Colonial American Freemasonry and its Development to 1770

Arthur F. Hebbeler III

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COLONIAL AMERICAN FREEMASONRY
AND ITS DEVELOPMENT TO 1770

by
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Bachelor of Arts, Butler University, 1982

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This Thesis submitted by Arthur F. Hebbeler, III in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done, is hereby approved.

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This thesis meets the standards for appearance and conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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He was initiated, passed, and raised to the degree of Master Mason in Damascus Lodge No. 643, Toledo, Ohio, in November 1982. He is also a member of the Valley of Toledo, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite; Ft. Meigs Chapter, Royal Arch Masons; Toledo Council, Royal and Select Masters; Toledo Commandery, Knights Templar; and Zenobia Temple, Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, all of Toledo, Ohio. He is also a member of Kentucky Chapter No. 134, National Sojourners, Ft. Knox, Kentucky.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the influence of Freemasonry as a social and cultural organization in the development of colonial America and the men who were active in the organization from its introduction to the colonies up to 1770. Since Freemasonry was the first fraternal organization established in the colonies, I wanted to see how, and if, it affected the attitudes and actions of its members during the pre-Revolutionary War years.

In preparing this thesis, I worked closely with lodges and Grand Lodges throughout the country. My research included physical inspection of a variety of Masonic documents dating back to the 1730s, as well as the record books, reports, and addresses made by Masons of that period and Masonic scholars preceding me. Where possible, I have indicated a secondary source for information gained from archives and records of lodges and Grand Lodges that would not be readily accessible to a non-Mason.

I found through my research that the lessons and teachings of Freemasonry had a varying effect on the development of colonial America. In some regions, where Masonic activity was significant, there appears to have been a greater influence by Freemasons on the development of the colony. In contrast, where Masonic activity was less evident, its direct and indirect effect was not as noticeable.

I was able to conclude from my research that Freemasonry, as a social and fraternal organization, did influence the development of colonial America during the late colonial period.
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INTRODUCTION

Since its formal establishment and organization in England in 1717, Speculative Freemasonry has provided men from all walks and stations in life with an organization designed to foster fellowship and brotherhood among men, give service to the community, and develop those traits and attitudes that are considered to be vital to one's self-improvement. Farmers, merchants, soldiers and landholders were counted in its numbers, each meeting on a level plane, regardless of social status, or lack thereof, outside of the lodge room. It was the first fraternal order established in the New World and was one of the few social organizations that existed in colonial America.

In 1730, the first leader, or Grand Master, of Freemasonry in the Western Hemisphere was appointed. During the next forty years, Freemasonry would grow and be nurtured along with the nation-to-be. The Masons in 1730 did not know what the future held for them or for their successors. However, the Freemasons played a significant role in the development of America during its pre-independence years, and the lessons and moral teachings of Freemasonry's ritual influenced the actions of these men.

In this thesis, I will show the development of American Freemasonry from 1730 to 1770. I will explain the structure, organization, and some of the symbols of the Fraternity, and how these influenced the attitudes and actions of the members. As the colonial press was the major source of
news and information of the day, it played a significant role in spreading
the word about Freemasonry and its activities throughout the colonies.
Finally, I will look at several individuals from colonial America who were
known Freemasons and show how their actions, or in some cases lack of
action, reflected the teachings and fundamentals of Freemasonry.

This thesis will not expose the secrets or ritual of the Freemasons. I
will not go to great lengths to reveal the ritual of the organization. To
assist the non-Mason, a lexicon of terms is included in the Glossary.
While not a complete dictionary of Masonic terms, it does include the most
significant and often-used terms found in this thesis or commonly used in
the discussion of Masonic topics.
THE DEGREES OF FREEMASONRY

To understand how Freemasonry's teachings can influence the actions of an individual, one must understand the three degrees which exemplify the basic teachings and lessons of the Masonic lodge. Several books and articles have been written that describe, allegedly in detail, the degree work and ritual of Freemasonry. Here, the lessons and ideas of the degrees will be presented, not in an effort to disclose the teachings of the Fraternity, but to enlighten Mason and non-Mason alike. There are three degrees in Freemasonry: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason. The Entered Apprentice is the first degree and provides an introductory look at Masonic teachings. It is followed by the Fellow Craft, which adds to the knowledge gained in the first degree. All of the lessons and symbolism are culminated in the Master Mason.

Entered Apprentice

The Entered Apprentice degree is the first degree of Freemasonry, and is the degree in which a non-Mason is introduced to the inner workings of the Masonic lodge. Here, before anything else, he is taught the key fundamental of this degree and of Freemasonry--the need for a belief in God.

\[1\] I am indebted to the Grand Lodges of Massachusetts and Ohio for providing me with guidance and support materials in preparation for this chapter.
While Freemasonry is not a religion, and does not claim that any one religion is better or more acceptable than another, the fundamental belief that there is a supreme designer of the universe is basic to Masonic tradition. According to Masonic teaching, the belief in God, in an entity greater than man and not of this world, is fundamental to life, and in a very real sense places the candidate in the hands of God, empowering him with the ability to go forward in Freemasonry, and life, with confidence.

In this degree, Masons are taught to be searchers for the truth, which is the fundamental quest for life. Freemasonry teaches that the personal traits of honesty and integrity are critical to good order and lead directly to the most desirable facet of an individual—sincerity. As a man measures others, Freemasons learn, so is he measured by the same standards. A Mason is taught that ideally, truth has no boundaries, and there is never an end to it. Sincerity and progressiveness are key traits of those who seek the truth.

As an Entered Apprentice, the Mason is introduced to a fundamental relationship, the brotherhood of man, and to the obligations required by each member of this brotherhood. A Mason is taught that, first and foremost, his place is in the home, and he is responsible for the care of those dependent upon him. A Mason must exemplify the tenets of Freemasonry at home, because if he cannot do so there it is highly unlikely that he will do so elsewhere. After meeting the needs of his family, the Mason is instructed to assist his fellow man, and that this obligation of assistance is ongoing, for there are no limits to the brotherhood of man. This obligation to others comes after the needs of the family have been met, and is not to be of such a degree that hardship comes to one's own home.
This degree teaches that this brotherhood is not just of those within the fraternity, but of all men, created by one God, and existing to assist and support each other. This is in the universal sense of man, referring to both men and women. In this way the Entered Apprentice is enlightened on this fundamental relationship.

Finally, the Entered Apprentice is taught that to achieve a suitable goal, one must have the proper tools. And he is presented these tools and informed of their uses, both in the world of the Operative and Speculative Mason. With these tools, the Mason works to mold himself into a better man, striving for the two key goals of Freemasonry—character and brotherhood. By building one's own character each person improves his little corner of the world, thus enabling a greater sense of brotherhood and cooperation among men.

Thus, we have the fundamentals of the Entered Apprentice. The fundamental belief in God, the quest for truth, the brotherhood of man, and the tools with which to develop character and brotherhood are key parts of the teachings of this degree.

Fellow Craft

As a Mason continues to improve and increase his knowledge of the fraternity, he passes from the Entered Apprentice degree to the Fellow Craft\(^2\) degree. Here, Masons are taught that it is necessary to properly understand and control one's values, and that a method of doing so is through learning and education. Without a firm understanding of the

\(^2\)Or, Fellowcraft. Both are used and accepted.
facts, or knowing the "big picture," one cannot make a responsible decision on an action or an opinion of another person. To do so without a full understanding leads to poor decisions and poor judgement.

Without a proper understanding of the issues at hand, people tend to make inaccurate or incomplete analyses of issues before them, and of events occurring around their own country, for example. Often times a deeper look at the issues reveals a solid foundation for the actions that were, at first, opposed. Freemasonry has been attacked and condemned many times by men and women who did not have all of the facts. This is especially evident in the Papal bulls of popes from Clement XII to Leo XIII. One cannot charge the popes with intentionally accepting and spreading false hoods about Freemasonry, for they lacked a full knowledge and understanding of the fraternity, because they were not Masons and they chose to study Freemasonry only on strict theological grounds, and not from a more general philosophical viewpoint.

The Fellow Craft is taught that since Freemasons work to build a better world, it is incumbent upon them to be interested in the spread of knowledge and a better understanding among mankind. The Fellow Craft is especially encouraged to study the arts of architecture and geometry, for they are noble arts and are held highly in Masonic tradition. Also, the Fellow Craft is reminded the past is not to be noted and then forgotten, but to be held with reverence and considered of great significance to the present and future. One must understand the past in order to benefit from the successes and to avoid repeating errors in the future, and at the

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3In Eminenti, April 24, 1738, and Humanum Genus, April 20, 1884, quoted in Albert G. Mackey, Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry (Chicago: The Masonic Publishing Co., 1927), vol. 1, 123.
same time build upon the positive lessons learned. Proper application of
lessons from the past prevent having to "reinvent the wheel" in the future.

Finally, in the Fellow Craft degree, one learns of the importance of
responsibility. As with the Entered Apprentice, responsibility to one's
family and to the world is stressed. Now the Fellow Craft also is taught
to be responsible for his own actions. Since the beginning of time and
Adam's attempt to pass responsibility for his actions to Eve, man has been
less than honest in his relationship with God and his fellow man. The
Fellow Craft is instructed that acceptance of personal responsibility is an
important lesson of this degree. Once we as individuals, the Fellow Craft
is told, accept the principle of brotherhood and the individual responsibili-
ty of accepting each other as a brother or sister, then, and only then, will
we be on a road toward universal respect and peace among men.

Master Mason

The Master Mason degree is the culmination of a man's search for
personal development in Freemasonry. There are other degrees and orders
that claim allegiance to and a relationship with Freemasonry, but there is
no higher degree a man can hold than that of a Master Mason. In this
degree, then, one would expect to find the ultimate teachings and lessons
of Freemasonry, and so one does. The challenge one finds, however, is in
which lesson is most important.

There are many symbols and tools of Freemasonry that are well-known
to the Mason and non-Mason alike. These are introduced or explained in
further detail in this degree. The compass\textsuperscript{4} is, perhaps, one of the best known. It reminds Masons of such important values as friendship, morality, and brotherly love. One could make a strong case for this being the most important lesson. What, indeed, could be more important to the growth of an individual than the understanding and exemplification of these three traits? The compass is a fine symbol for these, for regardless of how it is sized, it always makes a true circle, perfectly circumscribing all that is within its radius.

The other symbol readily identified with Freemasonry is the perfect square, which is found with the compass on the symbol of the fraternity. The quest for perfection could easily be considered the most noble quest which a person could make. Perfection provides a standard, and ultimate goal, for which to strive. Yet, Masons are taught that no man or woman is perfect, and the best one can hope for is to strive for that noble goal.

The third symbol of Freemasonry which is commonly seen is the trowel. The trowel is a tool with which Operative Masons spread mortar to bind bricks together into a single structure. Likewise, the Master Mason is taught, it represents a symbol for all to consider—the binding of ourselves, as individuals, into one unified brotherhood of man at peace. However, none of these symbols present the key teaching of this degree.

The most memorable part of this degree is the presentation of the Legend of Hiram Abif. It is a legend not unique to Freemasonry. It reflects one of the oldest lessons of mankind, seen in many forms in many parts of the world, such as Adonis in Greek mythology and Osiris in an-

\footnote{In some jurisdictions, \textit{compasses} is the term used. The plural usage comes from the original English usage, "a pair of compasses."}
cient Egypt. This legend teaches the most desirable traits a man could have.

Freemasonry is often considered a secret society. It is better described as a society with secrets. Just as any group of people, from a family to a civic group to a college fraternity or sorority maintains certain signs, lessons, or symbols of special meaning to its members, so do the degrees and lessons of Freemasonry offer special meaning to its members. It would be highly inappropriate to discuss these in detail here. However, by focusing on the obvious symbolism of the Fraternity, we develop a better understanding of the organization, and what the members of colonial American society gained from their affiliation with and membership in Masonic lodges.
STRUCTURE, ORGANIZATION, AND TERMINOLOGY

The structure of Masonic lodges and Grand Lodges has changed very little in the more than two hundred and sixty years since the formal establishment of Speculative Masonry. Although some grand jurisdictions appoint rather than elect officers to certain positions, and some jurisdictions have additional officers not included in this chapter, the basic structure of each lodge is the same. With a firm understanding of the organization of Freemasonry, one will be better enabled to comprehend the significance of the office a particular individual maintained, and the influence, or lack thereof, coincidental to the office.

The senior-ranking Freemason in any grand jurisdiction is the Grand Master. The Grand Master presides over the meetings and activities of the Grand Lodge, appoints or deputizes officer of the Grand Lodge to assist him in his duties, and grants dispensations for new lodges and any special circumstances that might arise. The Grand Master has the right to preside in any lodge in his jurisdiction and is given special honors upon his arrival in an open lodge. It is appropriate for Masons to address him as "Most Worshipful Brother." During the colonial period, there were three Grand Masters governing the activities of Freemasonry in North America, the Grand Masters of Masons in England (Moderns), England (Ancients), and Scotland. By tradition and law, the Grand Master of Masons in England was, and is, a member of the royal family or a senior member of the
Contrary to common belief, there were no Grand Masters in colonial North America. Instead, there were Provincial Grand Masters, appointed by one of the three previously mentioned Grand Masters, or by the Provincial Grand Master of Masons in Massachusetts, who was the senior-ranking Grand Lodge officer in the Western Hemisphere. The Provincial Grand Masters had all of the powers and authority granted to the Grand Master, but were subject to the Grand Master's decisions and the rules of their respective Grand Lodges. Following the declaration of American independence, all Provincial Grand Lodges technically became sovereign Grand Lodges, with the rights and privileges of such. Formal independence, however, was not completed until well after the war. Until their separation, however, it is more correct to refer to them as Provincial Grand Lodges, and their presiding officers as "Right Worshipful Brothers."

In the absence of the Grand Master, the Deputy Grand Master assumes the authority of the Grand Master. In some jurisdictions, the Deputy Grand Master is an appointive position, and not considered as the "stepping stone" to the position of Grand Master, while other jurisdictions consider it the precursor to assuming the Grand East. In a meeting\(^1\) of the Grand Lodge, the Deputy Grand Master sits to the immediate right of the Grand Master.

The third- and fourth-ranking officers of the Grand Lodge are the Senior and Junior Grand Wardens.\(^2\) The Grand Wardens assist the Grand

\(^1\)Traditionally, a meeting of any Masonic lodge is known as a communication.

\(^2\)In some jurisdictions, these two are known as the Grand Senior Warden and Grand Junior Warden.
Master in the activities of the Grand Lodge and may accompany him and
serve with him in any lodge within the Grand Master’s jurisdiction. Ac-
cording to Masonic law and custom, no Mason may serve as a Grand War-
den unless he has served as a Worshipful Master of a subordinate lodge.
The Senior Grand Warden sits in the West, and the Junior Grand Warden
sits in the South. Like the Deputy Grand Master, the Grand Wardens are
addressed as "Right Worshipful Brother."

The Grand Lodge usually consists of the Grand Master, Deputy
Grand Master, Grand Senior and Junior Wardens, Grand Senior and Junior
Deacons, Grand Senior and Junior Stewards, Grand Secretary, Grand Treas-
surer, Grand Tyler, and those additional grand officers as may be appoint-
ted. Additionally, the Worshipful Master and Wardens of each lodge within
the grand jurisdiction are considered as members of the Grand Lodge when
in session. In the colonial period, it was not uncommon for all able-bod-
ied Masons to attend the activities and communications of the Grand
Lodge.

The presiding officer in the subordinate lodge is the Worshipful Mas-
ter. He is elected by the members of the lodge or, in the case of a new
lodge, appointed by the Grand Master. The Worshipful Master is charged
with the government of his lodge, and the supervision of all work conduc-
ted by the members. He is assisted by the Senior and Junior Wardens, as
well as the other officers and members of the lodge. A Worshipful Master
or Past Master is addressed as "Worshipful Brother."

The physical structure of the Masonic temple, or meeting area, is dic-
tated by tradition and custom in English and American lodges. It is de-
signed as an oblong square, the longest sides being as close to due east
and west as possible. Its width is at least one-third its length, and customarily has high, vaulted ceilings to provide an atmosphere of openness as well as to allow for air circulation, since there are no windows in the room. There are two entrances to the room, both in the west. The Worshipful Master's station is in the center of the east wall. The Senior Warden sits facing the Worshipful Master at the center of the west wall. The Junior Warden's place is on the south wall, halfway between the Worshipful Master and Senior Warden.

To assist the Worshipful Master and Wardens, there are several other officers of the Lodge. The Secretary keeps the minutes of all meetings, handles all correspondence, and in many cases conducts the day-to-day business. This is especially true of the Grand Secretary. The Treasurer functions as any organization's treasurer might. He supervises the budget, deposits dues and other money collected, and pays the bills at the direction of the Worshipful Master. The Senior Deacon, who sits to the right-front of the Worshipful Master, is the principal conductor of candidates during ritual work and escorts distinguished visitors into the lodge for proper introduction and reception. The Junior Deacon sits to the right of the Senior Warden, and tends to the door of the lodge room, answering the call of the Tyler, who sits outside of the lodge to ensure only properly recognized members and visitors are permitted to enter when the lodge is in session or open. The junior officers of the lodge are the Senior and Junior Stewards, who sit in front of the Junior Warden. The Stewards assist in ritual presentations, and are often required to ensure that before- and/or after-lodge meals or refreshments are prepared, as their title implies.
In the center of the lodge room, be it at a communication, or meeting, of the Grand Lodge or a subordinate lodge, is the altar. Upon the altar are the Bible, the square, and the compass. To the right of the altar are three candles, or candle-shaped lights, placed in a triangular shape, one point of the triangle to the east, south, and west. The Bible is open when a lodge is conducting its business and the candles are illuminated. Upon completion of the lodge’s labors, the lights are extinguished and the Bible closed.

Such is the structure and organization of the Masonic lodge. From the Grand Master to the youngest Entered Apprentice, every Mason is well aware of the laws and customs that govern the design and operation of a lodge. Order and harmony are vital to the successful accomplishment of any task or of any meeting. The Masonic lodge is designed to be efficiently run by the Worshipful Master with the assistance of the officers and the obedience of the brethren.

There are several terms that are frequently used, and commonly misunderstood, when discussing Freemasonry. A more extensive lexicon of terms appears in the glossary. However, a brief discussion of a few other terms is appropriate here.

Several officers are referred to as "worshipful" brothers. The term worshipful comes from the Old English word worchypful, which means "deserving of respect." So too in the Masonic fraternity does the term worshipful take on a similar meaning. A Worshipful Master spends several years in preparation for the year he will serve in the East. During this

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3The actual placement of these lights varies according to jurisdiction. There are 11 possible variations.
time, he studies Masonic law, ritual, and customs in much greater depth than the average member. Additionally, he is making plans for the activities and work of the lodge during the year he will be Worshipful Master. In his leadership role, the Worshipful Master is charged to govern his lodge within the teachings of Freemasonry and to instruct the Craft, or members, in an effort to improve their understanding of Masonry and themselves as individuals. Because of this in-depth knowledge, a Master is given special respect by all Masons and is thus referred to as "Worshipful."

Officers of the Grand Lodge are addressed as "Right Worshipful" because of their senior status to Worshipful Masters of subordinate lodges. Only the Grand Master or a Past Grand Master is honored by the title of "Most Worshipful Brother."

Two other commonly used terms are "ancient customs" (or usages) and "time immemorial." Prior to the establishment of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717, Masonic lodges met according to the customs and traditions established during the years when Operative and Speculative Masons met together. The lodges in the pre-Grand Lodge era were formed as needed when a group of Masons felt it necessary or proper to do so. In the colonial period, Masons in North America would often meet in a lodge, justifying their actions according to the "ancient customs" regarding the establishment of a lodge. This action was formally prohibited by the Constitutions of 1723 of the Grand Lodge of England, which explicitly required all subordinate lodges to have a charter or warrant from the Grand Lodge in order to be considered regularly constituted. However, the problems of distance and communication to North America, as well as expedience, often led to this rule remaining "unknown" in the colonies for several years.
When Masons speak of "time immemorial," they are referring, in general, to the period of time prior to the creation of the Grand Lodge of England, and more specifically to the events and time before any formal history of modern Freemasonry was maintained. Masonically speaking, anything known as "time immemorial" has been done, or existed longer than anyone can remember. This does create a great deal of havoc with historians trying to date some Masonic activity accurately, but it a hazard of the trade which cannot be avoided.

In the colonial period, there were two Grand Lodges in England. The first, established in 1717, is commonly called the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns), or simply "Moderns" for short. This Grand Lodge is the Mother Grand Lodge, and its Grand Master is the senior-ranking of all Masons. In 1751, a group of Irish Masons working in London led a number of lodges in a break from the Moderns. These lodges and their members separated from the Grand Lodge of England over the belief that the Grand Lodge was straying from the "time immemorial" teachings of Freemasonry. Because of their belief in the antiquities of Masonry, this newer Grand Lodge is called the Grand Lodge of England (Ancients), or "Ancients," by Masonic historians. Both Grand Lodges issued charters and warrants in North America.

Finally, there are two patron saints of Freemasonry, Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist. While the specific reasons these two saints are selected for this role is the province of Masonic ritual, it is sufficient to say that they represent, by their actions and demeanor, certain qualities of life that make them suitable examples of character that Masons are encouraged to emulate. Also, since the commemorative days
for these two saints are in June and December respectively, we find a
great deal of activity around these dates, including parades, feasts, and
election and installation of officers.

With an understanding of the organization, structure, and basic termi-
nology of Freemasonry, let us consider the development and growth of
Freemasonry in colonial America and its influence on the American experi-
ence.
EARLY FREEMASONRY IN THE COLONIES

In establishing when and where in colonial America the first lodges and Masonic activity took place, one must determine the type and availability of documentation that exists, or does not exist, and of what validity it is. We can safely say that the first lodges in America were in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and that they were active as early as June 24, 1731. We know this because the earliest entries in Libre B,¹ an account book, indicate that the Tun Tavern Lodge was active and meeting according to the Ancient Customs at that time. The Right Worshipful Brother Henry Price, who is known to be the first active Provincial Grand Master in North America, did not receive his deputization until 1733,² and first granted charters to lodges in June of that year. Let us now consider the initial development of Freemasonry on the North American continent.

Right Worshipful Brother Daniel Coxe was deputized as the Provincial Grand Master for New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania by the Grand Master of the premier Grand Lodge of England, the Duke of Norfolk, on

¹Libre B is an account book for the lodge at Tun Tavern. Its earliest entry is in 1731. Libre A has never been found, and is presumed lost.

²Price’s deputation is transcribed in full in the Beteilhe MS, which is located in the Archives of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts in Boston, written by Francis Beteilhe, a Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts and contemporary of Henry Price. Also, it can be found in Thomas Sherrard Roy, Stalwart Builders (Worcester, Mass.: Asa Bartlett Press, 1971), 1.
June 5, 1730. This deputation was for a two year period, commencing with
the Feast of Saint John the Baptist that year, and provided Coxe
with full Power and Authority to nominate and appoint his Deputy [Provincial] Grand Master and Grand Wardens for the space of two years from the Feast of Saint John the Baptist now next ensuing, after which time it is our Will and Pleasure, and we do hereby ordain that the Brethren who do now reside, or may hereafter reside, in any or all of said Provinces, shall and they are hereby empowered every other year on the Feast of Saint John the Baptist to elect a Provincial Grand Master, who shall have the power of nominating and appointing his Deputy [Provincial] Grand Master and Grand Wardens.3

Coxe's deputation further stipulated that annual returns, or reports, be forwarded to the Deputy Grand Master, or his representative. The Provincial Grand Master was also directed to assemble the Craft for a celebration of the Festival of Saint John the Evangelist each year, and to collect money for a "General Charity ... for the relief of poor Brethren" at every quarterly communication of the Provincial Grand Lodge. The deputation also authorized establishing lodges and issuing them warrants as required.4 It appears that Coxe took no action under this dispensation, or, if he did, no record exists.

On April 30, 1733, Right Worshipful Brother Henry Price received a similar dispensation from the Grand Lodge of England. It designated him as the "Provincial Grand Master of New England aforesaid and Dominions and Territories thereunto belonging with full power and authority to nominate and appoint his Deputy Grand Master and Wardens."5 The original warrant was not preserved, but the text was entered in full in the minutes


4Ibid., 223.

5Ibid., 224.
and record book of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts on July 30, 1733. Right Worshipful Brother Price appointed Andrew Belcher, son of the Royal Governor, as his Deputy Provincial Grand Master.⁶

Right Worshipful Brother Price’s first action after the establishment of the Provincial Grand Lodge was to accept the petition of a group of Boston Masons to establish First Lodge.⁷ After a brief discussion, Price granted their petition, and the Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts issued its first charter. This was the first duly-constituted lodge in North America.

Following Massachusetts, the Georgia colony has a strong claim to early Masonic activity on the continent. In the minutes of the Grand Lodge of England, we find the following entry referring to a call from Freemasons to support the transportation of distressed members (more than likely, those in debtor’s prisons) to the new Georgia colony, giving these less-fortunate men and their families a chance for a fresh start.

Then the Deputy Grand Master opened to the Lodge the affairs of planting the new Colony of Georgia in America, and having sent an Account in print of the Nature of such Plantation to all the Lodges, and informed the Grand Lodge that the Trustees had given to Nathaniel Blackerby, Esq., and to himself commissions under their Common Seal to Collect the Charity of this Society towards enabling the Trustees to send distressed Brethren to Georgia, where they may be comfortably provided for.

Proposed, that it be strenuously recommended by the Masters and Wardens of all regular Lodges to make a generous Collection amongst all their Members for that purpose. Which being seconded by Brother Rogers Holland, Esq., (one of the said Trustees), who opened the Nature of the Settlement, and by Sr. William Keith,

⁶Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, July 30, 1733, Boston, Massachusetts.

⁷First Lodge is now known as St. John’s Lodge.
Bart., who was many years Governour of Pennsilvania [sic], by Dr. Desagulier, Lord Southwell, Brother Blackerby, and many others, very worthy Brethren, it was recommended accordingly.8

In 1734, the first Masonic lodge in Georgia opened. Under the leadership of Major General James Edward Oglethorpe as Master, a lodge was held outdoors near what would later become Sunbury, Liberty County. The Georgia colony's first duly-constituted Lodge was opened a few weeks later in Savannah and is now known as Solomon's Lodge.9

There are two claims for the existence of organized Freemasonry in America which have not been substantiated by conclusive documentation. However, since these are often erroneously included in many Masonic histories, it is appropriate to address them here in an effort to set the record straight.

First, the Reverend Edward Peterson, in his book *History of Rhode Island and Newport*, refers to a 1658 arrival of several gentlemen from Holland who "brought with them the first three degrees of Masonry and worked them in the house" of one of the group.10 There is no proof of this ever happening. If there was some documentation when the Reverend Peterson wrote his book in 1853, it was probably a forgery, for there were only two degrees of Masonry in common use at that time. When asked by the contemporary Masonic scholars of his day to produce the papers he claimed as proof, the Reverend Peterson said that they were unavailable

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10Ibid., 218.
and lost. Since he could not produce the documentation that he claimed enlightened him to such an early presence of Freemasonry, there is sufficient evidence to cast a large shadow of doubt on the authenticity of his claim.

In *History of Freemasonry and Concordant Orders*, written in 1890, the following appears as "justification" that Freemasonry existed in South Carolina well before the Coxe deputation and Oglethorpe's arrival:

In 1680, there came to South Carolina one John Moore, a native of England, who before the close of the century, removed to Philadelphia, and in 1703 was commissioned by the King as a Collector of the Port. In a letter written by him in 1715, he mentioned having "spent a few evenings in festivity with my Masonic brethren." This is the earliest mention we have of there being any members of the Craft residing in Pennsylvania or elsewhere.11

As with the previous example, attempts to find the letter referred to have been fruitless. There is no other proof from any source, particularly in the records of the Grand Lodge of South Carolina or Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, to support this claim. Therefore, one must assume the earliest known Masonic activity occurred in Philadelphia around 1730-1731, and the first duly constituted lodge was established in Boston in 1733.

Having established the initial introduction of Freemasonry into North America, it is appropriate to consider its development in the several colonies.

DEVELOPMENT OF COLONIAL FREEMASONRY

In colonial America, we find a wide variety in the detail, types, and quality of the reports and returns of the various lodges and Provincial Grand Lodges. In some colonies there were lodges chartered by more than one Provincial Grand Lodge, while other colonies conducted Masonic activity under the authority of another colony's Provincial Grand Lodge. Where multiple Provincial Grand Lodges issued charters, the parent Grand Lodge will be listed in parentheses.

Connecticut

By 1770 at least three Provincial Grand Lodges had chartered a total of thirteen lodges in Connecticut: New York (Moderns), Massachusetts (Moderns) and Massachusetts (Scotland). The majority were chartered by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts (Moderns). Evidence of a "time immemorial" lodge operating under the Ancient Customs existed in New Haven around 1733, because the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts for 1733 show that the lodge at "New Haven in Connecticut" did not respond to the roll call taken at the first Provincial Grand Lodge communication.¹

The first charter was granted to Hiram Lodge, New Haven, on Novem-

¹Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, 1733, Boston.
ber 12, 1750, with Major General (then Captain) David Wooster, the Father of Freemasonry in Connecticut,² as charter Worshipful Master.³ The Provincial Grand Lodge of New York chartered four lodges in Connecticut between 1762 and 1766. These were St. John’s No. 3, Fairfield, Union No. 5, Stamford, St. John’s No. 6, Norwalk, and Saint John’s No. 8, Stratford.⁴

Delaware

The first Masonic lodge chartered in Delaware, operating under the warrant of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, was established on June 24, 1765. This is the date Union Lodge No. 5 was entered on the rolls of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. However, the record books and ledgers of Union Lodge date back to 1759, which indicates it probably was operating in accordance with the Ancient Customs from 1759 to 1765.⁵

It is possible that a lodge operating near Wilmington existed prior to Union Lodge. In the archives of the Grand Lodge of Delaware, a certificate of membership for Brother Barney McCormick is filed. This certificate is dated October 7, A. L. 5767 [1767], and signed by Hugh Williamson, Worshipful Master, William Beck and George Rowan, Wardens, and Richard


⁵Records of Union Lodge No. 5, Middleton, Delaware, and address by Andrew E. Sanborn, Past Master, Wilmington, Delaware, January 20, 1917, Archives of Union Lodge No. 5.
Smith, Secretary. The certificate indicates the lodge worked under warrant as Lodge No. 393. It is uncertain whether this was under the Grand Lodge of England or Ireland. No record of a charter for a lodge by this number is on file with either Grand Lodge, and the sequence numbers of lodges in both of these Grand Lodges have been changed from time to time.

By 1770, only two lodges were duly chartered and working in Delaware, Union No. 5 (Pennsylvania) at Cantwell's Bridge, and No. 14 (Pennsylvania) at Christiana Ferry.7

Florida

During the colonial period, Freemasonry in Florida had a rather sketchy record. The colonists faced significant difficulties from the Indians, and the Spaniards supported the papal bans on Freemasonry. These two factors contributed to the problems of studying the history of Freemasonry and its development in colonial Florida. We do know that in 1759 the Grand Lodge of England (Ancients) granted a charter to a military lodge with the 14th Regiment of Foot. This lodge was number 58b on the List of Lodges.8 Additionally, the Grand Lodge of Scotland chartered a lodge at St. Augustine in 1768 and appointed a Provincial Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Scotland for the Southern District of North America at

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6 Archives of the Grand Lodge of Delaware and address by P. G. M. George W. Chaytor, June 1, 1859.


the same time. Thus, Florida was under the active leadership of the Grand Lodge of Scotland and its Provincial Grand Master and the passive control of the Grand Lodge of England and its Provincial Grand Masters.

Records of the St. Augustine lodge's request for a charter and the deputation for the Provincial Grand Master are found in the records of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, and was verified by the Right Worshipful Brother Murray Lion, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, in an 1898 letter to Most Worshipful Brother Silas B. Wright, a Past Grand Master of Masons in Florida. The letter said, in part:

In searching our Grand Lodge records I find under date of 15th March 1768: "Having read a petition from James Grant, Esq., Governor of the Province of East Florida, Henry Cunningham, late Senior Warden of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, and many other brethren residing in the province aforesaid, craving a Charter for holding a Lodge there by the stile [sic] and title of Grant's East Florida Lodge, and also entreating the Grand Lodge would appoint the said Governor James Grant Provincial Grand Master over the Lodges in the Southern District of North America, the Grand Lodge granted the desire of that petition, and authorised a Charter to be made out accordingly, and likewise a Commission appointing Governor James Grant, Provincial Grand Master over the Lodges in the Southern District of North America."

Rarely are we fortunate enough to find such a letter documenting the establishment of a lodge in a remote area of the colonies, let alone having it come from such a respectable and reliable of a source as a Grand Secretary of the chartering Grand Lodge himself. This letter is in the archives of the Grand Lodge of Florida, and is the primary evidence supporting both the existence of a lodge in Florida during its troubled colonial years.

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10 Letter From Murray Lion to Silas B. Wright, March 17, 1898. Archives of the Grand Lodge of Florida.
nial period, as well as the presence of a Provincial Grand Master for the Grand Lodge of Scotland in that part of the continent.

Georgia

Freemasonry in Georgia dates back to 1733 and the first settlements in the colony, as has been noted in the chapter "Early Freemasonry in the Colonies." To help us date the existence of Freemasonry as early as the 1730s, we have a letter written in 1859 by Mrs. Paula Sheftall Solomon to members of Solomon's Lodge, Savannah, on the occasion of the dedication of a new Masonic temple. To commemorate the event, Mrs. Solomon presented the lodge with a gavel made from a fragment of the oak tree under which General Oglethorpe opened the first Masonic meeting in Georgia. In her letter, Mrs. Solomon states that she received the gavel and information from her uncle, Sheftall Sheftall, who received it from his father, Mordecai Sheftall. Ordinarily, this type of hearsay information would not be significant proof. However, a search of the membership records of Solomon's Lodge shows that both Mordecai and his son were members of Solomon's Lodge, and that Benjamin Sheftall, Mordecai's father, was one of the original colonists in Georgia. Further, both Benjamin and his son served as Master of that lodge. Thus, it is very logical to assume that the oral history of the lodge was fairly accurately transmitted from grandfather to father to son. Additionally, the first Mason initiated in Georgia,


12 Records of Solomon's Lodge No 1, Savannah, Georgia.
Brother Noble Jones, and Mordecai were neighbors for over forty years. With all of this considered, Mrs. Solomon's letter provides rather significant support to the authenticity of the gavel and the establishment of Freemasonry in Georgia.

Of all the colonies, perhaps it is Georgia that felt the greatest influence of Freemasons. It was established by a Freemason, Major General Oglethorpe, as a colony for all free people, regardless of religion, homeland, or stature in life. Although the original rules of the trustees of the colony prohibited Jews and Roman Catholics, this order was quickly discarded by Oglethorpe. Brothers, who were also trustees of the colony, called on the Grand Lodge of England to solicit the support of lodges to send distressed brethren to the new colony, thus affording them the opportunity to start anew. We know that Oglethorpe openly aided and assisted Masons in Georgia, and that he gave his own Bible to Solomon's Lodge in 1734. The actions of Oglethorpe, and his fellow Masons in England, reflect the Masonic teachings of Wisdom, Justice, and Tolerance, virtues that helped foster the growth of Georgia, and are now memorialized as a motto on the Great Seal of the State of Georgia.

As we approach the inevitable war with Mother England, the Sons of Liberty were established in Georgia. Led by a distinguished group of Masons--including Brothers Noble Jones, Joseph Habershaw, George Walton, and John Houstoun--the Sons of Liberty conducted many protests

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15 Records of Solomon's Lodge No. 1, Savannah, Georgia, 1734.
throughout the colony. This was a distinguished group of leaders, for they had all served in various colonial government positions from 1733 and onward. They led protests against a variety of English actions, including the Stamp Act, and gave very vocal support to the Massachusetts-led charges against Mother England regarding her acts upon the colonies. Also, the Sons of Liberty, under the leadership of the aforementioned Masons, led a successful boycott of all taxed items imported into the colony.

Perhaps the most significant protest against English rule occurred in 1770. That year, the Provincial Assembly of Georgia elected Brother Noble Jones as its speaker. Royal Governor Wright objected, and ordered a new election. In reply, and perhaps out of spite, the Provincial Assembly confirmed its choice of Noble Jones with a unanimous vote. In an act of frustration with the colonists, Wright disbanded the Assembly and returned to England for a vacation and consultation with the Government. During the governor's absence, Brother Habershaw, who was the President of the Royal Council under Governor Wright, supervised colonial affairs in Georgia.

As one can see, Georgia was a hotbed of Masonic activity in and outside of the lodge room, and the Masons there worked for the good of the people and toward independence for America. There was a period during the Revolutionary War when Freemasonry was inactive or driven underground by the British troops, but it continued to flourish in spite of

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17 Ibid.

the challenges it faced.

Maryland

The Grand Lodge of England (Moderns), the Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts (Moderns) and the Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania (Ancients) all chartered lodges in Maryland. Prior to 1759, charters were granted by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts for lodges at Port Tobacco in Charles County and Leonardtown, St. Mary's County.\(^{19}\) The *Maryland Gazette* provides a number of reports between 1750 and 1764 of various celebrations of the Feast of St. John the Baptist each June. One such report appeared on June 25, 1759, and described the procession by the lodge in Leonardtown to the Court House, and a lecture given by the Reverend Brother John McPherson. The article also said that a ball was held that evening.\(^{20}\)

In 1765, the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns) granted a charter to a lodge at Joppa.\(^{21}\) This is the only Maryland lodge chartered by a Grand Lodge outside of North America. The influence of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania was more significant, however. From 1764 and on, a good percentage of members of Pennsylvania lodges actually resided in Maryland, providing an ample number of Masons to strengthen the lodges and keep the wishes and concerns of Maryland Masons before the Provincial Grand Lodge. In fact, the 1766 election of the Right Worshipful Bro-

\(^{19}\)Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, 1759, Boston.

\(^{20}\)*Maryland Gazette*, 25 June 1759, 3.

ther William Bell as Provincial Grand Master represented the first time a
Mason from Maryland was accorded this most distinctive honor. Under his
leadership, lodges were chartered at Georgetown on the Sassafras River
and at Charlestown, both in Kent County. Five years later, Right Wor-
shipful Brother Bell issued dispensations for two additional lodges in Balti-
more. Thus, all four of the lodges established in Maryland under the
supervision of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania came into exis-
tence while a Maryland Mason was serving as Provincial Grand Master.
This is the only time during the colonial period when a Provincial Grand
Master lived in a colony other than the one for which he was Provincial
Grand Master.

Massachusetts

As mentioned previously, the first duly constituted lodge in America
was the First Lodge, now known as St. John's Lodge. It is from this
beginning that all duly constituted Masonic lodges gain their authority and
regularity. In the minutes, bylaws, and written histories of this lodge, we
can gather a great deal of information about the attitudes of the members
and the activities conducted by the lodge during the colonial period.

The records of St. John's Lodge date back to October 24, 1733. These
include the bylaws first presented by a lodge committee, and later amen-
ded. These bylaws show a combination of Masonic custom, new ideas, and
rules borrowed from procedures in effect in the Mother Grand Lodge.

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Some of these bylaws remain in effect today.\(^{24}\)

Several of the bylaws dealt with membership requirements and fees. In accordance with Masonic law, a unanimous ballot was required for membership and advancement to each degree. Additionally, the candidate was required to pay an initiation fee for each degree. In keeping with the customs of the Mother Grand Lodge, the dispensation granted to Price, and the Masonic tenet of charity, all members of the lodge were required to make a contribution at each quarterly communication to aid in the relief of distressed brethren.\(^{25}\)

Additional bylaws addressed the requirements for active membership, visitation rights and fees, and examination requirements for visiting brethren. Further, the rules of the lodge prohibited a brother from bringing food, drink, or tobacco into the lodge room while in session.\(^{26}\)

By 1740, the membership of St. John's Lodge was strong enough to support its financial needs easily. However, the members decided it was prudent to increase the initiation fees in order to provide additional support for a fund which they considered "not only proper, but absolutely necessary for preserving the honour and dignity of Masonry in general."\(^{27}\) This increase in fees would be added to the lodge's charity fund, so the "fund, which ought to be inviolably sacred towards the relief of indigent, and distressed Masons, their wives, and children, may be preserved and

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\(^{24}\)Alex Horne, "Freemasonry Comes to America," *Transactions of the American Lodge of Research*, vol. 13, 3:385.

\(^{25}\)Ibid.

\(^{26}\)Ibid., 386.

\(^{27}\)Minutes of First Lodge, 1740. Archives of St. John's Lodge, Boston.
increased." This is the first example of any type of endowment fund being established in America by a Masonic lodge, and reflects the attitudes of the brethren to support the virtue of charity, upon which they were duly instructed by their ritual. This 1740 bylaw was followed in 1754 by a resolution from the lodge to other lodges in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Nova Scotia to create a fund to establish an ongoing endowment from which funds would be provided to support "a general charity . . . for the relief of poor brethren" in the region. This was the first regional solicitation for charity by any Masonic body.

One of the important celebrations of a Grand or Provincial Grand Lodge is the installation of a Grand Master or Provincial Grand Master. Being the senior lodge in North America, it was the right and responsibility of Boston's First Lodge to be the principal lodge in the installation of Right Worshipful Brother Jeremy Gridley as Provincial Grand Master in 1755. The following account, from the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, reports on the activities of October 1, 1755:

At a Grand Lodge held at Concert Hall this date, the Right Worshipful Jeremy Gridley, Esq, appointed [Provincial] Grand Master of Masons in North America, by the Right Worshipful the Marquis of Carnarvon Grand Master of Masons, was installed in that office. The three lodges in this town [Boston] and the Master and Wardens of the Portsmouth Lodge in New Hampshire with a great number of brothers were present clothed with white aprons and gloves, and after the installation [sic], accompanied by their Grand Master in Procession to Trinity Church in this order. First walked the Sword Bearer, carrying a drawn sword, in one hand and the Book of Constitutions in the other. Next came the

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28"Bylaws of First Lodge, 1740," Archives of St John's Lodge, Boston, Massachusetts.

several lodges according to their juniority, closed with the Wardens and Master, clothed with their jewels. Four Stewards with white wand went before the Grand Treasurer and Secretary clothed with their jewels, who were followed by the Past Grand Officers. After these walked the Grand Wardens with their jewels, and the present and late Grand Masters clothed with their jewels and badges, closed the procession. At church, the Rev. Mr. Hooper read prayers, and the Rev. Mr. Brown preached an excellent sermon on the occasion to a numerous and polite audience. After the service, the Sword Bearer and Stewards walked before the Grand Master, and the procession was made in reversed order back to Concert Hall, where an elegant dinner was prepared, and the afternoon spent in Harmony and Mirth. The whole ceremony and attendance was with the greatest decency, and made a genteel appearance.30

This was not the only occasion on which the Freemasons in Massachusetts gathered for a festival dinner and entertainment. In keeping with the original deputation to Right Worshipful Brother Price, the Provincial Grand Lodge, with visitors from lodges in other colonies, met annually for the celebration of the Feast of St. John the Evangelist. These festivals were grand occasions, often accompanied by formal Masonic processions and parades, sermons, and a large dinner and ball to conclude the event. For example, in 1736, the brethren also assembled on St. John the Baptist's Day for a festival that was of such magnitude it warranted a detailed report in the Boston Evening Post.31

New Hampshire

Freemasonry in New Hampshire is represented by one of the oldest duly constituted lodges in North America. In the archives of the Grand

30 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, 1755, Boston.

31 Boston Evening Post (Boston, Mass), 28 June 1736, 2.
Lodge of Massachusetts, the oldest Masonic document from New Hampshire is stored. This is a letter from the brethren at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, asking the Right Worshipful Brother Henry Price and the Provincial Grand Lodge at Boston to grant a charter for St. John’s Lodge. This lodge was chartered by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts in 1736, and at that time permitted only to present the first two degrees.

Around 1748, a second lodge was established in Portsmouth. This Masters Lodge met occasionally until 1757, and operated without a charter under the leadership of the officers of St. John’s Lodge. Records of the lodge show it began working on a regular basis in 1757 under the authority of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts and with its own officers and charter. Monthly stated meetings began in January 1759, and the lodge worked only under the Master Mason degree. There is no logical reason for it taking almost ten years for Masters Lodge to be chartered. It is very likely a case of finally "getting around to it" when the brethren in Portsmouth finally requested a charter.

Two distinguished brethren came from the lodges in Portsmouth. First, George Mitchell, Esq., who was a surveyor by trade and a member of the Governor’s Council. He was a member of the lodge as early as 1739. Although his Masonic record cannot be found, it is presumed he received the degrees of Freemasonry in an English lodge before his immi-

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32 Archives of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Boston.
33 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, June 24, 1735, Boston.
35 Ibid., 18.
migration to America. The second is the Reverend Arthur Browne, the first permanentEpiscopalian rector in Portsmouth, and the first clergyman in Portsmouth to be initiated into the Masonic fraternity. The distinctive accomplishments of these two gentlemen and their significant impact on the development of Freemasonry in New Hampshire are detailed in another chapter.

New Jersey

There is a very limited amount of information about Freemasonry in the New Jersey colony during the colonial period. We do know, however, that the first known Freemason in North America resided there. Brother John Skene, raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in 1682, was a member of the Lodge of Aberdeen No. 1, in Aberdeen, Scotland. Brother Skene arrived in the Province of West Jersey in October 1682. He was a leader of the Burlington Friends Monthly Meeting many times during his early years in the colony. He was elected a Chosen Freeholder, member of the General Assembly, and of the Governing Council in 1683. Brother Skene also served as the Deputy Governor, or chief resident administrator, from 1685 until 1688, when West Jersey was annexed into the Dominion of New England and Sir Edmund Andros arrived to serve as Governor.

The first lodge was chartered by the Provincial Grand Lodge of New York. St. John’s Lodge No. 1, at Newark was granted its charter on May

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37Ibid., 7.
13, 1761, under the authority of Provincial Grand Master George Harison.38

About one year later, a second lodge was chartered in New Jersey. This lodge was located in Elizabethtown, and was known as Temple Lodge No. 1. Jonathan Hampton was its charter Worshipful Master.39

Two additional lodges were chartered in New Jersey by 1767. One, St. John's Lodge, Princeton, was chartered by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts (Moderns) in 1765.40 The other was Baskinridge No. 1, established under the authority of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania (Ancients), in 1767.41

New York

We have a significant amount of information regarding the development of Freemasonry in colonial New York. During the colonial period, the Provincial Grand Lodge of New York operated under the leadership and supervision of the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns). There were five Provincial Grand Masters governing Freemasonry in the colony from 1730 to 1775. These were the Right Worshipful Brothers Daniel Coxe (1730-1732), Richard Riggs (1737-1751), Francis Goelet (1751-1753), George Harison (1753-1767) and Sir John Johnson (1767-1775).42

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40 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, 1765, Boston.

41 Cerza, vol. 90, 226.

42 Archives of the Grand Lodge of New York, New York.
Freemasonry in New York was faced with a great many challenges. As early as 1737, reports of thefts and acts of violence against Masonic halls appeared in the newspapers. In 1752, an announcement was placed in the *Mercury* by the Provincial Grand Master Francis Goelet calling for a special communication of the Provincial Grand Lodge of New York at the King's Arms Tavern to discuss "matters of extreme importance to the Craft." The reason for this communication was never published, but one can assume it related to the establishment of lodges within the colony and some of the difficulties lodges there were facing.

The Provincial Grand Lodge was active in establishing lodges in and out of the colony. Most of the lodges established outside of New York were in Connecticut; however, a few in Virginia were also chartered.

North Carolina

North Carolina had three lodges chartered during the colonial period. Two were under the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns), and one was chartered by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. The earliest lodge in the colony was chartered in 1754 by the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns). It was located in Wilmington, and is now known as St. John's Lodge. Worshipful Brother Cornelius Harnett was the charter Worshipful Master. The second lodge in North Carolina was not constituted until 1766,

43 *New York Mercury*, November 19, 1752, 2.

44 *Transactions of the American Lodge of Research*, vol. 9, 205-214.

45 Cerza, vol. 90, 228.
when Provincial Grand Master Jeremey Gridley of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, issued a charter to First Lodge, in Crown Point, Pitt County. The activities of both lodges are unknown, as no reports or returns from either were filed with the Grand Lodge or the Provincial Grand Lodge.

A third lodge, known as Royal White Hart Lodge, was established at Halifax, North Carolina, in August 1767 by the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns) and was number 338 on the English Register. This lodge was operating as early as 1764 under a charter granted by Cornelius Harnett. The regularity of the charter is in doubt.

Also in 1767, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts granted a deputation to Thomas Cooper to serve as Deputy Provincial Grand Master for North Carolina.

Pennsylvania

As previously mentioned, the first documented Masonic activity in Pennsylvania was in 1731, as noted by the entries in Libre B. However, in 1917, a letter in the possession of one Horace W. Smith, of Philadelphia, was exhibited that referred to a gathering of Masons in that city in 1715. This letter was written by John Moore, a Collector of the Port in Philadelphia from 1703 to 1715. In his letter, he wrote that he "spent a few evenings with [his] Masonic brethren." This is the first reported

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46 Mackey, History of Freemasonry, vol. 5, 1594.

47 Ibid.

48 Stillson and Hughan, 218.
proof of Freemasonry in America. This letter has been lost, and no copy exists today, except where quoted or referred to in older Masonic publications. Because of the controversy surrounding this document, its validity is now largely discounted.⁴⁹

In an address by the Right Worshipful Brother⁵⁰ Lamberton, a Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, we find the following. He drew his audience's attention to the following excerpt from a letter written in 1754 by Brother Henry Bell, of Lancaster, to Brother Thomas Cadwaller, of Philadelphia. It provides additional support, although not conclusive, for the existence of a Masonic Lodge at Tun Tavern as early as 1730.

As you well know, I was one of the originators of the first Masonic lodge in Philadelphia. A party of us used to meet at Sun [sic] Tavern, in Water Street, and sometimes opened a lodge there. Once, in the fall of 1730, we formed a design of obtaining a charter for a regular lodge and made application to the Grand Lodge of England for one; but before receiving it, we heard that Daniel Coxe, of New Jersey, had been appointed by that Grand Lodge as Provincial Grand Master of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. We therefore made application to him, and our request was granted."⁵¹

Assuming this letter is authentic, then Daniel Coxe did indeed grant a warrant to at least one lodge while serving as Provincial Grand Master. Unfortunately, historians have not found any letters, charters or warrant issued by Right Worshipful Brother Coxe, nor has any other positive docu-

⁴⁹Smith, 6.

⁵⁰The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania is a "Right Worshipful Grand Lodge," and its Grand Master is the "Right Worshipful Grand Master." This is a carry-over from its time as a Provincial Grand Lodge, and is the only Grand Lodge in America so identified.

⁵¹Letter of Henry Bell to Thomas Cadwaller, November 17, 1754, and Stillson and Hughan, 226.
mentation of the regularity of the lodge been found. However, when all of the evidence available is considered—the letter of 1754, the existence of *Libre B*, and the published account in the December 3-8, 1730, *Pennsylvania Gazette*—it can be said with confidence that Freemasonry did exist first in Pennsylvania, although its regularity is in doubt. Additionally, one can assume that this lodge at Tun Tavern was governed by the Anderson *Constitutions of 1723*, since this is the edition reprinted in full by Franklin in 1734.

In 1734, the Freemasons in Pennsylvania established an independent Grand Lodge, and chose Benjamin Franklin as the first Grand Master. However, once they learned that Price had received a deputation from the Grand Lodge of England, they petitioned him for a proper warrant to establish a Provincial Grand Lodge.

**Rhode Island**

There is a limited amount of information available on the early years of Freemasonry in Rhode Island. We know that on December 27, 1749, St. John's Lodge at Newport was chartered by Right Worshipful Brother Thomas Oxnard, Provincial Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. Worshipful Brother Caleb Phillips was its charter Worshipful Master. There must have been some discord among the brethren, or a loss of the original charter, because Provincial Grand Lodge records

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52 Mackey, *History of Freemasonry*, vol. 5, 1604.
54 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, 1749, Boston.
show the issuance of a second charter dated May 14, 1753.\textsuperscript{55}

This lodge was only authorized to work in the first two degrees; however, they ignored this injunction, and worked in all three of the degrees. When challenged by the Provincial Grand Lodge for this blatant violation, they claimed they were authorized to work in the Master Mason degree because of a dispensation granted to hold a Masters Lodge, and it was expedient to work as just one lodge. The argument must have been convincing, because the Provincial Grand Lodge consented to their actions.\textsuperscript{56}

Some years later, when Jeremy Gridley was serving under his extended deputation as "Provincial Grand Master for North America where no Provincial Grand Master is serving,"\textsuperscript{57} Right Worshipful Brother Jeremy Gridley granted a charter, dated January 18, 1757, to St. John's Lodge, Providence.\textsuperscript{58} In total, three lodges were chartered prior to the American Revolutionary War.

South Carolina

In 1735, the Grand Lodge of England granted a charter for Solomon's Lodge in Charleston. As mentioned previously, this lodge began work on October 28, 1736. While Henry Price was Provincial Grand Master, another lodge in Charleston was chartered by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Mas-

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Mackey, \textit{History of Freemasonry}, vol. 5, 1606.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Dispensation of Right Worshipful Brother Jeremy Gridley by the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns), 1755. Archives of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Boston.}
\footnote{Cerza, vol. 90, 228.}
\end{footnotes}
sachusetts in December, 1735. By 1763, seven additional lodges were chartered. The Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts chartered another lodge in Charleston in 1738. The Grand Lodge of England chartered Prince George's Lodge in Winyaw in 1743, and St. Mark's Lodge in Charleston in 1763. Union Lodge, Charleston, was chartered by the Provincial Grand Lodge of South Carolina on May 3, 1755. The Grand Lodge of Scotland chartered Union Lodge No. 98 in 1760.

In 1753, the Grand Lodge of England granted a warrant for reorganization of the Provincial Grand Lodge of South Carolina. This was completed on December 27, 1753.

Virginia

Lodges in Virginia were chartered by two different Grand Lodges and one Provincial Grand Lodge. The first lodge was established under the authority of the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1741, and was known as St. John's Lodge, Norfolk. This Grand Lodge also chartered lodges at Blanford, in 1756, and Fredericksburg, in 1758. The Grand Lodge of England

\[59\] Mackey, *History of Freemasonry*, vol. 5, 1609.

\[60\] Ibid.

\[61\] Ibid.


\[63\] Ibid.

\[64\] *South Carolina Gazette* (Charleston), 1 January 1754, 2.

(Moderns) chartered the Royal Exchange Lodge, Norfolk, in 1753, and a lodge at Yorktown in 1755. The Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania constituted a lodge at Winchester in 1768.

The lodge at Fredericksburg is considered one of the most important in colonial American Masonic history, because it is the Mother Lodge of Worshipful Brother George Washington. Worshipful Brother Washington received the first degree of Freemasonry there in 1752 and was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in 1753. The records of this lodge date back to September 1, 1752, and still exist today. Although it was not chartered until 1758, it is quite possible the lodge was operating under a dispensation from the Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, but this is pure speculation.

In addition to being the Mother Lodge of Washington, Fredericksburg holds a significant place in Masonic history for a rather unusual and Masonically improper action it took in 1757. That year, a group of Masons from Botetourt requested and received a dispensation from Fredericksburg Lodge to hold a lodge meeting there. This was highly irregular, since several Provincial Grand Lodges existed by that time. However, this lodge was recognized by the brethren in Virginia. In 1773, Botetourt was granted a charter by the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns). Why, at such a late time, a charter was sought from England is unknown, but one can

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68 Records of Fredericksburg Lodge, Fredericksburg, Virginia.
69 Records of Fredericksburg Lodge, 1757, Fredericksburg, Virginia.
assume the members were predominately Loyalists.

In conclusion, we see that the development of Freemasonry in the several colonies is varied as far as its success and existent documentation. Also, the influence of these lodges, Provincial Grand Lodges, and their members on the affairs of the colonies and colonial development in America is as different as the colonies and colonists themselves.
Masonic scholars are fortunate that a great deal of information about Masonic activity during the colonial period was included in the reports of the popular press of the day. From these articles, one can identify events and individuals within communities and regions where Masonic influence and activity were present.

As mentioned previously, the Freemasons have two patron saints, St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist. Within the Masonic community, festivals and special events were often held near the Christian calendar’s festival days honoring these two saints. Accordingly, many of the published reports of Masonic activity appear around these two special days.

Of the several colonies, South Carolina had some of the most extensive coverage of Masonic activity reported in its newspapers. The earliest report of Freemasonry in South Carolina is found in the South Carolina Gazette. In the October 29, 1736, edition of the South Carolina Gazette, the first public account of Solomon's Lodge, the first regularly-established and chartered lodge in South Carolina, is printed. In the report, the officers of the lodge, both elected and appointed, are listed.¹

The first major public event for Freemasonry in South Carolina was reported the following year. Here, we find the following recollection of the Freemasons' festival on St. John the Evangelist's Day, 1737, in

¹South Carolina Gazette (Charleston), 29 October 1736, 4.
Charleston:

On Tuesday last, being St. John's day, all members of the Annis place met at Mr. Seaman's, Master of Solomon's Lodge, from whence they proceeded, all properly clothed, under the sound of French horns, to wait on James Graeme, Esq., the Provincial Grand Master, at his house on Broad Street, where they were received by all of the members of the Grand Lodge. After a short stay, they all went in procession and with the ensign of their Order to the Court room at Mr. Shepard's house, making a very grand show. Here, to a numerous audience of Ladies and Gentlemen, who were admitted by tickets, the Grand Master made a very elegant speech in praise of Masonry, which we hear was universally applauded. Then, the Grand Lodge withdrew in order to proceed to the election of a Grand Master for the ensuing year, when James Graeme, Esq., was unanimously rechosen Grand Master, who appointed James Wright, Esq., Deputy Grand Master, Maurice Lewis, Esq., Senior Grand Warden, John Crooksharks, Esq., Junior Grand Warden, James Michie, Esq., Grand Treasurer, and James Gordon, Esq., Grand Secretary. 2

Once again, in 1738, the Gazette published a very detailed report on the procession by members of the Provincial Grand Lodge of South Carolina to the home of the Provincial Grand Master, and the subsequent meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge and its election and appointment of officers for 1739. 3

The Masonic tenet of relief to the less fortunate was exemplified by the brethren in the Charleston area in November 1740. A major fire destroyed many blocks of the city, leaving hundreds homeless. With a membership of less than fifty, the Charleston area Masons contributed over two hundred fifty pounds to the relief effort. 4

South Carolina was not the only colony in which the press reported on the activities of Freemasonry. In New York, many articles on Freemasonry

2 Ibid., 29 December 1737, 2.
3 Ibid., 28 December 1738, 2.
4 Ibid., 13 November 1740, 2.
appeared. A large number of them, however, were far less positive than those printed in South Carolina during the same period. For example, on November 14, 1737, the *New York Mercury* reported the theft of several items of Masonic regalia from the home of an area Mason. Two weeks later, the *New York Gazette* printed a very strongly-worded letter denouncing Freemasonry, and purporting to reveal in detail the obligations taken by members of the fraternity. This was the first published account of Anti-Masonic activity or attitudes in the New York colony.

Not all of the newspaper reports on Freemasonry in colonial New York were negative. From 1739 and on, more positive news of Freemasonry appeared. A large quantity of these reports were notices from the Provincial Grand Lodge of New York regarding meeting locations and agendas and the activities of subordinate lodges.

A lengthy article appeared in the December 31, 1753, edition of the *New York Mercury*. It reported the activities of the Provincial Grand Lodge of New York and of its celebration of the Feast of St. John the Evangelist. With great detail, the article described the Provincial Grand Lodge's procession to New York City's Trinity Church for special services, of the participants in the procession, and the clothing which they wore. Special mention was made that as the procession passed the port area, it was greeted by a large salute from the guns of the ships at anchor there.

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5 *New York Mercury* (New York City), 14 November 1737, 3.

6 *New York Gazette* (New York City), 28 November 1737, 3.

7 *New York Gazette* (New York City), 22 January 1739, 3, and *New York Mercury* (New York City), 2 July 1753, 2, and 31 December 1753, 3.

8 *New York Mercury* (New York City), 31 December 1753, 2.
For many years, the notices placed in the newspapers were in the name of the Provincial Grand Lodge of the colony, or were addressed simply to Freemasons in general. Around 1758, we find a change in this procedure, and the subordinate lodges began to publish announcements in their own names. There are several reasons for this change. First, the number of Freemasons had increased such that an assembly of the entire Provincial Grand Lodge was hardly feasible. Secondly, with this increase, the number of and need for active subordinate lodges were such that many were chartered in the larger communities. The easiest way to remain in contact with the members, and inform visitors of lodge meetings (or communications), was to publish notices in the newspapers, much as one finds today. In New York, the first occasion in which we find a subordinate lodge announcing activities in the press appeared in December, 1758, when the Temple Lodge published a notice in the Mercury inviting all interested Freemasons to purchase tickets for its upcoming celebration of the Festival of St. John the Evangelist.  

In the years leading up to the American Revolution, many reports were published about the activities of Freemasonry in New York. These ranged from examples of Masonic charity and relief, to reports of fires that destroyed Masonic temples.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is another major city in the development of Freemasonry in colonial America. As early as 1730, published reports can

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be found describing the activities of Freemasonry. The first such article was printed in Benjamin Franklin's own *Pennsylvania Gazette*. It was a reprint of an article first published in London, England, and began as follows:

As there are several Lodges of Free Masons erected in this Province, and people have lately been much amus'd with Conjectures concerning them; we think the following account of Free-Masonry from London will not be unacceptable to our Readers. . . .

This front page article continued to explain part of the Masonic ritual that was allegedly in use at that time.

This article is significant for several reasons. First, it refers to "several Lodges" in the area. These lodges must have been meeting according to Ancient Customs, because there was no charters granted for lodges in America until 1733, and none of these were in Pennsylvania. Further, as previously mentioned, *Libre B*, an account book for Saint John's Lodge, which met at Tun Tavern, has been located. Its earliest entry is 1731. Franklin's introduction to this article lends credence to the theories regarding the existence of Freemasonry in the colonies prior to the appointment of a Provincial Grand Master for North America by the Grand Lodge of England is not disputed, as it would be logical to assume such, and there exist records in the Grand Lodge of England reflecting members leaving for the colonies. The existence of lodges, however, is more difficult to determine. This article most likely raised Franklin's curiosity about Freemasonry, because the records of St. John's Lodge show that he became a Mason in that lodge about two months later.

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In the months and years to follow, Franklin printed many articles and announcements about Freemasonry in Philadelphia, and also within the several colonies. The following is an example of one such announcement, and is the first public indication that Franklin was a Mason:

Philadelphia, June 20--Saturday last being St. John's Day, a Grand Lodge of the ancient and honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons was held at Tun's Tavern, in Water-Street, whenafter a handsome Entertainment, the worshipful W. Allen, Esq., was unanimously chosen Grand Master of the Province, for the Year ensuing; who was pleased to appoint Mr. William Pringle Deputy Grand Master. Wardens chosen for the ensuing year were Thomas Boude and Benj. Franklin.¹⁴

Similar examples of public coverage of Freemasonry in Philadelphia and the rest of the colony are found in many editions of the Pennsylvania Gazette, reflecting the relative strength and position of Freemasonry in pre-Revolutionary Pennsylvania.

One common thread can be found in these reports. Freemasonry, as a social organization and fraternal society, began from a small, but strong, nucleus of men, and grew to become a strong influence on the lives of many Americans. Through the reports of these and other colonial newspapers, news of Freemasonry was spread throughout the colonies. This helped spread the name of the fraternity, and undoubtedly helped to increase the number of men who took an active part in the fraternity. The fellowship, common bonds, and ideals that these men shared influenced their actions and lives, and made, in part, colonial life what it was.

NOTABLE MASONS

The first Freemason to make a significant and lasting impression on the development of Freemasonry in America was undoubtedly the Right Worshipful Brother Henry Price, the first active Provincial Grand Master of Masons in North America. Right Worshipful Brother Price can rightly be called the "Founder of Duly Constituted Masonry in America," because under his leadership the foundation was laid and the cornerstone of Freemasonry in America was set.

We know little about what Price did outside of the Masonic lodge. A native of London, he was born in 1697, and lived there until 1723, when he moved to Boston. In 1733, in addition to receiving his deputation from the Grand Lodge of England as Provincial Grand Master, he was appointed by Governor Jonathan Belcher as a Coronet in the Troop of Guards with the rank of major.¹

In 1737, Price was married for the first time, to Mary Townsend. A year later, the couple added a daughter, Mary, to their family. He retired from his work as a tailor in 1750, and spent his time as a gentleman, without what was then technically known as the "mystery or degree" of any calling. In early 1752, his wife died. He wasted little time in grief, it appears, for his second marriage, to Mary Tilden, of Boston, was announced in April, 1752. In 1755, Price moved to his home in Cambridge

¹Johnson, 92.
full time, ending his summer treks out of Boston. About five years later, tragedy again struck the Price household, as both his wife and daughter died. This double tragedy in a short period of time must have soured Price on his Cambridge manor, because he moved back to Boston. He sold his Cambridge estate in November 1760.²

He remained in Boston until 1762, when he moved to Townsend, where he established his place as a leading citizen of the community and served as a member of the Provincial Legislature in 1764 and 1765. Price was married for the third time in 1771, this time to the widow Lydia Randall. In addition to her son, John, the couple had two daughters, Mary and Rebecca.³

Too old to serve in the Revolutionary War, it is assumed he was a supporter of independence, because several letters have been found, such as one dated May 14, 1779, with the words "and the third year of the independence of the United States of America."⁴

Price's Masonic record reflects that he did a great deal more than serve as the Provincial Grand Master from 1733 to 1737.⁵ He was a member of Lodge No. 75, Grand Lodge of England, meeting at the Rainbow Coffee House in York Buildings, in 1730.⁶ He also served the Provincial Grand Lodge as the Provincial Grand Master from 1740 to 1744, 1754 to

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³Johnson, 97-98.

⁴Ibid., 100.

⁵Records of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Boston.

⁶Ars Quatuor Coronatorum, vol. 10, 183.
1755 and 1767 to 1768. In the intervening years, he served as the charter Worshipful Master of both the Masters and Second Lodges in Boston and as a Worshipful Master of First Lodge. He also presided as Provincial Grand Master pro tempore at a Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts communication in 1773. He made his last appearance at a communication of the Provincial Grand Lodge in 1774.

On May 14, 1780, Right Worshipful Brother Price suffered a severe and fatal axe wound while splitting rails on his estate in Townsend. On the 20th of May, America’s most famous Provincial Grand Master was dead at the age of eighty-three.

The Right Worshipful Brother and General Joseph Warren was another well-known Massachusetts Freemason. Always an active Mason, he was a member of Saint Andrew’s Lodge (Scotland), Boston, from 1761 until his untimely death in 1775. On May 30, 1769, the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, the Earl of Dalhousie, appointed Warren as the Grand Master of Masons in Boston and an area within one hundred miles of there for the Massachusetts Grand Lodge, serving under the authority and jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. In 1773, he received a subsequent deputation from the Earl of Dumfries, Grand Master of Masons in Scotland, extending his jurisdiction throughout the continent of

7Records of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Boston.
8Johnson, 100-101.
9Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, 1883, 150.
10Records of St. Andrew’s Lodge, Boston, and the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Boston.
11The Massachusetts Grand Lodge, chartered by the Grand Lodge of Scotland, was the only Provincial Grand Lodge in North America not titled as such.
America.\textsuperscript{12} He served as Grand Master of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge for all but four of the forty communications held from his appointment until his death.

Warren died at the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775. Although commissioned as a general, Warren was serving in the role of a common private when he was felled by a bullet in his head. Thus, the Mason who had led the younger of the two Grand Lodges in Massachusetts was gone. Right Worshipful Brother Warren was among the first of many distinguished Americans to give his life in the battle for the independence of America. His legacy to the Craft continues, as many lodges across the continent are named in his honor and loving memory.

Perhaps the most well-known of all Freemasons was George Washington. Father of the nation, military hero, and devoted member of the Fraternity, he began his Masonic journey in Fredericksburg Lodge, Fredericksburg, Virginia, in November 1752 when he was initiated as an Entered Apprentice. He was passed to the degree of Fellow Craft in March 1753 and was raised to the degree of Master Mason on August 4, 1753.\textsuperscript{13} He was a young man when he became a Mason, but Washington had a great deal of experience that exceeded his years. He was a major in the Virginia militia, and a surveyor of remarkable skill. He was rather inactive in Freemasonry in his early years, because he moved to Mount Vernon, and was quite some distance from his home lodge. After the War for American Independence, Washington served as the charter Worshipful

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{13}Records of Fredericksburg Lodge and the Grand Lodge of Virginia, Richmond.
Master for Alexandria Lodge, Alexandria, Virginia, the only man to serve as Worshipful Master of his lodge and as President of the United States at the same time.

Washington used his Masonic ties and friendships in building his staff after he assumed command of the Continental Army. He had a high regard for the Fraternity, and endeavoured to associate with many brother Masons. On assumption of command, he was faced with an organization with poor morale and less-than-satisfactory leadership. He sought out men whom he could trust, and found many of them in the lodge room. Thus, we find a high proportion of his general staff to have been Masons. He encouraged Freemasonry within the army, and supported the growth of military lodges. There were at least eleven known to exist among the fifteen thousand man force.

In his speeches and writings, Washington referred to many of the traditions and teachings of Masonry. For example, in his Farewell Address, President Washington described his hopes that "union and brotherly affection may be perpetual," and he described unity as "the main pillar in the edifice of your real independence." He encouraged the people to "observe good faith and justice toward all nations, and to cultivate peace and harmony with all," and to be "guided by a sense of justice and benevolence." In all of these examples, we see Worshipful Brother

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16Ibid.
Washington making reference to images and ideas presented in the degrees of Freemasonry, and obviously resting strongly in his character.

From New Hampshire, we find two men in particular who made a significant contribution to the development of Freemasonry in that colony, as well as played an important role in the growth of the colony itself. First is Worshipful Brother George Mitchell, Esq. When and where Mitchell received the first degrees of the fraternity is unknown. However, the minutes of St. John’s Lodge, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, show that he was the first witness to the 1739 edition of the by-laws of the lodge, and is identified as Worshipful Master of the lodge at that time. Mitchell served as Worshipful Master from 1739 to 1742, and again from 1746 to his death in 1755. He was a surveyor and a member of the Governor’s Council for many years, and served on several military and naval expeditions at the direction of the Royal Governor. These expeditions included the siege of Louisburg in 1744. He must have been a better surveyor and Mason than a military leader, because his ship met with marginal success on several occasions. While presiding as the Worshipful Master of St. John’s Lodge, Mitchell conducted two lodge meetings aboard the Royal Navy ship America, which was a 44-gun ship under construction in Portsmouth. It was aboard the America that the first conferral of the Master Mason degree by St. John’s Lodge occurred. On December 11, 1749, this degree was conferred on five men: William Smith, Michael Henry Pascal, Brother Wallace, William Jennes, and William Campbell.

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17 Foss, 22.

18 Ibid.

19 Minutes of St. John’s Lodge, Portsmouth, N. H., December 11, 1749.
Mitchell was also the first New Hampshire Mason to represent the colony at a Provincial Grand Lodge communication in Boston, Massachusetts.

The Reverend Arthur Browne was the first clergyman to be initiated into Freemasonry in New Hampshire. Additionally, he was the first permanent rector of the Episcopal church in the colony. He received the degrees of Freemasonry on September 18, 1747, and quickly became an active and loyal supporter of the fraternity. In 1755, he invited the lodge to celebrate St. John the Baptist Day at his church, and thus began an annual tradition and celebration for New Hampshire Masons. The Reverend Browne must have been well-known and popular in the New England colonies, because he was invited to deliver the sermon on the occasion of the installation of the new Provincial Grand Master, Right Worshipful Brother Jeremy Gridley, on October 1, 1755. According to the records of the Provincial Grand Lodge, the sermon was entitled "Love Recommended," and was published in Boston.

From the opposite end of the colonies, we find several outstanding Masons from Georgia. First and foremost, undoubtedly, is Major General James Edward Oglethorpe. He was a Mason from England, and led the initial colonization of Georgia. Oglethorpe conducted several expeditions throughout the area and also journeyed to other colonies, such as South Carolina, to seek assistance and support for the new colonists in Georgia. However, his record is not as detailed as others.

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20 Foss, 84.

21 Ibid., 85.

22 Records of St. John's Lodge, Portsmouth, N. H.

23 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, 1755.
Noble Jones was the first man to receive the degrees of Freemasonry in the Georgia colony, receiving degrees just a few weeks after Oglethorpe's first Masonic meeting there in 1734. He was an intimate friend of the major general, and was appointed by Oglethorpe in 1757 to serve as a colonel in the first regiment established in the Georgia militia. Jones also served the colony by overseeing the building of the first lighthouse there, which was on the Tybee Island at the mouth of the Savannah River. He continued his service to the colony, and showed his interest in ensuring the safety of the others by leading the construction of a fort on the Isle of Hope. This fort was to serve as a rallying and defensive point against attacks by the Indians and Spaniards. Jones is also held in high esteem in Georgia history for his tactful and successful negotiations with the various Indian tribes, enabling the Indians and colonists to live and work together in harmony.24

His public service to the colony included serving on the King's Council under three Royal Governors: Reynolds, from 1751 to 1757; Ellis, from 1757 to 1760; and Wright, after 1760. Governor Reynolds appointed Jones president of the Council in 1751. When the Georgia colony became a province, Noble Jones was appointed as a justice of the General Court, and served as its first chief justice.25 In his long and extensive service to the colony, we see that Brother Jones applied the lessons of Freemasonry, and served the colonists in such a manner to foster the spirit of peace and harmony within the colony, trying to ensure that all were treated fairly and equally within the eyes of the law.

24Gould, vol. 5, 139.

25Ibid., vol. 5, 140.
Robert Tomlinson was the Provincial Grand Master of New England from April, 1737, to July, 1740. Right Worshipful Brother Tomlinson was made a Mason in First Lodge, Boston, in 1735. He later joined the Masters Lodge in Boston. However, we do not know for certain in which lodge he was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason. Tomlinson must have been well known within the community, and highly respected by the brethren in the lodge, because he was elected Worshipful Master of First Lodge in June, 1736, and the following December he was appointed Deputy Provincial Grand Master by the Provincial Grand Master, Henry Price.

On April 20, 1737, Tomlinson received a deputation from the Earl of Loudoun, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England, appointing Tomlinson as Price's successor as the Provincial Grand Master.

Tomlinson was a merchant by trade and often traveled to Antigua and England. We know that in 1738, while serving as the Provincial Grand Master, Tomlinson was in Antigua, and there he initiated several men into Freemasonry and established at least one new lodge.

In May 1739, Right Worshipful Brother Tomlinson returned to Boston, and in December appointed Thomas Oxnard as his Deputy Provincial Grand Master. This was a wise and timely appointment, because Provincial Grand Master Tomlinson died the following year in Antigua, where he is buried.

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26 Johnson, 168.
27 Records of St. John's Lodge, Boston, and Johnson, 169.
28 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, 1736, Boston, and Johnson, 169.
29 Archives of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, and Johnson, 169.
30 Johnson, 170.
31 Ibid.
Right Worshipful Brother Thomas Oxnard served as the third Provincial Grand Master for North America from 1743 to 1754, serving pro tempore from Tomlinson's death until his deputation was received from the Grand Lodge of England in 1743. He was a merchant by trade, and had a successful business partnership with his father-in-law, John Osborn.

Right Worshipful Brother Oxnard's Masonic record is very complete when compared to the records of his contemporaries. He received the degrees of Freemasonry in First Lodge on January 21, 1735, and was elected Worshipful Master of that lodge in December 1736. He was a charter member of Masters Lodge in Boston and regularly attended meetings there. During his tenure as Provincial Grand Master, Oxnard traveled a great deal, both in England and in North America. He issued charters to lodges in the colonies of Massachusetts, Newfoundland, Rhode Island, Maryland, and Connecticut. Right Worshipful Brother Oxnard died in June 1754 and his obituary appeared in several publications in both Boston and London.

Major General and Right Worshipful Brother Richard Gridley distinguished himself as a surveyor and civil engineer during the colonial period. He developed his skills in the military arts as a member of the Royal

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32 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, 1871, Boston, and Johnson, 280.

33 Johnson, 281.

34 Archives of St. John’s Lodge, Boston, and Johnson, 281.

35 Johnson, 280.

36 Archives of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Boston.

Battery in North America.\textsuperscript{38} He distinguished himself throughout his military career in both the British and American armies for his outstanding abilities in artillery deployment and fortification. He served General Washington as the Chief Engineer for the colonial forces during the Revolutionary War.\textsuperscript{39}

Right Worshipful Brother Gridley was a member of First Lodge and Masters Lodge, both of Boston. He was initiated as an Entered Apprentice Mason in First Lodge in January 1745\textsuperscript{40} and raised to the degree of Master Mason in Masters Lodge in April 1746.\textsuperscript{41} He served in a variety of offices in each of these lodges, including terms as Worshipful Master in each lodge.\textsuperscript{42} Right Worshipful Brother Gridley faithfully served the Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts as Junior and Senior Grand Warden from 1758 to 1759 and 1760 to 1761, respectively. He was also appointed to serve as the Deputy Provincial Grand Master in January 1768 by John Rowe, Provincial Grand Master. Gridley served in that position until August 1787.\textsuperscript{43} Right Worshipful Brother Gridley lived to the grand age of eighty-six. He died on June 21, 1796, of blood poisoning and is now buried in the cemetery in Canton, Massachusetts.\textsuperscript{44}

Next to George Washington, the best-known Mason of this period was

\textsuperscript{38}Johnson, 304.

\textsuperscript{39}Johnson, 304.

\textsuperscript{40}Records of St. John's Lodge, Boston.

\textsuperscript{41}Records of Masters Lodge, Boston.

\textsuperscript{42}Johnson, 308.

\textsuperscript{43}Archives of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Boston.

\textsuperscript{44}Johnson, 308.
Benjamin Franklin. We know that Right Worshipful Brother Franklin printed news of Freemasonry in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* as early as December 1730, and became a member of the lodge at Tun Tavern in the following February. Franklin was concerned about the status and Masonic regularity of Freemasonry in Pennsylvania and especially his own lodge. After hearing about Price’s appointment as Provincial Grand Master, he met with the Provincial Grand Master while visiting Boston in June, 1734. Franklin later wrote to Right Worshipful Brother Price on behalf of the lodge at Tun Tavern to gain a charter and confirm the proper establishment of a Provincial Grand Lodge in Pennsylvania. This petition was accepted and a charter issued in February 1735. Franklin was appointed by Price to serve as the Provincial Grand Master for Pennsylvania at the same time.

Right Worshipful Brother Franklin served the Masonic fraternity in a variety of positions during his lifetime. Under his leadership, the Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania was established and duly constituted. Freemasonry began in the colony. As the preeminent printer and publisher of the day, he provided the community with information about the activities of Freemasons through regular articles and advertisements in his newspaper. He was regarded highly in the colonial period, as history has shown us. He is an excellent example of a Freemason because he always acted on the level with those around him, treating each person fairly and

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46 Roy, 15.
48 Johnson, 131.
with brotherly love.

In these examples, we see how several men have taken the lessons and teachings of Freemasonry and applied them to their personal live in colonial America. These men were more than mere members of a fledgling fraternal organization. They were the leaders and fathers of a developing nation, laying out designs on a grand trestleboard. They exemplified the life of a Freemason in their daily routines, fostering the growth of the Craft and the development of a nation.
CONCLUSION

We have seen examples of how the development of Freemasonry in colonial America to 1770 influenced the development of America itself. The Freemasons took an active role in the development and leadership of their respective colonies, as well as their Grand Lodges and lodges. From the start we find the Freemasons maintaining autonomous organizations within the boundaries of their colonies and recognizing the sovereign status of each Grand Lodge and Provincial Grand Lodge. We do find some challenges to the organization, mostly from within, that resulted in two or more Grand Lodges claiming supreme authority in a colony. These few cases were limited in scope and effect on the fraternity’s development, however, and, in time, unification occurred in each colony.

A key factor in the development of Freemasonry is the fact that no national, or General Grand Lodge was established or even considered during the colonial period. Although several men were appointed to serve as a Provincial Grand Master for North America, their response was to use that authority only to establish a few duly constituted lodges in each colony so that the colony could itself establish a Provincial Grand Lodge separate from the others. Indeed, there were no serious attempts at establishing a strong central governing body for Freemasonry until after the Revolutionary War was over, and even then the attempt was unsuccessful. One might well conclude that this attitude among the Freemasons later
became evident in the political organization of the new American nation.

In contrast to the Anglican Church’s development in the colonies, Freemasonry in America continued with business as usual. All of the ritualistic pomp and fanfare found in the English lodges remained. Insignia, jewels, aprons, and other Masonic paraphernalia were either brought over from England by Freemasons traveling between the continents or manufactured in the colonies themselves. For example, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts has a complete set of officers’ jewels crafted by Right Worshipful Brother Paul Revere, perhaps the best-known silversmith of the colonial period. Officers were installed and new members initiated by colonial Freemasons. Only written reports and communications were required by the Grand Lodge of England. However, visits to English lodges and to Grand Lodge of England communications were common activities for sojourning brethren.

Unlike most other aspects of colonial administration, Freemasonry in North America was given a great deal of freedom to conduct its matters without constant interference from England. English Masonic tradition placed a great deal of faith on the ability of Provincial Grand Masters to act in the best interest of the Grand Lodge. Extending this autonomy to the Provincial Grand Lodges in America was logical to them. The English saw no logical reason to dictate policy or procedure to the lodges in the New World except through the Constitutions of the Grand Lodge, which applied to Freemasonry on both sides of the ocean.

Organizing a lodge, or even Provincial Grand Lodge, was simply a matter of sending a letter or petition and receiving a charter in return. There was no requirement for a person to go to England to be initiated,
to send letters and petitions there, or wait for English approval for actions taken by the Provincial Grand Master. All of this contributed to the autonomy of Freemasonry in North America, and the spirit of independence. The sovereignty of each Provincial Grand Lodge was important to the development of Freemasonry in colonial America and was highly regarded by the members. It may have contributed to the independent spirit of the colonists as war with England approached, but that is a subject for further research.

The teachings of Freemasonry stressed harmony and goodwill among men, each one keeping in himself his devotion to God. The fundamental quest for truth and honor later would be reflected in the words and actions of the American patriots as they prepared for and conducted war.
A. L. (Anno Lucis). In the Year of Light. This is the date used by Masonic lodges to mark the years, and is determined by adding 4,000 to the current year (Example: 1988 is A. L. 5988).

Abif, Hiram. Architect of and one of the three Grand Masters at the first temple in Jerusalem, according to the Old Testament. He is held in high esteem by Freemasons for his legendary life and death.

Acacia. A plant commonly found in the Middle East since Biblical times. Masonically, it is emblematic of the immortality of the soul and innocence. It is also the name of a college fraternity with Masonic ties.

Adjournment. An action which cannot take place in a Masonic lodge. According to the Old Charges of Freemasonry, Masons are charged to remain at labor until the Worshipful Master has determined all work is complete. A lodge must be properly closed by the Worshipful Master.

Age, Lawful. The age at which a man may be legally admitted into a Masonic lodge. In most jurisdictions, it is twenty-one.

Alarm. Masonically, the verb "to alarm" means to give notice to the lodge someone wishes to enter. As a noun, "alarm" refers to the signal by an officer, usually the Tyler outside of the lodge, who wishes to communicate with the lodge.

Ancient Craft Masonry. A term often used to describe the three symbolic degrees of Freemasonry: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason.

Ancient Masons. Those Masons and Lodges who, in 1751, broke from the Grand Lodge of England over a disagreement with the original body on Masonic ritual and customs. The separate Grand Lodges existed until 1813, when they were again united.

Apprentice, Entered. The first degree of Ancient Craft Masonry. Also, one who has received this degree.

Apron. The lambskin, or white leather apron, is the most important symbol of Freemasonry, and the badge of a Mason. It is worn by all Masons when in lodge, and during public processions and events, such as the laying of a cornerstone. Its full significance is explained in Masonic ritual.

Ballot. Membership in a Masonic lodge is granted only by unanimous consent by a secret ballot. However, some jurisdictions allow for some (1–3) negative votes. Voting is a duty of a Mason, and no member may abstain from balloting without the unanimous consent of the lodge.

Blue. The color universally ascribed to Ancient Craft Masonry, hence, the term "Blue Lodge."
Cable Tow. A rope or cord used in Masonic ritual to symbolically control an unobligated candidate in a degree. Also symbolic of the covenant by which all Masons are united.

Candidate. An applicant for admission into a Masonic lodge. Appropriately used only until the completion of the Entered Apprentice degree. Informally used to refer to any individual receiving any Masonic degree.

Certificate. A card, parchment, or scroll issued by a Grand Lodge or subordinate lodge to indicate the bearer is in good standing. A certificate alone is not justification for admission into a Masonic lodge. Commonly referred to as a "dues card" in American lodges.

Communication. The proper term for a meeting of a Masonic lodge.

Compass. A symbol of Freemasonry. Used by architects and Operative Masons to draw true arcs and circles. Its symbolic nature is explained in Masonic ritual. In most jurisdictions, the plural, compasses, is used.

Deacon. Each lodge has two—the Senior and Junior. The Junior attends to the wishes and directions of the Senior Warden, and attends to alarms at the outer door of the lodge. The Senior serves the Worshipful Master, introduces all visitors to the lodge, and is the principal conductor of candidates during degree work.

Degree. A step or segment of Masonic ritual. There are three degrees in Ancient Craft Masonry: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason.

Deputation. The authority granted by a Grand Master for a brother to act as a Provincial Grand Master.

Deputy Grand Master. In most jurisdictions, the principal assistant to the Grand Master, the second-ranking officer in the grand jurisdiction.

Demit. To resign from a lodge. In most jurisdictions, a demit is only granted to members in good standing, and then only for the purpose of transferring membership to another lodge.

Dispensation. A permission or waiver granted by the Grand Master to a brother, group of brethren, or an entire lodge to act in a manner not specifically authorized by Masonic law. Most common dispensations are granted to appoint a Grand Master's representative at an official Masonic function, to establish a new lodge between Grand Lodge Communications, and for a lodge to meet in a place other than specified on its charter.

East. Place of honor in a Masonic lodge. It is the location of the Worshipful Master's station.
Eastern Star, Order of. The American Rite of Adoption, open to Master Masons, their mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters.

Examination of Visitors. All visitors to a Masonic lodge must present a current certificate from a lodge or Grand Lodge recognized by the jurisdiction being visited. Additionally, the visitor must be examined by a committee of members to ensure the visitor is, indeed, a Mason. The examination may be waived if a member of the lodge can verify, or vouch, that he has personally attended a communication with the visitor.

Fellow Craft. The second degree of Ancient Craft Masonry, or one who has received this degree. Also, Fellowcraft.

Free and Accepted. Historically, a Free and Accepted Mason is one who is free-born (that is, not in captivity or bound, or when speaking of Operative Masons is free of the guild), and accepted by the membership as a Speculative Mason.

Gavel. A tool of a Mason, and a symbol of one of the degrees. Used by the Worshipful Master, Senior and Junior Wardens in their government of the lodge. The Master's gavel is sometimes called a "Hiram."

Grand East. The station of the Grand Master or Provincial Grand Master. Also, the term sometimes used to describe the location of the Grand Lodge headquarters. For example, Boston is the Grand East of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.

Grand Lodge. The administrative and dogmatic authority for Freemasonry in a given jurisdiction. In the United States, Grand Lodges cover the same jurisdiction as state boundaries. The presiding officer, the Grand Master, is the senior-ranking Freemason within the jurisdiction. All allied Masonic organizations within the Grand Lodge's jurisdiction are generally subject to the Grand Master's rulings.

Hiram, King of Tyre. Contemporary of Solomon, King of Israel, and said to have been present at the building of Solomon's Temple. Masonic tradition recognizes him as one of the three Grand Masters present at the construction, and subordinate only to Solomon himself.

Installation. The act of placing an officer of the lodge into his respective place, or station. Once installed, an officer cannot resign. Installation is required to obtain the rights and benefits of the office. A term of office is from installation to installation, and not election to election.

Jewel, Official. The official jewels worn by officers of a Masonic lodge are: Worshipful Master - square, Senior Warden - level, Junior Warden - plumb, Senior Deacon - square and compass with sun in center, Junior Deacon - square and compass with moon in center, Secretary - crossed pens or quills, Treasurer - crossed keys, Stewards - cornucopia, Tyler - crossed swords. The jewels of a subordinate lodge are
silver. The jewels of a Grand Lodge are gold.

Lodge Room. By tradition, a room situated due east and west, with a length at least one-third longer than its width, and with high ceilings. A lodge room is never on the ground floor of a building.

Master. Head of a lodge. The presiding officer of a subordinate lodge.

Master Mason. The third degree of Ancient Craft Masonry. Also, the title of one who has received this degree. The highest degree of any kind in Freemasonry.

Most Worshipful. The title given to a Grand Lodge and its presiding officer, the Grand Master, and all past Grand Masters.

Obligation. The promise made by a Mason as part of his receiving each of the three degrees. The single act which makes one a Mason.

Operative Mason. One who actually works at the trade of masonry. Commonly used during the early development of Freemasonry to identify one who was a worker and not merely an accepted or Speculative Mason.

Past Grand Master. One who has served as a Grand Master of a Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons. Commonly abbreviated P. G. M.

Past Master. One who has served and completed a term as a Worshipful Master of a subordinate lodge. Also, the title of a degree in the York Rite.


Regular. A lodge working under the legal authority of a charter or dispensation from a grand lodge.

Right Worshipful. The title given to the grand officers below the grand Master. Also, the title ascribed to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania and its Grand Master.

Saint John the Baptist. A patron saint of Freemasonry. His festival day is June 24th. The significance of his selection as a patron saint is explained in Masonic ritual.

Saint John the Evangelist. A patron saint of Freemasonry. His festival day is December 27th. The significance of his selection as a patron saint is explained in Masonic ritual.

Secretary. An officer of a Masonic lodge. He is responsible for taking the minutes of all meetings, processing all communications to and from the lodge, issuing receipts for monies received, and providing the Treasurer with a list of bills to be paid. In most lodges, a part
time employee of the lodge.

Solomon, King of Israel. The builder of the first temple in Jerusalem and one of the three Grand Masters at its building.

Speculative Mason. A Freemason. Specifically refers to a member of a Masonic lodge prior to 1717 who was not an Operative Mason, or one who made his living in the practice of masonry.

Square and compasses. The most common symbol of Freemasonry. The importance and significance of these items are explained in Masonic ritual.

Stewards. Officers of a Masonic lodge. They assist in degree work, prepare refreshments and meals, and assist the Deacons in the accomplishment of their duties.

Treasurer. An officer of the Masonic lodge. The custodian and depositor of all lodge funds. Prepares checks, drafts, and transactions at the direction of the Master based on instructions from the Secretary.

Temple, Masonic. The building which holds the Masonic lodge room. Often includes offices, social facilities, storage areas, and meeting places for other Masonic related organizations.

Wardens. Second- and third-ranking officers of a Masonic lodge. The Senior and Junior Wardens assist the Worshipful Master with degree work and the government of the lodge.
Address by Andrew E. Sanborn, written for the celebration of the anniversary of Union Lodge No. 5, January 20, 1917. Archives, Union Lodge No. 5, Middleton, Delaware.

Address by George W. Chaytor, presented to a communication of the Grand Lodge of Delaware, June 1, 1859. Archives, Grand Lodge of Delaware, Wilmington, Delaware.


Ars Quattor Coronatorum, 10:181-187.


Beteilhe, Francis. The Beteilhe Manuscript. AMs. Archives, Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Boston, Massachusetts.

Boston Evening Post, 28 June 1736.

The Boston Gazette, 2 July 1754.

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*South Carolina Gazette* (Charleston), 29 October 1736.

_____, 29 December 1737.

_____, 28 December 1738.
______, 13 November 1740.

______, 1 January 1754.


The archives and records depositories of the following Grand Lodges were also used in the preparation of this thesis:

Grand Lodge of Connecticut, Hartford.
Grand Lodge of Delaware, Dover.
Grand Lodge of Florida, Tallahassee.
Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Boston.
Grand Lodge of New York, New York City.
Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
Grand Lodge of Scotland, Edinburgh.
Grand Lodge of Virginia, Richmond.

The archives and records of the following subordinate lodges were also used in the preparation of this thesis:

Fredericksburg Lodge, Fredericksburg, Virginia.
St. Andrew's Lodge, Boston, Massachusetts.
St. John's Lodge, Boston, Massachusetts.
St. John's Lodge, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.
Solomon's Lodge, Savannah, Georgia.
Union Lodge, Middleton, Delaware.