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Koenigsberg -- Kaliningrad

In the March 1997 issue of *National Geographic Magazine,* Priit J. Vesilind takes readers to the Russian Oblast of Kaliningrad, Koenigsberg before the end of World War II.

Notgeld, both metal and paper, is dear to the hearts of collectors whose relatives once lived there. Among Notgeld-issuing towns in the 5,000 square mile area are Koenigsberg, Pillau and Insterberg.

The town was founded in 1235; in 1365 it became a member of the Hanseatic League. It lies at 54° 42' 8" north; 20° 30' 2" east, five miles from the mouth of the Pregel (Pregolya) River. It is 338 miles from Berlin.

German history of the area dates back to the time of the Teutonic Knights and their mixed zeal of religion and conquest. By the time their efforts had stopped at the Neman River, 23 castles had been built to preserve their power. Germanic influence remained in the area until the end of World War II.

It took a bit of tinkering, but the land of the knights acquired the strength of the Germans when in 1366, Albrecht von Hohenzollern, the last Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, purchased the legal reversion of the duchy around Koenigsberg. He laid the strategy which linked his possessions with those of his relatives in Brandenburg.

Koenigsberg became the home of the Electors of Brandenburg. It was, in the 19th Century, the third largest Prussian city, with a population of 87,000 in 1870.

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MONTHLY NOTGELD QUOTE . . .



Bad Bramstedt
(Schleswig-Holstein)
50 Pfennig Dec. 7, 1920
L-143

As long as the wind blows
And the cock crows
People will dance around Roland
When the sun goes down.

Bramstedt countryfolk dance around Roland
On the third day of Whitsuntide 1674
While they waited for their freedom
So that it is still done today.





Markenhaus Eluka G.m.b.H issued a set of four 50-Pfennig notes, L-703, dated May 23, 1921, in Koenigsberg.

Described by Vesilind as the "Allied carving knife," the World War II settlement with ally Russia gave Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to Russia, plus most of East Prussia, though a portion of the southern part was donated to renewed Poland.

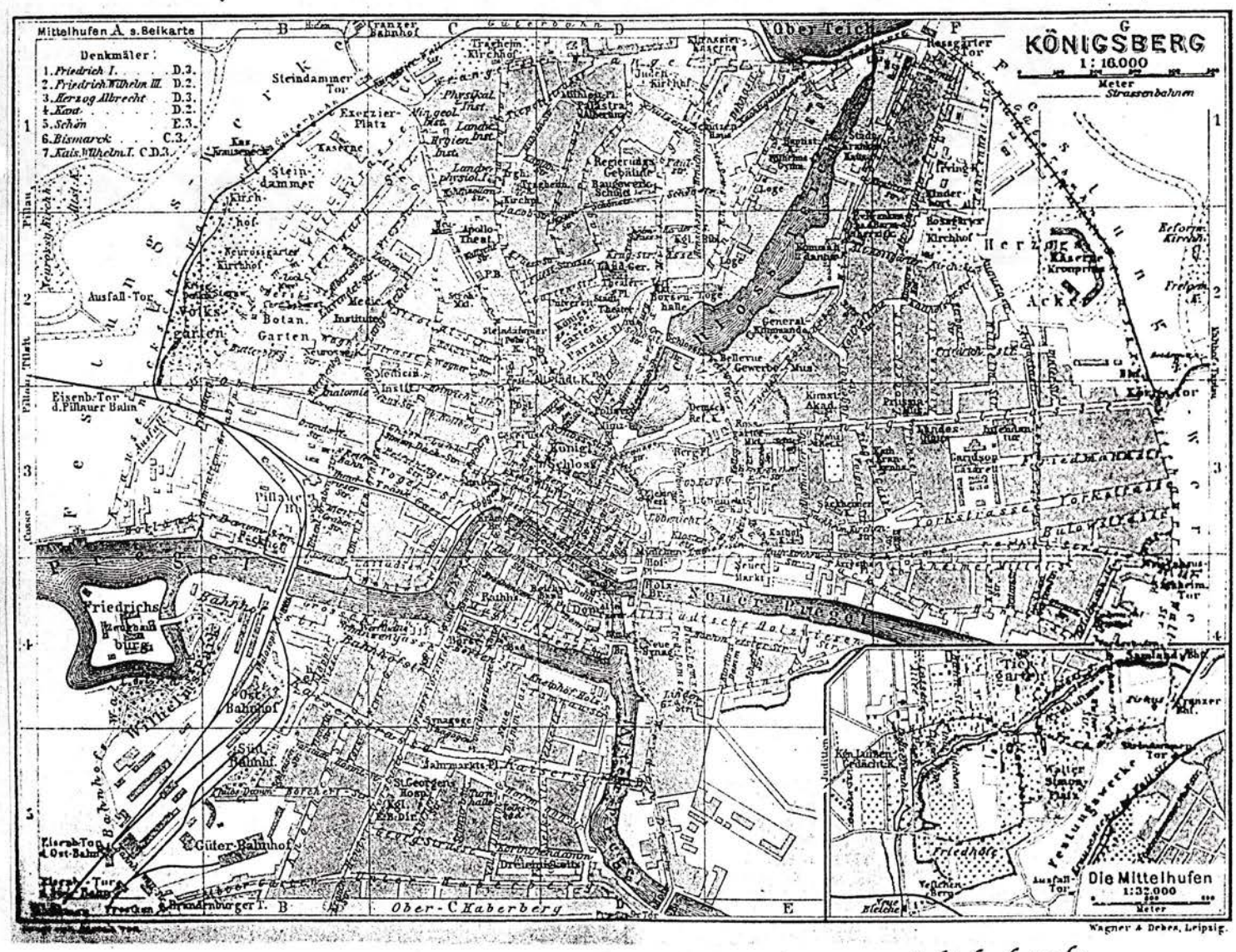
In 1946 Stalin named the new Russian territory Kaliningrad for Mikhail Kalinin, the puppet ruler of the Soviet Union, who let his wife die in a forced labor camp.

Now for some oddities. The Soviets deported 139,000 Germans from their new acquisition, then replaced them with Soviet citizens, Volga Germans, whose relatives had been imported by Catharine the Great 200 years earlier. There are at least two organizations in the United States who keep track of their family ties with the Volga Germans.

The imported Russians now feel isolated and neglected. Most of the Russian army has moved out; they feel they are destined to be replaced by Germans, according to Vesilind.



Dated Sept. 30, 1922, was a 50-Pfennig note of Koenigsberg, East Prussia, K-319, overprinted "eine Millionen Mark" in 1923.



For a walking tour of old Koenigsburg, a city map might be handy.

Aside from the capital of Kaliningrad, there are other cities of interest in the oblast. Protecting the mouth of the Pregolya River are two sand spits, Kursian and Visling. On Visling the Russian naval operations are headquartered, at the town of Basltiysk, formerly Pillau, the westernmost point of Russian territory.

German metal Notgeld collectors find 50-Pfennig coins of Pillau, struck in zinc, tombak and silver, made by H. Kissing, Menden, Germany, 1917. A codfish dominates the arms. And there is an undated five-Pfennig zinc token of the Kameradschaftsheim 1. Minensuch Flottille Pillau.





Undated set of five notes was issued by the Sparkasse of Insterburg, undated, in values of 30 and 70-Pfennig and 1.50, 2.50 and 3-Mark. At left is shown on the back of the 30-Pfennig the castle yard, dating from 1336, built by the Teutonic Knights. At right is the common face, a silhouette of the city.

But in another stroke of fate, the three Baltic countries north of Koenigsberg are no longer Russian, leaving a 200-mile stretch from the oblast to the Russian border.

One reason cited why Russia wants to hold onto the land is the possibility of creating a Russian type of Hong Kong, an economic window joining the west to the east. And another is that the Russian Navy can enjoy the only ice-free port along that portion of the Baltic Sea.

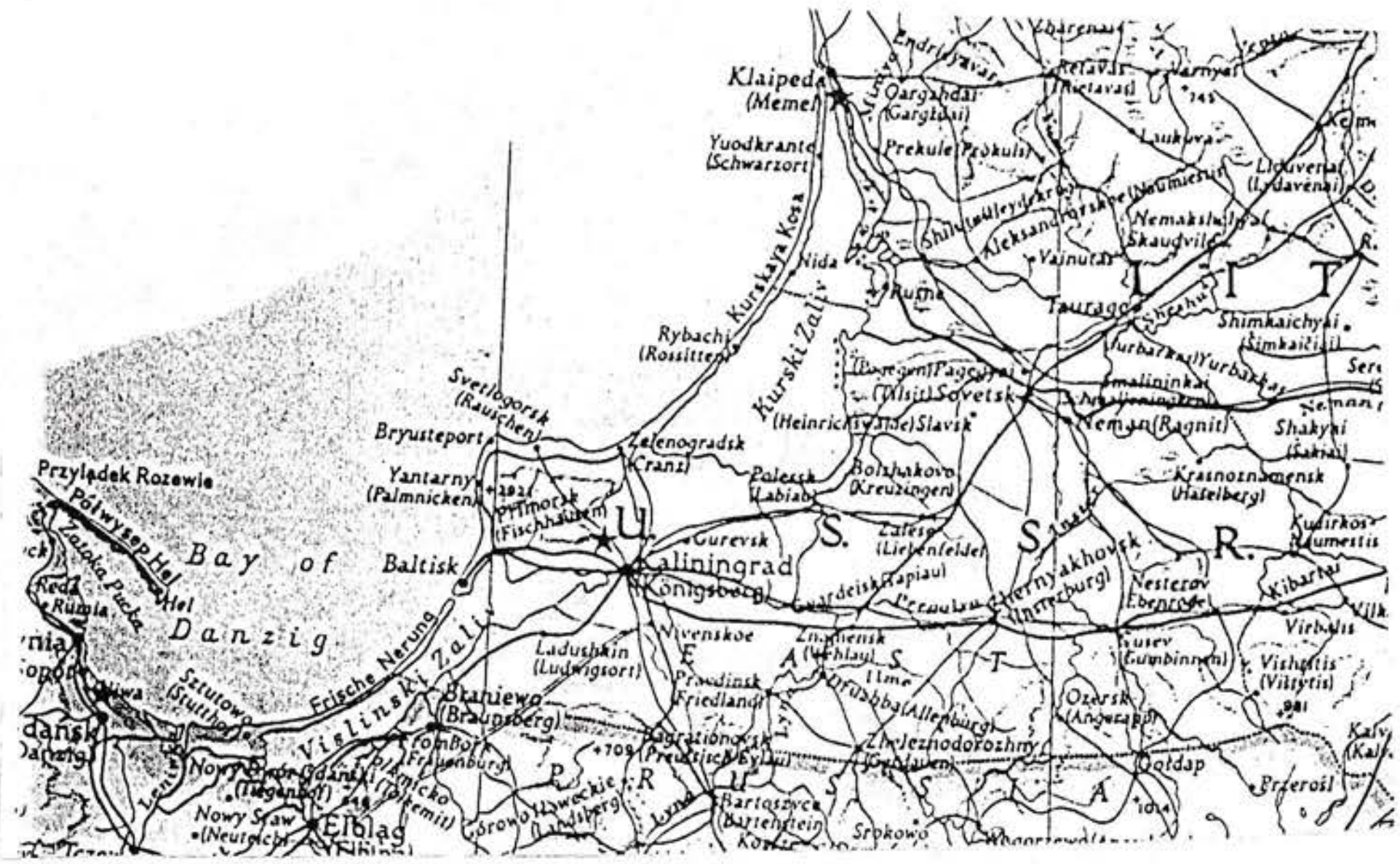
Some say, according to Vesilind, that the imported Russians lost their Russian heritage, and never assumed German traditions.

The largest building erected in Koenigsberg by the Russians was the Communist Party Headquarters, a 22-story monument built on the site of the Prussian Royal Castle. Unsurveyed by the builders were the mazes of tunnels, subterranean passageways and storage chambers below. Before the work was completed on the building, it had begun to crumble, and was never occupied.





The city arms of Insterburg depict Georg Friedrich, Markgraf in October 1583, on the back of the 70-Pfennig note; at right, the castle of the Teutonic Knights, on the back of the 2.50-Mark note.



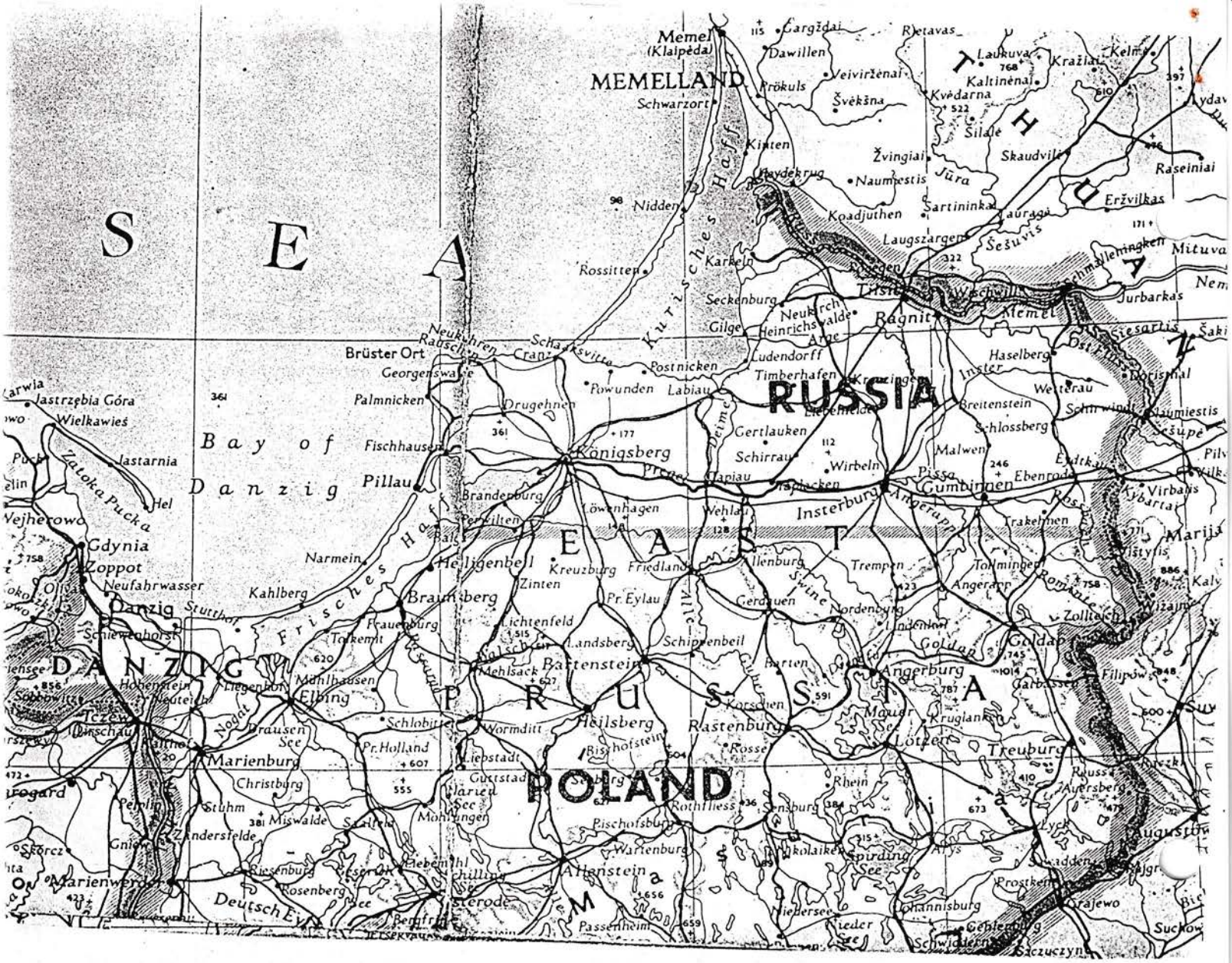
The Russian Oblast (province) of Kaliningrad, as shown on maps between World Wars I and II, shows both Russian and German names for major cities.

Aside from the forced deportations and immigrations to and from Koenigsberg, there has been another kind of immigr- ation. More than 100 German-Russian farmers have moved from harsh conditions in Kazakstan and Kyrgyzstan to create their own village near Chernyakhovsk, formerly Insterburg.

And thus we have another Notgeld-issuing city. On Oct. 28, 1918, 50-Pfennig notes were issued, with control numbers either black or green, number 1026 in the Pick-Siemsen catalog of circulating notes.



From the capital of the Provinz Ostpreussen is a 50-Pfennig note, dated Dec. 10, 1918, P-S 2006, issued in Koenigsberg.



Nestled between Poland and Lithuania, between World Wars I and II, was East Prussia, capital Koenigsberg.

Kai Lindman, in his catalog Serienscheine lists Insterburg as number 627, with denominations of 30 and 70-Pfennig, and 1.50, 2.50 and 5 Mark. Five items to collect? But each of these five denominations carries a letter A; each, the letter B; you get the idea -- all the way to Z, except there is no letter I. Count them: 125 varieties! plus four more with odd type for the control number. Sometimes when a collector thinks he is finished, he is only beginning.

When I was in Kaiserslautern, I had a German secretary whose family had owned a textile mill in Koenigsberg. "Mr. Coffing, we will get all of that back some day, won't we?" she would plaintively ask. And I would assure her she would.

Kellinghusen/Schles-Holstein Aug. 6. 1920 50 Pf L-669a $1.75*
Kempen/Rehinland March 9, 1920 20 Pf L-670 b II $3*
Kempen/Rheinland Aug. 1, 19223 100000 Mark K-2605a $4
Kevelaer June 1, 1921 10, 25, 50 Pf L-671 $1.75
Kirn/Rheinland May 20, 1920 50 Pf P-S 1103d $3*
Kissingen, Bad/Bayern ND 50 Pf P-S 1104 $1.25
Kitzingen/Main/Bayern 1920 1, 2 Pf P-S 1105q $2.25*
Kitzingen/Main/Bayern 1921 50 Pf P-S 1105t $1.25*
Kitzingen/Main.Bayern Feb. 1, 1921 25, 50 Pf P-S 1105u Heinz Schniestl $2.25*
Kitzingen/Main/Bayern March 1, 1921 50 (6) Pf L-682 $7*
Kleinen, Bad/Meck-Schw ND 10, 25, 50 L-685 Reutergeld $2.25*
Kloster Zinna Sept. 7, 1920 25, 50 Pf L-688 $1.25*
Kluetz/Meck-Schw ND 10, 25 Pf L-689 Reutergeld $1.25*
Kneitlingen July 1, 1921 50 (4), 75 (4) Pf, 1 Mark (3) L-690 $6.50*
Knivsberg March 14, 1920 50 Pf L-691 Spurius issue $20*
Koblenz Train-Ersatz Abteilung Nr. 9 POW NDF - good to Dec. 15, 1918 $7.50*
Koeln May 3, 1920 25 (2) Pf P-S 1114 i $1
Koeln Oct. 1, 1920 10, 20 Pf P-S 1114 l $1.20
Koeln Dec. 31, 1920 10 Pf P-S 1114 n $.60
Koeln Dec. 31, 1920 10 (4) Pf P-S 1114 o $2.25
Koeln July 13, 1921 10, 50 P)f P-S 1114 p Abschied $1.25*
Koeln July 13, 1921 10 Pf P-S 1114 s Heimkehr $.65*
Koeln Jan. 12, 1922 50 (3) Pf L-697 Heinzelmaennchen $4*
Koeln Jan. 1, 1922 50 (3) Pf L-697 Soldaten $4*
Koeln Feb. 1, 1923 10,000 Mark K-314 $2.50
Koeln July 1, 1923 100,000 Mark K-2684a $2
Koeln July 2, 1921 50,000 Mark K-2684b $2.50
Koeln Aug. 1, 1923 1 Million Mark K-2696a Rheinisches Braunkohlen Syndikat $3.50
Koeln Aug. 4, 1925 1 Million Mark K-2684 g $2.25
Koeln Aug. 9, 1923 10 Millionen Mark K-2684 i $2
Koeln Aug. 24, 1923 20 Millionen Mark K-2684 s Adenauer signature $2.50
Koeln Sept. 10, 1923 100 Millionen Mark K-2684 w $3.25
Koeln Sept. 14, 1923 200 Millionen Mark K-2684 z $2.25
Koeln Sept. 18, 1923 1 Milliarde Mark K-2684 aa $1.75
Koeln Sept. 20, 1923 500,000,000 Mark K-2644 bb $2.50
Koeln-Delbrueck ND 25, 50 (2) Pf L-699 $5*
Koenigsau June 10, 1921 40 Pf (4x10) Chess L-701 $.65*
Koenigsberg/Neumark Dec. 15, 1921 50 Pf, 1, 2 Mark L-702 $9*
Koenigsberg/Ostpreussen Dec. 10, 1918 50 Pf P-S 2006 h $2
Koenigshuette/Posen March 20, 1921 25 Pf L-706 Plebiscite $1.25*
Koenigssee/Bayern March 26, 1921 10, 20, 25 Pf L-709 $5*
Koenigswinter July 15, 1921 50 (6) Pf L-709 $4*
Koenigswinter July 156, 1921 25 (2), 50 (2), 75 (2) Pf L-710 $4.50*
Koeslin/Pomm 1921 50, 75 Pf, 1 Mark (2) L-714 $5*
Koestritz Oct. 1, 1921 50 Pf L-715b $1.25*
Kolberg/Pommern March 1, 1917 10, 50 Pf P-S 1141b $3
Kolberg/Ostsee Sept. 1, 1921 25, 50, 75 Pf, 1 Mark L-716a green $2.50*
Kolberg/Ostsee Sept. 1, 1921 25, 50, 75 Pf L-716b blue $1.75*

Konitz/Westpreussen 1918 10 Pf P-S 1143i $7.50
Krakow/Meck-Schw ND 10, 25, 50 Pf L-719 Reutergeld $2.25*
Kranichfeld Feb. 22, 1921 10, 25, 50 Pf L-720 $2.75*
Krappitz/Schlesien ND 25 Pf P-S 1152* $5*
Krempe Dec. 1921 25, 50, 100 Pf L-721 $2.50*
Kreuznach Sept. 15, 1923 50 Millionen Mark K-2813c $3.50
Kreuzburg/Oberschlesien Oct. 18, 1921 25, 50, 75 Pf L-723b Bells $2*
Kreuzburg/Oberschlesien ND 1 Mark (3) $2*
Kroepelin ND 10, 25, 50 Pf L-725 $2.25*
Kronach 1921 50 (3) Pf L-726 $2*
Kudowa, Bad ND 25, 50 Pf L-727 $1.25*
Kulmbach Oct. 12, 1918 5 Mark K-275 $1.50
Kunzendorf (Konczyce) March 1, 1922 50 Pf, 1 Mark L-729 $2.50*
Kyritz Dec. 31, 1921 25 f L-732 Scheck $1.75*
Koeln-Delbrueck ND 25, 50 (2) Pf L-699 $5*
Koeln-Muelheim Aug. 15, 1923 5 Millionen Mark
Laage ND 10, 25, 50 Pf L-733a Reutergeld $2.25*
Laage ND 50, 75 Pf L-733 $1.50*
Labes/Pommern October 1921 50, 75 Pf, 1, 2 Mark L-734 $2.50*
Laehn/Riesengebirge ND 25, 50, 75 Pf, 1, 1.50 Mark L-735Ia $3*
Lage/Lippe-Detmold Feb. 1921 10, 25, 50 Pf L-736 $1.75*
Lamsdorf/Oberschlesien ND 10 Pf P-S 1180 A. Hoffmann $2.50*
Landau Aug. 1, 1923 1,000,000 Mark K-2878 $3.25
Landeck/Schlesien Mrch 11, 1921 25 Pf L-1181e $2.75*
Landeshut/Schlesien Sept. 16, 1022 500 Mark K-338 $2.25
Landkirchen/Fehmarn ND 50 Pf, 1 Mark L-740 $1.60*
Langeln ND 25 (2), 50 (2), 75 (2) Pf L-743 $7.25*
Langelohe ND 50, 75 (2) Pf L-744 $5.50*
Langenbielau/Schlesien ND 50 Pf P-S 1193d $2.50*
Langeness-Nordmarsch Sept. 1, 1921 20, 30, 50 Pf, 1, 2 Mark L-746 map $7.50*
Langenhorn ND 75 Pf, 1 Mark L-747 $2.50*
Langensalza 1921 25 (6), 50 (5) Pf L-749 $12.50*
Langewiesen/Thuer 1921 5, 10, 25. 50 Pf L-751 $5*
Lassan/ND/Pommern (1920) 25, 50 Pf P-S 1197b $1.25*
Lassan-Zinnowitz/Pommern April 1, 1920 1, 5 Pf P-S 1198b $5*
Lauban/Schlesien October 1920 10 Pf P-S 1199 $1.25*
Lauchstedt 1919, 10 Pf; 1921, 25 f P-S 1201a, d $2*
Lauchstedt 1921 50 (4) Pf L-752 $2.50*
Lauenburg/Elbe ND (1920) 10 Pf P-S 1202 $1.50*
Lauenburg/Elbe ND 1 Mark P-S 1203 $8
Lauenburg/Pomm Nov. 15, 1918 10 Mark K-286 $3.75
Lauenburg/Elbe July 1, 1921 10, 25, 50 Pf, 1 Mark L-753 $2.50*
Laufen Oct. 20, 1920 25, 50 Pf P-S 126h $2.75*
Lauscha/S M April 1921 50 Pf L-756 Christmas trees $3*
Lautenthal/Harz Oct. 30, 1921 50 (2) Pf L-757 $4*
Lavfen/Oberbayern Oct. 20, 1920 25, 50 Pf L-1204 $2.50*
Lebus/Seelow July 1, 1920 10, 25, 50 Pf P-S 1219 $4*
Leer/Ostfriesland 1921 25, 50 (2), 75 (2) Pf, 1 Mark L-761 $4*

*Uncirculated
K-Keller catalogs; L-Lindman Serienscheine; P-S Pick-Siemsen

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