



The Masonic Philatelist

VOL. 31

APRIL 1975

NO. 8



NORMAN SEHLMAYER

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ROBERT A. SMITH

Guest Editor

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The Masonic Stamp Club of New York was organized in 1934 for the purpose of encouraging research and study in Masonic Philately, and to establish bonds of good fellowship among Masons who are stamp collectors. The need for the organization has proved itself through the years with its ever-increasing membership and the formation of other Masonic stamp clubs in the United States.

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First Friday of Every Month
(Except July and August)

COLLECTORS CLUB BUILDING
22 East 35th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10017

NORMAN H. SEHLMAYER

On March 29, 1975, Brother Norman H. Sehlmeier passed to his heavenly rest, after a short illness.

A delegation from the Masonic Stamp Club of New York assisted his lodge with Masonic funeral services on March 30, 1975.

Brother Sehlmeier was President of the Masonic Stamp Club of New York from 1963-1965 and served with distinction. He also served as Membership Chairman for many years until his death.

Born in Brooklyn, New York he resided there his entire life. He studied at local schools, receiving degrees from New York University and Brooklyn Law School. He was engaged in the practice of law and accounting. Philatelically he was a stamp collector for many years, collecting general, United States, United Nations, Canada, Tristan da Cunha, used airmails, space covers, etc.

He was a member of many philatelic organizations which included the Collectors Club of New York, American Topical Association, American First Day Cover Society, Collectors of Religion on Stamps, Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum. His scholastic, fraternal and business organizations included Beta Gamma Sigma, Phi Delta Phi, Longi Grotto, Aurora Grata Scottish Rite, Ocean Hill Square Club, Missouri Lodge of Research, National Association of Accountants, N.Y.U. Men in Finance Club and Nassau Central Lodge No. 536, F.&A.M. of which he was a Past Master and excellent ritualist. He also was a director of the Protestant Lawyers Association of New York, a trustee of Faith Home Foundation, and treasurer of The Municipal Club of Brooklyn.

We will sadly miss our Brother, who

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MASONIC COVERS PAST AND PRESENT

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MASONIC CACHETS
451 WEST 46th STREET
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10036

was always eager to assist in promoting the growth of the club. His generous spirit and friendship was his hallmark.

TO THE EDITOR . . .

Dear Bro. Smith,

If anyone can give you information about **Noble Jones** and the Georgia Bicentennial of 1933, it would most likely be Bro. Walter M. Callaway, Jr., Editor of the *Masonic Messenger*, Box 9912, Atlanta, GA 30319. He is familiar with Georgia Masonic history and is a member of the American Lodge of Research. The enclosed Stamp Club clipping is from page 22 of his April 1975 *Masonic Messenger*.

Congratulations on publishing the splendid article about the Freemasons in the Independence of Latin America. It is a jackpot of valuable data for collectors of Masons on stamps.

I enclose a very brief story about **Lauritz Melchior** with particulars of his Masonic connections.

Fraternal regards,
Marshall S. Loke

NOBLE JONES

Noble Jones (1724-1805) Revolutionary patriot and physician. Born in London, England in 1724. He was the son of Dr. Noble Jones, an early settler of Georgia, who was treasurer of the province and a councilor of state. He was associated with his father in medical practice at Savannah from 1748-56. He held a military commission from an early age and was a member of the assembly in 1761 and subsequently speaker.

An active patriot, he was corresponding with Franklin while the latter was in England. He was speaker of the first Georgia legislature and a delegate to the Continental Congress from 1775-76, and again from 1781-83. He lost a son at the capture of Savannah in 1778, and he himself was taken prisoner at the fall of Charleston in 1780 and taken to St. Augustine. Exchanged in July 1781 he practiced medicine in Philadelphia until December 1782 when he returned to Georgia and again served in the assembly. He practiced at Charleston from 1783-88 after which he lived in Savannah. He was president of the convention that revised the state constitution in 1795.

He is said to have been the first Mason initiated in Georgia, being a member of the old Solomon's Lodge No. 1 of Savannah. He died Jan 9, 1805.

—From Denslow's 10,000 Famous Freemasons, Vol. II, p. 317.

STAMP CLUB

The Masonic Stamp Club of New York was organized in 1934 for the purpose of encouraging research and study in Masonic philately, and to establish bonds of good fellowship among Masons who are stamp collectors. It is believed that this club is the oldest of its kind in the world. For Freemasons of Georgia and elsewhere who are stamp collectors and who might wish to become members, the address is Masonic Stamp Club of New York, Inc., 22 E. 35th St., New York, N.Y. 10016.

The club has a regular publication, "The Masonic Philatelist," which is circulated to their members and containing matters of interest to stamp collectors. It also has items of general Masonic interest.

The first U.S. stamp issued which claimed the interest of the club was the James Edward Oglethorpe stamp which described him as the Founder of Georgia in 1733, a 3¢ post card, autographed by the Worshipful Master of Solomon's Lodge No. 1, Savannah, of which Oglethorpe was first Master. The Square and Compasses appear in the upper left hand corner of the postal card. A boxed message below is reproduced: "200th Anniversary, General James Oglethorpe, Founder and First Governor of Georgia, Organized the first Masonic Lodge in that State, Solomon's Lodge No. 1, February 10, 1734. No. 1 of a series by Masonic Historical Cover Club."

There have been many such stamps of Masonic significance since the first one.

Georgia Freemasons are honored that the first stamp of the club concerned our state.

(Reprinted from *Masonic Messenger*, April 1975)

SCOTTISH RITE MASONS SPONSOR HAYM SALOMON COVER AND SPECIAL SOUVENIR BOOK

The Chicago Valley of Scottish Rite Masons, sponsors of the first day ceremonies for the Haym Salomon stamp, announced that they issued an official first day cover, and at the same time made available copies of the special souvenir program of the occasion.

First day ceremonies were held at the Scottish Rite Cathedral, 935 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois, on Tuesday, March 25, 1975, at 7:00 p.m. First day covers and programs were available at that time. Proceeds from the sale of the items will benefit the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum and Library in Lexington, Massachusetts.

The official first day covers, stamped with the Haym Salomon stamp and postmarked with the first day cancellation, are available by mail from the Scottish Rite Cathedral at 50¢ each, or two for \$1.00. All orders must be accompanied by a large stamped and self-addressed envelope for the return of the covers.

All the special souvenir programs were stamped with the Haym Salomon stamp and postmarked with the first day cancellation. One copy was given to each person attending the first day ceremonies, and additional copies were available at \$1.50 each. By mail the price is \$1.75 each which includes packing and return postage.

Note: Late orders will be honored!

(Submitted by Dr. Irwin M. Yarry)

THE AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF PHILATELY

Edited by JAMES H. SMYTH

Registered at the General Post Office, Sydney,
for transmission by Post as a Newspaper.

Vol. III AUGUST 17, 1903 No. 35

PHILATELIC FREEMASONRY

What Is It?

It is generally understood that one of the principles inculcated by members of the ancient and honorable order of Free and Accepted Masons, a very estimable body indeed, is loyalty to one another. Such principles should apply equally well to Philatelists. "Honesty and Loyalty" are, or should be, synonymous terms so far as stamp collectors are concerned. Some say, "it pays to be honest." Even with such a motive "Honesty is the best policy."

Stamp collectors and dealers throughout the world are peculiarly circumscribed in regard to each other. A collector may have a desire to increase his collection by means of exchange, he may consider the possibility of carrying out his ideas by communicating with a brother collector at some distance away. He can only form an opinion as to that person's honorableness by the fact that, "he lives in good repute amongst his friends and neighbours." If the initial correspondence results in sheets of stamps being exchanged between them, there is a tacit understanding that each will act honorably towards the other. Dealers are similarly situated. They send selections of stamps on approval to collectors and other dealers, relying on the assumption that the parties with whom they are corresponding are honorable men, and will either return the stamps

sent or pay promptly for those kept. This assumption is derived to a great extent, from hearsay or the manner in which the persons are referred to in the various philatelic journals, the editors of which by so doing inferentially give them what might be called a certificate of integrity. The law is, in many cases, powerless to give satisfaction, if necessary, or redress wrongs inflicted, owing to the fact that the parties may be living in different countries. If it should happen that a collector or dealer proves false to the traditions which surround our hobby, the only thing possible is to grin and bear it. The following has been brought under our notice: A dealer sent abroad recently several books of stamps on approval, to a collector. On their return he (the dealer) was astonished to find that several stamps had been changed, inferior ones having been substituted. This was mean. Dealers, as a rule, are pretty 'cute, they have methods of detecting such practices and collectors should, therefore, be careful lest confidence is shaken. In the case referred to, the books passed through several hands before being returned. The gentleman to whom they were sent may have been quite innocent, but he suffers. Such instances occur occasionally. Mostly dealers prefer to bear the loss rather than offend their customer, but they should not be called upon to provide against such a contingency.

Frequently the just have to suffer for the offenses of the unjust, consequently it is the bounden duty of all collectors not to "Do others as others would do you," but "Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you."

This is not intended to be a religious sermon, and we trust our readers will not consider it as such, but the necessity for "Philatelic Freemasonry" must be very evident to all, if the present day customs are to continue.

Not only in regard to exchange or approval lots is the necessity for "Freemasonry" apparent, but the principle is equally applicable to general behaviour, to the conduct of all correspondence and to information received or given.

That there are "black sheep" in philatelic ranks cannot be denied. To minimize this evil, the publication of "black lists" is suggested. Is not prevention better than cure? One hesitates before denouncing a fellow collector. In most cases the person bitten simply shies off and leaves the delinquent severely alone. This is falling short of his duty as a "Philatelic Freemason." Others may

suffer and it seems to us that, if possible, some method should be adopted whereby philatelists could be warned against such parties, other than by means of a "black list."

Another aspect of philatelic freemasonry is "Charity." Dealers may rival each other in fair open competition and display a keenness to cater for their customers more advantageously than their opponents, and collectors may vie with each other as to the beauty or extent of their collections, but all cannot be alike. Misfortune may come, a collector may be obliged to "sell out," or a dealer may not have advanced with the times and he may be obliged to fall out of the race. Under such circumstances, "don't kick a man when he's down."

Recently an old Sydney dealer, who was said to be one of the pioneers of philately in this country, died. Unfortunately for himself and his family he did not progress with the times and dropped out of the race, leaving his widow totally unprovided for. This is a case worthy of consideration, but as we understand, the matter is being taken up by our contemporary and will probably be ventilated elsewhere. We shall refrain from saying more on the subject at present.

All have their faults, failings and weaknesses, some are the victims of circumstances, and the man who through misfortune has suffered is entitled to more consideration than he, who, by his own mischievous act, has shaken the confidence of others. The former is to be pitied, the latter despised.

Nothing is better calculated to promote good feeling amongst collectors and dealers than "Philatelic Freemasonry."

LAURITZ L. H. MELCHIOR

One of the greatest operatic tenors of our time, Lauritz Melchior, has been added to the ever-growing number of Masons on stamps. He is one of the 15 famous opera singers featured on a set of stamps issued by Nicaragua on January 22, 1975. Melchior is depicted on the 4 centavos value in the title role of "Parsifal."

Lauritz Lebrecht Hommel Melchior was born March 20, 1890 in Copenhagen, Denmark, the son of an upper-middle class family. He sang as a boy soprano in church concerts, and after finishing school he undertook vocal lessons, eventually making his debut as a baritone April 2, 1913, at the Royal Opera House in Copenhagen as Silvio in "Pagliacci".

A few years later he switched to tenor.

Mr. Melchior was comparatively unknown until 1924 when in London he sang the part of Siegfried in "Die Walküre". His performance was such a tremendous success he was invited to sing the role of "Parsifal" at the Wagner shrine in Bayreuth, Germany. It was there the conductor of the New York Metropolitan Opera heard him and promptly engaged him. His Metropolitan debut in 1926 was as "Tannhäuser" and subsequently he had sung every important Wagnerian tenor role, remaining with the Met until 1950. He thrilled audiences singing in many other opera houses here and abroad. He also appeared in motion pictures and television.

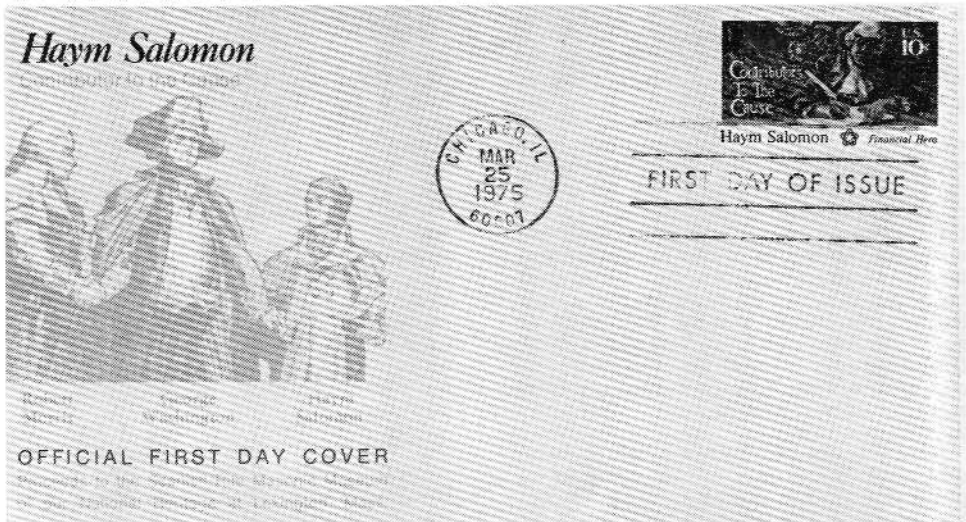
For many years he lived at The Viking, his hilltop home overlooking Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley. He died March 18, 1973 in Santa Monica, California, only two days before his 83rd birthday. He left a son, Ib, of Los Angeles and a daughter, Birte, of Copenhagen. His ashes were buried in Copenhagen.

Lauritz Melchior was made a Mason February 13, 1918, in the Lodge "Zorobabel og Frederik til det kronede Haab" in Copenhagen and was raised to the Master Mason degree on November 13, 1919. He took further degrees in 1921 and 1935. In 1928 he was honored by the National Grand Lodge of Denmark. He held honorary membership in Lodge "Mozart" in Munich and in Frederik Lodge No. 857 of New York. Brother Melchior was the recipient of many honors and distinctions from his native country as well as from Finland, France, Germany, United States, Canada, and South America. In 1944 at the 163rd annual communication of the Grand Lodge of New York he was awarded that body's Distinguished Achievement Medal.

—Marshall S. Loke

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP UNVEILING

A new stamp design commemorating Haym Salomon, merchant, banker and Revolutionary War financier was unveiled February 13, 1975, at 11 a.m. The unveiling was conducted by Postmaster Emmett E. Cooper, Jr. and Mr. Barnet Hodes, President of the Patriotic Foundation of Chicago, and Vice President of the Chicago Historical and Architectural Landmarks Committee. Mr. Hodes is a noted authority on the contributions of Haym Salomon to the American Revolution.



Salomon, one of the subjects of Lorado Taft's "Great Triumvirate of Patriots" monument here in Chicago, was born in Poland of Jewish-Portuguese parents in 1740. An advocate of Polish independence, he fled to England in 1772 and then America, where he opened a brokerage office in New York.

He was in New York only a few months before he joined the Sons of Liberty, a group of revolutionary patriots, and was twice arrested and imprisoned by the British. Later, in Philadelphia, Salomon became financial agent in America for the French government and was one of the leading dealers in bills of exchange and other securities. As a large depositor in Robert Morris' bank of North America, Salomon contributed to maintaining the new government's credit. When Morris was appointed Superintendent of Finance, he turned to Salomon for help in raising the money needed to carry on the war and later to save the emerging nation from financial collapse.

Salomon advanced direct loans to the government and also gave generously of his own resources to pay the salaries of government officials and officers. With frequent entries of "I sent for Haym Salomon," Morris' diary for the years 1781-1784 records some 75 transactions between the two men.

After the war, Salomon was almost penniless and died in 1785 before he could rebuild his business.

The first day of issue ceremony for the Haym Salomon stamp was March 25th at Chicago's Scottish Rites Cath-

edral, 915 N. Dearborn at 7:30 p.m.. Salomon himself was a Mason.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

By Whitfield J. Bell, Jr.

(Reprinted from *The Northern Light*)

For nearly two centuries American Masons have rejoiced that the nation's two earliest heroes were both members of the fraternity. Unlike in personal qualities, in their achievements for their country, even in their Masonic character and service, George Washington and Benjamin Franklin nevertheless embodied much of what was admirable in the national character.

Information about Franklin's Masonic career is disappointingly scanty. He probably first heard about Masonry when he was a journeyman printer in London in 1723-25, when the British Grand Lodge had but recently been organized, and its "Constitutions" printed. On his return to Philadelphia he heard more about the Masons, who were then establishing lodges in America.

To inform the readers of his newspaper Franklin occasionally printed in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* bits of Masonic news extracted from London papers. His curiosity about the craft grew as public notice and evidences of its work increased. To Franklin, the Masonic organization, its international links, and its broad membership that included professional men and well-to-do merchants as well as artisans, mechanics, and shopkeepers, offered greater promise than

his own Junto—the club of learned tradesmen—in promoting knowledge and virtue, twin pillars of a good society.

Perhaps Franklin applied for membership in the order and was rebuffed; perhaps he wanted only to amuse his readers with a half-serious, half-humorous account of Masonic mysteries. Whatever the motive, on December 8, 1730, the first page of the "Gazette" was filled with what purported to be a revelation of Masonic secrets. To the uninitiated it must have seemed absurd nonsense; but the brethren knew how much was truth; and Franklin—or the original London author—left no doubt what he thought: "Their grand secret," the article declared, "is that they have no secret at all. . . ." This was getting uncomfortably close to the truth. At the first possible moment after Franklin became eligible for admission (on reaching the age of 25), he was made a Mason. The "Gazette" printed no more jibes at the fraternity.

Franklin's initiation into St. John's Lodge in Philadelphia in February 1731 benefited both him and his brethren. It brought business to his shop—he reprinted the "Constitutions of the Free-Masons" for the American market in 1734, and he printed his lodge meeting notices. On the other hand, as the most facile writer in the Lodge, he was promptly called on to serve as secretary. In June 1732, for example, he was one of a committee that drafted by-laws for the Lodge. They recommended, among other things, that the Lodge purchase "the best Books of Architecture, suitable Mathematical Instruments, &c.," for the use and instruction of the members.

More important was the way Masonic ideals and practices inspired and confirmed Franklin's own ideas. The Masons offered a pattern for a world-wide party of knowledge and virtue that Franklin believed might reform society. "There seems to me at present," Franklin wrote a few months after he was made a Mason, "to be great Occasion for raising an united Party for Virtue, by forming the Virtuous and good Men of all Nations into a regular Body, to be governed by suitable good and wise Rules, which good and wise Men may probably be more unanimous in their Obedience to, than common People are to common Laws."

Such men, Franklin continued on another occasion, might "travel, every where endeavouring to promote Knowledge and Virtue; by erecting Junto's,

promoting private Libraries, establishing a Society of Virtuous Men in all parts, who shallehaddeean universal Correspondence and unite to support & encourage Virtue & Liberty and Knowledge by all Methods." This party of Virtue, Liberty, and Knowledge Franklin named the Society of the Free and Easy. The terms were taken from a Masonic song.

Masonic organization was not so formal in Franklin's day as in ours. Much of the work was done in the Entered Apprentice's Lodge, and progress through the hierarchy of offices might be swifter and less formal than with us. That explains why Franklin might be named Junior Grand Warden by the Provincial Grand Master in June 1732, less than 18 months after he entered. Two years later, in 1734, he succeeded as Grand Master.

In 1737 both Franklin and Philadelphia Masonry were seriously involved in a scandalous episode that resulted in the death of an innocent youth. David Reese, the credulous apprentice of Dr. Evan Jones, an apothecary, was eager to be made a Mason. Jones and several cronies decided to have some sport at the lad's expense. Accordingly, at the time appointed David was led into Jones' backyard, where he was made to take a gross and irreligious oath, forced to submit to several indignities, and instructed in some ludicrous signs—all of which he was told formed the first degree. Pleased with their success, the jokesters told others about it, including Franklin. They showed him a copy of the oath they had administered, Franklin laughed heartily at it, asked for a copy, and read and showed it to his cronies. Meanwhile, young Reese was prepared for the second degree. Again there was a profane invocation; he was given a libation that was in fact a purgative, and made to kiss what he was told was a book. All this was being done in the cellar of Jones' house. A pan of brandy was lighted; Reese's blindfold was removed; but the lad was unterrified. Taking up the flaming bowl, Jones approached nearer. Probably by accident the burning spirits splashed or spilled over Reese. Three days later he died of his burns.

One of the initiators fled; the others were indicted for manslaughter, and two were convicted. This made spectacular news throughout the colonies, and, the crime provided a convenient club to any who wished to beat the fraternity and Franklin.

Franklin's part was, in fact, not

wholly innocent. In his robust, earthy way he enjoyed the oath and had done nothing effective either to warn Reese he was being gulled or to stop the proceedings. In his defense he rejected imputation of connivance at the mock-initiation; but one feels that an enemy, writing in the rival "Weekly Mercury" had the better of the exchange. "But surely if Mr. F-----n has been in earnest or so serious upon the occasion, as he mentions, he would not have contributed to debauch and corrupt the minds and manners of so many by publishing and communicating to them a diabolical writing."

The sensational news was reprinted in New York and in Boston. There old Josiah Franklin and his wife read the accounts, including their son Benjamin's defense, with mounting concern. His religious opinions had long distressed Abiah Franklin; she had never liked his associations in secret orders; and here seemed proof that Masonic secrecy covered dark and criminous practices. In this spirit of anxious admonition she wrote to her son. Benjamin replied on 13 April 1738:

As to the Freemasons, . . . I know no Way of giving my Mother a better Opinion of them than she seems to have at present (since it is now*allow'd that Women should be admitted into that secret Society). She has, I must confess, on that Account, some reason to be displeas'd with it; but for any thing else I must entreat her to . . . believe me when I assure her that they are in general a very harmless sort of People, and have no principles or Practices that are inconsistent with Religion or good Manners.

These assurances were sufficient for Mrs. Franklin; in her next letter she declared she was satisfied with her son.

In 1749 Franklin, now retired from active business, was named Provincial Grand Master of Pennsylvania and the next year was appointed Deputy Grand Master. By this time the fraternity in Philadelphia was sufficiently respected, large, and prosperous, to undertake to build a hall for its own meetings and to lease for those of other bodies. Franklin was on the committee for the erection of the Freemasons' Hall, subscribed 20 pounds towards the cost, and participated in the dedication in 1755, when his son, William, as Grand Secretary, bore an open Bible in the procession.

Thus when Franklin went to London in 1757 as agent of Pennsylvania, he bore a Masonic character. Attending a Communication of the Grand Lodge of

England in 1760, he was identified as the "Provincial Grand Master." This Masonic character was useful to him in his work in England for Pennsylvania. It was to be even more useful twenty years later, when he represented the American States at the Court of France.

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