

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT: LINDA PATCH

781-862-6541

LPATCH@MONH.ORG

**The National Heritage Museum Presents
“The Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts:
Celebrating 275 Years of Brotherhood”
Opens March 22, 2008**

On July 30, 1733, Henry Price, the Provincial Grand Master of North America constituted the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts in Boston. Celebrating its 275th anniversary this year, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts is the oldest Masonic jurisdiction in the western hemisphere. As part of the celebration, the National Heritage Museum will open “The Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts: Celebrating 275 Years of Brotherhood” on March 22, 2008. The exhibition will trace the history of the state’s Grand Lodge, which grants charters, undertakes charitable activities, and standardizes Masonic rituals and customs throughout its jurisdiction. The exhibition will be ongoing.

Within its first ten years, the Grand Lodge chartered lodges not only in Massachusetts, but also in Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Antigua, Nova Scotia, and New Hampshire. As the only Grand Lodge granted authority by the Grand Lodge of England to charter additional lodges in the New World, Massachusetts led the way in spreading the light of Freemasonry. The maritime industries of Massachusetts also helped the Grand Lodge to extend its influence internationally during the 1800s and the 1900s. As merchant, fishing and whaling ships spread across the oceans, the Grand Lodge was petitioned to charter new lodges: in 1853, the Grand Lodge granted a dispensation for a lodge in Chile; in 1863, it was China; and in 1912, the Grand Lodge chartered a lodge in Panama.

Back home in Boston, the current Masonic Temple stands at the corner of Tremont and Boylston Streets. The Grand Lodge first purchased the land at this spot in the late 1850s, when Winthrop House stood there. Unfortunately, devastating fires occurred twice – in 1864 and in 1895 – forcing the Grand Lodge to rebuild each time. Despite losing some of their furnishings and belongings, the Grand Lodge Library (opened in 1850) and Museum (established in 1887) continued to collect books, documents and objects to tell the story of Freemasonry in Massachusetts and to preserve its treasures for future generations. Today, the Museum collection has grown to over 12,000 objects and documents, while the Library contains 70,000 volumes. The new exhibition at the National Heritage Museum draws on this fascinating collection and includes more than 150 objects, photographs and documents from the Grand Lodge’s history.

“The Grand Lodge of Masons in Massachusetts: Celebrating 275 Years of Brotherhood” presents the story of the Grand Lodge from 1733 to the present day. Firmly tied to the state’s unique history, the Grand Lodge has counted hundreds of thousands of

Massachusetts men among its members from Revolutionary War heroes Paul Revere and Joseph Warren to sports commentator Curt Gowdy and former pro football player Russ Francis. Visitors will travel through time to meet fascinating people, enjoy festive celebrations and learn about the symbols and traditions of Massachusetts Freemasonry.

National Heritage Museum is dedicated to presenting exhibitions and programs on a wide variety of topics in American history and popular culture. The Museum is supported by the Scottish Rite Freemasons in the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the United States. The National Heritage Museum is located at 33 Marrett Road in Lexington, at the corner of Route 2A and Massachusetts Avenue. Hours are Monday through Saturday from 10 am–5 pm, and Sunday, noon–5 pm. Admission and parking are free. Heritage Shop and Courtyard Café on site. For further information contact the Museum at (781) 861-6559 or visit the web site at www.nationalheritagemuseum.org.

###