

THE HOLOCAUST

MSCNY Article No. 59

Both Canada (1995) and the United States (1995) issued postage stamps honoring holocaust victims. The Canadian stamp shows the Star of David patch that Jewish people were forced to wear in cities to identify their race. Although this star is not directly used in Freemasonry, it is associated with our Order. Its use on the stamp should serve to remind us of the single greatest affront to Masonic ideals in world history. All we can do is reflect on the great suffering of millions of innocent people. Just how many Freemasons were murdered is not known, but the number is significant.

It is interesting to note that at least 14 Nazi prisoner of war camps had Masonic activity. Brethren often took the form of lodges of instruction; time was frequently spent trying to remember ritual. Yes, our ritual does offer a measure of solace, and would certainly have helped brethren to endure untold hardships.

For certain very few readers personally experienced the Nazi scourge; it was just too long ago in human terms. However, millions of stamps will bring about reflections for as long as stamp enthusiasts ponder their collections.



The Canadian stamp definitely shows actual photographs of victims. The US stamp appears to be taken from a photograph and the faces altered to eliminate possible identification of the men shown. The barb-wire fence is also modified to make it more apparent. The US did the same sort of thing with the Navy Issue stamp of 1945 (altered features of sailors). In this case I can see the rationale, but not with the Holocaust stamp. Nor should images be obscured with over printing (denomination and "USA"). I really don't think relatives of the men shown would object to their actual images on a stamp. As far as I know, there were no issues with regard to the Canadian stamp.

Christopher L. Murphy, BF