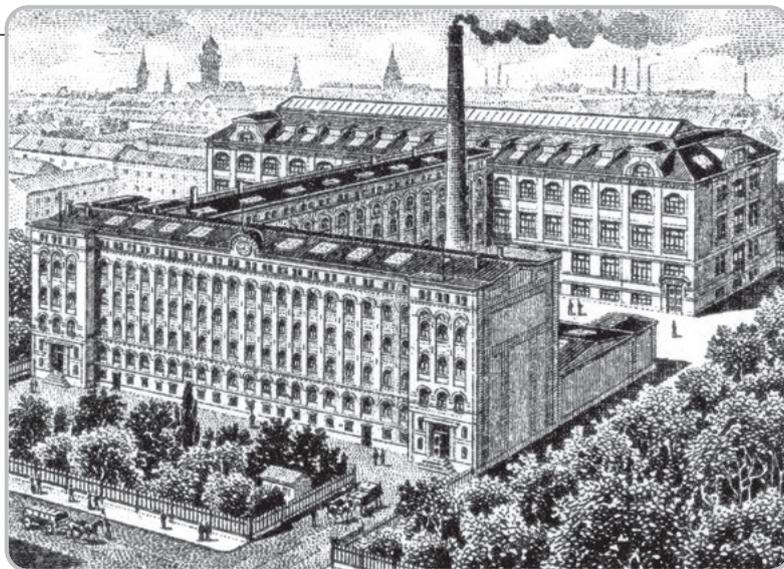


I am quite sure that the chromolitho printers and fine art publishers Meissner & Buch from Leipzig, Saxony, need no special introduction. Their name, the initials M&B are well known among postcard collectors worldwide. Cards from their numerous (artist) series turn up regularly at auctions and on the internet usually in the mid to higher price section.

Inquiries to learn more on the M&B company history have reached me from time to time during the past years. More often however collectors ask me if there are any checklists of the Meissner & Buch card series between c 1895-1910 available. Well, I have heard of yearly (novelty) catalogues once issued by M&B, but never saw one on offer. Some collectors as well as dealers holding bigger M&B card collections might have issued own checklists in the past. I was told of a list of the early M&B series published in a British postcard catalogue. There might be other attempts around.

I do not collect M&B cards myself, but the company history is of course of interest to me. I have collected all the bits and pieces published on M&B coming my way, and the purchase of the old "Papier-Zeitung" volumes puts me in the position to share some basic data on M&B's long company history with readers.

It all began on March 25 1861 when *Julius August Meissner* (correctly written *Meißner*), together with his partner *August Buch*, took over the 1852 established litho printer and deluxe paper manufacturer C.L. Bartsch & Co. and continued the business under the name of Meissner & Buch. Julius August's son *Julius Friedrich Meissner* joined the firm in 1863, became partner of August Buch after his father had died in 1866. Not long and Mr. Buch left the partnership. Julius F. Meissner (1837-1918) became sole owner



MEISSNER & BUCH · LEIPZIG

and started to turn M&B into a successful and worldwide operating company.

I have no information at hand where their first factory was originally located in Leipzig. In 1869 Julius F. Meissner decided to erect a new building to have more room for production and modern machinery. M&B moved into the new factory in 1871 which I believe was found already at Sidonienstr. A first steam powered hand (litho) press was installed in 1875, the first litho flatbed press in 1877. M&B's business was booming and 14 additional flatbed presses were bought between the years 1879 to 1882.

Meissner & Buch opened their first office in London at 112 Fleet Street in 1885. Here they specialized in publishing christmas cards, a paper article which was much more popular in England as in Germany. An own office in London meant a door open to the entire British Empire. Additional M&B offices were opened later in Berlin and in Frankfurt(?), in Italy, France and Belgium, not to forget also in the USA.

Julius F. Meissner was very much interested in art. He was member of the PAN Society. His special interest influenced also the design of many M&B products and resulted (together with the high printing quality) in

many positive reviews, medals at exhibitions etc. As said above, business was booming and by 1886 M&B employed already 272 persons. Typical for that time, and even more as today, it was somehow necessary to show others that a businessman was successful and had (own) style. Already in 1876-77 Julius F. Meissner hired the architects *Ende* and *Böckmann* from Berlin to design and built him a new, prestigious house at Sidonienstr. 26 (today Paul-Gruner-Str.) quite near the factory. It became a villa in Italian renaissance style architecture, a palazzo (see ill.). This house is long

gone but another example of his personal taste is the Meissner family grave found at the Leipzig Südfriedhof. Erected in 1903 the monument is designed in form of a classical Egyptian (gateway) grave, with several sculptures designed by popular artist *Fritz Klimsch* (1870-1960).

In late May 1886 Meissner & Buch company celebrated their 25th year in business. Julius F. Meissner had become a 'Kommerzienrat' (title conferred on distinguished businessman; officially used until 1919 only). He donated a foundation (Pauline-Therese-Foundation, believe it was named after his mother) with a initial capital of 30,000 Marks. The return to be used for needy M&B employees, send them to spa's, seaside resorts etc. The ongoing business success allowed Meissner to establish an own medical insurance for the employees of M&B. Probably he followed the socially minded example of *Wolf Hagelberg*, Berlin, owner of the world biggest deluxe paper company. Such social benefits ensured that the highly-skilled (and well paid) lithographers and printers/pressmen stayed with the company.

In 1888 M&B bought the rights of a patented facsimile art printing process (Photochrom?) and established an own art publishing business.

About 1889 M&B moved their London office to 121 Bunhill Row, within the 'Postcard Mile'. Their cable address read 'Facsimile London', which always surprised me a bit, but makes sense with their art publishing business mentioned above. The cable address of their works was *Chromo Leipzig*.

Meissner & Buch took part in most international exhibitions and fairs, won medals, received awards (i.e. London 1862, Vienna 1873, Philadelphia 1876, Chicago 1893, Paris 1900, St. Louis 1904 (*chromographic and publishing for artistic and commercial work*,



Julius F. Meissner's palazzo situated at Sidonienstr. 26.

Designed by the architects *Ende* and *Böckmann*, Berlin.

art papers, read the M&B entry in the official 1904 catalogue). M&B's products were always ready in time. Their Christmas and New Year cards and novelties were ready for shipping to wholesalers already in April. The company continued to grow. By 1894 M&B employed about 360-400 persons.

The son *Julius Wilhelm Meissner* joined the management/became co-owner in 1900 (the second son *Wilhelm Curt Meissner* followed in 1909). Meissner & Buch was one of the companies honored by a visit of the King of Saxony to Leipzig on February 21, 1906. Meissner sen. appeared to have good contacts to the Saxon court. The Meissner's proudly showed the King around. He was especially interested in the different stages of colour printing by litho and collotype process, facsimile art printing, silk-postcards etc. While the king was still around a special deluxe postcard with his portrait was printed (wish I had a copy!). The article on the king's visit mentions M&B's chromo collotype printing facilities a second time. I had no expected M&B being so strong in collotype printing. M&B employed 400 people in 1906. By the way, the visit of the Saxon King surely helped that Julius Friedrich Meissner was soon conferred the title 'Geheimer (= privy) Kommerzienrat'.

In contrast to the situation of the picture postcard industry and despite the growing number of protective tariffs in many countries, most German deluxe paper manufacturers still made good profits. Meissner & Buch decided that their factory needed an extension. The work began in January 1910 and lasted until May 1911. The notice I refer to mentions 6,000 square metres **additional** space for production, stocks etc. There is however no information on the entire space occupied by M&B. The title illustration shows the M&B factory in full size in 1911. It comes from a letterhead/bill mailed in March 1915 to a customer with information on latest available M&B patriotic/war card novelties ("Vaterländische Künstler-Postkarten"). Mentioned are no's 2117 - 2126. All cards were available with different patriotic/season imprints at same price.

The Meissner & Buch works, Sidonienstr. 18, Leipzig, had reached a dimension they never topped again. Employed were about 500 persons at Leipzig factory (39 were found in the office) and another c. 50 at their London office, now located at 66-68 Ironmonger Row (Old Street). In use were 21 flatbed presses for litho and collotype printing, and hundreds (!) of other machines/equipment, from handpresses, machinery needed for embossing, gilding, cutting to huge format process cameras. Business continued to run well until the outbreak of World War One.

War years as well as the early 1920's were not easy for such a highly export-orientated company as M&B was. Meissner sen. had died in 1918 and the firm was now run



Many printing firms donated postcards for the fund raising campaigns of the Red Cross. Here is that of M&B for 1914. "Please! Please!" signed *Klamroth*. Not printed by their typical chromolitho but an interesting combined halftone/litho process not often seen with M&B yet.

by the two sons Julius W. and Wilhelm C. Meissner. M&B's production line changed from artistic deluxe paper goods to facsimile art printing, artist litho prints, menue, decorative correspondence, trade and greeting/artist cards, all sorts of commercial lithographic printing for packaging purposes, posters, labels, calendars, book covers, brochures etc. M&B became more and more a typical commercial printer. Some of their litho printing presses were replaced by modern offset presses. Entries in 1921/1928

Klimsch addressbooks list no information at all on workforce nor equipment. This could mean that it was a steady up and down with business. Anyway by the late 1920's/early 1930, M&B business scale had reached almost the 1911 dimensions. 440 workers and a total of 190 machines for production. But something was going on because the two Meissner's were assisted now in M&B's management by four other men, one of them with the name of *Wolfgang von Asmuth*.

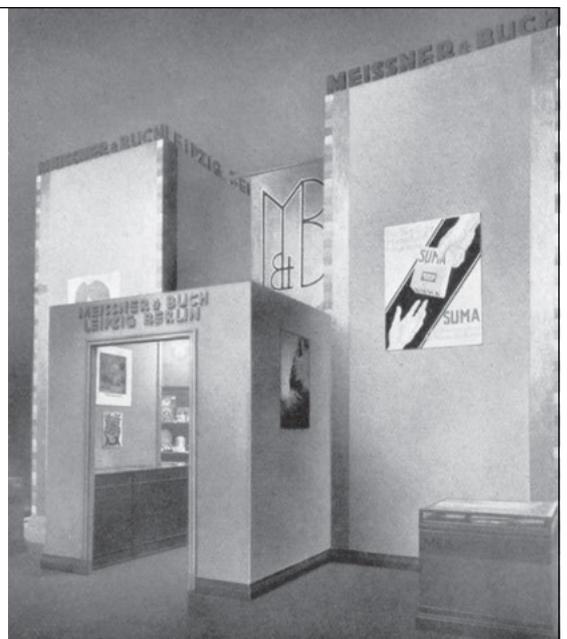
Klimsch printing trade addressbook 1933 edition (issued in July) shows just a mere two line M&B business entry (I almost overlooked first), at **NEW** address. No longer found in their huge factory building at Sidonienstr. 18, but at Hohe Str. 13, a location not far off Sindonienstr. So what had happened to Meissner & Buch? The early 1930's in Germany = poor economy and new unemployment records. This was a climate that helped the Nazi's to recruit a large following. Many companies forced to close down, others continued somehow but with less workers. I did not know yet that M&B had been a victim of these years, too.

Klimsch 1935 lists M&B now as GmbH (= Ltd.), managing directors since 1933 were Wilhelm C. Meissner and above mentioned Wolfgang von Asmuth. Specialized in poster and label printing, religious art prints and collapsible boxes. *Artistic commercial printing* became a slogan of M&B now. A total of 142 people were employed at Hohe Str. 13 (on corner Elisenstr.). So the old glory of M&B was gone, the (reduced) business converted into a limited company with one of the Meissner's left as managing director.

Entries in the 1939 Leipzig addressbook provide more information. The former M&B factory at Sidonienstr. 18 was now occupied by several firms from the pharmaceutical field, owner of the site was the ADCA = Allgemeine Deutsche-Credit Anstalt. This

Leipziger Reklamemesse 1927

M&B's stand at the yearly held Leipzig advertising fair was described as "designed in perfect artistic harmony". Looks to me very "Bauhaus-style" like, but I am no expert. The entire design was created by *Julius Gipkens* from Berlin. Giphens, born 1882 at Emmerich, moved to the USA in the 1930's where he is said to have died in New York in 1968. He was an illustrator and scene-painter, not studied artist but autodidact. Gained fame with his work for the chocolate companies *Sarotti* and *Stollwerck*. Was head of the art dept. of the huge A. Scherl publishing company, Berlin. An interesting artist!



bank house (with over 100 branches in central Germany) was also the owner of the building Hohe Str. 13 by the way. Wouldn't be much surprised to find out that Wolfgang von Asmuth (from a place named Gaschwitz) was associated with this bank somehow. "Birkner" Paper trade directory 1938 edition entry for M&B shows that this firm was no longer export-orientated but had become a typical commercial printer. 140 workers produced collapsible boxes, posters, advertising flyers and art prints. The listing in Klimsch 1939 edition provides some more details: 152 workers, chromolitho (1 press), offset (11 presses), colotype (2 presses) and steel engraving (3 presses) processes used for the production.

What happened to the M&B location Hohe Str. 13 during WW2 years is not known. But the Leipzig addressbook 1949 lists M&B as works for coloured artistic printing again, at Karl-Liebknecht-Str. 12. It is a great mess with street names by the way. The Nazi's renamed streets, some were given their old names after the war but the GDR government renamed streets often once again. The Karl-Liebknecht-Str. was the former Südstr., renamed in the 1930's into Adolf-Hitler-Str. (Leipzig addressbook 1939 lists a Südstr. as well as a Adolf-Hitler-Str.). That means that M&B had moved already during WW2 years. The managing directors of the M&B Ltd. was the couple Wolfgang and Hildegard von Asmuth, Gaschwitz. No Meissner family members anymore.

Polygraph (ex-Klimsch) addressbook of the graphic trade 1950 edition still lists firms from East-Germany. Later editions no longer. It appears that the GDR government did not want to circulate information on their trade and industry, unless it was officially approved. Furthermore many formerly private run firms were taken over by official side and reorganized as VEB's (people owned companies). Often various firms were put together un-



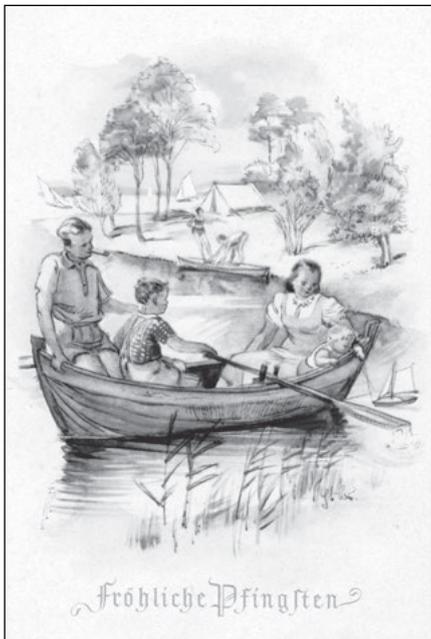
Advert from 1952 Leipzig Trade Fair book.

der one VEB name, but seldom found at the same address. According Christa Pieske's publications this happened also to M&B, but the year it took place is not given. The Polygraph entry however still gives us an idea of M&B's production size: owners were the Asmuths, managing director a Werner Nähbrisch, technical director Hans Nitsche. 49 workers, 4 offset presses, 2 colotype presses and 3 steel engraving machines plus other equipment for embossing etc. Colour printing of any type listed as speciality. An advert in the 1952 Leipzig Trade Fair catalog shows that M&B had begun to produce greeting cards again. Some finds of such cards with a small M&B logo on date from the 1950's. I have heard of samples dating from the 1960's, but haven't seen any so far. Guess M&B became contract printer for several GDR publishers and their logo was omitted.

The GDR governments dream of erecting a huge (better to control) VVB Polygraphische Industrie printing/binding trust at Leipzig surely effected also on M&B by the late 1960's. The exact year the firm was converted into a VEB. is still unclear however. Most likely it took place in 1972.

What was left of VEB Meissner & Buch is said to had been sold during the late 1980's, guess not long after the fall of the wall. Other sources mention M&B (part of VEB Interdruck?) to be wound up in 1988, but that production had been closed down already earlier. No idea which date is correct, but in the end it doesn't matter much I think. The late M&B had nothing in common with what the postcard collector of today identifies with Meissner & Buch.

← "Fröhliche Pfingsten" (Whitsun) greeting printed by M&B für "Planet-Verlag" from (East-) Berlin. Card no. 760 (A6 size = 148 x 105 mm). Typical offset printing, looks a bit like water-colour work. Card shows M&B logo in small size and grey ink. If I read the imprinted official codes correctly this card was printed in 1954. The picture is not signed. Shows a happy family having a good time (camping holidays). Really idealized, a dream for people of that time. Such card motifs were popular already in the 1930's!

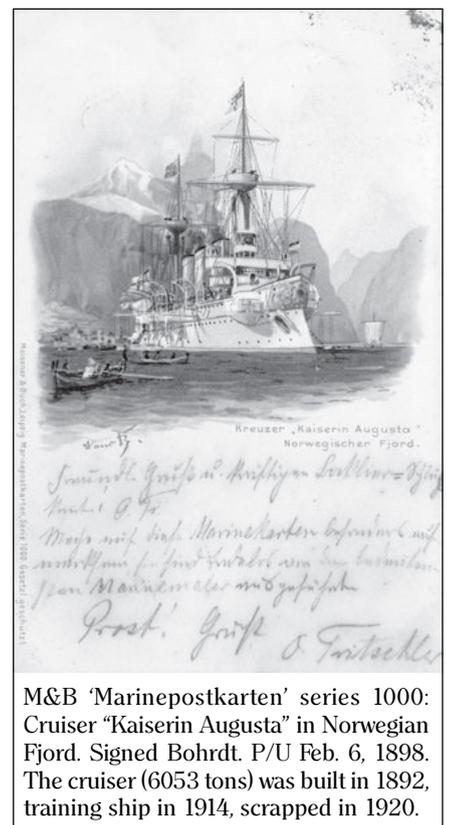


Meissner & Buch Cards

I would like to add some comments of mine on postcard published and/or printed by M&B, Leipzig. As mentioned before I do not collect M&B cards myself nor intend to do so in the future, so hold only few samples in my collection. I could have asked TPA readers for detailed info on M&B card series to be included here, but I did not although I know of at least 6 collectors who have specialized in (the early) M&B series, some holding impressive collections. I trust some would have been willing to share their knowledge with TPA readers. However, it would not only have led to further delays in completing this issue, but I fear I would run out of space to include all data in this issue which tends to become the biggest issue ever.

I will gladly give space in a coming issue for an article on the M&B post-cards series assuming that one of more M&B collectors agrees to cooperate and shares data with readers.

While looking for any information available on M&B cards advertised or reviewed in trade periodicals I hold myself or have access to, I noted a certain "absence" of advertising/information on Meissner & Buch, especially in post-1900 paper/printing trade periodicals. Although it is a fact that a great deal of M&B's general production was exported worldwide, there are a number of (topo) card series I understand to aim at the inland market. So, what was the media M&B used to inform the retail trade and customers in Germany on their new issues? →



M&B 'Marinepostkarten' series 1000: Cruiser "Kaiserin Augusta" in Norwegian Fjord. Signed Bohrdt. P/U Feb. 6, 1898. The cruiser (6053 tons) was built in 1892, training ship in 1914, scrapped in 1920.

For information on early M&B card series research-minded collectors will need access to copies of British and US trade publications which often had very detailed reviews and advertising of M&B as well as their competitors *Hagelberg* (Berlin), *Nister* (Nürnberg), *Wezel & Naumann* (Leipzig) etc. Especially "The Stationery, Bookselling & Fancy Goods" and "The Stationery World & Fancy Goods Review" are mentioned in Christa Pieske's book "Das ABC des Luxus-papiers" as excellent sources. Plus half a dozen other long gone publications from GB and the USA. Unfortunately I have not yet found access to any of them.

M&B's secret of success

A recent purchase of a copy of the official guide to the Leipzig Paper Fair (August) 1912, held twice a year, puzzled me a great deal. I had hoped to find at least some card info/data on M&B. All the big and small names of the postcard/paper trade of that time are listed, but there is no mention nor advertising of M&B at all. Very untypical, especially when taking into account that export at that time had become difficult also for German non-topo card publishers/printers.

Had Meissner & Buch such a strong position for years to ignore the rest of the trade and do their own thing? Well, to find an answer it would need much more research. What I have noted is the following. M&B had achieved an excellent reputation for their products, for (artistic) design together with a continuous high printing quality. The customer was willing to pay a higher price for something with the name Meissner & Buch on. Their business was export-orientated, and it appears that M&B spent quite some money on regular advertising in foreign trade publications. This resulted of course in (good) reviews and made the name "M&B" even more popular. Furthermore the

company was present at each and every important international fair/exhibition, collected medals and additional positive mention in the press. Taking part in foreign exhibitions was a costly matter by the way. But capital appears not to had been a problem for M&B in pre-1914 times. A clever management, an eye for what the public actually wanted, quality for a higher price, was probably the secret of success for many years.

M&B: The best and biggest?

From mention in postcard collector related literature as well as letters from readers and collectors (mostly from abroad) received over the past 15 years, I was often confronted with statements as *M&B the world's finest fine art / chromo-lithographic printers, . . . the biggest around* and other similar statements. Well, this is something I have a problem with. M&B published and printed a great number of excellent done postcards over a longer period of time, and so did other companies from Germany. Printer names not so popular with collectors nowadays, who supplied equal quality to the world markets, with more skilled workers, more printing capacity than M&B had, many of them established at the same time M&B entered business.

To name only a few: local competitor **Wezel & Naumann**, establ. 1872, publishers & printers, opened branch in London at about the same time M&B did. W&N postcards are much underrated – **Kunstanstalt** (vormals Gustav W. Seitz) **Hamburg-Wandsbek AG**, establ. 1852 – **Lithographisch-artistische Anstalt München** (vormals Gebr. Obpacher), establ. 1867, branches in London (also at Bunhill Row) and New York, often G.O.M. logo on their cards – **E. Nister**, Nürnberg establ. 1877, printer & publisher (Velten cards!) with branch in London from 1888 on – **A. & C. Kaufmann AG**, Berlin, establ. 1866. Became part of *Berlin-Neurod-*

er Kunstanstalten AG in 1900 with 1000+ workforce – **Wolf Hagelberg**, Berlin, establ. 1858, the biggest of them all! – **Albrecht & Meister AG**, Berlin establ. 1869, another of the big chromolitho printers around. **B. Dondorf**, Frankfurt, establ. 1833 published and printed excellent quality (artist-signed) cards, some series also in co-operation with well known firm **M.(arcus) Munk**, Vienna.

Now ask a dealer for any cards of above mentioned firms, and in most cases you will get a negative answer, or a box with mixed cards. Okay, you might have more luck when you ask for Velten artist cards. Then ask for M&B. In most cases you get a box or at least a pile of cards put on the desk. Why is this so? Well, M&B were clever and gave their cards a uniform design, today called corporate design, from the very beginning. Not only the luxury look and artist-signed illustration but the way their name and card information is arranged makes them easy to identify (and sort out for dealers always short of time). Full name is imprinted with series title and no., on the early cards on picture side along the left short side in a non-conflicting (grey) ink. Later issues with divided address side show a similar arranged publisher line in same characteristic type along the left side of writing space. Popular became soon the use of a M&B logo at top of dividing line position (later at lower left corner position). In either case M&B cards are easy and quick to identify.

Other publishers used similar layouts, name and card information arrangements, only to switch soon to completely different look. Some used logo's and/or initials only with a card/series number, sometimes easy to overlook (as some Albrecht & Meister cards I have seen). I believe the way M&B designed their cards long ago is part of their success which lasts until today.



M&B series 1003, Horse-racing (?), "Finish" signed C. Becker. With promo imprint of W. Straker's Ltd. on address side. (retailer?).
(My sincere thanks go to R.A. Hyde, GB for this card!)

W. STRAKER'S, LTD.,
BEAUTIFUL IVORY POST CARDS
(ALL DIFFERENT)
25 FOR 6D.
49, 51, 53, 55, 61 & 63, LUDGATE HILL
BRANCHES:
SALISBURY HOUSE, LONDON WALL, E.C. COVENTRY STREET, W.
GRANDHURST STREET, W.C. EDGWARE ROAD, W.
NEW OXFORD STREET, W.C. HIGH STREET, NOTTING HILL, W.
COMMERCIAL ROAD, E. BOROUGH HIGH STREET, S.E.
NEWINGTON GATEWAY, S.E. WHITECHAPEL HIGH STREET, E.
20, NEWGATE STREET, E.C.



Published by Meissner & Buch, London, & printed at their works in Leipzig (Saxony).

This is M&B's only other 'series' I know of. I have this single card only. Other cards said to be of similar design with diff. picture. Fine chromolitho printing, embossed border. Similar designs produced by other firms, too.



Sincerely wishing you a very happy Birthday.

M&B Künstler-Postkarten Series

These are the M&B cards of pre-1914 date, collectors are interested in most. I know only of one other M&B postcard series (not numbered) by the way: "Highest Award Series" There have been many discussions at all times what is a art (reproduction) and what a artist(-signed) postcard. Both however, came to existence in postcard terms quite late. The art publisher *Friedrich Adolf Ackermann* from München is said to had been the first to publish art reproductions on postcards in 1896. But many work did not qualify to be reproduced in full onto small postcard size. The birth of the artist-signed postcard = original designs for the medium postcard, was the year 1897 (according information found in "*Aufbruch und Erfüllung*", Werner J. Schweiger, Edition Brandstätter, Wien-München 1988). The author mentions following early publishers: *J. Velten* and *Gebr. Knauss* both from Karlsruhe; *M&B, Leipzig*; *Herbert Köhler*, München; *H. Hohmann*, Darmstadt.

Julius F. Meissner was, as mentioned before, very interested in art himself, also member of an art society. This might have put in a good position to get in touch with a number of illustrators representing the then popular trends and willing to supply work for M&B's fast growing postcard series (and other products). I am not in the position to judge the quality of the art/illustrations. I am also not sure if the art-friend J. Meissner went so far to use any designs which qualified as "art" but did not fit into his publishing line of popular, well-selling designs. What I know for sure is that the first M&B series (number 1000) published in 1897 was on German Navy, a very popular topic as the Kaiser Wilhelm II was totally crazy on (war)ships/maritime life. Cards I have seen of series 1000 are signed *Hans Bohrdt* (1857-1945). It was one of the major postcard topics during 1897-1900, and publishers needed to have at least one new series on offer per year. By the way, the Leipzig printer *Grimme & Hempel* produced a minimum of 10 series of navy cards looking very, very much like M&B's cards, signed *Willy Stöwer*. An-



M&B series 1013 "Rothenburg". 12 cards. Titled "Weisser Thurm" = White Tower. No. p/u, undiv. back = pre-1905. Signature reads "Otto Hummel" in my opinion.

other firm I have mentioned before, *Gebr. Obpacher*, München, published a number of *Willy Stöwer* maritime paintings at that time, too. It appears that Meissner had managed to sign the popular painter *H. Bohrdt* for a longer period.

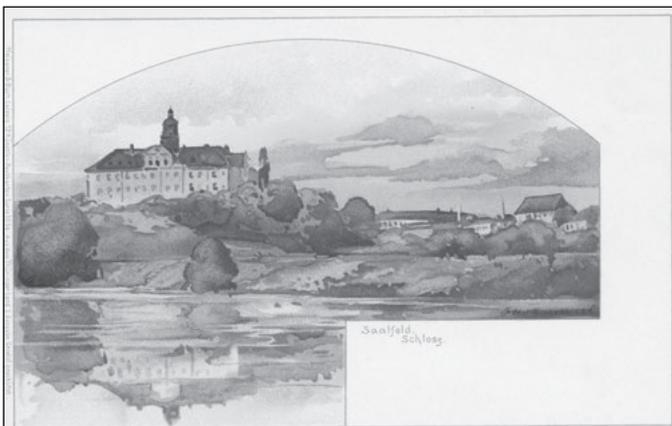
In "Papier-Zeitung", Dec. 5, 1897 issue I found a rather short review on M&B's navy postcard series with the work of *H. Bohrdt*. It reads "...each of the 12 cards..." and that sounds to me that M&B published 2 or more series titled "Marinepostkarten" at the same time. I have 5 cards from series 1000, 2 from series 1012 with sailing vessel and another showing a freighter in Africa without own series title, have seen two cards from series 1015 again titled "Marine-Postkarten" but with "Folge 1 = Part 1" in publisher line (both p/u 1899). Series 1076 (sample card p/u in

1900) was also of maritime interest: "Flottengröße" (flag signals). Series 1003 had no title and the only card I have seen so far shows an illustration signed "Becker" with horse-race motif. So, what type of cards were published in series 1006 for example? Or series 1010? And when?

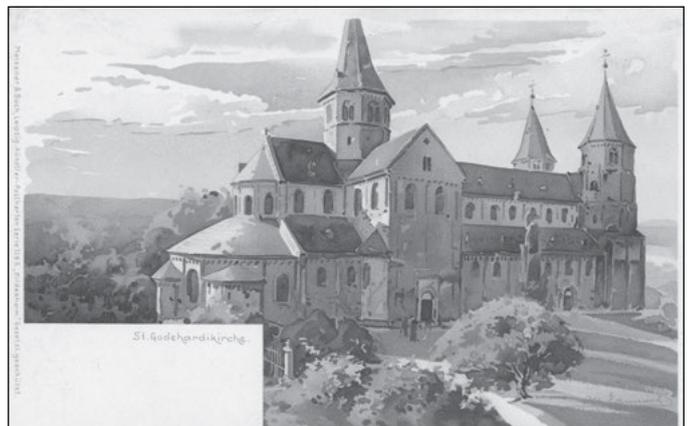
Discovered an interesting notice dealing with M&B in "*Reklamepostkarte*", Peter Weiss, Karl Stehle, Birkhäuser Verlag, Basel 1988. The authors examined the different series/card number systems once used to turn the interested customer into a (avid) collector. How postcard publishers made their card series look not outdated too soon. Meissner & Buch, according to the authors, reserved a number of series no's, let's say 1000-1020 for maritime motifs (sort of edition). Started off with 2 - 3 series, as we know with 12 cards each, then reprints of good sellers, added new cards from time to time. The most interesting fact however the authors Weiss and Stehle mention is that Meissner & Buch did not strictly put automatically 12 views into a single series. Well, suitable artwork did not grow on trees. M&B used no individual card (series 1000/9 for example), but series numbers only. Potential collectors did never know for sure how many cards were published in a specific series unless mentioned in publisher line. Hope that M&B collectors can supply more details on the M&B artist-signed postcard series and their numbering in the future.

Meissner & Buch is mentioned in general literature from time to time as printer and/or publisher of postcards. A series of 12 cards is said to had been published in 1898 (?) on occasion of the the artic expedition of the Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen. No idea if these found in their typical artist-signed series.

M&B postcard collectors usually concentrate on cards from the early years after the turn of the century, the undivided era. Series 1198 "*Frühlingsgrüße*" published pre-1905 shows rather common flower designs. There are other early M&B series around which in my opinion do not quality to be of outstanding design or quality.



M&B series 1034 - "12 Künstler-Postkarten aus dem Thüringer Land" (Part 1) - Saalfeld, Schloss. Not p/u, signed "Otto Hummel".



M&B series 1145 - "Hildesheim" - St. Godehardikirche. Not p/u, once again signed "Otto Hummel", although hard to read.

The chromolithographic printing process became also for M&B too slow and expensive for postcard production before the outbreak of the Great War. It appears to had been a common practise for most ppc printer in WW1 to donate cards towards the work of the Red Cross. The only sample I have done by M&B is illustrated and is not by chromolitho but a combined halftone/litho process. I have other samples from printers not that popular which are done in excellent chromolitho printing. By the way, in spring 1915 Meissner & Buch offered series no's 2117 -2126 as artist-signed card novelties, mostly typical spring motifs with or without patriotic imprints, only series 2120 is titled "Unsere Helden" (Our heroic men).

Meissner & Buch continued to publish greeting cards in their artist-signed series in the 1920-30's, although many common motifs show no signature at all. Some I believe were reprints of previous published cards.

Art reproductions, which were a good seller in the 1920's, took more and more room in M&B's postcard publishing activities. They show another modified M&B logo together with full name imprint, the picture printed by standard 3-4 colour halftone process. These art reproductions appear to be not much of interest to the 'typical' M&B collector, something I can really understand. Now we know that M&B run into big trouble in the late 1920's/early 1930's. That might be the reason that there are not many M&B published cards in the 1930's, but more contract printing work with M&B's name on. The highest M&B (series) number I have seen so far, suggesting that the numbering was indeed consecutive, reads 3248 p/u 1930. But my stock of M&B cards is quite small.

M&B series 1198: "Frühlingsgrüße", postally used in Austria, postmark illegible, undivided back. Signed "MB" I believe.



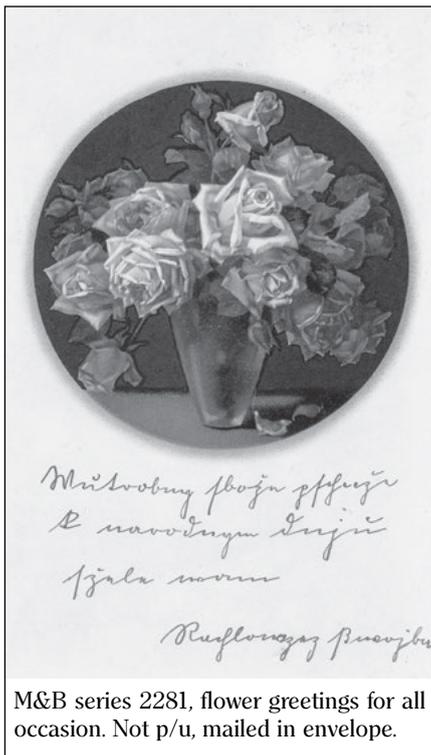
Meissner & Buch Logo

The early cards show the name in full. Then some time later the logo "M&B" inside shield was added at top of dividing line position (post-1905 date). Some cards are found where the logo is arranged at lower left corner, the letters still in a serif type font. Most of these date from the 1920's. M&B's breakdown and relaunch at new address is documented also by a slightly modified company logo. Still M&B inside shield but letters in non-serif type. This logo is still found on post-WW2 cards. Well, and then we have the different logo on the art reproduction cards. Three shields (graphic trade crest) each with a letter inside = M. (&) B. L. at top of dividing line position. At lower left corner full name imprint plus series number. This "M.B.L." logo version has led to some irritation in the past. Because there is another logo on cards around with initials M.B.L. in flag, often seen together with a single (card) number. As some of these cards, especially

those from early WW1 days are of high quality, (chromolitho, embossed), some collectors/dealers tend to file them under M&B. Well, I am quite sure that these are NOT from Meissner & Buch presses. I have found several more cards with M.B.L. flag logo, all p/u 1914-15, the make and quality is really different from that of M&B.

There were two other postcard printers/publisher at Leipzig in business about the same time with "matching" initials:

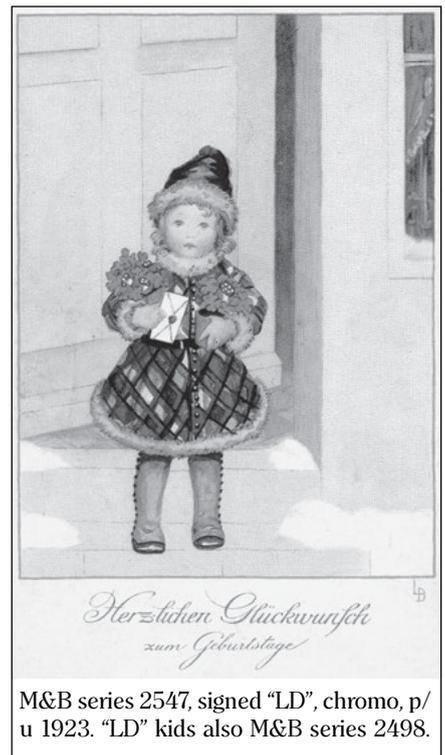
Max Bergmann, Leipzig-Reudnitz, fine art and chromolitho printers, in business since 1898, specialized in "Autochrom" postcards. By 1913 Bergmann had 8 litho presses and employed 60 workers. Klimsch addressbook 1928 lists the business again with 60 workers but 2 modern offset presses installed now. Still printing postcards but also picture books. Klimsch 1939: Max Bergmann now at new address, with only 3 presses left and 10 workers. No entries found in post-WW2 address books.



M&B series 2281, flower greetings for all occasion. Not p/u, mailed in envelope.



M&B series 2426, flowers, chromo with greetings steel-engraved. P/U April 1924.



M&B series 2547, signed "LD", chromo, p/u 1923. "LD" kids also M&B series 2498.

Max Breslau, Leipzig, sometimes also filed under "Bresmadruck" (their cable address), establ. 1901, is somewhat mysterious as there is no company data found in my standard, otherwise quite reliable, reference literature. But Breslau printed postcards using various processes and soon added modern bromide photo processing & printing machinery. Klimsch 1935-39 editions reveal that Breslau employed 85 workers, 3 letterpress plus 5 offset presses, plenty of other machinery incl. latest equipment for reproduction purposes, 4 bromide photo printing machines. Sounds like a well equipped, modern company. Products in the 1930's were ppc's (by offset process and bromide photo), posters and general illustration printing. Nothing found on Max Breslau in post-1945 literature.

I trust one of these two printers used the M.B.L. in flag logo on their cards for some years. Perhaps the flag logo was used by a yet unknown ppc publisher?

Shown below are the different Meissner & Buch logo's I have found on my cards or spotted in adverts. All illustrations were blown up by about the same percentage. There might be other variations around. Unfortunately I don't have even a single M&B card from WW1 years. The later version comes along in quite small size, usually printed in bright grey and easy to overlook especially with heavy handwriting.



M&B logo used in c. pre-1914 years



M&B logo used in post-1920 years



M&B logo found on their art reproduction series

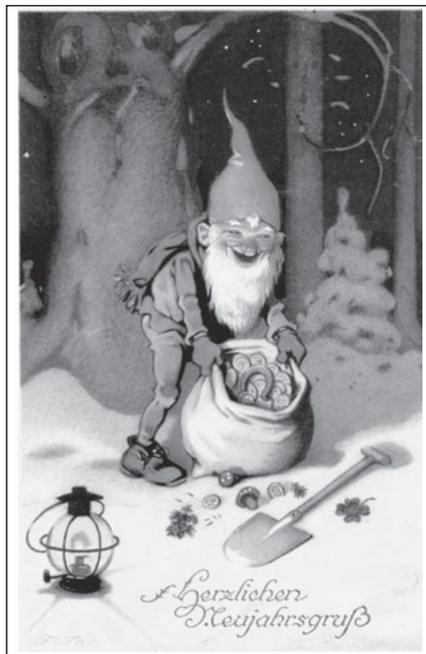


Nr. 3317

M&B logo (much smaller in size now) found on cards from c. mid 1920's on. With only minor changes in use until the 1950's (see 1952 advert)



M&B series 2327, art reproduction, titled "Frühlingslied" (spring song) by C. Sporedler. coloured halftone printing. M&B's name on picture side, series no. and logo (at top of dividing line) on address side. Card not p/u. M&B still used their typical series idea. Other finds of art repro cards prove that there were several cards by the same artist found under single series number. I am not really sure whether the M&B art reproduction series no's were integrated into the regular artist-signed card series.



M&B card number 3317, dwarf with sack full of gold in dark woods. Signed "FB" = Fritz Baumgarten. Coloured offset printing with steel-engraved New Years greeting. Card p/u in 1930. M&B logo with card number found on lower left corner position, printed in grey ink, together with "Germany" to meet export regulations. Guess M&B dropped the previous series system after business move.



1331

This is the M.B.L. logo which some collectors believe to be used also by Meissner & Buch. It is found printed in different colours, green, brown and black versions are known. The quality of the WW1 propaganda type of cards is mostly excellent, M&B-like chromolitho printed, often carefully embossed etc. Below I show card no. 3145 (not p/u, c. 1914/15). A second card (no. 1331, p/u 1915) shows a more common halftone printed view, hand-coloured, heavy gelatine cover and greetings in Slovakian language I guess. Information on any other cards with M.B.L. flag logo on, especially when postally used, much appreciated.

