

From: Beth Melofchik <tankmadel@yahoo.com>
John Hurd <jhurd@town.arlington.ma.us>, Stephen DeCoursey <sdecoursey@town.arlington.ma.us>,
To: "ldiggins@town.arlington.ma.us" <ldiggins@town.arlington.ma.us>, "dmahon@town.arlington.ma.us"
<dmahon@town.arlington.ma.us>
Cc: Ashley Maher <amaher@town.arlington.ma.us>, Lauren Costa <lcosta@town.arlington.ma.us>
Date: 02/17/2021 10:02 AM
Subject: Prince Hall

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Arlington's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the REAL sender (whose email address in the From: line in "< >" brackets) and you know the content is safe.

John Hurd
Chair, Select Board, Arlington

Dear Mr. Hurd,

Attached please find from the Library of Congress a copy of A Charge delivered by Prince Hall on June 24, 1797 in Menotomy, this is an electronic copy of one of the original pamphlets. Also attached is a downloaded version from the website: Black Past, of the text of Prince Hall's address. The third attachment is from March 2021 Atlantic magazine, an article about Prince Hall by Harvard Prof. Danielle Allen.

I am proposing June 24 as Prince Hall Day. I came to this inspiration after reading his Charge delivered on June 24, 1797 in Menotomy. (One of Arlington's previous names.)

I was struck by how relevant his words are today to the Black Lives Matter movement and their human rights initiatives and specifically to Arlington. Too few of us are aware of the Prince Hall Cemetery in East Arlington and precious few are aware of Prince Hall and his contributions to the greater Boston civic life of the revolutionary era. Prince Hall was a visionary and civic leader of his day.

This is being shared with Arlington's Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Jillian Harvey.

I present the Draft Warrant article as a resolution before Town Meeting to declare June 24 Prince Hall Day.

In so doing I seek an opportunity around which the town may come together to celebrate this man, this towering figure of human rights of the revolutionary era. Prince Hall was a black man, an African American.

My intent is to highlight Prince Hall Cemetery in East Arlington and to raise consciousness among the Arlington community as to Prince Hall's significance to our community and to the history of the establishment of the 13 colonies and the battles of 1775 soon to be honored in 2025 for the 250 year anniversary of the birth of this experiment in democracy. A democracy as of yet imperfect and in need of care.

I am asking the Select Board to support the resolution for June 24 to be Prince Hall Day.

I urge the Select Board if it is within their purview, to declare June 24 Prince Hall Day.

I respectfully ask for your support.

Kind regards,
Beth Melofchik

14
C H A R G E,

DELIVERED TO THE

AFRICAN LODGE,

JUNE 24, 1797,

AT MENOTOMY.

BY THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL
PRINCE HALL.

Published by the Desire of the Members of said Lodge,

—1797.—



A

C H A R G E.

Beloved Brethren of the African Lodge,

TIS now five years since I deliver'd a Charge to you on some parts and points of Masonry. As one branch or superstructure on the foundation; when I endeavoured to shew you the duty of a Mason to a Mason, and charity or love to all mankind, as the mark and image of the great God, and the Father of the human race.

I shall now attempt to shew you, that it is our duty to sympathise with our fellow men under their troubles: the families of our brethren who are gone: we hope to the Grand Lodge above, here to return no more. But the cheerfulness that you have ever had to relieve them, and ease their burdens, under their sorrows, will never be forgotten by them; and in this manner you will never be weary in doing good.

But

But my brethren, although we are to begin here, we must not end here ; for only look around you and you will see and hear of numbers of our fellow men crying out with holy Job, Have pity on me, O my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me. And this is not to be confined to parties or colours ; not to towns or states ; not to a kingdom, but to the kingdoms of the whole earth, over whom Christ the king is head and grand master.

Among these numerous sons and daughters of distress, I shall begin with our friends and brethren ; and first, let us see them dragg'd from their native country, by the iron hand of tyranny and oppression, from their dear friends and connections, with weeping eyes and aching hearts, to a strange land and strange people, whose tender mercies are cruel ; and there to bear the iron yoke of slavery & cruelty till death as a friend shall relieve them. And must not the unhappy condition of these our fellow men draw forth our hearty prayer and wishes for their deliverance from these merchants and traders, whose characters you have in the xviii chap. of the Revelations, 11, 12, & 13 verses,

verses, and who knows but these same sort of traders may in a short time, in the like manner, bewail the loss of the African traffick, to their shame and confusion : and if I mistake not, it now begins to dawn in some of the West-India islands ; which puts me in mind of a nation (that I have somewhere read of) called Ethiopians, that cannot change their skin : But God can and will change their conditions, and their hearts too ; and let Boston and the world know, that He hath no respect of persons ; and that that bulwark of envy, pride, scorn and contempt ; which is so visible to be seen in some and felt, shall fall, to rise no more.

When we hear of the bloody wars which are now in the world, and thousands of our fellow men slain ; fathers and mothers bewailing the loss of their sons ; wives for the loss of their husbands ; towns and cities burnt and destroy'd ; what must be the heart-felt sorrow and distress of these poor and unhappy people ! Though we cannot help them, the distance being so great, yet we may sympathize with them in their troubles, and mingle a tear of sorrow with them, and do as we are exhorted to—weep with those that weep. Thus

Thus my brethren we see what a chequered world we live in. Sometimes happy in having our wives and children like olive-branches about our tables ; receiving the bounties of our great Benefactor. The next year, or month, or week, we may be deprived of some of them, and we go mourning about the streets : so in societies ; we are this day to celebrate this Feast of St. John's, and the next week we might be called upon to attend a funeral of some one here, as we have experienced since our last in this Lodge. So in the common affairs of life we sometimes enjoy health and prosperity ; at another time sickness and adversity, crosses and disappointments.

So in states and kingdoms ; sometimes in tranquility ; then wars and tumults ; rich to day, and poor to-morrow ; which shews that there is not an independent mortal on earth ; but dependent one upon the other, from the king to the beggar.

The great law-giver, Moses, who instructed by his father-in-law, Jethro, an Ethiopian, how to regulate his courts of justice, and what sort of men to choose for the different offices ; hear now my words,
said

said he, I will give you counsel, and God shall be with you ; be thou for the people to Godward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God, and thou shall teach them ordinances and laws, and shall shew the way wherein they must walk ; and the work that they must do ; moreover thou shall provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, of hundreds and of tens.

So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he said.—
Exodus xviii, 22—24.

This is the first and grandest lecture that Moses ever received from the mouth of man ; for Jethro understood geometry as well as laws, *that* a Mason may plainly see ; so a little captive servant maid by whose advice Nomen, the great general of Syria's army was healed of his leprosy ; and by a servant his proud spirit was brought down ; 2 Kings, v. 3—14. The feelings of this little captive, for this great man, her captor, was so great, that she forgot her state of captivity, and felt for the distress of her enemy. Would to God (said she to her mistress)

mistress) my lord were with the prophets in Samaria, he should be healed of his leprosy : So after he went to the prophet, his proud host was so haughty that he not only disdain'd the prophet's direction, but derided the good old prophet ; and had it not been for his servant, he would have gone to his grave, with a double leprosy, the outward and the inward, in the heart, which is the worst of leprosy ; a black heart is worse than a white leprosy.

How unlike was this great general's behaviour to that of as grand a character, and as well beloved by his prince as he was ; I mean Obadiah, to a like prophet. See for this 1st Kings, xviii. from 7 to the 16th.

And as Obadiah was in the way, behold Elijah met him, and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art not thou, my Lord, Elijah, and he told him, Yea, go and tell thy Lord, behold Elijah is here : and so on to the 16th verse. Thus we see, that great and good men have, and always will have, a respect for ministers and servants of God. Another instance of this is in Acts viii. 27 to 31, of the European Eunuch, a man of great authority, to Philip, the apostle,

apostle : here is mutual love and friendship between them. This minister of Jesus Christ did not think himself too good to receive the hand, and ride in a chariot with a black man in the face of day ; neither did this great monarch (for so he was) think it beneath him to take a poor servant of the Lord by the hand, and invite him into his carriage, though but with a staff, one coat and no money in his pocket. So our Grand Master, Solomon, was not ashamed to take the Queen of Sheba by the hand, and lead her into his court, at the hour of high twelve, and there converse with her on points of masonry (for if ever there was a female mason in the world she was one) and other curious matters ; and gratified her, by shewing her all his riches and curious pieces of architecture in the temple, and in his house : After some time staying with her, he loaded her with much rich presents : he gave her the right hand of affection and parted in love.

I hope that no one will dare openly (tho' in fact the behaviour of some imple: as much) to say, as our Lord said on another occasion. Behold a greater than Solomon is here. But yet let them consider that our Grand Master Solomon did not divide the living child, whatever he might do with the dead one, neither did he pretend to make a law, to forbid the parties

from having free intercourse with one another without the fear of censure, or be turned out of the synagogue.

Now my brethren, as we see and experience, that all things here are frail and changeable and nothing here to be depended upon : Let us seek those things which are above, which are sure and stedfast, and unchangeable, and at the same time let us pray to Almighty God, while we remain in the tabernacle, that he would give us the grace of patience and strength to bear up under all our troubles, which at this day God knows we have our share. Patience I say, for were we not possess'd of a great measure of it you could not bear up under the daily insults you meet with in the streets of Boston ; much more on public days of recreation, how are you shamefully abus'd, and that at such a degree, that you may truly be said to carry your lives in your hands ; and the arrows of death are flying about your heads ; helpless old women have their clothes torn off their backs, even to the exposing of their nakedness ; and by whom are these disgraceful and abusive actions committed, not by the men born and bred in Boston, for they are better bred ; but by a mob or horde of shameless, low-lived, envious, spiteful persons, some of them not long since, servants in gentlemen's kitchings, scouring knives, tending horses, and driving chaise.

chaise. 'Twas said by a gentleman who saw that filthy behaviour in the common, that in all the places he had been in, he never saw so cruel behaviour in all his life, and that a slave in the West-Indies, on Sunday or holidays enjoys himself and friends without any molestation. Not only this man, but many in town who hath seen their behaviour to you, and that without any provocations, twenty or thirty cowards fall upon one man, have wonder'd at the patience of the Blacks: 'tis not for want of courage in you, for they know that they dare not face you man for man, but in a mob, which we despise, and had rather suffer wrong than to do wrong, to the disturbance of the community and the disgrace of our reputation: for every good citizen doth honor to the laws of the State where he resides.

My brethren, let us not be cast down under these and many other abuses we at present labour under: for the darkest is before the break of day: My brethren, let us remember what a dark day it was with our African brethren six years ago, in the French West-Indies. Nothing but the snap of the whip was heard from morning to evening; hanging, broken on the wheel, burning, and all manner of tortures inflicted on those unhappy people, for nothing else but to gratify their masters pride, wantonness and cruelty: but blessed be God,
scene

the scene is changed ; they now confess that God hath no respect of persons, and therefore receive them as their friends, and treat them as brothers. Thus doth Ethiopia begin to stretch forth her hand, from a sink of slavery to freedom and equality.

Although you are deprived of the means of education ; yet you are not deprived of the means of meditation ; by which I mean thinking, hearing and weighing matters, men and things in your own mind, and making that judgment of them as you think reasonable to satisfy your minds and give an answer to those who may ask you a question. This nature hath furnished you with, without letter learning ; and some have made great progress therein, some of those I have heard repeat psalms and hymns, and a great part of a sermon, only by hearing it read or preached and why not in other things in nature : how many of this class of our brethren that follow the seas ; can foretell a storm some days before it comes ; whether it will be a heavy or light, a long or short one ; foretell a hurricane whether it will be destructive or moderate ; without any other means than observation and consideration.

So in the observation of the heavenly bodies, this same class without a telescope or other apparatus have through a smoak'd glass observed the eclipse of the sun : One being ask'd what
he

he saw through his smoaked glafs? said, Saw, saw, de clipsey, or de clipseys;—and what do you think of it?—stop, dere be two;—right, and what do they look like?—Look like, why if I tell you, they look like two ships sailing one bigger than tother; so they sail by one another, and make no noise. As simple as the answers are they have a meaning, and shew, that God can out of the mouth of babes and Africans shew forth his glory; let us then love and adore him as the God who defends us and supports us and will support us under our pressures, let them be ever so heavy and pressing. Let us by the blessing of God, in whatsoever state we are, or may be in, to be content; for clouds and darkness are about him; but justice and truth is his habitation; who hath said, Vengeance is mine and I will repay it, therefore let us kiss the rod and be still, and see the works of the Lord.

Another thing I would warn you against, is the slavish fear of man, which bringest a snare, saith Solomon. This passion of fear, like pride and envy, hath slain its thousands.—What but this makes so many perjure themselves; for fear of offending them at home they are a little depending on, for some trifles: A man that is under a panic of fear, is affraid to be alone; you cannot hear of a robbery or house broke open or set on fire, but he hath an accomplice

accomplice with him, who must share the spoil with him; whereas if he was truly bold, and void of fear, he would keep the whole plunder to himself: so when either of them is detected and not the other, he may be call'd to oath to keep it secret, but through fear, (and that passion is so strong) he will not confess, till the fatal cord is put on his neck; then death will deliver him from the fear of man, and he will confess the truth when it will not be of any good to himself or the community: nor is this passion of fear only to be found in this class of men, but among the great.

What was the reason that our African kings and princes have plunged themselves and their peaceable kingdoms into bloody wars, to the destroying of towns and kingdoms, but the fear of the report of a great gun or the glittering of arms and swords, which struck these kings near the seaports with such a panic of fear, as not only to destroy the peace and happiness of their inland brethren, but plung'd millions of their fellow countrymen into slavery and cruel bondage.

So in other countries; see Felix trembling on his throne. How many Emperors and kings have left their kingdoms and best friends, at the sight of a handful of men in arms: how many have we seen that have left their estates and their friends and ran over to the stronger side as they thought:

thought : all through the fear of men ; who is but a worm, and hath no more power to hurt his fellow worm, without the permission of God, than a real worm.

Thus we see my brethren, what a miserable condition it is to be under the slavish fear of men ; it is of such a destructive nature to mankind, that the scriptures every where, from Genesis to the Revelations warns us against it ; and even our blessed Saviour himself forbids us from this slavish fear of man, in his sermon on the mount ; and the only way to avoid it is to be in the fear of God : let a man consider the greatness of his power, as the maker and upholder of all things here below, and that in Him we live, and move, and have our being, the giver of the mercies we enjoy here from day to day, and that our lives are in his hands, and that he made the heavens, the sun, moon and stars to move in their various orders ; let us thus view the greatness of God, and then turn our eyes on mortal man, a worm, a shade, a wafer, and see whether he is an object of fear or not ; on the contrary, you will think him in his best estate, to be but vanity, feeble and a dependent mortal, and stands in need of your help, and cannot do without your assistance, in some way or other ; and yet some of these poor mortals will try to make you believe they are Gods, but worship them not. My brethren

then let us pay all due respect to all whom God hath put in places of honor over us : do justly and be faithful to them that hire you, and treat them with that respect they may deserve ; but worship no man. Worship God, this much is your duty as christians and as masons.

We see then how becoming and necessary it is to have a fellow feeling for our distress'd brethren of the human race, in their troubles, both spiritual and temporal — How refreshing it is to a sick man, to see his sympathising friends around his bed, ready to administer all the relief in their power ; although they can't relieve his bodily pain yet they may ease his mind, by good instructions and cheer his heart by their company.

How doth it cheer up the heart of a man when his house is on fire, to see a number of friends coming to his relief ; he is so transported that he almost forgets his loss and his danger, and fills him with love and gratitude ; and their joys and sorrows are mutual.

So a man wreck'd at sea, how must it revive his drooping heart to see a ship bearing down for his relief.

How doth it rejoice the heart of a stranger in a strange land to see the people cheerful and pleasant and are ready to help him.

How

How did it, think you, cheer the heart of those our poor unhappy African brethren, to see a ship commissioned from God, and from a nation that without flattery saith, that all men are free and are brethren ; I say to see them in an instant deliver such a number from their cruel bolts and galling chains, and to be fed like men, and treated like brethren. Where is the man that has the least spark of humanity, that will not rejoice with them ; and bless a righteous God who knows how and when to relieve the oppressed, as we see he did in the deliverance of the captives among the Algerines ; how sudden were they delivered by the sympathising members of the Congress of the United States, who now enjoy the free air of peace and liberty, to their great joy and surprize, to them and their friends. Here we see the hand of God in various ways, bringing about his own glory for the good of mankind, by the mutual help of their fellow men ; which ought to teach us in all our straits, be they what they may, to put our trust in Him, firmly believing, that he is able and will deliver us and defend us against all our enemies ; and that no weapon form'd against us shall prosper ; only let us be steady and uniform in our walks, speech and behaviour ; always doing to all men as we wish and desire they would do to us in the like cases and circumstances.

Live

Live and act as Masons, that you may die as Masons ; let those despisers see, altho' many of us cannot read, yet by our searches and researches into men and things, we have supplied that defect, and if they will let us we shall call ourselves a charter'd lodge, of just and lawful Masons ; be always ready to give an answer to those that ask you a question ; give the right hand of affection and fellowship to whom it justly belongs let their colour and complexion be what it will : let their nation be what it may, for they are your brethren, and it is your indispensable duty so to do ; let them as Masons deny this, and we & the world know what to think of them be they ever so grand: for we know this was Solomon's creed, Solomon's creed did I say, it is the decree of the Almighty, and all Masons have learnt it : plain market language and plain and true facts need no apologies.

I shall now conclude with an old poem which I found among some papers :—

Let blind admirers handsome faces praise,
 And graceful features to great honor raise,
 The glories of the red and white express,
 I know no beauty but in holiness ;
 If God of beauty be the uncreate
 Perfect idea, in this lower state,
 The greatest beauties of an human mould
 Who most resemble Him we justly hold ;
 Whom we resemble not in flesh and blood,
 But being pure and holy, just and good :
 May such a beauty fall but to my share,
 For curious shape or face I'll never care.



(1797) Prince Hall Speaks To The African Lodge, Cambridge, Massachusetts

(<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/1797-prince-hall-speaks-african-lodge-cambridge-massachusetts/>)



Five years after his presentation at Charles Town, Prince Hall again addresses his fellow Masons. In an address delivered to the African Lodge at West Cambridge, Massachusetts on June 24, 1797, Hall challenges those Masons to work for the elimination of slavery and the establishment of full civil rights for African Americans while identifying with the common humanity and desire of all Americans for liberty. The address appears below:

Beloved Brethren of the African Lodge:

It is now five years since I delivered a charge to you on some parts and points of masonry. As one branch or superstructure of the foundation, I endeavored to show you the duty of a mason to a mason, and of charity and love to all mankind, as the work and image of the great God and the Father of the human race. I shall now attempt to show you that it is our duty to sympathise with our fellow-men under their troubles, and with the families of our brethren who are gone, we hope, to the Grand Lodge above.

We are to have sympathy, but this, after all, is not to be confined to parties or colors, nor to towns or states, nor to a kingdom, but to the kingdoms of the whole earth, over whom Christ the King is head and grand master for all in distress.

Among these numerous sons and daughters of distress, let us see our friends and brethren; and first let us see them dragged from their native country, by the iron hand of tyranny and oppression, from their dear friends and connections, with weeping eyes and aching hearts, to a strange land, and among a strange people, whose tender mercies are cruel,—and there to bear the iron yoke of slavery and cruelty, till death, as a friend, shall relieve them. And must not the unhappy condition of these, our fellow-men, draw forth our hearty prayers and wishes for their deliverance from those merchants and traders, whose characters you have described in Revelation xviii. 11-13? And who knows but these same sort of traders may, in a short time, in like manner bewail the loss of the African traffic, to their shame and confusion? The day dawns now in some of the West India Islands. God can and will change their condition and their hearts, too, and let Boston and the world know that He hath no respect of persons, and that bulwark of envy, pride, scorn and contempt, which is so visible in some, shall fall.

Now, my brethren, nothing is stable; all things are changeable. Let us seek those things which are sure and steadfast, and let us pray God that, while we remain here, he would give us the grace of patience, and strength to bear up under all our troubles, which, at this day, God knows, we have our share of. Patience, I say; for were we not possessed of a great measure of it, we could not bear up under the daily insults we meet with in the streets of Boston, much more on public days of recreation. How, at such times, are we shamefully abused, and that to such a degree, that we may truly be said to carry our lives in our hands, and the arrows of death are flying about our heads.

My brethren, let us not be cast down under these and many other abuses we at present are laboring under,—for the darkest hour is just before the break of day. My brethren, let us

remember what a dark day it was with our African brethren, six years ago, in the French West Indies. Nothing but the snap of the whip was heard, from morning to evening. Hanging, breaking on the wheel, burning, and all manner of tortures, were inflicted on those unhappy people. But, blessed be God, the scene is changed. They now confess that God hath no respect of persons, and therefore, receive them as their friends, and treat them as brothers. Thus doth Ethiopia stretch forth her hand from slavery, to freedom and equality.

A Forgotten Black Founding Father

Why I've made it my mission to teach others about Prince Hall [Danielle Allen](#) [ATLANTICMarch 2021 Issue](#)

Massachusetts abolished enslavement before the Treaty of Paris brought an end to the American Revolution, in 1783. The state constitution, adopted in 1780 and drafted by John Adams, follows the Declaration of Independence in proclaiming that all “men are born free and equal.” In this statement Adams followed not only the Declaration but also a 1764 pamphlet by the Boston lawyer James Otis, who theorized about and popularized the familiar idea of “no taxation without representation” and also unequivocally asserted human equality. “The Colonists,” [he wrote](#), “are by the law of nature free born, as indeed all men are, white or black.” In 1783, on the basis of the “free and equal” clause in the 1780 Massachusetts Constitution, the state’s chief justice, William Cushing, ruled enslavement unconstitutional in a case that one Quock Walker had brought against his enslaver, Nathaniel Jennison.

Many of us who live in Massachusetts know the basic outlines of this story and the early role the state played in standing against enslavement. But told in this traditional way, the story leaves out another transformative figure: Prince Hall, a free African American and a contemporary of John Adams. From his formal acquisition of freedom, in 1770, until his death, in 1807, Hall helped forge an activist Black community in Boston while elevating the cause of abolition to new prominence. Hall was the first American to publicly use the language of the Declaration of Independence for a political purpose other than justifying war against Britain. In January 1777, just six months after the promulgation of the Declaration and nearly three years before Adams drafted the state constitution, [Hall submitted a petition to the Massachusetts legislature](#) (or General Court, as it is styled) requesting emancipation, invoking the resonant phrases and founding truths of the Declaration itself.

Here is what he wrote (I've put the echoes of the Declaration of Independence in italics):

The petition of A Great Number of Blackes detained in a State of Slavery in the Bowels of a free & christian Country Humbly shuwith that your Petitioners Apprehend that They have in Common with all other men a *Natural and Unaliable Right to that freedom which the Grat — Parent of the Unavese hath Bestowed equalley on all menkind* and which they have Never forfeuted by Any Compact or Agreement whatever — but thay wher Unjustly Dragged by the hand of cruel Power from their Derest frinds and sum of them Even torn from the Embraces of their tender Parents — from A popolous Plasant And plentiful cuntry And in Violation of *Laws of Nature and off Nations* And in defiance of all the tender feelings of humanity Brough hear Either to Be sold Like Beast of Burthen & Like them Condemnd to Slavery for Life.

In this passage, Hall invokes the core concepts of social-contract theory, which grounded the American Revolution, to argue for an extension of the claim to equal rights to those who were

enslaved. He acknowledged and adopted the intellectual framework of the new political arrangements, but also pointedly called out the original sin of enslavement itself.

Hall's memory was vigorously kept alive by members and archivists of the Masonic lodge he founded, and his name can be found in historical references. But his life has attracted fresh attention in recent years from scholars and community leaders, both because he deserves to be widely known and celebrated and because inserting his story into the tale of the country's founding exemplifies the promise of an integrated way of studying and teaching history. It's hard enough to shine new light on an African American figure who has been long in the shadows, one who in important ways should be considered an American Founder. It can prove far more difficult to trace an individual's "relationship tree" and come to understand that person, in a granular and even cinematic way, in the full context of his or her own society: family, school, church, civic organizations, commerce, government. Doing so—especially for figures and communities that have been overlooked—gives us a chance to tell a whole story, to weave together multiple perspectives on the events of our political founding into a single, joined tale. It also provides an opportunity to draw out and emphasize the agency of people who experienced oppression and domination. In the case of Prince Hall, the process of historical reconstruction is still under way.

When I was a girl, I used to ask what there was to know about the experience of being enslaved—and was told by kind and well-meaning teachers that, sadly, the lack of records made the question impossible to answer. In fact, the records were there; we just hadn't found them yet. Historical evidence often turns up only when one starts to look for it. And history won't answer questions until one thinks to ask them.

John Adams and Prince Hall would have passed each other on the streets of Boston. They almost certainly were aware of each other. Hall was no minor figure, though his early days and family life are shrouded in some mystery. Probably he was born in Boston in 1735 (not in England or Barbados, as some have suggested). It is possible that he lived for a period as a freeman before he was formally emancipated. He may have been one of the thousands of African Americans who fought in the Continental Army; his son, Primus, certainly was. As a freeman, Hall became for a time a leatherworker, passed through a period of poverty, and then ultimately ran a shop, from which he sold, among other things, his own writings advocating for African American causes. Probably he was not married to every one of the five women in Boston who were married to someone named Prince Hall in the years between 1763 and 1804, but he may have been. Whether he was married to Primus's mother, a woman named Delia, is also unclear. Between 1780 and 1801, the city's tax collectors found their way to some 1,184 different Black taxpayers. Prince Hall and his son appear in those tax records for 15 of those 21 years, giving them the longest period of recorded residence in the city of any Black person we know about in that era. [The DePaul University historian Chernoh M. Sesay Jr.](#)'s excellent dissertation, completed in 2006, provides the most thorough and rigorously analyzed academic review of Hall's biography that is currently available. (The dissertation, which I have drawn on here, has not yet been published in full, but I hope it will be.)

Hall was a relentless petitioner, undaunted by setbacks. When Hall submitted his 1777 petition, co-signed by seven other free Black men, to the Massachusetts legislature, he was building on the efforts of other African Americans in the state to abolish enslavement. In 1773 and 1774, African Americans from Bristol and Worcester Counties as well as Boston and its neighboring towns put forward six known petitions and likely more to this end. Hall led the formation of the first Black Masonic lodge in the Americas, and possibly in the world. The purpose of forming the lodge was to provide mutual aid and support and to create an infrastructure for advocacy. Fourteen men joined Hall's lodge almost surely in 1775, and in the years from then until 1784, records reveal that 51 Black men participated in the lodge. Through the lodge's history, one can trace a fascinating story of the life of Boston's free Black community in the final decades of the 18th century.

Why did Hall [choose Freemasonry as one of his life's passions](#)? Alonza Tehuti Evans, a former historian and archivist of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia, [took up that question in a 2017 lecture](#). Hall and his fellow lodge members, he explained, recognized that many of the influential people in Boston—and throughout the colonies—were deeply involved in Freemasonry. George Washington is a prominent example, and symbolism that resonates with Masonic meaning adorns the \$1 bill to this day. Hall saw entrance into Freemasonry as a pathway to securing influence and a network of supporters. Hall submitted a petition to the Massachusetts legislature requesting emancipation, invoking the resonant phrases and founding truths of the Declaration of Independence.

In a world without stable passports or identification documents, participation in the order could provide proof of status as a free person. It offered both leverage and legitimacy—as when Prince Hall and members of his lodge, in 1786, offered to raise troops to support the commonwealth in putting down Shays's Rebellion.

In the winter and spring of 1788, Hall was leading a charge in Boston against enslavers who made a practice of using deception or other means to kidnap free Black people, take them shipboard, and remove them to distant locations, where they would be sold into enslavement. He submitted a petition to the Massachusetts legislature seeking aid—asking legislators to “do us that justice that our present condition requires”—and publicized his petition in newspapers in Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania, and Vermont.

In the summer of that year, a newspaper circulated an extract of a letter from a prominent white Bostonian who had assisted Hall on this very matter. The unnamed author of the letter reports that he had been visited by a group of free Black men who had been kidnapped in Boston and had recently been emancipated and returned to the city. They were escorted to his house by Hall, and they told the story of their emancipation. One of the men who had been kidnapped was a member of Hall's Masonic lodge. Carried off to the Caribbean and put on the auction block, the kidnapped men found that the merchant to whom they were being offered was himself a Mason. Mutual recognition of a shared participation in Freemasonry put an end to the transaction and gave them the chance to recover their freedom.

Prince Hall's work on abolition and its enforcement was just the beginning of a lifetime of [advocacy](#). Disillusioned by how hard it was to secure equal rights for free Black men and women in Boston, he submitted a petition to the Massachusetts legislature seeking funds to assist him and other free Blacks in emigrating to Africa. That same year, he also turned his energies to advocating for resources for public education. Through it all, his Masonic membership proved both instrumental and spiritually valuable.

Founding the lodge had not been easy. Although Hall and his fellows were most likely inducted into Freemasonry in 1775, they were never able to secure a formal charter for their lodge from the other lodges in Massachusetts: Prejudice ran strong. Hall and his fellows had in fact probably been inducted by members of an Irish military lodge, planted in Boston with the British army, who had proved willing to introduce them to the mysteries of the order. Hall's lodge functioned as an unofficial Masonic society—African Lodge No. 1—but received a formal charter only after a request was sent to England for a warrant. The granting of a charter by the Grand Lodge of England finally arrived in 1787.

In seeking this charter, Hall had written to Masons in England, lamenting that lodges in Boston had not permitted him and his fellows a full charter but had granted a permit only to “walk on St John's Day and Bury our dead in form which we now enjoy.” Hall wanted full privileges, not momentary sufferance. In this small detail, though, we gain a window into just how important even the first steps toward Masonic privileges were. In the years before 1783 and full abolition of enslavement in Massachusetts, Black people in the state were subjected to intensive surveillance and policing, as enslavers sought to keep their human property from slipping away into the world of free Blacks. Membership in the Masons was like a hall pass—an opportunity to have a parade as a community, to come out and step high, without harassment. That's what it meant to walk on Saint John's Day—June 24—and to hold funeral parades for the dead.

Whether that stepping-out day remained June 24 is unclear. As Sesay writes, “Boston blacks, including Prince Hall, first applied to use Faneuil Hall in 1789 to hear an ‘African preacher.’ On February 25, 1789, the Selectmen accepted the application of blacks to use Faneuil Hall for ‘public worship.’” By 1820, the walk on Saint John's Day appears to have become African Independence Day and was celebrated on July 14, Bastille Day, much to the displeasure of at least one newspaper. An unattributed column in the *New-England Galaxy and Masonic Magazine* complained about the annual parade in recognizably racist tones (the mention of “Wilberforce” at the end is a reference to William Wilberforce, the British campaigner against enslavement):

This is the day on which, for unaccountable reasons or for no reasons at all, the Selectmen of Boston, permit the town to be annually disturbed by a mob of negroes ... The streets through which this sable procession passes are a scene of noise and confusion, and always will be as long as the thing is tolerated. Quietness and order can hardly be expected, when five or six hundred negroes, with a band of music, pikes, swords, epaulettes, sashes, cocked hats, and standards, are marching through the principal streets. To crown this scene of farce and mummery, a clergyman is mounted in their pulpit to harangue them on the blessings of

independence, and to hold up for their admiration the characters of “Masser Willberforce and Prince Hall.”

Well after Hall’s death, the days for stepping out continued in Boston—an expression of freedom and the claiming of a rightful place in the polity. The lodge that Hall founded continued too. It is the oldest continuously active African American association in the U.S., with chapters now spread around the country. Its work in support of public education has endured. In the 20th century the Prince Hall Freemasons made significant contributions to the NAACP, in many places hosting the first branches of the organization. In the 1950s alone, the group donated more than \$400,000 to the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (equivalent to millions of dollars today). Thurgood Marshall was a member.

For all of what we now know to be Prince Hall’s importance, I learned of him only recently. [In 2015 the National Archives held a conference](#) about the Declaration of Independence, inspired by [my own research on the document](#). At the conference, another colleague presented a paper on how abolitionists had been the first people to make use of the Declaration [for political projects other than the Revolution itself](#). A few months earlier I had come across the passage from Hall’s 1777 petition that I shared above, and that so beautifully resonates with the Declaration; at that conference, I suddenly learned the important political context in which it fit. I had published a book on the Declaration of Independence—*Our Declaration*—in 2014, but until the spring of 2015, I had never heard of Hall.

Yet I have been studying African American history since childhood. When I was in high school, my school didn’t do anything to celebrate Black History Month. My father encouraged me to take matters into my own hands and propose to the school that I might curate a weekly exhibit on one of the school’s bulletin boards. The school was obliging. It offered me the one available bulletin board—in a dark corner in the farthest remove of the school’s quads. This was not the result of malice, just of a lack of attention to the stakes. But I was glad to have access to that bulletin board, and I dutifully filled it with pictures of people like Carter G. Woodson and Mary McLeod Bethune and Thurgood Marshall, and with excerpts from their writings.

I am deeply aware of how much historical treasure about Black America is hidden, and have been actively trying to seek it out. While I was on the faculty of the University of Chicago, I helped found the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, a network of archival organizations in Chicago dedicated to connecting “all who seek to document, share, understand and preserve Black experiences.” And while I was at Chicago—somewhat in the spirit of that old bulletin board—I curated an exhibit for the special-collections department of the campus library on the [45 African Americans who’d earned a doctorate](#) at the university prior to 1940—the largest number of doctorates awarded to African Americans up to that time by any institution in the world. Even so, I had not known about Prince Hall.

Having discovered Hall at the ridiculous age of 43, I have since made it a mission to teach others about him. At Harvard’s Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics, we have undertaken a major initiative to develop civic-education curricula and resources. Among the largest projects is a year-long eighth-grade course called “Civic Engagement in Our Democracy.” One of the units in

that course is centered on Hall's life. Through him and his exploration of the meaning of social contracts and natural rights, and of opportunity and equality, we teach the philosophical foundations of democracy, reaching through Hall to texts that he also drew on, and whose authors are required reading for eighth graders in Massachusetts—for instance, Aristotle, Locke, and Montesquieu. These writers and thinkers were important figures to Freemasons in Hall's time.

Too much treasure remains buried, living mainly in oral histories, not yet integrated into our full shared history of record. That history can strike home in unexpected ways. Not long ago, I was talking with my father about Prince Hall and the curriculum we were developing. His ears pricked up. Only then did I learn that my grandfather, too, had been a member of the Prince Hall Freemasons.

This article appears in the March 2021 print edition with the headline "A Forgotten Founder."

[Danielle Allen](#) is a political philosopher and the James Bryant Conant University Professor at Harvard. She is the author of [Talking to Strangers](#), [Our Declaration](#), and [Cuz](#).

From: Alan Jones <jones@carr-jones.com>
To: Ashley Maher <AMaher@town.arlington.ma.us>
Date: 02/16/2021 07:08 PM
Subject: FW: Prince Hall Day

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Arlington's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the REAL sender (whose email address in the From: line in "< >" brackets) and you know the content is safe.

From: bwedlock@verizon.net <bwedlock@verizon.net>
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 5:29 PM
To: mkrepelka@town.arlington.ma.us
Subject: Prince Hall Day

Arlington Select Board;

I strongly support making June 24 Prince Hall Day. As a member of Mystic Valley Lodge, AF&AM, I have attended the Memorial Day ceremonies by the Prince Hall Grand Lodge at their cemetery in Gardner Street on a number of occasions. Clearly Prince Hall was an important part of Arlington's black history and their Grand Lodge has roots in Arlington..

This would be a positive contribution to Black History Month,

Bruce Wedlock



Virus-free. www.avg.com

From: betty trembly <edandbetty86@yahoo.com>
To: "amaher@town.arlington.ma.us" <amaher@town.arlington.ma.us>
Date: 02/16/2021 10:29 AM
Subject: Beth Melofchik's resolution

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Arlington's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the REAL sender (whose email address in the From: line in "< >" brackets) and you know the content is safe.

Hi Ashley

Could you please pass this note along to the Selectboard at the appropriate time?

I would like to support Beth Melofchik's effort to declare June 24th, Prince Hall Day. Since Arlington is a central part of the Cradle of Liberty, I think it's quite appropriate to also acknowledge Prince Hall's efforts to provide liberty for all, regardless of race. I made it 64 years in Arlington with no awareness of Prince Hall. Declaring June 24th Prince Hall Day is a good way to start creating the awareness he deserves.

Thank you
Ed Trembly

From: Worshipful Master <pequossettelodge@gmail.com>
To: mkrepelka@town.arlington.ma.us
Date: 02/16/2021 10:40 AM
Subject: Article 89 Resolution/Prince Hall Day

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Arlington's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the REAL sender (whose email address in the From: line in "< >" brackets) and you know the content is safe.

Good Morning Ms Krepelka,

My name is Arthur D'Amico and I am the Worshipful Master of Pequossette Lodge. My lodge meets locally in Arlington, at the Masonic Temple on Academy Street. I would like to join my voice with those of my fellow Freemasons in support of Article 89. Prince Hall was a true revolutionary. His support in the Abolitionist movement, as well as in education reform for African-Americans have helped to guide our country to where we are today.

As a Freemason, Hall promoted the ideas of equality and freedom for all. It would be a great tribute to him, and to African-Americans in Arlington and the surrounding communities if we could all lend our support to this Article.

My sincere thanks for your time and consideration,
Arthur D'Amico

Dear Ms. Krepelka:

Just a note to inform you that I support the resolution to declare June 24 as Prince Hall Day.

Regards,

Kamel



Kamel Oussayef, 33°, MSA, DSA, BF

Research Consultant,

The Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library

33 Marrett Road

Lexington, MA 02421

(617) 680-1722

My latest books: "The Spirit of Freemasonry", "The book of Wisdom",
and "Saint Edouard, a 1748 Masonic Lodge during the French Enlightenment".

To Arlington's Select Board,

I'm writing to support the resolution to the 2021 Town Meeting to declare June 24 as Prince Hall Day in Arlington, submitted by Beth Melofchik and ten registered voters. As you know, Arlington has a connection with Prince Hall, both through the powerful speech he gave in his Masonic Lodge or in Menotomy, and the cemetery on Gardner St bearing his name.

Because Prince Hall was a prominent Freemason in his time and celebrated to this day, The Masons of Arlington would be pleased to participate in any annual event or celebration, including allowing use of our building, logistical support with publicity, refreshments, etc., and sponsorship. We would like to have members of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge and African Lodge #1. I was also on the team which created the Prince Hall Monument in Cambridge Common in 2010, and could invite the historians and others on the team.

Sincerely,

Alan Jones, Precinct 14

=====
RW Alan H. Jones
Past District Deputy Grand Master
Third Masonic District
Grand Lodge of Massachusetts

From: Edward Kazanjian <eakazanjian@gmail.com>
To: mkrepelka@town.arlington.ma.us
Date: 02/16/2021 01:29 PM
Subject: Prince Hall Day

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Arlington's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the REAL sender (whose email address in the From: line in "< >" brackets) and you know the content is safe.

Dear Ms. Krepelja,

Please accept this email in support of establishing an annual Prince Hall Day. His is an exceptional story with ties to Arlington.

I am a member of the Masonic Fraternity, namely Boston University Lodge, which is relocating our meeting location to the Masonic Temple in Arlington.

Thank you for your support.

Edward A Kazanjian

--

Edward A Kazanjian
eakazanjian@gmail.com

From: Rebecca Gruber <rgruber@alumni.upenn.edu>
To: amaher@town.arlington.ma.us
Cc: Beth Melofchik <tankmadel@yahoo.com>
Date: 02/16/2021 05:03 PM
Subject: In support of Warrant Article to Declare June 24th Prince Hall Day.

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Arlington's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the REAL sender (whose email address in the From: line in "< >" brackets) and you know the content is safe.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing today to express my support for the warrant article submitted by Beth Melofchick for a resolution to declare June 24 Prince Hall Day

Over the last year or so, Arlington has initiated several efforts towards ending racial discrimination in Town and towards creating a more diverse, equitable and welcoming community. I applaud these actions to improve our present and to ensure a better future. But we should not ignore our history.

How wonderful that the history of Arlington includes the personage of Prince Hall. Prince Hall, the founder of the oldest and largest African Masonic organization. Denied the right to form a lodge by prejudiced white Americans, who were ironically the newly liberated citizens of these United States, Prince Hall persevered by petitioning the Grand Lodge of England for a charter.

Being denied the right to belong to most other lodges due to the prevalent sentiments of racism and segregation up unto the late 20th century--meaning up through most of our lifetimes--Blacks, thanks to Prince Hall, had the opportunity to join the Prince Hall Masonic lodges.

On the National Register of Historic Places, the Prince Hall cemetery located in Arlington honors Prince Hall--community activist, abolitionist and leader in the free Black community of 18th century America--allowing Arlington to claim a special connection to this important historical figure. By resolving to declare June 24th as Prince Hall Day, Arlington further honors our Town's connection to a man who fought for liberty and justice for all.

Please include my letter in the public record of support for this warrant article.

Thank you for your consideration,
Rebecca Gruber
215 Pleasant Street

I am writing in enthusiastic support of the citizen warrant article for the upcoming Select Board meeting on February 22 proposing that June 24 become Prince Hall Day in Arlington. In proposing this, Beth Melofchik of Arlington's Historic Districts Commission argues for our recognition of a national and international figure with connections to Arlington.

Last week the *Atlantic* magazine called Prince Hall a “forgotten Black Founding Father” (<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/03/prince-hall-forgotten-founder/617791/>). A contemporary of John Adams, Prince Hall was a famed abolitionist. Through his petitions on abolition, he was also the first American to invoke the Declaration of Independence, with its language of freedom and equality, for a political purpose other than the Revolutionary War. He also founded the first black Masonic Lodge: Boston’s African Lodge, arguably the first black organization in the US.

In Prince Hall’s day, free people of color in the north were kidnapped into slavery, while angry mobs assaulted people of color and attacked schools that taught black children. Hall used a crucial form of political activism in his day—petitions—to argue for the abolition of slavery. He founded a school for black children. And in founding a network of African Masonic Lodges, he created an infrastructure of advocacy and support for African American communities.

Arlington forms part of Prince Hall’s legacy for two important reasons. First, he delivered a famous Charge to the African Lodge at Menotomy on June 24, 1797, in which he spoke out about anti-black violence and hostility—a topic that, unfortunately, is all too relevant 224 years afterwards (<https://www.loc.gov/item/87880347/>). Second, Arlington has the Prince Hall Mystic Cemetery, which is said to be the only remaining African American Masonic cemetery in the US (<https://patch.com/massachusetts/arlington/prince-hall-cemetery>).

These are powerful reasons for Arlington to be proud of its Prince Hall connection. It offer wonderful educational opportunities for Arlington’s public schools. Let’s make sure this African American founding father is remembered, not forgotten!

Rosalind Shaw
Associate Professor Emerita, Tufts University

From: "Ballman, Christopher" <cballman@bu.edu>
To: "amaher@town.arlington.ma.us" <amaher@town.arlington.ma.us>
Cc: Beth Melofchik <tankmadel@yahoo.com>
Date: 02/16/2021 06:59 PM
Subject: Supporting Beth Melofchik's 2 Resolutions

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Arlington's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the REAL sender (whose email address in the From: line in "< >" brackets) and you know the content is safe.

Hi Ashley - I live in Present Nine and I support my neighbor Beth Melofchik's resolution to make June 24 Prince Hall Day here in Arlington. I also support her resolution to declare Arlington's Tree Canopy a public health resource. I trust the Select Board will do the same on these two important articles. Thank you.

Best,
Chris Ballman
22 Russell Street

From: n m <n.mikita3@gmail.com>
To: amaher@town.arlington.ma.us
Date: 02/16/2021 07:51 PM
Subject: Fwd: Article 89 Resolution/Prince Hall Day

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Arlington's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the REAL sender (whose email address in the From: line in "< >" brackets) and you know the content is safe.

Dear Ms. Maher,

As prompted by Ms. Krepelka's "out of office" automated response, I am forwarding the attached message to you in hopes that it will be communicated to the Arlington Select Board.

Thank you,
Nicholas Mikita

----- Forwarded message -----

From: n m <n.mikita3@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 7:37 PM
Subject: Article 89 Resolution/Prince Hall Day
To: <mkrepelka@town.arlington.ma.us>

Dear Ms. Krepelka and members of the Arlington Select Board,

Thank you for your consideration of this message. My name is Nicholas Mikita, I grew up in Arlington, and I have continued ties to the area and its history as a member of Mystic Valley Lodge of Freemasons in Arlington.

I am writing to express my support for Article 89, regarding the declaration of June 24 as Prince Hall Day. Prince Hall was an extraordinary man whose life, values, and contributions to our history (local, Masonic, and national) are worthy of commemoration and celebration.

Sincerely,
Nicholas Mikita

From: Brooks Harrelson <brooks@harrelson.net>
To: Ashley Maher <AMaher@town.arlington.ma.us>
Cc: Beth Melofchik <tankmadel@yahoo.com>
Date: 02/16/2021 11:30 PM
Subject: Warrant Article For Prince Hall Day

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Arlington's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the REAL sender (whose email address in the From: line in "< >" brackets) and you know the content is safe.

Dear Ms. Maher,

Please convey to the Select Board my support for Ms. Melofchik's warrant article in support of the town declaring June 24 as Prince Hall Day.

As we strive to correct the mistakes of the past, recognition of great efforts that have occurred in Arlington should be brought to light and remembered for posterity.

Prince Hall has recently been re-recognized by historians for the work that he did in promoting enfranchisement, and Arlington, with the Prince Hall Cemetery thus holds a position of prominence that should be recognized by residents, and taught in the schools.

Declaring a day in his honor seems a small, but fitting start as we advance the cause of dismantling the marginalizations of the past and present.

Thank you.

William Brooks Harrelson
Town Meeting Member, Precinct 16

--

Brooks Harrelson
My pronouns: he/him/his

From: Jordan Weinstein <jordan3weinstein@gmail.com>
To: amaher@town.arlington.ma.us
Date: 02/17/2021 06:24 AM
Subject: Support for Warrant Article: Prince Hall Day June 24

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Town of Arlington's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the REAL sender (whose email address in the From: line in "< >" brackets) and you know the content is safe.

Dear Members of the Select Board,

I am writing to ask you to support Beth Melofchik's warrant article declaring June 24 as Prince Hall Day.

The intent of the article is to highlight Prince Hall Cemetery in East Arlington and to raise awareness of Mr. Hall's significance to our community and to the history of the establishment of the United States, soon to be celebrated in 2025 on its 250th anniversary.

Ms Melofchik's inspiration for this warrant article came after reading Mr. Hall's charge (attached) delivered on June 24, 1797 in then Menotomy. I too am struck by how relevant his words are today to the Black Lives Matter movement and especially to Arlington and its often overlooked Prince Hall Cemetery and Mr. Hall's contributions to greater Boston's revolutionary-era civic life. Mr. Hall indeed stands as an under-recognized visionary and civic leader of his day.

I do hope you agree that Prince Hall and his legacy are worthy of this recognition.

Sincerely,
Jordan Weinstein
Town Meeting Member, pct. 21

[A Forgotten Black Founding Father](#)

A Forgotten Black Founding Father

Danielle Allen

Why I've made it my mission to teach others about Prince Hall

(1797) Prince Hall Speaks to The African Lodge, Cambridge, Massachusetts

January 22, 2007 by: [BlackPast](#)



Prince Hall

Five years after his presentation at Charles Town, Prince Hall again addresses his fellow Masons. In an address delivered to the African Lodge at West Cambridge, Massachusetts on June 24, 1797, Hall challenges those Masons to work for the elimination of slavery and the establishment of full civil rights for African Americans while identifying with the common humanity and desire of all Americans for liberty. The address appears below:

Beloved Brethren of the African Lodge:

It is now five years since I delivered a charge to you on some parts and points of masonry. As one branch or superstructure of the foundation, I endeavored to show you the duty of a mason to a mason, and of charity and love to all mankind, as the work and image of the great God and the Father of the human race. I shall now attempt to show you that it is our duty to sympathize with our fellow-men under their troubles, and with the families of our brethren who are gone, we hope, to the Grand Lodge above.

We are to have sympathy, but this, after all, is not to be confined to parties or colors, nor to towns or states, nor to a kingdom, but to the kingdoms of the whole earth, over whom Christ the King is head and grand master for all in distress.

Among these numerous sons and daughters of distress, let us see our friends and brethren; and first let us see them dragged from their native country, by the iron hand of tyranny and oppression, from their dear friends and connections, with weeping eyes and aching hearts, to a strange land, and among a strange people, whose tender mercies are cruel—and there to bear the

iron yoke of slavery and cruelty, till death, as a friend, shall relieve them. And must not the unhappy condition of these, our fellow-men, draw forth our hearty prayers and wishes for their deliverance from those merchants and traders, whose characters you have described in Revelation xviii. 11-13? And who knows but these same sort of traders may, in a short time, in like manner bewail the loss of the African traffic, to their shame and confusion? The day dawns now in some of the West India Islands. God can and will change their condition and their hearts, too, and let Boston and the world know that He hath no respect of persons, and that bulwark of envy, pride, scorn and contempt, which is so visible in some, shall fall.

Now, my brethren, nothing is stable; all things are changeable. Let us seek those things which are sure and steadfast, and let us pray God that, while we remain here, he would give us the grace of patience, and strength to bear up under all our troubles, which, at this day, God knows, we have our share of. Patience, I say; for were we not possessed of a great measure of it, we could not bear up under the daily insults we meet with in the streets of Boston, much more on public days of recreation. How, at such times, are we shamefully abused, and that to such a degree, that we may truly be said to carry our lives in our hands, and the arrows of death are flying about our heads.

My brethren, let us not be cast down under these and many other abuses we at present are laboring under—for the darkest hour is just before the break of day. My brethren, let us remember what a dark day it was with our African brethren, six years ago, in the French West Indies. Nothing but the snap of the whip was heard, from morning to evening. Hanging, breaking on the wheel, burning, and all manner of tortures, were inflicted on those unhappy people. But, blessed be God, the scene is changed. They now confess that God hath no respect of persons, and therefore, receive them as their friends, and treat them as brothers. Thus doth Ethiopia stretch forth her hand from slavery, to freedom and equality.

Dear Select Board,

We support Beth Melofchik's Draft Warrant request to Town Meeting to make June 24th Prince Hall Day in Arlington.

Thank you,

Gwen Wong

Mark Labow

Charlotte Wong Labow

151 Lowell Street