

Brother Jeremiah Hill, First Master of Saco Lodge No. 9



By Carl J. Marsano, Secretary – Saco Lodge No. 9

The grave of our first master, RW Jeremiah Hill, is located in Woodlawn Cemetery, in Biddeford near the entrance by the Burger King, at the intersection of Alfred Road and US Route 1.

RW Jeremiah Hill was Master at Saco Lodge during the years 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805, 1806, 1809 and 1810.

Brother Jeremiah Hill served in Col. Edmund Phinney's 18th Continental Regiment in 1776. He served as Captain in the Fourth Company. He took part in the Battle of Saratoga. While recovering from smallpox in Boston, he was raised a master mason in St. Andrews Lodge in Boston on July 11, 1776. This lodge has as members such brethren as Paul Revere and John Hancock. After recovering, he moved back to the area, eventually moving to a home on Pierson Lane, in what is now Biddeford. He was one of the few townsfolk who had a college education, a Masters of Art from Harvard.

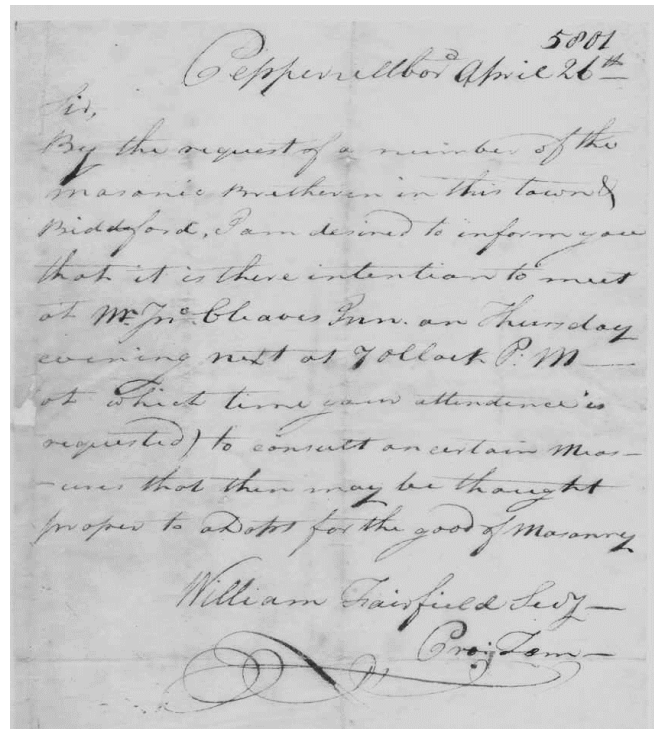
Name <i>Hill, Jeremiah</i>			
Residence	Occupation	Nativity <i>1747 Biddeford, Me.</i>	
Lodge <i>St. Andrews</i>	Initiated	Passed <i>1776-7-11</i>	Raised
Membership <i>1776-7-11</i>	Dim. Sus. Dis.	Reinstated	Deceased <i>1820-6-11 73 yrs. of age.</i>
<i>Charter</i> Remarks: <i>Member Saco #9, Saco, Me. 1st Master 1802-20. 1806; 1808</i> <i>Served as Deputy Sec. & Warden at Constitution of Oriental #13, Biddeford, Me. 1804-10-17</i> <i>" " D.D.G.M. at Constitution of Cumberland #12, New Gloucester, Me. 1805-9-27</i>			

Name <i>Hill, Jeremiah</i>		Official Record
Lodge No. <i>9 Saco</i>		
Initiated	Dimitred	<i>Official Record Hill 1802-3-4-5-6 + 9+10</i>
Passed	Suspended	
Raised	N. P. D. } Deprived } N. P. D. }	
Affiliated	Suspended	
Reinstated	U. M. C. } Expelled }	
Restored	Died	<i>June 11-1820 (Funeral the 13th) age 73</i>
Remarks <i>Charter member</i> <i>Justice of Court - Town Clerk of Biddeford</i> <i>Collector of Customs</i>		

Record of Jeremiah Hill from Grand Lodge of Massachusetts (left) and Grand Lodge of Maine (Right)

Jeremiah was the first Federal Collector of Customs for the District of Saco from 1789 to 1804, Town Clerk of Biddeford from 1780 to 1788, Representative in the Legislature in 1809, 1811, 1812 and 1813, and afterwards was one of the Justices of the Court of Sessions for this county before separation from Massachusetts. One unusual event happened to him in 1793, when his uncle, a deacon at the Pool Road Church formally charged him of heresy. The trial ended with him being exonerated.

A meeting was held on Thursday, April 30, 1801 at Mr. Cleaves Inn to discuss forming a Masonic Lodge in Pepperellboro (now Saco) which led to a petition requesting such a lodge. Bro. Jeremiah Hill was one of the attendees and original signers of the petition requesting a lodge be formed in Pepperellboro.



An invitation signed by Bro. William Fairfield for a meeting to discuss forming a lodge dated April 26, 1801 (from the Records of Saco Lodge)

On June 14, 1802, in answer to that petition the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts granted a Charter to "Saco Lodge. The petitioners were as follows: Jeremiah Hill, Joseph Leland, Thomas Cutts, Jr., William Fairfield, Asa Stevens, John Allen, Samuel Collyer, Richard C. Shannon, Nathaniel Scammon, Jr., Samuel Nutting, Jr., Micheal Nason, James Murch, Alvan Bacon, and William Marshall. The Charter was signed by Samuel Dunne, the Grand Master of that time.

At the first business meeting, RW Bro. Jeremiah was elected to serve as Saco Lodge's first Master and ended up serving seven times.

Twice while Master, he served as a Grand Lodge of Massachusetts representative for the Constitution of new lodges in what would become Maine, Oriental Lodge in Bridgton on 10/17/1804 and Cumberland Lodge in New Gloucester on 09/24/1805.

On October 3, 1805, Jeremiah Hill who had served as Master from the beginning of the lodge made an exceptionally fine speech in which he stated that he did not wish to continue as Master after that year. The speech is an excellent example of the Masonic thought and is interesting in regard to the thinking within the Fraternity at that time and shows how it has not changed all that much over the years. However, the lodge disregarded his desires and elected him again in 1806. Saco Lodge's first Past Master's jewel was given to R. W. Master, Jeremiah Hill at the expiration of his services on December 11, 1806.

RW Jeremiah Hill's Letter to Brethren in 1805

"Dearly beloved Brethren,

The attention you have paid to me ever since our first attempt to form a Lodge in this place, in repeatedly choosing me for your Master, demands my warmest acknowledgements. It has ever been my sincere desire to promote the Honor, Interest and prosperity of the Institution; but finding old age fast approaching and seeing so many young men embracing the Royal Art, whose abilities I flatter myself will do ample justice to this Lodge and the Craft in General. I feel warranted in manifesting my wish to be excused from the arduous Task of presiding over you another year, tho I ever did and hope I ever shall find a sincere pleasure in attending upon the Sacred, benevolent Institution, whose true and real Characteristic is "to deal justly, to love mercy and walk humbly with him, who first said, "Let there be Light and there was Light." How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who bringeth good tidings. But my Brethren, how much more beautiful are the feet of him who runneth to the assistance of the distressed, whose hands are calling for help. How beautiful are the Knees of a Brother bending to supreme Architect, imploring his kind mediation. How beautiful the Brest where the heart can deposit its Casket in perfect Security. How beautiful the Hand which backs a falling Brother, and the mouth which whispers in his Ear the Signals of Hope. Though I wish to be excused from presiding as Master of this Lodge, yet let it be remembered, that I do not relinquish my attachment to the Craft, and this Lodge in particular, but here I shall ever attend the regular meeting of the Lodge whenever my situation and circumstances will admit, and then if necessary be ready and willing to take an active part in the Labors thereof and now request when the Great Grand Master shall see fit to summon me from this earthly lodge, that you will, if my future conduct shall prove worthy of the Honor, accompany my Remains to the silent Grave, there to rest till, He shall summon his all perfect Lodge; and desire your prayers that I may so live, and so die, as to be hailed by him with this Euge: "well done good and faithful servant, enter in, and partake of that hidden manna, that Celestial Refreshment duly prepared for all those who are found in the way of well doing."

(Signed) Jeremiah Hill"

He would later serve as Master for two more terms in 1809 and 1810.

On June 13, 1820, the lodge attended the funeral of Brother Jeremiah Hill, who died on June 11, 1820 at the age of 73.

Bibliography

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