

THE PHILATELIC FREEMASON

Journal of the
MASONIC STUDY UNIT



Editor
Robert A. Domingue
59 Greenwood Road
Andover, Mass. 01810

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SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2000

WHOLE NO. 139

NICOLA PICCINI

Italy issued a stamp on May 6, 2000, to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the Death of Nicola Piccini.



Nicola Piccini was born January 16, 1728, in Bari, Italy. He entered the Conservatorio San Onofrio in Naples when he was fourteen. Sponsored by the Prince of Ventimiglia, his first opera, Le donne dispettose, 1754, was a success. In 1758 he went to Rome to produce his new opera Alessandro nell'Indie. He soon became the most celebrated composer in the city. His comic opera, La Cecchina, 1760, was considered the best of that genre prior to Rossini. In 1762 he wrote six operas which were performed simultaneously at six theaters. The Romans tired of him in 1773 and he returned to Naples. In 1776 he was invited to Paris where he gave singing lessons to the Queen and wrote Roland. In 1779 he was commissioned to write an opera, Iphigenie en Tauride; Gluck's version of the same libretto was performed first and found more favor. In 1780 Gluck left Paris and Piccini remained. His popularity soon declined and when the French Revolution began, he returned to Naples. Suspected of Republican ideas, he was closely watched by the King. In 1798 he was permitted to return to France where he was added to the faculty of the Paris Conservatory. Piccini wrote well over 100 operas of which few are ever performed today. At his best, his melodic drama equalled his rival Gluck. He died at Passy, France, on May 7, 1800.

Bro. Nicola Piccini was a member of the Lodge of Nine Sisters, Paris.

-article provided by our Unit President, Bro. Norman Lincoln

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

NEW MEMBERS:

TBD. Marco Novarino

ADDRESS CHANGES:

260. Edwin H. Shane, 1807 Jefferson St, Mission, TX 78572

388. Ronald J. Young, 9261 West 98th Way, Broomfield, CO 80021

CLOSED ALBUMS:

244. Grahame A. West, late of Storrington, West Sussex, England

The Fraternity and our special hobby has lost a wonderful member and supporter in Bro. West. He passed to the G.L. above on August 18. He was extremely active in The Masonic Philatelic Club, Great Britain, and spread his knowledge and friendship over a large circle. I had the honor and pleasure of meeting Bro. Grahame a few years ago during one of his trips to the USA. He and his wife stayed at a hotel not far from my home; we were able to meet and I gave him a tour of Andover. This wonderful man, Mason and Philatelist will be sorely missed. Our condolences to his family.

Bro. Jean-Claude Vilespy of Bouc Bel Air, France, has created a Web Site on Masonic Philately and research, the only one of its type in the world. Based on the "Freemason's chronicles", it presents a stamp catalogue and regularly features world novelties and other stamp enunitions. It can be accessed by <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/maril>. He has also created a "forum" to "talk" about those subjects - in French, English or Spanish; its access is <http://club.viola.fr/do/admin/philatelie-macconique>. - I must admit that when Bro. Jean-Claude first informed me of this Web site in April I did not pass on the information. My limited capability on the Internet resulted in my not being able to access his Site and I did not want to report it if I couldn't vouch for it. I visited the Site a couple of weeks ago, it is impressive.

Bro. Trevor Fray has rewritten and republished his booklet "Answering Our Critics". He has also written a "tongue in cheek" mystery story with a Masonic flavor. The cost of the 67 page booklet dealing with many aspects of the anti-Masonic attitude in today's world, is 8 pounds Sterling for UK residents and 10 pounds Sterling outside the UK - in Sterling currency or Sterling cheque. Anyone ordering the book will also receive the mystery story. His address is 76 Merrivale Road, Beacon Park, Plymouth PL2 2RP, England.

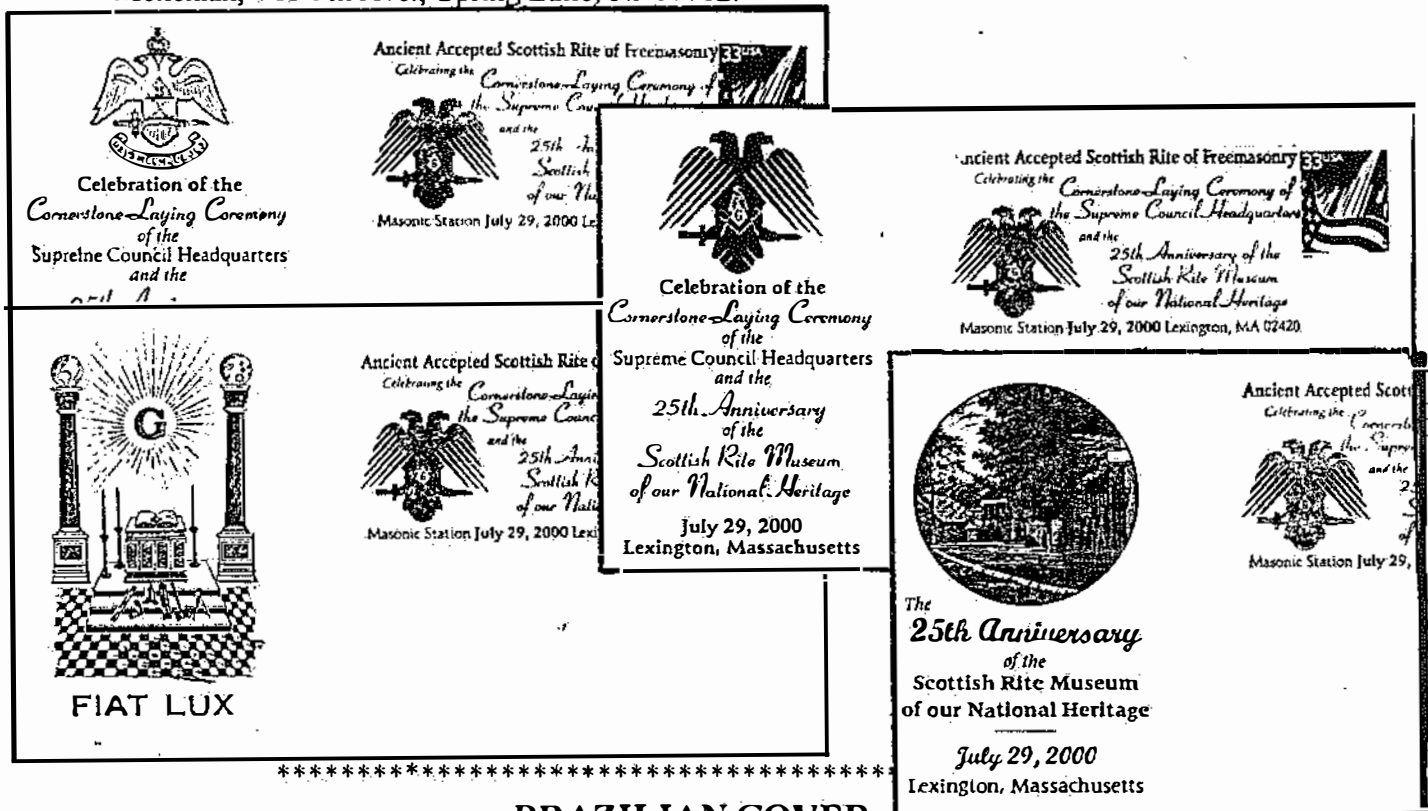
Bro. Ross Wetreich has decided to sell his stamp and cover business. Consequently, he will not be producing his Masonic Cacheted covers as he has been doing for many years.

Bro. Norman Lincoln is involved in opening a Commandery of Knights Templar in Eaton, Ohio; the first new Commandery in Ohio in 33 years. He could use any uniforms, swords or other paraphernalia if anyone has any they don't need.

Bro. Eddie Levey of Victoria, Australia, informs us of his busy schedule in Masonry, including an Open Day at his new Temple in Mildura and the establishment of a garden bed on the main street of town which displays the Square and Compasses.

COVERS FOR THE SCOTTISH RITE MUSEUM ANNIVERSARY

In the July-August issue of the Newsletter, an article touched briefly on a set of covers prepared for the Cornerstone Laying Ceremony of the Supreme Council Headquarters and the 25th Anniversary of the Scottish Rite Museum of our National Heritage. These covers are now ready and are available for a cost of \$15.00 for the set from Bro. M. Richard Mekenian, 711 5th Ave., Spring Lake, NJ 07782.



BRAZILIAN COVER

The Clube Filatélico Maçonico do Brasil has issued a cover for the 10th Anniversary of the Lodge Joacy Palhano No. 2585 of Vitoria, ES, Brazil. They are available from the Club, P.O. Box 3085, 88010-970 Florianopolis - SC - Brazil.



ERICH WEISS - HARRY HOUDINI - THE MASTER MAGICIAN

- contributed by Bro.
Norman Lincoln

Bro. Erich Weiss has been pictured on covers over the years and has now been honored as part of the "Entertainers of the Century" stamps of Angola and Chad.



Bro. Harry Houdini was born Erich Weiss in Budapest on March 24, 1874. In 1878 the family migrated to Appleton, Wisconsin, where his father was a Rabbi. He left school at the age of twelve performing magic acts in carnivals, amusement parks and vaudeville. Though only 5'4" tall, he was an excellent athlete and swimmer which helped his escape acts. He adopted the name Harry Houdini from French magician Jean Robert-Houdin and Bro. Harry Keller.

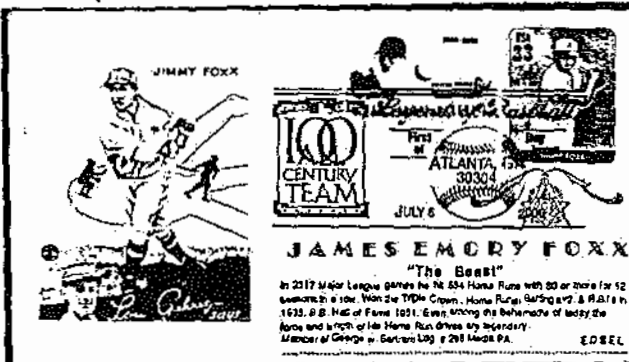
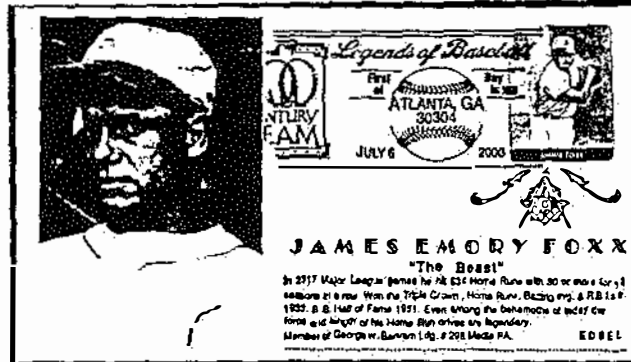
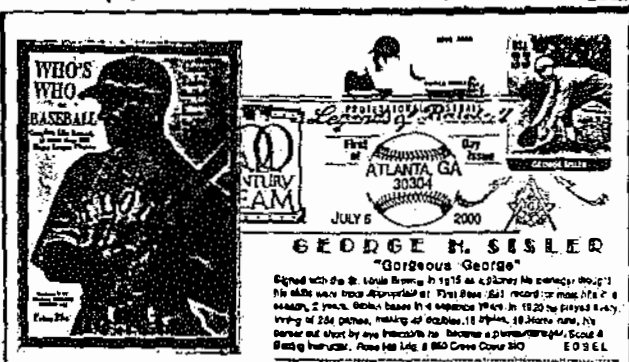
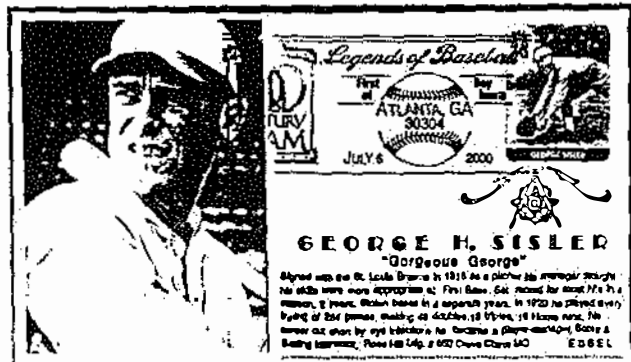
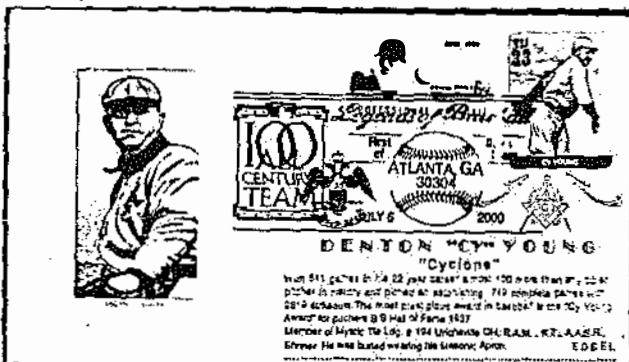
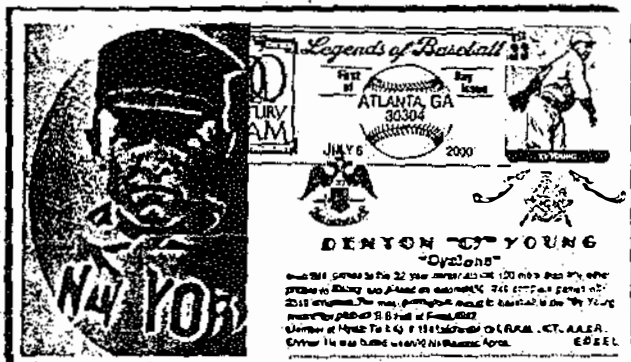
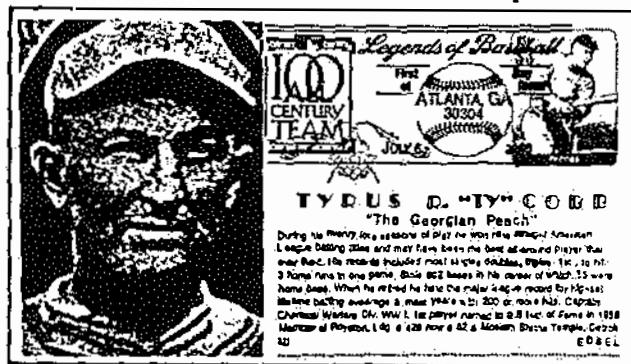
On June 22, 1894, he married Wilhelmina Beatrice Rahner who was Catholic. Despite this difference, their marriage was a happy one, though they had no children. He was also very close to his mother who died in New York in 1913. His brother, Theo, was his assistant in some of his acts until replaced by his wife. About 1895 he began to challenge police departments that he could escape from their handcuffs and jail cells. He became so adept at this that his bookings and salary increased rapidly. Houdini's secret was that he spent long hours studying locks and keys until he was an expert. He was also able to hide keys and picks from his audiences. One early illusion was where he was handcuffed, put in a sack and locked in a trunk. In a few seconds he appeared on stage with his wife Bess locked in the trunk. While there were many magicians, Harry Houdini's showmanship exceeded all others. His egotism was also unmatched and he scorned imitators and attacked critics. He was also generous to destitute perers.

In 1900 he and Bess travelled to England and later toured Europe. Back in Detroit, he gained much publicity from his escape from the frozen river. By 1912 he was earning \$1000 per week in New York. He then made several movies and played the London Palladium at \$3750 per week. After his mother's death, he became interested in spiritualism attending seances and exposing fake mediums. For a time he was a friend of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He had a collection of magical props and books and also wrote several books on the art of magic. His illusions of the Milk Can, the Chinese Water Torture and Walking Through a Wall became legendary. On Oct. 22, 1926, a McGill student hit him in the abdomen at the Princess Theater in Montreal. He died of peritonitis on Oct. 31st and was buried in Machpelah Cemetery, Brooklyn, NY.

On Aug. 21, 1923, Bro. Weiss was raised in St. Cecile Lodge No. 568, New York. He later joined the Scottish Rite and Mecca Shrine Temple.

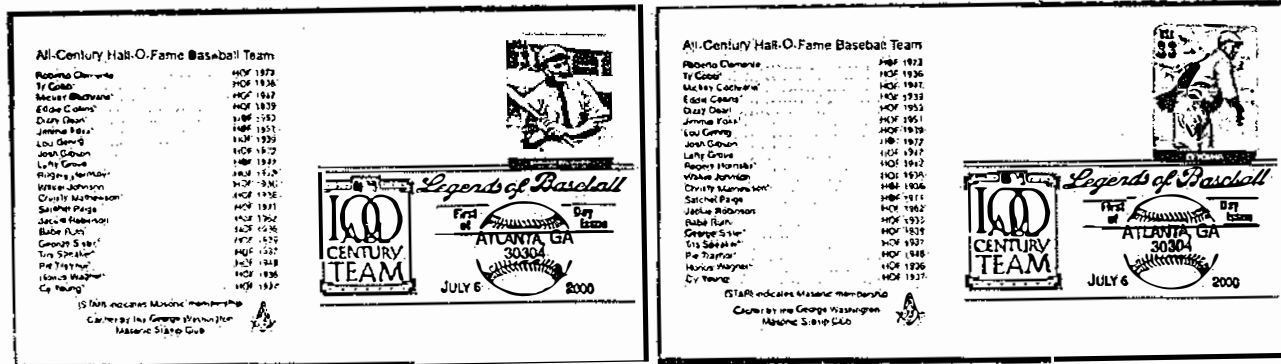
MASONIC BASEBALL PLAYERS - ON COVER

In the previous issue of the Newsletter, we featured the Masons included in the recent USPS Baseball All Stars set. Bro, Edsel Hatfield, P.O. Box 36, Hazelwood, MO 63042, has prepared two sets of covers - one using photo plaques, the other using plaques of baseball cards as the cachet. Examples are shown here.



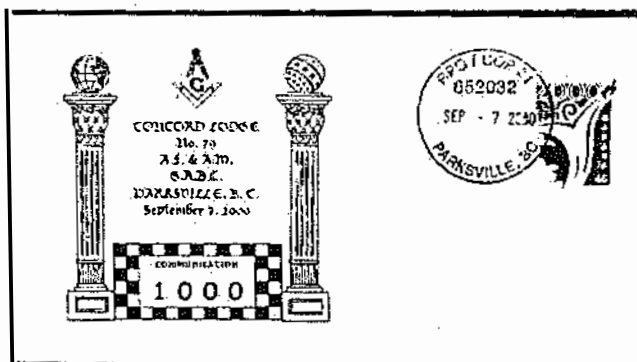
GWMSC COVERS FOR THE BASEBALL STAMPS

The George Washington Masonic Stamp Club also developed a cover for the Baseball All Stars. Their set consists of 20 covers, one for each stamp, with the same cachet on each. Examples are shown here. This set is available at a cost of \$30.00 from Bro. Stan Longenecker, 930 Wood Street, Mount Joy, PA 17552-1926. (Bro. Stan comments that the USPS did a poor job in applying their First Day of Issue cancel - in many instances, the upper bars cut right through the players name, making it quite difficult to read it.)



CANADIAN MASONIC COVER

On September 7, 2000, Concord Lodge No. 79, A.F. & A.M. on the Grand Registry of British Columbia, Canada, celebrated its 1000th Communication. To commemorate this event, Bro. Stan Freestone, a stamp collector but not a philatelist - per his description - developed the cover which is illustrated here. An enclosure provides a thumb-nail sketch of the Lodge beginnings. Any one who wishes to obtain a numbered copy (or copies) of this cover at a cost of \$3.00 each can contact him at 814 Stanhope Road, Parksville, British Columbia, Canada V9P 2T7, by phone at 250-248-4674 or by e-mail at peaches@nanaimo.ark.com



MASONIC STUDY UNIT OF THE AMERICAN TOPICAL ASSOCIATION

Secretary-Treasurer

Otto Steding
1033 Hollytree Drive
Cincinnati, OH 45231

Membership

\$8.00 - North America
\$14.00 All Other

President

Norman Lincoln
P.O. Box 454
Eaton, OH 45320

JOSEPH WARREN "VINEGAR JOE" STILLWELL



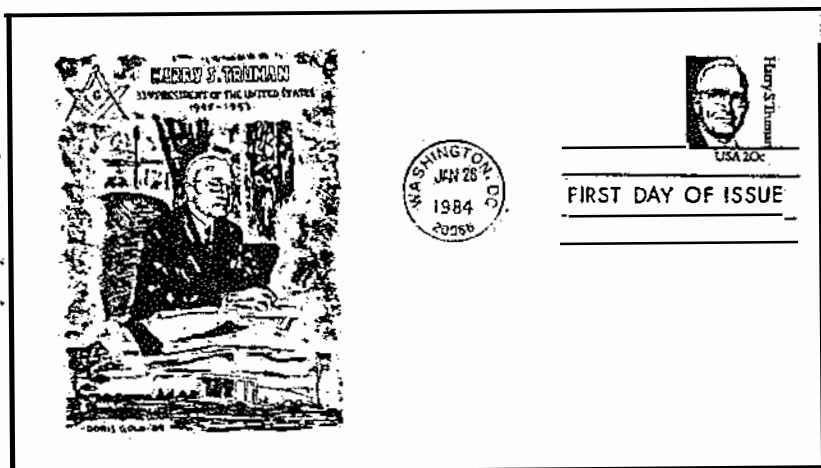
The recent 10 cent stamp issued at the APS Philatelic Show in Providence, RI, in August pictures Bro. Joseph Warren Stillwell who was raised in West Point Lodge No. 877 on June 1, 1917.

Bro. Stillwell was born March 19, 1883, in Palatka, Florida. He graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1904 as 32nd of a class of 124. He was assigned to the Infantry and was sent to the Philippines. From 1906 to 1910 and 1913 to 1917 he was an instructor in modern languages at West Point; the in-between years were spent in the Philippines. He married Winfred Smith while at West Point and in 1918 was promoted to the rank of Major and sent to France as an Intelligence Officer. In 1920 he was transferred to Peking as a Language Officer remaining there until 1929. Following an assignment as Instructor in Tactics at Fort Benning, GA, he returned to Peking in 1934 as military attachee. In 1939, Gen. George Marshall was appointed Acting Chief of Staff and he, in turn, promoted Stillwell to the rank of Brigadier General. Bro. Stillwell was only 5' 9" tall weighing 145 pounds but he was a strong believer in physical fitness. Considered an inspiring leader by most, he also had a number of prejudices - he hated the British and horses. In March 1942 he was promoted to Lieutenant General and put in command of US Forces in the China-Burma-India Theater of War. Forced out of Burma, he and his staff had to walk 140 miles through the jungle to safety in Imphal, India. As commander of all the Allied Forces, he recaptured Myitkyina in 1944 but was unable to solve the conflict with Generalissimo Chaing Kai-Shek. Recalled to the US, he was named Commander of the Tenth Army and died in Carmel, CA on May 9, 1946.

-article provided by Bro. Norman Lincoln, originally published in 1995

DORIS GOLD MASONIC COVER

Your Editor recently acquired this cover shown to the right that was prepared by Doris Gold. I am not familiar with her work and am not sure if the Masonic Square and Compasses were part of her design or whether they were added later by a Masonic Philatelist. Regardless, it is well done and a tribute to our Brother, Harry S Truman.



GUSTAV ALBERT LORTZING

In Stamp Market Tips for 4 Sept. in Linn's, page 38, Germany-Berlin Scott 9N69 is featured - the stamp which pictures Bro. Lortzing. It is reported that he was initiated September 3, 1826, in the Lodge "Zur Beständigkeit und Eintracht" in Aachen, Germany. In 1834 he affiliated with the Lodge "Baldwin zur Linde" in Leipzig.



Bro. Lortzing was born Oct. 23, 1801, in Berlin and died there Jan. 21, 1851. His father was a leather merchant who went bankrupt and then became an actor. He travelled throughout Germany with his parents performing and studying composition. In 1823 he married actress Rosina Ahles; they were the parents of eleven children. In 1825 he completed his first opera, Ali Pascha von Janina. Most of his nineteen other operas were sentimental Singspiels for which he wrote his own dialog. His works were inventive and popular and many remain permanent parts of the characteristic German repertoire. In 1833 Lortzing settled in Leipzig where his greatest success, Zur und Zimmerman, was performed in 1837. After Der Wildschütz was acclaimed in 1842, he was named Kapellmeister in 1844. Lortzing, however, was not a good manager and he was fired in 1845. He accepted a position in Vienna but lost it as a result of the revolutions of 1848. Ill and discouraged, he returned to Berlin where he soon died in poverty. At least seven of his operas are available on CD.

article provided by Bro. Norman Lincoln

ALEXANDER JOZEF van BATTENBERG - KING ALEXANDER I

Alexander Jozef van Battenberg was born in Verona, Italy, April 5, 1857, and died January 17, 1893, in Graz, Austria. He was the second son of Alexander Von Hessen-Darmstadt and Julie Van Hanke. After a peace treaty on July 13, 1878 during a Congress held in Berlin, Bulgaria became an independent monarchy, influenced by Russia. Alexander, a relative of the Russian Czar, became monarch of Bulgaria in 1879. He was very conservative in his policies and always looked up to Russia. Following a revolution there was a reunion with the Turkish province East Roemelia. Another war with Serbia, 1885 to 1886, was won by Bulgaria but led to a rupture with Russia. His term as monarch ended in 1886 and he became governor of Roemelia. He was forced to abdicate this position because of Russian intrigues. He was scheduled to marry Princess Victoria of Prussia but instead fell in love with Johanna Loisinger, an opera singer, and married her after his abdication. He called himself the Earl of Hartenau following his marriage and died while serving as a major general in the Austrian-Hungarian Army.

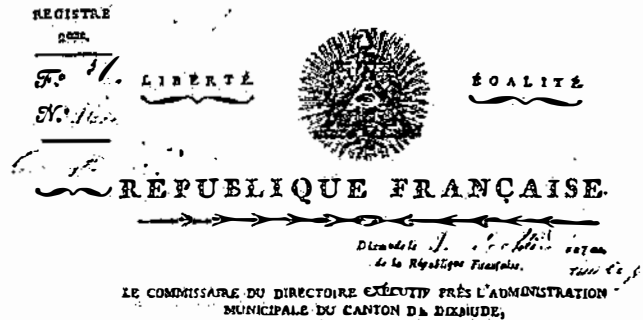
Alexander was a member of the Lodge "Stern des Balkans" in Ruschuk (Ruse) to the south of Bukarest in Bulgaria. This Lodge was founded in 1879 and abolished in 1882.

Bulgaria issued a stamp on September 23, 1993, to honor the 100th Anniversary of Alexander's death.

-article copied from De Verlichte Loep, Newsletter of De Getande Rand, the
Masonic Stamp Unit of the Netherlands.

AN INTERESTING LETTERHEAD

The letterhead shown here dates from the French Revolution period. Bro. Emiel Crab was able to purchase it through an auction. Note the various Masonic symbols.



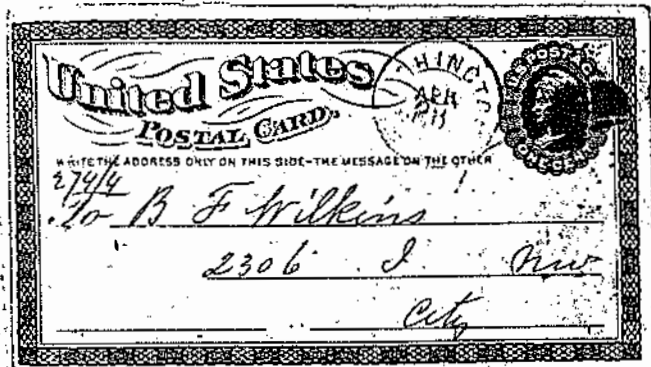
COLLECTOR OF MASONIC REGALIA

Bro Ferrando Sergio of Camogli, Italy, collects Masonic Regalia as well as items of a philatelic nature. He has forwarded a photo of one of his display walls.



MASONIC RELIEF ASSOCIATION POSTAL CARD

Bro. Erv Spettel has forwarded a copy of a Masonic Relief Association notice card he recently acquired.



EDWARD G. ROBINSON

The stamp being issued by the USPS honoring Edward G. Robinson - originally scheduled for September 17 release but now under debate - shows him in a photograph from the 1931 film "Five Star Final". Bro. Norman Lincoln believes he was a Mason but has not been able to locate the proof. The second of his three wives was Doris Warner, daughter of Brother Harry Warner. Can anyone help with the identification of his Masonic affiliation?



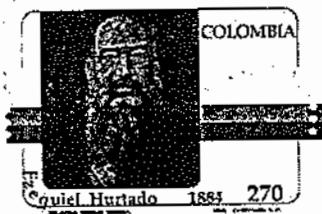
He was born Oct. 15, 1900, in San Francisco. His parents divorced when he was six and the next year his father's store was destroyed by the earthquake. To earn money, he dropped out of school working first as a newsboy, later as an actor and singer in vaudeville. In 1919 he went to Hollywood to work for his cousin, Jesse L. Lasky. He started in the wardrobe department, was promoted to assistant cameraman and appeared in some acting roles. By 1924 he had become a writer and three years later began to direct. His first important film was "Little Caesar", 1931, starring himself, which started a cycle of gangster movies. "I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang", 1932, featured Paul Muni in a strong performance. Le Roy showed his versatility with a musical, "Golddiggers of 1933" and a comedy, "Tugboat Annie", 1933. In 1936 he directed the first technicolor historical epic, "Anthony Adverse". He produced and directed a strong drama, "They Won't Forget" with Claude Rains in 1937 and two years later produced "At the Circus" with the Marx Brothers and the "Wizzard of Oz" - both for MGM. These were followed by Greer Garson in "Blossoms in the Dust", 1941, "Random Harvest", 1942, and "Madame Curie" in 1943. "Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo", 1944, was a fine docudrama about Bro. Jimmie Doolittle. His later work was less interesting but did provide the biblical epic "Quo Vadis", Esther Williams' "Million Dollar Mermaid", 1952, Andy Griffith's "No Time For Sergeants", 1958, the popular "FBI Story" with Jimmy Stewart and the musical "Gypsy", 1962. After "Moment To Moment", 1965, he retired having made nearly 100 films. He was honored in 1945 with an Academy Award for the short documentary on tolerance, "The House I Live In"; in 1975 he received the Irving Thalberg Award. He died December 13, 1987, of Alzheimer's Disease.

-article contributed by Bro. Norman Lincoln

CLARIFICATION OF NOTES IN THE ARTICLE ON MARIA-THERESA

Marie Theresa's son, Joseph II was named co-regent in 1765 and served as her successor from 1780 to 1790. While not a Freemason, he was disposed favorably toward the Craft permitting it to function openly. In 1785 he limited the number of Lodges within his realm and placed the Craft under State protection. He did not, however, rescind his "blessing" of the Craft; rather, he reduced the Craft's growth for political reasons. His successor, Leopold II, tolerated the Craft but he had a short reign. He was followed by Francis II under whose reign the Craft was under attack due to church influence. (by Bill Parker)

EXEQUIEL HURTADO



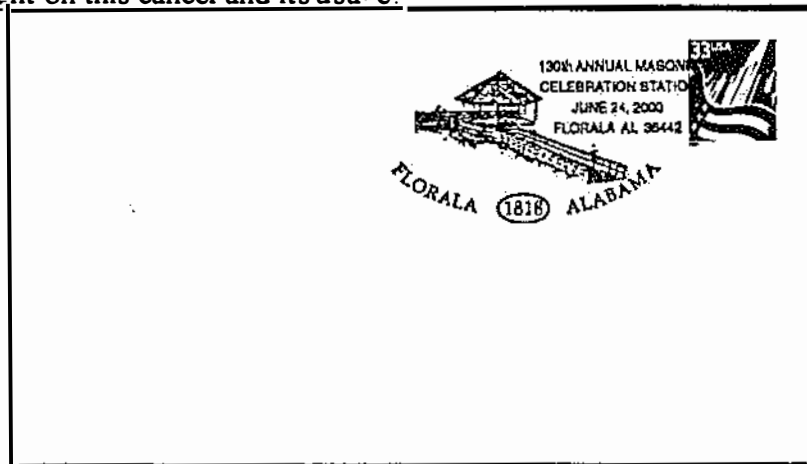
Bro. Ezequiel Hurtado was included in the sheet of Colombian Presidents issued by that country on April 5, 1955. The Lodge in which he was initiated is not known but it is known that he was one of the founders of Lodge Luz del Cauca No. 3 in Popayan, along with Bro. Gen. Julian Trujillo. He was the "Guardo Sellos" of this Lodge in 1866.

Born December 12, 1825, in Silvia, Cauca, Colombia, he became a Deputy in the National Liberal Convention of Rionegro on Feb. 4, 1863. He served as Minister of War in 1878 and 1879 and President of Estado Soberano in Cauca from 1879 to 1883. Following a term as Magistrate of the High Court of Justice, he served as President of Colombia from April to August 1884. He was banished from the country in 1885 by President Rafael Nunez but returned in 1889. He died December 24, 1890, in Popayan, Colombia.

-article copied from De Verlichte Loep, Newsletter of De Getande Rand, the
Masonic Stamp Unit of the Netherlands.

MASONIC CELEBRATION STATION CANCEL

The Postmark Pursuit column in Linn's identified a special cancel for the 130th Annual Masonic Celebration Station at Florala, AL on June 24, 2000. The cancel is shown here and I can only assume it is related to a St. John's Day celebration. Can any of our readers shed more light on this cancel and its use?



MARIO MORENO "CATINFLAS"

Bro. Juan Sabater Pie has identified that in one of his recent Lodge meetings in Barcelona, Bro. Antonio Carreter, a member of "Chilam-Balam Lodge No. 21 of Mexico, DF, visited and stated that he had been present at the initiation ceremony of Bro. "Catinflas" in the 1950s. This Lodge is under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge Valle of Mexico. Bro. "Catinflas" was a member of that Lodge but never received any further degrees. Bro. Juan has written to the Lodge for further information.

NEW ISSUES

The following new issues of Masonic interest have been announced in the philatelic media.

2000 - Equatorial Guinea - Anniversaries of 1999, strip of four se-tenant stamps including Jacques-Etienne Montgolfier and Johann Wolfgang Goethe.

Apr. 18 - Marshall Islands - American Presidents, sets of se-tenant stamps covering all the Presidents.

Apr. 28 - Palau - Visionaries of the 20th Century, 20 se-tenant stamps including Booker T. Washington, Walt Disney, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Henry Ford.

May 1 - Grenada - Millennium/1650-1700, 17 se-tenant stamps including Voltaire and Peter I.

May 1 - Micronesia - Great Philanthropists of the 20th Century, including Henry Ford.

May 6 - Italy - Nicolo Piccini 200th Death Anniversary, one value.

May 15 - Grenada - Anniversaries and Events, several stamps including Robert Stephenson and Thomas Stafford.

May 15 - Grenada-Grenadines - Anniversaries and Events, several stamps including Thomas Stafford.

May 15 - Guyana - Anniversaries and Events, several stamps including Thomas P. Stafford (3 stamps)

June - Uganda - Millennium/1850-1900, 17 se-tenant stamps including Edwin Drake.

June - Uganda - Monarchs and Popes of the Millennium, several se-tenant stamps including Pedro II of Brazil and Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria.

June 26 - Antigua and Barbuda - Anniversaries and Events, several stamps including Thomas Stafford.

June 26 - St. Vincent & Grenadines - Anniversaries and Events, several stamps including Robert Stephenson.

August - Dominica - Monarchs and Popes of the Millennium, two panes of 6 se-tenant stamps plus 2 Souvenir sheets, includes Peter the Great and Pope Clement XIV.

Aug. 4 - Gibraltar - Queen Mother's Birthday, 4 values plus S/S, includes King George VI

Aug. 23 - Denmark - The 20th Century, 4 values including Christian X.

Aug. 23 - Djibouti - Exploration of Space, 2 panes of 6 se-tenant stamps, including John Glenn and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin.

Comment: In "The Stamp Act" which I write for the Northern Light, I recently did an article on Sister Clara Barton and made the statement that she was initiated into the OES by Bro. Rob Morris, the founder of that Order. The fact that she was initiated in 1906 and Dr. Morris died in 1888 was pointed out by a reader. I traced the source back to an article that appeared in New Age in 1952. We must constantly be aware of the validity of our sources.