

PRINCE HALL THE COLOURED MAN IN FREEMASONRY

By: Bro. Wayne D. Anderson, MPS
Markland Lodge #99, Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia

With the integration of Negro and White residents of the Southern United States being much in the news over the past two decades, so has the question of the Negro as far as Freemasonry is concerned is a subject that should be of interest today.

Search as you will, you cannot find in Masonic literature where there is a colour bar to initiates. It is the exception to the general rule, but from time to time coloured men have joined regular lodges in Canada, the United States and in many countries of the British Commonwealth. In the States of New York, Massachusetts, Indiana, North Carolina, as well as in others there have been instances of such initiations. Several Lodges have been founded for the express purpose of having a Masonic home for Negroes and these have been very successful.

JOSHUA B. SMITH

Records indicate that many coloured men have attained honoured rank and have advanced to the higher degrees. One of these, Joshua B. Smith, was raised in St. Andrew's Lodge, Boston, in 1867, and affiliated with Adelpi Lodge, South Boston. Smith, who was renowned as a caterer, became a Warden of his lodge, was a Royal Arch Mason and became a Knight Templar and a Thirty-third degree Scottish Rite Mason. For the term 1873-74, he represented the City of Cambridge in the Massachusetts Legislature.

ALPHA LODGE NO. 116

In Newark, New Jersey, a lodge of coloured men was chartered as Alpha Lodge, No. 116, in 1871 under the regular Grand Lodge. The first petition was presented by ten white Brethren. As soon as the warrant was granted, twelve coloured men and one white man petitioned for initiation. All but one became members. This resulted in considerable discontent among the other Lodges but all was found in "exact accordance with Masonic Law and Usage."

Coloured Brethren soon took office and seven years after the founding, Abram T. Cooke, the first initiate, was installed as Worshipful Master. Since then few white candidates presented themselves and since 1929 none but coloured men have been members.

WAVERLEY LODGE NO. 597, EDINBURGH

Another instance is found in the records of Waverley Lodge, No. 597, Edinburgh, Scotland, where we find ten coloured brethren receiving all the degrees in May and June, 1904. Six were from New York, and one each from Illinois, Indiana, Alabama and Ontario. All were members of a

travelling theatrical company.

UNION LODGE NO. 18, HALIFAX, N. S.

Prior to the formation of the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia, five coloured men joined Royal Sussex Lodge, No. 704 (Grand Lodge of England) now No. 6 GL NS, Halifax in 1855. The next year, they applied for and received a dispensation from the Hon. Alexander Keith and on December 5, 1856, they and several white men were granted a warrant as Union Lodge, No. 994, by the Grand Lodge of England. In 1869, Union joined with other English Lodges in the Province, to unite with the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia, formed in 1866 and received the number 18 on the new Register.

About 1910, they started accepting petitions from any man of colour no matter where he resided, whether in a Canadian province or in the United States or West Indies. This was contrary to Masonic usage. About the same time the Secretary got careless in keeping records. As the result of the irregularities, Grand Lodge forfeited the Charter in 1916 and those in good standing were given demits. A number of the Brothers immediately joined other lodges.

One of the most noted of these was the Rev. Dr. William A. White, Pastor of Cornwallis Street Baptist Church, who was raised in Union Lodge, October 16, 1905, later affiliated with St. George's No. 20, Wolfville in 1931, continuing as a member until his death in 1936.

During the Grand Mastership of MWBro R. V. Harris (1931-35); MWBro Harris and Brother Rev. White mad a determined effort to revive Union Lodge. There was opposition to this move, however, and on the death of Brother White, the matter was dropped.

ELSEWHERE

Records indicate that many Lodges in the Commonwealth have not hesitated to accept coloured members. This is very common in the West Indies. In Jamaica, there are Lodges warranted by English, Scottish, and Irish Grand Lodges. In the Lodges under English and Scottish Constitutions, the great majority of the Brethren are coloured. The same is true of the Lodges in Antigua, Grenada, Trinidad and other West Indian islands.

PRINCE HALL ALLEGIANCE

Besides the regular lodges that have Negro members, there has grown up a parallel group of lodges that cater to Negroes only. They are known as Free and Accepted Masons, Prince Hall Affiliation. They date back to the 1770's when Prince Hall (Prince was not a title but a Christian name) was initiated into Masonry. First, let us learn about this man and the Grand Lodge that he founded.

PRINCE HALL FREEMASONRY

In the United States of America, in Canada and in the Bahamas there are some forty odd Grand Lodges of Prince Hall Freemasonry. These Prince Hall Grand Lodges exercise authority over more than five thousand Lodges. They claim descent, directly or indirectly, from the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts which is the offspring of African Lodge No. 459 warranted by the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns) on 20th September 1784. The great majority of these Prince Hall Grand Lodges incorporate the words "Prince Hall" in their title. The object of this was to overcome confusion among coloured members of the community because of clandestine "Grand Lodges" which had reared up. Prince Hall Grand Lodges are not recognized by the Grand Lodges in the United States and, also the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia, as we only recognize one Grand lodge in any Province or State, but, Prince Hall Grand Lodge is regarded as having a certain authenticity as apposed to clandestine coloured Grand Lodges.

THE PRINCE HALL TRADITION

The traditional story regarding Prince Hall is published annually in the Prince Hall Masonic Year Book, the official story of the gentleman known as Prince Hall runs thus:

Prince Hall was born at Bridgetown, Barbados, West Indies, about September 12, 1748. He was freeborn. His father, Thomas Prince Hall, was an Englishman and his mother a free coloured woman of French extraction. In 1765, at the age of 17, he worked his passage on a ship to Boston, where he worked as a leather-worker, a trade learned from his father. Eight years later he had acquired real estate and was qualified to vote. He was religiously inclined and later became a preacher in the Methodist Church with a Charge at Cambridge. On March 6, 1775, Prince Hall and fourteen other free Negroes of Boston were made Master Masons in an Army Lodge attached to one of General Gage's regiments, then stationed near Boston. This lodge granted Prince Hall and his brethren authority to meet as a lodge, to go in procession on St. John's Day, and as a lodge to bury their dead, but they could not confer degrees nor perform any other Masonic "work".

For nine years these brethren, together with others who had received the degrees elsewhere, assembled and enjoyed limited privileges as Masons. Finally, in March 1784, Prince Hall petitioned the Grand Lodge of England, through a Worshipful Master of a subordinate lodge in London for a warrant or charter. On September 20, 1784, the warrant was issued. It was not delivered, however until three years later, owing to the fact that the brother to whom the matter was entrusted failed to call for it. It was delivered, however, on the 29th day of April 1787, by Captain James Scott, a sea-faring man and, incidentally, a brother-in-law of John Hancock, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

On May 6, 1787, by virtue of the authority of this Charter, African Lodge No. 459 was established and began work as a regular Masonic body.

In accordance with Masonic usage of that time, a General Assembly of Coloured Masons met in Masons' Hall, Water Street, Boston, Massachusetts, on 24 June 1791, and formed African Grand Lodge with Prince Hall as its first Grand Master; which office he held until his death in December 1807.

On June 24, 1808, pursuant to a call from Nero Prince, the Deputy Grand Master, representatives of the three then existing lodges met in Boston and changed the name of the Grand Lodge to M. W. Prince Hall Grand Lodge, F & A M of Massachusetts, in memory of Prince Hall.

There is no indication in the Prince Hall Masonic Year Book as to the author of this traditional story, but from its contents it is evident that the author drew very heavily upon Grimshaw and Davis. It is greatly to be regretted that an official publication should include a biography which is both woefully inaccurate and, in some cases, manifestly untrue. This can only be derogatory of a man whose life required no false vindication.

WHO WAS PRINCE HALL?

The statement by Grimshaw, which has been repeated many times by other writers that Prince Hall was born "about September 12, 1748" does not stand up to any examination. Even Davis admits that Grimshaw was inaccurate, from the Boston Gazette for Monday 7th December 1807:

DEATHS:

On Friday morning Mr. Prince Hall, aged 72, Master of African Lodge. Funeral this afternoon at 3 o'clock from his late dwelling in Lendell's Lane; which his friends and relations are requested to attend without a more formal invitation.

Dying at the age of seventy-two would infer a birth date of about the year 1735. Confirmation of this possible date by Dr. Jeremy Belknap, a founder of the Massachusetts Historical Society, refers to Prince Hall as "a very intelligent black man, aged 57. He is the Grand Master of a Lodge of Free Masons, composed wholly of blacks, and distinguished by the name of African Lodge. It was begun in 1775, while this town was garrisoned by British troops; some of whom held a lodge and initiated a number of Negroes." If this statement is accurate then Prince Hall would have been born about the year 1738. No evidence of any kind has ever been produced to support Grimshaw's statement that Prince Hall was born in Barbados in 1748.

There exists in the Boston Athenaeum Library, among the notorial papers of one Ezekeil Price, a Certificate of Manumission, dated 9th April 1770, and signed by William Hall, together with three other members of the Hall family, giving Prince Hall his freedom. This document states that he (Prince Hall) had worked with the Hall family for twenty-one years, i.e. since 1749. The fact that Prince Hall was a slave rules out the extraordinary statement by Grimshaw that he was the offspring of a union between a free coloured woman of French extraction and an Englishman.

Prince Hall seems always to have referred to himself as an "African". And probably with some pride for, he WAS an African, having been seized in some part of West Africa as a lad of between eleven and fourteen and brought to New England by a slave-trader and sold as a slave. It is not impossible that he was actually sold to William Hall and it is also likely that he took the "Hall" from the family which he served so faithfully for twenty-one years.

There is no doubt that Prince Hall was, "religiously inclined". Just months before he died, he stated that he was a leather-dresser by trade; that he was "about seventy"; that in November 1762 he had been received into the full communion of the Congregational Church. There is no record that Prince Hall ever held a Charge at Cambridge.

Prince Hall was married five times. There is no known record of any children.

He is buried in Copp's Hill Burying Ground in Boston in the same grave as his first wife. The monumental stone carries the inscription:

HERE LIES YE BODY OF SARAH RITCHERY, WIFE OF PRINCE HALL, DIED FEBY THE 26TH, 1769, AGED 24 YEARS.

And on the back of the stone, added some time later, is the inscription:

HERE LIES THE BODY OF PRINCE HALL, FIRST GRAND MASTER OF THE COLORED GRAND LODGE OF MASONS IN MASS., DIED DEC 7, 1807

During his life he took a great interest in the welfare of the coloured people in Massachusetts. And badgered the city fathers of Boston for the proper education of the black children. He was regarded as a well read man.

PRINCE HALL'S MASONIC CAREER

The facts are a little obscure, according to the traditional story he and fourteen others were made Master Masons on 6th March 1775, probably a very accurate statement. A document found in the archives of African Lodge in Boston dated 6th March 1775 has the heading:

By Master Batt wose made these brothers
Prince Hall Thomas Sanderson
Peter Best Buesten Singer
Cuff Bufform Boston Smith
John Carter Cato Spean
Peter Freeman Prince Taylor
Fortune Howard Benjamin Tiber
Cyrus Jonbus Richard Tilley
Prince Rees

It shows at the foot of the sheet some men were made "Marsters", "Craft" and "Prentices". It was quite customary for a lodge to confer all three degrees at one meeting in those days. On or around 6th March 1775, the first shot of the War of Independence was fired at Lexington.

It would appear that Prince Hall and his fourteen companions were admitted to Freemasonry in an Irish Lodge, No. 441.

There were fourteen military lodges in and around Boston in 1775. Of these one was English, four were Scottish and the remainder were Irish. John Batt is registered as a member of Lodge 441 in the register in Dublin under the date 2nd May 1771.

John Batt is recorded in the Muster Rolls of the regiment from 1759 until his discharge from the British Army in 1777.

In Boston, Prince Hall and his fellow masons continued to meet as a "lodge" for some years. They had a "Permet" (Dispensation) to walk in procession on St. John's Day and to bury their dead, there seems to be some doubt as to who gave them this "Permet". When Prince Hall sent in his petition for a warrant in June 1784 he stated that the "Permet" had been issued by "Grand Master Row"(sic). John Rowe was appointed Provincial Grand Master for North America 12th March 1768 and he died in 1787.

Grimshaw states that Prince Hall was appointed Provincial Grand Master for North America on 27th January 1791, presumably in place of John Rowe.

We must take it that the alleged Patent appointing Prince Hall as Provincial Grand Master for North America is another of Grimshaw's inventions.

To return to the "PERMET". No matter by whom it was issued it was certainly used. In the issue of Monday, December 1782 of a Boston newspaper.

On Friday, last, 27th, the Feast of St John the Evangelist, was celebrated by St. Black's Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, who went in procession preceded by a band of music, dressed in their aprons and jewels to the house of the Right Worshipful Grand Master in Water Street, where an elegant and splendid entertainment was given upon the occasion.

Prince Hall was not happy with the article and wrote to the paper that they had not had a "splendid entertainment, we had an agreeable one in brotherly love". He signed the letter:

Prince Hall
Master of African Lodge No. 1
Dedicated to St. John

The signature is interesting as showing that the brethren considered themselves to be a lodge, as yet without a warrant. "*No. 1*" would indicate a position on some Register or Roll.

Prince Hall remained the Master of the Lodge until his death when he was succeeded by Nero Prince.

THE WARRANT TO AFRICAN LODGE NO. 459

In 1784 Prince Hall wrote two letters to a Brother Moody in London seeking his help in obtaining a warrant for his lodge.

The first letter is printed in AQC (vol 13, p 56) and the second is reprinted in Davis (pp33-4).

The request for petition was successful and the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns) issued a warrant to African Lodge No. 459 on 20th September 1784. But did not arrive in Boston until April 1787.

The date of the petition, 30th June 1784, is important in that the War of Independence had finished and a Peace Treaty had been signed in 1783. Massachusetts then became a state.

At the time of the warrant there were two Grand Lodges, the Scottish Provincial Grand Lodge over which Joseph Warren had presided. He was killed at the battle of Bunker Hill. There was the St. John's Grand Lodge which had been the English Provincial Grand Lodge (Moderns) with John Rowe as Provincial Grand Master. These two Grand Lodges were united on 19th March 1792 AFRICAN LODGE AS A GRAND LODGE

Because of no returns African Lodge was struck off of the Register of the Grand Lodge of England; possibly due to a breakdown in communications. And acted on there own as a Grand Lodge issuing warrants from the year 1797.

In 1797 Prince Hall received a letter from Peter Mantone who lived in Philadelphia requesting a warrant. He said he had been turned down by white masons because the white masons were afraid that "***Blackmen living in Virginia would get to be Masons too.***" We are not sure which Grand Lodge he had applied. In his reply to Mantone Prince Hall agreed to issue a warrant to the brethren in Philadelphia.

In reply to Peter Mantone's request Prince Hall wrote:

Mr. Peter Mantone,

Sir, I received your letter of the 2 which informed me that there are a number of blacks in your city who have received the light of masonry, and I hope they got it in a just and lawful manner. If so, dear Brother, we are willing to set you at work under our charter and Lodge No. 459, from London, under that authority, and by the name of African Lodge, we hereby and herein give you license to assemble and work as aforesaid, under that denomination as in the sight and fear of God. I would advise you not to take in any at present till your officers and Master be installed in the Grand Lodge, which we are willing to do, when he thinks convenient, and he may receive a full warrant instead of a permit.

Prince Hall's reply to Peter Mantone clearly shows that African Lodge proposed to function as a Grand Lodge. It agreed to install the Master and officers in the new Lodge in Philadelphia. African Lodge was still writing to London, in it's capacity as a private Lodge under the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns) and sending in returns and fees. Records show that the last payment of fees was made in 1797. Prince Hall's letter book contains a copy of yet a further letter, of 16th August 1806, in which he complains that he had not received any answers to his letters since 1792.

African Lodge were still under the impression that they were on the Register of the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns). They do not seem to have been informed of the change of number from 459 to 370 at the renumbering in 1792. Neither would they seem to be aware of the union of 1813 and their own removal from the register of the new United Grand Lodge of England, and in 1827 declared their independence from any Masonic authority.

As has already been stated, African Lodge---by a Declaration dated 18th June 1827 and published in the Boston Advertiser of 26th June 1827---declared itself to be "***free and independent of any Lodge from this day.***" The one-sided connection with the United Grand Lodge of England

was finally severed. Prince Hall had been succeeded on his death by one Nero Prince as "Grand Master".

The minutes of African Lodge show that he was raised in the Lodge on 20th August 1799. Grimshaw, in one of his wilder stretches of imagination says that Nero Prince was a Russian Jew. Nothing is further from the truth. He is shown in the Boston Assessors Tax Books for 1800 as a bread baker. In 1810 he went to Gloucester, became a sailor and made at least two voyages to Russia with a Captian Thomas Stanwood of Gloucester.

In 1812 Nero Prince entered the service of Princess Purtoosof and later became one of the staff at the court of the Emperor Alexander. He died in Russia in 1833.

By the time that the Declaration of Independence was made African Lodge had warranted two Lodges; one to brethren in Philadelphia on 24th June 1797 and a second to Hiram Lodge in Providence, Rhode Island, on 25th June 1797. From these three Lodges and others subsequently chartered by them or their descendents the whole of the present "regular" Prince Hall Grand Lodges have arisen. The largest being the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Mississippi with 586 subordinate lodges and the smallest being Rhode Island with 5.

NEGRO MASONRY COMES TO CANADA

Prince Hall Masonry was sponsored in Canada by T. C. Harnley. In 1851, he was deputized by the Grand Lodge of New Jersey to erect Lodges in the Province of Canada. The first Lodge organized was Mount Olive, No. 1, in Hamilton. It's charter was dated December 27, 1852 and is still active. The second was Victoria, No. 2 St Catherines, on June 7, 1853. This lodge later lapsed. The third was Olive Branch, No. 3, at Windsor, Ontario in October 1854.

A Past Grand Master of the Compact Grand Lodge of New York and a Grand Master of the National Grand Lodge organized the three Lodges into a Grand Lodge for Canada on August 25, 1856. The title chosen for the organization was "Widow's Son Grand Lodge of the Province of Canada." Benjamin F. Stewart, Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New Jersey, became the first Grand Master and Joseph F. O'Banyoun the Grand Secretary.

When the Dominion of Canada came into being by Act of the British Parliament, on July 1, 1867, "Upper Canada", or "Canada West" as it had been known before the Act of Union of 1841, now became the Province of Ontario, and "Lower Canada" became the Province of Quebec.

This governmental act caused the Widow's Son Grand Lodge to be dissolved and re-organized so as to include all the Lodges in the new Province. The re-organization took place at Chatham, Ontario, on October 22, 1872, when the warrants of all the lodges were surrendered and new ones issued under the enlarged Grand Lodge. Benjamin F. Stewart was elected Grand Master and Ezekiel C. Cooper, Grand Secretary, and the title was changed to the Grand Lodge of the

Province of Ontario. Since this title resembled closely the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, a change was made in 1919 to the present name, Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons, of the Province of Ontario.

In all twenty-four lodges have existed under the Grand Lodge from time to time, only ten, remain active today. Besides the ten lodges giving allegiance to the Grand Lodge of Ontario there are four other Canadian Negro Lodges. The are Alta No. 21, Victoria and Resolution, No. 16, New Westminster, both of which comes under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Washington; Regent, No. 5, Winnipeg under Minnesota and Mount Messiah, No. 87, Halifax under the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of New York.

EQUITY AND MOUNT MESSIAH LODGES, HALIFAX, N. S.

It might be well to relate the circumstances surrounding two Lodges in Halifax, each of which was organized to accommodate Negro members.

As already presented, Union Lodge, No. 18, was an active Lodge in Halifax from 1856 to about 1916. The majority of it's members were Negroes.

About 1932, a move to restore the Lodge met with no success. By 1945, with three members of the Lodge still in good standing, it was judged expedient to make another attempt at revival of a Lodge for coloured people.

To give the movement a good start, it was decided to abandon former plans and to organize a new Lodge, to be called Equity Lodge, and which would be made up of both white and coloured members. MWBro R. V. Harris and two other Past Grand Masters along with eleven Past Masters became charter members. A petition was filed with Grand Lodge in April 1947 which resulted in its institution on March 1, 1948. On this occasion the Deputy Grand Master presided and two of the surviving coloured members of Union Lodge became officers.

During it's first year, WBro James Crosby, the first Master, died and Bro. A. B. Crook was appointed to fill the vacancy. The Lodge continued active and was well represented at District Meetings and District Church services. The members were keenly interested in the educational side and ceremonial work and the attendance at their own meetings was almost 100%.

The D. D. G. M. recommended the issue of a Warrant and on June 8, 1949, this was granted and the number 106 assigned to them. The Lodge was constituted and consecrated on October 17, 1949 by MWBro Rev. George R. Thompson, G. M. He was assisted by four Past Grand Masters in the presence of over 300 Brethren, one of the more notable occasions in the history of Masonry in Halifax. The charter members included three Past Grand Masters, M. L. Fraser, A. H. MacMillan, and R. V. Harris.

Equity Lodge has since its institution taken its place alongside other Lodges in the Province and has been active in every worthy Masonic endeavour. Time has proved the wisdom of the venture.

MT. MESSIAH LODGE (PRINCE HALL)

About the time negotiations were undertaken to organize Equity Lodge, representatives of Prince Hall Masonry of New York came to Halifax, at the invitation of local Negroes, to try to extend that organization into Nova Scotia. Grand Lodge officers attempted to channel interests of all coloured men into the regular organization. It was thought this would make for harmony among the coloured residents and would avoid two struggling groups.

Despite the warning of the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia, the Prince Hall organization went ahead and on July 27, 1946, a lodge called Mount Messiah was given a dispensation by the Grand Lodge of New York (Prince Hall). Thirty-one applications were received, balloted for and the candidates initiated, passed and raised in one evening! The Master elected and installed was Arthur M. Callander and the secretary, Joseph W. Johnson.

Even after the institution of the Lodge, negotiations were continued to effect a union between the two factions but to no avail.

On April 14, 1948, Mount Messiah Lodge, No. 87, was constituted but all was not harmonious. Rev. W. P. Oliver, the Master of the Lodge at the time demitted and joined Equity Lodge. He was recognized as a leader of his people and a man of high standing in the community.

Since 1948, the isolation of Mount Messiah Lodge from sister Lodges in Prince Hall affiliation has been the chief hindrance most detrimental to its success. The nearest Lodges which its members can visit are in Boston and Montreal. The distance from New York makes it exceedingly difficult to supervise it.

Another serious problem encountered by Masons belonging to both Lodges is that many of them belonged to the same church, Cornwallis Street Baptist Church, where Rev. W. P. Oliver was pastor.

About 1954 still another attempt was made to draw the groups together. This might have been accomplished but the Prince Hall group refused to submit to the necessity of each individual petitioning for initiation rather than for affiliation. On March 3, 1955, the New York Prince Hall Grand Master, wrote, in part, as follows: "It is our opinion that until we have positive assurance that the members of the lodge will be welcomed into your Grand Lodge without any strings attached, the charter of this Lodge will remain in force." And so the matter stands to the present. This is not

the place to discuss or deal with the question of the recognition, or non-recognition, of the Prince Hall Grand Lodges by the more widely recognized Grand Lodges of the United States of America. That is a matter that can only be dealt with by the United States Grand Lodges. Our interest here is the Origin of Prince Hall and the Grand Lodges that he founded.

NOTES CONCERNING RECOGNITION OF PRINCE HALL MASONRY

When discussing Negro Masonry with members of our Lodges, one inevitably is asked the question: "Why don't we recognize these Masons?" The following notes may help to provide the answer.

On a number of occasions, Prince Hall Grand Lodges have made attempts to have regular Grand Lodges afford them recognition. In 1869, the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Ohio presented a petition to L. W. Bierce, Grand Master of Ohio, praying that his organization grant charters to the coloured Lodges in place of the warrants they then held. No action was taken immediately but in 1875 A. H. Batton, Grand Master, recommended the union of the two bodies. However, a committee reported adversely on the plan, fearing that the resulting mixture might weaken Masonry in the State. It did recommend partial recognition. Final action was postponed for a year.

In the meantime, many Grand Lodges bitterly opposed such a move. Grand Master Bollen of Nevada demanded that the whole subject be studied thoroughly before any type of recognition be granted. So much criticism arose that in 1876 the Ohio Brethren voted to drop the whole matter.

In 1897, two Negroes, C. A. Ridout and Gideon S. Bailey, members of Prince Hall Lodges in Pennsylvania, while visiting the West Coast, Petitioned the Grand Lodge of Washington for the privilege of fraternal intercourse. After considering the matter at its annual communication in 1898m the Grand Lodge adopted resolutions stating substantially that Masonry, being universal, colour and race cannot be made a test of a candidate's fitness for the degrees and that Washington would not prohibit its lodges from fraternizing with Negro Masons who had received their degrees in Lodges tracing back to African Lodge, No. 459, or to Lodges authorized by it or Prince Hall, and that as the white and black races in purely social matters, preferred to remain separate it would offer no objection to the Negroes forming their own Lodges and even their own Grand Lodge.

So started another Masonic war far more bitter than the Ohio affair. Pennsylvania admitted that colour was no bar to initiation but became highly incensed because Washington had recognized Masonry which Pennsylvania held to be spurious and had voted to share its jurisdiction with the Prince Hall Institution. Relations were then broken off with Washington. Other Grand Bodies took similar action. Among them were those of Prince Edward Island and British Columbia.

In 1899, Washington took steps to rectify the situation and in due course harmony among

Grand Lodges was restored, the last to act being New Jersey which held out until 1906.

Several cases where Negro Lodges initiated white candidates caused trouble temporarily but did not attain major proportions. As stated previously, a Lodge was warranted in Halifax for the express purpose of having a Masonic home for Negroes of that city. Its charter did not state this fact but was understood.

In 1927, a dispensation to open a similar Lodge in Montreal was refused "as it would be a grave error to recognize any distinction in race or colour in this jurisdiction."

A booklet compiled in 1961 by the Masonic Research Association of Anchorage Alaska, reported on a large number of pronouncements relating to Negro Masonry by the several Grand Lodges. Several are quoted here:

The Grand Master of "Canada" (Ontario), in 1899, stated: "Aside from any views I may have regarding the legitimate standing of Prince Hall and his associates and of African Lodge, No. 459, constituted under a Warrant from the Grand Lodge of England, I have strong doubts as to the right or power of African Lodge to constitute other Lodges or to form Grand Lodges."

On April 12, 1960, the Grand Secretary of the United Grand Lodge of England wrote: "Prince Hall was never appointed Provincial Grand Master of any territory and the Warrant of Constitution of 1784 conferred no power on any member of African Lodge to constitute other Lodges or to create a Grand Lodge."

VWBro J. Lawrence Runnalls, Past Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Canada in Ontario wrote: "Neither the Grand Lodge of England, nor the Grand Lodge of Scotland or Ireland nor any of the fifty-eight regular Grand Lodges of the United States and Canada have ever recognized any of the Prince Hall Grand Lodges. This is prima facie evidence that the sixty-one Grand Lodges whose membership composes the overwhelming majority of the regular Masons of the world consider the Prince Hall Grand Lodge clandestine."

To sum up, there seems to be a place in the order of things for both regular and Negro Masonry, at present there is no fraternizing between the two groups, but, perhaps, someday future Brothers will see the wisdom of combining both groups for a stronger more Brotherly Freemasonry.

RESOURCES*

OFFICIAL HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY AMONG THE COLOURED PEOPLE OF
NORTH AMERICA
WASHINGTON, D. C. 1903 BY: WILLIAM H. GRIMSHAW

FREEMASONRY AMONG NEGROES IN AMERICA
(UNITED SPREME COUNCIL, 1946) BY: HARRY E. DAVIS

HISTORY OF THE GRAND LODGE OF IRELAND VOL II, PG 9
BY PARKINSON

FREEMASONRY IN THE THIRTEEN COLONIES
(NEW YORK: MACOY, 1929) BY: J. HUGHO TATSCH

BLACK SQUARE AND COMPASS
BY: HARRY A. WILLIAMSON

THE PRINCE HALL PRIMER
BY: HARRY A. WILLIAMSON

THE CANADIAN MASONIC RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
A PAPER BY: VWBRO J. LAWRENCE RUNNALLS

THE GRAND LODGE OF SCOTLAND YEAR BOOK
AN ARTICLE BY: BRO. G. D. DRAFFEN, PDGM

NOTES FROM THE PHILALETHES

Saturday, June 8, 1991, almost a century after he persuaded his Grand Lodge to recognize Prince Hall Masonry, a headstone with Masonic symbols was placed at the grave of William Upton. Over 400 Freemasons, black and white, were present in Mountainview Cemetary in Walla Walla, Washington, for this historic occasion. They were honouring the death bed declaration of William Upton. In 1898 he persuaded the Grand Lodge of Washington to recognize Prince Hall Masonry as legitimate. The following year, to still the outcry from throughout the land, his Grand Lodge rescinded the previous action. Upton demanded that no headstone be placed on his grave until the Brothers of whatever colour could march side by side. In 1990 the Grand Lodge of Washington and the Prince Hall Grand Lodge entered into fraternal recognition. From that House not made with hand, Upton must have smiled with pleasure. As the Holy Bible says: "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

Even casual readers of the THE PHILALETHES will recall a good Brother taking me to tasks for daring to suggest the United Grand Lodge of England and its officials are not necessarily godlike. Rare indeed are those within Freemasonry who would dare disagree with that Brother. But at least one other has found the UGL fallible. In a letter to the Grand Secretary of the UGL, Kenneth W. Aldridge, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Quebec, questions the UGL's wisdom in prohibiting the visitation of its members in those Grand Lodges recognizing Prince Hall Masonry as legitimate. Aldridge points out in his letter: "There is no uniform state of recognition in the world and further there is not one Grand Lodge in North America that can be said to recognize every Grand Lodge recognized by its sister Grand Lodge with whom it is in amity...to be fair your Board should have expanded its decision to include every Grand Lodge in North America because in every Grand Lodge recognition is extended to many Grand Lodges not recognized by the United Grand Lodge of England." He added several examples. He thrust his pen a little deeper: "It certainly cannot be based on the lgality of the Prince Hall Masonry, since the original warrant to African Lodge was issued by the Grand Lodge of England (Moderns) and the evolution to a Grand Lodge is similar to many of the present day Grand Lodges currently recognized by your Grand Lodge. One would assume it cannot be racially motivated since your Grand Lodge enfolds within its ample arms and under its banner many blacks around the world. It cannot be due to shared territory because your Grand Lodge has Lodges in many parts of the world where it does, in fact, share the territory. Quebec is one such territory. In any case, the question of exclusive territory is an American doctrine which should have no bearing upon any decision made by the UGL of England."

Albridge closed his letter, which was sent to all Canadian Grand Lodges, several in the U. S. and the MSA, with a truism that should be engraved on the walls of all right-thinking men: "UPON OCCASION MASONS MUST DO THAT WHICH IS RIGHT BECAUSE IT IS RIGHT AND NOT BE INTIMIDATED BY THOSE WITH OTHER LESS NOBLE AGENDAS."