

# The Lamplight

The Quarterly Newsletter of  
the Chancellor Robert R Livingston  
Masonic Library of the Grand Lodge of New York  
[nymasoniclibrary.org](http://nymasoniclibrary.org)  
(212) 337-6619

Summer 2021

The Chancellor Robert R Livingston Masonic Library serves as the central research library of the Grand Lodge of New York. The Mission of the Library is to collect, preserve, interpret, and support the research and education for a community of scholars, including Freemasons, academics, undergraduate and graduate students, and the general public. Our institution features the foremost collections of the history, philosophy, culture and organization of American and International Freemasonry, with an emphasis on Freemasonry in New York State.

## From the Director

In light of the increasing numbers of New Yorkers getting their COVID-19 vaccinations, the Grand Secretary approved of new reopening guidelines for the Library & Museum. As of April 19th, the Library has been open to visitors with specific guidelines in place. These guidelines are found at: <https://nymasoniclibrary.org/re-opening/>.

A few highlights of the aforementioned guidelines are: the Library is open to visitors by appointment only; patrons are required to wear a mask to enter the Library; sign the visitor log; and no more than five patrons are allowed in the Library at any one time (including those who have appointments). Even though patrons will still have the option to send their books back to the Library in the mail, all in-person book returns/checkouts and research sessions need to be set up by appointment. Please email me at [Avastola@nymasoniclibrary.org](mailto:Avastola@nymasoniclibrary.org) or Joseph Patzner (email: [Jpatzner@nymasoniclibrary.org](mailto:Jpatzner@nymasoniclibrary.org)) if you need to set up an appointment.

Stay tuned for the next issue of The Lamplight e-newsletter, which will be circulated in the Fall.

Fraternally yours,

Bro. Alexander Vastola, Director

## **From the Library Trustees**

Dear Friends of The Lamplight,

Welcome to our second edition of the Library's Quarterly Newsletter, The Lamplight! I thank you for the many positive comments we received on the content of our first issue. We are committed to making our Newsletter accessible throughout our jurisdiction by publishing virtually. We know the economics of it works for us. We hope the convenience and continuous availability of this format makes it a favorable experience for you, as well.

Most important, we hope that this newest fraternal publication becomes a vital portal into the world of Masonic Education and learning in our Grand Jurisdiction. You will GLEAN information about upcoming Library lectures. You will LEARN about fascinating artifacts in our collection. You will be INFORMED of additions to the online Library. You will be able to READ reviews of important Masonic-related literary works. All of the Library's professional staff contribute to these efforts. I thank them for their daily efforts to make the Livingston Library the outstanding institution that it is.

I thank you, our readership, as well. Your generosity through the Brotherhood Fund, and by your individual donations, help to keep our initiatives going. These are tokens of your appreciation for the products and services we provide to our membership, each and every day. Without your support, we could not maintain our status as a world-class Masonic Library.

Until the Fall edition of The Lamplight in September, be safe and well.

Most fraternally,

Steve King, President  
Livingston Library Board of Trustees

## **Staff Featured Article: The Traveling Silver Trowel of Justice Lodge No. 753**

By Alexander Vastola and Ratirat Osiri

\*Images of the trowel and pages from the traveling trowel album taken by Ratirat Osiri

The story of the Traveling Trowel began with R.'W.'. C. Fred Crosby. R.'W.'. Crosby was the Senior Master of Ceremonies of Justice Lodge No. 753 in New York. In 1905, he suggested the idea of sending a Masonic trowel on a journey from Lodge to Lodge across North America, carrying the message of brotherly love and bringing the brethren closer. His proposal was enthusiastically received by the members of his Lodge. Thus, the "Silver Trowel Committee" was formed. This Committee was composed of seven members: W.'. Charles Glenn (Master), W.'. Alfred Stevane, W.'. J. Edgar Titzell, W.'. E. Percy Howard, Bro. Richard Berger, Bro. Joseph W. Phair (Secretary), and R.'W.'. C. Fred Crosby serving as the committee's Chairman. The Silver Trowel Committee proposed their project to the Grand Master of the New York Grand Lodge at the time, M.'W.'. Frank H. Robinson, and he fully supported their idea.



*The Traveling Trowel inside the leather sleeve presented by Oakland Lodge No. 188, California.*

The Traveling Silver Trowel was engraved with a female figure representing Justice, the symbol of Justice Lodge. Throughout its journey, the “Trowel Album,” a book accompanying the Silver Trowel, would record the details, events, and the signatures of the members involved. The Album also contained the portraits of the Silver Trowel Committee, and the following resolution by the Grand Master of New York Grand Lodge:

*“Whereas, the Trowel teaches all Master Masons that it should ever be their beneficent duty to spread the cement of brotherly love and affection among the craft, whenever and wherever opportunity offers:*

*Therefore, Justice Lodge, no. 753 of the Eighth Masonic District of the Grand Jurisdiction of the State of New York, worthily desiring to multiply such opportunities, send forth this Silver Trowel to journey among the brethren, throughout the length and breadth of the United States, bearing wherever it may go, a message of friendship, and trusting that it may prove a worthy instrument in uniting more closely the brethren of the divers Lodges, who might otherwise never have labored together in wielding this, the chiefest of the working tool of the Master Mason, in joining more firmly the living stones in our great fraternal structure of Free and Accepted Masonry. This we do with the full sanction and approbation of Most Worshipful Frank H. Robinson, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New York.”*

The dedication and consecration ceremony took place at the current Masonic Temple on 23rd street, New York, on October 30th, 1905. This marked the beginning of the historic journey of the famous Silver Trowel across the United States, as well as Canada and Mexico. A Trowel Album was created to document the Traveling Trowel’s journey, with pages filled with signatures of lodge officers, lodge delegation records, photographs, and beautifully illustrated lithographs.

The Trowel Album records several instances where the Traveling Silver Trowel was used in special ceremonies. For example, it was brought to the ceremony of the laying the cornerstone of the Washington Memorial in Alexandria, Virginia.





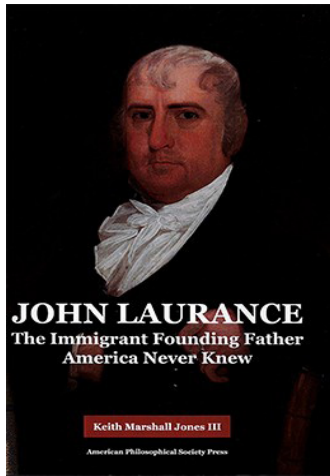
*The trowel was used for a Masonic ceremony at Theodore Roosevelt's grave by Matinecock Lodge No. 806.*

The Trowel eventually celebrated its homecoming to Justice Lodge on December 4th, 1923. The Trowel's entire journey took 22 years and almost 20,000 miles. After the homecoming, the Trowel still visited a few more lodges until 1936. With the courtesy of Justice Lodge, the famous Traveling Silver Trowel has become part of the Chancellor Robert R Livingston Masonic Library and Museum collection.

## Virtual Lecture Announcement

Virtual Lecture:

“John Laurance, the Immigrant Founding Father America Never Knew”



American Philosophical Society Press, 2019

American Philosophical Society Press, 2019

Featuring: Keith Marshall Jones III

Thursday June 24, 7:00 PM

To Register, go to: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/john-laurance-the-immigrant-founding-father-america-never-knew-tickets-153043678763>

**Lecture Synopsis:** JOHN LAURANCE, the Immigrant Founding Father America Never Knew is the never-before-told story of the only non-native-born citizen ever to rise within two heartbeats of the American Presidency. It's an inspiring journey from off-the-boat teenage immigrant nobody into the Early Republic's inner governing circle. "Past Master" of Manhattan's St. John's No. 2 Masonic Lodge, Brother Laurance was General George Washington's wartime Judge Advocate General, Alexander Hamilton's thirty-year intimate friend and legislative champion, James Madison's formidable House adversary, and President John Adams's Senate ally to launch the first true American Navy during quasi-war with France. Laurance was New York City's forceful pro-mercantile voice in both houses of the state legislature, Confederation Congress, and the First United States Congress. Laurance's striving lawyer's eyes provide fresh lens on the role of immigrants in our nation's founding, while challenging the traditional founding father myth. And there is no better view of the rise and fall of America's first political party (the Federalists) than from his insider seat.

**About the Speaker:** Keith Marshall Jones III is an independent writer and historian who is the great-grandson (times three) of Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall. He earned his MBA from Harvard in 1972, and worked three decades in advertising/promotion before leaving the corporate world to become founding President of the Ridgefield (CT) Historical Society and a hands-on historian. In addition to his book, John Laurance, he has written three other books: *The Farms of Farmingville*, (2001), *Farmers Against the Crown* (2002, 2008, 2014), and *Congress as My Government* (2008).

*Thank you to the 4th Manhattan District Square Club for their sponsorship of our lecture series!*

### Upcoming Virtual Library Lectures:

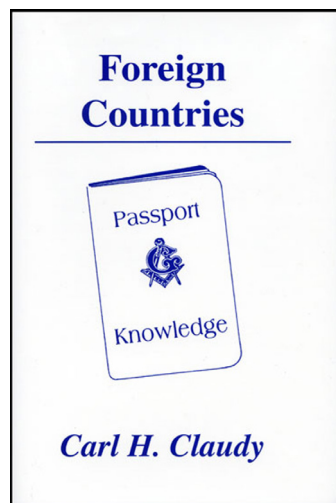
July 29, 2021: Jeremy John Bell: “Freemason’s Harlot” (book about Bro. William Hogarth)

August 26, 2021: Michael Kern: “The Master’s Emblem”

September 23, 2021: Eugene Heath: “From the Lodge at Kilwinning: Adam Smith in the Words of Alexander Gillies”

### **Book Review** **By Alexander Vastola** *Foreign Countries*

By Carl H. Claudy; Richmond: Macoy Publishing & Masonic Supply Co., Inc., 2006; 118 pages



Macoy Publishing & Masonic Supply Co., Inc., 2006

\*From Masonic Reading Course No. 1: “Who Comes Here?”

What is the true meaning of the various symbols of Freemasonry? This is the question that Masonic writer Carl H. Claudy tries to answer in his book, *Foreign Countries*. Brother Claudy states that he titled this book *Foreign Countries* because there are many ‘foreign countries’ (page 116) in Freemasonry. He states that to know the deeper meaning of the symbols of the three degrees of Masonry, a Freemason cannot simply travel to other places where Freemasonry exists and interact with the Brotherhood. He must also have a deeper understanding of the different symbols that the Mason sees in the Masonic degrees in the Lodge. This enhanced understanding allowing him to be more engaged with the Craft. Brother Claudy strives in this book to explain the deeper meaning of each major symbol of the Masonic degrees.

The first strength of Foreign Countries is its format. It was organized into three sections of essays for the first, second, and third degrees of Masonry, and most of the essays on the symbols were not long (e.i., 4-10 pages each). This made it easier to gradually read through the book and absorb Brother Claudy's interpretations of the symbols. The second strength of the book was its thorough interpretation of each symbol. For example, when Brother Claudy explained the "Winding Stairs" (pages 51-54) in the Fellowcraft Degree, he considers the deeper meaning of the Winding Stairs: that they represent a Mason's need to have faith as he journeys through Freemasonry. This is because a Winding Stair requires faith for him to reach the top, since the goal of reaching the top of the stairs is not as easily visible as on a straight staircase.

The one area that would have enhanced Claudy's book is an inclusion of citations. Without citations, it difficult for the reader to dig deeper into other sources and continue to learn the interpretations of the various Masonic symbols.

Overall, I recommend Foreign Countries to any newly-made Master Mason to help them understand the deeper meaning of the symbols of Freemasonry.

## **Notice About the Library's Odilo E-Resources Platform**

The Livingston Masonic Library offers several Masonic books through Odilo, our new e-resources platform: <http://nymasoniclibrary.odilo.us/>. Email Joseph Patzner ([Jpatzner@nymasoniclibrary.org](mailto:Jpatzner@nymasoniclibrary.org)) to set up an Odilo account.

## **Additional Library Resources**

### **Masonic Reading Course**

The Library offers 17 reading courses. Information about the Library's Masonic Reading Course is available at: <https://nymasoniclibrary.org/reading-course/>

### **Genealogy Research**

The Library provides Masonic information on Master Masons who were raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason within the New York Grand Jurisdiction.

Information about the Library's Masonic genealogy research services is available at:

<https://nymasoniclibrary.org/research/>

### **Research Requests**

For non-genealogy Masonic research requests, email Librarian, Joseph Patzner at [Jpatzner@nymasoniclibrary.org](mailto:Jpatzner@nymasoniclibrary.org)



## **To Our Loyal Patrons**

We hope you continue to support our mission to advance the understanding of, and appreciation for, Masonic history and culture in New York State. There are two ways that donations can be made. First, checks can be made out to “Livingston Masonic Library” and sent to our mailing address below. Second is through the Brotherhood Fund Campaign portal on the Grand Lodge webpage (<https://nymasons.org/>).

**The Chancellor Robert R Livingston Masonic Library**  
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**Telephone: (212) 337-6619**  
**<https://www.nymasoniclibrary.org>**