

THE PENNSYLVANIA FREEMASON

Issued Every Three Months By

The Right Worshipful Grand Lodge of The Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania and Masonic Jurisdiction Thereunto Belonging, through its

COMMITTEE ON MASONIC CULTURE—William E. Yeager, Past Grand Master, Chairman; William E. Montgomery, G. Edward Elwell, Jr., Frank R. Leech, William A. Carpenter, Charles A. Young and Ashby B. Paul.

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Benjamin Franklin, The Freemason

By WILLIAM J. PATERSON
Librarian and Curator

Benjamin Franklin, as a young man of 24 years, months before he had passed the tiled portals of any Masonic Lodge, unwittingly rendered a service to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Freemasons in General, greater in fact than any other person connected with our history.

While in London, 1724-26, the young printer had undoubtedly learned something about the Craft, the membership of which was then almost exclusively confined to the nobility and gentry, and which was attracting more or less attention in the public prints. The knowledge thus obtained, whether orally or from publications of the day, limited and vague though it must have been, appears to have quickened the ambitious philosophic brain of the young printer upon the subject of Freemasonry, and whetted his desire to be numbered amongst the elect; an ambition not to be realized under existing conditions, as he was then still under the lawful Masonic age and a journeyman printer, a virtual stranger in the community, and, as a mere soap-boiler's son, lacking both social and financial standing.

This applies to him during his sojourn in London, as well as in Philadelphia, at this period.

Upon his return to Philadelphia, this desire became even stronger when he learned that a Lodge had either been set up here, or was contemplated by the resident Brethren.

In the year 1727 Franklin organized a secret society of his own known as the "Leather Apron Club", a name itself suggestive of our Fraternity.

In 1731, the name of the Club was changed, and the character of the Club was also revised, so as to become a purely literary one and took the name of "Junto." Its chief element, "secrecy" patterned after the Masonic Fraternity,

was, however, retained, otherwise it became literary in character, or as Franklin himself wrote, "A club for Mental Improvement."

The eventful outcome of this club, running side by side as it were, with the Craft, was the formation of the Library Company of Philadelphia in 1731 and the American Philosophical Society in 1743, in both of which Franklin was the leading spirit.

As a matter of fact, it was within the Masonic Lodge at Philadelphia, where Franklin had the first opportunity of learning Parliamentary usage by actual practise or occupying any position of authority and government. Consequently, it is but fair to assume that here in St. John's Lodge, and subsequently in the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, was laid the foundation of Franklin's future greatness as a Parliamentarian and a prominent figure in all the many and various organizations with which he became identified during his long and active public career. Further it is an indisputable fact that the offices conferred upon Franklin by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, of that early day, were the first public honors held by the great Printer and Statesman.

To write the history of Franklin as a Freemason is virtually to chronicle the early Masonic History of America.

Early in the year 1731, we find that the young printer was Entered, Passed, and Raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason in St. John's Lodge, held at the Tun Tavern in Water Street, Philadelphia. The cost of his entrance fee was three pounds sterling.

The published records of the Craft in his newspaper known as "The Pennsylvania Gazette" supplant the early minutes of this Lodge long since lost or destroyed.

His connections with St. John's Lodge gives us an insight into the financial affairs of early Freemasonry, as found in the yellowing pages of "Liber B." His services as Grand Master and later as Provincial Grand Master are closely interwoven with the early Masonic history of this Jurisdiction. During the later years of his life he had an active Masonic career in France. There, his activity and intimacy with the Brethren was intimate and close, both personal and official, even advancing to the so-called higher degrees.

The Masonic career of Benjamin Franklin extends over a period of almost sixty years, during which time he was accorded the highest Masonic honors at home and abroad.

1705-6 January 6, O.S.—born at Boston, Mass. (N.S. January 17, 1706).

1730-1 February, Initiated in St. John's Lodge, Philadelphia.

1732 June, drafted a set of By-laws for St. John's Lodge.

1732 June 24, elected Junior Grand Warden.

1734 June 24, elected Grand Master of Pennsylvania.

1734 August, advertised his "Mason Book," a reprint of Anderson's Constitutions of the Freemasons," the first Masonic book printed in America.

1734-5 The State House (Independence Hall) built during Franklin's administration as Grand Master. According to the old Masonic and family traditions, the corner-stone was laid by him and the Brethren of St. John's Lodge.

1735-8 served as Secretary of St. John's Lodge.

1750- March 13, appointed Deputy Grand Master By William Allen, Provincial Grand Master.

1752- March 12, appointed on the Committee for building "The Freemason's Lodge" on Walnut Street between Second and Third Streets, Philadelphia.

1752- October 25, visited the Tun Tavern Lodge, Philadelphia.

1755- June 24, took a prominent part in the Grand Anniversary and Dedication of the "Freemason's Lodge" in Philadelphia, the first Masonic building in America.

1760- Provincial Grand Master of Philadelphia.

1760- November 17, present at Grand Lodge of England, held at Crown & Anchor, London. Entered upon the minutes as "Provincial Grand Master."

1762- Addressed as Grand Master of Pennsylvania.

1776- Affiliated with Masonic Lodges in France.

1777- Elected a member of Loge des IX Soeurs (Nine Sisters or Muses).

1778- February 7, assisted at the initiation of Voltaire in the Lodge of the Nine Sisters.

1778- November 28, officiated at the "Lodge of Sorrow" or Masonic Funeral Services of Voltaire.

1782- Elected Venerable (W.M.) of Loge des IX Soeurs, Grand Orient de Paris.

1782- July 7, member R.L. de Saint Jean de Jerusalem.

1785- April 24, elected Venerable D'Honneur of R.L. de Saint Jean de Jerusalem.

1785- Elected honorary member of Loge des Bon Amis (Good Friends), Rouen, France.

1786- December 27, in the dedication of a sermon delivered at the request of the R.W. Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, by Rev. Joseph Pilmore in St. Paul's Church, Philadelphia, Franklin is referred to as "an illustrious Brother whose distinguished merit among Masons entitles him to their highest veneration."

1790- April 17, Benjamin Franklin passed to the Grand Lodge above.

1906- April 19, memorial services at his grave in Christ Church yard, S.E. corner Fifth and Arch Streets, Philadelphia, by the officers of the R.W. Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, the occasion being the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Benjamin Franklin.

—W. J. P.



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A Message from Our Grand Master

THIS IS THE last time I shall address you through this medium as Grand Master. The next issue of the Pennsylvania Freemason will be printed after the election and installation of the new Grand Master.

It has been my purpose during my term of office to keep you currently advised on all matters pertaining to the Grand Lodge and to share with you, so far as possible, the knowledge and information which came to the attention of the Grand Master, and also to keep you informed of the activities of Grand Lodge.

The following outlines will brief you on the activities of Grand Lodge since the last issue of the Pennsylvania Freemason.

Friday, October 14, 1955, your Grand Master, accompanied by the Right Worshipful Grand Secretary, Brother George A. Avery, visited the Grand Lodge of Alberta A.F. and A.M., Canada. The Special Communication was held in Edmonton, Alberta, for the purpose of celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Grand Lodge of Alberta. Masons from all parts of Canada, and a personal representative of the Grand Lodge of England, attended the Golden Anniversary Celebration.

Saturday, October 22, 1955, at 2:30 P.M., before a distinguished group of Masonic officials and a large crowd of citizens of Boyertown, Pennsylvania, the Grand Lodge officers laid the cornerstone for the new Masonic Temple of Boyertown, Pennsylvania. It is interesting to note that Boyertown Lodge No. 741 is less than thirty years old, with a membership of approximately 200, is in a position to build a new, modern and useful Masonic Temple.

Saturday, November 5, 1955, Union Lodge No. 334, Bradford, Pennsylvania acted as host for the Masons of the twenty-second Masonic District of Pennsylvania, at which time the Grand Master and the Grand Lodge Officers, formally presented Brother Joseph W. Lincoln, a member of Union Lodge No. 334, as the newly appointed District Deputy Grand Master for the twenty-second Masonic District. Brother Ernest Gurdon Potter the former District Deputy Grand Master, who resigned due to health, was invested with the apron and title of Past District Deputy Grand Master, having served as a District Deputy for more than ten years.

Thursday, November 17, 1955, the Elective and Appointed Grand Lodge Officers, accompanied by all the living Past Grand Masters, dedicated the new Scottish Rite Cathedral and Masonic Temple, located at Third and Wiconisco Streets, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Masonic dignitaries from half of the states in the nation attended the dedication ceremonies, including Brother George E. Bushnell, Sovereign Grand Commander of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction, Brother Luther G. Smith, Sovereign Grand Commander of the Southern Masonic Jurisdiction, and Brother Clarence McC. Pitts, Past Sovereign

Grand Commander of Canada. Following the afternoon ritualistic exercises, a dedicatory dinner was served in Zembo Mosque to more than 3800 Masons.

Saturday, November 26, 1955, the Grand Lodge Officers laid the cornerstone for the new Recreation Building and Lodge Hall at the Masonic Homes in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania. The Recreation Building will provide a modern auditorium with a seating capacity of 500 and a stage fully equipped to present cinemascope motion pictures and live shows. The Masonic Temple is of Gothic Design with a Lodge Hall to accommodate 250, also other necessary rooms and a dining hall.

I am happy to report the building program at the Masonic Homes is progressing according to schedule.

The Utility Tunnel to house all heating pipes, returns, domestic hot water and electric cables is 98% completed.

The new wing, alterations and extension to the Philadelphia Freemasons Memorial Hospital is somewhat behind the schedule as of November 15, 1955, however, it is the hope of the contractor to speed up the work if the weather permits. It is the plan of the Committee to be able to transfer the hospital guests to the new wing by February 15, 1956, in order that the alterations and extensions to the present hospital can be completed and the entire project dedicated by August 1, 1956.

The contractor for the Recreation Building and Lodge Hall project expects steel to be delivered to the site by April 15, 1956. All concerned feel this building will be ready for dedication by the early part of 1957.

Due to the generosity of the Masons of Pennsylvania we will again be able to provide a nice Holiday Season for our guests at the Masonic Homes. Little do we realize, unless we are fortunate enough to visit the Homes during the Christmas Season, just what joy and cheer these personal gifts, entertainment and different routine furnished at this time each year, mean to our Brethren, their wives, widows and orphaned children. I know whatever effort we put forth for these, our Guests, meets with the approval and commendation of Him whose birth we cherish and celebrate on Christmas Day.

I shall be looking forward to meeting and greeting the Masons of this Commonwealth at the December Quarterly and Annual Grand Communications. To one and all my very best wishes for the Merriest Christmas ever, and a most happy and prosperous New Year.

RALPH M. LEHR, Grand Master

Bristol Lodge Celebrates 175 Years of Freemasonry

Bristol Lodge No. 25 celebrated its 175th Anniversary earlier this year, and in connection with the commemoration of that occasion, Past Master T. Jenks Wessaw reviewed some of the significant highlights of the history of this Lodge which is one of the oldest in Pennsylvania.

On March 15, 1780 a Warrant was issued by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania of which Brother William Ball was then R. W. Grand Master "to hold a Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons at the town of Bristol or anywhere within five miles of said Town." Brother John Clark, an officer in the British Army, was appointed the warrant Worshipful Master of the Lodge, with Brother Samuel Benezet, Senior Warden and Brother (Dr.) William McIlvaine, Junior Warden.

The first meeting of the new Lodge was held on March 29, 1780, but the records do not indicate in what building that historic meeting was held. As was often the custom in that early era it was decided that the Lodge would meet by the moon, and Bristol Lodge is one of the few Lodges still meeting "by the moon." The stated meetings are held the Saturday on or before full moon.

On June 24, 1786, the R. W. Grand Secretary requested Bristol Lodge No. 25 to appoint a member to attend the September Quarterly Communication in Philadelphia when action was expected to be taken on the motion which would make the Provincial Grand Lodge independent of the Grand Lodge of Great Britain. Brother John Clark who had served so well as Warrant Master was selected to represent Bristol Lodge, and he attended the meeting in Philadelphia on September 26, 1786 when that most important motion was approved.

Bristol Lodge surrendered its original warrant and on August 29, 1789 received its present warrant from the new R. W. Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, the warrant being dated July 9, 1787.

Early records indicate the new Lodge flourished for a time, but the attendance at the meetings began to dwindle and on December 3, 1801, the Lodge suspended its labors and it was not until January 6, 1812 that Grand Lodge approved resumption of its meetings. From 1812 to 1822 the Lodge continued to have great prosperity. After 1822, however, interest again began to wane and until 1825 the members apparently showed little enthusiasm. On December 27, 1825, with only six members present Bristol Lodge was again forced to cease work. For the next 23 years records indicate no meetings were held.

On February 10, 1848, the Lodge was re-suscitated and resumed its labors, a Special Grand Lodge Meeting attended by the R. W. Grand Master having been called for the occasion. From then until the present time the Lodge has continued to move ever forward.

The centennial celebration of Bristol Lodge which then had 140 members was held on March

29, 1880, and Past Master B. F. Gilkenson whose Father had been Entered on February 10, 1848, the night the Lodge was reorganized, had compiled the history of the first 100 years. Twenty-five years later, when the Lodge had increased its membership to 162, Past Master Charles E. Scott brought the history up to date and on March 29, 1930 with its membership at 389 Past Master Isaac S. H. Jones added the high lights of the previous 25 years. And now to commemorate the 175th Anniversary a brochure is being prepared to include the early histories to which Past Master T. Jenks Wessaw has added the last 25 years. From that humble beginning 175 years ago with five members Bristol Lodge has now grown to a membership of 578.

It is interesting to note that Past Master William H. Watson served Bristol Lodge as Secretary for 50 years; Brother Evan J. Groom served as Trustee for 36 years; Past Master William H. H. Fine as Treasurer and Trustee for 33 years and Brother Louis B. Girton as Trustee for over 30 years.

Recently Bristol Lodge recommended the constitution of two new Lodges, Fairless Hills No. 776 and Penn-Morris No. 778. Not only has Bristol Lodge given Pennsylvania some of its most outstanding Masons, but in its early days it also gave the Grand Lodge of New Jersey many of its highest officers, and at least one of its older Lodges, Burlington Lodge No. 32, whose members found it "frequently impossible to cross the ice laden Delaware River to attend Bristol Lodge."

Grand Lodge of Iowa Dedicates New Library Building

Away back in 1845, the Grand Lodge of Iowa appointed a Library Committee and appropriated the large sum of five dollars to help get the project started. Out of that humble beginning 110 years ago has grown one of the largest and finest Masonic libraries in the world. And last June the Grand Lodge of Iowa dedicated a million dollar structure in Cedar Rapids to house its collection of 65,000 books, a Museum and the Grand Lodge offices.

Theodore S. Parvin, who became Grand Secretary of the Iowa Grand Lodge, not only garnered its first book but practically founded the library single handed. The acquisition of the library's first volume, however, was not by purchase but by a social faux pas.

Parvin had visited a girl friend one evening and on a table in her parlor lay a copy of Cole's "Ahiman Rezon," an old Masonic volume. Parvin became so absorbed in the book that he paid little attention to the girl who finally suggested that if the miserable book were so much more intriguing than she, perhaps he should take it with him and go. Parvin went, and the book still remains in the Grand Lodge archives.

Within five years, Parvin had gathered enough books to classify in a four-page catalog.

By 1882 the collection was worth \$12,000 and in May, 1884, a building was acquired in Cedar Rapids to house the rapidly growing collection.

Parvin, who had served as Grand Secretary for 56 years, died in 1901, at the age of 84, and his son, Newton R. Parvin, who had been Deputy Grand Secretary succeeded his father as Grand Secretary and head of the library that same year.

By 1903 the library needed more space and the adjacent large residence was purchased. Ten years later more room was required and an addition was added to the original building. Newton R. Parvin died in 1925 and Charles C. Hunt took over his duties.

By 1944 the library had grown to roughly 40,000 volumes. It was about then that it was realized that a new fireproof structure was needed to house the priceless collection and in 1945 when Earl B. Delzell became Grand Secretary and Librarian, the Grand Lodge began accumulating the funds necessary to finance the erection of a building suitable to house the library.

Adjacent properties were acquired and now a beautiful new structure houses the 65,000 volumes. Theodore S. Parvin's hobby has indeed come a long way.

The new building, the dedication of which was attended by R. W. Grand Master Ralph M. Lehr, is L shaped with a frontage of 245 feet on First Avenue, a width along Eighth Street of 113 feet, and a width of 50 feet at the head of the L. The structure has a full basement and two stories except for the Library which has three stories. The exterior is of gleaming white Vermont marble, while the interior is of Missouri marble and wood paneling. The trim on the windows, doors and stair handrails is bronze. About half the window area is stained glass with Masonic emblems.

The building not only houses the Library, but also a Museum and the Grand Lodge administrative offices, with 44 offices and work rooms and three large fire proof vaults.

Over the main entrance the following inscription is cut into the white marble:

"Behold the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline with a plumbline in his hand."

Lodge No. 2 of Philadelphia Preparing 200th Anniversary

Lodge No. 2 of Philadelphia, having enjoyed nearly 200 continuous years of Freemasonry, is hard at work designing and arranging for their 200th Anniversary in 1958.

The history of Lodge No. 2 will prove most interesting and unequalled by other Lodges in this Jurisdiction. We are looking forward to featuring this rare and memorable occasion in this publication and take pride at this time in extending congratulations and best wishes to the officers and members of Lodge No. 2 in their every effort.

From Our Grand Secretary's Office

The September Quarterly Communication

In the following summary of the proceedings of the September Quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge we shall touch only upon those items which appear to us to be of the greatest interest.

Brother Samuel M. Goodyear, R.W. P.G.M.

Grand Lodge paid tribute to the memory of Brother Samuel M. Goodyear, R. W. Past Grand Master, in a beautiful "In Memoriam," prepared and delivered by Brother Scott S. Leiby, R. W. Past Grand Master.

Past District Deputies Created

The R. W. Grand Master, Brother Ralph M. Lehr, announced that he had recently constituted Brother Ellis E. Stern, who served for seven years as District Deputy Grand Master of District 5, and retired from that office after his election to the Committee on Masonic Homes, a Past District Deputy Grand Master. The Grand Master then conferred the same honor upon Brother Roy M. Krebs, District Deputy Grand Master of the 56th Masonic District for six years before accepting an appointment as Secretary to the Grand Master.

Floral Wreath Placed on Franklin's Grave

The R. W. Grand Master informed the Brethren that, on August 22, 1955, accompanied by Brother Pablo Oro, a member of the Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands, and a number of our Grand Lodge officers, he had placed a floral wreath upon the grave of Brother Benjamin Franklin, R. W. Past Grand Master. He further stated that photographs taken of the ceremony had been forwarded to Brother Oro, to be presented to the Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands.

Additional Funds Provided for Maintenance of Homes

Two resolutions, attached to the report of the Committee on Finance, and designed to provide additional revenue for the maintenance of the Masonic Homes at Elizabethtown, were unanimously adopted.

The first of these allocated the annual income of the Philadelphia Freemasons' Memorial Hospital Endowment Fund, which heretofore has been added to the principal, to the maintenance of the Hospital at Elizabethtown. This action will make approximately \$8,000.00 additional available for maintenance in 1956.

The second resolution changed the allocation of the Deceased Guests' Contribution Account of the Masonic Homes. In accordance with a previous resolution of Grand Lodge, the entire amount of this account is currently allocated to Masonic Homes Endowment Fund. Under the new rule, beginning with the next fiscal year, only the balance remaining in each deceased guest's account, after a maintenance charge for the period during which the guest has resided at the Homes has been deducted, will be placed in the Endowment Fund. That

portion of each account which has been charged to maintenance will become a part of the annual appropriation by Grand Lodge for the maintenance of the Masonic Homes.

War Relief Fund Made Available for Flood Relief

A third resolution, also attached to the report of the Committee on Finance, changed the name of the "War Relief Fund" to the "Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania General Relief Fund," and greatly enlarged the purposes for which this Fund can be used. It is now available for the relief of our Brethren in those areas devastated by last summer's floods.

Life and Honorary Membership

In the Grand Secretary's letter of September 8, 1955, addressed to the Secretaries of the subordinate Lodges, pointing out the changes in our law which will become effective if the proposed amendment to Article X, Section I, Item 7, of the Ahiman Rezon is approved by Grand Lodge at the Quarterly Communication of December 7, there appeared the following paragraphs:

1. No Lodge will be permitted to create any new life members after December 6, 1955. Life members, according to our law, cannot be required to pay dues of any kind whatsoever.
2. Lodges may, if they so desire, create honorary members. Honorary members are exempt from the payment of all dues, except the amount of Grand Lodge dues.

Life Members

Exception has been taken to the first of these statements on the grounds that it is a misinterpretation of the amendment. We quote that portion of the amendment involved:

"No Subordinate Lodge shall hereafter, by the creation of life members, or otherwise, take any action to relieve any of its members of the payment of said annual dues of \$4.00, except members whose dues are remitted by their Lodge because of the inability of such members to pay their Lodge dues."

It is argued by some that the amendment merely states that no member shall hereafter be relieved from the payment of said annual dues of \$4.00 by creating him a Life Member. The prohibition applies to the payment of Grand Lodge dues, not to the creation of Life Members. Therefore, if the Lodge assumes the obligation to pay the Grand Lodge dues of its Life Members, it is wholly within the law for it to create such members.

The fallacy in such reasoning as this becomes clear when one very important, but often lost sight of, fact is pointed out: Grand Lodge dues are charged to our Lodges, not to their members. True enough they are based upon a fixed amount for each member, but the Lodges pay these dues. Indeed, they pay even for members who are delinquent and have failed to pay their Lodge dues. The members pay their dues to the Lodge, not to the Grand Lodge.

What the amendment means, therefore, is that "No subordinate Lodge shall hereafter relieve any of its members from the payment of said dues of \$4.00" to the Lodge.

This provision patently prohibits the creation of Life Members. Life Members pay the Lodge no dues whatever. No members may hereafter be relieved from the payment of \$4.00 to the Lodge. Therefore, no Life Members may be created.

Honorary Members

The second statement, quoted from the Grand Secretary's letter, has been made the target of a great deal of criticism, not on the grounds that it does not represent a true interpretation of the meaning of the amendment, but because of the use of the term "Honorary" to designate those members who are exempt from the payment of all dues except Grand Lodge dues. To illustrate, we quote from a letter recently received from one of our Secretaries:

"You know Brother Avery, and this is just my own personal reaction, the name "Honorary Members" just doesn't seem to me to fit at all. It smacks of a fire company or many other organizations who do have honorary members, persons who are not active members, but through something they may have done in the way of a service for an organization seem to deserve some recognition."

We sympathize with these sentiments. Indeed, we, too, on more than one occasion have found our thoughts running in almost precisely the same channel. However, we should like to submit the following facts:

The term "Honorary," to designate what is in reality a limited life member, was not chosen by those who framed the proposed amendment to the Ahiman Rezon, nor by those whose responsibility it is to interpret the amendment. It is not now for the first time being offered as an innovation in the accepted terminology of Freemasonry in Pennsylvania. For many years it has appeared in the By-Laws of our Lodges as a name for those members who are exempt from the payment of all dues except Grand Lodge dues.

Whatever its implications in other organizations may be, in Freemasonry it has the authority of long usage as a technical term which designates those members of a Lodge who are entitled to all its rights and privileges, but who, as a result, either of the payment of a specified sum of money, or the payment of dues for a specified number of years, are exempt from all further payments to the Lodge except the annual payment of a sum equal to the amount of Grand Lodge dues.

When honorary membership first came into being in Pennsylvania, our predecessors in Grand Lodge searched for a term which would clearly differentiate between this type of membership and life membership, the holders of which pay no dues whatever. They chose the term "Honorary." Perhaps they chose unwisely. Who can say? Who can suggest a better term?

George A. Avery

GEORGE A. AVERY, Grand Secretary