



The Ashlar



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Kempsville Lodge No. 196, A.F.&A.M.
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Masonic Signers of the Declaration of Independence

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

Although the final draft of the Declaration of Independence was approved by the Continental Congress on July 4th, 1776, it was not actually signed by most of the signers until August 2nd of that year. Among the 56 signers were nine members of the Congress who were known Masons. An additional ten may have been Masons as they have been referred to as members of the Fraternity by various Masonic writers, and in Masonic publications, but their Lodge affiliation is not known.

Of the the nine known Masonic signers, the most famous is Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790). Franklin, an American statesman, scientist, philosopher and author, received his degrees in St. John's Lodge of Philadelphia in February, 1731 and became Grand Master of Pennsylvania in 1734. He became a member of the second Continental Congress of 1775 and was on the committee to draft the Declaration of Independence.



Another well known Masonic signer is John Hancock (1737-1793), probably due to the size of his signature on the document, which was the first. Hancock, perhaps the wealthiest man in Boston at the time, was chairman of the committee which protested the Boston Massacre and demanded the removal of British troops from the city. He was also the president of the first and second provincial congresses and president of the Continental Congress from May, 1775 to October, 1777. It has been an American legend that when asked why he wrote his name so boldly on the Declaration of Independence, Hancock replied, "So that George III (or John Bull) may read it without putting on his glasses." Hancock, who was made a Mason in Merchants Lodge No. 277, would go on to be the first Governor of Massachusetts.

The seven other known Masonic signers of the Declaration of Independence are the following:

- **William Ellery** (1727-1820), a merchant, lawyer, and politician from Rhode Island.
- **Joseph Hewes** (1730-1779) a Quaker representing North Carolina who left the Society of Friends to devote himself to the creation of the new country.
- **William Hooper** (1742-1790), a lawyer from Wilmington, North Carolina and a graduate from Harvard University.
- **Robert Treat Paine** (1731-1814) a Massachusetts lawyer and politician and later judge of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts.
- **Richard Stockton** (1730-1781) a lawyer and graduate of what would become Princeton University in New Jersey.
- **George Walton** (1750-1804) representing Georgia. Not only was Walton a signer of the Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation, he was also a Revolutionary War officer, a Governor of Georgia, a Chief Justice of Georgia and U.S. Senator.
- **William Whipple** (1730-1785), a trader and ship captain from New Hampshire who was a brigadier general during the Revolution.

From The East



To me, one of the most important things to take away from a reading of the Declaration of Independence is that fact that it states that our rights – life, liberty, and the pursuit of

happiness - come from our Creator and that we institute governments not to grant those rights but to secure them. Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. This implies that the powers of the government not derived from the consent of the governed are, inherently unjust and that governments that would deprive us of our Creator-endowed rights are usurping that which belongs solely to our Creator.

We received word from the Grand Master in mid-June that the Worshipful Masters of Virginia have the option of reopening their Lodges starting on July 1st. I will be exercising this option for us and our appendant bodies and we plan on holding our first Stated meeting since March on July 14th. There will be limitations in place to ensure that we maximize the safety of all our members. This includes a limit of 50 people at any meeting, social distancing of 6 feet, and no serving of food or snacks until otherwise directed. Hopefully, the limitation on food service will not last long so we can return to serving dinner at our Stated and hold our monthly breakfast. We will also be allowed to practice our ritual but may not confer degrees until permitted by the Grand Lodge.

As this shutdown draws to its conclusion, hopefully within the next few months, be assured that we as a Lodge are doing everything we can to keep Freemasonry alive and well at Kempsville Masonic Lodge. We will continue to coach our candidates so that they will be ready to receive more degrees as soon as we are permitted to confer them, we will continue to hold food bank drives on those days we would normally have held our monthly Lodge breakfasts, and we will continue to hold Monday night Masonic education to broaden our understanding of where our Craft came from. Lastly, but most importantly, we will continue to reach out to our members in need and provide whatever comfort and assistance that they require.

Finally, I would like to remind all our members that every Mason is our Brother and that every human being has a claim on our kind offices. Treat every person with the respect and dignity that they deserve. We are all children of God.

Brother Dave Trzeciakiewicz, Worshipful Master

From The West



This is the month of our country's independence which we as Americans celebrate on the 4th of July. Although it may not be a "normal" celebration in the context of past holidays, we

Masons have a grand history and much to reflect upon.

Many of our founding fathers of this great nation were Masons. As noted earlier, of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence, at least nine of them were Masons. Their vision for our country, their beliefs, and their writings were grounded in the times and we can see the basis of our craft represented in their work. The nature of the declaration is consistent with the ideas of Masonry and it is likely our ideas of freedom, independence, liberty, and equality were at hand during its creation.

During these turbulent and often confusing times, let us not lose sight of who we are and what we stand for. Every day we should strive to be better men, especially in the face of adversity and discourse. This is often uncomfortable and may even come at great personal expense. Our founding fathers pledged their lives and fortunes for what they believed to be right. But our Brotherhood is a solid foundation and something we can all fall back to in agreement. Happy 4th of July!

Brother Mike Denning, Senior Warden

From The South



On June 14th, 1777, the Second Continental Congress passed a resolution in which the flag of the United States was adopted. In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson announced a proclamation establishing June 14th as "Flag Day" in commemoration of this event. However, it was not until August 3rd, 1949 that this proclamation became a permanent annual celebration.

Freemasons have a deeply intertwined role in American history, which emboldens our affinity with the American flag. Freemasons have participated in every major conflict, Congress, and commemoration, helping to create the building blocks that define the fabric of our great nation. Every day the American flag flies, our pride in our Craft and country is invigorated.

As we celebrated Flag Day this year, we remembered to acknowledge and appreciate our nation's past, just as much as we would our own Masonic journeys. From our most illustrious Brothers, to our youngest Master Mason, we must all stand proud knowing that our flag and the forefathers who died to protect it, persevere.

Brother John Settle, Junior Warden

Masonic Birthdays for July

Ramon L. Baez, Sr. '97	C. William Nolan '80
Ralph E. Bregant '84	William F. Oliveira '19
Rickey P. Brooks '16	James D. Orlando '19
T. Edward Brown '10	William T. Parks, III '89
David L. Cline '91	William T. Peterson '07
Alexander R. Echols '09	Joseph A. Posey '79
Darin M. Ely '04	William K. Sheppard '08
James C. Gardner '70	Scott F. Sherman '17
Brian K. Goodwin '90	Dale E. Smith '79
Nazim K. Jamal '16	Joseph F. Thornton '63
Littleton Kirkpatrick, IV '10	Dennis G. Tompkins '02
William R. Knowles, Sr. '71	Richard L. Tyson '08
O. Eugene LeJeune '90	Robert L. Tyson, Jr. '08
Seth A. Miles '09	Robert L. Tyson, Sr. '08
Melvin S. Mizelle '67	Karl W. Wesseler '78
Edward F. Myers, Jr. '76	Johnny D. Whitley '64

The Brethren shown above have a total of 802 years in Masonry!

June Beehive Award

The Beehive Award winner for the month of May is Brother Mike Turner. Brother Mike has been a highly active member of the Lodge since he joined us back in 2018, and he became a Life Member in Perpetuity right after being raised in October of that year.



Over the past month, Brother Mike has done numerous things to support the Lodge and Masonry as a whole. He gave an outstanding presentation at a Monday night online training about Historic Bannack Lodge No. 3-7-77, replete with Masonic vigilantes and old West "hang 'em high" justice. He helped us work the food bank drive-through collection held in place of our May monthly breakfast, and he has volunteered his vast computer security expertise to the Grand Lodge IT committee.

Although Brother Mike travels often for his job, he is in Lodge with us whenever he is not out of town. In addition, he often visits other Lodges while traveling for work and brings us back many

interesting stories about Masonic ritual in other states. We are all proud to have Brother Mike as a member and are grateful for all he does for Kempsville!

To Our Masonic Widows

Happy Birthday to our special ladies in July:

Lee Eaton	July 1 st
Ouida Young	July 6 th
Ruth Ann King	July 21 st
June Lockwood	July 23 rd
Wanda Van Fossen	July 25 th

If any of our ladies are in need of assistance from the Lodge, please don't hesitate to contact Right Worshipful Bill Knowles or the Secretary.

Meet our Scholarship Winners

The second winner of a \$500 scholarship from Kempsville Masonic Lodge (along with an additional \$300 personally donated by the Brothers) is Clifford Gernandizo. Clifford, whose family is originally from the Philippines, is a student in the top 20% of his class at Kempsville High school and attends classes at the Virginia Beach Technical and Career Education Center. He has volunteered to be an ambassador for the Tech Center, and has represented the school at speaking events, career fairs, and informational table setups. He is working toward a nursing career and will be attending the Center's Licensed Practical Nursing course next year. The \$800 scholarship from the Lodge will cover the full tuition for that program.



Clifford told us that "The field of medicine has been a major interest to me since I was young and pursuing nursing came to me naturally. My career goal is to use the Nursing Program as a steppingstone into deciding my area of specialization such as Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist or even an Anesthesiologist." We here at Kempsville have no doubt that Clifford will have a successful career in whatever he chooses to do in the medical field. We are immensely proud of him and look forward to hearing more about his accomplishments in the years to come. Well done!

May Food Bank Donation Drive-In



Since we were not able to hold our May Lodge breakfast due to the virus pandemic, the Brothers of Kempsville decided to hold a “drive-through” to enable our members and their families to safely drop off food donations for our local food banks. We collected an amazing 452 lbs of food and \$80 in cash donations. The food donations were delivered to food bank at the Church of the Ascension next door to the Lodge. They were very grateful for the generosity of our members.

Many thanks to those who donated and to the Brothers who helped unload the food as it arrived. Special thanks to Mason of the Year, Bob Hughes, and his wife Melinda for taking the hundreds of pound of donations to the church for us. We will continue collecting these donations via drive-through on those days where Lodge breakfast is scheduled but cannot be held.

The Spirit of Masonry

Gentle, gracious, and wise, its mission is to form mankind into a great redemptive brotherhood, a league of noble and free men enlisted in the radiant enterprise of working out in time, the love and will of the Eternal.

Joseph Fort Newton

These words are engraved in the marble on the front wall of the Iowa Grand Lodge Library, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. It was in this library that our late Brother Newton secured his first Masonic literary light and was inspired to write *The Builders*, the perennial Masonic best seller.

Lodge Officers

Worshipful Master	Dave Trzeciakiewicz	620-8311
Senior Warden	Mike Denning	651-0712
Junior Warden	John Settle, III	675-9695
Treasurer	Chris Anders	635-7617
Secretary	Bob Stanek	255-8336
Senior Deacon	Pat Blankenship	406-6166
Junior Deacon	Doug Dunn	781-389-6557
Senior Steward	Bill Oliveira	748-3206
Junior Steward	John Gabor	408-1541
Chaplain	Keith Ingraham	613-5474
Musician	R. Scott Foxwell	536-1659
Marshal	Dickie Cooper	971-7347
Tiler	Roger Taylor	478-5498
Instructor of Work	Tom McGowan	497-3881
Education Officer	William Rawson	724-4867
MAHOVA Ambassador	Ray Connard	630-5797
Blood Coordinator	Michael Blankenship	438-2862
Youth Advisor	Eddie Foley	581-8144

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