

BULLETIN OF THE

POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



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Sobieska at Vienna

by M. E. Steczynski



If Poland were to issue a stamp to commemorate its greatest role in history, that stamp would be in honor of Jan Sobieski's victory at Vienna on September 12, 1683. Likewise, if Poland were to devote a stamp to its greatest painter, it would honor Jan Matejko, who kept alive on canvas glorious episodes of Poland's past.

Is it any wonder then, that if I were asked to name my favorite stamp of Poland, I would choose the 1.20 zloty dark blue issue listed by Scott as No. 278? This stamp brings together both Jans—the artist Matejko and the general Sobieski—in a fragment from the famous painting "Sobieski at Vienna."

The Artist Matejko

Matejko (1838-1893), the eleventh of thirteen children, an artist of limited means but of unbounded patriotism, felt that not only the world in

general, but even Rome was prone to forget Poland's gallant deed in saving Christianity from paganism. Matejko's concern was to keep alive the big moment when Poland had bared her breast to protect western European civilization and Christianity. So in 1883, two hundred years after the battle, he painted a canvas of heroic proportions, about 30 feet wide by about 15 feet high, showing the victorious Sobieski entering Vienna, and presented it to Pope Leo XIII. This masterpiece of faithful detail hangs in the Vatican to remind the Holy See that a gallant people championed the cause of Christianity in its critical hour.

Sobieski, "The Lion"

Jan III Sobieski (1624-1696) was a tall and corpulent fellow—large faced and full-eyed. He lived at a time when Poland was overwhelmed by invaders

from every direction, and he established his reputation as a military genius by defeating Tartars, Turks, and others, on numerous occasions. He fought the Turks with a vengeance—each infidel seemed to be his personal enemy—so they referred to him as “The Terrible” and “The Lion.” His brilliant record on the battlefield resulted in his election as King Jan III in 1674 and placed him as the outstanding leader of forces fighting the Turk.

Sobieski had the power to arouse, revitalize and lead his people to victory. Even today these qualities which were in him bring encouragement and inspiration to Poles fighting and conquering overwhelming odds. The man's military genius is never questioned. As a statesman, however, he perhaps failed somewhat in that he may have trusted too much in the sanctity of treaties and placed too much faith in the honor and integrity of others. Consequently, his reign depended on military victories for its bright spots.

With his French wife, Marie, whom Sobieski called by the Polish “Marysienka,” he had three sons—James, Alexander and Constantine—and a daughter, Theresa.

Sobieski lies buried in the Wawel Cathedral at Krakow with the other kings of Poland as well as with Thaddeus Kosciuszko, the champion of Polish independence; Prince Joseph Poniatowski, Napoleon's famous marshal, and Adam Mickiewicz, the national bard.

The Victory at Vienna

In 1683, the Moslem General, Kara Mustapha, with a horde of 300,000 men with countless horses, camels, buffaloes and with limitless baggage, marched in from Belgrade to occupy Vienna. His forces formed a ring around the city to besiege it. The Austrian Emperor, Leopold I, abandoned the city and sent messengers to King Sobieski to save Vienna. The Pope likewise sent emissaries to Sobieski to save Christianity. The gallant Sobieski promised help and acted promptly. The speed of mobilization of the Polish army broke all records for that age. The record-breaking march to Vienna averaged 20 kilometers per day.

It should be remembered that Vienna was only lightly garrisoned. The Turks formed a veritable ring around the city to besiege it. The Polish, Aus-

trian and German armies totaling about 75,000 men were marching to the relief of the city. Sobieski had the largest Christian contingent and made all military decisions regarding the plan of battle. He surveyed the position and strength of the Moslems from a hill-top and ordered a lightning attack. Under the personal command of Sobieski, the Polish Hussars with their winged armor charged the main mass of the Turks in a fiery onslaught and burst right into the Vizier's tents. The whizzing feathers and shrieks of the soldiers terrorized the fleeing Turks. All their priceless riches, superb equipage and jewelled weapons fell into the attackers' hands, who looked more like Turks than Poles after they got through outfitting themselves. Sobieski's share alone is said to have yielded several million ducats and with his Turkish captives, allowed him to expand his fine palace Wilanow, near Warsaw.

Vienna was free. The people in the besieged city simply went wild over the Polish hero. His task was well done. Sobieski paraphrased Caesar's famous words in a message to the Pope. “Veni, Vidi, Deus Vinxit,” he wrote. “I came, I saw, but God conquered.”

Since this memorable victory in 1683, popes, emperors, kings and princes tried to outdo each other in their praise of Sobieski as the savior of Christianity and Western Civilization. Sobieski's victory frustrated the last effort of the Crescent to conquer the Cross; enabled Europe to take the offensive; helped form the Balkan countries and started to dispose of the “sick man of Europe,” not saying anything about protecting the culture which centers in Vienna.

The Relief of Vienna Stamp

Exactly 250 years after this memorable victory, on September 12, 1933, Poland issued the large, dark blue Sobieski stamp, Scott's No. 278. It measures 44 by 23½ mm., and is printed in sheets of 70 on vertically ribbed yellowish paper. Perforations are 11½ and 12½ by 11½. The letters P.W.P.W. (Polska Wytownia Papierow Wartosciowych) in the bottom center designate the maker of the paper (Polish Mills for Valuable Papers). The total issue was 2,006,620 copies, of which 1,100,000 were later surcharged to correspond with the reduced postal rates which went into

effect on October 1, 1934. This made the net issue 906,620 copies. The 1.20 zł. had no direct postal application then, so the stamps were overprinted in red to cancel the original value and to add the new denomination of 1 zł. in the lower center. In the first surcharged issue of 500,000 (Scott's No. 286) the figure 1 is larger (5½ mm.) than the 1 of zł. The perforations are 11½ and 12x11½. In the second surcharged issue of 600,000 (Scott's No. 286A) the figure 1 is the same size (4½ mm.) as the 1 of zł. and the perforations are 11½, 12x11½ and 12½ x 11½.

As mentioned before, the stamp shows a fragment of Matejko's painting at the Vatican. In fact, less than 20 per cent of the entire area of the painting is included. The Turkish encampment, the banners, the atmosphere of grandeur, the rainbow and a myriad of details are deleted. But the story is there. The corpulent Sobieski, with sceptre in hand, is seated on his powerful white steed at the moment of his greatest glory as he is entering Vienna after the battle. He is receiving the plaudits of the citizens, the clergy and the army. On Sobieski's left (in the very center of the stamp) is his second son, Alexander, who accompanied his gallant father at Vienna. At the extreme right is Charles V, Duke of Lorraine who commanded the Austrian forces in the battle. Behind Sobieski are the Hussars—those mounted knights who struck terror in the enemy with the whiz and swish of their winged armors.

Artistically the stamp is a gem. The layout permits the painting itself to extend to all outer edges except for narrow panels at the sides which give strength to the framing and tie into the upper and lower lettering panels. The words POCZTA POLSKA (Polish Postage) and the denomination 1.20 zł. are placed beyond the arch at the top of the painting. The king's name is inserted in a panel in the lower left and the event is inscribed in the panel at the lower right. These panels form a break at the bottom which allows Sobieski's horse virtually to jump out of the picture. The ornamentation shows French influence which prevailed at Sobieski's palace at Wilanow. Credit for this layout goes to R. Kleczewski, the designer, whose name appears at the lower left of the stamp.

The handling of the engraving is

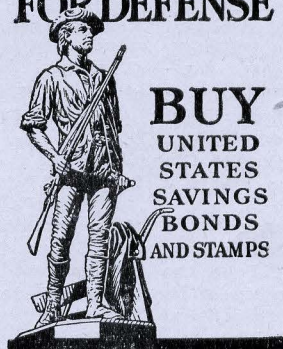
superb. It must be studied under a magnifying glass to be appreciated. Each dot and line was painstakingly carved by hand in the actual size of the stamp. Sharp detail of the huge painting is brought out as if by magic. The value of highlights and shadows is carefully preserved. Each face is a masterpiece in miniature. The engraver, Wladyslaw Vacek, whose name appears in the lower right, by virtue of this stamp alone, should rank among the very best.

The color of the stamp is also well chosen. The Polish Museum in Chicago has proofs of this stamp in various colors and the actual blue used is no doubt most satisfactory, especially under prolonged analysis and study.*

*Reprinted in part from STAMPS by permission.

We wish one of our members would list all of the varieties of the Poland Flag Stamp. How about it? Write it up, send it in and we will be very happy to print it.

FOR DEFENSE



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S. P. A. GOLDEN JUBILEE TO FEATURE CHIPEX

Committees Are Named

Anthony C. Russo, president of the Central Federation of Stamp Clubs, and general chairman of Chipex III, has announced committees for the operation of the exhibition to be held in conjunction with the Society of Philatelic Americans' Golden Jubilee Convention in Chicago the week-end of August 10-13. These committees are:

Honorary chairman: Saul Newbury, Dr. Clarence Hennan, Olaf Nagel and Julius Westphal.

General Chairman: Anthony C. Russo, Austin Philatelic Club.

Exhibition: Alfred Diamond, Chicago Philatelic Society; H. V. Gustavson, Austin Philatelic Club; Ben Reeves, Polonus Philatelic Society.

Bourse: Roman Rienowski, Cicero-Berwyn Philatelic Society.

Publicity: David Lidman, Chicago Philatelic Society.

Women's Activities: Mrs. F. Pauli, Chicago Woman's Stamp Club.

Finance: J. P. Rux, Hawthorne Stamp Club.

Activities program: W. H. Schulze, Chicago Philatelic Society.

Booster tickets: L. E. Van Reeth, Roosevelt Philatelic Society.

Program: John S. Bobo, Polonus Philatelic Society.

Reception: Mrs. H. Kunzendorf, Chicago Woman's Stamp Club.

Legal Advisor: Lester Jankowski, Polonus Philatelic Society.

Contact: Edward Benson, North Shore Philatelic Society; E. H. Wellman, Jack Knight Air Mail Society.

Transportation: Fred Peters, Austin Philatelic Club.

Seals: Henry Grimsland.

In announcing these committees, President Russo stated that Chipex III would be the greatest yet under sponsorship of the Central Federation of Stamp Clubs. The show will be presented at the LaSalle Hotel, also the site of the S. P. A. Golden Jubilee Convention. The convention had been planned for Washington but because of travel difficulties and at the request of the office of Defense Transportation, S. P. A. President J. Edward Vining of Webster Groves, Mo., and his advisors decided on the centrally-

located Windy City as the convention site.

Complete details of the convention and exhibition have not been completed. However, it is anticipated that Chicago—already a historic spot in the annals of S. P. A.—will again produce an interesting and outstanding convention. The exhibition committee under the able guidance of Alfred Diamond, S. P. A. secretary, aided by H. V. Gustavson and Ben Reeves, is expected to offer one of the finest shows in the history of Chicago. Plans include the showing of several notable collections. Collectors interested in exhibiting are to communicate with Chairman Diamond at 11 S. LaSalle St., Chicago.

BEEBA DURING S. P. A. CONVENTION

Plans are now being made by the Polonus Philatelic Society to feature as one of its many activities during the Golden Jubilee S. P. A. Convention and CHIPEX, to be held in Chicago during August, a BEEBA on Aug. 11, 1944. In the past the BEEBA has been one of the highlights of International Philatelic Week and usually climaxing the week's activities.

Significantly, each succeeding BEEBA has attracted a larger number of guests. Our guests, having tasted this truly Polish example of hospitality—a welcome coming straight from the heart—and having spent an enjoyable evening supping on traditional Polish dishes in a friendly environment where the spirit of goodfellowship prevailed, have left us looking forward to coming again, and have each time brought some one. Our motto always has been "The more the merrier." It's the talk of the Town.

The usual BEEBA refreshments, consisting of Polish sausage, kapusta, herrings in Rhine wine, Polish sardines (pre-war vintage), cheese, bread, coffee and cake will be served. But more about that later.

We are expectantly hoping that many of our out of town members will be in Chicago to attend the S. P. A. Convention and CHIPEX, so that they may attend this BEEBA with other members of the S. P. A. We hope to renew old friendships and begin many new ones.

LETTERS FROM OUR MEMBERS IN SERVICE

From somewhere in the South Pacific:

"I received 4 copies of the Polonus BULLETIN several days ago, thanks very much for sending them. They are very interesting. I have been out of touch now for over 2 years.

Thaddeus Piorkowski

"Easter Greeting and Best Wishes."

Julia C. Pach, A. N. C. 2nd Lt.
Fort Dix, N. J.

"I would greatly appreciate it if you would send me some old copies of philatelic magazines or addresses of people who would be interested. These magazines are not so much for my own need but for the needs and use of the enlisted men, who are interested and with whom I'm trying to learn more about stamps. These boys have leisure time in the evenings, and if they had literature pertaining to their hobby many a dull hour would be changed into an hour of interest and education."

S. F. Galaskiewicz, 1st Lt.
26th Med. Bn. Co. A.
Camp Grant, Ill.

"I had to give up philately temporarily. There are other activities that take up most of my time. I have followed Polonus through the various newspapers and magazines and the BULLETIN. I believe the '44 Souvenir Sheet the best yet. I liked the air of aggressiveness and confidence that it keynoted. Keep up the good work.

Edward Stepnowski
Camp Mackall, N. C.

MEET THE NEW MEMBERS

Member No. 221. Malcolm Lewis, 110 McDonald Street, Marietta, Georgia. (P, Scandinavia, China)

Member No. 222. Edward Kroll, 2717 10th Street, Wyandotte, Mich. (P, and U. S.)

Member No. 223. Anthony Schwanderla, 108 05 Spa Place, Jamaica 4, N. Y. (P, Czechoslovakia, Cent. Lith. and B. N. A.)

REINSTATEMENT

Member No. 46. J. Lobsenz, 336 Fort Washington Ave., New York 33, N. Y. (P)

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Walter Kaczmarek
1621 W. Division St.
Chicago 22, Ill.

John J. Skotnicki
1360 W. Walton St.
Chicago 22, Ill.

Mrs. Angelina Drabczyk
3011 W. Diversey Ave.
Chicago 18, Ill.

FINAL FIGURES ON U. S. FLAGS

First day covers for the Overrun Countries Series, completed Dec. 7, totalled 1,993,898. The Polish stamp, with a two-city first day, topped the list with 224,172 covers. Denmark, for whom the last stamp was issued—the country being belatedly added to the list after much prodding of the P. O. Department—was honored with the highest total for a one-city first day, 173,784 covers. The statistics, all first day points being Washington the Polish stamp also being sold in Chicago:

Issued	Country	Covers	Stamps sold
June 22,	Poland	*224,172	1,053,011
July 12,	Czechoslo'ia	145,112	617,801
July 27,	Norway	155,054	627,927
Aug. 10,	Luxemburg	166,367	552,749
Aug. 24,	Netherlands	148,763	537,720
Sept. 14,	Belgium	154,220	519,859
Sept. 28	France	163,478	500,921
Oct. 12,	Greece	166,553	497,172
Oct. 26,	Yugoslavia	161,835	494,392
Nov. 9,	Albania	162,275	478,055
Nov. 23,	Austria	172,285	500,239
Dec. 7,	Denmark	173,784	586,921

1,993,898 6,966,767

Totals (\$348,339.25)

*Includes Chicago sales: 88,170 covers, 415,062 stamps.

DEEPEST SYMPATHY

Word has reached us of the death of the father of Roman Reinowski, our Director and Sales and Auction Manager. The officers of Polonus and members extend their heartfelt and deepest sympathy to Roman and his family in this hour of bereavement.

Buy War Bonds & Stamps

THIS 'n THAT

The Regina Bain Donation Auction will be held April 28, 1944, at the club rooms of the Society, 1062 N. Ashland Ave. Members should bid generously at this auction as the proceeds will be used to increase the activities of the Society. All of the material has been donated by Mrs. Regina Bain and is from the collection of her late husband.

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Roman Reinowski, Auction Manager, advises that the Auction catalog has been mailed to each member.

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Our thanks to Frank Kovarik, the able and genial Editor of the Czechoslovak Specialist for his splendid write up about POLPEX 1944.

* * *

The Jack Knight Air Mail Society will hold its "Apex" on April 23, 1944, at the Olympic Bldg., in Cicero, Ill.

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Austin Philatelic Club will feature its Annual Stamp Exhibition on May 4, 5, and 6, 1944, at the Austin Town Hall, Lake and Central Aves.

* * *

Roman Reinowski spent a pleasant and enjoyable week end in Cleveland at the Garfield Perry Annual Stamp Show.

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Ray Bartz of the Pulaski Philatelic Society and Polonus member #160 was recently elected Secretary of the Michigan Stamp Club. Congratulations Ray, in your new job.

* * *

The new officers of the Pulaski Philatelic Society for the year 1944 are: Joseph Kay, president; Frank Jancowski, secretary; and Joseph Tarnowski, treasurer. The officers and members of Polonus extend congratulations to them and best wishes for a successful season.

* * *

Members Steczynski, Wolosewick and Rich exhibited in 10th Anniver-

sary Stamp Show of the North Shore Philatelic Society held at the Edgewater Beach Hotel. Each won an award.

* * *

Joe Godlef, our member from Brooklyn, was a welcome visitor at our last meeting.

* * *

The second meeting of each month will be devoted to stamp talks, mostly about the stamps of Poland. An interesting program is planned.

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How about bringing some of your Poland duplicates to the next meeting? Some of us could buy, you could sell, trade or exchange, if you wish.

* * *

Adam Kloskowski, Librarian, 2708 North Harding Avenue, Chicago 47, Illinois, announces he has some duplicate volumes of STAMPS and single copies of STAMPS and GOSSIP, which he has culled from the Society library, he is authorized to sell. Need any?

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We note a report in Linn's Weekly of April 13, 1944, that Germany has issued 57 postage stamps for use in Poland under German occupation.

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Also from Linn's of the same issue we quote: "Mr. John H. Feeman of Indianapolis, Ind., reports the most off center variety we have yet heard of in these flag stamps. It is a copy of the Poland stamp which came on a First Day Covers from Washington and the lithograph print is so badly off center in the engraved frame that the word "POLAND" below the flag is over the word "CENTS" in the engraved part of the stamp. There would be at least four sheets of fifty of this variety and there ought to be many others in the hands of collectors who have first day covers."

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We have already mentioned the two printings of the Poland flag stamp. See BULLETIN No. 15.