

ATLANTIC BROTHERHOODS: FRATERNALISM IN TRANSCONTINENTAL PERSPECTIVE (18TH-EARLY 20TH CENTURY)

GERMAN HISTORICAL INSTITUTE

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Freemasonry was an important element in eighteenth-century European sociability and fraternalism. Yet, from the outset it was also an essentially transcontinental, even almost global phenomenon. Soon after it had taken shape in early eighteenth-century England and while it was rapidly spreading across Europe, the fraternity pushed its borders far beyond the borders of the European continent. Within less than a century, Masonic lodges were linked through a vast and ramified network reaching the Americas, the Caribbean, the African coast, and South Asia.

In all these places, freemasons drew on a cosmopolitan ideology defining their lodge network as a universal brotherhood of mankind and a place for fraternal sociability and friendship among people beyond religious, political, social, national, and cultural boundaries. In doing so, freemasonry emerged as the most visible and most significant element of a larger trend: other fraternities, though smaller in size and extension, started to establish similar transcontinental long-distance networks, making fraternalism and cross-border sociability an important, though often overlooked aspect of early modern and modern World History.

The workshop seeks to examine these cross-border and long-distance dimensions of freemasonry and other fraternal organizations by focusing on one of Freemasonry's most important zones of expansion in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: the Atlantic World. Though never studied in a systematic way, Masonic and other fraternal organizations were a central feature of the different Atlantic empires and emerging nations; they were closely intertwined with all kinds of voluntary and involuntary Atlantic mobility; they were an important feature of Atlantic port cities in Europe, the Americas, West Africa, and the Caribbean; they intersected with various professional, political, ethnic, or religious networks stretching across the ocean; they became involved in the turmoil of Atlantic revolutions, wars, and the struggles around slavery and its abolition. By addressing these understudied connections, the workshop explores the role fraternal networks and other forms of fraternal sociability played in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Atlantic. It sets out to show to what extent the Atlantic World has been shaped by fraternalism, and how, in turn, fraternalism has been shaped by the Atlantic World. While concerned with empirical research, the workshop should also stimulate discussions on how the fields of a global history of freemasonry/fraternalism and Atlantic History relate to each other and on the potential methodological benefits from their combination.

This workshop invites scholars specializing in the history of freemasonry/fraternalism or in Atlantic History to make a contribution

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- the role of fraternalism within or across different Atlantic empires or their dissolution;
- the relationship of fraternalism to Atlantic migration and mobility, both in its voluntary and involuntary forms: professional, traveling, settlement, military, exile and flight etc.;
- the intersection of fraternalism with other Atlantic networks, e.g. of merchants, slave traders, diasporas (e.g. the Huguenots, the Jewish diaspora);
- fraternal organizations and sociability in Atlantic port cities;

- freemasons and fraternal organizations and the Atlantic revolutions;
- African-American and black freemasonry and their transatlantic connections;
- the relationship of fraternalism to slavery, slave trade, and abolitionism;
- fraternalism and masculinity, women's participation in fraternal organizations and networks, and other gendered dimensions of Atlantic brotherhoods.

The two-day workshop seeks to bring together advanced PhD students, young and senior scholars from the fields of Atlantic History and the history of fraternalism/freemasonry. The discussions will be based on pre-circulated papers submitted five weeks in advance. The workshop will be conducted in English.

Please send a short abstract of no more than 400 words and a brief academic CV with institutional affiliation in one file by March 31, 2015 to Jessica Harland-Jacobs (harlandj@ufl.edu) and Jan C. Jansen (jansen@ghi-dc.org).