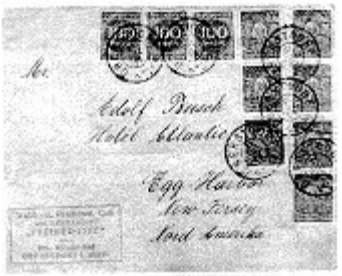
Odds, Ends, Gems

OUCH!

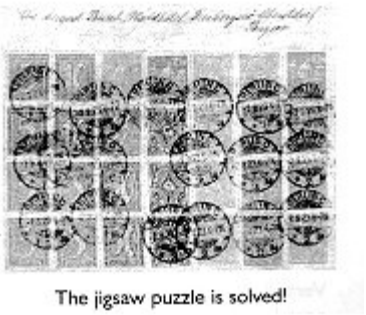
by Jerry Jensen

It was a good looking cover, just sitting in a dealer's box at the Philadelphia show, waiting to be added to my collection. Colorful, with its 38 stamps and showing the 800 Mark foreign letter rate of July 1, 1923. Covers of this period are usually insipid, showing just a couple of the brown 400 Marks stamps or such. With this many stamps, I worried about over/under franking and spent about half an hour counting and recounting their values until I was sure there was exactly 800 Marks of postage.



The cover, as purchased.

On the way home from the convention, I really started to study my purchases. Humm, interesting. The stamps on the reverse had been missed by the postmaster in Oberstdorf and canceled when the cover went through the Berlin C2 office. That's reasonable enough But wait a minute, something is wrong here, the cancels don't line up and some of the edges of the stamps are over portions of the cancels on adjoining stamps. Do they even belong there? Ouch!



The jigsaw puzzle is solved!

More study. Someone had removed all the stamps on the reverse to check their watermark (never heard of a "Morley Bright" I guess) and done a sloppy job of reassembly. After a day of soaking and repositioning, under a microscope, I got it all back to the original condition. As you can see, some of the center stamps had been misplaced and all of them "scrunched" together.

Restored, it is a wonderful cover. Best yet, at a local GPS luncheon, someone pointed out the prominent sender, August Busch, head of the AnheuserBusch Brewery. It was sent to his son who took over the company after his father's death. But that is another story.

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