

BULLETIN OF THE POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY



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POLPEX 77: "POLISH LEGACY IN THE U.S.A."

POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

POLPEX 77

Honoring the

POLISH LEGACY IN THE U.S.A.



On October 1, 1608 the first Polish settlers arrived in America on the English ships "Mary" and "Margaret." They settled in Jamestown and were excellent craftsmen and freedom loving people.

These Polish immigrants were the first Champions of American Civil Liberties striking against the English (Virginia Col).

As years passed, more prominent Poles came to America. One of these, a Polish Jew, Haym Salomon—merchant, banker, financier and advocate of Polish Independence also fled from occupied Poland through England to America. He opened a brokerage office in New York and proudly helped in the Revolutionary War by lending money to the U.S. Army.

In later years one of Poland's greatest stage artists Helena Modrzejewska appeared and conquered the hearts of American people.

Then Ignacy Paderewski a great Polish statesman, composer and musician arrived in the U.S. giving concerts and raising money for the cause of Polish Independence.



NATIONAL STAMP EXHIBITION

Chicago, Illinois • March 19-20, 1977

"The Polish Legacy in the USA"—theme of POLPEX 77—is depicted on the souvenir card, souvenir sheets, and cacheted covers. It is written about in our exhibition program catalog—all of which are being issued in connection with POLPEX 77 on March 19-20, 1977, at Polish Army Veterans Bldg., 6005 W. Irving Park Rd., Chicago.

Our souvenir card shown above reproduces the Poland issues for the US Bicentennial showing the 1608 landing of Poles in America,

and actress Helen Modrzejewska. Of U.S. issues the Haym Salomon commemorative and Paderewski Champion of Liberty set are reproduced. Priced at \$1.50 each; \$2.00 with Polpex cancellation—it is available from John Bor, 1810 N. Richmond, Chicago, IL 60647. Please include return postage.

Also available are the two cacheted Polpex covers (two different) at 40c each or 2 for 75c.

Souvenir sheets, in pairs, with descriptive folder, are 50c each

and also available from Mr. Bor. Kindly include return postage.

Polpex Chairman, Ed Link, announced that Chicago's mayoral candidate, Alderman Roman Pucinski, will preside at the opening



ROMAN PUCINSKI

day ceremonies at noon, Saturday, March 19th. Mr. Pucinski is a former U.S. Congressman.

Because our Beeba falls on St. Joseph's Day, traditional Polish foods with a little something extra, will be served and a gala atmosphere will prevail. The Beeba will be held on the balcony overlooking the exhibition hall, and it will begin Saturday at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$4.00 per person, and must be purchased in advance.

A U.S. postal station will be operating at the show selling latest commemoratives, sheets, and using the special Polpex cancellation. Members are asked to make large purchases of stamps as the amount of sales determines whether we have a postal station at next year's Polpex.

As announced last month, the Polonus Handbook with the lengthy treatise by T. Gryzewski, "Polish Occupation of Russia by the I Corps", and a second article

by Dr. S. Kronenberg on forgeries of this issue, is being printed. Copies of the handbook will be on sale at the Polpex.

As we do every year, we ask for Polpex Well Wishers. For the sum of \$2.00 your name will appear in the program catalog. In this manner, out-of-towners can participate and help out. Please use the remittance envelope enclosed for your convenience. Do so immediately as time is short.

Our biggest event of the year is the POLPEX. Let's get behind it and make it a success! We've done it before—we'll do it again!

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

At the February 25th meeting, President Alfred Szebel announced that he will donate a President's Award to be given to an exhibitor at POLPEX 77 selected for other than the Polonus Grand Award and the Kozakiewicz Research Award.

Another presentation this year will be of the S.P.A. Research Award.

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Our New Address . . .

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MINUTES OF POLONUS MEETING — FEBRUARY 25, 1977
at Polish Veterans Home, 6005 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 by the President, Mr. Szebel, with 14 members and 3 guests in attendance. The president called for approval of the minutes as published. M/S/C, Messrs. Rybarski, Resner: to accept the minutes as published. The treasurer reported a checkbook balance of \$190.15 and indicated the need to visit the bank to withdraw funds. The recent expenses of the upcoming Handbook and POLPEX has withered our available cash. The president and Mr. Rybarski will go to the bank and make the appropriate transfer of funds. The secretary reported that no new applications for membership have been received, but also the ad in the classified section of Linn's under **Societies** has had a good response. He has sent out six application forms the first week.

Old Business: POLPEX 77: Mr. Link assured us there was nothing to worry about, all was under control. The Bourse was sold out, but we do need more exhibits. The members apparently are still recuperating from last year and few have sent in applications for exhibition. The publicity has been sent out to the press, the s/s are ready to be printed as is the souvenir card. Mr. Bartczak reported that we have 126 frames in working condition which will be more than we will need for the show. **By-Laws:** Mr. Szebel, in accordance with the previously accepted procedure, called for approval of the new By-Laws. M/S/C, Messrs. Resner, Bor: to accept the revised By-Laws. Any members desiring a copy, can forward a SASE to the secretary (24 cents).

New Business: Mr. Bartczak explained the new rates for insurance of stamp collections announced by Lloyds of London. He will look further into the matter and give the details to the members. Mr. Bor received a letter asking for an explanation of the original charge for the BIE s/s. The membership agreed that the surcharge over and above the semipostal rate was the charge for the philatelic item. Don't we all wish we had purchased them at the original price! Mr. Szebel announced that he has received application forms for membership in the PZF. Anyone interested, should contact the president. The business of the Society having been completed Messrs. Bartczak, Rybarski and Wolosewick (tied): to adjourn.

Philatelic Presentation: The rest of the evening was devoted to the Clothesline Exhibition. Many outstanding exhibitions (and others) were shown. The members had to display three pages from their collections on the clothesline (compliments of Mr. Poniecki's wife) held by clothespins (brought in a brown paper bag) by Mr. Bartczak. All present voted on the winners. The choice was difficult. The excitement was running high. Several members had to be excused to the washroom. Finally, the results: Grand Award winner: Ms. Jeanette Zilke, the first woman to ever win any kind of Grand Award at Polonus! Second prize: to Mr. Theodore (Teddy) Resner. Runners up: Mr. Link and Mr. Schafer. Congratulations to all! The remainder of the evening was spent in trading, buying, talking and eating kolacki.

Respectfully submitted,
James Mazera, ACSW, Secretary

POLISH PRISONERS OF WAR STAMPS

By MICHAEL LUBINSKI

Reprinted from the Newsletter of the Polish POW and DP Camps Study Group

As a result of the military defeat of the Polish Army in 1939, thousands of Polish officers captured by the Germans were placed in prisoner of war camps and kept there until very near the end of the war.

Some of the POW camps were immense in size, as much as one mile in length in some cases, and very densely populated — up to 7,000 inmates in one camp.

Four of these camps established intra-camp postal service, Woldenberg (Oflag IIC), Gross-Born (Oflag IID), Neubrandenburg (Oflag IIE) and Murnau (Oflag VIIA). As is well known, "OF-LAG" is the abbreviation for "Offizieren Lager" (Officers' Camp.)

The incoming mail was censored by the German officers and then distributed to mail officers, who then handed it to the various addresses in the POW buildings.

It did not take long, once the camps were organized, for the inmates to get acquainted with each other, find friends and organize themselves into a vigorous cultural and social community. Their activities soon showed the necessity for establishing a system of communications. The intra-camp postal system was the answer. In order to overcome possible resistance, or even opposition, from some destructive elements, such as are found in any large community, an intra-camp postal service was established under the sponsorship of the "WIDOWS AND ORPHANS FUND" (FWS). The full-time officers received a nominal



Our Lady of Czestochowa is the subject of the Woldenberg POW Camp stamp (left) while Casimir Pulaski is featured on the Gross-Born Camp stamp (right).

salary, but they all paid this into the fund. All profits were also paid into the fund, up to the amount equal to \$4,000 monthly and the monies were, by devious ways, transferred to occupied Poland. The Postal Services were extensively used by the Camp Library, the Book Service, the Theatre, the Consignment Shop and various organizations and clubs, and, of course, by individuals. Some stamp clubs were organized and delegates of these clubs sat on the Stamp Advisory Committee.

It was obvious that this postal service was primarily used for real business and not for stamp collectors, from the number of postcards sold, as these are seldom kept by collectors.

The number of items handled was about 250 daily, with peaks of several thousands at Christmas and on more popular namedays such as St. Joseph, etc. At Gross-Born the record delivery was on the 24th of December, 1944, when it reached well over 10,000 pieces of mail.

(to be continued)

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MY FAVORITE COVER

By DR. STANLEY KRONENBERG

During the Polish Ukrainian war of 1919/20 the town of Skalat in eastern Galicia was surrounded by Ukrainian troops from late August until 2 December 1919. In November 1919 the Polish post office in Skalat ran out of Polish stamps; none could be brought from the outside and so with the permission of the postal directorate in Lwów the postmaster overprinted invalid Austrian stamps into Polish stamps: "Pocztą Polska/eagle/Skatat". These stamps were used for a short time until it became possible to bring in a fresh supply of Polish stamps.



The cover shown here was mailed from the Skalat post office to: "Edmund Linczyc, 172 Str. Hortohorn Kooc, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A." The two ring and bridge cancellation: "Skalat/**B**/18.XI. 1919" was stamped in the northeast corner of the address side and on the reverse tying the overprinted stamps to the cover. The return address reads: "Mozes Linczyc, Horodnica, Skalat, Małopolska (Little Poland)". The address was apparently copied from a poorly legible original and the writer had trouble interpreting it. "7" in the house (or street) number was written in the European way (with a line across) resembling a "4" and in the abbreviation for "Street" the German capital letter "S"

was used making the address hard to decipher for an American mailman. Ohio was written as "Ohii", "Cleveland" was spelled with a "w". The name of the street does not appear to be correct either.

The letter was mailed by registered mail with the yellow Skalat registration label: "R/Skalat/425". It was franked with one 40 halerzy and one 60 halerzy Skalat stamps. (At that time 100 halerzy was the correct postage for a foreign registered letter weighing below 20 grams).

The letter was censored and the dark violet hand rubber stamp: "CENZURA WOJSKOWA TARNOPOL" (military censorship in Tarnopol) in a rectangular frame was imprinted on the address side.

The letter arrived in New York City on 21 December 1919 and was cancelled with the purple date stamp: "New York, N.Y. Registry Division". This cancel also tied both stamps to the cover. On 23 December it arrived in Cleveland, Ohio and was stamped: "Cleveland, Ohio, Reg. Div." On 27 December (after X-Mas Holiday) it was transferred to postal station E in Cleveland where the seal: "Cleveland (Sta. E) Ohio Reg. Div." was applied.

At about this time the following happened to this letter:

1. The 60 h Skalat stamp was torn off the letter, apparently by a Cleveland post office employee, except for the northeast corner of the stamp which remained on the letter, making its identification possible. From postal marks it is evident that this must have happened 21 December and 31 December 1919.

2. A rubber stamp was applied partially over the 40 h stamp: "Received unsealed at Cleveland, Ohio Post Office".

3. The rubber stamp: "REGISTERED" was applied, tying down the Polish registration label.

4. The address being faulty, repeated attempts to deliver this letter were made by different mailmen whose numbers were stamped in red: 20065, 29213, 23900. The pencilled annotations made by these mailmen are: "Not known 632", "no response 12/27/19", "try cool", "not colt", "not str. E.", "198".

On 31 December 1919 this letter was transferred to Cleveland Ohio Registry Division, Collingwood Station whose violet seal was impressed in place of the torn off 60 halerzy stamp.

On 3 January 1920 the address was crossed out and the date: "3 Jan. 1920" was stamped in the northeast corner of the address side. Rubber stamps: "Return to Writer", "Unclaimed from Cleveland, Ohio" and "Station E Reg. Div. Cleveland, Ohio, 3 Jan. 1920" were also applied. On 19 January 1920 this letter was forwarded to Cleveland, Ohio registry division 1 whose seal also appears.

On its return trip it arrived on 21 January 1920 in New York City and was cancelled twice: "New York, Registry Division (3) Foreign". A large numeral: "110" was written over this cancellation with a red pencil.

From there the letter was returned to Poland where the postal censor's rubber stamp: "K1" in a circle was applied on top of the impression: "Return to Writer". Apparently the letter was then returned to its sender in Skalat.

A series of properties combine to make this cover philatelically most interesting and valuable: a very rare postage, its round trip to U.S.A., its totally nonphilatelic origin, and the easy to follow documentation of its routing and of the story it tells by impressed stamps and annotations. In addition it shows almost freakish coincidences: all markings are legible and well placed, the 60 h stamp was torn off just so that it can be identified and the cancellations document that it was done in transit, enhancing rather than diminishing the cover's value. It represents a documentation of the Polish-Ukrainian war and of its postal history.

HAVE YOU MOVED?

If you have moved, please notify us of your change of address. Mail notice to Chester J. Mikucki, 4704 N. Overhill Av., Norridge, IL 60656. This will insure your receiving the Bulletin promptly and avoid Polonus the expense of postage dues.

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POLONUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

Chester A. Schafer, Editor
864 N. Ashland, Chicago, IL 60622

James Mazepa, Secretary
Hines V.A. Hospital, Box 391
Hines, IL 60141

Al Rybarski, Treasurer
P.O. Box 82, River Grove, IL 60171

The Polonus Philatelic Society is non-political. Views expressed by authors of articles appearing herein do not necessarily express the views of the Polonus Philatelic Society.

— Annual Dues are \$5.00 —

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friday, March 11, 1977:

James Mazepa will speak on the I Polish Corps in Russia during the First World War.

Refreshments served.

Friday, March 18, 1977:

POLPEX MOUNTING PARTY.

Chicagoland members are invited to come to the Polish Veterans Hall at 7 p.m. Bring along window cleaner, cloth, scraper, and screw driver.

Sat.-Sun., March 19-20, 1977:

POLPEX 77 EXHIBITION

Hours: Sat. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Sun. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Friday, March 25, 1977:

Grand Award/Gold medal winners of POLPEX will discuss their collections.

March 26th — 27th, 1977:

ROCKFORD STAMP SHOW at the Clock Tower Inn, I-90 and Business 20 in Rockford.

April 23th — 24th, 1977:

PARK FOREST STAMP SHOW at Westwood Recreation Center.

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