

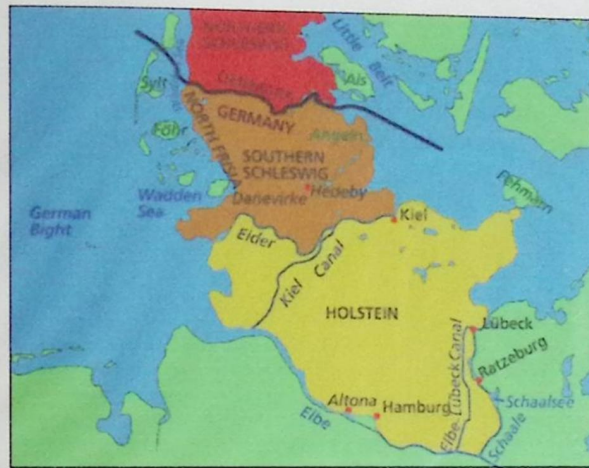
Slesvig Plebiscite 1920



Northern Schleswig Coat of Arms



Flag of Northern Schleswig



Political Map of Northern and Southern Schleswig and Holstein.



Geographical Danish Map of Southern Jutland
(Northern and Southern Schleswig and Holstein)



Postcard of the Schleswig Plebiscite
of 1920, showing the Northern Gate
in Flensburg. (Scan)

Slesvig Plebiscite 1920

INTRODUCTION

I. Political and General History

SCHLESWIG (Danish: SLESVIG), located at the Southern end of the Jutland Peninsula, had originally been a Danish province. Following the War of Schleswig in 1864, the territory was awarded to the Kingdom of Prussia by the Treaty of Vienna. It eventually became part of the Prussian Province of Schleswig-Holstein. In 1871, Schleswig-Holstein became a province of the newly founded German Empire.

The Schleswig Plebiscite was actually two referendums, organized according to the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, with the propose of determining the future border between Germany and Denmark. The referendums were monitored by representatives from France, the United Kingdom, Norway and Sweden.

After World War I, the Danish, who were neutral during the war, divided the province into three zones, in which separate referendums would be held:

ZONE I encompassed the northern and largest part of Schleswig. Zone 1 was about 75% ethnic Danish and 25% ethnic Germans. The referendum for Zone 1 was held on February 10, 1920, and it voted to become part of Denmark, today, the Danish Province of South Jutland.

ZONE II was formed from the central part of the province. Zone II was about 80% ethnic German and 20% ethnic Danish. The referendum for Zone II was held on March 14, 1920, and it voted to remain part of Germany.

ZONE III was the southernmost part of the province, and it was almost entirely German. No referendum was held in Zone III, as the outcome was obvious.

The referendums were, of course, "fixed" by Denmark, by having separate referendums for the zones they had established, based on the ethnic majority populations. In this way, the outcome was predetermined, and Denmark was able to reclaim portion of the province that they had lost to Prussia in 1864.

Even though the referendums were not fair, the outcome was peaceful, and the border between Denmark and Germany that was established in 1920 remains to this day, almost 100 years later.

II. Philatelic History

The basic set of 14 stamps, shown in this exhibition in all possible variations, was issued in January 1920 to publicize the upcoming Schleswig plebiscites. The stamps depict the Arms of Schleswig on the lower denominations and a pastoral scene on the high denominations.

The legends are in Danish, consisting of "PLEBISCITE" and "SLESVIG", but the stamps are denominated in German Pfennig and Mark.

In May 1920, after the conclusion of the two plebiscites, an identical set of 14 stamps was issued for the use in the now Danish Zone 1. They were overprinted "1. ZONE" and the stamps were now denominated in Danish currency Øre and Kroner.

These stamps were valid for use through the end of June 1920, when the stamps of Zone I were replaced by those of Denmark, and the stamps of the other two zones were replaced by those of Germany.



Above black print proofs of 20 & 25 Pf and 5 Mk on thin ivory paper without gum and watermark.

Slesvig Plebiscite 1920

The plebiscite stamps of SLESVIG were issued as a set of 14 values on 25th January 1920. They show two variations of the coat of arms on the smaller size low values and a landscape with a megalithic grave on the higher values from 1 Mark to 10 Mark.



Slesvig Plebiscite 1920

The same set of 14 stamps is shown here in fine used.



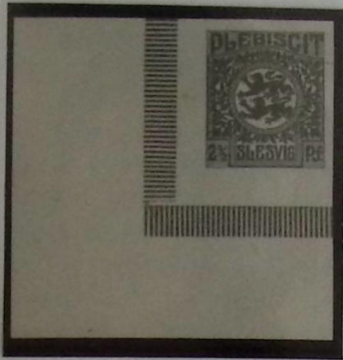
Slesvig Plebiscite 1920

The same set is now shown on piece and philatelically cancelled in Flensburg.



Slesvig Plebiscite 1920

On this page the same set of 14 stamps is shown as imperforated proofs with corner margins.



Slesvig Plebiscite 1920

The Plebiscite for the FIRST ZONE took place on 10th February 1920. The result was a majority for the reunification with Denmark. On 20. May the International Commission released a new stamp series of 14 stamps with an overprint in bluish black "1. ZONE" and the currency of Krone and Öre, but kept the previous design of the issue for both zones. They were valid until the reunion with Denmark on 16th June 1920 and were withdrawn on 17th July 1920.



Slesvig Plebiscite 1920

The same set of 14 stamps is shown here, used in various places within the 1. Zone.



Slesvig Plebiscite 1920

The third version of the same stamp design are the Officials, also the same design and currency as the first set of 14 but with the bluish black overprint C.I.S. (Commission Internationale Slesvig.) The Commission was independent and had the rights to issue these stamps for their own usage. They were released on 26th January 1920 and could be used only in Flensburg. They were withdrawn on 16th June 1920. 46 full sheets of 100 = 4600 stamps were printed of the small Pfennig values and 42 sheets of 50 = 2100 stamps were printed of the high Mark values. On this page we see a full set of 14 stamps in mint. (Cert.)



HELGE WITT

THORVALDSENSVEJ 17
1871 KØBENHAVN V
(01) 24 17 18

Medlem af A.I.E.P.
(Association Internationale des
Experts Philatéliques)

PRUFUNGSATTEST.

SLESVIG, 1920, C.I.S., cpl. Satz (14 W.) ungestempelt.



Die obenabgebl. Marken sind alle echt und ohne Repa-
ratur. Die Farben der 35 Pfg. sind verblasst.
København V., den 18. november 1975.

Helge Witt

Slesvig Plebiscite 1920

On this page we see a full set of 14 stamps on piece, philatelically used in Flensburg. (Cert.)
Genuine used stamps with overprint C.I.S are extremely rare. A few hundred of the
Pfennig values are existing and only 17 of the highest value 10 Mark are known.



Slesvig Plebiscite 1920

Three variations and errors are shown on Slesvig stamps below:

1. On top we find a strip of 5 stamps of 40 Pfg of which the one in the middle is showing an almost missing "I" in the word SLESVIG.
2. In the middle the 10 Mark stamp is showing a white spot on the stomach of the left lion.
3. At the bottom a 5 Mark imperforated proof with inverted overprint "MAK" and a mis-perforation in the lower margin. (Cert.)



BRIEFMARKENPRÜFSTELLE BASEL

CH-4144 Arlesheim

Postfach 608

Birseckstrasse 99

BEFUND

Michel-Nr.:

Kat. SBK:

echt
postfrisch, **
ungebraucht, *
gestempelt, ☉
einwandfrei
leichte Mängel

verzehnte Bogenreihe

MAK. (Makulatur durch)

Unterschrift:

Datum: 13.02.14

Slesvig Plebiscite 1920

The stamps of the first issue in German currency Pfennig and Mark are also found as proofs with the overprint MAK. (Short for Makulatur). These imperforated stamps were not valid for postal usage and exist only in mint. They are also found with inverted, misplaced and multiple overprints. After most of the small stock was demolished in a fire, very few are still existing. A full set of 14 marginal stamps with normal overprints and the variations are shown.



Slesvig Plebiscite 1920

Philatelic covers addressed to dealers or collectors are quite common. Most of them are over-franked and nicely cancelled. Here shown as two registered express covers from the same sender in Flensburg to a recipient in Bruchsal on 06. Feb. 1920. One with the first six low values and the second one with the four other small stamps of higher value up to 75 Pfennig.



Slesvig Plebiscite 1920

Empfohlenbrief

Lilbrief

Durch Eilboten
Express

per Eilboten zu bestellen.



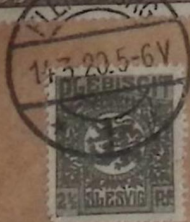
Flensburg
M 618

Herrn Carl Schmidt
per Ado Brønnevig in
Schiffbrucht
København Danmark.



On top a rare and genuine registered express coverfront of 21. February 1920 from Flensburg to Copenhagen.

Below a large and registered letter of 14. March 1920 from Flensburg to Stettin with the complete set of 14 stamps.



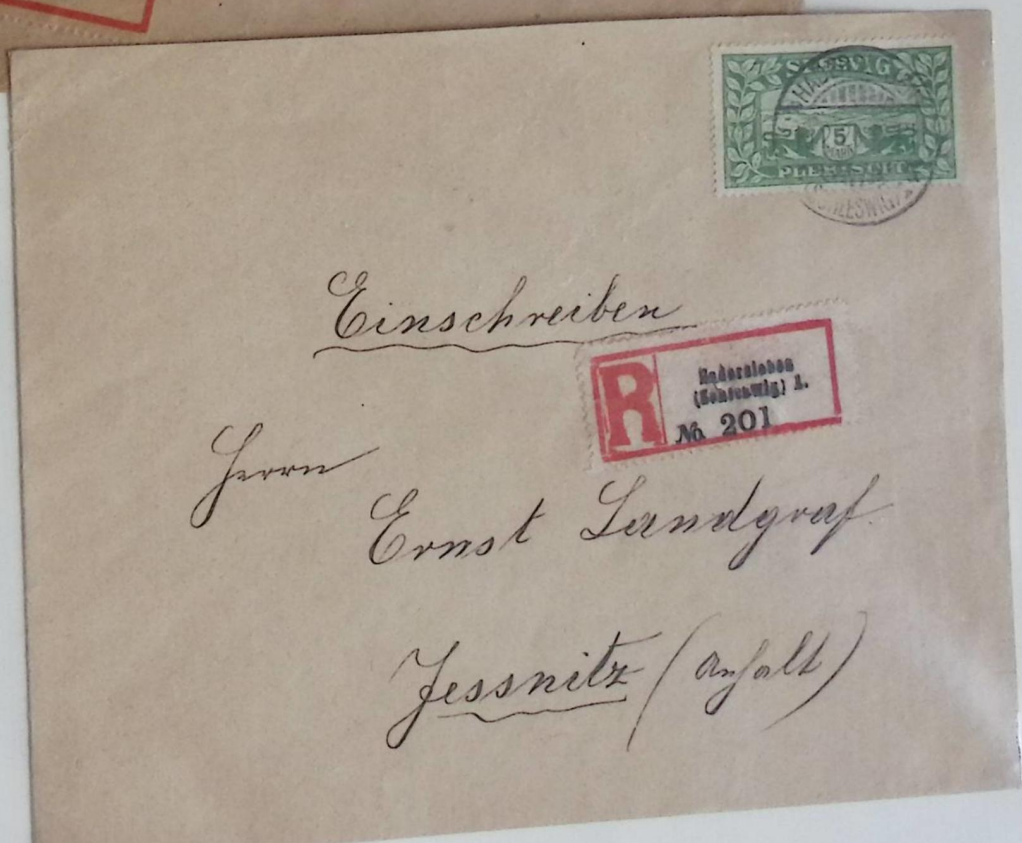
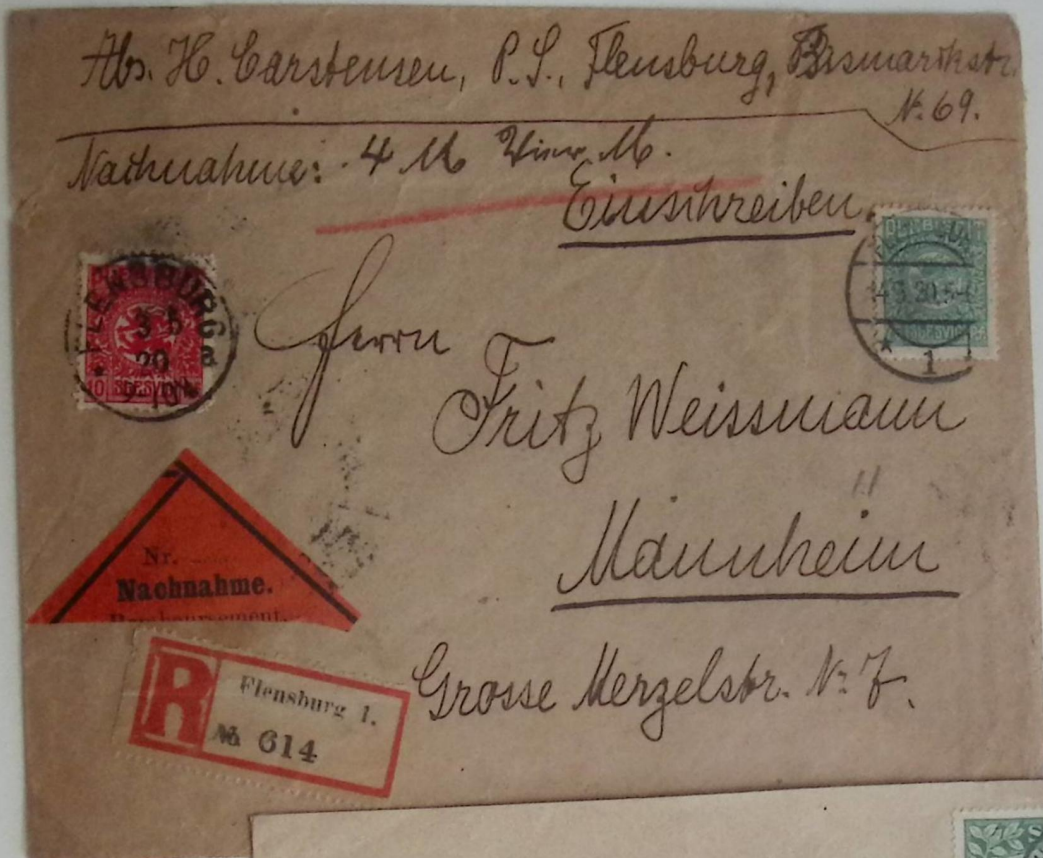
Flensburg 1.
M 40

Herrn Carl Schmidt
Stettin - Adress
1920



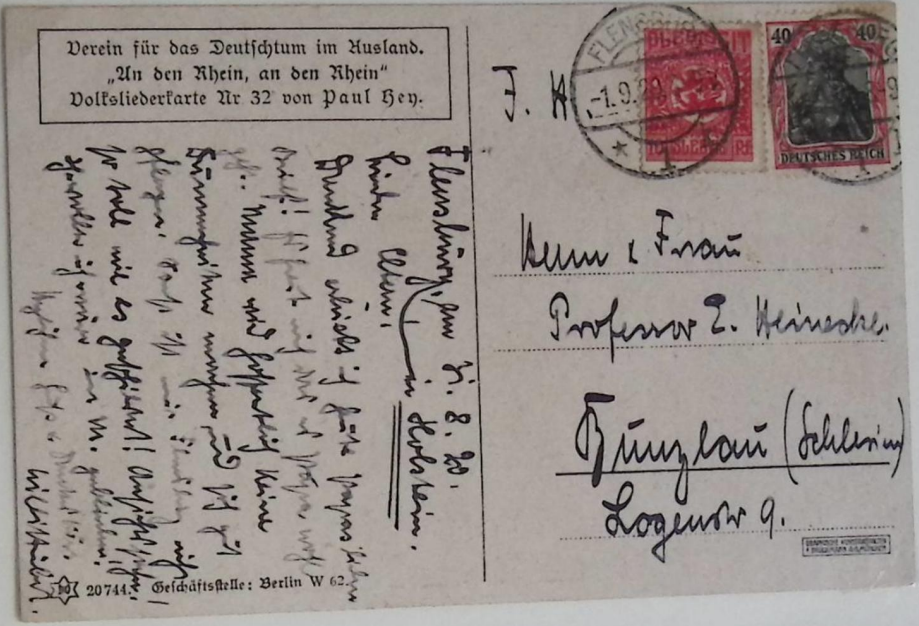
Slesvig Plebiscite 1920

Two rare genuine used covers on this page. One from Flensburg to Mannheim, correctly franked with 85 Pfennig as registered letter, to be paid on delivery (Nachnahme) and the other one also registered from Hadersleben to Jessnitz and overfranked with the 5 Mark stamp.



Slesvig Plebiscite 1920

On this last page we see two postcards. On top a genuine postcard of 01.09.1920 from Flensburg to Bunzlau (Silesia) with scarce mixed franking of German Reich stamp. The second one below is also a very unusual and genuine used one. It went from Hamburg, (where the cards and stamps were never valid) to Davos Platz in Switzerland on 31st. January 1931, many years after the cards and stamps expired.



Slesvig

Plebiscite 1920

The International Commission also issued a set of three postcards for the area. They came in three denominations of 7 ½, 10 and 15 Pfennig.



Slesvig

Plebiscite 1920

The same set of three postcards, this time philatelically used.



Slesvig Plebiscite 1920 (DENMARK)

In Denmark the unification of Northern Slesvig with the Danish Kingdom was the intention of the Plebiscite and success was acknowledged with a commemorative stamp set of five. (Three values and two colour variations.)

Also shown below a rare essay of a set of six stamps by August Carstens. They are printed on unwatermarked paper without gum. The word "PLEBISCIT" is not found on the stamps but only on the lower right margins of each drawing. The original artwork can be seen in the Danish Tele & Post Museum in Copenhagen.

