

## ZEMSTVOS THE RUSSIAN RURAL POST INTRODUCTION TO THE ZEMSTVO POST EXHIBIT

IN 1862, CZAR ALEXANDER II FREED THE 45 MILLION SERFS FROM BONDAGE, AND DIVIDED WESTERN RUSSIA INTO 38 GUBERNIS OR PROVINCES (STATES), EACH OF WHICH WAS THEN SUB-DIVIDED INTO MUNICIPALITIES TERMED ZEMSTVOS (ZEM=LAND). THE ZEMSTVOS MUNICIPAL FORMS OF GOVERNMENT, ESTABLISHED TO MANAGE THE VARIOUS AREAS SO CREATED. HOWEVER THESE AREAS WERE NOT PROVIDED WITH ANY POSTAL SERVICE, WHICH THE CZAR RETAINED AS HIS PRIVATE DOMAIN.

### Pages 3- 16 The Early or Vagabond Issues

WITH A DESPERATE NEED FOR POSTAL SERVICE, BY 1865 THE ZEMSTVOS BEGAN ISSUING THEIR OWN STAMPS, CONTRARY TO THE ROYAL DECREE, AND BY 1870 THERE WERE 28 SUCH AGENCIES OPERATING. WITHIN FIVE YEARS THE CZAR RELENTED AND THE ZEMSTVO POST WAS SANCTIONED IN AUGUST 1870.

### Pages 17- 32 the single & 2 design Zemstvos & Extended Periods of Operations

WITHIN THE NEXT DECADE ABOUT 150 ZEMSTVOS WERE ISSUING POSTAL STAMPS AND BY THE TIME OF THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION OF 1917, WHICH ENDED THIS SYSTEM, OVER 3,000 POSTAL VARIETIES ENCOMPASSING STAMPS, POSTAL WRAPPERS AND ENVELOPES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED. MANY OF THE VAGABOND ZEMSTVOS CLOSED WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD, WHILE OTHERS CONTINUED FOR EXTENDED PERIODS.

RESEARCH INDICATES THAT ABOUT 30% OF THOSE ZEMSTVOS WHICH BEGAN THEIR OWN POSTAL SERVICE OPERATED FOR VERY SHORT PERIODS, EITHER BECAUSE THEY WERE SUBSEQUENTLY SUPPRESSED BY THE CZAR OR WERE INFLUENCED TO CLOSE FOR OTHER REASONS. AS A RESULT THESE POSTS ISSUED ONLY ONE OR TWO DESIGNS OF STAMPS.

### Pages 32- 48 Hand Printed Issues

THE INITIAL FACILITIES AVAILABLE FOR THE PRODUCTION OF STAMPS IN MANY AREAS WAS VERY LIMITED, HENCE MANY ZEMSTVOS HAD VERY SIMPLE DESIGNS, AND SOME USED A HAND STAMPING PROCESS TO PRODUCE THE STAMPS ON A MIXED VARIETY OF PAPERS. SOME AREAS UTILIZED A NUMBERING SYSTEM TO CONTROL BOTH THE REVENUE AND DELIVERY OF ITEMS, IN SOME CASES UTILIZING A TALON OR STUB TO TRACK THE ITEM.

### Pages 49 - 64 Unique & Special Design Issues

THE FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO PRODUCE THE STAMPS VARIED AMONG THE VARIOUS ZEMSTVOS. MANY ZEMSTVOS PRODUCED THE SAME DESIGN ON DIFFERENT PAPERS, TO CREATE VARIETIES. OTHERS DECIDED TO PRODUCE STAMPS TO DEVELOP A FORM OF REVENUE CONTROL AND GUARANTEE DELIVERY, WHILE OTHERS USED DIFFERENT STAMPS FOR PREPAID ITEMS AND POST DUE.

### Pages 65 - 80 Later & State Printed Issues

AS ZEMSTVO GOVERNMENTS MATURED THE RUSSIAN RURAL POST BECAME MORE REFINED AND SOME AREAS RECOGNIZED AS ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS OF THE ROYAL RUSSIAN POST WERE ABSORBED INTO THE ROYAL MAIL NETWORK. OTHER AREAS BEGAN TO IMPLEMENT THEIR OWN SYSTEM WHILE OTHERS EXPANDED, LEADING TO THE DESIGN AND PRINTING OF SOME STAMPS BY THE STATE PRINTING OFFICE IN ST. PETERSBURG.

#### SCHLISSELBURG



THE FIRST ZEMSTVO TO ISSUE  
A STAMP IN 1865

THIS POST WAS SUPPRESSED IN 1866

EXAMPLES OF POSTAL HISTORY FOR ZEMSTVOS ARE SCARCE, POSSIBLY BECAUSE THE AREAS OF OPERATIONS WERE VERY REMOTE, AND THE LETTERS WERE NOT RETAINED, OR AS WAS OFTEN THE CASE THE POSTS LEAVING THE AREA ALSO BORE THE ROYAL MAIL STAMPS. ONCE COLLECTORS REMOVED THESE ITEMS, THE RESULTANT REMNANTS OF ENVELOPES WERE POSSIBLY DESTROYED. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE 1917 REVOLUTION RESULTED IN THE DESTRUCTION OF MUCH OF THIS ASPECT OF POSTAL HISTORY.