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BESPANGLED PAINTED & EMBROIDERED

DECORATED MASONIC APRONS IN AMERICA
1790-1850



SCOTTISH RITE MASONIC
MUSEUM OF OUR NATIONAL HERITAGE
LEXINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02173

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COVER: Masonic apron, painted on leather, c. 1800, catalog number 12.

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Shrine-AA.O.N.M.S.
Grotto-M.O.V.P.E.R.

Red Cross of Constantine
Royal Order of Scotland

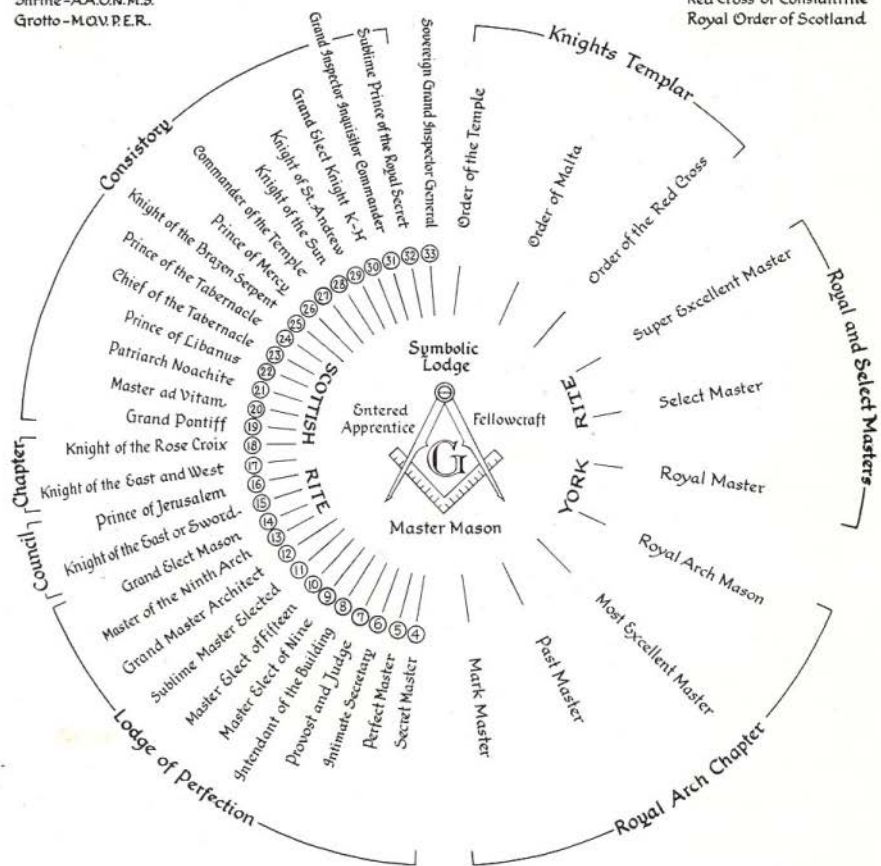


Diagram of Masonic organizations and degrees showing the Master Mason, York Rite, and Scottish Rite degrees.

INTRODUCTION

This catalog is the second in a projected series of publications presenting the research and interpretation of Masonic Symbolism in the American Decorative arts. The first, *Masonic Symbols in the American Decorative Arts* (Lexington, Museum of Our National Heritage, 1976), was a comprehensive survey of the entire field. Its appearance coincided with a major exhibit on view at the museum from September, 1975 to September, 1976. That catalog, the first in-depth study of the subject, has remained a standard work even though subsequent research and new information will require it to be revised before too long.

The present study focuses on just one category of objects decorated with Masonic symbols: the Masonic apron. American Masonic aprons merit this special consideration because they comprise a large and unique body of materials. Their relationship and importance to the American decorative arts have never before been examined thoroughly or interpreted properly. This catalog, and the accompanying exhibit on view at the museum from September 28, 1980 to April 5, 1981, will fill that need.

Since she joined the museum staff in 1974, Barbara Franco has made a special study of American folk art objects decorated with Masonic symbols. Her diligent research, dedication, and enthusiasm has made her an authority in this field. In this study she carefully delineates the place of decorated Masonic aprons in American art. She identifies the artist and engravers who decorated these aprons, explains the importance of the designs and symbols, presents historical information associated with them, and establishes the time periods in which they were made, and how they were made. She discusses European stylistic influences and compares them to their American counterparts. European aprons have not been included, however, because they fall outside the scope of this publication.

For most Americans Masonic aprons are unfamiliar and even curious objects. Masons are not often seen today outside their lodge rooms wearing their aprons and other regalia, which may include sashes, jewels, gloves, and top hat. This has not always been the case. The Masonic fraternity is the oldest and largest in the United States; its history and development parallel that of the nation itself. In the past, Masons wearing their trappings of office seem to have appeared in public frequently: at ceremonies commemorating historic events, at the laying of cornerstones of important buildings, at parades of every type, at the funerals of deceased members, and at their own special festival days, particularly those honoring the two Saints John. Benjamin Latrobe docu-

mented one of these important events in a drawing depicting the Masonic procession at the laying of the cornerstone for the United States Capitol, September 18, 1793. It is the basis for a contemporary painting by Allyn Cox now on view at the Capitol. General Lafayette's farewell tour of the United States in 1824 was the occasion for an unprecedented public display of handsomely garbed Masons. These public appearances continued throughout the 19th century but seem to have dwindled in the 20th. In all probability most Americans saw for the first time prominent Masonic leaders dressed in ceremonial garb when on October 8, 1956, *Life* magazine ran a colorful and informative pictorial feature entitled, "The U.S. Mason."

The Masonic apron is the single most important piece of ceremonial regalia that Masons wear. Symbolically it has a direct link to the stonemasons of the medieval period who, like most craftsmen, wore a protective apron while they worked. These aprons were usually made from an animal hide, particularly that of a sheep or a lamb; for some trades a cloth apron, usually linen, sufficed. For the operative stonemasons the apron was protective clothing; for the "Accepted Masons"—educated gentlemen admitted to the prestigious stonemasons' guilds—the apron was a badge of distinction. Whereas in earlier times protective aprons were made of large pelts to give maximum coverage, aprons of the "Accepted" or "Speculative" Masons were gradually reduced in size with the upper flap turned down and tied with laces wrapped around the waist. In the mid-18th century, Freemasonry evolved into a philosophical system whereby the stonemason's simple tools—the square and compasses, trowel, and plumb, among others—were used to teach moral and social virtues. The apron took on an added symbolic meaning. Made of white lamb skin, it symbolized innocence and purity. One of the highlights of a candidate's initiation into a Lodge of Freemasons was, and still is, his investiture with a plain white lambskin apron and an explanation of its moral significance.

Since symbolism and ritual permeated every dimension of Masonic teaching and its mode of operation, it was virtually a foregone conclusion that the plain white apron would not for long go unadorned. As aprons were gradually reduced in size, lined and bordered, the color of the linings and border took on special meaning. In the first half of the 18th century, the lining and border color identified national, regional, or local lodges, and marked distinctions of rank among lodge officers. For example, the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland, and Scotland each decorated aprons in this manner and prohibited extraneous decorative motifs. But toward the last half of the 18th century, as the Masonic movement spread rapidly around the world, uniformity of practice languished, and imaginative Freemasons began to embellish their aprons with the symbols associated with the craft. The French flare for design and style resulted in a proliferation of multi-colored, elaborate aprons. In the United States Masonic aprons also tended to be flamboyantly decorated: designs and styles were

influenced by the English and the French. With only a few rigid restrictions (particularly those marking rank within the Lodge organization) the practice of decorating aprons flourished and continued throughout the 19th century notwithstanding the fact that there was always a large constituency within the Masonic fraternity that frowned on the practice.

Freemasonry's pluralistic character provided nearly limitless opportunities for decorating aprons. Three degrees, — Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason, — comprise the basic Masonic system of the Ancient Craft Masonry, or as it is also called, Symbolic or Speculative Freemasonry. These three degrees are conferred in a Lodge of Ancient Craft Masons, or "Blue Lodge," as it is popularly called. In the United States these local lodges are under the jurisdiction of a Grand Lodge of which there is only one in each state. This arrangement is indigenous to the United States and is known as the American System.

After taking the 3rd degree in a Blue Lodge, Master Masons may elect to participate in two branches of Freemasonry: the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, consisting of thirty additional degrees, and the York or American Rite, comprising ten supplementary orders and degrees, including the Royal Arch and Knights Templar degrees. Both branches originated in the 18th century; their moral teachings and philosophy are an elaboration of the basic Masonic principles found in Symbolic or Blue Lodge Freemasonry. The system is elaborate. Each degree or branch has a carefully defined scope, ritual, and ceremony. As the symbolism proliferated, so did the opportunities for creating distinctive regalia, of which the apron can often be the centerpiece. To assist readers, we have included a glossary of Masonic symbols and a schematic diagram outlining the many-faceted character of the Masonic fraternity.

Publication of the catalog was made possible by a special appropriation of the Supreme Council of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States, Stanley F. Maxwell, Sovereign Grand Commander; and a grant from The Masonic Book Club, Bloomington, Illinois, Alphonse Cerza, President. We are grateful to Louis L. Williams, past president of The Masonic Book Club, who encouraged us in our publication efforts and who rendered valuable editorial assistance. We wish to express our deep appreciation to T.O. Haunch, Librarian and Curator, and to his assistant, Robert Groves, of the United Grand Lodge of England, for reading the manuscript and for rendering valuable criticism and suggestions. We also wish to thank the many Masonic organizations that freely provided information and loaned aprons for the exhibit; specific references are noted in the text of the publication. The catalog was designed by Addis M. Osborne, Assistant Director of the Museum of Our National Heritage.

Clement M. Silvestro
Director and Librarian



Plate I Masonic Apron, New Hampshire, 1790's, cat. no. 7



Plate II Masonic Apron, Portsmouth, N.H. 1796-1815, cat. no. 14



Plate III Masonic Apron, Nathan Negus, Boston, 1817, cat. no. 15

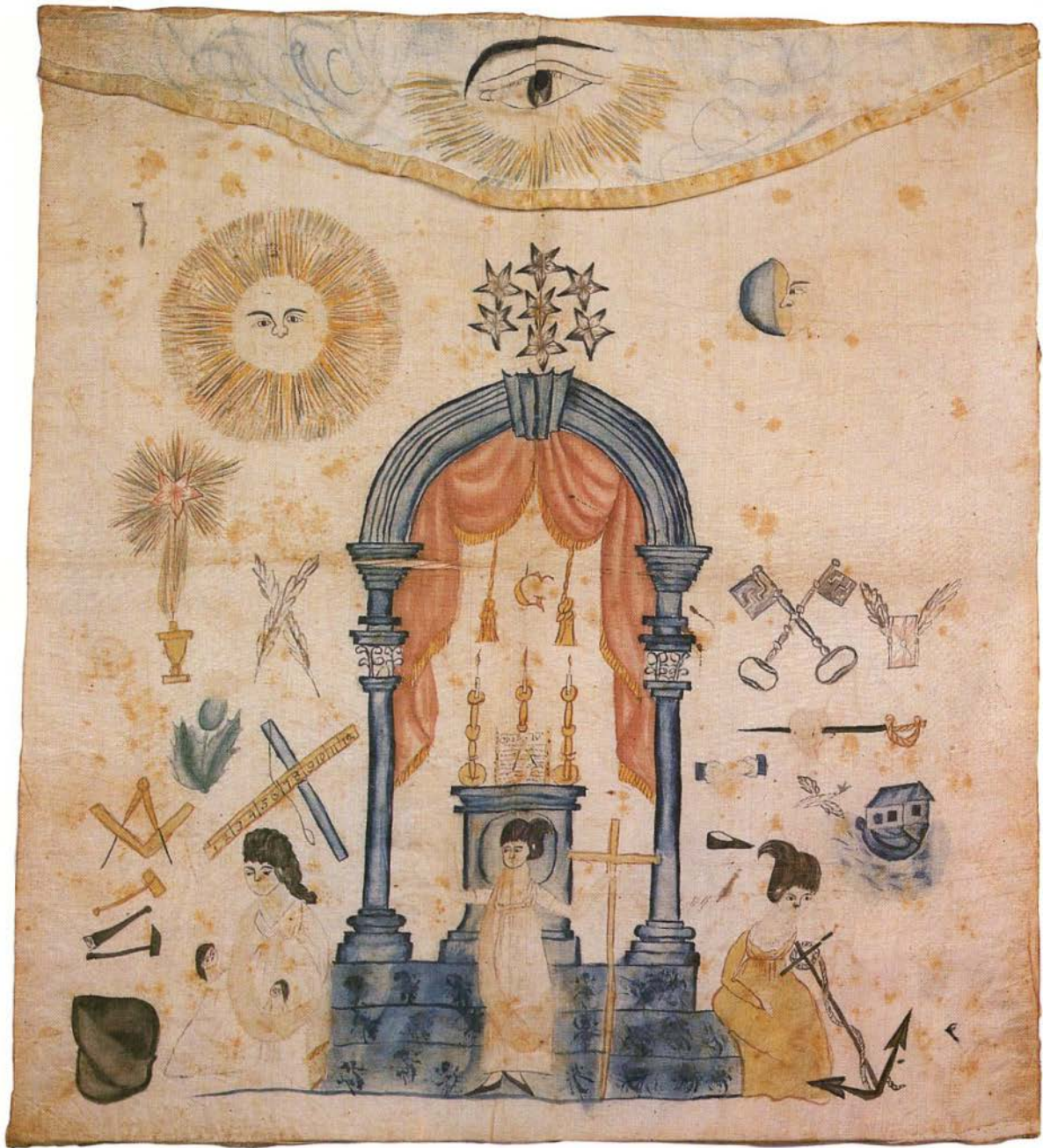


Plate IV Masonic Apron, c. 1815, cat. no. 20



Plate V Masonic Apron, c. 1820, cat. no. 21



Plate VI Masonic Apron Portsmouth, N.H., 1820-1830, cat. no. 24



Plate VII Embroidered Masonic Apron, Philadelphia, 1818, cat. no. 79



MR. J. HULL.
-aged 50 years.
Mrs. M. HULL
aged 49 years.

Plate VIII "Mr. and Mrs. Hull", watercolor on paper by an unknown artist, shows Mr. Hull dressed in Masonic regalia wearing an apron engraved by Abner Reed in 1800.
Museum of Our National Heritage

DECORATED MASONIC APRONS IN AMERICA 1790-1850

BARBARA FRANCO

MASONIC APRONS IN AMERICAN ART

Masonic aprons worn by Freemasons as part of their fraternal regalia were elaborately decorated with painted, printed, and embroidered designs from the end of the 18th century through the first half of the 19th century. The protective leather aprons worn by stonemasons and other 17th- and 18th-century workingmen developed into the symbolic and decorative Masonic apron which, according to official regulations, should always be made from pure white lambskin to symbolize innocence and purity. Masonic writers criticized decorating Masonic aprons with symbols and “devices,” yet the practice was common in the early 19th century and decorated examples have been saved and prized over the years by lodges, families, and collectors. Generally dating between 1790 and 1850, these Masonic aprons are part of a rich period in American arts. Along with stenciled walls, painted furniture, embroidered pictures, and watercolor allegorical scenes, they are typical of the vernacular art that proliferated in the new nation.

Decorated Masonic aprons were the work of a variety of artists and craftsmen who drew from a wide range of decorative traditions and techniques popular in this period. Printed aprons engraved by well-known American artists are related to similarly engraved illustrations appearing on certificates and bank notes of the time. Embroidered aprons reflect styles and patterns of stitchery similar to needlework mourning pictures and other decorative embroidery. Techniques used by sign painters, calligraphers, and stencilers also appear on Masonic aprons. Painted aprons signed by artists offer further documentation for the wide range of decorative painting commonly done by 19th-century American artists in addition to portraits and paintings.

The iconography of these aprons goes beyond Masonic symbolism and embraces major themes in American art. Freemasonry’s basic symbols—the square, compasses, other stonemason’s tools, sun, moon, stars, and all-seeing eye—consistently appear in the design of Masonic aprons, but the eclectic symbolism of Freemasonry also includes other familiar symbols associated with religion and patriotism. Faith, Hope, and Charity, represented by the figures of a mother and child, and female figures holding a cross and anchor, are common to both Masonic aprons and a wide variety of decorative certificates, family registers, mourning pictures, etc. The artists and designers of Masonic aprons were well-versed in classical decoration in addition to their familiarity with Freemasonry and its symbolism. Although the pavement, pillars, and steps are Masonic symbols representing Solomon’s Temple, the use of columns and other architectural forms in the designs of Masonic aprons coincides with the classical revival in America. Masonic aprons represent some of the most charming examples of American taste for neoclassical motifs. Symbols of death and eternal life closely link Masonic imagery with the mourning-art

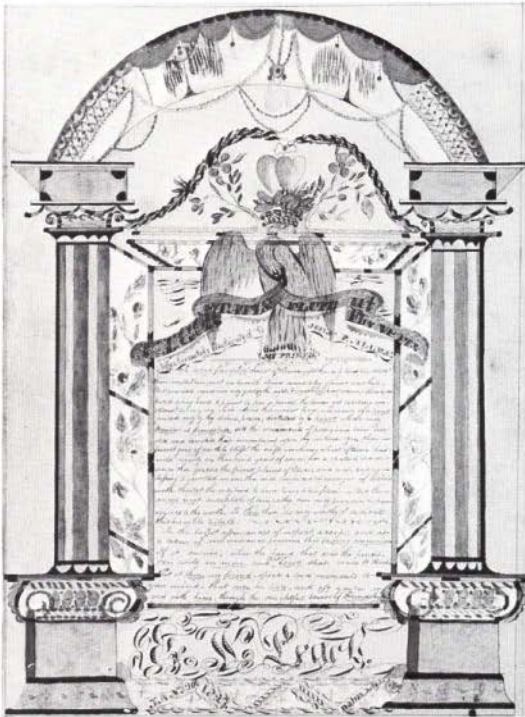
tradition in America. Universally recognized mourning motifs on gravestone carvings and mourning pictures of the Federal period, the coffin, willow branch, and urn were also widely used to express the ideals and teachings of Freemasonry. Masonic aprons became works of art that conveyed well-known meanings to contemporaries by combining familiar motifs and symbols of Freemasonry in a wide variety of original designs.

Large numbers of Masonic aprons were preserved in collections of institutions and individuals across the country. Local Masonic lodges and Grand Lodges in each state have saved these aprons as relics of early Freemasonry or because of an association with a prominent individual. While Masonic aprons in historical societies and museums have often remained uncataloged miscellanea in costume and textile departments, folk art collectors have recognized Masonic aprons as an American art form to be valued for its artistic and decorative merits.

Much has been written in Masonic literature about the significance and symbolism of the apron worn by Freemasons as part of their ceremonial clothing. Masonic scholars have extensively researched the symbolic meaning of the Masonic apron and its importance as the badge of a Mason and a symbol of innocence, purity, and strength.¹ Little scholarship, however, exists on the materials, manufacture, or decoration of Masonic aprons. One Masonic work that deals with the form of the Masonic apron rather than its symbolic meaning is an article by W. Harry Rylands entitled "The Masonic Apron." Writing in England in 1892, Rylands mourned the fact that "about this simple but important part of Masonic clothing . . . almost all that has been written is of little real value . . ."² Anyone who has attempted to identify, date, or describe a Masonic apron would be inclined to agree.

The present study attempts to place Masonic aprons in an art historical context in the hope that the large number of handsomely decorated aprons that survive may be better appreciated and understood. Masonic aprons were chosen for the study because they could be documented, dated, or related stylistically to the mainstream of American art. These key aprons can serve as guides to identifying and dating other aprons.

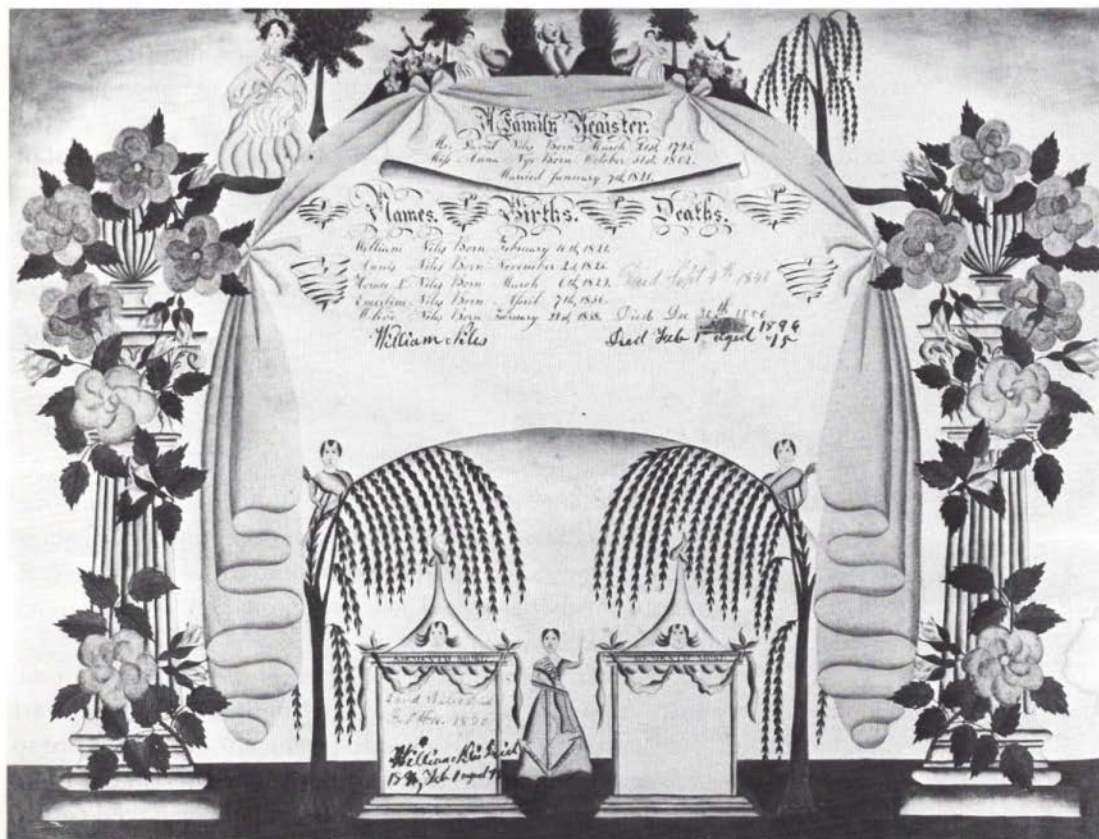
Far from being a specialized subject of limited interest to a few Masonic scholars, decorated Masonic aprons are part of a rich heritage of American art and decoration. The artistic techniques used to produce these aprons are so diverse that Masonic aprons cannot be considered an isolated decorative tradition. Engraved aprons have more in common with similarly engraved certificates and bank notes than with embroidered aprons of the same period. Comparison with a related example of needlework or decorative painting is often more helpful in dating an embroidered or painted Masonic apron than comparison with an engraved apron. Design changes that occur on Masonic aprons are closely related to period styles in American art. Typical 18th-



New England Friendship Letter, watercolor and ink on paper, E. W. Leach, 1827, New Hampshire
 Courtesy Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Kern

century flourishes and scrolls can distinguish an earlier Masonic apron from 19th-century examples with classical revival designs of allegorical figures, urns, and floral swags; late 19th-century examples can be identified by their ornate Victorian embroidery and ornament.

Decorated Masonic aprons dating from the period 1790 to 1850 have special significance for Masonic scholars and art historians. Freemasons can look back with pride to the fine quality and craftsmanship of the Fraternity's early regalia. As documented examples of paintings, engravings, and fancy needlework, early Masonic aprons offer new evidence for the varied accomplishments of American artists and craftsmen in the first decades of our nation's history.



Niles Family Register, watercolor on paper, c. 1837, shows columns, Hope and Charity, and mourning symbolism reminiscent of the designs on Masonic aprons.
 Courtesy Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Kern

EUROPEAN SOURCES — ENGLAND AND FRANCE

To understand the development of decorated Masonic aprons in America, it is necessary to turn first to the European sources of Freemasonry and Masonic aprons. Modern Freemasonry began in England as an outgrowth of the English stonemasons' guilds. At the end of the 17th century, these influential and highly regarded guilds of working stonemasons began accepting honorary members who were not associated with building trades. These "accepted" or gentlemen masons joined the stonemasons' lodges for social, philosophical, and intellectual reasons. A separate fraternity of "speculative" Freemasons, organized under the Grand Lodge of England in 1717, marked the official beginning of the Masonic Fraternity.

The apron in western culture has been the trademark of a craftsman for centuries. In England, "up to the late nineteenth century, the apron was in such general use for all jobs that its name in literature and its appearance in pictures became a sort of generic term or symbolic attribute denoting the 'working man'."³ When Freemasons adopted the tools, geometric concepts, and architectural forms associated with operative stonemasons as symbolic images for conveying their moral and philosophical teachings, the leather artisan's apron worn by stonemasons became part of Freemasonry's symbolism and ceremonial clothing.⁴

The earliest Masonic aprons in England were close approximations of protective, knee-length aprons worn by stonemasons. These aprons were made from a complete animal skin with the forelegs forming the ties, and the bottom edge either trimmed straight or rounded. The natural flap remaining at the top edge could either hang down or be worn above the waist by attaching it with a buttonhole or additional ties. Little written documentation about early Masonic aprons exists; pictorial representations are the main evidence for tracing the development of Masonic apron forms. One of the earliest depictions of Freemasons using aprons appears in William Hogarth's satirical print, "Night," published in 1738. It shows two Freemasons returning home wearing this early type of long leather apron tied in front with leather thongs.

As Freemasonry became more established as a separate philosophical fraternity, the form of the Masonic apron began to change. W. Harry Rylands, in his important historical essay on the development of the Masonic apron, suggests that "the bordering with ribbons and decorations were, I think, introduced by the speculative Masons, and may perhaps have been a mark of distinction,"⁵ in this case helping to distinguish speculative Freemasons from operative stonemasons. Refinements of the original leather artisan's apron had certainly begun by the 1730's. The Grand Lodge of England laid down regulations about regalia on March 17, 1731 which specified the color silk to be used for linings.⁶ These



"Night," engraving by William Hogarth, 1738, showing a Mason returning home wearing a long leather apron.

Courtesy Boston Public Library, Print Department

silk linings were finished by turning them over and hemming along the front edge of the apron to create a binding.

By 1786, the size and shape of the Masonic apron in England had substantially changed. A print, "Cagliostro at the Lodge of Antiquity," published in London, shows Freemasons wearing smaller, decorative aprons considerably different from the earlier artisan's apron. The smaller aprons were either square, rounded, or shaped to simulate an animal skin. The material of Masonic aprons also changed. Rylands suggests that "when the lodges ceased to supply them, and the fashion arose for decorations and of Masons possessing and carrying about their own aprons, it seems probable that silk and linen came into use."⁷ Leather aprons were not completely abandoned, but the fine white lamb or sheepskin aprons that continued to be used were more often decorated with painted or engraved designs.

There are several explanations for these changes in the basic form of English Masonic aprons. One explanation is that in the second half of the eighteenth century as men's fashions in England became more elaborate, Masonic aprons also became more decorative. In the 1760's and 1770's, "the fabrics and styles of clothing that were most admired came from abroad and in particular from France and Italy. The bright colors, and silken stuff, and the lavish use of lace... were either imported or imitated."⁸ In an article on the foppish men's dress of the period, Aliene Ribeiro quotes a letter written in 1769 by William Hickey which describes the transformation of an 18th-century Englishman's clothes after a visit to France:

Instead of the plain brown cloth suit we had last seen him in... His coat was of thick silk, the colour of sky blue and lined with crimson satin, the waistcoat and breeches also of crimson satin... coat and waistcoat being bedizened with a tawdry spangled lace.⁹

The rough artisan's apron of the early 18th-century Freemasons would have been incongruous with the silks, laces, and brocades used in the new fashions of men's attire depicted in a caricature by Carrington Bowles, dated 1770.

Another explanation for the change in Masonic aprons is suggested by Laurence Dermott, a controversial theorist of early Freemasonry, in 1764:

There was another old custom that gave umbrage to the young architects, i.e. the wearing of aprons, which made the gentlemen look like so many mechaniks, therefore it was proposed, that no brother (for the future) should wear an apron. This proposal was rejected by the oldest members, who declared, that the aprons were all the signs of masonry then remaining amongst them, and for that reason they would keep and wear them. It was then proposed, that (as they were resolved to wear aprons) they should be turned upside down, in order to avoid appearing mechanical.¹⁰

Dermott was a sharp critic of fellow Masons. His satirical description of some



"A Masonic Anecdote," engraving attributed to James Gillray showing Count Cagliostro at the Lodge of Antiquity, London, 1786. Courtesy Grand Lodge of Massachusetts

gentlemen Masons who were no longer disposed to wearing a workingman's apron was probably an accurate assessment of the fact that Freemasons in the mid-18th century were anxious to distinguish their own symbolic and ceremonial apron from its functional stonemason's prototype.

The 18th century was still a period of turmoil and development for the institution of Freemasonry. In England, two separate Grand Lodges representing the so-called Ancient and Modern factions existed until the Union of 1813 resulted in a United Grand Lodge of England. New degrees were being developed throughout the 18th century and were either adopted or rejected with much contention. Despite attempts to establish official regulations, aprons worn by members of the fraternity followed no uniform pattern, varying considerably among lodges under the jurisdiction of each Grand Lodge as well as from country to country. Two early references to Masonic aprons in the 1760's indicate that the practice of decorating aprons was a matter of individual choice. In the minutes of St. John's Old Kilwinning Lodge No. 6 of Scotland, an order for a procession reads, "the brethren are to have their aprons ornamented or not as they please."¹¹ Another publication of 1762 states that "every brother has an apron made of white skin and the strings are also of skin though some of them chuse to ornament them with ribbons of various colours."¹² While official regulations continued to specify a plain white leather apron, decorated aprons became increasingly popular and more elaborate in the second half of the 18th century.

Most early references to ornamentation on aprons refer only to ribbons and linings. More elaborate and pictorial decoration on English aprons dates from the last quarter of the 18th century, as indicated in this Grand Lodge report of September 2, 1772:

It having been represented to the Grand Lodge that several Brethren had lately appeared in public with gold lace and fringe, together with many devices on their aprons, etc., which was thought inconsistent with the dignity, propriety, and ancient customs of the Craft, Resolved and ordered: that for the future, no Brethren, Grand Officers excepted, shall appear with gold lace, gold fringe, gold embroidery, or anything resembling gold on their Masonic cloathing or ornaments.¹³

These regulations forbidding the use of gold lace, gold fringe, gold embroidery, and "devices" offer documentation for the kinds of embellishment that were beginning to appear on the formerly plain leather apron. Typically, these references to decorated aprons in English publications are critical of the practice.

Where and when did the use of pictorial symbols and the designs on Masonic aprons originate, despite the continued official position against decoration of any kind? One Masonic scholar, Albert Mackey, attributes the innovation to French Masons:



WELLADAY! is this my SON TOM!

"Welladay! is this my Son Tom!" A caricature of men's fashions in England by Carrington Bowles, 1770.

Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum

All extraneous ornaments and devices are in bad taste, and detract from the symbolic character of the investiture. But the silk or satin aprons, bespangled, and painted, and embroidered, which have gradually been creeping into our Lodges, have no sort of connection with Ancient Craft Masonry. They are an innovation of our French brethren, who are never pleased with simplicity, and have, by their love of tinsel in their various newly invented ceremonies, effaced many of the most beautiful and impressive symbols of our Institution.¹⁴

Writing in South Carolina in the 19th century, Mackey was familiar with the influence of French emigrés on American Freemasonry. Despite his obvious prejudice, evidence indicates that Mackey may have been correct in attributing pictorial decoration on Masonic aprons to French brethren.

From its origins in England, Freemasonry spread to continental Europe and America, rapidly becoming an international organization. It was probably first introduced into France by English nobility and gentry about 1725. Beginning as a genteel pastime for French noblemen, it gradually spread to include other levels of society. The 18th century was a period of Anglo-mania in France and Freemasonry was one of the many British Institutions adopted by Frenchmen. *Le Secret des Francs-Maçons*, an exposé of Freemasonry published in France in 1744, gives a fairly accurate if satirical view of the fashion for things English in France:

The Frenchman, though greatly impressed by his own merits, is, nevertheless an avid seeker for those of other Nations... First they wanted to dress like the English; they tired of that fairly soon; the style of dress gradually influenced their mode of thought; they adopted their metaphysics, and like them became geometricians; our Drama was affected by this English Fashion... Nothing more was lacking for the Frenchman than the joy of being a Free-Mason, & so he became one.¹⁵

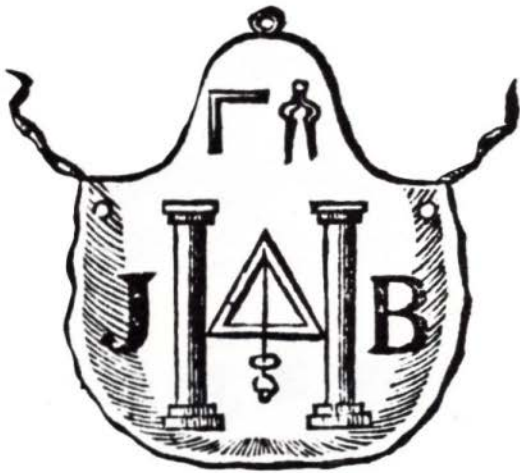
The French soon added their own interpretations to English Freemasonry, introducing Lodges of Adoption that included women members and additional degrees that eventually developed into the Scottish Rite of modern Freemasonry.

The practice of decorating aprons with painted and embroidered designs may well have been another French innovation. Early references to Masonic symbols used as decoration on aprons appear in mid-18th-century French exposés of Freemasonry. Because information about the Fraternity was kept secret, the many exposés which appeared in the 18th century are a major source for research on early Freemasonry. In *Le Secret des Francs-Maçons*, published in 1744, the aprons worn in a French lodge are described: "Some wear them entirely plain, that is without ornament; others wear them edged with blue ribbon. I have seen some who wore on the flap the Emblems of the Order which

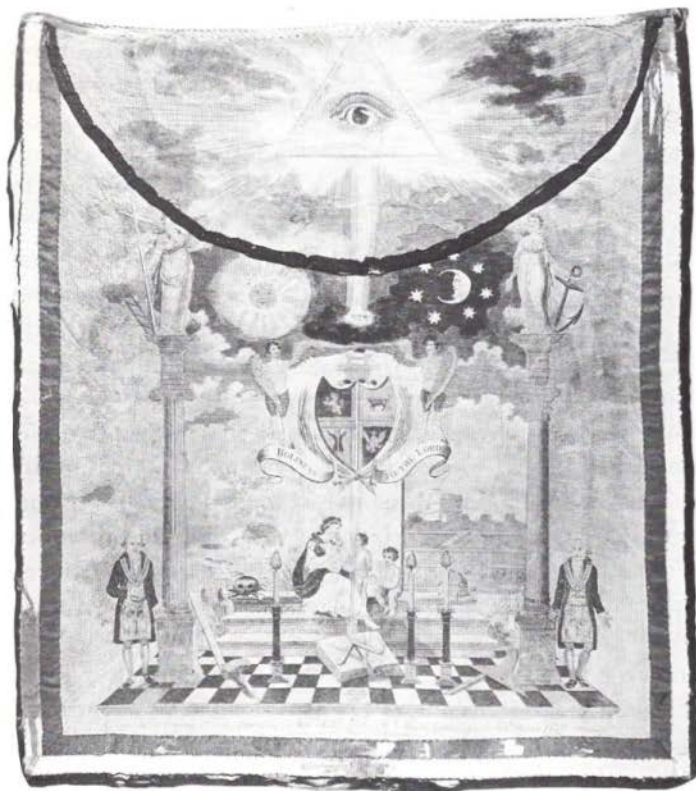
are, as I said before, a Square and a Compass.”¹⁶ Another exposé of Freemasonry published in 1751 states that “the apron is white skin lined with silk, edged with ribbon; various emblems of the order, such as the triangle and the square can be put on it.”¹⁷ Accompanying this description is an illustration of an apron with Masonic symbols. Both this illustration and the frontispiece of the book show Masonic aprons quite different from the larger plain aprons pictured in English publications of the 1740-1750 period.

French aprons from at least the 1740’s are different in style and shape from English aprons of the same period. French aprons are smaller in size and use distinctively French symbols which appear only on French or French-influenced aprons: the *niveau*, a French form of the level; tassels, ribbons, and a radiant “G”; small temple buildings reminiscent of the Pantheon in Paris; and columns topped with pomegranates. Landscape scenes with Egyptian elements such as sphinxes and obelisks, or with motifs of classical architecture are common in the engraved, painted, and embroidered designs of French Masonic aprons. Ornate embroidery with gold braid and sequins is used on French aprons and is particularly associated with the Scottish Rite degrees, first developed in France. Through the mid-19th century, French Masonic aprons continue to be ornately decorated.

Just as English travelers to France adopted more elaborate French styles of clothing in the second half of the 18th century, English Freemasons were probably influenced by highly decorated French aprons, and began to use pictorial and emblematic decoration on their own aprons. Decorated English aprons from the last quarter of the 18th century include a wide variety of painted, embroidered, and engraved designs, mainly based on symbolic charts and tracing boards with distinctively English designs. The development of copperplate printing added an important dimension to decorated aprons. Printed aprons by English engravers such as Robert J. Hixon, Robert Newman, and John Cole were especially popular in England from c. 1790 to c. 1815. In England, the period of decorated Masonic aprons officially ends after 1815 when the United Grand Lodge of England established standard regulations for apron designs. The official English Masonic apron that has continued with only minor changes since the 1815 regulations is square, bordered with blue, and elaborated only by rosettes and tassels.



Frontispiece from *Le Secret des Francs-Maçons*,
1744



1
 MASONIC APRON
 Robert Newman, England, 1798
 Hand-colored engraving on leather
 19" x 17"
 Museum of Our National Heritage

Robert Newman's engraved design is among the most sophisticated found on English aprons. It is inscribed, "Designed and Engraved by Br. Robert Newman/Dedicated to the Brethren at Large of the Ancient and Hon'able Society of Free and Acc'd Masons by Their Sincere Well-wisher Br. Rt. Newman/Pub's as the Act directs, May 1st A.D. 1798 A. L. 5798 etc. by Br. R. Newman Engraver." Robert Newman, an engraver in London, became a member of Lodge No. 255 in 1797. The figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity along with the Junior and Senior Wardens appear again and again in Masonic apron designs both in England and America. The concentric bands of colored silk as the border for the apron are characteristic of English aprons in the 1790's.

Algernon Tudor-Craig, *Catalogue of the Contents of the Museum at Freemasons' Hall*, (London, United Grand Lodge of England, 1938) p. 203.

2
 MASONIC APRON
 J. Cole, England, c. 1801
 Hand-colored engraving on leather
 18½" x 15¾"
 Museum of Our National Heritage

This engraved English apron is signed, "Dedicated to the Ancient and Honorable Society of Free and Accd Masons by their Faithful Br. J Cole PM Fore Street, London." John Cole was a printer in London who joined Globe Lodge No. 14 in 1797. Cole's design uses the figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity along with an arch through which the ark and dove can be seen. The binding is faded purple silk.

Algernon Tudor-Craig, *Catalogue of the Contents of the Museum at Freemasons' Hall*, (London, United Grand Lodge of England, 1938) p. 202.



3

MASONIC APRON

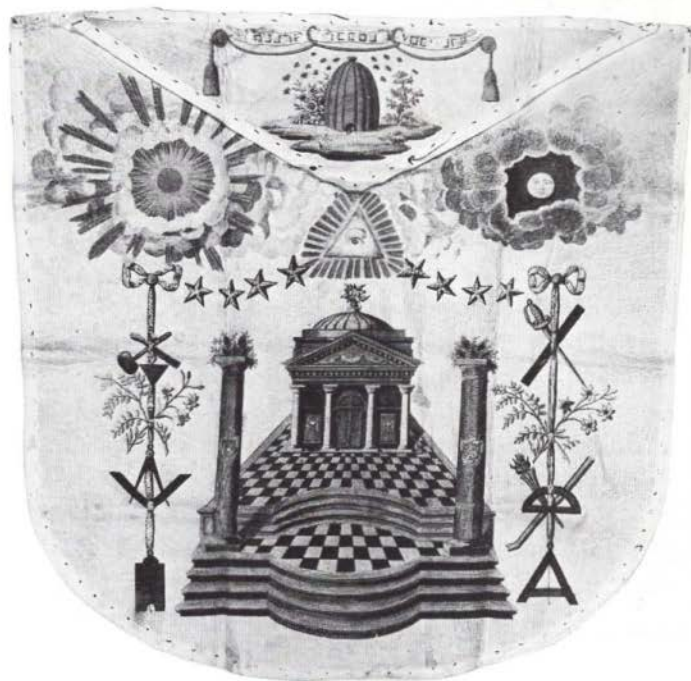
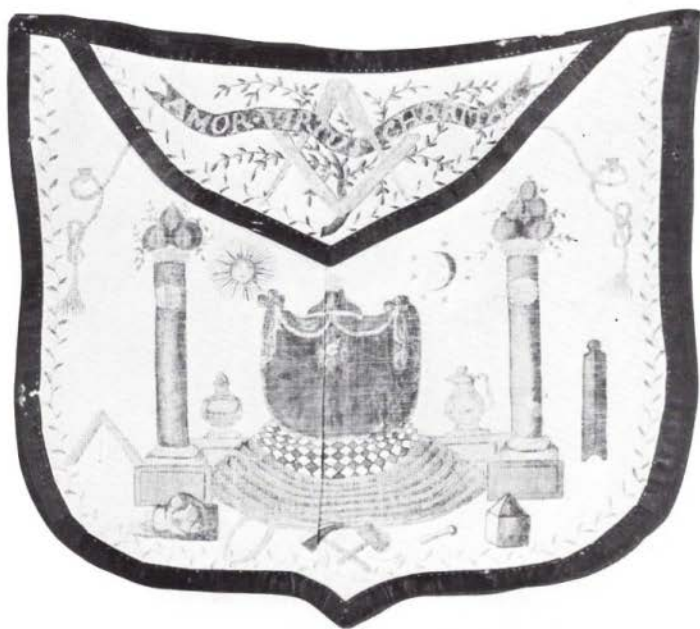
Artist unknown, France, c. 1765-1794

Watercolor on silk

15" x 17 1/4"

Museum of Our National Heritage

The French chemist Antoine Laurent Lavoisier (1734-1794) was the original owner of this apron. It dates sometime in the second half of the 18th century. The typical French designs include columns topped with pomegranates and the inscription, "Amor Virtus, Charitas."



4

MASONIC APRON

Engraver unknown, France, 1805-1814

Hand-colored engraving on leather

11 1/2" x 11 1/4"

Museum of Our National Heritage

Typical French symbols included on this apron are a temple building, columns topped with pomegranates, and Masonic tools suspended from a ribbon. It is inscribed under the flap, "Déposé à la Bibliothèque Imple," dating it within the Napoleonic period. French aprons are small, rounded at the bottom edge, and have a separate flap that does not extend to the edges of the apron.

AMERICAN MASONIC APRONS

In the 1730's British colonists introduced Freemasonry to America. The first Masonic aprons in America were either based on English models or imported. As Freemasonry established itself in the American colonies, however, it became a blending of diverse Masonic influences. In addition to ties with the Ancient and Modern Grand Lodges of England, American Freemasonry was imported directly from Scotland, Ireland, France, and the West Indies.¹⁸ In Massachusetts, for example, two separate Grand Lodges established by the Grand Lodge of England and the Grand Lodge of Scotland coexisted for eight years and both had the authority to charter new lodges in Massachusetts and other colonies. A number of the earliest lodges in the colony of Virginia were chartered by the Grand Lodge of Scotland, and one Virginia lodge, Loge de la Sagesse, of Portsmouth, was warranted by the Grand Orient of France.

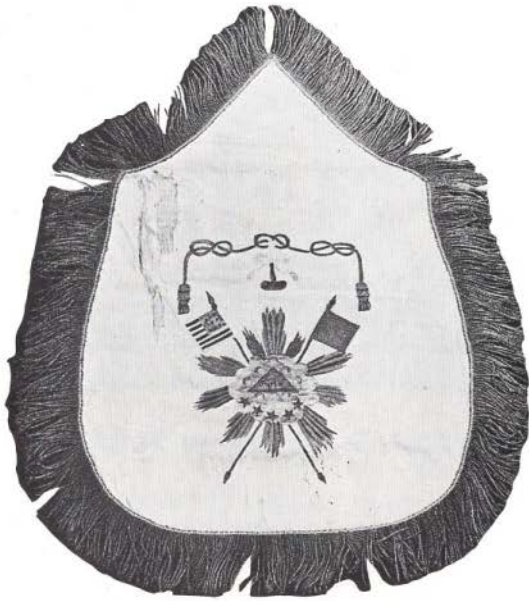
French aprons, in particular, were introduced to Americans by French immigrants, traders from the French West Indies, and indirect importation through England. At the time of the American Revolution, General Lafayette and other French officers who were Freemasons helped bring French and American Masons closer together. Following the French Revolution and subsequent revolts in the French West Indies in the 1790's, French Freemasons were among the many emigrants who fled to America. By 1798, large colonies of French emigrés located in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Orleans, Charleston, South Carolina, Savannah, Georgia, and Portsmouth, Virginia, accounted for most of the French refugees living in the United States. Freemasons among the emigrés established French lodges such as Frères Réunis in Maryland, and Loge Réunion in Charleston. At least one French emigré artist, Thomas Bluget de Valdenuit, engraved Masonic aprons and certificates during his stay in New York before returning to France in 1797.

Accurately reflecting these close ties with French Freemasonry, American Masonic aprons of the late 18th century include French motifs almost as frequently as English designs. Furthermore, large numbers of French aprons are found in American collections. Two aprons known to have belonged to George Washington are of French manufacture: the celebrated Lafayette apron, embroidered by Madame Lafayette and presented to Washington in 1784, is now in the collection of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania; another well-documented apron was presented to Washington in 1782, by Messrs. Watson and Cassoul, two of his friends who had aided the American cause during the Revolution. This apron, now at the George Washington Memorial, Alexandria, Virginia, was described by Elkanah Watson in his memoirs,



"Washington as a Mason," an engraving by George Edward Perine, published by Moore and Co., New York, c. 1860. Washington is shown wearing the apron embroidered by Mme. Lafayette. It was presented to him in 1784.
Museum of Our National Heritage

Wishing to pay some mark of respect to our beloved Washington, I employed in conjunction with my friend, M. Cassoul, nuns in one of the convents at Nantes to prepare some elegant Masonic ornaments and gave them a plan for combining the American and French flags on the apron designed for this use. They were executed in a superior and expensive style. We transmitted them to America accompanied by an appropriate address.¹⁹



Apron presented to George Washington by Messrs. Watson and Cassoul in 1782.
Courtesy Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22, Alexandria, Virginia

American Freemasons, influenced by a variety of Masonic traditions, continued to use decorated Masonic aprons long after the Grand Lodge of England had established standard regulations of a simple white apron with blue bindings for English Freemasons. American artists and craftsmen producing Masonic aprons were influenced by European designs on aprons imported from England, Scotland, and France in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. New immigrants to America brought European Masonic aprons with them as well as a variety of decorative traditions. Many American apron designs were freely adapted from English and French engravings. Liverpool transfer-printed ceramics and English printed handkerchiefs were other sources for designs that were available to the American market following the Revolution.

Although many American Masonic apron designs can be traced to European sources found on handkerchiefs, pitchers, or engravings, many others show unique arrangements of symbols influenced by American artistic and folk art traditions. Within the constraints of using the appropriate symbols for the Masonic use for which the apron was meant, artists and craftsmen could exercise a fair amount of individuality by arranging the symbols into interesting patterns or by selecting which symbols to emphasize. Using the same vocabulary of symbols, American artists produced a wide range of Masonic apron designs. Although most include the major Masonic symbols, in some, the figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity have been made the focal point of the composition; in others, the sun or the square and compasses may dominate the design. A trained artist, such as William Strickland of Philadelphia, could produce a sophisticated engraving for an apron utilizing academic principles of drawing and perspective while a self-taught sign painter completely ignored perspective and concentrated on lettering, gilding, or decorative details to create his design.

Little formal documentation for the stylistic development of American Masonic aprons exists and individual aprons are only rarely accompanied by a correct date, owner's name, or artist's signature. References to Masonic aprons found in the minutes of early Masonic lodges contain some of the most specific information about their materials and decoration. These records show that American Freemasons, organized first by colony, then state, and influenced by a variety of traditions, established little standardization of regalia until quite late in the 19th century.

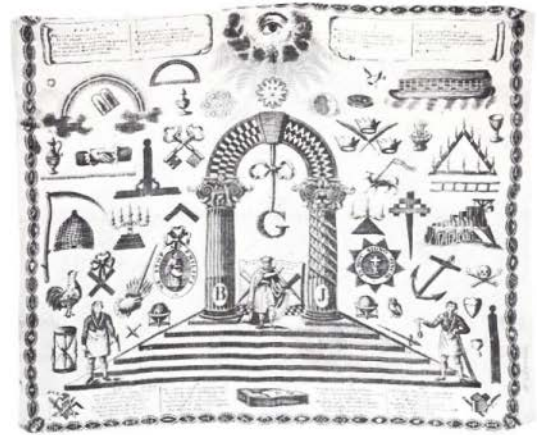
Eighteenth-century Masonic aprons in America were made locally or imported from Europe. Records of the Lodge at Fredericksburgh, Virginia, for 1754, list “drest deer skins bought, a charge for dressing the skins,”²⁰ suggesting that the lodge was making aprons locally from available deer hides. Fourteen years later, in 1768, the same lodge’s records include an invoice for “sundries purchased from Glasgow by Mr. Geo. McCaul.” The materials and services listed indicate that the lodge imported 8 embroidered Master’s aprons with gold fringe, 3 dozen lambskin Master’s aprons with gilding, and 7 dozen white skins made into 3 dozen Fellow Craft, and 4 dozen Apprentice aprons.²¹

Lodge minutes also offer some interesting clues about the materials used for aprons. Most references mention that the lodge purchased sheep skins or simply “skins” for aprons. In 1799, Old Trinity Lodge of Lancaster, Massachusetts, voted “that the Treasurer be Directed to purchase 2 Doz. of skins for Aprons.”²² The introduction of cotton aprons is documented in the minutes of Columbian Lodge, Boston, which noted on November 15, 1802, that the “treasurer and secretary were appointed a committee to procure two dozen white dimity aprons for use of members.”²³ Another reference to cotton aprons appears in the records of Aurora Lodge, Fitchburg, Massachusetts, for March 19, 1807: “Voted to purchase white jean sufficient to make four dozen aprons and to trim with blue ribbon.”²⁴ The introduction of woven materials for aprons in the early 1800’s is consistent with Ryland’s study of English aprons: “When the Lodges ceased to supply them and the fashion arose for decoration and of Masons possessing and carrying about their own aprons, it seems probable that silk and linen came into use. They are much more easily printed or painted upon than leather and the impression would wear much longer.”²⁵

Lodge records also show that American Masonic aprons lacked uniform or consistent decoration. In 1796, the by-laws of Columbian Lodge, Boston, Massachusetts, specifically prohibited painted decoration:

That the greatest decency and good order may be observed it is strongly recommended that every member appear cleanly dressed each Lodge night, and that no member presume to wear an apron, either in Lodge or at any procession which has any paintings or decorations thereunto, other than being lined, fringed, or trimmed with Ribbon. The Lodge conceiving any paintings or emblematic decoration to be highly inconsistent with the Masonic Art.²⁶

Yet in 1811, the minutes of Washington Lodge No. 59 in Philadelphia proudly state that “the Committee appointed to procure Lodge aprons and hangings for this Lodge report that they have contracted John W. Woodside to find skins and do the painting in the latest manner and for this his bill will be \$91.10.”²⁷ Woodside was well-known in his day as a painter of banners, fire engines, and other ornamental work. Although none of these aprons has been located, they were



Handkerchief printed by Gray and Todd, Philadelphia, c. 1817
Supreme Council, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction

almost certainly painted with decorative emblems similar to Woodside's other work. The aprons were apparently so highly prized by the members of the lodge that the following March, "the Lodge was called from labor the space of three minutes, to enable the Brethren to examine them."²⁸

As late as 1867, William S. Whitehead, a Mason, still deplored the lack of uniformity in Masonic aprons:

As I cast my eyes over this large assembly, representing all the lodges in this jurisdiction, the varieties of Masonic clothing represented to my view are as numerous as the lodges represented.

Aprons with square corners and aprons with round corners, white aprons, and aprons whose whiteness is marred by printer's ink, aprons bound with blue, and aprons not bound, aprons of cotton, of linen, of silk, of satin, of velvet, and alas, too rarely, aprons of pure white lambskin . . .

The true spirit of Freemasonry is better evinced by a rigid and uniform simplicity than by all the outward pomp and circumstances with which we invest it.²⁹

Despite continued criticism of the practice, decorated Masonic aprons not conforming to official uniform regulations continued to be popular in America through the first half of the 19th century.

Lodge records present confusing evidence as to whether lodges supplied aprons to members or whether individuals were expected to purchase their own. Perseverance Lodge No. 21 of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, records in its minutes for June 24, 1808, that "a motion was made and agreed unanimously that the Lodge should provide aprons for members that belong to the Lodge at the present time; and that if the Lodge increases the Officers of the Lodge shall take it upon them to provide an additional number."³⁰ Other lodges left the responsibility of obtaining aprons to individual members. A 1781 entry in the minutes of a Chester County, Pennsylvania, lodge states that "three dozen sheepskins were bought for the use of the Lodge; also that every Brother should supply himself with an apron."³¹

There is ample evidence that individuals purchased their own decorated aprons. Each of the Masonic aprons listed in the artist Ezra Ames' account books was painted for a specific individual. In 1800, for example, he records:

Mr. Joel Rogers	Masonic apron	14/ ³²
Mr. Phelps	Painting an apron	10/

A well-documented apron in the collection of the Rhode Island Historical Society is accompanied by the original receipt, dated 1793, from the artist to Daniel Stillwell, the apron's owner.

The majority of apron references in lodge records are for plain skins, indicating unadorned lambskin aprons, but some Masonic lodges also purchased



Liverpool pitcher, England, c. 1811
Museum of Our National Heritage

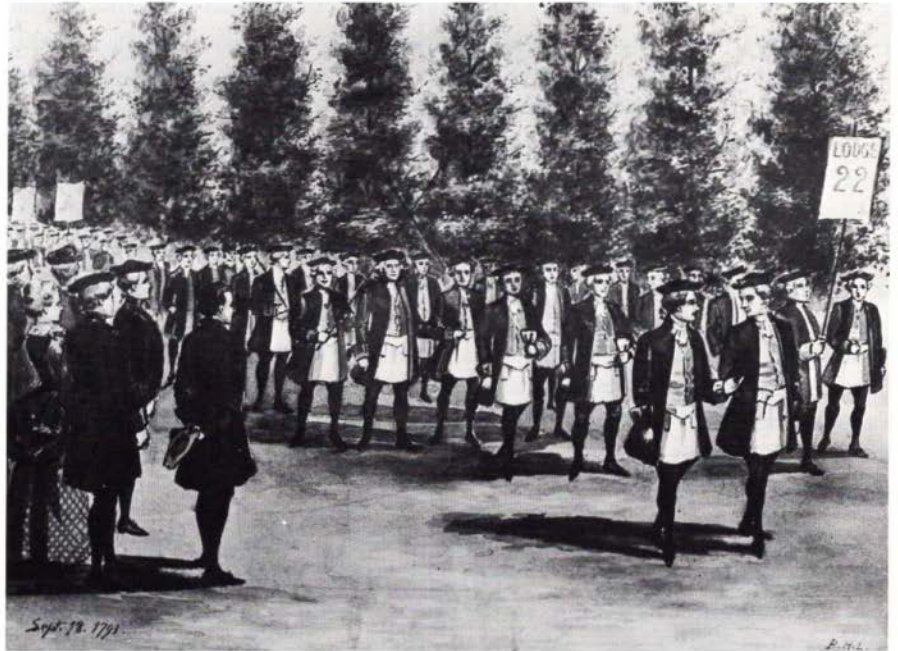
decorated aprons for the entire membership. In 1804, Columbia Lodge No. 91 of Philadelphia, had an engraved plate made for its certificate and apron decorated with the Lodge's name as well as emblematic and pictorial designs.³³

This confusion of whether individuals or lodges purchased aprons and whether or not they were decorated, is somewhat clarified by the following note in a history of Blandford Lodge No. 3 of Petersburg, Virginia:

Each member was required to have his own apron and sash for use on ceremonial occasions, especially in the processions held in connection with public appearances, including corner-stone layings, St. John's Day observances, and Masonic funerals. The aprons owned by the Lodge itself were of simpler design, being almost without exception the traditional lambskin aprons such as are presented to entered apprentices upon the occasion of their initiation into the first step of Freemasonry.³⁴

Rylands corroborates the dual use of aprons for both lodge and ceremonial occasions in his essay on the development of English Masonic aprons. His observations showed that, in England, "the engraved or elaborately decorated aprons appear to have belonged more particularly to Master Masons. I think also an explanation may be found for the introduction of many symbols which cannot be said to legitimately belong to pure Freemasonry, in the fact that the use of the aprons was not confined to the Lodge alone, but was extended to other gatherings of Masons."³⁵ If the more decorative Masonic aprons were primarily used by individuals for special processions and public appearances, the proliferation of decorated aprons in America during the period from the 1790's to the 1830's can be partially explained.

In the years immediately following the Revolution and in the first decades of the 19th century, American Freemasons enjoyed a high degree of visibility in their communities. Cornerstone dedication ceremonies commonly included the Freemasons of a community dressed in their finest regalia. One such Masonic event was the laying of the cornerstone of the United States Capitol on September 18, 1793. George Washington participated in the Masonic ceremonies. Newspaper accounts of the event described Lodge No. 9 and Lodge No. 22 of Virginia, "with all their officers and regalia," and the "order of procession which took place amidst a brilliant crowd of spectators of both sexes..."³⁶ The most important Masonic events each year were the St. John's Day observances for St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist. Celebrated by American Freemasons in December and June from the 18th century up until the mid-19th century, festivities associated with these days included "charity sermons," public processions, dinners and balls. In 1829, for example, Blandford Lodge No. 3 of Petersburg, Virginia, "resolved to hold a ball on the evening of the Festival of St. John the Evangelist, a practice that it continued for several years."³⁷ Many references to new aprons in lodge minutes seem to be asso-



The Masonic procession at the laying of the cornerstone for the United States Capitol, drawn by Benjamin Latrobe, September 18, 1793.

Courtesy Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of the Commonwealth of Virginia

ciated with the St. John's Day celebrations. In 1818, Blandford Lodge instructed the Wardens "to prepare a new apron and sash for the Master on or before the next festival."³⁸ A historical sketch of Union Lodge, Dorchester, Massachusetts, notes that "in 1807 the Lodge was supplied with new regalia and celebrated St. John's Day." The history then gives a full description of the day:

"A procession was formed at noon, composed of Union and the neighboring Lodges, with the clergy of adjacent towns, accompanied by a band of music, and proceeded to the new meeting house, where a discourse was delivered by the R. W. and Rev'd Brother T. M. Harris, and an oration pronounced by our R. W. Master Henry M. Lisle, after which an ode suited to the occasion was sung in the church, the procession formed again and returned to Union Hall, where the usual banquet was served, and the Lodge closed."³⁹

Masonic funerals were another occasion when Freemasons appeared publicly in their regalia. The description of a Masonic funeral in Pennsylvania, from a journal written by John Heckewelder in 1792, is one of the earliest references to American Freemasons wearing decorated aprons:

The Masons were colorfully dressed in leather aprons, skillfully embroidered with red, blue, or green ribbons around the edge and bearing the design of a square and compass in the center.⁴⁰

Masonic funeral services honoring George Washington were performed in many cities at the time of his death. In Boston, on February 11, 1800, a grand procession of more than 1600 Brethren was organized. The funeral insignia was "a pedestal covered with a Pall, the escutcheon of which were characteristic drawings, on satin, of Faith, Hope and Charity. The Pedestal, beside the Urn ... which contained a relic of the Illustrious deceased, bore also a representation of the Genius of Masonry weeping on the Urn and other suitable emblems."⁴¹ This was the famous golden urn made by Paul Revere for the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. The urn contained a lock of Washington's hair. Several painted Masonic aprons with a memorial to George Washington on the flap date from this period, and may well have been worn in one of these funeral processions. "The Grand Master, Pall Bearers and Grand Officers" in the Boston procession were described as "dressed in full mourning, with white scarfs and weeds. Each Brother bore a sprig of cassia and every one wore an appropriate badge of mourning."⁴²

Many highly decorated Masonic aprons were made as presentation pieces and for special occasions; others were ordinarily used in lodges. Lack of standardization continued to characterize American Masonic aprons well into the 19th century. The resulting diversity of designs, materials, and media, makes the subject of early Masonic aprons a fascinating study involving the history of American artists and craftsmen, the decorative and fine arts, engraving, and needlework.

Before 1790, few aprons in America were decorated with more than a decorative silk binding or a simple square and compasses. After 1850, Masonic aprons were commercially produced by regalia manufacturers according to standard designs established by the Grand Lodges. Within this sixty-year period a definite chronology of decorated Masonic aprons is difficult to establish because such a diversity of designs, techniques, and materials were used. Research is further hampered by the fact that few aprons have accurate histories that correctly identify an original date or owner. Nevertheless, from 1790-1850, subtle changes in shapes, materials, designs, bindings, and decorative techniques enable aprons to be categorized according to general stylistic periods.

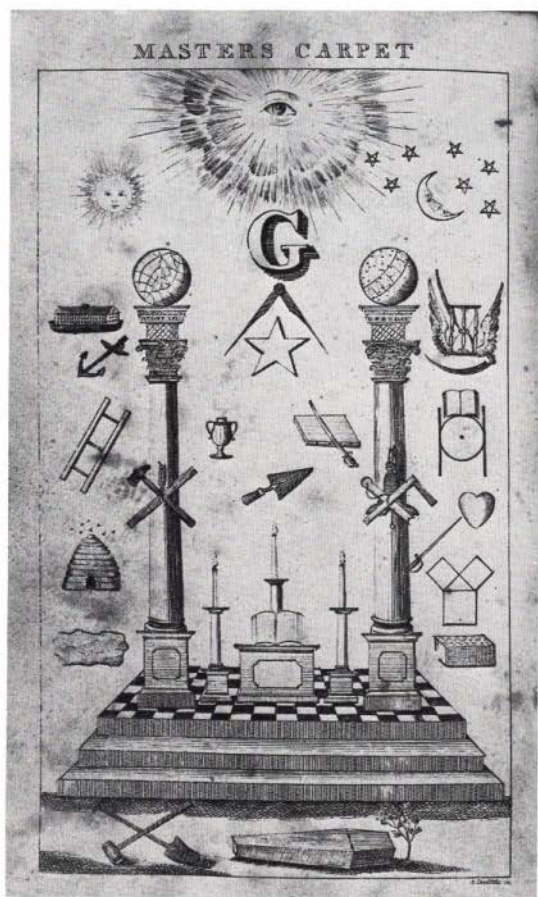
The earliest American Masonic aprons that can be assigned a mid-to late-18th century date are similar to leather aprons decorated with the symbol of the square and compasses described by John Heckewelder in a travel account of 1792. Most aprons dating before 1800 are either painted or drawn on leather with the dominant symbol a large square and compasses. Embroidered silk aprons of the late 18th century include both silk and metallic thread embroidery with bullion or silk fringe. Heckewelder's 1792 description mentions that the Masonic aprons he saw were "skillfully embroidered with red, blue, or green ribbons around the edge."⁴³ The simple binding of one-color ribbon or several

bands of different-colored ribbons are characteristic trimmings of late 18th-century American Masonic aprons. Eighteenth-century apron shapes are usually square, rectangular, or skin-shaped. Some large aprons date from this period, while others showing strong French influence are quite small.

By the early 1800's, engraving and stenciling joined painting and needlework as common techniques for decorating Masonic aprons in America. Although leather continued to be used as the basic material for plain aprons, by the 1820's it became less common for decorated aprons. Silk was used increasingly as the material for painted, stenciled, engraved, and needlework aprons. After 1800, changes in the designs of Masonic aprons reflected the growing influence of the classical revival in Federal-period America, characterized by the use of classical Greek and Roman motifs for furniture, architecture, and decoration of all kinds.

Although the basic symbols of Freemasonry remained the same, their emphasis and arrangement changed in the classical designs of early 19th-century aprons. Columns, swags, draperies, and classically inspired figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity replaced earlier 18th-century rococo scrolls and banners. The all-seeing eye became established during this period as the symbol most often used on the flaps of American aprons. An increasing number of symbols including the beehive, ark, ladder, pot of incense, anchor, and sword pointing to a heart began to be used more frequently and received equal emphasis with the square and compasses, level, plumb, and rule. Shapes changed to include square and rectangular aprons with a rounded lower edge as well as a variety of shield shapes that reflected the popularity of the shield motif in the Federal period. Plain silk ribbon bindings and bullion fringe continued to be used in the early years of the 19th century and silk fringe was most commonly used from about 1800 to 1810. Pleated silk ribbons with or without sequins or metallic braid became the most common edging after 1800 and continued to be used until the 1840's.

From 1820 to the 1840's, aprons continued to be decorated with painted, stenciled, and engraved designs. Needlework Masonic aprons declined in numbers as painting with watercolors on silk and velvet replaced silk embroidery as a pastime for elegant young ladies. Masonic aprons painted on silk or velvet by amateur artists were often copies of engraved aprons or prints. Floral borders on aprons of this period are similar to flowers in watercolors and drawings and suggest mid-19th-century taste. The designs of aprons were less individualistic as columns, pavement, and steps surrounded by an assortment of symbols became the standard design of most aprons. This arrangement of symbols is similar to the frontispiece of *Jeremy Cross's Masonic Chart*, engraved by Amos Doolittle and published at New Haven, Connecticut, in 1819. In particular, stenciled aprons popular in southern states from the 1830's to the 1850's, follow this pattern.



Frontispiece from *Jeremy Cross's Masonic Chart*, engraved by Amos Doolittle, New Haven, Connecticut, 1819
Museum of Our National Heritage

Although early individualistically decorated Masonic aprons have been assumed to be home made, advertisements from the 1820's indicate milliners, painters, and stationers as the three main sources for the wide variety of decorated Masonic aprons of that period. One advertisement dated July 1, 1820, was published in Boston's *Columbian Sentinel* by Mrs. Ferguson "who has on hand a variety of Masonic Clothing such as Aprons and Sashes, of the most approved kind, some from the plate of the late Edward Horsman."⁴⁴ Frederica Ferguson is listed in the Boston directories as a milliner from 1819 to 1823. Her 1820 advertisement also mentioned that the Horsman apron could be purchased "unmade" rather than made, suggesting that she and other milliners were responsible for adding the decorative trimmings on many Masonic aprons. Millinery establishments were well-equipped to finish painted and engraved aprons with the necessary ribbons, pleated edgings, sequins, and braid, for sale to the public.

Artists and decorative painters also made and sold Masonic aprons in the period 1800-1820. In Portland, Maine, Charles Codman advertised that he did "Masonic, Sign, Fancy and Ornamental Painting of all Kinds."⁴⁵ We know from the account books of other artists such as John Samuel Blunt and Ezra Ames that a good deal of Masonic painting involved Masonic aprons that were sold directly to individuals by the artist.

Booksellers and stationers formed the third major group of suppliers of Masonic aprons in the early 19th century. They particularly served as retailers for engraved Masonic aprons and certificates of the period. In 1821, W. G. Hunt of Lexington, Kentucky, advertised in the *Masonic Miscellany and Ladies Literary Magazine*: Masonic Aprons, Sashes, and Diplomas For Sale at the Bookstore of W. G. Hunt.⁴⁶ Booksellers were sometimes the publishers of engraved aprons. In 1813, for example, Robert Desilver and James Webster, both listed as booksellers in the Philadelphia Directory, published a Masonic apron engraved by an unidentified artist.

The number of decorated aprons began to decrease in the 1830's, reflecting declining membership during the anti-Masonic period which followed the Morgan Affair in New York State in 1826.⁴⁷ Changes within the Fraternity following the anti-Masonic period in America also affected the styles of Masonic aprons. By the 1850's, Masonic aprons were clearly in a state of transition. Two issues in particular were hotly debated in Masonic publications of the 1850's: should Masonic aprons be ornately decorated and to what extent should such decorations be standardized? In the last decades of the 19th century, Grand Lodges throughout the United States finally established uniform regalia for lodges under their jurisdiction. In most cases the new regulations were simply patterned after the earlier regulations of the Grand Lodge of England. The report of a Committee on Regalia to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania dated June 7, 1852, is typical:

TO FREE MASONS.

FOR SALE AT THE BOOKSTORE OF

W. G. Hunt,

JORDAN'S ROW,

The True Masonic Chart,

OR,

HIEROGLYPHIC MONITOR,

CONTAINING all the emblems explained in the degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, Master Mason, Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master, Royal Arch, Royal Master, and Select Master: designed and duly arranged, agreeably to the Lectures, by

R. W. JEREMY L. CROSS, G. L.

To which are added, Illustrations, Charges, Songs, &c. —
Lexington, July, 1821.

Masonic Aprons, Sashes, and Diplomas,

FOR SALE AT THE BOOKSTORE OF

W. G. HUNT.

The Committee appointed to report upon the appropriate regalia of the Subordinate Lodges, in attending to the duty assigned them, find a great want of uniformity to exist among the various Lodges; there being the most marked differences in the shape, color, and materials of the collars and aprons in use ... the result of which is to produce a very motley appearance in the Grand Lodge, and greatly to enhance the price for which the same article could be procured, were all made to one pattern ...

In their examination of the subject, your Committee have been favorably impressed with the consistency and simplicity of the regalia of Subordinate Lodges, as prescribed by the Grand Lodge of England and would recommend it to the consideration of this Grand Lodge. But in so doing they think it by no means advisable to compel those Lodges and Brethren already supplied, to discard that which they have and procure new, but merely to establish a standard that hereafter to be procured, which will in time bring about that uniformity so much to be desired.⁴⁸

The report touches upon two interesting points. One is the members' concern about the cost of individually made aprons compared to those which could be produced in large quantities in a specific pattern. Members were also acutely aware of the length of time that was required to bring about the desired standardization because they knew that existing regalia would continue to be worn by many Masons even after the lodge adopted new patterns.

In keeping with the committee's recommendations, the new regulations for Masonic regalia in Pennsylvania were as follows:

ENTERED APPRENTICE — A plain white lamb-skin, from fourteen to sixteen inches wide, and twelve to fourteen inches deep, square at the bottom, and blue strings.

FELLOW CRAFT — A plain white lamb-skin, similar to that of the Entered Apprentice, with the addition only of sky blue rosettes at the bottom, and blue strings.

MASTER MASON — The same with sky blue lining and edging, one inch and a half at the top and round the flap, an additional rosette on the fall or flap, and silver tassels.

OFFICERS — Master Mason's apron with the emblems of their offices in silver or white in the center of the apron.

MASTER — The Master Mason's apron with the emblem of his office in white or silver in the center and in lieu and in the places of the three rosettes, perpendicular lines upon horizontal lines, thereby forming three several sets of two right angles; the length of the horizontal lines to be two inches and a half each, and of the perpendicular lines, one inch; these emblems to be of ribbon half an inch broad, and of the same color as the lining and edging of the apron.

PAST MASTER — The same as the apron of the Master of the Lodge, with the Past Master's emblem in white or silver in the center.⁴⁹

As attitudes changed in favor of more uniform aprons and regalia for American Masonic lodges, the manufacturers and suppliers of Masonic regalia also changed. Advertisements in the 1840's indicate the beginning of a new era of Masonic regalia and illustrate the transition from artists to manufacturers. In an 1847 issue of *The Freemasons' Monthly Magazine* published in Boston, Thomas Savory advertised as an "Ornamental and Decorative Painter" who offered "Banners, Aprons, and every variety of painting for Lodges, Chapters, &c. executed to order, with neatness and dispatch."⁵⁰ Savory, an ornamental painter active in Boston between 1837 and 1865, represents the continued tradition of hand-painted Masonic aprons made to order by individual professional artists. The same 1847 issue of *Freemason's Monthly Magazine* includes an advertisement for "Masonic Regalia of every style and finish for Encampments, Chapters, and Lodges, Manufactured by A. W. Pollard, Merchant Tailor."⁵¹ Pollard represents the new shift to manufactured Masonic aprons, and a new type of business establishment that specialized in fraternal and military regalia of all sorts.

By 1865, A. W. Pollard & Co. was advertising as a "Masonic Furnishing Store" offering "Sashes, Collars, Aprons, Jewels, Swords, Charts also Masonic Books, Diplomas, Working Tools, And all the variety of Clothing for Encampments, Councils, Chapters, and Lodges, constantly on hand or made to order."⁵² Pollard also advertised military trimmings and equipment for officers and, like many other regalia manufacturers, was supplying both military and fraternal organizations with the appropriate finery. By 1865, the change from hand-painted to manufactured aprons had apparently taken place. The artist Thomas Savory in an advertisement stressed his skills as a banner and decorative painter only, with no further mention of Masonic aprons.

New establishments specializing in Masonic and other fraternal regalia began to appear in the late 1840's and increased in number through the 1860's. Elias Combs of New York City, for example, describes himself on a billhead dated c. 1851 as a "Manufacturer of and Dealer in" the regalia jewels, seals, and ornaments of many different fraternal organizations. The listing of his offerings gives a fairly complete inventory of what regalia manufacturers and dealers were selling as well as an indication of what materials were used for aprons and regalia that they made:

Also, constantly on hand, CARVED & GILT EMBLEMS AND ORNAMENTS—Eagles, Doves, Gavels, Pens, Keys, Crooks, Tridents, Spears, Batons, Staffs, Ornaments for Staffs & Banners. Also Ballot Boxes, GOLD AND SILVER TRIMMINGS—Stars, Links, Cords, Braids, Laces, Gimps, Tassels, Fringes, Spangles, Embroidering Bullion. Also, Floss, Silk and Chenille. Blank Books, Certificates and Frames, Robes, Masks, Plumes, Mourning and other Rosettes. Velvets, Merions, Satins, Silks, Ribbons, etc. etc. Embroidery done in splendid style. Seals cut to order. Orders from abroad promptly attended to.⁵³

MOSS & BROTHER,
No. 16 South Fourth St.
 (Old No. 12) *aka*
 PHILADELPHIA, *1867*
Publishers, Booksellers,
STATIONERS, BINDERS
 AND MANUFACTURERS OF
MASONIC AND ODD FELLOWS' REGALIA,
JEWELS,
EMBLEMS,
BANNERS,
DIPLOMAS, ETC.
 And every article connected with
MASONIC PARAPHERNALIA,
 — IN THE —
GREATEST VARIETY
 AND AT LOWEST PRICES.
 Lodges and Brethren may rely upon having orders filled to their satisfaction.
 Our arrangements and facilities enable us to ensure the best articles at the lowest rates.

Label of Moss and Brother, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, c. 1860.

Museum of Our National Heritage

Advertisement of Abner W. Pollard in *The Masonic Review*, June 1857.

Museum of Our National Heritage

A.W. POLLARD, MERCHANT TAILOR,
COSTUMER & REGALIA MANUFACTURER.



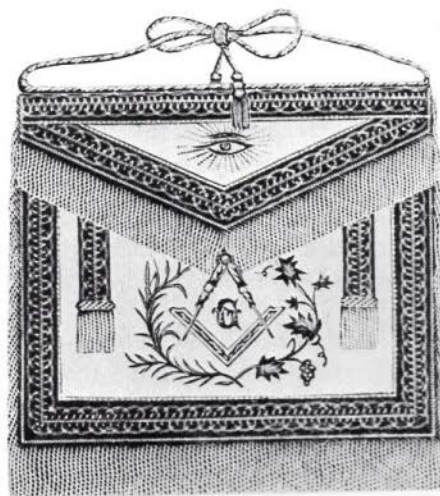
Abner W. Pollard,
MERCHANT TAILOR.
Costumer and Regalia Manufacturer,
 No. 6 COURT STREET, BOSTON.
 Also, Dealer in
MILITARY CLOTHS AND TRIMMINGS, Swords, Epau-
 lettes, Sashes, Army Laces, &c. **REGALIA GOODS,** with
 Laces, Stars, and Emblems. Theatrical Costuming Articles,
 with Laces, &c. Fencing Foils, Masks, and Battle-Swords.
 Banner Silks, Fringes, Tassels, &c. Ornaments, Trimmings
 for Engine Companies. United States Flags, Decorations, &c.
 Regalia and Jewels for all the "Orders." Ballot-Boxes and
 Balls, Gavels, &c. Masonic Books, Carpets, &c.
 If you want any article you do not know where to find,
 direct your orders as above. **ONE PRICE ONLY.**

John A. Bush of Peoria, Illinois; H. R. Caberey, Chicago, Illinois; W. H. Drew, Buffalo, New York; and M. J. Drummond of New York City are only a few of the many regalia manufacturers who advertised in Masonic publications of the 1850's and 1860's. The aprons of this period accurately reflect the goods described by Mr. Combs and other regalia manufacturers. Illustrations of velvet and silk aprons embroidered with heavy gold bullion, sequins, and fringes help date the later aprons and distinguish them from the earlier silk and metallic embroidery of the late 18th and early 19th century.

Many of these regalia firms began as local merchant tailors or stationers who gradually specialized in fraternal regalia, "military embroideries," and "theatrical goods." By the 1890's and early 1900's, the larger companies had developed into national businesses that filled mail orders for customers across the nation. The catalogs they published describe and illustrate standard aprons that were produced. Aprons advertised in the catalog of Masonic regalia published by Frank K. Henderson of Kalamazoo, Michigan, for 1892, ranged from a lambskin apron trimmed with blue ribbon and a printed emblem for \$1.25, to the most elaborate version costing \$20.00, described below:

White Satin or Watered Silk Apron, lined with quilted gros grain silk, edge of fine blue silk velvet, edged with either silver or gilt lace, flowers and vine work embroidered in silver or gilt boullion on the velvet border, embroidered emblem enclosed in handsome embroidered wreath, extra fine boullion tassels suspended from embroidered velvet bands, heavy silk cord and tassels, 2½ inch brilliant fringe; the finest Apron made ...⁵⁴

These manufactured aprons reflect 19th-century Victorian decoration and manufacturing techniques just as earlier aprons were examples of American folk art and decoration.



An illustrated price list of Masonic regalia sold by Frank Henderson, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1892, shows a typical late 19th-century apron manufactured according to standardized regulations.

PAINTED APRONS

Hand-painted Masonic aprons were among the earliest decorated aprons in America. Their popularity continued until Grand Lodge regulations prescribed uniform designs in the mid-19th century. Oral tradition suggests that painted aprons were hand-decorated by family members or by the original owners. However, documentary evidence reveals that a large number were the work of professional artists.

In the 19th century decorative painters frequently advertised Masonic aprons and banners, or simply "Masonic painting" among their work. John Leman, a previously unrecorded artist, advertised in the *American Masonick Record*, published in Albany in 1828-1829, that he did "Military, Standard, Sign, Masonick, and Fancy Painting."⁵⁵ In 1847, Thomas C. Savory advertised in Boston as an "Ornamental & Decorative Painter, Banner, Aprons, and every variety of painting for Lodges, Chapters, etc., executed to order with neatness and dispatch."⁵⁶

American artists in the 18th and 19th centuries spent a good deal of their time doing ornamental painting to supplement commissions from portraits and landscapes. The account books of Ezra Ames, long known as a distinguished Albany portrait painter, include numerous references to his Masonic work. In 1798, for example, he lists "1 Masonic sattan apron" for Mr. John James of Whitestown and "1 Masonic Meddle" for Mr. James Kinneer.⁵⁷ Portsmouth, New Hampshire artist, John Samuel Blunt, kept a ledger for the years 1825-1826, in which he listed numerous Masonic aprons painted for individuals:

June 24, 1826 Samuel Neal to Masonic Apron 2.25⁵⁸

June 23, 1826 Nath'l Denmet, Jr. to Masonic Apron 1.92

June 7, 1826 Sylvester Melcher to Masonic Apron 1.75

Unfortunately, painted aprons were rarely signed, and it is difficult to attribute the numerous, fine, painted aprons that survive. A rare signed and dated apron inscribed, "Painted by Nathan Negus, Boston, 1817," was done by Negus while he was apprenticed to John Ritto Penniman, a decorative painter in Boston, Massachusetts. Negus later became an itinerant portrait painter



AT THE SIGN OF THE EAGLE,
NEARLY opposite the PATRIOT-OFFICE
may be had of the subscribers on short notice,
Elegantly Gilt Ornamented
SETTEES, and CHAIRS of
every description,
ornamented & varnished in superior style.
(Prices—from \$1 to \$5.)
Sign & House-Painting,
and every other kind of painting usually called for
OIL-CLOTHS, (superior to
any imported) COPAL VARNISH,
(first quality) and JAPAN for sale.

Having carried on the business in this
place more than ten years, we flatter ourselves that
customers will continue to call where they may be
furnished with the above articles on liberal terms
by
LOW & DAMON.

N. B A few MASONIC APRONS elegantly
executed on white satin. Likewise—Stands of
COLOURS for Independent Companies—to be
sold at moderate prices.

All orders by Post-Riders or other-
wise strictly attended to, and every favor
gratefully acknowledged.

Concord, Feb. 6, 1816

tf

before his early death at the age of 24. This apron remained in his family among his personal effects and must have been regarded as an accomplishment of his apprenticeship because it was proudly signed and dated. Another apron can be attributed to an artist because it is accompanied by its original 1793 receipt from Davis W. Hoppin, a previously unrecorded artist working in Providence, Rhode Island. Hoppin was only 22 years old at the time he painted this apron for Daniel Stillwell and, like Negus, seems to have painted Masonic aprons early in his career while establishing himself as a professional artist.

The versatility of 19th-century artists is well-documented in advertisements offering to paint anything from a major portrait to signs, furniture, or sleighs. American artists used the varied skills of sign painter, mural painter, and calligrapher to improvise the wide variety of hand-painted Masonic apron designs that have been located in this study. Ornamental painting found on Masonic aprons is comparable to the identified work of contemporary artists and can suggest possible attributions to specific artists.

An apron belonging to Captain John Tarlton, a member of St. John's Lodge No. 1, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in the 1820's, combines many of the techniques of gilding and shading commonly used by sign painters. John Samuel Blunt, an artist working in Portsmouth, advertised in 1827 that he did "Portrait and Miniature Painting, Military Standard do., Sign Painting, Plain and Ornamented, Landscape and Marine Painting, Masonic and Fancy do. Ships Ornaments Gilded and Painted, Oil and Burnish Gilding, Bronzing & c.&c."⁵⁹ An account book kept by Blunt lists several aprons painted for Masons in 1825 and 1826. Stylistic qualities found on portraits and fire buckets attributed to Blunt appear in the design of John Tarlton's apron, suggesting the possibility that Blunt could have been the artist.

Another New Hampshire apron belonged to William Vaughan, also a member of St. John's Lodge No. 1 in Portsmouth. The painted design of this apron derives from another decorative painting tradition. The trees painted with spongelike leaves, the marbled flooring of the altar, and the scale and sparseness of the design closely resemble wall paintings of the period done by Rufus Porter and other New England wall painters. Porter, the best known of these itinerant muralists, was at various times in his life a house and sign painter, portrait painter, inventor, dancing master, and editor of *Scientific American*. One of his earliest murals painted about 1824 in the Joshua Eaton House, Bradford, New Hampshire, includes Masonic symbols of the square and the compasses in the landscape painting because the room was used for Masonic meetings.

Heraldry painting is another form of ornamental painting which is related to Masonic apron decoration. Many decorative painters advertised heraldry painting as one of their many services. Davis Hoppin, working in Providence, Rhode Island, advertised himself as a "Portrait and Heraldry Painter," as did

Advertisement of Low and Damon, *New Hampshire Patriot*, Concord, February 6, 1816.

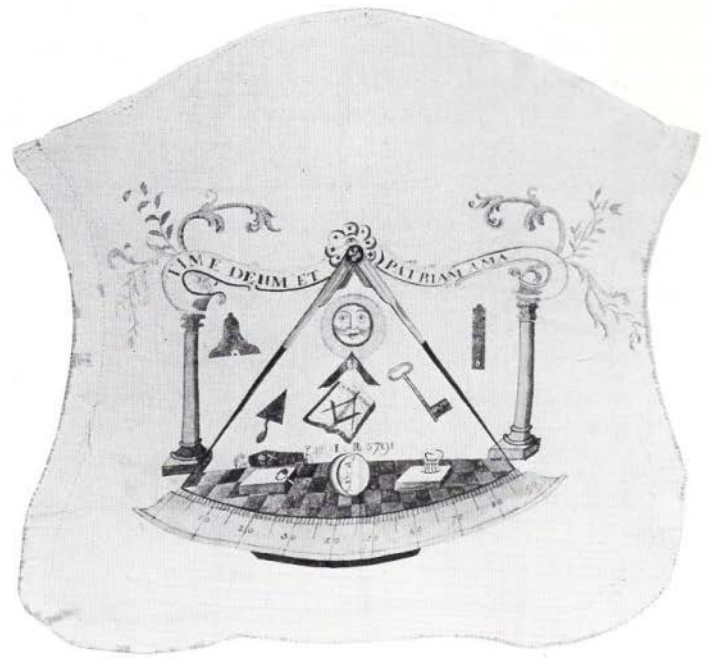
Courtesy New Hampshire Historical Society

Samuel Brown, who advertised two years later in the *Providence Gazette* of April 11, 1795. An Apron dating from c.1800, originally owned by William Burr of Providence, shows the influence of heraldry in the central designs of the Mason's arms. The use of coats of arms throughout the 18th and 19th centuries was extremely popular in America, and books such as Guillim's 1724 edition of *Display of Heraldry* was much used as a source for designs.

Not every painted apron was a unique creation. Nineteenth-century artists commonly painted duplicates of their own work. For example, Rembrandt Peale painted 79 copies of his now famous portrait of George Washington. Multiple copies of many painted aprons suggest that artists worked out designs and then painted aprons to order. The shops of some ornamental artists may even have had stock designs for aprons that could be painted by any of the artists or apprentices working there. William Low and Benjamin Damon, partners in a chairmaking and painting business in Concord, New Hampshire, advertised that they provided "Elegantly Gilt Ornamented SETTEES and CHAIRS... Sign and House-Painting, and... OIL-CLOTHS," and at the end of the advertisement noted "N.B. A few MASONIC APRONS elegantly executed on white satin."⁶⁰ The wording of "a few" suggests that Low and Damon kept painted aprons on hand or had several stock designs which they made to order.

Quality of painting and originality of design are the major indications that an apron was designed or painted by a professional artist. Aprons painted by amateur artists are often copies of engraved aprons similar to the "schoolgirl" drawings and watercolors from popular prints and engravings by young men and women in the 19th century. Aprons painted on velvet are closely related to the so-called theorem paintings of flowers and fruits that were popular in the 1830's. The common practice of painting on velvet utilized stencils and colors that were mixed to the consistency of starch. Stencils were often made by tracing a design and then transferring it to a stencil pattern. Most of the velvet aprons located in this study are copies of engraved aprons and all probably date c. 1820-1840.

Characteristic pigments and materials were used for painted aprons in different periods. The earliest painted aprons of the 1780's and 1790's were drawn on leather with ink and colored washes. From c. 1800-1820, the opaque water-colors that were used to paint aprons were probably similar to those described by Rufus Porter in his articles on landscape painting in *Scientific American*, 1846-47. Porter's process used ground-up colors mixed with water and tempered with alum and glue to produce opaque watercolors.⁶¹ Opaque colors in muddy hues are painted on both silk and leather aprons dating from 1800 to the 1820's. A noticeable change occurred in the 1820's when watercolor paints became increasingly available. Painted aprons from the 1820's to the 1830's are characteristically painted on silk in lighter colors similar to those used on other paint and embroidery pictures of the period.



5

MASONIC APRON

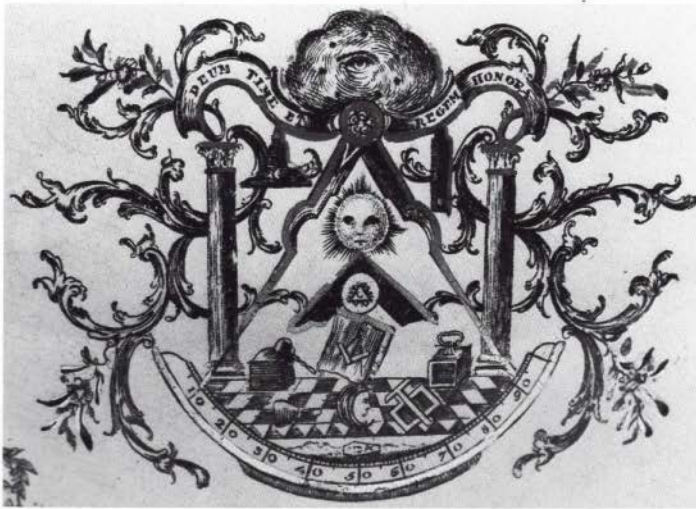
Artist unknown, Massachusetts, 1791

Ink and wash on leather

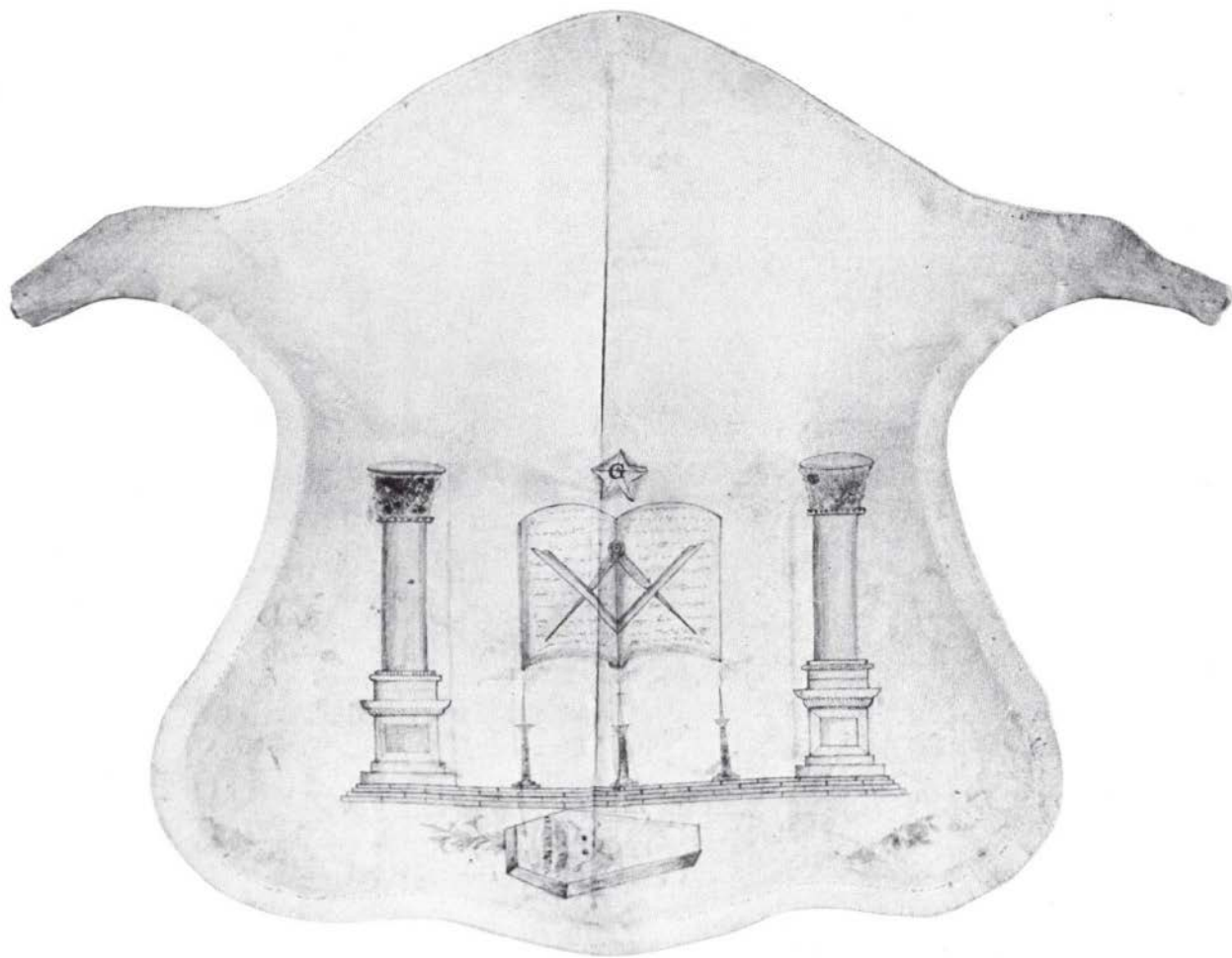
20" x 21 1/4"

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Massachusetts

Carrying the inscription, "I.R. 5791," this apron is one of the few 18th-century dated aprons. Compasses and quadrant form the central design surrounded by various symbols: columns, level, plumb, square, trowel, key, coffin, and rough and smooth ashlar. The prominence of the compasses in the design is typical of many early aprons. This particular design is similar to a transfer-printed engraving which appears on Liverpool pitchers. The original inscription, "Deum Time et Regem Honora," (Fear God and Honor the King) has been replaced with "Time Deum et Patriam Ama," (Fear God and Love your Country) accurately reflecting the patriotic spirit of Freemasonry. The shape of the apron approximates the complete skins originally used for aprons. The 18th-century ornamental scrolls are quite different from the classically inspired designs of later 19th-century aprons. A pencil inscription on the back of the apron reads, "John Row from his Brother John G. Rogers." John Rowe was a member of Tyrian Lodge, Gloucester, Massachusetts in 1789; he died in 1812.



Transfer-printed design from a Liverpool pitcher, c. 1810
Museum of Our National Heritage



6

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, c. 1790

Ink and wash on leather

20½" x 14¾"

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Massachusetts

The shape of this apron closely approximates early aprons made from an entire animal skin. The flap is formed by the shape of the leather rather than by a separately applied piece. The design includes columns, Bible, "G" within a star, coffin, square, and compasses. Like most early aprons the square and compasses are prominent in the design and only a few other Masonic symbols are used.

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, New Hampshire, 1790's

Ink and wash on leather

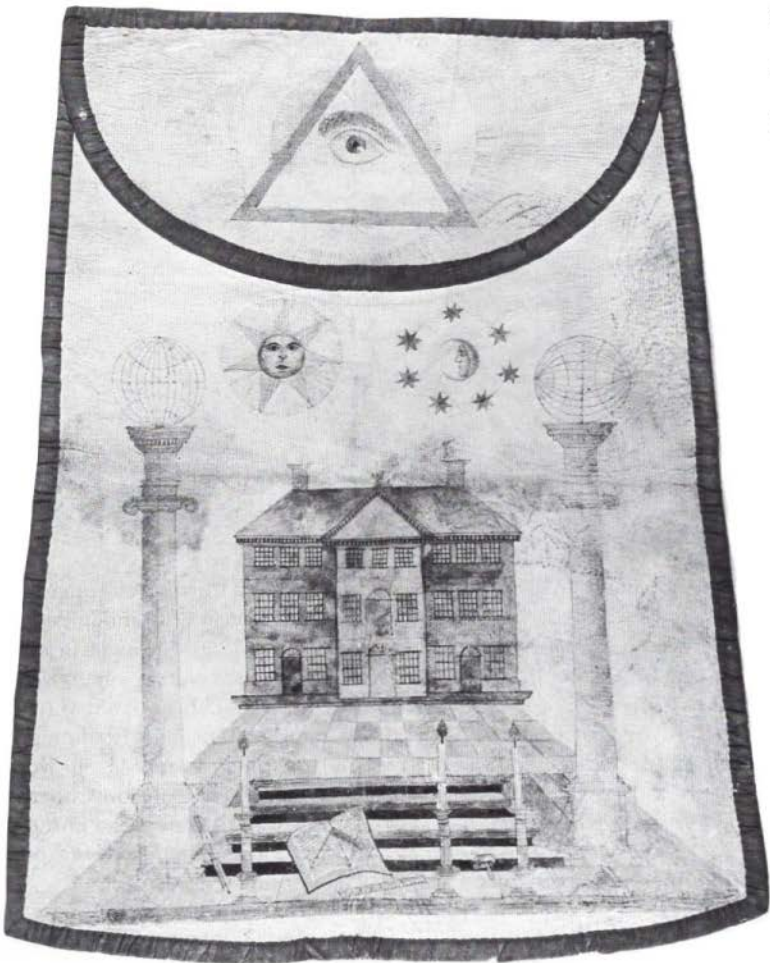
15¼" x 12¾"

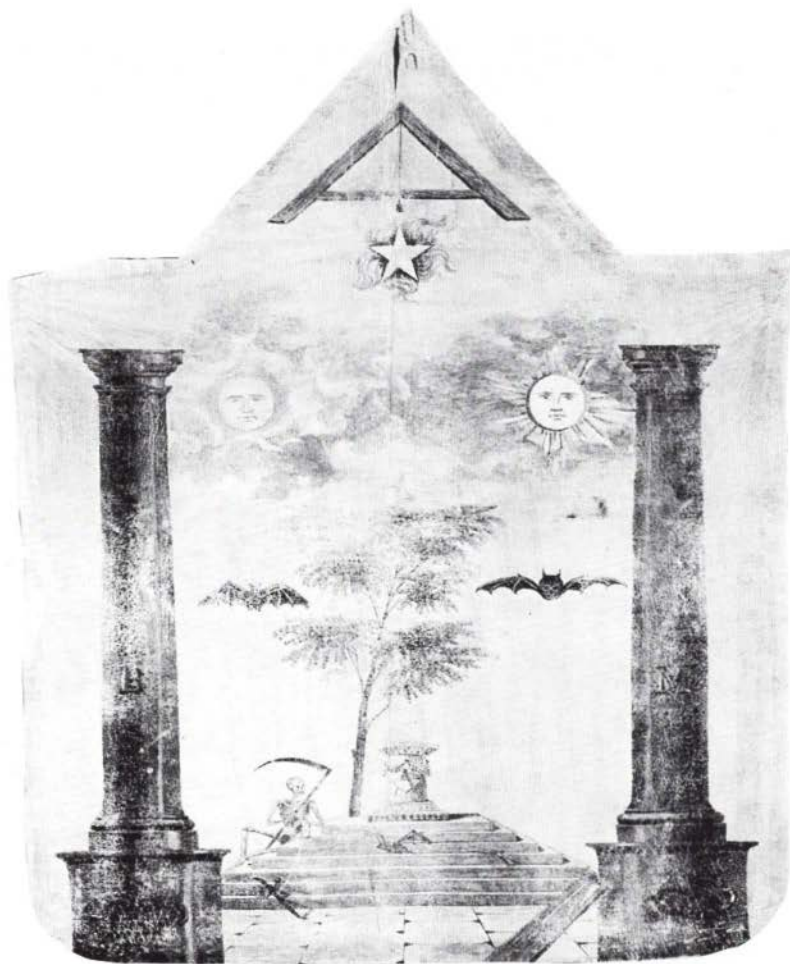
St. John's Lodge No. 1 F. & A.M., Portsmouth, New Hampshire

There is no record of either the owner or painter of this apron, but it probably belonged to a member of St. John's Lodge No. 1, Portsmouth. The central design of an 18th-century Georgian-style building is unusual. No building matching the one depicted on the apron has been found in the Portsmouth area. In all probability the artist simply used a familiar style of architecture to represent Solomon's Temple. Generalized buildings such as this one similarly appear in the designs of samplers dating c. 1780 to 1800, and on a group of painted chests from the Essex County, Massachusetts area which date from the second half of the 18th century.

Ethel Stanwood Bolton and Eva Johnston Coe, *American Samplers* (New York, Dover Publications, Inc., 1973).

Dean A. Fales, Jr., *American Painted Furniture 1660-1880* (New York, E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1972) p. 36.





8

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, New York, New York, c. 1790's

Painted on leather

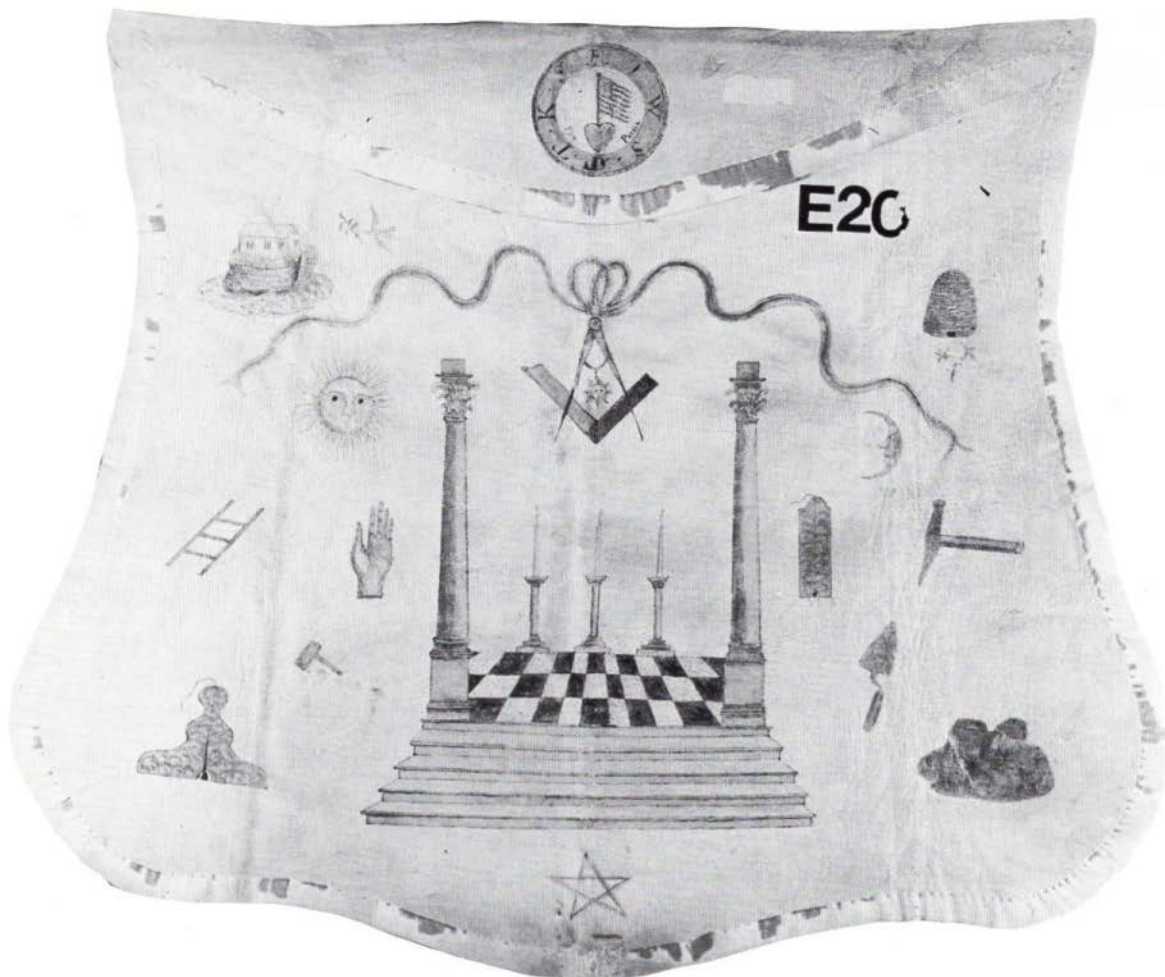
18" x 14½"

Supreme Council Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of
Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction

Painted on leather, this apron has a history of having been worn by William B. Wright of New York City, c. 1790. Strong French influence appears in the use of the *niveau*, a French form of the level, on the flap, the letters "B" and "M", and a radiant star. It may have been painted by one of the French emigré artists in New York in the 1790's.

William Wright was a member of Independent Royal Arch Lodge No. 2 in New York City. He became a Master Mason in 1789 and served as Worshipful Master of the lodge from 1790 to 1796, and again in 1800 and 1802. Mourning symbols, including the skeleton, scythe, and evergreen, constitute the central design. The unusual flap is designed to be worn up and buttoned to a coat or shirt. Examples of early aprons are found with these buttonholes. Master Masons wore the flaps of their aprons up in the early period of Freemasonry, but the practice was soon abandoned by all but first degree "Entered Apprentices." In France, "Fellow Crafts" or second degree Masons, apparently wore the flap up until a later time.

F. R. Worts, "The Apron and Its Symbolism," *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* vol. 74 (London, 1961) pp. 133-141.



9

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, North Carolina, c. 1793

Painted on leather

15¼" x 19"

Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of New York

The painted symbols of a Past Master's jewel and the letters HTWSSTKS indicate that it was both a Past Master and Mark Degree apron. Levi Andrews of St. John's Lodge No. 2, Newberne, North Carolina wore the apron prior to his death in 1795. His mark, consisting of a heart, American flag, and the inscription "Pro Patria," appears on the flap. Remnants of a red silk binding are evidence that it was used as a Royal Arch apron.



Providence January 13 1793
 Mr Daniel Stillwell
 to Davis W Hoppin Dr
 for painting Free Masons Apron — \$ 1. 2. 0
 Payment Recd
 Davis W Hoppin

10
 MASONIC APRON

Davis Ward Hoppin, Providence, Rhode Island, 1793
 Ink and wash on leather
 15 3/4" x 14 1/4"
 The Rhode Island Historical Society

Davis W. Hoppin, a Providence artist, painted this apron for Daniel Stillwell in 1793. His receipt for painting one "Free Masons Apron" accompanies the apron. Daniel Stillwell was a merchant in Providence and an important Freemason in Rhode Island. He served as Master of St. John's Lodge No. 2 in Providence from 1791 to 1792. In 1793, the year he purchased this apron, he became Past Master of his lodge and was named first High Priest of Providence Royal Arch Chapter No. 2 which he had helped establish. He remained active in Rhode Island Freemasonry until his death in 1804.

Davis Hoppin (1771-1822) was born in Providence, the son of Ben-

jamin and Anna Hoppin. In 1793, he married Hannah Brown, also of Providence. In the same year, he placed this advertisement in the Providence Gazette: "Davis W. Hoppin Portrait and Heraldry Painter Informs the Public that he executes the Business of his Profession with Elegance and Dispatch at his Room over the crockery store occupied by Mr. Lyndon — Gilding and Sign Painting in their various Branches are also performed in the neatest and most expeditious manner." He continued to live in Providence until his death but no other work by him has yet been located.

The Royal Arch design of this apron is strongly influenced by English prototypes and is similar to an engraved design on transfer-printed Liverpool jugs. The same design was used for an engraved apron by Elkanah Tisdale, Norwich, Connecticut, c. 1805. The binding of applied bands of colored ribbon is also characteristic of English aprons.

Providence Gazette and Country Journal, November 30, 1793.
 Henry W. Rugg, *History of Freemasonry in Rhode Island* (Providence, 1895).



11

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, Providence, Rhode Island, c. 1800

Ink and wash on leather

16" x 13¾"

Museum of Our National Heritage

William Burr became a member of Mount Vernon Lodge No. 4, Providence, Rhode Island, in 1800. Burr's residence was listed as Prov-

idence in the census of 1810 and as Bristol, Rhode Island in 1820 and 1830. His apron is particularly interesting because its heraldic design uses a Masonic coat of arms. Several painters including Davis W. Hoppin and Samuel Brown advertised themselves as "portrait and heraldry" painters in Providence during this period.

Providence Gazette, April 11, 1795.

Providence Gazette, November 30, 1793.



12

MASONIC APRON

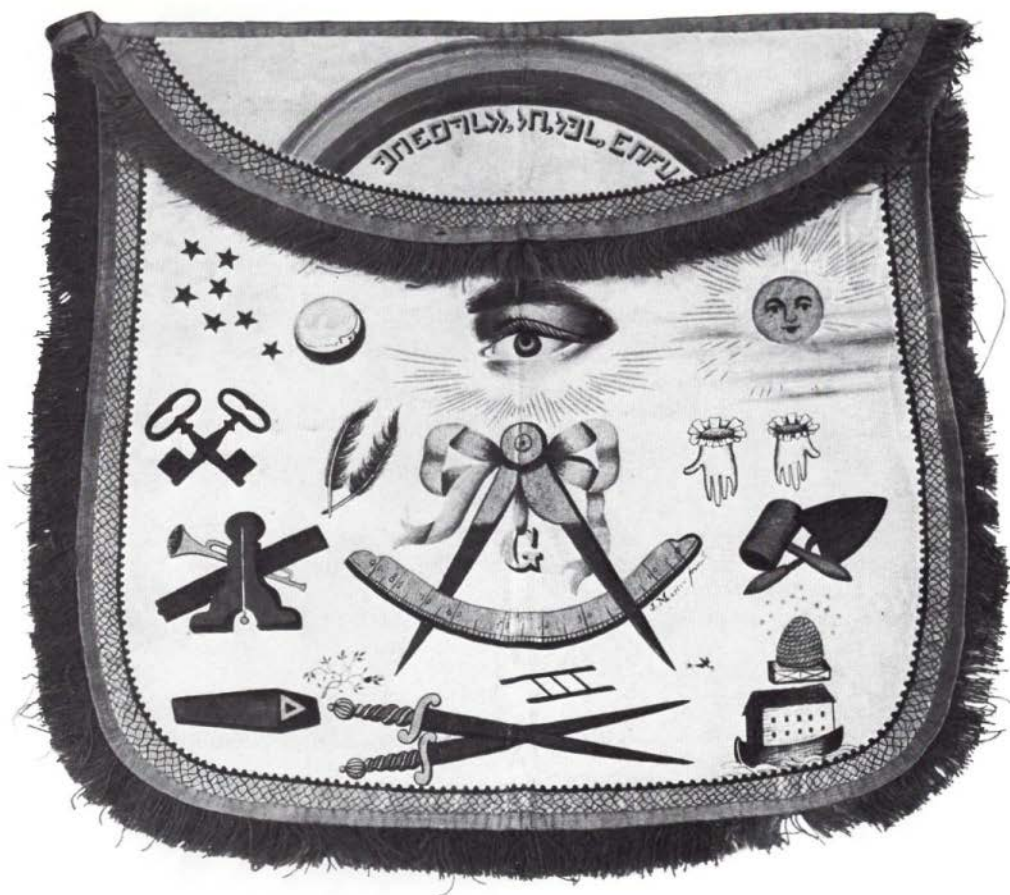
Artist unknown, Massachusetts, c. 1800

Opaque watercolor on leather

13" x 12¼"

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Massachusetts

The unusual design suggests that this apron was painted by an artist of talent and originality. Unlike the random placement of symbols common in the work of decorative and sign painters, the Masonic symbols have been incorporated into a cohesive allegorical scene. The apron was owned by Martin Brewster (1758-1833) a sea captain whose obituary in Boston's *Columbian Centinel* noted that he died in Kingston, near Plymouth, Massachusetts. The muddy tonality and mysterious quality of the figure in the foreground suggest the early style of Boston artist Washington Allston who graduated from Harvard College in 1800. After studying in Europe, he returned to paint in Boston between 1808 and 1811. Unfortunately, there is no definite evidence to link this apron with Allston or any other artist working in the Boston area at that time.



13

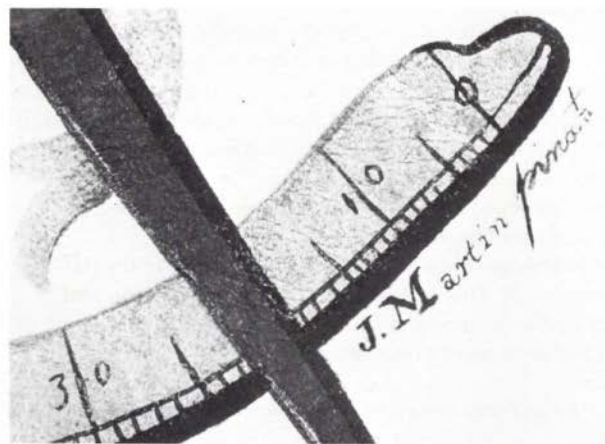
MASONIC APRON

J. Martin, New England, c. 1800

Opaque watercolor on leather

12 3/4" x 14 1/2"

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Massachusetts



The unusual characteristic of this Royal Arch apron is the painted border representing a knotted fringe in addition to an actual red silk fringe. This example is signed "J. Martin pinxit;" another, unsigned example was owned by Seth Lathrop of Colchester, Connecticut who was raised a Master Mason in Wooster Lodge No. 10, Colchester, in 1799. Both aprons are painted freehand with slight variations in the same basic design. No record of J. Martin exists in the Masonic records of the Grand Lodge of Connecticut, but a J. Martin is mentioned in the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts Proceedings as present at the first meeting of the newly organized Grand Lodge in 1792.



14

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, c. 1796-1815

Watercolor on satin-woven silk

13½" x 13"

St. John's Lodge No. 1 F. & A.M., Portsmouth, New Hampshire

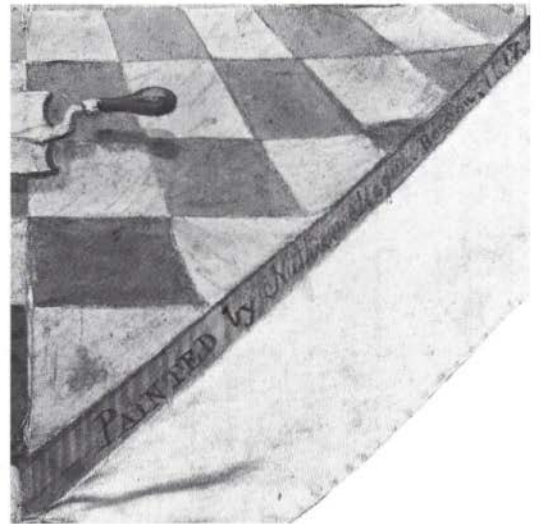
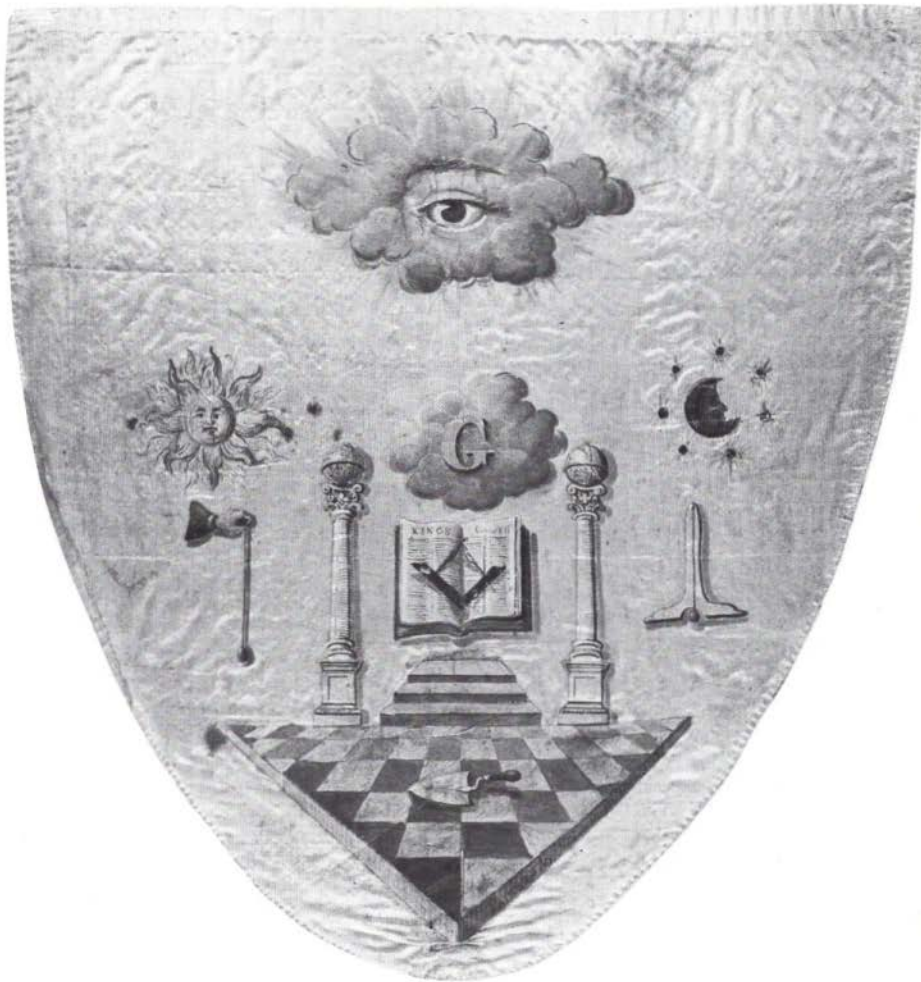
This painted silk apron with appliquéd binding of silk triangles belonged to William Vaughan who became a Master Mason in St. John's Lodge No. 1, Portsmouth in 1796. Vaughan died in 1815 after being severely wounded the year before in a cannon accident while serving as Captain in a militia company. The unusual design of trees and bushes painted in blue and green hues is reminiscent of later New England wall paintings by Rufus Porter and others in the 1825-1830 period. Porter spent the years from 1805 to 1816 in a variety of trades that included fiddler, farmer, and painter of signs, sleighs, and drums.

He also played the fife for military companies and served as a private and musician in three Portland, Maine militia companies. Like other artists, it is possible that early in his career as a sign painter he may have painted Masonic aprons before turning to portraits and murals. Porter's later description of his landscape and mural painting closely matches the technique used on this apron:

For the leaves of small shrubs two colors only need be used, one for light, and one for the dark side.

Trees and hedge fences ... are formed by means of the flat bushing-brush. This is dipped in the required color, and struck end-wise upon the wall ... in a manner to produce ... a cluster of small prints or spots ...

Jean Lipman, *Rufus Porter Yankee Pioneer* (New York, Clarkson. Potter, 1968) pp. 95-97.



15

MASONIC APRON

Nathan Negus, Boston, Massachusetts, 1817

Opaque watercolor on satin-woven silk

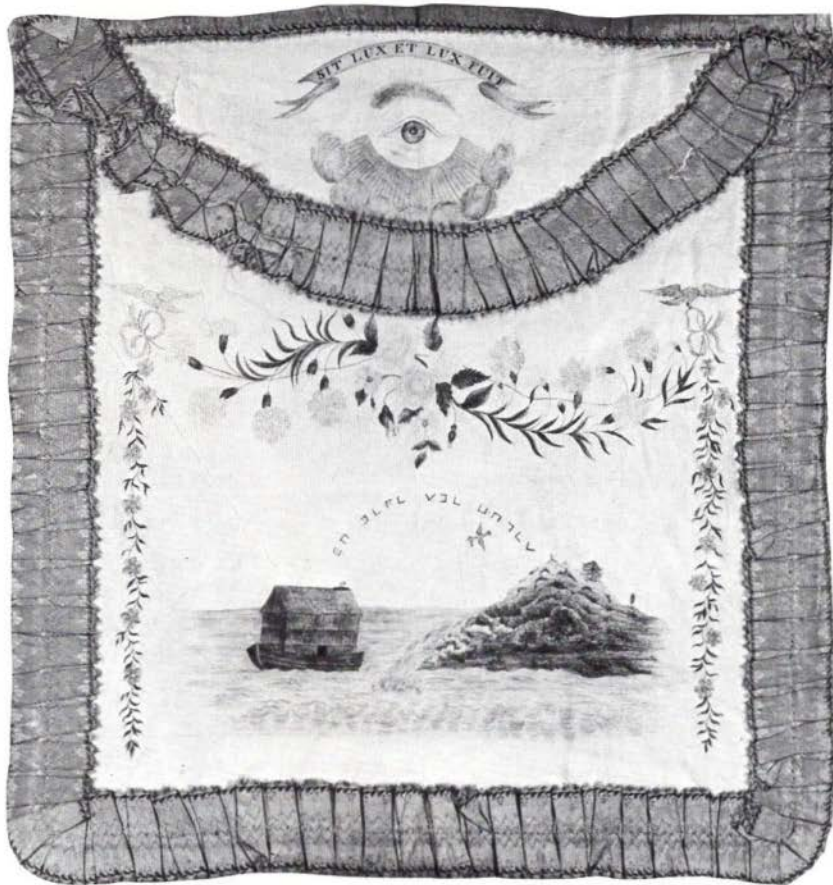
17 ¼" x 16 ¼"

Museum of Our National Heritage

Nathan Negus was apprenticed to the ornamental artist John Ritto Penniman between 1815 and 1820. This apron, signed and dated, "Painted by Nathan Negus, Boston, 1817," was never completed with the appropriate trimmings and still bears a pencil inscription, "set the ribbon round on this line." During his apprenticeship, Nathan Negus painted signs, standards, transparencies, and Masonic aprons; he

lettered apothecary drawers and "Ornamented an organ board for Mr. Gilbert Stuart." Negus himself was never a Mason, but Penniman was active in the fraternity and designed Masonic certificates, painted Masonic floorcloths, and decorated Masonic meeting rooms. This apron was never worn, but remained in the Negus family following Nathan's early death in 1825 at the age of 24. A similar, unsigned apron in the collection of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts was undoubtedly painted in Penniman's shop by either Negus or another artist working there.

Agnes M. Dods, "Nathan & Joseph Negus, itinerant painters," *Antiques* (November, 1959) pp. 434-437.



16

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, Pomfret, Connecticut, c. 1815

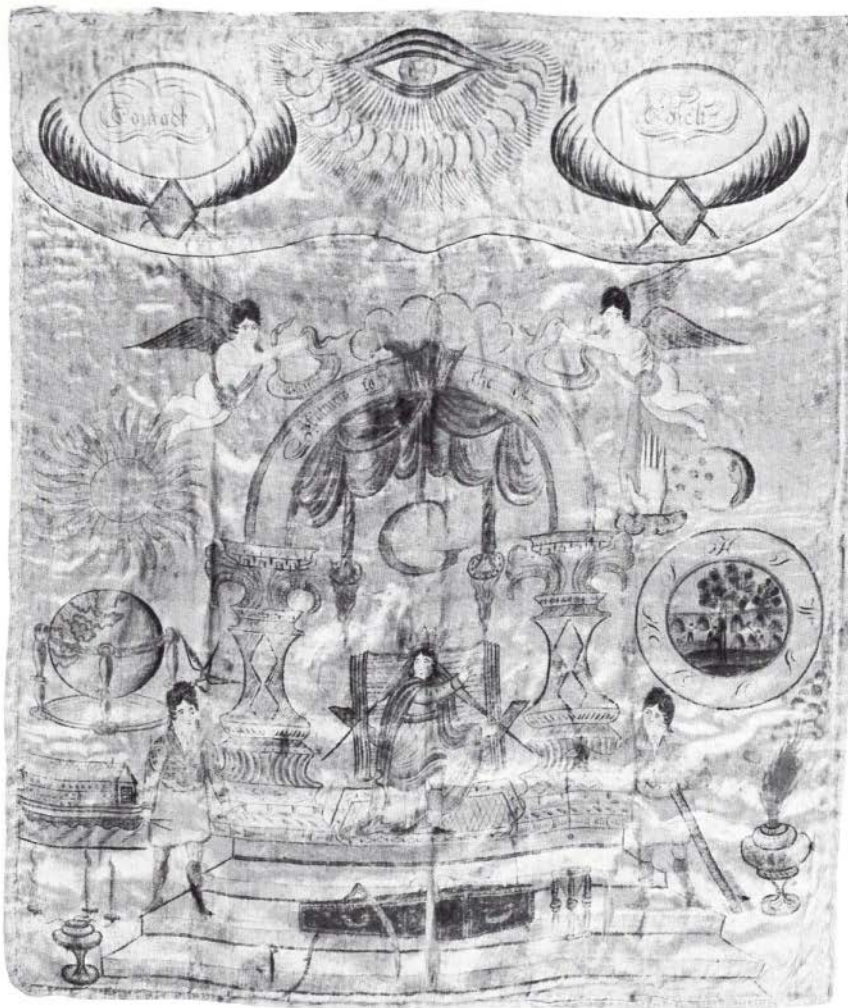
Watercolor on leather

15 3/4" x 15"

Museum of Our National Heritage

The ark and dove degree, a side degree of Royal Arch Masonry, was introduced in England as the Royal Ark Mariners c. 1789. In America the degree was used until the early part of the 19th century and then abandoned. This apron has a history of ownership in Pomfret, Connecticut. The pleated silk ribbon edging is unusually elaborate. Regalia of the Royal Ark Mariners is described in Mackey's *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* as "a broad sash ribbon representing a rainbow, with an apron fancifully embellished with an ark, dove, etc."

Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* (Philadelphia, L. H. Everts & Company, 1886).



17

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, New York, c. 1800-1820

Watercolor on satin

18" x 15"

Museum of Our National Heritage

The influence of calligraphy appears in the design of this apron owned by Conradt Edick. Edick was born in 1763 at German Flats, Herkimer County, New York, one of the Palatine German settlements along the Mohawk River. Little of the decorative arts of these German settlers has survived compared to the better-known folk art of the Pennsylvania Germans. German calligraphers worked in the

Palatine settlements of New York lettering baptismal, birth, and marriage certificates in the Fraktur tradition. Edick's apron is a Germanic interpretation of a popular Masonic design which appeared in English and American engravings between 1790 and 1815. The Fraktur lettering of Edick's name is an important part of the overall design in combination with typical ornamental calligraphic drawing. Two angels hold banners inscribed *Sanctum* and *Sanctorum*. Even the pictorial elements of the apron are executed in the straight lines and deft strokes of a calligrapher. Edick served in the Revolutionary War with Colonel Marinus Willett, commander of New York's Fifth Regiment. Edick was a member of Charity Lodge No. 170 in the early 1800's and died at Deposit, New York.



18

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, Massachusetts, c. 1800-1820

Ink and watercolor on silk

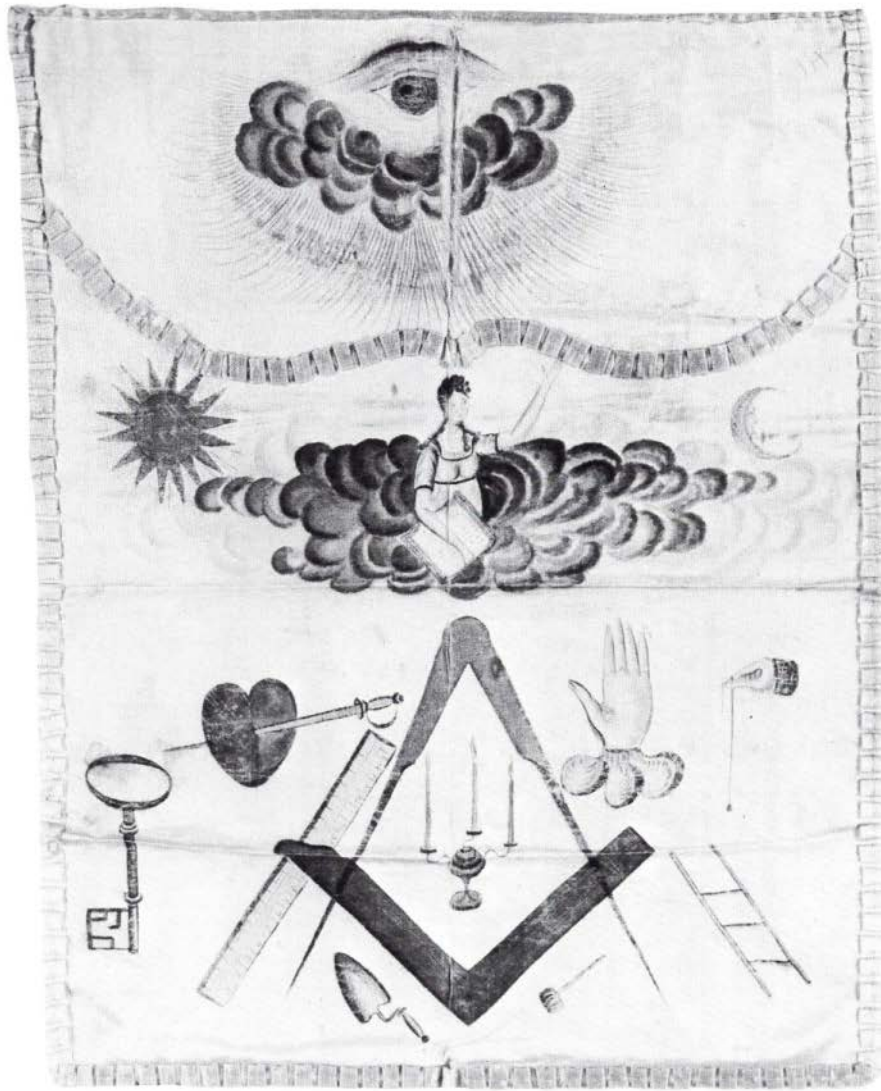
14" x 15"

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Massachusetts

Several examples of this Royal Arch apron with red pleated silk binding and a memorial to George Washington on the flap have been located in the Massachusetts area. The large number of mourning pictures inspired by the death of George Washington developed into a fashionable art form during the early 19th-century Federal period.

The memorial drawn on the flap of this Masonic apron includes standard mourning symbols of a willow tree and urn with the initials "G. W." One of the many Masonic funeral processions following Washington's death in 1799 may have been the occasion for wearing these particular aprons, making them part of the mourning-art tradition in America.

Anita Schorsch, *Mourning Becomes America* (Clinton, N. J., The Main Street Press, 1976).



19

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, c. 1810-1830

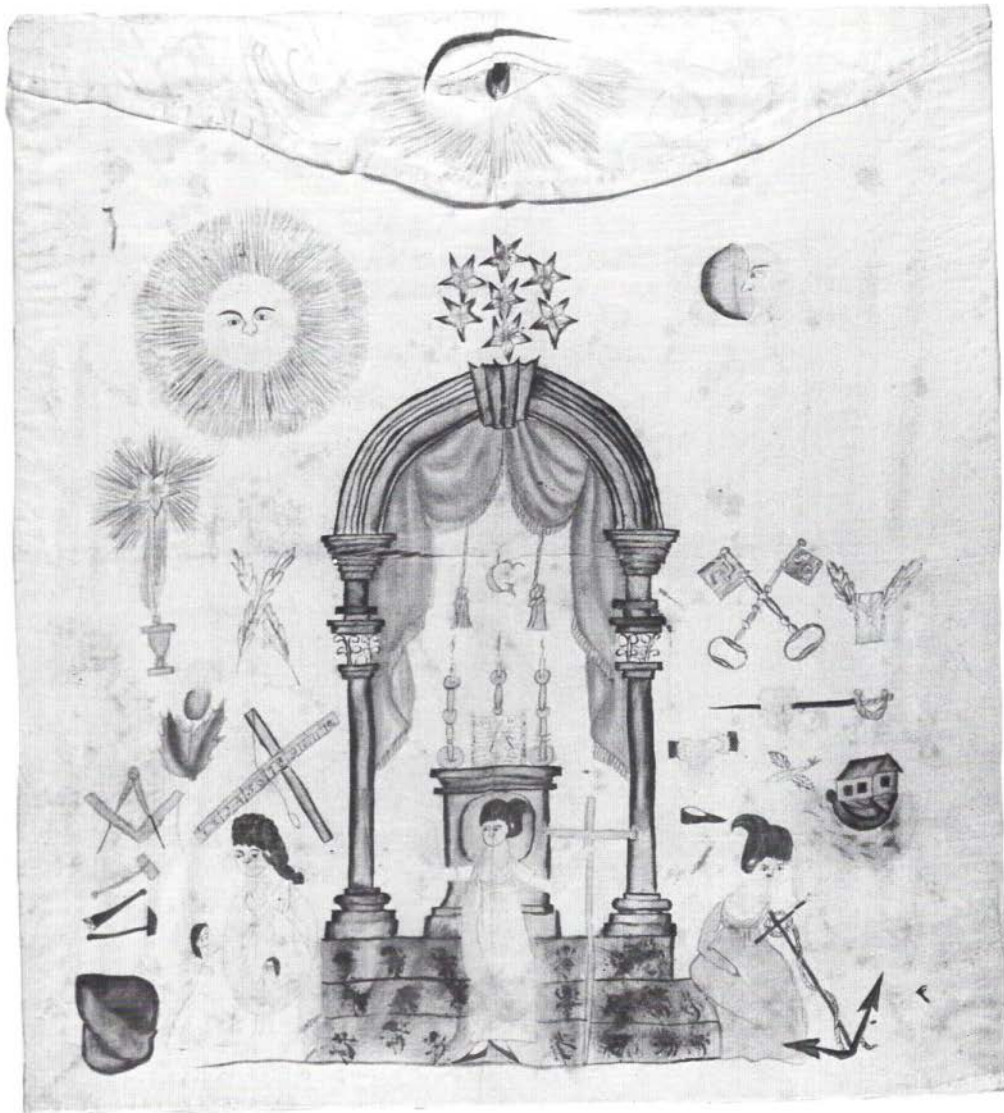
Watercolor on silk

16 3/4" x 13"

The Right Worshipful Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Pennsylvania

The charming folk art design combines a female figure in Empire-

style dress symbolizing Faith, and Masonic symbols of the plumb, key, trowel, rule, mallet, ladder, sword, and heart. The large scale of the square and compasses and the absence of typical columns, pavement, and steps suggest a date closer to 1810 than to 1830. The apron is inscribed "G. Hill" in pencil on the back. A later notation in ink reads "Lodge #52," located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A George Hill is listed in the census records for Philadelphia from 1810 to 1830.



20
 MASONIC APRON
 Artist unknown, c. 1815
 Watercolor on silk
 15½" x 14¼"
 Museum of Our National Heritage

The folk art design of this painted apron combining Faith, Hope, and Charity, the ark and dove, arch, and other Masonic symbols is almost

identical to a Masonic apron which appeared in "Folk Art: The Heart of America," an exhibition at The Museum of American Folk Art, New York. This apron was removed from a frame labeled Kittery, Maine, suggesting the possibility of a Maine or New England origin.

Elaine Eff, "Folk Art: The Heart of America," *The Clarion* (Summer, 1978).



21
MASONIC APRON
Artist unknown, c. 1820
Watercolor on silk
24" x 21"
Museum of Our National Heritage

The robed allegorical figures, acanthus leaves, swags, drapery, and architectural detailing typify the classical revival in Masonic apron

designs. The unusually large apron is painted with a central design of arch, altar, Faith, Hope, and Charity with additional Masonic symbols of tools, ark, and dove decorating the plinth. The painted graining of the altar suggests a decorative painter familiar with wood-graining techniques. The pleated silk edging is embellished with sequins and a knotted silk fringe. Unfortunately, no history accompanies the apron.



MEER, PHILAD.[^]
5820

22

MASONIC APRON

John Meer, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1820

Opaque watercolor on satin-woven silk

19" x 17 1/4"

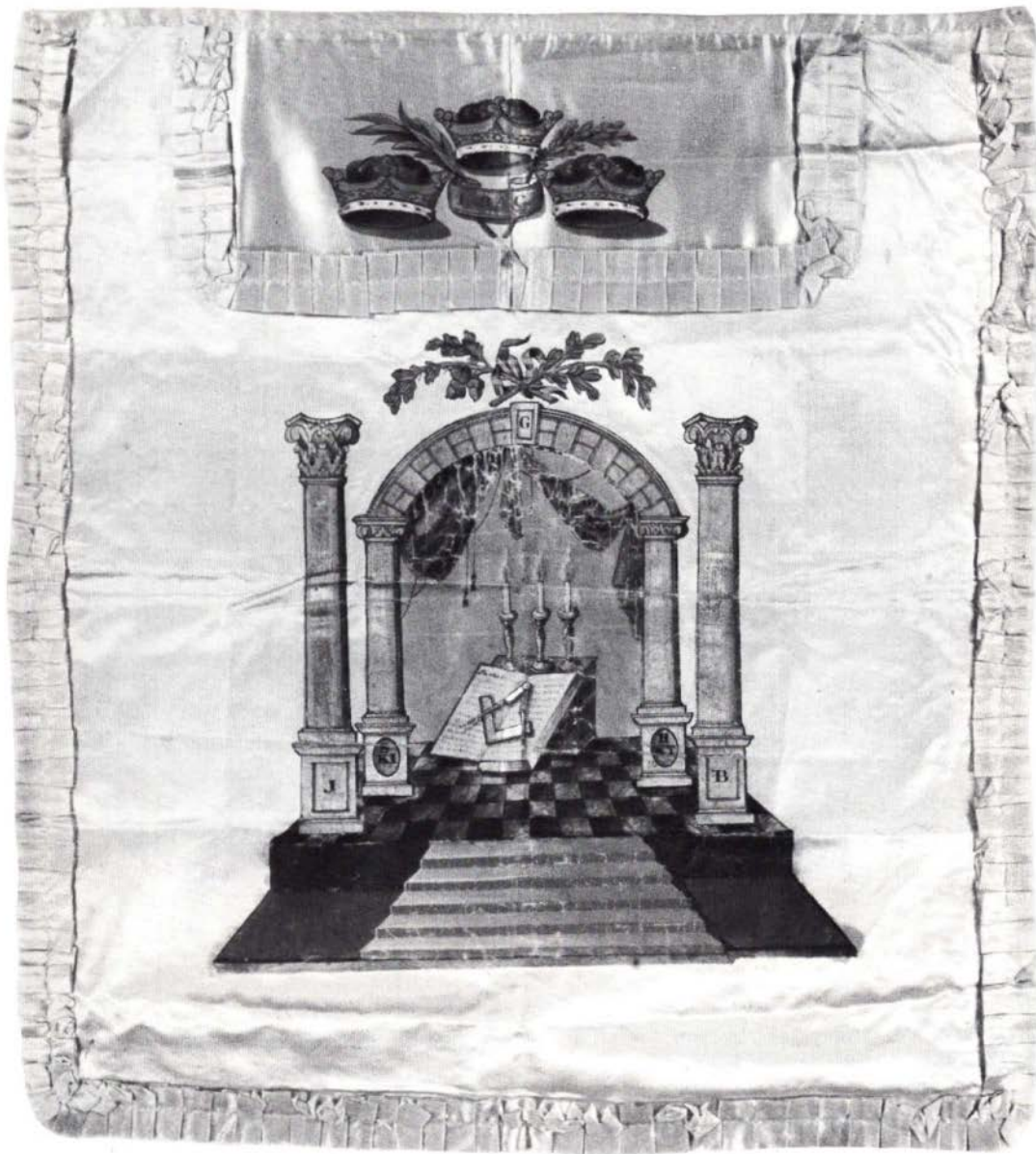
The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Massachusetts

These two aprons, similar in size and shape, were undoubtedly painted by the same artist. The apron with gold banner lettered "Lodge No. 19" is signed under the flap in ink: "MEER/PHILAD.[^] / 5820." John Meer became a Master Mason in Montgomery Lodge No. 19 of Philadelphia, on April 18, 1807. An artist in Philadelphia from 1795 to 1830, Meer worked as a japanner, painter on glass, engraver, and early lithographer. The central design of the apron consisting of oak and box branches, clasped hands, and dagger is unusual. When the Second Masonic Hall on Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, was dedi-

cated with the usual processions and ceremonies, Lodge No. 19 members were present in large numbers according to the lodge history. This apron, specifically dated 1820, may have been especially painted to be worn at that dedication ceremony.

The Royal Arch apron inscribed "HRAC" (Holy Royal Arch Chapter) has a similar shape and an unusual square flap. The same branches are painted in gold. The Royal Arch apron is edged with pleated blue silk rather than the simpler silk binding of the Lodge No. 19 apron. No connection has been established between the Massachusetts family who gave these aprons to the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts and either John Meer or a member of Lodge No. 19.

Alexander A. Morgan, *History of Montgomery Lodge No. 19* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1887).



23

MASONIC APRON

John Meer, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, c. 1800-1830

Opaque watercolor on satin-woven silk

18" x 16 1/4"

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Massachusetts



24

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 1820-1830

Opaque watercolor and gilding on silk

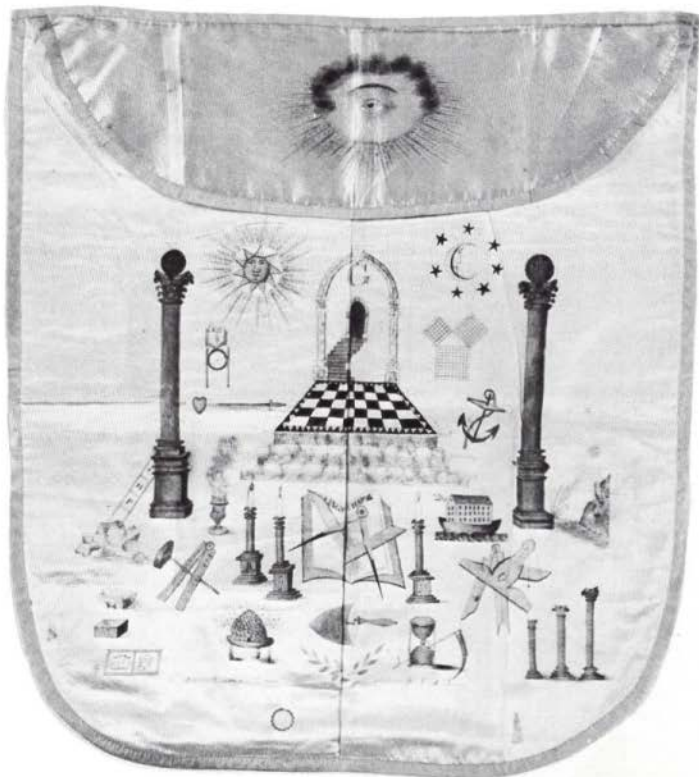
18¼" x 16"

St. John's Lodge No. 1 F. & A.M., Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Painted on silk with pleated blue ribbon edging, this apron belonged to John Tarlton who took his Masonic degrees in 1812 as a member of St. John's Lodge No. 1, Portsmouth, New Hampshire. John Samuel Blunt, an ornamental and portrait painter active in Portsmouth from 1821 to 1835, may have been the artist. The apron's design includes several characteristics of Blunt's work: strong diagonals, underpainting with a red ground, and exaggerated shading of drapery. An account book kept by Blunt from 1821 to 1826 lists a good deal of

Masonic work painting banners, sashes, and aprons. Samuel Neal, who became a member of St. John's Lodge No. 1 in 1824, purchased an apron from Blunt on June 24, 1826, for \$2.25. John Tarlton was born in 1780 and died in 1861; Samuel Neal died about 1831. Although Tarlton is not mentioned in Blunt's surviving account books, Tarlton's marriage to Abigail Neal, c. 1805, suggests that Samuel Neal could have been his father-in-law. A possible family connection helps link the Tarlton apron to Blunt and suggests that the apron purchased by Samuel Neal could be the apron owned by John Tarlton.

Robert Bishop, "John Blunt: The Man, the Artist, and his Time," *The Clarion* (Spring, 1980).



25

MASONIC APRON

Mandivilette Elihu Dearing Brown, Portsmouth, New Hampshire
Watercolor on silk

17" x 15¼"

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Massachusetts

Signed "M.E.D. Brown," this painted apron was purchased by Samuel K. Hutchinson in Portsmouth, New Hampshire in 1826. Hutchinson lived in Lowell, Massachusetts and was raised as a Master Mason in Pentucket Lodge, Massachusetts in 1826. The artist M.E.D. Brown was born in Portsmouth on April 13, 1810. It has often been suggested that he studied with the lithographic firm of Pendleton in Boston. He owned and operated his own lithographic firm in Philadelphia from 1831 to 1834 and employed Nathaniel Currier for one year. Brown studied in Europe from 1839 to 1849. He returned to settle in Utica, New York where he continued his career as a portrait and landscape painter until his death in 1896.

The apron is an almost exact copy of an engraved apron designed by Edward Horsman in 1814. Painted when Brown was only 16 years old, it seems to be the work of a student or apprentice. The fact that it was purchased in Portsmouth, New Hampshire suggests that Brown's early training may have been with John S. Blunt. In the *Portsmouth Journal* for April 2, 1825, John Blunt, a landscape, portrait, and ornamental painter announced the opening of his drawing and painting school:

Drawing and Painting School. The subscriber proposes to open a school for the instruction of young ladies and gentlemen in the arts of drawing and painting. The following branches will be taught: oil painting on canvas and glass, water colors, and with crayons. The school will commence about the first of May provided a sufficient number of scholars can be obtained to warrant the undertaking. Terms made known on application to John S. Blunt. Painting in its various branches attended to as usual.

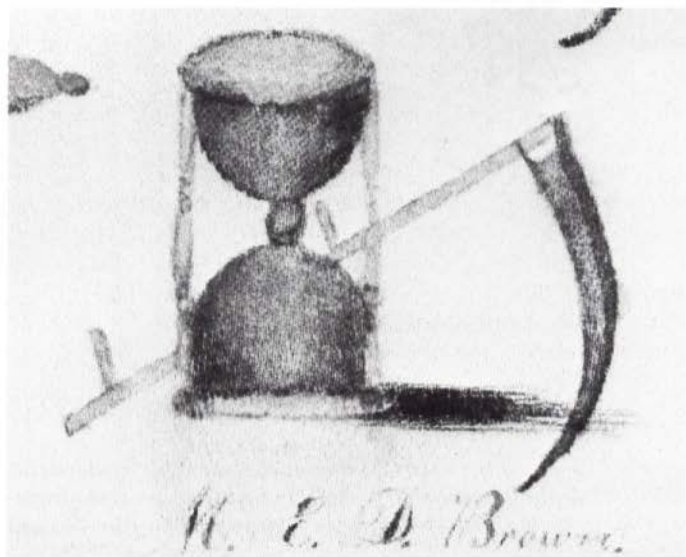
John Henry Bufford, a native of Portsmouth, has also been suggested as a possible student of Blunt's prior to his apprenticeship at the Boston lithographic shop of William and John Pendleton between 1828 and 1832.

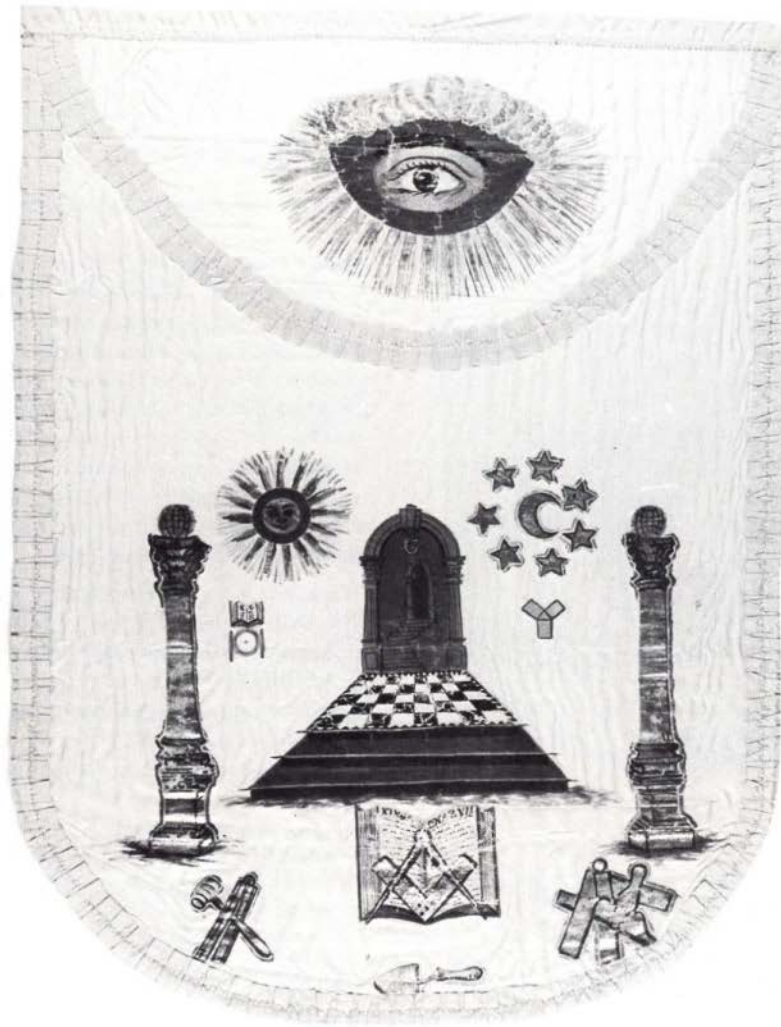
Rosemary Courtney, unpublished research on M.E.D. Brown to be published in the *American Art Journal*.

Utica Morning Herald, September 2, 1896.

Robert Bishop, "John Blunt: The Man, The Artist, and his Times," *The Clarion* (Spring, 1980).

David Tatham, "John Henry Bufford: American Lithographer," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, Vol. 86, Part 1.





26

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, Essex County, Massachusetts, c. 1828

Opaque watercolor and gilding on silk

18" x 13½"

Museum of Our National Heritage

Aaron Giddings, a resident of Gloucester, Massachusetts owned this painted silk apron with pleated silk edging. Giddings became a member of Tyrian Lodge, Gloucester, about 1828. He was born in 1753 and died in 1832.

27

MASONIC APRON

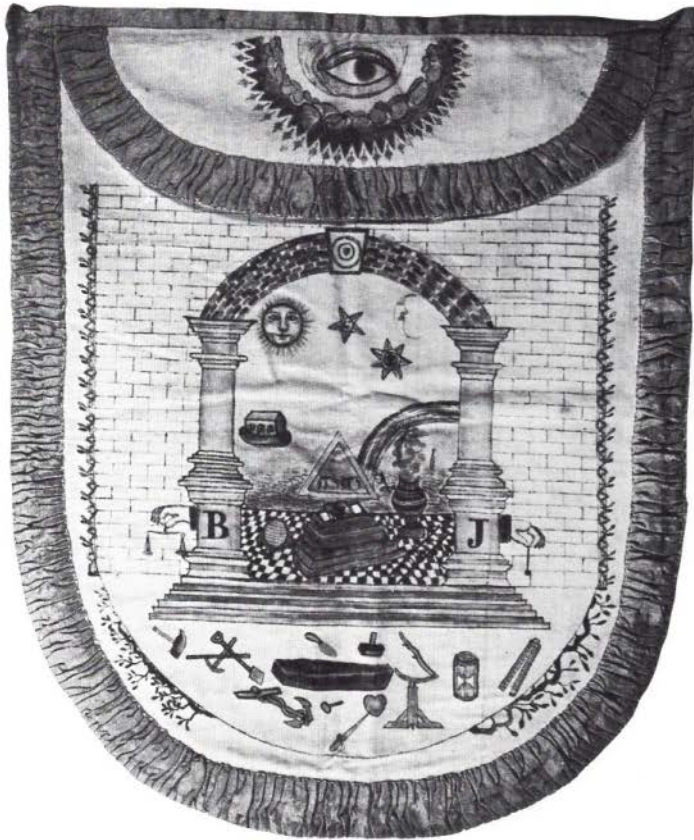
Artist unknown, c. 1820-1840

Painted on velvet

16¼" x 13¼"

Museum of Our National Heritage

The Royal Arch design of this painted on velvet apron is identical to an engraved apron by Oliver T. Eddy, published by Lewis Roberson of Wethersfield, Vermont, c. 1814-1822. The shirred silk edging is unusual but matches the silk edgings of engraved examples published by Roberson.



28

MASONIC APRON

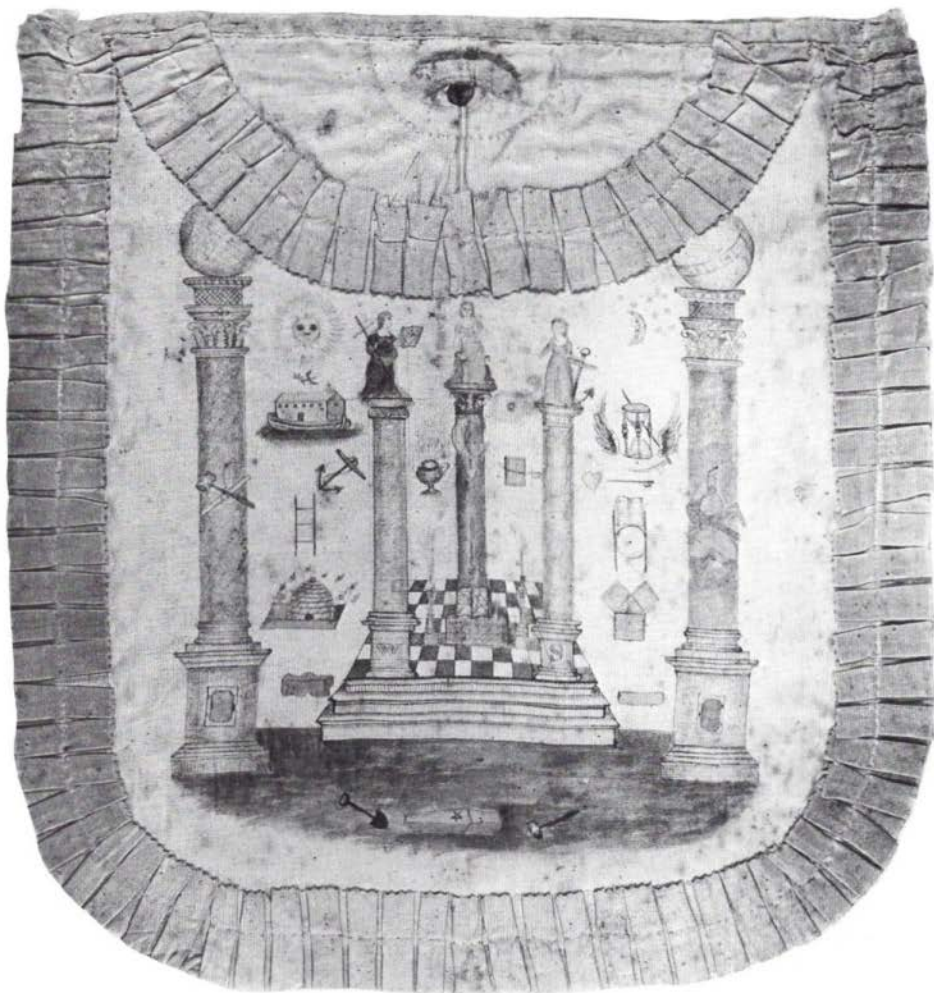
Artist unknown, c. 1820-1840

Painted and stenciled on velvet

16½" x 16"

Museum of Our National Heritage

Stenciled and painted on velvet, the main design is an arch, draperies, and urn. The border of holly is very unusual and suggests the possibility that the apron was used for the Feast of St. John held in December.



29

MASONIC APRON

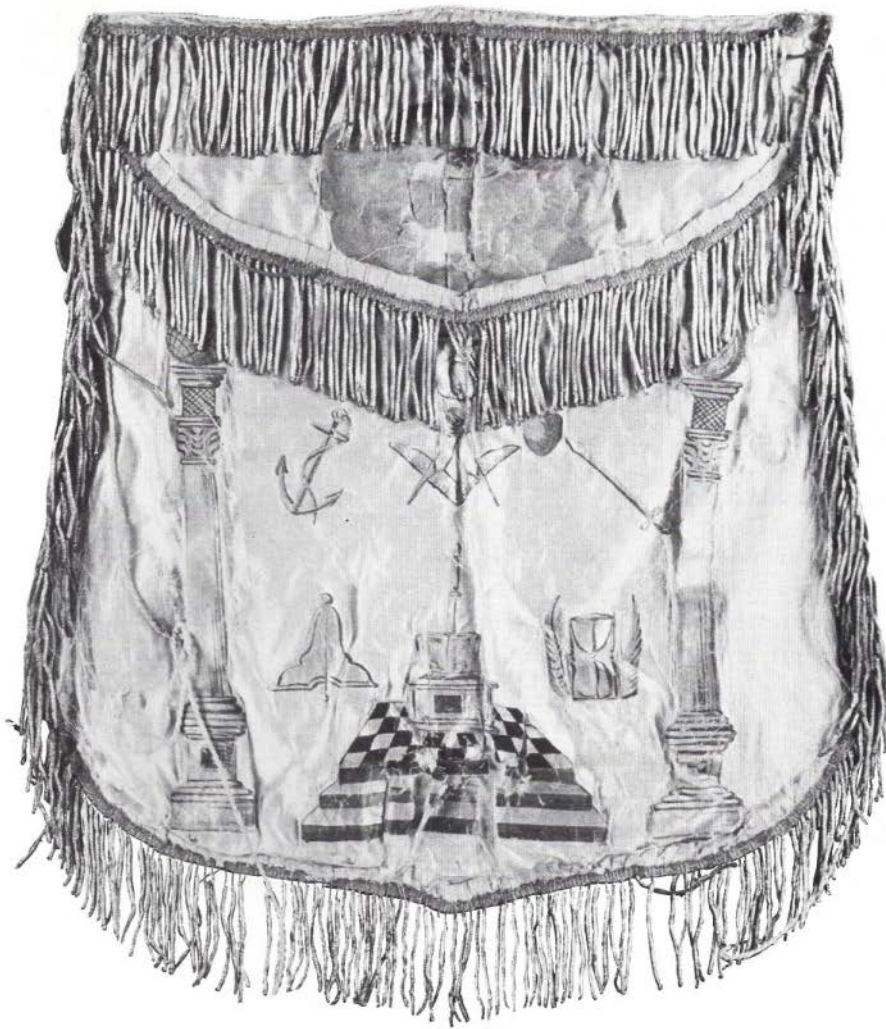
Artist unknown, late 18th or early 19th century

Watercolor on satin-woven silk

15½" x 14½"

St. Patrick's Lodge No. 4 F. & A.M., Johnstown, New York

This apron has a history of belonging to John Butler, a loyalist in the American War of Independence who later settled at Niagara. He was the first Secretary of St. Patrick's Lodge in Johnstown, New York, but his affiliation was disrupted by the events of the Revolution. Butler died in 1796 which would be an extremely early date for this type of painted apron on silk in America.



30

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, Baltimore, Maryland, late 18th century
Watercolor and gilding on silk

17½" x 17"

Saugatuck Masonic Lodge No. 328 F. & A.M., Michigan

According to a family history accompanying the apron, it was hand-painted on silk by a woman in Baltimore and presented to General Arthur St. Clair as a gift from George Washington. The apron was later given to Mr. Jacob M. Wise of Greensburg, Pennsylvania. In 1949, Dr. Solon Cameron, a Past Grand Master of the State of Missouri, purchased the apron from members of the Wise family. Saugatuck Lodge later acquired the apron from Dr. Cameron's daughters.

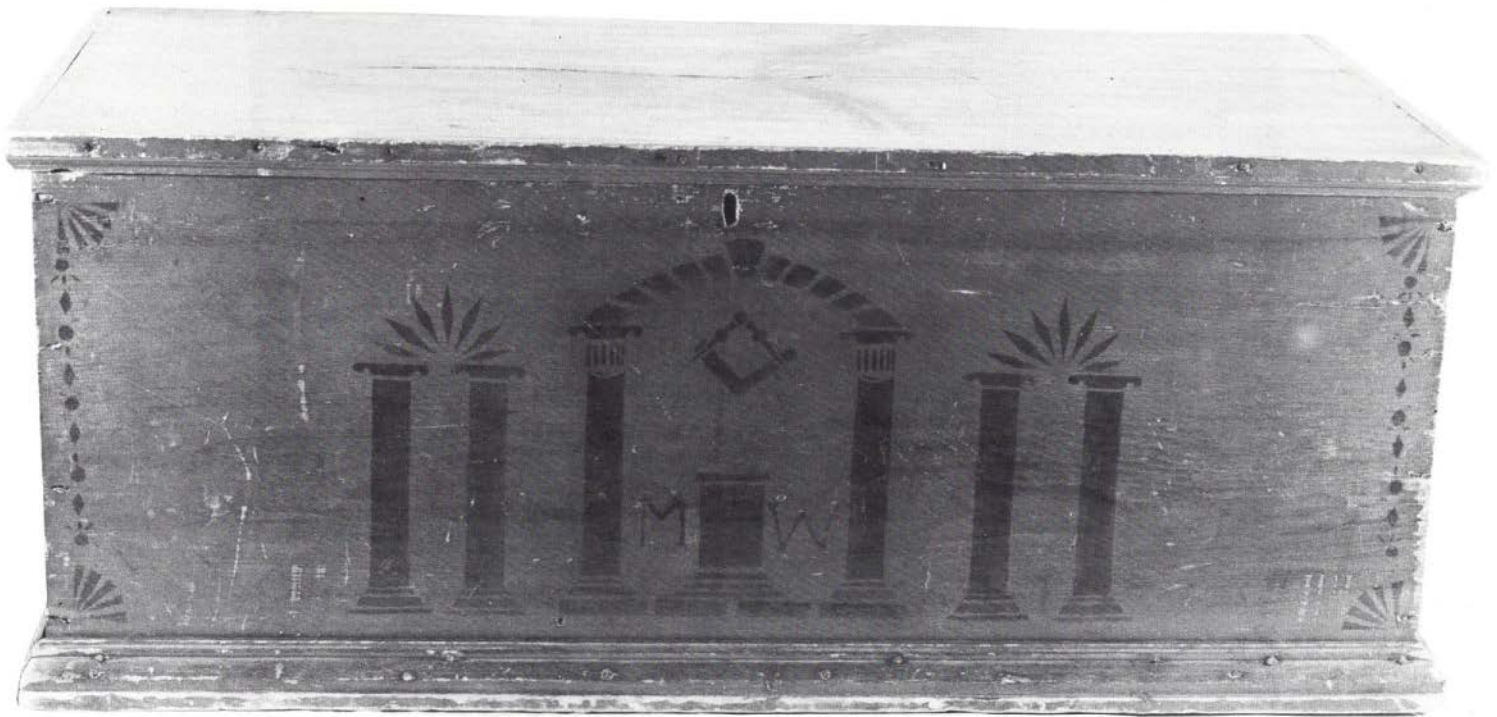
STENCILED APRONS

In the 19th century, stenciling was used extensively to decorate furniture and furnishings of all kinds. It was also a common way to decorate walls and floors, being much less costly than wallpaper and carpeting. In an article which appeared in *Scientific American*, American artist Rufus Porter (1792-1884) described how he used stencils to facilitate his painting of landscapes:

... the painting of houses, arbors, villages, & c., is greatly facilitated by means of stencils ... for this purpose several stencils must be made to match each other ... then by placing these successively on the wall and painting the ground through the aperture with a large brush ... the appearance of a house is readily produced in a nearly finished state ...⁶²

Using stencils for the main design and handpainting the details was another method used by artists who painted Masonic aprons. Sometimes stenciling is difficult to identify because painted details obliterate the original outlines. Close examination of symbols or letters, such as the Masonic "G," which show the sharp outline of the stencil most clearly, is often required to determine whether stenciling techniques have been used. When a group of similar stenciled aprons are compared, it is often possible to determine that the same cutout patterns have been used.

Two aprons in the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts collection not only have the same stenciled designs, but each one has a decorative stenciled border similar to geometric designs found on stenciled furniture, walls, or floors. Groups of stenciled aprons from Maine and Pennsylvania have also been located; a large number of stenciled aprons are found in collections of Southern aprons dating between 1830 and 1860. Examples from Georgia and Alabama, in particular, exhibit similar designs which seem to be based on an engraving of the "Master's Carpet" by Amos Doolittle, first published in 1819 as the frontispiece for Jeremy Cross's book, *The Masonic Chart*. Cross's book was influential in establishing more uniform Masonic ritual in America. The Doolittle frontispiece became a standard design; the central imagery of steps leading to a black and white pavement on which an altar, candles, and columns are placed, is surrounded by individual Masonic symbols arbitrarily placed. Large, five-pointed stars with shading are more prominent on Southern aprons of this period than on aprons found in New England or Middle Atlantic collections, and are probably based on the large-scale star which appears in Doolittle's frontispiece. An apron owned by Micajah W. Pearson of Dadesville, Alabama, about 1831, is an example of this type.



Stenciled chest, pine, c. 1800-1820
Museum of Our National Heritage

Another group of stenciled aprons was produced in the Kentucky area in the 1840's and 1850's. An apron owned by Henry M. Shuffitt, dated 1847, Woodsonville, Kentucky, is nearly identical to an apron owned by David Demarest, a builder in Athens, Georgia, c. 1848, which is illustrated in the catalog of an exhibit entitled "Missing Pieces: Georgia Folk Art."⁶³ Both aprons are the same shape and were produced from the same set of stencils. The design of columns, pavement, and large altar with red cushions is not common and the distorted perspective of the pavement is distinctive. A third more elaborate, but closely related apron owned by Fred Webber of Compass Lodge No. 223, Kentucky, in the early 1850's, shows the same altar and distorted perspective. These three aprons suggest a stencil artist working in the Kentucky area traveling through northern Georgia and adjoining states. More research and additional examples may some day associate these aprons with a specific artist.

Stenciled aprons from Maine, Kentucky, Georgia, and Western Pennsylvania in the first half of the 19th century confirm the fact that stenciling was more common away from larger cities where more sophisticated artists and engravers worked. Easily portable paper stencils and paints substituted for the more complicated tools and techniques of engraving and were especially suited to itinerant rural artists.



31

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, Massachusetts, c. 1800

Stenciled and painted on leather

12¼" x 13½"

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Massachusetts

One of two aprons with similar stenciled designs and borders, the dark muddy colors and prominence of the square and compasses in the design suggest a date close to 1800. The artist used stencils for the main outlines, then painted in the details. The geometric repeat design of the border is similar to stencils used on walls, floors, and furniture in this period.

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, Pennsylvania, c. 1810

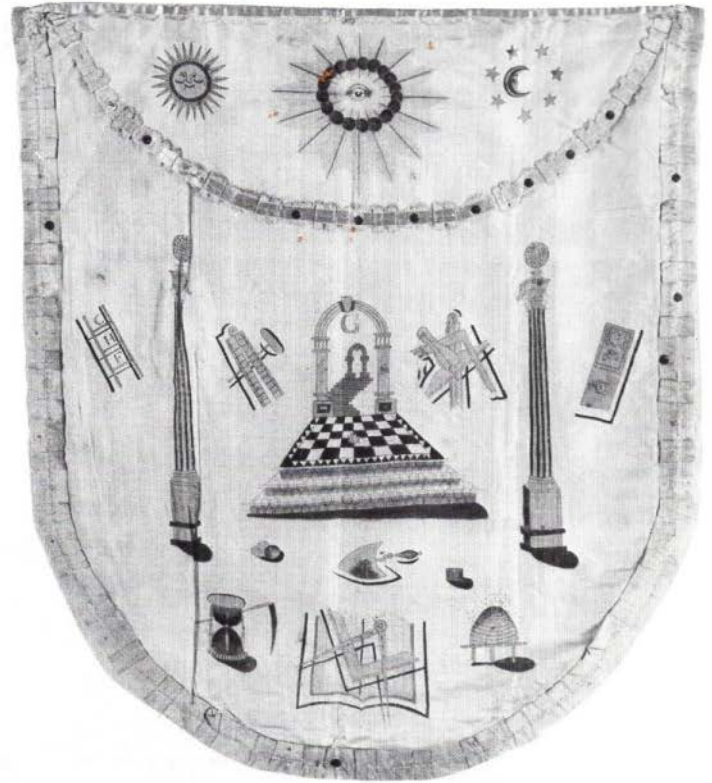
Stenciled and painted on satin

14 ¼" x 14 ¼"

Kenneth W. Nebinger

Stenciled and painted on satin, this apron owned by George K. Nutz of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, is identical to numerous examples found in the collection of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. Nutz practiced law and was admitted to the Bar of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, in 1809. From 1804 to 1809 he was a member of Lodge No. 62, Reading, Pennsylvania, and from 1809 until his death in 1824, was a member of Perseverance Lodge No. 21, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He served as Worshipful Master in 1810 and 1813. Perseverance Lodge No. 21 recorded in its minutes for June 24, 1808, that "a motion was made and agreed unanimously that the lodge should provide aprons for members that belong to the lodge at the present time." It is interesting to speculate whether the lodge might have had this stenciled apron made for its members.

William Henry Egle and James M. Lamburton, *History of Perseverance Lodge No. 21 F. & A.M., Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1901).



MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, Maine, 1820-1830

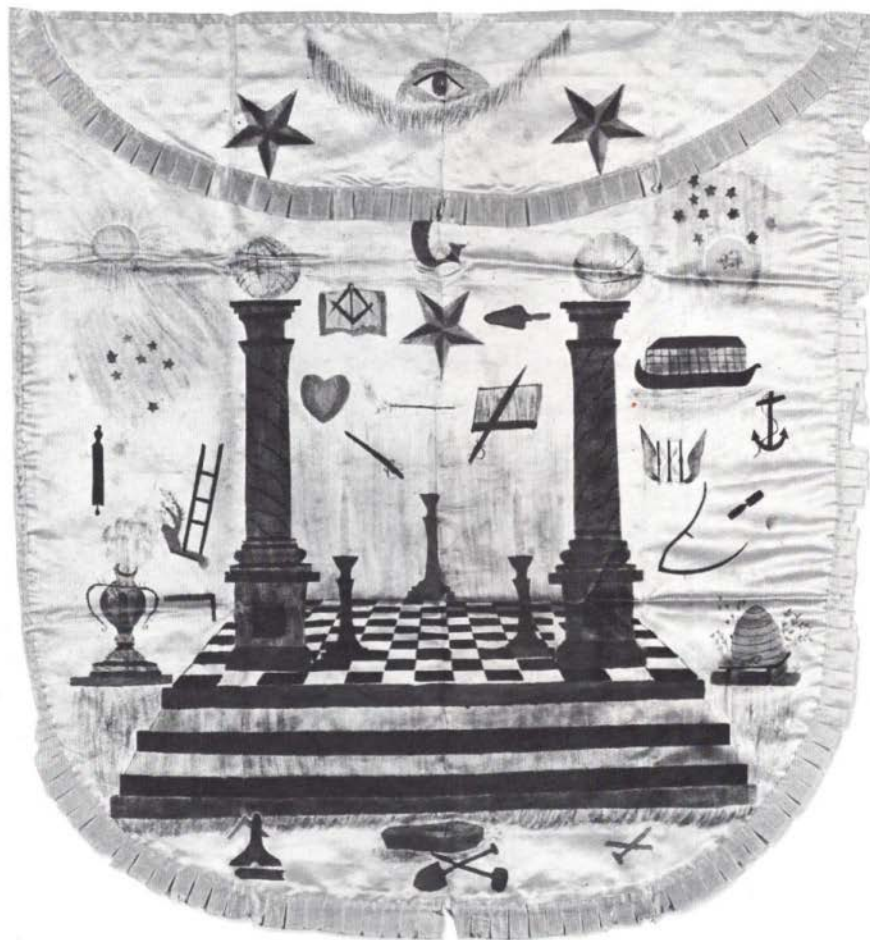
Stenciled and painted on silk

17 ¼" x 15"

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Massachusetts

The pleated blue silk edging of this stenciled apron is embellished with sequins. It is one of several aprons of this design associated with individual owners in Maine in the 1820's. Two different sets of stencils can be identified, but the aprons all exhibit a similar design that appears to be an adaptation of an engraved apron published by Edward Horsman of Boston in 1814. This particular apron belonged to Silas Bernard (1795-1873) who became a Master Mason in 1819 in Oriental Star Lodge, Livermore Falls, Maine. In 1828, he was a charter member of King Hiram Lodge No. 57, Dixfield, Maine. Fred J. Noyes is identified as the owner of another example of the apron, dated Eastport, Maine, December, 1828.





34

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, Alabama, 1831

Stenciled and painted on silk

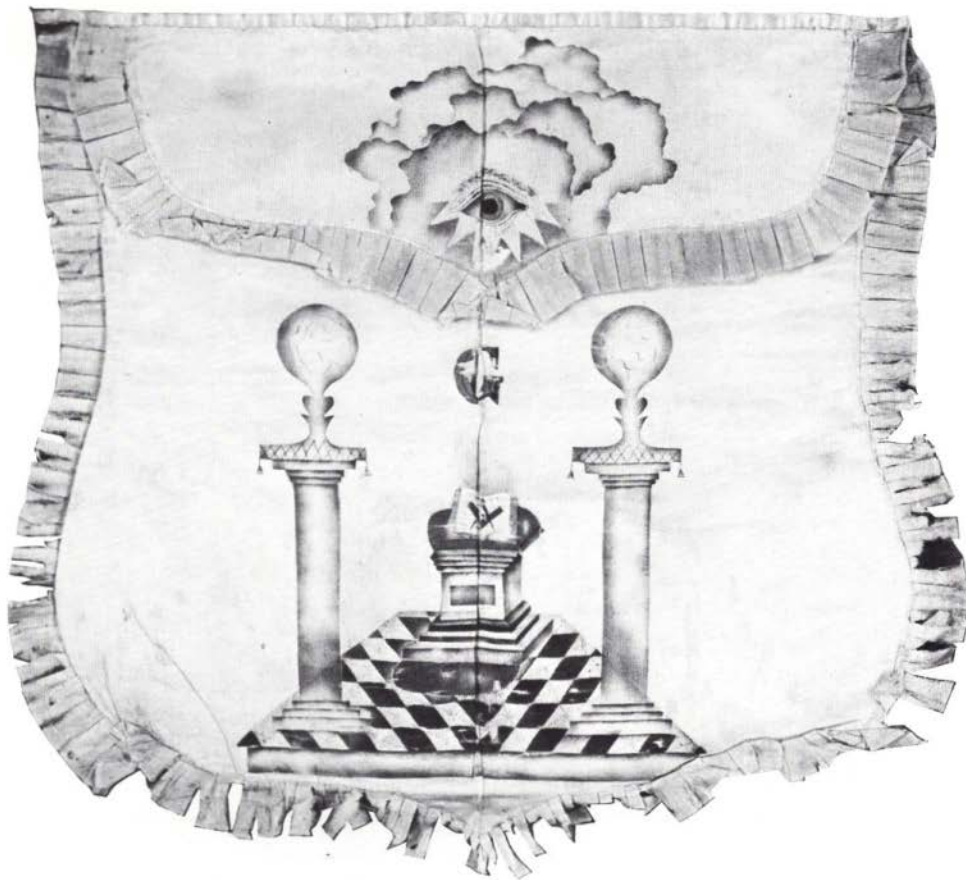
18" x 17"

Ellsworth B. Lawrence

Micajah W. Pearson of Dadesville, Alabama, owned this well-documented stenciled apron during the 1830-1840 period. The stenciled design is based on the Amos Doolittle engraving of the "Master's Carpet" published in 1819 as the frontispiece of Jeremy Cross's *Masonic Chart*. The edging is a pleated blue silk ribbon. According to family history, the apron was first worn by Micajah W. Pearson at Dadesville, Alabama Lodge No. 76, in 1831. The apron was passed on to his son, Micajah Pearson, owner of a small plantation

near Tallapoosa, Georgia. Family tradition also claims that during the Civil War, when approaching Federal troops threatened his plantation, Micajah Pearson spread this Masonic apron over a chest containing family documents and valuables. The Yankee officer in charge understood the message. Although he ordered the house and barns destroyed, he gave specific instructions that the chest covered by the apron be spared, and the family be left unharmed. Similar accounts of Masonic aprons providing an umbrella of safety for family possessions are associated with other southern Masonic aprons that survived the Civil War.

Ellsworth B. Lawrence, "Saving the Family Treasures," *The Northern Light* (April, 1978).



35

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, Woodsonville, Kentucky, 1847

Stenciled and painted on silk

15 1/2" x 17 1/4"

Supreme Council Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of
Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction

A group of stenciled aprons appears to have been produced in the Kentucky area in the 1840's and 1850's. This apron owned by Henry M. Shuffitt is inscribed under the flap, "H. M. Shuffitt, December 27th 1847, Woodsonville, Ky." It is identical to an apron owned by David Demarest, a builder in Athens, Georgia, in the 1840's. The Demarest apron owned by Masonic Research Lodge No. 104 of Atlanta, Georgia, appeared in an exhibit entitled "Missing Pieces: Georgia Folk Art." Both aprons are the same shape and appear to have been produced from the same set of stencils. Distinctive characteristics of the

design are the arrangement of the columns, the altar with red cushions, and the distorted perspective of the pavement. A third, more elaborate, but closely related apron, owned by Fred Webber of Compass Lodge No. 223 of Kentucky in the 1850's, shows the same altar, distorted perspective, and overall shape. The Webber apron is also in the collection of the Supreme Council Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction. Henry M. Shuffitt was a member of Green River Lodge No. 88, Munfordville, Kentucky. Demarest was a member of Mount Vernon Lodge No. 22, Athens, Georgia. The existence of these three stenciled aprons suggests an artist working in the Kentucky area and possibly traveling through northern Georgia and adjoining states.

Anna Wadsworth, *Missing Pieces: Georgia Folk Art, 1770-1976* (Atlanta, Georgia Council for the Arts and Humanities, 1976).

ENGRAVED APRONS

During the mid-18th century engraving on copperplate had developed in Europe to include a wide range of applications. Engraved designs could be printed on textiles and transfer-printed on ceramics. Portraits, scenic views and views of towns, buildings, and historic sites were all part of the engraver's art. The engraving process attracted Benjamin Franklin's attention during a London visit. Writing to his wife in 1758, he mentions "fifty-six yards of cotton printed from copperplates, a new invention to make bed and window curtains."⁶⁴ The engraving process had reached such a high level of refinement and had achieved such widespread applicability that the first half of the 19th century has been called the "Golden Age of Engraving."

Few engravers worked in colonial America, but immediately following the Revolution, American copperplate engraving and printing expanded rapidly. Professionally trained painters and engravers from England, Scotland, and France settled in urban centers such as Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. American silversmiths and artists became self-taught engravers to meet the new nation's need for maps and legal documents, bank notes, broadsides, and trade bills. Many of the earliest and most influential of these artisans also engraved and printed Masonic designs on leather, cotton, and silk for American Freemasons.

The design sources for American engraved aprons are varied. Large numbers of transfer-printed English ceramics, including Masonic pitchers, punch bowls, and mugs were imported to America following the Revolution and influenced American designs. Silk and cotton printed handkerchiefs with Masonic subjects imported from England were another source for Masonic designs. Engraved English and French Masonic aprons and certificates also found their way to America. Masonic aprons designed and engraved by American artists were in turn widely reproduced and became influential in the development of Masonic imagery in America.

Because engraved copperplates were commonly signed and dated, many artists and engravers of printed Masonic aprons can be identified. Plates engraved with the name of a publisher or a prominent Freemason indicate that

many engraved aprons were, in fact, the result of collaborations or partnerships between an individual Freemason and an engraver. Amos Doolittle, a well-known Connecticut engraver and a Freemason himself, collaborated with Jeremy Cross, an authority and lecturer on Freemasonry, to produce a Royal Arch apron. The apron is inscribed: "Designed by Comp[anion] Jeremy L. Cross/Royal Arch Apron/Copy Right Secured/Engraved by Comp[anion] A. Doolittle." Cross's diary, now in the collection of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, further documents the details of his partnership with Doolittle. On March 28, 1818, Cross noted that he "calld on Comp[anion] Doolittle and agreed with him to engrave a R. A. Aprn which he agreed to do and go halves in the expen[se] and profit."⁶⁵ In October of the following year Cross bought out Doolittle's interest in the copyright and became sole owner: "Bot 10½ of Copper; purchased the one copyright in the Royal Arch Apron and all the stock, debts, etc. belonging to Amos Doolittle and became the sole [owner] gave him fifty dollars for the whole."⁶⁶ Notwithstanding the dissolution of their partnership in this particular venture, the two men continued their business relationship. Other entries in Cross's diary for October and November, 1819, mention that he carried some satin to Brother Doolittle for select flaps and assisted in printing aprons which he then sold for two dollars and fifty cents.⁶⁷ Cross later designed another apron in the 1820's in collaboration with the firm of N. & S. S. Jocelyn of New Haven.

Similar collaborations produced other printed aprons. Connecticut engraver Abner Reed, produced three different Masonic aprons with Sherman Dewey, a Freemason of Willimantic, Connecticut. Each apron is inscribed, "Engraved by Abner Reed for Bro. S. Dewey." One of the most influential leaders in American Freemasonry, Giles Fonda Yates, of Schenectady, New York, designed an apron printed by the firm of Balch, Rawdon & Company of Albany, New York in 1821. Other aprons identify a publisher or designer without giving credit to an engraver. The engraved plates for these aprons were probably commissioned by a Mason or bookseller who then printed and sold them under his own name.

The rapid growth of the Masonic fraternity in the first three decades of the 19th century provided a ready market for printed aprons. Publishers and engravers were quick to see the possibilities of marketing aprons both locally and nationally. Edward Horsman, a Mason in Massachusetts, designed an apron, engraved by an unidentified engraver. Horsman solicited and gained the approval of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts for his design and successfully sold copies of the apron throughout Massachusetts. One Doolittle apron carries the legend, "Engraved by Brother Amos Doolittle, New Haven for H. Parmele. The above may be had of Bros. William . . . , Philadelphia, Samuel Maverick, N.Y., A. Doolittle, New Haven and I. W. Clark, Albany." Cooperative arrangements such as this among the many engravers who were Freemasons assured distribution of their work in several states. Many Doolittle certificates

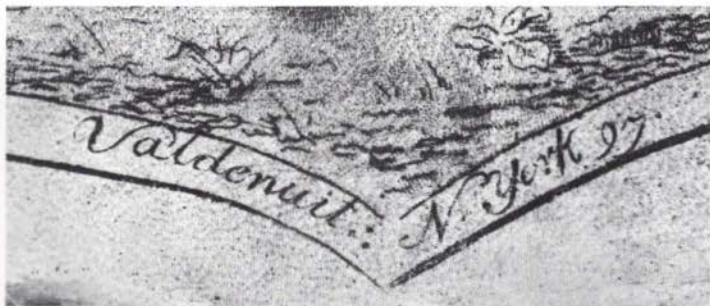
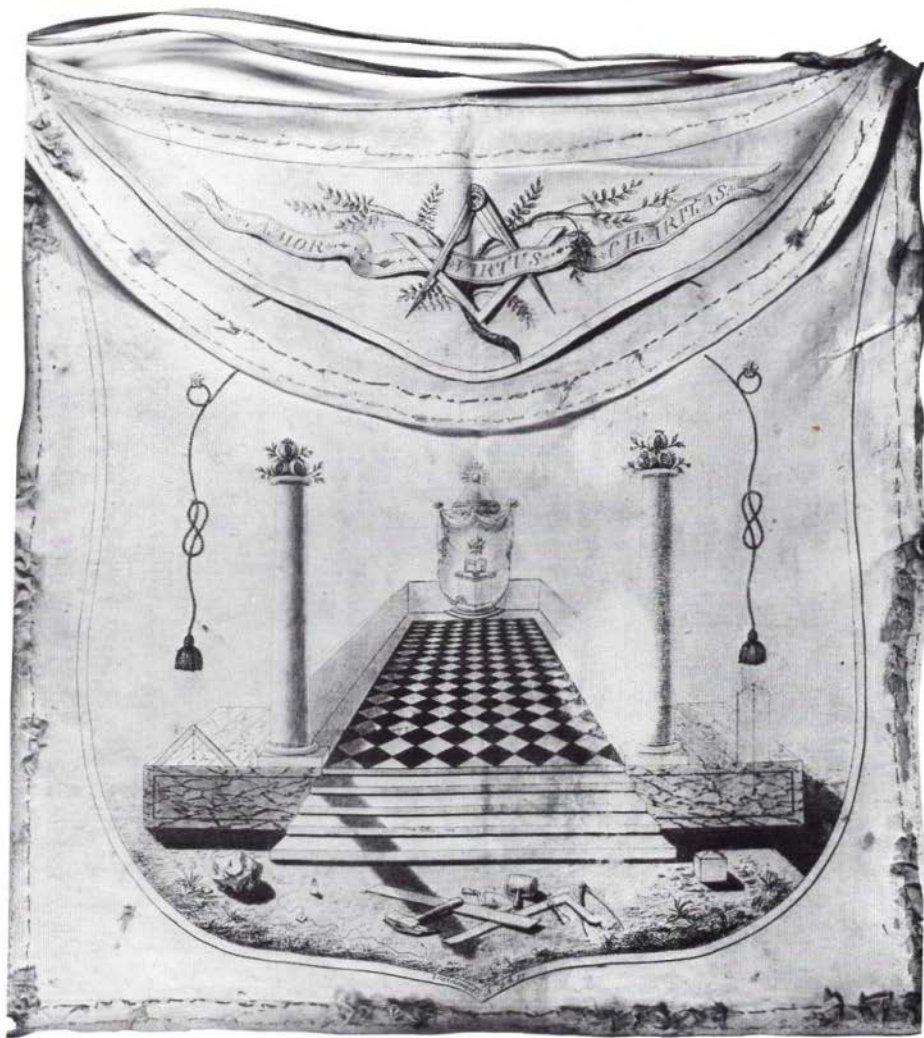
are multi-lingual, including French-English-Latin and Spanish-Latin examples, suggesting use in Louisiana, Florida, and the West Indies. Doolittle's engraved Masonic aprons and certificates today are found in large numbers over a wide geographic area, indicating that he both printed Masonic engravings in quantity and marketed them as widely as possible.

Doolittle was also ingenious in utilizing the same engraved plate for both a certificate and an apron. Several of his aprons are actually certificates that have been printed without the text. A similar use was made of a plate commissioned by Columbia Lodge of Philadelphia from which both aprons and certificates were printed.

Printed aprons with popular themes and designs were often widely copied by other engravers, as well as amateur and professional artists. Thomas Kensett's engraved apron titled, "Master's Carpet Compleat," published in 1812, served as the basic design for a number of subsequent aprons. An apron engraved in 1823 by Samuel D. Bettle of Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, is an exact copy of the Kensett design. A hand-drawn copy of an apron engraved by Elkanah Tisdale of Norwich, Connecticut, is another example of the way in which engraved Masonic aprons became the models for later drawn, painted, or engraved examples. In the Massachusetts area, Edward Horsman's engraved apron became a standard design that was widely copied and adapted in painted and stenciled versions.

Engraved Masonic aprons and certificates provide new information about the early work of well-known American engravers. For example, portrait painter, engraver, and inventor Oliver T. Eddy (1799-1868), engraved Masonic apron plates very early in his career. Eddy, the son of the Vermont printer Isaac Eddy, began engraving at the age of 15 under his father's tutelage. Before he left home for New York City in 1822, young Oliver had engraved two Masonic aprons which were published by Lewis Roberson of Wethersfield, Vermont. Similarly, Charles Cushing Wright, who began his career as a silversmith's apprentice, and who later became associated with some of the most important bank note printing firms in America, engraved Masonic aprons and certificates early in his career. In Homer, New York, he did his work for William B. Whitney, a Mason who belonged to the same lodge as John Osborn, the silversmith, to whom Wright was apprenticed.

Lesser known engravers are also represented in collections of Masonic aprons. Middletown, Connecticut, engraver James T. Porter's known work includes a frontispiece to *A Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt* (Middletown: Loomis and Richard, 1815), and a juvenile book with eight illustrations printed and sold by J. T. Porter in 1823. During the period that he worked in Middletown from 1815 to c. 1830, Porter also engraved at least three Masonic aprons. These examples considerably expand his previously known work.



36

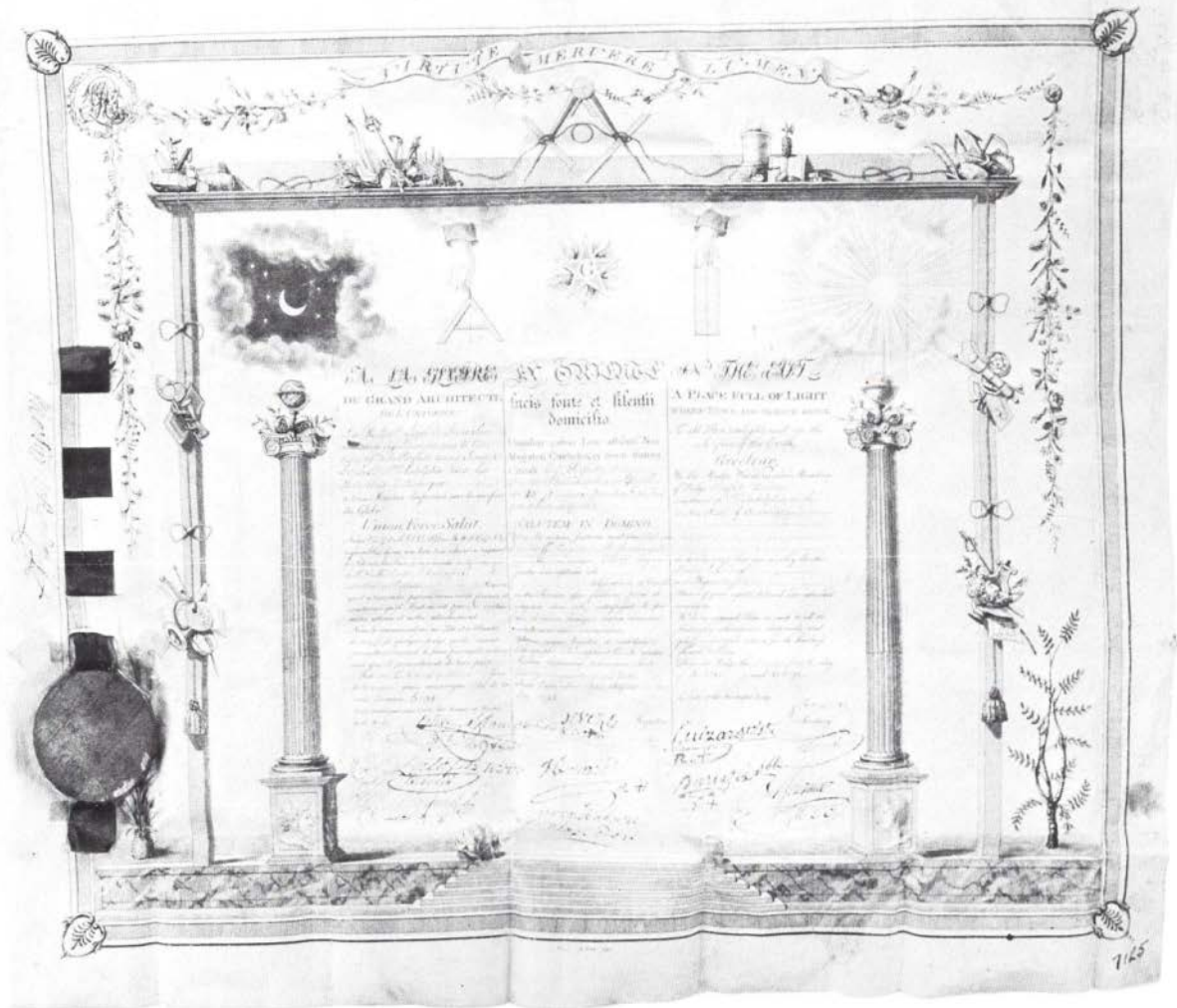
MASONIC APRON

Thomas Bluget de Valdenuit, New York, New York, 1797

Engraving on leather

15¼" x 14½"

Museum of Our National Heritage



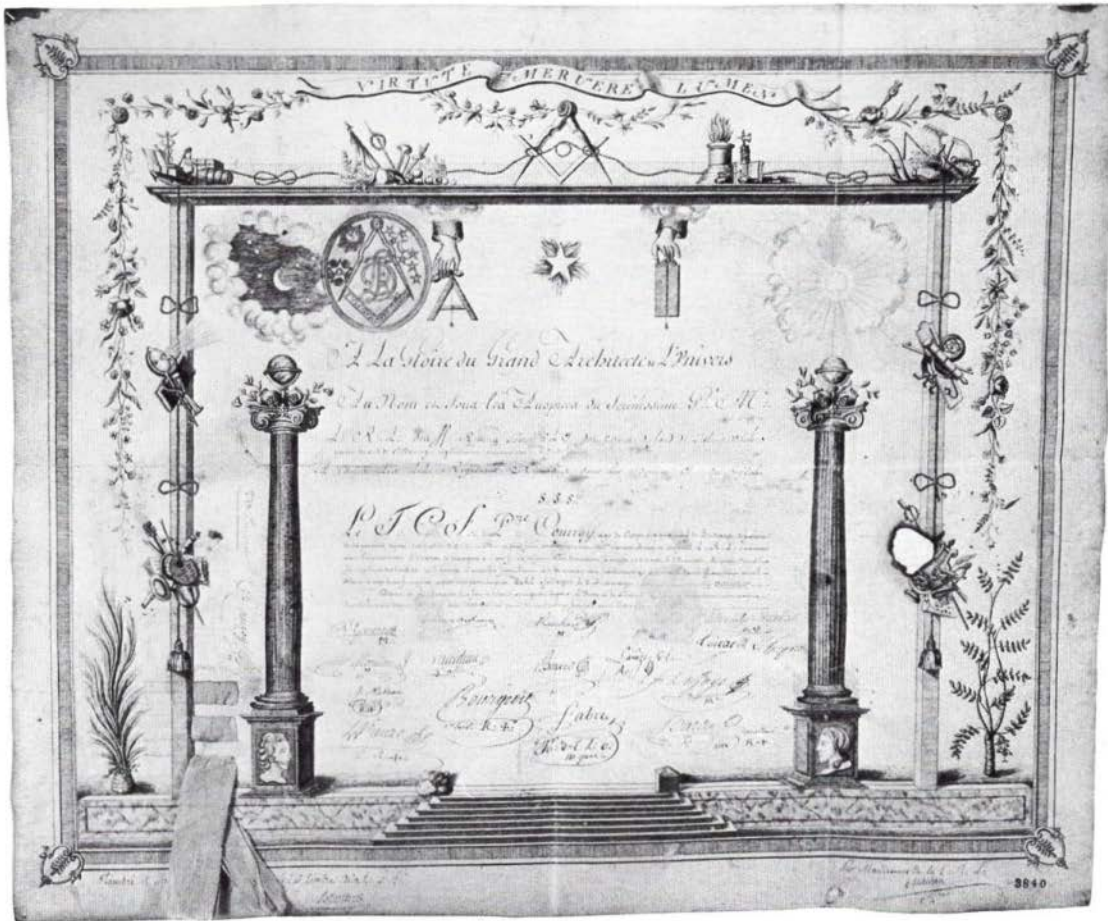
V... N. York 1797

CERTIFICATE

Thomas Bluget de Valdenuit, New York, New York, 1797
 Engraving on parchment
 18½" x 21"

Certificate of Martin Eckendorff, Lodge of Perfect Union, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1798.

The Right Worshipful Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Pennsylvania



CERTIFICATE

Attributed to Valdenuit, France, 1798

Pen and ink on parchment

17½" x 21"

The Right Worshipful Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Pennsylvania

Thomas Bluget de Valdenuit was one of many French artists who came to America following the French Revolution. He worked first in Baltimore, Maryland where he opened a drawing school in 1795. He then moved to New York City and entered into partnership with another emigré artist, Charles Balthazar Julien Frevet de Saint-Memin, in a crayon portrait, profile, and portrait engraving business. Valdenuit also did Masonic engraving during his stay in New York. The apron, signed "Valdenuit N. York 97," originally belonged to Josiah Sherman of Albany, New York. Another apron in the Grand

Lodge of New York collection is identical except that it is unsigned and the name "Howard Lodge" engraved on the apron suggests that it was a special commission of that lodge. An engraved certificate similar to these aprons is signed "V*** N. York 1797." Valdenuit is thought to have returned to France sometime after 1797. A French certificate in the collection of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania is nearly identical to the Valdenuit certificate published in New York except that it is drawn in ink. It is dated 1798 which would confirm that Valdenuit had returned to France by that time. Valdenuit clearly used identical designs for his work in New York and France, proving that French designs were used in America. Many aprons in American collections, now considered to be French imports, may be French designs produced in America by French artists.

MASONIC APRON

Abner Reed, East Windsor, Connecticut, 1800

Hand-colored engraving on leather

13½" x 14"

Museum of Our National Heritage

These three aprons are the work of Connecticut engraver Abner Reed in collaboration with Sherman Dewey. Each apron is signed, "Engraved by Abner Reed for Bro. S. Dewey," and dated 1800. Dewey was a charter member of Eastern Star Lodge No. 44, Willimantic, Connecticut, in 1798. Abner Reed was one of the self-taught American engravers whose versatility included work as a sign painter and ornamental artist, author, and school teacher. His diary in The Connecticut Historical Society collection also records printing "46 F.M certificate for S. Lodge" in 1798.

Thompson R. Harlow, "Connecticut Engravers," *The Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin*, Vol. 36 No. 4 (Hartford, October 1971).

Donald C. O'Brien, "Abner Reed: A Connecticut Engraver," *The Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin*, Vol. 44 No. 1 (Hartford, January 1979).

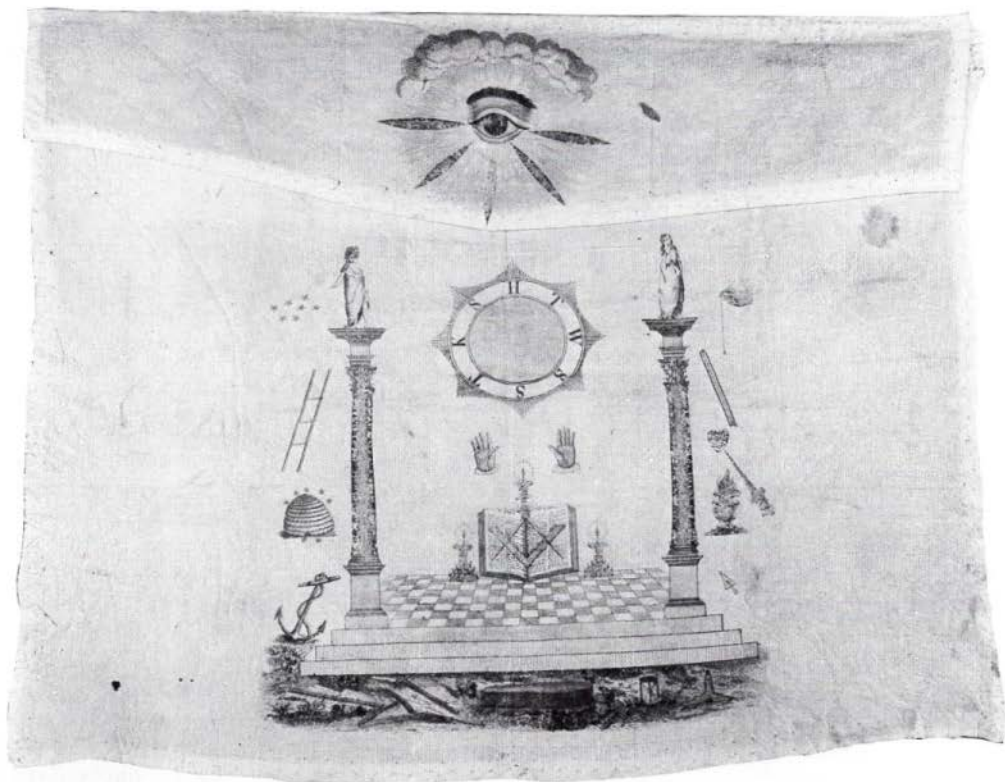
MASONIC APRON

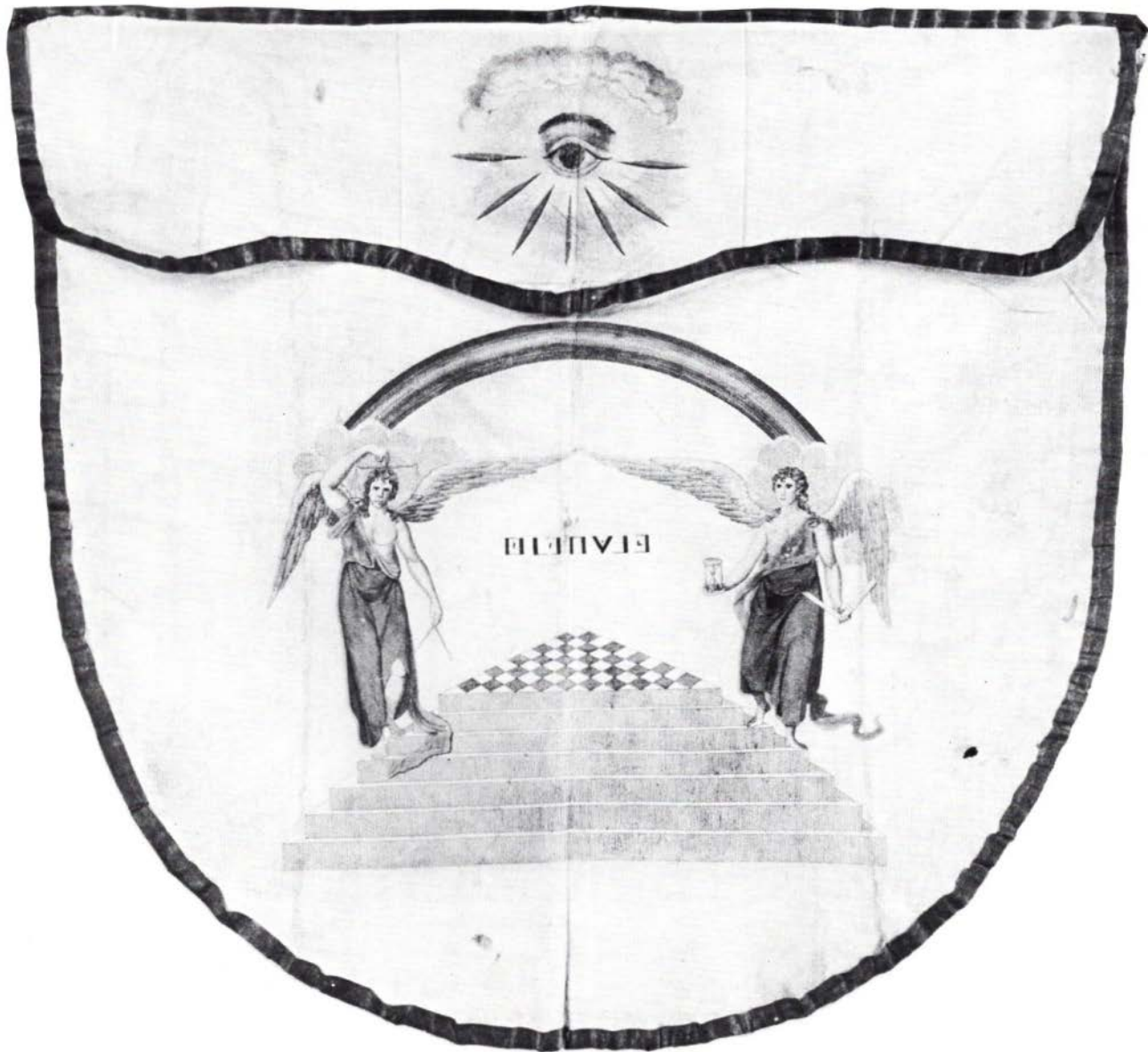
Abner Reed, East Windsor, Connecticut, 1800

Hand-colored engraving on leather

13¼" x 17¼"

Alexandra Turner





39

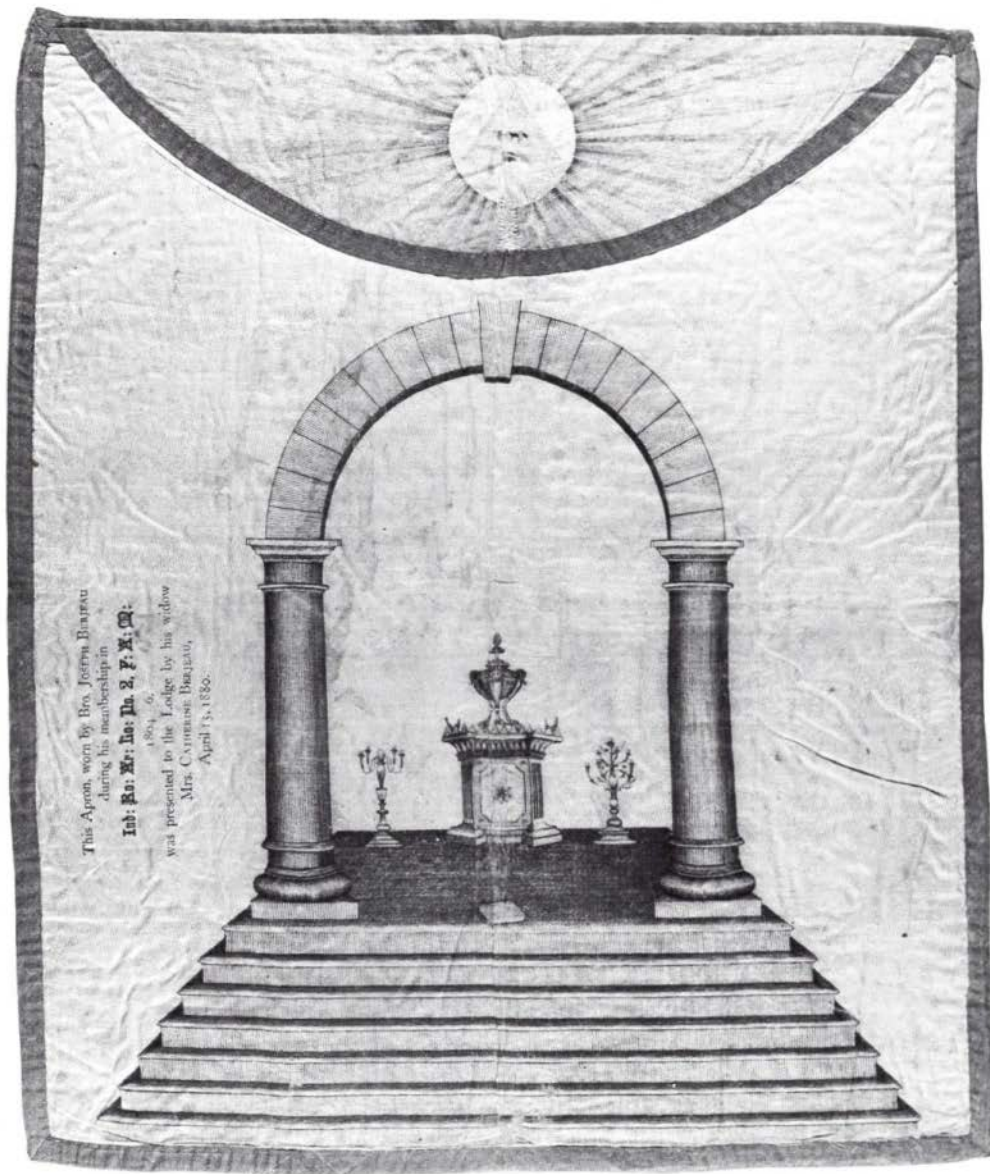
MASONIC APRON

Abner Reed, East Windsor, Connecticut, 1800

Hand-colored engraving on leather

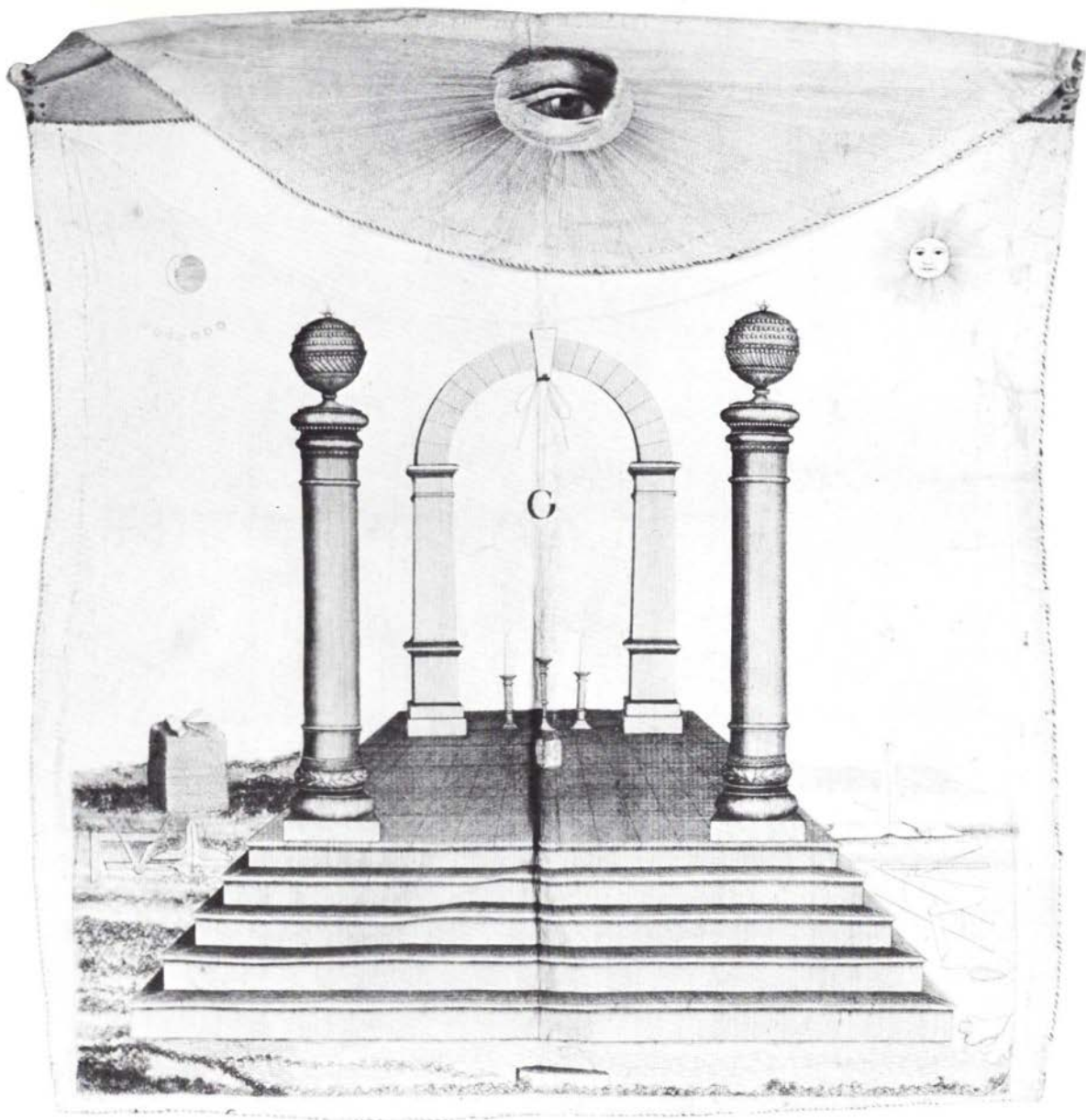
16½" x 17½"

The Connecticut Historical Society



40
 MASONIC APRON
 Engraver unknown, c. 1804-1806
 Engraving on silk
 18" x 15 1/8"
 Originally worn by Joseph Berjeau of Independent Royal Arch
 Lodge No. 2, New York, 1804-1806.
 Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of New York

Examples of aprons by this unknown engraver have been located in Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania collections. In each case the central design of the steps and columns are handled quite similarly with variations in the number of steps and symbols to adapt to the requirements of various Masonic degrees. The Berjeau apron is the only documented example, and its early date seems appropriate to the style of the engraving.



41
MASONIC APRON
Engraver unknown
Engraving on leather
17" x 16"
The Connecticut Historical Society



42

MASONIC APRON

Elkanah Tisdale and Consider Sterry, Norwich, Connecticut,

c. 1805

Engraving on silk

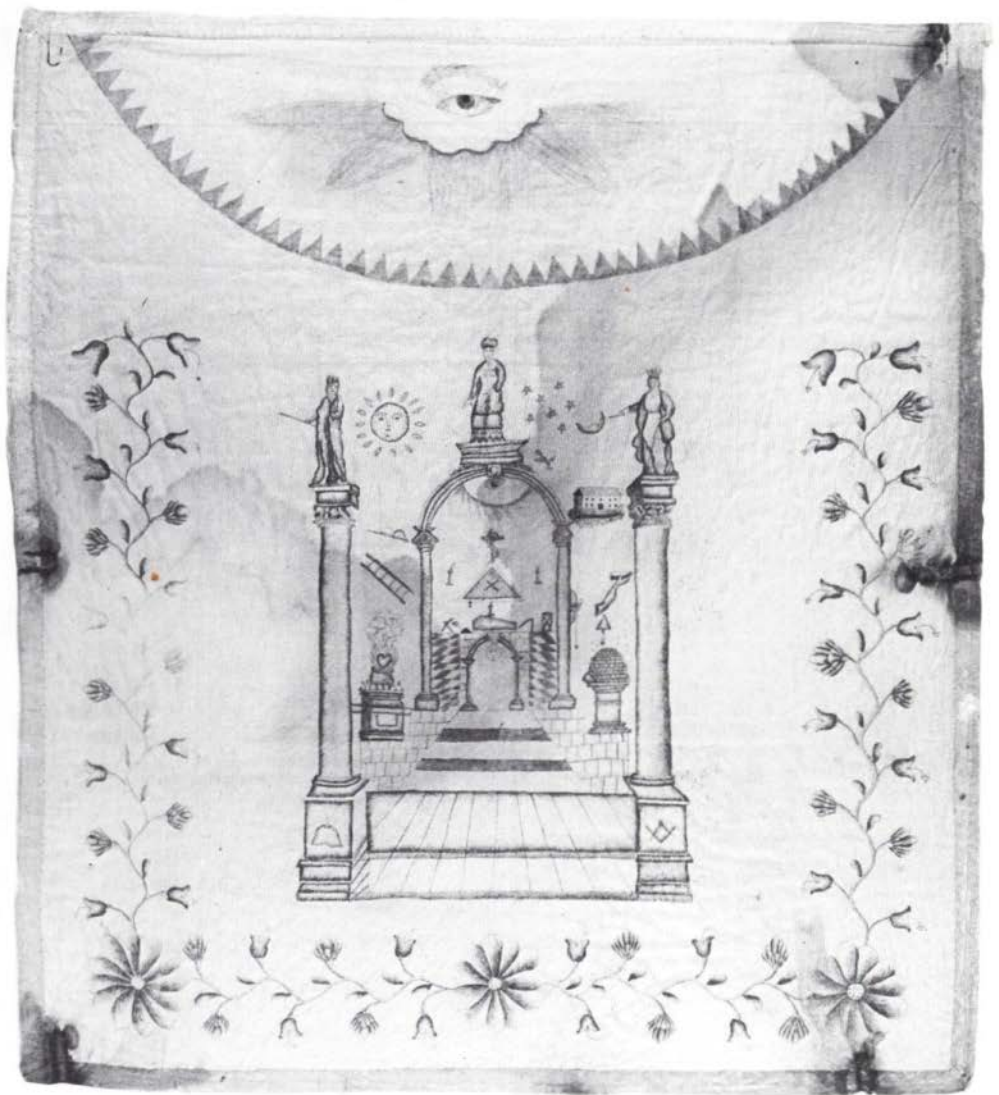
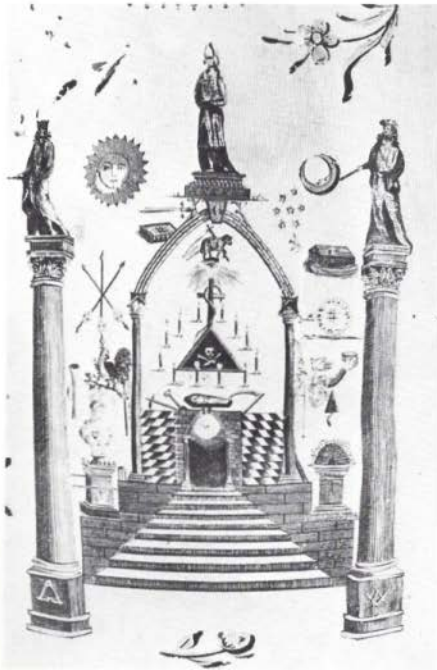
18" x 16"

The Connecticut Historical Society

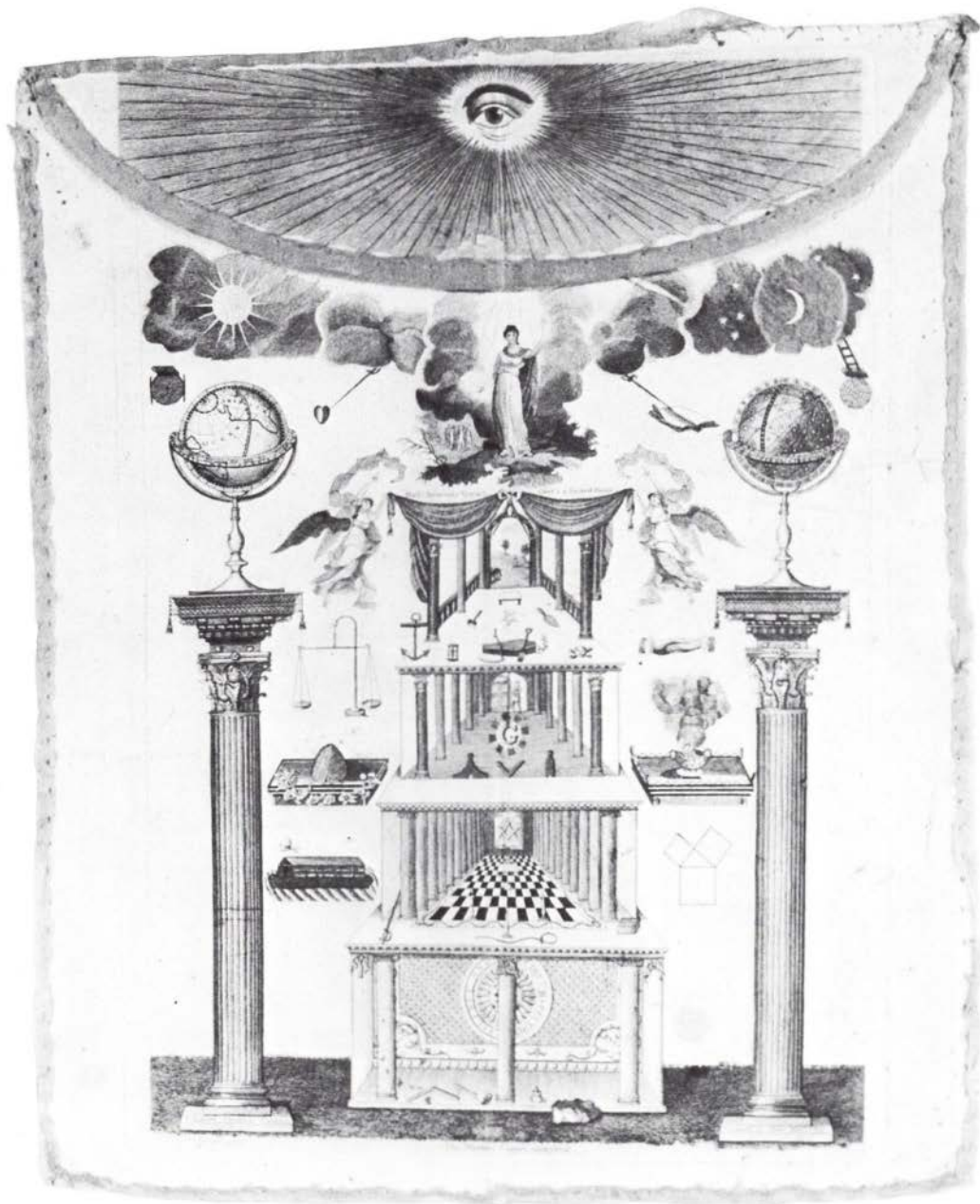
This apron represents another collaboration between an engraver and a Freemason. From 1796, Consider Sterry was a member of Somerset Lodge, Norwich, Connecticut. He served as Master of the lodge during the years 1807, 1809, and again from 1815 to 1816. He

was also the author of several books. A Masonic certificate in The Connecticut Historical Society's collection dated 1801 is signed "BC Sterry Inven. & delin." Elkanah Tisdale, an engraver in Norwich in 1805, engraved a number of plates for books and was a founder of the Hartford Graphic and Bank Note Engraving Company. The engraved apron is signed "C. Sterry/E. Tisdale, Sc." and is printed in blue ink. A hand drawn version of the printed apron includes the same floral border and is also drawn with blue ink. The original source for the design is an English engraving which appears on transfer-printed Liverpool pitchers.

Transfer-printed design from a
Liverpool pitcher, c. 1810
Museum of Our National Heritage



43
MASONIC APRON
Artist unknown, after 1805
Ink on cotton
16¼" x 16¼"
Museum of Our National Heritage



44

MASONIC APRON

Thomas Kensett, Cheshire, Connecticut, 1812

Engraving on leather

14½" x 11¼"

The Connecticut Historical Society

Thomas Kensett became a member of Temple Lodge No. 16 in Cheshire, Connecticut, c. 1812. Born in England in 1786, he had emigrated to America and settled in New Haven by 1806. In 1812, he entered into partnership in the firm of Shelton and Kensett, map and print publishers in Cheshire. His Masonic apron design was widely copied by other engravers and artists. For example, an exact copy of Kensett's apron was engraved by Samuel D. Bettle of Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania in 1823. The paper imprint of the Kensett engraving may have been used as a Master's Carpet or tracing board of symbols used to illustrate Masonic lectures.

45

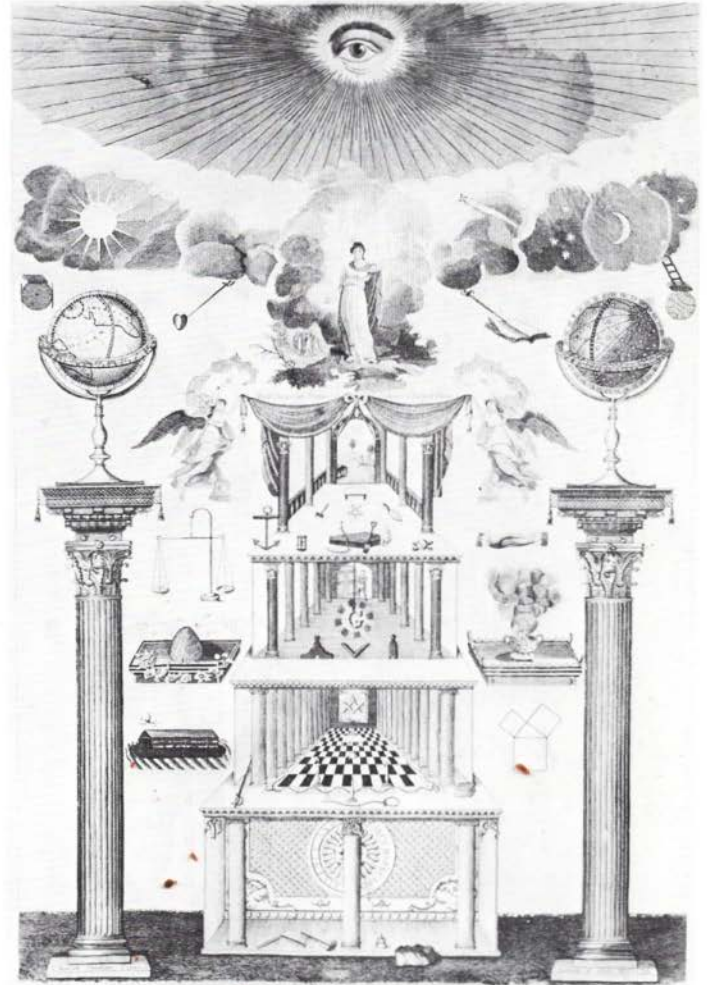
MASONIC APRON

Thomas Kensett, Cheshire, Connecticut, 1812

Engraving on silk

17" x 14"

The Connecticut Historical Society



46

"MASTER'S CARPET COMPLEAT"

Thomas Kensett, Cheshire, Connecticut, 1812

Engraving on paper

16" x 13"

The Connecticut Historical Society

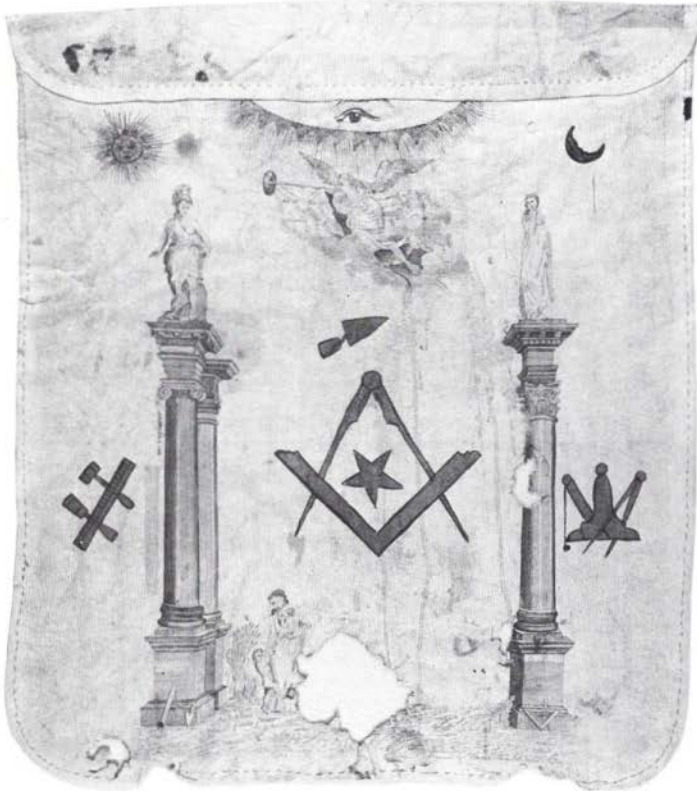
"GRAND LODGE OF CONNECTICUT"

Amos Doolittle, New Haven, Connecticut, c. 1799

Engraving on parchment

12 ¼" x 9 ¼"

The Connecticut Historical Society



MASONIC APRON

Amos Doolittle, New Haven, Connecticut, c. 1799

Engraving on leather with handpainted gold symbols

17 ¼" x 15"

Museum of Our National Heritage



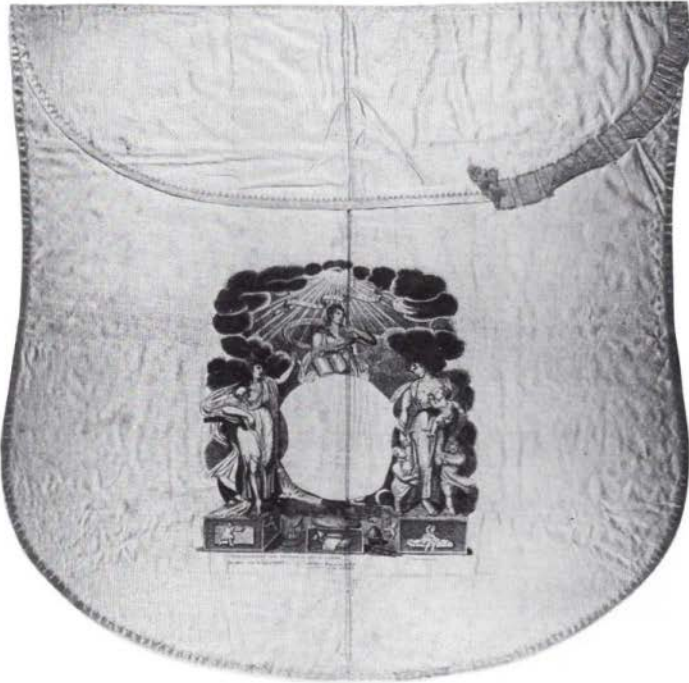
MASONIC APRON

Amos Doolittle, New Haven, Connecticut, c. 1819

Engraving on silk

16 ¼" x 16 ¼"

Museum of Our National Heritage



Amos Doolittle worked in New Haven from c. 1775 until his death in 1832. Born in Cheshire, Connecticut, in 1754, he was trained as a silversmith and taught himself the art of engraving. His four engravings of the battles of Lexington and Concord are among his most famous works. During his career he produced bookplates, portraits, book illustrations, and a number of Masonic aprons, certificates, and illustrations.

He was first recorded as a member of Hiram Lodge, New Haven, in 1792 and remained active in the fraternity throughout his life. The Grand Lodge of Connecticut certificate engraved by Doolittle is

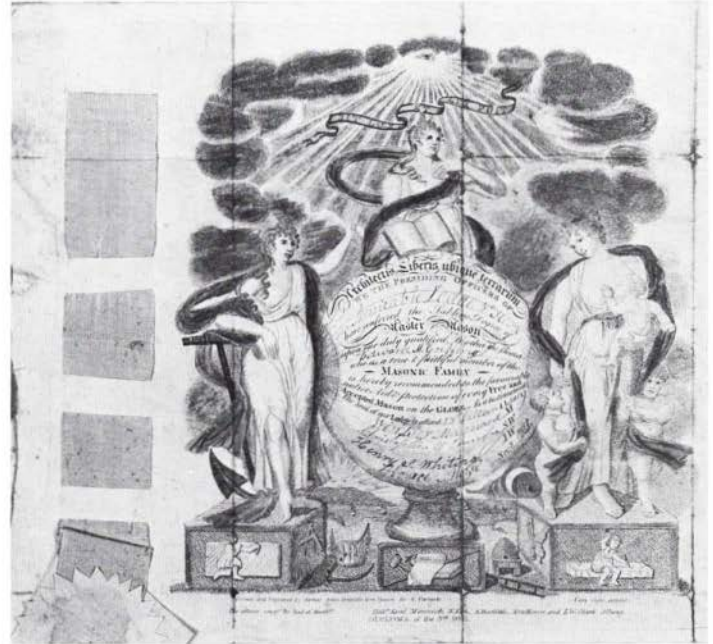
"DIPLOMA OF THE 3RD DEGREE"

Amos Doolittle, New Haven, Connecticut, c. 1819

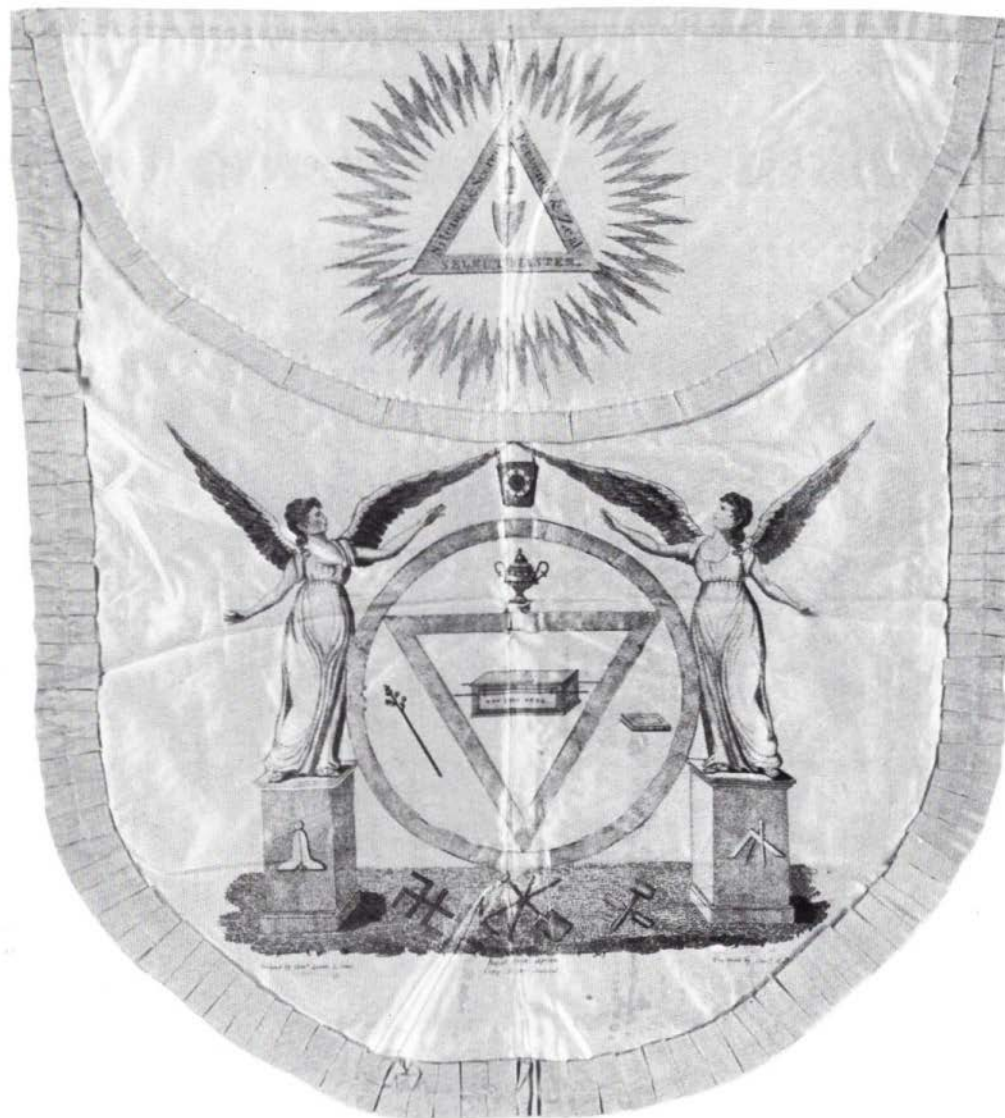
Hand-colored engraving on paper

8 ½" x 10 ½"

Museum of Our National Heritage



probably the one which, according to Grand Lodge records, was commissioned in 1797 and distributed to the lodges on May 15, 1799. Doolittle printed the plate without the text in order to publish it as an apron. A third degree certificate engraved by Doolittle was similarly printed as an apron. The certificate, signed and dated 1819, is identified as "Drawn and engraved by Brother Amos Doolittle, New Haven for H. Parmele. The above may be had of Brothers ... Phila. Saml Maverick, N. York, A. Doolittle, New Haven and I. W. Clark, Albany..."



Doolittle's collaboration with Jeremy Cross on a Royal Arch Select Master's apron is well-documented in Cross's diary. Doolittle also engraved the illustrations for Jeremy Cross's *Masonic Chart*, published in 1819. The frontispiece for the book was engraved by Doolittle. It was widely copied and became the model for many subsequent apron designs.

Grand Lodge of Connecticut, *Proceedings*, (Hartford, Conn., 1799)
Jeremy Cross, unpublished diary, Grand Lodge of Massachusetts collection.

51

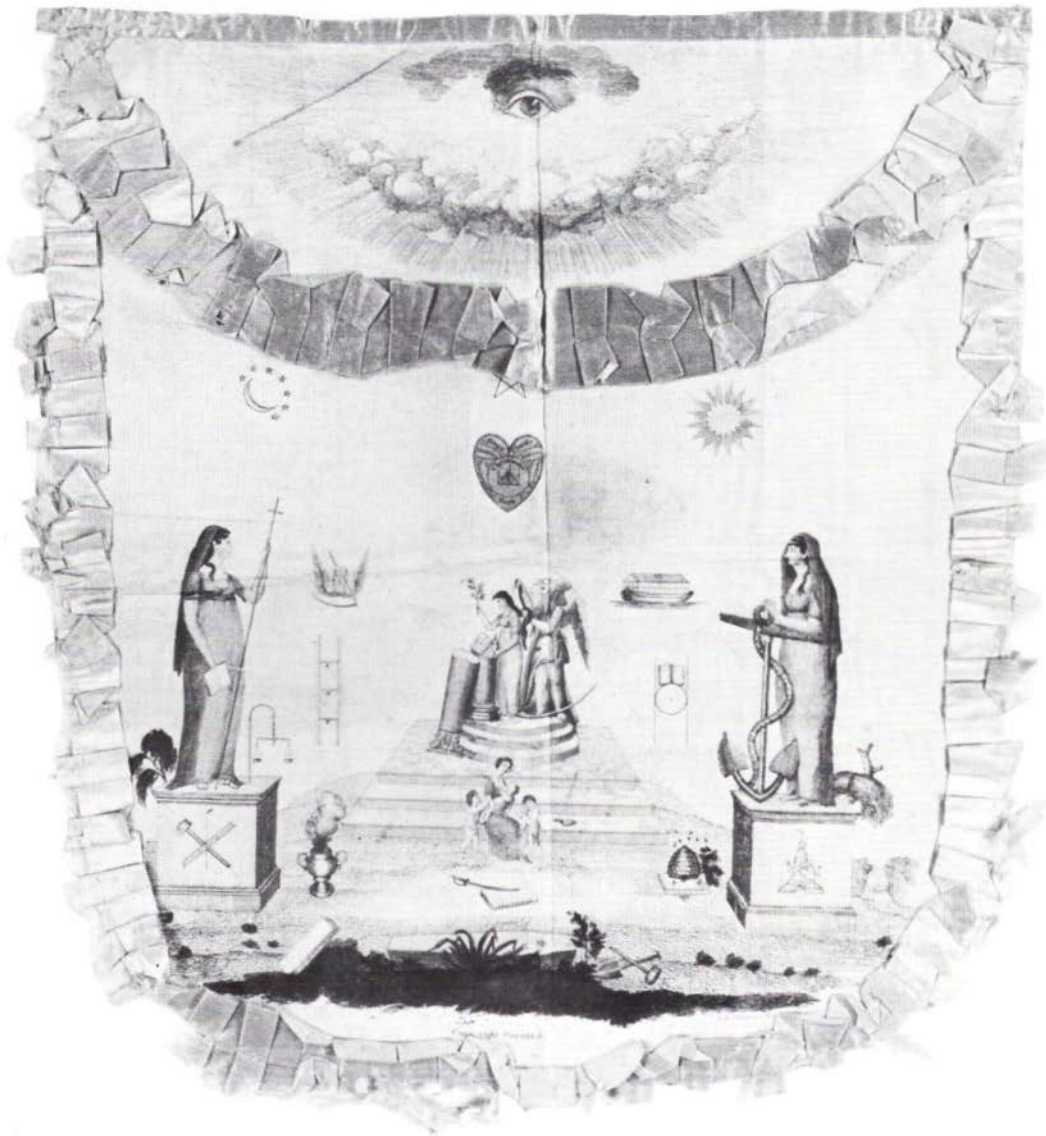
MASONIC APRON

Amos Doolittle and Jeremy Cross, New Haven, Connecticut, 1818

Engraving on silk

15" x 13¼"

The Connecticut Historical Society



Nathaniel and Simeon Smith Jocelyn were partners in a banknote-engraving firm in New Haven, Connecticut from 1818 to 1843. The design of the apron by Jeremy Cross includes the motif of the weeping virgin and broken column originally illustrated in Cross's *Masonic Chart*, published in 1819 with engravings by Amos Doolittle. Nathaniel Jocelyn was apprenticed to a clockmaker, but took up engraving about 1813 under the instruction of George Munger. The apron is inscribed, "Designed by J. L. Cross/Copy Right Secured/N. & S. S. Jocelyn Sc."

52

MASONIC APRON

N. & S. S. Jocelyn and Jeremy Cross, New Haven, Connecticut,
c. 1820's
Hand-colored engraving on cotton
16" x 14"

The Connecticut Historical Society

53.

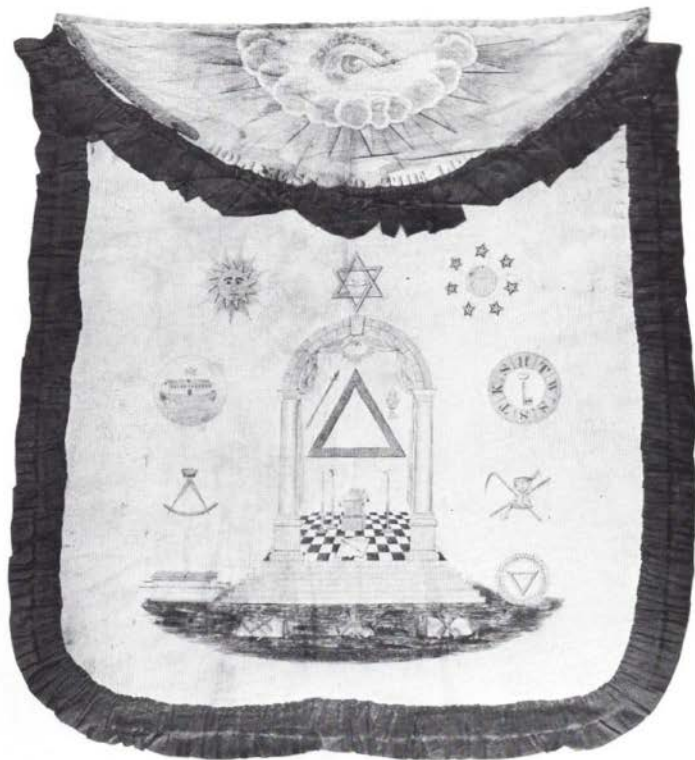
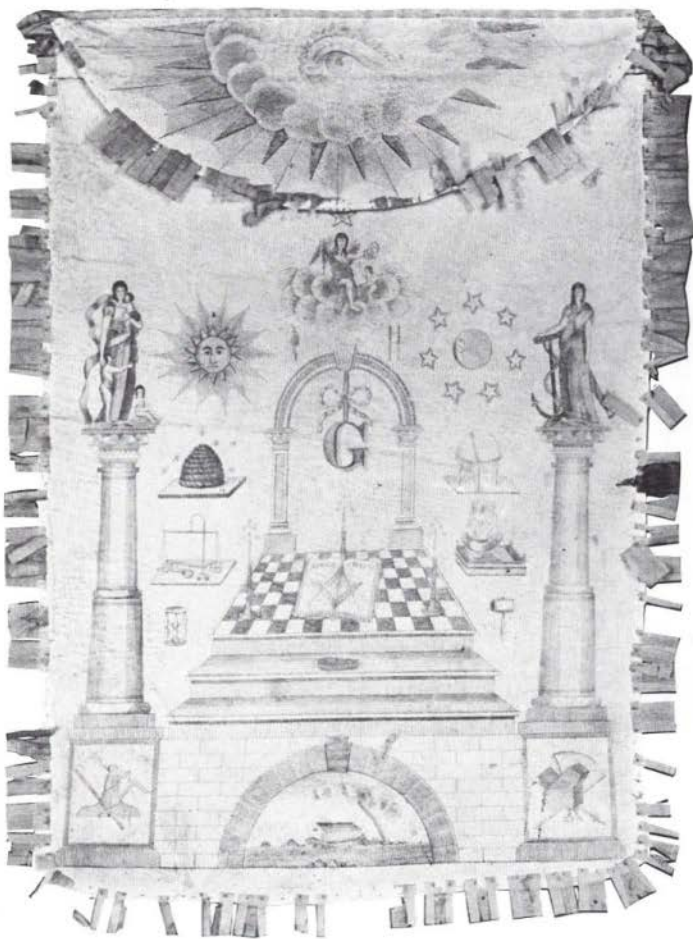
MASONIC APRON

James T. Porter, Middletown, Connecticut, c. 1810-1830

Engraving on leather

16½" × 12"

Supreme Council Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of
Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction



54

MASONIC APRON

James T. Porter, Middletown, Connecticut, c. 1810-1830

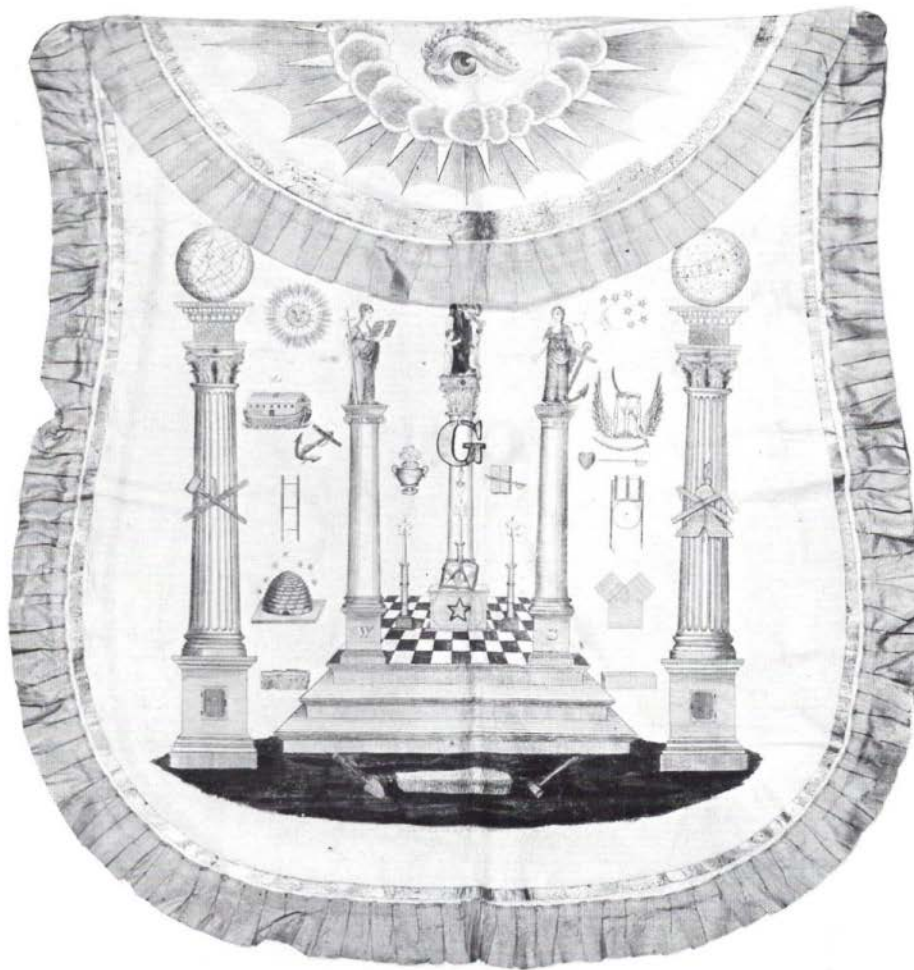
Hand-colored engraving on leather

14½" × 13½"

St. John's Lodge No. 1 F. & A.M., Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Three aprons engraved by James T. Porter considerably increase the number of works by this little-known engraver working in Middletown, Connecticut between 1810 and 1830. One apron, originally owned by Henry F. Wendell of St. John's Lodge No. 1, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, c. 1841, is signed "J. T. Porter, Middletown, Conn." Other examples are simply identified, "Designed and engraved by a brother, Midd. Conn." or are unsigned. The flaps of these aprons are printed from the same engraved plate lettered "Holiness to the Lord," but in some cases the words have been trimmed off or covered with gold paint to adapt the design for use on a Blue Lodge apron.

Little is known about Porter. Although he signed the aprons, "a brother," he is not listed as a member of the fraternity in the Grand Lodge of Connecticut records. He may have taken his Masonic de-



grees in another state or his records may have been lost or destroyed. James T. Porter is listed in Middletown, Connecticut in the 1820 census, placing his work there beginning sometime after 1810 and ending before 1830. A notation in the *Middlesex Gazette*, Middletown, Connecticut, July 6, 1815, lists James T. Porter under a column headed "Letters at the Post Office." Other works by Porter include a frontispiece to *A Narrative of the Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt*, printed in Middletown by Loomis and Richard in 1815, and a juvenile book with unsigned plates entitled, *Americans Triumphant or John Bull in Distress*, printed and sold by J. T. Porter, Middletown, in 1823.

Thompson R. Harlow, "Connecticut Engravers 1774-1820," *The Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin*, Vol. 36 No 4 (Hartford, October, 1971).

55

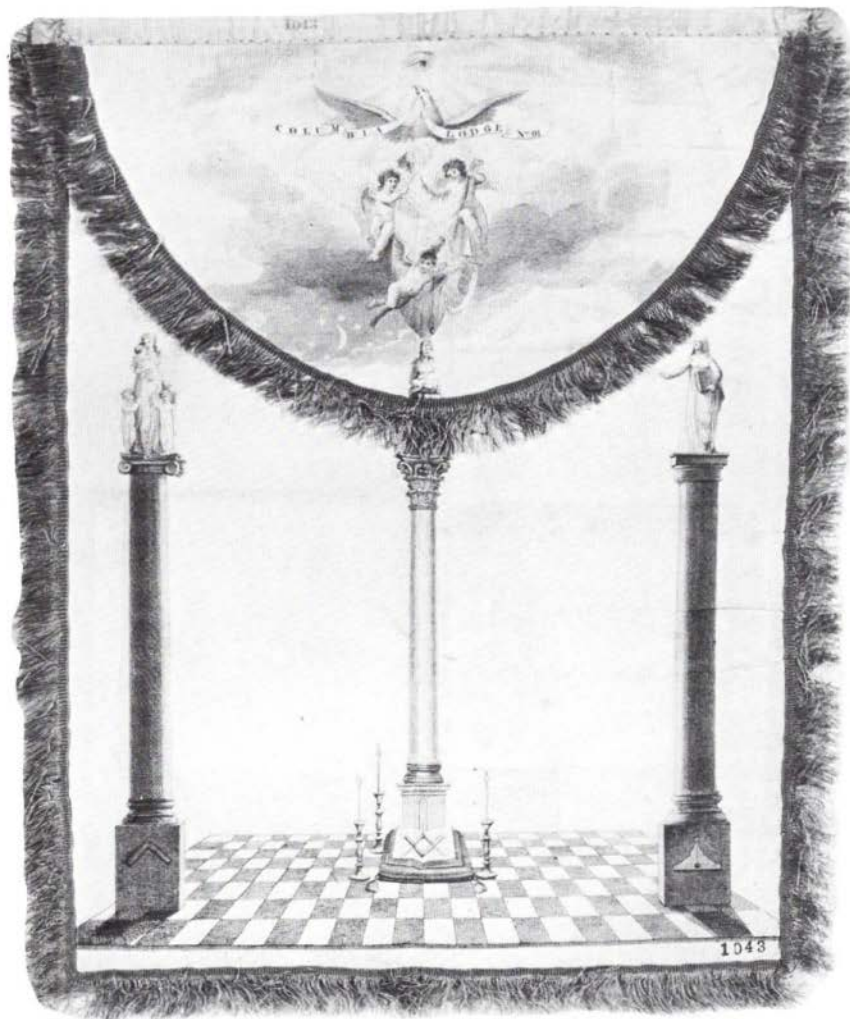
MASONIC APRON

James T. Porter, Middletown, Connecticut, c. 1810-1830

Engraving on leather

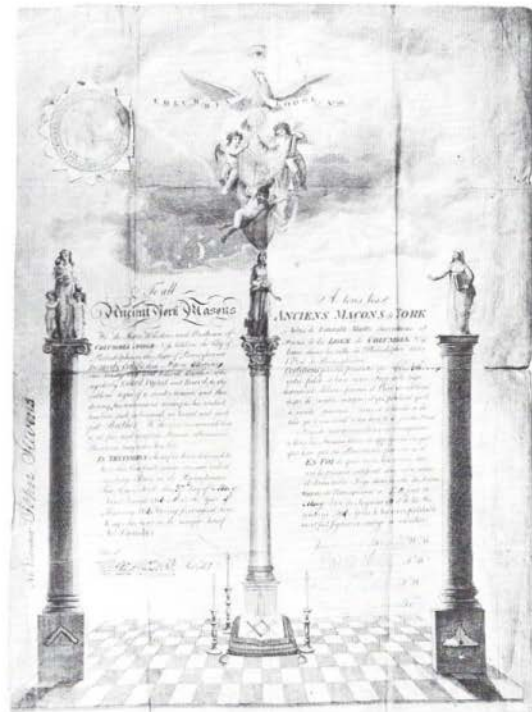
16½" × 16"

Museum of Our National Heritage



56.
MASONIC APRON
 Engraver unknown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1804
 Engraving on leather
 18" × 14½"
 The Right Worshipful Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Pennsylvania

In 1803, Columbia Lodge No. 91 resolved to "produce a draft or design for a certificate plate and seal for the use of the Lodge." In March, 1804, the engraving of the plate was finished at a cost of one hundred and thirty-one dollars. No engraver's name appears on the plate. David Edwin and William Strickland have been mentioned as possible engraver and designer because they later became members of the lodge (Edwin in 1806 and Strickland in 1809). Aprons were also



57.
CERTIFICATE
 Engraver unknown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1804
 Engraving on paper
 18" × 13¼"
 Museum of Our National Heritage

printed from the plate with the text of the certificate omitted. The original plate was altered in 1843 and remained in the possession of the lodge as late as 1901.

Julius F. Sachse, *Centenary of Columbia Lodge No. 91, 1801-1901* (Philadelphia, 1901).

58.

MASONIC APRON

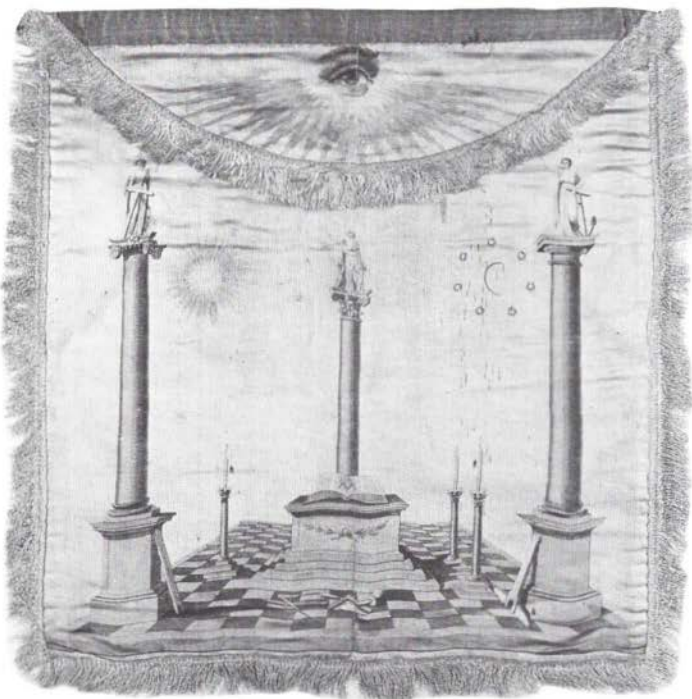
William Strickland, William Kneass, D. Bartling, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, c. 1804-1817

Engraving on silk

14½" × 14½"

Donald E. Carr

William Strickland began his career as an architect in Philadelphia in 1809, supplementing his income with painting, engraving, and surveying. The same year, he was initiated in Columbia Lodge No. 91, Philadelphia. His design for a Masonic apron, engraved by William Kneass, displays greater sophistication and training than the work of self-taught engravers such as Amos Doolittle. From 1804 to 1817, Kneass worked alone in Philadelphia. In 1817, he formed a partnership known as Kneass and Dellecker for one year, and then established the firm of Kneass, Young, and Company lasting from 1818 to 1820. Kneass and Strickland were apparently friends since one of his sons, Strickland Kneass, was named after the architect. Kneass and Strickland also printed a certificate, "drawn and aquatinted by W.



Strickland Arch. W. Kneass Sculpsit," dated 1814, Hiram Lodge No. 81, now in the collection of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. D. Bartling, also named on the plate, has not been identified, but may have acted as a publisher who joined them in this venture.



59.

MASONIC APRON

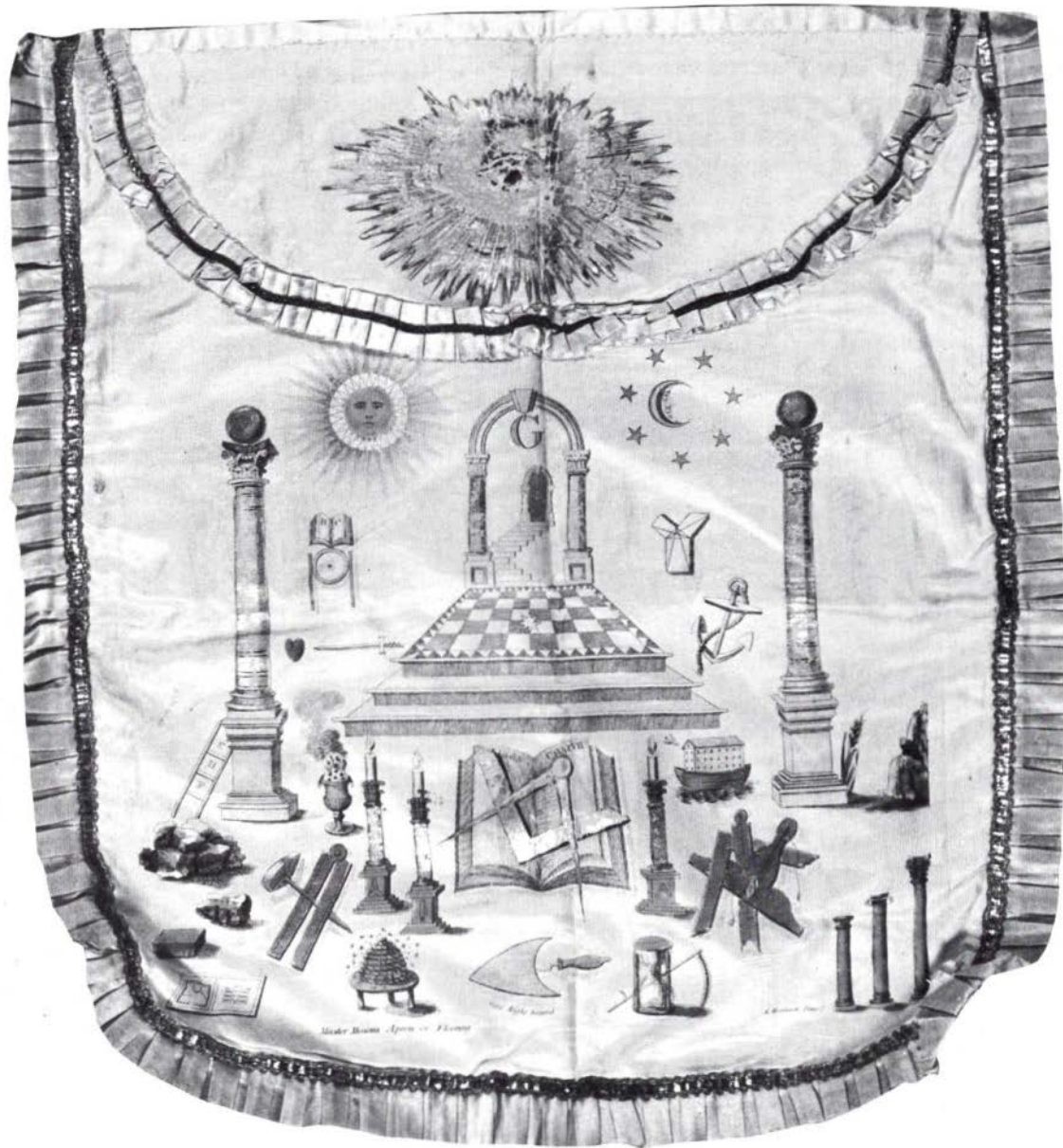
Desilver and Webster, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1813

Engraving on leather

13½" × 14¾"

The Right Worshipful Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Pennsylvania

"Published by Brothers Desilver and Webster," this apron by an unidentified engraver is dated 1813. James Webster was a member of Lodge No. 2 in Philadelphia and was listed in the Philadelphia city directory for 1813 as a bookseller. Robert Desilver was a bookseller, bookbinder, and a member of the Masonic fraternity who published city directories in Philadelphia between 1823 and 1836. A Royal Arch Chapter certificate in the collection of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, engraved by J. Warr, Jr., was published by the firm of Desilver and Muir.



60.
MASONIC APRON
Edward Horsman, Boston, Massachusetts, c. 1814
Engraving on silk
17" x 15½"
Museum of Our National Heritage

61.

COPPERPLATE

Edward Horsman, Boston, Massachusetts, c. 1814

Engraving on copper

14 7/8" x 12 1/8"

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Massachusetts

Edward Horsman's "Master Masons Apron or Flooring," signed "E. Horsman Pinx," became a popular and influential design in New England. In 1814, Horsman submitted his apron design to the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts for their approval. The proceedings of the Grand Lodge for May 6, 1814, describe the lodge's reaction:

The Committee appointed by the M't W'l Grand Lodge of Massachusetts to examine the drawings of a Masonic Apron, presented by the R. W. Bro. Horseman, report their approbation of the same, and recommend it to the Fraternity as a judicious selection of the emblems of the Order arranged with taste and propriety.

Little is known about Horsman's life. He became a Mason in 1802 in Mount Lebanon Lodge of Massachusetts. From 1805, he is listed in the Boston city directories as secretary of the Fire and Marine Insurance Company. He died in 1819 at the age of 44. Probate records appraising the property of the late Edward Horsman listed:

1 Engraving for Master Masons' Aprons	5.00
2 Engravings Mark Lodges for Cards	0.25
Samuel Kidders Receipt for Mason's Aprons to sell which is doubtful	27.50

On July 1, 1820, a "Notice to Freemasons" in the *Columbian Centinel* of Boston advertised that:

Gentlemen who wish to furnish themselves with APRONS for the celebration of St. John's Day, the 24 inst. can be supplied by calling on Mrs. FERGUSON, at No. 23, Marlborough-street, who has on hand a variety of Masonic Clothing such as Aprons and Sashes, of the most approved kind, some from the Plate of the late Edward Horsman, which has been so highly approved and patronized by the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, as a judicious selection of the Order, arranged with taste and propriety, for the Master Mason's Apron, and at such prices as cannot but fail to suit purchasers, and lower than can be purchased elsewhere. N.B. Those who wish them struck off from the Plate may be supplied with any number, unmade, at 50 cents a piece.

June 17

Although Horsman designed the apron, the actual engraver of the plate is not known. Horsman obviously retained ownership of the copper plate until his death and copies of the apron continued to be printed as late as the 1820's. His design was frequently copied and influenced the designs of several Masonic aprons in the New England area.

Columbian Centinel, Boston, Mass., July 1, 1820.

Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, May 6, 1814.

Suffolk County Probate Court Files, Case No. 26192



62.

MASONIC APRON

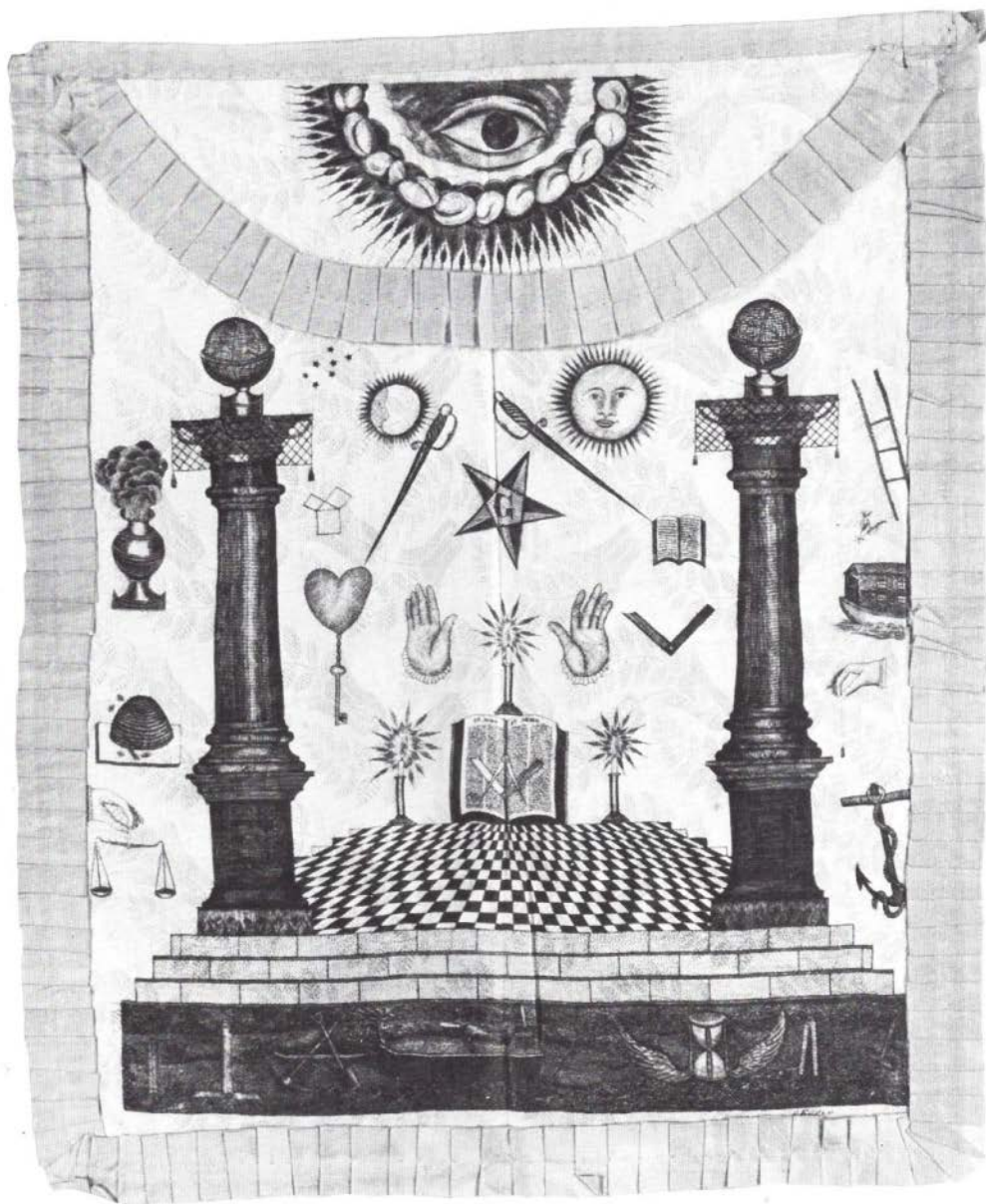
Engraver unknown, Massachusetts, c. 1820's

Engraving on silk

15" x 14"

Museum of Our National Heritage

The original owner of this apron was either Wilson Rawson, born in 1784 in Upton, Massachusetts, or his son, Wilson Rawson, Jr., also of Upton, who became a member of Solomon's Temple Lodge in 1823.



63.

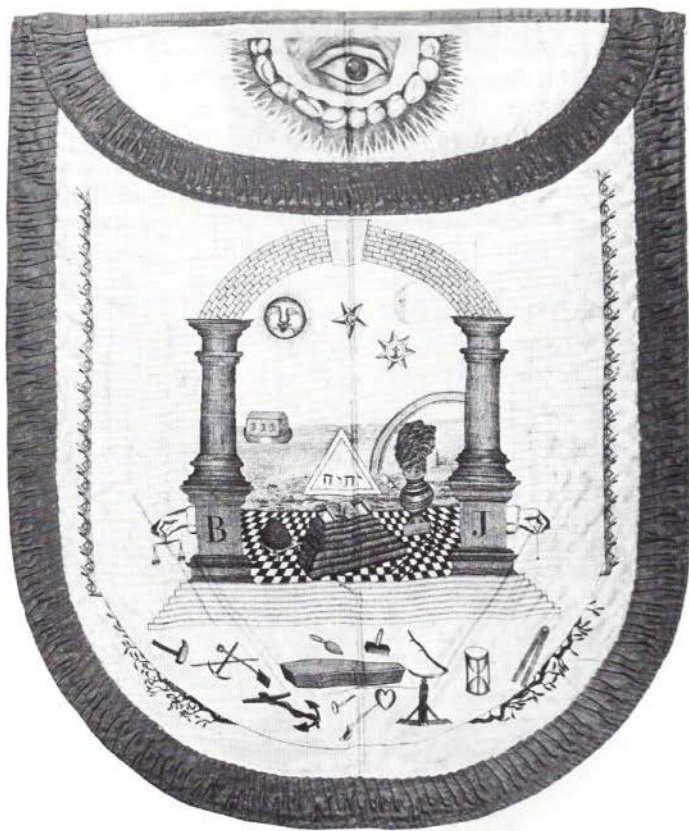
MASONIC APRON

Oliver T. Eddy and Lewis Roberson, Reading, Vermont,
c. 1814-1822

Engraving on silk brocade

15" x 12½"

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge F. & A. M. of Massachusetts

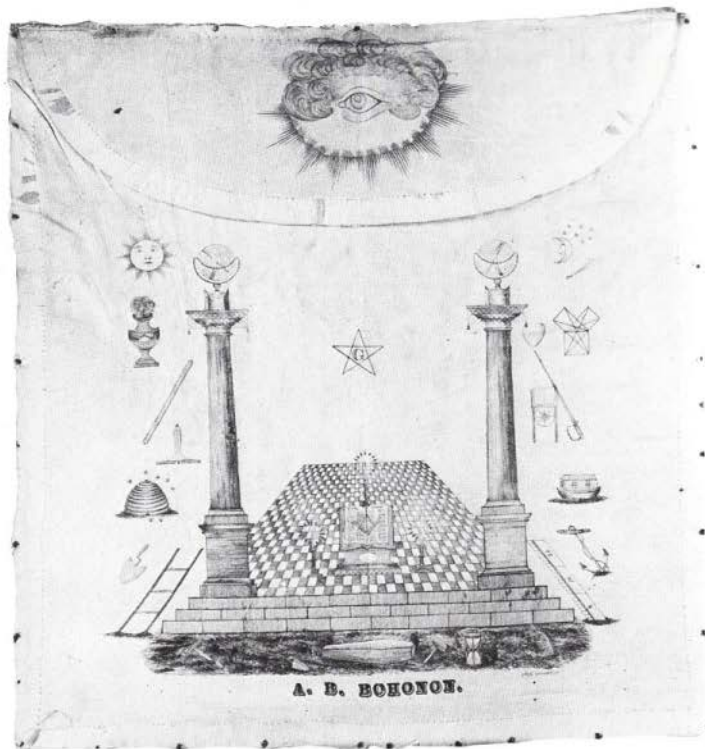


64.
 MASONIC APRON
 Oliver T. Eddy and Lewis Roberson, Wethersfield, Vermont
 c. 1814-1822
 Engraving on silk
 16" x 13 1/4"
 Museum of Our National Heritage

Lewis Robinson was born in Reading, Vermont in 1793 and served his apprenticeship with Isaac Eddy, an engraver in Wethersfield. Robinson became a printer and engraver, often spelling his name "Lewis Roberson" as he did on these Masonic aprons published with Oliver T. Eddy, the son of Isaac Eddy. One apron is signed "O. Eddy Sc." on the front and "Published by Lewis Roberson, Reading Vt." under the flap. The other apron, a Royal Arch Chapter apron, is not signed by Eddy, but is similar in style and similarly inscribed, "Published by Lewis Roberson, Wethersfield, VT." This Chapter apron originally belonged to Eleazer Davis Curtis of Hanover, New Hampshire.

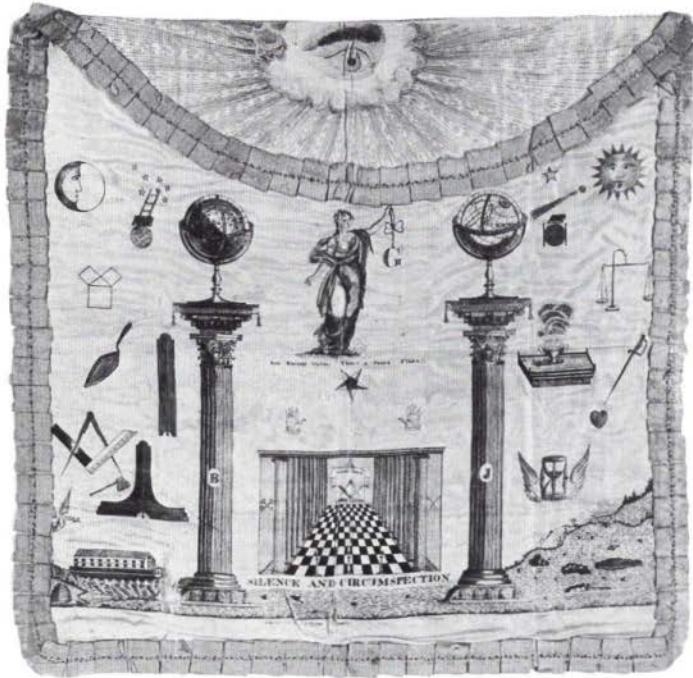
Oliver Tarbell Eddy was born in Greenbush, Vermont, in 1799 and began engraving with his father, Isaac Eddy, as early as 1814 in Wethersfield. Oliver Eddy left Vermont in 1822 and went on to become a noted portrait painter, engraver, and inventor.

Edith Bishop, *Oliver Tarbell Eddy* (Newark Museum, 1950).
 C. A. Murray, "Lewis Robinson, Printer and Engraver," *Times Reporter* (Springfield, Vermont, May 13, 1964).



65
 MASONIC APRON
 H. G. Aspinwall, c. 1823, New Hampshire
 Engraving on leather
 14 1/2" x 14"
 Museum of Our National Heritage

Andrew B. Bohonon, the owner of this apron, became a member of Samaritan Lodge No. 36, Salisbury, New Hampshire on January 20, 1823. Another copy of this apron also signed "H. G. Aspinwall Sc." belonged to Joseph E. Smith of Warner, New Hampshire. Horatio G. Aspinwall, an engraver, seal, and die cutter, advertised in the *Charleston, South Carolina Courier*, December 29, 1823. Two aprons owned in New Hampshire suggest that he was working as an engraver in New Hampshire prior to going to Charleston.



66

MASONIC APRON

Charles Cushing Wright and William B. Whitney, Homer, New York, c. 1816-1818

Engraving on silk

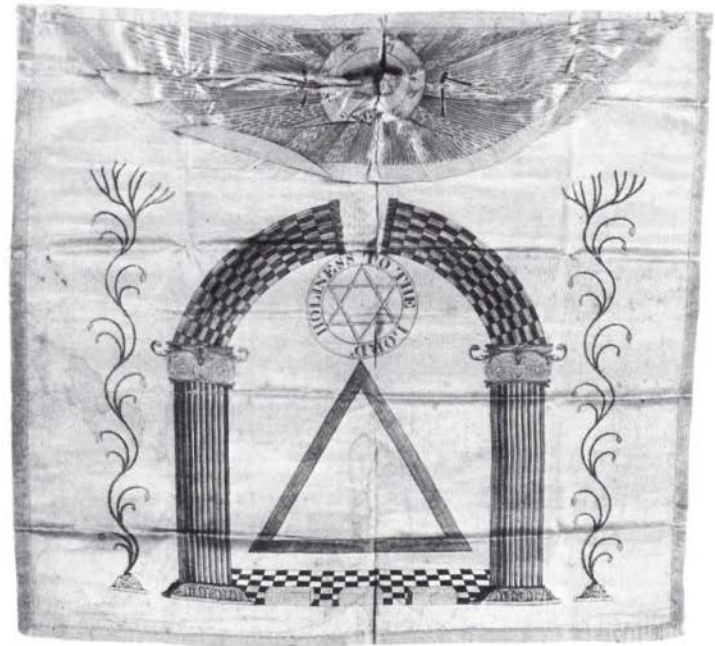
14½" x 15"

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Massachusetts

Charles Cushing Wright, the engraver of these aprons and certificates, was born in Damariscotta, Maine. He apprenticed himself in 1815 to John Osborn, a silversmith in Utica, New York. When Osborn moved to Homer the next year, Wright moved with him. By 1817, C. C. Wright had taught himself engraving. He left Homer to work in Albany and New York City before settling briefly in Savannah, Georgia. These plates were engraved for William B. Whitney of Homer sometime after 1816, and before 1819 when Wright went to Georgia. There is no record that Charles Cushing Wright was ever a Mason, but Osborn and Whitney were both members of Homer Lodge No. 137.

The Master Mason's Certificate is signed "C. Wt Scpt for W. B. W.y." This copy was filled out in 1832 at Rural Amity Lodge in Bradford County, Pennsylvania, indicating that engraved aprons and certifi-

cates continued to be used over a period of years and distributed throughout a wide geographic area. The apron with red binding, inscribed "Hail Heavenly Virtue Thine's a Sacred Flame," is signed "C. Wright scpt for W. B. Whitney, Homer" and belonged to Thomas Hall who took his degrees in 1823. A simpler Royal Arch apron without human figures is signed "C. Wright Sculpt. N. Y./W. B. Whitney, Homer," suggesting that this collaboration between Wright and Whitney took place while Wright was working in New York City before leaving for Georgia. After 1823, Wright returned to New York City where he spent the rest of his life as an engraver and medallist. He was a founder of the National Academy and, at various times, was a member of the engraving firms of Durand and Wright, Bale and Wright, and Wright and Prentiss.



67

MASONIC APRON

Charles Cushing Wright and William B. Whitney, Homer, New York, c. 1816-1818

Engraving on satin-woven silk

13½" x 14½"

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Massachusetts

68

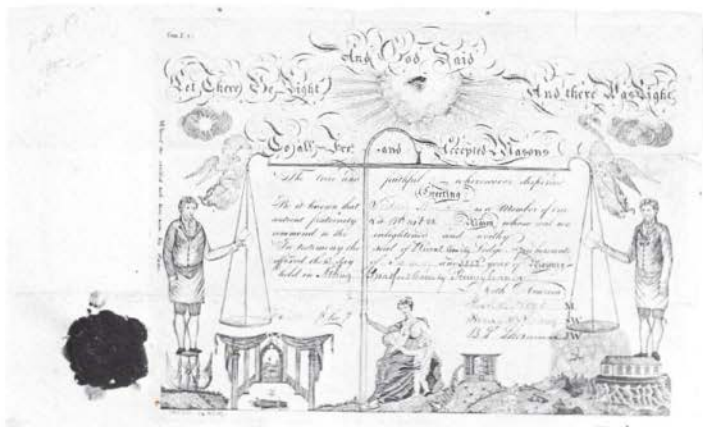
CERTIFICATE

Charles Cushing Wright and William B. Whitney, Homer, New York,
c. 1816-1818

Engraving on paper

17½" x 9¾"

Museum of Our National Heritage



69

MASONIC APRON

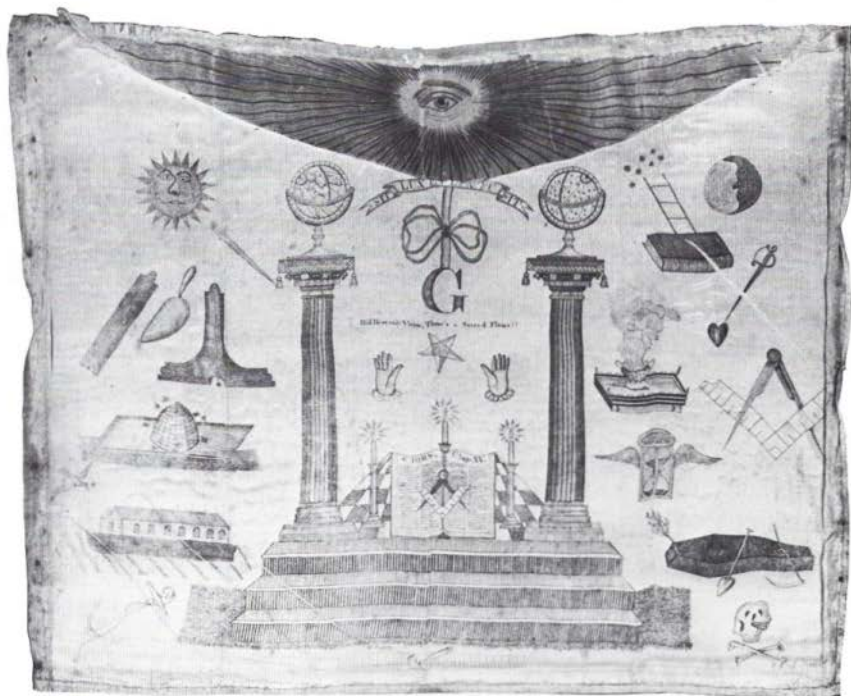
M. Peabody, New York State, c. 1815-1820's

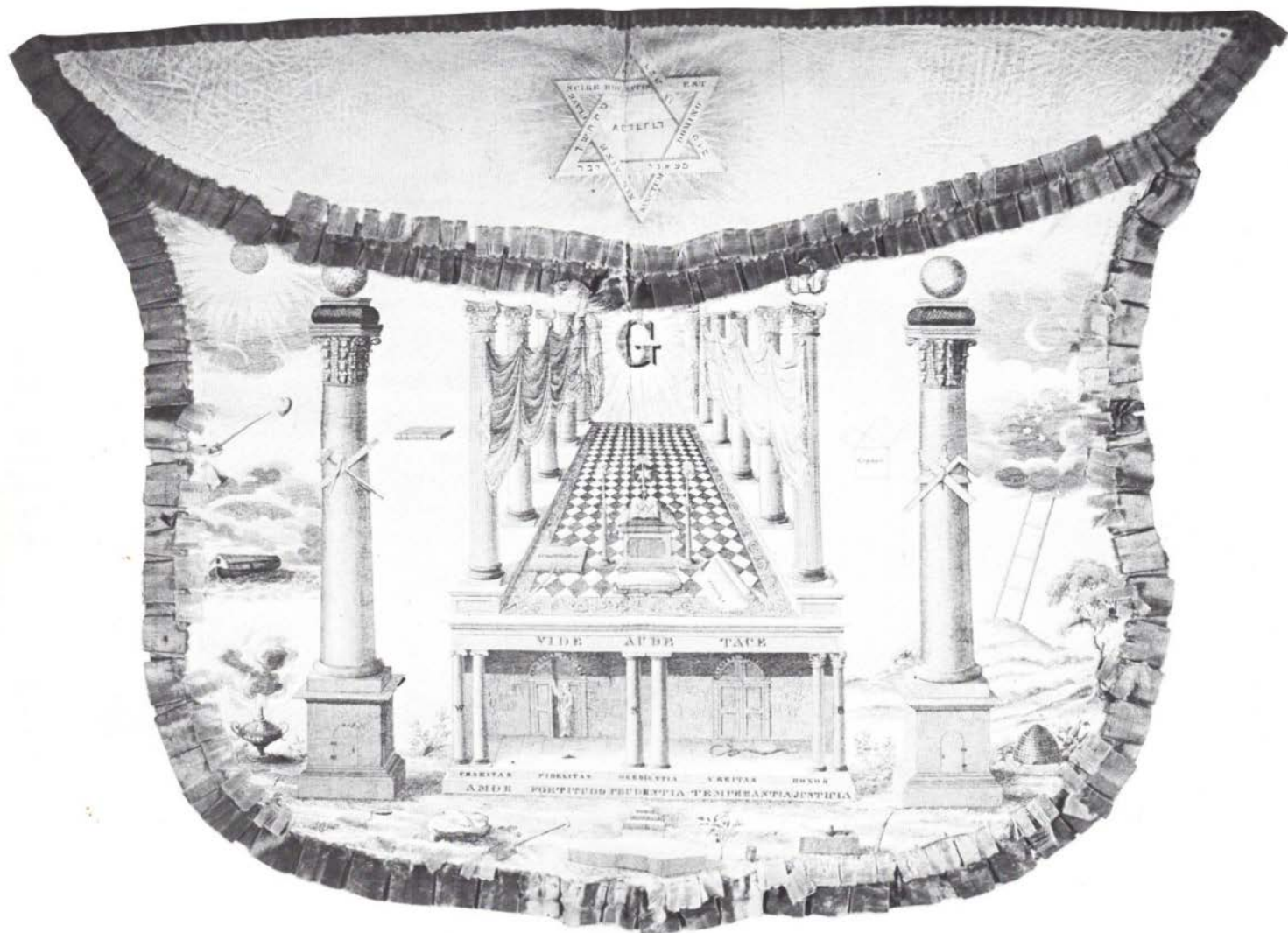
Engraving on silk

13" x 15½"

Supreme Council Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of
Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction

Little is known about the engraver who signed this apron "M. Peabody Sc." M. M. Peabody has been identified as a stipple engraver working in Utica, New York; his name appears in the 1830 census. A Moody Peabody, initiated as a Freemason, June, 1814, in Eagle Lodge No. 169, Ithaca, New York, may be the same M. Peabody. The apron is similar in style to the Masonic engravings of C. C. Wright, also working in central New York State in this period. Like Wright's engravings, the Peabody apron appears to be the early work of a self-taught engraver.





70

MASONIC APRON

Giles Fonda Yates, Balch, Rawdon & Co., Albany, New York, 1821

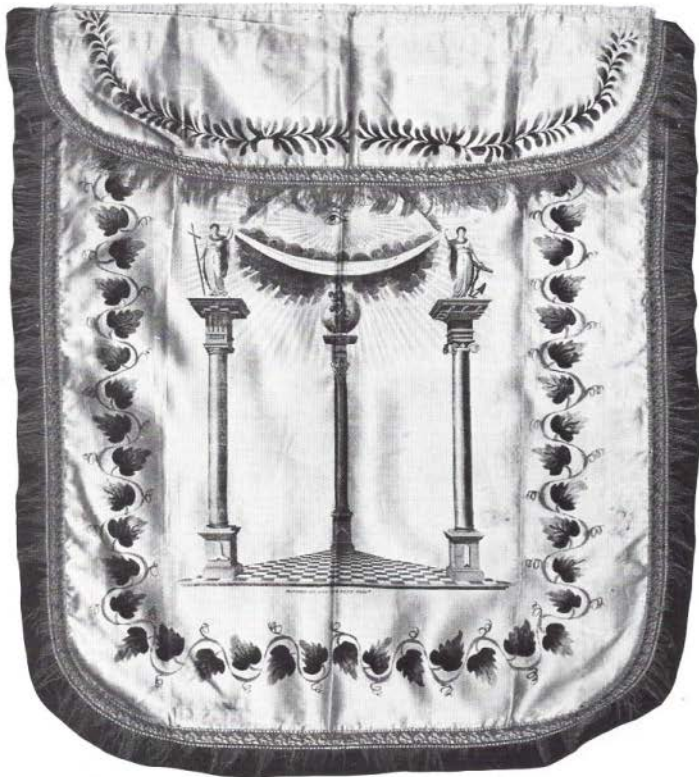
Engraving on leather

14 1/4 " 19"

Museum of Our National Heritage

Giles Fonda Yates, the designer of this apron, was an active and influential Freemason. Born in Schenectady, New York in 1796, he graduated from Union College to become a lawyer. In addition to

law, he devoted his time to the study of archaeology, philosophy, and the occult sciences. He was first initiated in St. George's Lodge No. 6, Schenectady, in 1817, but later affiliated with Morton Lodge No. 87 in 1821. He served as Worshipful Master of his lodge in 1844, was a member of the York Rite, and became Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite Northern Jurisdiction in 1851. The plate was engraved by Balch, Rawdon & Company, the Albany engraving firm of Vistus Balch and Ralph Rawdon.



71

MASONIC APRON

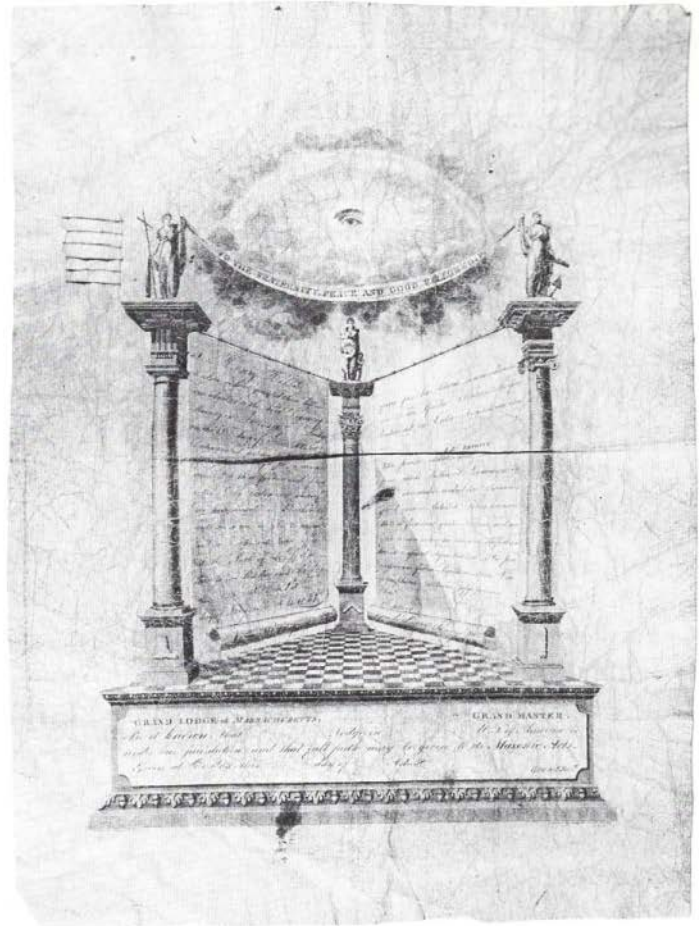
James Eddy, Providence, Rhode Island, c. 1830-1840

Engraving and stenciling on silk

18" x 15"

Museum of Our National Heritage

The stenciled leaf border and woven fringe of this printed apron are unusual. It is inscribed, "Finished and sold by J. Eddy, Prove..." James Eddy was an engraver who worked in Boston and New York from 1827. Born in Providence in 1806, he later returned to live there; his name appears in the Rhode Island census of 1840. The design of this apron is identical to a certificate drawn by Penniman and Mills, and engraved by the firm of Annin and Smith, 12 Court Street, Boston, c. 1820. John Ritto Penniman, an ornamental painter and lithographer,



72

CERTIFICATE

Penniman and Mills, engraved by Annin and Smith, Boston, Massachusetts, c. 1820

Engraving on leather

18" x 13 1/4"

Museum of Our National Heritage

worked for William S. Pendleton of Boston c. 1825; Eddy engraved for Pendleton in the 1830's. Penniman may have drawn the apron design, or Eddy may have adapted Penniman's certificate and published it as an apron. This example of the apron belonged to Sidney Barlow Smith who became a member of Harmony Lodge No. 9, Pawtuxet, Rhode Island in 1826.

David McNeely Stauffer, *American Engravers Upon Copper and Steel*, (New York, Butt Franklin, originally published 1907).

NEEDLEWORK APRONS

Needlework aprons are closely allied to the many types of embroidery popular in America from the 1780's to the 1830's. In the 18th and early 19th centuries, plain sewing was an essential skill that every woman learned. Fancy embroidery work was considered a refinement. Families who could afford it sent their daughters to schools that instructed young ladies "in all the useful and ornamental branches of a polite education,"⁶⁸ which included drawing, painting, and embroidery. With the exception of Georgiana Brown Harbeson, author of *American Needlework*, who mentions Masonic aprons in a section on religious needlework,⁶⁹ authors on the subject have ignored Masonic aprons as examples of American fancy needlework.

Research on embroidered Masonic aprons has been limited by the fact that the needleworkers who made them remain anonymous. The high quality of these aprons clearly indicates the work of skilled needleworkers whether amateur or professional. Documented examples of American embroidery on samplers, memorials, and family registers are known to have been made by schoolgirls as young as eight or twelve years old because they signed and dated their work. Complex silk-embroidery mourning pictures were usually the final achievement of a young woman's education at one of the many academies for young ladies. Based on these documented examples of embroidery, we know that many young women in America were taught the needlework skills necessary to embroider Masonic aprons for fathers and other family members. Then too, the most ornate examples of embroidered Masonic aprons may have been the work of professional embroiderers. One such embroiderer advertised in the *Boston News-Letter*, July 2, 1772:

Bernard Andrews, Embroiderer, makes all Sorts of Embroidery for Men and Women's Ware, either Gold, Silver or Silk; also cleans Gold and Silver Lace and Silk Work . . . Tassels, Fringes, & c. work'd with either Gold Silver or plaine silk in the genteelest Mode . . .⁷⁰

The materials used for needlework aprons were the most elegant and expensive available during the period. Imported silk fabrics and yarns remained expensive commodities in America even after the establishment of direct trade with China following the American Revolution. Embroidery on Masonic aprons often includes lavish use of costly materials such as chenille, metallic thread, and sequins (or spangles as they were then called).



Detail of embroidered apron, 1818, catalog number 79.

Many of the most ornate embroidered aprons used in America at the end of the 18th century were strongly influenced by French designs. The two most famous aprons presented to George Washington in 1782 and 1784 were made in France and embroidered in silk. Aprons of the Scottish Rite degrees throughout the 19th century are particularly close to French designs. The apron of the Rose Croix degree, developed in France in the 18th century, typically combines symbols of a red cross and pelican embroidered in sequins, velvet appliqué, silk, chenille, and metallic threads. The question remains whether elaborate embroidered aprons worked in French designs were made in America or imported. Several embroidered aprons in the collection of the Louisiana State Museum and other New Orleans collections are embroidered with sequins and metallic threads in typical French designs, but have a history of ownership in New Orleans. The large number of French emigré Freemasons living in cities throughout the United States in the early 19th century provides one explanation for the numerous French-style embroidery aprons that appear in American collections.

Other embroidered aprons used in America are similar in design and symbolism to English and Irish aprons. A cotton tambour-embroidered apron c. 1800 has winged cherubs, a cock, Royal Arch symbolism, and an early Masonic song. All of these items relate to English certificates and printed handkerchiefs of the 1790's. Many of the same design sources appear on a linen apron embroidered with wool, dated 1796, and said to have been brought to America from Ireland.

Chinese embroidered Masonic aprons were imported to America in the lucrative China Trade that flourished in America following the Revolution. One example, made in Canton, China, in 1799, for John Flagg Fry of Providence, Rhode Island, displays the fine silk and metallic thread embroidery which characterizes Chinese needlework. Similar embroidery on other aprons, enables otherwise undocumented examples to be attributed to the China Trade.

Embroidered Masonic aprons were influenced by the changes in needlework styles in America from the late 1700's to the early 1800's. Embroidered pictures, popular in the early 1800's, differed from earlier embroidery both in subject matter and materials. In the early 19th century, landscapes, architectural views, biblical and mythological subjects, memorials, and flower pieces were all worked in a variety of stitches using floss or twisted silks combined with painting. The many schools for girls which taught needlework, painting, and drawing played an important role in establishing the popularity of pictorial embroidery on silk. Mary Balch of Providence, Rhode Island, Abby Wright of South Hadley, Massachusetts, and Sarah Pierce of Litchfield, Connecticut, were just a few of the women who ran schools teaching fancy embroidery and drawing to young ladies from 1790 to 1830. The areas where these schools flourished, — New England, Middle Atlantic States, Maryland, Virginia, — are also the areas from which embroidery aprons originate. These schools taught a style of mourning and allegorical embroidered pictures which utilized fancy silk embroidery threads and watercolor paints that had become more readily available in the late 18th century. By the 1820's, painting began to replace more of the time-consuming needlework on embroidered pictures and at the same time, painted watercolor on silk aprons began to replace those with elaborate needlework. The majority of needlework aprons located in this study date before 1830.

The needlework Masonic aprons of the early 19th century reflect fashionable styles of school-girl art. A well-documented apron belonging to Lambert Keating of Philadelphia, dated 1818, is very similar to the fine embroidery of allegorical and mourning pictures of the period using a combination of paint, satin stitch, and silk, chenille, and metallic threads. Several Philadelphia aprons in the collection of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania have a similar design of Moses and Aaron and figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity, a repetition which suggest that the designs may have been drawn by a Philadelphia artist.

Designs for fancy embroidery of all kinds are known to have been adapted from popular engravings or from prepared embroidery designs kept in stock by vendors of needlework materials. Artists also drew designs for ladies' needlework. Sophisticated and pictorial needlework designs on Masonic aprons may have been designed by artists who also painted Masonic aprons. Charles Codman, a Portland, Maine, artist, who advertised "Masonic, Sign, Fancy & Ornamental Painting of all kinds," also advertised "drawings for Ladies' Needle Work"⁷¹ In 1817, Ezra Ames, the portrait painter from Albany, New York, recorded in his account book that he had painted several Masonic aprons along with "Painting a fancy piece for embroidery."⁷²

By the 1850's, embroidered aprons were widely produced by regalia manufacturers. Heavily ornamented with gold and silver bullion on velvet and silk, these later aprons have little resemblance to earlier embroidery work.



73

MASONIC APRON

Maker unknown, New York, New York, c. 1784-1789

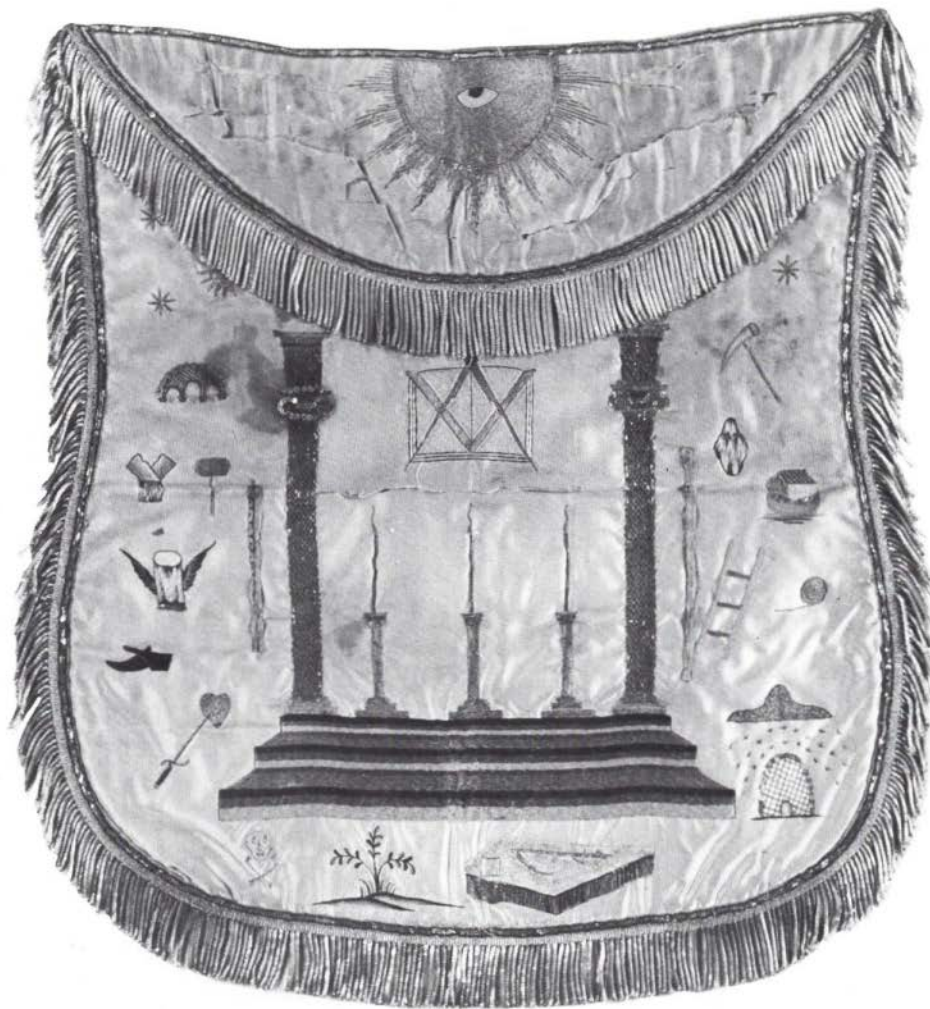
Metallic thread embroidery on silk

16½" x 17½"

Holland Lodge F. & A.M., New York

Worn by Major General Baron Steuben, this apron is similar to an apron worn by General Lafayette. Both aprons were worn at Holland Lodge, New York City, and are similarly embroidered with gold bullion and bullion fringe. Steuben's apron was probably presented to

him when he moved to New York City in 1784 or when he became an honorary member of Holland Lodge in 1789. Lafayette was probably presented with his apron during his visit to the United States in 1784. These aprons, dating from the late 18th century, are quite different from commercially manufactured aprons of the late 19th and early 20th centuries which also used bullion decoration. Use of military bullion on Masonic aprons occurs most frequently in the period following the Revolution and again after the Civil War.



74

MASONIC APRON

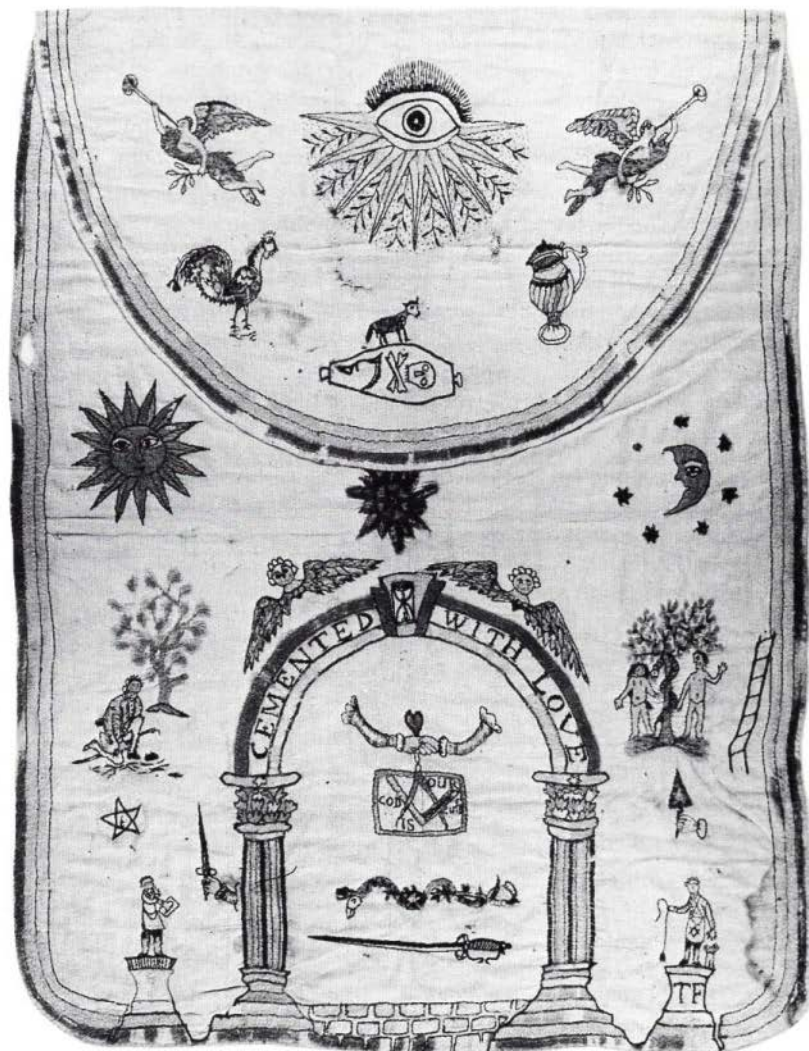
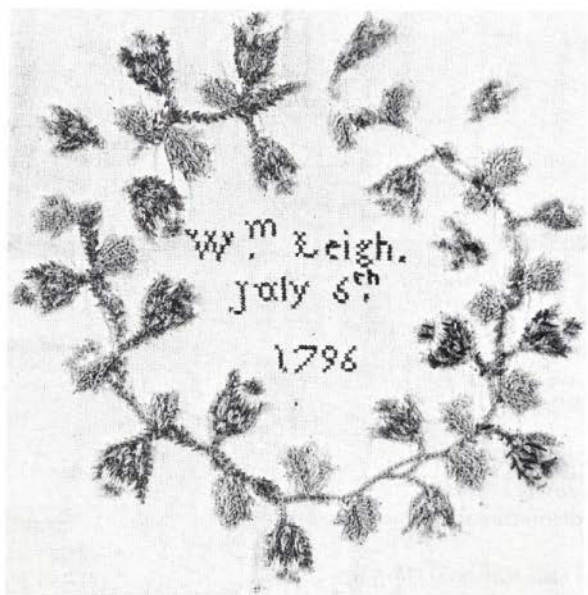
Maker unknown, Canton, China, 1799

Silk and metallic thread embroidery on silk

19¼" x 19¼"

Doylestown Lodge No. 245, Pennsylvania

Owned by John Flagg Fry, a member of St. John's Lodge No. 1, Providence, Rhode Island, this apron was "wrought in Canton, China" in 1799. Fry was living in Providence in 1800, according to the census, but was not listed in 1810. The apron was presented to Doylestown Lodge in 1859 by a descendant, John William Fry. Although other examples of Masonic aprons display similar fine silk embroidery and oriental interpretations of symbols, this apron fortunately retains a well-documented history of having been made in China.



75
 MASONIC APRON
 Maker unknown, Ireland, 1796
 Wool embroidery on cotton
 21 1/4" x 16 1/4"
 Museum of Our National Heritage

This apron, embroidered with the name "Wm. Leigh, July 6, 1796" under the flap, was brought to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, when the Alexander Stuart McKee family emigrated from County Down, Ireland. The design is embroidered in wool on handwoven cotton with an embroidered border of several bands of color.

Tambour work reached the height of its popularity as a fashionable needlework technique about 1800. Fine Indian muslins, embroidered with cotton, silk, or metallic yarns in a chain stitch that was traditionally worked with hooks instead of needles, provided the inspiration for the European and American fashion. The drum-shaped circular frames used to hold the fabric taut gave tambour work its name.

This apron has no history of ownership but probably dates from the early 1800's based on the type of embroidery, size, shape, and use of early symbols, such as winged cherubs and angels with trumpets. The apron is bound with black silk. Verses from Masonic songs written along the bottom of the apron are included in *The Masonic Minstrel*, published by J. Johnson, at which time they were considered old songs to be preserved "from the wreck of time's all-devouring hand:"

When a lodge of free-masons
Are cloth'd in their aprons,
In order to make a new brother,
With firm hearts and clean hands,
They repair to their stands,
And justly support one another.

Trusty brother take care,
Of eavesdroppers beware
'Tis a just and solemn occasion;
Give the word and the blow,
That workmen may know,
You're going to make a free-mason.

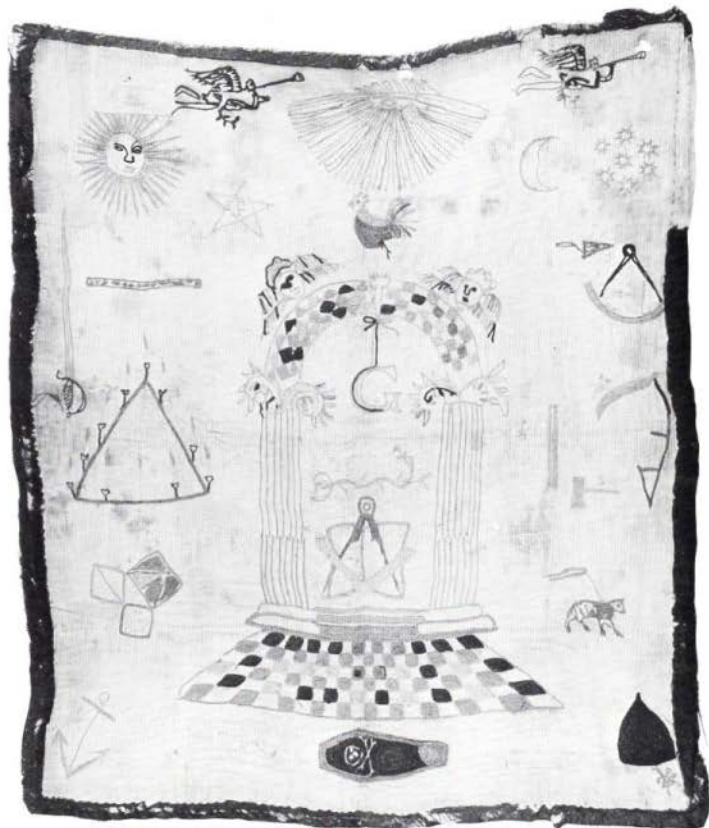
The Entered 'Prentice's Song

The World is in pain
Our secrets to gain
But still let them wonder and gaze on
'Till they're brought to the light
They'll ne'er know the right
Word or sign of an accepted mason

'Tis this and 'tis that,
They cannot tell what,
Why so many great men of the nation
Does aprons put on
To make themselves one
With a free and accepted mason.

Susan Burrows Swan, *A Winterthur Guide to American Needlework*
(New York, Crown Publishers, Inc., 1976).

J. Johnson, *The Masonic Minstrel* (London, 1828).



76
MASONIC APRON
Maker unknown, c. 1800
Tambour cotton-thread embroidery on cotton
23" x 20"
Museum of Our National Heritage

77

MASONIC APRON

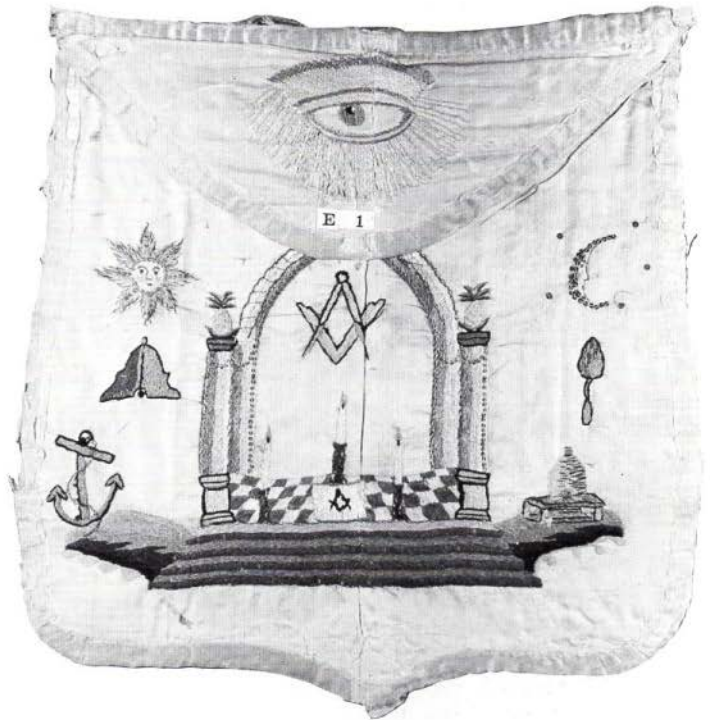
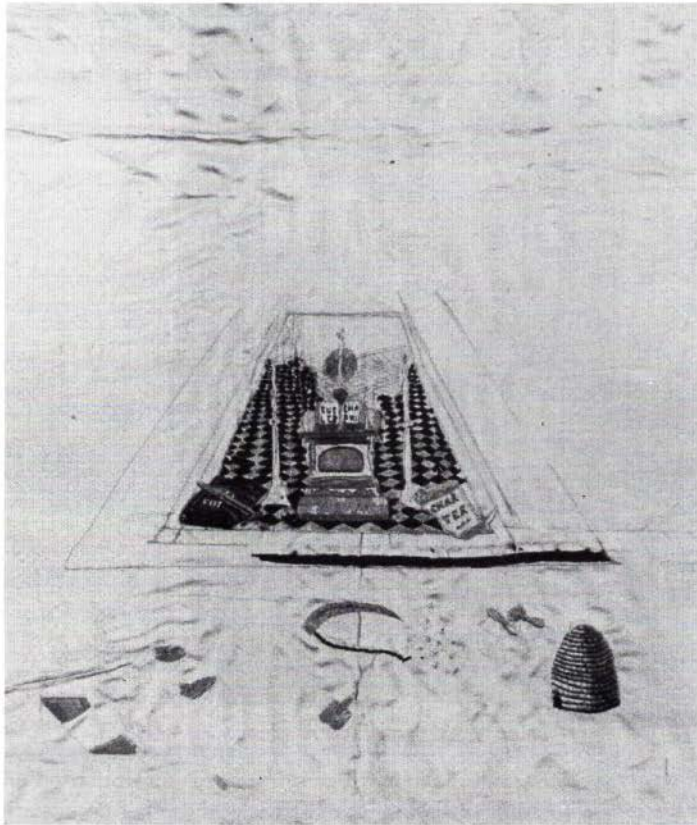
Maker unknown, New York, c. 1810-1820

Silk embroidery on satin-woven silk

16½" x 19"

Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of New York

Because it was never completed, this embroidered apron shows the cottonwill backing used to strengthen the silk, as well as the original design drawn in pencil.



78

MASONIC APRON

Maker unknown, New York, c. 1800-1820

Silk embroidery and sequins on satin-woven silk

15½" x 15½"

Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of New York

Daniel D. Tompkins was made a Mason in 1800 at Hiram Lodge No. 72, Westchester County, New York. His apron is unusual in its design of pineapples topping the columns rather than the more usual globes. Tompkins was governor of New York from 1807-1817 and Vice President of the United States between 1817 and 1824; he served as Grand Master of New York from 1820 to 1821.



79

MASONIC APRON

Maker unknown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1818

Silk, metallic, and chenille embroidery and watercolor on satin-woven silk

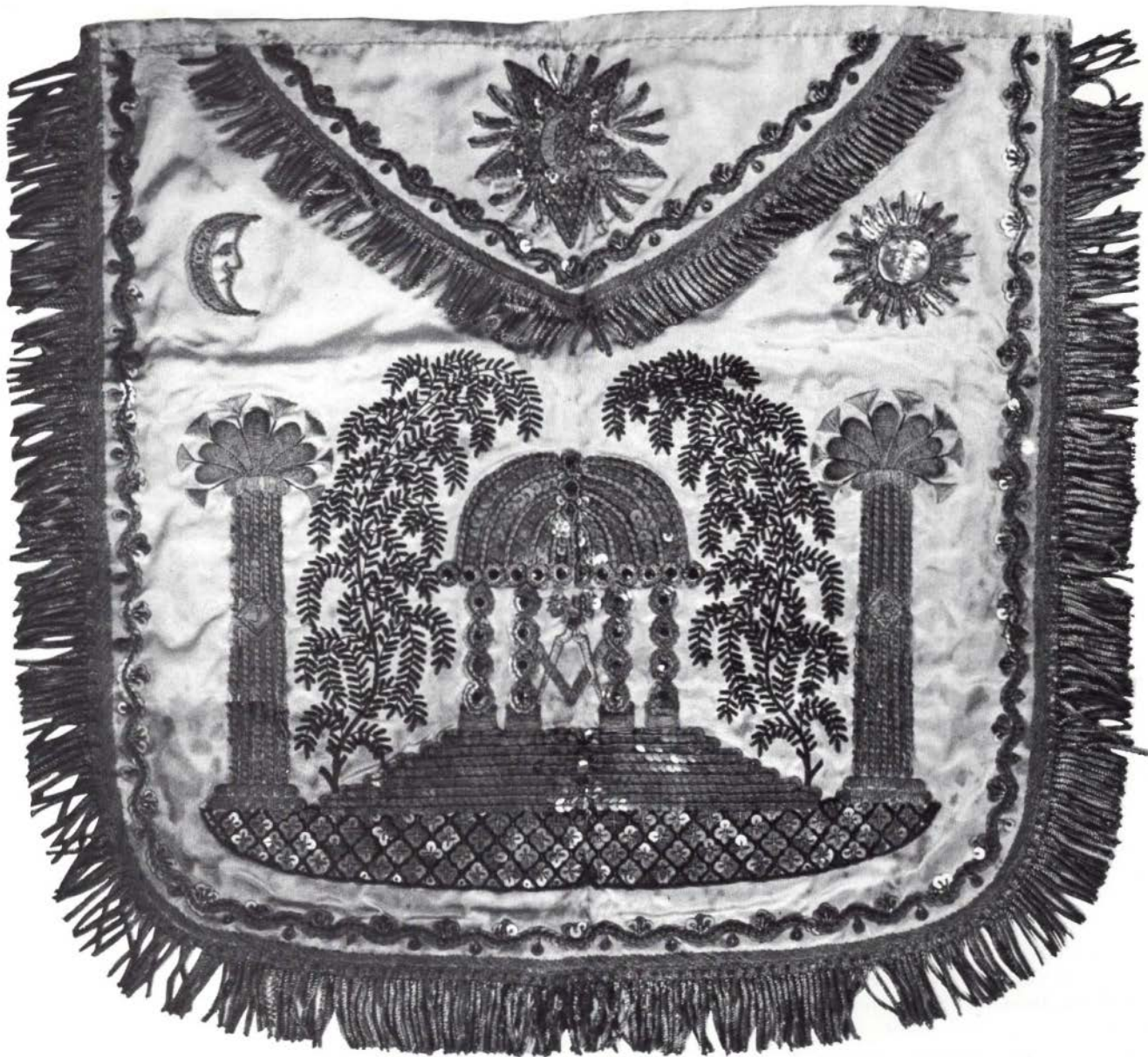
15½" x 15½"

The Right Worshipful Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Pennsylvania

Lambert Keating, a boot and shoe manufacturer of Philadelphia, served as High Priest of Harmony Chapter No. 52 in 1816 and 1817. This apron was probably presented to him as Past High Priest. Embroidered in silk, metallic and chenille threads, sequins, and jewels,

it is an excellent example of the type of fancy needlework used on embroidery pictures of the period. The faces and other details are similarly painted in watercolor. Several other aprons in the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania collection are embroidered by different hands, but are similar in design, suggesting that an artist in Philadelphia may have drawn the pattern. One such artist, Denis A. Volozan, designed embroidery patterns and taught art needlework to young ladies at Mrs. Rivardi's Seminary during his career as an historical and landscape painter in Philadelphia from 1806 to about 1819.

David Sellin, "Denis A. Volozan, Philadelphia Neoclassicist," *Winterthur Portfolio* 4 (Winterthur Museum, 1968).



80

MASONIC APRON

Artist unknown, American or French, c. 1800

Silk, chenille, and metallic-thread embroidery on satin-woven silk
14¼" x 15¾"

Horace Chase Lodge No. 72, New Hampshire

This apron from the collection of a New Hampshire lodge has survived with no known history. The use of chenille, satin stitch, gold

bullion, sequins, and small stones in the embroidery resembles the embroidery of a Philadelphia apron belonging to Lambert Keating. The design of a temple, columns topped with fronds rather than globes, and the metal disc for the face of the sun all show French influence. The use of gold-bullion fringe suggests that the apron was made in the late 18th or early 19th century.



81

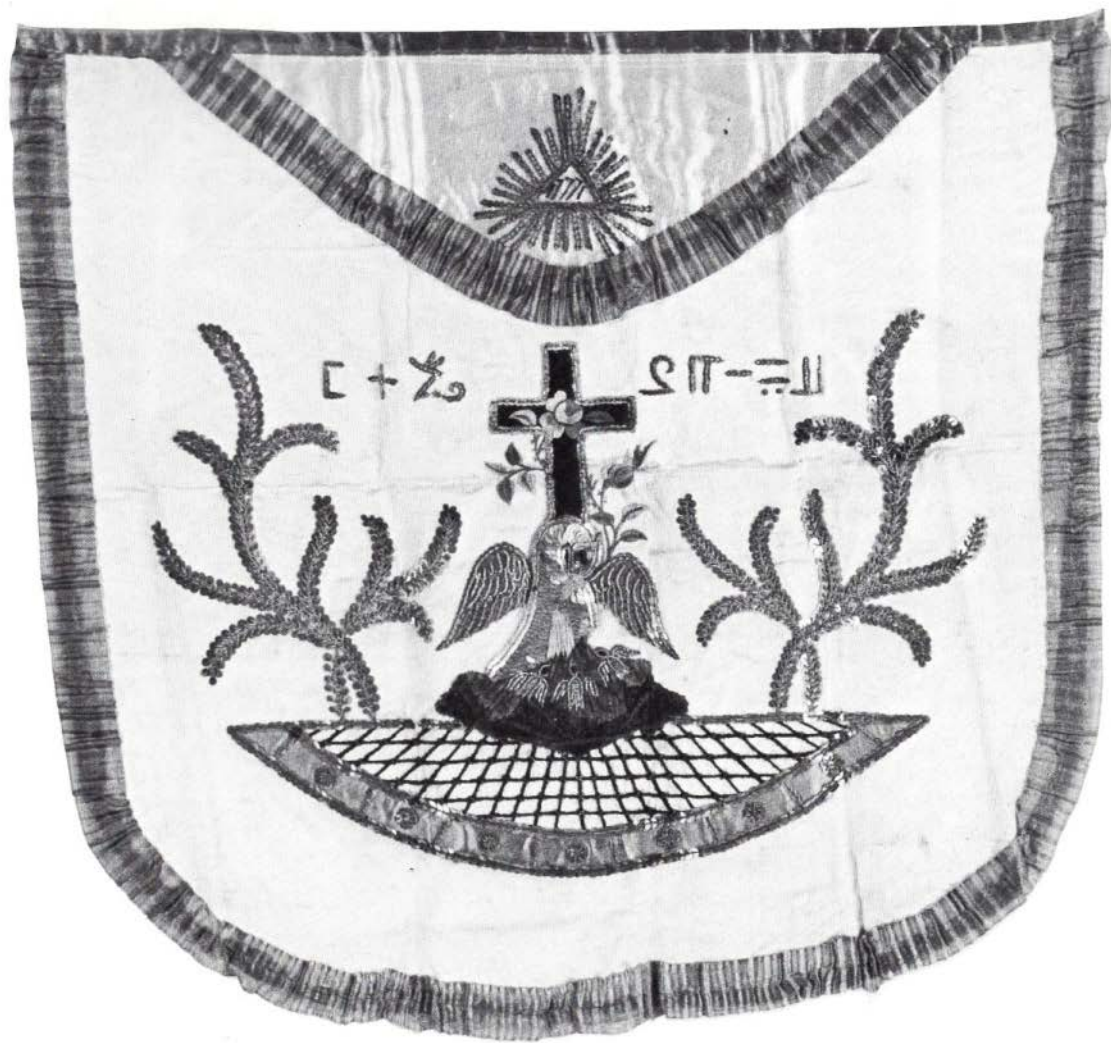
MASONIC APRON

Maker unknown, possibly New Orleans, Louisiana, c. 1800-1820

Silk, chenille, and metallic-thread embroidery on satin-woven silk
14" x 15½"

Supreme Council Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of
Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction

This Scottish Rite Rose Croix degree apron is similar to aprons in New Orleans collections. Embroidered on satin, the cross is appliquéd in red velvet and the central flowers are embroidered in chenille. The rest of the design includes sprays of foliage and a border of small flowers worked in metallic threads and sequins. The apron is finished with a fringe of twisted gold thread.



82

MASONIC APRON

Maker unknown, American, c. 1830-1840

Chenille, silk, and metallic embroidery and silk appliqué on satin-woven silk

13" x 13 3/4"

Museum of Our National Heritage

French influence remains apparent in the aprons of the French-inspired Scottish Rite degrees. The crimped silk edging is somewhat unusual but is found on other Rose Croix aprons of the 1830-1840 period. Aprons of the Rose Croix degree are among the most elaborate in Freemasonry.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Our white Lambskin Apron we scorn not, but delight in wearing it. Acknowledging its plain and humble reference, we should know that when worthily worn, it is more honorable than the favor of princes and it engirdles within its tie a prize unpurchaseable by the exchangeable values of this world... strength, humility, and innocence... Although its origin is obscure, its Masonic meaning is plain. It is an emblem of purity and the badge of a Mason. It is an inheritance from the past, more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle."
William A. Carpenter, Director of Masonic Education, Grand Lodge F. & A.M., Pennsylvania, Address delivered January 27, 1973.
2. Harry W. Rylands, "The Masonic Apron," *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, vol. 5 (London, 1892) p. 172.
3. Phillis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas, *Occupational Costume in England* (London, W. & J. Mackay, 1967) p. 375.
4. Albert Mackey, *Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry* (Philadelphia, L. H. Everts & Co., 1886) p. 84.
5. Rylands, op. cit., p. 172.
6. The Grand Master, his Deputy, and Wardens could wear "white Leather aprons lined with blue Silk." Stewards could line their aprons with red silk. Masters and Wardens of lodges could "wear their Aprons lined with white Silk... but of no other colour whatsoever."
Quatuor Coronatorum Antigrapha, W. J. Songhurst, editor, vol. X (London, Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076, 1913) p. 146-147.
7. Rylands, op. cit., p. 180.
8. Aileen Ribeiro, "The Macaronis," *History Today* (July 1978) p. 464.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Laurence Dermott, *Ahiman Rezon* (London, 1756) p. xxiv.
11. Rylands, op. cit., p. 172
12. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
14. Albert Mackey, op. cit. p. 84.
15. Henry Carr, *The Early French Exposures 1737-1751* (London, The Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076, 1971) p. 55.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 472.
18. H. L. Haywood, *Well-Springs of American Freemasonry* (Washington, D. C., Masonic Service Association, 1953) p. 38.
19. Elkanah Watson, *Men and Times of the Revolution* (New York 1856) p. 135.
20. James R. Case and Ronald E. Heaton, *The Lodge at Fredericksburgh* (Norristown, PA., 1975) p. 13.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
22. Johnathan Smith, *History of Old Trinity Lodge, Lancaster, Massachusetts* (Clinton, Massachusetts, W. J. Coulter, 1896) p. 37.
23. John T. Heard, *A Historical Account of Columbian Lodge*, (Boston, Alfred Mudge & Son, 1856) p. 226.
24. *Centennial of Aurora Lodge* (Fitchburg, Massachusetts, 1901), p. 64.
25. Rylands, op. cit., p. 180.
26. Heard, op. cit., p. 592.
27. William B. Reed, *History of Washington Lodge No. 59 F. & A.M.* (Philadelphia, 1893) p. 57.
28. *Ibid.*
29. David McGregor, *History of Freemasonry in New Jersey 1787-1937* (Grand Lodge of New Jersey, 1937) p. 122
30. William Henry Egle and James M. Lambertson, *History of Perseverance Lodge No. 21 F. & A.M. Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1901) p. 42.
31. Julius Sachse, *Old Masonic Lodges of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1912) p. 223
32. Account Book of Ezra Ames, New-York Historical Society.

33. Other lodges known to have commissioned aprons for the entire membership are Perseverance Lodge No. 21 and Washington Lodge No. 59, both of Pennsylvania.
34. William Moseley Brown, *A Bicentennial History of Blandford Lodge No. 3, Petersburg, Virginia* (Petersburg, Virginia, 1957) p. 109.
35. Rylands, op. cit., p. 179.
36. F. L. Brockett, *The Lodge of Washington* (Alexandria, Virginia, George E. French, 1876) p. 47.
37. Brown, op. cit., p. 187.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
39. *Historical Sketch of Union Lodge, Dorchester 1796-1876* (Boston, 1877) p. 33.
40. "John Heckewelder's Journey to the Wabash in 1792," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. XI (1887) pp. 473-475.
41. *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts A.F. & A.M.* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Caustic-Claflin Company, 1905) p. 159.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
43. "John Heckewelder's Journey to the Wabash in 1792," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. XI (1887) pp. 473-475.
44. *Columbian Sentinel*, July 1, 1820.
45. William David Barry and John Holverson, "Freemasonry and the McLellan Family of Cumberland County," *The Maine Mason*, vol. 3, no. 3 (Winter, 1976) p. 6.
46. *The Masonic Miscellany and Ladies' Literary Magazine*, vol. 1 no. 5, 1821.
47. William Morgan, a Mason of dubious standing, mysteriously disappeared after he had threatened to expose Masonic secrets. His alleged kidnapping by Masons of Batavia, New York in 1826 began a wave of anti-Masonic sentiment that closed many lodges and undermined the status of Freemasonry in America.
48. Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, *Ahiman Rezon, Book of the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1868) p. 131.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
50. *Freemasons' Monthly Magazine*, May, 1847.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Freemasons' Monthly Magazine*, 1865.
53. Leo Hershkowitz, "Early Trade Bills of New York City," *Antiques* (January, 1978) p. 233.
54. Frank Henderson, *Illustrated Price List of Masonic Regalia* (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1892).
55. *American Masonick Record*, (Albany, New York, 1828-1829).
56. *Freemasons' Monthly Magazine*, November 1, 1847.
57. Account Book of Ezra Ames, New-York Historical Society.
58. John Samuel Blunt Ledger, 1821-1826, Collection of F. C. Tahk.
59. Portsmouth, New Hampshire Directory, 1827, p. 81.
60. *New Hampshire Patriot*, Concord, New Hampshire, February 6, 1816.
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GLOSSARY OF SYMBOLS



ACACIA

Sprig of acacia a symbol of immortality.

ALL-SEEING EYE

A symbol of watchfulness and the Supreme Being, "whom the Sun, Moon, and Stars obey and under whose watchful eye even Comets perform and even invades the inmost reaches of the Human Heart."

ANCHOR

Hope and a peaceful harbor for the weary.

APRON

The badge of a Mason. Usually white lambskin or white silk symbolizing innocence and purity. Originally a long leather apron similar to the type worn by 18th-century artisans.

ARCH

Symbol of the "arch of heaven" and Royal Arch Masonry.

ARK

With an anchor, the symbol of hope and a well spent life. With a dove, the symbol of a degree known as the "Ark and Dove" formerly associated with Royal Arch Masonry.

ASHLAR

A hewn stone. The rough ashlar symbolizes man's imperfect state by nature. The perfect ashlar symbolizes the state of perfection arrived at by virtuous education.

B. Beauty

One of the principle supports of the Lodge together with Wisdom and Strength. Represented by a Corinthian column.

B. Boaz

"In strength." One of the two pillars of King Solomon's Temple.

BEEHIVE

Industry.

BIBLE

Symbol of the divine will of God. An open Bible often appears with a square and compasses, representing the Great Lights of the Lodge. An open Bible is also the jewel of the Chaplain.

BLAZING STAR

Divine providence, prudence.

BLUE

The color of symbolic Masonry representing the canopy of heaven. The first three degrees are known as the "Blue Lodge."

BOOK OF CONSTITUTIONS GUARDED BY THE TILER'S SWORD

Symbol of watchfulness and the unchangeableness of the Masonic Fraternity.

BROKEN COLUMN

Shown with a figure of Time and a weeping virgin standing over a book. Symbolic of mourning. The origin of this symbol has been attributed to Jeremy Cross's *Masonic Chart* published in 1819. The original engraving was done by Amos Doolittle.

CABLE-TOW

Symbolic of the scope of man's reasonable ability. Associated with the Entered Apprentice degree.

CANDLES

Three candles represent the three Lesser Lights of the Lodge, symbolizing the sun, moon, and the Worshipful Master of the Lodge.

CARDINAL VIRTUES

Temperance, a figure measuring from a pitcher; Fortitude, a figure with a soldier's helmet; Prudence, a figure contemplating a mirror; Justice, a figure holding a scale.

CHARITY

The greatest of Masonic virtues. The third rung of the theological ladder. Often represented by a mother and children.

CHISEL

Combined with the mallet or maul, symbolic of the polishing effect of education and discipline on the human mind. The working tools of the Mark Master degree.

CLOUDED CANOPY

The covering of a Lodge, symbolically the vault of heaven, demonstrating the universality of Freemasonry.

COCK

Symbolic of resurrection.

COFFIN

Symbolic of death.

COLUMNS

Two columns represent the two pillars of King Solomon's Temple. Three columns are the supports of the Lodge: Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty.

COMET

Used from 1735 to 1843, and then abandoned at the Baltimore Convention as being sectarian because of its resemblance to the Star of Bethlehem. (See All-seeing eye).

COMPASSES

Symbolically used to circumscribe desires and keep passions in bounds.

CORNUCOPIA

Jewel of the Stewards of the Lodge.

CROWNS

Three crowns are associated with Royal Arch Masonry especially during the period of the Ancients in England from 1750-1813. Three crowns appear on the Seals of the Grand Lodge at York, England, between 1725 and 1779.

CUP

The cup of bitterness. Associated with the first degree of the French rite, it symbolizes misfortune and sorrow.

DOVE

Used as a symbol of a messenger in English Masonry. Appears only in the "Ark and Dove" degree in this country.

E. The East

Symbolic of light and knowledge.

EAR

The attentive ear symbolizes that we learn more from listening than from talking.

FAITH

The lowest rung of the theological ladder. Represented by a figure with a cross.

FORTY-SEVENTH PROBLEM OF EUCLID

Teaches Masons to be lovers of the arts and sciences.

G. Geometry or God

Introduced in the mid-18th century, it is usually shown suspended in the East. It is commonly used with the square and compasses as a decorative device, especially after c. 1850.

GAVEL

The hammer used to break off rough edges of stone symbolizes divesting the heart of vice.

GLOBES

Symbolic of the universality of Freemasonry. One celestial and one terrestrial globe appear on the pillars, J. and B.

HANDS

Symbolize giving and receiving signs of recognition. Clapsed hands symbolize Fidelity.

HOPE

Second rung of the theological ladder. Represented by a figure with an anchor.

HOURLY GLASS

Symbolic of human life.

J. Jachin, "God will establish."

One of the two pillars of King Solomon's Temple.

KEY

Symbolizes silence and secrecy. Crossed keys are the Treasurer's jewel.

LADDER

Jacob's ladder or the theological ladder of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

LAMB

Symbolic of innocence and purity.

LEVEL

Symbol of equality. The Senior Warden's jewel.

MAUL

Setting maul is a symbol of untimely death. Also see Chisel.

PAVEMENT

The Mosaic Pavement, Indented Tessel Border, and Blazing Star represent the floor of King Solomon's Temple. The black and white pattern is symbolic of the good and evil in life.

PENS

Crossed pens, Secretary's jewel.

PILLARS

Two pillars, J. and B. placed at the entrance of King Solomon's Temple.

PLUMB RULE

Symbolizes uprightness. Junior Warden's jewel.

POINT WITHIN A CIRCLE AND PARALLEL LINES

Introduced about 1730 as a symbol. The point represents an individual Mason and the circle the boundary line of his conduct. The parallel lines represent St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, patron saints of Masonry. Other explanations are also given for this symbol.

POT OF INCENSE

Emblem of a pure heart.

S. Strength

One of the three supports of the Lodge together with Wisdom and Beauty. Represented by a Doric column.

SCALES

Symbol of justice.

SCYTHE

Emblem of time. Used more commonly in Ireland than in England.

SERPENT

A rod turned into a serpent is mentioned in the Royal Arch degree. A serpent swallowing its tail is a symbol of eternity or eternal life and is also used in Masonic symbolism.

SHOE

Associated with the first degree and symbolic of consecration and assumption of obligations.

SPADE

Symbolizes Divine Truth is discovered only through human efforts and death.

SQUARE

Emblem of virtue. The Master's jewel.

SQUARE AND COMPASSES

Symbolize reason and faith. With a sun, the Senior Deacon's jewel. With a moon, the Junior Deacon's jewel.

STAR

Seven stars symbolize the number needed to make a perfect lodge. Five-pointed star symbolic of the five points of fellowship. Six-pointed star of double triangle called Solomon's Seal.

STEPS

Symbolize advancement in Masonic knowledge. Three steps symbolize the three stages of human life: youth, manhood, and age, as well as the first three degrees.

SWORD

The symbol of justice. Flaming (wavy) sword or crossed swords, the Tiler's jewel.

SWORD POINTING TO A NAKED HEART

Demonstrates that "justice will sooner or later overtake us."

TASSELS

The derivation of this symbol is not clear. H. W. Coil suggests that misunderstandings in translation resulted in the use of "tassels" on French and German tracing boards rather than the "tessel" border of the Mosaic pavement. Tassels appear on the frontispiece of an English edition of "Mah-ha-bone or the Grand Lodge Door Opened" as early as 1766. The cord and tassel may be a representation of the cable-tow.

TRIANGLE

Symbolic of deity.

TROWEL

The symbolic tool that spreads the cement that united Masons in brotherly love. Used as the badge of the Grand Master in Ireland from c. 1725.

TWENTY-FOUR INCH GAUGE

Symbolizes the 24 hours of the day divided into three equal parts devoted to God, usual vocations, and rest.

W. Wisdom

One of the three principal supports of the lodge together with Strength and Beauty. Represented by the Ionic column.

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