



BULLETIN

VOL. V.



NO. 1

„Helvetia”

SOCIETY FOR COLLECTORS OF SWITZERLAND

BULLETIN

"HELVETIA SOCIETY FOR COLLECTORS OF SWITZERLAND"

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317 So. 15th. Street
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VOLUME V

January 1942

No. 1

INFORMATION WANTED.

In the minds of the founders of the Helvetia Society were some very definite reasons why the collectors and students of Swiss stamps should be bound together into a union. Helvetia was not simply an excuse to form another stamp club. Not the least of these reasons was the exchange of information, and the answering of questions which naturally arise when one studies his stamps. It is surprising to me that prior to the present time no one had attempted to use the Bulletin to ask for information on specific points, but now I have in hand several questions from one of our regular contributors, one who has not only written for our Bulletin but has also contributed several special articles for the Helvetia issues of STAMPS magazine and cooperated in the preparation of the script for our broadcast of a year ago over the red network of NBC. Mr. Caldwell's questions are listed below, and I have every reason to believe that there are members of our Society who will come forth freely and supply the answers.

It is proposed to have this Information Wanted column a regular feature of our Bulletin. It is reasonable to believe that there are many questions to be asked and also that there are sufficiently informed members of our society who can and will furnish the answers. At my request Mr. Caldwell has agreed to act in the capacity of a clearing-house for such questions and answers. These should be addressed to:

Mr. George W. Caldwell
5512 Hadfield Street
Philadelphia, Penna.

Due credit will be given to those persons furnishing the answer. If you do not wish to have your name mentioned, please state the fact. Let's get going with a bang!

Gustave A. von Gross, President.

The following information on Swiss revenue stamps is desired by Mr. Caldwell:

Kindly turn to question #1 on succeeding page.

Question #1 What is the translation and what is the significance of the following inscriptions found on the revenue stamps of Fribourg:

- a. Visa on lieu de timbre de commerce
- b. Timbre de dimension
- c. Visa on lieu de timbre de dimension
- d. Timbre mobile gradué
- e. Visa on lieu de timbre gradué.

* * *

Philadelphia, Pa. 1/26/42.

Minutes of the Meeting
of the
"Holvotia Society"

The regular monthly meeting of the Holvotia Society was held on the above date at 317 South 15th. Street with the President Mr. Gustavo A. von Gross presiding. The meeting was called to order at 8:45 P.M. with seven members present and answering the roll call after which the minutes of the previous meetings were read and approved.

Treasurer's Report

Receipts:

Balance on hand 12/12/41	\$120.95
Dues	10.00
Total	<u>\$130.95</u>
	22.50

\$108.45

Balance on hand Jan. 26, 1942 \$ 108.45

Expenditures:

Order #59 Paper, stencils	\$22.50
postage for bulletin	

Edw. H. Lewandowski, D.D.S.

Communications

The Secretary read bulletin No.50 from the National Federation of Stamp Clubs which dealt with various questions which are submitted to the various stamp clubs pertaining to subjects which may be of interest to their members in general or to the Club as an organization.

Reports of Committees

Research: Progress.

Reports of Committees (continuation)

Banquet: Tickets for the Banquet have been forwarded to the members and arrangements are going forward toward completion of the final arrangements. All members are urged to make their reservations as early as possible as we would like to have a good delegation attend the Banquet from Phila. Also those who can are requested to send a door prize to Sophie Buser as soon as possible, as Sophie is anxious to have the prizes on hand as soon as possible.

For the good of the Society.

Due to the fact that the editor of the bulletin has had considerable trouble in securing paper for the last two issues of the bulletin and due also to the constantly increasing cost of this paper, a general discussion was held concerning the advisability of the Helvetia Society purchasing a supply of mimeograph paper sufficient to last for a year. After a rather lengthy discussion it was finally decided that the Editor of the bulletin be instructed to lay in a three months supply of paper at a time, the majority feeling that this would be sufficient to meet our needs.

The following bill was ordered paid:

Order #59 Paper, stencils, postage etc. for the bulletin \$ 22.50

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned in regular form.

* * *

Accepted into Helvetia:

Maurice E. Rouillard	181 Chestnut Street	Holyoke, Mass.
Emil Bruechig	522 Fifth Ave.	New York, N.Y.
Hilda Yant	1337 Shriver Ave. N.E.	Canton, Ohio.
Sidney F. Barrett	87 Nassau Street	New York, N.Y.
Charles H. Johnson	71 W. 23rd. Street	New York, N.Y.

* * *

Applied for Helvetia Membership:

John Randolph		Phila. Pa.
Daniel de Beixodon		East Hampton, N.Y.
Lillian Marie Mack	564 W. 160th. Street	New York, N.Y.
Dr. Louise D. Larimore	750 Riverside Drive	New York, N.Y.

* * *

NOTE: For the succeeding contribution, "Postage Meter Impressions of Switzerland and Liechtenstein" we are indebted Mr. Werner Simon, author, and our own member Mr. George W. Wettach who so kindly prepared and cut the stencils for this creditable article. Unfortunately Mr. Wettach omitted to insert a conspicuous heading mentioning the author and himself.

* * *

THE POSTAGE METER IMPRESSIONS OF SWITZERLAND & LIECHTENSTEIN

The Swiss Postal Administration has published "Regulations for the users of postage meter machines" which contain all pertinent data regarding franking machines. The following paragraphs quoted from the regulations are of general interest:

"824. The manufacture and sale of franking machines is only allowed by such factories and distributors which are licensed by the Postal Administration. The Postal Administration exercises direct control over the use of the machines.

826. The franking machines can be used for payment of postage on mail meters of all kind, for payment of custom fees due in postal or rail transit and for advanced payment of fees in connection with insolvency proceedings.

827. The Postal Administration supplies the printing dies and date stamps to the users of franking machines at cost on a rental basis. The die number is identical with the control number. It is prohibited to use other dies & stamps than those supplied by the Postal Administration. ...Dies and date stamps which are not used anymore and those of sold machines are to be forwarded by the controlling post office to the Post Office Dept., Section Printing and Stamps, where they will be preserved for the user of the machine for possible later use.

828. The machines are equipped with counting and controlling meters which are different for the individual machine models.

842. The meters of the machines are to be read once a month.

844. The amount due is to be paid within 3 days by postal check, in cash or by debiting the postal checking account of the machine user. The Postal Administration is permitted to ask the user of the machine for a proper deposit"

Regulations Concerning the Meter Impressions

The philatelist is especially interested in the following paragraphs which contain the regulations concerning the meter impressions:

"832. The design of the indicia is wide oval and on the machines "Hasler F22", "Hasler F88 and "Safaf 2" rectangular. All impressions show the value in Arabian figures, the inscription "Helvetia", the control number of the machine and at the left and right of the value the letters "PP" (port paye).

833. The indicia is to be printed in one single impression, if possible, but may also be shown in 2 or 3 impressions side by side. The impressions are to be printed distinctly in the

upper right corner of the address side of the mail matter. Unclean, indistinct or only partly visible impressions are invalid.

3391. The printing ink is red; it is to be purchased by the users of the machines from the Section Printing and Stamps of the Post Office Department."

The use of two different indicia designs is necessary because all franking machines can be grouped into ~~two classes~~:

1. Machines with fixed value dies when each denomination prints from an entirely separate die.
2. Omni-denominational machines which can print any denomination on the Cash Register principle.

A general trend can be observed which replaces machines of group 1 more and more by those of group 2.

The Numbering of the Machines

Inasmuch as the Post Office Department furnished the printing dies (see above No. 827) these are alike for all machine models so that the prints of the individual models cannot be told apart. However, each machine has been allocated with a control number which appears also in the meter impression (see No. 827). Originally the numbering was arranged according to a certain system which assigned a special number series to each model, resulting in the following schedule:

100- 200 model Franco
201- 300 model Hasler
301-1000 model Universal 5
1001-upwards model Hasler
2001-upwards model Universal 5
3001-upwards models Francopost and Safag
4001-upwards model Hasler

(It is interesting to note that the last named number series starts with 4001 according to information received from the Post Office Dept. while actually a meter 4000 has been found.)

This number schedule has been upset by the appearance of improved machine models. In many cases users of older machines exchanged them for later models and still continued using their original control number even though they switched to another model. As far as new users are concerned the above number schedule is still being used.

It is therefore possible that Hasler machines can now be found within the 100-200 or 301-1000 series, although these series were not originally assigned to Hasler machines. Machine control numbers therefore are not infallible indications of the model from which the impression originated--only the date stamp is.

Unfortunately the majority of the franking machines belonging to group 1 are not equipped with a date stamp, but many of the meter impressions which originated from machines of the second group also lack it. Since the model cannot be sufficiently identified by the franking print alone, it is therefore advisable to classify all impressions without date stamp into one group regardless of model and manufacturer.

This article will therefore summarize the meter impressions without date stamp regardless of manufacturer and then deal with the impressions showing a date stamp according to the individual machine models.

Description of the Postage Meter Types

Group 1.

Machines with fixed value dies. Design: Wide oval.

Without date stamp

originating from the models Franco, Francopost, Hasler, Safag 1 and Universal 5.

Existing denominations: 3, 5, 7-1/2, 10, 15, 18, 20, 22-1/2, 23, 25, 30, 35, 37-1/2, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 1 Fr., 120, 150, 2 Fr., 3 Fr., 5 Fr.

Denominations of 55 and 250 have been used according to information received from the Post Office Dept. although no copies are known to the writer so far.

The rarest denomination is 37-1/2 closely followed by 22-1/2 of which only a few copies are known. Scarce are 18 and 23 also, as well as 7-1/2, 35, 30 and the high Franc values.

Sometimes a slogan can be found with the franking print. Details will be given below in connection with the description of the different machine models.

As all mail matter must indicate at which post office and at which time it was mailed, and in order to avoid double use of the meter impression, all prints which do not show town mark and date stamp are to be cancelled like regular postage stamps. Hand cancellations must be stamped close to the meter impression whereas machine cancellations may overprint it. Variations from these rules can often be found.

With date stamp.

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a) Model FRANCO. Licensed March 18, 1922.

These machines were distributed by the Franco-Aktiengesellschaft of Lucerne, and manufactured by the Gas- und Wassermesser-Fabrik A.G. of Lucerne. The model Franco was later purchased by the Safag A.G. of Biel and the Franco Company liquidated. Although licensed in 1922 the first machines were probably not installed before 1924. As previously mentioned the control numbers 100-200 were allocated to the Franco machines, but the highest number known in this series is 122. Only machines 102, 112, 117 and 119 printed a date stamp and upon closer examination it appears that 102 alone (Fig. 1) is a Franco while 112 and 119 are Francopost and 117 Hasler machines. Since the Francopost machines were developed from the Franco model it must be assumed that only very few Franco machines were installed and that the later numbers of the Franco series belong to Francopost. Unexplained remains the fact that number 117 is a Hasler machine, but most likely the user originally purchased a Franco or Francopost and exchanged it later for a Hasler.



FIG 1

The Franco machine is the only Swiss model with the date stamp under the frank. The date stamp is circular, about 2.5 mm below the oval. As mentioned before only machine 102 is known with date stamp and copies are rather scarce. Model Franco is equipped to print 5 denominations.

b) Model FRANCOPOST. This model is an improvement of the Franco and was produced by the Safag A.G. of Biel (Successors).

c) Model SAFAG 1. The next model that Safag put on the market was named Safag 1. Both Francopost and Safag 1 will be discussed together as their impressions are exactly alike.

As shown above part of the Franco numbers may already belong to Francopost; the numbers from 3001 upwards are assigned to all models manufactured by the Safag Company.

The date stamps of both Francopost and Safag 1 are printed at the left of the frank about 4mm apart. The following types exist:

Type	Form of stamp	In upper segment	In lower segment	Found on machine
D	circle with segments	cross	machine number	3026
H	double circle	cross	Roman figure	3012, 3021
J	double circle	cross (Fig.2)	machine number	3011
L	double circle	shaded	machine number	119
M	double circle	shaded	shaded	3011
(Types H-M show the date between two horizontal lines while the following type R is a double circle without the lines.)				
R	double circle	cross	machine number	3004

The Roman figure which appears in the lower segment on type H indicates the Postal District to which the post office shown in the date stamp belongs. The 11 Swiss Postal Districts are I. Geneva, II. Lausanne, III. Berne, IV. Neuchâtel, V. Basle, VI. Aarau, VII. Lucerne, VIII. Zurich, IX. St.Gallen, X. Chur, XI. Bellinzona.

For some years the machine number has been shown in the date stamp for control purposes which led to types D, J, L and R.

Safag date stamps can be recognized by the size of the date figures which are larger than on any other model. Also, the dots behind the date figures are placed at their foot.

Francopost and Safag 1 are equipped with 10 denominations which are supposed to run from 5 Rp. to 1.50 Fr. Both models can only print denominations divisible by 5, so that all other values must have originated from one of the remaining models. The following denominations are known: 5, 10, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 50, 60, 80, 1 F, 150.

Several machines print an advertising slogan in place of the date stamp. Slogans which usually have the form of a standing rectangle have been seen on machines 3029, 3035, 3040, 3041, 3052.



FIG 2



FIG 3

d) Model UNIVERSAL 5. Licensed April 30, 1925.

The machines are manufactured by Henry Baer & Co. of Zurich and built under license of the Universal Postal Frankers Ltd. of London, England. Apparently an originally British model was slightly changed and locally assembled in order to put it on the market as of Swiss manufacture.

Control numbers 801-1000 were assigned to this model but as this series has been used up, numbers from 2001 upwards have been used since.

The omissible date stamps appear at the left of the frank about 2.2 cm apart, and are easily recognized by the wide distance from the frank. The date figures are far smaller than those of the Safag machines and there are also no dots at all in the date. The following types of date stamps can be found:

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>FORM OF STAMP</u>	<u>IN UPPER SEGMENT</u>	<u>IN LOWER SEGMENT</u>	<u>ON MACHINE</u>
G	circle with segments	shaded	shaded	838, 839, 874
H	double circle with lines	cross	Roman figure	839
N	double circle without lines	blank	blank	849, 946

The first Universal machines were supplied with frank dies on which the control numbers were etched. This was the case from Jan. 1926 to Jan. 1929 and occurred on machines 801-894. As these etched figures wore out quickly they have been cut ever since. All etched control numbers can be recognized by their smaller size but many of them have been replaced by the larger sized cut figures and it happens that on the same machine some denominations still possess the small etched figures while others have the larger sized cut machine number. This explains the appearance of both large and small sized figures of different denominations found on the same envelope. A sample impression of the 3 Fr. value on machine 107 with small control number is in existence but it cannot be explained how the small figures could turn up outside of the Universal number series. As we have seen, number 107 belongs to the Franco series and it can only be assumed that Universal tried to repair or replace the Franco machine during the time when the small control numbers were furnished. The control numbers were supplied by the Post Office Dept. and inserted in the frank dies by the manufacturer.

Model Universal 5 may be equipped with advertising slogans which appear at the left of the date stamp or if no date stamp is used at the left of the frank. The size and setting of the slogans varies. Machine 937 exists with a slogan in the size and form of date stamp type N.

All Universal 5 machines are supplied with 5 denominations. The following values have been seen: 3, 5, 7½, 10, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 50, 60, 70, 90, 1 Fr.

e) Model HASLER. Licensed September 15, 1923.

The machines are a product of the Hasler A.G. of Berne. Only a few are equipped with date stamps which can be omitted at will.

The numbers 201-800 and from 1001 upwards were assigned to these machines; but as previously explained, many Hasler machines can now be found within the other number series.

The date stamps are placed at the left of the frank at a distance of about 1.3 cm; 4 machines have been found with a narrower setting of about 8 mm, namely 1017, 1018, 1114, 1261. All dots in the date are placed at half height of the date figures which makes it easy to identify Hasler impressions.

The following types of date stamps are in existence:

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>FORM OF STAMP</u>	<u>IN UPPER SEGMENT</u>	<u>IN LOWER SEGMENT</u>
B	circle (Fig.4)	cross	Roman figure
C	circle with segments	cross	Roman figure
H	double circle with horizontal lines	cross	Roman figure
J ^r	same as H	cross	machine figure
K	same as H	shaded	Roman figure
M	same as H	shaded	shaded

No machine number examples are given as all types appear frequently. The most common type is H. Type M can be found with thick and thin shading. An inverted date stamp has been seen on machine 117 (type K).



Fig. 4 (Type B)

Originally an advertising slogan could be furnished in place of one of the 8 denominations so that the form of the slogan was limited by the size of the oval frank. Naturally such a slogan could not be printed at the same time the frank was applied. Hence it was printed subsequently on any place on the envelope. Sometimes it was even stamped over part of the frank.

Later machines could be equipped with a small slogan in the form of a standing rectangle which appears on the left side of the date stamp. It is possible that the narrower setting of the date stamp which we have mentioned before was used in order to enlarge the space available for the slogan. Larger slogans can be found on machines without date stamp with the slogan always at the left of the frank. The slogan as well as the date stamp can be omitted if desired.

All possible denominations have been found on the Hasler F22 which prints 8 denominations.

GROUP II

OMNI-DENOMINATIONAL MACHINES. DESIGN: RECTANGLE

1. Small rectangular frank, 3.7 x 2.2 cm, with or without date stamp; originating from model Hasler F 22.

The impressions of this type can be grouped together regardless of whether they are equipped with or without date stamp because they can originate from no other model. Most machines are supplied with date stamps which, however, can be omitted if desired.

As any denomination can be printed (up to a certain maximum) the existing denominations are of little interest. It might be mentioned that values ending with $\frac{1}{2}$ Rp. like $7\frac{1}{2}$ Rp. are extremely scarce as such postage rates were discontinued around the time when these franking machines appeared on the market. The machines are available in the following sizes which the collector must also recognize:

1. with 3 figures of value
 - a) printing from 000 to 999
 - b) from 000 to $999\frac{1}{2}$
2. with 4 figures of value
 - a) from 0000 to 9999
 - b) from 0000 to $9999\frac{1}{2}$
3. with 5 figures of value, printing from 00000 to 99999.