

EVOLUTION OF THE GERMAN POST OFFICE AT SHANGHAI 1886-1917

SYNOPSIS

(June 2026)

Treatment & Philatelic Significance:

This exhibit, as defined on the title page, offers the viewer a chronological overview of the evolution of the German Post Office at Shanghai from beginning as a postal agency to postal headquarters in China with closure in 1917. Each 'division', or chapter, gives an overview of that particular aspect of the exhibit using forerunner mail, postage issues, documents, various postal history with an epilogue as closure.

Postal history & postmark-usage covers the entire period of German postal office presence in China 1886-1917, albeit dedicated to Shanghai, which was the administrative center for subsequent German Post Offices to have opened in China. All postmarks relate to Shanghai. Where postage examples are unused/mint, used examples do not exist or have not been found over forty+ years of collecting the subject, or are museum-level rarities and cost beyond the exhibitor's willingness to purchase.

Shown military mail relates only to Shanghai.

All-important postmarks of the 'German Post Office at Shanghai' are shown, including postal history relating to coastal sea-post, naval ship mail, consular as well as hotel & social organizations, but only relating to Shanghai. Over 150 postal history examples are shown having different rates, routes and markings as well as important stamp entities illustrating postmarks, many of which are rarities as highlighted.

Where 'Exp', or 'Cert', is indicated, the expertizer's name has been mentioned. Certificates, if applicable, are attached to the backside of the respective pages. ALL examples are "non-philatelic-inspired", except for less than five examples, where a commercial example has not been found,

As far as the exhibitor has been able to determine, this is the only known dedicated exhibit on this subject in North America & Europe.

Condition & Difficulty of Acquisition:

No less than 50% of this exhibit consists of scarce or only-known examples, many of which are expertized and/or have certificates (found on sheet reverse).

All material is the best found by the exhibitor in the last forty+ years and acquired piecemeal.

Presentation:

Two postal history examples will generally be found on each page. In certain instances, only one example will be mounted because of its size, its particular importance or its scarcity factor.

The exhibit uses colored text as follows:

- Black:** General historical, geographical & postal information
- Light Blue:** Chapter-start-page heading & important annotative information.
Blue-matted examples indicate particular importance & scarcity, which may or may not be additionally detailed.
- Maroon:** Postal rate information.

Thus, the viewer, or philatelic judge, can quickly survey the exhibit by following the colored text which is of most interest to him/her. Important annotative information, where indicated, is in blue text color, and could also be 'passed' if not of interest, for example. General historical or geographical information will be 'boxed' and usually found at the top of the applicable pages.

Text (Century Gothic) font sizes are: heading/title (14), sub-headings (12 or 10.5) or boxed text (10), cover/postcard/document descriptive text (10 or 9).

Philatelic Knowledge & Research:

The exhibitor has not patterned this exhibit on any others involving the subject or period, but, rather, has attempted to research the subject matter using the best available references in German or English so as to develop a cohesive "storyline" as he perceives it. Any original research has been integrated into the exhibit text and not highlighted.

Bibliography:

- * Friedemann/Wittmann, *Die Postwertzeichen und Entwertungen der Deutschen Postanstalten in den Schutzgebieten und im Ausland*, 4th Edition, Wittmann Verlag, Munich, 1988.
- **Miller, Jerry H., *German Offices in China 1886-1917: Background & Evolution*, The China Clipper, March, 2012, Volume 76, Number 3, Whole Number 435, Pages 90-96, 106-108.
- **Miller, Jerry H., *German Offices in China 1886-1917: Background & Evolution*, The German Postal Specialist, June 2012, Volume 63, No. 6, Whole Number 685, Pages 229-237. July 2012, Volume 63, No. 7, Whole Number 686, Pages 271-281.
- * Schmidt/Werner, *Geschichte der deutschen Post in den Kolonien und im Ausland*, Konkordia Verlag Reinhold Rudolph, Leipzig, 1939.
- * *Stempelkatalog .. Ehemalige deutsche Kolonien und Auslandspostämter*, Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Sammler deutscher Kolonialpostwertzeichen eV, (18th Edition), Berlin, 2018.

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'SPECIMEN' Values of the

German-homeland 'Germania-Series' Stamps having '**CHINA**'-overprint ...
First dedicated postage stamps for use by German Post Offices in China





Illustration of the German Consulate at Shanghai ..
Home of the German Post Agency (1886-1894)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The 'Treaty of Nanking' (1842) between China and Great Britain established five so-called 'treaty ports' which permitted 'foreigners' to reside & conduct commerce. One such treaty port was 'Shanghai'.

By 1885, citizens of many countries resided and conducted business at Shanghai, which had three distinct city districts: Chinese, French & International.

To facilitate communications between the foreign residents and their home countries, foreign post offices were established, since China was not a member of the Universal Postal Union until 1914.

ESTABLISHMENT OF GERMAN POSTAL FACILITIES IN CHINA FIRST TOOK PLACE AFTER THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT CHARTERED THE 'NORTH GERMAN LLOYD' (N.G.L.) SHIPPING LINE TO ESTABLISH REGULAR POSTAL & COMMERCIAL SERVICE BETWEEN GERMANY, THE FAR EAST, AUSTRALIA & PACIFIC ISLANDS.

AN IMPERIAL POSTAL OFFICIAL ARRIVED WITH THE FIRST N.G.L SHIP AT SHANGHAI, ESTABLISHING A POSTAL AGENCY IN THE GERMAN CONSULATE ON 16 AUGUST 1886.

That postal agency quickly grew into a full-service post office subsequently becoming postal administrative headquarters for the expansion of German Post Offices to other Chinese cities (adjacent map) until 16 March 1917, when diplomatic relations between China & Germany were severed because of World War I.

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EXHIBIT

This exhibit chronologically presents the evolution of the *'German Post Office at Shanghai'*, administrative headquarters for the Imperial German *Reichspost* in China, through forerunner, valid *'Reich-issued'* & dedicated stamp issues, all applicable postmarks, postal documents & postal history, including double-franking, commercial, parcel post, missionary, foreign in- & out-bound, military, sea-post as well as World War I related mail with an epilogue as closure.

TEXT COLOR CODING

BLACK: General Information

BLUE: Important Information relating to the postal history example and/or rarity factors & chapter start pages

MAROON: Postal Rate Information

EXHIBIT OVERVIEW

- I. MAP, HISTORY & TITLE PAGES
- II. PRE-GERMAN-POSTAL-AGENCY FORERUNNER MAIL
- III. PRE-1900 GERMAN PRESENCE IN CHINA
 - * Reich 'Pfennig' Issues
 - * Reich 'Crown & Eagle' Issues
 - * Chinese International Post Office & Customs Mail
- IV. 'POST OFFICE IN CHINA' POSTAL ISSUES
- V. POSTMARKS & POSTAL ISSUE USAGES
- VI. 'BOXER REVOLT' & OCCUPATION PERIOD 1900-1906
 - * Military Fieldpost Mail
 - * Shanghai Local City Post Mail
- VII. OTHER MAIL ACTIVITY TO 1914
 - * German Naval Ships in Chinese Waters
 - * Shanghai-Tientsin Seapost Mail
 - * Trans-Siberian Route-Network Mail
 - * Consular Mail
 - * Hotel & Social Organization-Related Mail
- VIII. END OF GERMAN PRESENCE IN CHINA 1914-1917
- IX. EPILOGUE