

Freemasonry in Revolutionary Boston

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THE FREEMASONRY OF AMERICA'S FOUNDING FATHERS AND REVOLUTIONARIES has long led Masonic enthusiasts, conspiracy theorists, and the occasional serious historian to postulate that an invisible Masonic hand may have pulled the trigger on the shot heard round the world. Nowhere was this connection stronger than in Boston, the Masonic hub of the New World, where Masons such as John Hancock, Joseph Warren, Paul Revere, William Molyneux, and dozens of lesser-known brethren not only made up the leadership and rank and file of the radical movement but also owned the so-called 'headquarters of the Revolution', Freemasons' Arms, better known as the Green Dragon Tavern. Serious scholars have generally viewed the Masonic memberships of so many of the founders as coincidental, and causally unrelated to their radical political activities. In *Revolutionary Brotherhood* Stephen Bullock admits that the cryptic Minutes of St Andrew's Lodge for 16 December 1773, the night of the Boston Tea Party, give every appearance of a cover-up, but otherwise sees Masonry as a mirror of the wider colonial society.¹ David Hackett Fischer, in his appendix to *Paul Revere's Ride*, claims to disprove a disproportionate Masonic membership among Boston's revolutionaries based entirely

¹ S. Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood: Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730–1840* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1996), 113.



Fig. 1. Jack Johnson's 1773 Watercolor of the Green Dragon Tavern, bearing the legend 'Where we meet to plan the consignment of few shiploads of Tea.' Clearly visible in the upper left hand corner in the Masonic square, compasses, and letter G. Though not a Mason, Johnson's painting is the earliest source publicly connecting the lodge with the dumping of the tea.

on one 1762 member list from a single Boston lodge.² Yet, a more careful analysis of a wider range of sources indicates an important contingent relationship between the Craft and the course of events in Revolutionary Boston.

In addition to significant ideological support for radical ideas, Freemasonry played a strong contingent role in creating the relationships and directly the organization of the radical movement. It also connected Boston's radicals to their counterparts within New England and beyond. Ascertaining the precise extent to which Masonry's link to revolutionary activity was causal rather than coincidental is challenging. The evidence that follows supports the case for a causal role in Boston's subversive movement, particularly in the organization of the Sons of Liberty and related radical groups, the planning and execution of the Boston Tea Party, and even in the details of Paul Revere's famous ride. Across New England Freemasonry offered a network of politically-active merchants, sea captains, artisans, intellectuals, and soldiers, who shared Masonic brotherhood and a radical Whig outlook. Masons in Boston, Gloucester, Portsmouth, Newburyport, and

² D. H. Fischer, *Paul Revere's Ride* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 308.

elsewhere met in and often owned the taverns used by local radicals. Perhaps more than anything else, the connections formed in the Lodge of St Andrew (Antients Constitution) in the years just prior to the Stamp Act Crisis fostered the relationships that came to guide Boston politics through independence.

Boston Freemasonry Before the Storm

At the beginning of the 1760s Boston played host to three Masonic lodges and the oldest Grand Lodge in the Americas. Founded in 1733, St John's Grand Lodge chartered over forty lodges from Atlantic Canada to Suriname on the northern coast of South America. Its membership boasted a 'who's who' of colonial elites, mainly merchants with highly-placed professionals and colonial officials – from corrupt customs collector Benjamin Hallowell all the way up to Governor Andrew Belcher. Only two of St John's many daughter lodges met in Boston – First (or St John's Lodge) and Second Lodge. First Lodge's records contain a gap from 1758 until post-independence, which can be only partially filled from other sources. The records of Second Lodge are complete for the period. Around New England St John's had chartered lodges in Marblehead and Newburyport, Massachusetts, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Newport and Providence, Rhode Island, and several lodges in Connecticut, most notably in Hartford. All of these lodges came to boast a preponderance of local patriot leaders including the known leaders of the Sons of Liberty in Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Connecticut. As the Revolutionary crisis wore on, a third Boston lodge, Rising Sun, was formed in 1772 under the leadership of a highly-placed patriot and eventual traitor, Benjamin Church, and other Moderns with revolutionary affiliations, as well as lodges in Falmouth (now Portland, Maine) and Nantucket, whose membership – particularly Falmouth's – featured among the local revolutionary leadership. Most of Boston's Moderns ended up neutral, with some even turning Tory, as the crisis grew more radical. However, many of the most active and important Moderns in the city, such as John Hancock, Richard Gridley, James Otis, and others remained active Patriots throughout the political storm.³

More prominent in Revolutionary lore is the Antients' Lodge of St Andrew, owner of the 'Headquarters of the Revolution', the Green Dragon Tavern, and preferred social club of Boston's Sons of Liberty, Tea Party Mohawks, and Patriot leadership. In 1769 St Andrew's obtained a Scottish warrant to form a Grand Lodge with authority for North America like that of their Modern counterpart. In the event they formed only

³ Lodge of St Andrew, *Minutes, 1756–1778* (Boston: Grand Lodge of Massachusetts) microfilm; Grand Lodge of Massachusetts A.F. & A.M. *Proceedings in Masonry: St John's Grand Lodge 1733 – 1792; Massachusetts Grand Lodge 1769 – 1792; with an Appendix Containing Copies of Many Ancient Documents, and a Table of Lodges* (Boston: published by the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, 1895); *Minutes 1760–1778*, Second Lodge, Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Boston, microfilm.

two lodges before the War of Independence: Massachusetts Lodge (1770), whose first Master, William Palfrey, served as secretary of the Sons of Liberty, the politically-active Merchant's Club, and the Grand Lodge; Tyrian Lodge in Gloucester (1772), whose early Masters, Barnet Harkin, Epes Sargent Jr, and Nathaniel Warner all took leading roles in local politics and military affairs. Indeed, most of the lodge was involved in either Revolutionary politics, combat, or both; notably on 24 June 1773 the lodge Minutes describe a feast of St John's attended by much of Boston's patriot leadership as well as visitors from afar afield as Rouen, France. St Peter's Lodge in Newburyport, 1773, also boasts many patriots. As the Antient Masonic authority in town, the Massachusetts Grand Lodge also held authority over the British regimental lodges among the troops occupying the town.

In clandestine existence since 1754, the Lodge of Saint Andrew obtained a Scottish warrant in 1760. Among the founders figured eight members of First Lodge, as well as one from Marblehead, two from Providence, one from Portsmouth, one from Second Lodge, two each from West Indies, Scotland, England, and Quebec, and one each from the lodges at Louisbourg and Seconto in Nova Scotia. James Otis joined First Lodge on 11 March 1752 and affiliated with St Andrew on 4 January 1754, when he served as Senior Warden in both lodges. St Andrew's records for the period are incomplete. John Hancock was raised in the Merchants lodge at Quebec, making him a member of St John's, affiliating in 1762 with St Andrew. Bullock breaks down the demographics of the lodge at 25% merchants to 66% of St John's.⁴ Other than John Hancock, St Andrew's merchants controlled under one-third of the merchandise and factorage carried by their Modern brethren. Sea captains made up 36% of the lodge, as opposed to under 10% of First Lodge. Thus, just over 50% of St Andrew's members took to the sea. A further 8.3% plied trades related to maritime commerce.⁵

Many of the most important Patriots, including most of the top leadership, joined between 1760 and 1764, most especially from 1760 to 1762, often taking degrees together. Future patriot leaders often performed initiatory degrees for each other. Important examples include Paul Revere, Joseph Warren, John Hancock, William Palfrey, Moses Deshon, Jonathan Snelling, Thomas Crafts of the Loyal Nine, Joseph Webb (also a member of First Lodge), Samuel Barrett – a Tea Party participant, Second Lodge and Rising Sun dual member; Ezra Collins, Adam Colson (who shouted 'Boston Harbor a Tea Party tonight' at end of the pre-party town meeting) and other, less well-known, future Sons of Liberty. Earlier members included James Otis, William Burbeck, John Pulling, who hung the lanterns in the Old North Church on the night of Paul Revere's ride (a member of Marblehead lodge closely associated with St Andrew's) – leaders who were also members of Modern lodges. In all, twenty-six of the Lodge of St Andrew confirmed Sons of Liberty

⁴ Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 90–91.

⁵ St Andrew, *Minutes; Proceedings*, 438–41, 447; Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 90–1.

were Masons prior to the beginning of the Stamp Act Crisis, lawyer and clerk to John Hancock, John Lowell, being among the last initiates early in 1764.

On 30 September 1761 St Andrew's lodge initiated Dr Joseph Warren, he having been proposed for membership by William Palfrey, future secretary of the Sons of Liberty and paymaster of the Continental Army. Presiding as Master that night was William Burbeck, artillery officer in two colonial wars and the Revolution to come. That night Warren met Paul Revere, who was to serve as his direct subordinate in subversive activities. Senior Warden Joseph Webb, Moses Deshon, John Jenkins, future rebel artillery commander Thomas Crafts, Joseph Tyler as well as Burbeck, Palfrey, Revere, and Warren would all become members and leaders of the Sons of Liberty in the years to come. Known future participants in the Boston Tea Party meeting that night included Thomas Urann, Samuel Peck, Warren, and Revere. Of the twenty members and fourteen visitors a significant number became politically involved.

In the years leading up to the Stamp Act crisis, which began American resistance to the crown, much of the top, secondary, and tertiary leadership as well as rank and file members of the future resistance movement joined St Andrew. The lodge also purchased the Green Dragon Tavern, later known as the 'headquarters of the revolution' for the number of subversive groups that met there. The Masters of the lodge were consistently leaders or active members of the Sons and other revolutionary agitation: William Burbeck 1760–65, Joseph Webb 1765–66, Burbeck 1766–67, Joseph Warren 1768–69, Samuel Barrett 1769–70, Paul Revere 1770–71, Jonathan Snelling 1771–72, John Lowell 1773–74, and Edward Proctor 1774–76. Of these all but Urann are listed as a Son of Liberty. Urann, like Barrett, Revere, and Warren participated in the Boston Tea Party and other rebellious actions, and it is likely that he simply missed dinner on the one night that the Sons of Liberty took attendance. A similar overlap exists for the Wardens, Secretaries and Treasurers of the lodge.⁶

Most importantly, from the perspective of causality, most leaders and at least twenty-six (30%) of the Sons of Liberty had entered Freemasonry before Palfrey introduced Joseph Warren to the lodge, and thus to Revere, and also through Freemasonry became connected to the future leadership of the Sons in Rhode Island. Palfrey later held concurrent positions as secretary of the Sons, the Merchant's Club and the Massachusetts Grand Lodge, of which Warren was Grand Master. He sat in lodge with John Hancock well before entering his employ. Hancock's clerk and future revolutionary and political leader, John Lowell, was among the last pre-Stamp Act members to enter the lodge early in

⁶ St Andrew, *Minutes*; F. S. Drake, *Tea Leaves: Being a Collection of Letters and Documents Relating to the Shipment of Tea to the American Colonies in the year 1773 by the East India Company* (Boston: A.O. Crane, 1884), 41. W. Palfrey, 'An Alphabetical List of the Sons of Liberty who Dined at Liberty Tree, Dorchester, Aug. 14, 1769,' *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society 1869–70* (Boston: Mass. Historical Society, 1871), 140–2.

1764. St Andrew's membership included some future Tories, but it is telling that these men rarely if ever attended lodge once the political crisis ensued. In addition to the Sons of Liberty, Masons played important roles in revolutionary organizations such as the North End Caucus, and in the militia and state and local governments. As we shall see, the legend of the Boston Tea Party's having originally been proposed in the Lodge of St Andrew is supported by contemporary accounts, and the lodge and its tavern certainly participated in the affair.

This web of connections soon took on political utility, as the leaders of the lodge became leaders of revolution. This is most clearly exemplified in the careers of several of its members, notably silversmith Paul Revere, merchant William Palfrey, and William Burbeck, the Deputy Grand Master, conveniently in charge of stores in British occupied Castle William. Dr Joseph Warren served among the very top ranks of Patriot leadership along with the likes of Hancock, Otis, and Samuel Adams. Along with official positions in Massachusetts government Warren oversaw much of the organizing of subversive activity, running an extensive espionage network, all while serving as Master of St Andrew's, beginning in 1768–9, and as Grand Master from 1769 until his death at the battle of Bunker Hill on 16 June 1775.⁷

Revere entered the Lodge of St Andrew on 4 September 1760. Revere's Masonic business affords a very clear look at the advantages of Freemasonry to a skilled artisan. He created Masonic jewels for lodge officers, medals, punchbowls and ladles, and plates for printing certificates and summonses. A disproportionate number of Freemasons also occur as customers for mundane goods. His first order for a Masonic item was a Freemason's medal for James Graham in January 1761. In the following year Masonic orders included a notification engraving plate for John Pulling, a founding member of Marblehead lodge, called upon by Revere on 18 April 1775 to hang lanterns in the Old North Church. Revere sold most of his Masonic items to customers in Massachusetts. However, Freemasonry brought him into the commerce of the greater Atlantic, most notably the 1762 order by Capt. Caleb Hopkins of a copper plate for engraving notifications for a lodge in Suriname.⁸

Revere crafted many items for the Grand Lodge, St Andrew, and the three lodges chartered by the Antients before the outbreak of war. He took part in the formation of all of these lodges, including Tyrian in Gloucester and St Peter's in Newburyport. Tyrian Masons were very active as local Patriot leaders, with Epes Sargeant Jr. and Nathaniel Warner serving as both Masters and with the leading political and military figures

⁷ St Andrew, *Minutes and Records*.

⁸ *Lodge of St Andrew Minutes, 1756–1778* (Boston, MA: Grand Lodge of Massachusetts) microfilm; E. Stebecki, *Paul Revere and Freemasonry* (Boston, MA: Paul Revere Memorial Association, 1985), 70–5, 108–113.

in town, along with many others. St Peter's also boasted many patriots, and both lodges purchased goods from Revere.⁹

Paul Revere was heavily involved in running the Lodge of St Andrew and the Massachusetts Grand Lodge. Revere held offices in 1762, 1764, and 1765. He served as Secretary in 1768–9, Master in 1771, 1778, 1777–9, and 1781–2. Revere also served as Senior Grand Deacon of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge from 1769 to 1774 under Warren. From 1777 to 1783 he rose from Junior Grand Warden to Deputy Grand Master. From 1784 to 1785 he served as either Master or Treasurer and then from 1786 to 1793, Master of Rising States Lodge, becoming Grand Master of Massachusetts from 1794 to 1797. During this time he also served on a number of committees and attended lodge regularly.¹⁰

The lodge made William Palfrey a Mason on 5 December 1760. By 8 January he had taken on the Secretary's duties. It was he who proposed Joseph Warren be made a Mason on 30 September 1761, which the lodge unanimously voted to do that very night. Palfrey too was a consummate networker and very active in Boston's radical political circles. The heavy presence of identifiable Masons among his professional and political contacts gives a strong impression that the fraternity was an important part of his success. At the time of their initiation the twenty year-old Palfrey was a clerk for Nathaniel Wheelwright, who after Thomas Hancock was the most successful merchant in Boston. Both St Andrew and Second Lodge list a Bro. Wheelwright. As the Moderns Second Lodge was the province of elite merchants and as Bro. Wheelwright first enters the records of St Andrew on the night of Palfrey's third degree, it appears that this was Nathaniel Wheelwright. In 1764 Palfrey moved from the house of Wheelwright to that of Hancock. Whether he had met John Hancock in the course of business before or not, the two had first attended lodge together on 14 May 1761. Palfrey became Secretary of the lodge immediately after entering, so his ability in handling the business of the lodge would have been known to his new employer. Another of Hancock's clerks, John Lowell, entered the lodge in 1764. Palfrey acted as a clerk to Hancock but with the stipulation that he could conduct his own business as well, making him as much a junior partner as an employee. They often employed captains Scott and Hall as masters of their vessels; both men were Masons who rarely attended lodge but made use of the Craft connections in Atlantic commerce.¹¹

⁹ St Peter's Lodge, *Minutes Book 1* (Boston: Grand Lodge of Massachusetts); Tyrian Lodge, *Minutes Book 1* (Gloucester, MA: Tyrian Lodge); Steblecki, *Paul Revere and Freemasonry*, 70–5, 108–113; J. Garland, *The Fish and the Falcon* (Charlestown, MA: The History Press, 2006), 72; Gloucester, MA: *Town Records*.

¹⁰ St Andrew, *Minutes and Bylaws*; Steblecki, *Paul Revere and Freemasonry*, 102–4; *Boston Evening Post*, October 9, 1739, advertisement.

¹¹ W. Palfrey, M. Brown, *The Course of True Love in Colonial times Being the Confessions of William Palfrey of Boston and the Friendly Advice of Moses Brown of Providence Concerning Polly Olney* (Boston, MA: The Merrymount Press, 1905), ix. This book contains a series of letters between Palfrey and Brown from the early 1760s.

Every New England lodge for which pre-war records exist includes Palfrey among its visitors. His letters to Laurence Dermott state that he also attended lodges in London. He travelled to the southern colonies on business on several occasions, and it seems likely that he would have visited lodges there as well. He, like Revere, served in a number of offices in both lodge and Grand Lodge, including as Grand Secretary under Grand Master Joseph Warren and as the first Master of Massachusetts Lodge in 1770.¹²

A series of letters the young Palfrey exchanged with Moses Brown of Providence demonstrates both the usefulness of Masonic affiliation to a young businessman and the mutual enthusiasm of the two men for Freemasonry. Their letters indicate that Palfrey met Brown and at least one of his brothers, probably John, as well as Dr Jabez Bowen, a prominent member of the community and later of Providence's Sons of Liberty, in the lodge. The Browns all were active Freemasons and, in time, political agitators as well. They were members of one of Rhode Island's dominant merchant houses. The lodge in Providence included other notables such as William Ellery, who was to serve as clerk of the Rhode Island assembly and then as a representative of Rhode Island to sign the declaration of independence. He was initiated in First Lodge while studying at Harvard. This lodge also had among its members other movers and shakers in colonial commerce.¹³

Most of their letters are concerned with Palfrey's unsuccessful courtship of Brown's friend, Providence beauty Polly Olney. The letters teem with Masonic references evincing the enthusiasm of young men with a new-found interest. The two refer to each other and to their mutual acquaintances as 'brother' frequently. On 3 February 1761 Palfrey states, '... give my Love to your Brother and Dr. Bowen, we have nothing new stirring here at present save that I was made a Royal Arch this Week.' On 26 March he wrote,

I have inclos'd you two small cutts [Masonic engravings], one for your Brother, the other please to accept of Yourself & hope they'll be agreeable, should have sent one for the Doctor, but could not get but those two, please to give my Love to the two Brethren abovemention'd ...¹⁴

As Palfrey's new brother, Revere was the only Mason in Boston at the time listed as an engraver it is highly plausible that he had fashioned the 'cutts'.

¹² *Minutes and Bylaws, 1737 – 1754*, First Lodge, Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Boston microfilm; St Andrew, *Minutes*; St Peter's Lodge, *Minutes Book 1*, Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Boston (hereafter cited as St Peter's *Minutes*); Tyrian Lodge, *Minutes Book 1*, Tyrian Lodge, Gloucester, (hereafter cited as Tyrian *Minutes*); St John's Lodge, *Minutes and Bylaws*, St John's Lodge, Portsmouth (hereafter cited as St John's *Minutes*).

¹³ R. Heaton, *Masonic Memberships of the Founding Fathers* (Silver Spring, MD: The Masonic Service Association, 1974), 16.

¹⁴ William Palfrey to Moses Brown, February 19, 1761, reprinted in W. Palfrey, M. Brown, *The Course of True Love in Colonial times Being the Confessions of William Palfrey of Boston and the Friendly Advice of Moses Brown of Providence Concerning Polly Olney* (Boston: The Merrymount Press, 1905), 3.

Their letters further demonstrate the utility of Masonic connections. Palfrey's letter of 13 April closes with an introduction of another young Mason: 'The bearer of this, Doctr Jackson, a very intimate Friend of mine & a brother of ours ...' There is no Dr Jackson listed among the members of St Andrew's, Palfrey's lodge, but Second lodge includes several Jacksons, most of whom were merchants. As the courtship was beginning to unravel, Palfrey wrote on 17 August: 'Remember me to the fraternity and all other acquaintances & believe me Your Affectionate Bro.', indicating that he had become acquainted with the rest of the members of the lodge. In addition to the Browns and Jabez Bowen, Jewish Masons connected to Moses Michael Hayes were actively involved in Rhode Island Freemasonry including Aaron Lopez, who later appears among Palfrey's business correspondents. Here we have a prime example of Masonic connections formed among men who came to be leaders of the Sons of Liberty and of Revolutionary governments in adjacent colonies. Similar Masonic ties connected leading Connecticut Sons of Liberty Samuel Wyllys, David Wooster, and Israel Putnam to Massachusetts, just as they connected leaders in Boston to parts north including Gloucester, Marblehead, Newburyport, and Falmouth.¹⁵

The Stamp Act Crisis

Stephen Bullock and others have suggested that the Moderns tended towards loyalism while the Antients aligned as Patriots, and that this division settled the ascendancy of Antient Masonry in the early Republic. This must be qualified in two important ways. First, it should be seen only as a general tendency. Major Modern lodges such as St John's in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Newburyport and Marblehead Massachusetts, Falmouth (Maine) and Nantucket, in Rhode Island, and in Georgia and New York all came down on the Patriot side, providing local, state, and national level leadership prior to and during the War of Independence. With the exception of the Moderns of New York, these lodges thrived in the new nation and continue to do so to the present day. In New York, the general situation was reversed. A thriving Modern establishment appears to have largely supported the Patriot cause. British reconquest of New York early in the war drove the Patriots out of the city. An Antient establishment formed of British military lodges and Lodge No. 186 – the shunned, ostracized, and then exiled black sheep of Boston Freemasonry – created the Grand Lodge of New York, which was to survive the war. Second, Moderns who became Loyalists or sat on the fence generally chose that position once

¹⁵ Peck MSS, Belknap box 61; Hiram Lodge #1, *Hiram Lodge No 1, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons 1750–1916* (New Haven, CT: John J. Corbett Press) 1916, 1–9; St John's Lodge database; J. Tatch, *Freemasonry in the Thirteen Colonies* (New York: Macoy Publishing, 1929), 168–92; J. R. Case & M. P. Tapley, *A Bicentennial History of the Grand Lodge of Connecticut* (Hartford, CT: Grand Lodge of Connecticut, 1989), 6–36; Second Lodge, *Minutes*, St John's Lodge, Portsmouth NH, *Minutes and Records*.

the movement became more radical from 1768 onwards. The elite northern merchants, southern planters and lettered professionals who populated Modern lodges largely and often actively opposed the Stamp Act.¹⁶

Both Moderns and Antients in Boston actively resisted the Stamp Act. Lt. Governor Hutchinson, writing in 1766, listed as leaders of the radicals John Rowe, William Molyneaux, and Solomon Davis.¹⁷ Rowe was a leader of the Sons until he was publicly branded an ‘incendiary’ by other elites in the British Coffee House in 1768, after which he gradually withdrew from the cause. Molyneaux appears as a visitor in Second Lodge, St Andrew, and the Massachusetts Grand Lodge. The overlap between the leadership and membership, as well as much of the organizational structure of Boston’s Sons of Liberty tightly matches that of Boston Freemasonry, with the leadership of Modern Grand Master Rowe fading in favour of Antients Grand Master Joseph Warren and dual member John Hancock. The limited extant evidence on the Sons in other colonies indicates that Freemasonry and the Sons had the same leadership, contact points, and communication channels in much of New England. Boston Freemasonry and its leadership also overlapped important political organizations such as the North End Caucus, formed by Grand Master Joseph Warren, and groups such as the Marine Society, Ancient and Honorable Artillery Club, and fire clubs that were co-opted for political purposes as well as city and colonial government. St Andrew’s Masonic networks overlapped those of St John’s, and included cross-visitation and organizational links to Patriot leadership in many seaport communities.

Gloucester’s Tyrian Lodge (Antients), closely connected to Paul Revere and made up of a who’s who of local revolutionaries, shared politically active membership with Newburyport’s St Peter’s Lodge and the Lodge of St Andrew. Moderns lodges in Marblehead, Newburyport, Falmouth (now Maine), Nantucket, Portsmouth (New Hampshire), and in Newport and Providence, Rhode Island all featured a number of patriot leaders, mainly predating the onset of the independence movement and mainly among those most actively connected to lodges in multiple communities, including Boston. Finally, there is considerable evidence that St Andrew’s connection to the Boston Tea Party is more than mere legend.

¹⁶ Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 117–8; O. Lang, *History of Freemasonry in New York* (New York: The Hamilton Printing C. 1922), 6–65; *St John’s Lodge, Two Hundredth Anniversary* (Newburyport: St John’s Lodge, 1966); D. Doliber, *History of Philanthropic Lodge, Marblehead* (publication pending, 2010); St John’s Lodge No.1, Portsmouth New Hampshire, Records and Minutes, MSS.

¹⁷ Hutchinson to Pownall, March 8, 1766 quoted in E. S. Morgan and H. M. Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution* (Williamsburg: University of North Carolina Press, 1995) 190.

The Fraternity of the Sons of Liberty

Morgan and Morgan’s *Stamp Act Crisis* ascribes the creation of Boston’s Sons of Liberty to a small political club called the Loyal Nine.¹⁸ This group of nine men, including at least two Freemasons, committed some of the first acts of resistance. The Morgans’ argument for causation is wholly chronological – the Loyal Nine acted, then the Sons of Liberty appeared, the latter including the Nine in their initial actions. They fail to explain that such a small group, with only one genuine elite, Freemason Henry Bass, morphed into a city-wide movement under new leadership that rapidly linked to similar movements across the continent. It seems more likely that the nexus for the Sons came out of the lodges, or at least was intimately connected through them, allowing them to draw on Freemasonry for membership, physical space in the Green Dragon, and organizational practices. That two of the Loyal Nine were Masons would have made folding this smaller group into the new organization all the easier.

Similar to the Masons, Boston’s Sons of Liberty used secret signs, passwords, and insignia. The language used by the Sons of Liberty, as evidenced by their correspondence and several of the letters of prominent Sons, shows marked similarities with those of Freemasonry. For example, Freemason and Son of Liberty Robert Treat Paine referred to the Sons as a fraternity. These men occasionally employed other Masonic symbols as well. For example, in a 16 April 1766 letter from the Sons in Providence to the Sons in Boston they congratulate their ‘brethren’ on their ‘love and charity’,¹⁹ and in Robert Treat Paine’s public letter he invokes the Masonic symbolism of the beehive.²⁰ Thomas Young writing to New York Son of Liberty Hugh Hughes comments: ‘as your Friend William Molyneaux says, truth is a small compasses.’ Molyneux, a mason, would have been very familiar with the symbolism of the compasses to represent truth. Sons’ documents also attest to a degree of class leveling in so far as the accusation of a Son of Liberty of any class against a man of higher standing would be taken at the brother’s word. Interesting testimony regarding the political nature of Boston Freemasonry is the fact that Samuel Adams, a non-mason, included the Masonic lodges in his rounds of politicking. No record of Adams’s visits to any lodge exists in the minutes of meetings; however, his presence is recorded in the Centennial Memorial of the Lodge of St Andrew and is attested to in several non-Masonic sources.²¹

¹⁸ E. S. Morgan & H. M. Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 58–9.

¹⁹ Providence Sons of Liberty to Boston Sons of Liberty, April 16, 1766, Correspondence of the Providence Sons of Liberty, *Peck Collection* 63–70 (Providence, RI: Rhode Island Historical Society).

²⁰ Thomas Young to Hugh Hughes, *Misc. Bound Documents* (Boston, MA: Massachusetts Historical Society).

²¹ Thomas Young to Hugh Hughes, *Misc bound Documents* (Boston, MA: Massachusetts Historical Society), Fischer, *Paul Revere’s Ride*, 22–3; Correspondence of the Portsmouth Sons of Liberty, *Belknap Papers* (Boston, MA: Massachusetts Historical Society) microfilm, Box 61; Correspondence of the Providence Sons of Liberty, *Peck Collection* 63–70 (Providence, RI: Rhode Island Historical Society); Lodge of St Andrew, *Centennial Memorial of*

Bullock and others support the view that the Antients of the Lodge of St Andrew were radicals, while the moderns of St John's Lodge were either neutral or loyalist, with a few notable exceptions. This is a considerable oversimplification. To understand the complex role of the moderns in revolutionary Boston it is necessary to differentiate between the activism of the Stamp Act period and the more severe radicalization which occurred from 1768 to the onset of hostilities. During the Stamp Act period the Moderns represented the very people most involved in organizing resistance to the Stamp Act – the merchant elite. Important to note is that Stamp Collector Andrew Oliver attended Master's Lodge regularly and also visited Second Lodge until January of 1764, after which his name disappears forever from Masonic records. The Stamp commissioner was apparently not welcome among Boston's Modern masons.²²

1769 was an important year for the Sons as, according to a letter from Thomas Young to New York Son Hugh Hughes dated July 30, 'The society of the Sons of Liberty after lying sometime inactive have again resumed their former vigor and begin to mediate a renovation of their correspondence thro the Continent.' The Sons of liberty did their best to keep their identities secret. However, secretary William Palfrey made a list of the Sons of Liberty who dined at Liberty Tree, Dorchester on August 14, 1769. The list names 355 Patriots, including six visitors from Virginia, Carolina and Pennsylvania. Not included is John Rowe, Grand Master of the Moderns, who had been a leading Son until the movement became more radical in 1768. Adding the aforementioned Grand Master Rowe and William Molyneux, we have a total of 350 names to compare with the records of the lodges.²³

Of these 37 were pre-1765 members of St Andrew (29 exclusively); 24 were exclusive members of Second Lodge; along with 10 members of First Lodge, who can be positively identified from the records of the 1750s or other sources (making 34 Moderns to 29 Antients); there were 13 brethren who belonged to both camps; 12 who appear among the visitor roles of either St Andrew or Second Lodge – primarily the former – and may have been members of First Lodge or brethren unaffiliated with a local lodge; this includes only those Masons who appear in lodge records prior to the date of the dinner, the majority first appearing in Masonic records prior to the Stamp Act agitation. Two others may be positively identified from a list of subscribers to a Masonic book, and there are 13 names

the Lodge of St Andrew (Boston, MA: Press of Arthur W. Locke and Co., 1870), 13; R. Bourne, *Cradle of Violence* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2006), 89; B. Carp, 'Fire of Liberty: Firefighters, Urban Voluntary Culture, and the Revolutionary Movement', *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 4, (Oct. 2001), 718–818.

²² Master's Lodge, *Minutes*.

²³ Palfrey, 'List of the Sons of Liberty'; 'Meeting, May 19, 1768', *Palfrey MSS*; Second Lodge, *Minutes*; St Andrew *Minutes*; Morgan and Morgan, *Stamp Act*, 160; R. Bourne, *Cradle of Violence: How Boston's Waterfront Mobs Ignited the American Revolution* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2006), 130; Hutchinson to Pownall, 8 March 1766, quoted in Morgan & Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis*, 190; Young to Hughes quoted in B. Carp, *Defiance of the Patriots: The Boston Tea Party and the Making of America* (New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 2010), 46.

which represent probable or possible brethren who cannot be conclusively identified. Thus, between 26 and 29.4% of known Sons of Liberty were Freemasons. The incompleteness of First Lodge's and Sons of Liberty's records and the presence in Boston of Masons unaffiliated with local lodges means these figures should be viewed as a minimum.²⁴

Additional Sons included nine members who joined in 1766–67. There is no way to determine which group these entered first. Nonetheless their dual affiliations speak to the close connection between the organizations. These tend to be less prominent Patriots who for the most part were uninvolved in politics prior to their Masonic initiations. Particularly interesting is the 8 January 1767 initiation of Thomas Chase, a member of the Loyal Nine. A Thomas Chase appears as a visitor to Second Lodge twice: in 1762 and 1763. A Thomas Chase or Case also visited St Andrew in 1764. It impossible to say if these were the same man. Due to the Moderns – Antients schism Moderns Masons wishing to join the Antient-aligned Lodge of St Andrew were inconsistently required to re-take their degrees. Thus it may have been that Chase was already a Moderns Mason who had visited the Antients and was re-initiated. Even if Chase was not part of the pre-1765 nexus of Masonic future Patriots, his prominence among the Loyal Nine and the Sons followed by his Masonic initiation indicate a relationship between the secret societies.

Likewise, Moderns Masons among the leaders of the Sons all entered Masonry prior to the Stamp Act crisis. Such prominent dinner attendees include Thomas Fleet, a member of Second Lodge prior to 1760, who was the publisher of the seditious *Boston Evening Post*. Richard Gridley, the hero of the siege of Louisburg, commander of the Massachusetts troops on the expedition to Crown Point and of the artillery that supported Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham, was the commander of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, which moved its meetings to the Green Dragon under his watch. His accomplishments as an artillery commander and military engineer were so highly esteemed that he was a half-pay officer of the British Army for life, and thus well connected at Castle William. He returned his British pension after commanding the cannons on Breed's Hill thirty years to the day of the victory at Louisburg. Gridley also was a Past Master of Second Lodge. William Burbeck was a Moderns Mason and a charter member of St Andrew. He had also put up the money for the purchase of the Green Dragon. At the time of the dinner he was Deputy Grand Master under Joseph Warren, having served as Master of St Andrew's from 1760 to 1765 and initiated as Masons the core of the future Patriot cause. Burbeck was Gridley's second-in-command in the Artillery Company. Furthermore, he was in charge of stores at Castle William, a position that allowed for consider-

²⁴ Palfrey, 'List of the Sons of Liberty'; St Andrew, *Minutes*; First Lodge, *Minutes*; Master's Lodge, *Minutes*; Second Lodge, *Minutes*; W. Calcott, *A Candid Disquisition of the Principles and Practices of the Most Ancient and Honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons; Together with Some Strictures on the Origin, Nature, and Lesson of that Institution* (Marlborough, MA: Brother William MacAlpine, 1772), i-xiii.

able Masonic and professional intercourse, and almost certainly intelligence gathering for Grand Master and insurgent spy master Warren. With the outbreak of war Burbeck returned from the Castle in a rowing boat and surrendered to patriot leaders, only to be commissioned in the Massachusetts artillery.²⁵

The known leadership of the Sons of Liberty overlaps Freemasonry very tightly. The Secretary, William Palfrey, was Secretary not only of the Merchants Club but also Grand Secretary of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge. The letters of the Sons of Liberty to John Wilkes instruct Wilkes to direct his correspondence not to Edes and Gill's print shop, the location specified to the Sons in other colonies in the Belknap Papers, but to the Whig Coffee House owned by brother John Marston. Masonic networks along maritime trade routes were ideal channels for discrete political communication. Nearly all of the letters exchanged between Boston Sons' Secretary, William Palfrey, the Sons of Liberty, and John Wilkes were delivered by Masons: Capt. Hall, Capt. Scott, and Dr John Jeffries. Scott and Jeffries were confirmed Sons of Liberty, though Jeffries turned Loyalist at the outbreak of the war. Future turncoat Benjamin Church was a high-ranking Patriot who served as the first Master of the Moderns Rising Sun lodge. John Hancock, James Otis, Joseph Warren, and his lieutenant Paul Revere, and Master of 'tar and feathers' brother William Molyneux, sat at or near the top of the movement with many of the most active secondary and tertiary leaders early lodge members as well.²⁶

A Network of Networks

Key Patriot Freemasons were often involved in multiple political or politicized organizations. Paul Revere was among the leadership of the Sons of Liberty, North End Caucus, Long Room Club (assuming there actually was such a group – no contemporary reference to it exists prior to Drake's 1884 *Tea Leaves*) and carried out the orders of Patriot leaders. Grand Master Joseph Warren was a leader of the North Caucus, Long Room Club, Sons of Liberty and the Boston Committee of Correspondence. James Otis was also in the Long Room Club (which may simply have been a euphemism for the Sons of Liberty) and Committee of Correspondence and was the radicals' ideological leader from the very beginning. Less well known, Thomas Chase was a member of the Loyal

²⁵ J. E. Triber, *A True Republican: The Life of Paul Revere* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 1998), 111–13. Revere had served as a lieutenant under Gridley at Crown Point. Triber speculates that the personal animosity between Burbeck and Revere hindered the latter's receiving the artillery commission he desired.

²⁶ Correspondence of Palfrey to Wilkes, Wilkes to Palfrey, Sons of Liberty to Wilkes, Wilkes to Sons of Liberty, 1768–1770, *Palfrey MSS*; St Andrew, *Minutes*; First Lodge, *Minutes*; Second Lodge, *Minutes* 1760–1778 (Boston, MA: Grand Lodge of Massachusetts) Microfilm; F. S. Drake, *Tea Leaves: Being a Collection of Letters and Documents Relating to the Shipment of Tea to the American Colonies in the year 1773 by the East India Company* (Boston, MA: A. O. Crane, 1884) 41; W. Palfrey, 'An Alphabetical List of the Sons of Liberty who Dined at Liberty Tree, Dorchester, Aug. 14, 1769', *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society 1869–70* (Boston, MA: Mass. Historical Society, 1871), 140–42.

Nine, the North Caucus, the Anti-Stamp Fire Club, and participated in the Boston Tea Party. Another North End Caucus member and Tea Party Mohawk, Thomas Urann, was Master *pro temp* of the Lodge of St Andrew at the special meeting held on the night of the Tea Party. William Molyneux was a member of the North End Caucus and the Boston Committee of Correspondence. He organized women's sewing bees and was notorious for raising gangs of youths to tar and feather Tories. Molyneux appears as a visitor to both St Andrew and Second Lodge, and at the first Massachusetts Grand Lodge meeting after the Tea Party. At minimum, thirty percent of the sixty known members of the North End Caucus were Freemasons, mainly from St Andrew. Whether or not the Long Room Club was a distinct group or another name for the Sons, it was named for the Green Dragon's long room.²⁷

Joseph Warren was among the most prominent political figure in the Patriot cause. He presided over the State House while still leading many of the grassroots organizations of mechanics and agitators and the Massachusetts Grand Lodge. Paul Revere, in addition to the groups already mentioned had by 1774 become:

one of upwards of thirty, chiefly mechanics, who formed ourselves into a committee for watching the movements of the British soldiers, and gaining every intelligence of the movements of the Tories . . . we held our meetings at the Green Dragon Tavern.'

William Palfrey, zealous Mason and ultra-Patriot, dined, drank, and sat in lodge while in England with men such as John Wilkes, George Hailey, and lesser men involved in the Wilkite agitation. Doubtless, both politics and Freemasonry (and any overlap between the two) were topics of discussion, because the lodges and their members were politically involved. Considering his attendance of lodges throughout New England and in old England, it seems likely that Palfrey, whose Masonic, business, and political networks overlapped heavily, must have attended lodges in New York, Pennsylvania, and the Carolinas, when he travelled on business – including the time he travelled on the business of 'the committee' in the months prior to the Boston Tea Party.²⁸

John Rowe was not the only Son of Liberty to exit the fight as political tensions increased from 1768. According to Pauline Maier no less than twenty of those who dined in Dorchester that August evening in 1769 turned coat.²⁹ Several other Masons who

²⁷ First Lodge, *Minutes*; E. H. Goss, *The Life of Colonel Paul Revere, With Portraits many illustrations facsimiles etc.* 3rd ed. (Boston, MA: Howard W. Spurr, 1899), 635–36; St Andrew, *Minutes*; Bourne, *Cradle of Violence*, 89; *150th Anniversary of the Lodge of St Andrew* (Boston, MA: Lodge of St Andrew, 1907), 273–300; Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 107; Paul Revere Memorial Association, *Paul Revere – Artisan*, 122.

²⁸ William Palfrey to Unidentified, December 1773, *Palfrey MSS*; Paul Revere Memorial Association, *Paul Revere – Artisan*, 129; Paul Revere, 'A letter from Col. Paul Revere to the Corresponding Secretary', *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society for the year MDCCXCVIII* (Boston, MA: Samuel Hall, No 53, 1798), 106–11.

²⁹ P. Maier, *From Resistance to revolution; Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765–1776* (New York: Knopf, 1972), 275–8.

appear on the list of Sons of Liberty – Andrew Cazneau, Samuel Quincy of Second Lodge, and Dr John Jeffries of St Andrew’s who had carried letters from Palfrey to John Wilkes – all became Loyalists once the shooting began. Over time more radical members, including Joseph Warren, Paul Revere, and the radical artisans of the North End, many of whom were members of St Andrew’s, had replaced the less radical leadership of the elite, many of whom were Moderns Masons and who had helped to create the Sons of Liberty based on the organizational template of Freemasonry.³⁰

The records of Second Lodge and the known membership of the 1772 Rising Sun Lodge indicate a political schism among Boston Moderns. In the years preceding Rising Sun, Second Lodge was not only well-attended but received as visitors William Molyneux and James Otis (together on one occasion), William Palfrey, and other Whigs. Following the formation of Rising Sun attendance dropped dramatically and was largely Tory or members with no discernible politics. The eighteen members of First Lodge who asked for the petition included St Andrew’s members / Patriots Samuel Barrett and John Gray, Son of Liberty William Jones, and, as Master, leading Patriot Benjamin Church, Jr. The Moderns underwent power struggles, resulting in Patriot control of the lodges in Portsmouth, based on their records, and apparently in Newburyport and Marblehead. Notably, unlike many Moderns lodges, these survived the revolution. The same bears true in Rhode Island and Georgia, as well as several Connecticut lodges. This indicates that the revolutionary orientation of a lodge or Grand Lodge, rather than simply its Ancients-Moderns orientation, was a key determinant in its survival in the independent United States.³¹

The Lodge of St Andrew Throws a Tea Party

*How much treason was hatched under this roof will never be known, but much was unquestionably concocted within the walls of the Masonic lodge.*³²

On 16 December 1773 Patriots dressed as ‘Mohawks’ stormed Griffins Wharf and dumped 342 chests of the East India Company’s tea into the harbour. The Tea Party and its Mohawks had close associations with the Green Dragon and the Lodge of St Andrew. The Long Room at the Green Dragon was considered the best hall in any tavern in town. The lodge had been meeting there since its inception, but its acquisition in 1764 gave them a valuable piece of real estate and an established business. The name was officially changed to the ‘Freemason’s Arms’, but Bostonians continued to call it the Green Dragon. It became the meeting place not only for the Lodge of St Andrew and its Masonic offspring, the

³⁰ Palfrey to Wilkes 1769–1771, *Palfrey MSS*.

³¹ *Proceedings*, 196, St John’s Lodge (Portsmouth), *Minutes and Records*, St John’s Lodge (Newburyport), *History*.

³² Drake writing about the Green Dragon, quoted in M. A. Hobbs, *The Contribution of Freemasonry to the Success of the American Revolution* (New York: St Paul’s Conclave No. 12, 1925), 8.

Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts and Massachusetts Lodge, but for a number of revolutionary groups including the Loyal Nine, the Boston Selectmen, the Long Room Club (if such a club existed), the Committees of Correspondence, the Sons of Liberty, Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, Revere’s mechanics, and in the run up to the Boston Tea Party, Warren’s North End Caucus. In providing a physical space for so many groups linked with resistance and revolution, St Andrew made a major contribution to the revolution. Furthermore, members of the various groups involved must have become frequenters of the tavern and had ample opportunity to interact officially and unofficially.³³

Travelling, or military lodges of the British 29th and 64th regiments, also met in the Freemason’s Arms, at least briefly, offering the opportunity to eavesdrop and interact to Patriot Masons. They shifted to meeting on their own at Castle Island. This would have provided Deputy Grand Master William Burbeck, in charge of stores at the Castle until his defection to the Patriots at the outset of the war, with ample opportunity to interact with enemy brethren. Sgt John Batt, who oversaw Prince Hall’s African brethren initiated, in all likelihood at Burbeck’s request and certainly with his blessing, was probably the same former British sergeant named John Batt, who defected and enlisted as an American in Henley’s Regiment of Continentals in Boston in 1778. So it is likely that sympathizers as well as careless tongues sat in lodge with the Deputy Grand Master on Castle Island. Joseph Warren had a number of informants, probably including the wife of General Gage, and he may have used the travelling lodges as a source of information. Furthermore, it would have made Masons in the British military establishment reticent to take action against the tavern. The legend that a British officer who was a Mason aided in Paul Revere’s release from capture on the night of his famous ride is implied by his account. The officer in question, on hearing that his prisoner’s surname was Revere, asked if he was Paul Revere. Receiving an affirmative answer he reassured the prisoner that he would not be harmed.³⁴

Legend has often ascribed the Tea Party to the brethren of St Andrew. Certainly, the Green Dragon Tavern was a staging point for the ‘Indians’. The list of known Tea Party participants includes members of St Andrew, the North End Caucus, and the Sons of Liberty. Cooper Samuel Peck, active in both St Andrew and the North End Caucus, asked in a town meeting earlier that day if ‘tea was miscible in salt water.’³⁵ Within St Andrew’s there is a traditional view that the plan was devised at the lodge, and its execu-

³³ Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood*, 113; C. Hodapp, *Solomon’s builders: Freemasons, Founding Fathers and the Secrets of Washington, D.C.* (Berkeley, CA: Ulysses, 2007), 66. Fischer, *Paul Revere’s Ride*, 308 lists alternative meeting sites for the Long Room Club and North Caucus – which began meeting in the Dragon in 1773.

³⁴ Grand Lodge, *Proceedings*, 226–8; *Prince Hall, Primus Hall, John Batt Reel*, Microfilm. Boston: Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. Paul Revere, ‘Statement on His Ride and Capture’, 1775. From americanrevolution.org/revere.html.

³⁵ Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution*, 275–78, 41–44; Willis; F. Drake, *Tea Leaves* (Boston: Smith and Porter, 1884), lxiii, lxvi–lxvii. *Boston Town Record*, Dec. 16, 1773.

tion committed to the North End Caucus. Brother John Hancock's Cadets stood guard while the Mohawks did their work. The Cadets disbanded when in the wake of the Tea Party the governor intended to revoke his commission. Corroboration for this or a similar view is related by those acquainted with the participants. A speech given in the Lodge of St Andrew's *Centennial Memorial* describes the story as told by the late Col. Henry Purkett,

Our brother the Colonel, by what he used to say to us, as well as by what he did not say, declared that the 'Boston Tea Party' was got up at the 'Green Dragon Tavern', and in St Andrew's Lodge.³⁶

Purkett had yet to enter the lodge at the time of the Tea Party. He was apprenticed to lodge member Samuel Peck as well as a member of the North End Caucus. Peck and Purkett both participated in the Tea Party. Logically then, it seems that Peck was present at the lodge when someone suggested the plan, and brought it back to his apprentice, who, after distinguished military service, joined the lodge in 1795. Francis Drake corroborates the lodge's version of events, and credits – albeit incorrectly – John Rowe with having asked in the town meeting, 'Who knows how tea will mingle with salt water.' While the basis for Drake's claim is difficult to ascertain from either the town records or Rowe's diary, Mason Samuel Peck's comment on the miscibility of tea does appear in the records.³⁷

William Palfrey took a business trip in the months prior to the Tea Party. Ostensibly, he was travelling through New York and Philadelphia on business for John Hancock. Not averse to mixing business with politics, Palfrey's real agenda becomes clear in a 3 December 1773 letter addressed simply to 'Hon'd Sir'. In it Palfrey passes on information on the tea situations in the colonies he has visited to 'your committee' or 'the committee'. He stated that he had met 'the committee' of Philadelphia the night before. He goes on to inform the committee that they should proceed with the actions they have planned, indicating that the Boston Tea Party had been planned prior to his departure in early November or late October. Palfrey later confirmed the real business of his trip: 'My Most respectful salutations & hearty good wishes attend the Gentlemen of the Committee beg leave to assure them that my whole time of absence shall be devoted to their service in the common cause.'³⁸

A fragment of a song sung as a rallying cry on the night of the Tea Party connects Warren, Revere, and the North Enders to the Tea Party:

³⁶ Lodge of St Andrew, *Centennial Memorial* (Boston: Press of Arthur W. Locke and Co. 1870), 113. The story is recounted in an oration by W. Bro Hamilton Willis.

³⁷ Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution*, 275–78, 41–44; Palfrey to Samuel Adams, August 25th, 1774, *Palfrey MSS*; Lodge of St Andrew, *Centennial Memorial* (Boston, MA: Press of Arthur W. Locke and Co. 1870), 113. The story is recounted in an oration by W. Bro Hamilton Willis; F. Drake, *Tea Leaves* (Boston: Smith and Porter, 1884), lxiii, lxvi–lxvii. *Boston Town Record*, Dec. 16, 1773.

³⁸ William Palfrey to unidentified, December 3, 1773, *Palfrey MSS*.



Fig. 2 Lodge of St Andrew Minutes for 16 December 1773. 'Lodge closed (on account of the few brethren present) until tomorrow evening.' Thomas Urann served as Master Pro Temp – he is listed among Drake's Tea Party Participants. No other flourishes like those on the bottom of the page occur anywhere in the Minutes.

Rally Mohawks – bring out your axes!
And tell King George We'll pay no taxes
...
Then rally boys and hasten on
To meet our chiefs of the Green Dragon
Our WARREN's there, and bold REVERE.³⁹

³⁹ I. L. Langley, *The American Revolution and the Craft* (Highland Springs, VA: Anchor Communications, 2000), 43–44. Brother James Gleason recorded the fragment. Gleason was a child during the Revolution and later collected

Many of the North End Caucus members who were Masons were also Sons of Liberty, and the Caucus is generally credited with a leading role in the Tea Party. Their Minutes for 23 October 1773 state: 'voted –That this body will oppose the vending any Tea, set by the East India Company, to any part of the Continent, with our lives and fortunes.' They then voted a committee of Paul Revere, Abiel Ruddock, and John Lowell 'to correspond with any Committee chosen in any part of the town on this occasion.' The group next met on 2 November at the Green Dragon, the first recorded instance of the Caucus meeting in its new home, and an indication that they meant to be closer to the nexus of resistance. The entire meeting concerns resistance to the tea, including requesting the presence of John Hancock and creating a resolution threatening the owners of the tea. They voted: 'That this body are determined that the Tea shipped or to be shipped by the East India company shall not be landed.' The Caucus Minutes include no other meetings after this one for several months, when on 11 March they met at 'Widow Campbells'.

The records of the Lodge of St Andrew include two interesting entries relating to the Tea Party: 30 November 1773: 'Lodge adjourned on account of the few Brothers present. N.B. consignees of TEA took the brethren's time.' The next meeting occurred on 16 December. The lodge had already met on the 2nd and the 9th. No business was conducted at the special meeting held 'by adjournment' on the 16th. Thomas Urann Served as Master *pro temp*, yet he appears on Drake's list of Tea Party Mohawks that same night. Four other brethren were present. The Minutes say only: 'Lodge closed (on account of the few brethren present) until tomorrow evening.' The next evening the lodge met again, initiating and preparing to initiate a number of new members. The Minutes for the meeting of the 16th also contain a set of flourishes resembling letter T's; no other such flourish appears at any point in the Minutes.

Conclusion: Brother Revere's Ride

John Pulling and Robert Newman, the two men credited with hanging the lanterns to warn of the British assault on Lexington, were both Masons. In reality this was probably accomplished by Pulling, a vestryman of the church and member of Marblehead Lodge no later than 1760, who was closely associated with St Andrew. Revere and Pulling met through Masonry in that year, another case of Masonic contingency in the American Revolution. Pulling and Revere had served on several Boston committees including the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety and a sub-committee 'to collect the names of all persons who have in any way acted against or opposed the rights and liberties of this country.' Pulling was closely connected to Patriot leaders in Marblehead, most if not all of whom were lodge members. John Pulling was also a merchant accus-

remembrances from his elders. As such it may not be a perfect remembrance.

tomed to climbing ship's rigging and quite capable of ascending the familiar bell tower with a lantern or two on his own. Paul Revere's account of his ride indicates that he had chosen a friend to hang the lanterns in the Old North Church. The singular is key. Robert Newman's family on the centennial celebration publicly took credit for their ancestor, based on his having been questioned by the British on the night of 19 April 1775. Newman, a member of Second Lodge, was a sexton in the church, and was questioned by the regulars later that night. He apparently explained that he had given Pulling the keys to the church on the latter's request. Satisfied, the troops left the Newman household unmolested but seized Pulling's property and would have arrested him, if not for a daring late night escape. Therefore, either Newman immediately cracked under pressure or was ignorant of Pulling's patriotic activities. A slower rider than Revere, William Dawes, a Moderns Mason, met Bros Revere and Hancock later than night. After a narrow escape in which a British officer, on learning that his prisoner was, in fact, Paul Revere, protected him from the apprehending sergeant's threat to 'blow his brains out,' Revere assisted Bro. John Lowell in escorting Hancock's chest full of documents and effects to safety.⁴⁰

Freemasonry was not the cause of the American Revolution, but it did bring together many Revolutionary leaders. In the early days of the movement, particularly during the Stamp Act Crisis, it served as an organizational support that was co-opted into the movement. Unlike other such societies, it was inter-colonial in scope and offered pre-existing networks, physical meeting spaces, and trustworthy brethren with shared political ideology. The Craft overlapped all of the other local groups co-opted in like manner, and united both individuals and organizations. Stephen Bullock has described the importance of Freemasonry in establishing social hierarchy and shared cultural bonds in the Continental Army. Following the war Freemasonry grew exponentially in the early Republic. In *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* Gordon Wood states offhandedly that 'the importance of Freemasonry to the Revolutionary generation cannot be underestimated.'⁴¹ In Boston the Moderns Grand Lodge, which had done so much to spread the Craft across the hemisphere, declined as the old elite it represented was replaced with the new elite ensconced in the Ancient Massachusetts Grand Lodge. In 1792 the two Grand Lodges merged, largely on the latter's terms. Like the newly independent state, its leadership was based largely on Revolutionary credentials.

⁴⁰ J. L. Watson, *Paul Revere's Signal: The True Story of the Signal Lanterns in Christ Church*, Boston Reprintd from the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society (Cambridge: John Wilson and Son, 1877).

⁴¹ G. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1992) 223–5.