

Fabulous Firsts: **Brunswick** (January 1, 1852)

(This article first appeared, without images, in Mekeel's Weekly circa 1920 and later in The Stamps of the German States, by B.W.H. Poole.)

Brunswick, or Braunschweig to give it its Teutonic name, is a sovereign duchy of the German Empire situated between Hanover, Saxony, and Westphalia. It has an area of 1,424 square miles and a population a little in excess of half a million. The duchy has two votes in the Imperial Council and sends three representatives to the Imperial Diet. Originally Brunswick formed a part of the duchy of Saxony, but in 1235 the independent duchy of Brunswick was created. Subsequently, along with Hanover, Lüneburg, Celle and other territories, it was transferred and reconveyed several times as the various Brunswick dynasties were founded and died out.

The duchy suffered severely during the Seven Years War. It was occupied by the French in 1806, annexed to the kingdom of Westphalia in the following year, and restored to its duke in 1813. The direct Guelf line became extinct in 1884, on the death of the childless Duke William, and since 1885 the duchy has been governed by a regent.

The town of Brunswick, capital of the duchy, is of ancient origin, its cathedral, for instance, dating from 1172. Here is found the tomb of Henry the Lion (see page 7), Duke of Saxony, whose descendants created the independent duchy.



The currency was the same as that of Hanover being the reichsthaler, worth about 78¢, divided into 24 gute-groschen of 12 pfennige, or the thaler, worth about 72¢, divided into 30 silbergroschen of 10 pfennige.

THE FIRST ISSUE.



Left to right, Brunswick Sc. 1-3. Sc. 3 bears a blue oval “5-1/2-6” time cancel. The use of this marking on the stamp was contrary to postal regulations as it was only supposed to be applied to covers.

While its neighbours, Hanover and Prussia, issued stamps in 1850, Brunswick did not follow suit until January 1st, 1852, when a series of three values was issued. All three values are of similar design, the centerpiece showing the horse of Brunswick galloping to the left, with a ducal coronet above, the whole being on a transverse oval with ground of vertical lines. On each side are small upright uncolored ovals containing the numerals of value, and above and below are scrolls, the upper one containing the name, “BRAUNSCHWEIG,” and the lower one the value, “EIN (ZWEI or DRIE) SILB. GR.” The whole is enclosed within a double-lined rectangular frame, one line being thick and the other thin.

The stamps were designed and engraved by Herr K. Petersen, and printed by Herr J. H. Meyer, in Brunswick. That separate dies were engraved for each of the three values is proved by slight differences in the designs, especially noticeable in the number and arrangement of the stones below the horse.

They were printed on a fairly thick white wove paper and the gum used was either reddish-brown or white with a brownish tinge similar to that used for the stamps of Hanover. They were issued imperforate. According to Mr. Eh-



Brunswick Sc. 2, 1852, "Leaping Saxon Horse" on folded cover tied by blue boxed Schoppenstedt Straight Line datestamp

renbach (*London Philatelist* vol. III, p. 162) the stamps were printed in sheets of 120 arranged in twelve horizontal rows of ten each, the stamps being about 2 mm apart. Mr. Westoby states that the plates were composed

of type-metal casts, which may account for the existence of the three "types" of the 1sgr differentiated by Mr. Ehrenbach as follows:—

Type I.—With no dots on the figures of value.

Type II.—With a dot on the figure at right.

Type III.—With a dot on the figure at left.

Mr. Ehrenbach further states that there is an error of lettering in type I with the word "SILBG" reading "SIL. 3." The stamps were only in use about fourteen months and unused specimens, with original gum, are among the rarest of German stamps. Indeed, many authorities consider the 1sgr unused as the rarest European stamp.

When the stamps were first placed on sale considerable interest was evinced in their issue by



1852 3sgr vermilion, Sc. 3, tied by light blue "BRUNSCHWEIG 19/11" double-circle datestamp on folded cover to Carlsbad, Bohemia.

the public. It is said that a huge crowd awaited the opening of the chief post-office in the town of Brunswick. At first only strips of ten stamps were sold to purchasers but this order was rescinded in 1853. Unfortunately no official documents are known to exist having any bearing on the history of these stamps as one of the Postmasters-General, who had a terrible aversion to the accumulation of papers and records, had ordered everything to be burned.

Reference List.

1852. Typographed. Imperf.

1. 1sgr rose, Scott's No. 1.
2. 2sgr blue, Scott's No. 2 .
3. 3sgr vermilion. Scott's No.3.

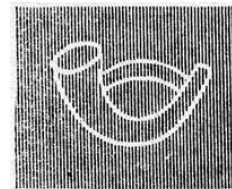
THE SECOND ISSUE.



Left to right, Sc. 7, 9, 10. Scott identifies the 1851 1sgr as #7 on orange paper, and the 1861 printing, Sc. 8, right, as on yellow paper.

On March 1st, 1853, the stamps appeared printed in black on colored paper, the 1sgr being on yellow, the 2sgr on blue, and the 3sgr on rose. The stamps of the first issue were not called in or demonetised and this fact probably accounts for the scarcity of unused specimens. The paper employed for the second issue was hand-made, of coarse texture, and was watermarked.

The watermark [shown here from the original article] consisted of a posthorn, turned to the left, within a rectangular frame though occasionally, owing to the paper being inserted wrong way into the



printing press, the device may be found turned to the right. Every posthorn of the 120 contained in a sheet differs in size and shape from the others, the “bits” for the dandy-roll having been made by hand. Mr. Meyer was again entrusted with the printing of the stamps, under the control of the administration, and Mr. Westoby tells us he used an ordinary printing press for the purpose. The paper varies in shade as there were several printings during the period the stamps were current.

Reference List.

1853. Typographed. Wmk. Posthorn. Imperf.
 4. 1sgr black on orange, Scott’s Nos. 7 or 8.
 5. 2sgr black on blue, Scott’s No. 9.
 6. 3sgr black on rose, Scott’s No. 10.



3sgr black on dull rose, Sc. 10, cancelled by “8” numeral cancel and tied by blue ink manuscript on small envelope to St. Petersburg bearing a blue double circle “Braunschweig 22 Febr. 1860” datestamp. Very few Brunswick covers are known addressed outside of Germany.

THE THIRD ISSUE.

Two low values were added to the series on March 1st, 1856, 3 pfennig=1/4ggr, and 4 pfennig=1/3ggr. The former had “1/4” in the ovals at the sides and “DRIE PFENNIG” in the scroll below; while the latter had “1/3” in the ovals and was inscribed “VIER SILBR. GR.” These stamps were also printed on the watermarked paper the 1/4sgr being on brown, and the 1/3sgr on white (Sc. 5, left).





The largest known multiple franking of the 1856 1/4 gr, Sc. 4, two sheet margin blocks of four and a pair, cancelled by clear strikes of "47" numerals on a folded letter sheet bearing a blue "Wolfenbuttel" datestamp.

1856 1/4sgr black on brown, Sc. 4, vertical strip of three tied by blue "WOLFENBUTTEL 21/4" datestamp.



Reference List.

1856. Typographed. Wmk. Posthorn. Imperf.

7. 1/4ggr (3pf) black on brown, Scott's No.4.

8. 1/3ggr (4pf) black, Scott's No. 5.

Not mentioned in the article is this 1863 1/2ggr black on green, Sc. 6.





The Brunswick Cathedral and the crypt with the tomb of Henry the Lion and his wife, Matilda of England, the Duchess of Saxony



According to legend, as described in Wikipedia, "Shortly after the death of Henry the Lion, the ruler became the subject of a folktale, the so-called Heinrichssage [which] details a fictional account of Henry's pilgrimage to the Holy Land. A popular part of the tale...Henry witnessed the fight between a lion and a dragon while on pilgrimage. He joins the lion in its fight and they slay the dragon. The faithful lion then accompanies Henry on his return home. After its master's death, the lion refuses all food and dies of grief on Henry's grave. The people of Brunswick then erect the statue in the lion's honor." The statue, which stands outside the Brunswick Cathedral, can also be seen in the photo on page 1.