

SYNOPSIS

POLISH-AMERICANS CELEBRATE THE QUINCENTENNIAL OF KOPERNIK

Overview: 1973 saw the 500th anniversary of the birth of Mikolaj Kopernik (Latin: Nicolaus Copernicus), the great Polish mathematician and astronomer. A US commemorative stamp was issued for the quincentennial. This exhibit focuses on the event and first day covers produced by Polish-American individuals and organizations to mark the anniversary. There are no Artmaster, Fleetwood or other cachets made by companies without Polish-American ties. Likewise, the exhibit lacks the first day ceremony program since that event was not arranged by Polish-Americans. It does contain the special card produced by Representative Henry Helstoski of New Jersey who introduced the legislation authorizing the USPOD to issue the Kopernik commemorative. Everything in the exhibit has direct ties to Polish-Americans.

Treatment & Development: The exhibit is divided into three logical sections—before the first day of the Kopernik stamp, the first day itself and afterwards. Forerunners include cacheted covers for stamp shows in cities with large populations of Polish-American heritage. The exhibit continues through first day material with seldom-seen cachets by Polish-Americans and concludes with special cachets and cancelations marking the end of the Quincentennial celebrations.

Challenge Factor: Many of the covers in this exhibit superficially appear to be commonplace, but actually are very difficult to find. I'm not ashamed to say that some of the show covers came from dollar boxes. These items have taken years of searching to find. Among the unusual first day covers in the exhibit are those prepared by obscure cachetmakers such as the Polish Philatelic Society of Buffalo and the Adam Plewacki Post of the VFW. These are virtually unknown even to experienced collectors. There also are first day covers from the AK Veterans Circle and the Polish American Congress of Chicago which were distributed primarily to non-collectors and thus are seldom seen in the philatelic market.

References:

Cusick, A. "Covering Copernicus", *First Days*, Sept/Oct 1973, pp. 18-20

Cusick, A. and W. Duffy. "A Copernicus Cachet Catalog", *First Days*, July/Aug 1974, pp. 27-28.

Cusick, A. and W. Duffy. "A Copernicus Cachet Catalog, Part II", *First Days*, Jan/Feb 1978, pp. 79-80.