

The Prexies at Work

At the suggestion of President Franklin Roosevelt, an avid stamp collector, the United States Post Office introduced a new series of definitive stamps in 1938. Technically known as the Fifth Bureau Issue or the Presidential Series of 1938, over the years the stamps have become known simply as the "Prexies" The Prexies consists of thirty-two face different designs issued in a variety of colors and formats, including sheets, booklet panes as well as horizontal and vertical coils. In addition, two stamps were overprinted for emergency use in the Canal Zone.

Because Federal Law prohibits the image of a living person to be portrayed on a postage stamp, the Series pictures the likeness of the twenty-nine Presidents who had died before 1938. The Series also depicts the first Postmaster General, Benjamin Franklin, the First Lady, Martha Washington, and the Presidential Residence, the White House.

The following ten frames show the 1938 Presidential Series by denomination in ascending face value order. Non-philatelic, commercial usages on envelopes, governmental postal cards, post cards, wrappers, forms and mailing tags have been chosen to show the wide range of domestic and international fee available from 1938 through 1959. Only Prexies or Prexies affixed to governmental cards and envelopes are shown.



20c Prexie prepaid the half ounce "Clipper" air mail rate (in effect April 1937 thru January 1945) on this December 7, 1941 cover mailed to Hawaii from the U.S. Mainland.