

World of Stamps:

Landlocked Countries: Austrian Republic, Pt. 1

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The Austrian (and later Austro-Hungarian) Empire was not a landlocked country, and until WWI, had several ports along the Adriatic coast. The empire collapsed into several national states after the war and Austria itself was reduced to a landlocked country in Central Europe.

This new Austria was at first called German Austria and was proclaimed a republic. It is the history and stamps of the Austrian Republic from November 1918 up till now this instalment of the Landlocked Countries series will discuss.

The process leading to the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy started with the assassination on June 28, 1914, of Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, annexed by Austria in 1908. Austria accused Serbia of initiating the assassination and declared war on Serbia, a war which eventually developed into the First World War. In 2014, an Austrian souvenir sheet marked the centenary of the assassination.

As Austria was on the loser side, the Austro-Hungarian lands were divided between the new nations of Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (Yugoslavia), parts allotted to Italy and Romania, and Hungary becoming an independent country after the war.

Austria has an area of 32,383 square miles and currently around 9 million inhabitants. Its capital city is Vienna. The country is a federal republic with nine constituent states. The first Constitution of the Federal Republic was passed October 1, 1920, and its centenary was commemorated on a 2020 souvenir sheet, picturing the main author, Hans Kelsen, and pages of the



Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1914



Land-locked Austrian map today



2014 Assassination of Archduke Ferdinand centenary

constitution document.

The Republic of German Austria was proclaimed October 30, 1918, and its first stamps, previous issues overprinted “Deutschösterreich” (German Austria) were issued from December 1918 onwards. The country title was chosen to indicate an intention of uniting with Germany.

A distinct definitive issue with designs featuring a posthorn, the republican arms or an allegory of the new republic was issued from July 1919 onwards. A

single 2018 stamp was issued for the centenary of the Austrian Republic.



2020 Federal Constitution (centenary of federal constitution of the Austrian Republic)



Left, 1918 overprints – Sc. 181; right, 1919 overprint – Sc. 196



Left to right, 1919 definitive – Sc. 200; 1919 Parliament – Sc. 219; 2018 Centenary of Republic of Austria;

right, 1920-21 10K High value – Sc. 247

High value stamps showing the national parliament building were added 1919-21. A new issue featuring the republican arms was issued 1920-21.

Stamps of both definitive series were overprinted for the Carinthia plebiscite and sold



Left to right, Carinthia Plebiscite overprint, Sc. B11; 1921 Tyrol plebiscite (unofficial); 1921 Salzburg plebiscite (unofficial)

at a premium for a fund to promote votes in favor of Carinthia remaining Austrian, and not be transferred to Yugoslavia. The vote was eventually in favor of remaining Austrian.

There exist similarly overprinted stamps for unofficial plebiscites in Salzburg and Tyrol. These stamps (page 1) had no postal validity.

The 30th anniversary of the Carinthia plebiscite was commemorated on a 1950 stamp, the 40th anniversary on a 1960 stamp, the 50th anniversary on a 1970 single, and the 75th anniversary on a 1995 single. In 2020, the centenary of the Carinthia plebiscite was commemorated with a single



Left to right: 1950 Carinthia 30th anniversary – Sc. B271; 1960 Carinthia 40th anniversary – Sc. 658; 2020 Carinthia centenary

stamp.

The millenary of Carinthia was celebrated on a 1976 stamp featuring a 9th-Century coronation throne. In 1976 there was also nine stamps for the millenary of Austria, showing the arms of the nine constituent states.



Left, 1976 Carinthia millenary – Sc. 1033
Right, 1976 Carinthia arms – Sc. 1042

In 1961, the 40th anniversary of the state of Burgenland was marked with a single stamp. Prior to the First World War, the area belonged to the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but due to the area's majority of German-speaking people, the area was awarded to Austria in 1921, but the area round Sopron decided to stay with Hungary. Stamps for Burgenland as an Austrian constituent state were also issued in 1971 and 1996 (for the 75th anniversary). The 90th anniversary of the state of Burgenland was celebrated on a 2011 stamp, and the centenary on a 2021 stamp.



Top row, left to right: 1961 Burgenland 40th anniversary – Sc. 673; 1971 Burgenland 50th anniversary – Sc. 905; 2021 Burgenland centenary
Bottom row, left, 1996 Burgenland 75th anniversary – Sc. 1708; right, 2011 Burgenland 90th anniversary – Sc. 2346

In 1921, the definitive stamps were overprinted and surcharged for the flood relief fund.

The victors of the war did not want an Austrian union with Germany, and forbade the use of the German Austria title, so new stamps simply inscribed “Österreich” (Austria) were issued January 1922.



Left to right: 1921 Flood relief – Sc. B41; 1922-24 definitive – Sc. 264; 1925-27 definitive – Sc. 303-24

During the 1920s several semi-postal stamps were issued to help vulnerable groups of society. The first was a 1922 set for the musicians' fund (picturing famous composers Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Bruckner, Joh. Strauss jr. and Wolf), followed by a 1923 and 1924 sets for the artists' fund, and a 1926 set for child welfare (showing scenes from the Nibelung Legends), a 1930 set for the anti-tuberculosis fund, and a 1931 set for the writers' and youth unemployment fund. Semi-postal sets of stamps for welfare work were also issued in 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, and 1937.

A 1933 set of semi-postals benefited the international ski championship fund, and another 1933 set the Pan-German Catholic Congress.



1922 Musicians' Fund – Sc. B52, Mozart; 1931 unemployed fund semi-postal – Poets: Ferdinand Raimund Sc. B93; 1932 welfare semi-postal – Artists: Gustav Klimt, Sc. B104; 1934 welfare semi-postal – Architects: Anton Pilgram, Sc. B122; 1935 welfare semi-postal – Military Leaders, Prince Eugene of Savoy, Sc. B132; 1936 welfare semi-postal – Inventors: Viktor Kaplan, Sc. B151; 1937 welfare semi-postal – Physicians: Ferdinand von Arlt, Sc. B161

Left, 1926 Child welfare semi-postal, Gunther's Voyage to Iceland – Sc. B72
Right, 1936 winter relief semi-postal,



1923 scenery semi-postal, Castle Hill, Graz – Sc. B63; 1924 welfare semi-postal, widow & orphans – Sc. B68



Left, 1933 welfare semi-postal – Sc. B112 Right, 1933 winter relief semi-postal – Sc. B118



Left, 1936 skiing semi-postal – Sc. B139



Below, 1933 Skiing semi-postal – Sc. B108-09



1933 WIPA Philatelic Exhibition souvenir sheet semi-postal – Sc. B111



In May 1932, the ‘Austrofascist’ Engelbert Dollfuss became Federal Chancellor of Austria and gradually made himself dictator and banned both the Socialist movement and the Austrian Nazi party. As part of an attempted Nazi coup in July 1934, he was murdered by ten Austrian Nazis July 25, 1934. Both during his rule and after the failed governmental coup, there was unrest and uprisings in different parts of Austria. The ‘Austrofascism’ rule continued however up till the German invasion of Austria in 1938.



1934-35 Dollfuss – Sc. 375

In October 1934, a stamp was issued in commemoration of Dollfuss, and a similar stamp was issued July 25, 1935, on the first anniversary of his murder. A definitive high value stamp in a

1936 Dollfuss – Sc. 380 similar design was issued July 25, 1936, on the second anniversary of his death.



1934-46 regional costumes definitive, Carinthia – Sc. 356-57



Clockwise: 1937 railway centenary – Sc. 385, 387; 1937 greetings stamp – Sc. 389 1937 Danube steamships – Sc. 384

The last stamps issued by the Austrian Republic before the integration into Germany were the 1934-46 regional costumes definitives, 1937 Danube steamships, 1937 railway centenary, and Christmas stamps.



German troops invaded Austria unopposed in March 1938 and Austria was united with Germany. German stamps were put into use from April 4, 1938, but Austrian stamps remained valid for postage until October 31, 1938. In 1988 a single stamp was issued to commemorate the 50th anniversary of ‘the end of Austria’ – the annexation to Germany.

Several stamps of the Third Reich were related to Austria, the first being a stamp for the referendum in Austria about the annexation. This stamp was printed at both the State Printing Works in Berlin and in Vienna.



Left, Austria 1988 50th anniversary of Anschluss (annexation by Germany) – Sc. 1422; right, Germany 1938 Austrian plebiscite, ‘One Fuhrer’ – Sc. 485



The 1938 winter relief semi-postal set featured motifs from Austria (Ostmark – ‘Eastern Lands’).

The postal scientific week in Vienna was among the motifs of the 1939 semi-postal series for postal workers. Scenery from Austria was also presented on the 1939 welfare stamps. In 1941, two stamps were issued for the Vienna Fair (page 4).

1938 winter relief Ostmark motifs – Sc. B123-31





In the Russian zone, several stamps for Nazi-Germany were overprinted "Österreich" and put into use from early May 1945. Later a definitive issue featuring the arms of the Austrian republic was issued. These stamps were denominated in German currency, but in September 1945 a single semi-postal for welfare charities was issued in Austrian currency.



Left to right, top row first: 1945 Russian zone g – Sc. 390; 1945 Russian zone d – Sc. 391; 1945 Russian zone a – Sc. 395; 1945 Russian zone f – Sc. 398; 1945 Russian zone definitive – Sc. 432; 1945 Russian zone semi-postal – Sc. B165

Top left, 1939 Postal employees semi-postal – Sc. B149; top right, 1939 winter relief Salzburg – Sc. B167; bottom, 1941 Vienna Fair – Sc. 502-04

In 1942 Vienna hosted a European Post Congress and the stamps were issued for that event. The congress resulted in the establishment of a German-led European Post- and Telecommunications Union, and the three stamps for the congress were overprinted to celebrate the founding. In 1943 and 1944, the Vienna Grand Prix horserace was commemorated with two semi-postal stamps each. In 1944, the 7th Tyrolian Shooting Competition was honored with two semi-postals.

1942 post congress and union with overprint – Sc. B212; 1943 Vienna Grand Prix – Sc. B245; 1944 Vienna Grand Prix – Sc. 284; 1944 Tyrol Shooting Competition – Sc. B278



1945 AMG posthorn – Sc. 4N1-17

In the three other zones, an Allied joint issue featuring a posthorn and with denominations in Austrian currency were issued from June 28, 1945, onwards. This set is one of the AMG issues printed in the U.S.



Coming next month, the First Republic, from 1945



After the collapse of the German Third Reich in May 1945, Austria was occupied by the four allied powers and divided into four occupation zones. During May 1945, local overprints were applied to Nazi-German stamps, obliterating the Hitler portrait with overprints reading "Österreich", "Republik Österreich", "Rep.Öst.", "Österreich wieder frei" (Austria free again), and similar text.



Clockwise, 1945 Dorfstetten, Loeben, Graz, provisionals