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Study Group Chairman Requests That the Editor Remain

Prexie Era Study Group Chairman Jeffrey Shapiro has asked me to continue as Editor of the Newsletter for at least one more year beyond the publication of Issue No. 35. I have gladly agreed to do so.

Famous Americans and Prexies

by

Robert D. Hohertz

Several years ago I found that I had a number of Prexie covers that also included one or more of the Famous American stamps as part of the franking. Since then, I have collected at least one example for each of the thirty-five original Famous American stamps.

The first set of five to be released pictured authors. The one-cent stamp bears the likeness of Washington Irving taken from a Matthew Brady daguerreotype.

Figure 1. The one-cent Irving is on a beat-up cover sent by sea to Europe and air to Palestine in 1940. Total postage was five cents surface and six cents surcharge for air from Europe. The stamps to pay the surface postage are on the back of the envelope, which caused some confusion. A postage due handstamp was applied and then penciled out, with a notation “over” written under it.



Figure 1

Figure 2. The back of the envelope to Tel Aviv. Irving, born in 1783, grew up during the time that George Washington and John Adams, the presidents on these stamps, were in office.

The two-cent Famous American author stamp features James Fennimore Cooper, also from a Matthew Brady photograph.

Figure 3. Two two-cent Coopers help make up the forty-cent postage for air service to Chile. The letter left New York on March 15, 1940, and reached Santiago on March 19.

Ralph Waldo Emerson appears on the three-cent stamp in the author group. The rather unflattering image was taken from a photograph in the Library of Congress.



Figure 2



Figure 3

Figure 4. The three-cent Famous Americans are the most difficult to find on covers that also feature Prexies. Most would have been used singly as domestic postage. This cover required an additional fifteen cents, paid using a Prexie, for the minimum fee for registration.

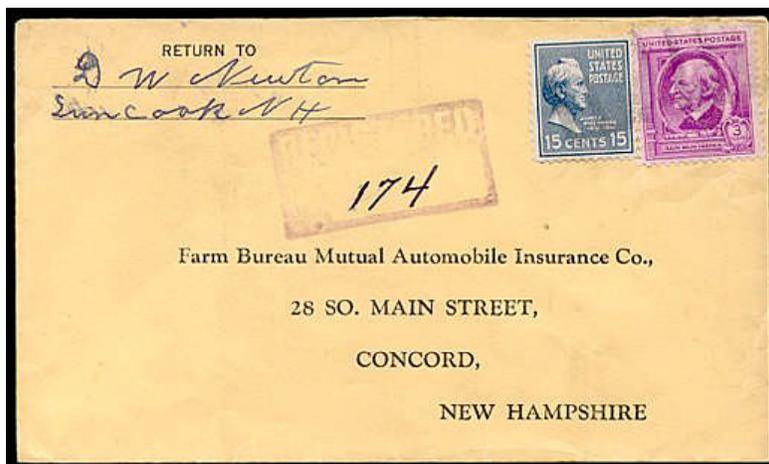


Figure 4

Figure 5. The five-cent Alcott and a three-cent Prexie make up the surface rate to South Africa, plus the three-cent surcharge for air transportation from San Francisco to New York.

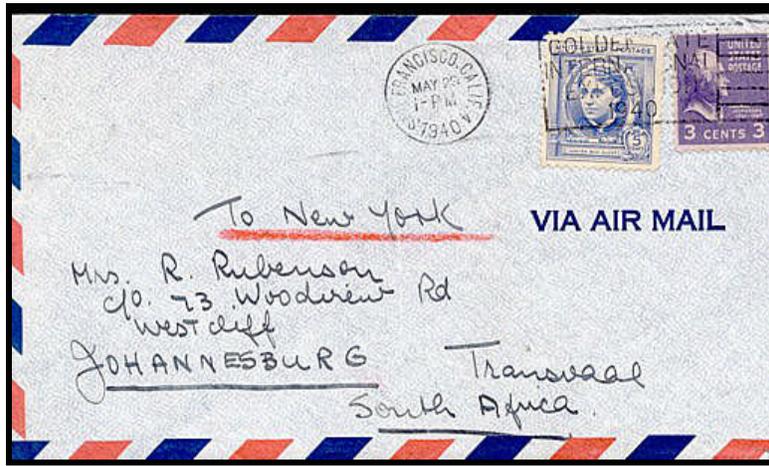


Figure 5

Figure 6. A five-cent Alcott and a twenty-cent Prexie pay part of the fifty cents in postage on this envelope to Switzerland, made up of thirty cents for transatlantic airmail, fifteen cents for registry, and five cents for a return receipt.

Figure 7 shows the final stamp in the author series — the ten-cent Samuel Clemens issue. The likeness was taken from a photograph in the Public Library in Washington, D.C. It pictures Clemens as he looked in his late 60's.

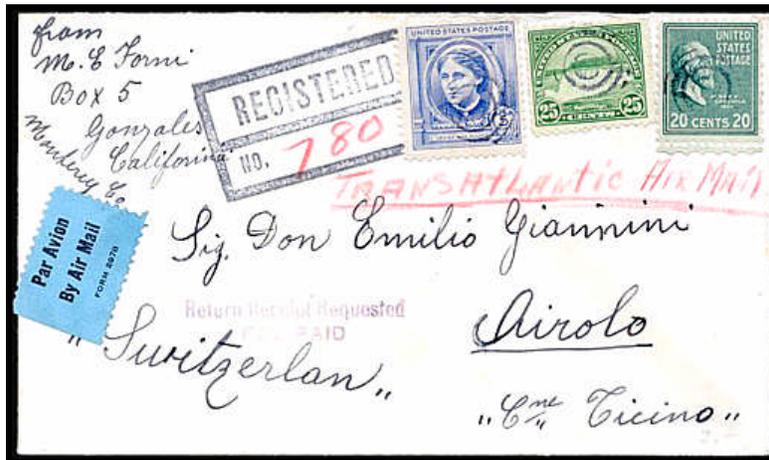


Figure 6

Next, the ten-cent Clemens and a 17 cents Prexie make up the transatlantic airmail rate on half of a paid reply postal card to Berlin in 1941.



Figure 7

Figure 8. Sixty cents in twelve-cent Prexies plus the ten-cent Clemens make up the seventy-cent Pacific route airmail rate to India through Hong Kong or Singapore that was available from April 1937 until December 1941.¹



Figure 8

The Handstamp “CPSF”

by

Robert Schlesinger

Bob wrote: “I received my Prexie Era Newsletter [No. 34] yesterday and saw the interesting article on the CPNY marking. As a result, I went through my collection and found a cover I had purchased from the collection of Rollie Rustad. In fact, the cover still is on its exhibit page with Rollie’s write-up.

¹ Information on the source of the Famous American stamp designs was taken from UNITED STATES FAMOUS AMERICAN SERIES of 1940 by George H. Hahn, APS Handbook Series.



Here is the cover with the write-up, as follows:

‘The 60 cents per ½ oz. rate, effective December 2, 1941. Routed via Miami over FAM 22. The handstamp “CPSF” means ‘Censorship Postal, San Francisco.’ ‘

Prexies on a Special Handling Tag



The tag shown above was offered on Ebay in November 2005 (Item Number 5639242644). Special handling usages are among the most desirable of all usages – in general. Any Special Handling use with a Prexie is a gem, indeed. This specimen has two Prexies!

Airmail to Turkey During the Second World War

by

Steven M. Roth

Foreign destination airmail during the period 1940 through late 1943 is one of the most elusive collecting and study areas of the Prexie Era because of the impact of the Second World War on routes and rates. This is because (i) the policy of the wartime United States government was to maintain secrecy with respect to routes, and (ii) routes, and often rates, frequently changed in response to the exigencies of combat and the shifting theaters of war.

Among the destinations which has escaped clear explication with respect to airmail rates is Turkey. While it seems that the correct rate (i) for covers flown over FAM 18 was 30¢ (or 36¢ if BOAC

rendered additional air service via the Middle East), and (ii) for covers flown over FAM 14 should have been 70¢, and (iii) for covers flown over FAM 22 was 70¢, in fact, only the FAM 22 70¢ rate was consistent with expectations and contemporary airmail conventions.

FAM 18

Such FAM 18 covers as are available for study generally reflect the 30¢ airmail rate from the United States to Europe via England or Lisbon, then by surface mail to Turkey. I am aware of one example of an FAM 18 36¢ rate cover to Turkey — airmail to England and then from England to Turkey. This cover appeared in the Dr. Arthur Groten Sale as Lot No. 825.² Dr. Groten, an exemplary student of mail to, through and from Palestine (He wrote the magnificent Introduction and the descriptions of the auction lots for the sale) stated as part of the description of the cover that “[the] 36¢ rate to Turkey was valid until opening of FAM 22.” This seems correct, and yet Lot 825 is the only 36¢ rate example I am aware of.

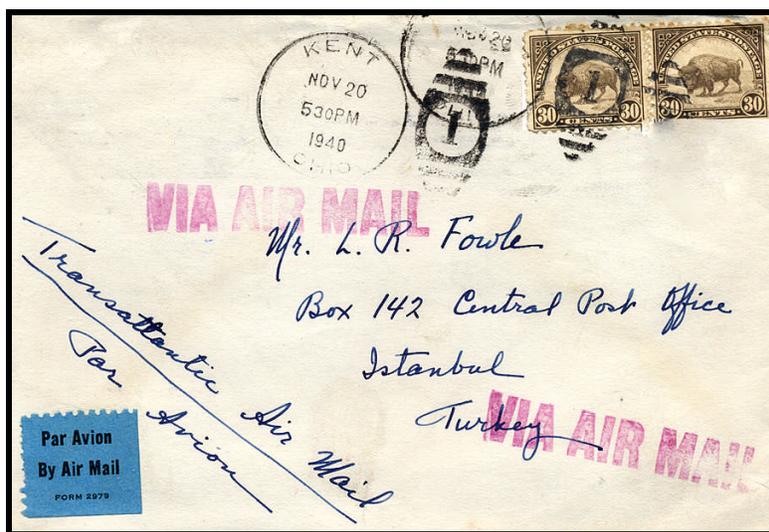


Figure 1

Figure 1 was carried to Turkey over FAM 18 in November 1940. It was a double rate letter. This letter could have traveled instead via the Reverse Horseshoe Route, but FAM 18 was much faster. It reduced the transit time from New York to Lisbon and from Lisbon to Turkey via surface mail by approximately three weeks.

After Italy entered the War against Britain and France on June 10, 1940, thereby effectively closing the Mediterranean Sea to Allied commercial air traffic, Great Britain sought other airmail routes to enable it to maintain communications with its Indian, Australian, African New Zealand, and Pacific colonies. Three routes that resulted were the two emergency Trans-Pacific Routes (FAM 14 and FAM 19) and (beginning June 19, 1940) the so-called Horseshoe Route which linked 16 countries between Durban and Sydney. The United States made use of all these alternate air routes.^{3, 4}

Trans-Pacific Route

² Nutmeg Sale No. 15, “Arthur Groten’s ‘Via Palestine’,” April 13, 1999, Lot 825.

³ Covers from the United States over the Horseshoe Route are often referred to as Reverse Horseshoe Route covers or as American Horseshoe Route covers.

⁴ In addition, the United States continued to use the established steamship route from New York (i) to Cape Town, South Africa, then (ii) by British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) air carriage to Cairo, Karachi, Calcutta, etc., including to Turkey. The transit time by ship from New York to Cape Town typically was 30 days.

The Trans-Pacific Route to destinations in Europe, Africa and the Middle East (and, specifically, to Turkey) from the United States required that the mail first be taken to San Francisco, then be carried via FAM 14 as if it were going to Asia. Ostensibly, the airmail rate to Turkey should have been 70¢ per one-half ounce just as it was for most mail to other destinations carried over this route. The problem with this reasonable assumption is that (i) the rate was not documented in any official publication that I have been able to find nor in the Pan American Airways postal rates guides, and (ii) only one cover reflecting this rate has been reported. In practice, the airmail rate to Turkey via the Trans-Pacific Route seems to have been 30¢ per one-half ounce, although (i) I have not been able to find this rate in any official publication or PAA rates guide, and (ii) the 30¢ rate does not fit the known rate convention for the route at that time. I showed an example of a 30¢ rate Trans-Pacific Route Prexie cover in the Prexie Era Newsletter No. 24, at page 6 [Fall 2002]. **Figure 2** is another rate example (without a Prexie) I recently acquired.



Figure 2

Figure 2 was routed through Singapore where it was opened, examined, passed and resealed. It was opened and examined again when it arrived in Egypt., and then examined again in Turkey.

Reverse Horseshoe Route

The route a Reverse Horseshoe Route cover traveled was (i) FAM 18 from the United States to England, then (ii) ship from England to Durban, South Africa. From Durban, the mail went overland to Mombassa, Khartoum, and on to Cairo. From Cairo, the mail traveled to its destination by local air, land and/or by sea.

Turkey-destined Reverse Horseshoe Route covers reflect the 30¢ airmail rate rather than the expected 70¢ rate. An example I recently acquired is shown below as **Figure 3**.



Figure 3

Note that **Figure 3** was twice marked by the sender “Air Mail via Lisbon”, the route via FAM 18. The New York City Post Office ignored the admonition and sent the letter via the Reverse Horseshoe Route. When the letter arrived in Durban, South Africa, it was opened by censorship, examined, resealed and passed. The letter was examined again by censorship in Turkey. The “VIA AIR MAIL” handstamp was crossed-out in Durban indicating surface carriage from there.

FAM 22 Route Covers

With the advent of the southern Atlantic route via Miami and Africa (FAM 22) in 1941 (officially as of December 6, but as a practical matter for non-military mail sometime late in May 1942) we find the first published reference to airmail to Turkey, as well as the first officially published rate — 70¢. This appeared in **Postal Bulletin No. 18348** (December 18, 1941).

SECOND ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,
Washington, December 17, 1941.
FOREIGN AIR MAIL SERVICE

Air mails for Netherlands Indies, North Borneo, Sarawak, Straits Settlements, Malaya, Burma, unoccupied China and countries west thereof (including Turkey), which have heretofore been sent by the trans-Pacific route, shall be routed promptly via Miami, Fla. The total postage on articles for all these countries is 70 cents per half ounce.

Air mails for the countries listed in the POSTAL BULLETIN of December 2, 1941, under the heading “Foreign Air Mail Service To Africa,” will of course also be sent via Miami, except any that are prepared to be carried by steamship to Africa thence by air.

Figures 4 and 5 are examples of typical 70¢ covers to Turkey flown over FAM 22. I note that notwithstanding the sender’s admonition, the **Figure 4** cover do not travel via South Africa.



Figure 4

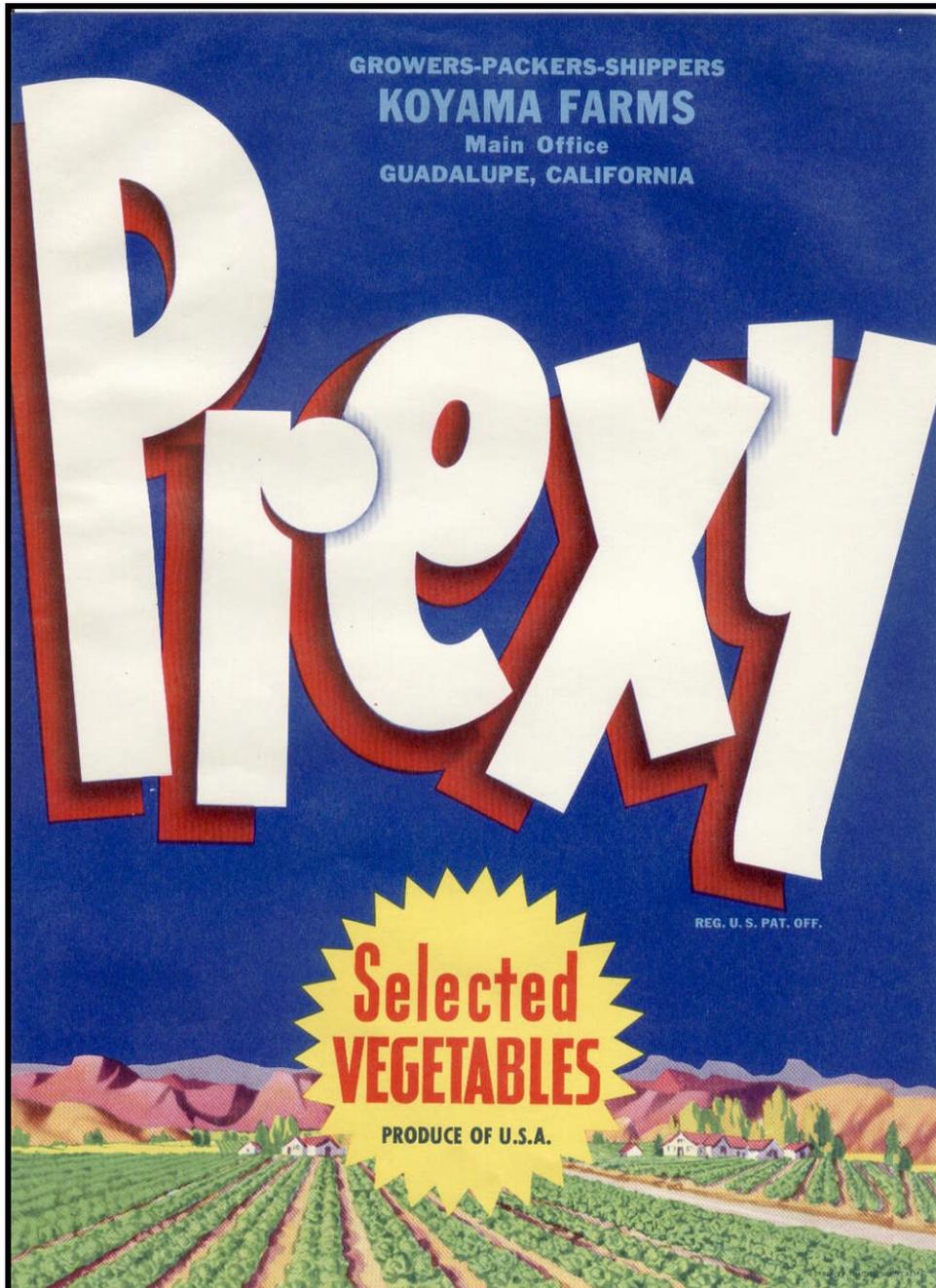


Figure 5

If any reader has access to a published airmail rate to Turkey before the advent of FAM 22, please make that information available for publication in the Newsletter.

Where in the World Does Jeff Shapiro Find These?

Every once in a while Jeff Shapiro surprises Newsletter readers by presenting an unusual Prexie Era item. Here is one Jeff sprang on me not too long ago.



Now, that's a beautiful multi-colored artifact for a serious Prexie collector!!!