

THE CZECHOSLOVAK Specialist

A publication of the Czechoslovak  Philatelic Society of N. America

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Editor Frank J. Kovarik, 8748 Rockefeller Ave., Brookfield, Illinois

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EDITORIAL

Your editor is celebrating the close of his 17th year as editor of the Specialist. We mentioned before that the then presiding officer, Dr. Wm. Reiner-Deutsch asked us to take the editorship temporarily because our immediate predecessors were engaged in war work and unable to devote enough time to our publication. Later, long hours and more work days caught up with us, too, but by then we had a fairly good grasp of the situation and felt we could carry on until the war's end. We tried to give up the job last election but are determined not to accept the task after our present term of office expires.

A letter from Czechoslovakia informs us that there is growing interest in the early specialties of the country, such as the various perfs on the Hradčany, imperf allegories, the red cross minus the overprint, various essays and all kinds of varieties. There is also a quest for early Czecho philatelic literature: handbooks, catalogs and magazines. We are sure that much of this type of material can be found more readily in our country than in Czechoslovakia. Of course, some real rarities have remained in the homeland and we hardly know of their existence. Some such material was exhibited in our section of Compex 1958, namely, color trials and proofs of the Scout stamps, Příjezd Presidenta Masaryka, color proof cancellations, also Scout cards of which we knew but have never seen before.

Mr. Thorsen of "Scouts on Stamps" wrote up the Scout portion of Compex 58 for their official publication and the notable pages were illustrated. We have permission to reproduce it but as no cuts were employed (the magazine is printed by the offset method), it would necessitate the purchase of cuts and at present we are too poor to afford such an expenditure. Our librarian has a few copies of this article on hand and it will be sent to the first members who send him a large stamped and addressed envelope.

Our collectors were surprised at the Hradčany reproduction on the stamp issued to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the first Czechoslovak postage stamp. It portrayed a reproduction of a type IV which was not the first stamp of the country. The first Hradčany Type IV issued was the 60h which first went to press April 8th, 1919, and was issued 2 days later. The first day cover reproduction was very nice, Švabinský did himself credit with the beautiful design and Jindra Schmidt was at his best in the engraving.

Acting on the suggestion of our secretary, a Hradčany group within the Society is being organized and the first members are: Dr. Wm. Reiner-Deutsch, W. Knox, R. Van Handel, C. J. Pearce, G. Wheeler, J. Jiranek and F. Kosik. A study group like this can bring up much information which is at present the possession of perhaps only one or two persons. We are assured the findings will be published in the Specialist. If you are interested, con-

tact member F. J. Kosik, R. #3, Box 463, Delavan, Wisc.

The Windsor (Canada) "Y" Stamp Club Bulletin reaches us when published. We note that one of the associate editors is our member Leo Goldman. We are jealous of the editors of this fine publication; it is "Published now and again," no deadline to plague them.

In the last issue of the Specialist the editor committed a grave mistake in the fifth and sixth lines of the editorial. The sentence should be read: "Printing costs went up some since we raised the dues from \$1 to \$2—". This is proof we need a new editor; the old one is used up.

The following collectors from Czechoslovakia wish to exchange stamps: Václav Šupík, Praha XII, Pod Karlovem 4; Václav Halla, Sušice 172/III; Jarka Jasinský, Královice u Rakovníka, Plzeňská ulice 308; Jiří Nečas, Bílovice u Brna, Dobrovského 481; Ladislav Kováč, Včelare 7 P. P. Turna N/B, okres Moldava N/B; Mrs. Vera Petráková, Praha 10. Strašnice, Za Strašnickou vozovnou. All these are in Czechoslovakia.

SINCERE APOLOGIES

In last month's Specialist we took to task a member whom we accused of calling "attention to the fact that the dues envelopes' nomenclature of various classes does not conform to the Constitution and suggests that we reprint a corrected envelope." The true wording was: "Dear Mr. Kobylka, Kindly type in the correct classification of the membership as per legally adopted Constitution. Sincerely, —". We are sorry we garbled the members request. We trust our friend will not deal harshly with us.

NEW YORK CHAPTER MEETING

The meeting was held Friday evening Feb. 20 at the Collectors Club with 15 people present, among them member Kenneth Woodbury and his wife from Rhode Island. Mr. Woodbury showed his Slovakia color slides; he is well qualified to photograph stamps; he has been doing it for the American Philatelic Society for many years, even when individuals were not allowed to photograph stamps for themselves, possess slides or show same.

Dr. Reiner-Deutsch showed some special items from his Postal History collection, mostly interesting covers, mixed franks and cancellations.

The Alfons Mucha sheets, prepared for the Czechoslovak Federation of Stamp Clubs and engraved by Jindra Schmidt, were distributed to the members who ordered them.

The March 20 meeting will feature a showing of the General Issues of Czechoslovakia from the collection of member L. M. Horechny.

NEXT CHAPTER MEETINGS

The New York Chapter meets every third Friday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Collectors Club, 22 East 35th St., New York City.

The Chicago Chapter meets every second Sunday of the month at 2 p.m. in the Lincoln Federal Savings and Loan Association Bldg., 6635 Cermak Rd., Berwyn, Ill.

Any changes from the above program will appear in the chapter meeting reports.

CHICAGO CHAPTER MEETING

A meeting of the Chapter was held in the home of member Janecka Sunday, Feb. 15. This was the last meeting held in a member's home; henceforth meetings will be held in the rooms of the Lincoln Federal Bldg. in Berwyn.

Member Kovarik distributed the Mucha engravings which were found very pleasing and which will make a fine addition to any collection of Czechoslovakia, especially to Hradčany specialized.

Members Janecka and Kovarik reported on the progress of Compex 59. Three new clubs were accepted into Compex making a total of 14 represented. The exhibition will be held Aug. 26-30, a total of 5 days, in connection with the Pan American Olympic Games. The U. S. Post Office Department will issue a commemorative air mail stamp of 10c denomination for the event with a first day sale Aug. 27. It was decided that the charge per frame be again \$1 as last year. Instead of only the 19th floor of the La Salle Hotel, a goodly portion of the 18th floor will be used.

A festive lunch was served after the meeting. Some of the members deplored the passing of the meetings in the homes but bowed to the will of the majority.

The March 8 meeting was the first held in the Lincoln Federal Bldg. with 13 members present. Two members who didn't attend the "home meetings" were present and there could have been others but due to a strike of the West Towns Bus Lines members residing west of Berwyn who haven't their own transportation were unable to attend.

Member Kovarik made a motion that inasmuch as the delegate and alternate to Compex 58 were reelected for 59, the exhibition and directory chairmen retain the status. Member Jiranek will head the exhibition committee and member Havlik will be in charge of collecting ads for the directory.

Last year our out-of-town members made a very fine showing at the exhibition and it was decided that the Chicagoland members permit them to do the same this year. We especially urge members from foreign countries to show their material; member Kvasnička's selected pages of Czechoslovakia brought many fine comments. We shall hear at the next meeting how many frames will be allotted to our Society and we urge all members to watch and act fast when a pertinent announcement will be made in the next issue of the Specialist. (A Compex meeting was held yesterday and in it our Society was allotted 102 frames which will be located in the same advantageous spot as last year.)

K LINE 1958 CZECHOSLOVAK ALBUM SUPPLEMENT

One of the finest features of the Kobylka album supplements is the promptness with which they appear when the year comes to an end. A country which issued some 60 new stamps during the year 1958 cannot be compared with the United States or a country even more conservative than our own government. The 10 pages which comprise the year's output of Czechoslovak philatelic endeavor are on a very fine grade of paper and punched to fit a standard 3 ring binder. The information introducing each issue as well as every individual stamp is brief and to the point. A blank page is included perhaps for those who wish to specialize, as for instance, the 2 types known to exist in the regular issues of the year, the 30h and 60h portraying president Novotný, as mentioned in a recent issue of the Specialist.

Those who like to collect the easy way are advised to ask for a sample page from the publisher. Look for the ad of Geo. C. Kobylka in every issue of the Specialist.

K LINE WORLD UNITED NATIONS ALBUM

One of the finest thematic or topical albums which recently came to our attention is the G. C. Kobylka album of stamps commemorating the United Nations by various postal administrations of the world. Some time ago the Society of Philatelic Americans Handbook Committee published an informative book on these issues which was authored by Marion Carne Zinsmeister who is well known as a philatelist not only in our own land but throughout the English speaking philatelic world. Kobylka based his album on her work and did a marvelous job.

The album has a simple but effective frontispiece. This page is in blue (the official color of the United Nations) with elongated U and N toward the left, the insignia of the U. N. in the center and "UNITED NATIONS" at bottom. All this is in white. This is followed by an acknowledgement page; the four corners are bordered in blue, the heading of the page is "UNITED NATIONS OF THE WORLD" and the center showing the United Nations emblem in the background, also in blue. The following page gives the most condensed outline of the construction of the U. N., explaining the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Specialized Agencies and the International Court of Justice. A complete listing of the member countries and date of admission fills the last page of information.

We were amazed at the large number of stamp issuing countries that at one time or another honored the U. N. by a stamp issue. The first three pages are devoted to Afghanistan which issued at least one stamp each year from 1948 to 1956. The rest of the countries follow in alphabetical sequence.

Those collectors who want to collect topicals which are interesting and can be informative should not overlook this opportunity. We are not aware how scarce or expensive these stamps can be but we are certain that most can be had with no great outlay of money.

The complete album can be purchased for \$11 from the K LINE of FINE ALBUMS, whose ad is found in every issue of the Specialist under the name of Geo. C. Kobylka.

NEW MEMBERS

- 653. Sladek, John, 2117 South 61st Court, Cicero 50, Ill.
- 654. Zenchina, Edward, 3936 W. Montrose Ave., Chicago 18, Ill.
- 655. Teplarek, Ivo, Nadrazi 898, Frenstat Pod Rodhostem, Czechoslovakia.
- 656. McAllister, William M., 37639 Mack Kenzie Dr., c/o Garden City P. O., Michigan.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

- 505. Patzelt, Charles A., 160-63 - 19th Ave., Whitestone, New York.
- 632. Skrivan, Stephen, 99 So. Crest Road, Chattanooga, Tennessee.
- 523. Boucek, R. J., 516 Federal Street, Pittsburgh 12, Pennsylvania.
- 211. Zaludek, Emil E., 5648 So. Massasoit Ave., Chicago, Ill.
- 91. Novy, Joseph, Falls Village, Connecticut.

CORRECTION OF ADDRESSES

- 237. Cowell, Eric G., "St. Albans," 6 Corbett-Scott Ave., Epsom S. E. 3, Auckland, New Zealand.
- 538. Rapasky, Rudolph, 224 E. 79th Street, New York 21, N. Y.

RESIGNATIONS

- 497. Stoeff, Marie, Mrs., 1211 Crestview, Tallahassee, Florida.
- 259. Sabol, Edward J., 2901 Penn Valley Road, R. D. No. 2, Bristol, Pa.

SECRETARY'S COMMENTS

Several months have elapsed since the last Comments article; I hope that the space taken up in our SPECIALIST shall not detract from the presentation of more interesting and purely philatelic material.

Our Society participated in the COMPEX 1958 Exhibition which proved to be a very wonderful success to our Society both financially but also with the help of our out-of-town members, particularly the gentlemen of the New York Chapter, a fine philatelic success. Our diversified showing represented almost every facet of Czechoslovak philately.

All indications are that COMPEX 1959 will be even greater and better. The 1959 COMPEX shall be a five day show, held in conjunction with the Pan American Games, August 25 through August 30, 1959. It seems that our Society shall retain the same space and number of frames offering 102 of the 24x36" size frames for our display.

This Twentieth Anniversary Year of our Society deserves the very best efforts we can put forth. In conjunction with our founding anniversary this year is also the 10th Anniversary of the death of the Founder of the Society, Joseph W. Lowey. We have permission to show a part of his own collection in the Court of Honor.

Since this year the COMPEX show shall be held in conjunction with the Pan American Games, and the first day of issue of the United States Pan American Stamp shall have its first day of issue at the show, the theme of the show might well be the "Sports Stamps of Czechoslovakia." We all know some very beautiful postal stationery that was also issued to honor sports events which could also surely prove of interest to the sports minded visitors.

The very wonderful response last year to our exhibition was instrumental in making our showing so wonderful and as was the case last year, out-of-town exhibitors shall be shown preference in the placement of their material, and the Chicago members shall try to set up their material to complement it.

I have again been asked to assume the duties of Exhibition Chairman, so I hope that your help shall enable our Society to derive the fullest advantage of this wonderful opportunity to promote our specialty and our Society.

Let us all make this Twentieth Anniversary Year Show the finest Philatelic Exhibition ever assembled by the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society.

—Joseph J. Jiranek, Secretary

(Reprinted from Mercury Stamp Journal)

Recently the question has arisen to which degree Qualified Opinions in Certificates seem permissible. The old-time experts and expert committees were concerned only with the genuineness of an item, and when certificates were issued, they stated only the opinion of the expert or experts whether an item was considered genuine or not. No mention was made about the condition, and even when a stamp was badly mended or extensively repaired, the certificates did not note such facts. Such incomplete certificates were favored by disreputable characters, as they were a perfectly useful cloak for selling second grade and repaired material. The experts and expert committees eventually became aware of the fact that their certificates were used to mislead collectors, and gradually they started to include in the certificates statements about the condition of the items, especially when they had defects or were repaired. The disreputable people objected to such complete certificates, they claimed that they wanted to know only about the genuineness of an item and were not interested in its condition. With negligible exceptions, the experts and expert committees did not fall for such arguments, they had found out why these people did not want certificates which also stated the faults

of the items. Today, practically all experts and expert committees will decline to issue certificates without mentioning the faults the item may have, except when such faults are readily visible in the photograph attached to the certificate. So far, all was well, but recently, some experts and expert committees began to go further, by including in certificates not only their opinions about facts concerning the item in question. They added statements which have to do solely with the desirability and salability of these items, stating no facts at all but elaborating on features which are a matter of individual preference. One such certificate, for example, after stating the facts about the item in the usual way, added the remark "but it is not a desirable copy." Now even an expert committee which lives in the clouds and is out of touch with the philatelic market should know that the desirability of an item is an entirely individual matter. Some item in bad condition may be undesirable for a general collector, but it may be highly desirable for a specialist who for example needs it to complete a plate reconstruction or to prove some point in his research. To call an item undesirable is for this reason alone unwise, but it also opens the odor to favoritism, because the wording of the certificates now would not only depend on the knowledge of the experts, but also on their day to day mood. The collectors are mature enough to know whether they want a stamp or not. If a certificate indicates all the actual faults a stamp has, the collector can make up his own mind whether such a stamp is desirable for his collection or not. To try to influence him in such a purely personal decision is neither the purpose nor the duty of an expert. He should be satisfied to advise the collector concerning genuineness and condition and should leave the decision whether a stamp is desirable for a collection to the collector's own judgment.

PARADE OF NEW ISSUES

Commemorative stamp on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the First Czechoslovak Postage Stamp



To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the issue of the first Czechoslovak postage stamp, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications in Prague will issue a commemorative stamp, the value of which is 60 h. The design was executed by the National Artist Professor Dr. h. c. Max Švabinský, the engraving by Jindra Schmidt.

On the stamp, there is depicted a woman symbolizing the Republic, and a part of the first Czechoslovak postage stamp, as the symbol of the sovereignty of the Czechoslovak Republic.

The stamp was printed by the Post Printing Office in Prague by the rotary recess print in blue color. The sheet contains 50 stamps. The dimensions of the stamp picture are 23 mm by 41 mm.

Validity for internal and international postal use is from 18th December, 1958, until further notice.

A First Day Cover, designed by Professor Max Švabinský and engraved by Jindra Schmidt, will be issued at the same time.

Commemorative stamps on the occasion of the World Ice-Hockey Championship (Czechoslovakia 1959)



To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the inception of the Ice-Hockey Association in Czechoslovakia and to commemorate the World Ice-Hockey Championship 1959, held in Czechoslovakia, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunication in Prague will issue, on 14th February, 1959, two postage stamps with sports motifs. At the same time further 4 postage stamps will be issued, representing sports events in which Czechoslovakia has achieved comparatively good results.

The values, motifs and colors of the stamps are as follows:

- a) 20h, the 50th anniversary of the inception of the Ice-Hockey Association in Czechoslovakia (1909-1959), brown-red and gray-green;
- b) 30 h, throwing the javelin, red-brown and orange-red;
- c) 60 h, the World Ice-Hockey Championship (Czechoslovakia, 1959), blue-violet and green-orange;
- d) 1,— Kcs, the obstacle race, dark red and yellow-green;
- e) 1,60 Kcs, rowing, dark blue and blue-yellow;
- f) 2,— Kcs, the high jump, red-brown and blue.

The designs of all the stamps were executed by the painter Mario Stretti, the engravings are by Jiří Švengsbir (a), Bohdan Roule (b), Jindra Schmidt (c), Bedřich Housa (d), Jan Mráček (e) and Jaroslav Goldschmied (f—after the line drawing by Jindra Schmidt).

All the stamps were printed by the Post Printing Office in Prague by the rotary recess print combined with photogravure in sheets of 50 stamps. The dimensions of the stamp pictures are 41 mm by 23 mm.

Two First Day Covers designed by the painter Mario Stretti and engraved by Jaroslav Goldschmied were issued at the same time.

Mention this publication when answering ads. Thanks!

CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S FIRST POSTAGE STAMPS

By Jindřich Nováček
Horní Černošice near Prague

(Reprinted with permission from STAMPS)



Signed photograph of Alfons Mucha, who created the "Hradcany" design used on Czechoslovakia's first stamp

The month of December 1958 marks the fortieth anniversary of the first postage stamps of the Republic of Czechoslovakia. It is an appropriate time, therefore, to bring to mind some details of that issue and to recall to memory the man who designed the stamps, Alfons Mucha.

To bring this story to the readers of STAMPS I will give some of the details which appeared in an article I wrote in 1937 under the pseudonym Jaroslav Orlický. It was published in the issue of Philatelists' Revue which honored the opening of the international stamp exhibition in Prague in 1938, and in which the editor had a welcome note in four languages: French, German, and English, as well as Czech. Visitors were expected and came from all over the world.

But to return to the subject of this article, I am sure that most of our readers are familiar with Czechoslovakia's first stamps. They have enjoyed world-wide popularity, and many articles about them have appeared in the philatelic press.

The first two stamps of what developed into a series were of the 5h yellow-green and 10h rose values, and they were issued just a few days before Thomas G. Masaryk, our liberator and President, came back to our country. Both stamps bore a reproduction of the old historic seat of the Czech Kings—Hradčany. On December 21, 1918, the day of President Masaryk's arrival in

Prague, a 3h red-violet stamp was issued, followed on December 30th with a 20h bluish-green and a 25h deep blue. The Hradčany set was further increased by eighteen stamps, and at the beginning of 1920 by the last three: a 10h, 20h, and 30h, in slightly different shades.

A more fitting choice of an artist to design these first stamps, which have always remained a happy reminder of our liberation, could not have been made. Alfons Mucha's great life work had always been to try to express the community and fraternity of all Slavs.

My article in the Philatelists' Revue was in the form of an interview, which took place in Mr. Mucha's studio in his cozy home. He had just finished his latest painting, destined for the Czech Savings Bank at Most. I was looking at that wonderful canvas with great interest and admiration, and reading my thoughts, Mr. Mucha said: "I wished this painting to represent the symbol of gold flowing in small streams down into the lap of a woman, who gathers and divides it." He pointed then to the figures on both sides of the picture, personifying Work, Science, and Art. "I admire our brave frontiersmen," he added, "and I am aware of their hard life. They make watchful guardians all along our frontier. We should help them in all ways."

As we sat down at a table, together with Mrs. Mucha, my host asked: "Would you like to know why I chose Hradčany for our first stamp? Nothing seemed more precious to me than our beloved Hradčany. During the years of our slavery, we often looked with sadness at its dark windows. No light came sparkling from them, and our nation almost gave up hope that the prophecy of Jan Amos Komenský (Comenius) would ever come true."

Assuredly, his choice was an apt one, and Czech philatelists have regarded the set of Hradčany with love and admiration, and have given it a prominent place in their collections.

Recalling the days of our liberation, Mr. Mucha enthusiastically expressed



A panoramic view of Hradčany, with St. Vitus Cathedral



Fig. 1—First rough drawing of Alfons Mucha's design for Czechoslovakia's first stamp

his credo: "Every nation has its Palladium. Since my childhood I have worshipped the incarnation of this symbol in St. Vitus Cathedral. I simply could not have chosen any other symbol for the first Czech stamp at a time when my nation was making its first steps towards freedom."

Mr. Mucha drew the design of the first stamp overnight. Let us look at those rough outlines and see from what few lines of the artist's pencil came the final design. In Figure I of the accompanying illustrations the outlines of St. Vitus Cathedral are clearly seen in the background. The inscription POSTA is above. The ornaments are not yet completed, but the sketch of a cock is to be seen quite well in the left corner. This design remained unfinished.

In Figure II we can see the detailed outlines of the main tower of St. Vitus Cathedral. No further changes had been made in the design.

The other details followed one after another. Mr. Mucha knew that in the vicinity of St. Vitus Cathedral there is that jewel of our architecture, St. Nicolas Church, the green brass cupola of which is gleaming brightly among the ridge-tiled roofs of the Lesser-Town. As seen in Figure III, to make the cupola of St. Nicolas Church more prominent, Mr. Mucha placed it on the left side, while its tower remained in the background of the stamp.

Figure IV: After finishing the preparatory work, Mr. Mucha decorated the corners and sides with ornaments. When the two little cocks had been drawn in the lower margin of the stamp, the design of our first stamp had taken form.

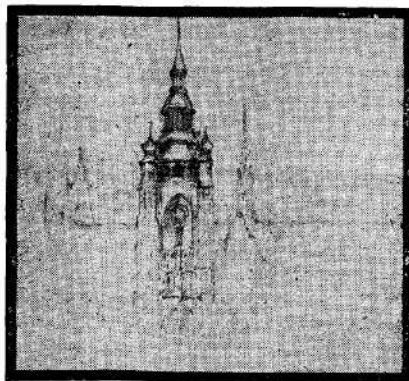


Fig. 2—Detailed outlines of main tower of Cathedral appear in this drawing by Mucha

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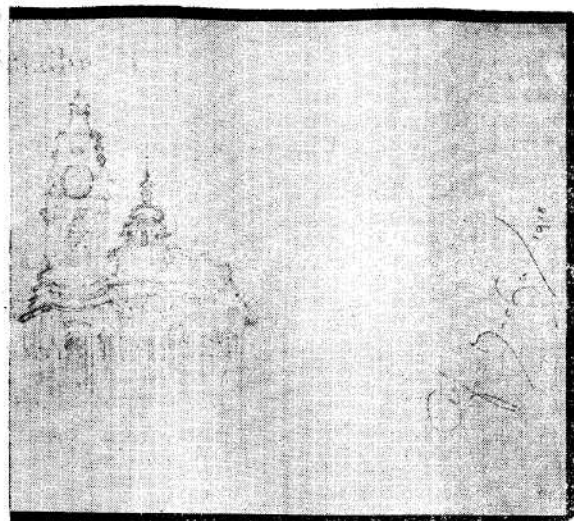


Fig. 3—To make the cupola of St. Nicholas Church more prominent, the artist placed it on the left side, while the tower remained in the background of the stamp. These sketches, it will be noted, are signed by the designer with date 1913.

Mr. Mucha made far more different drawings of various details than we are able to show here, and all of them proved his love for his work. Figure IV shows us St. Vitus Dome lit by the sun's rays, but on the stamps issued later on in 1919 and 1920, this was omitted. Why? The rising sun was symbolic of the resurrection of our nation after a long period of darkness, and told that the bright day of our freedom had been born.

As Mr. Mucha and I were examining detail by detail of the first stamp, he explained to me that the small leaves in either corner at upper right and upper left represent the symbol of the Slavs. "We Czech, Moravian, and Slovakian people form a living branch," he said and "I tried to symbolize that fact by two linden twigs with tender leaves. The middle and somewhat bigger leaf stands for Bohemia, and the smaller ones for the other parts of our dear country."

I examined the stamp again, and realized what a lot of symbolism had been embodied in its tiny design. Mr. Mucha went on with his explanation of the design:

The little cocks were meant to express the arrival of the days filled with faith and hope for a great and happy future for our nation. The small hearts on the lower margin represent our toleration, our desire for peace and love among all our countrymen. The old Slavonic ornament forms the borders of the stamps." He remarked that the stamps had been carried to all parts of the world and bore a variety of cancellations. "Collectors will always be interested both in the Hradčany stamps and the cancels they bore," he added.

Mr. Mucha explained the prominence of St. Vitus Cathedral in the stamp as appropriate because St. Vitus had been a bishop of Slavs dwelling in the North and he was also the propagator of the Slavs' ideals in Bohemia.

He gave me the following interesting sidelight information. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, when he was staying in Paris, he received a letter asking his opinion about the arrangement of St. Vitus Cathedral. There was a conflict of ideas as to whether the ancient central tower should be replaced by two smaller ones placed on either side of the Cathedral. He pro-

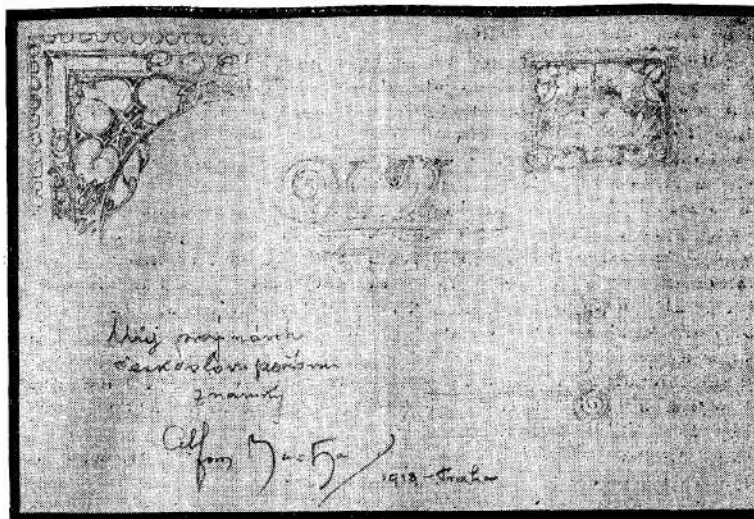
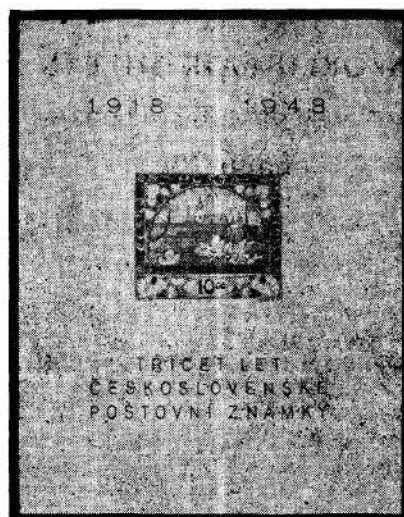


Fig. 4—Showing how Mr. Mucha made rough sketches of ornaments for corners and sides of the stamp design after finishing the preparatory work.

tested resolutely against any changes in the historic old tower, calling attention to the fact that it is part of the country's history and a symbol for the people. "I believe," he added, "that my warning words protected the Cathedral from being rebuilt and the ancient tower from being removed."

Those days came back to mind, he said, when he began designing those first stamps of the Republic. "I wanted the ancient tower to dominate it. St. Vitus Cathedral is situated in close vicinity to the Royal Castle, the seat of the Czech Kings, and the present home of our President."



The souvenir sheet issued in 1948 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Czechoslovak postage stamps

I asked Mr. Mucha: "What about the Hussite warrior whose figure appeared on two stamps in 1920?"

Mr. Mucha's face lightened up as he replied: "With those two stamps I wished to give a portrait of gallant fighters for truth and freedom, and to show the moral and physical strength that marked the famous Hussites' period. Jan Hus, hero and martyr of our history, who defended his religious ideas in times when the Czech nation stood in the foreground of European interest, sacrificed his life for his convictions."

I also asked him about the newspaper stamps he designed, using a flying falcon with spread wings for the subject, and he mentioned that he used this as a symbol of fast delivery. These stamps were in circulation a long time, with values from 2 up to 100 hellers, and they were issued in large quantity. Mr. Mucha also designed special delivery and postage due stamps, and told me that while working on those designs he always tried to give them a Slavonic appearance.

As our friendly chat came to a close, Mr. Mucha said he hoped that philatelists would always treasure the Czechoslovak stamps which showed this eventful era of Czech history.

Alfons Mucha died on July 14, 1939, at the age of 79. He was buried in the old historic cemetery at Vyschrad in Prague.

POPRADESKÉ PLESO

or Štrbské Pleso, is a vacation spot at about 4500 ft. elevation. Sheltered from the north winds by high peaks, it is open until October for the summer visitors. The local name for the lake is "The Eyes of the Sea".

4K and 5K stamps of 1928 show the lake and the mountains.



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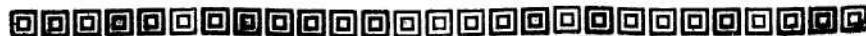
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