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American Helvetia
Philatelic Society

TELL

Crypto Stamps

by Richard T. Hall, C.Ph.H.

Let me give you my opinion on the latest scheme of the SwissPost to dig deep into the collectors' pockets – the Cryptostamp. You ask, what's that? Let me quote from the SwissPost's news release:

With the Swiss Crypto Stamp, Swiss Post combines the classic stamp with a digital image, an NFT (Non Fungible Token). This is mapped on the Polygon blockchain. This allows the Crypto Stamp to be traded online and guarantees that the ownership of the Crypto Stamp and its history are seamlessly mapped digitally. On the special block, there is all the information you need to view your digital image, make sure it exists on the blockchain, and transfer the NFT.

With the Swiss Crypto Stamp, Swiss Post is

also building a bridge from the physical to the digital world in philately. Classic stamps have always been collected, traded and exchanged physically. With the crypto stamp, this is now also possible online in the blockchain. The stamp thus becomes a digital collector's item. Swiss Post itself does not operate a blockchain platform on which Crypto Stamps can be traded. Anyone who wants to trade, sell or exchange the Crypto Stamp must do so in an existing Blockchain application.



Figure 1 - Matterhorn, 65,000 issued



Figure 2 - Matterhorn with Marmot, 350 issued

So the SwissPost is getting into the Bitcoin business.

You may have your opinion on Bitcoins, I have mine, but regardless the SwissPost is abusing their name and reputation on this issue. On November 25, 2021, they issued the first crypto stamp showing the Matterhorn. Figure 1 shows this issue with a face value of 8.90 francs! The first issue had a printing

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The Razor Blade Canceler with the Longest Service Life

by Roberto Lopez

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Razor Blade cancelers you already know. Everything has already been reported and published about it. Is there anything left to report? If you started reading this article, then yes.

With regard to the history of the origin of the razor blade cancel, for the sake of simplicity I would like to refer you to the work by Hans J. Zinken of ARGE-Switzerland, the "[Swiss Razor Blade Cancel Manual](#)".

By leafing through this manual or by consulting the master list (which can be downloaded or consulted on the ARGE-Switzerland website), you can see that the period of use for razor blade cancelers extends over 35 years. Most of them were repaired or replaced by other cancellers, so that different epochs can be defined.

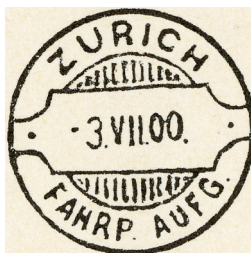
All? Yes, with one exception, otherwise this article would have no meaning. It is the Zurich Fahrpost postmark 11.06, which has 12 hatches above, 13 hatches below, dots in the date bridge, and is without hour wheels.

If you study the dates of use of this canceller, you can see that it was used from April 25, 1899 to June 29, 1923, i.e. a little more than 24 years, apparently without any repairs.

One would logically think that this is a common cancel, which in itself is very attractive to collect, but this is not the case, because razor blade cancelations can all be further divided into departure, forwarding and arrival uses. (Table 1) The rarity of these razor date stamps also depends on how they were used, which is also the case with the Zurich Fahrpost canceler. As you can see from Table 2, cancelers of departure are indeed very common, so they are rated 1 on a scale of 1 to 13. Forwarding and arrival date stamps, on the other hand, are much rarer, index 10.

One can, of course, go further and examine how this device was used, including letters, cash on delivery, postcards, postal stationery, insured letters or wrappers. The 101 entries of the Zurich Fahrpost (11.06) in my razor blade collection fall into the types of use listed in Table 2.

In particular, the use as a forwarding date stamp is unfortunately difficult to determine, since it has no hour wheels and it is, therefore, not possible to know exactly when it was used, unless there is an arrival stamp with an earlier (day) date on the receipt.



Use	First date	Last date	Index
Outgoing	25.04.1899	29.06.1923	1
Forwarding	11.07.1907	08.06.1922	10
Receiving	11.07.1907	26.06.1922	10

Outgoing	97
Forwarding	0
Receiving	4

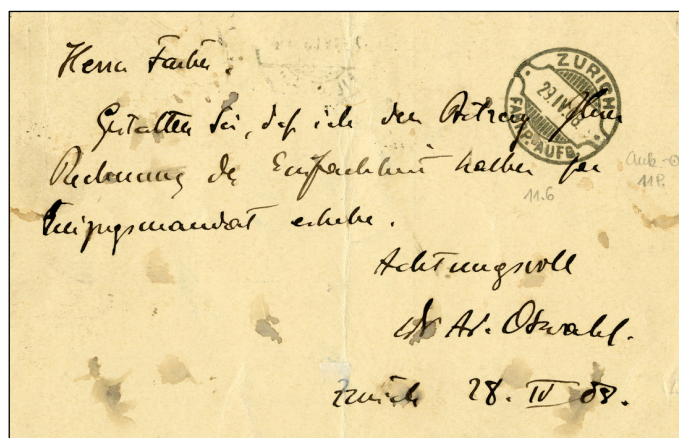
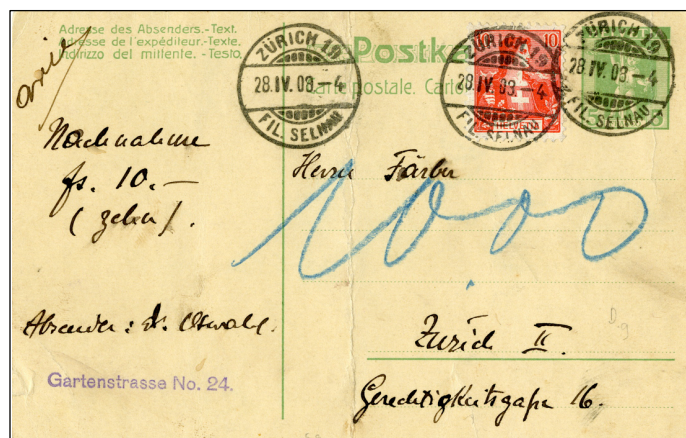


Fig. 1: Cash on delivery of CHF 10 from Zurich to Zurich. The rare arrival mark can be found on the back (Zumstein postal stationery 35, SBK 104)

This razor blade canceller was used on a variety of documents, including letters, postcards, printed matter, postal stationery, insured letters and wrappers. So, it is not surprising that in my collection it is found primarily used on cash on delivery documents (with one exception), if you also add the insured letter with a declared value of 1,000 francs (Fig. 3).

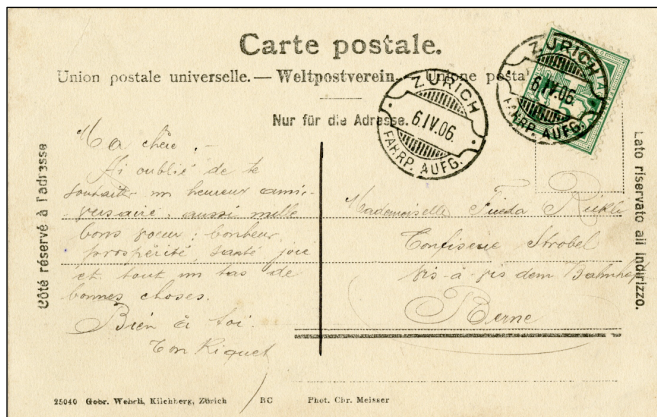


Figure 2: Unusual: Simple postcard with Fahrpost postmark (11.06) used April 6, 1906.



Fig. 3: Insured letter with a declared value of 1,000 francs from Zurich to Ermatingen. Seal on the back



Figure 5: Cash on delivery letter from Zurich to Romanshorn franked with Rp 60. It is a vertical pair of a standing Helvetia (SBK 96B) with Perfin, HUG (H28 after Martin Baer, Hug & Co., Musikhaus, Zürich + Basel)

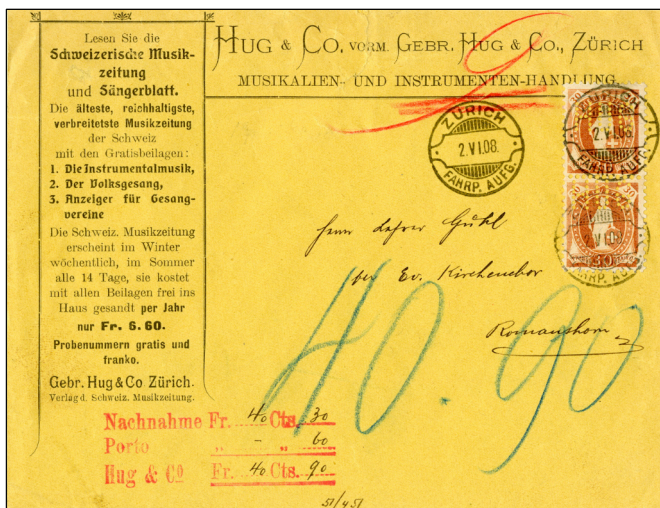
You see, it's worth studying documents (covers and post cards) at a bourse. In order to acquire the knowledge, however, one should delve into the matter and also consult fellow collectors. This is best possible in a club. Unfortunately, many associations are affected by the loss of members, because many

The exception mentioned is a postcard from Zurich to Bern dated April 6, 1906 (Fig. 2). In my database, this date stamp was used 99% for cash on delivery. Hans Jürgen Zinken confirmed this statement to me. The postal clerk who used this device primarily processed the cash on delivery (the cancellers were assigned to the employees). It would be interesting to find out whether there are more such documents with a different type of use to be found.

The period of use of this canceller, from April 25, 1899 to June 29, 1923, makes it possible to find it used on different stamp issues. This extended from the numeral patterns to the 1919 peace stamps, as illustrated in the next examples (Figures 4 & 5). It is also amazing that the canceller did not suffer any defects during its entire period of use and was never repaired. One must, therefore, assume that the postal worker treated his work tools very carefully.



Figure 4: Cash on delivery letter from Zurich to Zurich with 20 Rpf. franked (SBK 2x144) with clean strikes.



Matterhorn Meanderings

by Richard T. Hall, C.Ph.H.

I would like to start off this column with a request from a member who specializes in stamps related to deafness. He is particularly interested in the franchise stamps. He knows of the long listing in the Zumstein Special catalog.

He has three questions: first, is there a more complete list?, second is there any catalog that gives the relative values of the various numbers?, and lastly, how were the franchise stamps supplied to an individual charitable organization, did all get the same range of values and quantities of each value. If any reader can answer any of these questions, please let me know. I'll convey them back to the member and report them here in a future issue.

Here's the short list of post office closings for December and January.

1. On December 3, 2021, the following post offices closed:
6852 Genesterio (Canton Ticino) [assumed by 6850 Mendrisio]
[K-cancel K1020 was last used on that date]
8613 Uster 3 (Canton Zürich) [assumed by 8606 Nänikon]
2. On December 31, 2021, the post office at 3000 Bern 13 Matte (Canton Bern) was closed [assumed by 3017 Bern]
3. On January 14, 2022, the following post offices were closed:
8887 Mels (Canton St. Gallen) [assumed by 8887 Mels]
[K-cancel K147b was last used on that date]
1025 St-Sulpice (Canton Vaud) [assumed by 1027 Lonay]
[K-cancel K374 was last used on that date after 56 years of service]
4. On January 21, 2022, the post office at 8215 Hallau (Canton Schaffhausen) [assumed by 8215 Hallau] [K-cancel K113a was last used on that date after 51 years of service]
5. On January 29, 2022, the following post offices were closed:
6936 Cademario (Canton Ticino) [assumed by 6982 Agno]
[K-cancel K437 was last used on that date after 54 years of service]
1297 Founex (Canton Vaud) [assumed by 1297 Founex]

So, three old timer K-cancels were taken out of service after a half century of service. ✚

(cont. from page 6)

Zürich Razor Blade 11.06

collectors prefer to do philately in private and only with the Internet. This is a personal choice.

Nevertheless, an association, as the name suggests, unites like-minded people and allows a lively exchange of knowledge. Unfortunately, this knowledge can often not be found in the literature. For this reason it seems important to me to share this knowledge with other philatelists in this way.

I would like to thank Hans Jürgen Zinken for his willingness to share his knowledge. This is how philately is fun. We have been alone for far too long, mainly because of the Covid pandemic. ✚

Future Dates for Your Calendar

St Louis Stamp Expo - March 25-27, 2022. Be there, especially if you live in the central US. This is your chance to socialize with other AHPS members and see our annual showing of Swiss exhibits. The popular "swap" meet held on Sunday mornings always attracts an eager group.

Helvetia 2022 18-22 May, Lugano, Switzerland - group activity for AHPS members in the Lugano area. If you plan on attending, join the AHPS group to have a day activity together. Contact Bruce Marsden (see p. 19) for more info, he is planning the activities.

Pipex 2023, May 5-8, Portland, OR, National AHPS Convention, will be 100% virtual exhibiting, plus floor show for exhibitors who wish to have their exhibits seen in person. All judging will be done virtually so foreign exhibitors are invited to participate. George Struble can answer questions. (see p.19)

AHPS Member Zoom meetings are held first Saturday of month (next is March 5) at 1pm Eastern time, 10am Pacific, contact Dick Hall for email invitation. Previous meetings have included Jean-Claude Marchand talking about expertizing, and Rudy Caduff discussing different Swiss catalogues. The March 5 meeting will feature previews of Swiss exhibits being shown at St Louis Stamp Expo.