

PRINCE HALL FREEMASONRY

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INTRODUCTION

The Past Master assigned to greet visitors in your Lodge reports that an African-American from the United States of America seeks admission. He has passed all tests of recognition and exhibits such knowledge of Freemasonry as to place his understanding beyond doubt. He has presented a recent certificate of good standing and his Master Mason's certificate from the M.W. Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Arizona, with which his signature agrees. As Junior Warden, could you admit him?

The answer is no. The United Grand Lodge of New South Wales is not yet in harmony with Grand Lodges of Prince Hall affiliation, which mainly represent African-American Freemasons in North America. We are, however, in mutual recognition with an American Grand Lodge whose Constitution reads - '*A candidate for the degrees of Freemasonry must be a White man*'.

This paper attempts to bring together issues of relevance to an understanding of this position and the current moves in America and elsewhere to change it. It must be stressed that this is not due to racial prejudice, here or in America, on the contrary, equality between all men of any race or creed is a fundamental tenet of our Craft.

The paper does not purport to present any new information and is based on only a small part of the available literature, recognising the time the author has had available and that much vital information is necessarily not published or available to the casual researcher.

While every attempt has been made to present facts objectively, it is necessary in such a paper to add personal interpretations and speculate about the issues in order to bring them into focus. No attempt has been made to dodge the harder issues even though it is often potentially offensive to air them, on the contrary, the intent of this paper is to be controversial, as the whole question raises several fundamental issues of importance to us all in understanding our Craft.

The question of recognition of Prince Hall Freemasons is, on the one hand, one of obvious moral significance, as we would like to illustrate that we fully believe that Freemasonry knows no racial boundaries. On the other hand it sinks into a mire of difficult questions of Masonic regularity and jurisprudence so that the answer is not so obvious and those who wish to deny recognition may also be seen to be motivated with some honour.

HISTORY

The beginning

The Prince Hall Masonic Year Book publishes the traditional story that, in 1775, Prince Hall and 14 other Black Americans were made Masons in an army Lodge in Boston. There is no direct evidence concerning which Lodge performed these ceremonies, if any. However, the earliest evidence of coloured freemasonry in the United States is a sheet of paper in the archives of African Lodge in Boston, which states that Marster (sic) Batt made 15 persons masons, including Prince Hall, on 6th March, 1775.

Controversy over the date

However, there is controversy about the date on the above sheet of paper, on which the figure 5 in the date has been overwritten making the date dubious. This is particularly significant because another early record from Prince Hall's African Lodge, showing candidates and the dates degrees were conferred, shows the first entry as Prince Hall being made a Mason in 1778. This ambiguity, as is shown below, is

particularly significant to the whole issue of the regularity of their entry into Freemasonry as it concerns the status of John Batt.

Who was John Batt?

Irish Lodge No.441 was a military Lodge warranted to meet in the 38th Regiment of Foot under command of General Gage in Boston in 1775 and John Batt was a member of that Regiment at that time. There is no record of John Batt being a Freemason or a member of this Lodge and certainly none of his being Master. There is likewise no record of the making of Prince Hall and the other Black men in the returns to the Grand Lodge of Ireland.

This lack of returns to Dublin is not particularly significant as the American War of Independence broke out only a few weeks after that date, however it is surprising that no record exists at all. Nevertheless, if 1775 is the correct date, then it is more likely that Irish Lodge No.441 was the Lodge involved than any other.

John Batt was discharged from His Majesty's 38th Regiment in 1777 when it shifted from the Boston area to Staten Island. He was re-enlisted in Henley's Regiment, Boston, early in 1778 and is listed as deserted in June, 1778. Therefore, if 1778 were the correct date, John Batt was in Boston but Irish Lodge No.441 was not. However, the Adjutant of Henley's Regiment, Joseph Dunkerly, who enlisted Batt, was a member of Lodge of St Andrew, Boston, a stationary Lodge. While it is possible that John Batt was a Freemason in good standing, there is no record of a military Lodge being attached to Henley's Regiment and no record of John Batt's membership of Lodge of St Andrew.

It is widely considered that John Batt was never a Mason but simply made gullible Black men clandestine Masons for a fee using one of the many expose' rituals available at that time.

Regularity of this initiation

However, despite the contrary opinion and dubious evidence, let us suppose John Batt was Master of Irish Lodge No.441 and Prince Hall and his friends were regularly made Masons in 1775. Was the initiation regular?

The regulations of the Constitution & Laws of the grand Lodge of Ireland forbade the initiation in a military Lodge of any person living in a town where there was a town Lodge (and vice versa) subject to a fine in penalty.

This regulation has been quoted as being evidence that the making of Prince Hall and the other 14 African-American men as Freemasons was irregular. However, the regulation, although applying a fine, does not define any Mason so made to be clandestine or irregular. In any case the regulation could apply only to Lodges under the Grand Lodge of Ireland and the 'town' Lodges in Boston at the time were under the Grand Lodge of Scotland or the 'Moderns'. Therefore there is no basis for believing Prince Hall to have been a clandestine Mason on these grounds.

While the regulation, by restricting the activities of competing Lodges, makes good sense, the need for inter-jurisdictional understanding is underlined.

Free men?

A further question to be asked is - were they free men? That is, were they slaves or were they born slaves?

What an obnoxious question to ask today! I am sure we would all echo the feelings of Mahatma Gandhi when he said *'There is no dishonour in being slaves. There is dishonour in being slave owners'*. However, America, France and Britain were, at the time, still emerging from their feudal past and bondsmen, or those born in bond although now free, were common but not admissible to Freemasonry.

It was only in 1847 that the United Grand Lodge of England amended their charges to require that a petitioner for Masonic degrees be a 'free-man' not 'free-born' as previously so that those born in bondage, but now free, could be admitted. The question of slave status is then a valid test for regularity of the initiation of these men although it is doubtful if this test was ever intended to apply to men who were press-ganged or captured into slavery against their will.

The evidence about Prince Hall himself is controversial. *The Prince Hall Masonic Year Book* states that Prince Hall was freeborn. However, in 1962, a Caucasian Masonic researcher, Bro. John Sherman, discovered, in the Boston Atheneum Library, a copy of the document of manumission proving that Prince Hall had originally been a slave in the family of the Boston leather-dresser named William Hall, who had set him free in 1770 and after whom it is supposed he took his surname. Although this evidence has been repudiated on the grounds that there were several persons named Prince Hall in Boston at the time, nevertheless this evidence is widely accepted as accurate. Further, Prince Hall claimed to be a leather-dresser by trade.

The traditional story of Prince Hall has been shown to be inaccurate in a number of other respects and is given little credence. It does, unfortunately, still appear in *The Prince Hall Masonic Year Book* and, in consequence is still circulated as being genuine.

Nevertheless, even if the document of manumission applied to Prince Hall, this does not necessarily prove that Prince Hall was born a slave. It has been postulated that he may have been born free in Africa, caught and brought as a slave to America and sold there aged about twelve. Having been set free by 1775 (or 1778), there is no evidence for believing Prince Hall to have been a clandestine Mason on these grounds.

The first African Lodge

In 1784, Prince Hall and his friends petitioned the 'Moderns' Grand Lodge in London for a charter for a Lodge to meet in Boston. The petition was successful and a warrant was issued to 'African Lodge No.459' arriving in 1787. This is particularly significant and is the strongest and indisputable basis for Prince Hall Masonry's claim for regularity of origin.

Nevertheless, it has been argued that the warrant was irregular as it was an infringement of jurisdiction. In Boston, there were three other Masonic jurisdictions at the time:-

- * Saint John's Grand Lodge meeting under the deputation originally given to Henry Price by the Grand Lodge of England (before the schism) in 1733 and under Provincial Grand Master Rowe ('Moderns') at the time,

- * The Massachusetts Grand Lodge dating from 1769 and chartered a Provincial Grand Lodge by the Grand Master of Scotland, and

- * The 'Rising States' Lodge formed as an independent Lodge by expelled members of Saint Andrew's Lodge of Boston, including Paul Revere, who, despite the traditions of the craft, could not accept that they should owe allegiance to any British Grand Lodge after the successful conclusion of the American War of Independence.

The British Grand Lodges have never accepted the American doctrine of exclusive jurisdiction and, given the proliferation of jurisdictions in Boston, it must be difficult to concede that any infringement of jurisdiction was recognised in America at the time or could be taken seriously.

However, the claim has more significance when it is recognised that the petition to London stated that Prince Hall and his fellow Masons had been meeting as a Lodge holding a permit from PGM John Rowe, which permitted them to meet, parade in the streets and bury their dead (but not initiate candidates). This permit could be likened to the licence under which the Canberra Lodge of Research and Instruction operates and, although a very important piece of paper, if genuine, has not been retained in the records of Prince Hall Freemasonry.

While John Rowe was Provincial Grand Master of North America under the 'Moderns' (the Grand Lodge to which Prince Hall sent his petition) he was also, in civil life, a member of the Massachusetts

Legislature and was elected Town Moderator in 1781. It has been suggested that, in this civil role, Rowe may have been called to issue a permit to African Lodge to parade etc. Otherwise, if the permit was a genuine Masonic permit, why was it necessary for Prince Hall to go to London for it to be exchanged for a Charter? Why was this not done by PGM Rowe? Was Prince Hall going over his head?.

It is likely that London was improperly influenced by the reference to a permit from Rowe into issuing the warrant to 'African Lodge No.459'. The whole issue of this warrant is quite unsatisfactory. It must be concluded that London issued the warrant for a Lodge without reference to their own Provincial Grand Master in Boston. Perhaps this was due (later justified) to suspicions of strained relations over the War of Independence or due to delays in correspondence or perhaps London believed Rowe was not being fair to Prince Hall.

The activities of African Lodge

African Lodge made regular returns and paid dues to the 'Moderns' for some years but was finally struck off the register in 1813 for failure to submit returns and fees. It has recently been established that records show that such payments were regularly forwarded to the Grand Lodge and that the removal was not discovered by Prince Hall Lodge members until 1834. It is also apparent that the United Grand Lodge of England accepts that it erred in basing cancellation of recognition of the African Lodge on these grounds. This is most unfortunate as the de-listing has been used as a ground for attacking the regularity of origin of African Lodge.

While the 'moderns' charter did not permit it, African Lodge must have presumed that it had the power to issue Charters to other Lodges and agreed to install the Master in a new Lodge in Philadelphia to which it had issued a Charter following a petition received in 1797. While this action has been defended as following a precedent set by Lodge Fredericksburg, Virginia, some years earlier, it had no formal authority for this action and the Lodge thus Chartered must be considered irregular.

Another attempt to establish authority for these activities was made by Grimshaw, who stated that Prince Hall was appointed Grand Master for North America on 27th January 1791 in place of John Rowe by the 'Moderns'. A written deputation exists allegedly signed by the 'Moderns' Grand Master to this effect. The document has since been convincingly established as a forgery carried out by Grimshaw himself, who was unwittingly aided by the Grand Lodge of England, which commented on the deficiencies of an earlier draft submitted by Grimshaw as the historic original.

Unity of Masonic Jurisdictions in Boston

Moves commenced towards unity between the above three Caucasian jurisdictions in 1787, although it was not until 1792 that full unity existed between them. It should be noted that this unity was achieved in Boston before the 'Ancients' and 'Moderns' in England even made their first move towards reconciliation in 1798 and it was not until 1813, twenty-one years later, that unity was achieved in London.

Prince Hall was on friendly terms with many prominent Caucasian Masons in Boston and it is inconceivable that he did not know of these moves for unity. Nevertheless, the Prince Hall Freemasons did not take part in this opportunity for unity and the question must be asked - was Prince Hall not interested in unity with Caucasian Grand Lodges or was he made to feel unwelcome? Perhaps, having finally established legitimacy for African Lodge, he may not have wished to jeopardize it by taking part in talks obviously aimed at a Masonic 'Declaration of Independence'.

In any case, we should presume that the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts did not take kindly to African Lodge for the following reasons:-

* First, a considerable effort must have been taken to achieve unity between the other three former jurisdictions and, if they considered African Lodge to be legitimate, surely a similar effort would have been expended on their behalf, too.

* Second, the fact that London issued a warrant to African Lodge without reference to Rowe must have rankled, particularly if the alleged Masonic 'permit' was simply a civil permit and a trick had been perpetrated.

* Third, feelings of independence from British Grand Lodges were important emotional issues of the day. Earlier some members had been expelled for advocating Masonic independence but, as events showed, it was declared despite obvious doubts of its propriety.

The first Prince Hall Grand Lodge

In 1827, African Lodge announced in the newspapers the formation of a separate Grand Lodge in Massachusetts.

This unilateral declaration of independence by the Prince Hall Grand Lodge should not necessarily be viewed as a wish for complete severance from Freemasonry in general. In taking independence the Prince Hall Masons did no more nor less than the united Grand Lodge of Massachusetts had done 34 years previously, particularly if it is remembered that this Grand Lodge included the expelled Paul Revere and his friends of 'Rising States' Lodge, which would have to be considered clandestine.

There could be, however, no real practical question of recognition for the Prince Hall Grand Lodge from other Grand Lodges at the time. Prince Hall had not taken part in the negotiations for unity in Boston and African Lodge had, by then, been struck off by London who had not replied to its petition of 1824. Further, the other two Lodges within the Prince Hall Grand Lodge (Philadelphia and New York) must be considered to be irregular.

It is, in any case, hard to conceive how the Grand Lodge(s) in London could grant recognition to others, at least before their own unity in 1813, but also since they had established the custom of Provincial Grand Lodges instead of independent Grand Lodges. However, it is worth noting that the 'ancient' Grand Lodge of England did recognise the Independence of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania in 1792.

After this declaration of independence, the Prince Hall Grand Lodge set about issuing Charters to other African-American Lodges and the formal growth of Prince Hall Freemasonry began in earnest.

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF PRINCE HALL FREEMASONS

No-one has suggested that Prince Hall did not believe himself to be a legitimate Freemason, nor that he or African Lodge did not work tirelessly for the good of Freemasonry as they saw it and for the lot of their fellow African-American men. Whatever feelings held him apart from his Caucasian counterparts, or whether they were mutually held, is now only of historical interest.

Indeed, what is known of Prince Hall's life illustrates that he earned considerable prestige and respect. He became a family man, property owner and voter in Boston and a constant and active member of his church. As Grand Master of the coloured Grand Lodge until he died, he is considered to be the founder of coloured Freemasonry.

Many of the early members of Prince Hall Lodges rose to prominence in their chosen avocations. Absalom Jones was the first ordained coloured Episcopal priest in America and first Grand Master of the African Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. John Marrant, one-time chaplain of African Lodge, was ordained in London in 1785 and is believed to be the first ordained Black man of North American origin.

James Forten won a citation for saving people from drowning and helped recruit 2,500 Negroes to defend his city during the (Napoleonic) War of 1812. Being an ex-slave who purchased his own freedom, he is quoted, when a prisoner of the British during the Revolutionary War and offered a chance to go to England, as saying '*I am here a prisoner for the liberties of my country, I never, never, shall prove a traitor to her interests*'.

There are many pen-sketches of the lives of famous Prince Hall Masons in Walkes' book, which illustrate the degree to which Prince Hall Freemasonry has played a part in the growth of America. They have been active in defending cities during epidemics, during race riots, in the Black church, the education of children and the building of Black communities. In Korea during the Korean War, when racial animosity had reached intolerable levels, Prince Hall military Lodges were asked to help calm the situation.

The deeds of these members and of their Lodges illustrate author Walkes' theme that '*the history of Prince Hall Freemasonry is the history of the Black man in America*'.

PRINCE HALL FREEMASONRY TODAY

Today there are Grand Lodges with Prince Hall affiliation in 39 States of the United States of America as well as in Canada, Liberia and the Bahamas. They exercise authority over more than five thousand Lodges.

Prince Hall Freemasonry is a formidable fact of life. It is not likely to fail or diminish in importance. It is a constant reminder that, whatever their origins, racial barriers can exist in Freemasonry.

Whatever their origin, in my limited reading I have not come across any suggestion that their rituals are spurious or their Masonic forms, charges and regulations are in any major way different from our own. Indeed all material I have read exhibits the finest understanding and practice of Freemasonry. The *Grand Lodge of Alberta Bulletin* of June 1990 reports of Prince Hall Lodges in their State that:-

- * The Lodges operate in the York Rite.
- * They use the Daggett Ritual which is written in cipher.
- * The signs, grips, words and due-guards are the same as ours.
- * All other differences are very minor.

There has been some laxity with accuracy in the recording of their history, but recent publications are accorded much greater research respect. The 'Phylaxis Society' was established in the mid-1970's as a research Society for Prince Hall Masons and it is understood that its work and publications are of a high quality.

THE ISSUES FOR RECOGNITION

Previous episodes of recognition

It appears that, from the beginnings of the American Civil War, when Black Americans earned their emancipation, Prince Hall Grand Lodges have been seeking mutual recognition with their Caucasian counter-parts.

While Masonic recognition has been largely withheld by Caucasian Grand Lodges in the United States, Prince Hall Grand Lodges attained formal recognition from Grand Lodges in Germany, France, Italy, Hungary, Peru and the Dominican Republic during the 1860's. This recognition was repelled by Caucasian Masons in the United States, who regarded this as an intrusion on their prerogatives.

In at least one instance recognition was indirect. The United Grand Lodge of England was in fraternal communication with the Grand Lodge of Liberia, itself sympathetically disposed towards the Prince Hall Grand Lodges, for a considerable period.

In 1898, the Grand Lodge of Washington approved a report by a committee set up to inquire into Prince Hall Masonry, which declared Prince Hall masonry to be legitimate, asserted that it would recognise all Masons made in Prince Hall Lodges and stated that the established Prince Hall Lodges and Grand Lodge were no intrusion on its jurisdiction.

In response 16 Caucasian Grand Lodges declared non-intercourse with this Grand Lodge and the episode unleashed a major storm, which earned little credit for Freemasonry in general.

In 1947, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts adopted a report of a special committee declaring that Prince Hall Masonry was as legitimate as the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts itself. The Grand Lodges of Florida and Texas severed relations and the grand Lodge of California threatened similar action. The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts rescinded its former resolution in 1949.

Current progress

The essence of the problem is whether to join with Prince Hall Lodges rather than ignore or undermine them. Various actions have been taken.

* The Grand Lodge of Connecticut was the first to move in recent times and gave visiting privileges to Prince Hall Masons.

* The Grand Lodge of Nebraska gave full recognition.

* In 1977, the Grand Lodge of South Africa accepted two Lodges accommodating 40 coloured Freemasons, who completely severed their former association with the unrecognised Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

* The position of the Grand Lodge of Alberta is reported to be that Prince Hall Masons would have to sever all ties with Prince Hall Masonry and take all three degrees in their Lodges.

In May 1992 the Board of General Purposes of the Grand Lodge of England reported that the (Caucasian) Grand Lodges of

- * Connecticut,
- * Wisconsin,
- * Nebraska,
- * State of Washington,
- * Colorado,
- * Minnesota,
- * North Dakota and
- * Idaho

were intervisiting with Prince Hall Lodges and it is also reported that

- * Virginia,
- * Rhode Island,
- * Quebec,
- * Ontario and
- * Saskatchewan

are considering their position.

There are two basic factors involved in recognition, namely

- * visitation and
- * fraternal relations with exchange of representation.

It is understood that Colorado, Minnesota, North Dakota, Connecticut and Wisconsin have extended visitation rights only and that Nebraska, Washington and Idaho have extended full recognition.

Reactions from third party Grand Lodges to these recognitions range from strong support to equally strong condemnation leading to edicts being issued against those Grand Lodges granting recognition. The wording of these edicts can be confusing and are sometimes liable to different interpretations.

The retaliatory actions taken against Grand Lodges who recognise Prince Hall Lodges can vary as illustrated by the following examples:-

* It is understood that the edicts issued by the Grand Lodge of England against the eight Grand Lodges with inter-visitation with Prince Hall Lodges mean that English Masons must ascertain that no Prince Hall Mason is present at the same time as he visits a Lodge in these jurisdictions. Brethren from these jurisdictions can visit English Lodges. This may have been changed to stop English Masons visiting these jurisdictions (but not the reverse).

* The Grand Lodge of California does not recognise Prince Hall Lodges but permits its members to sit with any person recognised by any Grand Lodge which it recognises.

* The Grand Lodge of Louisiana severed fraternal relations with the Grand Lodge of Connecticut in 1989/90 but restored them in 1990/91.

While these recent retaliatory actions should not be regarded as being particularly severe, there is still a considerable potential for severe disharmony.

The deliberations of the Committee on Foreign Correspondence of the Grand Lodge of New South Wales are not published but judging from the warning in a recent *New South Wales Freemason* and the article in *The Tasmanian Freemason*, it is understood that the matter may be under consideration in Australasia.

Regularity of Origin

In view of all the evidence, it is hard to concede that the initial Prince Hall Grand Lodge was regular in origin although African Lodge must be considered so. However, we are in harmony today with the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, whose historic beginnings were very similar and should be accorded no preferred status on historical grounds. This fact was recognised by the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts in its 1947 report.

The principle of regularity of origin places weight on the beginnings of a Lodge rather than what it is currently. It is, in several respects, a remnant of our feudal past and reflects the historic importance of birth-right in property law etc. It is similar to the principle of Apostolic Succession adopted by some Christian Churches, whereby the authority of a Priest derives directly in succession from Saint Paul by virtue of the 'laying on of hands' ceremony.

While it cannot be taken lightly and must be considered to be one of our ancient landmarks, it does not derive, as far as the author can understand, from any great humanitarian principle but simply derives from our traditional past. It should then, in the author's view, give way when principles of greater humanitarian significance are at stake.

There must be a method of granting recognition which over-rides these problems of historical regularity or at least considers them to be of less importance. Surely the most relevant questions are - 'Are they good Masons?' - 'Do they reflect Freemasonry's principles today?'

The doctrine of exclusive jurisdiction.

The expectation that a single Grand Lodge should have exclusive jurisdiction over a particular geographic area, usually a civil jurisdiction such as a State or Nation, largely originated in the United States of America but was not widely fulfilled until about the 1880's. It began as a serious proposition after the American Civil War between the States and arose partly from the difficulties caused by the disbanding of the military Lodges of that time. It is now strictly held as a doctrine in the United States and is an underpinning for discipline regarding acceptable ritual and practises.

The presence of both Caucasian Grand Lodges and Prince Hall Grand Lodges in many States of America is a direct confrontation to this principle.

Our United Grand Lodge of New South Wales adheres to this principle rather more strictly than in some other Australian States. In South Australia, for instance, the Duke of Leinster Lodge works under a charter from the Grand Lodge of Ireland in harmony with the Grand Lodge of South Australia. There are other similar instances in Australia but not in New South Wales.

While the United Grand Lodge of New South Wales is well established in this principle, there are troubles in other Masonic bodies in New South Wales. A local Knights Templar Preceptory owing allegiance to the Grand Preceptory of Scotland and in harmony with the Grand Preceptory of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, has been contemplating sponsoring a second Preceptory of the Grand Preceptory of Scotland in New South Wales. While one local Scot Preceptory may be considered

acceptable as an historic anomaly and a welcome opportunity to observe another ritual, two stretches the friendship and this has been made quite plain.

Therefore, if we recognize a Prince Hall Grand Lodge in the same State of America as we recognize a Caucasian Grand Lodge, then we undermine the doctrine of exclusive jurisdiction to which we adhere in other ways. It could also be said that, by continuing to recognise the Grand Lodge of Connecticut, which recognises the Prince Hall Grand Lodge in its area of jurisdiction, we are being inconsistent.

If we wished to adhere to this doctrine, we must ask ourselves if it could be acceptable to subdivide the Masonic jurisdiction along racial lines and award recognition of exclusive jurisdiction over African-American people to the Prince Hall Grand Lodge in any State of America.

Perhaps the doctrine of exclusive jurisdiction is not worth the trouble. After all, this doctrine, although useful for some purposes, is really just an administrative convenience. It is not one of our ancient landmarks and it also does not derive from any great humanitarian principle comparable with the principle of racial equality.

Racial militancy

One potentially controversial issue is the degree to which Prince Hall Freemasons have been militant in racial politics in America. However much we may regret the need for our fellow Masons to be involved in racial politics, we still must not condone any improper use of Freemasonry as a political weapon.

Nevertheless, the issue of racial equality is a very fundamental landmark of our order. There can be no compromise with this basic issue and it is for us to decide the degree to which our members should be militant in pursuing it.

There can be no doubt that Prince Hall Masons have been militant in the cause of racial equality and that they have had a major influence in helping the African-American men of America in their rather unequal struggle for social recognition and justice in the past.

Prince Hall is credited as the author of petitions to the Senate and House of Representatives of Massachusetts to abolish slavery. Another member, Prince Saunders, one-time special envoy to England from Haiti, Attorney General of Haiti and lay-preacher in St Thomas Episcopal Church, Boston, took an active part in anti-slavery conventions.

James Forten was President of Philadelphia's Moral Reform Society. Peter Vogelsang was a member of the Phoenix Society, a Negro self-improvement organisation founded in New York. Richard Allen was the founder and first Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and is reported to have '*regarded the Negro as an oppressed minority who needs an aggressive leadership in order to achieve its emancipation*'.

Martin R. Delany, who was the first Black man to be promoted to the rank of Major in the United States Army, was a Black separatist, who proposed re-colonisation of Africa and was an advocate for violence against slave-catchers.

It is further reported that many Prince Hall Lodges were way-stations for the 'Underground Railroad', which assisted escaped slaves to reach emancipated States where they could lawfully evade re-capture and return to their owners under the Federal Fugitive Slave Law of 1850.

Is it wrong for Freemasons to engage in these activities or are they to be applauded for pursuing vigorously the issue of equality between all men?

How is a distinction to be drawn between a man as an individual, with all his desires for equality of rights, and as a Freemason, with his adherence with the principle that we 'meet on the level'.

Military Lodges

Prince Hall Freemasonry has a proud history of military Lodges dating back to the War of Independence and the American Civil War. It still sponsors military Lodges with travelling warrants and in 1976 it was reported that there were more than 60 military Lodges located in Asia, England, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, Italy, Taiwan, Thailand, Japan, Korea, Guam, The Philippines, and wherever the United States maintains a military presence.

Prince Hall military Lodges are forbidden to make 'town' Masons or initiate anyone who is not a soldier. They can exist only with the approval of their commanding officer and must so conduct themselves as not to give offence to the Masonic authority of the place or country where the unit is currently located. They must surrender their warrant when the unit disbands but may seek to renew the warrant if sufficient members continue to reside in any one place.

Military Lodges in the Caucasian system have been considered to be a problem in a variety of ways since the American Civil War and their rapid abolition in America after this war was part of the means by which State Grand Lodges established and secured their exclusive jurisdiction.

It is doubtful if the Prince Hall regulations for military Lodges would be considered to carry sufficient safeguards to convince many Grand Lodges that they could work side-by-side with them even today.

As a purely hypothetical example, consider the case where a Prince Hall military Lodge initiated a civilian employee attached to their unit, which was temporarily located in Sydney. It is doubtful if the relevant Prince Hall Grand Lodge could or would act on any complaint made by our Grand Lodge. It is doubtful if our Grand Lodge would make a complaint if that inferred recognition. In such an example, at present our Grand Lodge would undoubtedly require such an initiate to be re-initiated if he wished to continue his Masonry in Sydney after the military Lodge re-located.

THE OPTIONS FOR RECOGNITION

There are, therefore, three options for recognition as follows:-

- * A complete merger of interests or
- * Recognition of Masonic sub-jurisdiction by race or
- * Unconditional recognition.

Merger

It is to be hoped that the long-term eventual objective will be for a total merger of Prince Hall and Caucasian Grand Lodges in each State of America and elsewhere. This objective would express the principles of Freemasonry to the fullest extent. It would permit the retention of the doctrine of exclusive jurisdiction, at least at the level of Grand Lodge jurisdiction if not in towns. There are, however, a number of problems with this option:-

* Many Prince Hall Masons believe that they can best act for African-American men in America as they alone fully understand the problems facing their race. They are not convinced that they would be as credible or as free to act under any merged system of Freemasonry.

* It is not at all clear that both parties in each State want a merger which would subjugate their own individual rights for the good of both.

* There is no America-wide Masonic body with jurisdiction to represent all Grand Lodges so that each State must make its own way. Similarly, Royal Arch, Scottish Rite, Templars and Shriners have their own Masonic jurisdictions, which are not necessarily organised on the same boundaries. It would be too much to hope that both sides in all, or even most, of these jurisdictions would prefer merger and, although some may accept that they may be in a minority, most would want to achieve the same result as the majority.

The realities are that a merger in any State is very improbable in the short term at least. It is doubtful if it is even accepted as an objective. Instead the current discussions are, I understand, aimed simply towards mutual recognition with visitation.

Recognition of Masonic sub-jurisdiction by race

If a merger is not possible, mutual recognition must be resolved in the context of the doctrine of exclusive jurisdiction. Either this doctrine must be abandoned or recognition must carry a sub-jurisdictional character based on Prince Hall Grand Lodges being responsible for African-American Masons in any State. This would be, in fact, a tacit recognition of the existing system except that visitation would be acceptable. There are several further problems or conditions which need to be considered with this option:-

* It does little to provide a real incentive for resolving racial differences except providing the dignity of recognition and visitation rights to both sides. It may perpetuate and accentuate racial separation in conflict with the basic principle of racial equality and harmony.

* The problem of sub-jurisdiction over African-American people must recognise that there is at least one Lodge of African-American Masons in the Caucasian system (Alpha Lodge under the Grand Lodge of New Jersey) and many individual African-American Masons in other Lodges. In addition there was at one time one Lodge of Caucasian Masons under the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of New York. While one would assume that no-one would necessarily change allegiance as a direct result of recognition, problems could arise in future if, say, Alpha Lodge wished to sponsor a sister African-American Lodge under the Grand Lodge of New Jersey.

* There are other quasi-Masonic African-American Grand Lodges in America not owing allegiance to the Prince Hall Grand Lodges (for instance the John C. Jones Grand Lodges, which also operate in several States). In any one State they may have a more valid claim to recognition than their Prince Hall counterparts.

Unconditional recognition.

The simplest option is unconditional mutual recognition with visitation rights and with no reference to jurisdictional problems. This still has problems as follows:-

* It also does little to provide a real incentive for resolving racial differences except providing the dignity of recognition and visitation rights to both sides. It should not, however, make racial separation any worse than it is now.

* The doctrine of exclusive jurisdiction would be virtually abandoned but might be retained as far as geographic boundaries are concerned in some States. This should be no worse than coexistence with Lodges from the Irish or Scottish Constitutions in other States in Australia.

* Prince Hall Freemasonry still sponsors military Lodges which aggravate the problem faced by Caucasian Grand Lodges in relinquishing exclusive jurisdiction. They are proud of their military Lodges and would not relinquish them lightly but expect Caucasian Grand Lodges to recognise them also.

* If a complete merger is accepted as the ultimate objective, one of the problems is to decide whether unconditional mutual recognition with visitation rights will be a viable stepping-stone on the path towards it. One would hope so but it may simply prolong negotiations, giving the more conservative members what they want and removing their incentive for further progress.

It is this option which, it is understood, is making progress at present.

CONCLUSION

There can be no peace of mind for anyone trying to establish the Masonic regularity of the origins of Prince Hall Freemasonry in general although African Lodge should be acknowledged as being regular. The best that can be said on the whole issue of regularity of origin is that these origins were no more or less irregular than other Grand Lodges which we fully recognise, but this itself is worth saying as it establishes a basis in equity for recognition.

We should also acknowledge that regularity of origin is important. It is one of our ancient landmarks. However, it does not derive from any significant humanitarian principle - just from our historical past. It should not, in the author's view, be accorded so much importance that it alone prevents recognition of these fellow Masons.

If we ask 'are they good Masons?', inside the Lodge there is no evidence that their Masonic practices are in any major way different from our own. Outside the Lodge there can be no doubt that Prince Hall

Freemasonry has had a major influence in helping the African-American men of America in their rather unequal struggle for social recognition and justice in the past and is still doing so.

As to be expected their efforts are directed towards the African-American people of the United States as part of the wider community. This often means racial militancy and raises the question of the extent to which Freemasonry can be used as a political instrument to promote the principle of racial equality.

Race relations in the United States of America today are in a dangerous state with major riots against social injustice becoming frequent. Freemasonry has had a decided influence at other times in the history of this great nation and it is capable of playing a very important mediating role now. While there may be limits on the manner in which Freemasonry can act to help resolve these problems, few Masons would argue that it is not a legitimate aim for Freemasonry to try to do so. In accepting this proposition, we must accept that African-American racial militancy will be an outcome and this should be understood fully and sympathetically by Caucasian Masons.

The doctrine of exclusive jurisdiction has been a stumbling block in the past but it really is only a matter of administrative convenience. It is not one of our ancient landmarks and it does not derive from any great humanitarian principle comparable with the principle of racial equality. It should never stand in the way of mutual dialogue between African-American and Caucasian Masons.

While the most obvious objective is to seek to merge the interests of Prince Hall and Caucasian Freemasonry in America, this does not seem to be possible, at least in the short term, and mutual recognition with visitation seems to be the direction of current progress.

There is little opportunity for delay in decision. If the issue is not resolved, there will be individual Grand Lodges giving recognition to a Prince Hall Grand Lodge and there may be Grand Lodges which refuse to be in fraternal relations with those giving that recognition. While it appears that retaliatory action of this kind is, as yet, muted, it is by no means certain that this will continue to be the case.

The issue for us in New South Wales is no less important and difficult. We have our own issues of racial inequality here but they have not challenged Freemasonry in the same way. One might hope that we do not wait too long and run the risk of being thought to be unsympathetic to racial issues. It is also to be hoped that we do not act too quickly or in such a way as to provoke the wrong sort of retaliatory action against ourselves or against our African-American fellow human beings.

Could we resolve our own attitudes to recognition in the face of the remaining resistance from some Caucasian Grand Lodges in the United States with whom we are in harmony?. Should we continue to recognise Grand Lodges which positively discriminate against African-American men?

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This paper was subsequently presented to the Research Lodge of New South Wales No.971, where the following comments were made:

Wor. Bro. A. M. Sharp P.M.

This paper, headed simply 'Prince Hall Freemasonry', should have been titled 'The Recognition of Prince Hall Freemasonry' because that is what it is about — *recognition*.

I am surprised and somewhat upset, Worshipful Master, because this Lodge has devoted two meetings, in the past four months, to papers dealing with the recognition of one Grand Body by another. Recognition is a matter for Grand Lodge, and that is where it should stay.

I was shocked to read on p.104, para.4, 'The paper does not purport to present any new information and is based on only a small part of the available literature' That is not a good enough base for any paper to be presented to a Research Lodge, let alone this one.

I was further surprised when after reading as part of the preamble that the paper had been presented to The Canberra Lodge of Research and Instruction more than a year ago, to find that it still contained the same mistakes when presented this evening as it did then.

On p.107, para.3, reference is made to a 'schism' in the Premier Grand Lodge, founded in 1717 and known as the 'Moderns'. If this is intended to indicate that the lodges which in 1751 formed the Grand Lodge of England according to the Old Institutions (the Antients) had broken away from the 'Moderns', then schism is the wrong word. Henry Sadler in his *Masonic Facts and Fictions* published in 1887

showed, to the satisfaction of all serious masonic students, that the 'Antients' was not a break-away body from the 'Moderns' but was formed by the coming together of lodges which had always remained outside the control of the 'Moderns'. I believed that the schism theory had been well and truly buried but apparently such is not the case.

On p.109, 5th para, we read "It is, in any case, hard to conceive how the Grand Lodge(s) in London could grant recognition to others, at least before their own unity in 1813 . . ." Details of the reciprocal recognition between the 'Moderns' and the *Grande Loge* in France in 1768, well before the Union of 1813, were given on p.91 of the Transactions of this Lodge issued under date of 13 September 1993. It should be noted that the reference quoted in para.4, line 2 of that reply is incorrect and should read *The Freemason's Pocket Reference Book* and not *The Pocket History of Freemasonry*.

On p.114, para 5, we read, 'It [The doctrine of exclusive jurisdiction] is not one of our ancient landmarks . . .' If it is *not* one of them I wonder if Bro. Nairn will tell us please, what *are* our landmarks?

R.W.Bro. John A. Bieshevel, PSGW, J.W.

Firstly, I must congratulate Wor. Bro. Nairn on the subject matter of his paper. It is a very difficult subject indeed and in my opinion typical American, although the United Grand Lodge of England has a great deal to answer for.

Since I was first given this paper not long after it was delivered at the Canberra Lodge of Research and Instruction in August 1992, I have become very interested in the subject of Prince Hall Masonry, which I must confess, I only knew vaguely about before I read Wor. Bro. Nairn's paper.

Many brethren are saying that Masonry cannot survive long after the year 2000 because of lack of candidates etc. I don't subscribe to that theory but let me say this, the way we are handling this Prince Hall business could well become the downfall of our Craft.

Also I do not necessarily agree with Bro. Bob that we cannot allow a Prince Hall Mason to visit our Lodges because we are in amity with American Lodges whose constitution reads, " A candidate for the degrees of Freemasonry must be a white man". Surely we also recognise American Lodges who do not have this despicable clause in their rules.

Another point I must differ with Bob is where he says " It must be stressed that it is not due to racial prejudice" on the contrary I think it is very much an American racial problem, one that most certainly has no place in New South Wales.

As far back as 1885 a prominent Mason of the day, Brother General Albert Pike wrote " I took my obligation to white men, not to negroes. When I have to accept negroes as Brothers or leave Masonry, I shall leave it. "

Also there does not seem to be as much objection to Prince Hall Masonry in the Northern States as there is in the Southern States, again a strong reflection of racialism.

The Grand Lodge of England has a great deal to answer for with regards to Prince Hall Masonry, as they, as now is acknowledged, mistakenly struck the Lodge from its register in 1813.

A suspicious mind may well ask, was it done in error or is there more behind it ? Why is it that today in 1993. one hundred and eighty years later they still cling to that original decision ?

After all it has been acknowledged that they acted hastily and in error. Is it because of fear that they may upset the American Doctrine of Exclusive Jurisdiction ? Most certainly not. That doctrine has never been accepted by the British Grand Lodges.

At a meeting held on April 11, 1991, in the Grand Lodge building at Boston, Massachusetts, and called by R.W.Bro. M.B.S. Higham, Grand secretary of the United Grand Lodge of England, and was attended by

Past Grand Masters of Colorado, Washington, Connecticut, Wisconsin, Nebraska and others, Higham thanked all present to assist the English Brethren to understand the matter of recognition of Prince Hall Masonry.

There he explained, what was of concern to him was:

" Lawful establishment", " Regularity ", and believe it or not, the " Sharing of Jurisdiction ".

About regularity, M.W.Bro. Wood, PGM Washington, made the following observation.

“Mother Kilwinning Lodge of Scotland had warranted at least 50 lodges, all of whom are now recognised by the Grand Lodge England. Lodge Fredericksberg of Virginia in which Wor.Bro. George Washington was Initiated, Passed and Raised, an un-warranted Lodge, which started another lodge and together with another Lodge, formed the Grand Lodge of Virginia, which is universally recognised. Many United States Grand Lodges their origin to the Grand Lodge of Virginia and all of which are recognised by England.

After considerable discussion PGM Tye (Nebraska) expressed Prince Hall Grand Lodges have a better pedigree than any Grand Lodge in the United States and that England should apply their standards equally

However, not long after this meeting in Boston. on June 12, 1991, an edict was issued by England for brethren not to visit lodges in North America who allow Prince Hall Masons at their assemblies.

Terms being used by opponents of Prince Hall Masonry are: "Clandestine", "Irregular ".

In Masonic jargon, Clandestine means, “without legitimate origin.” Irregular means, "not Subscribing to the Ancient Landmarks". In either case it does not apply to Prince Hall Masonry.

Brethren, this whole business of Prince Hall Masonry is a sorry state of affairs, and has most definitely no place in our Craft, especially today.

After some 200 years of bickering I feel it is about time the Masons in the U.S.A., with the assistance of the United Grand Lodge of England get their act together, and put into practice the system of Universal Brotherly Love and affection for fellow Masons, regardless of colour, creed or religion.

In my view the solution is simple.

LET THOSE THAT WISH TO RECOGNISE PRINCE HALL MASONRY DO SO.
THOSE THAT DO NOT WISH TO GRANT RECOGNITION, DO NOT.

Without any repercussion of withdrawal of recognition or edicts of rights of visitations by brethren, and the immediate cancellation of all bans and clauses against those who wish to recognise Prince Hall Masonry.

This formula of course to be applied only to the Prince Hall Masonic Order.

Prince Hall Masonry has been with us for many years and will be with us for many more years. They do not wish to be assimilated with other Grand Lodges. Prince Hall Masons are as proud of their heritage as we are of ours. Rather than working against each other towards destruction, let us work together for the good of all masons and a truly Masonic Brotherhood regardless of the colour of ones skin.

Finally, W.M., I again wish to thank Wor. Brother Nairn for the time and effort he has put into this work and in furthering my own Masonic education.

Wor. Bro. W. G. Taylor

My sincere thanks to Worshipful Brother Nairn for sending me a copy of this interesting paper.

It was with a feeling akin to shock to know that officially we could not admit Prince Hall Masons to our Lodges.

It would seem to me in contradiction of our professed principles that all Masons are brothers, whatever their race.

As to the origins - it seems to me most likely that Prince Hall and his Brethren were conned by John Batt using an "exposure" to make them "Masons" for a suitable/unsuitable fee.

The regularity of Prince Hall seems to me irrelevant after this lapse of time and having regard to the widespread establishment of Prince Hall Masonry both in the Craft and its penetration into other Orders including the Eastern Star

The reluctance of Prince Hall Masons to unite with Caucasian Grand Lodges probably stems from the fact that they feel they can do more to upgrade the status of the black man in America while they retain their independence.

We can only hope that in the future the universality of the Order will apply also to all African-American Masons.

As Worshipful Brother Alan Sharp has pointed out the question of recognition may best be left to Grand Lodges. I sense from what has been said that moves are afoot to establish such recognition, painful and tardy though they may be.

V.W.Bro. J. C. Alvarez, W.M.

Although the existence of Prince Hall Masonry is almost entirely unknown to most Freemasons in this Jurisdiction, the emerging problem of recognition of this organization by some Grand Lodges in the United States and the repercussions that it may bring to the U.G.L. of NSW warranted that a comprehensive paper such as this be submitted to the Research Lodge for the general information of the Brethren in NSW. For this, I would like to thank Bro. Nairn for presenting tonight a very detailed paper and for his efforts in researching such a difficult subject.

At the present time very few people are in a position to effect original research on Prince Hall, nor on the Negro lodges at their source. We do not have access to records of primary research, and the sources of secondary information in this matter are of not much use, as the information gathered varies greatly depending upon the source. It is the simple case of discussion generating more heat than light.

If any one is going to attempt any research at all for the purpose of considering some kind of recognition for this Body, will have to content himself with merely listing the documented facts regarding Prince Hall Masonry in the United States and endeavour not to make any assertions based on reports by any Official Body or by way of their proceedings, which cannot be proven.

The documented facts are that all Coloured Grand Lodges in the United States attempt to trace their origin back to African Lodge No.459, chartered by the Grand Lodge of England on 29th September, 1784, (this number being changed to No 370 in 1793.)

There was a delay in delivering the Charter. It arrived in Boston on 29th April, 1787, and African Lodge No 459 started to work on 6th May, 1787.

This Lodge was apparently dropped from the Grand Lodge of England Roster for failure to pay into the Grand Charity Fund. There were only four payments made to the Grand Lodge Charity Fund by African Lodge No 459 (No 370); in the years 1789, 1792, 1793, and 1797.

In 1813, when the Moderns and the Antients formed the United Grand Lodge of England, the lodges were renumbered, and many lodges were not included on the new Roll, but it was provided that in cases of error any omitted lodge could apply later.

If any application was made by African Lodge, then No 370, it is not known to us. There are claims that a Committee of this African Lodge wrote a letter to the United Grand Lodge of England on 5th January, 1824, requesting a renewal on its charter, and for authority to confer the Royal Arch Degrees. Once again, to our knowledge there is no evidence that the letter was answered. This evidence may remain within the records of the United Grand Lodge of England and perhaps available only through the Grand Secretariat.

As a matter of further interest, on 15th June, 1827, the Boston Advertiser published a "*Declaration*" headed "*African Lodge No. 459*" stating that the Lodge was "*declaring ourselves free from the government and control of our Mother Grand Lodge of England . . . or any other lodges whatsoever.*" It then stated that they were free from the Charter issued by the Grand Lodge of England, and "*do create . . . African Grand Lodge No. 1.*"

Even taking into consideration the lack of learning of the times, please note the two very visible discrepancies in the preceding paragraphs, where the "Declaration" refers to African Lodge No 459, when in fact was renumbered No 370 from 1793, and the reference to the Grand Lodge of England when it was then The United Grand Lodge of England from 1813.

Unfortunately, the situation is extremely complicated. One is not only dealing with the legitimacy or regularity of the Negro Lodges, but with several factors emerging after more than two centuries of upheavals.

The overall picture must also be considered and the repercussions that any action taken by this Grand Lodge may have in the relationship with other Grand Lodges in particular and worldwide Freemasonry in general.

Another element to be observed, is to be absolutely certain that any decision taken will not be lightly reversed, which may prove detrimental to relations with Sister Jurisdictions.

An overview of the situation will reveal that at present it is a problem confined to North America, involving American and some Canadian Grand Lodges, with the exception perhaps, of the U.G.L. of England, who were instrumental in the creation of Prince Hall Masonry.

To aggravate the situation, the U.G.L. of England has since 1813, consistently taken the position that the Prince Hall Organization is not legitimate.

Another complex situation arose; not only as to the regularity of Prince Hall Masonry, but to the American Doctrine of "Exclusive Territorial Jurisdiction", where only one Grand Lodge can operate legally in one geographical area.

This rule is not a Masonic Landmark, and it is sometimes labelled as an American innovation. It was announced as early as 1759, and the adoption of such a rule was to keep other Grand Lodges of Foreign Countries from chartering Lodges in the U.S.A.. In actual fact, this doctrine has been one of the stumbling blocks in the recognition of Prince Hall.

Prince Hall itself chartered lodges in South Africa, but those lodges have now returned their Charters to Prince Hall to become part of the Regular Grand Lodge of South Africa.

The Prince Hall Organization have other problems with what they call "Bogus" Masonic Groups. In South Dakota, Prince Hall Lodges are under the control of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Minnesota, formed in 1894. In Minnesota there is also a "North Star Grand Lodge" which is part of a Coloured Group calling itself masonic and known as the National Grand Lodge, having had its origin from the original Prince Hall Masonry.

This National Grand Lodge has about 28 Grand Lodges in various States, (Unconfirmed report), all originating from within Prince Hall in 1847. It was formed on 24th June, 1847, by John Hilton, when he called a Convention of Coloured Masonic Groups. For many years, this National Grand Lodge was the dominant Coloured Masonic Organization in the United States.

As this Group can rightfully claim equal status as Prince Hall, one can only envisage a most unpleasant situation if Grand Lodges decide to make premature decisions in recognizing Prince Hall.

The problem of recognition is a complex one. Many of the recognized Grand Lodges still have unsettled opinions regarding the recognition of each other, as do the Coloured Grand Lodges among themselves

There are several other groups of Coloured Grand Lodges which have ties neither with those just mentioned, nor with each other. Prefixes such as "Widow's Sons", "Sons of Light", "Hiram of Tyre", and "King Solomon Grand Lodge of New York" with Lodges in more than one State.

This King Solomon Grand Lodge with Headquarters in New York's Harlem has warranted at least a Lodge in London, and the United Grand Lodge England has warned its members against masonic contacts with these Lodges. The warning extends to the Royal Arch members because, associated with the London Lodge, there is a Chapter claimed to have been chartered by the oddly-styled "Grand Chapter of Texas and Canada" which would no doubt admit to being of the "King Solomon" affiliation.

Up-to-date and reliable lists of these groups, their associated Grand Lodges and their daughter-lodges under each are difficult to obtain.

An unfortunate situation exists between the Grand Lodge of Oregon and the Grand Lodge of Idaho. In June, 1992, the Grand Lodge of Oregon withdrew recognition of the Grand Lodge of Idaho because the Idaho Grand Lodge recognized a Prince Hall Lodge in the State of Idaho, but under the control of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Oregon. The Grand Lodge of Oregon insisted that the Grand Lodge of Idaho, by recognizing a Lodge under the control of Oregon's Prince Hall, even if the Lodge was situated in Idaho, territory, by definition is recognizing the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Oregon, which they do not recognize.

At present, the following Grand Lodges in U.S.A. recognize Prince Hall Grand Lodges within their own Jurisdiction; Colorado, Idaho, North Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Washington, Wisconsin, and Connecticut.

All these Grand Lodges are in amity with each other, and Connecticut is in the process of extending recognition to all Prince Hall Grand Lodges that are currently recognized by Sister Jurisdictions.

The Grand Lodge of Washington reported in its 1991 Annual Proceedings, that seven more Grand Lodges will probably extend recognition within a year or two, but failed to name those Grand Lodges. It also reported that the Grand Lodges now recognizing Prince Hall met recently in Boston to meet with the Grand Secretary and the Chairman of the Board of General Purposes of the U.G.L. of England. It was the general consensus of this meeting that within five years, a majority of the North American Jurisdictions will recognize Prince Hall within their respective States.

The Conference of Grand Masters of Canada determined in 1992, that Prince Hall Masons were regular and deserving of recognition. Since that time, the Grand Lodges of Quebec and Prince Edward Island have recognized Prince Hall Masons, presumably within their own Jurisdictions.

All the facts regarding recognition of Prince Hall Masonry have been analysed from the point of view of the Caucasian Grand Lodges, but one can only wonder if some of the Prince Hall members are in complete accord with the movement towards recognition. It is quite feasible that a few of them may have taken the position to continue along the separate path they have travelled in the past two hundred years.

Finally, as seen by previous comments, this is a very complicated subject with side issues, many of which have not been fully explored. If I have any suggestion to make to Bro. Nairn, it would be to maintain a low level of research, unless it can be made where the events took place and/or with ample access to original and genuine documents. Some of the original documents have been tampered with and are therefore full of discrepancies.

I am sure that some very interesting documents could be found in the archives of the United Grand Lodge of England as this Grand Lodge was part of the initial involvement in the creation of Prince Hall Masonry.

I would like to add that as a precautionary measure, our Grand Lodge could advise Brethren intending to visit lodges in the United States, Canada, and perhaps England, to obtain the latest information from the Grand Secretary.