

## Saint Mark's Lodge

In 1803, there were 2 Masonic Lodges in Newburyport, St. John's Lodge (1766) and St. Peter's Lodge (1772). In September of 1803 a petition was read and dispensation granted to form St. Mark's Lodge with all the petitioners coming from St. Peter's Lodge. The first meeting of St. Mark's Lodge was held on September 27, 1803 with 9 members and 9 visitors attending.

The Constitution ceremony for St. Mark's Lodge was held on July 11, 1804 with 14 members and over 300 guests in attendance, including MW Isaiah Thomas and other Grand Lodge officers who performed the Consecration Service and installed the officers of St. Mark's Lodge.

In September of 1822, St. Mark's Lodge voted to approve permission to petition for a Lodge to be formed in Amesbury MA. This lodge was to be called Warren Lodge and of the 14 Charter members of Warren Lodge, 9 received their degrees in St. Mark's Lodge.

The records of the 3 lodges meeting in Newburyport in the mid to late 1820s show discussions over the idea of merging to create a single lodge in Newburyport. While agreements seemed to be close, St. John's and St. Peter's Lodges surrendered their charters and for 23 years St. Mark's Lodge was the only lodge in Newburyport. Though times befell Masonry from 1826-1832, largely due to the Morgan Affair in New York and the Anti-Masonic crusade which foiled. With few new candidates, lodge suffered greatly from lack of funds and with Masonic widows needing charity along with many demits and suspensions, the trustees reported in April of 1828 they had paid to the treasurer the balance of the money they had on hand.

Attendance dwindled and even with some of St. John's and St. Peter's Lodge members joining, St. Mark's Lodge on November 26th of 1832 held its last meeting until July 30th of 1837. During this time, the charter of St. Mark's Lodge was NOT surrendered, rather it was given to a sea captain to carry around the world and keep it safe from the Fraternity's enemies.

In December of 1840, St. Mark's Lodge was "closed, to meet again when a favorable opportunity is found". This opportunity was found in 1845 and since that time St. Mark's Lodge has regularly met.

In 1867, Charles C. Dame Lodge was instituted and chartered with 9 of its charter members having received the degrees in St. Mark's Lodge.

In Jan of 1882, the lodge voted to change the meeting night from the 1st Tuesday to the 2nd Monday.

In 1955, Emmeth Lodge was formed in Newburyport with 112 charter members. In 1975 due to declining membership, Emmeth Lodge merged with St. Mark's Lodge in a ceremony by MW Stanley F. Maxwell, Grand Master of Masons in Massachusetts.

St. Mark's Lodge meetings were held in a building called "Washington Hall" from 1803 until 1825. This building was located on Green St near where the police station is presently. St. John's and St. Peter's Lodges met there also. They met in "Phoenix Hall" located on State St from 1835 until 1862. Next, in the "New Washington Hall" (occupied by St. John's Lodge) on the southern corner of Essex and State Streets. A "New Masonic Hall" was procured on the 3rd floor of a new building on Pleasant Street in 1871. By 1882, the subletting renters moved and St. Mark's Lodge chose to move also. After meeting at several other locations, in 1923 a group of masons purchased a 3 story colonial house on Green St, which is the front of this building. And in March of 1929, MW Herbert W. Dean (Grand Master of Masons in Massachusetts) dedicated this Masonic Building and St. Mark's Lodge has met here ever since.