

Synopsis:

THE DIFFICULT FIRST DAY COVERS WITH BOTH THE 30¢ ROOSEVELT and 50¢ TAFT PREXIES

The exhibit shows the uncommon first day covers franked with both the 30¢ and 50¢ prexies and explains why they are so scarce.

Exhibit Inspiration: I have a reasonably successful one frame exhibit of the 50¢ Prexie Solo uses that has received large gold medals, and even a single frame grand at RMSS 2016. For years I have done a daily and mostly fruitless eBay search looking for additional items. I began to notice an occasional FDC franked with both 30¢ and 50¢ Prexies. That made sense because the two stamps were issued at the same place and time, Washington D.C. on December 8, 1938, and I started collecting them.

My First 30¢ 50¢ Exhibit: I did a one frame class exhibit that showed 50% first day covers and 50% postal history uses called “The 30¢ Roosevelt and 50¢ Prexies Used Together.” This was last shown at GASS/Americover 2023 in Cleveland where it won the single frame grand.

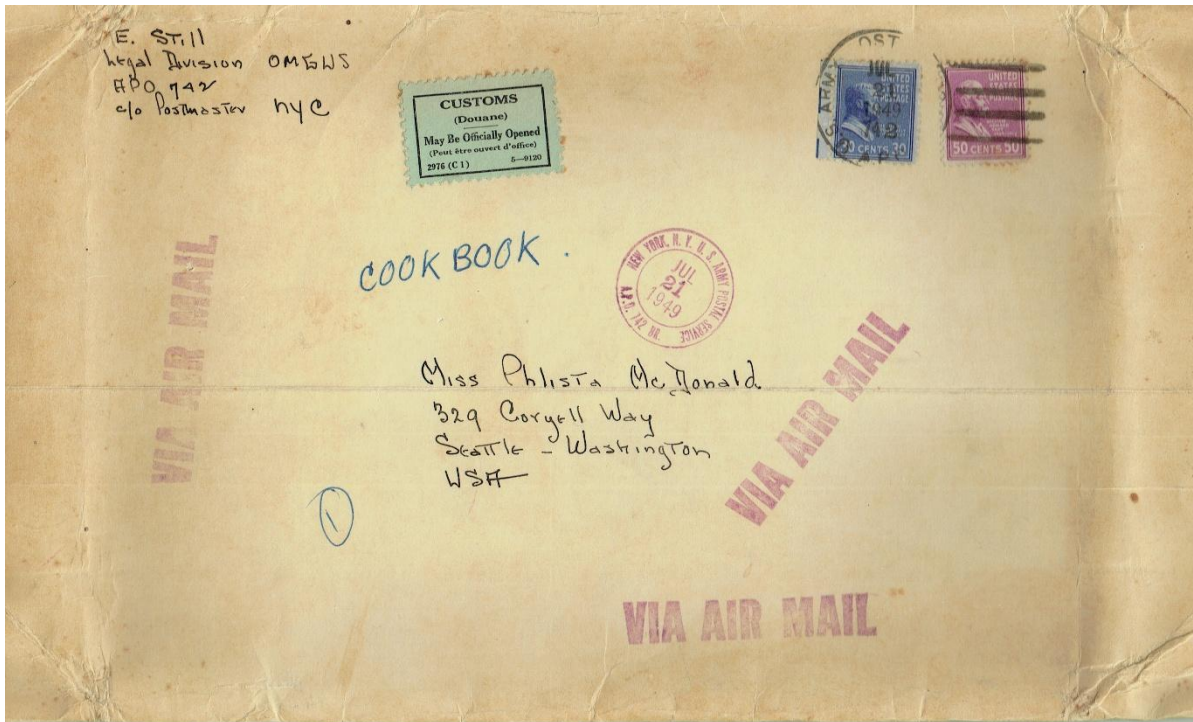
This exhibit: Over time I have accumulated enough FDCs to an exhibit that mostly them.

Importance: December 8, 1938 is an important date because these were the final two Prexie denominations released. True there were later FDCs for Electric Eye perforated stamps, coils, and booklet panes, but no new denominations. I know of no other attempt at an exhibit such as this.

Treatment: The story is organized by showing the announcements, FDCs with no cachet, generic Prexie cachets, Roosevelt cachets, and Taft cachets. It appears that no cachet maker made a cachet to deal with the two stamps together. One enterprising collector did make his own by combing parts from two Fidelity cachets.



The only commercial use postal history item is the wonderful cover on the last page paying the new 80¢ for the new 1 lb zone 8 air parcel post rate of 1948. Prior to that was no single weight 80¢ rate and no 80¢ stamp. The only way to pay 80¢ using only two stamps was with a 30¢ and a 50¢ stamp.



Difficulty of Acquisition: Rustad¹ tells us how many FDCs of each were prepared, including blocks, but cannot say how many were prepared using both stamps. I have no census numbers to give, just my difficult experiences to relay. I have everything that Doug Weisz and Henry Gitner could provide. Since then I have been lucky to find two covers a year. I have only once passed on an FDC because I already had it.

D.A. Lux has my criteria on his list, but that has unearthed nothing. I placed an ad in *First Days*, but so far that has not been money well spent.

Why are the FDCs so hard to find? Page 2 of the exhibit shows that the post office sent separate cards to collectors telling them how to order first day covers with a single stamp or block affixed, one card for the 30¢ Roosevelt and a different card for the 50¢ Taft. There were no instructions on how to order a cover with one of each stamp affixed. Only people at the FDC ceremony could do that if interested.

I have looked at all issues of Linn's Stamp News for 1938 and found that cachet maker ads of the day offered envelopes with cachets but did not offer to service covers. It is likely the few covers that exist with each stamp affixed were prepared by those collectors in attendance who chose to do so.

¹ Roland E. Rustad, *The Prexies*, The Bureau Issues Association, 1994, pp 298 and 305

Condition: It is easy to claim that every FDC is the finest one known since all but one are the only ones I have ever seen. Fortunately, there are no condition problems.

THE DIFFICULT FIRST DAY COVERS WITH BOTH THE 30¢ ROOSEVELT and 50¢ TAFT PREXIES

Introduction: The 1938 Presidential Issue, commonly known as the Prexies, began to be released on April 25, 1938. A total of thirty-two denominations were eventually issued, including profiles of the twenty-nine deceased presidents.

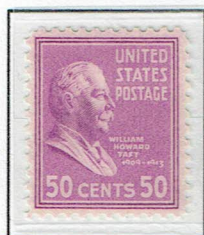
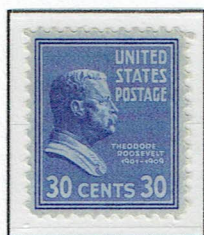
The final two Prexie denominations released, the 30¢ Roosevelt and 50¢ Taft, were issued at the same place and time - Washington, DC on December 8, 1938.

This exhibit shows the uncommon first day covers franked with both the 30¢ and 50¢ and explains why they are so scarce.

Nearly all items shown are difficult to find.

The most significant are double framed in a **dark red** border.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF BOTH STAMPS TO POSTMASTERS NOVEMBER 25, 1938



PLAN:

Announcements
No cachets
Generic cachets
Roosevelt cachets
Taft cachets
Combo cachets
An 80¢ rate

NEW ISSUES OF 30-CENT AND 50-CENT ORDINARY POSTAGE STAMPS

THIRD ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL
Washington, November 25, 1938.

Postmasters are hereby advised that the 30-cent stamp, bearing the likeness of Theodore Roosevelt, and the 50-cent stamp, containing the portrait of William H. Taft, will be the next denominations to be made available in the new regular series.

The stamps will conform in general design to the preceding denominations of this series, with double line borders. The 30-cent stamp will be printed in blue and the 50-cent stamp in lavender. Both stamps will be printed by the rotary process and issued in sheets of 100.

The stamps will be first placed on sale at Washington, D. C., on December 8, 1938, and at other post offices as soon thereafter as practicable.

Stamp collectors desiring first-day cancellations of the new stamps on December 8 may send a limited number of addressed covers, *not in excess of 10 for each denomination*, to the Postmaster, Washington, D. C., with a cash or postal money order remittance to cover only the cost of the stamps required for affixing. *Postage stamps will positively not be accepted in payment.* Each cover should bear a pencil endorsement in the upper right corner to show the number of stamps to be attached thereto. Envelopes for covers should not be smaller than 3 by 6 inches. Compliance cannot be made with unusual requests, such as for the affixing of plate number blocks, etc., and all covers must be fully addressed.

Requests for uncanceled stamps must not be included with orders for first-day covers to the postmaster at the above office.

For the benefit of collectors desiring stamps of selected quality for philatelic use, the 30-cent and 50-cent stamps will be placed on sale at the Philatelic Agency, Washington, D. C., on December 8, 1938. To insure prompt shipment, mail orders to the Agency must be limited to the 30-cent and 50-cent stamps, excluding other varieties heretofore on sale.

Postmasters at direct- and central-accounting post offices may submit requisitions for a limited supply of the 30-cent and 50-cent stamps to conform to local mailing requirements, but such requisitions must exclude other denominations.

So far as required to meet specific requests from local patrons, postmasters at district-accounting offices may obtain needed stocks of the new 30-cent and 50-cent stamps by requisition on the central-accounting postmaster after December 8. In some cases shipments of the new 30-cent and 50-cent stamps may be received by postmasters prior to the close of business on December 8. In all such cases care must be exercised not to allow any of the stamps to be sold before December 9.

RAMSEY S. BLACK,
Third Assistant Postmaster General.