

**TENNESSEE LODGE OF RESEARCH
F. & A. M.
ANNUAL PROCEEDINGS**



2007—WILLIAMS

**2006 ANNUAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
TENNESSEE LODGE OF RESEARCH
F. & A. M.**

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EDITORIAL NOTE: The Forum Section

The Forum Section of the Proceedings is included for the exchange of opinions and comments on matters of Tennessee Freemasonry or on the contents of the Proceedings. We invite your opinions and comments and will include them in the Annual Proceedings of the Tennessee Lodge of Research.

Commentaries should be type written and titled and suitable for correction using standard Microsoft Word Processing. All comments should have the author's name and Lodge attached. They can be sent electronically to the Secretary at the following email address: gladd32@hughes.net.

The Editorial Committee

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Articles submitted for publication in the *Tennessee Lodge of Research Annual Proceedings* should be type written in Microsoft Word or a compatible program. Margins should be 1 inch on the right, top, and bottom, 1½ inch on the left. Page numbers should be centered at the bottom without embellishments.

The entire document should be in 12 point Times New Roman font, including the title, which should be centered at the top of the page in **Bold**. The **By** Line should be centered as should the author's full **Name**.

All quoted or paraphrased material should be cited parenthetically, and all sources should be listed on a Works Cited page. Parenthetical citations, notes, and Works Cited should follow the guidelines found in *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6th edition*. An overview of general MLA guidelines may be found online on the "MLA Guide" from Long Island University: <http://www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/workshop/citmla.htm>.

The Editorial Committee

ESSENES

By

Bobby Gene Pollard, Past Master,
Unitia Lodge No. 295, Friendsville

PART ONE

It is now over 75 years since the Brotherhood of the Essenes first appeared before the public again, and it was in England that it was decided that they should make their first appearance on this Aquarian occasion. Today of course, more than 75 years on they exist in many other parts of the world as well, but England still continues to be their Headquarters for very important spiritual reasons. The commencement of the Brotherhood's public appearance for the Aquarian Age therefore, took place many many years before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the inevitable explosion of interest in the subject made the name "Essenes" a household word.

Once again, with the appearance of the Essenes, the teachings of the New Age, that is of the Aquarian Age, are being released to those who seek Truth, the Way, and the Life. In exactly the same way as the Christ when he walked the earth gave his knowledge and this teachings to all who came to him and asked the way, so in a similar manner does the Brotherhood of the Essenes of today offer to every person of every creed, high or low, rich or poor, the vast wisdom of the ages, to help and guide the footsteps of all towards and unfolding and understanding of the mysteries and revelations of God's Divine Plan.

The time is inevitably coming when the Spiritual leader for the Aquarian Age will appear before the world. And as was clearly stated before, this time it will be the return of Christ himself with Power and Glory, and with the Heavenly Host. 'Yes' the Brotherhood of the Essenes appreciates the immensity of that statement. "The return of Christ is nigh." We realize it because it is one of the reasons why we are here, but do you? And do you realize all the implications of that statement?

Some of the occult truths connected with this coming event have already been given out, while others are still being slowly released. Likewise, some of the teachings of the incoming Aquarian Age are now in the public domain. This time much of the new teachings is connected with the Animal Planes and the true place in the Divine Scheme of all Animal Life on this Earth. The Animal Planes in the Kingdom of God being of the most vital importance and for this reason the mystic veil on this important subject will be raised still further in due course.

Some of the teachings, much of which is very old but has never been released in public before, are contained within the authorized publications of the Brotherhood. Some are available at present, for example the various parts of 'The Essenic Light,' Part 1 for example deal with the structure of the human personality, while Part 7 partly lifts the veil and reveals some of the secrets of The Animal Kingdom.

If you are not satisfied with yourself, and if we are honest who is, then it is as well to know the structure of the edifice that you propose to change before taking any action, for despite current thought it can be changed, and in the vast majority of cases it really ought to be changed for the better!

Once you want to change, and you believe that it is possible to effect that change, then you

need to know the mechanism whereby that change can be effected, and this is a part of the Essenic teaching. For example practical help of an occult nature can be obtained by attending the Annual Convocation and Divine Service of the Essenes which is held at Glastonbury Somerset on 21 st June every year.

Since the archaeological discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1946, the word “Essene” has made its way around the world--often raising a lot of questions. Many people were astonished to discover that, two thousand years ago, a brotherhood of holy men and women, living together in a community, carried within themselves all of the seeds of Christianity and of future western civilization. This brotherhood--more or less persecuted and ostracized--would bring forth people who would change the face of the world and the course of history. Indeed, almost all of the principal founders of what would later be called Christianity were Essenes--St. Ann, Joseph and Mary, John the Baptist, Jesus, John the Evangelist, etc.

The Essenes considered themselves to be a separate people--not because of external signs like skin color, hair color, etc., but because of the illumination of their inner life and their knowledge of the hidden mysteries of nature unknown to other men. They considered themselves to be also a group of people at the center of all peoples--because everyone could become part of it, as soon as they had successfully passed the selective tests.

They thought, and rightly so, that they were the heirs of God’s sons and daughters of old, the heirs to their great ancient civilization. They possessed their advanced knowledge and worked assiduously in secret for the triumph of the light over the darkness of the human mind.

They felt that they had been entrusted with a mission, which would turn out to be the founding of Christianity and of western civilization. They were supported in this effort by highly evolved beings who directed the brotherhood. They were true saints, Masters of wisdom, hierophants of the ancient arts of mastery.

They were not limited to a single religion, but studied all of them in order to extract the great scientific principles. They considered each religion to be a different stage of a single revelation. They accorded great importance to the teachings of the ancient Chaldeans, of Zoroaster, of Hermes Trismegiste, to the secret instructions of Moses and of one of the founding Masters of their order who had transmitted techniques similar to those of Buddhism, as well as to the revelation of Enoch.

They possessed a living science of all of these revelations.

Thus, they knew how to communicate with angelic beings and had solved the question of the origin of evil on the earth.

One of their major preoccupations was to protect themselves from any contact with evil spirits, in order to preserve the purity of their souls. They knew that they would only be on earth for a short time, and they did not want to prostitute their eternal souls. It was this attitude, this strict discipline, this absolute refusal to lie or compromise, that made them the object of so much persecution through the ages.

The Essenes considered themselves the guardians of the Divine Teaching. They had in their possession a great number of very ancient manuscripts, some of them going back to the dawn of time. A large portion of the School members spent their time decoding them, translating them into several languages, and reproducing them, in order to perpetuate and preserve this advanced knowledge. They considered this work to be a sacred task.

The Essenes considered their Brotherhood-Sisterhood as the presence on earth of the Teaching of the sons and daughters of God. They were the light which shines in the darkness and which

invites the darkness to change itself into light. Thus, for them, when a candidate asked to be admitted to their School, it meant that, within him, a whole process of awakening of the soul was set in motion. Such a soul was ready to climb the stairs of the sacred temple of humanity.

The Essenes differentiated between the souls which were sleeping, drowsy, and awakened. Their task was to help, to comfort, and to relieve the sleeping souls, to try to awaken the drowsy souls, and to welcome and guide the awakened souls. Only the souls considered as awakened could be initiated into the mysteries of the Brotherhood-Sisterhood. Then began for them a path of evolution that could not stop anymore through the cycle of their incarnations.

Everybody knew the Brothers and Sisters in white. The Hebrews called them "*The School of Prophets*"; and, to the Egyptians, they were "*The Healers, The Doctors*". They had property in nearly all of the big cities; and, in Jerusalem, there was even a door that bore their name: the door of the Essenes. Despite some fear and joking, due to the rejection of that which one does not know, the people as a whole felt respect and esteem for the Essenes because of their honesty, their pacifism, their goodness, their discretion, and their talent as healers, devoted to the poorest as well as to the richest. They knew that the greatest Hebrew prophets came from their lineage and their School.

Moreover, even if the Brotherhood was very strict about the law of secrecy with regard to its internal doctrine, it cultivated many points of contact with the people, notably through places of lodging for the pilgrims from every horizon, through helpful actions in difficult periods, and especially through the healing of illnesses. These places of primary teaching and of healing were located in precise areas where people could go freely.¹

PART TWO

The Ancient Essenes--Origin Of The Order

Essene, from the Hebrew root, (Esan, to be strong) because they exhibited strength of mind, in enduring suffering, and in subduing the passions; the Essenes were an order of the Jews, and the fact that they developed themselves gradually, and at first imperceptibly, through intensifying the prevalent religious doctrines, render it impossible to say precisely at what time they were detached from the general body. Josephus, however, speaks of them as existing in the days of Jonathan the Macabaeon, (B.C. 143). He also mentions an Essene who delivered a prophecy in the reign of Aristobulus I; (B.C. 106). As we find no reliable record of them previous to B. C. 150, that is doubtless very near the date of the origin of the Order.

When they ultimately withdrew from the rest of the Jewish nation, the majority of them settled in Samaria, along the Jordan, and the rest lived in scattered communities throughout Palestine. Both Philo and Josephus mention them as being very numerous at this time. They were divided into two classes, the first devoting themselves to a life of contemplation, and studying the mysteries of nature and revelation; the second engaging in some daily handicraft. They were ruled by a Rabban, assisted by a Rabbi and a Rab, who were chosen by the whole body (*Rabban*, from the Hebrew *master*. *Rabbi* from the Hebrew *teacher*, and *Rab* from the Hebrew *assistant teacher*).

They divided the twenty-four hours into three parts: a portion of which was devoted to the service of God and the relief of the needy and distressed, a portion to their usual avocations, and a portion for refreshment and sleep.

They rose at early dawn and offered up the national prayer for the return of the light of day, after which they betook themselves to their respective vocations and engagements, under the

superintendence of the Rabbans and Overseers. At the sixth hour, or twelve noon, the labor of the forenoon terminated, and all reassembled, bathed in cold water, after which they put on their white garment, entered their refectory with as much solemnity as if it were the Holy Temple, and sat down together in mysterious silence to the common meal. When seated, the priest invoked God's blessing upon the repast, after which the baker placed before each one a small loaf of bread, and the cook a dish of plain food. At the conclusion of the meal, the priest offered up thanks to the Bountiful Supplier of all our wants. This was the signal of their dismissal, when they withdrew, put off their white garments, and resumed labor again until the eleventh hour (or five o'clock, as we reckon time). On the Sabbath they assembled in the synagogues, where they were seated according to their age, the younger sitting below the elder in becoming attire, and listening with due attention. Then one takes up the Sacred Volume and reads a portion, whilst the Rabbi expounds.

But as they were completely esoteric in their doctrines, they omitted the most mysterious portions, which were only taught in the Hadoth, or place of secret meetings.

As a sect they were distinguished by an aspiration after purity, and were confounded in the popular estimation with the great body of the zealous observers of the law.

As an Order they were distinguished by the following principles and observances: A love of truth and sobriety; love to God and man, made manifest by religious zeal and kindly acts towards each other; always aiding the needy—and to this end they had stewards in every place where they dwelt, to supply needy brethren with food and raiment, and as a means of recognition they had certain signs and pass words, by which they presently recognized each other.²

They were divided into three grades, or ranks, and when a candidate applied for admission, his character was scrutinized with the greatest severity, and if found worthy, he was admitted to the first grade, when he was presented with a white garment and girdle. He then remained in a state of probation and trial for one year, during which time, although he lived according to their customs, he was not admitted to their secret meetings. At the termination of this period he was advanced to the second rank, with its consequent rights and privileges; but he was not admitted to full fellowship until after another year of probation, when, if still found worthy, he was advanced to the third rank, and invested with all the signs, pass-words, and privileges of the Order. On his admission he was required to take upon himself a solemn oath or obligation, the heads of which were as follow: To exercise piety towards God and justice towards men; to shun the wicked and emulate the good; to show fidelity and obedience to those in authority; to be a lover of truth and a reprover of falsehood; to keep his hands clean from theft, and his soul from unlawful gains; to conceal nothing from the Order, nor disclose any of their secrets to any one in any other manner than he received them; and lastly, to carefully guard and preserve the Sacred Books and Symbols belonging to the Order.

Modern Essenism

Of the revival of Essenism and its introduction into this country, the principles of the ancient sect were adopted by the new Order here as a basis for their creed and government, together with the following Ritual, which is here given to assist us in becoming bright and zealous workers on the symbolic structure here below, to the end that we all may be the better enabled to eventually enter that Spiritual Building—that House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Now as in ancient time, the candidate for admission to the Order has to pass through a noviate of two stages

of twelve months each.³

On his admission to the first grade, the following rites and ceremonies are observed: First, the Rabban ascends the dais and calls the brethren to order, and commands the Rab to see that all of the approaches to the Hadoth are duly guarded, so that the profane may not gain admission. Then the Rabbi invokes the blessing of Deity on their labors (during which time all in reverence bow), and closes with Amen, to which all respond, Amen. So mote it be.⁴ There is a lot more ritual that is very similar to Free and Accepted Masonry. This causes me to wonder if they were the forerunners of masonry as we know it today.

¹ “The Essenes Today.” The Brotherhood of the Essenes. 7 Sept. 2007.
<<http://www.essenes.org/Essenes.swf>>.

² Redding, Moses Wolcott. Ecce Orienti: An Epitome of the History of the Ancient Essenes, Their Rites and Ceremonies. New York: Redding and Co, 1870. 1-12.

³ Redding, Moses Wolcott. Ecce Orienti: An Epitome of the History of the Ancient Essenes, Their Rites and Ceremonies, National Series. New York: Redding and Co, 1889. 15-16.

⁴ Redding, Moses Wolcott. Ecce Orienti: An Epitome of the History of the Ancient Essenes, Their Rites and Ceremonies. New York: Redding and Co, 1870. 12-13.

Editor's Note: The 1870 edition of Ecce Orienti: An Epitome of the History of the Ancient Essenes, Their Rites and Ceremonies is available in its entirety on the web at <http://books.google.com>.

MASONIC LODGE PARTICIPATION

By

Gerald W. "Jerry" Brooks, Past Master
Ingleside Lodge #1361 AF&AM, Grand Lodge of Texas
Gregory Lodge #998 AF&AM, Grand Lodge of Texas

The time has arrived to open the stated meeting of "Forget Me Not Lodge #896"* and the Brother Secretary turns and looks at the Worshipful Master and asks who will take a particular station for the meeting. As they look around the room to see who was available there was no one there, they were alone. Here is a lodge with over 200 dues paying or endowed members. While there was no one who had gone suspended for non-payment of dues this year and when asked there were those who said that they would be glad to fill these stations and places last June. Well of course at the Installation of Officers many of those who said that they would serve didn't show up to be installed. Sometimes the promises we have made to our Brethren to be there ends up to be just a bit short of the length of our "cable-tow". Brethren, this is an indeed all too frequent reality in the lodges and other Masonic appendant bodies across this state. Of course there are some lodges that do not have this problem, but they are too few and too far between to have a real impact on the fraternity. However, as the wheel of fortune with time turns, these same lodges who have active participation now will soon feel themselves the abandonment of their members; who will just become dues paying members. Many of our Masonic bodies today are just being held together by a small dedicated few who are devoted to Freemasonry. It is true that when we check the rosters of the lodges they do indicate that some members live far away and are not able to come; some of the members are older and unable to attend due to their age; but a closer examination reveals that there are a significant number who live close at hand and just can't seem to find their way to the Lodge, Scottish Rite, York Rite or Shrine. Freemasonry just does not seem to mean as much to them as it once did, or at least seemed to have meant to them at the time they joined.

Not too many years ago our Masonic bodies were filled with active Brethren. It was for a vast number of reasons that they came and worked in the bodies. They had many members just waiting in line to fill the chairs, which led to the leadership of their particular Masonic Body. Then it was different, for the new Mason was interested and it was the thing to do. But in today's world there are so many more distractions and different activities than we had back in the 50's and 60's. Back then television was new and many activities also included the family. Today the younger generations are bombarded with the number of different activities available to them. There are more "electronic toys" and games, the pressures are great to just keep the family going, and other factors come into play. The pressures of the job are greater than we seemed to have had in years past. Business operates at a faster pace than ever before. Society has speeded up and activities abound for this generation. We haven't been very attractive to the younger generation so our memberships are now growing much older. Many members of our Masonic bodies are well over 60 years old. The younger generation has been raised to be "on the move" so to speak and it is go, go, go. It is also sad to note that the commitment to our churches and the civic groups have declined as well. These younger men "just don't have the time" to devote to Freemasonry. That is at least what we have been told. So what do we do about it?

One of our problems is when it comes time to elect officers you can hear the cry among a few of the old Past Masters that "so and so just isn't qualified to be such and such officer, he hasn't been

around long enough.” We are frozen in the past, when we had an unlimited supply of members to choose from. So it comes down to who will take the office or position and actually serve? It might interest you to know that Benjamin Franklin became Grand Master of his Grand Lodge in 1734, just three years after becoming a Mason. It was a custom for new Masons to rise quickly in their lodges back in that period of expansion. Many of our Masonic bodies today have elected and appointed officers that never or seldom show up for the regular meetings. Many bodies have a hard time getting enough members to put on a degree, reunion, festival or ceremonial. Fortunately, usually some friendly Brothers from other lodges or body come and fill in for that degree. In the Scottish Rite they are unable to put on all of the degrees in a large number of the Valleys because there are not enough interested Brethren to fill the degree teams. The same is true in the Blue Lodge and York Rite. This extends into the Order of the Eastern Star, where many Chapters merge with other Chapters because of the lack of participation by their members.

The active Masons today are becoming fewer and fewer, and when non-active members are asked, when they will come to lodge their usual response is either to give an excuse or some vague promise of “soon”. It has become a truism to say today that if a regular lodge meeting has 10 percent of its members attending on a regular basis they are doing exceptionally well. As our membership grows older and more Masonic Funerals are held, there will not be an active member left, just dues paying members to an organization that cannot meet or hold a meeting because no one is left who knows how to conduct a meeting. We will become like that lodge mentioned at the beginning of this paper, which by the way ended up merging with another lodge. If the stated goal of Freemasonry is to take good men and make them better men, how does it make us better men if we all decided to become “just dues paying members?”

We have all heard many voices lift up the cry that “Freemasonry has to change with the times.” Then my question becomes “Just exactly what does that mean?” Every organization has to conduct the business of the organization. We must meet, pay our bills, vote on petitions and conduct the usual boring business of the Lodge. We must do these functions as all organizations must do. So do these voices echoing this cry simply mean change the requirements for membership? Or, on the other hand, do they mean to change the requirement for maintaining membership? Or just what does this pronouncement really mean?

The memory work has most often been mentioned as the problem of why so many Entered Apprentices never progress. If these changes are done then by what method do we use to teach Freemasonry, or do we need to teach the candidate anything at all? How and by what method do we teach the lessons that make a good man better? We hear that age is another often-expressed answer of why we are not growing in members. Well, is the reduction of the age requirement the way to go? There are visions of curing the problem after every Grand Lodge. Idea after idea has come and gone without success. And once we do get these marvelous new Masons will they become active members? Will any of these changes help us in getting member to attend and participate in the lodge and its activities? Have such changes made an impact on the local service organizations? Will these changes help us get the kind of men who will take responsibility for their actions and lead the lodges into new vistas of glory? I wonder. According to Rule # 172 of the Book of Constitutions of the United Grand Lodge of England no one can receive the degree unless four weeks have passed. Their Constitution has been around for a very long time and they seem to have better participation in their lodges than we do. Why is that?

So what is the answer? There is a Bible presentation around that has a most profound statement: *“WILL YOU BE WORTH ANYTHING OR NOTHING TO FREEMASONRY OR WILL*

FREEMASONRY BE WORTH ANYTHING OR NOTHING TO YOU? The answer to that question lies within you yourself alone. Brethren, there can only be one answer. It is the members who have voluntarily presented themselves at the doors of Freemasonry and asked to be made a Mason who must take the initiative and become active within the Fraternity. Our current members are the ones who will make or break this fraternity. They, the card carrying members are the only ones who can keep Freemasonry an important part of human society. Freemasonry will remain alive only as long as the members live up to their obligations taken at the altar and really ***“become a true and faithful Brother among us”***. It is the example we set for that new Mason in deciding what is important about Freemasonry. If we do not attend, then why should he? If Freemasonry is not important enough to the majority of members then why should he find it so? Brethren, it is by our example that we lead our children in growing up to become decent human beings, and it is by our example that new Masons learn what is important in Freemasonry.

I will leave you with this thought taken from the first paragraph of *“A Brief Application of the York Rite to Daily Life”* written by ME Sam J. Helm, Past Grand High Priest of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Texas in 1924.

Masonry is an ocean of fraternity, and every Mason should sail its broad expanse, because its profound solemnity and matchless beauty can never be appreciated by those who merely wade in the shallows at the shore. The tides have rolled mighty waves upon its bosom, and the storms of centuries have lashed the billows into foam upon its surface, but beneath there have remained, undisturbed, and immutable, the principles of the Brotherhood of Man.

This is very good food for thought. As long as we who are the members decide to just “wade along the shore” our Fraternity will not survive. It will become just another ancient order whose time has past and has become a relic of history.

That my Brothers is a shame because the world will have lost one of the greatest philosophies of living a useful life, that of to help our fellow man. *Will the veil of the Temple be rent in twain, when darkness shall reign and the flaming star obscured and shadow shall overcome light, the columns and working tools of Freemasonry shattered and the True Word is lost?* Brethren, we must refocus and reaffirm our commitment to Freemasonry. It was those ideals we felt about Freemasonry when we became Master Masons that filled our hearts with joy. Return my Brethren to the source of joy and Brotherhood. For when the light of reason is extinguished and chaos reigns, we will have become no more than the beast of the field. Freemasonry is a light and our active Masons keep that light of *Relief, Truth and Brotherly Love* visible to our fellowman. We must re-ignite the fires of our current members that they may reflect the beauty and harmony of our Fraternity.

* Note: Forget-Me-Not Lodge #896 was a lodge of the Canadian–American Grand Lodge of the United Grand Lodges of Germany in Heilbronn, Germany. It has since merged with Solomon Lodge #822 in Stuttgart Germany. This is the lodge where I was made a Master Mason.

TALL CEDAR'S HISTORY **Whence Came We?**

Written by the late J. Edward Bullen, Past Grand Tall Cedar
Baltimore Forrest No. 45,
Supreme Historian 1970-1975

(Editor's Note: A video recording of Past Grand Tall Cedar Garry Owens' presentation on the Tall Cedars of Lebanon, delivered at the December 2007 meeting of the Tennessee Lodge of Research at Clarksville Lodge No. 89, is available on the electronic version of the 2007 Proceedings.)

Before going into the history of Tall Cedarism, I would like to quote the Preamble of our Constitution, which is not only adequate, but sometimes fills a need for those men who are our brothers through the great Masonic fraternity in which we progressed from the apprentice, fellow craft, and Master Mason Degrees.

“It is to promote wider acquaintances and friendship among men already bound together by fraternal vows, to perpetuate itself as a fraternal and social organization, and to provide for its orderly government.” In the good book it states “in the beginning.” And thus it is with the Tall Cedars of Lebanon—there was a beginning, just how and where is a moot question and a lot of it is conjecture, but some facts do come out of the wood (Cedar wood, i.e.).

Apparently it all started in 1843 with some very energetic and imaginative Master Masons who dreamed up the idea of a Tall Cedar Degree, and in those days the degree was called “The Ancient and Honorable Rite of Humility.” The name “Tall Cedar Degree” does not reveal itself other than the possibility of a somewhat shorter title than the aforementioned, and this was to remain as such until we adopted the title of “Tall Cedars of Lebanon of the United States of America” upon incorporation in 1902.

It was some time around 1846, after the meetings of the Grand Lodge and some of the Blue Lodges in the Pennsylvania and New Jersey area that they would have the Tall Cedar Degree performed, and from what I can gather, it was a form of hazing in which the candidates for the degree were gotten from those willing to receive it, and it was put on by those who had already received the degree. However, there was a great lapse of time and nothing was heard about this degree until the early 1850's when a Dr. Thomas J. Corson from the New Jersey area started conferring the degree, as he had received it in Philadelphia.

As you well know, around that time your only means of travel was the horse and buggy, and the train, so this degree was not performed often, but rest assured, whenever they had a good gathering of Master Masons, the Tall Cedar Degree was put on. It was always so much clean fun to see someone get the works, even as it is today. Some “Old Timer” spoke of a jury of men being housed in the hotel in a town in New Jersey that heard the Tall Cedar Degree was to be performed. The Deputy Sheriff being a Mason took those that were also Masons to see it performed and after it was over brought them back to the hotel. It must have been really something to go to all that trouble.

Upon the death of Dr. Corson in 1879 the Tall Cedar Degree was continued by Dr. Stevens, who organized the first regular degree team and went to several cities and towns throughout the New Jersey area performing the work.

It seems that Glassboro, New Jersey, was the focal point for the performance of the Tall Cedars Degree, for whenever they had enough candidates the work was put on. In 1887 Dr. Stevens and his

degree team came to the town and conferred the degree on Frank W. Bowen, Orlando M. Bowen, and thirteen other candidates. I mention the names of these brethren because they were part of the charter group that formed the Tall Cedars of Lebanon. Even today, the Pitman Masonic Club in Pitman, New Jersey is where the 34th degree is performed, and perhaps is the aftermath of the Tall Cedar Degree.

In similar manner as the 34th degree is now conferred, at Pitman Masonic Club on May 24, 1901, fifty-four Master Masons who had received the Tall Cedar Degree met in Glassboro, New Jersey, to watch and confer the degree on 53 candidates from Glassboro, Clayton, Williamstown, Manuta, Woodbury and Philadelphia, with the following as officers. They were Grand Mogul Frank W. Bowen, Vice-Mogul Jacob Bibo, Treasurer T.C. Allen, Secretary Dr. F.A. Stanger, Conductor S. Stanger Iszard, Assistant Conductor Charles W. Wood, Inside Announcer W.H. Jones, Outside Announcer B.T. Ferrell, Preparer of the Forest Bresier Westcoat, Jr., Chaplain Rev. John H. Algar.

I mentioned above officer's titles to give you an idea of what comprised Tall Cedar Degree Team. It seems that the library of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania has a manuscript in its archives written in 1864 by Brother William H. Adams, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge, recording the secret work, and a description of the degree.

Four Master Masons who received the Tall Cedar Degree later became Supreme Tall Cedars. They were Frank W. Bowen, and Orlando M. Bowen in 1887, David H. Lukens in 1888, and Johns S. Broughton in 1889. The above brethren along with several others (fifteen in all, charter members of our organization) assembled in the State Capitol of New Jersey, in the City of Trenton, on March 18, 1902 for the purpose of establishing a fraternal order to be known as the Tall Cedars of Lebanon of America for fun, frolic, and fellowship. These brethren felt that since this form of friendship and sociability occurred so infrequently and had little form, that by incorporating they could eliminate the haphazard, disorganized methods of conferring the Tall Cedar Degree and thus stabilize and preserve a worthwhile ceremony.

I honestly believe that in the Prologue and Royal Court we have one of the most beautiful ritualistic works, and we are indeed thankful to Rev. George S. Gassner who was instrumental in making up the ritual. It comes directly from the first book of Kings, Chapter 5 verses 1 through 10, and the second book of Chronicles, Chapter 2 verses 8 and 9. Of the two passages, the first book of Kings, Chapter 5 is more specific. It revolves around the building of the Temple of Jerusalem, and that King Solomon had to rely on the help of King Hiram of Tyre who sent his Hewers of Wood into the forest of Lebanon to strike down and shape all the tall cedars for use in the Temple. Thus the Tall Cedars of Lebanon have a biblical background, and performance of the Tall Cedar Degree in the Blue Lodges at the conclusion of their meetings brings us closer to our Masonic forbearance.

Thus, from March 18, 1902 to 1971, we are known as the Tall Cedars of Lebanon of the United States of America, However, on November 13, 1971, in our 70th year of existence, we instituted a Forest in Canada, and became known as the Tall Cedars of Lebanon of North America. While our strength of membership lies in the eastern section of the United States, we're slowly expanding westward.

All down through the years the Tall Cedars of Lebanon had, in one way or another, on occasion contributed to worthy causes. However they really became of age when they decided that "no organization could continue to prosper unless it had a definite uplifting objective for the benefit of humanity." These were the remarks of the Most Worshipful Grand Master Harry Campbell of Washington, DC in 1933. After years of investigation and research, in 1951 they found not only a worthy cause but one which desperately needed support—muscular dystrophy. Up until 1972 we

supported the Metabolism Unit on the tenth floor of the Research Center in New York City through our Contributions and Life Fund Memberships in the National Charitable Objective.

When the Metabolism Unit of the Research Center was closed in 1972, the Supreme Forest was advised that the Muscular Dystrophy Association and the Muscular Dystrophy Association of America were going to submit monies in the form of research grants to various universities and colleges in the search and cure for muscular dystrophy, and they would welcome our support in this endeavor. It was decided that the Tall Cedars of Lebanon of North America would become a part of this project with the Jerry Lewis Tall Cedar Day Camp in the summertime. Thus while one aspect of our National Charitable Objective fades away another one comes into the forefront, with the possible finding of a cure for the dreaded disease through the project and to provide for a little bit of fun for these children in the summertime.

Before I close I would like to leave this thought with you. Should you meet a Cedar wearing a pyramid upon his head, greet him, for he is always glad to extend to you the hand of friendship for he carries in his heart compassion, friendship and love for his fellow man—that is why he is a Tall Cedar.

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For more information about the Tall Cedars of Lebanon in Tennessee, contact:

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MASONIC HALL

By

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Past Grand Commander, Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Tennessee

(Originally published in the Fourth Quarter Proceeding of the Tennessee Lodge of Research 1993. Revised and edited 2008 by Thomas J. Driber, Ph.D.)

Editor's Note: Hiram Lodge No. 7 in Franklin will be observing its 200th Anniversary with special events during 2009.

Masonic Hall, built in 1823, is the oldest public building in Franklin, Tennessee. It has been used continuously by Hiram Masonic Lodge No. 007, F. & A. M. Over the many years since 1823 it has also been utilized by many local churches while their own church buildings were under construction. Because of the height of Masonic Hall in comparison to other buildings in Franklin at the time, it was used as an observation post by Confederate soldiers to scout activities at Fort Granger, a federal post located several hundred yards across the Harpeth River.



“It is good work, true work, and square work and worthy of renovation.” This was the report of the engineers, architects and a small group assembled in 1979 to decide whether or not to restore and renovate or to sell Hiram Lodge No. 007.

After notifying the membership of a called meeting to decide the matter, only twenty one members plus one visiting member attended to vote on the sale or restoration of Masonic Hall. The

vote tally yielded 20 to restore the building (which vote included the visiting Brother) and two to sell. Oddly, there seemed to be little interest amongst the members which totaled 272 members at that time. The attendance represented less than 10% of the members. By comparison, in 1815 there were twenty four Charter Members. Had only 10% of the charter membership agreed to participate in the initial building of Masonic Hall, it would not be standing today. It was through their efforts that permission was granted to hold a lottery for raising the necessary funds to pay for the building cost.

Not unlike the charter members, the group behind the restoration in 1979 began the restorative work as soon as funding began coming in.

It is difficult to validate much of the history of Hiram Lodge due to the loss of records during the War Between the States. That notwithstanding, the search for historical records has led to a fascinating interest in the founders of the building beyond the building itself. Without their knowledge and wisdom the building would never have been built in the first place.

The founders were prominent in national affairs beyond the affairs of the local and state community. As I will touch upon the record of a few of these founding brethren I find that the dream and reality of Masonic Hall or Hiram Masonic Lodge originated in the minds of the heroes of that period, both those unsung heroes and the decorated. They shaped the growth of the state and the nation and more especially, our Lodge, some even at the price of their life. In Pat Alderman's book, The Overmountain Men, we can find reference that principal participants in the battle of King's Mountain on October 7, 1780 included Thomas Hardeman, Joseph L. Campbell, and Thomas Montgomery, all later leaders of Hiram Lodge.

First on the tax list of 1783 in Green County, Tennessee, we find Thomas Montgomery's name. Both Montgomery and Thomas Hardeman participated in the North Carolina Assembly during November 1788. While both were "western delegates." Montgomery was a former "Franklinite" in favor of separation to form the State of Franklin while Hardeman was from Davidson County.

Other political participants and Masons of the period included not only Hardeman and Montgomery, but also Andrew Jackson, James Robertson, James McNairy, and Joel Lewis, who each participated in the political assembly held in Knoxville on January 11, 1796.

In the records of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina, F. & A.M., dated December 11, 1808, and on a motion made by Robert Williams, a Charter was issued in the name of Hiram Lodge No. 007 of Tennessee. That was the same Lodge shown in the North Carolina Grand Lodge archives as No. 055. The Charter was directed to Charles McAlister, Worshipful Master, Guilford Dudley, Senior Warden, and George Hulme, Junior Warden providing authority to open and govern said Hiram Lodge No. 007. Hiram Lodge then adopted a Resolution that, "a convention of Ancient York Masons be held at Knoxville on the first Monday in December A.D. 1811 to establish a Grand Lodge of Tennessee. Brother Archibald Potter was a Delegate from Hiram Lodge No. 007.

On December 27, 1813 (The Feast Day of St. John the Evangelist) the Grand Lodge of Tennessee was formed and "began its ascent" in Knoxville. Attorney Thomas Claiborne, also a member of the General Assembly of Tennessee, represented both Hiram Lodge No. 007 and Cumberland Lodge No. 008. He was subsequently chosen and installed as the first Grand Master of Masons for the jurisdiction of Tennessee.

Records in the Court House of Williamson County Located in Franklin, Tennessee indicate that during the time of 1812 Hiram Lodge was granted permission to meet in the Court House.

On May 27, 1814 a Dispensation was issued to Hiram Lodge No. 007 by Thomas Claiborne, Grand Master of Masons in Tennessee. It was issued to Charles McAlister, Worshipful Master,

Thomas Hiter, Senior Warden, and George Hulme, Junior Warden authorizing Hiram Lodge No. 007 to carry out Masonic work. In 1815 a handwritten Charter was issued, a copy of which now hangs on the wall behind the Secretary's desk while the original remains safely protected in a bank safe deposit box. (See End Notation)

On November 14, 1817 the Tennessee General Assembly, as noted in Chapter 154, allowed Hiram Lodge to conduct a lottery for the purpose of raising capital to build the lodge building. The lottery was successful in raising the necessary funds and the Lodge was built on Lot 34 in Franklin, Tennessee. Lot 34 was conveyed to Nicholas P. Hardeman by Peter A. Booker. To settle the estate of Nicholas P. Hardeman, Thomas P. Hardeman on February 15, 1821, paid to Mary N. Perkins the sum of Four Hundred and Fifty Dollars for her ownership interest in the Lot. It was then registered on March 1, 1821. In 1828 and later in 1832 the land deeds for Hiram Lodge, which were registered in the name of Thomas Hardeman, were then registered to Hiram Lodge and its members for the sum of Two Dollars.

In 1818 Oliver B. Hayes of Hiram Lodge No. 007 was appointed Deputy Grand Master and in 1819 was elected Grand Master of Masons in Tennessee. He was active in Masonry and filled many and various functions for many years. Many of the streets in Nashville are named for members of the Hayes family. It was Brother Hayes, as a representative to Grand Lodge in 1816, who initiated the movement for Lodges to make Masons in the higher degrees. From this movement Cumberland Chapter of Royal Arch Masons No. 001 was unanimously approved and chartered. Of some curious note along this line, in 1818 and again in 1819 the Grand Lodge was opened on the higher "fifth degree" or Past Masters Degree. Following 1819 it was never again referred to as the "fifth degree." One last note on Brother Hayes, it was he who was appointed by Grand Lodge to chair a committee to remediate, in the most honorable and amicable way, the dispute between Brothers Sam Houston and C. W. Gibbs.

Brother Benjamin S. Tappan served as Deputy Grand Master in 1833 and 1834. He served as Grand Master of Masons in Tennessee during 1835 and continued to serve on numerous committees after that.

During the period of 1818 through 1821 Brother William G. Dickinson served as Junior Grand Warden and in 1827 and 1828 as Deputy Grand Master.

Brother Peter Perkins, Jr. served as Junior Grand Warden during the year 1832.

Brother Holland L. White served as Senior Grand Warden during the year 1837.

Others who were prominent in the settlement of our nation and who were leaders in our fraternity included Brothers Guilford Dudley, Hiram's first Senior Warden and also a soldier of the American Revolutionary War. He was well known throughout Middle Tennessee and married to the daughter of Thomas Eaton of North Carolina. Brother Dudley died in 1833 and was buried in the Old City Cemetery.

It was Brother Felix Grundy for which Grundy County, Tennessee was named. Brother Grundy was born in Virginia and served as Chief Justice of the Kentucky Supreme Court. Nonetheless, he claimed Tennessee as home. He authored the Code of Tennessee and was a Representative to Congress from Tennessee from 1811 through part of 1814. He defeated Newton Cannon in 1813 for the congressional seat, but resigned several months later. He represented Hiram Lodge No. 007 at the Grand Lodge in 1814 and was a faithful member throughout his life. He was a strong supporter of banks and the use of paper money and issued paper money through Grundy's Loan Office, established in 1820 and which became the Bank of the State of Tennessee. Brother Grundy served as U.S. Senator from 1829 to 1838 when he became Attorney General. In 1839 he was appointed

Secretary of War and was re-elected to the U.S. Senate in 1839 after Ephraim Foster resigned on November 15th. Brother Grundy's home at the time of his death was located at the corner of Union Street and 7th Avenue in Nashville. Governor Polk appointed Brother A.O.P. Nicholson then to serve in the legislature until the Legislature could choose a successor.

Brother Lemuel B. McConnico is said to have been the "earliest preacher in Franklin" for the First Baptist Church.

The Episcopal Church was established in 1827 in the Masonic Hall by Brother and Bishop James H. Otey. It was the first Episcopal Church established in the Diocese of Tennessee. In 1829 and for many years afterwards, he represented Hiram Lodge No. 007 at the Grand Lodge of Tennessee.

During the 1950's Mr. Glenn I. Johnson who managed the South Central Bell Telephone office in Franklin, Tennessee, and who lived on Granny White Pike in Nashville did much research on the history of the Hiram Lodge Building. He wrote that the building was completed in 1823. The Cornerstone Ceremony was held after the building was completed in 1825. It was conducted by the Grand Junior Warden, William G. Hunt, Pro-tem for the Grand Master. Eight other Pro-tem Grand Lodge Officers composed of members from Cumberland Lodge No. 008 and Nashville Lodge No. 037 participated in the ceremony.

Another point to support the completion date in 1823 was the assumption that a third floor Chapter Room would not have been built due to the additional cost for nothing more than a side degree. In fact, the Royal Arch at that time was still under the governance and jurisdiction of the Lodge. The Franklin Chapter of Royal Arch Masons received its Charter in late 1823.

The Deed, written by Thomas Hardeman of the first part to Thomas Hardeman, WM and the Officers and Brethren of Hiram Lodge No.007 of the second part (a total of 44 Masons) on June 9, 1828 and registered November 19, 1828, makes reference to the Act of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, November 14, 1817, Chapter 154, and that Hardeman was in conformity with the Act. The transaction was made for consideration of one dollar and conveyed approximately one half of the land.

On October 9, 1830 a second deed from Thomas Hardeman of the first part was conveyed to James Otey, WM and the Officers and Brothers of Hiram Lodge No. 007 of the second part (a total of 39 Masons) for consideration of one dollar and in conformity with the same Act of the General Assembly of Tennessee in 1817 and registered on March 28, 1832.

The land was deeded in two transactions, about half the land in each.

During the building period two of the most prominent families were the Hardeman and the Perkins families.

Nicholas "Bigbee" Perkins (1779-1848) gained national fame when he helped in the capture of Aaron Burr in 1807 in the Mississippi Territory. He was in charge of a small party that took Burr from Ft. Stoddert to Richmond, Virginia where he was tried and acquitted of treason. Nicholas Perkins was a lawyer and territorial Register of Lands. He had acquired 12,000 acres in the area of Forrest Home in 1821, and in 1822 built a mansion called "Montpier" along the Old Natchez Trace Road. He lived there with his wife Mary until 1838 when they moved a mile or so southeast into another mansion. Both are still standing at the time of this revision in 2008.

Others of the Perkins family played an important role in the affairs of Hiram Lodge No. 007 and the community as well. Brother Peter Perkins served as Junior Grand Warden in 1832 and W.O. Perkins was House Speaker in 1835.

Thomas Hardeman married Mary Perkins. Together they had eleven children, one of whom was

Bailey Hardeman who lived in the Triune area and who had considerable holdings there. He was born in 1795. In 1835, at the age of forty he moved to Texas and was one of six men who drew up the Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Texas.

Thomas Jones Hardeman served as Captain during the War of 1812, Colonel of the Tennessee Militia, quartermaster of Jackson's Natchez Expedition in 1812. He was one of the Commissioners who established Bolivar in 1825, and Hardeman County was named in his honor in 1823. He served as Junior Warden under Dispensation of Clinton Lodge # 54 in 1825. C. H. Hardeman was subsequently issued the Charter on October 2, 1826. The records show that Thomas J. Hardeman served on many committees of the Grand Lodge during his Masonic life and was last shown in 1833. He was the Great Uncle of James K. Polk. In 1835 he had secured a Land Grant in Texas and was urged to move there in support of the movement for Texas statehood. He served as a legislator for a short while. His sister married a man named Burnett in 1802 and their son Peter was the first elected Governor of California.

In addition to the Hardeman and Perkins families credit must be given to Brother James P. Hammer who was born July 14, 1835 in Nashville, Tennessee. He was a physician during the War Between the States and was raised a Master Mason on October 1, 1856. In those awful years following the war, and at various times totaling eighteen years, Brother Hammer served as Worshipful Master of Hiram Lodge No. 007, holding the Lodge together the best he knew how.

Prior to the War Between the States Reverend James H. Otey and Leonidas Polk were both Episcopal Bishops. They both declared strongly in favor of secession. Just as secession and the subsequent war was hard on the country, so too it was hard on the Masonic Fraternity. During the period from May 4, 1861 through May 22, 1861 thirty-two (32) Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason Degrees were conferred under Dispensation. In total, 34 degrees were actually conferred, but obviously two did not complete all their work. Although this practice occurred throughout the period of the war, no time was as active as May 1861. Some, such as Theo Carter, lost their lives in the Battle of Franklin on November 30, 1864.

It is a well established fact that Masonic Hall was used as an observation post, hospital, and barracks. Not only the wooden furniture, but also the wooden floors were pulled up and burned as firewood for heat. Masonic Hall suffered great damage and finally, in 1912, the United States government paid compensation for the repairs to the building. An article in the Nashville Banner, November 30, 1965, the 101st anniversary of the Battle of Franklin, indicated that "the red brick structure was being re-mortared and waterproofed, which was the first time in fifty-three years that the building had been renovated."

During the renovation the interior cedar panels of the second floor lavatory were being removed in order to enlarge the facilities, when at that time Union graffiti was discovered written on the inner walls. "Sgt. James Cuttrel, Co. G, 14th Michigan Infantry, August 25, 1863, Franklin, Tennessee" can be clearly read along with another name and date or two, but not written as legibly as Sgt. Cuttrel's.

Historians have said the building was the first three-story building in Tennessee; that it is a unique mixture of country craftsmanship and gothic tradition. It is said to be one of the oldest gothic structures still surviving in the United States and the oldest Gothic Revival building in Tennessee. The building pre-dates by approximately fifteen years the thrust of the Gothic Architecture period, which took place around 1840. As such, the building combines the flatness of the Federal style with gothic features including pointed arches, battlements, and finials on the pilasters.

The third floor of Masonic Hall has an arched ceiling, which was originally self-supporting. In

1982, following the installation of the new copper roof in 1981, the third floor ceiling had rod supports placed under and through it for added support. Major repair work was done throughout the early part of that decade including work on the interior walls, windows, flooring, and lavatories on the first and second floors. During that time a new dining hall was built incurring a cost of approximately \$140,000, which was paid through individual donations, contributions from the various Masonic bodies that met there, and from one fund raiser per year.

For the first five years the fund raiser was a fish fry, and although it was very successful, it was changed to a BBQ and has remained so unto the present day. *(Interestingly, Bro. Church noted in the original paper that for the fist eleven years, the fund raiser had not been rained-out. Fifteen years have since past and Brother Church has no recollection of the BBQ fundraiser being rained-out through 2008.)*

It is reported that most of the early churches of Franklin were incubated in the Masonic Hall until their own church buildings could be completed. Alexander Campbell preached in the Lodge in December 1830 as a minister of the Church of Christ. During the 1970's the adjacent Catholic Church held Sunday school in the Masonic Hall until their building enlargement program could be completed.

Of further note, The Treaty with the Chickasaw was negotiated on the front steps of Masonic Hall by President Andrew Jackson, Secretary Eaton, and General John Coffee, all who represented the United States. Representing the Chickasaw were Levi Colbert, James Brown, John Gilbert, William McGilvery, Issac Alberson, and James McClish along with thirteen others.

During the ceremonies Mrs. Peggy O'Neil Eaton, wife of Secretary Eaton, had the organ moved out onto the porch and entertained the group with music. Following the Treaty President Jackson met with the Chickasaw in Masonic Hall where the Peace Pipe Ceremony was carried out.

As those lodges chartered prior to Hiram Lodge No. 007 either lost their Charters due to surrender, inactivity, or other reasons Hiram Lodge No. 007 became the oldest continually operating Masonic Lodge in Tennessee and remains so to this day. Masonic Hall is home to Franklin Chapter No. 2, Royal Arch Masons, chartered in 1823; Franklin Council No. 134, Royal & Select Masters, chartered in 1972; DePayens Commandery No. 011, Knights Templar, chartered in 1871; and Franklin Chapter No. 449, Order of the Eastern Star, chartered 1954.

In conclusion, the building called Masonic Hall, located in Franklin, Tennessee, has had a long and august history gained through its longevity, enduring through crisis, calamity, and good times too. It has survived through the devotion of its brethren who lived Masonry in their lives, and those who raised funds through auctions and fundraisers, and who gave several thousand dollars of their personal wealth without regard for their own personal recognition in order that Masonry would have a home in Franklin, Tennessee, a home with a foundation deep and strong!

CHARTER MEMBERS; January 2, 1815

1. David Anderson
2. Guifford Dudley
3. L.B. Estes
4. James Gorden
5. Felix Grundy
6. William Hanby
7. Oliver Bliss Hayes,

8. John L. Henry (EA)
9. Thomas Hiter, SW
10. George Hulme, JW
11. William Hulme, Treasurer
12. John Jones, (FC)
13. William Jones
14. Josiah Knight (FC)
15. William Macklin
16. Charles McAlister, WM

Dispensation Issued; December 11, 1814, Charles McAlister, WM

Charter Issued; January 2, 1815, Charles McAlister, WM *(The original Charter was for many years secured within a safe deposit box in 1st Tennessee Bank in Franklin, Tennessee. The Charter was relocated to Regions Bank in Franklin, Tennessee where it is now secure in a new safe deposit box.)*

North Carolina Charter issued to Hiram Lodge No. 007 of Tennessee, December 11th, 1808.

THE SWEDISH ORDER OF FREEMASONS

Grand Lodge of Sweden

This and the following paper were presented by Brother Derek White, Past Master of Jackson Lodge No. 45 and a candidate for the ministry in the Methodist Church, at the March 2007 meeting of the Tennessee Lodge of Research. These were sent to him by Right Worshipful Brother Gunnar Lantz, Deputy Grand Secretary, Foreign Relations, of the Grand Lodge of Sweden.

March 2006

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Masonic Temple: Blasieholmsgatan 6, Stockholm

History of the Order

Freemasonry was brought to Sweden by Count Axel Wrede-Sparre, a cavalry officer who, during service in France, had become a Freemason. After returning to Sweden he brought together some friends who, like himself, had been made Freemasons abroad. In 1735, he initiated and passed his brother-in-law, Count Carl Gustaf Tessin, in Stockholm. Most of the Brethren joining WredeSparre's Lodge belonged to the higher nobility. The meetings seem to have ceased at the end of the 1740's.

At the beginning of the 1750's there were quite a large number of Freemasons in Sweden who had been initiated by Wrede-Sparre or abroad. Count Knut Posse established the Lodge St. Jean Auxiliaire (John the Baptist) in 1752. Wrede-Sparre and most of the Brethren of his Lodge joined the Lodge of St. Jean and Wrede-Sparre handed over his rituals and other documents to the new Lodge.

The Lodge St. Jean was called "Mother-Lodge of Sweden" and considered itself entitled to issue warrants to other Lodges in the country and in Finland, which was a part of Sweden at that time. Count Carl Fredrik Scheffer, who had been made a Freemason in Paris in 1737, was elected National Grand Master in 1753. During the 1750s, the Lodges opened their doors to members of other classes of society than the nobility.

In 1756, Carl Fredrik Eckleff together with six Brethren formed the Scottish Lodge L'Innocente in Stockholm, working so called Scottish St Andrew's degrees. The next step in the development of Swedish Freemasonry was taken by Eckleff in 1759, when he established a Grand Chapter in Stockholm. Eckleff, who was an employee of the Swedish Foreign Office, held a foreign patent authorizing him to form Lodges. It has not been possible to ascertain the date and place of origin of the patent and of the rituals. The Grand Lodge of Sweden was established in 1760.

The Swedish Rite

Eckleff moulded a Freemasonry system on a Christian basis. The moral philosophy of the Swedish Rite was further developed by Duke Carl, later King Carl XIII, who succeeded to Eckleff as the Swedish Masonic leader. By two major ritual revisions in 1780 and 1800 he created a logical Masonic system with ten degrees. The Rite is truly progressive and continuous. Each degree leads to the next and each

sums up the contents of the preceding degrees. The system is grouped into three divisions as follows:

St. John's degrees (Craft):

- I Apprentice
- II Fellow Craft
- III Master Mason

St. Andrews (Scottish) degrees:

- IV-V Apprentice-Companion of St. Andrew
- VI Master of St. Andrew

Chapter degrees:

- VII Very Illustrious Brother
- VIII Most Illustrious Brother
- IX Enlightened Brother
- X Very Enlightened Brother

On top of the system is

Most Enlightened Brother, Knight Commander of the Red Cross.

In 1811, King Carl established the Royal Order of King Carl XIII. It is a civil order, still conferred by the King, only to Freemasons holding the XIth degree with the number limited to 33. It is, however, not a Masonic degree.

Progression from one degree to the next is no easy matter and is far from automatic. A Brother has to be regular in attendance and to give proof of his knowledge of Freemasonry.

All of the Grand Masters belonged to the Royal House from 1774 up to 1997, when Prince Bertil, Grand Master since 1973, died. King Carl XVI Gustaf is the High Protector of the Swedish Order of Freemasons. Grand Master since 2001 is Professor Anders Fahlman.

Bååt's palace in Stockholm, an impressive building from 1666 and carefully extended in 1874-77, functions as the Masonic Temple of the Swedish Order of Freemasons.

Present Organization

At present there are 42 Craft Lodges, 23 Lodges working the St Andrew's degrees, one Steward Lodge, seven Chapters and one Lodge of Research in Sweden. There are 63 Fraternal Societies (nearest Lodges of Instruction), usually at smaller towns. In Finland there are seven Lodges working the Craft degrees and two Fraternal Societies under the Swedish Order of Freemasons. There are also two Lodges working the St Andrew's degrees, one Steward Lodge and one Grand Chapter in Helsinki.

There are about 14,200 Freemasons in Sweden and about 1,000 in Finland under the Swedish Order of Freemasons. As Lodges are few in number, there are usually quite a number of members in a Swedish Lodge. Only those of Christian faith are admitted.

The Worshipful Master of a Lodge is usually appointed for a period of six years. However, a compulsory retirement age of 75 is strictly enforced for all office bearers.

The Swedish Rite is worked in Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark and Iceland. It is also, in a German variant, practiced in Grosse Landesloge der Freimaurer von Deutschland.

SCANDINAVIAN FREEMASONRY

By Bro. Bertram Jacobs

(Trans. Quatuor Coronati Lodge, vol. lxxii. 1959, 76-97)

I have prepared this paper on Scandinavian Freemasonry without any pretensions to scholarship or education, nor because I hope to present anything new, but because, having enjoyed by visits to Scandinavian Lodges so much, I am impelled to tell my British friends about it.

I have visited Lodges in many parts of the world, but here I have been so impressed by the high level of knowledge and of practice and the beauty of the rituals that I feel that here is Masonry at its zenith. True, it is Christian and not universal, like the British, but this is not surprising, as it is the product, not of a widespread Colonial power, but of Sweden, a Christian kingdom. None the less, it is proud to point out its descent from the English Grand Lodge of 1717.

Originally, I had the idea that the rituals I saw there were similar to those practiced here (*England*) before the union, for I thought I recognized in them a likeness to a demonstration I had seen at the Cafe Royale. I set out to prove this and failed. Instead, I found a romantic and exciting history, which was even more satisfactory.

Thanks to that good friend of British Freemasons and of the late Sir Sidney White, Bro. Major Fritz Ryman, late Grand Secretary of Sweden, I was introduced to Prof. Arvid Odenkrants, then Grand Inspector of the Swedish Order and its greatest historian, with whom I have spent many pleasant hours. What follows is just the information I received from that great scholar and from my friends in Denmark.

The hero of my story is one Carl Frederik Eckleff, who, at the expense of his career in the Foreign Office, devoted over 40 years of his life to the foundation and promotion of Swedish Freemasonry. He was, in fact, only responsible for the first of the three periods into which the history of its early development can be divided, the man responsible for the subsequent two periods being the great Duke Charles, whose work is deservedly commemorated by the Royal Order Of Charles XIII, a knightly order and the greatest Masonic honor in Sweden. So, the three periods may well be termed: 1st, the Eckleff period, a period of chaos, of many rituals and observances into which he strove to bring some order, which lasted until between 1770 and 1780; 2nd, the first Duke Charles period, when the new rituals were introduced and the system of degrees formulated; and 3rd, the second Duke Charles period, when he had finished his Regency, revised the rituals, and stabilized the whole system as we know it today.

Eckleff was born in Stockholm on June 25, 1723, with a silver spoon in his mouth. Between the ages of 15 and 20 he managed to attend Upsala University and make many journeys abroad, especially to France and Germany, for his knowledge of both languages was excellent. During that period he resided at Kiel, where he was initiated into the Order of Torch Brethren, a society for the promotion "of literature, poetry, friendship, and wisdom."

He entered the Swedish Foreign Office when he was 20, and during his 24 years of service there he made little progress until, in 1759, he received the appointment of Royal Secretary, which was merely a sinecure. It is said that his lack of preferment was due to envious enemies and delicate health, but I suspect that it was mainly due to literary and other outside interests, especially his devotion to Freemasonry. It was to this he consecrated himself in the nineteen years following his retirement in 1767.

In the early part of the eighteenth century, Freemasonry spread from Britain to the Continent,

where it took many forms, some rather unorthodox. Many Swedes were initiated in Lodges in France and Germany, and received permission to introduce these workings at home, so that when they returned to Sweden they met together to constitute Lodges in a haphazard manner, without set forms or rituals, lacking guidance and authority.

Conditions were truly chaotic when Count Axel Wrede Sparre took the lead in founding the first Lodge of St. John in Stockholm in 1735. This Lodge was later named Den Nordiska Forsta (the First Northern). Wrede Sparre was introduced to Masonry in Paris, at the Kings Head Lodge, established in 1725 by Charles Radcliffe, Earl of Derwentwater, an attainted Jacobite. He was the son of Francis Derwentwater and Mary Tudor, daughter of James II, and had founded this York Lodge, presumably for the purpose of furthering the Jacobite Cause. He took part in the '45, and his execution the following year is still celebrated in North Country folksongs.

Wrede Sparre was initiated on May 4th and passed on November 16th in 1731, but not raised until 1733. He then returned to Sweden with authority to operate the three degrees. The Lodge was at first known by his name. Many well-known men became members and, to give the young effort further authority, Count C. F. Scheffer, who had also been initiated in Paris, obtained a Charter or Patent from Derwentwater in 1737 to found Lodges in Sweden.

At about the same period, another Jacobite, General James Keith, obtained from his "cousin", John Keith, Earl of Kintore, Grand Master of England (1740), permission to hold Lodges under the English Constitution wherever he happened to be. He exercised this right in Sweden until 1744. He was then in the service of the Russians and became Provincial Grand Master of Russia about 1740, when Governor of the Ukraine. Other Masons from abroad formed the Lijdbergs' Lodge, of which Eclkeff was first D. C. and later J. W., but this Lodge was not recognized by Scheffer until some time later, after which it changed its name to The St. Edward's Lodge.

Wrede Sparre's Lodge languished in 1746, and confusion reigned in Swedish Masonry. To bring some order out of chaos, Scheffer lent his authority to the establishment of the St. John's Lodge, St. Jean Auxiliare, by Count Knut Carlsson Posse, to which, on 2nd January, 1752, many of the members of Wrede Sparre's Lodge adhered. This kept the true spark alive and it became the parent of many new St. John's Lodges, under the jurisdiction of Scheffer's Patent. Masonic activity increased considerably, clandestine Lodges were regularised or closed down, their members joining regular Lodges, while the number of initiations considerably increased.

Until this date they had only been concerned with the first three St. John's degrees, corresponding to the British. but a ferment which had been created on the Continent made itself felt in Sweden. This had been started when Andrew Michael Ramsay, a friend of Derwentwater, made his famous oration in Paris in 1737, when he claimed that. Freemasonry was descended from the Christian Chivalries of the past, from the rebuilding of the churches in Jerusalem after their destruction by the Saracens, and from such orders as that of St. John of Jerusalem. He affirmed that returning Crusaders had established Lodges in Britain, that in 1286 James, Lord Stewart, had been installed Grand Master at Kilwinning (*ed. note: Edinborough, Scotland*), while Prince Edward, son of Henry, added to the strength by bringing back the remaining Brethren of the Orders from Jerusalem

This started many trains of thought and curious degrees. As an instance of this, when he founded his Lodge, Posse claimed to be a Scotch Brother in Gauche's Lodge in Strasbourg, Scotch Master in St. Andrew's Lodge, Cologne, Elect Master in the Lodge of Grimsen, Stockholm, and that he had also been initiated "L'ordre de la Chaine, L'ordre de la Felicite and L'ordre des Mopses" (a kind

of mock masonry).

In 1754 the Clermont rite was founded, and it is these rituals which formed the basis of the St. Andrew's Degrees, whose initiates bear the titles of Scottish Brother or Scottish Master or Maitre Ecossais. As there was no apparent connection with Scottish Masonry of the period, it is sometimes thought that "Ecossais" was an aberration or a misprint for "accassois," believed to be all old French word for "acacia." Be that as it may, Eckleff brought the Scottish rite to Sweden in 1756. He apparently brought his rituals and the authority to work there from Geneva, for the documents on which he based this were written in a French cypher and bear the superscription, "publié dicté, félicité, et enregistré Frederic Aescher, Secrétaire". The document dealing with the ceremonies refers to copies made from originals from "The Grand Chapitre de la Confraternité Immortelle, la Confraternité Illuminée et la Grand Chapitre Royal Primitif." It is believed he obtained them from the Grand Chapter of Geneva and, from their language, they would appear to date about 1750.

On 30th November, 1756, therefore, Eckleff constituted Sweden's first St. Andrew's Lodge, with himself as Master. It met at the Pelican Inn, near where the Slussen is now, and worked the 4th, 5th and 6th degrees of Scottish Apprentice and Fellow of St. Andrew and Scottish Master of St. Andrew. This was the beginning of the Swedish system, and his Lodge, which he called L'Innocente, is still working under the name of Nordiska Cirkeln. In 1759, Eckleff also established the first Chapter under the same name, L'Innocente, but only working the 7th, Enlightened Steward or Stuart Brother, degree.

I have several times mentioned that written authorities were brought from abroad. In the early days, with so many charlatans about, great stress was laid on the need for obtaining genuine patents or warrants from established Grand Lodges, for secrecy and control were difficult to enforce. Above all, genuine powers from the Grand Lodge of England were most sought after, and when Eckleff arrived from a journey, claiming to possess such powers, with prescription for ceremonies, rituals and bye-laws, his word was accepted and he carried all before him, though I have never discovered how he substantiated his claim to those powers.

In 1760 he started another St. John's Lodge, in addition to the six then working, which he called "Den Sjunde", the seventh. This does not appear to have raised any protest from "St. Jean Auxiliaire", the Mother Lodge, or from Scheffer. In fact, the seven Lodges then united together to form the National Grand Lodge of Sweden (Den Svenska Stora Landslogen), and to it was affiliated the "l'Innocente" St. Andrew's Lodge and Chapter. Scheffer was the first Grand Master, and Eckleff his deputy.

London appears to have been quite ignorant of the progress made in Sweden, where many more Lodges were quickly established in Gothenburg, Stockholm, and elsewhere, for in 1765 a keen Freemason called Tullman arrived at the British Embassy in Stockholm, who had been a secretary at the Legation in Denmark. He brought with him what he claimed to be a warrant of appointment as Provincial Grand Master of Sweden, under the English Constitution, and wide powers over all Scandinavia, for there were already Lodges working in Denmark and Norway under our rule.

This invasion brought a quick reaction from Scheffer and Eckleff, who resented what appeared to be piracy, and the strong letter, which Scheffer sent to our G.M. has already been Published in A.Q.C. The result of this battle royal was the defeat of Tullman. England withdrew his authority, recognized the National Grand Lodge of Sweden, and so founded the friendly relationship, which exists to this day. Meantime, Tullman had started a St. John's Lodge, the

Britannia, and, later, the Phoenix, in Stockholm, and also the St. George in Gothenburg. The Phoenix also worked the St. Andrews degrees.

The relevant documents have been extracted from the Grand Lodge letter book, one being a copy of a Draft of Constitution for the National Grand Lodge of Sweden. This is, in fact, a Patent, which rather naively recognizes Scheffer as the National Grand Master of Sweden and yet records it as an appointment as Provincial Grand Master, and in letters of the same period refers to him as such. The thirteen Lodges which formed this Grand Lodge did not include any founded by Tullman, whose recognition was completely withdrawn. The Swedes have never regarded themselves as a Province of England.

The second period of our history began with the initiation, in 1770, of the King, Gustavus III, and his two brothers, Duke Charles of Soedermanland and Duke Frederick Adolphus. The King became Protector of the Order, Duke Frederick was installed W.M. of the Swedish Army Lodge, but it was the Duke Charles who became most active and devoted most of the rest of his life to Swedish Masonry. Though history has not been very kind to him when, late in life, he became King, it was to Masonry that he gave of his best and became a great leader.

He seems to have begun, without delay, to study the whole system and the sources of the rituals. He got in touch with those who worked the system in Germany, especially with Carl G. von Hund, who had devoted himself to perfecting the Templar Orders of Clermont, and as a result the Convention of Wilhelmsbad was called to rectify the Scottish Master's degrees. This was attended by Duke Charles and, though contact with Germany was later broken, he remained in touch, and eventually gave Sweden a real system of Masonry, not just a collection of degrees. It was during this period that the Chapter working was extended, though Eckleff's documents still remained the basis of all the rituals.

In 1774 the Duke established a new St. Andrew's Lodge, the Blazing Star (Glindrande Stjämman), and immediately followed this by taking over office from Scheffer, who remained intimately connected with the work of Grand Lodge and with the committee the Duke formed to revise the rituals for all the degrees and Lodges in Sweden. This took a great many years, during which the Duke had to withdraw from his close interest in his Masonic work when the King Gustavus III was assassinated and the Duke Charles became Regent during the minority of Gustavus IV Adolphus.

In the meantime, Eckleff's health began to fall and, one by one, he resigned his Masonic appointments until, in 1783, he ceased to be Master of the great Lodge he had founded, "Den Sjunde." He died in 1786, but his famous documents survive him and are treasured in Stockholm to this day. Though the main work was done by Duke Charles, Eckleff deserves every honor for his forethought and his lifelong devotion to Swedish Masonry. In 1799 his Lodge was amalgamated with that of L'Unlon and St. Jean Auxiliaire to become the First Lodge of St. John in the 9th Province, and eventually, under the guidance of Duke Charles, the First Lodge of the North (Den Forsta Nordiska Sanct Johannes Logen of Nionde Provincen).

The third period began when King Gustavus IV Adolphus ended his minority in 1798, and the Duke took up his work in Masonry with renewed vigor. He made many journeys abroad in both periods, notably to Vienna and Prague, where he consulted all the authorities and the rituals and from where he sent home to his working committee a great part of the revised rituals and instructions he had evolved as a result of his studies. When he returned from his travels he took up the reins of government of the Craft, and finally created the Swedish system as we know it today, with little alteration except modernization of language, by giving his final sanction to the work of

his team of helpers who had labored under his direction so well. Charles provided the driving force which set Swedish Masonry on so solid a foundation. He created a logical system (each degree leading unerringly to the next, even up to the final and highest, because each contains the germ of the succeeding degree) and he continued to rule the Craft after he ascended the throne as King Charles XIII.

The close friendship, which had grown between the Swedish and English Grand Lodges is well illustrated by the delighted adventure of Count Jacob de la Gardie, who was the Swedish representative at the Union of the two rival Grand Lodges on December 27, 1813. I cannot do better than describe it in his own charming manner, for Prof Odenchrants has translated the entry from de la Gardie's journal, now in the Library of the University of Lund.

Dec. 27, 1813. Eleven o'clock Mr. Blacker came, sent by the Duke of Sussex, to conduct me to the Freemason's Lodge and many ceremonies here. 800 persons were in the Lodge. After the Acts were read and the Committee of Union went out to a neighboring room, both the Dukes asked me to follow them, and allow the Committee to read for me the different formulae suggested and that I, after that, should decide which of those I found the right one and that they then would accept that one. I followed them to another room and there the obligations of the Old and the New system were read to me, and without any doubt I approved the Old one, as more according to our Swedish system.

When we had returned to the Great Hall I made this declaration loudly to all the Lodges, and both the Dukes gave over to me, after the old ritual, their posts.

The Duke of Sussex was then in due ritual way elected Grand Master; he relinquished the Throne he had occupied to me and received, kneeling, from my hands the decorations belonging to his new office.

At 1/2 past six we went to the Dinner, which was not ended before half past one in the night. A great many toasts were given, among them the King of Sweden, the Crown Prince, the Swedish Masonry, the Swedish Army and my health. To them all I had to respond in English. I was most embarrassed, but an Englishman is very flattered if a foreigner speaks their language, and readily pardons a fault if there is a good will. Near 2 o'clock I went home, I cannot deny, very tired by the 14 hours.

I suppose this was the only occasion when a Swedish man in London finds himself in such a position that among 800 persons, all standing, only he sitting and one of the Royal Princes kneeling before him. When one knows the pride of an Englishman, his inner feeling of supremacy over all other nations, it is doubly worthwhile to be in the case when I now found myself and where certainly neither I nor any other man will ever come again.

It is thus fitting that, in 1868, our future G.M. and King, Edward VII, should have been initiated in Stockholm.

In 1853 the Swedish system was introduced into Denmark, and King Charles XV eventually affiliated his friend, King Frederick VII, since when the Danish Royal Family have taken the closest interest in the Order. Before that period there were Lodges under the English Constitution from 1743, and in 1745 we appointed a Grand Superintendent for Denmark and Norway. That

same year, on 25th October, Denmark's oldest Lodge, Zorobabel, received its Warrant from the Grand Lodge of England and still proudly possesses it. Of course, it only worked the three craft degrees. The Strict Observance (Templar Degrees) were introduced from Germany in 1765, modified in 1782 by the Convention of Wilhelmsbad, so they were ripe to receive the Swedish system, though, of course, they are today quite independent. They are, however, just as strict in their observance of the rituals, and there is no variation whatever between the Lodges, as there is in Britain. In fact, they are more conservative than the Swedes, adhering strictly to the rituals of a century ago, whereas in Sweden there has been a certain amount of liberalization and reform to bring the old wording up to date, while retaining the ancient spirit.

Norway also had Lodges under the English Constitution in the middle of the eighteenth century, and Bro. Dashwood has laboriously translated a Royal Arch Ritual practiced by a Chapter in Christiania in 1782, which he believes to be similar to the one then current in England. Lodges were also formed there by sailors. The Strict Observance was introduced by Denmark in the 1770's, but, with the Union with Sweden, Norway adopted the Swedish system, of which it became a province, working only the St. John's degrees at first, but taking over the remainder early in the nineteenth century. After the dissolution of the Union in 1905, they retained the Swedish system, though they have some of their own customs.

Until 1951, Iceland was a Province of Denmark. It was then constituted as an independent Grand Lodge, but its ritual is the same as in Denmark.

In Finland, in addition to the Swedish system, they also operate under that of the Grand Lodge of New York.

We in England delight in the diversity of our rituals, so that wherever we visit, especially in the provinces, we are sure to be stimulated by the different methods of presenting our ceremonies.

In Scandinavia, on the contrary, they are proud of their uniformity, so that, as they say, every instruction and lecture can be used and understood in every Lodge, and all can feel at home wherever they go. As in Australia, they have Inspectors of Workings, and when I first knew him it was the task of Prof. Odencrants, then Grand Inspector of Sweden, to ensure that uniformity, that perfection of ritual which is as general there as it is in Denmark and, I am told, in Norway and Iceland. To make that perfection even more certain, each Lodge is ruled by a permanent Master, assisted by one or more Deputies. These accomplished Masons should be members of the 9th or higher degrees, but even that is not a sufficient safeguard, for the Master has a book of the Ritual open before him to prevent the slightest deviation.

Their system is homogenous, consisting of ten degrees, followed by the 11th and supreme one. The ten degrees are grouped into three divisions, the first three in the Lodges of St. John, the second three into the Lodges of St. Andrew and the remaining four into the Chapter, followed by the Supreme degree of the Knights Commanders of the Red Cross. Their Masonry is a truly progressive system, for it is continuous, each degree leading to the next, and each degree contains some germ of the next, some connecting link to consolidate the progression right up to the 11th. On the other hand, to ensure that each is kept separate and distinct, several different Temples are used, each specially designed for its degree or degrees, built and ornamented to give the best possible background to the words and acts of the ritual. These magnificent halls are perfectly suited for their particular function. By creating a fitting atmosphere they become part and parcel of the ceremonies and add greatly to their solemnity and impressiveness, and deepen the understanding of the degrees.

The three divisions of the system, while enjoying a certain amount of autonomy, are under the

supreme rule of the Grand Master, who is called “The Most Wise Vicarius Salomonis,” the idea being, I presume, that there is only one Grand Master, He Who Rules in the Grand Lodge Above. In Sweden, he is now the Sovereign, while in Denmark, Norway and Iceland he is chosen from the members of the 11th degree, who assist him in Grand Lodge in similar offices to our own, such as Deputy G.M., Grand Chancellor, Presidents of Boards of Benevolence, Finance and General Purposes, Grand Inspector and the Provincial Grand Masters. The Masters of the various Lodges are elected for life or until retirement, while the other Regular Officers are elected annually, though the W.M. may extend the appointment of his Deputy (or Deputies) and Wardens by confirming them in office at not more than three subsequent elections. The Treasurer must be elected annually, but the Orator, Secretary, Director of Ceremonies and Introducer are appointed by the W.M.

The three groups of degrees each has its Apprentice, Fellowcrafts and Masters degree, a parallel to birth, life and what we gain from it, but there is continuity throughout, each a logical sequence to that preceding. Thus they have: 1st, Apprentice, 2nd, Fellowcraft, and 3rd, Master of St. John, which are equivalent to our Craft degrees, and in the “Enlightened Scottish Lodge of St. Andrew” the 4th is the Elect and Very Worshipful Scottish Apprentice, the 5th the Fellow of St. Andrew, and the 6th the Enlightened Scottish Master of St. Andrew. The first two are given consecutively on the same evening, while the 6th is a further step up the ladder. English Companions of the Royal Arch are now permitted, on invitation, to visit the St. Andrew’s degrees.

In the Chapter, which achieved its present form about 1810, the 7th, or Steward or Stuart Brother, is an introductory degree, and then the same pattern is followed of three: 8th, Very Confidant Brother of Solomon is the first Templar degree derived from Clermont; 9th, Illuminated Confidant Brother of St. John; and 10th, Very Illuminated Confidant Brother of St. Andrew.

The whole is governed by the 11th, the Knights Commanders of the Red Cross, which in Sweden is a Knightly Order known as the Royal King Charles XIII Order in memory of the great foundation laid by Duke Charles. It is not only a Masonic Degree, but a Civil Order conferred by the King, and the Knights of the Order of King Charles XIII wear their Red Cross in public. Thus, the 1st, 4th and 8th, 2nd, 5th and 9th, 3rd, 6th and 10th, are all, in a way, parallel, symbols of work in a certain stage of life, while the whole is coordinated by the teaching of the experienced ones in the 11th. This is limited to 30-27 lay members and three clerical.

In Denmark a special jewel of Honor was instituted in 1950 for presentation to members of the 10th and 11th degrees for distinguished Masonic Service. The late Sir Sydney White, whom every Scandinavian I met seemed to regard as a personal friend and whose popularity did much to cement the excellent relations existing between the Swedish System and the United Grand Lodge of England, was invested with this jewel as a well-deserved recognition of his great work. Progression from one degree to the next is no easy matter and is far from automatic. The method of recommendation varies, but a Brother has not only to be regular in attendance and diligent—he has to give proofs of his proficiency and of his knowledge of the Craft. A mere recital of set answers to a series of questions is not enough. It is quite a common sight to see the Masonic Libraries full of earnest young Masons studying the tenets of their Craft, and there is a considerable demand for books on loan.

In the St. John's Lodges, the W.M., assisted by his council of regular officers, decides when Brethren shall be summoned for advancements to 2nd and 3rd degrees. To obtain preferment to the St. Andrew’s Lodge, a Brother must apply through the Secretary of his St. John’s Lodge, is balloted for in the usual way, and after that his progress is, as before, by summons from the W.M.

Promotion to the Chapter is based on Lodge work, knowledge, and general worthiness, and is by recommendation by the W.M. to Grand Lodge.

Plenty of opportunities are given to young members to fill the junior offices, for, while Lodges are few in number and memberships very large, meetings are frequent. In fact, in Sweden there are only 34 St. John's, 17 Lodges of St. Andrew and five Chapters. The total number of Masons is 25,500, to which may be added 640 in Finland. In Denmark a total of about 8,350 is served by 22 St. John's Lodges, five St. Andrew's and two Chapters, one in Copenhagen and one in Odense. I believe the numbers in Norway are similar, but I have no figures for Iceland, now independent. (*Ed. Note: these numbers are as of 1959.*)

Work commences late September and continues until May; Lodges meeting once or twice a week, St. John's working 1st and 3rd, and St. Andrews 4th/5th and 6th degrees alternately, but the 2nd is only given four times a year, for this is essentially musical and very beautiful, symbolizing increasing harmony. In Copenhagen, Mozart's actual score, presented by his widow who returned there when she re-married, is often used.

At all meetings, evening dress with white ties (though black waistcoats) is invariably worn, with the gloves presented at each degree, and swords are carried. In Denmark all from 3rd upward wear top hats, but in Sweden this is usually confined to the Master, Wardens and D.C.

Where there are interested Brethren who cannot constitute a Lodge (often for reasons of finance in small towns) they form Masonic Societies. These work after a prescribed ritual, holding lectures and lodges of instruction, but they have no authority to initiate in any of the degrees. In Sweden there are 54 of these societies, and they perform many valuable functions. A fundamental part of the working of each degree is the explanation of the symbols appertaining to that degree displayed on the Tracing Board (or Cloth) on the floor in the centre of the Lodge, and the candidate is given a full explanation of the inner meaning of each ritual at the time of the ceremony. Furthermore, the degree must be shown in its place in the chain, and this must be carefully explained and, where possible, explicit lectures given.

As I have said, whereas elsewhere, apart from the three craft degrees and the Royal Arch, there are very many degrees but no system, the Swedish way of working is unique, for, though each degree is individual, they are all combined in a logical sequence, all the units forming a continuous chain of thoughts and principles. In the lectures at the end of each ceremony, "three points are stressed: First, the *historical*, showing the development of the system and its degrees; then the *ethical*, showing how the ceremonies and their symbolism are a basis for the teaching of upright and honorable living; and thirdly, the *mystical*, placing life here as a step in the chain from creation to our end, regaining unity with God the Creator". So that, to once again quote Prof. Odenchrants, "One can say that Swedish Freemasonry follows man from Origin to End, from creation to his goal, to reunion with our Master, not only in statements of what we believe, but also guiding us in our practical, ethical, and spiritual life."

APPENDIX

GRAND LODGE LETTER BOOK No. 2, 1769-75

2nd April, 1771, to de Vignoles, P.G.M. for Foreign Lodges:

I herewith transmit the two Patents for Leghorn and underneath you have an account of my charges for the different Patents etc. sent abroad since our account settled in April last.

Patent of appointment for Count Scheffer as P.G.M. for Sweden £.5/5/-

[List continues with other Patents for Brunswick, Leghorn, etc., and is signed "Jas. Heseltine."]

Part of a Letter, undated, but about March, 1772 to H.E. John Yelaquin, P.G.M. . . . for all the Russias :

. . . Br. Lonquin has informed me that there is already a person of the name of Kiechel [?] appointed P.G.M. for Russia and that he acts under an authority granted him by one Zinnendorff of Berlin, which Zinnendorff is authorized by the P.G.M. of Sweden. The Count De Scheffer is P.G.M. for Sweden, his authority he received from the Duke of Beaufort, but such authority is confined to Sweden only, consequently he has not the least [sic] to interfere in any other Nation. Br. Lonquin is charged with a Letter to the Count De Scheffer and a Copy of the Patent in order to have the affair explained but am inclined to believe the whole an imposition formed by Zinnendorff and have in consequence thereof wrote likewise to the Royal York Lodge acting under Us at Berlin...

Again undated:

To The R.W. The Count De Scheffer P.G.M. of the most Ancient etc. for the Kingdom of Sweden

THE POLKS AND FREEMASONRY

By
J. Rex Hartsfield

Brother Hartsfield is Past Grand Illustrious Master of the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of the State of Washington, Past Grand Lecturer of the Grand Lodge of Washington, and Past Grand Patron of the Grand Court of Amaranth of Tennessee. He is a plural member of Columbia Lodge No. 31.

Freemasonry came to Middle Tennessee and to Maury County very early, probably with the first group of settlers. The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Tennessee was organized in 1813 by nine lodges who had received their charters from the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. One of these founding Lodges was Hiram Lodge #7, which is located in Franklin, and whose membership included members living in what is now Maury County. One of these members was Dr. L. B. Estes who was appointed Postmaster in Columbia, in 1807, and served until his death in 1814. When he died members of Hiram Lodge came to Columbia to conduct the Masonic Rites at his funeral. This was the first recorded Masonic meeting in Maury County.

The first organized lodge was Columbia Lodge #31 located at Columbia. This lodge was organized in 1819 and received a charter in 1820 with W. G. Dickinson serving as the charter Master. The lodge was organized and chartered with nine members and promptly initiated two additional members. This was the twelfth lodge, in Tennessee, to be chartered by the Grand Lodge of Tennessee (there were ten others chartered in surrounding states before Columbia Lodge #31 was chartered) and the Polk family became active soon after it was chartered. Masonry in Maury County grew at a fast pace and included the concordant orders of Royal Arch Masons, Royal and Select Masters and Knights Templar. From the organizing of Columbia Lodge in 1819 it grew to fourteen lodges with the last new lodge being Theta Lodge which was chartered in 1906.

Few families have, in the history of our nation, exerted the influence over events in the development of our Nation as has "The Family Polk." The influence and the contributions of the Polk Family have extended across the breadth of the country from the very beginnings of our struggle for independence until modern times. They were involved in many areas including academic, ecclesiastical, military, political and Masonic.

The first member of the Polk family came to America near the end of the seventeenth century and settled on a land grant in what is now the state of Maryland. At this time the influence and contributions of the Polk family to their adopted country began. By the middle of the eighteenth century the Polks had migrated to the Colony of North Carolina and had become involved in events which were to chart the family course for generations to come.

William Polk, of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, had two sons, Thomas and Ezekiel. The sons of Thomas and Ezekiel, William and Samuel respectively, were to leave their marks in many areas. The accomplishments of William and Samuel and their descendents were to have a profound and lasting influence on the development of our fledgling nation and on Freemasonry in particular.

In the last part of the eighteenth century, the area which is now the state of Tennessee was part of North Carolina. After the Revolutionary War the new states repaid the soldiers for their war time service with land grants. Many land grants were awarded by North Carolina to soldiers and the location of the land was in "Western Carolina." Land surveying was an honorable and profitable vocation, for much of the compensation came in the form of a portion of the surveyed land.

Consequently many surveyors became land speculators strictly because of the amount of land they owned as a result of their surveying activities. Both William Polk and his cousin Samuel were surveyors in Middle Tennessee. They both owned property in this section, and although William Polk did not make his permanent home here, he spent considerable time here and his sons became prominent settlers in the area. Samuel Polk, however, did settle here and became a real part of the community as did his children. The sons of William and Samuel were involved in almost every aspect of the development of what became Maury County and their influence reached out into areas of state and national arenas.

The influence and involvement of Col. William Polk and his sons extended into many areas, but it is in the Masonic realm to which this paper is directed. Col. William Polk was a member of Royal White Hart Lodge of North Carolina and was the fourth Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina. He served in that capacity from December 1799 until December of 1802. It was during his term of office as Grand Master that he signed the charters for Tennessee Lodge # 41 at Knoxville and Greenville Lodge #43 at Greenville. Tennessee was, as a state, only four years old at that time and there was only one other lodge in the state. St. Tammany #29, located in Nashville, was rechartered with a name change on November 30, 1800 (also during the term of Col. William Polk) and became Harmony #1 under Tennessee. Tennessee Lodge #41 and Greenville Lodge #43 ultimately became respectfully numbers 2 and 3 when the Grand Lodge of Tennessee was organized and these three Lodges became cornerstone lodges in the formation of that Grand Lodge in 1813.

When Col. Polk signed the charters and extended Freemasonry into the newly organized state of Tennessee, I am sure that he did not realize that he was performing an act which would ultimately result in Freemasonry being projected to the shores of the Pacific Ocean and beyond. But, these lodges which formed the nucleus of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee were instrumental in the growth and expansion of Freemasonry. The members of these lodges carried Freemasonry into territories, which subsequently became part of the United States, but were unheard of and unexplored when Col. Polk signed the charters, and in some cases were colonies or territories of European countries.

In the nineteenth century the westward expansion of our country was constantly on the move. As these pioneers moved into new and uncharted areas they carried Freemasonry with them. The Grand Lodge of Tennessee chartered Lodges in Alabama, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, and California, and these lodges were instrumental in the formation of Grand Lodges. These new Grand Lodges then issued charters to lodges which were formed in new territories and states until Freemasonry reached the shores of Hawaii and the tundra of Alaska. Almost half of the states which comprise the United States can trace their Masonic Lineage directly to the Grand Lodge of Tennessee, and thus to the Grand Lodge of North Carolina and Col. William Polk.

Freemasonry was taken to the Pacific Ocean by men of the "Lewis and Clark" expedition, specifically by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark who were both masons. After this it took a somewhat slower, but steadier and more permanent movement, and The Grand Lodge of Tennessee figured very prominently in this movement as the states formed out of the "Louisiana Purchase" were settled. The lodges which formed the Grand Lodge of Missouri were originally chartered by the Grand Lodge of Tennessee, and as Missouri was the beginning of the Western Trails it also became the nearest Grand Lodge to the western territories. So it was to the Grand Lodge of Missouri that charter applications were made when new lodges were formed in the territories.

This paper is principally devoted to the Masonic involvements of the immediate families of William Polk and Samuel Polk in Maury County and is still very much "a work in progress" as there

is still much research to be done. Columbia Lodge #31 was the first lodge in the area, and it was in Columbia Lodge that the Polks were to become members. Columbia Lodge was chartered in 1820 and many of the earlier records are no longer available, as some were destroyed by the invading Armies and some were lost when the Masonic Hall was damaged in the fire of 1946. Lafayette Chapter #4 of Royal Arch Masons was chartered in 1825, Concordia Council #2 of R & S.M. was chartered in 1849 and DeMolay Commandery #3 was chartered in 1859. The records of Lafayette Chapter are intact and reveal a part of the growth and history of Maury County, but because they surrendered their charters the records of Concordia Council and Demolay Commandery are archived at the Tennessee Grand Lodge office in Nashville.

Col. William Polk had nine sons and at least four of these sons were active in Masonry in Middle Tennessee. They became members of existing Masonic organizations and were instrumental in organizing and chartering new ones. Their influence and involvement in Masonic affairs extended far beyond the local area of Middle Tennessee. They helped to form state level Masonic organizations, and these organizations then issued charters to form local Masonic bodies in the states and territories being established by the western migration. His sons were:

- Dr. William Polk was an early member of Columbia Lodge #31 and may have been a charter member of this lodge.
- Lucius Junius Polk—First Commander and organizer of Demolay Commandery #3 of Knights Templar in Columbia, Tennessee. This Commandery was organized in 1858 largely due to his efforts. He represented DeMolay Commandery #3 at a meeting in Nashville which resulted in the formation of the Grand Commandery of Tennessee. He subsequently served as the second Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery of Tennessee. His major contribution in assisting to organize the Grand Commandery of Tennessee was to serve as Chairman of the committee to write the Constitution and By-Laws. His name first appears on lodge records as being a member of Columbia Lodge in 1825. He also became a member of Lafayette Chapter #4 of Royal Arch Masons in 1825 and Concordia Council of Royal and Select Masters, both located here in Columbia. After its formation he became a member of Euphemia Lodge #195, in Columbia, and was a member of that lodge at his death in 1870. Lucius also served several terms on the Board of Trustees of various Educational Institutions, including Jackson College.
- Leonidas Polk—I have found no record, as of yet, that Leonidas was a Mason, but his father, his brothers and many of his close friends and associates, including his friend and mentor Bishop James Otey, were members. (this is one area I am researching).
- Rufus K. Polk—I believe he, too, was a member of Columbia Lodge #31 and Lafayette Chapter, but his death in 1843 and his membership in the lodge would have been during the period of time for which I have not located the records.
- George W. Polk—Who originally became a member of Columbia Lodge, but became a Charter member of Euphemia Lodge #195 when that lodge was formed in 1850. He remained a member of Euphemia Lodge until that lodge surrendered its Charter in 1887, at which time he affiliated again with Columbia Lodge and remained a member of that

lodge, Lafayette Chapter #4 of Royal Arch Masons and Concordia Council #2 until his death. Part of the lore of Maury County is that Rattle and Snap was spared the torch because the Union officer saw a Masonic ring on his finger in his portrait which was hanging in the entry hall, and being himself a Mason he spared the house. George W. Polk also served on the Board of Trustees of Jackson College.

- Andrew J. Polk—Originally became a member of Columbia Lodge #31, but became a member of and served as Charter Junior Warden of Euphemia Lodge #195 when it was formed in 1850. He was also a member of Lafayette Chapter #4, Concordia Council #2 and Demolay Commandery #3. He remained a member of those organizations until he left the country to live in Europe and his membership is unknown after that. He also served on the Board of Trustees of Jackson College.
- The sons of William Polk were instrumental in the formation and chartering of Euphemia Lodge #195 and most of the other members of the lodge were from their close circle of friends. Francis G. Roche was the charter Master of the lodge and was the manager of the old State Bank; E.H. Cressey was the Senior Warden of the new lodge and he was Rector of St Johns Church and Principal of Ashwood School for Girls. Many names from the list of prominent Maury County citizens were found on the membership list of Euphemia Lodge including the Pillows, Coopers, Devereuxs and Porter to name a few. These were also the same men who served on various Boards and directed the affairs of the city and county. Bishop Otey was not only a mentor for Leonidas Polk, but college classmate of Lucius Polk and a member of Hiram Lodge in Franklin. He also served as Grand Chaplain of both the Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Tennessee.
- They were also instrumental and supported the Masonic organizations of Maury County when they purchased Jackson College. This school was purchased from the Presbyterian Church in 1848 for the sum of \$5500.00. The purchase price was raised by the Masonic organizations and the various organizations received shares according to the amount of their investment. Jackson College was operated by a President who was subject to a Board of Trustees who were elected to the positions by the individual organization. The school was in operation until it was burned by Union soldiers in 1863. The County Masonic organizations then disposed of the rubble and stone, but still had a Board to oversee their interest in the property until after 1900.

Samuel Polk had at least three sons and one son-in-law who were active in Masonry:

- James Knox Polk – his oldest son was an active member and officer of Columbia Lodge #31 and of Lafayette Chapter #4 of Royal Arch Masons of Columbia, Tennessee. James Knox Polk received his Masonic degrees in Columbia Lodge #31 in 1820 and was one of the first members to receive the Royal Arch degrees in the newly formed Lafayette Chapter #4 in Columbia in 1825. He carried the teachings and tenets of Masonry with him throughout a life in public service at the local, state and national levels. His decision to become a Mason was undoubtedly influenced by his esteem for Felix Grundy and

Andrew Jackson, both of whom were ardent Masons and his political and professional mentors. His call to public service precluded a real active involvement in anything else, but he attended Columbia Lodge and Lafayette Chapter whenever his duties allowed him to take the time. There are entries in the minutes of Lafayette Chapter where he served as both an installed officer and as a Pro tem officer. I read in one source that he was an elected officer of Columbia Lodge, but I haven't verified that. The last record I have found of his attendance at a Masonic meeting in Columbia was when he attended a meeting of Lafayette Chapter in 1842. This would have been between his term as Governor and his Presidential term. James K. Polk apparently enjoyed being a Mason and enjoyed participating in Masonic activities. He did take time from his presidential duties to participate in two cornerstone ceremonies while he was President—the laying of the cornerstone of the Washington Monument and of the Smithsonian Institute.

- William Hawkins Polk was the ninth child and fifth son of Samuel Polk and was a member of Columbia Lodge #31, Lafayette Chapter #4 Royal Arch Masons and Demolay Commandery #3 of Knights Templar.
- Franklin E. Polk—The fourth child and second son of Samuel Polk was a member of Columbia Lodge #31.
- James Walker, who was married to Jane Maria Polk (Samuel Polk's oldest daughter), was a member and active in Columbia Lodge #31 and also in Lafayette Chapter #4.

Several members of subsequent Polk generations, including Lucius Polk, Jr. and Horace Polk, have been members and served various Masonic organizations in Maury County in elective and appointive offices. James Knox Polk, son of William Hawkins Polk was a member of Phoenix Lodge in Nashville and also of the York Rite Bodies in Nashville. I am sure there were other members of the Polk family who were Masons, but I am still researching and will probably have to go out of the state of Tennessee to find some of the information.

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Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Tennessee.

FREEMASONRY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREEK-LETTER FRATERNITIES

BY DAVID E STAFFORD, 32°



Masonic symbolism and philosophy had a strong influence in the early development of many of the so-called “Greek-letter” organizations so commonly seen and accepted on college campuses throughout the United States. In some cases, the influence is little more than an association of ritual and secrecy, but in many cases the relationships between Freemasonry and college fraternal organizations are strong and even enduring.

During the half century before the Revolutionary War, college fraternities had a meager yet building existence. Prior to 1776, Yale College, the College of New Jersey (Princeton University), and the College of William and Mary all had student fraternal organizations (Voorhees, 1945). The establishment and development of these fraternities closely mimicked the maturation of the American branch of Freemasonry. These fraternities supported fidelity, scholarship, and the development of speaking skills through debate and literary circles.

PHI BETA KAPPA: It was in the year of 1776 that the age of college fraternities took a secretive turn (Torbenson, 1992). That year marked the founding of the first Greek-letter society, the college fraternity Phi Beta Kappa at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia. Although not sanctioned by or directly connected to Freemasonry, Phi Beta Kappa patterned its initiations, oaths, and modes of proliferation after those of Freemasonry (Voorhees). Two of the founding members and a total of ten early members of Phi Beta Kappa were Freemasons (Torbenson).



Similarities between Phi Beta Kappa and Freemasonry are easily seen. First, both organizations held their meetings within a shroud of secrecy. Freemasonry and Phi Beta Kappa both required new initiates to take voluntary oaths of fidelity. The oaths of Phi Beta Kappa mentioned the “Holy Evangelists of Almighty God” and a “Supreme Being,” both of which are commonly referenced in Masonic lodge ritual (Voorhees, 1945, p. 1). The three Greek letters stood for *Philosophia Biou Kybernetes*, “Love of Wisdom, the Guide of Life,” a parallel to Freemasonry’s reverence for “Light,” or knowledge.

In the Phi Beta Kappa ritual, the founders named “friendship, morality, and literature as essential characteristics” (Voorhees, p.12). These are closely related to the principal tenants of Freemasonry: Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love. Phi Beta Kappa actually replicated the manner in which they established new chapters directly from the model used by Freemasonry. Soon additional chapters were formed at Harvard, Yale and Dartmouth.

In 1825, forty-nine years after the organization of Phi Beta Kappa, the Kappa Alpha Society (not to be confused with Kappa Alpha Order) was organized at Union College, Schenectady, New York. Among its founders were several Phi Beta Kappa members. Today, the Kappa Alpha Society holds the honor of being the first Greek-letter general college fraternity with continuous existence.

Like Phi Beta Kappa and the Kappa Alpha Society, college fraternities continued to be organized in the academic institutions of the United States. Most of these fraternities had oaths of secrecy and modes of recognition (Torbenson, 1992). This practice was often questioned, even

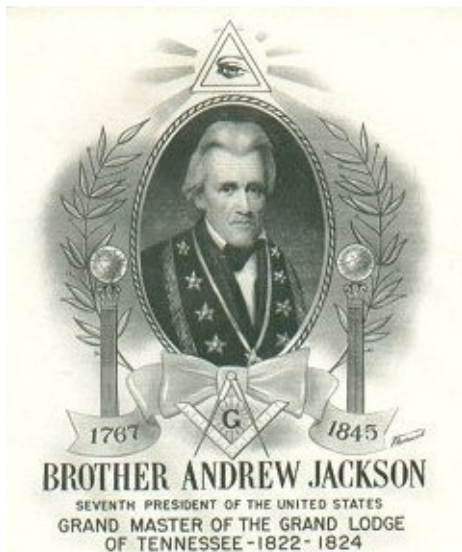
within the ranks of Phi Beta Kappa; however, it would not be until 19 September 1827 that the secrecy of fraternities would begin to be widely placed under scrutiny (Torbensohn; Voorhees, 1945).

RITUAL EXPOSURE: 1826 was the year of the disappearance of Captain William Morgan in upstate New York, allegedly abducted and murdered for publishing and exposing Masonic ritual. The story of Morgan's disappearance and the subsequent anti-Masonic period, lasting until about 1840, should be well known to all Freemasons, because this period marked the beginning of an explosion in published ritual exposures.

The crisis faced by Freemasons spilled over to Phi Beta Kappa in 1831 with John Marsh & Company's publication of *A Ritual of Freemasonry, Illustrated by Numerous Engravings; with Notes and Remarks, to which is added a Key to the Phi Beta Kappa*, by Avery Allyn, an anti-Masonic lecturer of the time. This well known ritual exposure would be reprinted time and time again.

The work focused predominantly upon the rituals of Freemasonry. It offered only eight pages on the topic of Phi Beta Kappa, and as little as one or two pages in later editions. Although the subversive author of the compromising book admitted there was not an open or concrete connection between Freemasonry and Phi Beta Kappa, the backlash resulted in the latter order abandoning its secrecy and becoming little more than an academic honor society (Allyn, 1831; Voorhees).

By the time the second edition of Allyn's exposure was printed, most Phi Beta Kappa Chapters had traded the standard of being a society cultivating friendship and the oath of fidelity for the sole image of being a scholarly literary society (Torbensohn, 1992; Voorhees, 1945). It is ironic

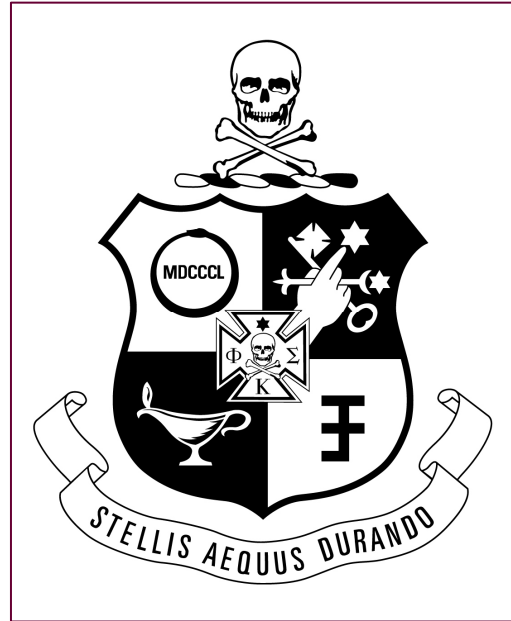


that in 1832, the same year Phi Beta Kappa was abandoning its own secrecy, the notoriously secretive Order of Skull and Bones was being established at Yale (Robbins, 2002). The founders of Skull and Bones are reported to have been outraged by the demystification of Phi Beta Kappa and wanted to create an order to carry on its mystical prestige.

The backlash from the Morgan Affair created the first third-party in American politics. The Anti-Masonic party continued with minimal momentum until the end of the 1830s. It garnered enough support following the Morgan Affair to organize a national convention in 1832. That year, the Anti-Masonic Party's presidential candidate, William Wirt, carried only the state of Vermont, and was defeated by Andrew Jackson, Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee (Holt, 2002).

THE FRATERNAL MOVEMENT: It would still be several decades before the chaos subsided enough to hasten in the heyday of American fraternalism. However, the number of Greek letter societies continued to grow throughout the mid- and late-1800's. The new fraternities formed during this time patterned themselves after Phi Beta Kappa's original model. Based upon this fact alone, it could be stated that all American college fraternities owe at least a little of their heritage to Freemasonry.

The unified fraternities that were organized during the last half of the nineteenth-century exhibit strong influences derived from Freemasonry; however, these fraternities held no official ties to it. During this era in American history, men going to college were often of an older age, and it was not unusual for these men to have either been inducted into the Masonic fraternity before enrolling in college or while under the tutelage of professors who were Masons (Torbenson, 1992). Three of the fraternities with Masonic similarities that were established during this period are Phi Kappa Sigma, Delta Tau Delta, and Kappa Alpha Order.



PHI KAPPA SIGMA: Phi Kappa Sigma was founded at the University of Pennsylvania on 16 August 1850. The primary leader of the movement was Samuel Brown Wylie Mitchell who later became a noted physician, and who was a member of Franklin Lodge No. 134¹, Philadelphia.

A quick perusal of the Phi Kappa Sigma website will reveal a few images and principles that will be familiar to Master Masons (*About Phi Kappa Sigma*). The arms of the badge of the order, designed by Mitchell, resonate with Masonic and Knight Templar influence. The shield bears a cross patée, the pin of the order, at its center, while the crest consists of a skull and crossbones.

DELTA TAU DELTA: Delta Tau Delta was founded 5 March 1858 at Bethany College, Bethany, West Virginia. One of the primary leaders in the organization of the fraternity was William R. Cunningham, a Freemason and Church of Christ minister. Cunningham had been inducted into the Masonic fraternity before the formation of Delta Tau Delta, and he was influential in the development of the ritual and constitution, both containing Masonic language (*The History Behind*, n.d.).



The crest of the Delta Tau Delta badge consists of an all-seeing eye, and the shield includes the symbol of the blazing star. Albert Mackey, in his encyclopedia, states that the blazing star is one of the most important Masonic symbols and is symbolic of “a true Mason, who, by perfecting himself in the way of truth, that is to say, by advancing in knowledge, becomes like a blazing star, shining with brilliancy in the midst of darkness” (Mackey, p. 130).

KAPPA ALPHA (KA) ORDER: Kappa Alpha Order was founded on 21 December 1865 at Washington College (now Washington and Lee University) at Lexington, Virginia, by James Ward Wood and three others. During their lives, all four were Master Masons. Wood was a member of Moorefield Lodge, Moorefield, West Virginia. The ritual for Kappa Alpha was created by Samuel Z. Ammen, ultimately earning him the title “the practical founder of Kappa Alpha Order” (www.kappaalphaorder.org).

Ammen, who had already been inducted into Freemasonry in Friendship Lodge, Fincastle,

Virginia, later stated: “I drew heavily upon my experience as a Master Mason in crafting the new ritual.” That ritual utilizes the symbolism of the Masonic Knights Templar as much as the symbolism of Craft Masonry. The ritual transformed the fraternity into an order of Christian knighthood, which sought to preserve the masculine virtues of chivalry, respect for others, honor and reverence for God and womanhood.

Other examples of Greek-letter fraternities with Masonic influences granted by either founding members or early members include Alpha Tau Omega, Sigma Nu, Phi Delta Theta, Sigma Chi, Phi Gamma Delta, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Phi Kappa Alpha, Zeta Psi, Tau Kappa Epsilon, Psi Upsilon, and Delta Psi. The last of these, according to the 1899 *Cyclopedia of Fraternities*, “was dressed up by someone who had access to rituals of the bastard Masonic rites of Misraim and Memphis” (Stevens, p. 346).

THE ACACIA FRATERNITY: On many college campuses there existed clubs and organizations for students and professors who were Freemasons, but it was not until the turn of the twentieth century that those exclusively Masonic college fraternities were unified (Ellenberger, 1998; Katsaounis, 2004; Sink, n.d.). The first unified fraternity to have direct ties to Freemasonry was the Acacia Fraternity.



It is unlike its peer organizations in that it does not use Greek letters to represent its name. Instead it uses a Greek word, Ακακία (Katsaounis, 2004). The fraternity was officially established on 14 May 1904 by fourteen Freemasons at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor (Ellenberger; Katsaounis). Initially its members were required to be Freemasons. However, the sublime degree of Master Mason is no longer a prerequisite.

The Acacia fraternity sought only those Master Masons with high standards of conduct. Thusly, Acacia was selective of an already elite group of men. Acacia wished to be an entity of high moral standards, offering a refuge and fraternity for those who wished not to participate in the debauchery of college fraternities of the time (Fairfield, 1965; Sink). It was the goal of the founders that the teachings of Acacia be dedicated to scholarship, and a continuation of the principles of Freemasonry.

The original colors of the Acacia Fraternity were dark blue and gold. The order’s pin is in the form of a right triangle, and although it was never designated as a 3-4-5 triangle, a close examination of the pin will divulge the base of the pin contains three pearls, the height four, and the hypotenuse five. The 3-4-5 triangle has great significance in the symbolism of Freemasonry (Stafford, 2006). Within the pin are three right triangles encased in a larger one. These three smaller triangles represent the three Hebrew-letters shin, teth and he. The crest of the fraternity is a three-branched candelabra wreathed with sprigs of acacia. The shield of “old gold” has a black band “in fess, endorsed” bearing three gold right triangles (*Acacia Fraternity*).

Today, the Acacia Fraternity has no official relationship to Freemasonry. However, many chapters still maintain close ties with local Masonic lodges. In 1997, the Masonic Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania began to restrengthen its connections with the Acacia Fraternity by allowing it the use of Masonic lodge rooms to conduct the three Acacian degrees (Katsaounis, 2004).

SQUARE AND COMPASS FRATERNITY: The Square and Compass Fraternity was organized at Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia in 1917 (Fairfield, 1965). This fraternity, like Acacia, unified the individual Masonic clubs found on college campuses across the country,

many of which were called “Square and Compass clubs” (Foss, 1925).

The Square and Compass Fraternity was organized as a reaction to Acacia’s “prohibition against having as members any Masons who were already members of social Greek-letter fraternities” (Foss, 1925). But Square and Compass was not as selective as Acacia, accepting virtually all Masons who petitioned for membership. Petitioning Masons could only be rejected for membership due to Masonic misconduct, and by majority vote (Foss).

The Square and Compass Fraternity merged with Sigma Mu Sigma in 1952 (*Alpha Chapter History*, n.d.). The objective of the unification of these two fraternities was “to thoroughly indoctrinate the college men of America with the traditions of our American Masonic Heritage through ritualistic and fraternity conducted educational programs devoted to the Rites of Initiation and our American Way of Life” (Fairfield, p. 16).

SIGMA MU SIGMA: Sigma Mu Sigma was established 25 March 1921 at Tri-State College, Angola, Indiana. During this time, the college had a strict rule banning student secret societies on campus. However, there were several organizations working clandestinely on the campus. These organizations were well known for hazing and excess. In order to combat the rules of the college and the unsavory established fraternities, three Masonic Knights Templar worked together to organize a fraternity for Master Masons (Fairfield, 1965).



The founders invited other students of good report and demeanor who were Freemasons to begin a student organization. The young founders were savvy enough to invite the president of the College and various professors who were Freemasons to become honorary members, a plan originally used by Phi Beta Kappa (Voorhees, 1945). The president wished to retain these high-

performing students at the College, so he revoked the restriction on fraternities and recognized the new body.

Today, Sigma Mu Sigma no longer requires its members to be Master Masons. The prerequisite was dropped in 1929 due to the reduced age of men attending college (*Alpha Chapter History*, n.d.; Fairfield). The Sigma Mu Sigma shield² incorporated the symbols of two clasped hands, an open book, and a lamp of knowledge. The crest above the shield consists of an all-seeing eye.

ORDER OF THE GOLDEN KEY: In the article “Collegiate Freemasons”, Almond Fairfield identifies a fourth collegiate order exclusive to Master Masons (1965). The Order of the Golden Key was first conferred at the University of Oklahoma on 21 March 1925 by Fairfield (Fairfield). It should not be confused with the Golden Key International Honor Society founded in 1977, or the honorary award of Phi Theta Kappa. Fairchild wrote, “The ritual of the order was written by a college Mason for college Masons with the purpose of giving them a comprehensive understanding of the Rites of Initiation and of Masonic Philosophy” (p. 17).

AN UNTAPPED SOURCE: The association and connection between Freemasonry and college fraternities is only one example of the great impact the Freemasonry has had upon American society. Although the Masonic fraternity has in many ways lost a great deal of its former influence, there

exists an immense need for men to be indoctrinated with the spirit of Freemasonry.

There is no other organization today, either on college campuses or in the world at large, that offers the moral and spiritual lessons of Freemasonry. It has been mimicked and copied many times but never surpassed. Freemasonry has a great deal to offer young men, and old men alike, who have experienced the initiation rites of lesser orders.

William Ellenberger (1998), in his article "The Acacia Fraternity", makes the assertion that the Acacia Fraternity and those like it offer the Masonic fraternity an untapped source of members. In order for Freemasonry to attract men of high quality it must be an organization that lives by the principles it teaches. Freemasons must walk circumspect to the world and truly be bringers of light. We must discover unto the world the happy effect of this ancient and honorable institution.

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¹According to a communication with the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, Brother Mitchell was admitted as a Master Mason into Franklin Lodge No. 134 on March 30, 1872 at the age of 43. There is no record as to where he was a member before affiliating with this lodge. Brother Mitchell died August 16, 1879.

²According to David Sobel, “the coat-of-arms of the Sigma Mu Sigma is azure, charged with the Hands of Sincerity, the Book of Morality, and the Lamp of Knowledge, all of or. The crest is the All-seeing Eye of God; the supporters, sprigs of acacia. It is underscored by the motto ‘Sincerity Life’s Guide’ translated in Greek.” David Sobel is associated with headquarters of Sigma Mu Sigma.



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Indocti discant, ament meminisse periti.

“Let the unlearned learn, let the experts love to remember.”

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THE ORDERS OF THE GOLDEN FLEECE AND THE GARTER

By

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Bethpage Lodge No. 521, F.&A.M.

Within all of Freemasonry, there are a large number of orders, cults, and institutions mentioned; however, within the blue degrees, as conferred in Tennessee, there are only two orders mentioned specifically by name. These two orders can be found within the apron lecture of the Entered Apprentice Degree and reemerge in the Masonic Funeral rites. The wording in both is verbatim. “The Lambskin is an emblem of innocence, and is esteemed the peculiar badge of a Mason. When worthily worn, it is more honorable than the order of the Garter, the Golden Fleece, or any other order that could be conferred, and every Mason ought to wear it with equal pleasure to himself and honor to the Fraternity.” These two orders are mentioned at the first and the last ceremonies of a Tennessee Mason’s Masonic career; yet, how much does the average Mason know about these two orders? Very little, if anything.

The wording in the Tennessee ritual is common; however, it is abbreviated compared to the lecture provided in many rituals. *Duncan’s Ritual* seems to contain the standard verbiage used in the Entered Apprentice apron lecture. It reads, “*Brother, I now present you with a lambskin or white apron, which is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason, more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, and, when worthily worn, more honorable than the Star and Garter, or any other order that can be conferred on you at this time, or any future period, by kings, princes, and potentates, or any other persons, except it be by Masons. I trust that you will wear it with equal pleasure to yourself and honor to the fraternity.*” Pirtle’s *Kentucky Monitor, Ancient Craft Masonry* (The Grand Lodge of New York’s monitor), and *The Official Monitor of the Grand Lodge of Texas* all state that the apron is more ancient than the Order of the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle and more honorable than the Star and Garter. It may be of interest here to mention that in the 1883 edition of *The Masonic Text-Book of Tennessee*, the apron lecture read differently than it does currently. “When worthily worn, it is more honorable than the Star and Garter, the Golden Fleece, or Roman Eagle, or any other order that could be conferred, and which every Mason ought to wear with equal pleasure to himself and honor to the Fraternity” (p. 28). This presents the questions: What are these orders, and why are they mentioned within the ritual of Freemasonry? The most logical place to begin this brief exploration is with the histories of the orders mentioned.

Order of the Garter

Both the Order of the Garter and the Order of the Golden Fleece are orders of chivalry. The Order of the Garter is the oldest order of knighthood in existence, and, as such, it will provide an appropriate place to begin this examination. The order was founded by King Edward III of England, sometime between 1344 and 1351 (Belts, 1841; Coil, 1961; Woodward, 1896). There are, according to Coil, two prominent legends that account for the formation of the order. The first is that Richard I, in the 12th century, “ordered his officers to tie a leather thong around the leg for better identification,” and King Edward III, while instituting the order, recalled this event and established an order of chivalry after its remembrance. The other, and most prominent legend, involves the Countess of Salisbury. According to the tale, the Countess was exposed to jest and laughter from the

court when she lost her garter while dancing. King Edward III, being a man of honor, came to her defense by picking the garter up and placing it on his own leg stating, “*Honi soit qui mal y pense*”. A phrase that is literally translated “shamed be he who thinks it evil” (Belts). The phrase was appointed the motto of the order

The Order of the Garter is the highest honor within the British honor system, and its exclusive membership is limited to 25 regular members. Additional members include individuals from the Royal family. The British monarch, known as “Sovereign of the Garter”, is the head of the order and holds sole responsibility for appointing its members (Belts, 1841).

It is most reasonable that the star mentioned in the apron lecture of other jurisdictions is in reference to an investiture of the Order of the Garter. According to Coil (1961), the star in the ritual “evidently meant the 8-pointed silver star, which is one of the insignia, having the Cross of St. George in the center, encircled by the garter and is worn by the knight on his left side. There is also a *George* or pendent representing St. George slaying a dragon” (Coil, p. 271). Brewer (1909) concurs with Coil on this assertion. Through the years there have been other propositions as to what the star represents, one of which will be referred to later.

The collar of the order is made of gold knots embellished with enameled medallions depicting a red rose encircled by a garter (Belts, 1841; Woodward, 1896). The jewel is worn suspended from the collar and is a colorful three-dimensional figure of Saint George slaying the dragon. The garter is dark-blue bearing the motto of the order in gold lettering. It is worn on the left calf by knights of the order and the left arm of the ladies.

Order of the Golden Fleece

Philip III, Duke of Burgundy founded the Order of the Golden Fleece on January 10, 1429 to commemorate his marriage to Isabelle of Aviz, daughter of the King of Portugal (Coil, 1961; Woodward, 1896). The order was fashioned after the Order of the Garter. It was dedicated to Saint Andrew and initially limited to 24 members, later increased to 51 (Dawson-Marsh, 2004). Although its primary symbol was reminiscent of the pagan golden fleece stolen by Jason and the Argonauts of Greek mythology, Catholicism was a prerequisite for membership. Due to this paradox, the symbol was often the source of controversy. In attempts to distance the Christian order from its pagan imagery, the fleece was publically proclaimed to refer to Burgundy’s primary source of income as well as the biblical account of Gideon. According to Woodward, one legend claims that the order received its name in reference to the golden hair of one of the Duke’s mistresses.

Philip’s intent in the creation of the order was to help unite the minor nobles within his realm in loyalty to himself. According to Dawson-Marsh (2004), petty infighting had erupted throughout all of Europe, and “Philip needed to create a brotherhood that would forge a common bond between he himself and those who served him” (p. 7). Philip later had aspiration to call for a crusade to invade and conquer the east following the fall of Constantinople in 1453. During this period the connection between the chivalric order and the crusading efforts of Jason and the Argonauts was again strengthened (Dawson-Marsh).

The order was divided into two branches due to a sovereignty dispute resulting from the death of Charles II, of the Spanish Habsburgs, in 1700. The sovereignty of the order passed to a Bourbon, and resulted in the order being divided into a Spanish and an Austrian branch. Both the Spanish and the Austrian orders are still in existence today (Dawson-Marsh, 2004).

The collar of the order is composed of separate links that are hooked with each other to form

a union of support. The fundamental idea of the order is “the equality and brotherhood of its members, who are bound together by their membership”. The jewel of the order is composed of a golden fleece inclusive with head and feet, resembling a whole sheep¹ (Coil, 1961).

This covers the two orders from the Tennessee ritual, but what about the Roman Eagle and the Star? These two references are not as clearly or easily understood. It could be suggested by the abbreviation of the Tennessee Ritual, that the Roman Eagle and the Star do not reference orders at all. Since the Tennessee Ritual specifically states the “orders of” it would be improper to include the Roman Eagle and Star if they referred to a standard and badge, respectively.

Roman Eagle

The Roman Eagle clearly is not referring to an order of chivalry. Coil (1961) defines the Roman Eagle thusly, “The standard representing an eagle, carried at the head of each Roman legion” (p.215). The Roman Eagle was a symbol of Rome’s overpowering existence and flaunting greatness. The Roman Eagle has a long legacy within Masonry. According to Mackey, it is from the single headed standard that was carried before the Roman Empire’s soldiers that the Scottish Rite’s double headed eagle originated. According to Mackey, after the split of the Roman Empire into two dominions the Roman Eagle generated a second head. One head looked west to Rome and the other east to Byzantium. It was probably not until 1758 that the double-headed eagle was introduced into Freemasonry, and according to Mackey (1927) it was not until 1802 that it really appeared pictorially, associated with the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

Order of the Star/Order of the Eagle

The most probable explanation for the star was afore discussed, as the star referring to an emblem of the Order of the Garter; however, there are those Masonic writers who take the position that the Roman Eagle and Star refer to two chivalric orders. Worrel (1997), in *The Spiritual Vision of the Seven Liberal Arts*, asserts that the star refers to the Order of the Star, not an insignia of the Order of the Garter. The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania’s website explains the star in like manner (www.pagrandlodge.org/programs/masedu/qa/51-67.html). The Order of the Star originated in France in 1352 and was short lived (Brewer, 1909). The order was founded by John the Good of France to unite the lesser nobles of his lands. The order was made up of 500 companions, and it was the Order of the Star’s own vows that lead to its demise. Each Companion of the order took two vows, one to meet once a year for an annual feast and the other to never retreat more than a mile from battle, preferring rather to be either killed or taken captive (Brewer). These two vows would prove out to be the orders undoing. At the first banquet, one Companion’s castle was captured by the English in his absence, and over the course of a few years, other companions were ambushed and slaughtered en route to the banquet. Due to the companions’ obligation not to flee battle, the knights of the order were repeatedly slain as sheep for the slaughter during intense engagements. A great number of companions of the Order of the Star were killed at the Battle of Mauron, and the remaining companions fell with a humiliating defeat at the Battle of Poitiers in 1356. The order never lived past the reign of its progenitor. In effect, the Order of the Star faltered in existence after around a decade (Brewer).

¹ A graphic of the jewel may be seen at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Golden_Fleece_dsc02934.jpg

The Order of the Eagle was founded in 1433 by Albrecht von Habsburg, Duke of Austria, who later became the Holy Roman Emperor (Brewer, 1909). It is of little historical importance, and it is extremely difficult to find information about the order other than its founder and date of institution.

Why the inclusion of these Orders in the Ritual?

Beckett (2006) proposed that the inclusion of these orders present an allusion to Freemasonry's date of origin. He stated that obviously, in the lecture as presented by Duncan, there is a hint of time. It directly states that Freemasonry was in existence before 1430, when the Order of the Golden Fleece was formed. Beckett extends this reference to time by assuming that since the ritual states it is more honorable and not more ancient than the Order of the Garter that Freemasonry is its junior. That would mean that Freemasonry was formed between 1344 and 1430. The premise of Beckett's assertion is that Freemasonry began during the development of the Medieval Craft Guilds. This is an interesting assertion; however, it is probably more romantic than practical.

It is most probable that the inclusion of the Order of the Garter and the Order of the Golden Fleece within the rituals of Freemasonry is merely an attempt to represent Freemasonry's general antiquity and honor. There is little debate that these two orders are the most successful and diligent orders of all knighthood. If this was the purpose of the originators of the ritual, it is very unlikely that the Star mentioned is in reference to the Order of the Star, since that order ended in disgrace. It is most likely that Coil (1961) had the right idea in his *Masonic Encyclopedia*, and it is the vestment of the Order of the Garter to which the ritual refers. The Roman Eagle is most probably referring the standard of the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire was the largest and most powerful civilization in the ancient world. Its standard is an image of power and prestige. By connecting it to the Fraternity of Freemasonry, a great deal of dignity is transposed upon the Craft.

The statement that Freemasonry is more honorable than the order of the Garter and Golden Fleece is a self-imposed proclamation of importance and greatness. As afore explained, the Garter is the most noble and prestigious class of knighthood and honors in all the United Kingdom and the Order of the Golden Fleece is one of the most widely recognized chivalric organization in the world. The original writers of the ritual are obviously attempting to reflect an ambiance of ancient and regal importance upon Freemasonry.

Regardless of the intent of the progenitors of the Craft rituals, there is an importance to knowing the background of these orders named within the Masonic ritual of the First Degree. It is hoped that the Masonic reader has gained a little insight in this exploration of history and romanticism.

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PARALLELS OF FREEMASONRY AND PLATO'S ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE

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Throughout history there have been many men who have attained a stature of high regard in the halls of Freemasonry. These men were usually individuals who added great triumphs to the world about them whether it be socially, academically, philosophically, or masonically. Each of these men may not have been raised in the Order but are believed to have been prepared and made a Mason in his heart. These are men who embraced the enlightenment thought either with or without the guidance of the Craft. One such man is the great philosophical teacher Plato. In the writings of Brother Albert Pike, Plato's time honored teachings are allured to repeatedly. Some Masonic authors even attribute a veiled lineage to the philosophical academies of Plato's time. Of all his writings, there is at least one lesson from this great educator's repertoire that has parallels with the system of Freemasonry. Plato's *Allegory of the Cave* should have great Masonic resonance for all who have been inducted into the roll of the Craft.

Before undertaking the task of exploring the parallels between Freemasonry and Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, it is prudent to examine what, if any, connection Plato has with the Craft and its development. First and foremost, it is important to assert, at the onset of this exploration, that there will be no claim that Plato was inducted into the mysteries of Freemasonry or that it traces its lineage from his, or any other, ancient mystery school. This examination will only look at what the shapers and formers of modern Freemasonry thought about and gleaned from Plato's writings and example. Any obvious connections that can be drawn between Plato's *Allegory of the Cave* and the modern institution of Free and Accepted Masonry will also be reviewed.

Plato's Life and Academy

Although there is some debate as to the date of Plato's birth, it is generally accepted that he was born around the year 428 BC (Guthrie, 1979). His given name was Aristocles. The name *Plato* was seemingly a nickname meaning broad, perhaps in reference to his physical appearance. Plato's early life is blurred by antiquity and unreliable accounts. His immediate family, while politically connected and affluent, was not overly impressive, and Plato most likely lived an early life of little difficulty (Guthrie).

Plato was a student of the acclaimed teacher Socrates. This relationship was very impressing upon the life and personal views of Plato. Perhaps the most influential experience in Plato's life was the death of his revered teacher. According to Nails (2002), Plato was twenty-eight when Socrates was condemned to death by drinking the notorious hemlock. Following Socrates' death, Plato left Athens and traveled to Megara, Cyrene, Italy, Sicily, and Egypt (McEvoy, 1984). It is during this time of travel that, according to Wilmshurst (1922), Plato sought initiation into the Egyptian Mysteries but was rejected by the high priest. "*You Greeks are but children in the Secret Doctrine*" Sais, the priest, was reported to have replied to Plato's requests to being inducted into the mysteries. The ancients, according to tradition, did instruct Plato in the sacred and spiritual doctrines, and he

was advanced in knowledge and understanding of the ancient mysteries.

Following his travels and intellectual search for light, Plato returned to Athens around the age of forty, and he established a school, the Academy, in the Grove of Academus (Cairn, 1961). Plato's school was geographically located within a grove or a public park filled with gymnasiums, altars, statues, and temples. Plato's Academy most probably was a loose connection of men who came to learn criticism of method by listening to his dialogues and instruction. The leader or head of the Academy was apparently elected for life by the majority vote of its members. Plato remained the Head of the Academy until his death in 348/347 BC. It was in the Academy that Plato instructed some of the greatest intellectual minds of Western Civilization, including Aristotle.

Ancient and Masonic Writers and Plato

The Illustrious Brother Albert Pike, who incidentally was called by some the "Plato of Freemasonry," held the teachings of Plato in high esteem (Hall, 2006). In *Morals and Dogma*, Pike (1956) reveals his position that Plato is among the greatest revelers of truth and light. Pike stated that Plato expounded and expressed the noble doctrine of nature "in the most beautiful and luminous manner" (p. 617).

Wilmshurst (1922) refers to Plato in his revered work *The Meaning of Masonry*. Wilmshurst stated that in order to fully understand the Fellow Craft Degree, a student of Freemasonry must study two ancient sources. The first of these is Plato's *Dialogues*. "The other is the records of the classical Christian contemplatives . . ." (p. 123). Of interest is Wilmshurst's reminder to the reader that Plato refers to the four cardinal virtues in *Phædo* and the *Book of Wisdom*, ch. viii, 5-7. If the studying Mason researches this point, he will not find the traditional Masonic virtues of fortitude, prudence, temperance, and justice. Instead he would find justice, temperance, wisdom, and courage.

Mackey (1882) in *The Symbolism of Freemasonry* stated, "And Plato says that the design of initiation was to restore the soul to that state of perfection from which it had originally fallen". This being taken from the *Phædo*, it is evident the general esoteric goal of both the ancient mysteries and modern Freemasonry are similar in concept.

The Dionysian Artificers refers to Plato numerous times. The work points out the importance of understanding that fables and allegories often contain numerous meanings (De Costa, 1936). It further asserted that Plato's teaching of "the descent of the soul into the darkness of the body, the perils of the passions, [and] the torments of vices" are shared by Virgil and illustrated in writings (p. 22). Of these, the descent of the soul into the darkness is relevant to the topic at hand. Fakhry (2004) connects the *Allegory of the Cave* and Ibn Sina's *Allegory of the Bird*. Fakhry asserted that both illustrate the destiny of the soul to only be released from bondage through an attainment of knowledge. It is recommended that all seek out and study the *Allegory of the Bird*. It has meaning and purpose to all men, but without a doubt it has great importance and is worthy of examination by those who are called seekers of light.

The Allegory of the Cave

In Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, human prisoners are held captive deep in the earth. Their necks and ankles chained, they have never seen the outside world, the sun, or each other. They are bound facing a stone wall. Light from the outside world shines in the cave casting shadows on the stone wall each prisoner is facing. Also behind the captives is a fire, and in front of the fire a walkway on

which men carry puppets and items from the outside world. These items include statues of gods, men, animals, and trees. The bondsmen have no understanding of their condition: their world is made up only of the illusions of distorted shadows cast upon the stone wall before them. The sounds and voices heard by those kept enslaved are only echoes and reverberations from the outside. As they sit in darkness, their reality is limited and their morals only based on their own understandings of distorted truths and skewed sounds from the outside world.

The allegory continues to explain that the prisoners cling to their own prejudices and self-conceived notions of reality. Plato asserts that if all the prisoners were released to turn and see the elements that created their reality, the prisoners would be blinded by the light of the fire. The prisoners, according to Plato, would quickly become angered by what they viewed and desire to return to their shackled condition. However, Plato suggests that if only one prisoner had his chains removed, the response would be vastly different. The prisoner would turn to see the fire, the walk way, and the other prisoners bound in a blind state. The allegory continues with the prisoner being dragged out of the cave by an agent and presented to the sunlit outside world. There he sees that the realities and morals of his world are only an illusion of the world about him. Without any argument, it may be asserted that Plato believed a return to the cave would be almost impossible because the prisoner would have seen his previously darkened condition as an enslaved state.

An Initial Examination

In the centuries between Plato's first oration of the afore described allegory and today, there have been countless numbers of interpretations of its meaning. Nearly every civilized culture and society has examined and synthesized the allegory to extract meaning and support to their lives. It is this allegory's ability to be interpreted in varied ways that makes it such a fundamental and enduring legacy of the thoughts and teachings of Plato. Why then should it not be appropriate to ascertain a Masonic interpretation of Plato's Allegory of the Cave?

The allegory's first element of Masonic resonance is its ability to be interpreted in varied ways. Just as it is asserted that the allegory's ability to be varied in interpretation has added to its popularity and survival, the same may be said of Freemasonry. No institution which is austere, unbending, and disobliging can have a true global existence, spanning geographic, religious, political, and cultural boundaries. It is the ability of Freemasonry to meet the needs of men from all creeds and walks of life that has led to its survival over the centuries. Without this ability to be relevant to Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, and Deists alike both the allegory of the Cave and Freemasonry would either be isolated or lost in the ages of time.

In *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*, Dr. T. Z. Lavine (1984) of George Washington University describes the allegory in such a way that one could use the same sentences to describe the Craft itself. "It is an allegory of our time as needing to be born again, to emerge from the darkness of corruption into the light of truth and morality. It is an educational allegory of our time as needing to ascend through stages of education from the darkness of intellectual and moral confusion in its everyday beliefs, to the light of true knowledge and values" (p. 28). Freemasonry hopes to lead its initiates to higher understandings of truth and life, to put away the dim light of superstition and passion, to embrace the illumination of reason, intellectual knowledge, and immutable values. Dr. Lavine's brief interpretations of the allegory provide a Masonic aura and a spring board for its analysis.

Both Freemasonry and Plato's allegory begin with men in a darkened condition. The men in the

cave are groping in darkness and bound to the blighted beliefs of superstition and self-prescribed truths. It is noteworthy to point out that the allegory takes place within a cave. Caverns have long been considered, masonically, to be “a symbol of the darkness of ignorance and crime impenetrable to the light of truth” (Mackey, 1927, p. 169). In the Ninth degree of the Scottish Rite, “the cave is a symbol of the imprisonment of the human soul and intellect by ignorance, superstition, deceit, and fraud” (Hutchens, 2000). The neophyte, who has petitioned Freemasonry, is held in the bondage of ignorance just as the mass of mankind is held in ignorance to the great and true teachings of the Craft. “There disinterestedness vanishes, every one howls, searches, gropes, and gnaws for himself. Ideas are ignored, and of progress there is no thought” (Pike, 1956, p. 3). Just as the profane is satisfied by the broken image of himself, so are the individuals in the cave content with living in darkness without any hope of intellectual growth or true fulfillment. It is also noteworthy to point out that the three ruffians, in the Ninth degree, are found hiding in a cave. Where else do ignorance, tyranny, and fanaticism belong?

In his allegory, Plato presents us with a very interesting assertion. He presents an occurrence where all the prisoners are released to turn and see the images within the cave. As they view the darkness around them, their eyes are not able to adjust to the protruding and offensive brightness of the fire’s light. They quickly become disillusioned and repulsed by the image and desire to return to their once darkened condition. Does this image not hold great Masonic meaning? The totality of the prisoners represents the mass of mankind. Brother Pike (1956) in *Morals and Dogma* states “people, as a mass, (*are*) rude and unorganized” (p. 6). Mankind, as an innate passion, loves squalor and ignorance. It is only through the instruction of an agent, such as Freemasonry, that the individual, not the mass, can be raised above his inborn breeding and grow intellectually. All men are not suited for the secret teachings of the Craft. They are unable to grasp its rich meaning and hidden gems of purpose. It is only the few, the minority of intellectually prone individuals, who can be lifted up from the mire of mankind’s filth to be bettered by the teachings of the Craft. The mass would be unable to perceive the teachings of the allegories of Masonry and would quickly be blinded and wish to return to their previous status in life. As the Hebrew proverb states, “As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.”

Freemasonry has always known that the masses are not compatible with its teachings; therefore, it has only admitted the best and most lofty individuals of society to attain the progressive instruction it has to offer. The degrees of the Craft are only represented within Plato’s allegory when considering the individual, just as only one man should be introduced to the mysteries of Masonry at a time. Within the lodge, the uninitiated is hoodwinked and blinded to the occurrences about him. He is kept in darkness for two reasons. The first reason is a reminder of the vow of secrecy soon to be taken. Secondly, it is intended that the candidate for the Entered Apprentice Degree, and all others, perceive the forms of the lodge in his heart before he views the beauties thereof with his eyes. The individual in Plato’s allegory is kept in darkness to reality. During this time, he uses shadows and distorted noises to conceive the reality that is around him, and the proselyte is not brought to light until after his cable tow has been removed. In the allegory, the prisoner is not brought to light until his shackles are opened. The agent who brings him to initial light walks him around the cave and points to objects and demands the individual to name them (Plato). The parallel exists that neither the individual released from bondage nor the newly made brother within the lodge are brought to complete light. The teachings of both are only partial. The two initiates are allowed to adjust to the new light that has been shown them and expected to progress through further stages to attain more light and greater understanding.

The next development in the journey of a man seeking Masonic enlightenment occurs through the teachings and philosophy of the Fellow Craft's Degree. This second degree of Masonry is filled with great and enduring ideas and teachings for the neophyte seeking further light in the Craft. The legend of the winding staircase holds lessons of the utmost importance, and within its beautifully illustrated lessons lie one word that most suitably expresses its meaning. That single word is ascension. The passage taken to the Holy of Holies is sacred and dominated by the ascension of a winding staircase. This winding staircase is symbolic of the journey of one seeking a liberal education (Mackey, 1927). Mackey explains, "the path of the Fellow Craft requires him to ascend, step by step, until he has reached the summit, where the treasures of knowledge await him" (p. 1007). Education is the great equalizer and is the one thing that a man can do to elevate himself above others. H. L. Haywood (1922) stresses the second degree's importance in elevating men intellectually. All men who seek elevation are destined to ascend the enlightened path of knowledge. Education and academics are the paths by which Masonry teaches one must take to truly find enlightenment. The experience of the freedman, within Plato's allegory, being dragged from the darkness of the cave can be compared to the winding staircase of the second degree. It is through this ascending passage that he finds the most brilliant light. The contradiction between the allegory and the second degree is the fact that the individual in the allegory is "reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent" (Plato). Freemasonry never forces itself upon initiates. It is through one's own freewill and accord that an individual is exposed to the teachings of the Craft.

"When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities" (Plato). This passage is true for both the allegory and the newly passed Fellow Craft. In each degree of Freemasonry, the brilliant light to which the candidate is exposed is so bright he at first is blinded by it. It might be prescribed that for this reason a period of at least twenty-eight days, in most jurisdictions, and a lecture are required before advancement might be made. This allotted time allows maturation of and ample reflection upon the seeds sewn within the lessons of the degree (Driber, 2004).

It is through the maturation of a candidate spiritually and intellectually, his listening to the instruction of well informed brethren, and the reflection upon the lessons taught him that a man is prepared to experience the life changing episode of the Third Degree of Masonry. Only after a candidate has first been brought to light and shown the initial beauties of the lodge and passed through the ascension of growth intellectually that a man can be raised to the newness of life as a Master Mason. The same journey, symbolically and allegorically, had to occur to the released prisoner. He had to first be brought to the understanding that he was in a state of bondage, after which he was caused to pass through the ascension of knowledge to seek the bright light at the pinnacle of the summit. It is at this summit that the freedman is truly brought to full illumination and entitled to freely see the realities of the world about him.

"First he will see the shadows best, next the reflections of men and other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven; and he will see the sky and the stars by night better than the sun or the light of the sun by day? Last of all he will be able to see the sun, and not mere reflections of him in the water, but he will see him in his own proper place, and not in another; and he will contemplate him as he is" (Plato). Through the lessons of the Third Degree a man is shown his place in the world as an immortal being destined to be resurrected by the ultimate Creator. The teachings of the Third Degree are explained to the newly raised brother; however, the truer and deeper realities and meanings of the degree are much later discovered, if ever. The freed prisoner in Plato's allegory is

able to view all the glories of the real world once he has completed his ascent from the cave; so too, the Master Mason is entitled and does receive a full explanation of the mysteries of Craft Masonry. Neither individual is at once able to comprehend the beauties he is caused to behold. It is through the reflection and consistent study upon what is seen and experienced that the true lessons are learned by both.

Other Writers' Parallels

Fanthrope and Fanthorpe (2006) stated that the *Allegory of the Cave* illustrates “the significance of free and independent thought as a *pathway to truth*” (p.110). They continued to state that the prisoner who first escaped “from the cave of deceptive shadows and discovered reality is someone who has learned Masonic truth” (p. 110). According to the authors, Plato taught the things we see, touch, smell, and hear are not reality. They assert that Plato believed that all that we perceive with our senses must be elevated through the mind before true understanding can occur. It was, according to Plato, the role of the philosopher to help others release the light within his students to allow them to understand the world around them through a stimulated mind. Fanthrope and Fanthorpe allude to the conclusion that this goal is shared with Freemasonry.

Conclusions

It is not suggested that the intent of The Allegory of the Cave was meant to be an illustration of Freemasonry. The absurdity of such an assertion would be a gross injustice to the honor of the fraternity. It is also acknowledged that many works of literature and philosophy could be stretched to illustrate some Masonic teaching. It is hoped, those who read this will find it Masonically enlightening rather than a mere stretch of Masonic thought. The thought Plato tried to impart through his allegory clearly parallels the high teachings of the Craft. It is only natural for an institution defined as “a peculiar system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols” to be interested in the parallels of those great minds who so effectively used allegories as tools of instruction. We are taught in the Second Degree of Freemasonry to cultivate the Arts and to grow in usefulness. This can only be achieved through consistent and intense reflection upon the Craft, and by paralleling and searching the philosophies and ideals that so closely resemble the morals of the Craft. May the Order of Freemasonry be as enduring as the teachings of the great philosopher Plato.

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**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, JANUARY 2007**

FREEMASONRY IN COLONIAL AMERICA

By Dr. S. Brent Morris

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*This STB was taken from an article titled **The Polite Revolution** published in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, Vol 116–2003. It has been edited because of space limitations in an STB.*

–STB Editor

Like so many Masonic events, the first appearance of Freemasonry in America is not precisely known. Jonathan Belcher, a native of Cambridge, Massachusetts and later Governor of the Colonies of Massachusetts and New Hampshire from 1730–41 and the Colony of New Jersey from 1747–57, was made a Mason in London around 1704. He is one of the very few Masons known to have joined the Craft before 1717. It is possible he held private Lodges at his residence before time–immemorial, or chartered, Lodges appeared. On 5 June 1730, the premier Grand Lodge appointed Daniel Coxe Provincial Grand Master for New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, giving the first official Masonic recognition of the English colonies. Bro. Coxe does not seem to have exercised his authority, even though he lived in New Jersey from 1731–39. The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania possesses a book marked “*Liber B*” which contains the records of the earliest known Pennsylvania and American Lodge. The first record is for 24 June 1731, and in that month Benjamin Franklin is entered as paying dues five months back. Franklin’s entry implies Lodge activity from at least December 1730 or January 1731.

No earlier Lodge records exist in the United States, though there are suggestive comments in newspapers. Consider these words from the *Boston Gazette* for 29 August 1720, 3 about the death of Mr. Benjamin Dowse in a hunting accident: “He was very much beloved and is universally lamented, being a Person of Exemplary Piety and Industry, and Good Temper, and a Widows Only Son.” Mr. Dowse was predeceased by his father and brother, and he left a mother and three sisters. Suggestive though this account is, it is not definitive proof that Masons met in America in 1720.

We are thus safe in setting 1730 as the date for the beginning of American Masonry. Whatever Masonic meetings may have been held before 1730 were not recorded or the records have been lost, and activity after 1730 rapidly increased and is documented. In addition to Bro. Coxe, England established several other Provincial Grand Lodges and Grand Masters. Coxe’s deputation was unique in granting the authority to Masons to elect Coxe’s successors. Specifically: Masons “in all of any of the said Provinces, Shall and they are hereby Impowered every other year on the feast of St. John the Baptist to elect a Provincial Grand Master....”

The fortunes of these Provincial Grand Lodges waxed and waned during the following decades. Some were blessed with dynamic leaders who nurtured and expanded the Craft, while others had periods without effective administration. Two factors complicated matters for American Masonic leaders: the rivalry between the Ancients and Moderns in England and the growing political turmoil

in America. The Masonic fraternity overcame these problems in a way that reflects well on the cement of brotherly love that bound their members together. They laid the foundation for an independent American Masonic system with millions of members, tens of thousands of lodges, and scores of retirement homes, orphanages, and national hospitals.

American revolutionary Masons fought and died for political independence but still cherished their ties to Great Britain. Their rebellion was political, not Masonic, and there was little bitterness or acrimony on either side as mortal combatants engaged in Masonic matters. This seeming contradiction was wonderfully illustrated by a meeting on 7 February 1780 of American Union Lodge, a military lodge chartered by the Modern (and mostly loyalist) St. John's Grand Lodge of Massachusetts and attached to the Connecticut Line of the Continental Army. The war had been fought for five years, and the American forces could not foresee their decisive victory a year away at Yorktown, Virginia. The Americans had done the unthinkable in separating from king and country. They had endured the bitter winter of 1777 in Valley Forge and the onslaughts of the world's greatest military machine. And yet they assumed a deferential posture in most things Masonic. The rebel soldiers, led by General Mordecai Gist, petitioned the Grand Lodges of the United States to create a General Grand Lodge, but only after obtaining "approbation and confirmation" from their "Grand Mother Lodge."

To the RIGHT WORSHIPFUL, the Grand Masters of the several Lodges in the Respective United States of America.

UNION—FORCE—LOVE

We beg leave to recommend the adopting and pursuing the most necessary measures for establishing one Grand Lodge in America, to preside over and govern all other lodges of whatsoever degree or denomination....

To accomplish this beneficial and essential work, permit us to propose that you, the Right Worshipful Grand Masters of a majority of your number, may nominate as Most Worshipful Grand Master of said lodge, a brother whose merit and capacity may be adequate to a station so important and elevated and transmitting the name and nomination of such brother, together with the name of the lodge to be established, to our Grand Mother Lodge in Europe for approbation and confirmation...

During the war, control of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania (Ancients) went from loyalists to patriots, depending on which forces were present. Lodge No. 3 [of Philadelphia] held the warrant of the Grand Lodge, whose [mostly patriot] members had fled the city. Under that authority, it formed itself into a Grand Lodge—an irregular proceeding—and [in 1778] warranted a military lodge in the British Army's Seventeenth Regiment of Foot. The regiment's original Irish charter was replaced by a Scottish one, subsequently lost at the battle of Princeton, New Jersey. The lost Scottish charter was replaced by the Pennsylvania warrant for Unity Lodge No. 18 and the new charter was itself lost a year later at the battle of Stony Point, New York. This time, however, the charter and regalia fell into the hands of American General Samuel H. Parsons, a member of American Union Lodge. The captured Masonic material was returned to the British lodge with the following letter.

West Jersey Highlands, July 23, 1779

Brethren: When the ambition of monarchs or jarring interest of contending states, call forth their subjects to war, as Masons we are disarmed of that resentment which stimulates to undistinguished desolation; and however our political sentiments may impel us in the public dispute, we are still Brethren, and (our professional duty apart) ought to promote the happiness and advance the weal of each other. Accept therefore, at the hands of a Brother, the Constitution of the Lodge Unity No. 18, to be held in the 17th British Regiment which your late misfortunes have put in my power to restore to you.

Samuel H. Parsons

As touching as this fraternal story is, the epilogue says even more about the character of the Masons involved.

In March 1786, three years after American independence had been achieved, the officers of [Unity Lodge No. 18] wrote to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania to inquire as to the status of its warrant, which they feared had been canceled. They expressed their wish to continue Masonic affiliation with the Grand Lodge and offered to pay all back dues. The Grand Lodge replied that it wished the same result, allowed the regiment to determine its own dues as all records pertaining to it had been misplaced or lost, and promised to search for the missing warrant. It extended its best wishes for the welfare and prosperity of the military lodge. These communications were curiously devoid of any of the bitterness or hostile feeling that one might expect to find between former enemies.

This difficulty in carrying hostilities from the battlefield into the lodgeroom, was mirrored by American Masons' difficulty in embracing the Ancients–Moderns dispute with the enthusiasm of the English. There were indeed Ancient and Modern American lodges and Grand Lodges, and they often denied recognition to each other. However, except in South Carolina, this denial was seldom vigorous and often honored in the breach. It was as if the American Ancients and Moderns knew they weren't supposed to like each other, but they weren't really sure why. This polite confusion is illustrated by the By-Laws of the lodge at Joppa, Maryland.

Joppa [Maryland] November 21st diem A.D. 1765, A.L. 4765 A.M. 5768.

Therefore by and with Consent of the Right Worshipfull Master and the Right Worshipfull Wardens and other Worshipfull Officers and Brethren of this Lodge be It Enacted and it is hereby Enacted that the following Articles be Laws fundamental for the use of this Lodge only subject as by our Warrant Specified.

14th [of 24]. That none who hath been admitted in any Modern Lodge shall be Admitted as a Member of this Lodge without taking the respective Obligations Peculiar to ancient Masons.

Joppa Lodge certainly did not want any Ancients joining them, but they seem to have made an oversight when they obtained their charter: they were Number 346 on the Grand Lodge of Moderns not the Ancients! The lodge eventually obtained an Ancients charter from the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, but their confusion is typical of how the Ancients–Moderns dispute muddled along in America.

In 1761 the Moderns Provincial Grand Lodge of Massachusetts voted to prohibit its members

from attending the Ancient Lodge of St. Andrew (which eventually received its charter from Scotland), even though a list of St. Andrew's members shows fifteen were made Masons in the Moderns Grand Lodge. A dozen years later in 1773, St. John's Grand Lodge voted to allow visitors from St. Andrew's Lodge and their Provincial Grand Lodge. This legislative fiat effectively ended the Ancients–Moderns dispute in Massachusetts, and is typical of how the dispute was settled throughout the states.

The shooting started in 1775, and on 4 July 1776 the thirteen United States of America issued their Declaration of Independence from Great Britain. After five years of warfare the combined American and French force defeated General Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, Virginia, on 19 October 1781, which effectively ended the Revolutionary War. The formal end came with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on 3 September 1783. During this unsettled period, American Masonry had a precarious existence. Some lodges were virtually unaffected by the war, while others dissolved. Control of some grand lodges swung from patriots to loyalists and back to patriots. The fieriest political revolutionaries could at the same time maintain a firm attachment to their mother grand lodge.

Masonic independence began as necessary actions to insure a stable government of the fraternity; there was often no plan or real desire to permanently sever Masonic ties. Contact with Great Britain was limited and erratic during the war, if not dangerously near to treason, so some Provincial Grand Lodges felt they had little choice but to elect their own Grand Masters. Some of these first steps at self-government were realized only later to be acts of independence. As more states took over their own Masonic governance, and as the revolution moved towards a successful conclusion for the former colonies, the remaining states came to view independent state Grand Lodges as the natural evolution from Provincial Grand Lodges. Dissent to Masonic separation from England became almost nonexistent, and the later votes for independence became unanimous endorsements of the new nation.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, FEBRUARY 2007**

**MASONIC INFORMATION CENTER
2006 ACTIVITIES**

This is a terrific time to be a Freemason. We are standing at the base of the mountain called *challenge*. New tools are in place, our energy level has been greatly expanded, our enthusiasm is high and it's time to begin the ascent. The following report will review those things that the Masonic Information Center has been doing to support our climbers. Scaling any mountain is never easy. That is why it is done as a team. As you will note from the following report 2006 was a very busy year.

Freemasonry in Popular Culture

A new book, *The Book of Fate* by Brad Meltzer, a TV series, *Vanished*, which appeared on the Fox Network; the movie version of *The Da Vinci Code*; and promised for 2007 the new book by Dan Brown and a possible sequel to the movie *National Treasure* all portray Freemasonry in a positive if sometimes misleading way. Many plotlines still depict the fraternity as guarding an enormous, monetary treasure or the Holy Grail. To clarify any doubt about what Freemasonry truly stands for the Masonic Information Center released the following statement:

Freemasonry makes an appealing topic for fiction writers

Freemasonry is a highly respected, centuries-old fraternity dating from—at least—the time of the stoneworker's guilds of medieval Europe, making it an attractive topic for legitimate research and for wild speculation. Recently, the Masonic fraternity has been woven into the plotline of a number of fictional movies and books that put Freemasonry back into the realm of popular culture. The privacy associated with the fraternity has been exploited as secretive, and popular culture has been given inventions of fantasy such as the following **myths** about Masonic identity: Freemasonry as a Guardian of the Holy Grail; keepers of an enormous fortune; a sinister force, who together with the Jews, are involved in a plot to take over the world; a threat to religious freedom; or a group of men who somehow must have something to hide. Although entertaining concepts, these false interpretations fail to present the authentic purposes of the Masonic order. Purposes that are found in its system of values based upon the following **cornerstones**: the dignity of man and the liberty of the individual; the right of all persons to worship as *they* choose; the formation of democratic governments; and the importance of public education.

Freemasonry encourages personal study and social betterment

Freemasonry, as we know it today, is very much a product of the Age of Enlightenment, which has, over the centuries, developed into a fraternity emphasizing personal study, self-improvement, and social betterment. Worldwide, there are 3.5 million members of the fraternity of Freemasonry who continue to help men and women face the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century by building bridges of brotherhood, performing good works in our communities and upholding the ideals for a better tomorrow.

Website Enhancement

Websites are fast becoming the major source of Masonic Information. Each succeeding year we

turn more and more to the internet for information. It is imperative that Grand Lodges, lodges, and other Masonic bodies have the most attractive, informative, and easily assessable websites that can be developed. MSA/MIC is no exception. We have just completed a major review of our site making it more accessible and far simpler to browse. We invite you to go to www.msana.com. Please share your thoughts and comments by e-mailing us at msana@ix.netcom.com.

Media Contacts

Media contacts during 2006 were extremely interesting. We had requests for information from print, audio, video, and website media. Just for example, we were interviewed by *Newsday* (Long Island, NY); *Channel 6 TV* (Richmond, VA); *Messenger Enquirer* (Owensboro, KY); *The New York Times*; *Florida Times Union*; *Howstuffworks.com* (a website that explains “how things work”). A variety of subjects were covered ranging from membership statistics to Freemasonry and conspiracy theories. Some extremely interesting interviews were the result.

Freemasonry in the News

Several times during the year Freemasonry was provided with excellent opportunities to bring a message about the fraternity to the general public. Two examples:

WHDT - West Palm Beach

This was a discussion with a radio talk show in South Florida lasting 11 minutes. An extremely wide-ranging interview discussing history, purpose, conspiracy theories, movies and books about Freemasonry. It was done by phone hook-up to the broadcast studio in West Palm Beach. An eleven-minute segment gave the Masonic Information Center an excellent opportunity to discuss Freemasonry in a positive way.

ABC Good Morning America

On April 19, 2006, *Good Morning America* (ABC News) featured several segments on Freemasonry. The show airs for two hours each morning and the segments involving Freemasonry totaled 17.5 minutes. There were interviews with Margaret C. Jacob, Professor of History at the University of California and author of *The Origins of Freemasonry*; Steven Bullock, Associate Professor of History, Worcester Polytechnic Institute and author of *Revolutionary Brotherhood*; Dr. S. Brent Morris, Editor, *Scottish Rite Journal*; and Richard E. Fletcher, Executive Secretary, Masonic Service Association/Masonic Information Center.

The following discussion was part of the interview with Richard E. Fletcher, PGM, Executive Secretary MSA/MIC;

Charles Gibson: But you know secret societies today raise suspicions. Now, you say it's not secret but there are parts about it that we just don't know.

Dick Fletcher: There are parts that are private. If you're talking about what “goes on behind closed doors and all those secret things,” they're not secret, they're private. What we're doing is taking an individual man and bringing him into the fraternity through a series of degrees. In these degrees he is going to be challenged to look at such things as honesty, honor, integrity, how to make himself a better person. And we do that through the lessons taught in the degrees.

Everything in Freemasonry has a symbolic as well as a practical meaning. So, while he is being challenged to look inward at himself, as a person, he is going to

have to self-reflect, contemplate, think. This can't be done in a public forum. It is done in the privacy of a lodge with his lodge brothers—who have already gone through the process the initiate is going through. They are there to nurture him, to care for him, to show their support for him. The Masonic Brothers and the initiate are the ones who see, understand, and reflect upon the life change that this man is going through. It is a serious step when you become a Freemason. We are pledging ourselves to become better people in our homes, in our churches, in all walks of life. And this is done in the privacy of our lodgeroom, rather than a public forum. If you put it in a public forum, you simply take away the importance of what is being conveyed to the initiate.

Statement on Freemasonry and Religion

In 1993 (with a revision in 1998) the Masonic Information Center prepared a statement on *Freemasonry and Religion*. This statement was widely circulated and Grand Lodges were urged to adopt it so that Freemasonry would have one position concerning religion. Many Grand Lodges adopted this statement and we encourage those who have not to do so.

It's About Time

In December 2005, the Masonic Information Center (MIC) released its report, *It's About Time: Moving Masonry into the 21st Century*. This report came about as a result of the request of the Conference of Grand Masters that the MIC look at ways of improving Masonic Public Awareness. A special Task Force from within the members of the Masonic Information Center Steering Committee was formed to respond to this request. The Task Force realized that past attempts at Public Awareness and promotional campaigns had produced disappointing results. We felt that the traditional approach of a "public relations campaign" needed to be modified because it had never been clearly established what exactly it was we wished to communicate to the general public. Our Task Force dealt with the question of Masonic Public Identity. It's About Time does give an historical perspective of where we were as a fraternity; where we are today; and where we hope to be in the future.

More than 15,000 copies of this report have been distributed in printed form. The report is also available on the website and may be reproduced and distributed at your discretion. (Permission to do so is granted.)

As a result of this report the Task Force further felt that the next step in Masonic Public Identity was to work with the lodges and encourage them to ask of themselves two vital questions; *What does it mean to be a Mason?* and *How do we communicate that meaning in today's world?*

The Twain Award

Lodge participation is absolutely essential in any realistic approach toward Masonic Awareness, either by our members or by the general public. To stimulate interest in Masonic Awareness and to renew our commitment to a Masonic way of life the Masonic Information Center is proud to introduce the Twain Award. For complete details please go to: <http://www.msana.com/twainaward>.

It's About Time to Reflect

The Masonic Information Center Task Force enthusiastically offers the report, *It's About Time!* and its support to help move Masonry into the 21st century, upholding the honor of Masonic membership and the joy of a Masonic way of life. It's About Time for us to take the concept of

Masonry off the shelf and put the values of Masonry into action.

As a follow-up to the report, *It's About Time! Moving Masonry into the 21st Century*, the Masonic Information Center has initiated the annual Mark Twain Masonic Awareness Award as the next step toward achieving our greatest challenges:

1. To heighten Masonic identity.
2. To restore the energy of Masonry within the lodge and throughout the greater community.

MIC Calls Lodges to Action

Brother by Brother, Lodge by Lodge

Does your lodge have an interest in Masonic Awareness? You bet it does! So do we at the Masonic Information Center. In fact, MIC feels strongly that those lodges, which seriously support Masonic Awareness, both within the lodge and throughout the community, deserve to be recognized. Additionally, these lodges need an opportunity to share their views and accomplishments with other lodges across North America, and to build a network of Masons committed to a strong Masonic fraternity today and in the future.

Based upon this understanding, it is with great pride that the Masonic Information Center announces a new award—called the Twain Award—to honor lodge achievement in Masonic Awareness. Participation in the Twain Award competition is a journey enhanced through learning, doing, and networking.

The Twain Award offers another step in answering the Grand Masters call in 2004 for an MIC–initiated public awareness program. The first step was the report, *It's About Time!* That can be used as a resource for Twain Award participants.

We heartily invite your lodge to participate in this important effort to broaden and strengthen our Masonic identity and to do so with energy and creativity.

Good luck and best wishes!

With these words the Masonic Information Center introduced the new Twain Award program to our lodges and to our members. The primary introduction was through the April 2006 *Short Talk Bulletin* and a posting on our website. We are very pleased that we had responses from more than 40 lodges who completed the entry form.

The excitement that is being generated is truly remarkable. We are already having lodges calling us indicating that they want to be considered for 2007 competition, which leads us to conclude that working together can make a difference!

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, MARCH 2007**

NATHANIEL B. PALMER
Explorer, Ship Designer and Brother

By: Roger W. Read

Bro. Read is a member of Coastal Lodge No. 57 and Past Master of Asylum, Lodge #57 in Stonington, CT (Asylum Lodge by merger is now Coastal Lodge). He is also a Past Grand Master of Connecticut, 1999.

-STB Editor

Capt. Nathaniel Brown Palmer was a great man in the seafaring annals of the 1800s. Acknowledged in the US as the discoverer of Antarctica, he was Captain of numerous Packet ships and designer of a fleet of swift China Clipper ships. He sailed the Atlantic and Pacific oceans in many ships, made record setting runs to and from the European continent, found seal havens south of Cape Horn and captained a number of clipper ships to and from the ports on the American, Asian and European continents.

Nathaniel Palmer was born in the old family home in Stonington, Connecticut on August 8, 1799. His mother was Mercy Palmer and he had eight sisters and brothers. He lived a number of years with his Uncle, Captain Alexander Palmer and his niece, Mrs. Richard F. Loper. The original Palmer house, where he was born, was lost to fire on November 15, 1850. It was rebuilt and stands today.

Nathaniel grew up in the seacoast town of Stonington and was reared in the shipyard of his father, Nathaniel Brown Palmer, Sr. It was a time of turmoil in these United States. An embargo was in effect on American shipping that spawned the night running of "blockade-runners" up the coast through Block Island sound from New York to Portland (ME). Young Nat shipped as a boy "before the mast" on one of these blockade-runners early in 1814. The routes lay just a stones throw from the Stonington port and many runners used the port as a haven for repairs. On June 18, 1812 war was declared; and on August 9, 1814, the town was bombarded by British Commodore Hardy from four ships with a total of 140 cannons. The town was defended by the men and boys with two 18-pound cannons with which they prevailed. Thus we see the life in which young Nat matured, became an expert seaman and ultimately, beginning at the age of 18, the captain of a number of sailing ships.

Nat's first open ocean sealing voyage was as second mate on the brig *Hersilias*. He was bound for the Shetland Islands south of Cape Horn in July of 1819 with orders to explore and discover new seal rookeries. By the use of intelligence gathered by Nat, the voyage found rookeries on islands now known as the South Shetlands.

As a result of his contribution on his first voyage, he was given command of the sloop *Hero* that accompanied three larger vessels to return to the Shetland Islands to harvest additional seals. While preparing to investigate the area south of Deception Island, Capt. Nat (as he was known) climbed to the highest point on the island to get a view in the direction he was going to sail. On that date, November 17, 1820, he sighted a loom of land with what looked like an active volcano. On January 14, 1821, Capt. Nat set sail to search the inlets and bays of the land further south to find additional rookeries. He sailed 200 miles, encountering fierce winds, snowstorms and floating icebergs. He

sailed along the coast of a vast land mass covered in ice and shrouded in fog. He was only able to venture to 68 degrees south latitude where solid ice barred his way. During the return trip the fog set in and while hove to, the presence of two other ships was detected. When the fog cleared Captain Nat was invited to meet with Captain Fabian von Bellingshausen, the Commodore of the Russian Imperial Navy fleet that was on a discovery mission. When, during the discussions, the sighting of the vast land mass was disclosed, the Commodore declared its discoverer to be Nathaniel Palmer and that the mountain range would bear his name.

During the years 1820 through 1833 Capt. Nat continued to command vessels in search of more seals in the Shetland Islands, commerce trading in the West Indies and providing contraband supplies to Simon Bolivar in Chile. He even lost a ship, the *Cadet*, in a storm along the New Jersey coast, but was immediately given command of the brig *Tampico* and ventured back to Chile. On the return from his fourth trip in 1826, he married his hometown sweetheart, Eliza T. Babcock on December 7th 1826. She subsequently accompanied him on voyages around Cape Horn to the Pacific. In the following years, he made seven trips as captain of *Tampico*, invested his profits in a new schooner and was instrumental in mounting an expedition to survey the ocean area south of the Shetlands as Captain and owner of the brig *Annawan*. The voyage, though not successful in making new discoveries, netted some small gain from the sale of seal furs and oil.

Of particular interest to members of the craft is the voyage that Captain Nat and his wife Eliza made in 1831 on the brig *Annawan*. The purpose of the voyage was to buy seal furs from the inhabitants of the penal colony island of Juan Fernandez, the island that inspired the story of Robinson Crusoe. Upon arriving at the island he and his crew were taken prisoner by the inmates who had revolted and now wished to use his ship to escape to Chile. As the convicts were about to execute the Captain a fellow Mason, to whom Captain Nat had made the ancient Masonic sign of distress, came to his aid and convinced the mob that they needed the Captain to navigate the ship during the escape voyage. With Eliza hidden below, Capt. Nat delivered the convicts to Chile and saved his crew. The voyage ended successfully with the purchase of sealskins, returning home to Stonington on September 25, 1833.

Captain Palmer received command of larger ships after his return from Antarctica and later was made designer of the Dramatic Line of Packets, an association that lasted to 1847. Palmer supervised the construction of four ships during this period. One, the *Roscius* (180 feet), was the most expensive ship in the transatlantic trade. Yet the ship was profitable, and Nat Palmer became wealthy.

In 1843 Palmer began designing and building clipper ships for the China trade. Together with William H. Aspinall, he was called the originator of the late clipper era. The Clipper ships were designed for speed and therefore sacrificed some cargo capacity. The belief was that a speedy delivery was more profitable than a large cargo. His stately clippers *Howqua*, *Samuel Russell*, *Oriental* and others were the most efficient and famous in the China trade.

A ship built in 1851 after the captain's design was named for him: the *NB. Palmer*. She was one of the largest of his clippers—214 feet long by 39 broad and 22 deep. In China she was known as "The Yacht" with her nettings in the tops, brass guns, gold stripe, and the hosting of lavish entertainments on the Fourth of July and Washington's Birthday. On her second voyage, the *N.B. Palmer* made her best speed record. On the third day out of New York, she covered 396 miles in 24 hours—an average 16.5 knots. On July 1, 1852 she overhauled the celebrated *Flying Cloud* that had sailed 10 days ahead of her and she beat the *Flying Cloud* from Canton to New York. The *NB. Palmer* was one of the swiftest of the clippers.

The largest of the Clippers was the *Great Republic*, built in 1853. As soon as she was launched a

fire destroyed her and the hull sank dockside. Nathaniel Palmer bought her and had her rebuilt with some reductions in size. The size reduction and other innovations such as a steam winch on the deck, allowed her to be crewed by 50 men instead of the original 100-man crew. The ship had a career of transport between England, France and the west coast of the US, ending in the *Great Republic* being used by the Federal government during the Civil War. She was sold in 1869 and was lost off Bermuda in 1872.

Captain Palmer was admired for his tact, kindness, and courage. He was very passionate and could get every knot of speed a ship was capable of by driving her to the limit. In calm weather he would come on deck with an old white beaver hat on, take it off, stamp on it, and damn the calm and everything else. But he never abused the men.

He lost his wife Eliza in 1872 and he became devoted to his nephew, the son of his brother Alexander, and his namesake. When the boy was diagnosed with tuberculosis, Capt. Nat journeyed far to find a climate where a cure might be affected. In 1877, one day after setting sail for San Francisco on a return voyage from China, the boy died. During the remaining voyage Capt. Nat's own health failed steadily. Upon reaching San Francisco he wired notice of the boys death to his father and within a few days passed to that house not made with hands on June 21, 1877.

The body of Brother and Captain Nathaniel Brown Palmer was shipped home and buried in the family plot in Stonington, Connecticut on July 15, 1877.

It is natural to find Capt. Nat as a member of the Masonic Lodge in Stonington where many of his friends, family, and business companions were Brothers. The minutes and record books of Asylum Lodge No. 57, of Stonington, Connecticut contain many entries attesting to the membership of Captain Nathaniel Brown Palmer. According to the records of the Grand Lodge of Connecticut, he was initiated in 1826. His record of membership ends in the year of his death and was reported at a special meeting of the Lodge on June 29, 1877. The Stonington Historical Society now owns the Palmer home and has preserved the many records that document the lifelong contributions of this great Brother.

In celebration of his daring and discovery of Antarctica, the United States of America issued a postage stamp commemorating his achievements. It is one of the 25 Cent, *Antarctic Explorers* series issued September 14, 1988 and is numbered 2386 in the Scott registry of stamps.

In addition, the Antarctic Palmer Peninsula, Palmer Station, Palmer Archipelago and the currently operating Research Vessel *Nathaniel B. Palmer* are named after him.

It is of note that the Masonic affiliation of Brother and Capt. Nathaniel B. Palmer is not well known. In many lists of famous Masons he is left unsung. Hopefully this account will correct that oversight and bring to the craft a brief account of his life and influence on the times.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, MAY 2007**

FREEMASONRY CROSSES THE MISSISSIPPI

By: Steve Harrison

In a very interesting story Steve Harrison took us on Freemasonry's Journey West (STB 8-06) giving us the history of Freemasonry in Oregon. This STB talks about the first lodge west of the Mississippi River. This article first appeared in the Spring 2007 edition of the Missouri Freemason and is reprinted with permission. Steve Harrison, PM is a member of Liberty Lodge #31, Kearney Lodge #311 and editor of the Missouri Freemason magazine.

-STB Editor

In the early twenty-first century, millions of people cross the Mississippi River every day without giving it a second thought. In the early nineteenth century, the Mississippi was an untamed, meandering, deceptively docile looking barrier that no sane traveler took lightly. Crossing the river was sometimes treacherous, crossing at night, even more so, and in winter, sometimes impossible. So unsurprisingly, until 1807 the east bank of the Mississippi marked the end of the Masonic universe.

By 1805, aptly named Western Star Lodge #107 stood as the last point of Masonic light on the eastern bank of the Mississippi. But the Louisiana Purchase two years earlier sparked interest in the vast area west of the river. Population on both sides of the river steadily increased. With this increase in the general population came an increase in the Masonic community as well. By 1807, fully half of the membership of Western Star Lodge #107 lived on the west side of the mighty river.

Western Star was located in Kaskaskia, Indiana Territory, southeast of the confluence of the Kaskaskia and Mississippi Rivers. St. Genevieve, in the Louisiana Territory, was the main population center on the west side of the river, seven miles northwest. Brothers in the St. Genevieve area had to make the difficult crossing in order to participate in Masonic fellowship. The desire, not to mention need, for a Lodge on the west bank became increasingly apparent.

This idea had nearly universal consensus, even from the members of Western Star Lodge, which stood to lose nearly half its membership by the formation of a new Lodge on the west bank.

The Petition

Otho Schrader was a territorial judge who had settled in St. Genevieve in 1806. While not a member of Western Star, he was a member of the craft and spearheaded an effort to establish a Lodge on the western side of the Mississippi. Schrader, together with several other brothers, gathered together and petitioned the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, applying for dispensation to form a new Lodge, "The Louisiana Lodge." Among that group of Brothers were Aaron Elliott and Thomas F. Riddick who would become the first Master of the Lodge and the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Missouri respectively.

On St. John's Day, December 27, 1806, these brothers met with those of Western Star Lodge #107 and sent the petition along with Western Star's Waiver of Jurisdiction to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

Things moved slowly in those days. Seven months later, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania met in a "Grand Extra Communication" on Friday, July 17, 1807 and passed the following resolution:

[The] Petition being in due form and being recommended by said Lodge # 107, agreeably to the Regulations of this Grand Lodge, it was on Motion made and seconded, Resolved, That the prayer of the Petitioners be granted, and that Brother Grand Secretary make out a Warrant accordingly, and that the said lodge be # 109.

The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania returned its warrant to Western Star and, following the petitioners' recommendation, charged James Edgar, Master of Western Star, with the responsibility of constituting the new Lodge and installing its officers.

First Lodge Meeting West of the Mississippi

Authorization in hand, Brother Edgar and several other brothers from the area assembled in St. Genevieve on Saturday, November 14, 1807 for the purpose of constituting Louisiana Lodge #109. WB Edgar presided, installing Aaron Elliott as Master, Andrew Henry as Senior Warden and George Bullitt as Junior Warden. It was the first meeting of a Masonic Lodge west of the Mississippi River, in what would become the state of Missouri.

The meeting itself was undoubtedly a big deal for the brothers in the area. One can imagine the meeting hall being filled to standing-room-only, perhaps even with some brothers having to stand in the hallways to listen in.

It is likely that most of the brothers in the area, from both sides of the river, attended the meeting. Aside from brothers Edgar, Elliott, Henry and Bullitt, no one knows positively who may have attended. However, it is far more than speculation that the following were witnesses to this historic gathering:

James Edgar—Master of Western Star Lodge #107 and presiding Master of the meeting.

Michael Jones—Senior Warden of Western Star Lodge #107.

James Gilbreath—Junior Warden of Western Star Lodge #107.

William Arundel—Secretary of Western Star Lodge # 107.

Aaron Elliott, PM—A member of the original petitioning committee; Installed as Master of Louisiana Lodge #109 at the meeting. Originally a member of a Lodge at Stratford, Connecticut, Elliott was the first American physician west of the Mississippi.

Andrew Henry—A member of the original petitioning committee; Installed as Senior Warden of Louisiana Lodge # 109 at the meeting. Henry later explored the Rocky Mountains and became a partner in the Missouri Fur Company, which was comprised mainly of Master Masons.

George Bullitt—A member of the original petitioning committee; Installed as Junior Warden of Louisiana Lodge #109 at the meeting. Bullitt, an attorney, had been a member of Western Star Lodge #107 and later became a member of the territorial legislature and Registrar of the Land Office.

Thomas F. Riddick—A member of the original petitioning committee. Riddick was a Major in the Blackhawk War. Originally a member of Solomon Lodge # 30 in Suffolk, Virginia, he became known as the "Father of the Missouri Public Schools." The Land Act of 1812 provided for all unclaimed lands to be reserved for the support of the public schools. Riddick personally rode to Washington, DC, on horseback to promote the introduction of this bill. Fourteen years hence,

Riddick would become the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Missouri.

Otho Schrader PM—A member of the original petitioning committee. Schrader later became Master of Louisiana Lodge #109. Thomas Jefferson appointed him Federal Judge of the St. Genevieve District.

Henry Dodge, EA—A member of the original petitioning committee. General Henry C. Dodge, a member of the Missouri Militia, would become a participant in the War of 1812. He later became Governor of the Wisconsin Territory and a senator from Wisconsin. Known as "Honest Henry," Fort Dodge, Iowa was named after him.

Thomas Oliver, EA—A member of the original petitioning committee. Oliver later served as Secretary of Louisiana Lodge #109 and fought in the War of 1812.

Francois Valle—A member of the original petitioning committee, and also a member of Western Star Lodge #107. He later explored the Rocky Mountains with Brother Andrew Henry.

Robert Robinson, PM—Member of Western Star Lodge #107. Originally a member of Stanton Lodge #13 (PA), Robinson was one of the original petitioners for what became Western Star Lodge #107. Robinson was the presiding Master at the constitution of Western Star Lodge #107.

Rufus Easton—Originally a member of Roman Lodge #82 in New York, Easton was the first Postmaster west of the Mississippi and served as Attorney General for the Indiana Territory.

Robert Terry, John Hepburn and Louis Lassous all served on the original petitioning committee and were almost certainly present. In addition, other brothers in attendance, mostly members of Western Star Lodge #107 were P. Fouke, William C. Greenup, S. Bond, Samuel Walker, D.S. Swearingen, George Fisher, John T. Smith (FC), Josiah Millard, and William Hickman.

Nicholas Janis House

For many years, the exact location of this historic meeting was unknown. The sparse minutes from Louisiana Lodge never mentioned the site. St. Genevieve, founded in 1735, was well established. Still, there were few buildings suitable for Masonic Lodge meetings, and speculation had always centered on a particular house built in 1790 by prosperous fur trader, Nicholas Janis. Upon Janis' death in 1804, his son Francois converted the house into an inn, known as the Green Tree Tavern.

Fortunately, the Green Tree Tavern, still stands. The current owner is Hilliard Goldman, a former professor of history at St. Louis Community College. Goldman is restoring it to its original condition. In 1997, this restoration uncovered the so-called smoking gun, which almost certainly marks the old tavern as the venue for the meeting. Workers discovered a crude image carved into one of the gallery (porch) posts. The carving is weathered and worn. Although faint, it is nothing less than an unmistakable square and compasses.

Brother Estel Smith, a member of Saline Lodge #226, lived in the area. He inspected the engraving upon its discovery and made the following observation, "The importance of this thing is for added evidence that old Louisiana #109 did meet there. My reaction... when I first studied it was, 'This is of scant significance, with it's other scantiness,' but yesterday I was taken with a whole spread of good reasoning—the porch post has been encased with trim boards for many, many years.... One reason it is so hard to detect, it is obviously as aged as the timber.... We know that this somebody, who gouged at a Green Tree post with his knife, knew what he doodled."

After the discovery of this carving, workers discovered a carving of a second square and compasses and an anchor, a third degree symbol of a well-grounded hope, “which shall safely moor us in a peaceful harbor where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary shall find rest.”

Goldman, with a doctorate in history, confirms that enough evidence of Masonic activity has been found within the building to scientifically confirm it as the original meeting place.

Unfortunately, however, Louisiana Lodge #109 did not enjoy a long life, nor did it ever become a part of the Grand Lodge of Missouri. Financial problems developed with the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, probably due to the distance between the two more than anything. Louisiana’s attempts to rectify the situation did not work out, and a mere eight years after its constitution, Louisiana Lodge #109 surrendered its charter. Yet, during its short life it boasted among its membership a small list of the “who’s who” of Freemasonry of that day, including two United States senators and the Father of Texas himself, Stephen F. Austin.

A series of communications between members of Louisiana Lodge #109, the Grand Lodge of Missouri and the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania somewhat resolved the financial issues enabling the individual members to retain their good standing. On October 28, 1826 the Grand Lodge of Missouri issued a charter to the brothers in St. Genevieve to establish Tucker Lodge #13, thus continuing the brotherhood established nearly twenty years before with the inception of Louisiana Lodge #109.

A Small Irony

Only a few miles separated the brothers in St. Genevieve from Western Star Lodge in Kaskaskia. However, the trip to Kaskaskia included the necessity of crossing the often-treacherous Mississippi River, so the main reason to establish a new Lodge so close to Western Star was to avoid that crossing. In April, 1881, the area flooded. As the waters receded, the Mississippi River realigned itself along a channel east of the town. Today, Kaskaskia, along with the place where Western Star Lodge sat, lies not on the east, but on the west bank of the Mississippi River. Had this flood occurred just after Western Star was established, there would have been no need for a Lodge in St. Genevieve.

Regardless, Freemasonry was primed to move west into the new Louisiana Territory. The area that would become Missouri was the focus of this movement and from that came the Grand Lodge of Missouri, the mother Lodge of many of the western states.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
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OF NORTH AMERICA, JUNE 2007**

THE BLAZING STAR

By: Chris Impens

The story of the Blazing Star and its relationship to Freemasonry is very intriguing. Chris Impens has carefully researched this subject and has written a fine article about it. The original article is longer than could be reprinted in a Short Talk and may be found in ARS QUATUOR CORONATORUM VOL. 118–2006, pg 140-153.

-STB Editor

The greatest scientist in human history is Isaac Newton, and his contemporaries were well aware of that. On Newton's statue in Cambridge is written 'Who surpassed all men in genius', and Alexander Pope's famous epitaph says;

Nature, and Nature's Laws lay hid in Night: God said, Let Newton be! And All
was Light.

Newton died in 1728. That same year, on the occasion of the accession of George II to the throne, John Theophilus Desaguliers published *The Newtonian System of the World, the best Model of Government: an allegorical poem*. There he developed—rather artificially, it must be said—a parallel between Newton's mechanical universe and the blessings of *limited Monarchy*. The very idea shows to what extent Desaguliers was permeated by Newtonianism. It is hard to imagine that Grand Lodge Freemasonry, to a large extent Desaguliers' work, could have escaped his overall Newtonian zeal. So the question is not so much if, but *where* early freemasonry reflects Desaguliers' Newtonian ideas. In this paper we will collect evidence for the thesis that masonry's Blazing Star is a Newtonian symbol, introduced by Desaguliers.

Desaguliers obtained his bachelors' degree, was ordained deacon and obtained the chair of Experimental Philosophy at Oxford in 1710, at the age of twenty-seven, and was elected the third Grand Master of freemasons in 1719. Somewhere between 1724 and 1731, a newspaper advertised a lecture '... shewing what Innovations have lately been introduced by the Doctor and some other of the Moderns, with their Tape, Jacks, Moveable Letters, Blazing Stars &c.' There can hardly be a more explicit way of saying that it was Desaguliers who introduced the Blazing Star in freemasonry. Also, there is no evidence for a masonic Blazing Star before Desaguliers came along. Sloane Ms. 3329 mentions the Blazing Star as one of the lodge jewels and would provide a counterargument if it had been written circa 1700 as some believe. But we agree with Gould, Hughan and others who think that this dating is wrong, and that the document is actually a compilation written some two decades later. The triple 'Mosaick Pavement, Blazing Star, Indented Tarsel' mentioned in this compilation is not likely to belong to the archaic core of the text, as *Masonry Dissected* (Prichard, 1730) also has it.

For those who find it difficult to accept that an astronomical item as a Blazing Star could have been the—literally—central symbol of a masonic lodge, we briefly recall some features of eighteenth century freemasonry. In those days, science was a most fashionable subject, in society as

a whole, and in the numerous clubs and societies, of which freemasonry was but one. For devout Christians like Newton and Desaguliers, science revealed to humans *the Laws settled by the All-wise and Almighty Architect of the Universe*, as Desaguliers writes on p. iv of his Newtonian System. No wonder, that such a strong analogy was felt between the moral effects of science and of freemasonry! Desaguliers, the scientist, wrote in 1717 that *a Philosopher* (this is what today we would call a ‘scientist’) *cannot be an Atheist; and if it were true, that a Smattering in Physics will give a proud Man a Tincture of Atheism, a deep Search into Nature will certainly bring him back to a Religious Sense of God’s Wisdom and Providence*. The similarity with Anderson’s sentence—written six years later—that *a mason, if he rightly understands the Art, will never be a stupid Atheist*, is most striking. There is considerable evidence that eighteenth century masons were actively concerned with ‘mental improvement’, possibly a result of grand officers belonging to scientific or philosophical circles, and scientific lectures of all kinds were common in masonic lodges.

There is not the slightest doubt as to the meaning of *Blazing Star* in eighteenth century English: it is a cornet, both in plain and in heraldic language. Actually, it’s the other way round; non-scientific seventeenth century English writers, whenever using the learned word *comet*, felt obliged to add that it meant a Blazing Star. The idea behind this terminology seems to be that a comet is a star that is ablaze and leaves behind it a trail of smoke and sparks while moving through the sky. Contemporary translators acted accordingly. The Dutch translation of *Masonry Dissected*, published five years after the original, translates Prichard’s ‘Blazing Star’ as *Start-Star*, literally ‘tailed-star’, then the common Dutch word for ‘comet’. Likewise, the French translation, included in *La Reception Mysterieuse* (1738), has *Comete*.

In eighteenth century England, people were highly intrigued by comets, as ample evidence—for instance, the number of comet related contributions to the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*—proves. Desaguliers, the Royal Society experimentalist and fervent Newtonian, had no reason to be any different, quite the contrary. His Newtonian System is full of comet references, both in the scientific footnotes and in the metaphorical poetry. The very poem culminates in an allegory where bad kings are held responsible for chasing people, like *comets, from ours, to other Systems* (v. 173-174) while a good king will bring about that *Comets from far, now gladly would return, And, pardon’d, with more faithful Ardour burn* (v. 189-190). A few years later, in 1732, Desaguliers presented a device to the Royal Society which he had invented to demonstrate the motion of planets with highly eccentric orbits, and comets. Later instrument makers, copying or improving Desaguliers’ device, coined the name *cometarium*.

Today, a person asked for a famous comet is likely to cite the name of Halley. The latter had predicted that a certain comet, appeared before, would return in 1758, and so it did. Before its return, this comet was not famous; after all, other comets had been predicted to return that didn’t show up at all. The *Antediluvian* newspaper advertisement proves that the Blazing Star appeared in Freemasonry in 1731 at the very last. By accident, the most important comet in history, both scientifically and psychologically, had also been one of the most remarkable on record until then. It had appeared in late November 1680, remaining visible to the naked eye—for some period also in broad daylight—for some three months. In northern Europe, conditions were not favorable to its observation, but whenever it was seen it must have been an appalling sight indeed. It had an enormous tail, broader than the moon, which eventually grew so long that the comet’s head touched the horizon while its tail reached a point in the sky right above the observer’s head. Moreover, coruscations attended the whole length of the tail, giving a brilliant and fearful aspect. In size and velocity also it far surpassed any other ever known. ‘I tremble when I recall the terrible appearance it had

on Saturday evening in the clear sky, when it was observed by everybody with inexpressible astonishment. It seemed as though the heavens were burning, or as if the very air was on fire. From this little star stretched out such a wonderfully long tail that even an intellectual man was overcome with trembling; one's hair stood on end as this uncommon, terrible and indescribable tail came into view,' an eyewitness accounts' (Notice 'fire' terminology.).

In those days, masons could have felt their Blazing Star was some herald of a new era, with freemasonry as a powerful exponent. The fact that the Blazing Star is hardly ever seen without the letter G in its centre is perfectly consistent with this view. G as an abbreviation of *Geometria* is many centuries older than Grand Lodge Freemasonry, and this time-honored interpretation was still prevailing with eighteenth century masons. A comet with the letter G in it may very well be thought of as *The Triumph of Geometry*; after all, it is mathematics (then often called 'geometry') which gave birth to the Newtonian system with all its benign consequences. Desaguliers says so explicitly:

Nature compell'd, his [Newton's] piercing
Mind obeys,
And gladly shews him all her secret Ways;
'Gainst Mathematicks she has no Defence.

Geometry and Masonry being synonyms—a fact emphasized throughout masonic history—the Triumph of *Masonry* means exactly the same. There is no conflict whatsoever with the secondary meaning of G as God, introduced around 1727–1730. In eighteenth century thinking, what Newton and Mathematics (science in general) revealed to mankind was nothing but pure divine law. To quote Desaguliers:

His [Newton's] tow'ring Genius, (...)

(...) shews th' Almighty Architect's unalter'd Laws.

And Halley—of irreligious, indeed atheistic, reputation:

Those on whom
Delusion cast its gloomy pall of doubt
(...)
May penetrate the mansions of the gods
And scale the heights of heaven.
(...)
Admitted to the banquets of the gods,
We contemplate the polities of heaven;
And spelling out the secrets of the earth,
Discern the changeless order of the world.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
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OF NORTH AMERICA, JULY 2007**

WILL ROGERS

By: Robert Morris

Bro. Robert Morris is Secretary Emeritus of Manchester Lodge, Manchester-by-the Sea, Manchester, MA and a member of the TROWEL Staff, a publication of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.

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-STB Editor

To those who can still remember Will Rogers, he was an omnipresence during the days of the great depression from 1929 to the mid-thirties. He was a star entertainer, humorist, newspaper columnist and radio announcer. He was a friend of presidents, politicians and royalty and a renowned world traveler. It's truly amazing that he was able to achieve this greatness when one considers the limitations which seemed to surround his almost humble beginnings in what was then known as the Indian Territory.

Will Rogers was born on November 4, 1879, at Oologah, a small village in what was later to become the state of Oklahoma in 1907. He was the son of a fairly well-to-do cattle rancher. He was part Cherokee Indian on both sides of his family.

Will thrived on living on a cattle ranch that seemed to be made for his aptitudes and attitudes. He early on learned to become an expert rope thrower and never seemed to be without his rope.

At the early age of 10 he was devastated by the death of his mother whom he greatly adored. He was never to completely recover from her loss.

It soon became time for him to receive his formal education and his father sent him to a series of schools culminating in Kemper Military Academy in Boonville, Missouri. The old adage, "You can take the boy out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the boy," applied and at age 18 he left the Academy to try cattle punching in Texas. After that, he tried a short stint of the same on his father's ranch. It was here that he already showed the charitable nature of his soul when he was told that a neighbor farmer had slaughtered one of his cattle. When he went to confront the culprit he found that he and his family were living in abject poverty and had killed the cow only after it had gotten loose and destroyed his small garden patch. Will then made no more of the matter and later on wished that the farmer had taken two of his cattle rather than one, saying "there are millions of steers in the world but human happiness is 'kinder' scarce."

Wanderlust then took hold and he left to try cattle punching in Argentina. Because of limited shipping schedules, he first had to go there by way of London. He didn't stay in Argentina long though, and when an opportunity arose he sailed for South Africa which he hoped would offer him better opportunities. While in South Africa he took part in a wild west show. He then sailed for Australia where he joined the cast of a local circus. By this time his wanderlust had begun to evaporate and homesickness gradually enticed him to return home. He sailed for San Francisco and from there back to his home in Oklahoma in 1902. By the ripe old age of 23 the country boy had already traveled around the world.

His experiences during his foreign travels had definitely infected him with show-business life and by 1904 and 1905 he found himself participating in shows in New York City. The following year he was off again to Europe where he took part in shows in both London and Berlin.

After returning to the states and at the age of 25 he petitioned Claremont Lodge No. 53, Oklahoma for the degrees in Masonry and received his third degree on March 13, 1906. He later joined the Scottish Rite Bodies and Akdar Shrine Temple in Tulsa in November, 1914.

Before leaving on one of his overseas trips he had met Betty Blake and they were married in 1908 at her home in Arkansas. He was later to say "When I roped (Betty) that was the star performance of my life." They were inseparable and their marriage was "one of the most enviable in the world."

By now, Will was appearing in various productions on the New York City stage. His father was proud of him but unfortunately did not live to see his son's later achievements. He died in 1911.

Shortly before the outbreak of World War I, Will and Betty were off to London. When they returned to New York Will decided to make it his headquarters and began appearing in various vaudeville shows and finally in those put on by his Brother Mason, the famous Florenz Ziegfeld. He now accompanied his roping acts with monologues mimicking the political personalities of the day. He ribbed Presidents, Archbishops and royalty with his homespun philosophy, but never with viciousness. He soon began to meet them personally, the first President being Woodrow Wilson who came back-stage to meet him.

When America entered World War I in 1917 Will turned his efforts to supporting the war effort and the troops. He was a most enthusiastic supporter of War Bond Drives. Too old himself to serve in the military, he raised money by putting on benefit performances and contributed liberally to the Red Cross and Salvation Army.

He next entered the movie business and moved to Hollywood while still touring the country with his show and as a guest speaker at many functions. He was a guest at the White House more than once, long before that privilege had taken on a completely new and different connotation.

In 1922 he began his career as a newspaper columnist with weekly humorous articles on the important people and events of the day. He needled the President, Congress and anyone seeking office on bloated claims to ability. He espoused medical research on children's diseases, as opposed to animal research, stating, "there is more money spent on hogs' sicknesses than there is on children."

When the Democratic Convention in New York in 1924 became deadlocked he jokingly offered to become the Vice Presidential candidate saying, "The hour demands a leader. The voice of the people calls. Who am I to hesitate?" He even received one vote for President. Later that fall he met the Prince of Wales who was an expert Polo player. They jokingly referred to each others horsemanship and became fast friends.

After being taken on his first airplane ride by the famous General Billy Mitchell, Will became an aviation enthusiast and a strong advocate of air power. He was constantly advocating air power and military preparedness as opposed to the then current trend toward disarmament and isolationism. When the United States agreed to reduce the size of its fleet as part of an international disarmament agreement, it sank its newest and biggest battleship, the USS *Washington*. Rogers was horrified and stated that if there was ever another war "we will have to borrow a boat to go to it."

In 1925 he began an extensive lecture tour of the country, even speaking in the staid Boston

Symphony Hall, saying afterwards “Wasn’t that English of mine the worst that was ever spoken in that Hall?”

The following year he again toured Europe, including England, Ireland, France, Spain, Russia and Italy, where he met the Dictator Benito Mussolini. When Rogers asked him about disarmament, Mussolini thought he was joking.

Back in the states in 1927, the Mississippi had overflowed its banks causing extensive damage and its ensuing homelessness and hunger. Will railed against the Congress for not doing enough and gave new benefit shows with the proceeds going to the Red Cross.

In keeping with the times, Will got into the movie business just as talking pictures were coming into vogue. He was a natural, and many of his pictures were box office hits. He also continued his world travels and became America’s unofficial Ambassador of Good Will. On one of his trips he even attended the London Naval Conference of 1930 and was thoroughly disillusioned with the ineptness and inappropriateness of the proceedings.

In 1931 he again demonstrated his concern for the unfortunate by going to earthquake-ravaged Nicaragua and doing benefit performances to help in their relief efforts.

The Depression was now setting in and Will campaigned for his brother Mason, Franklin D. Roosevelt, although he in no way blamed Herbert Hoover for being responsible for the Depression. He was invited to address the U.S. Senate and was again a guest at the White House.

In 1934 the Rogers family embarked on another trip around the world including Hawaii, Japan, Manchuria, Russia, Germany and London. When he returned he completed what was to be his last and most successful motion picture *Steamboat ‘Round the Bend*.

Since his first airplane flight with General Mitchell, Will had continued his keen interest in aviation and met with the leading aviators of the day, including Charles Lindbergh and more closely with his fellow Oklahoman Wiley Post. They decided to take a trip to the northern parts of Alaska. Their plane was a flimsy one-engine Lockheed and just before reaching their destination of Point Barrow, the engine failed and the plane crashed in the fog just short of Alaska’s most northern point. Both men were killed instantly. The date was August 15, 1935; Will Rogers was 55 years old.

Rogers’ death made the country and the world acutely aware of the type of man he really was. He had become one of the most popular and beloved men in the country. He was a natural-born actor, philosopher and humanitarian. He had pulled himself up by his own bootstraps to become a famous vaudeville and movie actor, newspaper columnist and radio announcer. He ultimately became one of the wealthiest men in his field and more than willingly shared it with those less fortunate. He was a natural follower of the tenets of Masonry and had no use for intolerance in race, religion or social standing. He enjoyed to the fullest the times he lived in and less than two months before his death he remarked that “a fellow can’t afford to die now with all this excitement goin’ on.”

Will Rogers was also the author of several books which brought out his native homespun cowboy philosophy.

Among these were *Illiterate Digest* in 1924 and his last book, *Ether and Me*, in 1937. The latter, the aftermath of his gallstone surgery, became a best seller and went through 18 printings, outlasting even the author himself.

Since his death, monuments and tributes have been made to the memory of this great man and Mason. In 1938 President Roosevelt paid tribute to his memory in saying, “The American Nation, to whose heart he brought gladness, will hold him in everlasting remembrance.”

In addition to the Oklahoma stone monument in Alaska near the place where he met his untimely end, several other states have created memorials as tributes to the memory of Will Rogers. In 1947 General Dwight D. Eisenhower gave the commemorative speech at the unveiling of a statue of Rogers at the Will Rogers Memorial Colosseum at Fort Worth, Texas. His statue stands in Statuary Hall in the US Capitol Building in Washington, DC. The State of Oklahoma erected a Memorial Museum to him at Claremore where he was buried in 1944. The State of Colorado has the Will Rogers Shrine of the Sun in Colorado Springs and California has set aside his last home, as the Will Rogers State Historical Park in Pacific Palisades and its nearby Will Rogers State Beach.

Those “long in the teeth” can still fondly remember the pithy remarks he used in his radio broadcasts, chiding the politicians of the day. He can still be remembered chastising the Oklahoma schooled Senator Huey P. Long of Louisiana, who by an odd twist of fate also came to a tragic end only 25 days after Will Rogers himself.

Americans and American Masons can be proud of the memory and legacy of Will Rogers. Even before he became a Mason he was already following its tenets and continued to do so for the rest of his days. He was the epitome of “Charity, Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth” wherein Masons are taught to regard the whole human species as one family, uniting men of every country, sect and opinion. Will Rogers lived these tenets to the fullest; he will be forever missed.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, AUGUST 2007**

BASIC FREEMASONRY

By: James Tresner

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This STB gives some basic information on the purpose of Freemasonry and a brief history of our ritual and obligations.

-STB Editor

The Quest

The Quest is as old as recorded human experience. It is reflected in the paintings on cave walls and echoed in the earliest records we have.

The Quest is as modern and contemporary as today. It forms the bases of such movies as the *Star Wars* series, the *Matrix*, and the *Lord of the Ring* movies, and will almost certainly be reflected in at least one movie made next year—whatever year that may be.

For the Quest is the very core of mankind, it seeks the answer to that most fundamental question: *What does it mean to be a man, and how do I achieve manhood?*

The Quest symbol changes. It can be the Grail, as in the stories of King Arthur. It may be a ring, as it is both in the *Nibelungen* and *Lord of the Rings*. It may be a flower granting immortality, as it is in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, or a stone with the same properties as it is in many of the allegories of the alchemists. It may be food for the Hero's people, as in many Egyptian, African, and Native American myths. The Quest may be for fire, or for Light, as in the Mysteries of Greece, the myths of Prometheus, Freemasonry, and the Native American tradition. Or it may be for freedom, as in the *Star Wars* films.

Whatever the Quest objective, the story generally has the same elements. The hero becomes aware of a need. In order to meet that need, he must initiate a course of action (which is a primary reason the joining process is called an "initiation"), leave home and go on a journey, usually with the aid of companions. He meets and learns from individuals on the journey. Sometimes they give him magical or mystical objects, needed for success in the Quest, sometimes knowledge, sometimes both. He also meets a guide, who will lead him at least a part of the way. The initiatory journey generally involves a descent (symbolic of becoming aware of his own innermost thoughts and feelings), an ascent (symbolic of higher levels of consciousness) or both.

At the climax of the journey, he finds himself at "the heart of the mystery," often either in an underground cavern or on a mountain peak. Here he often meets a character who represents his father, and from whom he learns important information and receives a blessing or a conferral of power (or who, in some traditions, he overcomes in combat).

He may or may not achieve the original goal of the Quest, but he has been changed in important ways. Sometimes that change includes physical appearance. But he is further down the path of claiming his own manhood, has left childhood behind, and has started to claim the powers which are his by right of being a man.

Basic Freemasonry

Freemasonry is a vast topic. With the exception of religion and the history of nations, more books have been written about Freemasonry than any other single topic. Estimates vary between 75,000 and 110,000 different titles.

We do not know when the Fraternity began. Almost certainly it evolved from the guild lodges of the stonemasons of the Middle Ages, who were working on the great cathedrals and castles. Possibly, the organization was influenced by the addition of members of the crusading order the Knights Templar or, more formally, the Poor Fellow-soldiery of the House of the Temple of Solomon. When the Order was suppressed in the early 1300's and members perforce went into hiding, some of them may have joined the Masons Guilds with whom they had had a long professional relationship (the Templars commissioned more buildings in the 1100's and 1200's than any other organization including the church).

The oldest clearly Masonic document found to date is known both as the *Regius Poem* and the *Halliwel Manuscript*. Experts have dated it to the year 1390, although there are indications that it is a copy of an even earlier document.

Masonry existed as a series of independent Lodges until the year 1717, when the Grand Lodge of England was formed and a formal structure was given to the government of the Fraternity.

According to historians, Freemasonry was a major source of the spread of the Enlightenment in Europe and was the source of many elements which were finally incorporated into the Constitution of the United States, including such things as civil rights, elected representative government, and the right of self-determination.

Essentially, Freemasonry is a fraternity which stresses self development of the individual's intellectual and spiritual nature. It teaches self-control and the development of insight. It teaches primarily through the use of symbols and allegory. It is the tradition in the fraternity that no one may speak officially for Masonry so far as its meanings and interpretations are concerned. Each man interprets the symbols for himself, although Masonic scholars write books tracing the history of the Craft and providing such interpretation of the symbols and lessons as they can. Still, that is opinion, and not to be considered, in any sense, official.

It, like any of the systems of initiation from ancient Mesopotamia to the present, is a quest in which the candidate seeks self-awareness and self-understanding. Its rituals and ceremonies are designed to further that quest.

The Evolution of the Ritual

It is impossible to say when the ritual of Freemasonry began. Very recent scholarship suggests that *Conte del Graal* or *Story of the Grail*, written by Chretien de Troyes in the late 1190's [the book which first told the story of the Holy Grail and the quests of the Knights of King Arthur], may actually have been written as a sort of fraternal proto-ritual or teaching legend. Our ritual origins may possibly lie there. The earliest rituals we have date from the 1600's. At that time, there was only one Degree in Masonry, the Degree of Apprentice, although there was a very short additional ceremony, known as the "Fellow's Part" which would later evolve into the Fellowcraft Degree. The Master Mason Degree came into existence sometime between 1720 and 1730.

Originally the Degrees were conferred in the preparation room rather than the Lodge room. They were very short, consisting primarily of a series of questions and answers which would fill less than one page of type. The lectures and other language which are now so much a part

of Masonry came into being during the 1800's when some famous Masonic teachers developed additional language and taught it as a part of the work.

Most of the Masonic ritual used in the United States is part of the "Preston-Webb" work, named for two of the early teachers who contributed most to its development. The ritual of Masonry has been the result of a slow evolution over many, many years.

Obligations and Penalties

Few topics give rise to so much confusion in new Masons as the Obligations and Penalties. Because they are, in many ways, the ethical and symbolic heart of the Fraternity, it's important to understand them. **THE OBLIGATIONS ARE THE THINGS WE PROMISE TO DO OR NOT TO DO, THE PENALTIES ARE THE CONSEQUENCES WE OFFER TO UNDERGO IF WE BREAK OUR OBLIGATIONS.** The Obligations are real, literal, and more than literal. The Penalties are symbolic, not real. The Obligations are promises made to God and all the Brethren of the Fraternity, not just your Lodge, and are made in the name and presence of God and the presence of the Brethren. The Penalties are acknowledgments of the shame and pain any true man should feel at the thought he had broken his word, as well as a reminder that the decision to become a Mason is a decision to live at more than an animal level.

The Obligations become more extensive and demanding with each Degree. The assumption is that the candidate is growing and developing in the process, leaving a primitive and unsophisticated understanding and becoming progressively more aware and comprehending. Thus, in the Entered Apprentice Degree, you promise little more than to keep confidential those things which should be kept confidential. In the Fellow Craft Degree the promises are greater, as befits one who is now supposed to have his passions and animal drives under control and to be moving to a higher level of thinking, continuing on into the Master Mason Degree.

Are the promises real and literal? Yes. When you promise that you will help a poor and distressed Entered Apprentice, assuming that you find his need is real, we expect that you will do so, so far as you can without doing harm to yourself or your family. But, in a sense, they are more than literal. The Lodge is a symbol of the world. Thus, if you promise to do something for an Entered Apprentice who is a member of the Lodge, you are promising to do it for any person in the world, at least to some extent. Most of us feel that we are required to go further in keeping obligations to a member of the Fraternity than we are to a non-Mason, simply because the Mason has bound himself to us by the same Obligations. But the Obligations should never be interpreted to suggest that we owe moral, ethical and charitable behavior **ONLY** toward those who are Masons.

The Penalties seem, at first glance, to be unbelievably cruel and heartless. It comes as a shock to learn that these were all penalties actually used by the legal systems in Europe during the 1500's, 1600's and early 1700's. Once again, in Masonry, the Penalties are symbolic, not real.

In order to understand the symbolism, it's useful to recall a few facts. In the days when the ritual of Masonry was developing, knowledge and understanding were thought to be in the heart, not the brain. We still speak of "learning something by heart," or "knowing something by heart."

Intuition and emotional comprehension and sensitivity were thought to be in the intestines. Thus you will find many written references to the "bowels of mercy." And we still speak of a "gut reaction," or "a feeling in the gut," when we mean something that we know is true without knowing how we know—an intuitive reaction.

The classical world of Greece and Rome believed that the earth and the universe were made of

five elements, four of which were physical and one of which was esoteric and seldom mentioned. The four physical elements were earth, air, fire, and water. The fifth or esoteric element (the quintessence) was the spiritual or ethereal,

It is impossible to discuss the Penalties more specifically, as they are, in many Jurisdictions, esoteric, but with the information given above and your knowledge of the Degrees, consider the following statements.

- The Penalty for each Obligation involves the destruction of the part of the body which was abused or misused in the breaking of the Obligation (silence, knowledge, or insight and intuition).

- The Penalty for each Obligation involves two of the four classical physical elements (earth--water, earth-air, fire-air). It can be assumed that the spiritual or ethereal element is involved as well.

- The Penalty for each Obligation corresponds to the position of the cable tow for that Degree.

For those with the knowledge and inclination, it might also be interesting to consider the chakra points, the location of the points of the Penalties if the body is seen as the middle pillar of the Tree of Life, and alchemical processes of reduction, recombination, and purification.

The contents of this STB only hint at the vast Masonic experience. We urge you to read more on the subject.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, SEPTEMBER 2007**

THE RITUAL SCRIPTURE READINGS

By: Wade D. Bridges, P.M.

This STB was taken from a paper by Bro. Wade D. Bridges, P.M. of the Georgia Lodge of Research. In the entire paper the scripture readings for all three degrees was explained. This STB deals only with the Scripture lesson of the 1st Degree. The paper was published in Vol. XIX, Transactions 2005, Georgia Lodge of Research.

-STB Editor

[Note: This Paper has been compiled from a set of three by W Bro. Wade D. Bridges, PM of GLR, who expressly asserts they are not his original work, but a compilation of, and commentary on, the work of others. Unless otherwise stated, Bible references are to the standard King James Version].

THE ENTERED APPRENTICE DEGREE

Psalm 133

A Song of Degrees of David

v1. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

v2. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments.

v3. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

HISTORY OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS

While some ascribe all of the Psalms to King David, the heavier weight of authority is that the greater part of them were written by David. The most widely accepted breakdown is 73 are attributed to King David; twelve to Asaph; eleven to the sons of Korah; two to King Solomon (the 72nd and 12th); one to Etna and one to Moses (the 90th). There is no widespread agreement on the authorship of the remaining Psalms: a few attribute some of them to the aforementioned men, while some are designated as "Anonymous".

Many of the Psalms were composed over the course of many years and were begun to be collected into a body of literature in the time of King David. As the book contains 150 independent compositions, it is not susceptible of any logical analysis. Psalms 120 to 143 are sometimes referred to as Pilgrim psalms or *Songs of Degrees* which may have been sung by the Jews as they ascended the heights of Jerusalem for annual feasts.

The Psalms present a wide range of human experiences: men burdened with affliction; struggling with temptation; or triumphing in the hope or enjoyment of deliverance. Admiring perfection of the Divinity, thanking God for his mercies, meditating on His truths, or delighting in His service; all of these and more are exhibited in the Book of Psalms.

King David

Since King David is considered by most authorities to have written the 133rd Psalm, a brief biographical sketch on him is in order.

David, the second king of Israel, was the great-grandson of Boaz and Ruth (Ruth, iv, 18). He was the youngest of the eight sons of Jesse of the tribe of Judah, dwelling in Bethlehem, where David was born. According to the usually accepted Biblical chronology, David was born in 1085 B.C. and reigned as King from 1055 to 1015 B.C. Some recent writers now date his reign from 30 to 50 years later.

David first appears in Scripture as a shepherd lad, tending his father's flocks in the fields near Bethlehem. While his three elder brothers were in King Saul's army, fighting against the Philistines, David was sent to the army camp with some provisions: there he heard that the giant, Goliath, had challenged all Israel to single combat. David volunteered to accept the challenge.

David's victory over Goliath won for him the friendship of Jonathan, the son of King Saul, and a permanent position at the King's court. However, David's popularity aroused the jealousy of Saul. David, being made captain of a thousand men, encountered many dangers in order to win the hand of Merob, Saul's eldest daughter, but in spite of the King's promise, she was given to another man. Michol, Saul's other daughter loved David: King Saul, hoping that David would be killed by the Philistines, promised to give her in marriage, provided David could slay one hundred Philistines in battle. David succeeded and married Michol. This success, however, made Saul even more paranoid about David, so he ordered David be killed. Through the intervention of Jonathan, David was spared, but Saul's hatred obliged David to flee.

A meeting with Jonathan convinced David that reconciliation with Saul was impossible, so for the rest of Saul's reign, David was an exile. Samuel, the Prophet and last of the Judges, had been sent to anoint David as King in place of Saul, whom God had rejected for disobedience. Seven years after David was anointed, King Saul and Jonathan were killed in a battle.

By God's command, David went to Hebron to claim the throne. The men of Judah accepted him as king, and he was again anointed. Civil war lasted for some time, but David's power continued to increase. After many military victories, David was anointed King of all Israel.

King David was successful in making Israel an independent state. Jerusalem was made the capital and political center of Israel. There he built a palace, took more wives and concubines, and begat many children. He resolved to make Jerusalem the religious center of his people by bringing to it the Ark of the Covenant. This he accomplished, but later, when David proposed to build a temple for it, he was told by the prophet Nathan that God had reserved this task for David's successor, David being a man of blood.

While King David's army was in the field during the campaign against the Ammonites, he fell into the sins of adultery and murder, thus bringing great calamities on himself and his people.

The last days of David were aggravated by the ambition of Adonijah, whose plans for the succession were frustrated by Nathan the prophet, and Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon. Solomon, who was born after David's repentance, was chosen in preference to his older brothers. To make sure Solomon would succeed to the throne, David had him publicly anointed.

The last recorded words of the aged king are an exhortation to Solomon to be faithful to God, to reward loyal servants, and to punish the wicked.

David died at the age of seventy, having reigned for some seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem.

To Solomon had been reserved the privilege of building God's House, but David made ample

preparations for the work by amassing enormous treasures and materials, as well as by transmitting to his son a plan for the building.

Explanation of Psalm 133

First Verse: *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity!* (Note differences in Contemporary English Version and Hebrew Scriptures.)

Abingdon's *Interpreters' One Volume Commentary* says this wisdom psalm was intended to combat a practice which threatened to destroy the traditional structure of Israelite society. If brothers continued to dwell together after the death of their father, then the estate remained undivided and the family's inheritance in the Holy Land was kept intact.

The development of commerce and the urbanization of society had induced many young men to sell their share of the inheritance and go off on their own. Here King David urges that the old custom is good and pleasant.

The opening word, *Behold*, may suggest King David was referring to a particular instance of the blessing of brotherly concord; of that we can only guess. At least, he was telling us to "observe" or "take note" of the joy and pleasure that is derived from unity or harmony among brethren. This peaceful unity is of extreme importance to Masons as it is the cement which binds us together as a fraternity; Peace and Harmony are the strength of our Fraternity.

Second Verse: *It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments.*

The Hebrew Scripture says that the oil runs down "over the collar of his robes". Most authors of commentaries agree that the "collar" rather than the bottom of the robe is what is contemplated.

In the *Dictionary of Biblical Theology* is the following:

Anointing: for the Hebrews, oil penetrates deeply into the body (Psalm 109:18) and it gives the body strength, health, joy, and beauty. On the religious level, it is understandable that anointings of oil were considered signs of rejoicing or of respect. They were also used as rites of healing or consecration. With this definition of anointing in mind, we can understand the purpose of, or for, anointing with oil. Let us look at some examples:

Anointing is a sign of joy or of honor, especially when done with perfumed oil (see Proverbs 27:9 and Ecclesiastes 9:8). It was used particularly in festivals (Amos 6:6). The image of anointing served to express the joy of the people of Israel assembled at Jerusalem for the great festivals. It also played a part in the description of the Messianic banquet: *On the mountain they will drink joy, they will drink wine, they will be anointed with perfumed oil upon this mountain* (Isaiah 25:6, Septuagint).

It is especially in this context of Messianic joy that there recurs the formula, "Oil of Gladness" (Isaiah 61:3, Psalm 45:8, Hebrews 1:9). So, dwelling together in unity is as the "oil of gladness". Psalm 133 shows that obedience to God's law, or system of living together, is a joy, happiness, and gladness.

Verse 2 illustrates the "good" of Verse 1, by recalling the oil of joy (ointment), thinking of the oil that was used to anoint a High Priest. Aaron stood as the personification of High Priesthood and the representation of the Hebrew nation. The copious anointing which poured down over his garments symbolized the solidarity of Israel.

The first two verses of the Psalm together thus present to us the idea that brotherly unity is the spirit of God coming effusively upon the anointed one. Conversely, we may conclude the spirit of God is productive of loving goodwill and brotherly harmony.

Third Verse: As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Mount Hermon is one of, if not the, most notable mountains in northern Israel, as well as the highest mountain in the region of Palestine. It rises to the north and east of Dan, traditionally the extreme northern limit of Israel. Zion was, in biblical times, the hill upon which the temple stood in Jerusalem. In poetical imagery we have a linking together of the two most prominent peaks of the northern and southern kingdoms, alluding to unification and therefore harmony.

Verse 3 illustrates the “pleasant” of Verse 1, by referring to the dews of Hermon, which are proverbial. This dew was known as nature’s way of compensating for her failure to give rain, and symbolized refreshment and quickening. Palestine was as desolate as the desert until the brethren came together in brotherly fellowship; then, like the dews of Hermon, they brought freshness and life, and the resurrection of ideals. There, God decreed the blessing upon this great brotherhood, which would mean life and prosperity forever, a promise by God of his blessing of immortality, an endowment for obedience to God’s law, for following God’s way of life.

Context of Psalm 133

The first verse is the heart of this scripture—the necessity for Brethren to live in peace and harmony. Two examples are given here of how valuable the unity is. The first is that of the precious “ointment” or oil with which Aaron, Moses’ older brother and spokesman, was consecrated as Israel’s first High Priest.

The second example is that of the dew of Hermon, which was essential to the success of Israelite agriculture and therefore life itself. They usually got the earlier and later rains, but the dew was necessary for their crops during the long hot summers. In that arid region, the dew was essential to sustain life itself.

Unity is essential in a Masonic Lodge; unity of purpose and of execution. The 133rd Psalm, then, is a glorification of the beauty and necessity of brotherly love and unity, which is why this Scripture is an integral part of the Entered Apprentice Degree.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
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THE RITUAL SCRIPTURE READINGS

By: Wade D. Bridges, P.M.

This STB was taken from a paper by Bro. Wade D. Bridges, P.M. of the Georgia Lodge of Research. In the entire paper the scripture readings for all three degrees was explained. This STB deals only with the Scripture lesson of the 2nd^d Degree. The paper was published in Vol. XIX, Transactions 2005, Georgia Lodge of Research.

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THE FELLOWCRAFT DEGREE

Amos 7: 7-8

v7. Thus he shewed me, and behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumb-line, with a plumb-line in his hand.

v8. And the Lord said unto me 'Amos, what seest thou?' And I said, 'A plumb-line.' Then said the Lord, 'Behold, I will set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel I will not again pass by them anymore.'

BACKGROUND ON SCRIPTURE

Historical

God delivered the nation of Israel from slavery in Egypt about 1270 B.C. by many miracles, signs and wonders including:

1. The Egyptian plagues;
2. The parting of the waters of the Red Sea;
3. Moses' meeting with God on Mount Sinai to receive the stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments;
4. Bringing water from a rock to quench their thirst;
5. Giving them manna from heaven for food;
6. Not letting their clothes wear out in forty years;
7. Parting the waters of the Jordan River;
8. Bringing them into the land of Canaan, the *Promised Land* and defeating the idol worshippers who lived there.

Despite all these and many other miracles, the Israelites continued to be an obstinate and

disobedient people. God tried on numerous occasions to bring them back into fellowship with Him, but the Israelites always reverted to their wicked ways.

Prior to the reign of King Jeroboam I, the Israelites were involved in Baal worship. Jeroboam instituted the Golden Calf worship in an effort to discourage the Israelites from making pilgrimages to Jerusalem. The northern kingdom of Israel was in continual fear the worship of Yahweh in the capital of Judea would cause the people to turn their sympathies to the southern kingdom.

In 783 B.C., Jeroboam II ascended to the throne, ruling Israel for forty years. Jeroboam II achieved great military success, expanding the borders of Israel as far as they had ever been (2 Kings 14:25-28). The nation was prosperous, but its prosperity was based on selfishness, unfairness to the poor (Amos 4:1, Amos 5:11), robbery, theft and murder. The people practiced only a token worship of God, but they perverted true worship by paying homage to pagan gods and idols. There was a complete lack of mercy and justice and absolutely no regard for human life. Israel was still involved in the worship of Baal and the Golden Calf, which Jeroboam II encouraged. The Israelites had sunk to an all time moral and spiritual low.

Amos, the Man

Amos was one of the lesser prophets of the Old Testament. He was a shepherd and a ‘tender’ of sycamore (fig) trees in and around Tekoa, a small village about 10 miles south of Jerusalem in the Judean highlands. Amos is the earliest prophet of the Old Testament whose actual writings we possess. He preached to the northern kingdom of Israel (ca. 750 B.C.).

Amos prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel. Amos faced opposition from the religious establishment of Baal and Golden Calf worship in Bethel. The priest Amaziah criticized Amos for his prophecy, claiming it was politically motivated and part of a Judean conspiracy to overthrow Jeroboam II.

Amos responded to this charge by Amaziah by restating his occupation and the fact he was not a professional prophet, but only following God's call. Professional prophets were common throughout Israel's history. They would proclaim oracles from God for profit, or attempt to divine the future for a fee. Most were false prophets who only proclaimed what the people wanted to hear (Jeremiah 6:13-14). Not only was Amos not a professional, but he was not even a student prophet or “son of a prophet”. Instead, he was given a special call by God, which he shares in Amos 7:15.

Briefly put, Amos' message was to warn the people of Israel, that unless they worshipped and obeyed God and created a just society, they would be destroyed. True to form, the people of Israel, being complacent in their prosperity, did not heed Amos' warning. As a result, Jerusalem was destroyed, and the people enslaved in Assyria in 722 B.C.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK OF AMOS

The Oracles Against the Nations (Chapters 1-2)

The book of Amos starts with a series of oracles from God proclaiming the sins and punishments of various nations. The oracles follow a very specific pattern. But as interesting as what is part of the formula, is what is not part of the formula. Previous prophetic judgments nearly always included a call for repentance. The purpose of prophecy is always to move people to change their ways to avoid punishment. But these judgments on the nations do not make a call for repentance.

For that reason, many Biblical scholars believe this is because these messages were not actually

spoken directly to the various nations. Rather, this is part of Amos' message to Israel. The structure and message of the book would tend to support this belief. The nations chosen are all the nations surrounding Israel. The primary sin mentioned for each of the nations is their inhuman treatment of people. In each case, punishment was inevitable and irrevocable.

The Israelites would have been drawn in to these prophecies, agreeing with Amos' conclusions and welcoming the punishment. When Amos completes this with the condemnation of Israel, his listeners would be forced to make the same conclusion: they had sinned in their treatment of people, and punishment would be inevitable and irrevocable. These are the major themes of the book.

The Word against Israel (Chapter 3-6)

Amos then elaborates on this condemnation of Israel in the succeeding chapters. He proclaims God's Word against Israel, listing their sins and detailing their impending punishment.

In the middle of this, Amos shares a lament for Israel's destruction, and then calls the people to repent. He then gives his invitation to repentance. This is his only invitation in the book, and is placed strategically in the center of the book. The call is to Seek the LORD and live. Punishment may be imminent and inevitable. But here Amos states that by seeking God and forsaking the pursuit of false religion, the punishment may be revocable.

The Visions (Chapters 7-9)

The book finishes with a series of five visions revealed to Amos. After the first two visions (locusts and fire), God relents after Amos' plea for mercy. In the second two visions (plumb-line and summer fruit), Amos does not make a plea, nor does God relent. The people are off the plumb-line and now the LORD refuses to relent. The final vision, that of the Lord himself at the altar, proclaims their destruction, and then finishes with hope of restoration.

INTERPRETATION

The scripture selection for the Second Degree is far less direct than that for the First Degree. Initially, upon hearing this Scripture, a Mason will notice the plumb-line in the passage and suppose that was the reason for its selection. Otherwise, one may presume that this scripture is just a vague promise by God that he would never overlook his people, that he would ever protect them. *I will never again pass them by.*

In the Seventh Chapter, Amos describes four visions shown to him by God. In this vision God represents to Amos the judgments he is about to bring upon Israel for their many iniquities.

In the first vision (7:1-3), God fashions a plague of locusts to devour the land. Amos pleads for Israel on the grounds of its weakness and God relents. In the second (7:4-6), God prepares destruction by fire. Amos makes the same plea and again God relents. The *Fellowcraft* scripture (Amos 7:7-8) is the third vision of Amos. The fourth of the visions (8:1-3) alludes to the inevitable result of failure. Using the image of the last fruits of summer, proverbially small and stunted, the prophet points to the immediacy of the end.

It is this ominously unspoken element of the other three visions that make our passage so particularly powerful. We receive only one of the four, in isolation, but we are supposed to know and understand the implications of the others. Ours is like an unresolved harmony in a musical cadence, pointing to a resolution that we, by our actions, must avert. The last vision goes beyond the simple statement of urgent need to give us a glimpse of the resulting catastrophe. It is a

glimpse of the future, all the more emphatic and chilling, for remaining implicit only.

The Lord standing upon a wall made by a plumb-line signifies the laws and commandments He has communicated to the people of Israel to build them into a just and upright nation. The plumb-line in His hand symbolizes the strict justice He will visit upon them according to their iniquities. The phrase *I will not again pass by them anymore* is an indication that God will no longer show them any mercy in His administration of justice.

The underlying theme of this Scripture as it applies to the Fellowcraft Degree is to admonish the candidate that he is now crossing the threshold from youth to manhood. As a man and a loyal member of the Masonic fraternity he will be more strongly bound to the fraternity by strict moral guidelines. Likewise, as an adult member of society, he will be expected to exemplify the highest standards of behavior and uphold the civil laws. As an Entered Apprentice, the candidate was introduced to the most basic moral principles, loyalty, trust and charity, which serve as the foundation upon which to build strong relationships. His development as a Fellowcraft will expose him to greater responsibilities that require a stronger discipline.

Note that the Lord set a plumb-line *in the midst of his people Israel*. He did not intend to judge them by a plumb-line from afar, but here—*here in the midst*—of them. This should be of great interest to the Fellowcraft Mason, since it teaches him how he should judge his own work—and, just as important, how he should judge the work of others.

Plumb-lines all hang alike; all Plumbs, like all Squares and all Levels, are equally accurate. Yet a man may use a tool, thinking it accurate, which to another man is not true.

The builders of the Washington Monument and the Eiffel Tower in Paris both used plumblines accurate to the level of the latitude on which these structures stand. Both are at right angles with sea level. Yet, to some observer in space or on the moon, equipped with a strong telescope, these towers would not appear parallel. As they are in different latitudes they rise from the surface of the earth at an angle to each other. Doubtless the engineers on each project were certain that the construction on his tower was true and accurate. But, since they aren't parallel each to the other, how are we to judge the builders? The Great Architect, we may hope, would think both right, knowing each was perfect by the plumb by which it was erected.

Thus the lesson from Amos is that we are to judge our work by our own plumb-line, not by another's; if we erect that which is good work, true work, square work by our own working tools, working tools provided by God—in other words, by our own standard—we will do well. Only when a Fellowcraft is not true to his own God-inspired conscience is he building that which is defective.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, NOVEMBER 2007**

THE RITUAL SCRIPTURE READINGS

By: Wade D. Bridges, P.M.

This STB was taken from a paper by Bro. Wade D. Bridges, P.M. of the Georgia Lodge of Research. In the entire paper the scripture readings for all three degrees was explained. This STB deals only with the Scripture lesson of the 3rd Degree. The paper was published in Vol. XIX, Transactions 2005, Georgia Lodge of Research.

-STB Editor

[Note: This Paper has been compiled from a set of three by W Bro. Wade D. Bridges, PM of GLR, who expressly asserts they are not his original work, but a compilation of, and commentary on, the work of others. Unless otherwise stated, Bible references are to the standard King James Version].

THE MASTER MASON DEGREE

Ecclesiastes 12: 1-7

1. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;
2. While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain;
3. In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened.
4. And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low;
5. Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden and desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets;
6. Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.
7. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

GENERAL

Most people will agree that one cannot simply read the Bible and expect to glean all its meanings and lessons. In no place in the Scriptures is this truth more evident than in the Book of Ecclesiastes, which is liberally sprinkled with metaphors. This is particularly evident in

Ecclesiastes 12:1-7.

“Ecclesiastes” is defined as “one who assembles” or “one who collects wise sayings.” It is liberally translated as “The Preacher.” Neither the date this book was written nor the identity of its author or authors is certain. Until the 19th century, scholars thought it was authored by King Solomon, but that theory is not widely held by modern theologians. Some Jewish writers ascribe it to Isaiah, the great prophet and preacher; others ascribe it to Hezekiah, a son of David; while others think it was written by someone in the time of Zerubbabel.

Most orthodox Protestant scholars contend it was written by an unidentified writer, most likely in the third century B.C., who was following the tradition of much of ancient Jewish literature when he selects a famous personage as his mouthpiece. The tradition of Solomonic authorship almost guaranteed the book a place in the canon of Scripture.

The author of Ecclesiastes identifies himself as “the son of David, King of Jerusalem” (Ecc 1:1) but he never names himself in the Book. In Ecc 1:12, the writer states, “I, the Preacher was King over Israel in Jerusalem”. Since Solomon was the only son of David who was King over Israel, there appears to be no doubt that “King Solomon” was the one to whom the reference is made.

PHYSICAL INTERPRETATION

The physical interpretation may best be considered line by line:

(1) REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH

Many young and middle aged people overlook their surroundings and God, but as old age comes to them they start to become concerned with how they have arrived at where they are and now try to get caught up.

(2) WHILE THE EVIL DAYS COME NOT

When your body and mind don't work the way they did in youth.

(3) NOR THE YEARS DRAW NIGH

Your time and years are drawing to a close.

(4) WHEN THOU SHALT SAY, I HAVE NO PLEASURE IN THEM.

When you can't do that which took no effort in youth to do, and now all you can do is sit and watch, or have someone else do it for you.

(5) WHILE THE SUN, OR THE LIGHT, OR THE MOON, OR THE STARS, BE NOT DARKENED

When death finally prevails and you are no longer part of the wonders of life and nature. Fading light depicts old age. For the old man, the world grows dark.

(6) NOR THE CLOUDS RETURN, AFTER THE RAIN

Rains created new growth and life, a fresh start. And the sun or the stars once again appear.

(7) IN THE DAYS WHEN THE KEEPERS OF THE HOUSE SHALL TREMBLE

The keepers of the house are the hands, the arms, and legs, the trembling comes with the feebleness of old age.

(8) AND THE STRONG MEN SHALL BOW THEMSELVES

When they become stooped over, or bowlegged, no longer able to stand erect.

(9) AND THE GRINDERS CEASE BECAUSE THEY ARE FEW

The grinders are the teeth, which were usually very few, (in old age), if you were fortunate enough to have any.

(10) AND THOSE THAT LOOKOUT OF THE WINDOWS BE DARKENED

The windows are the eyes. Failing sight is a trait common to old age.

(11) AND THE DOORS SHALL BE SHUT IN THE STREETS, WHEN THE SOUND OF THE GRINDING IS LOW

The doors are the lips, the streets are the mouth by which nourishment enters, and the sound of the grinding is the human voice. In old age when the teeth are lost, mumbling is a very common attribute.

(12) AND HE SHALL RISE UP AT THE VOICE OF THE BIRD

The bird is the crowing cock. In old age mankind is more restless in his slumbers, and early rising is a habit with many.

(13) AND ALL THE DAUGHTERS OF MUSIC SHALL BE BROUGHT LOW

The daughters of music is the ears. The voice loses its strength and hearing becomes less acute in the aged,

(14) ALSO, WHEN THEY SHALL BE AFRAID OF THAT WHICH IS HIGH

In the declining years, men fear to scale the heights which in their prime they ascended with ease.

(15) AND FEARS SHALL BE IN THE WAY

Timidity is a common fault of older people. They are filled with apprehension at the first sign of danger.

(16) AND THE ALMOND TREE SHALL FLOURISH

It refers to the white flower of that tree and the allegorical significance is to old age, when the hair of the head shall become white or gray.

(17) AND THE GRASSHOPPER SHALL BE A BURDEN

To the weakness of old age, even the weight of so small a thing as a grasshopper, is a burden, or a pest.

(18) AND DESIRE SHALL FAIL

The appetites and desires of youth cease in the declining years.

(19) BECAUSE MAN GOETH TO HIS LONG HOME

Literally to his grave. Or to that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns.

(20) AND THE MOURNERS GO ABOUT THE STREETS

This refers to the original custom of having official mourners, who make public lamentations for the dead.

(21) OR EVER THE SILVER CORD BE LOOSED

The silver cord is that spiritual cord which connects man to his God the same way an umbilical cord connects the baby to its mother.

(22) OR THE GOLDEN BOWL BE BROKEN

The skull is called the golden bowl, from its yellow color.

(23) OR THE PITCHER BE BROKEN AT THE FOUNTAIN

The pitcher is the great vein which carries the blood to the ventricle of the heart, here called the fountain.

(24) OR THE WHEEL BROKEN AT THE CISTERN

The wheel represents the aorta or great artery which receives the blood from the ventricle of the heart or the cistern and distributes it through the body.

(25) THEN SHALL THE DUST RETURN TO THE EARTH AS IT WAS, AND THE SPIRIT SHALL RETURN UNTO GOD WHO GAVE IT

Upon decomposition the body will return to mother earth from where it first originated, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

SUMMARY

Read this scripture how we will, the majestic awe-inspiring poetry rings home the solemn warning with a shake of the head and a shiver up the spine ... *Remember now thy Creator: "NOW"*, before the fearsome storms of life, or the decay of old age, are upon you; wait not until "fears are in the way" to cry for help to the Almighty. Delay not until toothless, sightless, white-haired age asks for help from on high, because there is no help left on earth!

Such is the intention of these ringing sentences, and such do they mean to Freemasons. No

man thinks of his Master Mason's degree but hears again in his heart at least the beginning and ending of this sermon in poetry. *Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth—then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.* The solemn strokes on the bell which is Ecclesiastes and the soul-gripping drama of the legend of Hiram Abif are never to be known apart by him who met them together.

The whole is a reminder to start early to remember thy Creator (worship God), as you can't catch up in later life, for while the dust returns to the earth, the spirit must return to God for his judgment at the end of our lives. The proper living of our lives and worship of our God must last our lifetime, in order to obtain eternal life with our God when this life is over.

Whatever stage of our life, it is imperative that we as men and Masons:

REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR!

SYNOPSIS

The scripture readings of the three degrees are one of the most neglected areas of Masonic study. These passages occupy places of unusual prominence in the degrees, an indication that they are intended to be of special importance. The recitation of each passage has a major impact on the tone of each of the degrees. These words of each scripture are spoken only once in our ritual, unlike so many others, and are not mentioned in any subsequent explanation.

These papers have considered these readings and offer some explanation of their meaning as well as their historical and Biblical context. Be warned to beware of concluding that they are understood simply because one can read the words and recognize their meanings. This is especially true in the case of Masonic Ritual and of Biblical passages.

Attention is called to a limitation of these papers: the passages are considered without regard to their historical dimension in the Craft, i.e., when they were introduced, how, in what sequence, etc. As a result, these interpretations cannot be said to have "historical" validity for any period of the Craft's history other than the present.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
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LEADERSHIP: IT MUST BE GIVEN AWAY

By: Vern Wertz, P. G. M.

At the Conference of Grand Masters held in Portland, OR. in Feb. 2007, Bro. Vern Wertz, PGM, (OR) shared the following paper with the Grand Masters present. Although the paper speaks directly to the Grand Masters the ideas expressed hold true for any Mason placed in a leadership position. MSA feels it is very important to share these thoughts with our readers.

-STB Editor

There are those who believe we have entered the last age of man. The last because we, unquestionably, have the capability of destroying every living thing on earth, and we can do it in a multitude of ways. Of greater concern is the fact that every day it seems more and more likely that some fanatic will light the fuse of total destruction.

And what should we do about this? I believe there is only one answer! We should take the lamp of truth and walk among our neighbors. We should continue to search for those good men who obey God and serve his children. We should look for men with fire in the heart and wings on their feet who will show other good men the pathway of brotherly love that we call Freemasonry. We must, each one of us, continue to lead in the advancement of our gentle craft.

Most of you in this room are leaders; and what is truly important, you are leaders by election. So, as gently as I can, I suggest that you lead! Lead by setting the example; lead by truly educating your Brethren in the meaning of Freemasonry; lead by allowing others to make use of their God given talents.

Some of the best brains in the world are yours to command; some of the noblest spirits; some of the most inspirational teachers—all at your beck and call!

As a leader it is not your function to ignore these men, and thus make them passive instruments, dull and broken and useless. Rather you must inspire them to share their nature and their talents in the greatest arena possible.

You must not wait for some command to do good to all. God delivered that command aeons ago! Do not surrender to either the fear of innovation or the suffocating comfort of custom and tradition. Freemasonry is not now and never has been static—and thank goodness for that; because, obeying an immutable law of nature, things that do not change become extinct. And so, each day in each Mason's life there should be change resulting in growth. As a leader, you must provide the setting for that change and that growth.

Since most of you in this room have been, are now, or will be a Grand Master, I would like to, for just a moment, touch on that leadership position.

Grand Master is a most paradoxical office. It is one of the most absolute, and yet, one of the most limited. While it is certainly the richest in personal gain, it is absolutely the poorest in revenue gained.

If a Grand Master tells you that he doesn't have fleeting thoughts of autocracy, he probably lies. If he doesn't sometimes walk in terror, and does not pray often, he is almost certainly a fool.

At times he is alone on the desolate mountain of doubt and those he would serve seem not to

know him.

Like all positions of leadership, it seems at times you stand alone; and yet, a Grand Master will gather a lifetime of friends from all across this great nation. And, of course, he is granted great power, great authority; but he must use it with some caution lest he be a leader with no followers.

I think that we all understand that the knowledge of power is one thing, the use of it is quite another matter. Whatever your plans are for Freemasonry; you have no choice, you must use the tools at hand—your Brethren and the organization that was so lovingly given by those who preceded you and I. Understand this, if we lose contact with our Brethren, both past and present, then we are lost, negligent shepherds who in the end will have lost much and done nothing.

Being a leader is never easy, and I believe that is particularly true within Freemasonry. We are, after all, each one dedicated to the full limit of our talent and ability to what looks like folly. A folly that seems to offer little hope for a successful completion—and yet, we continue the preparation of a good man to become a better man. And we do that in the midst of a world filled with evil's temptations. I do not have enough facility with the English language to describe how essentially necessary it is that you men, our leaders, continue this work!

For our work is not done, and with support from the Great Architect of the Universe it will always be ongoing; an act of brotherly love that never ends.

Know this, where we become defensive, where we hide Freemasonry's light in the Lodge room as though it would become tarnished goods because of contact with the world—there we fail, and we should! Where we hold it up as a beacon of hope, a torch of truth, and where we boldly proclaim it as relevant to every human life, every human act—there we succeed, and we should!

As we look toward and plan for our future, we must review and remember our past. The study of our past is the key to the pattern of events that will form Freemasonry's future. And this is an essential truth because all history shows that the only justification for yesterday and today is the tomorrow that comes from them.

Our Creator gave us a thinking, reasoning mind so that we would not build our future by some accidental, some purposeless plan. Planted deep within our genes is the need for unity and harmony in all that we do. If we abandon this, and we sometimes do, the result is near suicidal chaos.

If Freemasonry speaks to anything, it speaks to the essential necessity of utilizing that harmony which God implanted everywhere in his creation.

After all, all that we can observe in nature demonstrates that all creation obeys fundamental laws of harmony.

The great goal of Freemasonry is to have a man lift his eyes up from the dirt at his feet, look ahead, and see the glorious possibilities, the wondrous harmony that waits for him in that mysterious realm that we call the future.

The future I want, the future I work for has Brotherly love as its capstone. I suppose there are two sides to the coin of Brotherly love. The giving side is the one that proves the worth of the original minting. Sadly, the obverse side of giving is taking. I believe that he who constantly takes is the unhappiest, the emptiest of souls, for he has nothing to give.

How sad that is, after all, the only things that cannot be lost to us, that are truly ours, are the things we give away—freely give away. Love has no value, no meaning, until it is given. Freemasonry can never truly belong to you until you have given it to another man.

And here is one of God's greatest miracles—giving actually renews its source; over and over, and at ever greater levels.

How grateful I am that my life has been graced by so many good men, who without thought of recompense or desire for credit gave me the gift of Freemasonry. They gave it freely, willingly. It came with no strings, no demands; only the hope that I would receive it freely, willingly and let it work a miracle in my life.

They were simple men, humble men; neither rich nor clever. Many were uneducated, most were closely connected to the good soil of the Willamette valley. I'll say it again, they were simple men, and yet how great. Each possessed a spark of greatness and it was that wellspring from which came all that they gave to me.

And if you good men in this room would truly be the leaders of our gentle craft; then you too must fan that glowing ember of greatness that lies within you—fan it into incandescence, and then...and then you must give it away!