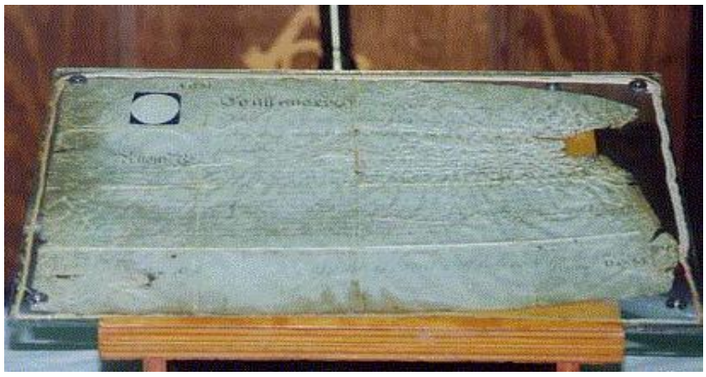
THE
HOUSTON VALLEY HERALD

September 25, 2025 A MONTHLY PUBLICATION Volume 4 Issue 9

Freemason risks his life to save charter Part 2: fifteen men stand firm



By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

With the war of American Independence raging on throughout the colonies, another battle was on the horizon. As the colonies were seeking equality in representation, Prince Hall and fourteen other men of good character were also on a journey towards equality. Prince Hall and his companions, all being freeman and active within the communities, especially Prince Hall himself who was very active in Boston's Methodist church. At some point these men would come across a Brother Mason who spoke of an ancient and magnanimous fraternity where men met upon the level and parted upon the square.

Once hearing of this fraternity that practiced equality, Prince Hall and his companions sought out the local lodge in Boston and applied for membership, and all were denied. It is important to note: not all members of our beloved fraternity at the time truly understood what equality meant; time and time again this has been true when the focus is on the ritual instead of the lessons. As found in The Bible in James 2:14-26, "what good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds", and in Luke 6:43-45 "For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit."

Despite this setback, Prince Hall and his companions would not be denied their equality. With the vigor and courage that was later shown at the battle Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775 by Prince Hall, who was believed to have served side by side with white solders in the defense of Independence, he and his companions petitioned Army Lodge 441 for membership. These lodge members were soldiers under the command of British General Thomas Gage. The lodge, chartered under the Grand Lodge of Ireland and with the Master of the Lodge Worshipful John Batt presiding, initiated all fifteen on March 6, 1775 and raised to them to the sublime degree of a Master Mason. The initiation was performed at Castle William, Boston Harbor, renamed Fort Independence.

We find in Brother Prince Hall's own correspondence, "one year later (1776) that he along with Thomas Sanderson, Boston Smith and others organized and opened: under dispensation granted by this British Traveling lodge, the first lodge of Masons composed of coloured men in America." African Lodge No 1 was formed, this would echo throughout history in the new republic and throughout the world wherever Freemasonry's light shined.

Even as this was a monumental first step for black men in America, there were still big hurdles to overcome. Even though

Cont'd on next page

The Feast of Tishri: A Spiritual Journey in the Scottish Rite

By Tre'Von Encalade 32°

The Feast of Tishri is one of four cornerstone festivals of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, and is a symbolic event that parallels three key biblical narratives:

- The Israelites' 40-year journey in the wilderness after being freed from Egypt
- The completion and dedication of King Solomon's Temple
- The Jewish Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot)

There are parallels between Sukkot, Tishri, and the degrees of the Lodge of Perfection, with the ultimate message being that the Lodge of Perfection serves as a spiritual roadmap, leading the Mason to conclude that the human body is the Temple of the Divine. This conclusion can be drawn when viewing from Kabbalistic, Hermetic, Alchemical, and Jungian psychological perspectives.

The Wilderness Journey

The Israelites' 40-year journey in the desert symbolizes a period of purification, a process of Catharsis**,** where they shed their attachments to Egypt (material bondage) and learned to rely on divine wisdom. This stage represents the death of the old self and the preparation for a new relationship with the Divine.

- **4° - Secret Master:** First step in the inner journey – requires obedience, reflection, and accepting the call to action in the search for deeper wisdom.
- **5° - Perfect Master:** Emphasizes moral purification, echoing the requirement for the Israelites to purify themselves before entering the Promised Land.
- **6° - Intimate Secretary:** Focuses on the importance of trust, discretion, and responsibility.
- **7° - Provost & Judge:** Teaches justice and righteousness, reflecting the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.
- **8° - Intendant of the Building:** Prepares the Mason for his work in constructing the Spiritual Temple.

This section aligns with the alchemical process of Nigredo (blackening) where the ego is dissolved, and the journey to self-mastery begins. Carl Jung (creator of the Jungian psychology framework) would refer to this as the confrontation of the shadow self.

The moment of King Solomon's dedication of the Temple marks a sacred moment of divine dwelling. The Temple then becomes the

Cont'd on next page

Cont'd from front, "Freemason risks his life, Pt 2"

African Lodge No 1 was formed, the lodge was not allowed to confer degrees; in fact, the only ceremony that we have written confirmation of is by Brother Prince Hall when he wrote to the Grand Lodge of England applying for a warrant:

William M. Moody, Most W. Master,

Permit me to return you my hearty thanks for your brotherly courtesy to my Brothers Reed and Mene, when in a strange land and in a time of need, you were so good to receive them as brothers, and to treat them so cordially as they informed me you did. What you have done to them I look upon as done to me and the whole of us, for which I give you many thanks and likewise to all the lodges. I hope they behave themselves as men and as Masons with you; if not I would be glad if you would be so good as; to let me know of it and they shall be dealt with accordingly. Dear Brother, I would inform you that this Lodge hath been founded almost this Eight years and had no Warrant yet, but only a permit from Grand Master Row to work on St. John's Day and bury our dead in form, which we would enjoy.

We have had no opportunity until now of applying for a warrant though we were pressed upon to send to France for one, but we refused for reasons best known to ourselves. We now apply to the Fountain from whom we received light for this favor, and, Dear Sir, I must beg you to be our advocate for us by sending this our request to his Royal Highness, the Duke of Cumberland, Grand Master, and to the Right Honorable Earl of Effingham, acting Grand Master, the Deputy Grand Master and Grand Wardens, and the rest of the Brethren of the Grand Lodge that they would graciously be pleased to grant us a Charter to hold this Lodge as long as we behave up to the spirit of the Constitution.

This, our humble petition we hope His Highness and the rest of the Grand Lodge will graciously be pleased to grant us there. Though poor, yet sincere brethren of the craft, and therefore in duty bound, ever to pray, I beg leave to subscribe myself,

Your loving Friend and Brother, Prince Hall, June 30th, 1784; in the year of Masonry, 5784.

In the name of the Holy Lodge.

C. Underwood, Secretary

To be concluded in next month's issue!

When hard times arise remember: when God wanted to make David into a King, he did not bring him a crown; he brought him Goliath!

"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

***The Houston Valley Herald* Email List**
This publication is printed monthly and distributed at stated meetings of the Valley of Houston for the benefit of the brethren assembled. *The Houston Valley Herald* is also available online at www.HoustonScottishRite.org (Click the "Newsletter" tab). Anyone is welcome to receive this publication via email as well. To join our mailing list, email acompass@yahoo.com

SCOTTISH RITE MASTER CRAFTSMAN

The Houston Valley Educational Program Master Craftsman Zoom study group. If you are interested in taking classes please email acompass@yahoo.com. Open to any Master Mason in good standing.

The Houston Valley Podcast & YouTube channel
Please like and subscribe to our channel, it helps promote the Scottish Rite and allows us to continue this great work.

https://www.youtube.com/@HoustonValleyScottishRite

Cont'd from front, "Feast of Tishri"

meeting point between Heaven and Earth, symbolizing illumination and balance.

Completion of Solomon's Temple

- **9° - Elu of the Nine:** Symbolizes the pursuit of justice & the struggle against corruption.
- **10° - Elu of the Fifteen:** Represents the return of divine wisdom to its rightful place within the Spiritual Temple.
- **11° - Elu of the Twelve:** Teaches harmony, balance, and righteous leadership.

This section aligns with the alchemical concept of Albedo (whitening), which represents the purification of the soul after impurities are removed. In Kabbalistic terms, Solomon's Temple aligns with Tiferet (Beauty), the center, when the balance of divine & human forces occurs.

Feast of Tishri: The Divine Indwelling

Sukkot (Tabernacles) celebrates the presence of the Divine among the Israelites during the time of the Tabernacle of Moses, later fulfilled in Solomon's Temple. It teaches that material structures are temporary, but spiritual dwelling, or union with the Divine, is eternal.

- **12° - Master Architect:** The realization that building the Temple is an internal process, not dependent on the ego, and detachment or subjugation of the Lower Self must occur to achieve the goal of union.
- **13° - Royal Arch of Solomon:** Represents the rediscovery of divine knowledge within, mirroring the placement of the Ark of the Covenant within the Sanctum Sanctorum of King Solomon's Temple.
- **14° - Perfect Elu:** The culmination of the journey in the wilderness, where union with the Divine occurs.

This final phase mirrors the alchemical stage of Rubedo (reddening), which is the completion of the Great Work. In Christian mysticism, this is where Theosis, union with the Divine essence, occurs.

Conclusion: The Human Body as the Living Temple

- **1 Corinthians 3:16 –** Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?
- **Alchemy:** The transformation of the base Self into the Philosopher's Stone represents the completion of the Temple of Perfection (the human body).

There are many other esoteric schools of thought that reiterate the belief that the human body is the Temple where union with the Divine can occur, with the phrase "die (to your ego) before you die" being the main focus. ***The Kabbalistic Craftsman – Gnosis of the Inner Temple* check out this webpage for other great articles.**

How to bring comfort to a heavy heart

We have all had a friend or loved one who has gone through hard times or suffered loss. How do we as Freemasons speak to those with loss? I have seen and heard many say "sending prayers" or they'll attempt to say something uplifting. While prayer is powerful, is that what they really want or need to hear? Proverbs 25:20 says *"One who sings to a heavy heart is like one who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on a wound."* Being with someone, or checking on them daily, can do more than people know. Empathy can be your best instrument for consoling those who are suffering.

Another great example of dealing with a heavy heart is found in John 11:35: *"Jesus wept."* Upon hearing and witnessing the sorrow over the death of Lazarus, Jesus did not tell everyone to cheer up or to pray. He wept with them and shared their pain and sorrow, even though he knew what was about to follow.

Editor in Chief
Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

Copy Editor
Eric R. Wylie 32° KCCH