

## St. Petersburg - Moscow Railway [Nikolaevskaya Railroad]

**Background:** The St. Petersburg – Moscow railroad was the first commercial railroad built in Russia for transportation of its citizens, military, freight, and mail. An earlier railroad between Tsarkoe Selo and St. Petersburg of 26 km in 1837 was built more for the amusement of the Czar than to be a commercial success. The Postal Dept had only a slight idea of what would be involved in the collection and distribution of the railroad mail.

**Significance:** The railroad was the first to carry fast mail for most ordinary citizens in Russia. Even though much planning was done for mail transportation including boxes at stations and for TPO cars on the trains, the Postal Dept. had no idea of the volume of mail that they would handle. A new system had to be organized to help control this unexpected volume that they would receive. This exhibit is the story of the cancellations that were used up to the bi directional datestamps.

The postal rate was 10 kopecks

**Challenge:** The material here displayed is both hard to find and rare. I have been collecting for 35 years, and it has taken that long for me to collect what you see on these pages. Information about the material was another problem. Not much was known until the publication of *Russian Railway Postmarks* in 1994.

**Importance:** The mail transported by the new railroad was to open Russia to the modern world of fast easy access to mail, as long as you lived in Moscow, St. Petersburg or stations along the route. It was a beginning for the railroad boom that was to follow.

### Treatment:

1. Early markings of the Nikolaevskaya Railway Post Offices at the St. Petersburg and Moscow stations, Pages 2-5.
2. Hexagonal Dotted Numerical Cancellations [3,4,5 & 6} used on the TPO's, Pages 6-7.
3. Circular datestamps with the Serial number [1-4] indicating the Post Wagon, Pages 8-9.
4. TPO Route 1-2 bi directional datestamps – Serial numbers 1-8, Pages 10-16.

**Highlights:** Pg 4 & 10 Later date than recorded. Pg 11, 12, 13, 14 & 16 unrecorded.

**References:** *Russian Railway Postmarks*, A.V. Kiryushkin & P. E. Robinson  
St Petersburg: The Imperial Post-its postmarks and other postal markings  
1765 – 1914, Ian L. G. Baillie & Eric G. Peel