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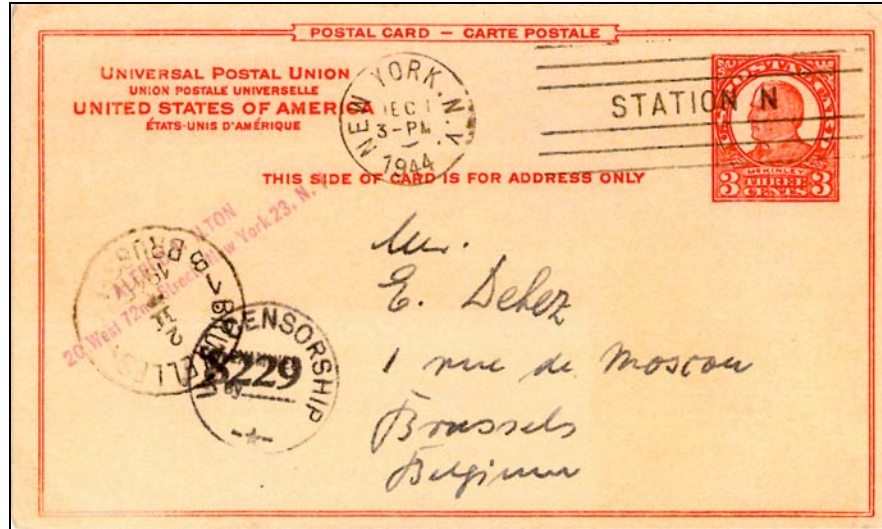
Louis Fiset, Editor/Publisher
7554 Brooklyn Avenue NE, Seattle, WA 98115-4302

fiset@uw.edu
206-524-8642

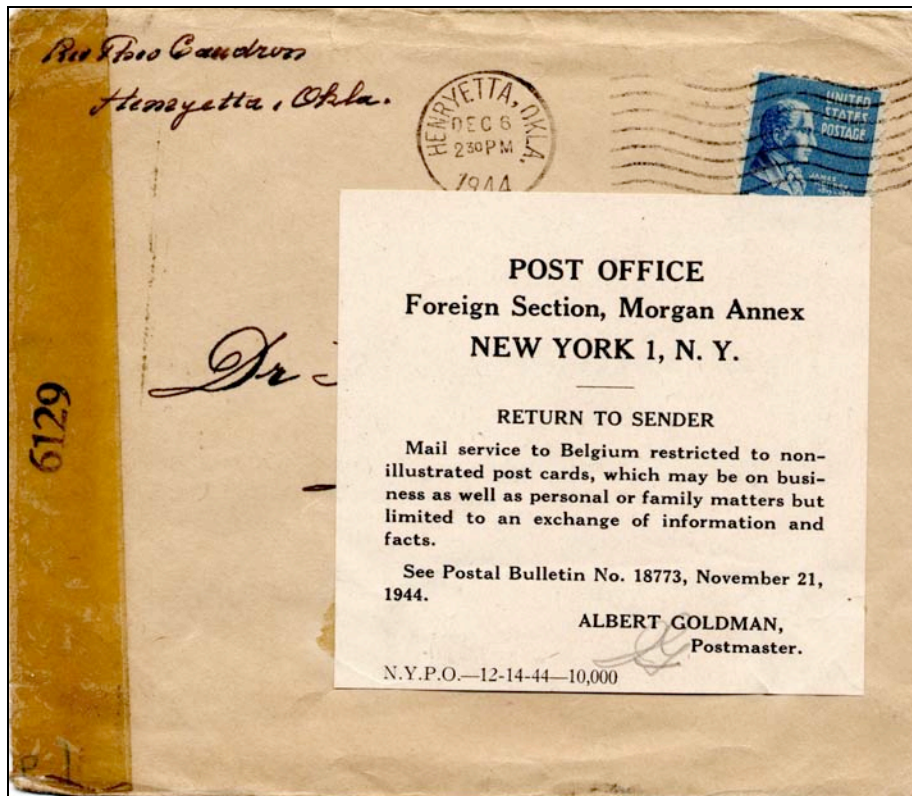
Resumption of Postal Service to Belgium, 1944

by

Bill Hart



The illustration above shows the beginning of resumed mail service to Belgium near the end of World War II. Permitted were non-illustrated postcards only, starting November 23, 1944. This example shows a postal card mailed one week later, on December 1st, and censored at the New York field station. A Brussels receiving mark shows the card arrived February 2, 1945, after more than 60 days in transit. Attempts to send surface letters, such as the one shown below, were turned back until February 2, 1945 when one-ounce letters were permitted.



Surface Mail Sent in Air Mail Envelopes – Part II

by

Dickson Preston



Figure 5. Returned for postage. Hand stamped "Returned for Additional Postage." Mixed Liberty and Prexie franking. November 18, 1954.

The Postal Bulletin of 16 February 1954 clarified what were probably procedures already used by many postmasters. Short paid airmail letters paying at least 3 cents should be returned for postage, unless that would cause undue delay, in which case "Air Mail" should be obliterated and the letter dispatched by surface (Wawrukiewicz, 119). One such letter, which was returned for postage, resulted in a mixed issue franking, since a new 3-cent Liberty Series stamp was used to add the postage (Figure 5). The postal people in Oklahoma City chose to use neither of the alternatives spelled out in the Postal Bulletin (Figure 6). This letter was neither returned for postage, although the sender's address was present, nor sent as surface mail. Instead it was forwarded as airmail, and postage due was collected from the addressee. The meaning of the red crayon marking "ECE" is unknown to this writer. Do any *Prexie Era* readers know what it means?

The final example is a slightly different kind of short paid airmail, which raises a number of questions (Figure 7). The envelope is designed for airmail and franked with the 6-cent airmail letter rate. The back is covered with dried glue, indicating the envelope was attached to a larger item. When the combined sending reached its destination of Stevensville, Mont., 5½ cents postage due was collected, indicating that 11½ cents postage was the assessed rate for both items. Unfortunately the attachment, including any postage stamps or markings on it, has been lost.

There were no fractional postage rates for first class mail, so the attachment must have been a third class item. On the other hand, in 1939 only first class mail traveled by air. The letter was sealed and opened, so it was first class matter. It could have been charged 6 cents because of the air mail envelope, even though it could not have gone by air, or it could have been charged 3 cents surface postage. In neither case would the remaining amounts of 8½ or 5½ cents, after the letter postage was deducted from 11½ cents, yield a valid fractional third class rate.

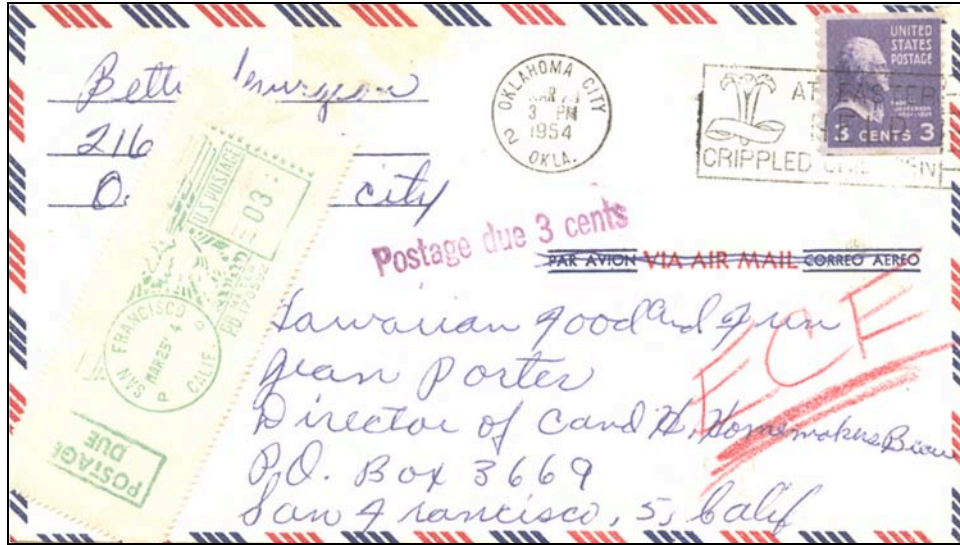


Figure 6. Sent as airmail, contrary to regulations. Hand stamped "Postage due 3 cents." Meaning of "ECE" is sought. March 23, 1954.

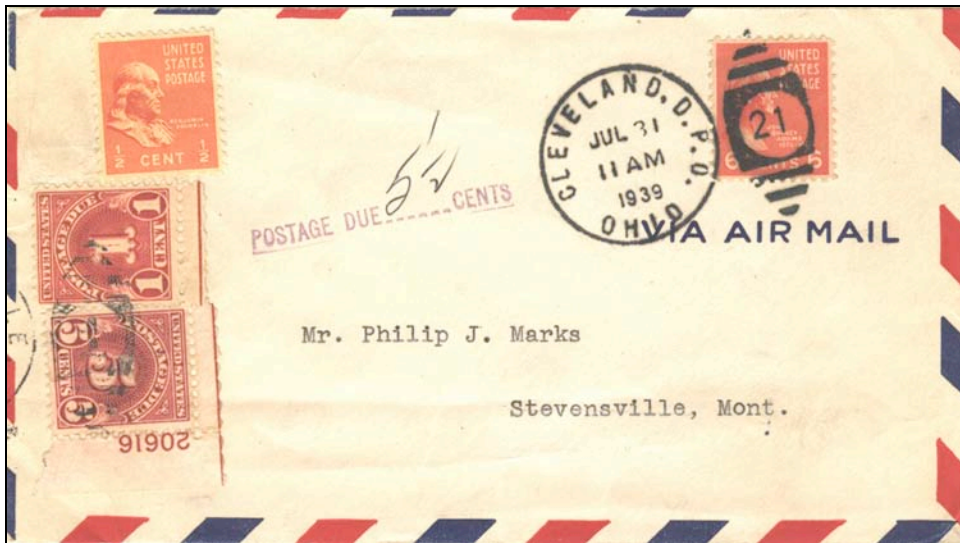


Figure 7. Air envelope attached to larger item. Hand stamped "Postage due 5½ cents" Amount due collected in Stevensville, Mont. Half-cent Prexie as change. July 31, 1939. Any ideas about the rates or handling of this item would be appreciated.

So what is the answer to this rate puzzle? The writer would like to pose this conundrum to readers of the *Prexie Era*? Any facts, theories or speculations will be welcome.

One final aspect of this letter is clear. Since 6 cents postage due was collected, but only 5½ cents was due, an unused half-cent Franklin was attached to the letter as change.

Reference:

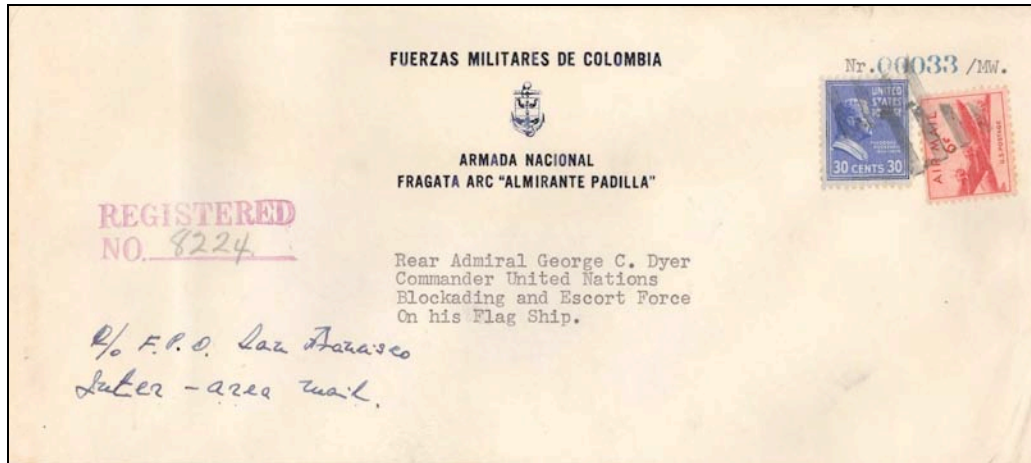
- Wawrukiewicz, Tony and Henry Beecher. *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-1993*. Shawnee-Mission, KS: Tradition Press, 1994.

U.S.-Colombia Cooperation during the Korean War

by

Jeffrey Shapiro

After decades of an uneasy relationship between the United States and Colombia following US support of the Panamanian revolt against Colombia, formal contacts were established in the fall of 1939 following the German invasion of Poland to formulate plans to protect the Panama Canal. Post-war cooperation continued with Colombia becoming the first nation to send personnel for training at the newly opened US Army School of the Americas in Panama in 1949 to defend against Communist unrest in the hemisphere. US military assistance continued to increase. In return, the Colombian government agreed to join the United Nations' sanctioned offensive in Korea in 1950, becoming the only South American country to support the effort. (Twenty-two nations made up the United Nations' forces sent to combat Russian and Chinese aggression on the Korean Peninsula)



Besides four battalions (approximately 3,100 personnel) the Colombian military sent their premier sailing vessel, the Frigate *Almirante Padilla*, to serve in the Korean "police action." Formerly the USS *Groton*, the ship was sold to the Colombian government in 1947 and rechristened *Almirante Padilla*. After refitting in San Diego by the US Navy, the *Almirante Padilla* was assigned to the United Nations fleet in June 1951 for patrol duty off the coast of Korea. She served with distinction until relieved by her Colombian sister ship, the ARC *Capitan Tono* (formerly the USS *Bisbee*) on January 19, 1952 with ceremonies at the US Naval Base at Yokosuka, Japan.

The airmail registered cover illustrated here was sent from the *Padilla* through the Naval Post Office Branch 13766 at Yokosuka, Japan a few days later, on January 24, 1952. The correspondence was received on January 27, 1952 by Rear Admiral George Dyer, Commander of the United Nations Blockading and Escort Force, aboard his flagship, USS *Piedmont*.

Tales from the Other Side – Part VIII: Color Errors

by

Francis Ferguson
ferg@FloridaStampShows.com

The two-decade life of the Prexie series produced a number of minor color variations, but only two major color errors – the 30-cent deep blue and \$5 red brown/black. The variations are noticeably distinct from the corresponding regular colors (i.e., deep ultramarine, carmine/black.) Shown here, from the Robert A. Siegel rarities sale archive is a plate block of the \$5 color error (http://www.siegelauctions.com/lot_lkp.php).



The quantities of the two normally issued stamps (30-cent value = 716.8 million; \$5 value = 9.32 million) is well known. However, the number of error stamps is simply a guess. Little solid information can be found to document with certainty what may or may not exist in the public realm.

Published reports of the \$5 error in the 1950s and 1970s reported numbers with little substantiation. Finally, Roland Rustad published an article in the July 1990 issue of *The United States Specialist* exhaustively detailing all he was able to uncover. The article provided illustrations of the nine blocks believed still to exist. Apparently no subsequent research has appeared since then. However, a report in *Linns* (August 27, 2001) detailed a certified block from the Turner estate auctioned by H.R. Harmer bringing to ten the number of documented blocks.

At one time 12 plate blocks of this error were reported to exist, which means that 1,200 stamps should theoretically exist. Most examples appearing in auctions feature position pieces or large multiples. Where are all the singles? It seems that with the quantity of known singles believed to exist there should be some in the market place at any one time. That does not seem to hold true. Singles rarely show up for sale.

Further notes for consideration:

1. This number may become more flexible as more holdings are examined more closely and more \$5 color errors are found in old albums and accumulations. Time will tell.
2. Most \$5 color errors sold in recent auctions have been multiples or position pieces – which of course have commanded high dollars. Two used copies have been certified and may be truly the rarest of all.
3. One should note the comment under the listing in the Scotts Catalog for 834a that reads “No. 834 can be chemically altered to resemble Scott 834a. No. 834a should be purchased only with competent expert certification.”

A Little Seen Return Receipt Usage

by

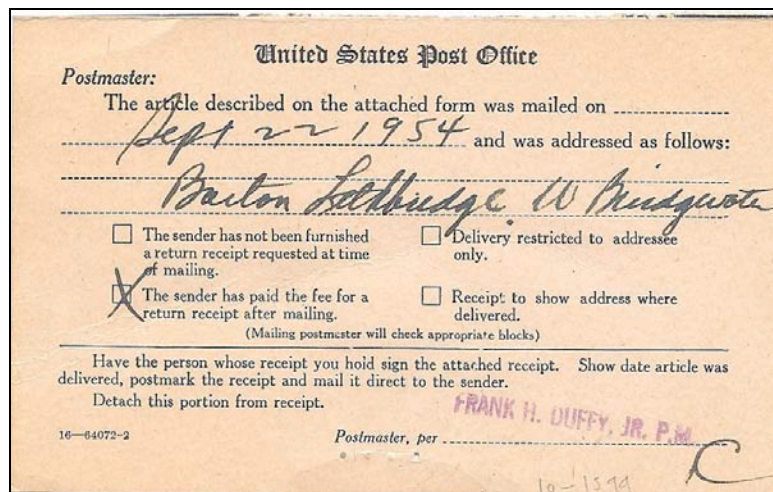
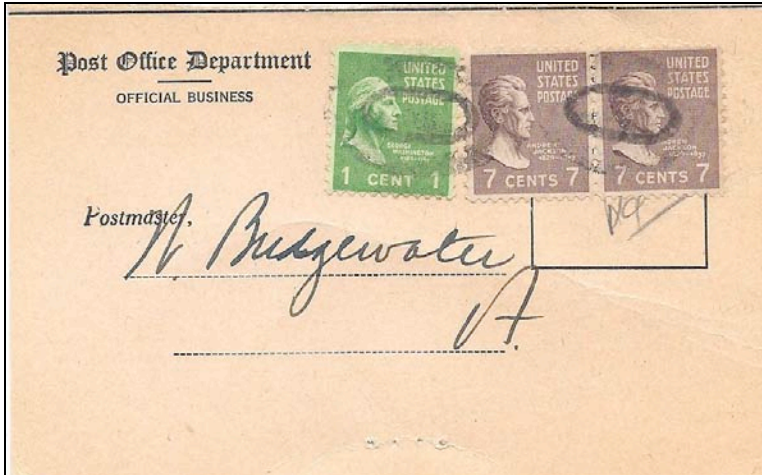
Robert Schlesinger
Robertsles@aol.com

The items shown below illustrate a seldom seen domestic usage during the Prexie era. The form appears to have been printed in a format similar to a postal card reply card and was folded, stapled (as evidenced by the staple holes on the bottom of the card) and mailed to the postmaster of the city where the item (whether a postal card, envelope or parcel) was mailed.

The postmaster of the city where the original item was mailed had four possible options to check (see card). In this case the box marked **The sender has paid the fee for a return receipt after mailing** was checked off. Please note the obvious fold and tear marking on the back (and top of the front) of the card. The instructions read as follows: **“Have the person whose receipt you hold sign the attached receipt. Show date article was delivered, postmark the receipt and mail it direct to the sender.”**

Such service began on March 18, 1931, with an assessed fee of 5 cents. By January 1, 1952 the fee had increased to 15 cents. The illustrated form was used in September 1954.

It is interesting to note that the form, when mailed, received a dumb, not dated cancellation. In addition, the Post Office Department went to the trouble of devising a whole form for this usage, along with a tiny number assigned (presumably) by the Government Printing Office. Few of these seem to have survived and reside in philatelists' collections.



Update On the Prexie Era Website

by

Steve B. Davis, Webmaster
stamperdad@yahoo.ca

In the Summer 2008 (No. 42) newsletter I announced formation of the Prexie Era website intended to provide a forum for articles and scans of provocative stamps and covers, as well as a place where news can be quickly posted to the site. The website provides an overview of the Prexies, Transport Airmails, 30-cent Globe airmail, Famous Americans, and the Win the War and 5-cent Skymaster stamps. The site has been updated with interesting usages on cover of the Prexies. However, we still need scans of the "Win the War" and Globe issue. In addition, the suggestion has been made to include the Overrun Nations issue.

Readers should also send me Palmares of Prexie era exhibits from shows throughout the country, which I will post.

The website may be found at: <http://prexie-era.org/>

Canada Censors Search for Secret Messages

by

Louis Fiset



Occasionally collectors encounter wartime covers with stamps partially or totally ripped off by censors looking for secret messages. The German government went so far as to prohibit the use of stamps on outgoing international mail to POWs and internees, and frequently destroyed adhesives on incoming mail looking for messages designed to elude censors.

This practice by U.S. and Canada censors was unusual during World War II, which makes the illustration here of particular note and requires some explanation. The six 1-cent Prexies on the cover mailed April 7, 1940, pays the one-ounce airmail rate to Canada. The correspondence was addressed in care of Internment Operations at Ottawa and, following censorship, forwarded to the addressee, a German enemy alien, at one of two internment camps for civilians then in operation.

At the time this cover was posted Canada had been at war with Germany for seven months. As early as September 1939 German enemy aliens believed to pose a security threat to the nation were arrested under the Defence of Canada Regulations and taken to internment camps established by military authorities to hold them for the duration of the war. In spring 1940 two camps were in existence, one at Petawawa, Ontario, and the other at Kananaskis (Seebe), Alberta.

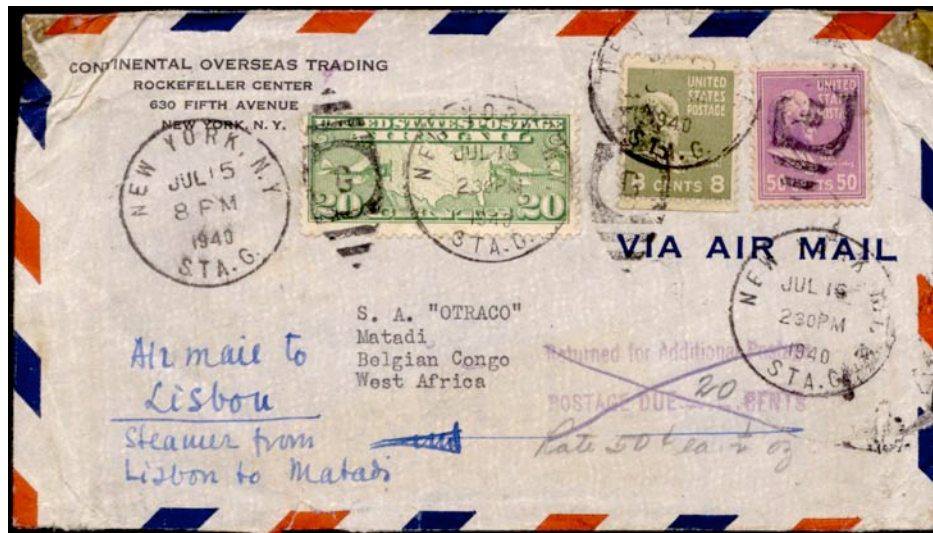
The Post Office Department was instructed to forward all foreign incoming mail for internees to the Chief Postal Censor, Ottawa, where it was to be examined before forwarding. In the illustration, the censor has written on top of the row of six damaged and undamaged stamps in red ink a check mark, "Examined," and his initials. The ink is the same color as the initials on top of the boxed censor marking confirming that the damage to the stamps was by the censor.

No doubt Canadian authorities applied this practice of censorship to other incoming mail to internees. The unusual use of six stamps to pay a common airmail rate may have drawn suspicion to this particular piece of mail as it provided ample space to write a lengthy secret message. In 20 years of collecting Canada internment mail this is the first example I have seen.

Confusing Rate to Belgian Congo

by

Bob Hohertz



I am very confused by this cover. It was sent via airmail to Europe, then onward by surface to the Belgian Congo. The rate for such routing is not obvious, but could be taken as the full air rate to Europe plus the foreign surface rate.

I assume this letter exceeded one ounce in weight, which could have been sent for triple airmail (ninety cents) plus double surface (eight cents), for a total of ninety-eight cents. Although a small cover, the back was taped shut, suggesting heavier than normal contents.

The actual franking is seventy-eight cents, with a notation that twenty cents additional postage was due, to make up the ninety-eight cents mentioned. However, it appears the same person who penciled in the “20” in the postage due area also wrote that the rate was 50 cents per half ounce – the full airmail rate to the Congo, which would have resulted in \$1 or one \$1.50 total postage to transport the letter. Perhaps the clerk wrote the note first and then changed his mind and filled in the “20”?

Evidence is lacking that an additional 20 cents was paid. Two date stamps appear on the cover – 8 p.m. July 15, and 2:30 p.m. July 16, 1940. The earlier date stamp ties all three stamps. The cover was mailed with 78 cents postage, and went to its destination for that amount.

It is possible the sender asked the post office to weigh the letter again on July 16, resulting in a weight up to one ounce. In that case the postage would have been more than sufficient. Otherwise, if it was due, there is no sign of the extra 20 cents having been applied.

Even if both of my guesses are correct, what rate did the senders think they were paying in the first place? And are there better explanations than those I’ve offered for the markings and lack of an additional 20-cent stamp?