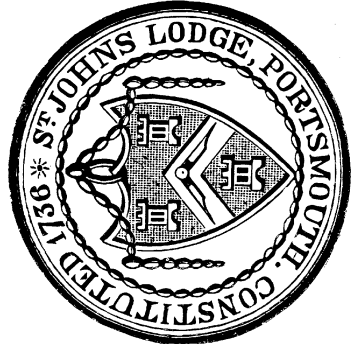
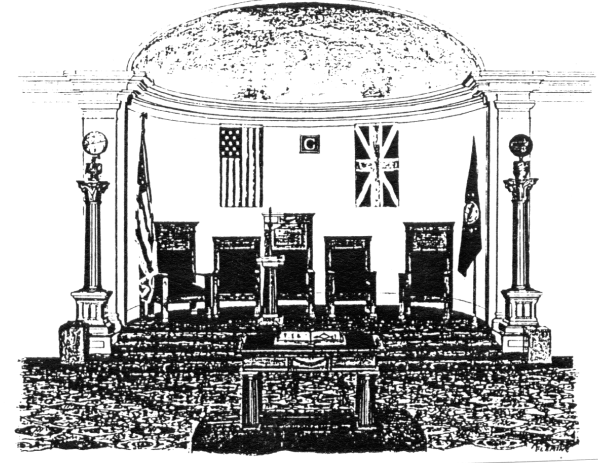


St. John's Lodge, No. 1, F&AM
351 Middle St
Portsmouth, NH 03801



Stamp

February 2025



February 2025
Trestle Board

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

The Master's Message

Greetings Brethren!

I hope your New Year has been healthy and productive. Our programming year begins in earnest at this month's stated with a lesson by Right Worshipful Brother David Akridge, Grand Education Officer, on the Lewis Jewel. Not sure what the Lewis Jewel is, or whether you're eligible? Come out to the stated on February 5th and find out! And if you do know, still come, we'd love to see you, it is going to be a great night.

From whence came you, and whither are you traveling? This is asked within our ritual and in some jurisdictions as a bit of a test. The answers speak to a deep meaning that is partially explained in our Master Mason degree charge as it refers to our journey through life. It is beautiful language, and I encourage you to revisit it. Navigation and maps have been a lifelong fascination for me. The idea of knowing where you, what is around you, and how to get to where you want to go is endlessly interesting to me. As many of you know, I am a retired Coast Guard officer and spent many years at sea. The ability to navigate at sea is a special skill that requires experience and practice. You have choices to help you navigate, whether it is GPS, or buoys, or even celestially via the stars and sun.

At the heart of it all is the compass and the cardinal directions by which we also lay out our Lodge. The masonic Square and Compasses has an overlap to me with a navigational compass. They both give you direction, and when used in concert with a map (or our ritual) they tell you where you are and how you might travel on your journey. So where are you traveling in life? Where are you traveling in Masonry? What compass guides you? What map do you use? And importantly how can we as a fraternity help you on your journey? Looking ahead to our March stated we will be having a "rusty brother" or "rusty apron" night.

While all Masons are always welcome at every meeting, I know from experience that the longer one has been away from attending, the more awkward it can feel to return. If you have not been to Lodge in a long time and have been hesitant to return because you think you

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might not remember what to do, this stated is for you...consider it a back to the basic's night. As always, our meals are free, so at a minimum join us for the fellowship. A program on the Portsmouth Temple is also part of the evening.

I look forward to seeing you in Lodge!



Fraternally,

Worshipful Michael Hudson
Worshipful Master

Harry Houdini

Born Erik Weisz in Budapest, Hungary in 1874; Harry Houdini was one of seven children of Rabbi Mayer Samuel Weisz and Cecilia Steiner. Weisz arrived in the United States on July 3, 1878, on the SS *Frisia*, the family changed their name to the German spelling Weiss, and Erik became Ehrich. The family lived in Appleton, Wisconsin, where his father served as rabbi of the Zion Reform Jewish Congregation.

In 1887, the family moved to New York City. As a child, Houdini took several jobs, making his public debut as a nine-year-old trapeze artist, calling himself "Ehrich, the Prince of the Air".

From 1907 and throughout the 1910s, Houdini performed with great success in the United States. He freed himself from jails, handcuffs, chains, ropes, and straitjackets, often while hanging from a rope in sight of street audiences.

Harry Houdini was initiated into St. Cecile Lodge in New York in 1923 and was passed and raised in July 31 and August 21 in 1924. He was proud to be a Freemason and even held a performance for the Scottish Rite Valley of New York. The event was attended by 4,000 people in the Scottish Rite Cathedral and raised money for Freemasons in need. Houdini became a Shriner a few weeks before his unfortunate death in October 1926.



Houdini is among a cohort of Masonic magicians like Harry Keller, Howard Thurston, and Harry Blackstone. Today, there is even an "Invisible Lodge" for Freemasons who wish to become magicians or learn about the artform.

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Today we simply refer to this ailment as food poisoning caused by bacteria. It took several days for him to feel better, but the illness left him in a significantly weakened condition. For the next several months, his health steadily declined and he eventually succumb at his home located at 294 Dennett Street in Portsmouth on Saturday morning, April 4, 1925; he was 57 years old. When they learned of his passing from labor to refreshment, his brothers from the Fraternity were entirely shocked and deeply saddened. His well-attended funeral service was conducted at the Masonic Home on Middle Street on Tuesday afternoon, April 7, 1925 at 2:00 with Rev. E. S. Tasker, D.D. of the Methodist Church officiating. The officers of the Lodge, led by the Worshipful Master, Edward H. Riley, conducted a Masonic Service that included beautiful renderings of "One Sweetly Solemn Thought" and "Abide with Me" by Brother John W. Mitchell accompanied by Brother Leon A. Robinson.

Wor. Fred E. Peckham's remains were taken to Nashua by J. Verne Wood accompanied by a large delegation from the various Masonic bodies in Portsmouth. Interment took place in the family plot where he now rests alongside his loving wife Clara, their precious daughter Marguerite, and his parents, William H. and Hannah F. Peckham.



Alan M. Robinson, PM
Historian

February 2025

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	

Stated Communication

Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Program—The Lewis Jewel—Presented by
RW Brother David Akridge—Grand Education Officer
(Dinner 6:00, Meeting 7:00)

Dinner—Lasagna
Officer dress—white tie and tails

**Contact
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Fred E. Peckham

Fred Everett Peckham was born October 30, 1867 in Salem, Massachusetts, the son of William H. and Hannah F. Peckham. As a young boy of 13 years, he and his parents moved to Lowell, Massachusetts, where his father worked in the cotton mill and where they lived in a Lawrence Manufacturing Company boarding house. Freddie completed school in Lawrence and then as a young man moved to Nashua where he worked as a bookkeeper and bank clerk.

In 1887, Freddie became active in the newly founded Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Nashua, and in 1891, while serving on its Board of Directors, he was instrumental in the organization becoming incorporated by the New Hampshire state legislature.

In 1891, at the age of 25, Freddie met 27 year old Clara T. Thompson of Nashua. They were married on August 25, 1891 in Nashua. On October 19, 1892, they welcomed into their family their daughter, Marguerite T. Peckham. Sadly, Marguerite died of Diabetes Mellitus shortly after her second birthday on November 8, 1894; she is buried at Woodlawn Cemetery in Nashua.

In 1898, Freddie and Clara moved to Portsmouth where he first worked as a bookkeeper in the office of J. Albert Walker's coal business. Located along the Piscataqua River at 137 Market Street, the Portsmouth Coal Pockets was a wholesale dealer of Anthracite and Bituminous Coal, as well as lime, cement, plaster and steam-pressed sewer pipe. Soon after taking that job, he was appointed to a clerk position with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service in the Customs House in downtown Portsmouth. A few years later, in November 1905, he accepted a position with the Granite State Fire Insurance Company.

After coming to Portsmouth, Fred and Clara first lived in a nice apartment at 19 1/2 Richards Avenue. They then moved to 5 Summer Street, across Middle Street from where our Masonic Temple is today. It was there at her Summer Street home that Clara dealt with chronic issues associated with diabetes. Her

illness was being treated by Brother and Dr. A. J. Lance, MD (a member of St. John's Lodge) but sadly, she passed away on Tuesday evening, April 23, 1907 from a diabetic coma; she was 43 years old. She was buried with her daughter at Woodlawn Cemetery in Nashua.

Fred continued to work at the insurance company and in 1914, during World War I, he worked as an accountant at the Atlantic Corporation Ship Yard in Portsmouth. In 1921-22, he served as Portsmouth city auditor. He was a particularly pleasing personality, and was always willing to extend a helping hand to anyone in need. Through his personal and professional lives, he met many people with whom he enjoyed great friendships.

Throughout his entire life, Fred exhibited all of the qualities that are valued by Freemasons and in fact, he was welcomed as an Entered Apprentice on June 8, 1906 and Raised a Master Mason on August 3, 1906 in St. John's Lodge. He was very active in the Fraternity and immediately joined the officer corps of the Lodge. He made his way through the chairs and was elected 69th Worshipful Master of St. John's Lodge for the years 1912-13. He was prominent in other Masonic circles and took great interest in the work of the order. He was especially proficient in the work and rituals of the Fraternity and made an excellent presiding officer. He was active in the York Rite of Freemasonry, especially Washington Chapter, Royal Arch Masons and DeWitt Clinton Commandery, Knights Templar. In the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, he held the office of Thrice Potent Master of Ineffable Lodge of Perfection. In 1923, as a leader of Washington Chapter, the sponsoring body of Portsmouth Chapter, Order of DeMolay, he became a tireless worker on the DeMolay chapter's first Advisory Board serving with its chairman, James E. Whalley, and several other fine Masons, including: Scott Somerville (1), William B. Randall (1), Laurence G. Peyser (56), Harry H. Foote (1), Eldred Marshall (56), Horace W. Locklin (1), Fred H. Marden (56) and Sidney S. Trueman (56).

One day in late 1924, when he was 57 years old, Wor. Fred ate something for dinner that didn't agree with him, perhaps it was a piece of undercooked meat. He suffered a very bad case of what was then called 'ptomaine poisoning.'

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