EUROPEAN CLASSICS

XVII. HAMBURG

Hamburg, the largest of the three Free Hanseatic Cities in Northern Germany and a sovereign state within the German Confederation, covered a territory of 150 square miles, which increased by 35 square miles on August 8, 1867, when Bergedorf and its territory — until then the common property of Lubeck and Hamburg — was incorporated. The territory of Hamburg bordered to the north and northeast on the duchies of Holstein and Lauenburg which until 1864 were under Danish sovereignty and, after transitional Prussian-Austrian rule, became Prussian in 1866. To the southwest, it bordered on the territory of Bergedorf and to the west and southwest on the kingdom of Hanover, on the left bank of the River Elbe, which also came under Prussian sovereignty in 1866. Several small islands in the Elbe and equally small enclaves in Holstein and Lauenburg territory also belonged to Hamburg as well as an enclave in Hanover territory, the bailiwick of Ritzebüttel on the coast of the North Sea, which had about 7000 inhabitants in 1867, and the small island of Neuwerk. The total population was 211,000 in 1856, 230,000 in 1863 and, after the incorporation of Bergedorf, 305,000 in 1867. The city of Hamburg, which was located on the right bank of the Elbe, 75 miles from its confluence with the North Sea, on both sides of the small river Alster, had a population of 165,000 in 1856 and of 225,000 in 1867.

Hamburg's *history* is rather long. Its origin seems to have been a small fortress which was erected in 808 by Charlemagne and which was called Hammaburg, derived from the Old-German name for forest. It became the site of a fishermen's village and in 811 a church was erected which became a center for the conversion of Northern Europe to Christianity. In 834, Hamburg was elevated by Ludwig I to an archbishopric, but the entire town was burned down by the Norsemen in 845. Rebuilt, the town was invaded and pillaged several times by Danes and Slavs. In 1110, Hamburg came under the sovereignty of Holstein and in that period the city started to develop into a center of transit, which fact eventually made it one of the principal ports of Europe. In 1215, Hamburg was made a free imperial city in accordance with a charter granted by Frederick I in 1189. In 1241 Hamburg concluded an alliance with Lubeck, which laid the foundation for the Hanseatic League of which Hamburg was one of the leading members. To the Hanseatic Laegue in its prime belonged almost one hundred of the principal cities on the European continent, from Amsterdam in the west to Königsberg in the east and Nürnberg in the south. But the importance of the League declined in later centuries, its last convention being held in 1669. The city was then ruled by a citizen committee, called the "Rath" which later developed into the Senate. The city suffered gravely during the Thirty Years War, but soon recovered. The first great impulse for its foreign trade was provided by the American declaration of Independence as Hamburg enjoyed extensive trade relations with the United States. The city suffered again during the Napoleonic Wars, when Hamburg was occupied by the French in 1806 and in 1810 became part of the French department 128, "Bouches de l'Elbe". After the withdrawal of the French in 1814, the interrupted progress continued rapidly, fostered by important new trade connections with the new independent countries of Central and South America. In 1867, Hamburg joined the North German Confederation and in 1870 became part of the German Empire of which it is still a part.

The *postal history* of Hamburg has its origins in the courier services which were established by the organizations of Hamburg merchants as early as 1518. They frequently infringed upon other postal services, especially those of Thurn and Taxis, which led to many protests, but the courier mails continued to flourish, extending over large parts of Germany and into neighboring countries. For many years, starting in 1658, the city tried to abolish these private mails but succeeded only in 1821 by paying a considerable sum to private mail services, in this way establishing on January 1, 1822, the "Stadtpost"*). It was conducted by

*) We purposely use the German expression "Stadtpost" because the translation "City Post" would be misleading considering the fact that this service not only handled city and domestic mail but also part of the mail to other countries.

the "Post-Deputation", which was supervised by the Senate of the city. Only the so-called "Footpost" ("Fusspost"), which served city mail, remained privately operated, but eventually it was also taken over by the "Stadtpost" on January 1, 1835. A post office in Ritzebüttel must have been opened at about the same time. The "Stadtpost" operated from January 1, 1822, for 46 years, until December 31, 1867, when its functions were taken over by the newly established mail service of the North German Confederation. From January 1, 1852, Hamburg was a member of the German-Austrian Postal Union.

The oldest *foreign mail service* established in Hamburg was that of *Thurn and Taxis*. It opened in 1616 and continued to operate despite all difficulties created by the various private mail services. In 1802, the zone ("Rayon") system of the Thurn and Taxis mail service was also introduced in Hamburg, which belonged to "Rayon 4." When the French occupied Hamburg in 1806, one of their first acts was to close the Thurn and Taxis post office there; it was reopened after the withdrawal of the French in 1814. The *Prussian* mail service originated in the Brandenburg mail service in Hamburg, which was introduced in 1654. An interruption in its operation occurred from 1807 to 1814, during the French occupation of the city. The *Danish* mail service existed from 1651. It was closed down during the French occupation from 1810 to 1814. From 1695 a separate *Schleswig-Holstein* mail service also existed in Hamburg, but this was consolidated with the Danish post office in 1773, when Schleswig-Holstein again came under Danish sovereignty. During the revolution in Schleswig-Holstein, the Danish post office in Hamburg was closed in 1848 and a Schleswig-Holstein post office opened instead in the same building. It was taken over as the "Holstein Division" by the Danish post office when the latter reopened in February 1851 and it was abolished in February 1852. The mail service of *Hanover* existed in Hamburg from 1684 first as Hanover-Lüneburg post office until 1706, later as British-Hanover post office. It was closed down by the French and reopened as Hanover post office in 1814. From 1706, there was also a *Brunswick-Lüneburg* mail service operating

which was closed by the French in 1810 and reopened as Brunswick post office in 1814. It was at that time consolidated with the Hanover post office and taken over by the latter in 1835. The *Mecklenburg-Schwerin* mail service was established in 1674, closed by the French in 1809 and reopened in 1814. The *Swedish* post office started in 1685 and was closed by the French from 1809 to 1814. In the same year, Norway came under Swedish rule and the name of the post office was changed to Swedish-Norwegian post office in 1816. But in 1858, it abolished the mail service to Norway which was taken over by the Danish post office and resumed the old name of Swedish post office. When the French occupied Hamburg in 1806 and gradually closed all foreign post offices, first a *Berg* post office, of the newly created Grand Duchy of Berg, was opened in 1806 and took over the functions of the Hanover, Prussian, Thurn and Taxis, Brunswick and Mecklenburg-Schwerin mail services. In 1807, it also took over the service in Hamburg itself. It adopted the Thurn and Taxis zone system, by which Hamburg was in Zone ("Rayon") 4. In 1810 a *Westphalian* post office was also created by the French for the same purpose, but its operation was of short duration as the *French* post office, created in 1808, took over the Berg and Westphalian mail services as well as all other postal services in Hamburg, except the Footpost, in 1811. In this way for the first time all postal services between Hamburg and foreign countries were consolidated in one post office. After Hamburg was liberated in 1813, the local Hamburg postal service and the foreign mail services gradually resumed operation and the French post office was closed. In 1810, the French had also opened a post office at Ritzebüttel, to serve as an emergency landing place for mail, when ships were unable to reach Hamburg proper because of ice on the Elbe or other adverse conditions. It was closed in 1813.

The *private mail services* were considerably older than the various governmental postal services. The first such services were created by the merchants as early as 1258, but regular courier services to the great centers of commerce in Europe were established only from 1518 on. Courier routes

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were established to Amsterdam, Antwerp, Stettin, Danzig, Leipzig, Lubeck, Cologne, Frankfort, Copenhagen, Emden, Brunswick and Nürnberg, but when the foreign post offices were established, they gradually took over these mail routes.

The mail service on Hamburg territory was also in private hands and from 1790 operated the so-called *"Footpost"* ("Fusspost"), which served the city and its suburbs. A main post office and a number of letter collecting agencies existed in the city and these collected and delivered mail; it also operated as feeder for the foreign post offices. The "Footpost" also existed during the French occupation, as the French did not interfere with the mail service in the city. When, on January 1, 1835, the "Stadtpost" took over the "Footpost", a complete reorganization occurred, all letter collecting agencies were abolished and replaced by mail boxes. But the new system did not prove satisfactory and on April 15, 1838, the mail boxes were abolished and a number of letter collecting agencies in the cities and the suburbs were again established. On January 1, 1852, the service of the "Footpost" was extended to the rural districts of the territory. Letter collecing agencies, operated by private initiative, had existed there from 1838 and when the city took over, were operating in Eimsbüttel, Grindel, Pöseldorf, Eppendorf, Barmbeck, Ham & Horn and Steinwerder.

Before the city took over the private mail services except the "Footpost", special government services existed for ship mail from late in the 18th century. The first organization of this kind was the *American Postal Agency* which was conducted by the Hamburg government for the mail service to America. A similar organization existed for mail to and via England, which from 1832 used the name of *"Schiffs-Brief-Comptoir"* and was operated in close cooperation with the London General Post Office which had an agent in Hamburg. From 1796, Hamburg also provided a mail service for the British island of Heligoland.

When postage stamps were introduced, the *"Stadtpost"* operated three post offices — the main post office, a branch post office ("Postexpedition") at the "Berliner Bahnhof" railroad station and a post office in Ritzebüttel — as well as a number of letter collecting agencies in the suburbs and the rural districts. In addition to city mail and mail within the boundaries of the Hamburg territory, they handled mail to Bergedorf with its territory, Lubeck, Bremen, Oldenburg, the Netherlands, as well as mail to Great Britain and Ireland, the United States and overseas countries via England. With the outbreak of the war with Denmark, the "Stadtpost" also took over on March 21, 1864 the Danish postal service in Hamburg, which at that time operated two post offices, a main office and a branch office at the "Berliner Bahnhof". They were incorporated into the "Stadtpost" as "Second Division" ("2. Abteilung") until they were consolidated with the original "Stadtpost" service, called "First Division" ("1. Abteilung") on January 6, 1867. With the incorporation of the Danish mail service, the "Stadtpost" took over the mail service to Denmark, Schleswig-Holstein and Lauenburg, as well as Norway, but it had to relinquish again the service to Lauenburg and Schleswig-Holstein to the Prussian post office early in January 1866, and on December 31, 1866, respectively. On August 1, 1865, a new branch post office ("Postexpedition") was opened at the "Lübecker Bahnhof" railroad station. On September 1, 1866 and January 6, 1867, respectively, two branch post offices ("Stadtpostexpedition") were opened "Vor dem Klostertor" (No. 1) and at the suburb of St. Pauli (No. 3). Hamburg also had a postal agency on the British island of *Heligoland* until June 30, 1866. The "Stadtpost" was abolished December 31, 1867 and from January 1, 1868 the postal service in Hamburg was conducted by the North German Confederation.

The *"Footpost"* continued to operate after the introduction of postage stamps. Franked and unfranked letters were accepted at its main post office and its letter collecting agencies which were located in all parts of the city and in the suburbs as well as the rural districts of Hamburg territory except at Ritzebüttel, which had its own post office. In the rural districts, the same letter collecting agencies were continued as in the pre-stamp period and a new one was officially opened in Uhlenhorst on January 1, 1865, but it seems to have been in operation before, in 1864. On January 1, 1865,

the "Footpost" was abolished and mail boxes again introduced throughout the city and the suburbs. The letter collecting agencies in the city and in the suburbs were closed but those in the rural communities outside the city limits remained in operation. They were continued as postal agencies after the postal service of the North German Confederation took over on January 1, 1868.

From 1861 on, several *private mail services* again started to operate in Hamburg for local city mail. The history of these private services — it is known that four firms, C. Hamer & Co., H. Scheerenbeck, W. Krantz and Charles van Diemen, operated such services before 1868 — is somewhat clouded in mystery, but it can be reasonably concluded that they operated mail services in the city to round out the mail service of the "Footpost".

Denmark also had, in addition to its main post office, a branch office at the "Berliner Bahnhof". Both offices handled all mail to Denmark (including Schleswig-Holstein and Lauenburg) and Norway. Both offices were closed on February 21, 1864, when they were forcibly taken over by the "Stadtpost". *Hanover* had post offices in Hamburg proper and from January 1, 1852, in Ritzebüttel. They handled mail to Hanover and Brunswick. The Hanover post offices were taken over by Prussia on June 16, 1866. The *Mecklenburg-Schwerin* post office had, in addition to its main post office, also a branch post office at the "Berliner Bahnhof". Both handled mail to Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz. *Prussia* had a main post office as well as a branch post office at the "Berliner Bahnhof". It handled all mail to Prussia, Saxony, Luxembourg, Austria (except Tyrol, Vorarlberg and Lombardy-Venetia), Russia (including Poland and Finland), as well as overseas mail in transit through Austria (Trieste), and part of the mail to Mecklenburg-Strelitz. From 1866 and 1867 respectively, Prussia also took over the mail service to Schleswig-Holstein and Lauenburg as well as to all countries until then serviced by the Hanover and Thurn and Taxis post offices. The *Schleswig-Holstein* post office serviced mail to Holstein and Lauenburg. It was taken over by Denmark the middle of February, 1851, and until February 1852 operated as "Holstein Division", when it was discontinued. The

Swedish post office handled mail to Sweden, Finland and, until 1858, also to Norway. *Thurn & Taxis* had only one post office in Hamburg, although it handled, together with Prussia, the bulk of all foreign mail, to all of the Thurn & Taxis postal territory, to Baden, Bavaria, Wurttemberg, France, Spain, the Italian States, Austria (Tyrol, Vorarlberg and Lombardy-Venetia only), Switzerland as well as overseas mail in transit through France (Marseille). The Thurn & Taxis post office was closed on June 30, 1867, and taken over by Prussia.

All foreign post offices at Hamburg, insofar as they had not been closed earlier, ended their activities on December 31, 1867, when the territory of Hamburg was incorporated into the North German Confederation and its postal service installed there. Only the Swedish Post Office remained open until it was also closed on March 31, 1869.

The Hamburg *currency* was the Hamburg "Courant", 1 mark (m) divided into 16 schillings, 1 schilling consisting of 12 pfennigs (pf). Half a schilling (6pf) was called a "Sechsling". The foreign post offices used their own currencies, the Thurn & Taxis postal service the silbergroschen currency of its Northern District. For *weight*, the metric pound of 500g divided into 32 loth (one loth about ½ ounce) was used. *Distances* were measured in miles, equivalent to about 7½ kilometers.

The Hamburg *"Stadtpost"* issued *Postage Stamps* on *January 1, 1859*. *Postal Envelopes* followed on *April 5, 1866* and *Postal Money Order Cards* were issued in the *first half of 1866*. No other kinds of stamps or stationery were introduced.

The *foreign post offices* in Hamburg were the first ones to introduce *Postage Stamps* there. The earliest was the *Schleswig-Holstein* post office, which introduced them on *Nov. 15, 1850. Hanover* followed shortly thereafter, by introducing postage stamps at its Hamburg post office on *December 1, 1850.* The *Thurn and Taxis* post office issued stamps in Hamburg on *January 1, 1852.* While these three postal administrations introduced stamps at Hamburg on the same day as at home, *Prussia* and *Denmark* were more reluctant, deferring their issuance until *January 1, 1852,* and *August 1, 1855,* respectively. The last in the line was *Mecklenburg-Schwerin,* which introduced

stamps in Hamburg on the same day, *July 1, 1856,* as in the country proper. The *Swedish* post office never introduced stamps at its Hamburg post office. Several of the foreign post offices also used their stationery in Hamburg, namely *Envelopes,* which were introduced in Hamburg by *Prussia* on *January 1, 1852, Mecklenburg-Schwerin* on *July 1, 1856, Hanover* on *April 15, 1857* and *Thurn and Taxis* on *October 1, 1861. Hanover* probably also used *Money Order Cards,* from *August 1865.*

It is claimed, that four *private city posts* also used stamps between 1861 and 1864. A number of issues are known, adhesives as well as envelopes, but their actual use, although possible, cannot be proven because no used copies are known which are above reproach. Until proof to the contrary is established, we must assume, that all of these private stamps are the product of two contemporary dealers, Ferdinand Elb of Dresden, and Spiro Brothers of Hamburg, who offered them to collectors as early as 1865.

The *postal rates* on January 1, 1859, when postage stamps were introduced, were rather simple. Letters up to 5 loths paid 1s in the city and its suburbs, to the rural area 2s. To Bergedorf, the fee was 1s for each loth, to the Bergedorf Vierlanden and to Ritzebüttel 2s for each loth. The same fee was collected per loth for ship letters which were handed to a ship captain for forwarding. To member countries of the German-Austrian Postal Union the rates fixed in this postal convention prevailed. Therefore, letters to Lubeck paid per loth 2s (= 1sg), to Bremen and Oldenburg up to a distance of 20 miles 3s (= 2sg) and to Oldenburg beyond 20 miles distance 4s (= 3sg). To Heligoland the fee was 4s (= 3sg) for 2 loths. To foreign countries, letters to the Netherlands paid 5s or 7s per loth depending upon the distance, to Great Britain and Ireland 9s per loth. Letters to overseas countries (British Colonies and Danish West Indies) via England paid 16s, while letters to the United States paid various fees depending upon the route, namely, on direct ships 6s, via Bremerhaven 9s and by closed Prussian mail via Aachen 18s, all rates being per loth. Printed matter including newspapers paid in the city, including the rural districts and Ritzebüttel, to Lubeck, Bremen and

Oldenburg ½s up to five loths, to Heligoland, the Netherlands and Great Britain 1s for each loth, to overseas countries per loth 2s for newspapers and 3s for printed matter. Printed matter to the U.S.A. paid 1s for direct mail, 2s via Prussian closed mail per loth and 6s for each 6 loths via Bremerhaven. Money Orders cost 3s up to 100 Mark and 4s over that amount. The registration fee was 2s. During the nine years of the use of Hamburg stamps, a number of rate reductions took place, the most important one for city letters, which from January 1, 1865, paid only ½s up to 15 loths. The same reduction took place for the rural mail service on March 1, 1866, and on June 15, 1866, also to the territory of Bergedorf. For bulk shipments of local letters, another reduction took place, from 50 schilling to 32 schilling for 100 letters. To Heligoland, the letter fee was now 2s for one loth and the printed matter fee reduced to ½s per loth on July 1, 1866. The letter fee to Great Britain and Ireland was reduced to 7s as early as July 1, 1859, to Netherlands to 4s on November 1, 1866; from October 1, 1865 the letter fee to Lubeck was 1¼s. When the postal service to Denmark, Schleswig-Holstein and Lauenburg as well as Norway was taken over on February 21, 1864, the Danish 4sk letter fee was first continued provisionally, with payment in Danish stamps; from March 1, 1864, the fee was 1¼s, which was increased to Denmark and Norway on April 1, 1864 to 2¼s. A special reduced fee of ½s was collected from September 1, 1867 for letters to the neighboring city of Altona in Holstein, this city being contiguous to the Hamburg suburb of St. Pauli.

Of the *foreign post offices,* so far as the rates to member countries of the German-Austrian Postal Union were concerned, Prussia and Thurn & Taxis charged the Union rates, namely, for single weight letters 1sg to 10 miles distance, 2sg from 10 to 20 miles distance and 3sg over 20 miles distance. The other post offices charged domestic rates, namely, for single weight letters Denmark 4sk, Hanover 1gg, from October 1, 1858 1g, Mecklenburg-Schwerin 1s (to 3 miles), 1½s (3 to 6 miles) and 3s (over 6 miles), from July 1, 1863 1s (to 5 miles), 2s (5 to 10 miles) and 3s (over 10 miles), and Schleswig-Holstein 1s and 2s, depending

on the distance. The Danish post office had the reduced city letter fee of 2sk introduced for letters from Hamburg to the neighboring town of Altona in Holstein. For printed matter, samples, registration and other fees, the appropriate Union or domestic rates applied respectively. For mail to foreign countries, Prussia and Thurn & Taxis charged varied and somewhat complicated rates, which often depended upon the route, especially to overseas countries.

Generally, mail had to be *franked* with the stamps of the postal service which handled it, in other words, local mail with "Stadtpost" stamps, mail to Hanover with Hanover stamps, mail to Mecklenburg-Schwerin with Mecklenburg-Schwerin stamps, mail to Baden with Thurn & Taxis stamps, etc. Amicable relations prevailed among the various post offices and when letters were posted at the wrong post office and/or franked with the wrong stamps, the post offices directed them to the correct post offices and accounted for any amounts they had received from the erroneous use of their own stamps on such letters. When mail boxes were introduced by the "Stadtpost" on January 1, 1865, the deposit therein of mail for all post offices was expressly permitted. When mail was addressed to a country to which the "Stadtpost" had no direct service, it was forwarded to the specific post office which had such service. If, as often was the case, the fee was paid by "Stadtpost" stamps — usually with 2s, 3s and 4s stamps for the 1sg, 2sg and 3sg German-Austrian Postal Union rates — the fees were properly accounted for with these particular post offices.

The *use* of postage stamps of the "Stadtpost" was never compulsory; during their whole period of use, mail could be sent at the same rates either franked with stamps or against payment in cash. In certain cases, franking with stamps was even prohibited or was impossible. This refers to local bulk mail — with a fee of about 1/3s for a letter, for which no stamp existed — and ship mail via England, for which postage had to be paid in full in cash and for which use of postage stamps was not permitted. The registration fee had also to be paid in cash and only from May 1866 was payment in stamps introduced. Originally, it made also no difference in the rate whether mail was sent paid or unpaid and for unpaid mail only the regular rate without surtax was collected from the addressee. But gradually higher rates were introduced for unpaid letters, for example, on Jan. 1, 1865, for local mail (1s unpaid, 1/2s paid), mail to Denmark (4s unpaid, 2 1/2s paid) and to Heligoland (3s unpaid, 2s paid). The *foreign post offices* generally had the same regulations as prevailed in the mother country; as a rule, at these post offices unpaid mail paid higher rates than paid mail.

Before mail boxes were introduced, in 1864 about 40,000 letters were mailed monthly at the "Stadtpost" offices. Of these letters, about 40% were unpaid and 60% paid, of the latter, on about three quarters postage was paid in cash and only on one quarter in stamps. After mail boxes were made available in 1865, the volume of letters increased about 10%. Because unpaid local letters now paid double rates, the percentage of unpaid letters diminished to 30%. The proportion between letters with the fee paid in cash or in stamps, was now reversed, about three-fifths being franked with stamps and only two-fifths paid in cash.

Following the example of Denmark, stamps were first considered a privilege for the large users of the mail service. Until this was changed on August 26, 1864, all Hamburg stamps were not sold singly by the post offices but only in horizontal strips of 8. From that date forward, in connection with the introduction of perforated stamps, sale of single stamps was authorized. From then on, buyers of full sheets of 96 stamps received a 3% discount. After Prussia had protested against this discount, which it considered a competitive move to harm its postal service in the city, this discount was again abolished on March 11, 1866.

When the Hamburg "Stadtpost" issued its first postage stamps on January 1, 1859, *denominations* fitting the main rates were introduced, namely *1/2s, 1s, 2s, 3s, 4s, 7s* and *9s.* All of these seven values remained in use during the entire period of Hamburg stamps. Only three new values were added, the first two when the mail service to Schleswig-Holstein and Lauenburg, as well as to Denmark was taken over on February 21, 1864, which necessitated new values of

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$1\frac{1}{4}s$ and $2\frac{1}{2}s$, which were issued on February 29, 1864, and April 2, 1864, respectively. The third value, a $1\frac{1}{2}s$ stamp, became necessary when the letter fee to Lubeck was reduced on October 1, 1865; it was issued rather belatedly on April 4, 1866. When *postal envelopes* were introduced on April 5, 1866, the values mainly needed at that time were provided, namely $\frac{1}{2}s$, $1\frac{1}{4}s$, $1\frac{1}{2}s$, $2s$, $3s$, $4s$ and $7s$. There were no 1s, $2\frac{1}{2}s$ and 9s envelopes because there was not sufficient mail to Denmark to warrant a special $2\frac{1}{2}s$ envelope; 1s as well as 9s had practically ceased to be letter rates when the domestic fee was reduced in 1865-66 from 1s to $\frac{1}{2}s$ and the fee to Great Britain from 9s to 7s in 1859. *Postal Money Orders*, issued in the first half of 1866, were *3s* and *4s*.

Of the foreign post offices, Prussia, Mecklenburg - Schwerin, Schleswig - Holstein and Thurn & Taxis seem to have used all values of their stamps and envelopes at their Hamburg post offices. Hanover officially only used there 1gg, later 1g, 2g, 3g (stamps and envelopes, possibly also money order cards), as well as 3pf, but actually $\frac{1}{2}g$ and 10g are also known used there, although only at the Ritzebüttel post office. Similarly the Danish post office officially used in Hamburg only the 4s value, but all other values are known used there, even the 4rs of 1851. But it seems that these additional values were brought to Hamburg by travellers or sent for return postage, a supposition which is supported by the fact that copies of the 4sk with the private perforation of Altona are also known used in Hamburg.

When foreign post offices were taken over by another administration, the old stamps usually were continued or tolerated for some time. When the Danish postal service was taken over by the "Stadtpost", the Danish stamps were allowed for postage to Schleswig-Holstein, Lauenburg and Denmark from February 21 to 29, 1864, which was quite necessary as the new $1\frac{1}{4}s$ stamps for this service were issued only on February 29, 1864. When Prussia took over the mail service to Schleswig-Holstein and Lauenburg, the use of Schleswig-Holstein stamps, $1\frac{1}{4}s$ and $1\frac{1}{2}s$ values, was permitted for such mail, but it seems that these stamps were never sold in Hamburg proper. When the

Hanover mail service was taken over by Prussia on June 16, 1866, the Hanover stamps were continued until September 30, 1866, and were replaced on the following day by the stamps of Prussia; but the Hanover stamps could be used up until October 31, 1866, and were tolerated even to the end of 1866. When the Thurn and Taxis mail service was taken over by Prussia on June 30, 1867, the Thurn and Taxis stamps became invalid immediately, but seem to have been tolerated for use during July 1867. When all remaining foreign post offices as well as the "Stadt-post" were closed down on December 31, 1867, all the stamps were demonetized on the same day and the post offices which reopened on January 1, 1868, sold and recognized only the new stamps of the North German Confederation.

The *design* of all Hamburg stamps had as its central motif the coat of arms of the Free City, on which the figure of value was superimposed. The original seven values all had the same design, except for the figure of value and the value indication at left and right, reading upwards. "HAMBURG" was at the top and "POSTMARKE" at bottom, both in curved ribbons. The additional values of $1\frac{1}{4}s$ and $2\frac{1}{2}s$ had principally the same design but while the coat of arms was on colorless ground on the 1859 design, it was on solid ground on the new values. Furthermore, "HAMBURG" was in a curved band on the $1\frac{1}{4}s$, which had "POSTMARKE" in a straight label, while on the $2\frac{1}{2}s$ both inscriptions were in straight labels, which were incorporated in a rectangular frame. The envelope stamps also had the coat of arms on solid ground, in an octagonal frame. This design was used at the same time for the stamps on the money order cards and also for the new $1\frac{1}{2}s$ adhesive. When the stones for the new $1\frac{1}{4}s$ and $2\frac{1}{2}s$ proved unsatisfactory, the design of the $1\frac{1}{4}s$ was also changed to the design of the envelope stamps but to make it more difficult to use cut squares from envelopes for postage — which was not permitted, because the envelope stamps usually were not cancelled when envelopes were used — the design was made rectangular by adding lined triangles in the corners and including them within the frame line. For the $2\frac{1}{2}s$,

the change consisted in the return to the original design of the 1859 adhesives. The two stamps in changed designs were issued on June 27, 1866, and May 5, 1867, respectively. The files give no information as to who designed all Hamburg stamps and whose work they are is not known.

Three different kinds of *printing methods* were used for Hamburg stamps and stationery. The first issue of postage stamps was *typographed* and printed from settings on the letter-press. This method was used for the postage stamps of ½s, 1s, 2s, 3s, 4s, 7s and 9s from 1859 to 1867 and for the 2½s in 1867. For the additional values of 1¼s and 2½s, *lithography* was used from 1864 to 1866. For the envelope stamps, which were also used for the money order cards, *typography combined with embossing* was introduced and used from 1866 to 1867. During the same period, the 1¼s and 1½s adhesives also were printed by the same method. The typographed stamps were printed by the Senate Printing Works of Th. G. Meissner of Hamburg, the lithographed stamps by C. Adler of Hamburg. The first printings of the envelopes, as well as the money order cards with embossed stamps, were made by the Prussian State Printing Works of Berlin, later printings of the envelopes as well as forms for money order cards (without stamps) were made by Rothschild, Behrens & Co. of Hamburg. The embossed 1¼s and 1½s adhesives were all printed by the Prussian State Printing Works of Berlin.

To obtain the *dies* for the originally issued typographed values, the complete design was cut in metal, probably copper, separately for each value. The original die for the 2½s of 1867 was produced in the same manner. For the 1¼s and 2½s of 1864, the complete design of each value was drawn separately on a stone. For the envelope stamps, a die was cut separately for each stamp. The die for the 1½s envelope stamps was also used for the adhesives, while for the 1¼s adhesives a new die was made, by adding triangular corners and remaking the frame lines in a working die taken from the die of the 1¼s envelope stamps. It is not known who cut the original dies for the typographed stamps, but they were made outside the printing establishment because it seems to have had no facilities for such

work. The design of the lithographed stamps was probably drawn on a stone by a lithographer of the printing firm and for the die of the envelope stamps, one of the engravers of the Prussian State Printing Works must have done the job.

For the *printing material* of the typographed stamps, the necessary number of stereotypes were taken from the die of each value and assembled to a setting, which consisted of two panes of 96 stamps (12 rows of 8), separated by a 47½mm. wide gutter. The rows were spaced 1½ to 2mm., the columns 3¼ to 3½mm.; vertical dividing lines were inserted between the columns, while such lines were omitted as unnecessary between the rows, as the stamps were sold only in rows of 8. On the top margin of each pane, the inscription "HAMBURGISCHE POSTMARKEN." was added and marginals inserted on the side margins, from "1" for the first row to "12" for the last row (Fig. 78). The top inscription, which was type-set and then stereotyped, comes in two different types, 6mm. high and 129mm. long, as well as 5mm. high and 118mm. long. It seems to be proven that there were several settings, at least for the most common values. For the lithographed stamps, first a transfer block of 12 (3x4) was made for each value by lithographic transfer, which in turn was transferred eight times to obtain the pane. The pane was transferred twice to a larger stone, spaced 47½mm. for the gutter, to obtain the printing stone. The process

Fig. 78

Fig. 79

chosen resulted in twelve transfer types of each value, which can be distinguished by small accidental characteristics of the design. Generally, the transfer types appear on the printed sheets in regular order as they were transferred from the transfer block, but because of replacements of defective or unsatisfactory transfers, irregularities can be noticed and certain positions of the stone show the transfer types out of order. The designs were spaced on the stones $2\frac{1}{4}$ to $2\frac{3}{4}$mm. in both directions. Vertical and horizontal dividing lines were drawn on the transfer block between the stamps and framing the block and these also appear on the printing stone. No inscription can be found on the top, but the marginals, now in italics, are on all four sides, from "1" to "12" from top to bottom and from "1" to "8" from left to right. The name of the printer, "C. Adler, Hamburg", also in italics, was inserted in the bottom margin, for the $1\frac{1}{4}$s in the right corner, and for the $2\frac{1}{2}$s in the middle below the fourth and fifth column (Fig. 79). At least two stones were used for each value, but this can easily be proven only for the $1\frac{1}{4}$s, for which the earliest stone shows rather heavy dividing lines (imperforate and perforated stamps), while later ones, made with the help of another transfer block, show the dividing lines thinner and rather indistinct (perforated stamps only). For the $2\frac{1}{2}$s, the perforated stamps were printed from a stone other than for the imperforate ones, again by using another transfer block. For the postal stationery, single electrotypes taken from the original dies, together with counter dies were used to print the embossed stamps on them. For the embossed adhesives ($1\frac{1}{4}$s and $1\frac{1}{2}$s), one hundred matrices were stereotyped for each value and two settings

of 50 (10x5) each assembled, of which electrotypes were taken and these two galvanos combined without gutter for the printing plate of 100 (10x10). The designs were spaced $1\frac{1}{4}$mm.; marginals "1" to "10" were inserted on all four sides, from top to bottom and from left to right. There were no other inscriptions on the margins and no dividing lines, only needle dots as an aid for the rouletting of the stamps in the middle of the top and bottom margin. The counter plates were obtained by embossing the complete plates in a soft metal.

No *plate varieties* of any significance have been found, only several plate flaws, some of which are constant and are found regularly in certain positions.

For the *printing* of the stamps, the Hamburg printers seem to have used handpresses, while in the Prussian State Printing Works steamdriven presses were employed. The printing of the typographed stamps was generally rather careful and badly printed stamps appear only in the last year of use; especially the $2\frac{1}{2}$s, first issued in 1867, usually comes in blurred and overinked prints. The lithographed stamps were less carefully printed; they soon showed signs of the wear of the stones, which resulted in blurred designs on the one hand and defective printing on the other hand, with many lines of the design broken or missing. The embossed adhesives and the stationery printed in Berlin were uniformly well printed as was customary for the products of the Prussian State Printing Works. The envelopes manufactured at Hamburg are somewhat less carefully printed.

Of major *printing varieties*, the imperforate 4s is known in distinct double prints, always ungummed. In all probability they

come from printer's waste of the perforated stamps, inasmuch as they were found only in the remainders and are not known used. The embossed stamps — adhesives as well as stationery — can be found in double prints, one of them colorless. This variety, which is characteristic of stamps printed by typography combined with embossing, was caused by feeding two sheets of paper into the printing press at the same time, the upper sheet receiving regular printing and embossing, while the lower sheet received colorless embossing only. Consequently, when this latter sheet was again fed into the printing press, it had this colorless embossing in addition to the regular print. This variety is known of the 1½s adhesive, unused only, as well as of various envelopes and of the money order cards. From the last Hamburg printing, the ½s envelope is known with the stamp and overprint inverted in the bottom left corner.

The *paper* of all Hamburg stamps and stationery was hand-made. Except for the adhesives and stationery printed by the Prussian State Printing Works, which were printed on wove paper, all adhesives and envelopes are printed on watermarked paper, which was supplied by the Thode Paper Works of Dresden. For the adhesives, a paper with sheet watermark was used. It consisted of twelve horizontal wavy lines, each 16 mm. high, extending over the pane, about 17cm. in width. The watermarks for each pane were enclosed in a single line frame. The sheet consisted of two such rectangles with twelve wavy lines, connected at the bottom by a single line, crossing a 47½mm. wide gutter. While the top part of this gutter showed no watermark at all, the bottom part, to a height of about 2½ rows of stamps, showed the coat of arms of Hamburg, standing on the bottom line which crosses the gutter. As the towers of the coat of arms are not symmetrical — one has four, the other three openings at the top — there exist two positions of the watermark, regular and reversed, depending upon which side of the paper was printed, but no inverted watermarks are known. Due to shifted watermark — which can also sometimes be found slightly oblique — stamps from margin rows or columns can be found without watermark and the gutter margin stamps of the last three rows

with parts of the arms watermark. Both occurrences are scarce. The watermark of the envelopes was embossed — only on those printed in Hamburg from December 1866, while the earlier Berlin printings are on wove paper — and consists of the coat of arms of Hamburg, covering the entire face of the envelopes. The arms are here equally asymmetrical, having four openings on the top of one tower and three on the other. Regular as well as reversed watermarks can be found and a few cases of inverted or double watermark are known, as well as obliquely shifted one. The watermark of the envelopes is sometimes rather indistinct and sometimes hardly visible, which fact has led to the erroneous report of envelopes printed in Hamburg on unwatermarked paper. Thick and distinctly thin watermarked paper can be distinguished for some of these envelopes. Only four values of the envelopes, ½s, 2s, 3s and 4s, were also printed on watermarked paper, but the 3s envelopes were not issued and are known unused only, from the remainders. The paper of the money order cards was blue and without watermark.

The *color scheme* used for the stamps of Hamburg was an independent one and did not conform to that of any other country. With one exception, all values retained their color during the entire Hamburg stamp period. As originally issued, the ½s was *black*, 1s *brown*, 2s *red*, 3s *blue*, 4s *green*, 7s *orange* and 9s *yellow*. Of the additional values, 1¼s was *lilac*, 1½s *carmine* and 2½s *blue green*. The only color change concerns the 7s which changed to *purple*, issued on February 9, 1865. As the reason for this change, it was said that it was made to conform to the color used for the equivalent value by other German-Austrian Postal Union countries, probably meaning the Thurn & Taxis 5sg, which was purple. But as other values did not conform to the Union colors — for example the 4s was green while the Union color for its equivalent of 3sg was brown — it seems that the actual reason was otherwise, possibly the similarity to the 2s or 9s under artificial light. The colors used for the stamps on envelopes and money order cards were the same as for the contemporary adhesives.

The number of *shades* of the Hamburg stamps is not considerable for the typographed and embossed stamp and generally

only slight variations can be found. The only exception is the 3s which early in 1865 underwent a change from blue to ultramarine and was printed in the latter color from then on; the 3s stamps on the envelopes and money order cards come only in ultramarine. Of the other values, only lighter or paler and darker shades are noticeable, but the 2s tends to red orange shades, especially the envelope stamps, the green of the 4s comes with yellowish and bluish tints and the green of the 2½s 1867 in grayish and olive shades. The purple of the 1¼s of 1866 also varies from lilac to violet shades. Much greater is the variety of shades for the lithographed stamps. While the 2½s can be found only in yellowish and bluish tints of its green color, the lilac of the 1¼s was most sensitive and fluctuates from lilac and purple to violet, with grayish and blackish shades. Distinct gray, greenish gray, green and blue shades of this latter stamp are the result of accidental changes of the ink, which occurred in part even before the stamps were printed, but frequently only later, under the influence of the gum, or still later, under specific atmospheric conditions. We view these accidental color changes generally with suspicion, although some of these stamps may have been sold by the post offices in such off colors. But the great majority occurred through later chemical influence, either accidental through climatic conditions or by the storage of letters in unsuitable cellars or attics, or fraudulently, by artificial changelings of regular stamps. Only stamps with full original gum or in their original state on cover provide some assurance that their color is the original one as sold at the post office. However, as the color is so sensitive that changing by dry methods, by fumes alone, is possible, we can never be sure how one of these stamps looked when it was originally sold by the post office.

The *gum* of the stamps of Hamburg was rather uneven, which often makes it difficult to ascertain whether a stamp has original gum. In any case, the gum was supplied in Hamburg by hand with brushes and the two printing establishments which supplied the stamps used different kinds of gum. Furthermore, the gum varied in part for each printing. Generally, the gum of the typographed stamps was thick, shiny and more or less brownish. The lithographed stamps show the greatest variety; their gum was first thinner and less shiny than that of the typographed stamps and only slightly yellowish. Later, it became thicker, more shiny and more yellowish and in the last printings was similar to that of the typographed stamps, by being thick, shiny and strongly yellowish. It seems, that the gum was applied only to small batches of sheets, when the post offices needed new supplies, which accounts for the rather great diversity. In contrast, the Berlin-printed embossed stamps were machine-gummed and show a uniformly colorless even gum.

The first Hamburg stamps were issued *imperforate* and the vertical dividing lines tended to help the separation for the private users who bought the stamps in strips of eight; horizontal dividing lines were dispensed with as it was believed that the postal clerks did not need such help to separate the sheet properly into strips. These dividing lines were continued even after they became unnecessary by the issuance of perforated stamps, from August 26, 1864 on. First, only the ½s, 1s, 2s, 3s, 4s, 7s and 9s were introduced perforated. The 1¼s followed in September 1864 and the 2½s as late as April 1865. The 7s in new color and the 2½s of 1867 were issued only perforated. The separation was a line perforation 13½ and was applied to panes of 96, the perforating lines running through the sheet margins on all four sides. The perforation of all typographed and lithographed stamps was supplied by C. Adler of Hamburg by a device purchased in 1856 from England, although the typographed stamps were printed by another printer. The embossed stamps of 1¼s and 1½s, which were printed by the Prussian State Printing Works, there received a colorless roulette 10, which was applied with an appropriate setting of sharpened lines in one operation for each sheet; the roulette does not run through the sheet margins.

There exist a number of *imperforate* and *part perforated* varieties of the perforated stamps, printed in Hamburg, most of which were found among the remainders. In part they can be considered printer's waste, which was retained during the control of the issued perforated sheets, in part they are unfinished sheets which remained imper-

Fig. 80

forate in 1867 at the end of the period of the use of Hamburg stamps. Such part perforated stamps are known of the ½s (imperforate vertically, and top sheet margin imperforate horizontally), 1¼s and 3s (both horizontal pairs, imperforate between), as well as 9s (vertical pair, imperforate between), and the 2½s of 1867 (horizontal and vertical pairs, imperforate between, also margin copies imperforate at margins). Of the 1¼s of 1864 there was a used pair, imperforate between, in the Ferrari Collection (Fig. 80), while the varieties of the four other values are known only unused. The known copies of 1s, strips of 3 and 4 imperforate vertically, all used, although considered bona fide by several reliable authors, in our opinion are fakes, made from imperforate stamps. Various values — reported are the ½s, 1¼s, 2½s, 3s, 4s, 7s orange and 9s — are known with double perforation, vertically or horizontally, but as far as they are unused and without gum they probably belong to the printer's waste sold with the remainders. Entirely imperforate varieties of the perforated stamps are easily recognizable for the 3s ultramarine, the 7s purple and the 2½s of 1867 as these three stamps were not issued imperforate. Of the other values only differences in the shades make possible distinction between the imperforate 1859 and 1864 stamps and unfinished (imperforate) stamps of the perforated 1864 stamps. A large part of unused stamps supposed to be of the 1859 issue and sold as such, in our opinion actually consist of such unfinished 1864 stamps. Only when imperforate stamps have undoubted original gum they can be considered the 1859 issue, because most of the remainders were ungummed.

The *postal stationery* had special features which made it rather diversified. The envelopes printed by the Prussian State Printing Works had all the characteristics of such products; many similarities with the envelopes of other Old German States, which were also printed there, are the

consequence. The envelopes manufactured in Hamburg in turn had their own specific characteristics.

On all envelopes, the stamp was embossed in the top right corner. In the same corner, an oblique *overprint* in black, sometimes grayish black, was applied which read on the ½s envelope "EIN HALBER SCHILLING POST-COUVERT" and similarly on the other values. The dies for the stamps were supplied by the Berlin printers to the Hamburg printers late in 1866; therefore they are identical on all printings. For the overprint, which was applied in Berlin with the help of a steel roll, the Hamburg printers probably used a flat setting which differs distinctly in the type and other details from the Berlin overprint. Furthermore, it reads "SCHILLING" for all values, while on the Berlin overprint it is "SCHILLINGE" for 3s, 4s and 7s. In view of the fact that the smallest available type — pearl — was used for the overprint, it is not surprising that various setting errors occurred in the Hamburg overprint, the most conspicuous ones being wrong letters (BSCHILLING for SCHILLING), transposed letters (VEIR for VIER, OCUVERT for COUVERT), missing letters (SCHILLIN for SCHILLING, EI for EIN) and inverted letters (T inverted in POST and COUVERT, E inverted in VIER) which were reported on various values. Several values are also reported with double overprint, but they must be considered printer's waste as they were found only in the remainders and are not known used.

While there was only one *size* of the envelopes there was a small difference in the size of the Berlin and Hamburg products, the former being 147x84mm., the latter 148x84mm. The *cut* of the envelopes from both sources also shows some differences. The *gum* on the flap was rather long on both kinds of envelopes but the Berlin envelopes generally were better gummed than the Hamburg ones. There were rather conspicuous differences in the *seal* on the top flap of the envelopes. The Berlin prints have the so-called Prussian seal, which was also used for envelopes of Prussia and other countries. It consisted of guilloche-type ornaments, of which 24 were in an outer ring and 6 in an inner ring. For the Hamburg prints, a seal of similar kind was used but with 22 outer and 7 inner orna-

ments. For the first Hamburg printings, this latter seal was embossed with the counter-die only; therefore it shows a flat embossing and all the details recessed which are regularly raised, and vice-versa. Only for the second Hamburg printing was the seal embossed in the regular way. Envelopes without seal and with double seal can be found, unused as well as used.

The *money order cards* were forms of 169x110mm. printed in black, which in the center at top had the coat of arms in a circle with negative inscriptions; the stamp was embossed at top right. They were printed only in Berlin. Similar forms without stamps were later printed in Hamburg. They have the coat of arms without circle in the center at top and a rectangular space for affixing adhesives at top right.

(To be continued)

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

● *The next issue* of the *MERCURY STAMP JOURNAL* is scheduled for *May, 1957.*

● *Our editor* will again *travel in Europe* during the early summer of 1957. He will leave New York on *May 15* and return on *July 9.* He intends to visit England, France, Germany, Switzerland and Austria, possibly also a few other countries. Communications during his stay in Europe will reach him at the following addresses: Felix Pollak, Ann's Cottage, Brook Farm Road, Cobham, Surrey, England (until May 25), Adolf Glaettli, Bahnhofstr. 110, Zurich, Switzerland (until June 10), Dr. Stefan Fischer, Ferrogasse 16, Wien XVIII, Austria (until June 20), Ladislas Varga, 9 Rue Gounod, Paris, France (until June 30), and then again at the address in England (until July 4).

● *The "Catalog of the Imperforate Classic Postal Stamps of Europe"* is now *in print* and publication is scheduled for *April 1957.* The subscription was closed on January 31 and new orders will be accepted at the publication price of $6.00 plus 25c postage. Bills will be sent to all subscribers shortly and should be paid before March 31 to insure receipt of the catalog immediately after publication. Subscriptions not paid at publication time will be cancelled. Shipment of all orders will be made by the printers directly from Vienna, but copies can also be obtained from the agents in

various countries appointed for the sale of the catalog. Judging from the subscriptions received, the catalog will be sold out before publication or shortly thereafter. For more details concerning the catalog, see the advertisement on page 120.

the philatelic AUCTIONEER

● *The Auction Season of 1956-57* has fulfilled the promise of the early sales by being a good season. The shortage of material seems to have been overcome, as the high prices realized brought out a number of sellers. Although their material is not always top notch, it practically always includes some very fine and interesting material selling at high prices. The number of regular auction buyers has increased considerably as more and more collectors discover that buying stamps at auction from a reputable auction house is the most sensible way to acquire scarce and rare stamps. Quite a number of collectors buy and sell through auctions and have done quite well at it. Of course, there are always some collectors who have exaggerated opinions of the value of their collections, by failing to take into account inferior quality. Although such collections in auctions generally bring a correct price according to the condition of the material, the owners often are unjustly dissatisfied. Usually such collectors also complain about the auction fees, although rising costs for everything, including manufacture of the auction catalogs, actually make the business of the auction houses less and less profitable. The sellers of high quality items as well as rare and interesting covers are easier to satisfy because the demand for such items is still improving. The "repatriation" trend is continuing, because in a number of countries collectors are prepared to pay considerably higher prices for the stamps of their country than the American collector is willing to pay. As a result, almost all good Switzerland, Old Italian States, Sweden and some other countries, offered in auctions over here, take a trip across the Atlantic and land in various collections in Europe. In any case, this tendency has contributed to rising prices for such material, to the satisfaction of the sellers, who in some cases realize for items of this kind much