

ALFONS STACH: WWII ERA CZECH STAMP DEALER

This single-frame exhibit presents World War II era material related to Alfons Stach. Stach was a prominent stamp dealer in Prague (Praha) who emigrated to the United States shortly before (sometime in 1938) WWII started and continued his stamp business in the U.S.A. Stach's New York City stamp shop was initially located at 116 Nassau St., later moving to 99 Nassau St. In philatelic history and legend, Nassau St. was a street famous for being the home of many dozens of stamp dealers at this time.

For the purposes of this exhibit, "WWII Era" is defined as June, 1938 (from the Praha 1938 FIP international stamp show, 26 June-4 July, the last major Czechoslovak show before the war started) through August, 1946 (until the Brno 1946, 3-15 August, the first significant Czechoslovak national stamp show after the war ended).

Material is presented in chronological order.
Scans of cover backs are shown reduced, generally at 60%.
Translations are shown in Helvetica type.
Postage rates are detailed.
100 heller (h) = 1 koruna (K, Kč, or Kčs)

PROLOGUE

Stach's retail shop in Praha was located at Národní 30 (Palais Chicago), Praha II. This was in one of the myriad labyrinthine passageways extending off of Wenceslas Square, the main shopping district in central Praha. There is still (as of 2012) at least one stamp shop in the Palais Chicago section of passageways.



Stach advertising in selvedge (tabs or coupons) of Czechoslovak postage stamps.

Auction House
Postage Stamps
ALFONS STACH
PRAHA II.,
Národní 30
(Palais Chicago)



The postmark date (18 December 1935) was the day Edvard Beneš became Czech President, replacing T.G. Masaryk who had resigned (14 December). The bottom text on the postmark reads: Election of President of the Republic

Alfons Stach
116 Nassau Street
New York

September, 1938

From: Praha
Registered

September, 1938
covers from Praha
(Prague). Czecho-
slovak stamps bear
Stach's advertising
labels.



8 September 1938

New York 9/19 and
9/20 receivers

5.50Kč franking:
2.50Kč postage (to
20g); 2.50Kč registry;
overpaid 50h



15 September 1938

CENSUROVÁNO =
Censored

Return address hand-
stamp from Stach's
shop in Praha

New York 10/2 and
10/3 receivers

10Kč franking:
7Kč postage (2.50Kč
to 20g; 1.50Kč each
add'l 20g = 4.50Kč to
80g); 2.50Kč registry;
overpaid 50h

Stach's 1939
Specialized
Czechoslovakia
Catalog

All text is in Czech
Values in \$/¢

Published from his
116 Nassau St. address
but printed in
Olomouc, Czechoslovakia



1932, Dr. Miroslav Tyrš

známky byly vydány na oslavu jeho 100. narozenin. Letopočet na známkách 1832—1932. Střední formát, zoubkování $9\frac{3}{4}$, desková označení 1, 1A, též bez deskového označení. Pruhy na klížené straně.



360	50 h	zelená	—30	—02
360a		bez pruhů	150	—05
361	1 Kč	červená	—50	—02
362	2 Kč	modrá	120	—04
363	3 Kč	hnědá	150	—03

1933, pamětní známky Pribinovy



byly vydány u příležitosti oslav 1100. výročí založení prvního křesťanského chrámu knížetem Pribinou v Nitře.

Střední formát, zoubkování $9\frac{3}{4}$, desková označení 1, 1A, též bez desk. označení. Pruhy na klížené straně.

364	50 h	zelená	—10	—02
365	50 h	v páru — meziarši	10—	—
366	1 Kč	červená	—65	—02
366a	1 Kč	červená — meziarši	70—	—

1933/36, různé portréty

malý formát, zoubkované $9\frac{3}{4}$, pruhy na klížené straně



367	50 h	žlutozelená B. Smetana	—12	—02
367a		sytě žl. zelená	—18	—06
367b		bez pruhů	—40	—03
368	50 h	tm. zelená A. Dvořák	—08	—02
368a		bez pruhů	—40	—03
369	50 h	zelená M. R. Štefánik	—08	—02
369a		zlomená deska	—40	—35
370	60 h	fialová M. Tyrš	—08	—02
370a		perg. papír	—25	—

malý formát, zoubkování $12\frac{1}{2}$, pruhy na klížené straně



Alfons Stach
116 Nassau Street
New York

April, 1939
From: Brno
First Advertisement
The Czechoslovak Specialist,

April, 1938
cover from Brno,
Czechoslovakia's
second largest
city.

25 April 1939

Correct 2.50Kč
postage (to 20g)



Page 6

THE SPECIALIST

THE

Only Specialist

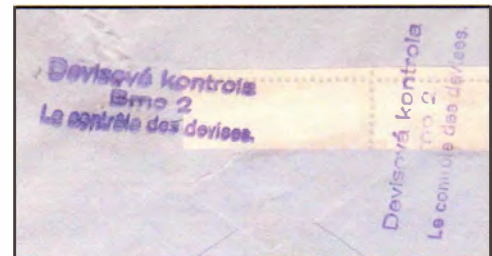
OF

**All Stamps of
Czecho-Slovakia**

COMPLETE STOCK OF ALL ISSUES,
RARITIES, ESSAYS, PROOFS AND
OTHER SPECIALIZED ITEMS

Alfons Stach
116 NASSAU STREET
NEW YORK CITY, N. Y.

KORESPONDENCE ČESMA A SLOVENSKA



Devisová kontrola =
Foreign Exchange (currency) Control

(repeated below in French, the
official international postal language)

Stach's first advertisement (full page, reduced at left) in *The Czechoslovak Specialist*, the journal of the Society for Czechoslovak Philately, was in the June, 1939 issue, the second edition of the journal. He remained a regular advertiser until his last ad in October, 1983. See last page in exhibit.

Alfons Stach
116 Nassau Street
New York

(see next page for details)

July, 1939
From: New York
Registered



Cover sent from the Czecho-Slovak Pavilion at the 1939-40 New York World's Fair.

Czechoslovakia had planned for a pavilion at the 1939-1940 New York World's Fair (30 April 1939 to 31 October 1940; open April-October each year). The pavilion was unfinished and only partially filled with Czech products when Nazi Germany occupied Czechoslovakia in March, 1939. The pavilion was supported and maintained by donations of American-Czechoslovaks and others. One of the money raising campaigns was the overprinting of souvenir sheets, wholly donated by stamp dealers, and sold at the pavilion. See interview (below) with Stach from the December, 1973 issue of *The Czechoslovak Specialist* (pp. 149-50).

6 July 1939

Correct 18¢ U.S. franking:
3¢ postage, 15¢ registry

Czech stamp and souvenir sheet are superfluous.
Czechoslovak Pavilion "Czechoslovak Day" postmark



Czechoslovak Specialist

Page 149

A Chat With An Old Friend—Alfons Stach

There is hardly anything that can take the place of a first hand account of a philatelic happening, and if there is anyone among us who stood by the cradle of the 1939-40 New York World's Fair overprints, it is our own ALFONS STACH.

Our interest in this issue was aroused (though only mildly) in October of last year, when our president, Mirko Vondra exhibited some interesting varieties of this overprint at NOJEX '72. Looking through the philatelic literature, we find no shortage of references as well as a fairly comprehensive story in the *SPECIALIST* of some thirteen years ago! Yet, many questions remain to be answered, some of which, if answerable, would almost certainly enhance interest in this somewhat controversial issue. We therefore exchanged several letters with Mr. Stach. The gist of our correspondence follows:

Question: STAMPS² says that the initial issue was 5000 sheets each of Scott 239 (Bratislava) and Scott P-26. The initial quantity of the Scott 251 sheet (Praga) is not known. The numbers apply only to the black seal overprint; colors supposedly came later. Do you think the numbers and facts are correct?

Answer: Yes, these numbers appear correct. However, we were far too busy to keep an accurate count of this "hot" item, which at that time was selling very well at the Fair.

Q: How much of the fancy colored, gold and silver material was made?

A: This is not known; my guess is 500 each or thereabouts.

Q: What quantities of the 1940 overprint do you think exist?

A: Less than of the 1939 overprint. I say 1000 to 2000 of some items, though as far as I recall there were only 200 of some, and of one only 50 pieces. Nobody knows exactly.

Q: Where was the overprinting done and by whom? Who did the contracting?

A: The Czechoslovak Consulate contracted with the printer and the Consulate lent him the die.

Q: Who purchased the "raw material" for overprinting, and from whom was it purchased?

A: The Czechoslovak Consulate purchased it from Mr. Felix Branner (a dealer from Prague) and from me.

Q: How did the "CZECHOSLOVAK" error come about?

A: With every printing there occur errors, and as you know the printer MUST turn everything in. The errors were sold at the Fair for higher prices. However, NONE OF THESE ERRORS WERE PRODUCED ON PURPOSE.

Q: How do you explain the fact that you had such a difficult time rounding up Bratislava and other sheets which even today are still a drug on the market?

A: That's easy to explain. It's like the stock market. When an issue



Page 150

December 1973

is stable, nobody wants to sell. And these sheets were indeed strong then. We bought up all we could because it was asked of us. But even today, I don't consider these sheets a "drug on the market." I don't have 20 such sheets in my stock—such as Praga and the others. I bought a large quantity of these after the war—except Bratislava—and all sold very well.

Q: When Pres. Beneš signed the stamps, were there just 1000 of the profile stamp or did he also sign the earlier 3¢ profile stamp? I believe I read somewhere that there were actually 2000 signed, counting both types.

A: On one occasion Pres. Beneš signed exactly 1000 stamps, and these are numbered. I myself handed them to him and pasted them. Occasionally Pres. Beneš signed other stamps—but not in any significant number. I myself had him sign a Masaryk sheet which I had in my collection. However, I eventually sold it for \$200.

Q: Mr. Lowey in STAMPS² says that when the Fair closed they were NOT sold out, but that the extra stock was sold to dealers. You say they were always short and sold out everything. What is the real story?

A: All I know for certain is that I did NOT buy any remaining or left over stock from the Consulate at closing time. However, later on I bought some of this material as part of the stock of Parker (Tribune Stamp), the stock of Kantor (Kent Stamp) and later as part of the stock of the United Stamp Co. (Franta Votický). In my opinion, if indeed there was material left over after the Fair closed, any dealer would have gladly bought it. At the time, the World's Fair issue was BIG HIT. Remember, that Czechoslovakia was then a favorite Nation, loved by the whole free world. Not only Czechs, but everybody bought the overprints—particularly on "Czechoslovak Day."

Q: How many overprint dies were there? I think I can distinguish two varieties by looking at the dash between Czechoslovak.

A: You may be right—but I'm not sure. I was not informed of this detail by the Consulate.

Q: Were you present or do you have any real proof that the die was indeed destroyed by filing?

A: I am 100% certain that the die was filed across the face. Consul Nový brought it to me and showed it to me. I insisted that the die be destroyed entirely, but they did not want to do it as it was property of the Consulate.

Obviously, Mr. Stach's forthright answers shed some additional and much needed light on the origin of the World's Fair overprints. Yet, do these items belong in our collection?

Were Hirsch still alive and editing his excellent *TRIBUNA*, the issue would no doubt be condemned, as it is for possibly different reason in Czechoslovakia today. Having neither Hirsch's stature nor politically motivated philatelic taste we shall refrain from telling collectors what to collect. As for us, we'll simply stick this issue together with our black prints (černotisky), limited denominations (význačné hodnoty) and other such gems and see whether time will be as kind to them as it was to the Lions issue or the 1918 Revolutionary Overprints.

HH

REFERENCES

1. STAMPS, vol. 28, no. 2, July 15, 1939, p. 41
2. STAMPS, vol. 33, no. 10, Dec. 7, 1940, p. 339
3. STAMPS, vol. 28, no. 5, Aug. 5, 1939
4. THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPECIALIST, October 1960, p. 116-119

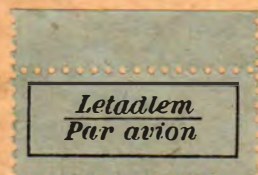
Alfons Stach
116 Nassau Street
New York

April, 1940
From: Brno
Airmail, Registered

Mr.
Alfons Stach
for Jack

116 Nassau Street
New York City

Via Panamerican Airways.



30 April 1940

German censor tape & handstamp

U.S. Customs **FREE OF DUTY**
handstamp

Praha 5/1 and
New York 5/11 and
5/13 receivers

21.50K franking:
2.50K postage (to 20g),
16K airmail surcharge (4K per each 5g)
3.50K registry;
underpaid 50h



Stach's 1941
Specialized
Czechoslovakia
Catalog

Text is in English
Values in \$/¢

Published from his
116 Nassau St. address
and printed in
New York.

STACH'S

1941

SPECIALIZED CATALOGUE

of the Stamps of

CZECHO- SLOVAKIA

Eastern Silesia
Siberia

PUBLISHED BY

ALFONS STACH

116 NASSAU STREET
NEW YORK CITY

PRICE: 35¢

DR. MIROSLAV TYRS

1932

Issued in honor of the 100th Birth Anniversary
of the founder of the Sokol Gymnastic Move-
ment.

Perforation 9%. With Rotary Lines.



322	50 h, yellow green	.55	.02
	a) without rotary lines	1.50	.05
323	1 K, carmine	.75	.01
324	2 K, dark blue	1.50	.04
325	3 K, red brown	2.50	.04

NITRA ISSUE

1933

Commemorating Duke Pribina, who in 933
erected the first Catholic church on Czecho-
slovak soil.

Perforation 9%. With Rotary Lines.



326	50 h, yellow green	.30	.03
	a) gutter pair	15.00	
327	1 K, carmine	.80	.13
	a) gutter pair	200.00	

VARIOUS PORTRAITS

1933-1936

Perforation 9%



328

329

330

331

Greta Stach

25 Monroe Place, Apt. 3F
Brooklyn

April, 1941

From: Praha 28

Airmail

April 1941

To Stach's wife, Greta,
at their Brooklyn
home address

German censor tape &
handstamps

Correct 8K franking:
4K postage (2.50K 1st 20
g, 1.50K add'l 20 g)
4K airmail surcharge



Alfons Stach

116 Nassau Street
New York

December, 1943

From: Leyton, Great Britain

Airmail

7 December 1943

U.S. censor tape

Correct 18d postage:
1/ 3d (15d) airmail,
3d registry



Alfons Stach

99 Nassau Street
New York Czech in U.S.

Note address change from 116 Nassau St. to 99 Nassau St.

June & October, 1945

From: Innsbruck & Praha I
APO; Airmail, Registered

27 June 1945

APO 470 =
Innsbruck, Austria
(APO = Army Post
Office)

Special military
overseas 6¢ airmail
rate;
overpaid ½¢

The Bohemia & Mo-
ravia Hitler Head
stamp is superfluous



28 October 1945

Praha I backstamp.
New York 11/14 re-
ceivers

28.6K franking:
-4K postage (2.5K to
20g, 1.50K add'l 20g)
20K airmail surcharge
(4K per each 5g),
3.50K registry;
overpaid 1.1K

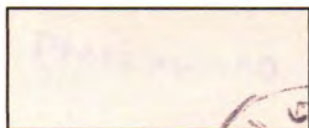
Přezkoušeno =
Examined

At this time, all enve-
lopes addressed to a
foreign destination
had to be presented to
the post office un-
sealed so they could
be inspected.

Bohemia & Moravia (occupied Czechoslovakia) postmarks and reg-
istration labels were dual language: German above and Czech below.

The German "Prag 1" on the registry label has been crossed out.

The original German inscription (PRAG I) in the postmark has been
removed.



Greta Stach
25 Monroe Place
Brooklyn

November, 1945
To: Praha Bubeneč
Airmail



11 November 1945

Airmail, Registered

From Stach's wife, Greta,
at their Brooklyn
home address

Brooklyn & New York
11/17 backstamps; Praha
11/26 receiver; 2
indistinct Czech receivers

Correct 80¢ rate:
60¢ quadruple weight
(15¢ per ½ ounce)
airmail;
20¢ registry



Alfons Stach
99 Nassau Street
New York

December, 1945 & January, 1946

From: Praha II
Airmail, Registered

5 December 1945

Airmail,
Registered

39.30K franking:
4K postage
(to 20g),
24K airmail sur-
charge (12K per
each 5g),
8K Registry;
overpaid 1.40K



Note use of Czech
language only
postmark on both
covers and change
to Czech language
only registration
label on bottom
cover.

29 January 1946

Airmail,
Registered

37.40K franking:
4K postage (to 20g),
24K airmail (12K
per each 5g),
8K registry;
overpaid 1.40K



Alfons Stach
99 Nassau Street
New York

June, 1946
From: Praha 7
Airmail, Registered



17 June 1946
First Flight from Praha to New York
PRAHA LETECKA POŠTA = Prague Airport Post Office

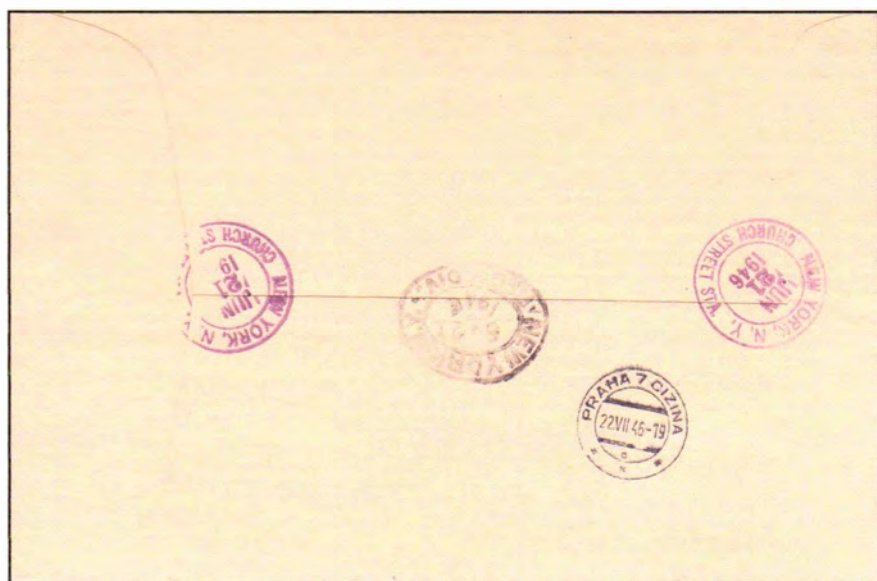
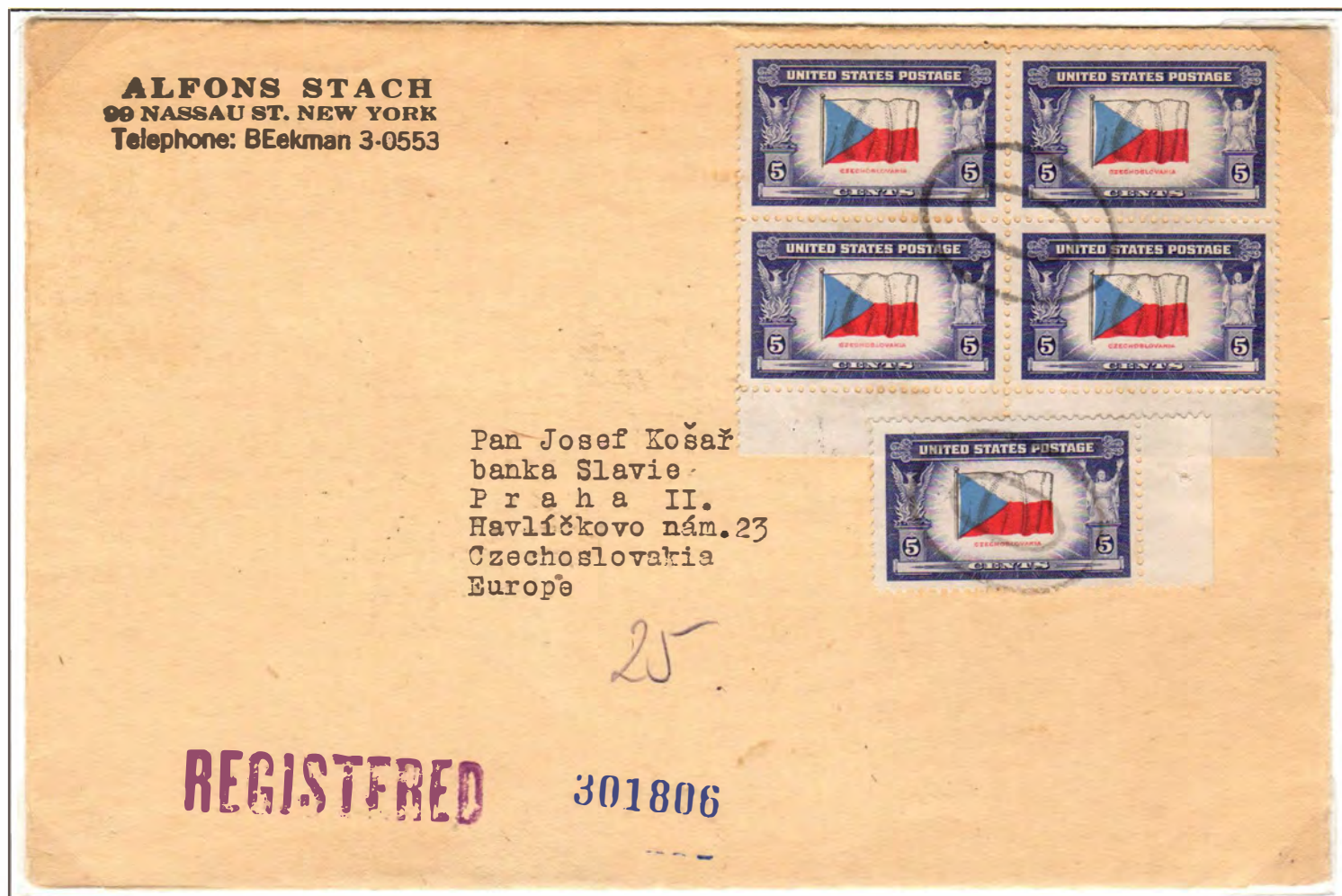
Airmail, Registered

Correct 24Kčs franking: 4Kčs postage (to 20g), 12Kčs airmail surcharge, 8Kčs registry

Note 13 June Praha 1 registry postmark

Alfons Stach
99 Nassau Street
New York

June, 1946
To: Praha II
Registered



21 June 1946
Registered

Correct 25¢ rate: 5¢ surface, 20¢ registry

Reduced letterhead of enclosed letter shown at right.

STAMPS - AUCTIONS
ALFONS STACH
99 NASSAU STREET
NEW YORK 7, N. Y., U. S. A.
TELEPHONE BEEKMAN 3-0553

WHOLESALE
RETAIL

WANT LISTS
FILLED

BANKERS:
THE NATIONAL CITY BANK OF NEW YORK
PRAGUE: ZIVNOSTENSKA BANKA
MONACO: LLOYDS BANK

MEMBER OF:
AMERICAN STAMP DEALERS ASSOCIATION
AMERICAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY
SOCIETY OF PHILATELIC AMERICANS
ALL LEADING EUROPEAN SOCIETIES

Pan Josef Kořař
banka Slavia
P r a h a II.
Havlíčkovo nám. 23

Alfons Stach
99 Nassau Street
New York

August, 1946
From: Brno
Airmail, Registered



10 August 1946
Registered, Airmail

Return address on reverse is from Headquarters of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Association in Prague

Correct 24Kčs franking: 4Kčs postage (to 20g), 12Kčs airmail surcharge, 8Kčs registry

Postmarks, cachet, & registration label from Brno 1946 National Stamp Show. This was the first national stamp show in Czechoslovakia following World War II.

Note that envelope was evidently delivered without street name, only street address number.

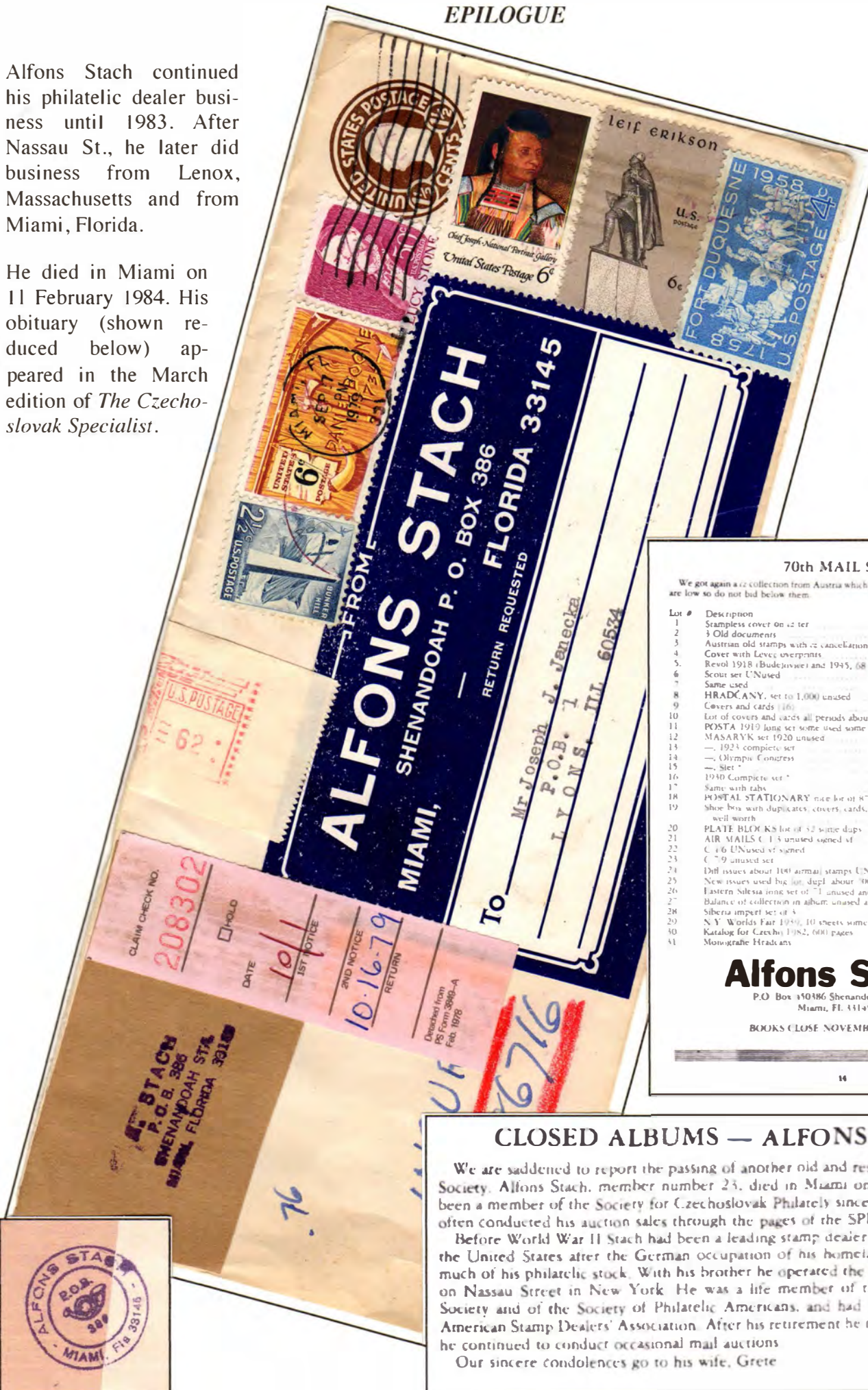
Alfons Stach continued his philatelic dealer business until 1983. After Nassau St., he later did business from Lenox, Massachusetts and from Miami, Florida.

He died in Miami on 11 February 1984. His obituary (shown reduced below) appeared in the March edition of *The Czechoslovak Specialist*.

17 September 1979
Insured

Correct \$1.38 rate:
28¢ postage (15¢ 1st oz., 13¢ add'l oz.),
\$1.10 insurance
(\$50.01-->\$100 indemnity)

Stach remained a regular advertiser in *The Czechoslovak Specialist*. His last ad appeared in the October, 1983 issue (shown reduced below).



70th MAIL SALE

We got again a collection from Austria which we sell in this auction. Starting prices are low so do not bid below them.

Lot #	Description	Minimum Bid
1	Stampless cover on 12 ter	\$10.00
2	3 Old documents	8.00
3	Austrian old stamps with 12 cancellations on album pages (84)	20.00
4	Cover with Levee overprints	3.00
5	Revol 1918 (Budejovce) and 1945, 68 stamps sold AS IS	17.00
6	Scout set UNused	15.00
7	Same used	15.00
8	HRADANY, set to 1,000 unused	10.00
9	Covers and cards (16)	15.00
10	Lot of covers and cards all periods about 180	20.00
11	POSTA 1919 lung set some used some * nice lot, about 70	36.00
12	MASARYK set 1920 unused	5.00
13	—, 1923 complete set	5.00
14	—, Olympia Congress	45.00
15	—, Slet *	45.00
16	1940 Complete set *	5.00
17	Same with tabs	10.00
18	POSTAL STATIONARY nice lot of 8"	10.00
19	Shoe box with duplicates, covers, cards, picture cards all kinds well worth	60.00
20	PLATE BLOCKS lot of 52 some dup	10.00
21	AIR MAILS C 13 unused signed of	28.00
22	C 16 UNused signed	48.00
23	C 79 unused set	5.00
24	Diff issues about 100 airmail stamps UNused and used	12.00
25	New issues used big lot, dupl about 300 used	8.00
26	Eastern Silesia long set of 71 unused and used	35.00
27	Balance of collection in album: unused and used	10.00
28	Siberia impert set of 4	17.00
29	N.Y. Worlds Fair 1959, 10 sheets some used	55.00
30	Katalog for Czechy 1982, 600 pages	8.5
31	Monografie Hradany	15.00

Alfons Stach

P.O. Box 386 Shenandoah Station
Miami, FL 33145

BOOKS CLOSE NOVEMBER 30, 1983

14

CLOSED ALBUMS — ALFONS STACH

We are saddened to report the passing of another old and respected member of our Society. Alfons Stach, member number 23, died in Miami on February 11. He had been a member of the Society for Czechoslovak Philately since its beginnings and had often conducted his auction sales through the pages of the *SPECIALIST*.

Before World War II Stach had been a leading stamp dealer in Prague. He came to the United States after the German occupation of his homeland, bringing with him much of his philatelic stock. With his brother he operated the World Stamp Auctions on Nassau Street in New York. He was a life member of the American Philatelic Society and of the Society of Philatelic Americans, and had been a member of the American Stamp Dealers' Association. After his retirement he moved to Miami, where he continued to conduct occasional mail auctions.

Our sincere condolences go to his wife, Grete

