

BULLETIN
OF THE
ROSSICA SOCIETY OF RUSSIAN PHILATELY

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This issue is a bit later than we wanted but a lot of time and effort was spent helping the Rossica Journal editor prepare the issue of the Rossica Journal which will compete next year at AMERIPEX '86. Any comments, notes or information for this bulletin should be sent to George Shalimoff, 20 Westgate Drive San Francisco, California 94127.

Sale of the Norman D. Epstein Collection

Rossica treasurer Norman Epstein surprised us all with the announcement that much of his lifelong collection of Russia was consigned for auction by Harpers of New York Inc. The first sale was held on October 15 and 16, 1985 covering the period 1857-1913. Nearly 600 lots were offered. The prices realized announcement indicated a gross of over \$214,000 even though nearly one third of the lots were not indicated on the realization sheet. Apparently these lots were either withdrawn, received no bids or did not meet a reserve which was indicated in the conditions of sale. Nevertheless, the catalog can be described as an Imperial Russia collector's wish book. There were many full-size or enlarged illustrations including two spectacular full color pages of outstanding lots.

The sale began with the embossed Tiflis 1857 local, the stamp that preceded the first Russian adhesive stamp. Described as the best known copy, ex- Stibbe, Faberge, Baughman, this classic was knocked down at \$9500. Essays, proofs and trial bi-color proofs of Russia No. 1 hovered around the \$2000-2500 range. Although a VF unused No. 1 was not listed in the prices realized, another unused copy with a thin spot and fine appearance brought \$600. A spectacular pair of No. 1's used in Poland reached \$2200 and another pair with Kazan town cancel reached \$1500. A superb No. 1 on cover with dotted oval "9" sold for \$1450. An unused No. 2 brought \$700 against a catalog value of \$1500.

A beautiful cover with a pair of the gray blue 5 kopek St. Petersburg-Moscow local used in Moscow was sold for \$6250. There was an extraordinary selection of catalog varieties such as imperfs, inverted backgrounds and centers. Some highlights included an imperf pair of the 2 kop. 1883-88 issue, cataloging at \$800 and sold for \$700., an imperf 7 kop. on cover went for \$1150 and a used 14 kop. with inverted center sold for \$2600 against a catalog of \$6000. Two lots of the 14 kop. bisect with red "7" surcharge, one on cover and the other on piece with the stamps cataloging at \$22,000, were not included in the prices realized.

In the 1889-92 issue, the 2 kop. with inverted background catalog \$7500 sold for \$3500 and the 14 kop. with inverted center hit \$2000 with a \$4500 catalog value. The 1902-05 magnificent showpiece of a pair of 14 kop. stamps one without a center was knocked down for \$800 versus a \$1500 catalog.

The highest single lot indicated in the prices realized was for a block of the 1902-05 7 ruble on vertically laid paper with inverted centers and large margin selvedge. This block ex- Baughman and King Farouk sold for \$12,500 against a catalog of \$16,000! A used single copy with inverted center reached \$3500.

It was quite obvious that condition was utmost in buyers minds. In nearly all cases

stamps in exceptional condition brought top dollar. As condition declined so did the bids. Each issue was represented with a fine selection of essays, proofs or color trial proofs which were lotted separately. Hopefully many of the successful bids went to the same buyer so as to keep these fine accumulations intact.

Part II of this sale starting with the Romanov issues through the Soviet period is slated for March 1986 and the final sale of the back-of-the-book material, offices and collateral material is scheduled for October 1986. Although Rossica members received complimentary copies of the catalog, the fine Harmers catalog at \$5.00 per sale with prices realized is a good addition to one's library.

Rossica at AMERIPEX '86 in Rosemont, Illinois



AMERIPEX '86 will take place May 22-June 1, at the O'Hare Exposition Center, in the Chicago suburb of Rosemont, Ill.

Rossica Society will meet at AMERIPEX on Sunday May 25, 1986 from 1 to 2:45 PM in Room Continental A of the Hyatt Regency O'Hare Hotel. This is on the main level of that hotel, not far from the O'Hare Exposition Convention Center where the international exhibition and public programs will be held. An agenda and program will be announced later in our next bulletin promised prior to that exhibition.

In addition, Rossica Society will share a booth on the exhibition floor with the Polonius Society. We will try to have it staffed during the exhibition and it should be a focal point for members and friends to meet and get acquainted. Although President Torrey will be busy judging the exhibits, other society officers will be attending and will be happy to greet other Rossica members and friends. Hopefully Chicago area members will help act as hosts at the show for the rest of us philatelic tourists.

There doesn't seem to be any particular deals with regards to accommodations. Visitors are advised to check with their travel agents early.

Soviet Catalog - A Best Seller

In our last bulletin we mentioned the possibility of obtaining the latest 2 volume Soviet stamp catalog. An overwhelming 21 orders were received. Pres. Gordon Torrey exhausted the supply of his foreign book dealer but we were still short. Then member David Canter of Chicago offered to try to get additional copies during his visit to Moscow earlier this year. And he got them! With David's help we were able to fill every order. It took some time and for awhile it looked bleak, but with patience, cooperation and some good luck, the project succeeded. Many thanks to Gordon Torrey and David Canter.

When It Is Time To Sell

Selling a stamp collection can be a traumatic experience for many. We all know that a specialized collection made up of rare and expensive stamps and covers that was assembled over a period of years usually from auction can be offered at auction again. But the general collection of stamps made by those who simply like to fill their album spaces is a more difficult matter. I'm sure many of you have been asked by friends how they can dispose of such collections, oftentimes inherited collections. It is very difficult to advise in these cases and we ask here that perhaps there are members who can pass along useful suggestions. Many Rossica members are stamp dealers who have dealt with such matters and we invite them to pass along their experiences and suggestions in selling this type of collection. This information would be useful to include here in the bulletin.

1985 Medal Winners

Once again, we list Rossica members who have been successful in competition. And once again we apologize if names have been omitted. We search for these in the philatelic press, usually by topic, so it is easy to overlook others. In addition, very little is ever reported of winners located outside the USA. Nevertheless, your efforts are well appreciated.

COLOPEX '85 Columbus, Ohio

- G. Adolph Ackerman : Soviet Air Mail - The Early Years (Vermeil and Columbus Philatelic Club First award).
: The Russian Arctic (Vermeil, Amer. Phil. Soc. 1900-1940 award, Amer. Soc. Polar Phil. best arctic award, Anita Horn plaque for best thematic and C.P.C First award).

MARCH PARK Cleveland, Ohio

- Rosylyn Winard : U.S. Beer Stamps 1866-1947 (Vermeil).

ARIPEX '85 Tuscon, Arizona

- John M. Hotchner : Stamp Separation: Its Development from 1840 to Modern Times (Gold plus Amer. Phil. Soc. research award).

ROPEX - 85 Rochester, New York

- John M. Hotchner : as above (Gold plus Errors Freaks and Oddities Collectors Club award).

SPRINGPEX '85 Springfield, Virginia

- George B. Shaw : Soviet Advertising/Propaganda Cards 1927-1934 (Silver plus U.S. Postal Stationery Society certificate).

ISRAPHIL Tel Aviv, Israel

- James Mazepa : Kingdom of Poland 1858-1870 (Gold with special prize).
: Poland: Airpost of 1939 (Gold).
J. Kuderewicz : Postal History of Poland XVIII and IX Centuries (Large vermeil).

NAPEX '85 Arlington, Virginia

- George B. Shaw : Russian Inflation 1917-1923 (Vermeil).
Valentine Zabijaka : Ukrainian International (Silver-bronze).

LOUISPEX '85 Louisville, Kentucky

- G. Adolph Ackerman : Russian Arctic (Topical Grand Award).

BALPEX '85 Baltimore, Maryland

- G. Torrey : Hejaz - Nejd - Saudia Arabia (Honor Class Gold).
J. M. Hotchner : Stamp Separations (Gold + Balpex Research Award).
M. Cerini : Russian Revenue Stamps - Imperial To Soviet (Vermeil + American Revenue Association Silver).
R. & A. Winard : U.S. Beer Stamps 1866-1942 (Vermeil + A.R.A. Silver).
G. Adolph Ackerman : The Soviet Arctic (Silver).
W. T. Shinn, Jr. : Soviet Propaganda Postcards (1926-1934) (Silver Bronze).

ARIPEX '85 Dayton, Ohio

- G. Adolph Ackerman : The Russian Arctic (Vermeil + Amer. Topical Ass. award)

Medal Winners (continued)

MIDAPHIL '85 Kansas City, Missouri

John M. Hotchner : Literature "Stamp Club Idea Trading Post" (Gold)
: Literature "The Philatelic Philosopher" (Vermeil)
: Literature "Errors, Freaks & Oddities" (Silver)

Congratulations to all winners. May the success of these exhibitors encourage others to exhibit their collections as well.

Worthwhile Articles

The following articles have appeared in "The American Philatelist", the journal of the American Philatelic Society, which may be of interest to Rossica members.

"German-Austrian Postal Union - Accounting of Prussian Closed Mail" by Allan Radin,
Part I, International Letters, February 1984.
Part II, Transit Letters, January 1985.

"Letter From Archangel, Russia 1918-1919" by David F. Westrate, January 1985.

"The American Expeditionary Force in Siberia" by William Moskoff, February 1985.

"Stamps of Central Lithuania and Their Forgeries" by Stanley Kronenberg, June 1985.

"On Service in Russia (YMCA)" by Roy E. Goodman, August 1985.

Rossica Members in the News

Polish expert and exhibitor Dr. James Mazepa of Illinois was elected Vice President of the Polonius Philatelic Society for 1985-1986.

Mr. Clyde North of Charlottesville, Virginia whose personal card states "Retired, No Business, No Clock, No Worries" is a collector of Russia and USSR for several years and new to Rossica. He writes that in his area of Virginia there aren't too many collectors sharing his interest. So he has begun a one man campaign to spread the faith with slide shows and lecture programs for his local stamp club. That's the way to go.

J. Lee Shneidman of New York recently shared his philatelic experiences in the Soviet Union with readers of Linn's Stamp news. He found that stamp collecting is thriving in the USSR, but it was a disappointment to find foreigners are excluded from participation.

John M. Hotchner writes in his prize winning column "Philatelic Philosopher" in Linn's Stamp News about the joy of finally winning a gold medal in a national level exhibition. It took nine years and a lot of help and advice along the way. He acknowledged by name no less than 87 individuals and organizations that helped him. Mr. Hotchner was also on the judges panel for NAPEX '85.

Joining the ranks of columnists is Mike Renfro of California. His column appears on a semi-regular basis in the newspaper "Stamp Collector" under the heading "Russian Pochta", introducing readers to a variety of information on Russian and Soviet philately.

The Rev. Leonard Tann treated readers of Linn's Stamp News to a two part article on cancellations of the Trans-Siberian Railway which featured several nice illustrations from his Romanov collection.

William Moskoff, another recent Rossica member, is a professor of economics at Lake Forest College in Illinois. His recent article on the American Expeditionary Forces in Siberia mentioned above was based on a study of history of the 1918-1920 period. He succinctly summarized the civil war period, its turmoil and confusion among the numerous factions, and the allied intervention, especially the American involvement. It would be nice to see this developed into an article for Rossica Journal readers.

President Gordon Torrey found himself in Austin, Texas this spring to serve as a judge at Texpex-Auspex '85 and later in June to serve as vice president and co-chairman of the prestigious NAPEX '85 in Arlington, Virginia.

A non-philatelic award but just as newsworthy was the Muhlmann Prize of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific for "excellence in astronomical research carried out at the Mauna Kea Observatories in Hawaii" awarded to member Dr. Dale P. Cruickshank. Perhaps we should appoint Dr. Cruickshank the society's resident astronomer and direct all space and astronomy-on-stamps questions to him. Congratulations!

Pen Pal

Rossica has received a note from the weekly newspaper Stamp Collector by a Soviet collector who would like to correspond and trade. The note was written in very good English and goes as follows: Dear Sir! I'm 37 years old, an engineer. Very interested in correspondence and exchange of stamps in the beautiful country U.S.A. I'm interested in new USA stamps and the themes Ships, Sea Explorers, Polar Expeditions, Geography, Fauna. Yours sincerely, Mr. Arcady Norinski, Box 266, 196070 Leningrad, USSR.

Perhaps some Rossica members would be interested in writing to him. The society reminds all that such contacts are strictly between the individuals. We also remind members that there exists some stamp trading restrictions in the USSR with foreigners, but that one can still have oftentimes interesting correspondence.

The CTO Anamoly

In the last issue of the bulletin we asked you to check your CTO copies of the 1981 Soviet 50 kop. souvenir sheet (Scott #4905) commemorating the 26th Party Congress. On many CTO copies with the printed cancel MOSKVA 16.02.81, you will see that the gold printing of the sheet in on top of the printed CTO cancel, clearly indicating that the application of the CTO marking is part of the initial printing process and that in this case it was out of phase since even CTO markings are expected to be on top of the design and not beneath it. The CTO date on this sheet, incidentally, corresponds to the first day of issue as well.

Dues

Once again, members are reminded that dues are for the calendar year January 1 to December 31. Please use the form below to remit your dues to the treasurer.

1986 Rossica Society Dues Renewal

Due January 1986

Your Name.....

Send your remittance for \$20 payable to the Rossica Society and this form to the treasurer:

Your Address.....

Mr. Norman Epstein
33 Crooke Avenue
Brooklyn, New York, 11226 USA

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Has Anyone Seen ...?

Under this heading in the last bulletin, we asked if anyone has seen broken letters on the 1927 "8 KOP." Soviet overprints and whether such broken letters were constant flaws or chance occurrences. Well, they are usually chance occurrences caused by the overprint made atop some of the circles of perforations that were on the surface of the sheets when the overprinting was done. See your Rossica Journal No. 106/107 for a review of these issues.

Zemstvos and the S.S.S.S.

Patrick Campbell of Canada correctly points out that this writer erred in the last bulletin when I wrote that in the 1890's the S.S.S.S. (Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps) blackblotted the Russian Zemstvo stamps. He provided xerox copies of all that society's condemnations published in Gibbon's Monthly Journal 1894-1899. Although the S.S.S.S. disliked local issues in many instances, it did not condemn the Zemstvo stamps. In a discussion of the S.S.S.S. the Gibbon's editor found that the Zemstvo stamps indeed did serve a valid postal service and that the local authorities were not excessive or abusive in their issuance policies, the usual argument for black blots.

Apparently the editor of the Australian journal where this writer first saw mention of the S.S.S.S. let his antipathy for local issues spread beyond the bounds of even the S.S.S.S. I apologize for the error in the last bulletin. It is nice to know that someone in Rossica Society can get his hands on the basic source information when needed. The Eagle Eye award goes to Patrick Campbell.

Study Groups

Some members have indicated an interest in starting study groups in their particular areas of interest. They invite other Rossica members to contact them if they would like to participate. A study group allows a more direct exchange of information where the collective efforts of several people with their material can perhaps help unravel some questions that are more difficult for the individual collector to do alone. The high quality xerox duplication that is now available makes it easy to send copies of material to study without having to risk the loss of originals in the mails or the expense of insuring mail. In fact, xerox copies with their higher contrast usually show details better than photographs and are often better suited for publication purposes. Rossica encourages such groups and would be pleased to publish any of the group's findings.

G. Adolph Ackerman, 629 Sanbridge Circle East, Worthington, Ohio 43085 would like to hear from any interested in early Soviet airmail postal history.

Alexander Safonoff, P.O. Box 1267, San Jose, California 95108 would like to hear from anyone interested in the plate flaws found on Imperial Russia issues.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

MERRY CHRISTMAS HAPPY NEW YEAR

PEACE