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The Prexie Era

The Newsletter of the USSS 1938 Presidential Era Study Group

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Steve Roth Steps Down as Editor/Publisher

After five years as editor/publisher of *The Prexie Era Newsletter* Steve Roth is stepping down because of recent and ongoing illnesses among members of his family. Steve regrets this move having enjoyed both the task of editing the newsletter and the camaraderie with contributors, subscribers, and fellow collectors interested in an exciting period of U.S. postal history.

Your acting editor first became aware of Roth with publication of his 1991 La Posta monograph, *The Censorship of International Civilian Mail During World War II*. Over the years he demonstrated meticulous attention to evidence presented on covers and the conclusions to be drawn from his empirical studies. He has shown these skills in recent issues of the newsletter with his series on emergency airmail routes during World War II.

I will miss Steve's presence as editor and contributor, a sentiment most of us share. He promises to continue as a subscriber. Hopefully, as his personal life levels off, he will return as a contributor and consultant.

Prexie Era Newsletter Seeks New Editor

With Steve Roth's departure Jeff Shapiro, president of the 1938 Presidential Era Study Group, has begun the search for a new editor or co-editors to carry on publication of the Newsletter. Individuals considering applying for the position should possess a general knowledge of U.S. postal history from 1938-1954, enjoy the writing process, and be outgoing in soliciting contributions from subscribers. He or she should be computer literate, including e-mail, and comfortable using Microsoft Word or compatible software.

The new editor(s) must be willing to make a two-year commitment beginning with the Winter 2008 issue (Whole No. 40). For more information please contact Shapiro at:

coverlover@gmail.com

Jeff Shapiro
P.O. Box 3211
Fayetteville, MA 01745

A Note from Your Acting Editor

At Jeff Shapiro's request I have agreed to edit/publish the next two issues of the Newsletter. The next issue is scheduled to appear in November, enabling us to publish three times in 2007. Pending an adequate number of submissions, the Newsletter should appear four times a year for the foreseeable future, in February, May, August, and November. Contributors have responded quickly to my solicitation for articles, which has already produced material to begin the Fall issue.

With this issue we begin a series dedicated to showing covers with Prexie multiple frankings – that is, bearing multiple stamps of the same value to make up the correct rate. Please send scans or color photocopies showing usages with interesting rates, routes, destinations, and auxiliary markings. We will publish one in each issue. Also appearing here is the first of an ongoing series of articles on Prexie EFOs, authored by Francis Ferguson. Your response is welcome.

The Prexie era extends from 1938 to 1954 and beyond. This period encompasses stamp issues besides the Prexies, including the Famous Americans, Defense Issue, Victory stamp, Flags of the Overrun Countries, the Transport Airmail Issue, and the Skymasters. I encourage subscribers to submit articles illustrating covers franked with any of these issues. For subscribers articulate when talking philately, but head for the exits when asked to write about it, send illustrations accompanied by several talking points on why your cover deserves to be seen in print. I'll help create the story.

Contributors should submit articles in Word compatible format and illustrations as tif files (jpg, if you must) at 300 dpi resolution. High quality color photocopies provide a reasonable alternative.

Finally, I encourage subscribers currently receiving the Newsletter by mail to switch over to the electronic format. Starting with the first issue in 2008 the mail version will be in black and white. The electronic version will remain in full color and reach you sooner than the snail mail version. It also eliminates the cost of postage. Please provide Jeff Shapiro with your email address.

--- Louis Fiset

Collecting Prexie Multiple Franking Covers



The multiple franking cover illustrated above shows five 6-cent sheet stamps paying the correct 30-cent, one-ounce airmail rate from the U.S. mainland to Canton Island, whose main residents were employees of Pan American World Airways. PanAm arrived in May 1939 to build facilities for a planned New Zealand flying boat service that began on July 12, 1940. Planes on the FAM-14 and FAM-19 routes refueled in the island's lagoon. A 6,000 foot landing strip built during World War II enabled Canton Island to become a stopover point for Navy Air Transport Service flights to Australia and New Zealand. It also served as a staging point for attacks on the Japanese-held Gilbert Islands.

A Brazilian Flyer

by

Jeff Shapiro

German U Boats sank 32 Brazilian merchant ships between 1940 and mid-1942, leading Brazil to declare war against Germany and Italy in August 1942. The only Latin American country to send troops to Europe (25,000 soldiers), Brazil also sent its First Flyer Group to fight Axis forces in Italy.

Early in the war when the northeastern coast of Brazil became vulnerable to invasion by the Axis, the U.S. agreed to train Brazilian pilots to help defend the country. The censored cover illustrated here, dated January 4, 1945, was posted by a Brazilian pilot in training with the 2666th Unit of the US Army Air Force's Training Detachment at Garner Field, in Uvalde, Texas.



Named in honor of John Nance Garner, a former resident of Uvalde county and two-term Vice President in the Franklin Roosevelt administration, the facility employed 120 instructors and a supporting staff exceeding 200. Pilots representing Allied countries from all over the world, including Mexico, Argentina, China and the Netherlands, trained there.

The writer used two 20-cent Prexies to pay the 40-cent per half-ounce airmail rate to his family in São Paulo, Brazil. This rate was in effect from December 1937 through March 1945, at which time the rate dropped to 20 cents. The letter received civil censorship at the San Antonio field station. The cover's reverse side bears a January 17, 1945 São Paulo receiving mark.

Such mail is scarce, this being the only cover to have surfaced after several years of searching.

MV *Gripsholm* Diplomatic Exchange Mail Goes Via FAM-22

by

Louis Fiset

The date FAM-22 route planes began routinely carrying civilian mail following its inauguration on December 6, 1941 remains unresolved. However, by July 1, 1942, when the cover illustrated below was postmarked, FAM-22 had been carrying such mail for some time.



The cover contained a letter intended for a missionary couple from China repatriating to the U.S. on the first diplomatic exchange between Japan and the U.S. during World War II. Through negotiations between the State Department and the Japanese Foreign Ministry, agreement had been reached for the two countries to exchange their diplomatic corps and as many non-officials as could be carried to the exchange site. The *Gripsholm* transported 1,500 repatriating Japanese nationals and their families to Lourenço Marques, Moçambique and returned with 1,500 westerners formerly held in Japanese controlled territory.

The exchange took place during July 22-26, 1942. Because of earlier publicity correspondents could write letters that would be waiting for the repatriates' arrival. The illustrated cover is a nice example of this type of mail. The transmit markings and censor resealing tape help tell the routing.

The letter, postmarked July 1, 1942 and properly franked with 70 cents postage paying the half-ounce airmail rate to Moçambique, was censored at the Miami censor station (#1913) soon thereafter. The letter reached Leopoldville, in the Belgian Congo, on July 12th. From there it was flown by Belgium's SABENA airline to Johannesburg where it was off loaded and transferred

onto an east bound train. It reached Ressano Garcia, a border crossing on the Moçambique side, where a railway post office (*Ambulancia*) receiving mark was applied on July 17th. The letter then continued its last 50 miles by rail to Lourenço Marques, arriving in plenty of time to meet the Japanese exchange ship, SS *Conte Verde*, that docked on July 22nd after transporting the missionaries from Shanghai.

Receiving letters such as this from home upon their arrival must have provided great emotional nourishment for the repatriates, many having had no communication from the time of their internment after December 7, 1941. Yet three weeks was not sufficient for some mail to reach Lourenço Marques before *Gripsholm's* departure on July 28th.



The second cover shown here, from Steve Roth's collection, illustrates a letter postmarked two days earlier, on June 29, 1942. It is addressed to the repatriating general manager of the Standard Oil Company of New York in China, a travel companion of the missionary couple arriving on the *Conte Verde* from Shanghai. It, however, failed to arrive on time and was returned to the writer the following December, months after the addressee had returned to the U.S. In this case the letter was censored at Port-of Spain, Trinidad and had to be loaded onto another FAM-22 flight, which did not receive a Leopoldville back stamp until September 2nd. The letter was returned to the U.S. via Capetown by land and sea routes where the cover received a transit marking dated September 23rd.

A missed flight, an extra day on the censor's table, a late arriving rail connection, all potential delays, point to the fragility of timely international mail connections during World War II.

Tales from the Other Side: Prexie EFOs - Part 1

by

Francis Ferguson



Not everyone looks for postal history. My interest in Prexie material is any stamp revealing an error, freak or oddity (EFO). If it happens to be on cover, that is okay with me. The wide variety of mostly affordable EFOs that abound in the vast quantity of 260.1 billion Prexie stamps produced yields a fertile collecting field. With the exception of a few items costing in the \$1,000 to \$4,000 range, large sums of money are not needed to acquire most of these EFOs.

Sooner or later everything and anything can be found. If one has interest in finishing and production errors, cutting and related folding/cutting errors abound. Cutting problems yield plate number in places they should not appear on coils and booklet panes. I thrill at matching two coils to create a full plate number. Perforation errors run the gamete in both horizontal and vertical directions, yielding some truly odd looking creations. While few truly imperforate varieties exist with the Series, the wide variety of war-perf creations make for entertaining hunting. Gutter pairs, like the one illustrated above, and gutter snipes are visually striking and sit high on my list of favorite EFOs. Adding another element to the potential collecting realm, forgeries do exist of the 3-cent value. The wrong paper used in the production process of the \$1 issue produced the USIR watermark variety.

My personal favorites are inking issues; mis-registered inks from the three multi-color subjects in the series, and the bizarre and strange under/over inked varieties on the other 29 face different subjects, such as the one in the illustration. Double/single paper varieties with or without splicing tape, slime paper production, uneven paper shrinkage, inverted plate numbers, rejection marks, and much more can be found in the Prexie EFO Hall of Fame.

I will be showing and discussing Prexie EFO material in the Newsletter on a regular basis. Any comments, illustrations, or suggestions along the way will be greatly appreciated. I can be reached by email at ferg@FloridaStampShows.com

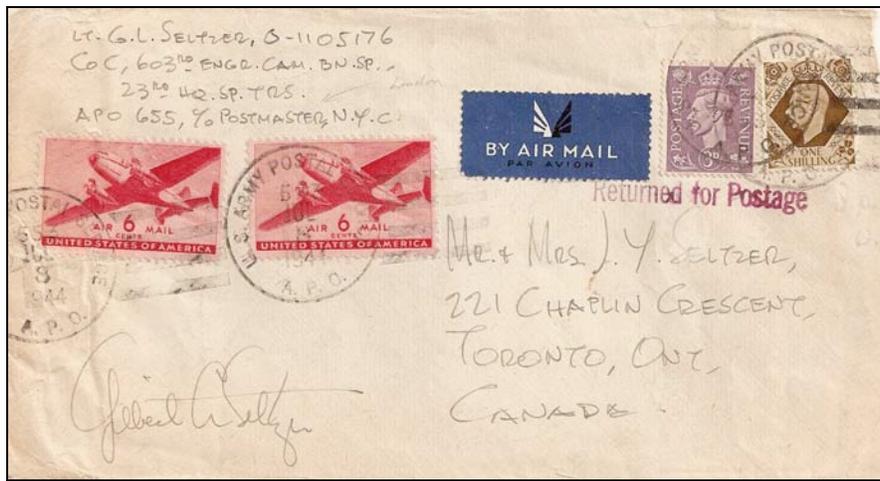
Mixed Foreign Franked Usages Of The Transport Airmail Series - Part 1

by

Joseph Bock

The Transport Airmail Series, issued during the early period of the Presidential (Prexie) Series, replaced several older U.S. airmail stamps from the 1930's, including the Clippers, the 6-cent Eagle, and the 30-cent Winged Globe. The Transport covers illustrated here, with mixed foreign franking, appear in the order of their issue date, which for the first six stamps was June 26, 1941 through October 29, 1941. A 6-cent booklet pane appeared in 1943, with an 8-cent value following in 1944 when the domestic airmail rate increased to 8 cents per ounce.

Double 6 cents per half-ounce -- special military rate



U.S. Military Postal Service airmail was made available to U. S. Allies on a space available basis. Sent by a Canadian attached to British Forces. Posted from U.S. APO 655, London, England to Canada, July 1944. Double military rate airmail. Great Britain required British postage on APO mail sent locally to a United Kingdom address. Lt. Seltzer apparently thought this same rule also applied to Canada. Thus the letter was returned to sender for U.S. postage for trans-Atlantic airmail.

From Iceland, redirected to Mexico, September 1943



Cover sent by diplomatic pouch from the U.S. embassy in Reykjavik. Local (Icelandic) postage paying the international letter rate was required by UPU regulations for pouch mail. Put into the U.S. mail at Washington D. C. by ordinary mail to Plainfield, New Jersey, then forwarded to Mexico. A Transport stamp was added to pay the correct 10-cent per half-ounce airmail rate to Mexico. Censored at New York en route to Mexico.

Paquebot usage from the Canal Zone



Business correspondence posted at sea franked with 23 cents U.S. postage. Two possibilities may explain the mixed franking on this June 20, 1946 cover. First, the Balboa post office may have discovered the letter short paid, and 7 cents Canal Zone postage was added to correctly pay triple the 10 cents per half-ounce airmail rate. Second, per Dickson Preston, mixed foreign franking paquebot mail was permitted in the Canal Zone on ships flying the U.S. flag. The writer may have used stamps on hand from the two postal jurisdictions to make up the triple weight rate.

Hawaii to Chile, forwarded to the U.S.



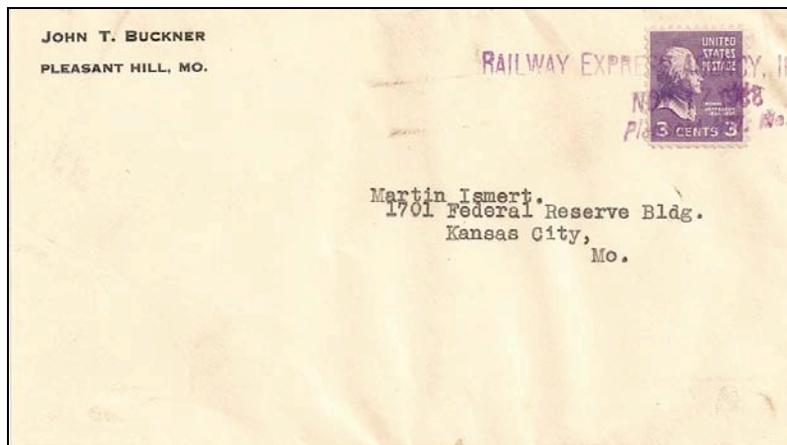
Combination rate of 20 cents per half-ounce airmail rate from Honolulu to the U.S., plus 40 cents per half-ounce from the U.S. to Santiago, January 1943. Forwarded by airmail to California with Chilean airmail stamps added. Censored outbound at Honolulu and inbound at Miami.

Outside of the Mail Prexie Era Usages

by

Robert Schlesinger

Interesting usages of Prexie Era postage stamps occur outside of the mail, two of which are shown here. The first is a cover affixed to a package containing postal history covers sent by a Bureau Issues Association member via the Railway Express Agency on November 17, 1938. The Postal Bulletin of August 24, 1938 (PB #17510) noted that first class mail sent via other means, such as Railway Express, had to be prepaid by postage and cancelled in ink, as was done in this case. The 3 cents may have paid the first class one-ounce letter rate, while the package itself may have been assessed a freight charge by weight, with a coupon, manuscript, or other indication on the wrapper, now lost.



The second cover shows a letter sent from Merced, California to Modesto, via Pacific Greyhound Lines service, covering a distance of approximately 30 miles. A Greyhound express label was applied on May 18, 1939, and the letter postmarked May 19th. Likely, the letter reached the bus depot after the scheduled departure, thus wasting the value of the MAY 18 Pacific Greyhound Lines coupon. The sender then dropped his correspondence in the mail or went to the post office: hence the May 19th date and the duplex cancel.

