

Being that today is July 4<sup>th</sup>-Eve (?) I thought that I would share a few things about some contributions made by Freemasonry and Freemasons that helped move America toward Independence. In the case of this presentation I will highlight some lesser known figures for the most part. Some of the proceeding is by my hand, but some of it has been copied from other sources.

We will start with a brother by the name of Joseph Warren. *Joseph Warren was born in Roxbury, Massachusetts in 1740, graduated from Harvard and was made a Mason in the Lodge of St. Andrew, Boston, September 10, 1761. He received the Second Degree on September 2, 1761, but it was not until November 28, 1765-four years after his initiation-that he was made a Master Mason. The delay was in the spirit and practice of the times.*

*In December 1769 Warren received a commission from the Earl of Dalhousie, Grand Master of Masons in Scotland, appointing him Provincial Grand Master of Masons in Boston and within 100 miles of the same. The commission was dated May 30, 1769. When the Earl of Dumfries succeeded Dalhousie as Grand Master of Scotland he issued another appointment to Warren, dated March 7, 1772, constituting Warren "Grand Master of Masons for the Continent of America," thus extending his original limits. He was a member of St. Andrew's Lodge which we will discuss more later. He was untiring in the discharge of his Masonic duties and, coupled with the labors of his extensive medical practice, the care of his motherless children, together with his patriotic devotion to his country, won for him the highest regard of the public and the craft. His name is indelibly engraved on the mystic temple of Freemasonry, just as it is on the pages of American history.*

*While practicing medicine and surgery in [Boston](#), he became involved in politics, associating with (Brother) [John Hancock](#), [Samuel Adams](#), and other leaders of the broad movement labeled [Sons of Liberty](#). He was one of the leaders of Patriot activities during the Liberty Affair and facilitated an agreement with Hancock and government customs officials prior to the Boston demonstrations.*

His involvement in these movements only intensified after the

Boston Massacre.

While it remains unclear where his information came from, Bro. Warren learned of a British expeditionary force set to arrive in Lexington and Concord just prior to the battles that took place there.

He enlisted William Dawes and Brother Paul Revere to ride out into the night and warn of the approaching army. Revere was also a member of St. Andrew's Lodge where he served as secretary while Bro. Warren was W. Master of the Lodge. Bro. William Palfrey was also Senior Warden of the Lodge. Palfrey who served as Bro. John Hancock's chief clerk and later as personal assistant to Bro. George Washington. Bro. Paul Revere well known for his many skills and contributions to America would eventually become Grandmaster of Massachusetts.

It was Revere that identified the body of Bro. Warren when he was gunned down from behind at the battle of Breed's Hill.

Warren held the rank of Major General in the Continental Army but upon arriving in Charlestown, Massachusetts where a number of militiamen had begun forming, he insisted, both, on enlisting as a private (deferring to Gen Israel Putnam and Col. William Prescott's military experience) and on being sent where the heaviest fighting was expected to occur.

During the early stages of the battle, Warren repeatedly stated that *"These fellows say we won't fight! By Heaven, I hope I shall die up to my knees in blood!"*<sup>[16]</sup> *Defending the Patriot position against two failed attacks by British troops, he kept firing his gun until running out of ammunition and was killed in action during the third and final assault by British gunfire.* He was buried there in an unmarked grave, but exhumed 10 months later and the identification of his body was made there by Revere who recognized a tooth that he had replaced for Warren. Warren was reinterred in the Granary burial ground (Tremont Street, Boston) where he was laid after Masonic ceremonies in King's Chapel and, exhumed and reinterred one last time, when he was buried in the Warren Tomb in St. Paul's Cathedral, Boston.

*His death, immortalized in John Trumbull's painting, [The Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker's Hill, June 17, 1775](#), galvanized the rebel forces.*

St. Andrew's, the Lodge that Bro. Warren belonged to, met in a building that served as a focal point for the approaching declaration of independence. The Lodge purchased the building and the Green Dragon Tavern operated out of it, well known for

being the location where the Sons of Liberty also met.

It was at this location on December 16, 1773, that The Lodge of Saint Andrew was scheduled to meet. However, the minutes of the meeting that night read:

*Lodge Closed (on account of the few Members present) until tomorrow Evening.*

It is assumed that attendance was down due to other events in the area that night as that was the night of the Boston Tea Party. Countless other Freemasons played starring roles in the founding of America and its Independence, most notably Bro. George Washington; Bro. Benjamin Franklin (Grand Master of Pennsylvania), who, along with Bro. Robert Livingston – eventual Grand Master of New York and who inaugurated Washington as the first President of the United States– were part of the Committee of Five who were tasked with authoring the Declaration of Independence, the Declaration which was signed first by Bro. John Hancock. *Signatures of other delegates were not needed to further authenticate it but the signatures of fifty-six delegates are affixed to the Declaration, though the exact date when each person signed became debatable*, but of those signers at least eight of them were Brother Masons. These are but a few of the Freemasons who served such large parts in the nation's founding, not to mention those who were not Masons but contributed in equally important and monumental ways many paying the ultimate price.

In closing I share a quote from one of those non-Masons, President John Adams, who said after the vote on the Declaration's acceptance had been resolved

*I am apt to believe that [Independence Day] will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more*