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LIFE OF

COL. DANIEL COXE,

THE

FATHER OF FREEMASONRY

IN AMERICA.

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SKETCH

OF THE LIFE OF

COL. DANIEL COXE,

THE

Father of Freemasonry in America.

By CLIFFORD P. MACCALLA,
Author of "Philadelphia, the Mother-City of Masonry
in America," etc.

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PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER
DANIEL COXE,
THE FATHER OF FREEMASONRY IN
AMERICA.

Daniel Coxe, afterwards Colonel in command of all the forces in West Jersey (by appointment of Lord Cornbury, the first Royal Governor), Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of New Jersey, and the Provincial Grand Master of Masons in the Provinces of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, was born in London shortly before August 31, 1673, on which date his baptism is registered in St. Botolph's Church, Aldersgate.* He was the son of Dr. Daniel Coxe, of London, the physi-

* 7 *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 326.

cian to King Charles II and Queen Anne, and from 1687 to 1691 the largest landed proprietor in, and the Governor of, the Province of West Jersey—a man of large wealth, gifted intellect, varied acquirements, and remarkable enterprise. In 1691, Dr. Coxe sold his Jersey territory to the West Jersey Society for £9000.* In 1702 his son, Daniel Coxe, was recommended to Queen Anne as a member of the Provincial Councils of New Jersey and New York, he having come to this country the previous year, when 28 years of age.† The next year, 1703, he received his appointment as Colonel of all the military forces in West Jersey. In 1705 he was recommended by Lord Cornbury to the Board of Trade, and then by the Board of Trade to the Queen, as a member of the Provincial Council, and received the appointment, continuing a

* Smith's "History of New Jersey," 132, 130, 207.

† 5 "Collections of Historical Society of New Jersey," 41.

member for eight years, until 1713,* under the administrations of both Governors Ingoldsby and Hunter. In 1707 he married Sarah, the daughter of John Eckley, of Philadelphia, by whom he left a numerous posterity—Brinton Coxe, Esq., now President of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and a member of the Philadelphia Bar, being a prominent descendant.

Colonel Coxe's marriage was quite a romantic one. His bride, Sarah Eckley, was a Quaker, and the two eloped together, and were united in wedlock in the woods of New Jersey, by firelight, the Chaplain of Lord Cornbury, then Governor, officiating. A letter written by Margaret Preston, in 1707, recites that

"The news of Sarah Eckley's marriage is both sorrowful and surprising, with one Colonel Coxe, a fine, flaunting gentleman, said to be worth a great deal of money—a great inducement, it is said, on her side. His sister, Trent, was supposed to have promoted the match. Her other friends

* Smith's "History of New Jersey," 345, 348, 370.

were ignorant of the match. It took place in the absence of her Uncle and Aunt Hill, between two and three in the morning, on the Jersey side, under a tree, by firelight. They have since proselyted her, and decked her in finery."*

In consequence of a controversy he had with the proprietors concerning certain lands of his father's, and because he endorsed the action of Lord Cornbury to the Queen when the latter's removal was sought by the West Jersey Assembly, he drew upon himself the hatred of the Governor's enemies, especially of Governor Hunter; but, notwithstanding this opposition, so great was his popularity that in 1715 he was again elected to the Assembly as the representative of Gloucester county, and the following year was chosen Speaker.† At this time he resided at Bristol, Pa., nineteen miles above Philadelphia. Governor Hunter's party gaining the ascendancy, Bro. Coxe and those

* 1 Watson's "Annals of Philadelphia," 50.

† Smith's "History," 404.

agreeing with him were expelled from the Assembly, whereupon his friends sent him to England, where he arrived in November, 1716, and had his cause espoused by the Lord Chancellor and Lord Townsend.* It was Governor Hunter who wittily wrote to Dean Swift, "Here is the finest air to live upon in the universe, and if our trees and birds could speak, and *our Assemblymen keep silent*, the finest conversation, too."

In 1719 Coxe was in London, at lodgings in Lincoln's Inn Fields. On December 8, 1719, he filed a caveat against an act of New Jersey providing for the running of a partition line between East and West Jersey.† Previous to this the Rev. Jacob Henderson had described him in a letter written in 1712, as "a very worthy gentleman and zealous churchman, who has given two hundred acres of land to the church of Hopewell.‡

* Field's "Provincial Courts of New Jersey," 70.

† "Archives of New Jersey," Vol. iv, p. 445-6.

‡ 4 "New Jersey Archives," 157.

Stacey or Burlington island lies in the river Delaware opposite Burlington, N. J. On May 31, 1722, when in the possession of the Dutch, before the advent of the English, this island had been the usual residence of the Dutch Governor, who built a small fort there, and mounted four cannon, to command both channels of the river. Subsequently it was used as a place of diversion, a sort of public park for the inhabitants of Burlington, then the capital of West Jersey. Burlington had been laid out as a town in 1677, and for many years subsequently both the courts and the legislature met alternately there and at Amboy.* In the letter that Bro. Coxe wrote to England concerning Burlington island, he sought to have it retained as a pleasure ground for the public, and not granted to any private individual.†

We now approach the early part of Col. Coxe's Masonic career. Bro. H. Sadler

* 1 Raum's "History of New Jersey," 262.

† 5 "New Jersey Archives," 38.

has informed the Masonic world, through the columns of the London *Freemason*, that the records of the Grand Lodge of England prove that in the year 1731 Bro. Daniel Coxe was a member of Lodge No. 8, which then met at the "Devil Tavern, within Temple Bar." According to Bro. Lane's "Masonic Records, 1717-1786," just issued, this Lodge was constituted on April 25, 1722. In 1729 it was No. 8 on the list; in 1740, No. 7, and it was erased on April 4, 1744, in which year it seems to have been united with the Westminster and Keystone Lodge, No. 8, which is still existing and flourishing.

On April 21, 1730, the Grand Lodge of England met at the "Devil Tavern," and there elected Bro. the Duke of Norfolk, Grand Master—the Brother who, less than two months thereafter, appointed Bro. Daniel Coxe to be Provincial Grand Master of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The full title of the Devil Tavern was

"The Devil and St. Dunstan." The legend ran, that one day while engaged at his trade as a goldsmith, St. Dunstan was sorely tempted by the devil, when the saint took a pair of red hot tongs out of the fire and caught his infernal majesty by the nose. The identical tongs are said to be preserved to this day at Mayfield palace, Sussex! The Devil Tavern was the favorite resort of "rare Ben Jonson," and Swift once wrote to Stella, "I dined to-day with Dr. Garth and Mr. Addison, at the Devil Tavern, near Temple Bar, and Garth treated."* Notwithstanding the fact that the devil is not a promising name for a tavern, owing to his representing evil *spirits*—in opposition to the *old* "Devil Tavern" a "Young Devil Tavern" was opened, also in Fleet street, in 1707; but the Young Devil was not a success—the house went up, and presumably the devil went down.

Bro. Daniel Coxe must have been a

* Hotten's "History of Signboards," 292.

Mason for some time prior to 1731, for the records of the Grand Lodge of England prove that on June 5, 1730, the Duke of Norfolk, Grand Master of the earliest Grand Lodge of England (the so-called "Moderns"), appointed "Our Right Worshipful and well-beloved Brother Daniel Coxe, Provincial Grand Master of the said Provinces of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania"—the Deputation or Warrant previously reciting as follows:—"Whereas application has been made unto us by our Right Worshipful and well-beloved Brother, Daniel Coxe, of New Jersey, Esqr., and by several other Brethren, Free and Accepted Masons, residing and about to reside in the said Provinces of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, etc."* This phraseology is very significant. It shows that Coxe in 1730 was "Worshipful," and therefore a W.M. or P.M. of a Lodge; and that he personally made

* Hough's "Origin of Masonry in New Jersey," vii.

application for the appointment as Provincial Grand Master of Masons. In America Masonry had not been previously organized under a Provincial Grand Master, but only existed in the person of its individual members, all of whom, no doubt, had been made Masons in England. It thus officially appears that there were regular Free and Accepted Masons then residing in, and others about to reside in the Provinces of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. In the autumn of the same year, 1730, according to the testimony of the letter written on November 17, 1754, by Bro. Henry Bell, of Lancaster, Pa., to Bro. Dr. Thomas Cadwalader, of Philadelphia, a party of Brethren who had been accustomed to meet at the Tun Tavern, Water street, and sometimes opened a Lodge there, made application to Provincial Grand Master Bro. Daniel Coxe for a Charter, and *had their request granted*.* To corroborate this

* "Dedication Memorial of the New Masonic Temple, Philadelphia," 21.

we have the printed testimony of the Dublin *Freemason's Companion* of 1735, which has on the list of Lodges, "The Hoop, in Waterstreet, in Philadelphia, First Monday." This Lodge is No. 79 on the English Register of Lodges, and is between those which unmistakably were chartered in 1731. Add to this the fact that Bro. Coxe lived not far from Philadelphia, first at Bristol, distant nineteen miles, then at Burlington, distant twenty miles, and towards the close of his life at Trenton, distant thirty miles, and that he married a Philadelphia lady, and hence very naturally knew the leading people of the city at that time, among whom were William Allen (then Recorder of the city, and afterwards Chief Justice of the Province), and Dr. Benjamin Franklin, the most prominent early members of St. John's Lodge, which was organized in 1730-31, and the conclusion is irresistible, even outside of the testimony of the Bell letter and the Dublin *Freemason's Companion*, that the Lodge which

certainly began in 1731 (since its regular Lodge Ledger is still extant, covering all the Lodge transactions from 1731 to 1738, the book being carefully preserved in the Library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania)—the conclusion is irresistible that this Lodge must have been “lawfully warranted and duly constituted” by Provincial Grand Master Coxe, whose appointment as Provincial Grand Master was formally acknowledged within nine months thereafter by the Grand Lodge of England, when R. W. Bro. Coxe, during a stay in London, visited that Grand Lodge on January 29, 1731, when *its record states* that his health was drunk “as Provincial Grand Master of North America”—that is to say, the only Grand Master in North America—as he then was.

Bro. Lane, in his “Masonic Records,” says (it may be with judgment) concerning the Lodge No. 79, which the *Dublin Freemason’s Companion* of 1735 locates at “The Hoop, in Water street, in Phila-

delphia,” between Lodges warranted in the year 1731, that this Lodge, No. 79, was “warranted for America, but probably the warrant was never used.” Admitted that the Grand Lodge of England granted a warrant in 1730–31 for Lodge No. 79 at Philadelphia, and that the warrant never was used, *this corroborates* the assertion of Bro. Henry Bell, in his letter of November 17, 1754, to Bro. Dr. Thos. Cadwalader, which reads as follows :

Once in the fall of 1730 we formed a design of obtaining a charter for a regular Lodge, and made application to the Grand Lodge of England for one, but before receiving it we heard that Daniel Coxe, of New Jersey, had been appointed by that Grand Lodge as Provincial Grand Master of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. We therefore made application to him, and *our request was granted.*

Bro. Lane thus becomes a witness in support of the Bell letter, and a capital witness, too. The truth fears no honest witness.

The circumstantial evidence referred

to above would be enough on which to hang a man—and certainly should prove, to the satisfaction of any one except a Masonic skeptic or an incorrigible Masonic non-affiliate, that the St. John's Lodge, Philadelphia, of 1730-31, was at first warranted by the Grand Lodge of England, and afterwards was warranted by Provincial Grand Master Coxe.

Pennsylvania Masons are not the only ones who are thoroughly persuaded that St. John's Lodge, Philadelphia was lawfully warranted. Our scholarly Bro. Wm. James Hughan, probably by common consent the highest Masonic authority in the world, has written :

The Lodge at Philadelphia was doubtless WARRANTED as well as CONSTITUTED in the latter part of the year 1730, or in other words nearly *three* years before any other Lodge has been proved to be in existence on the continent of America.*

* "Early History and Constitutions of Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania," xxiii.

P.G.M. Bro. William S. Whitehead, of New Jersey, in his "Historical Sketch of Masonry in New Jersey," says, referring to Bro. Dr. Franklin's having been active in Freemasonry in Philadelphia, in 1734 :

We think, however, from such information as we possess, and in the absence of any positive evidence to the contrary, that it may be safely inferred from the circumstances of the case that Benjamin Franklin was made a Mason under the authority contained in the *Deputation to Daniel Coxe* above recited.*

Bro. John G. Barker, Librarian of the Grand Lodge of New York, in his "Early History of Masonry in New York," says :

Late developments, through the persistent efforts of the Brethren of Pennsylvania, clearly demonstrate the exercise of the powers granted to Bro. Coxe under the provisions of his "Deputation." * * While, in our opinion, there is sufficient proof, so far as relates to Pennsylvania, we have as yet no evidence that conclu-

* Hough's "Origin of Masonry in New Jersey," x.

sively points to the exercise of his authority in the Provinces of New York and New Jersey.*

Grand Master Anthony, of New York, in his Oration pronounced at the Centennial Celebration of the Grand Lodge of New York, said :

Whether Bro. Coxe ever established any Lodges, under the prerogatives of his office, I am unable to say, but from the fact that Lodges existed in Pennsylvania as early as 1730, it is to be presumed he did; but we have no evidence that any were established in the Province of New York.

P.G.M. Bro. Theodore S. Parvin, of Iowa, in his Report on Correspondence for 1884, writes :

*That St. John's Lodge, of Philadelphia, was a legal Lodge there can be no doubt, according to the laws of that day. * * **
How can the writers of Massachusetts deny the legality of St. John's Lodge, of Philadelphia, while they claim the orthodoxy of their own Grand Lodge ?

* "Early History and Transactions of Grand Lodge of New York," Vol. vi.

After our discovery, in 1885, of the St. John's Lodge Ledger known as *Liber B*, Bro. the Rev. A. F. A. Woodford, then the able editor of the *London Freemason*, wrote in that journal :

Bro. MacCalla has thus the satisfaction of having discovered by far the earliest record in America, and also of having strengthened the presumption, *almost amounting to certainty*, that Philadelphia is the mother-city of American Freemasonry.

Philadelphia's primacy in early Masonry on the American continent has been sufficiently established. As Bro. Hughan has phrased it, Philadelphia is the premier Masonic city, or as we have said, Philadelphia is the mother-city of Masonry in America.

Bro. Col. Coxe was the author of two notable published books, one entitled "A Description of the English Province of Carolana," first issued in London, in 1722, and in two subsequent editions, in 1727 and 1741; and also of a "Collection of

Voyages and Travels," likewise issued in London, in 1741, posthumously.* The first-named volume contains the very first suggestion of a concerted plan for the union of the American colonies—which is thus referred to in the late Henry Armit Brown's eloquent oration, pronounced at the celebration of the Bi-Centennial of the town of Burlington, N. J., on December 6, 1877:

Here dwelt Judge Daniel Coxe, who planned a union for the colonies full thirty years ere Franklin thought of it, and a half a century before the Revolution.

His father, Dr. Daniel Coxe, owned as many as a million acres of land in America, situated in New Jersey, New York and New Hampshire. There is an enumeration of these in one of the Rawlinson MSS. in the Bodleian Library, at Oxford, England. He owned at Burlington, N. J.:

a tract of land, two houses, a kill,

* "Allibone's Dictionary of Authors," 442.

with divers Servants, who have made a greate progresse in a pottery of white and China ware, above £1200 worth being already made and vended in the Country neyhbour plantations, and the Islands of Barbadoes. * * * I have also at Cape May or Burlington four Stout Negroes. * * * I have a plantation at Cape May, made by a very skilfull french Gardiner, who is there resident ; he hath planted some thousand ffruit Trees.*

Dr. Coxe owned the whole of the present Cape May county, N. J., and his manor-house, "Coxe Hall," was located where Cape May city now stands. There he had a Court Baron and Court Leet, and dispensed justice after the manner of the baronial lords of England. In his deeds to purchasers of lands he reserved a royalty of "two fat capons or hens, delivered at Coxe Hall, Cape May, December 24th, yearly."

This was in good time for Christmas-tide.

* 7 "Pennsylvania Magazine," 329, 334.

Bro. Daniel Coxe's chief residence, in middle life, was at Burlington, N. J., where he was very active in Episcopal Church matters. In the Letters Patent for St. Mary's Church, Burlington, dated 1709, Col. Daniel Coxe is the first-mentioned applicant for the charter for that church. Mr. Rowland Ellis, in a letter written to the Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, dated Burlington, July 9, 1716, wrote:

The worthy bearer hereof, Daniel Coxe, Esq., one of the best members and benefactors to St. Mary's Church, at Burlington, &c.

In another letter, dated New Castle, August 28, 1716, the Rev. George Ross writes:

This comes by Colonel Cox, of New Jersey, a good and constant friend of all the Society's Missioners in these parts, and I cannot but wish that he may meet with that reception from all the members of that honorable body that a person of his worth and merits, and one that is so

hearty for the present constitution in Church and State, is very deserving of, and has just pretensions to.*

In still another letter, dated Trenton, 20th September, 1723, Bro. Daniel Coxe and William Trent (the founder of Trenton, N. J.) addressed the Secretary, with reference to the ruin and the repair of the Society's house. On December 9, 1723, Bishop John Talbot (who was the first Bishop on this continent, consecrated by non-jurors sixty years before Bishop Seabury, of Connecticut, and who lived and died at Burlington) wrote to the Secretary:

Colonel Coxe and Mr. Trent have done their parts towards the Society's house at Burlington. They have put it all in good order, both within and without. The gardens, orchards and pasture are fenced all round, and what is more than ever was done, they have got an honest man (as we suppose) to live there, as

*"Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church," Edited by Bishop Wm. Stevens Perry. Vol. II. Pennsylvania, p. 102.

Adam did in Paradise, to dress it and to keep it, so 'tis fit now for any Governor, in Church or State. Mr. Burnet has been there this quarter almost, and he says 'tis more pleasant than Salisbury in England.

In a letter dated "Trenton at the Falls of Delaware, 28th of April, 1728," Bro. Daniel Coxe wrote to the Secretary, thus describing Burlington, N. J.:

Burlington is almost in the centre of all of his Majesty's Dominions on the continent, the Town is very regular and handsomely built, with mostly Large Convenient Brick Houses. The whole number in the body of the town may amount to about a hundred. * * If the Society think fit to erect a College There, I shall present them with my lot of one acre at the Point.*

P.G.M. Bro. Daniel Coxe, while in office as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of New Jersey (Robert L. Hooper being Chief Justice), died at his residence in Trenton, on April 25, 1739, at the age

* Dr. Geo. Morgan Hill's "History of the Church in Burlington, N. J."

of sixty-five, his wife having died fourteen years before, and the remains of both lie interred in front of the chancel of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Burlington. The slab on which the inscription is carved is set even with the floor, and reads thus:

Daniel Coxe,
Died April 25th, 1739.
Ætat 65.

Bro. Benjamin Franklin noted his death as follows in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* for April 19 to April 26, 1739:

Yesterday morning, died at Trenton, the Hon. Daniel Cox, Esq., one of the justices of the Supreme Court of the Province of New Jersey.

The Coxe family mansion at Trenton, N. J., in 1777, during the Revolutionary War, was burned by the British troops,* while it was occupied by a grandson of Bro. Daniel Coxe, and with it were destroyed many of the family records and papers. Did these remain, it is reasonable to infer that we should find some cor-

*1 Sabine's "Loyalists of the American Revolution," 339.

respondence between Coxe and Franklin, and other men of the time, and more than likely evidence of Coxe's instrumentality as Provincial Grand Master in warranting St. John's Lodge, Philadelphia, in 1730-31; but, unfortunately, the family records perished in the flames, and we have to seek our evidence in other quarters. The success with which this evidence has been found, under the circumstances is remarkable. The discovery of the original Lodge Ledger, containing the Lodge proceedings from 1731 to 1738; the after discovery of the original report of eleven members of St. John's Lodge (including Bro. Benjamin Franklin) made to the Lodge on its By-Laws in Franklin's handwriting, and dated June 5, 1732; the discovery of the contemporaneous newspaper report in Franklin's *Gazette* of the election of Bro. William Allen as Provincial Grand Master of Pennsylvania, on June 27, 1732; of the regular election of his successors as Provincial Grand Masters, up to and including

the election in the year 1741; of the Henry Bell letter of 1754; of the Dublin *Freemason's Companion* of 1735—all of these corroborations of Bro. Coxe's unquestioned Deputation of 1730, and auxiliary proofs that as Provincial Grand Master he warranted at least one Lodge, and possibly two, go to prove, to any fair mind, that Masonry on this continent had its origin at Philadelphia. If so, then Philadelphia is the "Mother-city of Masonry in America," for the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania has, at one time or other, warranted Lodges in the States of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, the Northwest Territory and Indian Territory, besides Lodges in Mexico, Cuba, Trinidad and San Domingo—as the records of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania prove. Henceforth the position of honor, on the score of antiquity among the Grand Lodges of America, *must be awarded to the R. W. Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.*

[APPENDIX.]

THE HENRY BELL LETTER OF 1754.

By CHARLES E. MEYER.

Judging from the immense value placed upon this celebrated letter by some of our fellow-laborers in the Masonic Historical Quarries, it would seem as if the priority of Freemasonry in the city of Philadelphia were grounded solely on this letter, written from Lancaster in November, 1754.

If this letter were in the possession of the Grand Lodge Library, we venture to say that its great value would be considered to have much deteriorated.

We have a strong and abiding faith in what we have written, for we know the full meaning and intent thereof. Now

to the history of the letter, which is now for the first time given to the Masonic Fraternity.

In the year 1873, when the Craft were preparing for the dedication of the new Masonic Temple, Broad and Filbert streets, one day desiring to make some examinations for the Grand Lodge Library, I went into Bro. John Thomson's, the then Grand Secretary's office, where I found Bro. Francis Blackburne, one of the clerks, at his desk. As I entered the office a gentleman was just going out. Bro. Blackburne called me to his desk and handed me a copy of a letter he had just made from the original, in the possession of the party who had just left the office. The ink was scarcely dry. The copy read as follows, Bro. Blackburne only copying the Masonic portion. It was dated November 17, 1754 :

"As you well know, I was one of the originators of the first Masonic Lodge in Philadelphia. A party of us used to meet at the Tun Tavern in Water street,

and sometimes opened a Lodge there. Once, in the fall of 1730, we formed a design of obtaining a Charter for a regular Lodge, and made application to the Grand Lodge of England for one, but before receiving it, we heard that Daniel Coxe, of New Jersey, had been appointed by that Grand Lodge as Provincial Grand Master of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. We, therefore, made application to him, and our request was granted."

The letter was signed by *Henry Bell*, and was dated from *Lancaster* and addressed to *Dr. Thomas Cadwallader, Philadelphia*.

It is a comparatively easy matter to prepare a document, and give it the marks of antiquity by using paper bearing the water-marks of years past.

Bro. Jacob Norton, of Boston, is quite an expert in the detection of such matters, for it was he who exposed the unsatisfactory condition of the earliest Minutes of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, showing conclusively that the paper used in the Minute-book purporting to be

original, was manufactured some years after the date of the first Minutes written thereon.

Bro. Norton has written me many times to get this old "Bell Letter," and so has Bro. Hughan. I have used my best endeavors to oblige them, but was not successful up to the time of Bro. Blackburne's death. As Chairman of the Library Committee I offered him one hundred dollars to get the letter long enough to examine it, and photograph it; but he told me that the gentleman who had it was of a mysterious turn of mind, and when he found that inquiries were made about it, he positively refused to part with it, or allow another copy to be made of it, alleging that it was of great value, and the price would have to be high that would induce him to part with it.

We know, however, that the gentleman was a relative of the Cadwalader family and that he is since deceased. If I remember correctly his name was Bancker,

and he at the time lived on the North side of Chestnut, below Fifth street.

I have written to R.W. Bro. Robert A. Lamberton, Grand Master at that time, and who made the address at the dedication of the new Temple, and who used this Bell letter in his remarks, if he has any further information on the subject. He has promised to examine his papers, filed away, and let me know further.

And now the letter stands plain and distinct as a strong link in a chain of circumstantial evidence. A much weaker one has sent many a prisoner to the gal-lows.

Let us examine the letter critically as to its truth, and also as to how much of it has corroborative evidence to back it.

The writer was one Henry Bell, and he resided in Philadelphia in 1730. He speaks of the attempt made in 1730 to form a regular Lodge at that time, and that they were in the habit of meeting at the Tun Tavern on Water street.

That there were Masons here in 1730 is corroborated by the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, No. 108, December 3, 1730, printed by Benjamin Franklin, and he says: "As there are several Lodges of Freemasons erected in this Province," &c. Again, the Coxe deputation recites, under the seal of the Grand Lodge of England, June 5, 1730, that the application was made by Bro. Daniel Cox, of New Jersey, and several other Brethren, Free and Accepted Masons residing and about to reside in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, &c.

These were not clandestine Masons, but regular and duly acknowledged under the seal of Grand Lodge, as we have stated above. This should satisfy the most dubious that there were Masons in 1730 in Philadelphia. Now, where was Henry Bell in 1754, at the time of writing this? The tax lists of Derry township, Lancaster county, Pa., bear the name of Henry Bell, as a resident there from 1750 to 1759.

This should satisfy even Bro. Norton that Henry Bell was not a myth.

Bro. Bell writes to one Dr. Thomas Cadwallader, who was an eminent physician, son of John Cadwallader, and he was born in Philadelphia in 1707. He died November 14, 1779, aged 72 years.

Was he a Mason? Yes, in 1730 he would have been 23 years old, and in 1738 he was appointed one of the Grand Wardens of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons. See *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 6, 1738. Now Dr. Thos. Cadwallader cannot be claimed as a myth.

Where did these Masons meet in Philadelphia in 1730? Why at the Tun Tavern, where they afterwards held their St. John's Day festivals and elections, commencing in 1732, as the printed evidence of Franklin shows.

It might be asked, Why was not an annual election held on St. John's Day, in 1731? We will answer, Because the Coxe deputation was for the space of two years, from June 5, 1730, which also re-

quired that they should annually dine together on St. John's Day.

In strict conformity with these instructions on St. John's Day, in June, 1732, the first election was held.

There is also an important matter that bears out the rights of this Lodge in Philadelphia, it reads: "He, the said Daniel Cox, and the Provincial Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master and Grand Wardens for the time being."

This is an additional continuing clause, which is not found in the Price Deputation. There is also this important fact, that there is no record in the Grand Lodge of England's archives of the deputation said to have been issued to Henry Price, while there is on record there the copy of the Coxe deputation.

We remember years ago that no one did more to destroy the claims of Massachusetts to Masonic priority than Bro. Norton, and it was from his writings that my attention was first called so forcibly to the investigation of the neglected

history of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

The Masonic Fraternity of Pennsylvania are under obligations to Bro. Jacob Norton for making so many of us searchers after the true history of Freemasonry in America, and now that he finds that every day we are strengthening our foundations and buildings, he begins to attack the house that he himself has helped to erect.

We expect ere long to be in possession of the furniture and jewels of this Lodge of 1730. We have heard hints of their being still in existence.