

Winter 2002



Issue No. 21

The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the BIA 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

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Don't let this issue of the Newsletter be your last!
See page 2.

Message from the Editor

I must begin this issue of the Newsletter by offering my apology to one of last issue's contributor, Steve Suffet.

As I transcribed his article ["To the Gaza Strip and Back in 1949"] I took certain liberties in hastily editing his text and, in so doing, I introduced (in several places) the erroneous reference to "Israel" where Steve had correctly used the term "Palestine". I apologize again to Steve and to any reader I might have confused or misled in my haste to publish.

* * * * *

Our study group Chairman, Jeff Shapiro, has sent each of you our request for a small contribution to help pay the costs of printing and mailing the Newsletter. If you have not yet responded to Jeff, please do so. We have almost no source of funds to cover production and mailing costs other than what we receive from subscribers. When (if) the money runs out, we either will not be able to continue to publish or we will be forced to trim the mailing list to those people who have made contributions. In the meantime, however, we will occasionally (as in this issue) run a small auction of material that has been donated. The proceeds of the sale will help defray the costs of the Newsletter.

Chairman's Letter

I am happy to report that interest in Prexie Era material remains high.

Interest in our Study Group, too, continues to grow. But we need your help. Please show your support by contributing to our efforts at least \$5.00 in cash and/or mint postage. Send your contribution to me at: PO Box 3211, Fayville, MA 01745.

Steve & I greatly appreciate your support.

I wish you all a healthy 2002, with successful stamping.

Jeff Shapiro

Prexies Featured in NJPH Journal

More than forty Prexie covers with some New Jersey affiliation were featured in the November 2001 issue of the journal of the New Jersey Postal History Society. Information about the Society or copies of the journal can be obtained at <njpostalhistory@aol.com>.

Forwarded Out Of the Country

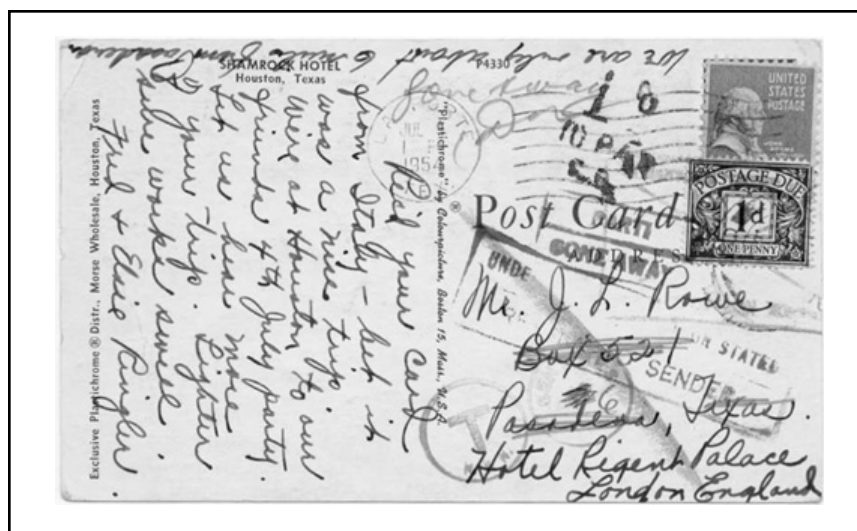
by

Dickson Preston

Ebay brought me a post card which originally began a six mile journey between two Texas towns and ended up crossing the Atlantic twice. The card was written by travellers at La Porte, Texas, and mailed to a friend in Pasadena, still in Texas, six miles away. The friend had departed, so the card was redirected to a London hotel.

Additional postage was charged to get the card to Great Britain since the domestic rate was 2 cents, while the UPU rate was 4 cents. If the card had been short paid, the charge would have been twice the indemnity, $2 \times 2 = 4$ cents, equal to 12 gold centimes. But since the card was redirected the charge was the 4 cents UPU rate, less the amount paid [$4 - 2 = 2$ cents, or 6 centimes]. The amount in the Exchange Office marking was changed by hand from 12 centimes to 6 centimes to reflect the correct charge.

In London the card was marked "1d TO PAY" and a stamp for that amount was applied and cancelled. However, the addressee had once again escaped so the card was marked "Gone Away" by hand and was hand-stamped "PARTI/GONE AWAY" "UNDE[LIVERED FOR REASON STATED/RE[TURN] TO SENDER". Since there was no return address, it is anyone's guess where the card went on its journey from London to Ebay and then to me.

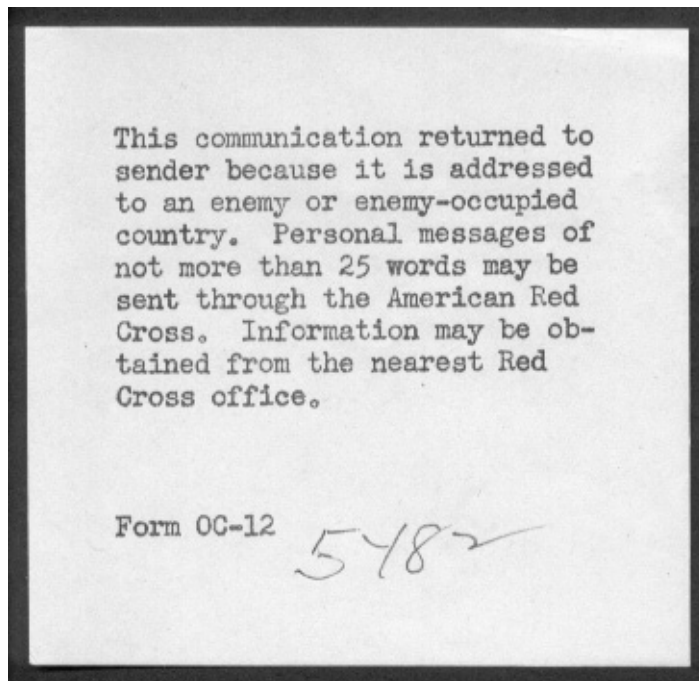


World War II Letter Mail Labels

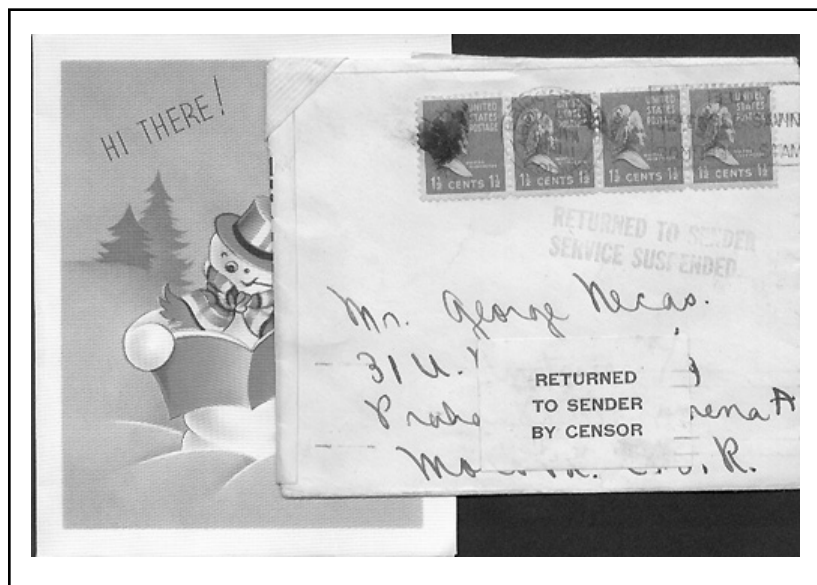
(continued from Issue No. 20)

Once the United States entered the War, it suspended mail delivery to Axis nations [e.g., Germany], countries under the control of the Axis [e.g., Holland], and mail to other countries to which mail delivery was not readily

and conveniently achievable [e.g., Switzerland in March 1943]. One notable exception was for letters of 25 words or less which contained a personal message. Such letters were to be mailed via the American Red Cross. (See Label OC-12 below.)



Apparently, the U.S. Office of Censorship did not consider a Christmas card mailed to Moscow in December 1941 within the scope of these requirements. It returned the card shown below with Form OC-12 attached.



[Editor's Note: I have run out of interesting labels from my holdings. Please send me some from yours]

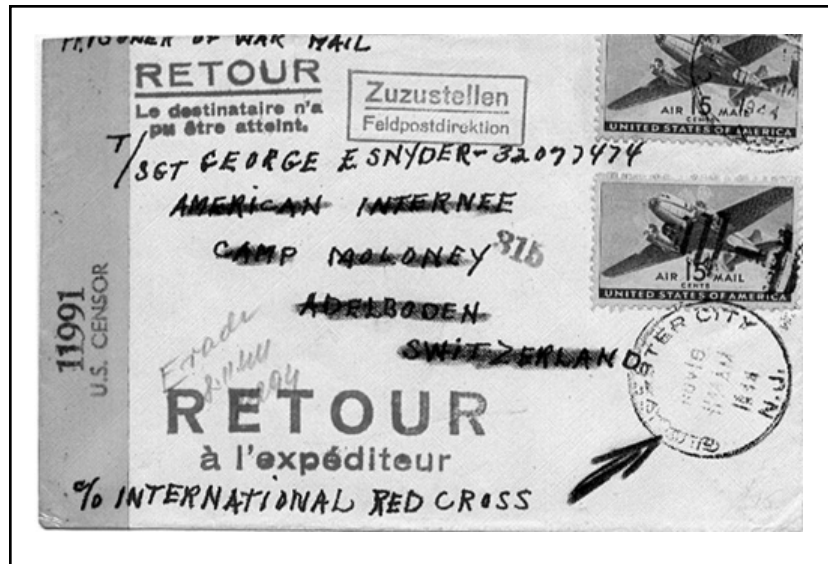
Your Editor needs your help. I need short articles, reports on interesting covers and information about in-period stamps. I also want news reports -- this is, afterall, a newsletter. Without your help, this Newsletter will become the *Roth House Organ* until I either run-out of my material or tire of writing.

Return to Sender - Prisoner Escaped! An Air Transport Cover

by

Steven M. Roth

This cover, sent to an American internee who was held at Camp Maloney, a detention camp located in Aldeboden, Switzerland, could not be delivered by the International Red Cross because, as someone had noted in pencil on the face of the cover, the addressee/prisoner of war had escaped ["Evade/8.11.44/4294"].



Do you want us to run Buy/Sell/Trade notices in the Newsletter? Let your Editor know.

A Famous American Censored Postal Card to Serbia

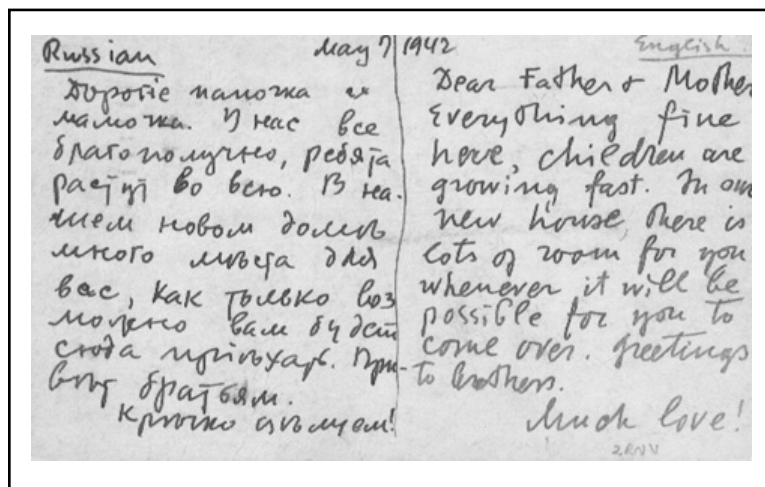
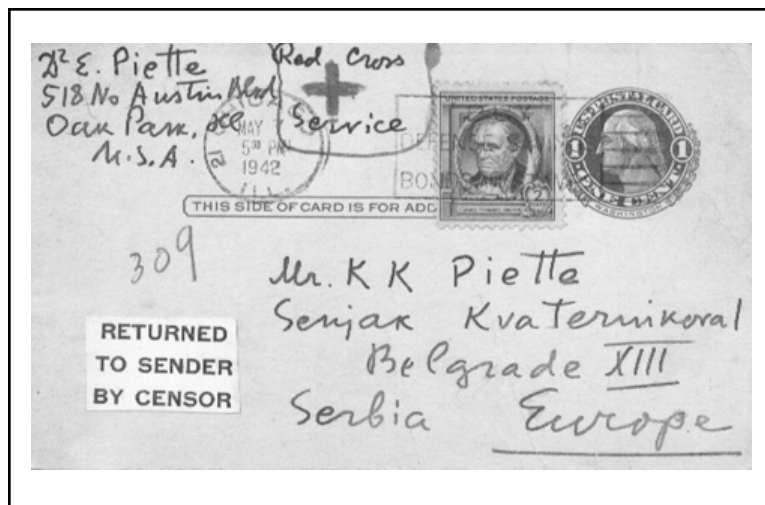
by

Steven M. Roth

Envelopes showing evidence of censorship are common even for the period before the United States entered the War. Postal cards, however, are far less common. A censored postal card to an interesting destination, therefore, is a very desirable artifact.

Shown below is a postal card bearing the 2 cents James Fenimore Cooper Famous Americans stamp added to a postal card to make-up the 3 cents postage fee to Europe. The card was mailed in Chicago on May 7, 1942, addressed to Belgrade, Serbia. The sender made the face of the card "Red Cross+/Service". A censor's label ["RETURNED/TO SENDER/BY CENSOR"] has been affixed to the face of the card.

The message side of the card is divided into two parts: the left side has the message written in Russian; the right side has the message written in English.



Study Group Donor Auction

We begin our Committee Donor Auction in this Issue of the Newsletter . All net proceeds will be used to pay the costs of printing & mailing the Newsletter. Our first three Lots were contributed, respectively, by: Steve Ekstrom, by Anonymous, and by your Editor, in the order presented below.

Auction Rules

1. All bids must be received by 5:00 pm (EST).
2. Bids less than the stated Minimum Bid will not be executed.
3. Winning bidders will be notified of the realized price(s) of their Lot(s), together with postage and mailing supply/box due.
4. Payment must be received by the Chairman within ten (10) days of the sending of the e-mail notice.
5. Each Lot will go to the highest bidder at the actual bid amount. There will not be any buyer's premium added to a winning bid.
6. In case of tie bids, the earliest bid received by the Chairman wins.
7. In case of disputes, the Chairman's decision is final.
8. Neither the Chairman nor the Editor is responsible for errors in the description of any Lot. Lots are mailed at the risk of the buyer. Postal insurance is at the expense of the buyer.
9. Send your bids by snail mail to: Jeffrey Shapiro, PO Box 3211, Fayville, MA 01745-3211 or to him by e-mail at coverlover1@yahoo.com].

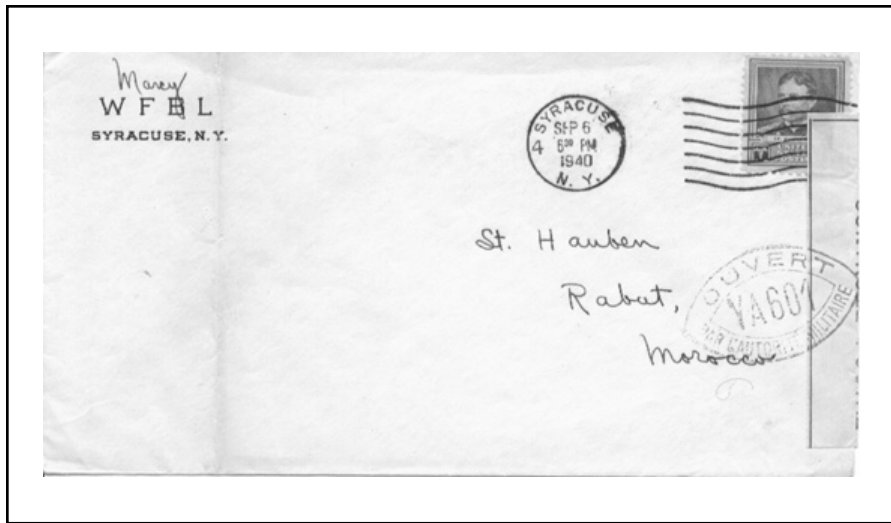
The Auction

Lot #1. March 22, 1944. Washington, DC to Brazil. Censor's handstamp on front. Interesting handstamp relating to the technical information enclosed [Sender, Harvey B. Jacobson, was a well-known Washington patent attorney]. Sent airmail -- rated 12 times the 40 cents postage. Minimum Bid: \$10.

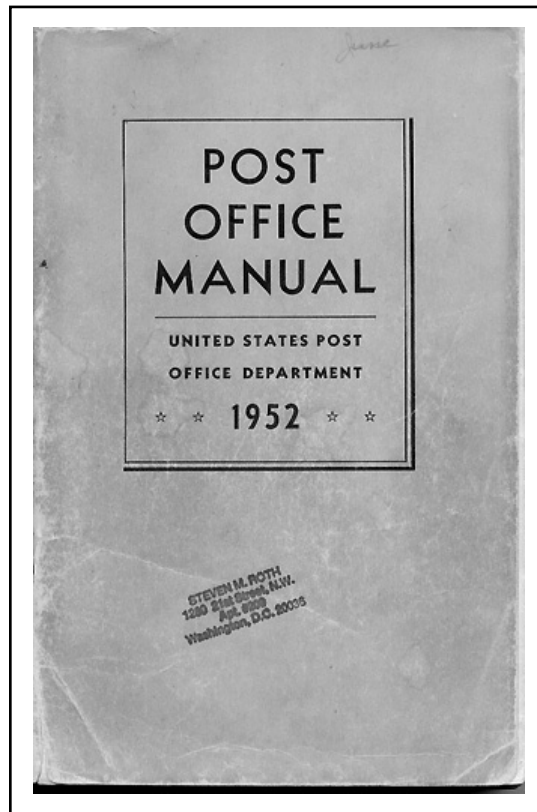


Lot #2. 5 cents Famous American stamp on ocean mail envelope addressed to Rabat, Morocco. Postmark dated September 6, 1940. Letter censored by Moroccan Military, and censor tape applied to right side to close up the envelope. Censor handstamp on front and back. Envelope creased at left; minor tear at left top. **Minimum Bid: \$3.00.**

Lot #2: [continued from prior page]



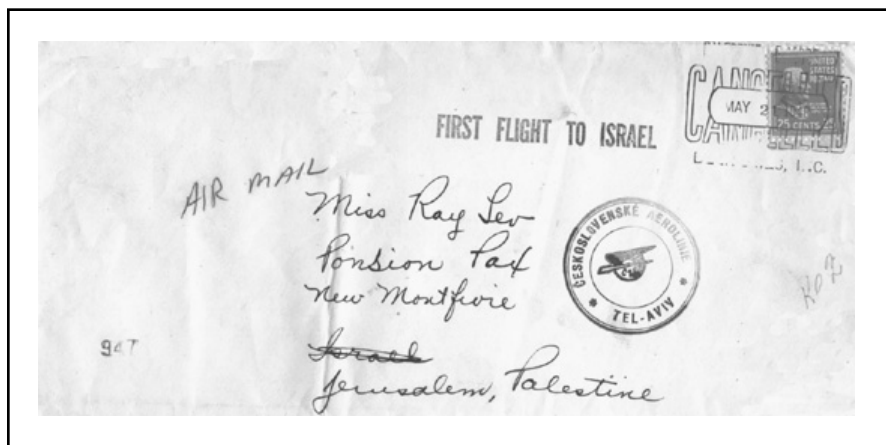
Lot #3. "Post Office Manual/United States Post Office Department/1952". 603pp. Well-used. Some clerk's notes written inside at various places. This volume contains a wealth of information about the operation of the Post Office Department during the Prexy Era. Cover bent in places and with some minor tears. This is an invaluable resource for the Prexy Era postal historian. **Minimum Bid: \$5.00.**



UNCOMMON USE OF SOLO 25c PREXIE - 1948 EMERGENCY SERVICE TO PALESTINE

by

Jeffrey N. Shapiro



Due to worsening conditions in the Arab/Israeli struggle, the United States Post Office suspended surface mail to Palestine at the end of March 1948. When “disturbed conditions” threatened air fields, air mail service was also suspended on 27 April 1948. Because of the importance of mail connections with the outside world, the New York-based Jewish Agency for Palestine, the unofficial embassy in America for the soon-to-be-established State of Israel, immediately proposed that mail destined for Palestine be collected in New York City and shipped as air freight.

Discussions began with KLM but switched to Ceskoslovenske Aerolinie (CSA) when that airline was the first to be granted landing rights by the newly-created State of Israel. With CSA ready to fly freight into Israel, and with a great demand for the proposed service, the Jewish Agency and other American Zionist organizations moved quickly to establish the Palestine Emergency Deliveries, Inc. (PEDI).

Procedures were relatively simple. Mail destined for Israel was sent to PEDI’s office in Manhattan under separate cover, franked with US stamps paying the then current 25c per half ounce international air rate to Asia and the Middle East. An additional 25c per half ounce was paid in cash or by money order to PEDI. These procedures were in full compliance with US Postal Regulations: any private carrier could accept and convey mail provided that the proper postage had been paid.

The first shipment was processed by PEDI personnel on 20-21 May. A few days later (date, air carrier and route are undocumented) the PEDI shipment left New York for Rome where it was impounded by Italian Customs officials. On 2 June a pouch containing about 1,200 PEDI letters was released to the crew of a CSA Dakota airliner, en route to Haifa via Athens. Upon arrival in Haifa that same evening, airline employees applied the CSA/Tel Aviv receiving mark to PEDI letters, even though the Tel Aviv airport was closed because of hostilities. The 1,200 letters came as a complete surprise to the newly established Israeli Post Office. It was assumed that air mail service from the United States had resumed and the PEDI mail was promptly delivered.

About 10,000 letters were delivered by PEDI and CSA through 7 June, on paper the date when official air mail service between the US and Israel was re-established. (Actual service did not resume until 28 June). PEDI continued to transmit mail well into July 1948. It is estimated that over 26,000 pieces of mail were processed before PEDI ended its services.

References:

Shamir, Chaim & Siegel, Marvin. **Air Mail Services From Abroad in May and Early June 1948**, Holy Land Postal History XXVIII, Autumn 1986, pp. 375-397.

Shamir, Chaim & Siegel, Marvin. **The Emergency Mails in 1948: Part B Palestine Emergency Deliveries, Inc. (PEDI)**. Holy Land Postal History XXXI, Summer 1987, pp. 527-553.

Another Secret Address? Why?

by

Steven M. Roth

Secret mailing addresses used during World War II have been well documented as to their purposes, identities and locations. There were, for example, those for mail addressed to people working on the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos; there was Box 506 in Lisbon, Portugal; and there was 25 Broadway, New York, NY, to name a few of the most familiar addresses.

Now, in the Postal Bulletin for March 5, 1943 (No. 18563) we see perhaps another secret address:

PRISONERS-OF-WAR MAIL

Treatment to be Given Matter Bearing as Part of Address “Post Office Box No.20, General Post Office, New York, N.Y.”

All concerned are requested to see that mail intended for prisoners of war and civilian internees bearing as part of the address “Post Office Box 20, General Post Office, New York, N.Y.,” is routed to that address even though the serial number of the addressee is omitted or the name of the State in which the camp is located appears on the envelope.

No. 18563, Friday, March 5, 1943

Why was there a secret mail address for civilian internees and prisoners-of-war who were held in the United States? It was unlikely that the purpose was to keep their locations secret since the PB notice acknowledged that the name of the state in which the camp was located might already be on the envelope. Rather, it is more likely that such routing was intended as an aid to the examination and censorship of all mail addressed to such persons by centralizing the examination and distribution.

Does anyone have a cover addressed to **PO Box No. 20** that we can display in the next Issue?