

The Newspaper Postage Stamps of Austria

This is an introduction to a complex subject, which is explained in detail in an essay [[CLICK HERE](#)] and an 8-frame international exhibit [[CLICK HERE](#)]

Introduction

The Austro-Hungarian Empire was the first country in the world to use special adhesive stamps for the inland postage of newspapers. Regulations permitting registered publishers to buy special-rate postage stamps for officially-registered newspapers, magazines, etc. were announced on 12 September 1850. Introduced on 1 January 1851, they were finally replaced by cash payment on 1 March 1922. An estimated ten thousand million newspaper stamps were printed in that period.

In the period up to 1918, the Austro-Hungarian Empire included nearly all of Central Europe. Eleven major ethno-language groups were scattered across the empire: Croatians, Czech, Germans, Hungarians, Italians, Polish, Romanians., Serbs, Slovak, Slovene, and Ukrainian.

In 1850, the Empire's population of over 36 million could read 229 officially-registered regularly-printed newspapers including 102 "political" in 11 different languages, of which Vienna had 19 political and 22 others. By 1892, in Austria 23.7 million people enjoyed 1,952 publications in 20 languages (the majority in German); in Hungary 19.1 million had 791 publications in 10 languages, including one in Latin!

The system

The system was designed for subscribers requiring postal delivery of a registered newspaper for a quarter, half, or full calendar year. The subscriber chose his paper from the approved list, and paid in advance. The newspaper tariff paid for carriage to the delivery post office, from which the subscriber would collect it. Delivery to a home address could be arranged privately on payment of a 1/2kr fee (per copy) to the subscriber's postmaster. Separate Newspaper Sections were attached to the post offices in the large towns, to facilitate the handling of newspapers and magazines, to accept subscriptions for such publications, and to sell the discounted stamps. Single newspapers had their newspaper stamp cancelled with the postmark of the sending post office. Bundles to the same delivery post office had their wrapper cancelled by the sending post office; but the cancellation of the newspaper stamps on the newspapers themselves was done after the wrapper was opened at the delivery post office.

The exhibit

There were 12 issues of newspaper postage stamps, which are shown in sequential date-of-issue order. The exhibit shows these stamps, including shade variations, cancellations, perforations, official and private imprints, and type differences; with examples of them in use.

The first page for each issue explains why and when it was issued. Its plan is: an overview and the 1851 issues are covered in Frame 1.; the 1858, 1861 and 1863 issues occupy Frame 2; the long-lasting 1867 issue begins in Frame 3 and continues into Frame 4; the 1880 issue concludes Frame 4; the 1899 issue is shown in Frame 5; the 1908 issue is in frame 6; the 1916 and the post-war 1919 issues are in frame 7; and the 1920 and 1922 issues are dealt with in frame 8.

