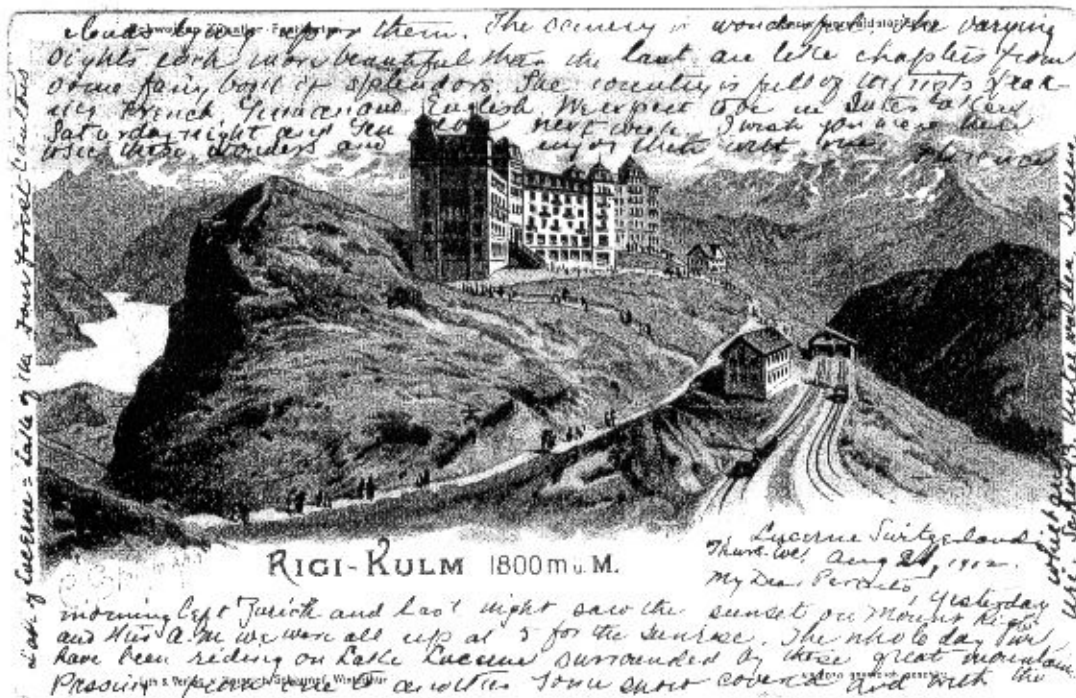


# Swiss Hotel Posts

This postal history exhibit includes the only eight Swiss hotels that issued stamps to serve postal purposes. It shows their **hotel stamps tied to covers** in order to “prove” uses at the times when the stamps could pay for mailing services. Other hotels, already served by local post offices, also issued “stamps” but employed them as publicity labels.

Switzerland’s international hotel business grew swiftly after the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian War, with increasing numbers of tourists vacationing at mountain hotels in remote areas still beyond railroad and postal services. Enterprising hotel proprietors charged a mail dispatch fee, usually 5c, equal to the federal postal rate for a local letter going no more than 6.2 miles (10 kilometers). Hotel employees took the tourist mail to the nearest post offices. Federal post offices were not authorized to cancel the private hotel stamps, which were usually affixed away from the federal stamps also needed on mail to pay the federal charges.

In a federal decree on September 26, 1883, the Postal Department prohibited the continued use of private stamps with denominations and the word “*franco*” (postage paid), which made them resemble federal stamps. Thereafter the hotels redesigned their private stamps to eliminate any similarity to official issues. This exhibit contains four covers from Stoos and one from Mont Prosa mailed after September 26, 1883, with private stamps conforming to the decree that day.



An American tourist's report on both a sunset and a sunrise at Rigi-Kulm.

## Organization by Date of First Postage Stamp

Rigi-Kaltbad (1864)	2-3	Stoos (1871)	9-12
Rigi-Scheideck (1867)	4-5	Belalp (1873)	13
Rigi-Kulm (1870)	6	Mont Prosa (1882)	14-15
Maderanerthal (1870)	7-8	Piora-thal (1882)	16