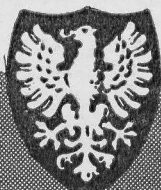


BULLETIN OF THE

POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



Meets Every Second and Fourth Friday of the Month at Falcons Hall, 1062 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago, Ill.

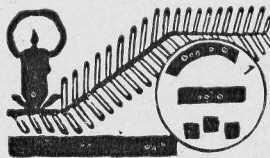
Issue No. 165

December 1958

POLAND'S CHRISTMAS POSTMARKS

By EDWARD NOWAK, SR.

Reprinted from STAMPS of 6/7/58



Christmas postmarks of Poland in the years before the second world war.

Long before Poland was known to use Christmas Seals the Polish Ministry of Posts used special cancellation dies. In this manner the Ministry of Posts was adding its bit to the festive spirit of people who celebrated the birth of Christ in accordance with old traditions established and nurtured through the centuries of Poland's Christianity.

Only during the era since World War II have evil trends from outside her borders eliminated all signs of festivity, and at bayonet point forced the Polish people to suppress their true festive spirit.

Up to the time of the second World War Poland was issuing simple but effective cancellation dies embodying the regular postal cancellation, with dates and name of the city of origin, plus a likeness of pine bough, candle, or star. Such Christmas dies usually contained the words of "Witaj Gwiazd-ko Złota" . . . meaning "Welcome Golden Star." These cancellation dies served as Christmas Seals and carried greetings to every part of the world to which Polish mail was addressed.

Traditionally, the celebration of the birth of Christ started Christmas Eve. Polish housewives cooked, baked, and prepared festive tables by loading them with food to be eaten soon after the first star started to blink in the frosty sky. The Christmas Eve fasting was strict and the only meal taken for the day was the festive supper. According to tradition, the "elder" in the family took his place of honor at the table as soon as the "small fry" gave the word that the stars were in the sky. Then, and only then, the rest of the family followed and took their places in accordance with seniority.

Before the food was placed on the table a thin cover of hay was spread on it, and a handful of grain was scattered over the hay. Then an immaculately white tablecloth was spread over it all and food placed for the festive supper. The significance of the hay was in remembrance that the Christ Child was born in a manger with only hay for a bed. At the end of Christmas festivities the hay under the tablecloth was served to domestic animals, the grain to poultry or wild birds.

A Polish Christmas supper traditionally consists of twelve different delicacies, one for each Apostle. The delicacies begin with the Polish "Barszez" (beet soup) with mushrooms, and ends with several different kinds of fish servings, and pudding. After supper, when the participants have left the table, the wife of the elder son cleans the table, removes the plates, and gathers the food scraps from the plates. These she places in a broken down vessel, usually used to feed the house dog, but in this case the "service" is for Judas, who does not deserve a place at the table among decent people. His scraps are carried ceremoniously to the

"hinge side" of a door, and placed on the floor, to remain until morning.

Before anyone at the table dares to touch food, the "elder" lights a candle and offers a prayer for those who are too distant to be present at the yearly family reunion. Just before the food is eaten the "elder" rises, with gilded plate in hand. The plate contains the traditional "Opłatek," or uncut wafers used by Catholic priests as the Host for communion. The "Opłatek" is obtained at the parish house. Although the wafer from which the Host is cut is consecrated during a Mass, the "Opłatek" is only blessed especially for the Polish Christmas Eve.

On a signal from the "elder" everyone at the table rises and the "communion of friendship" begins. The "elder" breaks off a piece of "Opłatek" and shares it with the next in age, and so on separately, person after person. With the sharing go best wishes and prayers, and at the end, each person respectfully kisses the hand of the "elder" as a sign of love and obedience. The "communion of friendship" may be participated in only "if one's heart is clean and free of anger." During this ceremony the person breaking the wafer must forgive all past grievances or ill-will towards his neighbors.

There are many variations of these ceremonies in different parts of Poland. It would take volumes to write it down, but that is not the intention of the writer. We are concerned with Polish Christmas cancellations and postmarks.

The Warsaw General Post Office came out with a special postmark for the first time in 1935. The experiment proved so popular that the next Christmas the Ministry of Posts supplied eleven post offices in different parts of Poland with a special postmark.

The city of Bydgoszcz had a tree decorated with candles and trinkets. Gdynia and Gdańsk (Danzig) shared a die showing a sailboat and the Star of Bethlehem. Katowice—because of its industries—showed a smoking factory chimney and star or a comet. Special cancellation dies of other cities are reproduced in this article.

Only the city of Poznań (Posen) used red ink for Christmas cancelling. All other post offices used regular black ink.



Merry Christmas

POLPEX BUT EIGHT WEEKS AWAY

It is only eight more weeks before the 20th Anniversary Polpex will open. With this reminder we want you to remember, that your exhibit is desired and welcome. We hope that you have prepared your collection, and made a decision in favor of exhibiting it at our 20th Anniversary Show.

Please note that the entries close February 13th, and the earlier you send your entry, the better. This year we are going all out with awards and offering a total of thirteen, consisting of trophies, plaques and medals. And if you are not lucky enough to win any of these—you will be sure to receive a participation award.

Our 20th POLPEX will honor the 400th Anniversary of the Polish Postal Service and this theme will be carried on our souvenir sheet which is now in process of being designed by Art Director Myron Steczynski.

As usually is done, we will issue a Catalog of the Exhibits or program book, with an attractive two-color cover. This year we plan to make it something more special. If you would want to contribute something to the success of this year's Show—please subscribe as an advertiser or patron. For your information we quote the costs: Full page ad \$18.00; Half page ad \$10.00; Quarter page ad \$6.00; Patron \$1.00.

We want to point out that all the profit goes to our Society funds which need strengthening in order to give you a bigger and better Polonus Bulletin.

Once again, please prepare your exhibit, and send in your Entry Application as soon as possible.

All correspondence regarding Polpex 1959 should be forwarded to:

Stefan Kochanski

4030 W. Carroll Ave., Chicago 24, Ill.

TID BIT

Jan Kiepora, noted operatic tenor, has a Los Angeles stamp wholesaler, Ernest Sechy, as his father-in-law. Sechy's stepdaughter is the famed soprano Martha Eggerth. Jan himself, is not a collector, but his son Jan Jr., is.

Kobyłka Album Pages

POLAND

Price Post.

Part 1, 1918-1939.....scheduled for late '58, early '59	
Gen. Gouvernement	\$3.85 35c
(This section includes, Polish Offices Abroad, Gov. in Exile, and other minor Polish sections.)	
Part 2, 1944-1955.....	7.00 50c
Supplement No. 1, 1956.....	55 15c
Supplement No. 2, 1957.....	.80 15c
(The above sections do not include air-mails!)	
Air-Mails, complete to 1956.....	1.20 15c
Airs, Supplement No. 1, 1957.....	.40 15c
EASTERN SILESIA, complete.....	1.65 15c
(This section is designed to fit with collections of Czechoslovakia or Poland).	

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Part 1, 1918-1919.....	9.00 45c
Bohemia & Moravia, 1939-1945....	3.50 25c
Slovakia, 1939-1945.....	3.25 25c
Part 2, 1945-1953.....	6.25 35c
Supplement No. 1, 1953-1954....	1.20 25c
Supplement No. 2, 1954.....	.45 15c
Supplement No. 3, 1955.....	.85 15c
Supplement No. 4, 1956.....	.55 15c
Supplement No. 5, 1957.....	1.25 20c

CAMBODIA

Part 1, through Feb. 1957.....	1.65 25c
Supplement No. 1, 1957.....	.50 15c

GHANA

Part 1, 1957.....	.50 15c
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LAOS

Part 1, through Feb. 1957.....	1.35 25c
Supplement No. 1, 1957.....	.40 15c

TOGO (Rep.)

Part 1, 1957.....	.60 15c
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VIET-NAM

Part 1, through Feb. 1957.....	1.25 25c
Supplement No. 1, 1957.....	.40 15c

INT. OLYMPICS GAMES

Part 1, 1896-1952.....	3.00 35c
Supplement No. 1, 1956.....	2.25 30c
Suppl. No. 1A, '57—('56 Games)...	1.00 15c

SCOUT STAMPS

Part 1, through Feb. 1957.....	3.00 40c
Supplement No. 1, 1957.....	1.35 20c

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THE "GOVERNOR FRANK STAMP"

By R. TRAGER

Reprinted from STAMP MIRROR of 5/6/50.

This stamp was ordered by Frank himself, without the consent of Hitler, from Vienna State Printing Works, towards the end of 1943 or the beginning of 1944. We had the opportunity of seeing the whole file from the archives of the printing works, which had been looted, and this contained a sealed envelope with one part sheet of 20, and 32 single stamps in strips, blocks and pairs.

The owner was a high foreign official who served with the forces in Britain as a private. After Russia joined the Allies he became a member of his London Government. Towards the end of 1944 he went to Russia and in April 1945 he was appointed delegate to the Russian forces in Vienna (Austria). It was during this period that he purchased the entire file regarding the Frank stamps, which he later sold. He stayed in London only a short time and then returned to his native country.

THE FILE

Contained in the file were the sealed envelope, as mentioned above, marked with the number of stamps, the letter from Governor-General Frank to the State Printing Works, and a copy of the letter from the State Printing Works to the Reichs Chancellory in Berlin. After a million stamps had been printed, by agreement with the Fuehrer, a reply was received from the Reich Chancellor, signed by the Fuehrer in person, ordering the destruction of the whole issue and forbidding delivery to Cracow, under penalty of death. It also contained two copies of letters in which this order was conveyed to the Reichs Chancellor, Berlin, and a second letter to Governor-General Frank, in which the enclosed order from the Fuehrer was conveyed. This letter also complained about the placing of the order without having previously obtained Hitler's consent.

USE IN POLAND

A small quantity of the stamps and an imperforated block of four were retained in the archives of the print-



ing works. Their origin can be proved as they are printed on identical paper and in the same way as the Hitler issues for the "General Gouvernement."

The largest part of the printing was destroyed in compliance with the order from the Reichs Chancellory in Berlin, but several sheets were abstracted by anti-Nazi workers and sent to Poland, where they were used as postage by the underground movement in order to embarrass the German Government. This placed Governor Frank in a very difficult position, according to information received from Poland some time ago.

Postally used copies of this stamp, a 20 gr. sepia, printed photogravure, perf. 14 comb, smooth gum, have been pictured in various Polish, Austrian and Swiss magazines. As can be seen from the illustration, the design is exactly similar to the 20gr. "Hitler" stamp, but bearing a portrait of Frank.

Poland's "Gryzewski" Catalogue, 1949-50 Edition, states the stamp to have been issued in 1943, gives the colour as brown-olive and values the issue at 30,000 zloty mint, correspondingly more used on entire. At present rate of exchange, that is over £20.

SPECIAL BULLETIN ISSUE FOR TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

In conjunction with the 20th Anniversary of Polonus Philatelic Society, the Publications Committee is planning a special 20th Anniversary issue of the Bulletin. The February, 1958 Issue will be devoted to this purpose. Deadline for this issue will be January 31st.

• NOTES FROM LONDON •

No. 10

November 1958

Our last meeting was our annual "Members Night," when our members delve into their collections of Poland and bring along a few sheets each to entertain their colleagues. We saw six interesting and varied displays this time, and it is surprising how much can be learned from a co-operative display of this type.

Dr. Bieberstein showed us some of the sheets he exhibited at the recent Doctors' Hobbies Exhibition, which was held here in London. This is an annual event at which doctors (of medicine) from all over the United Kingdom put on show items from their pastimes and hobbies. An enormous range of things can be seen, proving that doctors are a very versatile profession. In addition to philately, other classes of exhibit include painting, sculpture, woodwork, photography, ceramics, antiques, archaeology, modelling and even embroidery and knitting and crochet. The last named classes are not exclusively the domain of the female members of the profession either!! Dr. Zeitlin, another of our members, also had an entry in the philatelic section.

To return to our own meeting, we also saw displays from Mr. Bokiewicz (Original sketches of modern Polish stamps), Mr. Campbell (General Poland), Mr. Capes (Pre-stamp covers of the Congress Kingdom and Galicia), Mr. Sutcliffe (First setting of the "Pocztą Polska" overprints on the 1918 Germania issue), and finally from our worthy president, Mrs. Horowicz, who showed a number of pages containing a study of the dies and perforations of the 1928 Pilsudski stamp.

Our next meeting will be the Christmas one, when we have a two-part programme arranged consisting of a quiz and an auction. This is eagerly awaited by all.

When these notes appear in print, Christmas will have come and gone, and so I will close by sending to all our friends in the Polonus Society best wishes for health and happiness in the New Year ahead from all members of the Polish Philatelic Society, London.

—RON NEGUS

ATTENTION WRITERS!

The biggest event of the year for Polonus is our annual Polpex. At Polpex time we try to arouse the philatelic public's interest in stamps of Poland and in our Show. This we do by having members' articles on Polish philately published in various national weekly publications.

For several years now we have been successful in this venture and would like to do the same this year — and even better, as this is a special Show: our 20th Anniversary Show.

How about helping out; promote Polonus; contribute something to this year's Show. Your article on some phase of Polish philately will be greatly appreciated. Send your copy with material for illustration purposes as quickly as possible, to Chester A. Schafer, 864 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago 22, Ill.

A REVIEW

A Price List of Philatelic Literature was published by member Fritz Billig, which contains a Poland section. On page 48 of this booklet is a list of 23 publication concerning Poland postal history, stamps and stationery. These publications are in Polish, English, German and French. Prices follow each listing. Cost of this booklet is 50 cents. It may be obtained from Fritz Billig Publications, 168-39 Highland Ave., Jamaica 32, N. Y.

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NEW ISSUES

by J. J. Domar

Information received from ARS Polona dated Nov. 15th indicated that a souvenir sheet with a total face value of 50 złotych was to be released about Nov. 10th, 1958. On the upper part of the sheet an inscription: "400 Lat Poczty Polskiej, 1558-1958 Wydanie Jubileuszowe" — 400 Years of Polish Post 1558-1958 Jubilee Issue. This design was the project of Hanna Przewdzicka, plastic artist, after the painting of A. Kędzierski "On Kielce District Road." The ornamental frame is by Jerzy Miller; engraving by S. Lukaszewski. It is printed in steel plate engraving on "Milanówek" Silk. This is the first time that silk is used in the printing technique. Printed by "Państwowa Wytwornia Papierów Wartościowych" Warsaw.

It is my belief that the sheet that was referred to is the one illustrated in the November 1958 Polonus Bulletin. Although I cannot justify the 50 złotych as six stamps at 2.50 zł., total only 15 złotych and there is nothing on the sheet to show an additional charge was made.

On November 25th a set of two stamps was issued honoring Famous Poles. The 60 groszy value in violet is a self portrait of Stanisław Wyspiański, famous Polish painter and poet. On the right of the portrait are the dates 1869-1907, the dates of his birth and death. Beneath the portrait is his name. The 2.50 zł. value is green, shows the portrait of Stan. Moniuszko, Polish composer of national music. Beneath his portrait Stanisław Moniuszko, and on the left, the dates 1819-1872, the dates of his birth and death. Size 25.5 x 31.25 mm.; printed in steel plate engraving. Both designed by J. Koneczak. Engraving on the 60 gr. is by B. Brandt and the 2.50 zł. by E. Tirdiszek.

Just before going to press we learned of more new issues just received by Roman Burkiewicz. A Human Rights issue appeared Dec. 10th. Its value— is 2.50 zł.; color—brown & dark-brown; design—two figures in allegory of human rights. It is inscribed with the initials "O N Z" (Organizacja Narodów Zjednoczonych), or United Nations

Organization. Inscribed also is "Deklaracja Praw Człowieka" and Dec. 10, 1948-1958.

Five additional values of Airmails were issued Dec. 15 at Warsaw. This, with the six values issued previously, completes the set. The 5 zł. maroon and grey shows a plane over Gdańsk; 10 zł. brown and light-green, plane over Castle at Liwa; 20 zł. violet and chartruese, plane over high point in Tatra mountains "Kasprowy Wierch"; 30 zł. olive-green and yellow, plane over Water Dam at Porąbka; 50 zł. blue and grey plane over M.S. Batory.

TID BITS

On the 400th Anniversary of the Polish Postal Service, Ruch issued a beautiful and elaborate monograph — History of the Polish Postal Service From 1558 to 1958. In this monograph are proofs and illustrations of the more attractive issues of Poland through the years.

Nomination of Officers for 1959 will take place on January 9th and their Election will be held on January 23rd. Chicagoland members are urgently requested to attend both these important meetings.

POLAND

No. 754 Olympic 60gr. Imperf	\$7.50
C34a Warsaw Air sheet Imperf	5.00
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"SPUTNIK" STAMPS

On November 14th, Dr. M. E. Uznanski addressed the Polonus membership attending the meeting with a talk on Rocket Mail. This was the first presentation of this kind ever given (known to us). He did a very thorough job. Besides stamps and covers he had many photographs of early experimental flights and the men concerned. Along with this he had three actual scale models of Rockets and he even explained how they operated. In his collection were covers of early Rocket Flights, some dating back as far as 1932. He has stamps of many countries of the world dealing with rockets. Dr. Uznanski said he had to revive his studies in mathematics and calculus in order to better understand rockets. He held the members spell-bound with his talk and was flooded with questions when he finished.

NEW MEMBERS

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R. Trager and Stefan Kochanski
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— Annual Dues are \$2.50 —

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