

Fabulous Firsts:

Württemberg (Oct. 15, 1851)

(This article is based on a Mekeel's Weekly article by B.W.H. Poole with images added.)

From an early period the postal service of Wurttemberg was, with some interruptions, in the hands of the princely house of Thurn and Taxis, but by an agreement dated March 22, 1851, the government of Wurttemberg liberated itself by purchasing the postal privileges from July 1st of that year for the sum of 1,300,000 florins (about \$525,000 in 1851). It then proceeded to form its own administration and to join the German-Austrian Postal Union, established by the convention of April 6, 1850.

As one of the provisions of this convention required the adoption of postage stamps, preparations were immediately made for providing them and, by a notice of October 7, 1851, the public were informed that stamps of 1, 3, 6 and 9kr would be on sale at the various post offices on the 12th, and their use would commence from the 15th. In April, 1852, a new and higher denomination—18kr—was added to the series and as the design is similar to that of the lower values, all can best be treated as one set.

To quote the late Mr. W. A. S. Westoby:—"The resemblance between the first stamps of Wurttemberg and those of the first series of Baden is so remarkable as to leave no doubt that the Govern-



Baden Sc. 1



Top to bottom, Scott 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 (there is no Scott 3)

Top, the 1851 1kr black on light buff horizontal strip of three neatly tied by "Ehingen, 27, 10, 56" cds's on a folded letter sheet to Biberach, paying the 3kr rate up to 12 miles, also with a same day receiving postmark on the reverse.



Bottom, a single 1kr black on buff (Sc. 1) tied by one of two strikes of a "Bartenstein, 5/5, 58" circular date stamp on a folded cover to Rinderstetten



ment of Wurttemberg availed itself of the results of the investigations made by that of Baden previously to the issue of the first series for the latter State, May 1, 1851. The dies were similarly constructed, the inscriptions were similar, and the stamps were printed on colored papers. The matrix die was composite, the numeral of value in the center being within a frame, almost square, of 9-1/2mm placed angle upwards within a frame measuring externally 22-1/2mm by 22mm and internally 15-1/2mm by 15mm and carrying the following inscriptions on tablets: In the upper one, running the whole width, was 'Wurttemberg',



Württemberg 3kr black on yellow (Sc. 2) cancelled by one of two strikes of a blue "Stuttgart, 20 Oct 1852, 71-9½" c.d.s. on folded cover to Ober-Marchthal

Württemberg 6kr
black on green (Sc. 4)
vertical strip of three,
cancelled by two of three
strikes of a blue "Stuttgart,
5 Jan 1852, 6-7"
c.d.s. on a folded
letter to Mannheim.
Postage for this
triple weight letter
was 6kr for a
distance of 10-20
miles times three.



Württemberg 9kr
black on rose (Sc. 5)
on a letter to Kaiser-
slautern tied by one
of two strikes of a 3-
rings blue Ulm April
22, 1852 cancel.



and on a similar tablet at the foot was 'Freimarke', with an ornament at each end resembling a vine branch with two bundles of grapes, the lower one of which was incomplete. On the tablet at the left side was 'Deutsch-Oestr. Postverein', and on another on the right side 'Vertrag v. 6 April 1850'. These were set up in movable type, the upper and lower ones in ordinary German lower case characters with capital initials, and those on the sides in diamond type, as in those of Baden. The spaces between the rectangle carrying the numeral of value and the inner line of the frame were filled in with arabesque ornaments."

The design is similar for all values with the exception of the central portion carrying the numerals. In the case of the 1 and 6kr the background is composed of lines running parallel to the sides of the rectangle, making a design of small squares; in the 3kr the ground consists of small ovals; in the 9kr the ground is composed of small circles

Württemberg 18kr
black on violet gray
(Sc. 6) tied by one of
two strikes of a blue
"Neckarsulm, 29
Sep 1852" c.d.s. on
a folded cover via
Thurn & Taxis to
Strasbourg, France,
also with a blue "PD" in oval and red French entry and transit mark-
ings. The 18kr paid the postage of 9kr within the German postal union
and the 9kr within France.



resembling lace work; while on the 18kr the background is formed of horizontal lines.

The dies were engraved at the Mint in Stuttgart, where the electrotypes composing the plates were also made. The printing was done under the direction of the post office, in typographic presses, the sheets consisting of sixty stamps arranged in ten rows of six. All denominations were printed in black on colored papers. The paper was obtained locally and while it is always wove, it varies considerably in thickness and provides numerous shades. The stamps were all issued imperforate.

On some stamps the periods are missing after the "v" or the "6" in the right-hand inscription, evidently caused by small imperfections in the moulds from which the electrotypes were made. Variations in the position of the period after "Postverein" in the left-hand inscription will also be noted and according to an article in the *London Philatelist* of August, 1893, from the pen of the late Mr. Robert Ehrenbach, these differences occur in all values with the exception of the 18kr.

There are three small types in all. In the first type the period is between the second and third points of the zigzag lines of the border; in type II it is exactly over the second point; while in type III it is exactly over the third point. All three types are found on the 3kr denomination; types I and II are found on the 1, 6 and 9kr stamps; while the 18kr is found only with the first type. Whether the varieties are found side by side on the same sheet or are the distinguishing points of separate plates we are not told.



A rare usage of the Württemberg first issues on a cover to the Philippines, with 1kr black on light buff (Sc. 1, two singles), 3kr black on yellow (Sc. 2), 9kr black on deep rose (Sc. 5). and 18kr black on dull violet (Sc. 6), all tied by Cannstatt, 7 Aug, 1856 circular date stamps, the cover also endorsed "pr land mail via Marseille" at top, and the reverse with French transit cds's and entry postmark. The "2" reales due handstamp upper left was applied upon entry in Manila.

If you enjoyed this article, and are not already a subscriber, for \$12 a year you can enjoy 60+ pages a month. To subscribe, email subs@stampnewsnow.com