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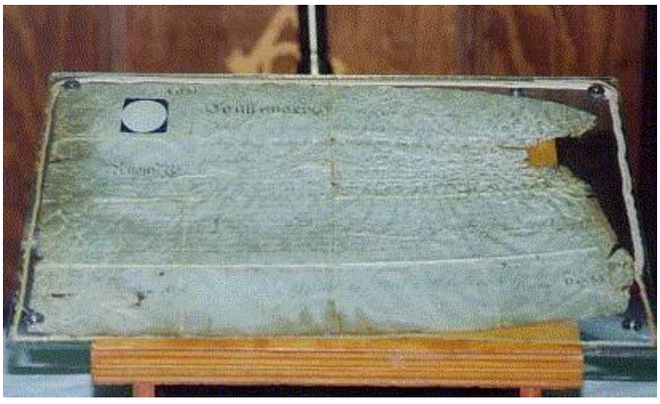
Freemason risks his life to save charter when the Grand Lodge was aflame - Part 1



By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

Courage, self-sacrifice, perseverance, and fortitude in the midst of overwhelming obstacles and oppression. What does Freemasonry mean to you? How much are you willing to sacrifice for your beliefs for equality and freedom? Are we not all charged with the preservation of life, liberty, and justice for all?

These qualities and a great many more have always existed in the hearts and minds of Freemasons. On one such occasion in 1869, in Boston, Massachusetts in the building that also housed the Winthrop House Hotel at the corner of Tremont and Boylston street. It was also the location of the Grand Lodge of Prince Hall of Massachusetts. The brothers of Revere Lodge were locking up the lodge building just after their meeting. Brother George H. Pike was surprised when smoke and flames were flowing from the steam-heated section of the building.

With flames and smoke engulfing the building and devouring everything, Grand Master S.T. Kendall did not flinch nor waver as he knew what had to be done. He rushed into the building, showing all the virtues and selfless courage found in only the best of men and brothers. Brother Kendall crawled into the building to save the Charter which set to work a group of 15 brothers who would change the world forever. Through sparks, smoke, ash, and flame, and at great risk of his own life, brother Kindall reached for the sacred metal tube that held the hallowed and consecrated document. This hallowed document was not just any charter but a symbol, and the future of true equality and the brotherhood of man. But from whence did this document come from?

Our story begins with Brother Prince Hall. Brother Hall's early life is one of mystery. There are several viewpoints about the early life of Brother Hall. Starting with where he was born some of the ideas put forward are Barbados, England, Africa and Maryland. I believe his birth place or date of his birth has been lost to time and our best guess is he was born around 1748. Some of the strongest evidence we have but not one hundred percent conclusive is that he was enslaved.

We find published in 1963 an article in the Philalethes Society Magazine which sited the document of manumission. *"This may certify it may concern that Prince Hall has lived with us 21 (date unclear - may be 25) years and has served us well upon all occasions for which reason we maturely give him his freedom and he is no longer Reckoned a slave but has always accounted as a freeman by us as he has served us faithfully upon*

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The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn

Image: "Portrait in Formal Tuxedo" by Edward Charles Volkert III

By Brett Laird Francis Doyle 32°

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn is a non-masonic organization which formed in the 19th century and is often associated with Freemasonry. The Order was developed in the late 19th century with the discovery of the Cipher Manuscripts.

The Cipher Manuscripts were passed between several masonic scholars until William Wynn Westcott was able to decode them in 1887. Westcott shared the Cipher Manuscripts with fellow Freemason Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers for a second opinion. Mathers in turn shared the findings with another Freemason William Robert Woodman. Mathers and Westcott are credited with developing the decoding of the Cipher Manuscripts into a usable format.

Within the Cipher Manuscripts Westcott found the name and address of Anna Sprengel, a woman living in Germany. Westcott contacted Sprengel who claimed to be in contact with the Secret Chiefs, beings who are responsible for overseeing all matters pertaining to esoteric organizations. Westcott asked Sprengel for permission to form a new temple in London, which Sprengel gave permission for and made Westcott, Mathers and Woodman members of the Order in 1887.

These three leveraged their Masonic and Rosicrucian backgrounds to create a coed, non-Masonic esoteric society focused on Hermeticism, Qabalah, and ritual magic. It should be noted that there is some speculation that the Secret Chiefs, although often described as beings, are also believed to have books and materials containing esoteric knowledge.

Although some of the founders of the Order of the Golden Dawn were Freemasons, the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia (SRIA) is a recognized fraternal order founded in England in 1867, dedicated to esoteric and mystical studies, particularly

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Cont'd from front, "Freemason risks life"

that account we have given him his freedom as witness our hands this ninth day of April 1770. William Hall, Margaret Hall. Even though exhausting research has been done to locate where and when Brother Hall was born, none can be confirmed without some speculation.

According to the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, "We have researched 11 countries, birth records, and in churches in Boston, Massachusetts and the name Prince Hall was not found." Brother Hall was enslaved by William Hall, who was a leather worker by trade in Boston. While Brother Hall was enslaved he was taught the trade of leather working, which one day he would use to his own benefit once he gained his freedom.

Brother Hall found love and married Sara Ritchery in 1763. However, his marriage to his beautiful bride was short and his wife passed away at the age of twenty-four in 1769. Brother Hall soon after gaining his freedom wasted no time finding employment in leather working in Boston, Massachusetts just five years prior to the beginning of the American Revolution when the colonies were aflame with ideas of freedom. Brother Hall's belief in freedom ran deep in his soul. He joined the Continental Army and was one of 100-150 freeman or enslaved black men who fought side-by-side with white soldiers. These men distinguished themselves and are credited with playing a significant role in the war.

Freemasonry for black men during the 1700's in the colonies was unheard of, but Brother Hall would not let that stop him. He recognized that Freemasonry held the values and teachings of 'all men are equal' and he set out to make it so.

To be continued in next month's issue! Pt2

"We profess to be both men and Masons; and challenge the world to try us, and disprove us, if they can."
Martin Delaney, 1853

"Journey Passport" Program
The Houston Valley is participating in the "Journey Passport" program which includes 33 challenges that allow participants to earn six unique Scottish Rite challenge coins. The passport program is designed to take brothers throughout the Valley of Houston and the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite. To learn more and get a passport, contact Brother Jason Rees 32° KCCH at: acompass@yahoo.com

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SCOTTISH RITE MASTER CRAFTSMAN

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***Check out our latest episode of the Houston Valley Podcast, the interview of the Sovereign Grand Inspector General of Arkansas and Second Grand Equerry of the Supreme Council* 33°, Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction Illustrious C. James Graham 33°.**

Scan the QR code for the Houston Valley Podcast

Cont'd from front, "Order of the Golden Dawn"

Rosicrucianism. It restricts membership to Master Masons who are also Christians, focusing on spiritual and philosophical exploration through rituals and teachings inspired by Rosicrucian traditions. The Order of the Golden Dawn had a similar system of three orders with degrees similar to the primary SRIA degrees: 1. Zelator, 2. Theoricus, and 3. Practicus.

The Golden Dawn's First Order degrees align closely with the SRIA's initial grades in name and thematic focus, though their rituals and teachings differ due to the Golden Dawn's emphasis on practical magic and Hermetic Qabalah.

The first order, sometimes referred to as the Outer Order, consists of six grades. The second order, which at one point was the ruling order of the Order of the Golden Dawn, has three grades. The final order has two grades.

The Order of the Golden Dawn had no gender, Christian, nor masonic affiliation requirements. Women were allowed into the Order on an equal standing with men. One of the members who joined during the golden age of the Order in the mid-1890's was Florence Farr, a popular actress at the time. She would become closely associated with Mathers until the two had a falling out over Aleister Crowley in the early 1900's.

A. E. Waite joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1891, where he encountered Aleister Crowley, and later left in 1914 due to internal strife. In 1896 or 1897, Westcott broke ties with the Order leaving Mathers in charge. It is unclear why Westcott left the order. It has been said that Westcott, a coroner by employment, left documents concerning the Order in a hansom cab; his employer was informed and Westcott was given the choice to leave the Order or resign from his job. However it was that he left the organization, it was the beginning of change in the order. By the early 1900's several temples of the Order had decided to declare their independence, generally unhappy with Mather's leadership. Some famous Freemasons and non-masons who were associated with the order were Aleister Crowley, Arthur Conan Doyle, and A.E. Waite.

In 1983, my best friend made a pen and ink portrait that was later made into a lithograph and printed on the 30th of April 1984 and is shown at the beginning of this article. If one looks closely, the two points to notice are images of the back of a Thoth Tarot card deck and Aleister Crowley. In modern lithography, this black and white image is made from a polymer coating applied to a flexible plastic or metal plate to produce initially a proof followed by more high-quality prints.

Failure leads to Success

Always remember, keep trying in all of the things that you do, even if you fail or fall.

***"For though the righteous fall seven times, they will rise again"* – Proverbs 24:16**

***"I missed over 9,000 shots, I lost almost 300 games, and 26 times I was trusted with the game winning shot and missed"* - Michael Jordon**

George Washington, while in command of the Continental Army, fought in 17 battles. He lost 7 battles, 4 ended in a draw, and only 6 battles were victories.

***"Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never – in nothing great or small, large or petty – never give in, except to convictions of honor and good sense"* - Winston Churchill**

Editor in Chief
Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

Copy Editor
Eric Wylie 32° KCCH