

Fredericksburg Lodge 4, A.F. & A.M.

The Trestle Board

July 2019



Illustrious Brother George Washington's Mother Lodge

Stated
Communication
2nd Friday*

* Except in June & November



Fellowship 6:00 p.m.
Dinner 6:30 p.m.
Stated Communication
7:30 p.m.

James M. Snyder

Master

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Phone: 540-903-2937 E-Mail: Jamie-Snyder@usa.net

First Extant Recorded Meeting, September 1, 1752

First Recorded Conferral of the Royal Arch Degree in America, December 22, 1753

Chartered by the Grand Lodge of Scotland July 21, 1758

Chartered by the Grand Lodge of Virginia, January 30, 1787

We are the Community



From the East



Brethren,

We are getting into the summer and I hope you will have an enjoyable one. I would like to congratulate David Placious and Huey Allen did their Master Mason return during the April Stated communication and received their Master Mason certificate.

Autistic girl 'finds her voice' with Masonic group, plans comedy event

There was a very nice article on the Rainbow Girls, the inclusion of our brothers and the comedy event. We are proud of the girls and the work they have done this year. To read the article, follow the link below.

[Link to Story](#)



The Bible is Done for the year

The last trip for the George Washington Obligation Bible was complete last month. This is the last trip that is scheduled for this year.

The bible went to George Washington Lodge in New York. Worshipful Warren West, Brother Chris Tripp and I formed the bible team. Seen below, in the lodge room with Right Worshipful Chad Ploth. It is always interesting to see the difference in ritual and how different jurisdictions work.



We attended the RW Ploth's DDGM visit to the district. The district includes 8 lodges with 7 of them meeting within the Grand Lodge of NY building. During this meeting, the officers of all 8 lodges were installed for their year. One officer represented each of the officer for the 8 lodges except the Worshipful Master. All 8 Masters attended the alter, 4 kneeling and four placed their right hand of a brother shoulder to be sworn in. This us to be the practice for this district though in recent years, they have moved away from it. This year, RW Poth has brought the district back together and even gave a roaring inspirational speech.

Are You a Traveling Man?

If you travel and have a Masonic experience or visit a lodge out of state please let us know so we can share with the brethren.

Brothers of the Leaf

On June 6 and 7, Wor. Bro. Dan Goodwin and I traveled to Burlington, NC to attend the “Smoking in the Carolina’s” cigar festival. This two-day event brings in cigar lovers from all over the country to enjoy good food, good drink, and more especially good cigars. While there we met many Masonic Brothers (both Blue Lodge and Prince Hall Lodge) from NC, Fla, and Georgia to include a District Deputy Grand Master from NC. One of the cigar company owners was a Brother who made a point to acknowledge Wor. Bro. Dan and I as we enter the event the first night.

Wearing the Lodge 4 ball cap was the biggest ice breaker as many Brothers came up to offer greetings and ask about Lodge 4 and talk about their Lodge and the Brotherhood as a whole.

One thing that should be stated aside from the Brotherly love that was displayed, is others that were not connected to Masonry saw how we interacted with one another, not as strangers meeting for the first time, but as Brothers with a common bond meeting for the first time. This display caused others to inquire about how to join the craft and a desire to belong to such a fraternity as illustrious as ours.

SEARCH FOR FREDERICKSBURG’S “LOST MASTER” – PART I

There are many mysteries and legends surrounding the origins and history of our storied Lodge. Perhaps the most intriguing is that of the mysterious, lost ‘First Master’ of the Lodge at Fredericksburgh in 1752. The quotes around the title are put there deliberately, for there has been much confusion surrounding that earliest recorded meeting on September 1, 1752. That meeting has been frequently described as the first meeting of the Lodge and the date on which the Lodge was established. Let us immediately set the record straight—there is nothing in the Minutes of September 1, 1752, to suggest that officers were elected or installed, or that the Lodge received a Charter, or that anything particularly unusual happened that night. In fact, Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 is considered a *time immemorial* Lodge, which means among other things that we do not know when it came into existence. The Lodge’s famous First Minute Book consisted of loose sheets that were only bound together in their present form in 1926. Those Minutes cover the years 1752 to 1771. They were rescued, along with the George Washington Masonic Obligation Bible and the Scottish and Virginia Charters, by Wor. William Ware a few months before the Battle of Fredericksburg in 1862. They were removed to Danville for the duration of the war. Unfortunately, the Lodge’s Minutes covering 1771 to 1862 were lost when the Lodge was ransacked and have never been recovered.

Therefore, the most that can be said is that September 1, 1752, is the earliest recorded meeting date in the Lodge’s First Minute Book. There were fourteen members present at that meeting, including Daniel Campbell, the Secretary and Treasurer, in whose hand the Minutes of that and many subsequent meetings were presumably written. Bro. Campbell later became Worshipful Master and played a key role in procuring the Lodge’s Scottish Charter in 1758.

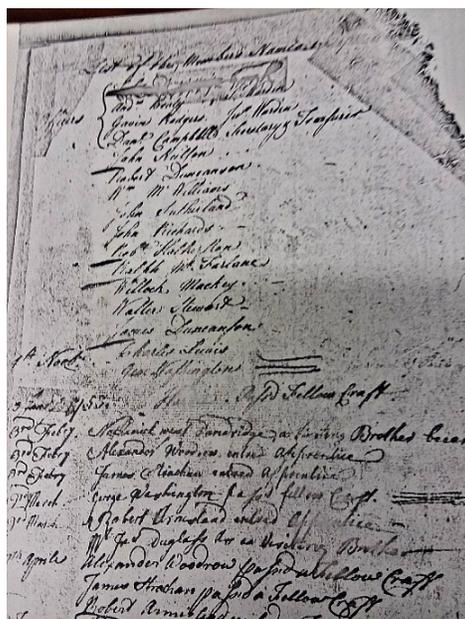


Figure 1 – Minutes page from 9/1/1752

Famously, the name of the Master that night was blotted out. This has given rise to much speculation. One theory is that the Worshipful Master was Simon Fraser, and that his name may have been blotted out after he fought for the British in the American Revolution and fell at Saratoga. One problem with that theory is that R.W. Fraser presided, some fifteen months later, over the first recorded conferral of the Royal Arch Degree. An obvious question is why his name would have been blotted from the Minutes in September, 1752, but not December, 1753. Though compelling, the Simon Fraser theory has now been disproved.

To recover the actual name, we must go to the source—the Minute Book itself. Fig. 1 shows the enigmatic page, taken from a black-and-white facsimile produced in 1965. Fig. 2 is a blown-up view of the Master’s name. Many have heard the story, but few have seen the Minute Book for themselves. Doing so clears up a very common misconception—that the Master’s name has been entirely blotted out. This is not quite the case.

In actuality, as seen in Fig. 2, the name has not been entirely blotted out. The middle portion of the name appears to have been effaced by smearing ink of a similar color to that used in the writing, though slightly lighter in color. The top of the letters is visible, as are parts of the bottom letters. There are a series of what appear to be hatch marks along the bottom of the last name—possibly indicating that the name was first cross-hatched out, then partially blotted. We may be grateful for this halfhearted attempt, for it raises the possibility that, with modern technology, we may be able to finally dispel the mystery. It doesn't help that when the Minute Book was bound in 1926, gauze was fixed with adhesive over the pages to slow future deterioration. This also partially obscured the writing, but at least we have a shot

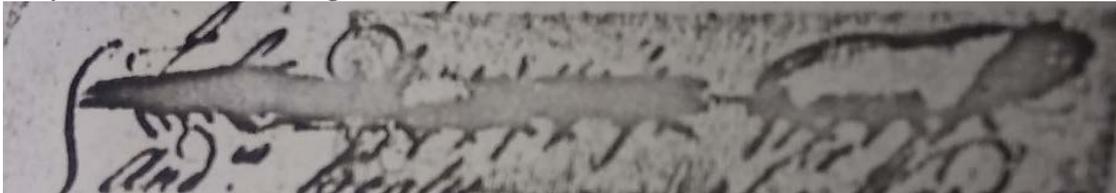


Figure 2 – Magnified and enhanced image of the “Lost Master’s” name

To decode the “Lost Master’s” first name, let us consider the role played by Daniel Campbell, whose name is spread liberally across the pages of the Lodge’s Minutes. At the time, he was the Lodge’s Secretary and Treasurer. An examination of the first several pages of Minutes after September 1, 1752, including that of November 4, when Brother George Washington was initiated, shows them written in a similar flowing hand. Therefore, the first approach is to compare the writing in Minutes for that and subsequent dates with the visible portion of the “Lost Master’s” name.

Of course, it cannot definitively be proven that this is R.W. Campbell’s handwriting, but it is at least highly plausible. The Minutes appear to be written in a flowing script that was very popular in the mid-1700s in America and England, variously referred to as English Cursive, Round Hand, or Italian Hand. Admittedly, this is the judgment of an amateur, who humbly suggests that it may be profitable to submit the Minutes for examination by a professional handwriting analyst. However, we live in an era when modern computer technology in the hands of armchair historians can yield some fruit.

I will submit that we now have the “Lost Master’s” first name, definitively putting to rest the Simon Fraser theory. For the “Lost Master’s” first name is now demonstrated (with near certainty) to be—*John*.

Fig. 3 shows the image of the top portion of the name with the smudge removed. This has been enhanced, and allows the mind to focus on the most visible portion of the “Lost Master’s” name—the top. Obviously, the last name is much longer than the first name, probably containing two or three syllables.



Figure 3 - Smudge and bottom of “Lost Master’s” name removed

Fig. 4 shows three images: (a) the top of the first name, (b) the name ‘John’ from the name ‘John Neilson,’ and (c) the top of the “Lost Master’s” name superimposed over that of John Neilson. A few words should be spoken about John Neilson, who was himself a prominent member of the Lodge. His name appears in the Minutes on September 1, 1752, a few lines below that of the “Lost Master.” Combining the two images results in a nearly perfect match. The loop of the ‘J’ is also consistent with that of many other Johns, James’s, and Jacobs throughout the early minutes—including Jacob Van Bram, a prominent early visitor from Williamsburg who will figure prominently in Part II.

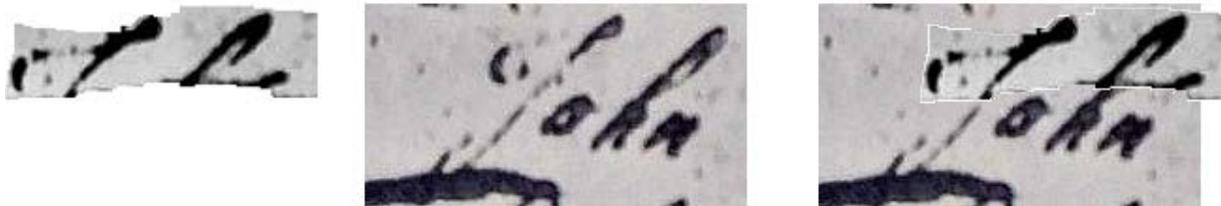


Figure 4 – (a) Top of the “Lost Master’s” first name, (b) John Neilson’s first name, and (c) the Lost Master’s first name superimposed over that of John Neilson

To summarize, thus far we have shown, with high certainty, that the “Lost Master” was not Simon Fraser, and that his first name was John. In Part II next month, we will undertake the search for the “Lost Master’s” more elusive last name and will unveil a new theory that, if true, would yield surprising new light on the origins of Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 and its connection with our Ill. Bro. George Washington.

From the Secretary's Desk

Brethren,

As the year is half way through we still have 39 members that have not yet paid their dues for 2019 of which 7 are delinquent with their 2018 Dues. The members that are delinquent have already been notified by the Grand Lodge with a letter and still have not made an effort to pay their dues. Their names will be read at the July Stated Communication and held over until the August Stated Communication where a vote will be taken for Suspension for Non Payment of Dues.

Please feel free to contact me if there are any questions.

Fraternally
Brother Michael Moses PM
540.842.7376

Upcoming Activities

July Events

7/6 8:00 Pancake Breakfast

7/6 – 7/7 Blood Drive

7/9 Community Meal

7/12 6:00 Dinner/Stated

7/23 Community Meal

7/30 Community Meal

Dinner for Stated Communication: Our OES sisters are serving pulled pork and a little pulled chicken in case we have members that don't eat pork; coleslaw; baked beans; and/or mac and cheese; and apple pie or peach cobbler for dessert.

Mark you calendar – Lodge Picnic is August 24th at 3:00 at the YMCA on Butler Road. We will provide the drinks and burgers and dogs from the grill. 3:00 to 6:00 is the picnic with swimming at the YMCA's pool from 6:00 to 8:00. Hope to see you there.

Officers' of Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4

Anno Lucis 6019

Senior Warden	Stanley Kennedy	stankennedy@verizon.net
Junior Warden	Chris Tripp	tripp4srramason@outlook.com
Treasurer	WB Charles Cooper	ccooper627@cox.net
Secretary	WB Michael Moses	fxbglodge4sec@gmail.com
Senior Deacon	Charles Dirienzo	chuckdirienzo@1976.usna.com
Junior Deacon	Joe Gilkerson	gilkerson@hotmail.com
Senior Steward	Pat McConnell	patmccnll@gmail.com
Junior Steward	Michael Tucci	tucci.michael@yahoo.com
Marshall	Keven Valentine	vak242@yahoo.com
Tyler	Shawn Bryar	asbryar@verizon.net

Trustees



Jeff St.Onge PDDGM	2019
Charles Cooper PM	2020
Dennis Berry PM	2021
Chris Decker PM	2022
Dan Goodwin PM	2023



Living Past Masters

Carter G. Wells	1963
Rudolph E. Griffith	1974
Henry W. Baker	1975
Edward L. Donalson	1983
Carlton D. Beach	1985
Dennis W. Berry	1986
Thomas C. Shelton	1988
William J. White	1989
James R. Adams	1992
Robert W. Benish	1993
Michael J. McCray	1995
Steven M. Gallahan	1996
James J. Fox, *	1997
Charles B. Pasto	1998
J. Travis Walker	2000
Daniel W. Thompson	2001



W. Robert Brammer *	2002
Sheridan G. Harrod	2003
Jene G. Parrotte	2004
Steven W. Sanford *	2005
Richard D. Dey	2006
Anthony L. Rudder	2007
Jeffrey D. St. Onge *	2009
Shelton S. Mackey	2010
Shelby L. Chandler	2011
Christopher J. Decker	2012
Christopher R. Wilson	2013
Jeffery L. Mitchell	2014
Jeffery P. VanCuren	2015
James L. Ragsdale	2016
Michael T. Moses	2017
Daniel T. Goodwin	2018

* Past DDGMs

FredericksburgLodge.No.4A.F.&A.M.

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