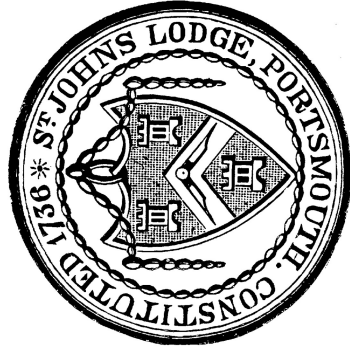
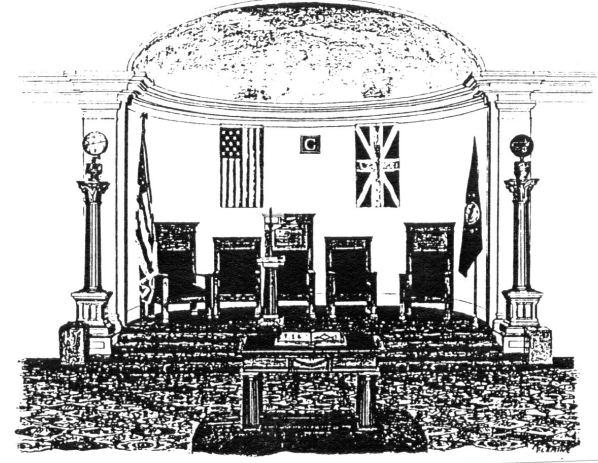


St. John's Lodge, No. 1, F&AM
351 Middle St
Portsmouth, NH 03801



Stamp

August 2025



August 2025 Trestle Board

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

The Master's Message

Greetings Brethren!

I hope you all are having an enjoyable summer. Our July Stated focused on fun as a most competitive game of Masonic Jeopardy unfolded revealing previously unknown presidential facts and a surprising amount of obscure music knowledge. We postponed our intended Fellow Craft degree in July to give the candidates some more preparation time. As such, we still have 4 EAs in the queue and hope to pass at least some of them to Fellow Craft in August. We also have a candidate and a petitioner in the wings as well. Looking ahead we will hold our annual Veterans Program on Saturday September 12th at 4:00PM. This will be a joint program with St. Andrews. In October we will hold a Table Lodge, tentatively for Saturday October 4th, details to follow.

I recently returned from a vacation in Europe, mainly Italy, where I was exposed to amazing works of art and architecture that have survived centuries and in some cases millennia. While I did not encounter or visit a Masonic Lodge while over there, I could not help but notice the various connections to Masonry in so many areas. While walking through the extensive art galleries at the Vatican, I noted that the 'Holy Saints John' were very frequently presented together in pieces of art. I found myself assessing every ancient column I encountered, and marveled that in Rome I did not see Tuscan or Composite columns, but only Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian, and so indeed it is to the Greeks and not the Romans we are indebted for all that is beautiful in architecture...and maybe the ancient Romans thought so too! There is a museum dedicated to Galileo in Florence that houses a vast collection of scientific instruments including a full exhibit on "squares and compasses" that early scientists used for measuring the world around them. Over the course of my time away, I was struck by how often the symbols and elements of our ritual sort of kept "popping up" without me searching or seeking. For this month's reflection, I would ask you to consider where and when you notice Masonic symbols in the world around you. Our Craft did not select obscure objects on which to base our teachings but rather took the common and added deeper meaning. Look around your world. What type of columns and pilasters do we have on the Portsmouth Masonic Temple? Or in your church? What do you use in your life to square your work (figuratively and literally)? I think you'll be surprised at how much you may notice.

I look forward to seeing you in Lodge!

!



Fraternally,

Worshipful Michael Hudson
Worshipful Master

Masonic Travels

The Quarry Rite

On Saturday, August 23rd, Moosup Lodge No. 113, will perform an outdoor Master Mason degree in an operative stone quarry under torch light. The quarry is located in Sterling, CT about a two hour drive from Portsmouth. Lodge opens at 6:00PM and is expected to conclude around 10:00PM. Reservations are required so please let Worshipful Brother Daniel Stolworthy know if you are interested in attending.



At our Stated Communication in May, we learned a little about the Cog Railway at Mt. Washington. As a side note, we also learned that there was a full MM degree conducted at the summit in 1955. A plaque, commemorating the degree, was hidden by a freezer placed in front of it. Brother Jason Debrow visited last month and noted that the plaque has now been moved and is visible for all visitors.

Brother Jamie Belanger visited this Lodge in Reykjavik, Iceland. That's Jamie holding on to the light pole.



Late for Lodge and can't get into the building?

Brother Howard Kalet has installed a doorbell which will ring in the auditorium and the Electrician's room. The Electrician's room also includes a video monitor so that the Electrician can see who is ringing the bell and send someone down to let you in.

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True was elected to a term on the Portsmouth Common Council and served as an Alderman. He was also very active in numerous civic groups including: charter member of the Portsmouth Yacht Club; exalted ruler and district deputy of Portsmouth Lodge, No. 97, BPOE; commander of Storer Post, No. 1, Grand Army of the Republic; member of the Knights of Pythias, Improved Order of Red Men, Kearsarge Naval Veterans of Boston and Osgood Lodge No. 48, IOOF. He was a member of Oak Castle, No. 4, Knights of the Golden Eagle; a longtime member of the Warwick Club; and President and Chief Marshall of the Portsmouth Veteran Firemen's Association in which he had a hand tub (predecessor of a fire truck) named for him.

It won't be a surprise to you that Brother True Priest was also a very active member of the Masonic organizations in Portsmouth. He joined St. John's Lodge, No. 1 in Portsmouth on July 6, 1881 and was very active in the York Rite of Freemasonry in Portsmouth, particularly, DeWitt Clinton Commandery, Knights Templar. He was a good man!

By the way, KEARSARGE was named for Mount Kearsarge in Wilmot and Warner, NH. It is situated in the Kearsarge Mountain State Forest and is the highest point in Merrimack County. The name of the mountain evolved from a 1652 rendering of the native Pennacook tribal name for the mountain, *Carasarga*, which likely means "notch-pointed-mountain of pines." The Portsmouth built KEARSARGE was decommissioned after the Civil War and then was in and out of service for the next thirty years serving in the Pacific, Atlantic, Central American waters, and the Caribbean. On February 2, 1894, while en-route from Haiti to Nicaragua, she wrecked on Roncador Reef. Efforts to salvage her proved fruitless, and she was stricken from the Navy list of ships later that year.



Alan M. Robinson, PM

Historian

August 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Stated Communication

Wednesday, August 6, 2025

(Dinner 6:00, Meeting 7:00)

Dinner—Pulled Pork Sliders

Officer dress—white tie and tails

Special Communication

Fellow Craft Degree

Brother Andrew Mitchell Kalet

Brother David Scott Kemper

Brother Charles Harrison Hudson

Brother Michael Kimon Fulis

Wednesday, August 27, 2025

(Dinner 6:00, Meeting 7:00)

Dinner—Baked Tortellini

Officer dress—white tie and tails

**Contact
Information:**

Michael A., Hudson
Worshipful Master
Hudson.mike@gmail.com
(207) 317-0861

Thomas W. Haslam, PM
Secretary
stjohnstom@comcast.net
603-498-7205

St. John's Lodge

Historical Sketch

True W. Priest

Do you remember the story of the American Civil War battle between the ALABAMA and the KEARSARGE? It was a great naval battle and a turning point for the Union in the Civil War.

The Confederate States Ship ALABAMA was a screw-powered sloop-of-war built in 1862 for the Confederate States Navy by a shipyard in Birkenhead on the River Mersey, opposite Liverpool, England. For several years during the Civil War, ALABAMA sailed all over the globe as a highly successful confederate raider that captured and burned 65 mostly merchant vessels at sea.

The United States Ship KEARSARGE was a Mohican-class steam sloop-of-war built by the Portsmouth Navy Yard and commissioned at Portsmouth on January 24, 1862. She was deployed to European waters in search of confederate raiders, and in June 1864, while in the English Channel near Cherbourg, France, she found ALABAMA in port undergoing maintenance and taking on supplies. Sitting at anchor near the mouth of the port, KEARSARGE had ALABAMA trapped.

On June 19, 1862, rather than be captured without a fight, ALABAMA put out to sea. KEARSARGE pulled anchor and steamed out on an intercepting path about six miles offshore. Visible from shore, the two ships circled each other and at 10:20 in the morning, from a range of 1,000 yards, ALABAMA opened fire on KEARSARGE with her superior weaponry. The Portsmouth built KEARSARGE had a strong protective outer hull that withstood three rapid rounds of cannon assault and suffered only minor damage. KEARSARGE then proceeded to return fire with her battery of guns that had never been used in a naval engagement. Circling each other about seven times, KEARSARGE skillfully maneuvered into position, and with deliberate resolve, aimed below the waterline, firing her heavy guns into ALABAMA's side. Witnesses on shore indicated that ALABAMA fired about 370 rounds, averaging one round per minute per gun, compared to KEARSARGE's gun crews, who fired less than half that number, but took more careful aim. One of the final blows came when KEARSARGE shot an 11-inch shell that ripped open a gaping hole on ALABAMA's starboard waterline. The hull quickly flooded and the ship's boilers were disabled. At 12:24 pm, ALABAMA sunk stern first in 40 fathoms of water (240 feet), leaving many of her crew floundering in the sea. Of her 170 member crew, ALABAMA suffered 19 fatalities and 21 wounded. KEARSARGE rescued most of the survivors, but 41 of ALABAMA's officers and crew, including her captain, were rescued and taken ashore by a private British steam yacht that had come out to watch the battle.

Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles later wrote to the KEARSARGE Commanding Officer, Captain Winslow, saying, "You will please express to the officers and crew of the Kearsarge the satisfaction of the Government at this

victory over a vessel superior in tonnage, superior in the number of guns, and superior in the number of her crew. The battle was so brief, the victory so decisive, and the comparative results so striking that the country will be reminded of the brilliant actions of our infant Navy, which have been repeated and illustrated in this engagement."

Kearsarge's Chief Engineer, William Cushman, expressed his delight with his fellow officers and crew, saying, "I respectfully report that the only injury received in the engine department during our engagement with the Alabama ... was to the smoke pipe, which was perforated through both sections by a 100-pound rifle shell, which exploded as it was coming through, tearing out a ragged hole of about 3 feet in diameter and carrying away three of the chain guys, and to the top of engine, room hatch, which was cut completely through and across by a shell. I would further report that all the assistant engineers and the firemen and coal heavers behaved with perfect coolness, and were attentive to their duty through the action. ... I would also mention ... First-Class Fireman True W. Priest for quickness and attention in charge of the after fire hose during the alarm of fire in the action."

True William Priest was born in Nottingham, NH on October 10, 1835, the son of Thomas J. and Harriet (True) Priest. He attended public schools in Nottingham and Somersworth. When the Civil War broke out, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served with distinction onboard USS KEARSARGE. Following the War and having received an honorable discharge from the Navy, he relocated to Portsmouth where he was employed at the Portsmouth Navy Yard as a machinist. Following his retirement from the Navy Yard, he opened a successful saloon at 20 Market Square in Portsmouth from which he sold lager, cigars, tobacco and whiskey. In 1902, he moved the saloon to Ladd Street where it continued to operate until his death in 1909.

On January 2, 1866, 30 year old True married 27 year old Elizabeth H. Wendell of Portsmouth. They lived on Daniel Street and later on State Street. In 1903 they purchased the building at 33 Islington Street at the intersection of Tanner Street and replaced it with a beautiful home. They had four children: Oliver, Caroline, Effie and Gertrude. Following the passing of his parents, Oliver and his wife Mary (Whittier) Priest and their family lived in that home on Islington Street. In 1995, that same home was unoccupied and it was lost in a fire; the resulting vacant lot was used as parking for Kline's furniture which was located next door. Kline's was razed in 2009, and a mixed-use five-story building now stands in its place at 51 Islington Street.

True W. Priest died on February 20, 1909 in Portsmouth of a neurodegenerative disorder called Ataxic Paraplegia which severely affected his ability to walk; he was 73 years old. His wife Lizzie died a few years later on March 27, 1912; she was also 73 years old. They are buried in the family plot at the South Cemetery in Portsmouth along with their children.

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