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# The Lyceum

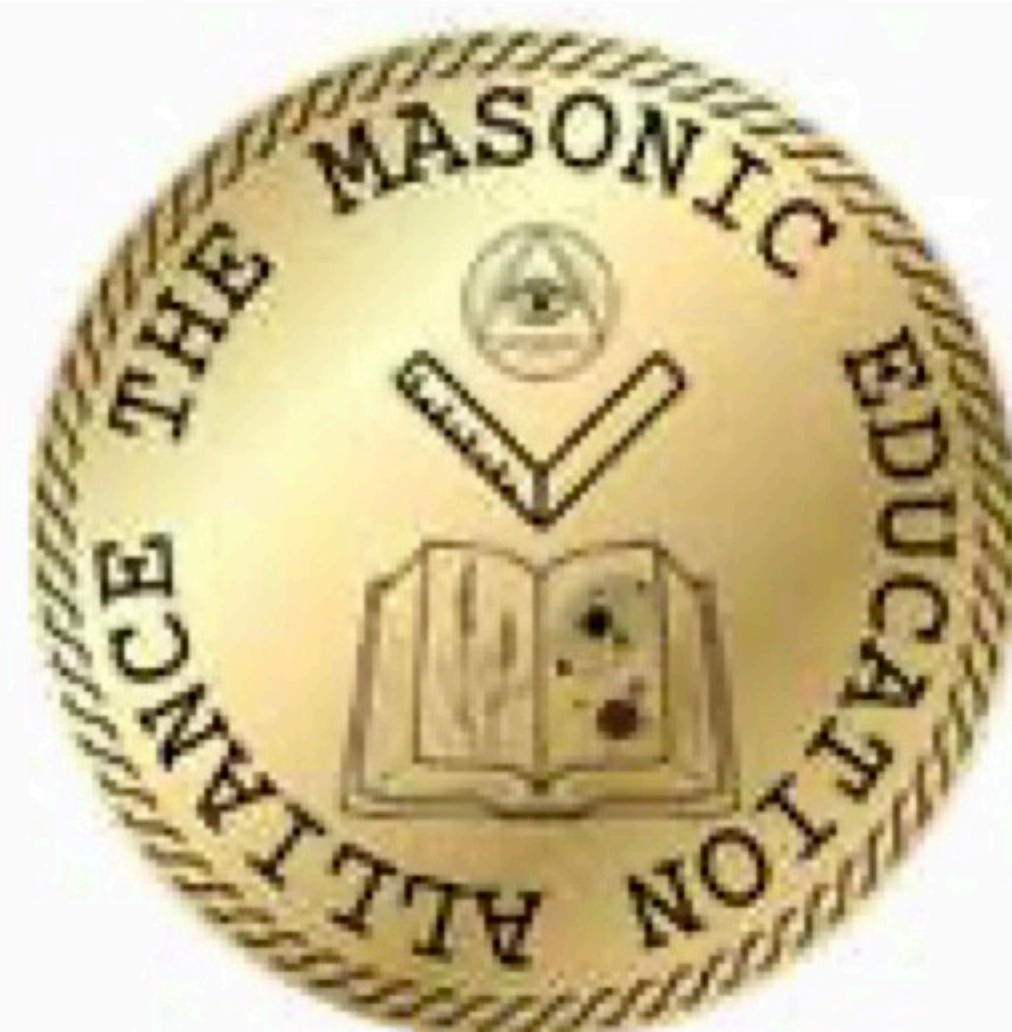
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A Publication of  
The Masonic Education Alliance

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# From the Desk of R.H. Johnson



## History:

Started in xxxx, The Lyceum, an e-magazine dedicated to Truth and Progress in Freemasonry, has undergone a necessary evolution in order to adapt to changing circumstances. Originally a publication of the Committee on Masonic Education of The Grand Lodge of Illinois, the magazine was the collaborative effort of two committee members. However, with the departure of one member and the Grand Lodge's change in direction, The Lyceum faced the threat of going defunct. In response, all previous issues have been rebranded, removing any association with the Grand Lodge of Illinois. While previous versions may still be available on certain websites, they are no longer offered by the publisher. These changes in branding ensure that The Lyceum can continue as a free and independent publication, focused on promoting Truth and Progress in Freemasonry, regardless of oppositional forces in any Grand Lodge organization. It is important to note that the content, authors, and publisher of The Lyceum do not represent any statements or positions of any Grand Lodge, unless expressly stated.

## About:

The Masonic Education Alliance, a groundbreaking initiative, has emerged as a beacon of Light in the realm of Freemasonry. Born out of the necessity to bridge the gap left by dwindling education committees within various Grand Jurisdictions, this alliance has taken on the responsibility of providing a limitless educational magazine dedicated to all things Freemasonry. Unrestricted by the restraints of any particular jurisdiction, the Alliance unites Masonic scholars, writers, and enthusiasts from around the world to create a platform where knowledge can flow freely and uninhibited.

In the past, education committees were the pillars of Masonic educational activities, disseminating knowledge and fostering a deeper understanding of the Craft within their respective jurisdictions. However, due to various circumstances, these committees have been effectively gutted, leaving a void in the educational landscape of Freemasonry. Recognizing this critical need for a comprehensive educational platform, the Masonic Education Alliance was formed.

Unlike traditional Masonic publications, which are often confined by the limitations of a specific Grand Jurisdiction, the Masonic Education Alliance embraces the power of collaboration and inclusivity. Its mission is to foster a love for learning, share profound insights, and explore all aspects of Freemasonry in an unbiased and global

manner. By removing these boundaries, the Alliance opens doors for Masons and non-Masons alike to delve into the mysteries, history, philosophy, and symbolism of Freemasonry from diverse perspectives.

Through the publication of a cutting-edge digital magazine, the Masonic Education Alliance brings forth a wealth of articles, essays, research papers, and creative works that elevate the intellectual understanding of Freemasonry. Drawing upon the expertise of its contributors, the Alliance takes readers on a journey of intellectual expansion, inviting them to explore the depths of Masonic teachings and traditions.

In this rapidly changing world, where traditional modes of education are transforming, the Masonic Education Alliance stands as a beacon of progress and innovation. By harnessing the power of technology, this alliance is able to disseminate knowledge to a wide audience across continents and jurisdictions. As a digital platform, the Alliance ensures that no Mason is left behind and that access to Masonic education is available to all seekers, regardless of geographical boundaries or political constraints.

In essence, the Masonic Education Alliance is more than just a magazine; it is a revolution in Masonic education. With an unwavering commitment to intellectual growth, unlimited collaboration, and global connectivity, the Alliance cultivates a vibrant and dynamic community of Freemasons hungry for knowledge. Together, members of the Alliance strive to preserve the essence of Freemasonry while embracing the transformative power of education in an ever-evolving world.

## The Seal:

The seal of the Masonic Education Alliance embodies the organization's commitment to providing rich and unbiased content to its readers. The golden hue represents the wealth of knowledge and information offered, while the borders ensure the protection of the Alliance from external influences and attacks. The Square symbolizes the Alliance's dedication to staying true to its research and providing accurate information to its readers. The presence of the All-Seeing Eye signifies the recognition of a higher power, while the book represents the Book of Nature, with a stalk of vegetation on one page and an illustration of a germ and the solar system on the other. Absent is the Compass, for the search for knowledge knows no boundaries.

*R.H. Johnson*

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# FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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Brothers all,

Daylight is increasing! I hope the sporadic sunshine you experience warms you and makes you long for the springtime. This month the Education Committee brings you a themed issue. February is Black History Month, and we wanted to bring you education that allows us to participate in this endeavor.

In 1976 the celebration of African American history--American history, was expanded to the entire month of February. We've got a great speech by Bro Ken Stuczynski that outlines the history of Prince Hall Freemasonry. We've also got an excellent piece about Worshipful Brother Robert Smalls, a dynamic and unique Brother whose story deserves to be told.

RWB. Chad Lacek once again brings a contemplative approach to betterment. He outlines an excellent formula for making fundamental changes in your life. Our Chairman asks us to contemplate the Masonic Virtues and how we use them in our lives.

WB. Kevin Wheeler also brings another excellent book review--this month is *Freemason's Guide and Compendium*. Should you buy this one? You'll have to read the review to find out.

Lastly, the front of the magazine this month is an obvious tribute and the back cover is a simple design we chose to express a celebration of Black History Month. We hope you enjoy this month's issue and that you learn something from it.

Yours in Brotherhood,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R. H. Johnson". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

R. H. Johnson



# From the Chairman

WB Michael Overturf, Chairman of the Masonic Education Committee

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Greetings my Brothers,

Welcome to February! In this issue, we pay tribute to DEO, WB Timothy U. Thomason, a huge link in our fraternal chain, which has now been broken. We also have much to celebrate, it being Black History Month. Then, with Valentine's Day and then at the end of the month, President's Day--our social media will be flooded with photos of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, as well great furniture sales :)

In his book *Masonic Perspectives*, the thoughts of a Grand Secretary by RWB Thomas W. Jackson wrote an interesting bit.

*“And then, for the first time, I began to understand why the influence of Freemasonry was not discussed in history books. We cannot deny the impact of Washington and many others in the development of American freedom, but it was Washington the man, not Washington, the Mason, and not Freemasonry that made America what it is. This is True of Bolivar, Kosuth, Kolokotronis, and Juarez and all the other great patriots of their countries.”*

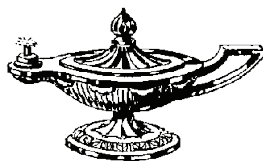
He Continues with *“The Philosophical purpose of Freemasonry is to develop the man--to start with good men and make them better, to increase the intellectual capacity of the individual, and to give the man, the incentive through our lessons to contribute to making the world a better place to live.”*

- 1.) What characteristics do they have in common?
- 2.) What cardinal virtues did they exemplify?

Fraternally,  
Michael Overturf

*Michael Overturf*

Chairman of the Committee on Masonic Education



# Prince Hall: An Overview in Relation to Craft and Country

by Brother Ken 'JP' Stuczynski

The article you are about to experience was a speech. The Midnight Freemasons blog ran the address in its entirety, and owing to its subject matter and heartfeltness, we offer it as the Featured Article for February, Black History Month. We believe you will find extreme value in it. Read on...

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\*The following is a transcript of a presentation Brother Ken Stuczynski gave in February of 2021\*\*\*

I am Brother Ken Stuczynski, hailing from the Grand Lodge of the State of New York, and I've been asked to give a presentation on Prince Hall for my Mother Lodge, West Seneca Lodge No.1111. One of my Masonic mentors, a Prince Hall Brother, gave a presentation to one of the other Lodges I belonged to. He presented the history as many others have done, and I will do that as well. But what I hope to offer is something more than researchable facts and more difficult to talk about — context.

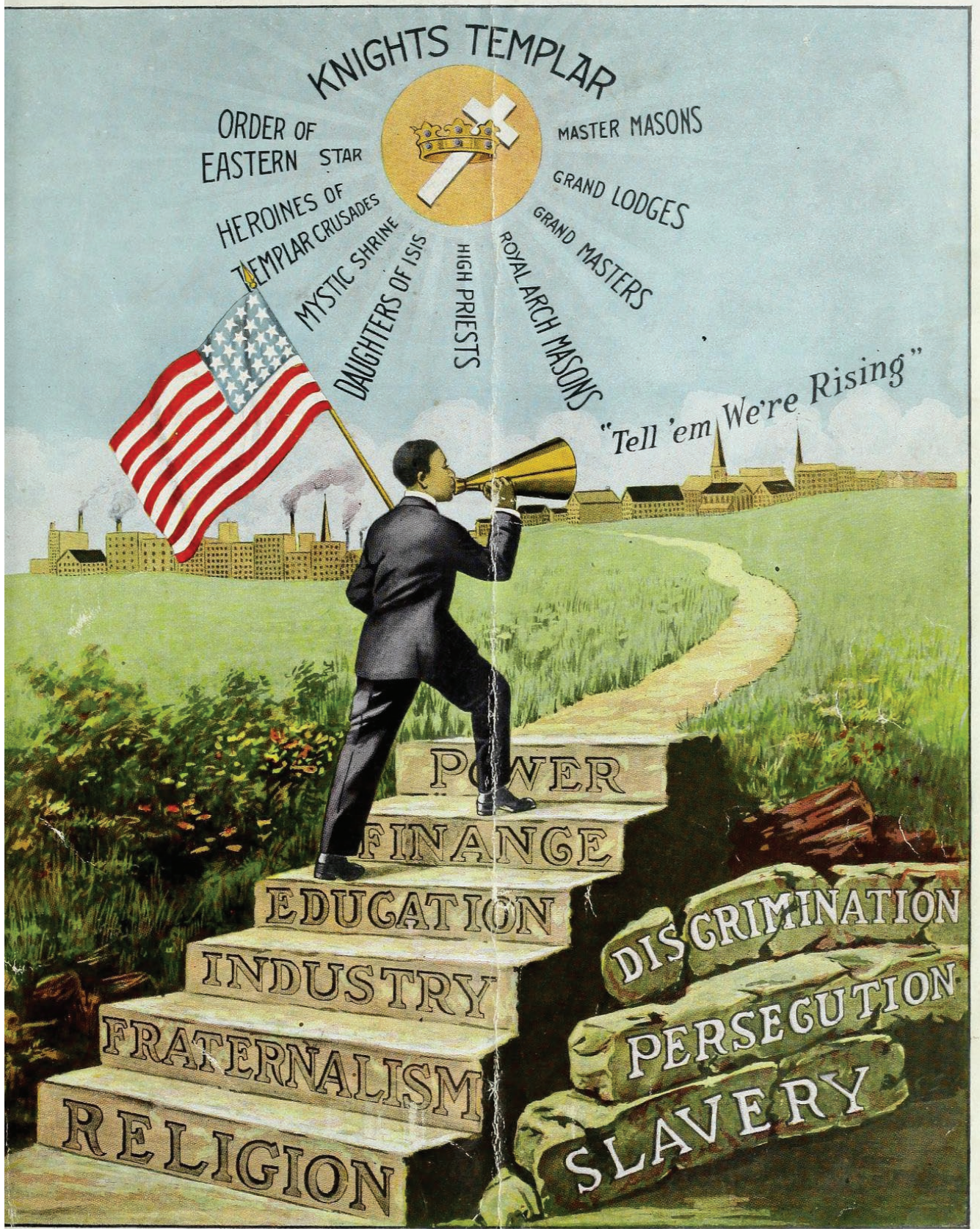
I cannot and do not speak on behalf of my Prince Hall Brethren, and I welcome their responses and corrections. Prince Hall Masonry, being an African-American tradition of Freemasonry, is for many an unknown, a curiosity. Some of us travel the world and yet have not explored quarries of this “foreign country” in our own backyards, Lodges who sometimes even share a building with our own.

New York's Prince Hall ritual is much closer to ours than that of Pennsylvania or Ontario. In fact, they preserved many things we took out over the years.

Prince Hall Masons have a reputation for diligent and precise work, and some suggest this is because they have had to prove themselves to be regular Masons, under fire for two centuries by accusations they were not.

Until recently, most of Masonry – in the US at least – considered them to be clandestine. Rationalizations of illegitimacy stem from questions of being “freeborn” and territoriality. Arguing over what “freeborn” meant in a time where slavery existed, and a person's origins could be questioned is ... questionable. This Landmark has been interpreted in different ways in different times and places – our Prince Hall counterparts in New York simply use the term “Free Man” – but I would suggest it boils down to the one question of a person having the legal right to enter an agreement of their own free will and accord, with no possible issues of previous “legal” obligations that may interfere, such as indentured servitude, or laws regarding the children of enslaved people.

As for territoriality, it is a courtesy to not establish Lodges in places where Lodges under another jurisdiction exist. This probably served the operative guilds well, but today, the aim is harmony or at least lack of poaching candidates and Brothers. That is why most states, provinces, and smaller counties each have a single Grand Lodge that we in New York recognize. And yet, in earlier times, Lodges in the American Colonies or on the European continent could have been chartered from England or Scotland or Ireland, and there were no boundaries. Recently, we chose to recognize more than one Grand Lodge



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of the same province of a Latin American country. Some lodges are under our jurisdiction, that now practice alongside Lodges that formed their own sovereignty as The Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of those places. But what of Prince Hall? How and where can they exist among jurisdictions whose territories cover every land from sea to shining sea?

To answer that, we must go back to 1784. Two years before that, a man named Prince Hall and fourteen other freemen were initiated by a regimental Lodge of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, having been rejected by the Colonial Provincial Lodges. Now they wished to form their own Lodge and did so as African Lodge, the first African-American Lodge in America, but not with a Charter from an American jurisdiction. After the Revolution, English Lodges moved to join the Lodges of various states, regimental Lodges returning to England, and one Provincial Grandmaster taking his Charter with him to Canada. These dark-skinned brothers were tolerated to an extent, but these new jurisdictions would not give them a Charter. Instead, they petitioned and received one from the Premier Grand Lodge of England.

In 1808, the year after Prince Hall died, the African Grand Lodge was formed, later named in his honor. The means of constituting their Grand Lodge has been criticized, but the short of it is that by various standards judging them illegitimate, many other Grand Lodges in America would also be such. I won't bore you with the details, but this is laid out thoroughly in Joseph Walkes, Jr.'s "Black Square and Compass: 200 Years of Prince Hall Freemasonry".

Prince Hall Freemasonry is arguably America's first Black institution. Prince Hall himself was an abolitionist. He challenged the government to stand by the principles it claimed, "a natural and unalienable right to that freedom, which the great parent of the Universe hath bestowed equally on all Mankind." He petitioned the legislature of Massachusetts that "means be provided for the education of colored people" on the argument that they had faithfully paid taxes and were willing to do so, yet their children's lack of schooling had been an "oversight." With Prince Hall's assistance, Belinda Royall became the first and only former enslaved person to receive monetary reparations for years of uncompensated labor. This was not an apolitical Mason, and he not any less related to the history of the Craft and our Country than our more familiar Brother, George Washington.

From here, Prince Hall Lodges grew and established new jurisdictions across the nation to accommodate those worthy and well qualified who were nonetheless rejected by other Lodges on the basis of the color of their skin. It became one of few pillars in African-American communities, as there were few if any organizations they could join. Even in higher learning, People of Color were barred from Greek Fraternities. This is also why the Nation of Islam grew into strength and not coincidentally mirrors some of the rituals and culture of Scottish Rite Freemasonry.

So we end up with two branches of Masonry in America, sharing the same ritual, the same language, the same Landmarks, the same professed values and ideals, and yet did not acknowledge each other. Albert Pike said in 1875, "I took my obligations to white men, not to Negroes. When I have to accept Negroes as brothers or leave Masonry, I shall leave it", but also said, "Prince Hall Lodge was as regular a Lodge as any Lodge created by competent authority. It had a perfect right to establish other Lodges and make itself a Mother Lodge." In his later years, it appears he recanted his prejudices, having become friends with the head of the Prince Hall Scottish Rite, which adopted his ritual.

If not apparent already, Prince Hall Freemasonry encompasses all the common Masonic Bodies, including Eastern Star, the Shrine, and the York Rite, or "Red House" as it is called, in contrast to the "Blue House" of what we call Blue Lodge. Their Shriners celebrate a unique holiday called Jubilee Day. It celebrates a Supreme Court decision made on June 3, 1929, deciding their lawful right – after a 15-year court battle – to use the name, designation, letters, emblems, and regalia as Nobles of the Mystic Shrine.

It is clear that our separate-ness is due to social and not Masonic differences. Masonic history in America is a reflection of our national journey, including its imperfections. One author describes Freemasonry as the most segregated institution in America, even more than Christian churches. Today, half of all Prince Hall Masons in America live in the seven states they are not recognized by "our" Grand Lodges. One Grand Master recently explained, "You have black Baptist churches, and you have white Baptist churches. But they both recognize each other as being Baptist. We are talking about accepting the fact that "you practice Masonry and I practice Masonry." Some Masons have formed Lodges outside their Grand Lodge, such as in Alabama, in response to not



voting for recognition.

Many Prince Hall jurisdictions have no interest unless it's clearly mutual, meaning we have to take the first step. We could argue over each other's stubbornness but forget that we inherited a legacy that created the conditions for the necessity of their forming alternative Lodges.

Mainstream ... sometimes those of us not Prince Hall call ourselves the "regular Lodges," as if they are somehow not regular. But even 'mainstream' reflects an unconscious bias. Instead of equal ownership in our tradition, they are seen as a branch on "our" tree, just as White is a sort of default identity in "our" society. They are our "other" Brothers in a way we don't think of Masons from other states or countries. This is not out of unkindness but unexamined socialization and unfamiliarity. We must guard against talking about Prince Hall Masonry as a curiosity or visiting them as if we are tourists. Nothing Masonic, or Human for that matter, should be alien to us.

As New York Masons, we can now visit any Lodge under the MWPHG LNY and in many other, though not all, Prince Hall jurisdictions across America. There are other Prince Hall jurisdictions, such as Prince Hall International, that we do not currently recognize. And there are many Lodges under the name Prince Hall that are considered clandestine by everyone but themselves.

The main Prince Hall jurisdictions have already been fully recognized by England and Scotland. In America, attempts at recognition caused the Grand Lodges of other states to revoke recognition of those "mainstream" Grand Lodges who dared it. The first long-standing recognition was established in 1989 between Connecticut's Grand Lodges; relatively progressive New York, not until 2003.

In New York, there were false starts and perceived slights, with "Black and White Dinners" in the 1980s, referring to formal attire. The efforts appear to have been abandoned thereafter. But thanks to two Brothers who worked together out in the world and discovered they were each Masons, but unable to attend each other's Lodges, dialogue turned into a negotiation, and finally, a Compact was established. Most Worshipful Brother Carl J. Smith, a local Mason, signed on our jurisdiction's behalf.

The first mutual Lodge gathering was here in Buffalo, between Ionic Lodge No.88 and Master Builder

Lodge No.911, an antecedent of Ken-Ton Lodge No.1186, or which I am a recent Past Master. I know the Brothers who started this conversation personally, and I've invited them to the debut of this presentation. I will let them relate that story themselves.

The biggest setback before this was our jurisdiction's enthusiasm to form a "unity committee," meaning a merging of Grand Lodges. From the Prince Hall perspective, this was presumptuous, if not offensive. To truly understand this, we must admit that African-Americans have always been caught between the forces of segregation or assimilation. As similar as we are, to integrate risks losing identity, and perhaps more importantly, their important continuing role in the African-American community.

Our Lodges, on the whole, have become regional. This is probably due to deurbanization and the fact that most people don't work in the same place they live and may not even go to worship in their own neighborhood. This is far less true of African-American communities, being more isolated and localized. Their Lodge mergers are across much smaller distances. In Buffalo and Erie County, all Prince Hall Lodges are within the city limits, while all of our Lodges now reside in the suburbs.

But when a prospective Brother inquires about Freemasonry, do I recommend one jurisdiction over another? We shouldn't be competing, after all, but we should also not assume their desires from their color. My suggestion, and practice, is to educate them and let them decide. If they are Black and living in the suburbs, for example, they may or may not want to join a nearby Lodge of mostly old White men. I will not judge them either way for that, any more than someone would prefer to join a Lodge with a lot of people with shared interests or in his profession. But if they want a Lodge that is connected to the African-American community, Prince Hall clearly fulfills that desire. And there's no reason we cannot still be there for a Brother's degrees if they choose another jurisdiction.

Famous Prince Hall Masons include Thurgood Marshall, the first African-American to serve on the Supreme Court of the United States; Booker T. Washington; Sugar Ray Robinson; Congressman John Lewis, who was the chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee from 1963 to 1966, yet suffered many arrests and beatings as a protester. There are many more that you can look up

yourself, but there are two points to be made here.

First, you will not find Presidents, astronauts, or famous generals, in such stations for the most part barred People of Color until my own lifetime. Secondly, you will find every last one of these upright men and Masons absent from many of the lists of famous Masons. Recognition and inclusion in the pride and promotion of our Craft could go a long way to fix this 'oversight.'

So, was our mission accomplished in 2003? Some of our Lodges proudly work together now and then, including a food drive during the pandemic. Two other Brothers and I were the first from our jurisdiction to march with our Prince Hall Brethren in Buffalo's Juneteenth Parade, possibly a first anywhere. Prince Hall Brothers assisted in the Middle Chamber lecture at a degree in Olean, New York. But there is so much more that could be done.

The education available between degrees in Prince Hall Lodges puts us to shame, and the knowledge is similar enough to take advantage of such classes for our own new Brothers if we are so welcomed. The participation of Prince Hall Brothers in our degree work would send a clear message to new Brothers that we mean what we say about tolerance and the universality of the Fatherhood of God.

Involvement in the community is something else we can learn from. In the suburbs, we tend to do charity at a distance, whereas there are opportunities to deal directly with those in need in urban communities. It's the difference between raising money for donations and things like having a shower facility for the homeless, as was established by St. John's Lodge No.16, the Prince Hall Mother Lodge of Buffalo. Working together can alleviate some of our common, circumstantial ignorance toward Color and poverty.

Of course, there's the hurdle that many people not of Color feel uneasy about going to certain neighborhoods. Taken for granted otherwise, we are not accustomed to being a minority at a venue or the only person who looks like us. That in itself can be challenging for some, but what better place to experience that than surrounded by Brothers?

I say our greatest challenge is our greatest opportunity. If we can have the conversations we need to within the Craft and learn to truly best work, and best agree, the profane world will have something to learn from

us — something it desperately needs, whether we are willing to see it or not.

To my Prince Hall Brothers, I offer this. My inquiry into Freemasonry included the question of racial exclusion in the Craft. If I had asked this hard question before 2003, I would not have become a Mason. I wish to believe most others did not know to ask that question rather than not caring or perhaps resigning themselves to things just being the way they were. Like so many other things in our society, we don't see race as being part of Masonry, whereas you did not have a choice, and that in no small way defines you. I don't think you owe me or anyone an apology for that.

Again, I do not speak for my Lodge or my Grand Lodge, but for myself ... When I am welcomed into your quarries, I stand humbly before you, like a brother of Joseph in Egypt, willing to make amends I am able, and you see just. I accept the debt of the sin of two centuries of failure to recognize and embrace my Brothers. I will mourn but not judge you if my Love is not returned.

But many of you have returned that Love, and I hope we improve upon our common Work, together, fully and meaningfully, for the sake of bettering ourselves and the World.

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Bro. Ken JP Stuczynski is a member of West Seneca Lodge No.1111 and recently served as Master of Ken-Ton Lodge No.1186. As webmaster for NYMasons.Org he is on the Communications and Technology Committees for the Grand Lodge of the State of New York. He is also a Royal Arch Mason and 32nd Degree Scottish Rite Mason, serving his second term as Sovereign Prince of Palmoni Council in the Valley of Buffalo, NMJ. He also coordinates a Downtown Square Club monthly lunch in Buffalo, NY. He and his wife served as Patron and Matron of Pond Chapter No.853 Order of the Eastern Star and considered himself a "Masonic Feminist."



# “An Equal Chance in the Battle of Life”

by Darin A. Lahners, AEO Eastern Area

Worshipful Brother Robert Smalls was born on April 5, 1839 in Beaufort, South Carolina to Lydia Polite, a woman who was enslaved to Henry McKee, who was most likely Robert's father. He grew up in Beaufort, in the fields. As Robert was favored over other slaves, his mother began to worry that he might not understand the harsh realities of Slavery, especially those that work in the fields. Robert's mothers asked for him to work in the fields and to witness the whipping of slaves at “the whipping post”. When he was 12, his mother requested that Smalls' master send him to Charleston, South Carolina. There he was hired out as a laborer for one dollar per week, with the rest of the wage going to his mother. He worked in a hotel and as a lamplighter on the streets of Charleston, finally finding work on Charleston's docks. He worked as a longshoreman, a rigger, a sail maker, and finally worked his way into becoming a wheelman or helmsman. As a result, he gained tremendous knowledge about Charleston harbor.

At the age of 17, Bro. Smalls married Hannah Jones, an enslaved Hotel maid. She was 22 and already had two daughters. Their first child together, Elizabeth Lydia Smalls, was born in February 1858. They had a son three years later, Robert Jr, who passed away at the age of two. Robert was determined to pay for their freedom by purchasing them outright, but at the cost of \$800 dollars (roughly \$22,764 in today's currency), it would take him decades to reach that goal. He had only managed to save \$100 dollars.

In April 1861, the American Civil War began with the Battle of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. In the fall of 1861, Bro. Smalls was assigned to work as a wheelman on the CSS Planter, a lightly armed military transport ship. The Planter's duties were to deliver orders, troops, supplies, to survey waterways, and to lay mines. Smalls was entrusted to pilot the Planter throughout the Harbor, as well as on area rivers and along the South Carolina, Georgia and Florida coastlines. Smalls could see the line of Union ships



blockading the Harbor seven miles away and began to hatch an escape plan.

On May 12, 1862, the Planter travelled 10 miles southwest to Coles Island, which was home to a confederate post that was being dismantled. The ship picked up 4 large cannon and returned to Charleston where the crew loaded 200lb of ammunition and 20 cord of firewood onto the ship. The evening of May 12, 1862, the Planter's three confederate officers disembarked to spend the night in Charleston, leaving Bro. Smalls and the crew on board. Before the officers departed, Smalls requested permission to allow the crew's families to visit them, which was approved provided that the families left before curfew.

When the families arrived, Smalls and the crew revealed the plan to them. Smalls had discussed the plan with his wife beforehand, to which she said: “It is a risk, dear, but you and I, and our little ones must be free. I will go, for where you die, I will die.” The other women were not informed and were frightened at executing the plan. They started to cry out of fear. The men attempted to quiet them with mixed success. At curfew, the family members returned home with the instructions to be at Southern Wharf and another wharf to be picked up for the escape attempt. Around 3am, Smalls put on a captain's uniform and wore a straw hat similar to the captain's

and the Planter departed. After stopping to pick up his and the other crew member's families, Smalls piloted the Planter past five confederate forts with no issue, as he gave the correct signals at checkpoints as Smalls had copied the captain's mannerisms along with wearing his straw hat, it was enough to fool the soldiers manning the various checkpoints. Around 4:30 am, Smalls approached Fort Sumter.

The crew started to be afraid, asking Smalls to give wide berth to the Fort. Smalls told them that such behavior might raise suspicion of the soldiers manning the guns at the Fort. He piloted the ship along the normal course at a slow cruising speed, pretending as if they were just out for a leisurely cruise. When the Fort gave the challenge signal, Smalls responded with the correct hand signals. There was a long pause and Smalls started to think he'd

**Justice**

**Fortitude**

**Prudence**

**Temperance**

soon be on the receiving end of a cannon barrage. However, the Fort replied back with the all-clear and the Planter continued on its way. Rather than turn east towards Morris Island, Smalls steered the ship straight

towards the Union ships blockading the Harbor. Smalls ordered all the confederate flags lowered and replaced them with white bedsheets that his wife had brought with her. This raised the alarm that something was amiss, but the Planter was already outside of Cannon range.

The Planter was seen by the USS Onward, which began to ready its cannons to fire upon the Planter. Luckily, a crewmember on the USS Onward noticed the white flag of surrender flying on the Planter. The Captain of the USS Onward, John Fredrick Nickels, boarded the Planter at which point Smalls asked for a United States Flag to fly. Smalls surrendered the Planter to Nickels, exclaiming "Good morning, sir! I've brought you some of the old United States guns, sir!" Smalls escape proved especially beneficial to the union navy. Along with the artillery pieces that the Planter was hauling, the captains codebook with the signals for each check point, along with maps of the mines laid in Charles-

ton Harbor were invaluable, as was Smalls expertise of the surrounding waters. The United States also learned that Coles Island had been abandoned by Confederate forces, which allowed the United States to capture the island

Word of Smalls escape quickly spread throughout the North via newspapers accounts. In the South, the Newspapers demanded disciplinary action for the officers who left Smalls and his crew alone aboard the ship. The U.S. Congress passed a bill awarding Smalls and his crew prize money for CSS Planter. Smalls was awarded 1500 dollars (roughly \$38415 in today's currency). Smalls was sent to Washington DC to help persuade President Lincoln and War Secretary Stanton to allow men of color to fight for the Union. Due to Smalls effort, Stanton signed an order allowing 5000 African Americans to serve the union at Port Royal, and they were organized into the 1st and 2nd South Carolina Regiments (Colored).

Smalls quickly started serving the Union Navy out of Port Royal, South Carolina and piloted many navy vessels, until he was transferred to the Army in March 1863. Smalls took part in 17 major engagements during the war. Some of his heroic actions include: He was made pilot of the ironclad USS Keokuk and took part in the attack on Fort Sumter on April 7, 1863. The Keokuk took major damage and sank the next morning. Smalls and much of the crew moved to the USS Ironside and the fleet returned to Hilton Head. On Dec. 1, 1863, Smalls was piloting the Planter on Folly Island Creek when Confederate gun batteries at Secessionville fired upon the vessel. The captain, James Nickerson, fled the pilot house for the coal bunker, but Smalls stayed at his post and piloted the ship to safety.

In May 1864, Smalls was an unofficial delegate to the Republican National Convention in Baltimore. Later that spring, he was in Philadelphia while the Planter was getting overhauled. While in Philadelphia, Smalls was in a streetcar and was ordered to give up his seat to a white passenger. Rather than ride on the open overflow platform, Smalls left the streetcar. The humiliation of Smalls, a heroic veteran, was referenced in a debate that resulted in the State legislature's passing a bill which integrated public transport in Pennsylvania in 1867.

After the civil war, Smalls returned to Beaufort. There he became a property owner, and purchased several properties, including a two-story building to be used as a school for African-American children. He also

opened a store with a Philadelphia business man, which served the needs of freedmen. He was elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives in 1868, moving to the Senate in 1870 after being elected to fill a vacancy. In 1874, Smalls was elected to the United States House of Representatives, where he served from 1875 to 1879 and then from 1882 to 1887 all while being threatened by the South Carolina “Red Shirts” which was a branch of the Klu Klux Klan. His political career was centered on promoting children’s welfare, education and African-American rights. He famously said in 1895: “My race needs no special defense, for the past history of them in this country proves them to be equal of any people anywhere, all they need is an equal chance in the battle of life.”

Smalls passed away in 1915 at the age of 75 due to malaria and diabetes. In 2004, the Defense Department named a ship for Smalls. The USAV Maj. Gen. Robert Smalls is a Kuroda-class logistics support vessel operated by the U.S. Army. It is the first Army ship to be named after an African-American. Robert Smalls was a member and a Past Master of The Sons of Beaufort Lodge #36 PHA in Beaufort, South Carolina.



# Mastering the Art of Change

by RWB.: Chad Lacek, Member Committee on Masonic Education



Did you make any New Year's resolutions last month? By now, you've had a chance to test their permanence. How's it going so far? Are you hanging in there, or have you already abandoned some of them?

Don't feel too bad. Change is hard. In fact, lasting change is almost impossible unless you apply it the right way. Most people try to use an act of willpower to resist the behaviors they are trying to eliminate or to add the habits they wish to begin. In this case, you can visualize what is happening by imagining a powerful magnet, pulling you in the direction of what you are trying to avoid and pushing you away from where you want to be. This invisible force is always there. It's always pulling and pushing, constantly, relentlessly. To achieve your goals, you will have to fight it every second, every day, forever. That's asking a lot of our poor willpower.

Let's consider an example of a man who wants to lose a few pounds. We all know the many benefits of maintaining a healthy body weight. It's a worthy goal. One significant component of his weight loss will be decided by the foods he eats. Every time he passes that box of doughnuts someone brought to the Lodge meeting, he must resist the desire to eat one if he hopes to achieve his goal. The problem is that he has to fight that desire and win, every time. Just like water that wears away at solid rock, so too will that doughnut eventually end up in his stomach.

So how do we make lasting changes? First,

we must admit that wanting something and denying it to ourselves is not a long-term solution. The secret to success is to work towards not wanting it in the first place. We can achieve this by reshaping our identity. "I want to lose a few pounds" becomes, "I'm the kind of person that enjoys keeping fit." This works with anything you wish to start doing or something you want to eliminate. "I want to write a book" becomes, "I'm the kind of person that writes every day." "I want to pay off my debts" becomes, "I'm the kind of person who lives debt-free and within my means."

I know what you're thinking. It's easier said than done, right? Yes, But no. Every action we take is really a vote for the kind of person we want to be. At first, you will need to tell yourself what kind of person you are. After a while, you will start to believe it. Eventually, you will become it. You might be surprised how much faith you have in your own voice and how much your opinion of yourself matters. If you find yourself saying things like, "I'm terrible with names" or, "My memory is awful," your subconscious will believe you.

Start telling yourself that you are the kind of person you want to be. You will be amazed how quickly you can transform your will without the need for willpower. For a step-by-step, simple, practical guide to implementing this practice in your life, I highly recommend reading *Atomic Habits* by James Clear (<https://jamesclear.com/atomic-habits>). Please trust me. You won't regret it. With a bit of practice and persistence, you will master the art of change.

# *District Education*

## *Talking Points*

### **Overview of the Intender Program - After Balloting**

“After the candidate’s petition is received, the Worshipful Master appoints an Intender, who is in possession of the Intender’s Handbook. The Intender meets with the candidate and his significant other at the Lodge hall, gives them a tour of the Lodge Hall, and explains information about what it means to be a member of the Lodge, and what may be expected of him. After the candidate is successfully balloted upon, the Worshipful Master sets a date for the candidate’s first degree, which should be no more than two weeks after the candidate has been elected to receive the Degrees in Masonry.”

# The Traveling Brother

by Darin A. Lahners, AEO Eastern Area

I have been slowly dissecting MWB Dwight Smith's seminal work: "Whither Are You Traveling?" for The Midnight Freemasons blog. The most important word in the title, "Traveling," would not have held much meaning for me when I first became a Master Mason on November 28, 2011. It has only been over the past ten years during which I have discovered why it is important.

There are various reasons as to why we as Masons should travel. In traveling, you can observe how other lodges operate. In this observation, you can often gain insights into what they are doing better than your lodge and sometimes what they aren't doing as well as your lodge. You can then use these insights to help your own lodge experience. As a new Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, or Master Mason, traveling to another degree allows you to observe what you just experienced. It helps to fill in the blanks, allowing you to see what you went through while hoodwinked. If you're like me, you also will key in a piece of the ritual that maybe you didn't give much thought to previously. I often find myself walking out of observing or participating in a degree with a newfound understanding of what happens during that transformative experience.

However, the most important reason to travel is that you get to meet new brethren. I have found in my experience that the beauty of Freemasonry is the fellowship that comes from the relationships that we form with our brethren. This fellowship, which often takes place in the dinners before a Masonic Event, or sometimes after, or sometimes during the short pauses between the sections of a degree, exemplifies the tenet of Brotherly Love, which we learn about in the Entered Apprentice degree.

Without Freemasonry, I would have never met many of the men I today can proudly call friends. I will also not have met other Freemasons who have mentored me, sometimes intentionally by giving of their time to help me improve myself in Freemasonry. However, it is often the Brothers that, by their upright conduct within and without the lodge, have served as unintentional mentors.

You will read about one such Brother in the next few paragraphs. Tim Uriah Thomason was an example of a "Traveling Man" that all of us as Freemasons can learn from. He was well known



throughout the state of Illinois because he would show up for events that were hours away from his residence. He was an unintentional mentor to me even though I only knew him for a very short time. I hope that you will be able to glean from his tribute(s) how many Brothers' lives he touched and how many of us shed a tear upon hearing of his passing. I hope that we can learn from his example and emulate him in our own lives. Thank You, Tim, for being an inspiration to me, even if you were just being yourself.

The following tributes were shared across social media when our dear friend and Brother, Tim Uriah Thomason passed to the Grand Lodge on High. We share them here as a tribute to his memory, to his work in Masonic Education and to his traveling nature--never missing an opportunity to work in foreign countries and earn Master's wages.

*"Today, Freemasons lost one of the most talented, knowledgeable and passionate individuals to ever kneel at the altar. Worshipful Brother Tim Thomason has graduated to the next place. We shared laughs, meals and a devotion to the Craft. I grieve for those who have never worked with Tim. He inspired us to be better in our thinking and in our understanding of philosophies. Timothy Uriah Thomason, 1986-2022."*

*"Rest In Peace my Masonic Brother.  
You were a great Mason and friend.  
You were always there when someone needed help and ready to pitch in.  
You will be sorely Missed and remembered.  
Rest easy Timmy!"*



*"We are better for knowing you, better for having met you, better for having you as a Masonic Brother, May you be as blessed in the next life, my friend, as We were in this one by knowing you."  
Goodbye Timmy."*

*"Like a lot of the brothers who knew Tim, I am just utterly shocked and saddened by his passing. He just recently touched my life this past year, and I just saw him in December at Double Eagle Con. He was the epitome of what being a Freemason is all about and he traveled extensively to Masonic events. He was extremely intelligent and knowledgeable about the Craft. He was just a really good dude, a mensch. I pray for his family and his Lodge brothers. Gone too soon. RIP WB Tim."*



*"Your name badge said "Timothy U. Thomason Landmark Lodge #422". You had just walked into a Stated Meeting in Springfield, something that members ten minutes away can't be bothered to attend. And you drove from Joliet? I was skeptical, but you were a legit member. Figured I'd never see you again, but it wasn't long before I realized there was no one in the State like you. While I rarely expected to see you, I learned never to be surprised to see you. So many events that were unforgettable in their own right, you were there. It was my good fortune, having met you that night in Springfield, that we'd frequently spend time together at these events, sometimes even hanging out afterwards despite you usually having a 2-3+ hour ride home. During the lockdown, you joined the Zoom calls a couple guys from 500 down here started. While everyone was trying to get a word in, crack a joke, or steer the conversation (most of the time me for all three), you'd just listen. When you did talk, everyone shut up because it was usually exactly what needed to be said. You were one of the guys that was supposed to come up with us, the guy we'd hear got appointed to some big position, the name we'd see on a list and say "Whatever else they're doing, if they're putting Tim in there, they're doing something right". You loved Masonry not just for what it could be, but for what it already was. You didn't travel the State just for what you could get, but for what you could give. You sincerely enjoyed being with your brothers, and had a genuine love for the Fraternity unlike any Mason I'd ever met, and maybe*

*ever will meet again. I woke up today to learn I'll never see you again. I guess it's one more Lodge you've visited before me. Until we meet again, dear friend and brother, until then, farewell."*

*"My heart breaks over the passing of WB Tim Thomason. He took part in each of my york rite chapter degrees and recently became a fellow district education officer. Tim was a true example of what a great mason was and I'm sad that he won't be able to continue to impact our craft but also grateful to have met him. Each brother that knew Tim has become part of his legacy and it's our duty to make sure his Masonic light continues to burn brightly in each of us."*

*"Rest In Peace Tim Thomason. I'll see you at the grand lodge above. You will be missed my dear brother."*

*"It saddens me to hear of a passing of a friend, fellow Mason, Knights Templar and Noble of the Medinah Shrine. God speed brother. You will be missed."*





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# Reader's Corner

## Freemason's Guide and Compendium

by Bro. Bernard E. Jones

A Book review by  
WB.: Kevin A. Wheeler



The book titled Freemasons' Guide and Compendium, written by Bro. Benard E. Jones is almost precisely what Bro. J. Heron Lepper described when writing his foreword as a

"Handbook of Masonic Lore." This book attempts to cover all of Masonry from its written inception. I believe every Mason should read this book at some point, along with the version associated with their Grand Lodge.

As with many books on Freemasonry, this book offers an enhanced explanation of Masonry from its most confirmed origins that we know of, based on written records. The author discusses traditions and customs and describes and explains actual architectural Masonry.

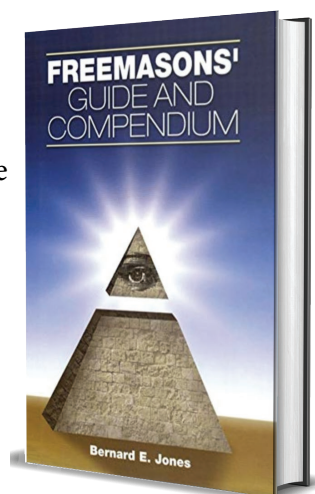
As noted above, the book covers a significant amount. Summarized notes on the chapters and things that I found to be of particular note are outlined as follows:

In the first chapter of this book, the author describes the origins of Architectural Masonry and how it grew throughout the ages and through the development of various civilizations--where some created wondrous beauty and others were lazy, simply added to its beauty. In the next chapter, the author discusses the Medieval Operative Masons and how, due to unfavorable conditions (i.e., acts of parliament, difficulty in finding work, unfavorable wages, too many employees, and not enough work), the "Old Charges" were created. The earliest of these being the Halliwell Manuscript, also known as the Regius Poem.

The author continues by describing various other types of workers as a means of bringing together where we received our traditions—one of which being an incident in Norwich in 1512 that caused the regulation for a seven-year apprenticeship. What's most important to me in this chapter was the introduction to traveling Masons who were said to have traveled under the protection of Papal Bull--the Magistri Comancini or the Comacines. These, the author argues, might be the operative Freemasonry our fraternity derived from.

Comacines formed their fraternity, "seeking a monopoly, as it were over the whole face of Christendom" (p.48). The author continues, stating that under the Papal Bull, they had the power to "fix the price of their labor and to regulate their own internal government." (p.48) It may be that there is a more profound revelation here that amongst all workmen, it was these workmen who were afforded so much freedom.

In another chapter, the author examines all the "Old Charges," which consist of several Manuscripts. The oldest of these, as mentioned earlier, is the Regius Poem which essentially lays out the rules for the foundation of the organized craft as we know it. As the author continues to travel along the timeline of Masonry, he introduces us to Elias Ashmole, who is credited with being the first Speculative Mason, and his manuscripts, "Memoirs of the Life of that Learned Antiquary, Elias Ashmole, Esq., Drawn up by himself by way of Diary. With Appendix of Original Letters" where he tells of his becoming a



Freemason being, "...the first known use of the term carrying a speculative or symbolic meaning". (p.100) In one chapter, it is alluded that Ashmole brought with him to Freemasonry many of "the Mysticism, the philosophies, and the Christian teaching of Rosicrucianism-the German cult that is believed to have arisen in the seventeenth century." (p.117)

Jones goes on to state that "The Rosicrucians then were alchemists who sought for the philosopher's stone by the intervention of dew and of light." The author goes on to discuss the correlations with as well as what may have been borrowed or imbedded into Masonry by the Rosicrucians, such as the symbol of the All-Seeing Eye within a triangle, a symbol of Alchemy. The author explains how the kabbalists played a role in enriching the symbolism of Freemasonry.

Jones goes on to discuss how the transition from Operative to Speculative Masonry occurred throughout time, eventually culminating in the creation of the first Grand Lodge "The Moderns" in 1717, the emergence of the second Grand Lodge "The Antients" in 1751, and their eventual reconciliation creating the United Grand Lodge of England in 1813. Whereas Prichard's *Masonry Dissected* helped in the development of ceremonial and esoteric ritual for the Moderns, Laurence Dermont, in his *Ahiman Rezon*, established the constitutions of the Antients. As the author continues to explain everything Masonry, he discusses prominent figures and occurrences throughout Masonry, such as other Grand Lodges that existed in England at the time. He also spends some time discussing William Preston, the father of Masonic History, and the adoption of printed rituals, the creation or adoption of the three-degree system from the former two-degree system, essentially creating the degree of Master Mason and the importance of the Past Master.

The author of this book covered Freemasonry from A to Z, from the origins of Architectural Masonry, through the development of the craft as a traveling guild, the various influences throughout time that helped to form the ritual, the deeper explanation of the uses of such terms as the Lewis, a cowan, etc. In fact, this may be the only book in Freemasonry that gives a working knowledge of the use of various Tools of the Architectural Mason.

Bro. Jones did a fantastic job explaining Masonry as a whole, allowing the reader to gain a broader un-

derstanding of the origins of the craft, allowing for a deeper understanding. One of the things I particularly enjoyed, especially given that I am Past Excellent High Priest of my Royal Arch Chapter, is the fact that Bro. Jones acknowledged and explained the importance of the Royal Arch and Mark Master's Degrees. One mistake made by the author was his omission of the first lodge in Scotland—which was not the lodge of Edinburgh in 1491 but rather, it was Mother Lodge Kilwinning No. 0, which dates to 1140 in the written record.

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Brother Bernard E. Jones wrote two books on Freemasonry--this one and another based on the Royal Arch. The book on the Royal Arch is more rare but can be acquired via ebay and sometimes on Amazon. Brother Jones also produced many other books which deal with practical woodworking, mechanics, machining and other manufacturing processes. He was, it would seem, an operative Mason as well.

If you decide to buy *A Guide and Compendium*, consider using the Amazon Smile service, where a portion of the sale is donated back to your Grand Lodge Charities!

