
Castellum



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President's Message

by Gary Little

Two new stamps with a Luxembourg theme have recently come to my attention. The first is from Nicaragua and was issued on February 5, 2003 in honor of the Royal Visit of Grand Duke Henri and Grand Duchess Maria Teresa earlier this year. The stamp features a full-length portrait of the royal couple in formal attire.

The other stamp was issued by the United States to honor Luxembourg-born photographer Edward Steichen (1879-1973). It is one of the twenty different stamps included in the Masters of American Photographers sheet issued on June 13, 2002.



*Nicaragua stamp featuring a portrait of the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess.
Issued on February 5, 2003.*

Steichen, whose family immigrated to the U.S. when he was only 18 months old, is perhaps best known for his *Family of Man* photo study, originally created in 1955 for the Museum of Modern Art in New York. (Steichen was the first director of MOMA's photography department.)

Since 1994, *Family of Man*, which includes 503 images of people engaged in various life-defining situations (love, death, work, war, etc.), has been permanently displayed at the medieval castle in Clervaux in northern Luxembourg.



*U.S. stamp honoring Luxembourg-born photographer Edward Steichen.
Issued on June 13, 2002.*

Use of the Oval *Déboursé* Marking on Mail with Postage Due that the Addressee Refused or that was Otherwise Undeliverable

by Allan F. Wichelman

In the September 2002 issue of *Castellum*, Gary Little asked why a postage due adhesive had been affixed and cancelled at Roodt on a postcard that the addressee refused rather than pay the postage due charge. I think the answer is straightforward. The card shown in Gary's article was addressed to a Monsieur Wolff in Niederanven, a village that has never had its own post office and whose mail at the time was delivered by mail carriers from the post office at Roodt. Upon receipt, the Roodt post office, having recognized that the card had been insufficiently prepaid, taxed the card by affixing and canceling a 10c postage due adhesive, after which the card was sent out with a mail carrier for delivery to the addressee in Niederanven *and for collection by the carrier of the 10c postage due*. When the rather niggardly addressee refused to pay the postage due charge, the carrier endorsed the card with the reason ("refused for want of payment of the postage due"), after which he had to return it to the Roodt post office for return to the sender (or a dead letter office if no return address was shown).

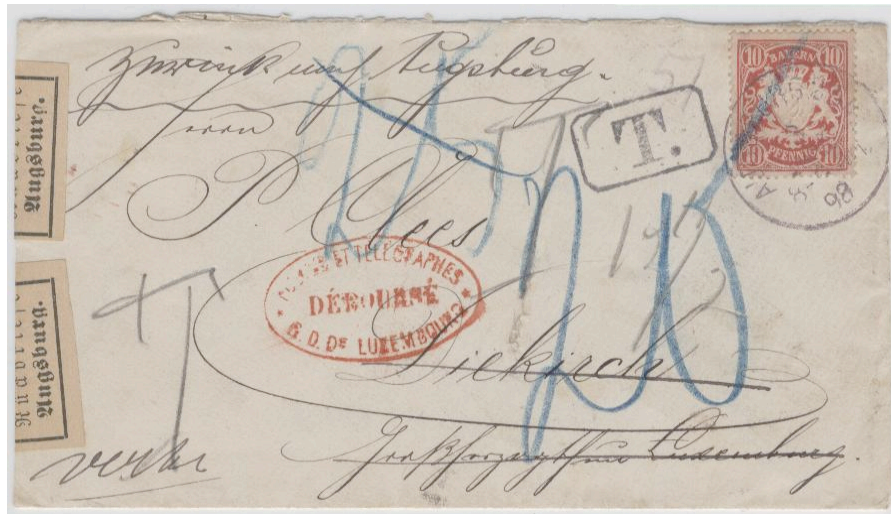
Under circumstances such as this where a taxed item could not be delivered, post offices sometimes stamped the French word "*déboursé*" on the item to indicate that the tax had been cancelled.



Pair of 10c postage due stamps cancelled Rodange, September 28, 1912, and invalidated with the déboursé cancel.

This mark usually takes the form of an oval and is struck over the already canceled due stamps or elsewhere on the front of the item, usually in red ink. Covers and cards bearing the *déboursé* mark are collectible as an interesting adjunct to a postage due, misdirected mail or auxiliary mark collection. I haven't seen the official regulations for the use of this mark, but at least in the early part of the 20th century I suspect that the mark assisted in accounting for the sale and use of due stamps for which the carriers were unsuccessful in collecting any money.

Some examples of undeliverable mail bearing the *déboursé* mark are shown below.



The letter above was posted at Augsburg, Germany, March 3, 1898, franked with a Bavarian 10 pfennig adhesive and taxed in blue crayon "20." There also is a manuscript pencil inscription "12 1/2" under the German "T" marking.

The letter is transit marked at Luxembourg-Gare, March 4, 1898, and also at its destination, Diekirch, on March 4, 1898. Apparently the addressee, P. Clees, refused to pay the tax, so in this pre-postage due stamp era, the *déboursé* marking was applied and the letter returned to Augsburg, where it was received March 6, 1898.

There are manuscript inscriptions in German script on the top front (in black), and in black and also in red on the back along with another blue crayon 20 and two resealing labels on the left side. The inscriptions and labels presumably explain why the tax couldn't be collected and what the consequences of this were.



This is the front of a letter from Besançon, France. Mailed on December 8, 1924, it is franked with a 5c sower adhesive, and is curiously addressed to 1 Rue des Capucins, Luxembourg, Belgium.

Since there is a Rue des Capucins in Luxembourg-Ville, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, I think the intended destination was Luxembourg, not the province of Belgium called Luxembourg.

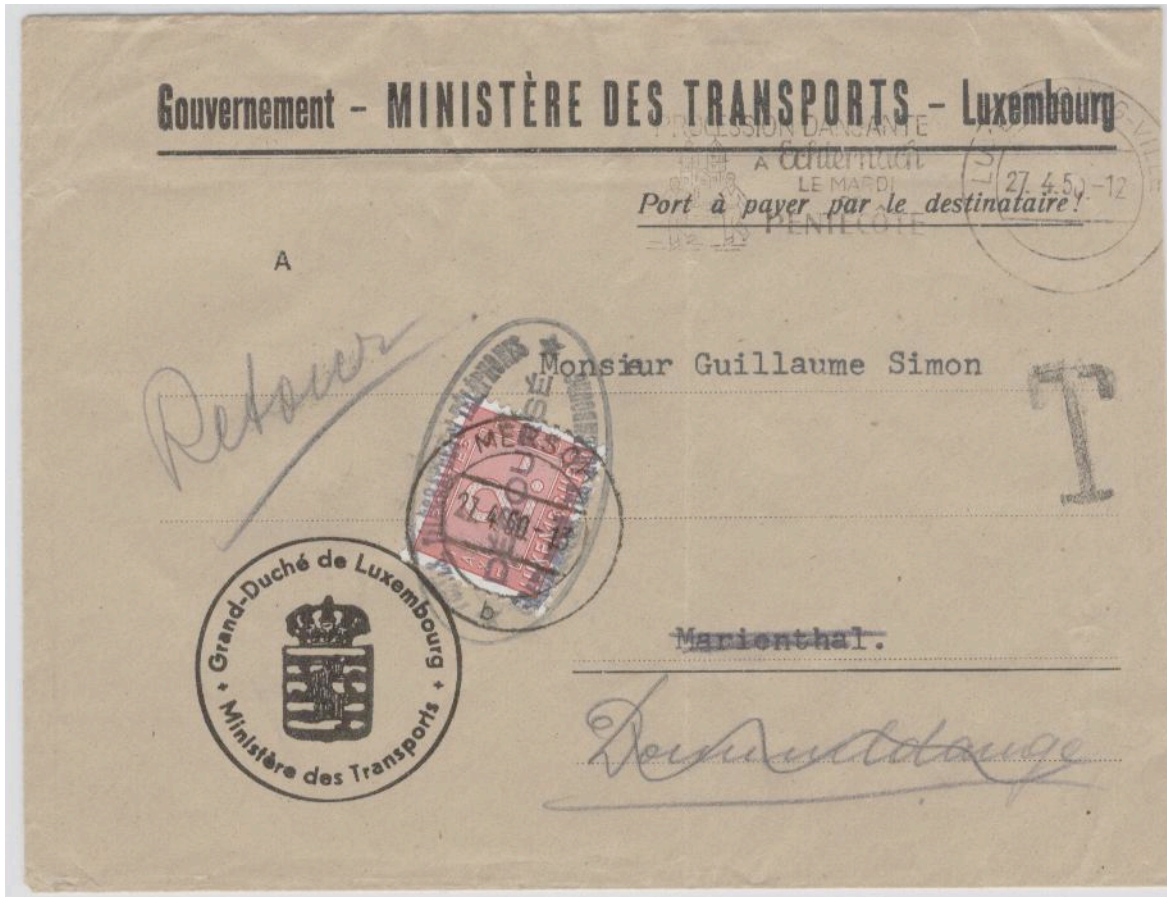
A pencil "T" and a blue crayon "30" indicates the tax due, and the 30c due stamp is cancelled at Luxembourg-Ville, December 11, 1924, the front stamped *Retour* [return to sender] and the *déboursé* cancel applied next to the due stamp. The pencil notation at the bottom is illegible.



A similar item, a cover posted from Paris, France, December 5, 1936, franked with a 50c French adhesive, inscribed in French *Personnelle* and addressed to the Galeries de France at Place Guillaume in Luxembourg. The receipt stamp on the back is that of Luxembourg-Ville, December 6, 1936. On the back the postman has written (in French) an explanation something to the effect that the address is insufficient or that the Galeries don't exist there (I'm not sure which). The due charge is shown in blue crayon (50) and the pair of 25c due stamps are cancelled at Luxembourg-Ville, December 7, 1936. The letter is stamped *Retour* and shows the *déboursé* cancel tied to one of the due stamps.



An advertising cover posted from a town in Wales (?) in 1936 to The Happy Philosopher (9 a.m. programme) at "Radio Broadcasting Station, Luxembourg" and franked with a 1 1/2 pence British adhesive. Marked in manuscript in black ink *2d Due* and with a T/20 handstamp, the amount was converted to 1.40 francs, as shown in blue crayon. The pair of 70c due stamps are (faintly) cancelled at Luxembourg-Ville and struck with the *déboursé* cancel. The Luxembourg postman's pencil notation on the back explains that the addressee refused to pay the tax, a fact confirmed by the British post office pencil notation on the left side "refused for postage due."



An official letter from the *Ministère des Transports* of the Grand Duchy with a printed endorsement in French requiring the recipient to pay the postage [*Port à payer par le destinataire!*] (note that the exclamation mark is in the actual text). Postmarked Luxembourg-Ville, April 27, 1950, and addressed to a Monsieur Simon in Marienthal, with a Mersch backstamp of the same date. Forwarded to Dommeldange per a pencil inscription on the back, where the Dommeldange postman on April 29, 1950 indicates *inconnu a Dommeldange*, meaning that Mr. Simon is "unknown" in Dommeldange. Taxed 2 francs (the domestic letter rate) with a 2 franc due stamp applied and cancelled at Mersch on April 27th.

Since the tax could not be collected, the Dommeldange post office struck the 2 franc due stamp with a black *déboursé* oval and marked the letter in pencil *Retour*. Apparently the post office simply had to absorb the uncollected amount on letters that were undeliverable, even though the letter had to be carried, in this case, three times, from Luxembourg-Ville to Mersch for delivery in Marienthal, then to Dommeldange for attempted delivery there, and then back to the Ministry in Luxembourg-Ville.

Adolphe Bridge Centenary 1903-2003

by Gary Little

Exactly 100 years ago, on July 24, the majestic Adolphe Bridge was completed and opened to traffic in the presence of its namesake Grand Duke Adolphe. Built for a cost of 1.5M francs (~US \$450,000), this massive sandstone structure spans the deep, narrow valley of the Pétrusse from the Place de Metz on the Bourbon Plateau to the Place de Bruxelles on the old town side.

Its elegant design allows the bridge to fit in well with the ancient fortifications and stone railway bridges of Luxembourg City. Adolphe Bridge is actually comprised of two 6 m wide longitudinal sections, mirror images of one another, separated by a gap of 6 m. Reinforced concrete slabs, each 18 m wide, bridge the gap and form the roadway.

Several arches are integrated into the bridge design. There is the main central arch, of course, which spans 85 m, making it the longest stone arch bridge in the world at the time, surpassing the Cabin John Bridge near Washington, D.C. (It may still be the longest; I've been unable to locate any other bridge with a longer arch span.) There are two smaller arches on either side that support the roadway leading up to the main arch. Finally, there are four arcades hollowed out of the tympanum on each side of the central arch.

The principal designer of the bridge was Chief Engineer M.A. Rodange of Luxembourg whose plans were reviewed by famous French engineer Paul Séjourné, known for the bridges of the Paris-Lyon-Mediterranean railroad. The principal contractor was Fougérolles Brothers of France.

Adolphe Bridge was initially commissioned because of the need to support a railway line from the Luxembourg station to Echternach via the center of town. This line, called "Charly" after Charles Rischart, Director General of the railroad, was in service for 50 years, from 1904 to 1954.

Here is the complete "tale of the tape" for all you statisticians out there:

- The main arch spans 85 m
- The top surface of the bridge is 46 m above the valley floor
- The bridge is 18 m wide, and 211 m long
- The smaller arches on either side of the main arch span 12 m each



Adolphe Bridge (1921 stamp designed by philatelist Bernard Wolff)



Decorative arcades on the Adolphe Bridge (2003 stamp)



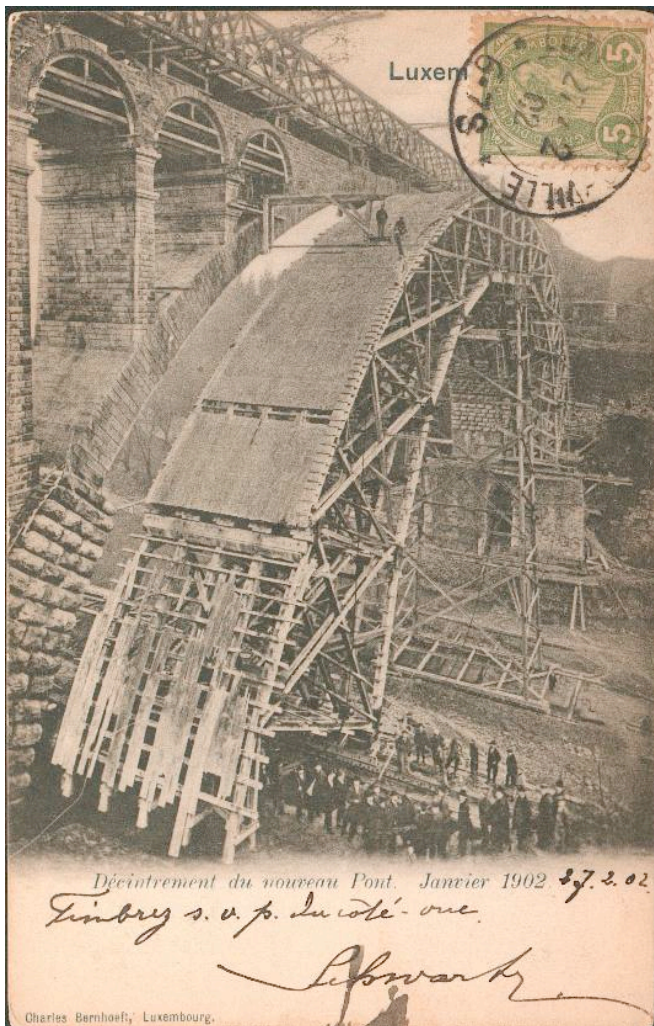
Adolphe Bridge appears in the lower right of this 1956 Belgian stamp issued to mark the electrification of the Brussels – Luxembourg railroad line. It is the only foreign stamp on which this famous bridge has appeared.



1902 postcard showing the Adolphe Bridge under construction.



Luxembourg National Day fireworks over Adolphe Bridge (1998 stamp)



1902 postcard showing the wooden scaffolding used for the central arch of the Adolphe Bridge.



Adolphe Bridge and State Savings Bank (1935 stamp)



Painting of Adolphe Bridge (1964 stamp)



1903 postcard showing the newly completed Adolphe Bridge.



The Cabin John Bridge near Washington, D.C. — when it was completed in 1863, its stone arch was the longest of any bridge in the world (1903 postcard). This record held until the completion of the Adolphe Bridge 40 years later. The arch spans 220 ft., 59 ft. shorter than the central arch of the Adolphe Bridge.