

The Polish postal service had a long history dating to 1558. Poland ceased to exist as a nation following successive partitions by Russia, Austria and Prussia from 1772-1795. Following the Congress of Vienna at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, a much reduced "Congress Poland" was established in 1815 and placed under Russian dominion. The first postage stamp for the Congress Kingdom was issued on 1/1/1860. The stamp 10 kopeck stamp was based on the Russian imperial design, with text in both Russian and Polish, for mail delivery only within Poland and Russia. This singular stamp was in use from 1860-1865, after which time only Russian stamps were permitted.

During World War I, both Austria and Germany occupied parts of Poland and took over postal services. German stamps were overprinted Russisch-Polen (1915) and Gen.-Gouv. Warschau (1916-17). Because of the wartime disruptions of the civilian post and cessation of delivery outside of central post offices, numerous local delivery services were permitted by the German authorities, which led to both sanctioned and non-sanctioned local stamps - collectively referred to as the 1918 Locals (see below.)

The Republic of Poland was created on the Armistice Day, Nov. 11, 1918. Prior to the first printings of regular stamps, numerous post offices locally overprinted their existing stocks with overprints - generally "Poczta Polska" or "Na Skarb Narodowy" (for the national treasury). I have called these Postmaster Provisionals, as they are not locals in the traditional sense. For National Stamps, both stocks of Warsaw local stamps, and German and Austrian stamps were overprinted in several major cities (POL-B, below).

The first new designs for a national stamps came out in early 1919, with separate printings for Northern Poland and Southern Poland, due to the local use of both German and Austrian currencies. Later in 1919 the use of Austrian currency phased out, and Poland adopted it's own currency in 1924. Germany occupied Poland from 1939-1945, while the government-in-exile issued its own stamps from wartime London.



01. Poland, Russian Dominion

Russia Colony
1860 - 1865

02. Russian-Poland, German Occupation

Germany Occupation
1915 -
on cover

03. General Government Warsaw, German Occupation

Germany Occupation
1916 - 1917

04. Poland, Northern

Poland Independent
1919 -

05. Poland, Southern

Poland Independent
1919 -



06. Poland

Poland Independent
1919 - 1939



07. Poland, German General-gouvernement

Germany Occupation
1940 - 1944



08. Poland, Exile Govt in G.B.

Poland Govt in Exile
1941 - 1945



09. Poland, People's Republic

Poland Independent
1944 - 1989



10. Poland

Poland Independent
1989 - Present

From the establishment of the Republic of Poland in November 1918 to the establishment of a national post office with new stamp designs in 1919, various national stamps were produced locally and/or overprinted in at least Warsaw, Poznan, Lublin and Krakow. These are treated in Scott as early National issues, although they saw limited distribution.



Poland, Cracow Issue

Independent
1919 -



Poland, Gniezno Provisional

Independent
1919 -



Poland, Lublin Issue

Independent
1918 - 1919



Poland, Poznan Issue

Independent
1919 -



Poland, Warsaw Issue

Independent
1918 - 1919

6520 POL-K POLAND, OFFICES ABROAD

3

Poland maintained post offices in the Free City of Danzig (1925-1938) and in Constantinople (1919-1921) during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. During the Russian Civil War, Polish stamps in five denominations were overprinted "Odesa" for use by the consulate in Odesa for a period of two months. The Odesa overprints are rare, and forgeries abound. (Michel Europa-Ost)



Danzig, Poland Offices in

Poland Post Office Abroad
1925 - 1938



Polish Consular Post in Levant

Poland Post Office Abroad
1919 - 1921



Polish Consular Post in Odesa

Poland Post Office Abroad
1919 - 1920

6520 POL-M POLAND, FIELD POSTS

3

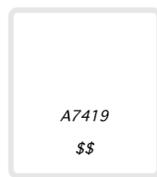
The Polish 1st Corps under General Dowbor-Musnicki established a field post in 1917-18 which handled both military and civilian mail. The 1st Corps was comprised of former Russian soldiers who joined the fight for Polish independence, with German support, after the 1917 February revolution. The territory held was along the Eastern front in modern-day Belarus.

The Polish Army in the Soviet Union was formed by freed Polish POWs who trained deep in the Soviet Union, in Uzbekistan, to fight in Italy. Polish Corps in Italy stamps are considered to be private (speculative) issues and are not cataloged in Michel (p. 589).



Polish 1st Corps in Russia

Poland Field Post
1917 - 1918



Polish Army in the Soviet Union

Poland Field Post
1942 -



Polish Corps in Italy

Poland Field Post
1944 -

Per the organization of Barefoot, I treat the Poland 1918 locals in three categories. First are the Municipal Posts (including fantasies) established during the war up through Polish independence (1915-18), generally with the cooperation of occupying German or Austrian authorities. Second are the locally overprinted "liberation" overprints of German stamps, promoting the birth of the Polish state (1918-1919) which can rightly be considered Postmaster Provisionals, and third are the similar Postmaster Provisional stamps in the Austrian zone.

The occupying military posts would only deliver civilian mail to the main post offices in a few large cities. During the occupation a number of local organizations proposed delivery services to homes and businesses. These services were approved by the German authorities whom generally forbade the printing of local stamps that could compete with the military post. Most local delivery services complied, however in some localities the use of stamps was tolerated. In my treatment, I only list the towns that produced actual postage stamps - ignoring the numerous towns that franked mail with a hand-stamp.

Polish locals were popular with collectors leading to some bogus (speculative) issues that flooded the market. Checiny was a fantasy creation, probably printed after national independence as there is no record of a local delivery service there. Luboml (Lyuboml) was a town in Volynia that ordered stamps from a Prague printer in 1918. Notably the inscriptions are in Polish, Ukrainian, German and Yiddish. The stamps were never delivered, and the printer sold the stamps into the philatelic market. The Przedborz post was legitimate and supported by Austrian authorities. Warsaw was a very active local post for the duration of the war, whose "local" stamps were eventually overprinted for use as the first national Polish stamps. Zarki may have been a legitimate post, but virtually all stamps today are from extensive printings done for collectors. For the local stamp of Posen (Poznan) please refer to 19th century German locals.

Ref Cit: Michel Europa-Ost (1994). Poland 1918 Locals, J Barefoot (1999)



Upon the achievement of Polish independence, post offices were instructed to overprint existing stocks of German occupation stamps with the name of the new nation. Various designs were employed including Polska-Poczta, bards, and sometimes the use of town names or the Polish crest. All of the overprints were on the Germania Generalgouvernement overprint series, except for Kowel, which was overprinted on Ukrainian stamps, and Grodno, which was a special case. Grodno (Hrodna) was a 1919 overprint on Russian and Ukrainian stamps produced by the Germans to resume mail delivery, but rejected by the Polish postmaster, thus used only in military mail.





A1932

Grodzisk

Poland Local
1918 -



A1933

Izbica

Poland Local
1918 -



Kalisz

Poland Local
1918 -



A1935

Kolo

Poland Local
1918 -



A1936

Konin

Poland Local
1918 -



A1937

Kowel

Poland Local
1919 -



A1938

Leczyca

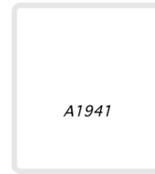
Poland Local
1918 -



A1939

Lowicz

Poland Local
1918 -



A1941

Luków

Poland Local
1918 -



A8877

Makow

Poland Local
1918 -



A3764

Ostroleka

Poland Local
1918 -



A1945

Ostrów

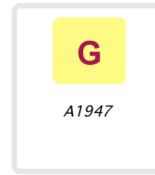
Poland Local
1918 -



A8878

Otwock

Poland Local
1918 -



A1947

Ozorków

Poland Local
1918 -



Pionsk

Poland Local
1918 -



A1949

Poddebice

Poland Local
1918 -



A1952

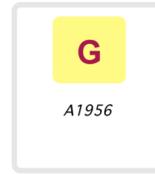
Pultusk

Poland Local
1918 -



Sieradz

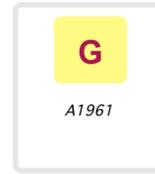
Poland Local
1918 -



A1956

Skiernewice

Poland Local
1918 -



A1961

Wloclawek

Poland Local
1918 -



A1964

Zdunska Wola

Poland Local
1918 -

Per the organization of the Barefoot catalog, I am treating the so-called 1918 locals in three categories. First are Polish Municipal Posts (including fantasies) established during the first war, often with the cooperation of occupying German authorities, in the period before Polish independence and the creation of the national postal system (1915-1918). Second are the locally overprinted "liberation" overprints of German stamps, promoting the birth of the Polish state (1918-1919) which can rightly be called Postmaster Provisionals, and third are similar overprints from the Austrian zone.

The German and Austrian military postal services only delivered civilian mail to main post offices in a few counties. During the occupation a number of local organizations proposed delivery services to homes and businesses, which were allowed by the German authorities, but whom generally forbade the printing of local stamps that could compete with the military posts. Most delivery services complied, however in some localities the use of stamps was tolerated. In my treatment, I only include the towns below that produced (original or overprinted) postage stamps - ignoring towns that franked mail with a unique handstamp. Stamps were popular with collectors leading to some bogus (speculative) issues that flooded the market, particularly with Checiny.

Ref Cit: Michel Europa-Ost (1994). Poland 1918 Locals, J Barefoot (1999)



A1926

Baranów

Poland Local
1918 -



A8873

Bochnia

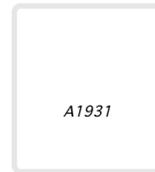
Poland Local
1918 -



A1930

Czermin

Poland Local
1918 -



A1931

Dziedzice

Poland Local
1918 -



Jedrzejow

Poland Local
1918 -
on cover



A8874

Klimkowka

Poland Local
1918 - \$\$\$



A8875

Krosno

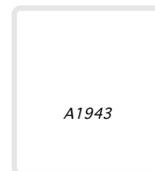
Poland Local
1918 - \$\$\$



A1942

Mielec

Poland Local
1918 -



A1943

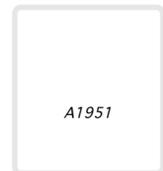
Myslenice

Poland Local
1918 -



Olkusz

Poland Local
1918 -
on cover



A1951

Przemysl

Poland Local
1918 -



Rozwadów

Poland Local
1918 -
signed

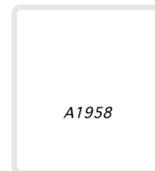


G

A1955

Skalat

Poland Local
1918 -



A1958

Swiatniki Górne

Poland Local
1918 -



G

A1959

Tarnow

Poland Local
1918 -



A8876

Wegierska Gorka

Poland Local
1918 - \$\$\$

With the retreat of German forces, various postmasters overprinted existing stocks of stamps with a combination of designs including variously Polska/Poczta, the coat of arms, the date of liberation, and town name, all with the intention of covering Hitler's ugly head. These town names are from the Michel Europa-Ost catalog (1994) except Sulejow which for which I do not have a catalogue reference. I keep seeing other town names pop up on line and I suspect there is a more recent expanded reference work, or perhaps these are all modern frauds.



Brwinów

Poland Local
1944 - 1945



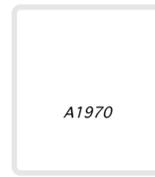
**Bystzyca Klodzka
(Habelschwerdt)**

Poland Local
1944 - 1945



Kónskie

Poland Local
1944 - 1945



Koszyce

Poland Local
1944 - 1945



Kraków

Poland Local
1944 - 1945



Lezajsk

Poland Local
1944 - 1945



Niezabitow

Poland Local
1944 - 1945



Rudnik

Poland Local
1944 - 1945



Sulejow

Poland Local
1944 - 1945



Warsaw

Poland Local
1944 - 1945



Wawolnica

Poland Local
1944 - 1945



Zamosc

Poland Local
1944 -

This is the only modern private post I have found on line, a current reference work would be appreciated.



InPost

Poland Private Post
-

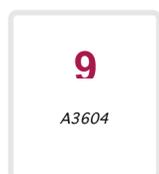
6520 POL-W POLAND, P.O.W. CAMP POSTS

4

During the second World War, four Offizerlagers (officer camps, usually abbreviated to Oflag) created a postage system for the prisoners, Polish officers held in Germany. Stamps were mostly made from woodcut dies with available paper, but some of the later stamps were well made with materials donated by the ICRC. Some of the camps were quite large, requiring an internal mail system, other letters were posted outside the camp. While approved by the German authorities, the ultimate purpose of these posts was to raise money for widows and orphans of fellow officers. All told, as many as 1 million stamps were produced by the prisoners. Woldenberg was the first camp to adopt the post, and was the most prolific issuer of (43) stamps.

Woldenberg (Woldenberczyków) and Grossborn (Borne Sulinowo) were camps in East Prussia which are now memorial sites in Northwestern Poland, Neubrandenburg is a city in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and Murnau is in Bavaria south of Munich.

re: Autolycus, The Polish Prisoner of War Posts



Oflag IIC Woldenberg

Poland Camp
1942 - 1945



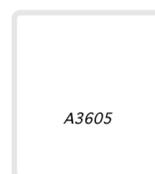
Oflag IID Grossborn

Poland Camp
1943 - 1945



Oflag IIE Neubrandenburg

Poland Camp
1944 - 1944



Oflag VIIA Murnau

Poland Camp
1942 - 1944

6520 POL-X POLAND, GHETTO POSTS

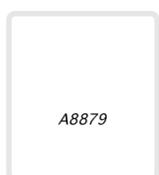
4

Postal delivery inside the Jewish ghettos were strictly controlled by the Germans, with authority managed through the Judenrat. The Lodz Ghetto Post had a particularly extensive postal system, with stamps professionally produced for mail both within and outside the Ghetto. The Warsaw Ghetto also had an extensive post office, but not with its own stamps. The Warsaw Ghetto Post was issued by the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization in an effort to established an underground mail service. There is no evidence that the stamps were used, and all of the surviving residents of the ghetto were murdered in 1943. The image is from the U.S. Holocaust museum.



Lodz (Litzmannstadt) Ghetto Post

Germany Occupation
1944 -



Warsaw Ghetto Post

Germany Occupation
1941 - 1943