making this ink indicates that the colorant is Victoria Blue toner. Titanium dioxide, calcium carbonate, and barium sulfate/barytes were used as extenders. Victoria Blue toner is characterized as having good resistance to fading, has good resistance to dilute acids and bases, is somewhat soluble in alcohol and acetic acid, is insoluble in water, oil, and hot paraffin, and finally, is a difficult pigment to grind.

Mr. Roland Rustad

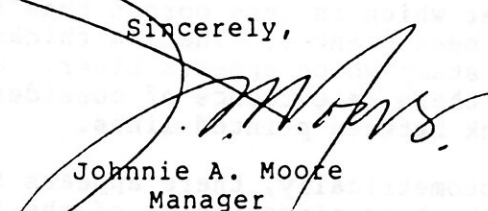
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The above formulation for blue ink on the submitted stamp had been used several years for printing the submitted stamps and other articles of security printing. Since the 30¢ Roosevelt Stamps were not printed in one run, we believe that the BEP had received raw materials for making inks which varied in properties. The properties of the blue colorant, Victoria Blue, are very important because the particle size, and the degree of dispersion are factors which influence the perceived color. We also believe that the particle size and degree of dispersion are responsible for the ten nano,eter shift of reflectance for the bluer appearing postage stamp.

Therefore, in our opinion the bluer appearing stamp was not a result of using a substitute material for the blue color but was an example of the effects of a variation in raw materials properties.

A total of eight hours was required to complete this examination. There is an initial two-hour charge of \$10 plus \$10 for each hour thereafter, in addition to a \$3.65 postal fee to return stamps by registered mail. Please remit a payment of \$73.65 to my attention at the address contained on the letterhead. The submitted stamps are herewith returned.

Sincerely,

  
Johnnie A. Moore  
Manager

Congressional and Media Affairs

Enclosure

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3-4-92  
ch-5698

PREXIEPEX VIII.....

Our annual PSC meeting was held September 6, 1997 at the INDYPEX Show. PSC members in attendance included Jim Adams, Jim Felton, David Goldsmith, John Grabowski, Roger Listwan, Jeff Shapiro, Steve Suffet, Phyliss Vonnegut and David Wessely. Steve showed slides of some of his military applications of the Prexies which was followed by a spirited cover swapping session, as usual.

PSC members exhibiting and their award levels included:

Bill DiPaolo, "The Prexie Coils" — Vermeil & AAPE Medal of Excellence

Jeff Shapiro, "Collecting Prexy Postal History" — Vermeil

David Wessely, "Registered Prexie Postal History" — Vermeil

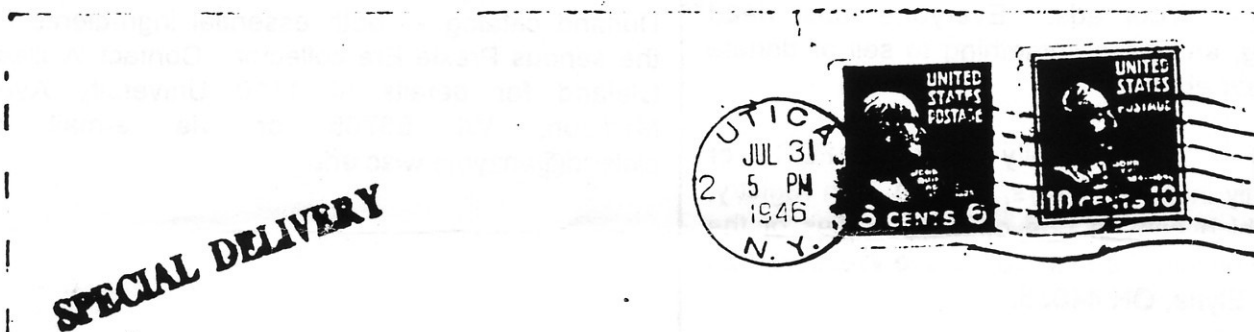
The winner of our annual coveted Roland Rustad Award : Bill DiPaolo

Attaway to go guys!!

MORE INTERESTING PREXIE ERA USAGES.....

A pair of Prexie coils paying the first class special delivery rate:  
.03 postage + .13 special delivery fee (11/1/44-12/31/48)

Prexie coils are infrequently seen on cover in the higher denominations, especially the 10-cent coil



THE HOOVER-HOLMES BUREAU, INC.

102 MAIDEN LANE

NEW YORK 5, N. Y.

CASUALTY INDEX



An uncommon use of a solo 7-cent Prexie:  
Postage - free, registration - free, return receipt service - .07 (1/1/52-6/30/57)

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PAYMENT OF POSTAGE, \$300  
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*Charleston Drive*  
*Huntington, N.Y.*

Backstamp: Sept. 16, 1954

David Wessley collection

#### SALE/TRADE/WANTED.....

**WANTED** — Your ads. Everyone must need something, and have something to sell or donate — let's hear about it.

**WANTED** — Commercially used (no FDC's or philatelicly inspired covers, please), with registry, covers which contain one or more copies of the 1/2-cent Franklin (Scott #803). Dave Wessely, 125 Elma Dr., Elyria, OH 44035.

**TRADE** — I need foreign destination, civilian, commercially used Prexy covers, 1939-1945. I am willing to trade better grade (some scarce or rare) domestic rates and usages. Let me know what you are looking for and what you have to trade. Steve Roth, 1280 21st Street NW #209, Washington DC 20036; (202) 293 6813, or e-mail: smroth@wizard.net.

**FOR SALE** — The definitive Prexy book, "THE PREXIES", by Roland Rustad and the latest Durland catalog — both essential ingredients for the serious Prexie Era collector. Contact Wallace Cleland for details at 1710 University Ave., Madison, WI 53705 or via e-mail at cleland@enzyme.wisc.edu.