

Why There Was a 1½¢ Prexie And its Later Solo Uses

The purpose of this exhibit is to show examples of the uses for which the Presidential series 1½¢ definitive was issued. Another way of saying this is that it uses covers to illustrate the various 1½¢ rates in effect from 1938 to 1958, when the corresponding Liberty series 1½¢ definitive replaced the stamp.

Treatment. The exhibit moves from the third class rate (including greeting cards,) which was its first, main reason for having been issued, then to foreign printed matter. It then shows some other uses that found the stamp appropriate, and ends with bulk mail, which provided a new purpose for its continued use in the twilight of the Prexie era.

Where appropriate, examples of mail sent to or from Territories or the US military stationed abroad are shown, as well as domestic origins.

The exhibit does not include covers using multiple copies of the stamp, as fewer copies of other denominations would have served as, or more, efficiently. Thus most of the examples show solo uses, but those illustrating forwarding use are also franked with the original postage.

Importance. When the stamp was first issued in 1938, the classes of mail covered in this exhibit were about 10% of all U.S. mail by volume. Not all would have been paid for with a 1½¢ stamp, of course, but the volume was not insignificant.

Knowledge, Study and Research. I was asked to write the second, third and fourth class mail sections of the Prexie Era book published by the APS in 2017. While not relating to material in this exhibit, research uncovered some details about second and fourth class mail that were not in the B&W Domestic Rates volume cited under References below.

Condition. Much of this material comes from the time of the Second World War and immediately following. The choice was not to show a mundane item in the best condition when a rare one in less pristine shape would make the exhibit more interesting.

Rarity. There are only two or three rare uses of this stamp, but there are rare covers in the exhibit. As an example, a Christmas card sent from a U.S. territory is not rare, but in the exhibit the use is represented by one of the two known examples postmarked in Honolulu, December 7, 1941.

Rare uses are the single-piece book and planting material rate (book uses shown - planting materials covers are unknown at present, as an appeal in the Prexie Newsletter did not produce reports of any.) How rare are the book uses? Out of hundreds of covers in my collection formed over more than twenty years there are two verifiable uses. Non-profit book rate, only the one possible such use included in the exhibit.

I indicate a forwarded third class cover as rare as well. There has not been any survey to justify this, but in my own collection, which includes any such uses I have seen available for sale, I count 27 instance of forwarding third class mail - twenty of which are unsealed Christmas cards. Three are forwarding of bulk mail, and four are forwarding third class business mail. If one thinks about it, who wants their third class or bulk mail - advertisements and sales letters - forwarded to them at their own expense each time?

Some other covers that are notable but not rare in the sense of the type of use they are being used to show are a Dispatch Prohibited third class cover, a greeting card mailed from a detention (not relocation) camp in North Dakota, perhaps the only known third class object mailed from Wake Island pre WWII, a Christmas card from Cavite, P.I. in 1941 mailed just before the Japanese blockaded the port, and one of the two instances I could find of the fourth class book rate that ran from 1939 to July of 1942.

A Possible Problem. One for judging this exhibit is that an example shown on page 115 of the Rustad reference cited below erroneously claims to be a "1½ cent per piece third class non-profit bulk rate, effective July 1, 1952." The example he shows is NOT non-profit, as the Sec. 34.66 P.L. & R. marking indicates regular bulk mail. In fact, there was no such non-profit bulk rate. The non-profit bulk per piece minimum beginning July 1, 1952 was one cent, remaining there until 1960.

The (probable) example in the exhibit is of the single piece non-profit rate for books, catalogs and material for planting which only emerged after the regular single piece rate for such items went to 2¢ on January 1, 1952. Shapiro mentions another single-piece non-profit rate beginning in 1952, not found in Beecher & Wawrukiewicz. Almost certainly this is the same rate, as I cannot locate another in the P. L. & R. and he does not recall what he was referring to.

References.

Fiset, Louis, editor, *Prexie Era, Postal History and Stamp Production, 1938 – 1962*, American Philatelic Society, 2017. Pages 87 - 106, 115.

Background on third and fourth class uses, written by exhibitor. Some of the covers shown are in the exhibit.

Shapiro, Jeffrey, *Presidential Usages - 1½¢*, The United States Stamp Specialist, September 1999. Pages 415-420.

Best treatment of use. Some confusion on non-profit rates, as explained earlier.

Beecher, Henry W. & Wawrukiewicz, Anthony S., *US Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-1999, Third Edition*, Cama Publishing Company, 1999. Third and fourth class sections.

and

US International Postal Rates, 1872-1996, Cama Publishing Company, 1996. Printed matter, samples, and special treaty rates.

Only necessary if there are any questions about rates.

Rustad, Roland E., *The Prexies*, Bureau Issues Association, Inc., 1994.

For information about the stamp only. Likely not necessary for judging this exhibit.