

6¢ Prexie Postal History

By Richard Pederson

The 6¢ value in the Presidential Series of 1938, hereinafter called the Prexies, depicts the sixth President of the United States, John Quincy Adams. He served one term as President and was son of the second President, John Adams.

The 6¢ Prexie was issued in sheet format on July 28, 1938 (see Figure 1) and was in continuous use until 1956 when the last delivery of stamps was made to post offices. The 6¢ value was also available as a horizontal coil which had a first day of issue on January 20, 1939 (see Figure 2) and was available for use until the last delivery to post offices in 1960.

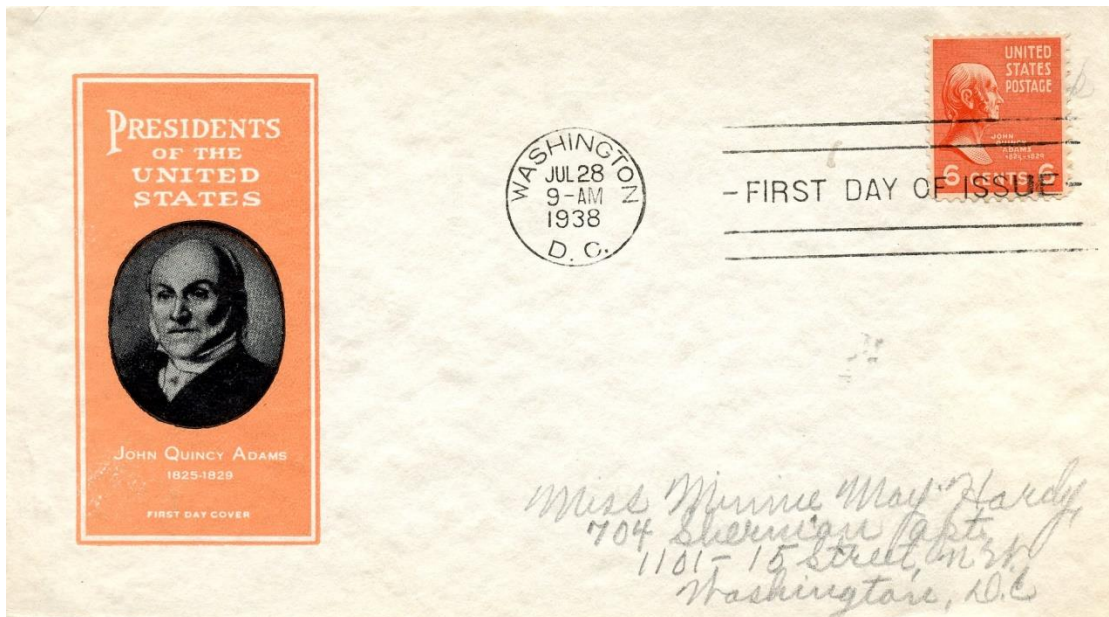


Figure 1. Poor First Day Cover (FDC) for 6¢ sheet stamp.



Figure 2. loor First Day Cover (FDC) for 6¢ coil stamp.

At the time it was first issued, the principal use for the 6¢ Prexie was to pay the single weight domestic airmail rate for letters weighing up to one ounce. This rate remained in effect until it was increased to 8¢, effective March 26, 1944. Later, the 8¢ rate was dropped to 5¢ and then returned to a 6¢ rate on January 1, 1949. The 6¢ rate remained in effect until an increase to 7¢ on August 1, 1958. In period solo uses of the 6¢ Prexie can be found for both periods in which it paid the up to one ounce domestic airmail letter rate. Figure 3 pictures a cover mailed from Akulurak, Alaska on April 28, 1949, during the last 6¢ domestic airmail rate period.

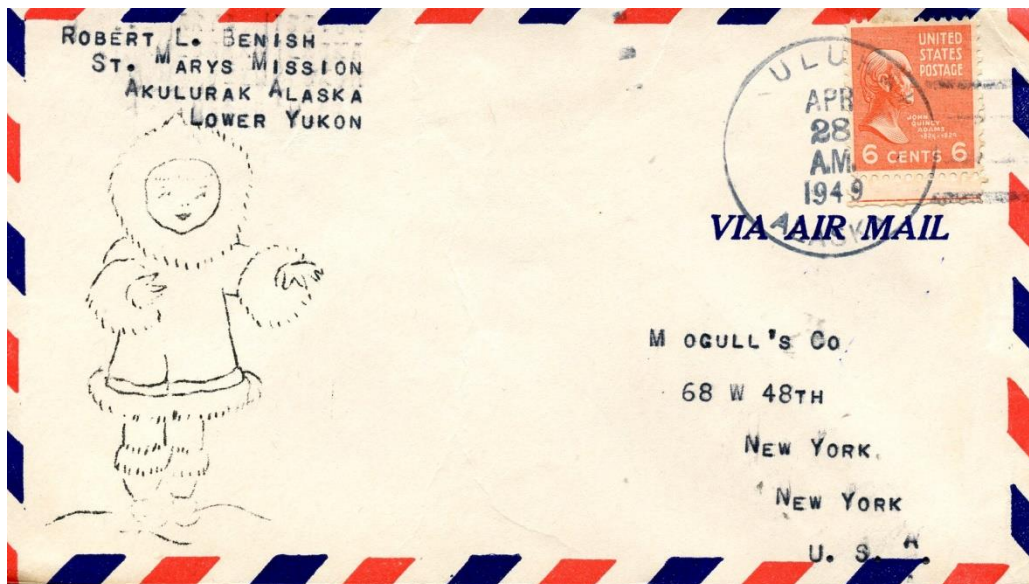


Figure 3. Domestic airmail letter from Alaska.

In addition to the domestic airmail rate discussed above, there are two other possible solo uses of the 6¢ Prexie. The first is a special 6¢ per one-half ounce airmail rate that was established for use on mail sent to and from military post offices during the period December 23, 1941 through September 30, 1946. Figure 4 shows a censored cover sent from APO 887, located in London, England to Tuscon, Arizona at the military airmail rate. The 6¢ military rate also applied to mail sent to a U.S. serviceman who was a Prisoner of War (POW). Figure 5 shows a letter sent to Lt. Irving R. Dudley, who was being held in a German POW camp. Unfortunately, the letter was returned to the sender, Mrs. W. B. Dulmage of Birmingham, Alabama, because it was “Undeliverable as Addressed” because the war was over at the time the letter was returned. According to the MooseRoots.com genealogy site, the camp where Lt. Dudley was imprisoned was liberated on April 29, 1945, at which time he was returned to U.S. military control after having been held for at least 589 days. Figure 6 shows a censored double rate military airmail cover that was underpaid with a single 6¢ Prexie and assessed 6¢ postage due, which was paid with two 3¢ postage due stamps.

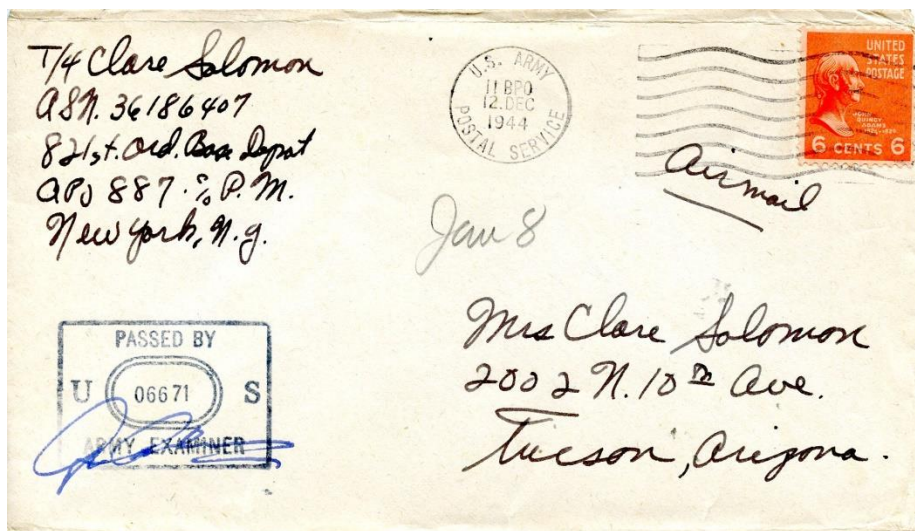


Figure 4. Cover showing special up to one-half ounce military airmail rate.

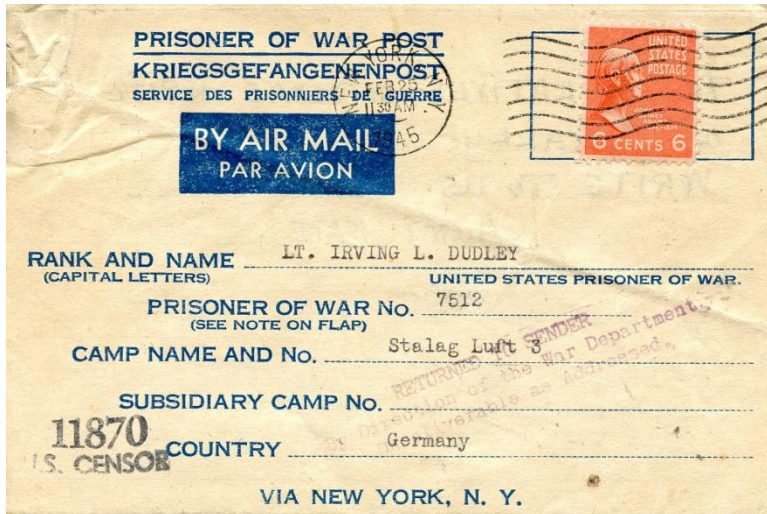


Figure 5. Military airmail rate on cover sent to a POW.



Figure 6. Cover showing double rate one-half ounce military airmail rate.

The final possible solo use for a 6¢ Prexie is a double rate first class letter, an example of which is shown in Figure 7. The 6¢ Prexie horizontal coil pays double the 3¢ per ounce first class rate in effect from July 1, 1932 until August 1, 1958. The double rate first class solo use is the least common of the 6¢ Prexie solo uses.

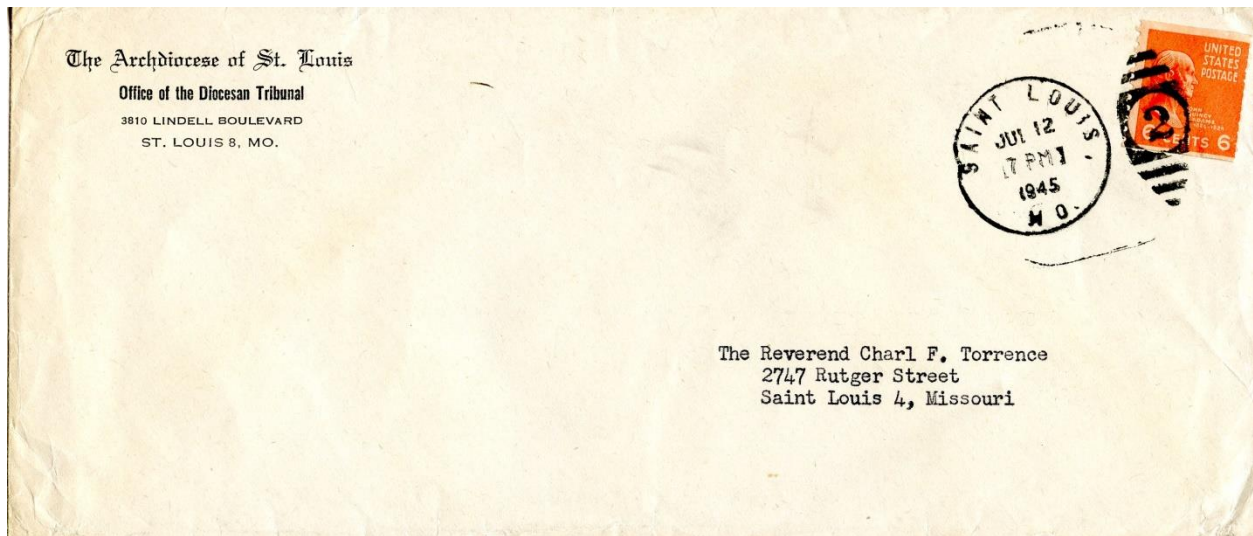


Figure 7. Double rate first class use.

In addition to the usages discussed above, the 6¢ Prexie was used in multiples or in combinations with other stamps to pay a wide variety of domestic and international rates, including those for airmail, return receipt service, parcel post, registration service, and special delivery service. The cover in Figure 8 shows a 6¢ Prexie added to a 6¢ airmail stamped envelope to make up the 12¢ domestic airmail rate in effect, for up to two ounces, when it was mailed on January 16, 1940.

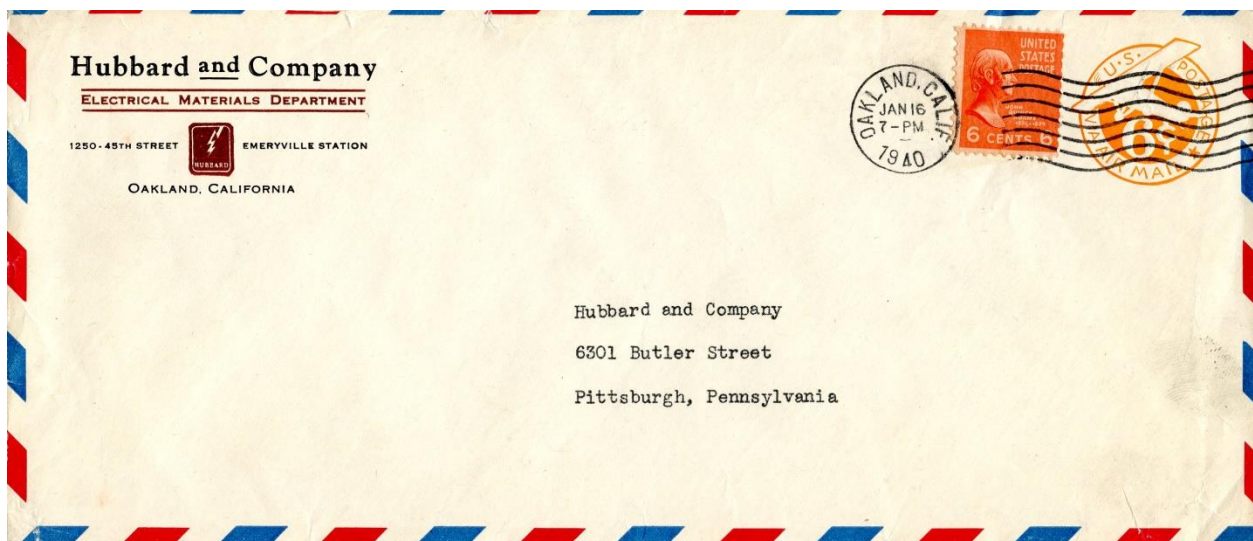


Figure 8. Double rate airmail use.

Figure 9 shows three 6¢ Prexies along with 2¢ and 3¢ Prexie horizontal coils added to a 3¢ stamped envelope to make up the 26¢ rate required for airmail special delivery service from Portland, Oregon to Los Angeles, California on August 14, 1953. On the

date of mailing, the domestic airmail rate was 6¢ for a one ounce letter and the special delivery fee was 20¢ for first class matter weighing up to 2 pounds.



Figure 9. Domestic airmail special delivery cover.

The Figure 10 cover is back stamped in North Hollywood with a date of April 29, 1954 and received in Merriman Nebraska on May 1, 1954. The cover contains 48¢ postage made up of six 6¢ Prexie coils and two 6¢ air mail stamps, which overpay, by 5¢, the required 6¢ air mail fee, 30¢ registration fee, and 7¢ return receipt fee for a one ounce letter mailed with no indemnity.



Figure 10. Domestic registered airmail with return receipt cover.

The cover shown in Figure 11, which is back stamped with a date of July 7, 1939, has three 6¢ Prexies used to pay the required 3¢ first class letter rate plus a 15¢ registration

fee for a one ounce letter mailed from Portland, Maine to Catskill, New York. The 15¢ registration fee provided indemnity for contents valued up to \$5.00.

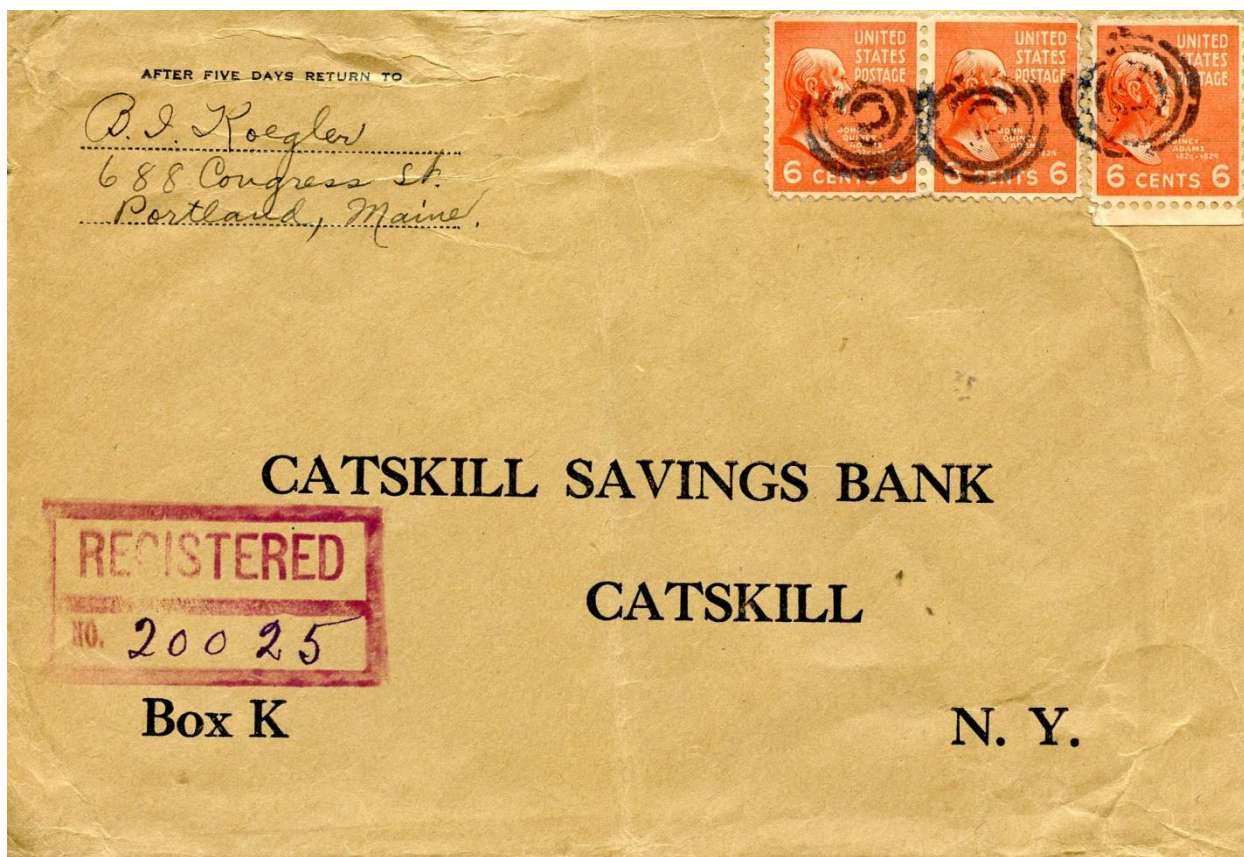


Figure 11. Registered domestic cover.

Figure 11 shows the front and back of a parcel tag containing three 6¢ Prexies. The tag was used to pay shipping costs for a parcel mailed from Clinton, Iowa to Bloomfield, New Jersey. I can only speculate as to the rate that was paid, but the only two that make any sense to me are either a 3¢ overpayment of the zone 5 parcel rate for up to one pound or exact payment of the book rate for up to three pounds. Based on an on-line search, I determined that the Hollis Company is a manufacturing company so the book rate could have been used to ship manuals or documentation or the parcel rate could have been used to ship equipment parts. In both instances, the tag would have been attached to a package mailed on or after January 1, 1949.

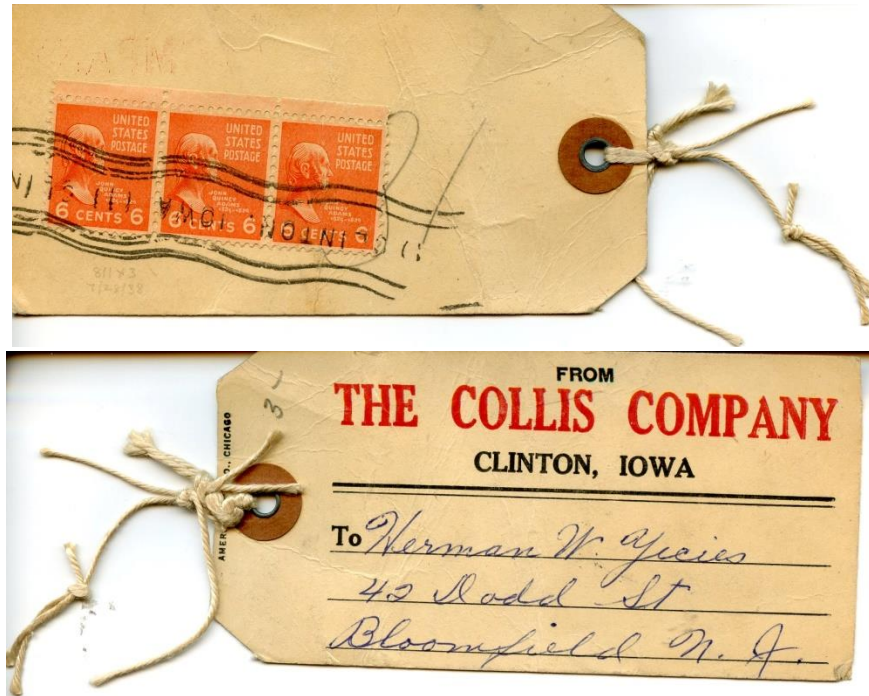


Figure 12. Parcel tag 6¢ Prexies (3).

The next cover (see Figure 12) shows a triple rate first class letter containing single 6¢ and 3¢ Prexies to make up the 9¢ rate in effect for a three ounce letter. The cover was mailed from Chillicothe, Ohio to the State Civil Service Commission in Columbus, Ohio on April 12, 1949.

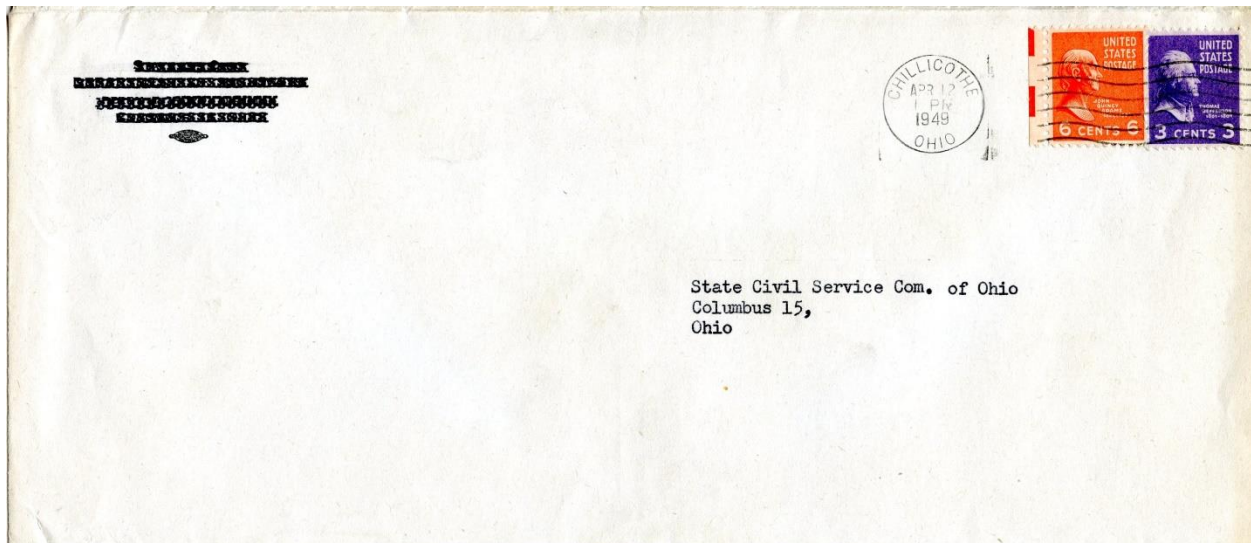


Figure 13. Triple weight first class letter.

Next is a use of the 6¢ Prexie on international mail. The Figure 13 cover was sent via airmail from Cleveland, Ohio to an attorney in Bletchley, England on May 16, 1941. The

cover contains four 6¢ Prexies combined with a 30¢ Prexie and the 2¢ and 3¢ values from the 1940 national defense issue to pay the air mail postage to England. Initially, the sender placed four 6¢ Prexies on the envelope and it was returned for an additional 35¢ postage, which was paid with a 30¢ Prexie and the 2¢ and 3¢ values from the 1940 national defense issue.



Figure 14. Censored airmail letter to England.

Following is a second international usage of the 6¢ Prexie. The cover shown in Figure 14, containing five 5¢ airmail stamps and a single 6¢ Prexie horizontal coil, overpays, by 1¢, the 30¢ postage required for a double rate airmail letter to Germany. The 15¢ per ½ ounce rate to Europe became effective as of November 1, 1946.



Figure 15. Double-rate Trans-Atlantic airmail letter to Germany.

I will conclude by showing a couple of unusual Prexie items. The first is an illegal use of the 6¢ Prexie that successfully passed through the U.S. mail. The Figure 15 cover contains a bisected 6¢ Prexie used to pay the domestic one ounce first class rate of 3¢. Although the use of bisects was prohibited at the time of mailing, the cover from Hallandale, Florida to Coral Gables, Florida made it through the mail without being assessed postage due. The second is a ½¢ Prexie on a letter from Newport, Rhode Island to Georgetown, Massachusetts. The ½¢ was evidently mistaken as a 6¢ Prexie, which would have been used to pay the double first class letter rate. It is hard to determine if the sender intentionally placed the ½¢ value on the envelope in an attempt to deceive the Post Office or mistakenly placed a ½¢ stamp on the letter thinking it was a 6¢. Regardless, despite being underpaid, the cover pictured in Figure 16 successfully passed through the mail resulting in a very scarce solo use of the ½¢ Prexie.

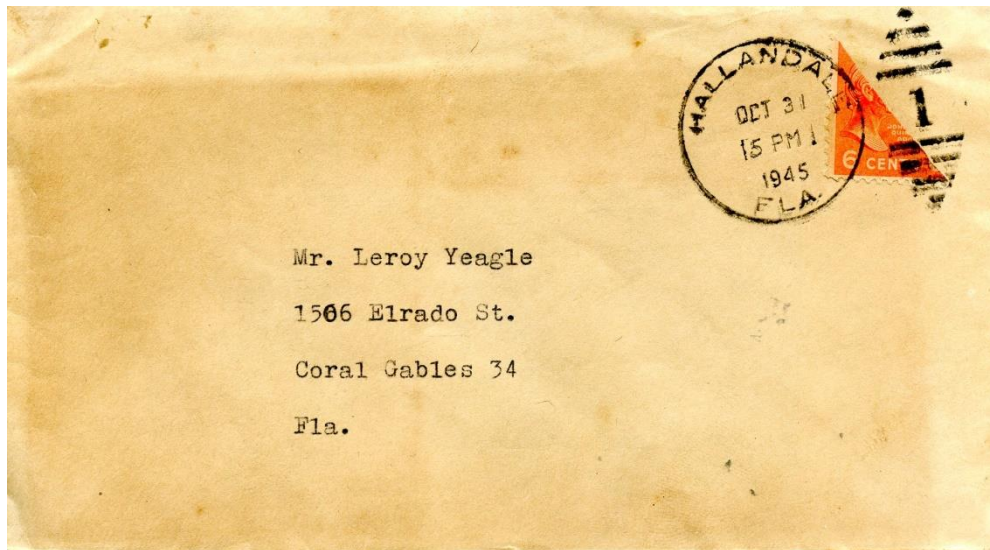


Figure 16. 6¢ bisect illegally used to pay first class rate.

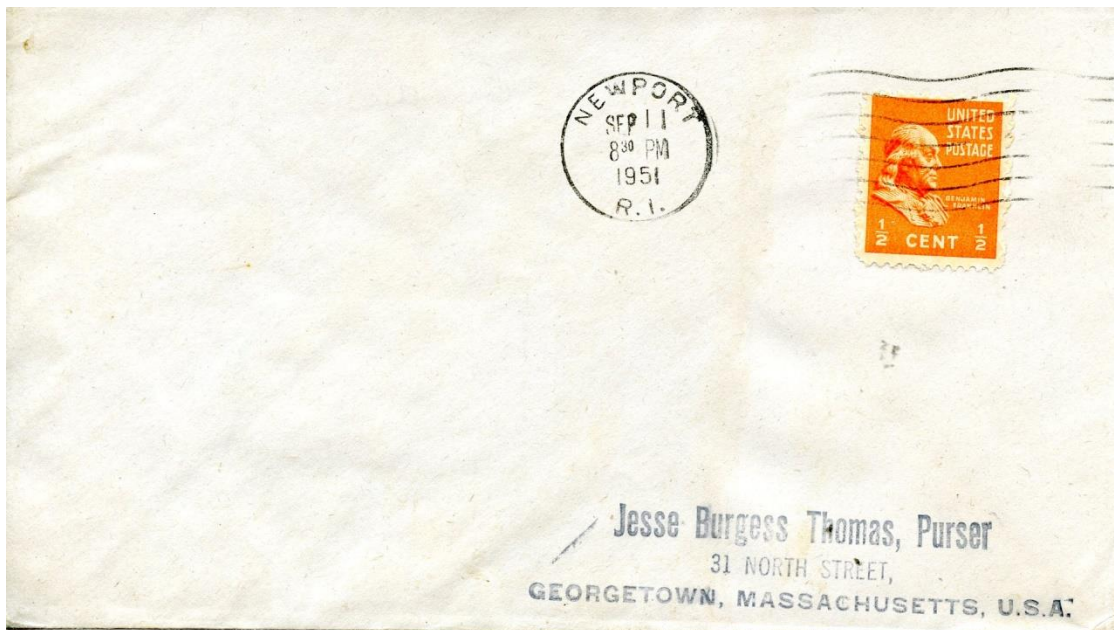


Figure 17. 1/2¢ used to pay double first class rate.

If you have any interesting 6¢ Prexie usages you would like to share or have any comments, clarifications or corrections, please send them to me at rich@pedersonstamps.com or by mail to P.O. Box 662, Clemson SC 29633.

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