

Address to Ashlar Lodge, No. 564 GRC, Ottawa

by

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Friday, November 3, 2000

Right Worshipful Sir, Right Worshipful Sirs, Very Worshipful Sirs, Worshipful Sirs  
and Brethren, Brethren all

Some months ago W. Bro. Jack Penny asked me to prepare a presentation for Ashlar Lodge in the fall; an activity which I consider an honour to be asked to undertake.

As a newly initiated candidate we are admonished to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge. For anyone wishing to delve into the administrative, **historical**, and managerial aspects of Freemasonry in Ontario, I suggest that you speak with your Lodge Secretary about enrolling in the courses of the College of Freemasonry. For anyone wishing to progress towards the East, I strongly urge you to take the courses - four of them at \$20.00 each. There can be quite a bit of reading, but like everything in life one can plunge into great detail or skim the surface.

Or, one can join one of the Masonic research organizations - the Philaethes Society (US), our own Heritage Lodge, No. 730, or the English Quatuor Coronati Correspondence Circle. All of these are open to Master Masons on request - that is, you simply apply and pay the fees to belong. Very few are "by invitation only".

And our own Grand Lodge has The Newsletter of the Committee on Masonic Education. This had been produced for a number of years for members at an annual cost of \$12.00, but has been defunct for the last three. It is being rejuvenated by Grand Lodge and I would encourage all of you to send in a subscription. It's an interesting publication which provides some interesting facts, and answers some of the more challenging questions which occur to us.

My current hobby, to use the term loosely, is to research military Lodges and I thought I would use one of these, as the focus of a brief presentation and discussion on a matter which, today, is still alive and flourishing, to the detriment of many people around the globe. I mentioned that this is a “hobby” and as that great Mason, Brother Anonymous is often quoted as saying, “There is a fine line between “hobby” and “mental illness”.

But first I want to leave a few thoughts with you regarding our military brethren.

FIRST: The spread of our Fraternity around the globe owes more to our military brethren than we really give them credit. Explorers would find “new lands”, usually in search of resources for the “Mother-Country”; but it would be the role of the military in the period 1700-1900 to hold the areas and make it suitable for settlers, more explorers, and other immigrants.

SECOND: There are more lodges in the military, historically speaking, than we usually recognize. In the military units of the British Empire of its day, were about 485 Lodges in military units, of which there were 5% under the Scottish Constitution; 43% under the Irish Constitution; 30% under

Antients Warrants; 13% holding Moderns Warrants and 5% “English” (i.e. UGLE).

THIRD: The first military Lodges were Irish; the oldest known being the Lodge in Le Regiment Walshe which had been raised in Ireland for “French service” and is referred to in documents dating from 1665. As over 50% of the British Army was raised on the so-called Irish Establishment, many military Lodges were influenced to practice a wide range of rituals as practised by the Irish. This was also reinforced by the many Antients Lodges in the Military. This has left behind in North America a rich fabric of masonic degrees, many of which are, today, embodied in both the “York Rite” and the “Scottish Rite”.

FOURTH: In North America we owe the early development of formalized masonic government to our military brethren. It was Freemasons in the military (and usually members of military lodges) who established the Moderns Provincial Grand Lodge of Quebec, Antients Provincial Grand Lodge of New York, Provincial Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, Antients Provincial Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia, to name a few.

FIFTH: The Antients-Moderns split in Britain was a very difficult time and during the period 1751-1813 masons of one “type” were prohibited from visiting their brethren of the “other type”. Such a split was not as evident in North America where masonic politics were less important than getting together to form a shield for mutual defence and support against Indians, the French, or the rebel Colonialists of the Thirteen Colonies.

SIXTH: There is no single document or book outlining accurately all the masonic lodges in the military and we may never know the full extent due to the loss of many files, records, documents, etc. The Grand Lodge of Ireland’s register prior to 1761 has long disappeared and there are glaring gaps in the earliest available register. The fact that many Lodges existed under extremely difficult wartime conditions (they were, after all, housed in British military units) meant that documents, records, regalia, etc were often lost to enemy action, or the elements themselves. Lack of returns to Grand Lodge does not mean that a Lodge was not working, it was normal for Grand Lodges to waive regular reporting and payment of Grand Lodge dues for our military brethren.

I wanted, this evening to review, briefly, the activities of one military Lodge . .

There are many cautions to give but I leave you with one. The way of conducting Masonic business was far, far, different in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries than today. Even though words appear the same, the real meaning may have been very different. As one example, a travelling military lodge could take in civilians and when it left for another assignment with its regiment, it would often leave a copy of its Warrant behind with the civilians who could then function as a Lodge until they obtained a new Warrant, often many years later.

**38th Regiment of Foot****[now part of The Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's) The Prince of Wales's Division]**

The 38<sup>th</sup> Foot was raised under the authority of a Warrant dated February 13, 1702 which authorized Colonel Lillingston to raise a regiment of foot in Litchfield. In 1706 the 38<sup>th</sup> (then called Lillingston's Regiment) was assigned to the Caribbean where it remain for almost 60 years and returned to Ireland in 1765. In 1766 Brevet Colonel Cadwallader Blayney of the Coldstream Guards was made Colonel of the 38<sup>th</sup> Foot. Blayney became the 9<sup>th</sup> Baron Blayney and later Commander-in-Chief and Lieutenant-General of Munster. Although we don't know where he was made a Mason, he was Master of the New Lodge, No. 313 ER(M), which met at the Horn Tavern, London and was Grand Master of the Moderns for 1764-66.

In 1775 the 38<sup>th</sup> Foot was detached to the American Colonies and placed in garrison in Boston, where it fought at Bunker Hill. In 1781 it was assigned to New York and when all British forces left the United States at the end of the Revolution it removed to Nova Scotia until 1788 when it returned to Ireland. Charles Lennox, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Richmond, and Governor-General of Canada in 1818, was Colonel of the 38<sup>th</sup> Foot immediately preceding this appointment and his untimely death on August 28,

1819 at Richmond, Ontario (possibly closer to Fallowfield).

The 38<sup>th</sup> Foot fought in the Peninsula under Wellington (who was also a Mason); South Africa in 1819; India and Burma; Gibraltar; the Crimea (1854); and in the Nile 1884-85 campaign. In 1881 the 38<sup>th</sup> Foot disappeared as such and was combined with the 80<sup>th</sup> (Staffordshire Volunteers) in the new South Staffordshire Regiment and fought in Egypt and the Boer War. In 1959 the South Staffordshire was amalgamated with the North Staffordshire Regiment (ex 64<sup>th</sup> and 98<sup>th</sup> Regiments of Foot) into the Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's). This, in a nutshell, is the 200 year history of a famous British Regiment.

Two Irish Lodges have worked in the 38<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot. There have been no English or Scottish Lodges. It is likely that when the 38<sup>th</sup> Foot served in North America both Irish lodges probably worked here. The Lodge which I wanted to present this evening is the second of these two Lodges.

REF: I61 **Lodge No. 38 IC, in Lillingston's Regiment** (restyled as the 38th Regiment of Foot in 1751) 1734/5-1801  
[now part of The Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales')]

The Grand Lodge of Ireland issued Warrant No. 38 on either November 1734 or September 1735, to hold a Lodge in Lillingston's Regiment (restyled as the 38th Regiment of Foot in 1751). There is no record of the issue of the Warrant. No names of members are recorded in the Grand Lodge Register. The Warrant was erased on November 5, 1801.

This is the sole amount of information which is known to exist about the Lodge. There is no Irish Grand Lodge Register predating 1761 and although the Warrant was erased from the Register in 1801, the Lodge could have ceased working many decades before that.

REF: I62 **Lodge No. 441 IC, in the 38th Regiment of Foot**, New York City

1765-1840

[now part of The Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's)]

The Grand Lodge of Ireland issued Warrant No. 441 on July 4, 1765 to hold a Lodge in the 38th Regiment of Foot. Volume 1 of the Grand Lodge Register records only 3 brethren registered in 1765: Matthew Tucker as Master, and William Murray and Thomas Matthews as Wardens (it was standard Irish practice to name them only as “Wardens” but today we would assume they were “Senior” and “Junior” Warden respectively.) This appears to have been a large Lodge, for a military one, and although registrations were “hit and miss” over the years, up to July 5, 1823, a total of 59 brethren were registered with Grand Lodge.

In 1775, the Regiment, accompanied by its Lodge, found itself as one of the units assigned to General Gage’s army quartered in Boston. Sergeant John Batt of the 38th Regiment of Foot was Master of Lodge No. 441 IC at this time (1775). In keeping with the tradition of admitting civilians, the Lodge initiated Prince Hall and 13<sup>1</sup> other American Negroes on March 6, 1775.

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<sup>1</sup> The total number of newly initiated African-Americans is 15 as shown by S. Brent Morris, FPS, BF, in the 1998 Blue Friar Lecture The High Degrees in the United States 1730-1830, as published in The Philalethes, Vol LI, Number 2, April 1998. Morris does not show the date of initiation.

On departure from Boston in 1781, the 38th Regiment was assigned to New York City and Lodge No. 441 IC went with it. Lodge 441 was one of the founding Lodges of the Grand Lodge of New York (along with three other Irish and three Antients military Lodges and 3 stationary Antients Lodges) which was formed on January 23, 1781 and authorized by the Grand Lodge of England (Antients) in 1782 as a Provincial Grand Lodge. At the formation meeting in 1781, Bro. John Brownrigg of Lodge No. 441 was elected as Senior Grand Warden.

The Regiment was returned to Boston on the cessation of hostilities in 1784 in preparation for its move to Nova Scotia. It is unclear whether in 1781 or 1784, as it was organizing to leave the Boston area, the Lodge left its resident black brethren with a permit which allowed them to hold meetings, walk on St. John's Day, and to bury their dead, but not to take in initiates or award degrees. During the period of the Revolution, the Lodge called itself African Lodge No. 1. Some time after the 38th Regiment and Lodge No. 441 IC left the United States at the end of the Revolution, Prince Hall made application for a Warrant to the Moderns Grand Lodge which issued Warrant No. 459 on September 29, 1784, for African Lodge with Prince Hall as the first Master. The Warrant was not received in Boston until April 29, 1787. This Lodge was not recognized by white Masonry in the United States and it began to initiate more and more candidates and, eventually, to issue charters to other lodges in black

communities; which would later become known around the world as Prince Hall Masonry.

As Brent Morris notes:

“In 1792 when the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts was formed, African Lodge did not join but remained attached to England. This could be due to loyalty to the premier Grand Lodge or to racism from the newly formed Grand Lodge. However, *the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts also didn't recognize St. Andrew's Lodge which had a Scottish Charter*” (my emphasis). Morris goes on to say that “There is evidence that white Masons visited African Lodge and that England relied on Prince Hall for information on Boston Lodges. In any event African Lodge continued its separate existence until 1813 when it and all other English-chartered American Lodges were erased from the rolls of the newly formed United Grand Lodge of England. Then in 1827 officers of African Lodge declared themselves independent and constituted themselves as a Grand Lodge. From these origins grew the large, parallel Masonic organization known today as “Prince Hall Masonry””.

R. W. Bro. McLeod, P. G. Historian, G.L.O.C.I.T.P.O.O. notes that “African

Lodge continued to meet, and to confer degrees; it submitted returns to England, sent contributions to the Charity Fund there, and received replies from London, as late as 1797. . . (and that) although letters were sent from African Lodge No. 1 to England in 1802 and 1806, no replies were received”. In the Moderns’ renumbering of Lodges in 1792, Warrant No. 459 was renumbered as 370 ER(M).

Prince Hall, Master of African Lodge No. 1, died on December 4, 1807, at the age of 72 years. At the time of union of the Antients and Moderns, in 1813, African Lodge, No. 459 ER(M), was erased for failing to have provided the returns required to Grand Lodge. Correspondence from African Lodge No. 1 to London dated as late as 1826 likewise received no response.

The Lodge was opened in Berhampore, India, in 1822, but closed in 1823. The Warrant was revived and the Lodge opened on March 2, 1840, in Limerick. The Warrant was returned on August 6, 1840, however, “in obedience to the orders of Sir Edward Blakeney, commanding the forces in Ireland”. In 1842 Grand Lodge indicated (it is not clear whether orally or in writing) to the Regiment, then in Corfu, that the Warrant was available to its members when they desired. Later the same year it was returned to the Regiment, although it does not appear to have been used. The Warrant was kept on the roll and finally removed from the printed Report of 1885. In his History

of Freemasonry, 1887, Robert Freke Gould, includes the following entry under a list entitled “Existing British Field Lodges, 1886” - “38th Ft., 441, I., 1765”, thus indicating that the Lodge was still working in 1886, although it is likely that he was looking at a Grand Lodge list which still held the number of the Warrant, even though the Lodge had not been working for many years.

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To return to Boston in 1781 . . .

Between 1781 and 1792 a number of lodges in Massachusetts formed a Provincial Grand Lodge - there had already been a Provincial Grand Lodge in existence since 1733 (which became a Moderns PGL in 1751) but the Moderns were generally a dying group towards the end of the eighteenth century, especially in colonial areas where there were liberal sprinklings of Antients, Irish and Scottish Lodges and Masons. There was also a Scottish Lodge in Boston, which referred to itself as St. Andrew’s Grand Lodge and which chose to remain aloof from the moves to establish an independent Grand Lodge in the State. In 1792, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts was formed. There is no evidence on either side that African Lodge No. 1/No. 459/350

ER(M) was invited to participate in masonic activities at this period, leading up to and including the formation of this Grand Lodge. R. W. Bro. McLeod cites a comment in 1785 by John Eliot (later to become Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts) that “white masons [who are] not [any] more skilled . . . than their black brethren, will not acknowledge them . . . . The truth is that they are ashamed on being on an equality with blacks.”

And what about Prince Hall, the Freemason?

There is more about Prince Hall that we do not know than what we think we know for sure. His birth date has variously been reported as 1735 or 1748. His obituary notice in six Boston newspapers, show his age as 72 years on the day of his death - December 4, 1807.

Prince Hall had three or four wives, depending on the documents one reads. He married Sarah (no last name) on November 2, 1763; she died on February 26, 1769. He married Flora Gibbs in Gloucester, Massachusetts on August 22, 1770, where he had gone after being freed by his owner, William Hall. We do not know what happened to Flora, but some time after the cessation of the American Revolution Prince Hall married

Phoebe Baker, and they lived on Philip Street, Boston, until Prince Hall's death. By the way, another record shows a Prince Hall marrying a Zilpha (or Zilpoy) Johnson on June 28, 1804 and she was named as Administratrix of his estate.

It is not even clear where Prince Hall is buried. Some reports indicate it was at Coppis Hill Cemetery or Copp's Burying Ground, at Boston, but this is not proven. Prince Hall's first wife, Sarah, is buried here in a marked grave.

Three Prince Hall's and one Primus Hall from Massachusetts are listed in the records of the Continental Army. It is not clear whether these men were coloured or not.

But it seems to matter little whether we know all these details. Prince Hall has left a legacy for us all.

Today there are at least 40 **Grand** Lodges that trace their origin back to African Lodge No. 459 ER(M). In 1992 there was one Prince Hall Grand Lodge covering constituent Lodges in Ontario and Quebec (originally known as the Widow's Son Grand Lodge of the Province of Canada), and there have been individual Lodges in

many of our major cities.

Lets talk briefly on the issue of Prince Hall Lodges from the perspective of Ontario.

Formally, the issue of Prince Hall masonry appears to have been first raised at the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario in 1899 when the Grand Lodge of Washington recognized the Grand Lodge of Prince Hall Masons of the State of Washington, and supported a request for recognition by other Grand Lodges. Opposition to recognition is recorded as having arisen not because Prince Hall Masons were coloured people, but from the fact that recognition violated the Landmark of “Exclusive Jurisdiction” in that it was considered as flagrantly violating the territoriality of the Grand Lodge of Washington. This would appear to be pretty thin ice for such a position on two grounds: (a) the Grand Lodge of the State of Washington had already agreed to recognize the Prince Hall Grand Lodge so there was no real question of violation of its Jurisdiction; and (b) United Grand Lodge has never appeared to be bound by exclusive jurisdiction in many parts of the globe, even today.

In any case, in July 1899 the Grand Lodge of Washington withdrew requests it

had made for the recognition of the Grand Lodge of Prince Hall Masons - after 17 Grand Lodges had broken off fraternal relations with the G. L. of Washington. I understand that it is this continuing issue of “exclusive jurisdiction” that continues to be a major impediment today for our Grand Lodge, coupled with a fear that “they” might not recognize “us”.

The issue of recognition would lie in darkness for ninety-three years, until the Conference of Grand and District Grand Lodges of Canada, held at Winnipeg on March 21, 1992, unanimously recommended the acceptance of Prince Hall Grand Lodges as approved by the Conference of Prince Hall Grand Lodges as being regular Masonic Grand Lodges. A few weeks later M. W. Bro. Norman E. Byrne formed a special Committee to report to Grand Lodge. At the Annual Communication of 1992 this Committee recommended that:

“ The Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Canada in the Province of Ontario hereby acknowledges the legitimacy or origin of the Masonic Grand Lodges of the Prince Hall Affiliation (specifically those that are approved by the Conference of Prince Hall Grand Lodges), and wishes to go on the record as recognizing the contribution that Prince Hall Masons have made to the

quality of life in the world at large, and particularly in this country. (This resolution refers only to historical matters, and does not authorize intervisitation). It is recommended further that this Grand Lodge continue to pursue a maintenance of this relationship.”

During this time (i.e. up to 1999) a great many Grand Lodges had recognized legitimate Prince Hall Grand Lodges and their member lodges and had permitted intervisitation - this included 26 Grand Lodges in the United States, and 8 in Canada; plus United Grand Lodge, Ireland and Queensland. In fact there may be more.

The June 1999 Grand Lodge Bulletin of the Grand Lodge of Alberta contains a summary of the 17th Annual Conference of Grand Lodges of Canada and reads in part:

“ . . . . A round table discussion took place on the matter of Prince Hall Masonry and the recognition of these Lodges in various Jurisdictions. It became apparent that the incorporation document of each Grand Lodge was unique to their own area and while some claimed authority over certain geographical parts of the country, others simply made reference to the jurisdiction over Masons who were members of a specific Grand Lodge. Within Prince Hall Masonry itself there are those jurisdictions who do not

recognize other Prince Hall Lodges. The consensus was that the matter receive ongoing attention and open dialogue to help resolve the complexity of the various issues.”

In 1994 I noticed that my Lodge, Acacia, No. 561, was discouraged from visiting Acacia Lodge, Buckingham, in a formal manner (i.e. carrying fraternal good wishes from one Jurisdiction to another), although visitation on an individual basis was not halted. WHY this state of affairs? Because the Grand Lodge of Quebec had given formal recognition to the General Conference of Prince Hall Grand Lodges. Today, of course, masonic intercourse exists, although I can't say that I feel that it is actively encouraged in my own Grand Jurisdiction.

My Brethren, we live in a world fraught with racist, religious and linguistic turmoil, where the slightest differences are emphasized and used to create divisions between individuals, families, societies, and the like. It is the most blatant racism and discrimination that should be easiest to spot and to remove. That is far from the case even in our own country, and harder still to prevent overseas.

But it is not just the most blatant and noticeable racism that is so damning, and

which will slowly destroy our societies and organizations. Rather, it is the invidious racism which each person practices - “I’m better than he is (or she is)”; “he/she screwed up, but I don’t expect him/her to perform better”; “he’s just along for the ride”; “what a jerk”; etc. We all do it to varying degrees, it’s part of the human condition.

It is time to stop emphasizing the differences and focus on the similarities. It is time for all of us to make efforts to reach out in understanding to others - and it will be very hard as we may have to learn different languages, relearn our own “English as she is spoke . . . .”. But it will take time and effort to remove the walls and other barriers we have erected.

Brotherly love, relief and truth are the great principles upon which the Craft is founded. Nowhere in the Ritual is there any qualification that they only apply to Brethren who look, think and speak like us. We are expected to apply these principles and the other moral teachings of the Craft to everyone, everywhere, all the time. And not because they would reciprocate - because to be a Freemason **is** to apply these principles to everyone, everywhere, at all times. This is what makes us a Freemason.

Are you strong and motivated enough to start? And to start this evening.

Thank you.

W. Bro. Michael Jenkyns was initiated in February 1990, passed in November 1990 and raised in January 1991. He is a member of the York Rite.

W. Bro. Jenkyns is very interested in Masonic history, particularly in military (or travelling) Lodges attached to military units and the effect which these have had on the evolution of ritual and the overall growth of the Craft around the World.

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He has recently been asked to serve on the Editorial Board of the Newsletter of the Committee of Masonic Education of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario.