

U. S. STAMPS TO HONOR MASONS, FIGHTERS FOR FREEDOM

Part I.

JOHN A. MIRT

Two Masons will be honored by "Champions of Liberty" stamps to be issued this year by the United States postoffice department.

On July 24, two values will pay homage to Simon Bolivar. "The George Washington of South America." Two values, to be issued September 19, will bear the portrait of Lajos (Louis) Kosuth, hero of the liberty movement in Hungary more than a century ago.



Simon Bolivar (1783-1830) liberated five South American countries from the yoke of Spain—Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, the last a change in name from Upper Peru. He became the first president of Bolivia in 1825 but after serving six months he turned the administration over to General Sucre, another Mason, whose portrait appears on numerous South American stamps.

Bolivar was an active Mason. He arrived in London in 1810 on a diplomatic mission and through General Miranda (another prominent Mason and philatelic figure) became a member of Lodge No. 5 of the York Rite. (Some reports say he has made a Mason in Cadiz, Spain.)

Bolivar returned to Venezuela and founded Lodge "Protectora de las Virtudes No. 1," of which he became Worshipful Master. In 1824, he jour-

neyed to Peru and founded Lodge "Order and Liberty No. 2." He was made a Scottish Rite Mason in France and became Grand Commander of the Supreme Council 33°, Scottish Rite Masons, of Colombia as well as president of that country. His Scottish Rite collar and apron are on display in the Grand Lodge Museum in New York.

A Roman Catholic, Bolivar broke away from the church when in his liberation movement he found that among his chief opponents were clerics who ruled with an iron hand under the Spanish administration. In 1828, when an anti-Masonic wave was sweeping over the world, he forbade meetings of Masons in Venezuela. On his death bed in 1830, he returned to the priests for spiritual aid.

Nevertheless, it was while a Mason that he performed the deeds which established him as one of the unforgettable liberators of mankind, and for which he is being honored postally by the United States.

Bolivar's portrait appears on the stamps of many countries of the world. Of particular interest to American philatelists is a series of seven regular (Nos. 457-463) and eight air mail (Nos. C322-329) stamps issued by Venezuela in 1951, showing the Bolivar statue in Central Park, New York.

Venezuela presented the statue to the United States in 1921. Thirty years later it was relocated in the park. The stamps were issued to commemorate the rededication.

It may also be of interest to point out that Ramon Magsaysay, late president of the Philippines and subject of the first stamp in the "Champion of Liberty" series of the United States, held a high regard for Freemasonry although he was a devout Roman Catholic.

Magsaysay, killed in an airplane crash in 1957, in a message to the 1956 annual meeting of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines said, in part:

"I have been made to understand that the Grand Lodge of the Philippines is identified with a great inter-

national movement for the general improvement of mankind. I wish to encourage it in this noble mission. Considering that the present need of the world today is greater international understanding. I am most certain that whatever the Grand Lodge can contribute in this

direction will be a stride nearer a lasting world peace."

This message was sent at a time when powerful religious forces in the Philippines were strongly opposed to Freemasonry. It took courage on the part of the president to commend the Craft on its high principles.



Simon Bolivar

Fighters For Freedom

Part 2

Lajos (Louis) Kossuth

By JOHN A. MIRT



Of especial interest to American Masonic philatelists is that of Kossuth (1802-1894), who was made a Mason in the United States.

Kossuth, a Budapest lawyer, worked for the separation of Hungary from Austria. He proclaimed the Hungarian Republic in 1849. The movement for freedom failed when Russian forces joined with Austria to suppress the revolution, and Kossuth was forced to flee the country.

(Ironically, in 1952, Communistically-dominated Hungary which suppressed Freemasonry, issued a 20f stamp in his "Holiday of Liberty" series bearing the portrait of Kossuth.)

In 1851, by Congressional resolution, a United States battleship was sent to bring him from England. On December 7, 1851 (a century later) the **New York Times**, commenting editorially on the 100th anniversary of Kossuth's arrival on American soil, said in part:

"On December 7, 1851, the cannons boomed, the church bells rang and the whistles of the boats in New York harbor went full blast as Louis Kossuth, Hungary's dauntless exile, stepped ashore at the battery. New Yorkers by the thousands gave him a wildly enthusiastic welcome . . . He caused so much excitement here because he symbolized something dear to Americans

—the spirit of freedom."

The editorial raised some question whether Kossuth should be honored because the newspaper considered him a chauvinist—an over-zealous and extravagant glorifier of his country, yet added: "But we do not honor him for his chauvinism but because he did, for all his faults, burn with the clear passion of freedom."

While here, Kossuth under date of February 18, 1852, petitioned Cincinnati Lodge No. 133, F. & A. M., Cincinnati. The petition was somewhat unusual. It read:

"The petition of the subscriber respectfully showeth that having long entertained a favorable opinion of your Ancient Institution, he is desirous of being admitted a member thereof, if found worthy.

"Being an exile for Liberty's sake, and having no place of fixed residence, is now staying at Cincinnati; his age is 49½ years; his occupation is to restore his native land, Hungary, to its national independence, and to achieve by community of action with other nations, civil and religious liberty in Europe.

Louis Kossuth."

The petition was made a "case of emergency" and action taken thereon. The degrees were conferred within two days. A week later, speaking before Center Lodge No. 23, at Indianapolis, Kossuth said:

"The Masonic brotherhood is one which tends to better the conditions of mankind, and we are delighted to know it enlists the attention of so many Brethren among you as we find surrounding us here . . . To one like myself, without a country or a home, dependent upon the hospitality of strangers for life and protection, a great substitute for all my privations is, I find, to be surrounded by Brethren of the Masonic Order."

On another occasion, Kossuth said: "If all men were Freemasons, oh, what a worldwide and glorious republic we should have!"

In the **Freemasons Monthly Magazine** of June 1852, I found a most interesting account of his visit to the

Grand Lodge of Massachusetts in Boston, May 10, 1852. More than 400 were present, and hundreds were turned away.

"Could the doors of the Grand Lodge have been thrown open, and the public found space to hear his remarks, they would have seen that the oracles of Ancient Craft Masonry at all times and in all places, wherever uttered, breathed only the freedom of man, attachment to good order, and love of virtue," said the magazine. "The great Magyar only spoke, in his eloquent way, the true principles of the Institution."

Kossuth was quoted as then also saying: "Masonry has never flourished where a country is ruled by despotism."

That statement, made a century ago, holds good today. Speculative Masonry was established in Hungary more than 200 years ago. In 1920, the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary was suppressed by a governmental decree. That order was rescinded in 1946, but in June 1950, the government announced that the lodges of Freemasonry in Hungary had been dissolved.

The reason, according to the official statement, was that the lodges were "the meeting places of the enemies of the People's Democratic (Communist) Republic; of capitalistic elements, and of the adherents of western imperialism."

Kossuth is honored on numerous Hungarian stamps.

How Kossuth Was Made a Mason

Your Editor enjoyed corresponding with the sincere and cooperative Secretary of Cincinnati Lodge No. 133 F. & A. M., Brother Louis Cahn, and from him we received detailed transcripts of the meetings held by his Lodge on February 18-19-20 & 21st, 1852. It was in these special meetings that Louis Kossuth, Col. Count Gregory Bethlen, Peter A. Nagy, Paul Haynik and Dr. Julius Utosy (Strasser) presented their petitions; then initiated Entered Apprentices; passed to the degree of Fellowcraft and finally raised to the sublime degree of Master Masons. At each meeting there was a large attendance of brethren and visitors, as might be expected.

The hand-written petition of Louis Kossuth, still in good and readable condition, is a part of the archives of the Lodge, and we show it in this issue. It read as follows:

"To the Worshipful Master, Wardens and Brethren of Cincinnati Lodge Free & Accepted Masons No. 133:

"The petition of the subscriber respectfully showed that, having long entertained a favorable opinion of your ancient institution, he is desirous of being admitted a member thereof, if found worthy.

"Being an exile for liberty's sake, he has no place of fixed residence but is now staying at Cincinnati, his age is 49½ years, his occupation is to restore his native land Hungary to its national independence and, to achieve by community of action with other nations,

civil and religious liberty in Europe."
Signed: Louis Kossuth.

Recommended by:

F. Bodman

Augustus Wm. Beyse

Cincinnati, Ohio. Feb. 18, 1852.

Brother Cahn advises us that Bro. Kossuth and his staff were royally entertained by the city officials of Cincinnati and cordially acclaimed by the citizenry. When we questioned the possibility of Peter A. Nagy, raised with Kossuth, as being a possible relative of the now martyred Imre Nagy, he informed me that it was quite possible, but that the name "Nagy" is quite common in Hungary, "such as Smith and Jones in these United States." We pursued the thought no longer. Bro. Cahn also added that he had been told by friends, who travelled abroad that "a monument was erected to Bro. Kossuth in Budapest and that on it the fact is related that he was a Free Mason in Cincinnati, although our records relate that, immediately after their raising, all of them (5), requested their demits and we have no record that these were later submitted to any Lodge in Europe."

May we add that since these Fighters for Freedom had to take refuge in Italy, there may not have been the opportunity of affiliation with a Lodge, at that time.

Reference: MP Vol. 14, No. 10, June 1958 and Vol. 15, No. 1, September 1958. (USA #1110, 1117)

Kossuth photo next page.



Louis Kossuth