

THE CZECHO-SLOVAK SPECIALIST



OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
THE CZECHO-SLOVAK PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

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Editor: Peter Kreischer, 6616 S. Marshfield Ave., Chicago, Ill.

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No. 9

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

"Special Notice to the Members: We are about to enter a New Year, third, in fact, since we started to publish the Specialist. In extending to you the Season's Greetings may we remind you to send in your dues for 1941? As you know the fee has been lowered from Two Dollars to One Dollar and in making your remittance send your check or Money Order to the Treasurer, made out to him. (Guy Greenawalt, 4000 Fifth St., North, Arlington, Va.) Please do not send remittances to the Secretary, as has happened last year, since this procedure entails a loss of time and unnecessary expense to the Society."

The Editor and the Officers of the Society wish to extend to you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a Philatellically Prosperous New Year.

DEADLINE ON DUES NEARS, TREAS. GREENAWALT SAYS

To Mrs. George R. Skopecek of Colfax, California goes the distinction of being the First member to send in her dues for the year 1941. Mrs. Skopecek's check arrived at your Editor's home on Friday December 6th. All memers are reminded that January 31st is the deadline. As you all know the Dues have been lowered to \$1.00 per year and your cooperation in paying them promptly will be greatly appreciated.

NEW MEMBERS

The following new members have been added to our steadily expanding group of collectors;

#67—Michaelson, Emil J., 42 Martin Place, Irvington, N. Y.

#68—Alexieff, Vladimir, 400 W. 117th St., New York, N. Y.

Welcome, Gentlemen, pull up a chair and make yourselves to home.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Mr. Kessler of Montreal has moved his business to New York. Though he has already rented a permanent office in the heart of the city which he will open within two weeks, his present address is the Times Square Hotel, 43rd St., and 8th Ave., N. Y. C. Mr Kessler promises a series of advertisements beginning with the January issue of the Specialist which he believes will be of interest to the members.

By now many or perhaps all of us have seen and read the December 7th or Chechoslovak Issue of STAMPS magazine. All the articles on Czecho-slovakia therein with the exception of one, were edited and prepared by our Secretary Mr. Lowey and to him goes a vote of thanks for the fine way in which he handled the issue and for what he has done in putting the C. S. P. S.-N. A. before a multitude of collectors all over the country. There is no doubt that the Society should benefit by the publicity achieved but its greatest gain will be in the prestige it receives as an organization that can boast of the most prolific writers on the stamps of Czechoslovakia.

This should be an encouragement to many of our members and no doubt there are many of us who can write and should write some articles on

some of the issues of the stamps of Czechoslovakia. Any articles so written should be sent to your Editor who will publish them in future issues of the Specialist.

(Editor)

Enclosed is an application blank of the Magazine, STAMPS. We have been asked by the publisher to inform you that the annual subscription for members of our Society is 80 cents. In other words if you will fill out the subscription blank and enclose Money Order for 80 cents and mail both to our Secretary he will relay these to the publisher and you will receive STAMPS for the entire year of 1941. We believe this to be an attractive proposition, more so when realized that each single copy costs 10 cents. Bought separately this would mean an outlay of over \$5.00.

In a letter to me, dated December 3, Mrs. Skepecek of Colfax, Calif., states that she also possesses a Czech-English Dictionary. This is a First edition, dated 1876, by Charles Jonas.

Very soon, I hope, I shall hear of someone in or near Chicago who owns one. Then I shall be able to see what it looks like.

(Ye Ed.)

ECHOES FROM THE LIBRARY

Quote from the American Philatelist, by Lowey: "In casually glancing at the stamps of the first issue we see what looks like a large complex of houses and towers, known as the 'Hradcany Castle', seat of the Bohemian Kings, the view is framed by various ornaments which seem to have been put there by the designer in order to fill up spaces. However, these various ornaments have a distinctive meaning and are known and dear to every Czecho-Slovak.

In order to obtain an explanation let us listen to an interview given by Alfons Mucha, the designer, to the Historian Jaroslav Orlicky a few months after the Stamps were issued. The complete story of this particular stamp and its design will be found

in Pamphlet I-a which is in our Library.

Mrs. Glawe, Librarian

THE JUBILEE ISSUE OF 1928

by Peter Kreischer

The Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs in commemorating the 10th Anniversary of the Czecho-Slovak Republic issued, in accordance with Official decree #40 (series 80) dated October 17, 1928, a new set of stamps for use beginning October 28, 1928. The set consists of ten values ranging from 30h to 5 Kc.

Scott catalogue numbers are 144 to 153 inclusive and the values, colors and scenes depicted are as follows:

- 30h, black, Hradec Castle at Opava.
- 40h, red brown, Town Hall at Levoca
- 50h, dark green, Telephone bldg. at Prague.
- 60h, orange red, Town of Jasina
- 1 Kc, carmine, Airplane view of Hluboka Castle.
- 1 Kc, 20h, brown violet, Velehrad
- 2 Kc, ultramarine, Brunn Cathedral
- 2 Kc, 50h, dark blue, View of the Grand Tatra Mountains
- 3 Kc, dark brown, President Thomas Garrigue Masaryk
- 5 Kc, deep violet, View of Prague.

The stamps were supplied in filling orders to the Post Offices in the Republic beginning October 22, 1928. The set did not supersede any issue in use at the time and was used until the supply became exhausted. It was, however, the desire of the Post Office Ministry to exhaust the issue during the months of November and December and with this in mind the quantity printed was an estimated two months supply. The issue was distributed to all Post Offices in quantities recognized by the Ministry as being an adequate two months supply, that is, larger Post Offices received larger quantities etc. Postal clerks were instructed to sell the stamps of this issue prior to the other stamps on hand in order that the issue be entirely sold before the end of December 1928.

Officers of the Czecho-Slovak Philatelic Society of North America

President: George F. Smyth, 945 Main St., Bridgeport, Connecticut.
Secretary: J. W. Lowey, 201 Marcy Pl., New York, N. Y.
Treasurer: Guy Greenawalt, 4000 Fifth St., North., Arlington, Va.
Editor: Peter Kreischer, 6616 S. Marshfield Ave., Chicago, Illinois.
Librarian: Mrs. M. Glawe, 9640 S. Seeley Ave., Chicago, Illinois.

The stamps were printed on a good grade of white unwatermarked paper, perforated 13 $\frac{3}{4}$, by the Graphic Printing Co., of Prague on Stickney Rotary Presses from steel engraved plates, 100 stamps to the sheet. All sheets bear the plate number "1-1928" in the lower left hand corners. At this time the practice of numbering plates was relatively insofar as Czechoslovakian stamps were concerned.

The Official engraver was Karl Seizinger who on this issue has shown his special talent for intaglio engraving suitable for the rotary plates of the Stickney Presses.

The design is a rectangle measuring 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 27 mm. The values below the 2 Kc are of horizontal format whereas the 2, 3 and 5 Kc are of vertical format.

The frames of the horizontal rectangles are all alike, consisting of an upper panel with the word "Cesko-Slovensko" in white letters. The side panels consist of seven lines with three leaf ornaments. The bottom of the stamps consist of three separate panels, the center panel contains the year dates "1918-1928" in white while corner panels contain the value in two lines also in white letters. The central designs consist of various views which will be described later.

The vertical rectangles of the 2Kc and 5 Kc values are similar to the horizontal rectangles except that the upper and lower panels do not contain the two leaf ornaments.

The vertical rectangle of the 3 Kc value contains the word "Cesko-Slovensko" in white letters in the upper panels, the panels on each side consist of a series of perpendicular lines that blend into a solid mass at the top, each side panel contains two Linden Leaves, one at the top and the other at the bottom, between these the year dates appear; 1918 at the left and 1928 at the right. At the bottom of the frames are three panels, one in each corner contains the numeral of value while the center panel contains the word "Koruny".

It may be of interest to what extent the Philatelists of Czechoslovakia have prevailed upon the Ministry to aid their Exhibitions. This issue was planned for many months and the subjects selected were chosen from a great number of suggestions. As a consequence the Ministry exhibited parts of this series as completed at four different exhibitions.

The first showing of a part of this

series was made at the Brunn Exhibition held during June 1928. This exhibition was not truly of a Philatelic nature but had as its purpose to show the progress of all Arts in the Republic. The first four values to be completed were exhibited by the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs on June 9th. They were as follows;

3 Kc, Masaryk

50 h, Telephone Building at Prague

30 h, Castle at Opava

1 Kc, 20h, Velehrad

These values are also listed in the order in which they were completed.

The second showing was at Prague. This was in connection with the Sixth International Congress of Artists held July 1928. In addition to the four values shown at Brno the fifth value to be completed was shown, this being the 1 Kc showing an Airplane view of the Castle at Hluboka. An interesting point in this connection was that the exhibit was held on the premises of the Graphic Printing Plant which is the official printery of the Czechoslovakian Government.

The third showing was made at the Philatelic Exhibition held at Paradubice from September 30 to October 4, 1928. This exhibition was truly of Philatelic nature since it was sponsored by the Paradubice Philatelic Society. At this time seven values were shown, the two new values being the 40 h and the 2 Kc. In this connection the Philatelic Press of Czechoslovakia carried conflicting accounts—one of the monthly journals stated that eight values were shown but no mention as to the value of the eighth stamp is cited.

From information at hand the eighth and ninth stamps to be completed were the 60h and the 2 Kc, 50h. The selection for the last subject entailed considerable discussion and finally the scene showing the Old City Hall at Prague was chosen, this being the 5 Kc stamp.

In connection with each of the foregoing exhibitions the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs authorized the use of special cancellation, however, none of the stamps of the issue under consideration were used for postage.

Simultaneously with the first day of issuance of this set another Philatelic Exhibition was held at Louny. This was held from October 28, 1928, the Czechoslovakian Independence Day, to November 1, 1928. At this exhibition the entire set was displayed. Therefore it can be said that this issue had a pre showing at Four Phil-

atic Exhibitions which in itself is an interesting fact.

Permission to cancel all mail franked with stamps of this set with red ink was authorized on October 28, the first day. Covers of this sort receive in Czechoslovakia as much consideration as do our own first day covers.

A brief description of each subject used on this issue follows:

30h, Hradec Castle at Opava

Opava is a village situated on the ancient much travelled Highway between the separate States of Silesia and Moravia. The known history of the Castle dates back to 1061 A.D., at which time it was strongly fortified and due to the protection it offered the village of Opava soon became a commercial center.

The Castle housed the Czech Royal family and therefore it, as well as the village was owned by Royalty. The last Royal family to occupy it was that of Queen Kunhut. After the death of her husband, Premysl II, she established her home here exclusively and it was here that her posthumous daughter was born. This daughter married Count Nicholas and the Castle thereafter housed lesser dignitaries known as the Counts of Opava, the first of these being John of Luxemburg. With their establishment the property passed from Crown ownership. Early in the 12th Century the title again passed into the hands of the Czech Crown, but for a short period only when it was sold by King Rudolph II to a private individual.

40h, Village Hall of Levoca

Levoca is an ancient free city in the State of Spis, Slovakia. It was incorporated in 1240 A.D. as the capital of that State.

The Village Hall was built in the 15th Century and stands sturdily on deep arcades with an upper loggia and frescoes of civic virtue along the north wall. The slope of the roof is lifted by ornamental gables. Within are fine chambers and the guild hall still lighted by crystal chandeliers, the gift to Levoca of the city of Venice. Levoca, like other towns of Spis was a settlement of linen weavers whose goods were sold throughout Poland, Italy and the Balkans. The ancient wooden dies and samples of fabric are still to be seen in the Municipal Museum.

The Town Hall and the equally ancient church of St. James with its Pilgrim shells, its carved and gilded altars, the works of Master Paulus of Cracow in the 15th Century and

its 14th Century frescoes of the legend of St. Dorothy, a favorite patron of Saxon maidens, are enough to distinguish Levoca from all other towns in Slovakia and to win for it the title the "Nuremberg of Slovakia".

30h, Telephone Exchange at Prague

Construction of the Telephone Exchange was begun in 1925 and telephone service was established in June 1927. The Telephone and Telegraph service in the Republic is Government owned and is under the direction of the Ministry of Posts and Telegraph Service. The building houses the Ziska Exchange which in addition to providing facilities for local telephone service also contains the largest Toll exchange in Czechoslovakia. The Toll system connects the 500 principal cities in the Republic as well as the telephone and telegraph facilities connecting Czechoslovakia with the outside world. The Laboratories, Engineering and Technical Staffs of the Telephone and Telegraph departments are also located in the building as are the various schools for the telephone and telegraph operators.

60h, Town of Jasina

Jasina is a village in that part of Czechoslovakia known as Carpathian-Russia. The territory is a mountainous section and due to its location progress has not been as noted as in other sections of the Republic. For this reason the Architecture of the buildings has not been affected by the outside world and consequently the churches and other buildings still conform to the ideas of the hardy mountaineers known as Carpatho-Ruthenians.

The majority of the churches are constructed of wood chopped and felled in the nearby forests. Even today approximately 150 such edifices are being used regularly for services. These churches were all built in the 17th and 18th Centuries and are usually situated on a hill or other high spot on the outskirts of the communities they serve. In addition to their church functions these buildings may be termed as miniature Museums for they house all the century old antiques of the craftsmanship of these hardy simple mountain folk.

In Architectural style these churches all follow a rather general outward appearance while in detail each one is different. Being built by the respective populations in each locality who did not follow any particular sets of plans, they represent the ideas, dreams and creations of the imagi-

nations of these untutored rural craftsmen. As a result the buildings exemplify all of their traditions, ancient design and wood craftsmanship. Having been built by hand with primitive tools, these buildings have withstood the ravages of war and time admirably. An attempt to classify the architectural style of these churches would probably result in placing a relatively few as resembling the Gothic and early French but the vast majority would fall in a distinct Ruthenian design.

The design on this stamp is the Church "Assumption of St. Mary" and is typical of the pure Ruthenian design. The structure on the right of the stamp is built in the form of a Greek Cross, the center of the cross which is a square is the tallest portion of the building. The building to the left houses the bell, typical of the customary arrangement.

1 Kc, Hluboka Castle

The castle at Hluboka is one of the most beautiful in Bohemia. It is situated on gradual sloping hill and is of Tudor style architecture, patterned very closely after the Windsor Castle in England. Construction of the castle was begun in 1838 and was not completed until 1863. The building itself and the adjacent parks present a rather romantic setting that is entirely fitting to the interior furnishings. The castle is furnished in unusual style as no expense was spared. The interior walls are lined with marble. The windows consist of pictures made of stained glass. The Art Gallery houses many paintings by Van Dyke, Hamilton and many other noted artists. It also contains a room in which many works of Sculptors and wood carvings are housed. The Library contains thousands of German and French volumes.

The history of the town dates back to the 13th Century when it was chosen as the site of the Franenberg Castle. After the death of Count Falkenstein the castle became the property of the Government in whose hands it remained with the exception of minor intervals, until the end of the 15th Century. In 1664 it was sold to members of the Schwarzenberg family.

1 Kc, 20h, Velehrad

This city of Moravia is renowned for its magnificent churches of which the principal ones are the Roman Catholic church, "Ascension of St. Mary" and the Jesuit Monastery.

The earliest written reference to

Velehrad dates back to 1131 A.D. which is an entry in the Monastery record by a Bishop, giving a summary as to the amount of cattle in the region. In 1220 the city became a marketing place and in the year 1257 A.D. Premysl Okotar, King of Bohemia and Moravia built a fortress on an island in the Moravia River and fortified the city against the Hungarians. This brought a great influx of people to the city.

The Monastery was founded about 1200 A.D. by the Benedictine Monks and in time became very prosperous, chiefly through cattle raising and breeding and with the fame of the Velehrad Monks having spread as far as Silesia in 1338. This wealth however, caused considerable envy and resulted in a raid during the Hussite Wars in January of 1421. At this time the original Monastery was destroyed; the Monks with few exceptions were either killed or burned at the stake. A slow process of re-establishment followed, taking about 30 years to rebuild the Monastery but it was not until 1511 that it was again returned to the Roman Catholic Church with its former privileges. In 1891 the Monastery passed on to the Jesuit Order.

2 Kc, Brno Cathedral

Brno (Brunn) is the present capital of Moravia, situated at the confluence of two rivers, between two hills one of which is crowned by a fortress now used as a barracks but which formerly was an Austrian Political prison. In this capacity it was rendered famous by the story of Silvio Pellico who was confined there from 1822 to 1830. On the lower hill lies the Cathedral of St. Peter dominating the Old Town, which though small and traversed by crooked streets, contains most of the civic and ecclesiastical buildings for example the Rathous, 1511 and the 15th Century Church of St. James. The Cathedral was begun in the 13th Century when Brno was a growing trade center on the Crusader's path to and from Jerusalem, it was completed two Centuries later in the period of Moravia's greatness. It is built of dark stone with five aisles of equal height and an iron fleche or spire which was added about 100 years ago.

Around the Old Town fine gardens and well built streets have replaced the fortifications and now connect the old with the new.

(To be continued)

Czecho-Slovakia

All sets mint and complete unless otherwise stated. I have in stock all sets with coupons, ornamental coupons also all se-tenant gutter pairs.

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