

# Trestleboard

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2003

The purpose of the NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education is to foster the education of the Craft at large through prepared research and open discussion of the topics concerning Masonic history, symbolism, philosophy, and current events.

## Next Communication

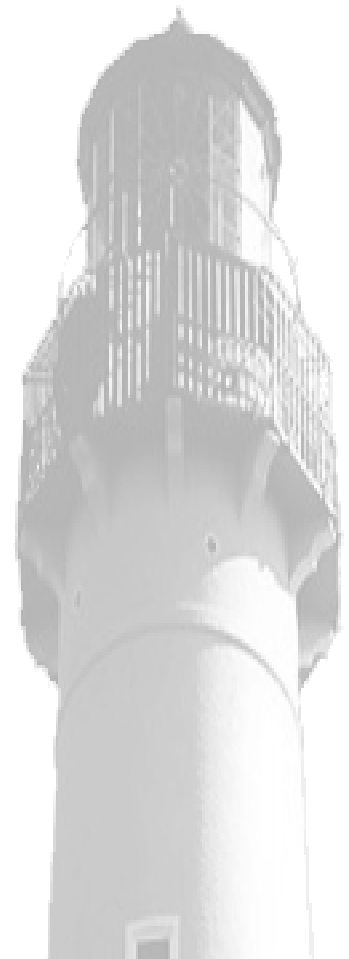
The New Jersey Lodge of Masonic Research and Education meets on the fourth Saturday in January, March, May, and September.

Our next communication will be held on  
**Saturday, January 25, 2003 at 10:00 a.m. at:**

**Trenton Masonic Temple  
100 Barracks Street  
Trenton, New Jersey**

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## From the East

RW George Olsen, Worshipful Master

Brethren,

I recently had a relatively new Master Mason question me about the research lodge. He wanted to know what we did. Without going into great detail and possibly turning him off I spoke to him about the structure of our lodge and the papers recently presented. He seemed interested, still somewhat uncertain, but indicated he intended to show up at the next meeting of LORE on the 25th. His questions caused me to reconsider those things, which because of my background, I take for granted. Hence the basics contained within this message.

When the word "research" is spoken within a group of people, it usually has a different connotation to each of the individuals within the group. To some, it is grandiose facilities with hundreds and thousands of people at work. For others, it means quiet library or reading time, and/or an individual working by himself. In actuality, it can be all of these or anything between those extremes.

Research is defined in the Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary in the following statements:

- "to search or investigate exhaustively"
- "a careful or diligent search"
- "a studious inquiry or examination"
- "investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts"
- "a revision of accepted theories or laws in light of new facts"
- "an observed practical application of new revised theories or laws"

***Research is :  
"to search or  
investigate  
exhaustively"***

Given the breadth of these definitions, anything done well (read written), and carefully documented will be considered by LORE.

Our current culture would not be in the state it is, if it were not for research and the application of that research to education, science, social science, or technology. We as a Masonic Research Lodge, therefore, have before us an opportunity to do many things which will increase the base upon which the education of our craft can be built. Come out, join the New Jersey Lodge of Masonic Research and Education (LORE), and become a partner in this endeavor.

Fraternally,



### ***Bro. Theodore Roosevelt became the first American to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.***

On December 10, 1909, President and Bro. Theodore Roosevelt became the first American to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, for helping to mediate an end to the Russo-Japanese War. The 26th President of the US was a member of Matinecock Lodge 806 at Oyster Bay, NY. He was made an honorary member of Pentalpha Lodge 23 at Washington, DC where he took part in many Masonic activities.

(Source: *Newsday ALMANAC; Freemasonry: A Celebration of the Craft*)

## Masters Notes

**RW George Olsen, Worshipful Master**

Our research lodge is alive and well. We have had one meeting at which two papers were presented and some basic instruction was provided. Over one hundred fifty brethren across the state expressed an interest in the Research Lodge, but only about fifty-five have actually become members as of this date. Those brethren who were present at the last meeting can attest to the quality of the papers presented.

The membership fee and annual dues are quite modest. With the membership fee comes your lapel pin. A pocket badge is available at your own expense for those who wish one. The annual dues covers the cost of the "coffee and" prior to each meeting as the brethren gather and the luncheon at each meeting, as well as the publication of the transactions of the lodge which will include the papers presented.

We presently mourn the loss of our Secretary, RW Steven Speirs. Through his diligent work we got off to a good start in that office, and we all will deeply miss him. For those of you who mailed in membership applications and dues money recently, please bear with us as we work our way through the void in lodge operations that his death created.

I hope we will have a good turn out on the 25th. In addition to the two papers to be presented, we will have as our guest that morning, Most Worshipful John M. Bettis, Grand Master of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge; his Grand Historian, RW Nelson A. Dutton and a number Prince Hall Brethren. I have asked that he and his Historian address two topics for us. The first is "the Organization and Structure of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge and it's Concordant, Appendant and Affiliated Bodies" and the History of their Grand Lodge.

If you are going to be present, please contact WB Ira Drucks the Junior Warden of LORE (bikerira@aol.com). We need to have a tentative attendance number so that sufficient "coffee and" and lunch can be ordered.

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## From the South

**WB Ira P. Drucks, Junior Warden**

As I travel around the state of New Jersey to many different lodges, I have the opportunity to speak about our newly formed lodge of Research and Education. There seems to be an interest in what this lodge is trying to accomplish. I let them know that we are planning to publish an updated version of the NJ History of Masonry, and we are in need of help in order to make this a success. The most helpful to this project would be the brothers who have been Masons for many years. Information about their raising and the history of their lodges would be greatly appreciated. Also, the listing of all the Masonic books in their inventory will help, so we can organize them into one database for easy access to all who might be interested.

Please let your Masonic friends know about our new lodge and bring them out to our next meeting.

## From The West

**Bro. Tom Thorton, Senior Warden**

### Masonic Membership Benefits

A place for a person who --

- enjoys leadership, to become a leader
- enjoys public speaking performance (ritual)
- likes public speaking, to give lectures
- wonders about man's history, to study same
- would like to write, the opportunity
- would like to be an actor
- who desires to develop the inner self
- likes the pomp of ceremony
- likes conventions and meetings
- likes to be away from home, but not the bar scene
- likes to spend time on the internet
- likes to be known (titles)
- to get and enjoy self esteem
- to enjoy something outside the rat race of life
- to use his musical talent, vocal or keyboard
- to become an authority on something
- to find the reason and purpose of life, (to study) unencumbered by traditional schools of thought
- to have male companionship and conversation without competition
- a place to go without the wife
- a place to work with youth, Demolay, Rainbow & Jobs' Daughters
- a place to interact with other men in seeking goals beyond the lives of any individual, a "friendship in the good"
- a place to enjoy learning about other Masons and their contributions to humanity
- a place to meet other good men beyond the confines of one's church, temple, synagogue or other place of worship
- a place to facilitate involvement with practicing charities
- provides membership in a exclusive club
- provides membership in a 'secret' order
- provides prestige of belonging to a world wide organization
- provides circle of professional friends
- provides activity and interest to retired men
- provides security for future needs (the Masonic home)
- an organization that regards all men as equal, regardless of their religion or socio-economic position
- an organization where 'just being a member' is appreciated
- an organization with members who are generally like minded
- an organization of which there is great internal pride
- an organization where charity contributions are not diluted by expense
- an organization that has more written about it than any other
- an organization that can become a full time way of life
- an organization that encourages self help and improvement
- an organization that provides support and aid to members in need
- an organization that provides manpower and money to many local youth groups
- an organization that is concerned for the well being of all mankind
- an organization that is concerned for the widows and orphans of its brothers
- an organization that contributes over one million dollars a day to charity (combined results of American Masonry)

## Origins of New Jersey Ritual

Bro. Ben Hoff, Highland Park Lodge #240

A question concerning the origins of New Jersey Masonic ritual was recently submitted to Bro. Tom Thornton, Senior Warden of the NJ LORE. The question posed is as follows –

Bro. Tom,

*I'd like to know more about the NJ ritual, since I've recently found out that we use the "Preston-Webb ritual", I'd like to know what other rituals other jurisdictions use. In my 3 years as a mason, I've been fortunate enough to travel to NY and to California and attend lodge meetings. I've noticed that in NY the sign of distress is done a little differently and is included during the opening and closing of the lodge after the master says "brethren, observe the east", when speaking to the master and opening and closing of the VSL, the brethren are standing with the sign of fidelity. What ritual does NY use? When was it ever different from NJ and when did they follow a different ritual from NJ? Since the two jurisdictions are so close together, were they ever under one ritual? Did Bro. George Washington follow the NY ritual while in NY?*

The first thing to realize about Masonic ritual is that it has NEVER been uniform. Ever. The only commonality among all the various rituals is the means of recognition (penal signs, words, grips, and perhaps the steps); certain elements of the first section degree work (most aspects of candidate preparation, the circumambulation or procession, the administration of an obligation & placement in the NE corner); and certain aspects of lodge arrangement (WM in the E, Wardens in the W & S).

There has been enormous variation in the symbols and their legendary history and meanings over the centuries and among various versions of the ritual. This is especially true of the lectures that explain the symbols, their history, and their meanings. The variations you have observed today are the legacy of this historical variation.

***"In the late 1600's and early 1700's, a man was considered a Mason if he could prove himself to be such by the usual means. There were no dues cards or centralized membership rolls."***

The second thing to realize is that the ritual has become longer and more elaborate over time. Much of the ritual difference we observe today are in the various elaborations (or innovations) that have been added to the core elements over time.

In the late 1600's and early 1700's, a man was considered a Mason if he could prove himself to be such by the usual means. There were no dues cards or centralized membership rolls. The method of conferring these identification secrets was up to the individual lodges following whatever tradition they received or developed on their own to add to the meaning of the occasion.

There was no such thing as a centralized Masonic authority to enforce a particular version of ritual, and even after there was a centralized authority (the first Grand Lodge established in 1717) it did not occur to them for 10 or 15 years that they had any business regulating matters of ritual. And even then, there was no standardization of the lectures which explained the history, symbols, and symbolic meanings.

Individual lodges "owned" the ritual, since a grand lodge in its early days was simply a voluntary association of independent lodges. They did not even consider unaffiliated lodges to be "irregular." So lodge traditions were very important, and innovations often spread by visitors to a lodge liking what they saw and bringing it back to their own lodges. If something appealed to the craft at large, it spread, and if it did not, it died out. And if they kept it for a few years, it became "ancient custom from time immemorial." Even to this day there are several dozen or more different rituals in use in England under the jurisdiction of the UGLE (United Grand Lodge of England) even though a standard ritual was supposedly established there in 1813 when that GL formed from the merger of the Antients and Moderns. The

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UGLE did not want to cause schisms in the craft by forcing lodges to give up all of their "nonstandard" practices.

Working against these innovative tendencies was the Masonic appreciation of regularity and tradition. The presumption of all masons was that their fraternity and its traditions all originated from a single source in antiquity, although whether that source was King Solomon, the sons of Noah, a Babylonian king, or Euclid in Egypt depended on the version of Masonic history your lodge followed. And since the ritual was purely an oral tradition, nobody could be certain that their version of ritual was the "right" one. So despite individual lodge traditions and innovative interpretations, there was a real thirst for authoritative certainty.

Strangely enough, the first source of standardized work was an exposure of Masonic ritual published by Samuel Pritchard in 1730 titled "Masonry Dissected" which was widely purchased by masons for some 20 years and used as a guide to ritual. It is also the first documentation of the MM degree, and probably explains why there is so much less variation among jurisdictions in that degree than in the EA or FC.

***"Masonry Dissected was widely purchased by masons for some 20 years and used as a guide to ritual."***

Before moving on to the matter of Preston & Webb, there is one more aspect of Masonic ritual that I need to cover, namely the lectures. The main emphasis of Masonic ritual in the early days was not the ceremonies of initiation, passing, or raising, but rather the working of the lectures. The lectures, moreover, were not the set piece orations we use today in NJ, but rather were in the Q&A form that we currently use for proficiencies. Our proficiencies, in fact, were the original lectures and not, as many presume, tests of the speeches we call lectures today. In New York ritual, they still use the Q&A form as the official lecture, in addition to the speech like material that we use in NJ and most other places in the US. Some American jurisdictions use a combination of Q&A interspersed with speech like elaborations or explanations.

Anyway, in the early days the Q&A lectures were worked at EVERY lodge meeting, which were typically in table lodge format, with the WM asking the questions and the brothers taking turns answering around the table punctuated by toasting at various points. If there was to be degree work that night, it was usually the first order of business with the Q&A lecture following for the education of the new brother. This is why we still require our new brothers to know this same material today - because they had to know it then in order to give the answers correctly in lodge as well as remember the process of making a mason.

Preston and Webb were the originators of much of the material used as lecture in the US. Hence, ALL American ritual (with the possible exception of PA) is considered the Preston-Webb style working to distinguish it from the style of lectures practiced in England, Scotland, Ireland, and elsewhere in Europe. Differences in lecture contents are not the only differences among various forms of ritual, as mentioned above. But for whatever reason the lectures are taken to represent the whole ritual system. I find this particularly strange since the typical American first section degree work is much closer in wording to what we know of English work from the mid 1700's than English work is today.

Now, as to Preston & Webb. William Preston was an Englishman, initiated in the early 1760's in London, who made the study of the Q&A lectures his specialty. He was rather put-off by the degree of variation among lodges, and especially by the uneven quality of the work and sometimes nonsensical (to his mind) interpretations of the symbols. He described the lectures as "rude and imperfect," unbecoming the dignity of so ancient an institution. He assumed that the state of the ritual was the result of serious degradation over the years. So he set about "restoring" the lectures by collecting the best of the best in current London practice (both Antient and Modern) and then polishing and arranging it into a more "elevated" form of prose than was typically found. He gave a rendition of his long and wordy, but definitely elegant, EA lecture at a Grand Gala in 1772, which was attended by the Grand Master of the Moderns, who subsequently gave his blessing to the work, which Preston took as official authorization -- the first such ever given. He set about teaching his lectures, and advertised them by publishing a brief de-

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scription along with commentary as "Illustrations of Masonry." Some of his commentary is now included almost verbatim in our current lectures, particularly the FC. Some of his actual lecture is included in the FC staircase lecture describing the orders of Architecture, Human senses, and the 7 L, A, & S. Interestingly enough, Preston still did his lectures in the Q&A format, with short Q's and often very wordy A's. While Preston was the first, he was by no means the only English lecturer. Current English work was also heavily influenced by Browne, Finch, and several others whose influence was not felt in American work.

Before talking about Webb, I need to mention the condition of American Masonry in the colonial period. Masonry was a veritable tower of babble, both ritually and organizationally. America was the repository of many regional styles of Masonry as well as the "normal" variations among lodges working the same regional styles. We had lodges chartered from many different jurisdictions (Scotland, Ireland, English Antients & Moderns, and even the odd French lodge) presumably reflecting the origins of the masons who founded those lodges. Moreover, both distance and eventually politics (American Independence) loosened and then severed connections to the old country and its sources of Masonic authority.

Americans were in a unifying and nation building mode in the early days of the republic so the recently formed American GL's pretty quickly realized that one way to insure Masonic unity was to promulgate a uniform Ritual. So after some decades they set about selecting the best of the best of the predominant forms of ritual among their lodges and tried to force uniformity. It took the best part of a century to accomplish this in NJ and probably most other of the 13 original states, and the process was repeated in every new GL that was formed by the admission of a new state into the Union. Each tried to create something uniform out of the mix of what they had inherited from various places.

***“America was the repository of many regional styles of Masonry and had lodges chartered from many different jurisdictions (Scotland, Ireland, English Antients & Moderns, and even the odd French lodge).”***

Thomas Smith Webb was an American who learned Preston's material from an English Mason while residing in Albany in the late 1780's or early 1790's. Impressed with the high moral tone of Preston's work, he adopted much of it into his own model ritual. Like Preston, he also published commentaries on the meanings of the symbols in what became America's first Masonic Monitor. Webb's thrust on the ritual was to include more biblical references and to try and tie blue lodge symbolism much more closely to the York Rite series of degrees (He was a blue lodge ritualist as a sideline. His primary interest was founding Commanderies of Knights Templar). He pretty much adopted Preston's style, and in the case of the FC degree, Preston's actual words into his own system of lectures. Webb's monitor and system of lectures once again filled the need to have some unifying, standard work that would satisfy the brethren.

Webb had many students, one of which was Jeremy Cross, who had his own version of Webb's work. Cross was much in demand as a teacher of lectures throughout the country, and was Grand Lecturer in several different states (not NY). His work was adopted as the official NJ ritual by the GL on November 18, 1822. Another of Webb's associates and a disciple of Jeremy Cross was James Cushman who was a promoter of Cross' work. Cushman attended that GL as a visitor, subsequently affiliated with Mount Holly Lodge, and became NJ's first Grand Lecturer in 1824 serving until 1829. (He was also Grand Lecturer of Virginia in 1822). Thus the Cross version of Webb's ritual system formed the basis of NJ's ritual.

A final word on Q&A lectures. During the early 1800's it became the practice to move lodges out of the taverns and change format from table lodge to our current lodge room arrangements as something more befitting the dignity of the institution. This change was occurring at the same time on both sides of the Atlantic. The Q&A lectures sometimes continued to be worked interspersed with readings (yes reading, not from memory) from the commentaries in the monitors. (This is why you will find some of our ritual ciphers in plain language. Much of the lecture material was never secret.) The UGLE eliminated the Q&A form of lectures in its model ritual established at the union of Antients and Moderns in 1813. Probably

# Redemption at Gettysburg

RWB Howard Kanowitz

*The following is an excerpt from the first paper submitted to the NJ Masonic Lodge of Research and Education at its last meeting. The entire text can be found on the Lodge website (<http://mastermason.com/njlore1786>)*

## 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.

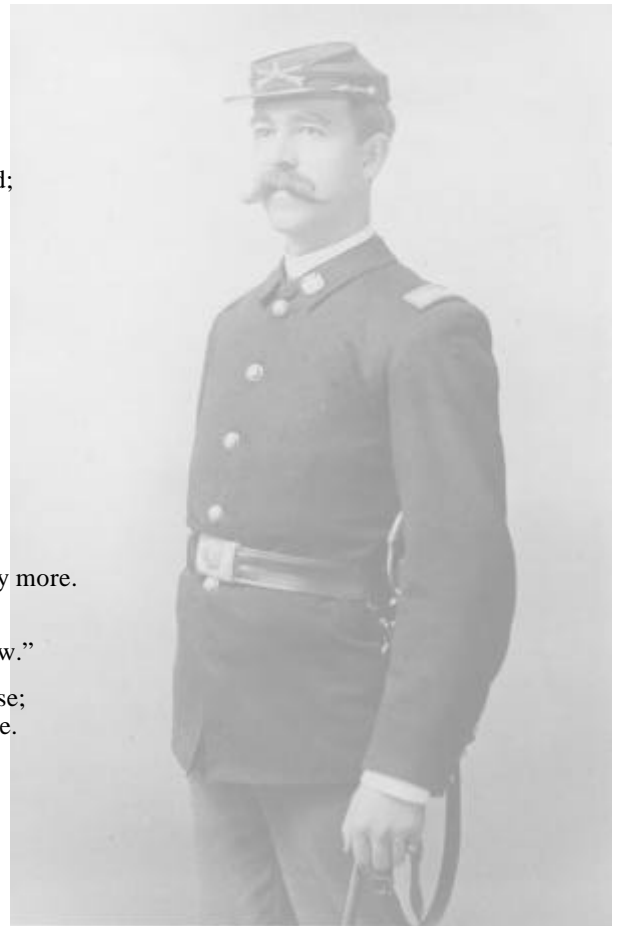
Unable to bear witness, he turned away, only to face another blow;  
Staring lifeless at the sky was his best friend Private Snow.

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.





**NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education**  
**Important Information**

**Grand Master of Masons of the State of New Jersey**  
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**Like to Write?**

**Interested in Masonic History or Theory?**

**Why not consider submitting  
 a paper to the  
 NJ Lodge of Masonic Research  
 and Education?**

The NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education is looking for individuals interested in the history and activities of Freemasonry in both New Jersey and the world.

Only papers concerned directly with Freemasonry will be considered for presentation and publication: The history of Lodges, active or demised; biographies of Masons distinguished in the annals of Freemasonry; its ceremonies, usages, and practices; the speculative or philosophical aspects of Freemasonry; and any other Masonic subject of general interest to the Fraternity.

Interested? If you have a paper you would like to submit or would like more information concerning writing and submitting papers, please feel free to contact :

**RW Thomas Thorton at 973-887-8772**

In Memorium

**R.W. Brother Stephen B. Speirs**

PDDGM of the 1st Masonic District  
 Secretary NJ Lodge of Masonic Research  
 and Education No. 1786

Called to the Lodge on High -  
 November 15, 2002

*From the Editor's Desk.....*

*The next Trestleboard will be published in late February. If you wish to submit an article or have an idea on how to improve the quarterly newsletter, please contact me no later than February 15, 2003.*



*Matthew Korang, PM, Secretary*

New Jersey Lodge of Masonic  
Research and Education No. 1786

Trenton Masonic Temple  
100 Barracks St.  
Trenton, NJ 08610

*Bringing Light to New  
Jersey Freemasonry!*

We're On the Web!!  
[mastermason.com/  
njlore1786](http://mastermason.com/njlore1786)



## Back Page Book Review

Bro. Jay Hochberg, Menorah Lodge No. 249

“Freemasonry: The Study of a Phenomenon” by Alexander Piatigorsky  
Published by Harvill Press Editions, 398 pp.  
ISBN 1 86046 265 0

In “Freemasonry: The Study of a Phenomenon,” author Alexander Piatigorsky presents the Craft as the latest vehicle to transmit traditions that are thousands of years old. A Russian-born professor of comparative religion at the University of London, Piatigorsky makes his case in the dry prose of the academic, but this book’s content more than compensates for what it may lack in style.

Scholarly Masons will be familiar with most of Piatigorsky’s sources, which helps make his thesis understood, but what is guaranteed to open the reader’s eyes is his extensive citations of Masonic ritual and symbols to demonstrate that Freemasonry is a society for philosophers and mystics. This book is not for those who are squeamish about seeing key elements of Masonic ritual in print, however, these “revelations” are necessary, not sensational.

This book also includes many beautiful and helpful illustrations that are used to show the Craft existed well before its public debut in 1717. As may be expected of a professor, Piatigorsky provides numerous annotations in support of his ideas. While his approach is obviously Anglo-centric, “Freemasonry: The Study of a Phenomenon” deserves to be considered among the most educational of books on Masonry in recent years.