

Germany's "Lost Colonies"



Colonial Flag

During the Paris Peace Conference, the victorious Allied Powers met to discuss and set forth the peace terms for a defeated Germany. The conference began on January 18, 1919. A central issue of the Conference was the disposition of the overseas colonies of Germany.

The British dominions wanted their reward for their sacrifice. Australia wanted New Guinea, New Zealand wanted Samoa, and South Africa wanted South West Africa. Woodrow Wilson wanted the League of Nations to administer all the German colonies until such time as they were ready for independence.

Prime Minister David Lloyd George realized he needed to support his dominions, and he proposed a compromise that there be three types of mandates. Mandates for the Turkish provinces were one category; they would be divided up between Britain and France. The second category, comprising New Guinea, Samoa, and South West Africa, were located so close to responsible supervisors that the mandates could hardly be given to anyone except Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.



*Germany – Post Offices in China
1905 Unused 2-Cents Paid Reply Postal Card*

Finally, the African colonies would need the careful supervision as "Class B" mandates that could only be provided by experienced colonial powers Britain, France, and Belgium. Woodrow Wilson and the others finally went along with the solution. The dominions received "Class C Mandates" to the colonies they wanted. Japan obtained mandates over German possessions north of the equator.

The exhibit will show when the colony was acquired, utilization of the resources within the colony, and which country it was mandated for administration by the use of postage stamps, postcards, and covers.

German Offices in China 1891 – 1914



Issued 1898

Along with much of the rest of Shandong, Yantai was controlled by the Germans for about 20 years. In the run-up to the First World War, its trade continued to grow but was limited by the poor roads of the area's hinterland and the necessity of using pack animals for portage. After the Germans were defeated by Allied forces in World War I, Qingdao and Yantai were handed over to the Japanese, who turned Yantai into a summer station for their Asian fleet.

The development of Tsingtao urban space during Germany-occupied period originated from the port area. Large scale urban construction began in 1898 with the relocation of Chinese dwellers along the coast. With the completion of such series of projects as wharves, Tsingtao-Jinan Railway Line, Tsingtao Railway Station and locomotive works, a city was starting to take shape.

The area had the highest school's density and highest per capita student enrollment in all of China, with primary, secondary and vocational schools funded by the Berlin treasury and Protestant and Roman Catholic missions. In 1914, Tsingtao was taken over by Japanese and served as a base for the exploitation of natural resources of Shandong and northern China.

German Offices in Morocco 1899 - 1919



Issued 1899

The network of post offices in foreign countries established by Germany were to provide mail service where the local services were deemed unsafe or unreliable. They were generally set up in cities with some sort of German commercial interest. German stamps started appearing in the late 19th century and reached their heyday at the beginning of the 20th century; they closed down during or shortly after World War I.

German post offices in Morocco (German: Deutsche Post in Marokko) started to operate in 1899. German definitive stamps were used with overprints; after the first issue the valuta was changed to pesetas and centimos. German post offices closed in French-controlled Morocco in 1914, and in Spanish-controlled Morocco on June 16, 1919.

German Offices in Turkey 1872 - 1914

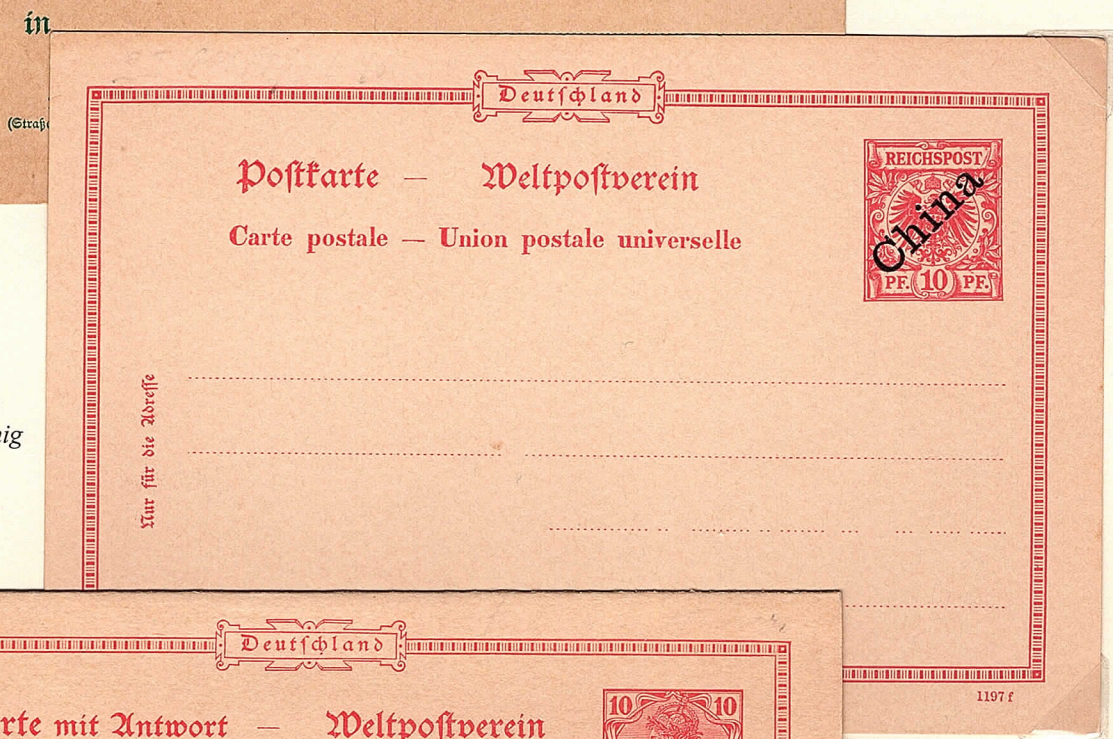
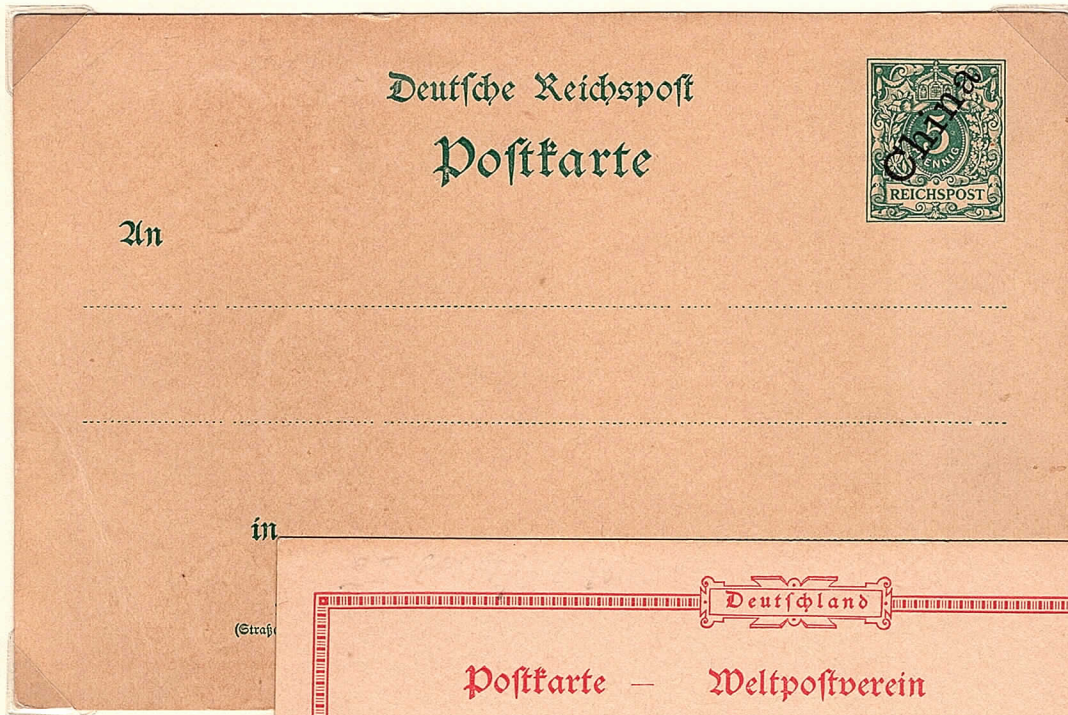


Issued 1889

On March 1, 1870, the postal service of the North German Confederation opened its first office in Constantinople (Istanbul) using definitive stamps without an overprint. After January 1872, the Reichspost took over the management of the office. Starting in 1884, stamps began to be issued with overprints restating the stamp's face value in the Turkish denominations, i.e. piasters and paras. The overprint did not include an additional country name, as was the case with stamps issued for use at the German post offices in Morocco and China.

Beginning in 1908, the German Post Offices in Turkey issued an additional set of stamps which it sold at the same time as the series overprinted with values in Turkish piasters. This 1908 series had diagonal overprints with new denominations in French centimes instead of horizontal overprints in Turkish piaster denominations. The Reichspost decided to issue this French currency series as exchange rates made the parcel post rates charged by the German Post Office more expensive than those of other countries also operating in Turkey. With the entry of Turkey into World War I the offices were closed on 30 September 1914.

German Offices Postal Cards



Cameroun 1884 - 1916

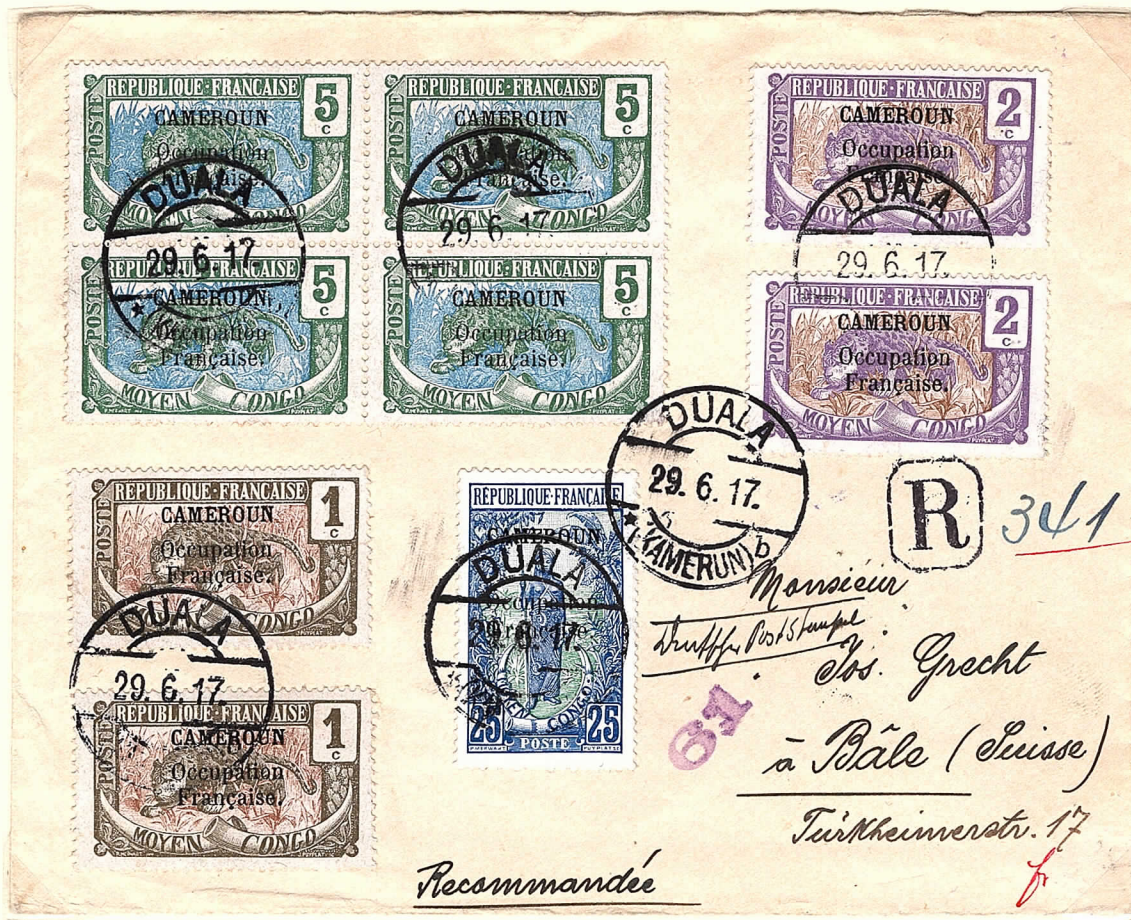
In 1884, Adolph Woermann, representing West African companies as their spokesman, petitioned the imperial foreign office for “protection” by the German Empire. Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, the Imperial Chancellor, sought to utilize the traders in governing the region via “chartered companies”.

In response to Bismarck’s proposal, the companies withdrew their petition. Bismarck yielded to the Woermann position and instructed the admiralty to dispatch a gunboat.



Flag of the German Foreign Office

The protectorate of Cameroun was established during the period generally known as Europe’s imperialist “Scramble for Africa”. The German explorer, medical doctor, imperial consul and commissioner for West Africa, Gustav Nachtigal, was the driving force toward the colony’s establishment. By then well over a dozen German companies, based in Hamburg and Bremen, conducted trading and plantation activities in Cameroun.



*French Occupation
June 1917
Duala, Cameroun
to Bale, Switzerland*



With imperial treasury subsidies, the colony built two rail lines from the port city of Duala to bring agricultural products to market. An extensive postal and telegraph system and a river navigation network with government ships connected the coast to the interior. The Cameroun protectorate was enlarged with New Cameroon in 1911 as part of the settlement of the Agadir Crisis, resolved by the Treaty of Fez.

In 1914, at the outbreak of World War I, French, Belgian and British troops invaded the German colony and occupied it during the Cameroun campaign. The last German fort to surrender was at Mora in the north of the colony in 1916. Following Germany's defeat, the Treaty of Versailles divided the territory into two League of Nations mandates; Class B under the administration of Great Britain and France.

Caroline Islands

1899 – 1919

After the Spanish-American War of 1898, Spain sold the Caroline and Mariana Islands to Germany in the German-Spanish Treaty (1899) for 17 Million Goldmark, while reserving the right to establish a coal mine in the area. Germany governed the archipelago and was administratively associated with German New Guinea.

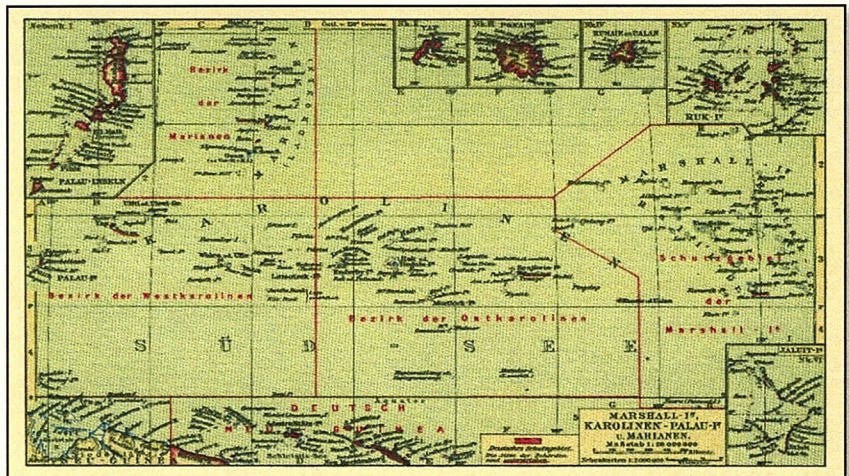


*Caroline Islands, March 1913
Yap, Carolines to Berlin, Germany*

Japan invaded and occupied the islands in 1914, during World War I.

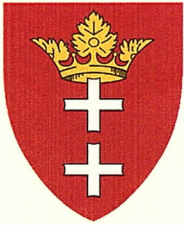
The Western Carolines under the squadron commanded by Rear Admiral Matsumura Tatsuo, and the Eastern Carolines under Vice-Admiral Yamaya Tanin.

In 1920, after the conclusion of World War I, Japan received a League of Nations mandate over the Caroline and Marshall Islands.



Danzig

1871 – 1919



Danzig Coat of Arms

Danzig was annexed by the Kingdom of Prussia in 1793, in the Second Partition of Poland. From 1807 to 1814, during the era of Napoleon Bonaparte, Danzig became a “Free City”. In 1815, after France's defeat in the Napoleonic Wars, Danzig again became part of Prussia. With the unification of Germany, Danzig became part of Imperial Germany in 1871, and remained part of Germany until their defeat in World War I.

When Poland regained its independence after World War I with access to the sea as promised by the Allies on the basis of Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points", the Polish people hoped the city's harbor would also become part of Poland. However, since Germans formed a majority in the city, with the Polish people being a minority, the city was not placed under Polish sovereignty.

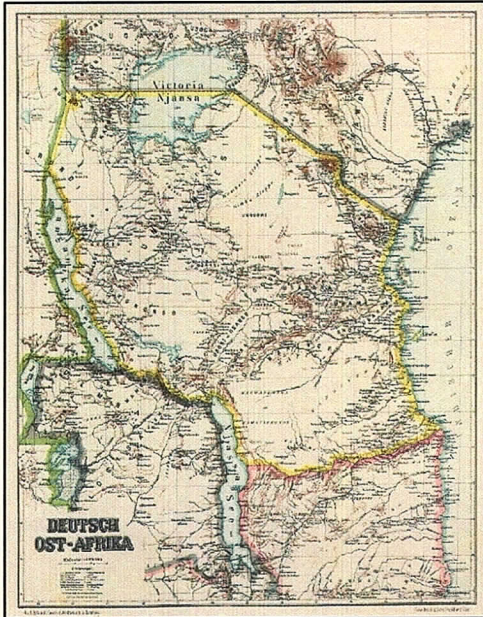


Issued 1920

In accordance with the terms of the Versailles Treaty, it became the Free City of Danzig, an independent quasi-state under the auspices of the League of Nations with its external affairs largely under Polish control. Poland's rights also included free use of the harbor, a Polish post office, a Polish garrison in Westerplatte district, and customs union with Poland.

German East Africa

1885 – 1919



The colony began when Carl Peters, an adventurer who founded the Society for German Colonization, signed treaties with several native chieftains on the mainland. On March 3, 1885, the German government announced an imperial charter was granted, which was signed by Chancellor Otto von Bismarck on February 27, 1885.

Germans promoted commerce and economic growth. Over 100,000 acres were put under sisal cultivation, which was the largest cash crop. Two million coffee trees were planted, rubber trees grew on 200,000 acres, and there were large cotton plantations. The Kironda-Goldminen-Gesellschaft established the first gold mine in the colony, the Sekenke Gold Mine, which began operation in 1909.

General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, who had served in German South West Africa and Cameroun, led the German military in German East Africa during World War I. His military consisted of 3,500 Europeans and 12,000 native Askaris and porters.

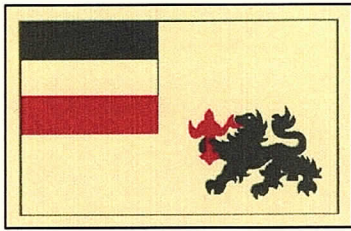


*Issued 1910 – 1916
Kaiser's Yacht "Hohenzollern"*

Lettow-Vorbeck's guerrilla warfare compelled Britain to commit significant resources to a minor colonial theatre throughout the war and inflicted more than 10,000 casualties. Eventually, the weight of numbers, especially after forces coming from the Belgian Congo had attacked from the west and dwindling supplies forced Lettow-Vorbeck to abandon the colony. He withdrew south into Mozambique and then into Northern Rhodesia where he agreed to a ceasefire. This was three days after receiving news of the armistice between the warring nations.

The Supreme Council of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference awarded all of German East Africa to Britain on May 7, 1919, over the objections of Belgium. The British colonial secretary, Alfred Milner and Belgium's minister Pierre Orts, negotiated the Anglo-Belgian agreement, whereas Britain ceded the north-western German East Africa provinces of Ruanda and Urundi to Belgium. The Treaty of Versailles was signed on July 28, 1919. The treaty did not take effect until January 10, 1920, and German East Africa was officially transferred to Britain, Belgium, and Portugal.

German New Guinea 1884 – 1914



Flag of the New Guinea Campaign

In the early 1880s, an active minority, stemming mainly from a right-wing National Liberal and Free Conservative background, had organized various colonial societies all over Germany to persuade Chancellor Otto von Bismarck to embark on a colonial policy.

The most important ones were the Kolonialverein of 1882 and the Society for German Colonization which was founded in 1884. To expand the highly profitable plantations the Germans needed more native workers.

The government sent military expeditions to take direct control of more areas. Instead of voluntary recruitment it became a matter of forced mobilization. The government enforced new laws that required the tribes to furnish four weeks of labor per person annually and payment of a poll tax in cash, thereby forcing reluctant natives into the work force.

After 1910 the government tried to ameliorate the impact by ending the recruitment of women in some areas and entirely closing other areas to recruiting. The planters protested vehemently, and the government responded by sending troops to fresh areas to impose the labor policy.



Issued 1901 - 1919

Bottom 3 Stamps Issued "NeuGuinea" without the Hyphen. They were never placed in use.

Australian troops captured Kaiser-Wilhelmsland and the nearby islands in 1914, after a short resistance led by captain Carl von Klewitz and Lt. Robert "Lord Bob" von Blumenthal after the outbreak of World War I. After the Treaty of Versailles was signed in 1919, Germany lost all its colonial possessions, including German New Guinea.

In 1923, the League of Nations gave Australia a trustee mandate over Nauru, with the United Kingdom and New Zealand as co-trustees. Other lands south of the equator became the Territory of New Guinea, a League of Nations Mandate Territory under Australian administration.

German South-West Africa 1884 - 1915

On 16 November 1882 a German merchant from Bremen, Adolf Lüderitz, requested protection for a station that he planned to build in South West Africa, from Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. On April 24, 1884, he placed the area under the protection of Imperial Germany to deter British encroachment. The German flag was finally raised in South West Africa on August 7, 1884. The German claims on this land were confirmed during the Conference of Berlin. In October, the appointed Commissioner for West Africa, Gustav Nachtigal, arrived on the SMS Möwe.

In April 1885, the German Colonial Society for Southwest Africa, was founded with the support of German bankers, industrialists, and politicians. The society was granted monopoly rights to exploit mineral deposits. In 1908, diamonds were discovered. Gold, copper, platinum, and other minerals became a major investment.



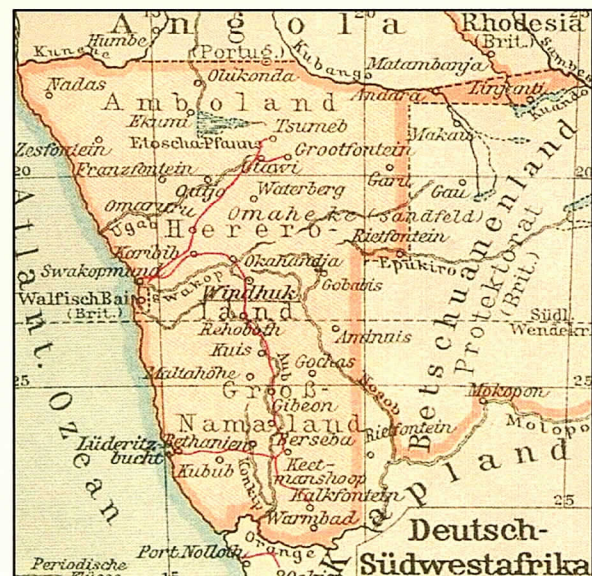
German POW Cover,
December 1916
Prisoner-of-War Camp
Aus, South-West Africa to
Windhoek, South-West Africa



During the First World War, South African troops opened hostilities with an assault on the Ramansdrift police station on September 13, 1914.

Due to the overwhelming superiority of the South African troops, the German Schutztruppe, along with groups of Afrikaner volunteers fighting in the Maritz Rebellion on the German side, offered opposition only as a delaying tactic.

On July 9, 1915, Victor Franke, the last commander of the Schutztruppe, capitulated near Khorab. After the war, the territory came under the control of Britain, and was made a South African League of Nations mandate.



Kiauchau

1898 – 1914



Civilian Administration Flag of Kiauchau

On April 8, 1898, Kiauchau Bay was officially placed under German protection by imperial decree. As a result of the lease treaty, the Chinese government gave up the exercise of its sovereign rights within the leased territory.

According to international law, the leased territory remained legally part of China but for the duration of the lease, all sovereign powers were to be exercised by Germany.

The treaty included rights for construction of railway lines and mining of local coal deposits. Kiauchau was transformed into a modern realm with Germany investing upwards of \$100 million. The impoverished fishing village of Tsingtau was laid out with wide streets, solid housing areas, government buildings, electrification throughout, a sewer system and a safe drinking water supply. The completion of the Shantung Railroad in 1910 provided a connection to the Trans-Siberian Railway which allowed travel by train from Tsingtau to Berlin.



Issued 1901 - 1905

On 15 August 1914, at the outbreak of World War I in Europe, Japan delivered an ultimatum to Germany demanding that it relinquishes its control of the disputed territory of Kiauchau. Upon rejection of the ultimatum, Japan declared war on 23 August 23, 1914, the same day its navy bombarded the German territory. On November 7, 1914, the bay was occupied by Japanese forces. Following the resolution of the Shandong Problem, the occupied territory was returned to China on December 10, 1922.

Mariana Islands

1899 – 1919

Weakened from its defeat in the Spanish-American War, Spain could no longer effectively control and protect the nearly 6,000 islands it retained throughout Micronesia, including the Northern Marianas, Carolines and Pelew Islands. Spain entered into the German-Spanish Treaty on February 12, 1899, to sell the Northern Marianas and its other remaining islands to Germany for 837,500 German Goldmark's. The Northern Marianas and other island groups were incorporated by Germany as a small part of the larger German Protectorate of New Guinea.



Issued 1901



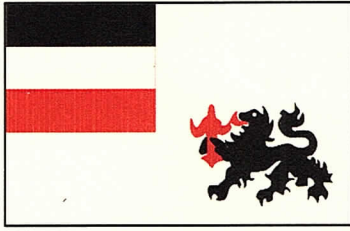
Japan, allied with the Entente Powers during World War I and seized all of Germany's colonial possessions in East Asia and Micronesia, including the Northern Mariana Islands.

Under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, Germany was stripped of all her colonies worldwide, including the Palau, Caroline, Northern Mariana and Marshall Islands.

By international agreement, these were all placed into trusteeship under the management of League of Nations which assigned them to Japan as the Class C South Pacific Mandate.

Marshall Islands

1885 – 1919



Imperial Colonial Flag of the German Empire

Spain sold the islands to the German Empire in 1885, and they became part of German New Guinea. Germany established a protectorate and set up trading stations on the islands of Jaluit and Ebon to carry out the flourishing dried coconut meat trade. The Marshallese Iroj (high chiefs) continued to rule under indirect colonial German administration.



*Marshall Islands Postcard, September 1910
Jaluit, Marshall Islands to Leipzig, Germany*

Japan assumed control of the Marshall Islands at the beginning of World War I. The Japanese headquarters was established at the German center of administration, Jaluit. In 1920, the League of Nations combined the other German territories to form the South Pacific Mandate.

Saarland 1871 - 1919



Flag of Saarland

On July 31, 1870, the French Emperor Napoleon III ordered an invasion across the River Saar to seize Saarbrücken. The first shots of the Franco-Prussian War 1870-1871 were fired on the heights of Spichern, south of Saarbrücken. The Saar region became part of the German Empire on January 18, 1871.



Saarland Coat of Arms

Prior to its creation as the Territory of the Saar Basin by the League of Nations after World War I, the Saarland did not exist as a unified entity. Until then, some parts of it had been Prussian while others belonged to Bavaria. Saarland is the result of a regulation of the treaty of Versailles and was created in 1919



Issued 1920

Prior to this creation, there never existed a comparable administrative unit or a feeling of togetherness. In 1920 the Saargebiet was occupied by Britain and France under the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. The occupied area included portions of the Prussian Rhine Province and the Bavarian Rhenish Palatinate. The region was administered by France. In 1920 this was formalized by a 15-year League of Nations mandate.

Samoa

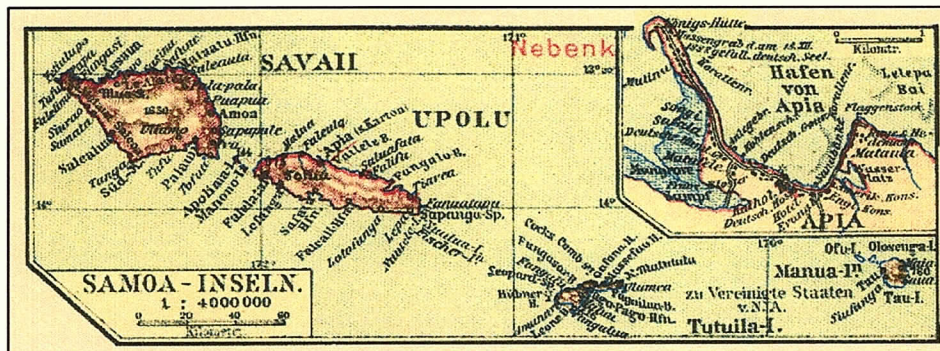
1900 – 1914

German Samoa was a German protectorate from 1900 to 1914, consisting of the islands of Upolu, Savai'i, Apolima and Manono. Samoa was the last German colonial acquisition in the Pacific basin, received following the Tripartite Convention signed in Washington, D.C. on December 2, 1899 with ratifications exchanged on 16 February 1900.

The colonial period officially began with the raising of the imperial flag on March 1, 1900. Wilhelm Solf the first governor, skillfully grafted Samoan institutions into the new system of colonial government by the acceptance of native customs. Solf himself learned many of the customs and rituals important to the Samoan people, observing cultural etiquette including the ceremonial drinking of kava.



*Issued 1900 - 1915
Bottom 3 Stamps were never placed in use.*



Energetic efforts by colonial administrators established the first public school system; a hospital was built and staffed and enlarged as needed, and Samoan women were trained as nurses. At the behest of Great Britain, the colony was invaded unopposed on the morning of August 29, 1914 by troops of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

Vice Admiral Count Maximilian von Spee of the German East Asia Squadron gained knowledge of the occupation and hastened to Samoa with the armored cruisers SMS Scharnhorst and SMS Gneisenau, arriving off Apia on September 14, 1914. However, he determined that a landing would only be of temporary advantage in an Allied dominated sea and the cruisers departed. New Zealand occupied the German colony through 1920.

Togoland

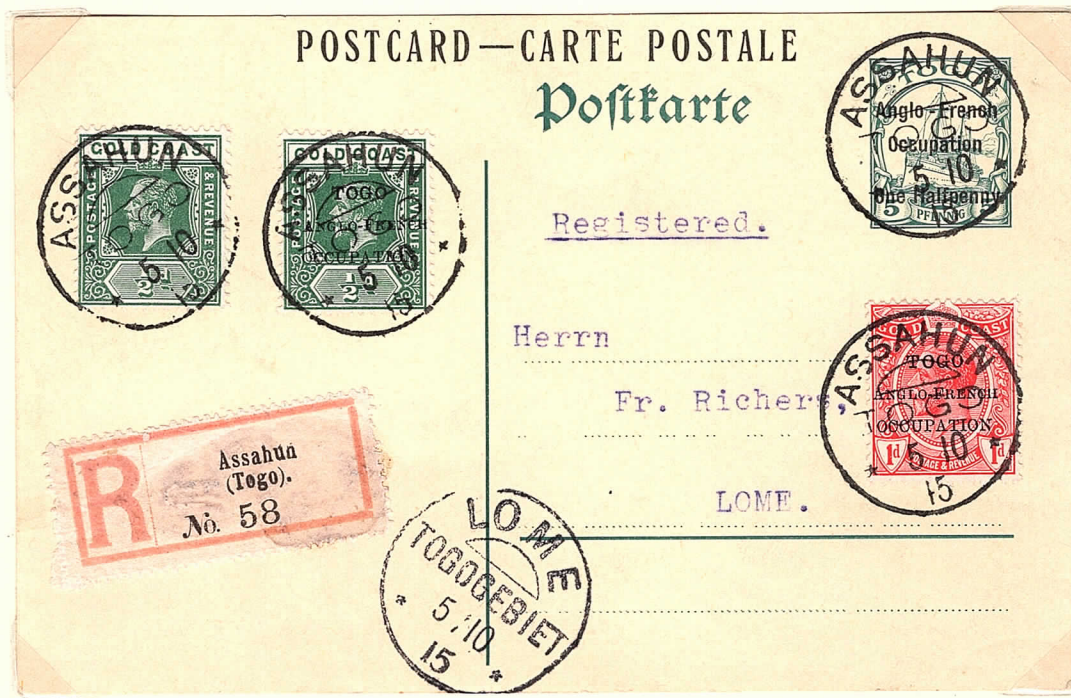
1884 – 1914



Proposed Flag of Togoland

Togoland was a German protectorate in West Africa encompassing what is now the nation of Togo and most of what is now the Volta Region of Ghana. The colony was established during the period generally known as the "Scramble for Africa".

The colony was established in 1884 in part of what was then the Slave Coast and was gradually extended inland. At the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 the colony was drawn into the conflict.



*Togo Postcard, October 1915
Anglo- French Occupation
Assahun, Togo to Lome, Togo*

It was invaded and quickly overrun by British and French forces during the Togoland campaign and placed under military rule. On December 27, 1916, Togoland was separated into French and British administrative zones. Following the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, on July 20, 1922, Togoland formally became a League of Nations Class B mandate divided into French Togoland and British Togoland.

Germany's Mourning Vignettes

After the Treaty of Versailles, a chamber of commerce organization issued "mourning" vignettes, in 1920, appearing to be like postage stamps for the lost colonies and territories. They were to be used as labels to seal envelopes for mailing. The vignettes show the Imperial Yacht, flag and the colony's name.



Mourning Poster for Vignettes



Souvenir Book for Vignettes

Never Forget!

Gathering all your forces for the offensive never to give way, showing yourself powerful; this calls the arms of the Gods to your side.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
1749 - 1832

Example Vignettes Shown Below

