

Mariners Lodge No. 385 – A New Lodge in Jacksonian New York City



In the telling of the tale of New York City's growth, Oliver Street does not attract exceptional notice. It only attracts our attention because of the existence of a place called Union Hall, which

is where Mariners Lodge No. 385 held its earliest meetings. No trace today remains of the Oliver Street that would have been familiar to any of the Brethren.

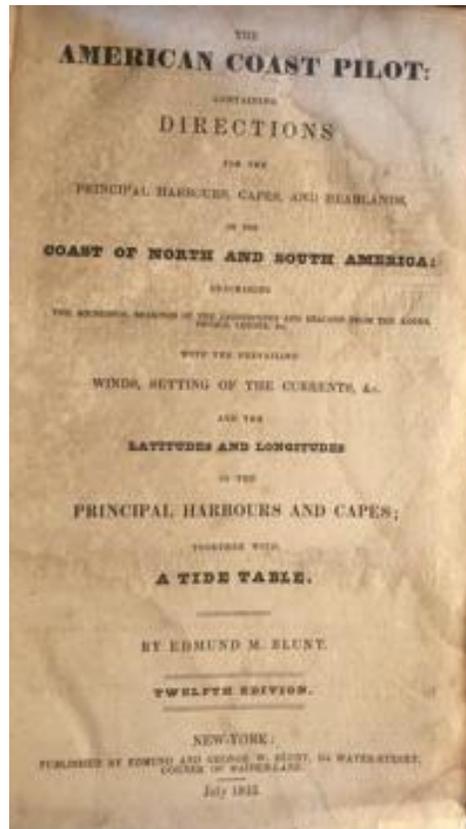


Originally, fairly large tracts of City land were controlled by the DeLancey family, many of whom were commissioned officers of the British Army up to the rank of General. One such was Oliver DeLancey, the man from which the street derived its name in 1819. The family joined the diaspora of loyal British subjects following the conclusion of the Revolutionary War and left the City.

The street then experienced first urbanization, then successive waves of gentrification and abandonment. This has been true up to the present day: Oliver Street, which once extended uninterrupted to the shore, has been truncated by the erection of public housing; the Smith Houses, started in 1950, which required the demolition of any extant traces of that section of the street. The row houses, as you head west, were built around 1910-1920.

Originally, the most notable building in the area wasn't particularly distinguished; a plain, two-story Georgian building, the Oliver St. Baptist church, erected in 1795 on two plots of land on the north side of the street, this section then known as Fayette Street (which was part of the farm of Hendrich Rutger, after whom Rutgers University is named). In 1822 it was renamed the

Olive Street church, when Oliver Street was extended to Chatham Square. And after it burned down in 1843, it was rebuilt as the Mariner's Temple Church, as it remains today.



Our first Worshipful Master, George Arnold, was a pilot by trade, a vital skill for the burgeoning ship trade passing through New York, they having committed to memory the currents, channels and obstructions of the waters that led, from the open sea, into safe harbor at one of the multiple docks ringing the island.

Thomas Longworth's "American Almanack" answered the need to locate an individual's current address. Published annually, it required legions of canvassers to go door to door, noting the name of the principal householders and their profession, often listing both business and home address when different. Tracking someone down could still be a task, there being no reverse directory. Br. Arnold, for example, lived at 39 Roosevelt in 1820, 9 Batavia 1822-24, 7 Doyer in 1825, 100 Oliver 1829, 96 Oliver 1830, and 40 Oliver in 1833, all in a 5 square block radius.

LIST of Lodges in the city of New-York and its vicinity, with their officers and time and place of meeting.

Name	No.	Master	Senior Warden	Junior Warden	Secretary	Treasurer	Meet. on	Meet. at
St. John's	1	Lewis Seymour	C. Ripley	James Westervelt	Wm. N. Seymour	Smith Grant	2, 4, Thursday	Union Hall
East Royal Arch	2	Richard Farnell	Wm. R. Ross	Jacob Wickoff	Alex. Boyle	A. Freeman	2, 4, Monday	City Hotel
St. Andrew's	7	Jon. C. Hart	Samuel H. Rogers	John Sheldon	J. L. Sackley	H. W. Peckwell	2, 4, Friday	Tammany Hall
St. John's	10	John Largey	John J. Winkle	Daniel M. Loan	Levi White	Alex. Dwyer	2, 4, Wednesdays	Union Hall
Hiram	16	Chas. H. Ferris	John R. Leonard	John Montgomery	A. B. Rich	James Bertine	1, 3, Tuesday	Union Hall
Hudson	18	Wm. DeLafield	Trs. Barrett, jun	Isidore Kortright	Robert U. Long	Charles D. Lloyd	1, 3, Tuesday	City Hotel
Howard	21	(cooperative)						
Trinity	23	James G. Funn	E. Deenan	John C. Simms	William O'Leary	Gilbert Lewis	2, 4, Monday	St. John's Hall
Phonix	24	James D. Stevenson	J. C. Williamson	S. Mott	J. C. Curry	Benjamin Mott	2, 4, Wednesday	Tammany Hall
L.U. Franciscan	71	Edouard Millon	René Fardoux	Joussime Delamar	Antoine S. Petit	Augustus Perret	1, 3, Friday	City Hotel
Fortitude	81	Levi Porter	J. Vandyke	Daniel Sturm	J. T. Watson	G. Little	1, 3, Monday	Brooklyn
Abrams	83	Wm. Cheeverman	James A. Reynolds	J. Hawley	D. Miles	James Webster	1, 3, Monday	Calton Hall
Washington	84	David H. Wood	Wm. D. Morgan	F. Vandewater	J. B. Camp	Asker Martin	1, 3, Tuesday	St. John's Hall
Warren	85	(cooperative)						
Adelphi	91	George Schlot, jun	O. M. Lownds	George Barrell	J. Bell	H. Anderson	2, 4, Thursday	City Hotel
Fraternity	102	Thomas Cleary	Harris Blood	James Depeyster	John S. Borlett	Wm. H. Hardy	2, 4, Tuesday	City Hotel
Morton	104	Joni Curtis	J. M. Laughlin	P. Brewer	John Hewitt	Ed. Aron	1, 3, Thursday	St. John's Hall
La Sincérité	122	Joseph Bouchard	Francis Salmon	Hypolite Laine	James Albion	James Hilly	1, 3, Monday	City Hotel
Monia Mariah	122	Abraham Frutze	James Heaton	J. Gasser	John M. Leary	G. W. Fryer	1, 3, Thursday	Union Hall
Benevolent	142	James Spruz	Alex. Casades	D. G. Nevill	S. G. Lowe	Henry Marsh	2, 4, Tuesday	St. John's Hall
Clinton	143	Anthony W. Jones	L. Deceufres	M. Hoyt	E. Cooke	D. Hart	2, 4, Monday	Union Hall
Mechanic's	153	Leonard Denby	Gilias Higgins	W. J. Sumner	Thomas Holden	Earth Grainger	2, 4, Tuesday	Union Hall
New Jerusalem	158	James Flaughts	Samuel Bennett	Joseph Cole	John Moore	S. Hewitt	2, 4, Tuesday	Brooklyn
Canaan	204	Leban Chapman	S. Higgins	Nial Blountard	I. E. Williams	Zophar B. Jarvis	1, 3, Thursday	Tammany Hall
German Union	222	Julius Trueman	G. Meany	J. St. Loy	Charles Lesinger	F. Jagger	1, 3, Wednesday	Union Hall
Hamburden	223	Abthar Young	Joseph G. T. Hunt	J. Sprague	E. Worthington	J. N. Smith	2, 4, Monday	Brooklyn
Hibernia	228	S. Byrne, resigned	Edward Copeland	Robert Stewart	W. Manning	Ed. Hamilton	2, 4, Wednesday	St. John's Hall
Silencia	273	Samuel Danian	Thomas G. Potter	Henry Masley	E. Dennisson	H. Battersho	1, 3, Monday	St. John's Hall
York	287	John W. Timson	Niel Gray	Uriah Weinman	Edw. N. Trilber		1, 3, Tuesday	City Hotel
Flourish's	293	Val Vandewater	Augustus H. Bands	Charles St. John	M. W. Knop		2, 4, Thursday	Union Hall
Manhattan	270	Robert Young	Henry F. Downer	John Doughty	Isaac O'Neil			St. John's Hall
Hiberna	271	Ferd. I. Wilroy						

Union Hall was already a familiar meeting spot for the Brothers who came together to petition the City Grand Lodge for the Charter to form Mariners Lodge No. 385. Longworth's Directory of residents for 1824/25 was the last to feature a section on the Masons of New York, listing Lodges, officers and meeting places. Of the thirty-two Lodges in the city that year, nine met in Union Hall (the other main locations being St. John's Hall, Tammany Hall, and City Hotel).

One of the frustrating aspects of any historical research is that primary resources usually won't answer the question that a student or historian most wants answered. This is certainly the case with Mariners Lodge and Union Hall. We know the name of the building and we know it was prominent in this neighborhood. But it is often the things generally known that are never noted, and such is the case here. Longworth's names the building in the above illustration, and as shown below the minutes of the Lodge note it as the meeting place in every entry.

At a Regular Meeting of Mariners Lodge No. 385 held at Union Hall on Wednesday Evening 13 Sept. 1826

Present George Arnold W. C. H.
James F. Harding W. P. J.
John F. Davis W. P. J.

However, there is never any mention of the street address, nor the name of the proprietor (who is always referred to, when negotiating a new lease, as simply the proprietor). Going through consecutive years of the Directory, there are two likely candidates, and further research should nail down which location is the correct location and proprietor. The first is Edward Harris, who was located at 35 Oliver St. in 1825, near to the corner of Madison St., the building listed as a refectory, or dining hall; the other was Selah Waterbury, located at 92 Oliver, NE corner of Cherry St., employment listed as tavern.

None of the other buildings on the street, nor a list of occupants compiled, would allow for them to be considered as the location of Union Hall. In general, it would appear that the streetscape was predominantly that of three-story buildings, commerce on the ground floor, rooms to rent behind and above. There was a scattering of private residences as well, if the enumeration residents is substantially correct.

Both of these addresses were located within a massive building, or rebuilding, of Oliver Street that occurred in 1819/1820, as documented by the Longworth's for 1820/1821 in its addendum of addresses too late to enter into the main directory, the predominance of which were the names and addresses on Oliver Street.

Just for context, the street would not yet been supplied by gas lights in 1825. The New York Gas Light Co. had only been incorporated in 1823, and by 1825 only Broadway far to the west had been completely lighted. This is also borne out by a regular expenditure of candles by the Lodge to be used for illumination.

In 1838, a committee formed of Past Masters Waydell, Moore and Harding chose a new location for the Lodge to meet, in a new building owned by a Brother Barnes at Canal Street near Broadway. Mariners Lodge said farewell to Union Hall April 25, 1838.

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W.: Leon Calafiore, Past Master