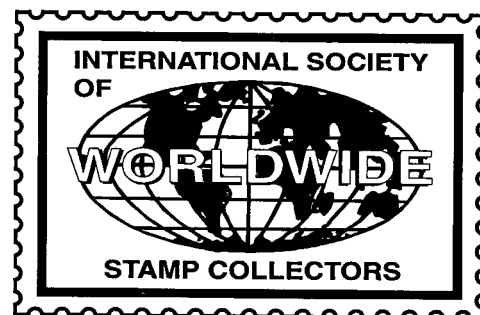


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March/April 2005 • Volume 23 No. 2

The Official Journal of the International Society of Worldwide Stamp Collectors

President's Column

by Randy Smith (#1111)
ISWSC President

I am pleased to report that at least three individuals have stepped forward and expressed an interest in the Executive Director position. As I write this column, the ISWSC Board is discussing the process they will use to select the next director. As our next issue will be our roster issue, I am hopeful that I'll be able to announce our new director in the July / August edition!

While the Executive Director position is a big one to fill, it is by no means the only one which needs a volunteer. More than a year after being required by term limits to officially step down as the Vice President for Public Relations, Tom Fortunato (#379) continues to oversee the duties of this office while a successor is sought. Responsibilities of this position include promoting the ISWSC, assisting the Regional Representatives in their work to promote the ISWSC around the world, and securing an Election Chair each time an election is held. Anyone interested in serving in this role for the next year should contact me as soon as possible.

Elsewhere in this newsletter, you'll also find more opportunities to serve the ISWSC and your fellow members. New volunteers are needed in a number of positions, as most of the current volunteers have served the maximum number of terms allowed by our bylaws.

Finally, a thank you to all who included a comment or question on the ballot postcard. Your comments have been read and will be discussed by the Board in an upcoming meeting. Comments, questions and/or suggestions are always welcome from any ISWSC member!

Happy Stamping!



Election Results Announced

The results of the ISWSC elections are in! Congratulations to Ken Wills (#2150) and Duncan Koller (#2154) who were elected to serve as directors on the ISWSC Board for the next two years. A total of 141 ISWSC members participated in the election. The final vote totals are as follows:

Duncan Koller	114
Ken Wills	107

David Paul (#59), Louis Lussier (#2439), and Chuck Wilkie (#2236) each received one write-in vote.

Despite an error on the ballot (the words "For President:" inadvertently appeared above the candidates names), the election results will stand. The ISWSC Board discussed the error and decided that since the accompanying article correctly identified the positions being voted on and the race was uncontested, no new election was necessary.

Thank you to all who voted and to Duncan and Ken for their willingness to serve on the Board. Another big thank you to Craig Grothaus (#2344) who served as election chairperson!



ISWSC Roster Issue

The next edition of The Circuit will be our roster issue. If you have recently moved, please contact Executive Director, Tony Zollo (#856) to ensure your correct address is listed. Any member preferring not to be listed in the roster issue should also contact Tony. A regular news-filled issue of The Circuit will appear in July.

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terrynjim@enter.net

OMNI CIRCUIT

Manager: Jim Millette (#1314)
8901 Marcel Cadieux (#207)
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CANADA
jmillett@globetrotter.net

Co-Manager: David Paul (#59)
2 Heritage Drive
Belchertown, MA 01007 – USA

Co-Manager: Thomas Pomaski (#410)
8195 National Drive
Melbourne, FL 32940
stamper10@earthlink.net

Co-Manager: Dale E. Harris, MD
212 Schofield,
Reedsport, OR 97467-1366,
harrisda@ohsu.edu

*Phone or send your
questions to the
appropriate volunteer.
Please include a
self-addressed stamped
envelope or IRC for a
reply.*

SWAP CIRCUIT

Coordinator: Randy Smith (#1111)
P.O. Box 21115
Eagan, MN 55121-0115 – USA
rasmory4@earthlink.net

Large I Circuit:

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jseidl@mindspring.com

Large III Circuit:

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Lawton, OK 73505
jmmcarthur@earthlink.net

Small/Definitive Circuit:

Kenneth Wills (#2150)
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Grapevine, TX 76051 – USA
wills@airmail.net

CTO Circuit and Super Circuit:

William Silvester (#1058)
378C Cotlow Road
Victoria, BC V9C 2G1 – CANADA
wgsilvester@shaw.ca

USA Circuit:

Andrew Titley (#2366)
3334 Long Beach Rd. #149
Oceanside, NY 11572-5049
info@albionstamps.com

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*Represent the ISWSC, distribute stamps to
youth programs in their region.*

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ahorwedel@hotmail.com

**DEADLINE
FOR THE
NEXT ISSUE:**

MAY 20, 2005

*Please remember that the Editor does not mail
out The Circuit. If you have any questions about
your Circuit mail service, please contact Randy
Smith, Tom Fortunato or Tony Zollo. Thank you!*

Old Friends and Stamp Collecting

Everyone Was a Beginner at One Time

by Joseph Palko (#421)

Recently, on my College Alumni email network, a college classmate put out a notice that he had inherited a small stamp collection from his parents. He had just started to gain an interest in stamp collecting, and, as a beginner, he was looking for other classmates who were collectors and would be willing to talk with him.

Three of us responded. Of course, this resulted in a flurry of email traffic. Dan and I had not seen each other since graduation, 40 years ago. By coincidence, he lived about 40 miles away, but we had not visited each other, either. I was able to tell him about the ISWSC, get him on a few local mailing lists, advise him about the local clubs and the local dealers. Even though our ages are the same, our collecting experience differs by over 50 years. I've been a collector since I was eight years old, and a member of three local clubs for over 25 years.

Another coincidence was that one of the local dealers was having a show in the near future. Via email and phone, Dan and I agreed to meet at the show. On the appointed day, we met, sat down over coffee and talked over old times. We really spent more time talking about college days than we did about stamp collecting! It was a great reunion and we are planning to go to another show in the future. We were both wondering why it took us so long to get together, since we lived so relatively close to each other!

Let's hear your stamp story! Members are encouraged to submit short articles relaying interesting encounters, how they got started in stamp collecting, or any other philatelic memory. For more information, contact Randy Smith, President, or Jennifer Arnold, Editor.

Members are encouraged to submit short articles relaying interesting encounters, how they got started in stamp collecting, or any other philatelic memory.

Dues/Advertising Policy

Dues Information:

Single/Dealer/Club membership: \$12.00*

Youth membership (under 18): \$10.00*

Family membership (up to 4 persons in one residence): \$19.00*

*Plus 250 large commemoratives for the Youth Program or equiv. donation in US\$. Dues above are for one year and include six newsletters per year. You may sign up for three years at a time. For an application or further information send SASE or IRC to: ISWSC, P.O. Box 150407, Lufkin TX 75915-0407, USA. There will be a \$2 per year discount if the renewal is received at least one month prior to the current expiration date.

Advertising Policy:

For reasons of accountability, only members of the ISWSC, APS or ASDA may place ads. All ads dealing with philatelic concerns are acceptable. We reserve the right to edit out objectionable language. Advertisers are expected to respond to all inquiries, so be sure you can handle the responses before you offer to trade, buy or sell. If you have a bad result from answering an ad, contact the Editor. We will try to resolve the conflict.

Display Rates (Camera Ready*) per insertion:

Full page: \$75.00

Half page: \$40.00

Quarter page: \$20.00

Per column inch: \$5.00

Six repeat insertions of the same ad for the cost of five ads (one free). We will also offer a two-sided insertion for \$125 per issue.

*Camera Ready means ready to paste up or scan and print. Reductions and typesetting extra.

Classified Rates per insertion:

First 30 words, including name, address, and ZIP code are \$3. Additional words are 20 for \$1.

NOTE: State abbreviations = one word; "P.O. Box 1234" = two words; ZIP code = one word.

Make all checks payable to ISWSC in U.S. funds. Send text and payment for ads to the Editor. All addresses can be found on page 2.



Swap Circuit Manager(s) Sought

by Randy Smith (#1111)
ISWSC President

Ken Wills (#2150), after four and a half years of managing the Small/Definitive circuit, and William Silvester (#1058), after three years of managing two circuits, have both decided it is time to hand the tongs, stamps and glassines to other volunteers.

On behalf of all the Swap Circuit participants, thank you to Ken for his years of service and to Bill for managing two circuits for so long (and for agreeing to stay on as manager of the CTO circuit!). During the transition to new managers, Ken will continue to send out Small/Definitive circuits and I will send out Super circuits.

The circuit managers are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the swap circuit. Typical management tasks include:

- Producing circuit routing sheets
- Creating stamp packets
- Maintaining records of circuit participants
- Tracking late/lost circuits

- Responding to miscellaneous correspondence
- Providing feedback and suggestions to the Swap Circuit Coordinator

Access to a computer with word processing is essential and e-mail capability is extremely beneficial. Spreadsheet and/or database software would also be helpful, but is not mandatory. Operating expenses incurred by the manager are reimbursable and circuit managers are exempt from swap circuit fees.

If you would like to be considered for a manager position, or if you have questions about the positions, please contact me via mail at:

PO Box 21115

Eagan, MN 55121-0115

Or via e-mail at: rasmay4@earthlink.net.

Please include a brief description about yourself, including the number of years you have collected stamps, your collecting interests and why you would like to be considered for the position.



Call for Nominations

by Randy Smith (#1111)
ISWSC President

We may have just wrapped up our 2004 elections, but it is already time to ask for nominations for positions to be elected at the end of this year! Nominees are needed for the following Board positions:

PRESIDENT

This person presides at all meetings of the ISWSC and its Board. He/she performs all duties incident to the office as described by Robert's Rules of Order and recommends such action as he/she believes will increase the effectiveness of the organization.

SECRETARY

This person keeps a permanent record of all society Board of Director proceedings, including Board meetings and votes. The Secretary also attests to all legal documents of the Society and performs other duties are requested by the Board and/or the Executive Director.

VICE-PRESIDENT FOR

PUBLIC RELATIONS

This person performs duties with respect to promoting the ISWSC, monitors and assists the ISWSC Regional Representatives, and is responsible for securing an Elections Chairman.

VICE-PRESIDENT FOR CHARITABLE PROGRAMS

This person serves as Chairperson of the Youth Program and assumes other responsibilities as assigned by the Board. This person also serves in place of the President, should the President be absent or unable to serve.

Elections for these two-year positions will be held in November 2005. To express your interest in a position (or to obtain more information), please contact Randy Smith (#1111), ISWSC President, or Tony Zollo (#856), ISWSC Executive Director (see page 2 for contact information).

Nominations must be received by September 1, 2005.

*Nominations must
be received by
September 1, 2005.*





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3M: Make the Most of Your Membership

by Randy Smith (#1111)
ISWSC President

Yes, 3M may also be that large corporation that had its start in Minnesota, but in this case, it's a reminder to get the most out of your ISWSC membership by participating in all the programs it offers. The ISWSC has a variety of programs designed to help you put more stamps in your collection. In this edition of the newsletter, I'll highlight the Swap Circuit — one of the easiest and cheapest ways to convert your quality duplicates into stamps that you want to place in your collection.

Here's how the program works. Participants are grouped into a 4 or 5 member circuit. The first member of the group is sent a routing sheet (containing the names and addresses of the other members of the circuit and the manager who creates the circuits) and a packet of all different stamps. The first member selects the stamps he/she wants, then replaces them with an equal number of quality all different stamps. The routing sheet and the stamp packet is then mailed to the next member of the circuit.

The process continues until the last member receives the packet and makes his/her swaps. Then

the packet is mailed back to the manager of the circuit, along with mint postage for sending out the next circuit. The manager then changes the order of the members, creates a new packet of stamps, and sends it back out to the participants. Once all members of the circuit have been in each position on the circuit (from first to last), a new circuit is formed with a new grouping of participants.

There are five circuit types to select from: Large, Small/Definitive, CTO, Super, and USA.

- The **Large circuits** consist of 100 stamps that are considered "large" in size — more than 1" x 1½" (approximately) in size. Because the Large circuits are the most popular, participants are broken into three groups, each with its own manager.
- The **Small/Definitive circuits** contains 100-150 stamps that are smaller than 1" x 1½" in size or that are definitives (of any size).
- **CTO, or Cancelled To Order, circuits** contain 100 stamps and are the only circuit where CTO stamps can be traded.
- The **Super circuits** are the same as the Large circuits, however each stamp packet contains 200 stamps instead of 100.
- Finally, the **USA circuit** contains nothing but USA stamps (100 per packet). Stamps in all circuits types must be off paper, but they may be mint or used, hinged or unhinged.

In order for the program to operate, annual fees are charged to Swap Circuit participants. (The term "fee" is used to distinguish them from the separate dues charged annually to be an ISWSC member. ISWSC membership is required to participate in any ISWSC program.) Except for the programs' annual fees, no cash is needed — for each stamp you select, you simply replace it with another stamp, without regard to the catalog value! In order to maintain the quality of the program, members are, however, encouraged to only swap desirable stamps — common and damaged stamps are not allowed.

Now is the perfect time to join the Swap Circuit program! To join, complete the form accompanying this article (page 7) and mail it with your fees to the address on the form. If you would like more information prior to joining the program, please contact Randy Smith (postal and e-mail addresses are listed on page 2).

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ISWSC SWAP CIRCUIT MEMBERSHIP FORM

To join the ISWSC Swap Circuit program, please complete this form and return it with Randy Smith
your fees to: P.O. Box 21115
Eagan, MN 55121

Member #:		PLEASE PRINT	USA
-----------	--	---------------------	-----

Member #:		PLEASE PRINT	Eagan, MN 55121 USA
Name:			
Mailing Address:			
	<i>If this is a new address, please check here:</i> <input type="checkbox"/>		
E-Mail:			
Collecting Interests:			

	# CIRCUITS REQUESTED ¹		AMOUNT ENCLOSED	
	USA/CANADA MEMBERSHIP	INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP	STAMPS	MONEY ²
1) MONETARY FEE <i>U.S. \$2.00 (or equivalent in mint stamps)</i>				
2) STAMP FEE	<i>Please specify quantity of circuits requested</i>			
LARGE CIRCUITS <i>The fee for up to 4 Large Circuits is 100 large stamps or \$5.00. The fee for up to 9 Large Circuits is 200 large stamps or \$10.00.</i>				
SMALL/DEFINITIVE CIRCUITS <i>The fee for up to 4 Small/Def. Circuits is 100 small stamps or \$5.00. The fee for up to 9 Small Circuits is 200 small stamps or \$10.00.</i>				
CANCELLED TO ORDER (CTO) CIRCUITS <i>The fee for up to 4 CTO Circuits is 100 CTO stamps or \$5.00. (4 circuit maximum.)</i>				
SUPER CIRCUITS <i>The fee for up to 4 Super Circuits is 200 large stamps or \$10.00. The fee for up to 9 Super Circuits is 400 large stamps or \$20.00.</i>				
USA CIRCUITS (USA stamps only.) <i>The fee for up to 4 USA Circuits is 100 USA stamps or \$5.00. (4 circuit maximum.)</i>				
Totals:				

¹ This is the number of circuits (per type) you want to be on at the same time. USA/Canada circuits take approximately 1 month to circulate. International circuits take approximately 1½ months to circulate.

² Checks must be in U.S. funds and should be made payable to ISWSC. Cash is sent at your own risk.

Overpayment of fees, if any, should be (check one): ☐ Donated to ISWSC ☐ Returned

**Questions? Write to the address above or send an e-mail to rasmmary4@earthlink.net.
THANK YOU!!**

Message to All ISWSC Members

by Tom Fortunato (#379)

ISWSC Vice President for Public Relations

Washington 2006 is America's once-a-decade international philatelic exhibition, being held May 27-June 3 in Washington, DC. It's the Super Bowl of the stamp world, with hundreds of millions of dollars worth of philatelic material on display in competitive exhibits and at dealer tables for sale to an eager collectors. You can visit the website at: www.washington-2006.org.

Attendance over the 8 day show is expected to be around 100,000. This is obviously a great opportunity to promote specialty societies, including the ISWSC. It is also a good time to schedule a meeting for ISWSC members to gather.

A section on the exhibition floor will be set aside for a maximum of 100 groups to promote their interests and recruit new members. ISWSC officers

are looking into the possibility of signing up for one of these tables, which costs \$250. Another collecting group, the Cover Collectors Circuit Club (<http://www.geocities.com/coverccc/>) has asked to join us in splitting the table expense and responsibility to man the table. A representative from either group must be present at all times, roughly 10 AM to 6 PM, daily.

For all of this to happen, we need volunteers. While it's a bit early to know for sure a specific schedule, we want to get a rough idea of how many members plan to attend and can donate a few hours to the effort. Please contact Tom Fortunato at stampmf@frontienet.net by email or at 28 Amberwood Pl, Rochester, NY 14626 if you can help out. You'll be contacted closer to show time asking for specific dates and times available.



PIPEX 2005

by Shar Wilkey

PIPEX 2005 Publicity Coordinator

PIPEx 2005 is set to take place in Portland, Oregon on May 27, 28 & 29. The annual Pacific International Philatelic Exhibition sponsored by The Northwest Federation of Stamp Clubs is hosted by The Oregon Stamp Society this year. The location is the Monarch Hotel Conference Center, at 12566 SE 93rd Ave., Clackamas, OR 97015, just off I-205 near Clackamas Town Center Mall.

This is a Champion of Champions Show. There will be over 200 Frames of Exhibits showing stamps and Postal History designed to inspire better, more interesting collections of the future. Typical displays will include stamps and covers from around the world, often showing rare or seldom seen issues.

Even if you don't collect stamps, the displays are well worth a visit. Entrance is free, parking is free, bring the family, free stamps for the kids as well,

The U.S. Post Office will be present on Friday from 10 to 4 and Saturday from 10 until 2. The Special Show Cancel was designed by Doc Nichols. Cacheted covers, featuring Lewis & Clark, the Corps of Discovery will be available all three days.

Meetings scheduled during the show: Northwest Federation of Stamp Clubs annual meeting American Air Mail Society, Northwest Chapter meeting and program Canal Zone Study Group meeting / program Universal Ship Cancel Society board meeting / general meeting & program Auxiliary Markings Club meeting / program Military Postal History Society

meeting / program American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors meeting

Seminars, sponsored by the Northwest Philatelic Library: Stamp Estates, their care and disposal Tony Wawrukeiwicz on single-frame exhibiting Beginner Stamp Collecting for adult / youth with Carol Edholm There will be 25 dealers at the bourse with a variety of philatelic wares.

In attendance: Bob Burger Stamps, D.K. Enterprises, Emerald Stamps, Fairwinds, Gary Hoecker, Gutter Pairs, Etc., Jim Hall Stamps, Jim Taff, Mammoth Stamps, Michael Jaffe, Rainy Day Stamps & Covers, Ray Coughlin, RG Stamps, Richard Thomas Philatelics, Robert Beall, Rogue Valley Philatelics, Sherry Staley, Stamp Art, Stamp Center of Texas, Terry Ferguson Stamps, The Stamp House, Unique Estate Appraisals, Wayne Holmes Philatelics, Weinstock Stamps & Covers, and William T. McGreer.

The Youth Stamp Collectors tables will be a busy place with free stamps for youngsters. They have information for educators on using stamps in class projects as well. Tours to the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Oregon City are scheduled for non collectors needing a break. The Monarch Hotel has a special rate for 3rd and 4th night stay. Call 800-492-8700.

A prospectus for exhibitors is available from Tony Wawrukeiwicz at 503-244-8223 or e-mail tonywaw@spiritone.com. Show contact: Len Lukens, phone 503-254-8303 e-mail: llukens@easystreet.com.



Plebiscites of Post WWI Germany: Silesia

by Erik Tomsen (#2356)

Currently a member of the ISWSC, Erik also served as president of the Junior Philatelists of America (JPA). This series of articles first appeared in The Philatelic Observer, newsletter of the JPA. Reprinted with permission.

Silesia is a region in east central Europe, following the course of the upper Odor River to its headwaters in the Krkono'e Mountains (German Riesenebirge which translates to Giants, Mountains in English), which act as a link between the eastern Alps and the western Carpathians (two of the main mountain ranges in Europe). Silesia is generally an agricultural area with mixed forested lowlands that are drained by the Odor River and its tributaries. In the southeast Silesia there are large mineral deposits of coal, lignite, zinc, lead, iron, and other ores.

Because of its high productivity and prime central location, Silesia has always been a region in heated dispute. It has been ruled by three of the greatest Empires of central Europe and has names to reflect its long diverse history. Given by each ruling power in their own native language, the three names for Silesia are: Slezsko in Czech, Schlesien in German, and Slask in Polish.

The first people to inhabit the Silesia came during the Stone Age. They settled in the river valleys and traded amber, flint, and metals throughout eastern Europe. A number of finds have been made to validate the existence of these prehistoric people. The Silingers, a Vandal tribe of Germanic people, arrived around the time of Christ. These people gave the region its name.

The Silingers were pagans who believed the mountain they called Zobten (which is located southeast of Breslau) was one of the holy places. During the great migrations of the 5th century the Silingers moved west. A few remained, giving places names that still survive today.

Slavic peoples began to arrive in Silesia around 500 A.D. inhabiting the under-populated areas. The Czech and Polish rulers both sought to rule the productive region. In 990, Mieski I, the Prince of Poland, obtained the area and by the 11th century Silesia had become an integral part of Poland. Around 1135, King Boleslaus III divided Poland into four duchies, of which Silesia was one, for each of his sons. In 1163, the region was divided into Lower Silesia (the northwestern part) and Upper Silesia (the southeastern part). [This naming process is common throughout much of northern Europe in which the mountains or highlands lie to the south and the rivers flow north to the lowlands by the Baltic Sea.]

Throughout the years, Silesia continued to break down, eventually constituting a number of minor principalities. The Piast dynasty (a ruling family line in Central Europe) came in control of Silesia in the 1100s. They separated Silesia from the Polish crown and sought greater connections with western Europe. In order to fully develop and settle their lands the Silesian Piasts called for immigrations from the west. The greatest number of these settlers came from central Germany and brought a Germanic influence to the area. They increased the regions agricultural productivity and developed the coal mining and textile manufacturing industries. Towns began to spring up as trading centers, which had a predominantly German character.

In 1335, Silesia became part of the Bohemian monarchy, which was then part of the Holy Roman Empire. In 1526, all of Silesia, along with the rest of Bohemia,

Upper
Silesian
Coat of
Arms



Lower
Silesian
Coat of
Arms



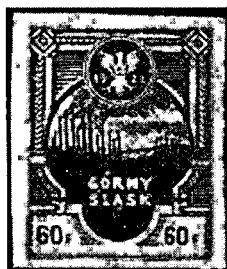
This map shows the various towns and cities in Silesia. In regular letters are the Polish names and in italics are the German names.

Continued on next page

Silesia

Continued from page 9

passed to the House of Hapsburg, the rulers of Austrian Empire. Under the Hapsburg Empire Germanization increased and ties with Poland were loosened. During the Reformation (c. 1535) Silesia became an almost entirely Protestant region. It rebelled against the Catholic Hapsburgs in the Thirty Years War (a war between Protestants and Catholics which raged across Europe from 1618 to 1648). This time brought a



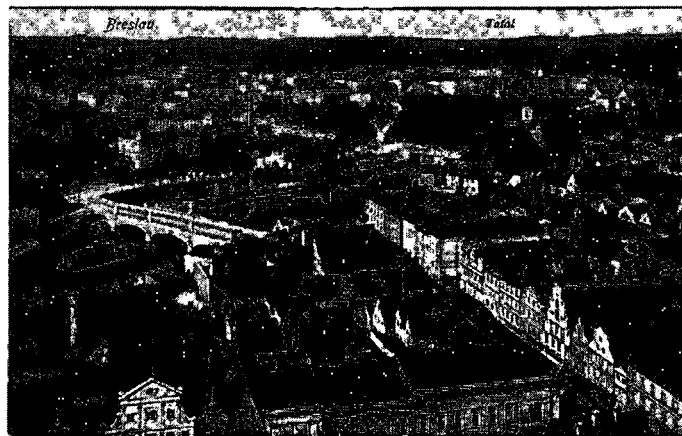
A privately issued stamp not recognized by the Inter-Allied

Commission of Government so could not be used for valid postage.

great deal of misery and suffering to the people of Silesia who passed under successive Saxon, imperial, and Swedish occupation. After the Peace of Westphalia, which brought an end to the war in 1648, Silesia was reverted back to the Hapsburg crown. The Counter Reformation, which sought to bring the converted Protestants back to Catholicism, made great progress in Silesia with the help of the Hapsburgs. Lutheranism was still tolerated in the cities such as Breslau. By the 18th century the development of the mining and textile industries made Silesia the richest of the Hapsburg provinces.

Upon the death of Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI in 1740, a dispute arose as to whom was to inherit the Hapsburg crown. Maria Theresa, the rightful heir to the crown (being the daughter of the deceased ruler), was forced to fight a number of related wars in order to prove her claim. These wars, which lasted from 1740-1748, were collectively known as the War of the Austrian Succession. The first of which occurred on December 16, 1740 when Ferdinand II of Prussia invaded Silesia. At the battle of Mollwitz in April 1741 the fate of the province was decided with the defeat of the Austrian Army. In 1742, with the signing of the Treaty of Berlin, Maria Theresa ceded all of Silesia, except Teschen and what is now Czech Silesia, to Prussia.

The defeat of the Hapsburgs became widely known and sparked numerous conflicts in which other European powers sought to obtain pieces of the Hapsburg Empire. After a series of victories the Austrians thought themselves prepared to fight Prussia in order to bring Silesia back to Hapsburg rule. The Second Silesian War began in 1744 and was concluded by the Treaty of Dresden the following year. Prussia remained in firm control of the province.



This postcard shows the city of Breslau (Polish Wroc'aw), the largest city in Silesia.

Protestants across Silesia welcomed the Prussian rule, as it no longer meant they were subject to a Catholic dynasty. The Prussians also brought about a more efficient administration. A great deal of focus was paid to economic development of the region during the Industrial Revolution between the 18th and 19th centuries. Coal mining and textile weaving developed rapidly, placing Silesia as the second most important industrial area in the German Empire, which Prussia had joined in 1871.

Ethnic tensions rose as the upper and middle classes were predominantly German, whereas a high percentage of the workers were Polish. The Germans resided in the towns, while the Poles lived in the agricultural areas working as farmers, miners, and laborers



in industry. "Though these conditions were gradually improved, Silesia even in the 20th century remained, despite its great productivity, a relatively backward area."¹

After Germany's defeat in WWI and the creation of the new Polish nation, conflicting claims were set forth as to whom Silesia was to belong. The Austrian districts, which the Hapsburgs had been allowed to retain after the Silesian Wars, were given to Poland and Czechoslovakia. The bulk of Upper Silesia, which had a mixed population of Poles and Germans, was in dispute. The Treaty of Versailles called for a Plebiscite (vote) to be held so that the people could decide for themselves which nationality they wished to become.

In the mean-time, before the vote was to be held two sets of stamps specifically designed for the region were issued. These stamps were inscribed in three languages: German, Polish, and French (French is the international diplomatic language). The first set was issued on February 20, 1920. A number of these stamps were overprinted "Plebiscite" or surcharged with



Stamp issued on March 26, 1920 overprinted "Plebiscite 20 Mars (March) 1920" in red.

inscription "C.G.H.S." These were only used for official use. In total 98 stamps were issued for the region of Silesia during the interim period from February 1920 to March 1922.

On March 20, 1921 the Plebiscite was held. 1,185,000 voters turned out to decide the fate of their beloved homeland. Just under 60% of the voters (706,000 people) chose the course of reunion with Germany. The other 40% (682,000 people) wished to join Poland. When the votes were broken down into communes (small geographic areas, similar to voting districts), the numbers were even closer. Of the 1,474 communes in Silesia, 792 had voted German, while 682 had voted Polish. The Inter-Allied Commission who ran the Plebiscite now had a dilemma on their hands. Would they give all of Silesia back to Germany when such a great number of voters had voted to become Polish?

The situation worsened in May 1921 when the Silesian Poles staged an armed uprising demanding that they be allowed to join Poland. On October 20, 1921 the Allied Powers finally made their decision, giving the southeastern portion of Upper Silesia to Poland, while allowing Germany to retain the rest. This southeastern portion was where the Poles held a majority of the vote. It was also the most economically productive area. Three quarters of Silesian coal was produced in the southeast portion, which also held two thirds of the regions steelworks.

When Adolph Hitler and the Nazi Party came to

different values. To go along with these, the Inter-Allied Commission overprinted German stamps in two methods: one a circular blue Handstamp, the other with the printed

power in Germany in 1933, they sought to bring back all the people of "Germany Blood" to their new Third Reich. A vast number of these people lived in Poland, which had only twenty years before been provinces of German Prussia. Hitler invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, followed by the Russian dictator Joseph Stalin, who was at that time an ally of Hitler. Poland was divided in two. The western half (the areas which were once Prussian provinces) went to Germany, and the eastern half to the USSR. Silesia was now completely under German control.

During the war, many Silesian Poles were killed or deported by the Nazis. New German settlers filled in the area. When the war turned on the Nazis in the winter of 1942, Silesia was faced with a Russian Army that was steadily moving back toward their territory. In 1945 Silesia was overrun by Soviet troops.

Following the war, the Treaty of Potsdam was signed, returning nearly all of Silesia to Poland. (Germany was allowed to keep a small section of Lusatia, which was incorporated into the state of Saxony, and Czechoslovakia was returned its piece around Teschen.) In order to avoid an ethnic crisis, such as that which occurred after WWI, the Allies forcibly expelled the (majority) German population. While being forced to relocate to East and West Germany, the German population faced numerous atrocities committed by the Russians who held a great deal of spite and anger against them following the war.

In all, more than three million Germans were forced to leave Silesia between 1945 and 1950. Poles repopulated the area and rebuilt the industries that had been severely damaged during the war. A large ethnic German minority still remains in Polish Silesia today (between 600,000 and 800,000 people). The total population numbers nearly 10 million citizens.

¹ *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*. 2002



Stamps showing the traditional dress of the region of Silesia.



Polish stamp overprinted S.O. for Silesia Occidental, to promote the area's union with Poland.



This 5 Pfennig stamp was one of the first issued by the region of Upper Silesia in February 1920. The region was preparing to conduct a Plebiscite – the stamp is printed in German, Polish, and French.



This German official stamp was overprinted C.G.H.S. for use in Upper Silesia. The overprint is inverted, which is common for many Silesian stamps due to the urgency of their printing.



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by Everett King (#1389)

ISWSC Auction Manager

Auction 28 closed on January 2, 2005. All bids arrived before the closing except one which was postmarked in December and arrived over a week after closing.

This was a very successful auction with 51 bidders competing for 100 lots. There were 404 individual bids. Of the 100 lots, 81 lots sold, 4 were withdrawn, and 15 lots remained unsold.

Anyone having lots they wish to enter into the next auction have time to get them mailed to me. Very large or bulky lots maybe held by the owner to save shipping costs. Please fully describe your lots and it possible use the entry forms available from me by mail, email or at <http://www.whitethorn.com> under the auction section of my web site. Forms are also available from the ISWSC web site.



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