

# *The Masonic Philatelist*

PUBLISHED BY THE MASONIC STAMP CLUB OF NEW YORK



Vol. VI No. 10 January 1950



## *• Meetings •*

### BIG SURPRISE FOR JANUARY 27th

On Friday evening, January 27th, at 8 P.M. the First Vice President of the Masonic Stamp Club of New York - Bro. Arthur I. Heim - will treat his fellows members to a surprise showing. All of the members know of Arthur's proclivity for collecting Belgian Congo, therefore considerable curiosity is being aroused by his announcement that he will show a collection of Cyprus. This is one of the most interesting of the British Colonies and we understand that there are some basic questions regarding Cyprus that ought to develop a stimulating discussion. Don't miss this interesting showing of Cyprus. The usual swap session commences at 7 P.M.

### PAST PRESIDENTS NIGHT

One of the most enjoyable evenings last year was Past Presidents Night, and there is every reason to believe that this year's celebration will be even better. The big night is February 3rd when all members of the Masonic Stamp Club of New York will turn out to honor all of their past prexies. Arrangements are being made by Bro. Jacob Glaser, himself a member of that select group, and you may all be certain that the program will be very smoothly run as well as most interesting. Let us have the greatest turnout in years in order to pay homage to former leaders of our great club. Stamp swapping and gossip begin at 7 P.M.

**MASONIC STAMP CLUB OF NEW YORK**  
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**PAST PRESIDENTS**

**Arthur W. Deas** 1934-1938  
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**George Camnitzer** 1943-1945  
**Sam Brooks** 1945-1946  
**Jacob S. Glaser** 1946-1948  
**Ferrars H. Tows** 1948-1949

(\*) indicates deceased

**THE MASONIC PHILATELIST**

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**EDITOR**

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 New York 52, N. Y.

***Lindquist Is Elected  
 President of N. Y. A. C.***



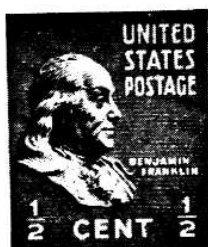
**Harry L. Lindquist**

Harry L. Lindquist was elected president of the New York Athletic Club last night. Succeeding Theodore J. Van Twisk, who retired because of ill health, he became the thirty-ninth leader of the 8,000-member Winged Foot organization, founded in 1868.

**New York Times Jan. 11,**

We are pleased to note that Brother Franklin R. Bruns, Jr. will continue his famous page for stamp collectors in the combined New York World-Telegram and the Sun. He has been doing a fine job and is deserving of our continued support. The new paper is to be congratulated for obtaining the services of this fine writer and for continuing the Stamp Page.

## BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



This stamp is the lowest value of the issue of 1938, known as the Presidential Series. The portrait is from a photograph of the statue by James Earl Fraser, in Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Born at Boston, Massachusetts - January 17, 1706.  
Died at Philadelphia - April 17, 1790.

Franklin was made a Mason June 24, 1731 in St. John's Lodge of Philadelphia. He was elected Junior Warden June 24, 1731, Worshipful Master, June 5, 1732, and Provincial Grand Master in June 1734. In 1779, while in Paris, he was elected VENERABLE of the LOGE des IX SOEURS. It is said of Franklin that he "did more to establish Freemasonry in America, than any other man of his time."

Franklin excelled as a Statesman, Scientist, and Publisher. Early in life he learned the printer's trade and after moving to Philadelphia, he edited the "Pennsylvania Gazette," and "Poor Richard's Almanack". Among his inventions were the lightning rod, the "Franklin Stove", and experiments in electricity. As early as 1753 he was Postmaster for the colonies. Later he was sent to London as agent for the Pennsylvania Colony. He was a member of the Continental Congress, and served on the committee to draft the Declaration of Independence. In 1776 he sailed for France, where he spent nine years pleading the cause of the new republic. His last service was as a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1787. He was considered one of the outstanding men of the eighteenth century.

(from Masonic Philately, by Sam Brooks )

## Franklin and Music

As a boy, Ben Franklin had a talent for making rhymes. His brother James the printer, to whom he was apprenticed, persuaded him to write two ballads. These James printed and then sent Franklin about the town to sell them. At age 15, he set the type for the first barred music notes for the initial publication of music in America.

When he was in his middle years, he invented a musical instrument known as the armonica which enjoyed popularity during the second half of the 18th century. It was introduced into the court of France and music was composed especially for it by Mozart and Beethoven. In addition to his delight in playing the armonica, Franklin also learned to play the violin, harp, and guitar and composed several songs, including "Sailor Song," "The Mother Country," "Fair Venus Calls," and "My Plain Country Joan."

Smyth in his "Writings of Franklin," tells how the latter song, was caused to be written.

It seems that the Junto Club which Franklin organized, discovered that their merrymaking songs were mostly about maidens, and none about married women. Franklin set about correcting this and his lyrics go as follows:

Of your Chloes and Phyllises poets may prate,  
I sing of my plain country Joan:  
These twelve years my wife, still  
The joy of my life, —

Never overlooking an opportunity to preach a lesson in thrift, Franklin included reference to it in the above song, in the line, "*In peace and good order my household she guides, right careful to save what I gain . . .*"

According to the *Music Industries Chamber of Commerce*, Franklin was a leader in the musical trend of his time, wrote on musical theory and harmony as well as composing songs. The *Musical Digest* credits Franklin with being America's first Musicologist, first printer of music, first American inventor of a musical instrument, first publisher of music, and first critic.

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THE FRANKLIN SOCIETY FOR HOME BUILDING AND SAVINGS

217 BROADWAY, NEW YORK 7, N. Y.

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### A FRANKLIN POSTMARK COLLECTION

If some of our first day cover enthusiasts are interested in the Craft, in a postal history sense, they might do worse than attempt to form a Franklin postmark collection. In 1793, there were Franklin-named post offices in Georgia, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Tennessee. It might not be a simple matter to acquire folded letters of the period showing townmarks indicating origin from these offices. However, with patience and fortitude, mostly patience, these will come along if sought for in the proper places. The proper places, it might be said, are state specialists in postal history.

By 1842, there were 23 Franklin-named post offices and 15 with Franklin as part of the name like Franklin College, Tennessee; and Franklinton, North Carolina; and Franklinton, Pennsylvania. Today there are about 50 Franklin offices in the United States Post Office.

Of course, the same sort of collection can be developed on Washington and other presidents of the United States who were (or were not) members of the Craft. Since the "Masonic Philatelist" is sponsored by members of the Craft, it is quite natural our fellow craftsmen (of other days) should be featured--more especially, Franklin and Washington.

---Harry M. Konwiser

## FRANKLIN AND SHIP LETTERS

by Harry M. Konwiser

Ship letters--that is, letters carried by water routes from one port to another, did not begin in the American Colonial period in the Benjamin Franklin era. Franklin, however, did interest himself in ship mail between the Americas and England, and can readily be termed a pioneer in the matter of regular mails on the Atlantic.

Among the "Unpublished Papers" in the Stevens Collection (1886) according to John Bigelow, writing in *The Century*, June, 1886, is a letter from Franklin to M. St. Jean Crevecoeur, about 1787 or 1788, which carries reference to Ocean Mail as follows:

"...having formerly had some share in the management of the Pacquet boats between England and America, I am entitled to furnish you with some small remarks...Commerce increases correspondence, but facility of correspondence increases commerce, and they go on mutually augmenting each other.

"Four Pacquet boats were at first thought sufficient between Falmouth and New York so as to dispatch one regularly the first Wednesday of each month. But by experience it was found that a fifth was necessary, as without it, the regularity was sometimes broken by accidents of wind and weather, and the merchants disappointed and their affairs deranged, a matter of great consequence in commerce. A fifth Pacquet was accordingly added."

Postal Marking students--hobbyists interested in Postal history, do not record any Shipmarks that are of Franklin design--the incoming foreign mail in the American Colonial period, from 1639 onward, did not acquire any Shipmarks on arrival, as was the later-day custom. Practically all of the Shipmarks seen on incoming foreign mail (that is into the United States) acquired its Shipmark on arrival at a port on the Atlantic or Pacific.

Ship letters date back to 1639 in what is now the United States. These had their beginnings when the Massachusetts General Court made a November 5th record (in 1639) as follows:

"For preventing the miscarriage of letters...it is ordered that notice be given that Richard Fairbanks, his house in Boston, is the place appointed for all letters which are brought to him from beyond the Sea..."

Incidentally, in manner of speaking, this Richard Fairbanks post office is the earliest recorded post office on American soil--North American soil, that is--since the Peruvians appear to have employed a courier system for letters at the time Columbus was --(continued next page)-

wending his way westward from Spain.

The New Netherlands ordinance of June 12, 1657, forbade the boarding of incoming vessels at what is now New York City, until these vessels had been visited by the governing officials of the Dutch Colony (then operating what is now a small part of New York) until the Ship Letters had been transferred to these officials.

None of the letters received in the Americas in the early period referred to, appear to have any sort of markings though the Massachusetts Colony record does indicate Fairbanks was to mark letters handled by him for the fee. At least none have turned up to this writer's eyes, though strict search has been made in many historical records in many places where records of the early days of the postal service of the Americas might well be deposited.

There is no recorded knowledge as to when the words "Ship Letter" first appeared on incoming foreign mail, nor is there any definite knowledge when the word "Ship" was first placed on incoming foreign mail--for postal recording purposes. There was no official interchange of mail matter from foreign lands until well in the 1850's when the United States established postal service arrangements with some countries. (a few such arrangements were made prior to 1850).

In the Franklin Colonial period, that is, when Franklin represented the British Crown as a Deputy Postmaster General for the American Colonies, such mail as was received from England carried marks indicating British origin, some with townmarks (in handstamp format) plus a small date circle. The use of "London/Ship-Lre" (for example) did not become regular until around 1760. Several American postal marking collections have "prior to 1800" letters showing "Ship Letter" marks as applied to letters at English posts. This writer can place a few of this type.

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From Memorial Volume of the Benjamin Franklin Bi-Centenary Celebration--Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, 1906.

46

Franklin was elected a member of the Lodge of the Nine Muses (Loge des IX Soeurs) in 1777 or 1778.

On February 7th, 1778 the Lodge enjoyed the distinction of Initiating the Philosopher Voltaire... Voltaire entered supported on one side by Benjamin Franklin.....

November 28, 1778 Franklin officiated at a Lodge of Sorrow held in memory of Brother Voltaire under the auspices of the Lodge of the Nine Muses. In the year 1782 Franklin served as Venerable (Worshipful Master) of the Lodge."



## SAMUEL GOMPERS AN ARDENT MASON

The following Masonic cachet appears on the latest in my series of covers -- Mirt.

Samuel Gompers, pictured on a 3¢ stamp issued Jan. 27, 1950, the 100th anniversary of his birth in



London and who did more for American labor than any other man living or dead, was an ardent Mason. He became a member of Dawson Lodge No. 16, Washington, D.C., May 9, 1904, and received his 32° in Albert Pike Consistory, Washington, Feb. 10, 1906. He was a member at his death, Dec. 13, 1924. A year later, Samuel Gompers Lodge No. 45, Washington, was chartered by the Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia. President of the American Federation of Labor for 41 years, he fought Socialism relentlessly. In his autobiography he relates that his Masonic affiliation frequently protected him. His death was mourned nationally by labor and industry.--John A. Mirt,

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Brother Wendell K. Walker Librarian of the Grand Lodge Library sends the following regarding Samuel Gompers:

received the symbolic degrees in Dawson Lodge No. 16 here--EA- 8 February 1904, FC- 28 March 1904, MM- 9 May 1904. He was continuously a member of that Lodge until his death December 13, 1924.

He received the 4th, 14th, 18th, and 30th degrees of the Scottish Rite in March 1905, and the 32nd degree on February 10, 1906, all in the Bodies here in Washington. He was a member until his death.

Samuel Gompers Lodge No. 45 of this jurisdiction was named for him, it being chartered a year after his death.

From letter from The Library of the  
Supreme Council... S.J...15 Dec 1949.

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A new national stamp society has been formed called TOPICAL PHILATELISTS Inc. Two of our members, Brothers Fred Barovick and Harry O. Henneman are on the Board of Directors. No doubt they will be pleased to explain the purposes of the new club if you will get in touch with them.

## Sol Glass Heads the B.I.A.



**A**T the recent election of officers of the Bureau Issues Association, Sol Glass, well-known collector and U. S. specialist, was elected President and Chairman of the Board of Governors. Mr. Glass has been Vice-President and Washington Representative of the B.I.A. for the past four years, and his advancement to the presidency is in recognition of the splendid record achieved during that period.

Brother W.R. McCoy of N.Y. another of our members, was elected Vice-President. Bro. McCoy is also Vice-President and Congress editor of the American Philatelic Congress

George Camnitzer is Chairman and Carl Pelander and Harry Konwiser are CO-Chairmen for a JUNIOR EXHIBIT the Club is to sponsor for the children of Masons. It is expected to take place late in June. More details next month.

**Franklin On Ocean Transportation**— Benjamin Franklin, in letter to France, 1787, suggested French Packets to supplement the five British Packet Boats, operating between England and the United States. He wrote "\*\*\* commerce increases correspondence, but facility of correspondence increases commerce and they go on mutually augmenting each other."

### Franklin's Mail Rates

Franklin's Table of the post of all single letters carried by post in the Northern District of North America, as established by Congress in 1775, shows the postage was rated in Pennyweights and grams of silver at three pence sterling for each pennyweight. The Northern District extended from Falmouth, in Casco Bay, to Suffolk, in Virginia.

These tables indicate the rates on single letters were as follows:

For any distance not exceeding sixty miles, one pennyweight and eight grams; over 60 and not exceeding 100 miles, two pennyweights; upward of 100 and not exceeding 200, two pennyweights and sixteen grams; upward of 200 and not exceeding 300 miles, three pennyweights and eight grams; and so on, 16 grams advance for every hundred miles.

By these rates, a single letter sheet, from Boston to New York was three-pennyweight and eight grams, which equalled 10 pence sterling, or about 20 cents in our money.

(from *The American Stamp Collectors Dictionary*, by Harry M. Konwiser.)

### Poor Richard Said:



**FLATTERY:** Approve not of him who commends all you say.

**FRUGALITY:** Silks and Satins, Scarlet and Velvets put out the Kitchen Fire.

**CREDIT:** He that would have a short Lent let him borrow money to be repaid at Easter.



**ECONOMY:** Since thou art not sure of a minute, throw not away an hour.

**FREE SPEECH:** Freedom of Speech is ever the symptom as well as the effect of good government.

**GOOD COUNSEL:** We may give advice but we cannot give conduct. However, remember this: They that will not be counseled cannot be helped; and further, if you will not hear Reason, she will surely rap your knuckles.