

ALFONS STACH: WWII ERA CZECH STAMP DEALER

Synopsis

Importance: Alfons Stach was a significant dealer of Czechoslovak material, from his initial dealership in Prague to his subsequent emigration to the United States in 1938. He remained an active U.S. dealer until 1983. Stach was a/the preeminent Czechoslovak dealer in the United States. He died in 1984.

Treatment: Exhibit is organized in chronological order. The Prologue shows two items from Stach's time as a dealer in Prague. The middle 14 frames present Stach WWII era related material (1938 to 1946). The Epilogue very briefly sums up his post-WWII dealing and death.

Knowledge/Research: Postage rate details are broken down for each cover. This involves knowing/understanding United States, U.S. APO, British, and Czechoslovak rate tables.

It was only recently (about three years ago) that I learned of the difficulties and specific details of Stach being able to export (1938) his dealer stock to the U.S. See Herst reference.

Rarity/Challenge: There is nothing of substantial/significant rarity and/or monetary value in the exhibit, although most items are scarce, interesting, and very seldom seen.

The significant challenge in developing this exhibit was locating material related to a specific individual during a span of less than a decade occurring more than 80 years ago. Finding material involved searching through,

literally, many thousands of covers with remote prospect of finding a Stach related item. The material exhibited has been accumulated over a 25+ year period. A couple of the items were obtained during multiple trips (2002-2012) to Prague, visiting local dealers and bourses.

Items of special interest:

- a) Stach's 1939 and 1941 catalogs. These are the only copies of these I have seen.
- b) The overprint Czech souvenir sheet from the New York World Fair (July, 1939). These are seldom seen used on cover.
- c) Cover sent (April, 1940) to Stach from occupied Czechoslovakia (Bohemia & Moravia; Böhmen und Mähren).
- d) Cover sent (December, 1943) to Stach from Great Britain.
- e) An early example (November, 1945) of post-WWII resumption of airmail service to Czechoslovakia is shown. Wawrukiewicz identifies airmail resumption starting in April, 1946. This cover predates that by 5-6 months.
- f) A cover sent (August, 1946) to Stach from the Brno 1946 stamp show, the first post-WWII national Czech stamp exhibition.

Condition: Condition is excellent.

References

- Wawrukiewicz, Anthony S. and Beecher, Henry W. *U.S. International Postal Rates, 1872-1996*. Cama Publishing Company, 1996.
- "Czechout", April, 1983. pp. 41-2. Czech foreign postage rates. Publication of Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of Great Britain.
- Herst, Herman, Jr. *Nassau Street*. Amos Press, Inc. 1988. Chapter 11, pp. 105-6.

ALFONS STACH: WWII ERA CZECH STAMP DEALER

This single-frame exhibit presents World War II era material related to Alfons Stach. Stach was a prominent stamp dealer in Prague (Praha) who emigrated to the United States shortly before (in mid-1938) WWII started and continued his stamp business in the United States. Stach's New York City stamp shop was initially located at 116 Nassau St., later moving to 99 Nassau St. In philatelic history and legend, Nassau St. at this time was a street famous for being the home of many dozens of stamp dealers.

For the purposes of this exhibit, "WWII Era" is defined as June, 1938 (from the Praha 1938 FIP international stamp show, 26 June-4 July, the last major Czechoslovak show before the war started) through August, 1946 (until the Brno 1946, 3-15 August, the first significant Czechoslovak national stamp show after the war ended).

Material is presented in chronological order.

Scans of cover backs are shown reduced, generally at 60%.

Translations are shown in Helvetica type.

Postage rates are detailed. 100 heller (h) = 1 koruna (K, Kč, or Kčs)

Information of special interest is shown in **Bold Blue** text.

PROLOGUE

Stach's retail shop in Praha was located at Národní 30 (Palais Chicago), Praha II. This was in one of the myriad of labyrinthine passageways extending off of Wenceslas Square, the main shopping district in central Praha. There is still (as of 2012) at least one stamp shop in the Palais Chicago section of passageways.



Stach advertising in selvedge (tabs or coupons) of Czechoslovak postage stamps.

Auction House
Postage Stamps
ALFONS STACH
PRAHA II.,
Národní 30
(Palais Chicago)



Postmark date (18 December 1935) was the day Edvard Beneš became Czech President, replacing T.G. Masaryk who had resigned (14 December 1935). The bottom text on the postmark reads: Election of President of the Republic

At the time Stach wanted to emigrate to New York, export of his dealer stock to the United States was virtually impossible due to Czech regulations. Stach had met Herman Herst, (a prominent American stamp dealer, philatelic author, and raconteur) during Herst's philatelic journey to Europe in 1937. Stach and Herst conducted several philatelic transactions and established a friendship. In early 1938, unknown to Herst, Stach convinced Czech authorities he had sold his entire inventory to Herst and was permitted to ship his holdings to Herst in New York. Sometime later, Stach arrived unannounced in New York to reclaim his stock. **Without this ruse, Stach would have been unable to export his inventory to America and reestablish his philatelic dealership in New York.**

(See *Nassau Street*, by Herman Herst, Jr., 1988, Chapter 11 for detailed explanation.)