



## *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) 337-6620

*Fall 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 Brethren and friends of the Livingston Masonic Library,

Welcome to the Autumn edition of *The Lamplight*. The “dark” summer season has not been slow for Library Staff. Trustees have been travelling to Lodges and various events representing the Library and sharing information about our programs and other educational initiatives. We have also made plans to re-institute the ‘live’ Lecture Series in New York City this year. These were always popular, and we are excited about starting them up again as conditions allow in the post-pandemic environment. The live presentations will not take the place of our virtual lectures. These latter have proven very popular and have extended our reach significantly. We are committed to using both platforms to serve the needs of the Library’s patrons and supporters. When we have a confirmed lineup of presenters for both versions, we will be promoting them vigorously.

The contact information for Bro. Michael LaRocco, Bro. Alexander Vastola and Ratirat Osiri on our website ([www.masoniclibrary.org](http://www.masoniclibrary.org)) and at the end of every edition of *The Lamplight*. They can also serve as a sort of suggestion box for the kinds of things on which you would like to see us focus. Whether it is scheduling presentations in your Lodge, highlighting artifacts in our virtual museum, or keeping you up to date on changes to our collection. In short, our aim is to make the Library a place where everyone’s interests can find a home and a platform. Please stop in—either virtually or personally—and spend some quality time satisfying those interests.

R. : W. : Stephen S. King

President, Chancellor Robert R Livingston Masonic Library

### From the Executive Director

Did you know, your Grand Lodge possesses (possibly) the only known proof that Antonio López de Santa Anna was a Freemason? Though speculated for years, the fraternal membership of the four-time president of Mexico and military leader was Masonic lore until the Library staff came across the “[Santa Anna Certificate](#).” Unfortunately, the Santa Anna Certificate has seen better days. Still, we have worked with a conservationist to frame and display the historical and fraternal document. The above hyperlink shows the conserved Santa Anna Certificate, along with a Scottish Rite publication on the significance of the document to fraternal and US history.

As a reminder, the Library is here to provide Masonic light and services to all within our Grand Jurisdiction. First, in-person lectures will commence on September 28th, in the Chapter Room at Grand Lodge at 8 pm. Second, the Library staff is available to present to lodges and districts. Third, our invaluable [Reading Course](#) is a free scholarly outlet, comprised of 17 courses - ranging from the historic to the esoteric. Some Reading Course materials can be accessed conveniently through [Odilo](#), our digital reading platform. Fourth, the [Masonic genealogy](#) research is popular among the Brethren.

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](mailto: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



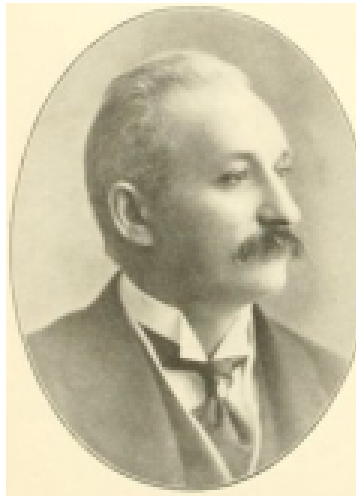
## The New York Masonic Genealogy Project

By Alexander Vastola, Director of Collections Services

This summer, the Livingston Masonic Library embarked on the New York Masonic genealogy project. The aim of this project is to consolidate the member records of New York Masons into one searchable internal database that will make it easier for the Library to verify membership for members of Masonic Lodges chartered by the Grand Lodge of the State of New York. Since July, four Masonic volunteers have already reached out to the Library expressing interest in working on this project. In addition to planning the overall workflow for consolidating the Masonic member records, we have transcribed over 500 names from the 1832-1853 Grand Lodge of New York member register into Excel. Many of the volunteers who have come forward are interested in performing this transcription work, scheduled to begin this fall.

The work of the New York Masonic Genealogy project has verified the Masonic membership of some prominent New York individuals. For example, the microfilmed lodge returns revealed that Lyman G. Bloomingdale, one of the co-founders of Bloomingdale's, was a Mason in New York. The lodge returns show that he received his Masonic degrees in Adelphi Lodge No. 23, located in Manhattan, New York: he was initiated on September 2, 1872, passed on September 16, 1872, and raised on October 7, 1872. Bloomingdale became a Mason the same year he co-founded the namesake-department store with his brother, Joseph B. Bloomingdale. Bro. Bloomingdale would eventually demit from Adelphi Lodge in 1883 to join Mount Neboh Lodge No. 257 (also located in Manhattan, New York), but he remained a Mason in good standing until his death on October 12, 1905.

The Library is still looking for volunteers to help with the New York Masonic Genealogy Project. If interested, please email Alexander Vastola at [Avastola@nymasoniclibrary.org](mailto:Avastola@nymasoniclibrary.org)



Lyman G. Bloomingdale  
(Courtesy Wikimedia Commons)

**By Ratirat Osiri, Museum Technician**

### **Royal Ark Mariners Degree Artifacts**

A few weeks ago, a researcher reached out to us, searching for the 'Royal Ark Mariner Degree' artifact in our collection. Upon working with this research, I came aware of the ultra rare artifacts we have in the Grand Lodge of New York collection. *This Lamplight* is the perfect opportunity to share a bit of the artifacts' story with those who might find them interesting.

The artifact is a silk apron, decorated with printed imagery and rainbow color trim on the edge. The engraving has the reference of Moses' Noah Ark and symbols of various Masonic degrees. While there is no information of this apron in the library index, it was mentioned in the Transaction of American Lodge of Research.



According to Bro. Ward K. St. Clair, the Grand Lodge of New York received the apron in 1949 from Bro. John. B. Mullan, who received it from Secretary of George Washington Memorial Association, who originally received it from J. Carleton Esty, the grandson of Bro. Charles Esty who was a member of Morton Commandery No. 4, of New York City in 1872.<sup>1</sup>

The plate it was printed from was made by Daniel Dodd and John Luckington, and published in London by Isaac Moseley, Ebenezer Sibby, Charles Sinclair, and William Hannam in 1794.<sup>1,2</sup> They were British Masons who were, more or less, involved with Knights Templar and Royal Ark Mariners Degree. William Hannam was the Acting Grand Master of Knights Templar. Charles Sinclair also appeared as Secretary in the Knight Templar warrants and was a Grand Equerry in the Grand Conclave in 1807.<sup>2</sup>

Apparently, the Grand Lodge of New York's archive claims that there are only six known artifacts printed from this engraving design, and two of them are in the Grand Lodge of New York's possession. The only

After the apron is identified, it led to another artifact in certificate collection, the Warrant of Granville Encampment of New York. The Grand Lodge received the warrant in 1940 from Bro. Morris Rote-Rosen, Past Master of Granville Lodge No. 55, who received it from Mrs. Ada Tobey.<sup>2</sup>



Granville Encampment was warranted in 1803 by the British Royal Ark Mariners, granted the authority to work on “make and install Masons in all superior Degrees above Craft Masonry, except the Royal Arch.”<sup>2</sup> The other known warrant of this kind, from the same officers, was issued to Washington Encampment in New London.<sup>3</sup>

After the Grand Commandery of New York was organized, the Granville Encampment requested to join but it was unsuccessful, they were nonetheless still active until 1826, the same year when the Morgan Excitement and Anti-Masonic Movement broke out.<sup>2</sup>

#### Reference:

1. St. Clair, Ward K. “An Old Royal Ark Mariner Apron.” *The Transactions of the American Lodge of Research*, vol. 5, 1949, pp. 283–287.
2. St. Clair, Ward K. “Granville Encampment of Knights Templar.” *The Masonic Outlook*, Dec. 1940, pp. 64–65.
3. “Something for Masonic Antiquarians.” *The Masonic Review*, 1862.



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

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](mailto: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](mailto: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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