

The 1966 Polish Millennium Stamp

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SYNOPSIS

PURPOSE

Written specifically for inclusion in the May issue of *The American Philatelist* which was a themed issue of the journal focusing on the sixties. The intent of the article is two-fold. First, to provide a thorough examination of the commemorative stamp, from idea to issue. Second, and in my opinion more importantly, to illustrate the opportunities that exist for philatelic research even when one considers a “new” commemorative stamp from the 1960’s.

SIGNIFICANCE

The article was written to appeal to a wide philatelic audience. Although “just” a mid-sixties commemorative this is, in my opinion a very important stamp. Too frequently I believe new or less experienced collectors think it is impossible for them to contribute anything significant to philately unless they are able to study or write about the classics. This article is intended also to document some of the important controversies relating to the stamp. There was political intrigue, when the Communist Polish Government objected to the design of the stamp, and at home many people simply objected to a stamp of “religious” nature. Finally, there were many Religious institutions that issued their first, and in many cases only, first day covers for this stamp. These FDCs were collected by many non-stamp collectors who were more interested in the commemoration of the event, rendering some of these covers scarce. This article documents many of those.

RESEARCH

All available or known resources regarding the stamp were reviewed including official postal notices and announcements to incorporate the postal aspects of the story. The most significant research undertaken in writing this article was completed by myself at the National Postal Museum Library. Here I was able to review the 1966 Polish Millennium stamp files of the Third Assistant Postmaster General. In these files I was able to review a great deal of primary source information including communication between postal officials and politicians, and communication received by (and replies from) the Postmaster General and citizens advocating for the issue of a Millennium stamp.

TREATMENT

Treatment met the guidelines of the editor(s) of the publication. Credit to Susanna Mills from *The American Philatelist* for pre-publication editing and design suggestions. Philatelic illustrations are covers from the authors collection. The first part of the article discusses at length the intense lobbying effort on behalf of the stamp. Next is a review of the design including several never before seen essays from the files of the Third Assistant Postmaster General. Finally, are illustrations of some of the scarcer first day covers created for this issue.

POSTSCRIPT

Following publication of this article the author has received significant positive feedback from several collectors relatively new to the hobby. They all expressed that they had no idea that this much information could still be undiscovered about so recent a stamp issue.

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