

THE ROAD TO MUTUAL RECOGNITION IN CONNECTICUT

On October 14, 1989, history was made in the world of Freemasonry. The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Connecticut, Inc., and the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Connecticut both voted to recognize one another as legitimate Masonic bodies and to permit intervisitation.

The process of recognition began at the 200th Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Connecticut, on March 29, 1989. I received a telephone call from then Most Worshipful Grand Master Gail N. Smith informing me that the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Connecticut had passed a resolution requesting recognition from the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Connecticut. This resolution was written and presented by M.W. Bro. Gail Linnell Smith, Past Grand Master and is as follows:

“Whereas - Qualified Masonic scholars and several in-depth investigations have demonstrated conclusively that the Prince Hall body of Freemasonry is completely legitimate;

Whereas - Eminent and distinguished members of the Grand Lodge of Connecticut, A.F. & A.M. have more than once, attested in the courts of the land to the legitimacy of the Prince Hall Masons in Connecticut;

Whereas - The doctrine of exclusive jurisdiction is a myth, and a device formulated by American Grand Lodges without any basis in Masonic custom and usage and universally practiced by the originators;

Whereas - Division among Men and Masons claiming to practice the Brotherhood of all Men under the Fatherhood of one God is contrary to the basic and ancient tenets and teachings of Freemasonry;

Therefore - Be it resolved that this Grand Lodge , Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Connecticut request fraternal recognition from the Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons of Connecticut, Prince Hall Affiliation;

And be it further resolved that the Grand Master is hereby authorized to appoint a special, temporary sub-committee to the Committee on Fraternal Relations for the sole purposes of contacting Connecticut Prince Hall Masons and advising the

full Committee. "

This resolution was accepted and referred to the Committee on Fraternal Relations with instructions to present a report with a recommendation at the next communication of this Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M. on October 14, 1989."

"There was a standing ovation by the Brethren in support of this resolution which authorized the Grand Master to appoint a Committee to work jointly with Prince Hall toward mutual recognition."

On behalf of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge I congratulated M.W. Bro. Gail Nelson Smith on the courageous step taken by the Grand Lodge of Connecticut, A.F. & A.M. However, I informed M.W. Bro. Smith that I would have to discuss this resolution with the line officers before committing the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Connecticut. The line officers at the time were: Thaddeus Holman, Deputy Grand Master, Michael S. Bivans, Senior Grand Warden, Robert Williamson, Junior Grand Warden and Lewis Myrick, Sr., Grand Master.

After several hours of discussion regarding recognition of A.F. & A.M. in Connecticut, it was decided that we should move forward. But before going forward we had several concerns that had to be addressed. Ok

The greatest concern was that of merger. Webster's definition of merge is "to lose or cause to lose identity by being absorbed, swallowed up, or combined; to unite indistinguishably." This was unacceptable then as it is not acceptable today. We are as proud of our history as they are of theirs. How many "Regular Grand Lodges" could withstand the scrutiny that Prince Hall has been subjected to? According to Masonic history not very many would be considered "Regular" if the same rules were applied as used against Prince Hall.

The next concern was that of demit and dual membership of our Caucasian Brethren into Prince Hall Lodges. The latter was easy to resolve because we do not allow dual membership. Demitting was cause for immense discussion. After several hours we decided against demitting between the two bodies for fear of becoming another Alpha Lodge No. 116 (NJ). Perhaps this might shed a little light on "partial recognition" that some Grand Lodges and certain writers have alluded to.

We were concerned about how much and what impact would this step have on our standing in the Prince Hall family. We were very aware of the strong feelings against the recognition of "Regular Grand Lodges" by Prince Hall Grand Lodges. This concern required several days of discussion and soul searching to decide if we were willing to take such a step as this. The questions that had to be answered were very important to us and to Prince Hall Masonry. Were we willing to be an outcast? Would we be able to accept the criticism for taking this step? Were we willing to accept the possibility of some Prince Hall Grand Lodges withdrawing recognition of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Connecticut? These and others questions and what

we thought would be best for Connecticut had to be answered before moving forward. We, in Connecticut, decided that we were willing to be outcasts, able to accept criticism and accept the withdrawal of recognition from our Sister Jurisdictions if need be in order to practice the true meanings of Freemasonry.

At the Conference of Grand Masters of the northeast region in April 1990, two of the questions that we were concerned with came to the surface. First, was the feeling that Connecticut had sold out Prince Hall Masonry to the "white man" and that we had turned our back to the "black man". That most Prince Hall Grand Lodges did not approve of the actions of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Connecticut.

At the Conference of Grand Masters, Prince Hall Masons held in Boston, Massachusetts in May 1990, we again, came under attack from several Prince Hall Grand Lodges. We informed the Conference that we, as a Grand Lodge, have the right to recognize any Grand Lodge that we might so choose. And no other Grand Lodge can dictate to the Grand Lodge of Connecticut who they can or cannot recognize. To our pleasant surprise we had more support than we had opposition.

An A.F. & A.M. Committee, Prince Hall, was appointed by then Grand Master Lewis Myrick, Sr., with Most Worshipful Brother Preston L. Pope, Past Grand Master, as Chairman. A like Committee was appointed by then Most Worshipful Grand Master Gail N. Smith, with Right Worshipful Brother Kenneth B. Hawkins, Senior Grand Deacon, as Chairman. These Committees worked long and carefully, meeting frequently together until an agreement in principle was reached. From these meetings came the joint resolution that was passed on October 14, 1989 by our Grand Lodge. The Semi-Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Connecticut, was held on the same date and an identical resolution was passed. The resolution made in the form of a motion is as follows:

Whereas: The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge, A. F. & A.M. of Connecticut, has existed in the State of Connecticut, Since 1750, and profess the same Masonic principles and ideals of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Connecticut, and;

Whereas: Both Grand Lodges desire to remain autonomous within themselves, operating hereafter as heretofore, with their own Grand Master, Rules and Regulations, Lodges and Memberships, etc., and;

Whereas: Both desire to fraternally recognize the other, with rights of visitation within Grand Lodge and Lodges assembled,
BE IT RESOLVED:

IT IS MUTUALLY AGREED BY THE MOST WORSHIPFUL PRINCE HALL GRAND

LODGE, F. & A.M. OF CONNECTICUT, INC., AND THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE, A.F. & A.M. OF CONNECTICUT, ON THIS 14th DAY OF OCTOBER, 1989, THAT WE DWELL TOGETHER IN PEACE AND HARMONY, AND EACH DO HEREAFTER FRATERNALLY RECOGNIZE THE OTHER AS LEGITIMATE PROPONENTS OF BROTHERLY LOVE, RELIEF AND TRUTH, WITHIN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT AND DO ACCORD TO THE OTHER, RIGHTS OF VISITATION IN GRAND LODGE AND CONSTITUENT LODGES WHERESOEVER ASSEMBLED, SUBJECT TO THE RIGHTS, POWERS AND AUTHORITY OF THE GRAND MASTERS AND THE MASTERS OF THE CONSTITUENT LODGES TO PRESIDE OVER THEIR RESPECTIVE GRAND LODGES AND LODGES.

Prince Hall Freemasonry came to Connecticut in 1849 at New Haven. In 1873, four lodges formed what is now the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Connecticut, Inc. Freemasonry came to A.F. & A.M. of Connecticut in 1750 at New Haven. In 1789, thirteen Lodges established the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Connecticut. The year 1989, the 116th Annual Communication of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Connecticut, brought Fraternal Recognition of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Connecticut by the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Connecticut, Inc.

Connecticut Prince Hall Freemasons have had dialogue with Connecticut A.F. & A.M. Masons for many years. In 1960, in the Court of Common Pleas in New Haven, Connecticut, during a suit brought by the Prince Hall Grand Lodge against black lodges who claimed to be the official representation of black masonry in Connecticut. Two Past Grand Masters of the A.F. & A.M. Grand Lodge, both attorneys, testified "to the recognized legitimacy of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge." This highest court of original Jurisdiction at that time found the Prince Hall Grand Lodge to be legitimate and enjoined the non-Prince Hall group.

In 1966, the "Brotherhood-In-Action" (B.I.A.) program was established in the State of Connecticut uniting members of Knights of Columbus, Prince Hall Grand Lodges of Masons, B'nai B'rith and the Grand Lodge of Masons A.F.& A.M. The B.I.A. is still in existence today. Representatives of these fraternal organizations met in the Assembly Room of the Capitol of the State of Connecticut in Hartford to affirm their common support to Brotherhood-In-Action. The Reaffirmation Platform of this Fraternal B.I.A. program stated in part "The constant attacks being made today on the moral standards of America call for the enlistment of the high-mined strength of fraternal organizations of this nation to combat and overcome the forces whose degenerative influences are becoming a crippling menace to the American way of life.....The participating organizations look upon this effort as a crusade believing confidently that the strengths of Faith, Hope, and Charity will overcome those of hate, bigotry and evil." After more than thirty years the Brotherhood In Action program is still active.

In 1967, decisions were made by The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut to

accept and admit to the care of such Foundation, at the Masonic Home and Hospital, Wallingford, Connecticut, qualified Master Masons of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge, their wives and widows. In 1995, two Master Masons of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge were appointed to The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut.

In 1980, a joint table lodge was held in Hartford, Connecticut. The joint Table Lodge was given by Tuscan Lodge No. 17 F. & A.M. P.H. and Level Lodge No. 137 A.F. & A.M. This table Lodge was very unique in the fact that it was untiled.

Intertwined with considerations of regularity and frequently confused with the issue of legitimacy is that of recognition of one Grand Jurisdiction by another. Most Grand Lodges concern themselves with the independence of the petitioning Grand Lodge and the regularity of its Masonry, i.e., that it teaches monotheism, makes the Volume of Sacred Law a part of lodge furniture, practices secrecy, makes Masons of men only, confers the traditional three degrees, is nonsectarian and non-political, and has as its dominant purposes, charity, education, benevolence and religion.

The following document was sent to the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Connecticut by Eureka Lodge No. 2, Norwich, Connecticut (Now Defunct) in 1876. It is as follows:

“It is evident to all fair-minded Masons, since the general movement in the several states in forming State Grand Lodges, that a well-grounded belief has been established that state jurisdiction is the only legitimate government for Masonic Grand Lodges, hence the rapid decay of the National Compact. Much is needed to be done whereby a decided and successful step may be taken, that we as colored Masons of the United States may stand in full fellowship with the Masonic world. Enough has been in the way of petitions and otherwise from us to the several State Grand Lodges, (white,) towards a recognition, until it has become humiliating and painful; that the prejudice of the whites is so great and inveterate, that they are not willing to grant us justice; that every true Mason is, or should be, bound to respect the principles of Masonry, which teach us no creed and no nationality, but one universal Brotherhood, which with them is lost, first, in Masonic principle and their obligations, second, in their nation's declaration of sentiments, thirdly, to the Grand Architect of the Universe, as God made all men free, so must they be to whatever position they may attain. Under these circumstances, it becomes us to endeavor to take such steps as will bring about a firm basis of equality, and to this end we would propose, as soon as convenient and possible, to unite all Masons in good standing into State Grand Lodges. This done, let us call a Grand Masonic Assembly, at a convenient locality, there to adopt such regulations as will tend to the general good of all, ensuring the right of jurisdiction and endeavoring to have the work as near alike as possible, also, a check- word to guard against imposture. This done, let there be a committee on correspondence from each state, or otherwise as may be deemed best, with full power to make and establish a full recognition with all the Grand Masonic Bodies

throughout the world, and requiring those going abroad, who wish to visit Masonicly or otherwise, to secure a certificate signed and sealed in a manner which may be determined upon by the Grand Assembly, and do, or counsel to be done, any other business beneficial to the Craft. This Brethren, will do away with the too long continued practice of begging for recognition from prejudiced white brethren, and place us in an enviable equality with them in spite of their efforts to crush us out.

We would most respectfully submit this paper to your consideration, hoping active measures will be taken upon it to insure its success."

Signed, Eureka Lodge No. 2, F. A.M. Norwich, Conn.

Sept. 18, 1876, A.D., 5876, A.L.

W. H. Burr, W.M.

Alexander Brent, S.W.

John B. Clayton, J.W.

George L. Williams, Sec.

Also, taken from the proceedings of 1876, are comments on recognition by Bro. James H. Ralston, Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Connecticut, (P.H.).

"I feel that I must say something in regard to one of the most absorbing topics of the day, and that is the question of recognizing the rights of colored Masons by our white brethren, or in other words, by their Grand Lodges. The proposal of the committee, appointed to investigate the matter by the Grand lodge of Ohio (white), does not quite accord with my view of recognition. They recommended that if the Grand Lodge of Ohio (colored) would take the name "African" as a prefix, they would be recognized. Now I don't see, according to the American view of jurisdiction of Grand Lodges, how they can reconcile that, and their pet theory, that no two Grand Bodies can legally exist in one and the same state. So how will they dispose of that objection? That portion of the address of the M.W. Grand Master of Minnesota, Chas. Griswold all honor to him, relating to colored Masonry, is, in my opinion, the only recognition we could honorably accept or desire, but the action of the Grand Lodge of Ohio has had the salutary effect of agitating the question and bringing to the surface the different ideas and views of other Grand Bodies on the subject. Before leaving this subject, I would say, my dear Brethren, let us so conduct ourselves in our daily walks through life, and in our intercourse with the world, that instead of being obliged to seek for the, by some, most coveted boon of recognition, that we will be felt as a strong power and be importuned by our white Brethren to join them in their work and become as one Brotherhood and members of one family."

Recognition has taken many strange turns as many states deal with the process of recognition. One such case in point is Pennsylvania. The R.W. Grand Master of Pennsylvania stated in an article; *"Many members of our Fraternity, during my*

tenure as Grand Master, have addressed questions and concerns with me about Freemasonry, especially about Prince Hall Freemasonry. They have given me suggestions about the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania and its future with Prince Hall Freemasonry. My reply to these recommendations is that the members of every Masonic body love the Craft with honor and enjoy the highest standing that all Freemasons throughout the world should personify."

"Pennsylvania Masons have in the past, and currently do, recognize properly constituted and warranted Grand Lodges in Japan, Russia, Africa, South America, and on every continent throughout the world. I am quite sure that we will continue to recognize new lodges as they develop worldwide."

"The officers of Prince Hall Freemasons in Pennsylvania, have met with our Landmarks Committee, and have asked our Grand Lodge to support their efforts with the Grand Lodge of England to secure a proper warrant that could, and should, be recognized throughout the entire world as a properly warranted Lodge. We have granted this request by sending a letter to the Grand Lodge of England stating that the Grand lodge of Pennsylvania has no objection to the Prince Hall of Pennsylvania receiving a warrant from England, just as we have never objected to any other worthy country receiving a warrant from the Mother Grand Lodge."

The doctrine of exclusive territorial jurisdiction is often misunderstood. First, only in the United States is it mentioned as a rule. Other grand lodges take it for granted that they will recognize more than one, sometimes many grand lodges in a territory. Even in the United States grand lodges today and in the past recognized more than one grand lodge having jurisdiction in a geographic area, such as in Alaska, where the Grand Lodges of Alaska and Washington both have lodges, and in the twenty-five states (as of July 1997) where grand lodges recognize Prince Hall Grand Lodges that have their own lodges in the same states. Stewart W. Miner, Past Grand Master of Virginia the then Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of the district of Columbia and the Secretary of the Conference of Grand Secretaries of North America, made the following observations about the doctrine of exclusive territorial jurisdiction: *"(a) that the Doctrine, as originally conceived, no longer exist; (b) that the historic application of the Doctrine, especially in the 19th Century, has been selective; (c) that consistent applications of the Doctrine have encouraged challenge , and (d) that when it has seemed prudent, American grand lodges have modified their interpretations of the Doctrine to satisfy challenges at hand. This process, I believe, is irreversible, and despite the attempts of a few grand lodges to stem the tide by punitive action, their efforts will fail, in the long run, and change will questionably prevail."*

What does this Doctrine say? The most influential American group dealing with this subject, the Commission on Information for Recognition of the Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America. The Commission has existed since 1952, making recommendations on standards for recognition as well as specific suggestions about whether grand lodges in North America should or should not recognize each foreign grand lodge. The Commission's definition of the doctrine of

exclusive territorial jurisdiction is different from what most masons think it is.

There can be no question about Exclusive Jurisdiction. It is a basic principle that a Grand Lodge must be autonomous and have sole and undisputed authority over its constituent Lodges. This cannot be shared with any other Masonic council or power. But the question of exclusive Territorial jurisdiction is not so clear-cut. In some..... European and Latin American countries, a Geographical or politically self-contained unit may be served by two or more Grand Lodges. If these Grand Lodges, and hence their constituent lodges, are working in amity, and both are worthy of recognition in all other respects, this joint occupation of a country, state or political subdivision should not bar them from recognition.

In other words, exclusive territorial jurisdiction means that all the lodges under a grand lodge give their loyalty only to that grand lodge. There can be several grand lodges in a single country, all with many lodges, each giving loyalty to only one of the grand lodges, and the doctrine of exclusive territorial jurisdiction is not violated, according to the Commission. The Commission did add, " If these Grand Lodges and hence their constituent Lodges are working in amity."

As you might know or may not know there is still a movement to diminish the role of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Connecticut in being the prime mover in the area of recognition between the "Mainstream" masonry and Prince Hall masonry.

There are elements, both "mainstream" and Prince Hall, that are attempting to give the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts the credit for the advancement of recognition because the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts was the first Prince Hall Grand Lodge the Grand Lodge of England extended recognition to.

The Grand Lodge of California "mainstream" in their Masonic Education Booklet states "In 1989, the United Grand Lodge of England extended recognition to the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. Connecticut and Massachusetts soon followed with recognition of their own. Since that time, many Prince Hall and mainstream Grand Lodges have extended recognition to one another. As of 1998, 28 of 51 mainstream Grand Lodges were in fraternal accord with their Prince Hall counterparts."

As we know this is erroneous. The Grand Lodge of England did not recognize the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts until 1994. Unfortunately, this error has not been corrected by the Grand Lodge of California.

If the truth is to be known the Grand Lodge of England and "Mainstream" Grand Lodge of Massachusetts called a meeting in Boston in 1990 with the five "Mainstream" Grand Lodges that had extended recognition to their Prince Hall counterparts. The Grand Secretary of the United Grand Lodge of England and a member of General Purposes attended this meeting. The purpose of this meeting was an attempt to convince the "Mainstream" grand lodges to reconsider their

actions and rescind recognition from their Prince Hall counterpart “so that peace and harmony may prevail in the (*mainstream*) Masonic family.” The representatives of the five Grand Lodges informed the Grand Secretary of the United Grand Lodge of England it is not 1898 when the Grand Lodge of Washington granted recognition to the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Washington and it was rescinded nor is it 1947 when Massachusetts recognized Prince Hall and it too was rescinded.

It is strange that the United Grand Lodge of England recognized the Prince Hall Grand of Massachusetts before the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts did, while other Prince Hall Grand Lodges were not recognized until the mainstream Grand Lodge recognized their Prince Hall counterparts. The United Grand Lodge of England recognized the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts in 1994. The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts did not extend recognition until 1995.

The next excerpt from the Proceedings of the GLMA will shed some light on the above paragraph concerning the feeling of the GLMA toward the PHGLMA, and Prince Hall Masonry in general.

The GLMA, when asked to recognize the PHGLMA he deferred to the UGLE: "1990.06 GMMA E.W. Darling: "England considers [PHA] to be clandestine. I do not feel that we should go against our Mother Grand Lodge of England and that it is up to Prince Hall to resolve the problem with England before we can act legally."

The reason for this is that the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts did not expect the United Grand Lodge of England to recognize Prince Hall of Massachusetts.

This is the same Grand Master that, after the two Connecticut Grand Lodges voted to extend mutual recognition, issued an Edict that Connecticut masons would no longer be able to participate in any degree work or any other ritualistic work in lodges, which had been done for many years between lodges, that owed allegiance to the GLMA. However, CT brethren may continue to visit lodges in MA. The Edict stayed in effect for almost a year before it was withdrawn.

The Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Connecticut requested recognition by the United Grand Lodge of England, the Grand Lodge of Ireland, and the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1994. Of course, the requests were denied at that time. After the United Grand Lodge of England recognized the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts we were informed that we must establish our lineage to African Lodge #459. When we satisfied our lineage to African Lodge #459, we were then informed by the United Grand Lodge of England and the Grand Lodge of Ireland they were going to recognize the Prince Hall Grand Lodges according to seniority after the Prince Hall Grand Lodges were recognized by the “Mainstream” Grand Lodge in each state. This meant that they would not recognize the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of

Connecticut until the Grand Lodge of New York recognized the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of New York.

This action by the UGLE and Ireland created a very serious problem in the progress of recognition in the US.

After several exchanges of correspondence with the Grand Secretary of Ireland explaining the racial issues in the USA and that most of the senior Prince Hall Grand Lodges are in the South and the impact that it would have on the progress of recognition, the Grand Secretary of Ireland suggested that perhaps there might be another way to approach this issue. A plan was indeed devised to circumvent the original idea of recognizing the mother Grand Lodge of each Prince Hall Grand Lodge even though a particular daughter Prince Hall Grand Lodge was recognized by their state counterpart.

And that plan, as we well know now, was to recognize each Prince Hall Grand as their “mainstream” counterpart extended recognition to the PHGL in their state.

I might add that the Grand Lodge of England notified the Grand Lodge of Connecticut of our request. One of the members of the Fraternal Relations Committee for Grand Lodge of Connecticut AF&AM was outraged because we did not confer with him before submitting our request for recognition to the United Grand Lodge of England.

This same brother called me at home and informed me that the United Grand Lodge of England was annoyed that the Prince Hall Grand of Connecticut had the audacity to petition them for recognition without the consent of the Grand Lodge of Connecticut AF&AM.

I informed this venerable PGM that the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Connecticut is a sovereign body and answers to no other authority whether domestic or foreign, and we were not concerned if he was outraged and the United Grand Lodge of England was annoyed. As far as we were concerned they could go to **.**

Again, this same PGM had called another brother who was a Masonic Historian who had written a history of Prince Hall Masonry and its legitimacy to inform him of the annoyance of the United Grand Lodge of England and the response that he received from me concerning this issue. To this PGM’s surprise this brother agreed with our stance and said he would have replied in stronger terms.

It was not so much that the United Grand Lodge of England was annoyed it was more of the Grand Secretary at that time being annoyed. Incidentally this was the beginning of the removal of the Grand Secretary of England.

The Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts let it be known that they did not agree with the actions of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Connecticut in regards to mutual recognition between Prince Hall Grand Lodges and “mainstream” Grand Lodges.

However, according to a “Private and Confidential” report, dated November 16, 1994, sent to the Grand Secretaries of Grand Lodges recognized by the United Grand Lodge of England item 6 under “Recognition of or other relations with Prince Hall Grand Lodges” states that “in 1988 the Board was unable to support an application from the Grand Master of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, seeking recognition for his Grand Lodge (and in ultimate effect on behalf of some 300,00 Prince Hall Masons in jurisdictions descended from his).”

Further, from the same report item number 7, “The Board has been reconsidering the application for over three years, and it believes that the proper course is now to ignore unusual formation (sic) of African Grand Lodge of Massachusetts and to recommend instead that the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts should be deemed to be and accepted regular, and recognized.”

Item number 8 from the same report, “If the problem of regularity were to be solved in this way, the State Grand Lodge of Massachusetts would have no objection to the United Grand Lodge of England recognizing the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.”

Now, if we follow the timeline, it is apparent that this change of heart, on the part of the United Grand Lodge of England, came after the summit of ‘mainstream’ Grand Lodges that had recognized the Prince Hall Grand Lodges in their jurisdiction and the State Grand Lodge of Massachusetts held in Massachusetts in 1990.

I know some of our learned brothers will not agree because they feel that Massachusetts was and continue to be the main player in the road to recognition. However, I might add that the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Connecticut was in amity with several State Grand Lodges “mainstream” prior to December 1994.