

## Usage of the Ring Stationery of Finland, 1891-1911

The Postal Manifesto decreed in 1890 by Alexander III brought the Finnish postal service under the control of the Russian Ministry of the Interior. On 1 May 1891, an order went out from the Ministry for the use in Finland of postal stationery and postage stamps of the so-called Russian designs, printed in denominations of the Russian currency but with identifying "rings". The ring designs indicated that the price paid for them was credited to Finland. The ring stamps and stationery were valid until 14 May 1911.



Return portion of double card, from Mombasa, East African Protectorate – 13 JA 06

Although the ring stamps and postal stationery were sold only in Finland, they were also valid without restriction throughout the Russian Empire. In turn, the purely Russian stamps were valid in Finland, but were not sold there until 1899-1900. The ring items could be purchased with either Finnish or Russian currency, and therefore postal clerks had to maintain two separate cash drawers.

The Finnish people did not like the kopek frankings and preferred to continue use of their own penni-valued postage. Therefore, none of the ring stationery can be considered common. It was issued in very limited quantities, and much of it was destroyed, unused, in 1911. At all times during the twenty-year period that the ring items were valid, usage of the contemporary Finnish issues, denominated in penni, was prevalent within Finland's borders.

### Significant items

Items of special significance are displayed with a light blue colored backing. These include a registered wrapper to German Southwest Africa; two registered lettercards; an example of the mistaken application of the **FRAN RYSSLAND** harbor stamp on a short-paid postal card to South Africa; return portions of three double cards, two of which are returned from Mombasa, East African Protectorate ( see above card) and British Guiana; an example of the use of the August, 1900 "Mourning" label and an example of usage after demonitization and invalidation. Mixed frankings with the 1889 or 1901 Finnish penni denominated stamps are also seldom seen, and are displayed with a light cream backing.

## 1 Kopek Wrapper

## Intended Usage

1 kopek was the proper postage for local printed matter in Finland or within the Russian Empire, weighing 1 luoti (about 13 grams) or less.

Only one size (89mm x 389mm) of the 1 kopek wrapper was issued. The quantity was 30,300. This wrapper is most often found with additional franking for transport beyond the local boundary, and **examples of its original intended usage are rarely found.**



Local printed matter, Wiborg (Wiipuri),  
8. III. 96., with tri-lingual Russian cancel.

In 1893-1894, the trilingual Russian cancels replaced the 1873 "double ring" and the 1888 "Finland" style cancellers, remaining in use until the 1920's, after removal of the Russian text in 1918.

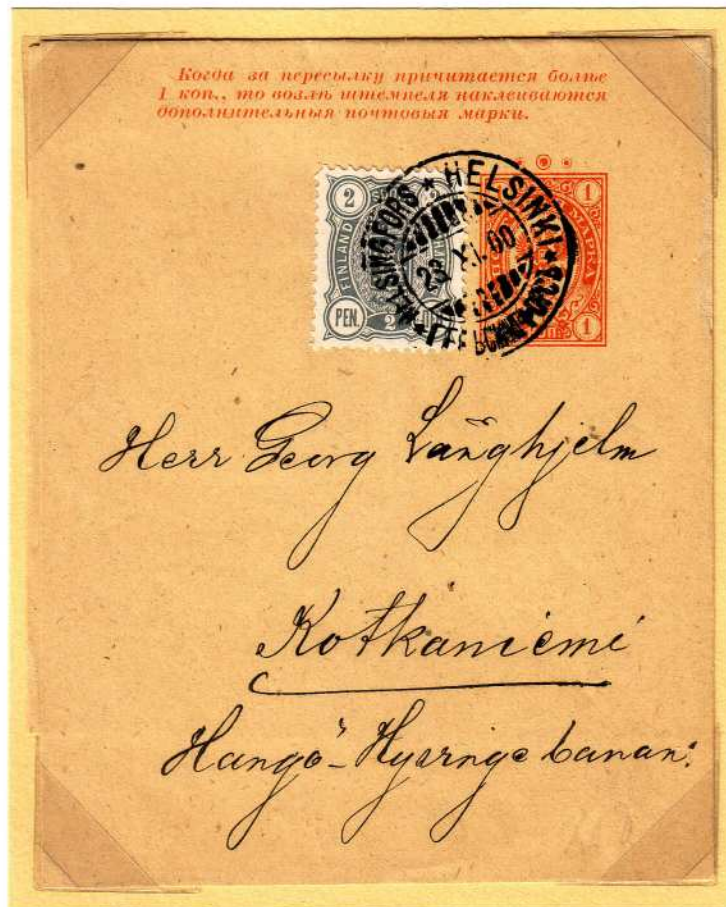


Usage within the Empire

Local printed matter,  
Moscow, 10.II.1897

## Finnish Coat of Arms Issue of 1889 added as additional postage

2 kopeks or 5 penni was the proper postage for printed matter weighing up to 50 grams.



2 penni gray Finnish coat of arms issue added to 1 kopek wrapper.  
(2 penni = 1 kopek + 1 kopek = 2 kopeks or 5 penni.)

Helsinki, 23. XI, to Kotkaniemi, backstamped with 24.XI.00 **K.P.XP.No. 15** railway cancellation. This line ran from Hanko to Hyvinkää between 1900 and 1908.

The 1889 Finnish coat-of-arms issues remained valid on mail to abroad until August 14, 1900 and on inland mail until January 14, 1901. Penni and kopek issues could be combined to meet the rates for the intended class of service, but the combination is very rare..

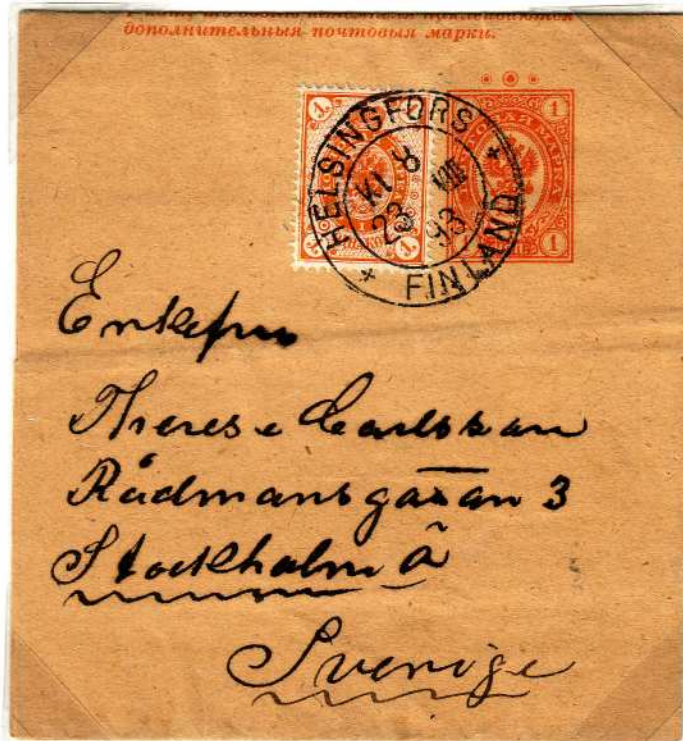
For domestic mail, penni valued stamps were readily available for franking any postal service. Further, the majority of the Finnish people did not favor the Russian stamps and did not use them unless required, i.e. to Russia and later to abroad.

## 1 Kopek Wrapper

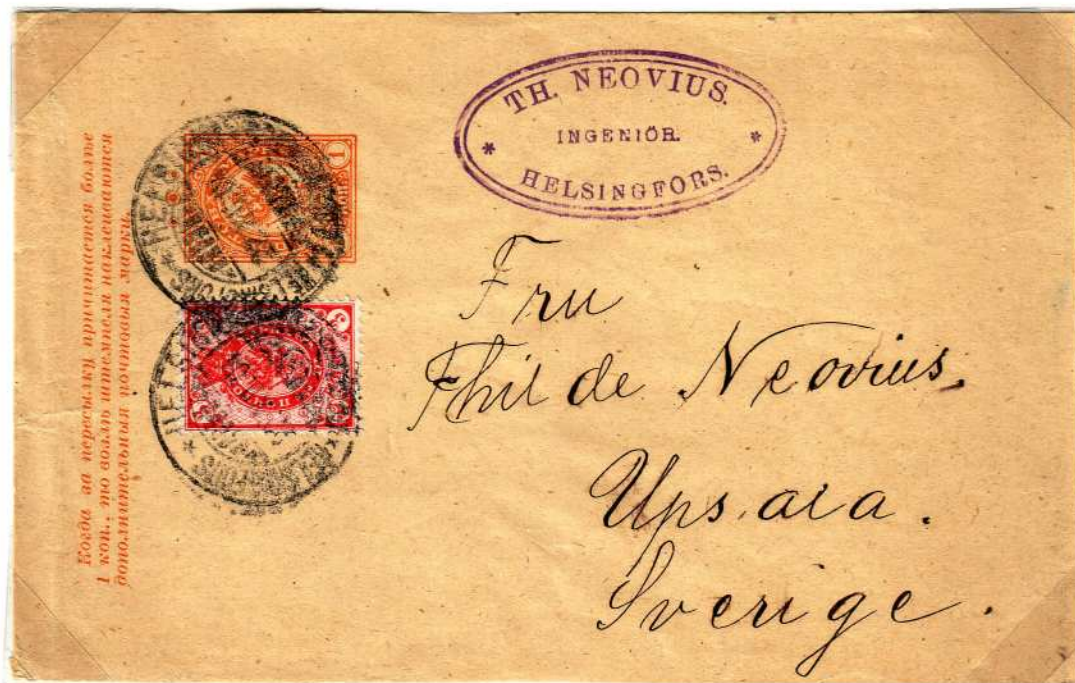
## Finnish Ring Stamps Added as Additional Postage

2 kopeks was the proper postage for printed matter abroad, weighing up to 50 grams.

4 kopeks was the proper postage for printed matter abroad, weighing 51 to 100 grams.



1 kopek ring stamp added to 1 kopek wrapper. Helsinki, 23. VIII. 93. to Stockholm, with 1888 Swedish language Finland style cancel. Finland never issued penni valued wrappers, so the ring wrappers were the only ones available. However, most newspapers were addressed and stamped directly, and therefore, all of the wrappers are scarce.



3 kopek ring stamp added to 1 kopek wrapper. Helsinki, 27. XII. 04. to Upsala, Sweden.

## Finnish Issue of 1901-1909 added as additional postage

6 kopeks or 15 penni was the proper postage for inland printed matter weighing 8-12 luotia from May 1, 1891 through December 31, 1900, or 101-150 grams from January 1, 1887 until September 9, 1917.

4 kopeks or 10 penni covered 4-9 luotia or 51-100 grams for the same periods.



Åbo (Turku) to Muonio, Lappland  
with Åbo closed oval ship cancel.



Helsinki to Muonio, 2.V.07  
With Charity Seal.

2 and 10 penni Finnish "Russian" design issues of 1901-1909 added to 1 kopek wrappers.

12 penni, equivalent to about 5 kopeks  
+ 1 kopek = 6 kopeks

10 penni, about 4 kopeks  
+ 1 kopek = 5 kopeks (overfranked).

The postal system and the currency system did not exactly correspond. For example, while 10 penni would buy a 3 kopek postal card, 25 penni would purchase a 10 kopek lettercard or entire, but 5 penni would cover 2 kopeks.

The confusion created by this inconsistent conversion led to some interesting and very rare mixed frankings in the early years of usage.

1 Kopek Wrapper

Russian Issue of 1889-1906 Added as Additional Postage

Destination --- France



Kuopio, 27 III 04 to Le Havre.

Destination --- Germany



Jakobstad, 9 I 01 to Berlin

2 kopeks paid the printed matter rate up to 50 grams for inland and all foreign destinations except Russia. About 1900, with the introduction of the Russian ringless definitive issues and the phasing out of the ring stamps, both issues were used concurrently. The ring and ringless mixed franking combination was fairly common until about 1908.

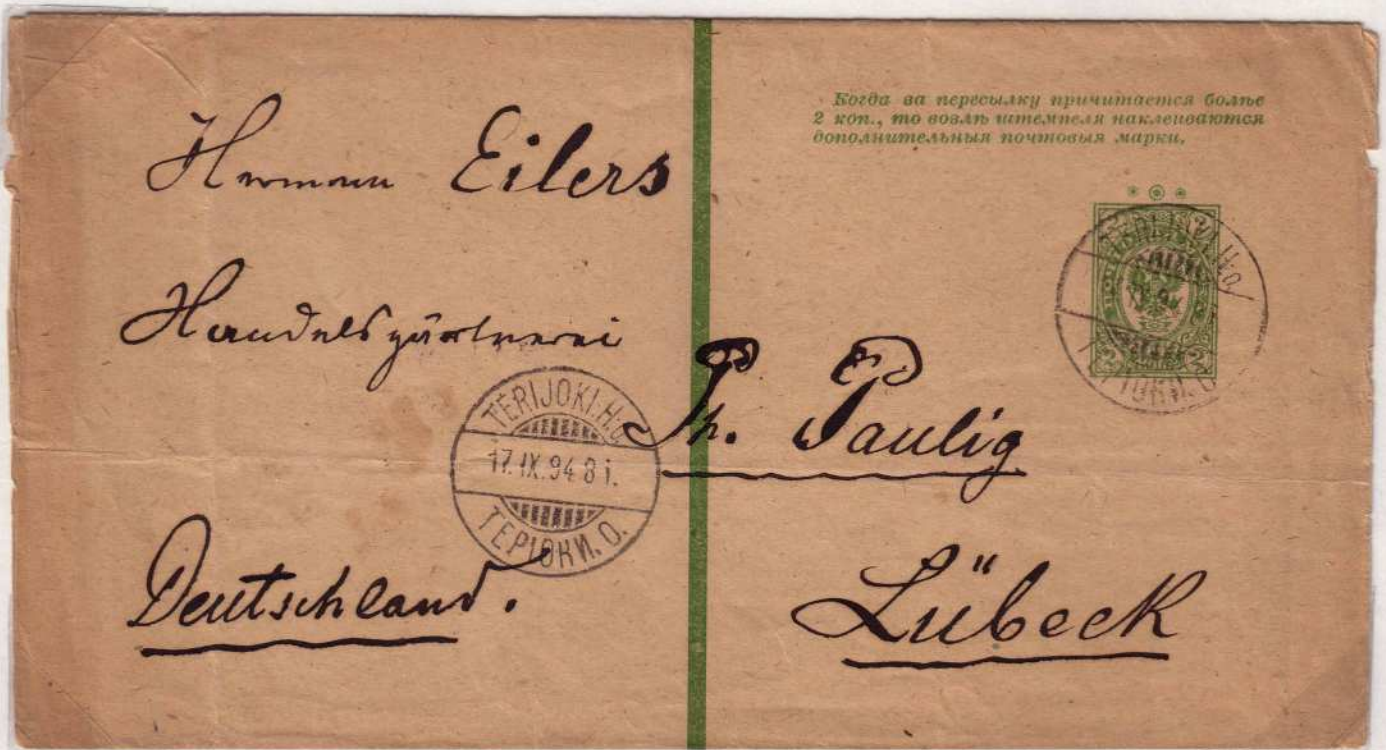
2 Kopek Wrapper

Intended Usage

2 kopeks was the proper postage for printed matter abroad, weighing up to 50 grams..



2 kopek narrow (134mm x 376mm) wrapper sent from Fredrikshamn, 15 November 1891 to Berlin, backstamped with St. Petersburg, 4 Nov 1891 transit markings and Berlin, 18/11 arrival marking. The double circle cancellations were taken out of service in 1893 and are seldom found on ring items.



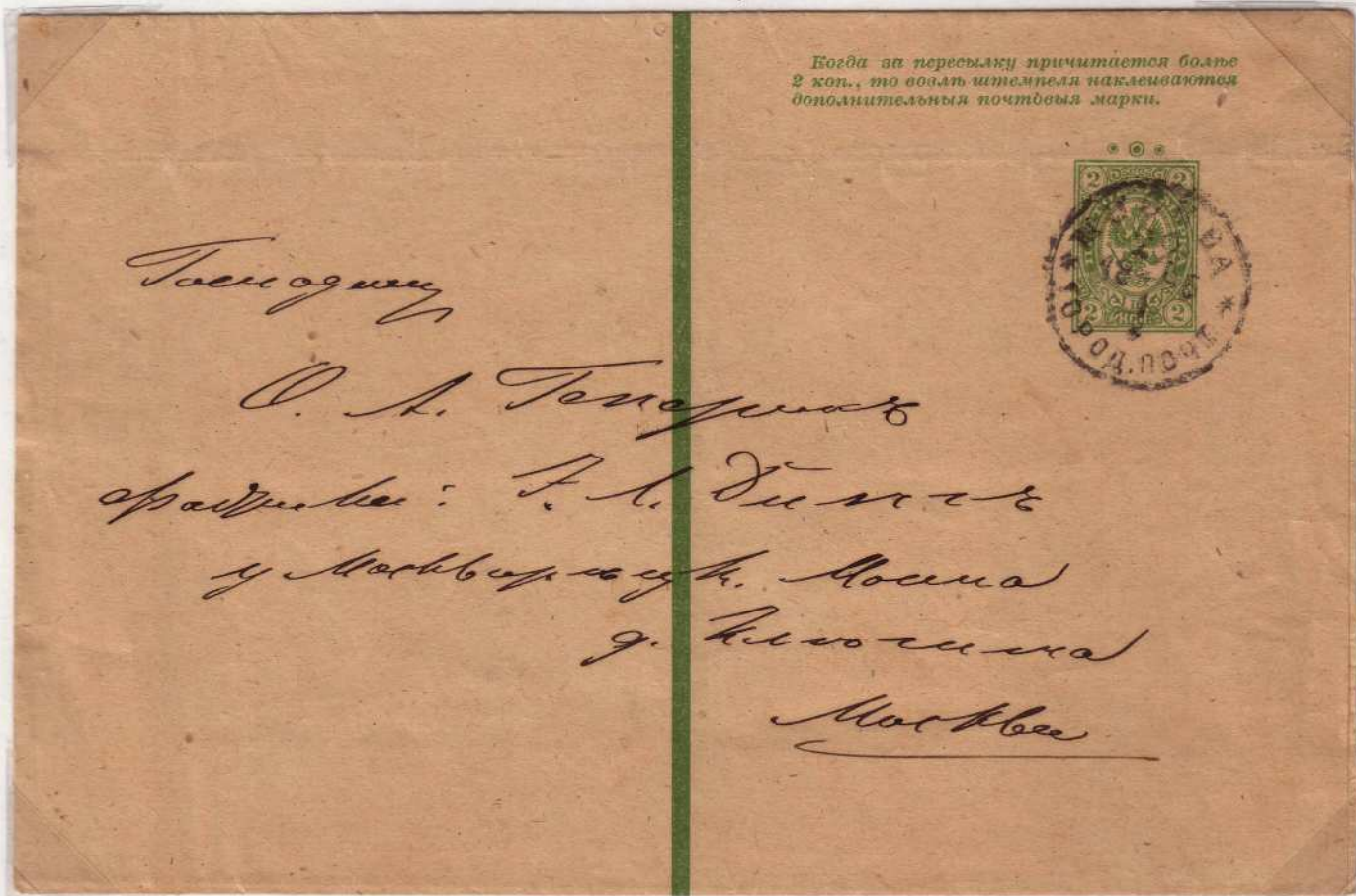
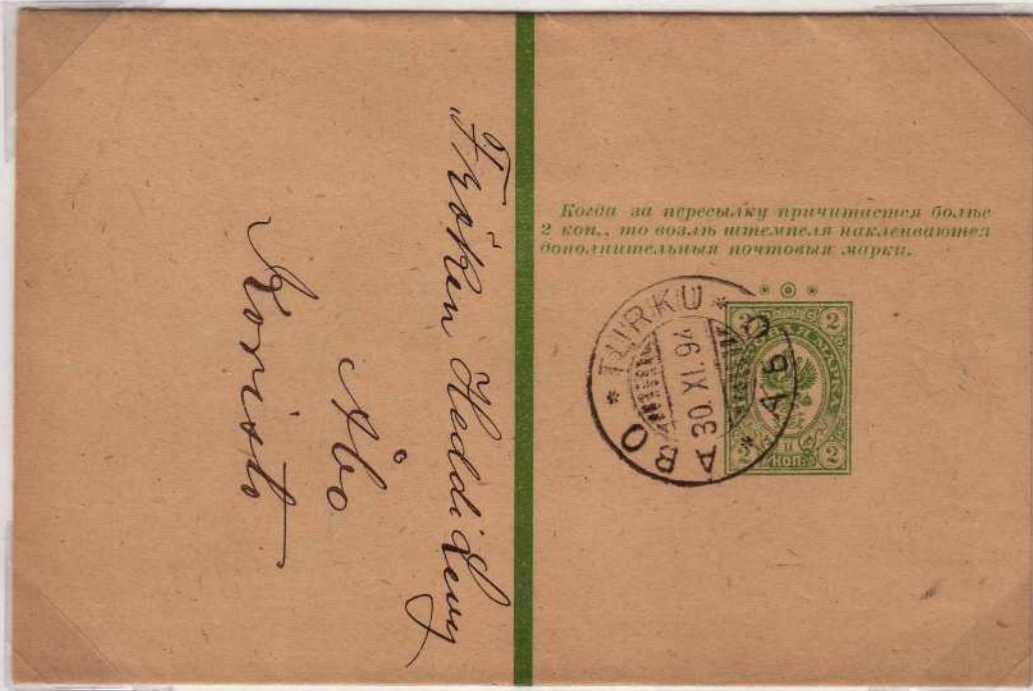
2 kopek wide (177mm x 444mm) wrapper sent from Terijoki, 17. IX. 94., to Lubeck with 6. IX. 94 St. Petersburg transit backstamp. 10,100 of each size were printed.

2 Kopek Wrapper

Intended Usage

2 kopeks was the proper postage for local printed matter weighing from 1 to 8 luoti

Narrow style wrapper used for local printed matter within Åbo, 30. XI. 94. With tri-lingual Russian cancel



Wide style wrapper used for 1895 local printed matter within Moscow.



2 Kopek Wrapper

Finnish Ring Stamps Added as Additional Postage

8 kopeks was the proper postage for printed matter, weighing from 151 to 200 grams.  
24 kopeks was the proper postage for printed matter, weighing from 551 to 600 grams.



Helsinki, 1.II.00, to Willmanstrand.

Helsinki, 23.II.01, to Willmanstrand.

**Finnish 1889 Coat of Arms Issue and Ring Stamps added as additional postage**

25 penni or 10 kopeks was the proper postage for printed matter weighing up to 250 grams.



St. Michel, 9 III. 00, to Björnberg (Pori).

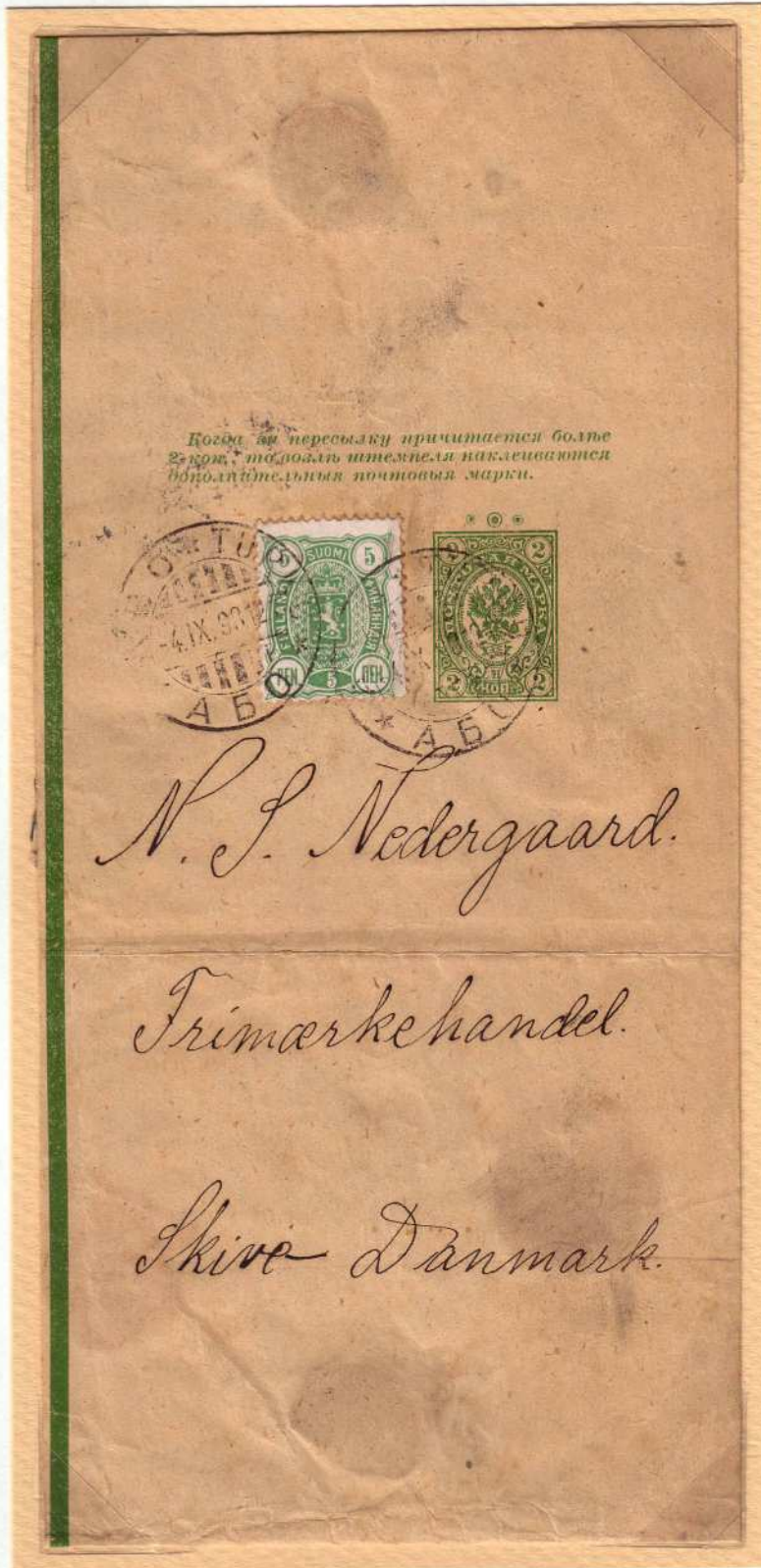
3 kopeks = 10 penni + 15 penni = 25 penni, sufficient franking for printed matter weighing up to 250 grams.

MIXED FRANKING - The 1889 Finnish coat-of-arms issues remained valid on mail to abroad until August 14, 1900 and on inland mail until January 14, 1901. Penni and kopek issues could be combined to meet the rates for the intended class of service.

This is one of the most striking and exquisite mixed franking combinations known from this period.

Finnish Coat of Arms Issue of 1889 added as additional postage

4 kopeks or 10 penni was the proper postage for printed matter weighing from 51 to 100 grams.



5 penni Finnish coat of arms issue added to 2 kopek wrapper.

(5 penni = 2 kopeks + 2 kopeks = 4 kopeks or 10 penni.)

Åbo, 4.IX.98 to Skive, Denmark -- backstamped Skive, 8.9.98.

2 Kopek Wrapper

Russian Issue of 1889-1906 Added as Additional Postage

Registered Wrapper

Uncommon Destination

6 kopeks was the proper postage for printed matter, weighing 101 to 150 grams.

10 kopeks was the registration fee for foreign mail, other than within the Russian Empire



2 kopek narrow wrapper sent registered from Waltimo to German Southwest Africa.

With Helsinki-St. Petersburg railway registration label. and Nurmes transit cancel of 10-I-96.



2 kopek narrow wrapper sent registered from Jyvaskyla to Buenos Aires, 22.IV.96.

Very few kopek franked items have been reported to South America.

3 kopeks was the proper postage for a postal card sent domestically, or within the Russian Empire.

These cards are relatively scarce in domestic traffic, as the Finnish people preferred to use the Finnish penni currency stamps, or the readily available 10 penni postal cards. 1,234,850 were printed, but most were destroyed in 1911.



3 kopek postal card from Nykyrka, 23 IV. 92., to St. Michel, with "Finland" style cancellations at both ends.

Within the  
Russian Empire.



Helsinki, 16 March 1899 (per dateline) to St. Petersburg. This card contains the St. Petersburg branch post office "7" cancellation, a 5 Mar 99 receiving cd, and the boxed handstamp **ИЗЪ ФИНЛЯНДИИ (Iz Finlandii)** or 'From Finland' which is believed to have been applied to uncanceled mail arriving in St. Petersburg on the train from from Helsinki.

There are two distinct printing varieties of the 3 kopek postal card.  
(This is a new discovery - June, 2001)

Type I - The 6 address lines consist of irregular circular dots, spaced at 25 dots per 2 centimeters.



Nikolaistad, 24.XII.95., to Brändö – backstamped 24.XII.95.

Type II – The address lines consist of evenly spaced rectangular dots, spaced at 32 dots per 2 centimeters.

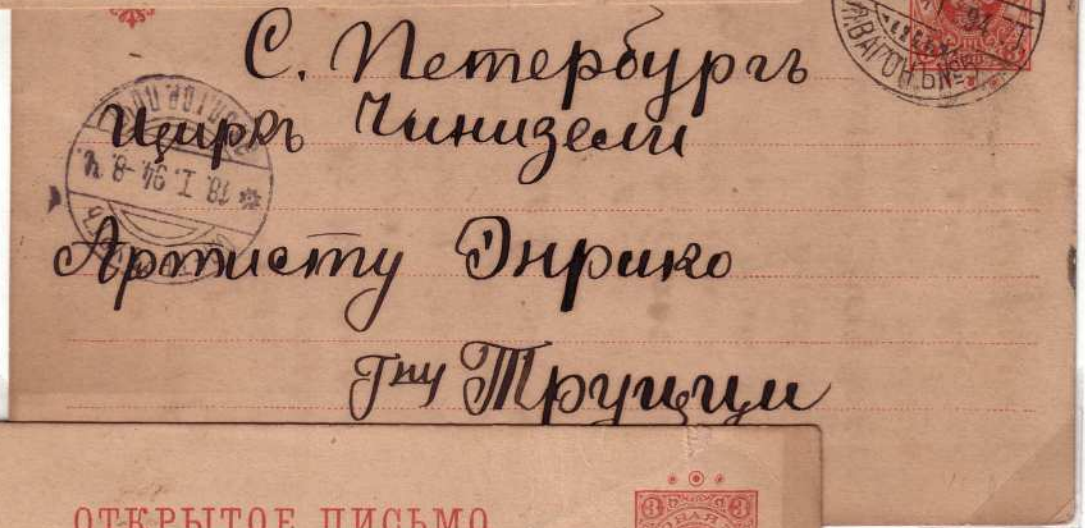


Kuokkala, 6.VII.98., to Moscow, 26.VI.98 (Julian calendar)



“Postiljons Kupe”,  
Postilji.k. J-J

The J-J line ran from  
Joensuu to Jaakima.



К.Р.Х.Р. No. 5,

No. 5 was the Toijala-  
Tampere-Vaasa line.

“Postiljons Kupe”,  
Postilji.k. T-H

The T-H line ran from  
Tammerfors to Helsinki



“Postiljons Kupe”,  
Postilji.k. T-H

The T-H line ran from  
Tammerfors to Helsinki