

7¢ Prexie Postal History

by Richard Pederson

The 7¢ value in the Presidential Series of 1938 (see Figure 1), hereinafter called the Prexies, depicts the seventh President of the United States (1829-1837), Andrew Jackson, also known as “Old Hickory.” William K. Schrage designed the stamp based on a Belle Kinney Sholz statue of Jackson located in the Rotunda of the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C.

Prior to becoming President, Jackson, as a 13-year-old fought in the American Revolutionary War and later, in the War of 1812, he commanded the American troops tasked with defending New Orleans. He gained fame by defeating British forces who vastly outnumbered his in the January 1815 Battle of New Orleans. He was elected as a United States Senator from Tennessee in 1823 and served in that capacity until elected President in 1828. As President, Jackson introduced the “spoils” system where supporters were placed in high positions throughout the Federal government.

The 7¢ Prexie is relatively easy to find on cover or parcel as a multiple or in combination with other stamps, but solo uses are scarce. It was issued in sheet format on August 4, 1938 (see Figure 2) and was in continuous use until 1958, when the last delivery of 7¢ stamps was made to post offices. It was replaced by the 7¢ Woodrow Wilson stamp in the Liberty series on January 10, 1956, but some were used into the early 1960s, especially to pay the 7¢ air mail rate, which became effective on August 1, 1958.

Prior to the first day of issue, the Post Office Department sent out announcement cards to prospective purchasers of First Day Covers (FDCs), an example of which is pictured in Figure 3. An electric eye perforated version of the 7¢ value was issued on October 28, 1941 (see Figure 4).

Domestic and, particularly, international solo uses of the 7¢ are hard to find. During the time it was in use, possible solo rate and rate/fee combinations for the 7¢ Prexie in-



Figure 1. 7¢ Prexie sheet stamp.



Figure 2. First Day Cover (FDC) for 7¢ Prexie with Harry Ioor cachet.

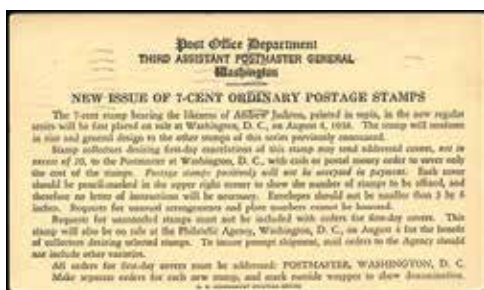


Figure 3. 7¢ announcement card.



Figure 4. Electric eye FDC with Fidelity cachet.

cluded the following, the Figures cited being shown later with additional information in this article:

1. First-class local letter at a non-carrier post office weighing greater than 6 ounces and less than or equal to 7 ounces, a rate in effect through December 31, 1951.
2. Letter paying the 7¢ domestic air mail rate that was in effect from August 1, 1958, through January 6, 1963 (Figure 5).
3. Business reply air mail letter sent between prior to March 25, 1944, or from January 1, 1949 through June 30, 1957, paying the 6¢ air mail rate and 1¢ business reply mail fee (Figure 7).
4. Item paying the 2¢ domestic third-class rate plus 5¢ minimum insurance fee, a combination in effect from January 1, 1949, through January 1, 1957 (Figure 6).
5. Transient second-class matter weighing greater than 6 ounces and less than or equal to 7 ounces, a rate in effect beginning on August 1, 1958.
6. Third-class single piece matter weighing greater than 6 ounces and less than or equal to 7 ounces, a rate in effect from January 1, 1949, through July 31, 1958.
7. The fourth-class library rate for an item weighing more than 6 pounds and less than or equal to 7 pounds, a rate in effect through the end of the Prexie period.
8. A fourth-class Zone 4 single-piece of bound printed matter weighing up to 1 pound, a rate in effect from July 1, 1939, through March 25, 1944.
9. A fourth-class Zone 5 single-piece of bound printed matter weighing up to 1 pound, a rate in effect from March 26, 1944, through December 31, 1948.
10. A UPU letter, weighing up to one ounce, sent via air mail in the U.S. and via surface mail from the U.S. exchange office to its destination, mailed from October 1, 1946, through June 30, 1948 (Figure 8).
11. Postal Union of Americas and Spain (PUAS), except Canada and Spain, surface rate for printed matter (books and sheet music) weighing more than 11 ounces and less than or equal to 12 ounces (2¢ for the first two ounces and 1¢ for each additional two ounces), in effect from January 1, 1959, through June 30, 1961.
12. PUAS, except Canada and Spain, surface rate for printed matter (publisher's periodicals) weighing more than 11 ounces and less than or equal to 12 ounces (2¢ for the first two ounces and 1¢ for each additional two ounces), in effect from January 1, 1959, through end of Prexie period.
13. Packages of merchandise weighing up to 6 ounces (3¢ for first 2 ounces and 2¢ for each additional 2 ounces) sent via surface mail to Canada, Cuba, Mexico, Panama and countries that joined the Pan American Principle Congress of Mexico, for a period from November 1, 1953, through June 30, 1961 (ended on April 30, 1959 for all countries except Canada, Chile, Cuba, Guatemala, Haiti, Panama, Paraguay and Peru).

[Note: for the purposes of this article, I will consider the Prexie period to last until the end of 1962. Deliveries of some Prexies were made to post offices until 1959 and many post offices still had some Prexies in stock into the early 1960s, so they are frequently found on non-philatelic mail until then. I purchased my copy of the \$5 Prexie at Ben Franklin Station in the old Post Office Building in Washington, D.C. in 1960, so know they were still being sold.]

Although the above list provides possible rates for solo uses of the 7¢ Prexie, most of those uses are seldom, if ever seen.

Domestic solo uses of the 7¢, though scarce, are much easier to find than those in the international mail. Perhaps the easiest domestic use to find is one paying the domestic air mail rate that went into effect on August 1, 1958. An example of a cover paying the 7¢ domestic air mail rate is pictured in Figure 5. The cover was mailed from Schmidt Lithograph Co.

in Long Island City, New York to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on October 29, 1958, and has a duplex cancel saying "USE ZONE NOS. FOR BETTER MAIL SERVICE," which the sender did not do.



Figure 5. 1958 cover with 7¢ solo paying the domestic air mail rate.

Figure 6 pictures the front of a third-class envelope mailed on October 30, 1956, from Amarillo, Texas to La Mesa, California. The solo 7¢ Prexie paid the basic 2¢ domestic third-class rate and 5¢ minimum insurance fee for an item valued up to \$5, a rate combination that was in effect from January 1, 1949, through January 1, 1957. The cover has a sticker saying "FOURTH CLASS MAIL" but fourth-class mail up to eight ounces was treated as third-class mail.



Figure 6. 7¢ solo paying the 2¢ third-class rate and 5¢ minimum insurance fee on a 1956 cover.

A quite scarce domestic solo use is shown, front and reverse, in Figure 7. In this instance, the recipient paid for a single piece of air mail business reply mail with a solo 7¢ Prexie covering the 6¢ air mail rate and 1¢ business reply mail fee. The letter was mailed on August 22, 1951, from Torrington, Connecticut to Emdees Medical and Surgical Supplies in Mahwah, New Jersey.



Figure 7. Front and reverse of 1951 cover with 7¢ solo paying the 6¢ air mail rate and 1¢ business reply mail fee.

As indicated previously, solo uses of the 7¢ Prexie on international mail are hard to come by. Figure 8 pictures a cover that appears to be such a use. The cover was mailed from Des Moines, Iowa to



Figure 8. 7¢ solo on 1943 cover to the Netherlands that was returned to sender by the censor.

an address in the Netherlands on September 29, 1943, during World War II. The 7¢ stamp was intended to pay for air mail service in the U.S. to

the exchange office and surface mail to its intended destination in Europe. The problem is, the letter was underpaid by 1¢ as in 1943, 8¢ was required. Service to the Netherlands was suspended since it was under German control when the letter was sent, so the letter was returned to the sender by the censor, perhaps the reason postage due was not assessed.

The 7¢ Prexie is most often encountered on domestic registered mail, either as multiples or in combination with other stamps. Figures 9 and 10 show the front and reverse of two examples where seven of the 7¢ are combined with a single other stamp to pay the domestic first-class rate, registration fee and, on the second example, a return receipt fee. Currently, only one other cover has been reported with a larger multiple on cover than the two pictured.

The Figure 9 cover was mailed on September 6, 1957, from Columbus, Mississippi to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where it was received on the 8th. In addition to the seven 7¢ Prexies, there is a 1957 4¢ 48-star flag stamp, totaling 53¢ in postage paying the 3¢ first-class rate and 50¢ registration fee for an item with an indemnity value up to \$10.



Figure 9. Front and reverse of 1957 cover with seven 7¢ Prexies and a 4¢ 48-star flag stamp paying the 3¢ first-class rate and 50¢ registration fee.



Figure 10. Front and reverse of 1956 cover with seven 7¢ Prexies and a 1¢ Prexie paying 3¢ first-class rate, 7¢ return receipt fee and 40¢ registration fee on a 1956 cover.

The Figure 10 cover was mailed within San Francisco, California on August 2, 1956, and was received on the 3rd. In addition to the seven 7¢ Prexies, there is a 1¢ Prexie, totaling 50¢ in postage paying the 3¢ first-class rate, 40¢ registration fee for an item with an indemnity value up to \$5 and 7¢ return receipt fee.

The cover shown front and reverse in Figure 11 has five 7¢ Prexies and a 5¢ Prexie, which combine to pay 40¢ in postage, the amount required to pay the 2¢ local first-class rate, 23¢ return receipt fee showing the address where the item was delivered and the 15¢ registration fee for an item with an indemnity value of no more than \$5. The cover was mailed in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on September 16, 1942, and after two delivery attempts was returned to the sender on September 23rd with a pointing hand marking and

a handwritten notation stating that the addressee was "Gone no address."

Figure 11. Front and reverse of 1942 cover with five 7¢ and one 1¢ Prexie paying the 2¢ local rate, 23¢ return receipt fee showing delivery address and 15¢ registration fee.



The cover pictured front and reverse in Figure 12 was mailed on October 5, 1940, from Tannersville, New York to Catskill, New York where it was received on October 7th. Two 7¢ Prexies and two 2¢ Prexies combine to pay the 18¢ in postage required to pay the 3¢ first-class rate and 15¢ registration fee for an item with an indemnity value of no more than \$5.

At times, multiples of the 7¢ Prexie exactly paid the required postage rate and registration fee. Figure 13 shows such a cover. The four 7¢ Prexies on the cover exactly paid the 3¢ first-class rate and 25¢ registration fee in effect at that time for an item with an indemnity value up to \$75. It was mailed on November



Figure 12. Front and reverse of 1940 cover with two 7¢ Prexies and two 2¢ Prexies combining to pay the 18¢ in postage required to pay the 3¢ first-class rate and 15¢ registration fee.



Figure 13. Front and reverse of 1944 cover with four 7¢ Prexies exactly paying the 3¢ first-class rate and 25¢ registration fee.

21, 1944, from Detroit, Michigan to San Jose, California, where it was received on November 25th and a notice sent to the intended recipient. The "TAKE OUT" marking, which was applied on December 5th, does not make much sense as the cover was fully addressed to a P.O. box and the "TAKE OUT" marking is normally applied to an item that is placed in general delivery, not claimed and returned to the sender on the "Take Out" date. There is also no indication that the cover was actually returned since there is no Detroit, Michigan receiving date after December 5th.



Figure 14. Front and reverse of 1942 c. over with three 7¢ Prexies exactly paying the 3¢ first-class rate and 18¢ registration fee.

Another cover with multiples of the 7¢ Prexie, this time with three stamps, is shown in Figure 14. The cover was mailed on April 17, 1942, from Appleton, Wisconsin to San Antonio, Texas, where it was received on April 19th. The 21¢ in postage paid the 3¢ first-class rate and an 18¢ registration fee for an item with an indemnity value up to \$25.

Certified mail began as a service in June 1955, towards the end of the Prexie period. The initial fee for certified mail service was 15¢ and the Post Office Department issued a stamp to pay that fee on June 6, 1955.



Figure 15. 1955 first-class cover with 7¢ Prexie, 3¢ Liberty Issue and 15¢ certified mail stamp with 7¢ Prexie paying the return receipt fee.

Those sending certified letters often wanted to receive a return receipt showing delivery of the certified item. Through June 30, 1957, the return receipt fee was 7¢ and frequently, on certified mail, the 7¢ Prexie was used to pay that fee along with an additional stamp to pay either the first-class rate or air mail rate. Figure 15 pictures a certified mail return receipt requested cover mailed on November 14, 1955, from Laconia, New Hampshire to Boston, Massachusetts. A 3¢ Liberty issue pays the first-class rate, a 15¢ certified mail stamp pays the certified mail fee and a 7¢ Prexie pays the return receipt fee.

Figure 16 pictures another certified mail return receipt requested cover, this time sent by air mail on June 24, 1955, shortly after certified mail service commenced. The cover was mailed from Evansville, Indiana to Kalamazoo, Michigan where it was redirected to Richland, Michigan.



Figure 16. 1955 air mail cover with 7¢ Prexie, 6¢ air mail stamp and 15¢ certified mail stamp with 7¢ Prexie paying the return receipt fee.

A 6¢ small format DC-4 Skymaster air mail stamp pays the air mail rate, a 15¢ certified mail stamp pays the certified mail fee and a 7¢ Prexie pays the return receipt fee.

Figure 17 pictures a 6¢ monoplane air mail envelope with two 7¢ Prexies added to pay the 20¢ trans-Pacific air mail rate from Hawaii to the U.S. mainland. The censored envelope was mailed on March 8, 1944, from Hakalau, Hawaii to San Francisco, California.



Figure 17. 6¢ monoplane air mail envelope with two 7¢ Prexies added to pay the 20¢ trans-Pacific air mail rate from Hawaii to the U.S. mainland on a 1944 cover.

Although difficult to find as a solo on international mail, the 7¢ Prexie is not difficult to find on international mail when combined with other stamps. From November 1, 1953, through June 30, 1961, an 8¢ UPU surface rate applied to mail sent to all UPU countries including those outside of Europe. The small size Figure 18 cover, possibly containing a Christmas card, was mailed on December 19, 1949, from Savage, Maryland to Bamberg in the American-occupied zone of Germany. A 7¢ Prexie and a 1¢ Prexie combined to pay the UPU surface rate to Germany.



Figure 18. 1949 cover with 7¢ and 1¢ Prexies combining to pay the UPU surface rate to Germany.

From November 1, 1946, until June 30, 1960, the air mail rate from the U.S. to South America was 10¢. Figure 19 shows the front and reverse of an air mail letter mailed on March 31, 1947, from Washington, D.C. to the U.S. Embassy in Lima, Peru, where it was received on April 8th. A 7¢ Prexie and a 1½¢ Prexie were added to a 1½¢ George Washington stamped envelope to pay the 10¢ South American air mail rate.



Figure 19. 1947 cover with 7¢ and 1½¢ Prexies added to a 1½¢ George Washington stamped envelope to pay the 10¢ South American air mail rate.

Figure 20, next column, pictures a portion of a mail piece sent from Worcester, Massachusetts to Brussels, Belgium on January 8, 1940. The envelope contained printed matter weighing up to 10 ounces. A single 7¢ Prexie and a ½¢ Nathan Hale, from the Fourth Bureau Issue, paid for a five times weight (5 x 1½¢) piece containing printed matter, a rate in effect through October 31, 1953.

I'll conclude with another international use of the 7¢ combined with other stamps. The Figure 21 cover was mailed from New York City on December 7, 1953, to Tangier Morocco. From November 1, 1946,

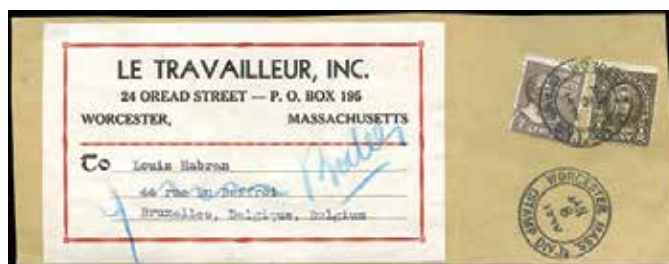


Figure 20. 1940 mail piece to Brussels, Belgium with 7¢ Prexie and ½¢ Fourth Bureau Issue paying the rate for a five times weight piece of printed matter.

through the end of the Prexie period, the air mail rate to Mediterranean Africa was 15¢. Initially, the cover was posted with a 6¢ meter stamp on December 4th, but was returned to the sender for 9¢ in additional postage and 7¢ and 2¢ Prexies were added to make up the amount due.



Figure 21. 1953 cover with 7¢ and 2¢ Prexies added to a 6¢ meter to pay the air mail rate to Tangier, Morocco.

If you have any interesting 7¢ 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 at 15312 Gammon Green Walk, Midlothian, VA 23112.

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