

A Short History of Table Lodges and Festive Boards in Freemasonry

The old saw that “the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach” is probably true, as we men have from time immemorial, loved our food and beverage. Wherever the ancient lodges of Masons met, whether in the lean-to lodges attached to the buildings they were erecting, in the homes of the patrons of the various buildings they had come to build, or many other places, it seems that by the 16 and 1700’s, the tavern or ale house became a favorite gathering place for lodge brothers to assemble, and there to have their meetings.

In England, prior to 1717, there were several lodges which met within the City of London and surrounds. Four of these, known as The Old Lodges, or Lodges of Time Immemorial, met in taverns for their regular communications: The Goose and Gridiron Ale House; The Crown Ale House, The Apple Tree Tavern, and The Rummer and Grapes Tavern.¹ In 1716, at a meeting in The Apple Tree Tavern, apparently on December 27, a decision was made to organize and constitute a Grand Lodge which would govern and stabilize the practice of speculative freemasonry in England, and would call the brethren back to the old practice of a quarterly conference and twice yearly observance of “The Feasts of the Craft.” Such a gathering was held on June 24, 1717 at The Goose and Gridiron Ale House, and The English Grand Lodge of Freemasonry was constituted that day.²

It is easy to see today what the esoteric and philosophical reasons for these two specific feast days might have been. The summer feast marks the apogee of the sun to the zenith, and the longest day of the year. For a fraternity which uses light as a teaching symbol, and which in its inception was purely Christian, this day would be symbolically important. The winter feast marks what was or seemed the shortest day of the year, or the perigee of the sun’s heavenly course, and prepared for the new *die natale Solus Invictus*, the birthday of the Invincible Sun (or Son).

There is a suggestion by some historians that the call for a re-institution of the Annual Feast may have been the most important thing that the new Grand Lodge could have done. Not long after this call to revive the feast, Grand Master Sayers ordered that “the old, regular, and peculiar Toasts and Health’s of Freemasons” be used at the banquet.³ It is without doubt that either from the practice of holding the Great Feasts, along with their formal toasts and “healths,” that the Table Lodge and Festive Boards arose, or that, as the brethren were already at table in an upstairs or otherwise secluded room in the tavern, that the rituals would be worked in that space.^{4-a}

One masonic historian notes, “In eighteenth century lodges, the feast bulked so large in the lodge that in many of them the members were seated at the table when the lodges were opened and remained at it throughout the Communication, even when the degrees were conferred.”^{4-b}

What was the draw of the tavern and alehouse for the Mason of the day? While gentlemen of the day had their clubs and fine townhouses and estates to find solace from poverty and squalor, the public houses, inns, taverns and ale houses provided an opportunity for the common man to meet. There they could hear the latest news, shop-talk or gossip; eat a sumptuous meal of cheap meat, cheese and bread; and lift a beverage which would muddle the head and delight the heart. Here they would be provided a moment of gathered friendship and insulation from the ravages of 16th and 17th century England’s daily grind. At the tavern, the publican could offer beyond the tasty food and

frothy tankard, a relatively private room in which friends could gather to meet and discuss fraternal business of the day.⁵

Further, feasts were mentioned in minutes of several of the old lodges wherein the brethren would gather following an “entering” or “passing” of a man, and the lodge would gather about the “festive board” to honor both the brother initiated or passed, and to use the time to teach the work of the fraternity.

“The result,” says masonic historian and writer H. L. Haywood, “was that Masonic fellowship was good fellowship in [the lodge], as in a warm and fruitful soil, acquaintanceship, friendship, and affection could flourish—there was no grim and silent sitting on a bench, staring across at a wall. Out of this festal spirit flowered the love which Masons had for their lodge. They brought gifts to it, and only by reading of old inventories can any present day Mason measure the extent of that love, there were gifts of chairs, tables, altars, pedestals, tapestries, draperies, silver, candle-sticks, oil paintings, libraries, Bibles, mementos, curios, regalia’s and portraits. The lodge was a home, warm, comfortable, luxurious, full of memories, and tokens, and affection, and even if a member died, his presence was never wholly absent.”⁶

It was clear that no one had to be reminded or even encouraged to go to lodge, for that was a haven of rest, relaxation, learning, enjoyment, and refreshment.

“What business has any lodge to be nothing but a machine for grinding out the work. It was not called into existence in order to have the minutes read. Even a mystic tie will snap under the strain of cheerlessness, repetition, monotony, dullness. A lodge needs a fire lighted in it, and the only way to have that warmth [was] to restore the lodge Feast, because when . . . restored, good fellowship and brotherly love will follow, and where good fellowship is, members will fill up an empty room not only with themselves but also with their gifts.”⁷

Laurence Dermott, the well-known Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of the Ancients in England, (prior to the union of the two Grand Lodges) and author of *Ahiman Rezon*, the Constitutions of Masonry according the Grand Lodge of Ancient Freemasons, stated this in the mid 1700’s about the Table Lodge:

“It was expedient to abolish the old custom of studying Geometry in the Lodge, and some younger Brethren made it appear that a good knife and fork, in the hands of a dexterous Brother, over proper Materials (food), would give great satisfaction and add more to the conviviality of the Lodge than the best Scale and Compasses in Europe.”⁸

Clearly, this was an early introduction of the terms “Knife and Fork Mason” or the “Knife and Fork Degree” which we jokingly use today.

*I do not attend the meetings
for I’ve not the time to spare.
But every time they have a feast
you will surely find me there.*

*I cannot help with the degrees
for I do not know the work.*

*But I can applaud the speakers,
and handle a knife and fork.*

*I'm so rusty in the ritual,
it seems like Greek to me.
But practice has made me perfect
in the Knife and Fork Degree*

Brother Richard L. Kurtz⁹

Table Lodges, as far as can be ascertained from rituals, minutes, etc., were organized in “peculiar” or specific orders and patterns which reflected the festive nature of the lodges. The lodges, being formed around and meeting at dining tables, conducted their meetings so that neither the ritual interfered with the serving, nor the serving with the ritual of the lodge. While hilarity and fun were enjoyed by the brethren, the esoteric as well as the common teachings of the fraternity were shared among the brethren. The Table Lodge was apparently traditionally tiled as an Apprentice’s Lodge, and followed a specially tailored or modified ritual which would allow all Apprentices and Fellows to enter upon the enjoyment of the fellowship of the Lodge.¹⁰ Brother Beresiner notes in his book *1723 and all that*, “. . . since June 1717, Freemasons were doing pretty well, regularly meeting at taverns, dining and drinking whilst learning the ritual and conducting the ceremonies.”¹¹

One writer, in an introduction to Table Lodge protocol for his Grand Jurisdiction, suggests that in the fledgling United States, the Table Lodge was among the greatest assets of Masonry during the colonial period. With the political and economic problems of the day, the festivities, camaraderie and just pure individual and group support lifted the spirits of the Brothers of the Craft when times were at their worst.¹²

It is interesting to note at this point that while the facts to the story are sparse and tend to be vague, the traditional history of a severely shortened meeting of St Andrew’s Lodge in Boston at a particular tavern suggest that lodge’s major role in a famous “Tea Party” which may indeed have been planned over bread, cheese and ale at a Table Lodge by brothers in a particular Tavern in old Boston.¹³

A fitting fact, whether St. Andrew’s Lodge helped to host a “Tea Party” following a Table Lodge or not, when Table Lodges are in session, traditionally the objects in the room take on a military “flavor.” The Table becomes the “Trestleboard.” Table cloths become “Standards,” as in “flags.” Plates are “tiles,” dishes are “platforms,” spoons are “trowels,” knives are “swords,” forks are “mattocks,” and bottles become “barrels.” The glasses used, especially certain glasses used for toasts, are called “canons.” Please take time to look at the English Firing Glass I have brought today. Filling up the “canon” glasses is “to charge” the canon. Lights, particularly candles, are called “stars,” chairs are “stalls,” food is “materials,” and bread is “Rough Ashlar.” Red wine is “strong powder,” water is “weak powder,” salt and pepper are “sand” and “dust” respectively. To eat is to “masticate.” To drink, following the term for the glass as a “canon,” is “to Fire” or “Discharge” the canon.¹⁴

For any number of reasons, the room is arranged in a specific pattern, at least according to all but one of the rituals which this researcher has found. That separate ritual also gave the “usual”

arrangement, with an alternative setup, but it was noted that the separate setup was to accommodate abnormally large groups.¹⁵

Normally, the tables are set up in an “open ‘U’ shape, with the Worshipful Master seated at the center or apex of the “U.” The S W and the J W are seated at the far ends of the ‘U’ on the right and left respectively as one looks out from the apex. The brethren are seated on the outside of the ‘U’ with particular places assigned for the Chaplain, and other officers and special visitors. With this arrangement, the stewards or serving brothers will have ease of access to each dining brother, and whatever activity is in progress at the time of serving each course can proceed without interruption. If this is to be a Table Lodge rather than a “Festive Board” which is the hearty banquet following a tiled meeting in a lodge hall, and historically most often following a degree conferral, the Altar should be set up in the lower middle of the open ‘U’ in front of the WM, with the three G:. L:. around it as appropriate for the Jurisdiction in which it is being held.¹⁶

While the ceremonies for a Table Lodge as well as those for a formal Festive Board (which is generally functionally only differentiated by whether it is tiled and opened with the formal lodge ceremonial opening) are not well known among most Masons, the forms go back over three centuries in English, Scottish, Irish, and French Freemasonry. Twelve toasts or “Healts” were proposed in some of the rituals. Seven is the most usual number of toasts presently used. Following the proposal of a toast, except for certain ones which preclude such, a response is normally given by the honoree or a designee. Brother Yasha Beresiner, in one of his publications (*Masonically Speaking: A Guide for Craft and other Speech Making*; e-mailed excerpts from the author), notes a not uncommon situation which was true in the 1700’s and is still true today:

The brother responding on behalf of the visitors had exceeded his allotted time and had the appearance of planning to go on for some time yet. The Master signaled his Warden with the gavel, implying that a gentle tap to the speaker’s head may encourage him to sit down. The Warden, obedient to his Master’s command crept behind the speaker, and as he was about to hit him, tripped and the gavel landed on the head of a brother sitting next to the speaker. Knocked semi-conscious, he slid under the table and was heard to say, “Hit me again! I can still hear him speak.”¹⁷

The toasts and the proposers (according to one system) are

- 1st To the President of the United States
- 2nd To the Most Worshipful Grand Master and Most Worshipful Grand Lodge
- 3rd To the Worshipful Master of the Host Lodge
- 4th The Senior and Junior Wardens
- 5th To the Brethren in the Armed Forces
- 6th To the Other Officers and Visiting Brethren
- 7th To All Masons Wheresoever Dispersed Over the Face of the Globe¹⁸

A second form is

- 1st To Our Country proposed by The WM
- 2nd To Our Gentle Craft proposed by the JD
- 3rd To Our Departed Brethren proposed by the Chap

- 4th To the Worshipful Master proposed by the SW
- 5th To the Grand Lodge proposed by the JW
- 6th To the Local Lodge (Name and #) proposed by a visiting WM or a local PM
- 7th To Our Visiting Brethren proposed by the SD
- 8th To the Initiate(s)/Passed Brother(s)/Raised Brother(s) proposed by a recent recipient
- 9th The Tiler's Toast (the LAST toast of the evening) by the Tiler. This toast is to all Masons where-so-ever spread over the face of the globe, and may be oriented toward "our absent brethren." There is never a response speaker to this one.

Note that toasts '7' and '8' may be unnecessary on some evenings. The toasts may be specially composed for the evening, or one of the traditional prepared toasts may be used. The response by an appropriate Brother should not be over a few minutes in length, else the indented paragraph above might come into full "indenting" use.¹⁹

The seven toasts prescribed by the Grand Lodges of British Columbia, Iowa, and several other Grand Jurisdictions (with appropriate modifications) are very similar, follow old rituals, and provide an excellent framework for use in other Grand Jurisdictions. 1st the President of the United States; 2nd The Most Worshipful Grand Master and the Grand Lodge of your state; 3rd The Worshipful Master of the Host Lodge (and may include all present sitting Masters); 4th The Wardens of the Host Lodge (and may include all sitting Wardens); 5th Past Worshipful Master of the Host Lodge (and may include all visiting Past Masters), 6th All other Officers, new initiates and Visiting Brethren; 7th The Tiler's Toast to all Masons where-so-ever spread over the face of the globe and all absent Brethren.²⁰

As an important note, the Grand Lodge of Tennessee prohibits the use of alcoholic beverages in masonic buildings and the use of such in any degree work except under certain well controlled conditions in certain rites which historically require small amounts to be used. Even then, alternatives must be provided for those who require it, or steps must be taken to allow the initiate/candidate to receive the ritualistic work without use of the beverage to the detriment of his health or conscience. While wine has been the beverage traditionally used in Table Lodges and at Festive Boards, other beverages can and should be used when there is any doubt as to the permissibility or appropriateness of use of wine. Grape juice, cranberry juice, and of course, water (the elixir of life) are appropriate.²¹

One of the rituals which has been consulted suggests a six course meal wherein the seven toasts are offered throughout the meal, and keeping the eating and toasting moving throughout the evening. The courses are suggested to allow for an adequate number of courses to fit the ceremonies, but to avoid creating a large, expensive, or difficult to prepare and serve meal. The courses suggested are, COURSE 1 (a) a small glass of an appetizer juice such as apple, cranberry or tomato, (b) a small wedge of cheese and two or three crackers, and (c) a few meatballs or cocktail sausages. With this course will come Toast 1. COURSE 2 (a) a small fruit salad, (b) a small sherbet, (c) a three bean salad. Toast 2. COURSE 3 (a) soup. Toast 3. COURSE 4 (a) fresh green garden salad with choice of dressing. Toast 4. COURSE 5 (a) Main Entree, such as braised chicken breast with steamed vegetables and rice, or sliced Beef Brisket with potato and vegetables. Toast 5. COURSE 6 (a) dessert. Toast 6. A speaker might be asked to make his presentation immediately after the dessert has been consumed. If there are only five courses, the first toast will commence the meal. Whichever way is chosen, the Seventh and last toast is the very last to come before the closing ritual or prayer,

and traditionally is offered at or as close to 9:00 p.m. as possible.²²

There are historically military “maneuvers” to be executed before and following each toast or “firing.” While these may seem “silly” to some brothers, the system has been in use for more than three hundred years, and is a physical and kinetic connection to the actions, attitudes, and even beliefs of our more ancient brethren, just as the strange and sometimes less well understood words and actions of some of our degree ceremonies are equal connections with “antique masonry.” According to “the orders for toasting” as put out by the Grand Lodge of Maine, adapted from one of the English systems, the Master, or whoever proposes the toast, following the statement of honor (to whom the toast is made), says, “Right hand to arms” when the members touch their right hands to the “firing” or wine glass. “Ready” at which the members raise the glass with outstretched arm. “Aim” at which the members bring the glass to their lips. “Fire, Good Fire, Fire All” where the members drink in three distinct motions. “Present Arms” at which the members return the glass to the ready position. What follows is an interesting and very English maneuver. In quick time, the glass is carried to the left shoulder, the right shoulder, and to the outstretched position three times, then horizontally to the left, to the right, and to the table with some force, though not enough to shatter the glass. Note that the firing glasses are often specially made or engraved with the names and numbers of the lodges, and can be quite expensive. Following release of the glass, a battery of three times three follows with VIVAT said loudly three times.

There is also, in formal occasions, a “sword manual” which can follow using the table knives. Here the order is given “Advance Swords!” at which the brethren raise the table knife with the arm extended over the table. “Poise Swords!” at which the knife is elevated slightly. “Salute with Swords!” at which the handle of the knife touches the bearer’s chin. “Swords at Rest!” at which the brethren strike the table with the knife. The same three times three battery is given followed by the same “VIVAT,” which is tantamount to wishing long life to the brother saluted or toasted.²³

Available online, from the publication divisions of several Grand Lodges, from various appendant Masonic Bodies in the United States, as well as from this researcher or, if I am so directed by the officers of this Lodge of Research, from its Secretary or other officer, is a compendium of different rituals from many Grand Jurisdictions and their related directions which can be used to set up either a “Table Lodge” (if it is approved by the Grand Master of the Jurisdiction) or for a Festive Board following a Masonic Communication. Many of the ritualistic items, while similar in some ways to actual Masonic Ceremonies in opening, closing, or conferring degrees, could be slightly adapted, should the lodge so desire, to be used with profanes and lady guests present. I have attended at least one such “Ceremonial and Catered Festive Boards” here in Tennessee.

This last statement brings me to the crux of this paper. I have, over my thirty-eight years of being a Mason, had the pleasure of being welcomed into the Scottish Grand Lodge Hall, and the Scottish Grand Chapter/Council and Great Royal Order of Scotland Hall. I have been welcomed into the halls of The United Grand Lodge of England and of various English Lodges. I have been queried and welcomed into many Grand and Subordinate or Constituent Lodges across the United States. To witness the ceremonies and rituals, the regalia and the furniture of these lodges, to see and hear the “Living History” of the brotherhood has been exciting and wonderful. But to witness and get to know and celebrate the fraternity and the *reality* of brotherhood brother to brother over a table with food and beverage, has been most rewarding of all.

I wish to quote a few lines from Brother Yasha Beresiner, who has been cited previously in this paper. Brother Beresiner is a noted writer in London, a guide to London's points of interest, a brother Mason, and a close friend of one of my first met English Brothers, Brother Christopher Nicholls, PM, and currently Secretary of Coopers Old Boys Lodge #5211, my own lodge by "British Honour" in London, England.

"When you browse through the history of our remarkable craft," says Brother Beresiner, "you will find it impossible to get away from eating, drinking, food and speeches from the very start. After all, organized Freemasonry began in June 1717 around a dining table at the Goose and Gridiron in London, and seven decades earlier, in the early evening of the 16th October, 1646, Elias Ashmole wine and dined, following his initiation in Warrington (his father-in-law's home)." (*Note received by e-mail*) "The majority of lodges have always had some refreshment after their meetings. Outside of London in the 18th and 19th centuries where the brethren would have had some distance to travel, meetings were held during the day or as near to the full moon as possible....The repast in an ordinary Provincial Lodge would have been informal in the 1800's. Extant records give the menu: cottage loaves, cheese, pickled onions and large quantities of beer in a warm and friendly ambience. London, the metropolis that it was by Victorian times, had a greater concentration of lodges and Masons and held far more elaborate dinners. The fact that the Victorian middle classes were big eaters is reflected in the surviving menus, especially of Installation and Consecration meetings. It would not be unusual to have a menu with ten courses, giving alternative choices for many of the dishes and a selection of wines and liqueurs to assist with digestion.

Music was very much part of the Masonic dinner scene of the period. Anderson, in his first Constitutions, encouraged it by publishing words and music for the benefit of the brethren. Available [written] records of the mid-1700's show members of the lodge singing to the accompaniment of a violin or flute. Towards the end of the century and start of the nineteenth in London and other large cities such as Manchester and Birmingham, well-known professional performers, string quartets, solo violinists, cellists, and male and female vocalists, were hired to entertain the brethren. They all offered their services in contemporary advertisements published in the Masonic press."²⁴

While the Table Lodge (and Festive Board) are certainly part of our fraternal history, this writer is convinced that these are items which deserve our attention again. Smaller lodges, and sometimes some of the larger ones have given up on such an activity as the regular festive board before or for preferable reasons including assuring that brethren do not leave before the enjoyment of the feast begins, after meetings or the occasional Ceremonial Banquet because of time or effort. Some have given up because brothers want to have a short and cursory "just read-the-minutes meeting" and go home, with no time for banter, boiled beef, beverage OR brotherhood. These are also often the lodges whose membership is dwindling, and the lodges and brethren who wonder how long they will be able to remain viable lodges. When we are able to find methods of increasing the camaraderie and interest in our members, to get them intrigued as to what the evening's monthly program might be, and who might be visiting, the joy of lifted spirits in dining together, and the exciting sharing of old times and new friends and brothers, this researcher believes we will find new life and excitement among the ranks of the members of Our Gentle Craft, and within our Lodges. The writer of the article on "Table Lodge History and Ritual" for Phoenixmasonry Incorporated, states: "The Table

Lodge is the summary of Masonic Doctrine. It prescribes reverence for Divinity and the Moral Law. It strengthens the devotion that Masons hold for the Lodge and Country. It increases the unity and fellowship of the Craft."²⁵

Brethren, Feed the Mind, Feed the Body, Feed the Soul....Feed and Grow Masonry!

About the Author

The Reverend Donald Edgar Brooks, KYGCH, 33°

Most Illustrious Past Grand Master, Cryptic Masons of Tennessee, 2003-2004

Illustrious Brother and Reverend Donald Edgar Brooks was born into the home of the Reverend Weldon F. Brooks, a Baptist Minister, and Edna Mae (Taylor) Brooks, a nurse, in Alvin, TX, in 1946. Don completed High School in Woodlawn, Tennessee and later graduated from Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, Tennessee with a BA in English/Speech & Theater. He taught one year in the Clarksville-Montgomery County school system; then moved to Saulsbury, Tennessee, and taught school for ten years in the Hardeman County schools, leaving the classroom to become Director of Psychological Services. He earned his Masters in Education in clinical counseling and a Master of Arts in School Psychology from the University of Memphis. He was ordained a Deacon, then an Episcopal Priest in 1982, later enrolling in St. Luke's Seminary, School of Theology, The University of the South at Sewanee, where he earned his Graduate Certificate in Anglican Studies. Father Brooks has served several congregations as Vicar or as Rector; as a special assistant and Pastor to the Bishop of West Tennessee, Examiner in Liturgical Theology, Homiletics and Canon Law for those seeking ordination in the Episcopal Church; Diocesan Program Director for Ministries in Small Congregations; and Diocesan Chaplain to the Order of The Daughters of the King, an order of sisters in the Episcopal Church. He is Director of the Emergency/Disaster Preparedness and Response for the Diocese, and has served as a Justice on the Church Ecclesiastical Court.

Additionally, Brother Don has served as Chaplain to the Brownsville Police and Fire Departments, the Haywood County Sheriff's Department, and the Haywood County Emergency Management Agency. He moved to Union City, Tennessee, where he serves as Rector of St. James' Episcopal Church, Associate Chief Chaplain and Chaplain Training Officer for the Union City Police Department. He is a member of the Tennessee Public Safety Network Emergency Response and Debriefing Team, and served in this capacity with the Tennessee Team on the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina. He is Vice President of the Obion County Ministers' Alliance. Don has assisted Temple Adas Israel, Brownsville, (the oldest continuously functioning Jewish Congregation in Tennessee) as part-time visiting Cantor, and has written and had published a comprehensive history of the Congregation and served as a tour guide for their historic building.

Brother Brooks was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason in June, 1970 in Berlin Lodge, # 170, F & AM, Saulsbury, Tennessee. He served as Worshipful Master during 1976, becoming a plural member in 1998 of Ed Worsham Lodge #505, Brownsville where he served as Worshipful Master in 2005. Don served the Grand Lodge of Tennessee as Grand Chaplain in 1996, and received appointment as Representative of the United Grand Lodge of England to the Grand Lodge of Tennessee in 1998.

Active in the York Rite Bodies of Tennessee, Don received the distinction of Knight York Cross of

Honour in Tennessee Priory #15 on March 27, 1979 and he has served as the Grand Chaplain/Grand Prelate in the Grand Chapter, the Grand Council, and Grand Commandery of Tennessee.

He served as Worthy Patron of both Ruth Chapter #35 and Haywood Chapter # 357, Order of the Eastern Star and is a member of Faith Court #15, Order of the Amaranth; The Royal Order of Scotland; Tralee Council #41, Knight Masons; West Tennessee College #141, York Rite Sovereign College and the recipient of the Grand York Rite College Service Award in 1998. Don is a Knight Companion of St. Stephen's Conclave, Red Cross of Constantine; Nicholas E. Oldham Council #378 Allied Masonic Degrees; Zaman Grotto, MOVPER and Al Chymia Shrine Temple; The Philalethes Society; the Scottish Rite Research Society; the Tennessee Lodge of Research, where he is a published author; Life Member of the West Tennessee DeMolay Alumni Association; recipient of the DeMolay Legion of Honor (HLOH) 2006; and is a former Rainbow Chapter Dad, and has been elected to membership in The Commemorative Order of St Thomas of Acon.

Brother Brooks is a member of the Scottish Rite Bodies of the Valley of Memphis, Orient of Tennessee where he has served as Chaplain to the Bodies, and is a ritualist and member of the Director's Staff. He was decorated a Knight Commander of the Court of Honor in 1979 and coroneted as an Inspector General Honorary, 33° December 13, 1999, and in 2007 was appointed Chanter for the cast of the Thirty-third degree team.

In the Grand Council, Cryptic Masons of Tennessee, Illustrious Brother Brooks was elected Grand Captain of the Guard in March of 2000 and progressing each year to be elected as Most Illustrious Grand Master on March 24, 2003.

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