



# The Finnish Philatelist

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## The Finnish Philatelist

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## Tornio Censor Tape 12b

The fourteen or so two line Finnish-Swedish Tornio censor tapes used from August 16, 1914 to late December 1914 present a number of challenges. The first seven tapes are known used only during August 1914 and none were used longer than two weeks. The early tapes were characterized by misspelled words in both the Finnish and Swedish text and they are much sought after by collectors of the wartime period. It would be quite an accomplishment for a collector to acquire all thirty plus Tornio censor tapes.

Tornio Censor Tape No. 12 was first described by Juhani Olamo in *Postal Censoring in Finland*, his 1972 catalogue of Finnish censor marks. His description indicates the Finnish text measures 47 mm and the Swedish text at 53 mm. Olamo listed one day of use, November 22, 1914. Termonen & Keturi (T&K) add to the time of usage for this tape from November 8, 1914 to November 30, 1914. However, T&K measure the Swedish text at 54 mm, a small but nevertheless easily measurable difference. In addition, T&K added tape 12a to their 1999 catalogue with the Finnish text measuring 41 mm and the Swedish text 49 mm. Apparently, CT 12a is not derived from CT 12.

Recently I acquired a small but significant cover lot of Tornio censor tapes including the tape illustrated below. The type font in this tape is the same as used in CT 12a, but the Swedish text measures only 47 mm. This measurement is absolutely accurate but I do not have original examples of tapes 12a to compare spacing between the letters. Nevertheless I feel confident that this tape deserves a separate listing as Tornio CT No 12b consistent with the classification of other tapes with very small differences in the length of one or another line of text. For example see the three line Tornio CT Nos. 22, 23, 24, and 26. Comments are welcome.

Roger Quinby





## Fun with Finnish First Day Covers – 10

By Alan Warren

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 1927 Finland issued a set of two values to mark the tenth anniversary of the country's independence (Norma 138-139). These stamps might be candidates for the first commemorative issues of Finland. The design was the familiar lion from the Finnish national Coat of Arms.

The 1½ Fmk paid the domestic letter rate at the time as well as the rate to other Nordic countries. The 2 Fmk value paid the letter rate to other countries. First day covers are typically overpaid as collectors wanted both stamps or pairs on their envelopes.

Figures 1 and 2 show two different first day Helsinki cancels—the hand cancellation (Fig. 1) and the machine cancel (Fig. 2). But take another look at that Figure 2—it is dated 5 December or a predate of one day. Whether the clerk released the stamps prematurely or forgot to move the date forward in the canceller may never be known.

Figure 3 shows both values of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence set used in pairs on two different first day covers. These were cancelled in Puistola (Swedish, Fastböle), a suburb of Helsinki. This is what collectors in the United States call an “unofficial” cancel on the first day, meaning a cancel other than where the stamps are normally issued and cancelled.

Figure 3 below.



Figure 1 above. Figure 2 below.



Most Finnish FDCs have Helsinki cancels, just as most of the FDCs of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are cancelled in Copenhagen, Oslo, or Stockholm. Exceptions usually occur when the stamps are released at some special site or event such as an exhibition, for which a special cancel has been prepared. In the Figure 3 example, an enterprising collector decided to make FDCs that were truly unusual.



# The Golden Ear (Kultatähkä) Postal Stationery Cards

By Kari R. Rahiala

Translated by Carita Parker and Edited by Jeffrey Stone

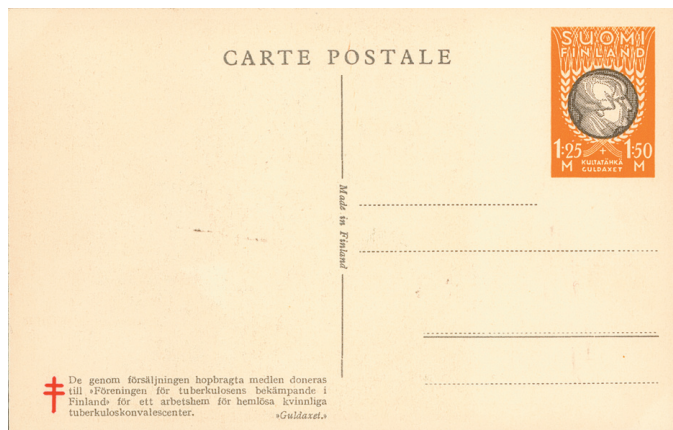


Figure 1. Address and message side with imprinted 1½ mk value stamp, accurate franking for the inland rate.



Figure 2. The cards were demonetized when the inland card rate went to 1,75 fmk on June 15, 1940. The triangle overprint voided the value stamp. All illustrations are from the collection of Kari Rahiala.

## The Origins of Kultatähkä

Nearly all collectors are familiar with the 10 different Golden Ear postal stationery cards issued in 1935 and also the Golden Ear postal stationery envelope. But what are the origins of 'Golden Ear?' In 1930 the debate about care of patients recuperating from tuberculosis was getting quite a lot of publicity. At a time when tuberculosis was a national disease in Finland activists drew attention to the fact that convalescents weakened by the disease but released from hospital could not get work or support anywhere and had to hide their illness carefully. It was suspected that these individuals became both mentally and physically destitute. The aim of the 'Golden Ear' activists was convalescent care, to be provided by a service that would include housing, an employment agency, vocational training and for some convalescents even a permanent home for life, to be called 'Kultatähkäkoti' (The Golden Ear Home). The

intention initially was that the institution would care only for homeless female convalescents, but later men were included. The institution was to be a self-supporting home and place of work that would, in every respect, even from a national and economic standpoint, be quite remarkable.

The person behind the 'Golden Ear' idea and the instigator of activities in support of the scheme was Miss Aili Sarkkila, herself a victim of the lung disease. Miss Sarkkila had already started charitable activities in 1928, in Orivesi, as director of a club that made decorative items sold for the benefit of those with tuberculosis. These items were first sold at a women's Christmas fair in 1928. The following year the work spread to several locations and a new item was offered for sale - the Golden Ear - that became the symbol for the charity.

As early as 1930 the women's committee of the association for the fight against tuberculosis in Finland, which operated under the direction of Miss Sarkkila, published the first Christmas cards designed by artist Martta Wendelin. Less well known is the marketing of the 'Mourning flower' labels started in 1933. (See Åko Berglund, 1994, "Christmas Seals. The Finnish Anti-Tuberculosis Association," p. 86) The label was meant as an expression of sympathy upon death. That same year (1933) the Kalevala cards appeared for sale where



Figure 3. Vase with flowers.





Figure 4. The 1.25 Fmk value stamp was insufficient franking for air transport to Palestine. Tampere, 28. IV. 37, via Stockholm, 29. APR 1937, to Jerusalem, Palestine. The card rate to abroad from December 1, 1936 to September 30, 1942 was 2 Fmk. The air transport surcharge for zone 3 was 3 Fmk from April 15, 1935 to March 31, 1938. A very unusual destination.

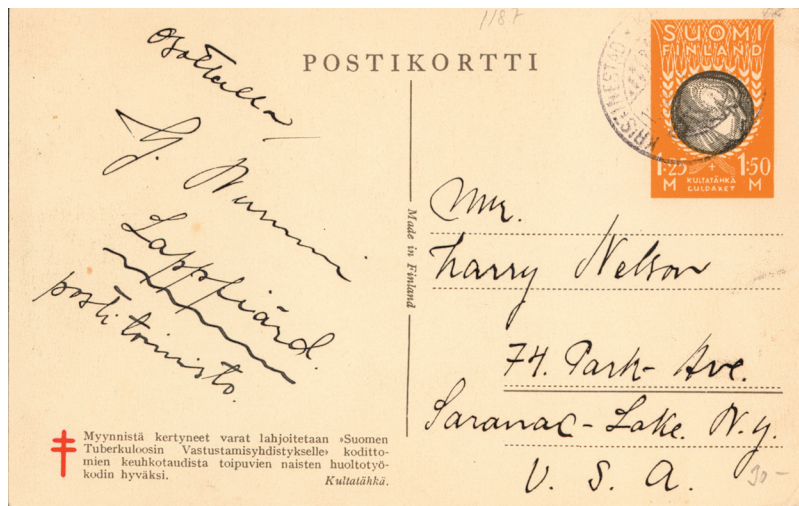


Figure 5. Kristinestad, 13. VI. 39, to Saranac Lake, New York, a small village about seven miles from the site of the 1932 and 1980 Winter Olympics at Lake Placid. The foreign card rate from November 1, 1936 to September 30, 1942 was 2 Fmk, therefore this card was underfranked by 75 penni.

the solicitors got permission to use the internationally common logo symbolizing the work in the fight against tuberculosis - the Lothringen cross - said to have been on Gottfried von Lothringen's cape as he led the first crusade in 1099. At the suggestion of a Danish pastor the same symbol was taken into use when embarking on 'the crusade against tuberculosis.' Cards were made in eight different languages for sale abroad, but the marketing was a failure. Only some were sold in the U.S.A. and this mostly among Finnish-speaking immigrants. But in Finland the sale of the cards was quite successful especially when coinciding with the commemoration of the Kalevala in 1935.

At the end of 1934, work on behalf of tuberculosis patients received a considerable boost when granted the right to profit from the sale of postal items. In an interview in autumn 1934, Aili Sarkkila stated that the idea of using postage stamps originated with the most honorable patron of 'Kultatahkä', the First Lady of the Republic of Finland, Mrs. Ellen

Svinhufvud. Consequently, 'Kultatahkä' requested that the likeness of the president's wife be on the imprinted stamp. The artist, P. Malin, designed the stamp so that in the center, surrounded by golden ears, is the likeness of the First Lady in profile. The values of the imprinted stamps were those of the current post card rate of Fmk 1.25, and the letter rate of Fmk 2, each with a 50 penni fee added for the benefit of the Golden Ear charity. The initial period of sale granted for these items was one year, both for inland and international mailings. It was expected that the stationery envelope would appear by Christmas 1934, but it did not materialize until the following spring.

On 1 November 1934, the government granted permission for these privately issued postal items. Miss Sarkkila or the charity had to pay for the envelopes and post cards, as well as for imprinting the value stamps and everything else 'so that the government would not incur any expense in the matter.'

The printing took place at the Finland's Bank Mint. Later on, the Traffic and Public Works Ministry stated that the size of the imprinted stamps was to be 24 x 34 mm and the colors the same as that of the corresponding current postage stamp denominations. The quantity printed, in addition to Post Museum and UPU specimens, was 250,000 of each type. In the spring 1935, the amount of the additional fee was raised to 1,50



Sina högtidsdräkter tog hon,  
Tog de renaste hon hade,  
Klädde sig i femfald klädnad,  
Prydde lockarna med smycken.  
Kalevala 10: 237—240.

Figure 6. Girl at the door.





Figure 7. Child in field of grain.

Fmk for the postal stationery cards, but stayed at 50 penni for the stationery envelopes.

The post cards had pictures and a yellow imprinted stamp. Ten popular national typically-Finnish motifs by Martta Wendelin adorned the cards and each had one of ten different verses appropriate for each subject from the Kalevala epic. The cards were issued both in Finnish and Swedish:

1. Vase with flowers
2. Girl at the door
3. Child in field of grain
4. The cloth weaver
5. Mother with child
6. Log cabin in the valley
7. Family at the home gate
8. Man and woman in a boat
9. Folk dance
10. Girl with sheep

The proceeds at the time went to the Golden Ear charity as represented by the association for the fight against tuberculosis in Finland. These days the charity's many-faceted operations continue under the 'Kultatähkä Kiipula' Foundation on a property in Janakkala named after its former owner Kustaa Kiipula. Mr. Kiipula was a farmer, but he also held governmental positions and with his wife Miina he farmed their land. Kustaa Kiipula passed away in 1918 and pursuant to Miina's last will and testament the Kiipula homestead was bequeathed to the Janakkala district for the use as a sanatorium

for tuberculosis sufferers. Incidentally, the Kiipulas' daughter also succumbed to tuberculosis. The district in its turn gave the Kiipula homestead to the 'Kultatähkä' just prior to the war in 1939, to be used as a work home for tuberculosis patients lacking financial means. These days the Kiipula Foundation runs the operations.

### How then to collect 'Kultatähkä' entires?

I will not deal at all this time with the postal stationery envelopes in two different sizes with the violet imprinted stamp. In collecting the postal stationery cards, the attached table or chart may suffice. I have included in the chart all that can be found on the cards as well as their uses and also unused specimens. The exact date of issue is not known from documentary evidence, but a date mentioned in this connection is April 17, 1935. My collector friends know of cards postmarked Helsinki April 15; Tampere April 16; Inkeroinen April 17; and then several on April 18. I think that even earlier marks may exist and I would welcome any such information. There are printing varieties on the cards arising from the several printings. At present it is not known what sort of sheets the cards were printed on or in what groupings of the pictures. The usual variety on the cards occurs in the address lines. The upper most in the later printing is shorter, with the dotted lines not extending as far as the other lines. According to the postal rate at that time, the card was also valid without additional fee for the other Nordic and Baltic countries, but as such, clearly not as common as inland use. Foreign destinations



Figure 8. The cloth weaver.



are also rarer except for those used philatelically.

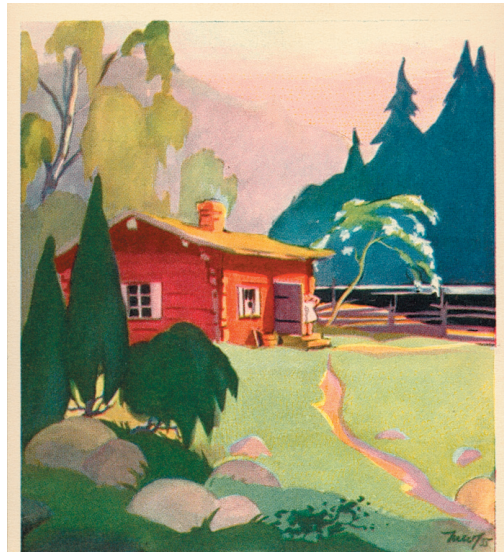
Naturally, this type of special card is also rather commonly seen with various special event marks. When a stamp depicting Finland's then President Svinhufvud was issued, items with the

presidential couple side-by-side on card also showed up. When the period of sale ended and with it the special 'Kultatähkä' solicitor permit in late 1940, the imprinted stamp on the remainder of the Finnish language edition was struck with



Dig jag tacka vill, min moder,  
Du, som vaggade mig en gång,  
Som på dina armar bar mig,  
Som ditt bröst mig gav till näring.  
Kalevala 24: 337—340.

Figure 9. Mother with child.



Tuomikko tuvan takana,  
Katajikko kaivotiellä,  
Kaikki maassa marjan varret,  
Marjan varret, heinän korret,  
Pajupehkot, kuusen juuret,  
Lepän lehvät, koivun kuoret!  
Kalevala 24: 471—476.

Figure 11. Log cabin in the valley.



Noin sanoi minun isoni,  
Noin sanon minä itseki:  
Varjele, vakainen Luoja,  
Kaitse, kaunoinen Jumala,  
Autä armokourallasi,  
Väkevällä vallallasi.  
Kalevala 30: 465—470.

Figure 10. Family at the home gate.



Osalliset, onnelliset  
Tuota toivovat alati  
Kesän kaunihin tulevan,  
Suven suuren lämpiävän.  
Kalevala 44: 105—108.

Figure 12. Man and woman in a boat.



a violet triangle, so that afterwards these could be sold at a stationers as picture postcards. The imprinted stamp was no longer postally valid, however.

The cards marked with a triangle are not uncommon and occur later as picture postcards franked with current postage stamps. In retrospect, this somewhat radical 1930s experiment should not have been ignored. In my opinion, the cards should have been used more extensively. Nowadays, Finland's Red Cross with the Post's co-operation has produced similar items. However, they began without much publicity, so at least for now they lack the same recognition that the 'Kultatahka' postal cards received right from the outset of their introduction.

Figure 1 illustrates the value mark of the 1.25 Fmk postal card. The usual variety is seen showing the short address line. Also shown are postal stationery cards with the picture texts in Finnish. This involved the initial series of cards. Furthermore, a triangle-marked postal card is shown in Figure 2. In the next column I have presented a chart to make collecting easier. Everyone can add to it according to their own preferences. It has clearly been of help to me when looking for a specimen that I have not yet encountered, and I would like to see those who have many of these cards complete a similar chart. After that we collectors could exchange information and further the collecting of a very interesting issue.

**Editor's note.** These cards are an excellent subject for a one-frame display exhibit, and the cards are both reasonably priced and easily collected. I hope someone would exhibit these beautiful cards at the SCC regional meeting in San Diego next January. The editor will forward your comments to Kari Rahiala.

### Chart

Finnish language, unused  
 Swedish language, unused  
 Finnish, short line, unused  
 Swedish, short line, unused  
 Finnish language, used  
 Swedish language, used  
 Finnish, short line, used  
 Swedish, short line, used  
 Used Nordic  
 Used Estonia  
 Inland use + 50 penni  
 Inland use + 75 penni  
 Inland use + other  
 Used Nordic + 50 penni  
 Used Nordic + 75 penni  
 Used Nordic + other  
 Used foreign + 25 penni  
 Used foreign + other  
 By air in Finland  
 By air abroad  
 Registered  
 Insured  
 Express  
 Special marks  
 Svinhufvud +  
 FDC  
 Error printings  
 Other exceptions  
     Exceptional destinations  
     Triangle-marked, unused  
     Triangle-marked, used



Figure 13. Folk dance.



Figure 14. Girl with sheep.



## The M/30 Series - The Definitive Issues, Part III

### The 16 Fmk Post Bus Stamp Uses

#### Selecting The Best Postal Items For An M/1930 Exhibit

The purpose of this article is to refresh the memory about these stamp uses. It is often asked how to select an object especially from among the large picture stamps because at the time they were issued they did not meet the rate for any specific postal service or delivery. There is a saying among the Savo province populace: "The responsibility now is on the reader." It is necessary to hit the study books and spell out the postal rates keeping in mind the stamp issue date. If memory fails, then grab a pen and paper and figure out the various rate combinations. Knowing what to look for is already a big step in the right direction. The M/30 lion stamps were issued either for a specific use, in which case the printing ink followed the UPU ink color specifications or as added stamps, having some other color. The UPU specifications were outlined in "The M/30 Stamps – The First Entirely Finnish Definitive Series, Part II," *The Finnish Philatelist*, May 2005, p 2.

There was always some purpose of use for the large stamp issues. The purpose of use for each stamp was included in the listing of the main types, but often the stated uses are so all encompassing as to let the imagination run wild. Usually the stamps were issued for registered items, parcels, and airmail; that is, the purpose of use differed from that of the UPU directives, in which case the stamps could be printed in any ink color. One of the most interesting of the large stamps is the 16 Fmk post-bus issue. According to the *Handbook* this stamp was meant for inland registered letters weighing up to 20 g (grams) between January 16 and December 31, 1946, both the letter and the registration fee being 8 Fmk each as shown in Figure 76. However, the stamp order and the delivery were delayed and the stamp was not issued until October 16, 1946, and so the stamp period of use was only 2 1/2 months. Regardless, the stamp is seen on registered letters, but not very often. Although the stamp had a particular purpose of use, much more interesting single uses of the stamp are encountered that were also appropriate for the existing postal rates. And

because the purpose for the stamp use was independent of UPU rules, any uncommon use of the stamp can be chosen for an M/1930 collection, but preferably a single use.

Almost equal in rarity with an inland registered letter is the airmail letter to Europe (outside the Nordic countries). A



Figure 76. The rate for an inland registered letter up to 20g for the period January 16 to December 31, 1946 was 16 Fmk; the letter rate = Fmk 8; registry = Fmk 8.

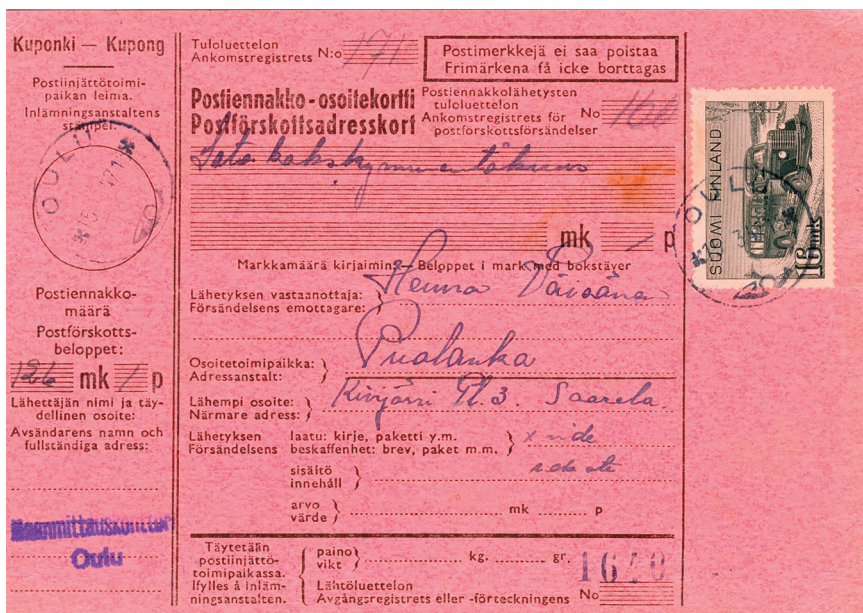


Figure 77. Inland printed matter sent as a COD parcel weighing 151-200 grams from January 1 to - December 31, 1947 was 10 Fmk and the rate for under Fmk 5,000 was Fmk 6, for a total of 16 Fmk.



letter abroad during September 1, 1945 and December 31, 1946 weighing under 20g was 10 Fmk with added airmail postage of 6 Fmk (up to 10g), for a total of 16 Fmk. Here too, the stamp issue date has to be taken into consideration, which limits the period of use to 2½ months. Thus, these usages are not very common, either. Another interesting item is the inland printed matter rate from January 1 to December 31, 1947 weighing 151-200g at 10 Fmk mailed as COD with the postal rate of 6 Fmk for items less than 5,000 Fmk, totaling 16 Fmk. (Figure 77). This combined rate is pure happenstance, but nonetheless known to exist. Anyone who takes to the task of figuring out the various rates might find other even more interesting 'happenstances' than the above.

One even more uncommon individual stamp use than the previous is an inland registered local letter during 1947 when a local letter rate for less than under 20 grams was 6 Fmk (January 16, 1946 to December 31, 1947) and 10 Fmk registration fee (January 1 to December 31, 1947) for the 16 Fmk rate (Figure 78). Objects like these are certainly very difficult to find even though the item period of use lasted an entire year. This kind of object would be an excellent choice as an exhibition item.

Now we will take a look at several great rarities, although the previous object also can be considered uncommon. First a look at a 16 Fmk airmail letter to America. The rate for a letter less than 20g abroad was 10 Fmk from September 1, 1945 to December 31, 1946. In those days airmail to America could be mailed in two ways. First, the item could be sent directly from Finland in which case the added airmail fee was very steep. During the period of this letter mailing it amounted to 22 Fmk for a 5g letter. And due to the high airmail rates limits were put on the weight of the mailings in Finland. Second, as shown in Figure 79, the item could be airmailed to England in which case the cover was marked 'BY AIR TO THE UNITED KINGDOM.' In this case the added airmail rate for Europe was only 6 Fmk for 10g. The letter went by ship across the Atlantic, but prior to this the airmail label or mark was cancelled in England, most frequently with a red coil mark of which many types were used. The item rarity is understandable when considering the 2½ month period of use. The commonness of this item has not been specifically catalogued, and over the years other such objects have not been encountered.

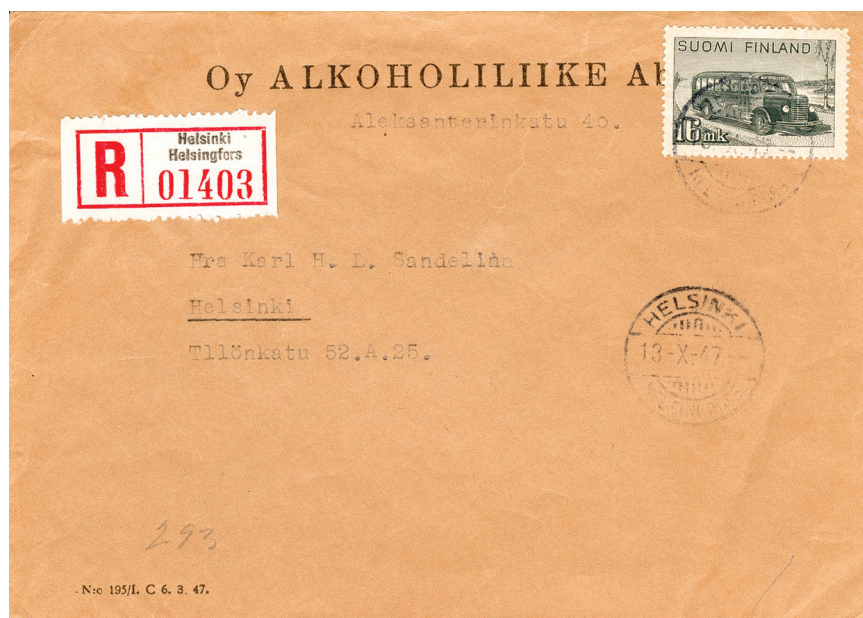


Figure 78. This registered local letter was accurately franked at 16 Fmk during 1947 when the rate for a local letter under 20g was Fmk 6 (January 16, 1946 - December 31, 1947) and the registry fee was Fmk 10 (January 1 - December 31, 1947).

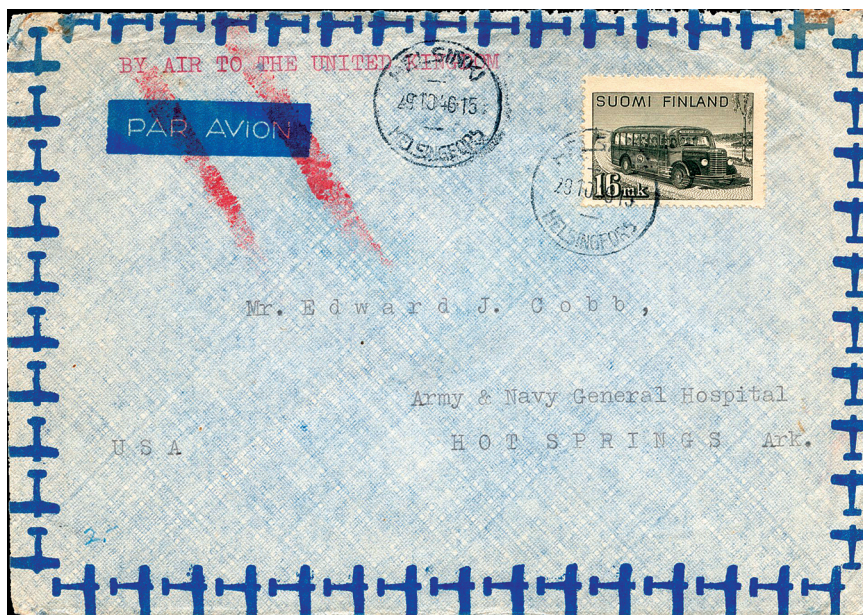


Figure 79. This 1946 letter from Helsinki to Hot Springs, Arkansas was sent by airmail to England and by ship to the United States. Thus the cover had to be marked: BY AIR TO THE UNITED KINGDOM and the added airmail rate applied only letters carried within Europe. The foreign letter rate = 10 Fmk; airmail rate for Europe = 6 Fmk for total 16 Fmk franking.

One of the most difficult mailings is a 2<sup>nd</sup> weight class letter (21-40g) to abroad from September 1, 1945 to December 31, 1946. Only two such items have been recorded. Once again, the stamp date of issue must be noted as well as the limited period of use, about 2½ months. When the 16 Fmk rate went into effect during the time of the stamp issue, the stamp was considered for use also on 2<sup>nd</sup> weight class foreign letter mail.



The text here contains a few observations on the Fmk 16 stamp single uses, and what uses can be looked for in a collection. The uses are interesting and additionally, all uses presented here are within a year of the stamp issuance, so the time frame has not been stretched too far. A similar story applies to the 24 Fmk lion of which several and also extremely rare single uses from the time of the stamp

**The Red Cards**

(This text was originally presented by Carl Appelberg as a talk on the occasion of the Helsingfors Stamp Club's 110th year celebration in January of 2003).

What are the "red cards" that we are talking about? The answer is simple: They are the M/30 lion stamps on postcards mailed to foreign destinations during the period of 1930 to 1954.

The Union Postale Universelle (UPU) founded in Bern in 1874 decided sometime at the turn of the previous century that the postage stamp color of the member nations was to indicate the purpose of use. Thus (Finnish) inland letters had to have violet stamps, foreign-bound letters blue, inland postcards yellow, printed matter commonly green, and postcards to abroad red. This system was to help postal employees know what kind of mailing it was. In planning the appearance of the M/30 definitive lion stamp series, the Finnish Post and Telegraph strictly followed UPU guidelines, although along the way it became difficult to strictly follow the guidelines due to WWII and the inflation that followed resulting in many rapid rate changes; however, overall the color scheme was successfully managed. The printing companies had the most difficult time, because the rates would change at such a short notice that the printers were not quite able to furnish the Post with stamps according to the UPU color scheme.

Of the red cards, the initial specimens had the 1,20 Fmk red stamp, and these were long considered among the most difficult mailings. Only in the past years have the catalogues carried pricing information about the objects according to grades of rarity. Still, 10 years ago a postcard franked with the 1,20 Fmk red stamp was considered the most expensive M/30 object in the *Norma Special Catalogue*, which apparently was due to the fact that the stamp could

Figure 82, right. The 1930 first printing 1 Fmk violet on postcard to Ondonga, Tsumeb, SW. Africa, cancelled at Helsinki 23.1.1932. The 1,25 red stamp intended to meet the UPU color code had not yet issued.



Figure 80. A 2nd weight class letter (21-40g) to abroad from September 1, 1945 to December 31, 1946, was Fmk 16.00.

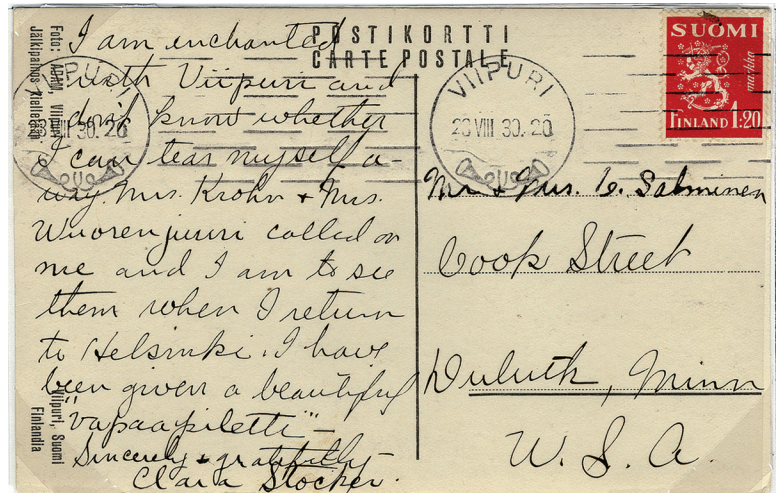


Figure 81. The 1930 Fmk 1,20 stamp paid the postcard rate to abroad from January 1, 1930 to November 31, 1931. Only 2 million specimens were printed. After November 31, 1931 there was no specific rate for this stamp. Cards with Fmk 1,20 franking are somewhat uncommon. Viipuri 28.VIII.1930 - Duluth, U.S.A.

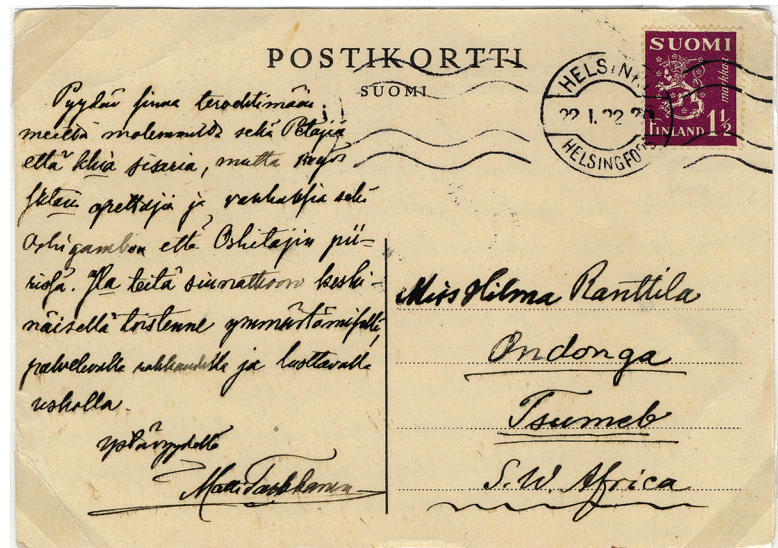


Figure 82, right. The 1930 first printing 1 Fmk violet on postcard to Ondonga, Tsumeb, SW. Africa, cancelled at Helsinki 23.1.1932. The 1,25 red stamp intended to meet the UPU color code had not yet issued.





Figure 83. The 1932 printing of the 1,50 Fmk red on postcard to abroad, from Helsinki, 20. XII. 33, to Barcelona, Spain. The 1,50 red met the postcard rate to abroad March 1932 - October 31, 1936.

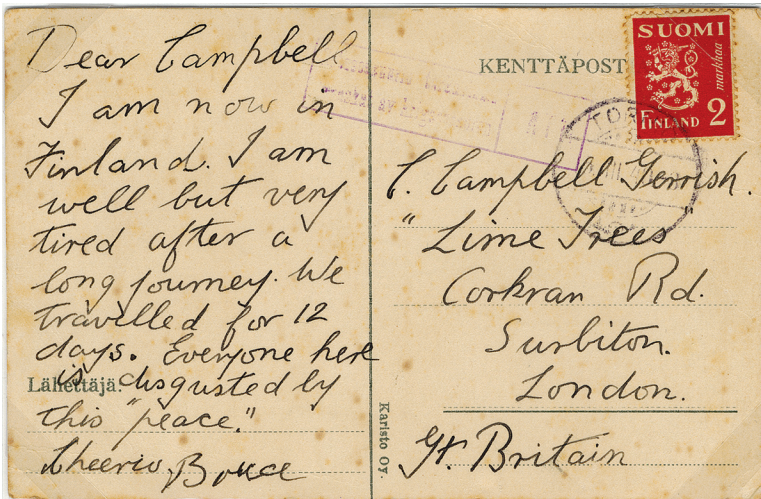


Figure 84. The 2 Fmk red was accurate franking for postcards to abroad from Dec. 13, 1936 - Sept. 30, 1942. Therefore, 2 Fmk stamp color was changed from violet (inland letter rate) to red although both were valid franking. 2 Fmk red on postcard from Tornio, 16. III. 1940 to London.

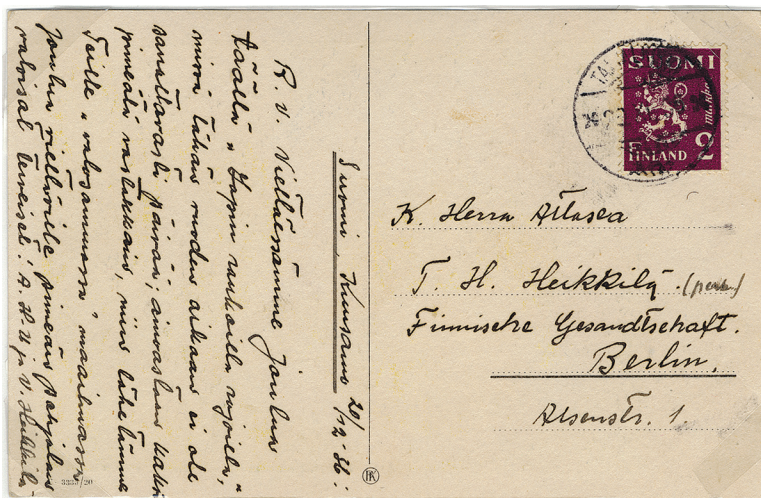


Figure 85. The postcard foreign rate rose from 1,50 to 2 Fmk on November 1, 1936, and thus the 2 Fmk violet, inland letter rate stamp, was good on a postcard to abroad as shown on this card to Berlin, 20. XII. 1936. The 2 Fmk red was issued on December 13, 1936.

not be used singly on any other mailing. Regardless, the stamp was used rather frequently and nowadays hardly any M/30 collector lacks this postcard. The value of the Finnish mark relative to the gold franc changed in 1931 and therefore the postal rates had to be changed beginning on December 1, 1931. The printing companies had difficulty keeping up with the change and thus all new stamps as well as the second overprints were delayed. The postcard postal rate abroad was raised to 1,50 Fmk and a matching red stamp was issued, but it did not appear on the market until March 1932. This, however, did not matter, because there was still the stock of 1½ Fmk violet stamps for use on domestic letter mail. It seems that the Postal Administration often delayed release of new rate stamps so that the existing inventory of stamps would be used up, even if the older stamp did not conform to the UPU color code.

The same happened when foreign rates increased on November 1, 1936, and the postcard rate rose to 2 Fmk, but the 2 Fmk red stamp did not appear until December 13, 1936. Prior to then the 2 Fmk violet was used that was already issued in 1932. The 1930s proved to be a stable period economically and even WWII had no effect on the red postcard rates. But from 1942 the pace of rate increases resulted in short periods of use and postal rarities. The war brought with it a high rate of inflation, and in 1942 the inland rates increased on September 1 and then the foreign rates rose on October 1. At that time the 2½ Fmk red was issued and here is the first so-called rarity.

During the war Finland had a postal agreement with Germany and its allies. Pursuant to that agreement, mail from Finland to there was franked with the Finnish domestic rate. The same rates were also valid from Finland to the Nordic countries. But since Finland was at war with England and most of the other European nations were occupied, few if any red postcards were sent to abroad. However, it was possible to send to Switzerland, Spain and Portugal, but mail to these destinations was rare. Eventually WWII was winding down and ended totally with the surrender of Japan in 1945. With Europe partly in ruins and Finland giving up the territories of Karelia and Petsamo, as well as the so-called leasing of the Porkkala area to the Soviets, the inflation rate, too, shot up and the postal rates changed frequently.

On July 1, 1945 the foreign postcard rate increased to 3 Fmk and so the red 3 Fmk postal card appeared. But still there were few objects addressed to countries outside of Scandinavia and when the rate doubled on September 1 of that same year - that is when the actual rarities were born. But only one object can be referred to here, because only a single correctly franked foreign card is known. This means that only one complete M/30 collection exists. Here caution is appropriate - beware of counterfeits. You



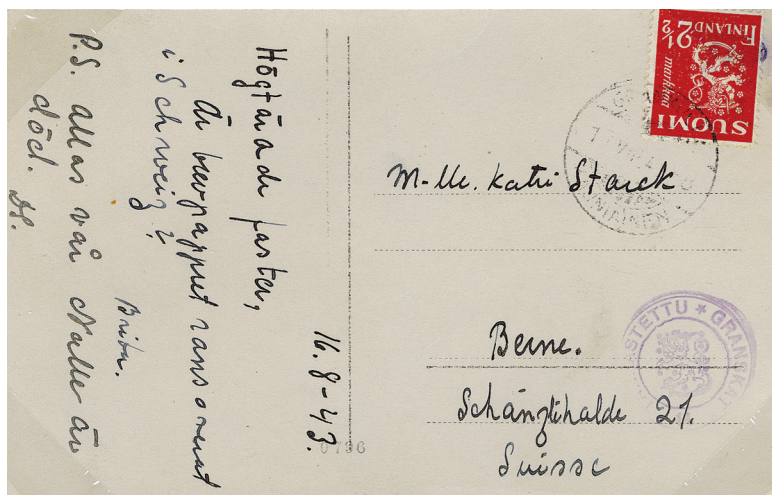


Figure 86, above.



Figure 87. The 1945 printing 1, Fmk 3 red on inland postcard July 1, 1945 - Jan. 15, 1946, and on postcard abroad July 1, 1945 - Aug. 31, 1945. Pictured here, this minor collection 'black sheep.' A red Fmk 3 marked MYLLYKOSKI 6.8.1945 - Lahti, i.e., not a foreign destination. Only one 3 Fmk red on postcard abroad from that time is known, and the explanation is simple - WWII was still raging.



Figure 88. The 1945 6 Fmk red met the postcard rate to abroad from October 29, 1945 to December 31, 1946. A postcard mailing outside of Scandinavia was still rather uncommon at the end of 1945 and during 1946. Kotka, 7. 10. 46 to Wassenaar, Holland.

Figure 86, left. The 1942 printing of the 2,50 Fmk carmine stamp met the postcard rate to abroad from October 1, 1942 - June 30, 1945. During WWII there were very foreign-bound basic rate postcard mailings due to the fact that the domestic rate applied to Scandinavia, Estonia, Latvia, Germany and its allies. The basic foreign rate was available only to neutral nations such as Spain, Portugal, and Switzerland. A rare card with the correct rate: Graankulla, 17. VIII. 1943 to Bern, Switzerland.

may all have read in the *Filatelisti* publication about the postcard franked with a red 3 Fmk specimen where the stamp, mark, and date are correct, but the address has been tampered with. This is a poorly made forgery, but more skillfully made ones may appear. Already earlier counterfeit M/30 mailings have been discovered.

On September 1, 1945 the 6 Fmk red card was issued; on January 1, 1947 the 7 Fmk; and in 1948 the 9 Fmk red. Especially the 6 Fmk red is difficult to find although the others are not easy either. Besides, the 9 Fmk red is two months late. Because of the inflation these stamps were used on other mail such as inland postcards, printed matter, and local letters. However, mailings with the stamp original purpose of use (on foreign bound items), these red postcards are a must in all M/30 collections. On November 1, 1949 and on January 1, 1952 the foreign rates again rose, and the 12 and 15 red Fmk cards were issued. Both were late, but 'substitutions' were found. With the beginning of tourism such mailings are not hard to find. The only importance is the discovery of tidy objects.

The red postcards no matter how nice are only a part of the fascinating field of collecting. The M/30 is the largest of the Finnish definitive series, the total printing quantity amounting to 2 ½ billion stamps, so there is an abundance of material. The stamps can be collected traditionally or as postal history or specializing in cliché faults, which are plentiful. Auctions and postage stamp markets offer individual stamps as well as covers and other postally traveled items. There are plenty of selections. The most difficult in this area of collecting is the finding of uncommon objects, because the stamps in themselves are not remarkable at all, so nobody has kept them for their beautiful subject matter. And rummaging through attics and basements is hardly worth it anymore. Anything from such places has been carried off to flea markets. As for the red postcards here is some good advice, the old postcards sell well and are available all over the markets. While picking through the cards be sure to look at the franking, too. It is possible to make some incredible finds as the dealers, especially outside Finland, are not always knowledgeable about rates and dates of use. But again be alert to forgeries.



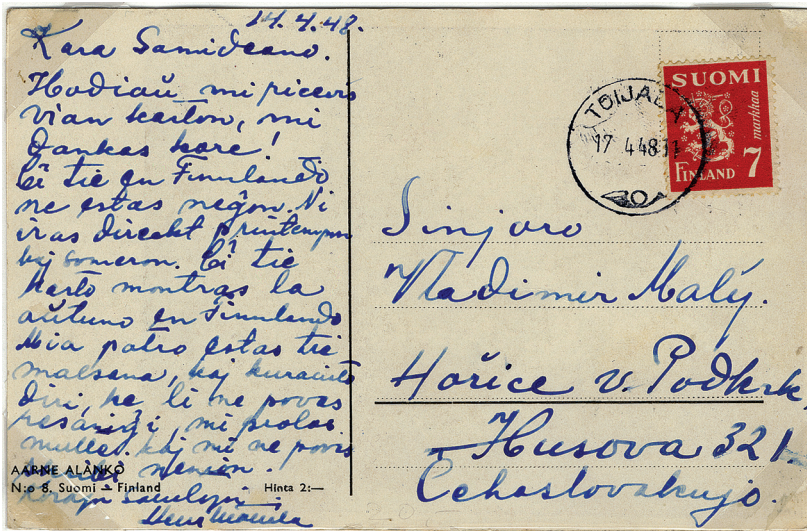


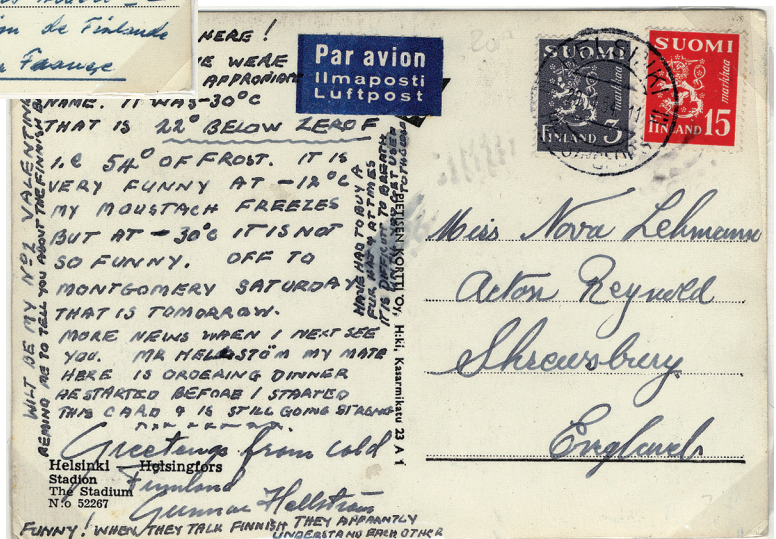
Figure 89. The 1947 7 Fmk red met the postcard rate to abroad from February 10, 1947 to June 30, 1948. At the end of the 1940s the mailing of postcards abroad was still unusual. Thus a postcard to abroad franked with a 7 Fmk red is rare: Toijala, 17. 4. 48 to Husova, Czechoslovakia.

Figure 90. The 1950 printing of the 12 Fmk red met the postcard rate to abroad from January 9, 1950 to December 31, 1951. Riihimaki, 23. 12. 1951 to Halle, Germany.



Figure 91. The 1950 printing of the 15 Fmk violet was used on postcards addressed to abroad from January 1, 1952 to May 31, 1956. After the 1952 rate hike the 15 Fmk violet was acceptable on inland as well as on postcards to abroad. Helsinki, 14. 11. 1951 to Paris.

Figure 92. From January 1, 1952 until May 31, 1956 both the inland and foreign card rate was 15 Fmk. Both the 1950 15 Fmk violet and the 1952 15 Fmk red were used during this period. This airmail postcard from Helsinki, 20. 2. 54, to Shrewsbury, England was also franked with the 3 Fmk grey to meet the airmail surcharge for destinations within Europe.





# The Cork Cancel Corner - Finnish “Figure Cancels”

By Ed Fraser

## Introduction

Usage of these mute “Cork” or “Figure” cancels generally ran from 1877 to the 1890s. The earliest one began with usage on the 1856 oval issues, with some usages continuing in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At their peak of usage in the late 1870s, they may have represented between 10% and 20% of all cancelled Finnish stamps. Generally they appear as distinctively anonymous pattern cancels and it is a feat showing philatelists’ determination over the past 75 years that so many have been traced to their general locale of use.

The guidebook for this area of collecting is Aaro Laitinen’s catalog, *Suomen Kuvioleimat*, published in 1981. It has a remarkable forward in four languages that gives an excellent background about these cancels, and has a couple of insightful tables.

Since Laitinen’s landmark publication, which was built on the extensive detail and study of several earlier books, principally E.A. Hellman’s 1961 “treatise” *Die Figurenstempel Finnlands – Suomen Kuvioleimat* in German and Finnish, there have only been articles in the Finnish stamp magazines with new cover and new cancel discoveries.<sup>1</sup>

In an effort to give an update about these cancels and to perhaps get some input from readers, we will look to add this feature, *The Cork Cancel Corner*. Various called cork, figure, picture, mute, pattern, grid, bars, killer, or even “fancy” cancels, “cork” or “figure” seems the most often seen English description of these Finnish cancels. In Finland these cancels are commonly called “figure” cancels.

Calling them “cork cancels” is also in spite of the fact that we believe the most common usages were from cancel devices made of metal, and it is not if any were made of wood or cork. However, it is likely that by number a major number of different ones were made from cork or wood. We know from examining the were definitely made from soft, flexible, and even rubbery materials. Some apparently deteriorated or showed wear very quickly, and some changed little over years of use indicating that they were made of metal. While thousands of the town dated cancellers and other official post office handstamps are stored in the Finnish Postal Museum, apparently only one mute canceller is there (No. 53). Two others are at other museums, and one is in a private collection. Apparently these four all look as if they were commercially made, possibly being regular “post office or business style” handstamps, with the “cancel part” made of metal and perhaps only the “stamp or cancel part” might



Figure 1. This “cork” cancel, No. 53, is the only mark of this type in the Postal Museum.

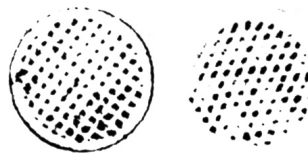


Figure 2. Cancels Nos. 387, left, and 387A have not been found on a stamp or cover although they are believed to have been used. The possibility is likely remote, but a discovery item may be sitting in a dealer’s dollar box.

have been hand cut. Cancel No. 53 is the only one known to have been used. It is believed that the other three were used, but no examples are known. One is listed on page 205 of the Laitinen’s catalog as No. 387. Additionally, No. 387A is listed as the one from a private collection. (These last two look like examples I have seen of what I believed were people’s personal seal stamps without a personal monogram in them and yet also not “negative cancels” that make a grid impression into soft sealing wax.) This style pattern can be found in the wax seals of some Finnish mail of the era. I do wonder if “sealing wax handstamps,” but ones where the pattern in the handstamp was raised rather than in base relief, were a source for a number of these cork cancels?

## The Field

The fact that apparently no records were required, or made, of when or where these cancels were used by postal employees makes the size of the field unknown. Years of collectors’ hunting indicate that there are about 600 different known cork cancels. Of these, about 300 different cancels are common enough that a collector, given time, can acquire them. Then there are about another 300 where there probably are no more than 10 examples known, and many are unique. Given that perhaps a quarter of those might be unique (only one has been found) forming a “complete” collection in one place is unlikely. As I understand it, when Fabergé apparently got E.A. Hellman focused on collecting these cancels, and Fabergé sold most of his collection to him in the 1930s, E.A. Hellman was about the only person collecting these cork or figure cancels. He then diligently sought them out for decades thereafter. The result was to assemble during his lifetime a nearly complete collection of all the cancels he could find and that turned out to be just about all the different cancels known at the time.

While new cancel finds turn up every year, even if one makes a wild guess of only one or two a year, these are often unique and of course further complicate the possibility of there ever being a single complete collection.

In this “Cork Cancel Corner” it would be interesting if some “new cancel finds” can be presented. I am sure that cork cancel collectors have perhaps one or more examples that should be shown and currently there are between four and six examples to present here in future articles.



### Identifying A Cancel Are All Of These Cancels Genuine?

Beginning in the 1980s, an unusual situation came into play. With Laitinen's pricing catalog giving the marketplace some estimates for pricing rarity and uniqueness, there was a serious fear of forged cancels coming to market and some have. Aaro Laitinen raised the bar on accepting "new finds" by not wanting to certify new one-of-a-kind examples except in special situations. Exceptions might be where it is found on a cover that can be expertized, or where more than one example has been found from different sources.

Finding previously unknown cancels, or examples where only 1 or 2 were known, has to be one of the hardest areas of cork cancel collecting to handle. In addition to finding a fairly good example of an unusual cancel, we first have to confirm it is not one of the 600 cancels already known. After all, it may be that this example of the cancel was in part poorly inked, worn, partially damaged, or poorly struck so that the cancel blurred, the contents in the envelope were lumpy and prevented clear cancelling, or the canceller was not held at an angle perpendicular to the stamp being cancelled. Then, too, some of the unique catalog listed cancels may also be examples of imperfect strikes.

#### Identification Suggestions:

- When looking for a cancel, check first for the most common types known on the particular stamp issue. This cannot be emphasized enough. Realize, too, that the common cancels were used a lot, and change over time may cause a single illustration in the catalog to be less accurate for the example one has "in hand."

- If you are lucky enough to have a cover, the easiest step is usually to look for the known cancels from the same town. That works over 90% of the time. If it is not a known cancel of the town of origination, or even the town of the addressee, then the cancel can be especially interesting.

- Expect that the cork cancel ink appearance usually looks like the town cancel ink used on their dated cancels. Inks of an unlikely color or shade are often clues of a fake cancel.



Figure 3. Cancel No. 431 was thought to have been used in Kangsala as an arrival mark on uncanceled 10 pfg stamps on a postcard from Danzig, but it is now recognized as an originating mark used in Danzig.

- Consider the possibility of foreign cancels acquired in transit on out-of-the-country mail. For example, Danzig used

"cork" style cancels, especially on package mail, in the 1900s<sup>2</sup>, the Russian Empire used a lot of "cork" style cancels during WWI for security reasons, and Sweden used a number of corks on uncanceled stamps on arriving domestic mail generally after 1900 and on into the 1920s.

- Consider that common stamps already lightly used, and scarcer faulty stamps that are unused or lightly used, are good feedstock for a cancel forger. As a first clue, strange style cancels, especially on stamps that are badly damaged, or cheap unused, may not be genuine. Of course, forged cancels on covers create even more value for the forger. The Finnish stamp press has had articles about forgeries for some years, but fortunately they seem quite uncommon.

#### A New Cancel?

This unusual cancel with a distinctive grid pattern is shown in Figure 4 on a 10 kopek 1891 ring stamp. Figure 5 is a rough drawing of what the full cancel might look like. Part II of this article, which will be published in the November newsletter, will examine this cancel carefully, and discuss another similar style, but earlier, cancel already reported in the Finnish stamp press in 1992. There will also be some analysis about this new discovery, and what might be required for a new discovery to get its own catalog number. If you have a stamp with a similar cancel (even if not Finnish!) please send your comments to the editor or Ed Fraser, 195 Marine Street, Farmingdale, NY 11735. Mr. Fraser can also be reached at [efraser@msn.com](mailto:efraser@msn.com)



Figure 4.



Figure 5.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> There were a small series of articles in *The Posthorn* in the 1980s, and individual articles by several authors throughout *The Posthorn's* decades.

<sup>2</sup> For example, No. 431 is now recognized as a Danzig cancel (see Figure 3), with nothing to do with the Finnish postal system.

#### Thank You

This newsletter would not be possible without the generous contributions and encouragement from you, the readers and subscribers. In the past six months or so, I have received a number of compliments on the new full color format. Your letters, e-mails, checks, and other contributions are appreciated. Thanks to: Ran Ram, L.L. Tann, Roger Cichorz, Don Halpern, Don Brent, Paul Nelson, Alan Warren, Dirk Vorwerck, Henk Burgman, Jon Iversen, Don Kauppi, Ed Street, Kauko Aro, John Salmi, Eric Hopper, Matt Hedley, Jack Isaacson, Steve Kaplan, Cyril Schwenson, J.A.J. Van Dijk, Anselmo Gonzales, Roger Byrne, John Root and many others. We run out of space, look for your name in the November issue.

Roger Quinby



## Friends of the Postal Museum

Friends of the Post Museum is an active association with the purpose of supporting the Museum's operations, promoting co-operation between philatelic enthusiasts and deepening people's knowledge of the Post, both historically and at present.

The association publishes an annual journal *Tabellarius*, (similar in quality to *The Congress Book* published annually by the American Philatelic Congress), containing excellent articles on a wide variety of philatelic subjects and current themes. The journal is magnificently illustrated in full color on coated heavy paper. The journal is written in Finnish with an English summary.

The 2003 *Tabellarius* features articles among others on the big tooth Finnish revenue stamps that will be published in the November 2005 newsletter and an article honoring artist Martta Wendelinin on the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her birth. Martta Wendelinin's illustrations were used on the ten Golden Ear postal cards issued in 1935. See Kari Rahiala's article on page 3.

The journal is delivered free of charge to members of the Friends of the Postal Museum, although I am not sure if there is a surcharge for overseas members. The annual membership fee is 25 €. Member benefits also include free admission to the Post Museum, discounts at the Museum Shop and Bar & Café, and special offers for members only. The Association also organizes interesting visits and tours so it may be possible to join one of their excursions during your visit to Helsinki, possibly at NORDIA 2006.

On a visit to the Post Museum last fall I purchased the current issue and the back issues for 2000-2003.

Readers of *The Finnish Philatelist* are encouraged to join the Friends of the Post Museum. For further information and back issues contact the Finnish Post.

## TABELLARIUS



An online application is available from the Post website at: [www.posti.fi](http://www.posti.fi) or write:

Friends of the Post Museum  
P.O.B. 167  
FI-00101 Helsinki  
Finland

### Figure Cancel No. 296

Figure cancel No. 296, illustrated on the right, (illustration from Aaro Laitinen's catalog, *Suomen Kuvioleimat*, p 169) is readily identified as the Jyväskylä mark used in the 1880s and known on various 1882 and 1885 stamps and postal stationery. Nevertheless as shown in the illustrations, the mark impression is very often blurred, smudged, unevenly struck, incomplete or otherwise unclear making it difficult for the novice collector to easily identify figure cancels with confidence and reasonable certainty. See TFP, "The Finnish Figure Cancels," Vol. 9, No. 2, May 2004, p 3.

E. A. Hellman's catalogue, *Die Figurenstempel Finnlands*, was published with India paper overlays, which used in conjunction with the identification procedures recommended by Laitinen, will prove helpful identifying many cancels, especially where only a partial strike exists on a single stamp. The many faces of No. 296 are also shown on two postal cards, cropped and slightly reduced, and five 20 penni 1885 stamps at full size.

