

ANCIENT CRAFT MASONRY IN VERMONT

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649053025

Ancient Craft Masonry in Vermont by Lee S. Tillotson

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

LEE S. TILLOTSON

**ANCIENT CRAFT
MASONRY
IN VERMONT**

ANCIENT CRAFT MASONRY

IN

VERMONT

BY

LEE S. TILLOTSON 33°

Past Grand Master of Vermont

Published by
CAPITAL CITY PRESS
Montpelier, Vermont
1920

Preface

In his address to the Grand Lodge of Vermont in 1856, Grand Master Philip C. Tucker said:

"It is among my highest aspirations that in the evening of my days, the avocations of business and the necessities for exertion, may be, by a kind Providence, so far relieved, as to enable me to place before my brethren a connected history of the Freemasonry of this State."

In 1859 he again alluded to the subject as follows:

"Should our kind Creator and Preserver please to preserve your Grand Secretary and myself for a year or two longer, it is to be hoped that the history of Green Mountain Masonry will be made more accessible to the fraternity than it is at present. In other words we hope to be able to lay before them the substantial history of this Grand Lodge from 1794, and of the Masonry which preceded the formation of this Grand body in the State."

Brother Tucker, unfortunately, departed this life without accomplishing his desire in this respect. Had he written even his own personal recollections of the masonic incidents of his time, it would have formed a work of inestimable value. His modesty forbade this, and he continued during the remainder of his life to solicit information from the subordinate lodges and individual masons, but with indifferent success, and died without even beginning the work which he so much desired to accomplish, and for which he was so admirably fitted.

The author of this work has met with a somewhat similar experience in his endeavors to obtain material from the subordinate lodges. It was his original intention to have included herein a sketch of each secular lodge, but because of the neglect or inability of nearly half the lodges of the jurisdiction to furnish him the data requested, he has been obliged to omit that feature, and has confined himself mainly, so far as the secular lodges are concerned, except the five original lodges, to such information as is found in the Grand Lodge Records. It is, perhaps, as well that this is so, because the material of a general character, which it seemed advisable to use, has attained such proportions that it would have been impracticable to have inserted any additional matter of purely local interest.

The information which has been obtained from those lodges which responded to the author's request has all been filed in the Grand Secretary's office, and is accordingly accessible to any who may desire to refer to it.

In compiling this general history of Ancient Craft Masonry in Vermont, it has been the aim to make use of all available material from sources outside the masonic archives, and to avoid, so far as possible, the repetition of matter which has already been published in the proceedings of the Grand Lodge. In conformity with this plan the author has had reference to the old newspaper files in the State Library, Thompson's History of Vermont, Hemenway's Gazeteer, and other historical works.

The author takes this occasion to express his appreciation of the encouragement and assistance which have been accorded him, generally, by his brethren, and particularly by Most Worshipful Past Grand Master Edwin L. Wells, Most Worshipful Grand Master Archie S. Harriman and Most Worshipful Henry H. Ross, Past Grand Master and Grand Secretary.

To write the history of one hundred and forty years of any sort of activity is an undertaking of no small degree, and the author appreciates, more fully than others, his inability to adequately perform such a task; but, unsatisfactory as this production undoubtedly is, he believes that it will serve, in some degree at least, to imbue in the hearts of Vermont masons a just pride in their organization and a laudable ambition to perpetuate its traditions and purposes.

And now may I be permitted to address a personal word to my brethren of Vermont? As this work goes to press I am about to take up an occupation which necessitates my removal from the state and will, quite probably, prevent me, at least for several years to come, from participating in your labors. I cannot thus break the associations of a lifetime without keen regret. You have accorded to me honors and privileges for which I am deeply grateful, and I would that I might be permitted to labor with and for you during the full remainder of my days. I shall retain my masonic affiliations in Vermont, and shall cherish the hope that I may occasionally, and some time again, perhaps, regularly meet with you and renew the associations which are, and will remain, dearer to me than all others excepting only those of my own family.

Yours fraternally,

LEE S. TILLOTSON 33°,

Past Grand Master.

MONTPELIER, VERMONT,
September 15, 1920.

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST LODGE

On November 10, 1781, a charter was issued by St. Andrews Grand Lodge of Massachusetts to John Barrett and others for a masonic lodge at Springfield, Vermont, under the name "Vermont Lodge". The number of this lodge in the Massachusetts register was 17.

The early history of Vermont Lodge is closely interwoven with the civil history of that period. The petition for the charter was dated at Cornish, *Vermont*, May 11, 1781. At that time several of the towns in the southwestern part of New Hampshire had annexed themselves to Vermont, and on April 6, 1781, representatives from thirty-five towns on the eastern side of the Connecticut River took their seats in the general assembly of Vermont then sitting at Windsor, and in October, 1781, the legislature of Vermont, met at Charlestown, New Hampshire.¹ There had been no election of Lieutenant Governor by the people of Vermont that year, and Colonel Elisha Paine of Lebanon, New Hampshire, was chosen to that office by the legislature. He also served the same year as chief justice of the supreme court. This union with the New Hampshire towns lasted only a few months, being dissolved in February, 1782. Thus we have an explanation of the fact that the petition for the charter of Vermont Lodge was dated at Cornish, *Vermont*.

The following is taken from the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, 1733-1792, page 294:

"At a meeting of the Grand Lodge held at Free Mason Hall, Thursday, Nov. 8, 1781, 4 o'clock P. M. on special occasion. * * * * Brother Col. John Barrett presented a petition signed by himself, Amos Emerson, Bartlett Hinds, Stephen Alvord, Thomas Sterne, John House, and thirteen other Brethren dated State of Vermont, Cornish, 11th May, 1781, Praying this Grand Lodge would Please to grant the Petitioners a charter of Erection. Brother Barrett withdrawing, the Grand Master directed the Sec'y to read the Petition, Whereupon the Grand Lodge Granted the Prayer on the same Conditions that charters have heretofore been Granted by this Grand Lodge to Petitioners from states of New Hampshire and Connecticut. Expenses of the evening Paid by Bro. Barrett."

The original charter is still in existence in the possession of Vermont Lodge at Windsor. It bears among others the signa-

¹Thompson's Vermont, II, pages 61 to 72.

ture of Paul Revere, then Grand Senior Warden of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. The following is a copy of that historic document made by the author from the original:²

"To all the Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons to whom these presents shall come:

The Most Worshipful Joseph Webb Esqr. Grand Master of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, duly authorized and appointed, and in ample form install'd, together with his Grand Wardens, send Greeting:

Whereas a petition has been presented to us by John Barrett Esqr., Amos Emerson, Bartlett Hinds, Francis Beatty, Thomas Stern, Stephen Alvord, John House, Timothy Bedle, Ebenezer Green, John Payne Junr., Thomas Bingham, Ziba Hall, Elihu Newell, Nathaniel Hall, John Hewitt, Charles Bowen, Alexander Ralston, Phineas Hutchins, Jonas Prescott, George Agur, all ancient Free and Accepted Masons, resident in Springfield, state of Vermont, praying that they, with such others as may think proper to join them may be erected a regular Lodge of Free and accepted Masons under the Name, Title and Designation of VERMONT Lodge, with full power to enter apprentices, pass Fellow Crafts and raise Master Masons:

Which Petition appearing to us as tending to the advancement of Ancient Masonry, and the general good of the Craft, have unanimously agreed that the prayer of the Petition be granted:

Know ye therefore, that we, the Grand Master and Wardens, by virtue of the power and Authority aforesaid, and reposing special trust and confidence in the prudence, fidelity & Skill in Masonry of our beloved Brethren above named, have constituted and appointed, and by these presents do constitute and appoint them, the said John Barrett Esqr., Amos Emerson, Bartlett Hinds, Francis Beatty, Thomas Stern, Stephen Alvord, John House, Timothy Bedle, Ebenezer Green, John Payne Junr., Thomas Bingham, Ziba Hall, Elihu Newell, Nathaniel Hall, John Hewitt, Charles Bowen, Alexander Ralston, Phineas Hutchins, Jonas Prescott, George Agur, a regular Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons under the Name, Title and Designation of VERMONT Lodge, hereby giving and granting unto them and their Successors, full power and Authority to meet and convene as Masons within the Town of Springfield, to receive and enter Apprentices, pass Fellowcrafts, and raise Master Masons upon the payment of such moderate compositions for the same as hereafter may be determined by said Lodge. Also to make choice of Master, Wardens and other Office bearers annually, or otherwise as they shall see cause.—To receive and collect funds for the relief of poor & decay'd Brethren, their Widows or children, and in general to transact all matters relating to Masonry which may to them appear for the good of the Craft, according to the ancient Usage and Custom of Masons.

And we do hereby require the said constituted Brethren to attend the Grand Lodge, or quarterly communications, by themselves or their Proxies (which are their Master and Wardens for the time being) And also to keep a fair and regular Record of all their proceedings, and to lay them before the Grand Lodge when required.

And we do hereby enjoin upon our said Brethren to behave themselves respectfully and obediently to their Superiors in Office, and not desert said Lodge without leave of their Master and Wardens. And we do hereby declare the precedences of the said Lodge, in the Grand Lodge, and elsewhere, to commence from the Date of these presents, and re-

²Brother Koon, in his sketch of Vermont Lodge in the Early Records of the Grand Lodge of Vermont, states that "the original Massachusetts charter was burned many years ago." Such, however, is not the fact.

quire all Ancient Masons, especially those holding of this Grand Lodge to acknowledge and receive them and their Successors, as regular constituted Free and Accepted Masons, and treat them accordingly.

Given under our Hands, and the Seal of the Grand Lodge affixed, at Boston, New England, State of Massachusetts, this Tenth Day of November, 1781, and of Masonry, 5781.

SAMUEL BARRETT	D. G. M.	
PAUL REVERE	S. G. W.	
EDWARD PROCTER	J. G. W.	
THOMAS URAM	S. G. D.	
WINTHROP GRAY	J. G. D.	
JOHN SYMMES	G. S.	(Grand
NATHANIEL FELLOWS	G. S.	Stewards.)
In the margin: Seal — "JOSEPH WEBB,	G. M.	

Received Thirty six Shillings for Engrossing this Charter.
James Carter G. C.

Received Two Guineas for this Charter.

John Lowell Gd. Treasr.

Wm. Hoskins Gd. Sec'y."

On the back: "Rec'd this charter of Vermont Lodge this eighth day of October A. D. 1795 by brother Stephen Jacob, their Secretary.

Thos. Tolman G. Sec."

Although Vermont Lodge was chartered to meet in Springfield, Vermont, it, in fact, organized and held its meetings in Charlestown, New Hampshire, until some time in 1788 or 1789. To North Star Lodge of Manchester, Vermont, which was chartered and organized in 1785, (see next chapter), therefore, belongs the honor of having been the first masonic lodge to actually convene upon Vermont soil.

The original records of Vermont Lodge, covering the period from November 29, 1781, the date of its first meeting, to August 20, 1788, are in existence in the possession of the lodge at Windsor. The records from August 20, 1788 to December 7, 1818, are missing. They were probably burned in a fire which is mentioned in the record for December 7, 1818, as having destroyed "all their books and papers of record." The following is a copy of the record of the first meeting:

"Vermont Lodge held under jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge as per charter affixed at Boston, first held at the House of Abel Walker, Innholder, in Charlestown No. 4, State New Hampshire on Thursday November ye 29, 1781.

Those of the members then present:

R. W. John Barrett	Master P. T.
Phineas Hutchins	S. W. P. T.
George Agur	J. W. P. T.
Stephen Alvord	

Visiting Bro. Geo. Kimball.

Proposals for initiation by the R. W. John Barrett: Josiah Goldsmith, James Bowtwell, Daniel Gould, Stephen Jacob;

Br. Hutchins: Ezra Stiles, Elkany Day;

Br. Eager: Amos Babcock.

Lodge closed till Tuesday the 18th December to meet at Br. Bowen's in Charlestown.

Charles Bowen Secy. P. T."

The first election of officers was held December 18, 1781, when the following were chosen:

John Barrett	Master
Ranna Cossett *	S. W.
Alexander Ralston	J. W.
Ebenezer Green	S. D.
John House	J. D.
Charles Bowen	Treas.
George Kimball	Secy.
Moses Emerson	Toiler

The following is a list of the masters of Vermont Lodge from its organization to 1833, except the period from 1789 to 1794 inclusive of which there is no record.

John Barrett	1781 to 1785
Jotham White	1786
George Kimball	1787
Benjamin Moore	1788
Stephen Jacob	1795 to 1797
Alba Cady	1798 to 1799
Isaac Green	1800 to 1802
John Henry	1803 to 1804
Timothy Lull	1805
Joseph Winslow	1806 to 1810, 1814
Jabish (or Jabez) Hunter	1811, 1813, 1815
Abisha Hoisington	1812
William Donoghue	1816, 1817, 1823, 1827, 1828, 1829
Return B. Brown	1818
Thomas Boynton	1819
James Lowe	1820 to 1821
Leland Howard	1822
John H. Colton	1824
Wyman Spooner	1825, 1826
Charles E. Coleston	1830 to 1833

The records, during the very early days, were very briefly kept and contain very little other than a report of the officers and members present, degrees conferred, bills paid and other routine business. The meetings in Charlestown appear to have usually been held at the house of Jotham White, during the early days. A little later the records are headed "Masons Hall" and do not show its exact location.

The following, with reference to the lodge holding its meetings in Charlestown instead of Springfield, is found in the records of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts under date December 24, 1782:

* The appearance of the name of Ranna Cossett in this list is difficult to explain. He was not one of the charter members of the lodge, and there is no record of his having been admitted as a member.