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Use of \$5 Prexie Stamps to Pay Excess-Value Registry Surcharges: 1939-56

Purpose and Scope: This exhibit shows registered covers bearing \$5 *Prexie* stamps that paid *excess-value* surcharges imposed by the US Post Office.

Organization: The covers are presented in chronological order.

Background: On July 1 1932 the USPO launched a supplemental-fee system that imposed surcharges on registered mail with declared content-value exceeding that covered by postal insurance. Financial institutions and insurance companies were major users of that system. Such *excess values* ranged up to several millions of dollars, and supplemental fees (surcharges) ranged up to hundreds of dollars. Surcharge fees were usually paid with postage stamps. Bulky valuables were shipped in bags with attached tags bearing the required stamps. Foldable valuables, such as negotiable bearer bonds or small packets of currency, were mailed in covers. Such covers are the subject of this exhibit

Supplementary Surcharge: Cents per \$1000 Excess Declared Value.

POSTAL ZONES	7/1/32 to 3/26/44	3/26/44-to-1/1/52	1/1/52-to-7/1/57
1: < 50 miles	8	11	12
2: 50-to-150	9	12	14
3: 150-to-300	10	14	16
4: 300-to-600	11	15	17
5/6: 600-to-1400	12	16	18
7/8: >1400	13	18	19

Importance: Surcharge payment was a major --perhaps the main-- use of \$5 *Prexie* stamps

Scarcity: Only seventeen \$5 *Prexie* surcharge covers are known to have survived

Noteworthy items: All covers shown are scarce-to-rare. Highlights include:

Oct 5 1939; Earliest known \$5 *Prexie* surcharged cover.

May 16 1946; Highest supplemental fee (\$361); Most \$5 *Prexie* stamps on any cover (72); Highest declared value (\$3 million).

Dec 21 1951; Only known airmail/special-delivery \$5 *Prexie* surcharged cover

Feb 6 1956; Latest known \$5 *Prexie* surcharged cover.

Reference: Beecher, H. & A. Wawrukiewicz; *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-1993*; Traditions Press, Shawnee-Mission Kansas 66207

