

BULLETIN OF THE

POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



Meets 2d & 4th Friday of each month at Polish Falcon Hall, 1062 N. Ashland Av.

Issue #79

November 1949

NEW RULING ON EXCHANGE OF STAMPS IN POLAND

With the release of Official Bulletin #13 of the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs of July 23, 1949, the following ruling is posted:

"As of the above date, the exchange of stamps with foreign countries will no longer be handled by Philatelic Societies, but will be under the control of the Ministry of Foreign Commerce (Ministerstwo Handlu Zagranicznego)."

Hereafter postage stamps will be treated as apparent money tokens (quasi znaki pieniezne) and are subject to the regulations governing trade goods.

The sending of postage stamps out of the country, whether they be mint or used, foreign or Polish, requires the permission of the Ministry of Foreign Commerce (Ministerstwo Handlu Zagranicznego—Wydział Reglamentacji).

The import of stamps for collectors is permissible in registered letters up to 100 grams in weight, with the exception of Polish current stamps.

Editor's note:

This information was translated from the Aug.-Sept. Bulletin of the "Polskie Towarzystwo Filatelistyczne" of Krakow.

GRYZEWSKI CATALOG OF POLAND FOR 1949-50

by M. E. Steczynski

A brand new up-to-date catalog for 1949-50 with current prices in zlotys of all the stamps of Poland has just been issued by T. Gryzewski, P. O. Box

292, Warsaw 1, Poland. It is an 80-page book set in smaller type than the 1948 edition of 64-page, and consequently has a great deal more material—material sorely needed by the regular collector as well as by the specialist.

The cover is printed in blue and red and illustrates three stamps which mark the beginning of three definite postal eras; Poland No. 1 issued in 1860, the 50 fen. Warsaw overprint of 1918 (Scott's No. 14) and the Gen. Dabrowski stamp of 1944 (Scott's No. 343).

The catalog covers all the issues from 1860 up to the most recent 1949 emissions. It includes the regular issues as well as semi-postals, airmails, locals, dues, foreign offices, military issues, occupations, plebiscites, Central Lithuania, etc.

A very important feature is the listing and pricing of many oddities, inverts, errors, proofs and imperfs of pre-war issues which were not available to collectors up to the war but which as a result of war activities, were removed from the Postal Museum and from the Government Printing Office to find their way to the philatelic market.

The book includes explanatory pages about the treatment of its contents in general and has numerous descriptive paragraphs about specific issues. The edition is profusely illustrated so that persons not familiar with the Polish language can still orient themselves by the illustrations, face values and prices. These data make the booklet highly desirable for every collector of Poland.

The scope of the work is excellently handled and conveys my idea of the type of handbook that Polonus could issue on the stamps of Poland in the English language. Polonus has many large size cuts of Polish stamps and it would be comparatively simple to illustrate a handbook of this type.

The prices throughout the book have been extensively modified. The classics, rarities and most of the better stamps have shown a trend to higher prices, while stamps of the General Government and others have shown a trend to lower prices. Those stamps where the quantity issued was small have gone up in price appreciably and the reason can be briefly explained by the fact that philately in Poland is increasing in popularity and that the supply of the better items is even scarcer than it was prior to the war because so many of the better items have either been destroyed or removed from the country. A part of the general increase in prices might be explained by the fact that the inherent value of the zloty as dropped, which tends to prove that money invested in good stamps holds its value better than inflated currency. Many of the better stamps are priced very high and it would appear that there is a serious shortage of good material within the country as compared with the more popular material.

The official rate of exchange of the zloty is 400 for a dollar, while the free market exchange reaches 1200 for a dollar. A good cross section of a rate of exchange based on average prices in America would be about 600 catalog zlotys per dollar. On this basis, it is evident that many of the rarities are priced high and many of the common stamps are priced extremely low, making it desirable to buy the better stamps away from Poland and to get the common ones directly from Poland, especially if the rate of exchange will approach the free market basis. The catalog states that the firm of Gryzewski is prepared to furnish all stamps listed at the prices shown.

The book is priced at \$1.50 in Poland and may be obtained for \$1.75 postage prepaid or for \$2.00 by insured mail from V. Rachmanov, 214-17 47th Avenue, Bayside, New York or from M. E. Steczynski, 4154 N. LeClaire Avenue, Chicago 41, Illinois.

NEW MEMBERS

Chester Kosiek #395

3521 S. Wood St.

Chicago, Ill.

Robert J. Warpinski #396

Route #2

Green Bay, Wisc.

APPLICATIONS PENDING

Roman W. Siwe

1819 N. Linder Ave.

Chicago, Ill.

POLPEX 1950

Polpex Director Larry C. Zieler announces our annual show will be held on March 3, 4, and 5, 1950, at the Polish Falcons Hall, 1062 N. Ashland Av., Chicago. The theme for the souvenir sheet will be the 90th anniversary of the issuance of the first Polish stamp.

The following persons were appointed for the various jobs:

J. J. Domar, Polpex Co-Chairman; Chester Mikucki, Honorary Chairman; John Wendt, Secretary; Dr. S. F. Galaskiewicz, Treasurer; Chester Makowski, Legal Adviser and Exhibit Fund Chairman; Jack Rux, Publicity Chairman; Bert Powell, J. Jaworski, John Gapinski and Dr. Mioduszewski, Publicity Committee; Stanley Kucharz and Chester Schafer, Program Committee; John Wendt, Exhibit Committee; Roman Reinowski, Bourse; Myron Steczynski, Art Committee; Dr. M. E. Uznanski, Awards; Dr. L. P. Kozakiewicz, Reception and Entertainment Committee; Adam Kloskowski, Seal Director; and Mrs. Ann Mikucki, Ladies Committee.

STAMPS FOR THE WOUNDED

Let's not forget this worthy cause.

Members are requested to rummage through their stamps for duplicates, unwanted philatelic albums, literature, and supplies to be donated to Stamps For The Wounded.

Chicago members please bring material to meetings.

Out of town members please send material to Barney J. Fialkowski, 2633 N. Emmett St., Chicago 47, Ill.

At the last few meetings donations were made by Bert Powell, John Bobo, Jack Domar, Stanley Buck, and Chester Mikucki.

BEG YOUR PARDON

In the article that appeared in last month's BULLETIN "Delivery Post in the Warsaw Ghetto" by V. Rachmanov, we neglected to give credit to Myron Steczynski for translating and preparing the above article. Sorry.

RARE STAMPS TELL STRUGGLE OF POLISH PRISONERS OF WAR

TURNED OUT IN NAZI CAMPS,
THEY ILLUSTRATE LONELY LIFE,
HORROR MARCH, LIBERATION

by Elmore Bourbeau

Editor's Note:

This article is reprinted by permission of THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL. It appeared in The Milwaukee Journal Green Sheet of 9/23/49. The author Elmore Bourbeau, is of the Journal Staff. The illustrations are shown by courtesy of the Journal.

Wherever man lives, he leaves his mark. That is true even when, as a prisoner of war, he finds himself shut off from normal occupation, with food and shelter more or less automatically provided and a few other elemental necessities fulfilled as a matter of course. In such circumstances, boredom becomes a deadly enemy, for the means of coping with it are more or less cut off, except as the individual can find them within himself.

Such a problem was faced and conquered in a measure by thousands upon thousands of Polish military prisoners of war, held in German camps after 1939. A unique record of one method of their success in dealing with it exists in a collection, formed by Leo Topolinski, 914 S. 18th St., of the postage stamps used in the camps and other mementoes of the prisoners' lives there.

The Topolinski collection is marvelously complete, a fact which is astonishing, considering the limited contacts the men in the camps had with the outside world and the difficulties under which they lived.

Fight Against Loneliness

There were four major prisoner of war camps: At Woldenberg, in East Prussia; at Neubrandenberg and Gross-Born, in central Germany (these camps were later consolidated), and at Murnau, in Bavaria. In the Woldenberg camp, there were more than 7,000 captives, 6,000 of them Polish officers.

The philatelic record of their life in the camps is a moving record of efforts to overcome loneliness, bitterness over disastrous national defeat, and the handicaps of limited means for recreation and intellectual activity. Sports contests were major events, sig-



The Fox Stamp

nalized by special programs, prepared with solicitous care on whatever material could be found, and commemorated by special stamps and special postal cancellations.

The postal matter that survives is eloquent of the efforts to fill the emptiness of prison camp life—notices of concerts and club meetings; reminders from the library that a borrowed book was overdue; greeting cards for church and national holidays. Events that would seem trivial to persons leading a normal life loomed big in the dullness of life for the captives.

Fox Ends Up on Table

One such high point came unexpectedly at Gross-Born, in the fall of 1944. A fox wandered into the camp in search of food. Conditions being what they were in hard pressed Germany just then, the fox wound up in a stew which formed the principal dish at one of the war prisoners' meals.

To commemorate the occasion, the camp's postal system produced a sou-

venir label, showing the head of a fox with a fork in its mouth. The labels were affixed to souvenir cards and canceled by the camp post office. Men who partook of Br'er Fox at the first serving got cards with red labels; for the second serving, the label was blue.

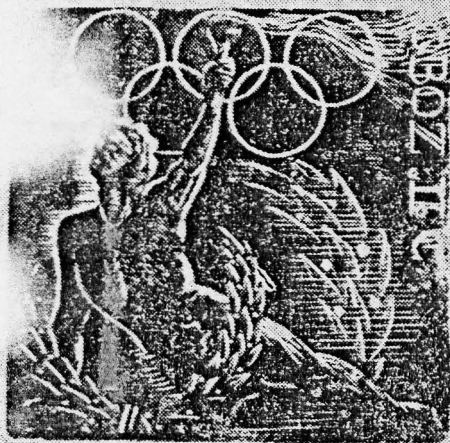
Each of the camps was a sort of city in itself, with thousands of men living packed closely together and isolated from the outside world except by contacts through official channels, which were slow and unsatisfactory, so that few of the men used them except as a last resort. Under such conditions, the need of a postal system was obvious. When the captives proposed to set up their own, they got German

permission with relatively little delay.

Variety Almost Unrivalled

The documents and stamped paper of those postal systems form the main part of the Topolinski collection. Nowhere else outside of the national museum in Warsaw can these sidelights of that phase of the history of the war years be found in such variety.

All of the stamps of the Woldenberg camp are found there complete. The stamps were produced from woodcuts made by artists among the prisoners. At first they were produced in single impressions; later a printing press, built in the camp from salvage material, was used. There was no way of perforating the stamps, which all



POCZTA WOLDBERG
Kptm. Maklowski
Barak 156 B.



—Stamps from Collection of Leo Topolinski

Polish prisoners of war at Woldenberg, Germany, issued the souvenir card and stamp (top), both of which they produced in the camp, to commemorate their "Olympic games" in 1944. The card also shows the souvenir postmark. A series of three stamps (lower panel), made from designs cut in linoleum, signalized the prisoners' march from Woldenberg to Murnau, Bavaria, in 1945. The inscriptions read "125 kilometers to the Oder," "375 miles. to the Elbe (Laba)" and "1,100 kilometers to the Danube (Duna)."

have straight edges.

All sorts of paper—whatever was available—were utilized. Some of the stamps were printed on toilet paper; some on the margins of German newspapers. Later, the Swedish Red Cross provided white paper, and on this the captives turned out stamps which compare favorably in appearance with the products of much better equipped plants. Ink was always a problem, but in the later days of the camp postal systems that was pretty well conquered, also.

Profits Go to Charity

The designs of the Woldenberg stamps covered a wide range, with emphasis on the highlights of Polish history. One constant feature of the design is the monogram FWS—the initials of three Polish words that translate "Widows' and Orphans' Fund." All profits from the sale of the prison camp stamps went to this fund, which also benefited from charges made for some of the issues in excess of their face value.

The first design, issued in March, 1942, even before the camp postal service was instituted at Woldenberg, shows a woman in widow's garb, accompanied by a child, at the grave of a soldier. Another early design was symbolic of the camp postal system.

Success of the enterprise led to a greater variety of stamp designs. Early in 1943, a series of three stamps commemorated the 150th anniversary

of the Polish military order "Virtuti Militari." The designs were reproduced in a souvenir sheet, printed in blue and black, the colors of the ribbon of the order. A "torch" set of three values featured patriotic themes, suggestive of Poland's will to rise again. A souvenir sheet marked the 80th anniversary of the Polish insurrection of 1863.

Special Events Marked

Other events commemorated by special Woldenberg stamps were Polish "Sea day," Feb. 10, 1943; the 400th anniversary of the death of Copernicus the astronomer; the death of Gen. Wladyslaw Sikorski (Sikorski died in a plane crash July 3, 1943; the star was issued July 15).

Another interesting set of three values honored famous Polish shrines. One pictured a traditional Madonna; the other two of the Madonnas of Czestochowa and Czestochowa. Another series issued in 1943 pictured the famous soldiers (hetmans) Jan Zamoyski, Stanislas Zolkiewski, John Chodkiewicz and Stefan Czarniecki. The series was completed in 1944 with a stamp showing Tadeusz Kosciuszko.

The mermaid, symbol of Warsaw, was depicted with sword in hand on a stamp commemorating the 1939 siege of Warsaw. Marshal Josef Pilsudski was portrayed on a two color (brown and gray) issue commemorating the 25th anniversary of the independence of Poland won Nov. 11, 1918. Another stamp noted the 20th anniversary



At the left is the stamp the prisoners produced at Murnau in honor of the approaching liberation by the United States army. At the right is a memorial stamp issued at Woldenberg in mourning for Gen. Sikorski.

the Polish YMCA; another depicted Jan Paderewski, first premier of the Polish republic. A symbolic design, showing peasant fighters armed with scythes and pitchforks, commemorated the 150th anniversary of the 1794 rebellion which Kosciuszko led.

Honor Government in Exile

The white eagle of Poland was the central design on a stamp issued for the Polish national day, May 3. Another patriotic stamp showed W. Raczkiewicz, president of the Polish government in exile. There was also a special stamp in honor of "Olympic games" held in the camp in August, 1944. A set of three stamps honored Poland's eastern counties, for which Russia was then grabbing.

A two color (red and black) issue noted the 80th anniversary of the Red Cross. Another set symbolizing Poland's will to regain independence appeared in 1944. The design showed fresh shoots growing from the stump of an oak tree that had been cut down.

The final design from Polish history was used Nov. 10, 1944, for a stamp and souvenir sheet commemorating the 500th anniversary of the battle of Varna (Bulgaria), in which the Polish king, Wladyslaw (Louis) Warnenczyk, was killed leading the Slavic armies of eastern Europe against the Turks.

Designs Were Censored

The designs of the stamps were carefully censored by the German officer in charge of the camp. An interesting section of the Topolinski collection shows some of the designs that were rejected. Among these were a projected set of three stamps to commemorate the 450th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of the new world and a set showing famous buildings in Chojnice, Torun (Thurn) and Gdansk (Danzig). Also refused sanction were three stamps showing battle scenes and labeled Narvik, Tobruk and Warsaw.

Variety and interest were added to the Woldenberg philatelic gallery by ornamental special cancellations devised for unusual occasions and anniversaries. The camp's postal emissions included stamps for official business and postage due stamps.

The Woldenberg stamp designers kept their in right up to the day of their liberation by advancing United States forces. The camp at Woldenberg was evacuated late in January,

1945, when the Russian army drove close. The prisoners were forced to proceed on foot to Murnau, in Bavaria. It was a horror march in the dead of winter, and only about 2,000 of the men who left Woldenberg survived the two month ordeal.

Final Liberation Stamp

At Murnau a set of three stamps commemorating the march was produced by the use of lino-cuts (designs cut in linoleum) rather than the woodcuts previously utilized. These stamps were given a special cancel symbolizing the fatigues of the long march, and bearing the dates 25.I-22.III, 1945.

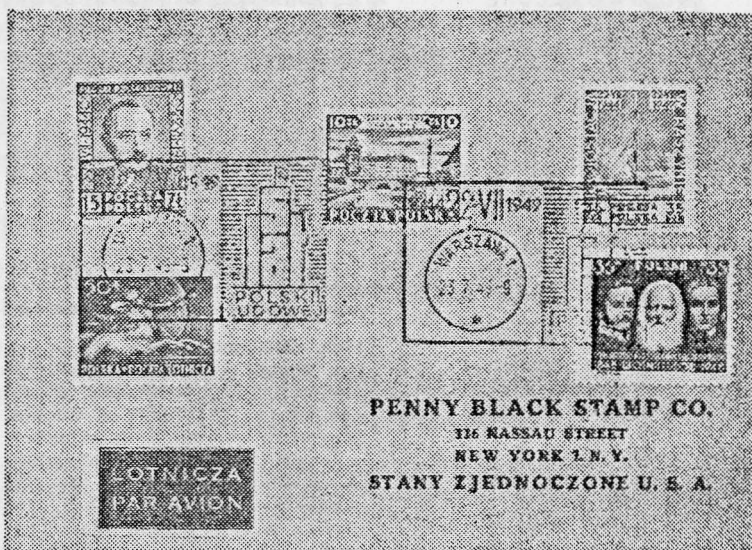
The final stamp of the Woldenberg series issued Apr. 28, 1945, shows a row of prisoners pushing down the barbed wire fence that had been their prison for so long. United States forces were then approaching Murnau, and they arrived the next day.

The liberation stamp was then given a black overprint, showing the Polish eagle and carrying the inscription "Polski Osrodek Wojskowy Murnau" (Polish Military Fragment, Murnau).

A LIST OF THE LARGER PHILATELIC SOCIETIES IN POLAND

- Polskie Towarzystwo Filatelistyczne—Warszawa, Mokotowska 13.
- Polskie Towarzystwo Filatelist—Kra-kow, Basztowa 22, pok. 117 skrytka pocztowa 756.
- Tarnowski Klub Filatlist.—Wrad. Grz-ywa, Tarnow/skrytka pocztowa 67.
- Slaskie Stowarzyszenie Filatelist. —Katowice, Zwirki i Wigury 6/4.
- Wielkopolski Klub Filatelistow, Poz-nan, ul. Lodowa 22 m. 2.
- Stowarzyszenie Filatelistow, Ostrow Wlkp., ul. Armii Czerwonej 66.
- Lodzkie T-wo Filatelist.—Lodz, ul. Pi-otrkowska 33 m. 23.
- Zwiazek Stowarzyszenia Filatelistow—Torun, ul. Szczytna 1 Adm. Niklew-ski.
- Polskie T-wo Filatelistyczne — Wro-claw, ul. Sadowa 1.
- Zachodnio-Pomorski Klub Filatelistow —Szczecin, ul. Wojska Polskiego 29 m. 6.
- Stowarzyszenie Filatelistow—Gorzow.
- Gdanskie Stowarzyszenie Filatelistow —Sopot.

Tony Banasiak is the proud father of a new baby girl.



Cover showing the Polish Committee of National Liberation Fifth Anniversary series (top three stamps). The 10 zl. is a steel-grey, the 15 zl. a bluish-red, and the 35 zl. a blue-grey. (Cut courtesy LINN'S WEEKLY STAMP NEWS)

NEW ISSUES

The previously mentioned series of three stamps issued on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of P. K. W. N. (Polish Committee of National Liberation), was put on sale and into circulation by order of the General Postmaster of July 9th. (See above illustration). The total issue was 500,000 sets; the size of the design is 22x27.5 and the size of the whole stamp is 25.5x31.25 mm. There is line-perforation because in a short time the P. W. P. W. could not prepare a proper perforating machine.

On the 75th anniversary of the Universal Postal Union a new airmail series was released. The 6 zl. shows a stagecoach, and is a violet-gray; the 30 zl. shows a ship, and is a light blue; the 80 zl. shows a plane, and is a light green. The background of all three designs is a map of the world. The stamps were drawn by Ryszard Kleczewski, engraved by Bogusław Brandt (6 zl.), Stefan Lukaszewski (30 zl.), and Marian R. Polak (80 zl.). Total quantity issued: 500,000 sets. The stamps are recess printed from steel engravings.

There is already in preparation a series of this year's "men of the year." They are a 10 zl. Chopin design, a 15 zl. Słowacki, and a 35 zl. Mickiewicz. They were drawn by Mieczysław Wat-

orski, and engraved by Polak (Mickiewicz), Brandt (Słowacki), and Lukaszewski (Chopin).

The P. W. P. W. is also preparing a new airmail stamp in the value of 500 zl. As the first drawing of Mr. Wilczek was not fit to be engraved in steel, a new one was drawn by Prof. Wacław Borowski. It represents an aircraft factory worker leaning on a propeller, in the background are workshops and hangars, and above a flying plane. The engraving is by Brandt. Total issue: 200,000.

(New Issue information obtained from PRZEGLĄD FILATELISTYCZNY and from the "Chef de l'Exploitation Internationale" of the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs, Mr. Horwich.)

IN MEMORIAM

It is with deep sorrow we report that on September 25, Stanislaus Weron, beloved father of member Rev. Marion Weron, was called to his reward. The officers and members of the Society wish to extend to Father Marion and his family our most sincere sympathy.

With deep regret we report another death. Member Chester Langner lost his son. We extend our most profound sympathy to member Langner and his family.

YOU MAY SECURE

back numbers of the monthly magazine "Polish Philatelic Review" also known as PRZEGLAD FILATELISTYCZNY. This magazine is published by the Philatelic Society of Lodz and is printed in both the Polish and English languages.

I have available 25 Vols. of #1 and II, which can be had at \$4.00 for both Vols. postpaid by insured mail. All copies of the Review for the North and South Americas are mailed from my address, thereby making sure no copies are lost in the mails from Poland.

Frank B. Jancowski
3588 Frederick Street
Detroit 11, Michigan

THAT JACK KNIGHT SHOW

We can't help but notice the many times member Ben Reeves' name appears in the various philatelic publications for the splendid work he did as Exhibition Committee Chairman for the American Airmail Society Convention and Exhibition—Jack Knight Airmail Society, Host.

At this show member Myron Steczynski fared well with his exhibit of Poland Flight Covers. He was awarded the A. A. M. S. Medal and also the Suburban Collectors Club Trophy for his exhibit.

We also note that for the first time in the history of the American Airmail Society, a woman was chosen as head of the organization. Grace Conrath was chosen as President for the next two year term.

TID BITS

Member Leo Topolinski and wife of Milwaukee visited us a few weeks ago. A little get-together was staged at Chester Makowski's home on a Sunday afternoon, at which there was an abundance of stamp, food and drink. Jack Domar, Ben Reeves, Dr. S. Galaskiewicz, Chesters Mikucki, Makowski, and Schafer, and Mr. and Mrs. Leo Topolinski were there. It was here that Mr. Topolinski gave us the article and plates on the Polish Prisoners of War stamps (in this issue), and showed us his fine collection. It is the finest collection of Woldenberg material known to us and is well illustrated and written-up.

We have received some beautiful cachets of Chopin on covers from the Pulaski Philatelic Society in Detroit. They were released for the October 79-8

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2144 W. Potomac Ave.
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Associate Editors this issue

Jack Domar
Chester Mikucki

17th, 1949, anniversary of the death of the Polish composer. One cover is printed in dark brown and olive green and shows the profile of Chopin with decorative surroundings. Another cover is printed in black and yellow and shows Chopin playing at the piano by candlelight, with the figure of Death playing a lyre behind him. The Pulaski Society has outstanding talent for art work as is shown by their exhibition seals, cachets, etc. We understand the above-mentioned covers may still be obtained from Frank B. Jancowski, 3588 Frederick St., Detroit 11, Mich.

MEMBERS MART

Poland Roosevelts—single set \$1.25,
souvenir sheet \$2.50.

General Government complete mint
or used, 168 values \$8.00.

What else do you need?

Joseph Bleniecek, 2509 East 23rd St.,
Granite City, Illinois, U. S. A.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I should like to advise all of my friends and customers that I have closed my Stamp Store in Lippstadt, Westphalia, Germany, and am now again engaged in buying and selling postage stamps.

I specialize in the Stamps of Poland, Germany and other European Countries.

RICHARD ESTKA, 7149 So. Sacramento Ave., Chicago 29, Illinois.

FOR SALE

SKALAT 1919 issue, complete set ON COVER (except 50 hal. of which only 2 were issued) including the scarce 2 kor. of which only 6 were issued.

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