

Preface

This volume contains the first ten issues of *The Phylaxis* magazine—magazines that set the tone for a research, historical, and educational society that, at this writing, is in its fifth decade of research, history, and education. I have said publicly that freemasonry made me a better man, and I can now say that the Phylaxis Society made me a better mason. I wonder even now what the world would be if every man could be a mason, and how much better still if every mason could reap the benefits of a society such as this.

This compilation encapsulates the spirit upon which the Phylaxis Society was built and it should serve as encouragement and inspiration to any Prince Hall mason who studies it well. Take your time. This is not a task to be rushed. This compilation has the power to transform, and when you are transformed, as I think you will be, you owe it to those masons you love to help them with their transformation. This volume should be required reading for Prince Hall masons, but because this is no trivial task, your insistent encouragement will be needed to motivate your brothers to the effort.

We say we are seeking light, but more to the point we are seeking *truth*—that fundamental tenant of Freemasonry we call a divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue. Join with us. “You will know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.”

Several articles in this collection justify the cost of this publication. The articles by Alexander Clark (volume 2, number 5, page 135) and Martin Delaney (volume 2, number 6, page 160) show why they are considered giants in Prince Hall masonry. The Delaney article is a

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true work of art. One might take issue with details of its historical narrative, but for those inclined toward his point of view, Delaney makes a strong case for the African origin of Freemasonry (volume 2, number 6, page 160). The poetic voice of Alexander Clark shines brightly in the Masonic classic published in volume 2, number 5, page 135. The silver tongue of Alexander Clark might just be strong enough to convert a hostile audience to his point of view. Ira Holder became the first fellow of the Society, and his papers, featured frequently in early editions, prove him worthy of the honor. Then there are the papers of Joseph A. Walkes, Jr., the Society's second fellow, founder, and first president, who has an incredible sense of history. It is clearly his tireless investigation, examination, and exploration that allows him to discover the pearls of wisdom we find in this volume and to craft masterpieces of his own as he does time and time again. I call your attention to his address to the Conference of Grand Masters (volume 2, number 7, page 171), not for its artistry or historical significance, but because it sets out the way Prince Hall masons can benefit from an active association with the Phylaxis Society and the reason that Prince Hall masons should be strong supporters of the Society and its goals.

Please take your time with the collection. Get to know Prince Hall from his charges to African Lodge and from his letter book, all of which you will find within these pages. Get to know the early giants of masonic thought from their words. The more you study this volume, the more rewarding the experience will become. Then consider, there are a dozen more collections to come covering the period from 1977 to the present.

John B. Williams, FPS, Life
Editor

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