

## **FAMOUS FREEMASONS**

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



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# JOHN, PAUL, GEORGE & BEN

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

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## But before we introduce the Band:

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- 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:

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# PURPOSE OF TALK

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- ❑ 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

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- **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

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- ❑ 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

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- 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

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- ❑ 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

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- ❑ 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

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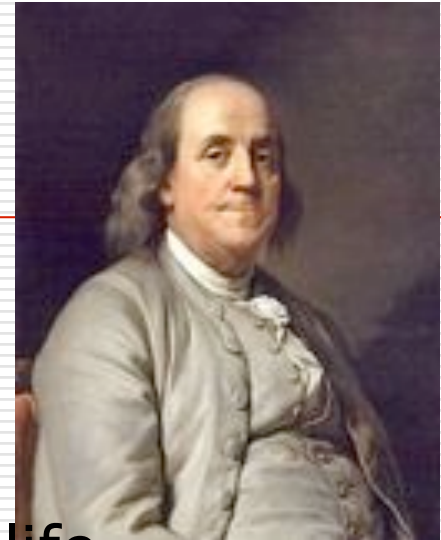


- Joined Fredericksburg Lodge age 20
  - No activity until revolution
  - Never a Lodge Master or active brother, but always supported the Craft
  - Wrote and spoke highly of it, was happy to oblige his brothers at ceremonies and other events.
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# BENJAMIN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

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- 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

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- ❑ 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?*

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- ❑ **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

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**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

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## COMPARE AND CONTRAST

# AMERICAN CHARACTER

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- ❑ 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”

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# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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- 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

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## □ What is History?

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

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- 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

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- 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 role by?
    - How's that 15 minutes of fame working for you?
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# "THE LASPE OF TIME"

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- 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

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□ 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"

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- 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?

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- 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?

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- 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

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- ❑ 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 !

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