



THE SUPREME COUNCIL

(MOTHER COUNCIL OF THE WORLD)

ANCIENT & ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE OF FREEMASONRY, SOUTHERN JURISDICTION, USA

July 1, 2026

Dear Brothers,

The shot heard 'round the world in 1775 led to the greatest socio-economic-political-religious changes the world has ever known. It was and still is, freedom.

Freedom, as we understand it was truly founded in the United States of America the moment the last signatures were dry on the Declaration of Independence. North Carolina celebrates what Joseph Hewes, William Hooper, and John Penn did 250 years ago. Hewes settled in Edenton. Hooper lived in Wilmington. Penn settled in Granville County. North Carolina's history is laced with the Spirit of '76 in Mecklenburg and Halifax County. We are the beneficiaries of those who risked everything for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

With freedom comes responsibility. We are responsible for protecting the work our founding fathers and mothers were willing to give their lives for long ago. At the same time, we have a responsibility to adapt to the times in which we live. Borrowing from Sovereign Grand Commander Cole's messages, I doubt any of us would take the horse and buggy to a lodge meeting today.

Scottish Rite Masons oppose fanaticism in religion and politics. To this charge, we shall not retreat. The freedom I have is the same freedom you have. It involves rights to assemble, speak, and so many other inalienable rights our founders gave to us. We must preserve them in a spirit of humility, gratitude, and love for both our Creator and one another.

Freedom. Responsibility. When we the people unite with a common understanding of the inseparable nature of freedom and responsibility, the world will be a better place. That is what the founding fathers envisioned 250 years ago. I also believe if we assume the light of unity, then that light, as President John F. Kennedy said, "will truly light the world."

As we celebrate our nation's 250th anniversary, let us remember the words of President Abraham Lincoln who told us what the light of unity really was when he said, "with malice toward none, with charity for all." Happy Fourth everyone!

 *Alfred Cott* 
Sovereign Grand Inspector General
in North Carolina