

Problems at the post offices in Poland with food parcels from the USA 1920-1924

Background

After World War I, the Treaty of Versailles established in 1920 the Free City of Danzig, (as it was then called). Food parcels were sent by ships from the USA, through the Port of Danzig, to Polish families suffering from the post-war hunger. The Polish Post Office Gdańsk – Nowy Port was opened in Danzig in March 1920 and became responsible for the handling of those parcels. In this post office, parcels were received from the ships, repacked, so-called auxiliary parcel cards were prepared and handling fees were calculated. These parcels were transported from Danzig through customs post offices in Aleksandrów Kujawski, Poznań, Tarnów and Przemyśl to the recipients mainly in the South of Poland.

The parcel traffic from the USA to Poland was allowed from 20 January 1920, as reported by *The Postal Bulletin* No. 12162 from 22 January 1920. Parcels up to 11 lbs = 5 kg weight were accepted for expedition for a fee of 12 cents/pound. On 1 December 1922, the maximum weight was increased to 10 kg, as reported by *The Postal Bulletin* No. 13031 of 4 December 1922. Parcels were shipped from New York.

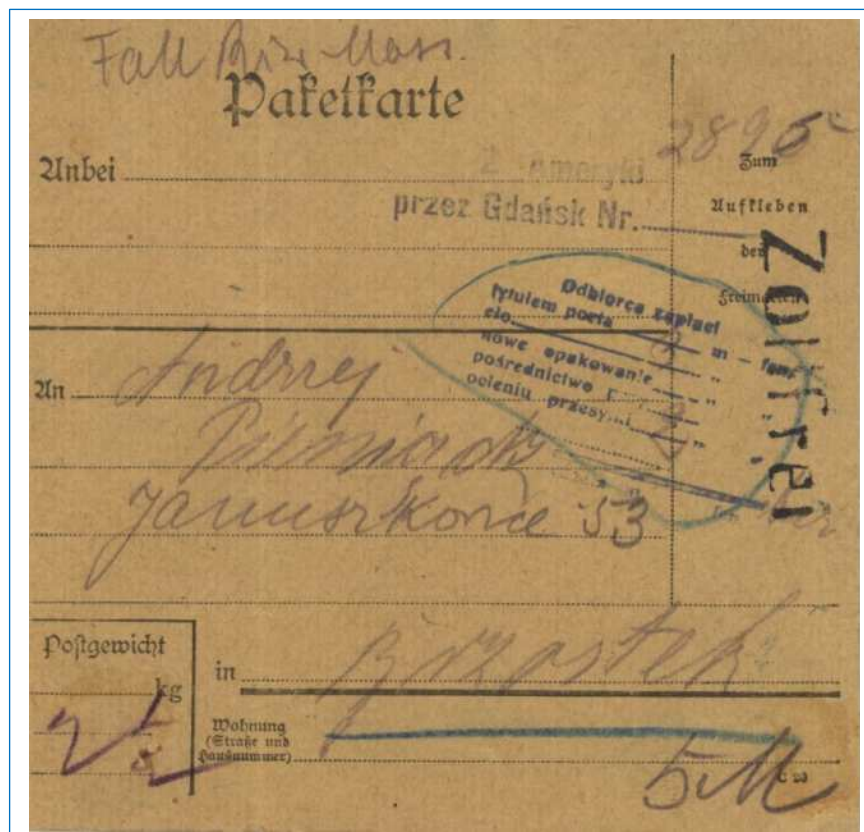
The newly opened post office in Danzig had a lack of employees to process such large quantities of parcels and was forced to employ new employees without experience and training. There was not enough space in the old barracks on the Holm island, there was theft of parcels during transport from the ship to the office and a lack of postal accessories like date stamps and (Polish) postal forms. As a result of this the Gdańsk - Nowy Port Post Office used a total of **39** different auxiliary parcel cards (German, Austrian and Polish) for the documentation of the parcel traffic.

Purpose of the exhibit

The exhibit shows the makeshift solutions used by the Polish Post in Danzig for the forwarding of food parcels from the USA to Poland. It shows the very diverse documentation of the parcel traffic; several forms are known only in single copies. The poor recipients of the parcels had to handle the problem of the ever-increasing receiving fees, caused by the inflation. Between 1920 and 1924 the postage to be paid by the recipient of the parcel increased from **5 Mk to 250 000 Mk**, which is shown on the parcel cards.



The Port of Danzig showing the locations of the Polish Post Office in the Freihafen and on the Holm island.



German parcel card for a 2,5 kg parcel sent to Brzostek. Gdańsk Z Ameryki przez Gdańsk Nr.... handstamp, a German *Zollfrei* handstamp and BRZOSTEK a 4.V.20. XI arrival cds. In Gdańsk 3 marks was raised for handling in the harbour and 2 for customs handling, a total of 5 marks which were paid with two Polish stamps with a local PORTO handstamp used as postage due stamps on the back. [The earliest recorded parcel card.](#)

**Z Ameryki
przez Gdańsk Nr.**

Odbiorca zapłaci	
tytułem porta	m.....fen.
cto.....	” ”
nowe opakowanie.....	” ”
pośrednictwo przy.....	” ”
oczeniu przesyłki	” ”
.....	
razem m fen.	

Importance

The exhibit, on the one hand, illustrates the very important US aid during the post-war food crisis in Poland and, on the other hand, shows the diligence of Polish Post Office in Danzig in the handling of the food parcel traffic.

Exhibit plan

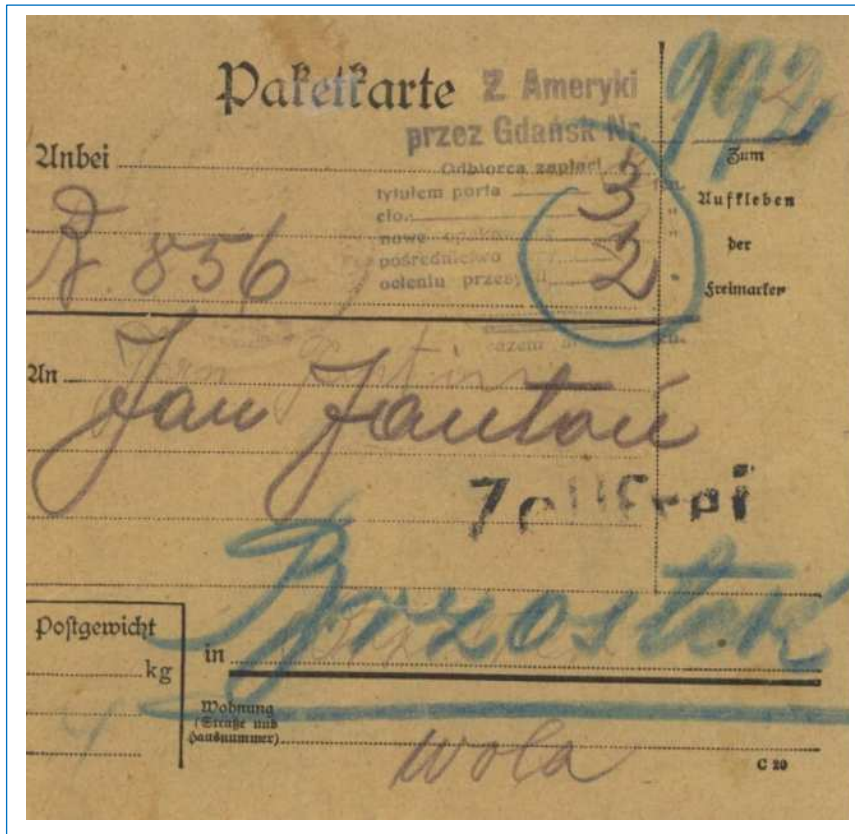
1. German postal forms in 1920 with handling fees
2. Austrian postal forms printed with POCZTA POLSKA in 1920 - 1921 with handling fees
3. German postal forms with handling fees in 1921
4. Polish postal forms with handling fees 1921 – 1924

Exhibit development

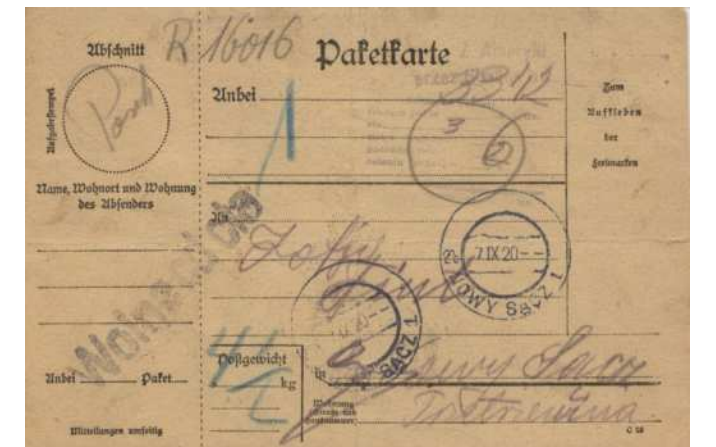
This exhibit is a social philatelic study (class 2C of the postal history regulations) showing the postal forms used in parcel traffic. All items have been expertised and rare parcels cards have been outlined in red. The sections have been balanced according to material available. The exhibit has been renewed, after having been shown in Polish exhibitions, because A3 size sheets give better possibilities for presentation as compared to the old A4 sheets. It is impossible to duplicate this exhibit because of the density of special and unique items.

References

1. **Vogels H.**, German postal forms used as parcel cards by the Polish Post in Gdańsk 1920-1921. *"The Danzig Philatelist"* 14 (2010), p. 12-14,
2. **Auleytner J., Vogels H.**, The Postal and Telegraph Management for Pomorze in Gdansk 1920 – 1921, *"The Danzig Philatelist"* 12 (2009), p.1-12,
3. **Auleytner J., Vogels H.**, Obsługa paczek nadawanych z Ameryki do Polski w latach 1920-1923, *"Filatelista"*, 2018, nr 9(1151), p. 506-511,
4. **Vogels H.**, *The Polish Post in the Free City Danzig 1920 – 1939. Handstamps, forms and labels.* IV Basel, Gliwice 2018.



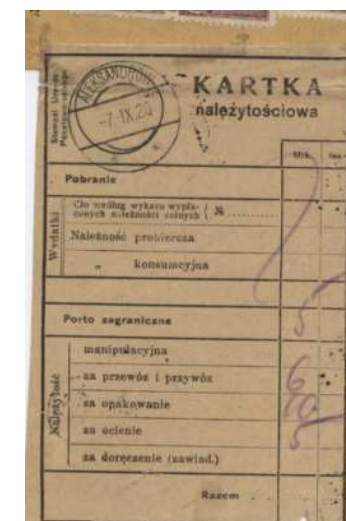
German parcel card for a 4 kg parcel sent to Brzostek. Gdańsk Z Ameryki przez Gdańsk Nr... handstamp, a German Zollfrei handstamp and a BRZOSTEK b 31.V.20. arrival cds. In Gdańsk 3 marks was raised for handling in the harbour and 2 for customs handling, a total of 5 marks which were paid with three Polish stamps with a local PORTO handstamp used as postage due stamps on the back.



German parcel card for a 4.5 kg parcel sent to Nowy Sącz. The Gdańsk handstamp indicates that 3 marks was raised for handling in the harbour and 6 marks for customs handling. TARNÓW 2 2a cds 23 August 1920 and a single-line *Wolne od cła* of the Customs Post Office. Adapted bilingual Austrian NOWY SĄCZ 1 5b arrival cds 24 August 1920. A mixed franking of 400 pfennig and 500 heller postage due stamps, covering the 9 marks postage due, cancelled NOWY SĄCZ 1 2b 7 September 1920.



Parcel card for a 4 kg parcel sent to Jedlińsk. Gdańsk Z Ameryki przez Gdańsk Nr... handstamp, a boxed *Wolne od cła* and an official seal of the Aleksandrów Customs Post Office and an adapted bilingual Austrian JEDLIŃSK arrival cds 10 September 1920. In Gdańsk 3 marks was raised for handling in the harbour and 2 for customs handling, in Aleksandrów 5 marks for foreign postage, 6 marks for transport, 10 marks for packing and an additional 5 marks for customs handling, a total of 31 marks which were paid with normal Polish stamps used as postage due stamps cancelled JEDLIŃSK 21 September 1920.





Parcel card for an insured parcel.



Parcel card for a COD parcel.

Card for a parcel sent from the USA to Włodzimierz Wołyński. Boxed *Wolne od cła* (Free of duty) and an official seal and manuscript date 27 May of the Customs Post Office in Aleksandrów. WŁODZIMIERZ WOŁYŃSKI cds 23.VI.20 from the day the card was sent to the addressee on the front.

Card for a 4,1kg parcel sent from the USA to Krasnystaw. Boxed *Wolne od cła* (Free of duty), an official seal and a manuscript date 28 June of the Customs Post Office in Aleksandrów. KRASNOSTAW -8.VII.20 cds on the back.

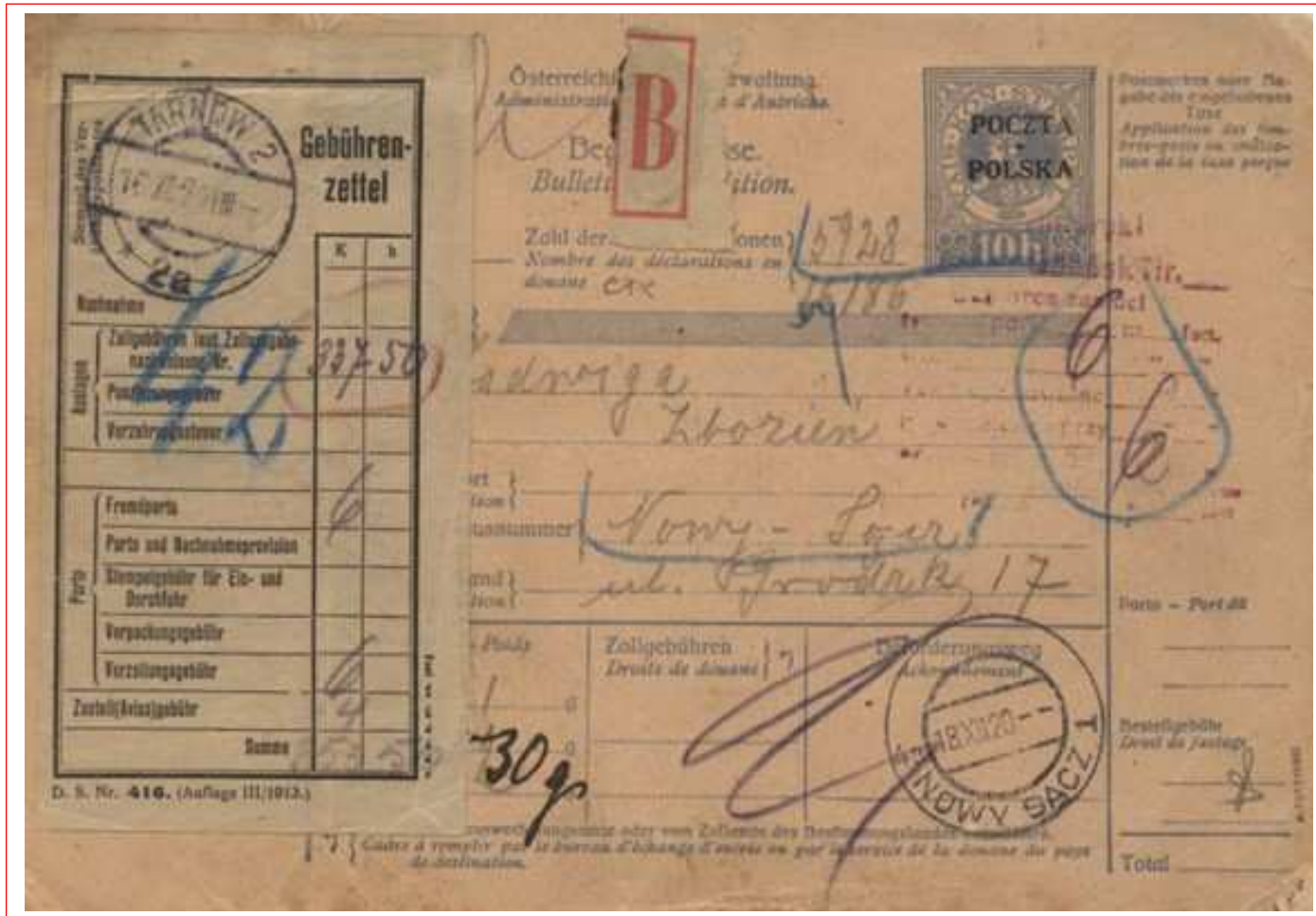


Z Ameryki
 Odbiorca zapłaci
 tytułem porta m..... fen.
 cło..... " " "
 nowe opakowanie..... " " "
 pośrednictwo przy..... " " "
 oczeniu przesyłki..... " " "
 razem..... m..... fen.

Card for a 5 kg parcel sent to Płocicz via Posen W. with a parcel label with manuscript annotation *Z Ameryki* (from USA). The Gdańsk handstamp indicates that 3 marks was raised for handling in the harbour and 2 marks for customs handling. POZNAŃ 3 cds 27 November 1920. The recipient signed for receipt on 30 November 1920 (reverse).



Card for a 4 1/4 kg parcel sent to Czermin via Dębica with the Gdańsk Nowy Port label with code letter 'a'. The Gdańsk handstamp indicates that 6 marks was raised for handling in the harbour and 6 marks for customs handling and additional 15 marks for packing in Dębica. CZERMIN a cds 17 and 19 January 1921. The recipient signed for receipt on 19 January 1921 (reverse).



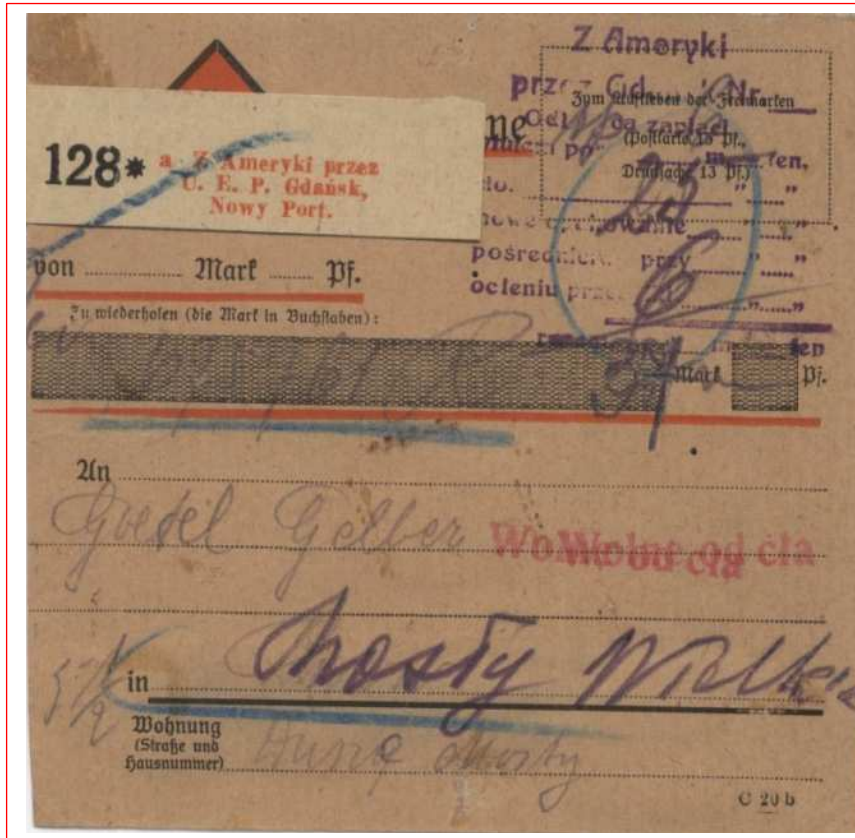
Austrian postage due calculation card on a parcel card for a bag (red label B = Beutel) with probably several parcels sent from the USA through Danzig to Nowy Sącz. The Tarnów Customs Post Office raised 337.50 marks for customs duty, 6 marks for postage, 6 marks for customs handling and 4 for delivery; a total of 353.50 marks. TARNÓW 2a cds 16 December 1920 from the Tarnów customs post office on the postage due calculation card. NOWY SĄCZ 1 4a arrival cds 18 December 1920. Only known parcel card with red label B and calculation card.



Card for a 5 kg parcel sent to Nowy Sącz. The Gdańsk handstamp indicates that 6 marks was raised for handling in the harbour and 6 marks for customs handling. TARNÓW 2 2a cds 25 November 1920 and a single-line *Wolne od cła* (free of customs duties) from the Tarnów Customs Post Office. NOWY SĄCZ 1 5b arrival cds 26 November 1920. 200 heller and 1000 pfennig covering the 12 marks postage due that had been calculated, cancelled NOWY SĄCZ 1 4a 27 November 1920.



Card for a 4,5 kg parcel sent to Nowy Sącz. The Gdańsk handstamp indicates that 3 marks was raised for handling in the harbour and 6 marks for customs handling. A single-line *Wolne od cła* (free of customs duties) from the Nowy Sącz Customs Post Office. NOWY SĄCZ 1 5b arrival cds 18 November 1920. 900 heller postage due covering the 9 marks due that had been calculated, cancelled NOWY SĄCZ 1 4a 18 November 1920.



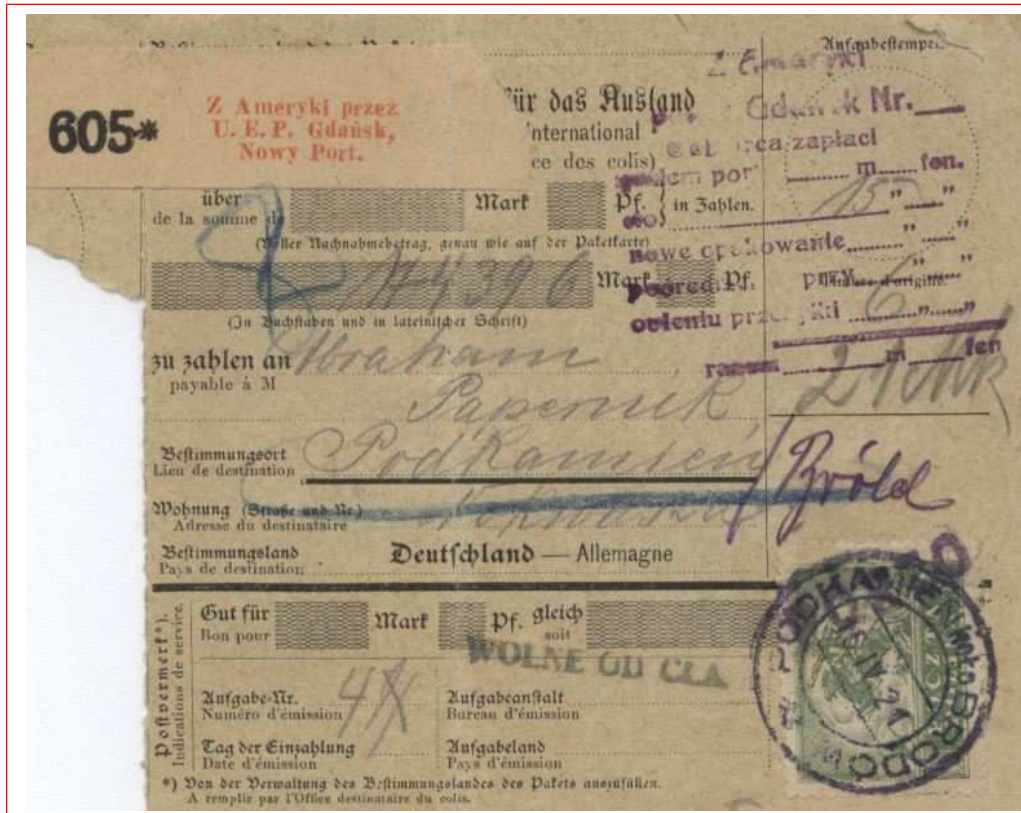
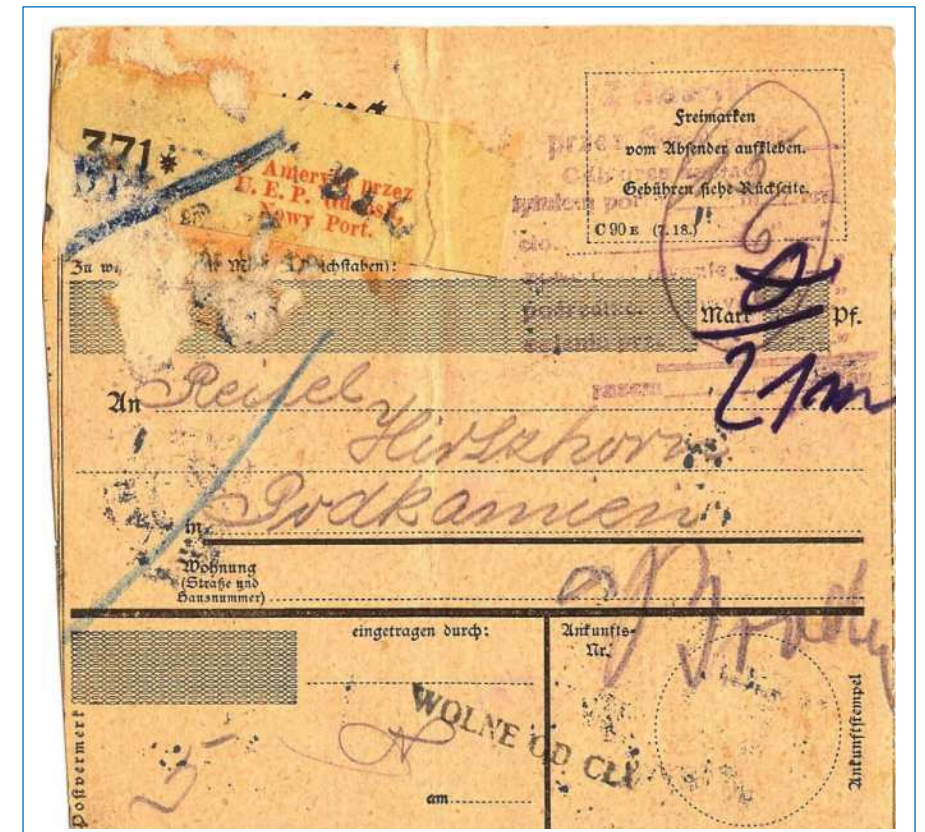
Card for a 5.5 kg parcel sent to Mosty Wielkie with the Gdańsk Nowy Port label with code letter a. The Gdańsk handstamp indicates that a total of 37 marks postage due was raised there for handling in the harbour, packing and customs handling. TARNÓW 2 2a cds and a single-line *Wolne od cła* of the Tarnów customs post office. MOSTY WIELKIE a arrival cds 11 February

1921. Eight Polish postage due stamps and one Mosty Wielkie local postage due stamp covering the 37 marks postage due that had been calculated, cancelled MOSTY WIELKIE 12 February 1921.



Card for a 5 kg parcel sent to Podkamień with the Gdańsk Nowy Port label without code letter. The Gdańsk handstamp indicates that 15 marks was raised for manipulation in the harbour and 6 marks for customs handling. TARNÓW 2 2a cds 17 March 1921 and a single-line *WOLNE OD CŁA* of the Tarnów Customs Post Office. PODKAMIEŃ koło BRODÓW arrival cds 20

April 1922. Five Podkamień local postage due stamps covering the 21 marks postage due that had been calculated, cancelled PODKAMIEŃ koło BRODÓW 22 March 1921.



Card for a 5 kg parcel sent to Podkamień with the Gdańsk Nowy Port label without code letter. The Gdańsk handstamp indicates that 15 marks was raised for manipulation in the harbour and 6 marks for customs handling. TARNÓW 2 2a cds 9 April 1921 and a single-line *Wolne od cła* of the

Customs Post Office. PODKAMIEŃ koło BRODÓW arrival cds 13 April 1921. Two Podkamień local postage due stamps covering the 21 marks postage due that had been calculated, cancelled PODKAMIEŃ koło BRODÓW 15 April 1921. Single-line ZAMIEJSCOWY (out of the town) and manuscript annotation that the address was in Brody, probably the name of an estate in the neighbourhood.



German/French postal encashment order. Card for a 5 kg parcel sent to Podkamień with the Gdańsk Nowy Port label without code letter.

The Gdańsk handstamp indicates that 15 marks was raised for handling, 10 marks for packing and 10 marks for customs handling. PRZEMYŚL 1 5a cds 16 April 1921, an official seal and a single-line *Wolne od cła* of the Przemysł Customs Post Office. PODKAMIEŃ koło BRODÓW arrival cds 18 April 1921. Three Podkamień local postage due stamps cancelled PODKAMIEŃ koło BRODÓW 19 April 1921. Instead of the 35 marks postage due that had been calculated, 45 marks postage due was raised.





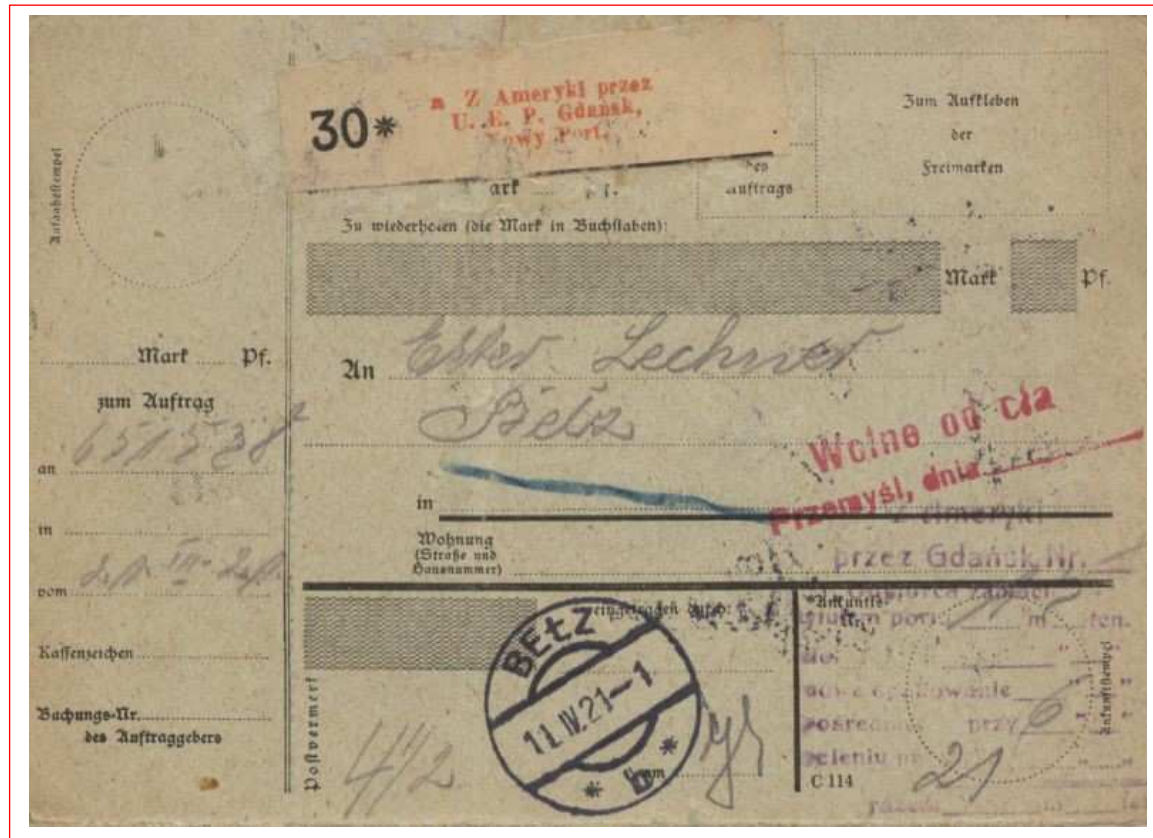
Card (C18) for a 1 kg parcel sent to Roźniatów with the Gdańsk Nowy Port label. The Gdańsk handstamp indicates that 15 marks was raised for handling in the harbour, 16 marks for packing and 6 marks for



Postal money order form used as a parcel card for a parcel sent to Wolanka near Drohobycz. The Gdańsk handstamp indicates that a total of 40 marks postage due was raised there for handling in the harbour, packing and customs handling. TARNÓW 2 2a cds 21 February 1921 and a single-line Wolne od cła of the Tarnów Customs Post Office. DROHOBYCZ 1 5a cds 23 February 1921 and a TUSTANOWICE arrival cds 25 February 1921. Two 20 marks Tustanowice local postage due stamps covering the 40 marks postage due that had been calculated cancelled TUSTANOWICE cds 26 February 1921.



customs handling. TARNÓW 2 2a cds 19 February 1921 and a single-line Wolne od cła of the Tarnów Customs Post Office. ROŹNIATÓW arrival cds 25 February 1921. Polish normal stamps with manuscript Dopłaty (postage due) with a total value of 37 marks and a 100 heller postage due stamp covering the fee for sending the parcel card to the recipient.

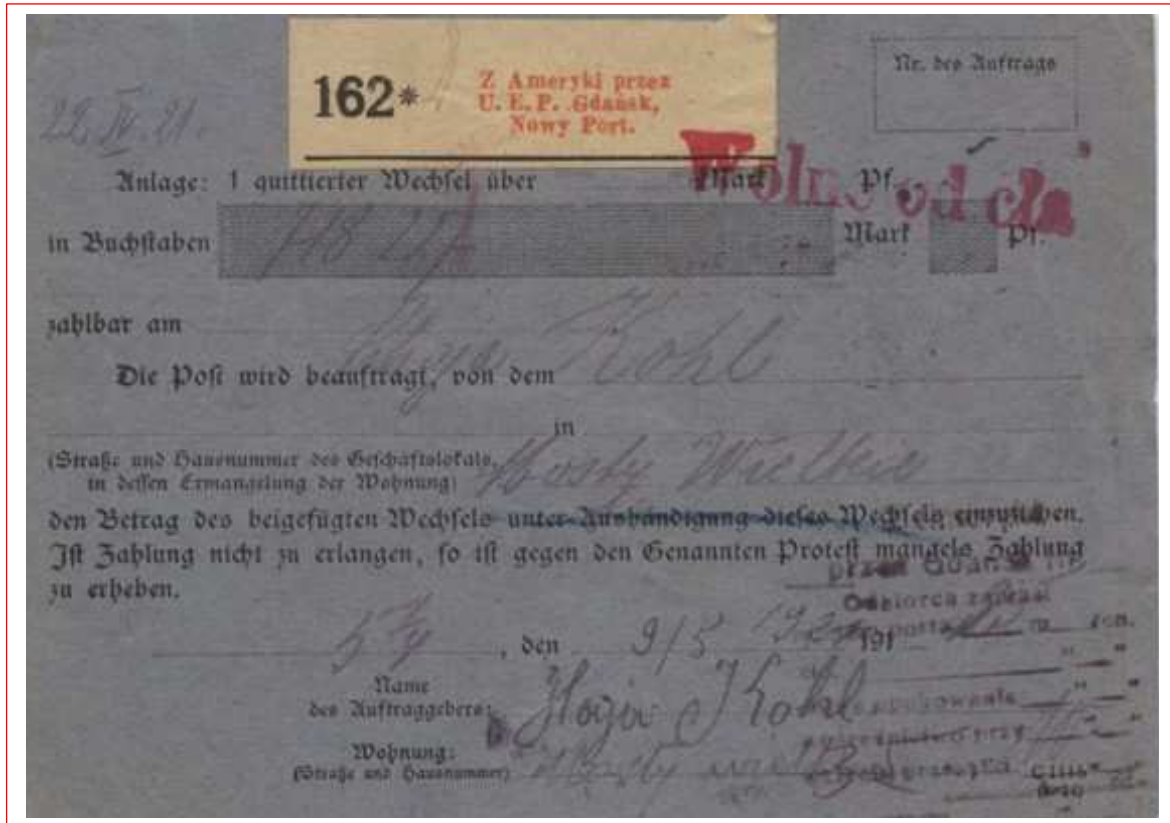


Postal money order for a postal collection order (C114) used as parcel card for a 4.5 kg parcel sent to Bełz with the Gdańsk Nowy Port label with code letter a. The Gdańsk handstamp indicates that 15 marks had to be paid for handling in the harbor and 6 marks for customs handling. PRZEMYŚL 1 5a cds 9 April 1921, an official seal and a double-line Wolne od cła Przemyśl, dnia.... of the Przemyśl Customs Post Office. BEŁZ a arrival cds 11 April 1921. Four Bełz 5 marks local postage due stamps, one 1-mark stamp missing, cancelled BEŁZ b 12 April 1921.



Postal money order for postal collection order (C114/5.14) used for a parcel sent to Podwołoczyska with the Gdańsk Nowy Port label with code letter a. A total of 12 marks postage due was raised in Gdańsk for handling in the harbour and customs handling. TARNÓW 2 2a cds and a single-line Wolne od cła of the Tarnów Customs Post Office. PODWOŁOCZYSKA 3a arrival cds 27 February 1921 and the same handstamp dated 1 March 1921. 800 heller and 200 marks in regional postage due stamps and two Podwołoczyska local 1 mark postage due stamps covering the 12 marks postage due that had been calculated cancelled PODWOŁOCZYSKA 2a 2 March 1921.





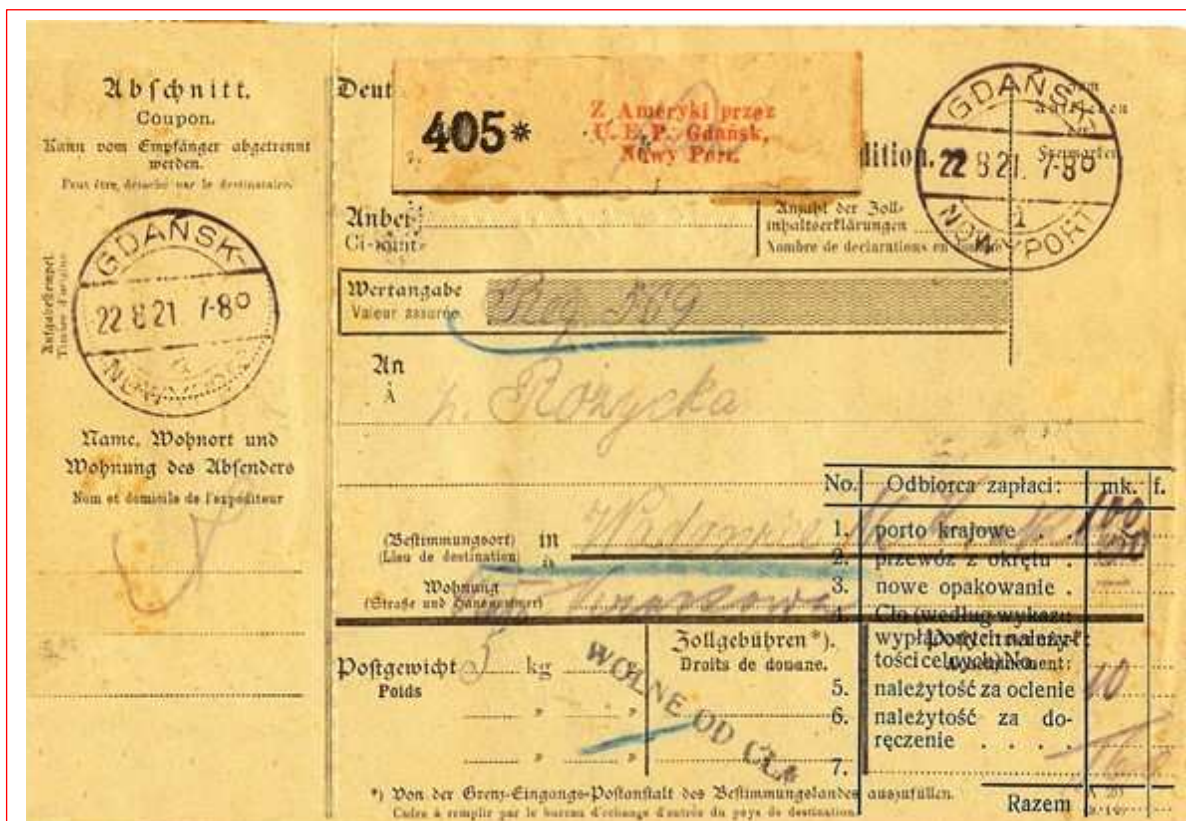
Postal money order for postal collection order used as a parcel card for a 5.25 kg parcel sent to Mosty Wielkie with the Gdańsk Nowy Port label without code letter. The Gdańsk handstamp indicates that 25 marks was raised for handling in the harbour and 10 marks for customs handling. PRZEMYŚL 1 5a cds 7 April 1921, an official seal and a single-line *Wolne od cła* of the Przemysł Customs Post Office. MOSTY WIELKIE arrival cds 8 April 1921. Three Polish postage due stamps with a total value of 32 marks and one Mosty Wielkie 3 marks local postage due stamp covering the 35 marks postage due that had been calculated, cancelled MOSTY WIELKIE 10 April 1921.



Card for a 5 kg parcel to Wadowice with the Gdańsk Nowy Port label without code letter and a GDAŃSK NOWYPORT a cds 22 August 1921. Single-line *WOLNE OD CŁA* and a TARNÓW 2 2a cds 10.IX.20 Customs Post Office. 100 marks for postage in Poland, 50 marks for the transport from the ship and 10 marks for customs handling.



Polish – German parcel card for a 4½ kg parcel to Tartaków with the Gdańsk Nowy Port label without code letter and a GDAŃSK NOWYPORT cds 4 November 1921. 100 marks for postage in Poland, 50 marks for the transport from the ship and 10 marks for customs handling. Single-line *Wolne od cła* and a PRZEMYŚL 1 5a cds 10 November 1921 of the Customs Post Office. TARTAKÓW arrival cds 24 November 1921. Four Tartaków local postage due stamps with a total value of 160 marks.



Postal money order for a COD parcel - with printed orange elements used as a card for a 5 kg parcel to Pilzno with the Gdańsk Nowy Port label with code letter a and a GDAŃSK NOWYPORT a cds 22 September 1921. 100 marks for postage in Poland, 50 marks for the transport from the ship and 10 marks for customs handling due. Single-line *Wolne od cła* and a PRZEMYŚL cds 15 October 1921 of the



Przemysł Customs Post Office and PILZNO 16.10.21 arrival cds on the reverse. Five Pilzno local postage due stamps covering the 160 marks postage due that had been calculated.

Urząd nadawczy } *Ameryka* No *9671*
Chicago Falls

ZASTĘPCZY LIST PRZESYŁKOWY

Rodzaj przesyłki i zawartość: *codziennie* Wartość: z...g. Pobranie: z...g.

Do: *Audrey Gora*
 w: *leso Łyżna*

Ulica }
 Nr. domu }
 Ostatnia poczta. } *Szydłów*
 Ziemia }

Nazwisko i adres wysyłającego (przy paczkach zwracanych)

Waga: *4.5* kg. *500* gr.

Stempel kalendaryzacyjny: *SZYDŁÓW 25 V 1924*

IV. 921) 1,000,000.

Stwierdzam odbiór paczki, oznaczanej na drugiej stronie i obowiązuję się wazetkie na niej ciążące należności podatkowo uiszczyć.

data: *23/V 1924*

Podpis: *Jarosił J. Katar*

Card for a 4.5 kg parcel sent from the USA to Szydłów with an adapted Austrian SZYDŁÓW cds 25 May 1924, the day the card was sent to the recipient (a year error in the date stamp). 250.000 marks in postage due stamps postmarked SZYDŁÓW 25 May 1924 on the reverse. It is not clear why this type of parcel card was still used in May 1924: On 1 December 1923 the Polish Post Office in Danzig had ceased the system of preparing individual parcel cards for parcels arriving from the USA.

ADRES PRZESYŁKOWY Z AMERYKI PRZEZ GDAŃSK

Stempel kalendaryzacyjny urzędu nadawczego: *GDAŃSK 13 IX 22*

№ R. amerykański: *65154*

Do: *Moses Szak*
 w: *Kolanka*

Ulica }
 Nr. domu } *Borysław*
 ostatnia poczta }
 województwo }

Waga: *4 1/4* kg. *9* gr.

Wystawił: *[Signature]*
 Zbadał: *[Signature]*

M. P. i T. 26. (VIII. 921). 500.000.

№	Odbiorca zapłaci:	M. f.
1	porto krajowe	<i>400</i>
2	przewóz z okrętu	<i>150</i>
3	nowe opakowanie	<i>120</i>
4	clo (według wykazu wypłaconych należności celnych №)	
5	należność za cienie	<i>50</i>
6	należność za doręczenie	
7	składowe	
8		
9		
Razem:		

Stwierdzam odbiór paczki oznaczanej na drugiej stronie i obowiązuję się wazetkie na niej ciążące należności podatkowo uiszczyć.

data: *13 IX 22*

Podpis: *[Signature]*

ADRES PRZESYŁKOWY Z AMERYKI PRZEZ GDAŃSK

Stempel kalendaryzacyjny urzędu nadawczego: *GDAŃSK 13 IX 22*

№ R. amerykański: *65154*

Do: *Moses Szak*
 w: *Kolanka*

Ulica }
 Nr. domu } *Borysław*
 ostatnia poczta }
 województwo }

Waga: *4 1/4* kg. *9* gr.

Wystawił: *[Signature]*
 Zbadał: *[Signature]*

M. P. i T. 26. (VIII. 921). 500.000.

Card for a 4 1/4 kg parcel sent to Borysław with a GDAŃSK – POLSKI URZĄD POCZTOWY No 1 cds 13 September 1922. 400 marks due for postage in Poland, 150 for transport from the ship, 120 for packing. An official stamp and a PRZEMYŚL 1 5a cds 20 September 1922 of the Przemyśl customs post office. TUSTANOWICE 22 September 1922 cds, indicating the day the card was sent to the recipient. On 11 January 1922 the name of the Harbour Post Office had been changed to POLSKI URZĄD POCZTOWY Nr 1 W GDAŃSKU (Polish Post Office No 1 in Danzig).

Card for a 4 1/4 kg parcel sent from the USA to Nowy Sącz with the Gdańsk Polish Post Office No 1 label. *WOLNE OD CŁA* (front) and a TARNÓW 2 2a cds 24 January 1923 (back) of the Tarnów Customs Post Office. An adapted Austrian Nowy Sącz 4a cds 25 January 1923, the day the card was sent to the recipient. 800 marks for postage in Poland, 300 marks for the transport from the ship and 100 marks for customs handling covered with postage due stamps on the back.

Stwierdzam odbiór paczki oznaczanej na drugiej stronie i obowiązuję się wazetkie na niej ciążące należności podatkowo uiszczyć.

data: *24 I 23*

Podpis: *[Signature]*