

VICTORIA LODGE OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH.
650- Fisgard Street, Victoria, B.C. V8W 1R6

A MASTER MASON'S CARPET AND DIPLOMA, C. 1854.

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(Currently, 1/1/99 your Secretary is unable to copy pictures or sketches into these records however a copy of the sketch for this paper is available for copying in the Library records.)

1993-1

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Having gathered considerable information since first presenting this paper in 1993 it is considered expedient to update that presentation. However, before analyzing the Certificate it would be informative to provide some background as to when and why this certificate came into being.

We are aware that Speculative Masonry was brought to North America by immigrants from the British Isles and France and by members of military lodges on active duty. An unidentified source advises there is documentary evidence a Lodge was organized in Rhode Island in 1658. However, at this time and up to the formation by four London Lodges of the first Grand Lodge in England in 1717, each lodge acted independently. Gradually other Lodges were assimilated but not without growing pains as a schism developed splitting the union into two factions, 'The Antients' and 'The Moderns'. Eventually in 1751 the Antients formed a Grand Lodge of their own. The schism continued until 1813 when the two Grand Lodges amalgamated to form the United Grand Lodge of England.

It is known that a form of ritual was in existence before 1717, but inasmuch as it had been written in violation of the oath of secrecy we cannot be positive as to its accuracy. W.Bro. Harry Carr, in his paper "600 Years of Craft Ritual" advises that by 1745 the ritual was fully developed, albeit in crude form. In 1769, efforts were made by Wellins Calcutts and Williams Hutchins to make the rough places smooth, however in 1772, an Antients supporter, William Preston, having received the permission of his Grand Lodge produced a ritual superseding all others. In subsequent years he improved his work with eleven revisions and about 1800, the rituals and lectures were completed. Shortly before the reunion in 1813, the ritual was again revised with some elements being removed. This will be revealed during the examination of the Diploma.

In 1796, a recorded 'excellent scholar', Thomas Smith Webb, of Albany, New York, U.S.A., in conjunction with an English mason, John Hanmer, familiar with Preston's ritual and lectures, prepared and in the following year published the text "Freemasons' Monitor and Illustrations of Masonry". This publication was very popular as a means of control of the ritual which at that time was communicated "mouth to ear".

Among the many well qualified Masons serving as ritual lecturers trained by Webb was Jeremy L. Cross, who, to assist him in communicating the lectures of the three degrees of Speculative Masonry produced the first accepted pictorial aid. These were published in 1819, under the title "True Masonic Chart or Hieroglyphic Monitor", and becomes the source of the Diploma herein discussed. It is interesting to note many of these sketches are still used individually in Monitors (Ritual Books) in some American Jurisdictions today..

In February 1976, Wor.Bro. Humphrey Golby P.M., Mount Newton Lodge No.89,

addressed the Victoria Lodge or Education and Research on the topic, "Some Different Similarities in British Columbia Rituals; - The Working Tools". About ten years later the original copy of the 'Master Mason's Carpet and Diploma', here depicted, became available and was copied. This certificate pictorially portrays the Ancient or American Work as practiced in Ohio in 1854. It outlines a candidates progress, step by step, through the

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three degrees, illustrating the Lodge paraphernalia used and the topics and scenes necessary to demonstrate Masonic tenets and principles. During our examination of this certificate it was compared with the British Columbia Ancient and Canadian Rituals and with a copy of the Scottish Ritual to assist us in describing the details. It is possible some of our explanations may not be as would be detailed by an Ancient Work ritualist but we hope that in general we have been reasonably close.

The accompanying mounted copy of the Carpet and Diploma has been reproduced in actual size. The original was folded and contained in a small black folder, about 2 3/4" x 4", on which the title was stamped. It was undoubtedly used to gain admission to a Lodge not previously visited and could serve as an aid when examining a visitor. You will note the certification is printed in English, German and French.

The three Canadian Work tracing boards do not illustrate all the same symbols as here depicted, however the tenets and principles expounded remain essentially the same, hence we should be able to appreciate the different similarities in our rituals

The illustrations are separated into three sections with those belonging to the E.A. degree in the bottom panel, immediately above it are those of the F.C. degree. Above this are those in the M.M. degree.

Commencing on the left of the lower or E.A. panel is a female figure portraying Faith; being an expressed conviction of every candidate before being admitted to a Lodge. (It has been suggested that each of the female figures are making a token salutation sign) Above Faith the composition of lines represents squares, levels and perpendiculars, the true and proper signs by which to know a Free Mason. This reference, while retained in the Scottish Ritual, is not in the B.C. Ancient Ritual. The apron is to the right of this figure and is shown in the position it is to be worn, that is with the flap elevated. The altar, with the Three Great Lights is to the right of Faith. Note that the points of the compasses while being under the square, are not concealed. Above the altar are the three Lesser Lights;- the sun, moon and the Master of the Lodge. As it is not possible to represent this group at the altar they are allegorically depicted by three tapers or candles. In our Lodge the lights at the stations of the three principal officers represent the three Lesser Lights. To the right of the apron are the common gavel and 24-inch gauge. Canadian Work includes a chisel.

In the 2nd. section of this panel are a slipper, a cabletow, clasped hands and a lamb. The slipper is meant to remind the E.A. of being neither barefoot nor shod, and refers to an ancient Israelitish custom recorded in the Book of Ruth concerning the redeeming or changing of a contractual agreement, in the confirmation of which the individual making the commitment plucked off his shoe and gave it to the other party. The allusion is meant to indicate sincerity and integrity. The cabletow is meant to indicate the means by which a candidate would be removed from the Lodge should he refuse to assent to the obligation. The clasped hands is in reference to the manner by which the candidate is raised

from the altar by the W.M. The lamb is recognized in all ages as the emblem of innocence, and therefore the wearer of the lambskin apron is continually reminded of that purity of life and conduct which is essential to gain admission to the Grand Lodge above.

Commencing from the top and to the right of this section is the Volume of the Sacred Law, opened at Psalm 133, which begins as follows, "Behold how good and pleasant it is when brethren dwell together in unity." Beneath this is the Charter. The two succeeding sketches under it are described in the Ancient Ritual as follows, "Our ancient brethren usually met on a high hill or a low dale the better to detect the approach of cowans and eavesdroppers." Below this is a sketch representing the stations of the principal officers indicated in their respective positions by one, two and three steps.

Proceeding farther to the right and at the top are the columns of wisdom, strength and beauty, under which is a representation of Jacob's ladder resting on the Volume of the Sacred Law. Faith, Hope

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and Charity are indicated on the rungs of the ladder as it extends up into the clouded canopy of a star-decked heaven. (It is to be noted the letters F and C are reversed.) Below this illustration is the mosaic pavement with the star in the centre

Moving again to the right and at the top are three tapers once more indicating the three Lesser Lights. Immediately under them are the moveable and the immovable jewels. Below these is a diagram showing the form of a Lodge and its orientation. To the left and below this is a Volume of the Sacred Law beneath which is a point within a circle with tangent parallels extending down to two male figures representing St. John, the Baptist and St. John, the Evangelist, the patron saints of Freemasonry. To the right are four female figures who represent the four cardinal virtues, - Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice. These are depicted in our lodge by the tassels at the corners of the mosaic pavement

The F. C. degree shown in the second panel commences with a female with an anchor which together represent Hope. To the right of Hope is the F.C. apron with the All-Seeing Eye on the flap which is now lowered. Farther to the right are the 2° working tools. Beneath them and on the altar are the Three Great Lights. Apparently there was a printing or drafting error in this sketch as both limbs of the compasses are fully exposed. To the right of the altar is a sketch representing the password in this degree, and is an ear of corn beside a waterfall. You will recall in the Canadian work 'waterfall' is replaced by 'a stream of water'. The second section of this panel shows the temple entrance with Boaz and Jachin surmounted by the terrestrial and celestial spheres. The stairs, in three sections, of three, five and seven steps commence between the columns and extend up to the outer chamber of the Temple where the F. C. were paid their wages. Within the inner room is the Sanctum Sanctorum and in which the W.M. appears to be seated. This of course would be at variance with Canadian ritual. Outside and below the rooms are the pillars representing the five noble orders of architecture; namely the Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite.

The top panel illustrates the symbols of the M.M. degree and commences with a female figure representing Charity cherishing the orphan child. Beneath this is the altar with the Three Great Lights with the limbs of the compasses resting on top of the square.

To the right of Charity is the trowel, which symbolically teaches us to spread the cement of Brotherly Love. Below this is the apron shown in the position it is to be worn, that is with the lower left corner turned up.

To the right of the altar is the sketch of a hill at the foot of Mount Moriah where Grand Master Hiram Abiff was indecently interred and from whence he was borne to the Temple for a decent burial.

The five-pointed star is a Masonic symbol differing from the blazing star in the east and referring to Divine Providence, but is consecrated in this degree as a symbol of the Five Points of Fellowship.

The allusions relating to the broken column and accompanying figures are an innovation made by Jeremy Cross to the Antient Ritual in the American Work as he believed that some son of memorial should have been erected to the memory of Hiram Abiff. The description of this illustration as is contained in the B.C. Ancient Ritual is as follows. 'Masonic tradition informs us that a marble column was erected to his (Hiram Abiff's) memory upon which was depicted a beautiful virgin weeping; before her lay a book open, in her right hand was 'a sprig of acacia, in her left hand an urn, and behind her stood Time, with his finger unfolding the ringlets of her hair. The broken column denotes the untimely death of our Grand Master, Hiram Abiff; the beautiful virgin, the Temple unfinished; the book open before her, that his virtues lie there in perpetual record; the sprig of acacia in her right hand, the timely discovery of his body; the urn in her left hand, that his ashes were there safely deposited to perpetuate the remembrance of so distinguished a character. Time unfolding the ringlets of her hair, that time, patience and perseverance accomplish all things.

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Beneath this is a representation of King Solomon's temple and to the right of it is a record of the construction details and the people employed in erecting it. No details could be found concerning the numbers 3, 5, and 7 but may refer again in some sense to the winding stair in the Fellowcraft degree.

At the top of the row of sketches to the right of the figure Time are the columns of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty and are surmounted by images representing the three initial Grand Masters. In order, beneath the pillars is a depiction of the mosaic pavement, the Sanctum Sanctorum and Hiram Abiff's tomb. As we were unable to find any information concerning these last three sketches we can view them only in light of the Canadian Ritual.

The illustrations in the three vertical columns to the right include two classes of emblems or symbols. The first group comprise all but the two final sketches and a summary of their description as they appear in the B.C. Ancient Work is as follows. The three steps are emblematic of the three principal stages of human life, i.e. youth, manhood and age. In youth, as Entered Apprentices we ought industriously to occupy our minds in the attainment of useful knowledge; in manhood, as Fellowcraftsmen, we should apply our knowledge to the discharge of our respective duties, to God, our neighbors and ourselves so that in age we may enjoy the happy reflections consequent on a well spent life and die in the hope of a glorious immortality.

The pot of incense is an emblem of a pure heart; the beehive an emblem of industry; the Book of Constitutions, guarded by the tyler's sword, reminds us that we should always be watchful and guarded in our thoughts, words and actions; the sword pointing to a naked heart, demonstrates that justice will sooner or later overtake us; and although our thoughts, words and actions may be hidden from the eyes of man, yet that All-Seeing Eye, whom the sun, moon and

stars obey, and under whose watchful care even comets perform their stupendous revolutions, penetrates the inmost recesses of the human heart, and will reward us according to our merits.

The anchor and the ark are emblems of a well-grounded hope and a well spent life. The 47th Proposition of Euclid, the work of the illustrious Pythagoras, is intended to stimulate all Freemasons to be genuine lovers of the arts and sciences.

The hour glass is an emblem of human life and it is intended to remind us of its transitory nature.

The scythe is an emblem of time, which cuts the brittle thread of life, and launches us into eternity.

The second class of symbols are all striking emblems of mortality and include the setting mall, with which Hiram Abiff was slain; the spade by which his grave was dug; the coffin which received his remains and the sprig of acacia which is meant to remind us of that imperishable part of man that survives the grave.

In the last three columns the ritual adopted at the United Grand Lodge formation in 1813 retained only the following elements: the Pot of Incense, Anchor, Hour Glass, Scythe, Spade, Coffin and Sprig of Acacia. (This presentation was made with the assistance of a slide projector and tape recorder.)

Authors' notes.

Two of the sketches have puzzled us to give a reasonable explanation. The first is in the representation of the Sanctum Sanctorum in the 2nd. Degree. It is regretted that for mailing purposes the necessary reduction in the diploma size has obscured sketch detail. In this sketch the top-hatted W.M. appears to be seated behind the altar and with his right arm and hand extended in a hailing position and holding a gavel. We are unaware in any ritual we studied of the W.M. assuming the duties of High Priest and should he be so doing then his position appears to be at variance with what one might expect.

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The other puzzling item is in reference to the contents of the urn held by the maiden in the monument tableau in the 3rd. Degree. Our traditional history indicates a different type of disposal of Grand Master Hiram's remains.

Bibliography

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