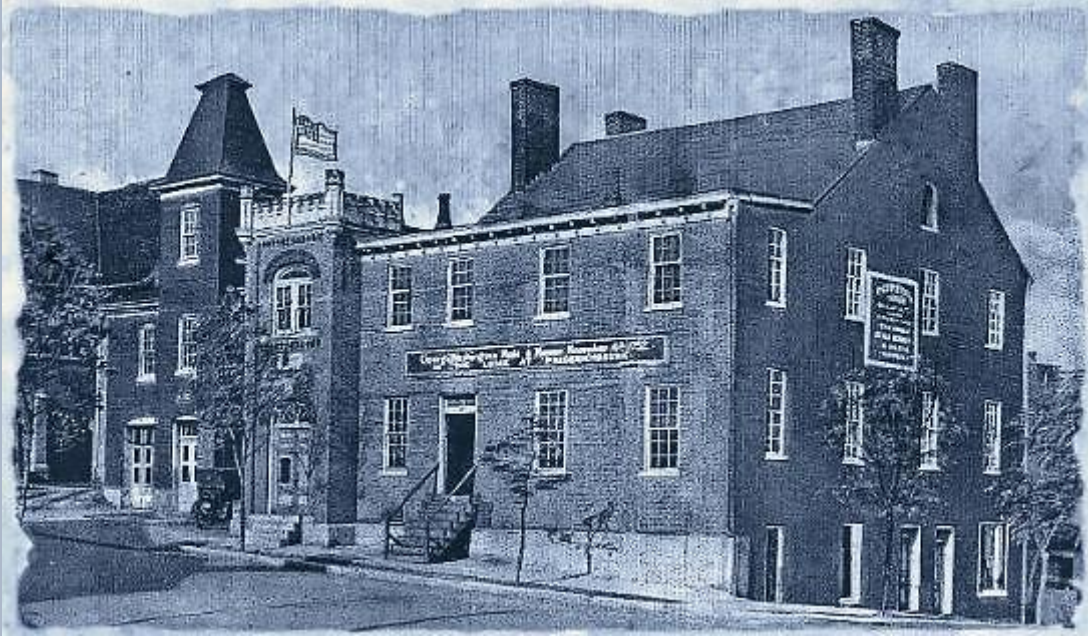


# **FREDERICKSBURG LODGE NO. 4, A.F. & A.M.**



## **TRESTLE BOARD**

**FIRST RECORDED MEETING - SEPTEMBER 1, 1752**

**SCOTTISH CHARTER - JULY 21, 1758**

**VIRGINIA CHARTER - JANUARY 30, 1787**

### **MOTHER LODGE OF ILL.: BRO.: GEORGE WASHINGTON**

803 Princess Anne St.  
Fredericksburg,  
VA 22401

[Masoniclodge4.org](http://Masoniclodge4.org)

**INITIATED NOVEMBER 4, 1752**

**PASSED MARCH 3, 1753**

**RAISED AUGUST 4, 1753**

Stated Meeting  
Second Fridays  
(except Nov. 4)

Dinner 6:30 pm  
Meeting 7:30 pm

**'GUARDIANS OF THE CRAFT,  
BUILDERS OF TOMORROW'**

**OCTOBER 2025**

Degree Work  
Wednesdays 7pm  
(check calendar)

## OCTOBER 2025 EVENTS

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1  MM practice 7 pm	2	3	4  Pancake Breakfast, 8 am
5	6	7	8  Lodge Practice & Clean Up 7 pm	9	10  Stated Comm. Dinner 6:30 pm Meeting 7:30	11  SLOT 10 am Ashland Lodge
12	13	14  Community Meal 4 pm	15  Degree or Ritual School 7 pm	16	17	18
19	20	21	22  Degree or Ritual School 7 pm	23	24	25
26	27	28	29  Degree or Ritual School 7 pm	30	31	

*Consult calendar on website for event details and updates.*

### Highlights from Last Month:

- Visit to Hay Market Lodge No. 313
- Johnson/Rowell/Dungan Area Ritual School in Kinsale
- Program by Wor. Jim Solomon of John A. Lejeune Lodge No. 350 – Freemasonry in Film

## ANNIVERSARIES & MILESTONES

### Masonic Anniversaries for October

Wor. Edward L. Donalson	56 yrs.	Bro. Kevin A. Valentine	20
Bro. Samuel G. Row	52	Bro. Richard D. Dey, Jr.	19
Bro. Jerry E. Austin	48	Bro. Christopher B. Ognek	15
Bro. Bobby J. Barnes	47	Bro. Michael D. Ognek	15
Bro. Don J. Rhynalds	44	Bro. Matthew P. Mason	14
Wor. Guy Masquefa	43	Bro. Stevie L. Ikner	11
Bro. John G. Lee	42	Wor. Shawn D. Bryar	9
Bro. Robert S. Belman	42	Bro. Frederick C. Edwards	9
Wor. Graham Raven	41	Bro. Edmund C. Witalec	9
Rt. Wor. Joel D. Ratliff, Sr.	40	Bro. Jacob M. Bryar	5
Bro. John F. Oliver	35	Bro. Taylor S. DeHart	5
Wor. Christopher S. Tripp	27	Bro. Luther E. Deyo	5
Bro. Marshall C. Campbell	24	Bro. Matthew D. Gish	5
Bro. Walter S. Davis	24	Bro. Shane R. Page	5
Bro. John C. W. Vincent	24	Bro. Charles L. Sheppard III	5
Bro. Robert F. Bowman	24	Bro. David W. Ellis	4
Bro. Justin S. Woodside	23	Bro. Seth R. Roderick	3

### Lodge No. 4 Visits Hay Market Lodge No. 313

On a recent evening, a group of Brethren from Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 made a fraternal visit to Hay Market Lodge No. 313 at their stated communication. What awaited was an evening marked by hospitality, fellowship, and shared Masonic light.

From the moment we entered, the warmth and Brotherly love extended to us was unmistakable. The Brethren of Hay Market Lodge embody the pride of their membership, and it was clear why they so readily introduce themselves as proud members of their Lodge. The camaraderie and atmosphere within their walls were not only genuine, but also truly worthy of emulation.

## **Fellowship & Refreshment**

The evening began with a meal that more than lived up to the rumors surrounding it. A hearty low-country boil was served, with every dish prepared to perfection, and the Brethren of Lodge No. 4 were quick to give thanks for the hands that prepared it. As if that were not enough, dessert featured ice cream and cookies, a sweet ending enjoyed by all present.

In the spirit of good customs, the Worshipful Master of Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 was presented with a gift that has since found its place of honor in his office, a Master Mason rubber duck, a token that carries fraternal charm!



## **Masonic light shared**

During the communication, the Worshipful Master of Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 presented a program on the Swedish Rite system of Freemasonry. The presentation was warmly received by the Brethren of Hay Market Lodge as well as our own visiting Brethren. The program offered a thoughtful glimpse into a system rich with history and symbolism.

As a token of gratitude, Worshipful Brad Fox, Master of Hay Market Lodge No. 313, was presented with our Lodge coin and the Master's coin of the year. Words

of thanks and appreciation were also exchanged, underscoring the importance of fellowship between Lodges.

### **A lesson in visiting**

Visits such as these remind us of the value of traveling Masonically. They broaden our perspective, deepen our fraternal bonds, and strengthen the ties that unite our Craft. Whenever the opportunity presents itself, I encourage Brethren to take the time to visit our neighbors in the fraternity. It is always time well spent.

### **Correspondence received**

We were honored to receive correspondence from Worshipful Master Brad Fox, who shared the following words on behalf of Hay Market Lodge:

*Worshipful Master Dove,*

*On behalf of Hay Market Lodge No. 313, thank you for visiting with us and for bringing so many Brothers along. Your presentation on the Swedish Rite was fantastic, clear, engaging, and deeply informative. You gave our Brethren a thoughtful look at a beautiful system of Masonry.*

*Please extend our appreciation to the visiting Brethren for their fellowship and support. Our doors are always open to you; we'd be honored to host you again anytime, program or no program.*

*Thank you as well for sharing your materials in advance. With your permission, we'd like to include them in our lodge's education archive for those who couldn't attend.*

*S&F,*

*WM Brad Fox*

*Hay Market Lodge No. 313*





R.W Shelby Chandler, Bro Seth Roderick, Bro George Dunlap, Wor. Mike Dove, Wor. Chris Tripp, Bro. Ken Carey, Wor. James Snyder

## Closing Reflection

As we reflect on our visit to Hay Market Lodge, it becomes clear how such evenings strengthen the very foundations of our Craft. Fellowship reminds us that the cement of brotherly love is not confined within the walls of our own Lodge, but extends wherever Freemasons gather.

Education reminds us that by sharing knowledge, whether of the Swedish Rite or of our own traditions, we keep alive the spirit of inquiry and growth that has long defined Masonry. And preservation reminds us that these experiences, like the artifacts and history entrusted to Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4, are to be cherished and passed forward.

May our travels continue to inspire us to preserve the past, embrace the present, and build the future of our noble institution together.

Sincerely,  
Mike Dove

## **Saints John**

From the earliest days of our Craft, Lodges of Free and Accepted Masons have been solemnly dedicated to the two Holy Saints John—John the Baptist and John the Evangelist. This dedication is no idle ornament; it is a tradition drawn from deep wells of history and clothed with profound allegory. To grasp its import, we must look both to the lineage of the custom and to the meaning it conveys within our system of symbols.

In the Middle Ages, the guilds of operative masons placed themselves beneath the patronage of saints. Such dedications were at once practical and sacred: a saint's feast day served as a fitting time for annual assemblies, elections, and convivial celebrations, while the invocation of a saint's protection lent divine sanction to their labors. Among many possible patrons (saints), the two Johns rose to preeminence.

John the Baptist, the stern herald crying repentance in the wilderness, the baptizer of Jesus, is honored on June 24, when the summer sun reaches its zenith. In towns, this day was observed with processions, fairs, and fires on the hilltops. For the craftsmen and the guild, the annual gathering was a natural time of the year, to elect officers, and to rejoice. John the Baptist's fearless honesty, his moral vigor, his sacrifice even unto death were qualities admired by builders who raised their works not for a short time like minimalist architecture so popular today, but solid buildings to withstand the judgment of centuries, particularly the great cathedrals.

John the Evangelist, the beloved disciple, is remembered on December 27, near the winter solstice, when the long night yields and light begins its return. John's Gospel opens with that very prescriptive declaration: "*In the beginning was the Word.*" Through the divine spark of the Supreme Architect, all knowledge and everything else flows from the Word. To Him we ascribe wisdom, spiritual sight, and the mysteries of divine love. To the masons

of old, inscribing a sacred story in stone and glass as a witness to eternal light, provided the perfect complement to the John the Baptist's uncompromising voice.

By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the operative guilds gave place to speculative Masonry, the twin dedications were already firmly established. Early Grand Lodge records speak of "St. John's Masonry" and of meetings held at their feasts. It was on the John the Baptist's day, June 24, 1717, that the Grand Lodge of England was formed, and many American Lodges, inheriting that legacy, followed suit.

The Saints John represent continuity: midsummer and midwinter, guild and Lodge, labor and reflection. They mark the rhythm of the year and the cycle of our inheritance. Yet beyond history lies allegory. The two Johns stand as parallel lines at the extremes of the solar course—one at the height of the sun's power, the other at its rebirth from darkness. They signify balance: zeal tempered by wisdom, moral law dignified by divine love. In dedicating our Lodges to both, we acknowledge that virtue lies not in extremes, but in harmony.

In our symbolism, the two lines of the Saints John, with the Holy Scriptures above, enclose the circle wherein the Master stands. That emblem teaches us that a Mason must walk uprightly, guided by sacred law, held steadfast between moral firmness and spiritual illumination. John the Baptist calls us to integrity and repentance; John the Evangelist, to love and insight. Together they remind us that no edifice of life can endure unless both the outer conduct and the inner soul are shaped to righteousness.

Their feasts, at the solstices, mirror the arc of the sun: midsummer fire and midwinter light. To enter the Lodge is to step into that cosmic order, to learn that our labor too is bounded by seasons—that discipline must be softened by charity, that outward toil must be joined with inward contemplation.

Here in Virginia, this dedication has always been cherished. Our Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 is recorded as meeting at the feast days in its earliest notices. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Virginia Lodges gathered their Brethren on the days of the Baptist and the Evangelist to install officers, to celebrate charity, and to renew the bonds of brotherhood under their patronage.



When we dedicate our Lodge to the Saints John, the exemplars between whom we must walk uprightly, we affirm not an old-fashioned usage, but perpetual lessons. Historically, because our forebears in the guilds adopted them as patrons, their feasts anchoring the year's round of labor and fellowship. Allegorically, because they embody the harmony which is revealed when we labor to balance zeal and wisdom, law and love, repentance and revelation. Within those parallel lines, beneath the light of Holy Writ, we learn to build, not merely with stone and timber, but with the durable materials of character, truth, and faith. And so shall our labor, rightly directed, endure through time and eternity.

Bro. Seth Roderick  
Sr. Warden

### Secretary's Corner

Brethren,

As we get into the fall, citations are going out to several Brethren for nonpayment of dues. If you're in that situation, please don't let things go any further. As we've said many times, we're willing to work with you to help retain your membership. If you haven't paid your dues for this year, please do so, as dues for next year will become due as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, at which time you may be liable for suspension.

If this doesn't apply to you but you haven't been to Lodge in a while, why not? Maybe you moved away but still value your membership in your Mother Lodge. If not, know that you're never far from our hearts. Maybe your work or family obligations don't allow you to attend. Maybe you're laboring for the Craft some other way. Life sometimes intervenes and only you know the length of your cable-tow. But if not...I'd ask you to ask yourself – are you getting your money's worth? If it's not your fellowship with your Brethren, what is it you value about being a Mason? If you're supporting our other appendant bodies, you're still doing the work of the Craft. But don't forget to support your Blue Lodges, as they're the root without which everything else would wither and die on the vine. Too often, the answer is in some ancient slight or grudge, long-forgotten to everyone else. Or the far too much hand-wringing about the faults of other Masons. Let's pause to remember that Solomon's Temple was built by craftsmen who kept their own tools sharp and free from rust. They didn't spend all their time worrying about their

Brother's tools. If you're like me, your own shortcomings are enough to keep you busy chipping away on yourself. All of which is to say that maybe it's time to come back home and see what you've been missing out on.

Briefly stepping into my LIW role, we received good feedback from our DDGM and others about the work that District 8 did at the Ritual School in Kinsale. This was one of the best ritual performances we'd done, and your Lodge was a big part of that success, and especially Bro. Seth, who presided in the East for the conferral of the Fellowcraft Degree. Now we're looking ahead to several Master Mason's raisings this fall and we can definitely use your help. Come down on Wednesdays to brush up or to learn a new part. We always have room for willing hands.

### **Ice Cream, a Movie, and a Rainbow of Fellowship!**

Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 recently opened its doors to a joyful evening hosted by the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls. The occasion "**Ice Cream and a Movie**" proved to be more than just an event. It was an evening of fellowship, laughter, and youthful energy that brought together Rainbow members, prospects, and supporters for a cause rooted in service and community.

#### **Fun, Games, and Fellowship**

The afternoon was filled with all the right ingredients: sweet ice cream, lively music, engaging games, and a film that drew smiles and conversation across generations. In true Rainbow fashion, the gathering was not just about entertainment, but about building bonds, showcasing the vibrancy of the Fredericksburg Assembly, and reminding all in attendance that fellowship is at the heart of everything we do.



## A Grand Service Project Takes Root

One of the highlights of the evening was the dedication of a **Little Lending Library** placed proudly on the Lodge's porch. This library is the Grand Service Project of Miss Elise Hoglund, offering three categories of books, Adult, Teen, and Children, to ensure that readers of all ages may benefit. The small library stands as a big symbol: a gift to the community that reflects the values of Rainbow Girls, service, education, and charity.



### Leadership and Dedication

Though a small chapter, Fredericksburg's Rainbow Girls are blessed with inspiring leadership and committed members:

- **Melissa Almassy**, holds the distinguished title of **Grand Immortality** and serves as Regional Representative to Pennsylvania and Bolivia.
- **Bobbie Almassy**, her steadfast supporter, serves as **Mother Advisor** and contributes at the highest level on the Grand Executive Board.
- **Kensley and Caleb Lawrence** journeyed from Norfolk to lend their support. Kensley, a Majority Member, now serves as one of our invaluable adult helpers alongside Caleb.

- **Becca Wilcox**, a student at Mary Washington, has committed to attending future meetings, bringing new energy to the group.
- Three enthusiastic prospects also attended, offering hope that the Assembly's numbers will soon grow.

## **Building the Future**

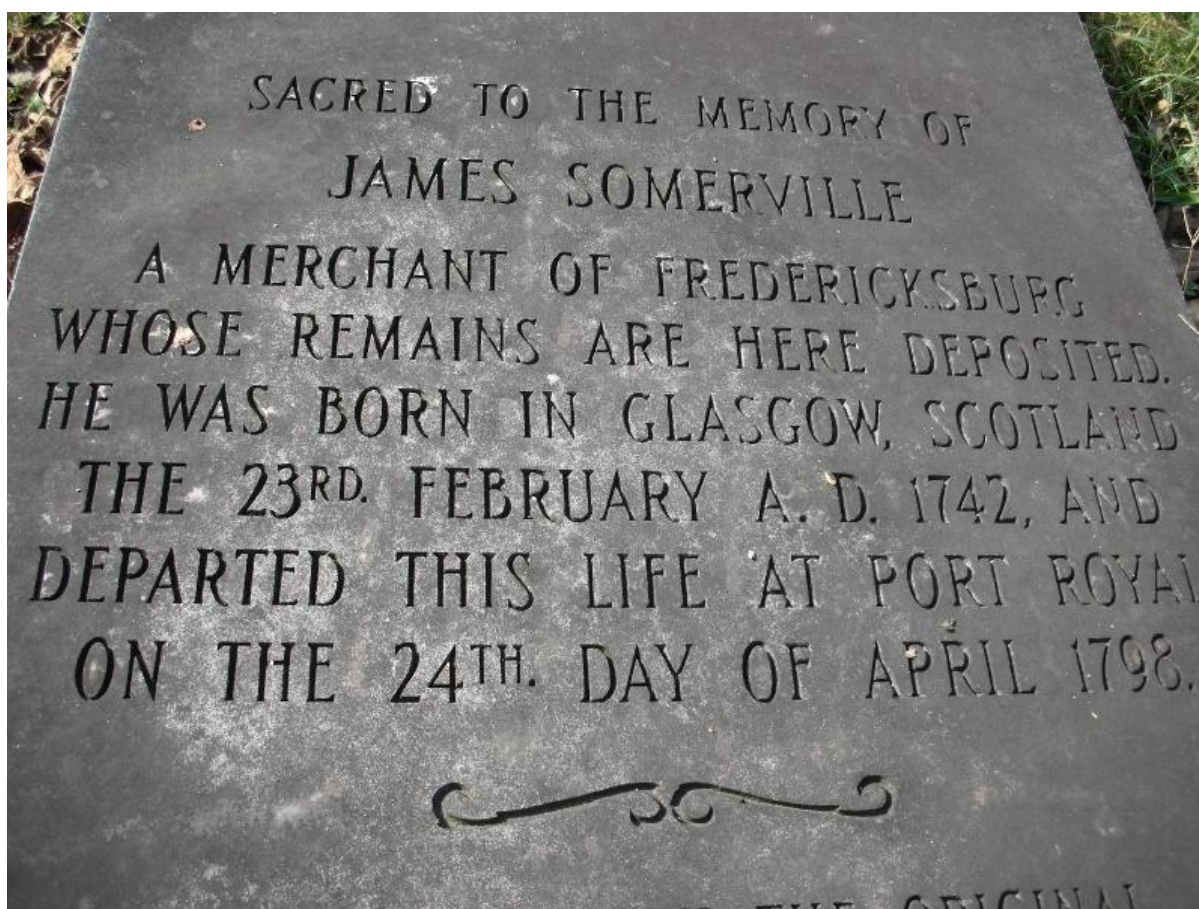
The event was more than an afternoon of fun, it was a step forward in building visibility for Fredericksburg's Rainbow Girls. As they continue to host programs like this, their aim is to invite more young women to discover what Rainbow has to offer: leadership, service, friendship, and growth.

If you have daughters, or know of young women, who might benefit from joining this vibrant organization, Fredericksburg's Rainbow Girls warmly invite you to get in touch. Connections can be made through the Lodge, and every helping hand in encouraging new members is an investment in the future of this worthy Order.



## Guardians of memory, presenting Veteran and Brother. James Somerville

*Preserving the Legacy of Fredericksburg Masonic cemetery*



**James Somerville (1742-1798): Merchant, Freemason, and Mayor of Fredericksburg, Virginia**

Bro James Somerville (25 February 1742 - April 1798) was a Scottish-born merchant who became a prominent figure in late 18th-century Virginia through his business enterprises, Masonic leadership, and civic service. Settling in Fredericksburg after immigrating from Glasgow, Somerville rose to wealth as a partner in mercantile firms and acquired extensive landholdings in the region.

He was deeply involved in the community: a three-time mayor of Fredericksburg and member of the town's common council, as well as an active Freemason who helped establish Fredericksburg's historic Masonic Cemetery. Somerville's life and career offer a revealing case study of a transatlantic entrepreneur who blended

commercial success with civic responsibility and fraternal engagement in post-Revolutionary Virginia.

### **Early Life and Immigration to Virginia**

Born in Glasgow, Scotland on 25 February 1742. Bro James Somerville came from a family of modest Scottish gentry. Little is recorded of his early years in Scotland, but like many young Scots of his generation he was drawn into the thriving Glasgow-Virginia tobacco trade. In the mid-18th century Glasgow's mercantile firms regularly sent factors and junior partners to the Chesapeake region, and Somerville was part of this diaspora of enterprising Scots. Notably, he belonged to a cadre of Scottish merchants, including colleagues like Henry Mitchell, James Robb, and David Blair, who "began their careers in Fredericksburg or Falmouth as factors or partners in Glasgow mercantile firms". By the early 1770s (on the eve of the American Revolution), Somerville had relocated to Virginia to represent Glasgow trading interests and seek his fortune in the export of tobacco and import of British goods.

Somerville "located at Fredericksburg" and soon "became a wealthy merchant" in the town. Fredericksburg, a bustling port on the Rappahannock River, was then a key hub for the regional plantation economy, and Somerville's Scottish connections gave him an advantageous network in transatlantic commerce. By the 1780s, he was a partner in the prominent mercantile house of Somerville & Mitchell in Fredericksburg, a firm engaged in trade and shipping. Contemporary records consistently describe Somerville as a man of substance and integrity. When the newly independent state of Virginia organized local government after the Revolution, Somerville was appointed among the first justices of the peace for Fredericksburg in 1782, one of "six gentlemen who were all men of respectability and excellent standing" chosen to hold the inaugural court session. This attests to his standing in the community just a few years after the war.

Although he prospered in business and public life, Somerville never married and had no children. He owned considerable property, including lands in Orange and Culpeper Counties but "having no heir of his body," he arranged to leave his entire estate to his nephew, James Somerville (1774-1858), back in Scotland.

The younger James, son of the elder Somerville's brother Walter and Mary (Gray) Somerville, emigrated to Virginia in 1795 to assist his uncle and ultimately inherit his holdings. Letters in the family record that the elder Somerville especially prized his tracts at the Rapidan River for their beauty and fertility, noting that the Orange/Culpeper lands would have made "a healthy agreeable, beautiful and eligible situation, which I would have, settled had I married". In accordance with these wishes, after inheriting the estate the nephew established a plantation residence named "Somervilla" on that property in 1812, ensuring the Somerville presence in Virginia continued into the 19th Century.

Bro. James Somerville's life came to an end in the spring of 1798. While visiting the port of Port Royal on the Rappahannock (approximately 20 miles downriver from Fredericksburg), he fell ill and died there in early April 1798.

He was 56 years old at his death. Somerville's remains were brought back to Fredericksburg and interred with full honors in the local Masonic burying ground, a cemetery which he himself had helped to create (as discussed below). His passing marked the conclusion of a remarkable personal journey - from Glasgow émigré to respected Virginia elder - and set in motion the transfer of his legacy to the next generation of his family and associates.

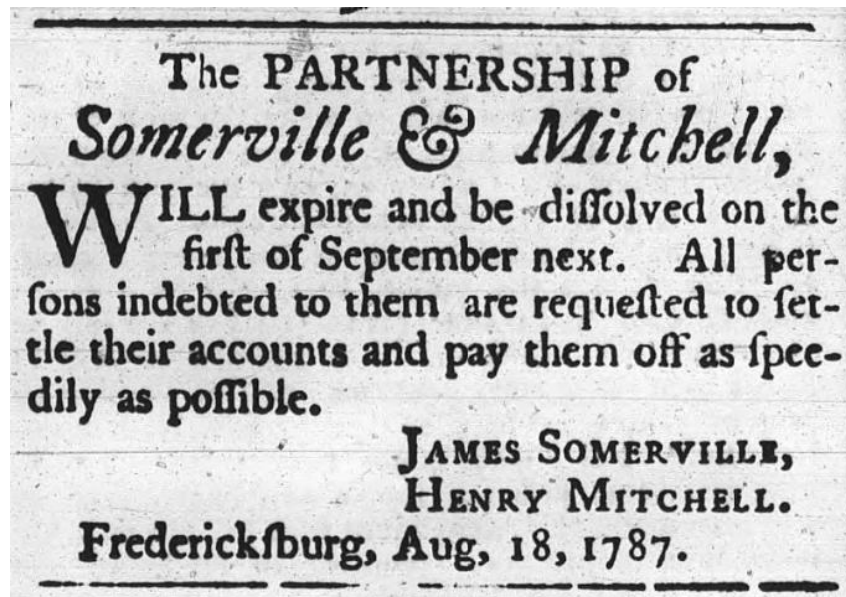
### **Mercantile Ventures and Business Legacy**

Somerville's primary livelihood in Virginia was as a merchant, and he accumulated significant wealth through astute commercial partnerships. In Fredericksburg, he co-founded Somerville & Mitchell, an importing and exporting firm that became one of the town's leading mercantile enterprises in the post-Revolutionary era. The partnership with Henry Mitchell (a fellow Scot) exemplified the close-knit Scottish merchant network in Fredericksburg. Both Somerville and Mitchell had been trained as agents of Glasgow firms, and together they leveraged transatlantic connections to trade tobacco, wheat, and consumer goods between Virginia and Britain.

Their firm operated a warehouse and wharf in Fredericksburg and engaged in shipping ventures that linked local planters to international markets. Surviving records such as tax rolls of 1785 show "Somerville & Mitchell" among the top-

valued businesses in town, attesting to the substantial scale of their operations (with taxable assets valued in the hundreds of pounds).

An 18th-century chronicler later noted that Somerville had “located at Fredericksburg [and] became a wealthy merchant” through these endeavors. The partnership of Somerville & Mitchell, however, did not last indefinitely. With the political turmoil of the Revolution and its aftermath, Henry Mitchell - who was suspected of Loyalist sympathies - departed Virginia in the mid-1770s.



After the war, Somerville evidently revived or restructured his business interests. Notices in the Virginia Herald indicate that Somerville & Mitchell's partnership was formally dissolved in 1787, likely reflecting the final settlement of Mitchell's stake.

By this time Bro James Somerville had taken on new partners and expanded his reach westward. He formed a second firm, Stevens & Somerville, based in Culpeper County, in association with General Edward Stevens of Culpeper.

Edward Stevens (1745-1820) was a Revolutionary War hero and former brigadier general who, after the war, turned to mercantile and land ventures. The partnership of Stevens & Somerville operated a store or trading post in Culpeper and handled commodities from the Virginia Piedmont, complementing



Somerville's Fredericksburg business. This dual presence allowed Somerville to tap both the established coastal trade of Fredericksburg and the emerging markets of the interior.

Stevens & Somerville flourished through the 1790s, dealing in everything from grain and tobacco to land speculation and labor. Legal records after Somerville's death show that Edward Stevens became "the surviving partner of Stevens & Somerville" in Culpeper, indicating that their joint enterprise continued under Stevens's sole management into the 19th century. Somerville's commercial legacy in Fredericksburg was likewise carried on by those he mentored. In the early 1790s, a young clerk named Daniel Grinnan joined Somerville's Fredericksburg establishment and trained under the experienced merchant. Grinnan, originally from Culpeper County, *"came to Fredericksburg, about 1792 and was employed by James Somerville, a wealthy merchant of the town"*.

After Somerville's death in 1798, the enterprising Grinnan rose to prominence in the local business community. He formed the firm of Murray, Grinnan & Mundell and became one of Fredericksburg's leading merchants, effectively succeeding to the role his late patron had filled.

Through Daniel Grinnan and others, the mercantile concerns that Somerville built did not disappear but rather evolved into the next generation of trading firms that sustained Fredericksburg's economy in the early 1800s. In this way, Bro James Somerville's impact on the region's commerce outlasted his own lifetime.

### **Masonic Involvement and the Fredericksburg Masonic Cemetery**

Freemasonry was another central aspect of Bro James Somerville's identity and public service. Fredericksburg in the late 18th century had a vibrant Masonic community, centered on Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4, one of the oldest Masonic lodges in America. Bro. Somerville became an active member of Lodge No. 4, joining the fraternity alongside many of the town's civic leaders. In fact, "the list of early members of Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 reads like a 'Who's Who'", including Revolutionary War heroes and "most of the early Mayors of Fredericksburg, including Charles Mortimer, William McWilliams, James Somerville and MW Benjamin Day".



This roster underscores that Somerville's Masonic involvement was intertwined with his civic life, the Lodge was a gathering place for the "local elite" and a conduit for community leadership. Somerville served the Lodge faithfully, though surviving records (some were lost during the Civil War). As a respected Master Mason in Lodge No. 4 he moved in Masonic circles that overlapped with the political and mercantile networks of the town.

Bro. Somerville's most enduring contribution to Freemasonry in Fredericksburg was his role in establishing a dedicated Masonic burial ground. In 1784, he provided a parcel of land for the use of Lodge No. 4 as a cemetery for its members. According to lodge history, "the ground on which the Cemetery is situated was acquired from Bro James Somerville by the Lodge for the sum of £40" in 1784. Other accounts describe this transaction as Somerville donating roughly half an acre to his brethren for a burying ground, which would become the Fredericksburg Masonic Cemetery.

This cemetery, adjacent to today's James Monroe Museum on Charles Street, is believed to be one of the oldest Masonic cemeteries in the United States. Somerville's gift provided a final resting place for the fraternity's dead and reflected the Masonic virtues of charity and brotherhood.

Fittingly, Bro James Somerville himself was laid to rest in the Fredericksburg Masonic Cemetery. An inscribed tablet marks his grave and recounts his origins and demise: "James Somerville, a merchant of Fredericksburg whose remains are here deposited. He was born in Glasgow, Scotland the 25th February, 1742 and departed this life at Port Royal on the 4th day of April, 1798."

His burial in the lodge's cemetery underscored his prominence in the Masonic community. To this day, visitors to the old graveyard can find Somerville's tombstone among those of other 18th-century luminaries. Through the cemetery he helped create, Somerville's memory has been preserved in local Masonic lore. The cemetery itself remains under the care of Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4, which recognizes Somerville as an early benefactor who enabled the lodge to establish this "hallowed ground" for the fraternity.

His name thus lives on in both the literal landscape of Fredericksburg and the institutional history of Virginia Freemasonry.

Beyond commerce and Masonry, Bro James Somerville was a significant civic leader in Fredericksburg during the formative years of American independence. He served multiple terms as an elected official in the town's government, helping to guide Fredericksburg through the post-Revolution transition. Somerville was first chosen as Mayor of Fredericksburg in 1784, just two years after the city was incorporated under a new charter following the Revolutionary War.

This initial mayoral term (March 1784 - March 1785) came at a time when the town was rebuilding its civil institutions and recovering from wartime disruptions. Somerville's leadership must have inspired confidence, for he was elected mayor on two further occasions: in 1787 - 1788 and again in 1792-1793.

Serving as mayor three times within a decade was a rare honor that attests to his stature and the trust placed in him by his fellow citizens. Contemporary observers praised Somerville's performance in office. According to one account, he "discharged the duties of Mayor faithfully" during each of his tenures.

His responsibilities would have included presiding over the Common Council (town council), overseeing municipal administration, and maintaining order and development in Fredericksburg. Notably, during Somerville's second mayoralty (1787-88), a young James Monroe, future U.S. President, was a member of the Fredericksburg town council.

Bro. Somerville thus had the distinction of leading the town government at a time when Monroe and other rising figures were involved in local affairs, indicating the high caliber of the civic circle in which he moved. In addition to his mayoral service, records show Somerville was continually involved in the town's governance. He sat on the Fredericksburg Common Council for many years (not only when he was mayor), contributing to routine decision-making and municipal oversight.

His role as one of the first justices of Fredericksburg in 1782 has already been noted, and he likely also served on various committees concerned with the town's commerce and public works. Fredericksburg was a small but strategically located town, and leaders like Bro Somerville had to address issues from infrastructure (streets, wharves, markets) to public welfare and the encouragement of trade. His

background as a merchant made him well suited to promote the town's economic interests in these deliberations.

Bro. Somerville's civic contributions extended to the judicial realm as well. In the 1780s and 1790s he was found witnessing legal documents, arbitrating local disputes, and executing wills and estates including acting as a trustee or executor in complex cases involving fellow merchants.

For example, he served as a surviving trustee for the estate of a colleague, John Mitchell, indicating his reputation for probity in financial matters.

This kind of trusted position in estate administration was another form of public service in the era, aligning with his general role as a community patriarch. By the 1790s, Bro James Somerville was regarded as one of Fredericksburg's elder statesmen. Historian Paula S. Felder notes that the Fredericksburg council in those years was dominated by experienced men of Scottish background - "most of the early Mayors," including Somerville, were of that fraternity. His blend of mercantile acumen and civic-mindedness helped guide Fredericksburg's growth at a pivotal time, as the town evolved from colonial outpost to independent American city.

## **Legacy and Conclusion**

At his death in 1798, Bro James Somerville left behind a multifaceted legacy in Fredericksburg and the surrounding region. In personal terms, he ensured the continuity of his family line in Virginia by bringing over his nephew and heir, who would establish roots in the community and carry the Somerville name forward.

In economic terms, the enterprises he built or nurtured - Somerville & Mitchell in Fredericksburg, Stevens & Somerville in Culpeper - continued operating under his partners after his passing, and his protégé Daniel Grinnan emerged as a leading merchant in Fredericksburg, thus perpetuating the commercial vitality that Somerville had helped foster.

In the Masonic realm, the cemetery he sold (or donated) to Lodge No. 4 remains a lasting memorial, not only to Somerville himself but to an entire generation of early American Freemasons; it stands as a physical testament to his generosity and

foresight in securing a sacred space for the brotherhood. And in the civic sphere, Fredericksburg remembers Bro James Somerville as one of its first and most effective mayors, a man who served faithfully and helped lay the foundations of municipal governance after the Revolution.

Somerville's story is emblematic of the contributions made by immigrant merchants in the new American Republic. He successfully bridged two worlds: maintaining ties to the transatlantic Scottish trading network while fully immersing himself in Virginia society and politics. A contemporary tribute described the early Fredericksburg leadership (Somerville among them) as "men of respectability and excellent standing", underscoring the high esteem in which he was held. Through his enterprise, public service, and fraternity, Bro James Somerville carved out an enduring place in Fredericksburg's history. His life reflects how one individual's influence, spanning commerce, community, and culture, could be profoundly felt in the formative years of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Reflection by WM Mike:

*In the life of Bro James Somerville we see the harmony of labor, leadership, and light. Though centuries have passed, his example endures: that a Mason's duty is not only to his Lodge, but to build faithfully, lead justly, and leave behind a foundation upon which others may rise!*

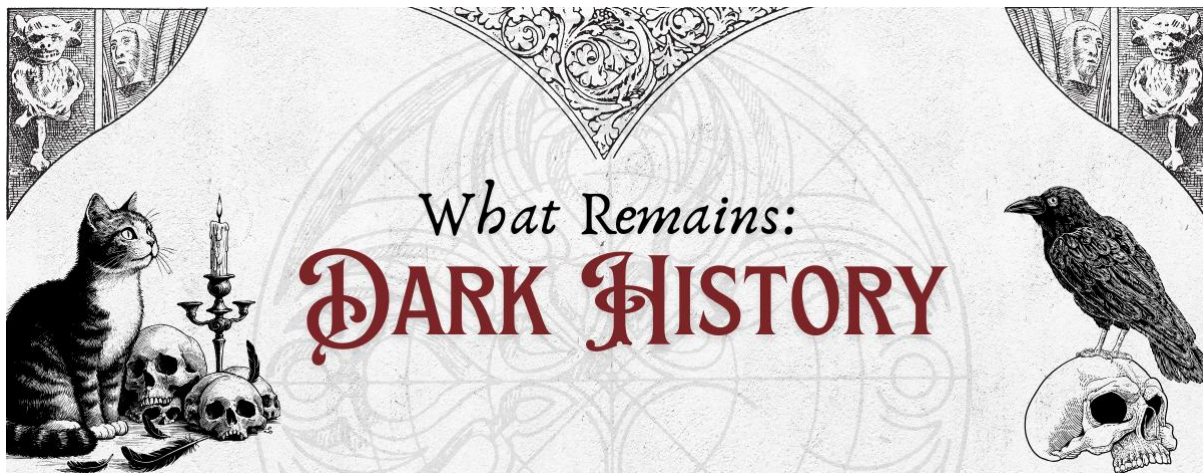
This concludes the tenth installment of our *Guardians of Memory* series. We hope you have found this journey through history both enriching and inspiring. In the enduring pursuit of further light, we warmly encourage all who are so inclined to explore history's timeless lessons and its profound influence on our shared legacy.

Sincerely,  
Michael Dove

## Sources:

1. Philip Slaughter (as cited in Ware family genealogy), *History of St. Mark's Parish, Culpeper County*, excerpt on James Somerville's birth, merchant career, and estate waregenealogy.com.
2. Willard J. Adams, *Fredericksburg: Past, Present and Future* (1898) -notes on 1782 justices and reputation of Somervillewaregenealogy.com.
3. *William and Mary Quarterly* - reference praising Somerville's faithful discharge of mayoral dutieswaregenealogy.com.
4. Robert S. R. Yates, *A History of James Somerville of Culpeper County, Virginia* (1988) - notes on Somerville as mayor alongside James Monroe on councilwaregenealogy.com.
5. Jeffrey G. Edmunds, *250 Years of Freemasonry in Fredericksburg* (2002) - list of early Lodge No. 4 members (including Somerville) waregenealogy.com.
6. Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 Archives - deed of 5 April 1784 for cemetery lot (Somerville to Lodge No.4 for £40) masoniclodge4.org.
7. Fredericksburg Masonic Cemetery records - tombstone inscription of James Somervillefiles. usgwarchives.net.
8. Tara G. Chicirda, "The Furniture of Fredericksburg, 1740-1820," *American Furniture* 2006 - context on Scottish factors in Fredericksburg (citing Jacob M. Price) chipstone.org.
9. *Virginia Herald* (Fredericksburg), 6 Sept. 1787, p.4 - notice of dissolution of Somerville & Mitchell partnership virginiachronicle.com.
10. District Court of Fredericksburg records (1805) - case referencing Edward Stevens as surviving partner of Stevens & Somervillerootsweb.com.
11. Find A Grave memorial #12508883 - biographical summary of James Somerville (merchant firms, landholdings).
12. Find A Grave memorial #5106760 - biographical summary of Daniel Grinnan (Somerville's clerk and successor) findagrave.com.





### About This Event

Join our friend FAM's Curator of Collections, **Kylie Thomson**, as we uncover artifacts that reveal the city's eerie and somber past. From mourning customs and tombstones to deadly concoctions and possibly haunted objects, every item holds a chilling story.

Explore the history of local cemeteries, the devastation of war, the toll of disease, and more in this captivating journey through Fredericksburg's darker side. Even hear about our resident spirits and decide for yourself if Old City Hall is haunted.

#### Cost:

\$9 for FAM Members

\$13 for Non-Members

*Registration is required.*

<https://secure.qgiv.com/for/fredericksburgareamuseum/event/what-remains-dark-history-100925/>



Purchase a brick through [BricksRUs](http://BricksRUs.com) to help  
maintain our Historic Home!

[Fredericksburg Masonic Lodge #4 Friends of Fredericksburg Donor Site \(bricksrus.com\)](http://FredericksburgMasonicLodge.org)





George Washington's Lodge  
**Fredericksburg**  
— Lodge No. 4 —

On the Tenth Day of October, in the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty-Five, Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4, A.F. & A.M. shall hold its monthly Stated Communication. This particular meeting shall serve as "Move-Up Night" for the incoming line of Lodge officers. Master Masons in the region are invited to join in on the camaraderie and support our Lodge's growing leadership. Our MAHOVA Ambassador, Bro. Joseph Ilk will delight us with a Founders Program followed by a presentation from Bro. John Lapke.

All who intend to partake of the evening's repast are kindly entreated to inform the Worshipful Master at [michaeldove79@gmail.com](mailto:michaeldove79@gmail.com) with their attendance and the number in their party. We eagerly await the pleasure of your company as we gather in the spirit of Brotherhood, Enlightenment, and Fellowship.

Sincerely and Fraternally,

W.:M.: Michael Dove  
Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4, A.F. & A.M.  
[michaeldove79@gmail.com](mailto:michaeldove79@gmail.com)



*The dinner shall consist of Pork Schnitzel, German Potato Salad, Roasted Brussel Sprouts, Garden Salad, and Blueberry Pie. A contribution of twenty dollars shall be requested for the evening's meal, which we are sure will be suitably adorned and leave all brethren and guests well satisfied.*





George Washington's Lodge  
**Fredericksburg**  
Lodge No. 4

# *The Master's Banquet*

at the Fredericksburg Area Museum  
907 Princess Anne Street

**Friday, November 14**  
**Tour 5:30 PM | Dinner 6:30 PM**  
**\$50 Per Person, 40 Seats Available**

Please RSVP to Wor.: Mike Dove  
michaeldove79@gmail.com  
& pay at MasonicLodge4.org or mail:  
Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4  
PO Box 702, Fredericksburg VA 22404

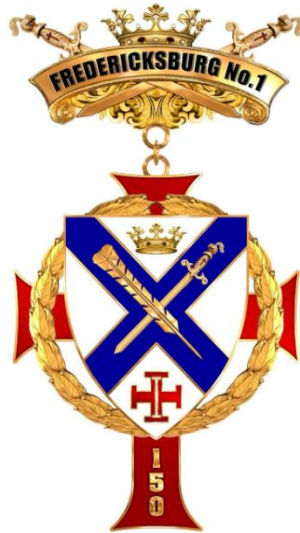
Guided Tour by Kylie Thomson, Curator of Collections  
Guest Speaker R.:W.: Jim Kraut, P.D.D.G.M.  
& Secretary, Hay Market Lodge No. 313

Menu: Herb Crusted Prime Rib, Garlic Whipped Mashed Potatoes,  
Fresh Vegetables, Fresh Garden Salad, Parker House Rolls, and Chocolate Ganache Cake.  
Madeira wine will be served with an alcohol-free alternative, Stella Rosa Black wine.

Dress Code: Dark Suit / Tuxedo / Cocktail Dress / Dress

RSVP to: <https://www.punchbowl.com/parties/MastersBanquet>

1875



2025

## Fredericksburg Commandery No. 1 150th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday, October 18, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

**A. Smith Bowman Distillery  
1 Bowman Drive, Fredericksburg, VA 22408**

Please join us for an evening of chivalric fellowship and history as we celebrate the 150th Anniversary of our founding. Social hour followed by dinner, a historical program, and distinguished speakers.



**Dinner \$50**  
Guests Welcome.  
Please RSVP to  
**CELEBRATE150@FXBGKT1.ORG**  
by September 30.



*Due to increased costs, tickets for this event are now \$50. Guests and Masons who are not Templars are also welcome. Dinner is being catered by Orofino Restaurant and will include salad, two types of pasta, lemon chicken, and asparagus. Many of our historic artifacts will be on display. Please also note we have 150th Anniversary jewels (pictured at top) for all Knights Templar to wear on their uniforms throughout our anniversary year for \$30.*



## 2025 LODGE OFFICERS

Michael Dove	<a href="mailto:Michaeldove79@gmail.com">Michaeldove79@gmail.com</a>	(540) 388-1001	Worshipful Master
Seth Roderick	<a href="mailto:Sethroderick@protonmail.com">Sethroderick@protonmail.com</a>	(703) 935-9781	Senior Warden
Jeff Adams, Sr.	<a href="mailto:jadams@rosendin.com">jadams@rosendin.com</a>	(571) 643-3962	Junior Warden
James Snyder, PM	<a href="mailto:jamie-snyder@usa.net">jamie-snyder@usa.net</a>	(540) 903-2937	Treasurer
Thomas Baker	<a href="mailto:Baker8359@gmail.com">Baker8359@gmail.com</a>		Asst. Treasurer
Christopher Tripp, PM	<a href="mailto:Secretarylodge4va@gmail.com">Secretarylodge4va@gmail.com</a>	(540) 424-5767	Secretary
Troy Blanchard	<a href="mailto:Cajnboy24@gmail.com">Cajnboy24@gmail.com</a>		Senior Deacon
John Lapke	<a href="mailto:Lapke.j@gmail.com">Lapke.j@gmail.com</a>		Junior Deacon
Kyle Olesevich	<a href="mailto:Kyle.olesevich@gmail.com">Kyle.olesevich@gmail.com</a>		Senior Steward
Joshua Miller	<a href="mailto:Joshua.miller21@gmail.com">Joshua.miller21@gmail.com</a>		Junior Steward
Justin Garrett	<a href="mailto:Jaygarrett0214@gmail.com">Jaygarrett0214@gmail.com</a>		Chaplain
Robert Breitenbach	<a href="mailto:Robertjbreitenbach@icloud.com">Robertjbreitenbach@icloud.com</a>		Marshal
Michael Scullin	<a href="mailto:mscullin@gmail.com">mscullin@gmail.com</a>		Tiler

### TRUSTEES

Dennis David – 2025  
Dan Goodwin, PM – 2028

Dennis Berry, PDDGM – 2026  
Christopher Tripp, PM – 2029

Chris Decker, PM – 2027

### PROGRAM OFFICERS

**Lodge Blood Coordinator**  
Jeff Adams

**Lodge Instructor of Work**  
Christopher Tripp, PM

**Lodge Education Officer**  
Bob Melvin

**Masonic Home Ambassador**  
Joseph Ilk

**Lodge Catechism Chair**  
Justin Garrett  
**Lodge Scholarship Coordinator**  
David Smith

**Widows Program Coordinator**  
Robert Breitenbach

### LIVING PAST MASTERS

Wor.: Carter. G. Wells.....	1963	Wor.: Anthony L Rudder.....	2007
Wor.: Rudolph E. Griffith.....	1974	R.: W.: Jeffrey D. St. Onge.....	2009
Wor.: Henry W. Baker.....	1975	Wor.: Shelton S. Mackey.....	2010
Wor.: Edward L. Donalson.....	1983	R.: W.: Shelby L. Chandler.....	2011
R.: W.: Dennis W. Berry.....	1986	Wor.: Christopher J. Decker.....	2012
Wor.: Thomas C Shelton.....	1988	Wor.: Christopher R. Wilson.....	2013
Wor.: William J. White.....	1989	Wor.: Jeffrey L. Mitchell.....	2014
Wor.: James R. Adams.....	1992	M.: W.: Jeffrey P. VanCuren.....	2015
Wor.: Michael J. McCray.....	1995	Wor.: James L. Ragsdale.....	2016
Wor.: Steven M. Gallahan.....	1996	Wor.: Michael T. Moses.....	2017
Wor.: Charles B. Pasto.....	1998	Wor.: Daniel T. Goodwin.....	2018
Wor.: J. Travis Walker.....	2000	Wor.: James M. Snyder.....	2019
R.: W.: Daniel W. Thompson.....	2001	Wor.: Stanley R. Kennedy.....	2020
R.: W.: W. Robert Brammer.....	2002	Wor.: Christopher S. Tripp.....	2021
Wor.: Sheridan G. Harrod.....	2003	Wor.: Joseph K. Gilkerson.....	2023
Wor.: Jene G. Parrotte.....	2004	Wor.: Patrick F. McConnell.....	2024
R.: W.: Steven W. Sanford.....	2005		
Wor.: Richard D. Dey.....	2006		