

Cinderella Considerations

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In philately, a Cinderella stamp is virtually anything resembling a postage stamp, but not issued for postal purposes by a government postal administration. Technically, such is simply a “seal,” which is the term most commonly used. From the outset, seals were primarily created to raise money for a charitable purpose.

The attractive Masonic seal seen here (top) was created in about 1907 by a Masonic organization in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to raise money for an orphanage. This particular specimen was obviously placed with regular stamps, and thus the postal cancellation. The new orphanage was finally opened on March 25, 1921 and remains to this day.

Seals of this nature are still used (Christmas Seals, Easter Seals and so forth) for charitable purposes. Such do not usually show a denomination as we see with the Masonic seal, but the idea is the same; and all are highly collectable.

With the advent of “personal stamps” or special interest stamps, which are provided by government postal services and approved for postage, the traditional “seal” has taken on a new identity. Generally speaking, government postal services jumped into the “seal” business. What we end up with is something between a Cinderella and a regular postage stamp. The main downside is that the charitable aspects are largely taken out of the equation. Charity seals, which can be produced for a fraction of a cent, are sold for a few cents with the proceeds going to a worthy cause. Personal stamps have to include the cost of postage delivery, and with a cost/profit factor added, come out at over double the domestic rate shown on the stamp or “implied.” Unless the stamps are sold at a higher price, there is no room for charity.

Although most stamp collectors would likely prefer personal stamps to pure Cinderellas, Masonic Grand Lodges that wish to celebrate something should consider the latter (as seen on the right issued by the Grand Lodge of Costa Rica) and use the proceeds for charity.

Special thanks are extended to Bro. Rubén Manasés Achdjian of Buenos Aires, Argentina, for providing the interesting Masonic orphanage seal and its story in his newsletter, *The Widow — Philately & Freemasonry*.

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This seal was given a lot of thought. Aside from the obvious Masonic symbolism, we see a chain border around the central design. It symbolizes “fraternity” and the linking together in a common cause.



In the world of philately, the seal is the equivalent of the token in the world of numismatics. Both were significant in the last century up to about the 1980s. The main use of the seal was to affix them to letters and thereby “spread the word.” The e-mail has all but replaced letter-writing, so the incentive to create

seals of any sort has greatly diminished. Nevertheless, they still appeal to collectors so there is a market.

There are what are called Cinderella Clubs, so many of the remarkable creations of the 1900s have been preserved. Like stamps, they trace our history. The following are some examples.



