

Chapter 4

The French Post Office in Hamburg (1806-1814)

The French wanted to arrange for a post office in Hamburg in November 1797 because “the English had a post office in Hamburg.” The matter was dropped following the explanation that the English did not have a post office. The postal service with “Englisches” in the title was a Hamburg institution and served England as the Reichspost served France.

The Grand Duchy of Berg was created by Napoleon for his brother-in-law, Joachim Murat, who was appointed grand duke on March 15, 1806. The grand duchy was made up of the old Duchy of Berg which Napoleon had obtained from Bavaria and Cleves. Napoleon conceived the idea of combining the posts of the Hanseatic cities of Bremen, Hamburg and Lübeck within the Grand Duchy of Berg. The objective was to counter the entry of foreign letters into continental Europe since Hamburg was a known location for foreign agents and their correspondence. The French negotiated on July 17, 1806, for transfer of the Thurn & Taxis privileges in the Hanseatic cities to Murat. A Grand Duchy of Berg post office was not established in Hamburg until October 26, 1806. It is likely that the Thurn & Taxis post office in



T.G.D. HAMBOURG

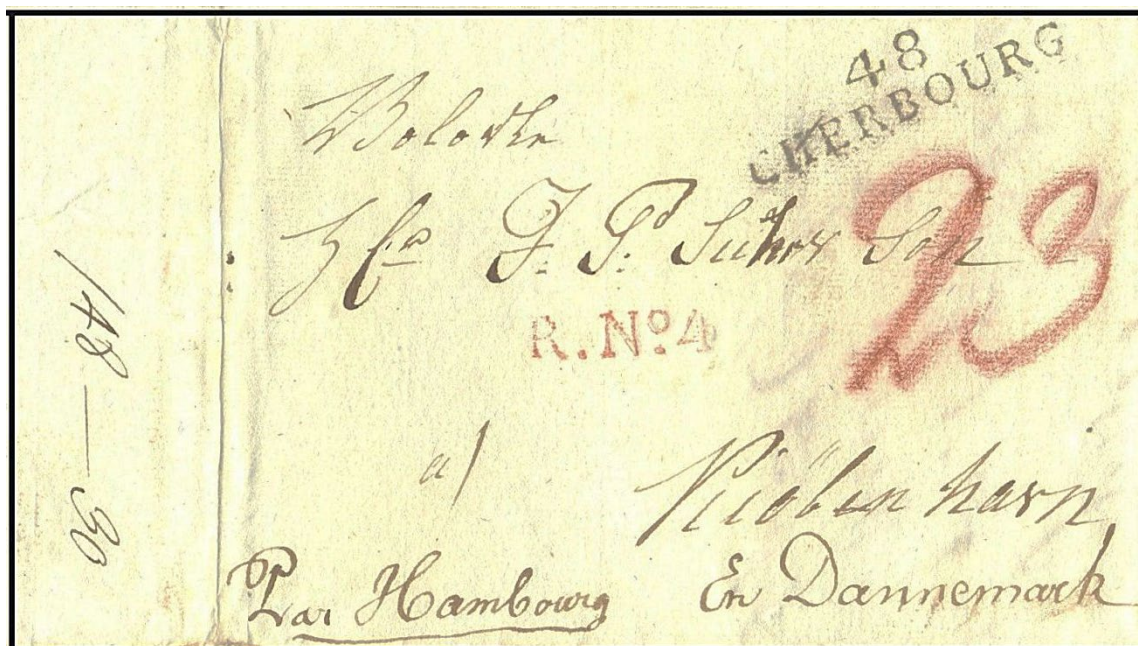
Hamburg was taken over by the French and then became the Grand Duchy of Berg post office. Three hand stamps were ordered for use by the Berg post office. One, **T.G.D. HAMBOURG**, was used for transit letters from November 1806 until early January 1807. The two others were used as origin marks on prepaid and unpaid letters, and they are not known on letters from Scandinavia. Red ink was used for all three hand stamps.

In 1806 Napoleon had extraordinary success in the war with Prussia. Consequently he decided to implement his concept of “conquering the sea from the land” in the war against Great Britain. This was announced by decree at Berlin on November 21, 1806, and resulted in the continental blockade that prohibited all commerce and correspondence with Great Britain and its colonies. The complete embargo of the continent against Great Britain included the ports on the Ems, Weser and Elbe Rivers. Implementation of the embargo required French occupation of the Hanseatic cities even though these independent cities had maintained a non-belligerent status.

In December the Berg post office took over the mail routes to France, Spain and Portugal. The foreign post offices operating in Hamburg at the time of the French occupation had to function in a city under French control. The Thurn & Taxis, Prussian, Swedish and Hannoverian post offices there were closed in 1807. The Danish post office was closed in March 1811 and moved to Altona.

The operation of the Berg post offices in Hamburg was unusual because of the very large number of different hand stamps, the relatively short period of their use, and the limited amount of mail because of the wars. These factors resulted in a scarcity of letters with some of these hand stamps. Table 4-1 shows the transit handstamps applied to mail from Denmark and Sweden during the Berg post office period.

These hand stamps are the first Hamburg transit stamps to show the day, month and year of date. The initials B.G.D. are an abbreviation for Bureau Grand-Ducal. Some also show R.4. or 4., representing Hamburg’s rayon number as used with the earlier Thurn & Taxis hand stamps. Table 4-1 shows only the transit stamps used for Scandinavian mail. There were also a large number of hand stamps containing “HAMBOURG” in a two- or three-line text, which were used on mail posted at the Hamburg post office or as transit marks on letters to Denmark. Like the earlier Thurn & Taxis “HAMBURG” stamps, these were also used on letters carried outside the post and then posted at Hamburg. In addition, transit hand stamps were provided in 1807 for mail from the Hannover, Prussian and Mecklenburg post offices.



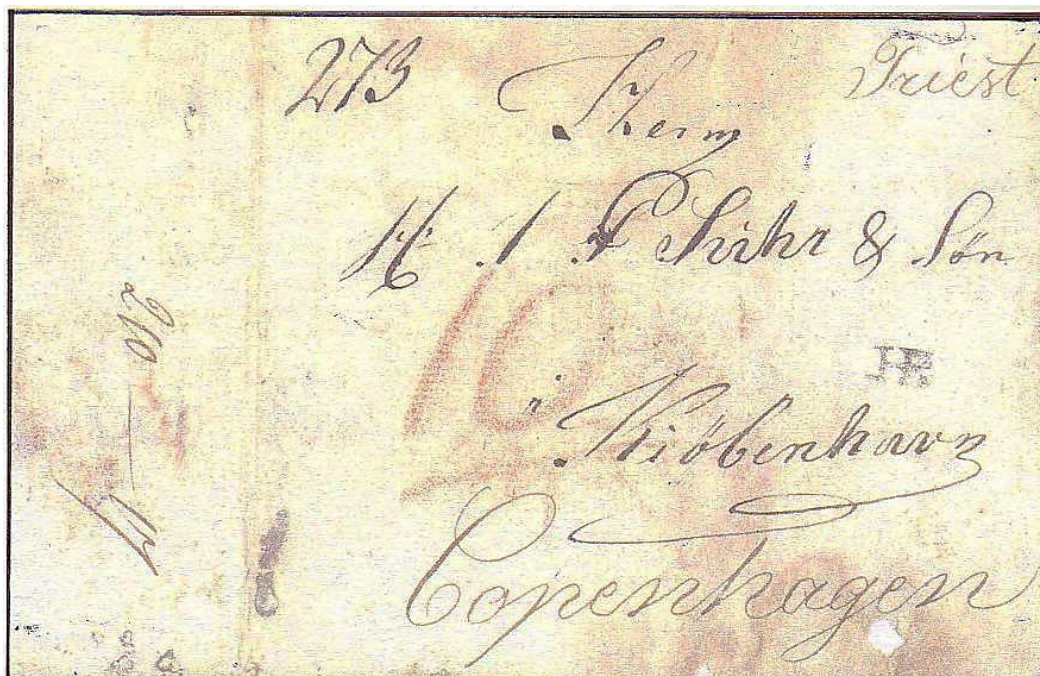
Unpaid letter of November 8, 1806, from Cherbourg to Copenhagen. Inscribed "Par Hambourg".

Postmarked **R. N°4** to show the French rayon number.

There was no postmark of the Berg post office in Hamburg.

Postage to Hamburg was 23 schillings and 7 Lsk. from Hamburg to Copenhagen for a total of 30 Lsk. as marked.

Courtesy of the I.P. Suhr & Søn archive, Statens Arkiver, Erhversarkivet, Århus.



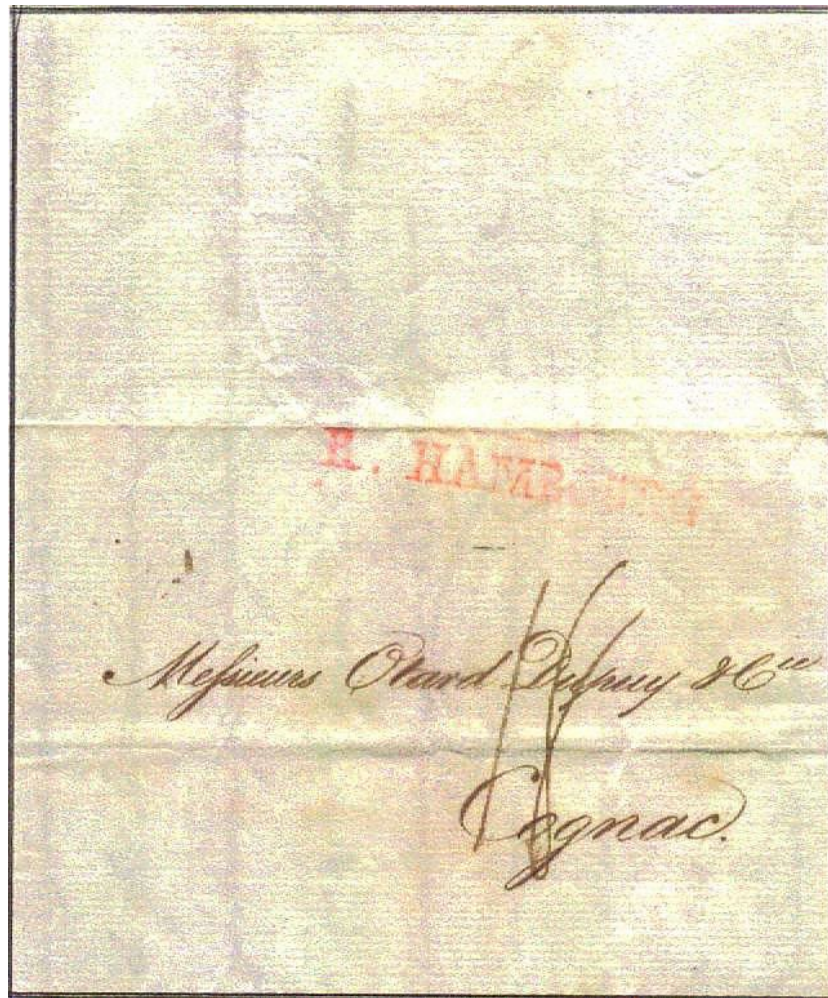
Unpaid letter dated December 28, 1806, from Trieste to Copenhagen.

Postmarked **HB** by the Berg post office in Hamburg in early January 1807.

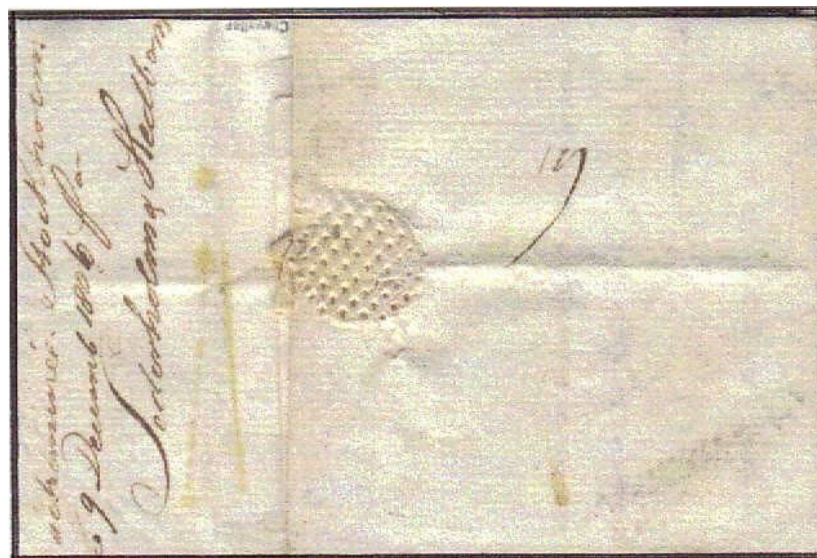
Postage to Hamburg was 10 schillings and 7 Lsk. from Hamburg to Copenhagen for a total of 17 Lsk. as marked.

This is the latest of eight letters from the I.P. Suhr & Søn archive, Statens Arkiver, Erhversarkivet, Århus dated during December 1806 that show the **HB** stamp in black ink.

A history of the Mecklenburg post office in Hamburg during the “Franzosenzeit” stated that French troops occupied Hamburg on November 23, 1806, and that the Großherzoglich Bergisches Oberpostamtes was established on December 4. A French history of Hamburg stated that with the arrival of the French, the lease of the post was vacant and the post was presented to Murat by the Emperor. The postal markings were changed immediately to the French spelling with provisional hand stamps in use in November and December 1806. A letter of November 18 from Copenhagen to Bordeaux was postmarked with the **T.G.D.HAMBOURG** and was inscribed for December 3 arrival at Bordeaux. This was consistent with use of this stamp before the Berg post office was established on December 4. The stamp continued to be used in early 1807 as shown by use of this stamp on a letter of January 10 from Copenhagen to Bordeaux.

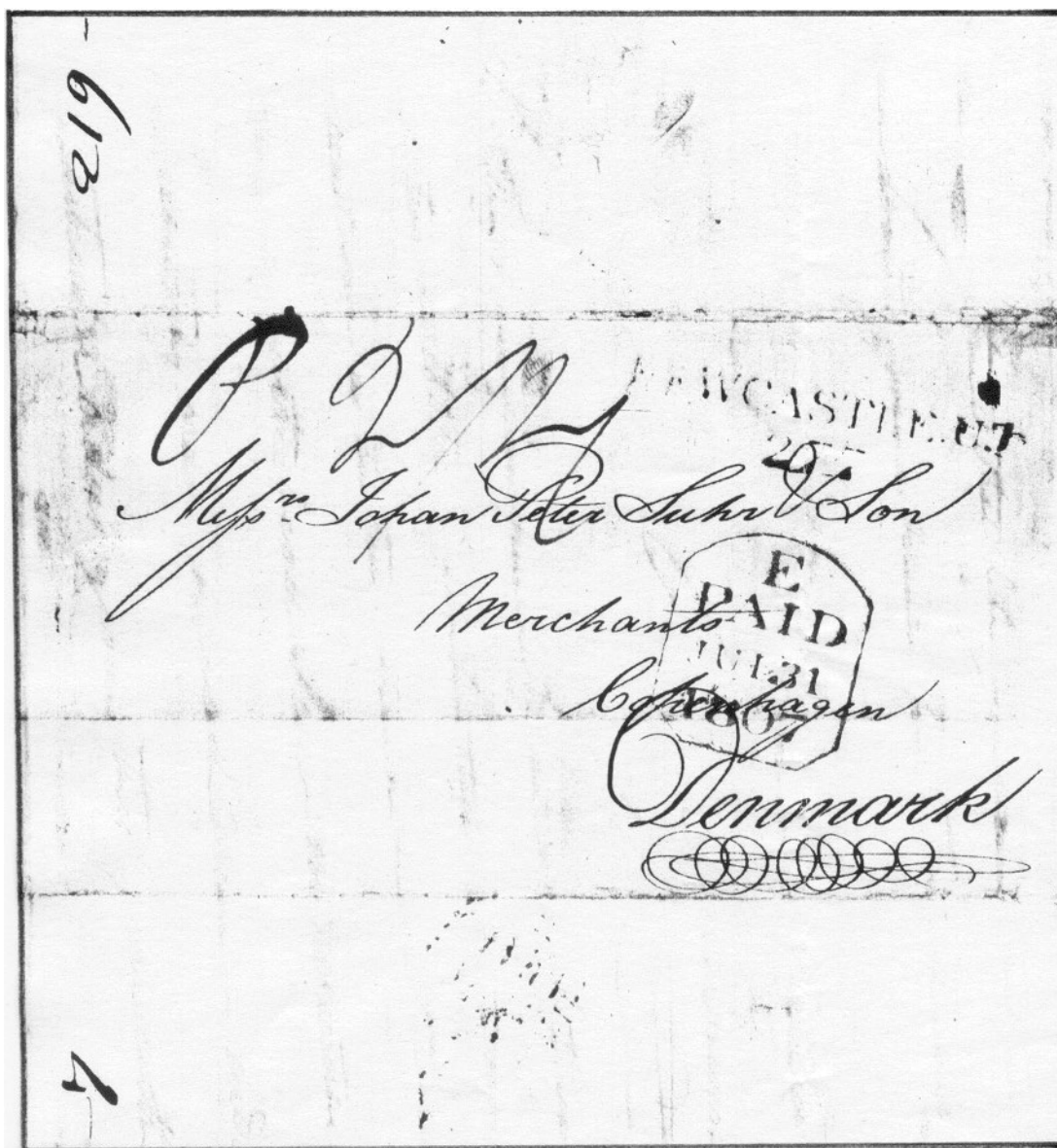


*Letter of November 28, 1806, from Altona to Cognac.
Postmarked **R. HAMBOURG** in red ink by the Berg post office in Hamburg.
Received at Cognac on December 12. Postage due was 18 decimes.*



Letter from St. Petersburg dated October 23, 1806, forwarded at Stockholm.
 Marked "acheminée Stockholm 9. Dec 1806 par Sederholm & Hedbom". Prepaid to Hamburg.
 Postmarked **T.G.D.HAMBOURG** by the Berg post office in Hamburg.
 Postage due at Bordeaux was 38 decimes for the 11 gram double weight letter.

The British postal service issued a report on December 11, 1806, that the Hamburg Post had stated in a letter of November 28 that no further mails should be made up for Hamburg. Mails for Denmark could be dispatched as usual by packet to Husum in Schleswig as these could be transferred to the Danish postal service. British mails for Northern Europe, including Denmark, had been sent by packet to Husum for conveyance to the Hamburg Post in Hamburg in accordance with an agreement between the Hamburg Post and Denmark in 1803. The British post office agent at Husum moved to Tønning in Schleswig in April 1807. British mails for Denmark continued to be sent to Tønning until August 15, 1807, when the mails sent from London on August 8 were seized by Danish authorities following the British attack of Copenhagen.



*Letter of July 28, 1807, from Newcastle on Tyne to Copenhagen.
 Postmarked at Newcastle and at London with the **PAID** stamp on July 31.
 Prepaid postage was 10d. to London and 1/6d. from London to Tønning for a total of 2/4d. as marked.
 Danish postage from Tønning to Copenhagen was 7 Lsk. as marked.
 Collection of D. Cornelius.*

Table 4-1

Grand Duchy of Berg Transit Hand Stamps

<u>Hand Stamp</u>	<u>Period of Use</u>	<u>Color</u>
T.B.G.D. HAMBOURG, R 4 1807. Janv. 10.	January 7 to January 14, 1807	red
T. B. G. D. HAMBOURG, R. 4 1807. JANV. 20.	January 20 to February 18, 1807	red
T.B.G.D. HAMBOURG. R. 4. 1807. Fevr. 4		or black
DANEMARC. 4.	February 1807	red
DANNEMARC par Hambourg. 4 B.G.D. 4 Mars. 1807.	March 1807	red
DANNEMARC par Hamqou.rg4 B.G.D 18 Mars. 1807.	March 1807	red
DANNEMARC.par Hambourg. 4 B.G.D. Avril. 3 1807.	April 1 to April 9, 1807	red
DANNEMARC.par Hambourg. 4. B.G.D. 10 Avril 1807.	April 1807	red
DANEMARC p.le B.G.D. 4. HAMBOURG. 24 JUIN 1807.	April to October 1807	black

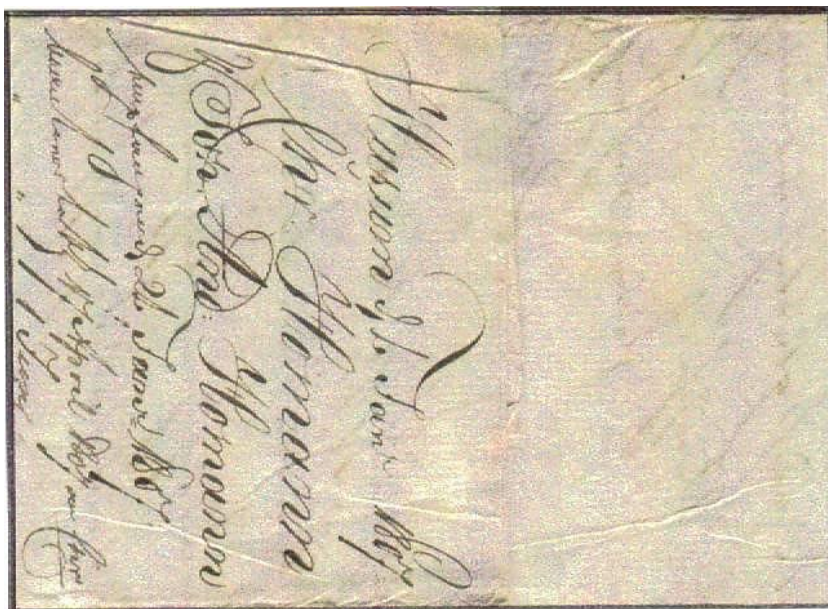
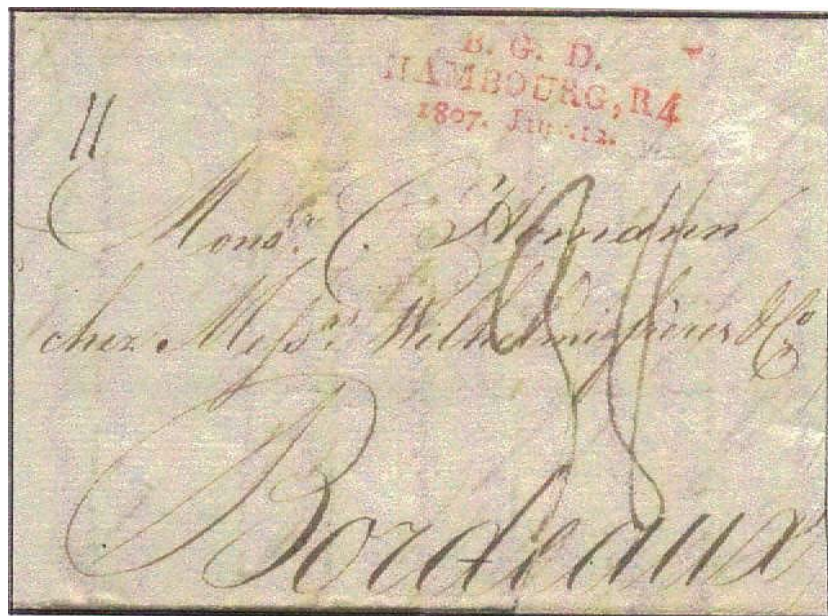
Table 4-1 (Continued)

Grand Duchy of Berg Transit Hand Stamps

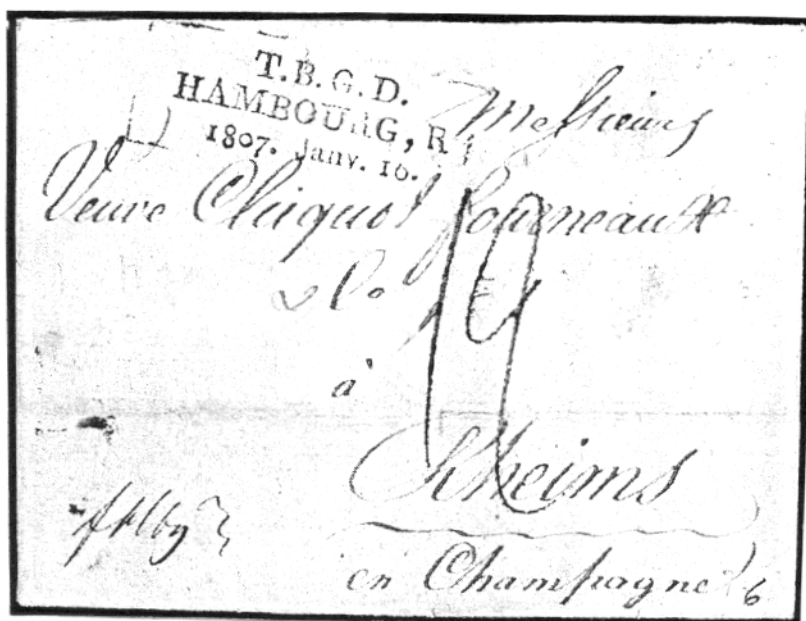
<u>Hand Stamp</u>	<u>Period of Use</u>	<u>Color</u>
SUEDE p. le B. G. D. 4. HAMBOURG. 13 IUIV 1807.	April to October 1807	black
DANNEM. p. le B. G. D. 4. HAMBOURG 24 NOVEM 1807.	September 1807 to January 1808	black
DANEM. p. le B. G. D. R. 4. HAMBOURG 4 DECEM 1807.	September to January 1808	black
DANNEMARC R. 4. HAMBOURG 9 JANV. 1808.	January 1808	Black
DAN. p. HAMBOURG 4. 4. MARS. 1808.	January to September 1808	black
DAN. p. HAMBOURG. 4. 1. MARS. 1808.		

It was of great importance to the French to have the Hamburg postal services under their control. In 1807 the French minister to Hamburg, Bourrienne, exerted pressure on the Hamburg Senate to cede the Hamburg post office routes to the Berg post office. It was finally agreed to surrender the Dutch, Pomeranian, Bremen and Lübeck postal routes for 25 years, effective January 1, 1808. A remuneration of 100,000 marks was agreed upon. The Hamburg Senate conducted the transaction with the French even though the postal system was entirely in private hands. The Borsenälte, the owners of the private posts that had evolved from the merchant guild postal routes in the 16th century and still operated from Hamburg, pointed out through numerous memoranda that postal privilege had never been a state matter. Shortly afterward, the initials B.G.D. were eliminated from the Hamburg and Denmark hand stamps.

Murat was named king of Naples and ceded the Grand Duchy of Berg to Napoleon on July 31, 1808. Napoleon then assumed the title of grand duke of Berg. The Grand Duchy of Berg post office in Hamburg became the Kaiserlich Königlich Französisches Ober-Postamt on August 4, 1808. The frequent



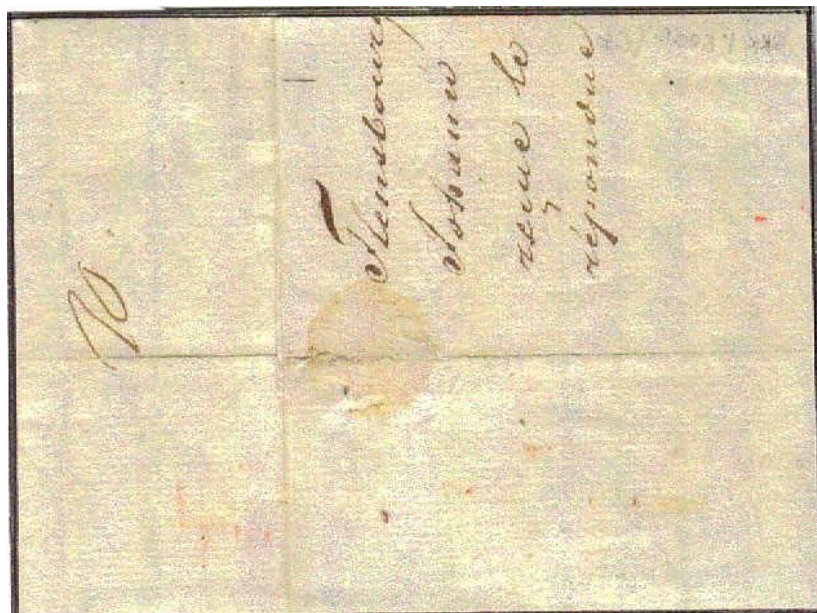
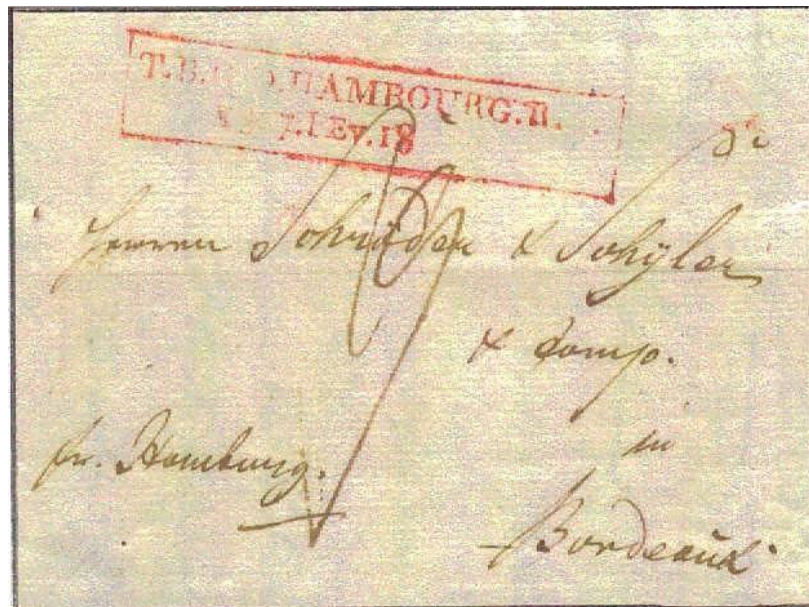
Letter dated January 1, 1807, from Husum to Bordeaux
Apparently posted at the Berg post office in Hamburg.
Postmarked **B. G. D./HAMBURG, R. 4/1807. Janv. 12.** in red ink.
Postage due was inscribed as 28 decimes at Paris.
Received on January 24



Letter from Christiansund to Reims. Inscribed "fr Hbg" and prepaid to Hamburg.
 Postmarked **T.B.G.D./HAMBOURG, R4/1807. Janv. 16.** in red ink by the Berg post office in Hamburg.
 Postage due was 12 decimes as inscribed.
 Rauhut auction, October 2001.



Letter of January 6, 1807, from Stockholm to Lisbon. Stockholm to Hamburg via Helsingør postage of 17 sk.bco. plus 8 schillings courant postage from Hamburg to Antwerp as required before the French occupation of Hamburg was prepaid.
 Transferred from the Swedish post office in Hamburg to the Berg post office where it was postmarked **B.G.D.HAMBOURG/1807. Janv. 16. R. 4.** in red ink.
 The Berg stamp for posting in Hamburg was used because there was no stamp showing Swedish origin until May 1807.
 Spanish postage of 7 reales was marked on the back.
 Collection of G. Nilsson.



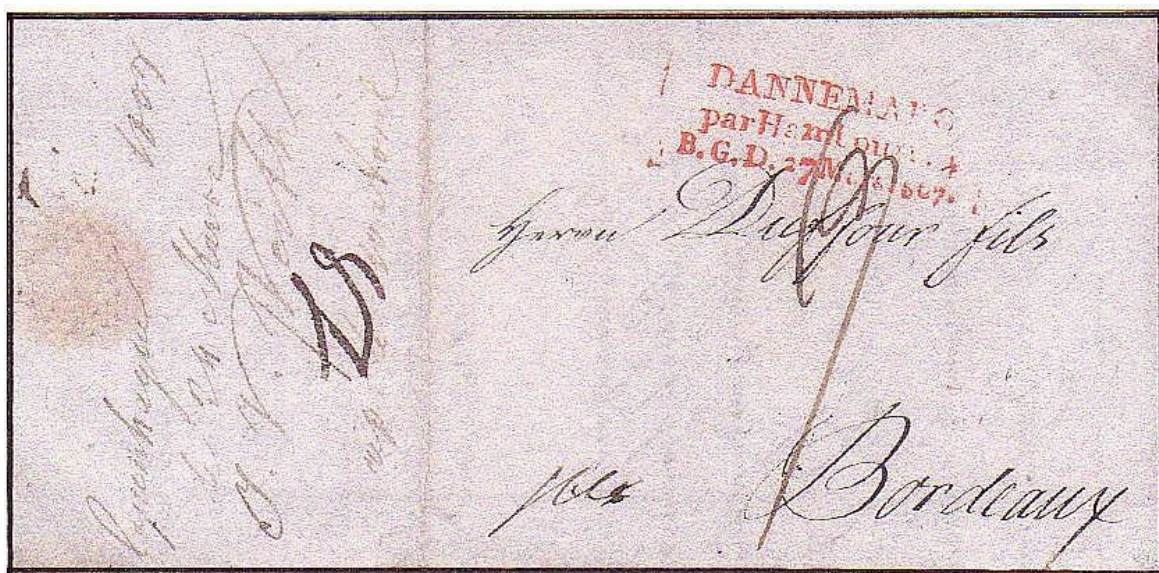
Letter dated January 27, 1807, from Flensburg to Bordeaux
 Postage to Hamburg was prepaid.
 Postmarked **T. B. G. D. HAMBURG. R. 4/1807. FEV. 18** in red ink by the Berg post office.
 Postage due was inscribed as 19 decimes at Paris.
 Received on February 24



January letter from Altona to Paris. Letter was probably posted in Hamburg.
 Postmarked **T. B. G. D. HAMBURG. R. 4 / 1807. JANV. 26** in black ink by the Berg post office in Hamburg.
 Paris arrival was stamped as February 3. Postage due of 12 decimes was marked.
 HBA Auction 60 November 2012.



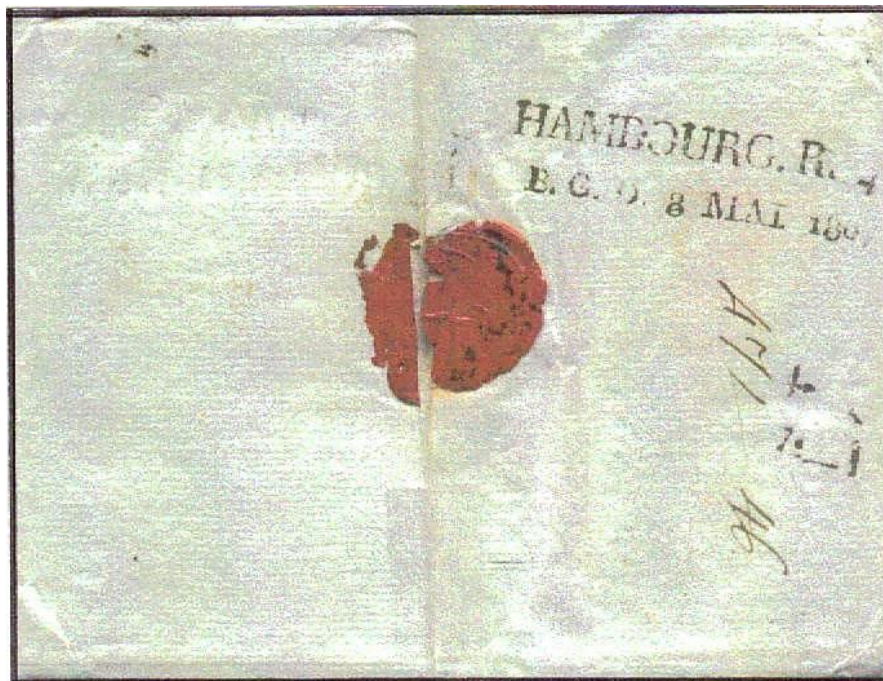
Letter from Denmark to Bordeaux. Inscribed "franco Hamborg".
 Postmarked **HAMBURG.4/B. G. D. 25. Febr. 1807.** and **DANEMARC. 4.** in red ink.
 The combination of postmarks was used because the specific Berg stamp for Danish rayon 4 origin
 was not in use until March 1807.
 Postage due was marked as 19 decimes
 HBA Auction 60 November 2012



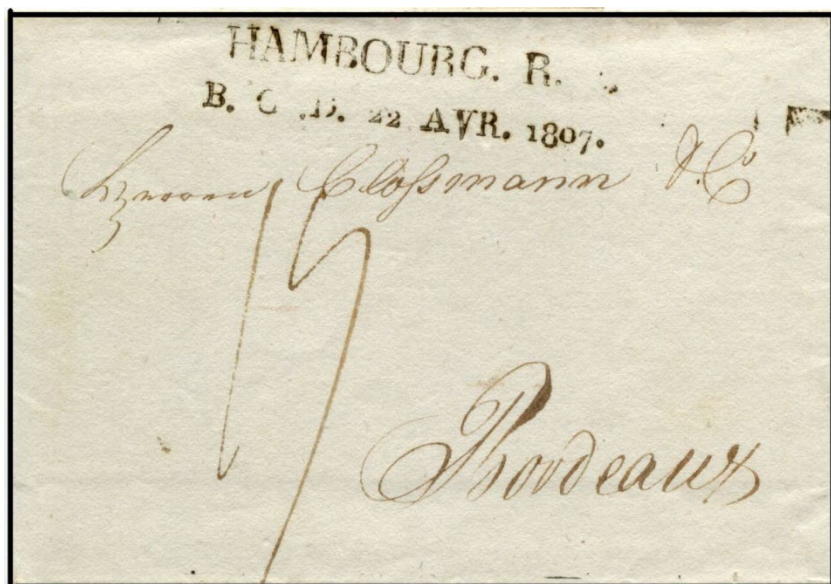
Letter of March 24, 1807, from Copenhagen to Bordeaux. Prepaid to Hamburg.
 Postmarked with the **DANNEMARC/par Hambourg/B.G.D. 27 Mars. 1807.** stamp in red ink.
 Postage due was 19 decimes.
 Collection of L. De Clercq.



Letter of April 8, 1807, from Husum to Bordeaux. Postage to Hamburg was paid.
 Postmarked **DANNEMARC.par/Hambourg. 4 B.G.D./Avril. 8 1807** in red ink by the Berg post office in Hamburg.
 Postage due was 19 decimes.
 HBA Auction 60 November 2014



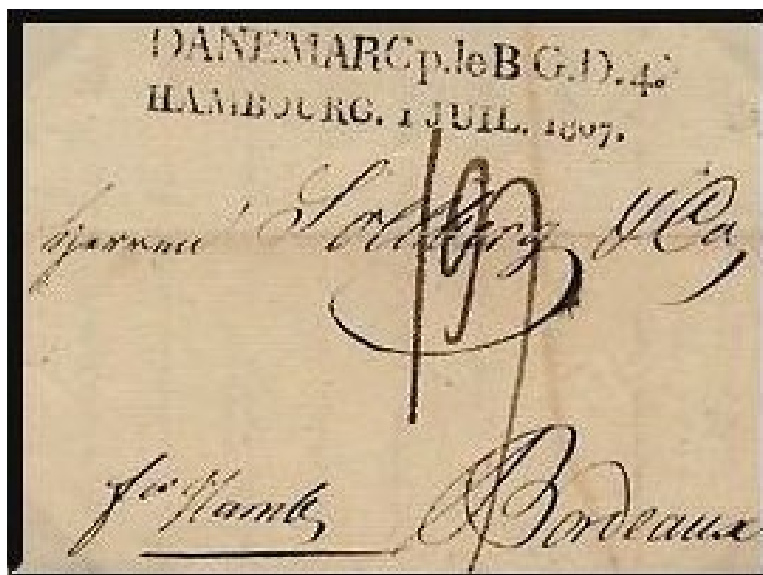
Unpaid letter of April 22, 1807, from Bilbao, Spain to Copenhagen with the inscription "über Hamborg".
 Bilbao origin postmark in red ink. Stamped **ESPAGNE/PAR BAYONNE** at the French border.
 Postmarked **HAMBOURG. R.4/B.G.D. 8 MAI 1807** by the Berg post office in Hamburg.
 Postage to Hamburg was 39 schillings courant and from 7 Lsk. from Hamburg to Copenhagen for a total of 46 Lsk.



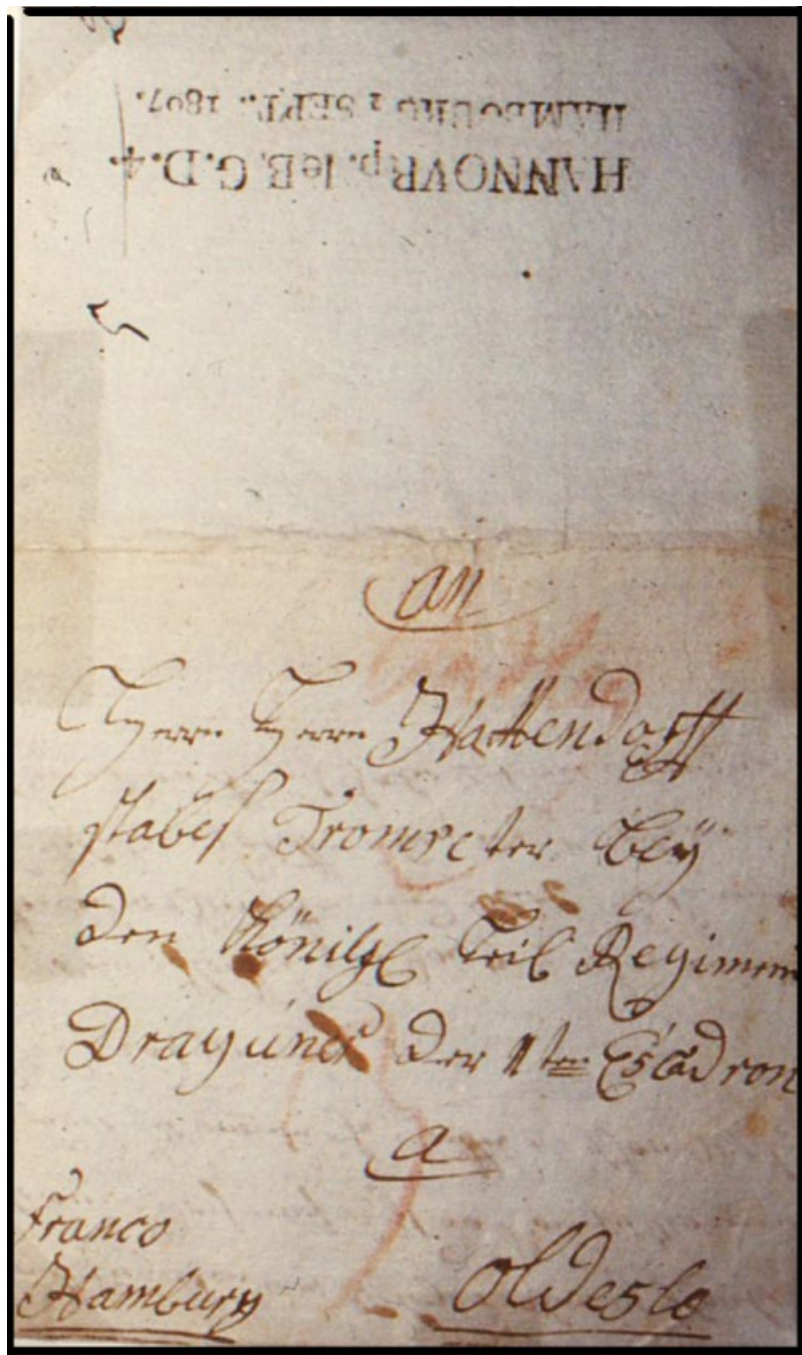
Letter of April 8, 1807 from Altona to Bordeaux.
 Posted at the Berg post office in Hamburg.
 Stamped **HAMBOURG R. 4./B. G. D. 22 AVR. 1807.**
 Postage to Bordeaux was 19 decimes



*Letter of July 24, 1807, from Stockholm to Bordeaux. Prepaid to Hamburg.
This was during the period that Swedish mail was dispatched from Altona.
Postmarked **SUEDE p. le B.G.D.4./HAMBOURG. 1 AOUT 1807.** by the Berg post office.
Postage due was 19 decimes.*



*Letter of July 1, 1807, from Copenhagen to Bordeaux. Prepaid to Hamburg.
Postmarked **DANEMARC p. le B.G.D.4./HAMBOURG. 1. July 1807.** in black ink by the Berg post office in Hamburg.
Postage due was 19 decimes.*



Letter of August 26, 1807, from Ohndorf in Hannover to Oldesloe in Holstein. Prepaid to Hamburg.
 Postmarked **HANNOVER p.le. B.G.D.4./HAMBOURG 1 SEPT. 1807.** by the Berg post office in Hamburg.
 The Hannover post office in Hamburg was closed in 1807.
 D. Halpern collection



Letter of November 12, 1807, from Flensburg to Bordeaux. Prepaid to Hamburg.
Postmarked **DANNEM. P.le B.G.D./HAMBOURG 15 NOVEM 1807.** by the Berg post office.
Postage due was 19 decimes.
Collection of L. De Clercq.



Letter of November 28, 1807, from Flensburg to Riga. Prepaid to Hamburg.
Postmarked **DANEM. P.le B.G.D. R 4/HAMBOURG 1 JANV 1808.** at the Berg post office in Hamburg.



Letter of January 3, 1808, from Paris to Copenhagen.

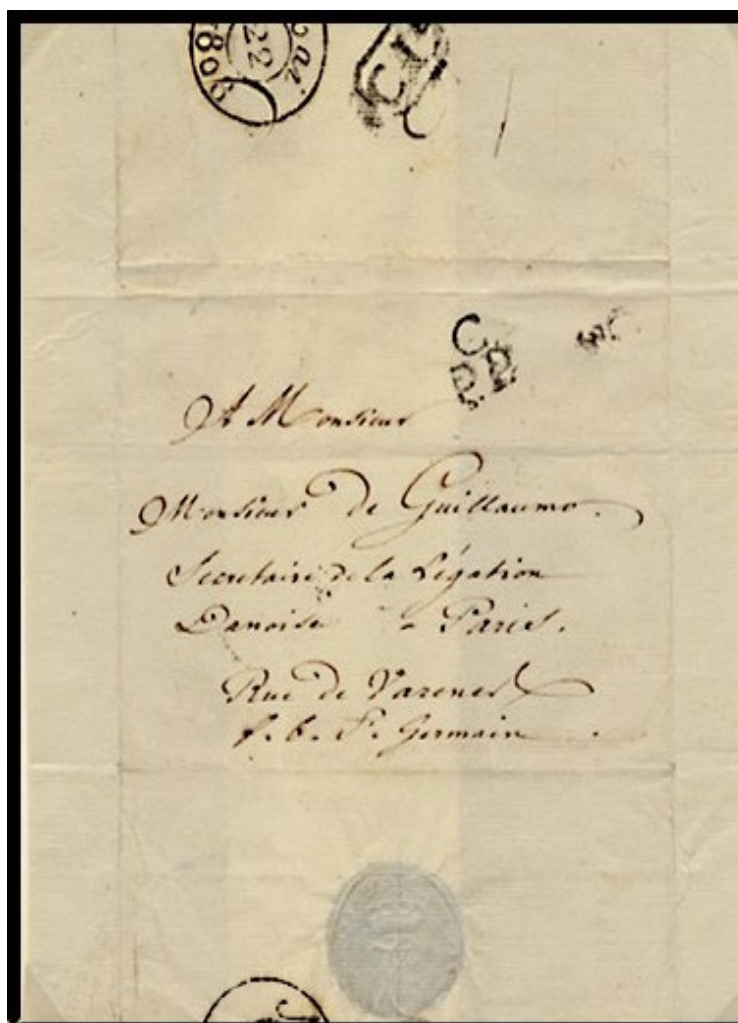
Postmarked R. N°3 in red ink to designate rayon 3 as the origin in accordance with the French postal rate of the Franco-T&T postal convention of 1802.

The Danish debit at Hamburg was marked as 22 schillings in red crayon.

Danish postage from Hamburg to Copenhagen was 7 Lsk. for a total postage due of 29 Lsk. as marked.



January 1808 letter from Denmark to Bordeaux. Postage to Hamburg was prepaid.
 Postmarked **DANNEMARC R. 4./HAMBURG 13 JANV. 1808** by the Berg post office in Hamburg.
 Postage due at Bordeaux was marked as 20 decimes.
 HBA Auction 60 November 2012



Letter of May 22, 1808 from Denmark to the Secretary of the Danish Legation in Paris.

Censored by the authorities when the letter was dispatched.

Wax seal shows the "C7" monogram of Christian VII.

Paris receiving postmark dated May 22. The other postal markings are probably French.

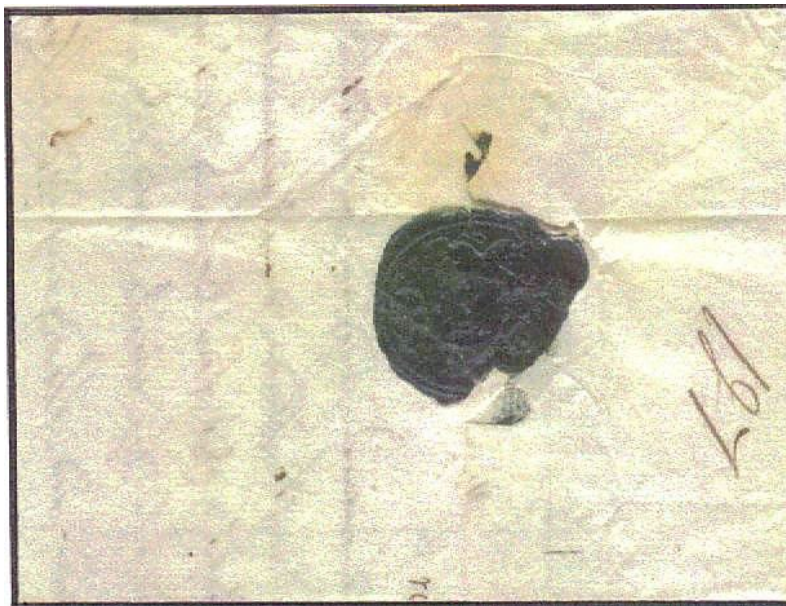
From reference 12.



Letter of May 10, 1808, from Copenhagen to Riga. Prepaid to Hamburg.
Postmarked **DAN p. HAMBOURG 4./17 MAI. 1808.** at the Berg post office in Hamburg.



Letter of June 11, 1808, from Holmestrand to Bordeaux. Prepaid to Hamburg.
Postmarked **DAN p. HAMBOURG 4./8. JUL. 1808.** at the Berg post office in Hamburg.
Postage due was 19 decimes.
Moldenhauer Auction, November 2004



Letter from Copenhagen to Bordeaux. Prepaid to Hamburg.
 Postmarked **HAMBOURG. 4./15. JUN. 1808.** at the Berg post office in Hamburg rather than the stamp showing Danish origin
 although the letter was posted in Copenhagen and showed a Danish list number.
 Postage due was 19 decimes.

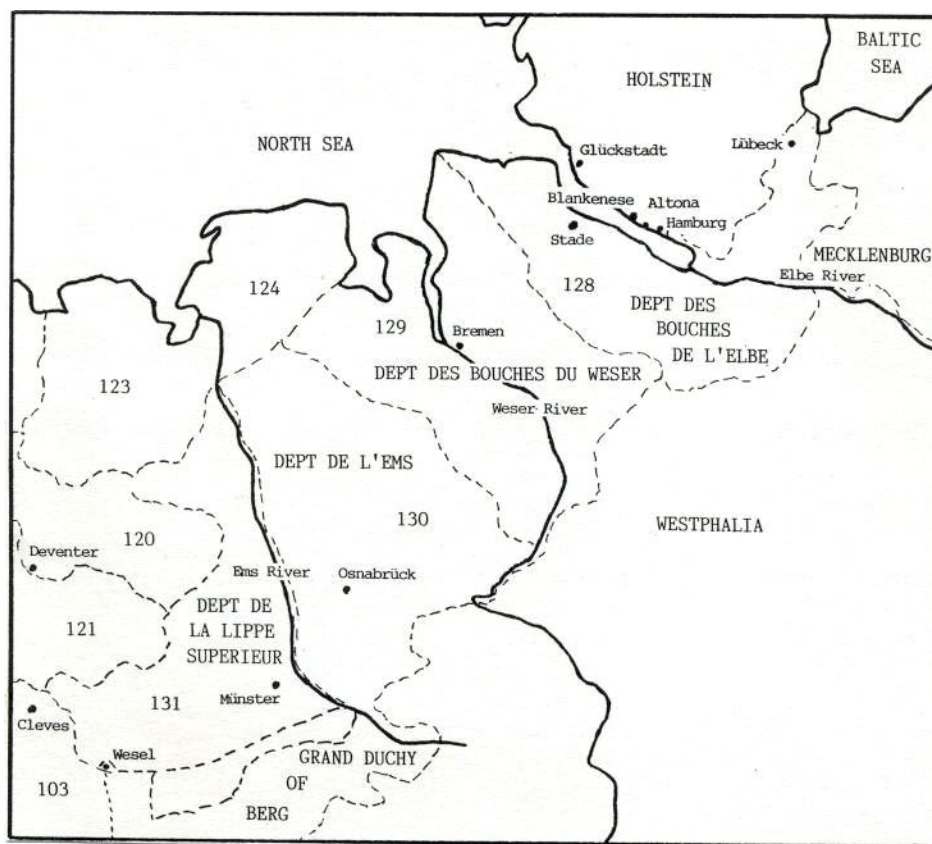
Table 4-2

Kaiserlich Königlich Französisches Ober-Postamt Transit Hand Stamps

<u>Hand Stamp</u>	<u>Period of Use</u>	<u>Color</u>
DANN.pr.HAMBOURG.4. 19. AOUT. 1808.	August to October 1808	black
DANN.pr.HAMBOURG.4. 3 DEC. 1808.	October 1808 to February 1809	black
DAN. pr. HAMBOURG. 4 2. MAI 1809	October 1808 to October 1809	black
DAN.pr.HAMBOURG.4. 17. OCTB. 1809.		
DAN. pr. HAMBOURG. 4.	September 1809 to April 1810	black
DAN.pr.HAMBOURG 4.		
DANNEMARC. P..HAMBOURG..R.4.	March 1810 to January 1811	black
DANNEMARC P.HAMBOURG.R.4		
SUEDE P.HAMBOURG.R.4	January to October 1810	black
SUEDE P.HAMB.OCT26.R4	October to November 1810	black

change in hand stamps continued with no significant differences in appearance. Table 4-2 shows the hand stamps used by the French post office on Scandinavian mail until Hamburg was annexed by France in 1811. Postal rates increased rapidly under the new French postal administration. This was a hardship for the commercial interests, who complained in early 1809 that rates had already doubled and were increasing to a factor of three.

Napoleon issued an order effective on January 1, 1811, for France to annex the territory north of a line from Wesel to Lübeck. The territory was divided into four departments, one of them the Département des Bouches de l'Elbe with Hamburg as the capital. The objective was to simplify the application of French laws and to provide better surveillance by customs agents and police since this territory was difficult to



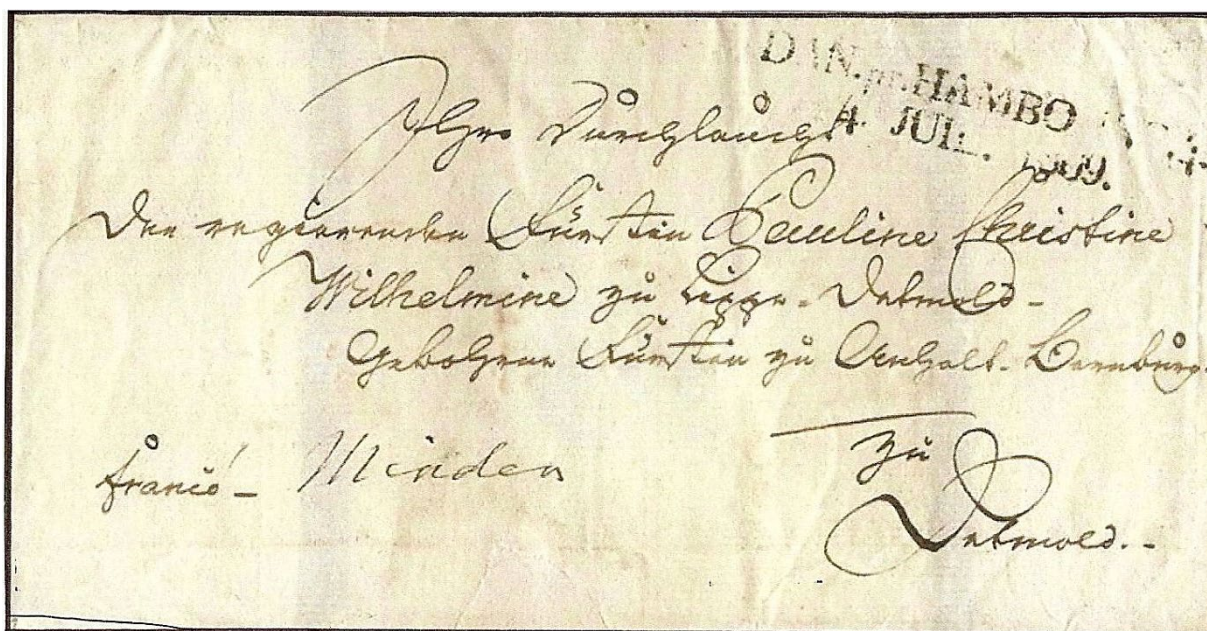
The four French Departments that were created in North Germany in 1811

patrol. The Département des Bouches de l'Elbe was assigned the number 128. The rayon 4 designation was no longer applicable and disappeared from the hand stamps. The Hamburg origin hand-stamps showed the number 128 after August 1811. "Port Payé" stamps were also introduced including a **P.P./DANNEMARCK** postmark in April 1812. Table 4-3 shows the hand stamps used for Scandinavian mail until 1814.

The war that began in February 1808 between Denmark and Sweden ended in 1809. Sweden wanted to revive its mail route through Denmark to Hamburg and soon obtained an agreement. Mail was then carried through Denmark until the next war between Sweden and Denmark in 1813. Four different Swedish transit stamps were used at Hamburg, beginning in 1810.



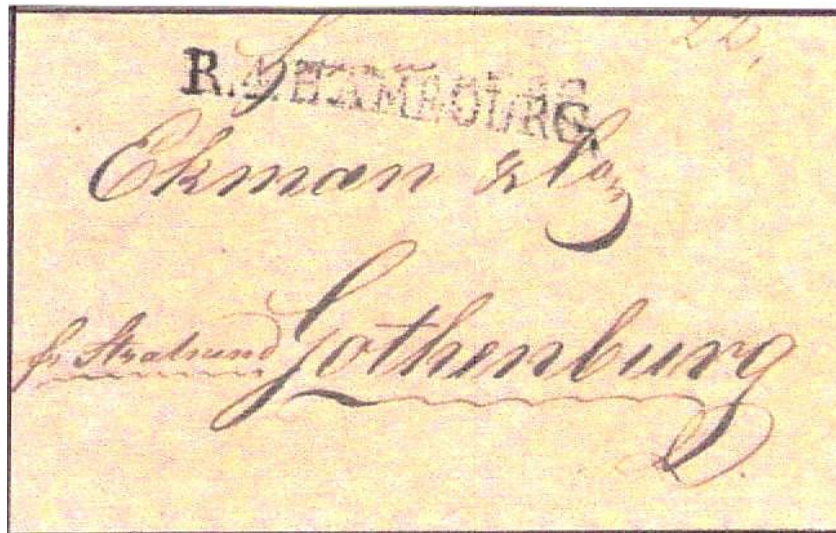
1808 letter from London to Amsterdam. Sent to Altona via Heligoland and Schleswig without British markings.
 Posted at Altona and paid to Hamburg. Stamped **DAN.pr.HAMBOURG. 4/12. JUL. 1808.**
 by the French Imperial post office at Hamburg.
 Postage due was 6 stuivers as shown in red crayon.
 Collection of C. Muys.



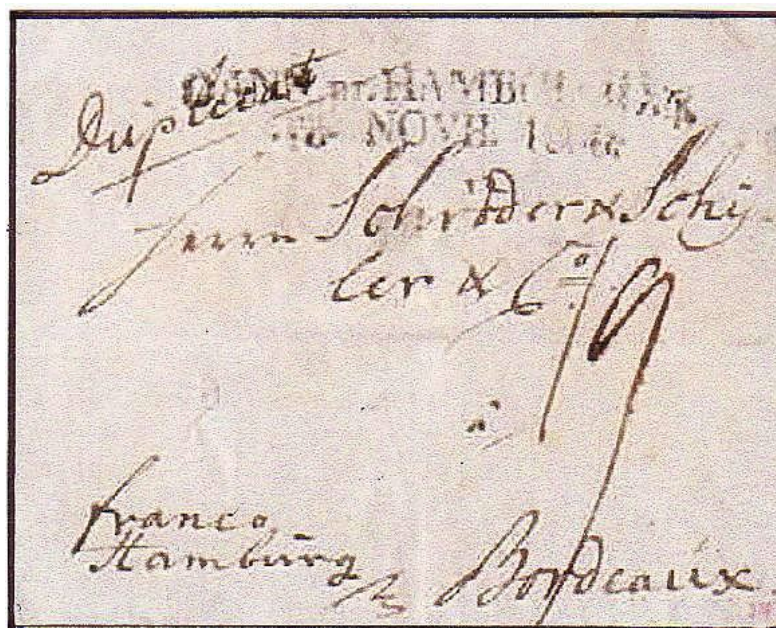
Letter to Detmold. Prepaid to Minden.
 Postmarked **DAN.pr.HAMBOURG/4. JUL. 1809.** by the French Imperial post office in Hamburg.
 Postage due was 1 gutegroschen as marked in red crayon. Reduced to 92% of the original size.



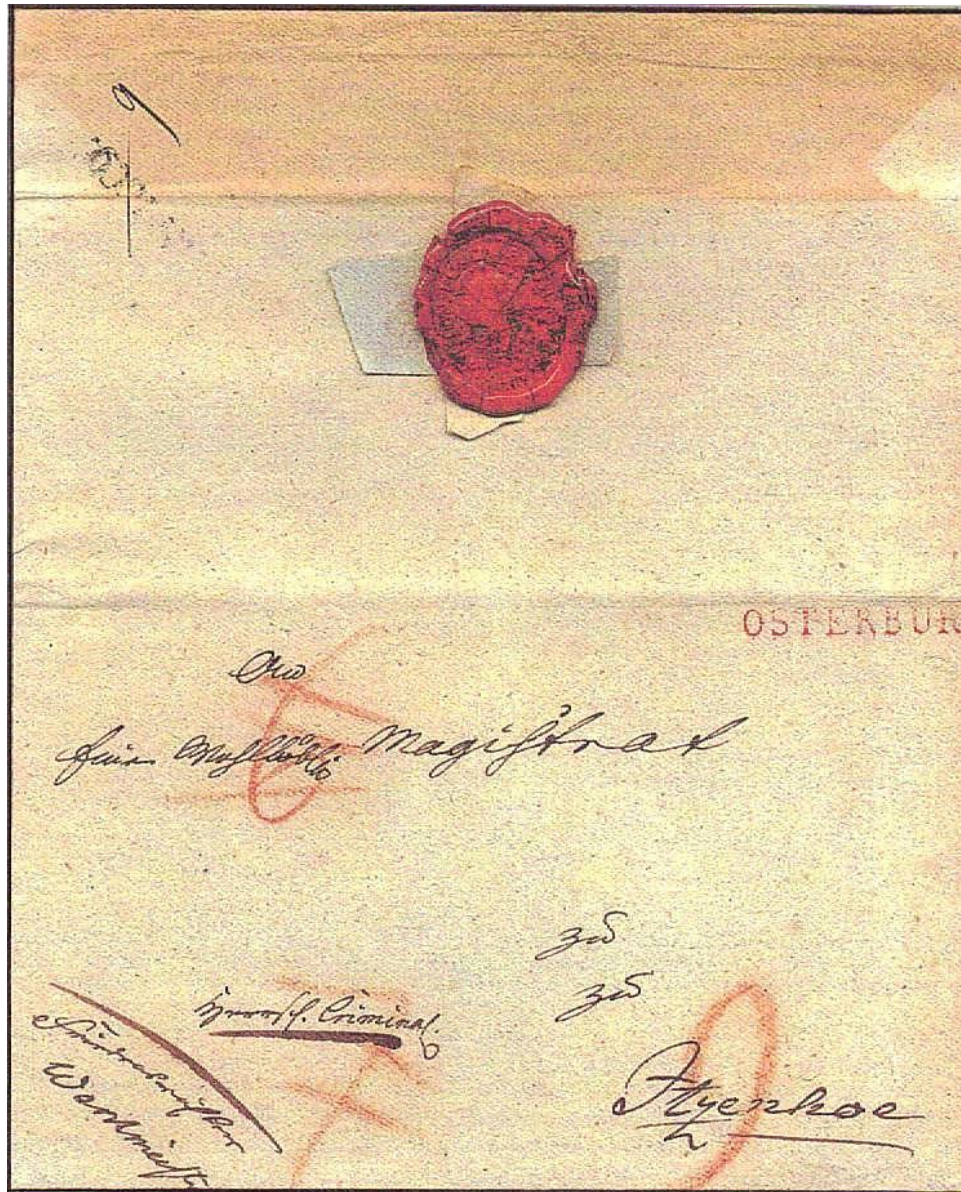
Letter of January 1, 1809 from Paris to Copenhagen.
 Postmarked **R. N°3** at Paris to show that the letter originated in French rayon 3.
 The letter was opened, censored and resealed by the French post office in Hamburg
 and then stamped **9. JAN. 1809.** on the back.
 Postage due was inscribed as 36 Rbs.
 Frank Banke November 2014



Letter of November 7, 1809, from Hamburg to Gothenburg. Inscribed "franco" and "fr Stralsund".
Postmarked with a **R.4.HAMBOURG** stamp in black ink by the French Imperial post office in Hamburg.
The stamp was placed in use in September 1809 but was of such poor quality
that the impression from the stamp was unsatisfactory in early 1810.
Philippa auction, April 2005.



Letter of October 31, 1808, from Trondheim to Bordeaux. Inscribed "fr Hambourg" and "Duplicat".
Postmarked **DANN.pr.HAMBOURG.4./18. NOV. 1808.** by the French Imperial post office in Hamburg.
Postage due at Bordeaux was 19 decimes.
Moldenhauer Auction, November 2001.



Unpaid letter dated March 18, 1809, from Osterburg in Prussia to the magistrate in Itzehoe.
Postmarked **OSTERBURG** in red ink.

The letter was censored at the Danish post office in Hamburg.

After examination of the contents, the post office in Hamburg placed a wrapper around the letter and sealed this with the seal with the inscription **KÖNIGL.:DÄN.POST AMT zu HAMBURG** and the monogram of Frederik VI.

Postage to Hamburg was 6 schillings and postage from Hamburg to Itzehoe was 3 schillings for a total of 9 schillings as marked in red crayon.

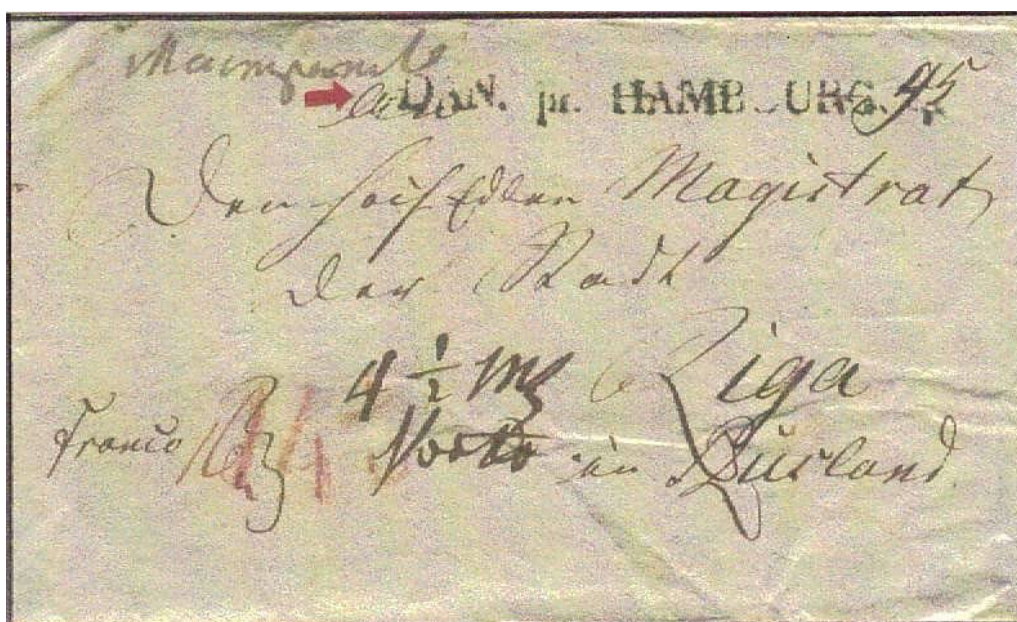
From reference 3.



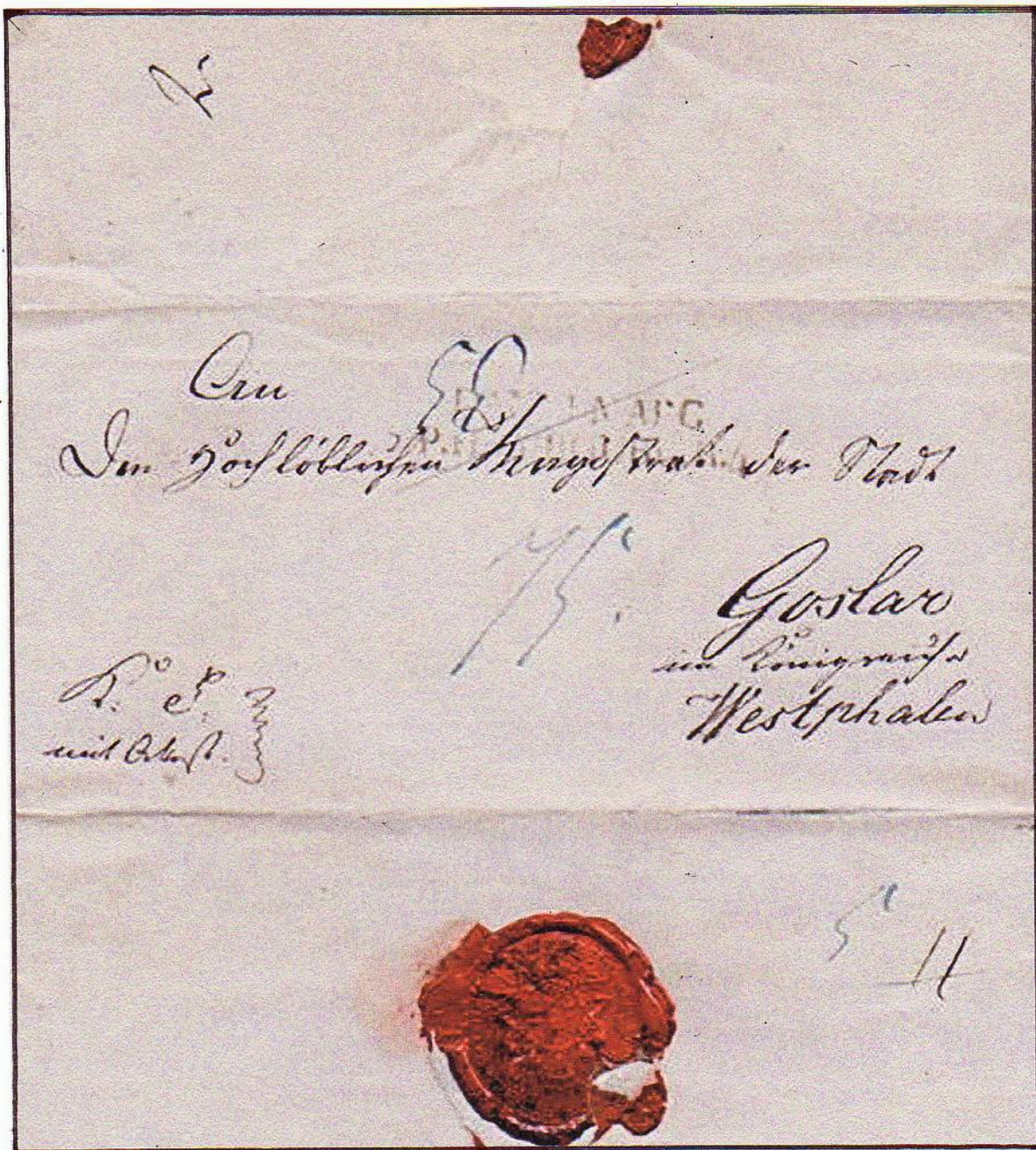
Unpaid letter from Bordeaux to Laurvig. Postmarked at Bordeaux with **R N°5** added at Paris.
 Inscribed **19** by the French post office in Hamburg representing 19 Lsk. postage
 to Hamburg and stamped **19. AOUT. 1809**.
 Transferred to the Danish post office in Hamburg where the letter was censored.
 Sent to Copenhagen with arrival on August 25 as inscribed.
 Postage due was 35 Lsk. as inscribed.
 Collection of M. Lascombe



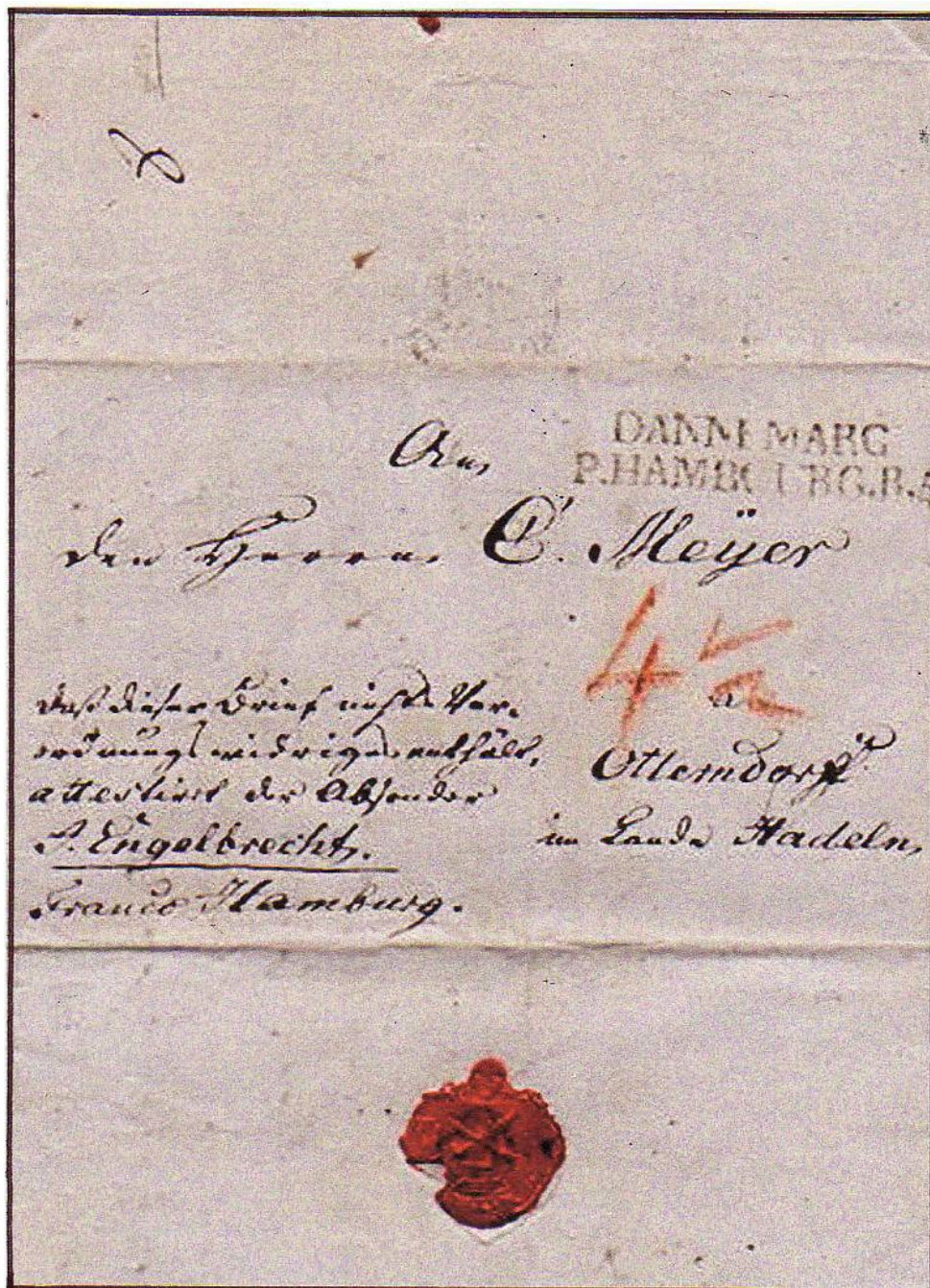
Cover dated November 23, 1809, from Schleswig to Riga. Inscribed "francho Hamburg".
Postmarked **DAN. pr. HAMBOURG 4.** by the French Imperial post office in Hamburg.
Collection of C. King.



Letter of March 12, 1810, from Veile to Riga. Prepaid to Hamburg.
Postmarked **DAN. pr. HAMBOURG 4.** at Hamburg.



Letter from Copenhagen in April 1810, to Goslar in the Kingdom of Westphalia.
 Inscribed "K.T. mit attest" for an official letter and it was not censored.
 Sealed at Copenhagen with the seal SIGILLUM CIVITATIS HAFNENSIS.
 Postmarked **DANNEMARC/P. HAMBOURG R. 4.** by the French Imperial post office in Hamburg.
 Postage from Hamburg to Goslar was 75 centimes.
 Collection of H. Carstensen.



Letter of November 19, 1810, from Elmsborn to Otterndorf in Hannover.

Inscribed that this letter contained no illicit information, attested by A. Engelbrecht and "Franco Hamburg".

As a foreign letter, this was correctly handled as this was written by a person known at the letter origin and was attested by the sender that the letter contained nothing forbidden by decree.

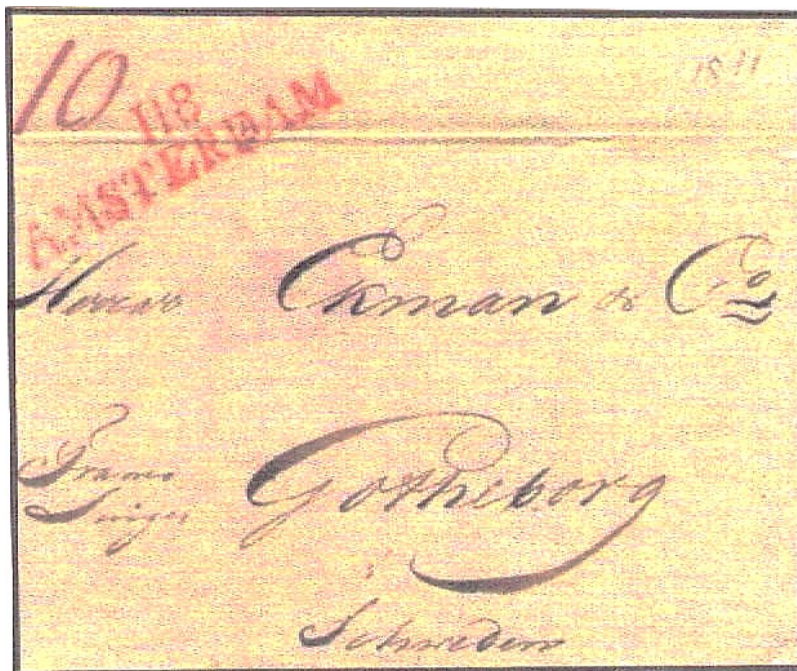
Postmarked **DANEMARC/P.HAMBOURG.R.4** by the Kaiserlich Königlich Französisches Ober-Postamt in Hamburg.

Postage due of 4½ gutegroschen was inscribed in red crayon.

From reference 3.



Prepaid letter of 1811, from Landkirchen on Fehmeren to Troyes.
 Posted at Hamburg. Postmarked **R.4 HAMBURG** in black ink and **P.P.R.4/HAMBOURG** in red ink.
 Stamped **P.P.P.P.** (Port Payé Passé Paris) in red ink at Paris.
 Potsdamer Philatelistisches Büro auction, May 2009.



Letter of June 18, 1811, from Amsterdam to Gothenburg. Inscribed "Franco Lingen".
 Postage to Lingen of 10 stuivers was prepaid. Postmarked **118/AMSTERDAM**. The French annexed the Netherlands on January 1, 1811, and divided it into 6 departments. Amsterdam was the capital of French Department 118, Zuyderzée. The department stamps were in general use in the Netherlands in February/March 1811.
 Philippa auction, April 2005.

Table 4-3

Kaiserliche Königlich Französisches Ober-Postamt Entrée Hand Stamps

<u>Hand Stamp</u>	<u>Period of Use</u>	<u>Color</u>
SUEDE P.HAMB 18.NOVEM	November 1810 to January 1811	black
DANNEMARC P.HAMB. 12.FEVR	February 1811	black
DANNEMARC P.HAMBOURG	March to December 1811	black
SUEDE P.HAMBOURG	April 1811 to February 1813	black
DANNEMARC P.HAMBOUG	February 1812 to March 1813	black
P. P. DANNEMARCK	April 1812 to February 1813	red
DANEMARCK PAR HAMBOURG	October and November 1813	black
P.P. DANEMARCK PAR HAMBOURG	September 1813	red

A Danish postal circular dated March 11, 1811, stated that the Danish post office in Hamburg had become the Danish post office in Altona and that the Danish post office in Lübeck had become the post office in Stockelsdorf. Letters that were to be forwarded by the French postal service were to be sent to Altona and letters that were to be forwarded to other foreign countries were to be sent to Stockelsdorf.

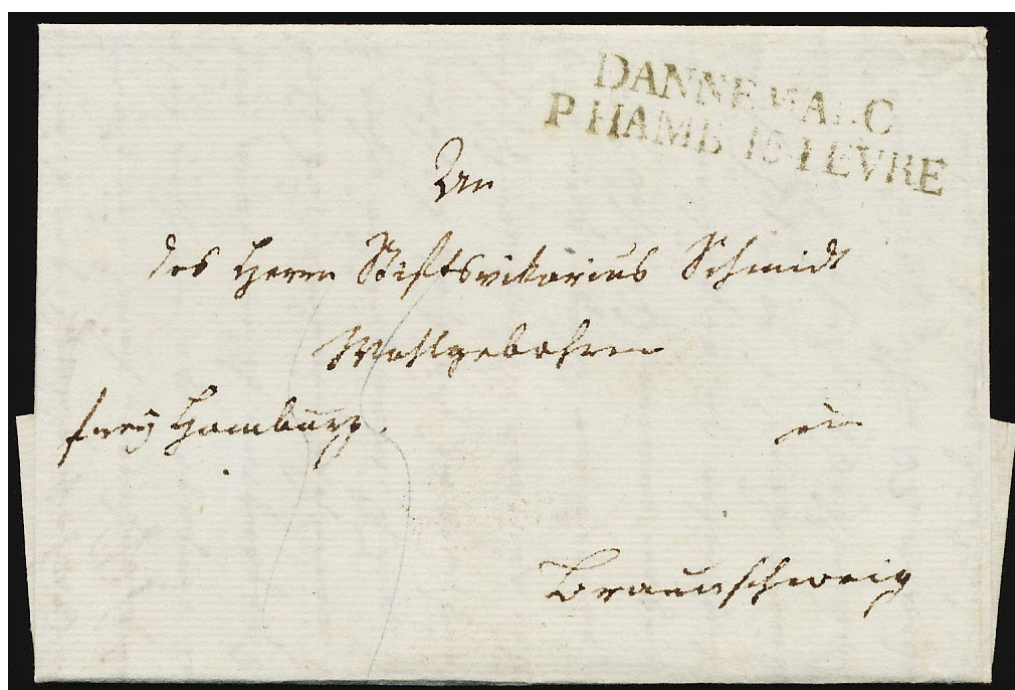


Letter of January 22, 1811, from Copenhagen to Lyon.

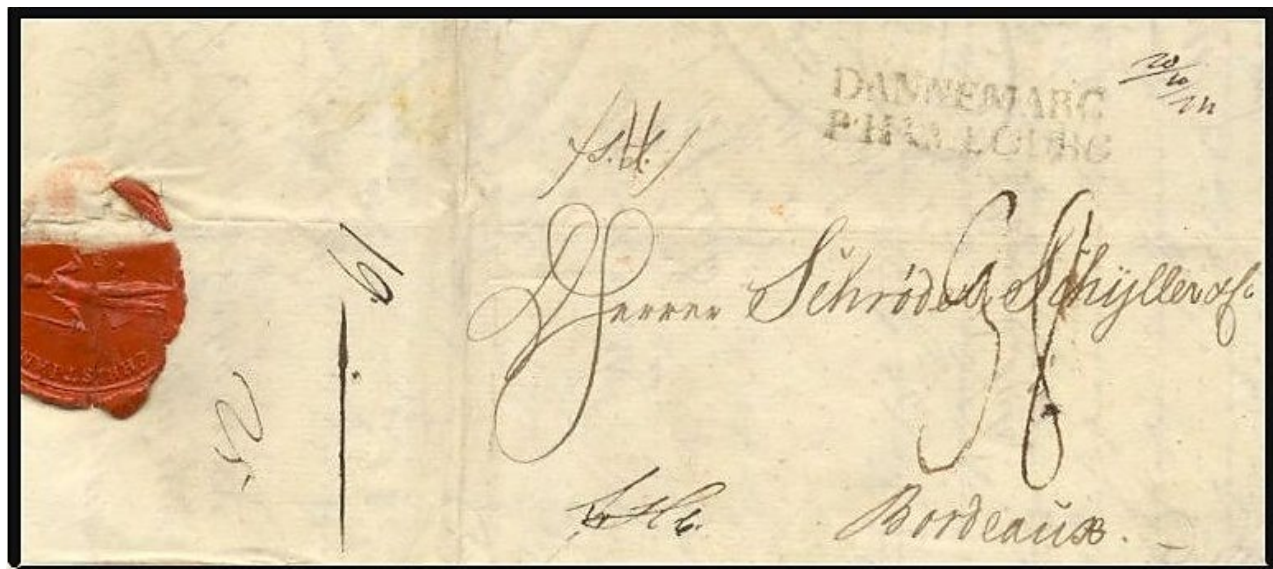
Prepaid to Hamburg.

*Postmarked **DANNEMARC/P.HAMBOURG.R.** from the **DANNEMARC/HAMBOURG.R.4.** hand stamp.*

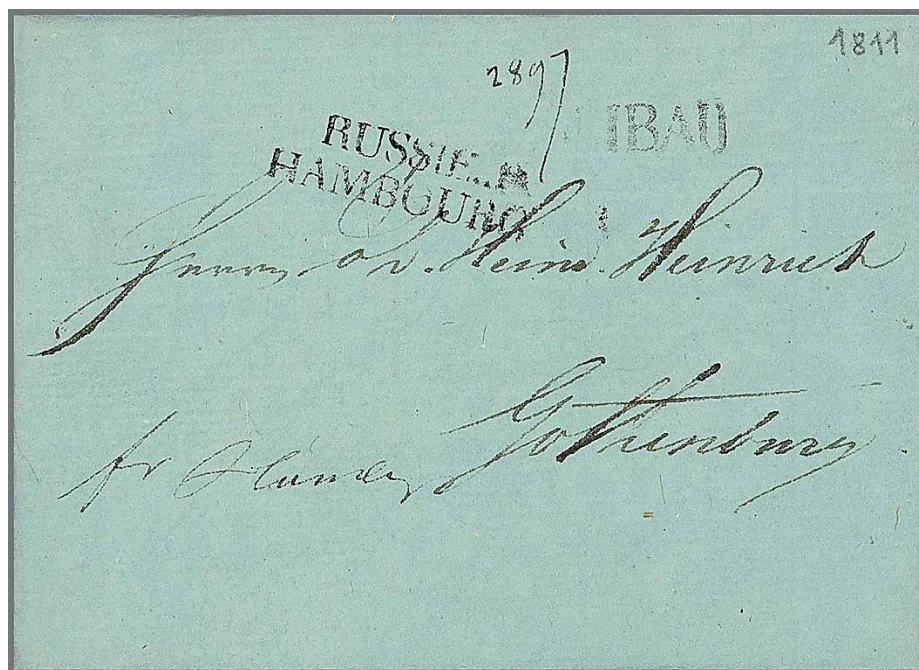
Received at Lyon on February 5. Postage due was 18 decimes.



Letter of February 15, 1811 from Denmark to Braunschweig. Prepaid to Hamburg.
 Postmarked with **DANNEMARC/P.HAMB.19.FEVRE** by the French Imperial post office in Hamburg.
 HBA Auction 60 November 2012



Letter of April 11, 1811 from Christiania to Bordeaux. Prepaid to Hamburg.
 Postmarked with the **DANNEMARC/P.HAMBOURG** stamp by the French Imperial post office in Hamburg.
 Postage to Bordeaux was 38 decimes for a double-weight letter.
 Reduced to 85% of the original size.



Letter of 1811 from Libau to Gothenburg. Inscribed "fr Hambr". Postmarked **LIBAU**.
 Postmarked **RUSSIE..P/HAMBOURG** by the French Imperial post office in Hamburg.
 Grobe auction July 2014



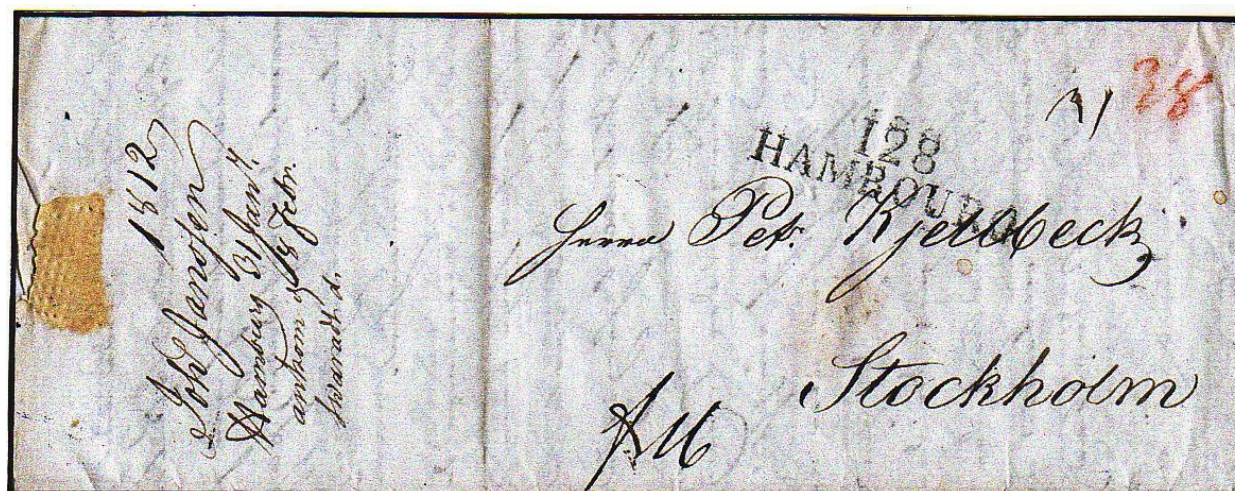
Unpaid letter of March 2, 1812, from Altona to Bremen.

Posted at the French Imperial post office in Hamburg.

Postmarked with an **R 4 HAMBOURG** hand stamp that replaced the stamp used from September 1809 to early 1810.

Postage due was 9 grote.

Reduced to 90% of the original size.



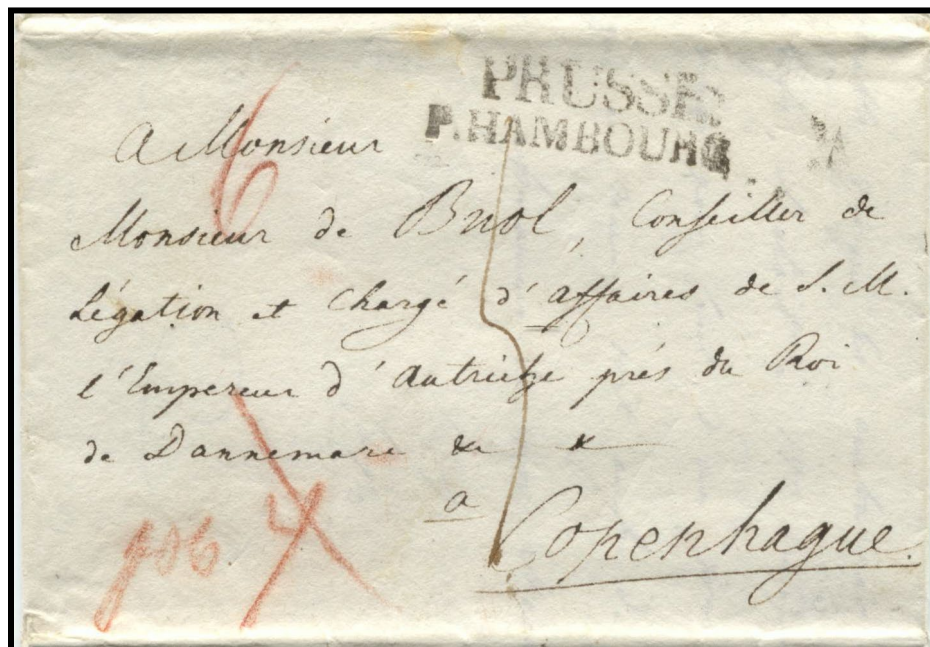
Unpaid letter of January 31, 1812, from Hamburg to Stockholm.

Postmarked **128/HAMBOURG** by the French Imperial post office in Hamburg.

Conveyed from Altona to Helsingør by the Danish post and from Helsingborg to Stockholm by the Swedish post as there was no Swedish post conveyance through Denmark.

Received on February 8. Postage was 16 sk.bco. as marked. Reduced to 82% of the original size.

Courtesy of the Swedish Postmuseum.



Letter of May 12, 1812, from Berlin to Copenhagen.
 Postmarked **PRUSSE/P.HAMBOURG** at Hamburg.
 Postage from Berlin was 5 gutegroschen. Postage from Hamburg to Copenhagen was 12 Lsk.
 Postage due was 83 Rbs. paper currency.



Letter of January 11, 1813, from Stockholm to Dömitz. Inscribed "zito zito" requesting an urgent delivery.
 Postmarked **STOCKHOLM**.
 Postmarked **SUEDE/P.HAMBOURG** by the French Imperial post office in Hamburg.
 Postage to Hamburg was 16 sk.bco. paid at Stockholm.
 Postage from Hamburg to Dömitz was 18 schillings as marked.
 The 18 schillings was replaced with 21 Mecklenburg schillings.
 Collection of G. Nilsson.

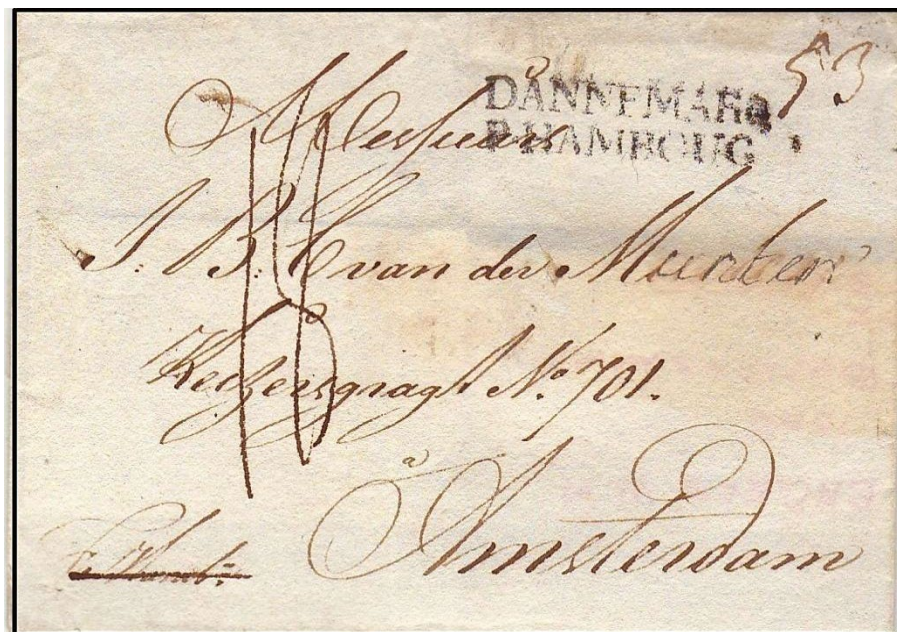
The Russians took possession of Hamburg in March 18, 1813, and seized the French post office. The French retook the city on May 30 and the French post office resumed its activity. Because the hand stamp for letters from Denmark was missing, the **DÆNNEMARK** stamp that had been used by the Thurn & Taxis post office was placed in use. The **P.P./DANNEMARCK** hand stamp was also missing, so a new one reading *Port Payé* was used with red ink from June until September for prepaid letter. The *Port Payé* stamp is known in combination with the **DÆNNEMARK** stamp in July 1813. New **P.P./DANEMARCK/ PAR HAMBOURG** and **DANEMARCK/PAR HAMBOURG** hand stamps were introduced in September and October 1813.



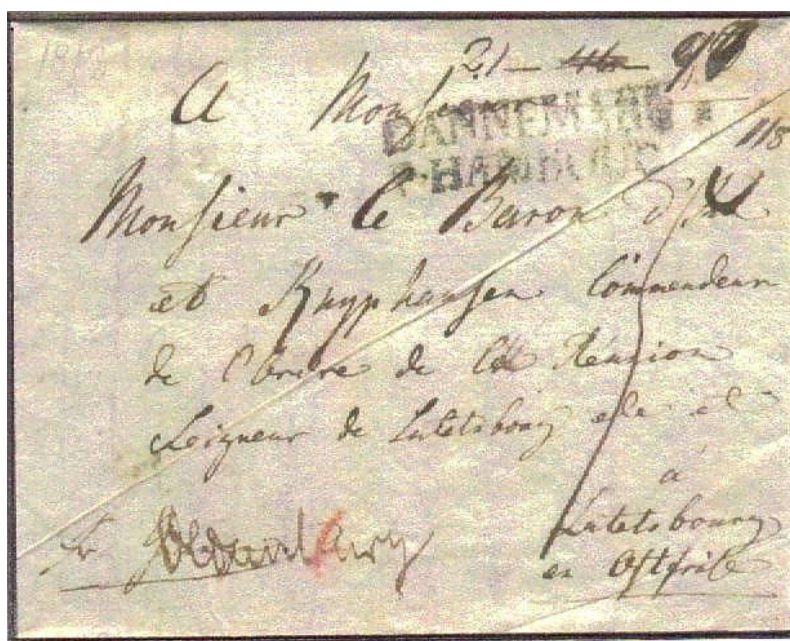
Danish troops inadvertently took part in the Russian defense of Hamburg in 1813. King Frederik VI sent the Danish council president to apologize to Napoleon during the armistice in the summer of 1813. Napoleon proposed a treaty in which Denmark would provide 12,500 men to join his French forces in north Germany. Frederik VI accepted. The Danish troops, under the command of Frederik of Hesse, the king's brother-in-law, were attached as an auxiliary corps to Marshal Davout's army which operated from its base in Hamburg. The army moved through Mecklenburg to Schwerin for contact with a French army advancing toward Berlin. Because the other French army was defeated before joining Davout's army, Davout withdrew to the Lübeck area in September. A shortage of provisions resulted in Davout's return to Hamburg, and the Danish army moved towards Rendsburg in Schleswig with an army under Carl Johan of Sweden in pursuit. Lübeck was freed from French control on December 5. The main Danish post route to Hamburg through the duchies remained open until December 13 when letters could no longer be sent beyond Rendsburg. Rendsburg was surrounded on January 6, 1814, when Russian and Swedish troops moved into Schleswig. That was the end of the war for Denmark. A treaty with Sweden and Great Britain was signed at Kiel on January 14.

Because the Treaty of Kiel ended the Danish coalition with France, France was then considered an enemy country. Danish receipt of letters from France or French subjects was prohibited. Since Hamburg was still under French control, Danish mail could not be sent to Hamburg. A royal order of January 25, 1814, to the governor in Schleswig and Holstein, Prince Carl of Hesse, included the instruction that the border post office at Stockelsdorf in Holstein would handle mail to foreign countries via Lübeck. The postmaster at Stockelsdorf sent out a circular to other post offices on February 1 that directed foreign letters to Stockelsdorf. The Danish general post director communicated on February 8 that letters could now be received from foreign countries with the exception of France. Mail to and from foreign countries was then sent via Stockelsdorf and Lübeck. Beginning on February 19 letters could be sent to Holland and Great Britain via Glückstadt in Holstein and prepaid to Wildeshausen in Hannover. From March 26 letters were sent to Holland via Glückstadt and Stade in Hannover. Meanwhile, Holland and British post offices were established at Blankenese in Holstein without Danish permission, although this was requested. Denmark did establish a smaller postal substation at Blankenese on May 3, although the Danish postage rate was based upon Pinneberg in Holstein. After Napoleon had renounced his throne and a treaty was finally concluded in May, the prohibition on letters to and from France and French subjects was lifted. Letter dispatch to France was reopened on May 17 via Blankenese with prepayment to Düsseldorf. Effective June 1, letters to France were sent prepaid to the Holland border.

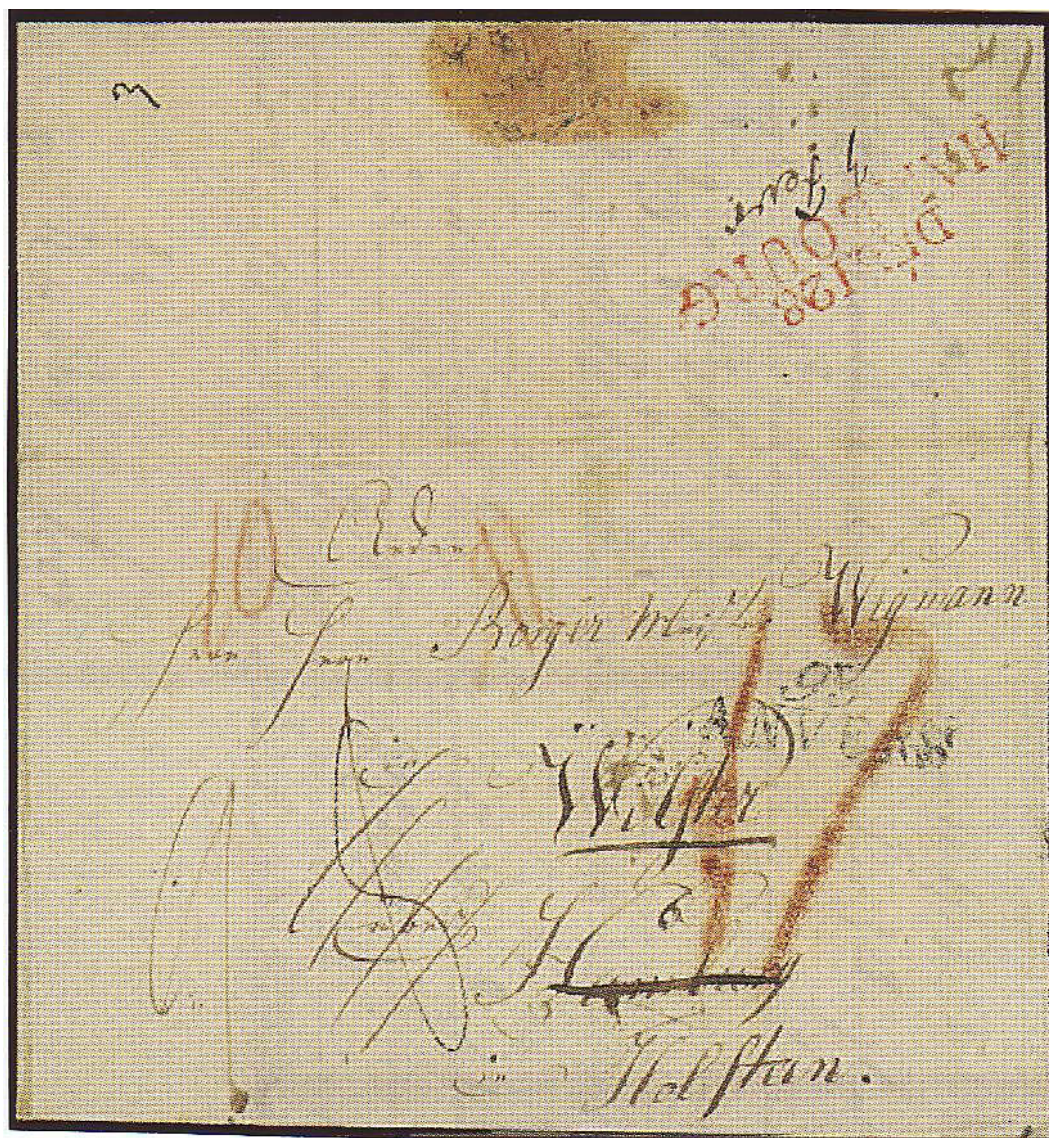
After Marshal Davout withdrew his army from Lübeck to Hamburg, the Russians besieged Hamburg, beginning in November 1813. The allies had cut the route from Bremen to France in October and had taken Stade on November 2. A British packet connection with Den Haag began late in 1813 after the French had abandoned Holland. Davout refused to surrender Hamburg until ordered by Louis XVIII following the surrender of Paris on April 18, 1814, and the abdication of Napoleon. The surrender finally



Letter of October 10, 1812 from London to Amsterdam. Sent via Schleswig and Altona to Hamburg.
 Prepaid to Hamburg. Postmarked **DANNEMARC/P.HAMBOUG** by the French Imperial post office in Hamburg.
 Postage was 4 Lsk. from Altona to Hamburg and 14 decimes from Hamburg to Amsterdam.
 Postage due was 18 stuivers.
 Collection of C. Muys.



Letter of March 5, 1813, from Lethrabort to Lutetbourg in Oldenburg. Inscribed "fr Gransen" changed to "Hamburg".
 Postage to Hamburg was 118 Rbs. paper currency. Postmarked **DANNEMARC/P.HAMBOURG** by the French Imperial post
 office in Hamburg shortly before the Russians occupied Hamburg on March 18, 1813, and destroyed this hand stamp.
 Postage due was 5 decimes.



Unpaid letter of 1813 from Antwerp to Wilster in Holstein.

Origin postmarked **93/ANVERS**.

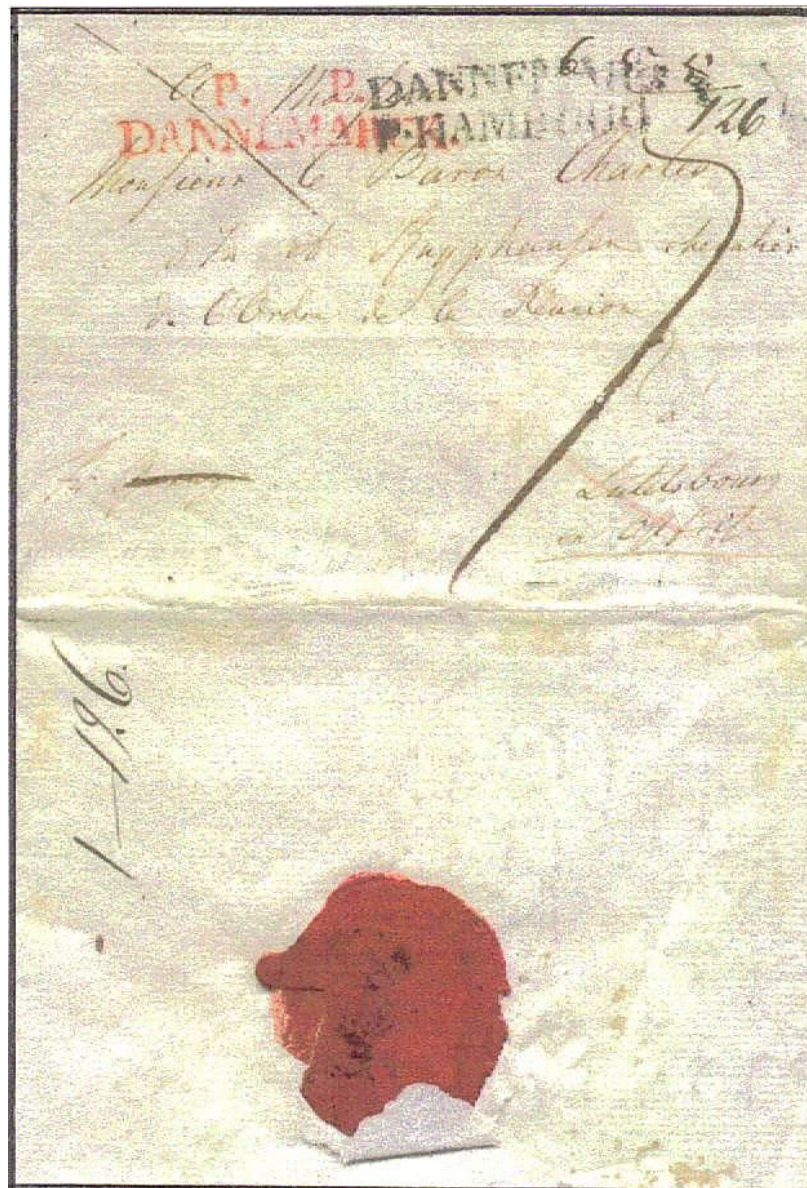
Postmarked **DEB.128/HAMBOURG** in red ink by the French Imperial post office in Hamburg and inscribed "1 Fevr".

Postage from Antwerp to Hamburg was 10 schillings as listed in 1813 Danish foreign tariffs.

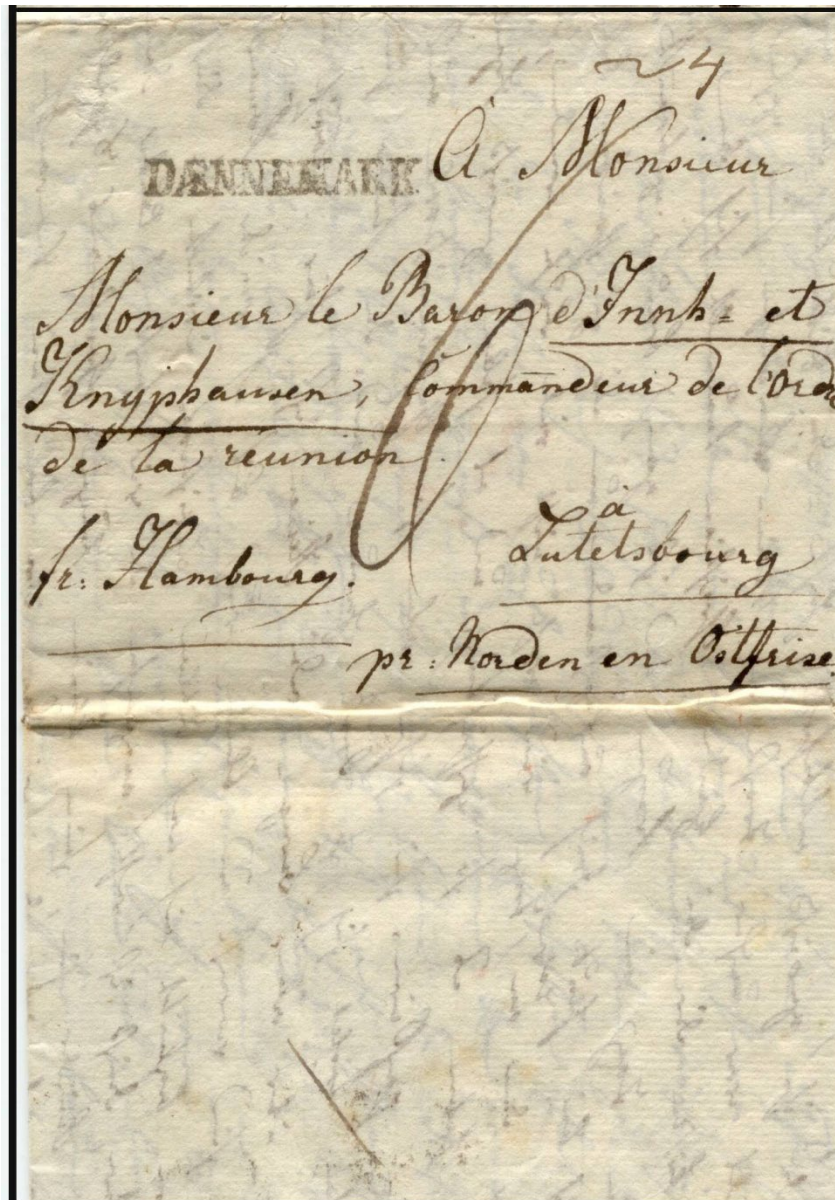
Transit within Hamburg was 3 schillings. Postage from Altona to Itzehoe for Wilster was 3 Lsk.

Apparently a delivery fee of 1 Lsk was added. Total postage due was 17 Lsk. as marked.

HBA auction, November 2004.



Letter of 1813 from Lethraborg to Lutetsbourg in Oldenburg.
 Prepaid postage was 126 Rbs. paper currency.
 Postmarked **DANNEMARC/P-HAMBOURG** in black ink and **P. P./DANNEMARCK** in red ink
 at the French Imperial post office in Hamburg.
 Postage due was 7 gutegroschen

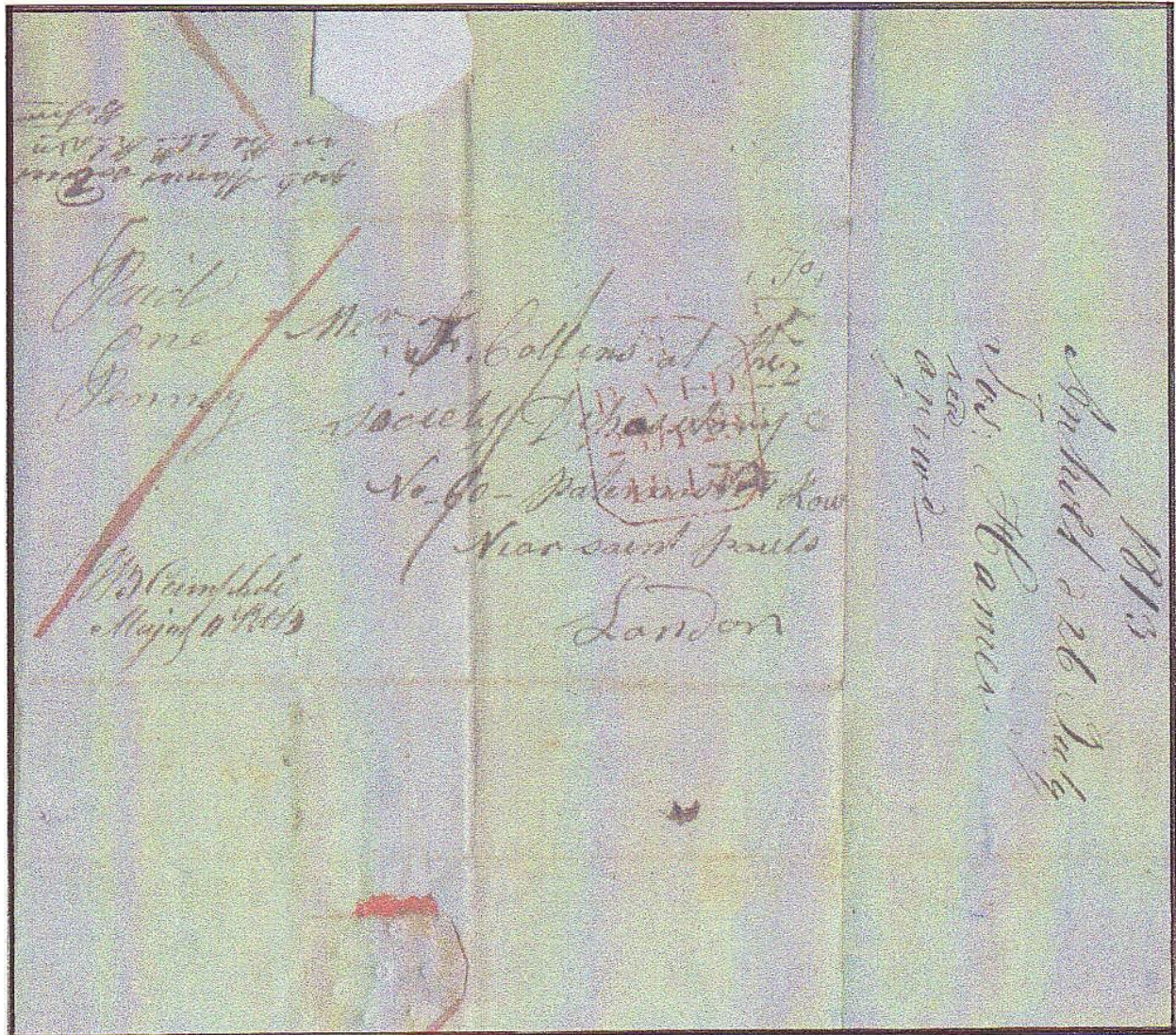


Letter of June 8 1813 from Lethrabort to Lutetsbourg in Oldenburg.
 Inscribed "fr. Hambourg". Prepaid postage was marked as 6 Lsk.
 Postmarked **DÄNNEMARK** by the French Imperial post office in Hamburg.
 This stamp had been used by the Reichspost office in Hamburg before the French occupation.
 The French Denmark hand stamps had been destroyed during the Russian occupation of 1813. .

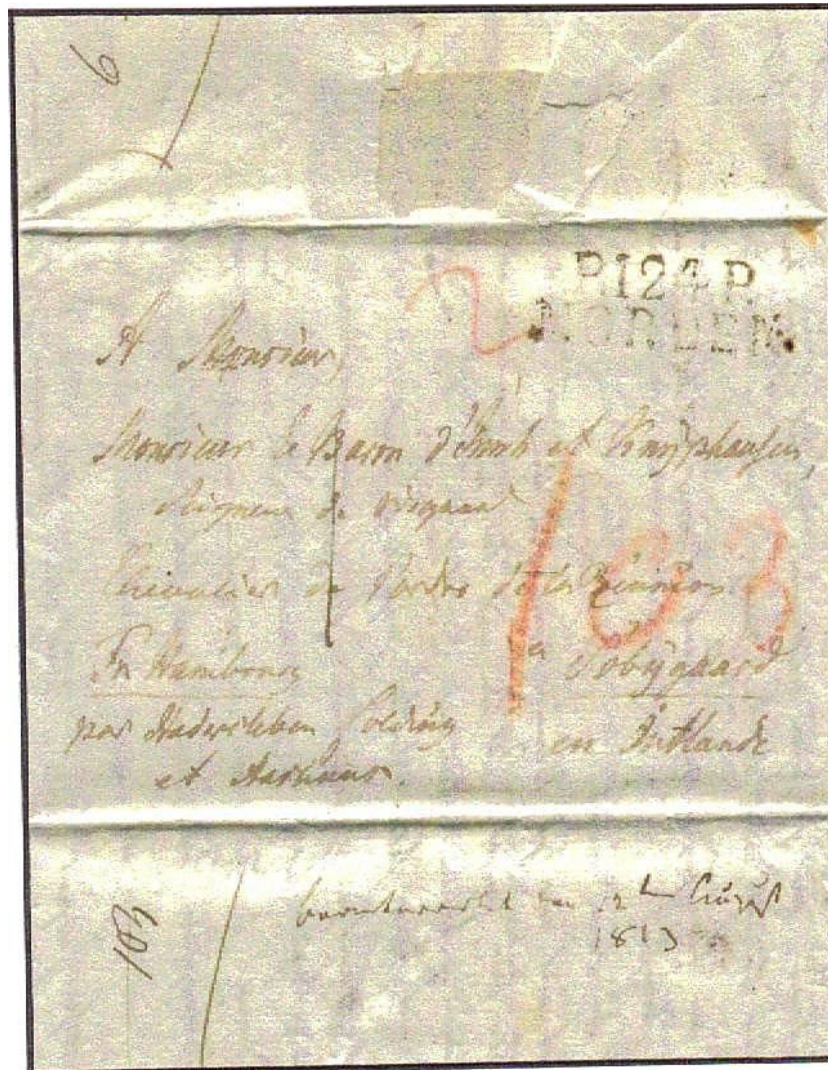
Anholt is a Danish island in the Kattegat that was occupied by the British from 1807 to 1814.

Postage for a soldier's letter was 1d.

Letters were conveyed by ship on the route London, Anholt, Gothenburg, Stockholm and Carlskrona.



Soldier's letter to London addressed dated July 26, 1813,
but the London **PAID** stamp of July 23 indicates that the letter was of June 26.
Inscribed "Paid one penny".
Collection of Prof. B. Jay.

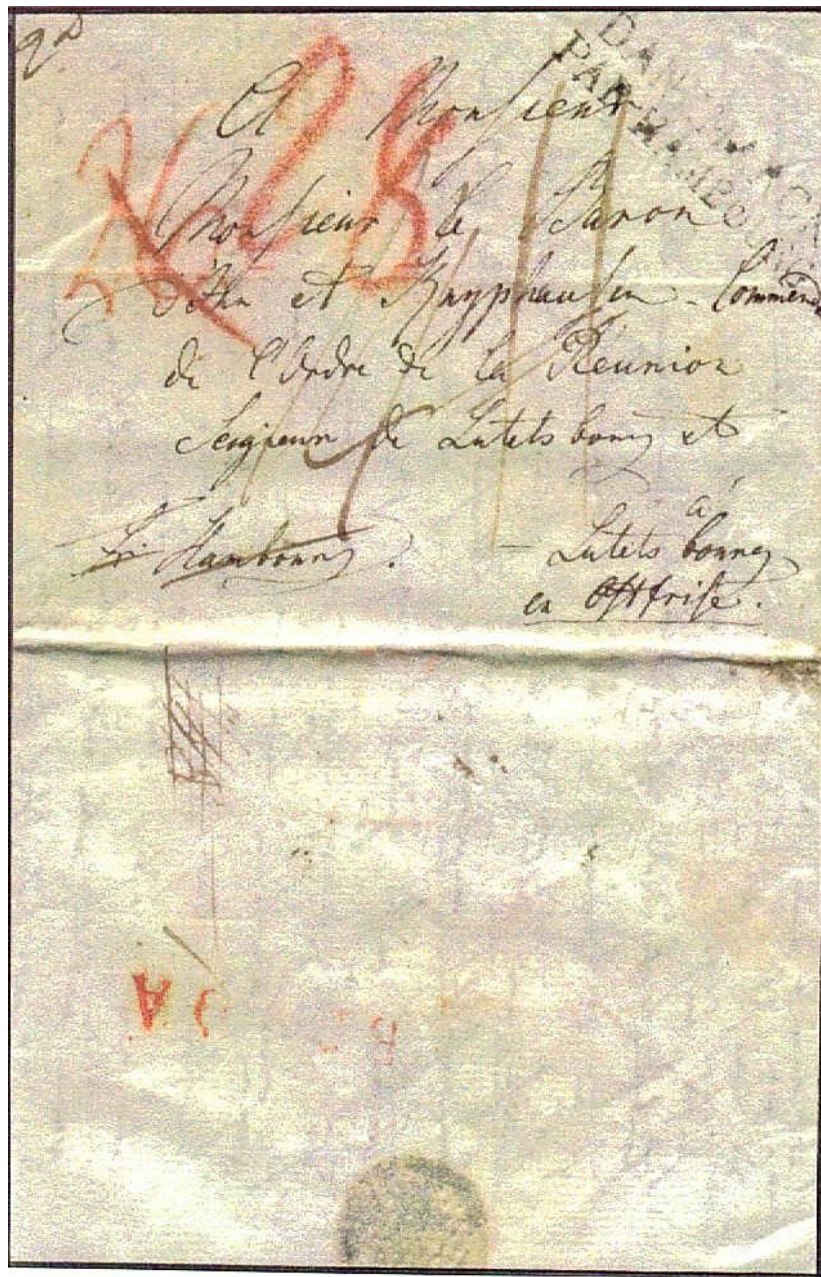


Letter of August 12, 1813, from Lutetsbourg, East Friesland to Søbygaard near Aarhus.

Inscribed "Fr Hambourg par Hadersleben, Kolding et Aarhus".

Postmarked **P. 124P./NORDEN** to show payment from Norden to Hamburg.

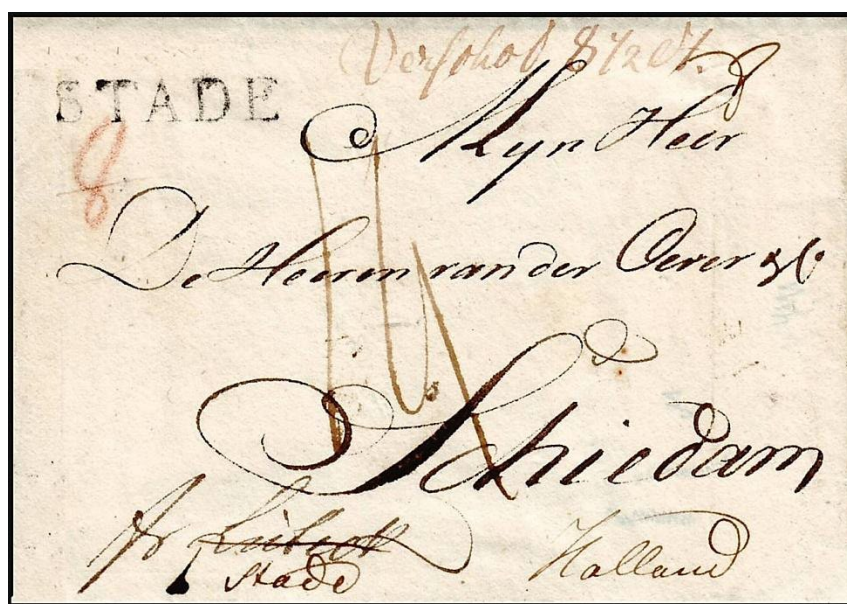
Norden was in French Department 124, Ems Oriental. Postage due was 103 Rbs. paper currency.



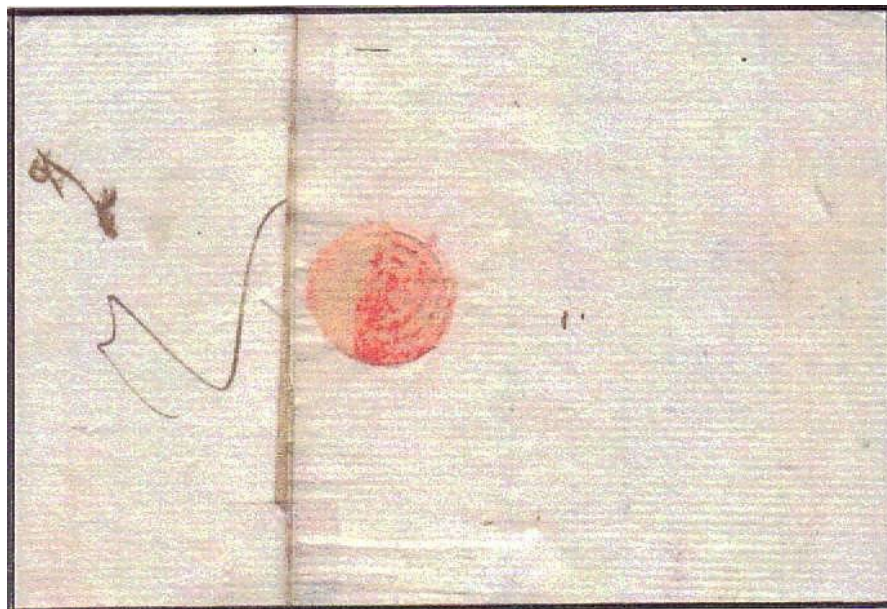
Letter of November 13, 1813, from Lethraborg to Lutetsbourg in Oldenburg.
 Prepaid postage from Roskilde to Haderslev was 4 Lsk. equal to 16 Rbs. paper currency plus 70 Rbs. from Haderslev to
 Hamburg for a total of 86 Rbs. paper currency.
 Postmarked by the French Imperial post office in Hamburg with the **DANEMARCK/PAR HAMBOURG**
 hand stamp introduced in October 1813.
 The letter was sent to Paris and then to Oldenburg via Breda where **BREDA** was stamped on the back.
 Postage from Hamburg to Paris and then to the destination was 28 decimes for this double-weight letter.



Letter dated July 14, 1813 from Søbygaard to Lutetsbourg. Inscribed "fr. Hambourg".
 Prepaid postage was marked as 6 Lsk.
 Postmarked **DÆNNAMARK** and *Post Payé* in red ink by the French Imperial post office in Hamburg.
 Reduced to 82% of the original size.
 Potsdamer Philatelistisches Büro auction May 2015



Letter dated February 22, 1814 from Helsingør to Schiedam. Inscribed "fr Lübeck".
 The Netherland International Mail/Section 1 instruction for Border Offices on the Northern Border was **Zwolle** corresponding with **Bremen** Feb. 28 to Aug. 8, 1814.
 Hamburg was closed until May 28 so transit was via Stade.
 The instruction for transit via Stade was not known in Denmark until March 26 so Lübeck was replaced with Stade.
 Probably sent to Stade via Glückstadt. Postmarked at Stade.
 The Border Office at Zwolle marked "Verschoot 8 1/2 St" as the debit of 8 1/2 stuiver to Hannover.
 Total postage due was 14 stuiver as marked.
 Collection of E. Berger



Letter of May 7, 1814, from Helsingør to Schiedam.

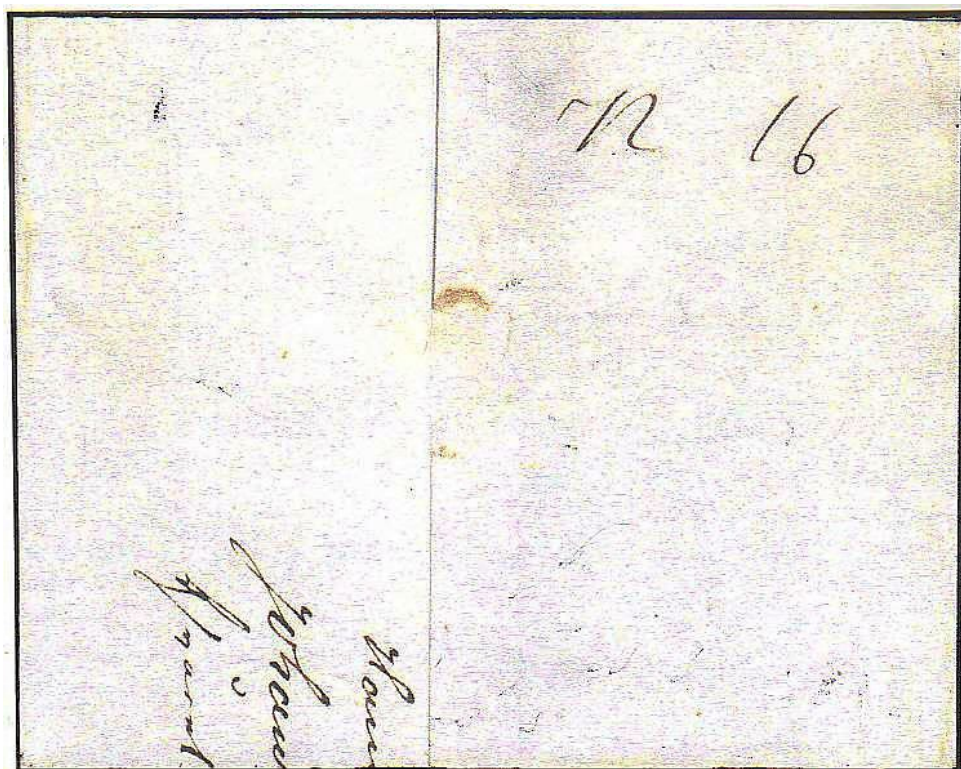
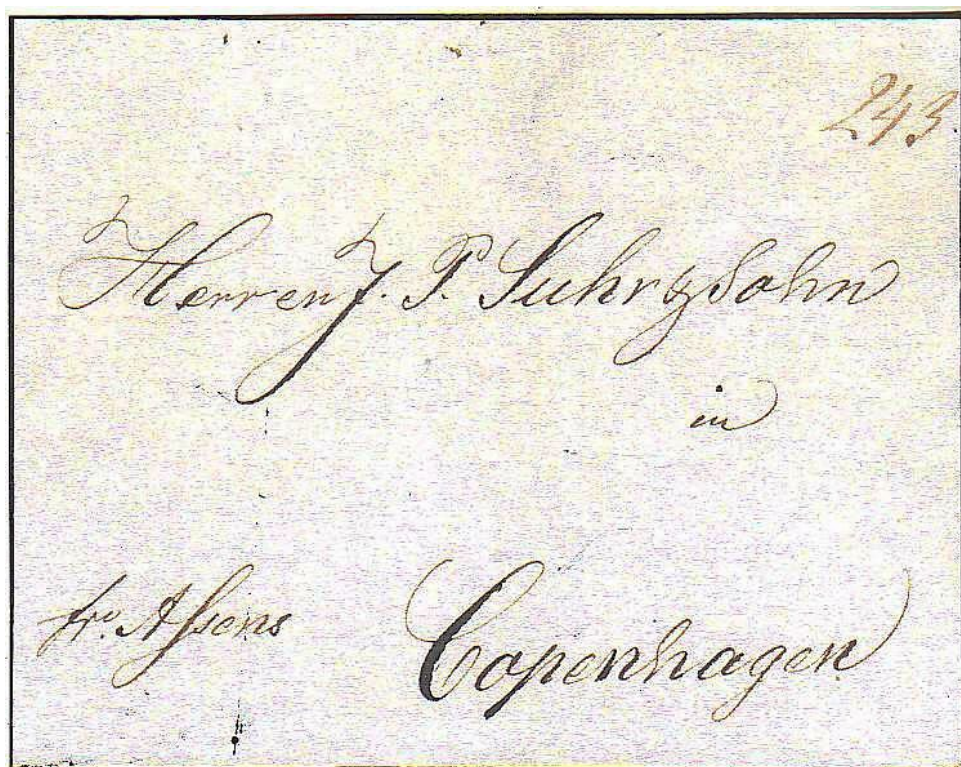
Sent "fco Stade" via the Danish postal substation at Blankenese during the last days of the French occupation of Hamburg.

Prepaid postage was 8 Lsk. to Glückstadt and 4 Lsk. from Glückstadt to Stade for a total of 12 Lsk. silver.

The "Z" on the back was from the border post office at Zwolle.

Postage due at the Dutch border was 11 stuivers (Verschot).

Received on May 22. Postage due was 16 stuivers.



Letter of May 27, 1814, from Hamburg to Copenhagen. Inscribed "fr Assens". Sent from Copenhagen before the Danish post office in Hamburg had reopened after the French occupation. Postage to Assens was required to be paid in silver currency. Postage from Assens to Copenhagen was 16 Rbs. paper currency as marked. Received on May 31.
 Courtesy of the I.P. Suhr & Son archive, Statens Arkiver, Erhversakivet, Århus.

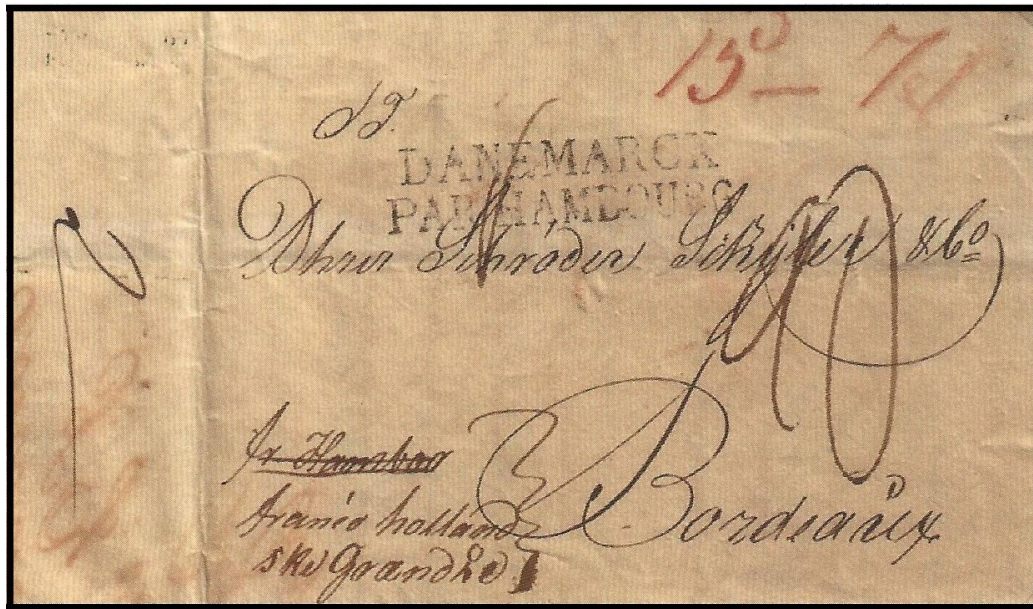
took place on April 29, and the last French troops left Hamburg on May 31. The Danish post office in Hamburg resumed operation on June 14 and replaced the Blankenese post office on June 21 when that office closed. The post office at Stockelsdorf was closed on June 30. Danish mail to foreign destinations was sent to Hamburg for further routing with the exception of mail to Mecklenburg and Pomerania, which went via Lübeck.

Mail from Norway to Hamburg encountered problems during the period of the French occupation of Hamburg. The political attachment of Denmark to Napoleon and France resulted in a British blockade of Norway and Denmark that began in 1807. A sea route was attempted between Frederikshavn in Denmark and Frederiksværn in Norway. Frequent bad weather and the seizure of the ships by the British, with the destruction of the mail, made this a very undependable route. The war between Denmark and Sweden cut off the mail route through Sweden from February 1808 to January 1810 and again in 1813. The sea route was attempted again in 1813 but with the same difficulties as before.

Decrees under King Christian's seal were issued at Glückstadt and Kiel on August 16, 1807, that prohibited letter exchange with British subjects. All Danish post offices received an order on August 17 to inspect all letters that were to or from England. This was a particular imposition for Tönning as letters from August 7 to 11 had arrived with British packets. A sign prohibiting letter exchange with England was posted at the Altona post office on August 17, 1807. A postal circular of December 12, 1807, stated that all letters, without exception, to foreign locations as well as those to Altona, Husum, Tönning, Frederikstad, Helsingør, Frederikshald and Kongsvinger were to be examined by the appropriate authority at the originating location to assure that there was no direct or indirect letter exchange with England or British subjects. After examination, the letter was then to be sealed to show proof of the inspection. This instruction also applied to the post offices at Hamburg, Lübeck and Eutin but inspection at these post offices also included letters to Sweden with enclosures as there was a direct ship connection between Gothenburg and England. Letter exchange between Denmark and Norway through Sweden resumed December 31, 1809, as before the war with Sweden. Examination of letters to and from Sweden continued at Copenhagen, Helsingør and Frederikshald but ceased shortly after July 31, 1810. Beginning on December 11, 1811, the sender of a letter to Sweden was required to provide an attest with his name and certification that foreign letters were not enclosed. This requirement was discontinued on single letters on February 11, 1812. Letters from France and letters from the French postal service were no longer censored after the Danish post office in Hamburg moved to Altona and the post office in Lübeck moved to Stockelsdorf in March 1811. Letters from Denmark continued to be censored.

Letters from Norway during the period of 1807 to 1812 are known with "Chrania" and "Xania" for Christiania, "L" for Laurvig, "Hstrnd" for Holmestrand, "Fhld" for Frederikshald, "Mand" for Mandal, "Thiem" for Thronheim, and "Chriand" for Christianssand written in manuscript on the backs to show that they had been opened and resealed in accordance with the royal order.

A General Post Directorate circular of May 19, 1814, prohibited communication and trade with Norway because of Danish support of the Norwegian refusal to accept the provision of the Treaty of Kiel that placed Norway under Swedish sovereignty. The Norwegian Storting accepted entry into a union with Sweden in October 1814. The restriction on communications with Norway was voided on September 19, 1814, and the first mail from Norway to Denmark arrived in mid-October.



Letter of June 21, 1814, from Randers to Bordeaux. Inscribed "fr Hamborg".

This was crossed out and replaced with "franco hollandske grandske" in accordance with a circular effective June 1 requiring prepaid postage of 15 Lsk. from Blankenese (or Hamburg) to the Holland border for letters to France.

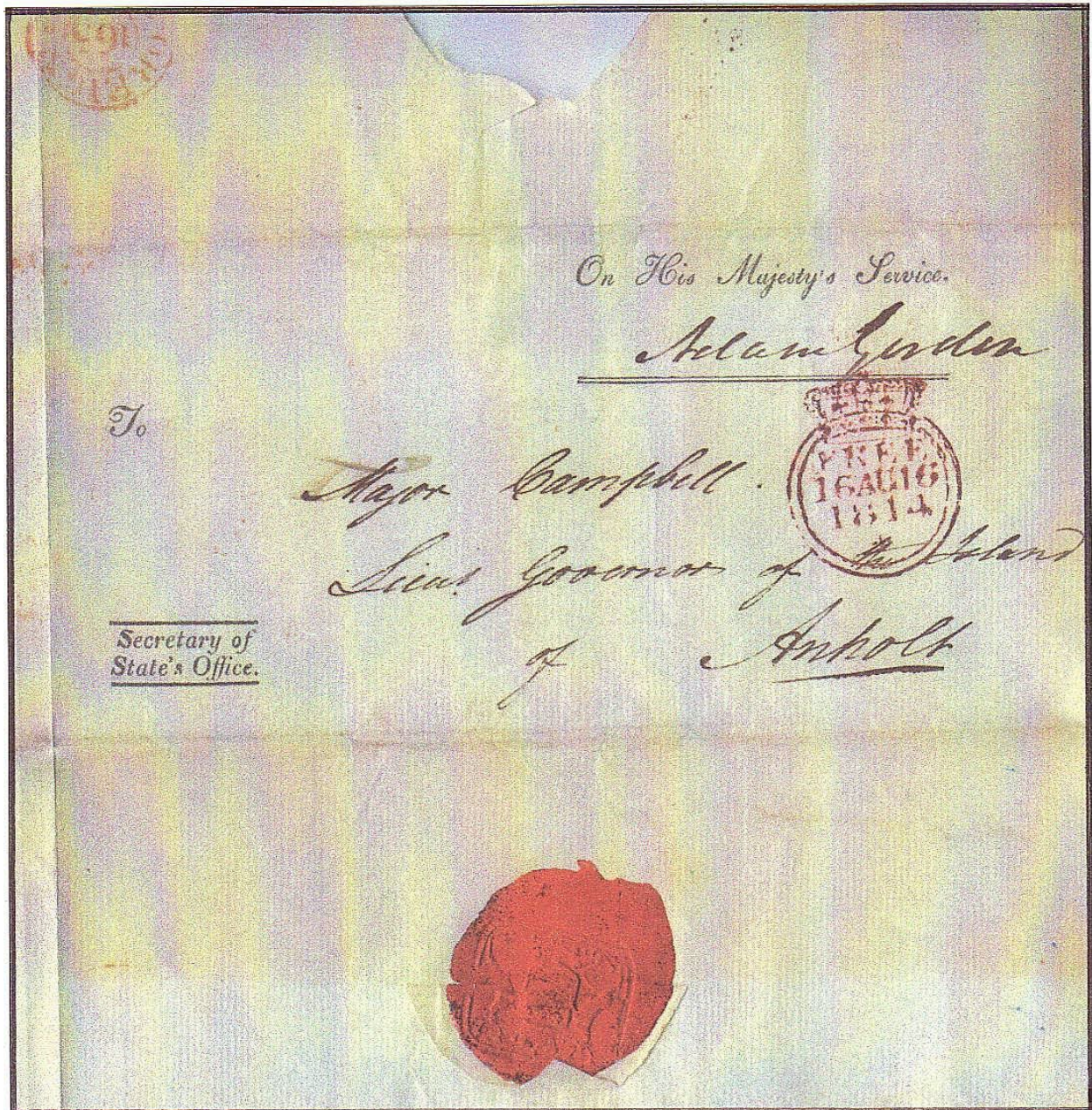
Additional prepaid postage was 7 Lsk. from Randers to Hamburg.

Postmarked **DANEMARCK/PAR HAMBOURG** by the Thurn & Taxis post office at Hamburg.

The French postal service ignored the postage paid from Hamburg and inscribed "20" decimes due at Bordeaux.

This represented 12 decimes for Hamburg to Paris and 7 decimes from Paris to Bordeaux plus 1 decime for a 6 to 8 gram letter.

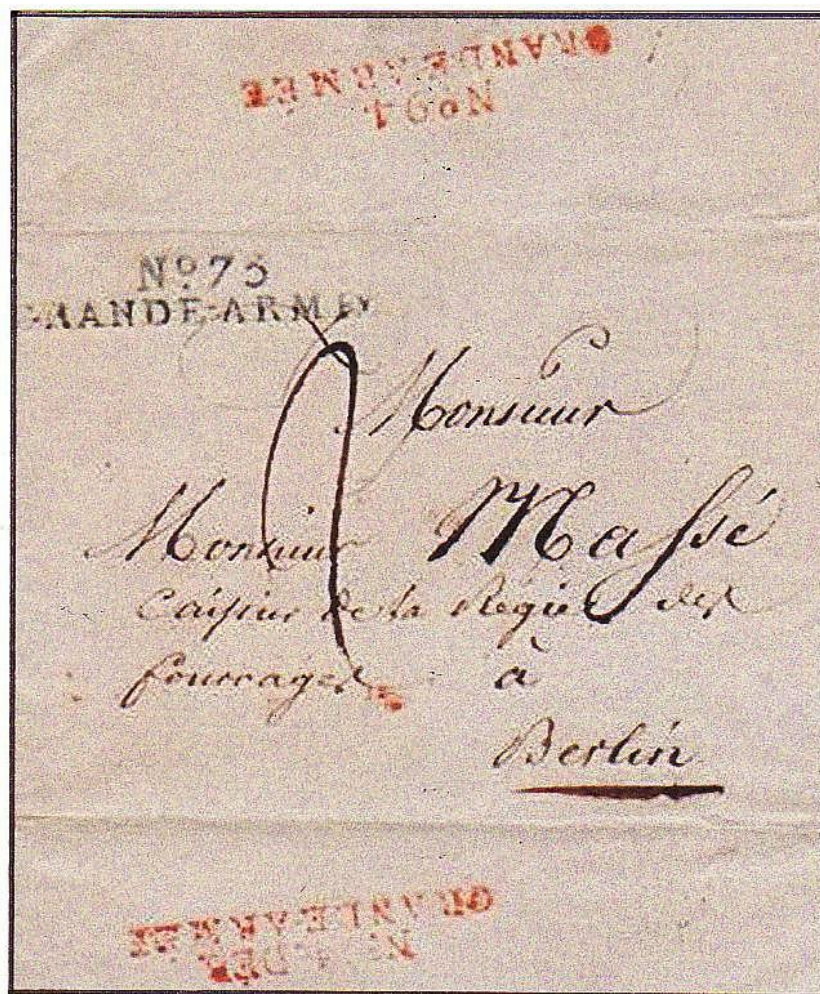
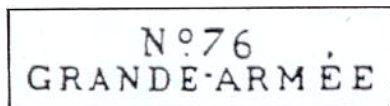
Collection of E. Berger.



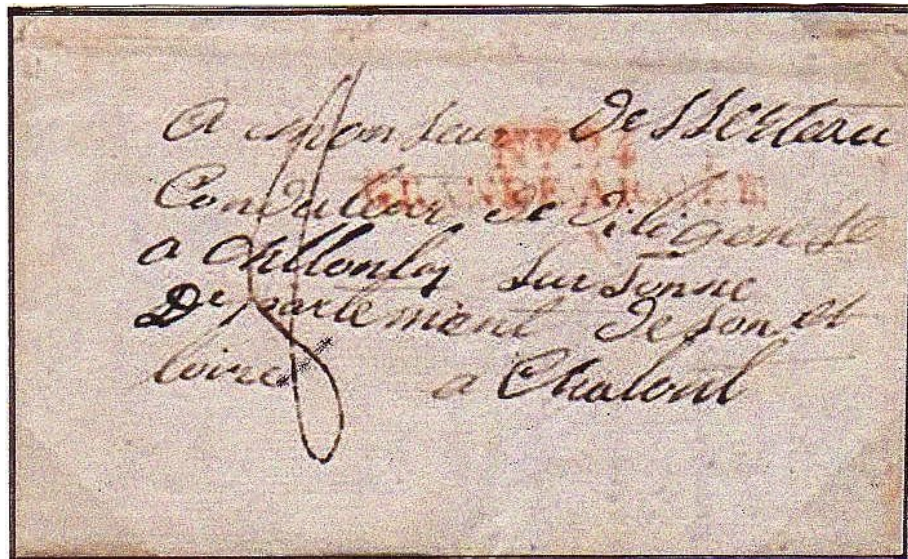
Official letter from the Secretary of State's Office in London to the Lieutenant Governor of the Island of Anholt.
 Postmarked **FREE** at London on August 16, 1814, and stamped by the London Foreign Office.
 Collection of Prof. B. Jay.

French Military Hand Stamps

Denmark became an ally of France on October 31, 1807, and declared war on Sweden on February 29, 1808. French and Spanish troops entered Holstein on March 5, 1808, in accordance with the French alliance. Dutch troops arrived later. Garrisons were established at Middlefart, Nyborg, Odense, Svendborg, Flensburg, Rendsburg, Itzehoe and Altona. French "GRANDE-ARMÉE" hand stamps were used at these garrisons. Unit numbers known on the hand stamps are: 24, 34, 47, 67, 69, 74, 75, 76, 91 and 94. These stamps are known in red, black and blue ink. The foreign troops departed early in 1809.



*Letter from the general headquarters in Odense on May 5, 1808, to Berlin.
Stamped with N° 75/GRAND ARMÉE at Odense. This was used by a Spanish division stationed at Odense.
The other two stamps, N° 94/GRAND ARMÉE and N° 94/DEB. GRANDÉ - ARMÉE,
were transit stamps applied at Hamburg. Postage due was 2 gutegroschen.
Collection of H. Carstensen.*



Letter of August 12, 1808, from Flensburg to France
Postmarked N° 24/GRAND ARMÉE in red ink.
Postage due was 8 decimes.
Collection of H. Carstensen.



Fieldpost letter of October 1, 1808, from a soldier in the 1st Division Boudet in the Corps d'Observation des côtes de la Baltique at Rendsburg to France.
Postmarked N° 69/GRAND ARMÉE in red ink. Postage due was 12 decimes.

Napoleon returned to France on March 1, 1815, from his exile on Elba and returned to Paris on March 20. Great Britain, Austria, Russia and Prussia signed a treaty to prosecute a war against Napoleon on March 25. The Duke of Wellington was sent to take over the allied army in the Low Countries. A Netherlands postal circular of May 12 announced that post exchange with France had stopped. The French army under Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo, near Brussels, on June 18. After allied troops surrounded Paris, an armistice was signed on July 3 that ended the war. A Netherlands circular of July 7 stated that correspondence with France was reopened. The British mail route via Calais was temporarily stopped on March 30, 1815 and was reopened in July. It is likely that correspondence between Hamburg and France was affected by the war between May and July of 1815.

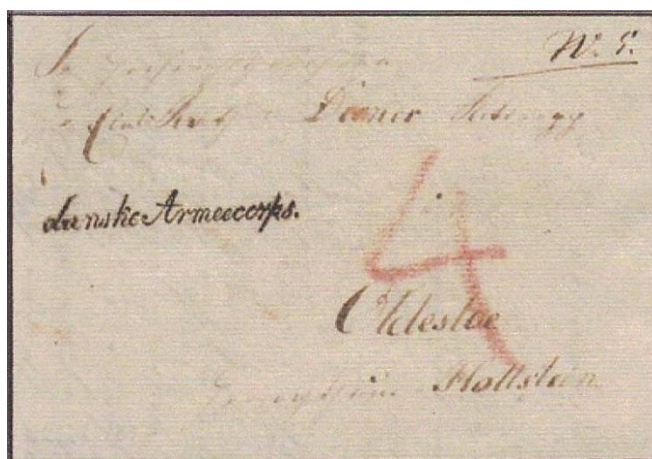


*A letter sent as a duplicate of letters of March 15 and 17, 1815, from Altona to Bordeaux. This was conveyed from Altona to London outside the post and then posted at London. Prepaid as a ship letter to Le Havre and postmarked in red ink on April 4. Stamped **COLONIES/PAR LE HAVRE** rather than **ANGLETERRE** that was the usual stamp for British mail.*

Postage due was 19 decimes representing 10 decimes for Le Havre to Paris and 9 decimes from Paris to Bordeaux.

The letter was received at Bordeaux on April 24.

Reduced to 82% of the original size.



*Troops from Schleswig and Holstein served in the occupation of France following the end of the Napoleonic Wars. A letter from Lens to Oldesloe of 1817 showed a handstamp **danske Armeecorps.** used during the occupation.*

Postage due from Hamburg to Oldesloe was marked as 4 schillings. Reduced to 66% of the original size.

Potsdamer Philatelistisches Büro GmbH auction, June 2004.

References

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