

REPORT OF THE GRAND HISTORIAN

(Grand Lodge of New York, 1932)

R.W. OSSIAN LANG, Grand Historian

presented the following report

which was received

and ordered printed

in the Proceedings.

To the Grand Lodge:

WAS ANDERSON RIGHT? WHO WAS HE?

A Review of His Report on the First Six Years of Organized Freemasonry

The story of the formation of the first Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons in the world has been told innumerable times. The earliest and only official accounts are those to be found in the first and second editions of the "Constitutions of the Freemasons" published by order of the Grand Lodge of England. The first edition (1723) contains only a passing reference to the event, but includes a list of Lodges recorded as being in existence in 1722. The edition of 1738 is the one which supplies the earliest summary of what took place between 1716 and 1723 and after. The account having been written about twenty years after the happenings of the things there recorded, it is possible of course that the text contains some errors. The question is whether the things attacked by critics as not being true, really are important, or whether ANDERSON'S account may be accepted as substantially correct.

The report respectfully submitted herewith presents conclusions arrived at after careful consideration of scholarly criticisms of ANDERSON'S text and their bearing upon ascertained facts relating to the formative period of organized Freemasonry from 1716 to June 24, 1723, the date when the premier Grand Lodge installed its first Secretary, from which time onward the official minutes have been kept without interruption and are in existence now.

Tedious as the examination of questionings of the accuracy of ANDERSON'S account may appear, those criticisms have obtained currency because of the scholarly writers who raised them and, if for no other reason, it seemed important that the facts should be established so firmly as to put a wholesome check on writers who would, if they could, keep the story of beginnings look uncertain and thereby retain a play-ground in which they can sport their imaginations in the guise of history.

The original text of the first Book of Constitutions was compiled and completed before June 24, 1722, submitted in print on January 17, 1723, and put on sale in February, as is evident from an advertisement in the *London Post Boy* of February 26/28, 1723:

"THIS DAY IS PUBLISH'D

The CONSTITUTION of the FREE-MASONS. Containing the History, Charges, Regulations, &c., of that most Ancient and Right Worshipful Fraternity, for the use of the Lodges. Dedicated to his Grace THE DUKE OF MONTAGU the last Grand Master, by Order of his Grace THE DUKE OF WHARTON the present Grand Master authorized by the Grand Lodge of Masters and Wardens at the Quarterly Communication. Order'd to be publish'd and recommended to the Brethren by the Grand Master and his Deputy. Printed in the Year of Masonry 5723; of our Lord 1723. Sold by J. Senex and J. Hooke, both over against S. Dunstan's Church in Fleetstreet.

The first edition has only one reference to beginnings, and that is rather vague:

And now the Freeborn British Nations, disentangled from foreign and civil Wars, and enjoying the good Fruits of Peace and Liberty, having of late much indulg'd their happy Genius for Masonry of every sort, and reviv'd the *drooping Lodges of London*, this fair Metropolis flourisheth, as well as other Parts, with several worthy particular Lodges, that have a quarterly Communication, and an annual grand Assembly, wherein the Forms and Usages of the most ancient and worshipful Fraternity are wisely propagated, and the Royal Art duly cultivated, and the Cement of the Brotherhood preserv'd; so that the whole Body resembles a well built Arch; several Noblemen and Gentlemen of the best Rank, with Clergymen and learned Scholars of most Professions and Denominations, having frankly join'd and submitted to take the Charges, and to wear the Badges of a Free and Accepted Mason, under our present worthy Grand-Master, the most noble PRINCE JOHN DUKE OF MONTAGUE.

ANDERSON himself appeared in Grand Lodge for the first time in September 1721, and so could have had no share in the shaping of the organization before that time. One point of special interest in the cited statement is that-

"Several worthy particular Lodges have a quarterly Communication, and an annual Grand Assembly."

Nothing is said of a Grand Lodge.

In a second edition of the Book of Constitutions (1739), he supplies considerable detail, but hardly any reference therein given as to matters antedating 1723, has gone unchallenged. His "carelessness" here has been severely criticized, and not always justly. ANDERSON, it must be remembered, had to depend almost entirely on hearsay. Details of what took place, before THE DUKE OF MONTAGU became Grand Master, probably were supplied by his friend JACOB LAMBELL (or LAMBALL), a carpenter, who attended the First Assembly, on John Baptist Day in 1717, and retained his membership in the Craft for many years thereafter.

Having suffered serious financial losses in the bursting of the South Sea Bubble, in 1720, ANDERSON sought to supply his wants by compilations for which there might be a profitable market. If in his recital of events he gave rather free rein to his imagination where there was a hiatus, he did no more than a host of others have done after him, when the object was to write Masonic History. In ANDERSON's defence we at least can say that he was the pioneer in the field and had nothing to guide him. Moreover, no really serious harm has been done to the reputation of the Craft, which is something that can not be said in behalf of later uncritical writers with abundant opportunity near at hand to get at the truth.

It is well to bear these things in mind when reading, for example, LIONEL VIBERT'S paper on "Anderson's Constitutions of 1723," originally prepared for the Quatuor Coronati Lodge of London, in 1723, and since republished in book form; or Bro. DR. WILHELM BEGEMANN'S monumental work on Freemasonry in England, who first formulated the various strictures repeated by the former distinguished historiographer.

Without ANDERSON's account of what occurred between 1716 and the time of the first appointment of a Secretary to Grand Lodge, on June 24, 1723, we should have next to nothing to turn to for light concerning the earliest beginnings of Freemasonry, except stray newspaper items and a few diary notations and letters. If the men who had been active participants in the events recited by ANDERSON in the Constitutions of 1738, and were yet alive, found no fault with his chronicle, there would appear to be no reasonable ground for taking him to task now.

The newspaper items collected by SIR ALFRED ROBBINS and published in volume XXII of the Transactions of the Lodge Quatuor Coronati; DR. STUKELEY's Diaries and Letters, containing references to Masonic doings in London from January 6, 1721, onward, which GOULD extracted and read to the Lodge Q. C. on July 23, 1893; and various notes found in other contemporary publications, supply correctives for anything which may be found amiss in ANDERSON or is not included in his chronicle. After all is said and done, we shall find that his chief fault, if it is a fault, is that he was inclined to picture conditions in too rosy a light. For my own part I feel that Freemasonry owes to JAMES ANDERSON a greater debt of gratitude than to any other men of the early days, except perhaps DESAGULIERS and PAYNE.

The chronicle of Masonic events from the formation of the premier Grand Lodge, in 1717, to the beginning of the first official minutes, in 1723, as it is set down by ANDERSON in his Constitutions of 1739, has been reprinted many times as the Official History of the Grand Lodge of England for that period. Yet, for convenience in reviewing it critically, it appears desirable to repeat it once more. So here goes:

King George I. enter'd London most magnificently on 20 Sept. 1714. And after the Rebellion was over A.D. 1716, the few Lodges at London finding themselves neglected by SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN, thought fit to cement under a Grand Master as the Center of Union and Harmony, viz., the Lodges that met,

1. At the Goose and Gridiron Ale-house in St. Paul's Church-Yard.
2. At the Crown Ale-house in Parker's Lane near Drury-Lane.
3. At the Apple-Tree Tavern in Charles-street, Covent-Garden.
4. At the Rummer and Grapes Tavern in Channel-Row, Westminster.

They and some old Brothers met at the said Apple-Tree, and having put into the Chair the oldest Master Mason (now the Master of a Lodge), they constituted themselves a Grand Lodge pro Tempore in Due Form, and forthwith revived the Quarterly Communication of the Officers of Lodges (Call'd the Grand Lodge) resolv'd to hold the Annual Assembly and Feast, and then to chuse a Grand Master from among themselves, till they should have the Honour of a Noble Brother at their head.

SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN, the renowned architect, was adopted a Brother, on May 18, 1691, at a great convention, at St. Paul's Church, of the Fraternity of Free-Masons, as would appear from a Ms. notation made by JOHN AUBREY (1626-97). The Fraternity (or Fellowship) of Freemasons was a circle distinct from the Worshipful Company of Masons of the City of London. It is at least a coincidence that the Founder Lodge No. 4 was formed in the same year in which SIR CHRISTOPHER was adopted into the Fraternity. Moreover, there is a tenacious tradition, with at least one leg to stand on, that SIR CHRISTOPHER was elected head of the Fraternity. The expectation, in such case no doubt was that he would take an active interest. ANDERSON obviously followed the current talk when he said that the few Lodges at London found themselves neglected by SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN.

On St. John Baptist Day, in the 3d year of King George I., A.D. 1717, the ASSEMBLY and Feast of the Free and Accepted Masons was held at the foresaid Goose and Gridiron Ale-house.

Before Dinner, the oldest Master Mason (now the Master of a Lodge) in the Chair, proposed a List of proper Candidates; and the Brethren by a Alajority of Hands elected MR. ANTONY SAYER, Gentleman, Grand Master of Masons, who being forthwith invested with the Badges of Office and Power by the said oldest Master, and install'd, was duly congratulated by the Assembly who pay'd him the Homage.

MR. JACOB LAMBALL, Carpenter
CAPT. JOSEPH ELIOT
Grand Wardens

SAYER, Grand Master, commanded the Masters and Wardens of Lodges to meet the Grand Officers every Quarter in Communication,* at the Place that he should appoint in his summons sent by the Tyler.

N.B. -It is called the Quarterly Communication, because it should meet Quarterly according to antient Usage, And
When the Grand Master is present it is a Lodge in Ample Form; otherwise, only in Due Form, yet having the same Authority with Ample Form.

That the Quarterly Communication of the Officers of Lodges (called Grand Lodge), held in 1716, represented a revival, has been denied by learned writers with considerable emphasis. But why? It had been the custom of English trade Corporations or Companies of Masons from time immemorial" to hold Quarterly Communications, usually held on Michaelmas Day (Sept. 25), the Feast of St. John Evangelist (Dec ' 27) and Lady Day (March 25) ; and to hold their Annual Assembly on St. John Baptist Day. Hence the restoration of such practice by the Lodges of 1717, descendants of their operative prototypes, actually meant a revival, even though the rule was not observed during the inchoate period of the Grand Lodge. As a matter of fact, only Annual Assemblies were held in 1717, 1718, and 1719. The first Quarterly Communication of record was that on St. John Evangelist Day in 1720.

That any joint meeting of the four Lodges was held prior to St. John Baptist Day, 1717, also has been questioned. Certainly some action must have been taken by the interested parties to prepare for that Assembly. I can see no cogent reason for not accepting ANDERSON'S statement, especially as the critics have produced no counter proposition. JACOB LAMBALL, carpenter, made Senior Grand Warden of the premier Grand Lodge, is known to have been a friend of ANDERSON and is listed among the advance subscribers to the 1738 Constitutions, and he certainly never questioned the cited account, quite likely having himself furnished the information put into print.

The occurences noted in the record of the momentous Assembly on St. John Baptist Day, in 1717, the birthday of Freemasonry, the critics have allowed to stand unchallenged.

ASSEMBLY and Feast at the said Place 24 June 1718.

Brother SAYER having gather'd the Votes, after Dinner proclaimed aloud our Brother GEORGE PAYNE, Esq., Grand Master of Masons who being duly invested, install'd, congratulated and homaged, recommended the strict Observance of the Quarterly Communication; and desired any Brethren to bring to the Grand Lodge any old Writings and Records concerning Masons and Masonry in order to shew the Usages of antient Times: And this Year several old Copies of the Gothic Constitutions were produced and collated.

PAYNE was an antiquarian and a man of considerable substance. He brought order into the organization, roused the members to an appreciation of its antecedents, and urged a re-establishment of the ancient usages of operative Masons. ANDERSON speaks of Gothic Constitutions. It was the fashion in the London of his time to affect contempt for Medievalism in architecture and to enthuse over the Classic-Roman or Antient, ANDERSON calls it-style. What the cultured Englishman thought of the "Gothic" style may be judged from a sentence in S:R HENRY WOTTEN'S "Elements" (1650), where he speaks of the pointed Gothic:

"As for those arches. which our artizans call the third and fourth point, I say, these, both for the natural imbecility of the sharp angle itself, and likewise for their very uncomeliness, ought to be exiled from judicious eyes, and left to their first inventors, the Goths and Lombards, amongst other reliques of that barbarous age."

And Sir EVELYN, in dedicating his "Account of Architects and Architecture" (1687) to SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN lets loose a torrent of irritation at what he calls the "decadence of Classic Art":

"After the irruption of swarms of those truculent people from the North, the Moors and Arabs from the South and East, overrunning the civilized world, that, wherever they find themselves, they soon began to debauch this noble and useful art. Instead of those beautiful orders, so majestic and proper for their stations, becoming variety, and ornamental accessories, they set up those slender and misquise pillars, or rather bundles of staves, and other incongruous props to support incumbent weights and ponderous arched roofs, without entablature. . . . The unreasonable and universal thickness of the walls, clumsy buttresses, etc., nonsensical insertions of various marbles impertinently placed, turrets and pinnacles thick set with monkeys and chimeras, and abundance of other busy work and incongruities, dissipate and break the angles of the sight, and so confound it that one can not consider it with any steadiness where to begin and where to end."

I am citing the opinions of those learned worthies because they furnish a clue to ANDERSON'S intentions in referring to the medieval "Constitutions 19 of the operative Masons as Gothic. He was a Scot Calvinist of the Knox stamp, and the time before the Reformation was the Dark , the Gothic Age . It accounts for much that is amiss in what he offers as History of the antecedents of the Craft. Moreover, it explains why our Senior Deacons' oration ascribes to the Greeks and Romans all that is best and noblest in architecture and disowns the Gothic altogether, the very style which was created by our own operative forbears.

1719

ASSEMBLY and Feast at the said Place, 24 June 1719. Brother PAYNE having gather'd the Votes, after Dinner proclaimed aloud our Reverend Brother JOHN THEOPHILUS DESAGULIERS, LL.D. and F.R.S., Grand Master Of Masons,(Mr. ANTHONY SAYER, MR. THO S MORRICE, Grand Wardens) and being duly invested, install'd, congratulated and homaged, forthwith reviv'd the old regular and peculiar Toasts of Healths of the Free Masons. Now several old Brothers, that had neglected the Craft, visited the Lodges; Some Noblemen were also made Brothers, and more new Lodges were constituted.

The importance assigned to the revival of "the old and peculiar Toasts and Healths of the Free Masons" is. first of all, an indication that a study of old Writings and Records concerning Masons and Masonry" had gotten under way. Incidentally it reveals the essentially convivial character of the Lodges, before DESAGULIERS, PAYNE and ANDERSON, the great constructive trio, had effected a change, putting ideals into the foreground.

THOMAS MORRICE, stonecutter, who retains his place as Junior Warden, was a freeman of London and member of the Masons Company. As to the Noblemen made Brothers and the new Lodges there is justified doubt. The desire for the honor of a "Noble Brother" no doubt would else have found expression, and ANTHONY SAYER, Gentleman, would not have been put in the Grand Senior Warden's chair, after having been Grand Master. Anyway so the critics reason, and none can deny them.

1720

ASSEMBLY and Feast at the foresaid Place 24 June 1720. Brother DESAGULIERS having gather'd the Votes, after Dinner proclaimed aloud GEORGE PAYNE, Esq., again Grand Master of Masons; MR. THOMAS HOBBY and MR. RICH. WARE, Grand Wardens), who being duly invested, install'd, congratulated and homag'd, began the usual Demonstrations of Joy, Love and Harmony. This year, at some private Lodges several very valuable Manuscripts (for they had nothing yet in Print) concerning the Fraternity, Their Lodges, Regulations, Charges. Secrets, and Usages (particularly one writ by Mr. NICHOLAS STONE the Warden of Inigo Jones) were too hastily burnt by some scrupulous Brothers; that those Papers might not fall into strange Hands.

GEORGE PAYNE, Esquire, again Grand Master. So a Noble Brother is not yet available.

At the Quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge, in ample form, on St. John Evangelist's Day 1720, at the said Place

It was agreed, in order to avoid Disputes on the Annual Feast Day, that the new Grand Master for the future shall be named and proposed to the Grand Lodge some time before the Feast, by the present or old Grand Master; and if approv'd, that the Brother proposed, if present, shall be kindly saluted; or even if absent, his Health shall be toasted as Grand Master Elect.

Also agreed, that for the future the New Grand Master, as soon as he is install'd, shall have the sole power of appointing both his Grand Wardens and a Deputy Grand Master (now found as necessary as formerly) according to antient Custom, when Noble Brothers were Grand Masters.

1721

ACCORDINGLY

At the Grand Lodge in ample Form on Lady-Day 1721, at the said Place Grand Master PAYNE proposed for his Successor our most Noble Brother.

JOHN DUKE OF MONTAGU, Master of a Lodge; who being present, was forthwith saluted Grand Master Elect, and his Health drank in due Form; when they all express'd great Joy at the happy Prospect of being again patronized by noble Grand Masters, as in the prosperous Times of Freemasonry.

PAYNE, Grand Master, observing the Number of Lodges to encrease, and that the General Assembly requir'd more Room, proposed the next Assembly and Feast to be held at Stationers-Hall, Ludgate Street; which was agreed to.

Then the Grand Wardens were order'd, as usual, to prepare the Feast, and to take some Stewards to their Assistance, Brothers of Ability and Capacity, and to appoint some Brethren to attend the Tables; for that no strangers must be there. But the Grand Officers not finding a proper Number of Stewards, our Brother MR. JOSIAH VILLENAU, Upholder in the Burrough Southwark, generously undertook the whole himself, attended by some Waiters, THOMAS MORRICE, FRANCIS BAILEY, &C.

The "Noble Brother" is assured. PAYNE, ever on the alert for good order, introduced new regulations to prepare the way for a Grand Master who may not always be free to attend meetings. "Sole Power" is given the "New Grand Master" to appoint both his Grand Wardens and a Deputy Grand Master. GOULD ("The Four Old Lodges," 1879) wrote the final word on this departure:

"The first innovation upon the usages of the society occurred ... when the office of Deputy Grand Master was created, and the Grand Master was empowered to appoint that officer, together with the two Wardens. This encroachment upon the privileges of members seems to have been

strenuously resisted for several years, and the question was not finally settled until April 28, 1724."

Lady-Day means March 25. Sometime before this, THE DUKE OF MONTAGU must have become a member of the fraternity and was made Master of a Lodge. The ardent wish of the Grand Lodge was now about to be realized.

The news of the acquisition spread abroad rapidly. A young organization, composed for the larger part of middle-class men, must have unusual attractions to secure a Duke for its official leader. Members of the nobility and scholars now sought and found membership. The REV. WILLIAM STUKELEY, M.D., fellow of the Royal Society appears to have been the first one to take the step. He was received into Masonry on January 6, 1721, as is witnessed by an entry in his diary reading:

"June 6, 1721. I was made a Freemason at the Salutation Tav., Tavistock Street, with MR. COLLINS, CAPT. ROWE, who made the famous diving Engine."

To his interest in the fraternity, for a number of years, we owe much interesting information concerning actual conditions in Grand Lodge, as he made mention of them both in his Autobiography and his Common-Place Book. As regards the period immediately preceding the installation of THE DUKE OF MONTAGU in the Grand Master's chair, he furnishes this note:

"I was the first person made a freernason in London for many years. We had great difficulty to find members enough to perform the ceremony. Immediately after that it took a run, & ran it self out of breath thro' the folly of the members."

What he means by "the folly of the members" appears to have troubled the critics quite a little. No doubt he had in mind the excitement which the admission of the Duke created, with the consequent influx of members, some of whom might not have been able to find admission after a close scrutiny of their fitness for Masonrv. Being nobles or members of the Royal Society appears to have been considered ample recommendation.

ASSEMBLY and Feast at Stationers-Hall, 24 June 1721, in the 7th Year of King George 1. PAYNE, Grand Master, with his Wardens, the former Grand Officers, and the Master and Wardens of 12 Lodges, met the Grand Master Elect in a Grand Lodge at the King's Arms Tavern, St. Paul's Church-yard, in the Morning; and having forthwith recognized their Choice of Brother MONTAGU they made some new Brothers, particularly the noble PHILIP LORD STANHOPE, now Earl of Chesterfield; and from thence they marched on Foot to the Hall in proper Clothing and due Form; where they were joyfully receiv'd by about 150 true and faithful, all clothed.

After Grace said, they sat down in the antient Manner of Masons to a very elegant Feast, and dined with Joy and Gladness. After Dinner and Grace said, Brother PAYNE, the old Grand Master, made the first Procession round the Hall, and when return'd he proclaimed aloud the most noble Prince and our Brother, JOHN MONTAGU, Duke of Montagu, Grand Master of Masons and Brother PAYNE having invested his Grace's Worship with the Ensigns and Badges of his Office and Authority, install'd him in Solomon's Chair and sat down on his Right Hand; while the Assembly own'd the Duke's Authority with due Homage and joyful Congratulations, upon this Revival of the Prosperity of Masonry.

MONTAGU, G. Master, immediately call'd forth (without naming him before) as it were carelessly, JOHN BEAL, M.D., as his Deputy Grand Master, whom Brother PAYNE invested, and install'd him in Hiram Abbiff's Chair on the Grand Master's left Hand.

In like Manner his Worship call'd forth and appointed

MR. JOSIAH VILLENEAU Grand MR. THOMAS MORRICE Wardens, who were invested and install'd by the last Grand Wardens. Upon which the Deputy and Wardens were saluted and congratulated as usual.

Then MONTAGU, G. Master, with his Officers and the old Officers, having made the 2d procession round the Hall, Brother DESAGULIERS made an eloquent Oration about Masons and Masonry: And after Great Harmony, the Effect of brotherly Love, the Grand Master thank'd Brother VILLENEAU for his Care of the Feast, and order'd him as Warden to close the Lodge in good time.

The following newsprint report, published in the Post Boy , June 27, 1721, no doubt was furnished to the press. It was copied subsequently in two weekly papers:

"There was a Meeting on Saturday last (June 24th) at Stationers Hall of between two and three hundred of the ancient Fraternity of Free-Masons, who had a splendid Dinner, and Musick. Several Noblemen and Gentlemen were present at this Meeting, and His Grace THE DUKE OF MONTAGUE was unanimously chosen Master for the ensuing Year, and DR. BEALE Sub-Master. The Reverend DR. DESAGULIERS made a Speech suitable to the Occasion."

STUKELEY attended the meeting, to judge from the following entry in his diary:

"June 24, 1721-The Masons had a dinner at Stationers Hall present, DUKE OF MONTAGUE, LD. HERBERT, LD. STANHOIIE, SR. AND. FOUNTAIN, &C. DR. DESAGULIERS pronounced an oration. The Gd. Master MR. PAIN prodic'd an old MS. of the Constitutions which he got in the West of England, 500 years old. He read over a new sett of articles to be observ'd. THE DUKE OF MONTAGUE chose Gd. Mr. Next year. DR. BEAL, Deputy."

This adds to ANDERSON's account the interesting and important mention Of PAYNE's having

"produced an old Ms. of the Constitutions which he got in the West of England. The document has been identified authoritatively as the so-called "Cooke Ms." of the Ancient Charges, now in the British Museum. BEGEMANN has proved conclusively, on philological grounds, that it actually was derived from Western England, more particularly the Western Midland and, though it must have been written in the early part of the fifteenth century, it contains a part dating back to a much earlier time. Hence STUKELEY, learned archaeologist that he was, appears to be right when he judged it to have been five hundred years old at the time it was exhibited in Grand Lodge.

The Grand Lodge in ample Form on 29 Sept. 1721, at King's Arms foresaid, with the former Grand Officers and those of 16 Lodges.

His Grace's Worship and the Lodge finding Fault with all the Copies of the old Gothic Constitutions, order'd Brother JAMES ANDERSON, A.M., to digest the same in a new and better Method.

This probably is correct in substance as it stands.

The next item in the diary refers to the constitution by Dr. BEAL, Deputy Grand Master, of a new Lodge of which STUKELEY became the Master. The recorded meeting must have taken place in the afternoon, preceding the next Quarterly Communication:

December 27, 1721. "We met at the Fountain Ta. Strand & by consent of Grand Mr. present, DR. BEAL constituted a new Lodge there, where I was chose Mr."

The Grand Lodge in ample Form on St John's Day 27 Dec. 1721, met at the said King's Arms, with Former Grand Officers and those of 20 Lodges.

MONTAGU, Grand Master, at the Desire of the Lodge, appointed 14 learned Brothers to examine Brother ANDERSON'S Manuscript, and to make Report. This Communication was made very entertaining by the Lectures of some old Masons.

This was the first Communication attended by ANDERSON.

1722

Grand Lodge at the Fountain, Strand, in ample Form, 25 March 1722, with former Grand Officers and those of 24 Lodges.

The said Committee of 14 reported that they had perused Brother ANDERSON'S Manuscript, viz, the History, Charges, Regulations, and Master's Song, and after some Amendments, had approv'd of it: Upon which the Lodge desir'd the Grand Master to order it to be printed.

Meanwhile

Ingenious Men of all Faculties and Stations being convinced that the Cement of the Lodge was Love and Friendship, earnestly requested to be made Masons, Affecting this amicable Fraternity more than other Societies, then often disturbed by warm Disputes.

Grand Master MONTAGU'S good Government inclin'd the better Sort to continue him in the Chair another year; and therefore they delay'd to prepare the Feast.

But PHILIP, DUKE OF WHARTON, lately made a Brother, tho' not the Master of a Lodge, being ambitious of the Chair, got a Number of Others to meet him at Stationers-Hall 24 June 1722. And having no Grand Officers, they put in the Chair the oldest Master Mason (who was not the present Master of a Lodge, also irregular '), and without the usual decent Ceremonials, the said old Mason proclaimed aloud

PHILIP WHARTON, Duke of Wharton, Grand Master of Masons, and
Mr. JOSHUA TIMSON, Blacksmith, Grand but his Grace appointed
Mr. WILLIAM HAWKINS, Mason, Wardens no Deputy, nor was the

Lodge opened and closed in due Form. Therefore the noble Brothers and all those that would not countenance Irregularities, disown'd WHARTON'S authority, till worthy Brother MONTAGU heal'd the Breach of Harmony.

The significance of the latter sentence is explained by ominous happenings. The first inkling is supplied in an innocent looking news item in Applebee's Original Weekly Journal of August 5, 1721:

"Last week His Grace THE DUKE OF WHARTON was admitted into the Society of Free-Masons; the Ceremonies being performed at the King's Arms Tavern in St. Paul's Church-Yard, and His Grace came Home to his House in the Pall-Mall in a white Leathern Apron."

WHARTON was only twenty-two years old and in the midst of "that wilfull and unruly age, which lacketh rypeness and discretion, and (as wee saye) hath not sowed all theyr wyeld Oates." He was a dissipated, unstable, ambitious, turbulent young man, attractive in appearance and a popular mixer. Politics was his particular hobby and, after having been, with the Whigs, on the side of the King, he turned Jacobite and agitated the Stuart cause. His admission into Masonry was bound to rouse the suspicions of the Government, as he carried his Jacobite preferences to the hustings.

The many newspaper references to the expansion of Grand Lodge, since THE DUKE OF MONTAGU's election to the Grand Mastership, no doubt led WHARTON to see in Masonry a short route to prominence. He lost no time to press his aspirations to the fore and make known his desire to succeed MONTAGU in office.

The danger of having politics break into Masonry caused the Craft much anxiety. Hence the

delay of preparations for "the Feast."

STUKELEY notes in his diary that, on May 25, 1722, he met THE DUKE OF QUEENSBORO', Lord DIJMBARTON, HINCHINBROKE and others, at Fountain Tavern "to consider the Feast of St. John's." This would appear to suggest that WHARTON's doings were discussed and an agreement reached that the Annual Assembly must be held on St. John's Day, whatever may happen.

The anxieties of "the better Sort" may be surmised from a news item in the London Journal of June 16, 1722:

"A few Days ago a select Body of the Society of Free Masons waited on the Right Honourable the Lord VISCOUNT TOWNSHEND, one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, to signify to his Lordship, that being obliged by their Constitutions, to hold a General meeting now at Midsummer, according to annual Custom, they hoped the Administration would take no Umbrage at the Convocation as they were all zealously affected to his Majesty's Person and Government. His Lordship received this Intimation in a very affable manner; telling them, he believed they need not be apprehensive of any Molestation from the Government, so long as they went on doing nothing more dangerous than the ancient Secrets of the Society; which must be a very harmless Nature, because as much as Mankind love Mischief, no Body ever betray'd them."

The Government's assurance that there would be no Molestation "so long as they went on doing nothing more dangerous than the ancient Secrets of the Society" quite likely was a veiled hint to WHARTON and his adherents to stick to the Landmarks and leave politics alone.

This was the prelude to the following announcement in the Daily Journal of June 20, 1722:

"On Monday next, being the 25th Instant, will be kept at Stationers-Hall, the Grand Meeting of the most Noble and Ancient Fraternity of Free Masons, as usual."

In the same number of the *Daily Journal* appeared another announcement, not authorized by Grand Lodge and evidently issuing from the WHARTON camp:

"All belonging to the Society of Free-Masons who design to be at Stationer's Hall the 25th Instant, are desired to take out tickets before next Friday; And all those Noblemen and Gentlemen that have took tickets and do not appear at the Hall, will be look'd upon as false Brothers."

This misleading ad was stamped as spurious in the *Post* next day:

"Whereas there was an Advertisement inserted in this Paper Yesterday, design'd to be injurious, 'tis hoped no such sly Insinuation will have any Influence on the Fraternity."

On the same day was published, by authority of Grand Lodge, in the *Daily Journal*, the following announcement:

"All belonging to the Society of Free Masons that design to meet at Stationer's Hall on Monday the 25th Instant, are desired to take out Tickets by tomorrow night; and as they are deliver'd out by the most Ancient Branch of this Society in Town, therefore pray take out Tickets by to-Morrow Night, or Saturday Morning at the farthest."

THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF 1722

The Daily Post of June 27, 1722, printed a brief notice which emanated no doubt from an official source:

"On Monday last was kept at Stationer's Hall, the usual Annual Grand Meeting of the most Noble and Ancient Fraternity of Free-Masonry (where there was a noble Appearance of Persons of Distinction) at which meeting they were obliged by their Orders to elect a Grand and Deputy-Master; in pursuance whereof they have accordingly chosen His Grace THE DUKE OF WHARTON their Grand Master, in the room of His Grace THE DUKE OF MONTAGIJE, and DR. DESAGULIERS, Deputy Master, in the Room of DR. BEAL, for the Year ensuing."

ANDERSON's account of the happenings on June 25, 1722, written fifteen years after the event, has been criticised because he gives the date as June 24 -a not unnatural slip, seeing it was the St. John's Day Assembly. From that the conclusion is drawn that everything he wrote under this head must be wrong, particularly as the cited newspaper report tells an entirely different story.

To begin with the Grand Lodge hardly could afford, at the time, to have the details of the Stormy Feast appear in public print, considering the conditions under which the Government had permitted it to be held. As between the two accounts, that by ANDERSON undoubtedly is the correct one. His Grace actually had "appointed no Deputy" for the very good reason that DESAGULIERS, sternly loyal to the King, saw fit to protest against some of the upstart Duke's Jacobite doings. This also was not wise to publish abroad.

If ANDERSON had started a new paragraph at "Therefore the noble Brothers . . . disown'd WHARTON's Authority," he would have made clearer that the reference was to noble Brothers who had kept away so as not to give rise to still more unbecoming acts.

"Brother MONTAGU heal'd the Breach of Harmony" on January 17, 1723, in exactly the manner described by ANDERSON, and it was not till after WHARTON had given certain pledges, that his Grand Mastership was ratified and DESAGULIERS appointed Deputy Grand Master. In other words WHARTON doffed the Jacobite coat and donned the Hanoverian one again. A new impetus was given to Masonry now that order had been restored.

1723

The Grand Lodge met 17 January 1722/3 at the King's Arms foresaid, where THE DUKE OF WHARTON promising to be True and Faithful,

Deputy Grand Master BEAL proclaimed aloud the most noble Prince and our Brother.

PHILIP WHARTON, Duke of Wharton, Grand Master of Masons, who appointed DR. DESAGULIERS the Deputy Grand Master,
JOSHUA TIMSON, Foresaid, and JAMES ANDERSON, Grand Wardens, for HAWKINS demitted as always out of town.

When former Grand Officers, with those of 25 Lodges, paid their Homage.

G. Warden ANDERSON produced the new Book of Constitutions now in Print, which was again approv'd, with the Addition of the antient Manner of Constituting a Lodge.

Now Masonry flourish'd in Harmony, Reputation, and Numbers; many Noblemen and Gentlemen of the first Rank desir'd to be admitted into the Fraternity, besides other Learned Men, Merchants, Clergymen, and Tradesmen, who found a Lodge to be a safe and pleasant Relaxation from Intense Study or the Hurry of Business, without Politicks or Party. Therefore the Grand Master was obliged to constitute more new Lodges, and was very assiduous in visiting the Lodges every Week with his Deputy and Wardens; and his Worship was well pleas'd with their kind and respectful Manner of receiving him, as they were with his affable and clever conversation. ANDERSON's Book of Constitutions was presented in print and again approved.

The mentioned "Addition" probably was suggested at this meeting. The Book was put on sale on February 1, 1723, as shown by the advertisement cited at the beginning of this report.

Grand Lodge in ample Form, 25 April 1723, at the White-Lion, Cornhill. with former Grand Officers and those of 30 Lodges call'd over by G. Warden ANDERSON, for no Secretary was yet appointed. When WHARTON, Grand Master, proposed for his Successor THE EARL OF DALKEITH (now Duke of Buckleugh), Master of a Lodge, who was unanimously approv'd and duly saluted as Grand Master Elect.

Of exceptional importance is the record-unquestioned-that no Secretary had been appointed as yet. ANDERSON called the roll and wrote the above minutes which were printed in the 1738 edition of his Book of Constitutions. Here we have another reminder of the indebtedness of the Craft to him for all essential information concerning Communications of Grand Lodge from its very beginning to June 24, 1723, when "WILLIAM COWPER, Esquire, a Brother of the Horn Lodge at Westminster" became "Secretary to Grand Lodge."

FINALE

We have arrived at a convenient place to stop. The succeeding Assembly was a rather agitated one, because of the scheming WHARTON. That may be interesting history, but is not concerned in the examination of ANDERSON'S accounts before the opening of the first official Grand Lodge Book of Minutes.

For the convenience of the readers of my report I now shall attempt to indicate what of ANDERSON'S account remains intact:

Some time in 1716, four Lodges of Free-Masons, located in London and Westminster, together with some unaffiliated old Brothers, met in joint session at the Apple-Tree Tavern in Covent Garden. The oldest Master Mason, then Master of a Lodge, was called upon to preside. A resolution was adopted to revive the time-immemorial custom of operative Mason Lodges of holding an Annual Assembly and Feast on St. John Baptist Day.

The proposed Feast was held on June 24, 1717, at the Goose and Gridiron Tavern in St. Paul's Churchyard. Before dinner, the oldest Master Mason, then Master of a Lodge, was placed in the Chair. It was decided to elect a Grand Master. The presiding Master proposed a list of suitable candidates. The Brethren, by show of hands, elected ANTHONY SAYER, Gentleman. The presiding Master forthwith invested him with the insignia of the office, and the Assembly paid him the customary homage. JACOB LAMBELL, carpenter, and CAPTAIN JOSEPH ELLIOT were made Grand Wardens. The four Lodges then constituted a Grand Lodge, in **due** form, to be their common center of union. After that they dined together.

On St. John Baptist Day, in 1718, the Grand Lodge met again at the Goose and Gridiron, in Annual Assembly. An election was held, and ANTHONY SAYER who presided, proclaimed Brother GEORGE PAYNE, Esquire, to have been chosen Grand Master. Investment, installation and homage followed. PAYNE recommended the holding of Quarterly Communications, according to ancient usage, and asked the Brethren to bring to Grand Lodge any old manuscripts and records concerning Masons and Masonry in order to arrive at a better knowledge of the usages of ancient times.

At the Annual Assembly of 1719, the Rev. Brother JOHN THEOPHILUS DESAGULIERS, LL.D. and F.R.S., was elected Grand Master, and ANTHONY SAYER and THOMAS MORRICE were made Grand Wardens. At dinner, DESAGULIERS revived the old regular toasts peculiar to the Free Masons.

On St. John Baptist Day, in 1720, GEORGE PAYNE was again elected Grand Master.

The first Quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge was held on December 27, 1720, in celebration of St. John Evangelist Day. With an eye to orderly procedure at the Annual Feast, a resolution was adopted to elect the future Grand Masters at some time before that event, the actual Grand Master naming and proposing his successor, and, if the nomination be approved, the Grand Master Elect, if present, is to be saluted and his health toasted. The latter homage is to be paid even if he should be absent.

Also agreed was that, in the future, the new Grand Master shall have the sole power of appointing both his Grand Wardens and a Deputy Grand Master. Whether or not this was the "antient Custom, when Noble Brothers were Grand Masters" is of no consequence. Grand Lodge felt assured that it was. That assurance is valuable merely as indication of a settled purpose to act in all things in accord with what was believed to have been the traditional practice of the ancient forbears of the Grand Lodge.

All Communications from 1717 onward, including the one held on March 25, 1721, were held at the Goose and Gridiron. At the latter Grand Lodge session, THE DUKE OF MONTAGU, then Master of a Lodge, was elected Grand Master, on nomination by GEORGE PAYNE.

This would appear to be sufficient recension of the record bequeathed to posterity by the Rev. Bro. DR. JAMES ANDERSON concerning the early days of the first Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, from which all present regular Freemasonry has sprung. From the day on which MONTAGU was installed Grand Master, onward, an abundance of printed material has become accessible to interested historians to supplement ANDERSON's record. Without him we should be entirely in the dark with regard to beginnings, and Freemasonry would be, even more than it has been, at the mercy of romancers of the DR. OLIVER type and fabulists with a penchant for creating a history to prove particular theories.

Thank God for ANDERSON and that he is right,-on the whole!-so far as concerns the formative period of organized Freemasonry, from its beginning in 1716 or 1717 to the day of the inauguration of official minutes, on June 24, 1723, and from there onward to the present.

WHO WAS DR. ANDERSON?

Our Brethren in Continental Europe are inclined to regard JAMES ANDERSON as a sort of hierophant who, under the guise of phantastic history, conceals mysteries which to the initiates reveal the true meaning of the wisdom of the cabalists, alchemists or whatever they would like to be regarded as the true ancestors of Freemasonry. Appeal to the "Anderson Constitutions" is one to Sir Oracle. They never think of referring to them as the Constitutions of the premier Grand Lodge.

In England, on the other hand, the tendency has been to regard ANDERSON as a mere hack, diffuse, and utterly unreliable in almost everything but the Charges and Regulations, which are not his, but are transcripts of the authoritative law of Grand Lodge.

The Scots and the Irish took over the Constitutions "as is" and have not troubled themselves about the "History" bound up with the book ' One who does not know the Scots might think national pride would have stirred them from the very beginning to gather everything available in the records of their country to supply a comprehensive and authentic biography. So far they have not turned a hand. Why should they? It was a Scot who gave to England and to the world at large the Constitutions of Freemasonry. That is all that matters.

ANDERSON was a Presbyterian and the pastor of "a congregation gathered from amongst persons of the Scottish nation who resided about Westminster." The words between inverted commas appear in the first fairly satisfying biographical notice of him, a voluminous work on "Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses in London, Westminster and Southwark," published by a non-Mason, in 1814. *Dissenter-that* is what ANDERSON, "this learned divine," was, -- being a Presbyterian pastor in the early Georgian days. And it was not good manners to talk about such non-conformist persons. That may explain the night of silence enshrouding JAMES ANDERSON for almost a century. It is only within the past thirty years or so that English Masons have gone to work to build up a biography of what they could find concerning him.

In 1910, Bro. ALFRED ROBBINS read to the Quatuor Coronati Lodge his paper on "Dr. Anderson of the Constitutions" (vol. XXIII, A.Q.C.). In it he embodied much information regarding ANDERSON and his extensive literary output. The discussion by the members revealed a deep-seated unwillingness to have it appear that they consider the compiler of the Constitutions to be entitled to a niche in the Masonic hall of fame.

Bro. ROBBINS characterized ANDERSON'S work as "imaginative, fantastic and unhistorical." That passed as being about right. He spoke of ANDERSON'S "appalling industry." That was challenged. ANDERSON'S title of D.D. was questioned, etc.

Yet ANDERSON was, as Bro. ROBBINS pointed out, "the constant associate and helper" of DESAGULIERS whose "large part in the origin and development of the Grand Lodge of England" is freely acknowledged by all. The DUKE OF BUCHAN was his life-long patron. "My friend Mr. JA. ANDERSON"-writes STUKELEY in his diary. The standing and character of the men who were lifelong admirers and friends of ANDERSON ought to suffice in themselves to make critics cautious.

It is well to bear in mind also that a man must be judged against the background of the time in which he is living. Judging a man of two centuries or more ago by present day standards of scholarship is unhistorical as well as not fair. The literary life and social conditions of the London of the first third of the eighteenth century must be taken into account, to do justice to any public figure of that period.

JAMES ANDERSON was born at Aberdeen about 1680, he was graduated from Mareschal College, and later he received the degrees of M.A. and D.D. Sometime between 1705 and 1710 he arrived in London where he gathered together a number of his Presbyterian countrymen and became their minister. The congregation worshiped in a church formerly held by French Huguenots, on Swallow Street, with the father of DR. DESAGULIERS for their rector. Twenty-four years later, a division having arisen in his congregation, ANDERSON with his followers transferred to Lisle Street in Leicesterfields. The division appears to have arisen out of his leaning toward ceremonial, which caused his being popularly known as "Bishop Anderson" and by the facetious as "a little mass John."

His literary output was staggering, considering the amount of research necessarily involved. Among his published sermons was one preached on the anniversary of the execution of Charles I., entitled "No King-Killers" and was intended chiefly to beat down current misrepresentation of the position of the Presbyterians, during the civil wars, by showing that the conduct of his people and of Scots in general always had been entirely loyal to the crown. The sermon aroused enough interest to call for a second edition. The preface reveals that he personally had been subjected to vehement attacks from pulpit and press for anti-monarchical principles and practices. The publication is dedicated to the REV. DANIEL WILLIAMS, one of the most eminent divines of his time, by whom ANDERSON had been ordained to the ministry.

ANDERSON'S wife, Rebecca, had brought him a considerable fortune, most of which was lost in a wild orgy of speculation quite generally indulged in and finally, in 1720, resulting in disaster for all stockholders in the South Sea scheme.

Aside from the "Constitutions" his chief work was entitled "Royal Genealogies; or the Genealogical Tables of Emperors, Kings and Princes, from Adam to these times." It was professedly based on a German publication by JOHANN HUEBNEII, but considerably expanded by ANDERSON to include genealogies and dynasties and "the peers and great gentry of the Britannic isles." The latter feature found particular favor in England. The folio was dedicated to Frederick, Prince of Wales. ANDERSON spent seven years of hard labor on it, the first work of its kind on so large a scale published in the English language. Those who are interested and happen to live in or near New York City, will find a copy in the New York Public Library.

To mention only one more of his publications, there is "Unity in Trinity and Trinity in Unity," a theological treatise "by JAMES ANDERSON, D.D., chaplain to RT. HONOURABLE DAVID BUCHAN." It was dedicated to JOHN MITCHELL, M.D., for reasons of "our old friendship early contracted at the University which hitherto has not been once interrupted." SIR RICHARD ELLYES, Baronet, is mentioned, as from the library of this renowned scholar ANDERSON had obtained the use of many rare books on Classical and Oriental lore, including many Rabbinical writings.

There is no need of enlarging the list. ANDERSON continued to write to the day of his death, on May 25, 1739. "News from Elysium, or Dialogues of the Dead" was published after his death.

Prejudice appears to have dogged him to the very grave and after The Daily Post of Saturday, June 2, 1739, had this interesting note concerning his interment, interesting as furnishing -the earliest hint as to how Masonic obsequies were conducted:

"Last Night, was interr'd in Bullhill-Field the Corpse of DR. ANDERSON, a Dissenting Teacher, in a very remarkable deep Grave. His Pall was supported by five Dissenting Teachers, and the REV. DR. DESAGULIERS: It was follow'd by about a Dozen of Free-Masons, who encircled the Grave; and after DR. EARLE had harangued on the Uncertainty of Life, &c. without one Word of the Deceased, the Brethren, in a most solemn dismal Posture, lifted up their Hands, sign'd, and struck their Aprons three Times in Honour to the Deceased."

His brother, ADAM ANDERSON (1692-1765), had the advantage over him as regards exposure to unfair criticism, by not being a clergyman and having chosen commerce and industry for his chief study. He was an industrial expert, as is witnessed by his great two-volume historical and chronological work "tracing political, commercial, social and colonial developments of European powers, with particular reference to Great Britain and Ireland." An appendix is devoted to "Modern Politico-Commercial Geography of the Several Countries of Europe."

Interesting to us as Americans is ADAM ANDERSON'S particular devotion to colonial affairs and his having been one of the trustees for establishing a colony of Englishmen in Georgia. He also was a trustee to carry out the wishes of Queen Anne for the establishment of parochial libraries at home and in the colonies.

The minutes of the Grand Lodge of England, under date of December 13, 1733, record that "Deputy Grand Master BATSON recommended the New *Colony of Georgia, in North America* to the Benevolence of the particular Lodges."

The reason for making mention of ADAM ANDERSON was to suggest what the intellectual caliber of the two brothers was and what sort of educational equipment they must have brought with them from Scotland.

Criticism, whether constructive or destructive, is needed to destroy or correct error. Prejudice never yet has benefited anyone, least of all the one afflicted with it. That is why one of the chief objects of Masonry is to emancipate its votaries from such obsession and to turn them into sympathetic, open-minded and open-eyed searchers for the truth and good in all things.

I have dropped into preaching. All I merely wanted to do was to try to have you appreciate with me the great debt Freemasons owe to our worthy Brother, the REVEREND JAMES ANDERSON, D.D., from Aberdeen.

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1998-05-01