

JEPHTHA LODGE 494

Huntington, New York 11743 ♦ 631.351.8361 ♦ <http://www.jephtha.com>

GREETINGS FROM THE EAST

Dear Brothers,

I would like to congratulate our newest Dedicated Service Award recipient, W.: John B Lentinello. I thank the Grand Lodge for naming W.: John as a designee to receive this most honorable award in 2021. We remain hopeful in having a proper celebration in the near future when pandemic restriction allows us to meet again in a large group. Jephtha Lodge has the good fortune of having in its midst multiple DSA recipients working in the quarries. I am honored to be surrounded by these brothers, all with great minds and caring hearts.

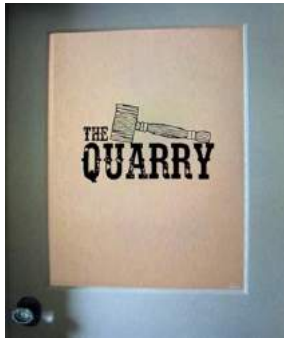


The month of January brought charitable acts to local veterans in need. Our Benevolence Committee Chairman, Brother Bill Fenty III, coordinated with the Squires Club of the Knights of Columbus to provide meals for the veterans of the United Veterans Beacon House. Using funds raised by the sale of W.: Ron Seifried's book, *Images of America, Long Island Freemasons*, several veterans were regaled with delicious meals. We anticipate bringing more meals to our honorable veterans during the months of February and March.

The work of the Benevolence Committee does not stop there. Charity sometimes begins at home. During the January stated communication, a motion was presented and carried to allow for the formation of the Jephtha Benevolence Fund which will collect donations to help members of Jephtha Lodge experiencing hardships. The global pandemic at hand serves as a reminder that Freemasonry is built upon faith, hope and charity.

One of the challenges of being a Worshipful Master during this global pandemic is discovering the trestle board you may have presented while still a Senior Warden has, for the most part, been scrapped, revamped, and retooled to follow pandemic guidelines as presented by the Grand Lodge. These guidelines are subject to change at any time as our Grand Line members consider the safety of the brethren in our ever-changing environment. I had planned, for the month of January, a special communication to present Years of Service Certificates to our members. But current pandemic guidelines limit attendance in lodges to no more than ten brothers. Simply stated, we want to share this recognition of our brothers' years in the "quarry" in a lodge room packed with brothers. So, for now, we will wait until that opportunity once again arrives. One of Jephtha's Years of Service Certificate recipients, Brother Stuart Koenig, raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason on January 26th, 1970, over 50 years a Freemason, has earned such recognition. I congratulate you, Brother Stuart!

I would like to thank Brother Luke Loporto for presenting the January on Zoom stated communication Masonic Moment with a focus on the phrases: *ordo ab chao*, order out of chaos, and *lux e tenebris*, light in darkness. Our Libations Committee members also had their moment to shine as they revealed the naming



of the barroom at Jephtha Lodge. Jephtha Brothers had voted to pick the best of ten names chosen by our members to be artistically applied as a decal on the barroom door. Our bar's new name, *The Quarry*. Thank you Brothers Drew MacCallum, Paul Levy, Ken Siesner and Luke Loporto for your efforts to see this through! (Design by Luke Loporto)

I look forward to our February 8th stated communication on Zoom which will feature some focus on Black History Month. We are also preparing a fundraising celebration of Mardi Gras on February 20th. Details to follow!

Sincerely and Fraternally yours,
 Brother Tony Colonna
 Worshipful Master
 Jephtha Lodge #494

GREETINGS FROM THE WEST

My brothers, I hope all is well. A new year is in full swing and there are many things we have planned. Although there is no timetable for normalcy, Jephtha will continue fundraising and degrees when permissible. To ensure that you receive all correspondence regarding our events, please make sure your contact information is up to date.

I would like to encourage all brothers to reach out if your living circumstances have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. Our obligation is to each other so it's important that we maintain healthy communication. If there is anything within our power to help, it will be given. No brothers should bare their burdens alone.



There are many challenges ahead, but we will continue to face them head on. Please do your part in keeping up with current Grand Lodge edicts and all safety protocols. As we have seen, no one is impervious to this virus so proceed with caution. I wish my brothers and their families good health.

Sincerely and Fraternally,
 Jeremiah Campbell
 Senior Warden

GREETINGS FROM THE SOUTH

Dear Brethren,

February is the month when we Americans reflect on the struggle for equality for all as we celebrate Black History Month. That struggle has also included women's right to vote whose 100th anniversary was celebrated last year, and the past prejudices against the newly arrived Irish and Italian immigrants, Catholics, and today against Hispanic immigrants, legal and illegal. As late as the mid 1940's advertisements for jobs and home rentals also listed the phrase, "Anglo-Saxons need only apply." That meant only British (and by extension, white) Protestants and their descendants. Only when we, as a nation, accept and understand all men and women are created equal in the eyes of God, no matter their professions, beliefs, creed or color, it is then we can truly say equality has prevailed.



This country was built by Freemasons, and Freemasonry is the one place where there is no prejudice, where everyone is a brother, and all brothers are equal. The love of one brother for another is unbreakable, knowing that no matter whom we are we will be treated equally. It is, undeniably, one of the reasons why our beautiful craft will be everlasting. Freemasonry puts back together what is divided and understands that we are all created in God's image and, therefore, equal.

This month we also honor our presidents, 14 whom we can call brother (from George Washington to Gerald Ford). Although not a Master Mason, Lyndon Johnson was an Entered Apprentice, and Abraham Lincoln was not a Mason. However, it is rumored that his first degree was supposed to be scheduled on the Monday after his assassination.

February also rewards us with Saint Valentine's Day, when Cupid's arrows symbolically capture our hearts. What a wonderful time to give special thanks to that very special person in your life, the one who makes sure the top shirt button is well fastened so it doesn't pop, who joins us in our special Jephtha activities, encourages us in our Masonic functions, and for the time we take away from that special person as active Masons, all with unconditional love. For me, it's my beautiful wife, Miranda, who is always present to reassure me, and, with her understanding and acceptance, makes me a better husband and Mason.

Brothers, on this very special day, let us take the time to embrace our significant others and kiss them as we did that very first time, enjoy them as we have never done before, and tell them how much we love them as we wish them a very happy Saint Valentine's Day.

I would like to close with my interpretation of "Baby, You're A Rich Man" from the Beatles. When my daughter was 5, I was introducing her to the song, and explained that *rich* describes being *rich in life not in money*. With my wife, daughter, extended family and faithful dog, I am the wealthiest man in the world, and with my Masonic brothers, my life has been enhanced beyond comprehension. As the song states, "How often have I been there, often enough to know, which is every second of every day."

Always remember, dear brothers, Masonry is a sacred brotherhood. It binds us not only by obligations, but most importantly by brotherly love. We should always be asking ourselves, "What can I do to be a better man and a better Mason?"

Sincerely and Fraternally,
Michael S. Crispino
Junior Warden

GREETINGS FROM THE CORNER DESK

Brother Benjamin Franklin is credited as having said, "Remember not only to say the right thing in the right place, but far more difficult still, to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment."

In today's world, leaving unsaid "the wrong thing at the tempting moment" is sometimes seen as a weakness or a sign of slow-wittedness. I would argue, however, that it is the pinnacle of wisdom – far more important (and difficult) than "saying the right thing in the right place."

I have fewer years in the brotherhood than many, but even I have seen more brotherly relationships ruined by careless words and inappropriate rantings than by even the harshest truth-telling. In today's world of social media where we are able to put our most polarizing statements in front of hundreds (indeed, thousands!) with a single click, knowing when to say what and when not to say anything is harder than ever before. I cannot count the times brothers have told



me that they've considered leaving the craft because of what they have seen and learned on Facebook. Having immediate access to our brothers' political, religious, social, and philosophical peculiarities can make it incredibly difficult to live together in "brotherly love and affection."

Several years ago, the Grand Lodge put out a list of "Best Practices for Social Media" (<https://nymasons.org/site/best-practices-social-media/>). The world has changed a lot since they were first written, but it remains a useful guide. I encourage you to spend a few minutes looking it over and considering your online presence, and the online connections you maintain and develop with others from our majestic brotherhood.

I also urge you to pay attention to the comments regarding smartphones in the lodge. They are as pertinent today as ever.

Grace and peace,
Tim TenClay
Secretary

CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY 2021

| | | | |
|-----------|-------------|---------|---|
| Monday | February 1 | 7:30 PM | Entered Apprentice Degree Rehearsal |
| Tuesday | February 2 | 7:00 PM | Officers Meeting on Zoom |
| Monday | February 8 | 7:30 PM | Stated Communication: Black History Month |
| Monday | February 15 | 7:30 PM | Entered Apprentice Degree Rehearsal |
| Wednesday | February 17 | 7:30 PM | Benevolence Committee Meeting |

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Michael Carey
Adrian Ciocci
Frank Corso
Per U. Dobler
Charles H. Fisher
Richard B. Gentile
John N. Lowe

Xavier F. Marinaro
Cory H. Morris
Scott L. Myers
Derek G. Rhodes
Christopher Sikes
James R. Thompson

FEBRUARY RAISINGS

Daniel Bernzweig
Michael R. Denkovich
Eric M. Freedman
Timothy L. Mason
Michael J. Rittenhouse
Nick Vorrias
Martin H. White IV



KEEPING IN TOUCH



BAND (Jephtha): <https://band.us/band/77740271>



FACEBOOK: Jephtha Lodge No. 494



INSTAGRAM: Jephtha 494



MASONS OF JEPHTHA #494: <https://www.jephtha.com>



OUR LODGE PAGE (Jephtha): <https://494-ny.ourlodgepage.com>



GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK: nymasons.org/site

GREETINGS FROM THE LODGE HISTORIAN

BULLY!

In Search of the Lost Origins of the Mysterious Water Buffalo Head

No current furnishing, artifact, or memorabilia has been discussed in Jephtha Lodge more than the mysterious African water buffalo head mounted on a second-floor wall. Some of the wild conspiracy theories include the long-held legacy that the mighty beast was hunted and killed by nearby resident and Brother Theodore Roosevelt and personally delivered to the Huntington lodge by the former President.

As our late Brother coined over one hundred years ago, "Bully!"

The Expeditions of Theodore Roosevelt

Our mystery commences in February 1915, when Theodore Roosevelt delivered a lecture entitled "My Masonic Experiences in South America and Africa" to his local Masonic brothers residing near his home in Cove Neck. An invitation went out to the members of his own Matinecock No. 806 and their parent lodge, Jephtha No. 494 in Huntington. It is estimated over 30 Jephtha brothers from Huntington trekked over to Roosevelt's home in Sagamore Hill, including one of his second degree examiners, R.:W.: Douglass Conklin, for this exclusive gathering. While in Africa, Roosevelt did find time to visit a masonic lodge in Nairobi, in the British colony of Kenya, but the focus was clearly on his hunting exploits.



Roosevelt's first expedition started just 19 days after the conclusion of his final term as President. Organized by the Smithsonian Institute to collect specimens for their new Natural History Museum, the small group was led by legendary hunter-tracker R. J. Cunninghame and set sail for East Africa on March 23, 1909. By the end of the trip over 10 months later, the team killed or trapped approximately 11,397 specimens, including 512 by Roosevelt and his son Kermit. Roosevelt kept a detailed diary of his adventures and later published the exact list of his kills in the book, *African Game Trails*. The variety of big game personally hunted by the former president was extraordinary, including lions, leopards, cheetahs,



hyenas, elephants, white rhinos, the now exceedingly rare black rhino and ten buffalos, six by the former president and four by his son Kermit.

Roosevelt stated in his book, "Kermit and I kept about a dozen trophies for ourselves; otherwise, we shot nothing that was not used either as a museum specimen or for meat...the mere size of the bag indicates little as to a man's prowess as a hunter, and almost nothing as to the interest or value of his achievement." If Roosevelt's claim that the family only kept one dozen for themselves is accurate, a tour through the Sagamore Hill home would count for most if not all these specimens.

Roosevelt later led a scientific survey expedition in South America between December 1913 to April 1914 to follow the path of the Rio da Dúvida in the Amazon basin. The problematic tour included many members coming down with malaria, poorly supplied food leading to starvation diets, one person drowning, one person murdered, and his accused killer left behind in the jungle to perish. Roosevelt himself was

near death after having received a gash in his leg that later became infected. Roosevelt returned to New York greatly weakened and never fully recovering, dying at his Cove Neck home less than five years later. There is no record of Roosevelt hunting for buffalo in South America.

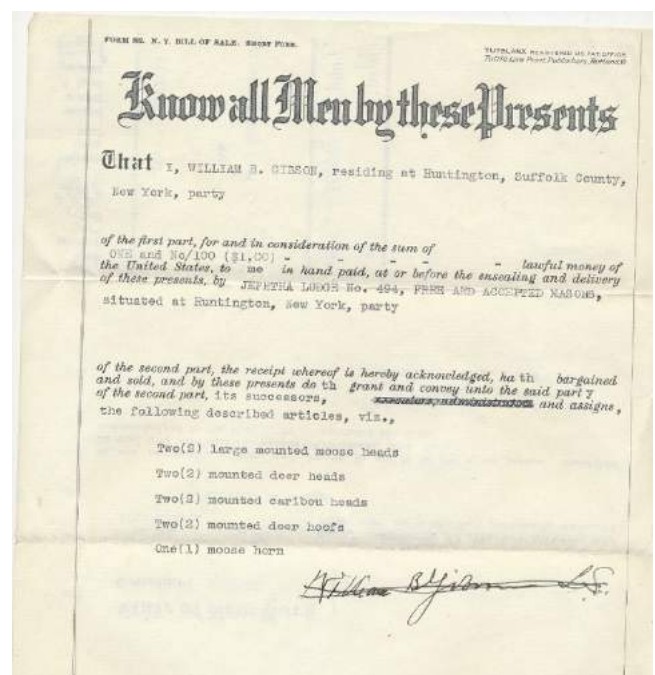
Roosevelt started giving lectures in May 1914 in part to silence the critics doubting he discovered the river and undertook the expedition. These series of lectures included his invitation-only event to Oyster Bay and Huntington Freemasons in February 1915. Unfortunately, there are no known records of the lodge receiving a prized water buffalo head from Roosevelt.

A Forgotten Sale from a Coroner

But Roosevelt was not the only big game hunter to cross paths with Jephtha Lodge. On February 15, 1937, Jephtha Lodge took possession of nine taxidermied animal parts from Dr. William B. Gibson in exchange for one dollar of American currency. The list of stuffed animal parts included two large, mounted moose heads, two mounted deer heads, two mounted caribou heads, two mounted deer hoofs and one moose horn. The bill of sale was accepted by W.: Allison E. Lowndes, Past Master (1922) and longtime Trustee of Jephtha and filed in the archives by W.: Herman Chris Lorck, Secretary (1935-1944) and Past Master of Jephtha (1932).

There is no known connection between Dr. Gibson and Jephtha Lodge. He was not raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason, nor is there any record of a petition. There is also no recorded proof that Gibson hunted the mammals or if he acquired the pieces from an intermediary.

William B. Gibson (1855-1941) was born in Clarenceville, Québec, Canada to Dr. John B. (b. Scotland) and Lucy S. Baker Gibson. In 1878, he obtained his medical degree from McGill Medical College (now McGill University) in Québec. Gibson



practiced medicine in London for one year, before returning to Dunham, Québec. Between 1878-1885, he was an Assistant Surgeon of the 60th Canadian Regiment, obtaining the rank of Major in a commission signed by Queen Victoria. Appointed to the Medical Department at the University of Vermont in 1885, Gibson lectured on materia medica and obstetrics until 1889.

Gibson moved to Huntington, New York in 1891, living at 153 Main Street (1900 -1920) and 71 New Street (1930-41). Elected President of the Queens and Nassau Counties Medical Society and Associated Physicians of Long Island in 1901, Gibson was the Suffolk County Coroner for several decades. In 1880 he married Amelia Caroline Moore, and they had two sons, Gordon, and Frederick.

The big game trophies from the collection of Dr. Gibson have long vanished from the rooms of Jephtha Lodge. Although the water buffalo is not listed as part of Gibson's former collection, there is no evidence that his items were acquired in the African continent.

In Search of Additional Evidence

We can determine the mounted head on the second floor is a water buffalo based on its horns growing slightly downward and backward, then curving upward in a spiral. More common in Asia, water or river buffalo, can be found in Egypt. But Roosevelt's safari was in the sub-Saharan part of Africa, miles away from the northeast corner of Egypt and based on photographic evidence, Roosevelt only hunted cape buffalo.

The water buffalo was introduced in the Amazon river basin in 1895, which was part of Roosevelt's 1913-14 expedition. Because of the challenging South American survey trip, including almost facing death, it is not believed Roosevelt did any hunting on the continent during his three months stay.

The origin story of the old water buffalo staring out to curious onlookers with its glass eyes in the small second floor room will remain a mystery for the time being. It does not stop brothers from spinning tales to unsuspecting visitors that Jephtha Lodge's connection to Long Island's most famous Freemason is more than a proficiency examiner and personal lecture guests. The framed picture of the former president with one of his African prizes still hangs adjacent to the mounted head, with a black and blue masonic baseball cap on one of its horns. The evidence is not clear, but Jephtha Lodge members can carry the infamous legacy forward as a distinct possibility if not a certainty - the TR Buffalo can retain its moniker.

Sincerely and Fraternally,
W. . Ronald J. Seifried, DSA,
Jephtha Lodge Historian

JEPHTHA LODGE CONTINUES TO RAISE FUNDS FOR LOCAL CHARITIES DURING PANDEMIC

The pandemic of 2020 has forced many local charities to redevelop their benevolence programs that faced the prospect of limited public gatherings and an unstable economy. Jephtha Masonic Lodge in Huntington has been giving back to the local community since its founding in 1860 and has been able to remain charitable to those in need through wars, recessions, The Great Depression and now its second global pandemic since 1918.

Led by Benevolence Committee Chairman Bill Fenty III, the lodge faced these extreme challenges with fortitude and determination in these uncertain times.

A long-planned charity walk that Jephtha Lodge No. 494 F. & A. M. has participated in the past was reprogrammed into a virtual event that helped raise over \$4,400. The Sunrise Association Day Camps have been operating in several locations, including Wyandanch, since 2006. The mission of the camps is to provide children ages 3½ to 16 struggling with cancer and its difficult treatments with activity filled summers at outdoor day camps free of charge. The children's months of isolation are broken with a few weeks of sunshine and fun at the day camp, without rescheduling any medical treatments because the campers can stay at their own homes at night. The program also includes siblings to help the children with cancer be more comfortable and less lonely during their difficult treatments. With the regular Sunrise Walks cancelled due to the pandemic, Jephtha Lodge had to be creative to keep to the spirit of past outdoor fundraisers. On June 28, 45 brother masons and their families attended their own walk in Huntington Village.

The lodge followed the charity walk with a Back-to-School Drive in September where the members collected 11 backpacks, 15 bags and 3 boxes of supplies and \$344 for families in need during the remote-learning challenges of the 2020-21 school year.

In the same week, the brotherhood supported Ride343, the New York City Fire Department's annual bike ride in commemoration of 9/11 and the 343 men and women of the NYC Fire Department who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks. An annual event organized by Jephtha Past Master Greg Gatto of the FDNY, 2020's charity bike ride was unfortunately canceled due to COVID, but the brothers of Jephtha, their families and friends helped keep its legacy alive by having their own private ride. Gatto is a member of the Ride343 Bicycle team that rides over 100 miles at the annual event from Ground Zero to the South Fork of Long Island to benefit U.S. Veterans. Dozens from the Jephtha family rode the 10-mile round trip from Jones Beach to Cedar Creek Park in Wantagh on September 12, raising \$1,142 through GoFundMe and independent donations, far exceeding their \$300 goal.

On October 24th, the brothers of Jephtha Lodge, with assistance from friends and family, met to continue the work started over the summer to improve the historic Old Burial Ground Cemetery in Huntington. With help from the Town Historian Robert Hughes, the volunteers were able to make a significant impact on removing the thick vegetation and found additional headstones that were completely engulfed by the overgrowth.

In November, the brothers answered the call of those in need by assisting the Helping Hand Rescue Mission in Huntington Station. Because of the impact of COVID, the Helping Hand Rescue Mission was in need of supporting 800 families during the holiday season as hardships were even more pronounced in 2020 than in the past.

The Jephtha Lodge Benevolence Committee had originally set a goal of 3 bags of groceries and 15 coats but was very pleasantly surprised when the donation tables were overflowing with 40 bags of groceries and 15 large bags of coats. The Holiday Food and Coat Drive was organized by Brothers James Visalli and Luke Loporto, who allowed the lodge to use their business establishments as fund raising drop-off locations.

The holiday season fundraising did not stop there. The lodge coordinated with the U.S. Marines for their Toys for Tots donation drive, an event usually kicked off at the annual Huntington Holiday Parade. Hundreds of people usually show up to watch the parade from the lodge building's second floor location overlooking New York Avenue, kickstarting the annual drive. Over 120 toys were collected in time for the December 18th drop off with the USMC by Brother Chris Tomasino.

The lodge closed out its fundraising efforts of 2020 with the first project started. Net proceeds of the new book by Past Master Ron Seifried, *Long Island Freemasons* (Arcadia Publishing) exceeded \$1,500.

Published in March 2020, most of the planned promotional events were cancelled, leading the author to think outside the box to raise funds. Several Zoom events and podcasts later, the lodge members decided to donate the funds from Seifried's book to a local homeless Veterans organization in Islip for warm meals throughout the cold winter months.

The lodge plans to resurrect other charity fundraisers cancelled due to pandemic restrictions, including annual Diwali, Huntington Holiday Parade, Mardi Gras and St. Patrick's events after the economy opens back up. As Jephtha Lodge enters its 17th decade, the future of the Benevolence Committee is determined to stay on target for upcoming fundraisers in one of the fastest growing Masonic lodges in New York.

Sincerely and Fraternally,
W.: Ronald J. Seifried, DSA
Jephtha Lodge Historian

MASONIC MOMENT

The Jephtha Lodge Newsletter is pleased to present the following article from the New-York Historical Society Museum & Library in celebration of Black History Month

African American Freemasonry and New York's Grand Colored Lodge

A recent acquisition by the Patricia D. Klingenstein Library at N-YHS sheds light on the early history of African American Freemasonry. The twelve-page, handwritten Proceedings of the Convention of the Grand Colored Lodge, dated 1845, outlines the intentions of the members of three African American masonic lodges to unite under the auspices of one "Grand Lodge."

African American freemasonry originated during the American Revolution. On March 6, 1775, fourteen men of color were made masons in Lodge #441 of the Irish Registry attached to the 38th British Foot Infantry at Castle William Island in Boston Harbor, Massachusetts. Prince Hall, a freedman and leather worker, would emerge as the leader of this group, called African Lodge #1. After the war, the group applied to the Grand Lodge of England, the Premier Grand Lodge of the world, for a charter to organize a regular masonic lodge, with all the rights and privileges that went along with it. On September 29, 1784, the Grand Lodge of England issued a charter to African Lodge #459, the first lodge of African Americans Freemasons.

This was the beginning of a tight knit Freemason community based upon common race, history, and experience. Through a growing network of lodges, African American masons promoted fellowship, mutual aid, and social respectability, while standing against slavery and white supremacy. Together, free blacks were much stronger than they could be standing alone, and voluntary associations like those of the Freemasons empowered them and created the potential to exert influence in the community. Over the following decade African American lodges were established in Philadelphia, and in Providence, Rhode Island. In 1812 the African Lodge of Boston issued a charter to create an African American lodge in New York City under the name "African Lodge of New York." This lodge was later renamed the "Boyer Lodge of New York" in honor of Haitian Revolutionary Jean Pierre Boyer. The manuscript "pamphlet" in the N-YHS library reflects a period when the African American Freemasons were struggling with issues of expansion, cooperation, consolidation and identity. In 1827, the African Lodge declared its independence from the United Grand Lodge of England. The African Lodge also stated its independence from all of the white Grand Lodges in the United States. The pamphlet is the product of a convention held September 1844 at 105 Elm Street in New York City, attended by masons from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Jersey, with the purpose of establishing a cooperative

ruling body, or Grand Lodge, called the Independent Philanthropic Grand Colored Lodge of the Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons.

As the authors of the 1845 pamphlet noted, "the White Masons [of] the Grand Lodge of the United States of North America... did for reasons to themselves known pass a resolution not to grant anybody or association of colored men a warrant or charter to convene as Masons with their approval in these United States, which violation is in contradiction to the principles taught by Masons; therefore, we deem it expedient to organize a Grand Colored Masonic Lodge."

Though it seems that this convention's proposed Grand Lodge did not last long during a period of upheaval and reorganization, the tradition of African American Freemasonry has persisted. There are now at least 5,000 lodges that can trace their lineage to the original African Lodge #459 established by Prince Hall. This pamphlet is a valuable piece of the history of African American Freemasonry.

NB A comment sent to the New-York Historical Society Museum & Library clarifies some of the information above: This is a great find but the info may be mixed up. Philanthropic GL was an independent GL made up of black masons who were not associated with what became Prince Hall Grand Lodge of NY. In fact, it was a rival and the 3 Lodges that formed it were said to be Philanthropic 1, Hiram 2 and Union 3. Submitted by Oscar Alleyne on March 25, 2019.

Reprinted from the New-York Historical Society Museum & Library, *From The Stacks*, February 28, 2019.

Negro History Week began in 1926 when historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association of the Study of Negro Life and History announced the second week of February would be celebrated as Negro History Week honoring the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln (February 12) and Frederick Douglass (February 14. Douglass was a former slave and ardent abolitionist.) In the 1970's Negro History Week became Black History Month. In New York State, Lincoln's birthday is a state holiday.

Respectfully submitted,
Br. Richard Gentile
Jephtha Lodge #494

FAMOUS FEBRUARY MASONS

GEORGE WASHINGTON

Father of Our Country

February 22, 1732, Pope's Creek, British America - December 14, 1799, Mont Vernon, VA, USA

Not all Masons are obligated on the Christian Bible. Masonry is universal and men of every creed are eligible for membership so long as they accept the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. Therefore, the candidate should be obligated on the Book of the Sacred Law which he accepts as such since his obligation is a solemn and binding one.

I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain what I consider the most enviable of all titles, the character of an honest man.

Associate with men of good quality if you esteem your own reputation for it is better to be alone than in bad company.

Freemasonry is founded on the immutable laws of Truth and Justice and its grand object is to promote the happiness of the human race.

Being persuaded that a just application of the principles, on which the masonic fraternity [sic] is founded, must be promotive of private virtue and public prosperity, I shall always be happy to advance the interests of the Society, and to be considered by them a deserving Brother.

George Washington was the first of six children of Augustine and Mary Ball Washington, descended from a wealthy Virginia family which had made its fortune in land speculation. (His great-grandfather, John Washington, immigrated to the colony of Virginia from Sulgrave, England in 1656.) His father was a justice of the peace and a prominent public figure, and when his father died, George inherited Ferry Farm and 10 slaves while his older half-brother inherited Little Hunting Creek which he renamed Mount Vernon.

Washington did not have the formal education his brothers had, but he did learn mathematics, trigonometry and land surveying (receiving his surveyor's license from the College of William and Mary) and became a talented draftsman and mapmaker. By the time he was 20 he owned over 2,000 acres of land.

His only trip abroad was in 1751 when he accompanied his brother, Lawrence, to Barbados in the hope the climate would cure his brother's tuberculosis. During the trip he contracted smallpox which slightly scarred his face but also gave him immunity. Lawrence died the following year and Washington leased Mount Vernon from Lawrence's widow which he inherited outright upon her death in 1761.

Lawrence's military career inspired George Washington to seek a commission and thus began his distinguished military career rising to the rank of brigadier general. In 1758 he resigned his commission and at age 26 he married Martha Dandridge Custis, a widow of the wealthy plantation owner Daniel Parke Custis. They raised her 2 children and 2 grandchildren; they had no children of their own. Through his marriage he inherited 1/3 interest in the Custis estate and managed the remaining 2/3's for Martha's children; the estate also included 84 slaves. He became one of Virginia's wealthiest men which increased his social standing. By 1775 he had increased the size of Mount Vernon to 6,000 acres and its slave population by more than 100. (In his will, Washington instructed his wife, Martha, to free his slaves upon her death. She freed all their slaves the following year, 1801.)

As a military hero and large landowner, he was soon among the political and social elite of Virginia. He was elected to the Virginia provincial legislature, the House of Burgesses, where he remained for the next 7 years. He opposed British taxation without representation. The Boston Tea Party forced Washington to declare the newly passed British Coercive Acts were "an invasion of our right and privileges." Soon the First Continental Congress was formed to which Washington was selected as a delegate, and as tensions rose, Washington helped train the county militias in Virginia. Congress created the Continental Army on June 14, 1775 and Washington was unanimously elected its commander-in-chief because he "was best suited to lead and united the colonies" (John Adams).

As commanding officer during the American Revolutionary War, Washington led troops in the battles of: Boston (MA), 1775-1776; Long Island (NY), 1776; Kip's Bay (NY), 1776; Harlem Heights (NY), 1776; White Plains (NY), 1776; Fort Mifflin (PA), 1776; Red Bank (PA), 1776; Germantown (PA), 1777; Red Bank (PA), 1777; Monmouth (NJ), 1778; and Yorktown (VA), 1781, and other campaigns and skirmishes in Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Trenton, and Yorktown. By 1783 the British left Savannah, Charleston and New York; the French navy also departed. Washington resigned as commander-in-chief when the Treaty of Paris was signed on September 3, 1783 officially ending the American Revolutionary war. Washington bade farewell to his officers at Fraunces Tavern in New York City on December 1783 and returned to Mount Vernon. Once home, he was congratulated by a continuous stream of visitors paying their respects.

Seventy-four men were commissioned generals in the US Continental Army (1775-1783), and 33 (46%) were Freemasons. Three of Washington's foreign-born generals deserve note since they were Masons, came from noble families and dedicated themselves to the young, American nation's ideals: Marie-Joseph Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, **Marquis de Lafayette** of France (1757, Chavaniac-1834, Paris; He died with the American rank of major general and was the last surviving general of the American Revolutionary War. An American flag always flies over his French tomb since Congress bestowed upon him honorary American citizenship in 2002. He was also the first foreign dignitary to address Congress in 1824.) No documentary evidence shows when and where he was made a Mason, but he said he was, presented himself as such and was universally accepted as a Mason. He visited numerous Masonic lodges during his lifetime. **Kazimierz Michal Wladyslaw Wiktor Pulaski**, a Polish nobleman known in the United States as Casimir Pulaski. (1745, Warsaw-1779, Savannah, GA; He died with the rank of brigadier general.) There are no surviving documents of his actual Masonic membership, but he was buried with full Masonic honors in Monterey Square, Savannah, GA. "I came here, where freedom is being defended, to serve it, and to live or die for it." He was made an honorary American citizen in 2009. **Baron Frederick von Steuben** of Prussia (1730 Prussia-1794 Steuben, NY). He is buried in the Steuben Memorial State Historic Site, Remsen, NY. He was made a Mason in Germany and became a member of Trinity Lodge #10 (now # 12) in New York, and he later affiliated with Holland Lodge #8. In the final years of the war, he served as Washington's chief of staff with the rank of brigadier general.

By 1786 Washington was persuaded to attend the Constitutional Convention where he was nominated by Benjamin Franklin to serve as its president general. By April 6, 1789 the convention was over, and Washington was elected president. Washington was inaugurated as the first president of the United States on April 30, 1789 at Federal Hall in New York City, then the capital of the United States, and was witnessed by 10,000 people among them statesmen, foreign dignitaries, militia and marching bands. Chancellor Robert R. Livingston, a Mason, administered the oath, using a Bible he borrowed from St. John's Lodge No. 1. That Bible is known today as the George Washington Inaugural Bible. The King James Version of the Bible, dated 1767 and printed in London, was randomly opened to Genesis 49 during Washington's swearing in. When the ceremony was over, he kissed the Bible and said, "So help me God," and John Livingston exclaimed, "It is done!" Afterward, Washington and his followers walked to St. Paul's Chapel where they invoked the blessings of God on the new government.

St. John's Lodge No. 1, Ancient York Masons in New York City, is the oldest operating Masonic Lodge under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of New York of Free and Accepted Masons, and the George Washington Inaugural Bible is still owned by this lodge. When this Bible is not in use or on tour, the St. John's Lodge allows it to be displayed in the Inaugural Gallery of the Federal Hall National Memorial, New York City. It has also been used in the inaugurations of Harding, Eisenhower, Carter, George HW Bush, and the funeral processions of Washington and Lincoln. It was present in the center-stone laying of the US Capitol, the Washington Monument, the centennial of the cornerstone laying of the White House, the Statue of Liberty, the 1964 World's Fair and the launching of the aircraft carrier USS George Washington.

During his presidency (1789-1797) Washington established: the title Mr. President and not His Excellency or His Highness the President as had been suggested; the inaugural address; messages to Congress; the cabinet form of the executive branch; a day of Thanksgiving ("It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor."); payment of the nation's debts; moving the capital temporarily to Philadelphia and then near Georgetown on the Potomac River; the First Bank of the United States; the boundary with Canada; the Navy in 1794 to combat the Barbary pirates, and a smooth transition of power to his successor. (He retired after two terms setting a precedent not to create the image of the presidency as a lifetime appointment.) In his Farewell Address Washington stressed the importance of national identity; a united America would safeguard freedom and prosperity; the country had to be aware of three dangers: regionalism, partisanship and foreign entanglements, and the importance of religion. Washington returned

to Mount Vernon and devoted his time to his plantations and business interests.

On December 12, 1799, Washington inspected his farms on horseback in snow and sleet. Not to keep his guests waiting, when he returned home he did not change into dry clothes. The next morning, he awoke with an inflamed throat and trouble breathing. He died two days later at 67 years of age with Martha present. He was interred at Mount Vernon in a private funeral service followed by a ceremony performed by various members of Washington's Masonic Lodge of Alexandria, Virginia.

Major General Harry Lee III (1756-1818, early American patriot and politician, 9th governor of Virginia and father of Robert E. Lee) eulogized Washington as "First in war - first in peace - and first in the hearts of his countrymen." In 1886, Congress proclaimed Washington's birthday (February 22nd) a federal holiday.

For the Bicentennial of 1976, Congress bestowed posthumously on Washington the rank of *General of the Armies of the United States* (six stars). This rank had been created for Washington in 1799 but he was not actually appointed until 177 years later. Congress specified in 1976 that Washington's new grade ranked above all other grades of the Army, past and present.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The Great Emancipator

February 12, 1809, Sinking Spring Farm, KY - April 15, 1865, Washington, DC

The people of these United States are the rightful masters of both congresses and courts, not to overthrow the Constitution, but to overthrow the men who pervert the Constitution.

Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right.

Abraham Lincoln never became a Mason, but he did submit his nomination to the Tyrian Lodge in Springfield, Illinois after his nomination to the presidency in 1860. However, after further consideration, he withdrew his nomination because he did not want his motives for joining be misconstrued as an attempt to have Masons vote for him using the name of Freemason for his personal gain. He advised the lodge he would become a Mason after his presidency but his assassination while president never allowed him to fulfill his promise. The Tyrian Lodge adopted a resolution on April 17, 1865 (2 days after his death) stating "that the decision of President Lincoln to postpone his application for the honours of Freemasonry, lest his motives be misconstrued, is the highest degree honourable to his memory."

Lincoln was fully aware of Freemasonry through many of his friends: Bowling Green (Lincoln's surrogate father), Stephen A. Douglas (politician and lawyer), James Matheny (his best man), James Gourley (his closest neighbor), Henry Clay (a famous statesman and lawyer), et. al. and he displayed many of the important qualities of Freemasonry: faith, hope, charity, belief in God, the equality of all people, and the ability of each person to improve himself.

Lincoln in 1861 said: "I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence... I have often inquired myself what great principle or idea it was that kept the Confederacy so long together. It was ... that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave us liberty, not alone to the people of the country, but hope to the world for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights should be lifted from the shoulder of all men, and that ALL should have equal chance." This is the guiding spirit of the Masonic philosophy, then and now, and it

became a part of the Declaration of Independence that in turn affected Lincoln so fundamentally.

Freemasonry also played a role in alleviating the harshness of the Civil War, and this probably came to Lincoln's attention and may have affected his own attitudes to some extent. Masons from both sides got together to exchange information, assist wounded from the other side, and arranged for Masonic burial services for fallen enemies. Some soldiers even escaped death because of their Masonic affiliation. Lincoln and his colleagues who were Freemasons demonstrated charity toward others even while engaging in all-out combat to accomplish goals they felt were worth fight for - to maintain democratic government and to prove that people could govern themselves.

Abraham Lincoln was never a Mason, but it is likely Masonry had some positive influences on him, and he on Freemasonry. His political philosophy was affected by Masonic ideals through the Masonic influence on the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. His spirit of charity during the Civil War was probably affected to some extent by hearing how Masons in the war helped each other while maintaining their ideals. Lincoln was helped in his personal life and his political activities by Masons, from his days in New Salem through the rest of his life. Without overreaching, Masons and all who study Lincoln can rightly take some satisfaction from the involvement of Abraham Lincoln, a non-Mason, and Freemasonry.

Last three paragraphs reprinted from *Abraham Lincoln and Freemasonry* by Paul M. Bessel, Presented to A. Douglas Smith, Jr. Lodge of Research, #1949, July 29, 1995.

Respectfully submitted,
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Jephtha Lodge #494

All brothers of Jephtha Lodge are encouraged to contribute articles for *Masonic Moments* and *Famous Mason* (the same birth month as the month's publication). Kindly submit articles to the Communications Committee: Br. Bill Fenty III (wfenty@gmail.com) and Br. Richard Gentile (rg.jlnews@aol.com) by the 15th of the month for publication the following month. If you have any questions, kindly contact the two brothers above.

