

# LATVIA: THE RISING SUN STAMP OF 1919

Purpose/Scope: This traditional exhibit examines a single stamp issued in 1919 for the Northern Region of Latvia. Due to the war front, the stamp originated as a regional issue and grew to national usage once Soviet forces were defeated. A single design, with the value of 10 kap. was printed in perforated and imperforate form. This value pre-paid the local, domestic and foreign postcard rate, as well as, the local and domestic letter rate.

Organization: This exhibit is presented in the following order:



IMPERFORATE

- ✦ Essays with hand printed design on stationery cards
- ✦ Machine and hand printed proofs
- ✦ Original issue
- ✦ Paper and gum varieties
- ✦ Printing varieties and plate flaws
- ✦ Perforation varieties
- ✦ Usages with local, domestic, foreign, manuscript markings and registered mail prior to invalidation



PERFORATED



Military Front Line  
Separated  
Northern Area  
(shaded blue)  
from the  
rest of Latvia

Historical/Philatelic Background: Although Latvia had declared independence in November 1918, the territory remained a battlefield for 1½ more years. Military developments caused a complete disruption of communications between the postal administration in Riga and areas to the North due to the front line's location in early 1919. To alleviate the lack of stamps and maintain mail service, the Commander of the Latvian Northern Army ordered an emergency printing of local stamps in early July.

Far too many were printed (900,000 imperforate and 90,000 perforate) for the necessity. Used examples on cover are very uncommon; most stamps were sold to the philatelic trade. Once Latvia was reunified, the stock of printed stamps was turned over to postal authorities in Riga. Their low face value made them obsolete due to inflation and rapidly increasing postal rates. Realistically, their life span was about 6 months despite being valid for usage throughout Latvia until April 30, 1922. By that time, the rate for a domestic letter had risen to 500 kap. and the 10 kap. stamp no longer had practical value.

Rarity and Condition: Essays and proofs are exceedingly rare as they originated during times of duress when time was of the essence. Postal usage of the issue was minimal; usages shown have been chosen for variety and clarity.

Especially significant items are highlighted in purple.