

THE PHILATELIC FREEMASON

Journal of the
MASONIC STUDY UNIT



Affiliate #94



Editor
Robert A. Domingue
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Andover, Mass. 01810

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Whole No. 172

NATHANIEL BROWN PALMER

Article written and contributed by Bro. Roger W. Read, a member of Coastal Lodge No. 57 and Past Master of Asylum Lodge No. 57 AF & AM in Stonington, CT. He is also Past Grand Master of Connecticut, 1999.

Capt. Nathaniel Brown Palmer was a great man in seafaring annals of the 1800^s. He is acknowledged in the US as the discoverer of Antarctica, was Captain of numerous Packet ships and designed a fleet of swift China Clipper ships in the 1800^s. He sailed the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans in many craft, made record setting runs to and from the European Continent, found seal havens south of Cape Horn and captained a number of Clipper Ships to and from the ports on the American, Asian and European Continents.

Nathaniel Palmer was born in the old family home in Stonington, Connecticut on August 8, 1799. His mother was Mercy Brown Palmer and he had eight sisters and brothers. He lived a number of years with his Uncle, Captain Alexander Palmer and his niece, Mrs. Richard F. Loper. The original Palmer house, where he was born, lost to fire on November 15, 1850, was rebuilt and stands today ⁽¹⁾.

Nathaniel grew up in the seacoast town of Stonington, Connecticut and was reared in the shipyard of his father Nathaniel Brown Palmer Sr. It was a time of turmoil in these United States. An embargo was in effect on American shipping that spawned the night running of "blockade-runners" up the coast through Block Island sound from New York to Portland. Young Nat shipped as a boy "before the mast" on one of these blockade-runners early in 1814. The routes lay just a stones throw from the Stonington port and many runners used the port as a haven for repairs. On June 18, 1812 war was declared and on August 9, 1814 the town was bombarded by British Commodore Hardy with three ships with a total of 140 cannons. The town was defended by the men and boys with two 18-pound cannons with which they prevailed ⁽¹⁾. Thus we see the prevailing life in which young Nat matured, became an expert seaman and ultimately, beginning at the age of 18, the captain of a number of sailing ships.

Nat's first open ocean sealing voyage was as second mate on the brig *Hersilias*. He was bound for the Shetland Islands south of Cape Horn in July of 1819 with orders to explore and discover new seal rookeries. By the use of intelligence gathered by Nat, the voyage found rookeries on islands now known as the South Shetlands.

As a result of his contribution on his first voyage, he was given command of the sloop *Hero* that accompanied three larger vessels to return to the Shetland Islands to harvest additional seals. While preparing to investigate the area south of Deception Island, Capt. Nat (as he was known) climbed to the highest point on the island to get a view in the direction he was going to sail ⁽¹⁾. On that date, November 17, 1820, he sighted a loom of land with what looked like an active volcano. On January 14, 1821, Capt. Nat set sail to search the inlets and bays of the land further south to find additional rookeries. On this trip, he sailed 200 miles, encountering fierce winds, snowstorms and floating icebergs. He sailed along the coast of a vast land mass covered in ice and shrouded in fog. He was only able to venture to 68 degrees south latitude where solid ice barred his way ⁽¹⁾. During the return trip the fog set in and while hove to, the presence of two other ships was detected. When the fog cleared Captain Nat was invited to meet with Captain Fabian von Bellingshausen, the Commodore of the Russian Imperial Navy fleet that was on a discovery mission ⁽³⁾. When, during the discussions, the sighting of the vast land mass was disclosed, the

Commodore declared its discoverer was Nathaniel Palmer and that the mountain range would bear his name ⁽⁴⁾.

During the years 1820 through 1833 Capt. Nat continued to command vessels in search of more seals in the Shetland Islands, commerce trading in the West Indies and providing contraband supplies to Simon Bolivar in Chile ⁽¹⁾. He even lost a ship, the *Cadet*, in a storm along the New Jersey coast, but was immediately given command of the brig *Tampico* and ventured back to Chile. On the return from his fourth trip in 1826, he married his hometown sweetheart, Eliza T. Babcock on December 7th 1826 who subsequently accompanied him on voyages around Cape Horn to the Pacific. In the following years, he made seven trips as captain of *Tampico*, invested his funds in a new schooner and was instrumental in mounting an expedition to survey the ocean area south of the Shetlands as Captain and owner of the brig *Annawan*. The voyage, though not successful in making new discoveries, netted some small gain from the sale of seal furs and oil ⁽¹⁾.

Of particular interest to members of the craft is the voyage on the brig *Annawan* that Captain Nat and his wife Eliza Palmer made in 1831. The purpose of the voyage was to buy seal furs from the inhabitants of the penal colony island of Juan Fernandez, the island that inspired the story of Robinson Crusoe. Upon arriving at the island he and his crew were taken prisoner by the inmates who had revolted and now wished to use his ship to escape to Chile. As the convicts were about to execute the Captain a fellow Mason, to whom Captain Nat had made the ancient Masonic sign of distress, came to his aid and convinced the mob that they needed the Captain to navigate the ship during the escape voyage. The end result was the saving of the ships crew and the successful deliverance of the convicts to Chile where they were ultimately recaptured. The voyage ended successfully with the purchase of sealskins and the return home to Stonington on September 25, 1833 ⁽¹⁾.

Captain Palmer received command of larger ships after his return from Antarctica and later was made designer of the Dramatic Line of Packets, an association that lasted to 1847. Palmer supervised the construction of four ships during this period. One, the *Roscius* (180 feet), was the most expensive ship in the transatlantic trade. Yet the ship paid, and Palmer became wealthy.

In 1843 Palmer began designing and building clipper ships for the China trade. Together with William H. Aspinall, he was called the originator of the late clipper era ⁽¹⁾. The Clipper ships were designed for speed and therefore sacrificed some cargo capacity. The belief was that a speedy delivery was more profitable than a large cargo. The stately clippers *Howqua*, *Samuel Russell*, *Oriental* and others were the most efficient and famous in the China trade ⁽⁵⁾.

A ship built in 1851 after the captain's design was named for him: the *N.B. Palmer*. She was one of the largest of his clippers—214 feet long by 39 broad and 22 deep. In China she was known as “the Yacht” with her nettings in the tops, brass guns, gold stripe, and the hosting of lavish entertainments on the Fourth of July and Washington's Birthday. On her second voyage the *N.B. Palmer* made her best records for speed. On the third day out of New York she covered 396 miles in 24 hours—an average 16.5 knots. On 1 July 1852 she overhauled the celebrated *Flying Cloud* that had sailed 10 days ahead of her and she beat the *Flying Cloud* from Canton to New York. The *N.B. Palmer* was one of the swiftest of the clippers.

The largest of the Clippers was the *Great Republic*, built in 1853. No sooner was she launched, when a fire destroyed her and the hull sank dockside. Nathaniel Palmer bought her and had her rebuilt with some reductions in size. The size reduction and other innovations such as a steam winch on the deck, allowed her to be crewed by 50 men instead of the original 100-man crew. A career of transport between England, France and the west coast of the US ended in the *Great Republic* being used by the Federal government during the Civil War. She was sold in 1869 and was lost off Bermuda in 1872.

Captain Palmer was admired for his tact, kindness, and courage. He was very passionate and could get every knot of speed a ship was capable of by driving her to the limit. In calm weather he would come on deck with an old white beaver hat on, take it off and stamp on it, and damn the calm and everything else. But he never abused the men.

He lost his wife Eliza in 1872 and he became devoted to his nephew, the son of his brother Alexander, and his namesake. When the boy was diagnosed with tuberculosis, Capt. Nat journeyed far and wide to find a

climate where a cure might be affected ⁽⁶⁾. In 1877, one day after setting sail for San Francisco on a return voyage from China, the boy died. During the remaining voyage Capt. Nat's health failed steadily. Upon reaching San Francisco he wired notice of the boys death to his father and within a few days passed to that house not made with hands on June 21, 1877.

The body of Brother and Captain Nathaniel Brown Palmer was shipped home and buried in the family plot in Stonington, Connecticut on July 15, 1877.

It is natural to find Capt. Nat as a member of the Masonic Lodge in Stonington as many of his friends; family and business companions were Brothers. The minutes and record books of Asylum Lodge No. 57, AF&AM of Stonington and the Grand Lodge of Connecticut contain many entries attesting to the membership of Captain Nathaniel Brown Palmer. According to the records of the Grand Lodge of Connecticut, he was initiated in 1826. His record of membership ends in the year of his death and was reported at a special meeting of Asylum Lodge No. 57 on June 29, 1877 ⁽⁸⁾. The Stonington Historical Society now owns the Palmer home and has preserved the many records that document the lifelong contributions of this great Brother.

In celebration of his daring and discovery of Antarctica, the United States of America issued a postage stamp commemorating his achievements. It is one of the 25 Cent, Antarctic Explorers series issued September 14, 1988 and is numbered 2386 in the Scott registry of stamps.



In addition, the Antarctic Palmer Peninsula, Palmer Station, Palmer Archipelago and the currently operating Research Vessel *Nathaniel B. Palmer* are named after him ⁽⁹⁾.

It is of note that the Masonic affiliation of Brother and Capt. Nathaniel B. Palmer is not well known. In many lists of famous Masons he is left unsung. Hopefully this account will correct that oversight and bring to the craft a brief account of his life and influence on the times.

The knowledge of a link in the chain of Brotherhood has been lost and now, with the Grace of Almighty God and the power of the pen, that knowledge shall again shine for all to see.

Bibliography

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- (2) Sperry, Armstrong. *South of Cape Horn: a saga of Nat Palmer and early Antarctic exploration*. Philadelphia: Winsted, 1958.
- (3) Rosove, Michael. *Let Heroes Speak: Antarctic Explorers, 1772-1922*. New York: Berkley, 2000.
- (4) Fanning, Edmund. *Voyages Round the World: with Selected Sketches of Voyages to the South Seas, North and South Pacific Oceans, China, etc.*, New York: Collins and Hannay, 1833.
- (5) Chapman, Walker. *The Loneliest Continent, the Story of Antarctic Discovery*, Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic, 1964
- (6) Boas, Norman, MD. "Cpt. Nathaniel B. Palmer & Nathaniel B. Palmer, 2nd, a Poignant Story". The Stonington Historical Society, Stonington, CT, 1998
- (7) Asylum Lodge No. 57, AF&AM of Stonington (now Coastal Lodge No. 57) "*Minutes Book*", Meeting date June 29, 1877.
- (8) Grand Lodge, AF&AM of Connecticut. "*Annual Report of May 1826*", page 398: Wallingford, CT.
- (9) InternetSite, http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nathaniel_Palmer

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

NEW MEMBERS:

123. Eero Tahtinen, Tammibaantie 2 E 44, 02940 Espoo, Finland.

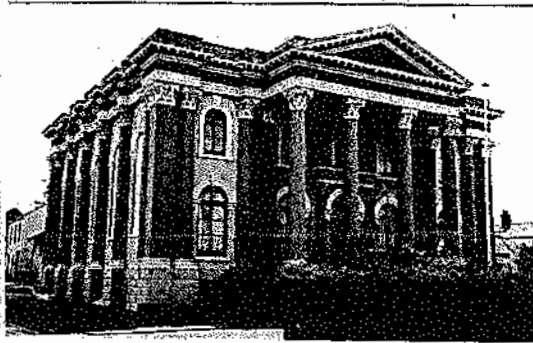
Bro Tahtinen is very active in Blue Lodge, Scottish and York Rites and a Research Lodge. He also belongs to the MSC of NY and the MPC (of GB)

REINSTATEMENTS:

144. Romy C. Go, c/o CAB Hardware, Balibago, 467 McArthur Highway, Angeles City, Philippines 2009

393. Elmer Nelson, 1371 W. Rahn Rd., Dayton, OH 45459

Bro. Nelson has sent along a few copies of postcards in his collection. We recognize the "Gran-Pop" series and the Bequia stamp reproduction. The Temple is one he visited three years ago in St. Helier, Jersey. It was dedicated on May 25, 1864.



CORRECTIONS and COMMENTS ON THE PREVIOUS ISSUE

First of all, please let me apologize for the Masthead error. Vol. 30, No. 5 was for January-February 2006, Whole No. 171 -- not what appeared on your copy.

Page 1954 -- I cited the Link to The Ashlar. The direct address for that publication is www.circlepublications.com

Page 1954 -- I cited an incorrect e-mail address for the Masonic Philatelic Club of Brazil. It should be clubselo@terra.com.br

Page 1961 -- Bro. Crab notes that The Masonic Academy is based in Valkenswaard, the Netherlands, not in Belgium as I stated.

Page 1961 -- Bro. Jean-Claude Vilesby writes to inform us that there are several CHENIERs.

- The father Louis de CHENIER (1723-1796 was considered a Freemason by Ligou's Dictionary but without proof.

- Andre de CHENIER, the first son, born in 1762, died on July 25, 1794, the poet I spoke of, was never a Mason. There is no proof of his membership, especially in the famous Paris Lodge "Les Neuf Soeurs".

- The second son, Marie-Joseph de CHENIER, 1764-1811, was never a Mason. The first study on the "Neuf's Soeurs" was written by Lois Amiable in 1897 and contains many errors. The most recent work on that Lodge in 1989, written by Charles Porcèt, starting from the first book, corrects much of the mis-information.

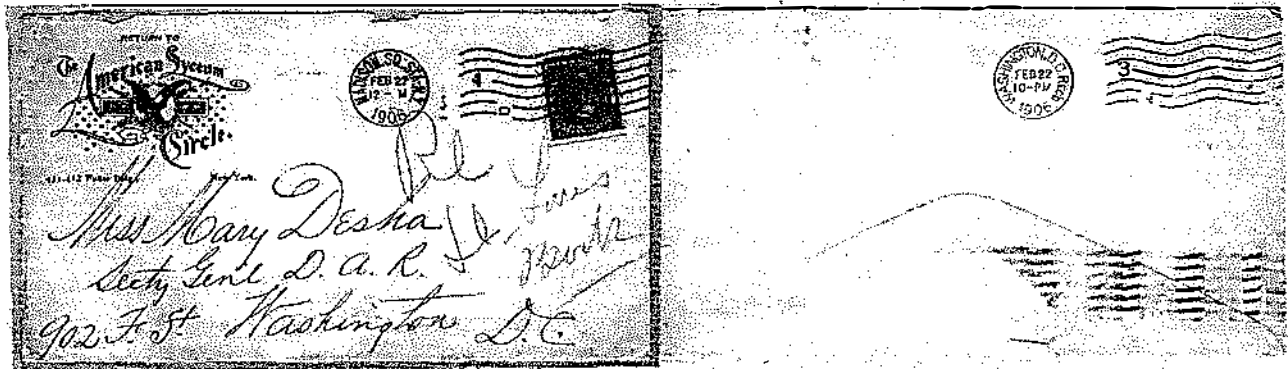
GEORGE WASHINGTON MASONIC STAMP CLUB - 50 YEARS OLD -

As I start to prepare this issue of the Newsletter, several of our members and other Masonic Philatelists are gathered together in Alexandria, VA for the Annual Meeting and Dinner of the George Washington Masonic Stamp Club. The meeting today, Feb. 26, 2006, is special in that it is the 50th Anniversary of the Club – a “spin off” from the Masonic Stamp Club of New York. They have enjoyed an illustrious career and are especially noted for continuing the tradition of the Master of Philately Degree. We of the MSU/ATA wish them many more years of continued success.

I had the honor of attending the Annual Meeting a few years ago and wanted to make the trip this year but my wife had both of her knees replaced on January 24 and I am still needed as a part time nurse and housekeeper even though she is making fantastic progress. Many of the “greats” were scheduled to be there and I would have loved to be able to “rub elbows” with them all.

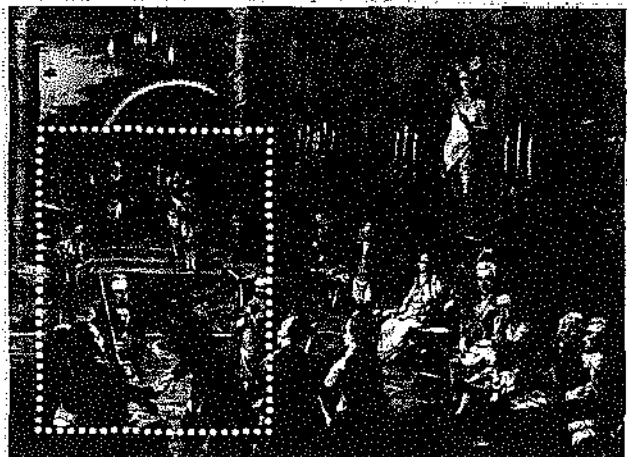
WASHINGTON BIRTHDAY COVER

Bro. Stan Longenecker has shared this cover from his 2/22 collection which demonstrates the timeliness of the mail delivery in 1906. It was mailed at the Madison Square Station, New York City at 12 M(idnight) on 2/22 and was received in Washington, DC at 10 PM the same day. Now the rate is 39 cents and it takes two or three days.



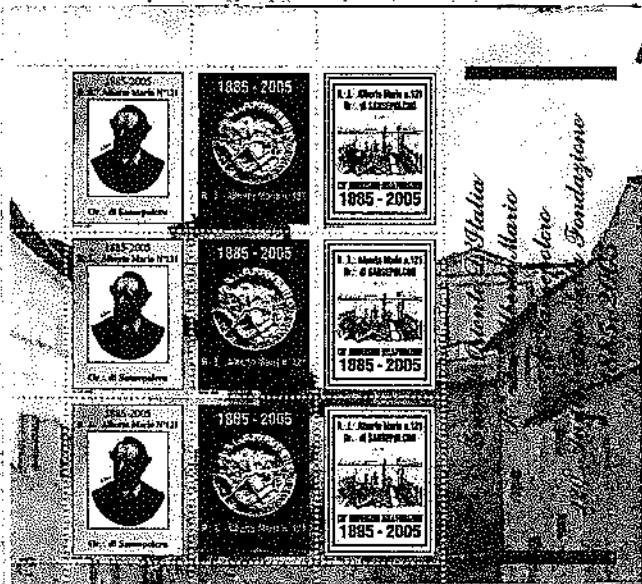
AUSTRIA PURE MASONIC ISSUE

Austria will be the latest country to recognize Freemasonry with a stamp. The stamp shown here commemorates Freemasonry in Austria and will be valid for postage on April 6, 2006. It pictures a Lodge meeting of years ago – very well done. Thank you Bro. Schmid-Korlath.

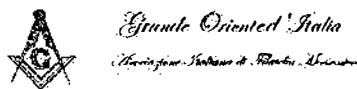


ITALIAN ASSOCIATION OF MASONIC PHILATELY

The Associazione Italiana di Filatelia Massonica, through its association with the Grand Orient of Italy has issued many covers and sponsored many special cancels to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the Grande Oriente D'Italia in 2005. Several examples are shown here. There is a special folder including several of these items that is available for 25 euros. Those desiring further information can contact Fr. Massimo Morgantini, Secretary of the group, at massimomorgantini@yahoo.it



1885-2005
180. anniversario della fondazione
R. L. Alberto Mario



GIUSEPPE
MAZZINI
1805-1872



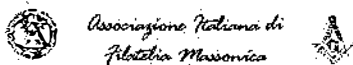
Il Risorgimento Italiano
7 novembre 2005



Grande
Oriente d'Italia



Cartolina commemorativa emessa in occasione



*Celebrazione Bicentenario del
Grande Oriente d'Italia*
Firenze, Palazzo di Porto Gelfo - 12 novembre 2005



Associazione Italiana di
Filatelia Massonica



*Celebrazione Bicentenario del
Grande Oriente d'Italia*
Roma, Villa "Il Vascello" - 17 settembre 2005



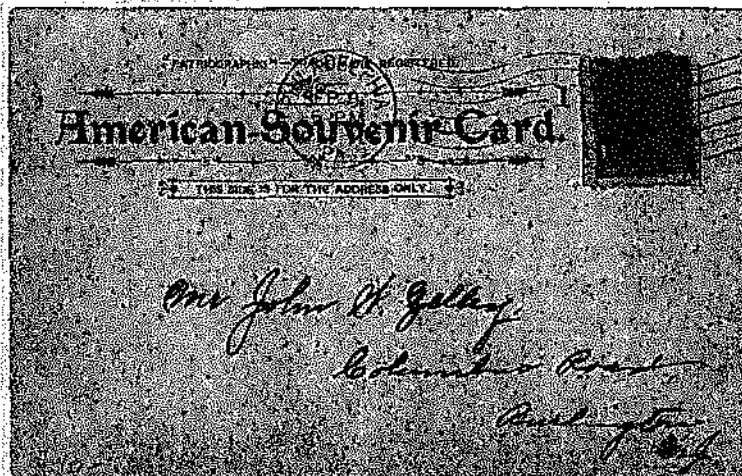
PIONEER/SOUVENIR POSTCARD PICTURES A MASONIC TEMPLE

Those pioneer/souvenir postcards produced prior to 1898 generally pictured familiar sights and scenes of the cities and vacation spots. But finding a picture postcard of the pioneer period with a Masonic Temple is not easy. In fact, a glancing review of the pioneer/souvenir postcards listed and illustrated in the various books on pioneer postcards seems to point this out.

The one pioneer/souvenir postcard, copyright 1897, that does picture a Masonic Temple is shown to the right. It shows the Masonic Temple in Philadelphia, PA in full color. It is regarded as one of the finest and most ornate Masonic Temples in the world. Its imposing structure is only part of its fame as the many impressive Lodge rooms represent various themes relating to Masonry. The Temple was dedicated in 1873 and stands in the center of Philadelphia directly opposite City Hall.



No doubt the imposing structure was considered as a place to see while in Philadelphia and so it was that the American Souvenir Card Co. considered to use it as one of the vignettes together with a scene of Wissahickon Creek and the Fountain, Dauphin Street Entrance.



The philatelic aspect of the souvenir postcard is that although it was used somewhat late (1906) it was mailed with a 1 cent stamp at the printed matter rate. Actually the inscription AMERICAN-SOUVENIR-CARD was not in compliance with the post office regulation that privately produced postcards have the heading POSTCARD. If not, they were subject to the 2 cent letter rate if they had a written message.

So while this pioneer/souvenir postcard is of interest from the philatelic viewpoint, it is really of greater interest from the Masonic viewpoint of having a picture of the Masonic Temple in Philadelphia -- home of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

-Article and illustrations contributed by Bro. Charles A. Frike, Philatelic writer of note

MICHAEL NEY

Michael Ney, Duc d'Elchigen and Prince de la Moskowa, was born at Saarlouis on Jan. 10, 1769, the son of a cooper. He worked for a time as a lawyer's clerk before enlisting in a French Hussar regiment in 1788. He rose to a high rank in the French Revolutionary Wars before reaching the summit of his greatness in the Napoleonic Wars. A captain in 1794 he was picked as a hussar "partisan" and led light cavalry and infantry in all the actions of the army of Sambre-et-Meuse to 1797, becoming general of the brigade in 1796. He boldly took Mannheim by surprise in 1799 and was then promoted to general of division to command Andre Massena's "vanguard" in Switzerland but was wounded on May 27 near Winterthur. His first command of infantry of the line in battle was in 1800 and he was conspicuous at Hohenlinden. He was received cordially by Napoleon in May 1801 and Josephine arranged his marriage the next year. He was put in command of the political and military organization of Switzerland from Oct. 1802 to Dec. 1803 and in May 1804 was made marshal of the empire. His many battle successes earned him the description of "bravest of the brave" from Napoleon.

He went to Spain hoping for the command in chief but ran into difficulties with Massena and was removed by him from command. In 1811 he was forming the new III corps for the invasion of Russia and distinguished himself in several maneuvers. His defeat at Dennewitz showed he could not command an army. He was the most prominent of the army leaders who confronted Napoleon at Fontainebleau to demand his abdication in April 1814. His conduct made him a peer and governor of Besancon for Louis XVIII and when Napoleon landed again in France he concentrated his troops to oppose him but then publicly declared himself for Napoleon. He was a battle leader at Waterloo and when all was lost his courage was extinguished. He left Paris on July 6 with a passport to Switzerland but was arrested on Aug. 5 in the Cantal. The court-martial resulted in a sentence of death by firing squad on Dec. 7, 1815.

Stories have been told and documented that he was placed before the wall and tumbled to the ground as the riflemen shot. The colonel in charge of the execution covered him with a sheet and Ney was quickly carted away. Apparently the Duke of Wellington, a friend and fellow Mason and several other Masons, including the members of the firing squad, helped him sham death and later to escape to the United States. Three years later a large man of military bearing turned up in Florence, North Carolina. He gave his name as Peter Stewart Ney, said he was a refugee from France and became a schoolmaster. For the next 30 years he wandered around the southeast and as he lay dying in 1846, at the age of 78, he informed his friends that he was indeed Marshal Ney. In 1946 ceremonies in observance of the centennial of his death were held in the Carolinas.



Michel Ney was initiated Sept. 20, 1801 in the Lodge "Saint Jean de Jerusalem" at Nancy, France. A large proportion of the members of this Lodge were men occupying prominent positions under the Empire. He was also said to be a member of the Lodge "La Candeur" of the Quartier General du 6th Corps de la Grande Armee" in 1807. He is pictured on a stamp issued by the Saar in 1947, Scott. No. 170.

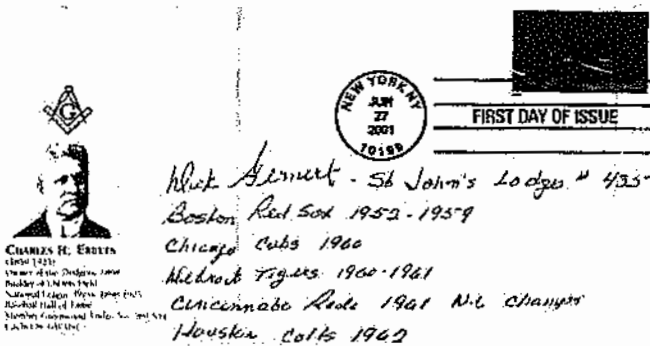
-Information gathered from a variety of sources.

MILT SCHMIDT'S LODGE

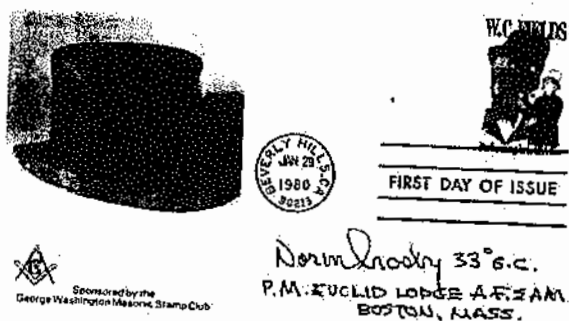
In a previous article about Milt Schmidt, the noted professional hockey player, I was unclear about the Lodge he belonged to; I mentioned Fraternity Lodge and Fuller Lodge. Research has shown that Fraternity Lodge was chartered in 1945 meeting in Newtonville, MA. In 1980 it merged with Fuller Lodge and took the name of Fraternity & Fuller. Then, in May 2001, this Lodge merged with Norumbega & Brookline Lodge. This Lodge became Norembega Fraternity Lodge and still meets at the Masonic Temple in Newtonville.

BRO. PETER WESTBERE COVERS

A few more covers offered by Bro. Peter Westbere of Guelph, Ontario, Canada.



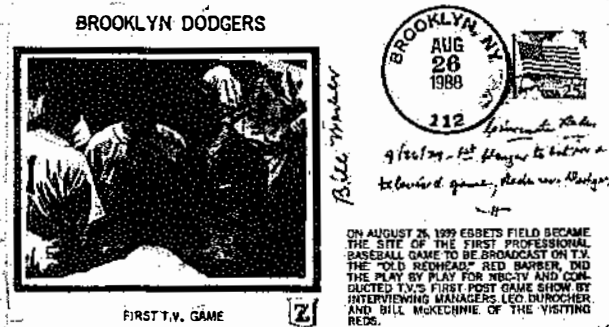
Bro. Dick Gernert—Baseball Player
St. John's Lodge #435



Bro. Norm Crosby – Comedian/Entertainer
P.M. Euclid Lodge, Boston, MA



Bro. Dick Starr – Baseball Player and Coach
Lodge #244, Pennsylvania



Bro. Bill Werber – First player to bat in a
televised game
Stansbury Lodge #24, Washington, D.C.

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GEORGE M. HENDEE (1866-1943)

In August of this year the USPS will issue a set of stamps depicting motorcycles – One will be an Indian (red Indian). George M. Hendee was the co-founder of the Indian Motorcycle Company of Springfield, MA which built motorcycles from 1902 to 1953. He was raised in Hampden Lodge in Springfield in March 1897 and served as Worshipful Master in 1903. He was also a Charter Member of Samuel Osgood Lodge, Springfield. In 1939 he was awarded the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts Distinguished Service Award. He was an active philanthropist and Shriner. Many Indian motorcycles are still in service.



-Article provided by Bro. Norman Lincoln

ANOTHER INPUT ON BRO. HORATIO NELSON

Bro. Maurice Beazley has sent in a copy of a letter which appeared in *MQ* which continues to follow up on Bro. Nelson. Some excerpts are as follows:

"Some two years ago my Mother Lodge, the Knights of Malta Lodge No. 50 in the Province of Leicestershire and Rutland, celebrated its Bi-Centenary and I was part of the editorial team charged with updating our Lodge history. In that history is an interesting anecdote concerning one of our early members, Bro. William Hands, who was born in 1777 at Burbage. He enlisted into the army when quite young and was initiated in a Lodge in Ireland attached to the 90th Foot in 1799. He served in this regiment for some years as a Private. The regiment then moved to Gibraltar where another Lodge, No. 8 on the roll of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Gibraltar, was warranted and Bro. Hands became a member of this Lodge. In 1805 he was stationed in the West Indies, being at that time a General's orderly. On 4 June that year he was drafted as a bombardier in the artillery on board the *Victory* and returned on that ship to Europe, subsequently taking part in the battle at Trafalgar.

"Bro. Hands died on 16 April 1860 at the age of 83. It is recorded that until the last few years of his life he retained a distinct recollection of his early experiences, and delighted to recount how, on going on board the *Victory*, Nelson singled him out from his companions, all of whom were Masons, and addressed a few questions to him as to his military knowledge and experience. From this account we can see that there were several Freemasons serving on *Victory* and Lord Nelson may have known of their presence on board. It would also be interesting to search the records of Lodge No. 8 at Gibraltar to determine if there were any visitors from the Navy."

Don Peacock, Hinckley, Leicestershire

A large number of Memberships will expire in April – If yours is one, please send in your dues now to beat the rush.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

On January 18 I received the following e-mail from Bro. Norman Lincoln:

January 17 slipped by without much fanfare compared to Martin Luther King Day. Yesterday was the tri-centennial of the birth of arguably the most influential, if not the greatest, Mason born in what became the USA. He was renowned throughout the Western world as a scientist. His business acumen enabled him to retire at 42 and live a good life on the fruits of his efforts as a printer. His diplomatic skills persuaded the French to assist the British colonies to form an alliance which resulted in the war for independence to succeed. His political savvy from the Albany Plan to the Declaration of Independence to the Constitution made the USA a going concern. His philosophy from Poor Richard's Almanac is still cogent. Founder of the Free Public Library and the American Philosophical Society, inventor of the Franklin stove, the lightning rod and bifocal glasses, chief negotiator of the Treaty of Paris, the list goes on. Though a Provincial Grand Master he was denied a Masonic funeral. Let us not forget our Brother Ben.

The USPS has already remembered Ben this year with the stamped envelopes for the new first class rate. A block of four stamps will be released in April commemorating Ben as a statesman, scientist, printer and postmaster.



Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston, MA on Jan. 17, 1706. He was the tenth son of soap maker Josiah Franklin. Josiah intended that Benjamin enter the clergy however he could only afford one year of schooling – clergymen required several years. Since young Ben loved to read, he was apprenticed to his brother James who was a printer. When Ben was 15 his brother started *The New England Courant*, the first “newspaper” in Boston. Ben wanted to write for the paper but James would not let him. Writing secretly under the by-line of Silence Dogood, he was a smash hit. When James was thrown in jail for being at odds with Boston’s powerful Puritan preachers, Ben ran the paper for several issues. These successes placed the brothers at odds and Ben decided to run away in 1723. He took a boat to New York hoping to find work as a printer. Finding none he walked across New Jersey and arrived in Philadelphia via a boat ride.

In 1727 Ben organized the "Leathern Apron Club" as a secret society in Philadelphia (non-Masonic) and on Dec. 8, 1730 printed an article in his paper pretending to reveal Masonic mysteries. Two months later, Feb. 1731, he received his degrees in St. John's Lodge of Philadelphia. He became active in the Lodge's work right from the very beginning. He served as Secretary of the Lodge from 1735-38, was elected Junior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania on June 24, 1732 and Grand Master on June 24, 1734. He was appointed Provincial Grand Master by Tomas Oxnard of Boston on June 10, 1749. He was deposed from this position by William Allen on March 13, 1750 but immediately appointed Deputy Grand Master. In 1734 he printed Anderson's Constitutions as *Mason Book* which was the first Masonic book printed in America. During his overseas trips he visited many of the Lodges in Scotland, England and France becoming a member and serving as Master in several of them. He assisted at the initiation of Voltaire in 1778 and later that year officiated at the Masonic funeral services held for Voltaire. His was definitely a Masonic career that could well be revered and emulated.

NEW ISSUES

New issues of a Masonic interest as reported in the philatelic media:

Linn's Stamp News:

Dec. 27, 2005 – Niue – V-E Day 60th Anniversary, pane of 4 se-tenant stamps, include Winston Churchill

Jan. 2, 2006 – Germany – Mozart 250th Birth Anniversary, one value

Jan. 16, 2006 – Isle of Man – Queen Elizabeth's 80th Birthday, four stamps, include Prince Philip

Jan. 17, 2006 – Marshall Islands – Benjamin Franklin 200th Birth Anniversary, pane of 9 se-tenant stamps

Jan. 27, 2006 – Romania – Famous people, 3 values, include Mozart

Jan. 27, 2006 – Austria – Mozart in Vienna, one value

Scott Stamp Monthly: (March and April 2006)

Ascension – 879/81 – 10/25/05 – Battle of Trafalgar, H Nelson

Central Africa – 1454 – 5/15/03 – Famous People, H. Nelson

Cuba – 4494 – 6/17/05 – M. Gen. Maximo Gomez

Dominica – 2541/5 – 9/7/05 – Battle of Trafalgar, H Nelson

Dominica – 2548 – 9/7/05 – Frederich von Schiller

Ecuador – 1735/6 – 7/22/05 – Guayaqui Conference 183rd Anniversary, Simon Bolivar

Falkland Is. – 891 – 10/21/05 – Battle of Trafalgar, H Nelson

Germany – 2367 – 1/2/06 – W. A. Mozart

Great Britain – 2321/6 – 10/18/05 – Battle of Trafalgar, H Nelson

Italy – 2687 – 9/14/05 – Pietro Savorgnan de Brazza

Jamaica – 1025/7 – 10/18/05 – Battle of Trafalgar, H Nelson

Nauru – 543/5 – 10/18/05 – Battle of Trafalgar, H Nelson

Virgin Is. – 1055/8 – 10/18/05 – Battle of Trafalgar, H Nelson

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A recent newspaper article stated that the ashes, or mortal part, of Bro. Gordon Cooper will be returned to outer space sometime in March of this year. The ashes of James Doohan who played chief engineer Montgomery Scott on "Star Trek" and another 185 people will also be on that flight.

