

Chapter 17

The Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg Post Office in Hamburg and the Mecklenburg Posts

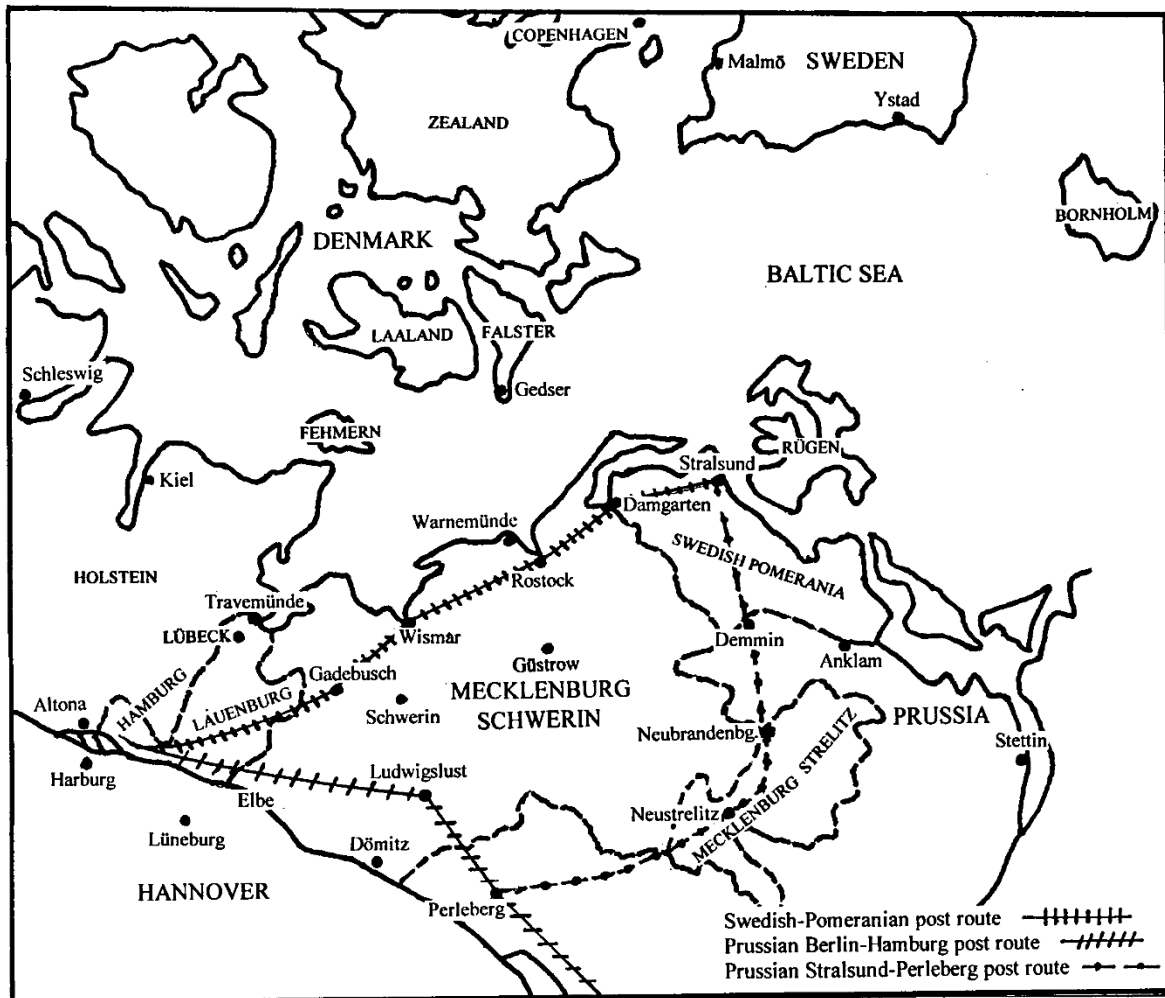
The Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg Post Office in Hamburg

Mecklenburg became a duchy in 1348. The duchy became involved in Scandinavian affairs and in 1363 provided Sweden with a new royal dynasty when Duke Albrecht of Mecklenburg became king of Sweden. The dukes fought against the Roman Catholic powers in the Thirty Years' War. Mecklenburg territory including the town of Wismar was awarded to Sweden by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. The Mecklenburg ducal family divided the territory into the duchies of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz in 1701.

A regular post and passenger route was established by yacht conveyance between Ystad and Swedish Pomerania in 1683. A post wagon route between Hamburg and Rostock via Wismar was approved by the Swedish government in 1684. A passenger post between Stralsund and Rostock completed the Stralsund-Hamburg connection. This route was important to Sweden as this provided an alternative to the post route through Denmark to Hamburg. Permission for post wagon passage between Stralsund and Hamburg had to be obtained from the Dukes of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Mecklenburg-Güstrow and Saxony-Lauenburg. The Swedish government requested this permission from the dukes and the Hamburg Senate on March 7, 1684. Satisfactory replies were received from the dukes and the Senate so that the Swedish-Pomerania diligence went in service in mid January 1685. There were continuing problems for the Swedish-Pomerania post in Mecklenburg as the post officials resented its presence. This post is known to have operated into the 1790s. Post conveyance between Stralsund and Hamburg became the responsibility of the Prussian post after Sweden ceded Swedish Pomerania to Prussia in 1815. An agreement between Prussia and Mecklenburg-Strelitz of November 12, 1817, provided for a Prussian post conveyance through Mecklenburg-Strelitz territory. A Prussian riding post was established in 1818 between Pomerania and Perleberg in Mecklenburg to connect with the Hamburg-Berlin route to the Prussian oberpostamt in Hamburg.

The post connection between Berlin and Hamburg was of great importance to Prussia. A treaty of July 30, 1824, between Prussia and Mecklenburg-Schwerin provided for this route through Mecklenburg territory. The Prussian transit post was not allowed to accept letters, money, packages or passengers for its own account in Mecklenburg except at Boizenburg where there was a Prussian post office. The Berlin-Hamburg railroad was completed in 1846 with passage through Mecklenburg.

The Mecklenburg post to Hamburg originated with the Mecklenburg-Güstrow and the Mecklenburg-Schwerin posts. The Duke of Mecklenburg-Güstrow recognized the importance of a postal connection from his residence in Güstrow to Hamburg and this was introduced in 1674 by means of a connection to Boizenburg. The Brandenburg post had a connection from Boizenburg to Hamburg. The duke granted free passage for the Brandenburg post through his territory and in return received free transport of his correspondence from Boizenburg to Hamburg. The duke appointed a Hamburg citizen as his post administrator in Hamburg. There was little profit in the appointment so the administrator resigned and the Hamburg Senate took over the Güstrow post office. The Duchy of Güstrow passenger post was leased to Daniel le Plat in 1678. The Mecklenburg post was allowed at the Börse and other important locations in the city of Hamburg. The Senate explained to le Plat and the Duke of Güstrow that the Mecklenburg passenger post would be admitted only under very rigid conditions. The duke replied that other sovereigns had been granted post installations in the city. A Mecklenburg-Güstrow post office was established in Hamburg, presumably in 1683. The Hamburg Senate then forbade this post establishment



Swedish-Pomeranian and Prussian postal routes between Stralsund and Hamburg in the 18th and 19th centuries.

to accept letters or packages that were not to be sent to the duke himself. This prohibition could not be enforced because the old Hamburg post messenger route between Hamburg and Stettin passed through Güstrow territory. Interruption of this route could have been expected as retribution by the Güstrow government. The duke then negotiated an agreement with the Senate that le Plat could not convey heavy packages in competition with the Hamburg carriage post.

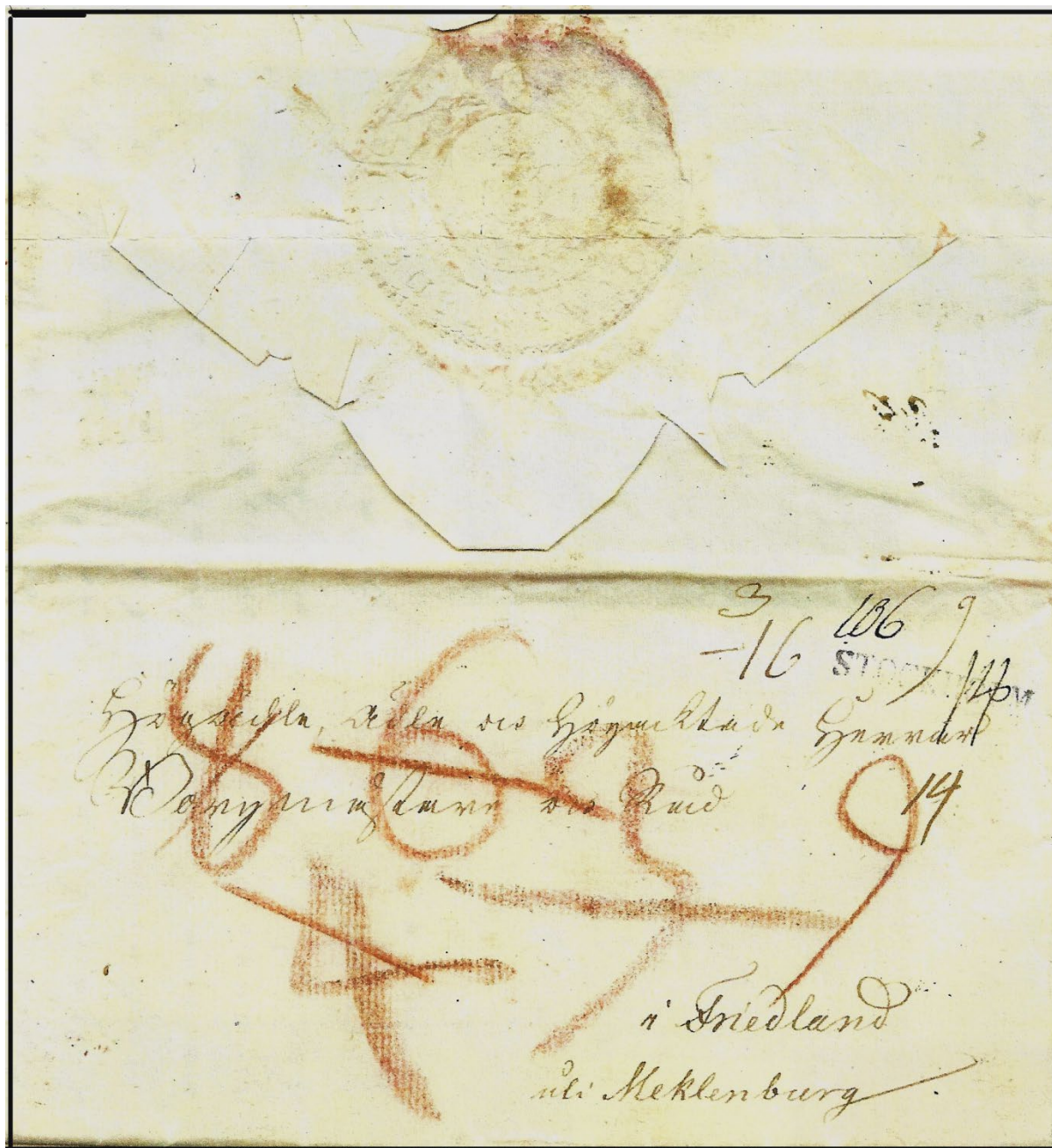
The Mecklenburg-Güstrow sovereign line died out in 1692 and the Mecklenburg-Güstrow post office in Hamburg was combined with the Mecklenburg-Schwerin post office. A regular riding post between Schwerin and Hamburg had been established in 1689 by the Lübeck postmaster with the approval of the Schwerin sovereign. This operated once a week. A twice weekly passenger post was added five years later. The necessity of a ducal Schwerin post office in Hamburg became apparent. A Hamburg resident, who acted as court agent for Schwerin, represented the Schwerin post in Hamburg. This passenger post also had the task of providing the Schwerin court with food, especially with fish and wine.

The Hamburg Senate complained in 1712 that the Mecklenburg post office in Hamburg provided unnecessary competition for the Hamburg city post office. This competition ceased when plague broke out in Hamburg in 1713 and Danish troops completely cut off the city. The Mecklenburg post office in Hamburg was closed between 1713 and 1719 although the plague and blockade ceased in 1714. There were many difficulties about postal rates in the following decades between Schwerin on one side and the Senate, Prussia and Sweden on the other side. Hannover had acquired Lauenburg and required Mecklenburg to pay compensation for passage through its territory. Hamburg also had to pay compensation for passage of its Pomerania riding post.

The French occupied Hamburg in November 1806 and opened the Großherzoglich Bergischen Oberpostamt in December. Under a directive of February 15, 1807, the Berg post office assumed the operations of the Mecklenburg post office in Hamburg with the exception of the Fahrpost. The Fahrpost was placed under the Kaiserlich Königlich Französisches Ober-Postamt on March 1, 1811. The Mecklenburg post office in Hamburg was closed until March 23, 1813, when it was reopened during the Russian occupation. It was closed again on June 1, 1813, when French and Danish troops occupied Hamburg. After the end of the French occupation in May 1814, the first post was sent to Mecklenburg from the Mecklenburg post office in Hamburg on June 1, 1814.

The post office was raised to an Ober-Postamt in 1816. The entire Mecklenburg traffic to Hamburg was transferred to the railroad after completion of the line between Hamburg and Berlin in 1846. Consequently, Mecklenburg post conveyance to Hamburg could be abolished. The letter and passenger posts to the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin from the Mecklenburg oberpostamt had to be given up. Similarly, the Prussian oberpostamt could deliver to Mecklenburg-Strelitz. A Mecklenburg post office was also opened at the Hamburg railroad station in 1846. Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Mecklenburg-Schwerin joined the German-Austrian Postal Union effective September 16 and December 18, 1850, respectively. The Mecklenburg post installation in Hamburg was passed to the North German Confederation on December 31, 1867.

The first hand stamp used by the Mecklenburg post office in Hamburg was in 1825 following correspondence between the Mecklenburg postmaster in Hamburg and the General Postmaster of Schwerin in regard to the need for a stamp. Six different **HAMBURG/day, month, year** hand stamps were used from November 12, 1825, until 1838. Letters to or from Scandinavian postal territory are relatively scarce. Scandinavian mail to and from Mecklenburg appears to have gone via Wismar and Lübeck. Only letters to and from the duchies of Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenburg were typically processed by the Mecklenburg post office in Hamburg with the exception of the period in 1848 when



Letter dated July 6, 1772 from Stockholm to Friedland, Mecklenberg Postmarked **STOCKHOLM**.

Postage from Stockholm to Ystad was 8.6 öre silver. Marked as 9 in red crayon.

Postage from Ystad to Swedish Pomerania was 4 öre silver as marked in red crayon.

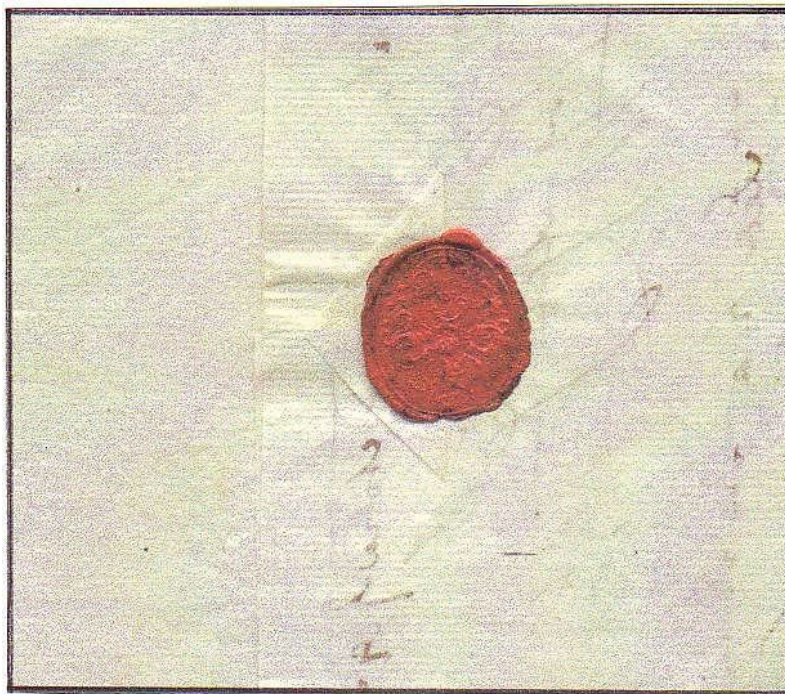
Total Swedish postage was equal to 6 Pomeranian schillings.

Mecklenburg postage from Swedish Pomerania to Friedland was 2 Pomeranian schillings.

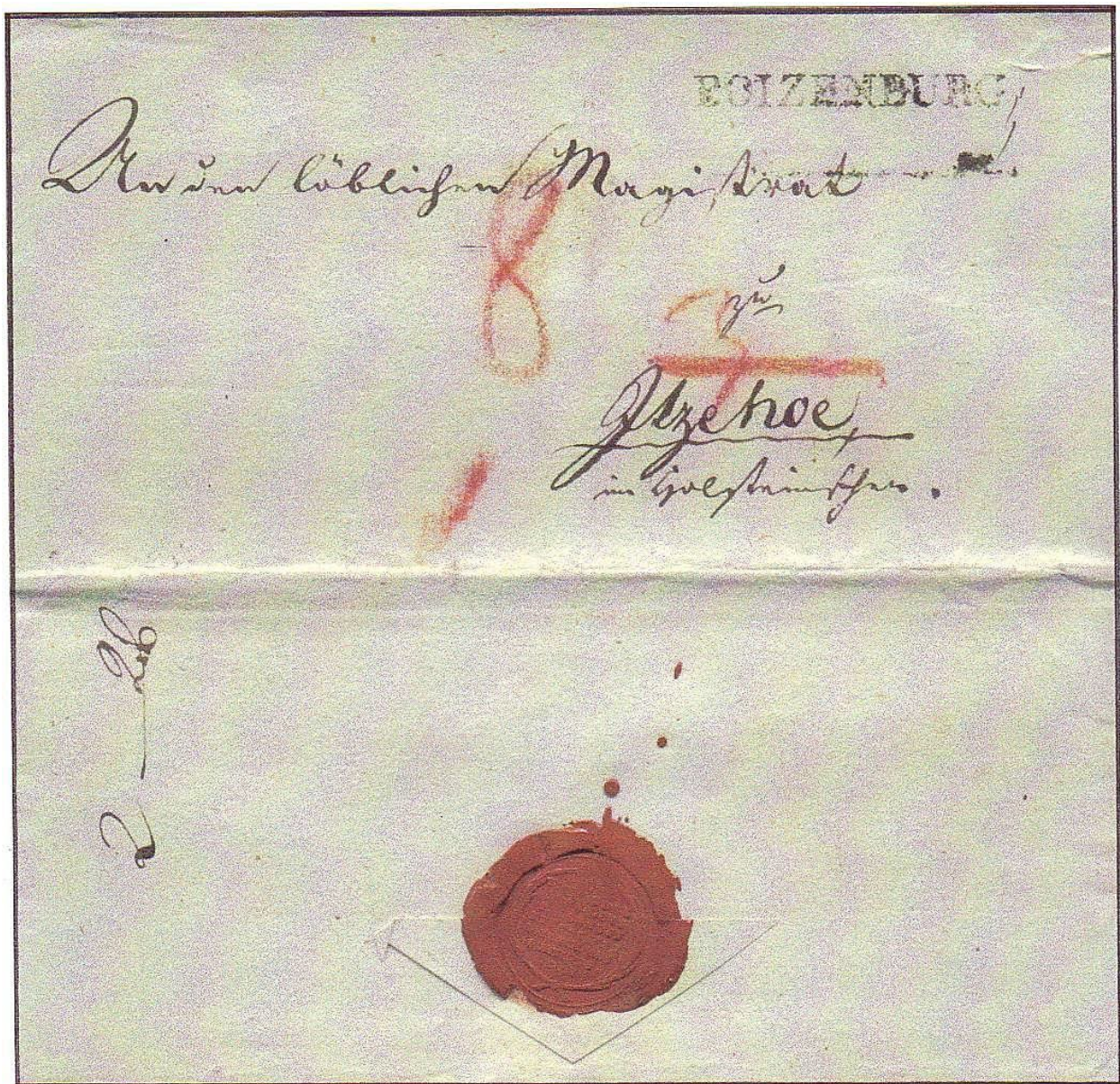
Total postage due was marked as 8 Pomeranian schillings.

Collection of G. Nilsson.

Herrn
Herrn G. Schicht
Provisor & Oeconomus
Boizenburg



Unpaid letter of April 19, 1781, from Altona to Boizenburg.
Probably posted at the Mecklenburg post office in Hamburg.
Postage due was marked as 2 Mecklenburg schillings.



Letter of April 20, 1826, from Lübtheen, Mecklenburg to Itzehoe.

*Postmarked **BOIZENBURG**.*

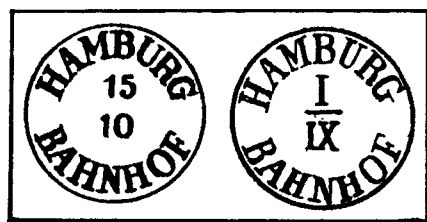
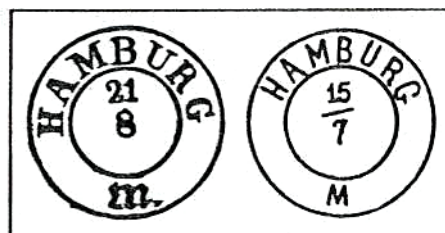
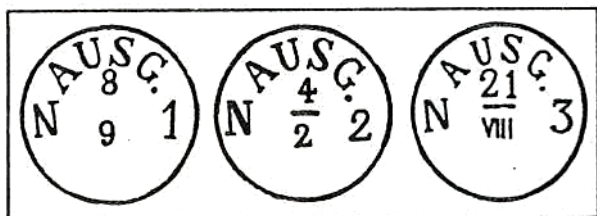
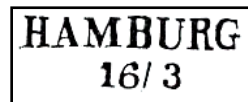
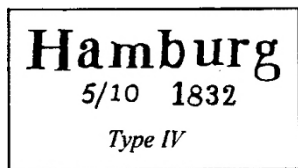
Postage to Hamburg was 3 schillings.

Postage due at Itzehoe was 8 schillings or 26 Rbs. as marked.

Reduced to 92% of the original size.

the Danish post office in Hamburg was closed because of the Schleswig-Holstein rebellion. The Type IV hand stamp used from 1829 to 1837 is known on a letter to Glückstadt. The Mecklenburg **HAMBURG/day/month** handstamp, known on a letter posted at the Mecklenburg post office in Hamburg to Nakskov during 1848, was used from January 1835 until March 1849. Arrival hand stamps were used from 1852 to 1867. These were inscribed **AUSG.** and showed the day and the month.

A double-circle stamp with **HAMBURG/day/month/m.** in antique lettering, except for the “m” in Gothic style was used from 1849 to 1858. A similar double-circle stamp with **HAMBURG**, the date and “**M**” all in lapidar type, was used from October 1857 to January 1866. Handstamps were used by the Mecklenburg railroad post office but these are not found on letters to Scandinavian postal territory.



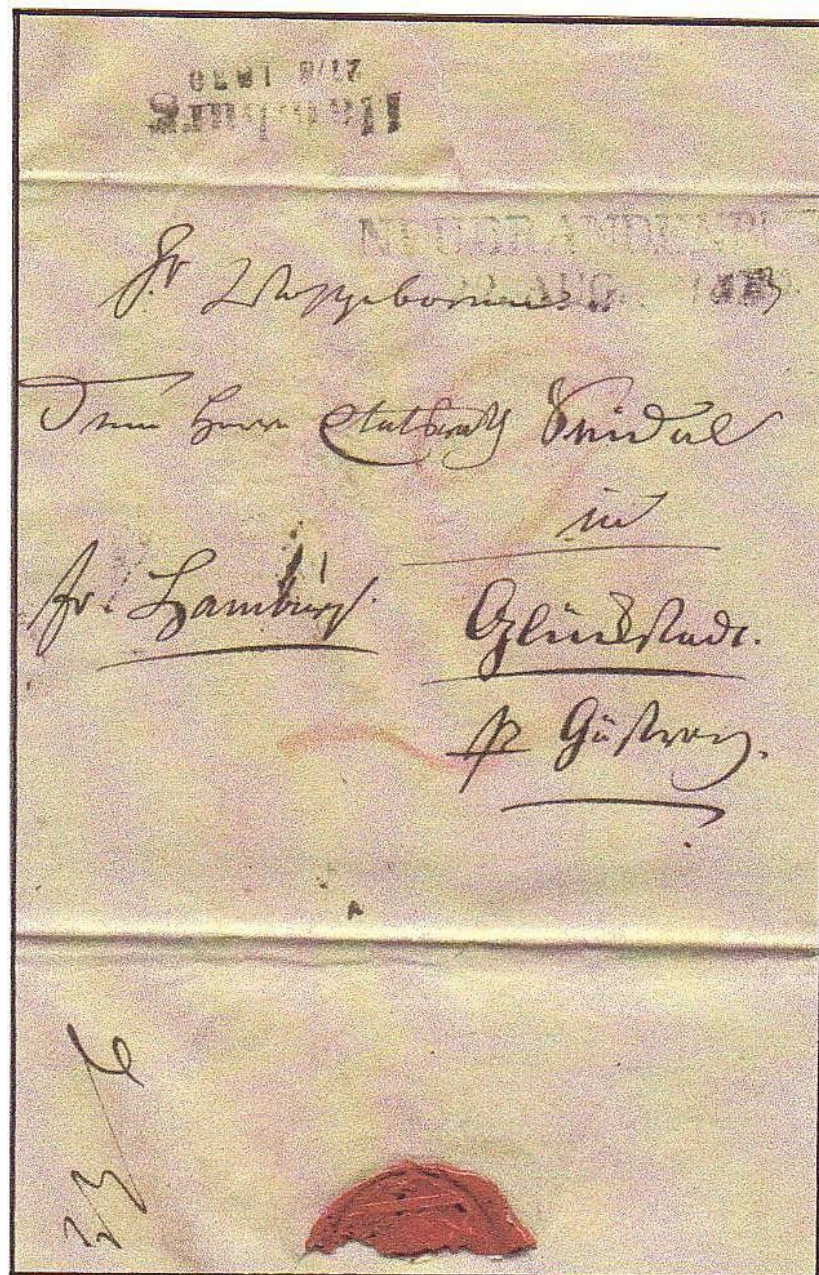
The Mecklenburg Post established a Post Expedition at the Hamburg railway station after the Berlin-Hamburg railroad was placed in operation in 1847. Four hand stamps with **HAMBURG/BAHNHOF**, the date and month were used at the Post Expedition from 1848 to 1867. Two were double-circle and two were single-circle stamps. One single-circle stamp had Arabic numerals and the other had Roman numerals.



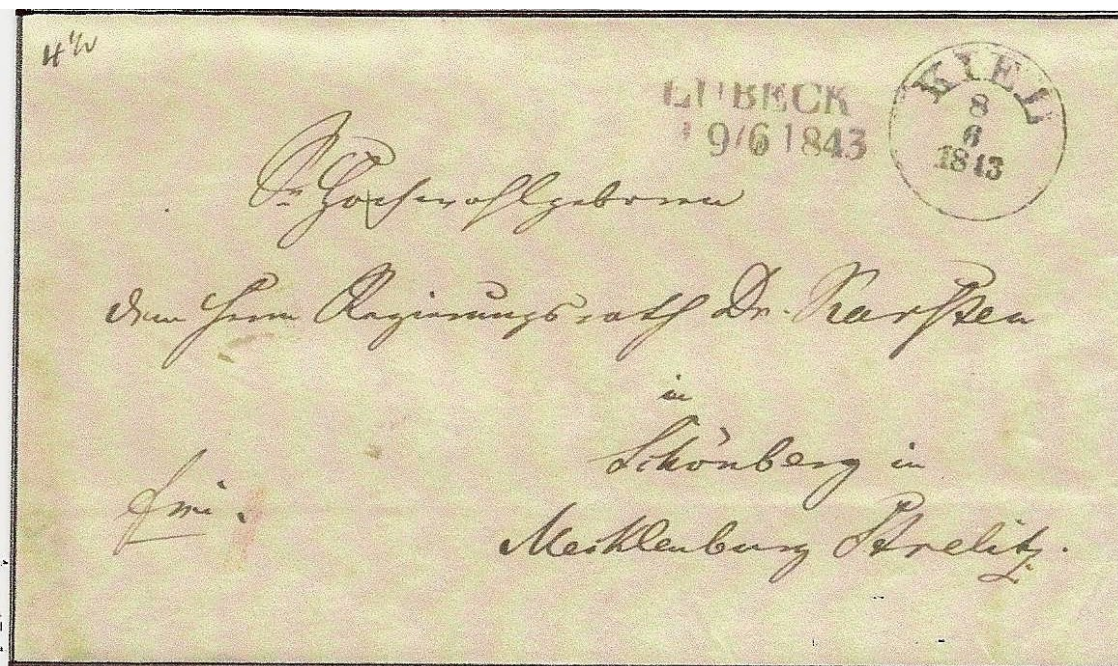
Sign for the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg Ober-Postamt in Hamburg.

Mecklenburg Sea Post Connections

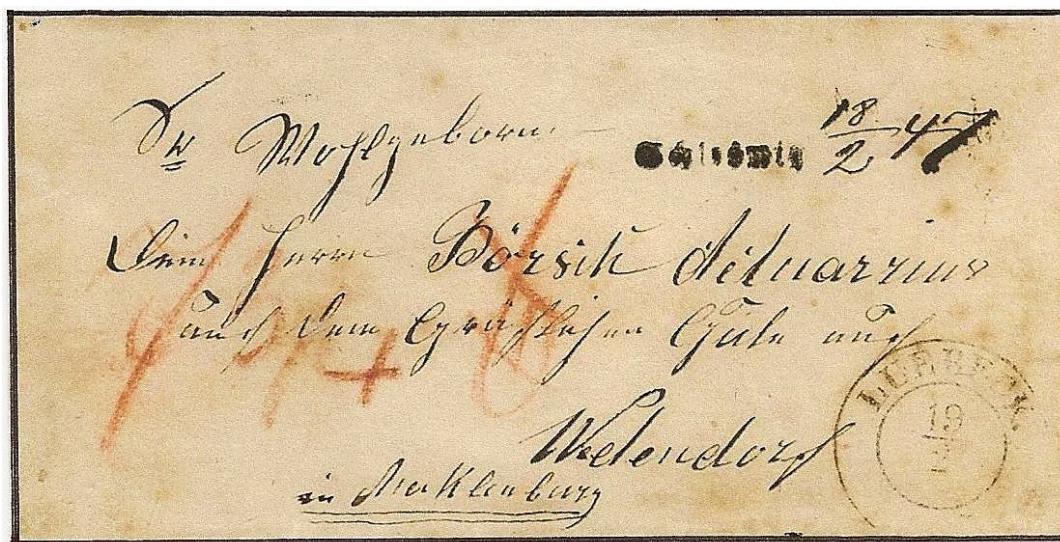
Mecklenburg sea post connections were important to Denmark since the mail could be sent by ship to Mecklenburg for conveyance to Hamburg. An agreement between Denmark and Mecklenburg-Schwerin for a post connection existed as early as 1818. The sea post connection between Copenhagen and Wismar in Mecklenburg became particularly important during the Schleswig-Holstein rebellion. Trips by the Mecklenburg Steamship Company's "Obotrit" between Copenhagen and Wismar began in September



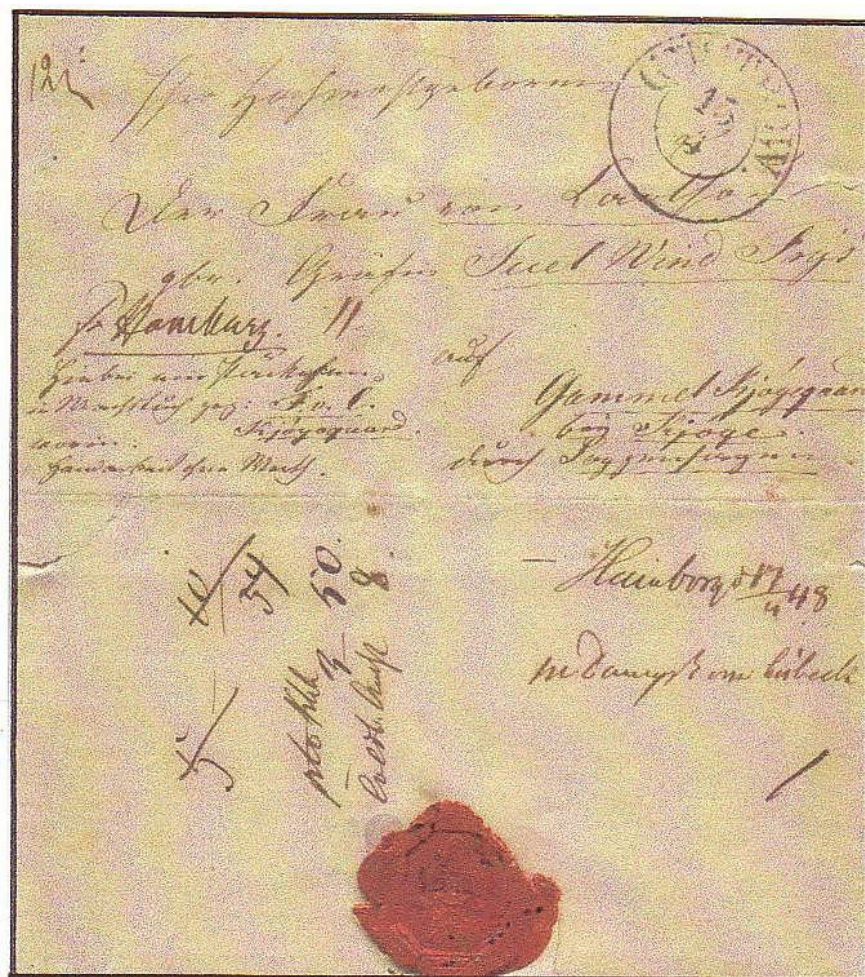
Cover for letter to Glückstadt with Neubrandenburg origin postmark dated August 22, 1830.
 Prepaid to Lauenburg with postage of 2 Mecklenburg schillings. Inscribed "fr Lauenburg".
 Postmarked with the Type IV **Hamburg/27/8 1830** handstamp by the Mecklenburg post office in Hamburg on August 27.
 Postage due was 6 Lsk..



Letter of June 8, 1843, from Kiel to Schönberg, Mecklenburg-Strelitz.
 Inscribed "frei" as no postage was required to Lübeck.
 Postmarked at Kiel and by the Lübeck Stadtpost on June 9.
 Transferred at Lübeck for conveyance by the Mecklenburg post to Schönberg.
 Postage due was 6 Mecklenburg schillings.



Unpaid cover from Schleswig to Wedendorf in Mecklenburg-Strelitz.
 Postmarked with **Schleswig** and manuscript 18/2 47 in use from 1846 to 1848. Date stamped at Lübeck on February 19.
 Postage marked as "6" in red crayon was marked out and replaced with $7\frac{3}{4}$ Mecklenburg schillings due.
 Collection of C. King.



Letter of April 15, 1848, sent with a package from Güstrow to Kjøge. Güstrow origin postmark.

Prepaid to Hamburg with 11 Mecklenburg schillings and inscribed "fr Hamburg".

There was no Mecklenburg postmark added at Hamburg.

Inscribed "Hamborg 17/4 48" and "pr Damps o Lübeck" at Hamburg.

Postage from Hamburg to Lübeck was 10 schillings equal to 34 Rbs.

Inscribed "pto Kbh" to show that postage due at Copenhagen was 50 Rbs.

A customs charge of 8 Rbs. was added. Postage from Copenhagen to Kjøge was 5 Rbs.

Total postage due was 63 Rbs.

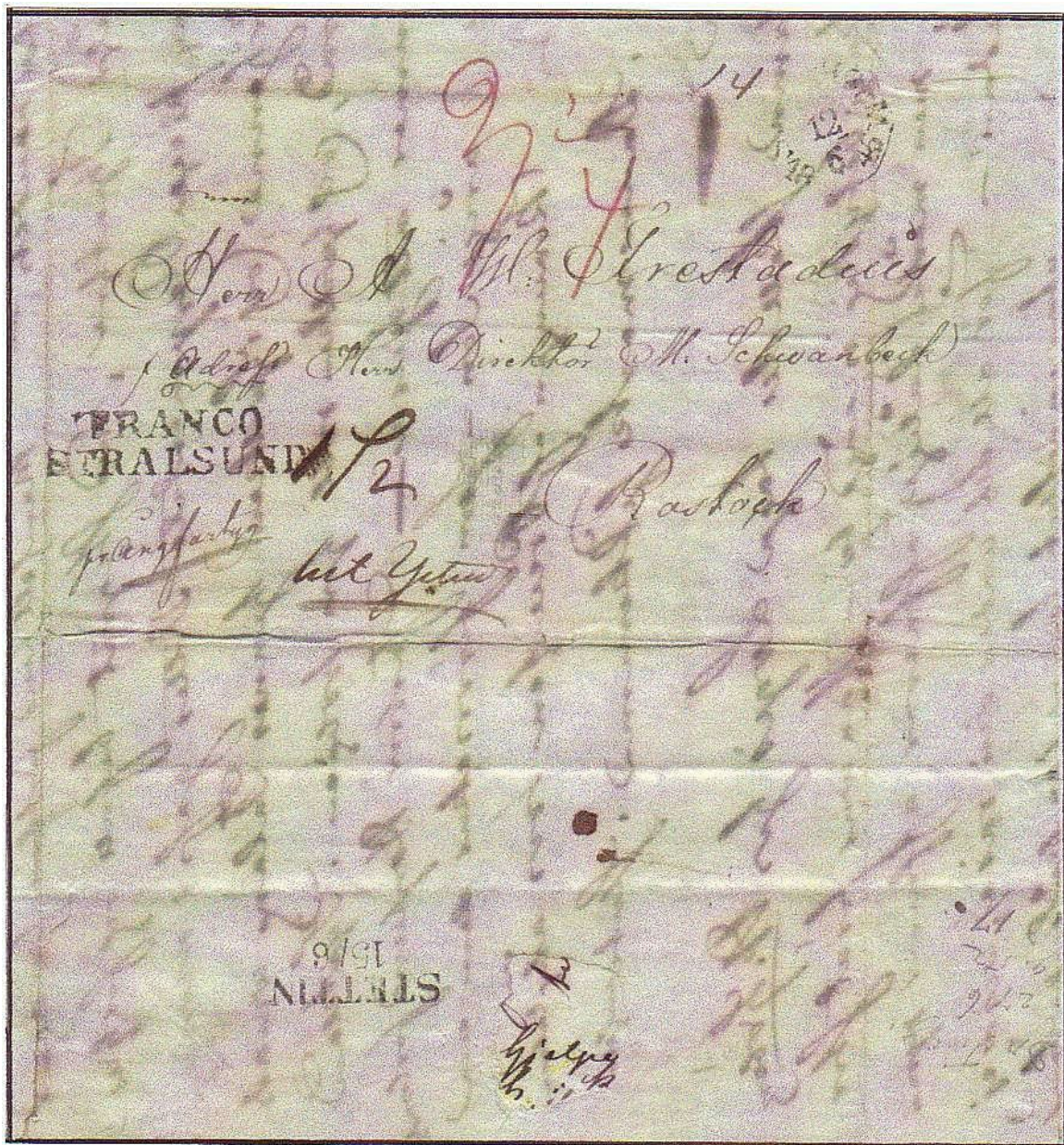
The Swedish-Prussian convention of 1840 listed postage as 2 sgr. per loth from Hamburg to Rostock. Letters sent from Sweden in accordance with this convention were transferred to the Hamburg Stadtpost.



Letter from Stockholm to Rostock. Postmarked at Stockholm on October 18, 1843. Postage paid to Hamburg was 38 sk.bco. in accordance with the Swedish rate book of 1838. Postmarked **Franco Hamburg** by the Swedish & Norwegian post office in Hamburg. Transferred to the Hamburg Stadtpost and postmarked on November 7. Postage due was 4 Hamburg schillings as marked in red. Collection of G. Nilsson



Letter marked as 1½ loth weight from Stockholm to Rostock. Postmarked at Stockholm on February 27, 1844. Postmarked by the Swedish & Norwegian post office and by the Hamburg Stadtpost as the above letter. Postage due was 6 Hamburg schillings as marked in red ink.



Letter of June 12, 1845, from Stockholm to Rostock. Inscribed "pr Ångfartyg".
 Inscribed "bet Ystad" and prepaid to Stettin. Postmarked at Stockholm.
 Postmarked at Stettin on June 15 and stamped **FRANCO/STRALSUND**.
 Postage due was $3\frac{1}{4}$ Mecklenburg schillings as inscribed in violet ink.

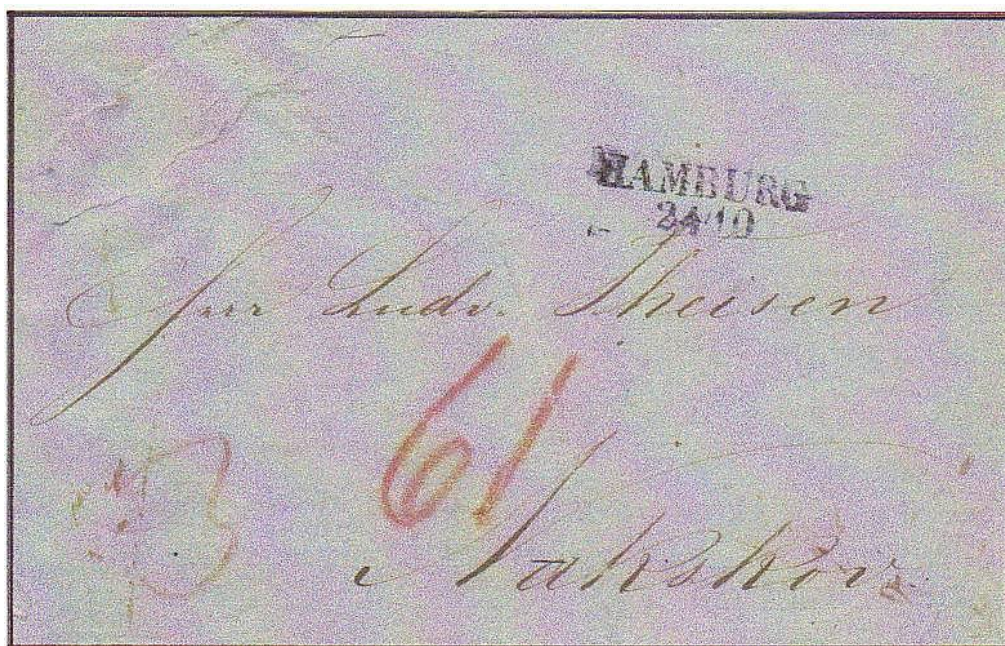
over Wismar

Herrn A. Falckenberg
 of Randers.
 per Adm. Herrn H. L. Rie's Linné
 Kopenhagen

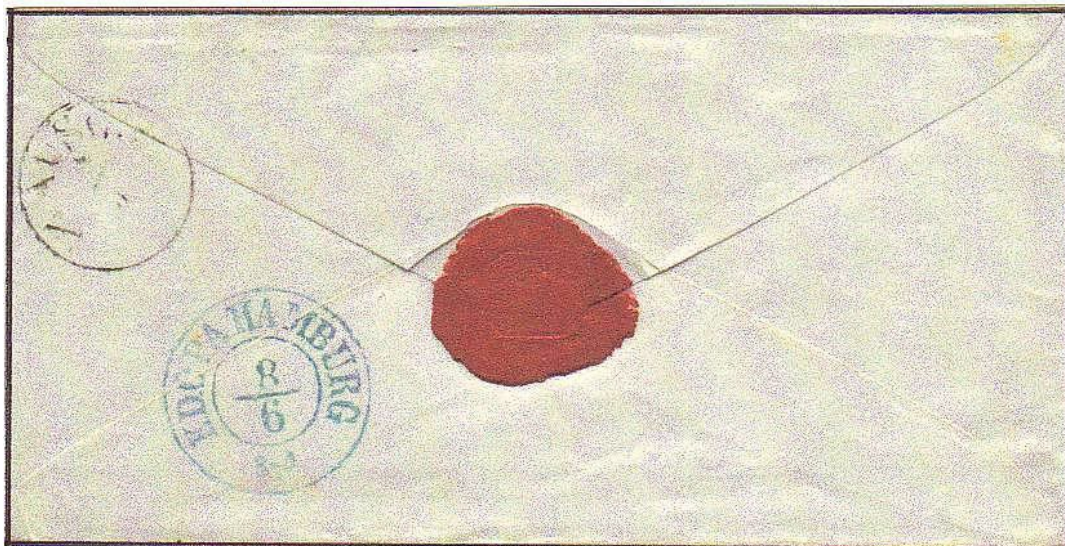
34/29

14

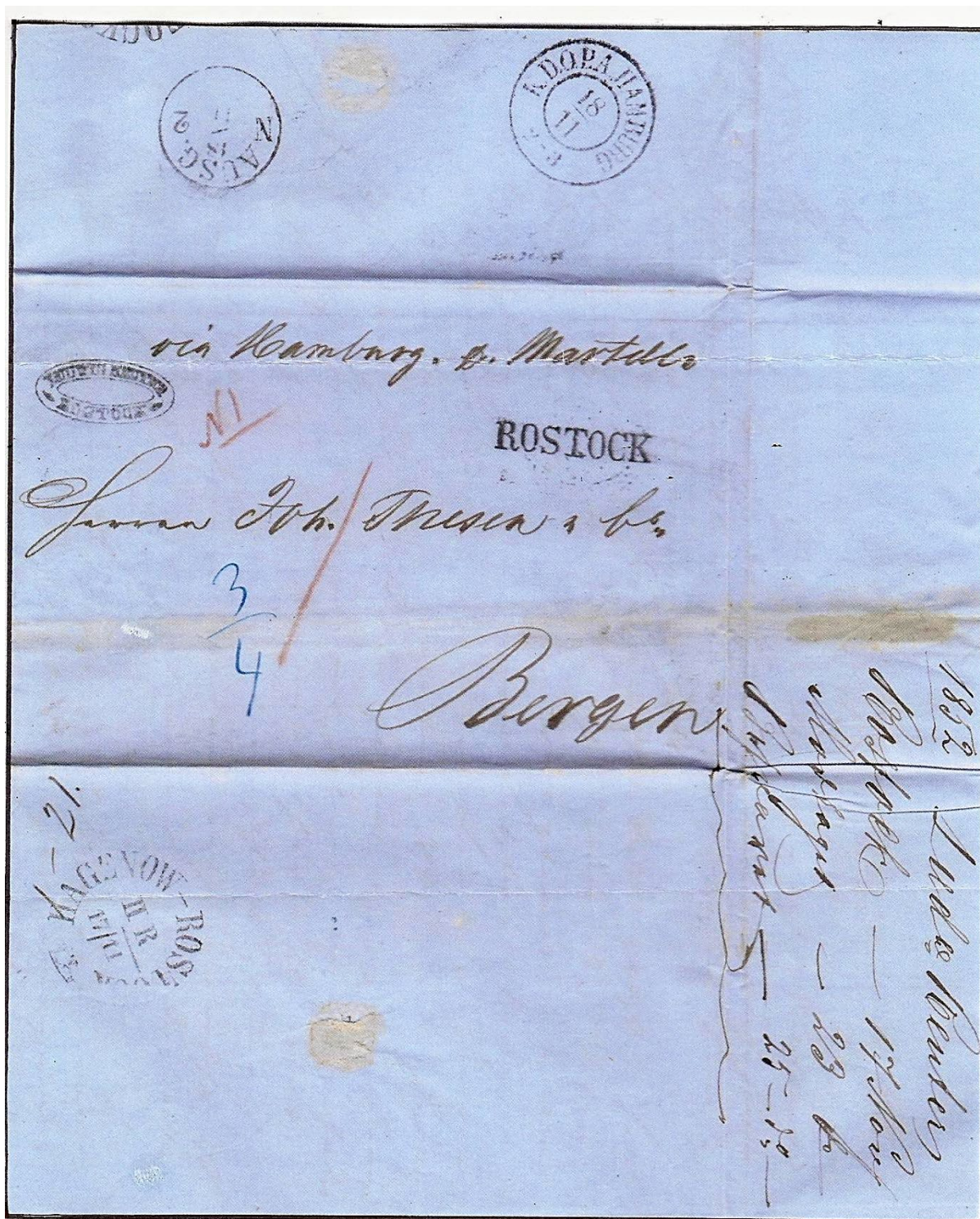
Letter of September 26, 1848, from Hamburg to Randers.
 Inscribed "over Wismar" because the Danish post office in Hamburg
 and the route between Hamburg and Denmark were closed because of the Schleswig-Holstein insurrection.
 Postage at Copenhagen was marked as "34/29" for 34 Rbs. foreign postage from Hamburg to Copenhagen
 and 29 Rbs. Danish postage from Copenhagen to Randers.
 The Randers post office added 2 Rbs. for a delivery fee to show a total due of 65 Rbs.



Unpaid letter of October 24, 1848, from Hamburg to Nakskov.
 Posted and postmarked **HAMBURG/24 10** at the Mecklenburg post office in Hamburg.
 Sent via Wismar in Mecklenburg for conveyance by the Mecklenburg Steamship Company's "Obotrit" to Copenhagen.
 Post conveyance through the duchies was interrupted by the Schleswig-Holstein rebellion.
 Mecklenburg postage was 24 Rbs. to Copenhagen and Danish postage was 35 Rbs.
 A delivery fee of 2 Rbs. was added for total postage due of 61 Rbs.



Cover of June 8, 1852, from Ludwigslust to Gelting in Schleswig. Ludwigslust origin postmark.
 Arrival postmark by the Mecklenburg post office in Hamburg and Danish post office in Hamburg postmark of June 8.
 German-Austrian Postal Union postage to Hamburg was 2 sgr.
 Postage from Hamburg to Schleswig was 2 sgr.
 Total postage due was 4 sgr. or 5 schillings courant



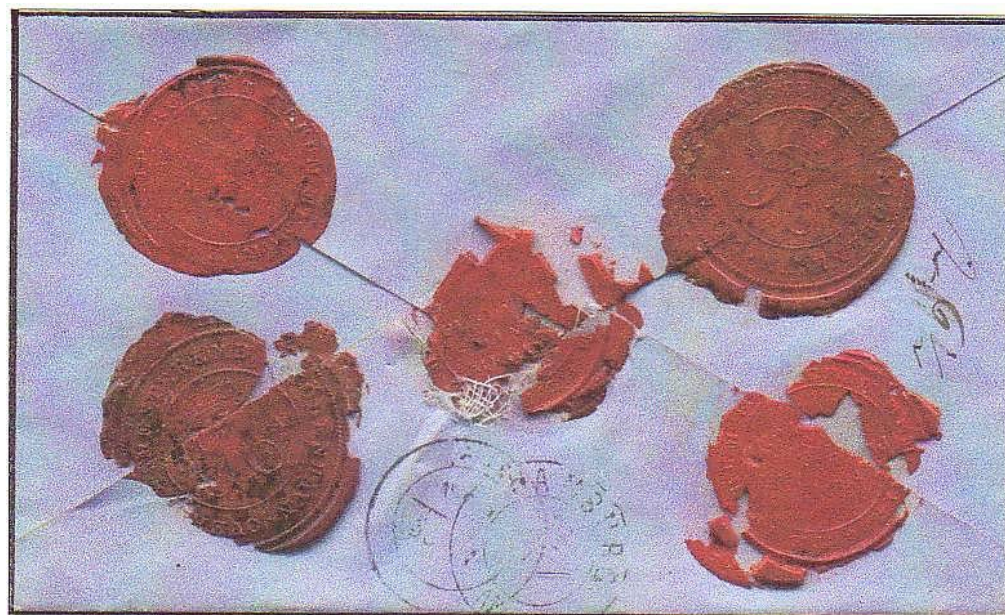
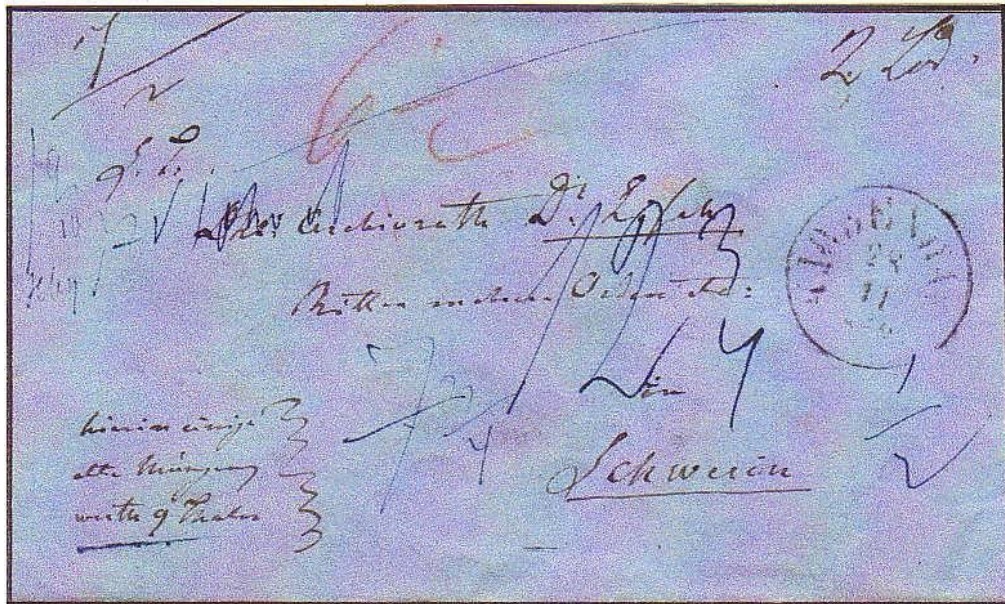
Letter dated November 17, 1852, from Rostock to Bergen. Inscribed "via Hamburg. pr. Martello". Postmarked **Rostock**. Postmarked on the Hagenow-Rostock railway on November 17. Postmarked with the Mecklenburg arrival stamp and by the Danish post office in Hamburg on November 18.

Sent from Hamburg to Norway via Denmark. Received on November 23. German postage was marked as 3 sgr. and foreign postage as 4 sgr. Postage due was 21 sk.sp. as marked. Reduced to 85% of the original size.

Potsdamer Philatelistisches Büro auction, May 2010.



*Letter from Stettin to Helsingør. Inscribed "via Kiel".
 Postmarked at the Stettin Railway station on October 18, 1854, on the Hagenow-Rostock railway on October 19 and
 at the Danish railway station in Hamburg on October 20.
 Prussian postage was 3 sgr. as marked in blue ink.
 This was marked as 4 schillings in red crayon and then as 13 sk.Rm.
 Danish postage was 9 sk.Rm. for a total of 22 sk.Rm. due as marked.
 Potsdamer Philatelistisches Büro auction, May 2010.*



Unpaid letter to Schwerin postmarked at Copenhagen on November 28, 1859.

Inscribed that the contents were valued at less than 9 thaler. Weight was marked as two lod.

Sealed on the back with five wax seals. Two with **OVERPOSTMESTEREMB. KIØBENHAVN** and three with **NUMO PHYLACIUM DANÆ REGIUM**.

Postmarked by the Mecklenburg post office in Hamburg with the **HAMBURG M** stamp on November 29 and with a Mecklenburg railway stamp on November 30.

Postage to Hamburg was 6½ schillings courant as marked in red crayon equal to 7¾ Mecklenburg schillings. Mecklenburg postage was 5 schillings for total postage due of 12¾ Mecklenburg schillings as marked in blue ink.



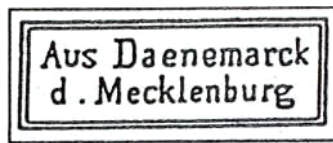
1848. A connection was then made from Wismar to the Hamburg-Berlin railroad. Ice forced closure of the Copenhagen-Wismar route from December 1849 until February 1850. With a prospect of ice in December 1850, a winter steamship post route was established between Gedser on the Danish island of Falster and Warnemünde in Mecklenburg for connection via Rostock with the railroad between Hamburg and Berlin. The Gedser-Warnemünde ship connection was discontinued on February 27, 1850, when the post route through the duchies was resumed.

A twice weekly steamship connection between Copenhagen and Wismar that would connect at Wismar by train to Hamburg and Berlin was announced at Berlin on March 23, 1850. The connection was by Mecklenburg train to Hagenow and by Prussian train to Hamburg or Berlin.

A Danish postal circular of April 16, 1851, stated that as a result of a postal convention concluded with the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin postal rates effective April 15 were:

1. Postage for a single-letter not over 1 lod Danish weight (15.62 grams) between the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Denmark was $3\frac{3}{4}$ silbergroschen (sgr.) for correspondence via Wismar or Hamburg. Of this postage, $\frac{3}{4}$ sgr. was the Mecklenburg share and 3 sgr. was the Danish share.
2. Postage for Mecklenburg transit correspondence to and from the German-Austrian Postal Union territory to and from Denmark would be made up of:
 - a. a Danish postage of 3 sgr. for a single-weight letter of not over 1 lod Danish weight.
 - b. a German postage of 3 sgr. for a single-weight letter of not over 1 lod Danish weight except for a list of locations for which the postage was 1 or 2 sgr. in accordance with the GAPU specifications for postal rate according to distance.

A weekly post connection between Copenhagen and Wismar began in 1851 in accordance with the postal rates that were in effect on April 15 of that year. Letters that were sent via Wismar in open transit received on arrival the stamp **Aus Daenemarck/d. Mecklenburg** and then usually the railroad stamp Hagenow-Rostock. The stamp is known used from 1851 to 1853 and in 1859. Black ink or blue ink was used for the stamp. According to the 1851 agreement, letter parcels to and from Hamburg were conveyed at a rate of one schilling Mecklenburg courant ($2\frac{2}{3}$ Rbs.) per lod net weight.



An agreement between Mecklenburg and Denmark was in effect on February 1, 1854, for a single letter rate of 8 Rbs. between Copenhagen and Hamburg via Wismar. Letters sent via Wismar were at the request of the sender as the rate for a single-weight letter was 2 Rbs. higher by this route than for a franked letter between Copenhagen and Hamburg sent via the duchies.

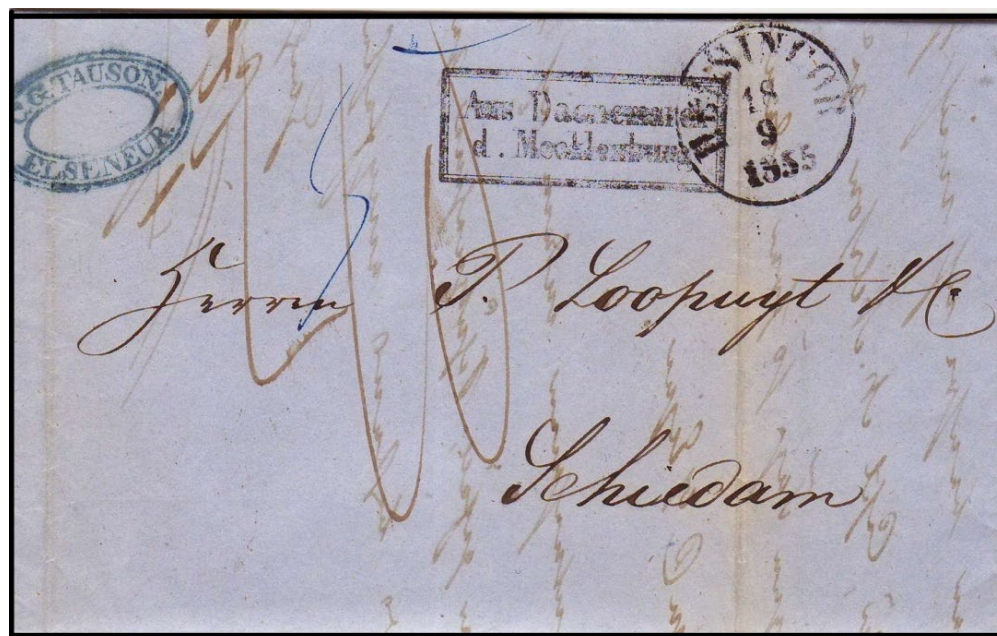
War in Schleswig in February 1864 again blocked the post route between Hamburg and Copenhagen via the duchies. This interrupted the connection for Swedish mail via Hamburg. Sweden operated a steamship post between Ystad and Warnemünde from February 3 until March 28, 1864, after Denmark opened a steamship route between Copenhagen and Lübeck that called at Malmö.



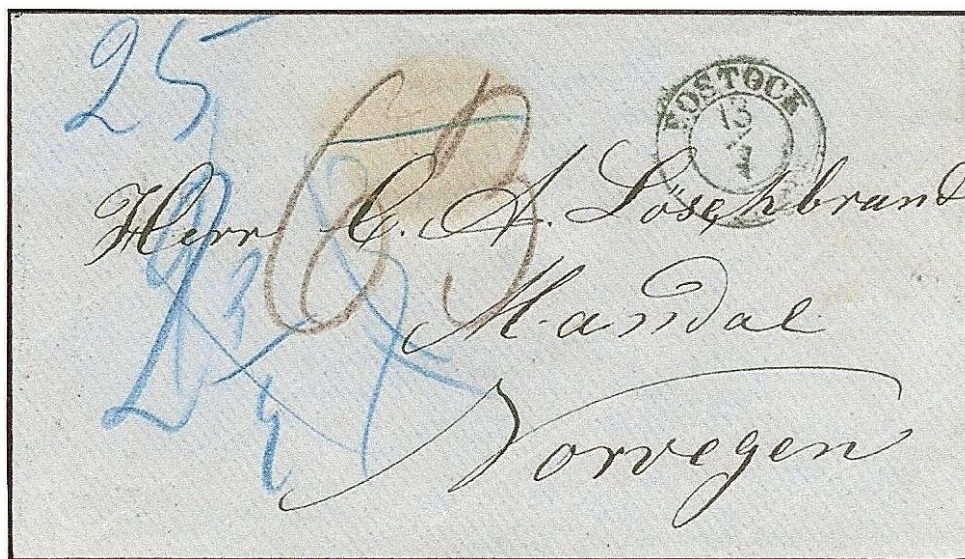
Unpaid letter dated September 28, 1852, from Copenhagen to Köln. Postmarked **B H/WISMAR**.
 Conveyed by Mecklenburg and Prussian railways with date stamps on September 29.
 Receiving postmark at Köln on September 30.
 Postage to Wismar was 3 sgr. and GAPU postage to Köln was 3 sgr. for a total due of 6 sgr. as marked.



Partly paid letter dated May 4, 1855 from Helsingør to Port St. Mary's Spain. Postmarked at Helsingør. Stamped **Aus Daenemarck/d. Mecklenburg** and **PRUSSE**. It was possible to pay postage only to the French border. Postage to Hamburg via Mecklenburg was 8 Rbs., Prussian postage was 3 sgr. and French postage was 3 sgr. for a total of 8 ½ sgr. or 36 Rbs. paid by the sender. Spanish postage was 4 reales.



Unpaid letter from Helsingør to Schiedam postmarked at Helsingør on September 9, 1855. Stamped **Aus Daenemarck/d. Mecklenburg** on the **Rostock-Hamburg** railway on September 18. Stamped on the **Hagenow-Rostock** railway on September 19 and at Schiedam on September 20. Postage from Helsingør to Copenhagen was 4 skRm. and Copenhagen to Hamburg was 8 skRm. Postage from Hamburg to Schiedam was 5 sgr. Total was 7¼ sgr. that represented 40 cents Dutch postage. One sgr. = 6 Dutch cents and Dutch postage was rounded to the next 5 cent increment so 40 cents as marked.



Unpaid letter to Mandal postmarked at Rostock on July 13, 1865.
 Postmarked Stralsund, Södra Stambanen and Svinesund.
 Postage to Stralsund was marked as 2¼ sgr in blue crayon. The Swedish debit to Prussia was marked as 25 öre.
 Total postage due was marked as 63 sk.sp.
 Potsdamer Philatelistisches Büro auction, May 2009.

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