POSTER STAMPS
By Rhonda Hawes

As a follow-up to Alex Clays’ series of articles on playing cards on postage stamps, this article discusses playing cards on “poster stamps.”

Poster stamps are exactly what the name implies: miniature posters in the form of stamps. They were created to do what a poster was meant to do...advertise, promote or commemorate products or events. They were designed to be pleasing to the eye and catch one’s attention. They cost very little to produce and were easily distributed to thousands of people.

Poster stamps are a subset of a larger group of stamps called Cinderellas. These Cinderellas are defined as any stamp or stamp-like item that is not actually a postage stamp. They do not qualify for inclusion in International Federation of Philately exhibitions (just as Cinderella was not allowed to attend the ball!).

Poster stamps were first produced in Germany in the latter part of the 19th century, where they were known as reklame marken. Their popularity quickly spread throughout both Europe and the United States, reaching a peak shortly before World War I and then declining in the 1930s when magazine advertising took over the market. Designed by some of the best known graphic artists in the world, these tiny posters sold products, promoted sporting events, expositions, charities and other public events. Because they were so colorful and artistic and could easily be stored in albums, they very quickly became collectible. People collected them by artist, topic etc.

In my collection I have poster stamps that use playing cards or suit signs to advertise products, as well as stamps that advertise playing cards. The beautiful poster stamps that I am featuring in this article represent the latter.
Four stamps advertising Altenburger Spielkarten

Jacks, Queens and Kings for Stralsunder Spielkarten

4 stamps advertising F.A. Lattmann, Goslar

Speelkaartenfabriek Nederland
Set of six stamps advertising Norrköpings Spelkort, very similar to the Wüst stamps previously shown. The games being played are: Bridge; Wira; Whist; Preferance; Kille and Fem-kort.

Four miscellaneous poster stamps for Danish playing cards:
Kruckows, Danske, Spillekort, Engelsen&Schröder; S. Salomon & Co., Holmblad's Spillekort; and Gieses' Spillekort.

Editor’s Note; Thanks Rhonda, there just doesn’t seem to be an end to the wonderful items like these ones which are playing card related.

This is another unknown collecting field to us and we think that the images and colors on these poster stamps are absolutely fabulous. I hope that those members who are able to, will check out this article on the website in order to see it in full color.

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