



The Lamplight

The Quarterly Newsletter
of the Chancellor Robert R Livingston
Masonic Library of the Grand Lodge of New York
nymasoniclibrary.org
(212) 337-6620

SUMMER 2023

Mission Statement

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 Trustees of the Library

Dear Friends of the Livingston Library,

Welcome once again to the summer issue of *The Lamplight*. We have been very busy at the Library this year acquiring new artifacts, cataloging new volumes and, most important, reaching out to the Lodges to present programs of interest and enlightenment.

One very exciting project is the Library's role in the upcoming Centenary Celebration of The Grand Lodge of Finland, which was formally established by the Grand Lodge of New York in 1924. Our Finnish Brethren are planning a major celebration in September of next year, including a major exhibit highlighting the history of their Grand Lodge. The planned exhibits, which will be housed in the National Archives complex there, will include creations from the United Grand Lodge of England, the Grand Lodge of Sweden and our own Grand Lodge of New York. The planning for this event has been going on for more than a year. As part of our contribution, the Library has been charged with providing a number of artifacts and virtual representations for its exhibit space. The experience has been an exciting creative enterprise, giving us opportunity to display the unique impact New York Freemasonry has exerted on our worldwide Fraternity.

There will be many cultural and social activities planned for the Centenary, and our Finnish Brethren are hoping that a large delegation of New York Freemasons will be in attendance to help them celebrate. Details of the trip will be forthcoming.

I hope that I and the other Library Trustees will be able to see many of you later this month at the St. John's Day celebration in Utica. See you then.

R. : W. : Stephen S. King
President, Livingston Library Board of Trustees

From the Executive Director

Over the last few months, more and more brothers are signing up for the [Reading Course](#) . This free scholarly outlet is comprised of 17 courses that is comprised of publicly published books - ranging from the historic to the esoteric. All Brethren in good standing are encouraged to access the Reading Course. Some Reading Course materials can be accessed conveniently through [Odilo](#), our digital reading platform. Hard copies of readings can still be obtained through our mailing system.

An additional service that is popular among the Brethren is our [Masonic genealogy](#) research. This ancestral research is a free service for Masons from this and other Grand Jurisdictions (Non-Masons must pay a \$35 processing fee to have their genealogy request answered.). The Library's genealogy services is an important resource when retrieving fraternal history for the Lewis Jewel or for joining the Order of the Eastern Star. Often, the family members seek out the Library's genealogy services to provide closure on the fraternal life of loved ones who now reside in the Celestial Lodge.

In addition to the above, your Livingston Masonic Library contributed to the Grand Lodge Annual Meeting by supplying a magnificent Tiler's sword, gavels and square and compasses that were used during the assembly. At the request of the Custodians of the Work, the NY Ritual Monitors are digitized. To our surprise, we found 23 NY Monitors from 1884 to 1989 with changes among them. Without fail every couple of weeks, we discover something remarkable that we have in our possession. While working on the Finland Centennial Celebration coming up next year, we discovered a first edition of the "The Freemason's Monitor" by Thomas Smith Webb from 1797. Thomas Webb is attributed with being one the greatest influences in the Masonic Standard Works and Lectures that is practiced in the United States.

Guided by the expertise of Ratirat Osiri, Museum Technician, and Alexander Vastola, Director of Collections Services, we will continue to present artifacts and programs. It is my responsibility to bring the Library and Museum to the Brethren. I welcome invitations to present at every lodge within our Grand Jurisdiction.

I would like to remind everyone that we are open. Except for researchers who request access to materials from our collection, appointments are not required to enter the Library. Also, the Library will again be hosting live lectures. If you have an interest in presenting at the Library, or know someone who might, please contact me directly.

Similarly, if there are insights on how the Chancellor Robert R Livingston Library can better serve the Craft, I am only an email (mlarocco@nymasoniclibrary.org) or phone call away (212-337-6620).

Stay tuned for our next issue of The Lamplight in the fall.

Fraternally Yours,

V.∴ W.∴ Michael LaRocco
Executive Director, Livingston Masonic Library

An Overview of New York Masonic Genealogy Resources

A significant part of the Livingston Masonic Library's collections contains information on the members of Masonic Lodges chartered by the Grand Lodge of New York. The Library's collections contain a variety of records that can confirm Masonic membership in New York. The earliest of these records are the Grand Lodge Member Registers. Before 1787, there was no statewide registry of Master Mason for the Grand Lodge of New York. By 1787, the Grand Lodge of New York began to record the names and information of Masons who were members of its Masonic Lodges. There are three sets of these Registers: 1787-1832, 1832-1853, and 1854-the end of the 19th century.

One of the largest collections of member records is the Lodge Returns. These records dates from 1840-1952. The Lodge Returns (also called Lodge Registry Returns) are the worksheets that Masonic Lodges submitted to the Grand Lodge at the end of every year to report on their members (who was initiated, who affiliated, who paid their dues, etc.). The original copies of these Returns are stored at the Masonic Home in Utica, NY. The Library uses a microfilm set of these returns to help answer Masonic genealogy requests. In addition, there is also the Docuware card catalog of New York Masons. This record series documents New York Freemasons from 1920-1990.

These member records can provide a lot of genealogical data for researchers. They list the Grand Lodge ID number, the Lodge number (the number the Mason was assigned once initiated in the Lodge), their Lodge name and number, their Masonic degree, the dates they were initiated, passed, and raised, and if they paid their dues. Also, these records show non-Masonic information: the age of the candidate at his initiation; his occupation, birthplace and residence. If the member affiliated or was a dual member with a Masonic Lodge in New York, these records also document where the Mason was originally raised. When a Mason demits, withdraws, is expelled, dropped from a lodge's roll or dies, this information is also recorded in these Returns and catalog cards. A recorded date of death indicates that a Mason was in good standing with his Lodge when he passed away.

The Library also has secondary resources that can assist with answering Masonic genealogy requests. For instance, the Library has many biography and photo files of past members. In addition, there are complete sets of the Grand Lodge of New York Proceedings, which document members' involvement with the Grand Lodge of New York, as well as the American Lodge of Research Transactions. There is also a section in the Library for locally-published Lodge histories, many of which list information on their past members. The Lodge Historical Files contain papers that document the Masonic membership and activities of Lodge members. Furthermore, the Library has the series of Individual Lodge Files, which contain the founding documents for every Masonic Lodge chartered by the Grand Lodge of New York. These papers document early Lodge members, founders of Masonic Lodges, and early Masonic Lodge officers.

Information on how to submit a Masonic genealogy request is available on the Library's website at [Masonic genealogy](#). This service is free for Master Masons in New York State and Masons from other Grand Jurisdictions that the Grand Lodge of New York recognizes. Non-Masons must pay a \$35 processing fee to have their genealogy request answered. Beyond a family member understanding the fraternal journey of their ancestor, the Library's genealogy information is important when confirming Masonic membership for a Lewis Jewel candidate. Similarly, with the Order of the Easter Star, confirmation of Masonic ties is important to membership.



(Image Courtesy Wikimedia Commons)

An example of someone whose Masonic membership was verified using the Library's Masonic member records: Matthew Vassar, the founder of Vassar College. He was a member of Solomon's Lodge No. 1, located in Poughkeepsie, NY. He was an active of the Lodge after he was raised in 1823, and he appeared in all the Lodge Returns for this Lodge up through 1827.

Alexander Vastola
Director of Collections Services, Livingston Masonic Library

A Gift to Albert Pike from Italy

In this issue of *The Lamplight*, I am excited to share the photograph relic that has been rediscovered in the Grand Lodge of New York's photograph collection. The artifact involved not only one, but three monumental figures of Scottish Rite Freemasons.

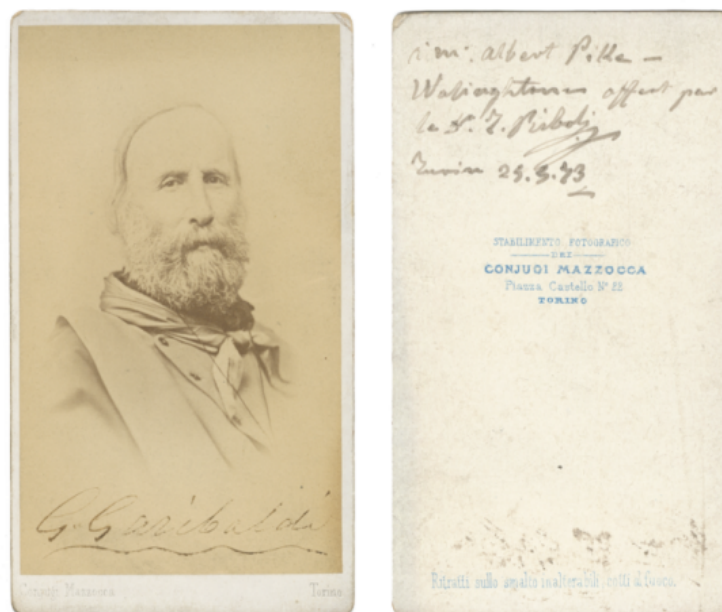
It is a cabinet photograph of Giuseppe Garibaldi, taken and developed by Conjugi Mazzocca in Torino (Turin). At the bottom of his portrait, a signature by Garibaldi himself. On the back of the card, it was addressed to Albert Pike in Washington, and signed, "T. Riboli, Torino, May 25th, 1873."

Giuseppe Garibaldi was the Italian revolutionary fighter, and a prominent member of Italian Freemasons. He was elected as the Honorary Grand Master of Italy in 1864.

T. Riboli was Dr. Timoteo Riboli, the Sovereign Grand Commander of Supreme Council of Turin. He was also a close friend and the personal doctor of Garibaldi. Dr. Timoteo Riboli became the Sovereign Grand Commander of Turin in 1885. There were several Scottish Rite Supreme Councils established around Italy. However, the Supreme Council of Turin was the only Supreme Council in Italy to be recognized by America's Northern and Southern Jurisdictions to represent Italy. It later merged with the Supreme Council of Rome into the Supreme Council of Italy in 1887. Dr. Timoteo Riboli then became the Sovereign Grand Commander of Italy until his death in 1895.

It is said that Albert Pike had held Dr. Timoteo Riboli in high regard, and the correspondence letters between them are documented. It is possible that Dr. Timoteo Riboli sent the photograph of his friend, Giuseppe Garibaldi, to Pike as a gift when he was the Grand Representative of Supreme Council of Italy at Turin, near the Supreme Council of Southern Jurisdiction in 1873.

It is unknown how the photograph ended up hidden within the Grand Lodge's collection.



Notice About the Library's Odilo E-Resources Platform

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The Livingston Masonic Library offers several Masonic books and periodicals through Odilo, our e-resource platform: <http://nymasoniclibrary.odilo.us/>.

To set up an Odilo account, email Alexander Vastola at: Avastola@nymasoniclibrary.org

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, 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 Alexander Vastola at: Avastola@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://www.nymasons.org/>).

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