

**Prince Hall named Founding Father of the United States by city of Cambridge.  
October 20, 2008, R-20**

It has been almost 3 weeks since Mayor Simmons introduced a resolution in Cambridge City Council proclaiming Prince Hall a “founding father.” The term “Founding Father” has often been used by historians to refer to a small group of men who held power in the United States during the confederacy. The “Founders” represented property and position, criterions that led to the exclusion of many people with equally valiant contributions to the founding of the United States. The resolution adopted by the Cambridge City Council notes that recently the term “founding father” has also been used to recognize those who challenged principles of democracy, civil rights, and equality during the founding of this nation. History has often unfairly overlooked or excluded the significant contributions of African Americans, Native Americans, and women of every color in the founding of this nation. Many of these patriots gave their lives to free this nation from British colonial rule, so that all might enjoy the privileges of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Prince Hall was one of these less known but no less notable individuals who helped to define this country's values. Prince Hall was one of the first civil rights leaders in America: he led the effort to allow African American men the right to join the revolutionary army and was instrumental in creating the first school organized by African American citizens to educate African American children.

As the city prepares to erect a monument in honor of Prince Hall in Cambridge Commons, it is also time to declare Prince Hall a “Founding Father” of the United States of America. This monument shall also honor all those African American patriots---men and women of the revolutionary era in the thirteen colonies---who sacrificed their lives for the cause of freedom in this nation while being denied full citizenship based solely on the color of their skin.

To read the full text of the resolution, please visit the City Council website at [www.cambridgema.gov/ccouncil](http://www.cambridgema.gov/ccouncil).

For more information about Prince Hall, please visit [www.princehallmemorial.org](http://www.princehallmemorial.org)

**Prince Hall Memorial Groundbreaking  
Saturday, September 13, 2008  
Cambridge Common, Washington Rotunda**



From Left to Right: R.W. Raymond Coleman, Prince Hall Grand Lodge Historian, Captain Harry G. Orcutt, Aleppo Shrine Minutemen, Past-Junior Grand Warden Ernest A. Pearlstein, Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Prince Hall Brother Red. T. Mitchell, Jr., Mayor E. Denise Simmons, past-R.W. Earl W. Cole, Jr. (13<sup>th</sup> District), and M.W. Brother Leslie A. Lewis, Massachusetts Prince Hall Grand Lodge, A. & F.M.

*Photo and text provided by Captain Harry G. Orcutt*

On Saturday, September 13, 2008, Mayor E. Denise Simmons, Chair of the Prince Hall Memorial Committee, convened with fellow committee members, and with members of the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge, to break ground in honor of Prince Hall. It was truly a memorable occasion.

Prince Hall has cast a momentous shadow throughout this country's history. He is thought to have been born in 1735 (although, due to the institution of slavery, records of his birth and early years do not exist), he died in 1807, and he contributed so much to the world in the years between. Prince Hall was one of the very first African-American men to become a Mason in America, and he would go on to found African American Freemasonry. This became so

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identified with its founder that "Prince Hall Freemasonry" has become a global institution. Through this institution, we have gained a better understanding of US History, and of the history of the African Diaspora.

Prince Hall was a trailblazer in so many ways. He combined his influence as a Masonic leader with his talents as a community builder to help better his country. For example, he helped organize the writing of antislavery petitions that were presented to the Massachusetts government; he helped publicize and draw attention to the problems of racism and its impact upon African-American unemployment; and he opened the first school in Boston for African-American children. Prince Hall was also heavily involved in fighting to establish the rights of slaves and ex-slaves in the Cambridge/Boston area. He was also a popular caterer and leather craftsman, and those important functions kept him visible in the community and helped him build trust among his community.

Cambridge, MA is honored to serve as the location for the very first memorial that recognizes Prince Hall, a man who helped establish the foundations of a Civil Rights Movement that reverberates to this very day. In celebrating Prince Hall – a man who was nearly lost to history – we celebrate all those nameless, faceless, and forgotten African-American patriots of the Revolutionary War period who helped shape this country. This memorial shall serve as a permanent reminder of all the achievements and efforts bestowed upon us by these brave men and women.

The proposal for a monument on the Cambridge Common was presented by then-City Councilor (now Mayor) E. Denise Simmons, on September 12, 2005, which is Prince Hall's observed birthday. The Cambridge City Council unanimously approved the proposal. With the site having been chosen, an external committee has been established to choose an appropriate artist. The artists shall be instructed to submit designs for a memorial that can be completed by August 2009. The process to commemorate this important historical figure has been a long and winding one, but the final product promises to be well worth the effort.

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