

**NEW JERSEY LODGE OF RESEARCH AND EDUCATION #1786**  
**REDEMPTION AT GETTYSBURG**

**A Study in Masonic Duty**

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**MIZPAH HADDON HEIGHTS LODGE # 191**

**PROLOGUE**

Our fiction's set in '63;

Two sides fighting, whether all men should be free.

The plot takes roots near Chancellorsville;

It's been seven days since guns stood still.

Though battle's won and foe's in flight;

Tension reigns as day turns night.

One soldier ponders a single shot;

He's sure he fired, but wished he'd not.

He contemplates three oaths he vowed;

But disgrace of duty he has allowed.

That duty to country, his master taught;

To preserve the South, is why he fought!

Yet duty can lead to conflict, from without and from within;  
We all try to live righteously, but can plunge headlong into sin.

Bullets fly. Death abounds;  
But our gentle craft still makes its rounds.

So, sit back, grab a brew, and imagine how brave men died;  
Our story starts, your attention please, your patience will be tried.

## **PART I: CHANCELLORSVILLE**

The cookfire crackled as the men drew around;  
There were privates, Lumley, McIntyre Schmidt and Reed, as well as Corporal Brown.

They all stood mute, for the Sergeant was late;  
He'd be bringing news about the General's fate.

When he arrived, it was etched in his face;  
Old Stonewall was dead, gone to his Savior's Grace.

"No not from my bullet" came Juble Lumley's cry;  
A shot in the arm bore no reason to die.

But Sergeant said they took his arm and then the festering spread;  
Pneumonia was what killed him, when they confined him to bed.

Then Sergeant paused to ask Juble how he could know;  
That it was his bullet, when all were firing in a row.

But Juble was certain. Ghostly horsemen had appeared;  
The Union was upon them, is what they all feared.

For at the tail end of battle a heavy fog had rolled their way;  
They could no longer distinguish the Blue from the Grey.

Someone shouted “fire!” Juble had a horseman in his sight;  
He felt his stomach tremble as he gave his bullet flight.

He’d had enough of battle, its terror and its gore;  
He’d had enough of Union invaders, he didn’t want to do this any more.

For courage he muttered angry words he would soon chew;  
“May my bullet take your life, may your soul boil in hell fire’s stew.”

In the blink of an eye, the rider lurched, and toppled from his horse;

After a brief exchange, the firing stopped, as folly yielded its force.

A white flag began waiving as silence vacuumed up the air;

For men of Grey on both sides, in horror all drew near.

In agony upon the ground the rider, their general, lay;

Yes, they'd won the battle, but would they lose the day?

In dread Juble repented what had just issued from his breath;

This time he muttered a prayer that General Jackson be spared from death.

Unable to bear witness, he turned away, only to face another blow;

Staring lifeless at the sky was his best friend Private Snow.

A week he prayed the wound would heal and restore this Stonewalled pilaster;

Now he knew, God rejected his plea. He'd killed his Operative Grand Master.

So Juble began shouting how he'd changed the score;

That on account of him, the South would lose the war.

Sergeant had enough to bear, to keep his weeping men intact;

He could not tolerate such harmful words, their morale further to detract.

He ordered Juble's silence, but Juble continued his lament;  
So, off to the stockade for guard duty, was where our boy was sent.

## **PART II: AT THE STOCKADE**

To and fro he paced, all the while did he brood;  
Till from jailor's keep, he heard "Hey Reb how 'bout some food."

To and fro he paced, when came a second plea;  
Till Juble yelled "I done enough for ya, Damn Yankee you feed me!"

Then from within came another voice, this one distantly known;  
"Juble its me Joe, from lodge, its me, its Joe McKeown."

Stunned by this chance meeting on the night of his greatest shame,  
Juble thought back on the altar where both swore in God's name.

Joe told him how he'd been captured, how Andersonville lay ahead;  
That fetid Southern hell which claimed the record of Union dead.

He asked, no he begged Juble to free him, giving the Grand Hailing Sign of Distress;  
Juble realized the dilemma, his allegiances were in a mess.

How Juble in his heart wanted to help his brother flee;

But what duty owed he first to his neighbor or his country?

To and fro his conscience tugged whether to help the poor soul go;

Till Juble yelled, "You're pullin on my cable tow. Joe, my answer's No!"

### **PART III: ON THE WAY TO GETTYSBURG**

When morning came, Juble snuck Joe some gruel;

Then said his good bye's, all to quickly, and just a little bit cruel.

They broke camp by mid-day and began a new campaign;

They marched in the heat, they marched in the rain.

But whether sleeping on hard ground or sleeping in mud;

Juble 'woke nightly, as dark thoughts would bud.

Yet these nocturnal intrusions were nothing to what took shape;

When Juble heard through the grapevine, Joe was killed in an escape.

Battle followed battle while Juble thought on his deeds;

Pangs sprouted into pains, like a garden full o' weeds.

Bravado masked what lay beneath, as fearless he became;  
All thought he was killing Yankees to atone for his great blame.

But whose death he wanted was the real surprise;  
He was first at the front, seeking his own demise.

Marching and fighting were his regiment's toil;  
When as June ended they were on Northern soil.

They were plagued by hunger, and they knew thirst;  
But they were headed for Washington by the morning of July 1<sup>st</sup>.

In need of some shoes, they stopped to rest at Gettysburg, P A.;  
A battle for the ages they'd touch off this day.

By nightfall it had calmed and Mason's hall was lit;  
Where men of Blue and Grey alike, in lodge together sit.

#### **PART IV: IN LODGE**

Something inside Juble drew him into Lodge that night;  
His soul needed fixing, he had to solve his plight.

He came to find some answers, he hoped he could find peace;  
He had not known God these past six weeks, he needed a release.

By the time he arrived, refreshment was on call;  
He found the men intermingled, filling up the hall.

Seen from above it formed a garden, grown of blue and grey seed;  
The war seemed far away, all but Juble would have agreed.

He thought back on his duties, but was confused by this colorful sight;  
Enemies calling each other brother, didn't seem at all right.

So he kept to himself starring north across the room;  
He kept thinking about Joe, whom he'd left to face his doom.

A Yankee tried to say some words to him; Juble turned aside;  
He tried to say some words again, again Juble had not replied.

Then came whispered friendly council from the Reb in the next seat;  
"A truce is on, it'll do no harm your opposite to meet.

Juble thought a while then cracked a smile, the first in many a week;

It was time to face his demon, peace of mind to seek.

He rose from the bench to cross over to “enemy ground”;

But as he passed the altar he heard the gavel sound.

Lodge was again at labor, his chances all were gone;

So he resumed his solitude; his anguish to continue on.

The Master said some solemn words about how the war was fought;

About duty, honor and brotherhood despite the tragedy war brought;

He said how powerless was he, a single life to save;

That in this affliction, to trust in prayer, like Solomon at the Grave.

As the Chaplain began his calming words, Juble drifted into thought;

How twisted up his life had been, to escape from life he sought.

Four duties that his master taught, so sacred they had been;

One bullet changed it all for him, he’d plunged headlong into sin.

He offended God by wanting to die, his country he put at peril;

His brother's plea he had ignored, betraying himself to the devil.

The altar with its holy book began to look so dear;

As he gazed upon the Square and Compasses, he began to shed a tear.

Here in this hallowed hall, could he at last ask God's attention;

He vowed to bear any Herculean task if his reward were his redemption.

With that he heard the word "Amen" followed by "So mote it be";

In prayer he had found the path back to God to resume his great duty.

## **PART V: THE BATTLE**

One of the bloodiest days in US history, July 2nd, came and went;

But for Private Lumley, redemption was not yet sent.

After 2 days' fighting, neither side had the upper hand;

Lee was on the offensive, Meade was making a stand.

By midday on the 3rd the Southern troops were falling back;

Lee had failed to command his Generals to coordinate the attack.

He then decided on a gamble to pay the North its due;  
In writing out the Orders, Lee wrote his ticket to Waterloo.  
One mile from the Cemetery Hill, the Rebs troops took to the field;  
Row after row, seasoned and steeled.

They announced their intentions with two hours of artillery fire;  
By pounding the North, Lee hoped Meade would retire.

But the cannon barrage did little good;  
It overshot its targets, mostly landing in the wood.

Then the order to advance came with sounds of saber rattle;  
Facing 100 Union cannon, no atheist fought in this battle.

Yet the enemy guns remained silent, it seemed very strange;  
All knew they were waiting for the Rebs to reach range.

Yanks cross-haired the foe 'til their specter grew large;  
Then volley followed volley, burst upon **Pickett's Charge**.

Rebs marched in formation while shot whistled above;  
This was no place for charity or brotherly love.

With every Union bombardment, Rebel lines would deplete;  
12,000 advanced, half survived to retreat.

What was row after row, became heap upon heap;  
Boots were stained red, the blood ran so deep.

But despite the carnage our Juble did reach;  
The enemy position, and passed through a breach.

His rifle he aimed, but the target he knew;  
From the other night in Lodge, all decked out in blue.

Juble's whole being froze upon sighting that Yank;  
He fathomed the problem while his heart quickly sank.

For not more than a second did Juble hesitate;  
His redemption now at hand, it was time for his fate.

When the Yank looked down that barrel, Brother Juble he knew not;  
With that brief hesitation, the Yank managed his shot.

Juble fired at the ground, as his life slowly passed;

Thinking of his Maker, and how he'd found peace at last.

Dying in a pool of blood that had trickled all around;

He'd covered up his face before falling forward to the ground;

This last gesture of his life was the testament he'd willed;

That the Yank should never know it was a brother whom he'd killed.

## **EPILOGUE**

Juble traded his life for another, as if his own were not worth remorse;

But did he really step outside the circle, did he violate duty's course?

What was unrevealed to Juble, what no one else could know;

Is that the bullet that struck old Stonewall, had been fired by his late friend, Private Snow.

Did Jule die the fool or do we judge him brave;

Was his sacrifice what we mean by "Charity extends beyond the grave?"

So, raise that brew you're drinking, and give a Rebel yell;

For maybe Juble's soul was spared eternity in hell.

One last note of optimism before I send you on your way;

The brother who shot Juble, lived to fight another day.

He relived that moment, asking again and again, why;

Why that Reb held back his fire, why he didn't die?

The answer lay within him, from night on both knees bent;

The Grand Architect had intervened, is what it surely meant.

From that day forward, by the Square his life was built;

He lived to raise three children, untouched by Juble's guilt.

## HOW I CAME TO WRITE REDEMPTION AT GETTYSBURG

In 1981, as an Entered Apprentice, I received a copy of Joseph Fort Newton's The Builders, published by the Supreme Council 33<sup>rd</sup> Degree, A.A.S.R. At page 212 appears this footnote: "Following the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg, there was a meeting in town, and "Yanks" and "Johnny Rebs" met and mingled as friends under the Square and Compass. ..."

These three lines exerted a strong influence on me, and I would repeat them many times as an anecdote, describing the strength and goodness of the Fraternity.

I had the good fortune in 1993 to attend a reception of the Golden Slipper Club of Philadelphia, which was honoring David Kessler, President Clinton's FDA Commissioner, and Ken Burns, the producer of the acclaimed "Civil War" series that appeared on PBS. I managed 10 minutes alone with Burns over a glass of Tennessee Sippin' Whisky<sup>1</sup>, at which time I recounted to him the footnote in the Newton book.

Later in 1993, Van Hook Council staged a Masonic play, The Fight, based on an historical incident just prior to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. The same week, the A&E television network premiered its first episode in its Civil War series. It described how General Stonewall Jackson was shot by friendly fire (Southern) just following the battle of Chancellorsville.

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<sup>1</sup> Okay, its was Jack Daniels and soda on the rocks.

All the elements came together, suggesting to me that I take a stab at writing a play. I decided to combine these elements about the man who shot General Stonewall Jackson, culminating in the lodge room at Gettysburg (the battles were less than two months apart). Thus I slipped fiction into fact, or at least what I believed was fact!

I have always been taken with the speech the Master makes before each of the degrees, where he discusses that the forthcoming Oath will not conflict with what I will call the “primal duties” to God, to Country, to Neighbor, and to Self. This has also been the theme in the first paper I produced for AMD “Masonic Morality, a Very Special Theory of Relativity”, in which I describe how the “primal duties” can produce conflicting, yet moral, behavior among masons. That theme is developed in this work, where Juble joins the war in the name of these “primal duties” to “protect the South”; how he had to choose between his duty to Neighbor or Country, when facing the dilemma about helping Joe, and how he reacted in a Masonic lodge where both sides were intermixed. In fact it is the object of this paper that the audience identify with Juble even though his “country” is the South and his one sided state of mind arises at various points along the work, until his ultimate confrontation with a Union brother.

One of the problems I had to work out for the play was how to fit 30,000 soldiers in a lodge room for Pickett’s Charge. I decided to “borrow” from Shakespeare. I created a narrator, who would speak in rhyme to describe what could not be shown. For better or for worse, the narrative in rhyme (I don’t think it s good enough to call poetry) was better than the dialogue I used in the play(I tend to get mellow-dramatic), and that was one of the reasons I was prompted to redo the work in this format.

The play was first staged at Zerubbabel Chapter in 1994, when I was High Priest. It was

subsequently staged at Medford Lodge and again in 2000 at Zerubbabel. A copy of it is on file with MSA.

In 1996 my family and I visited Gettysburg. As I stood before the Lodge (a Sunday, it was closed), I decided to send the Secretary a copy of the play. A few weeks later I received a letter from him, that he had searched the minutes of the Lodge and could find no record of the meeting on July 1, 1863. So much for my reliance upon that footnote (One of these days I'll have to do a piece on debunking Masonic mythologies). Fortunately, I had described the play in the opening lines as a fiction.

Later, in 2001 when the Lodge of Research was formed, I thought to make an early entry of a paper. I had one ready, but it was committed to AMD. Accordingly, I retooled the play into all rhyme, with a few twists added to keep the attention of those who had already seen the play (and because I just can't leave things alone). Voila!

As this is a Lodge of Research, a few notes on the authenticity (or lack thereof) of this piece, are in order. The only true characters are Jackson, Lee and Meade. The main character Lumley and his fellow rebels, Joe, and the rest are all creations.

The discussion about Stonewall Jackson's death is fairly accurate, as well as the description about the battle of Gettysburg. Some of the phrases I used, such as "heap upon heap" were actually used by soldiers who had been in the battle, when they described it in letters and other writings. The reference to "saber rattle" was an homage to Southern General Armitage, who waved his hat on his saber as he advanced during Pickett's Charge. He is depicted in the Friend to Friend monument at the battlefield. Lastly the line "no atheist fought in this battle"

was an homage to my late lodge brother John Cruz, a veteran of Iwo Jima. While the phrase was by no means his creation, he quoted it often enough, and it certainly applied here.

May 8, 2002 Howard Z. Kanowitz