



THE WATERMARK

Canada's Online Masonic Philatelic Newsletter

Thanks For The Feedback

The feedback I have been receiving since I started writing the Watermark again has been great. Even better some of you are suggesting topics to write about, which believe me, is really helpful. I am trying to put an issue out every month other than July and August in addition to writing a second monthly newsletter on my search for Atlantic Canadians who fought in the American Civil War 1861-1865. As you might suspect there were many Freemasons on both sides of the Conflict. In addition, I distribute daily postings from my unpublished manuscript on the history of the RCMP. Fortunately I am retired now and have some time to do research and write about these varied topics.

In this issue of The Watermark we have a guest article from Bro. Cambell Caraher in the UK and part one of my latest research concerning Brothers who have been professional magicians. So hopefully I don't have to pull a rabbit out of my master's top hat to keep you interested.

Larry



Anti-Fascist Stamps Of World War II

by Campbell Caraher

On the 1st January, 1942 Serbia issued four stamps to commemorate the Grand Anti-Masonic Exhibition, which opened in Belgrade on October 22, 1941. These stamps depicted a strong and victorious Nazi governed Serbia, crushing an evil Masonic-Communist-Jewish plot for world domination.



Apart from their postal use these stamps had a surtax on them which was used to pay for Anti-Masonic, Anti-Communist, and Anti-Jewish propaganda and also to spread hatred against Freemasonry.

These stamps, with their association of Masonic, Communist, Jewish and Serbian symbols, provide a remarkable window into how Freemasonry was regarded by the Serbian government during this war time period. Even after the Communist takeover of Yugoslavia in May 1945 Freemasons were still regarded with suspicion and contempt by the Serbian dominated Yugoslav authorities and Freemasonry remained outlawed for the next 45 years - until the summer of 1990.



A little over a year after the end of WWII on the 14th September, 1946, an Anti-Fascist exhibition was held at the Kuenstlerhaus in Vienna with the purpose of informing the Austrian public of the crimes committed by the Nazi regime. Over 840,000 visitors attended.

This exhibition was titled "Niemals Vergessen", "Never Forget" and was attended by the Austrian Federal Chancellor Leopold Figi and a number of senior Soviet occupying soldiers, the exhibition paid particular attention to those Nazi leaders who led the war.

To commemorate this post war exhibition, Austria issued a set of eight stamps on the 16th September 1946. Surtaxes on Austrian stamps of the period were typically used to raise revenue for public charities and celebrations, re-construction projects and national causes, however, the surtaxes on this Anti Fascist stamp set were also used to fund this Anti-Fascist exhibition.

This set of Austrian stamps was designed to directly oppose the 1942 Serbian Anti Masonic stamp set.



The red 01+01 stamp shows a hand saluting and making the oath of allegiance to the Austrian flag in front of an Austrian mountainous landscape scene and broken free from Nazi bondage.

The red 02+02 stamp details a German Imperial Eagle with Austrian flag above a burning and enflamed swastika.

The black 05+03 stamp shows a Nazi sword with swastika hilt piercing an outline map of Austria symbolizing the destruction caused from the German invasion of 1938.

The 06+04 stamp has a broom sweeping a broken fasces and swastika off of a map of Europe and into the sea, symbolizing the Allied victory over German occupied Europe.



The orange 08+06 stamp shows St. Stephens Cathedral in flames surrounded by an illuminated crown of thorns, following an accidental Allied bombing raid on the Austrian capital of Vienna in April 1945.

The 12+12 stamp shows a pleading skeletal hand behind a barbed wire fence, Austrian flag and the letters KZ, which refers to the Mauthausen camp located in the North of Austria and its 100 sub-camps which were spread over the rest of the country. Mauthausen was one of the largest concentration camp complexes in German occupied Europe. This camp was operated by the Schutzstaffel (SS) when Austria was annexed into the German 3rd Reich on the 12th March, 1938 until its liberation by Allied troops on the 5th May, 1945.



This camp, which included quarries, munitions and arms factories, mines and assembly plant such as the Me262 fighter aircraft and was nicknamed the “Knochenmühle” or “Bone Grinder” with the infamous “Steps of Death”, where prisoners were forced to carry 50kG granite slabs on their backs up 186 steps to the top of the quarry and was classed as a Stufe or Grade III camp, which meant that it was intended to be a tougher concentration camp, if such a thing was possible, for the “incorrigible political enemies of the Reich” and was used for “extermination through labour” where it is estimated that between 122,766 and 320,000 Soviet, Spanish and Polish prisoners perished.

The 30+30 stamp shows a hand choking a serpent with swastikas as scales and search lights illuminating the night sky in variance to the 1+1 Serbian stamp of 1942 which details a serpent with the Star of David as scales.



Lastly, the 42+42 stamp opposes the Serbian Sampson 4+4 stamp and shows a sledge hammer smashing a column and structure with a swastika capital illuminated by the rays of heaven.

It is noteworthy that the Austrian 5+3 & 12+12 stamps were not the originally intended stamp designs but rather the SS lightning bolts and thunderstorm of raining swastikas over a map of Austria and the death skull and mask of Adolf Hitler with the Kopff/22P comet shown in the top right hand corner of the stamp.

This comet which was first discovered in August 1906 peaked in Magnitude in 1945 following its orbital change through 1939 to 1945, but as the approval of stamp designs in post WWII Austria were governed by the occupying Allies, these two designs were deemed too inflammatory during this period of peace and reconstruction, so the less provocative stamp designs were selected for issuing and circulation.



Magicians of Masonry

When you say the words magic and Freemasonry, many uninformed people in the world automatically think of the occult and nefarious mystery. This has been happening for hundreds of years and productions such Mozart's opera the "Magic Flute on movies have contributed to sphere of mystery and awe of the Craft. But we are not discussing Brother Mozart and other aspects of mysticism. No we are visiting the world of practical magic, you know the kind where entire elephants disappear before your very eyes.

Who isn't impressed by illusion and magic? Whether you are a child or young at heart, the slight of hand, card tricks and rabbits popping out of hats, or a person escaping from imminent danger or making tigers appear will make your hear skip a beat. Several prominent illusionists have wore the lambskin apron and in this article, you will be introduced to some of the greatest in their craft and possibly experience a sense of awe and happiness delivered by these men.

For obvious reason, not every member of this illustrious group has been honoured by being featured on a stamp, but some have. Many Freemasons are familiar with the names Harry Keller, Howard Thurston, Harry Houdini, Charles Carter, and Harry Blackstone, Sr. all of whom were Freemasons and have been written about, but they were not the only magicians that were Freemasons.



VENTRILOQUISM.

Mr.  POTTER.

The VENTRILOQUIST.

Begs leave most respectfully to inform the Ladies and Gentlemen of

Evening's Brush to Sweep away

CARE: Or, the Rubbing to Cleanse.

At Mr. **Ball-Room.**
On **Evening** **instant**
In the course of the Evening will be offered upwards of

100



with Cards, Eggs,

Money, &c.

CURIOUS BUT MYSTERIOUS

Experiments,

A **SONG.**

(For Particulars, see small Bill.)

by Mr. POTTER.

PART SECOND.

VENTRILOQUISM.

Mr. P. will display his wonderful but unknown power of Ventriloquism. He shows his voice and many different parts of the voice, and into the gentleman's hats, trunks, &c. Associates all kinds of Birds and Beasts, so that few or none will be able to distinguish his imitations from the reality. This part of the performance has never failed of exciting the surprise of the treated and well informed, as the consequence of success is allowed to be one of the greatest operations of nature.

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One of the earliest magicians who was a Freemason was **Richard Potter** (1783-1835), the grandson of Sir Charles Henry (Harry) Frankland 4th Baronet and the Collector of Customs for the Port of Boston. Circumstantial evidence suggests that Frankland's son, Henry Cromwell Frankland (1741-1814) later Vice Admiral Cromwell and the house maid Dinah, a freed slave of Sir Charles, were the parents of Richard Potter.

Although he was illegitimate (like his father) Richard was raised on the Frankland Estate in Hopkinton, MA and attended school there. At the age of ten he was hired on as a cabin boy and set sail for England. After arriving in England he became a circus performer and began touring throughout Great Britain and Europe. In the circus he became an assistant to magician "Rannie the Scot" (John Rannie) and eventually migrated back to the United States with the Rannie troupe around 1801.

Over the next decade, he began performing on his own act with Rannie and when his teacher retired in 1811, Richard began his own independent career. Especially noted for his ventriloquism juggling, hypnosis, and magic he performed throughout America, Canada and England becoming the first successful Black American magician. By 1817, his admission fees had grown from 25 cents to \$1.00. and he became quite wealthy, building a Potter Place, his mansion on 175 acres of land in Andover, NH.

When Potter retired from performing, he spent his remaining years on his farm with his wife Sally and their three children. He passed away at the age of 52 years at Potter Place in September of 1835.

Brother Potter joined African Lodge No. 459 of Boston under the premier Grand Lodge of England (Moderns) in November 1811. In addition he is named in the document that created Prince Hall Masonry, the "Declaration of Independence" of African Lodge signed June 18, 1827.

Signor Blitz (1810-1877) Born Antonio Blitz in Deal, England he began his career at the age of 13 in Hamburg, Germany and after travelling for two years in Europe, he returned to England, and performed his first show in Dover in Dec. 1825. He continued to perform throughout the United Kingdom and in 1834 he came to the United States, travelling through that country, Canada and West Indies.

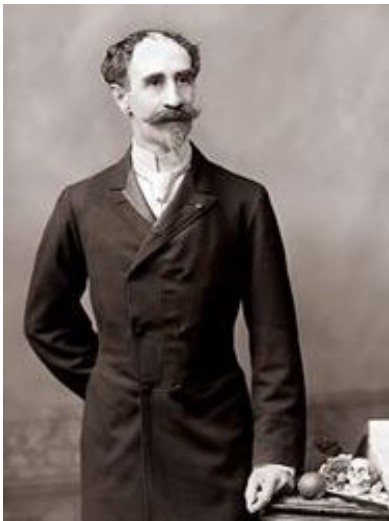
He performed for several years and was an accomplished magician, ventriloquist, juggler and bird handler. One of his magic acts involved more than 500 canaries.



He became so popular that at least 13 other magicians were performing under the name "Blitz" in an attempt to capitalize on his popularity.

He settled in Philadelphia, Pa. where he resided until his death on Jan. 28, 1877.

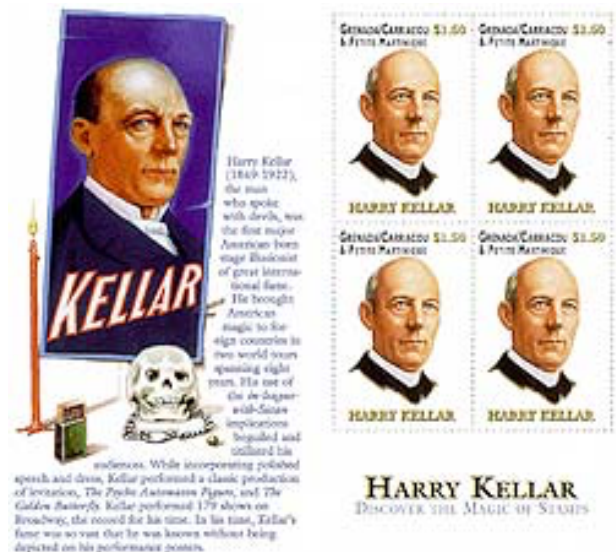
He authored "Fifty Years in the Magic Circle" and despite the fact his his original lodge is not known, he was made an honorary member of Montgomery Lodge No. 19 of Philadelphia.



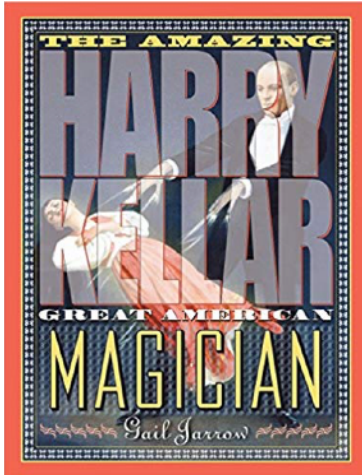
"The Great Herrmann", Alexander Herrman (1844-) was part of the Herrmann family which, has been called "first-family of magic". Born in Paris he followed his father and brother Compars Herrmann to pursue a career as a magician. He joined his brother's stage show at the age of eight and the brothers toured the world together. In July 1876 Alexander moved to America and throughout the 1870s and 1880s, he and his wife Adelaide performed together in elaborate stage shows. They toured the world, and performed for audiences that even included Royalty. After returning to America they continued to build their reputation and became one of the few magicians to earn \$75,000 a year (about \$3 million today). Herrmann died on December 17, 1896 at the age of 52 while traveling from Rochester, NY to Bradford.

Harry Keller (1849-1922) has been was called the Dean of Magic and was credited with founding the Royal Dynasty of American Magicians. Born in Erie, Pennsylvania. He studied magic starting at the age of 12 while travelling after the American Civil war as an assistant to the magician Isaiah Harris Hughes whose stage name was "The Fakir of Ava, Chief of Staff of Conjurers to His Sublime Greatness the Nanka of Aristaphae" Between Keller's apprenticeship and creating his own show, Keller often perform as the Fakir of Ava to cover for the aging Hughes'.

By 1884 he had created his own full evening show and quickly rivalled the skills and popularity of Alexander Herrmann, whose position as the leading magician in the United States was well established and which, he assumed when Herrmann died in 1896.



One interesting story that is told about Keller related to the loss of his Masonic Diploma. He was performing in a tour that took him through Mexico, South America and on to Europe, but the ship they were on hit rocks in the Bay of Biscay and sank. As it went to the bottom it took all the money Keller and fellow magician Fay had, along with their costumes and props for their show and his the diploma. They managed to hire divers who brought up baggage from the sunken ship and Bro. Keller afterwards said his diploma had been viewed by Grand Master Neptune and returned to him.



He was made a Mason in May, 1875 in Lodge Fraternidad y Home at Pelotas, Brazil; received the Royal Arch Degree on the Isle of Mauritius (Port Luis). In 1880 he received the Scottish Rite degrees in Triple Esperance Lodge, Port Luis, Mauritius, and a member of Manitou Lodge No. 106, New York City. He was also a 32nd degree Scottish Rite and a member of the Mecca Shrine Club.

If you would like to know more about Bro. Keller you can read "The Amazing Harry Kellar: Great American Magician" which, was published in 2012.

When Harry Keller died in 1922 the mantle of "Greatest American Magician" passed to Bro. **Howard Thurston** (1869-1936) who became the foremost magician of his day and was called the 'King of Cards'. He entertained thousands for over 27 years. Howard Thurston was born in Columbus, Ohio and he was initiated in Manitou Lodge No. 106, New York City, on July 22, 1907. When performing he like to say "pronounce the magic word 'Hiram Abif' and the rooster and the duck will change places" to let his Masonic Brothers know that a fellow Freemason was on the stage.



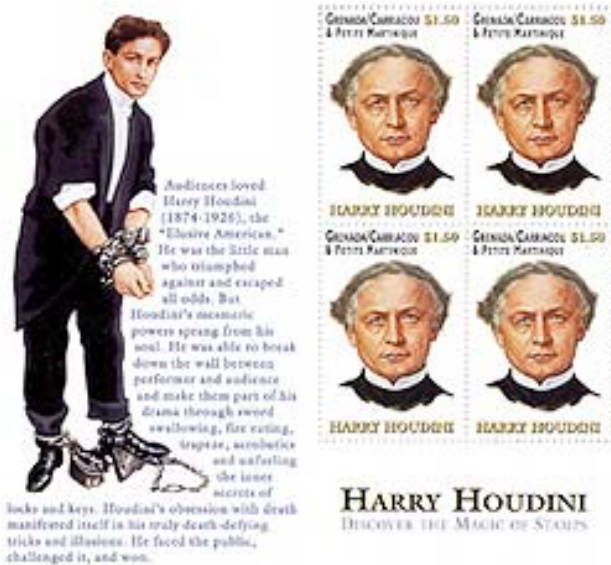
The "King Of Cards", and successor to legend Harry Kellar, Howard Thurston is regarded as a master of sleight of hand and the foremost magician of his day. Strongly influenced by Hermann the Great, Thurston dazzled his audiences by having playing cards with his picture into the furthest corners of theater balconies.

His first full-stage illusion show in 1897 was considered a wonder of its time. In 1907 Thurston inherited the mantle of a retiring Harry Kellar and headed up the world's greatest extravaganza for 27 years. His show of astonishing illusions, levitation and miracles is considered the most spectacular of his era.



HOWARD THURSTON
DISCOVER THE MAGIC OF STAMPS

Harry Houdini (1874-1926) is still the most famous escape artist who ever lived. Immortalized in movies, books and popular culture he continues to inspire shock and awe around the world. Born in Budapest Hungary, Erik Weisz, later Ehrich Weiss or Harry Weiss, moved to America on July 3rd 1878. The family found themselves in severe poverty by 1887 and he moved with his Rabbi Father to New York to seek work and eventually, the family was reunited. Young Ehrich hustled for work and made his first public debut as a trapeze artist at the age of nine, and then followed that up by getting into magic, calling himself Harry Houdini. He took the name Harry as an homage to his favourite magician Harry Keller and Houdini in honour of the French Magician Robert Houdin.



Today he is remembered primarily as an escape artist, but he was an accomplished illusionist as well, and amazed audiences by making an elephant named Jennie disappear.

In 1909 he became interested in aviation and purchased a Vosni biplane for \$5,000. After crashing his plane he fixed it up and made his first successful flight landing in Hamburg Germany on November 26th. Then he took his plane to Australia when he toured down under.

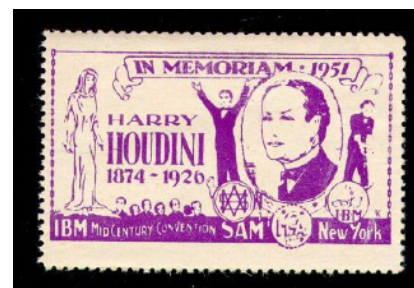
Between 1909 and 1923 he starred in six movies, two of which he produced, but gave up on the movie business and then turned his attention to



debunking phoney spiritualists and mediums.

The great Houdini died at the age of 52 of a ruptured appendix on Halloween, 1926 at the Grace Hospital in Detroit, MI. It has been speculated that the contributing cause was from being repeatedly punched in the abdomen in his dressing room in Montreal, Canada, by a McGill University student, Jocelyn Gordon Whitehead (1895-1954). He was suffering from a broken ankle at the time so he took the publicity stunts lying on a couch. Even though he was in great pain and feverish, he ignored the advice of a doctor to get to the hospital immediately, he went on stage in Detroit and subsequently passed out during the show.

Houdini was an active Freemason and was a member of St. Cecile Lodge #568, in New York City.



The Keller dynasty passed from Bro. Thurston to another Freemason "**Dante The Magician**" Harry Jansen (1883-1955). Unlike his predecessors, Harry Jansen was not born in America, but instead, in Copenhagen, Denmark and moved to America at the age of six. Jansen began his career in magic at the age of sixteen, when he toured the world for five years studying under the magician Charles Wagner calling himself "The Great Jansen". By 1922 Howard Thurston recognized the skills of the new magician and realized that he could become strong completion to his act. So he approached Jansen and hired him to headline his Number 2 Thurston Show, and gave him a new stage name "Dante".



By 1925, Jansen was co-owner of the 2nd Thurston show which he built and co-produced. Throughout his career he worked in vaudeville, burlesque, theatre, movies, and eventually television. Jansen was the man who coined the magic phrase "Sim Sala Bim" which was made famous in the Laurle and Hardey movie, "A Haunting We Will Go" In reality it wasn't a magical word at all, they were part of the lyrics of a popular Danish children's song. Human beings being what they are, not all men in this Fraternity like each other and this was the case for Harry Jansen. He did not like Harry Houdini and wasn't shy about slagging him in public.

In an article written by Jansen he let the public know his feelings with *"First, he (Houdini) stole his name from the man who originated and made magic possible, Robert-Houdin"* (Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin 1805 -1871) and criticized Houdini's act and methods claiming he could cuff Houdini in a way that would leave him bound, or lock him in a packing crate and he would not be able to get out. *"Houdini the escape king? What can he escape from? So far, he has escaped criticism. This is the biggest trick he has ever done."*

Jansen was initiated in Sydney, Australia's Lodge Thespian on December 23, 1913.



Following Dante's death in 1955, the mantle, if such a thing still existed, allegedly passed to **Lee Grable** (1919 -2015).

Born in Portland Oregon March 12, 1919 and as a young boy he struggled with a speech impediment and wore glasses but his life was changed when a magician named "Professor Turtle", tore a newspaper into confetti and then turned the confetti into a white dove. He began studying magic and at the age of eight he gave his first performance to his Cub Scout Pack and by sixteen he was performing in clubs in San Francisco. Following military service in WWII he and his new wife Helen built new illusion and began touring. By 1950

their Broadway Magical Mystery Extravaganza was on the road playing one-nighters throughout the mid-west, with their signature illusion, a floating piano that revolved with Helen in mid-air while she played the piano.

With the invention of the television and its rapid growth in American homes the act began to wane. Magicians were now featured on TV and it was time to find a new career. Magic found a resurgence in the 1970's and they decided to take their act on the road again in 1977. In 1986 he published an autobiography called "The Magic and Illusions of Lee Grabel."

He continued to tour with a new show "A Nostalgic Return to the Golden Age of Magic." and in 1994 he named Vegas headliner, Lance Burton as his successor in the Royal Dynasty of Magic.

The last magic show he performed was at the age of 87 at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood California. when he died in 2015 at the age of 96, he and Helen had been married for 71 years.



To be continued...



The Watermark is published on an irregular basis (I try for 10 issues a year) and the comments, opinions and articles are those of the author unless stated otherwise.

Comments and constructive criticisms can be directed to the Editor.

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