

The First Issue of the Lokhvitsa Zemstvo

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Many zemstvo collectors know the story of the first issue of the district of Lokhvitsa in the province of Poltava.

According to Schmidt, 5,000 copies were issued. They were widely used on mail and very few mint or genuinely used copies came into the hands of collectors. Schmidt rated these stamps RRRR because he knew of only three copies.

However, in 1909, 70 more copies were found:

“Almost all of the stamps were used up before collectors found out about the opening of the postal service in the district. About 70 copies of these stamps remained at the post office counter until 1909. They had a circular purple control mark which consists of a double circle with the inscription, beginning at the lower left: “печать лохвицкой уѣздной земской управы” = “handstamp of the Lokhvitsa district zemstvo council”, and in the middle in two lines “для пакетовъ” = “for official mail”. All these stamps have a small hole in the middle.” [1]

The small hole is probably present because the stamps were all “sewn” together.

Recently, a good copy of this stamp was submitted to me for expertisation:

I consider the stamp as genuine without doubt and issued a certificate. It bears the cancellation mark and the pinhole as described by Schmidt. But the pencil annotation on the reverse, which is from Agathon Fabergé, indicates that he obtained the stamp from Kirchner in...May 1904.

How could Georg Kirchner, a famous zemstvo collector very close to Fabergé, get a copy of the cancelled No. 1 of Lokhvitsa in 1904 if these stamps were only discovered in 1909? Was part of the remaining stock sold earlier to important collectors such as Kirchner? The question is open and it would be interesting to know if other copies were in the hands of collectors before 1909.



[1] From the very rare catalogue “Schmidt und Fabergé”, 1909-16, Vol. 2, p. 418 - author’s collection:

Die Marken wurden fast alle aufgebraucht, bevor die Sammler etwas von der Eröffnung der Post im Kreise erfuhren. Ca. 70 Stück dieser Marken blieben im Postkontor bis zum Jahre 1909 liegen. Sie waren mit einem violetten runden Kontrollstempel versehen. Der Stempel besteht aus einem Doppelkreis mit der Inschrift, von links unten beginnend: „печать лохвицкой уѣздной земской управы = Stempel des Lochwiz’schen Kreis-Landschaftsamtes, in der Mitte steht in zwei Zeilen: „для пакетовъ” = für Briefumschläge. B. III. Taf. V. 3. Alle diese Marken haben in der Mitte ein kleines Loch.