

The Small Town Texas Mason E-magazine

November 2011



LYTTON SPRINGS MASONIC LODGE #487 AF&AM



The Small Town Texas Mason's E-Magazine

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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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Pine Island Texas Stock Tank July 2011

Lytton Springs Masonic Lodge #487 AF & AM

THE LODGE OF A COMMUNITY

The history of Lytton Springs Masonic Lodge 487 is one of close ties to an ever-changing area and of close association with the Community and people by which it is represented. The heritage of this Lodge has evolved with the people of Caldwell County and continues to this very day. The members of this Lodge are proud to set to pen the history of our Lodge, with sincere thanks and great admiration to the Masons who have gone before us.

The community of Lytton Springs was located near springs identified by a man named Domingo Ramon in the year 1716. These springs were called San Ysidro and San Pedro Del Nogel and were said to have been located just south of the present day Community of Lytton Springs. The Community of Lytton Springs was named after John Litton who ranched

on the Colorado River near the town of Elgin and brought cattle to the Lytton Springs area in the 1840s. It is said that the area was rich in wildlife and game and there was no trouble in feeding your family off the land.

Lytton Springs Lodge 487 was chartered by the Grand Lodge of Texas, "under dispensation", on March 9, 1876, and included 16 Master Masons. The Master of the Lodge was Brother B.T. Palmer. G. W. Robbins was the first Senior Warden and E.A. Jennings the first Junior Warden. There is some question as to the first name of the lodge. Some papers indicate that it was called Albade Lodge 487, but according to Grand Lodge records the name was Litton Springs and later evolved to Lytton Springs 487. Among the first members were as follows: Brothers B.T. Palmer, G.W. Robbins, E.A. Jennings, Johnson Perry, J.W. Jeffery, J.C. Lamb, George B. Covey, D.P. Roberts, S.G. Watkins, W.L. Carter, A.J. Rife, J.W. Jolley, J.W. Jennings, L.C. Sims, C.M. Booth, and R.W. Bunton.

It should be mentioned here that B. T. Palmer was also the first Master of Lockhart Lodge 690. The Lytton Lodge worked "under dispensation" until December 14, 1878, when it received its charter to work from the Grand Lodge of Texas as Lytton Springs Lodge 487. According to Caldwell County Deed Records on July 21, 1881, Johnson Perry and his wife Sally, deeded to the Lytton Springs Baptist Church, one acre of land and the associated building with the upper story to be conveyed to the Masonic Fraternity (see volume W, page 259). Thus, the first Masonic Hall was established, above the then Baptist Church and School. The old Church and Masonic Hall were located at or near the present day Johnson Perry Cemetery.

By all indications, the Lytton Springs Lodge 487, thrived and prospered until the early 1900s when, with regard to shifting populations and growth patterns, the membership voted to remove the Lodge to Mendoza, Texas and changed the name to Mendoza Lodge 487. This was accomplished in December, 1902. In the Caldwell County Deed Records, Vol.39, page 78, there is recorded a transfer of .1 acre of land from Louis W. Booton to the Mendoza Masonic Lodge 487, "for the purpose of a Masonic Hall to be built above the Mendoza Store". Although the exact location of this store has not been determined, it is thought to be located near the intersection of present day Old Lockhart Road and Williamson Road. Louis W. Booton served as Master of the Lodge in 1904.

In June, 1920, again because of shifting population patterns, the Lodge voted to re-move to Lytton Springs and rename the lodge Lytton Springs Lodge 487. The "store lodge" was sold for 300 dollars and a new lodge was built in Lytton Springs on land at the site of the present-day lodge. Members of the lodge bought the land, and the deed was so recorded. At the time of this move there were 44 members, and 36 of those members lived in the Lytton Springs area. The Master of the lodge at this time was Hubbard W. Baker.

The Lodge again settled into the affairs of the community when on the evening of, August 11, 1931, another event occurred which tested the membership. On that evening, the building burned to the ground destroying all records, furnishings, and contents. Despite this tragedy, the Brethren rallied around one another and forthwith rebuilt the lodge from the ground up. The work was completed entirely by the membership and it is recorded that the foreman received \$2.00 a day, with helpers being paid \$1.00 per day. It is also recorded the low



bidder for the construction material was the Lockhart Alamo Lumber Company at a price of \$30.00.

This Lodge building was used and enjoyed by all of the surrounding Masonic Brethren until September of 1993 when, because of old age and just plain wear and tear, the membership voted to replace the old two-story wood structure with a more modern facility. It is said by some Masons that, they could feel the old building swaying when the wind blew. The old building was sold, and ground was broken for a new facility on, September 1, 1993. As construction progressed on the new facility, it finally became necessary to remove the old building from the premise. As in the past, the new building was paid for and erected by the sole membership of Lytton Springs Lodge 487. Some of the Brethren that were instrumental in erecting the new building were as follows: Brothers Charles "Chuck" Franz, A.C. Thomason, Gerald Roberts, J.D. "Red" Carlson, Rex Ferguson, Lester Keller, Edward DuBose, and Hollis Roberts. As the work progressed, the Masonic spirit was evident, as well as the good wishes and support of the community. The cornerstone was leveled on May 25, 1996 and the building was dedicated on November 30, 1996 under the auspices of Robert Walker, Grand Master of Texas.

The present day lodge hall is enjoyed by all of the citizens of Caldwell and surrounding counties. This is done through functions of the lodge such as fish fries, pancake breakfasts, chili suppers and even serving as a polling place. This year the Lytton Springs Lodge furnished a scholarship to a qualifying Lockhart High School Senior.

Lytton Springs Lodge 487 is proud to be a productive member of the Caldwell County community and will continue to serve the community and all of the citizens as it is so called to do.

The Aim of Freemasonry

From the Just A Mason Blog At <http://justamason.blogspot.com/>

Anti-Masons aren't against Freemasonry for what it is. They're against it for what they think it is. And they're invariably wrong.

God-less religion, secret world rulers, blah blah blah. On and on they spout, like water from a damaged dam that, inevitably, comes back to flood their own basement. There's been documented anti-Mason blather since 1698 and I suspect there always will be. But Freemasonry still survives and, at times, flourishes. It will so long as men join together to assist and encourage each other to follow the principles of virtuous living.

Masons can do little about anti-Masons. Some laugh at their foolishness (it's pretty easy to do). Some counter misconceptions. Masons have been doing that for generations, too. Today, they do it on the web. Before the web, it was done in the popular press. Here's an article in the New York Times, dated October 23, 1860. It's about a packed house, both women and "the sterner sex" gathering for the eighth anniversary of Metropolitan Lodge No. 273. It's entitled Masonic Ovation; ANNIVERSARY OF METROPOLITAN LODGE AN ADDRESS, A POEM AND A CONCERT. Let's skip past a list of names of a bunch of Knights Templar Commanderies and see what the story has to say:

As the Grand Lodge entered, Dodworth's Band, which in full force was stationed on the platform, performed a grand march. The members of the Lodge, who were clad in their regalias, took seats on the platform where already were stationed the choir of the Cooper Union ranged near one of CHICKERING's grand pianos. The decorations of the stage were simply a scroll formed of gas jets, with the words, "Sit Lux et Lux Fuit," suspended midway between the ceiling and the platform, and the banners of the Lodge.

DANIEL GODWIN, Master of the Metropolitan Lodge, presided and made a brief address, greeting and welcoming those who were present. Then an appropriate opening ode was sung by the Choir, the audience rising and uniting in it. Rev. Mr. CORBIT offered prayer, and the prescribed exercises of the evening proceeded. They consisted of an introductory address, by M.W. JOHN W. SIMONS, Grand Master of Masons, State of New-York; an anniversary oration, by Rev. W.P. CORBIT; and an anniversary poem, by Hon. A.J.H. DUGANNE, with a musical interlude between them.

Mr. SIMONS congratulated Masons upon the rapidity of their increase and upon the respectable position which they now hold in the public estimation. He corrected the prevailing notions concerning the gridiron and goat-riding rites of the brotherhood; declared that its objects, much as they had been misrepresented, were to carry out good projects; asserted that where liberty dwells there is the Mason's country; and reminded maligners that all of good moral character were at liberty to become acquainted with the arcana of the order.

Mr. DUGANNE's poem was entitled "King Solomon's Temple." In it he compared Masonry to the castle in

the fairy tale, and Truth to the Princess within awaiting the coming of one earnestly seeking her. In diction of great beauty he pursued the allegory into the very penetralia of the charmed palace.

Mr. COBBITT's address was devoted to a controversial of the ideas often held by the uninformed with regard to Masonic principles. The aim of the Order was to unite mankind in one common brotherhood by God's Holy Word, which was its chart and compass -- its polar star. A Mason was simply a builder -- as God himself was a builder. It had been charged that Masons claimed that Masonry was superior to Christianity. This was not so. Mountains of censure had been placed upon Masonry, because it had failed often to accomplish what Christianity itself had failed to accomplish. The mistake was in judging Christianity by this standard. Masonry claimed to be subordinate to our glorious Christianity. Where the cedar of Lebanon had failed of healing, why should so much be expected of the hyssop on the wall? They did not claim that Masonry was as perfect as the Gospel. Away with all such slanders. It was charged that there were bad men in the Brotherhood. Well, "let him among you that is without sin cast the first stone." They of the Fraternity were not omniscient. No body of men had been more careful in making rules designed to exclude bad men. Let him who knocked at the door look to it that he was worthy. Masonry was founded upon the best principles. He knew that they had bad men among them, and he wept over it as he wept over the shortcomings of backsliders in Christianity. But from the nature of things, while the world lasted there would be hypocrites and evil-doers. Mr. CORBIT combatted the idea that the Fraternity is wholly a secret society, and that, so far forth as it is a secret society, it was unworthy. Mr. CORBIT brought down the house by saying, Now, would you not like to know the Masonic password to-night? Listen -- [deep silence] -- while I tell you -- [rapt attention] -- the password that will admit you -- [slowly] to a Masonic [very slowly] lodge-room is _____ [a pin distinctly heard to drop,] never to be spoken outside of a Masonic lodge-room. [Pronged laughter and applause.] The orator expatiated upon what Masonry had accomplished and the particulars in which it carried out the principles of the Christian Religion.

The exercises were closed with another ode and a benediction.

Incidentally, you'll notice the Times wrote of the "principles" of a particular religion, as opposed to its dogma about how one worships. Perhaps an examination of Matthew 7:12 and I Corinthians 13:13 is in order as these principles should apply to anyone, regardless of how they believe in the Creator.

Let Masons carry on and practice the tenets of the fraternity and not worry too much those who deliberately dwell in the land of misconceptions. Though it does a Mason good to remind himself what the fraternity is about and to let others know, too.

Masons' Grand Gift

Tom Mooney
Wiltshire Gazette & Herald
Malmesbury, Wiltshire, UK

Members of the St Aldhelm Masonic Lodge in Malmesbury have raised £1,000 for the Bobby Van Trust. The idea to donate to the trust, which provides a home security service for elderly, vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Wiltshire, was put forward by charity steward Ian Robinson, who was burgled earlier this year. When Mr Robinson and his wife returned from holiday in April they found thieves had ransacked their Little Somerford home. The culprits had made off with cash and jewelry, including an engraved watch given to Mr Robinson by his mother for his 21st birthday.

He said: "They caused a lot of damage and quite a lot was taken. They had gone through our stuff and tossed things around the place.

"It is a horrible feeling when that happens. It really shook my wife up.

"We had a visit from the Bobby Van Trust as part of the services offered by the police.

"They were magnificent – they gave us counseling and fitted things like window locks, free of charge.

"I had never heard of them before it happened to us but I was just so impressed with the service they provide."

Mr Robinson suggested to his fellow lodge members that they should donate £1,000 to the trust. He said: "I was surprised to find there were two others in the group who had also been victims of burglaries and had benefited from the Bobby Van Trust too.

"Everyone was supportive of the idea. We were really pleased to help because they rely on fundraising and are struggling just like many other charities."

Texas Rangers Were Brothers

The Lone Ranger, Freemasonry, And Texas Ranger Ethics

By James A. Marples, VII^o, Life Member, Nebraska College, M.S.R.I.C.F.

In this technological age of the 21st Century, it is difficult for young people to relate to the fewer communication and entertainment avenues of the early 20th Century. Back then, it was radio which provided news, programming and entertainment. Before television made it possible to convey images, radio-listeners had to create their own mental picture to blend-in and enhance the messages that they heard. Successful radio programs had to use correct language, as well as clear and vivid depictions to keep listeners spellbound. In 1933, a Detroit, Michigan man named George W. Trendle, created a radio program broadcast over radio station WXYZ. He wanted it to appeal to youth, yet be interesting and exciting for adults, too. The setting of the Old West in America provided an interesting theme in which to portray the hardships of the pioneers. Those hardships were deepened by burdens imposed by bad luck, bad choices, and bad men. With any big problem, people look for 'something' or 'someone' to help lift that burden and help make things right. As you might suppose, the hero would rescue the situation and happiness would prevail.



The program, which began on radio, was eventually brought to television. That is where my first recollections of it began. The character would exhibit genuine virtue, honor, valor, wisdom, compassion and respect for Law. The person in this leading role would be a true gentleman, who sets a good example of clean living and clean speech. He would walk uprightly and promote Justice without regard for personal gain. He would come to the rescue when needed, and he wouldn't be afraid to enlist the help of his faithful companion or a group of citizens to work in concert with him to bring order out of chaos. Restoring the community's peace and harmony was his overriding concern.



This character had a past history as a lawman - as a Texas Ranger. He was shot down in an ambush, along with five other Texas Rangers. As he lay near death, an American Indian named "Tonto" came across the scene and observed that one Ranger was still breathing, brought him water, and nursed him back to health. Around the Ranger's neck was a necklace bearing a symbol that Tonto had given a young white-boy years earlier. Tonto said, "You are kemo-sabe." (A Pottawatomie Indian word meaning "trustworthy scout" or "faithful friend.")

The Ranger, vaguely remembers his childhood nickname. He remembers Tonto and their memories of youth. The Ranger, John Reid, sees his brother (a fellow Texas Ranger) Dan Reid among the five dead Rangers. Together, Tonto and the

Ranger dig six graves to make it appear to the outlaws that there were no survivors. As the sole survivor, Tonto makes the astute pronouncement to his friend: "You the Lone Ranger, now."

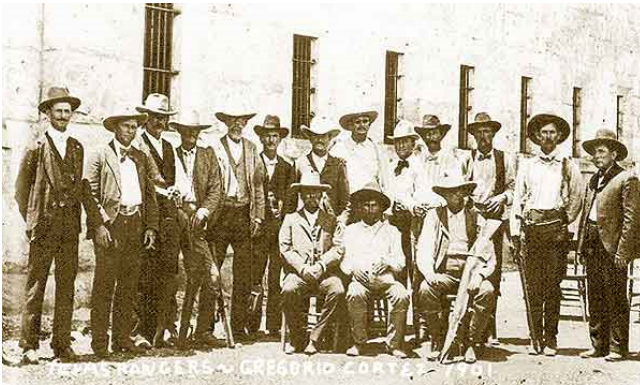
Before burying his fellow Texas Rangers, the surviving Ranger cut a strip of black fabric from his brother Dan's vest and fashioned it into a mask to put across his face and conceal his identity. As "The Lone Ranger," he vowed: First, to bring to Justice the members of the Cavendish Gang who did the dastardly deed. And, Second, to help bring Law and Order to the rugged American Frontier as well as a level of stability to its citizenry. The Lone Ranger had his trusty horse, Silver, and Tonto had his beautiful paint horse, Scout.

I can almost hear the sounds of the 'Cavalry Charge' finale of Gioacchino Rossini's William Tell Overture, and the booming baritone voice of the announcer, who said, "A fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of

dust, and a hearty 'Heigh-Yo, Silver!!' The Lone Ranger. 'Heigh-Yo, Silver, away!!' With his faithful Indian companion Tonto, the daring and resourceful masked rider of the plains led the fight for law and order in the early West. Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear. The Lone Ranger rides again. "

Like many people, I would classify "The Lone Ranger" as a true American hero... a larger-than-life personality, worthy of emulation. Growing up, I knew several men who, if wrapped-up-together, would embody most of The Lone Ranger's admirable traits. Upon reaching adulthood and soon thereafter joining Masonry, I can see many of those desirable virtues inculcated in the various Masonic degrees.

It is no co-incidence that Freemasonry helped influence the law enforcement agency, the Texas Rangers. It was Bro.: Stephen F. Austin, a Mason, who had the fervent wish to organize a group of hardy men to protect his new colony (which later became Texas). In 1823, Bro.: Austin referred to that group as Rangers, because of their duties compelling them to 'range' over the entire vast area.



This select group gave rise to what is called now "Texas Rangers." Furthermore, many notable early Texas Rangers were Masons, including Jack Hays, John B. Jones, (who later became the presiding officer of Royal Arch Masonry in Texas) L.H. McNelly, James Gillett, and George W. Baylor (among many others). One of the most dynamic Texas Rangers of the 20th Century was Manuel Trazazas Gonzauillas. His career as a Texas Ranger was notable for his patrolling of the East Texas Oil Fields, near Kilgore, Texas. He was known by the nickname "Lone Wolf Gonzauillas," and he was the only Texas Ranger then of Spanish descent. He was also a Mason. Bro. Gonzauillas was involved in the

control of gambling, boot-legging, bank robbery, riots, prostitution, narcotic trafficking, and general lawlessness from the Red River to the Rio Grande and from El Paso to the Sabine River during the 1920s and 1930s.

In September 2006, I was pleased to have Barry K. Caver, Captain of Texas Rangers - Company "E" tell me, "There was a time that most, if not all Texas Rangers, were Masons; however, I do not know their level of involvement."

The battle of "Good" winning over "Evil," and the struggle from 'adversity and despair' to 'triumph and joy' is a hallmark of real-life adventures that have been memorialized by both works of fiction and non-fiction. In pioneer days, horses were the principal means of transportation. Having a good horse often meant the difference between life and death for not only Texas Rangers, but for ordinary citizens as well.

Animals, as well as humans, sometimes experience adversity. The Lone Ranger and Tonto saved a big white horse from being gored to death by a buffalo. The Lone Ranger and Tonto nursed it back to health, and eventually set it free. The horse later followed them back to camp and The Lone Ranger adopted it. The horse became his trusty steed "Silver."

The Lone Ranger's bullets were made by a retired Texas Ranger in an old silver mine. The silver bullets were to remind the Ranger of how expensive it is to shoot at a man, and conversely, how valuable every person's life is. The Lone Ranger would always shoot to wound -never to kill.

As a Masonic Rosicrucian, I am reminded of the virtues of the element SILVER. It is not only a precious metal used in monetary exchanges as currency, it also has healing properties. I am reminded that pioneers moving west often put silver coins in their water barrels to keep them clean as a bactericide and algacide. Silver is also used today in pharmaceuticals.

The Lone Ranger put on the mask so he could not be identified. This served a twofold purpose: So he could not be easily recognized by the outlaws who sought to kill him initially. Secondly, any good deeds he would perform later would be done purely for the love of country and the pursuit of justice. Anonymity gives a person a stronger backbone of self-discipline if it is apparent the donor will receive nothing in return. Many Masonic Halls in olden days would have wooden boxes placed in aisles, lobbies, hallways or in rooms adjacent to the Lodge room for members to donate Alms and other money to be directed to the poor. Any selfish person will make a donation if they can brag and boast about it, but it takes a truly selfless person who really cares to contribute in private.

The Lone Ranger rode over a vast amount of territory, which included the Great Plains and several rivers, streams, distant mountains and the occasional canyon.

When I was growing up in Kansas, I was amazed to learn that parts of the current States of KANSAS, COLORADO, NEW MEXICO, OKLAHOMA, and even a bit of WYOMING were once part of the Republic

of Texas. In that context, it is easy to envision a former Texas Ranger riding the diverse types of terrain which were then ONE REGION. And, Kansas has a Pottawatomie Indian Reservation. Sometimes works of fiction are based on more reality than a person might imagine. For The Lone Ranger and Tonto, friendships were solid and life-long. Masonry likewise inspires solid, lifelong friendships. Fr. Christian Rosenkreutz, the founder of the Rosicrucian Society had members go out in the world in pairs. He felt that by going out in the world two-by-two would provide more safety and security than a sole individual dealing with life's struggles alone. Furthermore, life's lessons are often better understood when you have someone by your side to help you see how it has affected them too. Courage doesn't develop instantly. Moral courage goes beyond personal courage or bravery. Moral courage must be cultivated and reinforced. Freemasonry instills an honorable Code of Conduct. Many early Texas Rangers being Masons themselves adopted a code of ethics or integrity that lives on today. The white lambskin apron is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason.

The 5-pointed Star-within-a-wheel design is the badge of a Texas Ranger, and the badges are generally made from old Mexican five-peso silver coins. Early Rangers sometimes lacked an "official" badge for various reasons: insufficient salary, no real need to display it to Indians or Mexicans, or no need of displaying such a tempting target on one's chest. However, the Masonic influence on the 5-pointed Lone Star has been evident from the beginning. In 1844, George K. Teulon, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of the Republic of Texas, addressing a gathering of Masons in Portland, Maine said, "Texas is emphatically a Masonic Country. Our national emblem, the 'Lone Star' was chosen from the emblems selected by Freemasonry, to illustrate the moral virtues--- it is a five-pointed star, and alludes to the five points of fellowship." Badges are nice to have, but we all must strive to aspire to the duties and qualifications that our 'badge' represents.



Brother John Yarker

Born in Westmorland, England, April 17, 1833, died March 20, 1913, and was long identified actively with Freemasonry in Manchester but connected with Masonic Bodies in all parts of the world.

He was initiated on October 25, 1854, in Integrity Lodge No. 189, later No. 163, at twenty-one years of age. He contributed an article on Military Masons in 1858 to the Freemason's Magazine and Masonic Mirror.

Thereafter he was a frequent writer on Masonic matters to the publications of the Craft. His book, *The Arcane Schools, a Review of Their Origin and Antiquity*, with a general history of Freemasonry and its relation to the theosophical, scientific and philosophic matters, was published in 1909 after some ten years' labor, as the preface tells us, and is a book of 566 pages dealing with the traces of a speculative system from the ancient days.

- Source: Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry



Lodge Of Transition Number 0

By WBro Robert Callant

Have you ever considered what the purpose of the 'Lodge of Transition Number 0' is, where the Lodge membership comes from, and particularly how it manages its membership especially in relation to workings? How the Master and other Lodge Officers are appointed or renewed, given that its membership is literally 'transitory'? The Lodge initiates no candidates and general members can only stay members for a year if unaffiliated, unless over 75 years of age and a Freemason for over 40 years, or at the Grand Master's pleasure.

The Victorian Masonic Guide on the Lodge of Transition;

The purpose of the Lodge is to provide membership facility embracing all Masonic privileges for those brethren who for a variety of reasons are experience difficulty in maintaining and/or attending a regular lodge.

Any Lodge member who has a good understanding of Lodge management would know that those becoming Worshipful Masters first gain experience by taking progressive office. This contributes to aspiring Master Masons obtaining the experience and knowledge of the Lodge workings through 'progressive training'. In the case of 'Lodge Transition', how can such a Lodge function at all, given that it the normal rules of succession cannot be applied to temporary officers whose membership may well be counted in terms of a period of months?

All these questions were answered, when I attended the Lodge of Transition's Installation that occurred on the evening of the 1st Wednesday (the 2nd day) of February 2011.

The first thing that struck me when I entered the lodge as a 'visitor' was the Warrant. Lodge Transition was consecrated by Most Worshipful Neville Smith in 1996 and allocated the unusual lodge number "0". Given that our Past Grand Master Smith is also a member of my 'Masters

Group', I thought the Lodge was 'quite young' in both years and concept. The other exciting element was its number of attendees, this having a full complement of office holders, visitors and members, which is always a thrill when visiting a Lodge. This excitement was tempered by me being puzzled by the paradox, whereby the Lodge appeared to be thoroughly well organised and competently managed; seemed to enjoy a particular 'Spirit de Corps' which would be expected of any functioning and well run Lodge, yet wasn't this a Lodge made up of transitory members which meets only once every year?

As per many Lodge Installations, the Lodge of Transition had invited the current 2010-11 Grand Lodge Ceremonial Team to undertake the Installation and the ceremony commenced under the competent leadership of the Grand Director VWBro Mark Eadon. Most readers would be familiar with the Installation ceremony with the residing Worshipful Master, generally being succeeded by his Senior Warden and the remaining chairs, being invested to replace the vacated offices. What was different in this particular instance was that the vacated office-holders tend not to progress to the next office level, but instead are replaced by a whole new team. How strange!

So where does this new team come from? The answer is that office holders are replaced by the Grand Lodge Ceremonial Team that immediately preceded the current Grand Lodge Ceremonial Team who install their predecessors. Hence the 'Installing Team' was the Grand Lodge 2010-11 Team who were installing the 2009-10 Grand Lodge Team into the Chairs of the lodge. This is how the Lodge of Transition's team is formed.

Freemasons would appreciate that the Constitution requires a Lodge to determine a Master Elect, Treasurer and Tyler by vote; and, to ensure that the successful Master Elect is obligated in the 2nd Degree, prior to Installation. This of course occurred, and the Obligation was indeed undertaken and witnessed in the 2nd Degree, prior to the Lodge being raised to the 3rd Degree for the commencement of the installation ceremony.

With the Grand Lodge being able to supply a full complement of office holders for the Lodge of Transition all Lodge officers were subsequently invested. The Lodge Secretary was filled by the then Grand Secretary, RWBro Barry Reaper; and the position of Lodge Treasurer, filled by Right Worshipful Henshaw. The Lodge Worshipful Master was Very Worshipful WBro N Rinkel PGDC.

Following a very successful installation, the officiating Installing Master Most Worshipful Devotion Vaughan Werner, then had the pleasant duty of awarding a very large number of long service award jewels to the many Transition members who were currently associated with the Lodge. The honour of awarding such, as well the pleasure and joy of receiving the same, was plainly exhibited to the delight of the assembled brethren.

At the successful conclusion of the Installation Ceremony and the awarding of the Jewels, the Lodge of Transition was then closed in the familiar manner known to all Freemasons, and the Brethren then enjoyed the traditional gathering in the South, where the newly installed Worshipful Master was toasted with very best wishes for the forthcoming year.

Potential visitors to the Lodge of Transition are well advised to contact the Lodge Secretary, The Grand Secretary, Phone Number 9411 0011 for further details, if contemplating a visit or attending the next Installation Ceremony of the Lodge of Transition Number 0.

Fish House Masonic Lodge #298 F & AM

Editor's Note; In the last issue we also featured a Lodge from Kentucky. I selected it because of the unusual name, "Crittenden-Dry Ridge Lodge." I liked the idea so much that I decided to continue it as an ongoing feature.

Colorful local history makes it quite apparent why the organizers of this Lodge selected the rather unique name by which Fish House Lodge has always been known. Although the Post Office was always listed as Northampton, Fish House was, and still is, the popular name for the community in which this Lodge's organization took place. The name seems particularly appropriate inasmuch as it was used by Sir William Johnson when he built his hunting and fishing lodge in that location in 1762, thereafter always referring to the lodge as "the fish house. Thus the founder of Saint Patrick's Lodge No. 4 in Johnstown, NY unknowingly provided the name for a yet-unfounded Lodge that would be located in his hunting and fishing area.



We would be remiss not to refer to the two parent lodges of Fish House Lodge: North Star Lodge No. 162, and Golden Rule Lodge No. 284. Fortunately, the Minutes Book of the former has recently been recovered so that we have definite information regarding its early operation.

North Star Lodge No. 162 was located at Edinburg, and held meetings there from August 28, 1807 until July 27, 1826. The differences in Lodge procedures at that time are indeed less striking than the similarities, and these similarities remind us of how much some ancient traditions persist to present times. Probably the most surprising difference is the fact that all business was conducted on the Entered Apprentice Degree, and much is to be said for the custom of permitting newly-initiated brothers to attend meetings immediately after receiving their first degree.

Information on Golden Rule Lodge No. 284 is rather sketchy. Some authorities locate it in Northville, and others believe it was at Northampton. However, the best sources lead us to believe that it held meetings, at least during part of its existence, at Osborne's Bridge, a small hamlet midway between Northville and Northampton. It is known with certainty only that it was in existence between the years 1824 and 1836.

As was true throughout the eastern States, Masonry received a serious set back during the 1830's and 40's, particularly in the rural areas. The combined efforts of misguided clerics and political opportunists needed only the spark of the Morgan incident in 1826 to label the Masonic Fraternity as anti-Church and anti-American. It required twenty years for the Craft to prove itself. In 1826 there were 480 Lodges in New York State with over 20,000 members. Just two years later there were only 75 Lodges registered with only 300 members.

Although both North Star and Golden Rule Lodges ceased to operate at this time, a brave group of Masons, inspired with the fraternal spirit, met clandestinely in another location: Their secret lodge room was in Parkville, a settlement commonly known as "The Dam," located immediately north of Northville. Their makeshift Lodge Room was, in fact, the loft of an old barn that is still in existence.

On March 4, 1853 The Grand Lodge of the State of New York granted a dispensation to Fish House Lodge to organize. Ten men were listed as charter members at the time of its institution; among them were five former members of North Star Lodge and one of Golden Rule Lodge. James Partridge, a resident of Edinburg, was one of these North Star former members who helped organize the present Fish House Lodge. He had the double distinction of having been a Mason for 59 years, and having seven of his sons become members of Fish House Lodge. Certainly this is an enviable record and one duplicated in but few Lodges.

During the brief period when the Lodge was under dispensation George Van Slyke was initiated. & Opposite his name in the register of members we find one of those isolated remarks that is so gratifying to a historian, stating that he was "one if the best Masons, for seven years Worshipful Master."

In June of 1853, the Grand Lodge session issued a warrant on June 11th that constituted Fish House Lodge as Lodge number 298. & At that time it was located in the Seventh Masonic District. Henry W. Spence had the honor of being the Lodge's first Master. During the first four years, three other former North Star members affiliated with Fish House Lodge. However, the first Northville resident did not join until 1865, and that was B. N. Lobdell who was numbered 157 on the Lodge's roster. Northampton was much the larger of the two places at that time, and yet despite the close proximity of these villages, very few Northville men applied for membership until after 1870.

Meetings had always been held on Wednesday evenings, but not until 1872 did the bylaws call for meetings to be set on the first and third Wednesdays, as at present. Following the custom of North Star Lodge, and indeed most Lodges in these early days, meetings were scheduled for 6 o'clock on the Wednesday on or before the full moon, with another meeting two weeks later. This practice was followed from October through March. The quality of artificial illumination being so inferior, it was necessary to conserve all the sunlight possible for one's vocation, especially in the farming community. Then, too, the advantages of having moonlight for the journey homeward after a meeting could hardly be neglected.

Masonry was then a more vital part of the lives of its members than it is today, with most brethren taking its precepts

very seriously. Saint John's days were seldom passed by without notice and on several occasions, at least, elaborate ceremonies were held. We are proud that nearly all the local municipal officials have their names listed on the Lodge rolls. As always, Masons were a select group, and should one be accused of unmasonic conduct, he could be brought before the Junior Warden for a Masonic trial.

Meetings on many evenings must have been very lengthy. Very often two degrees were conferred on an evening, sometimes at the time of the District Deputy's visitation or on Annual Meeting night. At one November meeting in 1865, the minutes record that a report was read on a Masonic trial, five candidates balloted upon, and all three degrees worked, along with various items of miscellaneous business.

An 1886 fire in the Lodge rooms resulted in the destruction and loss not only of many valuable records, including the minutes of meetings from 1853 to 1861, but also all the records of Golden Rule Lodge. By the end of that year a new Masonic Temple was nearly completed so that meetings could be held there.

The first recorded agitation for removing the Lodge to Northville began in 1870. Little headway was made at that time, but during the next year, in the minutes of the January 4th meeting, is found the following quote which dramatically indicates the intensity of the feeling on the matter: "Motion that Fish House Lodge No. 298 petition the Grand Lodge of the State of New York for permission to hold its meetings at Northville. Amended that the motion be laid on the table. Amendment lost. Then the Worshipful Master declared motion out of order." Later that year the proposition for establishing a new Lodge at Northville was voted upon, and resulted in a 36 to 36 tie. Applications for new Lodges to be established at Day Center and Luzerne were summarily defeated, often without the necessity of a ballot.

Again, in 1882, a vote was taken either to move the Lodge to Northville or to establish a new Lodge there. Both motions were defeated. During the next decade Northville experienced rapid growth, easily attaining a population of 1,100 by 1892. By that time enough Northville residents had managed to become members of the Lodge that in June of that year it was finally and successfully voted to move the Lodge to Northville. Inasmuch as Northampton and Northville were so close together, and both in the same Masonic jurisdiction, Grand Lodge looked with favor upon the move. The majority of the membership decided that the prosperity of the Lodge would be promoted by the move. In July, 1892 the first communication was held at Northville in the Kested and Bowman block owned by the Lodge treasurer, George N. Brown.

Although we find few references to National conflicts in our early Minutes, the effect they had on the Lodge, particularly in the case of the two World Wars, was profound. The only mention of the Civil War was the notation in 1865 of a letter received seeking aid for a destitute brother "who was pecuniarily reduced by aiding brethren who were prisoners in and near Charleston." During World War I special dispensations were received from Grand Lodge permitting degrees to be conferred at intervals shorter than usually prescribed by Grand Lodge. Leon H. Dunn received the first degree on November 6th, 1918, and the two remaining degrees on the next night. So many line officers answered the call to military service, that in 1920 there were five Past Masters installed as officers. A similar situation was repeated during World War II.

Fish House Lodge was incorporated under the Benevolent Order Law of the State in 1923. It was during that year that the home of George N. Brown was acquired, but never used, for Lodge meetings; negotiations having been started in the interim to purchase the Cole block. On the morning of Saturday, June 16, 1928, dedication ceremonies were held at the present Masonic Temple with the Grand Master of Masons in the State of New York as the principle speaker.

There has always been a mutually beneficial and harmonious relationship between the Masonic Fraternity and the Order of the Eastern Star. As early as 1866, before the Eastern Star was organized into the present Chapter system, the "Ladies Degree" was conferred by the Officers of Fish House Lodge. From that time to the present, the Lodge has not hesitated to request the ladies to serve meals for them. Our records frequently show thanks being tendered the ladies for the "generous collation" served on some occasion or other. When the local Chapter of the Eastern Star was formed in 1902 every encouragement was given them by the Masons, and the use of the Lodge rooms was donated to them rent-free during the first year.

A particularly pleasant and fraternal spirit has grown from the close relationship that existed between the Gloversville and Fish House Lodges. Two former members of Fish House Lodge helped organize Gloversville Lodge in 1857, and one of them became their first Junior Warden. The altar presently in the Fish House Lodge was a gift presented by Gloversville Lodge No. 429 at the time of the dedication of the present Lodge Rooms.

Grand Lodge has honored Fish house Lodge by the appointment of four District Deputy Grand Masters. The first was Lee S. Anibal who served two terms from 1883 to 1885. The office was later held by Edgar P. Palmer in 1922-23, James Carpenter in 1937-38 and Herbert G. Corey during 1950-51. Each of these men was of the highest caliber both as man and Mason, all of whom served their Lodge and their District with exceptional distinction.

Grand Lodge having instituted the policy in 1948 of awarding 50 year medals, Brother David Sandner and Worshipful Brothers Arthur Heath and Seymour Brownell, in that year were presented with that honor. Two years later a 60-year palm was added to Worshipful Brother Brownell's medal. Unfortunately all three of these faithful brothers were called to the Celestial Lodge before the occasion of the Lodge's centennial celebration.

There have been a total of 704 brothers raised in Fish house Lodge in the course of the past century. At the present time membership is at its highest peak, there being 154 active members in our Lodge.

Texas Masonry and Charity

By Don Comedy, TCMF Executive Director

From the Fall 2011 "The Texas Mason Magazine" at www.grandlodgeoftexas.org

The date on the articles of incorporation of the Texas Masonic Charities Foundation (TMCF) is December 16, 2004. Masonry came to the territory now known as Texas in the early 1800's with the first scouts and settlers and with them came the fraternal obligation to charity.

Throughout the war for Independence, the birth of a new nation as the Republic of Texas, statehood, the Confederacy, and all the challenges since, the Masons of Texas have continued their commitment to those in need. From those meager beginnings and for the next 180 years, Masonry has thrived and been an integral part of the lives of a unique people who have become known throughout the world as 'Texans'.

Masonry and Masonic charities daily touch the lives of many Texans, and this contact often occurs without the slightest knowledge of the recipient. Unverified estimates put the dollar value of Masonic Charity in the US at \$2 million per DAY.



TMCF and Local Lodges

The Texas Masonic Charities Foundation is the vehicle that local lodges can use today to compound their efforts at the local level to continue the tradition of charity to the new society of the 21st Century.

Board members have been consistent in their commitment to compound the value of all TMCF grants by requiring dollar for dollar matches from local lodges. While the board is firm in their belief that the one-to-one matches are generally the best approach, they recognize that some very worthwhile charitable needs might very well be larger than the financial abilities of some of our smaller lodges and board members have expressed a possibility that at some point they might consider a two-to-one or other ratio type match. At the same time, current board members are unanimous in their commitment to require local lodges to participate with some type of cash match for any grants approved.

Scholarships

One of the largest charitable contributions of Texas Lodges every year is funding college scholarships and every lodge has their own unique system of what best works in their individual communities. TMCF is dedicated to the goal of working with as many of these lodges as possible and providing matching grants for their scholarship programs. TMCF is committed to being as flexible as possible in working with lodges and at the same time making certain that all IRS regulations affecting our 501(c)(3) status are followed.

Masonic support of education in Texas dates to the time of Texas as an independent Republic and has continued until today. No single charitable event touches more communities across our state or has a more direct impact than the Worshipful Master or his representative of a local lodge presenting scholarships and Lamar.

Medals at graduation and award ceremonies.

During 2010, TMCF conducted its first matching scholarship program and received just over 100 applications of which 65 were actually funded. As with most new programs, we discovered numerous ways to improve the program and those improvements resulted in over 200 lodges receiving 2011 matching grants totaling just over \$250,00.00

Wildfire Relief

TMCF is also heavily involved assisting local lodges meet the needs of Texas Masons who have suffered losses in the recent wildfires.

Other Charities

In addition to these programs, TMCF also offers matching grants to local lodges for other charitable endeavors. These projects can vary and might be in support of a community project such as a local volunteer fire department trying to raise money for special equipment or some other worthwhile project that the local lodge members decide to support.



"Freemasonry is an ancient and respectable institution, embracing individuals of every nation, of every religion, and of every condition in life. Wealth, power and talents are not necessary to the person of a Freemason. An unblemished character and a virtuous conduct are the only qualifications for admission into the Order. [LAURIE]",

Freemasons: Secret Men's Business

The Freemasonry movement has shed centuries of secrecy and is now looking for a few good men. Daniel Tran reports.

Hanging by a piece of barely visible thread is the letter G. It is silver and large, about the size of a man's head, and it hangs in another 309 rooms across Victoria in similar fashion. For the freemasons gathering under it tonight, it is a representation of one of their ancient order's central tenets: there is a God.

Although the organization has traditionally been shrouded in secrecy, Freemasons Victoria's grand secretary Peter Henshall is straightforward about what the once esoteric organization does.

"Freemasonry is probably one of the world's oldest fraternal organizations. [It] offers men of over the age of 18 opportunities to develop themselves, interact with other like minded men and, in a general sense, adopt a principled way of life."

He says Freemasons believe in fraternity and acting honestly and equitably towards others, be they members, family or peers.

Freemasonry was formed in the image of Europe's stonemasons, who had created guilds to protect their commercial advantage. Impressed by their methods, a group of like minded men established the first lodge in their image.

In 171 in, England, several of these lodges came together to promote the concept of free masonry, so named because it was free from the requirement to actually be a mason of any kind.

The Craft, as Freemasonry is known among its members, spread through the British Empire and reached Australia through members travelling aboard the Endeavour and First Fleet. In Victoria today, there are 130 lodges and about 13,000 members. Although the average freemason is in his mid-50s, there has been a growing trend of younger men joining its ranks.

To become a freemason, a man must be at least 18, of good moral standing in the community and have a belief in a supreme being, like God.

But religion plays no part in Freemasonry. The initiation ceremony specifically encourages candidates not to enter into any political or religious topic during a lodge meeting.

"Freemasonry is in no way a religion and it doesn't profess to be. It wants to equally apply itself to people from any religious background and that's evidenced by our membership," says Mr. Henshall.

"I think the principle of equality is exemplified by all wearing the same dinner suit and gloves so that you can go into a lodge and you can have a bricklayer stand next to a lawyer and you wouldn't know who was who.

"Gloves hide the gnarled hands of the bricklayer and the smooth hands of the surgeon, allowing them to meet on equal grounds, regardless of wealth or standing."

Before a candidate is admitted to the Craft, however, he is required to front a selection committee and provide references on his moral character.

"The great thing about having a standard and having everyone set and staying at that standard is that when you meet a freemason, you immediately know who he is and what to expect of him," Mr. Henshall said. "You immediately have a trust in him that you can rely on."

If a freemason is found to be behaving in an illegal or unethical manner, such as through theft or infidelity, he is investigated by an ethics committee and may be expelled.

For most members, it was the character of the freemasons they knew which inspired them to join.

Mr. Henshall said his father, also a freemason, was a principled man who was a good example to him growing up.

"And you sort of put two and two together. His mates were freemasons, they were all decent sort of fellas, they all enjoyed each other's company so it sort of sparked my interest in joining. And when I joined, I sort of appreciated why he was as he was and I've been a freemason ever since.

"The people whom I knew were freemasons and their attitude to life, their attitude to fellow human beings,



Freemason Peter Henshall. Picture: Lucy Di Paolo

their general behavior, that's what made me want to be a freemason. The only regret I have is that I didn't join it sooner."

Master of the Canterbury Lodge is John Rodrigo whose grandfather was a freemason in his native Sri Lanka. He inspired his grandson to join because of the company he kept.

"I never knew my grandfather. I was one year old when he passed on, but my father told me he was very prominent in the lodge," Mr. Rodrigo said.

"And even though I didn't meet him in person, I used to meet his friends and they were always very up-standing people and I always wanted to be something like that because they were honest, they were family members, they were family men.

Although he was 30 when he eventually joined, Mr Rodrigo, said Freemasonry had always been a part of his life.

Canterbury Lodge meets in the Mt Waverley Masonic temple in Stephenson's Road. The lodge, No. 312, was formed on November 13, 1932 by 13 freemasons. Their first master was engineer David McLeod Buchanan. Originally meeting in an old theatre in Surrey Hills, the lodge moved to Prospect Hill Road in Camberwell before settling in Mt Waverley 11 years ago. Since its first move, the lodge's former location has become its formal name although it is no longer based there.

At the time Mr. Rodrigo joined in 1981, Freemasonry was still highly secretive and despite its popularity, it was difficult to determine who was a member.

Says Mr. Henshall: "You would've seen men walking down the street in gabardine overcoats with little black cases and you wouldn't have known that they were freemasons. It was very much a topic that wasn't openly discussed."

But the Craft's secrecy has taken a toll on its once-strong membership, which has dwindled to less than a fifth of what it once was.

"When I joined the Craft back in 1981, the membership was about 75,000. Now it's dropped, but it's dropped because of pressures of day-to-day living and I think the younger people of today have a lot more things to do and their priorities are different.

"But the numbers are increasing again – a lot of younger people coming back in which is good to see."

Mr. Henshall said Freemasonry was starting to become appealing again for younger men.

"I think people are now returning to those needs because there really isn't anything offered in a community sense, like freemasonry, for the younger man."

Women are still unable to join though, another part of the group's traditional nature. When it was founded, men would travel to find work while their wives stayed at home.

"It's not to say that women aren't involved, they're very, very heavily involved in terms of a lot of the charitable work that we do and a lot of the social work that we do. Another benefit for women is that they appreciate their partners are learning something valuable in terms of relationships."

"There are membership organizations for women as well that are allied or similar to freemasonry, the Order of the Eastern Star is a lady's only organization."

Freemasons Victoria's Monash Gully District is holding an open night at the Waverley Masonic Centre on October 14. Details: Hans, 9758 5764.



In Mt. Vernon TX, Drummond's Bar began construction on an expansion of their building in order to increase their business.

In response, the local Baptist Church started a campaign to block the bar from expanding, and used petitions and prayers.

Work progressed right up until the week before the grand reopening when lightning struck the bar and it burned to the ground! Afterwards the church folks were rather smug in their outlook, bragging about "the power of prayer," until the bar owner sued the church on the grounds that the church was ultimately responsible for the demise of his building, either through direct or indirect actions or means."

In its reply to the court, the church vehemently denied all responsibility or any connection to the building's demise.

The judge read through the plaintiff's complaint and the defendant's reply, and at the opening hearing he commented "I don't know how I'm going to decide this, but it appears that we have a bar owner who believes in the power of prayer, and an entire church congregation that does not."

Fraternal Orders — Rosicrucians

By Percy Jantz, Feb. 4 2002

Rosicrucians. Not rose crux, rose cross, but ros crux, dew cross. Dew was considered by the ancient chemists as the most powerful solvent of gold ; and cross in alchemy is the synonym of light, because any figure of a cross contains the three letters L V X (light). "Lux" is the menstruum of the red dragon (i.e. corporeal light), and this gross light properly digested produces gold, and dew is the digester. Hence the Rosicrucians are those who used dew for digesting lux or light, with the object of finding the philosopher's stone.

"As for the Rosycross philosophers.
Whom you will have to be but sorcerers,
What they pretend to is no more
Than Trismegistus did before,
Pythagoras, old Zoroaster,
And Apollonius their master."

Butler : Hudibras, pt. ii. 3. E. Cobham Brewer, The Dictionary of Phrase & Fable. Hertfordshire : Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1993. pb. p.1076.

Many people have sought a connection between Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism. Some claim — incorrectly — that Freemasonry came from Rosicrucianism. There are enough similarities between them to make the history of Rosicrucianism of interest to freemasons.

The birth of Rosicrucianism is almost universally attributed to John Valentine Andrea, a German monk. He was known for his charity and his attempts to promote the betterment of mankind through study and learning.

Scholars believe it was he, in 1614, who published a fictional book called "The Chemical Marriage" by Christian Rosenkreuz.

In this book, Christian Rosenkreuz is born to a poor but good family. At a young age he joined a monastery, and at some stage he is allowed to accompany an old monk on a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. The monk dies in Cyprus and Christian goes on alone. In Damascus, he is amazed by the wonders of the city sages and he places himself under their direction.

After three years of studying their hidden mysteries, he goes to Egypt for further study. Then at the direction of his Arabian masters, he travels to Fez, where there is an annual meeting of the African and Arabian philosophers, to compare notes on their studies and travels.

After several more years, he goes to Spain but getting a poor reception, he returns to his native Germany.

There, Rosenkreuz advocated a reformation in morals and science But met with little sympathy. So he decided to start his own society.

He gathered three companions from his old monastery, swore them to secrecy, passed all his knowledge on to them and, it is transcribed, they built a temple, called "the Temple of the Holy Ghost."

They then increased their number to eight, and after all were fully instructed into the mysteries of science and nature, they agreed to separate. Two would stay with Father Rosencruetz, the others would travel to pursue learning, but would return every year to communicate the results of their study. Then they would depart again, this time with two different members of the order staying behind.

The rules of the order were:

- 1) that they would devote themselves to nothing else than the free practice of Physic.
- 2) that they were to wear no special clothing, but rather to adopt the customs of the land they were in.
- 3) that each one was to present himself at the Temple Of the Holy Ghost on a particular day of the year,



The Temple of the Rose Cross, Teophilus Schweighardt Constantiens, 1618.



18° Knight of the Rose Croix jewel (from the Masonic Scottish Rite)

or send an excuse for his absence.

- 4) that each was to look for a brother to succeed him on his death.
- 5) that the letters RC were to be their seal, watchword and title.
- 6) that the brotherhood was to be kept a secret for 100 years.

When 100 years old, Christian Rosencruetz died. His burial place was known only to the two brothers who were with him at the time and they took that secret with them to the grave.

The society continued, always 8 in number, for a further 120 years. There was tradition in the brotherhood, that after 120 years, Father Rosencruetz' grave was to be discovered, and the brotherhood no longer a secret.

The Temple of the Holy Ghost was being altered, and when a brass plate was removed from the wall, a door was revealed bearing this inscription "after 120 years I will be opened"

Inside was a vault of 7 sides, each 5 feet long and 8 feet high. The ceiling was arched and the room lit by an artificial sun at its center while in the middle of the floor was an altar bearing the inscription "while living I made this compact copy of the universe my grave".

In the center were 4 figures with the words

- 1) by no means void
- 2) the yoke of the law
- 3) the liberty of the gospel
- 4) the unsullied glory of God

The 7 walls were each divided into 10 squares, with figures and sentences to be explained to the initiates. They also each contained a door, leading to closets, which contained all manner of wonders, from the history of the brotherhood to encyclopedias, from the life of the founder to curious mirrors and burning lamps, of instructions on how to build up the order, and how it would eventually fall into decay.

Pushing aside the altar, they found the body of Rosencruetz, freshly preserved, with a volume under his arm.

This then was the story attributed to Andrea. It was intended to be a suggestion to the learned, to promote philanthropy, to better mankind through answering the questions posed.

It was misunderstood then, as it has been since. Everywhere his fable was accepted as fact. People searched for the Temple of the Holy Ghost. Letters appeared continuously, addressed to the order, seeking admission. None were answered.

The brotherhood was earnestly attacked and vigorously defended in books and pamphlets.

But no one ever heard from the order itself.

Eventually some, having sought vainly for the invisible society, resolved to form their own, and hence there appeared by 1622 an alchemists group in The Hague, calling themselves Rosicrucians.

The doctrine soon found its way to Britain, around 1625, and publications began to appear.

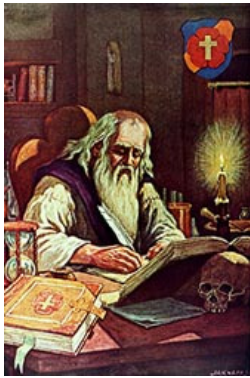
Common symbols resulted in scholars then and since trying to find a common origin between Rosicrucian and Freemasonry. But this is not so. The Rosicrucians were Theosophists, religious men whose doctrines were of spirits, of the elements, of numbers and heavenly bodies and their influence on men.

The Freemasons were founded by builders, whose symbols applied in architecture and were of a Christian character.

There is however, some Rosicrucian influence in the higher degrees of Freemasonry. Chevalier Michael Ramsey, (1668-1743) is credited with starting the higher degrees. His were designed to support a connection to the crusades and the Templars. But Rosicrucian or Hermetic philosophy crept in.

By 1758 there were over 50 degrees, with titles like "Hermetic Knight, Hermetic Rite, Philosophic Cabalist, Rite of Philalethes". Most of these are now laid aside, but the modern 28th degree in the Scottish Rite, that of Knight of the Sun, is a condensation of the Rosicrucian doctrines.

The modern 18th degree of the Scottish Rite, that of the Rose Croix is not Hermetic. it stems from Christian doctrine alluding to the blood of Christ being shed on the cross.



Frater C.R.C. - Christian Rose Cross

Colorful Confederate General Both Vilified And Celebrated

By LARRY ESKRIDGE of the Daily Ledger
Canton Daily Ledger

On a cold March morning in 1862, Union forces were attacked at a place called Pea Ridge in Arkansas by a group of Confederate soldiers, both on horse and on foot. As the Confederates advanced, Union troops realized by the painted faces, feathered hats and turbans, moccasins, tomahawks, bows and arrows, and war cries they were being attacked by Indians.

The Native American Confederates, Cherokees from Indian Territory, overwhelmed the Union troops but failed to take advantage of their success as they stopped to celebrate at the captured artillery. Some of them set fire to the gun carriages, with the result of the shells in the ammunition chests exploding, killing and wounding many of the warriors.

Finally, the Union forces regrouped and drove the Indians back. The Confederate Indians were still able to keep the artillery pieces they had captured, although they were not able to use them.

While only a minor part of the two-day battle, which resulted in an important Union victory, the attack by the Native American Confederates received a great deal of publicity in the North, with accounts of the scalping and mutilation of Union soldiers bringing condemnation against the man who had recruited the Indian fighters, Brigadier General Albert Pike.

Northern papers accused Pike of approving the practices, which were a regular part of Native American warfare, even accusing Pike of getting the Cherokees drunk to participate in the savage acts. It was further reported that Pike dressed up in war paint, feathers, and a nose ring to lead the Indians in the battle.

In reality, Pike was horrified by the incident. He issued an order that wounded men were not to be killed and no scalping was to be done, even sending a copy of his order to the opposing Union commander. The accusations, however, remained.

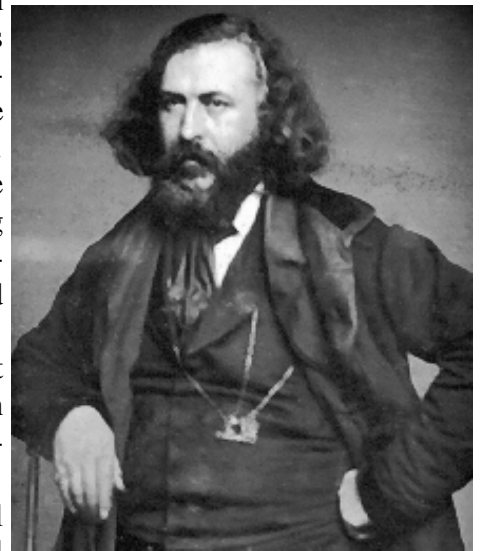
Pike himself was quite a colorful figure even without the sensational accusations. At 55, he had long hair and a Biblical beard, and often did put on Indian garb -- moccasins, leggings and feathered headdresses. Moreover, he was a friend of the Indians, often representing them in legal matters and possessing a great knowledge of their customs.

Although he had served in the Mexican War, Pike was not primarily a military man. Settling in Arkansas after a visit to the Indian tribes in the southwest, Pike was not only a lawyer but also a poet, journalist, planter and scholar, speaking Latin, Greek, Sanskrit and many Native American languages. Born in Boston, he was a large man renowned for his gluttony and for hiring a brass band to accompany him on his travels to out of the way legal circuits. He was also devoted to the work of Shelley and Keats, trying to imitate them in his own work.

Most of all, Pike was said to have an ego the size of his body and was known to be quite stubborn about the correctness of his opinions. And he apparently was often right.

Pike was appointed as a special commissioner to deal with the tribes in the Indian Territory, particularly the Five Civilized Tribes -- Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Seminoles. When he arrived, he found the tribes feuding internally between those who agreed to removal from their original homelands and those opposed, as well as full-bloods who wanted to follow the old ways and mixed bloods who were more progressive. The tensions were heightened by the white Civil War.

Pike was able to sign treaties with some of the leaders of the Five Civilized Tribes, as well as with members of the Osage, Quapaw, Seneca, and Shawnee tribes. He also managed to get the Comanches to sign a pledge to stop raiding in Texas, although they did not promise to actively support the Confederacy.



Brigadier General Albert Pike

The treaties negotiated by Pike promised the Confederacy would take over the financial assistance provided by the Union for the tribes, and stipulated that Native American Confederate troops would only be called on to fight in defense of their own lands in the Indian Territory. The treaties also promised Confederate troops would be called into Indian Territory to help fight against Union forces threatening the area.

Pike himself was made a brigadier general because of his efforts and took command of a number of Native American regiments.

Although Pike's Indian troops met with some success, he eventually began quarreling with other southern commanders, finally resigning his command, which he claimed he never wanted in the first place. Vilified as "insane or a traitor" by the South and despised as a war criminal in the North, Pike returned to private life.

But that was not the last of Albert Pike. Using his knowledge of history, languages, and cultures, he authored a work called "Morals and Dogma," which became what many believe to be the cornerstone of the Scottish Rite bodies of Freemasonry.

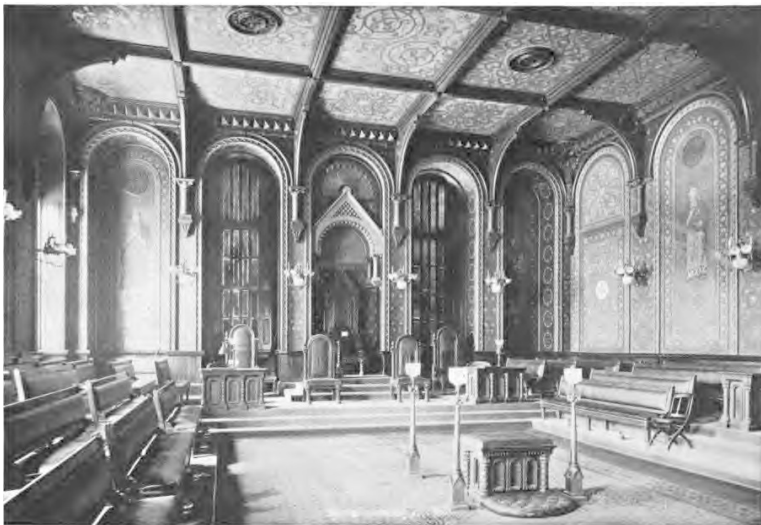
Pike may have enjoyed good relations with Native Americans, but other Confederates were involved in a different way with the Indian tribes of the West. Their exploits, although extremely important in U.S. history, are almost unknown by the general public. Their story also deserves to be told.

The Masonic Temple

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The Masonic Temple of Philadelphia is, believe, the largest and most costly edifice ever erected for the exclusive uses of the Masonic Fraternity. The ground on which it stands was purchased July 1, 1867, and has a frontage on four streets—one hundred and fifty feet on Broad and Juniper Streets, respectively, and two hundred and forty-five feet on Filbert and Cuthbert Streets—the Temple occupying the entire block. The corner-stone was laid June 24, 1868, and the Temple was completed and dedicated September 26, 1873, the cost up to that date being \$1,569,092. About three hundred thousand dollars have since been expended on alterations, improvements, and decorations. It is a perfect type of Norman architecture, and was built of Quincy and Fox Island granite.

In its construction and in its furnishing none but the best and most durable materials were used, and, after a lapse of thirty years, no fault has been discovered in the structure. It is a lasting monument to the Fraternity it represents.





My own theory on the butterfly or moth, and I have stretched a picture (left) of the Silk Moth being the multicultural symbol of rebirth and reincarnation. It is also connected with metamorphosis, as it changes from the caterpillar to the moth after a period of silky gestation. Admired more than many common moths for their symmetry of pattern and colour, and the preciousness of their fibres, they are also connected with the night and the flame, creatures of secrets and illumination. It seems appropriate to be placed between the spoked wheel and the skull.

The silk worm feeds on the mulberry, so ingests wisdom. However, the continuous fibre that they weave is ultimately to their own doom, as unravelling the thread will kill the insect. It seems worthy of consideration, but possibly lepidopterists may not.

The skull has one ear placed on the nearest the pilgrim's staff and is interpreted as "listening to the wants of a distressed brother". From another description of the Mosaic:

The skull has one ear placed on the nearest the pilgrim's staff and is interpreted as "listening to the wants of a distressed brother". From another description of the Mosaic:

"On a ground of Grey Stone is a human skull, inlaid in grey, black and white, above it is a plumb line in coloured wood, the points being made of brass. From the Top is suspended a plumb line-beneath the skull is a six-spoked wheel, on the rim of which is a moth with red wings edged with yellow, while its eyes are blue. On the left there is an upright spear from which hangs a scarlet and purple robe. The spear is surrounded by a white braid of black and white squares. On the right is a thorn stick from which hangs a coarse piece of cloth in grey brown and yellow tied with cord and over it a leather knapsack. Here we have the Sq. and the plumb-line, the skull, emblem of Mortality, the Butterfly - Moth - symbol of the Greeks to designate the Soul - the wheel emblem of the circle of life - the spokes are placed to represent the six points of intersection and form the triangles - the Hub - the Point in the Centre - the right side - the rugged Staff, the robe and wallet of the Wanderer, denote the passing transitory life of the world - the left - the spear, purple robe and golden cord of the conqueror - the reward of an upright and honourable life well spent. The Skull has one ear placed on the side nearest the pilgrim's Staff and is interpreted as "Listening to the wants of a distressed Brother." The whole a symbol of Life - Death and Immortality. Probably the oldest Tracing Board in the world to-day".

Acknowledgements

[1] *The Builder* – January 1915 – MasonicDictionary.com

[2] *Hainault Lodge* – Newsletters 1969-1977 – original idea for the article

Remember Your Absent Brother

From the "Just a Mason Blogspot" at <http://justamason.blogspot.com/>

Does attending a meeting of your Lodge really demonstrate true interest in the fraternity? And does non-attending mean a lack of interest?

A Lodge recently looked at suspending a brother for non-payment of dues. No one had heard of him, let alone seen him in Lodge. It appeared he wasn't contributing much except a cheque and, even then, he stopped contributing that.

It would have been very easy to be lazy Craftsmen and to vote for suspension and save the Lodge the ever-increasing fees to Grand Lodge. But someone decided to check into the situation. It turns out the brother, now 82 years of age, had been hospitalised much of the year and barely had money for medical costs. He hadn't attended meetings as he had moved to a small town in the 1960s but continued his membership.

It would have been very easy to be lazy Craftsman and simply remit his dues. But a new brother in the Lodge instantly whipped out a chequebook and put out his own money for a brother he didn't know and likely would never meet.

It was an act of selflessness that serves as an example for Freemasons far senior in the quarries.

The old brother was astounded. He wrote the Lodge and explained how he loved the Craft, had followed the principles of it as best he could and hoped he could live up to those many men in his Lodge years ago who did the same.

Brethren, it's imperative as Freemasons that we continue to remain in constant contact with each other to lend help and encouragement and just to let a brother know that someone is thinking of them. For while a brother of the Order may not be able to be at meetings, that may not make him any less a brother. Or a Freemason.

An Instrument of Death — A Play in One Act

Editor's note; This little story was found on the "Just A Mason Blogspot" at justama-son.blogspot.com without author credits, so I have no idea who wrote it. I do know if I could have written it, I would have been proud of it. It is the best commentary I have ever read regarding the one day classes.

Scene: *The Unfinished Temple of King Solomon.*

Time: *Past High Twelve, as Grand Master Hiram is about to leave by way of the South Gate.*

Curtain.

Ruffian: Grand Master Hiram! It is fortunate that I meet you at this time. Behold! The temple upon which I have labored is almost complete, but I have not received the wages of a Master Mason, promised to me when my work is done. I, therefore, demand of you the secrets of a Master Mason.

Hiram: Craftsman, you have not yet completed your task. At the proper time...

Ruffian: Well, Grand Master Hiram, my girl-friend wants to go out on our night of labor in the Lodge. Masonry is not supposed to interfere with my personal life, right?

Hiram: I guess that's true, Craftsman.

Ruffian: Observe! I hold an instrument of death. I can deplete the Masonic roll by walking if I have to wait around much longer. You won't have much of a Lodge left.

Hiram: Oh, very well. Here are the secrets of a Master Mason.

Hiram communicates secrets.

Ruffian: There's not much reason for me to hang around and work on this building any more. My girl-friend wants to go to the football game tonight. Farewell.

The Ruffian exits. Grand Master Hiram continues to the West Gate.

Ruffian 2: Grand Master Hiram! You agreed to give me the secrets of a Master Mason when the Temple was completed. I realize I haven't done very much on it, but I've got other things going on. Work is really busy. I just don't have time. This isn't the 1990s, you know, when guys didn't have to work as much as I do.

But I'm young, so I'm the future of Masonry, you know. You need me. I hold an instrument of death. I will kill the Lodge by leaving it. So, give me the secrets of a Master Mason.

Hiram: But, you say you haven't done much...

Ruffian 2: Yeah, I know what I promised when I joined. But, you know, stuff happens. And I've really been tied up. So, I've got my reasons. You said public and private avocations come first. Therefore, give me the secrets of a Master Mason.

Hiram: Oh, I suppose your intentions are good. Here are the secrets.

Hiram communicates secrets.

Ruffian 2: That's all? I was hoping for a lot more than that. Later.

The Ruffian exits. Grand Master Hiram continues to the East Gate.

Ruffian 3: Grand Master Hiram! I have heard you quibbling with the other two. I not yet an Entered Apprentice, but I desire the secrets of a Master Mason you have given to them. And you know how life is today. I work a lot of hours, I have children at home, I have commitments to...

Hiram: Tell you what, my friend. We have a fast-track class coming up. No labor is required. Simply show up with your check book, block out a couple of hours, sit on the side and you will have the secrets of a Master Mason. You can do the labor after, if you'd like. I realize the young people of today...

Ruffian 3: Grand Master Hiram, I am ashamed of you. Would it be that you surrender the secrets of a Master Mason so easily? Should they not be earned? Should not every new Mason have a feeling of a sense of accomplishing a task? Is that not part of the analogy of labor that is outlined in Masonic ceremonies?

Hiram: Well...

Ruffian 3: Is it not better for a young man to wait with patience and join a Masonic Lodge when the time is right instead of making excuses and pushing him through, just as the candidate for each degree is asked to wait



with patience before entering for the ceremony?

Hiram: Well...

Ruffian 3: And should not someone in the exalted position you hold be protecting such traditions, the very bedrock which attracts keenly interested new members, as it has for all ages?

Hiram: Well...

Ruffian 3: If your secrets are so easy to obtain, then they are secrets I do not want. I shall retire by the West Gate, which is open wide to the new who are merely curious and the old who would favor shortcuts.

Hiram: But...

Ruffian 3: Grand Master Hiram, I do not hold an instrument of death. You do.

The Ruffian exits.

Curtain.

Madame de Xaintrailles

A lady who was initiated into Freemasonry by a French Lodge that did not have the excuse for this violation of law that we must accord to the Irish one in the case of Miss Saint Leger. Clavel (*Histoire Pittoresque*, page 34) tells the story, but does not give the date, though it must have been about the close of the eighteenth century. The law of the Grand Orient of France required each Lodge of Adoption to be connected with and placed under the immediate guardianship of a regular Lodge of Freemasons. It was in one of these guardian Lodges that the female initiation which we are about to describe took place.

The Lodge of Freres-Artistes, Brother-Artists, at Paris, over which Brother Cuvelier de Trie presided as Master, was about to give what is called a Fete of Adoption, that is, to open a Lodge for female Freemasonry, and initiate candidates into that Rite.

Previous, however, to the introduction of the female members, the Brethren opened a regular Lodge of Ancient Freemasonry in the First Degree. Among the visitors who waited in the antechamber for admission was a youthful officer in the uniform of a captain of cavalry. His Diploma or Certificate was requested of him by the member deputed for the examination of the visitors, for the purpose of having it inspected by the Lodge. After some little hesitation, he handed the party asking for it a folded paper, which was immediately carried to the Orator of the Lodge, who, on opening it, discovered that it was the Commission of an Aide-de-Camp, which had been granted by the Directory to the wife of General de Xaintrailles, a lady who, like several others of her sex in those troublous times, had donned the masculine attire and gained a military rank at the point of the sword.

When the nature of the supposed Diploma was made known to the Lodge, it may readily be supposed that the surprise was general. But the members were Frenchmen, they were excitable and they were gallant; and consequently, in a sudden and exalted fit of enthusiasm, which as Freemasons we cannot excuse, they unanimously determined to confer the First Degree, not of Adoption, but so far as they could do so, of regular and legitimate Freemasonry, on the brave woman who had so often exhibited every manly virtue, and to whom her country had on more than one occasion committed trusts requiring the greatest discretion and prudence as well as courage.

Madame de Xaintrailles was made acquainted with the resolution of the Lodge, and her acquiescence in its wishes requested. To the offer, she replied, "I have been a man for my country, and I will again be a man for my Brethren." According to the report, she was forthwith introduced and initiated as an Entered Apprentice, and repeatedly afterward assisted the Lodge in its labors in the First Degree. Doubtless the Irish Lodge was, under all the circumstances, excused, if not justified, in the initiation of Miss Saint Leger. But for the reception of Madame de Xaintrailles we look in vain for the slightest shadow of an apology. The outrage on their obligations as Freemasons, by the members of the Parisian Lodge, richly merited the severest punishment, which ought not to have been averted by the plea that the offense was committed in a sudden spirit of enthusiasm and gallantry.

- Source: Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry



Interesting Views On Catholicism and Freemasonry

By Greg From Freemason Information

I stumbled across this post from John Whitehead, a Catholic Historian in Oxford, in his blog Once I Was A Clever Boy who had some interesting thoughts on Catholicism and Freemasonry. In it he said:

Whether Freemasonry is a direct threat in this country [England] or in the English speaking world to Christianity may be doubted by some, but...its essential ideas are not supportive of the Church's vision and message. Freemasons may not actively plot over their dinners how to do the Church down, but their ideals reinforce post-Enlightenment attitudes and ideas that are not conducive to revealed Catholic Christianity.

His post was based on another by Fr, Ray Blake from St. Mary Magdalen Church in Brighton England. From Fr Ray Blake's blog – Masonry is a mortal sin...

The basic doctrine of Masonry is that whether we are a Jew, Christian or Muslim, we are all brothers, that these differences are unimportant. Ultimately of course that means that the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the Way to Salvation is undermined and unimportant, that being Catholic or CofE or Baptist or Methodist is immaterial, all are as good as one another. Masonry is ultimately about enshrining Enlightenment values which we see in the American and French Constitutions which are so antipathetic to the Catholic Faith: I mean values like "All men are created equal", which are now so much part of modern thinking.

This piece also asks an important question:

Who in practice is against such concepts as liberty, equality, fraternity?

To answer:

The truth is that we Catholics are, or at least we would want to qualify such sound bites, as in fact society does in practice. All men are not created equal, some have special needs others have unique abilities, some will cost society dearly, some will contribute greatly.

I wonder then, could you extrapolate and say the Church does not see all men on the level towards God, are some closer to deity than others, no matter their statement of faith? Is there a caste system of faith behind the Roman Church of who is in more Grace than the other?

All this talk stemmed from an older piece Good Catholics Should Not be Masons, written in 2009, in the Catholic Online from an article written by Fr Ashley Beck who is assistant priest of Beckenham in south London, which reiterated something most Masons already knew:

The Catholic Church teaches that Freemasonry and Christianity are incompatible. The Holy See in 1983 reiterated the traditional position that Catholics who are Freemasons are in a state of grave sin and may not receive the sacraments – the Declaration on Masonic Associations was signed by the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and makes it clear that local bishops cannot dispense from its provisions.

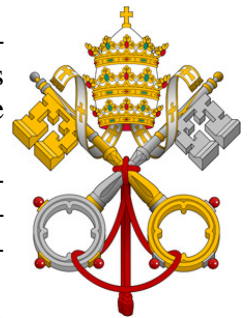
In this piece, the author gets to the heart of the matter and states:

The overriding problem is that in spite of what Freemasons claim, their way of life is a religion, with all of religion's hallmarks. You can no more be a Freemason and a Christian than you can be a Muslim and a Christian. Catholics are committed to inter-faith dialogue and mutual respect, but this requires Freemasons to be honest about what they are. For Catholics, thinking about the reasons for the gulf between us can deepen our understanding of the Christian faith.

This rhetoric comes up every few years, and American Masonry quickly disassociates itself with the claim that its "different" than European Masonry and that the Church is OK with membership in both organizations.

Clearly, its not.

I wonder what, if anything, would come from the Vatican on the matter. We do have the 1983 Declaration, but is that valuable now 28 years on? and, I wonder to what degree American Masons pay heed to it, choosing their own free will and Liberty over doctrine? I feel for those brothers, to know that the agent of their faith sees them as in a state of grave sin. To be in a



Grave Sin means that the individual still “sin[s] willfully after having the knowledge of the truth, [such that] there is now left no sacrifice for sins.” Essentially, it becomes a premeditated act of offense.



You can find a (long) list of Grave Sins at the website What is a Mortal Sin, of which I counted 48 – from Lust to Despair in Hope. All of which stems from Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Clearly, these various points raise a number of questions and points, to which I would refer the reader to an article, The Catholic Church and Freemasonry, published last year in which Rev Mr. John J. McManus, JD, JCL – a Church Deacon and attorney, spoke at Gate City Lodge and delved into these topics there and in person. In that presentation, and in the piece, he enumerates 11 positions on why the church and Freemasonry are incompatible which had a significant outcome which lead to the 1983 fundamental conclusion which said:

“Even though Masonic organizations may not in particular cases plot against the faith, it would be still wrong to join them because their basic principles are irreconcilable with those of the Catholic faith.”

Given the tone of the Church, many in the Protestant arena have agreed with the same conclusion.

All of this brings us to some interesting and unanswered questions:

1. Is a declaration of being a Faith necessary for a dialog between Masons and the Church?
2. Does it take some proclamation of Faith to necessitate inclusion in an interfaith discussion in a free state?
3. What greater degree of honesty is the Vatican looking for, or will Masonry forever be incompatible the same way as it see’s Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, or any other non Catholic faith?
4. Does masonry have the stamina or will to drive the conversation, or is it secure in its own practice without need of any recognition?
5. What is at the center of the Church’s disdain for Masonry such that as it will sit with other faiths and recognize their values but squirms and frets at the inclusion of Freemasonry because it believes in the idea of equality of man? Isn’t that the purpose of interfaith dialogues, recognizing the universality of faiths role to mankind?
6. Should Masonry align itself with the Church doctrine and strip away its Universal tenets and bring itself more into measure with those of the Catholic Church so as to bring the two organizations together so as to have these dialogues?
7. Does it even matter to Masonry that its tenets intersect the doctrine of the Church?

You may read or comment at - <http://www.freemasoninformation.com/2011/01/interesting-views-on-catholicism-and-freemasonry/>



A six-year-old grand-son asked if he could say grace.

As we bowed our heads he said, "God is good, God is great. Thank you for the food, and I would even thank you more if Nana gets us ice cream for dessert. And liberty and justice for all! Amen!"

Along with the laughter from the other customers nearby, I heard a woman remark, "That's what's wrong with this country. Kids today don't even know how to pray. Asking God for ice cream! Why, I never!"

Hearing this, my grand-son burst into tears and asked me, "Did I do it wrong? Is God mad at me?"

As I held him and assured him that he had done a terrific job, and God was certainly not mad at him, an elderly gentleman approached the table.

He winked at my grand-son and said, "I happen to know that God thought that was a great prayer."

"Really?" my grand-son asked.

"Cross my heart," the man replied.

Then, in a theatrical whisper, he added (indicating the woman whose remark had started this whole thing), "Too bad she never asks God for ice cream. A little ice cream is good for the soul sometimes."

Naturally, I bought my grand-children ice cream at the end of the meal. My grand-son stared at his for a moment, and then did something I will remember the rest of my life.

He picked up his sundae and, without a word, walked over and placed it in front of the woman. With a big smile he told her, "Here, this is for you. Ice cream is good for the soul sometimes; and my soul is good already."

From Brother Ed Meise.

Masonic Lodges Destroyed By Tornado Merge Into One

By Wayne Grayson - Staff Writer

Having been called to the cornerstone only by his title, the Grand Senior Warden placed a wooden level, the “jewel of his office,” atop the stone and eyed it.

He returned to face the podium.

“Most worshipful Grand Master, I have found the cornerstone to be level,” he reported. “The craftsmen have performed their duty.”

Two more officers placed their instruments against the stone as well. They found it plumb and square.

Only then did the Grand Master proclaim the stone “well-formed, true and trusty.”

Also blessed with corn, oil and wine, the men gathered along Hargrove road Saturday morning also invoked the blessing of God, referred to as “the Great Architect of the Universe,” to support the re-born Rising Virtue Masonic Lodge No. 4.

Rising Virtue and its sister lodge, Von Bayer Lodge No. 699 in Alberta, were destroyed by the April 27 tornado. In the aftermath, members of the two lodges unanimously voted to merge.

A time capsule was laid behind the cornerstone, containing lists of the lodge’s officers and members, the names of state senators and representatives, a custom knife and a Grand Master’s lapel pin.

To commemorate the circumstances under which the lodges merged, copies of Saturday’s Tuscaloosa News as well as one from April 28 and a copy of the News’ book of tornado coverage “Eye of the Storm” were included in the time capsule as well.

The ceremony to bless the cornerstone was solemn and carefully conducted. The dozens of Freemasons in attendance were serious and gave great attention to the many details and symbolic acts of the ritual, because while the cornerstone represents the fortitude of the lodge, the lodge represents something even greater.

“Masonry was founded by men long ago who built massive structures. They built castles,” said Ronald Andress, Grand Master of Alabama’s Grand Lodge.

“Their craft could be used to teach many life lessons ... We’re building a lodge today and it’s important that it be true and square.

“But we should also be building ourselves as true and square people.”

Andress, only the third Tuscaloosa native to be named state Grand Master, said he expects great things, including greater community service, of the new lodge.

“This is going to be one of the greatest lodges in the state of Alabama,” he said. “We’re stronger and you’re going to see a lot more of us in Tuscaloosa than you’ve been seeing.”

The cornerstone ritual is one of only three public rituals the Masons perform, said Chris Riles, a spokesman for the Rising Virtue lodge. The others are funerals and the swearing-in of officers.

Thanks to the 2004 movie “National Treasure” and “The Lost Symbol,” by “The Da Vinci Code” author Dan Brown, a lot of speculation and intrigue surrounds Freemasonry and its role in the founding of this country and the secrets it still holds after at least 400 years of existence.

A couple of nods to those secrets and that history were given during Saturday’s ceremony. First the ceremony began at 10 a.m., the same time President George Washington oversaw the placing of the U.S. Capitol building cornerstone in 1789.

And during the event, a member spoke at the podium of the good the fraternity does as the reason for its long history.

“We have secrets,” he said. “But these secrets are lawful and not repugnant to the laws of man.”

“A lot of the Mason rituals are based on teachings from the Bible,” Riles said. “But the lodge is not a place of worship. Inside we don’t tell any man how to worship or what theology he should subscribe to. Every Freemason is free to believe what he wants and to think for himself.”



Freemasons perform a Masonic corner stone ceremony for the merger of the Rising Virtue Lodge No. 4 on Hargrove Road and Von Bayer Lodge No. 699 in Alberta on Saturday. Both lodges were destroyed by the April 27 tornado.

Brother Mark Twain

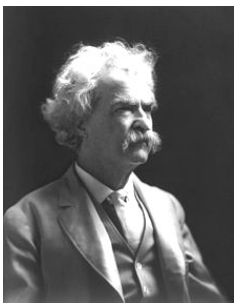
Samuel Langhorne Clemens

It is a matter of tradition that comedies and comic literature are short-lived. If this be so, one might well ask why the writings of Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, retain their vitality so that they are now read more than the works of any other American author. The popular opinion of Mark Twain is that he was a humorist. He was that - quite the greatest humorist the country has yet had - but he was also much more and it is because of this "much more" that his books are winning an ever-increasing audience.

During the latter part of the Civil War, Clemens was a newspaper correspondent in newspaper row, Washington D.C., where he made a reputation for himself as a competent, industrious and successful newspaper man.

After the War he made an excursion in the Mediterranean on board the old Quaker City. He found that many of his shipmates were (according to his own lingo) "innocents" and the comic side of his experiences on the Quaker City appealed to him so irresistibly that he wrote a diary of the cruise which he called *The New Pilgrims' Progress* or *Innocents Abroad*. The book was so truthful, so humorous, so interestingly written that it became tremendously popular and brought its author into the limelight, but I do not believe that it was the fun in it that had everything to do with making it popular; rather it was the information that it contained which was unvarnished and fearlessly written. In 1878 I stepped into a print shop in Cairo, Egypt, and asked for a guide book. The dealer handed down a small paper covered volume which I recognized at once as an excerpt from *Innocents Abroad*. When I said that I wanted a guide book not a "diary" the dealer replied that it was the best selling guide book of Cairo ever printed and strictly accurate.

The story of the "Seven Sleepers" as translated from the Koran has a beautiful moral but it is prosy and not very interesting to read; but Mark Twain's version in *Innocents Abroad* makes it an interesting story without losing any of the moral. Such things are an indication of his transcendent literary talents. His "War Prayer" is more harrowing than any page in any of Shakespeare's tragedies and will go down the ages as a classic. For decades Dickens has had the reputation of being able to portray human nature and of describing individual characters and their idiosyncrasies as no other writer, but in my own estimation Mark Twain was quite his equal if not his superior.

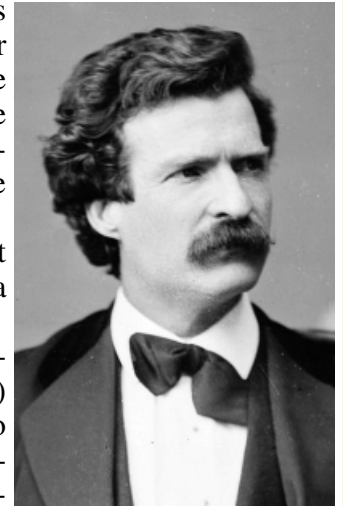


Our writer was born in the little village of Florida, Missouri, in 1835. He attended the village school in that state. His father died early and left a dependent family so that Samuel, while still a mere boy, was obliged to enter the printery of the *Hannibal Courier*, where he remained for three years and earned for himself the dignity of assistant editor. He afterwards worked on New York, Philadelphia and Cincinnati papers and won thereby a rich and varied experience. Later on, he became a steamboat pilot and if all traditions concerning the same are to be trusted, was one of the best that ever steered a boat up and down the Mississippi River. After the Civil War broke out, he served a few weeks in the Confederate army though not with any great success or patience as one may learn from the biography by Bigelow Paine. For a time he lived in Nevada and was editor of the *Virginia City Enterprise* during which time he first began the use of his now famous nom de plume "Mark Twain."

He was married in 1870 to Miss Olivia Langdon, who had been one of his shipmates on board the Quaker City. After his marriage he became editor and part proprietor of the *Buffalo Express* and lived in Buffalo for several years. Later on, he moved to Hartford, Conn., where he continued his literary work and did occasional lecturing.

From the Grand Secretary of Missouri I have the information that Samuel L. Clemens petitioned the Polar Star Lodge No. 79, St. Louis, on December 26, 1860. He was elected to receive the degrees February 13, 1861; was initiated May 22nd, 1861; passed to the degree of Fellowcraft June 12, 1861; and raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason July 10, 1861.

- Source: *The Builder* - July 1923



The Monday After: McKinley As A Mason

By Gary Brown
CantonRep.com staff writer

An event Friday will commemorate the 110th anniversary of President William McKinley's assassination.

It also will celebrate his chosen status as a Mason — a founding member of the lodge that would be named after him following his death — and a member of the Knights Templar.

"Usually, we do a memorial service in January. That's when he was born," said Gust Goutras, worshipful master of William McKinley Lodge 431.

This year, however, Lodge 431 will replace the wintertime wreath-laying with a Masonic funeral at 5p.m. Friday at McKinley National Memorial. The service will conclude with a wreath-laying ceremony and the playing of "Taps."



William McKinley in the attire of the Knights Templar.

ASSASSINATION REMEMBERED

McKinley, history records, was shot by anarchist Leon Czolgosz on Sept. 6, 1901, while in a receiving line in the Temple of Music at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, N.Y.

The 25th president of the United States died on Sept. 14, 1901.

McKinley's body and that of his wife, Ida, were laid to rest in the McKinley National Memorial in September 1907.

So, the McKinley monument is an obviously appropriate spot to honor the memory of McKinley. And the Masons are an apt organization to remember McKinley, the president being one of their own.

BECOMING A MASON

It was during the Civil War that McKinley was introduced to the Freemasonry standard. During the aftermath of fighting at Winchester, Va., not long before the battle of Gettysburg, McKinley saw the Masonic principles at work.

"Shortly after the last battle of Winchester had been fought and won by the Union, a Union officer went with his friend, a surgeon, to a field where about 5,000 Confederate prisoners from the battle were being held under guard," wrote Freemason author Todd E. Creason at his blog, "The Midnight Mason." "Very shortly after they passed the guard, the officer noticed his friend, the doctor, was talking to and shaking hands with some of the Confederate prisoners. He also noticed that the doctor was handing out money from a roll of bills he had in his pocket."



William McKinley and his wife, Ida, are entombed in the McKinley National Memorial in caskets inside the sarcophagi placed under the monument's dome.

Creason wrote that the officer — William McKinley — asked the surgeon why he was making such a generous gesture to the enemy — to strangers.

"They are brother Masons in trouble and I am only doing my duty," the doctor said. It was at that moment, that McKinley decided to become a Freemason, wrote Creason.

"If that is Freemasonry, I will take some of it for myself," McKinley supposedly recalled thinking that day.

Creason called McKinley a "true and upright Mason" with "exemplary character." And he noted that following the conclusion of the war the future president fulfilled his commitment to joining the Masons by becoming a Freemason in May 1865 at Hiram Lodge 21 in Winchester, Va.

FOUNDED LODGE

McKinley returned to Canton to build a law and political career, Goutras noted. And, he continued his affiliation with Freemasonry.

In fact, McKinley is listed as one of the charter members of what was then the Eagle Lodge of the Masons.

"Following his death, the lodge name was changed to William McKinley Lodge No. 431 and remains so today," said Goutras. "Niles McKinley Lodge No. 794 in Girard, Ohio, is also named in honor of McKinley."

Both lodges will participate in the Masonic funeral service at the McKinley monument Friday.

“Four Masons from various lodges who are Civil War re-enactors will serve as the honor guard,” said Goutras. “Behind them will be a column of Knights Templar (Canton Commandery 38); they’ll position themselves to both the left and right of the entrance to the monument.”

The funeral detachment from McKinley Lodge 431 will stand in front of the Knights Templar.

Five individuals will give brief historical readings concerning McKinley’s early years, his service as a soldier, his life after the Civil War, his front porch campaign and the red carnation that he consistently positioned on his lapel.

“Not everybody knows a lot about the historical background of McKinley, so we thought it would be appropriate,” Goutras explained. “Then we will do our funeral service, the same as we do for anybody who requests a Masonic service.”

Goutras and worshipful master of the Niles lodge will lay the wreath at the monument.

Then “Taps” will play as the memory of a president, Canton’s fallen favorite son, is honored in both Masonic and military fashion.

Masonic Impostor! Or, Sea Captain, Bigamist, Forger, Confidence-Man, Thief

From The National Heritage Museum

Pictured here, from the Album of Masonic Impostors, is Hubert Boothby, a Mason who, according the 1900 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Montana was expelled from Butte Lodge No. 22. The caption below Boothby's photo in the Album is a sort of novel in miniature (or, perhaps, a business card waiting to be made): Sea Captain, Bigamist, Forger, Confidence-Man, Thief.



HUBERT BOOTHBY.
Greatist No. 172.

Butte Lodge No. 22, Butte, Montana. Sea Captain, Bigamist, Forger,
Confidence-Man, Thief. Expelled.

The subject of Masonic impostors lends itself to over-the-top descriptions of con artists like Hubert Boothby. But at its heart, the story of Masonic impostors is really a story of Masonic charity.

Without the goodwill of Masons helping others, there would be no target for the imposition of those fraudulently posing as Masons. In the Van Gorden-Williams Library & Archives collection, we have a number of different types of material produced by Masonic Relief Boards. These Boards were often located in big cities and existed to help the down-on-his-luck Mason (or wife or children) by way of centralizing relief. In most cases, the relief board would give relief (cash, meals, a place to stay, etc.) and then get reimbursed by the Masonic lodge that the recipient belonged to.

The Masonic Board of Relief in Syracuse, NY published a small annual report that described various different cases brought to them during the year. These ranged from "Worthy Cases Reimbursed" (i.e. legitimate cases in which they assisted Masons and were reimbursed by the Mason's home lodge) to "Worthy Cases Not Reimbursed" (i.e. the same as above, but not yet reimbursed by the home lodge). A read through some of the "Fraud" cases, while occasionally amusing, suggests that many of these cases may have involved men who were alcoholics. Both the "Worthy" and "Fraud" cases are oftentimes touching vignettes of hard times. In other cases, like that of Barnet Lebner (below), we get a glimpse at what is more likely the case of a classic con man, spinning tales.

The True Mason

My Brother, Freemasonry means more than just wearing a pin or carrying a paid up dues card. You may wear an emblem on your coat, from your finger show a ring. But if you're not sincere at heart it doesn't mean a thing. It is merely an outward sign to show the world that you belong to this great fraternal brotherhood which teaches right from wrong.

What certainly counts lies buried, deep within the human breast, 'til Masonic teaching brings it out and puts it to the test. If you practice out of lodge the things you learn within, be just and upright to yourself and to your fellow men. Console a Brother when he's sick assist him when in need, without a thought of personal reward. Walk and act in such a way that the world throughout can see that none but the best can meet the test laid down in Masonry.

Always Live up to your trust and do the best you can, then you can proudly walk the world as a Freemason and a Man.

Sights unseen: Auburn's Masonic Temple

From The Sun Journal at <http://www.sunjournal.com/bplus/story/1084402>

The windowless square brick building is rather unremarkable from the outside.

It sits on Turner Street, silently keeping watch over Gracelawn Cemetery.

"People drive by this building all the time and wonder what's in here," said Ken Richardson, secretary for the Rabonni Lodge and all of the Scottish Rite bodies. "It's not a secret. You can call and set up a tour at any time."

The members of the Masonic Temple are even tentatively setting up an annual public open house for October 15.

The temple was built in 1970 and dedicated in 1971, with a large portion of money from long time member J.H. Merrill.

There are few hypotheses about why the brick structure was built without windows.

"I think they were afraid of vandalism," speculated Richardson. "There was nothing out here in 1970."

Inside the temple, around 1,000 members meet on different nights in different halls.

The Scottish Rite body and the York Rite body have the two largest halls, but allow the other 16 or so bodies to utilize them.

Within the halls, each ornate chair represents one of the 13 officers within the larger body. Then regular members sit on church pew like benches.

In order to become a Freemason, a man over 21 must seek out a current member for a petition- the Masons do not actively recruit.

After prospective candidate has been recommended by two Master Masons, investigated by a committee, and passed a unanimous ballot, the potential brother will then start his degree work.

Degree work are moral lessons equal to stages or levels of membership, performed over a Bible or Quran, because even though Masons are not a religious sect, one must believe in a Supreme Being in order to belong.

"That is what's great about it. You can be any profession, any race, and any religion to join," said Richardson.

After attaining the 32nd and highest degree, a Mason could then move on to become a Shriner.

Freemasonry in what is now Maine, dates back to 1769 when the Triangle Lodge No. 1 was formed in what is now Portland.

Every year since statehood, Masons of the state convene at the Grand Lodge of Maine in Portland for an annual meeting. The minutes from these meetings are bound into books and each temple has a set, including Auburn, dating back to 1820.

In order to fully describe what Freemasonry is, Richardson points to an informational pamphlet given to men seeking inquires about the fraternity.

On the final page it describes Freemasonry as "a kindness in the home, honesty in business, and courtesy in society, concern and assistance for the unfortunate, help for the weak, forgiveness for the penitent, love for one another, and above all, reverence and love for God. Freemasonry is many things, but above all, Freemasonry is a way of life."



A young Entered Apprentice was being tested on his proficiency. After going over the signs and passwords, he looked at his tester and asked, "I noticed several of the older members sticking their fingers in their ears and whistling. What does that sign mean?"

"That's not a sign," his tester said, "Those are Past Masters adjusting their hearing aids."



Birthplace of Tranquil Lodge, Minot, Mass. [Now North Auburn, Maine] 1818.



They Never Would Be Missed

From the book, "The Lodge Goat. Goat Rides, Butts and Goat Hairs" (1902)

There are men in our fraternity who never come to Lodge,
 And whose claims we can't resist, for they have them on the list"
 But if their names were stricken off, so far as we can judge,
 They never would be missed, they never would be missed.
 They cannot give the password, and they do not know the sign,
 And of the Order's good or ill they never read a line;
 They growl about assessments, and they grudge to pay their dues,
 And every call for charity they stubbornly refuse.
 If all the Brothers were like these, the Lodge could not exist,
 And they never would be missed, they never would be missed. -Sam Booth.

And, there's the accidentals, who now and then en masse,
 Crowd in to beat some motion that true men wish to pass;
 They're seen at each election, or when a feast is spread,
 And at the loaded tables are always near the head;
 They always have some hobby, and on it strong insist-
 Should they stop their accidental calls, they never would be missed |Y. H. B.

There's the self-important member, who thinks he knows it all,
 Whose principal pastime is gyrating round the hall;
 He makes himself obnoxious with his winks and knowing nods,
 And affects to have the power and the wisdom of the gods.
 So we've got him on the list, and his neck we want to twist,
 For he never would be missed. he never would be missed. -K.of H. Reporter.

But what about the kicker, the chap with chronic bile,
 Who since his advent to the world was never known to smile?
 He kicks against the widow, and the orphan, and the sick,
 And the measly, fly-blown rascal should be pounded . with a brick.
 If old Nick should run across him, and his ownership insist,
 Lots of folks would jump for gladness, for he never would be missed. - Foresters' magazine.

There's the "watch-dog of the treasurer," who's always there to see'
 That nothing is paid out, what 'ere the cause may be:
 Relief, distress, or charity-calls pass unheeded by,
 The fogy member has his way-progress would be to die;
 The funds are his, he seems to think, and must be kept intact
 For his children by and by, when he is off the track
 We love (?) to see him run the Lodge, and always shall insist
 That when he's called from off the earth the Lodge will still exist,
 And he never will be missed, he never will be missed. - Western Odd Fellows.

And then there is the sorehead, who to office oft aspires,
 A perfect pair of pincers when it comes to pulling wires.
 He gets a nomination by many a turn and twist,
 But when it comes to 'lection the Brothers all insist
 That he's not the proper party, so he shakes an angry fist,
 And is granted a withdrawal card, but never, never missed. -N. W. J.

Planting your Seed

From The Educator At, <http://www.theeducator.ca/philosophy/planting-your-seed/>

A successful business man was growing old and knew it was time to choose a successor to take over the business.

Instead of choosing one of his Directors or his children, he decided to do something different. He called all the young executives in his company together.

He said, “It is time for me to step down and choose the next CEO. I have decided to choose one of you. “The young executives were Shocked, but the boss continued.

“I am going to give each one of you a SEED today – one very special SEED. I want you to plant the seed, water it, and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from the seed I have given you. I will then judge the plants that you bring, and the one I choose will be the next CEO.”

One man, named Jim, was there that day and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly, told his wife the story. She helped him get a pot, soil and compost and he planted the seed. Everyday, he would water it and watch to see if it had grown. After about three weeks, some of the other executives began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow.

Jim kept checking his seed, but nothing ever grew. Three weeks, four weeks, five weeks went by, still nothing.

By now, others were talking about their plants, but Jim didn’t have a plant and he felt like a failure.

Six months went by — still nothing in Jim’s pot. He just knew he had killed his seed. Everyone else had trees and tall plants, but he had nothing. Jim didn’t say anything to his colleagues, however, he just kept watering and fertilizing the soil – He so wanted the seed to grow.

A year finally went by and all the young executives of the company brought their plants to the CEO for inspection. Jim told his wife that he wasn’t going to take an empty pot.

But she asked him to be honest about what happened.

Jim felt sick to his stomach, it was going to be the most embarrassing moment of his life, but he knew his wife was right. He took his empty pot to the board room.

When Jim arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by the other executives. They were beautiful — in all shapes and sizes. Jim put his empty pot on the floor and many of his colleagues laughed, a few felt sorry for him!

When the CEO arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted his young executives.

Jim just tried to hide in the back. “My, what great plants, trees and flowers you have grown,” said the CEO. “Today one of you will be appointed the next CEO!”

All of a sudden, the CEO spotted Jim at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered the Financial Director to bring him to the front. Jim was terrified. He thought,

“The CEO knows I’m a failure! Maybe he will have me fired!”

When Jim got to the front, the CEO asked him what had happened to his seed – Jim told him the story. The CEO asked everyone to sit down except Jim. He looked at Jim, and then announced to the young executives,

“Behold your next Chief Executive Officer!

His name is Jim!” Jim couldn’t believe it. Jim couldn’t even grow his seed. “How could he be the new CEO?” the others said.

Then the CEO said,

“One year ago today, I gave everyone in this room a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds; they were dead – it was not possible for them to grow”

All of you, except Jim, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you.

Jim was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new Chief Executive Officer!”

The Moral of the Story

- * If you plant honesty, you will reap trust
- * If you plant goodness, you will reap friends

- * If you plant humility, you will reap greatness
- * If you plant perseverance, you will reap contentment
- * If you plant consideration, you will reap perspective
- * If you plant hard work, you will reap success
- * If you plant forgiveness, you will reap reconciliation

So, be careful what you plant now; it will determine what you will reap later.

Conclusion

I love sharing these gems, as to me they are beautiful and to the point.

Furthermore we are taught in Freemasonry can best be explained by “Allegory”

Thank you again for allowing me to share with you.

Have a wonderful day & God Bless You and Yours

Norm

Masonic Lodge Hosts Food Fair Every Sunday

If by some chance, Topangans find themselves in Tarzana, CA on a Sunday, Hollywood Masonic Lodge #355 (located in Tarzana) will be hosting a food fair every Sunday from 4 to 8 p.m.

Five food trucks that pay a small fee to the lodge’s building association, will serve a variety of gourmet meals:

- BarbiesQ — Famous for its hand-pulled sandwiches of pulled pork, shredded BBQ beef, chopped smoked chicken and a veggie BBQ sandwich, as well as Mac & Jack, Cheesy Grits, Collard Greens, Grits and Greens. (barbiesq.com)
- Bollywood Bites — Sanjay Patel’s mobile catering service for L. A. events, prepares Indian food and a variety of dishes from all over the world, including Kosher and Halal and gluten-free food upon request. (thebollywoodbites.com)
- Grilled Cheese Patrol — Owner David Kerin served time as a cook for California 2,000 firefighters before making his escape to movie catering and his Grilled Cheese Patrol truck. (grilledcheesepatrol.com)
- Slammin’ Sliders — Owned and operated by California Crazy Chefs Catering, offers a menu of Kobe beef, lobster, shrimp Po’ Boy, Pulled Pork and West Coast Philly Steak, sliders all as well as salads, siders and smoothies. (slamminsliders.com)
- All American Softy — will provide the dessert with ice cream cones, cups, sundaes, root beer floats, shakes and banana splits. allamericansofty.com.
- Members will sell water and soda.

The lodge, located at 19626 Ventura Boulevard, Tarzana, CA 91356, will provide tables and chairs for people to sit and enjoy their food. For more information, contact Sheldon Mowrey, jr.warden.355@gmail.com or hollywoodlodge.org/.

About the Freemasons

Freemasonry is a non-profit fraternal organization built on a foundation of three principles: Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. Brotherly love teaches tolerance, kindness and respect towards all mankind regardless of religious, cultural or ethnic differences. Relief is that responsibility that Masons undertake to look after the welfare of each other, their families and the community at large either by philanthropy or through care and involvement. Finally, Masons believe truth to be divine in nature and fundamental to morality, and as such, is worthy of pursuit.

The International Order of Job’s Daughters and the International Order of DeMolay are related youth groups dedicated to preparing young women and men to lead productive and happy lives by teaching them leadership, responsibility and civic awareness. Both of these organizations undertake this goal in a manner that is fun and builds long-term bonds among those youths who join.

The lodge and youth orders are non-profits that support charities, such as the Masonic Homes or annual charities that are designated by Grand Lodge. This year the various lodges, together with California Grand Lodge, raised more than \$425,000 for our “By Your Side” project, which sets up a trust to pay for the training needed for nurses to become certified oncology nurses.

Baphomet, Masons and the Knights Templar

An Interview With Author Stephen Dafoe
Conducted January 2nd, 2000 by TH.C Staff

THM: Stephen, in 1998 you wrote a book called "Unholy Worship?" Isn't that an odd name for a book that is pro-Masonic?

Dafoe: Yes it is. In retrospect, it was probably a poor choice for the title as many have confused it with one of the many anti-Masonic books written on the Fraternity.

THM: Why did you write the book. What was the motivating factor?

Dafoe: As I began to research more and more the motivating factors behind the arrest of the knights Templar, I learned that the concept of Baphomet, was.....

THM: Excuse me Baphomet, could you preface that with what a Baphomet is?

Dafoe: Yes, Baphomet was the name given to the idol the Templars were accused of worshipping.

THM: Ah yes.

Dafoe: So the more I looked into the trials of the Templars, the more I realized that very little was discussed about the Baphomet concept. Indeed many of the accusations leveled against the order referred to idols, but seldom by the name of Baphomet.

THM: So if this is the case, how did Baphomet come to be associated with the Freemasons?

Dafoe: Well it is a rather long story, but in a modern context, which is really the basis of accusations against the fraternity today, the Baphomet connection can be traced to an Evangelical tract produced by Jack Chick.

THM: Jack Chick?

Dafoe: Chick is the author of many Evangelical Christian tracts geared at winning people to Christ. They are done as little comic books. For the most part they are absolute representations of intolerance. For example one on the Moslem faith is called, "Allah had no son." It goes so far as to say Moslems worship Demons. It is this type of religious intolerance that is absolutely tragic in modern society.

THM: So the Demon in the tract is Baphomet?

Dafoe: No the Baphomet is in their anti-Masonic tract called, The Curse of Baphomet, which I won't go into detail because there is a page on Templarhistory.com that we created, which is devoted to it. Suffice to say it is typical Chick material. A Masonic family has word their son tried to kill himself and has no will to live. They soon learn it is because they are Freemasons and, according to Chick, Freemasons worship Baphomet. After burning their Masonic goodies, the son recovers and the family walks off into the sun set.

THM: Are you a Freemason?

Dafoe: I am.

THM: Well it is often said in anti-Masonic publications that Masons don't know this until they reach the higher degrees. What degree are you?

Dafoe: I've gone all the way through the Craft or Symbolic lodge, which is the first three degrees that all men must obtain before going through the appendant bodies.

THM: Appendant bodies?

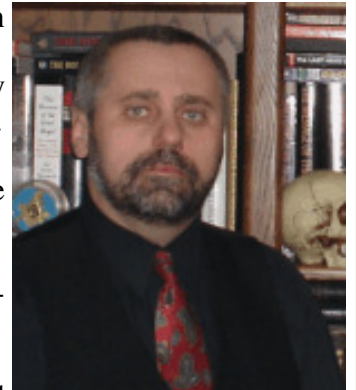
Dafoe: Yes it is my belief that there are no higher degrees in Masonry. There are many side degrees that a Mason can take, but as a Mason he is no higher ranking than a third degree Mason. It's like having a turkey dinner. I might add gravy to my bird and you may add cranberries. Someone else may add ketchup and someone may add them all. In the end we've still all ate a turkey dinner; what we've all done is enhanced our enjoyment in that dinner via different methods.

The same can be said of Freemasonry. I am a member of the Royal Arch, Cryptic Rite and Orders of the Temple, which contain the Order of Knight Templar. These all make up the York Rite. So while the Christian Right states that I am a high ranking Mason because I've done the York Rite equivalent to the 32 degree, I contend that I am no higher ranking than a man who has taken but the craft degrees.

(As a side note, Stephen Dafoe has also, since this interview, joined the York Rite College and Red Cross of Constantine, two invitational Masonic bodies)

THM: So having taken all of the York Rite degrees, have you seen any signs of Devil Worship?

Dafoe: Absolutely not. I find it remarkably interesting that an organization that practices religious tolerance



is so frequently attacked by the religiously intolerant. It all boils down to a portion of Christians who believe that their interpretation of the Bible is the only one. To me a sect that teaches that a Jew, Moslem or Hindu is worshiping Demons is not acting as a Christian as I know it.

THM: Are there Christian Masons?

Dafoe: Absolutely but one doesn't have to be to be a Mason. In fact, only a few side degrees of Masonry require one to be a professed Christian. The best known of which is the order of the Temple or Knights Templar. There are some different interpretations of this in that some jurisdictions require only a willingness to defend the Christian faith, which any Mason would be willing to do as would he defend any other faith's rite to practice its tenets.

THM: What of the Eastern Star. Their emblem is an inverted Pentagram, which is said to represent the goat or the Devil.

Dafoe: This is simply put a ludicrous assertion. Eliphas Levi was really the first in modern times to apply a sinister aspect to the inverted pentagram. Unfortunately some Masonic authors writing in the 1800's, in their ignorance wrote of this in their histories.

The inverted or one point down pentagram represents the "Star in the East" which as tradition tells us illuminated the way to Christ's birth. Further to this each of the five points corresponds with five women of the Bible. The motto of the order is We have seen His star in the East, etc."

THM: So the pentagram is not a symbol of evil. What about the Church of Satan and Anton Szandor LaVey?

Dafoe: Certainly La Vey used Levi's Sabbatic goat image as the front of his book and indeed this sigil is called a Baphomet. I go into the Baphomet pentagram in detail in the book.

A Symbol is what it is to the people interpreting it. To you and I we see Golden Arches as a place to eat food, but to someone who had never been there or saw an add, they might interpret it as mountain peaks and lord knows how a Freudian might interpret it.

What many fundamentalists forget is that the Pentalpha or five-pointed star was, early on, a Christian symbol representing the five wounds Christ suffered on the cross.

Additionally they are quick to forget that in the early days of the Christian Church, they had to meet in private assemblies or that a common secret sign was to trace the shape of the fish on the ground with ones foot.

THM: Did you write the book then to show the Fundamentalists, the error of their ways?

Dafoe: No. It is not my intention to sway their opinions, merely to show the other side of the story, from an historical context. I feel that in this way, if we understand what went before, we can understand what is happening now and avoid making the same historical mistakes.

THM: Well as they say if we don't learn from history, history will repeat itself.

Dafoe: True enough.



BSA100 – Boy Scouts of America, 100 Years of Being Prepared.

Posted on September 3, 2010 by masonictraveler

Part II Of III – Origins

There are many stories about how the Boy Scouts came into existence: Unknown Scouts on foggy London streets, clubs organized for wayward boys, or alternative organizations to an increasingly urbanized way of life. What is for sure is the zeitgeist, or spirit of the age, in which the idea of the Scouts emerged.

In short, as the middle class began to take shape in early 20th century and families moved from rural farms to urban city, there was a growing concern among some about the loss of patriotism and individualism instilled in young people. Part of that drive was a sort of early social welfare that included programs to provide physical, mental, and spiritual development for those who wanted them. The YMCA was an early promoter of these reforms and an early proponent (and organizer) for the Scouts which in quick turn, in 1910, incorporated as the Boy Scouts of America with the express purpose of teaching boys "...patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred values."



The Scouts first Director, Edgar Robinson was a former YMCA administrator who brought his skills and expertise and applied them to the newly formed Boy Scouts.

The prospect of a National Boys movement as such even garnered a national Federal Charter by Congress in 1916 as both a Patriotic and National organization.

What the scouts captured was an ideal citizen, a compassionate, reverent, and committed member. The ideal of this is codified in its mission statement which has gone through some evolution from its origins to present day.

1936 – "Each generation as it comes to maturity has no more important duty than that of teaching high ideals and proper behavior to the generation which follows."

2008 – "to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law"

Two notable predecessors of the Boy Scouts in the United States were the Woodcraft Indians started by Ernest Thompson Seton at Cos Cob, Connecticut, in 1902 and the Sons of Daniel Boone founded by Daniel Carter Beard in 1905 at Cincinnati, Ohio. A more pronounced source came in 1907 from the founding of the Scouting movement in England by British General Robert Baden-Powell who used elements of Seton's works to create several small local scouting programs for boys.

Wikipedia says of this inspiration:

"In 1909, Chicago publisher W. D. Boyce was visiting London, where he encountered the Unknown Scout and learned of the Scouting movement. Soon after his return to the U.S., Boyce incorporated the Boy Scouts of America on February 8, 1910. Edgar M. Robinson and Lee F. Hanmer became interested in the nascent BSA movement and convinced Boyce to turn the program over to the YMCA for development in April 1910. Robinson enlisted Seton, Beard, Charles Eastman and other prominent leaders in the early youth movements. In January 1911, Robinson turned the movement over to James E. West who became the first Chief Scout Executive and Scouting began to expand in the U.S."

It makes for an interesting Masonic aside to find the parallels between Masonry and Scouting, yet only a few concrete connections to American Freemasonry can be found that have carried to present day.

Beard (right) with Scouting founder Robert Baden-Powell (seated) and Ernest Thompson Seton (left)

First of those connections being through Daniel Carter Beard and his Sons of Daniel Boone, of which a notable Masonic award exists today for the support of Freemasonry and Boy Scouting aptly called the Daniel Carter Beard Masonic Scouter Award which is presented to any Master Mason who has made significant contributions to youth through Scouting. This is a selective award, the purpose of which is to recognize the recipient's outstanding service to youth through the Boy Scouts of America.

A second, and perhaps more prevalent in the daily operation of lodge and troop, is the National Association of Masonic Scouters which works to foster and develop support for Boy Scouts of America by and among Freemasons while upholding the tenants of Freemasonry.

A third connection is a bit more at the root of the early organization. Following Robinson



Beard (right) with Scouting founder Robert Baden-Powell (seated) and Ernest Thompson

as director of the newly formed BSA, James E. West was appointed director. West also happened to be a Freemason (complete records of his lodge affiliations have been a challenge to find).

In his career, West was instrumental in the early Scouts being a strong champion for it on many fronts, building its acceptance and credibility to many groups including the unions who disliked its early anti organizing language and with the Catholic Church (which at first prohibited membership because of its non Catholic start with the then very protestant YMCA).

Looking beyond Beards contribution and West's obvious affiliations to Masonry, another possible Masonic connection to the Boy Scouts comes through Baden-Powell himself.

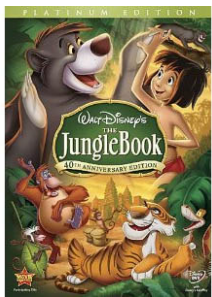
Much has been written on this subject, and its easy to find many references that say that Baden-Powell was NOT a Freemason (including a letter from then UGLE Secretary J. MacDonald in 1990) , and that the Scouts were in no way a Masonic club for boys.



Despite the similarities between the two and the obvious awards and rank progression it is possible, however, to find a small connection to Baden-Powell and Masonry through Rudyard Kipling, who, as many readers will know, was a very prolific Mason and who took his Masonry very seriously in both his works of fiction (See the *The Man Who Would Be King* film and its original book) and in his poetry (see *The Mother Lodge*). Baden-Powell and Kipling kept very close association from the start of their friendship which began somewhere between 1882 and 1884 in Lahare, India. Its doubtful to say that the friendship led to a Masonry based civic organization for boys, but its possible to see how through conversation and comparison some elements might

have been wound together, especially as you read more extensively into their friendship which continued for many years until their passing.

Further, its more likely to see how the spirit of the age contributed to the early Scouting movement, especially as youth orders seemed to lend themselves to more grown up responsibilities expressed, in some measure, through the British Scout Defense corps (or even perhaps in the more nefarious Hitler Youth which existed from 1922 to 1945, the Young Soviet Pioneers from 1922 – 1991, or even more alarming the American Boy Scouts which was a parallel of the Boy Scouts of America which existed from 1910-1920 and organized as a more militaristic program to train boys). A bolder aspect of this ideal of civic citizen contribution can perhaps be seen in the Civil Conservation Corps which had a two fold aspect of building the well-being of the country and putting unemployed men to work. In that same period there was a growing sense of losing the youth to the changing society, and the Boy Scouts were an early precognition of just how important it was to keep the youth engaged and conscious to civic involvement. In the years following the BSA incorporation, Eleanor Roosevelt was a champion for youth engagement as she championed in 1930 the American Youth Congress which saw, then as now, the need to engage youth and instill values.



But, from the relationship of Baden-Powell and Kipling, and this spirit of the age, came the essence of what would become the Cub Scouts taking shape from Kipling's work "The Jungle Book" published in 1893 (the Disney film came out in 1943) . The Wolf Cubs, as Baden-Powell had styled them, felt that the Jungle Book was every bit suitable to the idea of youth scouting. Kipling was in such agreement that he even contributed much of his Jungle Book to it including the exact method of the Wolf Cub howl instructing its call as:

"A-KAY-Lar with an accent on the second syllable which can be prolonged indefinitely.

The initial A on the other hand is almost a grunt – 'Er' - Try this and you will see the beauty of the thing."

Some other notable elements from The Jungle book that made their way into the Cub Scouts include "Law of the Pack," "Akela," "Wolf Cub," "grand howl," "den," and "pack" all (and more) used with Kipling's blessing.

The obvious connections aside, Freemasonry and the Boy Scouts have a few other traces in common. One less obvious but perhaps overt connection is in the Order of the Arrow, created in 1915, which has been described as a Masonic



Freemasons for Dummies blog recently reported on the Lodge opened at the 100th Jamboree in conjunction with Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4. Said of the event: The meeting was simply amazing as nearly 500 masons attended. The Lodge was opened on the Entered Apprentice degree, so that all Masons could attend. Most of us were dressed in our full scout uniforms. Introductions were made and the wealth of Masonic knowledge in the room was impressive. Numerous Masters and Past Masters, 3-4 past state Grand Masters, heads of Scottish Rite and York Rite bodies, etc.



The Young Soviet Pioneers

ritual embedded into the Boy Scout organization.

Created by E. Uner Goodman and Carroll Edison, the two collaborated to make a club within the club – to create a camp fraternity to improve the Scout's summer camp experience.

From Wikipedia:

Goodman and Edson decided that a “camp fraternity” was the way to improve the summer camp experience and to keep the older boys coming back. In developing this program they borrowed from the traditions and practices of several other organizations. Edward Cave's Boy's Camp Book was consulted for the concept of a camp society that would perpetuate camp traditions. College fraternities were also influential for their concepts of brotherhood and rituals, and the idea of new members pledging themselves to the new organization. Ernest Thompson Seton's Woodcraft Indians program was also consulted for its use of American Indian lore to make the organization interesting and appealing to youth. Other influences include the Brotherhood of Andrew and Phillip, a Presbyterian church youth group with which Goodman had been involved as a young man, and Freemasonry. The traditions and rituals of the latter contributed more to the basic structure of the rituals than any other organization. In an interview with Edson during his later years, he recalled that the task of writing the first rituals of the society was assigned to an early member who was “a 32nd degree Mason.” Familiar terms such as “lodge” and “obligation,” were borrowed from Masonic practice, as were some ceremonial practices. Even the early national meeting was called a “Grand Lodge,” thought to be a Masonic reference. Goodman became a Mason only after the OA was established.

Goodman was Raised in Lamberton Lodge No. 487, Philadelphia, Pa. about 1917 according to Denslow's 10,000 Famous Freemasons.

The aim of the order of the arrow is to allow Scouts to choose from among their numbers the individual who best exemplifies the ideals of Scouting. Those selected are to embody a spirit of unselfish service and brotherhood.

Goodman said of it:

“The Order of the Arrow is a ‘thing of the spirit’ rather than of mechanics. Organization, operational procedure, and paraphernalia are necessary in any large and growing movement, but they are not what count in the end. The things of the spirit count: Brotherhood, in a day when there is too much hatred at home and abroad; Cheerfulness, in a day when the pessimists have the floor; Service, in a day when millions are interested only in getting or grasping rather than giving.”



From the other side of the threshold there are some Masonic Grand Lodges that recognize cross over clubs like the National Association of Masonic Scouters and promotes a greater level of interactivity with troops. The most significant interactions with Freemasonry today, however, are those Masons with sons who have served in some capacity in the leadership of their Troop or Local Council.

Freemasonry does not rank in the top 10 of organizations that support the Scouts (the top 5 being the LDS Church, the Methodist Church, the Roman Catholic Church, PTA Groups, and private citizen groups) which is a terrible missed opportunity for lodges to engage and support an organization in such affinity to its own ideals. The reason for this I can only extrapolate is that Scouting is perceived to encroach on its own membership from participating in DeMolay, the Masonic youth order, founded in 1919.

With this briefest glimpse at the Scouts origins, the next step is to look at its organization to appreciate its flexible and member friendly approach to put the priority on the Scouter and less on the place the Scouts practice.

Coming Up Next Month: Part III – Lessons in BSA Organization.



A Holy man was having a conversation with the Lord one day and said, 'Lord, I would like to know what Heaven and Hell are like.'

The Lord led the holy man to two doors.

He opened one of the doors and the holy man looked in. In the middle of the room was a large round table. In the middle of the table was a large pot of stew, Which smelled delicious and made the holy man's mouth water. The people sitting around the table were thin and sickly. They appeared to be famished. They were holding spoons with very long handles that were strapped to their arms and each found it possible to reach into the pot of stew and take a spoonful. But because the handle was longer than their arms, they could not get the spoons back into their mouths. The holy man shuddered at the sight of their misery and suffering.

The Lord said, 'You have seen Hell.

They went to the next room and opened the door. It was exactly the same as the first one. There was the large round table with the large pot of stew which made the holy man's mouth water. The people were equipped with the same long-handled spoons, but here the people were well nourished and plump, laughing and talking.

The holy man said, 'I don't understand.

'It is simple,' said the Lord. 'It requires but one skill. You see, they have learned to feed each other. The greedy think only of themselves.'

Quarterly in Bendigo.

From The Devotion Newsletter



WBro Don Hall, PJGD is Lodge Devotions organist and plays for many other lodges in Melbourne. Above he plays the lodge song in the South at our last meeting

“Worshipful Master, you are summoned, together with your Past Masters and Wardens, to attend the September Communication of Grand Lodge, to be held at the Capital Theatre, 50 View Street, Bendigo on Friday 30th September 2011, commencing at 7:30pm.

The Grand Master is particularly keen to ensure that this function is well attended and encourages as many brethren, particularly those from the metropolitan area, to support the brethren of Bendigo.

The Grand Master must be very pleased with the Quarterly Communications held in Bendigo. I certainly was! Many brethren answered the call and attended, including our IPM and JD who drove up and arrived minutes before it started. Many faces from Melbourne were seen and there was the traditional refreshments and catch-up afterwards in the most impressive Capital Theatre.

The Theatre was built as a meeting place for Freemasons and our MW GM touched upon some local Masonic History when ad-

addressing the assembly.

Capital Theatre History

“Amongst the memorials and things of fame that bring renown to the City of Bendigo few, if any, bear such honourable, enduring and stately testimony to the wealth and magnificence of the city, as does the Masonic Hall in View Street.”

This extract from a book published in Melbourne in 1902 describes exactly the place held by the former Masonic Hall, now The Capital - Bendigo's Performing Arts Centre, in the City of Greater Bendigo

The Masonic Hall was designed by two prominent Freemasons, W.C. Vahland and his partner, Robert Getzschmann. The foundation stone for the building was laid on 24 June, 1873. It was the most ornate building in the City; the magnitude of its proportions and the classic beauty of its architectural design was regarded as an ornament not only to the City but to the State of Victoria.

The main building covers a frontage of 60 metres (197') in length on View Street and is approached by broad bluestone steps. The building is faced with six pillars in the Corinthian Order rising 10 metres (33') in height with the handsome curvilinear entablature of that Order. The pillars are decorated with an ornate frieze and cornices, having pediments at the top with pedestals, vases and a decorative moulded coping. The building is surmounted with an aeroteria, representing a female face and creating an imposing effect, it being 20 metres (65') from the bottom step to the apogee of the pediment.

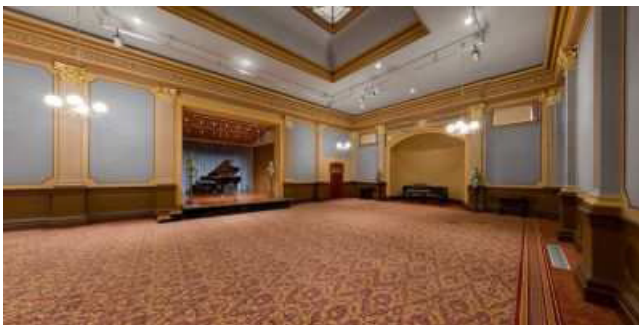
Masonic symbols are still in evidence throughout the building. One will note the compasses, the set squares, the all-seeing eye, the celestial globe and terrestrial globe, particularly in the original Lodge Room, the upstairs foyer and the Capital Theatre. The Capital Theatre is the last of the Bendigo theatres. When built this space was the largest hall in Victoria

apart from the Melbourne Town Hall. The entire building is listed with the National Trust and Heritage Victoria. The Capital Theatre was closed in the 1970s after almost a century of opera, drama, dance and cinema. The Masons continued in the downstairs Lodge Room until the maintenance of the building became too great a burden on the resources of the members.

During the years when the Capital Theatre was closed there had been constant attempts by the community to



Capital Theatre 50 View St Bendigo – Former Masonic Building



have the theatre reinstated. There was strong resistance from some quarters to this proposal and a committee was formed to endeavour to bring about a consensus.

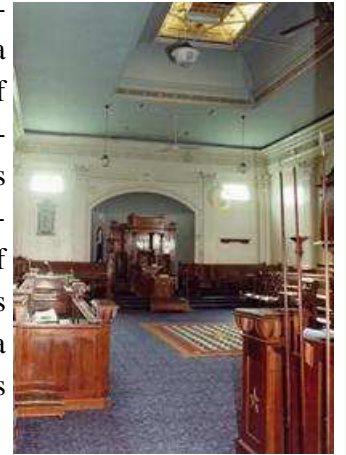
In late 1987 three of the five Bendigo municipalities, Marong, Strathfieldsaye and Eaglehawk purchased the building from the Masons. With the financial support of State and Local Government, private and public subscriptions and overwhelming community support, renovations, costing around \$6 million, started in 1989 and the building was officially reopened by the former Premier, Mrs. Joan Kirner on 26 April, 1991.



In 2003-2004, a Federal Government Grant allowed The Capital to undertake further upgrades throughout the venue. Advancement to backstage facilities and the structural development have improved the venue for local and commercial hirers.

Bendigo Bank Theatre - History

This is the original Masonic Lodge Room (see right) where the Masonic ceremonies and rites were performed. A feature of this room is the retention of the Masonic symbols including the celestial globe, the all-seeing eye and the terrestrial globe. The plaster decoration in this room is quite magnificent. A dentil lines the cornice and this is crowned with a superb thick moulding of Vitruvian scrolls interspersed with flat anthemion and paterae around the entire perimeter of the room. The apse is outlined with a lovely lotus and dart motif. Above the apse there is delicate foliate tracery either side of the all-seeing eye. The alcove to the left formerly housed the choir benches and is decorated with the lotus and dart motif seen on the apse. The area behind the choir stalls was used as a refreshment area. The beautiful stained glass lantern ceiling also displays Masonic emblems. The pilasters return again to the classic Greek architectural motifs of the rest of the room and features the same fine plaster work on the Corinthian pilasters as seen in the Banquet Room and Foyer. In this room the pilasters seem to have just a little more vitality and brio than those elsewhere in the building - perhaps because this room was the heart of the Masonic building the work here is just that little finer.



The Pope took a couple of days off to visit the rugged mountains of Alaska for some sightseeing. He was cruising along the campground in the Pope Mobile when there was a frantic commotion just at the edge of the woods.

A helpless Democrat, wearing sandals, shorts, a "Save the Whales" hat, and a "To Hell with Bush" T-shirt, was screaming while struggling frantically and thrashing around trying to free himself from the grasp of a 10-foot grizzly. As the Pope watched in horror, a group of Republican loggers came racing up.

One quickly fired a 44 magnum into the bear's chest. The other two reached up and pulled the bleeding, semi-conscious Democrat from the bear's grasp. Then using long clubs, the three loggers finished off the bear and two of them threw it onto the bed of their truck while the other tenderly placed the injured Democrat in the back seat.

As they prepared to leave, the Pope summoned them to come over. "I give you my blessing for your brave actions!" he told them. "I heard there was a bitter hatred between Republican loggers and Democratic Environmental Activists but now I've seen with my own eyes that this is not true."

As the Pope drove off, one of the loggers asked his buddies "Who was that guy?"

"It was the Pope," another replied. "He's in direct contact with Heaven and has access to all wisdom."

"Well," the logger said, "he may have access to all wisdom but he doesn't know squat about bear hunting! By the way, is the bait holding up, or do we need to go back to Massachusetts and get another one?"

Celebrating 100 years of Freemasonry

One of the city's most venerable institutions celebrated its 100th anniversary on Sunday in one of the city's oldest and most distinguished buildings.

Taft-Midway Lodge No. 426, F & AM, hosted the officers of the California Grand Lodge to mark the centennial of Freemasonry in Taft in the 88-year-old Masonic Temple on North Street.

Mason Kenneth Cooper, whose book, *Freemasons in the Oilpatch*, will be published next month, served as master of ceremonies and also spoke about the history of Masonry on the Westside.

Taft Midway Lodge No. 426 was founded as Midway Lodge on Oct. 17, 1911 and over the past century, three other western Kern County Lodges, Temblor from Fellows, Maricopa and Taft Lodge, have merged with the Midway Lodge.

The Taft and Midway Lodges consolidated in 1972

There are currently 94 Freemasons in Taft.

Over the past century, 2,773 men have been Masons in the Taft area, and the four combined lodges have a total of 266 years of combined operation.



A Brief History

By Kenneth Cooper <http://www.taftmidwaydriller.com/archive/x493113128>

Here is a brief history of Freemasonry on the Westside compiled by Kenneth Cooper.

The first Masonic Lodge on the West Side was instituted on October 17, 1911, as Midway Lodge No. 426. It first met in the Redmen's Hall in the Smith Bros. Building, then after two years moved into the Odd Fellows Hall across the street.

Ten years later, the lodge's first owned Temple was constructed in 1923 on North Street, where it continues to meet.

The second Masonic Lodge chartered was Maricopa Lodge No. 434, which was instituted on February 6, 1913. It first met in the Coons & Price Hall and then in the Palace Hall, but after twenty-four years there it opted to purchase the Odd Fellows Hall where it had originally held meetings. The lodge met in peace until the morning of July 21st when the 1952 Earthquake happened. Of all the lodges on the West Side, their Temple was the only one damaged beyond repair. For five years the lodge met at Temblor Lodge in Fellows until 1957 when the Lodge occupied its newly constructed Temple built on the foundation of the old building.

The town of Fellows was also becoming a bustling oilfield community, so a third Masonic Lodge was instituted there on January 14, 1920. It first met in the Fellows Oil Workers Union Hall, but after a year purchased the Star Rooming House in town and renovated it for a Masonic Temple.

The fourth and last Lodge to be instituted was Taft Lodge No. 516 on December 28, 1921. For a short time it met in the Taft Odd Fellows Hall until the new Temple was built which it occupied with Midway Lodge. It had become necessary for a second lodge in town because of the tremendous number of new member applications.

Each lodge had its affiliated Chapters of the Order of Eastern Star. They were in order of chartering: Maricopa No. 323 in 1913, Taft No. 337 in 1915, Buena Vista No. 364 (Fellows) in 1920, Faith No. 514 (Taft) in 1929.

Other Masonic-related organizations were the Order of DeMolay, Jobs Daughters, Sciots, Commandery of Knights Templar, Royal Arch Masons, High-Twelve, and White Shrine of Jerusalem.

In July 1972, the first of three consolidations occurred when Taft Lodge joined Midway Lodge; thus, causing the name change. Then in 1973 and 1975, Maricopa and Temblor Lodges respectively consolidated into Taft-Midway Lodge. Beginning in 1968, all the Eastern Star Chapters consolidated and currently there are none operating on the West Side.

During the 266-years of combined lodge existences, there have been 2,773 Masons on the membership rolls. All the lodges had very active Masonic and community activities. Some of the most notable ones were a Masonic degree conferred near the summit of Mt. Abel in 1940 for 1,500 in attendance, an eleven-year tradition of annual elk dinners provided by Louis Dopyera, and a program by the renowned historian Frank F. Latta. The lodges made many contributions to their communities, but the most notable was a donation in 1999 to the Taft West Kern Oil Museum to construct an adjacent room.

Only two Masons ever received 75-year membership pins. They were Frederick J. Phoenix in 1975, and Dr. Alexander R. Moodie in 1983. Due to the minimum petition age for membership, a 75-year member would have to be at least 95 years of age.

The longest officer tenure was by Abner B. Smith, a Taft pioneer businessman, who was the treasurer of Midway Lodge for 44-consecutive years from 1923 – 1966.