

POLAND: WARSAW POSTAL ADMINISTRATION
FIRST AND SECOND PROVISIONAL ISSUES
November 17, 1918 to June 1919

BACKGROUND:

When Poland declared independence on November 11, 1918, the country was divided into various administrations based on the territories occupied by Germany and Austria. The *Warsaw Administration was the largest and centered in the capital of the country*. To continue the postal service in the Warsaw Administration, the authorities *first* provisionally used the German occupation stamps and rates, and *then* overprinted into Polish stamps two German issues: The *unissued* 1916 Warsaw City Post stamps and the *occupation stamps* with the German overprint GEN. GOV./WARSCHAU. The *unoverprinted* German occupation stamps were provisionally valid until December 15, 1918. The first official Polish *government issue* was on January 27, 1919. The *overprinted* Warsaw provisionals were permitted to be used until supplies were exhausted.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE:

The purpose of this exhibit is to document the beginnings of the Polish Post in the newly formed country of Poland by an examination of Poland's first stamps and their use. These first issue provisionals made by the Warsaw Post Office was to be used *only* in their Administration. They were used from November 17, 1918, until supplies were exhausted sometime in June 1919, a *short seven-month*. The issues shown are the first stamps of the newly formed Republic of Poland.

TREATMENT:

This exhibit has three chapters. At the suggestion of several judges, I've included an additional short new *Chapter One*. This is a short introduction documenting the *transition* from the German post to the Polish Post. *Chapter Two* follows with the First Warsaw Provisional stamp Issue. *Chapter Three* addresses the Second Provisional Issue. The chapters are organized by value as noted in the upper left of the page and the significance of the page of the upper right.

There is very limited archival material. There are essays for the First Warsaw Issue which are shown. The Second Warsaw Issue has only trial (called proofs in the Polish catalog) overprints of the spacing of lines on stamps. All are shown. *The Polish Post overprinted what was on hand and the values seldom corresponded to an existing rate. Thus, single uses for a rate are not common and impossible for most of the stamps.* The stamps are analyzed and then followed by their postal use. The multitude of color varieties on the basic Germania stamp are beyond the scope of this exhibit. Exceptions are made for rare varieties and for the 20 fenig stamp because 20f color varieties are listed in many catalogs including Fischer, Scott and Michel. Ink varieties of the GGW German overprint are not detailed *except* when they exist on a rare variety. *Postal cards* were overprinted, but an analysis of them is beyond the scope of the exhibit.

IMPORTANCE:

These issues rate very high in importance because they are the FIRST issue of a country and issued in the capital of the country. These issues were only in use for barely seven months. These eight frames represent one of the most comprehensive showings of these provisionals ever put together.

PHILATELIC KNOWLEDGE AND RESEARCH:

An in-depth knowledge is shown for each value including errors or varieties not in the catalog. *All classes of mail are shown, all existing postal rates, and military use.* An analysis of the errors and varieties has been published in the POLONUS BULLETIN and in Poland.

RARITY:

After being under the yoke of oppressors for 125 years, the *public wanted souvenirs* of the new country and bought out the supply in many post offices. *During World War II, many important collections of this issue were lost.* The survival rate has been estimated at +/- 10%. Therefore, *do not be deceived by the low catalog value of these stamps which seems to have been based on the number printed rather than the number survived.* Genuine commercially-used material is very, very difficult. Stamps with a catalog value of \$1.00 on a *commercial letter* can now bring up to \$1000.00. Over 100 are shown. *Parcel Post Cards and Postal Money Cards* were kept by the post office and destroyed. Perhaps between 15 and 20 have survived. Seven are shown. *Value letters*, akin to insured mail, are extremely difficult, and eight examples are shown. One of two recorded examples of a *registered express letters* is shown (40f section). Six *newspaper wrappers* are known from the First issue - two are shown. Three of the five newspaper wrappers of the Second Issue are shown. *First Day of use* for both issues is shown. The *gems* of the First and Second Warsaw issues are *provisional cancellations*. Many offices refused to use the German postmarks and made their own provisional cancellations. Shown are 42 off-cover examples and 47 covers. *This is one of the largest collections of provisional cancellations.*

CHALLENGE:

This exhibit is a result of over 30 years of searching and accumulating this material. These provisionals are the first issue of a newly-born country and as a result they are eagerly sought after by collectors in Poland with whom I have had to compete. *Collectors in Poland have acknowledged this is one of the finest collections/exhibits of the Warsaw Provisionals ever put together.* It is virtually *impossible* to duplicate this exhibit.

This exhibit received the Grand Prix at the 2015 Polish National Exhibition (Warsaw) and has received a WSP Grand. It has since been improved.

ALL SIGNIFICANT ITEMS HAVE BEEN EXPERTIZED.

REFERENCES:

FISCHER KATALOG TOM I, POLSKI ZNAKOW POCZTOWYCH. Fischer 2017, Warsaw (in Polish).

Mazepa, Dr. James. Value Letters in Poland's Second Republic. Collector's Club Philatelist, Vol. 89, #4, July-August 2010.

Mazepa, Dr. James. Various articles, POLONUS BULLETIN, #559, 556, 554, 545 (and more)

Schmutz, Leslaw and Szaba, Kazimierz. ZNACZKI WYNADIA "POCZTA POLSKA/GEN.-GOUV.WARSCHAU z 1918 i 1919 ROKU, Fischer 2009, Krakow (in Polish).