

## **THE PREXIE COILS**

### **PURPOSE**

The exhibit is a study of the 1938 Presidential issue coil stamps and their usages. The purpose is to focus on a series of stamps seldom isolated from the entire issue. The exhibit attempts to put a distinct body of knowledge about a distinct group of stamps in a proper perspective.

### **BACKGROUND**

Much has been written, exhibited, studied about the 1938 Presidential Series. Though these efforts have included the coil stamps, seldom has there been an effort devoted exclusively to this format. During the Prexie period, coil stamps did not have the popularity among users that they do today. Widespread utilization of coil stamps by the general public was not apparent until the time of the Liberty Series in 1954. During this period, business -- the original market for coil stamps -- was moving rapidly to meters. Because of this limited need, there were relatively few coil stamps issued when compared to the regular issue stamps of the same denomination.

Other than plate configuration, a study of the printing of the coils suggests no significant differences from other formats of the series. There are no known errors in the coil format and, aside from plate number miscuts, especially of the 3c horizontal, very few freaks - a remarkable accomplishment considering the length of time this series was produced. Production varieties are rare.

### **TREATMENT**

The exhibit studies the stamps first and then usages. Though die proofs (all rare, some the only ones known) are shown, preproduction material for the Prexies is almost nonexistent. The cover section begins by showing a solo usage of each denomination. Covers are organized generally by service and/or rate for purposes of clarity. While some rates are redundant, the intent is to show different stamps, different usages. Because of the intended use of coil stamps, the exhibit does not purport to be a rate study. A comprehensive showing of all denominations is a major intent of the exhibit. Since this is a subset of a larger group of stamps, no effort has been made in either section to group stamps of the same denomination together. A point or story is established and the stamps or covers used to tell the story.

### **RESEARCH**

This is the only known traditional exhibit dealing exclusively with the Prexie coils. As a result of the concentrated study in this area, new discoveries have been made.

1. New findings on thin paper variety of the 3¢ value.
2. Discovery piece of the thin paper 3¢ - new plate.
3. Definitive conclusions on large hole, small hole perforation varieties.
4. Rarity of higher value precancels, especially on cover.
5. First time printing variations on leader strips have been noted and classified.

### **PHILATELIC SIGNIFICANCE**

The fundamental significance of this exhibit is the perspective it brings to certain stamps of an important and popular series. There is very little study of the coil stamps apart from the other formats. While certain generalizations may be accurate when applied to the entire series, they could be faulty when applied to the coils particularly as they relate to postal history. For example, one would be correct in a belief that a solo usage of the 1c denomination is common. That generalization applied to the 1c vertical coil would be inaccurate. In fact, a solo use of the 1c vertical coil is a seldom-found usage. This exhibit has two. Same for the 2c vertical.

It is no surprise that the \$5 Coolidge claims the number one spot for fewest issued of the Presidential Series with approximately 9.3 million. At number two, however, is the 1.5c vertical coil with 10 million followed by the \$2 Harding with 13.6 million and the 4.5c horizontal coil with 16.2 million. There are some estimates that show the 1.5c vertical coil with fewer issued than the \$5 value.

### **RARITY/DIFFICULTY OF ACQUISITION**

Though coil stamps are produced for frequently used rates, usages can be remarkably elusive, particularly the endwise type. What is particularly noteworthy in this exhibit is the large percentage of covers where coils are used exclusively. Very few examples mixed with other Prexie formats are used. It is important to note that while the rate or Prexie usage may be common, the usage with a coil is often a difficult find. One would think an 8¢ double weight UPU rate would be common. It is, but in 30 years, I have found only two examples franked with coils.

Prexies should not be confused with Prexie coils. Difficulty and significance should not be confused with popularity and publicity. There is much in this exhibit that is uncommon including twenty examples of the elusive 10¢ value on cover and a significant showing of rare coil production varieties.

Recent (past 9 months) additions to this exhibit:

1. Small die proofs
2. Design competition art work
3. 12 covers

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