

"Greetings:

"Be it known to all whom it may concern. That we, the Master, Wardens, Members of the African Lodge No. 459, City of Boston (Mass.), U. S. of America, hold in our possession a certain unlimited Charter, granted September 29, A. L. 5784, A. D. 1784 by Thomas Howard, Earl of Effingham, * * * Whether the conditions have been complied with by our ancestors, we are unable to say; but we can add that, in consequence of the decease of the above-named Brother, the institution was for years unable to proceed, for the want of one to conduct its affairs agreeably to what is required in every regular and well-educated Lodge of Masons. It is now, however, with great pleasure we state that the present age has arrived to that degree of proficiency in the art, that we can at any time select from among us many whose capacity to govern enables them to preside with as much good order, dignity, and propriety as any other Lodge within our knowledge. This fact can be proved by gentlemen of respectability, whose knowledge of Masonry would not be questioned by any one well acquainted with the art. Since the rise of the Lodge to this degree of proficiency, we concluded that it was best and proper to make it known to the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge from whence we derived our charter, by sending written documents and monies, to fulfill the agreements of our ancestors, giving information of the low state to which it had fallen, its cause, &c., with its rise and progress; and also soliciting favors, whereby we might be placed on a different and better standing than we had heretofore. And notwithstanding this has long since been done, and more than sufficient time has elapsed for returns, yet we have never received a single line or reply from that Hon. Society. In consequence of that neglect, we have been at a stand what course to pursue. Our remote situation prevents us from making any verbal communication whatever. Taking all these things into consideration, we have come to the conclusion that with what knowledge we possess of Masonry, and as people of Color by ourselves, we are, and ought by rights, to be free and independent of other Lodges. We do therefore, with this belief, publicly declare ourselves free and independent of any Lodge from this day, and that we will not be tributary, or be governed by any other lodge than that of our own. We agree solemnly to abide by all proper rules and regulations which govern the like Fraternity, discountenancing all imposition to injure the Order, and to use all fair and honorable means to promote its prosperity, resting in full hope that this will enable us to transmit it in its purity to our posterity for their enjoyment.

"Done at the Lodge, this 18th day of June A. L. 5727 [sic], A. D. 1827.

"In full testimony of what has been written, we affix our names:

"John T. Hilton, R. M. W. [sic]

"Thomas Dalton, Sen. Ward.

"Lewis York, Jun. Ward.

"J. H. Purrton, Secretary."