

Masonic History:

No one knows with certainty how or when the Masonic Fraternity was formed. A widely accepted theory among Masonic scholars is that it arose from the stonemasons guilds during the Middle Ages. The language and symbols used in the fraternity's rituals come from this era. The oldest document that makes reference to Masons is the Regius Poem, printed about 1390, which was a copy of an earlier work. In 1717, four lodges in London formed the first Grand Lodge of England, and records from that point on are more complete.

Within thirty years, the fraternity had spread throughout Europe and the American Colonies. Freemasonry became very popular in colonial America. George Washington was a Mason, Benjamin Franklin served as the head of the fraternity in Pennsylvania, as did Paul Revere and Joseph Warren in Massachusetts. Other well-known Masons involved with the founding of America included John Hancock, John Sullivan, Lafayette, Baron Fredrick von Stuben, Nathanael Greene, and John Paul Jones. Another Mason, Chief Justice John Marshall, shaped the Supreme Court into its present form.

Over the centuries, Freemasonry has developed into a worldwide fraternity emphasizing personal study, self-improvement, and social betterment via individual involvement and philanthropy. During the late 1700s it was one of the organizations most responsible for spreading the ideals of the Enlightenment: the dignity of man and the liberty of the individual, the right of all persons to worship as they choose, the formation of democratic governments, and the importance of public education. Masons supported the first public schools in both Europe and America.

During the 1800s and early 1900s, Freemasonry grew dramatically. At that time, the government had provided no social "safety net". The Masonic tradition of founding orphanages, homes for widows, and homes for the aged provided the only security many people knew.

Today in North America, the Masonic Fraternity continues this tradition by giving almost \$1.5 million each day to causes that range from operating children's hospitals, providing treatment for childhood language disorders, treating eye diseases, funding medical research, contributing to local community service, and providing care to Masons and their families at Masonic Homes.

The four million Masons worldwide continue to help men and women face the problems of the 21st century by building bridges of brotherhood and instilling in the hearts of men ideals for a better tomorrow.

Short History of Masonry in the Region

San Juan Islands, archipelago of more than 170 islands composing San Juan county, northwestern Washington, U.S. The islands are part of a submerged mountain chain in upper Puget Sound near the Canadian border, south of the Strait of Georgia and east of Juan de Fuca Strait. The islands were explored (1790–92) and named by the Spanish Francisco Eliza expedition. The main islands (including Orcas, San Juan, and Lopez) were visited by George Vancouver in 1792 and were occupied for a time by the Hudson's Bay Company. Following the bloodless "Pig War" of 1859 (precipitated by a marauding British pig in an American potato patch and involving American forces commanded by Captain George E. Pickett, who would be better known as a Confederate general during the U.S. Civil War), San Juan Island was occupied by both British and American forces for 12 years. San Juan Island National Historic Park, divided into British and American camps, commemorates this period. The islands were awarded to the United States (1872) after settlement of a boundary dispute. Orcas Island includes Moran State Park and Mount Constitution (2,400 feet [730 metres]), the highest point on the islands. The islands are linked by ferry services and have had extensive summer resort development. Whale-watching excursions (tracking killer whales in particular) are popular with tourists visiting the islands. Friday Harbor, the largest town and the county seat, is the base for a fishing fleet and the site of the University of Washington Oceanographic Laboratory. Pop. (2000) 14,077; (2010) 15,769.

Captain James Cook: Explorer Captain James Cook is remembered by many in his native Great Britain and around the world for his 18th century voyages to the South Pacific. But Cook's influence is recalled in the Pacific Northwest, too.

Some accounts of Freemasonry in Hawaii have recorded that Captain James Cook, considered by many to be the greatest Pacific explorer and navigator, and the first to discover the Hawaiian Islands, was a Freemason. In spite of the oft-told story of Captain Cook being a Freemason, this has never been confirmed.

George Vancouver: Many students of Northwest history recall that a young George Vancouver — a Freemason who would explore and name Puget Sound (and many other geographic features) in 1792 — was a member of the crew on Captain Cook's second and third voyage. Vancouver was considered one of the finest navigators in the Royal Navy, having apprenticed as a midshipman under the renowned Captain James Cook.

On May 19, 1792, Captain George Vancouver under the direction of Captain James Cook, dropped anchor aboard the 300-ton H.M. Sloop of War Discovery, between Bainbridge and Blake islands. The following morning, Capt. Vancouver dispatched Lt. Peter Puget and Master Joseph Whidbey to conduct a detailed survey of the waters to the south. This is the first penetration of "Puget's Sound" by Europeans. Thus charting every feature of the massive estuary and naming most of them in the process. And he was far from finished. Before his North Pacific mission ended he would survey 1,700 miles of coastline. Freemasons were among those exploring the area including Captain

George Vancouver and lesser known mariners as well as Hudson's Bay Company traders.

There are several Masonic lodges found in the area. The oldest chartered lodge is Franklin #5 in Port Gamble WA, followed by Port Townsend Lodge #6 both chartered in 1859. Victoria-Columbia #1 in Victoria BC was chartered shortly thereafter in 1860. As of 1910, approximately 60 lodges were situated in the Puget Sound region.

Accessible only by water or air, San Juan Islands are an archipelago of hundreds of islands, reefs, and rocks between mainland Washington and Vancouver Island. Only in 1872, later than any other area in the 48 contiguous states, did the San Juan Islands and thus Friday Harbor become an undisputed part of the United States following the "Pig War" boundary dispute with Great Britain.

After the Civil War, population surged in the Pacific Northwest spurred on by the gold rush in the Klondike, free land grants, and resolution of the Canadian border disputes. Friday Harbor was named after an Hawaiian immigrant working for the British Hudson's Bay Company. Joe Friday and his son tended a Hudson's Bay Co. sheep enterprise on the island and some time before 1878 the inlet was named Friday Harbor.

The first official government map of Washington Territory to list the inlet's name was issued in 1878.



Washington Territory became a state on Nov 11, 1889. Friday Harbor was incorporated in 1909 and remains the only incorporated town in the county. Like Friday Harbor, ports at Roche Harbor at the northwest tip of San Juan Island and Richardson on the southern end of Lopez grew rapidly in the late 1800s and early 1900s as island industry and commerce expanded. Early settlers depended heavily on the islands' rich marine resources. As settlement increased the islands supplied the surrounding region with fish, agricultural produce, timber, and lime from some of the nation's richest deposits.

San Juan Masonic Lodge No. 175 Founders

A Grand Lodge charter was issued on June 16th, 1909 to E. H. Nash, Worshipful Master and 15 others; (including Brother O. H. Culver Senior Warden, Van E. Sargent Junior Warden, Gene C. Gould Senior Deacon, and Frank P. Christensen Secretary) for San Juan Lodge as No. 175 at Friday Harbor in San Juan County. Our Lodge was the first Masonic lodge in San Juan County. Founded by E. H. Nash, our Lodge was the one hundred and seventy fifth Lodge chartered in 1909 by the Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of Washington, dedicated to Faith, Hope, and Charity.



E. H. Nash Seattle 1886

Elijah H. Nash, our first Worshipful Master, went on to become an early mayor of Friday Harbor, served three terms in the Washington state legislature, and was general manager of the Island Packing Company when it reorganized as a joint-stock company in 1905. In his later years, he was the Friday Harbor Postmaster. He and Deborah (Kelly) raised a large, community-minded family in the spacious home they built at the corner of Caines and Spring Streets. (We know it today as the main house of Spring Street International School.) You can see daughter Martha Nash Gubelman's portrait at the San Juan Community Theater, revered for her role in the development of community performing arts. Her brother was the Master of the Lodge in 1931, Doctor Al Nash, Sr., Along with Dr. Little, purchased Friday Harbor Drug from Dr. Wright, a company that then stayed in the family for about 75 years when ownership passed to his son, Al Nash, Jr., also a pharmacist. Al Jr.'s brother Charlie was Master of the Lodge in 1949 and was equally well known as a Port Commissioner and Friday Harbor Postmaster. Even more can be said about these children and grandchildren of E.H. and Deborah Nash, as well as for their many siblings and their positive effects on Friday Harbor and local Freemasonry. A full list of the past Worshipful Masters is provided by means of the Past Masters menu option.

Our Lodge Building:



See Building history report here: [info\[pubs/Masonic Hall Friday Harbor 1980 report.pdf\]](#)