

**“HELVETIA
SOCIETY
FOR
COLLECTORS OF SWITZERLAND”**

BULLETIN

"HELVETIA SOCIETY FOR COLLECTORS OF SWITZERLAND

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317 South 15th Street
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

VOLUME IV

Jan/ Febr. 1941

Nos. 1/2.

"HELVETIA'S" THIRD ANNIVERSARY.

G.A.v.G.

The Helvetia banquet was a success. Members and friends attended en masse to pay tribute to our 3 year old organization. The black velvet skull caps with its embroidered Edelweiss on the front swayed New York and as ever attracted a lot of attention. The Philadelphia delegation arrived at the Pennsylvania Station at 10:40 A.M. and from there scattered in all directions. The Switzerland radio program on "CALLING ALL STAMP COLLECTORS" went over a nation wide network at 1:15 P.M. and from reports received, was clearly heard everywhere. George Caldwell during his speech on the air, with a cannon sound explosion, created by the turning of one of his pages, imitated an August 1st salvo in celebration of our birthday party. At 7 P.M. the first arrivals of Helvetia very nicely arranged themselves along the mahogany bar in the spacely "Watermarking Department" of Maison Louis sampling the different solutions best adopted for their specific purposes. By 8 o'clock neither standing and sitting room was available. Frank Zeltmann and sister just before leaving for Miami paid us a flying visit saying hello to everybody. Harry and Mrs. Lindquist, and Ferrars Tows with jolly Fay Jordan occupied a comfy corner in the Salle a Manger, or banquet room to you. Although there was a lovely balcony overhanging the hall of festivity, somehow nobody enacted the famous balcony scene from Romeo and Juliet. Eddie Elkins our toastmaster introduced all the members, friends and guests in the order they were seated so that everyone may get acquainted with each other. Speeches were condensed with. Music was provided by our resourceful and capable Chairman Anna Elkins. Ferrars Tows rendered skillfully a beautiful piano solo, his mastery received thunderous applause for his great accomplishments. A Spanish senorita clapping the castanets gracefully twisted her slender, petite body in rhythm to a Mexican Rumba. Another refreshing and talented lady entertained us with songs. Dapper, smiling Franklin Bruns from the New York Sun and his charming wife were a treat to behold. Dr. Larrimore, Past President of the Women's Philatelic Society of New York, as well as our own Helen Harrison and "Cherie Keating" enjoyed a good time. The Buser and Ritter families were out in full force. Sophie and Eddy Buser must have sat on hot coal for they were constantly moving around, leading the different activities and opening the dance. Cardinal De Groot and Phil Robbins must have been in the dumps, for hardly anything was heard from them. Mrs. Robbins was caught in a tete a tete with a long lost cabin friend of the 1939 P.S.S. period and a balmy beach. Minnie and "Butch" Kilcher and her friend chaperoned by Mama Kilcher had the time of their lives, the

young ladies visiting the "Big City" for their first time. Tommy Armstrong of Philadelphia was taken in tow by George Caldwell and unfortunately had to leave before the entire banquet was served. Mom Huguenin made sure not to break her neck to be able to keep an eye on George. Martin Neumunz, Mill Engineer lost a couple of big contracts so he could bring his better half of "Bratwurst" fame. Madame Rosse, missing for the past two years made her appearance with Lucien, who wanted to know if "Helvetia" still issues bulletins. Olga Domanski was in mourning for Mary Lewandowski and needed cheering every once in a while. Vincent Domanski and Walter Arn held side conferences with Harry Lindquist giving him the high sign on the coming S.P.A. Convention in Philly. Bill Montgomery and his lovely wife thought about our hospitalized members and were responsible for the cheering message of flowers sent to Jacques Kilcher, Mary Lewandowski and Rudy Cullum. Steve Rich and Carl Pelander functioned as official time keepers on the welcome address and did their job admirably. Karl Posch of "Star Burlesque" fame in Brooklyn during the BALISEA Show invited us to hold the Fourth Anniversary of Helvetia, next February, in Union City, N.J. He vouches to surpass any previous events. Good luck Karl, your offer is accepted. "Vive la Suisse et La Tchecoslovaquie." Seen but not heard were John Boyce, Mr. & Mrs. Thomas F. Harrison, Mr. & Mrs. Sherwin, Mrs. Arn, and many others too numerous to mention. Sadly missed were jovial Harry Salisbury, Colonel Wilson who I understand is likewise ready to enter a hospital; Doc Evans who at the time of the banquet operated on Rudy Cullum and Sol Glass who sojourned in California and could not return in time to attend the banquet, but will be with us at "ATEX". Dr. & Mrs. Ernest Bissegger were unexpectedly called to Washington and had to forego the pleasure of making their first acquaintance with Helvetia since he joined. A pityful aftermath could not be prevented. After Steve Rich left, the day following, Vincent Domanski at breakfast time in the Hotel Taft, became deadly sick and had to be put to bed. Whether the parting affected Vince, no one knows. Olga's careful nursing brought Vince back to life and three hours later he was observed eating fatty pigs knockles and sourkrout with a dose of beer. Is it any wonder why poor Olga never gets any sleep? Thanks to Anna Elkins, Sophie Buser and Eddie Elkins for a wonderful time. In the meantime, "ADIOS" and so ends my story and another Birthday Party.

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ATTENTION!

The next combined Helvetia meeting will be held Saturday, March 29, 1941 at the Colton Manor and the "ATEX" exhibition in Atlantic City. There will be a Helvetia table at the banquet. See you then!

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Welcome to our latest members of "HELVETIA", two well-known philatelists from Switzerland, namely:

Dr. Ernest Bissegger,	44 Arden St. 2M	New York, N.Y.
Alexis Kellner,	119 John R. St.,	Detroit, Mich.

I am sure these well versed gentlemen will make splendid contributors to our Helvetia bulletin.

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Courtesy George H. Wettach.

Swiss Lake Post Cancellations

by

Robert S. Gordon.

AUSTRIA had floating post offices on Lake Constance from before 1886, at least. The early Bregenz-Lindau-Friedrichshafen-Konstanz line used postmarks inscribed "K.K. Österr. Schiffspost Bodensee". A single-circle postmark was used a bit later, reading K.K. OESTERR. SCHIFFSPOST around top, AM BODENSEE around bottom (also known with small "am"); this about 1891. In 1903 the cancel in use was double circle, legend K.K. OESTERREICHISCHE SCHIFFSPOST around top, AM BODENSEE around bottom. This and the one before it had three-line date in center, the hour usually being included also. A postmark similar to the 1891 one existed about the time of the war, and up to 1921 at least; spelling is OSTERR. instead of OESTERR. Later in the 1920's, cancel was double circle, OSTERREICHISCHE SCHIFFSPOST AM BODENSEE, with small letter a or b at bottom, date in one line across center between horizontal lines; 1928 and 1936 dates known to me.

BAVARIA used postmarks on its Lake Constance ships similar to the one mentioned: SCHIFFSPOST around top, route around bottom. The routes were Lindau-Rohrschach and reverse, and Lindau-Romanshorn and reverse. Town names abbreviated to LIND, and RHORN. These existed from late in the last century to at least 1911. Three-line date in center.

GERMANY also had Lake Constance marks in the "Deutsche Schiffspost" type between Friedrichshafen and Romanshorn, according to Mr. Holton. I have no further knowledge of this. He also has reported a similar Lindau-Romanshorn cancel.

There was to my knowledge, a KONSTANZ-BREGENZ SCHIFFSPOST cancel (single circle, horizontal oval, similar to the German railway cancels) in use in pre-war days (1909 date known; believed to have existed since the 1870's). Mr. Holton has also reported "Romanshorn-Friedrichshafen". There also existed, in railway bahnpost type, KONSTANZ-LINDAU SCHIFFSPOST (1928 date known); and KONSTANZ-LUDWIGSHAFEN SCHIFFSPOST like the "Konstanz-Bregenz" mark (this known only during the 19th century, from the 1870's).

ITALY had (and perhaps still has) many Swiss lake marks, of undoubted official status. (Earlier ones that may or may not be official, but which are probably at best only semi-official, are the "I.R. Piroascafo sul Lago Maggiore" of Lombardy-Venice times, and similar items). In double-circle with number at bottom are: NATANTE ARONA-LOCARNO (1 or 2 at bottom), SERVIZIO POSTALE SUL LAGO MAGGIORE.

WURTEMBERG also had Lake Constance "sea post". Its lines from Friedrichshafen to Konstanz, Lindau, Rohrschach, and Romanshorn

train never to miss the bull's-eye. Here again, yearly tournaments and matches enable these men to meet in friendly competition and every three years a great Federal Shooting Festival, lasting a fortnight, takes place in one of the big towns and assembles the best marksmen of the country. The Swiss also always take part in international shooting tournaments where they have often carried off world championships. This training is of course very useful to the military organization of the country, for each officer and soldier is under obligation to shoot off a certain number of cartridges each year, between the annual periods of military training. (Special commemorative postcards and cancellations.)

The age-old traditions of Switzerland are as diverse as the life of the people. Every region and district has its own customs. Central and Eastern Switzerland are famed for the "games" played by the cowherds: ~~wrestling, stone-throwing, flag game~~, "Hornuss" - which is played with bats or rackets. These sports develop muscles and render bodies supple, but they also give rise to most amusing country festivals where popular gaiety is given free rein. (Semi-postals Pro Juventute Year 1932).

Every town and district is renowned for some particular local tradition. Basle, for instance, is famous for its fife and drum band; Geneva for its Feast of the Escalade, or annual celebration of the victory of the citizens of the town over the army of the Duke of Savoy on the night of December 11th, 1602; Vevey, on the shores of the Lake of Geneva, holds a Vine-Growers' Festival every twenty-five years which glorifies the work of the fields and the vines; Montreux has its annual Festival of the Narcissus; Locarno, in the Tessin, its Feast of the Camellia, Zurich its Spring Festival with gorgeous historical pageant and the burning of the Snowman testifying to the passing of Winter. (Special commemorative cards and cancellations.)

Every Spring, as soon as the grass begins to grow again on the heights, the cowherds of Gruyere, Valais and Appenzell, take their flocks up to the mountain pastures to the sound of tinkling bells - for goats and cattle all wear a bell, so that, should they stray from the watchful eye of their guardians when in the pastures, they may be found again. This annual migration from village to alpine grazing lands is quite a solemn event in the life of the peasants, and a most beautiful melody is sung at this time, called the "Ranz des Vaches", which has become the traditional song of the Swiss mountaineers. (I believe there ^{card} also exists a commemorative card either in the Pro Juventute series, or Bundesfeier cards).

In the Upper Valais, which is a catholic canton, on Corpus Christi day the mountain folk make wonderfully colorful processions through their villages and put on their treasured national costumes, jealously kept and handed down from generation to generation. (Bundesfeier cards).

A great deal could be said about these old popular customs of Switzerland, so numerous, so diverse and sometimes so moving. Mention

can only be made here of the better known among them. And yet in every canton, in every valley and region the most characteristic and charming costumes are kept up, although their origin may be lost in time. (Particularly noteworthy are the folk costumes, compare with National costume series of the Pro Juventutes).

There is, however, one national tradition which must be mentioned here: every year, on the night of August 1st, the National Day of Switzerland, from one end of the country to the other, in the valleys and on the mountain peaks where the Alpine horn resounds so harmoniously, bonfires are lit around which gather the dwellers of towns and villages. The parson or a local magistrate reads in solemn tones the Federal Pact of August 1st, 1291, by which the founders of the Swiss Confederation swore to unite their strength in order to defend their liberty. Thus, after 650 years to the town-dweller of Geneva, who speaks French and is Protestant in belief, is brought the realization of the fundamental ideal which unites him to his catholic and Romanche-speaking brother of the Grisons. That is the link which welds together this multiple diversity of language, race, culture and religion and out of these creates the harmonious whole of the Swiss Confederation. (Bundesfeier cards).

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For our members not acquainted with the history of William Tell, Karl Poasch, sometime ago forwarded me the following clipping:

The Legend of William Tell.

by

G.A. Henhoeffler.

On the strong arm and steady bow of a highlander once rested the fate of a nation. He was William Tell, the Alpine hunter, who clove an apple in two as it balanced upon the curls of his bright-eyed son and fought to establish the Swiss Republic which many years later became one of the first nations to issue a postage stamp.

Six hundred years ago he boldly scoffed at the hat of the tyrant Gessler as it hung from a mast in the market place where all the townspeople could see it and pay their homage. Immediately he became a leader of an insurgent thrust against Austrian domination and the hero of the Swiss nation.

His many deeds have since taken on the high color of legend but he is still remembered as the proud and powerful highlander who dealt the death blow to Austria in the Swiss rebellion. And, today, his broad figure and that of his small son are still commonly seen on the stamps of Switzerland.

November 1907, the Swiss stamps first recalled the incident in the market place when the people breathlessly watched him shoot an apple from his son's head as the sneering Gessler stood by. The stamp shows a large picture of the boy holding his father's crossbow and the arrow-

pierced apple.

A few years later, in 1914, a series of stamps portraying Tell himself, clad in the simple, rough tunic of the mountain folk, was produced. Slung over his broad shoulder is the crossbow that made history.

As the story goes, Tell, after refusing to kneel to the ducal hat, was seized by Gessler's men and given the choice of being put immediately to death with his son or performing the iron-nerved feat of archery. With firm hand he drew two shafts from his girdle and let one fly from the bow that struck true to its mark.

Gessler demanded to know why he was ready with two arrows and Tell, with the sweat still clinging to his brow, calmly said he would have driven the second into Gessler's heart had harm come to the boy.

The hero was then condemned to prison in the dungeons of the Castle of Kussnacht, but as Gessler and a military escort spirited him across a lake toward his musty cell a storm blew up and their boat foundered on a rock. Tell hid in a thicket and when the tyrant appeared in the clear let fly the second shaft, which dropped him to the dust.

In the uprising that followed the Swiss people shook off the Austrian yoke and offered to make Tell their King, which he declined, to return to seclusion in his Alpine home - there to be virtually forgotten by the Republic until its stamps in 1914 paid tribute to his heroic deeds.

Many years later Schiller, the great poet, himself an honored figure on the stamps of Germany, dramatized Tell's adventure in the story which became the basis for Rossini's famous opera.

On other stamps of Switzerland have appeared the heraldic arms of the Canton of Uri, where Tell lived. They were the first of a long series of colorful stamps showing the emblems of many cantons in the country. They were produced annually to gather funds for orphaned and needy children.

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Editor's note.

The bust on the 1914 Tell stamps was drawn from the original of the Tell monument at Altdorf by the sculptor R. Kissling.

The 60 c. value of the new historical personages issue of Switzerland shows the likeness of Tell as depicted by Ferdinand Hodler of Geneva, the great Swiss master who greatly contributed to the foundation of the modern Swiss School.

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