



George Washington's Lodge
Fredericksburg
Lodge No. 4

May 2026

Trestle Board

W.:M.: Seth Roderick
Magnanimity - Fidelity - Honor

First Recorded Meeting - September 1, 1752

Scottish Charter - July 21, 1758

Virginia Charter - January 30, 1787

Ill. Bro. George Washington

Initiated November 4, 1752

Passed March 3, 1753

Raised August 4, 1753

803 Princess Anne Street
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401

Friday, May 15: We're offering free tours and cake on the 250th birthday of Virginia's independence. R.W. Shelby L. Chandler will give a lecture at 7 PM on the 5th Virginia Convention and how our lodge members played a part.

Saturday, May 16: Special tours of the Lodge starting at 2pm and of the Fredericksburg Area Museum starting at 4pm. Social hour, dinner, and keynote from M.W. Jeffery Hodges at Ristorante Renato starting at 6pm. [Learn more and get tickets here.](#)

					1	2 Pancake Breakfast 8 - 10 AM
3	4	5	6 Called Communication: EA Degree 7:00 PM	7	8 Dinner 6:30 PM Stated Communication 7:30 PM	9 Masonic Youth Roundup 10 AM - 3 PM
10	11	12	13 Practice or Called Communication 7:00 PM	14	15 5 th VA Convention Open House 5 - 9 PM Lecture 7 PM	16 Reunion of the Founding Lodges Event (see below)
17	18	19	20 Called Communication: EA Degree 7:00 PM	21	22	23
24	25 Memorial Day Lodge Picnic at the Masonic Cemetery 12 PM	26 District 8 Ritual School 7:00 PM	27 Practice or Called Communication 7:00 PM	28 Lt. Col. Gustavus B. Wallace Lecture by Kylie Thomson 7:00 PM	29	30
31	<p>Monday, May 25: In the fashion of "Decoration Day" in times past, bring flowers to honor a grave in the Fredericksburg Masonic Cemetery and stay to enjoy hotdogs, hamburgers, fixings, and refreshments provided by the Lodge. Brethren, family, appendant bodies, and youth groups are all invited. Please inform the WM of your attendance at SethRoderick@protonmail.com so that we can plan accordingly.</p> <p><i>Please bring a side to share and a flower to place on a grave, in the tradition of Decoration Day. The inclement weather plan is to meet in the Baker Room.</i></p>					

Masonic Anniversaries

R.W. Lokie L. Voight	66 yrs.	Bro. Brian F. Supples	18
Bro. Richard P. Miller	63	Bro. Brian R. Hesler	16
Bro. George H. Edwards	60	Bro. Gregory A. Baxter-Hey	16
Wor. Rudolph E. Griffith	58	Bro. William F. McGrath	16
Bro. Henry E. Rees	42	M.W. Jeffery P. VanCuren	16
Bro. Denny W. Kelly, Sr.	29	Bro. Stephen T. Cahill	15
Wor. Charles L. Cooper	28	Bro. Mikeal C. Stojic	14
Bro. Gregory P. Balzer	26	Bro. Scott W. Walker, Sr.	12
Bro. Nasseem A. Sleem	22	Bro. Ronald F. Reuschling	12
Wor. Stephen M. Draper, Sr.	22	Bro. John J. Lapke, Jr.	11
Bro. Michael A. Hunnel	21	Bro. Trevor B. Taylor	11
Wor. Christopher J. Decker	20	Bro. Michael P. Hansberry	10
Bro. Charles W. Horton, Jr.	20	Wor. Joseph K. Gilkerson	9
Bro. David G. Black	20	Bro. Nicholas T. Gilchrist	8
Bro. Todd P. Kee	20	Bro. Thomas T. Morgan	4
Bro. Roger W. Baughan	19	Bro. Gavin J. Petersen	3
Bro. Gary S. Smith	18		

Master's Message

*State of the Lodge,
April 2026*

Seth Roderick, WM

April was a full and useful month for Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4. We began with one of the most meaningful duties of the year, delivering lilies to our widows. It is a small gesture, but a proper one. A Lodge that remembers its widows keeps faith with its own family.

At our April Stated Communication, the Brethren heard a powerful reading of the Declaration of Independence from our Lodge Education Officer, Bro. Bob Melvin, a fitting program as we continue into the America250 programs. The Lodge was honored to welcome our keynote speaker and Brother for the evening, Worshipful Brother and Sir Knight, William Searcy, 152nd Right Eminent Grand Commander of the Knights Templar of Virginia, who gave a wonderful oration on service and Freemasonry. This night was designated as Commandry night in the Lodge and many of our Brothers who are members of that fine order came decked in their Knights Templar uniforms. The charity basket supported the Fairy Godmother Project, and the Lodge also heard updates on degree work, candidates, building needs, and upcoming events.

Our public lecture series began on April 9 with Brother Ethan Burgess speaking on the Lodge at Fredericksburgh. This was a fine beginning to a series meant to remind both the Lodge and the public that our history is part of the larger American story. [Recording here.](#)

On April 11, the Lodge and cemetery were part of the Liza Spooner cenotaph ceremony, connecting our grounds again to the work of remembrance and local history. This event was attended by almost 40 members of the public to include an official representative from the US Congressional District office in Fredericksburg. Later in the month, Brethren gathered for a work morning to clear old material and bricks in preparation for the front porch project. The work was needed and appreciated. The Brothers who assisted this very physical labor can now all attest to the true weight of a ton of bricks.

The Lodge also stayed active beyond our own walls, with Fraternal visits to Hay Market Lodge No. 313 in Haymarket, Virginia and Independent Orange Lodge No. 138 in Orange, Virginia, District 8 Ritual School, representation at Ferry Farm's Drums Along the Rappahannock, the the Presidential Wreath Laying for Bro. James Monroe at his grave at Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, on the occasion of his birthday. Our building continued to serve the Masonic family and the community through Rainbow Girls, Job's Daughters, Abaca Grotto, BNI, church use, instruction nights, and public events.

In a first in many, many years, the Lodge initiated an Entered Apprentice in the old Lodge room by candlelight. Not actual burning tapers per se, but replica LED tapers machined to fit the existing sconces by our own Brother Joel McKinley. You will also notice a wall going up in the Baker Room where our tables, chairs and other storage items are kept. This new wall being built by Brother Brian Hesler and his son will benefit the aesthetics by hiding those materials when not in use and improving the organization of the Baker Room as a first step in improvement to draw more rentals.

April showed the Lodge doing what it ought to do. We remembered our widows, welcomed the public, cared for the building, supported our candidates, visited our Brethren, and kept the Temple alive with useful work. May we carry that same steady spirit into May.

Sincerely and Fraternaly,
Seth Roderick, WM





Secretary's Corner

Brethren,

Let's get this month's public service announcement out of the way first. In today's age of electronic communication, the Fraternity and the Lodge still need your correct contact information. Twice in the past month, I have been contacted by a Brother who paid his dues and a month or two later wanted to know why he hadn't received his dues card. In both cases, we determined we had an old address on file and the mail forwarding had expired. We have also received some other mail and cards come back as undeliverable. I will be glad to update your address, phone number, and/or email for you, but you can also do it for yourself on Grand View. If you haven't signed up, you are once more urged to do so as there's a lot of useful information there plus a few self-service items, including paying dues. You will need your membership number, which is not the same as the number on your dues card. I will be glad to provide it upon request. We can always order a replacement card if needed, but that will result in more delay. So please make sure we have your correct address.

Speaking of electronics, the Grand Lodge has recently revised its Social Media Policy. Social media is increasingly a big part of our lives and increasingly how we communicate with each other, including with Brethren outside our own Lodge. This can also be a mine field if we're not mindful of our working tools, especially the Compasses and the Trowel. We should remember that once something is posted hastily or rashly, it leaves an indelible digital trace that cannot be easily expunged. Without going into all the details, our public communications should always reflect dignity and decorum, truthfulness, harmony, and discretion. We should be mindful of the impact of our posts on the reputation of Freemasonry. If publicly identifying our Masonic affiliation, we should make clear when we're expressing our own view and must not ascribe them to the Craft. We must not post anything that's not proper to discuss outside the Lodge, including Masonic secrets or private Lodge business. There's more and I'd encourage every Brother who is active on social media to read it. And guess what? It's available on Grand View too!

For myself, I try to follow a couple basic principles. First, treat every Masonic page or forum as if it were an extension of the Lodge. Secondly, treat every Brother in email or on the web the same as I would if we were talking face-to-face. Certain topics—mainly politics and religion—are not proper to discuss within the Lodge. They should not be discussed on Masonic websites, pages, or forums either. Certain topics—such as unwritten aspects of our Ritual or a Brother's confidential business—are not proper to discuss outside the Lodge. And treat every Brother with the same courtesy and respect as if he were standing before you.

Now, what should you do if you see something online that's a Masonic secret? Ignore it! We all know there's a ton of information out there on the web that anyone can find. Some of it is even true. Every time I see someone respond 'Remember your obligations...' I just want to hit my forehead. Brethren, let's learn from the government—neither confirm nor deny any of the crazy stuff folks put out there. And I hate to tell you, this is not even a new problem. Disgruntled Masons were publishing exposés hundreds of years before any of us were born.

What should you do if a Brother says something you don't like? Ignore it! Every Mason has a right to his own opinion...even if he disagrees with you. He even has a right to express it. Now I have had some conversations and read some things saying that a Mason should never discuss politics, religion, or really any controversial subject publicly. That seems to me to be misunderstanding our policy and our social responsibilities. Do we not have clergymen among the Craft? What about long lists of presidents and Founding Fathers who were Masons? Clearly, they have taken public stands on those important topics. Remember that Freemasonry unites men of every country, sect, and opinion....Personally, I have strong opinions on lots of things and occasionally feel the urge to express them. But I will not publicly quarrel with a Brother who dares to say something I don't like; every Master Mason is sovereign in his own beliefs. Previously, I might have been inclined to shoot from the hip, but Masonry has gifted me with the capacity to take a deep breath and think twice before commenting. It's empowering to see something you disagree with and just scroll on by.

Sometimes I mess up. Sometimes I step on my tongue when I should have bitten it. But we have to remember we're all just human. Fortunately, Masonry doesn't require me to be perfect. It just requires me to be constantly trying to be better and live up to its lofty ideals. The minefield of social media could easily become one giant game of Whack-A-Mole where we're quick to drop the hammer on any Brother at the least infraction. But I like to think Masonic justice is more about redemption than punishment. Your working tools are for you to work on yourself, not your Brother. The thing about a minefield is, it's a dangerous place to start swinging around a hammer. We could say a lot of about email communication and Masonic correspondence, but let's save that for another month. These are turbulent times. Let peace and harmony prevail.

Sincerely and Fraternaly,

Christopher S. Tripp, PM
Secretary

Fredericksburg's Revolutionary War
Heroes Lecture Series
The 5th Virginia Convention

1776 2026



R.W. Shelby L. Chandler
Historian & Past Master, Lodge No. 4
7:00 PM Friday, May 15
Fredericksburg Masonic Lodge No. 4 | FREE



FREDERICKSBURG
VA250

HISTORIC
Fredericksburg
FOUNDATION, INC.

Fredericksburg's Revolutionary War
Heroes Lecture Series
Lt. Col. Gustavus B. Wallace

1776 2026




Kylie Thomson, Curator of Collections
Fredericksburg Area Museum
7:00 PM Thursday, May 28
Fredericksburg Masonic Lodge No. 4 | FREE



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[Learn More About the Series](#)



Portsmouth *Wilkes* *Orange* *Blandford* *Virginia*
Saint James *Norfolk* *Botetourt*
Williamsburg *Fredericksburg*

Reunion of the Founding Lodges

\$55 Tickets
Guests Welcome

Saturday
May 16, 2026

Hosted by Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4, A.F. & A.M.
 2 - 6 p.m. Tours of the Lodge & the Fredericksburg Area Museum
 6 p.m. Ristorante Renato Social Hour Begins | 7 p.m. Dinner, Toasts & Speakers

Get Tickets



Memorial Day
Lodge Picnic

Monday, May 25, 2026
12:00 PM
Fredericksburg Masonic Cemetery
Lodge No. 4 Brothers, Families,
Appendant Bodies & Youth Organizations
Welcome

Bring a side and flowers!



Restoring Memory: The Cenotaph Dedication of Elizabeth Spooner

Fredericksburg Masonic Cemetery, April 11, 2026

by Mike Dove, PM

On a quiet April morning, beneath the linden tree of the Fredericksburg Masonic Cemetery, a story long left incomplete was gently brought back into the light.

On April 11, 2026, members of Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4, in partnership with the Fredericksburg Area Museum, gathered alongside community members, historians, and visitors to dedicate a cenotaph to Elizabeth Spooner, a woman whose life, though deeply rooted in the history of Fredericksburg, had for too long remained on the margins of memory.

What unfolded was more than a ceremony. It was an act of remembrance, of restoration, and of quiet historical justice.

Elizabeth Spooner, daughter of Lt. Col. Gustavus Brown Wallace, lived a life that reflected the experiences of so many women of her time. She was essential to family and community, yet seldom preserved in the historical record with the care she deserved. In just eleven years of marriage, she gave birth to seven sons. Her life was marked by love, loss, and resilience, yet only fragments of her story survived.



And yet, those fragments were enough.

Over the past year and a half, through dedicated research, collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to telling her story, that fragment became a voice once more. The ceremony itself was marked by reverence and sincerity. Prayers were offered by Rev. Joseph H. Hensley, Jr. of St. George's Episcopal Church, grounding the moment in both faith and reflection. Speakers shared not only the known history of Elizabeth's life, but also the deeper meaning behind the effort to restore her place in Fredericksburg's story.

There was a shared understanding among those present that remembrance is not reserved only for the well-known, but is equally owed to those whose lives shaped families, communities, and generations in quieter ways. That truth was felt perhaps most deeply in the story of her youngest son, Henry Spooner, who died in infancy and rests in the same ground. For generations, his brief life was scarcely more than a line in stone. Yet now, like his mother, he too is gently returned to memory, a reminder that even the shortest lives leave a lasting imprint.

In a particularly meaningful recognition of the event's significance, representatives from Congressman Eugene Vindman's office were present in support, underscoring the broader importance of local history and community remembrance. Members of the press also caught wind and conducted interviews with Kylie Thomson of the Fredericksburg Area Museum and Mike Dove of Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4, helping to carry Elizabeth's story beyond the cemetery and into the wider public. Coverage of the event had already begun to extend that remembrance further. The Fredericksburg Advance published a feature on the dedication titled "Giving Flowers to a Forgotten Wife," and the story was also shared on Town Talk with Ted Schubel on B101.5 FM, where the significance of the project and the journey behind it were discussed.

Following the dedication, guests were welcomed to an open house at Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4, where tours were offered and conversations continued. It was a fitting continuation of the morning, a chance not only to reflect, but to share in fellowship, education, and the living tradition of stewardship that made the event possible.

For all involved, the day carried a profound sense of honor.



To take part in restoring a life to memory, even after more than two centuries, is a rare and meaningful privilege. The ceremony was beautiful, respectful, and deeply moving, a testament to what can be accomplished when historical care is matched with genuine humanity.

This moment did not come together by chance.

It was the result of sustained effort, collaboration, and dedication over the past eighteen months. Many individuals and organizations contributed their time, expertise, and support to bring this project to fruition.

Special thanks are due to the Fredericksburg Area Museum for their partnership and continued commitment to preserving and interpreting the city's history, to Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 for their stewardship in this effort, to Brother Charles McDaniel for his cemetery support, to St. George's Episcopal Church, to Fredericksburg Advance and Town Talk with Ted Schubel on B101.5 FM for helping share the story, to Tom Reger of Reger Cemetery Preservation Services for his skilled restoration work, and to all visitors, researchers, supporters, and community members who contributed to this project over the time. Their collective efforts made it possible to do something simple, yet deeply important.

To remember.

Elizabeth Spooner now has a place not only in this sacred ground, but also in the shared memory of a community that chose to look back with care. Her story, once fragmentary, is now preserved and accessible, including through her newly established memorial on [Find a Grave](#).

As the ceremony concluded, there was a quiet but powerful sense that something had been made whole.

Elizabeth Spooner, once nearly lost to time, now stands again among the remembered. And perhaps that is the truest measure of this day. Not that we changed the past, but that we answered it. And in doing so, we carried one more name, and one more life, out of silence and into the enduring light of memory.

For those who wish to explore more, the coverage can be found here:

[Fredericksburg Advance](#)

[Town Talk with Ted Schubel B101.5 FM](#)





The Reflection Chamber: Remembering Our Heroes

by Justin Garrett, Chaplain

My dear friends and Brothers, May is here! May has always been a joyous time for me, or at least the weather is more my style, so I'm happier. Either way, I'm always excited for the month of May.

This month, I'd like to talk about remembering our heroes. Typically, we talk about military service and the month coinciding with Memorial Day, but this time, I'd like to play with the idea: Remembering the heroes within our lives. Many people join a profession of service to the public like the military, law enforcement, firefighting, nursing, teaching, and the like as a means to serve their country and community. This is great! We need folks who are willing to show up at 3 am when calamity strikes, or to protect our beloved country when it must be done. Many of us are proud of our service and unabashedly share our contributions. Some even go on to make it their whole identity. Some accept that the time they served was what it was and make no effort to hide it, but no effort to promote it. They return to their humble lives, entirely content with picking up right where they left off or building something new. I always admired those folks, personally. No ego, no chip on their shoulder, no need to prove anything. Those people who returned to their lives and became heroes right where they were. Too often, we hang on to the past. One of my PT instructors at the academy would often say "it's not about what you've done for me, it's about what you've done for me lately." I choose not to hang onto the past. I'm not going to pretend my time with the Department of Homeland Security didn't happen, but I'm not going to glorify it either.

Who was I to those people I helped back in those days? Does that even matter now? Perhaps it does - to them - but they are no longer the person in front of me in need of help. At one time, it was my brother, at another, it was a candidate, at one time, it was myself. We are all in need of heroes. I look back on my Masonic heroes like Mike Moses, Dan Goodwin, Shelby Chandler, Chris Tripp, and the like. They each provided me with something I did not previously have as an 18-year-old, freshly minted in the lodge. I look at my candidates now, like Kyle Olesevich, Taner Lopez, Raul Garcia, and Giancarlo Rodriguez. They helped me grow just as much as I helped them grow. Each taught me something new.

In fact, I recently had an experience with a Brother that will stick with me for a very long time. The morning after March Stated, I had probably gotten a few hours of sleep after a very fun night across the street. He called me, asking if I'd like to go shooting with him and his son. I obliged, and when I got to the range, I learned that neither of them had ever handled a firearm before in their lives. I helped them shoot, taught them some things, and by the end of it, we all had a great laugh and went home. On the drive home, seemingly out of the blue, I broke out into heavy, deep sobs. I told myself that I had left that life behind, but something told me "you don't know what you gave them." That, to me, was the consolation I needed. I have no clue what I gave them. It might have been a fun time, a learning experience, an opportunity to embrace their constitutional rights, or just the lesson they needed to defend themselves should the need ever arise. This made me think: Did I know what I was giving any of my candidates when I took them on? Did the brethren who served as my heroes know what they were giving me when they took me under their wings? I thought about Jeff St. Onge, and how he would turn to me every chance he got and say, "What do you think, young man?" I used to think he was checking to see if I was paying attention or just dumb, but maybe it was an invitation to provide input with fresh eyes from a different generation. I have no clue. I wonder if he did either.

My friends and Brothers, we don't know what we're giving people. Showing up to work every day, you never know who's watching, who's admiring your resolve and consistency. Perhaps it's people seeing you performing a good deed, not for recognition, but because it is the right thing to do. Perhaps it is one small gesture or tiny interaction that changes perception. I gleaned structure from Mike Moses, depth of dedication from Shelby Chandler, benevolence and affability from Dan Goodwin, and unwavering friendship and support from Chris Tripp. They're still those folks to me today. Did they know that's what they gave me, or did they simply show up and do what was their purview to do?

Even those who seem as enemies can be given something profound. Those hardened professions don't necessarily mean hardened hearts. In 1944, a train full of Japanese prisoners of war arrived at Camp McCoy in Wisconsin. Lt. Commander Takeshi Yamamoto was one of them. When they arrived at camp, the prisoners were greeted with warm clothes and cottages. The meal of the day was white rice and meat, which, in Japanese culture, was something given as a last meal to show respect before execution. They thought it was their last meal! They wept, they stirred, they became tense. Eventually, a translator relayed this information to Captain Robert Henderson, who quickly informed the prisoners that they would be treated fairly, that they would strictly follow the laws laid out by the Geneva Convention, and as such: prisoners of war were to be fed the same rations as soldiers were, which was white rice and meat that day. The prisoners eventually settled down and became more comfortable in their new environment. Yes, they were subjected to labor, but not any tougher labor than the American soldiers working alongside them. The prisoners were even paid 80 cents a day, one dime per hour worked, which could be spent at the commissary.

Yamamoto eventually, after several months in camp, wrote in a journal that he ate white rice three times a day while his countrymen fight and die and his family struggles to survive. "I cannot say I regret surviving. Is that weakness, or is that simply being human?" Yamamoto and Henderson developed a great relationship over their shared time at the camp. Upon returning home, Yamamoto shared his story with his family, saying that all of the horrendous things they were told about Americans were wrong. That many of the prisoners learned English while there, and that the language was much more egalitarian than the formal addresses of Japanese. That the prisoners were able to erect a Shinto shrine, and soldiers even removed their head coverings out of respect for the religious ceremony. That they ate better than they ever had in their entire lives to that point. That regardless of what narratives we might be presented with to dehumanize and barbarize our enemies, they just might be more human than we initially think.

I am reminded of Thomas Hardy and his sonnet, *The Man He Killed*: "Yes; quaint and curious war is! You shoot a fellow down You'd treat if met where any bar is, Or help to half-a-crown."

Indeed, we are all more human than we think. I remember working at a detention facility for the Department of Homeland Security, and a detainee said, "Mr. Garrett, how many times have you asked God to send someone and He did?" How many times has someone asked God to send someone, and He sent you? I didn't know what I was giving that detainee. I don't know what I gave to my brother, my girlfriend, my candidates, my fellow Brethren, or my fellow human beings. I don't know what I give people on a daily basis. Did Henderson know what he was giving Yamamoto? Did my Masonic heroes know what they were giving me? I doubt it. I think the only thing we knew was that we were going to show up and be exactly who we were going to be that day. So long as we show up and give our true, authentic selves to people, they will get exactly what they need from us. I need a hammer to drive a nail, not fasten a screw. Perhaps we are all instruments of the will of God, whether we realize it or not.

Could this young lad and his mentor foresee what good he'd do and who he'd become?



Could I have foreseen how beautiful a moment of triumph it'd be with these three whom I had mentored? My heart was beaming just as bright as my tie clip. As much as I'd like to pretend I know what good they'll do in the future, I see something wonderful on their horizons; I'm just waiting for it to happen. Could they see just how much my heroes poured into me? Will those to whom they become heroes see how much I poured into them?



Could I have foreseen Brother Raul breathing life into the charitable side of Freemasonry, and bringing the Grotto back from a pariah Animal House to a renewed reputation of showing sympathy and good fellowship for a greater cause? Dan Goodwin's motto for the year was "Invest in The Craft." Could he have seen just how much he invested in me, and how much I invest in them as a result, and how much they'll invest into The Craft far beyond all of us? I stand between the past and future, seeing how much was given to me from the past, and how much I give to the future in which they'll come to lead.



Recently, Brother Raul gave me a cross stitch he had in the works for me, chronicling moments we shared while he was going through his degrees. At some point, enlightenment no longer concerns ourselves, but others. My heroes accepted my praise not for the edification of their own egos, but in recognizing that heroes need to be honored. I accepted Raul's gift, not because it made me look good or like the best mentor ever, but because Raul had a hero he wished to honor. The embodiment of ideals and the actions which come as a natural result of them are not just empty hopes in the dark, but sparks of light which set a dark world ablaze.



I wonder if my mentees realize the heroes I had myself. The heroes I still carry and honor in my heart, and although they're still human too, they were the ones who embodied those ideals for me too.

Equally, my friends and Brothers, what will you do? Do you recognize your heroes? Do you recognize the good you do in the world? Do you recognize those who view you as a hero in your own right? Do these quiet acts of goodness mean something outside of what we do and forget about? In an indifferent and cold universe which refuses to keep score, there is someone out there who remembers you because you were kind to them when nobody else was. Is that not heroic thought in action? Let us continue on this quest of caring for our fellow human beings. We are all children of a beneficent and loving God who sends each of us into the world to make the world a better place, which is our mission, should we choose to accept it. It is equally theirs, as those who receive, to endeavor to give in some way they can, even if that time is so far into the future they can't see it themselves.

There's one thing left for me to say on this topic. Memorial Day was originally called Decoration Day, where people would clean up and decorate the gravestones of their dearly beloved and sadly departed, which started after the Civil War. In the spirit of honoring our heroes, I, too, will spend the day with a hero of mine whom I think of very often, and who fought the good fight I never had, and whose death impacted so many and influenced change so profound, the likes of which make such a strong impact to this day, my dear brother, Kevin.

From the Brightest Seat in the House,

Justin C. G. Garrett
Chaplain and Catechism Chair
Fredericksburg No. 4 A.F. & A.M.



Chapter 432

In music, it is said that certain tones, when precisely attuned, bring the mind into harmony rather than agitation. It is said 432hz is such a tone. In like manner, poetry and prose can also be a medium to steady thoughts and temper passions.

The selections presented in Chapter 432 are drawn from the works of Freemasons, writers traditionally associated with the Craft, and authors whose words reflect the moral, symbolic, and philosophical spirit of Masonry. We hope you enjoy these selections and selections in future Trestle Boards.

Glycine's Song

by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

A sunny shaft did I behold,
From sky to earth it slanted:
And poised therein a bird so bold
Sweet bird, thou wert enchanted!

He sank, he rose, he twinkled, he troll'd
Within that shaft of sunny mist;
His eyes of fire, his beak of gold,
All else of amethyst!

And thus he sang: 'Adieu! adieu!
Love's dreams prove seldom true.
The blossoms, they make no delay:
The sparking dew-drops will not stay.
Sweet month of May,
We must away;
Far, far away!
To-day! to-day!'

Intimations

by John Banister Tabb

I knew the flowers had dreamed of you,
And hailed the morning with regret;
For all their faces with the dew
Of vanished joy were wet.

I knew the winds had passed your way,
Though not a sound the truth betrayed;
About their pinions all the day
A summer fragrance stayed.

And so, awakening or asleep,
A memory of lost delight
By day the sightless breezes keep,
And silent flowers by night.

**Guardians of Memory:
Brother John Chew, Jr.**

Preserving the Legacy of the
Fredericksburg Masonic Cemetery

by Mike Dove, PM

John Chew, Jr. (1753-1806)

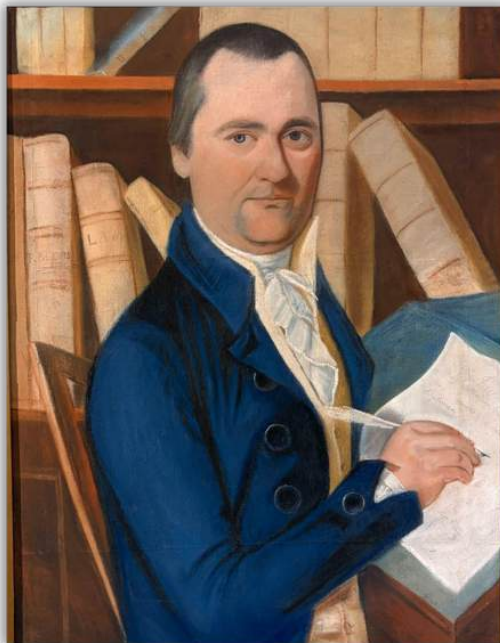
Lieutenant - Paymaster - Clerk - Custodian of a Young Republic

Invocation

There are men remembered for victories.
There are men remembered for speeches.
And there are men remembered because a community
never allowed their name to disappear.

Brother John Chew Jr. belongs to that third order!

He stood at one of the most disastrous moments of the American Revolution.
He lost his arm in battle. He endured captivity. He returned home permanently marked.
But his greater legacy did not end in war. It began afterward.



Courtesy of the Fredericksburg Area Museum

Born into Record

John Chew Jr. was born on August 5, 1753, in Spotsylvania County. His birth date survives not through tradition but through sworn certification, drawn from a family Bible “belonging to his ancestors,” as attested during his disability proceedings.

From the beginning, his life was anchored in documentation. That detail becomes symbolic. Because the man who would later preserve Fredericksburg’s legal memory began life already rooted in written record.

The Southern Campaign and the Collapse at Camden

By 1780, the Revolutionary War had shifted decisively south.

British strategy, under Charles Cornwallis, aimed to retake the Carolinas by combining professional regulars with Loyalist support. After the fall of Charleston in May 1780, American resistance in the South stood on fragile ground.

Virginia militia units, including Chew’s 2nd Virginia Militia, were ordered south to reinforce the American army.

The American force under General Horatio Gates was a mixture of Continental regulars and militia. The structure itself was a tad unstable:

- Militia were often lightly trained
- Supply chains were thin
- Discipline varied
- Terms of service were short

On August 16, 1780, near Camden, South Carolina, those structural weaknesses collapsed.

When British regulars advanced with bayonets, large portions of the militia line broke. Gates fled the field. Continental units under Baron de Kalb resisted fiercely but were overwhelmed.

The Battle of Camden became one of the most devastating American defeats of the war.

It was in this collapse, not in orderly retreat, but in disintegration, that John Chew Jr. was struck in the left arm. The wound was so severe that amputation followed.

He did not die, he endured.

Officer and Paymaster

The disability papers reveal something even more significant. Chew was not merely a line officer. He served as paymaster of the regiment.

This role placed him in a position of trust

- Managing regimental funds
- Maintaining accounts
- Ensuring distribution of pay
- Preserving financial order amid campaign chaos

Even in war, Chew was a custodian of structure. Fellow soldier William Cason later testified under oath that:

- He served alongside Chew in 1780-1781
- He witnessed his wounding at Camden
- He shared imprisonment with him
- He was exchanged with him around July 12, 1781

The testimony shows Bro. Chew not only wounded, but captured and exchanged. He experienced the full arc of military collapse: battle, injury, imprisonment, and release. That experience would shape the rest of his life.

Spotsylvania County March 28 th 1786.

I do hereby certify that the bearer hereof, John Chew Jun'r., served as a Lieutenant in my Regiment of Militia, ordered from this State for the relief of South Carolina, and that in the action near Camden (in South Carolina) which happened the sixteenth day of August 1780 the said Chew was wounded in the left arm, which was the cause of it's being amputated Certified the day & year above mentioned and Geo. Stubblefield [George Stubblefield] Col. 2 Reg't. V. M. th Spotsylvania County. March 28 1786. I do hereby certify that the bearer hereof John Chew Jun'r. was born the fifth day of August one thousand seven hundred and fifty three, being now in the thirty third year of his age, as appears by his register recorded in the Family Bible belonging to his ancestors. -And that the said John Chew jr now is, and has been from the time of his birth an Inhabitant of the County aforesaid Joseph Brock.

I DO, with the advice of Council, hereby certify that John Chew Jr of Spotsylo' a. about 33 years of age late a Lieutenant in the 2 . Regiment of Virg'a. Militia ordered to the relief of So. Carolina, appears to have been disabled in such a manner while in the service of The United States, as to entitle him to the sum of Forty Eight Pounds yearly; which allowance is accordingly made him, to commence from the first day of January 1786 d GIVEN under my hand at Richmond, this 23 day of October 1786.

P. Henry [Patrick Henry] Mr Chew recv'd a wound in his left arm at the battle of Cambden, which occasioned the amputation thereof. T. Meriwether.

Spotsylvania County to wit Personally appeared before me a Justice of the Peace for the County aforesaid William Cason [pension application S9157] a credible witness, aged seventy four years, who made oath that he was well acquainted with the late John Chew of Fredericksburg Spotsylvania County, knew him in service in the 2 regiment of Virginia Militia under command of Captain John Halliday [John Holliday] in the years 1780 and 1781, was with him in the Battle of Camden where he was wounded in his arm, so as to cause him to have it cut off; that he held the rank of Lieutenant, and acted as Paymaster of the Regiment; that he was taken prisoner together with this Deponant and that they were exchanged at the same time say on the 12th July 178 and this Deponant never heard of his (the said John Chew) resigning his commission Given under my hand & seal this 8 day of May in the year of our Lord 1834 th NOTE: Two documents in the state pension file bear the signature of John Chew, Jr.

Disability and the Architecture of a New Republic

When Chew returned to Virginia permanently maimed, the Commonwealth required proof before granting support.

Virginia's early disability system demanded:

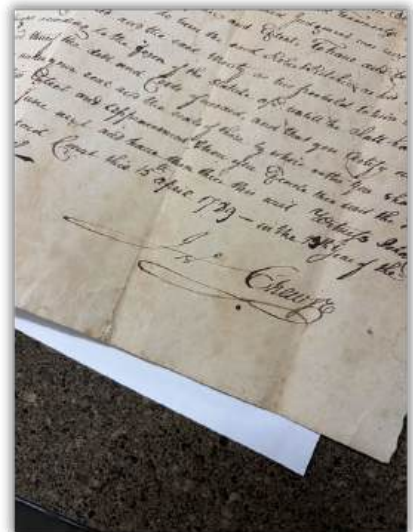
- Sworn testimony
- Verification of rank and service
- Proof of wound
- Confirmation of identity and residence

In Chew's case, the record included:

- Attestation by George Stubblefield
- Deposition by William Cason
- Birth verification from a family Bible (Joseph Brock)
- Certification signed under the authority of Patrick Henry

On October 23, 1786, Virginia granted him an annual allowance of £48 for permanent disability.

This is more than compensation, It is one of the early republic's first bureaucratic acts of memory. The state entered his wound into its books, and once entered, it became part of public record.



Credit: Many official documents found within the City Archives are found with Chew's signature. This includes deeds, wills, court cases, and more.

From War to Order

On August 6, 1787, just one year after his disability certification, John Chew Jr. was appointed Clerk of the Fredericksburg Hustings Court.

The transition is not accidental.

The man who had managed regimental accounts in war would now manage the legal continuity of an entire town.

Fredericksburg was no minor village. It was a regional legal center. Courts there handled significant civil and criminal matters. Lawyers operating within Virginia's legal culture, including figures such as John Marshall and James Monroe, moved within this judicial world.

As the clerk, he preserved deeds, recorded proceedings, authenticated copies, maintained bonds, ensured continuity between sessions. If Camden represented collapse, the clerkship represented order.

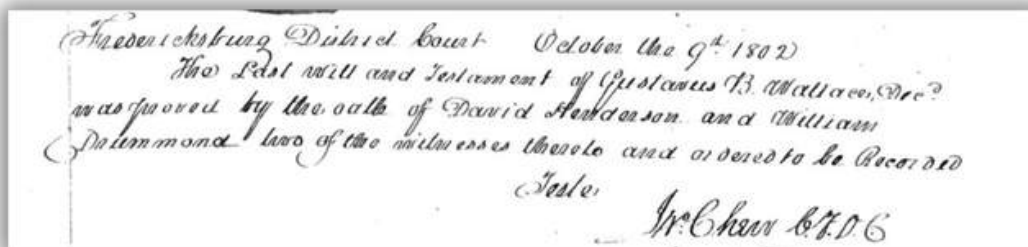
And Bro Chew would hold that office from 1787 until his death in 1806. Nearly twenty years.

Civic Trust, Proven by Repetition

Council minutes show Chew repeatedly elected or retained:
1788,1790,1791,1792,1801,1802,1803,1804,1805

This is institutional confidence sustained over decades. A newspaper notice shows a lawyer directing clients to: "John Chew, Esq., clerk of the court," for full accounting of pending suits and monies.

That is trust made public. He became the living memory of Fredericksburg's legal obligations.



Fredericksburg District Court October the 9th 1802
The Last will and Testament of Gustavus B. Wallace, Dec^d
was proved by the oath of David Henderson and William
Dalemona two of the witnesses thereto and ordered to be Recorded
Teste
J^r. Chew C^lrk

Bro and Lt. Col. Gustavus B Wallace's will, signed by Bro. John Chew Jr. Credit: Fredericksburg City Archives

Before the Office

Even before 1787, Chew appears in legal records:

- Witnessing executor bonds (1784)
- Participating in estate proceedings
- Witnessing deeds (1787)
- Acquiring 432 acres in Spotsylvania (1785)

Fredericksburg did not elevate a stranger, It elevated a man already embedded in its legal fabric.

Death and Continuity

John Chew Jr. died on February 12, 1806.

Estate notices followed in May. His wife Elizabeth died that same year, the clerkship passed to Robert S. Chew, long identified in clerk memorials as his son.

The desk did not go silent.
The records did not falter.
Continuity survived the man.

Guardianship

Bro. John Chew Jr. guarded memory in three dimensions:

In war; as a militia officer and paymaster who endured collapse at Camden.
In law; as a disabled veteran formally entered into Virginia's early disability system.
In peace; as the steady hand preserving Fredericksburg's legal continuity for nearly two decades.

The Republic that nearly unraveled at Camden learned to steady itself through men like him. Men who survived disorder in war and devoted their remaining strength to order in peace.

Reflection by Wor. Dove:

Two centuries have passed since Bro John Chew Jr. laid down his pen. The courthouse books he once kept have aged. The ink has faded. The town has changed beyond anything he could have imagined. And yet the principle he embodied remains urgently modern.

Nations still depend on those who endure hardship without abandoning duty.
Communities still rely on those who preserve order when disorder would be easier.
Institutions still stand or fall on the quiet integrity of the people who keep their records,
maintain their trust, and do their work without spectacle.

In an age that celebrates noise, John Chew Jr. reminds us of something steadier:
That survival is not enough.
That sacrifice must be followed by service. And that continuity, patiently maintained, is one
of the highest forms of devotion to a republic.

This concludes the 15th 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.

Source List

- Virginia disability certifications (1786)
- Depositions of George Stubblefield and William Cason
- Birth verification from family Bible (Joseph Brock)
- Certification signed under the authority of Patrick Henry
- Fredericksburg Hustings Court clerk roll
- Council-minute entries (1788-1805)
- Virginia Herald estate notice
- Spotsylvania deed and probate abstracts
- Masonic Cemetery roster
- Lodge No. 4 historical materials
- Memorials of Old Virginia Clerks



Freemasonry and Natural Rights

by Seth Roderick, WM

As we celebrate America's 250th anniversary, it is fitting for the Lodge to consider the principles which brought this country into being, and the obligations which still rest upon men who profess to labor under the eye of the Grand Architect of the Universe. The Declaration of Independence did more than announce a separation from the British King and Parliament. It set forth a moral claim. "All men are created equal," and are "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights," among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Government, according to the Declaration, exists to secure those rights and derives its just powers from the consent of the governed. Jefferson gave the Declaration its language, but he did not invent the moral world from which it came. He drew from a long inheritance of natural law, English constitutional argument, Enlightenment thought, and the older Christian understanding that man's dignity precedes the state.

The moral and political philosophy Jefferson drew from is often called Natural Rights. It means that man does not receive his rights from the state nor does he receive his conscience from a magistrate. Likewise, he does not receive his moral worth from fashion, social faction, wealth, or power. These rights belong to him by nature, and that nature is understood as endowed by the Creator. The civil state may recognize, protect, or violate such rights, but it cannot manufacture them.

Freemasonry stands in close sympathy with the American expression of this older principle. The Lodge is universal in its reach and civil in its habits. It does not exist to seize the instruments of government, and it does not turn its tiled room into a party caucus. Instead, it forms men capable of acting in public life with justice, charity, and truth. Virginia Masonry teaches that a Mason is to observe the moral law, reject bigotry, and follow the golden rule. It further teaches that Freemasons are to be lawful and concerned citizens, mindful of the welfare of their country and community, and ready to act when a Brother, or any member of the human family, suffers oppression or distress.

The philosophical roots of this are older than 1776, older than our Lodge, and older than the speculative Masonry itself. Aristotle taught that man is by nature a political animal, meaning that human beings come to their full moral life in ordered community, through speech, judgment, friendship, and deliberation. Augustine warned that civil power without justice loses its moral ownership, asking what kingdoms become when justice is removed. Aquinas gave Natural Rights its Christian expression. Natural law, by his account, is the rational creature's participation in eternal law. Man, because he has reason and conscience, can discern that good is to be pursued and evil avoided, and that human law must be measured by a higher moral order. Freemasonry does not turn these philosophers into ritual authorities, but we breathe the same air. Our Craft assumes, likewise, that each Brother can know duty, choose virtue, and be held answerable for his conduct.

For those reasons, a Lodge does not require every Brother to speak in the vocabulary of Aristotle, Augustine, or Aquinas, but it does require him to live as though moral order is real. Our symbols teach that life is measured. The obligations teach that conscience binds and that charity to the distressed is never an abstraction. Freemasonry requires this understanding because the whole Craft rests upon the proposition that a man can be improved by discipline, conscience, duty, and truth. Remove moral order, and the Lodge becomes nothing more than pageantry.

Natural Rights describe what is owed to man by virtue of his created nature. Masonic obligation describes what a man owes to God, his neighbor, his country, and himself. This is why the civil nature of Masonry is so important in our own time. A Lodge must be a place where men of different tempers and opinions can meet without surrendering conviction and without importing the disorders of the world outside. The old Constitutions of Masonry are clear that no private quarrels about religion or politics are to be brought within the doors of the Lodge, and that Masons are bound by obligation to square their actions, remain on the level with their fellow man and walk upright in all their stations. These things aren't easy for an individual so the Lodge, in its whole, must strive to teach men to govern themselves before they presume to govern others. In other words, Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

Masonry says that a Mason should practice the private virtues, avoid intemperance, work justly, study the arts and sciences. We must also give comfort to the distressed and give directions to the lost traveler. These instructions are clear and appropriate for this 250th anniversary.

How do we apply all of this in our Lodge?

First, we must form good men. A petitioner should find in the Lodge a school of character, not a fraternity clubhouse. A Master Mason participates in Lodge business as a full and equal member, and every Master Mason bears accountability for the decisions of his Lodge. Liberty without responsibility becomes reckless. Rights without duties become sloth. Masonry answers both errors by placing working tools in a man's hands and requiring him to use them.

Second, we must practice public virtue without becoming overly partisan with our compatriots. Our public service, education, relief, and friendship to the community are the correct expressions of Masonic citizenship.

Third, we must preserve the universality of the Craft like the Declaration of Independence speaks in universal language. Within the Lodge, men meet upon the level. Outside the Lodge, they are expected to walk uprightly in their ordinary transactions of life. These principles should be clear even toward non-Masons, noting that every person has a claim upon a Mason's kind offices, requiring respect, fidelity, and goodness.

In this 250th year of independence we must remember the claims about man, natural rights, and moral order. We must renew our commitment to form men who can bear liberty without abusing it, defend conscience without arrogance, serve community without spectacle, and preserve harmony without cowardice.

The work of Independence began with a declaration. The work of Masonry begins with a man. If the rights of man are natural, the duties of a Mason are civil. Our Lodge becomes worthy of its heritage when it teaches both.

Support the Preservation of Our Historic 1816 Lodge Building

Just one gift can contribute toward another 200 years of Freemasonry in Fredericksburg, and earn you a brick on the Baker Room wall!

Visit BricksRUs.com/DonorSite/FXBG4 to donate.



Visit Our Online Store

New to the shop: Commemorate 250 years of American independence with this beautifully crafted America 250 Masonic Lapel Pin—a meaningful symbol of patriotism, brotherhood, and the enduring principles shared by Freemasonry and the founding of our nation.

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- Half-page ads \$250 (12 months)
- Full-page ads \$400 (12 months)

*Your
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★★ Come One and All to a ★★

YOUTH ROUND-UP

Saturday, May 9th, 2026
10 am to 3 pm



The International
Order of the
Rainbow Girls



Job's Daughters
INTERNATIONALE



DEMOLAY

**Learn about the Masonic Youth Organizations
Rainbow Girls, Job's Daughters and DeMoLay**

Lunch Provided

Saturday, May 9th, 2026
10 am to 3 pm
Fredericksburg Masonic Lodge #4
803 Princess Anne Street
Fredericksburg, VA. 22401



ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR
VIRGINIA



2026 Lodge Officers

To reach a lodge officer, please contact Secretary@MasonicLodge4.org to request their contact information.

Worshipful Master	Seth Roderick
Senior Warden	John Lapke
Junior Warden	Michael Dove, PM
Treasurer	James Snyder, PM
Secretary	Christopher Tripp, PM
Senior Deacon	Joshua Miller
Junior Deacon	George Dunlap
Chaplain	Justin Garrett
Marshal	Kenneth Carey
Tiler	Shelby Chandler
Senior Steward	Michael Scullin
Junior Steward	Brian Hesler
Assistant Treasurer	Thomas Baker
Assistant Secretary	Ethan Burgess

Lodge Program Officers

Lodge Blood Drive 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

Committee Chairs

Funeral Committee	Justin Garrett
Website & Social Media	Ethan Burgess
Buildings & Grounds	Rand Sompayrac
Finance	Robert Brammer, PDDGM
Sick & Widows	Patrick McConnell, PM
Archives	Mike Dove, PM

Trustees

R.W. Dennis Berry, PDDGM - 2026
Wor. Chris Decker, PM - 2027
Wor. Dan Goodwin, PM - 2028
Wor. Chris Tripp, PM - 2029
Wor. Pat McConnell, PM - 2030

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. Michael J. McCray	1995	Wor. Jeffrey P. VanCuren	2015
Wor. Steven M. Gallahan	1996	Wor. James L. Ragsdale	2016
Wor. Charles B. Pasto	1998	Wor. Michael T. Moses	2017
Wor. J. Travis Walker	2000	Wor. Daniel T. Goodwin	2018
R.W. Daniel W. Thompson	2001	Wor. James M. Snyder	2019
R.W. W. Robert Brammer	2002	Wor. Stanley R. Kennedy	2020
Wor. Sheridan G. Harrod	2003	Wor. Christopher S. Tripp	2021
Wor. Jene G. Parrotte	2004	Wor. Joseph K. Gilkerson	2023
R.W. Steven W. Sanford	2005	Wor. Patrick F. McConnell	2024
Wor. Richard D. Dey	2006	Wor. Michael J. Dove	2025