

THE 5¢ PREXIE BLUES

The image of James Monroe (1758-1831), the fifth President of the United States (1817-1825), appears on the 5¢ blue stamp issued as part of the 1938 Presidential Definitive Series (known affectionately as the "Prexies"). Two varieties of the stamp were produced: the sheet stamp (issued July 21, 1938), and the horizontal coil (issued January 20, 1939). Records indicate that 2.6 billion sheet stamps and 40 million coil stamps were printed. Shades can be found varying from grayish blue to light blue to dark blue.

It is ironic that Monroe, one of the authors of the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, which warned the European Powers to stay out of the affairs of the Americas, be on the stamp that paid the much-used 5¢ one ounce UPU surface rate to the World, in effect July 1875 thru October 1953.

During the years of the Prexie Era (1938 thru the late 1950's), other rates and fees were introduced which could have been paid with solo and multiple uses of this 5¢ Prexie definitive stamp. This exhibit highlights commercially-used examples.

Franked with a 5¢ Prexie to pay the one ounce UPU international surface rate, this December 1943 cover addressed to a New Zealand pilot stationed in England was returned as the addressee was listed as "missing on operations."

