

Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of North Carolina



Quarterly Newsletter

Volume III ISSUE II

Spring 2006

From the Trestle Board of.....

The Most Worshipful Grand Master



*“Continuing to Build This Jurisdiction:
Peg by Peg, Plank by Plank, Brick by Brick,
Block by Block, and Stone by Stone!”*

The Honorable Milton F. “Toby” Fitch, Jr.
Most Worshipful Grand Master

From the Trestle Board of..... The Most Worshipful Grand Master

Stones have always held special value and significance for both Speculative and Operative Masonry. As Master Masons we can never forget how the Grand Architect of the Universe used a “forgotten” stone to build the foundations of the heavens and the earth; yielding salvation and eternal life for all who know the significance of, and, adhere to the basic tenets of The Chief Cornerstone!

In the Twenty-Seventh chapter of Deuteronomy (27: 1-4) Moses spoke to the children of Israel saying, “Keep all the commandments which I command you this day. And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shall set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister. And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth them, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee. Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaister them with plaister.”

It was left to Joshua (Joshua 4: 1-5) to carry out this task as the children of Israel crossed over Jordan into Canaan; the Promised Land. This ancient event holds a message and lesson for those of us today who are left with the Mantle of Responsibility of helping to teach, and raising, our people to a level of possession and thrival in a land where they hold an innate heritage.

We too have “markers” called “Landmarks.” We must return to the “ole landmark” to project ourselves into our foreordained destiny. Cognitive renewal of these Landmarks allow, and compel, us to draw upon the spirit, wisdom, knowledge, skills, and work of all those who have labored before us. The “wind beneath our wings” is recognition and utilization the physical, cognitive, and spiritual resources of our ancestral forbearers.

As your Most Worshipful Grand Master and Leader, I am hereby initiating a campaign to implement the renewal of “mindfulness” and practice of the basic Landmarks of this Most Worshipful Grand Lodge. By way of reflection, I will use the *Newsletter* to highlight the universal and eternal Landmarks of Masonry while individually recognizing Past Most Worshipful Grand Masters of this great Jurisdiction of North Carolina with the hope the speculative wisdom and knowledge they obtained, along with the spirit of the Almighty God, will lead us to ultimate operative growth of this Grand Lodge.

I know of no greater testament of my sincerity and commitment t these principles and this program than the humble and pride filled recognition of the Stone and Spirit of which I am a part, my father the late Most Worshipful Grand Master, Milton F. Fitch, Sr.



MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND MASTER

Milton F. Fitch
(1920-1995)



Celebrating His Life and Work

Raised in Masonic Light, Mt. Hebron Lodge #42, 1951
Worshipful Master Mt. Hebron #42 Three Different Terms
Senior Grand Warden North Carolina Jurisdiction
Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Correspondence of the
North Carolina Jurisdiction
Member Mizpah Temple #66 A.E.A.O.N.M.S.
33rd Degree Master Mason
Grand Master Knight of the Knights of Pythagoras
Honorary Past Right Eminent Grand Commander of the
Knights Templar of the Gold-Wayne Commandery
ELECTED MOST WORSHIP GRAND MASTER
Prince Hall F.&A.M. North Carolina Jurisdiction
October 7, 1995

The Landmarks

1. The modes of recognition are, of all the Landmarks, the most legitimate and unquestioned. They admit of no variation.
2. The division of symbolic Freemasonry into three Degrees is a Landmark that has been better preserved than almost any other

FEBRUARY _____BLACK HISTORY MONTH

2006

To recall and celebrate the positive contributions to our nation made by people of African descent, American historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week beginning on February 12, 1926. In 1976, as part of the nation's bicentennial, the week was expanded into Black History Month.

Dr. Woodson, a historian, writer, and educator is often called the "Father of Black History." In 1926 he first established Negro History Week. February was chosen for this observance because the birthdays of abolitionist Fredrick Douglass and President Abraham Lincoln fall in this month. It was during the 1970's, the name of the celebration was changed to Black History Week and then black History Month in 1976.

Origin of Prince Hall Masonry
Prince Hall 1738 – 1807
Champion of American Liberty
Advocate of Negro Freedom
Founder of Black Masonry

“Throughout history the powers of single black men flash here and there like falling stars, and die sometimes before the world has richly gaged their brightness.”

W.E.B. DuBois

By Dr. Charles Harris Wesley, PhD.

Renowned Scholar, Lecturer, Educator, Author and Historian

Prince Hall, our founder, was one of our greatest Americans, a Worthy Grand Master associated with our first Grand Lodge and its expansion. His name is carried and borne by our Masonic organizations in the United States, and thousands of Masons, who regard themselves as descendants from the Grand Lodge of England from which he received his authority more than two centuries ago. We in America celebrated in 1976 the two hundredth anniversary of our Declaration of Independence. This is also the two hundred and first anniversary of the founding of Prince Hall Masonry. It is a monument to Prince Hall’s life, career and leadership.

Many rumors of the birth of Prince Hall have arisen. Few records and papers have been found of him either in Barbados where it was rumored that he was born, but no record of birth, by church or state, has been found there, and none in Boston. Countries were searched and churches with baptismal records were examined without the name of Prince Hall being found. The first record, which we have of Prince Hall, is a manumission paper filed by William Hall of Boston, and found in the Boston Athenaeum. This document tells us:

“ Prince Hall has lived with us 21 years and served us well upon all occasions, for which reasons we maturely give him his freedom and that he is no longer to be reckoned a slave, but has been always accounted a freeman by us, as he has served us faithfully. Upon that account we have given him his freedom. As witness our hands this ninth day of April, 1770.”

Witnesses:

Susannah Hall – William Hall

Elizabeth Hall – Margaret Hall

Boston 12 April 1770 recorded Boston Athenaeum.

In appearance our Prince Hall was unlike the portrait which has been used of him, which was near to a white man in appearance. William Bently of Salem, Massachusetts, once described him at a Turtle Feast in Salem, Massachusetts, as "An African and a person of great influence among his color in Great Boston, being Master of the African Lodge and a person to whom they refer with confidence principal affairs." Another, William F. Haywood in his Minutemen and Mariners, described another Turtle Feast, "There was one outstanding expert: Prince Hall, a tall, lean Negro of great dignity. He always did, for whenever a well-to-do person wished the best catering job in Eastern Massachusetts, he sent word to Prince Hall in Boston, and when the time came he appeared with a dozen of his black men or two dozen if the banquet was a large one." This author described how "four of Prince Hall's Africans stepped smartly into the tent bearing on their shoulders the great turtle shell filled with a pie to the delight of the guest. These descriptions make Prince Hall an African who had an African crew. He seemed to be a black man among black men or he would have been pointed out, if otherwise.

A significant event in Masonry on March 6, 1775, Prince Hall and fourteen other men were initiated in Masonry through Warrant No. 459, which is still in our possession. John Batt, who was of the 38th Foot Regiment of the British Army having enlisted in 1759 and learning of the American cause re-enlisted in its Army. The enlistees were Prince Hall, Cyrus Johnson, Bueston Slinger, Prince Rees, John Canton, Peter Freeman, Benjamin Tiler, Duff Ruform, Thomas Santerson, Prince Rayden, Cato Speain, Boston Smith, Peter Best, Forten Howard and Richard Titley. The writer had this record, A permit was issued for these masons to meet as African Lodge No. 11 and they became the first Black Masons in the United States. Prince Hall enlisted and served as a soldier in the 2nd and 6th Regiments of Massachusetts. In this connection, George W. Williams, historian, wrote in 1884, "that he saw hard service and we know by the record of the two regiments he served in, always distinguished for steadiness and valor. Prince Hall was not only a good soldier, he was a statesman.

As the years passed, Prince Hall decided to approach England again, the war being over in 1783. On March 2, 1784, he wrote a letter to William Moody, a Worshipful Master of Brotherly Love Lodge No. 55, in London, England, stating that African Lodge has been in operation for eight years and they had only "a Permit to walk on St. John's Day and to bury their dead in manner and form" and he thought it "best to send to the Fountains from whence he received the Light for a Warrant." This Warrant or Charter was prepared but not sent. Three years passed then the cost of it had not been received in London. It seems that Prince Hall had sent it but it had not been delivered. Finally, he was careful in selecting his messengers and asked Captain James Scott, brother-in-law of Governor John Hancock of Massachusetts, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Captain Scott delivered the letter and the money and then received the Charter Warrant.

Prince Hall acknowledged this receipt and added in his letter to England. "By the grace of God, I shall endeavor to fulfill all that is required of me in the Charter and I shall make the Constitution my guide." He added, "I hope we can adorn our profession as Masons."

This Charter is in the possession of African Lodge of Massachusetts and is kept under lock and key.

Some of us have seen it and treasured it for it is the only Charter in existence from England, our source, available today to Masons. A recognition of this fact was adopted in a report of a unanimous committee in 1946 of the historic Northern Jurisdiction but it was delayed by another committee's action, but it is worth noting.

"It is believed to be the only original Charter issued from the Grand Lodge of England which is now in the possession of any Lodge in the United States."

Some white Masons say that Blacks were not denied admission to white Lodges and they point out the very few and the presence of others by invitation as proofs. We believe the contrary for D. Bentley, a contemporary who wrote in his diary, available to all, "The truth is they are ashamed of being on equality with blacks. Even the Fraternities of France, given to merit without distinction of color do not influence Massachusetts's Masons to give an embrace less emphatically or tender affectioned to their Black Brethren. It is evident that preeminence is claimed by whites."

The question of extending Masonry arose when Absalon Jones of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, appeared in 1791 in Boston. He was an ordained Episcopal Priest and a Mason who was interested in establishing a Masonic Lodge in Philadelphia. In 1792, Black men came from Providence, Rhode Island, to Boston, to inquire about Masonry. They attended to hear the charge by Prince Hall who spoke of the presence of these men, "my dear brethren of Providence, who are at a distance from and cannot attend the Lodge but seldom." Masons in both places, made in England or the West Indies or elsewhere came to Boston to see Prince Hall and mentioned their cities as places for Lodges. At a subsequent assembly the African Grand Lodge was formed in 1791 by delegations from Philadelphia, Providence and New York in an assembly, which was a Grand Lodge. Prince Hall regarded as Grand Master was the source and remained in this capacity until his death. African Lodge, in Philadelphia, and Hiram Lodge, in Providence, came under his aegis in 1797. With growth and expansion the movement went West and South.

Prince Hall died December 4, 1807. His successor was Nero Prince who sailed to Russia in the year 1808, George Middleton succeeded him. 1808-1810, Peter Lew, Samuel H. Moody and then the well-known John T. Hilton who recommended a Declaration of Independence from the English Grand Lodge in 1827, which the Grand Lodge of Independence from Massachusetts had done in 1772 and assumed powers and prerogatives as an Independent Grand Lodge.

Freedoms Journal, November 7, 1828, the first black newspaper, praised Prince Hall as "the Founder of African Lodge of Boston," and for his "work for the Grand Masonic Lodge. The heritage which Prince Hall left us has authentic and factual goodness to us as Masons, and we go forward distributed in 44 Grand Lodges. Eastern Stars, two Supreme Councils, Golden Circles, Shriners, Daughters of Isis, Brothers and Sisters in the United States, the West Indies, Canada, Liberia and West African, all doing great work and spreading a good cause in Masonry. To all those who read this, we say as Prince Hall said in 1797:

"Blessed be God, the Scene is Changed! They now confess that God has no respect of persons, and therefore receive them as friends and treat them as brothers. Thus doth Ethiopia stretch forth her hand from slavery to freedom and equality."

Text of the Original Charter

Issued to Prince Hall, Etc., on September 20, 1874

by

Thomas Hall, Earl of Effingham, Acting Grand Master, The Grand Lodge of England

Know all men by these presents:

“Thus were we greeted by the Grand Lodge of England, on the 20th day of September A.L. 5784, A.D. 1784; the following said Greeting and warranted 459, granted by the Grand Lodge of England on petition of Prince Hall, Boston Smith, Thomas Sanderson, and several other Masons, of Boston, constituting them into a regular Lodge for Free and Accepted Masons.

“To all and ever our Right Worshipful and loving Brethren, we, Thomas Hall, Earl of Effingham, Lord Howard, etc., etc., etc.; acting Grand Master under the authority of His Royal Highness, Henry Frederice, Duke of Cumberland, etc., etc., etc., Grand Master of the Most Ancient and Honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons, send Greetings:

“Know ye, that we, at the humble petition of our right trust and well beloved brethren Prince Hall, Boston Smith, Thomas Sanderson, and several other Brethren residing in Boston, New England, in North America, do hereby constitute the said Brethren into regular Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, under the title or denomination of the African Lodge, to be opened in Boston aforesaid, and do further at their petition hereby appoint the said Prince Hall to be Master, Boston Smith, Senior Warden, and Thomas Sanderson, Junior Warden, for the opening of the said Lodge, and for such further time only as shall be thought proper by the Brethren thereof, it being our will that this our appointment of the above officers shall in no wise affect any future election of officers of the Lodge, but that such election shall be regulated agreeably by such by-laws of said Lodge as shall be consistent with the general laws of the Society, contained in the Book of Constitution and we hereby will require you, the said Prince Hall, to take especial care that all and everyone of said Brethren are, or have been regularly made Masons, and that they do observe, perform and keep all the rules and orders contained in the Book of Constitutions; and further, that you do, from time to time, cause to be entered in a book kept for the purpose, an account of your proceedings in the Lodge, together with such rules, orders, and regulations as shall be made for the good government of the same; that in no wise you will omit once in every year to send to us, or our successors, Grand Master, or to Roland Holt, Esq., our Deputy Grand Master, for the time being, an account in writing of your said proceedings and copies of all such rules, orders and regulations as shall be made as aforesaid, together with a list of the members of the Lodge, and such sum of money as may suit the circumstances of the Lodge, and reasonably be expected toward the Grand Charity.

“Moreover, we hereby will and require you the said Prince Hall, as soon as conveniently may be, to send an account in writing, of what may be done by virtue of these presents.

“Given at London under the hand and seal of Masonry, this 20th day of September A.L. 5784 A.D. 1784.

“By the Grand Master’s Command

Witness: Wm. White, G.S.

R. Holt, D.G.M.

Lodges on the Move

Bethel Lodge No. 846 PHA hosted an awards banquet on 24 Feb 06 at Lewis Chapel Middle School in Fayetteville, NC for their annual Black history Essay Contest with the 8th grade class.

WM Freddie Robertson



Lodges on the Move

**WINNABEE #786 & May Queen Chapter
OES #599
Participated In Shallotte Christmas
Parade**

December 3rd, 2005 10:00 a.m. Winnabee Masonic Lodge # 786 and May Queen Chapter OES # 599 participated in the local Christmas parade in Shalotte NC. This is an annual event that several hundred local people attend each year. The 19th District DDGM James Light and DDGM Geraldine Armstrong were in attendance along with several other guest Prince Hall family members.

Brother Donnie Frink, Jr. is Worshipful Master

**WINNABEE #786 Hosted Annual
Christmas Fellow Dinner**

December 19th, 2005 Winnabee Masonic Lodge had their annual Christmas Fellowship Dinner. Masons and Eastern Stars brought their families together for the annual time of sharing and giving. The Brothers prepared 55 boxes for less fortunate brothers, sister and non-Prince Hall members of the surrounding community. Our sisters prepared and made sure we were all "filled to the brim."

The occasion included a mini program with scripture, prayer, personal memorials, and singing. A highlight of the event was the introduction of new members to the Lodge.

Winnabee's Worship Master is Brother Donnie Frink, Jr.

A. J. Henderson Lodge # 792 will be hosting its very 1st Annual Banquet in honor of Past Master Alexander Alford for his faithful and dedicated service to our Lodge , Community and Prince Hall Masonry.

It would be a great honor and privilege to all Brothers, Sisters and Friends attend and share in this historic and memorable event in honoring PM Alford who has served faithfully for over 50 years. The banquet will be held on April 15th 2006 at the Westover recreation Center 267 Bonanza Drive, Fayetteville North Carolina 28301. The banquet will start at 7:00 PM. Dress code Semi Formal..

Tickets sales are 1 for \$25.00 or 2 for \$45.00. RSVP by 30 March 2006 if you will honor us with your presence at our banquet Contact WM Rodney Johnson for ticket sale information at 910-229-8027.

If there are any questions please contact Bro. Secretary Acevedo at (910) 224-4636.

Fraternally

Original Signed
Wilfredo Acevedo
Secretary

Original Signed
Rodney Johnson
Worshipful Master

SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE TO THE NEWSLETTER

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PICTURES, AND ARTICLES MAY BE SUBMITTED TO ME, BROTHER DENNIS E. CHESTNUT, GRAND DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AT: Newsletter@MWPHGLNC.Com . If you have questions and need to speak with me I may be reached at (252) 757 – 1531.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER IS: JUNE 25, 2006!!!

Editor-in-Chief

Grand Master Milton “Toby” Fitch, Jr.

Associate Editor

PM Dennis E. Chestnut

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PM Paul Kinsey, Jr

Bro. Larry Farmer

PM Raymond Hayes, Grand Junior Steward

Brother Eddie Linsay, Grand Lodge Webmaster

*The Brothers of this Grand
Lodge Salute All Mothers on
your Special Day*

Happy Mother's Day



*Remember to attend and
participate in Our Central
Children's Home Celebration*

*Saturday, June 17, 2006
Oxford, NC*