

# THE SMOKY MOUNTAIN PHILATELIST

## JOURNAL OF THE ASHEVILLE STAMP CLUB



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**THE ASHEVILLE STAMP CLUB**  
WWW.STAMPS.ORG/ASHEVILLE-STAMP-CLUB

**ELECTED OFFICERS**

**President:** Robert Taylor, 828-447-4699  
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**Vice President:** Larry Oliver  
Email: stamper707@gmail.com

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**Secretary:** Jay Rogers  
Email: jaylr232@gmail.com

**Past President:** Ed de Bary  
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**APPOINTED POSITIONS**

**50-50 Fundraiser:** Lucille Lamy

**Auctioneers:** Ed de Bary & Jay Rogers

**Membership:** Larry Oliver

**Journal Editor:** Randall Chet  
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**WHO TO CALL**

If you cannot make a meeting, club event, presentation, or have a question or a suggestion, please contact:

**Robert Taylor**, 828-447-4699  
Email: robertt16@bellsouth.net

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Asheville Stamp Club meets at Deerfield Episcopal Retirement Community, 1617 Hendersonville Rd, Asheville, NC in the Blue Ridge Room of the Community Center at 1:30 pm on the third Sunday of each month. Bring stamps and covers to sell, trade, or show. There are Nickel Boxes and Envelopes of stamps with new material being added all of the time. The club's 2015 Scott catalogs will be at the meeting; World Classics, World, and US Specialized. As always, there will be the 50-50 Drawing and Door Prizes.

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# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

What a joy it is to see our club attracting new members at each monthly session this year. For all of the new members this year, there is a wealth of philatelic knowledge that you can tap into from all the existing members. Do not be shy about asking for advice. It does not matter what your philatelic interest is, I am sure there are members at each meeting that can help you.

The club has a full set of Scott 2015 Catalogs for you to peruse. On a table in the back of the room are stamps that you can look through. They sell for 5 cents each. After you have selected stamps you would like, just pay our treasurer Stan for your desired stamps. At times, some of the members bring in trays of stamps in 102 cards or glassine envelopes for you to scan through and purchase if you wish from the owner.

Our bi-monthly educational programs put on by our vice-president, Larry Oliver, are for your enjoyment and education. Larry is always looking for new program ideas so if you have a specific interest in an area, please contact Larry.

Our other bi-monthly program is an auction and it is probably one of the best, and spirited, in the state. Here you bid and acquire anything from stamps, covers, sheets, albums and miscellaneous collections of stamps at very reasonable prices. As long as you are a current member, you can bring anything philatelic to the auction for bidding. If you are not sure how it works, please ask Jay, Larry, Stan or myself for guidance and recommendations.

This is your club so take advantage of the tools and expertise it can offer you. See you at our next meeting.

Best regards, Robert

## ASC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

COLLECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ DEALER \_\_\_\_\_

I COLLECT \_\_\_\_\_

RECOMMENDED BY \_\_\_\_\_

Please print, fill out and bring to a club meeting with \$10 payable to ASC, or send to Jay Rogers, Secretary ASC, 15 Hickory Court LN, Hendersonville, NC 28792.

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## CLUB NEWS

**Our website is live!** Please visit [www.ashevillestampclub.com](http://www.ashevillestampclub.com)

**Member Bob Bouvier** is forming an archive of Asheville Stamp Club publications that will be sent to the American Philatelic Research Library in Bellefonte, PA to augment their current holdings. He is particularly interested in newsletters and other material from before 2012 (i.e., from our founding through December 2011). He will accept loans of hard copies that he will scan and return if the owners wish to retain them;

the scans will go to Bellefonte and will also be archived and available on our own new website. Owners willing to donate hard copy publications can give them to Bob who will scan them for our use and retention, and forward the hard copies to Bellefonte. Please contact Bob first to see if he needs what you are willing to contribute to this worthy project, especially anything dating from 2012 through the present. Bob can be reached at [bouv1946@gmail.com](mailto:bouv1946@gmail.com) or 828-713-0270.

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## PROGRAMS

**July is auction month once again**, so bring the rest of those stamps and cover duplicates that have been collecting dust all winter.

**Planning Ahead for the AUGUST Meeting...** We have our exhibition frames - now let's use them. Create your own ONE PAGE exhibit. Handwritten, typewritten, computer generated, it doesn't matter. One pagers are simple in concept & execution. Take a small topic, show an example or two with a few lines of text & that's it. Some topics that might spur your thoughts include: Your favorite stamp; or least favorite stamp; the ugliest stamp (Romania's 1970 stamp "honoring" Beethoven is Larry's

choice); a single cover analysis; a single stamp with an oddity like a double transfer; an error in stamp design (The Vegas Statue of Liberty); a simple color comparison, like the various shades that can be found on US #563. Robert Taylor and Larry Oliver will be judges and there will be prizes!

**August won't be an auction month**, but September and November will be. The September auction will be a mini-auction, limit of three lots per club member, since John Owen of Columbia SC will be a guest speaker - topic as yet to be announced. We're looking for a program volunteer for October.

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## SHOWS & EVENTS

**July 8-9** Asheville NC  
Stamp & Postcard Show  
Comfort Suites Outlet Mall  
890 Brevard Road  
(next to Asheville Outlets)  
(I-26, exit 33 & NC Hwy exit 191)  
Asheville, North Carolina.  
Sat: 10 - 5, Sun: 10 - 4  
Contact: Cary Cochran, 800-560-5310

**July 29-30** Charlotte, NC  
CHARPEX 2017  
Worrell Bldg  
Central Piedmont Community College  
1228 Elizabeth Avenue  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28204  
Sat: 10 - 6, Sun: 10 - 4  
Gene Zhiss, [signup@charpex.info](mailto:signup@charpex.info)  
Phone: 704-553-8110  
[www.charpex.info](http://www.charpex.info)

**August 3-6** Richmond, VA  
APS Summer Convention  
Greater Richmond Convention Center  
403 N. Third Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
Thurs-Sat 10 a.m.-6 p.m.,  
Sun 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Kathleen Edwards  
Shows and Exhibitions Assistant  
814-933-3803 ext. 217  
[stampshow@stamps.org](mailto:stampshow@stamps.org)

**August 19-20** Columbia, SC  
Summer Stamp and Postcard Expo  
Spring Valley High School  
120 Sparkleberry Lane  
Columbia, South Carolina 29223  
Sat: 10 - 5, Sun: 10 - 4  
Mark Postmus

[mapostmus@yahoo.com](mailto:mapostmus@yahoo.com)  
or mobile 803-309-2534

**September 16-17** Marietta, GA  
Stamp Dealers Association of GA Bourse  
Mansour Center  
995 Roswell Street  
Marietta, GA, 30060  
Sat: 10 - 5, Sun: 10 - 3  
Contact: Len Curtis, 404-593-6838  
[collectemall@bellsouth.net](mailto:collectemall@bellsouth.net)

Email your articles, letters, classified ads, auction items, and comments for the Smoky Mountain Philatelist to Randall Chet: [randallchet@gmail.com](mailto:randallchet@gmail.com)  
Deadline for the Sept.-Oct. issue: August 25th



# CASE #599A

The 599A type II coil stamp is not an uncommon variety. It is highly publicized and illustrated in most catalogs, and with patience most people will find one with some patience and persistence. After seeing a few with your own eyes you will know exactly what to look for.

I have a great story to tell of when I really truly learned to hunt for these. A dealer friend in NY, John Kellas III, gave me an opportunity to search a box of these about 10 years ago. But, this was no ordinary box, it was HUGE. The box was the size of 3 large pillows piled on top of each other. Mostly off paper! We figured over 200,000 stamps. I spent 2 months searching it, and I actually found over 250 of the 599A and 634A Type II stamps in that box. I became very good at finding them at a glance. I was able to keep 20 of those stamps after searching it for John. The 599A and 634A are scarce as that box was 100% unsearched and only about 1 in a 1000 stamps were Type II. The pair of stamps below was not found in this box, but in a collection many years later. I have the many hours of hunting this box, to credit helping me find this in a collection at a Florida show.

But let us discuss what the 599A (and 634A) Type II is. In the photo below the type 1 #599 is on the left, and the 599A is on the right. The 599A has three very bold hairlines. They have significant width to those three hairlines. Many people will mistake a heavily struck or over inked stamp as the actual variety. The trick is to look for true width in those hairlines. Also a line in the

right scrolling is bold, as it has distinct width, as compared to the normal, it is a secondary marker to confirm the variety. See illustrations, and compare to the photo of the pair of stamps pictured.

Because this is a plate variety, all stamps on the same plate do have the variety, why is the stamps picture a pair with one stamp showing the variety and one without? The answer is, that this stamp was printed by the rotary press method, and more than one plate is placed on the drum that does the printing. Where the plates come together, that forms the line that you see. So when 2 different type plates were put on the rotary drum, this very rare variety was born. So this is a variety of a variety. Kind of corny I know, but what can I say, that is who I am.

In terms of value, this is fun as prices multiply quickly from the plain #599 price. #599 used is a 5 cent stamp, the 599A used is \$17. A nice premium for sure, but if you can find a line pair with one #599 and #599A the price jumps to \$1000 for a used pair. If these were in MH condition, the #599 is 35 cents, the 599A is \$100, and the line pair with one 599 and one 599A is \$650. Never hinged jumps to \$1250. But this is an excellent example of the normal mint stamp being worth less than the same stamp in used condition. My example has a few short perforations on one stamp, which hurts the value quite a bit, but it is still an extremely difficult piece to find.

Happy Hunting! Scott



Scott #599

Type I  
Normal width hairlines

Scott #599A

Type II  
Strengthened hairlines

# WHAT THE...A SEWING MACHINE PERF?!

Randall Chet

Most collectors of US revenues are well aware of our first issue revenues which can be found imperforate, part-perforate and perforated. The full story of first issue perforation varieties is a future article all it's own however! Butler & Carpenter of Philadelphia had worked out production perforation problems within the first year and settled into producing first issue revenues until the second issue was released in September of 1871.

Unlike first issue revenues, most all second issues were released perforation 12 on the new Wilcox "Chameleon" paper, a topic for yet another article. I say "most", because a very limited number of second issue sheets escaped the printer imperforate. Scott does not list any second issue imperforates, but the Philatelic Foundation has certified a very few examples of R112 and R115. Possibly existing but yet to be found are imperforate R107 and R120.

More "common", but certainly still very scarce are the four known second issue "sewing machine perfs": the Scott unlisted R107, and the Scott listed R112b, R115a, and the R120a.

In "The Boston Revenue Book (1899)", these are described as such following the description of the second issue 25c:

*"This stamp is known perforated by sewing machine and the natural inference to be drawn from that fact is that a sheet or more were issued imperforate by mistake and that the buyer, not wanting the trouble of cutting them apart, simply ran them through a sewing machine, the needle acting as a perforator."*<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the "sewing machine perfs", the R112 and the R115 can be found as even scarcer perforated 8. We do not know who was responsible for these "private perforation varieties", but we do know that many of them were used from June to September 1872 in New York and Philadelphia.



Figure 1  
R112b, found in a 2-page "junk" lot of US revenues on eBay, June 2017. This is the "fuzzy" style "sewing machine perf".

We also know there are at least two styles of "sewing machine perfs", "fuzzy" as in my example above, (Fig. 1) and more clean cut. And speaking of how they were actually produced, there is speculation that these were not "perforated" with a sewing machine at all, but with a "pounce" or "pattern" wheel. (Fig. 2)

I found my example in a "junk" US revenue lot on eBay in June 2017. It was tucked off to the right side of one of the two low resolution scans. I could not tell for sure if it truly was a sewing machine perf (Chameleon paper second issues can have very rough perforations), but sometimes it pays to take chances.



Figure 2  
An example of a nineteenth century pounce or pattern wheel, similar to the type of device possibly used to create "sewing machine perfs" on the second issue US revenues.

## References:

- <sup>1</sup>An Historical Reference List of the Revenue Stamps of the United States (The Boston Book), Toppan, Deats, and Holland p.79, (1899)  
 "A Hypothesis: Privately Produced Sewing Machine Perforations were Neither" The American Revenuer, First Quarter 2016, p. 2  
 "Two Very Rare Revenue Imperfs" [https://www.stampcommunity.org/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=38966&whichpage=1](https://www.stampcommunity.org/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=38966&whichpage=1)  
 "R112" [https://www.stampcommunity.org/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=47480&whichpage=1](https://www.stampcommunity.org/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=47480&whichpage=1)

# SURCHARGES - WHY, WHEN, AND WHERE

Larry Oliver

Anyone who collects non-US stamps probably has several stamps which have been overprinted with a new value - a surcharge. We tend to think of the word "surcharge" as being an increase in value but it can be, and often is, a *decrease*. It can also be in a different currency than the original value. This article will present the reasons for a country surcharging their stamps including the economic and/or political environment for it, and covers showing the various types of surcharges. Such an understanding aids in the enjoyment of collecting by giving the collector insights into the working of the country issuing them and often, understanding the workings of the parent country in dealing with issues in their pesky colonies!

Two caveats to open with: 1) this article will not cover overprints that do not change the value of the underlying stamp. The "Molly Pitcher" overprint on US #646, for example, is an overprint, but not a surcharge. 2) The US has never surcharged a regular issue, semi-postal, air mail, special delivery, registration, certified mail, postage due, or official stamp. Offices in China and some postal stationery have surcharges which will be mentioned in the appropriate context in this article. Revenues will not be covered but will be mentioned, below.

I will distinguish between the *justification* for selecting surcharging as the means of changing the denomination and the *cause* requiring denomination changes. Cause is the more interesting, and will be the main thrust of this article, but will address justification first.

## *Justification for opting to surcharge:*

When current stamps don't meet the postal needs, the post office faces the choice of either printing new stamps or surcharging existing stamps. Their first decision is: Which to do?

There are two underlying justifications for surcharging as opposed to issuing whole new stamps:

- 1) Economy
- 2) Expediency

If a postal situation arises in which you need stamps of a new denomination and you have a surplus of ones you no longer need, economic reasons often motivate a postal department to surcharge the existing stamps. The postal department simply may not have money in the budget for a whole new printing, but can only afford the surcharge.

That was the case often in colonies, in which the colonial postal administration elected to spend the money for printing locally rather than order the stamps from the parent country.

Expediency is the time factor: if you need the stamps right away, a preferred option is to take the quick route and send some existing stamps to the local printer.

It can be difficult to determine from examining the stamps themselves why a country choose to surcharge their stamps. Other sources, philatelic references and the internet, are vital resources for obtaining the *historical* justification for surcharging. On the other hand, the stamps and postal history are often sufficient to determine the underlying *cause(s)* demanding surcharging.

## *Reasons for surcharging:*

An extensive review and analysis of surcharges from most major countries show that virtually all of the reasons for surcharging arose from just four situations:

- 1) Runaway inflation
- 2) Postal rate change, independent of inflation
- 3) New currency, including use in a new country, region, or colony
- 4) Local stamp shortages

The latter three causes often have one common denominator: poor planning by postal management, as the need can usually be foreseen. Management mistakes will not be discussed here, as I do not want to make this a book, just an article addressing the consequences of such decisions.

There is one other, non-postal, situation in which stamps were surcharged, and that is with revenue stamps when the tax increased (I could find NO circumstance in which the tax *decreased!*) - this article will focus only on postage stamps.

## *Cause: Runaway Inflation*

The two best known inflation spirals documented philatelically are those of Hungary in 1945-6 and Germany from 1918-23.

### **Hungary 1945-6:**

The basic denomination of Hungarian currency in 1945 was the pengo. If one was to buy an item in Budapest in April 1945 for 500 pengo (about \$2) by January that item



US #646, the Molly Pitcher overprint — not a surcharge.

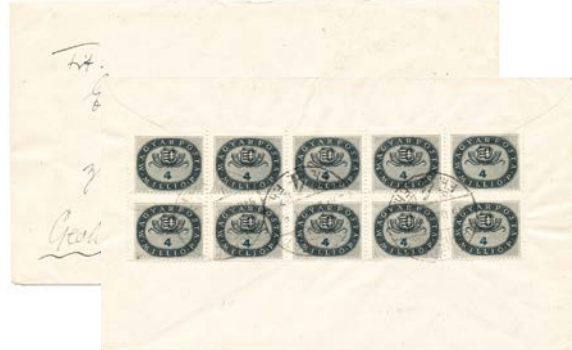
JANUARY 1946	FEBRUARY 1946	MAY 1946	TRANSLATION
HL.1	HL.2	Helyl/level	Local letter
Hlp.1	Hlp.2	Helyl/lev.-lap	Local post card
TL.1	TL.2	Tavolsagi/level	Distance letter
Tlp.1	Tlp.2	Tavolsagi/levlap	Distance postcard
Any.1	Any.2	Nyomtatv./20 gr.	Printed matter
Ajl.1	Ajl.2	Ajanlas	Registration fee
Cs. 5-1	Cs. 5-2	Csomag/5 kg.	Parcel post 5 kg.
Cs. 10-1	Cs. 10-2	Csomag/ 10 kg.	Parcel post 10 kg.

The "surcharges" used by Hungary to designate the allowed use of the stamps during inflation.

would have cost 1.6 Million pengos and by May 1946 it would have cost 85,000,000,000,000,000 pengos and in July of 1946 — 900,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 pengos! Rates changed 2x/day, often by a factor of 10. Money was less than worthless, and the very act of printing stamps cost more by the time the ink dried than the stamps were worth. Even overprinting was not cost effective, but was attempted - with only limited success. The definitives of 1944 were overprinted in 1945 with 100-fold surcharges, up to 100 pengo, but it still required many stamps to mail a letter: single franking is rarely seen.



Four examples of the surcharges of mid-1945 on the definitives issued in 1943, with surcharges up to 100 pengos.



Postmarked Budapest 13 May 1946, during the 15th of 27 rate periods, with 40 million pengos postage to go to Brno, Czechoslovakia. One year earlier the rate was 0.3 pengos.

The Hungarian government literally gave up, and soon changed the currency to the atopengo (sometimes spelled adopengo), which began as equal to 1 million pengos, and in six months the atopengo rose to 2,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 pengos. Very little mail was produced in Hungary at that time: the envelopes were not big enough and no one had sufficient currency! The inflation was so rapid that the post office could not devise and accommodate means to handle the inflation.

Before changing the currency, Hungary tried another approach to the inflation crisis that is unique in philately. In January of 1946, they began issuing a series of stamps with overprints like "HL.1", "Helyi/level", "Ajl.1", "Ajanlas", and other similar types. These are so-called "permit" stamps. Each had a new value, but it was unstated in the overprint. These surcharges were valued so as to pay the entire postage for certain types of mail. "HL.1" and "Helyi/level" paid the postage for a local letter, while "Ajl.1" and "Ajanlas" paid a registration fee. The other abbreviations covered post cards, printed matter, parcels, etc. The intent was to enable the use of a single stamp on each item rather than a combination of stamps. For reasons unclear, the system did not work. Many more covers are found with combinations of stamps during the early days of 1946 than covers using a single permit stamp. If the Hungarian post office had only realized that by adjusting the selling price periodically, they would have created the first "Forever" stamp!



These three examples of the Hungarian Permit Stamps issued in 1946 are Scott #'s (l to r) 801, 805, & 806. Note that the Permit surcharge was sometimes printed over a previous surcharge.

**Germany:**

The German example is more illustrative of surcharging. Since Germany used it four times during their inflation period and more postal history is available than from Hungary. From 1918 through the end of 1923, Germany went through 23 rate changes. A good example of their surcharging is the overprinting of the numeral issues of 1922 and early 1923 with values 10 fold to 100-fold higher, resulting in the series identified in Scott as #'s 241 - 278, and issued 23 August 1923. These stamps were used through several rate changes and were only replaced in the last quarter of 1923 when new denominations were printed, only for them to be overprinted in December of 1923. In order to accommodate the demands, the surcharges were used on multiple different base denominations: the 2 million mark surcharge was used on 6 different stamps,



The first five in Germany's surcharge series of 1923

The six surcharges of 2 million marks. Note that two of the base denominations differ only in the type of perforating: one being rouletted.



for example.

The proliferation of stamps needed to satisfy even normal letter usage was so great that one post office, in Dippoldiswald took an unusual, and drastic approach. The time needed to sell, affix, and cancel the large numbers of stamps to a normal letter was such that they decided to just BURN the stamps and apply a hand stamp stating that the postage had been paid! For accounting and efficiency reason, two postal clerks witnessed each such hand stamp.

The German Postal Administration showed good planning and judgement in preparing the surcharges of the numeral issues. The range of values was wide - from 5000 marks to 2,000,000 marks - and they used up leftover supplies of the numeral issues by not limiting a surcharge to one base denomination. During the time the surcharges were in their primary use (24 August 1923 - 22 October 1923), the postal rate went from 8,000 marks for a domestic letter to 4,000,000 marks with 6 rate changes in between.

The postal history throughout the German inflation period is a dramatic display ranging from single franking to many multiples on one cover. I've discussed only surcharges here, but the full rainbow of stamps and accommodations adopted by the postal service is even more striking, is seen on the Germany multiple franking cover, and is appropriately the subject of another article.

The proliferation of stamps for the inflation period led to a glut of unused stamps: the inexpensive unused inflation stamps are a testament to this. The excess stamps also lent themselves to other uses: in the accompanying figure is a sample of how the inflation excess was subsequently overprinted for political labels.



The inflation period stamp surplus was overprinted for political labels. This translates to: "Elect Hindenburg".

### Cause: Postal rate change

The postal administration of a colonial empire, particularly in the late 1800's, created several problems for the local colonies because the communication times were so long. A rate change made by the parent country often took weeks to get to all the colonies, plus the time needed to order new stamps and print them for each colony, which made for numerous surcharges just to meet the new, parent country-imposed rates.

**Dresdner Bank Filiale Nürnberg**  
 Rufnummern: im Ortsverkehr: 4560 - 4574  
 im Fernverkehr: 9915, 10800 - 10803, 12111 - 12113, 12131 - 12132

**DEWEISENKURSE**  
 am 25. Oktober 1923  
 Ohne Gewähr.

	Bi	Alle	Gi
Chi. New York	64 8		
London	284 2		
Amsterdam	24 5		
Paris	3 6		
Brüssel	3 1		
Madrid	8 3		
Mailand	2 7		
Zürich	1 1 2		
Christiana	9 6		
Kopenhagen	1 0 9		
Stockholm	1 6 5		
Drng	1 8		
Wien	8		
Budapest	3 4		

New-Yorker Mark-Kurs von 10 Uhr

**DRESDNER BANK**  
 AKTIENKAPITAL 1 100 000 000  
 RESERVEN rund 5 903 000 000

**DRESDNER BANK FILIALE NÜRNBERG**  
 KAROLINENSTRASSE 16 / 20  
 Telegramm-Adresse: Dresdbank  
 Postcheck-Konto Nürnberg Nr. 80  
 Rufnummern für Ortsverkehr: 4560 - 4574  
 Fernverkehr: 9915, 10800, 10801, 10802, 10803, 12111, 12131, 12132

DEPOSITENKASSEN IN NÜRNBERG:  
 Allersberger Straße Ruf-Nr. 655  
 Bucher Straße Ruf-Nr. 12269  
 Plärrer Ruf-Nr. 3367  
 Laufertor R.-Nr. 3421 | Steinbühl R.-Nr. 6289

**DRESDNER BANK FILIALE FÜRTH**

Firma C. Hirschfelder  
 Fürth 1/B.  
 Hirschenstr. 42

Single franking of 2 million marks on a local postcard sent by a German bank on 25 October 1923. The bank used this means to inform their customers of the exchange rate changes for foreign currencies. The 2 million mark rate is correct for this rate period: it changed to 4 million marks on 1 November.

An example of multiple franking required to pay the 14 billion mark rate for a 100 gram out-of-town domestic letter from Gladbach to Aachen, 40 km away. Postmarked 17 November 1923.





The British Caribbean consisted of as many as 18 separate postal services, all of which were primarily using stamps printed in Great Britain but with their own country name on them. There were bound to be situations when a new rate required postage not available at the time of the rate change. And there were many such rate changes.

Two excellent examples of the rate change problem occurred in St. Vincent. In 1881, a 2 1/2d rate for a letter to any



The 6d yellow green used as the basis for the surcharging to 1/2d. The pair of #28 surcharged then bisected—note that the perforations for the bisect are cleaner than the peripheral perfs. Also note that the printer put the “pence” designation above the value indication, for space reasons.



The unseparated pair of St. Vincent #31 used on a local cover in Kingstown.

of the Windward Islands went into effect. Having no 1/2d stamps, the local postal administration took 12 sheets of 60 of the 6d yellow green (Scott #28), surcharged them with 1/2d using a local printer, with each stamp getting *two* surcharges, then *reperfed* to bisect them! This is Scott #31.



Postmarked Kingstown, St. Vincent and addressed to Birmingham, England, this cover uses the surcharged stamp #56 for the postage following the entry of St. Vincent to the UPU.

The local letter rate was 1d, so a pair of the bisects could also be used for the local rate: it rarely happened, since there were so few of the surcharged stamps available. One example, using an unseparated pair, is shown here.

The second St. Vincent example of a postal rate change was in January 1891. The overseas rate between the colonies and Great Britain was set at 2 1/2d after the colony joined the Universal Postal Union, and the colony had local printers surcharge a surplus of 1d bright blue stamps to make the surcharge (Scott #56). Interestingly, the base stamp, the 1d bright blue, had not yet been issued, so it has no separate, unsurcharged, catalog number. Shown is a first class letter from Kingstown, St. Vincent to Birmingham, England, postmarked 7 August 1896.

The only US example of surcharged stamps occurred with the Offices in China series, #'s K1-18, when a postal rate change was considered necessary

because of the costs of transporting mail from China to the US. The underlying stamps were the ones in current use in the US, and were all surcharged at 2x the base denomination for use at the US Postal Agency in Shanghai. The Agency Post Office was in operation from 1919 through 1922, and two series of stamps were surcharged.

The US also surcharged a number of postal stationery pieces, mostly in the 1920's. The reasons for the surcharging and the varieties are very broad, and deserve a separate discussion beyond the scope of this article.

Examples of the two issues of stamps surcharged by the US for use in the China service. Top is #K8, and bottom, on a piece postmarked September 22 1922, China, is a pair of #K18.





The four types of overprints of British stamps for use in Morocco, left to right: value in centimos for use in the Spanish zone (#40); value in centimes for the French zone in Southern Morocco (#406); value of base stamp for use at British post offices throughout Morocco (#240); and value of base stamp for use at British post offices in Tangier (#507).



This piece of registered mail originated in Casablanca, French section of Morocco. It is postmarked 6 December 1922 at the British Post Office in Casablanca and was sent to Ashville (sic), NC and franked with a block of four #405.

### Cause: New Currency

Vivid examples of this situation are found in the stamps issued for the Great Britain offices, such as in Africa. I've chosen the Morocco Agencies to use as examples, because there were four different types of overprints of Great Britain stamps made for Morocco, two of which were surcharges:

- Value in centimos/pesetas for use in the Spanish zone in Northern Morocco;
- Value in centimes/francs for use in the French zone in Southern Morocco;
- Value of base stamp used for British post offices throughout Morocco;
- Value of base stamp used for British post offices in Tangier.

The last two, while overprinted, were not surcharged. Britain may have been able to *require* the zonal post offices to use unsurcharged stamps, the risk of underpayment and outright fraud by postal clerks was so high that the cost of printing new stamps was deemed necessary.

### Cause: Stamp Shortages

This is the most fascinating and varied circumstance of all, because many options for alleviating shortages have been documented. Besides surcharging, they include: using stamps from another colony; bisecting higher value stamps; reversion to using a pre-stamp canceller (such as "PAID") without any stamps used; and allowing postal clerks to initial for payment. Furthermore, most of the use of surcharges were printed by local printers, so there is considerable variety found in the overprinting.

For surcharging examples, we will turn to Trinidad, because of the peculiar circumstances prevailing in Trinidad in the 1800's. Firstly, that colony was one of the very few of the British Caribbean colonies that printed some of their own early stamps. A used Britannia die was obtained and local shops printed 6 issues between 1852 & 1859 (Scott #'s 7,9,10,11,12 & 13). These



Trinidad #3, the (1d) blue printed by Perkins-Bacon in London is on the left. Trinidad #9, also a (1d) blue but printed in Trinidad, is on the right. Notice the lack of clarity in the Trinidad printing. #3 is also printed on blue paper; #9 on white paper.

can be distinguished primarily by the usually worn impressions on the Trinidad printed stamps. Even though the locals had experience with printing stamps, yet when a problem arose in 1882, the postal administration chose to ignore that experience and turn to a new type of surcharge, the manuscript surcharge.

In April of 1882, Trinidad received its last shipment - a small one - of the 1/2d and 1d Britannia stamps, and the new Queen Victoria issue wasn't due to arrive until January 1883. Simultaneously, the rate for inter-island mail dropped from 6d to 2 1/2d, leaving a large surplus of the 6d green Britannia (Scott #60). Expecting to run out of 1d stamps, since they paid the rate for intra-island and local mail, the postal officials decided to have the postal clerks surcharge the 6d stamps *by hand*, not even with a rubber stamp! They were to write, in red ink, a "1d" over the face of the stamp and line out, in red, the "six pence" at the



A used copy of Trinidad #60, the base stamp for the manuscript surcharging in 1882.

A used copy of Trinidad #67 with the "1d" manuscript surcharge in red.



The cover was originally mailed in San Fernando, 30 km south of the capital. No stamps were available in San Fernando, so the cover was sent, stampless to Trinidad General Post Office. The San Fernando office marked it with a date stamp for February 1, 1883, from the "M.O.O." section: the Money Order Office, to indicate to the Trinidad GPO that the postage had been paid to England and to simply apply the requisite stamps without assessing a fee. The GPO then cancelled the stamps with a February 2 date stamp. Franking is with two pairs of #67, both with the same handwriting.

bottom of the stamp. All this was done at the time of sale, although there is evidence that full sheets were surcharged in advance of sale. Since the Queen Victoria stamps were not expected for several months, this practice gave rise to a number of covers and, since there were several different postal clerks in the various Trinidad towns, a variety of manuscript styles in the surcharges. At least 33 different styles have been documented. There has never appeared an explanation of why the local printers were not called in to do overprinting. The manuscript surcharges were introduced 9 May 1882 and were sold until 30 December 1882, and were valid for postage until 1 September 1885.

#### Forgeries, especially of local surcharges:

Beware of forgeries. They are not plentiful, but some are very well done. Local surcharging often has multiple minor varieties (see footnote) and forgers exploit that variation to create bogus stamps and covers. Before you buy, study the stamp and especially the cover carefully: Are the type fonts exactly correct? Does the date fit with the period of use? Was the stamp actually available in the town in which it was cancelled? Is the cancel over or under the surcharge? These are critical questions and often easy to answer. The APS Philatelic library has tremendous resources for any member to borrow and understand the genuine stamps/covers from the forgeries: use it. There is more pleasure in owning and appreciating a single \$100 cover or stamp than ten \$10 covers. Try it. Even if you buy fewer items, you find yourself going back and looking at the \$100 item time and again and feeling: "This is cool!"

As one example of forging, see the figure of the Dahomey set of 1912 surcharges in the Navigation & Commerce series. All surcharges AND the basic stamps are forgeries by Francois Fournier. If real, the set catalogs at >\$1000.

Fournier marked most of his stamps with the term "facsimile" on the reverse, but a number of his stamps are also found without that marking. The forgeries have several differences from the genuine stamps, two of the most definitive are the lack of a navel on the person on the right, and the blurry, indistinct blobs forming the fruit on the plate held by the person on the right.

*This is the complete set of 10 of the Dahomey surcharges, dated 1912, of the French omnibus series Navigation & Commerce, Scott # 32-41, including the 10c on 50 azure with red country name, catalog value = \$1,000+. All stamps, the surcharges AND the base stamps, are forgeries made by Francois Fournier.*



#### Summary & Conclusions:

The primary reasons for surcharging, and the justifications behind the choices, have been presented, discussed, and exemplified. The intent is to help the reader evaluate and enjoy this niche of stamp collecting. The article is insufficient to be a tutorial or a significant reference document. If it serves as a motivation to look further - that is a satisfactory conclusion.

Surcharges are fun, and challenging, especially when one attempts to determine the reasons for them. It leads one into a review of the history, both traditional history and postal history, of the country. Some of the stamps and covers are inexpensive, others are rare and dear. One can delve into it as much as one desires and can afford, But it is always interesting!

*Footnote: local surcharges were all typeset, and the typesetter would run out of certain letters in the selected font, so would substitute a different font, often in 1-2 cliches in a sheet. Another common variety was the misplacing of a space, creating narrow and wide varieties.*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## HOW I BECAME A PHANATIC

*Larry Oliver*

I was 8 years old, living in a small town in northern Minnesota, going to school, learning the printing business (the family owned a weekly newspaper), and doing all the things kids do when you live on a lake. My mother began to have vision problems and was diagnosed with a detached retina. Surgery required her to go to Minneapolis, a five hour trip by bus. When she returned - with a patch over her eye - she handed me a present that she had purchased at Macy’s. The album was 1/2” thick and the rest of the package included a few packets of stamps, hinges, a pair of tongs, a plastic magnifying glass, and a coupon for 25c off on your first order of approvals from Kenmore Stamp Company. I’d always had an interest in geography, so seeing the stamps from places like Liberia, Poland, France, and French West Africa was very exciting. I was getting paid 25c/hour for working at the newspaper after school and weekends, and didn’t have much else to spend it on (except a once/week movie, for 25c plus 10c for popcorn), so Kenmore Stamp Company got my business.

Liberia was my first focus, partly because of the packet of stamps in that first purchase, but also because a few months later I bought the four stamp set of Jehudi Ashman, issued in 1949 (#309-312) and paid the princely sum of \$1.00 for it. They are

wildly multi-colored and I thought they were not only beautiful, but showed some of the history of the colony. Much later I checked the perforations on them and found they were the questionable 12 1/2 perf variety, origin unknown and probable forgeries. The real set catalogs for \$1.80 now, 65 years later.

My specialties now include advertising covers, WWII material, British Commonwealth classic issues, classic US, and western Europe. I attempt to determine the contemporary relevance of the stamps and covers, delving into the historical context in which they were issued: why were they needed and how were they used? With the exception of WWII, my collection is almost entirely pre-1940. Stamps are a fascination in general, and I keep finding ways to expand my research into them and introduce them into conversations. During a course given by McCall College, the instructor gave me a slot to discuss the postal service in WWII, and I used patriotic covers for illustration.

Besides philately, I spend time on natural history of the Blue Ridge, having gotten certification in that field after moving to North Carolina, help my wife in her gardens (she’s a Master Gardener, I am a Master Digger), train my four dogs in agility, and do experimental cooking.

# ON REMOVING SELF ADHESIVE STAMPS

Jay Rogers

*Here is another way: Peel them off. That's all there is to it.*

We've been spending years trying to "soak" them off when what we really want to do is just get them off the paper. So counter intuitively, and after 150 years of experience to the contrary, grasp one corner of the stamp, with finger nails or tongs, and slowly start to peel it off. Take at least 30-60 seconds to do this. When about a ¼ is peeled back, grasp the rest between thumb and forefinger and continue to peel slowly. Watch the adhesive as it stretches and pulls apart. The adhesive has never solidified as it does in water activated gum. The cohesive force (the force that holds the adhesive to itself) is weaker than its adhesive force (the force that holds the adhesive to the paper). Note that the physical nature of the adhesive remaining on the stamp has changed. It is now only slightly sticky. Just like a sticky note.

If you want to mount it just press it lightly in its place. If you want to do otherwise, wipe the adhesive off with a Q-tip damp with lacquer thinner, or limonene, or lighter fluid or etc. If that's too easy – keep on soakin'.

**Furthermore:** Stamps with water activated adhesive (aka "gum") can also be removed without soaking, albeit by a completely different method. Melt it off. Most stamp gum melts below the boiling point of water. Press the envelope paper against a tea kettle with boiling water in it. The stamp will likely fall off. Using two pair of tongs is advisable here. This is actually useful if you have a piece with water soluble ink or an envelope with red paper that would otherwise turn every stamp in the bowl pink.

## STAMPS – WANTED, FOR SALE OR TRADE

**Wanted!** WWII US patriotic covers - especially with cachets that are "politically incorrect", humorous, or feature women. Top prices paid - which ain't much, frankly! Larry Oliver [stamper707@gmail.com](mailto:stamper707@gmail.com)

**Wanted!** US First Issue Revenues. Large accumulations as I am looking for shades, paper types and cancellations. [randallchet@gmail.com](mailto:randallchet@gmail.com)

**Wanted!** Philatelic Literature related to US revenues, especially any back issues of the American Revenuer, and Weekly Philatelic Gossip 1936 - 1957. Also any general periodicals 1880 - 1950. [randallchet@gmail.com](mailto:randallchet@gmail.com)

**For Sale!** 98 US FDCs in a VPD flip binder and slipcase. Most 1958-60, most unaddressed with cachet. \$25 [randallchet@gmail.com](mailto:randallchet@gmail.com)

**Trade!** Hundreds of UN FDCs. Large 8.5 x 11 flag series block covers. Smaller covers. Does anybody collect these? [randallchet@gmail.com](mailto:randallchet@gmail.com)

**For Sale!** USPS Commemorative Yearbooks. Mint. Few to no stamps. Years: 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2007. \$5 each. [randallchet@gmail.com](mailto:randallchet@gmail.com)

*If you are a member of the ASC and have something of interest to list, feel free to email your classified ad to [randallchet@gmail.com](mailto:randallchet@gmail.com). As space allows, I'll do my best to include it in the next issues of the Smoky Mountain Philatelist.*

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