

Oh, the Things You Can Learn Stamp Collecting!

Mike Schumacher

What do all of these stamps have in common?



No, the answer is not that they are all in my collection.

The answer is: they are all the first stamp engraved by Czeslaw Slania for each of the various countries.



Czeslaw Slania, Master Engraver (1921 – 2005) was born near Katowice, Poland.

He joined the underground movement in 1939, after Nazi Germany invaded Poland and helped to forge documents. In 1945 he enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow and worked for the Polish Stamp Printing Works where he learned to engrave on steel. He moved to Sweden (1956) and by 1959 was engraving stamps for the Sweden Post. King Gustaf VI appointed him as the Swedish Court Engraver (1972). Slania subsequently received various awards for his stamp engraving from Poland, Denmark, Monaco & Great Britain. From Great Britain he received the **“Roland Hill Achievement” Award** for his life-long work in stamp engraving. He has also held 3 records in the Guinness Book of World Records including – the most prolific stamp engraver and his 1000th stamp is based on the 17th century painting “Great Deeds by Swedish Kings” by David Klocker Ehrenstrahl and is recognized as the largest engraved stamp ever issued.

Czeslaw Slania engraved over **1070 images of stamps for 32 countries**, as well as banknotes for 10 different countries during his 50+ years of stamp engraving. How many are in your collection? If you have stamps engraved by Czeslaw Slania be sure to look closely at them because he often included himself and family members on those stamps. See examples below:



Slania on stamp



Slania’s mother, Jozefa



Slania the mechanic



Slania’s sister’ name on stamp - **“Majewska”**

So many stamps to collect and so much learning to do! Happy Stamp Collecting!

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St. Louis, MO

We have read that perhaps half of the population of this country does not remember World War II, simply because it was not alive at the time. It is rather difficult to conceive this, since it made such a profound impression on those who wore the uniform to keep the war far from these shores.

The war had a greater effect on the production of stamps than is realized, but this was nothing new. In 1898, the Spanish-American War resulted in our Trans-Mississippi Exposition issues appearing in one color, rather than bi-colored, since engraving facilities were needed to issue securities and revenue stamps to finance the war.

The cutting off of dye stuff imports from Germany in 1917 and our lack of any substantial manufacturing facilities here had a considerable effect on our stamps. Our American-made inks were so inferior that our Bureau of Engraving and Printing had to resort to surface (offset) printing to produce stamps needed by the Post Office.

In World War II, the Bureau's appeal for replacements for its perforating machinery was turned down, due to the greater need for steel for armaments. Having to make do with what they had, a spate of part perforates began to appear. Philatelists, that is, the lucky ones, had a profitable time visiting Post Offices. The vast market that philately is can be seen from one statement; the writer sold something like twelve hundred pairs of the 3c Defense (Scott #901a), imperforate between, for 75c per pair. (Today it catalogs at \$12).

The then regular issue, the Presidentials, also appeared in the same condition. Most common was the 1½c (Scott #805b). Actually, this is a very rare error when not precancelled, with only a very small number existing. But a very large quantity of these were precancelled for use in St. Louis, and shipped there.



Stamp collectors soon found out, but since precancels are sold only for precancel permit holders, this slowed them down...but only momentarily. Some of the clubs in St. Louis took out permits, and loaded up on sheets. They sold the imperforate pairs to dealers at such a premium that they had what is called "scrap" for mailing out club bulletins for years. So common were these errors in the 1940s that one of the stamp magazines gave a pair free with every 50c subscription. (This, too, was a case of history being re-written. When the famed five-cent errors (Scott #467 and #505) were found in 1919, Weekly Philatelic Gossip, of Holton, Kansas, gave a pair (one error, one normal) with each 25c subscription. And since #467 today catalogs at \$140, this will probably remain as one of philately's outstanding historical bargains.

We can offer a limited number of pairs of Scott #805b, precancelled as above, for \$3.50 each. We have an even more limited supply of blocks of these, entirely imperforate between of course, at \$8.50 each. Although precancelled, all are very fine and unhinged. We are quite certain to be sold out of these before long, so those who may be inclined to answer this offer after the middle of January or so had better be prepared for disappointment.

[Editor's note: This article from the ever-readable Pat Hearst – penned a little over 50 years ago, has been provided for our reading pleasure by Team Dowrick. The precancelled pair of 805b has a 2018 CV of \$20 and is not difficult to obtain.]