

FREEMASONRY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Introduction

Much has been written about the role Freemasons played in the early history of the United States of America - so much that it is sometimes difficult to focus on the history of the Order itself. Freemasonry in the United States spanned through a period of considerable change in Masonic practices and, as a result, American Freemasonry has a character of its own. This is expressed in the profusion of independent Grand Lodges and different rituals, a propensity for public witness, an emphasis on egalitarianism and a particular regard for Constitutional matters.

The survival and growth of Freemasonry in the United States, despite hardships, is a courageous story. It is a story of controversy, civil persecution and racial segregation. It tells of the breakdown of feudal practices and a search for democratic independence, constitutional regularity and individual rights in Freemasonry. It is a story of a remarkable group of people over three centuries. Like all human institutions, it also has some problems left unresolved.

This paper also attempts to assess the effects that American Masonic history has had on Freemasonry in general. It was estimated some time ago that about 80 percent of the World's Freemasons live in North America and it would be strange if their influence on the Craft was not considerable. Indeed their activities have had a considerable effect on World Freemasonry and current events have a potential to be just as profound.

Early Masonic activity in North America

While one eminent Masonic historian, J.F.Gould, claims that a Masonic Lodge worked in Newport, Rhode Island, from 1658 to 1742, it is generally agreed the John Skene, who settled in New Jersey in 1682, was the first Freemason in America. However some accord this privilege to Jonathon Belcher, a Bostonian, who was initiated in England in 1704 and returned to Boston in 1705 to assume the Governorship of Massachusetts and New Hampshire in 1730. There was no shortage of Freemasons in the early American colonies. Sir William Keith, Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania from 1717 to 1726 was a Mason and later Junior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of England. He was succeeded by fellow-Mason Patrick Gordon, who was Governor of Pennsylvania from 1726 until his death in 1736.

The earliest accepted report of otherwise undocumented Masonic meetings in America related to those held in King's Chapel, Boston in 1720. There is no formal record of a Lodge being formed, indeed, it would be unusual if records did exist from those days. References to '*several Lodges of Free-Masons erected in this Province*' appeared in a series of articles in the 'Pennsylvania Gazette' in December 1730, published by Benjamin Franklin, and the earliest documented records of a Lodge in America are for the 'Sun Tavern' Lodge meeting in Philadelphia from 1731. It is recorded that Franklin was made a member in 1731.

The first Provincial Grand Master in North America

In 1721 the newly formed Grand Lodge of England passed a regulation that no Lodge could be considered regular without a Warrant from the Grand Master, although by

1723 it had only attempted to extend its control over all lodges 'within ten miles of London'. In 1726 it appointed its first Provincial Grand Masters and by 1728 it had constituted Lodges in Bengal, Gibraltar and Madrid. By 1730 eleven Provincial Grand Masters had been appointed, five in England and six overseas, mainly in Britain's Colonies.

While it would be many years before all Lodges in Britain brought themselves under the wing of the London Grand Lodge, there was early recognition of the desirability of compliance with this regulation in North America, where Masons from 'time immemorial' Lodges soon sought to obtain regular 'deputations' from duly authorised persons and be in full harmony with brethren elsewhere, although some confusion arose about how this was achieved.

The first North American to be granted a deputation was Daniel Coxe, when, in 1730, the Grand Master deputed him as Provincial Grand Master for New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania for a period of two years. It is claimed by Pennsylvanian sources that this deputation was only the third granted by the Grand Master of England, granted the widest powers of any deputation issued by the Grand Master and is the earliest record of a deputation for Provincial Grand Master still in existence, however interest in this document is not confined to these precedents alone.

Colonel Daniel Coxe was a very successful land-owner and was active politically in Pennsylvania, being a member of the Governor's Council and chairing the Council of Proprietors. He was attributed as having drawn up the first plans for an American Union of States in 1722, in order to offset the potential for French aggression. However, in his relationship to some of the various Governors under which he served, it would be meaningful to draw parallels between Coxe and Australia's McArthur, another Freemason, and controversy surrounds the man as well as his early contribution to North America's Masonic history.

The first Grand Lodge in North America

Masonic controversy exists because there is no record of Coxe forming a Grand Lodge, or appointing Grand Lodge officers or corresponding with Lodges in these States with the intention of issuing deputations to them or bringing them together within the regular orbit of the Grand Lodge of England. He made no returns to the Grand Lodge of England as required by his deputation. Nevertheless the Grand Secretary, having made a search in 1870 to confirm these facts, stated that it was rare for reports of this type to be made.

Even in those days it is difficult to believe that a Grand Lodge could be said to exist if it did not carry out at least some those functions. His deputation was unusual in that it permitted the election of a successor without reference to the Grand Master and it is claimed by some that the election of William Allen as Grand Master for *Philadelphia* in 1732 was authorised by the Coxe deputation. However, it is not at all clear that Allen was a successor to Coxe under this deputation - he is referred to as Grand Master in the account books of 'St. John's Lodge of Philadelphia', a time immemorial Lodge, as early as June 24th 1731, still during the two-year currency of Coxe's appointment. Much later in 1750, Allen did apply for and receive a deputation from the Grand Master of England as Provincial Grand Master for Pennsylvania, which suggests that he doubted the regularity of his prior title and tends to undermine those holding to the Coxe lineage.

Nor is there any evidence that the '*several Lodges of Free-Masons erected in this Province*' had banded together to form a Grand Lodge in Pennsylvania, whether recognised by London or not. The petition for Coxe's Provincial Grand Master's deputation was supported '*by several other brethren ffree (sic) and accepted Masons residing and about to reside in the said Provinces*' but there is no record of other Lodges

supporting it or being chartered by Coxe under its authority. If Franklin was referring instead to Allen's Grand Lodge, there is still no evidence of others banding together to form a Grand Lodge. It is normally expected that a Grand Lodge should exist to form or to bond together the common interests of several Craft Lodges, not just one (although, in England, the Grand Lodge of England South of the River Trent 1779-89 consisted for its entire life of only one Lodge - the Lodge of Antiquity).

There is also some minor confusion about the geographic scope of Coxe's deputation, he being referred to in the minutes of the Grand Lodge of England on January 29th 1731 as 'Daniel Cox (sic) Esqr. Provincial Grand Master of *North America*'. Is it possible that the Grand Secretary's knowledge of colonial geography was that deficient? or did it simply and loosely refer to the fact that there was only one PGM in North America at that time?.

In 1732, Henry Price of Boston sailed for England with agreement from Masons in Massachusetts to request authority from the Grand Lodge in London to constitute a regular Lodge. He returned to Boston in 1733 carrying a deputation from the Grand Master appointing him Provincial Grand Master for New England. He immediately organised his Provincial Grand Lodge (referred to as St. John's Grand Lodge) and received a petition to form 'First Lodge', now called 'St. John's Lodge of Boston'. This, and the Grand Lodge, was founded on 30th July 1733. As a Grand Lodge at that time was Constituted under the PGM's deputation and as it carried out the functions normally expected of a Grand Lodge, then Massachusetts lays claim to the first duly Constituted and operating Grand Lodge in North America despite Coxe's preceding deputation.

Further, Massachusetts claims that in 1734 PGM Price's deputation was extended by London to cover all of North America. This suggests that London no longer considered the Coxe deputation to be current. The same year, according to Massachusetts sources and in apparent confirmation of the Massachusetts claim, W.Bro. Benjamin Franklin applied for and received from St. John's Grand Lodge in Boston, a deputation as Master of 'First Lodge in Pennsylvania' meeting in Philadelphia. *At this time, however, (1734) he is reported by Pennsylvanian sources to have been the Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania and a successor to Allen.* It would appear that Franklin also had doubts about the regularity of his office.

The validity of the Boston warrant is also doubtful as the claim that PGM Price's deputation from London had been extended to embrace all of North America has not been widely accepted, although by 1743 Thomas Oxnard certainly held this deputation from London for this same Saint John's Grand Lodge in Boston.

There is no doubt that William Allen, styled as Grand Master in Philadelphia, preceded Price with a Grand Master's title. The controversy is whether his Grand Lodge should be recognised as the first by virtue of the Coxe deputation, which preceded Price's, but has uncertain lineage to Allen. The claim that the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania was first in North America still remains controversial, but the weight of evidence certainly favours Massachusetts as the first Provincial Grand Lodge to act like one.

Despite this controversy, the spread of formal or 'warranted' Masonry in North America had commenced. In 1735 a Lodge was warranted by London in Savannah, Georgia, following a subscription to send distressed brethren to this colony '*where they might be comfortably provided for*'. This rapidly spread and by 1736 a Provincial Grand Master had been deputed by London for South Carolina. New York followed in 1737. The first Lodge in Canada (in Annapolis-Royal) and in the West Indies (Antigua) were constituted in 1738 under Boston's St. John's Grand Lodge.

More controversy was soon to follow, allegiances to the Grand Lodge of England would be challenged and the authority of a Grand Master's deputation would not be sufficient to bind Lodges together.

The Rival Ancient and Modern Grand Lodges

In 1751 the 'Ancients' Grand Lodge emerged in London and the initial Grand Lodge became known as the 'Moderns'. This division was echoed in 1752 in Boston where a new Lodge was formed of Masons who met at the Green Dragon Tavern '*according to the Old Customs*' and claiming adherence to traditional practices of Freemasonry more ancient than those of the London Grand Lodge.

Despite the phrasing being reminiscent of the Ancients' position, this Lodge was chartered by the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1756 and called 'Lodge of St. Andrew'. The date is of interest as it was only in 1758 that a 'strict union' was established between the Ancients and the Grand Lodge of Scotland. The first initiate after this charter arrived in Boston in 1760 was Paul Revere. It is not clear when the Ancients began chartering overseas Lodges but by 1771 they had forty-three Lodges in overseas countries.

St. Andrew's Lodge, together with three military Lodges stationed in Boston, (one chartered by the Grand Lodge of Scotland, one by the Irish Grand Lodge and one by the Ancients) petitioned the Grand Master of Scotland to form a Provincial Grand Lodge of their own and this was formed, under Provincial Grand Master Joseph Warren, in 1769 and was known as the Massachusetts Grand Lodge. There were now two Grand Lodges in Boston - Price's, under the 'Moderns' and Warren's, under Scotland.

The fact that the split in Boston occurred in 1752 so soon after London is of interest. It should be remembered that it was December 1753 before the Ancients in London appointed their first Grand Master. Clearly, although news could cross the Atlantic in about two months, similar causes for the split existed on both sides of the Atlantic.

While the rhetoric of the two parties attributed the split to the 'correctness' with which ceremonies and traditions were maintained, this is not wholly satisfactory and many other speculative reasons for the split are found in the literature. The official history of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts attributed the split in Boston to the fact that the St. John's Grand Lodge, holden under the 'moderns', admitted only gentlemen as members and '*workingmen who applied for membership in the Boston Lodges were unsuccessful*'. On the other hand, of St. Andrews' Lodge members in 1762, seven were merchants, one a physician and the remaining 29 were artisans or tradesmen.

This view of the conflict is supported in other references - for instance Franklin was initially thought by one Masonic author to have '*lacked both social and financial standing*' until he was finally admitted to the craft. It is reported that, in the first nine Lodges represented in the first minutes of the Ancients' Grand Committee there was a large Irish element '*whose members were mainly mechanics or shopkeepers*'. The harshness of life in the early colonies meant that a man's worth was judged by a more practical yardstick than his birth and, as land in many places could virtually be owned by farming it, the concept of a land-owning class was becoming meaningless. Freemasonry, which espoused the equality of all free men, was not to be restricted by class barriers. Egalitarianism is an enduring part of the American way of life and clearly influenced many early Masons to embrace the Ancients' cause.

Politics was also important. There are authors who portray the 'Moderns' in London as being influenced by Tories, politically attempting to capture Masonic loyalties to the Crown (despite reservations about the King's mental health), and opposed to the Whigs amongst whom many families might be found with Jacobite sympathies. While the Jacobite cause after Culloden (1746) was bowed and dispersed, many Scots still debated a conflict of loyalties between crown or country and many had found their way to the colonies.

The principles of 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity' were beginning to arouse and split Europe and Republican movements were beginning to grow that would soon throw off the remnants of Feudalism in France. These same principles attracted many people to the Craft. There were, at that time, strong and growing feelings about these political issues and they can hardly fail to have formed a topic of conversation in Lodges.

The War of Independence

Whatever the causes for the Masonic split, the winds of discontent and political change were also blowing in America.

The Stamp Act of 1765, British Parliament's first attempt to tax the colonies, was bitterly resented but was eventually repealed, Benjamin Franklin arguing against it in the House of Commons. This reprieve was short-lived and the 'Townshend Acts' re-established taxes which increased the cost of glass, paper and tea. Again colonial resistance was strong and resulted in the repeal of all except the fateful tax on tea. The 'Boston Tea Party' resulted in 1773. It is worth noting that George Washington advocated reparation payments for the lost tea.

The formal start of independence should date from the First Continental Congress, which was called in 1774 to discuss measures that might be taken and it was during this Congress that Washington, whose military fame was already established from campaigns against the French in the North, first rose to political prominence.

From the attitudes he displayed in his letters at the time, he understood only too well the internal torment faced by those who strove to be loyal to their King yet could not reconcile this with the love they bore to the country of their birth. Washington was initiated in Fredericksburg Lodge No.4, Grand Lodge of Virginia, at the time of the split (1752), and he would have observed the Masonic schism at first hand. He had seen men divided within in Freemasonry as he now saw them politically divided. He would have also understood that the spirit of Freemasonry was able to transcend such divisions and work as a potent force to heal them.

It is claimed that *'the First Continental Congress left the door open for a peaceful settlement with England. But King George III and his ministers wanted no peace'*. In any event, in 1775 Paul Revere received his lantern signal and undertook the horse ride that poet Longfellow made famous. Hostilities had commenced between the troops of Great Britain and America in Lexington. Fellow masons in civil and military Lodges had now to decide for King or for liberty. As Washington, who had commanded British troops and attended Masonic meetings with them, put it:-

'Unhappy it is to reflect, that a Brother's Sword has been sheathed in a Brother's breast, and that, the once happy and peaceful plains of America are either to be drenched with Blood, or Inhabited by Slaves. Sad alternatives! But can a virtuous Man hesitate in his choice'.

Brother was pitted against Brother. Dr. Joseph Warren, Grand Master to the soldiers in the military regiments in Boston, died at their hands at Bunker Hill.

Many authors have claimed that Freemasons were responsible for the American revolution planned in Lodge and carried out by Freemasons. (Paul Revere, Elisha Story and Henry Purkitt were Boston Masons who are said to have taken part and the Lodge of St. Andrew closed early that night 'on account of the few members in attendance'). True or not, it is apparent that, even if there were rules forbidding political discussion in Lodges at that time, it is unlikely they were taken too seriously. Masonic researchers point to the fact that Masonry suffered more than most from these events and letters from key participants in the revolution, such as Joseph Warren, President of the 'Provincial Congress of Massachusetts', Washington and Franklin, show how hard they

worked to avoid it with honour. It nevertheless comes as no surprise to find Franklin, a stickler for Masonic constitutional regularity, amongst those helping to draft the Declaration of Independence.

It is also said by some that the Constitution of the United States owes much to Masonic Organization. The concept of forming a central Federal Government (or Commonwealth) from sovereign and independent Colonies (or States) was entirely new and is not dissimilar to that of a Grand Lodge and its constituent private Lodges. However, the concept of private Lodges being sovereign and independent but owing fealty to a Grand Lodge, which they created, owes more to feudal concepts than the democratic thinking that established the Federal Government of the United States.

It would indeed be ironic if this concept of Federalism derived from Masonic thinking as the various Grand Lodges have been unable to form a combined United States Grand Lodge despite several attempts during the years.

The Constitution, in its division of powers and structure, has also been said to resemble Masonic Organization in that the three complementary institutions of the Federal Government - the judicial, legislative and administrative arms - reflect Masonic structure. Although the three Principals of a Royal Arch Chapter represent the royal, legal and moral arms of Government, the concept of them, or the Master and his Wardens in a craft Lodge, establishing a balance of power, with appropriate cross-checks and balances, similar to the three U.S. arms of Government is alien to Masonic thinking.

However, one of the greatest challenges facing those who wished to form the world's first Republic since Roman times was the establishment of its moral legitimacy. In the colonial context, King George III was head of the Church, an echo of the concept of 'divine right', and the concept of Royal assent underpinned the moral authority of law. This authority had to be replaced in the planning for the new Republic and there is little doubt that Masonry had influence in this respect. The Bill of Rights reflects Masonic thinking.

Independence and Masonic disunity

Although, by 1779 England was also at war with France, it was to be late in 1783 before peace was finally achieved in America. But restoration of harmony in the Lodges was not to be so simple. Many Masons, despite the traditions of the craft, could not now accept that their Lodges should owe allegiance to an English, Irish or Scottish Grand Lodge and sought independence.

On the other hand, many felt that Masonry should perform a healing function. Masonic loyalists, despite the independence of their country, could not concede that independent Lodges could be lawfully constituted or regular. Others pointed to the independence of the Scot and Irish Grand Lodges and asked who in London could guarantee regularity. There could be little hope that London would even 'recognize' an independent Grand Lodge as there was, as yet, no hope of a reconciliation between the Ancients and Moderns in London.

In Boston, Saint Andrew's Lodge split over the issue and eventually resolved it only by expelling those who had voted for independence for a Massachusetts Grand Lodge. These expelled members, including Paul Revere, formed an independent Lodge called the 'Rising States Lodge'. There were now three Masonic constitutions in Boston.

Seeds for a further Masonic division was sown in 1775, when it is claimed that Prince Hall and 14 other black Americans were made Masons in an army Lodge in Boston. In 1784, Prince Hall successfully petitioned the 'Moderns' for a charter for 'African Lodge' in Boston and thus formed the fourth Masonic jurisdiction in Massachusetts.

Similar Masonic disputes were widespread throughout the American colonies. The relative success of the 'Ancients' also caused jealousies and Henry Coil reports that *'The rivalry reached its highest pitch after the revolution, when, for about thirty years following 1787, the discord and dissension in South Carolina was prolonged and serious'*.

It is against this background of disunity that one understands the failure of the first attempt in 1780 to create a United Grand Lodge for the whole of America promoted by Pennsylvania who nominated Washington as Grand Master. How could a single United Grand Lodge for America be formed when some States had several competing Grand Lodges within their own backyard.

The latter part of the eighteenth century were turbulent years. The industrial revolution in Britain ground to a halt when, in 1792 the French overthrew their King and proclaimed a Democratic Republic, closing their ports to British trade. America remained neutral as the Spanish and French colonies of Florida and Louisiana were in contention. (Louisiana had three French Lodges and nine chartered by North American Grand Lodges. They formed their Grand Lodge in 1812). By 1803, the United States had acquired both colonies and, when Britain retaliated against France with a naval blockade of French Ports, America was soon again at war with Britain over this blockade of their markets in France. There was renewed fighting over the Canadian territories in 1813 culminating in the White House being sacked by the British in August 1814. This was no time to owe allegiance to anything British.

Unity and the Masonic Declaration of Independence

In Boston, while moves commenced towards unity between the Massachusetts Grand Lodge and Saint John's Grand Lodge in 1787, it was not until 1792 that unity was achieved in Boston including the Rising States Lodge but excluding Prince Hall.

The achievement of unity in Boston, given the violence of the causes that underlay the rifts, is even more remarkable when it is remembered that unity between the Ancients and Moderns in England was not achieved until 1813, twenty-one years later. The first move towards reconciliation, the appointment of a committee, was in 1798.

However, impatience with Britain may have contributed to events. Both of the 'deputed' Provincial Grand Masters (Price and Warren) had died and their deputations did not permit election of a successor, which had to be appointed from London or Scotland. Given the Masonic situation in London and the independence movement in North America at the time, the united Grand Lodge of Massachusetts virtually made its own declaration of independence. Paul Revere became Grand Master of Masons in Massachusetts in 1795. He chartered 23 Lodges during his three years as Grand Master.

Prince Hall was on friendly terms with many prominent Caucasian Masons in Boston and it is inconceivable that he did not know of the moves for Masonic 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 even given the anti-British sentiments of the day. Later, in 1827, Africa Lodge announced in the newspapers the formation of a separate Grand Lodge in Massachusetts, after having been erroneously struck off the register of the now united Grand Lodge of England. They formed their own Prince Hall Grand Lodge by a similar declaration of independence.

The political unrest in Europe may have been one of the reasons for the 'Secret Societies' Act of 1798 which required the registration (names and details) of members. While Freemasonry was excluded in 1802, the lasting effect of this Act was reflected in the 'recognition' of other orders of Masonry. No longer was there any real threat in Britain that 'other orders' would work the first three degrees. These restrictions were not repeated in North America and may account for the difficulties which were faced in ensuring that only Craft Lodges worked these degrees.

Unity in other American Grand Lodges followed that of the Ancients and Moderns in London and the North Americans were interested parties to the debates during the intervening period when there were major changes in the Charges and rituals.

It is worth noting that the Ancient Grand Lodge of England, although still granting deputations to Provincial Grand Masters as late as 1787 (South Carolina), recognised the independence of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania in 1792. The system of foreign Provincial Grand Lodges under the United Grand Lodge of England still persists in some countries and the process of gaining independence in others has sometimes been disruptive despite the early precedent of the American Grand Lodges. The very concept of independence for post-colonial Grand Lodges is due in large part to the American War of Independence and American Freemasons.

The ritual adopted on unity in Boston was that of St. John's Grand Lodge, which was developed in America by Thomas Webb from the work of William Preston, a 'Moderns' lecturer, and is now adopted by most Grand Lodges in America. This Webb-Preston ritual had been worked in America for about 15 years before the Emulation ritual, which is now used in England (and many other countries) and which reflects more 'Ancient' influence, was adopted by the United Grand Lodge of England. The early independence of North American Grand Lodges has, therefore, led to the active preservation of different forms of ritual.

Criticism from outside the craft

Freemasons such as the Marquis de Lafayette, who had helped Washington during the War of Independence, although a loyalist during the French Revolution itself (and later declared a traitor), were, by 1815, prominent in post-revolution France. With Franklin's death in 1790 and Washington's in 1799, their stabilising influence was no longer present, but their association with French revolutionary Masonic figures (such as Voltaire) and Franklin's long period in France as Ambassador, was not forgotten. Some of the early American Masonic revolutionaries, such as Revere, were still alive and prominent in the post-revolution era. In the environment of war and economic recession rumours started to spread that the French Revolution and the American War of Independence had been started by Freemasons, who wanted more political power in America.

This might have been more acceptable if the French Revolution had been more successful, but Napoleon, despite his worthwhile social and legal reforms, had been too ambitious militarily in Europe. His initial defeat, the temporary restoration of Louis XVIII and then Napoleon's triumphal return and subsequent second defeat, only added to the restless economic and political feeling of the times.

There were other causes of criticism and restlessness. The popularity of the Order was coming under renewed attack from Church groups and there were some early critical exposés of Freemasonry. While Rome had opposed Freemasonry since the Papal Bulls of 1738 and 1751, new anti-Masonic Papal bulls were issued in 1821 and 1825.

Therefore, while internal harmony and initial growth came with Masonic unity in America, this growth was relatively short-lived and membership in the Craft started

falling off due to these criticisms and rumours, which culminated in the devastating 'Morgan Affair' of 1826 and the anti-Masonic political movement.

The Morgan Affair and the Anti-Masonic Political Party

In 1826, Masons in Batavia, New York State, took William Morgan from Jail, where he had been imprisoned on allegedly trumped-up charges, and ran him out of the State for printing his expose of Masonic rituals called 'Illustrations of Masonry' and for presenting himself as a Companion and thereby gaining admission to a Royal Arch Chapter. It was alleged that he was given \$500 and a horse at Niagara on the Canadian border and agreed not to come back, but rumours rapidly spread that he had been murdered. Whatever the truth, nine Masons were convicted of kidnapping, false arrest and other charges in connection with the matter. No murder charge was laid.

The incident ignited a fury both within Freemasons' Lodges and amongst Masonry's detractors. Every Freemason searched his conscience and debated the foolishness of their brethren in Batavia. Some felt that the Craft in general could not be held responsible for errant members who committed criminal acts so clearly against its principles. Others felt that the Craft had to accept responsibility and was insufficiently cautious or exerted inadequate control if members could use their Civil roles to subvert Justice in these ways, particularly in a Masonic cause, irrespective of the odious character of William Morgan. They urged severe action against the culprits but felt they were thwarted by a lack of Masonic jurisprudence.

Some erstwhile Masons renounced Freemasonry and became lifelong critics, partly because they thought the Craft could not or would not discipline its members. One of these, the Rev. David Bernard, renounced the craft at a stormy meeting of the Lodge at Pavilion, twelve miles from Batavia, one month after Morgan's disappearance. He vilified Freemasonry for the remaining forty years of his career. He published 'Light on Masonry' in 1829 and, from 1830 to 1840, helped found the Anti-Masonic Party and fuel the excitement of the anti-Masonic movement throughout most States of America.

Anti-Masonic politics and the wave of anti-Masonic fervor that swept America added a new dimension to being a professed Freemason. Men who owned to being members of the Craft were actively persecuted in their churches, businesses and in politics.

A convention of several Baptist churches, meeting in New York State in 1827, resolved to excommunicate all members who were Freemasons and did not renounce the Craft. In March 1827, Genessee County resolved not to support any candidate for public office or any Minister who was a Mason. It is reported that over 1,000 similar resolutions were adopted at meetings throughout the country. In 1828, the Anti-Masonic Party nominated a candidate for Governor of New York but were defeated. They succeeded in their nomination for New York State Senator in 1829 and for Governor of Pennsylvania in 1836. They conducted a National Anti-Masonic Convention in 1830. In 1832 they nominated a candidate for the Presidential election and again in 1836 but without success.

The effect on Masonic membership was devastating. In 1826, New York had 480 Lodges on its roll, but by 1835 only 75 Lodges survived. Membership in New York dropped from 20,000 in 1827 to 3,000 by 1830. For a time in Vermont not a single Lodge was working.

In New Hampshire, 26 of the 48 Lodges ceased. Those Lodges that were able to continue suffered drastic reductions in their membership but for those who sustained their loyalty there was a form of immortality as reward. Ark Lodge No. 33 at Geneva was kept alive by the 'Immortal Seven' meeting secretly and Fidelity Lodge by the 'Twelve Apostles'.

In the States of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, investigations into Masonry were started by the Legislatures (equivalent to Royal Commissions). Many Lodges held civil charters and several Lodges in Rhode Island suffered their withdrawal.

There were instances of heroic resistance. George Dallas, Vice-President of the United States, Immediate Past Grand Master of Pennsylvania and a fearless lawyer, together with others, was summoned before the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg in 1836, for the purpose of being examined in relation to the activities of the Craft. He declined to be heard and filed a statement which denied their authority to question him on Civil Rights grounds.

Deputy Grand Master Borneman of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania wrote of this incident:-

'It is a great inspiration to recall the conviction, the courage, and the fortitude of the fathers of the Craft in the midst of religious prejudice, political defeat and social ostracism.'

In 1830, when Masons assembled in Faneuil Hall, Boston, and prepared to march to Tremont Street to lay the corner-stone of a Masonic Temple on a site close to where the headquarters building of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts now stands, angry crowds were gathered and a police escort was necessary to part the crowd for the procession as they moved along State Street amongst cries of 'murderers' and other insults. Courage was not lacking on that day. Later, this Grand Temple was purchased privately by a wealthy Freemason, when the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, to forestall anti-Masonic civil action, surrendered its civil charter and became an unincorporated body.

Whatever feelings were held about the Morgan Affair, it nevertheless took great courage to admit or retain a Masonic affiliation at this time. Andrew Jackson, Past Grand Master of Tennessee, was twice elected President during that period, in 1828 and again in 1832 and yet, it is reported, never wavered in his loyalty to the Fraternity. The strong feelings caused by the 'Morgan Affair' and anti-Masonic politics slowly receded and, by the 1840's, Freemasonry again began to grow in America. The following table illustrates the decimation of the craft and its regrowth in Maine:-

GRAND LODGE OF MAINE					
Lodges at Annual Convention					
Year	Lodges	Year	Lodges	Year	Lodges
1830	30	1835	6	1840	0
1831	20	1836	4	1841	4
1832	16	1837	1	1842	2
1833	10	1838	4	1843	3
1834	7	1839	4	1844	19

Source: *Roberts 'Freemasonry in American History'*

An early indication of Masonic re-growth was the formation of the Grand Lodge in Florida in 1830. Also, following the massacre of 'the Alamo', when Mason Sam Houston defeated Mexican Mason and President Santa Anna and the Republic of Texas was formed, the Grand Lodge of Texas soon followed in 1838.

Masonic reconstruction

The need for clear Masonic jurisprudence and the experience of Civil actions arising out of the Morgan Affair and Legislative Enquiries in the period which followed, lead to a thoughtful and creative period for American Masons.

The question of retaining Masonic secrecy (on matters other than those subject to the obligations), although considered legally defensible on civil rights grounds, came under scrutiny and, inevitably, many saw little need for continued diffidence or secrecy regarding Masonic affairs, which had so recently been a matter for public investigation. On the contrary, the fortitude of those who did not bend to the fury of the anti-Masonic movement had become legend and many wanted to identify with these courageous men. It became popular to publicly profess Masonic membership and the wearing of Masonic rings, stick-pins and other jewels became common.

Many realised the need for Grand Lodge Constitutions that could be exposed to public or legal scrutiny. This may have given rise to a pre-occupation with the definition of the 'Ancient Land-marks', always a disputable subject in Masonry and a real vagary for those compiling Constitutions, which occupied many American Grand Lodges from about 1850. No uniformity was achieved and the whole attempt to define the ancient landmarks became an embarrassing fiasco.

Peace was again to be short-lived for tensions were rising over the tariffs charged by the Union on the States, particularly the exporting southern States. As early as 1833 South Carolina abolished the tariffs and declared that, if force were used, it would secede. President Jackson answered by sending another Mason General Scott to command the Federal troops in the South.

In addition, the practice of slavery was being condemned by many nations around the world. In 1847, as a harbinger of things to come, the United Grand Lodge of England amended their charges to require that a petitioner for the degrees be 'free-man' not 'free-born' so that those born in bondage or slavery, but now free, could be admitted.

The Civil War

In America the issue of slavery soon flared into a major political issue, some Southern States claiming that the abolition of slavery would ruin their economies. They claimed that the Central Government under President Lincoln had no power to abolish slavery and stated that they would secede from the Union in favour of a Confederation of States, should Lincoln try to enforce abolition through military power. The dispute was no longer one of slavery alone, but one of State's Rights and the power of the Union.

Again, thinking people had to face a moral conflict between the issue of equality and freedom for individuals against the economic 'need' for slavery and between the equality and democratic independence of their State Governments against centralist power in the Union. It is no surprise to see Freemasons amongst those trying to find a peaceful solution. Jackson exercised great restraint and another Mason, Henry Clay introduced compromise Bills in the Senate.

By 1862, when all attempts to stop the conflict had failed and the rattle of war-drums was heard, Freemasons were amongst the first to heed the trumpetcall, amongst them an echo of an earlier conflict - Joseph Revere, Freemason and grandson of Joseph Warren and Paul Revere, was a Brigadier General in the Union Army. It was estimated that just over 11% of the soldiers in arms were Freemasons.

Again Brother was pitted against Brother, but this time there was no common foe. One cannot imagine a harsher trial with which to test the foundations of Freemasonry. At the very first battle at Fort Sumter, Major Anderson, the Federal commander of the Fort faced his former pupil and brother Mason, Brigadier General Beauregard. Even members of the same Lodge were opposed in battle. The foundation Master of Rocky Mountain Lodge No 205 GL of Missouri, Major General John Robinson (Union) faced a past Senior Warden of that Lodge, Major General Henry Heth (Confederate) at Gettysburg.

One of the major issues facing Freemasonry in the North was whether Masonic recognition and privileges should continue to be extended to those in rebellion against the legal Government of the Union. Some Grand Lodges passed resolutions withdrawing recognition (most reversing this later) but the majority stood by the wording of Section 2 of Anderson's Constitution of 1724, which states:-

'So that if a Brother should be a rebel against the State, he is not to be countenanc'd in his Rebellion, however he may be pitied as an unhappy Man; and, if convicted of no other Crime, though the loyal Brotherhood ought to disown his Rebellion, and give no Umbrage or Ground of political Jealousy to the Government for the time being; they cannot expel him from the Lodge, and his Relation to it remains indefeasible'.

The records of Grand Lodge Communications from both Union and Federalist States, while deploring the war itself, illustrated the firm foundations of the movement and spoke with true faith of their hope for its early conclusion and abounding charity towards members of both sides and their families.

Although the postal service between them was disrupted, many stayed in regular communication with 'enemy' States Grand Lodges despite their difficulties in retaining contact with their own Lodges, many of which could not work for several years during the conflict.

There are many incidents, summarized in Roberts' inspiring book *'House Undivided'*, where Masons and their families owed their lives to Masonic recognition signs, Masons-in-Distress calls or to the Masonic badges and jewels they wore and, of course, to the almost universal acceptance of the principle of the above charge. As a result of their readiness to defend their Union or their Confederation, and as a result of the compassion they showed to enemy Freemasons, the Masons of the Civil War showed clearly that Freemasonry can transcend war, even one fought amongst brothers, and that the mystic tie cannot be broken even in these harsh circumstances.

As an example, the Boston magazine *'The Masonic Monthly'* of November 1863, had this to say:-

'In this great crisis of our country, not only have our political institutions suffered detriment, but every institution in the land has experienced the baneful and prejudicial effects of the civil war. The churches, which served, in addition to the ties of a common blood, to add the link of a common faith, have lost all control over the contending forces. They have suffered division, and have been rent asunder with a violence equal to that which has snapped in twain our political federation. The colleges, which diffused a common education among the youth of our country, have experienced this great tearing apart of North from South. Professors have ranged themselves against professors, and pupils have seceded from Alma Maters, as have their States from the Union which made them great and glorious. One institution only, amid all the strife, has retained its integrity, and its influence unbroken over its membership, in either section. Freemasonry stands out pre-eminently, a solitary pillar in the wilderness - a monument, proving, by its unbroken shaft, the excellence of its architecture, the strength of its material, and the depth and durability of its foundations. What an inestimable privilege is this to which it has been ordained!'

The civil war, therefore served to strengthen Masonry despite the loss of life and disruption to Lodges that it created. Of particular significance is the degree to which the civil war illustrated beyond any doubt the value of not permitting politics to influence Masonic affairs.

The aftermath of the Civil War

Many Grand Lodges chartered Military Lodges for the duration of the conflict and they often served as a focus for Masonic charity to friend, foe or civilians in need. They were also very active in initiating new Brethren who had seen the effectiveness of Masonic charity in war. They were disbanded soon after the war so that there should not be territorial conflict with the stationary Lodges in the various States jurisdictions.

But not all incidents which occurred during the war were helpful to Freemasonry. Masons in Wisconsin were blamed for the draft and an anti-draft riot took place in Osaukee County, when the Lodge room was wrecked and the courthouse and the homes of some prominent Masons were entered. In addition, at least one of the outlaw groups ravaging the countryside was reputed to have been led by a Mason.

The civil war saw the collapse of the 'Conservator' movement, created to again attempt to form an United Grand Lodge for the whole of America. The movement, founded in 1860 by Robert Morris, advocated that a written ritual, based on the Webb-Preston, but in code, be adopted by all Grand Lodges to ensure regularity of the ceremonies, rather than trusting to ritual being handed down by word-of-mouth.

Morris, a PGM of Kentucky, was vilified as a Masonic dictator and the movement collapsed in 1865. Its collapse possibly owed more to the American Civil War than any other cause, as the Southern States at this time were in no mood to concede power to a central authority, Masonic or other. (Morris was later reconciled and is best known as the author of the ritual and founder of the Order of the Eastern Star).

Black Americans earned their emancipation during the American Civil War and Prince Hall Grand Lodges have sought mutual recognition with their Caucasian counter-parts since that time. 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. Even if slavery was defeated, this did not mean that black Prince Hall Freemasons were necessarily legitimate and their rights to recognition should be debated in America first.

In 1898, the Grand Lodge of Washington (State) 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. The issue of Prince Hall recognition in the United States died for the time.

The proliferation of Grand Lodges

The growth of Freemasonry followed the growth westwards of the United States. The proclamation of Statehood (or Territory status) was soon followed by the formation of a new Grand Lodge, sometimes by as few as three Lodges. Although the Lodges founding these new Grand Lodges often held charters from several different Grand Lodges, there seemed little impediment to their calling a convention, agreeing to form a Grand Lodge, electing officers and proceeding to work as a Grand Lodge, after appropriate Installation by a neighbouring Grand Master or qualified person, with the support and recognition of all neighbouring Grand Lodges. Perhaps the most outstanding feature of this movement is the ease with which these new Grand Lodges proliferated as illustrated by the table below:-

REGULAR GRAND LODGES IN THE UNITED STATES

<u>Period</u>	<u>Grand Lodges</u>
1780-1800	4
1801-1820	14
1821-1840	22
1841-1860	29
1861-1880	37
1881-1900	47
<u>After 1900</u>	<u>49</u>

Note: Excluding about 34 Prince Hall Grand Lodges

Source: *Coils 'Masonic Encyclopedia'*

The ease of this process for the formation of a new Grand Lodge was in stark contrast with the early beginnings of the Grand Lodges of the craft in North America and, indeed, with more recent events world wide. The process followed the early formation of the Grand Lodge of England with the exception that the new Grand Master was installed by another person of equivalent rank. There was apparently little resistance and not that much initial consultation with the Grand Lodges from whom the participating Lodges held their Charters.

The doctrine of Exclusive Territorial Jurisdiction.

Instead, the process seemed to be achieved with dignity and co-operation and a full understanding of the need for democratic, local jurisdiction based on State boundaries. It contrasts with the concept of Provincial Grand Lodges (to which the Grand Lodges of England, Scotland and Ireland still subscribe) and it provided a truly democratic venue for local control of Masonic affairs.

There were however several exceptions. When several counties broke away from Virginia to form West Virginia in 1861, the Grand Lodge of West Virginia followed in 1865 formed from eight Lodges holding charters from the G.L. of Virginia. The new Grand Master was installed by a past Grand Master of Ohio. Virginia was reluctant to let its Lodges go and held out for five years before giving West Virginia what they wanted.

Similarly, the Grand Lodge of Dakota was formed in 1875. However the Grand Lodge of Minnesota refused to recognise it because two Lodges chartered by Minnesota in the Territory had not been notified of the convention to form a Grand Lodge in Dakota (now South Dakota). In response, the Grand Lodge of Dakota passed a resolution in 1878, *'That the Grand Lodge of Dakota possesses sole and exclusive Masonic jurisdiction throughout the Territory of Dakota, and that no subordinate Lodge can maintain a lawful existence in said Territory without acknowledging allegiance to the Grand Lodge of Dakota.'* It worked and within two years both Minnesota Lodges had requested charters from the G.L. of Dakota.

Although the practice had existed for some time, this is understood to be the first formal statement of the doctrine of exclusive territorial jurisdiction. This doctrine is recognised by many Grand Lodges around the World although the Grand Lodges of England, Scotland and Ireland do not subscribe to its limitations. One of the aspects of exclusive territorial jurisdiction is the banning of dual membership by many Grand Lodges.

The Masonic Service Association

During the War of Independence, the 1812 War and particularly during the American Civil War, Freemasonry had proved a strong force for healing the woes of War for friend, foe and civilian alike. When the United States entered the first World War in

1917, moves were made to establish Masonic clubs to provide libraries and entertainment huts for servicemen overseas. Permission for this Masonic assistance was refused despite the official help given to the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Knights of Columbus etc. and despite assistance given by a Mason and then Assistant Secretary for the Navy - Franklin D. Roosevelt. Needless to say, this caused considerable resentment. Fosdick, the official who refused the Masonic help, had claimed that Freemasonry had no central organisation and the Government could not deal with 49 separate Grand Lodges.

However, the various attempts to form a central Grand Lodge of the United States had been resisted strongly by the various Grand Lodges and, when a meeting of Grand Masters was called in Iowa in 1918 to discuss the question, it was only after considerable debate that a resolution was passed to form a Masonic Service Association of the US. Within a year 37 Masonic jurisdictions had joined the Association and members learned that the leadership of Freemasonry could meet without compromising their sovereignty.

However, during the 1920's membership declined and little was heard of the Masonic Service Association during the 1930's depression despite the accession of Roosevelt to the Presidency and the general tenor of his 'New Deal' policies. With the outbreak of War in Europe in 1939, despite United States neutrality, the Association began reviving in 1940. The then Senator Harry Truman, a Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Missouri, together with General Marshall and other Freemasons made sure that the Masonic Service Association would not be refused when it was eventually needed.

When Pearl Harbour made necessary the United States formal entry into the second World War in 1942, the Association provided canteens and entertainment for troops and a hospital visitation programme to ease the burden of War.

The regular meeting of Grand Masters, which originally was called to form the Masonic Service Association, continues today and is the primary forum for discussion of matters of mutual interest to Freemasons throughout the United States. There is still no united Grand Lodge of the United States.

Recognition of Prince Hall Freemasons

While Prince Hall Grand Lodges have existed since 1827, today there are Grand Lodges with Prince Hall affiliation in 39 States of the USA as well as in Canada, Liberia and the Bahamas. They exercise authority over more than five thousand Lodges and at least one-half million men. 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.

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.

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. It seemed as though history was to repeat itself and the issue of recognition would never be settled.

However, the whole issue has recently again been raised but it is ironic that issues such as the proliferation of Grand Lodges and jurisdictions and the doctrine of Exclusive Territorial Jurisdiction, that derived from United States Freemasonry, should be stumbling blocks to progress for Prince Hall recognition. Various actions have been taken recently and the whole matter of recognition is current.

It is understood that Grand Lodges in twelve US States have extended full recognition - California, Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming... Michigan and Ohio have made some steps towards this. Canadian Grand Lodges have amity with their Prince Hall counterparts. Recently, the PH GL of Minnesota dropped its ban on dual membership because several members had expressed the wish to join AF&FM lodges in Minnesota.

Reactions from third party Grand Lodges to these recognitions range from support to condemnation leading to edicts being issued against those Grand Lodges granting recognition. The retaliatory actions taken against Grand Lodges who recognise Prince Hall Lodges in the past have varied as illustrated by the following examples:-

- The edicts issued by the Grand Lodge of England against Grand Lodges with inter-visitation with Prince Hall Lodges meant that English Masons needed to ascertain that no Prince Hall Mason was present at the same time as he visited a Lodge in these jurisdictions. This has since been changed and GLE recognises some PH Grand Lodges.
- 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 very disruptive retaliation sufficient to shake the very foundations of the craft in America and in other countries. We await with the outcome with prayer and considerable interest.

Memorials

There are many Masonic memorials in the United States but two stand out - both in or near the Capital. The George Washington Masonic National Memorial at Alexandria, Virginia was commenced in 1923 and dedicated in 1932. It has been gradually improved and is a point of call for many tourists visiting the City of Washington, Masonic or not. The general public can take a guided tour through the room used by the Lodge of which Washington was Master and see the trowel he used to lay the foundation stone of the Capitol building and other historic relics.

Until recently it was permitted to climb the 898 steps inside the 555 foot high Washington Monument in the centre of the nation's capital city. Many of the stones bear inscriptions from their donor Lodges throughout the United States and as the climb progresses upwards, it is pleasant indeed to take an occasional rest to read these legends. Unfortunately, this particular climb is not now permitted but it will not go unremembered.

Conclusion

The history of Freemasonry in the United States of America parallels the story of the nation. It is a story of people finding Masonic and National legitimacy in a nation born in revolution, where awareness of 'ancient landmarks' is synonymous with an awareness of the National Constitution and human rights, where respect for liberty and equality reflects the history of a people who shed the last vestiges of British feudalism, who had

to fight a War of Independence to rid themselves of 'foreign' taxes and a Civil War to rid themselves of slavery and establish a firm basis for their Federalism.

The heritage given to international Freemasonry by the North American brethren through the years is quite extensive. North American Grand Lodges showed the way for other colonies to gain independence from British Grand Lodges and, because they became independent in the early formative years of the Craft, they are responsible for the preservation of some early rituals and practices.

They propagated Masonic egalitarianism and questioned Masonic diffidence. They showed how Grand Lodges can easily proliferate with dignity and regularity to demonstrate the principle of democratic local rule based on individual sovereignty underpinned by the doctrine of Exclusive Territorial Jurisdiction. They also showed, through the Masonic Service Association and conventions of Grand Masters, that Masonic representatives can meet on issues of mutual concern without jeopardizing their sovereignty.

If we ever feel pessimistic about falling membership in the Order, we need only think of the Morgan Affair, or the American Revolution, or the Civil war, to recognise that Freemasonry has the strength to withstand even our own apathy and to realise that it is synonymous with men of strong character and eternal vision who will not only never let it die, but who will make a strength out of any adversity.

If, however, we ever feel complacent, we need only think of the Prince Hall Masonic controversy to realise that our principles will always be put to the test and that, no matter how big were the victories of the past, today's problems always seem to be bigger.

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