

THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE
CZECHOSLOVAK PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA

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Editor Frank J. Kovarik, 2502 So. Kedzie Ave., Chicago 23, Ill.

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EDITORIAL

Chicago had a visitor, our energetic secretary, Jos. W. Lowey. His visit was necessarily brief; but it was appreciated by those of us who have known him since the Society was organized and before then. Most of us knew him through correspondence; Joe is an ever-ready writer. He has done much for the Society, in fact, he is one of the few who not only organized the Society, but has led it through its most trying times, the period of organization. We feel sure Joe enjoyed his short visit with us and in turn we assure him that his unceasing efforts for the good of our Society will bear fruit.

NEW MEMBER

150. Joseph Brazda, Royalton Road, R. F. D. #2, Brecksville, Ohio.

DR. IRWIN NEUFELD

Our very active member from New York City, Dr. Irwin Neufeld, is now a member of the United States Army Medical Corps, with the rank of Captain. Good luck to you, Doctor!

OUR MEMBERSHIP LIST

True to our promise, we present in this issue the new and revised membership list. While it is not as up-to-date as we would wish, under the circumstances it is really sufficient. Regulations prohibit the publication of addresses of some members in the Armed Forces and in such case we publish the home or civilian address of these members. We are sure that the folks of these members would forward all mail, addressed as here presented, to their military address.

NEXT ISSUE OF SPECIALIST

We had several reasons for postponing the June issue and hurry to assure our members that the next issue, the September number, will be in the mails soon after the middle of August. In that issue will appear the reprint of Mr. Lowey's article, now published serially in the American Philatelist and those of you who are not members of the American Philatelic Society, may be assured you are in for a real treat. Our thanks go to the publishers of the American Philatelist for the permission to reprint this article and for the loan of the illustrations which accompany it. The acting editor, Mr. Lester G. Brookman, is a friend indeed and we thank him heartily.

CZECHOSLOVAK ARMY IN ENGLAND

During the past months I have been in touch with the secretary of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society in London and am now in a position to relay an interesting offer to those of our members who are interested to receive the Army postmarks.

Our fellow society in London is willing to send to our members all commemorative postmarks and other material which will be issued by the Army in the future. In addition the society's bulletin will be sent from time to time.

This offer stands on one condition, namely, that interested members join the London group. Annual dues are 6 shillings and the best way to remit is per International Money Order.

In writing state that you are a member of our society and mention your wishes. I would suggest that you use commemorative stamps on your envelope. As a collector himself the secretary will appreciate this. His name and address, J. Tauber, 20, Compton Avenue, Luton, Beds., England.

J. W. Lowey

TRIP TO CHICAGO

During our first convention which was held in 1939 at the Bohemian National Hall in New York I made the promise to our editor that I intended to visit Chicago either in 1940 or the following year. True to my promise I laid my plans early in 1940 in order to make the trip in June. Unfortunately circumstances compelled me to cancel my trip a few days before my departure. Similar events postponed planned trips from year to year.

However early this year I decided to make the trip this Spring, come what may. At first some of my Chicago friends doubted my words—they had reason to be skeptical. Hadn't Lowey promised year after year to make that trip only to disappoint them repeatedly? Then when I notified some of my more intimate member-friends that I already had made reservations on the "Trail Blazer" and would be there on that and that day did they believe.

A few days ago I returned to New York on the same train. It would be very easy for me to use innumerable superlatives to describe the reception I received and the splendid time I have had during my visit. Suffice it to say that the boys in Chicago gave me the keys of the city.

I arrived at Union Station on a Saturday morning and found Dr. Stolfa, with whom I had been corresponding for about 3 years on world matters, waiting for me. Both of us had looked forward to this personal meeting for a long, long time and when we shook hands we both felt the elation of men who now would have the chance to discuss the many problems more thoroughly than had been possible in written intercourse.

From the station we rode to the Doctor's house in Berwyn. Naturally after an 18 hours ride and inadequate train meals I felt fairly hungry but I was not prepared for what awaited me. Mrs. Stolfa had prepared an excellent dinner and I still remember the special taste of that creamed chicken with dumplings.

After dinner the Doctor took me around his fairly large house and showed me the various things and items which he had collected on his travels over the United States. What, however, fascinated me most, was his tremendous library which contains a large section of Czech volumes. It seems practically complete as to standard works but there are several de luxe editions which I have never seen before. During my stay I made it my business to look into these as time permitted.

It had beforehand been decided that I would sleep the first two nights at Mr. Hrivnak's house and then return to the Stolfa's where I would stay until my departure.

Around 5 o'clock "Gus" Hrivnak arrived in his fine Buick convertible. For about an hour the four of us had an animated conversation until it became time to leave.

In about 15 minutes we were at Gus' house in Riverside, which is a small, fashionable community outside Chicago. His house, like the doctors, is somewhat different from city dwellings, very large and splendidly furnished. Mrs. Hrivnak received me in a very charming manner and we became instant friends.

Since supper was to be served somewhat later friend Gus did just as the

Doctor had done a few hours earlier, he took me on a trip through his domain. It would take too long to describe everything. However let me mention just two rooms. One is the basement which in its entirety has been rebuilt into a sort of library-lounge. An entire wall has built-in book cases which are filled to the hilt. The second room which interested me most is the attic which also has been rebuilt to serve the masters purposes. It is Hrivnak's "Inner Sanctum" and is unquestionably the largest private philatelic room I have ever seen. Here our friend has his albums, stock books and innumerable boxes and receptacles which contain material to be sorted out. All around the walls stretch glass enclosed book cases which contain not only all Czechoslovak philatelic publications, handbooks, catalogs, etc., etc., but practically all stamp publications of the past 25 years.

After Dinner the host showed me his albums. His collection is big and for this reason I only could look at such specialized material which interested me most.

The next morning we got up fairly late and Gus showed me his garden, lawn and the many spots around the house. We then went up to the attic. I had intended to look over the library but suddenly felt that it would be a hopeless task. I did not know where to look first and realized that it would take a decade to see everything. Instead my eye fell upon the pool table in the middle of the room. "Play the game?" asked Gus. I said that I knew billiard but that I had never played pool but would try. We played several games and I almost won each. Well, Gus, I'll do better on my next visit!

We were to hold an informal meeting in the afternoon to which the Chicago members had been invited to the house. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon the first guests began to arrive. Unfortunately some, whom I had been anxious to meet, did not appear. This is due to the long distance from the inner city but some of the boys could not come for various other reasons.

One of the first to arrive was my old pal Frank Kovarik and both of us were happy to see each other the first time after five years.

Monday and Tuesday I spent in the company of our editor. Arriving at his house I found him alone. His father and one sister had gone to their bungalow on the Lake and the other members of the family were working. As in previous instances Frank showed me their house. Since the Kovarik's are a large family they had to have a large house. As a matter of fact they had lived in the house for some 40 years and most of the children had been born there.

After our sightseeing tour we settled down to discuss society affairs and plan its future, whereupon we had lunch. Then came the historic moment. I was to see Frank's collection.

We went to his studio den on the first floor. It is not a very large room but very inviting and on first glance one has the impression to step into the office of a very busy manager. There is a desk, a typewriter, book cases line the walls and on top of them philatelic trophies and bric a brac. The floor is covered with a bizarre, colorful Mexican rug.

For years mutual friends have told me that Frank's collection is a big one. They have not overdone. It is big, terrifically big. It is precisely mounted and well written up. There are some 60 albums, containing Czechoslovak and U. S. issues and Souvenir Sheets, not to mention stock books and glassine envelopes chock full with material. My host seemed amused whenever I pointed to the amount he could get for this or that item. For instance I appraised the value of 3 album pages containing singles and blocks of regular and proofs of Airmails of Czechoslovakia at between 800 to 1000 dollars. But Frank just smiled tolerantly—he is a simon pure collector first and last and not concerned with the financial value of his property.

On Tuesday morning we had another stamp session at his house and in the afternoon went to look up philatelic acquaintances. We also paid a short visit to Mr. Lidman, philatelic editor of the "Chicago Sun" who previously had announced my coming in prominent type in the Sunday column of his paper.

On both evenings Frank accompanied me "home" where together with the Doctor and Mrs. Stofa, well supplied with liquids we conversed deep into the nights. I should mention here that the Doctor in spite of some 40 years residence in this country has retained his knowledge of perfect spoken and written literary Czech. He is a constant contributor to Czech papers and also has books of philosophical character published in Czechoslovakia to his credit. One of them

has an introduction by the famous writer Karel Capek.

Wednesday I was the guest of the Berka's. The afternoon I spent at the house of Mr. Egon Berka. For months I had looked with keen anticipation to meet again his father. Unfortunately he had died some time ago. Egon Berka is now continuing on his father's collection of Czechoslovakia which is acknowledged to be the finest and largest in the world. I did not even ask Egon to show me just the highlights, because it would have been an impossible task. Instead I turned to my other hobby—books. Egon Berka, who is a lawyer by profession has been able to bring over part of his library. I admired with awe some of the volumes which he put into my hands. Some are 2-300 years old but what seemed the gem to me is a Virgil printed in Latin some 400 years ago. In the evening I met Egon's vivacious wife at his mother's house where we all had supper. The conversation revolved mostly on present topics and our relatives and mutual friends in Czechoslovakia. I did not wish to stay too late and Mr. Berka drove me to the train.

On Thursday I had some private errands, also visited the Chicago office of my concern and had supper with one of the executives.

For the following day John Velek had invited me for lunch to his house and I spent a few very pleasant hours with him, his wife and his two sweet two year old twin girls. After lunch John showed me his collection of Czechoslovakia. His pet is the 40h value of the Hradcany issue of which he has everything in proofs, cancellations and other specialized material. John also has a small but well kept philatelic library and also some very fine books on Paintings and Music.

We parted from John with the impression that he is a serious but very friendly fellow who tries his best to please and make one feel at home. I did, John!

That night I was to have supper with Mr. and Mrs. Hrivnak at their house and found my friend with his car at an appointed place from where he whisked us away. During supper Gus mentioned that the "Polonus" Philatelic Society was having a meeting that night. He is a member and suggested that I attend the meeting with him. It was alright with me if Mrs. Hrivnak did not object to being left alone. However, she did not.

We arrived at the Polish Sokol Hall around 9 o'clock and found the members in the midst of their meeting. Shortly after we were seated Mr. Steczynski, the dynamic President arose and, introducing me to the membership gave me a very fine welcome. I replied in like manner. After the meeting I met some of the Bigwigs of the organization—Jack Domar the sympathetic secretary, whom I had previously met at the house of Mr. Hrivnak, Lester Jankowski, Editor of the Polonus Bulletin, Roman Reinowski, exhibition chairman and others whose names have slipped from my memory.

Saturday noon, together with Mr. Hrivnak, we called upon Dr. Stofa at his office. We were to have a fare well Dinner at the "Little Bohemia" Restaurant across from Union Station. The name "Little" hardly fits the place. It is a large and excellent eating place but just one of the many Czech restaurants which are so prominent in Chicago. Gus had to leave early on account of duties at the plant but the Doctor remained with me until my departure. In fact he went along right into the train coach.

Parting was not easy. We both realized that we had not been as much together as we had planned. This is due to the fact that the Doctor spent his day time in his office on the other hand I had to be away from his house most of the evenings in order to fill my engagements.

In the foregoing I have tried briefly to review my stay in Chicago. I have had an excellent time in every regard. I have further cemented old friendships and hope that they will continue in the years to come.

Finally I wish to thank most sincerely for the hospitality extended to me by my friends and their wives.

J. W. Lowey

ORCHIDS

174 Addison Rd., Riverside, Ill.
March 15, 1944

Dear Frank:

The 1943 issues of the Specialist neatly bound arrived in the mail Saturday

and the volume is a grand addition to any library.

The usual Philatelic Press bally-hoo about bindings—a la World War #2—was entirely missing in connection with this volume and yet in my opinion the job on it has any of the Philatelic editions issued recently cheated to death.

Kindly accept my thanks.

I remain,

Sincerely yours,

A. J. Hrivnak

We are happy to know friend "Gus" was pleased with the binding job of the Specialist Volume V, which was mailed to all our patron members of last year.

POSTA CESHOSLOVENSKA 1919
Translated from the Hirsch-Franck Handbook
by W. L. Russell

(Continued from the February issue)

OVERPRINT "B"

This overprint, which is the smallest of all, was used for the triangular Austrian Express stamps, the Airmails, and the provisional Postage Dues. It is always horizontal on the triangular Express, and at an angle of 28 degrees on the others, except on the 1 h stamp (Karl VI) where the word PORTO was already overprinted at an angle of 43 degrees, and the new overprint was angled to match it. A characteristic of this type of overprint is that the second "9" in the year date is always cut across diagonally at the base.

We have discovered 4 types of this overprint, which differ from each other in the positions of the words POSTA, CESHOSLOVENSKA, and the date 1919. The sketch which appears on page 180 of the handbook will help you to recognize the types easily. In Type I an imaginary line from T of POSTA goes between the letters O and V and between the second 1 and 9 of the date. In Type II the line cuts through the letter V and touches the last 9. In Type III the line cuts through the letter O and touches the last 1 of 1919. Least noticeable, and very much resembling Type I is Type IV, where the imaginary line touches the letter V and the figure 1.

We wish to emphasize that not all these 4 types occur together on the stamps mentioned. On the Triangular Express, for example, we have found only Types I and II, whereas on the Airmails and the Provisional Postage Dues (except the 1 h) Types I and III only. On the 1 h Postage Due (Karl VI), types I and IV only.

The overprints on the Provisional Postage Dues are frequently found with printing imperfections. These appear on some letters as small circular specks outside the outlines of the letters, or letters with rough outlines, and incomplete forms of the overprints. These defects would lead to the supposition that they are characteristics of the overprint, as they are so frequently met with. Yet this is not the case. The cause of these imperfections are little pieces of paper (the waste, or punchings from the perfs) which found their way in between the stamp sheet and the printing plate. We shall deal with this in the chapter devoted to printing imperfections.

PLATE I—This is set up quite differently from the others and was probably set up for the triangular Express stamps, 2 h and 5 h. There are 8 rows, each of 13 stamps, to the sheet and they are arranged in the rows so that they face each other (tete-beche). At the end of the 8th row 4 empty places are left (8 x 13 equals 104) which have been left unprinted. Just as the stamps are arranged tete-beche, so also the blocks for the overprint, i.e. 52 blocks upright and 52 reversed. Altogether there are 104 overprints, 4 of which are printed on the blank spaces. As already mentioned, the triangular Express stamps show only the overprint types I and II. How and in what order the types change in the overprint, and in what ratio represented we cannot tell, for we never obtained a complete sheet. According to the small number of sheets overprinted we can definitely state that only one plate was used for all the triangular Express.

PLATE II—It is evident that for the overprint of the Airmails, which are bigger in size, a new plate of 100 overprints had to be set up. Perhaps it was a plate with fewer blocks, because quite possibly the small number of these stamps

were overprinted in small blocks. There is now no complete sheet of stamps in existence (even if there had been originally) and we are not in a position therefore to give any particulars regarding variations in Types and their mutual positions on the sheet. This will always remain unknown. It is interesting to know that the earlier issues of the Airmails (March 1918) were of higher and narrower format, whereas the identical stamp, but of broader and lower format, came out just prior to the revolution, or before October 1918, on which day their validity expired. This conforms our view of the speculative aspects of these stamps. Of the two formats overprinted POSTA CESKO-SLOVENSKA 1919, the broader and lower one preponderates.

PLATE III—For the overprint 15/2, 10/24, 15/36, 20/54 and 50/42h provisionals, a new plate had to be set up, consisting of 100 blocks arranged at an angle of 28 degrees. Although we have only the 15/36 and 50/42 h in complete sheets for examination, we are justified in saying that the same plate was also used for overprinting the very small number of sheets of the rare value of 15/2, 10/24 and 20/54 h, of which there are no more sheets in existence.

The arrangement of the types for the Provisional Postage Dues (except the 1 h) is illustrated on page 182 of the handbook. The overprint of the sheet possesses 52 stamps of Type I and 48 of Type III. The overprint on the 15/2 h (Maria Theresa) is placed higher than on the Franz Josef Stamps. True, we had no complete sheets of these valuable stamps at hand, but we assume that except for a little adaptation it caused no great difficulty to use Plate III, so that the setting up of a new plate was avoided.

PLATE IV—For the overprint of the 1 h Postage Due (Karl VI) it was found necessary to make a new plate with the angle of 47 degrees, to keep in alignment with the previous oblique overprint of the word PORTO. In this case (Plate IV) we needed to test a great number of sheets, which showed us the presence of Types I and IV. A reconstruction of this plate had to be abandoned on the grounds of lack of material.

The setting up of a new plate for this practically valueless stamp proves again that economy was not our prime motive. The rarity of this stamp is due to the fact that not more than 100 sheets were overprinted, and this brought a revenue of Kc 150.00 to the P. O. It is hard to believe that it was possible to recover the outlay for the overprint of this individual value by means of that sum!

The execution of the previous overprints of the Airmails and Postage Dues (FLUGPOST and PORTO) printed in Vienna, convinced us that we rightly and precisely perform our own overprints. The overprint POSTA CESKOSLOVENSKA 1919 was made by exactly the same method as the overprints FLUGPOST and PORTO of 1916-18, with plates of 100 single blocks reproduced by means of stereotypes from hand set type. It is natural that similar type variations are met with in the FLUGPOST and PORTO overprints, because the identical working processes in the overprinting were employed as in POSTA CESKOSLOVENSKA 1919.

Therefore we find 2 types of overprints in "15 PORTO 15" on the 2h Maria Theresa, consisting of varying positions of the figures "15" in relation to the word PORTO, or as an exception, we find the first "O" of PORTO of an oval shape on the 1 h stamp, which occurs 8 times on the sheet (on stamps 20, 38, 56, 63, 75, 85 and 87) yet this "O" is circular on the rest of the stamps in the sheet.

Plate III (Type B)

| | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 3 1 1 1 3 | 1 3 3 1 3 |
| 1 3 1 3 1 | 3 1 3 1 1 |
| 1 1 1 1 3 | 1 1 1 3 1 |
| 3 3 3 3 1 | 3 1 1 3 1 |
| 3 1 3 1 1 | 3 1 3 1 3 |
| 1 3 1 1 3 | 3 1 3 3 1 |
| 1 3 1 3 3 | 1 3 1 3 3 |
| 3 1 1 3 3 | 3 1 1 1 3 |
| 3 3 1 1 1 | 1 1 3 1 3 |
| 3 3 1 1 1 | 3 3 1 3 3 |

(To be continued)

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