



The Masonic Philatelist

A QUARTERLY

VOL. 48

DECEMBER 1992

NO. 4



The MASONIC PHILATELIST

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DR. ALLAN BOUDREAU
PUBLISHER

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THE COLLECTORS CLUB
22 East 35th Street
New York, New York 10016
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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.

The Editor invites all members to submit items of information and articles on the subject of Masonic Philately. Typewritten copy and/or camera ready items will result in the best possible presentation of your material if it is selected for use.

X ANNIVERSARIO

GRAN LOGIA DE ESPANA

MASONERIA REGULAR

Consagrada El 6 Noviembre 1982

The first Lodge "Saint John from Catalogne No. 208 was consecrated in Perpignan, France on May 14, 1977. With the support of the Grand Lodge National of France (G.L.N.F.) the Grand Provincial Lodge of Occitania was designated. Other local Lodges followed; St. George No. 227, Perseverance No. 246 and Concord No. 257 were organized and on June 16, 1980 the District of Spain was established within the Grand Lodge National of France

By July 2, 1982 ten Lodges were operating and the Grand Lodge National France issued a decree establishing the Grand Lodge of Spain. Today, only fifteen years after the establishment of the first Lodge in 1977, the Grand Lodge of Spain has more than 60 Lodges and is recognized by most of the regular Masonic Grand Lodges throughout the world

This attractive cover commemorates the X ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONSECRATION OF THE GRAND LODGE OF SPAIN (1982-1992). A donation of \$4.00 (US) is requested for a regular cover and \$10.00 (US) for a special cover with the signature of Grand Master R. M. H. Luis Salat Gusils. All proceeds will be devoted to Masonic Charities

Please send your orders and inquiries to

Juan Sabater Pie
Ronda Guinardo, 28 30 1a
08024 Barcelona
Spain

MY HOBBY IS PHILATELY

By Herman Hearst, Jr.
P. O. Box 1583
Boca Raton FL 33429-0494

King Solomon Beethoven Lodge #232, New York City

While philately is probably the world's most popular hobby not only dollarwise but in number of adherents, it is a comparatively new hobby compared to many. Postage stamps were not invented until 1840, when Rowland Hill convinced the British Parliament that if the Post office, then losing money, reduced its rates to one-twelfth of the price it then charged, it would make more money.

Until 1840, the recipients of letters, not the senders, paid the postage for carrying them, both in the United States and abroad. This system was fine while only the wealthy possessed the ability to read and write, but as education was extended to the masses--and to the poor--more and more people began to send letters to those who simply did not have the money to accept them. Hill wisely concluded that if a system of pre-payment could be devised, the Post Office would be assured its fee before the letter would be delivered.

A bit of gummed paper, called a "label" by Rowland Hill was the device he came up with. On May 6, 1840 a black label (now called a stamp) portraying the classic features of Queen Victoria, then a young girl, was placed on sale throughout the British Isles.

Other nations watched the experiment with interest. They too were having trouble keeping the Post Office in the black. The astounding success of the Hiss scheme (he subsequently became Sir Rowland Hill for his innovation) induced other nations to follow suit. Switzerland followed in 1843. Brazil became the first Western Hemisphere nation to issue stamps, also in 1843. The United States went ahead with its plans cautiously. Even then we were a large country, and the Post Office did not know how well Americans would take to such a radical idea as paying the postage on a letter beforehand.

Stamps were issued experimentally in several of our cities: New York, New Haven, and St. Louis in 1845; Annapolis, Maryland and Alexandria, Virginia in 1846, and others. many of these are today extremely rare; none are common. Prices well into the five figures -- dollars -- are paid frequently for the rarer examples when on the original envelope. Even the more common ones on envelope can run into the hundreds.

In 1847 this country issued its first regular issue of postage stamps, a five cent stamp, picturing our first Postmaster-General, Benjamin Franklin, and a ten cent stamp, picturing our first President, George Washington. The five cent stamp as to carry a letter between points less than 300 miles distant; the ten cent for a journey between points more than that. This first issue is not rare, but it is quite popular, and specimens in extremely fine condition have brought very high prices.

The average philatelist tries to soft-pedal the dollar sign in collecting, as do most avid hobbyists. The thrill of the chase, the pleasure in acquisition, and the pride in possession are of far greater significance to the true collector. Well meaning souls often pose two questions to someone whom they have just discovered to be a philatelist: What is your collection worth? and How many stamps do you have? Neither question is a polite one, and the reply, if indeed one is forthcoming, is not apt to be a helpful one.

Nevertheless, in the past few decades the motivating factor which has induced many to take up stamp collecting has been the desire to make money. The fact that so many collectors have indeed made money with their stamps, has induced many more to fees that they too can. It is the same with the stock market. It is given to a few to be fortunate, but one can obtain no guarantee that his financial rewards will be rich ones.

The buying of sheets of our commemorative stamps has been a popular vogue. A commemorative is a stamp issued to call attention to an anniversary, to show mourning for a deceased national figure, or to be used as propaganda. In past years many different ones have been

issued each year. There are commemoratives issued not much more than fifty years ago which today sell for as much as a thousand times their original price at the Post Office. Had one bought sheets of these when they were available, one could very well retire on the proceeds. The fact that few people did buy them is easily deduced from their very scarcity.

On the other hand, thousands of hopeful "investors" are buying sheets of today's commemoratives with the fond hope that these too will boom in price the way the early ones did. It is futile to tell them that this cannot happen. Today a minimum of 130,000,000 of each commemorative is issued; on many, considerably more. Some of these earlier commemoratives which today are scarce were issued in quantities of less than a million. This is a statistic today's speculators ignore.

The Post Office, contrary to public opinion, does not redeem postage stamps. This fact has brought about an activity that exists and does a thriving business for the thousands engaged in it: the buying of unused sheets of stamps at a discount, to be sold to mail users at smaller discounts. With the literally millions and millions of dollars which have been "invested" in these mint sheets of stamps, and which will never "boom" in price, there are enough of these stamps in safe deposit vaults to keep the discount postage gentlemen in business for many years.

But stamp collecting can be a profitable hobby if one collects intelligently and wisely, buying quality material from reputable sources, a collection can only increase in value. A stamp that is scarce enough to sell for even a dollar or two can only increase in scarcity. The ravages of time have their effects on stamps, as on everything else, and a scarce stamp can only become scarcer as the years go by. (It does not necessarily follow that a common stamp can become scarce) . And since the number of philatelists has increased each year since Sir Rowland Hill came on the scene in 1840, the lessening supply of desirable stamps coupled with the increasing demand can force prices in only one direction.

Stamps are no less receptive to the basic laws of economics than are any other commodity: supply and demand provides the key. If supply is large, and demand is small, the item becomes difficult to sell. (So it is with these hoards of mint sheets, laid away by the thousands, for which there are only sellers, few buyers). But if the demand is large, and the supply small, the price trend can only be upward. (So it is with stamps which take a bit of finding, and obviously, a bit of paying.)

But the richest rewards of philately are not to be found in dollar signs. Rather, they are in the friendships to be made with philatelists, friendships that transcend race, religion and nationality. They are in the knowledge that stamp collecting brings, of history, economics, sociology, engraving, printing. They are in the satisfaction of a job well done. And with a bow somewhat in the direction of the all-important dollar sign, it also comes with in the realization that here is a hobby in which one can have his cake and eat it, too. The money invested in a good stamp collection is not spent and gone forever, as in so many hobbies, but rather a substantial part of it -- even all of it, and more -- is left, when one gives up philately, through choice or necessity.

It all started with Rowland Hill's label. It is no wonder that in 1940, the hundredth anniversary of his invention, dozens of countries besides his own (including our own United States) honored him with commemorative stamps.

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The Masonic Philatelist

DISPOSING OF YOUR COLLECTION

By Dr. Allan Boudreau

A fact of life that many of us are reluctant to face up to is that every collection eventually changes hands. Sooner or later, every collector passes his collection on to someone else. Now and then this transfer of ownership is well planned and systematic; the owner supervises the disposal of his collection. He turns his collection over to another interested person or institution by gift, trade, sale, or bequest. Unfortunately this is the exception. The more likely situation occurs when the collector dies and his widow, children, or other heirs are suddenly confronted with the problem of disposing of the collection. A collection that they frequently know little about.

Recently I was called upon to assist in the disposal of several stamp collections. The circumstances of each situation were different and involved unique factors. In some instances I was able to help. I could have been much more helpful to those seeking guidance had each collector planned for this eventuality. With that thought in mind I encourage every stamp collector to develop an intelligent strategy for building and maintaining their collection, and for the eventual disposal of the collection.

Collecting is fun! We all enjoy our collecting! If we didn't reap fun and enjoyment from this delightful diversion we would not spend our time and money on the care and feeding of our collection. Stamp collectors also realize that philately is the rare pastime that offers the promise of a return on your investment.

True, there is no guarantee that anything will increase in value. However, there is the very real possibility that your collection is worth something today and will be worth more in the future. Unlike other amusements such as cooking, jogging, hiking, supermarket shopping, or photography, your stamp collection will almost certainly always have some value. Nevertheless, the problems someone will face when the

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time comes to convert a stamp collection to cash can be very significant.

When a collector belongs to a well established philatelic group, such as the Collectors Club in New York City, the Masonic Stamp Club of New York, the American Topical Association, or the American Philatelic Society, it may be possible to contact the organization and arrange for a member to examine the collection, offer informal advice, and perhaps assist in the disposal of the collection.

One must keep in mind when they seek such friendly volunteer assistance that fellow club members are not stamp dealers. A fellow collector may not be an authority on the specific philatelic material contained in your collection. And you cannot expect a supportive volunteer to devote a great deal of time and effort organizing a chaotic accumulation. Nevertheless, a club member who lives nearby can be a great help in extending practical advice to a noncollector faced with the problem of disposing of a stamp collection.

One of the first issue one faces in disposing of a collection is determining the difference between a true collection and an accumulation. Anyone would be discouraged from shopping in a store where all the merchandise was piled up in a heap, with no price tags on the goods and no labels on the boxes. Sometimes this is a major problem. The collector himself probably knew what his own collection contained, and the treasures he has amassed. Unfortunately the collector may be the only one with the extensive first-hand knowledge of his collection necessary to identify and detail the contents.

All of this specialized knowledge is lost with the death of the collector. With that eventuality in mind we cannot overemphasize too strongly the importance of developing an intelligent strategy for building and maintaining a stamp collection, and for the eventual disposal of the collection.

The ideal postage stamp collection is one that was built with a clearly defined long term goal. Where the collector fixed the limits of a specific area and then devoted the systematic effort necessary to select the best items he could afford. Where knowledge,

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contemplation, and careful selection were employed to acquire the best items available for the price. A quality collection such as this usually takes years to build. The albums, stamp books, mountings, and other packaging are first rate, and a brief description of the contents of each is present. The cataloging and indexing is complete with the Stanley Gibbons and/or Scott catalog numbers clearly associated with items in the collection.

Also included with the ideal collection are awards received when the collection has been exhibited, correspondence with dealers and other collectors, memberships in philatelic societies, invoices and sales records for items purchased at auctions along with the names and addresses of dealers who have sold items to the collector and the record of trades with other collectors. Of course the inventory records and work sheets together with the insurance policy for the possible loss of the collection by fire or theft are key documents. A copy of these documents should be kept in a safe place apart from the collection where they will be available should the collection be lost.

The careful collector will provide for that unpleasant possibility that a valuable collection can be lost as the result of some natural disaster such as fire and flood, or by theft. The American Philatelic Society offers its members group rates for insurance against the risks of loss or damage to philatelic property. Any collector interested in this service of the American Philatelic Society insurance can write to the Society for complete details.

There are several basic methods for disposing of a stamp collection; private sale to a dealer or another collector where the complete collection is sold for a price negotiated between the buyer and seller; public auction where the collection is placed with an auction house advertised and offered for sale; and liquidation through the services of an agent in a manner similar to the sale of real estate or fine arts. Another option sometimes available is the gift of the collection to a library, museum or other non-profit organization.

A timely decision must be made as to the procedure to follow in selling the collection. The public auction or sale through an agent are

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not realistic considerations when the collection is lacking in quality, organization, and significant dollar value.

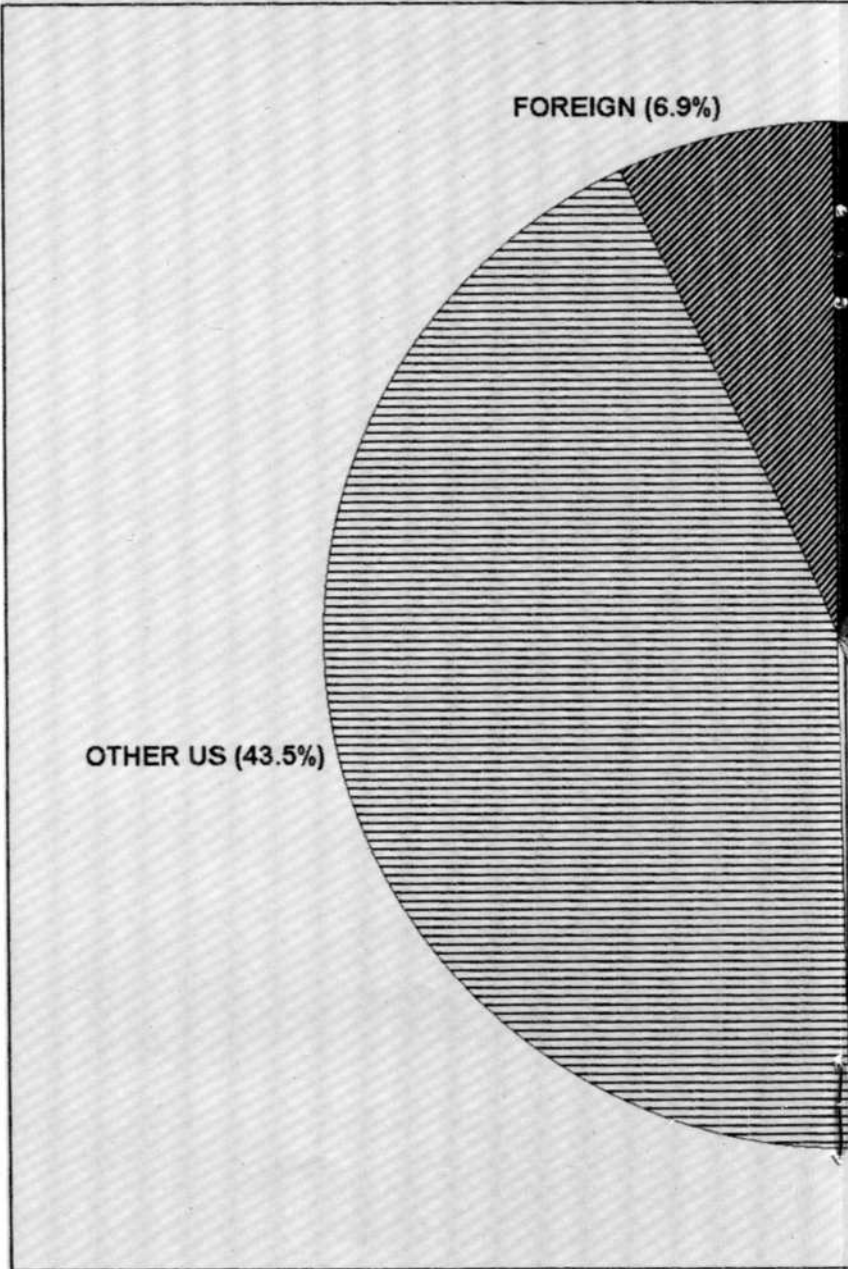
Stamp Dealers can often provide invaluable assistance in the disposal of a collection. Especially a well established stamp dealer who has built up a relationship with the collector, assisted in the development of the collection, is aware of its contents and worth, has a working relationship with other collectors in the same field, and is up-to-date on market conditions.

There are many reputable Stamp Dealers. The American Stamp Dealers Association maintains a roster of accredited dealers and will provide a list of the approved dealers in your geographic area. One must keep in mind that collections bought at retail prices are often sold at wholesale prices, considerably less than the retail price guides.

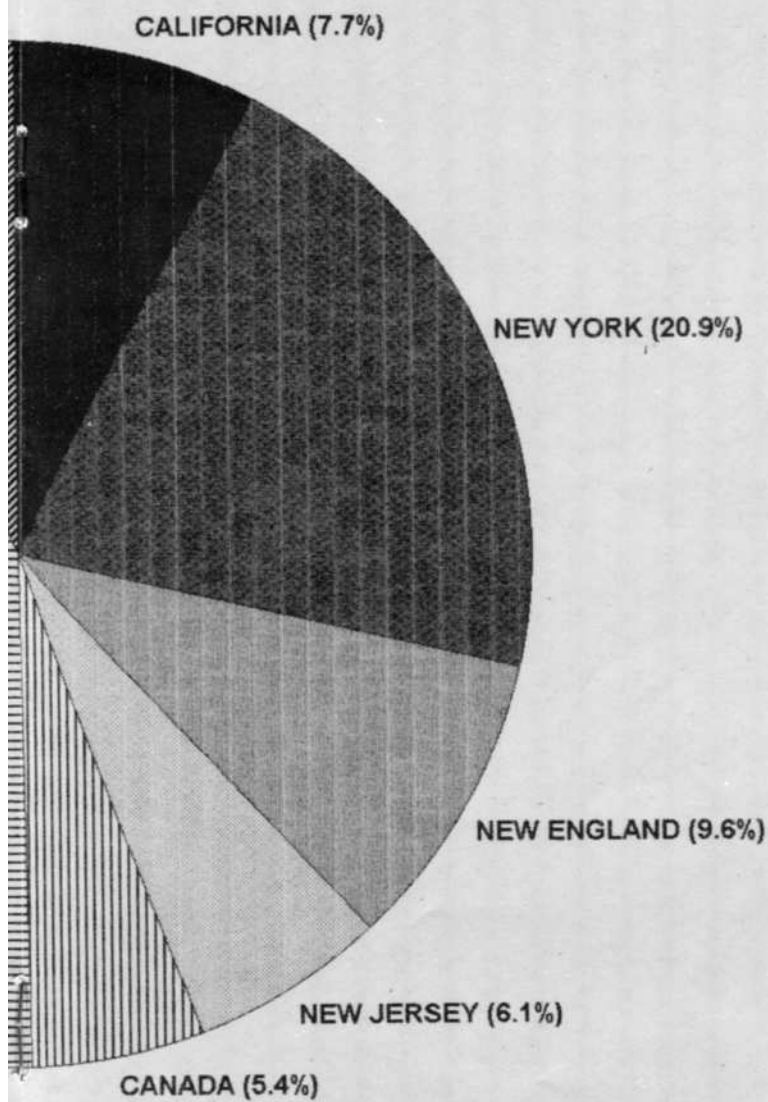
Stamp Dealers are in the business of buying and selling philatelic items. They do not have the time, or the staff, to classify, index, and price each item in your collection. You cannot expect a Stamp Dealer to serve as an unpaid consultant and devote many hours organizing, evaluating and appraising your collection. In the ideal stamp collection this important work is actually done, over the years, by the collector, as he builds the collection.

The problem of disposing of a stamp collection is usually a once in a lifetime situation, filled with the emotions resulting from the loss of a loved one. Unrealistic expectations are often present when the collector has suggested (or implied to his wife) that the collection has a value far greater than its real worth. Collectors sometimes mislead themselves, and others, by overvaluing their collections.

Frequently the most enthusiastic stamp collector will concentrate on acquiring items that have little inherent value but are of some personal interest to the collector. So too the enthusiasm a collector displays in the pursuit of his hobby can suggest to a noncollector that a great deal of money is invested. This can lead to major disappointment.



CLUB OF NEW YORK



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The Masonic Philatelist

MASONIC PHILATELY

By Robert A. Domingue

St Matthews' Lodge, Andover MA
Editor *The Philatelic Freemason*
(Journal of the ATA Masonic Study Unit)

Masonic Philately is an interesting topical field within the hobby of stamp collecting; it unites the "Hobby of Presidents and Kings" with the "Universality of Freemasonry." A collector does not have to be a member of the Craft to become involved in this hobby but knowledge of the Fraternity enhances the appreciation and enjoyment of this very interesting topic. The various collecting categories within this topic are several and one is not constrained to collecting just stamps.

But first, let us look at the basic stamp collecting categories within Masonic Philately. Of primary importance are those stamps which portray men who are known or strongly believed to be Freemasons. There are many, many stamps and Masons in this category. Within the United States the foremost category is the group of fifteen Presidents who have at least been initiated Entered Apprentices -- covering the list from George Washington to Gerald Ford. Presidents have always been key subjects for stamps in the United States with George Washington quite naturally leading the group in quantity.

Many great military leaders of our nation satisfy the dual criteria of being a Freemason and being pictured on a postage stamp. Notable inclusions in this category are General "Hap" Arnold, Admiral David G. Farragut (first Admiral of the U. S. Navy), General Nicholas Herkimer, John Paul Jones, and General Douglas MacArthur. Several of our Astronauts were Masons and can be found on postage stamps issued by foreign countries; John Glen, "Gus" Grissom, "Buzz" Aldrin, and Gordon Cooper lead this list.

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There are several organizations comprised of these topicalists and some of them publish periodic newsletters to disseminate light to the members. Overseas organizations include Masonic Philatelic Groups in Great Britain, the Netherlands, France, Italy, and South Australia. Here in the United States there are local Clubs in Denver, Colorado, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D. C. — the last, the George Washington Masonic Stamp Club, opens its membership to Masons of all areas and issues an annual newsletter. The Masonic Stamp Club of New York holds regular monthly meetings at the Collectors Club at 22 East 35th Street in New York City and publishes a quarterly magazine, The Masonic Philatelist. The Masonic Study Unit of the American Topical Association has been publishing a newsletter bi-monthly since April 1977. Annual membership dues are \$10.00 and any brother interested can contact Robert A. Domingue, 59 Greenwood Road, Andover, MA 01810.



Douglas MacArthur Centenary Cover \$2.00
 Carlos L. Inductivo P. O. Box 3312
 Manila, Philippines

The Masonic Philatelist

Add to these three categories those Freemasons who were not elevated to the presidency nor were they in the military nor did they fly in space but were noteworthy enough to be honored on a postage stamp and one has a significant number of individuals around which he could develop a meaningful collection. This later category would include Lewis and Clark, George M. Cohan, Benjamin Franklin, Clark Gable, Sam Houston, Sam Rayburn, Wendell K. Willkie, Earl K. Warren, and many more.

Collecting the stamps themselves is only part of the enjoyment of Masonic Philately -- the research aspects of the hobby can far outweigh the location/purchasing activity in time consumed and satisfaction achieved. For many of our philatelic brethren, the details of their Masonic membership are well documented and readily available; for others, however, the data is very obscure by virtue of lost or damaged records and can only be substantiated by hearsay or secondary references. Occasionally, new information is uncovered by researchers which can make Masonic Philatelic collections more complete in their knowledge base (or conversely can eliminate a subject previously thought to be a Mason such as John James Audubon).

If a collector wishes to expand his collecting interests beyond the confines of the United States, the boundaries are opened considerably. The collection can include Kings, Princes, Potentates and all other foreign Masons; the revolutionists of the South American nations provide a fertile field for collecting and research. The quantity of stamps available to the world-wide Masonic collector numbers to the hundreds, even thousands.

As alluded in the opening paragraphs, Masonic Philately can be expanded into "ancillary" areas. Some collectors feel constrained by only collecting Masons who are pictured on postage stamps -- they prefer to expand their interests to include stamp designs which are related to the lives of certain Freemasons. For example, the Liberty Bell was cracked when tolling the death of Chief Justice John Marshall, a Mason. The Liberty Bell is pictured on stamps so they would be applicable. Frank A. Banks was the supervising engineer of the Grand Coulee Dam -- again a Mason and a stamp design. James A.

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Naismith, founder of the game of basketball, John Gutzon and Lincoln Borglum, sculptors of Mount Rushmore, and Frank E. Herring, the first sponsor of Mother's Day, suggest further opportunities for collection enhancement. The possibilities are endless and are bounded only by the collectors imagination and desire for research.

Examination of stamp designs and the use of a little bit of imagination and creativity can yield a collection of stamps which picture each and every symbol of Masonry. A working knowledge of Masonic ritual is extremely helpful in this aspect of the topical collection. Many foreign nations have issued stamps which honor Masonic anniversaries such as Grand Lodge foundings and picture Masonic symbols directly.

A very popular adjunct to stamp collecting is the field of cacheted cover collecting. This medium allows the enhancement of stamp design by added information in the form of illustrations, photographs and text. Masonic Cacheted Covers date back to the 1920's and the number of creations total in the thousands. A catalog of these covers has been compiled for reference purposes.

In the later part of the nineteenth century postmasters used hand cancels to dispatch letters and to ensure that the stamps were not reused. These cancels were made of cork or other suitable materials and were often crafted into unique designs. Quite naturally, several postmasters who were members of the Craft chose the Square and Compasses as their design; other Masonic symbols such as the Square, a Triangle, and an Open Book were also used. The application created stamps and covers which are quite rare and very much sought after today.

(Dr. S. Duffield Swan a long time officer of the Masonic Stamp Club of New York published many examples of these "Masonic" Cancellations in his definitive lists)

Each of these facets of Masonic Philately could be used to establish a worthwhile collection by themselves or combinations thereof can result in a very impressive collection which serves not only as a hobby but as a powerful research and education tool. The number of Masonic Philatelists throughout the world is limited when compared to the total number of stamp collectors.

The Supreme Council
MOTHER COUNCIL OF THE WORLD
OF THE
THIRTY-THIRD AND LAST DEGREE

THE SCOTTISH RITE JOURNAL
DR. JOHN W. BOETTJER, 33°
MANAGING EDITOR



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ANCIENT AND ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE OF
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September 18. 1992

Dr. Allan Boudreau
The Masonic Philatelist
C/O Collectors Club
22 East 3 th Street
New York, NY 10016

Dear Brother Boudreau,

Thank you for your letter of September 11, 1992, commenting on the September issue of The Scottish Rite Journal which features an article on Masonic philately by Robert A. Domingue. I am pleased to know you have received several inquired regarding the Masonic Philatelist because of this article.

Per your request, I am enclosing two copies of the September issue in this mailing.

Congratulations on your lifelong service to Freemasonry in so many ways!

Cordially and fraternally,

John W. Boettjer
Managing Editor



MONSIEUR JEAN PROUTEAU
1 RUE VERLAINE
17000 LA ROCHELLE



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Oct.31 st 1992

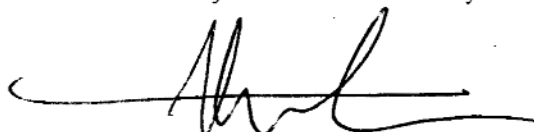
Dr Allan BOUDREAU
1 Washington Square Village
New York N Y 10012

Dear Brother Boudreau,

Thanks very much for your nice letter dated Oct.23. You can reproduce my work appeared on the back page of September-October in the last issue of 'Actualites ', in a future issue of the Masonic Philatelist. I will be very glad.

I took necessary action in order your change of address be known by our managing Director and editor.

Yours sincerely and fraternally.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JP' or similar, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Jean Prouteau

PHILATHÉLIE

Les nouveautés par le R.F. Jean Prouteau

France :

Une très belle oblitération temporaire (10 mai 1992 à Ham, Somme) vient d'honorer la mémoire du Général et Comte d'Empire Maximilien Foy (1775-1825).

Il fut Vénérable d'Honneur de la R.L. "La Bienfaisance" à l'Orient du Havre.

Une flamme a été mise en service en juillet à Montauban R.P. Elle est à l'effigie de Jean-Bon Saint-André.

Il fut Vénérable de la R.L. "Napoléon et Joséphine" à l'Orient de Mayence.



Grande Bretagne :

Une magnifique oblitération datée du 10 juin 1992 a marqué le 275^{ème} anniversaire de la formation de la Grande Loge Unie d'Angleterre. Elle représente le "Freemason's Hall" sis Greet Queen street à Londres.



Autriche :

Une oblitération temporaire de Rosenau datée 10/12 avril 1992 nous rappelle que la Franc-Maçonnerie est apparue il y a 250 ans en Autriche.



Etats-Unis :

Le 9 mars 1992 un timbre de 29 c. a été mis en circulation. C'est le portrait de Earl Warren quatorzième Président de la Cour Suprême des Etats-Unis. Il était membre de la R.L. "Sequoia n° 349" de Oakland (Ca). Il fut Grand Maître de la Grande Loge de Californie en 1935. Il était aussi Knight Templar et 33^{ème} d'Honneur A.A.S.R. (S.J.).



Jamaïque :

Une série très colorée de quatre timbres a été émise le 1er mai 1992 pour marquer avec éclat le 250^{ème} anniversaire de la présence de la Franc-Maçonnerie anglaise à la Jamaïque.





Masonicalia Society of Alberta

P.O. Box 4271, Station 'C', Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2T 5N1

THE MASONICALIA SOCIETY OF ALBERTA

The Masonicalia Society of Alberta is a non-profit society organized within the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Alberta, Canada.

Membership in the Society is comprised of members of the Craft who are interested in Masonic collecting of a generalized nature. Items gathered by its members include artwork, books, certificates, gadgets, implements, jewels, ornaments, photographs, postcards, regalia, stamps, summonses, tokens and even furniture. Current members hail from Canada, Great Britain, Australia and the United States.

The Society is headquartered in Calgary, Alberta and two types of memberships are available:

1. Regular Membership: for members who reside within the jurisdiction who are able to interact directly in the Society's activities through attendance and participation in locally arranged events.
2. Subscribing Membership: for members who reside at a distance or in other Masonic jurisdictions which are in amity with the Grand Lodge of Alberta and where participation is generally by correspondence.

The Society's focus is on three major activities:

1. The gathering of Masonic related items of every nature.
2. The study of such items and the dissemination of information.
3. The safeguarding and preservation of such collectibles.

In order to encourage and foster friendly and cordial relationships between members, equality rather than rank, governs. Members are encouraged to be influenced by the 'Level!'

For information on the Society, please contact Tom Hargreaves at the above address or phone: (403) 282-8091.

SIR ALEXANDER FLEMING

by Nick Batalias

As I was perusing through my Ten Thousand Freemasons books, doing some research for our Masonic Stamp Club, the name of Alexander Fleming caught my eye. Memories of an illness I had as a young sailor quickly came to mind.

I was very proud of the fact that I had just received my Able Bodied Seaman papers and was on my way to pick up my ship SS Marine Leader, which was a chartered ship with the Standard Oil Fleet. On the way to Bayonne, I felt pain at the base of my spine, but thought nothing of it. The SS Marine Leader left on a foreign voyage that evening, as tankers never stay in port long. I was on the four to twelve shift at the helm, and never gave much thought to the pain at the base of my spine that evening as I was busy getting acquainted with the crew. The pain had become much worse by the next morning's watch, and I could barely stand up. Captain Nagel came to the bridge, and quickly asked the second mate what was the matter with me. I was a little embarrassed, because this was my first cruise as an Able Bodied Seaman, but the pain soon became unbearable by the end of my watch. As soon as the Captain saw the swelling at the base of my spine he called the purser, who knew First Aid, up to the bridge. He diagnosed it as a pionidle cyst, and administered a shot of penicillin. By the end of the voyage my cyst was completely dried up and the purser was able to lance it as well as give me several more shots of penicillin. The miracle drug killed any infection, and allowed me to heal properly so that I could continue my duties on the ship.

The Brother Mason who discovered penicillin was born August 6, 1881, on a small farm in Ayrshire, Scotland, where he had to walk eight miles every day in order to attend school. He later moved to Kilmarnock, Scotland, where he attended an academy school. Fourteen year old Alexander finished his technical education in London where he was living with an older brother. Working for a steamship line kept him busy while attending college. Graduating with honors from St. Mary's Medical School in 1908, the newly created Doctor accepted a position with Sir Almoth Wright, one of the great medical men at that time.

While still in medical school, Alexander Fleming found the time to join the London Scottish Rifles, a regiment of volunteer soldiers and became an expert rifleman. At the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Dr. Fleming was made a Captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps. While continuing to work with Almoth Wright, Dr. Fleming studied wound infections.

Fleming became a Mason in Sancta Maria Lodge on June 8, 1909, #26082. He was installed Worshipful Master in 1924 and later served as Secretary. He received Distinguished Achievement Award from the Grand Lodge of New York in 1953. Brother Fleming joined Misericordia Lodge #3286 in London in 1925, became its Worshipful Master in 1935, and its Treasurer in 1942. He was exalted by the Royal Arch Masons of England, Chapter #2410 on July 27, 1923, and was their High Priest in both 1931 and 1942.

Brother Fleming died of a heart attack in his home in London on March 11, 1955.

When I was a young man, I did not realize that it was Brother Alexander Fleming who discovered penicillin and helped me become an "Able Bodied Seaman" again.

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