

PAUL REVERE, ROYAL ARCH MASON

By Melvin M. Johnson

Dr. Melvin M. Johnson has contributed this article on one of Massachusetts' most outstanding Freemasons. It came to the editor marked "Notes on Paul Revere" but we have changed its title to bring out Revere's Royal Arch membership. The writer is one of America's distinguished and versatile Craftsmen, Past Grand Master of Massachusetts' Grand Lodge and for many years the Sovereign Grand Commander of the Northern Jurisdiction of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry.

Col. Paul Revere, or Rivoire, as his ancestors wrote the name, was born in Boston, in December 1734, O. S. (January 1, 1735), and died there in May, 1818, aged eighty-four. His grandfather emigrated from St. Foy, in France, to the Island of Guernsey; and his father, at the age of thirteen, was sent by his friends from that island to Boston, to learn the trade of a goldsmith; here he afterwards married, and had several children, of whom Paul was the eldest. Young Revere was brought up by his father to the business of a goldsmith and made himself very serviceable in the use of a graver. Having a natural taste for drawing he made it his peculiar business to design and execute all engravings on the various kinds of silver plate then manufactured.

His business interests were very extensive. He was primarily a gold and silversmith, designing and furnishing many articles, many of which are preserved today and are almost priceless. He was the best engraver of his day. One sample of his work is the plate for printing the first Continental scrip money in 1778. He manufactured gun powder, cast church bells and cannon and maintained an iron foundry and hardware store. He established the first rolling mill for copper sheathing, in which he made plates for Robert Fulton's steamboats. He was probably the first manufacturer of artificial teeth in the Western Hemisphere.

In Freemasonry, he was active and zealous. Initiated in St. Andrews' Lodge September 4, 1760, and raised January 27, 1761, he was elected Senior Warden in November, 1764, and Worshipful Master in November, 1770. Later, there was a schism in the lodge and Revere was one of the dimitting members, immediately becoming active and almost dominant in Rising States Lodge. In the Massachusetts Grand Lodge (this being the one which descended from Scotland, and not the one founded by Henry Price), he was Junior Grand Warden, 1777-79 inclusive; Senior Grand Warden, 1780-83 inclusive; and Deputy Grand Master in 1784, 1790 and 1791. After the union of the two Grand Lodge in Massachusetts, which occurred in 1792, Revere became the second Grand Master and served in that office from December 12, 1794, to December 27, 1797.

The records of the Royal Arch Lodge held in Boston, record the fact that—

"The petition of Brother Paul Revere coming before the Lodge begging to become a Royal Arch Mason, it was rec^d & he was unanimously accepted & accordingly made."