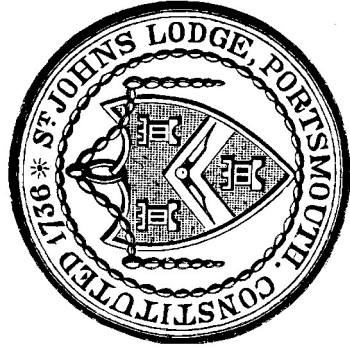
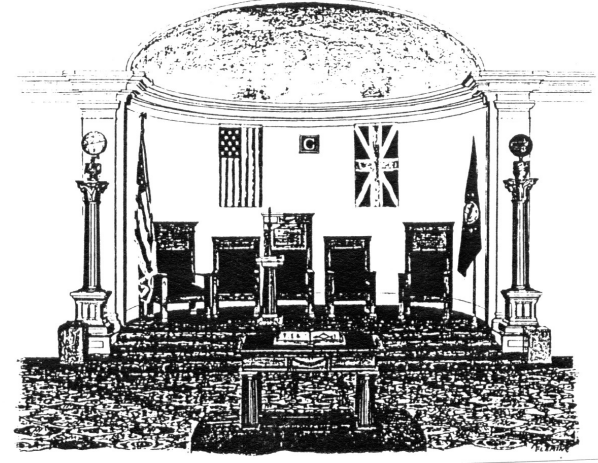


St. John's Lodge, No. 1, F&AM
351 Middle St
Portsmouth, NH 03801



Stamp

September 2023



September 2023 Trestle Board

St. John's Lodge No. 1
Portsmouth, NH



Worshipful Master Daniel Stolworthy emceed Jeopardy at the Stated Communication in September. The challenging questions included Masonic trivia, Portsmouth trivia, and general knowledge questions. A fun night was had by all!

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At the Stated meeting of St. John's Lodge in January 1955, a month after Ralph had passed, the secretary, Thomas B. Ruxton, read a communication from the insurance company J. Clifton [Avery] Agency, Box 576, Wolfeboro, notifying the lodge that our late brother Ralph Samuel Parker had bequeathed the Lodge the sum of \$2,500. Fifteen months later, on April 4, 1956, the Master, Wor. James F. Leavitt, reported to the brethren that the Lodge had received a check for \$2,500 from the estate of Brother Parker and that the funds were deposited in the Reserve Fund for the time being. About a year later on February 6, 1957, Wor. Leavitt, as chairman of the Board of Managers of the Lodge's property, requested that the Lodge authorize the sum of \$800 from the Ralph S. Parker bequest to be used to furnish and equip the new reception room now being set up in the temple; and that a memorial plaque be set up in the room as a memorial to Brother Parker. Upon vote of the members present, his request was approved. Very nice wood furniture was purchased and placed in the room, and a handsome plaque was installed on the wall, and you can see both next time you're in the Parker Room.

Alan M. Robinson, PM
Historian



Golden Rule Lodge No. 5—Owl's Head
Outdoor Degree
Saturday, September 23, 2023

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selling gentlemen's clothing at a store in Wolfeboro. He continued singing and became choirmaster at a church in Wolfeboro, and he served as an auditor for the town of Wolfeboro.

In 1923, nine years after returning home to take care of his parents, his father John W. Parker died. Then twelve years later, on Thursday, October 3, 1935, his mother Abbie Parker died at the age of 88 years. Four days after his mother died, on Monday, October 7, 1935, Ralph and Carolyn (Carrie) May Young of Wolfeboro filed their intentions to marry with the Wolfeboro Town Clerk. Carrie was born on December 28, 1871 and was a local caterer. A couple months later, on December 1, 1935, she and Ralph got married in Wolfeboro, they were both 63 years old, and this was the first and only wedding for both of them.

Ralph and Carrie lived a happy married life in Wolfeboro from 1935 until May 22, 1954 when Carrie died of complications of a severe stroke; she was 82 years old. I suspect Ralph was broken hearted at the loss of his wife for he died six months later on November 16, 1954 of a heart attack at his home on Pleasant Street in Wolfeboro; he too was 82 years of age. Ralph and Carrie are buried together in the Haley – Parker family plot at Lakeview Cemetery in Wolfeboro. They are with his parents, John and Abbie, and Abbie's parents, Enoch and Cynthia Haley.

Ralph was a good man, a good son and husband, and a gifted musician. He was also a longtime member of the Masonic fraternity. He was Raised a Master Mason in St. John's Lodge on June 10, 1903 and at the time of his passing was a 50-year member of the fraternity. For a few years from 1906 until he returned to Wolfeboro in 1914, he led a very popular Masonic Quartet along with Brothers C. W. Gray, H.P. Montgomery and John Mitchell. They sang for degree work and to entertain the brethren of St. John's Lodge. When Ralph died, no masonic services were held, but several members of Morning Star Lodge, No. 17 in Wolfeboro attended his funeral service.

September 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Stated Communication

We will be voting on the 2024 budget

Wednesday, September 6, 2023

(Dinner 6:00, Meeting 7:00)

Dinner—Stuffed Peppers

(with fresh tomatoes from the Splaine garden)

Officer dress—White tie and tails

Collation to follow

Special Communication

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

Joint Grand Lodge Visitation

With St. Andrew's Lodge No. 56

(Dinner 6:00, Meeting 7:00)

Dinner—Chicken Marsala

Officer dress—White tie and tails

Collation to follow

Lodge of Instruction—District 1

At St. John's Masonic Temple

Rainbow Girls will be there to serve dinner

(Dinner 6:00, Meeting 7:00)

Dinner—Shepherd's Pie

Officer Dress—Business Suit (with jewels and aprons)

Ralph S. Parker

There is a room in the Portsmouth Masonic Temple that has been named after someone – do you know which one? For as long as I've known (more than 50 years), the room at the top of the stairs between the lodge room and the second floor of the Hackett House has been named "The Parker Room." It's a very comfortable and well-lit space with nice furniture and windows that look out onto Miller Avenue. It was originally designed as a receiving room and for many years has been used for committee meetings and as a place to prepare for lodge events; it's also a convenient pass-through room. I didn't know much about Brother Parker, and neither did anyone else that I've asked over the years; that is, until now.

Ralph Samuel Parker was born in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, on January 21, 1872, the son of John William and Abbie (Haley) Parker. He graduated from Brewster Academy in Wolfeboro and from a young age was a gifted musician and talented piano player. He had an amazing singing voice and was quite possibly the best tenor in the state of New Hampshire. In early 1898, he moved to Portsmouth and lived at 28 Vaughan Street. He began to sing in several quartets and with several local orchestras, and he became a regular performer at several area churches. One week in 1898, he sang at the Knights of Pythias Fair in New Castle; at a private birthday function; and at a public musical revue held at the Odd Fellow's Hall in downtown Portsmouth at which he sang with Bilbruck's Orchestra.

Ralph was a standout actor in local musical theater; for example, on January 23, 1902, he played the lead role of Dick Davis in a sold-out performance of the comedy "Me and Otis" at Philbrick Hall in Portsmouth. The play was sponsored by the Young Men's Christian Association also known as the YMCA and benefitted their building fund. You may remember that the Franklin Block building in downtown Portsmouth was built in 1879 and originally held a second-floor theater and a hall. During improvements around 1900, the theater was removed and the hall extended. It was first called Franklin Hall and then renamed for its owners to

Philbrick Hall, and then soon after to Freeman's Hall, the home of St. John's Lodge before we bought our current Masonic Temple. Throughout the year 1902, Ralph regularly performed to large audiences at Freeman's Hall where he performed vocal selections and was reportedly one of Portsmouth's most popular singers.

Ralph became the musical director of the Portsmouth Athletic Club and produced their famous and largely-attended Minstrel Shows. One such show was in May 1906 at which his group of singers entertained and he sang his original song, "When in Dreams I Hear my Mother's Song Again." That same year, he was the director of The Female Minstrel Company that performed to sold-out crowds in Portsmouth. On the occasion of the 200th Anniversary of the founding of the Greenland Congregational Church in 1906, his quartet sang the anthem, "The Lord is my Light." In 1909, he toured with his minstrel show cast to neighboring towns and on a May evening in Hampton, performed his beautiful original composition, "When the Autumn Leaves are Turning Red and Gold." In 1910, he was elected a trustee of the local Musicians Union.

While living in Portsmouth, Ralph was very active in the Order of United American Mechanics. Founded in Philadelphia in 1845, the Order was a patriotic, social and benevolent fraternity that aimed to help native-born Americans find employment, and to assist members' widows and orphans and members who could not work. He was also a Past Chancellor of Damon Lodge, No. 9, Knights of Pythias (1905).

Ralph was a very popular clerk at George B. French Co. in Portsmouth. French's was the leading department store located at 37-41 Market Street in downtown Portsmouth. It was where Kennedy Gallery & Custom Framing is today.

In the spring of 1914, sixteen years after arriving in Portsmouth, Ralph returned to his hometown of Wolfeboro to be with his mother and father in their declining years. He left his job at French's dry goods store and took a similar job

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