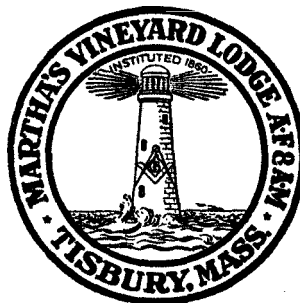


**MARTHA'S VINEYARD MASONIC LODGES**

**Past and Present**

1791 to 1959

DWIGHT W. ROBB



ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

MARTHA'S VINEYARD LODGE

OF

TISBURY

VINEYARD HAVEN, MASSACHUSETTS

June 6, 1959

# Martha's Vineyard Masonic Lodges

## *Past and Present*

### INTRODUCTION

The original intent, when this paper was started, was to write a history of Martha's Vineyard Lodge of Tisbury, preceded by a few paragraphs about several older lodges, that were either proposed or constituted on Martha's Vineyard, an island of about one hundred square miles in extent, off the southern coast of Massachusetts. However the information available or obtained by correspondence dealing with the older lodges, caused a change in the arrangement of this paper. Therefore, in the first part following this introduction, only a few paragraphs are devoted to Martha's Vineyard Lodge. This treatment or slight on the writer's part is rectified in the second part, by devoting it entirely to the history of the Lodge that prompted the writing of this treatise.

A perusal of the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts discloses that, probably, from 1791 there have been at least seven Masonic Lodges either proposed or erected on Martha's Vineyard. The first Lodge listed below presents so many probabilities as from what higher authority it received its Charter, that more space will be devoted to it. It appears that it was granted a Rite of Perfection charter (referred to as a Scottish Rite Lodge in this paper), whereas the second Lodge listed was actually continuing the Masonic labors of the older Lodge, but under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.

The Masonic Lodges that once were, or now are located on Martha's Vineyard, to be considered, some at length, others but briefly, are:

- 1st — King Solomon Lodge *of* Perfection, 1791 to 1797.
- 2nd — King Solomon Lodge *in* Perfection, 1797 to 1822.
- 3rd — Royal Arch King Solomon Lodge, 1787.
- 4th — Seven Star Lodge of Edgartown, 1820 to 1824.
- 5th — Martha's Vineyard Lodge of Tisbury, organized in 1859.
- 6th — Oriental Lodge of Edgartown, organized in 1866.

7th — Ocean Isle Lodge, Oak Bluffs, proposed 1878.

While we are considering the first two Lodges listed above, whose names are so similar, and to make clear which Lodge is referred to, the first Lodge will have the word “*of*” italicized to distinguish it from the second Lodge that will have the word “*in*” italicized.

*Part One*

First — KING SOLOMON LODGE *of* PERFECTION  
1791 to 1797

King Solomon Lodge of Perfection was probably the first Masonic Lodge to be erected on Martha's Vineyard and the earliest reference, so far uncovered by the writer, will be found in Volume II, reprint edition of the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, when on December 11, 1797, the following vote was passed in Grand Lodge

On Motion, VOTED, That a new charter be granted to the Lodge at Holmes' Hole, Martha's Vineyard, by the name of King Solomon Lodge *of* Perfection.  
(II Mass 112)

As a result of the above vote, this Lodge was thereafter known by the name of King Solomon Lodge *in* Perfection. This vote also indicates that there had been a Masonic Lodge on Martha's Vineyard for some time prior to 1797. But how long, we are at this late date unable to determine with any certainty.

In 1804, a committee was appointed in Grand Lodge to determine the rank or seniority of the Lodges under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge. The committee reported that the original charter of this Lodge was dated 1791, "but without specifying the month or day. In the case of every other Lodge in the list, the precise date of the Charter is given." Dr. Frederick W. Hamilton, formerly Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge, explains this deficiency in the following manner, "The inference is that the original Charter was not available to the Grand Secretary and the date of 1791 rests on tradition." (19n Mass 268)

Dr. Charles E. Banks, a former member of Martha's Vineyard Lodge, in his *Annals of Tisbury*, published in 1911, has this to say as to when it was organized: "While it is believed that this Lodge was instituted in 1783, yet the actual proof is not

available.”

Dr. Hamilton, previously referred to, in 1921 wrote an interesting article, about this old Lodge, entitled: —

A FORGOTTEN CHAPTER IN MASSACHUSETTS  
MASONIC HISTORY

in which he said in his concluding paragraph: —

“Thus our ancient records enable us to recover an interesting but long forgotten chapter of our Masonic history and to show with apparent conclusiveness that the first Scottish Rite body in Massachusetts was King Solomon Lodge *of* Perfection, existing, perhaps it would be too much to say flourishing, in Holmes’ Hole, on Martha’s Vineyard, from 1791 to 1797.” (1921 Mass 268)

Dr. Hamilton in the article referred to above indicates that Moses Michael Hays did, while he was Grand Master of the Massachusetts (Independent) Grand Lodge, as Deputy Inspector General of the then Rite of Perfection, grant a charter to King Solomon Lodge *of* Perfection. However, he further states, there are no records in existence showing what Scottish Rite Lodges were erected or chartered by him. Furthermore, Dr. Hamilton defends this action by Hays in granting a charter to this old Lodge on Martha’s Vineyard, as being strictly regular under the terms of his commission and entirely consistent with the position which he then held as Grand Master, for the reason that the body so organized would be a Scottish Rite body and as such not an invasion of the Grand Lodge’s jurisdiction, especially as at that time the Scottish Rite conferred the symbolic degrees. (1921 Mass 268)

Other evidence supporting Dr. Hamilton’s contention that this old Lodge was a Scottish Rite body follows: —

In 1871, M. W. William S. Gardner, Grand Master of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge, in his farewell address to that body

at the end of his third term, in speaking of the masonic accomplishments of Moses Michael Hays, said in part: "Indeed, during his administration, a Lodge of Perfection was chartered." (1871 Mass 243) Unfortunately Bro. Gardner did not indicate the location or name of this Lodge, therefore by implication it could have been King Solomon Lodge *of* Perfection, on Martha's Vineyard, that he chartered sometime between 1788 and 1792, while he was filling the high office of Grand Master.

There is a book, published in 1798, by Thaddeus Mason Harris, entitled: the

CONSTITUTION OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS,  
SECOND EDITION,

in which appears the following item: —

"A new charter was also issued to the Lodge at Holmes' Hole, on Martha's Vineyard, by the name of 'King Solomon's Lodge *of* Perfection'."

"This Lodge was first constituted by the Most Worshipful Grand Master Hays, with the privilege of Making Royal Arch Masons, &c. That charter they still retain; yet, upon the principles of Masonic union and correspondence, came under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, and took a new charter."

The second paragraph quoted above, refers to the original charter, apparently giving the Lodge the privilege of "Making Royal Arch Masons, &c." Of this privilege, Bro. J. Fairbairn Smith, Editor-in-chief of the *Masonic World*, Detroit, in a letter, has this to say: "The '&c.' would indicate that in addition to the Royal Arch Degrees, the various degrees of Ineffable Masonry — were conferred under the Charter." He also states, that "no doubt the original intent of the Charter was to erect a Lodge of Perfection, which at that time consisted of 25 degrees."

The matter of the Charter of King Solomon Lodge *of* Perfection being retained by the new Lodge, will be further discussed in the

next section of this paper, dealing with the doings of King Solomon Lodge *in* Perfection.

At the time, when Martha's Vineyard Lodge's present temple was dedicated on October 26, 1895, the *Martha's Vineyard Herald* had a long report of the dedication exercises, conducted by the M.W. Edwin B. Holmes, Grand Master and his suite. This report included a copy of a letter received from the first Master of the Lodge, Wor. Joseph T. James, then living in St. Louis, in which he said in part:

“After organizing, I tried to regain the jewels of the original Lodge of Tisbury, known as King Solomon Lodge *of* Perfection, which went to pieces after the Revolution. This Lodge had its charter from England, was known as (a) Blue Lodge and conferred seven degrees.”

No doubt the above was Bro. James' understanding of this old Lodge, but the information obtained by correspondence and otherwise, does not substantiate the facts as given by him, for the following reasons:

First — It appears that this Lodge was not organized until long after the Revolution ended.

Second — Had the charter been obtained from England, “it would have been a Lodge authorized only to work the first three degrees.”

Thirdly — It appears that this old Lodge was not a Blue or symbolic Lodge, but rather a Rite of Perfection Lodge.

Fourthly — As to this old Lodge conferring seven degrees, it is more likely that they had the privilege of conferring 25 degrees, as a Rite of Perfection Lodge.

In the writing of this section, the writer is indebted to many who have so generously exchanged letters with him, giving him the benefit of their knowledge and advice as to what publications

he should read, on this subject that has held his attention for so long. Besides those already given credit for information received, thanks are also extended to Mrs. Muriel D. Taylor, Librarian, Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Bro. Ivor Grantham, Librarian, Grand Lodge of England, Bro. George S. Draffen, Librarian, Grand Lodge of Scotland, Bro. J. O. Harte, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, Bro. J. R. Dashwood, Secretary of Quatuor Coronati Lodge, #2076, London, England and others, both here and abroad, including, Dukes County Historical Society, Edgartown, Mass.

One other should be mentioned, who loaned me certain material, used in preparing this section of this paper, I refer to Walter S. Booker, Secretary of Martha's Vineyard Lodge of Tisbury, since 1946.

## Second — KING SOLOMON LODGE in PERFECTION

1797 to 1822

Very little is known about King Solomon Lodge *in* Perfection at Holmes' Hole. Its new charter, granted it in 1797, by vote of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, appears the only source of information so far available to the writer. It is contained in Volumes Two and Three of the reprint editions of the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, from 1797 to 1822.

It also appears from the few items included in the Proceedings, that this Lodge had a short and troubled existence. At different times, committees were appointed in Grand Lodge, to consider petitions and other matters, pertaining to the Lodge, and what the committees' findings may have been are not now available. Several times, by vote in Grand Lodge, the payment of their quarterage were adjusted.

Perhaps, with the thought that the Grand Lodge would look more favorably on the doings of the Lodge during their troubled times, they chose MAW. Paul Revere, of Revolutionary fame, to



be their proxy in Grand Lodge. His appointment would date from December 9, 1799, when a letter was read, from the Lodge and accepted in Grand Lodge, appointing him. (II Mass 151) At the same Communication of Grand Lodge a committee reported on a letter previously received from the Lodge, that “was referr’d over to the next Quarterly Communication.” (II Mass 152)

On the next page of the Proceedings will be found the following interesting item:

“Cash, received from King Solomon Lodge *in* Perfection, P. Revere \$5.”

In 1819, the Grand Master appointed a Committee to report to the Grand Lodge, the state and condition of the craft under its jurisdiction. On March 8, 1820, this committee made its report, in which they said, with reference to King Solomon Lodge *in* Perfection, that it was “8 years in arrears, has manifest a spirit of insubordination highly disrespectful to Grand Lodge and totally inconsistent with their obligations and the known and acknowledged principles of Masonry.” (III Mass 283)

At the next quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge, held on June 14th, 1820, M.W. Francis J. Oliver, Grand Master, had this to say about the conditions of King Solomon Lodge *in* Perfection, that it was

“8 years in arrears (\$64) to the Grand Lodge. It will be recollected that the recognition of a proxy for this Lodge was recently suspended until some information could be had of its present state, no returns having been received from it since 1812 and it is believed no Meetings had been since that period. To obtain this information, I addressed a Letter to brother (E Hillman) who signed the commission of proxy, and his reply confirmed the belief entertained, and contained an implied threat, that if the Gd Lodge should see fit to recall the Charter, the Lodge would notwithstanding continue to work, under one granted by the Gd Lodge of \_\_\_\_ in the year \_.” (III Mass 301)

The last sentence in the above report implies that the officers of the Lodge still had in their possession the original Charter granted to King Solomon Lodge *of Perfection*, the first Lodge known to have been located on Martha's Vineyard. The fact that the Charter of the old Lodge was retained is supported by an item appearing in the Book of Constitution of Free and Accepted Masons, referred to in the previous section of this paper, that reads in part as follows: "That charter they still retain;" etc.

Thus matters stood, until the Stated Communication of Grand Lodge, on December 27, 1822, when the Grand Treasurer reported to Grand Lodge, that this Lodge had surrendered its Charter. (III Mass 428)

The Vocal Companion and Masonic Register of 1802, shows the following as members of the Lodge:

R.W. Rufus Spalding,	W.M.	THOS. COOK
W. Elijah Hillman	S.W.	PAUL
W. JONATHAN	J.W.	JOHN PEASE
BENJAMIN SMITH,	Secy.	LOT LUCE
JESSE LUCE,	Treas.	SILAS
JESSE LUCE, JR.,	Tyler.	DAVID
		LEVI PEASE
		SAMUEL

### Third — ROYAL ARCH KING SOLOMON LODGE 1787

According to Dr. Charles E. Banks' Annals of Tisbury, published in 1911, there was a Royal Arch King Solomon Lodge on Martha's Vineyard in 1787 and the only evidence of such a Lodge offered by him is a copy of a diploma given to one Arthur Fenner. This diploma is supposed to be in the possession of the Masonic Library Association of Minneapolis, Minn. It reads as follows:

And the darkness Comprehended it not.

In the East a place of Light where Reigns Silence and Peace.

Wee, the Master, Wardens, and Secretary of the Royal Arch King Solomon's Lodge held at Edgartown in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts do certify that the bearer hereof our worthy

Brother Arthur Fenner has been Regularly Initiated into the third Degree of Masonry.

As such he has been Received by us; and being a True and faithful Brother, he is hereby recommended to the favor and prote'n of all free and accepted Masons wheresoever Disperesd. In witness whereof we have Caused the Seal of our said Lodge to be afixed this sixteenth day of May in the year of our Lord 1787 and of Masonry 5787.

ARTHUR FENNER

JOHN COOKE, Mr.  
JOHN PEAS, S. W.  
DANIEL READ, J.W.  
BENJ. SMITH, Sec y.

“The size of this document is said to be 6 x 8 inches and the seal referred to is a square piece of paper affixed diagonally to the upper left hand corner by a wafer. The text is enclosed in a border of double lines.”

The name of this Lodge implies that it might have been a Royal Arch Chapter, similar to our present day Chapters, but the above copy of the diploma indicates that only the first three degrees were conferred on the candidate.

Replies to letters sent to the Grand Lodges of Massachusetts, England and Scotland, show that the name of this Lodge does not appear in their indices, and one may wonder, because the name of this Lodge is similar to the first two discussed in this paper, if it could have been a part of, or connected with, King Solomon Lodge *of* Perfection, the first Lodge discussed. Bro. Smith, previously referred to, thinks it was. This seems to be borne out, by assuming that certain officers of King Solomon Lodge *of* Perfection, continued in the same office after that Lodge acquired its new Charter from the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts in 1797 and that they may have held similar offices in this Royal Arch King Solomon Lodge. A comparison of two names appearing on the diploma, with the 1802 list of members of King Solomon Lodge *in* Perfection, seems to bear this out. On the diploma appears the name of John Peas, S.W., and on the 1802 list there is also a John Pease, who has an “e” attached to his last name. And again, in the case of Benjamin Smith, who was Secretary of both Lodges, on the diploma his first name is spelled “Benj.” and on the 1802 list the first name is spelled in full. One further note about a present day lodge now located in New York city, the erection of which may also apply to this old Royal Arch King Solomon Lodge of Edgartown in 1787. The following

information was received from Bro. Wendell K. Walker, Director of the Library and Museum of the Grand Lodge of New York. Bro. Walker writes as follows: —

“Very few of our present lodges were warranted before the organization of this (New York) Grand Lodge in 1781, and of those few we do not definitely know the source of all the warrants. For example my own lodge, Independent Royal Arch Lodge 2, was warranted 15 December 1769, but we do not know whether this was done by some Grand Lodge in the British Isles or by a Provincial Grand Master.”

Therefore, from the above information supplied by Bro. Walker, it appears, that there might have been a Masonic Lodge duly erected on Martha’s Vineyard and located in Edgartown by the name of Royal Arch King Solomon Lodge before 1791.

Fourth — SEVEN STARS LODGE OF EDGARTOWN  
1820—1824

At the Quarterly Communication of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge, held on July 14, 1820, a petition was received from Thomas Melville Vinson, Samuel Wheldon and Samuel Worthman, with five others all Master Masons, praying that a Charter be granted to erect a “Lodge in Edgartown on Martha’s Vineyard.” This petition was supported by a certificate of approbation from Union Lodge of Nantucket and Fraternal Lodge of Barnstable. The District Deputy Grand Master of the 12th Masonic District, R. W. Hezekiah S. Gardner also added his recommendation for the erection of this Lodge. All of which was referred to a committee, (III Mass 289) who reported at the next Quarterly Communication of the Grand Lodge on September 13, 1820, recommending, “that the prayer of the Petitioners ought to be granted.” The name chosen for this new Lodge was Seven Stars Lodge (III Mass 308). It is noted in the above that the name of King Solomon Lodge *in* Perfection does not appear as recommending the erection of this Lodge, they at that time not being in good standing with the Massachusetts Grand Lodge.

Apparently the organizers of this new Lodge were having some difficulty in getting started as the following vote was passed in Grand Lodge on September 11, 1822:

Voted, that one year be granted to the Members of Seven Stars Lodge for the purpose of being constituted a regular Lodge. (III Mass 411)

The Proceedings of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge does not state the date when Seven Stars Lodge was constituted, but at the

December 27, 1823 Stated Communication of Grand Lodge, the District Deputy Grand Master for the 12th Masonic District, reported that this Lodge was in arrears for the year 1823, but what the arrears may have been is not mentioned. (III Mass 471)

On December 27, 1824, the Grand Treasurer reported to the Grand Lodge that this Lodge had returned its Charter. (III Mass 526)

Fifth — MARTHA'S VINEYARD LODGE OF TISBURY  
Organized — August 10, 1859

With the passing of Seven Stars Lodge of Edgartown in 1824, there is no record in the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge, of a Blue Lodge being located on Martha's Vineyard until 1859, a period of thirty-five years, when on August 10th of that year, M.W. John T. Heard, Grand Master, granted to Joseph T. James and others, a dispensation to erect Martha's Vineyard Lodge of Tisbury at Holmes' Hole.

On September 18, 1860 the Lodge was duly constituted, by M.W. Winslow Lewis, Grand Master, and the other officers of the Grand Lodge.

Unfortunately, on August 11, 1883, fire destroyed the business section of the village and with it went the building where the Lodge Room was located, including the Secretary's records prior to October 20, 1868. The only property of the Lodge that was saved, was the Holy Bible and the regalia. This Holy Bible is still being used by the Lodge and it bears the date of 1859 on the fly leaf.

In 1895 the Lodge acquired their present well appointed Masonic Hall, that has been free of debt since 1915.

Through the years the Lodge has prospered and now has a membership of over 170.

Sixth — ORIENTAL LODGE OF EDGARTOWN  
Organized — July 16, 1866

Oriental Lodge of Edgartown was organized in 1866 and is now in a healthy condition, with a membership of about 200, having a fine Masonic Hall and they will soon be able to celebrate their own first centennial.

Seventh — OCEAN ISLE LODGE, OAK BLUFFS  
Proposed — 1878

Of Ocean Isle Lodge, Oak Bluffs, there are two minutes in the Secretary's records of Martha's Vineyard Lodge, dealing with the proposed erection of this Lodge, and none

at all in the files of the Grand Lodge, until an inquiry was sent them. The first motion put before the members of Martha's Vineyard Lodge for their approval of the erection of this new Lodge was voted down. However, at the next Communication on July 2, 1878, the following vote was passed:

A petition was received from Howes Norris and others for permission of the Lodge to form a new Lodge at Oak Bluffs under the name of Ocean Isle Lodge.

Petition granted by a vote of five in the affirmative to one in the negative.

One other Masonic organization on Martha's Vineyard that derives its membership from members of Blue Lodges is the Vineyard Royal Arch Chapter, organized in 1918. They held their meeting in the quarters of Martha's Vineyard Lodge until the first of 1950, when they moved to Edgartown by permission of the Grand Chapter of Massachusetts. Their membership now being over 125.

*Part Two*

**MARTHA'S VINEYARD LODGE OF TISBURY**

Among the gifts given to Martha's Vineyard Lodge at the time it was constituted on September 18, 1860, that was rescued from the fire that destroyed or damaged several structures in the business section of Holmes' Hole in 1883 and rebound in 1951, is our Holy Bible, that has been in continuous use by the Lodge at every communication since it was first received. On the fly leaf of this Volume of the Sacred Law, will be found the following notation:

Presented  
to  
MARTHA'S VINEYARD LODGE  
of  
TISBURY  
by the Undersigned  
Visitors & Friends  
from  
Boston  
August 7th, 1860

WM. D. COOLIDGE  
ISAAC CAREY  
JOHN M. CLARK  
OTIS RICH

WM. K. JONES  
JOHN T. GARDNER  
JOHN SEAVER  
also

J. PUTNAM BRADLEE, ESQ.

The story as to what prompted the above gentlemen to give such a fine gift to this new Masonic Lodge, follows, as it was reported in the September 28, 1860 issue of the *Vineyard Gazette*.

“At the close of the public services reported last week, the following remarks were made. They will sufficiently explain the circumstances that called them out. Mr. William D. Coolidge, of Boston having a splendid copy of the Bible in his hand, arose and addressed the presiding officer as follows:

“Worshipful Master: It will be remembered by you that a few weeks since a party of gentlemen from Boston, seeking health and pleasure, found here a safe harbor for their yacht, and a most genial reception for themselves from their brethren of this place.

“Your cordial greetings and kindness on that occasion met with a ready response in the hearts of all that company of eight, seven of whom were brethren of the Masonic fraternity of Boston. Impressed with a sense of the great

value of our institution and feeling as we should a deep interest in the welfare and prosperity of the new Lodge about to be established, on our return it was resolved that we would testify that interest in you, by the presentation of that great light in Masonry which is the rule and guide of our lives, the Holy Bible. And now, sir, in the name and in behalf of the gentlemen who have united in this gift, and whose names you will find inscribed upon one of its pages, present you this beautiful edition of the Bible — asking for it a place upon your altar. And may those who look upon it, and all who may hereafter place their hands upon it, be guided by its precepts, strengthened by its promises, and brought at last, by obeying those precepts and trusting in those promises, to the rewards of the faithful in the Celestial Lodge above where the supreme Architect of the Universe presides forever.

“As you look upon your beautiful harbor, with her arms extended as if to invite the tempest tost mariner to a safe and peaceful anchorage, as you daily look upon this beautiful scene, a daily lesson to open your arms and your hearts to receive and comfort the way-worn brother, and to afford him the safety and assistance he may need, so that he may go on his way rejoicing. And may you be assured of that promise from the Great Master ‘that as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done unto me’.”

(Brother Coolidge was at that time Junior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge, later Grand Master, 1861 and 1862A.)

The Worship Master on receiving the Holy Bible, placed it in the hands of the Chaplain, Rev. L. D. Davis, who responded in part as follows:

“In behalf of the Master, Wardens, and brethren of Martha’s Vineyard Lodge, I accept this Book and return the thanks of those receiving it. You will allow me to say that in welcoming you and your associates to the hospitality of Masonry in this place, on the occasion to which you refer, our brethren are conscious of having done no more than a simple duty. If they conferred a pleasure on you, they received a pleasure as well; and it may be doubted whether they or you are the debtors. But, leaving for the present this question unsettled, you will believe me when I say that the offering now made in the presentation of this Bible is received with unfeigned satisfaction. Nothing could be more appropriate to the circumstances connected with the occasion.”



The first Master of Martha's Vineyard Lodge, Wor. Joseph T. James arrived in Holmes' Hole, in July 1852 and finding no Masonic Lodge in any of the towns of the island, went in search for those who were or had been members of the Fraternity and he found but three old men, who could not be persuaded to give their names as petitioners for a Lodge." In answer to a request for instructions from the Grand Lodge at Boston, was told to use his best judgment as to those who would be good timber for the erection of a Masonic Lodge and for them to apply to the nearest Lodge. By 1859 he had persuaded the following Brothers to apply to Marine Lodge of Falmouth for the degrees: —

HENRY BRADLEY	ALEXANDER W. SMITH
BENJAMIN CLOUGH	DANIEL F. WORTH
WILLIAM LEACH	ALEXANDER NEWCOMB

and by the following June they had been duly made Masons in Marine Lodge of Falmouth and it is presumed that they joined Bro. James in petitioning the Grand Master, M.W. John T. Heard for a dispensation to commence their Masonic labors on Martha's Vineyard, as the records of the Grand Lodge simply states, Dispensation granted — Martha's Vineyard Lodge, Tisbury to Joseph T. James, et al., August 10, 1859 (VI Mass 285)

Before a Charter was granted by the Grand Lodge, Bros. Worth and Newcomb had left the Island and Bros. Jared Crowell and Henry Beetle were substituted as Charter members, together with the remaining new Masons listed above. On September 18, 1860 Martha's Vineyard Lodge of Tisbury was duly "Dedicated and constituted" by M.W. Winslow Lewis, Grand Master and his suite, according to the Vineyard Gazette of September 21, 1860 and the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge. (VI Mass 323)

The Grand Lodge records show that Bro. Crowell was made a Mason in Martha's Vineyard Lodge while the Lodge was working under dispensation and of the other Charter Members, it is not known in what Lodges Bro. James and Bro. Beetle were made Masons.

As the Secretary's records prior to 1868 were destroyed in the fire of 1883, we must rely on various other sources as to what transpired when the Lodge was constituted on September 18, 1860. Happily there are still copies of the Vineyard Gazette in their files that give some idea of what happened on the memorable occasion. Also in the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge for 1875, there are copies of several addresses given by M.W. Winslow

Lewis on various occasions and it would appear that one of them must have been delivered at the time Martha's Vineyard Lodge was constituted, as in the last paragraph of that address, he stated, "Yours is the second Island Lodge which has ever been formed in this State, the first being Union Lodge of Nantucket, the Charter of which dates back now nearly ninety years. (1875 Mass 260)

In Wor. Bro. James' letter of October 1895, previously referred to, he stated that the Lodge first obtained suitable quarters for a lodge room, over a paint shop on Main Street and there commenced their Masonic labors and that during the time he was Master, sixty one members were added. He also said, that it cost about \$1,000 for the "fitting of the hall", with jewels, furniture and other regalia, but he adds, by the end of his first term as Master, "we paid off this debt and had a \$1,000 in the charity fund." Bro. James served as Master for about three and one half years, including the time the Lodge was working under dispensation.

The earliest records saved from the fire of 1883, commences in 1868 and shows that F. H. Jenkins was the landlord, and up to 1883 when the Lodge moved to another location, still on Main Street, the yearly rental was \$40. As the landlord in 1878 increased the rent for the use of the hall to \$60. per annum, a committee was appointed to look for other quarters, that were found and moved into during the summer of 1883. There they remained but a short time and a portion of the records of December 3, 1883 explains fully the circumstances that caused the Lodge to move to its third location, follows: —

"At a regular communication of M. V. Lodge, Dec. 4th, (1883) the following entry was ordered on the page preceding the records of the communication of the above date.

"Since the date of our last communication, on the 11th of August a terrible conflagration visited our community, sweeping off all the business portion of the village, among which was Luce Bros. Store over which was our Lodge room, which had been fitted up and had been occupied but three times; demolishing all of the contents including our Charter (by which no legal meeting could be holden), the Holy Bible and Regalia being all that were saved. The new Charter was obtained from the Grand Lodge on the [...] day of Nov. 1883."

The Grand Lodge on hearing of the Lodge's great loss,

immediately sent funds, to which the D.D.G.M. of the 27th Masonic District, R.W. Joseph S. Barney of Nantucket added his contribution for the use of the Lodge, or for the Brethren who had suffered loss by the fire, as the Lodge may decide.

In the minutes of the meeting on December 4, 1883, the grateful thanks of the Lodge was conveyed to the Grand Lodge and to R.W. Barney, by a resolution being sent to each.

According to the *Cottage City Star*, of August 15, 1883 the Lodge suffered a loss of \$500 that was insured for \$300.

Again the Lodge obtained another location, over Swift Brothers store, where they remained until they acquired their present hall in 1895, on Church Street, just a short distance from Main Street. This building was originally built for the Methodist Church in 1833, which they occupied until 1845. From the later date until it was purchased by the Lodge, it was known by the name of Capawock Hall and used for many purposes, such as, for the showing of plays, dances and for typical New England town meetings. Several times during the intervening years the Lodge also used it for special occasions.

On October 25, 1895, M.W. Edwin B. Holmes, Grand Master and his suite were present to "solemnly dedicate the Hall to Freemasonry, to Virtue and to Universal Benevolence, in accordance with ancient form, and usage and the ritual of the Grand Lodge, interspersed with music by the quartette." etc.

Many activities were held subsequent to the time this property was acquired to raise money to pay off the mortgage, in which they were assisted by the Ladies and finally in 1915, it was paid in full. The burning of the mortgage occurred on March 9, 1916, to which were invited the Ladies and members of Celestia Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star. At this meeting, historical papers about the formation of the Lodge, and about former Lodges located in this village, were read by R.W. Gilbert L. Smith and Bro. Stephen C. Luce (Sr.).

For the rest of this history of the lodge, the writer relies on the Secretary's records, that have been through the years, so carefully and faithfully kept by the several Brothers who have held this important office, and they show that Bro. Alexander W. Smith, was the first to fill this station and his services, except for a period of about ten years, continued up to 1896.

The records that survived the fire of 1883, commence with the minutes of October 20, 1868, and below are several of the more

interesting ones.

Up to 1900, it was the custom of each Secretary, when dating the minutes of each meeting, to use the Anno Lucis (Year of Masonry) date, instead of the Anno Domini (In the Year of our Lord) dating, that is so common today.

From May 6, 1883 to June 1, 1903, the various Secretaries kept the records in duplicate, that is to say, they were copied from one book into another. Which book can now be considered as the original record is hard to determine.

On January 5, 1875, it was voted, "That the records of each communication be approved on the evening of each meeting respectively. This practice was discontinued in 1896.

According to the records, in 1894, began the practice of examining each candidate in open Lodge prior to their advancement to the next degree and the records state, "which lecture reflected great credit to both the instructor and the candidate."

One of the early minutes recorded in 1869, tells of a special communication being held to attend a Masonic Funeral in Eastville, about two miles distance from where the Lodge room was located. To get there, they hired the Steamer Monohansett and eighteen brothers attended, for which fares totaling \$5.00 were paid. Today Eastville is reached from Vineyard Haven by crossing a bridge, however, in 1869 it was a journey of about seven miles around the Lagoon, by horse drawn vehicles.

At another communication in 1869, after it had been reported, "that there had not been any calls for assistance", by the Charity Committee, a letter was read from the widow of a deceased member, asking for an appropriation from the Lodge, for the building of a monument for her family. In this case the Secretary was instructed to explain to her, that the Lodge had no funds for a monument, but to tender to her \$25.00 for her relief. And again in 1870, the Lodge voted to instruct the Charity Committee, to confer with another widow and purchase for her a sewing machine.

In 1871, it was voted to change the phraseology of one of the By-laws, with reference to dues for the support of the Lodge, as follows: —

Voted — There shall be paid by each member of the Lodge, quarterage at the rate of Two Dollars per annum to defray the expenses of the Lodge.

However, in the following year, another change was made in the By-laws, by increasing the quarterage to \$3.00 per annum and at the same time, by vote, placed the following added duty on the Secretary. This vote required the Secretary to notify each member with the September notice of the amount of dues to be paid, and should no payment be received before the following January, the member shall be suspended, however, if payment is received at a later date, then the delinquent member shall be reinstated in such a way that the records do not show such suspension. How this reinstatement was to be accomplished is not stated in the records.

Apparently in 1873 the Lodge was still having trouble collecting dues, as in that year a Committee of one was appointed "to make exertions collecting from delinquent members, for his services he shall be paid ten per cent of all collected." This method was again resorted to in 1874, with two on the Committee, they to receive a commission of ten per cent. However, in June 1948 the Secretary made the following unusual entry in the Lodge records, "that all dues for 1947 had been paid."

At the October 1877 communication, it was voted — To present the three corner hat belonging to the Lodge to Daniel W. Stevens, who thanked the Lodge for this generous gift. This item indicates, that the Master of the Lodge, in the early days, probably wore a tricorn hat when occupying the East, similar to the one now worn by the Grand Master when he is presiding over a Lodge or Grand Lodge.

In the records there is recorded, several instances, during the days when the pursuit of whales, supplied the livelihood for so many Vineyarders, that permission was obtained from the Grand Master, "to confer the second and third degrees at one time, or in less than one month."

At the February 1885 and again at the March 1886 communications, invitations were read, asking the Lodge to participate in the exemplification of the degree work and each time the invitations were declined. However, at the June 1886 meeting, the Lodge decided to cooperate, with the following limitations as indicated by the following vote:

—  
Voted that the part which this Lodge will take in the proposed exemplification of the work in the 27th Masonic District meeting be left to the discretion of the Worshipful

Master.

At the February 1900 communication, Bro. Walter H. Renear, presented an application from some Ladies of the Town wishing to form a so-called Eastern Star Chapter." Whereupon it was voted they could hold their first meeting in the Lodge room without charge, later the question of rent to be paid by them, was set at a nominal amount. In exchange for this courtesy, Celestia Chapter, O. E. S. has allowed the Lodge full use of their dishes. Similar courtesies have since been extended to Vineyard Royal Arch Chapter, and the Martha's Vineyard Rainbow Assembly for Girls, while they were being organized.

In Lodges, as in other organizations, town meetings and such, discussions have a way of commencing and continuing, and Martha's Vineyard Lodge is no exception. The question of having "better lighting" in the present Lodge building, commenced in 1906 and ended in 1909, according to the Secretary's records. Many propositions were brought forth and debated. The records show that this subject was many times taken from the table, discussed in open Lodge and by vote returned to the table again. Finally at the April meeting in 1909, the following vote was passed: —

Voted — That the following committee consider the matter of the better lighting of the Hall and report at the next meeting. Bros. Ernest L. Briggs, Stephen C. Luce (Sr.) and Alvin H. Cleveland.

This committee made their report as ordered by the above vote, which was accepted, but they were continued "in service with instructions to obtain further information."

At the June communication following, the above instructions were rescinded and the Committee reported, that the Martha's Vineyard Electric Company, would wire the building and install the fixtures at the Lodge's expense and the electric company, would "receipt all electric bills until they had furnished free an amount of electricity equal in value to the construction charges." This generous offer was accepted and the project of having "better lighting" was finally realized. However, in 1958, with very little discussion, the Lodge room was rewired and the present lighting fixtures installed.

In February 1922, the piano now in the Lodge room was purchased from Bro. James W. West, who in 1934 wished to have written in the Lodge records the following history of it: —

Bro. West had originally purchased this instrument for his

family use, but discovered that its construction was so heavy and strong that none but a vigorous person could play it.

This piano was among the effects of Count Ivan Ivanoski, who spent considerable time on the Vineyard some years ago, maintaining a summer home and studio at Lamberts Cove. Count Ivanoski was a portrait painter of international distinction, and had made portraits of various members of the royal families of Europe during his career. He was a close friend of Ignace Jan Paderewski, the famed Polish musician, who later became President of Poland. Paderewski had this piano especially built for his friend, Ivanoski, and, both being musicians, ordered that the tension on the keys be made suitable for the playing by strong men like themselves.

(The lodge paid \$160 for this instrument.)

During the preparation of this paper, a member inquired of the Secretary about his grandfather, Bro. N. Loring Cannon, who was made a mason while the Lodge was working under dispensation in 1859, being raised on October 2nd, of that year. On his return to the Vineyard in 1864, he signed the By-laws. Most of the time between the above two dates, he was detained in a Confederate Army Prison.

At different times since the Lodge was organized there have been calls for its members to take part in the defense and preservation of our country and during the first World War fifteen members were called to join the armed forces. During the second World War twenty five members responded.

At the Regular Communication of February 4th, 1941, Bro. Francis A. Foster, presented, with appropriate remarks, the two flags seen in the East of the Lodge. The one on the left as you face the East being the flag of the United States, the other to the right being the Massachusetts state flag.

On seven occasions, the then Grand Master, has honored the Lodge, by appointing from its membership, Past Masters to that higher office of District Deputy Grand Master and the following have served in that capacity: —

R. W. Gilbert L. Smith	1895-1896
R. W. William J. Look	1908-1909
R. W. Ulysses E. Mayhew	1918-1919
R. W. Stephen C. Luce, Jr.	1921-1922
R. W. John E. Palmeira	1945-1946

R.W. Arthur A. Mayhew 1953  
R.W. Dwight W. Robb 1953-1954

Not only has R.W. Bro. Luce served as District Deputy Grand Master for the 31st Nantucket Masonic District, he was elected Senior Grand Warden of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge in 1924 and since that time has served on various important Grand Lodge Committees, and is now a member of the Board of Trustees of the Masonic Education and Charity Trust. At the Regular Communication of the Lodge on June 1, 1954, Bro. Luce was given a testimonial dinner on his election as Deputy Grand Inspector General of the 33d and last degree in Freemasonry and at that time his 33d degree jewel was presented to him.

R.W. Bro. Palmeira has also served on Grand Lodge committees and is now the Grand Representative to the Massachusetts Grand Lodge for the Grand Lodge of Rio de Janeiro (D.F.) Brazil.

R.W. Bro. Robb, Past Master of Sagamore Lodge of Medford, Massachusetts, was appointed to complete the unexpired term of R.W. Bro. Arthur A. Mayhew, who passed away on February 10, 1953 while on his way to make a Fraternal Visitation on Pythagorean Lodge of Marion.

Over the years, many gifts have been given the Lodge, including several Past Masters' jewels and the members debated for many months thereafter, as to whether or not a cabinet should be erected on the west wall of the Lodge room to properly display them. This discussion commenced in 1935 and continued up to September 2, 1947, when Wor. William H. Place was appointed their custodian, with authority to have a case built to contain them. At the November 1947 communication, Bro. Place made his first of many reports of "progress" or of "definite progress" being made. However, his report of November 1947, according to the Secretary's records, was the last one to be made for five and one half years, when at the February 1953 meeting, he again stated he was making progress. Still the cabinet had not been erected and at the following September communication, the Secretary did record the following item in his record book, in which he wrote: —"A discussion on the old subject of the building of a cabinet for Past Masters' Jewels ..... followed. Report: No Progress. At this meeting the one



who was to build the cabinet, arose and remarked, "Let us not be too hasty in this matter." Later Wor. Joseph C. Allen commented, "That progress in this matter appeared to be something akin to a traffic jam, and was wearing thin." However, at the following November communication, Wor. Bro. Place's assistant, Wor. Lawrence W. Winterbottom, reported that the cabinet had finally been completed and was then hanging in the place reserved for it. Also at this meeting it was voted to invite Celestia Chapter, O. E. S. to share the cabinet with the Lodge for the display of any jewels, they may have, of their past officers.

Since the Lodge was organized in 1859, there have been fifteen Brothers who have held the office of Secretary, two of whom have served for a total of fifty-six years, including the period prior to receiving the charter. They are Bro. Alexander W. Smith and Bro. Roy W. Norton, each of whom served for periods of twenty-eight years. Wor. Walter S. Booker is next in line for length of service, he having held that office since 1946.

Finally it has been a pleasant and interesting task compiling the necessary data for the writing of the history of the Lodge. It is practically impossible to cover all the events that have occurred during the last one hundred years or to mention the names of all those who have contributed to the success of the Lodge. My thanks are extended to Wor. Walter S. Booker for allowing me access to the existing records. Thanks are also extended to Bro. Sydney N. Riggs and Bro. Place for supplying certain additional material included.

Lastly, I wish the Lodge continued success and may the new members who have recently joined the Lodge and those yet to join our ancient institution, carry on and improve on the foundation that has been built during the last century.

## PAST MASTERS

WOR.. JOSEPH T. JAMES	• 1860-61-62
	• 1863-64
WOR. BENJAMIN CLOUGH	▪ 1865-66
	1867-69-76
WOR. HENRY BRADLEY .	1868
	1870-71-72
WOR. WILLIAM LEACH .	<sup>18</sup> 73-74-75
	1877-78
WOR. J. WELDON HOLMES	1879-80
	1881-82-83-84-85
WOR. STEPHEN A. THOMAS	<sup>86-87-88-89-90-93-98-99</sup>
	1891
WOR. HENRY BEETLE .	1892
	<sup>18</sup> 94-95
WOR. WILLIAM HILLMAN .	1896-97
	• 1900-01
WOR. MATTHEW L. SMITH .	1902-03
	1904-05-06-07
*RT. WOR. GILBERT L. SMITH	1908-09
	1910-11-21
	1912-13
	1914-15
WOR. JOHN H. COWELL	1916
	• 1917-18 .
WOR. CHARLES F. CHADWICK	19
	1920
WOR. WILLIAM W. NIEFERT	1922-23
WOR. WILLIAM D. HARDING	<b>1924</b> -25
	1926
WOR. HERBERT N. HINCKLEY	1927-28
	• 1929-30
WOR. HENRY W. MCLELLAN	1931-32
	<sup>1</sup> 933-34
*RT. WOR. WILLIAM J. LOOK .	<sup>1</sup> 935-3 <sup>6</sup>
	<sup>1</sup> 937
WOR. ALVIN CLEVELAND .	1938
	<sup>1</sup> 939
WOR. ABBOT L. BAKER	1940
	1941-42
*RT. WOR. ULYSSES E.	<sup>1</sup> 943-44
	<sup>1</sup> 945-4 <sup>6</sup>
MAYHEW	• <sup>1</sup> 947
	1948
WOR. NORMAN JOHNSON .	<sup>1</sup> 949-5 <sup>0</sup>

WOR. LESTER H. BUMPUS  
WOR. DANA C. SWIFT .  
WOR. ALTON C. TUCKERMAN .  
\*#RT. WOR. STEPHEN C. LUCE, JR.  
WOR. FRED K. SNOW .  
WOR. GEORGE G. CHURCHILL  
WOR. WINTHROP C. RHENO  
WOR. ERWIN C. BURLEIGH  
WOR. CHARLES B. DUNBAR  
WOR. HARIPH C. HANCOCK  
WOR. WALTER E. FLANDERS .  
WOR. WALTER S. BOOKER  
WOR. WILLIAM A. COLBY  
WOR. CURTIS S. ATHEARN  
WOR. JOSEPH C. ALLEN .  
WOR. ELIJAH W. CROWELL . \*RT.  
WOR. JOHN E. PALMEIRA \*RT.  
WOR. ARTHUR A. MAYHEW .  
WOR. THEODORE C. HOWES .  
WOR. JAMES F. MORRICE  
WOR. JAMES A. BOYLE .  
WOR. S. DAVID CRONIG .

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\* Past District Deputy Grand Master.

# Past Senior Grand Warden.

WOR. LAWRENCE W. WINTERBOTTOM

WOR. E. EVERETT HOWELL

WOR. LOUIS M. GREENE

WOR. WILLIAM E. ADAMS

WOR. PHILIP V. COLE

AFFILIATED PAST MASTERS

WOR. WILLIAM H. PLACE \*

RT. WOR. DWIGHT W. ROBB

WOR. MILTON E. TEMPLE

ORGANIZATION 1959

WOR. PHILIP V. COLE ..... Worshipful Master

BRO. ROBERT B. BOREN ..... Senior Warden

BRO. B. CRUME LAMB . ..... Junior Warden

R. W. DWIGHT W. ROBB ..... Treasurer

WOR. WALTER S. BOOKER . ..... Secretary

WOR. THEODORE C. HOWES ..... Chaplain

WOR. LOUIS M. GREENE..... Marshal

BRO. DAVID L. WELCH ..... Senior Deacon

BRO. EDWARD S. CHILD ..... Junior Deacon

BRO. LESLIE WADDINGTON..... Senior Steward

BRO. A. DOUGLAS STEWART ..... Junior Steward

BRO. WINTHROP M. NORTON..... Inside Sentinel

BRO. J. WILLIAM ENTWISTLE ..... Tyler

TRUSTEES

WOR. HARIPH C. HANCOCK 1961

WOR. JOSEPH C. ALLEN 1960

BRO. HOLLIS A. SMITH <sup>1</sup>959

SERVICE COMMITTEE

R.W. STEPHEN C. LUCE, JR.

WOR. JOSEPH C. ALLEN

BRO. ERNEST C. MAYHEW

PROXY TO THE GRAND LODGE

R.W. JOHN E. PALMEIRA

ASSOCIATED MEMBER OF BOARD OF

MASONIC RELIEF

R.W. JOHN E. PALMEIRA

\*Past District Deputy Grand Master.