

Fabulous Firsts:

Germany (January 1, 1872)

By B. W. H. Poole

Germany (from the Latin Germania) is the English name of the country which the natives call Deutschland and the French L'Allemagne. It occupies the central portion of Europe and is bounded by the North Sea, the Danish Peninsula, the Baltic, Russia, Austria, Switzerland, France, Belgium and the Netherlands. [In 1913, when this was written] its area was 211,168 square miles, or about one-sixteenth of that of all Europe—slightly larger than France, but about twice as large as Great Britain and Ireland.



Unified Germany, 1872

Germany is composed of a federation of twenty-five states, with one imperial territory (Reichsland), which vary enormously in area and influence. In 1901, Berlin, the capital of the Empire, had 1,888,848 inhabitants, next come Hamburg, 705,738; Munich, Dresden, Leipzig and Breslau, with over 400,000; and Cologne, 372,529. There are 26 other towns with between 100,000 and 200,000; and 175 towns between 20,000 and 100,000. The population of the German Empire at the census of 1871 was 41,058,792; in 1880, 45,234,061, and in 1901, 56,367,178. The following table of the different states forming the Empire together with their respective areas is of interest:

Kingdoms.

1. Prussia area, 136,073 square miles.
2. Bavaria area, 29,632 square miles.
3. Saxony area, 5,856 square miles.
4. Wurtemberg area, 7,619 square miles.

Grand-duchies.

5. Baden area, 5,891 square miles.
6. Hesse area, 3,000 square miles.
7. Mecklenburg-Schwerin area, 5,197 sq. miles.
8. Saxe-Weimar area, 1,404 square miles.
9. Mecklenburg-Strelitz area, 1,144 sq. miles.
10. Oldenburg area, 2,508 square miles.

Duchies.

11. Brunswick area, 1,441 square miles.
12. Saxe-Meiningen area, 964, square miles.
13. Saxe-Altenburg area, 517 square miles.
14. Saxe-Coburg-Gotha area, 765 sq. miles.
15. Anhalt area, 917-square miles.

Principalities.

16. Schwartzburg-Sondershausen, 337 square miles.
17. Schwartzburg-Rudolstadt, 367 sq. miles.

18. Waldeck, 438 square miles.
 19. Reuss-Greiz, 123 square miles.
 20. Reuss-Schleiz, 323 square miles.
 21. Schaumburg-Lippe, 133 square miles.
 22. Lippe-Detmold, 475 square miles.
- Free Towns.
23. Lubeck, 116 square miles.
 24. Bremen, 100 square miles:
 25. Hamburg, 160 square miles.
- Reichsland.
26. Alsace-Lorraine, 5,668 square miles.

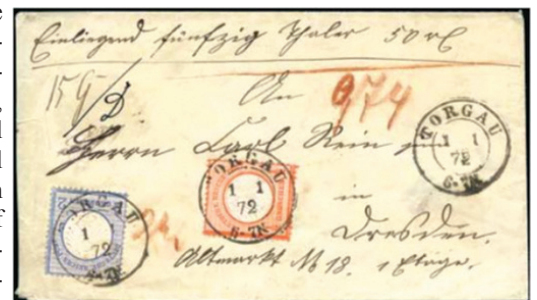
[In 1913] The German speaking inhabitants of the Empire number upwards of 51,000,000, but a considerable portion of these are not of Germanic stock. Among the peoples retaining their own language—more than four millions in all—are Pole (exclusively in eastern and northeastern Prussia) 3,329,000; Wends (in Silesia, Brandenburg and Saxony) 93,000; Czechs (in Silesia), 107,000; Lithuanians (in eastern Prussia) 103,000; Danes (in Schleswig) 141,000; French (in Rhenish Prussia, Alsace and Lorraine) and Walloons (about Aix-la-Chappelle in Rhenish Prussia) 224,000. The Germans are divided into High and Low Germans; the language of the former is the cultivated language of all the German states; that of the latter, known as Platt-Deutsch, is spoken in the north and northwest.

The Empire as reconstituted in 1871, possesses the exclusive right of legislation on all military and naval affairs; on civil and criminal law for general application; on imperial finance and commerce, on posts, telegraphs, and railways in so far as the interests of the national defence and general trade are concerned.

The rivalries of Austria and Prussia for pre-eminence in the Confederation ended at Konniggratz (1866) with the exclusion of Austria from Germany. The great Franco-German war of 1870-71 led to the re-annexation of Alsace Lorraine and the constitution of the new German Empire, with the kings of Prussia as hereditary emperors.

THE FIRST ISSUE.

The empire was re-established on January 18th, 1871, and the Imperial German Postal Administration replaced that of the North German Confederation. This necessitated a change of stamps and by a law passed by the new German Parliament on October 28th, 1871 these were not to be used until January 1st, 1872.



Cover with Germany 1872 First Issue 1/2 groschen orange, 2 groschen ultra, Sc. 3, 5 tied by First Day use January 1, 1872 double circle cancels.

As the old system of two currencies still prevailed two sets had to be prepared one with values in groschen and the other expressed in kreuzer. The same design, however, served for both series, this consisting of an uncolored circle in the centre on which the Arms of the empire were embossed. Above this circle are the words DEUTSCHE REICHS-POST (German Imperial Post) in a curve and at the base is the value "1 GRO-SCHEN 1" or "2 KREUZER 2" etc., in a straight line. A colored line enclosed the central circle and between the stamps are solid lines of color of about 1-1/2 mm. wide, probably made with printer's rule, which makes



Left to right, top row first:
1/4gr, 1/3gr 1/2gr, 1gr, 2gr
5gr, 1kr, 2kr, 3kr, 7kr
18kr



Computer enhanced
embossed central
eagle and small
shield design

a colored margin on all four sides of each label. The background is composed of a sort of colored network. The embossing was done at a second operation, the colored printing being produced by typography. The stamps were manufactured at the Government Printing Office in Berlin, and were perforated 13-1/2 by 14-1/2. It will be noted the values are the same as those of the superseded Confederation stamps and the colors, also, are practically the same.

This set, familiarly known as the "eagle with small shield" series, was ready for use before January 1st, 1872, and was actually sold to the public on December 15th, 1871, though they were not available for postage until the authorised day. This issue, however, can only properly be described as a provisional one, since the postal authorities, anxious to start work on the series as quickly as possible, constructed the Arms in the centre themselves instead of waiting for the authorised design of the Herald's Office in Berlin. The design of the latter was only approved on August 3rd, 1871, so that had the postal authorities been a little less impatient they could still have prepared the new stamps in time and have had the arms heraldically correct.

Mr. Barnsdall, writing in *Gibbons Stamp Weekly* tells us that "In this provisional issue the displayed eagle was a somewhat scraggy-looking bird and the shield upon its breast bore rather microscopic Prussian eagle. As finally arranged, the Imperial eagle was rounded out into fuller proportions, and two banderoles or streamers added to the Imperial crown hovering over its head. The shield borne on its breast was enlarged about four times so as to display to better advantage the Prussian eagle, on whose breast also appears a shield bearing the arms, quartered black and white, of the Hohenzollerns, the family to which the Emperor belonged."

In an interesting article in the *London Philatelist* for January, 1902, Mr. Reichenheim states, "In the earliest print of some of these stamps (1/4, 1/3, 1, 2 and 5gr and 3kr) a small network, exactly like that on the stamps of Alsace and Lorraine, has been found, and becomes visible if the stamps are dipped in a solution of sulphuretted hydrogen. The stamps of the top and bottom rows of each sheet have about one or two perforations less, and are about 1 to 2 mm. smaller than all the other stamps. The 2gr and

5gr are also found imperforate, but I am not aware whether entire sheets or only parts of sheets have escaped perforation."

Practically all values, except those printed in bistre, may be found in a variety of shades. The 1/2gr and 2kr were originally printed in a tint which can best be described as orange-vermilion and, apparently, the vermilion had some detrimental effect on the plates, for in April, 1872, the printers were ordered to change the color to orange yellow. The 1/2gr in the new shade appeared in the following May, but the 2kr was not placed on sale until August.

Reference List.

Jan. 1st, 1872. Small shield. Perf. 13 1/2 x 14 1/2.

1. 1/4gr mauve Scott No. 1.
2. 1/3gr green, Scott No. 2.
3. 1/2gr orange, Scott No. 3 or 3a.
4. 1gr rose Scott No. 4.
5. 2gr blue, Scott No. 5.
6. 5gr bistre, Scott No. 6.
7. 1kr green, Scott No. 7.
8. 2kr orange Scott No. 8 or 8a.
9. 3kr rose, Scott No. 9.
9. 7kr rose, Scott No. 10.
9. 18kr rose, Scott No. 11.



Germany 1872 10kr, 30kr, Scott 12-13

In February, 1872, two high values of 10gr and 30gr were issued to take the place of the corresponding denominations in the series for the North German Confederation. In design and color they are identical with the stamps of the Confederation except that the inscription was altered from *NORDDEUTSCHER POSTBEZIRK* to *DEUTSCHE- REICHS-POST*. Like the former stamps, these were really only intended for internal service on heavy packages and, again like the Confederation series, they were not supposed to be sold to the public but to be placed on sale until May, 1873, at earliest.