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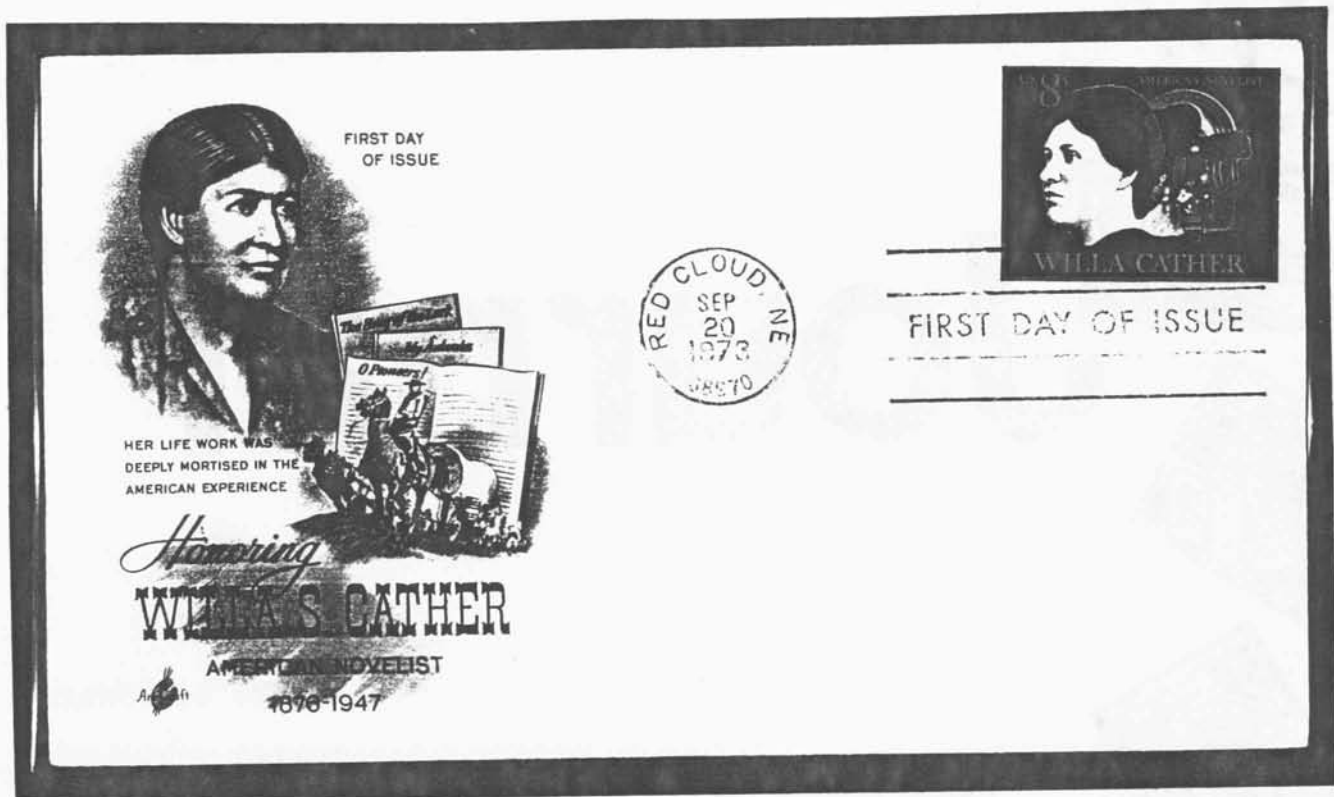
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We look forward to hearing from you, our readers and members, for comments, ideas and articles for future issues.

We encourage advertising and correspondence between readers regarding their philatelic interests.

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Willa Cather (1876-1947)

Little is known about Willa Cather's personal relationships, because she cautiously protected her privacy. Her biographers agree, however, that her deepest commitments were to women. In "Willa Cather, Her Life & Art," James Woodress calls Isabelle McClung "the one great romance of her life."

Probably the best analysis of Cather's sexuality is found in Jane Rule's 1975 book, "Lesbian Images." Although she provides no evidence that Cather had erotic relationships with either men or women, Rule found two women who were at times more important to Cather than her work -- McClung, a relationship that lasted from 1901 until McClung's death in 1938 -- and Edith Lewis, Cather's "domestic companion" for the last 40 years of her life.

Cather left little fodder for her biographers, Rule said. "Perhaps the most intimate and important letters Willa Cather wrote were those to Isabelle McClung ... At her death in 1938, those letters were returned to Willa Cather, who week by week burned bundles of them until they were all destroyed," Rule writes.

Lewis' short biography of her companion sheds little light on their life together, Rule said. Lewis urged her readers to seek Cather's essence "in art alone," rather than delving into her personal life.

None of Cather's fiction is about love between women, although "Death Comes for the Archbishop" centers around a friendship between two priests. Cather often used a masculine narrator, and point of view, in her works. The central character was often a man who had left his small town to become an artist, and was ridiculed on his return.

Cather moved from Red Cloud, Nebr. to the University at Lincoln to Pittsburgh and New York City.

Jonathan Katz' "Gay American History" quotes a newspaper column that Cather wrote during her Lincoln years. After poet Christina Rossetti's death in 1895, Cather compared her with Sappho, whom she called one of the greatest poets of all time. However, Katz said, "It is not clear to what extent she knew Sappho as the poet of women-loving women. In Cather's time and earlier, Sappho's life and works were often heterosexualized."

Cather did, however, create some strong women in her works. One of the strongest, although she chose traditional female roles, was Antonia, the immigrant farm girl who took over family responsibilities after her father's suicide. He couldn't stand the rigors of prairie life, but his daughter could.

Rule said "My Antonia" was the book Cather herself liked most.

-- Kathy Hall

ATA # 390278

The Dream of Lhasa

The Life of Nikolay Przhevalsky
Explorer of Central Asia



DONALD RAYFIELD

Published by Ohio University Press, 1976

Nikolai Przhevalskii (1839-1888)

Николай Пржевальский

Despite the fact the leadership of the Soviet Union has long maintained that homosexuality does not exist within the borders of their land, various researchers have unearthed some interesting aspects of the personalities of a few of Russia's former leading citizens. Tchaikovskii and Gogol, both gay, are well-known to Western culture; however, other luminaries also were passionately homosexual. Nikolai Przhevalskii was the Russian counterpart of David Livingston. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, Przhevalskii explored much of central and far eastern Asia for Tsarist Russia, and propelled interest in expanding Russian dominance in the Orient.

The material for this brief report has been extracted from The Dream of Lhasa by Donald Rayfield, which was reviewed in the April 1, 1982 issue of The Advocate. Although Mr. Rayfield at no point specifically defines Przhevalskii as being gay, there can be no doubt concerning the explorer's sexual inclinations. It is hardly a matter of even reading between the lines.

Przhevalskii was born in 1839 into a relatively comfortable Russian family of Polish extraction. He was raised on a small estate in a country setting, and while growing up enjoyed hunting and other outdoor activities. He was distant from his father, who died while Nikolai was still quite young. The boy's upbringing was shared by his mother and a strong-willed nurse, Makarevna, who later in life was to play a prime role in selecting suitable young men for Przhevalskii's affections.

He enrolled in military college, went to St. Petersburg, and there he developed a strong revulsion to city life. He couldn't tolerate the crowded city, filled with fawning government officials. More and more he longed to get away, and he ultimately succeeded in convincing his superiors to send him to the far eastern region of Siberia, an area politically unstable, and still in dispute with the Chinese. He financed this first journey himself, but nevertheless succeeded in mapping and describing in detail the Ussuri region near modern-day Manchuria and North Korea.

Both cocky and bold, he had a fascination for young men. The sidekick he brought on this first journey of exploration, a young German, became homesick before they even reached eastern Siberia. Przhevalskii required manliness in his men. Herr Koecher's weakness sickened him. Koecher's replacement was a sixteen year old boy, plucked from the "outback" of Siberia, a trainee in topography.

The first Siberian expedition of 1867 was fruitful and proved to be the impetus and stimulation for the Russian authorities to grant funds for succeeding travels. The Tsar and his ministers were concerned about British expansionism in India and the far east and were anxious to assert their own claims in central Asia. Przhevalskii's success in Siberia, as well as his own enthusiasm, caused him to be the most promising candidate to commence a journey through Mongolia, Sinkiang and onward to Tibet.

Once again Przhevalskii chose a youthful companion, Mikhail Pyltsov. He was an earnest and eager protégé but not a learned scientist. Throughout the course of his professional career, Przhevalskii consistently chose young men unschooled in geology, anthropology, or any other science critical to the analysis of the environment through which the expeditions would pass. This caused continual consternation in the scientific community as well as criticism of Przhevalskii's efforts. The explorer most decidedly did not want a stodgy academic for a companion and right-hand man. He unflaggingly picked men in their late 'teens or early twenties, fresh from military school, or better yet, snatched from behind the counter of the local store, handsome, virile, in straightened circumstances and willing to be dominated by the demanding Przhevalskii.

The 1872 expedition through central Asia to the borders of Tibet was successful, which persuaded his backers in the Russian government to finance further travels deep into disputed Chinese territory. By now his fame was firmly established, and he was besieged with requests to speak before the most esteemed scientific circles throughout Europe. At this time, Przhevalskii was developing an even greater hatred for city life, and an almost misanthropic feeling for much of humanity.

The ensuing journeys throughout the 1870's and 1880's, carried out with a succession of handsome



Cover registered at Liepaja, Latvia, USSR, backstamped at Philadelphia, PA., June 12, 1953. Two 60 kopeck stamps at upper right depict Prjevalsky and a variety of horse that he discovered.

young men, all caused him further repute. The stays in St. Petersburg between-times were agony, and the decision was made to buy a country estate deep in the birch forests of European Russia. His dear old nurse, Makarevna found for him there his greatest treasure, a young clerk, Pyotr Kozlov, who knew exactly the right line when Przhevalskii asked the dreamy-eyed man what he was pondering:
 "I was thinking," Kozlov replied, "how much brighter those stars must shine in Tibet."

Przhevalskii made Kozlov promise never to get married; the two fast made plans for yet another expedition. In the meantime they stayed at Sloboda, Przhevalskii's new estate, where no woman was allowed to set foot in the house, not even Makarevna.

His greatest journey, made with his adored Kozlov, began in 1883, and once again traversed central Asia. He never succeeded in pushing all the way to Lhasa; however, the wealth of data he secured despite his fierce opposition to the accompaniment of scientists on his travels, made his journeys every bit as important as those of the great contemporary African explorers.

After their return in 1886, Kozlov enrolled in Junker college. Another round of laudatory dinners and awards soon caused Przhevalskii to escape to his country estate. Despite his penchant for hunting and sporting, he felt lonely and unfulfilled. Kozlov was not there, and his other Cossack buddies from the expedition had all disbursed. But on a neighboring farm he happily found Kostya Voyevodskii. Przhevalskii, now in his late forties, became a father to this young lad. The explorer also made overtures to his favorite Cossack, Teleshov, beseeching him to settle down at Sloboda. He courted by letter,

"How are things at home? I can tell in advance: at first happy and fine; then you got fed up.... You're not thinking of marrying? Look out, be careful with that sort of business. You can't undo mistakes..."

Another journey was planned. Przhevalskii was middle-aged, and had grown irritable about his fading good looks and growing paunch. Kozlov again traveled with his mentor, but the expedition with Przhevalskii as leader never reached fruition. In central Asia he designedly drank water from a cholera-plagued lake despite warnings, and died soon after in the midst of his beloved men. The great, gay explorer, Nikolai Przhevalskii was quietly laid to rest.

By Blair O'Dell ATA # 39886-7

Interest: Red China, Nationalist China (Taiwan), Israel, Canada, U.N., Worldwide. Trade or correspond.

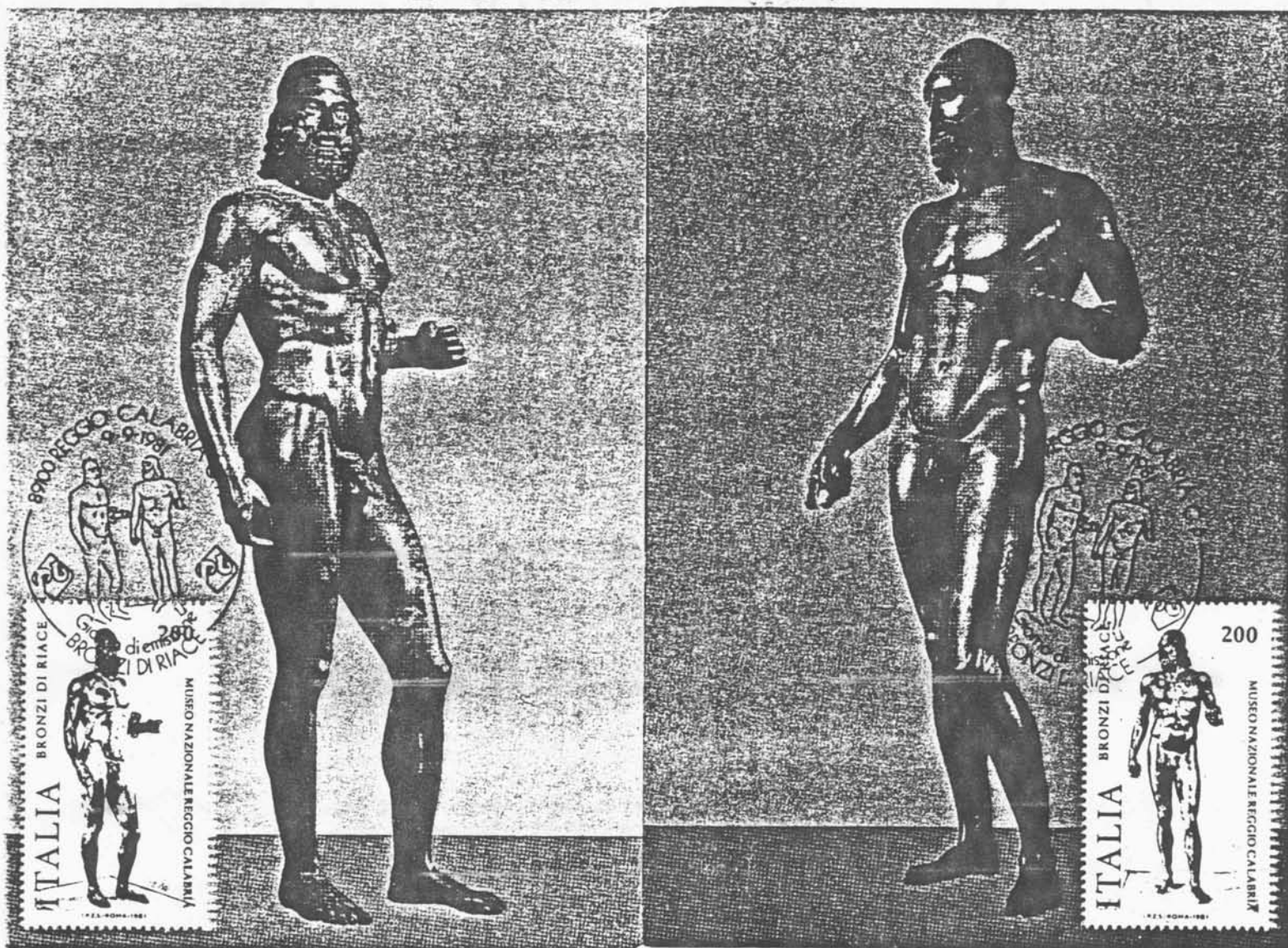
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Visit INTERPEX 83, March 10-13 at the NY Coliseum. Paul Hennefeld, GLHS secretary, will display there a portion of his Gay and Lesbian History on Stamps collection. This will be the collection's "coming out", and should certainly bring about some consciousness-raising within the stamp-collecting community.

Gay And Lesbian History on Stamps

Continued from Vol. # 1, # 3



9N155



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1648

Alexander von Humboldt, Thomas Gray
and William Shakespeare

Literature

The number of gay and bisexual famous authors, who have been on stamps, is enormous. I will list those gay and bisexual authors on stamps who I have discovered in my search. They are: Hans Christian Andersen, Charles Baudelaire, William Blake, Lord Byron, Willa Cather, Colette, Emily Dickenson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Gustave Flaubert, Andre Gide, Johann Goethe, Thomas Gray, Franz Grillparzer, Johann Holderlin, Quintus Horace, Alexander Von Humboldt, Heinrich Von Kleist, Niccolo Machiavelli, John Milton, Honor de Mirabeau, Michel de Montaigne, Marcel Proust, Arthur Rimbaud, Sadi, William Shakespeare, Madame de Staël, Henry David Thoreau, Paul Verlaine, Walt Whitman, and Oscar Wilde.

Paul Verlaine and Arthur Rimbaud traveled together to France, England and Belgium. They quarreled frequently due to Rimbaud's unfaithfulness and Verlaine's alcoholism. Verlaine shot Rimbaud and spent two years in prison and Rimbaud spent two months in the hospital. Walt Whitman, a bachelor, wrote love letters to young Peter Doyle and spoke lovingly of numerous young men, especially young men of the working class.



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Paul Verlaine and Arthur Rimbaud

Conclusion

I have been collecting gay people on stamps for just a relatively short time. I am quite sure that I will discover other gay people on the stamps of the world, as I continue my search through historical writings and stamp catalogues. I would be interested in hearing from anyone who might be able to help me further in this search for gay people on postage stamps.

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