

Why There Was a 1½¢ Prexie and Its Later Solo Uses

Purpose of this exhibit: To show examples of the 1½¢ Prexie used in all the roles for which it was issued in 1938 and for which, as a single franking, it was found useful later.

Background: The “Prexie” definitive series of 1938 featured portraits of each of the first twenty-two Presidents on stamps of the same denomination as the order of their presidency, plus seven more to cover 24, 25, 30 and 50 cent denominations and 1, 2, and 5 dollar values.

Why was there a 1½¢ stamp in the series, even though it did not fit into the sequence of Presidents? That denomination paid the first step rate for **third class mail**, **greeting cards**, and **foreign printed matter** in 1938 - over 10% of all mail by volume. In 1952 it became the minimum per piece rate for **bulk mail**, which afforded it a new lease on useful life.

Without this stamp, two or more stamps would have been necessary on billions of pieces of mail, costing ink, paper and time.

The 1½¢ Prexie was replaced by the 1½¢ Liberty definitive in 1956, though supplies continued to be released through 1958 for bulk mail use. When the bulk mail minimum went to 2¢ at the beginning of 1959 there was no further need for it.



STANDARD THIRD CLASS MAIL -
MISCELLANEOUS OBJECT

Exhibit plan:

Reason 1: Standard third class mail

Reason 2: Unsealed greeting cards

Reason 3: Foreign printed matter

Opportunists: Later, Minor One-and-One-Half Cent Rates

Fourth class books

Third class books and material for planting

The Last Hurrah: Bulk Mail

Rates valid:

15APR25 - 1JAN49

15APR25 - 1JAN49

1APR32 - 1NOV53

1NOV38 - 1JUL42

1JAN49 - 1AUG58

1JUL52 - 1JAN59

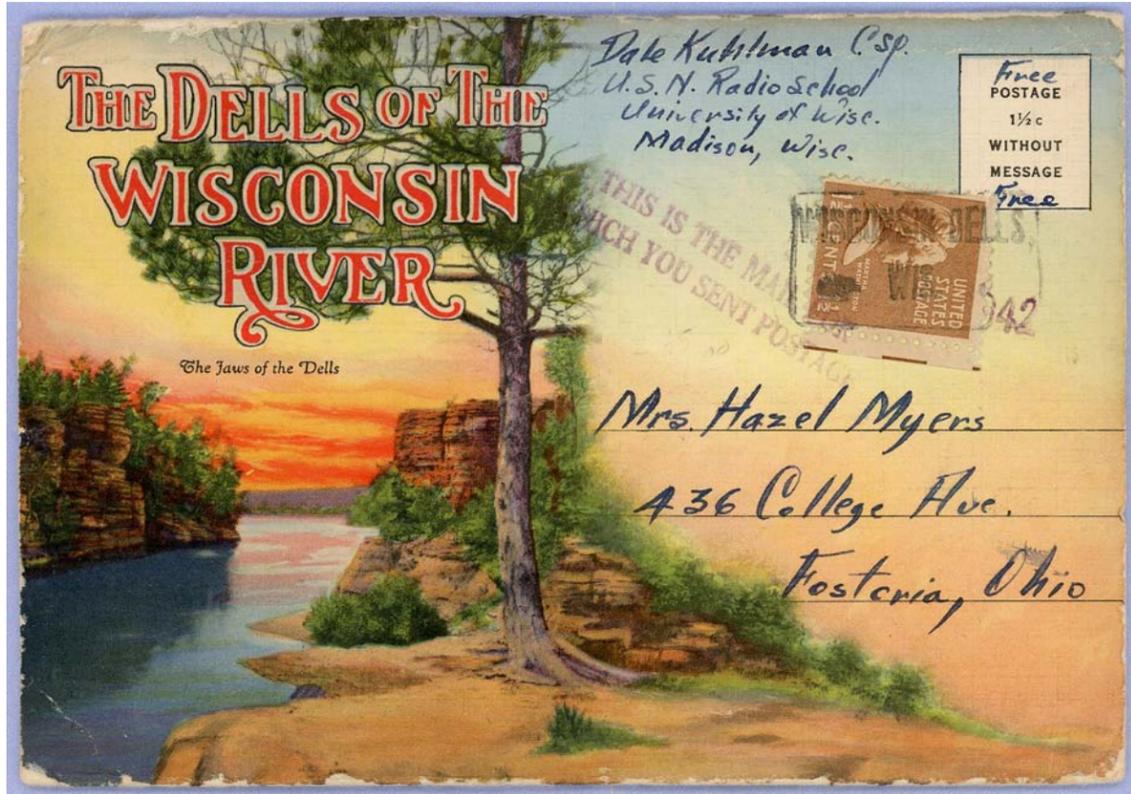
Notably unusual uses have red borders.

Type of use in **CAPITAL LETTERS**. General information in regular type. *Information on a specific cover in italics.*

REASON 1:

Third Class Standard Rate, Single Piece

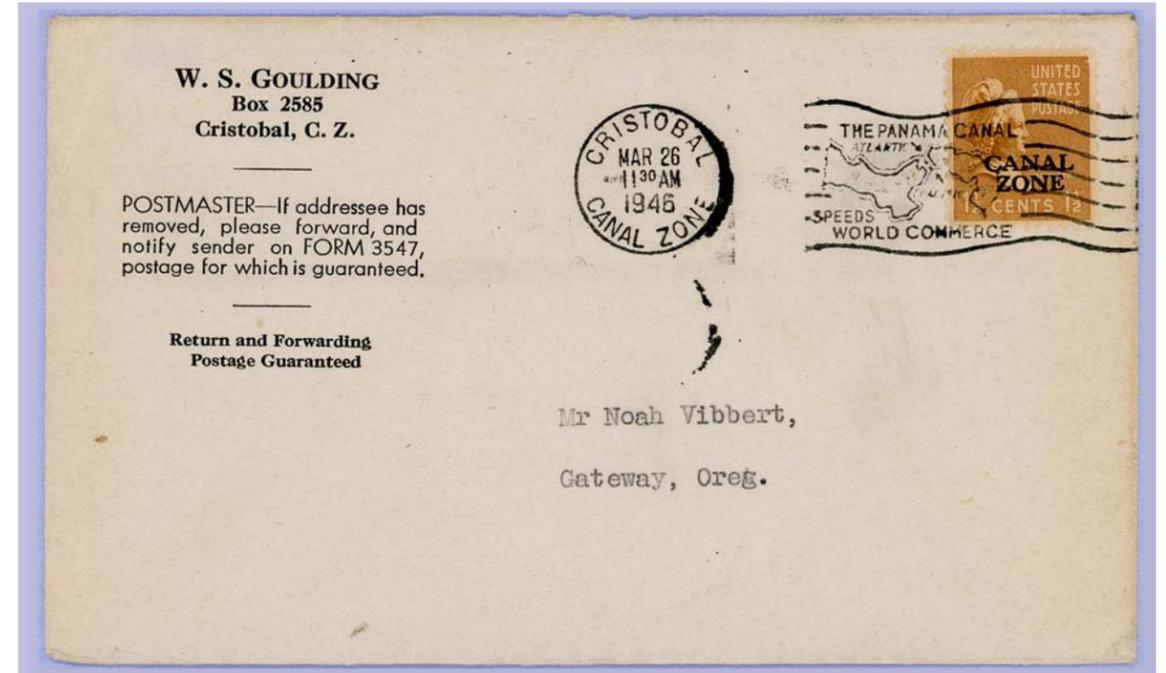
1½¢ ≤ 2 oz.
15APR25 - 1JAN49



Half-cent and 1½¢ Prexies were overprinted for use in the Canal Zone. Shipments of the 1½¢ overprinted stamps were made in 1939, 1940 and 1944. 1,119,991 were issued before they were withdrawn from sale December 31, 1948.

The 1½¢ Prexy was first issued May 5, 1938 in sheets of 100. 21,727,162,500 were issued through 1958.

Stamp at left is identifiable as Electric Eye printing from bars in its selva. Over 93% of sheet stamps were Electric Eye prints, but cannot be identified as such except from selva.

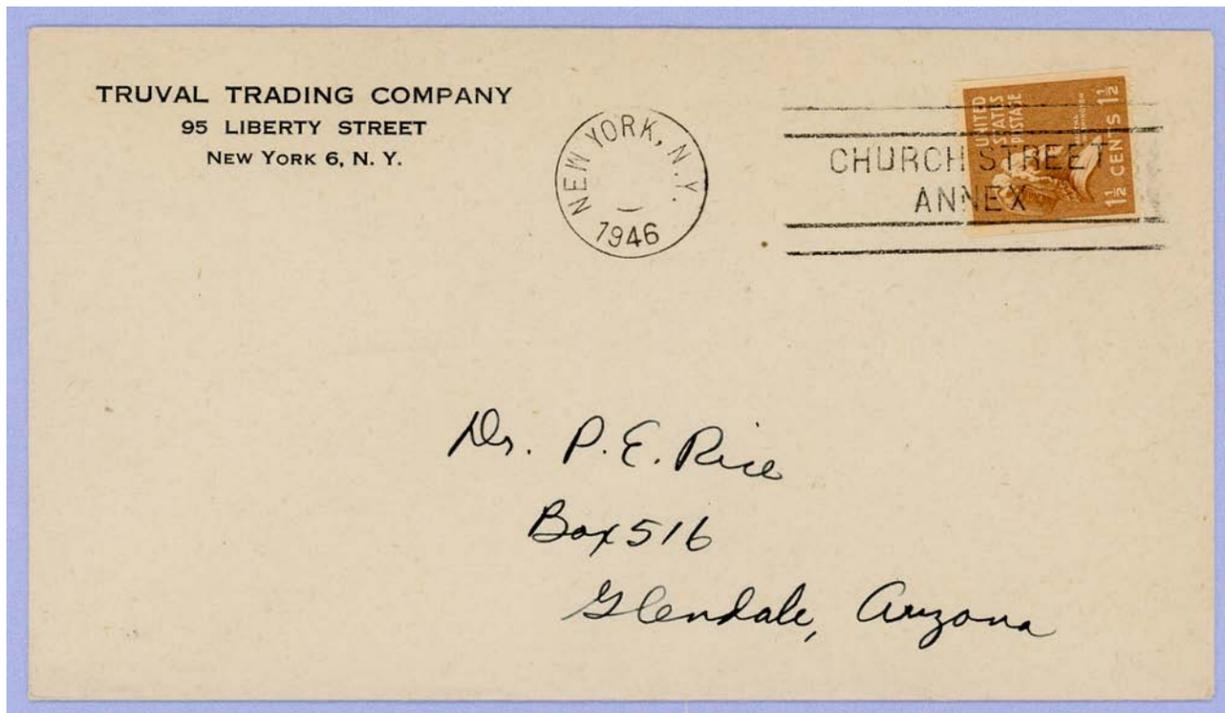


PRINTED MATTER - TERRITORIAL

Canal Zone overprinted stamp used to send missionary newsletter to the U.S.

PRINTED MATTER

Folder, pointing out that postage was 1½¢ without message, the third class printed matter rate. An attempt was made to mail it "free" by someone in naval radio school, but third class postage was not included in military concession free mail. Stamp was supplied by the addressee.



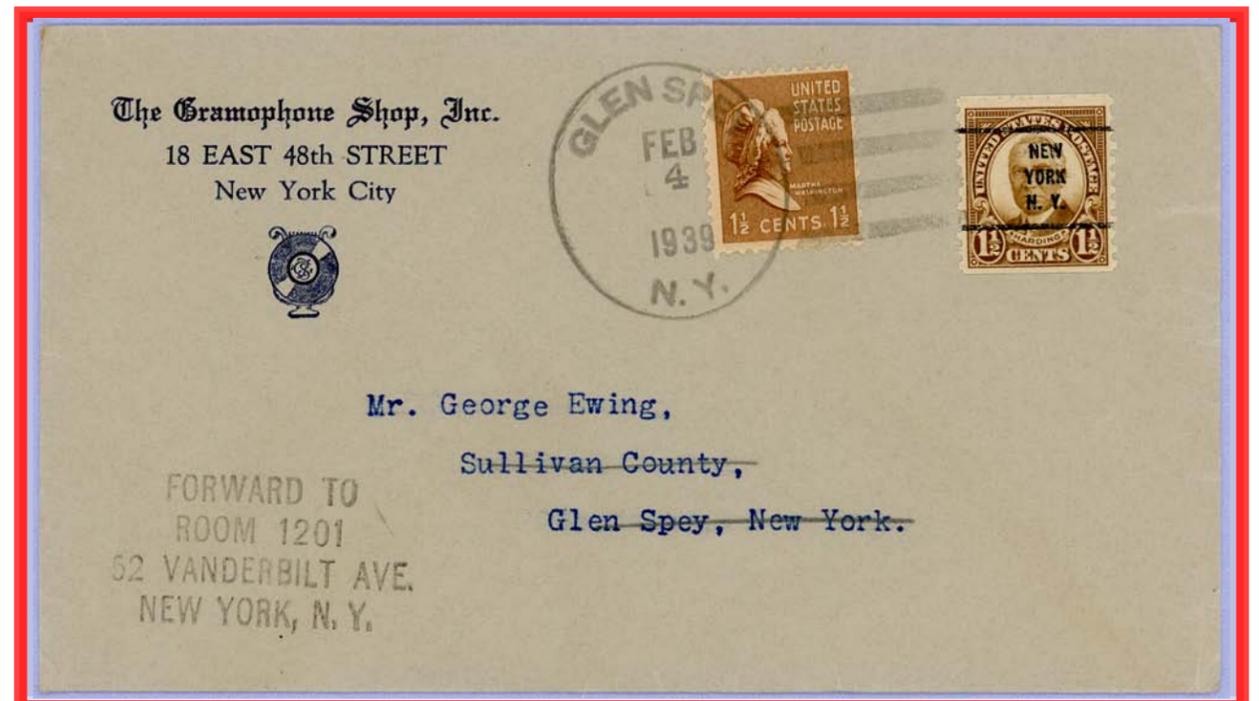
Left: MERCHANDISE OR PRINTED MATTER

Vertical coil on third class mailing of merchandise, price list or other printed matter.

On January 20, 1939 the first 1½¢ horizontal coils were issued, and on January 27, 1939, the first vertical coils.

2,133,842,000 coil stamps were issued, ending in 1959.

No split by number is available between vertical and horizontal coils, but the estimated number of 1½¢ vertical coils issued is nine million, the smallest number of any perforation type in the Presidential series.



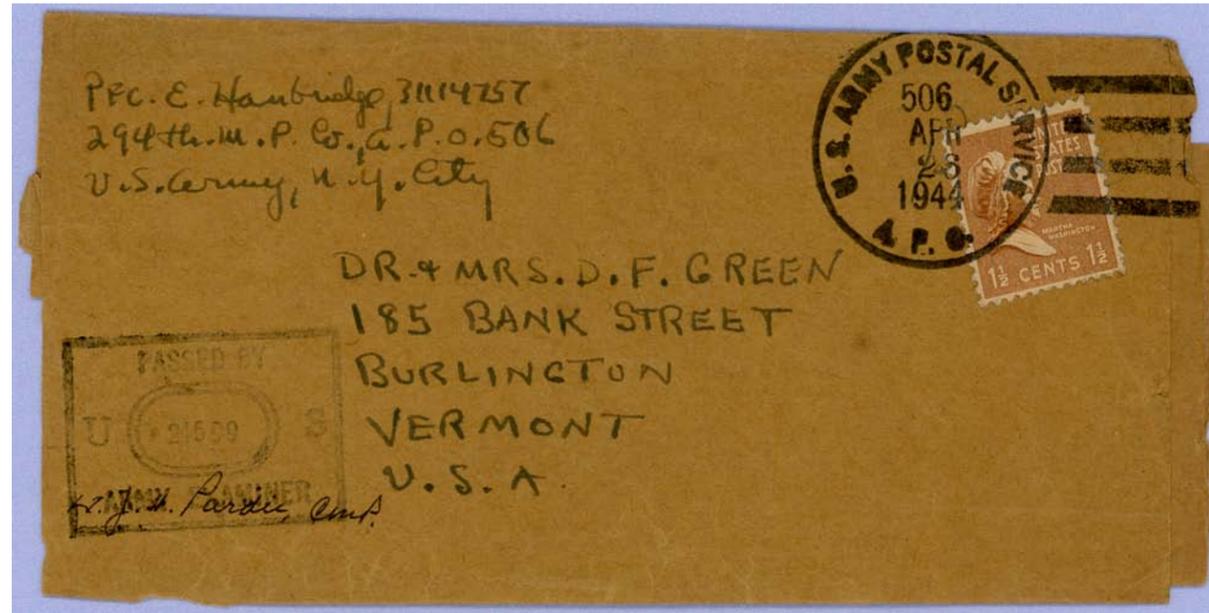
PRINTED MATTER - FORWARDED

Domestic third class mail, other than greeting cards, was rarely forwarded. If it was, it was charged additional postage as if it had been mailed from the forwarding station. Full third class postage to forward printed matter.

**Third Class Standard Rate, Single Piece
Printed Matter and Merchandise - Military Post Offices**

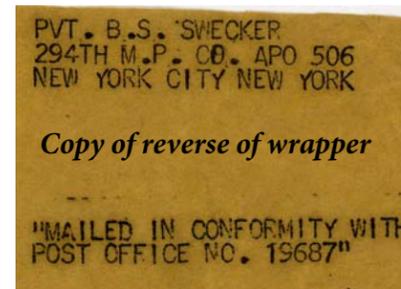
1½¢ ≤ 2 oz.
15 APR 25 - 1 JAN 49

Third class mail sent to and from military post offices abroad was not free, but used domestic rates.

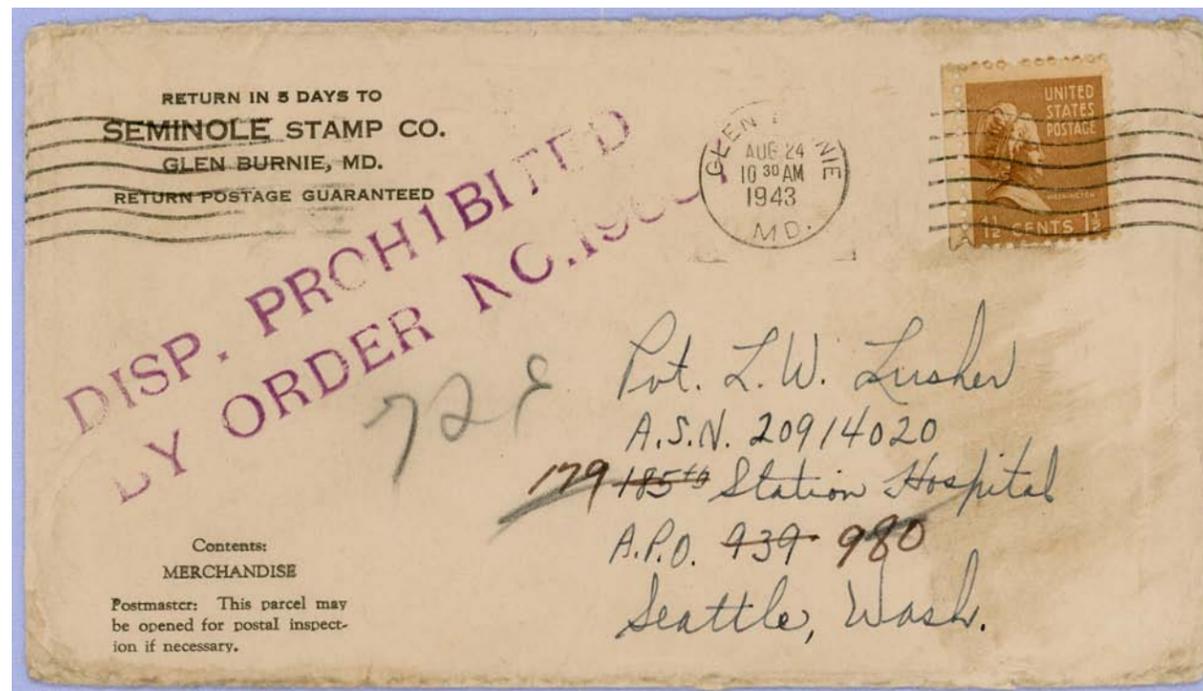


FROM APO - Re-used wrapper mailed from Army Post Office 506, Glasgow, Scotland in 1944. Original use "Mailed in conformity with Post Office No. 19687."

During the Second World War the APO postal system became clogged with third and fourth class mail, so Postal Order 19687 of January 7, 1943 prohibited dispatch of anything in those classes which was unsolicited.



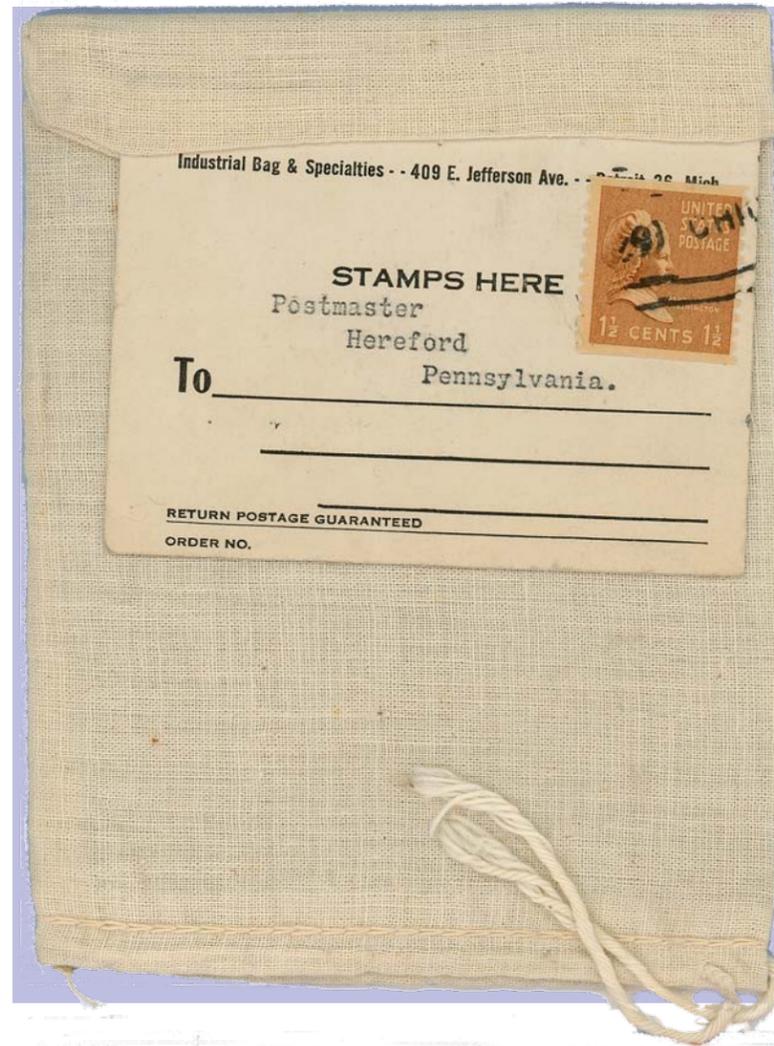
TO APO - REJECTED - Mailing (approvals?) to Dutch Harbor, Unalaska Island, redirected to HQ, Eleventh Air Force, Adak Island, was not delivered.



**Third Class Standard Rate, Single Piece
Miscellaneous Objects**

1½¢ ≤ 2 oz.
15 APR 25 - 1 JAN 49

Miscellaneous objects weighing 8 ounces or less could be sent third class during the rate period.



DOMESTIC

Horizontal coil stamp used to send cloth bag with a return address of the Division of Savings Bonds, Chicago, on reverse of tag.

TERRITORIAL

Miscellaneous object mailed at third class rate from Wake Island in May of 1941. Entered the mails at the Honolulu, Hawaii post office.



REASON 2:

**Third Class Rate
Unsealed Greeting Cards**

1½¢ ≤ 2 oz.
15APR25 - 1JAN49

From May 4, 1911 until January 7, 1968 unsealed cards could be sent using the third class rate. These could not contain writing other than signatures and simple phrases such as "Happy Easter."



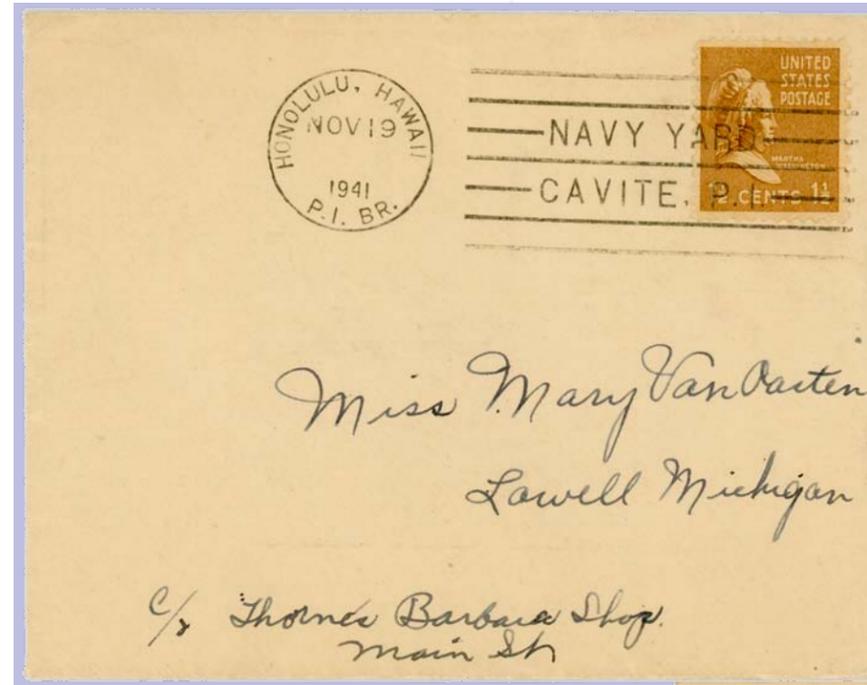
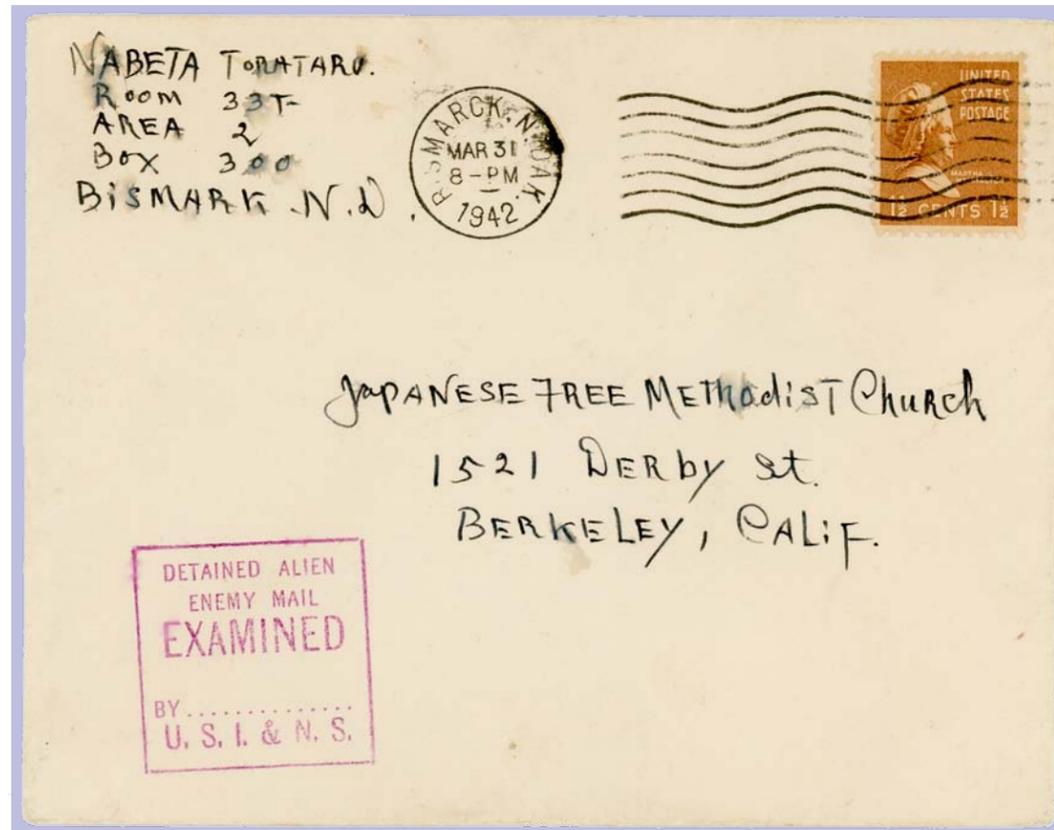
DOMESTIC

Sheet stamp used to mail an unsealed Christmas Card.
Savannah, Ga., December 18 (AP) - "Fire in a mail-packed storeroom at the Union station here today wiped out a big slice of Christmas for hundreds of persons."

DOMESTIC - INTERNMENT CAMP

Unsealed greeting card sent at the third class rate from Fort Lincoln Internment Camp in Bismarck, North Dakota in 1942. Censored by the US Immigration and Naturalization Service.

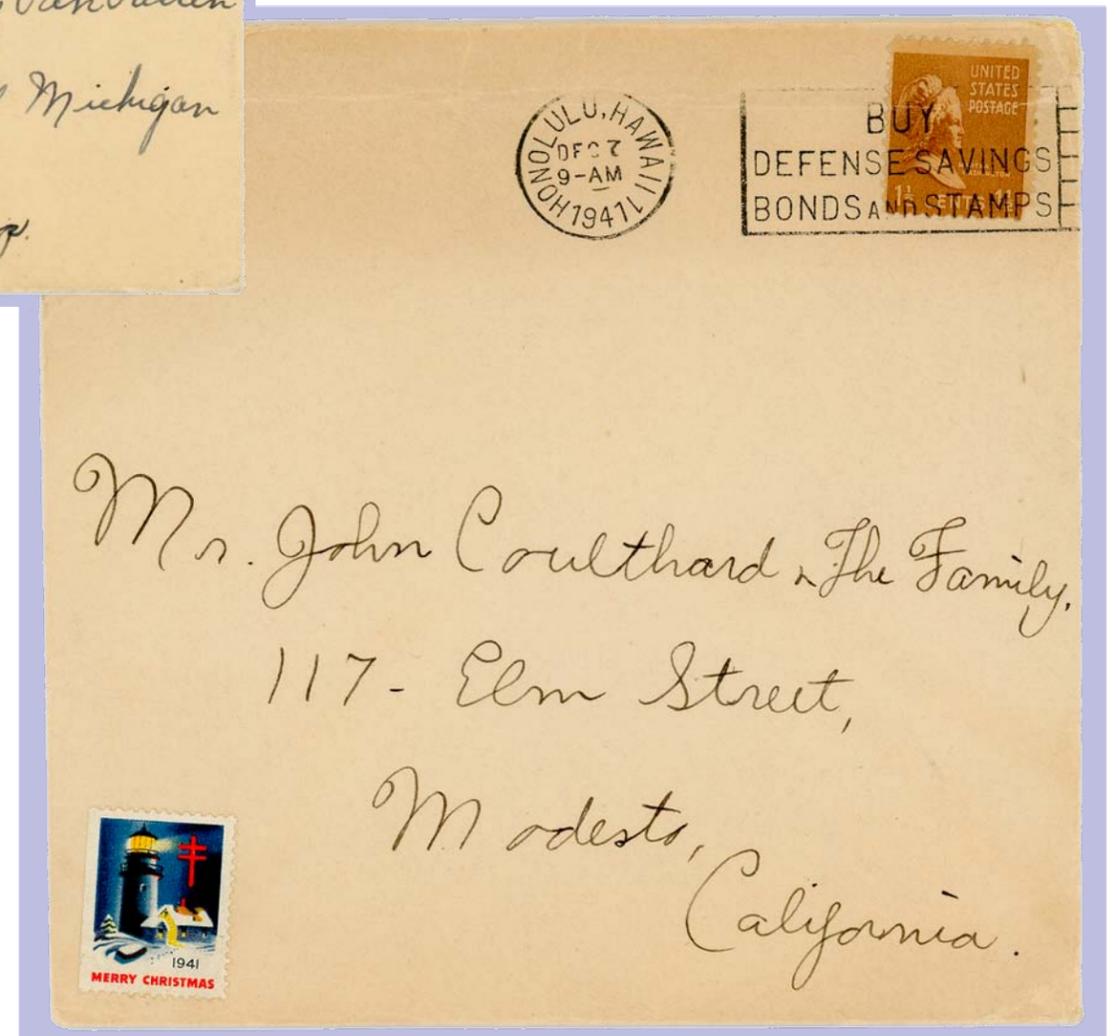
The sender would have been a resident Japanese national confined to the camp by the FBI.



MILITARY

Christmas card mailed from Cavite Navy Yard, Philippines. Postmarked November 19, 1941 in Honolulu, where it entered the mails. After December 7 little mail could leave the post.

The Japanese occupied Cavite in January, 1942.



TERRITORIAL

Postmarked at Honolulu the morning of December 7, 1941. One of eight pieces recorded, and by far the best of the two greeting card covers known. Card was received on the mainland on January 15, 1942.

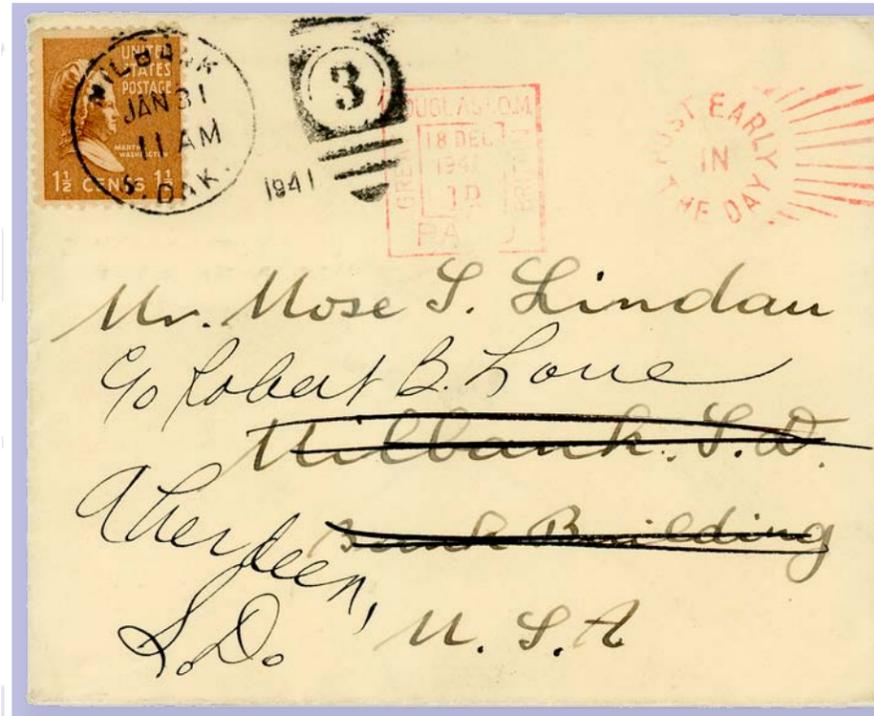
Third Class Rate Unsealed Greeting Cards - Forwarding

1½¢ ≤ 2 oz.
1 APR 32 - 1 NOV 53

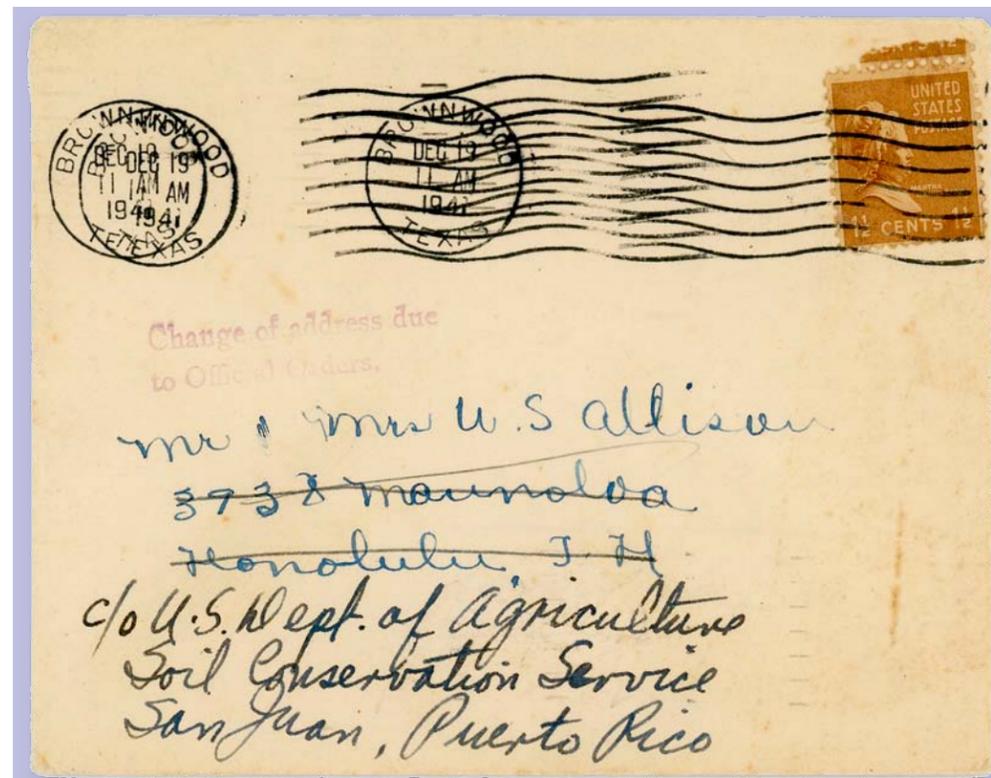
Unsealed greeting cards were treated as third class mailings as far as forwarding was concerned. Normally such mail was not forwarded without full additional third class postage.

FORWARDED - CHARGED

Christmas card sent to Milbank, South Dakota from Hutchinson Camp, a British internment camp at Douglas on the Isle of Man, on December 18, 1940. Third class postage added January 18, 1941 to forward it to Aberdeen, South Dakota.



Paragraph 10, Section 769 of Postal Laws and Regulations of 1932 provided forwarding of third and fourth-class mail without charge where change of address was caused due to official Government orders.



FORWARDED - WITHOUT CHARGE

Greeting card forwarded without additional charge to a new address the result of official orders.

Sent to Hawaii on December 19, 1941. Released on January 14, 1942 by the Information Control Board and received in Puerto Rico on February 16.

REASON 3:

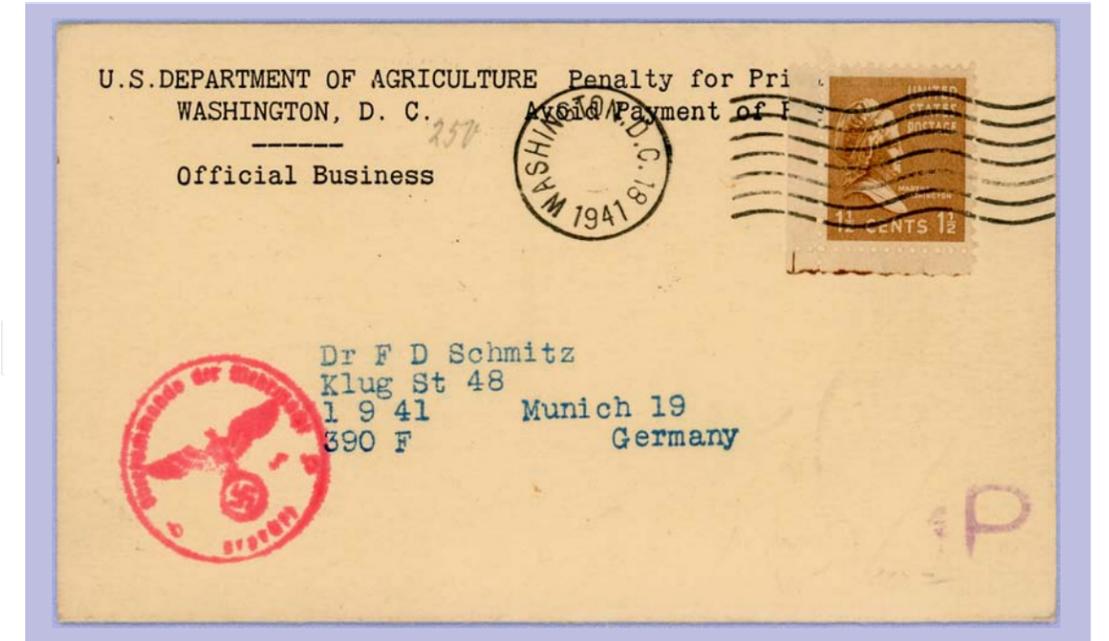
Foreign Printed Matter Rate

$1\frac{1}{2}\text{¢} \leq 2 \text{ oz.}$
1 APR 32 - 1 Nov 53

This rate encompassed printed matter, commercial papers, and greeting cards conforming to certain standards as explained below.

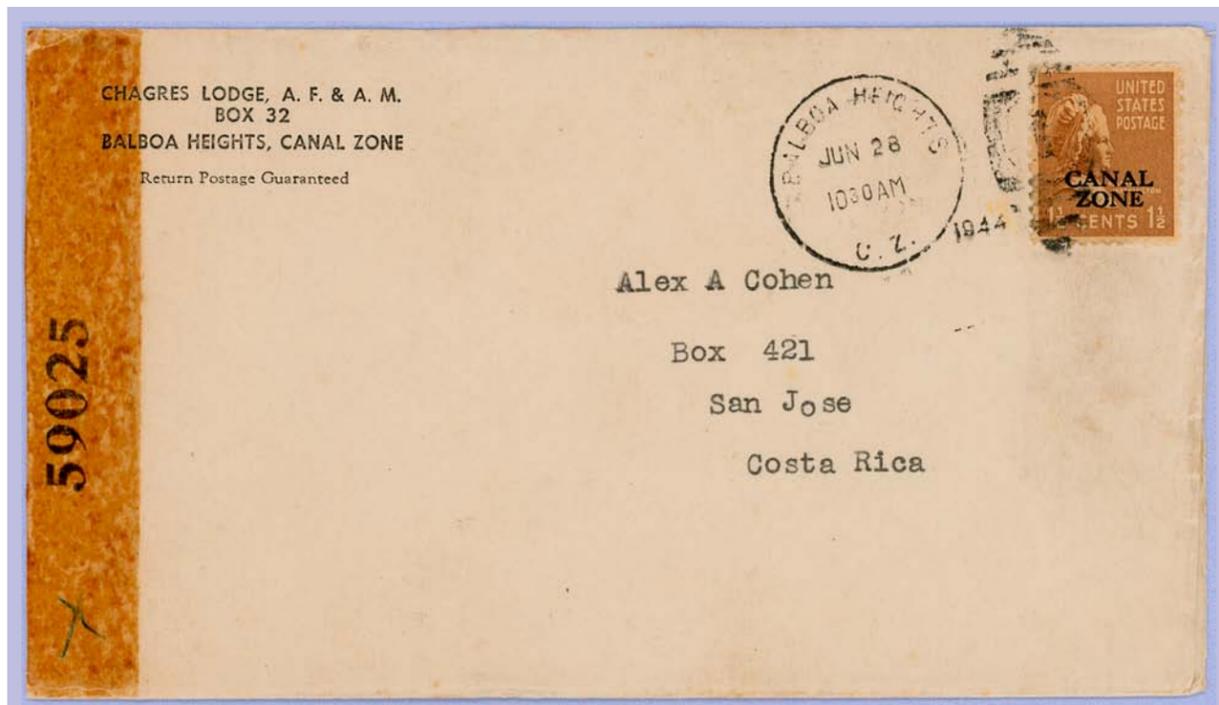
PRINTED MATTER

Vertical coil stamp used to pay the foreign printed matter rate to Sweden in 1951.



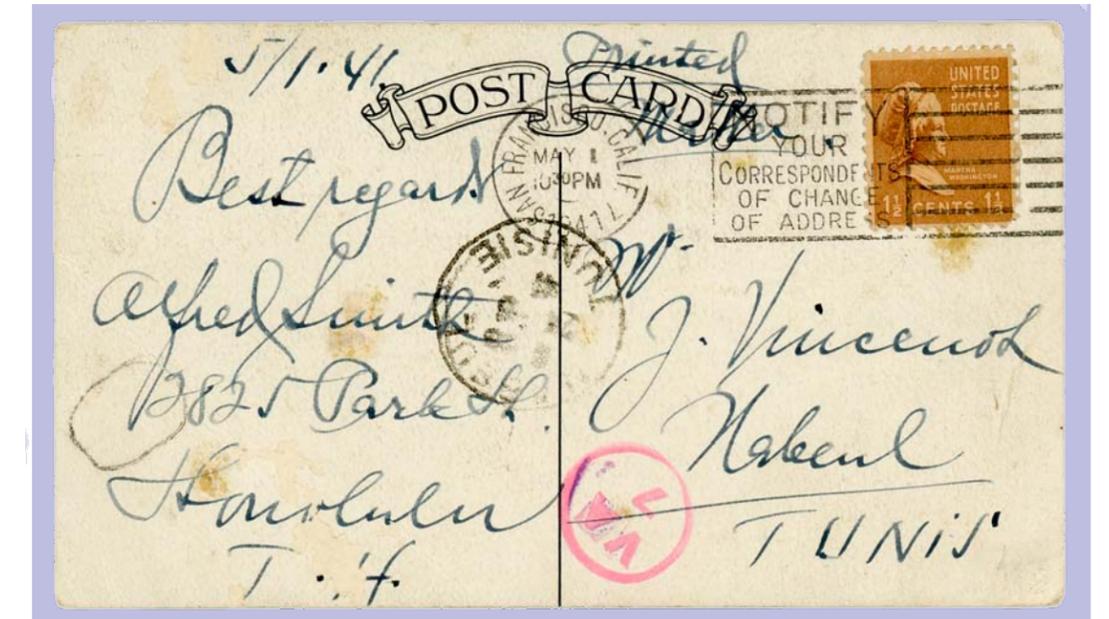
POST CARD

Government mail with a domestic penalty clause required a stamp when sent abroad.
Printed post card sent to Munich, Germany in early 1941.



PRINTED MATTER - TERRITORIAL

Lodge mailing from the Canal Zone to Costa Rica in 1944 using a Canal Zone overprinted stamp.



"GREETING CARD"

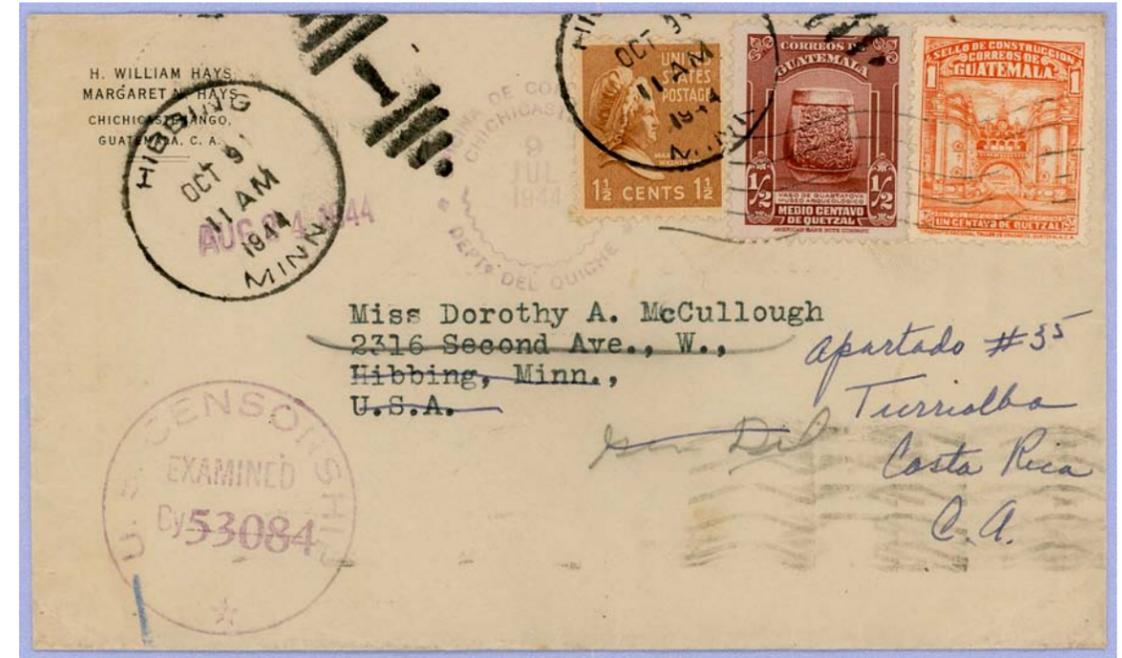
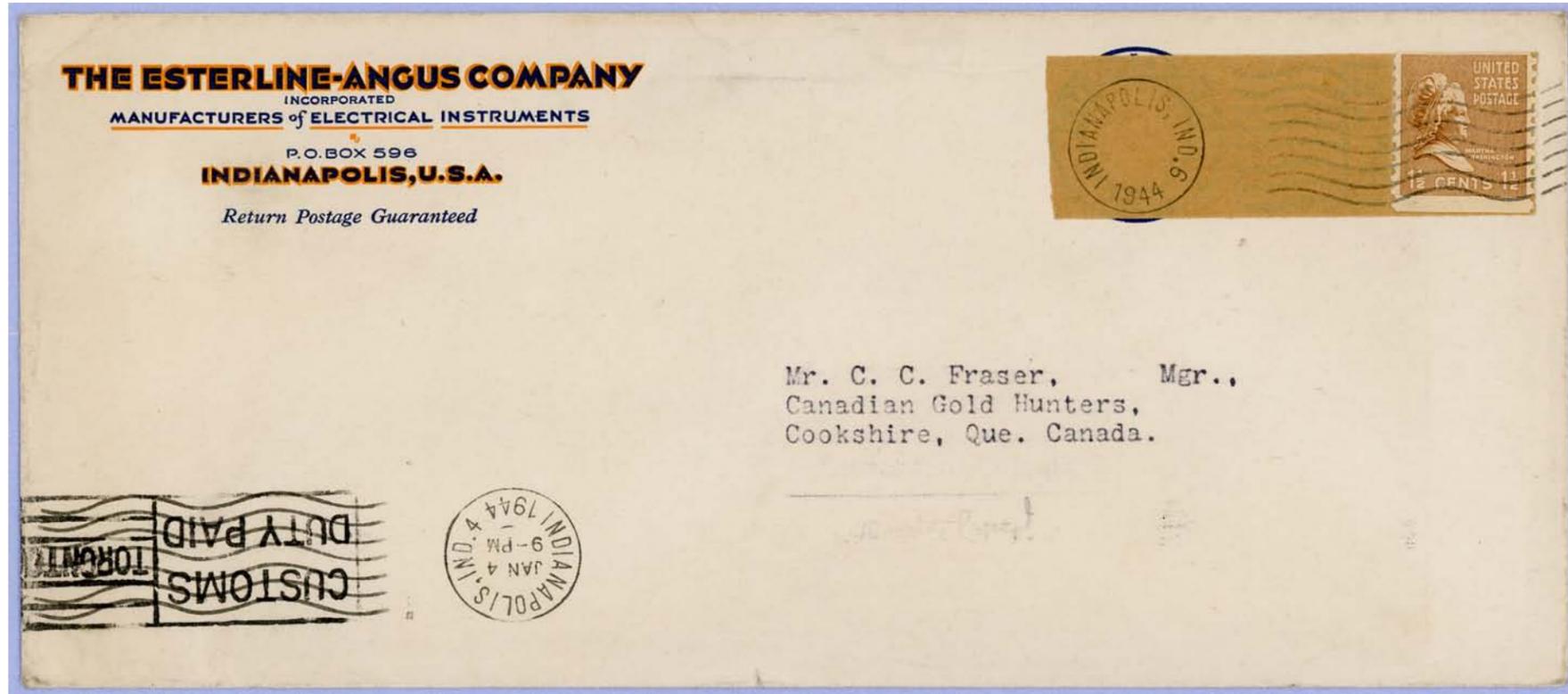
From 1911, greeting cards could be sent at the foreign printed matter rate, but only if any writing they contained was no more than five handwritten words of good wishes or the like.

Alfred Smith, who knew the limitation of "five or fewer handwritten words" wrote two words of greeting on this post card, labeled it "printed matter" though there was no printed message on it, and paid 1 1/2¢ instead of the 3¢ foreign post card rate when sending it to Tunisia in 1941.

Naturalized German-American citizens with pro-Nazi sympathies, Smith and his wife would be interned as U.S. security risks from late 1941 until 1943.

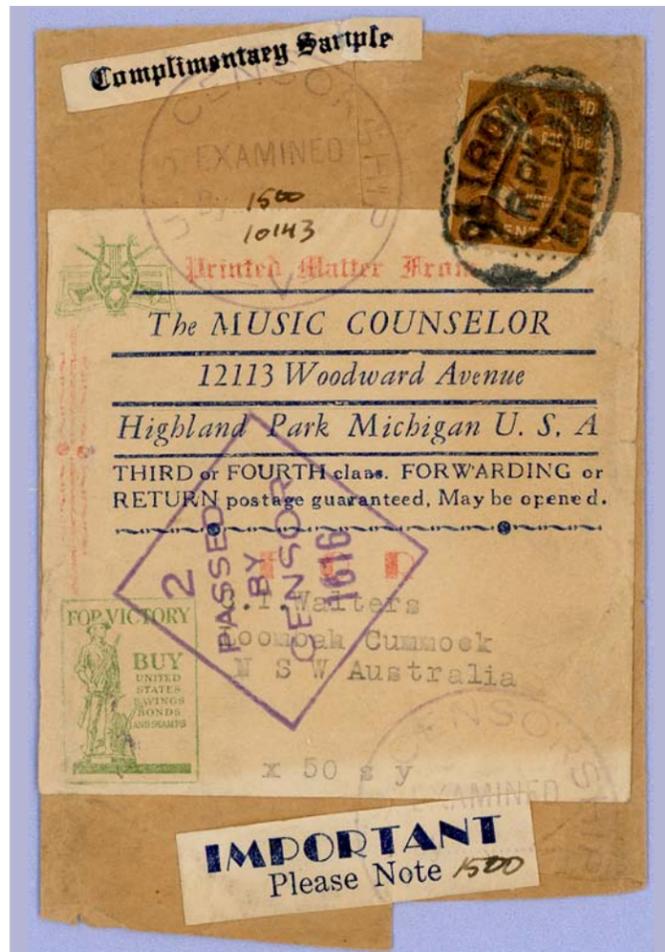
Foreign Printed Matter Rate

1½¢ ≤ 2 oz.
1 APR 32 - 1 Nov 53



FORWARDING - U.S. TO COSTA RICA

Sent at printed matter rate from Guatemala to the United States in 1944. Addressee had moved to Costa Rica so 1½¢ printed matter postage was added for forwarding. Civil censorship performed in Chicago.



TO CANADA

Special treaties existed with Canada and Mexico, but printed matter rates were identical to UPU rates.

Horizontal coil stamp stuck to leader. Strip was pasted on cover so as not to waste the stamp.

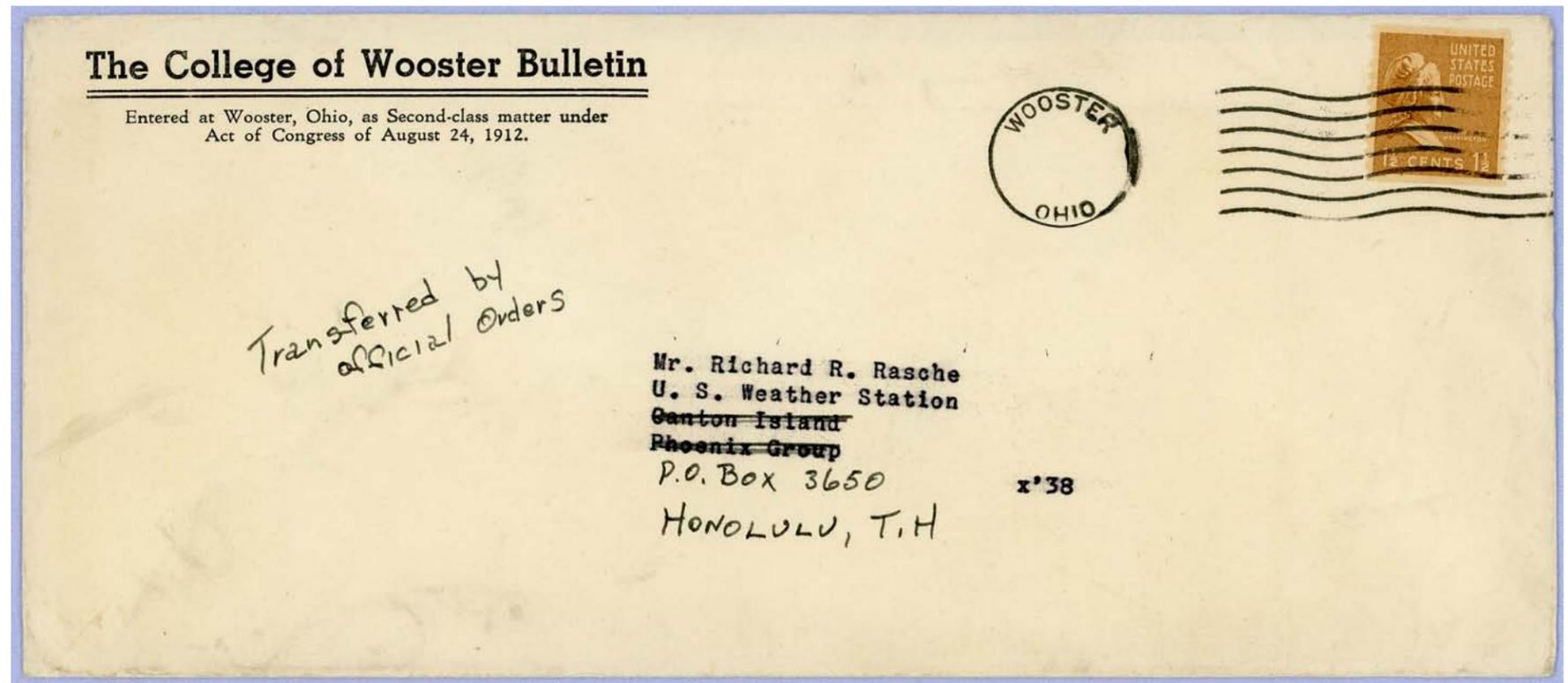
Sent in 1944, no censorship apparent.

PRINTED SAMPLES

Samples sent abroad used the same rate schedule as printed matter but required a 4 ounce minimum.

Wrapper sent to New South Wales, Australia. Used to send samples of printed music, since it was less than the minimum weight, printed matter rates were used.

U.S. civil censorship performed and checked in San Francisco. Also censored in Australia.



SENT AS FOREIGN PRINTED MATTER - FORWARDED AS DOMESTIC

Sent to a U.S. Weather Station on Canton Island in 1952 at the foreign printed matter rate rather than the then current domestic third class rate of 2¢. Addressee had moved to Hawaii so cover was then treated as domestic mail and forwarded free due to transfer by official orders.

OPPORTUNISTS: LATER, MINOR 1½¢ RATES THAT BENEFITTED FROM THE STAMP BEING AVAILABLE

These rates were **not** effective when the stamp was issued, so they cannot be considered as causes for its issue. They would have been low volume uses which benefitted from having a stamp to pay the basic rate.

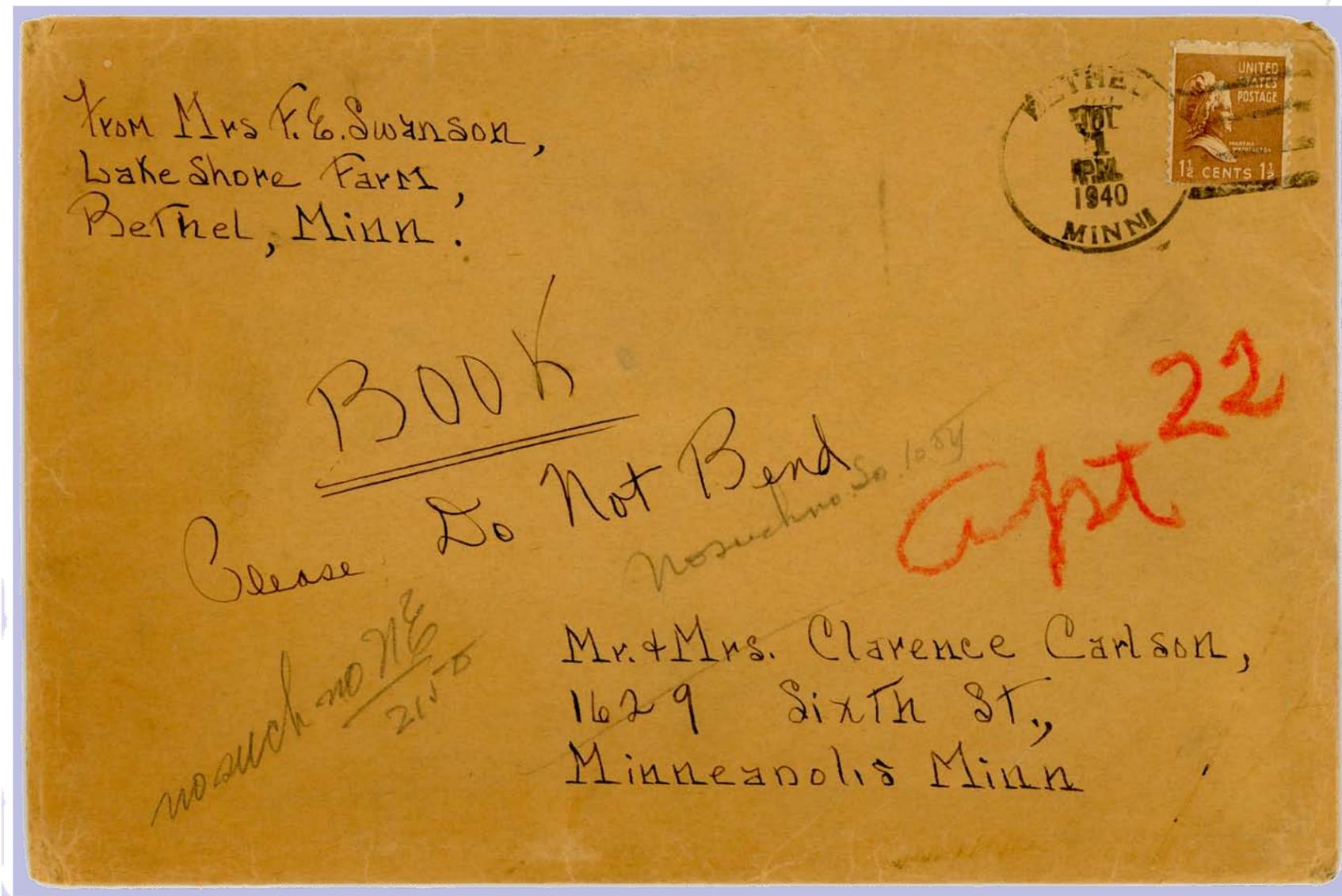
Fourth Class Book Rate

1½¢ per pound
1 Nov 38 - 1 Jul 42

To fall into this fourth class rate, books must have had more than 24 pages, essentially all reading material, as opposed to advertisements.

FOURTH CLASS BOOK RATE - Mailing of almost four ounces could not have been sent in 1940 for 1½¢ except at the fourth class book rate.

Contents were a booklet of poetry in excess of 24 pages and a cardboard stiffener.



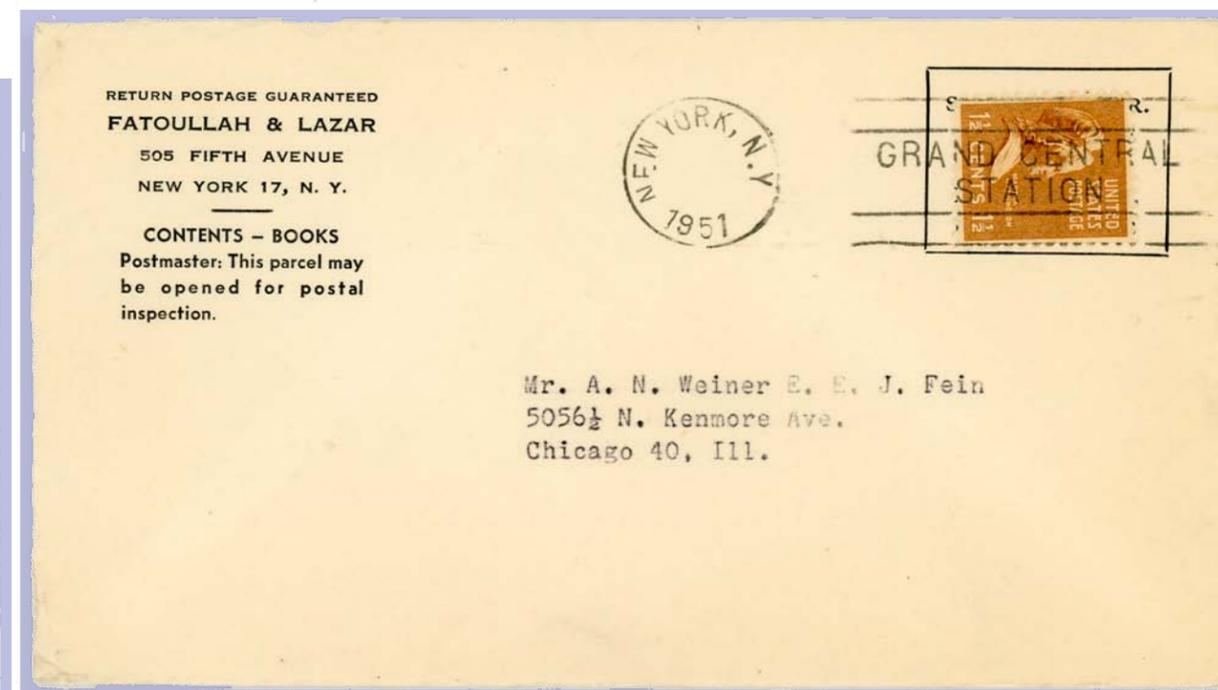
THIRD CLASS BOOK RATE - NON-PROFIT - The standard third-class rate for the first two ounces went to two cents on January 1, 1949 but the rate for books, catalogs and material for planting remained 1½¢ for the first two ounces until January 1, 1952. At that time the regular rate went to 2¢ but the non-profit rate for such items remained at 1½¢ until August 1, 1958.

At right: "Non-profit organization" was the required phrase for bulk mail beginning December 21, 1954, but the bulk postage per item would have been only 1¢ before July 1, 1960, and 1¼¢ afterward. This is a tear-off from a booklet which likely was prepared as a bulk mailing in 1958 (from meeting date on back) but had fewer than 200 recipients, so had to be mailed for 1½¢ under the special nonprofit rate for books, catalogs and material for planting in effect January 1, 1952 until August 1, 1958. If mailed as bulk, each item would have been over-franked by ½¢, and there was no reason to do this.

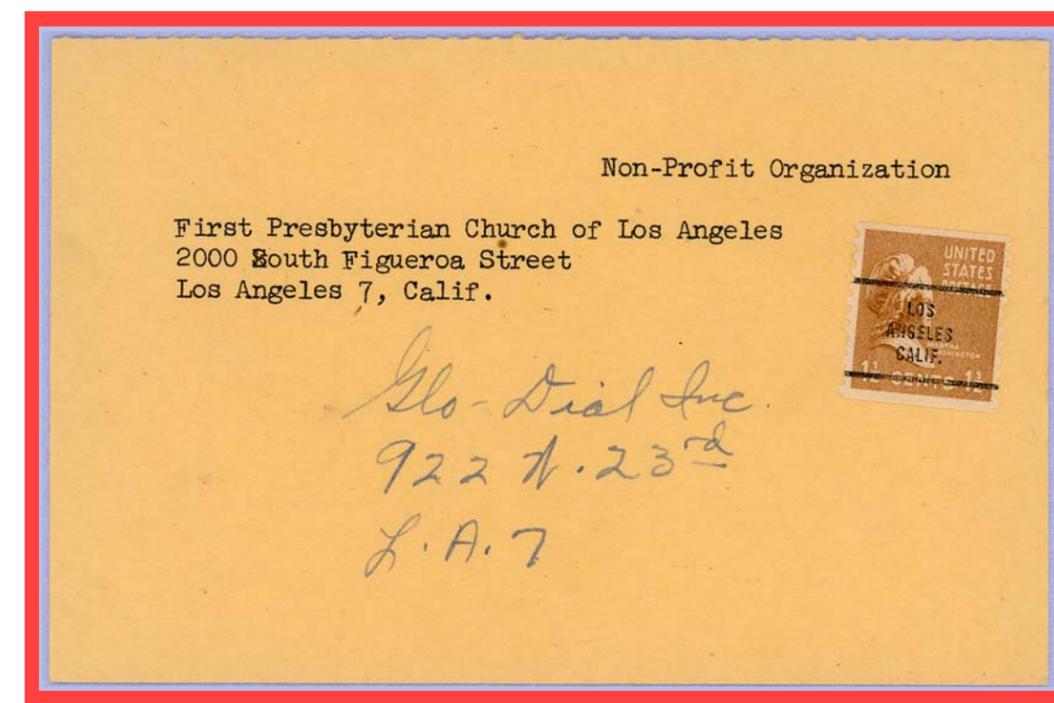
Third Class Books, Catalogs and Material for Planting Rate

1½¢ ≤ 2 oz.
ALL: 1 JAN 49 - 1 JAN 52
NON-PROFIT: 1 JAN 52 - 1 AUG 58

This special third class rate applied to books, catalogs and materials for planting weighing ≤ 8 ounces.



THIRD CLASS BOOK RATE - Dated cancel shows that this mailing of a book was made under the third-class rate for books, catalogs and material for planting. Standard third class minimum rate had gone to 2¢ in 1949.

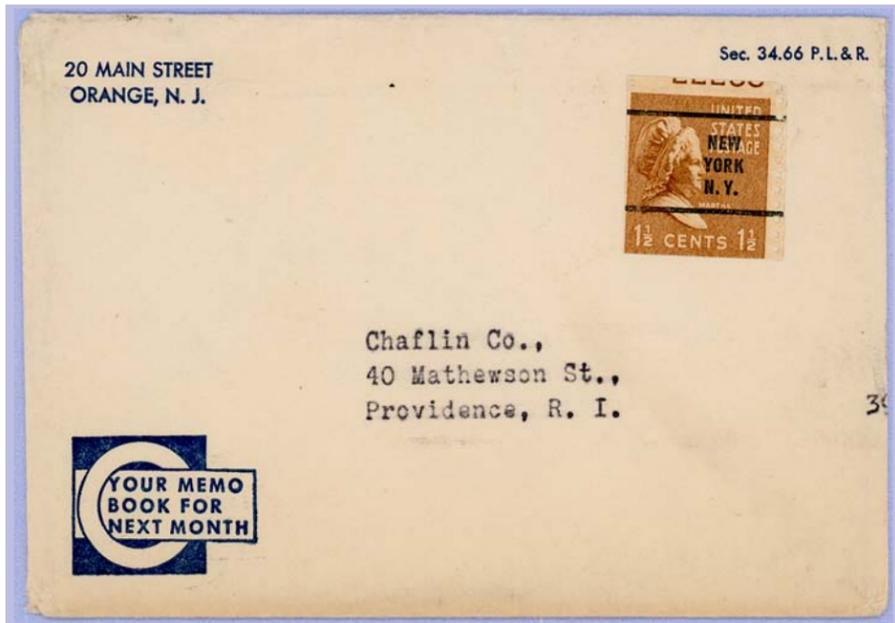


THE LAST HURRAH: THE 1½ CENT PREXIE FINDS A NEW PURPOSE IN 1952 - BULK MAIL

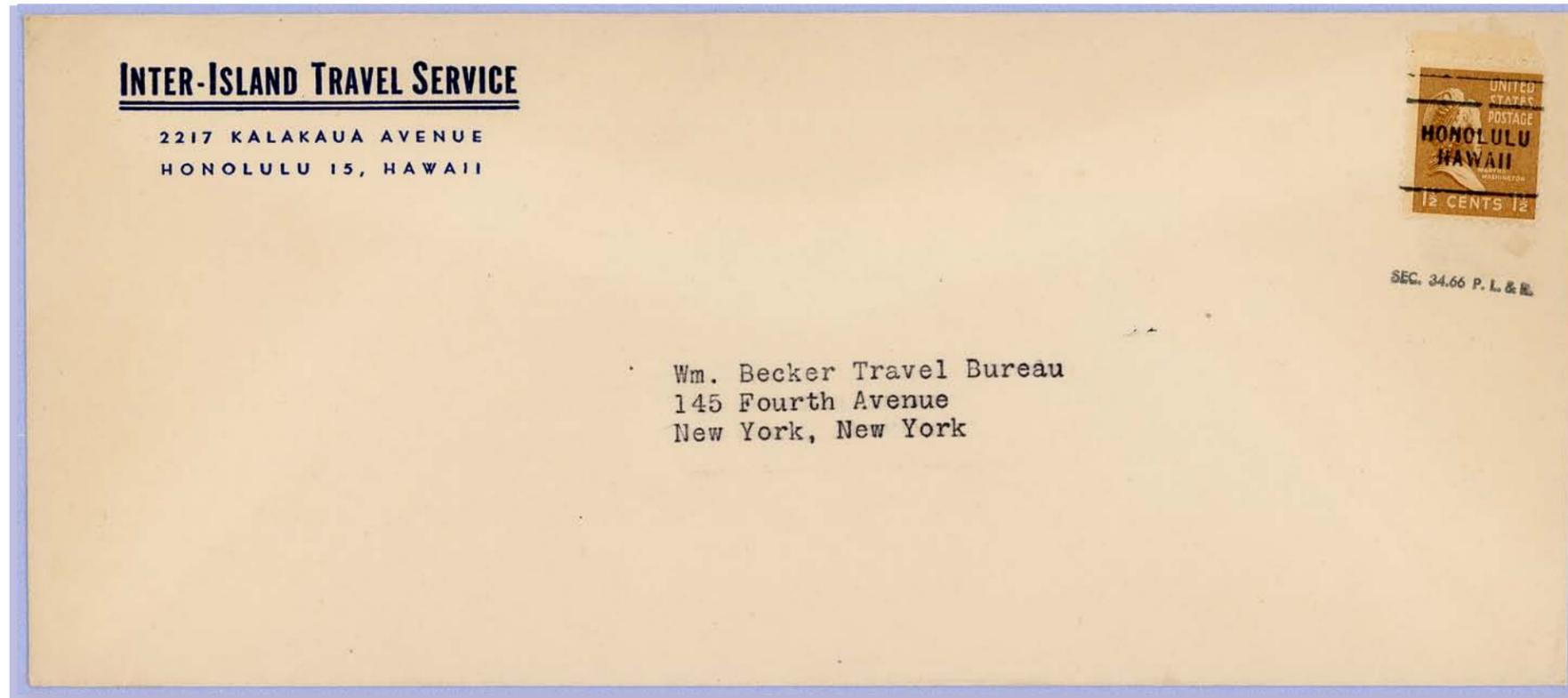
**Third Class
Standard Bulk Mail Minimum Rate**

1½¢ minimum charge
1 JUL 52 - 1 JAN 59

Bulk rates were expressed per pound, but there was a minimum of 1½¢ charge per piece.
Standard bulk mail was identified by "Sec. 34.66, P.L.&R." February 25, 1949 until July 1, 1954, by "39 C.F.R. 34.66" until December 21, 1954, and "Bulk Rate" thereafter.

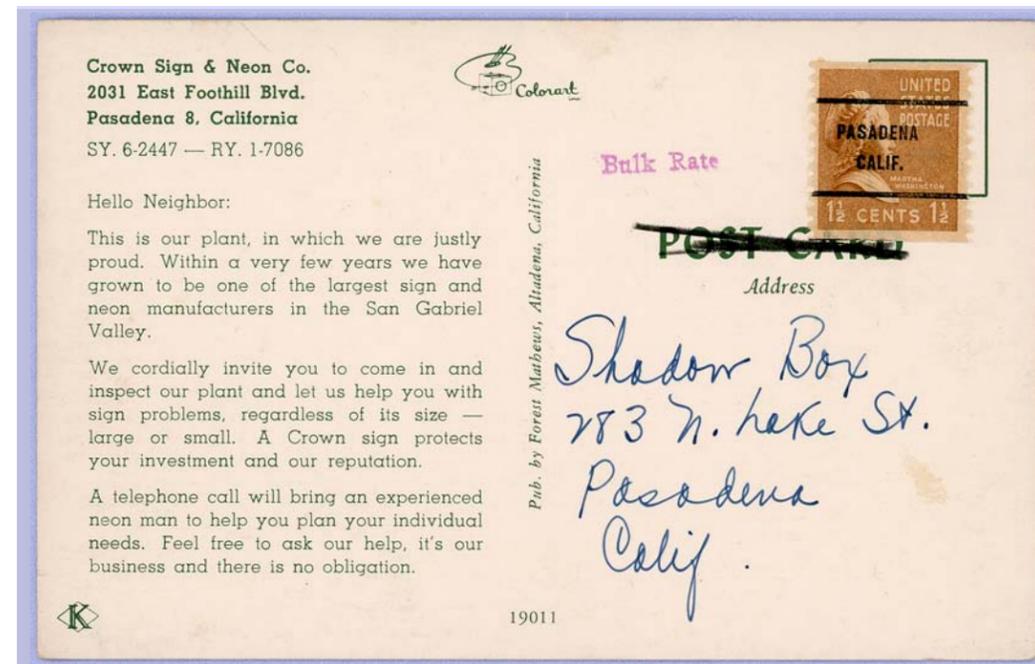
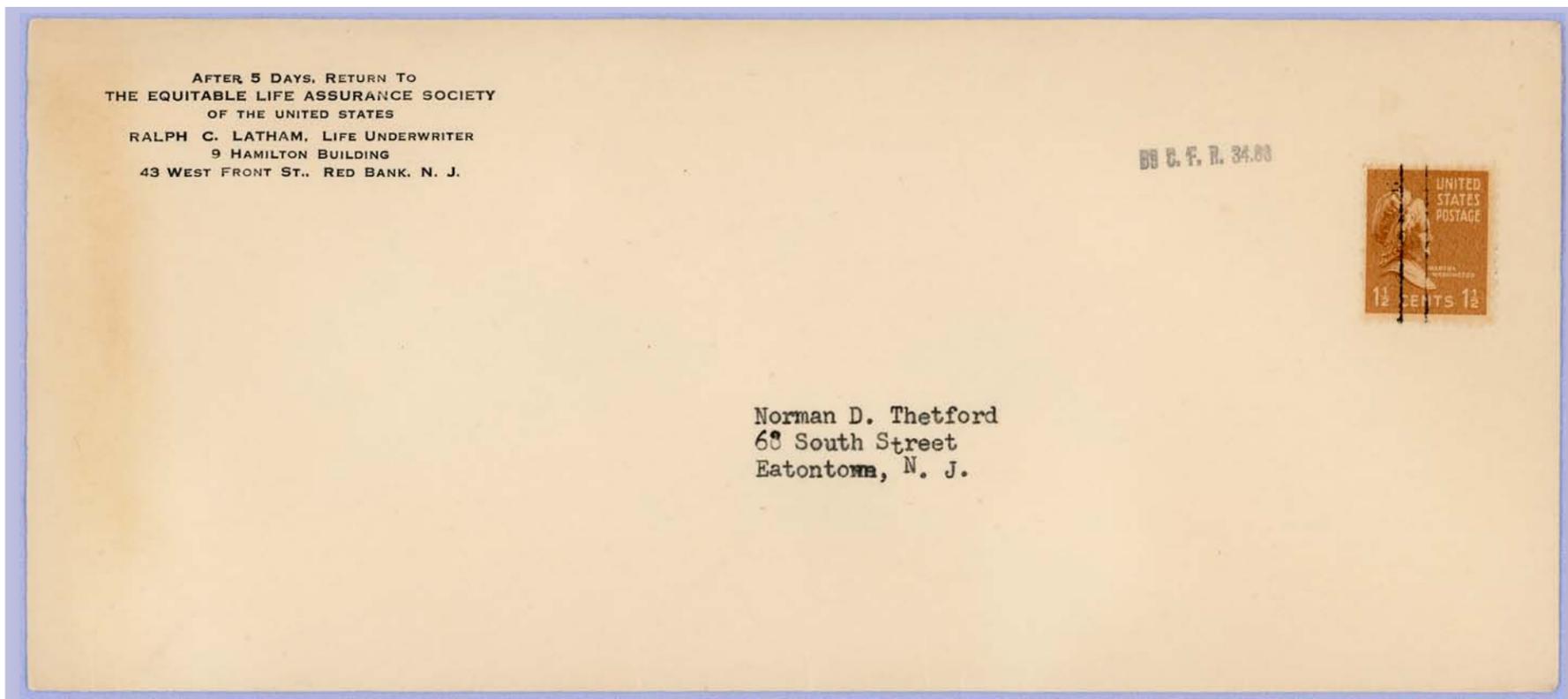


DOMESTIC - Sec. 34.66, P.L. & R. designation.
Horizontal coil miscut to show partial plate number 22238. Bureau precancel.



TERRITORIAL - Sec. 34.66, P.L. & R. designation. Sent from Hawaii. Local precancel.

DOMESTIC - 39 C.F.R. 34.66 designation, in use less than six months during 1954.
Silent precancel.



DOMESTIC - BULK POSTCARD - Handstamped "Bulk Rate" designation likely used early 1955. Regular postcard postage would have been two cents, so "POST CARD" crossed out. Bureau precancel.

The 1½¢ Prexie was being phased out after the third class minimum went to two cents in 1949. When the bulk mail minimum went to 1½¢ in 1952 its production surged again, briefly. It was last delivered in 1959.