

THE MURDER OF LIDICE

Synopsis

Display Division

StampShow 2011

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Treatment & Importance

Treatment: Since this is the telling of an historical event, the exhibit is presented in chronological order, ending in 1945. A couple of postwar philatelic items are included because they amplify and add detail to the telling of the story.

The exhibit ends in 1945 to coincide with the end of the war. The postwar commemoration of Lidice is told in a separate, stand-alone exhibit, *Lidice Remembered*. The *Epilogue* section does summarize and conclude the Lidice story.

Importance: Lidice's destruction is the WWII event of most significance to Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic. **Lidice is to Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic what Pearl Harbor is to the United States.** At the invitation of the Lidice Museum, an agency of the Czech government, an expanded version of the exhibit was shown in the Museum Art Gallery in Lidice as part of the 65th anniversary in 2007. A return invitation has been extended for the 70th anniversary in 2012. Czechoslovakia issued more stamps for Lidice than for any other WWII event. The Czech Republic postal service recently announced the issuing of a Lidice stamp in 2012.

The destruction of Lidice was perhaps unique among Nazi atrocities in that it was actually publicized when it occurred. A formal news release was issued announcing what had been done (see poster in *Reprisal* section). As a result, reaction around the world was immediate and wide spread (see *Wartime Recognition* section).

All directly relevant philatelic items available to collectors are shown. The only significant item(s) not shown is/are postal history from the women and/or children while in concentration camps. There are no known examples in collector hands; all recorded examples are in Czech museums or still in the possession of the families.

Much of the significant material shown, both philatelic and collateral, was obtained as a direct result of exhibitor's close personal relationship with individuals in Lidice and the Czech Republic. Several items are the only ones known in collector hands. **Replication of exhibit is, therefore, virtually impossible.**

Knowledge, Study, & Research

Key philatelic items shown include pre-WWII Lidice postal history, the Heydrich Block and related Death-mask issue material, and post-destruction commemorative items. Comprehensive showings of all are exhibited.

Exhibitor is actively updating a census of the Heydrich Block, initially compiled early- to mid-1980's by the Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren Study Group in Germany. **Increased recorded copies from 70 to 131.**

Since the widespread showing of this exhibit and exhibitor's census articles (*The Czechoslovak Specialist*, *Germany Postal Specialist*), the **Scott catalog listing for the Heydrich Block has been corrected** to indicate it was presented to those attending Heydrich's first death anniversary ceremony in Prague rather than to those attending his funeral. Correction first appeared 2007 edition.

Specific research/study efforts include:

- a) In-person interviews with two Lidice survivors' daughters.
- b) In-person interviews with docents and two Directors from Lidice Museum.
- c) Lidice Museum and Archives.
- d) In-person interviews with noted Czech historical tour guide.
- e) Conversations with deputy curator of Czech Army Museum.
- f) Personal trips (10) to Lidice/Prague (since 2002).
- g) American Philatelic Research Library (APRL).
- h) U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum library/archives.
- i) American Sokol Headquarters, Chicago.
- j) National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library, Cedar Rapids, IA.
- k) Extensive correspondence with Czech teacher/historian/philatelist.
- l) Czech National Library.

Much of the information presented represents the first merging of Lidice philatelic and historical research.

Challenge/Difficulty & Rarity

Challenge/Difficulty of Acquisition: The challenge/difficulty of acquisition for the material represented is significant and substantial. Except for the common Deathmask stamp and some of the WWII patriotic covers, seeing even one or two relevant items at a major show/bourse is unusual. **Several items shown are the only known examples in collector hands.**

Because Lidice was totally destroyed in June, 1942, pre-war Lidice material is extremely scarce. In 15+ years of intensive searching, including 10 trips to Lidice/Prague, exhibitor has seen **perhaps a dozen pre-1942 Lidice postal history items** available to collectors. **Six are included in this exhibit**; most not shown are duplicates of ones included in the exhibit (some duplicates are in exhibitor's collection).

After the war, most owners destroyed Heydrich/Nazi/SS items, fearing possession would be considered evidence of Nazi party membership and/or sympathy with Nazi policies. Acquisition of significant collateral, and some philatelic, material is therefore very difficult.

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New Additions

- a) **1939 Bohemia and Moravia cover sent from Lidice.** This is the only Protektorat postal history item to/ from Lidice seen by exhibitor.
- b) **Dorothy Knapp signed patriotic cover.**
- c) **Kuratorium cover.** The Kuratorium was a Hitler Youth-type organization instituted by Heydrich for Czechs.
- d) **1917 church postcard sent by priest who was still the Lidice priest executed in 1942**

Items of Exceptional Significance or Rarity

- a) **Auschwitz Death Notice**, only Lidice women/children concentration camp item known to be in collector hands.
- b) **Heydrich Block**, with envelope.
- c) **Deathmask Presentation Booklet** (only 25 copies printed). Exhibitor has seen only one other copy.
- d) **Lidice resident WWII civilian identification booklet**, only example known to be in collector hands.
- e) **Lidice postmark postcards**, Austro-Hungarian Empire (1903 & 1916).
- f) **Lidice postmark postcard** sent by Lidice woman (1936); same woman whose Death Notice from Auschwitz is exhibited.
- g) **Lidice postmark postcard (1896)** sent from St. Martin's Church.
- h) **Cover (1922)** sent from **Lidice City Hall**.
- i) **Cover to Jan Sonnevend**, executed Church official, while in Gestapo custody.
- j) **SS Memorial Book for Heydrich**. This is the **collateral equivalent of the philatelic Heydrich Block**. Exhibitor has seen only one other copy (in Czech Army Museum). See exhibit description for detailed explanation.

Other Notable Exhibit Content

- a) **All cataloged Heydrich Memory Cards (Gedenkblätter) with varieties, plus 1 discovery.**
- b) **All Deathmask issue plate/printing flaws, including use on cover.**
- c) **Deathmask issue postal history:**
 - 1) **Early use**
 - 2) **First day use**
 - 3) **Last day use**
 - 4) **Late use**
- c) **Two Czech WWII era newspapers showing correct newspaper stamp use.** Surviving usage on entire newspapers is **rare**.
- d) **Prague SS fieldpost cover w/letter** referencing curfew following Heydrich attack.
- e) **Color postcard** sent from Berlin by **conscripted Czech worker** referencing Heydrich's funeral.
- f) Items e through h in previous section show **complete progression of pre-war Lidice postmarks**.
- g) **First edition** of Edna St. Vincent Millay's 1942 poem, *The Murder of Lidice*.
- a) **2007 Czech souvenir sheet and postmark** commemorating this exhibit being shown in Lidice.
- b) **Certified copy of 1800s Lidice baptismal certificate with Bohemia and Moravia revenue stamp.**
- j) **Heydrich calling card.**
- k) **German newspaper announcing finding of 13 Lidice children.**
- l) **1942 (pre-destruction) Lidice soccer club stickpin (1 of 7 recorded)**
- m) **Czech translation** of Millay's *The Murder of Lidice*. Only copy seen by exhibitor.
- n) **Driver's license for Kladno man** who was a Gestapo driver during the Lidice destruction.

References

Philatelic

Protektorat Cechy A Morava, 2000 Pofis specialized catalog for Böhmen und Mähren. pp. 36-37. Czech. Currently out-of-print. (Deathmask issue)

Die Sonderausgabe zum 1. Todestag Heydrichs. Arbeitsgemeinschaft Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren, Germany. Monograph. German. (Heydrich Block, Presentation Booklet, Gedenkblätter)*

Sherman, Lawrence. United States Patriotic Envelopes of World War II. 2006.

Historical

After the Battle, Number 24, 1979; magazine. Perhaps the best, relatively brief (38 pages) historical account of event. pp. 1-37. Many "then and now" illustrations.*

Reinhard Heydrich Assassination!, Cowdery & Vodenka, 1994. Extensively illustrated, 110 page soft cover book.*

*Exhibitor has donated these items to APRL.