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WORLDWIDE PHILATELIC SOCIETY



# Vatican Notes

VOLUME XXIII SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1974 NUMBER 2



### 24th HOLY YEAR ISSUE

On April 3, 1933, the Vatican issued a set of four stamps to commemorate the 24th Holy Year. The year was chosen since it was the 1900th year since Christ's death. The two designs are quite similar, depicting a globe surmounted by the Holy Cross, by Enrico Federici. The inscription translates: Hail the Cross, our Only Hope. Each stamp has a surcharge in the lower right corner. The latest Bolaffi catalog lists this set, Scott # B1-B4, on a first day cover, as pictured, at \$140.00.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF INCUMBENT OFFICERS

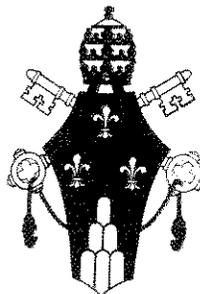
Treasurer Frederick J. Levitsky was born in NewLondon, Connecticut. He matriculated at Worcester Polytechnic Institute where he earned both his M.S. as well as his B.S. Degrees. He then taught Electrical Engineering there at the same Institute for a period of seven years. He is currently serving as Head of the Standardizing and Test Laboratory of the New England Electric System. He was initiated into the hobby of Stamp Collecting during his high school years. After a temporary lapse during the busy college years, he has been active every since. His specialized interest in Vatican City developed in the 1940's and he has delved into all aspects of Vatican philately. Over the years he accumulated an extensive collection of Papal Sate stamps and has become serious in this area in more recent times. By common standards, Fred would now be considered somewhat of an expert in this particular specialty now. His stamp interests also extend to United States stamps and Connecticut precancels.

In addition to the VPS, Fred is a member of APS, BIA, Precancel Stamp Society, Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum, New England Precancel and Stamp Club (Past Secretary as well as serving as Treasurer for the past 10 years), and the Worcester Philatelic Society (Past President).

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Secretary Wallace R. Smith is a Manager of the Insurance Services Office of New York. He began collecting when he was about twelve years of age but gave it up when he reached his teen-age years. But then he returned to stamp collecting after he was married. Wally specializes in Vatican City First Day Covers and Maximum Cards, Japan and United States Commemoratives, Plate Blocks and First Day Covers. He is approaching his twentieth year serving the Society as its Secretary, having taken on that position first in 1955. He graduated from Newtown High School in 1937. From 1942 through 1946 he served in the United States Army Air Force. He attended New York University and the College of Insurance and secured his C.P.C.U. designation in 1957. Wally has been in the insurance business since 1937. He is married and has three children. And, as all dues-paying members know, he resides in Flushing, New York.

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### THE HOLY YEAR

In this, our second article on preparations for the observance of a "HOLY YEAR" by the Vatican in 1975, we will give an historical and religious background drawn from the concept and practice of the Jubilee Year in Biblical and Rabbinic Judaism.

Most of the information is drawn from a presentation entitled: "Holy Year 1975 and Its Origins in the Jewish Jubilee Year" which was prepared by Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum, the National Interreligious Affairs Director of the American Jewish Committee. It was his hope that such reflection might contribute "to understanding and mutual respect between Christians and Jews, especially throughout the Holy Year. "

I am sure it would be an interesting study for one of our members who might also collect Israel, to research the issues of the State of Israel for this theme.

The Jubilee Year had its origins in Biblical Judaism and it was developed and experienced in about 3,000 years of Jewish history.

The word "jubilee" derives from the Hebrew term "yobel" which means "jubilating" or "exulting." It refers to the sounding of the shofar - the ram's horn - on the Day of Atonement announcing the inauguration of the jubilee year. (Cf. Joshua 6:4) Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, and the Jubilee had much in common. The central intention of both was a "new birth." The Day of Atonement provided an opportunity to free the person from slavery to sin and enabled him to start life anew, at one with God and with one's fellow human being. The Jubilee had for its aim the emancipation of the individual from the shackles of povert, and the elimination of the economic inequalities in the Jewish Commonwealth in accordance with the demands of social justice.

So important was the law regarding the Jubilee that, like the Decalogue, it was ascribed to the divinely-inspired legislation revealed on Mount Sinai (Leviticus 25:1).

There could be no more stirring call to the conscience for inaugurating the Jubilee than the blowing of the Shofar which heralded the revelation of the Ten Commandments. The Prophetic portion of the Torah, read to this day in Synagogue services, is taken from Isaiah 58 . Isaiah scores the hypocrisy and worthlessness of ritual without reighteousness. He reminds his people that prayer and fasting alone are not enough, "doing justice" and "loving mercy" must go hand in hand with "walking humbly with your God."

Certain objectives were to be served through the observance of the Jubilee year. The Bible sets forth four-fold obligations, all of which focus on realizing liberation in the actual life of the People of God as basic preconditions to their liberation.

The four-fold obligations for the observance of the Jubilee Year of the Jewish people were directed toward liberation in the actual life of the people as preconditions to their spiritual liberation. They were:

- a) Human - liberation of the slaves
- b) Economic - the moralization of the use of property and material goods
- c) Ecological -- liberation of the land
- d) Educational - the creation of a spiritual democracy by devoting the Jubilee Year to intensive education of all in the teachings of the Torah.

According to Biblical Scholar, Prof. Heinrich Ewald, "nothing is more certain than that the Jubilee was once for centuries a reality in the national life of Israel." The Prophet Ezekiel speaks of its non-observance as one of the signs that 'the end is come' upon the nation for its misdoings. He mentions "the year of libert," when a gift of land must return to the original owner.

Jewish authorities differ as to the timing of Jubilee years. However, a conference of Rabbis, called in Jerusalem, and in accordance with the view of Maimonides as well as with the practice of the oldest members of the Jewish communities, and meeting in 1552 fixed the Sabbatical year of their time as 1552. By that reckoning 1974 would constitute the 20th year of the present Jubilee Cycle.

Members who might be interested in a more complete understanding of the Jewish Jubilee Year could receive the full paper of Rabbi Tanenbaum by writing to :

Interreligious Affairs  
American Jewish Committee  
165 East 56th Street  
New York, New York 10022.

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PLEASE NOTE: The "NOTES" this issue is restricted to eight pages. This is NOT a measure toward economy, but due to a lack of material being submitted by our membership for publication. PLEASE, take an hour or two, compose an article on some interesting aspect of your collection and send it to the Editor at 49 Elm St., Worcester, Mass. 01609.

NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to receive into membership in our Society the following people and extend to them a cordial welcome as well as the invitation to share with the rest of us their knowledge of Vatican stamp collecting through the pages of "THE NOTES."

189	James J. Slattery	820 Chatham Road	Glenview Ill. 60025
2429	Isabelle Hyams	98 Madison Terr.	Springfield, N.J. 07081
2430	James Wiley Jr.	1206 S. Trotwood Ave/	San Pedro, Calif 90732
191	Fiore Ranieri	7309 W. Olive St.	Chicago, Ill. 60631
2431	Irene E. Prantis	35 Winslow St.	Hyde Park, Mass. 02136
2432	Rosemary Herron	6939 Anthony	Dearborn, Mich. 48126
2433	Phillip A. Schick	5144 N. High St. Apt. 205	Columbus, Ohio. 43214

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CORRECTION

As Interim Editor I completed the publication of the series of articles on the 5 Baj. However, I incorrectly attributed that series to Fr. Phinney. I take this opportunity to correct my error.

The discovery of the change in setting was made by the Late Dr. John Knauer and the series of articles should have been attributed to him. This I am pleased to do now.

Our liaison for this series was Rev. Floyd Jenkins, S.J. of the University of San Francisco. Father Jenkins is the Papal States Chairman of our Society.

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SWAPPING

Charles Johnson is interested in swapping mint/used singles only. He may be contacted as 6632 N. 13th St. Phoenix, Arizona 85014.

F.J. Levitsky, VPS Treasurer, is looking for specific Papal State material. At the moment, precancelled covers are wanted, If any members have such material, please contact Fred, with details of the trade or sale, at 13 Lesley Ave., Auburn, Mass. 01501.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Several thoughts struggle for expression and I'll try to set them down -- not necessarily in order of importance.

1. I am to be regarded strictly as an interim president. Too many pressures prevent my devoting the time to this job that it deserves. However, since Fred Levitsky's appeal for help went unanswered, I let myself be "volunteered", if you know what I mean. In the past, some have felt that a few have monopolized the top spots. This has only been because they have had the good of the Society at heart when no one else was willing to take over. Certainly they have not been motivated by the compensation since there is none. Fr. Phinney, Bill Quinn, Fred Levitsky and Wallace Smith have given years of unstinting service; others have served long as committee chairmen. Without them, the Vatican Philatelic Society would not now occupy its preeminent position. The challenge is to maintain it. A new, young editor, Fr. George O'Brien, gives every indication of being able to infuse new energy to the end that the Society will progress to greater heights.

2. In this inflationary age, everyone must admit that our dues structure is way out of line. Paper and printing costs have mounted tremendously in the last year. They've already reached the heights I mentioned in the last paragraph! The only point to consider in regard to raising the dues is: by how much? Or should our publication be a quarterly? Or might there be a combination e.g., a one dollar raise in dues and a change to a quarterly publication? Remember, too, that the Society provides various services free for the asking:

## Slide Chairman:

Ms. Margaret A. Monahan  
103 Marlboro St.  
Boston, Mass.

## Pontifical State Chairman:

Rev. Floyd A. Jenkins SJ  
Loyola U. of L.A.  
7101 W. 80th St.  
Los Angeles, Calif.

## Chapter Co-ordinator:

Mrs. Ione E. Madritsch  
5854 N. 35th St.  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

## Membership Chairman:

Ms. Rita Murphy  
34 Beaver St.  
Framingham, Mass.

## Translation Service:

Bro. Camillus, OSF  
180 Remsen St.  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

3. Here is your opportunity to express your thoughts and constructive criticisms pertaining to the problems confronting your Society. What features in the VPS NOTES would you like to see started or developed? Your officers have some interesting ideas, but we need to know of YOURS, too.

Arthur E. Lohan  
President

## Lazarettos, Quarantine, Contumaz and Disinfection Stations

At least as early as Biblical times the concept of contagion or transmission of diseases through contact was developing and by the 15th century principles of quarantine were being adopted, developed and enforced. Segregation of lepers was practiced at the Convent of St. Gallen in a Hospitalum in 736. With the widespreading of leprosy throughout Europe during the 11th century, in France the so-called "maladrevies," "malanteries," "maselleries" or "jadrevies"; in Germany the "Siechenhauser" or "Gottleutha user," and in Italy the "Lazzerotti" were established. During the 15th century, while Black Death raged, these installations served as quarantine stations for merchants and travelers coming from regions where plague had been recognized. The first such station to be used for handling plague was in Venice in the house of St. Lazarus, or the lazaretto in 1448. According to Thomas (1908), this hospital was located on the island of Santa Spirito, two miles from Venice.

There are many versions about the origin of the word "lazaretto." The informative documents of C. Ravasini (1957) are summarized: According to Bazala (1954), the word "lazaretto" is derived from the name of a hospital in Rome in the 12th century. It was built by King Rotharo II (1101-1154). Buesolin (1881) thought that the name was derived from the church Santa Maria di Nazaret, used as a pesthouse in the 15th century and that "lazaretto" is a corruption of "Nazarethum." This opinion is supported by the Webster's Dictionary. Metlicovitz has advanced the idea that it was derived from Lazarus or from the name Jacopo Lanzerotti, one of the first priors of the same hospital. The ulcerous beggar, subject of the Biblical miracle—in Italian Lazzaro, in English Lazarus and in Hebrew Eleazar (God has helped)—was made patron saint of the poor and sick. His name was given to a religious and military order founded in Jerusalem by the Crusaders during the 12th century and abolished in 1830. This order prospered in Sicily, Lower Italy and Thuringia and flourished especially in France.

The example of Venice was followed by other marine cities, for example in Genoa in 1476 King Rene transformed the leprosarium built in 1467 into a lazaretto, and in 1526 Marseilles established a lazaretto for merchant mariners suspected of being infected. Trieste erected barracks for plague patients in 1598, and a lazaretto was developed at Zante in 1609. In Toulon an installation was built in the 17th century for the French navy. The Knights of Malta erected the lazaretto of San Rocco in the Marsamuschetto Island in the Valetta Bay in 1643 (Patton, 1951), and Alexandria established one in 1818. A detailed account of the lazarettos, the quarantine, isolation and disinfection meas-

ures there applied is given in John Howard's "An Account of the Principal Lazarettos in Europe" (circa 1789). It is the most authoritative description of the regulations, procedures and services rendered by the quarantine establishments at Marseilles, Genoa, Spezia, Leghorn (Livorno), Naples, Messina, Venice, Trieste, Zante, Corfu, Castel Moro and Malta. Howard refers several times to disinfection of letters; he saw the procedures being carried out at Marseilles where incoming letters were received at the health office.

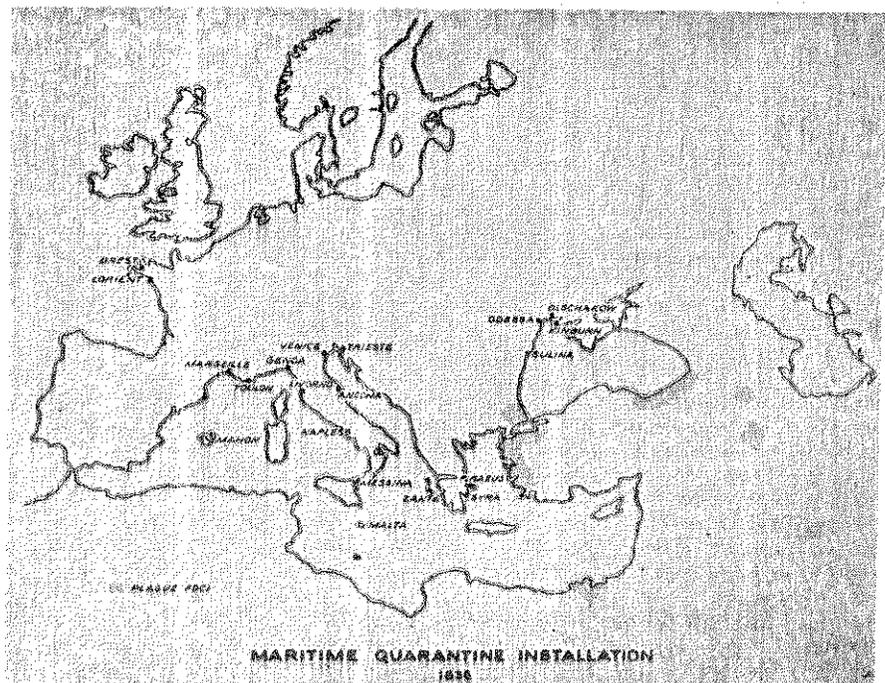
Throughout history, epidemic diseases invaded Europe from east to west. The people of Central Europe were terrified by these plagues, and attempts were made to confine plague, typhus, smallpox and later cholera to Turkey, Russia and the Balkans. Quarantine was not confined to the sea frontier alone. During the cholera period (1830-50) land frontier disinfection stations, many of them small and many of them operating for only short periods, were installed in Austria, Italy and the German States. The multiplicity of the cachets and seals from this period fully attest to the scope of this effort to limit the spread.

One of the earliest land frontier quarantine stations in Europe was established about 1750 at the lazaretto in Semlin on the north bank of the river Sava opposite Belgrade. Disinfection of mail was carried out at Semlin as early as 1733. This city was located on the main trade route overland from Turkey and the Balkans and represented the gateway of trade into Europe via Austria. The operations of the station are described by A. W. Kinglake (1844) and by Patton (1951). Increased commerce with the Balkan countries and the corresponding growing mail traffic forced the

Austrians to establish disinfection stations along the Turkish border in the Austrian military zone. Similar stations were placed in operation by some German States along their own borders or against Russia. These stations, either independent or attached to hospitals or post offices, were known as "Kontumaz Amt" or "Kontumaz Anstalt" (Kontumaz means quarantine). At these stations persons, merchandise, goods and mail were detained, isolated and decontaminated according to the regulations in force at that time. With some exceptions disinfection of the mail was certified by means of an official handstamp mark or wax seal stating that the letter was clean and healthy.

From 1830 on, in the course of epidemics, there were quarantine stations and special post offices in the following countries: Austria (including Lombardi, Venetia, Danube Principalities), Belgium, Bosnia, France, German States (Bavaria, Bremen, Brunswick, Cuxhaven, Hamburg, Hannover, Mecklenburg - Schwerin, Pomerania, Prussia, Thuringia), Greece, Holland, Ionian Islands, Moldavia - Walachia, Russia, Serbia, Ottoman Empire and others. The multiplicity of cachets on letters from the Papal States, Tuscany, Modena, Milan, Sardinia, Lombardy and Venetia make it clear that many similar disinfection stations operated in Italy during this period. Unfortunately little is known about their operation, except what is given in the accounts of Carlo Ravasini.

Ludwig Dengel (1953) has described the disinfection activities in the Contumaz station in Transylvania. Alfred Heinsen (1933), in his description of disinfection of mail in Hannover, pointed out that in 1831 the border post offices were entrusted with the disinfection of the mail and consequently the handstamp mark.



## "DISINFECTED MAIL" by K.F. Meyer, M.D. (Con't.)

## Procedures for Disinfection of Letters

*Solutions and Fumes.* To students of disinfected mail the official regulations, sometimes strictly and sometimes superficially enforced at quarantine stations, are of interest when they deal with the cleansing or purifying of letters. The known methods were elementary, but ingenious with respect both to the choice of disinfectant and to the procedure of application. A great variety of methods were used. Probably the most common one after the latter part of the 15th century was sprinkling the letter with vinegar or actually immersing it in a bucket of water or vinegar (Howard, 1789; Patton, 1951). At Marseilles Howard saw the letters being picked up with iron tongs and dipped into a bucket of vinegar standing ready for that purpose. The letter was held in a cleft stick or cane by means of iron tongs or pincers until after disinfection, when it was deemed safe to handle. Only experienced collectors can decide whether the residual stains on the letters, particularly those handled in Venice, are due to immersion in vinegar.

Vinegar immersion was frequently followed by smoking or fumigation. "The smoke from straw, burning tobacco, or sulphur, steam from charcoal fires, the evaporation of camphorated vinegar and smoke from pitch or gun powder all seem to have been used at one time and another" (Teall, 1947). At Malta in addition to dipping in vinegar letters from Turkey were laid in a case on a wire grate under which straw and perfumes were burnt. The fuels for this "perfuming," as the smoking was called, were juniper berries, fragrant gums and resins, incense, myrrh, benzoin, resinous woods, leaves of fragrant herbs, aromatic vegetable substances to which mineral ingredients were added (Ancona, 1951). In his description of the operation of disinfection boxes in Venice, Ancona also mentions use of chlorine fumes.

According to instructions issued on October 28, 1680 (Heinsen, 1933) in Hannover, mail or parcels were held with tongs and exposed in the open air to the fumes generated by burning juniper or aromatic shrubs. On August 18, 1710, the Mecklenburg-Schwerin postal administration issued similar instructions with the exception that the letters were first dipped in "plague vinegar" and decontaminated with the fumes evolved from "Raucher" powder (Schonherr, 1926).

The problem was to disinfect the letters without damaging them, a

problem not always solved successfully. But judging from the appearance of the letters disinfected in the German States, the "Raucher Powder" was certainly less injurious than sulfur, saltpeter or wheaten bran used, for example, in one lazaretto at Trieste. As late as 1879, the maritime governor of Trieste (Trieste, 1879) ordered that "letters are decontaminated through heating of the papers and through fumigation of the same with a mixture of 1/4 part powdered sulfur, 1/4 part broken saltpeter and 2/4 part wheaten bran. But the papers can be considered purified only after they are completely cooled." The sanitary regulations governing the protective measures of the Province of Reggio "Emilia" (1854) specify (page 8) that the fumigation powder to be used should consist of one part of manganese peroxide (Perossido di manganese) and two parts of common crackling salt (Sale commune decrepitato). A part of this was placed in an earthen dish, moistened with water to form a paste and a corresponding amount of commercial sulfuric acid was added. Letters, papers and small packages were exposed in a box to the vapors of the chlorine for a few minutes. Money and metal objects were treated with an aqueous solution of calcium chloride and sulfuric acid. The disinfectors were warned to avoid inhaling the fumes and to keep the sulfuric acid under lock. This is the first authentic report on the use of chlorine in the fumigation of letters.

According to a report by the Royal and Imperial Marine Authority at Trieste, the mail was disinfected by putting it in a cylinder of sheet iron and exposing it to the fumes created from this mixture (Kumpf-Mikul, 1933). This process was often carried out too enthusiastically, for most of the letters that passed through Trieste were scorched by it. But Pettenkofer in his well known report to the Bavarian Government in 1884 pointed out that the odor of burnt paper, the brownish discoloration and the perforation of the letter appeased the anxiety of the recipient because he was assured by them that the letter had been disinfected. Any microbiologist today would say that the procedure was time-consuming and complicated, but ineffective. Already in 1884 Robert Koch, in his classical comments on cholera, expressed the following view: "Experience has shown that the infective agent (Cholera vibro) cannot be distributed in the

dry state because cholera has never been spread from India through merchandise. In fact, letters or mail which had not been perforated and fumigated have never transferred the disease to man."

A mixture of sulfur, saltpeter and wheaten bran was also extensively used throughout the German States (Heinsen, 1933). According to imperial Prussian instructions issued in Cap. XII at Altenlandsberg (Landsberg am Lech) on August 10, 1712, an abbreviated formula for "Raucher Pulver" (fumigation powder) was especially developed for the postal authorities by a "Sanitäts Collegium" (a group of health officials, probably physicians) (Kohler, 1926; Lickint, 1935).

During the first sixty years or so of the 18th century, mail coming to Great Britain was disinfected at the Standgate Creek, the Mother Bank, St. Ives Pool (Portsmouth) and Holy-lake (Liverpool) lazarettos by dipping it into or splashing it with vinegar or by fumigation, or both, by holding it with tongs and scorching over fire

(Patton, 1950). The substances other than vinegar have not been described.

Towards the end of the 19th century, sulfur in combination with vinegar fumes were supplemented by sprinkling with carbolic acid (Munthe, 1886; Patton, 1951). Frari (1840) indicates that beginning in 1840 the fumes created from juniper berries, gums, resin, benzoin, wood camphor or whatever were abandoned in favor of chlorine because it was thought to be more effective. The postal authorities of Santiago, Chile used dry heat during the cholera epidemic of 1886-87 which had been introduced from Europe (Palmer, 1947).

(To be con't)