

The Masonic Philatelist

PUBLISHED BY THE MASONIC STAMP CLUB OF NEW YORK



Vol. VI No. 8 November 1949



• Meetings •

TURKEY HASH ON NOVEMBER 25th

This is an innovation which it is believed can easily turn into one of the most interesting evenings of the season. The idea is this - - - everyone, and we mean each and EVERY MEMBER and guest present that night, will bring something to show. This can consist of a single stamp, a cover, one or more album pages or anything else of philatelic significance that you think your fellow members will find interesting. Each person will necessarily be limited in time to five minutes ONLY. This will be followed very strictly (using a fire siren or baseball bat) so that everyone will have an opportunity to strut their stuff. If everyone turns out this will be one of the most enjoyable evenings of the season. Regular meeting begins at 8 P.M. Date is Friday November 25th. Place: the Collectors Club. Swapping as usual at 7 P.M.

MASTER OF PHILATELY DEGREE

on DECEMBER 2nd

On Friday evening December 2nd at 8 P.M. the Master of Philately Degree will be presented by the Masonic Stamp Club of New York to members who have not had this privilege. This is without doubt one of the highlights of the season as all who have witnessed this ceremony will agree. If you have not received this degree, plan to be present at the Collectors Club this night. We hope that a number of out-of-town members, as well as all of those residing in the Metropolitan area, will be present for this event. DON'T MISS Dec. 2nd!

MASONIC STAMP CLUB OF NEW YORK **OFFICERS 1949-1950**

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THE MASONIC PHILATELIST

Published by
The Ralph A. Barry Publication Fund
of
The Masonic Stamp Club of New York

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New York 52, N. Y.



Germany — The Western Zone of Germany issued a stamp on October 9, 1949 commemorating the U.P.U. The stamp shows a profile of Dr. Heinrich Von Stephan, the General Post Office in Berlin, and the "Staendehaus" in Berne,

STAMPS are wanted for the kids at the Masonic Home at Utica. Please help make this a real philatelic Christmas by sending stamps or supplies to Bro. Knight at the Home Or to the Editor. All gifts will be acknowledged.

All participants in the Turkey Hash exhibit next meeting will be eligible to enter a drawing for valuable prizes. Show a page or two of a novel or interesting way of collecting--- have fun --- and win a PRIZE.

Brother George C. Slawson, of 320 Riverside Drive, New York, 25, N.Y., has published a new check list of the circular die envelopes, sponsored by the US Envelope Society. Price is 75¢ and George will be pleased to supply you if you are interested.

Brother George Camnitzer was the winner of a first award at the last big show in Newark. George is busy assisting at a Dental Seminar on Friday evenings. The Club's loss, but the Dentists gain. See you soon.

HEINRICH vonSTEPHAN --- "Father of the U.P.U."

Harry O. Henneman wrote in the March MASONIC PHILATELIST that Heinrich von Stephan (1831-1897), Postmaster-General of the German Confederation in 1875, was a Member of Lodge Teutonia zur Weisheit in Potsdam. He was Initiated in 1858.

To this may be added that von Stephan is acclaimed as the "Father" of the U.P.U. He was instrumental in organizing the most successful international body ever known.

In celebration of the 75th anniversary of the U.P.U., most of the member countries have issued special stamps. Von Stephens portrait appears on several stamps of the various German zones.

---S.B.

CARL H. PIHL *** Second Vice-President

Born in the City of New York, Brother Pihl was a normal child until the age of 12 when he became interested in stamp collecting. His interest in stamps has been continuous except for four years when he went away to college (Alabama Polytechnic Institute) where he was Southeastern Conference and South-eastern A.A.U. Mile Champion, held numerous track records and was captain of the team in his senior year.

Another interruption in his philatelic study was caused by four years war service, including two years in the ETO. At present, Major in the Field Artillery Reserve and in command of the 840th Field Artillery Battalion.

Editor and writer with the Copper and Brass Research Assn. in New York. Married and has two children. Owns his own home on Long Island. Raised in Kings County Lodge # 511 on March 18, 1947 and joined the Masonic Stamp Club shortly thereafter. Chairman of the Program Committee last year and has accepted again for this year. (and doing a darn good job--Editor)

Carl Pelander is in charge of the Scandinavian Stamp Exhibit to be held in December at the Philatelic Museum, Philadelphia. The arrangements call for a 200-frame show.

Henry Friedman has retired from his insurance business, and will be happy to hear from members. Address him at 350 Central Park West, New York, 25, N.Y.

MASONRY BEHIND A POSTAGE STAMP

By JOHN A. MIRT, 32°

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If the recently issued 3c U. S. postage stamp in commemoration of the final encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic could talk it would tell a most interesting story about Masons in Illinois who long ago passed to their rewards.



Members of the Craft charted the course of the G. A. R. during its infancy. Brethren who worked in the vineyards of Masonry developed the early ritual for the organization, made up of men who had fought and bled that this Union might be preserved.

And, it was a member of the Scottish Rite Bodies of Chicago—Maj. Gen. John A. Logan—who is recorded in G. A. R. annals as the most outstanding leader the Grand Army ever had. To Gen. Logan goes the credit for the establishment of Memorial Day as a countrywide holiday for the honoring of those who had served their country on the battlefields.

The idea of a G. A. R. originated in a camp during the Civil War. Maj. Benjamin F. Stephenson of Springfield, Ill., a surgeon, and the Rev. William J. Rutledge of Petersburg, Ill., frequently discussed the project.

With the war's end, Dr. Stephenson decided to carry out the idea. He discussed the organization with others in Springfield, but it was in Decatur that the first post was established. There, on April 6, 1866, Dr. Stephenson installed Capt. M. F. Kanan, a member of Macon Lodge No. 8, Decatur, as commander of the first post.

Of the twelve charter members, I have found the names of four enrolled in Masonic Lodges at the time. Brig. Gen. Isaac C. Pugh and Maj. John H. Nale also were members of Macon Lodge No. 8. Capt. Christian Reibsame was a member of

Ionic Lodge No. 312, Decatur. Gen. Pugh had served in the Black Hawk and Mexican Wars as well as the Civil War. He was chosen district commandant.

Other posts were chartered in rapid succession. There were 60 posts when the first state convention was held in Springfield, July 12, 1866. A permanent state organization was effected with the election of Maj. Gen. John M. Palmer as commander. Gen. Palmer was a member of Mt. Nebo Lodge No. 76, Carlinville, Ill., and a Past Grand Orator of the Grand Lodge of Illinois.

The movement spread to other states and on Nov. 20, 1866, a convention of state departments was held for the first time in Indianapolis. Brig. Gen. Stephen A. Hurlbut, a member of Belvidere Lodge No. 60 of Belvidere, Ill., and also a Past Grand Orator of the Grand Lodge of Illinois, was elected as the national commander-in-chief.

Meanwhile, Dr. Stephenson had been conferring with others on a ritual for the G. A. R. Among those who participated in its development were Gen. Logan, Gen. Palmer and Capt. Kanan. The handiwork of the Masons was seen in the form of the early initiation ceremonies. The ritual provided for three grades of membership—Recruit, Soldier and Veteran. Each had its sign, grip and password. The initiatory work, including the obligation assumed, had many familiar passages. Assistance of distressed comrades, "their widows and orphans" was stressed. Later, one class of membership was established.

At the second national convention, held in Philadelphia, Jan. 15, 1868, Gen. Logan was elected commander-in-chief of the G. A. R., which had grown to a membership of more than 200,000. His reign was popular and he was re-elected twice.

It was at the start of his first term that he issued his historic general order for all posts to decorate the graves of soldiers on May 30. He remains today the most outstanding of all commanders-in-chief of the G. A. R.

The three-fold objectives of the G. A. R. were explained by Gen. Logan in one of his talks. They were: "Fraternity among its members which shall bind them together in one great brotherhood; the exercise of Charity in its broadest sense of liberal distributions to and sympathy for those in want and distress; and, unswerving Loyalty to our government and its great principles, coupled with a determination to maintain its integrity unimpaired."

On another occasion—a Memorial Day oration—he said: “The Grand Army of the Republic has been organized on nearly the same basis as ‘The Cincinnati’ and for nearly the same object. It is a secret society, taken from the order of our forefathers, and here are the first fruits of that society.”

“The Cincinnati” was composed of leaders in the Revolutionary War. The moving spirits were Masons who had served with Gen. George Washington, America’s most revered Mason.

Gen. Logan’s biography is a brilliant one—too long to detail. Most of his life was given to the service of his country. He was born in Murphysboro, Ill., Feb. 9, 1826. After serving in the Mexican War he studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1851.

The Civil War broke out while he was serving in Congress. Actuated by a patriotic impulse, he left his seat and fought as a private in the Battle of Bull Run. Returning to his state, he recruited the 31st Illinois Volunteer Regiment. Thereafter, throughout the war, he displayed skill and heroism. He was promoted by stages to major general. In that capacity, he led the Army of the Tennessee in Gen. Sherman’s march to the sea.

After the Civil War he was elected to the United States Senate several times. He campaigned zealously in behalf of those who had fought for their country. In 1884, he was a candidate on the Republican ticket for vice president. His death in Washington, Dec. 26, 1886, was mourned nationally. Tens of thousands viewed his remains in the rotunda of the National Capitol. Thousands lined the streets as his body was borne to a resting place.

The Rev. Dr. John P. Newman, in his funeral oration, said:

“Today, 350,000 veterans in the Grand Army of the Republic feel they have lost a friend. Today, 622,000 pensioners bless his memory. Today, 230,000 widows and orphans breathe a prayer to Heaven for the peace of his soul. And now the spirits of 350,000 patriotic soldiers, slain in the war, gather around the great soul of Logan and thank him that on each returning 30th of May their graves are not forgotten, but are covered with flowers.”

When the \$75,000 St. Gaudens’ statue of Gen. Logan astride a charger was unveiled in Grant Park, Chicago, on July 22, 1897, the occasion was virtually a state holiday. Nearly 17,000 men, including 1,552 in Knights Templar uniform, took part in a parade. Hundreds of thousands

attended the dedication ceremonies.

Gen. Logan was raised in Mitchell Lodge No. 85, Pinckneyville, Ill., and in 1851 affiliated with Benton (Ill.) Lodge No. 64. At the time of his death he also was a member of the Scottish Rite Bodies of Chicago; Washington Chapter No. 43, R.A.M., Chicago, and Chevalier Bayard Commandery No. 52, K.T., Chicago. He was elected to receive the 33d Degree, but died before it could be conferred.

Gen. Palmer also served his country gallantly and with skill during the Civil War. In 1868, he was elected governor of Illinois, serving four years with credit to himself and satisfaction to his people. He occupied other public offices in later years, including that of Senator from Illinois. He died Sept. 25, 1900, and was buried with Masonic honors at Carlinville.

Gen. Hurlbut fought nobly throughout the Civil War and was mustered out in July, 1865, as a major general. He held numerous public offices. He died of a heart attack in Lima, Peru, March 27, 1882, while serving there as minister to Peru.

Whether Maj. Stephenson, who died in 1871, was a Mason has not been established. In his talks he frequently referred to his comrades and “their widows and orphans.” He studied medicine with his brother, Dr. William Stephenson of Mount Pleasant, Iowa, who later became a member of the Masonic Lodge there.

When the remains of Maj. Stephenson were reburied at Peterburg, Ill., Aug. 29, 1882, the G. A. R. services were conducted by Judge James H. Matheny of Springfield. Judge Matheny was a Past Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Illinois and in his oration he said:

“I am here today with the single purpose of laying a sprig of ‘Immortelle’ upon the grave of our departed comrade.”

Maj. Stephenson nurtured the idea of the G. A. R. and was elected its first adjutant general. It was the consensus—and he agreed—that more colorful and nationally known figures should head the G. A. R. in its formative stages in order to assure its success. He died when the organization was still young.

There are two surviving members of the Grand Army of the Republic in Illinois. One of these is Bro. Thomas Ambrose, who was born in Ohio, May 5, 1849. He was raised in McMillan Lodge No. 141, Cincinnati, and affiliated with Covenant Lodge No. 526, Chicago, Jan. 19, 1894. He is one of Covenant’s 50-year members. The other survivor is Lewis Fablinger.

WHAT THEN, BROTHER?

One of my friends once harbored a large duck, white, of the "puddle" variety, which swam the Lake down past the Temple in the summer and sojourned in his cellar in the winter. It was a great pet and followed the children about constantly.

I once asked him if the duck was a male or a female and he remarked "That matter is of no interest to anyone but another duck."

Such is a stamp collection--of interest only to another stamp collector--and so I look forward with mild misgivings, as the years race along, to the time when I shall lay down the tongs and the hinges and leave my collection to the tender mercies of those who follow me.

Shorn of all the sentimental associations and divested of the million little things, known only to me, that makes it dear, it becomes merely a scrap book of countless bits of paper that perhaps have some commercial value but mean little to the layman.

I hope that whoever reads this, when I am beyond the defending of it, will find it a red light of warning before they ruthlessly dismember it.

I can only shudder at the thought of that, perhaps greatest of all stamp collections, that we have seen scattered to the four winds by the money loving relatives who gained possession of it.

If there is a stamp collectors Heaven, there is within it an unhappy spirit.

It is unlikely that the family line will produce another stamp collector. I never heard that Philately was hereditary like acting or bald heads. My progeny show a mild interest but I never caught one of them alone with the albums.

It would be nice, but unlikely. They will tire

of dusting off the white elephant and the stamps will move on. Somebody will take them, thoroly sterilized of all my traditions, and fit them into his collection. The memories of their former owner will be "In the coffin there with Caesar."

It is fitting that I recount a few of the difficulties encountered in disposing of a collection. There are few who would care to buy an advanced collection, because most of the joy in owning one is found in securing it piece by piece. So, a Dealer is the next move.

The first word that you will hear on offering your stamps is "Condition."

Condition is the Gremlin of the stamp collector. In case you are not instructed, a Gremlin is the Imp of Satan that sits on your shoulder and directs the traffic of misfortunes that follows you through life.

So far I have heard several hundred reasons why my stamps are practically worthless. I can see no evil in an attempt to buy goods as cheaply as possible. The Stamp Business is a tough business and considering the small number of salable stamps in any lot that a Dealer buys, he just has to buy them at a low figure.

If a collection is complete at all, it contains hundreds of stamps that every collector has or can easily get. They are space fillers-uninteresting-common-place. Collectors want classics-rarities-the unusual.

If you attempt to break up your collection and sell it piecemeal you will suddenly find yourself in possession of a lot of these fillers and all your rarities gone. What is left will bring very little.

Another danger is for your stamps to fall into the hands of a person too young or ignorant Philatelically to appreciate them.

It is impossible to pass on to anyone the priceless knowledge and hours of pleasure obtained in the assembling of your collection. My stamps are a solace, an escape, a refuge, a counter-irritant, a Hobby, if you will. They are an investment in the lore of generations past and present. They are not a speculation.

There is no price on the romance of old cancellations, for instance. Dream up the pictures of those old Post Masters, the different personalities that could produce cancellations that range from an indifferent thumb print to the fantastic Devil and pitchfork or exemplify the influence of the Craft or the Church.

My stamp collection is perhaps the most personal thing I own. It ranks next to my false teeth.

It is the least understood of all my belongings.

It is the most selfish thing I own because it takes much time and some of my money from things that might be more easily shared.

And so I speculate: what will become of it? That, perhaps, should be the least of my worries. Will it be treasured for itself or because it was mine or will it be scattered to the Philatelic winds? will it be sold for the price of a case of Scotch or the down payment on a new baby?

I belong to the M.S.C. I am sure that when the time comes, whoever has my stamps can take them to one of the Brass Hats of this Club for advise.

They may not tell him where he can make a Fortune, but at least they will not hand him a "Mickey Finn."

I hope for the best. It is not beyond reason that some Grandchild will treasure it for itself.

After all there are 15 million of us.

--Harry L. Kinne