

BULLETIN OF THE

POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



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Nicolas Copernicus

by Dr. S. M. Mioduszewski

Twenty years ago Poland issued two commemorative postage stamps, Scott's Nos. 192 and 193, in honor of her son and astronomer, Nicolas Copernicus. The occasion was the 450th anniversary of his birth, February 19, 1473, in Torun, Poland.

This year marks the 400th anniversary of his death which took place May 24th, 1543, at the age of 70 in Olsztyn (Allenstein).

Modern men today play with the hands of ordinary or artificial clocks, pushing them forward and backward and by doing so they regulate daily work, save artificial light, and get more benefits of sunlight. But there were men who had only the natural clock—the sun.

We know that Joshua—successor to Moses as leader of the Israelites, and who in seven years conquered Palestine—during one of his battles stopped the sun clock in order to gain light or time for finishing a battle. It is natural to suppose that the sun must have been in motion if Joshua stopped it in order to finish his work.

It is easy for us to understand why early man believed that the sun, the stars and the planets revolved around the earth. This view—the geocentric conception of the universe—was stated in great detail by the Greco-Egyptian astronomer, Ptolemy, in the second century. His conception became an essential part of scientific, philosophical and religious thought for the next 1500 years.

The Copernicus' conception of the



solar system was contrary to Ptolemy's and contrary to the common belief. He came to the conclusion that the sun, not the earth, is the center around which the earth, stars and planets revolve. In other words, he dared to challenge an old fixed idea, and evolved the heliocentric conception. It was Copernicus who "stopped the sun and set the earth in motion." He was the "new dealer" in the natural clock.

To change fixed ideas and fixed systems and orders was a very dangerous procedure. Copernicus was conscious of this more than anyone else. He was a churchman himself, not a priest, but a canon or administrator of a Duchy—bishopric of Varmia, where his maternal uncle and guardian, Lucas Waczelrod, was Bishop. Copernicus did not publish his revelations without due consideration. He was careful in checking

and rechecking his findings before the publication of his "De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium" (Concerning the Revolutions of Heavenly Spheres), which was printed a very short time before his death.

His statement in the dedication of his work to Pope Paul 3rd, illustrated the author's carefulness. "When, therefore, I had pondered these matters, the scorn which was to be feared on account of the novelty and absurdity of the opinion impelled me for that reason to set aside entirely the book already drawn up." But the proof-reader of Copernicus' work inserted his own anonymous foreword stating that the new system is only a hypothesis good for calculations but not necessarily true. The result was that the Church overlooked the discovery of Copernicus for 73 years. But, in 1616, his work was put on the Index, and remained there until 1835.

Martin Luther, however, was quicker in his judgment of Copernicus: "The fool will overturn the whole system of astronomy." Fortunately, Luther did not have the power of the Church and not a "fool" but the timid Copernicus really overturned the "absurdity of the opinion" in due time. The promoter—as we would call him now—of Copernicus' discovery was the great Danish astronomer, T. Brahe (1546-1601). His long and accurate series of observations formed one of the greatest contributions to observational astronomy. An immense amount of factual material was needed to decide between two conceptions of the universe. It is difficult for us to realize the great struggle that took place in religious and scientific circles before the conception of Copernicus was adopted.

It is interesting to note that one copy of the first edition of Copernicus' book is in the New York Public Library and that the other known copy is in the Royal University of Upsala, Sweden. In the same library in Upsala there is also a book under the title "Calendarium Magistri Joani demote Regis" with notes by Copernicus. Under the year 1505 it is twice written in the margins with his hand in Polish: "Bog pomagay" (Help me God).

Young Nicolas attended school at St. John in Torun. Later, but not directly from this school, he went to Krakow where he studied in the university. Nicolas studied at Krakow from 1491 to 1495. At that time

mathematics and astronomy were being taught by Wojciech of Brudzew, or Albert Brudzewski (1445-1495). Nicolas was his pupil.

From Krakow, Copernicus went to the University at Bologna where he studied canon law and, in 1503, he went to Rome where he lectured on mathematics and astronomy. Then, he studied medicine at Padua University (1501-1503) and received a Doctor's degree in canon law at Ferrara, Italy.

Soon after, he came to Varmia and assumed his duties as a canon and continued working on his astronomical researches. Here he practiced medicine and even painted his self-portrait, a reproduction of which was on the Astronomical Clock Tower of the Cathedral of Strasbourg, France. Copernicus was also helping his uncle, the Bishop, and a Polish senator in a secretarial capacity. His uncle was one of the supporters of the idea of transferring the Teutonic Order from the North to the province of Podolia, in the South, where the order could be useful against the Tartars and Turks. Such a project, although not a new one, was discussed in Poznan, (1513) at the conference of Polish senators with the representatives of Albert Hohenzolern—head of the Teutonic Order—and son of the sister of Sigismund the First, King of Poland. But Albert did not agree to this project and tried not to fulfill the obligations under which he was installed in Krakow as head of the Order in 1512. Albert even went into an agreement with the Grand Duke of Moscow—Vasil the Third—against Poland. In 1520 war broke out with the Teutonic Order. In that war Copernicus, as a commander, was helping to defend Olsztyn (Allenstein) against the Teutons.

Copernicus was also a prominent economist. Not only did he take part in the reforms of currency, being appointed by Sigismund the First, but he also wrote his "Concerning the Principle of Coining Money," (1526) in which he established the law of bad money with scientific precision and which led to the eventual adoption of the gold standard by nearly all nations.

This year stamp collectors no doubt would have at least one more commemorative stamp of Copernicus were it not for the global struggle with the modern Teutonic Order. The stamps that were issued by Poland in July, 1923 to honor the 450th anniversary



by courtesy Kosciusko Foundation
Nicolas Copernicus

of Copernicus' birth came at a time of increasing inflation in 1000 and 5000 mark denominations. Facts of interest to collectors on these two stamps are:

Scott's No. 192, 1000 mark indigo, printed on a rotary press, thin paper, perf. 12½. There are two types

of this stamp due to re-engraving. In the original issue, there are thin shading lines on the cheek of Copernicus and a dot on the breast of the eagle. In the re-engraved issue, the entire design is cleaner, the cheek is clear and the eagle has no
 (Continued on last page)

Na Biednych

by Myron E. Steczynski



Prince Joseph
Poniatowski
King Stephen
Bathory

King Boleslaus
The Brave
King Casimir
The Great

Thaddeus
Kosciuszko
King Ladislaus
Jagiello

King
Sigismund I
King John
Sobieski

This set of 8 labels NA BIEDNYCH (FOR THE POOR) is dated 1917 and is perhaps more typically Polish than actual stamps of Poland. They measure 25x31 mm., are perforated, but also occur imperforate. The stamps portray kings and heroes of Poland of long ago. They were later surcharged with the letters O. K. O. P. in the four corners and new values in thin type, also with the same letters and higher values in heavy type as indicated in the table.

Value and Descr.	Portrait	Lived	Remarks
5, red	Prince Jozef Poniatowski	1762-	Soldier, patriot. Napoleon's gallant marshal of France, who in a heroic retreating action at the battle of Leip- sig, met death in the Elster river.
50 fen. thin surch.		1813	
7 Mk. heavy surch.			
10, olive green	King Boleslaw the Brave	966-	Promoted Christianity, expanded boundaries, founded unified kingdom of Poland and aligned Poland's civil- ization and culture with western Eu- rope.
1 Mk. thin surch.		1025	
10 Mk. heavy surch.			
25 Mk. heavy surch.			
15, bl. green & brown	General Tadeusz Kosciuszko	1746-	Beloved national hero of Poland who fought for its independence after the partitions and Washington's general during American revolution.
		1817	
20, olive brown	King Zygmunt First	1467-	Ruled for 42 years, established bene- ficial treaties, promoted learning and culture. Was known for his tremend- ous physical strength.
2 Mk. thin surch.		1548	
15 Mk. heavy surch.			
30 Mk. heavy surch.			
30, plum	King Stefan Batory	1533-	Guided Poland during its greatest ex- pansion and prosperity, extending the boundaries to the north and east, also developed high prestige abroad.
3 Mk. thin surch.		1586	
50, blue	King Casimir the Great	1310-	Only Polish king the Poles call Great. Established law and order. "He found the Polish cities built of wood and left them built of stone and brick."
		1370	

60, brown & gold	King	1348-	Ruled Lithuania and Poland, founded Jagiellonian dynasty, defeated Knights of the Cross. His wife was Jadwiga, beloved queen of Poland.
5 Mk. thin surch.	Wladyslaw	1434	
50 Mk. heavy surch.	Jagiello		
100, green & gold	King	1624-	Military genius, defeated Turks and Tartars repeatedly. Savior of Vienna, of Western European Civilization, and of Christianity.
	Jan III	1696	
	Sobieski		

FLASH!

Washington, D. C.—The Post Office Department has just announced that a new series of 11 stamps will be issued honoring the "downtrodden" nations of Europe. The stamps will be issued over a period of several months. The stamps will be exceptional in design and each will include a reproduction in colors of the flag of each of the nations to be honored. It will be the first time the Post Office Department has issued a stamp in more than two colors. The stamps will all be of the size of the current special delivery stamp and the denomination of all will be 5c. A more complete description of the stamps, details of first day sales and the dates of issuance of the ten remaining stamps will be made later.

The countries to be honored are Poland, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Belgium, France, Greece, Yugoslavia, Albania and Austria.

The first of the new stamps, honoring Poland, will be placed on first day sale on June 22, 1943, at the post office in Washington, D. C.

—By William M. Stuart.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Article 12, Section 2, of the Constitution and By-Laws, provides, in part as follows: "Unpaid dues:— The failure of any member to pay the dues fixed hereby and applicable to such members by the first day of June shall cause the suspension of such member and cause his name to be dropped from the rolls of the Society which shall continue until the delinquency is satisfied. So long as such suspension shall continue the member shall have no rights or privileges in the Society or its properties or its activities....."

COPERNICUS NIGHT

Meeting May 28, 1943

The May 28, 1943 meeting will be held at the Museum of the Polish

Roman Catholic Union, at 984 Milwaukee Avenue, corner Milwaukee Avenue and Augusta Blvd. at 7:30 P. M.

POLAND TO ISSUE NEW STAMPS

Word has reached us via the grapevine that Poland will soon issue a new series of stamps to replace the December 15, 1941 issue. While no definite official information is available at this time it is believed that the new issue will consist of five values. Nothing is known of the nature of the designs.

It is believed the remaining stocks of the December 15, 1941 issue (Scott's No. 3K1 to 3K8) will be withdrawn and demonitized. Watch the BULLETIN for further and official information!

LIFE MEMBERS

At the last meeting of the Society, the Board of Directors suggested that a new type of membership be created in the Society—Life Membership.

The suggestion was received very enthusiastically by everyone. The necessary changes in our Constitution and By-Laws are now being prepared and probably will be voted on at the meeting of the Society to be held June 11, 1943.

Applicants for Life Memberships will be required to pay the sum of \$25.00. No further dues will be collected from or payable by them. Life Membership will be open to both regular and associate members.

POLPEX 1944

POLPEX 1944, will be the fifth stamp exhibition of the Polonus Philatelic Society. Plans are now in the formative stage to properly commemorate this event.

POLPEX 1944 will also mark five complete years of existence of the Society. It is to be hoped that this auspicious occasion will not be overlooked.

Roman Rejnowski has been named Exhibition Director for POLPEX 1944.

Na Biednych (Cont.)

dot. Proofs of this stamp occur in sepia, orange, olive, indigo and violet-black.

Scott's No. 193, 5000 mark, rose, printed on a flat bed press, medium and thin paper, with perfs 10½ or 11½; also printed on a rotary press, thin paper, perf 12½. The spacing between stamps is 4 mm. and 5½ mm. on both the medium and thin papers.

Author's Note: The Kosciuszko Foundation, 149 East 67th Street, issue a biography by Stephen P. Mizwa. It is a very worthy book, beautifully illustrated, skillfully and carefully edited. It is worth reading and worth having. 88pp. 75 cents. The large illustration in this article is taken from the book.

MEET THE NEW MEMBERS

Member No. 184, Dr. Marion Zygmunt Ploski, P. O. Box 22, Emory, Virginia. (Souvenir Sheets.)

Member No. 185, C. C. Smith, 203 School St., P. O. Box 457, Webster, Mass. (Poland, Netherlands & Colonies, Canada & Newfoundland.)

Member No. 186, Ignacy Stuczynski, 853 N. 24th St., Philadelphia, Penna. (U. S. & E. P. P.)

Member No. 187, Fred Joseph Haskell, 2006—7th Street, East Moline, Illinois. (Poland, Russia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Austria & Canada.)

APPLICATION PENDING

Miss Regina Barbara Serowiecki, 2568 East 117th St., Cleveland, Ohio.

Rev. Marion Weron, Mission House, Franciscan Fathers, Ellicott City, Md.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Rev. L. Surak, 955 E. Ringwood Road, Lake Forest, Illinois.

JACK KNIGHT AIR MAIL SOCIETY SHOW

Polonus members took an extensive part in the stamp exhibition held under the auspices of the Jack Knight Air Mail Society. The list of Award winners is as follows.

Grand Award

BERT POWELL—Cancellations on the 1934 U. S. Air Mail Stamp.

THADDEUS STANCZAK — Vatican City stamps and flights.

First Awards

BERT POWELL—1934 6c Air Mail Stamps.

BERT POWELL—Air Mail Etiquettes. POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY—Selected pages from award winning Polish collections.

BEN REEVES—Famous Flight Covers, and The Elmer Stuart Buffalo Balloon Stamp.

M. E. STECZYNSKI—Poland Flight Covers.

Third Award

BERT POWELL—Poland.

This 'n' That

'As ye sow, so shall ye reap.' The first of the harvest from the Polonus Juniors can be found in the list of new members given in the April issue of the BULLETIN. Norbert Zielinski and Edward Stepnowski have been members of Polonus Juniors for a long time under the able tutelage of Adam Kloskowski. They are the first of the Juniors to become regular members. Welcome.

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Roman Reinowski on his recent trip to Cleveland and the Garfield Perry Stamp Exhibition met and discussed Society matters with members Konwinski and Zeller.

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If your dues for the current year are not paid by June 1, 1943, we will publish your name on the list of members suspended for non-payment of dues in the June issue of the BULLETIN.

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More and more of our members are entering the service of Uncle Sam. Remember to send in your name and address to Publications Committee if you enter the Armed Forces.

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May 28, 1943, will be a special Copernicus night commemorating the 400th anniversary of the death of Nicolas Copernicus. Dr. S. M. Mioduszewski author of the article in this issue of the BULLETIN will be the principal speaker.

* * *

'Copernicus' night will have its souvenirs, some of which will be auctioned and others given away free.

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Alfred Diamond, Secretary of the S. P. A., was a welcome visitor at our April 30th meeting.