

Saint John's Lodge

Masonry in the Newburyport area can be traced back to around 1740 when the only lodges around were in Boston. Men would travel many hours/days to become masons in the Boston lodges. In 1765, the Grand Master sent aprons and other lodge regalia to this area and in July of 1766 St. John's Lodge became the 2nd lodge outside of Boston and the 4th in the province. A second lodge was formed here 6 years later, called St. Peter's Lodge. Masonry continued to expand here to include the York Rite bodies. In 1803, St. Mark's Lodge formed making 3 Blue lodges in Newburyport.

While the actual records for the early meetings of St. John's Lodge are few, there is evidence that the lodge continued to meet throughout the Revolutionary War, in traditions of the times it is likely the lodge met in taverns such as the Wolfe Tavern. Records also indicated meetings being held in 1772 through 1775 in Masonic Hall located on Temple St.

In March of 1792, the 2 Grand Lodges in Boston united to become the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. In 1803, the charter of St. John's Lodge was confirmed and endorsed and so began the 2nd period of St. John's Lodge history. The next 5 years were very prosperous for both Freemasonry as well as Newburyport, until an embargo caused the ports to be unusable until 1810. Then, as fate would have it, the great fire of 1811 followed by the War of 1812 caused great hardship for Newburyport and its citizen.

In 1834, like many lodges of the time, St. John's Lodge relinquished its charter to the Grand Lodge thus ending the 2nd historical period.

In 1844, seventeen former St. John's members met and organized the restoration of the charter of St. John's Lodge. Thus beginning the 3rd (and current) phase of St. John's Lodge history.