

## **NEGRO MASONRY in the State of Washington**

### **The Prince Hall Masons Comes to Washington**

Prince Hall Masons have been in the State of Washington at least since 1870, primarily from Iowa, Missouri and Illinois Jurisdictions. In 1897 two Prince Hall Masons, Gideon Bailey and Con Rideout, residing in the State of Washington addressed a communication to the white Grand Lodge of this jurisdiction, asking it to devise some method whereby they might be brought into fellowship with the Craft. At that time, according to existing data, there were two chartered Negro lodges in this state. This petition was referred to a committee of three: Thomas M. Reed, James E. Edminston and William H. Upton, all prominent in Masonic affairs and two of them Past Grand Masters.

According to available data the above names committee held several meetings during the recess of the Grand Lodge before completing its report. During the Grand Lodge session of 1889 the committee presented a resolution recognizing Prince hall Masons in the State of Washington to be "Regular, Just and Legitimate". After a very heated debate the resolution passed in grand Lodge by a substantial majority; however, due to the injustices of the social system that was in vogue during that time, the majority of the other white Grand Lodges in the United States and Canada withdrew Masonic relations with the Grand Lodge of Washington until the aforementioned resolution was repealed. Bowing to Masonic pressure from across the United States and Canada, the said resolution was rescinded at the Grand Lodge session in June 1899, and until June 1990, ninety-one (91) years later, the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Washington passed a resolution (**90-23**) recognizing the Prince Hall Grand Lodge, F. & A.M., Washington and Jurisdiction as Regular, Lawful and Legitimate" and to all Masons there unto belonging, granting the said Prince hall masons the rights of visitation to all lodges in its Jurisdiction as well as the Grand Lodge in session and other Masonic privileges that are commonly granted to other Grand Lodges, and in July 1990 the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, F. & A.M. passed a similar resolution (10-90) granting the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Washington the same privileges and rights.

### **Massachusetts Grand Lodge**

On March 12, 1947, Negro Freemasonry in Massachusetts of the "Prince Hall Affiliation" was acknowledged by the Grand Lodge of Masons (white) of Massachusetts to be legitimate and "duly constituted." The committee's report authenticating Prince Hall Freemasonry was accepted, approved and recorded by a unanimous vote. This action of the Grand Lodge was like a declaratory court decree. It holds that "Origin, early procedures and subsequent development of the so-called Prince Hall Freemasonry in Massachusetts have been and are regular and legitimate."

The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts (white) traces its history as a duly constituted organization to 1733 and Prince Hall Freemasonry to 1787 when African Lodge began to function under its charter.

Regarding any other groups of Negroes who claim to be Masons, the committee reported that "we have found no evidence in support of such claims and our conclusion thus far is that the so-called 'Prince Hall' Freemasonry is alone entitled to any claim of legitimacy among Negroes of this commonwealth."

### **First Negro Lodges in Washington**

The first lodge of Negro Masons in Washington was started as a club in May, 1889, at Roslyn. It was organized by District Deputy Grand Master J. E. Shepperson under the jurisdiction of the M.W. Grand Lodge of Iowa as Cascade Lodge U.D. in 1890. It received its charter in 1897 and became known as Cascade Lodge No. 23. Trinity Lodge No. 28, A.F. and A.M., was organized U.D. October 2, 1902, in Seattle, and was chartered August 4, 1903 by the Iowa Jurisdiction. Guiding Star Lodge No. 31, A.F. and A.M., was organized U.D. in 1904 in North Yakima and was chartered in 1905 by the Iowa Jurisdiction.

Four lodges were organized in this area by the Grand Lodge of Illinois. They were Enterprise Lodge No. 47, A.F. and A.M. of Portland, Oregon, organized in 1891; Washington Lodge No. 49, A.F. and A.M. of Franklin, Washington, then a coal mining section near the present sites of Black Diamond and New Castle. This lodge was organized in 1897 and was later moved to Seattle. Inland Empire Lodge No. 53, A.F. and A.M. of Spokane, Washington. This lodge was chartered in 1901. The last lodge to be organized in this area by the Illinois Jurisdiction was Compass Lodge located at Everett, Washington.

### **Organization of Negro Grand Lodge**

"The members of Enterprise Lodge No. 47 of Portland, Oregon, Washington Lodge No. 49 of Seattle, Washington and Inland Empire Lodge No. 53 of Spokane, Washington, all working under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Illinois and Jurisdiction, recognizing their great distance (2500 miles) from and their inability to within a short time communicate with the grand officers of their jurisdiction -- matters of importance constantly arising which demanded the attention and construction of the highest delegated authority -- the rapid increase in number of renegade Masons in their midst, and their inability to protect themselves from the actions of unscrupulous ex-Masons, and for many other reasons too numerous to mention, decided, after a conference held in the City of Seattle on the 13th day of April, 1903, by delegates from the above-named lodges called for that purpose, to erect a Grand Lodge."

A constituted number of warranted lodges being by their proper officers represented, a Grand Lodge was then and there erected, to be known as the Grand Lodge of Washington and Oregon, A.F. and A.M. The officers were elected and installed; the Second Annual Communication to be held at Portland, Oregon, June 22, 23, 24, 1904.

### **Incorporation of Grand Lodge**

On the 20th day of July in the year of 1906, Sam H. Nichols being Secretary of State, the Grand Lodge was incorporated under the name of Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons (African) of Washington, with all powers, rights and privileges of such corporations.

On the 9th day of July, 1907, in the City of Tacoma, the name and title of Grand Lodge was changed to read the M.W. United Grand Lodge of Washington and Jurisdiction, F. and A.M., and embraced the three lodges which had been chartered from Iowa Jurisdiction.

On the 11th day of July, 1944, in the City of Seattle, County of King, State of Washington, a Grand Session of the above-named corporation was held at 425 21st Avenue, a resolution was adopted unanimously changing the name to Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, F. & A.M. of Washington and Jurisdiction. This action was carried out by the Grand Officers on the 6th day of September, 1944.

On the 12th day of July, 1972, in the City of Vancouver, County of Clark, State of Washington, a Grand Session of the above corporation was held at the Inn at the Quay. A resolution was adopted to refile our Incorporation under the provisions of R.C.W. 2420, Laws of the State of Washington. This was completed March 30, 1973. Ludlow Kramer, Secretary of State.