

Part Seventeen

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Switzerland Its Essays and Proofs

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(Continued from Journal No. 22, Page 89.)

K. Hotel Posts

Situated in the higher levels of the Alps, many of Switzerland's resort-hotels were beyond the area of government mail delivery and collection, until late in the 19th century. To fill this void, some proprietors put into effect a quasi-messenger service by means of which mail was conveyed between their respective hotels and the points of contact with the government post down in the valleys.

Adhesive Stamps Provided

A fee of 5 or 10 Rappen was charged guests for such service in most cases; some hotels furnished adhesive stamps to their guests as a convenience in prepaying this fee.

These operations constituted a series of Private Posts in the philatelic sense, and have become known as the *Swiss Hotel Posts*.

In the course of time, government mail service following along with railway extensions reached these out-of-the-way locations and made the private posts unnecessary. Finally, as of September 1883, the Department suppressed the Hotel Posts.

Some of the hotels which had used the adhesive-stamp plan continued to use the stamps as advertising labels, altering or completely changing the design in certain instances. Others, viewing the idea with interest, adopted such use. These are not postage stamps, but because of their historical interest are included in most collections of this philatelic category.

A listing of the Hotel Post stamps is beyond the scope of this monograph. Interested collectors will find complete listing in Zumstein. (55)

Essays and Proofs

Neither essays nor proofs of the Hotel Post stamps appear to be in philatelic ownership. There are a few items which definitely are not stamps, but it is not clear as to whether they are essays, trial color proofs, or simply counterfeits. Further research will be required to establish their status. In the meantime the matter remains clouded.

L. Soldatenmarken

Known among the French-language Swiss as *Timbre Militaire*, the Soldatenmarken or Soldier Stamps present a very colourful and attractive group. They are not postage stamps in the usual definition; instead, they fall into the same category as Christmas Seals, which for some years have been included in the philatelic family.

Soldatenmarken first appeared during World War I. They were issued by the various military units in order to raise money to supply in some measure the more personal needs of the soldiers and their families.

The idea, however, did not originate with this purpose in mind. According to Locher, (58) the artist Fred Bieri of Bern, an adjutant in the Swiss Army, designed two Soldier Stamps and distributed them

55 Zumstein, Special-Katalog, Schweiz-Liechtenstein, 1945.

58 Locher, Paul, — Die schweizerischen Soldatenmarken ans der Grentzbesetzung 1914-18 Spiez, 1936.

p. 156 as souvenirs in June, 1915. During March of the following year, the Leserzirkel of Hottingen held a festive gathering in the Zurich Town Hall, for the benefit of the Soldiers' Recreation Rooms. On that occasion the committee prepared and sold three Soldier Stamps to augment the receipts.

Influenced no doubt by these two examples, Dr. Stiner of Bern, a medical officer in Regiment II, started a movement in May, 1916, which, by the close of the war accounted for almost 400 major varieties of Soldatenmarken.

A list of the designers of these stamps includes such artists as L'Eplattenier, Burkhard, Boscovitz, Liner, Jules Courvoisier — names well known to Swiss philatelists. Lesser known artists, many of whom were in the active army, complete the list.

The manufacturing details parallel those of postage stamp production except that intaglio does not appear to have been used.

World War II

With the outbreak of the Second World War, Soldatenmarken again appeared, and in great variety. Many unnecessary items were produced including a single design in many colors; intentional design errors; imperforate and perforated stamps of the same design; souvenir sheets and panes; and many others. This policy was carried to such an extent, that the Commandant of the Army was obliged to issue orders restricting the number and variety of stamps that might be issued, in order that the soldiers would not "kill the goose that laid the golden egg."

Essays and Proofs

Many essays and proofs of the Soldatenmarken of World War I have been listed by Locher, (58) but the listing lacks so much of the detail desired from the American viewpoint that recording in this monograph in the absence of examples is not practical. Hence the matter must await further research. Data concerning the World War II issues are not available to the author.

Author's Note: This instalment completes the original portion of the monograph. The first section of the Addenda will appear in the next issue of this JOURNAL.

The Addenda will follow the same general plan as that of the original script and will include data and items that have become available to the author since preparing the original text. In some instances, these new data permit definite conclusions that previously were conjecture. Categories which were deferred in the original text will be covered as completely as available data permit.

(To be continued.)