

The Greatest American Mason by John Tester

The greatest American Mason. George Washington? Maybe. Benjamin Franklin? Possibly. But there is one other American Mason who stands out among all others, and although he is famous for a variety of reasons, his membership in the fraternity is not one of those reasons. And that is very unfortunate.

This revolutionary Brother whom I am going to introduce you to tonight is none other than Paul Revere. You have read about his famous ride through the Massachusetts country side warning that the “British were coming”, having received the signal of two lamps in the church steeple. You probably even read about his role in our country’s fight for independence from the “Mother Country”. But Brother Revere was much, much more than that. As the story of Paul Revere unfolds, you will learn that not only was he a patriot, an officer in the army, a Mason, a dutiful son, a doting husband and wonderful father, but in addition to his famous and well known career of silver-smithing, he worked with gold, copper, iron and bronze. He made bells that to this day ring around the world. He made hardware, like nails, hammers and hinges. But all of that is just the tip of the iceberg, as Brother Paul had several different vocations.

Paul Revere was not only a cunning-worker of metal, he was a dentist. He was well known throughout the North End of Boston for his dentistry, and in a twist of fate to be discussed later, his dental work will prove to play a pivotal role in the death of another great American patriot and Freemason. Paul Revere didn’t stop at that either, he was also a coroner, being appointed as the county coroner and over a five year period performing forty-six inquests. Other vocations over the years included making gunpowder for the Revolutionary Army, printing some of the very first paper currency in the newly independent colonies, Chairman of the very first Police Commission in Boston, and shipbuilding. He was a man of many talents, many trades, and vast energy, which is exemplified by that fact that he sired sixteen children!

Brothers, the story of the greatest American Mason, Paul Revere.

Our hero Paul Revere is not of English descent, or even Scottish descent, he hails from French descendants. Paul’s father, Apollos Rivoire, was put on a ship in France in November of 1715 and sent to the new country at the tender age of 13. Apollos, who was indentured to a goldsmith in Boston who paid for his passage, thrived in Boston. His master was one of the good ones, he taught Apollos everything he knew about silver and gold smithing and the boy took to it. By 1722, Apollos was almost as adept at making teapots and spoons as his master, which was fortuitous, as the old man died and left Apollos to fend for himself.

In 1729, two big changes took place in Apollos life. First, he changed his name. Apollos said that the English bumpkins could not pronounce his name so he changed it, from Apollos to Paul, and

from Rivoire to Revere. Our hero's father now had a very English sounding name. The second big change that occurred happened when he met and fell in love with one Deborah Hitchborn. The young couple wed on June 19, 1729 and moved to the North End in Boston and Apollos, or Paul as he was now called, thrived in the silver business. The first of Paul's siblings, a sister, was born in 1732 and then the hero of our story, his father's namesake, Paul Revere, was born on December 21, 1734.

In the 18th century, there were two types of schools for children needing an education; the first were for the high-born or children of aristocrats, these were Latin schools. The second school, called Writing Schools, were for the lower classes of people. Here, students learned the basics of reading, writing and math, and then ended their education in their early teens so they could become apprentices and learn a trade. Paul Revere attended the North Writing School.

Paul probably stopped attending the North Writing School about the time he was twelve or thirteen years old. This is when he got serious about becoming an apprentice in his father's shop. As the eldest son, Paul had been sweeping floors, emptying trash, tending the fires and running menial errands since he was big enough to hold a broom, but now, he got to learn. Nothing too big to start with, buttons, silverware, and maybe the occasional cup handle. But Paul was a great learner, and in no time he was beating billets of silver into teapots and bowls with the best of them. Not only did Paul like his vocation, he was good at it. And, as it would turn out, Paul Revere was good at a lot of things.

Paul continued to apprentice in his father's silver shop and although his dad was one of the finest silver smiths in Boston, the pesky British kept levying taxes that made his wares unaffordable to most citizens. Times were hard and then when Paul was just 19 years old, they got a whole lot harder. In July of 1734 his father died. So now, Paul had two problems. First, he was left to provide for a very large family, and second, under Massachusetts law, he could not take over his father's shop until he was 21 years old. With more than 17 months left as an apprentice, the Revere family was in a quandary, until good ol mom stepped in. She registered the silver shop in her name and became the master, allowing her sons Paul and Thomas to do all of the work. So things were starting to look up a bit, that is until the British got into a land dispute with the French.

During 1754 and 1755 the British tried to kick the French out of Canada but got their butt handed to them. So in 1756, the Brits regrouped and decided the best course of action was to just throw more manpower at the Frenchies and their Indian friends. In May of 1756 Paul Revere received his enlistment papers from the Royal Governor of Massachusetts, appointing him a Second Lieutenant of the Train of Artillery. And where was he sent? To Lake George, New York of course. Lieutenant Revere marched and rowed his way up to Fort William Henry on the southern tip of Lake George, arriving in late summer or early fall. Other than some small skirmishes that resulted from marauding Indians, Lt. Revere did not see any action and spent most of his time at the fort cutting timber to help build ships for an attack on Crown Point. The attack on Crown

Point never took place and as winter set in, Lt. Revere and the Massachusetts artillery was sent home. Had Paul not been sent home, the story of our hero could have been a short one, with a much different outcome. Just months after Paul Revere returned home, about 6,000 French soldiers and 2,000 Native American's showed up at Fort William Henry and after a short siege, a surrender of the British troops, and an attempted march to Fort Edward, the unarmed soldiers were attacked and massacred by the Indians. The movie, the Last of the Mohicans, is based on this very sad turn of events.

Once home, Paul returned to the silver business and with the help of his new apprentice, his brother Thomas, they quickly got back to the work of turning out some the finest silver tea pots in the country. The British do love their tea. But Paul had more than just work on his mind and on August 17, 1757, he married the beautiful Sara Orne. The wedding took place none too soon, as just eight months later, the first of Paul Revere's children was born. In all, Sara would bare Paul 8 children. Of those, two would die in infancy, and only one, his sixth child Mary, would outlive him. The other eight were still to come.

In 1730, four years before Paul Revere was born, a group of men met at a small tavern in Philadelphia, known as Tun Tavern. These gentlemen were Freemasons, and this meeting is the first known meeting of Freemasons in America. Then on July 30, 1733, at the Bunch of Grapes Tavern in Boston, the very first duly constituted and chartered Lodge was created. For the next 27 years, St. John's Lodge was the only chartered Masonic Lodge in Boston. In 1756, application was made to charter another Lodge in Boston, St. Andrews Lodge, from the Grand Lodge of Scotland. It took four years for the charter to be granted and then travel from Scotland to Boston. In August of 1760, the charter arrived and the very first meeting of St. Andrews Lodge took place in the long room of the Green Dragon Tavern on September 4th, 1760. Just five days later, a 25 year old candidate named Paul Revere would be the very first initiate of St. Andrews Lodge. Paul was initiated as an Entered Apprentice on September 9, 1760 at the Green Dragon Tavern. Four months later on January 8, 1761 Paul was passed to the degree of a Fellow Craft, and then a mere three weeks after that on January 27th, he was raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason. Paul Revere had begun his Masonic journey, a journey that would assist one of the most famous Revolutionary patriots in our history, and a journey that would cause him some of the most painful times of his life.

There is no definitive record about why Paul Revere became a Mason. But most masonic historians believe that Revere was introduced to Masonry while serving at Fort William Henry during the French and Indian War. Revere's commanding officer was a gentleman named Richard Gridley who was a member of St. John's Lodge in Boston. In 1756 while serving at the fort he petitioned for and received a charter for a military lodge, called Lake George Lodge. Revere was surely introduced to Masonry during this time and when he returned home he saw that many prominent citizens were members of the St. Johns Lodge as well. So why didn't he join St. Johns when he returned home. The new St. Andrews Lodge counted among its 57

members many artisans, blacksmiths, ship builders and other assorted craftsman, like Paul. St. John's Lodge membership was decidedly more elite, not Paul's cup of tea.

Just a brief mention about the lodge room where St. Andrews met. In 1764 the members of St. Andrews Lodge voted unanimously to purchase the building where they were presently meeting. This was of course, the Green Dragon Tavern. The purchase of the tavern turned out to be quite an event. It took 13 years, and involved some 15 different Masons, including Paul Revere. At one point, one of the Masons involved in the purchase became so angry about not getting his money he took the lodge charter and hid it. After more than a year the charter was returned and the mason, who had been expelled, was reinstated. The name of the Green Dragon was changed to Freemasons Arms, and over the years eventually shortened to Masons Hall, but only the Masons who used the hall referred to it as Masons Hall. Throughout history it was always referred to as the Green Dragon Tavern.

Masons Hall was used by many other groups and organizations in Boston, not just St. Andrews Lodge. In 1768, some of the groups that were given free use of the hall were several Regimental Lodges of the British Army, specifically the 29th and 64th Regiments. There were many masons among the British troops who were occupying Boston at the time. The 29th Regiment by the way, were the soldiers that were involved in the Boston Massacre in 1770.

Now, back to Paul Revere. In 1762, Paul was elected to his first office in the lodge, as Junior Deacon. He held that office for one year and then jumped over Senior Deacon and was elected as Junior Warden. After a year in that chair he was elected as Senior Warden. Paul would remain as Senior Warden in St. Andrews Lodge for 3 years and then was elected as the Lodge secretary in 1767. There is no record as to why he did not assent to the Masters chair at this time. He would however, in time, not only become Master of this lodge, but would attain much greater success

During the year 1768, things in Boston, in Freemasonry, and with Paul Revere personally began to change dramatically. In September of that year, the British showed up in Boston Harbor and took up residence so that these pesky con-conforming colonists could be kept in check and made to pay their taxes. For the American firebrands like Hancock, Sam Adams and Thomas Paine, having the Redcoats hanging out in Boston was just what they were looking for to start screaming for independence. For Paul Revere and Freemasonry, the British Army actually helped out. As was mentioned before, there were many, many masons among the British Soldiers who were camped out in Boston, and although they did have Regimental Lodges, they also visited St. Andrew's lodge on a regular basis. But, in a surprising twist of fate, the lobsterbacks would help St. Andrew's Lodge do something that went against their mother country and launch a whole new era for Freemasonry in America. Since 1861 when St. Andrews Lodge was chartered out of Scotland, there had been a running feud with St. Johns Lodge, which was chartered out of England and considered Modern. St. Andrews masons, who were Ancient, were barred from visiting St. John's Lodge or any St. Johns event, and although invited many times, they refused to acknowledge or attend any St. Andrews meeting. The St. Andrews Ancient

Masons were referred to as irregular Masons, fake Masons, or not even a Mason at all. Because St. Johns had a Grand Lodge, and St. Andrews did not, they decided it was time to be on equal footing and with the blessing and assistance of the three British Regimental Lodges, which were also Ancient, they petitioned the Scottish Grand Lodge for a Grand Lodge for Ancient Masons in Massachusetts. In May of 1769 the Provincial Grand Lodge of Scotland issued a charter for a Grand Lodge in Massachusetts, and on December 27th of that same year, a ceremony was held in Masons Hall installing Joseph Warren as Grand Master for the Massachusetts Grand Lodge. Paul Revere was installed as the Grand Senior Deacon. Of the 10 Grand Lodge officers, eight were from St. Andrews Lodge, and two, the Grand Junior and Senior wardens, were officers of the British Regimental Lodges. Revere would serve as Grand Senior Warden for five years.

From 1770 through 1783, Paul Revere, cemented himself as a true leader and visionary of Freemasonry. During this 13 year period, he served as Master of St. Andrews Lodge five times, for a total of 11 years, served in the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts as Senior Deacon, Junior Warden, Senior Warden, and Deputy Grand Master. As will be discussed later, he would become Grand Master, but in a much, much bigger role. During this same 13 year period, there was the small matter of the Revolutionary War, of which Mr. Revere played a part.

In March of 1770, the 29th Regiment got in a scuffle with a bunch of town folk, and after a couple of bad decisions, the Boston Massacre became a part of history. Five colonists were dead, and a group of British soldiers were put on trial. Paul Revere did a very famous engraving of the Boston Massacre, and some historians believe that Revere was actually there because of the detail of the engraving. There is nothing recorded however that proves Paul was physically at the scene of the massacre.

For the next several years Paul busied himself with his duties in Masonry and other groups that he belonged to, most notably the North End Caucus. Records from these groups show that Paul was attending a meeting four to five evenings a week. Sound familiar? In May of 1773 tragedy would once again strike the Revere household. Sara, Paul's wife of 16 years, had given birth to their eighth child, a daughter named Isanna on December 15, 1772. Sarah had a hard time with the delivery and lingered in poor health until May 10th, when the light of Paul's life finally succumbed and passed away. Paul was absolutely devastated. Not only had he lost the love of his life, but he had 7 kids at home, and the infant Isanna was very fragile. He knew that he could not do this alone, and although his oldest daughter Deborah was old enough to lend a hand, he knew he needed help. Then in June, he found his angel. They met at North Square and the attraction was immediate. Her name was Rachel, and not only did she fall in love with Paul Revere, she fell in love with his family, especially little Isanna. Rachel took up residence in the Revere household and became the mother that his children desperately needed. She was there, with her beloved Paul, when little Isanna died in September, too fragile to tough it out in these hard times. Paul found solace in Rachel, and they married on October 10, 1773.

Just like 1768, 1773 would prove to be a busy year for Paul. He not only had to deal with tragedy and triumph in his personal life, but the damn British were really starting to stir things up. They had done the unthinkable, they taxed the TEA! The colonist had had it with these taxes, especially on tea. So in November when the British ship Dartmouth showed up with its cargo of tea, Paul Revere was one of several dozen men assigned by the North End Caucus to stand guard over the ship to make sure that the tea was not unloaded. Then on the night of December 16th, a few Masons showed up at Masons Hall for a meeting, but so few were there that the meeting was postponed. Turns out that most of them were at the Old South Meeting House, where one Sam Adams was about to give the order. By the evenings end, some 40-50 men, many of whom were dressed as Mohawk Indians, had descended on not only the Dartmouth, but two other ships that had arrived with tea, and dumped 347 cases of it overboard. Although there are no records of who actually participated in this event, almost all historians believe that Paul Revere was certainly there and helped dump the tea. Biographer Joel Miller even states that Revere led the group along with his 13 years old son, Paul Jr. But Paul's night was not over just yet. Sam Adams penned a letter for the Committee of Correspondence to be delivered by express rider to patriot leaders in New York and Philadelphia. When asked for volunteers to be the express rider, a dozen or more members of the community raised their hands. Adams pointed to Paul Revere and asked him to deliver the good news about the revolt in Boston. It would not be his last ride.

Paul was the main express messenger from Boston to New York and Philadelphia, riding to those two cities more than a half dozen times during the year delivering news about the blockade of the Boston Harbor, movement of the British Troops, and brought back news about the meeting of the first continental congress. There were two events that happened that year that are noteworthy. One of Paul's many other professional pursuits was dentistry, for which he was very well known. At some point in 1774 he was visited by his good friend, and fellow Mason, Joseph Warren. Warren needed some dental work so Paul implanted two false teeth and secured them with a silver wire. It was an otherwise inconsequential visit that would prove to be of enormous consequence in the next two years. Also that year the birth of Paul and Rachel's first child occurred in December. As with his first wife Sarah, seven more children would follow.

On April 18th, 1775, Joseph Warren and other members of the Committee of Safety in Boston received word from a trusted spy that the British troops were on the move to Lexington and Concord. Paul Revere was notified and he sped off to warn the countryside, with two lanterns shining in the steeple of the Old North End Church, Paul knew they were coming by water. The signal lanterns on the steeple by the way were Paul Reveres idea. He devised the signal and made arrangements with a trusted friend who was a sexton of the church to display them. Paul Revere and another rider, William Dawes, rode off into the night going separate directions but both winding up in Lexington where John Hancock was alerted to the coming of the British Army. The two riders then left to alert Concord but on the way Paul was captured by a British patrol. After some questioning and getting roughed up a little, he was set free, on foot, and made his way back to Lexington. Paul Revere never made it to Concord, that town was alerted by William

Dawes. However, Paul was a witness to the battle that took place in Lexington. The war had started.

Paul Revere was a patriot, through and through, so he wanted in on the action. The Colonel who was in charge of the war effort in Massachusetts was none other than Richard Gridley, Paul's old commanding officer back at Lake George. When Paul went to Gridley and asked for a commission as an artillery officer, Gridley said no. Why would this proven patriot, who risked life and limb to warn the country side just the week before, not be given a commission? Two trusted sources of information, a biography of Paul Revere written by Joel Miller, and a biography of Revere's life in Freemasonry by Edith Steblecki, both gave the same answer. Masonry. You see, Richard Gridley was a Modern Mason, and Paul Revere was an Ancient Mason. Hard feelings run deep, and in war, Brotherhood can only go so far. Paul was turned away. He had one other option; there was another commander who could give Paul a commission. Unfortunately, that person was William Burbeck, who was the Mason that took and hid the lodge charter for more than a year over money owed him. Although Burbeck did return the charter and was reinstated into the Lodge, Paul knew that he too would not be forthcoming with a commission. Paul went home and tried to help the war effort as best he could as a civilian.

Despite his disappointment in not joining the Continental Army, Paul did receive a very large honor in May of 1775. He was tasked by the Continental Congress to start printing paper money. The very first American currency, authorized by Congress, was printed by none other than Paul Revere.

Just one month later, the Battle of Bunker Hill took place. In that battle, Paul Revere's longtime friend, Grand Master for the Ancient Masons in Massachusetts, and a true patriot, Joseph Warren was killed. When the British captured the top of Breeds Hill, where Warren was killed, they shoved his body unceremoniously into an unmarked grave with several other fallen soldiers. Nine months later, in March of 1776, an effort was made by the Masons to try and recover their Grand Master so he could be properly honored. When the mass grave was uncovered, it was Paul Revere who positively identified the body. Revere pointed to the two false teeth and silver wire that he had placed in Warren's mouth just months before. Dental forensics in the 18th century.

At about this same time, Revere finally received a commission. It was with the Massachusetts Militia, not the Continental Army, but at least he was serving. Paul was appointed a Major for the Artillery Chain and stationed on Castle Island just outside of Boston. For as hard as Paul worked to get a commission to join the military and help the fight for Independence, it would prove to be one of the worst periods in his life, and something that he would regret until he died. For starters, for the four years that Paul was in the Massachusetts Militia, he would leave Castle Island only two times. He had a very brief and uneventful military engagement in Nantasket Harbor just three months after he joined, and then an absolutely disastrous campaign in what is present day Maine. More on that in a minute. While Paul was at Castle Island, his days were

filled with endless paperwork, settling squabbles between soldiers, and awful, complete and all-encompassing boredom. He was a man waiting for a war.

The one bright spot for Paul during this period is that he found an old mill, and with the help of his friend Samuel Adams, he learned the craft of making gunpowder and over the years provided tons of the powder to Continental Army. While Paul Revere spend his days toiling in boredom on Castle Island, he spend his nights working at the craft. Paul was heavily involved in Masonry during this period, especially the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. He held several Grand Lodge positions during these years, including Grand Senior Deacon and Grand Junior Warden. In December of 1777 he was once again elected as Master of St. Andrews Lodge, a position he would hold for the next five years.

In June of 1779, Paul Revere finally got his war. The Massachusetts Militia was ordered to a remote location in what is present day Maine, called Penobscot Bay. Seems the British were trying to build a fort their and General George Washington wanted it stopped. Paul was by now a Lt. Colonel and he was in charge of the artillery. The campaign at Penobscot Bay would go down in the annals of Revolutionary War history as one of the biggest debacles that ever occurred. The American army, mostly the Naval unit that was involved, made every mistake that one could possibly imagine, and that combined with outright stupidity, jealousy, and even a measure of cowardice, resulted in a rout of the Americans the likes of which had never been seen. Just two months after the Penobscot Bay campaign started, those who not killed or captured, including Paul Revere, were back in Massachusetts, licking their wounds and waiting for the inevitable court marshals to begin.

For Paul part, he certainly made a number of errors in regards to the placement and use of the artillery. But when he was finally brought up on charges in September of 1779, they accused him of neglect, disobeying orders, and cowardice. These charges were completely untrue. Paul was merely caught in the middle of the infighting between the navy and the army. The generals involved were very much guilty of these charges, but Paul Revere, and dozens of other officers were merely casualties. One month after being brought up on charges, the Court Marshal was over and there was no verdict found for or against Paul. Paul Revere languished back on Castle Island with no pay and no rations for more than two months. Finally in November, they dismissed all but one charge, disobeying an order. Paul appealed the verdict and for the next four years he would write letter after letter and meet with officer after officer to clear his good name and reputation. Finally, in February of 1783, the court-martial reconvened and reviewed Paul's case. He was cleared of all charges and had his back pay and reputation restored. He was finally vindicated.

Now that the war was over and Paul was out of the military, he could concentrate on more pleasurable pursuits, namely, his beloved Freemasonry. He was currently the Grand Junior Warden in the Massachusetts Grand Lodge, and by 1783, elected as the Deputy Grand Master. Also during that year, Paul Revere once gain expanded his vocations. He gave the engraving

shop to his son, Paul Jr., and of all things, opened the very first stationary store in Boston. He sold paper, pencils, sealing wax, fabric and hosiery. It also gave him a storefront to display and sell his silver and gold wares. The new venture wasn't terribly successful, but he kept at it, and it thrived for years to come.

Although the war was over, Paul's life would once again get complicated, this time because of the fraternity that he loved. The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts voted to break from the Grand Lodge of Scotland and become an independent Grand Lodge. This posed a serious problem for St. Andrews Lodge, do they break with the Grand Lodge of Scotland or so they join the new independent Grand Lodge of Massachusetts? In January of 1784 a vote was taken, and by a vote of 24 to 30, voted to remain with the Grand Lodge of Scotland. The twenty four Masons who voted to move their allegiance to the independent Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, including Paul Revere, were kicked out of St. Andrews Lodge. Paul Revere, the very first initiate of St. Andrews Lodge, and its Master for more than 7 years, was now lodgeless. So, he asked the new independent Grand Lodge of Massachusetts for a charter to form a new lodge, which was granted. Rising States Lodge was the first new lodge chartered under the new Grand Lodge. Paul served as treasurer of Rising States for about a year and then took over as Master of the Lodge. For the next 10 years, Paul would serve either as Master or Treasurer of his new Lodge.

Although Masonry was a big part of Paul's life during this time, he still had to make money. So in 1788 he opened a bronze and iron factory where he manufactured nails, hammers, and cannons. And just to keep life interesting, he served on a committee with John Quincy Adams, to establish a new police department for the city of Boston. Then in 1792, while still operating his silver and gold smithing shop, his stationary store, his bronze manufacturing plant, and serving in the Grand Lodge, Paul decided that he wanted to make bells, so he bought a bell manufacturing plant. He produced the very first bell ever manufactured in Boston, where it was hung in his childhood church, the Cockerel. Paul and the son of his close friend, Joseph Warren would go on to manufacture 398 bells between 1792 and 1828. Those bells were shipped all over the world, and some are still in use today.

Also in 1792, the battle of the Ancients and the Moderns finally ended in Boston. St. Johns Lodge, the very first Lodge of Freemasonry in the United States, joined the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, breaking ties with the Grand Lodge of England.

Paul Revere was elected as the Grand Master of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge in 1794 and served as Grand Master for two years. During that time he oversaw the chartering of 23 new lodges in Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire.

On July 4th, 1795, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, led by Grand Master Paul Revere, performed a ceremony where the cornerstone for a new statehouse was laid.

One year later, Paul would try his hand a brand new vocation. He was appointed as the county corner, where over the next several years; he would be paid \$119.00 to perform five autopsies.

On December 15, 1797, Paul Revere stepped aside as Grand Master. It would be the last office he would ever hold in Masonry. He was still a member of Rising States Lodge, but his active role in Freemasonry would diminish greatly. Over the last 35 years, Paul held every office (except Stewards) in Blue Lodges and all but secretary and treasurer in Grand Lodge. He was the guiding force in creating a new Grand Lodge for Massachusetts, oversaw the chartering of 23 new lodges, and was the calming voice of reason and understanding in some of the most turbulent times during the infancy of Freemasonry in America. And just to make sure that his indelible stamp was on the fraternity he loved, all of the jewels worn by the Grand Lodge Officers were manufactured by Paul Revere, silver smith. The very last Masonic event that Paul is ever known to attend, occurred in October of 1805, when the 68 year old Past Grand Master was a pall bearer at a Masonic funeral for a dear friend.

Even though Paul's Masonic journey had come to a conclusion, did not mean that this great American patriot and entrepreneur was done making his mark on the world. In 1798 Paul's bronze and iron factory started supplying all of the nails, hinges, and handles for all of the great ships being built for the United States Navy. One year later, Paul once again spread his wings and began working with copper, and he perfected a way of melting it into sheets. Two years later, Paul was asked to provide 8,500 pounds of copper sheathing, which was used to sheath the dome of the Massachusetts capital building. That copper dome is still there today.

In December of 1799, arguably the greatest American Hero to ever live passed away. President George Washington. In February, Paul Revere led a procession of 1,600 Masons through the streets of Boston for a memorial burial honoring the great general and president. After the memorial march, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts asked Washington's widow for a lock of his hair to be kept as a keepsake honoring his tremendous contributions to Masonry. The request was honored and the lock of hair was kept in a special marble box for safekeeping. Guess whose house the marble box was kept in; Paul Revere's. Nine years later, Paul Revere crafted an urn made of gold to permanently house the lock of Washington's hair. That urn, and the lock of hair, is on display to this day at the Massachusetts Grand Lodge.

The last few years of Paul Revere's life had its share of tragedy and disappointment. In 1810, the lodge that Paul helped form for the independent Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Rising States Lodge, was dissolved. In a fight about money, the lodge brothers voted to dissolve their own lodge so they could obtain a financial gain from the sale of the lodge property. Then in 1813, Paul's wife of 40 years, Rachel, passed away. She had born Paul 8 children, of whom only four outlived her.

At 80 years old, Paul Revere had not lost his will and his gusto. He sent a petition around Boston, mostly to the few old friends he had that were still alive, stating they wanted to help defend their city against the British invasion of 1814. The petition was later sent to the Commander-in-Chief. That petition rests in the Library of Congress today.

Then, on May 10th, 1818, Paul Revere died. He was buried with full Masonic honors in the Granary Burial Ground. Paul left behind five of his 16 children, a business worth more than \$50,000, and a legacy that is unmatched in Freemasonry today. He was, the greatest American Mason.

I will leave you with this speech, given by Paul Revere during the July 4th, 1795 cornerstone laying ceremony;

“Worshipful Brethren. I congratulate you on this auspicious day: When the arts and the sciences are establishing themselves in our happy country, a country distinguished from the rest of the world, by being a government of laws, where liberty has found a safe and secure abode, and where her sons are determined to support and protect her... May we, my Brethren, so square our actions thro life as to show to the world of mankind, that we mean to live within the compass of good citizens, that we wish to stand upon a level with them, that when we part we may be admitted into the temple where reigns silence and peace.”

Presented to the VT Lodge of Research on October 2, 2012