

the Watermark

Canada's Online Masonic Stamp Newsletter



Beware The Ides Of March

The famous line “beware the Ides of March “ is familiar to most people. William Shakespeare penned the line in his play “Julius Caesar” and refers to the warning to Caesar by a soothsayer that he would be assassinated on his way to the Theatre of Pompey by the Ides of March. Caesar scoffed at the idea and laughed and jokingly said to the seer, "The Ides of March have come", pointing out the fact that the Ides had arrived and the prophecy had not been fulfilled, to which the seer replied "Ay,

Caesar; but not gone! We all know what happened to Caesar he was stabbed 23 times and didn't make it to the theater. What are Ides and what do they have to do with our fraternity? The Latin word "Idus" is the root of Ides and means "half division" usually in relation to the Roman calendar indicating the approximate day that was the middle of the month. The Romans used it for the 15th day of the months of March, May, July, and October, and the 13th day of the remaining months. The Ides of

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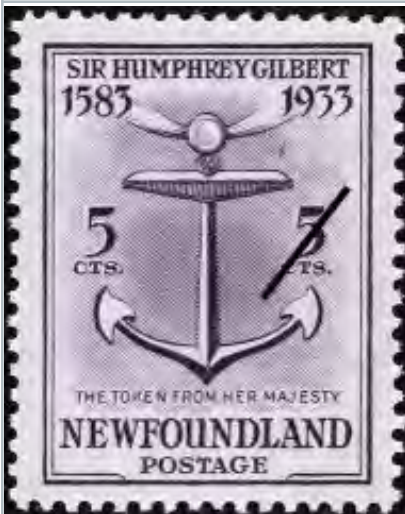
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Masonic Symbolism On Stamps

“Freemasonry is a peculiar system of morally veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols”

Many collectors of Masonic stamps enjoy the challenge of identifying and collecting stamps that depict Masonic symbols or include symbolic references in their design.

There are numerous stamps that have nothing to do with the Craft, but the designer included images and symbols that are incorporated in to Masonic ritual that we use to illustrate the allegorical meaning of the lesson being presented in the ritual. The search for

these symbols is only hampered by the individuals knowledge of symbolism. The fun and challenge is further enhanced because there are numerous concordant bodies (other organizations that only Freemasons can join) affiliated with mainstream Freemasonry. Each of these organizations is rich in symbolism that the average Master Mason is not likely to be familiar with unless they continue the



journey by joining them as well.

In most countries Freemasons are charged with reading and studying to learn more are about their Craft and by doing so the stamp collector is better able to recognize other symbolism related to Masonry. So why not take up the challenge and see how many you can find?

Masonic Stamp Book

There are not many books dedicated to Masonic Philately let alone books that deal with a specific subject within the Fraternity.

I book that I recommend you add to your library is “Prominent Prince Hall Masons on Philatelic Materials” compiled by Brother Sherrod N. Gresham of North Carolina. You can obtain a copy by contacting Gresham Coins Stamps and Medals

P.O. Box 334
 Knightdale, NC 27545
 e-mail: greshamcoins1@hotmail.com
 phone: 919-266-5579





Anti-Masons of the Month

Marshall Philippe Pétain and Bernard Marie Louis Fay

French soldier and statesman, Philippe Pétain was born 24th April 1856 at Cauchy-à-la-Tour. Pétain rose rapidly through ranks of the French Army. In WWI he was promoted to general and after the successful defense of the city of Verdun (the French saw it as a victory) he received much praise and acclaim. After a series of mutinies in the French Army he was made the commander in chief of the French Army in 1917. In 1918 he was promoted to Marshall and after defeating Abd-el-Krime in Morocco in 1929 he was appointed Inspector-General of the Army and he served as France's Minister for War between February and November 1934. In 1939 he retired from the Army and became ambassador to Spain. For most of his professional life Marshal Pétain was respected and revered, after he was called home from Spain in 1940 he transformed from a national hero to a traitor. France was on the verge of being overrun by Hitler's troops and Pétain accepted the position of Prime Minister. Instead of rallying the French people to fight off the Germans, Pétain surprised nearly everyone by agreeing to an armistice with the

Germans on June 22nd effectively dividing the country in half.

Under the terms of the agreement, the Germans ran the territory they had occupied during their invasion while Pétain, and his appointed National Assembly comprised of authoritarian, anti-parliamentary, anti-communist and anti-capitalist hacks based in Vichy, ran the other half of the country. In preparation for planned full occupation of France scheduled for November 1942. The puppet National Assembly government gave Pétain the right to rid Vichy France of its "moral decadence". Anticipating Nazi demands (or simply wanting to please his masters he created new laws aimed at freemasons and Jews, excluding them from most businesses and public functions.

He ordered the police to aid the Nazis in rounding up those he and the assembly considered to be decadent, resulting in over 77,000 Jewish citizens being deported to death camps. When the Allies liberated France Pétain and many of his supporters fled to Germany but he eventually crossed into Switzerland and surrendered to the French authorities on 26th April 1945.

The Ides of March Continued

March was special in that they held a festival dedicated to their god or war (Mars) with a military parade usually held in his honour. Today (and for some time) Freemasons like Caesar have ignored the soothsayer and ignored the warning of our demise and carry on as if everything will stay the same. Our fraternity has always had its critics who have mocked us and ridiculed us and branded us as a secret society that controls the world's governments and economies. For most of our existence we have been able to ignore them and not respond to their outlandish and ridiculous claims because we did not live in the information age. But times have changed. The conspiracy theorists, nut bars, religious bigots and all forms of axe grinders have embraced the new communication technologies. Meanwhile lodges around the world have not only aged and lost membership, they have continued to act as if nothing has changed or can happen to this wonderful institution. Not only are we going to see increased attacks on our credibility, in many countries our basic civil rights are under attack. In many communities we are simply going to cease to exist because our refusal to accept the fact that we can no longer avoid defending ourselves or change the way we operate our lodges. Failure to refute the falsehoods tossed at us and failing to create Lodges that are welcoming to new members instead of chasing them away with boring business meetings that accomplish nothing will result the death of this institution. Instead we have identify and meet the needs our members so we can survive. Let's not follow Caesar and ignore the Ides of March!



Anti-Masons Continued

He was brought before the High Court of Justice, and found guilty of collusion with the enemy and high treason. He was stripped of all rank except the title of Marshall (only Parliament could do that), all of his goods were ordered confiscated and he was sentenced to death. In view of Pétain's advanced age, General de Gaulle agreed to commute the death sentence to life imprisonment. He died in prison on 23rd July 1951, at the age of 95, and against his wish to be buried in the tomb prepared for him at Verdun he was buried in a simple grave at Port-Joinville cemetery.

Bernard Marie Louis Faÿ (1893-1978) was a Harvard trained French historian of Franco-American relations and was the director of the French National Library (Bibliothèque Nationale) during the Vichy regime. Marshal Pétain appointed him as the Director of the anti-Masonic service with the responsibility of overseeing the repression of French freemasons. Bernard Faÿ and his sidekick Gueydan de Roussel created a list of over 170,000 names taken from the seized archives of alleged secret societies, which Marshal Pétain believed, were the root cause of all of France's problems.

The lists of all freemasons were published in the Vichy government's official gazette and

nearly 3000 lost their jobs. Many Catholic publications published the lists to show the Church's support of the Vichy government by demonstrating its contempt for freemasonry. For the four years of the Vichy regime Fay edited and published a monthly review *Les Documents maçonniques* ("Masonic Documents") in which he published anti-Masonic propaganda.

As part of his anti Masonic propaganda Fay produced a film entitled *Forces Occultes* in 1943. The film depicted how world wide Masonic subversion existed and how it was in league with the Illuminati, Jewish financiers in England and the USA with the goal of involving France in a war against Germany. This film is still cited by anti-Masonic nuts as proof of the grand Masonic conspiracy to rule the world.

In addition to hating Freemasons he was a staunch anti-Semite and was suspected of being a Gestapo Agent. Many historians believe that Bernard Faÿ was directly responsible for nearly 1,000 deportations of French Freemasons to concentration camps where at least 589 of them were shot.

In 1946 an unrepentant and defiant Bernard Faÿ was arrested and tried as a collaborator. When question in court he stated, *"I was glad to have in my hands the*



instrument capable of renovating the country. My mission was to organize a service for the detection of the Freemasons and masonic archives. To be successful in that work, I was obligated to have relations with the Germans, especially as they had an organization parallel with ours." At the age of 54 he was sentenced to forced labour for life, but he escaped five years later and fled to Switzerland where he resumed his teaching career. French President René Coty pardoned him in 1959.

To this day ultra Catholics and anti-masons revere him for his persecution of Masonry and admire his defiant stance against Freemasonry but in their glorification of him never mention the fact that he was responsible for the death of nearly 600 men whose only crime was to exercise their rights to belong to an organization that in France was based on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.



Canadian Mason of the Month

Thomas Clement "Tommy" Douglas (1904-1986) the father of Medicare was a was a Scottish-born Baptist minister who led the first social democratic government in North America becoming the 7th Premier of the Province of Saskatchewan in 1942 and holding the position until 1961. He introduced single payer, universal health care to Canada and went on to become the leader of the Federal New Democratic Party. In an informal poll he was voted one of Canada's greatest men. In addition to being a member of Weyburn Lodge No. 20 GRS, Weyburn, SK is was the grandfather of actor Keifer Sutherland.

Masonic Stamp of the Month

Prince Hall (Barbados 1976 Scott #443)

Arguably the most shameful aspect of Freemasonry has been the denial of membership in some jurisdictions of our Black Brethren. Freemasonry espouses equality but to this day some American jurisdictions still refuse to acknowledge Prince Hall Masons. Prince Hall (1735-1807) was a free literate black man and abolitionist in the Free Black community of Boston. Politically active, he petitioned Massachusetts for the abolition of slavery and worked for laws to protect free blacks from being kidnapped by slave traders and fought for the education of black children. In early 1775, Brother Hall petitioned St.



John's lodge in Boston but was denied membership. Shortly thereafter he and 14 other free black men petitioned a British army Lodge of Freemasons attached to the 38th Foot Regiment, and were initiated into Irish Military Lodge No. 441 on March 6, 1775. When the regiment withdrew from the area Sergeant John Batt, issued the 15 men a limited permit on March 17, 1775 allowing the group certain Masonic privileges as well as permission to meet as a lodge. On July 3, 1775, African Lodge No. 1, the first lodge of Black Free and Accepted Masons in the world was created, and Prince Hall was made its Worshipful Master. The Provincial Grand Master John Rowe granted the new lodge a second limited permit to continue their activities but by the end of the war of independence the lodge still had not been granted a permanent charter. On September 29, 1784, after nine years of waiting a the Grand Lodge of England granted them a charter authorizing the organization of African Lodge No. 459 in Boston with Prince Hall as master. The official charter arrived in Boston on April 29, 1787. Prince Hall's dream of integrating blacks into white lodges were eventually abandoned and in 1791, black Freemasons met in Boston and formed the African Grand Lodge of North America and Hall was unanimously elected its Grand Master and served until his death. A year after his death the African Grand Lodge was renamed the Prince Hall Grand Lodge and in 1827 the African Grand Lodge declared its independence from the United Grand Lodge of England and all White Lodges in the United States. Today Prince Hall Lodges exist throughout the world and most mainstream jurisdictions now except and recognize the legitimacy of their Prince Hall brethren. Sadly racism still exists in the hearts and minds of some Freemasons and they continue to poison their souls and the fraternity with hatred instead of complying with the tenants of the Craft that they espouse.

You can find previous editions of the Watermark online at <http://bytown.ottawamasons.com>.



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