

FAMOUS FREEMASONS

or why did John, Paul, George, and Ben Join the Craft?



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JOHN, PAUL, GEORGE & BEN



(The Beatles were not Freemasons) though there is still hope for Paul & Ringo

But before we introduce the Band:

- What do you know about these men?
 - When did you learn it?
 - Who taught you and how?
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Now consider these brothers:



PURPOSE OF TALK

- ❑ Compare these men's understanding of Freemasonry's to ours conceptions and misconceptions.
 - ❑ Through comparison we might understand the limitations of history, our capacity to understand the past, and what are "Famous Freemasons".
 - ❑ Final question: Does history imposing a tyranny on us, but are we equally tyrannical over the dead?
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JOHN HANCOCK

- **Born into money - from shipping and merchant trade**
- **Inherited wealth from uncle**
- **Elected and beloved in Mass.**
- **Continental Congress –Declaration of Independence, 1776**
- **Governor of Mass during Revolution and after.**
- **A regional leader / financier of revolution, but not a great thinker or national leader**



HANCOCK as MASON



- ❑ He joined Merchant Lodge No.277 Quebec, 1762
 - ❑ Affiliated with Lodge of St. Andrew's Boston, 1762.
 - ❑ No record of him doing anything in Lodge or in Masonry in general.
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PAUL REVERE

- Immigrant family, father was a silversmith
 - Joined every civic, political, trade and Masonic association he could.
 - Was messenger, organizer of Mass. rebellion
 - Famous ride to Lexington and Concord
 - Did very little in the war, would remain unknown if not for Longfellow poem
 - Made a fortune as metal smith, but no fame
 - Not a leader other than in Masonry
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REVERE as MASON



- ❑ Master Mason in Lodge of St. Andrew Boston 1760
 - ❑ Secretary and Master of the Lodge in the 1760s -1770s
 - ❑ Grand Master of Grand Lodge of Mass., 1794-1797
 - ❑ Was Royal Arch Mason in 1760s
 - ❑ Was Knight Templar in the 1790s
 - ❑ Remained active in the craft for over 35 years.
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GEORGE WASHINGTON



- ❑ Landed gentry, worked hard as surveyor, soldier when a young man
 - ❑ Inherited Mt. Vernon, married rich widow. Built his fortune wisely
 - ❑ Commander in Chief in Revolution
 - ❑ Father of the Nation, First President, etc.
 - ❑ Great fame, great fortune, beloved and revered – even Memorialized, if you will
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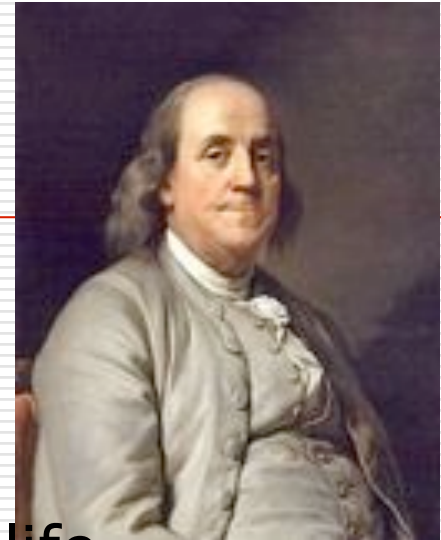
WASHINGTON as MASON



- Joined Fredericksburg Lodge age 20
 - No activity until revolution
 - Never a Lodge Master or active brother, but always supported the Craft
 - Wrote and spoke highly of it, was happy to oblige his brothers at ceremonies and other events.
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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

- From a humble, but respectable Boston family
 - Self-made man in Philadelphia
 - Naturally talented in all aspects of life
 - Retires and becomes scientist
 - Leader of revolution at home and in France.
 - Secures French support that wins the war
 - Dies rich and famous – the first American, internationally revered
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FRANKLIN as MASON



- ❑ Joined Lodge in Philadelphia in 1731
 - ❑ Was Provincial Grand Master in 1734
 - ❑ Visited Lodges in London and Edinburgh
 - ❑ Master of Lode of Nine Muses, Paris
 - ❑ Did not get Masonic funeral
 - ❑ Supported the Craft, but little mention of it in his writings
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What did these Men know of Freemasonry or Understand it to be?

- ❑ **John** – very little if at all
 - ❑ **Paul** – a great deal within Massachusetts, perhaps well-read
 - ❑ **George** – casually, but it came to him. He did not seek it
 - ❑ **Ben** – Quite a lot, not just in PA, but in London, Edinburgh, Paris. Meet most of the leaders and thinkers – maybe even Preston?
 - But why so little comment by any of them?
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RECAP

John – wealthy politician; for the love of nation and fame– but little Masonry

PAUL – artisan family, community organizer and to make a living – Grand Master Mason

George – planter society, duty of his class and love of nation – some Masonry, but not too much

Ben – Self-made man, love of adventure and supremely confident – Grand Master Mason

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

AMERICAN CHARACTER

- ❑ John – With money comes responsibility, and fame can be bought
- ❑ Paul – The dignity of Labor, the right to make a living and to live as you please
- ❑ George – Duty demands action, Freedom is duty's reward for action
- ❑ Ben – If you can dream it you can do it, and the best dream is to serve

“All Freemasonry is Local”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- If all these men are honored as “great freemasons”, then why?
 - Which of these four are great men, great Freemasons, or both?
 - What preconceptions did you have about these men, before this presentation?
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HISTORY'S TYRANNY

□ What is History?

- Is it simply what happened before the present moment?
 - Free will v. Predestination
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ALTERNATE UNIVERSES

- Do the actions or inactions of past generations always affect the present.

 - The Time Travel Paradox
 - If I travel into the past and kill my ancestor, will I ever be born to travel in the past
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RIPPLES OR PERMANENT WAVES IN TIME

- Are we, living in the present, governed by those in the past?
 - Does Washington's life have a lesser or greater impact as the years roll by?
 - How's that 15 minutes of fame working for you?
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"THE LASPE OF TIME"

- Does Freemasonry, with its own history, have a greater or lesser impact on individuals as it did during the 1700's?
 - Is what Freemasonry taught J, P, G & B relevant today or is it foolish?
 - Is Freemasonry a 1700s reenactment club or a society to perpetuating Enlightenment principles?
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THE LIVING'S TYRANNY OVER THE PAST

□ Dead men tell no tales?

- If we know Freemasonry and they do not, then can they argue with us?
 - Only the living write history or can only a Roman write Roman history?
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ORWELL'S "Ministry of Truth"

- He who controls the past controls the future.

 - The Enola Gay controversy: Can historians tell WW II veterans what the the Pacific War was about?
 - Can someone who lived through an event know everything about that event? Ask a detective.
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ALL THINGS ARE RELATIVE?

- One man's traitor is another man's patriot
 - How do Canadians view John, Paul, George and Ben?
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WHY IS HISTORY WRITTEN?

- To keep certain bookish people off the streets and out of pool halls?
 - So the History Channel can butcher it for entertainment?
 - To keep the King happy?
 - To prove your team is #1
 - All of the above.
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CONCLUSION

- ❑ Why did YOU join Freemasonry?
- ❑ What came you here to do?

***"The Compasses teach us to limit our desires in every station, th
rising to eminence by merit, w
may live respected and die
regretted"***



THANK YOU !

