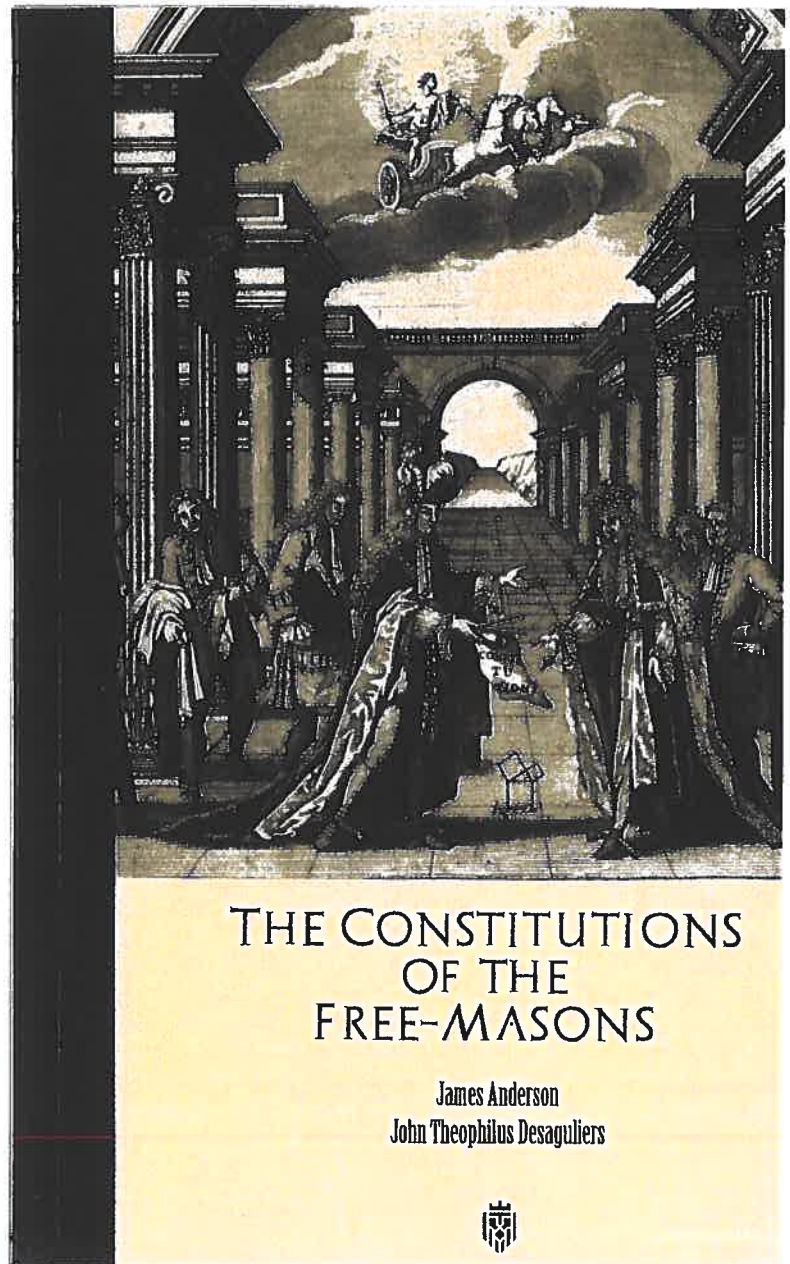


Klein's Korner - Book Review

by Honorable Steven D. Klein

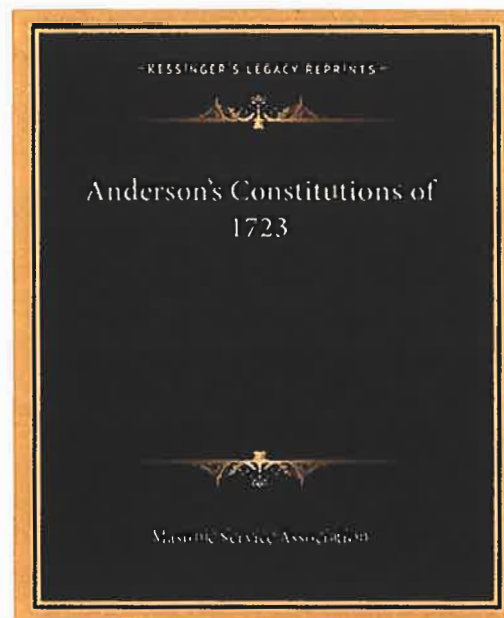
Recently, I saw in the Grand Lodge of Texas communications that a question of Masonic jurisprudence arose which that jurisdiction had no precedents. The Grand Master decided to consult Anderson's Constitutions, as this work is alternatively known, for guidance. I liked this approach of "going back to the source," to the very foundations of our beloved Craft. I then decided that I must read Anderson's Constitutions for myself.

The United Grand Lodge of England was formed on June 24, 1717, but no minutes were taken until 1723, coinciding with the publication of Anderson's Constitutions. In what appears to be a deliberate effort to raise the profile of the organization, George Payne, (1687-1757) a tax official, in his second term as Grand Master in 1720-21, wrote *The General Regulations of a Free-Mason*, which were incorporated into Anderson's Constitutions. The work that Anderson is chiefly remembered appeared in 1734 greatly expanded on the 1723 edition of *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons*. The book was the first Masonic book to be published in North America in 1734, the same year it appeared in England, by Brother Benjamin Franklin, who that year was elected to the office of Grand Master of Masons in Pennsylvania.



James Anderson (1690/1691-1739) was both a prominent scientist and minister, Master of a lodge, and a member of the Royal Society, He was a good choice to be tasked with the writing of this authoritative digest of Masonic rules and practices. Likewise, John Theophilus Desaguliers, another contributor, (1683-1744) was a philosopher, clergyman, engineer and was elected to the Royal Society in 1714 as an assistant to Isaac Newton and was the third Grand Master of the UGLE.

Today's Mason will feel quite at home in many chapters of the "Constitutions." as well as in a 1730's lodge. He has heard much of the book already. The Charges are basically unchanged after three centuries. Some of the chapter titles include "Concerning God and Religion," "Of the Civil Magistrates Supreme and Subordinate," "Lodges, Of Masters, Wardens and Apprentices," "Management of the Craft", "Of Behavior" (covering behavior in the lodge while constituted, after lodge is over and brethren not gone, when brethren meet without strangers but not in a lodge formed, in the behavior of strangers not Masons, behavior at home and in your neighborhood behavior toward a strange brother.)



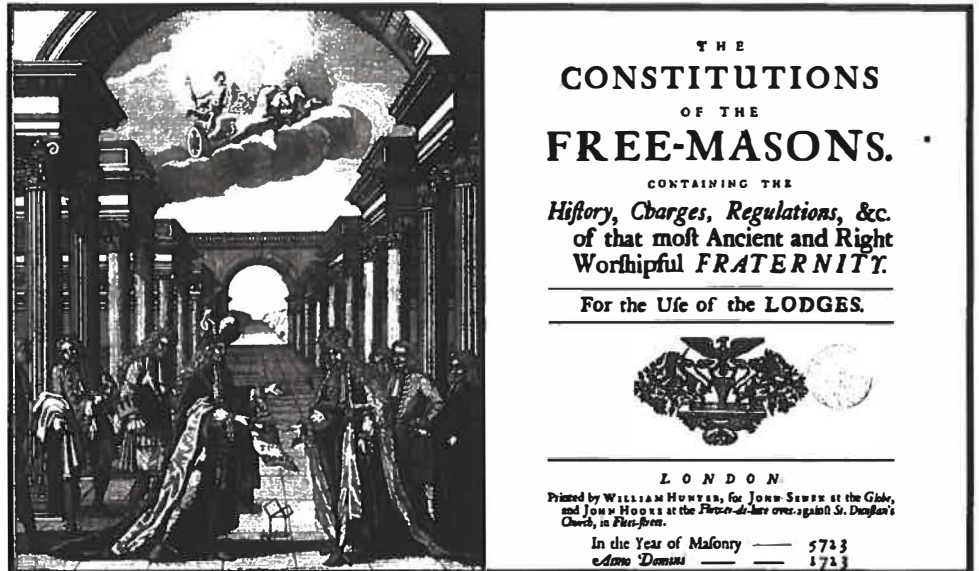
The expanded version of 1734 sees Anderson develop an historical context for the Craft, not stopping at King Solomon's Temple, but throughout the Bible. Some of Anderson's claims may be looked upon as rather exaggerated or incredible, but I will leave this all up to the reader to decide for himself.

The Constitutions also go into minute detail on the administration of the annual banquet and its ticket sales. There was a great deal of singing at these events, with the Master's Song being 28 verses and 5 choruses, the Warden's Song being 13 verses and 1 chorus, the Fellowcraft's Song at 6 verses and 6 choruses and the Apprentice's Song 7 verses and no choruses.

The writing style, punctuation, typefaces and changes in the meanings of words after the passage of centuries may throw today's reader for a loop. It's a bit labored at times. For example, cunning simply meant knowledge, without today's sinister implication. Rehearse meant to recount in order. If you, dear brother, are in doubt, consult your dictionary or your hand-held device!

I would recommend reading Anderson's Constitutions to any brother who wishes to delve deeper into the genesis of our great Fraternity. It is enlightening and reassuring to see that we are basically the same as Masons three centuries ago, striving for the same personal goals of improving ourselves and the world around us.

Respectfully submitted,
 Steven D. Klein,
 Guest Reviewer,
 Hollywood Lodge Member



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