

THE GRAND LODGE
OF GEORGIA
FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS



1786 — 1980

by

William Henry Rosier and Fred Lamar Pearson, Jr.

Published by
The Educational and Historical Commission
of the Grand Lodge of Georgia F. & A. M.

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Grand Lodge of Georgia

Free and Accepted Masons

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The Masonic Home Print Shop

Macon, Georgia

First Edition 1983

1	The Mother Grand Lodge
2	Masonic Traditions in Georgia
3	Origin of Freemasonry in Georgia
4	Provincial Grand Lodge of Georgia
5	Ancient and Modern Lodges
6	Early Georgia Lodges, 1733-1786
7	Reconstituting The Grand Lodge of Georgia
8	Years Without Records, 1787 - 1820
9	The Lights Begin to Dim, 1820 - 1830
10	Masonry's Darkest Days, 1830 - 1840
11	Rays Through The Clouds, 1840 - 1850
12	Brightness In The East, 1850 - 1860
13	Devastation of War, 1860 - 1870
14	Panic of the Seventies, 1870 - 1880
15	Centennial Year, 1880 - 1890
16	Jubilee Celebration, 1890 - 1900
17	The Turn of The Century, 1900 - 1910
18	Masonry Marches Forward, 1910 - 1920
19	The Roaring Twenties, 1920 - 1930
20	The Great Depression, 1930 - 1940
21	World War II, 1940 - 1950
22	The Fabulous Fifties, 1950 - 1960
23	The Dynamic Sixties, 1960 - 1970
24	An Era of Inflation, 1970 - 1980
	Conclusion
	Bibliography
	Appendix
	Index

RAYS THROUGH THE CLOUDS

1840-1850

Over the centuries Freemasonry has encountered countless periods of persecution approaching the brink of complete disaster and annihilation. Each time, due to the firm foundation of the order and the placing of its trust in the hands of Almighty God, it rebounded to become even greater. Almost obliterated at the beginning of 1840, there was a miraculous recovery during the succeeding ten years.¹

GRAND SECRETARY'S SUMMARY

In 1839 eight lodges submitted returns, and twenty members attended the opening session of Grand Lodge. There were only 430 Masons in the entire state of Georgia. However, the loss of members and closing the doors of lodges subsided. With a mighty surge, the fraternity became greater than ever during the next few years. Grand Master William Dawson, in 1849, submitted the following figures of the 1840s:

1840	12 Lodges Reporting	7 Defaults	430 Members
1841	12 Lodges Reporting	6 Defaults	
1842	23 Lodges Reporting	3 New Charters	
1843	34 Lodges Reporting	6 New Charters	907 Members
1844	42 Lodges Reporting	8 New Charters	1110 Members
1845	45 Lodges Reporting	3 New Charters	1600 Members
1846	51 Lodges Reporting	6 New Charters	1863 Members
1847	63 Lodges Reporting	12 New Charters	2568 Members
1848	78 Lodges Reporting	15 New Charters	3088 Members ²

Then, during Grand Master Dawson's year of 1849, 116 Lodges reported; 36 new charters were issued, and there was a total of 4610 members. There were more initiations (1423) during that year than there were total members in Georgia four years earlier. From a deficit in the Grand Treasurer's account, he now reported a surplus of \$6,861 in the Treasury.

GRAND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GRAND LODGE OF GEORGIA
NEAR OTHER GRAND LODGES

In this decade, 1840, a communication was received from the Grand Lodge of New York requesting Georgia to name a member of the Grand Lodge of Georgia to represent the Grand Lodge of New York in this state. Also, if desired, the New York Grand Lodge would name one of its members to represent Georgia in the Grand Lodge of New York. Action was not taken at this Communication, but in the following year Grand Master William Schley announced the appointment of William Rockwell as the Grand Representative of New York near the Grand Lodge of Georgia.

In 1842 the Grand Secretary recommended in his report that he be authorized to correspond with other Grand Lodges to ascertain if they would participate in the exchange of Representatives. The response was very good, and the next year the following brothers were named as the first representatives of the Grand Lodge of Georgia near Other Grand Lodges:

NAME	RESIDENCE	STATE REPRESENTED
H. Cobb	Athens	Maine
A. H. Hansell	Savannah	New Hampshire
G. D. Case	Milledgeville	Massachusetts
Augustus Alden	Watkinsville	Connecticut
James Castens	Talbotton	Rhode Island

R. L. Roddy	Forsyth	New Jersey
W. L. Mitchell	Athens	Pennsylvania
William Bacon	Athens	Maryland
Simri Rose	Macon	Delaware
Jeremiah Leak	Zebulon	Virginia
P. T. Schley	Columbus	North Carolina
Jonathan Olmstead	Savannah	Alabama
Emanuel Ezekiel	Columbus	Mississippi
S. Chipley	Columbus	Kentucky
Robert McMillan	Clarksville	Indiana
Lucian LaTaste	Milledgeville	South Carolina
Wm. S. Rockwell	Milledgeville	New York ³

Shortly prior to the Civil War the program declined dramatically. Then, during the war, communication with other states ceased. A few years subsequent to the war the program was revived. From the beginning of nineteen representatives, the Grand Lodge of Georgia has increased to 108 representatives in the United States and Foreign Jurisdictions. Iowa, Pennsylvania and Wyoming do not exchange representatives today.⁴

This position is now, to a great extent, honorary since the members are not authorized to make any commitments concerning their Grand Lodges. Except for nearby states, the representative seldom visits the state for which he is appointed, although a conscientious brother will correspond with the brother appointed as representative of the other state, thereby establishing an informal and friendly relationship between the jurisdictions. *Proceedings* of Grand Lodge are exchanged, and new ideas to aid the advancement of Freemasonry can possibly be obtained for presentation to their own Grand Lodges.⁵

* * * * *

At the Grand Lodge Communication of 1842 there were pronounced signs to indicate the crisis time of Freemasonry in the United States was over. The Committee on the State of the Grand Lodge reported:

Your Committee wishes to express our high gratification at the condition of the craft within our jurisdiction. The clouds which have so long obscured the Masonic sky are rolled away and the holy light is beaming over our State with an effulgence that may well compare with its proudest days of its ancient glory.

The reveling and dissipation of which our Lodges have been with too much justice accused, are numbered among the things that were — and the order has assumed its true position as the open foe to vice and unmorality, and as the prop and support of every noble and generous principle which has been developed in human nature.⁶

EARLY MASONIC PERIODICALS IN GEORGIA

During the same year of 1842 the Grand Lodge called attention to a Masonic publication, edited by Brothers Davis and Thompson of Augusta. The name of the publication was *The Masonic Journal* which the Grand Lodge recommended be read by all Masons. This was the first Georgia publication found in the records of the Grand Lodge.⁷ Two years later Brother J. M. Cummings, of Madison, edited a paper named the *Masonic Signal*. It was also recommended by the Grand Lodge. Then, in 1849, Dr. J. B. Randall of Marietta began publication of a periodical, *The Masonic Journal*. How long these publications continued is not known. They were endorsed by the Grand Lodge, but not as official organs. In 1851 Brother Loomis became affiliated with the *Journal*, and in 1853 the *Signet and Journal* was published in Marietta by Brothers Samuel Lawrence and Mitchell. It is unknown if the *Masonic Journal* and the *Signet and Journal* were the same publication under new publishers and names. In

At the Annual Communication of Grand Lodge in 1852 the Chairman of the Committee on Education submitted in his report, the following resolution, which was adopted:

RESOLVED, That the institution known as the Southern Female College in Covington, Newton County, is received as tendered by the present Board of Trustees, and that a Committee of three, one of whom shall be learned in the law and skilled in the department of conveyances, be appointed to prepare and cause to be executed the deeds necessary to the consummation.²³

The institution was, on the 15th day of July 1853, publicly dedicated to the purpose of education, benevolence and virtue, with the imposing forms and ceremonies of our ancient order, by the Most Worshipful Grand Master William C. Dawson, aided by the Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master, William S. Rockwell, and in the presence of about two hundred brethren and a large concourse of admiring citizens. On the same day all the necessary titles to the college buildings, etc., were satisfactorily secured, and a legal transfer secured. One condition was inserted by the Grand Lodge:

If at any time it shall so happen, from any cause, that the said Institution is likely to become burdensome to the funds of the Grand Lodge, then it may suspend or cause to be suspended, the operation thereof, or otherwise direct its affairs as shall be deemed most wise and proper.²⁴

Reverend Alexander Means of Covington was elected President and Reverend Creed Fulton to the Vice-Presidency of the College. Reverend Means had practiced medicine in Covington and was a licensed Methodist Minister. He only served one year, then accepted a position as President of Emory College at Oxford, the forerunner of Emory University in Atlanta.

A Board of Trustees consisted of William Dawson, Grand Master, as President Ex-officio; Simon Holt, A. A. Gaulding, G. D. Rice, and William Rockwell, Deputy Grand Masters, as Vice-Presidents; and the following:

Howell Cobb	Richard Lane
J. M. Wayne	T. M. Furlow
William Schley	J. W. Castens
A. J. Miller	C. D. Pace
Alfred Iverson	W. P. Haynes
J. H. Stark	*Dr. W. D. Conyers
J. N. Williamson	*Dr. J. B. Hendricks
James Milner	*Dr. J. H. Murrell
*W. P. Anderson	L. C. Simpson
*T. F. Jones	*John Harris ²⁵
R. R. Cuyler	

*These brothers, members of Golden Fleece Lodge, had served as trustees prior to the transfer to the Grand Lodge.

The Committee on the College, in 1859, gave a report of the achievements and operation of the college. Excerpts from the report are given:

During these past few years the institution was in a very prosperous condition. There were eleven young ladies graduated in 1854, eighteen in 1855 and twenty-two in 1856. The prosperity was attributed to the policy, government and eminent qualifications of the President and Faculty of the College. Reverend Creed Fulton, who had been appointed to solicit contributions to endow the college, succeeded in raising \$31,000 as the product of his zealous and devoted labors . . .

The college in 1859 gratuitously dispensed instructions, which, if charged at usual rates, would have produced a revenue of nearly \$1,000. This degree of educational benevolence is without a parallel in the history of literary institutions, and evidences the unexampled success of the college. The Grand Lodge, during the same year, appropriated a sufficient fund, collected by Brother Fulton, erection of a boarding house for the use of the students . . .

During the year 1858 there were near 150 pupils in attendance upon the instruction of the able and efficient professors, who were equal to the necessities of the college. The institution was in a more prosperous condition than at any former period. Over \$1,500 was charitably bestowed, by the faculty, upon worthy young ladies, who otherwise could not have enjoyed the privilege of having their minds stored with useful knowledge. The President gratuitously offered to instruct all young

ladies, sent to the college, who were unable to pay their tuition. In connection with this, the college had five pupils, beneficiaries of the Grand Lodge; the Grand Master and each Deputy Grand Master being privileged to select one deserving student . . .²⁶

Due to failing health Brother Fulton was forced to resign in 1859, and J. L. Jones was elected President. He had been a member of the faculty since 1853. Prosperity continued during the year of 1860. Brother Richard Winfrey willed the school an endowment of \$3,500. Deputy Grand Master Butler collected \$6,000 toward building a chapel at the college. Property was purchased adjacent to the school which contained a beautiful home for use of the President, and four additional pianos were purchased. In attendance were 161 regular students and sixteen part time students. They came from South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas and Georgia.

Another year and the mighty tide of war began to sweep the nation. Then, in 1862, it was necessary to close the doors. An attempt was made to continue operation, but the state appropriated the buildings for a hospital. This no doubt saved the buildings from destruction as Sherman's troops marched through Covington in 1864.

Following the war all of the structures were badly in need of repairs. Regardless of the adverse conditions, the college reopened, with the Reverend James L. Pierce as President. Paying students were scarce at first since many formerly affluent families were now destitute. The 1867 graduating class consisted of twelve, but the following year ninety pupils enrolled in the fall term. The Grand Lodge was able to pay the President \$2,000, and some improvements were made on the property. But the faculty consisted of only three, including the President.²⁷

Although slow to recover, it soon became apparent the college would return to the high standards established prior to the war. Gustavis J. Orr assumed the Presidency in 1868, remaining until 1871, when he was replaced by Brother J. N. Bradshaw. Brother Bradshaw was by necessity paid a very modest salary of which he expended a great deal upon repairs and maintenance of the property. He was truly dedicated. Attendance increased and in the second year of his administration 139 pupils enrolled in all departments. From the opening of the college to 1871, tuition had paid the greater portion of the expenses. During the nine year period the Grand Lodge had expended \$18,986, of which \$5,800 was used to purchase the President's home. Grand Master Samuel Irwin told the members of Grand Lodge in 1873 that "this is about the only scheme of benevolence which our Grand Lodge has ever attempted to carry out, and I do hope that it may be a blessing to coming generations."²⁸

During the 1870s Grand Lodge suffered serious financial difficulties. Cost overruns of the new Grand Lodge Temple and an unpredicted recession created a situation that depleted the treasury making it imperative for the college to operate from the revenues derived from tuition. With a number of students already enrolled for whom tuition had been remitted, it was impossible to operate within the income. Conditions continued to decline. President Bradshaw reported having only \$2,426 to pay four teachers and his own salary. After the teachers were paid, he had \$500 for his year's salary. To everyone's dismay, the school, as well as the Grand Lodge, was without funds. Accordingly, the Grand Lodge cancelled the Annual Communication of 1879 and 1881 thereby saving the expenses of travel and per diem.

A resolution adopted at the Communication of 1880 designated the Grand Master to appoint a committee of five to dispose of the interest the Grand Lodge possessed in the Southern Masonic Female College. After a thorough investigation of the buildings and equipment and after conferring with the original trustees of the college, a deed was executed conveying all the property back to the original owners.²⁹ July 1, 1882 was indeed a sad day, but there was no alternative. Funds were not available to continue the operation.



**IN MEMORY OF
J. WILSON PARKER**
June 26, 1898 — July 27, 1966
GRAND MASTER 1940

Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Masonic Home of Georgia, 1946-1966.
Raised in Fairburn Lodge No. 180, F. & A. M., 1920; Worshipful Master 1923 and 1943; High Priest Fairburn Chapter No. 24, R. A. M., 1926; Illustrious Master Fairburn Council No. 45, R. & S. M., 1926; Eminent Commander Constantine Commandery No. 26, 1959; E. Grand Captain, General Grand Commandery; Past Sovereign Red Cross of Constantine; Knight York Cross of Honor, 1959; 33° Scottish Rite Mason, 1955.

Distinguished lawyer and jurist.
His devotion to duty, his dedication to the principles of Freemasonry, his abiding love for the children of the Masonic Home, and his untiring labor for their welfare and happiness. His spirit of good will toward all men; greatness of mind and heart will forever be cherished by the Masons of Georgia

Marker placed by
Educational and Historical Commission
Grand Lodge of Georgia, F.&A.M.

[Erected in 1967 on the grounds of the Georgia Masonic Home for Children at Macon]



**SOLOMON'S LODGE NO. 1, F. & A. M.
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA**

Organized as a Masonic Lodge, February 21, 1734, its first Worshipful Master was General James Edward Oglethorpe, English soldier, Statesman, Humanitarian, and founder of Georgia, who raised the flag of England at Savannah on February 12, 1733.

Chartered by the Grand Lodge of England in 1735 as "The Lodge at Savannah in Ye Province of Georgia," Solomon's is the oldest continuously operating English constituted Lodge in the Western Hemisphere. In 1786 the Independent Grand Lodge of Georgia, F. & A. M., was created and proclaimed by concerted action of Solomon's and the one other Lodge then existing in the state. Solomon's was chartered as the first Lodge in Georgia.

From its beginning in 1734 brethren of Solomon's Lodge have served with distinction in vital positions of leadership in public and fraternal affairs of city, colony, state and nation. The Lodge produced the first Grand Master of Georgia F. & A. M., William Stephens, who governed the Georgia craft from 1786-1788 and 1793-1813.

Solomon's Lodge, one of Savannah's greatest Historical Institutions, is honored and revered by the nearly 100,000 Freemasons of this state as the mother Lodge of Georgia, Free and accepted Masons.

Marker placed by the
Educational and Historical Commission
Grand Lodge of Georgia, F. & A. M. 1969.

[Erected April 19, 1969, Bay Street Strand, next to City Hall, Savannah, Georgia, within a few feet of the commemorative plaque marking the spot where General James E. Oglethorpe first landed in Georgia with his English Colonists on February 12, 1733]



JOSEPH RUCKER LAMAR

Joseph Rucker Lamar was born in Elbert County, Georgia, October 14, 1857. He was a playmate and classmate of Woodrow Wilson in Augusta while Woodrow Wilson's father was minister of First Presbyterian Church and Joseph R. Lamar's father was minister of First Christian Church.

He attended Richmond Academy, Augusta; University of Georgia, Athens; and was graduated from Bethany College, Bethany, West Virginia, in 1877. Admitted to Georgia Bar in 1878 and practiced law in Augusta until 1903. Georgia State Legislator 1886-1890. Justice of Georgia Supreme Court 1901-1905.

Member of Webbs Lodge No. 166, F. & A. M., Augusta; Augusta Chapter No. 2, R.A.M.; and Georgia Commandery No. 1, Knights Templar, Augusta.

Joseph R. Lamar was appointed Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court by President William Howard Taft, December 17, 1910, and thus became the first Georgia Mason so honored. He died in Washington, D.C., January 2, 1916, while holding this office. A beloved citizen and faithful public servant of his state and country. He is buried in Summerville Cemetery, Augusta, Georgia.

The first home he owned was located directly across the street from this marker at 1209 Greene Street.

Marker placed by
The Educational and Historical Commission
Grand Lodge of Georgia, F&A.M. 1969.

[Erected September 27, 1969, on the parkway of Greene Street, near 12th St., Augusta, Ga.]



WILLIAM SCHLEY

1786 — 1858
GOVERNOR OF GEORGIA — 1835-1837
GRAND MASTER OF GEORGIA — 1828-1831

In this family Cemetery rest the remains of William Schley, Governor and Grand Master of Georgia. Brother Schley was born in Fredrick, Maryland, December 10, 1786, and acquired his education in the Academies at Louisville and Augusta, Georgia. He was admitted to the bar in 1812, and continued the practice of law until 1825 when he was elected Judge of the Superior Court of the Middle Division of Georgia.

Brother Schley was a member of St. Patricks Lodge No. 8, Louisville, Georgia, and served as Worshipful Master in 1819. He served four terms as Grand Master of the most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Georgia, Free and Accepted Masons, and was the presiding officer and principal speaker at the ceremony of laying the cornerstones of the first Masonic Hall erected in the city of Augusta on June 2, 1828.

Our brother was a public-spirited citizen in every relation; exemplified that noblest work of God, "an honest man", one of advanced ideas, believing in the strictest adherence to the United States constitution and the withholding of all powers from congress which were not expressly delegated to it.

Marker placed by
The Educational and Historical Commission
Grand Lodge of Georgia, F. & A. M. 1967.

[Erected at Walker-Schley Cemetery, Richmond Hill Road, Augusta, Georgia, May 20, 1967.]



WILLIAM STEPHENS
FIRST GRAND MASTER, GRAND LODGE OF GEORGIA, F & A M

Born January 1752, at Beaulieu (Bulie) near Savannah of distinguished English ancestry, William Stephens was an eminent lawyer and jurist during and after the war for Independence.

Georgia's first Attorney-General, he was also Chief Justice of Georgia, Mayor of Savannah and held other important posts of honor. In 1802 President Thomas Jefferson appointed him United States District Court Judge, which position he held with distinction until just prior to his death on 6 August 1819.

A dedicated Freemason he was Worshipful Master of Solomon's Lodge at Savannah prior to 1783. In 1791 he was Worshipful Master of another Savannah Lodge, Union No. 10 (extinct).

When the Grand Lodge of Georgia, F. & A. M., was organized at Savannah on 16 December 1786 as the independent and sovereign Masonic power in Georgia, William Stephens was elected Grand Master and he served through 1788. In 1793 he was re-elected Grand Master and served continuously through 1813. A record of longevity in that exalted Masonic office never since equalled.

The honored remains of Grand Master Stephens rest in the Colonial Cemetery of Savannah. His Masonic posterity, the nearly 100,000 Freemasons of Georgia, will ever cherish his memory.

Marker placed by
 Educational and Historical Commission of the
 Grand Lodge of Georgia, F. & A. M. 1970

[This marker is located in Colonial Cemetery, Savannah. The exact location of William Stephens' grave is unknown.]



GEORGE WALTON

(1749-1804)

SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
PATRIOT — SOLDIER — STATESMAN — JURIST — FREEMASON

Born a Virginian, he became a Georgian in about 1770. An early leader in the liberty movements in Savannah, Colonel in the Revolutionary Army, member of the 2nd Continental Congress, Chief Justice of Georgia, 1783-1786; United States senator, 1795-1796; Governor of Georgia, 1779 and 1789; State Legislator and Superior Court Judge; trustee of the Academy of Richmond County, Augusta, and of the State University at Athens. Named in his honor are the county of Walton and two Masonic Lodges, Walton No. 200, Jasper County, Ga., and George Walton No. 699, Augusta, Ga.

This immortal Georgia and American, whose last home, "Meadow Gardens" stands here, and whose honored remains are buried here in Augusta, not only shed his blood for American Liberty but dedicated the rest of his life to the successful erection of civil government in his state and nation; as active and faithful member of Solomon's Lodge No. 1, F. & A. M., of Savannah, Ga., his name will ever be held in highest veneration by the Freemasons of Georgia.

Marker placed by
 The Educational and Historical Commission
 Grand Lodge of Georgia, F. & A. M., 1968

[Located in front of Meadow Gardens, the home of George Walton, in Augusta].



Columbian Lodge No. 7, Free and Accepted Masons
Columbus, Georgia

Organized October 9, 1828, Columbian Lodge was chartered by the Grand Lodge of Georgia in December 1828 as No. 28. In 1849 it became No. 7. It is the oldest lodge in Western Georgia. First Worshipful Master was Luther Blake. The lodge was organized two months before the city of Columbus was incorporated in Muscogee County, then in Indian territory.

Number among the many prominent Georgians who have been members of Columbian Lodge: Colonel James W. Fannin, Master in 1829, a Martyr at Goliad in the war for Texas independence; Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, editor, poet, soldier, statesman, hero of San Jacinto and Second President of the republic of Texas; Phillip T. Schley, Grand Master of Georgia Masons 1836 through 1841 and in 1843.

During its nearly 150 years of continuous existence as a vital influence for good, Columbian Lodge has furnished many outstanding citizens and brethren in the field of public and fraternal service.

Always steadfast in its adherence to the gentle philosophy of Freemasonry, Columbian Lodge is the Mother Lodge of the Chattahoochee Valley area.

Marker placed by the
 Educational and Historical Commission
 Grand Lodge of Georgia, F. & A. M., 1975

[Located at Columbian Lodge No. 7, 1127 Second Ave., Columbus].



FREEMASONRY IN MACON

Freemasonry came to Macon in 1824, when the city was in its infancy. Macon Lodge No. 5, F. & A. M., was organized in 1824 and chartered by the Grand Lodge of Georgia in 1825. Historians have referred to Macon Lodge as being the "First Society in the town of Macon." In 1846 the Grand Lodge of Georgia, F. & A. M., moved its seat from Milledgeville to Macon and for many years held its annual communications in the hall of Macon Lodge No. 5.

Dr. Ambrose Baber, M.D., a physician and pioneer citizen of Macon was the first Worshipful Master of Macon Lodge and later served the whole craft in Georgia as Grand Master of Masons during 1831. He died accidentally in 1846, and in the following year a monument was erected to his memory by joint action of the Grand Lodge of Georgia, Macon Lodge and Constantine Chapter No. 4, Royal Arch Masons.

In 1825 during his triumphal tour of the United States by brother and general the Marquis De La Fayette, the Freemasons of Macon and other groups lavishly entertained and honored this famous and beloved French Nobleman who had contributed so much to the cause of American liberty by serving as a comrade-in-arms with brother and general George Washington.

Marker placed by the
 Educational and Historical Commission
 Grand Lodge of Georgia, F. & A. M., 1971

[This marker is being relocated in downtown Macon].