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FREEMASONRY IN THE UNITED STATES.

Freemasonry was planted in the American Colonies by English masons during the first three decades of the 18th century. The oldest existing written record is a minute book of a lodge in Philadelphia dated 1720, and pre-supposing a yet earlier date. Benjamin Franklin was a member of this Lodge, which was believed to have been formed without a written charter. The earliest Lodge known to have been constituted by the Grand Lodge of England was the First Lodge of Boston, organized in 1733 by Henry Price, deputised by Viscount Montague (the then Grand Master) "to be Provincial Grand Master of New England and Dominions and Territories thereunto belonging".

During the colonial period the majority of the Lodges worked under English Constitutions, with here and there a few receiving their charters from the Grand Lodges of Scotland and Ireland.

At the culmination of the Revolutionary War the ten local Lodges asserted their independence, and their sovereignty was everywhere recognised within a few years. Each Grand Lodge confined itself within a jurisdiction coincident with the political boundaries of its corresponding State, a custom followed by all Grand Lodges subsequently organized in the U.S.A. This was the origin of the now famous doctrine of exclusive territorial jurisdiction, the point of which is that a Grand Lodge is sole and sovereign within its own acknowledged territory, any violation of which being considered grounds for the discontinuance of fraternal recognition.

Royal Arch Masonry (or Capitular Rite) was introduced in the middle of the 18th Century, and was followed later in the century by the Councils of Royal and Select Masters (or Cryptic Rite) of which the Columbian Council No.1 of New York City (1810) is the oldest existing Council in the United States.

The Knight Templar or Chivalric Rite was introduced during the same period.

The Mother Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite was organized in Charleston S.C. in 1801.

There are also in the U.S.A. a number of social organizations, the so-called "Side Orders". Notable among these are the Order of the Eastern Star, with a mixed membership; the Ancient Arabic Order, Nobles of the Mystic Shrine for North America; Mystic Order of Veiled Prophets of the Enchanted Realm; the Ancient Egyptian Order of Sciots; the Tall Cedars of Lebanon; the Order of de Molay for Boys; and a number of others of less importance. These appendant societies are not to be confused with masonic bodies properly so called, and are not recognized by Grand Lodge of England.

(Encyclopaedia Britannica).



Franklin Roosevelt, who was installed as President of the United States on 11th March, 1933, was the twelfth Mason to hold that office; the other eleven who were members of the Craft being Bros. Geo. Washington, James Monroe, Andrew Jackson, James Polk, Jas. Buchanan, Andrew Johnson, Jas. A. Garfield, William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, W. H. Taft and Warren G. Harding.



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