

CANCELLATIONS OF THE PROVISIONAL ERA IN LATVIA: 1919-1921

Purpose/Scope: This exhibit is a detailed study of the forms and types of provisional cancellations used in Latvia in the tumultuous period following the November 1918 declaration of independence and ending when standardized Latvian devices were introduced by the Latvia Post in early 1921.

Organization: The basic cancel types were used concurrently throughout the Latvian territory and had no distinct geographic boundaries; this exhibit divides them into 6 main sections:

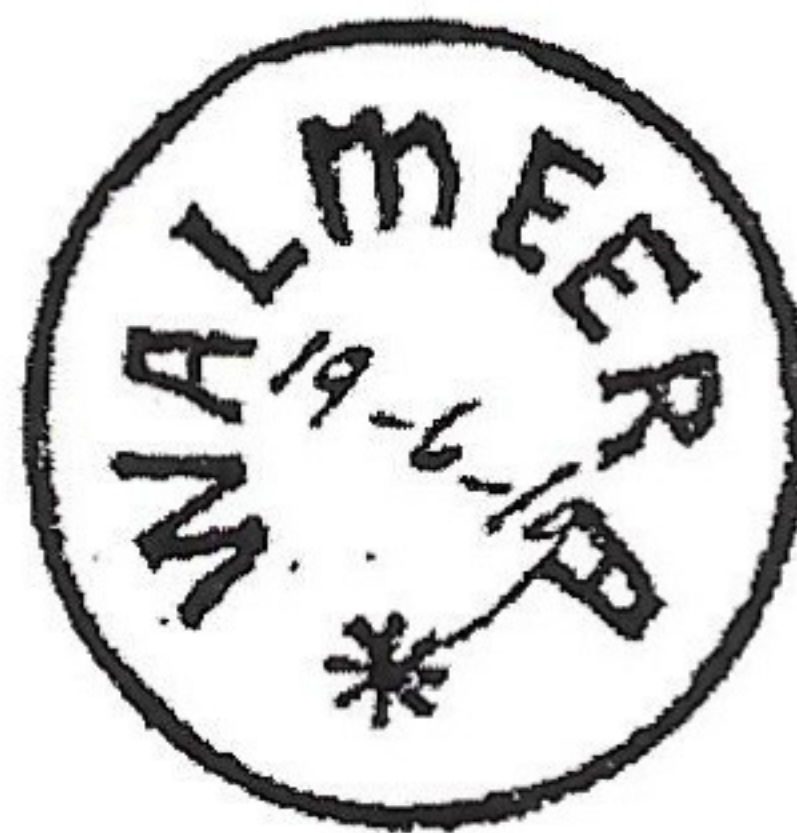
Hand Wrought Markings	Local Postmaster Contrived: Assorted Shapes & Designs	Frame 1, Page 2
Cyrillic Cancellations	Russian Imperial Post Types: Town Name & Province	Frame 3, Page 14
Cyrillic Cancellations	Russian Imperial Post Types: Town Name Only, No Province	Frame 5, Page 12
Dual Language Types	Cancels in Russian & Latvian Language	Frame 6, Page 7
German Occupation Types	Continued Use of WWI German Occupation Types	Frame 6, Page 10
Latvian Language Types	Newly Created Designs in Latvian Language Only	Frame 6, Page 16

Berstele.

Straight Line
Markings

WIDRISI

Boxed Rectangular
Markings



Circular
Markings

Маренбургская
1919-1921

Curves & Oval
Markings



Odd Shaped
Markings



In Russian
Town & Province



In Russian
Town & No Province



In Latvian & Russian
Town & Country



In Latvian; German Type
Town & Country



In Latvian Only

Historical/Philatelic Background: For centuries, Latvia was part of Imperial Russia or the German Empire. It remained a battlefield with fronts in 3 directions until January 1920 when, the Soviets were finally defeated. The Government, which had been moved to the far west temporarily, returned to Riga, the capital. Since the Latvian government was ineffective during this time of relocation, local postmasters were left to choose or create temporary devices for the cancelling of mail as there was little or no guidance. Most post offices had little stock of postage and equipment had been pillaged. Some continued to use old Tsarist era cancellers if available; others resorted to modifying or creating their own new devices. These provisional cancellations were short lived and varied greatly in appearance from town to town.

Rarity and Condition: Numerous shown cancellations are exceedingly rare as they originated from tiny villages during times of duress which had little postal activity even in normal times. Markings have been selected for their clarity and variation. Exhibiting space constriction has limited this showing to the most difficult to obtain cancellations.

Especially significant items are highlighted with a maroon mat.

Maroon rectangular boxes for discovery and personal research items are identified with:

