

# THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST

Official Monthly Journal of the  (USPS 808300) Society for Czechoslovak Philately, Inc.

Silver Award Interphil '76 — Silver Award Capex '78 — Silver-Bronze Praga '78

A.P.S. Unit 18

Vol. XLVII

November 1985

No. 9, Whole No. 453

## AN UPDATE ON PROFESSOR KARL SEIZINGER - ENGRAVER

By J. L. Klein

Seven years ago, in 1978, I informed the Editor of the *SPECIALIST* that Professor Karl Seizinger had died in the town of Haarlem, in the Netherlands, at the age of 89 years. Seizinger, as is well known, was the engraver and designer of many of the Czechoslovakian stamps issued during the period 1926–1938.

In the meantime, I met an old friend of the late Seizinger and learned many details not published so far; additionally I found a well-documented article, written by Mr. A. Boerma, and other information from Enschede & Sons, the well-known printers of postage stamps and banknotes. Moreover, I have had access to two extensive collections of Seizinger drawings and proofs of Czechoslovakia stamps as well as the collection of his proofs of Croatia, Jugoslavia, etc., which are now in Germany and Holland. I also was able to examine several accumulations of his proofs in the United States.

Since Professor Seizinger was one of the outstanding engravers of his time, it might be useful to share this additional information concerning a man whose work we find on many stamps in our collections of Czechoslovakia.

Carl Friedrich Wilhelm Seizinger was born in Hildburghausen, now Eastern Germany, on March 23, 1889. His father was a photographer and wanted his son to work in his photo shop, but young Karl could write and draw quite well and had other aspirations: he studied successfully at the grammar-school and the art-academy, and since 1905 at the School for Engraving, also in Hildburghausen, where he received lessons from the Director, C. Metzgeroth and also from Professor Max Svabinsky, the same artist who designed the early Masaryk stamps issued in 1920.

However, before Seizinger could start a career World War I broke out. He was stationed in Iraq, where he served with the German airborne troops. In 1918, after an eventful march from the Mosul oil fields via Constantinople and Wilhelmshafen, he reached Berlin where he found his wife and son, but no work. Germany was suffering from staggering inflation and, as we collectors well know, practically no new stamps were made; existing stamps were reprinted as well as overprinted. So young Seizinger tried elsewhere and, beginning in 1921, he worked in Finland, where he engraved banknotes, but no postage stamps, for the National Bank.

In 1924 he went to Prague, where he lived at the address Lucembursku 24. It was here that he started to engrave postage stamps. During the years 1926–1938 no less

than 61 Czechoslovakian stamp designs were issued, engraved by Karl Seizinger! He first worked for the National Bank and later exclusively for the Ministry of Post.

A second engraver, Bohumil Heinz, came to Prague in 1934, and from 1934 through 1938 we find stamps engraved by either Seizinger or Heinz. Over the years since, the question has often been asked whether this pairing represented competition or cooperation? Although the question probably can never be answered factually, there seems to be a logical explanation for using each artist, as described by Charley Chesloe in one of his columns: the engraving technique of Heinz was quite different from that of Seizinger. Seizinger had a heavy, precise stroke and this made his landscapes and architecture — castles and buildings — among the finest such stamp engravings in the world. His detail was extraordinary — showing clocks in towers with actual times being visible. This heavy stroke, however, did not favor his work on the human form; by the same token, it was in this area that Heinz excelled. So it was that during this period of duality, Seizinger did mostly landscapes, castles and other buildings, while Heinz worked on designs showing the human form, especially portraits. When Seizinger left the scene in 1938 it was due to the political climate created by a threatening Hitler to countries bordering Germany. Thus it is that after July 16, 1938, no Czech stamps engraved by him have been issued.

Nevertheless, there are some intriguing aspects about the 1938 January Sokol stamps: the catalogues mention Heinz as the engraver, and indeed the issued stamps were "touched" by Heinz. However, the original drawings were Seizinger's and there also exist proofs made from dies engraved by Seizinger. A close comparison of the latter with the (Heinz) proofs of the issued stamps indicate only minute and relatively insignificant differences. One might conclude that the Heinz changes were made only to change the product from Seizinger to Heinz — and we don't know the reason for the charade.



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Vol. XLVII

November 1985

No. 9, Whole No. 453

Published monthly except July and August - \$15.00 per year

Second Class Postage Paid at Ord, Nebraska 68862

and additional mailing offices.

Editor: Frank W. Julsen, 8721 Via La Serena, Paradise Valley, AZ 85253

Literary Editor: Henry Hahn, 2936 Rosemoor Lane, Fairfax, VA 22031

President: Dominick J. Riccio, 235 W. 76th St. Apt 4D, New York, NY 10023

Vice President: Richard M. Major, P.O. Box 4074, Arlington, VA 22204

National Secy: Edward Lisy, 87 Carmita Avenue, Rutherford, NJ 07070

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Expertizing Chmn: Edwin W. Lehecka, 217 Hazel Ave., Westfield, NJ 07090

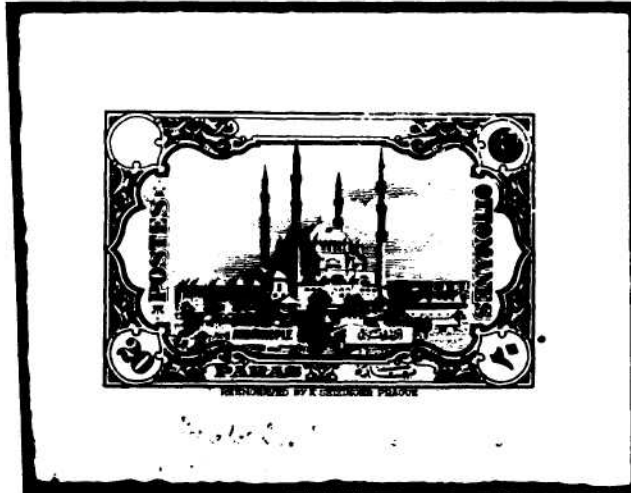
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*Changes of address to the editorial office.*

During his stay in Prague, Seizinger exhibited his work at IPOSTA, Berlin (1930), where he received the Grand Prix; also at WIPA, in Vienna (1933); Bratislava, Large Gold (1937); Praha, Gold Plaquette (1938).

Most collectors are unaware that Seizinger, during his years in Czechoslovakia, worked for other countries and stamp printing companies as well. For example, illustrated below is an interesting essay he prepared for the Turkish government, being a re-engraving of the original 1913 Adrianople issue or more likely the modified 1920 series. Although signed by Seizinger, unfortunately it is not dated, and there is another mystery on our hands: why would he have been commissioned to produce an Ottoman Empire stamp between the years 1924 and 1938, when the Turkish Republic came into being in 1923? And by whom?



Note the inscription at the bottom: "Reengraved by K. Seizinger, Prague."

It is also not generally known that he was held in high esteem by the English engraving/printing firm Waterlow Sons Ltd. Seizinger engraved for them a "promotional sample" stamp which was printed by Waterlow in a variety of colors and distributed to their customers for postage stamps all over the world. For this job Seizinger received £ 50, according to a Waterlow letter dated February 4, 1931.



It is not clear whether this promotion resulted in any assignments for Seizinger, but it is surely a delightful job of engraving, when examined in its original proof state. One can only conjecture as to how long it took him to engrave this sample; but the pound equivalent of \$250 U.S. in 1931 seems very low for the talent involved. Perhaps he was expecting future assignments to compensate for this "low" price.

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In passing we might note that as early as 1934 he tried to interest the German government in his services, but with no success. But during his stay in Prague he did some work for Panama and he also received a request from the American Bank Note Company, New York, presumably to engrave United States stamps; this probably was also a speculative venture that did not come to fruition.

Karl Seizinger not only engraved postage stamps: in 1932 he made a copper-engraved "St. George and the Dragon" that has been printed on Czechoslovakian state bonds.

Let us now pick up the story in 1938 when Seizinger and his wife, daughter of an American consular official, managed to emigrate to Yugoslavia where he engraved many stamps, including the first copper-plate stamps to be produced there. He worked in Belgrade until 1941, when it became prudent for him to return to Germany: anti-German sentiment was rising in Yugoslavia. Because he still possessed his parent's home in Hildburghausen, Marienplatz Nr. 17, he returned there for a short time. Then he went to Zagreb, to work for the new Croatian government, and was granted the title of Professor on June 17, 1943. Since 1941 he designed 32 stamps, engraved the block issued in 1943 for the philatelic exhibition at Zagreb. On August 24, 1944, he signed a contract to work for the Kroatischer Staatsdruckerei at Zagreb. The end of the war brought him back to Germany. His drawings and proofs were left behind but gradually he retrieved them.

A little-known bit of information: apparently during his short stay in Germany during 1941, Seizinger was commissioned to engrave the Poland "Genealgouvernement" series listed by Michel as unissued numbers I, AI, II and III. Unfortunately, the catalogue does not mention when these were printed. I can venture the guess that they are circa 1941 because the designer, Prof. Puchinger, is listed also as the designer for the 1940 series, Michel numbers 40-51, but for no other subsequent stamps. So it may be assumed that Prof. Puchinger was active only at that time. I welcome more definitive information from any of our membership regarding this series.

To back-pedal a moment: during the war some of the Seizinger stamps were reengraved in London by Waterlow & Sons Ltd. and used for the souvenir sheet issued during the exhibition of Czechoslovak stamps in London, 1943. Two stamps, engraved in 1928 for the set "1918-1928" were now printed with "1918-1943": the 60h Jasiňa was reissued as 1 Kč and the 1.20 K, Velehrad became the 2 Kč. Also, the 1 Kč from the Praga 1938 block was now used as a 5 Kč and the 10 Kč Bratislava stamp issued in 1936 was now printed as a 3 Kč stamp. The latter two stamps also got the inscription "1918-1943." Of the Seizinger stamps used for this sheet only the 10 Kč has the secret engraver's marking "s"; this "s" does not appear on the re-engraved 3 Kč stamp in the sheet.

After the war comes Seizinger's "Dutch period. The Dutch printers, Joh Enschede & Sons, Haarlem, contacted the British Control Board and managed to obtain the necessary permits for Seizinger to emigrate to Holland in 1948, where he and his wife lived in Haarlem. A further contract dated March 21, 1952 confirms that his salary will be maintained at 568 guilders a month and he will be further reimbursed 100 guilders for engraving a complete stamp. Apparently he did no work on Dutch stamps, but he did engrave the stamp for the International Congress for Art History, Portugal, issued in 1949. He also did the 1½¢ and 50¢ United Nations stamps of 1951, designed by the Mexican artist Leon Helguera, and of course printed in Haarlem by Enschede. They also printed banknotes for Finland, Syria, Curacao, New Guinea and Indonesia, all engraved by Professor Seizinger. As for Dutch stamps, he did engrave the "Fishmarket at Leyden, 1672," but for some reason Enschede did not submit this sketch to the Dutch Ministry of Posts.

Karl Seizinger retired in 1961 at the age of 72 years. Thereafter his stamps were exhibited at various international stamp shows, such as Barcelona, Vienna, Melbourne, Warsaw, Amsterdam. It was at Amphilex Amsterdam (1977) where the now 88-year-old artisan met with Mr. R. Fisher, Ministry of Posta of Czechoslovakia; this meeting resulted in a visit to Prague and an invitation for him to attend Praha 1978.

Unfortunately, he would not return again to the city where he had been so successful, as he died shortly before Praha 1978, on May 4, 1978. He is buried at the Haarlem cemetery. The CSSR honored Professor Seizinger by issuing a stamp with his portrait on December 18, 1983 (Day of the Postage Stamp) — #2747.

Fortunately, many of his original sketches and drawings as well as die proofs are in private collections, so that many collectors can enjoy the work of this outstanding engraver of postage stamps.

Through the courtesy of member Fred Hefer we illustrate a humorous self-portrait of Professor Seizinger.



## BARDEJOV

In the highlands of Eastern Slovakia in the Šariš district is situated the town of BARDEJOV (Bartfeld); the town is one of the best preserved old towns in Slovakia, situated at 900 feet above sea level and North of the city of Prešov, near the Polish border. BARDEJOV is famous for its modern spa, situated some 6 km to the North of the town. Its origins go back to 1247, and the first baths were built as early as 1505.

The origins of BARDEJOV itself go back to the 9th century and it became a free Royal town in 1376 during the reign of Charles I (IV). The town gives a medieval impression with its almost unspoilt, original architecture. The main cobbled square, which is rectangular in shape, is surrounded by Gothic and Renaissance style buildings.

Still remaining are battlements of the town fortifications dating from the year 1352, when the whole town was fortified. Many gates and bastions with original plastering may still be seen to this day.

At the South side of the main square is situated the huge Gothic Parish Church of Saint Aegidius. It is a real museum with costly 15th and 16th century collections. The building was started in the 14th century and completed in the 15th. Among the most precious features inside are the Gothic aisle altars, the Gothic pews against walls round the Holy of Holies, the tower-like stone pastoforium, the bronze baptismal font, the statue of Saint Aegidius, a rich collection of chalices, exquisite panel paintings, and splendidly colored rosettes.



Burgher houses dating from the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century, with their facades showing high wall signs above their main fronts overlook the main square. Some of the original stucco decorations, frescoes and mural paintings still remain today.

In front of the Town Hall, in the middle of the main square a small cannon has been placed; it came from the ruins of the nearby Zborov castle. In the old Town Hall the museum for the Šariš district is situated, it contains a number of most interesting Icons.

A 50h stamp showing the Bardejov coat of arms was issued in 1969, refer Pofis number 1792.

*NOTE:* For anyone interested in the Icons, refer to the book "ICONS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA" by Heinz Skrobucha; Hamly, this volume shows 60 Icons in various places in Czechoslovakia.



# PERFORATION OF CZECHOSLOVAK POSTAL STAMPS (1918–1939)

*(continued)*

It is generally known that this comb perforation, one of the most common used in the Hradčany issue, especially in the 30 haléfů light reddish violet and dark reddish violet type, is for a collector a hard nut to crack. Usually it is mistaken for scale  $11\frac{1}{2}$  or for combined perforation  $11\frac{3}{4} + 11\frac{1}{2}$ . Collectors also often find stamps marked as  $11\frac{1}{2}:11\frac{3}{4}$  approximately until 1947 (also in foreign catalogs of this era we find the same statements).

In 1937–1947 these perforations were expertly reevaluated by the foremost Czechoslovak philatelists (Hirsch, Kálal, Mrňák and L. Novotný), and because scale  $11\frac{1}{2}$  was nearer to  $11\frac{3}{4}$ , it was agreed that this perforation shall be known as HZ  $11\frac{3}{4}$ . And so in the well known specialized catalog of L. Novotný in 1948 the perforation is so listed and in the listing of the catalog the letter "B" was assigned to it, and it is known by that designation to date.

Because with this designation of the perforation certain problems may arise, let us pay it more attention. Let us take into consideration the results of research gained in reviewing the perforation on a larger block or on an entire sheet. In horizontal direction an individual stamp has 19 perforation openings on a distance of 30.9 millimeters, and in the vertical direction 16 perforation openings on a distance of 25.3 millimeters. In this the distance is measured from the first diagonal line of the perforation holes. From this it can be deducted that the average distance between diagonal lines is in a horizontal direction 1.717 millimeters, and in the vertical direction 1.687 millimeters. Thus in the calculation of the 20 millimeter distance, decisive in fixing the scale of perforation, we gain in a horizontal direction 11.648 and in the vertical 11.855 holes in 20 millimeters. These calculations practically agree in accuracy with the results of direct measurements on the larger part of sheets offered at the Post Office counter. In both instances we are confronted with a relation close to the value of  $11\frac{3}{4}$ — 11.750, less close than the former scale of  $11\frac{1}{2}$ . It only remains to be seen how large is the inaccuracy for holding out for a scale of  $11\frac{3}{4}$ .

If we consider as ideal the perforation  $11\frac{3}{4}$  for the space of 20 millimeters we may consider for the space between two radial lines of perforation openings as 1.702 millimeters. This is in horizontal perforation by 0.015 millimeters shorter and in the vertical position practically of the same space longer in actual measuring of stamp. From these values it results that the ideal scale  $11\frac{3}{4}$  is between the interval of values of realistic perforation with an accuracy of +1%. Therefore we are within rights to use this scale as a universal measurement for the perforation of the mentioned stamps.

From the above it is clear that there will be a definite difference noted in the described perforations in measuring by gauge on which naturally the ideal scale is indicated as  $11\frac{3}{4}$ . In measuring individual stamps we shall, in view of this actuality, observe a relative diminution of the perforation by about 0.3 millimeters horizontally, and a relative increase of approximately 0.2 millimeters in the vertical. In each instance, however, these differences observed on a scale of  $11\frac{3}{4}$  are the smallest; a stamp measured by any other scale will show larger differences. For control we recommend the direct comparison with a current stamp with guaranteed comb perforation of  $11\frac{3}{4}$  (30 Haléfů light reddish violet). Here, with double magnification we compare the stamp with a stamp perforated  $11\frac{3}{4}$ , the horizontal perforation with the horizontal, and the vertical perforation with the vertical from left to right and reverse. It is well to have the comparative material at least in a block of four.

With the issue of Hradčany where the perforation was utilized in six instances the stamps in question are most of the lowest values.

On the illustrations we observe in double magnification samples of measuring horizontal and vertical perforations on the scale  $11\frac{3}{4}$ .



Illustration 50. Scale  $11\frac{3}{4}$  — horizontal position, scale disagrees.



Illustration 51. Scale  $11\frac{1}{2}$  — horizontal position, scale agrees.

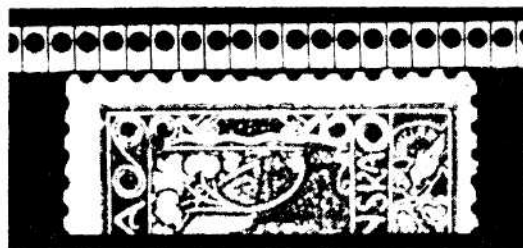


Illustration 52. Scale  $11\frac{3}{4}$  — vertical position, the scale agrees.

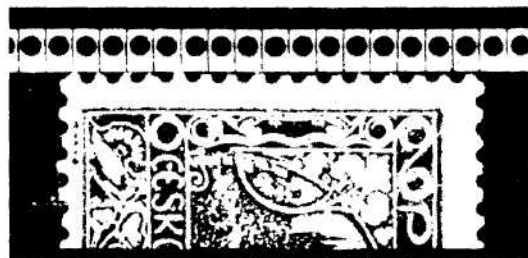


Illustration 53. Scale  $11\frac{1}{2}$  — vertical side, scale does not agree.





Illustration 54. Control comparison of horizontal and vertical sides.  
(HZ 11¾ — two stamps compared.)

In 1920 a new perforation method was introduced, known as HZ 14, for the stamps of smaller format Dove and Liberated Republic. The perforations were used in all values. Only some of the values of the two issues were perforated with the line perforation RZ 13¾ as previously described.

The perforation was accomplished in one operation, in most instances from top down.

After a number of years it was ascertained that this perforation also was applied with some sheets from left to right, so a so-called "horizontal comb" perforation resulted (with two values of Dove, 5h violet and 10h olive, and two values of the Liberated Republic, 40h type I and 60h).

The perforations of these four values are covered in a separate chapter.

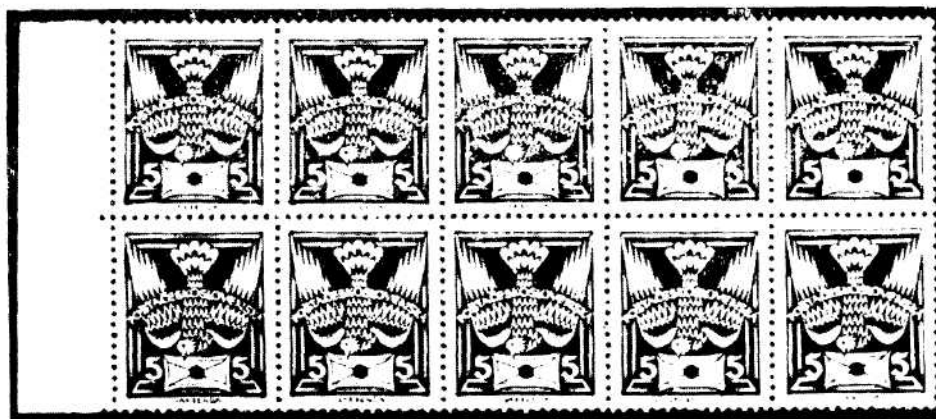


Illustration 55. HZ 14.

It was already mentioned that under "compound perforation" we mean a situation when in one sheet two standard scales of perforations were used: The comb and the line perforations, usually as the result of using two perforating machines. Usually it was with perforation HZ 11¾, when by error a stroke was not made on the last line of perforations. The result was that the last line of the horizontal position was imperforate. At the quality control this omission was detected and the sheets were additionally perforated, in this instance by a line perforator. This occurred in some isolated instances on a few sheets of 30 Haléřů Hradčany, reddish violet. In such manner some collectors gained a few examples of this value with the following perforation: HZ 11¾ + RZ 11½ and HZ 11¾ + RZ 13¾.

It is to be noted that the stamps so perforated (used or mint) belong to an especially valuable collection material.

### 3.3 Dimensions of frame perforations

This method of perforations was used in the period 1918–1939 only in a few instances. First was the production of the "Music sheet" in 1934 when a special perforation was used on the scale 13¾:13 (referred to as RZ 13¾:13). This instance is unique as to arrangement and size.

In this other instances perforation RZ 12½ was employed, and that with the miniature Bratislava 1937, Praga 1938, and the Jubilee miniature of 1938.

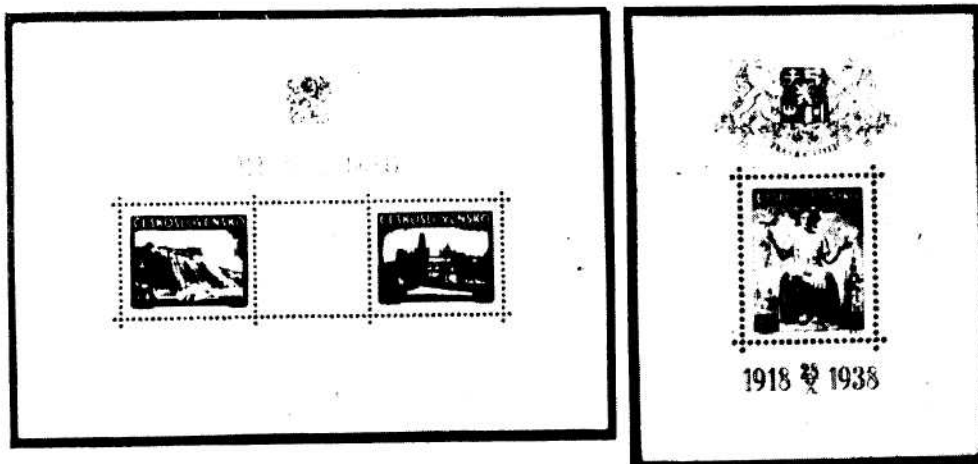


Illustration 57. RZ 12½.

### 3.4 Horizontal comb perforation HZ 14

In the chapter on comb perforation we already mentioned the special so-called horizontal comb perforation size 14, which proceeded in horizontal direction usually from left to right.

In this instance it consisted of arrangements due to the small size of the Dove and the Liberated Republic stamps and had a novel comb perforation plate (see illustration). As is evident in the illustration, the first stroke of the comb perforation plate is on the first vertical line on the left side of the sheet. The stamps are perforated on the first vertical line and on the top and bottom of the edge of stamps in this row. The second stroke perforates the right vertical side of the first row and the top and bottom edge of the second vertical row of stamps. Other strokes follow and finish with the 11th stroke on the end of the sheet to the right.

To be continued

# FIRST SLOVAK STAMP CLUB ORGANIZED IN 1895

By Paul Sturman

Until recently it has been believed that Slovak philatelic clubs began with the formation of the Czechoslovak Republic, and by 1923 formal associations existed in Bratislava, Turčiansky sv. Martin, Košice, Žilina and elsewhere. Prior to 1918, although individual collectors were active throughout the country, philatelic clubs with Slovak as the official language were non-existent, it seemed, due to the oppressive measures of the Hungarian government which frowned upon and often cruelly oppressed any demonstration or expression of Slovak nationalism.

Such belief prevailed until recently when original documents consisting of minutes and other records discovered in the archives of the Lehotský family proved the existence of an association of philatelists in the city of Kremnica (Kremnitz in German, Kőrmöczbánya in Hungarian, with its membership records, by-laws and correspondence written in the Slovak language. The records were examined by Dr. Severin Zrubec of the Philatelic Association in Bratislava and his findings were published in a booklet replete with reproduction of the records and numerous photographs of members and officers of the Kremnica association.

On Saturday, March 30, 1895, just over 90 years ago, the household of Pavel Križko, city archivist, was visited by two of his grandsons, Aurel and Klement Lehotzký, young students who were accustomed to play after school in the garden of Križko, or in case of inclement weather, on the spacious veranda or the living room of his apartment. On this day, while playing in the living room they discovered an Egyptian stamp on the floor evidently dropped out of the album of Križko, who was known as an ardent collector of stamps. An argument followed. Each of the boys claimed the stamp. Finally Križko took part in the argument and gave the boys a long lecture on the stamp, the postal system and the enjoyable hobby of collecting stamps.

The discussion made a lasting impression on the boys, and by early evening they decided to form a philatelic club and begin in earnest to collect stamps. Their uncle supported them in their desire and determination, giving each a blank notebook for the collection and a goodly supply of postally used stamps of the country. The boys, in their enthusiasm, immediately induced their brother Medard to join the club together with their uncles Jaromír and Milutin Križko, and other members of the immediate family. They simply named their club a Stamp association, and among the initial members selected Klement Lehotzký president (predsedník), Aurel Lehotzký secretary (zápisník) and Aurel Lehotzký the third member of a "Directorate." All the others were deemed "members."

It is interesting that in addition to individual collections by members an "official" or "collective" collection was maintained by the association in a blank book into which choice specimens of stamps were pasted by the secretary, by countries. Membership dues were established at 20 used postal stamps per month, and the payment of such dues was carefully recorded in a special book by the secretary. Right at the start Milutin Križko donated one thousand stamps to the club. Jaromír Križko also donated a large number of stamps. Of such donations the largest one made by Drahotína Križkova who gave the club 13,000 used stamps. There is no mistake about the number. It is mentioned several times in the records of the association. The stamps were recorded in the special book by their color rather than by denomination. Such gifts were an indication that stamp collecting was widespread in the area, though the collectors were not formally organized into clubs. There were several associations in the city, such as a skating club, sharpshooters' association, glee club, association of Kremnica housewives, alliance of mining engineers and miners, etc. All of these associations were maintained by the German and Magyar majorities, the Slovaks constituting a despised minority.

The Stamp association gained considerable wealth in donations and "dues." The stamps were carefully appraised; defective stamps in the collective collection were replaced by fairer specimens. The surplus was packaged into packets of 25, 50 and 100 stamps and offered for sale or exchange to collectors in the city and elsewhere.

Correspondence was maintained in Budapest, Vienna and as far as Oslo, Norway. Stamps were appraised according to price lists issued by Budapest collectors and dealers. At the beginning stamps of Austria-Hungary were collected mostly. Later stamps from nearly every country in the world were regularly traded.

In the second year of its existence the association received as gift a book entitled "Album," the second edition of a universal album issued by Sigmund Reach of Praha.

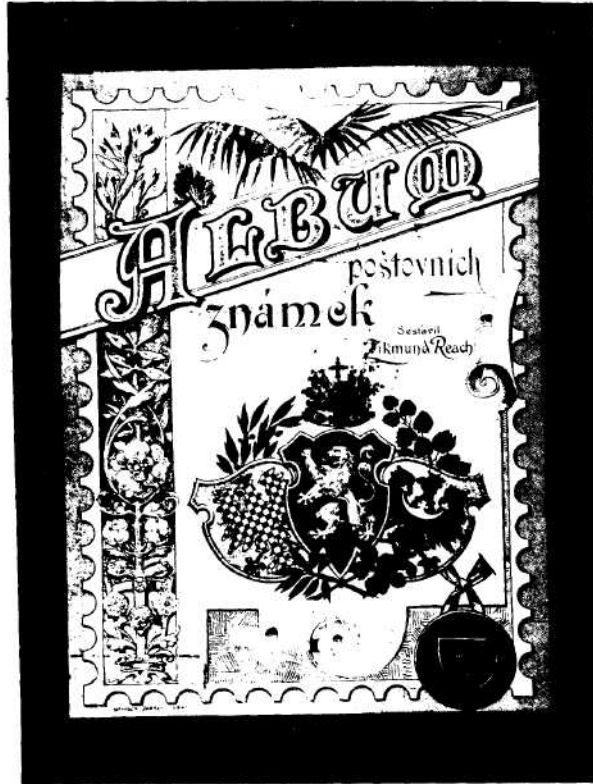


Photo courtesy of member Mirko Vondra.

The name made such a good impression on members of the association that they decided to name their group the Album Society of stamp collectors, later changed to simply "Club Album."

It is to be noted that at the founding Aurel Lehotzký was 13 years old, Medard 11 and Klemont 10, but they acted as adults as recorded in the minutes of the Club and history of the Club. The periodical "Osveta" was published regularly by the secretary in typewritten form, as the secretary owned the only typewriter among association members. Reportedly, the periodical as the only copy was circulated among members on request, but traces of a violet carbon can be discerned on some of the issues indicating at least some copies were made.

In 1896, according to the minutes of the association, it owned a total of 17,340 stamps from over the world. In the common album there were a total of 515 stamps, a year later 548 choice stamps. Later the additions were less numerous as local supplies were exhausted as to variety, and additions were made by purchase.

Within one year from its founding members of the club, eight in number, considered it meaningful to have a set of by-laws for the government of the club. Such by-laws were written in 1897 by the Secretary, Aurel Lehotzký. Individual paragraphs dealt with acceptance of new members, their duties and privileges, payment of dues in stamps, the method of preserving and recording the stamps and their disposal in case of dissolution of the association.

V. 5 (opraveno z mared)


1. Čl. 1. se opravuje do podoby po 188
2. Přijímá se zpráva o činnosti za rok 1899
3. Čl. 1. se opravuje do podoby po 188

VI. 5. Opraveno z mared.

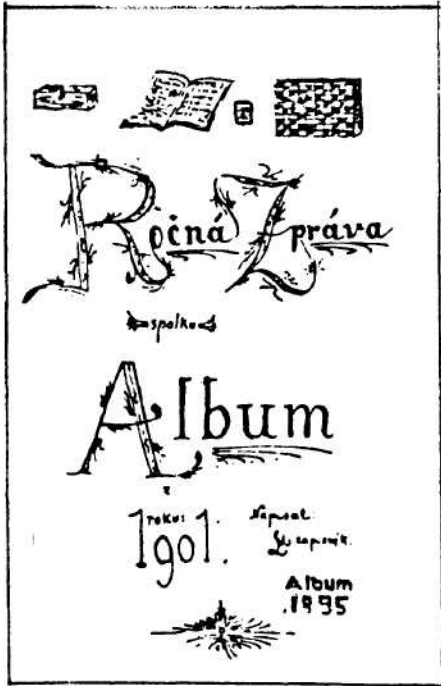
1. Zpráva o činnosti za rok 1899, s. 188 a 189.
2. K této zprávě přiložená zpráva o činnosti.
3. K této zprávě přiložená zpráva o činnosti, popřímo a podrobně.

Učineno dne 7. května 1899. Vlastní úřední zpráva o činnosti.

*Janek A. ...* *Janek A. ...*  
*Janek A. ...* *Janek A. ...*



Final page of by-laws signed by members of the Board of Directors and witnessed by members



Title page (reduced 1/3) Annual Report for 1901

*Čl. 1. ...*

Práše o vstupu do společnosti, aby se stal členem a zaplatil 10 Kč roční příspěvek a 5 Kč vstupní příspěvek.

*Janek A. ...*

Application for membership

By 1902 the association had 24 members and at its annual session Drahotína Kardoššova was designated as founding member for donating 13,000 stamps to the club. At that time its secretary, Medard Lehotzký, always of delicate health, contracted paralysis and was unable to attend to all his duties as secretary. None of the other members was deemed well enough versed in all details of secretaryship to be considered as his successor. Activities of the association became less frequent until 1904 when the association ceased to exist according to memoirs of Aurel Lehotzký, transferred to Marmarošská Slatina as a mining engineer. Most of the other members moved to other locations or married and settled in another city. The secretary died and with him the motivating spirit of the club.

It may be interesting to note that 11 of the 24 members were women, and one was elected president of the association. Of all members only Aurel Lehotzký, the first secretary, stayed active in philately until his death in 1943.

The association used several "seals" for identification. One was a silhouette of three flying swallows encircled by dots. It identified all documents. "Album" was a seal engraved on wood and used as a heading for minutes and reports from 1900 to 1902. Also a seal "Album 1895" was used to identify official correspondence, and a seal of capital "A" for all archival material.

Under the influence of the founder, archivist Pavel Križko, punctual and accurate evidence was kept of all activities, donations, purchases, moneys, correspondence and membership. Meetings were held with all formalities duly observed. Absent members were required to give a written explanation for their non-attendance. Voting was by ballot and absent members were represented by written proxy. Votes were counted and recorded by a special committee.

Judging by today's conditions the association in its common album had most of the initial issues of countries. At the dissolution of the association members received packets of stamps as their share of proceeds but the fate of the common album remains a mystery. Packets of stamps presumably given at the time of dissolution were found in the family archives of several members.

Despite the fact the association was of local significance only, it established a number of firsts. It treated juveniles as equal to adult members. It was the first known stamp club in Slovakia with Slovak as the official language, significant for the era of forceful magyarization in town and country. It specified dues to be paid in collectible stamps, and many other innovations in philately. In addition to collecting stamps the association was also instrumental in arranging musicals, theatrical performances, educational sessions in the home of Pavel Križko, and merits a place of honor among pioneers of Slovak patriotism in the era of suppression and persecution.

Of historical interest . . .

The city of Kremnica, since becoming a free royal city by a royal patent in 1328, was continually a scene of important historical events. Its rich gold and silver mines were an early inducement for the establishment of a mint, and its products; the Kremnica ducats of fine gold became standard in the realm. During Turkish wars in the sixteenth century it was besieged several times by the Turks, but never conquered. In their disappointment for not gaining such a rich prize the Turks sacked nearby defenseless villages, taking the inhabitants as slaves. During the Kuruc or malcontents wars under Thököly, Bocskay, Berhlen and Rákóczy, the city became the financial and war supplies center for the insurgents. Later it was taken by imperial forces. Several emperors in succession visited the city, with the burghers going out of their way to entertain royalty. Several fires and an earthquake took their toll.

A separate chapter should be devoted to the educational system in Kremnica. In the 17th century it was well known for the excellence of its teachers employing the Comenius method of instructions, and books written by him.

The cleavage between the burgher and the miners began early. The wealthier burghers, mostly Germans and Magyars, dwelt in the fortified center of the town, while the miners were slowly but steadily pushed into the suburbs and surrounding villages, despite all their efforts to gain parity with the wealthier and more influential burghers.



In the 18th century Kremnica became a station on the postal line of Bratislava-Hlohovec-Banská Bystrica-Ružomberok-Košice. During 1861-1872 a railroad line was built between Zvolen and Vrútky, adding to the importance of Kremnica, and the founding of several industrial establishments. There were numerous associations and clubs for the Germans and Magyars. The Slovak element had to be satisfied with an association of craftsmen for the education of apprentices in the industries, organized by Pavel Križko and Lutheran chaplain František Šujanský. The "Catholic Craft Guild" in addition to Magyar and German plays also presented a number of plays in Slovak. Younger members of the Album Club were accomplished musicians and gave numerous concerts in the spacious home of Pavel Križko.

For 40 years Dr. Gustáv Kazimír Zechenter-Laskomerský was the city's official physician. He authored numerous books and humorous stories. Historian and archivist Pavel Križko (1841-1902) spent his entire life in fruitful endeavors in Kremnica. Ján Levoslav Bella made his residence in Kremnica from 1861 to 1881 as a musician and composer of note. Bella, hailing from Liptovský sv. Mikuláš, composed the first Slovak opera "Blacksmith Wieland" in Kremnica. Another noted musician, Rudolph Orságh, composed the first children's opera in the city. The first serious collector and writer of Slovak folklore and poetry, Ľudmila Lehotská (1862-1946) lived in Kremnica. Later numerous writers, composers and historians lived and worked in the town. Kremnica is the seat of the state mint, and its fine gold ducats made it famous throughout Europe. There are numerous museums in town in historical buildings to attest to its greatness and historical importance.

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### FROM THE EDITOR . . .

Some additional notes:

Another Monografie volume has been completed and is now in proof form. It will cover these issues: air mail, postage dues, newspaper stamps and special delivery stamps. There will be over 2700 illustrations, and the book will be on sale shortly after the first of the year. An absolute date is not yet known, but we will inform the membership as more details become available. The editor saw the proofs and it is indeed an impressive work which will be of much interest to our specialists.

Still another Monografie volume is now in preparation, covering the "S O" issues. Perhaps we shall see this volume in late 1986 or early 1987.

And, finally, some more good news: the Padelky book on forgeries is being revised and is scheduled for release prior to PRAG 88. Of great importance is the decision to have English and German text added. What a boon to the collector not proficient in Czech language!

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