German Novelty Postcard

By Norman Hinds

This image shows the two sides of a specific souvenir combination from German South West Africa (Deutsch-Südwestafrika, modern-day Namibia) dating to March 1906. Instead of a traditional folder, it features a rare philatelic "stamp-on-stamp" postcard paired with a native souvenir attachment.

1. The Postcard (Top Panel)

This is an original philatelic novelty postcard designed and published by Ottmar Zieher in Munich.

- The Design: Zieher became world-famous in the early 1900s for producing high-quality postcards that replicated the postage stamps and coats of arms of different countries and colonies using detailed, raised embossing. This specific layout is No. 15 in his globally collected series.
- The Imperial Imagery: The top-left corner features the large, embossed Imperial German Eagle (Reichsadler). It is surrounded by the "Kaiser's Yacht" (Hohenzollern) stamp series, which was standard issue for Germany's overseas colonies during that era.
- The Message & Postmark: The text in the center is written in old German handwriting.
    - It translates to: "Windhuk, 25/3 1906. Greetings to you and your family from your traveling brother-in-law, Paul Melzer."
    - Windhuk (now Windhoek) was the colonial capital. The date points to the height of the early 20th-century German colonial presence in the region.

2. The Souvenir Fan Attachment (Bottom Panel)

The lower image shows the secondary face or a protective folder backing meant to serve as a keepsake.

- The Feathers: It features real avian feathers layered to form a fan structure. This was a popular style of localized hand-crafted souvenir sold to German soldiers, sailors, and colonial administrators stationed in the African territory.
- The Text: It is prominently inscribed with "Zur Erinnerung / 1906 / an S. W. Afrika" Translation – "In Memory of 1906 in South West Africa".
- The Ribbon Finial: On the left, a green silk ribbon rosette tightly binds the base of the fan, adding a decorative trim common to European mementos of the period.
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3. Historical & Collectible Value

For Stamp and Postcard Collectors (Philately/Deltiology) -- mint (unused) versions of Ottmar Zieher cards are relatively easy to find, but postally used examples sent directly from the specific colony depicted on the card are scarce and command a premium among collectors.

4. Description of the Front Folder

The image shows the front cover and the blank back cover of the souvenir booklet folder.

- The Design: The right side shows the front cover. It is framed by a delicate, blue-printed ornamental vine border.
- The Title Typography: The text is printed in a stylized, sweeping script. It reads: "Silber-Blätter von Süd Afrika" (which translates from German to "Silver Leaves of South Africa").
- "Silber-Blätter" -- This title refers specifically to the leaves of the famous Silver Tree (Leucadendron argenteum), native to the Table Mountain region of South Africa. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, these thick, naturally metallic, and silky leaves were widely collected by travelers. They were often dried, painted with miniature landscapes or verses, and sold in souvenir booklets or cards across Southern Africa—including neighboring German South West Africa.

The actual measurements of the opened card are 9¼ inches by 6½ inches.

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