

SWISS FONDUE

The story of Swiss Philately

Welcome to the annual convention meeting of the American Helvetia Philatelic Society, the organization for the promotion and study of Swiss philately in the United States. Accompanying this exhibit, you will find many other exhibits of Swiss stamps and postal history prepared by our members which go into greater depth of study of their chosen areas.

My purpose in presenting this exhibit is to provide a “synoptic” overview of Swiss philately to illustrate the breadth of opportunity for collectors – of both a general collecting nature and to introduce areas of opportunity for specialization. The exhibit spans pre-philately of the era before postage stamps were invented, the classic issues of the 19th century, and explores a half dozen themes that organize an approach to the story of Switzerland’s philatelic development to the present day.

Switzerland is a geographically small, land-locked nation of approximately 7 million people, about 10% of whom are guest residents native to other countries. Located in central Europe, it is strategically important for its control of transportation routes over and through the Alps mountain range. Switzerland shares borders with France, Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, and Italy. While the German language is spoken by more than 60% of the citizens, French and Italian are spoken regionally. A fourth official language, Romansch, is spoken by approximately 30,000 residents of remote Alpine valleys in the southeastern corner of the country.

Early Swiss postal services were concentrated in the three principal commercial cities of Basel, Zurich, and Geneva and their regional “Cantons” which can be thought of as similar to American states (in their relationship to the federal government) or counties (in size and population). With improvements in transportation and the transition of the economy from agriculture to industry, postal services are now universally distributed nationwide.

Organization

1:2-1:10	Pre-Philately and Postal Markings	4:7-5:13	Impact of Postal Services and Regulation
1:11-1:13	The First Stamps – Cantonal Issues	5:14-7:11	Impact of Transportation Development
1:14-2:5	Federalization of the Post	7:12-9:4	Impact of War and Peace
2:6-3:2	Strubels – The First Long-lived Definitives	9:5-10:1	Impact of Tourism and National Identity
3:3-3:8	Subsequent 19 th Century “Classic” Issues	10:2-10:9	Impact of Charity
3:9-4:6	Progress of Production Methods	10:10-10:16	Impact of Philatelic Marketing / Promotion

References

Zumstein Specialized Catalog of Switzerland, Vol. 1 & 2, 2002
Zumstein Ganssachen (Postal Stationery) Catalog
Schweizerische Luftpost (Airmail) Handbuch
The Imperforate Sitting Helvetia – Strubel by Herbert Brach