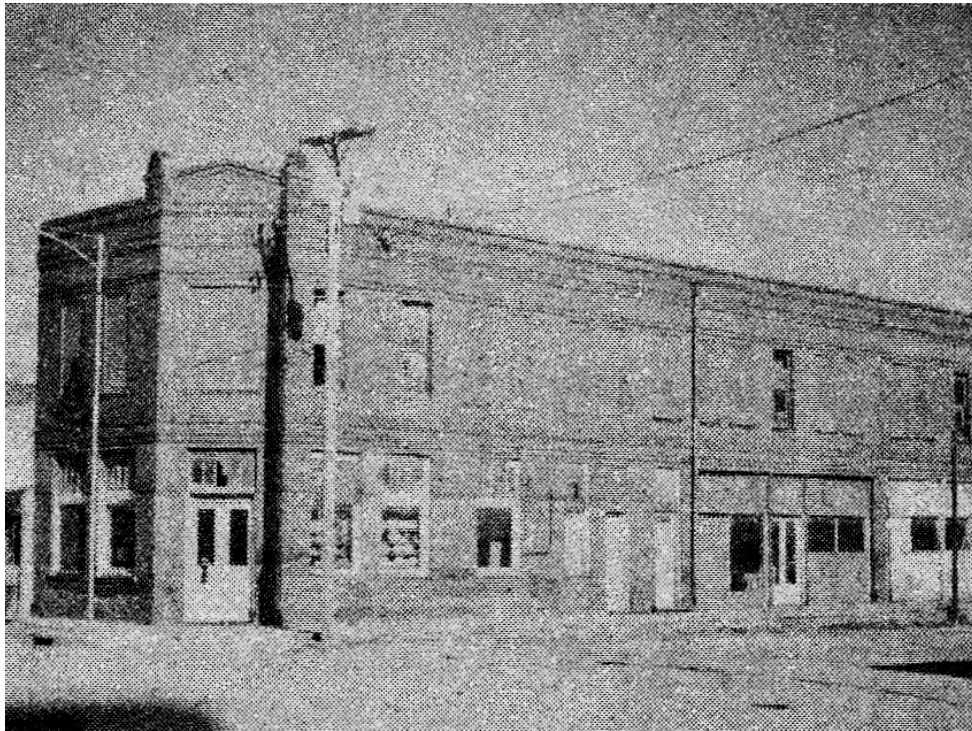


# The Small Town Texas Masons E-magazine

May 2012



## Baird Lodge \*522 A.F. & A.M.



**239 Market St., In Baird, Texas**

## The Small Town Texas Mason's E-Magazine

The Small Town Texas Mason's E-Magazine is not affiliated with any state Grand Lodge or individual Blue Lodge.

It was created to enlighten, educate and entertain Masons and non-Masons alike and as title suggests, it does feature a small town Texas Masonic Lodge and a story of Texas Masonic history in each issue.

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## A History Of Baird Masonic Lodge \*522 A.F. & A.M.

The oldest fraternal organization in Callahan County is the Baird Masonic Lodge #532. The Lodge held its first meeting in July 1880 in Belle Plain, Texas with Grand Master of Texas E.G. Bower presiding. He installed the officers of the Lodge who were: Master, T.J. Largen; Senior Warden, W.J. Norman; and Junior Warden E. Estaes. The Grand Lodge granted the original charter to Belle Plain on December 15, 1880. It was signed in Houston then Grand Master J.H. McLeary. The membership dues at that time were two dollars annually.

The Lodge continue to be in Belle Plain until 1886 when the population had dwindled to almost zero after the railroad was rerouted through Baird. In a hand written letter dated March 22, 1886, permission was given by Grand Master Z.E. Coombes to move the Lodge's location to Baird.

We have no record of the original location of the Lodge in Baird after it was moved from Belle Plain however, we do have a copy of the lease of the upper floor of the bank located at the corner of Second and Market Street in Baird, the next location of the Lodge dated May 1, 1929. On January 4, 1890 it was voted to officially change the name from Belle plane to Baird Lodge #522 and the name was presented to grand Lodge for approval. The current location of the Lodge is 325 Market St. since the purchase of it's building in 1955.



### A Sampling Of The Work And Activities Of The Lodge..

On March 10, 1910 the Rev. A.V.C. Dinwidder requested the Baird Lodge to lay the cornerstone of the new Presbyterian church the Lodge accepted the offer and invited all of the Masons in Callahan County as well as the Lodge members from Cisco and Abilene to attend the ceremony. On April 12, 1910 the Grand Master of Texas T.C. Yantis issued a special dispensation authorizing the Lodge to lay the cornerstone. The stone for the church was laid on April 18, 1910.

In 1955 date Tecumseh Lodge #552 merged with Baird Lodge. The last living member of Tecumseh Lodge is W.C. Breeding who was presented his 60 year award and pin on May 21st, 2007 and now resides in Clyde nursing home. Putman Lodge #1047 merged with Baird Lodge on January 10, 1979.

In 1980 the Baird Masonic Lodge celebrated its 100th anniversary and earned its 100 year award from the Grand Lodge of Texas. Presentation was made by the Past Grand Master Sam Hillburn to Worshipful Master Alton Payne.

When we should have been celebrating our 125th anniversary, arm lamp our membership was at an all time low. Indeed there was considerable thought given to closing the Lodge and returning our charter to the Grand Lodge of Texas. Fortunately, this did not happen through the efforts of six brethern and Bill Giles, Roger Corn, Alton Paine, Terry Joy, Harold Hass and Lee Loper, the membership increased to 34 members. This increase has led the Lodge to make a greater contribution to the Baird community.

We have established a scholarship fund to be awarded to a graduating senior from Baird High School. The scholarship fund was established mainly through the efforts of brother Rocky Ash. This past Christmas the Lodge made a donation to the community food bank, also known as the Clothes Closet.

Another program established is one which provides hospital equipment for those in need of assistance. We provide beds wheel chairs and walkers, etc. This equipment is made available at no cost to anyone in need wherever they may live and is not limited to members of the community or Callahan County.

In addition to the community activities, we are in the process of building a Masonic Museum on the second floor of the Lodge, in which records will be on display for the use of any Master Mason. One of our displays will be the charter issued to the Lodge December 15, 1880 in the original name of Belle Plain Lodge #522. This charter, rediscovered at the Lodge by brothers Tom Taylor and Mike Tennyson, is written not on paper but on parchment and we consider it to be our most valuable artifact. Brother Lee Loper had it photographed and the frame copy is on display. The original charter is kept in its metal casing for preservation.

This year (2010) we are celebrating our 130th anniversary. With our present active membership we hope that our contributions will make Baird a better community for many years in the future.



## April 21, 2012 - San Jacinto Day

*Editor's Note; Way back when I was a young fellow San Jacinto Day (April 21) was a popular state holiday and many businesses closed on that day. It was the first day of the new year for my buddy and I to go fishing at the bay.*

*Note; This story was intended to be in the April issue which had to be canceled due to health issues.*

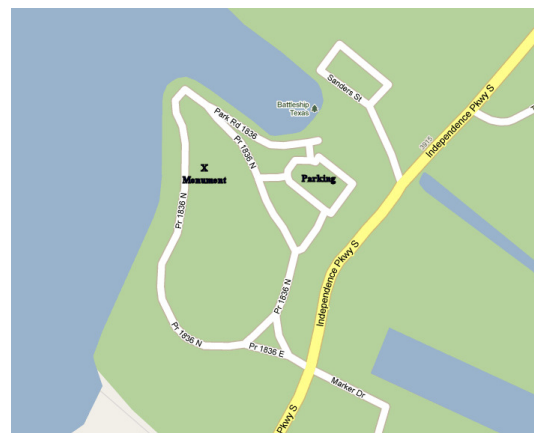
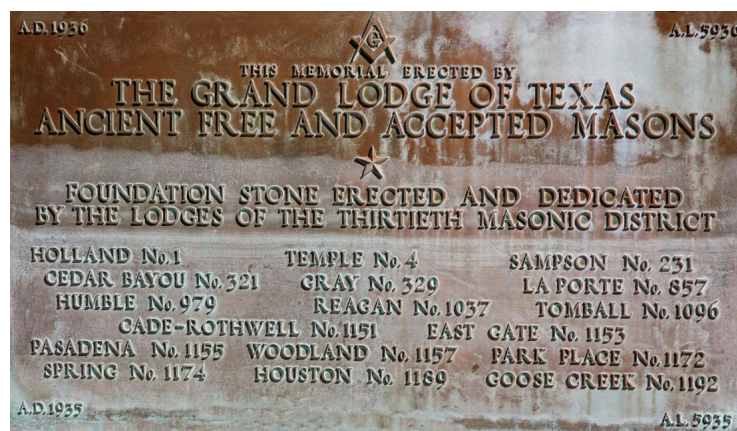
To all Master, Fellowcraft, and Entered Apprentice Masons, their families, friends and neighbors: Everyone is invited to join the Grand Master for a "Laying of the Wreath" ceremony honoring the Masons that took part in the Battle of San Jacinto. This will be held at the MASONIC Monument on April 21th at 9:00 AM. This Monument is located near the battleship USS Texas, on the west side of Battleground Road, across the street from the San Jacinto Monument. Parking for this ceremony is close to the Masonic Monument, and is easily accessed by veering to the right and following the road to the parking lot after entering the park. The Monument is due north of the red-roofed concession building. There is a path leading to the Monument. We hope you will make plans to join us for this special occasion.



Please RSVP at address below, so we might better plan for this event.

For more information E-Mail: mwsad30@gmail

Sponsored by: Masters Wardens & Secretaries Association of the 30th Masonic District, Harris County Texas



## Freemasons At BU Prepare To Return, Build Membership

Written by Mary Yatrousis

After a 13-year hiatus, the Boston University Lodge of Masons is expected to renew its charter June 23.

A. David Brown, treasurer-elect of the BU Lodge, said 35 people submitted first-year dues.

"Once we get the charter, we are hoping to increase that number. There are a lot of people on the side waiting," the College of Engineering Career Development Office assistant director said.

Brown said BU Lodge is for any male BU students, faculty, staff or alumni.

"We hope to have a steady stream of new members joining every year, but what is really important is that the people who are members get really involved," Brown said.

While the Lodge is not receiving any funding from BU, members want to serve the community, Brown said. Members set plans to reinstate the scholarship program the Lodge provided for students once they secure enough funds.

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enough funds.

“We want to be keeping to the University, not the other way around,” Brown said.

The Lodge was originally founded by President Daniel Marsh in 1925 and lost its charter in 1999 due to a “decline in interest,” according to the Grand Masonic Lodge of Massachusetts website.

“What we’ve noticed is that once the Vietnam era hit, sons didn’t want to follow in the steps of their fathers, and there was a decline,” said Master-Elect Scott Sherman, a School of Management class of 1986 alum. “We’ve always been the quiet fraternity, and the message got lost.”

The re-constitution of the Lodge has been in progress for nearly three years, Sherman said. The initiative was partly inspired by the masonic regalia from the previous building found at the Grand Lodge.

“Many of the group’s Masons from other lodges saw it . . . and said they would like to see if it could work again,” he said.

Brown said Dean of Students Kenneth Elmore and other officials expressed support for the BU Lodge.

Elmore declined to comment on the BU Lodge and Freemasonry.

Jamie Gorton, a second-year law student at BU’s School of Law, said the interest in Freemasonry appears to have increased in society recently.

“Freemasonry is becoming more popular in pop-culture through ‘National Treasure’ and Dan Brown books,” Gorton said in a phone interview.

However, Gorton said he hopes the core tenants and philosophy of Freemasonry are what draw members in. Though it may not have a large impact on campus, he said it could influence Freemasonry in the state.

BU spokesman Colin Riley said while the organization is in its infancy, most organizations begin with a small core of interested members until they grow.

“For those members of the BU community interested in joining, it will likely strengthen their relationship with BU,” Riley said via email.

Brown said a group of 35 men is a good start for a Lodge, and they are hoping to reach 100 members once they get their charter back.

Out of those who signed up, only two are undergraduates, Gorton said. However, members planned to be “young and hip,” despite the stereotypes of Freemasons.

“Freemasonry is not for everybody,” Gorton said. “Some will think it is old, stodgy and for their grandfathers. Students will be interested in approaching Freemasonry because they are intrigued by the history of it.”

One of the undergraduate students involved with the Lodge, SMG senior Jehan Hamedi, said the BU Lodge will eventually attract a younger demographic, provided that applicants are of good character and “believe in any supreme being.”

“These are honorable, honest guys who want to make themselves better,” Hamedi said. “You need to believe in something above you, you are not the end all be all.”

**CORRECTION:** The article quoted Jehan Hamedi saying he thinks the university will eventually attract a younger demographic, but Hamedi’s statement referred to the BU Lodge specifically.

## Top Ten Masonic Books

From Hiram’s Lighthouse Newsletter

There are numerous lists of ‘favourite’ books on Freemasonry. Grand Lodge has several such lists on its web site. Find the lists if you can!

**McLEOD’S LIST** - Wallace McLeod is professor of classics at Victoria College, University of Toronto, and past president of the Philalethes Society, and a Masonic researcher and author of some renown.

(In order of preference)

1. Freemasons’ Guide and Compendium, Bernard E. Jones, 1950, 1956
2. Coil’s Masonic Encyclopaedia, Henry Wilson Coil, 1961
3. The Freemason at Work, Harry Carr, 1976
4. Freemasonry: A Celebration of the Craft, John Hamill & R. A. Gilbert (ed.), 1992
5. The Pocket History of Freemasonry, Fred L. Pick & G. Norman Knight, 1953
6. Whither Are We Traveling?, Dwight L. Smith, 1962
7. The Master’s Book, Carl H. Claudy, 1935
8. Key to Freemasonry’s Growth, Allen E. Roberts, 1969
9. The Early Mason Catechisms, Douglas Knoop, G. P. Jones, & Douglas Hamer, 1953, 1963
10. A Pilgrim’s Path, John J. Robinson, 1993

## The Old Masters Wages

I received this from a Brother in Virginia, thought it was worth passing on. God Bless each of you this New Year.

May our Fraternity Grow and continue to do good work.

Brother, Tom Marshall

---

I met a dear old man today,  
Who wore a Masonic pin,  
It was old and faded like the man,  
It's edges were worn quite thin.

I approached the park bench where he sat,  
To give the old brother his due,  
I said, "I see you've traveled east,"  
He said, "I have, have you ? "

I said, "I have, and in my day  
Before the all seeing sun,  
I played in the rubble, with Jubala  
Jubalo and Jubalum."

He shouted, "don't laugh at the work my son,  
It's good and sweet and true,  
And if you've travelled as you said,  
You should give these things their due."

The word, the sign the token,  
The sweet Masonic prayer,  
The vow that all have taken,  
Who've climbed the inner stair

The wages of a Mason,  
are never paid in gold,  
but the gain comes from contentment,  
when you're weak and growing old.

You see, I've carried my obligations,  
For almost fifty years,  
It has helped me through the hardships  
and the failures full of tears.

Now I'm losing my mind and body,  
Death is near but I don't despair,  
I've lived my life upon the level,  
And I'm dying upon the square.

Sometimes the greatest lessons  
Are those that are learned anew,  
And the old man in the park today  
has changed my point of view.

To all Masonic brothers,  
The only secret is to care,  
May you live your life upon the level,  
May you part upon the square.

## For Your Information

From Hiram's Lighthouse Newsletter

Washington Chapter #3 of Portsmouth, NH announced its meetings via the town crier, who received from 6¢ to 25¢ for his work.

- Alphonse Cerza, The Truth is Stranger than Fiction, MSA

Last month, this article featured Golden Lodge in Stanstead, PQ. Here is a response.

It is true that their Lodge room once straddled the Canada - US Border, so that members from both countries could enter the Lodge, from Derby Line, VT and from Stanstead, PQ, (despite the fact they were at war) during the War of 1812. The Lodge then, and still does have members from both sides of the border.

However, they no longer meet at that particular location. They moved to their current location, I believe, in the 1920's. Their current Lodge building is in Stanstead, about 1 km from the border. Founded in 1803, they are surely one of the oldest Lodges in Canada.

The Owl's Head Mountain degree tradition started in 1857, and has been held annually ever since, on the 3rd weekend

# Partners

**Editor's Note, A good question and a Brother's answer from the Live Journal at <http://masons.livejournal.com/465152.html>**

Hi all

I have an odd question. Has anyone out there had their partner ask them for specific detail of masonic ritual? If so how did you deal with it? On one hand you have the SOs, on the other you have the implicit trust shared between one and one's partner. Please feel free to message me privately if you don't want to talk in a public forum.

Cheers

Mark

From Geometrician

This isn't an odd question at all. It's a very good one!

There is very little about Masonic Ritual that qualifies as secret. There are certain words and descriptions; and the signs, grips, and tokens.

I would say that the Ritual is interesting when you are going through it, but that there isn't really anything to interest people outside of Masonry. I would say that one of the things that makes Masonry fun is that there are secrets. The secrets aren't about things that mean anything to non-Masons, they are just the ways that we recognize each other, and certain aspects of the stories we use as allegories. I would say that the real secret of Freemasonry is that through it, we can learn to become better men: better partners, better parents, better workers... and that this is not really a secret at all!

There is no problem with describing the Ritual in generalities. You can say there was nothing embarrassing or demeaning, but that instead, the Ritual is uplifting and encouraging. You can say that there were prayers, and you took an oath to become a good man and a good Freemason. You can say that you were shown the secret ways of recognizing other Masons. You can say that you started the Ritual in darkness as a way of symbolizing ignorance, and that in the course of the ceremony, you were brought into the light of knowledge. You can say that this light is symbolic of the learning process that we all need to stay involved in, through the rest of our lives. You can say that you made a vow to come to the aid of a Brother when it is in your power to do so without causing any harm to yourself, those that you love, or your work; and more importantly, that many, many others made a similar vow to you.

A lot of times, when others want to know details of our Ritual, they are looking for something that isn't really a part of it. You can assure your partner that these things--political influence, vast wealth, hidden religions, unheard-of technology--are not a part of Freemasonry or its Rituals. You can tell them that we use the word "Ritual," but really it is more of a ceremony.

You can also bring your partner to open Masonic events. Installations, for instance, have elements of the Ritual that you can show them, and say, "here, a lot of it is like this." My partner enjoys coming to many Masonic, Scottish Rite, and Shriners events, and does quite a lot of volunteer work for them, without yet deciding to become a Mason himself. He rubs elbows and enjoys friendships with Past Grand Masters, Potentates, and Illustrious Brothers of the 33rd Degree. Through these, he is coming to understand Masonry in a way that I perhaps did not before I made the choice to petition. I was raised as the son, grandson, great-grandson, and so-on, of Masons, so it all had an air of usual life for me. I envy my partner the new experience of it.

Good luck! I think the real solution here is to keep the secrets, but don't be secretive.

## Please Judge Us Kindly

Don't expect perfection in a man because he is a Mason.

Masonry makes a man better, but no human agency can make him perfect.

If he is a Mason, you have the right to presume he is a fairly good man, but do not condemn Masonry even if a few Masons

turn out disappointing. Even the great Teacher himself had a Judas.

The aim and purpose of Freemasonry is to receive none but good men, keep them good, and make them better.

Judge the institution not by a few failures, but by the average of its success. That average is high and it consequently gives standing to its members, but it cannot be an infallible guide.



# Athelstane Lodge No. 839

Editor's Note; Due to it's popularity the series with Lodges with unusual names, continues this month with "Athelstane Lodge No. 839" in Pearl River, New York .

Welcome to Athelstane Lodge No. 839 Website

It is our most sincere and distinct pleasure to open our doors to our viewers and Brother Mason across the Nation/World and urge you all to look around and learn of our great Masonic history.

Athelstane Lodge is located in Pearl River, New York we meet at the Naurashank Lodge Building at 2 South Middletown Road. Our monthly communications are held every 1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM. We are part of the Orange-Rockland Masonic District composed of thirteen lodges under the jurisdiction of The Grand Lodge of the State of New York.

Named for Athelstan, King of England from 924 to 939, Athelstane Lodge No. 839 was issued a work dispensation on May 21, 1902, and the official Charter of the Lodge was issued on 8th May 1903 by the Grand Lodge of the State of New York in the Village of Spring Valley. Seven of the 11 charter members, including the first Master, J. Donald Dunlop and first Senior Warden, Frank E. Pagett, had been members of Ramapo Lodge, No. 589. The first Lodge room lay above the Plaza Restaurant building on Main Street, which the Lodge purchased in 1908. After more than half a century at this location, the Lodge acknowledged its need for additional parking with easier access for older members and the Lodge in 1966 voted to purchase the former Temple Beth-El building in Spring Valley as a Masonic Hall. Athelstane remained in that building until 1993, at which time it sold the building. After a brief tenancy at the Ramapo Lodge building in Suffern, the Lodge moved in 1995 to its present meeting site, the Pearl River Masonic Temple, owned by Naurashank Lodge, No. 723, in Pearl River.



In August, 2000, Tappan Zee Lodge No. 1125,( which had been instituted on August 12, 1947) merged with Athelstane Lodge. The earliest members of Tappan Zee were dedicated Master Masons residing in and around the Village of Nyack, but not affiliated with any existing Lodge in Rockland County. Two members of Rockland Lodge No. 723, Ernest Turner and Albert Burnweit, took the lead in active sponsorship of the new Lodge. The idea of having a building of its own began in 1955 and finally reached fruition in 1965, when the Lodge purchased the West Nyack American Legion Post building. A new Lodge room was built within the beautiful existing neoclassical structure, which was ready for use in early 1968.



Athelstane Lodge celebrated its centenary on May 2002, and the Lodge was re-dedicated by the Grand Master of Masons of the State of New York then, the Most Worshipful Carl J. Fitje. A number of Brothers of Athelstane (and Tappan Zee) Lodge have distinguished themselves as District Deputy Grand Masters (DDGMs) of the Orange-Rockland District, among them, Norman B. Gottesman, Clarence E. ("Pete") Erickson, Fred S. Dresdale, Martin Lindenberg, Peter J.D. Dedel

As we enter the 21st Century, Athelstane Lodge continues to lead our Masonic District by its aggressive community involvement, generous philanthropic efforts and member growth.

We hope that you enjoy our history and will investigate our wealth of opportunities. If you are considering Masonry, Athelstane Lodge welcomes your inquiry!

— W ∴ Howard Whitman - Worshipful Master 2011-12

Before Athelstane Lodge was organized, all the Masonic lodges in Rockland County were located on its outer perimeter in as much as Suffern, Nyack, Haverstraw and Sparkill.

No minutes of the organizing meeting are available. If they were recorded, they were either lost or destroyed.

The first records are those of the initiating of the lodge on June 6th, 1902. The brethren met in the Odd Fellows Hall, where then District Deputy of the 13th Masonic District of the State of N.Y. R ∴ W ∴ John Salis-



bury presented the Dispensation and installed the first officers, The lodge continued to meet at the Odd Fellows Hall, better known as the Amity Opera House, until 1916. The lodge concluded its probationary period during that 1st year and on June 6th, 1903 was granted its charter.

There are several stories pertaining to the naming of Athelstane Lodge although there is no official record. On several occasions during our history, speakers have dealt with this subject and the following explanations are recorded. In 1917, while speaking on the passing of Br. Edward M. Ehlers, the Master, in his remarks to the lodge, said that it was Brother Ehlers who had chosen the name. In 1928, at the 25th Anniversary of the lodge, Past Masters remarked that the meaning of Athelstane in old Anglo-Saxon, was noble stone and was probably the reason for choosing it for the name of the lodge.

At the 50th Anniversary, the speaker referred to Alfred the Great, 1st King of England. His grandson, Athelstan, was crowned in AD 924. Two years later he commissioned his brother Edwin, to organize the 1st Grand Lodge of Masonry at the City of York. This made King Athelstan the 1st Grand Patron of Masonry. The reader may have his choice of any of the above.

In 1915, an option was taken, on the property on the corner of Main Street and Funston Row. Not without opposition however, for the owner at the time was a brewery from Paterson, N.J. and some of the brothers thought it in bad taste to make the purchase. On June 22nd, 1916 the purchase was finalized and Athelstane Lodge came into possession of its 1st meeting hall. It was not a Masonic Temple, but the income derived from the stores located on the street level helped to maintain the new lodge through some lean years.

During those years at the Main Street address, much remodeling was done to insure an appropriate Masonic atmosphere but the lodge always looked forward to having a true Masonic Temple. In 1967 the dream was finally realized.

By the Lighthouse Beam From Hiram's Lighthouse - TORONTO EAST DISTRICT

## Hiram's Lighthouse

### Positivism versus Negativism

Yet another negative and / or critical report about Freemasonry came through my e-mail. And I am getting tired of them. These reports generalize and preach. If ONE ABC-lodge in XYZ-country is a model Lodge, then it is inaccurate to generalize.

What does the author want? Elitism? 7-Year apprenticeships? Publishing a number of papers prior to becoming M.M.? If that is the norm is a certain District or in a foreign country, it does not have to become the norm here. What does the author want? Masonic Uebermenschen?

If something is wrong with a Lodge or District, then quietly approach the W. or R.W. or M.W. and suggest something doable: e.g. - try and improve attendance by 10% by the end of this year; - try and follow through with E.A. / F.C. / M.M. Masons for a period of x months; - try and better the floor work - etc.

Our Religions are - in most cases - inherited from our parents. As to Freemasonry, we become members by our own choosing and are "immigrants" into our beloved craft. So . . . do adapt, adjust and integrate.

Our brand of Freemasonry is "across the board," open to all ranks. In order to be a good Mason, it is enough to adhere to our tenets: Brotherly Love - Relief - Truth; and to Fortitude - Justice - Prudence and Temperance. If a Mason can find himself to observe a due medium . . . by reminding himself "I am a Mason," then he is a good Mason. If he attends his lodge meetings only once a month, he very likely has a good reason: family - work - church - volunteering - etc. He does not have hear / read about ALL THAT IS WRONG within and with his fraternity.

Visiting lodges is great, if one can do it because of available time - mode of transportation - and without disturbing the harmony in home life or volunteering duties. Let the author of CRITICAL MATERIAL not use his multiple visits or lectures (here or abroad) to proselytize, how great THEY are and how lacking WE are. Whatever works over there (through selection or elitism) does not have to be accepted here.



Our lecture on the Working Tools tells it so beautifully: NOT TO BE AN ENTHUSIAST AS TO RELIGION (by saying “My religion is better than your religion”), thereby also implying NOT TO BE A MASONIC ENTHUSIAST either. We must not SLANDER anyone’s religion; nor should we slander (a strong word, but you know, what I mean) our brother’s Masonic practice.

The Final Charge at the Master’s installation says something about the ideal Mason being modest - quietly and unobtrusively doing his duties. In the WORKING TOOLS (i.e. how to work in and live with our Craft) it talks about humility; about life’s simple times: prayer - labour - refreshment - sleep. Negative reports by high-ranking Masons may scare the h\*ll out of candidates. The candidate may be led to believe that Masonry is a full-time (or at least a part-time) occupation; or an intense hobby, to the exclusion of family - work - church - . . .

Let’s be proud of the amazing array of Masonic celebrities (statesmen - royalty - scientists - actors - . . .). But let’s not elevate them to saints. That is a church thing: praying to saints for intercession – guidance - protection. These brethren were and are just men, who were placed on a higher spoke of fortune’s wheel. These celebrity brethren performed their duties to the best of their Masonic abilities. So do we.

They were / are oranges; we are apples.

Our Mason is allowed to be a simple Mason, who says that his knowledge, grounded on accuracy (i.e. facts), aided by labour (hard work) and promoted by perseverance . . . will establish happiness in the path of SCIENCE. So, brother author, let’s encourage him with THAT (not with handshakes with celebrities - not visits abroad - not comparing our jurisdiction with “foreign” ones). !! Let us advocate “. . . to regulate our lives and actions by the Masonic rule . . . “

Books are good. But don’t forget: books are foremost written to make money. Probably most of us do enjoy Masonic history, research and speculations. But devouring books is not necessary in order to become / be a sincere Mason. All we must do is TO RESPECT each other’s Volume of the Sacred Law.

Some of these negative reports smack of medieval Protestantisms (plural). It leads to divisions and hardcore Masons and maybe hard-core lodges. Maybe the author advocates a COMMANDO lodge??

I see Freemasonry as a positive movement, which fits in with Family - Work - Church - Other duties.

Freemasonry must never dominate. In my lodge I see the secretary with his unending, rotten and delicate job (that nobody else wants). I see my lodge’s (repeating) Master, who lives and works WAY OUT of the district, but knows he is needed. I see the brother, who keeps the cupboard and paraphernalia in good shape and repair . . . an ongoing job. I enjoy the pleasant atmosphere in my lodge; the willingness of my brethren. I observe all the charitable and social Masonic committees; the seminars. And I see this in the lodges I have the pleasure to visit.

We have sincere brothers, who are hard-working fathers and husbands. They carry with them camaraderie. Sure, one year’s “generation-through-the-chairs” may need some tweaking; and then - in a following year - things are smoother. We know and do this ourselves. We do not need a sledge hammer to make us aware. When statistics show a downward trend, is it the fault of the brethren? Do not forget, Brother author, that we are not allowed to canvass. It is a sign of the times: numbers go up and down. Let’s maintain our upbeat attitude. What good does it do to read about a lodge in Upper Slabovia with a helter / skelter ritual; but nothing is done about it by the author?

One more thing: Brother authors of critical and negative reports . . . please tone it down. Do you want to give us a minority complex? Must our lodge become a boot camp?

I love my craft - my brethren - their positive attitudes - their camaraderie - their hard work and humour their discreet tweaking.

Author: Jan Jansen

Publisher: Hiram’s Lighthouse



“I say today, thank God for Masons and for all affiliated with this outstanding organization because you bring good, and the more good we bring, the closer we get to a more perfect world, so that the children of this world can indeed know peace, have freedom, and seek dreams.” --Bro. Dirk Kempthorne, Governor, State of Idaho, 2004.

## Which Lodge is the Oldest Masonic Lodge in the World?

(Part 2 Of 2) From <http://www.masonic-lodge-of-education.com/oldest-masonic-lodge.html>

Brother Mackey says, "I confess that I look upon the legend and the documents that contain it with some favor, as at least furnishing the evidence that there has been among the Fraternity a general belief of the antiquity of the Kilwinning Lodge."

Those, however, whose faith is of a more hesitating character, will find the most satisfactory testimonies of the existence of that Lodge in the beginning of the 15th century. At that period, when James II was on the throne, the Barons of Roslin, as hereditary Patrons of Scotch Freemasonry, held their annual meetings at Kilwinning, and the Lodge at that place granted Warrants of Constitution for the formation of subordinate Lodges in other parts of the kingdom.

**Kilwinning Subordinate Lodges:** The lodges thus formed, in token of their respect for, and submission to, the mother Lodge whence they derived their existence, affixed the word Kilwinning to their own distinctive name; many instances of which are still to be found on the register of the Grand Lodge of Scotland---such as Canongate Kilwinning, Greenock Kilwinning, Cumberland Kilwinning, etc.

**Grand Lodge of Scotland...in Edinburgh:** But, in process of time, this Grand Lodge at Kilwinning ceased to retain its supremacy and finally its very existence. ...so in Scotland, the supreme seat of the Order was at length transferred from Kilwinning to the metropolis; and hence, in the doubtful document entitled the "Charter of Cologne", which purports to have been written in 1542, we find, in a list of 19 Grand Lodges in Europe, that that of Scotland is mentioned as sitting at Edinburgh, under the Grand Mastership of John Bruce.

**Kilwinning Records Cannot Prove Itself as the Oldest Masonic Lodge:** In 1736, when the Grand Lodge of Scotland was organized, the Kilwinning Lodge was one of its constituent Bodies, and continued in its obedience until 1743. In that year it petitioned to be recognized as the oldest Lodge in Scotland; but as the records of the original Lodge had been lost, the present Lodge could not prove, says Lawrie, that it was the identical Lodge which had first practiced Freemasonry in Scotland.

**Kilwinning Lodge Secedes From the Grand Lodge of Scotland:** The petition was therefore, rejected, and, in consequence, the Kilwinning Lodge seceded from the Grand Lodge and established itself as an independent Body.

**Mother Kilwinning Lodge:** "Mother" Kilwinning Lodge organized Lodges in Scotland; and several instances are on record of its issuing Charters as Mother Kilwinning Lodges to Lodges in foreign countries. Thus, it granted one to a Lodge in Virginia in 1758, and another in 1779 to some Brethren in Ireland calling themselves the Lodge of High Knights Templar.

**Kilwinning Rejoins the Grand Lodge of Scotland:** But, in 1807, the Mother Lodge of Kilwinning renounced all right of granting Charters, and came once more into the bosom of the Grand Lodge, bringing with her all her daughter Lodges.

Here terminates the connection of Kilwinning as a place of any special importance with the Freemasonry of Scotland."

...End of Albert Mackey reference information.

...and That...is the Rest of the Story about the dispute as to which of these 2 Lodges is the Oldest Masonic Lodge in the World.

### **Simon-Sez:**

Empirical evidence supporting the history of Freemasonry prior to the 18th Century (1700s) is difficult to find. The loss of evidence of the Minutes of Lodge Kilwinning from 1140 to 1642, which might well prove it to be the oldest Masonic lodge, is a very sad loss, indeed.

However, history can be reported only as accurately as it is recorded and passed down through the generations.

So...which of these 2 lodges is the Oldest Masonic Lodge in the world? Empirical (historical) evidence going back this far is difficult (read this to mean: almost impossible) to find.

Dates of the chartered foundations of Lodge of Edinburgh No. 1, Mother Lodge Kilwinning No. 0 nor Lodge of Melrose St. John No. 1...all of which were in existence in and before 1598,...and all 3 of which are named with a zero or a one in their name, have not been found.

Therefore, while Lodge of Edinburgh No. 1 has in their possession the oldest Masonic lodge minutes, it may very well be possible that another lodge may, in truth, be able to claim the title of the oldest Masonic lodge in



the world...if only they could prove their claim to this title.

Therefore, I'll let you decide from the evidence as to which is the oldest Masonic lodge in the world.

Grand Lodge Inception Dates:

England: 1717

Ireland: 1725

France: 1728 - (Grand Orient de France)

United States: 1730

Scotland: 1736

#### CONSIDERING A MASONIC TRIP?

If you are considering taking a Masonic trip, to visit the oldest Masonic lodge, Scotland is an excellent travel choice, as there is much to see and do,... most of which is within a 2 hour drive of Edinburgh.

Here are some of the places to see:

Edinburgh Castle: Edinburgh, Scotland. Take a tour of historic Edinburgh Castle, perched high upon the hill above Edinburgh.

The castle is home to military museums and contains the Scottish National War Memorial as well as the Honours of Scotland,... possibly the oldest royal regalia in Europe.

Members of the Royal Artillery fire the famous One O'Clock Gun from Edinburgh Castle's canons.

Lodge of Edinburgh No. 1: The oldest Masonic lodge in the world, Lodge of Edinburgh No. 1, is located on Hill Street in Edinburgh.

Grand Lodge of Scotland: Edinburgh, Scotland

United Grand Lodge of England: London, England. About 400 miles south of Edinburgh.

Rosslyn Chapel: Rosslyn Chapel is in Midlothian, Scotland...about 12 miles south of Edinburgh. Built in 1446 by William St. Clair, and made mega-popular by Dan Brown's book and follow-up movie, "The DaVinci Code"; it is filled with the intricately carved stonework of operative stonemasons. Most interesting are the mason's marks on the individual stones.

The Knight Templar tombstone, below, reads: "Knight Templar...13th Century".

Knight Templar Tombstone in Rosslyn Chapel

Photo Courtesy Alex Young

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Dunfermline Abbey: ...about 18 miles north of Edinburgh. In 1329 Robert the Bruce died. His body is buried in Dunfermline Abbey.

Dunfermline Abbey

Photo Courtesy of Alex Young.

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Dunfermline Abbey New Church

Photo Courtesy of Alex Young

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In 1818, when the site of the old Abbey Church (circa 1070) was being prepared for the new Abbey Church, Robert the Bruce's remains were discovered, wrapped in a cloth of gold and he was re-interred at Dunfermline Abbey in 1819.

Robert The Bruce's Final Resting Place

Photo Courtesy Alex Young

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Lodge of Dunfermline No. 26 - The Lodge of Dunfermline, No. 26, is rich in history. This history includes the numerous churches built by operative masons, royalty and many famous names.

In addition, it must be noted that in 1598, Warden Thomas Robertson, of the Ludge of Dunfermling and St. Andros, was one of the commissioners who confirmed the Schaw Statutes.

To read more about The Lodge of Dunfermline No. 26, visit The Lodge of Dunfermline, No. 26 page on The Grand Lodge of Scotland's website.

Robert the Bruce - Just before his death, Robert the Bruce asked that his heart be removed from his body and taken on a crusade by a worthy knight,... eventually to go to the Holy Land. His close friend, James Douglas honored this last request. Therefore, Bruce's heart was removed, embalmed and placed in a container that hung from Douglas's neck.

In the early spring of 1330, Douglas was in Spain battling the Moors when he found himself in an ill-fated battle, surrounded by the enemy. Once Douglas realized that his own death was imminent, he pulled the heart of his long dead king from his neck and threw it into the ranks of the enemy. Drawing his sword, he shouted

"Onward braveheart, Douglas shall follow thee or die."

A brave Scottish soldier fought his way through the lines and re-captured the small locked silver casket containing Robert the Bruce's heart, and brought it back to Scotland. He was knighted Sir Simon Lockhart of the Lee for his actions.

Melrose Abbey: Melrose, Scotland. (about 40 miles south of Edinburgh) Robert the Bruce's heart is buried at and memorialized at Melrose Abbey.

Bannockburn: About 30 miles north of Edinburgh, in Bannockburn, you can walk the famous battlefield where in 1314 King Robert the Bruce and the brave men of Scotland fought the decisive and significant battle toward winning Scottish independence from England.

Mother Lodge Kilwinning No. 0: (Possibly the oldest Masonic lodge in the world, but without the minutes to prove it) ...About 85 miles west of Edinburgh in Ayrshire. Mother Lodge Kilwinning has a wonderful Lodge Museum.

Edinburgh Hotels: There are over 195 hotels in Edinburgh. You can also stay at one of the many Royal Mile Hotels, to be close to shopping and restaurants.

Golf Scotland: St. Andrews Golf Course: If you are a golfer, about 60 miles north of Edinburgh is the famed St. Andrews Golf Course. Scotland has been regarded as the "home" of golf for over 6 centuries. You can play the links at St. Andrews, yourself, instead of watching Tiger Woods on television. St. Andrews Golf Course is also where Jack Nicklaus bid farewell to competitive golf in 2005.

Scotch Whiskey Heritage Center: Next to Edinburgh Castle. Learn how Scotch whiskey is made.

Scottish Distilleries: Sample some of the greatest Scotch in the world. Scotland has over 150 working distilleries and several whiskey producing regions. Most distilleries offer distillery tours that include a "wee dram". While there are many distilleries in Scotland, these 3 are among the closest to Edinburgh and the oldest Masonic lodge are:

Glenkinchie Scotch Whiskey Distillery: 15 miles southeast of Edinburgh.

Glenturret Distillery: Scotland's oldest distillery. About 60 miles north of Edinburgh.

Aberfeldy Distillery: Home of Dewar's. Tour the Dewar's Museum. About 75 miles north of Edinburgh

### **Take the family!**

Traveling to Scotland and visiting the oldest Masonic lodge may very well be a once-in-a-lifetime event. But, it's not the only memorable thing to see in Scotland! Scotland is full of history.

There is much to do and see. After visiting the oldest Masonic lodge, you can go hiking in the clear air of the Highland peaks, visit Loch Ness, (home of Nessie), take walking tours, bus tours, visit the William Wallace (Braveheart) Memorial, as well as Stirling Castle, the former home of Mary Queen of Scots.

### **Edinburgh Shopping: Shop the Royal Mile in Edinburgh.**

Scottish Scotland is famous for its knitwear, Scottish cashmere sweaters, and the finest of Scottish lambs wool. You can shop for Scottish bagpipes, Scottish kilts and Scottish tartan woolen products all made in Scotland.

So, don't take a Masonic trip to Scotland just to visit the oldest Masonic lodge in the world.

Make the trip to transport yourself back through history to where you will be able to experience Masonic education, first-hand.

Simon

## **Masonic Questions and Answers**

Q: Does A Masonic Obligation Have To Be taken On The Christian Bible.

A: No,

Even though the Masonic Lodge is an organization with Christian members, it is not a Christian organization. The Grand Lodge of Texas law states,

"It is the policy of this Grand Lodge to permit a candidate whose religious persuasion is based upon other than the Holy Bible to be obligated upon the book of his chosen faith and the same may be situated upon the Altar in front of the Holy Bible during the conferral of the three degrees of Masonry."

Before an E.A. initiation a while back, I ask one of the older brothers if we shouldn't use the Holy Book of the candidate's religion. I was quickly told "Nope, if he joins my Lodge, he'll have to use my Bible."

It wasn't a problem after all, because the candidate took his obligation on the Bible without protest. Now, the thing that bothers me is that I wonder if that older brother had been forced to take his obligation on the Koran or any book other than "His Bible" would he have felt he was really obligated?

Think about it, if Masonry is an organization whose members are only bound to each other and to the Lodge by the obligation and their conscience, shouldn't the obligation be one that is taken on a Holy Book that would be binding to the man taking it???

# Learn Freemasonry Insider Secrets And More

Posted on January 22, 2012 by admin

A 16th Century organization that has gained a whole lot of attention lately is freemasonry; this is mostly as a result of all the freemasonry secrets that the group has been able to help keep all these years. And there have been a great deal of false impression concerning the group. You can find so many individuals who have been misled into believing that this group is doing some dark activities. On account of the secrecy of the group there is little identified truth about them. But they have a whole lot of member that have reached as much as six million all over the globe, two million of which are based within the United States. Most of the identities of the members are also kept secret. There have already been a good deal of masonic symbols that can be noticed on the distinctive establishment or even getting worn as jewelry which may be the key reason why others have learned about their widespread existence.

The two major secrets involve their handshakes and their rituals. So that you can recognize other Freemasonry members when away from house, they've special passwords, handgrips, and signs. Keeping these secret make sense, if every person knew them how could they tell who seriously was a Freemasonry member. The second of the Freemasonry secrets centers on the instructing of their new members. Based on the writings in the Bible and writings of other philosophers, this ritualistic instruction has work well by means of the years. The distinctive adaptation and presentation sets the fraternity apart from others, which means nobody can imitate them. The lessons taught within the ritual nonetheless, aren't secret, and anyone can obtain them. 1 little quirky note about joining Freemasonry, is that the members do not invite others to join, if an individual is interested they need to approach the Masons on their own accord. Masonic symbols, displayed proudly in vehicles, houses, jewelry, and clothing contain the square and compasses, which represent righteousness, revelation, and redemption.

If the Masons have any secrets, they're the shared emotions, private beliefs and intimate moments shared by people who have one belief that supports and strengthens them. People from all walks of life join the fraternity and form lengthy, resilient friendships. The fraternity does not make any attempt to save peoples souls. This function has been correctly left towards the church.

## Where Did They All Go?

One of the surest ways for a Lodge to deteriorate is for the members to loose interest and grow slack in their attendance. Why is attendance so necessary?

To begin with a candidate has only one way to evaluate the Lodge on his initial appearance. Does he find the men present who signed his petition, or did their interest fade when they presented his petition to the secretary, considering that the putting on the degree and teaching the candidate was someone else's problem?

Does the candidate feel lost and among strangers when he first comes to the Lodge? Is he accompanied by the brethren who recommended him, or else do they meet him at the Lodge? When he received the first degree, does he see familiar faces and hear the voices of his friends, or is he completely among strangers? Where are the men who assured him that Masonry is one of the finest organizations he could be elected to, and where men are brothers.

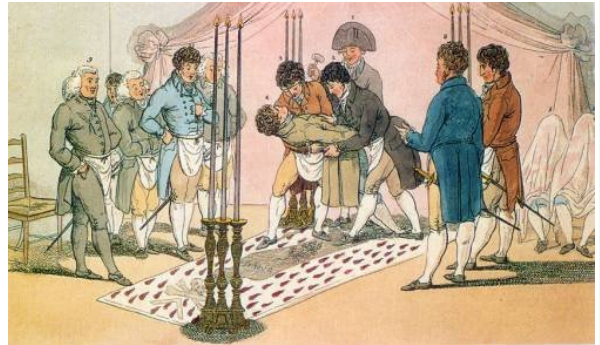
We must remember that the Masonic Hall is our Masonic Home and we as members are the hosts for the visitors and should greet the warmly. Even those of us who can't teach can at least greet and welcome new brothers to be, sit with them at the meal, include them in the conversations and make them feel wanted.

When the degree begins and the candidate is cast among a bunch of strangers and confronted with an imagination that is running wild and being led into the unknown for what seems hours, hearing friendly voices or seeing friendly faces can make a lot of difference. The act of becoming a Brother should begin after a candidate's petition is voted on and not after he is raised. After all we want every new E.A. to eagerly come back for the next two degrees.



## Freemasonry In Other Countries

Masonry in other countries is a lot more time consuming and selective than it is in America. In Panama for instance, where I myself joined the Craft, the path from uninitiated to a Master Mason is over three years time. The degrees are only provided after you have held a degree for a period of one year, and have shown proficiency in all aspects of that degree. We would have many less Masons in the US with this system. It is also very expensive. The Brethren meet in all three degrees, and the candidates are expected to attend all degrees they are entitled to attend. They also sometimes attend the higher degrees, and sit outside the Lodge to work on their memory work with the Tyler or other Brother.



I would also like to call out the differences between the Craft and the Catholic Church. While there have been Papal Bulls against the Craft, there have been more Popes who have seen no issue with a Catholic practicing Masonry. The Brother, eventually Master of my Lodge, who got me involved in the Science/Art of Klowning (Kena Klowns spelling is correct), is now a Catholic Priest. I put grease on my face for the first time behind the Rectory, where he was studying. My conductor/Brother was a very devout Catholic. Unfortunately, some Catholics think belonging to a Masonic Lodge is strictly prohibited by the Catholic Church. This is simply not the case. While I myself am not Catholic, as a Hispanic I am very familiar with these issues. Hispanics are predominantly Catholic.

When I first became a Mason, and visited my then In-Laws, I was chastised for my involvement with the Craft. Their Pastor, whom they had housed while he attended Seminary, and had been their Pastor for over 40 years, was invited to "talk some sense into me". After dinner, and upon hearing my in-laws concerns, he pulled me aside and gave me a very unexpected Fraternal grip. He then educated them on the Craft, shared with them his own Masonic history, he was actually already a Mason when he lived in their home as a young Seminary student. He had been Master of his Lodge, and had the pleasure of raising several of the other Pastors whom they had very high admiration for, etc. He spoke to one of them, who invited them and I to a Masonic event in their hometown, where they saw many of their neighbors, friends, and actually family members who were also members of the Craft. This Mason whom he had spoken to, was actually on a leave of absence from the church, as he performed his duties as Grand Master Puerto Rico. Needless to say, I never heard any other objections to my involvement. My exes grandfather actually told me he would have liked to join the Craft, if he had known all the men he admired were open about their membership in the Craft. He was very advanced in age, and passed away a few months later.

Bottom line, we will always have those who think Masonry is contrary to their own beliefs. I am a born-again Christian who has been very involved in my Church. I am also very involved in the Craft. I believe the two are not exclusive of one another in any way. Our calling, as Believers and Masons, is to by our examples lead exemplary lives others around us SEE. Once they SEE our actions, they will know our Hearts. Then and only then, they will themselves understand the two are actually the same. Our belief in a Supreme Being is the Mortar that unites us as Brothers! Without this belief, one cannot be a Mason, lest he wear a ring or not.

Bro. Reuben V. Martinez

## Masonry In 715 BC?

Numa Pompilius organized Roman workers into various Collegia; he attached one to each legion of the army so that the Roman arms and arts went hand in hand into the outlying parts of the empire. The stone workers or masons were the most numerous and became very powerful. There were some similarities between these groups and a modern lodge. Each Collegia was required to have at least three members; the head was called the Magister or Master; they used their tools as symbols; and they looked after the widows and orphans of the members.

# The Problem of Fraternity

By Angel Millar (Bro.)

Even before I joined the Craft I had noticed that it had acquired a strange and rather off-putting reputation. Freemasonry was fascinating, but Freemasons were not really interested in it, so I heard. Freemasons thought of it as a social club, was the cliché. After my initiation I was pleasantly surprised to see that most were in fact extremely interested and enthusiastic Masons, and were prepared to share anecdotes of rituals, and hotly debate the Craft during the Lodge dinner. However, after a while it became increasingly apparent that this was completely abandoned once inside the Lodge itself. In my first year there was not a single lecture on Freemasonry given, and not a single discussion of Masonic symbols, rituals, or philosophy took place. Instead we were treated to lectures on tax law, men's health, and the life of a fireman. It is a simultaneous failure of imagination and common sense that banishes Freemasonry from the Lodge, though the situation is hardly the fault of Lodge Masters alone.

With the decline in membership, and the loss of revenue from dues, in recent years Grand Lodges have become especially alarmed. They have often committed vast amounts of capital to homes for the elderly, and these can't simply be abandoned. While they have encouraged Lodges to initiate more and more men, and to make the initiation process easier, they have not instituted policies that – to use the cold language of the modern age – give value for money. They have been reactionary rather than pro-active; and they have largely promoted the Craft in a way that appealed to them when they were young men, or, perhaps, that appealed to their fathers, who introduced them to the Lodge in the first place. Consequently new members often disappear after a short while.

But the situation cannot be entirely blamed on the various Grand Lodges and the elder statesmen that populate them either. Simply put, they cannot legislate initiative. Freemasonry is, and has always been, a voluntary society, and has always required its members volunteering their talents, knowledge and understanding. In the eighteenth century when it was enormously popular Freemasonry was characterized by creative zeal. Men painted their own Masonic aprons, or their wives sowed and embroidered them. They made the tools for the Lodge, painted tracing boards, or drew illustrations directly onto the floor in chalk. Moreover, Freemasons discussed and even argued over Freemasonry. They delivered lectures. They ate, drank, sang, and even put on Masonic plays together. It deserved the name, "the Craft."

There is another important change. If in the eighteenth century the philosophical and so-called "esoteric Freemasons" were particularly active and vocal – writing books, lecturing, creating Rites and Degrees (even if these were frowned upon) – today they are silent, and one might say a rather guarded group. Such Freemasons are, typically, aware of the esoteric tradition generally (the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, alchemy, Cabala, etc.), and, as such, they may be more knowledgeable about related traditions than the average Brother. They have something to contribute to the Lodge, but, instead, it seems they want to hoard their knowledge, as if it is a finite resource which will run dry if shared. Some of them have expressed to me that their Grand Lodge may disapprove or even punish them in some undefined way if they hear of their interests.

No doubt I am an esoteric Mason of sorts. I have given talks on the Golden Rosicrucians in Lodge, and in May my book, 'The Forest of Symbols,' specifically charting the impact of Freemasonry on the Western Esoteric Tradition, will be published. So far I have encountered no hostility from the Grand Lodges, and have even been praised by many of the members of the Grand Line, and asked to do more. I am not trying to inflate my importance, but simply to point out that the fears of esoteric Freemasons are probably not justified. Most Brothers did not join the Craft because of fraternity or charity. To differing degrees most have an interest in philosophy, symbols, mythology, esotericism, etc., and all have a burning interest in the Craft itself.

Grand Lodges might be faulted for not encouraging a lively intellectual tradition within Freemasonry, but those of a century ago were no better than those of today. Indeed, one might cite positive examples of our own time, such as the Grand Lodge of New York's publication of a manual for Masters of Lodges, containing history, lectures, and even a few texts from the eighteenth century, and the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon posting of an extensive list of papers on Freemasonry and esotericism on its site. In Europe, where Freemasonry is flourishing, Entered Apprentices are expected to give lectures on the Craft. It's a good practice. New Brothers get to learn a lot in a short time, and Lodges ensure that they have knowledgeable members who are getting the most out of Lodge, and who are able to give the most back, and mentor younger Brothers,

or simply answer their questions intelligently, when the time comes.

Brothers in English-speaking countries may bewail the promotion of the Craft as a fraternity-cum-charity (certainly I do), especially when it is currently attracting global attention as a Mystery tradition. But unless individual Freemasons as well as Lodges take the initiative, go out on a limb, and give talks on the Craft, and cultivate the kind of enthusiasm for Freemasonry inside the Lodge that one regularly experiences with Brothers outside of the Lodge, then Grand Lodges will be unable to promote it as a Mystery tradition, or a school of philosophy or esotericism, etc. Masters and Officers of a Lodge are responsible for encouraging discussion of Freemasonry in Lodge, but Brothers who are philosophically or esoterically inclined are equally responsible. Lodges need to be the one place a man can go to learn about Freemasonry. They have to be places of 'mutual education,' not entertainment. Only in this way will it remain a rewarding experience for men of our time.

There may be some good news in this regard. The internet – love or hate it – is connecting enthusiastic Masons with one another, and it is becoming increasingly clear that the interest that Freemasonry generates really is in its rituals, symbols, etc., not especially in its charitable works, wonderful though they may be. Brothers are gaining mutual support outside the Lodge, and they are getting quite a bit of information too. However, if it is not to end up comparable to the Lodge dinner, then those who are active online need to be active in Lodge. An article for an online Masonic forum needs to indicate a talk given in Lodge. A comment in a blog needs to suggest a Mason that gives sound advice to younger Brothers. In effect, from Grand Master all the way down to the Entered Apprentice, we are going to have to reinvigorate the Craft ourselves, by bringing it back into the Lodge. We need not worry that every word of a lecture is delivered like a professional speaker, or every talk crafted like the work of a historian or philosopher. We are members of the Craft, not the art. We have to expect the rough with the smooth, but, like online communities, members of Lodges need to share what skills and understanding they have.

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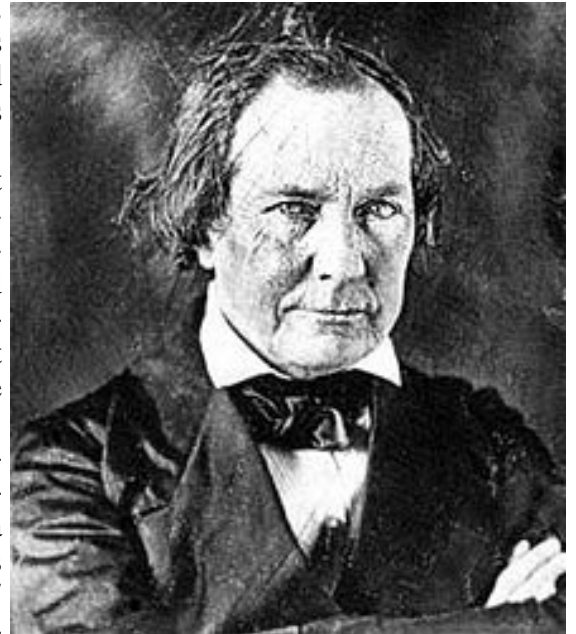
## Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar

Accomplished in horsemanship, fencing, painting, and poetry, Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar came to Texas and became one of its greatest political leaders. His inspired vision of what Texas could become lay the foundation for future greatness during some of its darkest years.

Born in Georgia on August 16, 1798, Lamar was educated at the academies at Milledgeville and Eatonton. He served as secretary to the Governor of Georgia from 1823 to 1826, and was elected state senator in 1829. Defeated in the elections of 1832 and 1834, he followed James Fannin to Texas to collect historical information. He became involved in the independence movement and, deciding to settle in Texas, hurried back to Georgia to settle his affairs.

Back in Texas, he was commissioned a colonel and commanded the cavalry at the Battle of San Jacinto. He was soon appointed Secretary of War and demanded the execution of General Santa Anna as a murderer and war criminal. In September 1836 he was elected Vice-President of the Republic of Texas, and in 1837 founded the Philosophical Society of Texas. In 1838 he was supported for President by the anti-Sam Houston faction. Both of his opponents' committed suicide before the election.

At Lamar's suggestion, the new capital city of Austin was built and occupied in 1839. His proposal set aside public lands to finance public education earned him the title "Father of Education." As a lieutenant colonel during the Mexican War, he fought in the Battle of Monterrey. During the next ten years he traveled extensively and was U.S. Minister to Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Shortly after returning to Texas he died at his plantation at Richmond on December 19, 1859, and was buried in the Masonic Cemetery. He was a member of Harmony Lodge No. 6 at Galveston.





## Whatever Became Of The Masonry We Once Knew?

By W.B. Ken Baril and R. W. Brother Richard E. Backe, PDDGM, Grand Lodge of Connecticut

In June of 1966 and October 1971, we were raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason. They were evenings we shall never forget. The experience will live in our hearts and minds until time is no more. We believe it was one of the proudest moments of our life. Surrounding us that evening, were brothers who really took an interest in us and each one offered their assistance to us while we were learning what needed to be learned?

The warmth, the feeling of belonging, the brotherly love and the genuine concern for us was overwhelming. We will never trade those moments for anything in the world.

The ritual work was done to perfection. All the officers who took part in the degrees were extremely proficient. The pride they had in their work was quite evident and the deep feeling of accomplishment was written all over their faces. They walked straight, squared their corners, and held the staffs at the correct angle. What impressed us the most was the fact that no ritual book, not one single book, (except for the designated prompter) was open during each degree. While the degree was being exemplified, there were no other sounds within the lodge-room. All brothers were concentrating on the candidate while also focusing on the officers performing their speaking parts. It was almost like being in a cathedral. It was a spiritual experience to say the least.

We were also impressed by the fact that when a brother reached the Oriental Chair, he had learned everything in that book from cover to cover. There is a difference between learning the ritual and memorizing it. Only if one travels toward the East is that evident. Even those who sit on the sidelines should recognize this distinction.

After taking each degree, our mentors called to schedule a class of instruction and to see if we would be available to attend any special event that might be taking place. The personal interest shown in our well-being and us was gratifying, for in a world where there are more takers than givers, this was unique. In a society in which man feels so alone, so alienated, it is comforting to be with others who share the same ideals, emotions and experiences. Feelings of warmth, friendship and potential comfort in times of distress are always present, yet they appear most readily in lodge. After becoming a member of my lodge, we found men who treated us with brotherly love, which relieved the stress of the day. In lodge, we met old and new friends who demanded nothing from us, and thus we demanded nothing from them in return.

When attending lodge, the brothers were always well dressed; their shoes were shined, their slacks were pressed and their appearance was always impeccable. It was assumed that proper attire (shirt, tie and jacket) would be worn while attending lodge. Now members attend lodge as if they were going to a company picnic, some in shorts, muscle shirts and t-shirts, others in stained blue jeans. Sneakers, athletic shoes, sandals and all sorts of other footwear have replaced shoes. We suppose it is a lot easier not having to shine your shoes. Socks appear to be optional. Ties are a thing of the past. Open collar shirts and golf shirts have replaced the traditional dress shirt. I truly believe that when Masonry states that, "it is the internal and not the external qualifications of a man that Masonry regards," it does not apply to a dress code. We can readily understand there are circumstances where a brother has just come from his place of employment where jacket and tie are inappropriate and he does not have enough time to return to his home to change his clothes. This should be a one-time, exceptional occurrence. There is no reason why the proper attire could not be left at the lodge or kept in one's car. When we mentioned this to a brother, his answer was, "since when do I have to bring my wardrobe to lodge?"

We realized, at that point, it was not in the best interest of all parties to pursue the subject. So Mote It Be.

Now, forty-four and thirty-nine years later, respectively, we sit in lodge and cannot believe the drastic

change that has taken place. We now have Grand Master's One-Day Classes where a candidate can take all three degrees in one day and then leave with his dues card in hand and a Masonic lapel pin on his jacket. He has taken the degrees in succession with no opportunity to digest the preceding degree. The theory is that the candidate has a mentor to explain the degrees and answer any questions that may arise. This is nice in theory but the reality is that many mentors know less than the candidate.

We have also noticed that many line officers do not have the pride in their work that once existed. Having the ritual book open during a degree is the norm, and on many occasions, officers cannot open or close the lodge without reading their respective parts. We both attended a lodge meeting one evening where the Chaplain, (a Past Master, no less) had to read the prayers. Even while doing so, he had to be prompted by another Past Master because he had difficulty reading the prayer properly. What a shame! When mistakes are made, they are followed by a shrug of the shoulders, a nonchalant facial expression or a simpering laugh. This has the effect of drawing more attention to the error than just continuing with the work. After all, the candidate will not know that a mistake was made unless attention is called to it.

We were also in attendance for a Master Mason Degree when, during the second section, the Senior Warden read his part from a script and made no attempt to conceal this from those brothers present. Compounding the felony, the District Deputy Grand Master for that lodge attended, (not as an official visit,) and did not attempt to stop the degree or reprimand the officer in question after the degree. This is certainly ludicrous and sets a poor example for the officers and all brethren present. Still we have the audacity to ask, "Whatever became of the Masonry we once knew?"

The Craft today does not appear to be as proud of Freemasonry as it ought to be. Masonry is the most wonderful institution in the world. Think of its historic past. Since coming into existence, dynasties have fallen, thrones have tottered, empires have tumbled and crowns have vanished, but our grand order lives on with eyes undimmed, greater, more exciting and more influential than ever. Today, when so many imagine that history began with their own birth certificate and that compassion for their fellow man is unnecessary, belonging to an order with a great historic past and with the tenets of brotherly love, relief and truth is not only fulfilling, gratifying and uplifting but also, to some of us at least, necessary. Masonry has a great mission to fulfill in the present age, and a great contribution to make to the future of humanity. It is the last vestige of civil behavior in a world gone mad.

Another problem that is prevalent today is the language that is used in some lodges, especially in the banquet hall or lobby. Profanity is the norm during conversations. Some brothers are under the impression that bar room language is acceptable. IT IS NOT! Once we heard a Master use the most vulgar language possible when addressing the secretary. This was during open lodge with the Three Great Lights in full display. At first we did not believe what we had heard, and was too shocked (like those around us) to bring our dismay to the Master's attention. What kind of impression are we giving to those in attendance? Is this the reason our older members no longer come to lodge? Is this the reason many new brothers do not return?

Some brothers, seem to forget the fact that when others know they belong to our fraternity and act in a non-Masonic manner, that eyes are upon them, and their language and actions are a direct reflection on the whole fraternity, especially us. These brothers do not think before they act or speak and when they are driving their cars, and someone cuts them off or irritates them in any way, they should have the decency to remove their Masonic ring before they "flip the bird." When your car has a Masonic emblem pasted to the rear window or on the trunk, remember you represent the entire fraternity and not just yourself --- ACT ACCORDINGLY.

Another incident we witnessed was while a candidate was kneeling at our Altar of Obligation, one brother sitting across the room, threw a piece of hard candy across the lodge room, over the Altar, to a brother on the other side of the room. This is totally unacceptable! On several occasions one of us said, "If this was my only example of a Masonic lodge, I would have joined the Knights of Columbus." Some recommendation!

We can no longer be content to be members of the "silent majority." Members are reluctant to express their constructive criticisms in open Lodge. They have no such problem expressing these concerns in the banquet hall after the meeting when it is no longer relevant. Furthermore, in most cases these concerns are not voiced to the offending party. Every time we hear a brother complain about an incident or problem, one of us mentions to him that he should bring it up in open lodge because it is the right of every member to state his concerns. Whether right or wrong he still has that right, and, in fact, IT IS HIS DUTY! As long as he presents them in a respectful and brotherly manner, he CAN and MUST be heard. Most often, the brother states that he is afraid that voicing his criticisms will be regarded as un-Masonic conduct. This is completely erroneous. The charge of un-Masonic conduct should be leveled against the offending brother and not on any brother who may

complain.

Identifying and developing successful candidates for line positions within the lodge, is one of the greatest challenges confronting our fraternity today. Furthermore, given the breadth of interest in the continuing goal of achieving, more pressure is being placed on Masters to identify capable brothers and to accelerate their development to fill these positions with greater responsibilities and leadership.

Masters must stop appointing brothers to line positions just to have warm bodies filling chairs. It should be evident that a brother's qualifications should be top priority when being considered for a line position. If a brother is to be appointed to the line, it must be impressed upon him that he has specific duties and responsibilities. The Master must be certain he understands. The brother must be evaluated periodically as to his proficiency, his goals, his leadership and his management skills. He must be one who works well with others. If, after consultation and training, these attributes are weak or non-existent, he should be diplomatically informed that unless he shows improvement in those areas in which he is deficient, he would not be advanced to the next office. The Senior Deacon's office should be the last chair he can occupy if most of those attributes are not evident. Allowing a brother to continue under these circumstances causes embarrassment not only for the lodge, but also for brother in question. Why waste the lodge's and the brother's time?

Some jurisdictions have required that prospective Masters be certified that they can open and close lodge properly before they are installed as Master. Nice thought, but if the person doing the examination does not do it properly, what's the use. District Deputies, Lecturers, District and Lodge Education Officers and Grand Line Officers should have a clue as to proper Masonic protocol, procedures and ritual before they attempt to examine or chastise any brother. Moreover, just because the person being examined is a Past Master doesn't mean he knows the ritual. He SHOULD but that doesn't mean he does.

The brethren cannot honor the honorable station of Worshipful Master if its possessor does not honor it.

Brethren, we would not want to leave you with the impression that all in present Freemasonry is negative. Ours is an exciting, unique organization, with long traditions, profound philosophical teachings, and a haven for right-thinking men in our present world, so torn by the ills of poverty, war, terrorism, hunger and crime. We must move forward with enthusiasm, our spirit strengthened by the knowledge that we still have much to teach society, and that we have the tools to assist us in bringing to fruition our human potential.

This Masonic Did U Know list is strictly voluntary. If you received this message in error or you wish to be removed, please reply to the author only and you will be removed, no questions asked. If you know of a Brother who would like to be added to our list, reply to author with the Brother's eb mail address and it will be added immediately.

May We Meet Upon The \_!\_ Act By The ! And Part Upon The \_!  
W. Bro. Dwight D. Seals - Camden Lodge #159 - Camden, Ohio

## **The Alamo Observance**

From The Davy Crockett Lodge #1225 AF & AM April 2012 Newsletter

This was sent to the Brothers of District 84 by District Instructor, Brother Larry Fitzpatrick who came to San Antonio and accompanied me to the Alamo Observance and the Grand Masters Conference. I thought it was worth sharing.....

Brethren, I had the opportunity to attend yesterday morning in San Antonio and was pleased to see many of our Brothers from around the state in attendance as well. If you have the opportunity to go next year, I highly recommend it. It is important for us as Masons and as Texans to remember those Brothers who gave the ultimate sacrifice in pursuit of liberty. All of us have read or heard the battle cry "Remember the Alamo", and know how it spurred the early patriots of the Texas Revolution on to ultimate victory over Santa Anna and the Mexican Army at San Jacinto. However, have you ever stopped to think about how different our nation would be if Texas had remained a part of Mexico? At a minimum, the loss of Texas would have greatly hampered the westward expansion of the United States, which in turn would have limited our ability to become a world power. The resources, both natural and human, of Texas, have made countless contributions to the growth and welfare of the United States. As you wake up and begin your day on Tuesday, March 6th, please remember Brothers; James Bonham, Jim Bowie, Davy Crockett, Almaron Dickenson, William Barrett Travis, and the many others who were not identified. Please do not take for granted the sacrifice they made 176 years ago so that we can enjoy the liberties and freedoms we as citizens of the greatest state, and the greatest country in the world, have today. Lastly, think about what we as Masons can do to have a positive impact on the lives of others. Our actions can be an inspiration to others, and as a Fraternity, we can make a positive impact on the world we live in.



# Freemasons in Africa - A Strange Inheritance

From the Southern Times of Southern Africa Part I Of II

A European import, freemasonry is remarkably widespread in both French and English-speaking Africa, as it is in Latin America and the United States. Freemasonry is often to be found close to the centres of power. Simon Bolivar and President Roosevelt were both masons; and in Gabon, President Omar Bongo is their éminence grise. The Southern Times here publishes excerpts of a paper by for Le Monde Diplomatique.

In Congo-Brazzaville, President Denis Sassou Nguesso and his predecessor Pascal Lissouba are both freemasons, although they belong to different chapters of the order.



Lissouba is an initiate of the Grand Orient of France while Sassou Nguesso belongs to a Senegalese lodge affiliated to the French Grand National Lodge. After the 1997 clashes of armed militia in the capital, French and African Freemasons of the Grand Lodge of France, the United Grand Lodge of Côte d'Ivoire and the Grand Orient and United Lodges of Cameroon joined forces in an attempt to restore peace.

This is a revealing instance of the Freemasons' influence in French-speaking Africa.

The Grand Orient established its first lodge at Saint-Louis in Senegal in 1781 and, as a consequence, the names of a number of distinguished Freemasons are to be found in the history of French colonial rule.

First came two proponents of the abolition of slavery: the Abbé Grégoire at the time of the French Revolution, followed by Victor Schoelcher, a junior minister for the navy under the Second Republic, who was instrumental in obtaining the final abolition of slavery in 1848 after its restoration by Napoleon I.

Then, Algeria's Emir Abdel Kader was admitted to the Grand Orient in 1864 as a mark of gratitude for his protection of the Damascus Christians during the 1860 massacres, when he was in exile in Syria.

The great French empire builder, Jules Ferry, was also a Freemason and so was the colonial governor, Félix Eboué, a black from French Guiana, who rallied Chad to the Free French cause in 1940, leading the whole of French Equatorial Africa and Cameroon to support General de Gaulle at a time when the Vichy Government was introducing laws against masons and Jews.

There were a good many Freemasons (or members of the "brotherhood of light" as it is sometimes known) in the French colonial administration.

After the Second World War, most of them campaigned for independence for the French overseas territories in Africa and more and more Africans joined the lodges.

After 1960, the great year for independence, Freemasonry continued to spread, acquiring an African identity and losing its ties with the French chapters. National chapters were established in a number of French-speaking African countries but they retained fairly close links with the French chapters, sometimes even reflecting the divisions between them.

Freemasonry is known for being multifarious, divided even, and perhaps more so in France than elsewhere.

The clearest division is between the Grand Orient and the other lodges.

Unlike the other rites, the Grand Orient does not invoke the "Great Architect of the Universe", that is to say God, in its constitution and its members do not swear on the Bible.

The Grand Lodge of France and the French Grand National Lodge both recognise the "Great Architect", but the latter is the only one to be recognised by the United Lodge of England, the parent chapter of the order worldwide.

French Freemasons continue to take an interest in Africa.

Under the Fifth Republic, at least two Freemasons were in charge of the Ministry for Co-operation, the Socialist Christian Nucci of the Grand Orient and the Gaullist Jacques Godfrain of the Grand Lodge of France.

Guy Penne, advisor on African affairs to François Mitterrand during his term as President between 1981-86, is a member of the Grand Orient.

And Ambassador Fernand Wibaux, President Chirac's personal advisor on African affairs □ along with the late Jacques Foccart □ is an initiate of that chapter.

Generally speaking, the national chapters in French-speaking African countries are the fruit of a merger between the lodges of the Grand Orient and the Grand Lodge of France, established before independence.

This is true of the Grand Equatorial Rite of Gabon, the Grand Orient and United Lodges of Cameroon, and the Grand Orient and Associated Lodges of Congo and Benin.

In Gabon, however, in addition to the Grand Equatorial Rite of Gabon, there is also a Grand National Lodge affiliated to the French Grand National Lodge.

In Côte d'Ivoire, there are a number of different chapters, including the Grand United Lodge and the Grand Eburnie, which are close to the Grand Lodge of France and the Grand Orient respectively.

In Togo, there are lodges affiliated to the Grand Orient and the Grand Lodge of France.

In Senegal, the lodges of the Grand Orient and the Grand Lodge of France have also kept their affiliations, but the French Grand National Lodge is also represented.

The Freemasons of Togo and Senegal have not established a national chapter, apparently because they are afraid it might be infiltrated by the regime and used for its own ends, as has sometimes happened in other countries.

However that may be, most of the chapters that are linked to a greater or lesser degree with the Grand Orient and the Grand Lodge of France participate in the REHFRAMs (African and Madagascan humanist and fraternal meetings), which have been held in an African capital every year since 1992, and to which those French lodges are invited.

There were 400 delegates at the meeting at Libreville in Gabon in 1996 and 600 at Cotonou in Benin in 1997, including representatives from several countries in Europe.

The African lodges affiliated to the French Grand National Lodge, which is on its own in this respect, do not take part in these meetings. The Lodge has increased its membership in black Africa in recent years and its progress, as the only French chapter recognised by the Grand United Lodge of England and by freemasonry in America, is a source of annoyance to the other French lodges where it is regarded by some members as a covert means of extending Anglo-American influence in Africa, an imputation that is hotly denied.

None of the lodges in former British colonies are invited to the REHFRAMs (they too are divided into chapters linked with the Grand United Lodges of England, Scotland and Ireland respectively).

This is the case, for example, in Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Uganda.

On the other hand, the Grand Orient of Zaire (now DRC), an emanation of the Grand Orient of Belgium, does take part in these humanist and fraternal meetings between lodges in French-speaking Africa.

#### Persecution

Freemasons have always attracted enemies, often of a somewhat nefarious kind, and this is perhaps their best claim to the high moral ground.

The most violent and inveterate of these was Hitler, locked in combat against an imaginary Judeo-Masonic plot. Freemasonry was also outlawed under the fascist dictatorships of Mussolini, Franco, Salazar and Pinochet.

At the other extreme, the communists, too, were hostile, at least in the early years.

In 1922, the French Communist Party ratified the decision of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International to exclude Freemasons, and French communists were effectively obliged to choose between freemasonry and membership of the party.

More recently, Islamists, too, have formally declared their opposition to the order.

The Vatican's position has changed substantially over the years.

The Catholic Church first condemned Freemasonry in 1738.

This was essentially the work of Pope Clement XII, whose hostility to the "brotherhood of light" came to a head at the time of the movement to separate Church and State.

Despite a certain stand-off in the battle between clergy and laity, freemasons are no longer excommunicated, the lodges are still suspect in the eyes of hardline Catholics.

In 1983, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith again proclaimed that practicing Freemasons were "in a state of grievous sin".

It was against this background that Freemasonry was banned and Masons persecuted in many African countries.

The worst persecution of African Freemasons occurred in 1963 in Côte d'Ivoire, when President Félix Houphouët-Boigny imagined himself to be the target of a series of plots.

This was reason enough for getting rid of the leaders of the left wing of the Democratic Party, the only party in Cote d'Ivoire at the time, who were suspected of communist sympathies.

Many of those accused were Freemasons, most of them members of the Grand Orient, notably Jean-Baptiste Mockey, Jean Konan Banny, Amadou Thiam and Ernest Boka.

They were humiliated, beaten and tortured, sometimes in the presence of the President himself, at Yamoussoukro.

Ernest Boka died in detention.

## More About Born In Blood

From Summer 91 edition of the Missouri "The Freemason" More about Born In Blood.

By John C. Allen, Past Master Pleasant Grove Lodge #42 Otterville, MO.

From the Davy Crockett Lodge #1225 A.F. & A.M. Newsletter

In the summer issue of this year's Freemason appeared a review by Zel Eaton of the book *Born in Blood*, by John J. Robinson. I am prompted to write this article by a conclusion drawn by Mr. Robinson about the origin of Freemasonry. In his review Mr. Eaton alludes to this aspect of the book only vaguely.

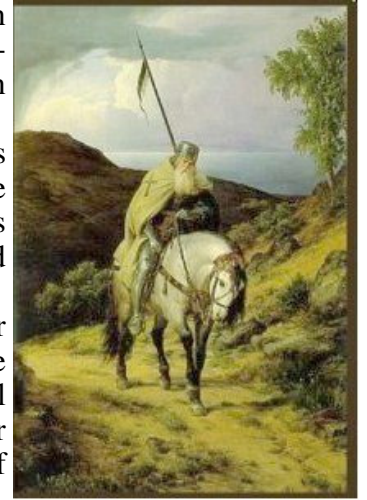
I am referring to Mr. Robinson's theory that modern Masonry actually had its origin from the Knights Templar, outlawed in 1312 by Pope Clement V and the French King Philip the Fair. It was Mr. Robinson's conclusion that the Templars not apprehended went under-ground to escape the heavy hand of the Papacy and then resurfaced centuries later as lodges of Freemasons.

Most traditional Masonic researchers, of course, have contended that the Order and its ritual somehow developed from the early crude organizations of the stone mason labor guilds. I, for one, have never been able to accept that view. Several years ago I arrived independently at the same conclusion as Mr. Robinson. Our Masonic ritual, steeped as it is in Kabalistic occultism and mystery ceremonials of the Middle East, could never possibly have been developed out of the crude beginnings of the stone mason guilds. In that era even the skilled artisans and their speculative associates were far too unlettered and unlearned to have been capable of coming up with anything as elaborate and esoteric as even the earliest forms of Masonic ritual. Knowledge of the Hebrew Kabal and the Middle Eastern mystery dramas had been ruthlessly suppressed by the Papacy during the Dark Ages and could have returned to Western Europe only by way of the Crusades. For bringing it back, the Templars became the logical bridge. During their stay in the Holy Land, the Templars had come into close association with a Moslem sect called the Sufi, who previously had adopted many of the beliefs and ritualistic forms of the Gnostic, or primitive Christians. From the Sufi the Templars borrowed many of their own esoteric beliefs and ceremonials. A number of these have made their way into modern Freemasonry. One of these, for example, is the Junior Warden's call of the Craft from labor to refreshment and from refreshment to labor, referring in a symbolic sense to death and re-birth. The Gnostics, the Sufi, and the Templars all believed in reincarnation.

Is this view about Masonic origins borne out by any prestigious Masonic scholars? Yes, it certainly is—by one of our most celebrated scholars, Brother Albert Pike. My readings in Brother Pike's *Morals and Dogma* have convinced me that Mr. Robinson, in his recent book, was on the right track. Jacques B. de Molai, the last Grand Master of the Knights Templar, according to Brother Pike, masterminded the plans for Freemasonry while he was awaiting execution. Before coming in unequivocally to that assertion, Brother Pike cited conclusive evidence that long before the Templars went underground, they considered themselves builders, or masons, and were even called by the English, through careless pronunciation, Freemasons. This is clearly shown by the following extract with reference to de Molai: — The Templars, or Poor Fellow Soldiery of the Holy House of the Temple" intended to be rebuilt, took as their models, in the Bible, the Warrior Masons of Zorabel, who worked, holding the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other. Therefore, it was that the Sword and the Trowel became the insignia of the Templars, who subsequently concealed themselves under the name of Brethren Masons. The name Freres Macons in the French was corrupted in English into Free Masons. The trowel of the Templars is quadruple, and the triangular plates of it are arranged in the form of a cross, making the Kabalistic pentacle known by the name of the Cross of the East.¶

On page 820 of *Morals and Dogma*, Brother Pike leaves no doubt that he considered Freemasonry the brain child of Jacques de Molai, as this extract will indicate. — But before his execution, the Chief of the doomed Order organized and instituted what afterward came to be called the Occult, Hermetic, or Scottish Masonry. In the gloom of his prison, the Grand Master created four Metropolitan Lodges, at Naples for the East, at Edinburgh for the West, at Stockholm for the North, and at Paris for the South.

The initials of his name, J.B.M., found in the same order in the first three degrees are but one of the many internal and cogent proofs that such was the origin of modern Free Masonry.¶ Brother Pike's reference to the initials, of course, is to the words Jachin, Boaz, and the Master's Word in the third degree. Could this be a





mere coincidence?

Brother Pike then went on to say that —The legend of Osiris was revised and adopted as the central theme of the third degree ritual, to symbolize the destruction of the Order, and the resurrection of Khurum, slain in the body of the Temple of Khurum Abai, the Master, as the martyr of fidelity to obligation, of Truth and Conscience.¶

According to the legend of Osiris here referred to, as the fragments of the god's body lay on the ground, a lion reached down with his paw, scooped up the pieces, and lifted them back again to erect and living form. In the new Order succeeding the Templars this served as a symbolism. The Papacy and the King had slain the Grand Master but failed to accomplish their purpose. The grip of the lion's paw had triumphed again over extinction' The prostrate corpse of the Knights Templar had been raised from death. Once again it lived in the form of a new Order—Freemasonry. The old Order, vitally obsessed with building, lived on as builders still. The trowel remained still as its principal working tool. The Templars continued their role as —Brethren Masons.

Why are Freemasons so obsessed with the Holy Saints John? — Oh, the labor guilds were expected to have patron saints, so the stone masons adopted the Holy Saints John.¶ We have all read that lame explanation. If a labor guild wanted patron saints, why would it choose two saints with contrasting religious beliefs? For the Knights Templar to do so was perfectly logical, as Brother Pike took note in *Morals and Dogma*. From their very inception, the Templars functioned as a dualistic Order. Their avowed and pretended purpose was to protect Christians making pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Their actual and secret objective was to rebuild the Temple of King Solomon to recapture its original splendor and restore Jerusalem to the days of its pristine glory. In their outward aspects they posed as loyal supporters of orthodox Catholicism. This facade they craftily cultivated to gain the approval and sanction of the papacy. For this reason they adopted John the Baptist as one of their patron saints. St. John the Evangelist, however, was the one who had been regarded as the spokesman of the Gnostic religious views to which they adhered and wished to make supreme in their restored city of Jerusalem, designed by them secretly to displace Rome as the center of Christendom. St. John the Evangelist, therefore, became their most cherished patron saint. If Freemasonry did indeed stem from the Templars, it is only natural that the Masons would also adopt both of these patron saints.

Since the Templars chief objective was the rebuilding of King Solomon's Temple, one would reasonably expect them to continue in that preoccupation when they established a new Order to succeed the Templars. Need there be any mystery, then, as to why Freemasonry is similarly obsessed with the same Temple? The Templar Connection would also nicely explain the mystery of the — bloody¶ Masonic obligations. If the Templars had any part in drafting these obligations, we would expect them to be fraught with dire consequences. We say today that the obligations are intended to be only symbolical. To a Templar member of the early guilds or lodges they would not have been considered symbolical. A Templar was a marked man with a price on his head. The long arm of the Papacy could reach him even in non-Catholic Scotland. Wherever he fled, there was always the threat of hired assassins. He could take no chances of having his identity or activities revealed. Many of the other secrets of Freemasonry can be similarly accounted for as safe-guarding the security of the Templars who probably dominated the earliest lodges.

In one respect perhaps the traditionalists were right. Perhaps Freemasonry did develop in and come down to us from the stone mason guilds of Scotland. Its concept and ritual, however, could not have been originated by the stone masons per se. Perhaps the Templars who escaped to Scotland decided to infiltrate the stone mason guilds and there introduce the system of deMolai's new Order. They had very good reasons to do so. The Templars had also been builders, or masons. In their heyday the Templars had exerted complete control over not only the stone masons but also over all other skilled craftsmen throughout Western Europe. That being true, the Templars would obviously have experienced little difficulty trying to infiltrate the guilds.

As a final argument for the Templar Connection, we should not forget the religious element. Freemasonry is regarded as a semi-religious Order. If the Templars did really found Masonry, it would be surprising if they hadn't placed a very strong emphasis on religion, because the Knights Templar was instituted primarily as a religious Order.



*Brother Albert Pike*

# The Rise And Fall Of The Illuminati

## Professor Tells Rise, Fall Of Illuminati During Lecture

By Andrew Crivilare - Staff Reporter The Daily Eastern News

Signs of the Illuminati are supposedly everywhere. Jay Z plasters his album covers with their symbols. Dan Brown writes about how they are in conflict with the Catholic Church. But according to an Eastern professor, the Illuminati have not existed in more than two centuries and have no plans on returning.

Gustavo Albear, an assistant professor of secondary education and foundations, was the speaker at the "The History of the Illuminati" lecture, sponsored by University Board, Thursday in the Seventh Street Underground.

Albear said the Illuminati were indeed once an organization with motives toward removing religious influence in European government, but collapsed under political pressure prior to the French Revolution.

"You're not going to be seeing one walking around anymore, they're gone," Albear said. "They're off the face of the earth."

Albear said that the first people to take the title of Illuminati were those baptized into Christianity, thus becoming "illuminated" with the knowledge of God.

A group during the 18th century adopted the name Illuminati. They schemed to integrate themselves amongst the power brokers of Europe by aligning themselves with the charitable values of Freemasonry without informing people of their treasonous plot or the dangers involved, Albear said.

"Basically they're B.S.ing people into believing that what they're doing is the righteous and good thing to do and that no one is going to get in trouble," he said.

Today, the Illuminati are associated with Satanism and Devil worship, in part due to the influence of pop media such as Dan Brown's stories, Albear said.

"I want you to understand the Illuminati are not Satanists," he said. "That's stuff Mr. Brown shoves in for giggles."

Albear said the Freemasons ties to the Illuminati more than 200 years ago continues to color public opinion on who the Masons are and their activities.

"There are secret societies and there are societies with secrets," he said. "By definition, a secret society is not known to the public except to its membership."

Angie Bradley, the lectures coordinator for University Board, said she was pleased with the large turn out for the lecture.

"We had a lot of people show up," Bradley said. "We typically do not see this large of a crowd for the lectures."

Bradley said the audience in particular seemed to enjoy the professor's address.

"I thought the audience enjoyed it," she said. "They seemed really engaged."

Robert Clark, a freshman kinesiology and sports studies major, said Albear's lecture helped him understand who the Illuminati really were.

"I thought they were kind of mysterious or mythical almost," Clark said. "It was really good to hear what it actually was."

Clark added that Albear was particularly engaging as a speaker and managed to make the topic engaging through his tone.

"He had a lot of facts to back his opinions up," Clark said. "He really was defiant, it made you understand what he was trying to say."



*Kimberly Foster | The Daily Eastern News  
Gustavo Albear, assistant professor of secondary education and foundations, explains the origins of the symbol of the Illuminati, a secret society of freemasons that has had its purpose distorted by media and fiction such as Dan Brown's popular novel The DaVinci Code."*

## Medals And Ceremonial Jewels Stolen From Masonic Lodge

The items were taken from the Roman Eagle Lodge in Edinburgh sometime between February 28 and March 1.

Medals and jewels worth £5000 have been stolen from a Masonic lodge in Edinburgh.

Three medals, a ceremonial chain and jewels were taken from the Roman Eagle Lodge in Johnston Terrace sometime between February 28 and March 1.

Lothian and Borders Police are trying to track down the items and are keen to speak to a man who was seen leaving the building around 11.40am last Thursday.

He is described as white, in his late teens or early 20s, 5ft 7ins tall, chubby, with a clean shaven face and short dark hair. He was wearing a thin black jacket with a white logo on the left hand side and dark bottoms.

A police spokesman said: "The items that were stolen include three medals on crimson ribbons, featuring two or three gold bars above the main face. In addition a ceremonial gold chain was also stolen, along with jewels of an elaborate design, with varying inscriptions on the back."

"The total value of the stolen items is estimated at approximately £5000, and we are appealing for anyone with any information that can help us reunite the items with their rightful owners to come forward."

"Anyone who was in the area of Johnston Terrace around midday last Thursday, who saw anyone acting suspiciously there, should contact police. Anyone else who has been offered the items for sale, or who has any other information that can assist our inquiries, should also get in touch."

Anyone with any information should contact Lothian and Borders Police on 0131 311 3131, or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



*Medal: This item was one of a few taken from the lodge.*

## I Have Been a Mason for 33 Years

The truth is, I found God as my salvation in 1961. As a lot of us do, I took my eyes off God for a while. When I found my way into Free Masons, I regained my sight. In short, I was brought to Light. By being brought to light, it wasn't about just me anymore, but everything around me; the chance to give back just a little of what I had received; to work with the brotherhood of men who, for the most part, were better men from the start.

When I was placed at the Holy Altar and know just who I was talking to, it was the best thing that has ever happened in my life.

The education that I received from that point to this is unreal. Just as the Holy Bible, there is no end to being a Mason. No, the Lodge did not take the place of my Church, but it sure helped me to understand and learn more from my church.

I have never wanted to be the brightest star. I like to be in the background and to be the support of new members and to fire up our Lodge when it comes time.

I love to give to those that are in need, and to teach Charity to my Brothers. As the Chaplain of my Lodge, I love to use the Holy Bible... the most important tool of Masons. I have made this my job as a Mason.

Masonry has:

1. Helped me to be a better man.
2. Put my feet on the right path.
3. Given me a sense of direction.

I may leave this world broke, but, I'll leave being a Mason and will be my Brother's keeper until then. Last word. "Be faithful over a few things."



## Opening Up In Search Of A Bright Future

STANDING in front of the imposing wooden doors, beneath the rather grand classical portico of Bristol's Masonic Hall in Park Street, I made a decision. Whatever mysteries were about to be revealed to me; whatever secrets I was about to uncover, I should first of all set aside all prejudices.

It would be far too easy to take this opportunity of getting a glimpse into the famously secretive world of freemasonry and turn it into a simple hatchet job – a chance to just poke fun at what is generally seen as the archetypal old boys' club – all rolled-up trouser legs, preposterous ceremonial aprons and a slightly absurd preoccupation with Old Testament mythology and symbolism.

But it seems like times are changing for the city's 1,500 masons, as it is for the 250,000 masons nationally. With the 300th anniversary of English freemasonry just five years away, the organisation's top men have decided it is time to drop the veil of secrecy that has left the fellowship enshrouded in shadowy half-truths – giving the enduring impression that the whole society is frankly sinister.

Today the masons publish *The Future of Freemasonry* the first independently commissioned report into the workings of the organisation in its history, compiled by the Social Issues Research Centre.

It aims to highlight the damage the society's secretive tendencies have caused – both in terms of making masons figures of ridicule, and in obscuring the fact that the organisation remains the second biggest charitable donor in the country, second only to the National Lottery.

But as I press the door bell, there is no getting away from the sense that I'm about to step inside a rarely explored world.

In fact, the masons open the doors to their lavish hall at least once a year – often on Doors Open Day. But revealing the architecture to the wider public is not quite the same as unveiling the organisation's secrets.

But any underlying sense of nervousness about the group is quickly put to rest a moment later when the door opens and I am greeted by an affable janitor, wearing the distinctive striped masonic tie, who leads me through a sumptuous lobby and up a grand staircase.

I am taken along a corridor. The doors on the right lead to a series of lodge rooms – I'm resisting the temptation to talk about an 'inner sanctum', but these chambers are the hub of masonic life.

It is in these rooms that the city's 36 masonic lodges hold their meetings. It is here where all those spooky initiation ceremonies take place.

They are lavish, parliamentary-looking chambers, complete with decorative pillars to represent Solomon's Temple. Along the left-hand side of the corridor, there are a series of doors labelled "candidates rooms". These are much smaller rooms – just large enough for a small desk and two chairs. It is here, where fledgling masons spend time with their mentor learning the ways of the society.

Each door reveals a different secret to the developing initiate. Again, all the doors are shut as I pass by. All that is, bar one. Inside I catch a glimpse of a small desk and two chairs. The only thing on the desk is a length of rope.

If anything is likely to put the jitters into a visiting non-mason, it's the curiously sinister sight of a single length of rope on a desk.

I later learn that the rope – known as a cable tow, from the German word for rope, kabeltauw – is in fact a symbol of the "first degree" of masonry, representing the candidates' bond to his guide, and possibly representing a sort of umbilical cord.

It is no accident that the door is left open. This is the first discovery made by a mason along his peculiar journey of initiation. At the end of the corridor there is a final door – the office of the Provincial Grand Master, Alan Vaughan – the chief mason for Bristol.

But today the masons have an even bigger cheese to impress, with the visit of the Grand Secretary of the United Grand Lodge of England Nigel Brown. Short of the Duke of Kent, the society's patron, Nigel is the country's top mason. One can only imagine how ornate his apron would be.

Thankfully Nigel's apron is able to remain in the confines of my imagination. As I step through the door into the ornate circular room, there isn't an apron in sight.

I am simply greeted by three friendly middle-aged men in suits.

Alan is entertaining his superior with a plate of delicately quartered sandwiches and a steaming pot of tea, at an antique table surrounded by twee floral armchairs.

Nigel is a larger-than-life presence in the room. He has all the smiles and sheen of a politician, married with the untroubled confidence of a military man – the son of a district commissioner in Rhodesia, he graduated from

Sandhurst with a commission in the Grenadier Guards, reaching the rank of captain before his retirement, and embarking on a career as a businessman. He joined the masons in 1985, aged 39, and is now effectively CEO of the organisation. They are accompanied by Graham Russell, an elderly mason – a retired freelance journalist and now the group's "information officer". He has been a Bristol mason since before the Second World War.

Alan, a Kingsweston accountant by day, seems the least comfortable about discussing the finer points of masonry, as we sip our tea. Even the question of 'why do people join the masons?' is greeted by a defensive, 'well, you'll have to read the report'.

It can't be easy for a long standing member of such a reserved organisation to find himself discussing it openly with a journalist, but after a few more triangular sandwiches he mellows into the situation.

"Listen, this is first and foremost just a social experience for people," he says. "There's nothing weird."

In fact, Alan says, they go to great lengths to "keep the weirdos out".

"The internet creates the conspiracy theorists, who read far more into freemasonry," he says. "But conversely we then get the weirdos who want to join because they think it's some sort of strange secret society. We weed them out quickly in the interview process."

Nigel is rather more keen to explain the things that freemasonry isn't about – to debunk what he sees as the myths.

"It's certainly not about networking or general advancement through mutually supportive businessmen," he says. "That's what people always think, but it's truly not the case."

Graham chips in: "More often than not members don't keep track of what their fellow masons even do for a living, they're just friends in this wonderfully uplifting fellowship. It's a social club essentially."

Nigel nods thoughtfully, takes a sip of tea, and adds: "We have members from all walks of life, from all social backgrounds, all religious backgrounds, men and women."

So freemasonry isn't confined to a particular religion – it's not entangled with the Templar Knights?

"No not at all," Nigel says, horrified at the suggestion. "We're a secular organisation, open to all denominations, all religions."

'What about atheists?' I ask, intrigued by the notion that a society so entwined with biblical imagery considers itself as being secular.

"Well no actually," Nigel admits. "Interestingly enough, not atheists. You have to believe in God – it can be any god you want, we don't mind if you're Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu – whatever, as long as you believe in a supreme being."

"We think a belief in a higher being is integral to having true concern for your fellow humans, and that is after all what is central to the masons' ethos – charitable fundraising."

'And you allow women into your meetings?' I try to clarify.

"Yes," Nigel says. "Well no. Not in the same meetings. But we have ladies' lodges."

'And what about all these rituals?' I ask. 'Are they really necessary? Can't you just collect money for charities and have a social club for members, along the lines of the Rotarians?'

Nigel smiles and shakes his head.

"No," he beams. "The rituals – what I like to call our one-act plays, are nothing sinister. They are simply a symbolic depiction of the progress a mason makes through the order. They're great fun – our members love them – and above all they give people confidence and a sense of initiation into a greater fellowship. That's important I think."

So why all the secrecy?

"Well we're not a secret society as people tend to think," Nigel tells me. "We're also not a 'society with secrets', which was the all-too pithy description masons used for far too long. We don't have any secrets. We don't reveal everything about procedures, simply because it's nice to maintain some sense of mystery."

"The secrecy crept in during the Second World War. When Hitler invaded a country, one of the first things he did was to round up all masons and send them to the gas chambers. There were 200,000 masons executed across Europe."

"It was partly that Hitler personally didn't like the idea of masons, and partly a control mechanism. He thought the elite in society tended to be masons, so get rid of the masons and you get rid of the leaders."

"We were terrified of the day arriving when this country was invaded by the Nazis, and it would happen here. So masons began to be a little bit more covert about things. It was a self defence."

And what of the future?

"We need to demonstrate more transparency," Nigel says. "If we do that, and regain our position of respect and trust in society, the future's bright for masons."

# The Future Of The World's Oldest Fraternity

From The Lithgow Mercury

LODGE Central Tablelands, the newest Lodge of Freemasons in the Lithgow and Bathurst area, is celebrating three years in the community.

In celebration of their success the lodge will open its doors, exposing the inner workings.

Master of the lodge Russell Cochrane, the third 'president' of the club, is proud of Lodge Central Tablelands in its willingness to be open.

When asked what is Freemasonry Russel candidly explains: "Freemasonry is an organization where men meet in an amicable and friendly way.

"We come together to look at how we can improve ourselves, help others and enjoy the fellowship of like-minded people," he said.

Lodge meetings are formal and include a business session.

These sessions are followed by instruction in the meanings and traditions of Freemasonry.

This is where Freemasonry stands out from Rotary and Lions — Masonry is not a service club.

Masons have a belief in a higher being and Freemasonry is open to persons from all walks of life who share a similar belief.

"We are not a religion and Freemasonry is not in conflict with religious, civic or moral responsibilities," Mr. Cochrane said.

The most common symbols of Freemasonry, the square and a pair of compasses, are a constant reminder to Masons of how they should regulate their conduct.

"The square is a reminder to 'act on the square' in all our dealings with others ... that is always do that which is fair and equitable to everyone.

The compasses remind Masons to keep their passions and prejudices within due bounds and not to go to excess in any aspect of daily living," Mr. Cochrane said.

"We encourage men, and especially family men, to join and enjoy Freemasonry.

"Family and friends participate in our regular social activities: these are a major focus of Lodge Central Tablelands."

Mr. Cochrane said Freemasonry is a diverse organization offering different things to different people.

"Charitable works are another major focus and can be seen in our establishment of aged cared facilities and helping others through our main charity, Masonicare.

"The old days of it being a secret society are over. We are open and happy to talk about Freemasonry."

Wives and partners attend the bi-monthly dinner at differing restaurants and women are invited to come to the informal Information night tomorrow.

Lodge Central Tablelands will be holding an informal information night in Lithgow tomorrow at the Lithgow Masonic Hall, 208 Mort Street from 7pm.

Interested persons seeking further information should come along to find out about Freemasonry.

For further information contact Russell Cochrane on 6351 4768 or the Lodge secretary on 6352 5223.



*Russell Cochrane, Evan Toyer Don Mac Murray, Elaine Toyer and Alec Bedwell enjoy a light hearted moment at a lodge function. lm032012lodge*



## Going To The Dogs

"If there are no dogs in Heaven, then when I die I want to go where they went."

..... Will Rogers

"We give dogs time we can spare, space we can spare and love we can spare. And in return, dogs give us their all. It's the best deal man has ever made"

..... M. Facklam

Dogs love their friends and bite their enemies, quite unlike people, who are incapable of pure love and always have to mix love and hate."

..... Sigmund Freud



## Funny Handshakes And Bizarre Initiation Ceremonies

*Myths and the Freemasons David Henry Grand Secretary of the Freemasons UK, Nigel Brown.*

Nigel Brown doesn't seem like a man at the head of a sinister organization that's secretly controlling the world. With his impeccable manners, and perfectly normal handshake, he's somewhat of a disappointment.

Nigel is the General Secretary of the Freemasons. "It's sort of like being the chief executive officer," he explains with a smile. His headmaster appearance - smart suit, shiny shoes, thinning hair - and benevolent bank manager persona is not matching expectations.

Perhaps this is all a cunning ruse. For surely Nigel can't really represent the masons, that secretive sect we know so little about but who hold such a vivid place in the popular imagination. Shouldn't he have half a trouser leg rolled up and be jigging around in an apron?

"There are some extraordinary myths about masons and it's really important to get rid of them. I'm very keen we are seen as a transparent, open organization," he says.

So Nigel has commissioned an independent report into the future of freemasonry by an outside body. When it's published later this week, it's hoped it will highlight the realities of masonry. It's part of a campaign to cast light on the brotherhood as it approaches its tercentenary in 2017.

"When we celebrate our 300th anniversary, we want to be able to demonstrate we are not the organisation some people believe us to be."

Ahead of the report's publication, he's touring the country to show the masons have stepped out of the shadows. The aim is to correct the public's prejudices. He's got a big job on his hands.

To some people, let's politely call them conspiracy theorists, the masons is a sinister secret society hell bent on world domination, responsible for every war, assassination and political coup since the Enlightenment. Others view masons with a more mundane suspicion, seeing them as a group of old men who dress up in funny costumes in return for business favors. Nigel insists the truth is very different. Well how did the myths begin in the first place?

"I point the finger at us because we haven't done enough to knock these myths on the head and now the myths have become reality," says Nigel. "Before the Second World War we were actually right up there - respected in the community. We were very upfront and overt.

"But then Hitler had a downer on masons. He sent up to 200,000 to the gas chambers. After the war, masons became very inward-looking. It became very private and people wondered what was going on. Nobody corrected the myths that grew up."

Right then, Nigel. Do the masons rule the world? He laughs: "I would love to say we do control the world but sadly we don't at all. We don't have any political influence and nor would we wish to have any. We're not a political organization at all."

What about business backhanders? "Members are not allowed to do business networking. They can go elsewhere for that but at our meetings we don't network.

"We only support people in their lawful undertakings. But that's to do with friendship rather than business ac-



*Funny handshakes, backhanders for businessmen and bizarre initiation ceremonies. What's the truth about the Freemasons? The brotherhood is stepping out of the shadows to tell us, as David Henry discovers.*

tivities. If somebody is sick or about to lose their house we do what we can to help. It's about supporting each other as friends."

OK. What about women? Why can't they join? "There are women masons," says Nigel. "Another myth busted. In fact, anyone can join the masons. I'm proud that we have people from every age, religion and social background. The masons mirror society – and like society we are very diverse."

And the handshakes? "There is no masonic handshake. In all the years I've been a mason I haven't been given a funny handshake."

Well that's saying something because Nigel's been part of the fraternity since he was 39. Now, aged 64, he's reached the top of the club. As General Secretary he's one of the organization's few full time employees. Previously he ran his own consultancy business and before that served in the Grenadier Guards, having trained at Sandhurst.

If the rumors are true, masons have all kinds of initiation rites, mystical ceremonies and mysterious codes. One practice is said to involve hanging a noose around new members' necks.

Steadfast in his politeness, he calmly claims that's not a fair reflection of the joining ceremony. "We see it like an umbilical cord."

Masons perform a series of "one act plays", like the initiation ceremony, he says. "There's an element of theatricality, which can seem strange out of context."

Strange indeed, but these rituals aren't putting people off. There are currently around 250,000 masons in England. In East Lancashire, the area covering Greater Manchester, there are 6,000 members.

Last year the organization raised £30m for charity. Among the good causes that benefited from their generosity was the Red Cross and the Royal College of Surgeons. ;

"We have a website. It's all there online. We're not trying to hide anything from anyone," he says.

So if there are no backhanders, no political plot, what's the point?

"There's a wonderful feeling of belonging.

"In the internet age, life can be quite lonely. People are looking for a social structure. That's what the masons provide."

It almost makes you wish the myths were true.

(Note) Read more at: [http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1487366\\_funny-handshakes-and-bizarre-initiation-ceremonies-myths-and-the-freemasons](http://menmedia.co.uk/manchestereveningnews/news/s/1487366_funny-handshakes-and-bizarre-initiation-ceremonies-myths-and-the-freemasons)

## **These Things Are Daft And Dangerous!**

From the LODGE TAWHIRI 166 Newsletter

Conspiracy theorists abound. They are people who promote wild theories in the face of contradictory or non-existent evidence. The wild claims of such people usually serves to confuse the gullible.

In medieval Europe, word was spread by conspiracy theorists that Jews poisoned wells, had killed Jesus, and drank the blood of Christians.

So as a direct result, many thousands of Jews were slaughtered.

Then in 1678 a Londoner named Titus Oates spread news of an alleged conspiracy of dagger-wielding Roman Catholics, whom he accused of murders and treason. In the panic that followed, more than 1200 innocent Catholics in London alone were arrested, and 24 were executed.

Thousands of innocent women and girls were also murdered when accused of witchcraft and of being in league with the devil.

Conspiracy theorists tend to be relentless. To exaggerate. To leap to conclusions. To be unable to distinguish real evidence from false.

They will go on and on, no matter how little proof they have. When much of what they say is discredited, they remain undeterred.

Once a conspiracy theory is started, it is often very hard to stop.

Some conspiracy theories are silly. Like saying the moon landings never took place. Like insisting Elvis Presley did not die, and is living somewhere today. Like believing that Paul McCartney died in a crash in 1966 and was replaced by a lookalike.

Some conspiracy theories are mischievous. Like saying the Freemasons are plotting to rule the world, despite the fact that many members of the British royal family, and many Presidents of the USA, have been among its members.

And some conspiracy theorists are cruel. Like saying New Zealand Prime Minister Norman Kirk, and also Princess Diana, were murdered. We need to remember: spreading rumors, hatred, or unfounded suspicions about people, ideologies, or races, is not just daft. It is dangerous.

## A Piece Of History

By Jill Keppeler [The Tonawanda News](#)

Nine years after the Knights Templar were fictionalized as an order of secret-keepers in Dan Brown's "The Da Vinci Code" — and more than 700 years after the downfall of the historic Templars — an event Saturday will bring a little bit of medieval history into North Tonawanda.

A copy of "Processus Contra Templarios," a volume collecting reproductions of manuscripts documenting the heresy trials of the Templars, will be on display Saturday at Sutherland Lodge No. 826 in North Tonawanda. This copy of the rare publication — only 799 numbered copies were produced — is owned by the Chancellor Robert R. Livingston Masonic Library of Grand Lodge, whose director, Thomas Savini, will also give a lecture on the Templars at the exhibition.

Kevin King, in charge of education for the local Masons, said the "Processus" has made stops in Western New York during previous tours, but never in the Tonawandas.

"It's a copy of actual documents from the archives in the Vatican," he said. "They're made to be as authentic as possible."

"It should be very interesting," he said. "I think there's going to be some eye-opening history. People might not realize some of the things that went on."

The Knights Templar, a medieval Christian military order known for protecting pilgrims to Jerusalem, attained a great deal of power over the years before order members' arrest in 1307 by the French Inquisition on charges of heresy. The "Processus" was published by the Vatican Secret Archives in collaboration with Italy's Scrinium cultural foundation in 2007, the 700th anniversary of the arrest of the Templars, and includes a copy of the "Chinon Parchment" containing Pope Clement V's absolution of the order on the charge of heresy.



*HISTORIC DISPLAY: A copy of "Processus Contra Templarios,"*

The reproduced documents include transcriptions of the testimony of captive Templars, handwriting of inquisitors and sometimes the stains and imperfections of the originals, Savini said.

The pages are recreations of 14th century parchment that can travel well, but still look extremely authentic, he said. "It's the kind of thing people can come up and touch, that they can take a look at it and get a sense of what history looks like in a very tangible way."

In addition to Savini's talk and the display of the volume, a group of modern-day Templars will be there in their full regalia, King said. He called the group "a concordant body of Masonry."

The connection of modern Freemasons to the Templars is a tenuous — possibly nonexistent — one, but there's a lot of conjecture, he said.

"It depends on who you believe. There's no direct point where someone can say, 'Ah ha!' There's a lot of speculation of possible ties," said King, who added that speculation hinges upon the thought that some of the Templars escaped the inquisition to one day found the Masons. "I've read quite a few different books on what the ties are and they all have a different slant ... whether perhaps the Templars absorbed the Masons or the Masons absorbed the Templars."

Savini said he starts the lecture off noting that there's "not a shred of evidence" to prove a connection between the Templars and Freemasonry, but that he acknowledges the different theories and make note of what they have in common — including themes of separation of church and state.

"The Templars were sort of a forerunner, or at least an early victim of the battle between church and state," he said. "It gets people in the door because they're interested in the Templars, and we can connect it to Free-



*HISTORIC DISPLAY: A copy of "Processus Contra Templarios," a volume of documents on the trials of the historic Knights Templar, is shown at Livingston Masonic Library in New York City. The volume will be on display Saturday at Sutherland Lodge No. 826 in North Tonawanda, when library director Thomas Savini will also give a lecture on the Knights Templar.*

masonry.”

The Livingston Masonic Library acquired the “Processus” as simply an interesting piece of historical work, not before of any true Masonic link, Savini said, but it also makes a good educational tool.

“We thought well, if we can use it as a door opener ...,” he said. “It seems to be what the public wants. They want the fantastic and the mystery.

“Another point I make in the lecture is that Freemasonry has always been an organization that has relayed on legend and symbolism. It has never had a problem separating the two.”

When the organization started, literacy was a rare thing, making reliance on symbols a necessary point for the first Masons, Savini said.

“Our stories have always been important to us,” he said. “As long as we know the difference between fact and fiction, we’re OK.”

Editor’s Note;

THE GREENFIRE TIMES NEWSPAPER OF SANTA FE NEW MEXICO IS PROUD TO SUPPORT MASONRY: We say: "MASONS HAVE BEEN PROTECTING AND FIGHTING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SINCE 1360 AD...PERHAPS EVEN LONGER!"

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**FREEMASONS, WE WERE GREEN BEFORE GREEN WAS COOL! ASK ONE TO BE ONE!**



## (Book) 7 Fascinating Secret Society Photos

From the [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/adam-parfrey/secret-society-photos\\_b\\_1407127.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/adam-parfrey/secret-society-photos_b_1407127.html)

Just about every single village, town and city in the United States has at least several buildings used as secret society lodges, hidden in plain sight: various forms of Freemasonry, Odd Fellows, Shriners, Woodmen of the World, Improved Order of the Red Men, Jesters, Druids, subordinate orders meant for women or children of these groups--Rebekah, Order of the Eastern Star, Job's Daughters, DeMolay or one of six hundred different orders that ran strong in this country.

It might come as a surprise that the banal business and patriot groups, like the Lion's, Optimists, Elks, Eagles, and the Rotary Club are also secret societies who are joined by initiates who swear secret oaths.

At the turn of the twentieth century, several well-regarded insider books on fraternal orders claimed that as many as one-third the population of the country belonged to among six hundred different secret orders. Now that's a mother lode of secrecy.

A dozen major factories in the country made costumes and uniforms, strange lodge ephemera, banners, books, and strange hazing pranks for a huge and not-too-secret fraternal marketplace.

What's the attraction of belonging to such groups?

It seems that a small percentage were attracted to learning esoteric wisdom. Others were drawn to having a place where they could meet with friends and drink away from the wife and kids. A surprising number of fraternal orders outside the Ku Klux Klan--which based its structure on Freemasonry--froze out the participation of other races and religious beliefs. A good number of secret orders provided life insurance and care for families at a time when social security, Medicare and life insurance did not exist. Some original secret orders have since dropped the rituals and esoteric pretense to morph into full-time insurance companies.

With the distractions of television, video games, the Internet, fast food, microwave meals and full-time employment for mothers of the family, membership in secret orders has dropped precipitously since the late '60s. Bruce Webb, a friend from Waxahachie, Texas, runs an art gallery that nearly exclusively features purchases he made from newly defunct Lodges.

A member of the Scottish Rite temple bemoaned to me the dissolution of fraternal orders, and suggested that I read the book *Bowling Alone* by Robert D. Putnam to glean a better idea why the communitarian aspect of American culture has collapsed, and why lodge membership seems like a faint throwback to a weird and ancient era.

Today, Orders like the Scottish Rite Temple are trying to find ways to attract new members who don't have enough interest or drive to spend months memorizing complex ideas to climb the 32 degrees of the Order's hierarchy. Many Scottish Rite lodges today offer the 32 degree climb within a day or two... Less work equals more "raised" members.

In opposition to the decline today of secret society membership is the continued strength of fraternal membership among the police and military, or the so-called Brotherhood of the Gun.

Accompanying this article are patches of Masonic police brotherhoods. Coincidentally, the Middle East has been a fraternal obsession since the turn of the twentieth century. Masonic publishing companies have published novels and non-fiction books about Baghdad and The Temple of Solomon. An online Shriners magazine called *The Scimitar* discusses military lodge work in Baghdad. A New York Times article from 1912 discusses a "scheme" of Freemasons to purchase and rebuild The Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem.

The co-author of *Ritual America* [Feral House, \$29.95] and I believe that although membership of esoteric orders are declining by the day, the esoteric groundwork of modern America has already been established. Although traditional structures--with notable exceptions in police and military ranks--are in decline, other forums for fraternal fun have emerged, from sports bars (somewhat akin to early Masonic meetings in colonial taverns) to mega-churches and their venues of entertainment. At the same time, modern America has been permeated by many of the gnostic concepts of the secret societies, making formal affiliations a bit moot. We might say that modern America has truly become *Ritual America* at a deeper level, and the average citizen is an unconscious initiate, a dweller in the long historical shadows of secret societies.



*Dartmouth's Sphinx founded 1885. Present building constructed in 1903 by local architect architecture, as with many Masonic lodges of that time. Building located on north East Wheelock street (across street from and west of Alumni Gymnasium). William Butterfield; example of "Egyptian Revival"*

## The Lambskin Apron

Adapted by V.W. Bro. Norman McEvoy from a paper by Bro. Auri Spigelman (Grand Lodge of California). From "The Educator" at <http://www.theeducator.ca/symbolism/the-lambskin-apron/>

It was "Lambskin Apron Night" at the Lodge. The brethren excitedly unfurled their precious possessions, some for the first time since being raised as Master Masons, tied them around their waists and wore them with pride.

What is the value and importance of this Lambskin Apron and why does it excite such emotions?

The apron is the initial gift of Freemasonry to a candidate. The word derives from the French "napron," meaning a cloth, and from the expression "a napron" evolved "an apron" in English. The candidate is instructed to wear this distinctive badge throughout an honorable Masonic life. As we will see, the presentation or Rite of Investiture symbolizes the candidate's new life of understanding and inner purification.

Our speculative use of the apron derives from both historical and operative sources. From the historical perspective, we learn about initiatory and religious functions. The initiate into ancient Orders traveled a so-called Rite of Passage, whereby he symbolically matured from the naïveté or spiritual darkness of the child to "enlightenment" as an adult.

He became "cleansed of impurities" of both the mind and spirit.

This "redemption" or "regeneration" afforded his placement into a milieu of special human fellowship, moral truth and spiritual faith.

White aprons were worn upon initiation into the ancient mysteries of Mithras; the Jewish cult of the Essenes and Chinese secret societies. They were worn by ancient Jewish and Druidic high priests.

The early Christians wore them when baptized. The Persians used it as a national banner. It adorned Greek and Egyptians gods.

It was used by the Mayans, Incas, Aztecs and Hopi Indians, the Vikings, the Zulus and by the Anglican clergy.

Because men wore them as emblems of their high office or position, the apron acquired an aura of authority and respect in many diverse cultures.

From the religious or mystical standpoint, the white apron was regarded as a sign of purity.

It covered the lower portion of the body, which was associated with uncleanness and immorality. The sash or band used to tie the apron separated the upper and lower parts, and when worn at prayer, reminded one of the functional priority of heart and mind.

The "mystics" spoke of the four physical (earth, air, fire and water) and three spiritual (presence, knowledge and power: symbolic of Deity), which add up to the Pythagorean "perfect" number seven.

In this we can find a recurring theme in Masonry, the 47th Problem of Euclid. Discovered by Pythagoras, it teaches that in right-angled triangles, the square of the hypotenuse equals the sum of the squares of the two other sides. This is the root of geometry and foundation of mathematics, which was essential knowledge for our Masonic cathedral builders. From the operative perspective, the apron, no doubt, had its development for practical reasons and became necessary equipment for the medieval stonemasons.

The apprentice was a bearer of burdens, carrying ashlar and timbers against his body. He needed a large apron, usually made of a tough animal hide, to protect him from physical injury and his clothes from damage and soiling. The Fellowcraft was a hewer in the mountains and quarries and required the apron to deflect lime chips and stone dust. The master, as overseer of the work, wore his apron with the corner turned up, as a mark of his special authority. The apron and other clothing, such as cap, collar and gloves, developed into uniforms which distinguished members of one guild from another. The mason's apron became his specific badge!

It was in the 17th century when the building of massive edifices slowed and membership in the guilds declined that the seeds of modern Speculative Masonry were sown. Our founding fathers recognized the importance of incorporating the wisdom and experience of both the historical and operative perspectives into a new moral system that would attract the interest of men whose vocations were not in the operative craft. On this basis, how was the apron treated? Let us look to the description in our ritual.

**LAMBSKIN.** The lamb is gentle and harmless. In ancient times it was often offered as a sacrifice to the gods, either to please them or as a symbolic plea for the expiation of sins.

The lamb is therefore associated with redemption and purification.



The lamb's white color is an ancient symbol of purity and cleanliness, of innocence, conscience, good character and discipline. It is the color that reflects the most light, speculatively the "light of understanding."

Alternately, it shows stains most plainly, so we must beware if committing misdeeds and acts of immortality.

The origin of the word "candidate" is from the Latin, "candidus" meaning white.

Candidates for office in ancient Rome often wore white togas to proclaim their qualities.

Today, we use the word "candid" to mean free from prejudice or deception, fair, or an honest and sincere expression.

**EMBLEM OF INNOCENCE.** First let us examine the difference between symbol and emblem. A symbol is an idea, sign, device or object which has within itself something else, which it guards from false scrutiny, but which it may yield, if studied. "Virtues" are symbols, for example. An emblem is a symbolic device whose meaning need not be discovered.

Its meaning is obvious, known and accepted by common agreement. For example, "white means purity."

**BADGE OF A MASON.** The badge differs from the symbol or emblem, in that it is a conscious mark or sign by which a person (or object) is distinguished, making his identity or membership known. The apron is a sign to prove rough work, either that physical labor or the Operative or the spiritual work of the Speculative Mason. Historically, this badge helped to elevate Masonry's status to that of a worthy and honorable profession, one of creating and constructing.

It did much to change societal attitudes toward labour, which was no longer thought relegated to slaves or menials.

As the badge of Masons, the apron also represents their "bond of friendship."

**MORE ANCIENT THAN THE GOLDEN FLEECE OR ROMAN EAGLE.**

The Order of the Golden Fleece was founded in 1429 by Phillip, the Duke of Burgundy, upon his marriage to the Infanta Isabella of Portugal. The "Golden Ram" was its badge and alluded to the lost Greek mythological object sought by Jason and the Argonauts. It was the symbol of the triumph of superior spiritual strength and purity of the soul.

In contrast to Masonry, this Order's motto was "wealth, not servile labor."

Its original purpose was to protect the Church and Catholic faith, but later extended to other faiths. It still exists and interestingly, in 1985 King Carlos of Spain, conferred the Order on a Moslem, King Hussein of Jordan.

The Roman Eagle was the ensign of Rome's Imperial power, around the 1st century B.C., during the second consulship of Gaius Marius. It exalted the glory and greatness of the past. It fostered a belief that the wisdom gained by experience was the basis of progress and secured our present and future happiness.

It was thus a source of morale for the Roman Legionnaires.

**MORE HONORABLE THAN THE STAR OR GARTER.**

To "bestow honor" was a device of flattery. It promoted class distinction and special privilege, as well as the "Divine Right" of kings.

The Order of the Star probably alludes to a society founded in 1351 by John II of France. Its insignia was a silver eight-pointed star, worn on the left breast.

The Order of the Garter was founded in 1349 by Edward III of England and consisted of the King and 25 knights.

Freemasonry exists in striking contrast to these concepts.

It teaches reverence and service to God. It promotes the pursuit of knowledge, self-reliance and devotion to honest work.

It stresses the soundness of moral principles, integrity, justice, good conscience and "right" conduct. It glorifies the building of exemplary character.

It dissipates discord and dissension by promoting peace, patriotism, brotherhood and equal opportunity.

Indeed, Freemasonry's supports are "Wisdom Strength and Beauty."

Its beliefs are "Faith, Hope and Charity."

Its tenets are "Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth."

The Lambskin Apron should "continually remind us of that purity of life and conduct" required of Masons. Only "when worthily worn" can we spiritually merit "gaining admission into the Celestial Lodge above, where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides."

We are thus taught accountability for our actions here on earth.

And, as we strive to understand Freemasonry's philosophy and practice its lessons, a gradual enlightenment enables us to wear our aprons, "with pleasure to ourselves and honor to the Fraternity."

# Pilgrimage: A Journey Toward Light

by W.Bro. Julian Rees

After the prayer in the first degree, the aspirant is led round the temple by the Deacon in a clockwise manner, past the Master in the east, and halting at the Junior Warden and Senior Warden for an examination.

In times gone by, in all pursuits of self-discovery and self-improvement, as well as spiritual quests, a pilgrimage was necessary. In the ancient world, the deities who controlled certain areas of life were unable to operate outside those areas. Their power to favour or to destroy only operated within their own area. So a man from the mountains who found himself in the plain and was in need of divine help, had to make a pilgrimage back to his place of origin in order once again to be one with the deity controlling the mountainous regions. Pilgrimages therefore are journeys with a sacred or spiritual intent, and since the whole of Freemasonry is a journey, we have here a little pilgrimage, a part of that total journey.

This pilgrimage however is unique. It is that journey which, once the aspirant has moved away from the door of the Temple, leads him away from worldly pursuits towards the abandonment of selfish goals, in order to draw nearer to his Self. It may also be regarded as a journey away from darkness towards light. It is a journey which he might undertake with apprehension, with a feeling that something unexpected might suddenly overtake him or confront him.

It is also a journey that he undertakes in personal darkness, since he is blindfolded. This blindfold is an allegory of two things: that his attention might be focussed inwards rather than outwards, and also to underline his spiritual poverty. He has come here, he assures the Master, to seek improvement, 'soliciting to be admitted to the mysteries and privileges of Freemasonry'.

In ancient times of course a physical pilgrimage might have lasted many years and might have been accompanied by many dangers and difficulties, even life-threatening ones. The ritual of Freemasonry endeavours to represent this in an allegorical way.

In the eighteenth century in England, and even today in many masonic jurisdictions, the Junior and Senior Wardens were placed, not as they are today in the south and the west respectively, but both of them in the west, either side of the entrance to the temple. In this situation, they acted as gate-keepers, guarding the entrance to the temple against unwanted intruders. They represented the Roman god Janus, the keeper of gates and doors, and hence representing also beginnings and endings, depicted by a double-faced head, one face looking out, the other face looking in. Janus was worshipped at the beginning of the harvest time, planting, marriage, birth, and other types of beginnings, especially the beginnings of important events in a person's life. Janus also represents the transition between primitive life and civilization, and the growing to maturity of a young person.

We could try to imagine how these gate-keepers in an earlier century might have responded to an aspirant being brought to him by the Deacon. The question 'Whom have you there?' might have been delivered in a stern and forbidding tone, as if to say 'What do you want here? Why should I let you pass? Convince me that you are a worthy man, worthy enough to be admitted to our secrets and mysteries.'

Consider the Deacon's answer on behalf of the aspirant. 'Mr Smith, a poor aspirant in a state of darkness, who has been well and worthily recommended, regularly proposed and approved in open lodge, and now comes of his own free will and accord, properly prepared, humbly soliciting to be admitted to the mysteries and privileges of Freemasonry.' To condense this a little, what the Warden wants to hear is that the aspirant is well recommended, is approved of by all the members, comes of his own free will, that he is prepared not only outwardly but also inwardly and that he comes in humility. Humility is of course important, and is allied to the lack of rashness mentioned elsewhere in the ceremony.



## The Worlds Shortest Fairy Tale

He ask her to marry him.

She said no.

He lived happily every after.



# The Old Folks Section

## Surviving The Big Ones.

### Prices Have Changed

By Corky

The big ones for me were that 16 year period between the Great Depression and World War II. Being born in 1928, I grew up during the hard times between the stock market crash of 1929 and the end of World War II in 1945.

One of the main problem with growing up in that era is the memory of what prices used to be.

For instance, I almost showed my age the other day when making up a Tex-Mex recipe book that is part of a new web page called "Texas Our Texas" that is all about Texas. Anyway, I was typing the recipe for Frito Chili Pie and started to say, use a fifteen cent bag of Fritos.

Now everyone knows you couldn't even buy a lunch bag size bag of Fritos for fifteen cents (usually .99 cents now days), but when I was a young fellow there were only 3 different sized bags of Fritos or Potato Chips. The nickel size bag for lunch boxes, the fifteen cent size for family cold cuts night, and the twenty five cent size for parties.

Just about all kids back then would buy a nickel bag, when we could scrounge a nickel, for a snack. The real heroes among the teens were the guys who would save their nickels until they could buy a fifteen cent bag and have a real feast. I think a fifteen cent bag costs about a dollar and sixty nine cents now days.

That reminds me, Nellie and I stopped at Dairy Queen in Hempstead yesterday evening where I splurged and bought 2 small ice cream cones for a dollar and ninety eight cents. Somehow it seems to me that a small ice cream cone ought to still cost a nickel. Shoot, I used to make malted milks that filled a large glass and still had some more in the mixing can for only fifteen cents each when I worked at Hall's Grocery Store after school. Mr. Hall's store was a real money maker.

The store had an ice cream counter in one end and a huge metal soda water box that we kept filled with bottles of all brands covered with crushed ice. There was also a large rack of funny books and magazines and a big showcase of candy bars. It could be called a semi-typical mom and pop neighborhood grocery store and meat market, but what made it a money maker was the fact that it was across the street from Lubbock Elementary School on the south and a City of Houston fire station on the east.

In case you didn't know, one of the firemen in each fire station always cooked a noon meal for all of the men. Besides, they were always walking across the street for a soda water (5 cents), a candy bar (5 cents), an Ice cream cone (5 cents a dip), a funny book (10 cents) or a pack of cigarettes (17 cents). In those days a big bell rang with a coded series of rings that let the firemen know which station was to respond to the fire and the location. They could hear it across the street as well as in the station, so they could go to the store when they felt like it.

The Boulevard Food Market, the only other store near by was two blocks away, but not patronized by the firemen. Mr. Goldberg wouldn't sell one of the firemen a pack of cigarettes one day because he wasn't a regular customer. It was during world war II, but you could see the cartons under the side counter. Now Mr. Goldberg did sell him a pack after the fireman said "Gee I sure hope your store or your house doesn't ever catch on fire because you aren't one of our regular customers." After that the firemen stayed away from the Boulevard Food Market. How many of you ever saw an ice cream man carrying a big wooden box under his arm with a leather strap over his shoulder to support the weight. The box was filled with Popsicle's, Dreamsicle's and Fudgesicles along with some dry ice. You could hear their wail a block or two away, "Iiice Cccream." Man, when we heard that cry, kids ran off home in all directions to try to beg a nickel from moma. That's right, any one of those frozen treats could be bought for a nickel.

Not many of the natives remember the Ritz Theater in the 1940's. It was on Preston Ave. between Main and Travis streets. Now the Ritz wasn't in skid row, but it was on the edge. You couldn't even call it a "B" movie because it wasn't that classy. What I am actually working toward was the little walkup hamburger stand next door to the Ritz. Have you guessed yet that the hamburgers there cost a nickel apiece.

My buddy Billy and I were really desperate to earn a little extra money that summer. We took a job cleaning the old mortar off the bricks where they were tearing a building down around the block from the Ritz Theater. They were paying the princely sum of one cent a brick and we could see ourselves turning huge piles of bricks into huge piles of money. At lunch time we walked around the block and bought a couple of nickel hamburgers. It wasn't

like Fudruckers, but they were eatable. Oh yes, the bricks. When we went back to the job site we counted and discovered that together, we had cleaned about three hundred bricks in a half day's work. I wasn't a math genius but I quickly figured that I had worked in a very hot dry dust filled place about 4 or 5 hours for three dollars, or \$1.50 each. I picked up my hatchet, told Billy he could have my half of the bricks and I caught the bus for home.

## Ol' Leroy McKrank Visits Another Lodge

Ol' Leroy McKrank wasn't one for vacations. They were unnecessary expenditures as far as he was concerned. But the persistent nagging of his wife finally convinced Leroy to do the unthinkable and take a vacation. So Leroy loaded up his meticulously maintained 1958 Chevy pickup and drove Margarete thirty miles up the road to the Motel 6 in the city. Margarete wanted to go someplace classy and he wasn't going to fork out the money for the Ritz Carlton. He figured if he was going to take a vacation he might as well do something worthwhile. So he attended a lodge meeting that was taking place in the city that evening.

He entered the lodge in his normal visitor attire: a maroon colored three piece suit that he wore to his high school prom. It was quite a departure from his overalls that he wore to his home lodge meeting. Leroy was immediately appalled by what he saw. He saw expensive paintings, a full and well kept library, and a table full of refreshments. A Brother walked over to greet Leroy.

"Well, you fellas sure are a fancy bunch, just how d'ya afford this kinda place on 25 dollars a year?" Leroy was perplexed.

"Well, our dues are 150 a year, but my name is Brad, I'm serving as master of the lodge."

Brad was a young man, around the age of thirty. He was sporting a pinstriped suit and some of the most ornate Masonic regalia Leroy had ever seen. It appeared as though his apron had come right out of its packaging.

"Well, I suppose a man like you could afford it, eh sonny? You can just give me a good old fashioned white apron, one that has a little yellowing on it. That'll be fine," Leroy seemed displeased with all this excess.

Leroy sat through the lodge meeting which featured a speaker on the teachings of the Kabbalah, a lodge of instruction on the Emulation Ritual, and a report on the upcoming table lodge, which would feature fine wines and cigars.

The lodge spent little time on business matters and discussed the points of the educational presentations. There were about twenty men in attendance, all under the age of sixty. All of them were dressed in some sort of dark suit. After lodge, they invited Leroy to accompany them to the restaurant downstairs and join them for a meal. Leroy obliged, out of morbid curiosity. Besides, the master said that he would pay for Leroy's meal. It wouldn't be very frugal to pass that up.

When they sat down to eat, Brad asked Leroy what he thought of their lodge. Leroy didn't hesitate to give his opinion.

"Well, son, I don't know what the heck you all were taught when you became Masons, but that is no way to run a lodge. You got too much stuff for starters! Who needs a library or attractive regalia! And I've never heard of a lodge meeting where people talked about the Kabbalah. Is that some sort of song by them Beatles? And just what the heck is the Emulation Ritual?! Our Grand Lodge gives us all the doggone ritual we need and I sure was upset by all that talk of intoxicating beverages for your table lodges. Boy, I'll tell you, you all need some learnin'! How can anyone afford all that!"

Brad answered patiently and politely. "Well, it is what the members want. We can afford all those nice things because one of our lodge members owns this restaurant and gives us a cheap rate for rent. Our Brethren listed Masonic education as their most important reason for Masonic involvement. It all comes down to what the Brothers want. They are willing to pay the extra dues, and most contribute extra sums of money, because they feel that the lodge is worth it. We are all really good friends and we all feel that the education makes us better men at the end of the evening."

"Well, I'll tell ya what ya need," replied Leroy, "ya need some minutes and real business to discuss. The Grand Lodge sends plenty of letters full of things your lodge needs to do. Then ya need to ignore all that hippie education! Do away with the books and paintings. Then afterwards, y'all can enjoy some weak coffee and hard cookies. I could get you down to 25 dollars a year dues. Now that is Masonry!"

"Well, I'm glad it works for your lodge, but that method almost killed ours." Brad replied, still shocked by what he was hearing.

"I'll tell ya what, when I get home tomorrow I'll call the Grand Master and get him over here to help ya out. Don't worry, ol' Leroy will get you squared away!" Leroy slapped his knee and cackled at his play on words. He found it quite witty.

He finished his dinner and put the extras in a to-go box. He figured that those leftovers would be the fancy vacation meal that Margarete had always wanted.

## Is That Really True

Since election time has come around again, I usually get up two or three emails a day telling me how our government and/or the President is destroying this country and canceling our freedoms. They then plead for me to pass their message on to a hundred or so of my closest friends.

**Please don't misunderstand me; I don't like many things that are happening in our government, any more than those who send the emails, BUT then, I didn't like everything that President George W. Bush did either. I do however, believe in honesty and fair play as I was taught at my mother's knee and in my Masonic Lodge. And, if we don't try to live by these teachings, we are no better than those who we are condemning.**

I usually check out the majority of these stories before blindly passing them on and find that most have been taken out of context, altered or leave out relevant parts to suit the sender's motives. It only takes a minute to go to a site like "Snopes" at <http://www.snopes.com/>, Click on the latest story you received, There are, at this writing, 112 President Barack Obama stories that have been circulated that you can click on and almost all are false, or at least misleading, like for instance one of the latest ones;

The claim was that President Obama issued an executive order that **gives himself unprecedented powers** in time of national emergency. The email message was,

"The National Defense Resources Preparedness Exec. Order gives President Barack Obama unprecedented powers allowing the nationalization of pretty much the entire USA even in peacetime if he desires. They can, under this order, restrict civilian travel by any mode, including (probably) foot travel. They can ration food. They can restrict water usage, even from private wells. They can ration any and all drugs, including OTC and vitamins. They can collectivize farms. They can take over all energy production, including home solar units.

It also allows for drafting civilians. If they have need of your skills, they can compel you to work for no compensation."

As usual, the claim as stated, was at the very least misleading. President Obama didn't write the EO, he updated some parts of it.

On 16 March 2012, he issued an executive order (EO) covering National Defense Resources Preparedness. **Despite claims that the executive order provided the President with unprecedented new powers** such as declaring martial law, seizing private property, implementing the rationing of food, gasoline, and drugs, re-starting peacetime conscription, and nationalizing America industry, simply by declaring a national emergency, **the National Defense Resources Preparedness EO issued by President Obama was for the most part simply an updating of a similar order by President Bill Clinton in 1994** and amended several times since.

What this EO specifically orders: identify, assess, be prepared, improve, foster cooperation. None of these items claim authority to seize private property and place them at the personal disposal of Obama. What follows after Section 103 are the directives for implementing these rather analytical tasks, mostly in the form of explicit delegations of presidential authority to Cabinet members and others in the executive branch.

Why the update? If one takes a look at EO 12919, the big change is in the Cabinet itself. In 1994, we didn't have a Department of Homeland Security, for instance, and some of these functions would naturally fall to DHS. In EO 12919, the FEMA director had those responsibilities, and the biggest change between the two EOs is the removal of several references to FEMA (ten in all). Otherwise, there aren't a lot of changes between the two Eos.

The original EO dealing with national defense resources preparedness was issued in 1939 (EO 8248) according to the National Archives. It has been superseded a number of times, starting in 1951 by nearly every President through Bill Clinton, **and was amended twice by George W. Bush.**

I grew up during some of the most trying times in the USA history, the Great Depression and World War II and serviced my time in the United States Army during the Korean "Police Action". We served with honor and we backed our country, right or wrong. We didn't make up lies or re-slant everything the government and our elected politicians said or did and embarrass our country in front of the whole world.

If the people who make up or re-slant these stories and/or pass them on to everyone they know, would use their energy to show how good their candidates are instead of how bad their opponents are, our world would be a much better place.

I guess there can be no question as to why Grand Lodge Law forbids any discussion of politics or religion in the Masonic Lodge