

The First Postal Cards of the Republic of Finland

The Saarinen Postal Cards 1917 - 1930

This is a postal stationery exhibit with special emphasis on rates, upfranked cards and usages. This exhibit includes all the issued single and double cards, the few known printing errors and the unissued cards.

Purpose:

The purpose of this exhibit is to show:

- 1) The issued and unissued cards: shades, varieties and printing errors
- 2) The applicable postal rates and cancellations
- 3) Required upfranking to meet rate changes
- 4) Unusual usages: COD, airmail, registered and foreign destinations

Background:

In March 1917, the Russian Kerensky government authorized Finland to run the post office and assume responsibility for domestic affairs. The first stamps and postal card were released in the fall of 1917. On December 6, 1917, Finland declared itself an independent republic.

From November 3, 1917 until December 31, 1930, when the last series of Saarinen postal cards were demonetized, 17 postal cards, including overprinted cards, were issued, many of which lagged the rapid rate increases through the early 1920s.

Exhibit Organization:

This exhibit is organized by the value stamps, Parts 1-16, from the lowest value, to the 1 Fmk card, except that the 1:20 Mk/40 is shown before the 1 Fmk card, the last in the Saarinen series. The 90/20 and 90/40 cards are combined in one section. Each section is numbered and

first printed in **this color**. The applicable rates are shown with each card in the right header.

Exhibit Theme:

The first Saarinen card, 10 penni red, issued on November 3, 1917 was already obsolete because the basic post card rate was increased to 15 penni on October 1st. Many subsequently issued cards lagged rate increases as obsolete cards were upfranked by postal clerks, holding the new cards in stock until the inventory of earlier cards was exhausted or until new accurately franked cards were printed. This exhibit fully illustrates the variety of upfranking possibilities, the anomalies and misfranking associated with the many rate changes and demonetization of both Saarinen stamps and postal cards.

Important Items & Destinations:

Some better items include: a COD card, registered cards, air mail cards, misrated cards and War of Independence usages. Some items are highlighted in **red** type. Unusual destinations: Java, Straights Settlement, Indo-China, China, Australia, Belgium Congo, Argentina, Haiti, Canal Zone, Mexico and Portugal.

Major References:

Norma 2010 Special Catalogue (and earlier editions)
Suomen Postimerkkien Käsikirja V; Helsinki, 1970
Esa Mattila, *Suomen Postimaksuja*, 1881-1985
Lauri Siivonen, *Finlandia 95*, Bulletin 3, pp 48-61
Handbook of Finnish Stamps V, 1986, second series



For the first few years, the Saarinen postal cards often required additional franking to meet rapidly increasing rates. Many cards were incorrectly upfranked reflecting misunderstandings of rates, validity of postal cards and stamps. Here, the 20 penni card, although still valid, was 40 penni below the card rate; the added 60 penni stamp resulted in a 20 penni overfranking.