

MONTANA FREEMASON

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About The Cover

Do you recognize this hand carved building detail?

The Montana Masonic Foundation's museum was a highlight of the October "Hidden Helena" tour hosted by Preserve Montana. The event brought over 250 people to our museum on October 5th. The self-paced tour allows participants to encounter "hidden" spaces and gems in the Queen City. Inside the building hides one of Meriwether Lewis' Masonic aprons. Search for it yourself when you visit the Montana Masonic Museum! You can explore this historic building at your own pace to experience firsthand one of Montana's capital city's hidden histories and curious spaces.

EDITOR NOTES



Reid Gardiner
Editor



Articles & Correspondence

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The Editorial Staff welcomes contributions in the form of informative articles, reports, news, and other timely information that broadly relate to general Masonry.

Article Submission. It is essential to follow these points when submitting articles for publication.

Photographs & Artwork. Original pictures or pictures from digital cameras work best. Use the highest resolution. Please do not send newspaper pictures or inkjet prints, as they will not reproduce satisfactorily. All photographs should include the name of the photographer and the name of the event or individuals who might have been in the photo. Printed photographs will not be returned.

Text & Copy. The articles must either be typewritten or computer-generated. Articles can be submitted to the editor by E-mail, fax, regular mail, or dropped off at the Grand Lodge office. Spell checking is necessary for articles, and they are subject to peer review and evaluation. Compensation for items, photos, or other material submitted for publication cannot be granted. E-mail all photos and articles to the address below.

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SAINTS JOHN MESSAGE 2025

In the month of January, we celebrate St. John the Evangelist with a feast. It was a tradition and custom for professions and cities to have patron saints. San Francisco had St. Francis, Carpenters, St. Joseph, Musicians St. Cecilia, and Masons had St. John. Some had St. John the Baptist (observed in June), and others had St. John the Evangelist. Observed on December 27. The Masonic Fraternity eventually went with both St. Johns!

Since 1919, DeMolay has been sponsored by the Masonic Fraternity. As tradition tells us, St. John was the youngest of the apostles, so he is usually depicted without a beard. Given this dual role as patron of Masonry and Patron of youth, he is depicted on the Guild of the Leather Apron, also known as the Advisor of the Year award for the order of DeMolay. The Advisor of the Year honor is designated to give singular recognition to a DeMolay Advisor who has made outstanding contributions to the growth and success of DeMolay. The Advisor should exemplify the ideals and precepts of DeMolay in their daily life and in their work with the young men in DeMolay.



John the Evangelist is the patron saint of love, loyalty, friendships, and authors. He is often depicted in art as the author of the Gospel with an eagle, symbolizing “the height he rose to in his gospel.” In other icons, he is shown looking up into heaven and dictating his Gospel to his disciple. He is the same person as John the “disciple Jesus loved”. As the author of a Gospel account, three epistles, and the book of Revelation, John was not only a close friend of Jesus during his time but a spiritual teacher for the ages. Our Masonic connection is the Light of Knowledge.

John was the son of Zebedee. He and his brother James the Greater were called by Jesus to follow him as his Apostles. James and John were known as the “sons of thunder.” John is referred to as the “beloved disciple.” At the Last Supper, it is John who sat next to Jesus. He is the only apostle not to die a martyr’s death. He stood courageously at the foot of the cross with Mary.

The Feast of Saints John is an annual celebration where we should reflect upon the teachings of these patrons in our lives and enjoy the companionship of our Fraternity. My Brothers, I encourage you to reflect upon these thoughts and seek to implement the meaning of the Feast of Saints John in your own lives. Doing so will add value to us as good men and honor the ancient teachings of Freemasonry.

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The holidays are a time to spend with loved ones and friends. I want to personally thank each of you for all that you have done for yourself and masonry.



Samuel H. Whitehead
Grand Master
Grand Lodge of AF&AM of Montana

The Masonic Renewal Committee has approved a survey to be distributed to Master Masons, aiming to capture their location, demographics, and whether they were ever affiliated with a DeMolay Chapter in their youth. Systematically, they are attempting to rebuild the lost data of Masons who were DeMolays and DeMolays who are now Masons.

The survey link is provided below and will only require a few minutes to complete. Upon completion, the survey responses will be submitted electronically.

<https://form.jotform.com/232633187681158>



Masonic & DeMolay Membership Engagement Survey

This brief survey is hosted by the Masonic Renewal Committee, a function of the Conference of Grand Masters of North America, as an attempt to better understand the interconnectivity between the local Masonic Grand Lodges and their sponsored DeMolay organizations.

Thank you in advance for your responses.

Please take a few minutes to provide candid responses as appropriate. Completing the whole survey should take less than 10 minutes of your time.

BRO. MARK DAVIES, 50 YEAR MEMBER CHINOOK LODGE NO. 50



On September 10, 2024, three Chinook Lodge No. 50 Brothers traveled south to the Bear's Paw mountains to present Bro. Mark Davies with his 50 yr. Pin and certificate. Mark's beautiful log home is shared with his wife Yvonne. Secretary Bro. Ben Hall, also a 50-year member, is shown presenting Mark with the certificate and pin. Brother Kevin Spudic, JW, & Bro Jack Mattingly, SW, were also present for the presentation.

By. Bro. Ben Hall



MWGM Whitehead Visitation to Great Falls Area Lodges



MWGM Sam Whitehead's Official Visitation to the Great Falls Lodges was hosted by Euclid Lodge No. 58 on September 17, 2024. Lodges in attendance: Euclid Lodge No. 58 (host), Cascade Lodge No. 34, Delta Lodge No. 128.
By: Bro. Roger Cathel

Special Presentation by the Hamilton Rainbow Girls Assembly



At Ionic Lodge's Stated Communication recently, the Hamilton Rainbow Girl Assembly made a presentation to Ionic Lodge No. 38.

Special Presentation by the Hamilton Rainbow Girls Assembly- Rainbow Girls-Winter White (left) & Lucy Arnold (right) from Hamilton Rainbow Girl Assembly No. 2 presented the 100 Year Anniversary Book for Rainbow Girls to WM Stephen Holton. Hamilton Rainbow Girl Assembly No. 2 is Montana's oldest active Rainbow Assembly. The presentation book is titled Rainbow in the Big Sky- A History of the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls in Montana, forward in the book by Brother Don Matlock, State Rainbow Dad-2021-2022.

-Rick Laible

BRO'S. ROGER MCCLURE & TOM JENKINS RECEIVE 50 YEAR MEMBERSHIP MYSTIC TIE-RIVERSIDE LODGE NO. 17



The picture on the left shows member Roger McClure receiving his 50-year recognition. Also in the picture is James Staedt (dec), lodge Instructor, and Tom Jenkin Senior Deacon. The second picture (right) is that of Bro. Tom Jenkins, Senior Deacon of Mystic Tie Riverside, received his 50-year recognition with all the members of Mystic Tie Riverside in attendance.

-John Kreis, Secretary, Mystic Tie Riverside No. 17

Hiram Lodge No. 52 Service Awards



"Hiram Lodge No. 52 honors: 1) PGM Billy Millhollin for 24 years of service as Lodge Secretary, 2) Bro. Eli Spannagel, Jr. for 60 years of Masonic service and 3) PGM Don Holland for 60+ years of service."

Photo by Bro. Al Kajin

“An Enemy of the People”

On October 18-19 & 24-26, the Autur Miller Play “An Enemy of the People” was performed by the Montana Actors Theatre (MAT) in the MSUN/MAT Theatre on the MSU Northern Campus. On Oct. 18th, three Brothers from Havre Lodge No. 55 attended the play, and three of the Brothers were characters in the play. Pictured sitting Brother John South, attendee; Brother Michael Stevenson, actor. Standing Brother Joe Ross, attendee; Brother Ben Hall actor; Brother Conor Burns, actor; and Brother Mark Bartz, attendee.

“Audiences should see this show to reinforce the old adage, “If we do not learn from history, we are doomed to repeat it.”

-Michael R. Stevenson



Installation of Officers for 2024-2025 Powder River Lodge No. 120 and Ekalaka Lodge 135



Ekalaka Lodge No. 120 & Powder River Lodge No. 135 pictured Officers for 2024-2025: Pat Strickland, Devin Bowman, Jesse Barnhart, Doug Bonsell, Elliott Barnhart, Mike Capra, Floyd Huckins (Broadus), Al Kajin, John Smith.

By: Bro. John Rusting

W. BRO. HANK TWEETEN RECEIVED 50 YEAR MEMBERSHIP HAVRE LODGE NO. 55



Brother Henry "Hank" Tweeten received his Masonic degrees in Havre Lodge No. 55. He was Initiated on February 01, 1974, Passed on March 03, 1974, and Raised the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason on October 17, 1974. He served as Worshipful Master in 1979 and again in 1997.

Grand Master Visits Doric Lodge No. 53



Grand Master Whitehead at the Montana Youth Conference



Grand Master Visits Manhattan Lodge No. 59



Blankets for Veterans



Center is Walter Hoveland, on his left is Sam Whitehead Grand Master of Montana and on the Right receiving the first blanket is Shelly O'Connor, Chief of Voluntary Services at the hospital.

Photo by: Cathy Ohara-Hoveland

The Freemasons of Montana are presenting 120 blankets to the VA Hospital in Helena on Wednesday, November 20th. This movement began when Walter Hoveland was hospitalized last winter at Fort Harrison VA in Helena. Hoveland started the project began at Ottawa Lodge No. 51, in Marysville. News of the project spread among local lodges, and soon Masons from across many different towns donated toward the effort.

"This fixes a need," said Walter Hoveland. As a veteran and Mason himself, Hoveland believes that this will improve things for patients. Veterans who find themselves a little chilly this season will be able to feel a little warmer now. "There's enough blankets to cover beds on any shift." The dark blue blankets are embroidered with a message thanking veterans for their service, from the Masons of Montana.

The blankets will be used on the 3rd and 4th floors at the hospital. These are medical/surgical and ICU floors. In all, there are 28 beds being supplied with blankets. There are enough blankets to recover all of the beds at least four times each.

Local Masons have contributed personal time and given resources to the VA in numerous times over the years. Charitable giving is a principal tenet of the fraternity going back to the early 1700's.

The Masons also support a 501(c)(3) organization, the Montana Masonic Foundation, which provides charity (public and private) and encourages and promotes free public education and schools in Montana through endowments, grants, scholarships. The Foundation also hosts a museum which educates about the state of Montana, as viewed through fraternalism. Proudly displaying Meriwether Lewis' Masonic apron, it is open freely to the public.

If you wish to contribute to this program or for more information contact: whoveland@gmail.com



The blankets are made from a heavy arctic fleece at a company in Massachusetts and are embroidered by a woman in Great Falls. Although current goals are met blankets will need to be replaced over time. Hoveland says, "This is not going to be a one-and-done situation. This is something I am trying to set up so that it continues in perpetuity."



Bro. Walter Hoveland, Ottawa Lodge No.51



Photos by: Madelyn Heath, MTN News



A few weeks ago, the VA Hospital in Helena held a photography event where the local television crew captured the presentation of blankets embroidered with "Thank you for your service" by the Masons of Montana, as featured on page 20 (left). Concealed from the camera, behind the blanket displayed for the photograph, was a significant quantity of blankets, providing a peek into the behind-the-scenes efforts.

THE TRUE SECRET WORD OF A MASTER MASON

By David J. Llewellyn, Past Master,
East Point Lodge No. 288, F. & A. M. (Georgia)

At the beginning of his Masonic career each candidate for initiation is instructed that "Freemasonry is a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. The design of the Masonic Institution is to make its members wiser, better and consequently happier" To that end we are reminded by symbols to circumscribe our desires and to keep our passions within due bounds. Our Lodges are universally opened with a prayer. In many jurisdictions we beseech the Grand Architect of the Universe, whom each of us worships privately in his own way, to "[g]rant that the sublime principles of Freemasonry may so subdue every discordant passion within us, so harmonize and enrich our hearts with Thine own love and goodness, that the Lodge at this time may humbly reflect that order and beauty which reign forever before Thy throne."

Our degrees teach and constantly remind us of our duties to ourselves and our fellow creatures. In the Entered Apprentice Degree we are taught to extend true charity to all. Not just material charity, but also that more noble charity of mind and spirit that inspires us to help every other human being who is in need. We are reminded to act with Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, and Justice. The last of these cardinal virtues – Justice – "enables us to render to every man his just due without distinction." The Fellowcraft Degree instructs us to engage ourselves in the pursuit of knowledge, not just at passing, but forever. In particular it encourages us to study the classical liberal arts and sciences, which lead to a liberal and enlightened mind. That mind is free from the dross of all prejudices, national, cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious. It could hardly be otherwise, for we are also taught that Masonry is universal, extending its benevolence throughout the entire terrestrial globe. By so freeing our hearts and consciences from all prejudices we are taught that we will earn, not be given, wages of spiritual nourishment, refreshment, and joy. The Sublime Degree of Master Mason goes even further. It is called "sublime," that is "elevated in thought," "inspiring awe," because it teaches us of our further duties to each other and, indeed, to all humankind. In that degree we undertake certain serious and solemn obligations to each other as brothers. But these duties are not exclusive to us. The true, mature Mason understands that they apply to all persons of every kind in every situation. We bind ourselves to each other only as a starting point, a point from which the real Mason travels onward.

The Master's degree, however, comes with a warning. That warning is conveyed in the most dramatic fashion. It is that we must ever guard against the worst ruffians of our natures and oppose them, even to death, if we hope to be placed as living stones in that "House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." We must act. We may not just hope. The Master's degree also informs

us that the secret word of a Master Mason has been lost to us through the perfidy of our unseemly desires and passions – the ruffians that confront us daily and to which we so often succumb. It is our duty to seek out that secret word, that hidden meaning, even though it will always remain ineffable and inexplicable to others. It is our individual duty to become worthy of receiving it by subduing our passions and controlling our desires. Only then may we hope to obtain and understand it – the true meaning of Freemasonry – within our hearts and soul.

He who would receive the true secret word of a Master Mason must come to understand that it can only be learned it by the constant practice of the virtues inculcated by our degrees. We all will one day stand naked and defenseless before the Grand Architect of the Universe. Before that Throne there will be no distinctions of nationality, class, or race. All those artificial distinctions, meaningful only to sinful man, will be worthless to us. If we would finally receive the true secret word, the word that has been lost, we must constantly resist the ruffians of our natures that keep us from it. We must not sow discord. We must resist the temptation to treat only those who look and think like ourselves as our neighbors and brothers.

He who allows the three ruffians of religious bigotry and intolerance, ethnic and cultural blindness, and racial animosity and hatred to dominate his thoughts and control his actions will no more discover the true secret word of a Master Mason, no matter how hard he cries "Give it to me!!", than did those ruffians whose evil deed bloodied the ground at the building of King Solomon's Temple. This is the great teaching of the Third Degree. It is of greater importance than any haled word or sign. And it is the hardest one for most of us to grasp. But grasp it we must if we are ever to become true Master Masons.

One does not become a Master merely by being raised. Rather one becomes a Master by truly embracing and living that which our ceremonies teach. In the end it is up to each of us to become a Master Mason in spirit as well as in body. Only then will one be worthy to receive the true secret word of a Master Mason. Whether one ever reaches that goal, whether one ever becomes worthy to be placed as a living stone in that celestial Temple, will be known only to him and to our Infinite Creator when he finally stands before Him. Therefore it is well that we constantly strive to make smooth our rough natures by embracing and following the great lessons of Freemasonry – the lessons taught by symbols, types, and allegories in the Three Degrees - in all our thoughts and actions inside the Lodge, as well as in the profane world.

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Grand Master Visits Wisdom Lodge No. 61



Grand Master Sam Whitehead made an official visit to Wisdom No. 61 on Monday, and we had fun in the frigid night. He was accompanied by Senior Grand Warden Don Powell, the Grand Secretary, and SG Steward Mark Bassett, G Standard Bearer Ken Bates, G Pursuivant Will Enloe, and 3 PGMs.



HANDS OF THE WORKMAN

Stephen A. Holt Grand Master 1947-1948

Stephen Albion Holt was born September 18, 1874, in a sod house in Creighton, Nebraska. Initially, he attended a country school 2 ½ miles from his home. He later attended school in Brazil Mills, Nebraska, where he rode horseback from his sister's home. He then attended school in Creighton, Nebraska, where he graduated from High School. Following his high school graduation, he attended a county institute and received a certificate to teach in rural schools. However, the \$30.00 per month for teaching was not too attractive. After several years of working on ranches, he attended Iowa State College of Pharmacy graduating in 1901. He owned and operated drug stores in Gross and Bristow, Nebraska.



On April 6, 1933, he received his Royal Arch degree, Chapter 14, at Miles City. In 1948, he became a member of Adoniram Council No. 8 in Billings. He had become a member of the Eastern Star at Butte, Nebraska, in 1909 and later dimitted to Margaret Trautman Chapter No. 108, at Broadus, and served as Patron in 1921 and 1922 and as Associate Patron in 1938. In December he was honored by receiving the degree of K.C.C.H. He received the degrees of the Shrine on May 13, 1938, in Al Bedoo Temple in Billings. He was also honored by being elected as an honorary member of Ashlar Lodge No. 29 and Rimrock Lodge No. 149, both of Billings.

In 1909, they moved to Montana, Steve homesteaded on 320 acres near where the town of Ekalaka is now located. They remained until 1914, when they moved to Port Angeles, Washington. They returned to Ekalaka in 1915 and operated another drug store until 1919, when Powder River County was created with Broadus as the county seat; he moved his drug store there in 1920. He headed the Montana Pharmaceutical Association in 1939. He remained in Broadus, until his retirement in 1943, he moved to Billings in 1950.

Steve's civic life was very active. He was appointed Justice of the Peace at Bristow, Nebraska, and was mayor of Ekalaka, Montana in 1918. He represented Carter County in the House of Representatives in 1919, and served in the state Senate in 1929 and 1931 from Powder River County. Realizing from his struggle in his boyhood days to obtain an education and was a leader for good and better schools. He was a member of the Broadus and Ekalaka school boards. He was affiliated with the Community Congregational Church at Broadus and served as Trustee and Deacon for many years. He held a deep concern for the welfare of the community, state, and nation and was a constant foe of religious and political totalitarianism. To him, Masonry was truly a way of life. He was an upright man, a loyal citizen, a devoted husband and father.

He became a Mason in Orman Lodge No. 261, A.F.&A.M., at Spencer, Nebraska, in 1908. Soon after moving to Montana, he affiliated Sandstone Lodge No. 84 at Baker, Montana. After moving to Ekalaka, he felt the need for a Masonic Lodge in this young town. He and other tried and true men were able to secure enough members to petition the Grand Lodge for a Charter to form Ekalaka Lodge No. 120. The men studied the Montana work in the back of his drug store. He served as the lodge's first Secretary and Master the following year. After moving to Broadus, he demitted from Ekalaka Lodge to help in the formation of Powder River Lodge No. 135, and served as Worshipful Master in 1920-21 and 1922, and later served as Lodge Secretary for over a quarter of a century.

He was appointed to the Grand Lodge officer line to the office of Grand Standard Bearer in 1938, and in 1947, he was elected as Grand Master of Masons in Montana. M.W. G. M Holt presided over the 84th Annual Communication in Billings on August 17-18, 1948. During the year Kotana Lodge No. 70 surrendered its Charter. Rimrock Lodge No. 149 was Constituted. A cornerstone ceremony was held at Valley Lodge No. 21. In 1948, there were 135 Lodges and 22,564 members. In 2024, there are 76 Lodges and 3,173 members.

In 1950, he moved to Billings to make his home with his wife and son. On October 15, 1958, he received his 50-year membership pin. Brother Holt resided in Billings until his death on February 16, 1960, at the age of 85. A Special Communication of the Grand Lodge of Montana was held on February 19, 1960, for the funeral of M.W. Brother Stephen A. Holt, Sr., Grand Master 1947-1948. The Brothers repaired to the Congregational Church of Broadus for public services. At the conclusion of the service, the mortal remains of our Past Grand Master were borne to Valley View Cemetery, Broadus, Montana, where they were deposited in accordance with the usages and customs of the Craft. Masonic services were conducted by Rev. George Sloan, Pastor of the Colstrip Community Church and Past Grand Chaplain, and Past Grand Master Myron Bean, as Grand Master in charge of committal service.



Rapelje School Receives Educational Grant From the Montana Masonic Foundation



Brice Liggett representing the Montana Masonic Foundation presents a check to Ms. Sarah Stevens, Rapelje Schools librarian and music teacher, and the Rapelje elementary music class. The Montana Masonic Foundation's purpose is the support of charitable, scientific, literary or educational purposes and to support free public education through endowments, grants, scholarships, and fellowships. The Montana Masonic Foundation's Educational Grant Program is designed to provide Montana's Public Schools with an opportunity to apply for grants to assist under-funded programs in Music, Drama, Science, and Library.



Grand Master Sam Whitehead and Worthy Grand Matron Elaine Tucker while attending a Rainbow initiation.

A MOUNTAIN'S NAMESAKE

Chuck Clampitt, MT Etna No. 333, Indiana

Throughout history only a few men have been described as explorers. A phrase that best describes the meaning of exploration was used in the introduction to the popular 1960's Star Trek TV show as "going where no man has gone before." That same concept could also be used to describe such noted explorers as Columbus, Marco Polo, or Magellan. What is interesting though, is that as we look through our own Masonic luminaries, many were explorers, adventurers, or were the first to achieve a unique feat. Among those were Davy Crockett, Lewis and Clark, and Neil Armstrong. Lewis and Clark would become famous in American History for their great exploration to the Pacific Ocean while a lesser-known explorer of the same period is generally overlooked. That person was Zebulon Pike.

Pike was born in New Jersey in 1779, the son of Zebulon, Sr and Isabella Pike. His father was a militia officer prior to the Revolutionary War and when the war broke out became a regular officer in the Colonial Army. Following the war, the elder Pike continued as a career army officer. The U.S. Army at that time consisted of only one infantry regiment with the primary mission of guarding the wilderness areas west of the Appalachian Mountains. It was at remote isolated frontier army outposts in Ohio and Illinois where young Zebulon Pike grew up and in 1794 enlisted in the army at age 15.

In 1803 U.S. Agents, under the direction of President Thomas Jefferson, purchased from France the vast area that is known as the Louisiana Purchase stretching from the current state of Louisiana up the Mississippi River to the Canadian border and then westward to the Rocky Mountains. As might be expected, Jefferson was anxious to find out what this vast new territory consisted of, and so in May, 1804 Meriwether Lewis and William Clark set out on their famous westward expedition from St Louis to the Pacific Ocean. Among their many duties were to map a route to the Pacific Ocean as well as contact, research, and pacify the Indians, make scientific observations of flora and fauna, and investigate any minerals or natural resources of value in the new territory.

In August, 1805 a second expedition, headed by 22-year-old Lieutenant Zebulon Pike, Jr was dispatched to explore northward from St Louis up the Mississippi River. Pike was given similar tasks as Lewis and Clark with the added objectives of finding the origin of the Mississippi River and bringing any English or French traders and trappers under the

authority of the U.S. government. Pike completed many of his assigned duties, but had to winter over in what is now northern Minnesota. On his return to St. Louis in late spring of 1806, he was again dispatched by General James Wilkerson, governor of the Louisiana Territory and senior officer of the army, as the head of another expedition. Leading a small force of 22 men, Pike was to explore the headwaters of the Arkansas and Red Rivers traveling westward overland through present day Kansas.

It is at this point that two different historical interpretations evolve. The first is straight forward. Pike would follow Wilkerson's instructions, but on his own decided to continue on to the Rocky Mountains and attempt to scale the mountain now known as Pike's Peak. The second opinion is that Pike had been given a totally different mission enroute by General Wilkerson's son, Lieutenant James Biddle Wilkerson who accompanied Pike. The objective was to enter Spanish Territory in order to scout the area and gather intelligence, an act seen as trespassing by the Spanish and strictly forbidden to Americans.

General Wilkerson was a treacherous individual, even though he would serve as a mentor to young Pike. Years later he would be found to be a paid secret agent of the Spanish Government. At the time, Spain controlled Florida and the extended panhandle that reached all the way to New Orleans as well as Mexico and most of central and south America. Spain had also owned all the territory of the Louisiana Purchase until it was acquired by France in 1800. Spain's primary objective was to keep the fledgling United States from further expansion.

Once Pike had completed his expedition's objective of locating the sources of the Arkansas and Red Rivers he continued westward to the Rocky Mountains. (At this point it would be difficult to believe that Pike would have disobeyed his orders and ventured out on his own). As he led his small party into the mountains, he was possibly driven by different objectives: to scale the mountain now named for him; to explore and map Spanish Territory; or to find a passage through the Rocky Mountains to the west coast.

Although not planned, the mountain, now named for him, drew him onward to be scaled. With winter closing in and supplies exhausted the quest to climb the mountain had to be abandoned. Pike managed to save all his men by leading them southward toward Sante Fe, where they were taken into custody by Spanish authorities. They were then taken 550 miles



Pike was soon promoted to Lt Colonel and commanded the 4th Infantry Regiment which was a part of General William Henry Harrison's forces in The Battle of Tippecanoe in November, 1811. With the outbreak of the War of 1812, Pike was involved as an infantry officer and in 1813 was promoted to Brigadier General. A major strategic plan of the American forces during the war was to invade Canada in hopes of inciting rebellion by Canadians against their colonial overseers the British. In 1813 an American Army invaded Canada and during the Battle of York (present day Toronto), Pike was killed when an ammunition magazine was blown up by retreating British forces and his body was returned to the U.S. and buried in Sackets Haror, New York.

further south to Chihuahua, Mexico where they were placed under house arrest, questioned, and Pike's expedition journal seized. After several months, Pike and his men were released and accompanied back to Louisiana Territory where they arrived in July, 1807. In total Pike's second expedition would last 353 days and cover 3664 miles.

After returning to St Louis, Pike's career seemed to take on a meteoric trajectory. He was immediately promoted to Captain and received multiple highly visible assignments. In 1810 he published a very popular two-volume set of his expeditions entitled "The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike". Included was much of the information from his lost journals as well as extensive maps including Spanish Territory. The book was highly successful both in the United States as well as in Europe.

So, what is the connection between explorers and Masonry? Why have so many Masons distinguished themselves as scientists, inventors, writers, and men of the arts? In Masonry much is made of the word "light", but defining the concept of "more light is Masonry" isn't deeply defined. Perhaps it is no more complicated than investigating and learning from the world around us. Maybe words like inquisitiveness, curiosity, or a sense for adventure should inspire us as well as explorers like Zebulon Pike.

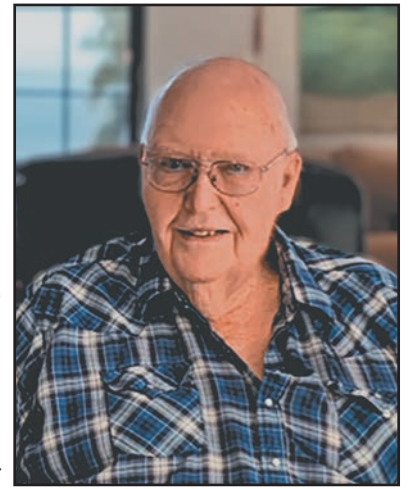
(Note: Zebulon Pike was a member of Lodge #3, Philadelphia, PA.)

Grand Master Whitehead at Deer Lodge No. 14



JOSEPH RALPH SIMPSON

1935-2024



Brother Joe Simpson was born in Lewistown, Montana, on November 15, 1935. He was the second of five children: Ward, Paul, Pat, and Bob. He grew up and spent his entire life in Central Montana.

Brother Joe and his wife Betty attended high school in Moore, Montana. They were high school sweethearts and later married. They were married for 67 years. They farmed and ranched in the Moore/Ross Fork area their entire married life. They raised children, barley, wheat, and cattle. They raised five children: Jerry Simpson (Kathy), Dan Simpson (Lauren), Janet Southworth (Chris), Lori Goodman (Rick), and Julie Kreps (Randy). The children were raised on the ranch at Ross Fork, where they helped with the farm work and household chores from a young age, teaching them all the value of hard work and sharing their skills with their children.

Joe served in the Army National Guard for nine years and was in the first graduating class of the Montana Military Academy (June 28, 1958). He was honorably discharged as a Reserve Commissioned Officer First Lieutenant on October 31, 1964. He was a member of the Moore Methodist Church. He served on Ross Fork school board for 3 years and Moore school board for 6 years.

Brother Joe received his Masonic Degrees in Judith Lodge No.86: Initiated on December 17, 1968; Passed on February 4, 1969, and Raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason on February 18, 1969. He served as Worshipful Master of Judith Lodge No.86 in 1974 and again in 1994. Bro. Simpson was appointed Lodge Instructor from 2009 to 2013 and from 2015 to 2018. Worshipful Brother Joe was called upon to serve as W. Grand Pursuivant and District Officer in 2008-2009. W. Bro. Joe received the Meritorious Service Medal (Bronze) in 2002 and the Distinguished Service Medal (Silver) in 2009. W. Brother Simpson was elected to the Montana Masonic Hall of Fame in 2017. Brother Joe was a proud member of the Masonic fraternity; he received his 50-Year Member Award in 2019. Brother Joe was also active with the York Rite, Scottish Rite, and Shrine. Joe was a 50-year member of the Vesper Chapter Order of Eastern Star in Hobson, Montana.

Everyone who knew Joe was touched by his kindness and humor, and he was always the first to lend a hand. He lived a life of selfless service and will be sorely missed by those whose lives he touched. He was a man of principle, honest, and hard-working. He was the best storyteller and could always make someone laugh with his jokes. He was the King of crossword puzzles. He enjoyed processing meat (in the basement's meat room) and cooking snacks (especially chicken gizzards or bacon). He was a great wood carpenter, making beautiful kitchen cabinets, dressers, and an assortment of other treasures. The 45-cup coffee pot was always on for friends and family who would stop in for a visit.

Worshipful Brother Joe Simpson, having lived a life respected and died regretted, laid down his working tools and passed to the Celestial Lodge above on Thursday, December 5, 2024, at Peace Hospice House in Great Falls, Montana.

Funeral arrangements are underway. The funeral arrangements will be coordinated with Cloyd Funeral Home, 209 Third Ave N, Lewiston, Montana. A celebration of life service will be in late spring when the sun is shining, the grass is green, and the roads are dry! Memorials can be made to Central Montana Foundation (Hobson Ambulance), Benefis Peace Hospice (Great Falls, MT), or the Donor's choice. Or order memorial trees or send flowers.

VIRGIL A. RINKE

1952-2024



Virgil A. Rinke was born in Polson, MT, on December 25, 1952. He attended grade school at the Round Butte Schoolhouse through 8th grade, where he then went into town and graduated from Ronan High School in 1971. After high school, Virgil worked as a roughneck in the oil fields of Wyoming. He then went on to work in Alaska for Nabors Oil Company and spent 31 years working for Doyon Drilling on the North Slope.

Virgil and Barb were married in Hot Springs on August 22, 1980. He, without hesitation, adopted Billie Jo, and 11 years later, they adopted a baby boy named Matthew. He enjoyed the time he spent with his kids being a dad. While working in the oil fields, he managed and helped Barb run the family ranch. He always managed to keep Barb working on the "10-Year Plan" to come home to help run the ranch. Brother Virgil is survived by his mom Dorothy Rinke, and his wife Barb Rinke; his children, Billie Jo (Paul) Bianchetti and Matthew Rinke; grandchildren, Ben Rinke and Cameron Brown (Madison Clairmont); and great-granddaughter, Blaine River Brown.

Virgil volunteered countless hours as a hunter safety instructor with Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. He was honored with many plaques, the most recent being in 2017, for 25 years of service helping young hunters learn how to shoot and properly handle a firearm. He wasn't just a hunting instructor but a mentor to many and loved by all. Virgil was an adventurous outdoorsman who spent many seasons hunting with friends and family in the Bob Marshall Wilderness and guiding hunters. He appreciated telling a good hunting story of the one that did or didn't get away. He lived a life of making memories with friends and family, never passing up an opportunity to make people laugh and smile with his unique and coarse but direct sense of humor. He always put others' needs above his own by helping people with anything they needed. He has been described as the salt of the earth, the man you want to have your back in the oil fields, and the one to have next to you if you happened to get into a bar fight.

Brother Virgil received his Masonic Degrees in Hot Springs Lodge #153: Initiated on December 11, 1990; Passed on June 11, 1991, and Raised to the Degree of Master Mason on February 11, 1992. Brother Virgil served as Worshipful Master of Hot Springs No. 153 in 1998 and 2005 through 2008 and again in 2014. He affiliated with Kalispell No. 42 on February 1, 2024, after Hot Springs No. 158 surrendered its Charter. He was also a member of Kathryn C. Johnson Chapter #132 Order of the Eastern Star and a member of the Algerian Shrine Temple. He spent countless hours and years raising money for children in the valley to attend the Western Montana Shrine Circus in Missoula, Montana.

Once again, a Brother Mason, having completed the designs laid down upon Life's Trestleboard has answered the last summons of the Grand Master of Heaven and entered into that Celestial Lodge above over which the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides. Though our beloved and respected Brother has passed through the portal of eternity, his memory remains to inspire us to live respected and die regretted.

Brother Virgil A. Rinke died on December 7, 2024, at the age of 71, at his home in Round Butte. Virgil will be remembered for his quick wit, ability to laugh and make people laugh, and mostly for the love of family and friends. A memorial service will be held on Friday, December 20, 2024, at 11:00 A.M. at the Faith Lutheran Church in Ronan, MT. The family has asked, instead of flowers, donations in Virgil's honor be made to the following: Lake County Hunter Education Program c/o Tom Fieber (406) 250-3386 or Shriners Hospital for Children of Spokane.

THE DAWN OF THE EXPERIMENTAL METHOD AND THE MASONIC LODGE

Mike McCurry, PM, Eureka No.93

For years I have puzzled over why the scientific method was developed in Europe, and not in China, or Iran, or Bagdad - places where many discoveries came at a time when the Scots and English were still painting themselves blue. Other places had a long history of developing technical innovations, and should have had an equally long head start toward developing scientific methodology. My answer came as I researched the significance of Scots Freemasons in the 17th century. By the time I was through researching that topic, I found that several people had already answered my question.

There is the question of whether the times make the changes inevitable, or whether the 'great man' creates the history. The times - Seventeenth Century Europe - created a time when the Enlightenment could thrive. On the other hand, there is a 'great man' responsible for England's development and acceptance of the scientific method. His name is Robert Moray. He is the first man recorded as being made a Freemason in England. He was a Scots Covenanter general (and working for Richelieu). He could not have built the Royal Society without the Masonic Lodge. This is his story, and his story explains why the scientific method grew to maturity in Europe.

The Times

The Seventeenth Century was a time of strife. The place was not yet Great Britain - the separate kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland were not accustomed to getting along, much less achieving the status of a United Kingdom. In 1603, James VI of Scotland became James I of England.

King James was Presbyterian. Any hopes that he would lead a United Kingdom into toleration of the Catholic religion ended on November 5, 1605, with the Gunpowder Plot - a conspiracy of Catholics intent on blowing up Parliament, King James, his queen and his son. James wanted a religion that could impose the divine right of kings onto the general attitude of all of his subjects.

Science was under fire from the Roman Catholic church - literally and figuratively. On February 17, 1600, Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake after the Inquisition had found his cosmological theories heretical. By 1615, Galileo had the Inquisition examining

his work. He finished his career under house arrest - a happier end than his colleague Bruno. While the Inquisition did not actively search out what we would regard as scientists today, it is important to remember that the inquisitors searched for heresy. Also, the lines dividing science from magic were not so strongly drawn as today - for example, Both Isaac Newton and Robert Boyle began their careers as alchemists, moving into science later.

What Stevenson terms Masonry's "Scottish Century" is the 120 year span from 1590 to 1710. The Scottish Century includes the British Civil Wars and the publication of an English translation of the Bible (1611) under the direction of Brother James Stuart (James the VI of Scotland, James I of England. It is a time of political and religious strife.

1566 to 1648 The Eighty Years War
1618 to 1648 The Thirty Years War (fought primarily Central Europe it included Scots soldiers in a Catholic vs Protestant war)
1594 to 1603 The Nine Years War
1638 The National Covenant (Scotland) which led to the
1639 to 1640 The Bishops War
1639 to 1653 The War of the Three Kingdoms (Cromwell and the Puritans)
1660 The Stuart Restoration
1688 to 1689 The Glorious Revolution

The Scottish Century began with the last Tudor monarch on the throne, then went to the Stuarts, then the Lord Protector, back to a Stuart, then to the House of Orange, and a return to the final Stuart. The many changes in government, and the varying religions ascendant along with them probably explain our tradition of not discussing politics or religion in the Lodge.

The Man

Sir Robert Moray (1608 to 1673) was made a Mason on May 20, 1641. His efforts lobbying King Charles II resulted in the "College for the Promoting of Physico-Mathematicall-Experimentall Learning" (later renamed the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge - shortened to simply The Royal Society).

Moray is a hard man to easily describe - just as the aspects of science where he experimented are

diverse, so were his professions. Probably it is easiest to describe him first as a Scots soldier and military engineer, working against

England, then moving to France where he also served as a soldier and as a spy for Richelieu. Six weeks after Richelieu's death, Moray was knighted by King Charles I. ... and a few days later returned to France and a promotion to Colonel commanding the Scots Guards. The record seems fairly clear - had King Charles dressed in drag, and followed Moray's advice, he would probably have avoided the indignity of being the only beheaded king.

After the Scots turned King Charles over to Parliament, Moray returned to France while the Cromwells (father and son) ruled England. Moray returned to England with the Restoration and saw Charles II installed as King. Under Charles II, Moray moved into a series of British government postings, became the first president of the Royal Society.

The Royal Society grew from Gresham College's group that was known as 'the invisible college' - it included Freemasons Moray, Elias Ashmole, Dr. Jean Desaguliers, Christopher Wren and Alexander Bruce. (Note: This occurred while Masonry was still secret - I'm satisfied that these men were Freemasons, but others might argue. I haven't encountered any dues cards.)

I cannot state that either the invisible college or the initial Royal Society was even predominately Masonic - but there is no question that the Royal Society was created through Moray's efforts.

Moray was never an outstanding scientist - but his experimental efforts included such diverse fields as chemistry, magnetism, metallurgy, mineralogy, pharmacology, and many technical applications.

While Moray was, at best, a mediocre scientist, he was aware of the threat the Inquisition posed to any scientist that crossed the orthodox church line. He was born into a society that based facts on faith - his creation of the Royal Society ensured that, in his early fifties, his corner of the world was safe for experimenters and scientific research.

It might be argued that the Inquisition set the social parameters that pushed Moray into developing the Royal Society, I prefer to believe that the old Scot was the great man who brought the scientific method to Europe. Perhaps the lack of the Inquisition kept other scientists from developing the scientific method in Persia, in China, India, Baghdad, etc. But Moray's role in the early United Kingdom is apparent.

The Sidekick

It may be impertinent to refer to Elias Ashmole as a sidekick - while he is the first English Freemason where we have records of his initiation, he is very different from Moray. During the Civil War, Ashmole was a royalist (like Moray) but at the end of the war, with Cromwell's side ascendent, he was forgiven for his role - but not allowed to enter London. While Moray appears to have been recruited into the Lodge, Ashmole's diaries show that he chose to become a Freemason hoping for associates who could help him get ahead financially. His early goal was to marry a rich widow - and his diary entries leave me suspecting that he hoped that his new brothers in the lodge would at least manage to pull the strings that could get him back into London and maybe even help him make contact with that rich widow.

Still, in keeping with our modern idea of making good men better, Ashmole, though not a scientist, also became a member of the Royal Society - and preserved the collections and working papers of several Royal Society members. I am satisfied that the scientific method became established in England because of the efforts of these two early Freemasons.

Sources:

https://www.freemasonry.bcy.ca/texts/reviews/invisible_college.html

David Stevenson The Origins of Freemasonry Scotland's Century 1590-1710



No More Elevator Speech!

Sooner or later, at every conference or meeting on membership, the idea that everyone needs an “elevator speech” is put forward for that moment when someone asks: “What is masonry all about?”. When that happens, there are two reactions from the Mason who has been asked. The first, and most common, is a panic reaction of the Mason who wishes he had taken some time and mental energy to develop that speech. The result is some stumbling and stammering ending in something like “making good men better.” The second is usually a very high-sounding but incomprehensible monologue about a course of hieroglyphical and moral instruction taught using types, emblems, and allegorical figures emblematic of your journey through life. This well-developed speech goes into all sorts of details about the beauty of the ritual, and it quickly becomes a summary of the entire third narrative lecture in the first and third degrees. Both responses will not likely develop into an opportunity to have more discussion. So, what will open that further discussion if these two responses are inadequate, or possibly improper, for the profane (non-Mason)? I would offer up another line of discussion. Masonry is about brotherhood, charity, and studying your relationships with the world at large; it is a search for truth.



Submitted by:
Herb Merrick, DSM
Hancock Lodge 311

Masonry is a fraternity in the classical sense. It is a diverse group of men who believe in working together to improve themselves and the world around them. The shared membership experience provides each member with a circle of friends who can work like a family. The term “brothers” is quite literal. A member can rely on other members of the fraternity to provide the same type of support found in a family setting. The lodge is where members can ask questions and seek practical and philosophical information without worry. Like a family, there is a wide variety of opinions about almost anything, but a special relationship is gained through shared experiences. This allows members with differing opinions to share fellowship without disruptive disagreements. An early example is provided to us through Brother Rudyard Kipling’s “The Mother Lodge.”¹ Establishing the makeup of the lodge in the first four verses, in the fifth verse, he talks about the monthly discussions of religion in a lodge with members of each of the three major monotheistic religions. Here the issues are discussed as education while avoiding offense by not having a banquet.

Masonic charity assists other members and the community at large to make the world better. The Masonic concept of charity or relief is introduced in the third narrative lecture of the first degree. It is expanded in the following degrees and specifically addressed in the obligations of the second and third degrees. Masons see charity as a universal duty of all people, but it is also the key to establishing the close relationships that make the fraternity strong and united. The obligations expand this tenet with specific requirements to the individual Mason and the Mason’s family. The formalization of a Masonic charity can be found in the Grand Lodge of England’s establishment of a Committee of Charity in 1727.² This has led to every Grand Lodge having a committee or a foundation to support charitable activities within

1 The Mother-Lodge by Rudyard Kipling - Famous poems, famous poets. - All Poetry <https://allpoetry.com/The-Mother-Lodge> accessed July 2023.

2 Masonic Charity (masonicworld.com) Prestonian Lecture of 1993 and published in volume 108 of *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* in October 1996. https://www.masonicworld.com/education/articles/masonic_charity.htm

its jurisdiction. While Masonry is fraternity and not a charity, it is the practice of charity that binds the fraternity members into a band of brothers united in several important purposes.

The Masonic search for truth is the last pillar of what makes the key supports of the fraternity. It is one of the most important fields of study conducted by the members of the craft. It is through this search for truth that unites our passion and our logic. Truth is the crowning virtue of the fraternity. It is a symbol for divinity and the source of all the other virtues held in such high regard. As Masons, we abhor any perversion of truth, but we also accept that facts are subject to interpretation and are willing to give interpretations a fair and just hearing in the search for the truth. Truth is at the crux of the Masonic experience. For masons, at least in a philosophical and religious sense, the search for truth is the object. Truth is symbolized by the world, and from the minute a candidate becomes a member, his search for truth in the universe begins. Truth is attained through experiential learning and by engaging with the age-old Masonic rituals and ceremonies. But truth is also found in meaning. By living a masonic life, each member is reflecting the values that facilitate a virtuous existence.³

The next time you get the “What is it all about” question, you can provide an answer in just a few sentences. Masonry is a fraternity, the oldest operating in the modern world. Brothers working together to make the world better by helping those in need. Using rituals and ceremonies, the fraternity searches for meaning and truth. From these three simple thoughts, you can expand based on the level of interest returned from the inquirer. We are brothers searching for truth and helping our members and the world at large.



3 The Intersectionality of Truth and Belief in Freemasonry; William Regal April 17, 2023 <https://freemasonscommunity.life/truth-and-belief-in-freemasonry/> accessed 21 July 2023



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THE RIGHT MORTAR

I recently saw a post by a friend involved in preserving a Historic Building, specifically the home of Brother George Walton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. The post was about the type of mortar used for historic buildings.

Did you know that mortar matters?

That's right, the type of mortar you use to point the brick or stone on your historic house or building matters. A LOT! Repointing is a common masonry repair for historic structures. This is when failing or lost mortar is removed and replaced with new mortar.

Historic mortars are frequently lime-based and are softer and more permeable than modern Portland cement-based mortars. This allows moisture to move in and out of the mortar joint, not the historic brick. The mortar breaks down, protecting the brick. If the historic soft mortar is replaced with a modern, harder mortar, moisture will move through the brick instead. This will cause the historic brick to break down because it is softer than the modern, impermeable mortar. This leads to visual and structural deterioration of your historic building. The same thing can happen with softer stones when paired with a hard, modern mortar.

The analogy with Freemasonry was immediately obvious to me. We often call this mortar that unites us into one sacred band or society of friends and brothers, cement instead of mortar, but the meaning is the same. We are taught to spread the cement (mortar) of brotherly love and affection, using the most important tool of a Master Mason, the Trowel. It is important that we maintain the structure of Freemasonry; we use the right tools and materials to ensure that it will survive for the long-term.

When brothers want to introduce change to Freemasonry, we are right to question the materials they bring to our structure.

There are those that would introduce to our Craft the newest fads and trends of society so that we can match the world around us. These brothers seem to get on a crusade to remake Freemasonry in their image, and all others are wrong if we disagree. I am open to healthy discussion about the future of Freemasonry, but I am not open to wholesale changes for the sake of change.

Freemasonry should not look like society; it should look like Freemasonry. We have specific tenets and maxims that have been laid out over the centuries, and we should think long and hard before we make changes to our ancient Craft.

I would remind our brethren that, if Freemasonry had looked like society, we would have never achieved what we have as a fraternity. When the early lodges and Grand Lodges were formed, they did not reflect society. If the lodges matched society, they would be limited to the wealthy and titled, or they would be filled with only the working class, never the twain should meet. But they did not follow the societal rules; they ensured that men of all stations in society could meet together to form the mystic bond that we cherish even today.

It is important to use the proper materials to build and improve our structure to ensure that they strengthen the fraternity, not introduce new mortar that will deteriorate the historic structure and cause it to fail and fall.

Although the Grand Master and the Worshipful Master appear to be in charge, they are really just the guardians of the Craft. His task, and one he must take very seriously, is to ensure the success of the Craft for the generations that follow.

Reprinted from the Masonic Messenger, Official Publication of the Grand Lodge F&AM of Georgia, Summer, 2024, Page 29.

Grand Master Whitehead at Acacia No. 33



Consolidation of Mission Valley No. 78 with Bigfork No. 150 as Bigfork No. 150



THE ANCIENT MYSTERIES

In all periods from the dawn of history until about the fifth century A.D., there existed, in nearly every known country, societies which appear to have been strikingly similar to Freemasonry. These societies taught the same doctrine in the same way, although they had different names in different countries, and are now generally termed the "Ancient Mysteries."

It seems that among pagan people of ancient times there were a few superior minds and spirits who did not accept the popular idolatrous notions as an adequate conception of the Deity, but who quietly searched in the great works of nature for knowledge and understanding. They would have been subjected to ridicule and persecution had they publicly expressed their beliefs and their rejection of the popular pagan religions, so they discussed their convictions only in secret with those of kindred mind in societies where they were secure from observation and interference. It is generally believed that such was the origin of these ancient fraternities.

These societies had fixed forms of initiation, successive steps or degrees, a symbolical system of teaching, and possession of emblems and perhaps grips, signs and words of recognition. Initiation was an allegorical search for light and knowledge, and involved physical and moral preparation, transformation from ignorance to knowledge, from corruption to moral and spiritual purity, and investiture with an emblem of purity, sometimes a white apron, sometimes a white sash or robe. All of the Mysteries taught a system of monotheism, though coupled with the idea of a trinity, or one god in three persons, but differing from the Christian Trinity in that they conceived it to be a male, a female and an offspring, or father, mother and son. They might also the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and immortality of the soul.

Of these Ancient Mysteries, one of the oldest was that of Osiris, his wife Isis, and son Horus, which dates back to about 3,000 B.C. in Egypt. Slain by his evil brother Typhon and others, the dismembered body of Osiris was eventually recovered by Isis, embalmed and buried, after which it was announced that he had risen from the dead. The legend appears to have been the model for the other and later "mysteries", among which were those of Mithras in Persia, Cadmillus (of the Cabiri) in Thrace, Adonis in Phoenicia, Baldur of the Scandinavians, Bel (or Baal) of the Chaldeans, and Dionysian and Eleusinian of Greece.

Contemporary authorities content there is no connection between the Ancient Mysteries and Freemasonry, in spite of the similarities. Early Masonic writers, obviously impressed by these similarities and without further

evidence, theorized that there was a direct connection. But with the advent about 1870 of the school of realism, imagination gave way to investigation, and fancy to fact, and by 1885 it was demonstrated that Freemasonry was of an entirely different order and origin.

The Hiramic legend is peculiarly Masonic. It was developed during the very early days of accepted and speculative Masonry. Possibly its originators borrowed some elements from the old "mysteries", but there is no evidence that the legend of Hiram the Builder has been passed down from time immemorial. The striking similarities between the Ancient Mysteries and Masonry are intriguing, nevertheless, and indicate that, throughout the ages, man has sensed the Divine Presence and sought a greater knowledge of and closer communion with his Creator.

Reference:

Coach's Handbook, Section Four, Montana Masonic Manual.



MASONIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

The standards you set are the standards you get.

Lecture by: Jack Levitt, PGM

Our present state of Masonic Education can be described, at best, as spotty. There are ample materials that have been distributed, but, there are few competent brothers designated in most lodges to use them effectively. Relying on Masters to do so has been ineffective. As a result, there is a minimal use made of these material, if any. Although there was little direction given with these materials, it was expected that they would be utilized, but there has been no follow up, resulting in a failure to develop any enthusiasm for further learning.

In short, the present approach to Masonic Education creates little encouragement to a commitment to learning about, and applying, Freemasonry. Additionally, failure to teach our candidates much of the true value of the degrees they experience adds a reason for failure to advance.

Likewise, failure to peak the curiosity of our members to learn more than is presented in the lectures adds a reason for failure to attend lodge.

Education should be a continuous growth of the mind and a continuous illumination of life. There is no reason why learning should stop before one's death.

Prior to the 1960s the Masonic culture was such that the emphasis was on the candidate to earn the honor to become a Freemason. Coaching then included explanation of the history of Freemasonry, its symbolism and its cardinal principles. By exemplary conduct, good ritual and the hand of friendship, candidates were inspired to learn Freemasonry's lessons. These influences caused candidates to desire to please the lodge and to warrant the privilege of membership.

Today, because of the insatiable hunger for members, candidates are overly accommodated, the ritual is unnecessarily shortened and our lessons go largely unexplained, largely unappreciated, and, in too many case, almost entirely unlearned. If every candidate were required, in accordance with the letter and spirit of the ancient regulations, to be thoroughly instructed in one step of Masonry before he is allowed to take another, we should not see so many "rough ashlar" laying all along our pathway.

One reason now being given for the goal to rush through the degrees is that men today lack the time to take the degrees in the manner used for hundreds of years. However, men make time for the things they value.

Education is the way by which we try to prepare ourselves to gainfully improve, which is one of the things we came here to do. But, education results only when individuals are induced to guide their thinking in compliance with established moral principles. The value of lessons taught in Freemasonry lies entirely in the thoughts and inspirations they stimulate in the minds of those receiving them.

It is necessary to overcome the apathy toward Masonic Education and the lack of desire to utilize time for it. Candidates and members must be motivated to learn and lodges must have a coordinated and articulated program of Masonic instruction that delivers a quality presentation as well as a quality product.

We need to identify, recruit and train competent brothers to make a Masonic Education program in each lodge a reality and a meaningful one that can cause our candidates and our members to catch a vision of what Freemasonry can be for them in their lives.

You have already been given materials to use in making a short presentation of Masonic Information. I will now go over some additional ones that should provide you with some ideas for others.

Our standards must be heightened. The standards you set are the standards you get. Our attitudes must be changed. If we apply and maintain high standards, live Freemasonry's principles and take time to educate in Masonic History, philosophy and doctrine, we will go far in restoring the Masonic culture that once existed.

I close by asking whether our lodges are providing an incentive to appreciate the value of the Craft's teachings, a desire to learn more and if our candidates are even being informed of the necessity to study further? If you answer in the negative, as I suspect you must, wouldn't that indicate the necessity to change the drive from one of primarily seeking candidates to one of stressing the duty of every Freemason to learn and improve? Wouldn't it further indicate the necessity to change the emphasis from merely obtaining the degrees to learning how to strenuously enforce, by precept and example, a steady obedience to the tenants of Freemasonry?

Helena No. 3 and Montana Masonry Welcomes Two New Entered Apprentices



Helena Lodge #3 initiated two EA's. Welcome, Bros. Will Stotts and Carson Payne! Carson has been waiting four years to join - since he was 14. When he turned 18 in September, he petitioned. How's that?!

Grand Master Whitehead at Ruby Lodge No. 36



Freemasonry is as important today for ethical and moral behavior, as it was for George Washington and other U.S. Founders

By Brother Norman Black
Roswell Lodge No. 165



*Norman Black, a member of Roswell Lodge No. 165, has published a book entitled **Born in Blood, A Merit** c 1754-1815, which includes information about why Freemasonry was considered very important for the new United States by George Washington and a number of other prominent founders of this nation.*

His book tells the story of America, from the French and Indian War, to the American Revolution and

independence from Britain, to the creation of the United States of America, and on to 1815, when a second American war with Britain ended.

During this period, war decided what America's and the world's main language would be, what governmental institutions and social and economic arrangements would dominate America and the world, and that there would be religious freedom in the United States and Canada.

By 1815, the U.S. federation's sectional character was visible, and events happened, which moved the young republic towards its current status. This period is, therefore, extremely important for an understanding of subsequent American history.

The book is available on amazon as both a printed book and a Kindle book. The following is an excerpt from it:

The American Revolution left money as the sole value

Though not intended by the United States' founders, the American Revolution discredited Europe's paternalistic and hierarchical order and resulted in creating the world's first and so far only completely commercial society. Pursuit of happiness, that is, making money, is the paramount value.

The old order had specific types of social relationships, mainly ones of dependency, based upon patronage and kinship. The American Revolution intentionally destroyed these relationships. The revolutionaries wanted to establish alternative relationships, but were unable to. The result was a society very different than what they expected.

The old order was rationalist, but ordinary people in the 1700's were very religious. Educated people in the old order and in post-revolutionary America did not use religion to explain the world. Ordinary people made sense of life and explained the world with religion. By the early 1800s, as a result of the American Revolution ordinary citizens dominated American politics, culture, and social life and brought their religiosity with them.

Some prominent Founders were deists, but most were theistic rationalists. They believed in a mighty, rational, and benevolent creator who made laws governing how the universe functions. For them, God was a unitary and personal deity who was present and intervened in human affairs. Because of that, they believed prayers were effective. For them, one served God by living a good and moral life. Morality was the core value of their religion.

The founders did not expect the great spread of evangelical Protestantism, which developed in the Second Great Awakening of the 1820s. Even today, the United States is the most religious of the industrialized nations. That is because the relatively democratic form of United States' politics enables ordinary people to dominate American culture more than ordinary people to dominate societies in Western Europe. It is also the cause of American vulgarity and materialism.

The Anglo-American culture of the gentleman was at its peak in the 1700s. A gentleman was a man that knew how to behave and how to rule. In the American colonies there was less weight given to family and wealth to create a gentleman and more to moral behavior. America's founders had little claim to important family backgrounds and significant wealth, and the definition of a gentleman by his moral behavior made it possible for Founders to aim for gentility.

The traditional English definition of a gentleman required one to have significant wealth, have no need to work, and be disinterested. He could not be a laborer or retail merchant, but he could engage in a profession such as doctor or lawyer. In the 1700s members of professions had leisure time and worked many fewer hours at their professions than men in similar professions do today. This accorded with the contemporary understanding that a gentleman was independent because of his wealth and leisure time. The purpose of a gentleman's leisure time was to rule through public service. Gentlemen were men that were disinterested in daily commercial activities, and it was that disinterestedness, which qualified them for political leadership. After the revolution there was no traditional aristocracy left, except in southern states. Gentlemen remained a force in every other European society, and the old order survived.

In the old order, those that had power were deferred to. They could give orders to those dependent upon them and reward them when warranted. After independence, the Founders thought that the general public would obey them because they were well educated, capable, and

had been elected. They were sure that once a candidate was elected by the people, the people would listen to him. Throughout his life, Jefferson held on to the revolutionary dream that talent would be elected and obeyed.

Men that doubted this became Federalists, a party founded from 1789 to 1890 by Alexander Hamilton. Federalists thought that those candidates that voters elected would not be the best qualified. They would be those that could attract attention. They would be the best talkers, the best looking, and the wealthiest.

Today Americans know that each elected politician and would-be politician is beholden to special interests, or he would not have a source of campaign funds. A recurrent hope voters have is that someone independently wealthy will step forward to lead.

According to Gordon S. Wood, in *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, post-revolutionary America is a commercial society in which the political order supports the idea that people's decisions about their own economic interest are the only social connection between them. He noted that commercial society was a victory for ordinary, self-interested people who "political philosophers since the beginning of time have said are ill equipped to run any government. They are too self-interested, too preoccupied with the pursuit of their own interests."

As the United States developed, the north was a capitalistic, materialistic society, and northerners increasingly saw buying and selling for monetary gain as society's basic connection. During this time, leading southerners' values remained nearer to values of the 1700s and the Age of Reason (also called The Age of Enlightenment).

The Age of Enlightenment or Age of Reason in America normally refers to the years from 1715 to 1789. It was distinguished by critical thinking about religious, social, and philosophical matters, and sought to reject beliefs of theories, which were neither based upon reason nor justifiable by logic. The Age of Enlightenment developed mainly in Western Europe and spread to America.

During the Enlightenment, classical republicanism developed as a way to bring together beliefs in reason, religious tolerance, and natural rights. This thinking rejected divine rights of rulers and supported government based upon a belief that every citizen had God-given natural rights.

Another philosophy that developed during the American Age of Reason, is liberalism based upon the thoughts of John Locke. Locke wrote that each man has natural rights to life, liberty, and property, which no government should violate. Locke's thinking about self-government became a central thought in Britain's American colonies.

The men that wrote the Declaration of Independence agreed with Locke's thinking and featured prominently in that document the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The writers also stated that these are natural rights, given by Nature and Nature's God, which governments' have an obligation to protect.

The Constitution of the United States says little about the role of a god in the new order it creates. As implied in the Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation, the people are the authority for the political action declared. Justin B. Litke, in *Twilight of the Republic*, writes "God has so far served as a witness to the rectitude of the people's intentions or the guarantor — from the far-off moment of creation — of the legitimacy of self-government in general."

Freemasonry as an alternative to materialism

An organization based upon the Age of Reason's beliefs began to flourish in the new American nation concurrently with independence. It was a fraternity, which emerged in Britain in the early 1700s, and was based upon Age of Reason beliefs that good men associating with other good men would improve themselves ethically and morally and benefit society. It offered an alternative to materialistic values.

The fraternity is Freemasonry, and British civil servants and regiments carried the fraternity around the world to every British colony. Lodges formed during the American colonial era received their warrants from English grand lodges.

Freemasonry stresses good conduct and virtue. It sank deep roots in Britain's American colonies, and by the late 1700s, it counted many important men in its ranks: men that would soon lead the new nation.

These included Benjamin Franklin and George Washington, Paul Revere, John Hancock, and John Marshall. Washington served as master of his Virginia lodge and also as grand master of Virginia Freemasons.

In Britain's American colonies and in the post-evolutionary United States, Freemasonry created an institution of men, which was not based either upon blood descent or materialism. Regardless of their status in society, members fraternize as equals in lodge. This fraternity filled part of the vacuum left by destruction of the old order in the United States, and its popularity grew among well to do Americans in the post-revolutionary United States. Through its members, Freemasonry has had great influence on the development of the country.

Freemasonry was also part of many civic ceremonies as the U.S. began. The dedication of the cornerstone of the United States capitol is just one example.

On the morning of September 18, 1793, President George Washington and his entourage crossed the Potomac River from Alexandria, Virginia, into Washington, the new United States' capitol. They were in full Masonic regalia and were accompanied by the Alexandria

Volunteer Artillery and members of Masonic lodges from Virginia, Maryland, Georgetown, and Federal City. They walked 1.5 miles (2.4 km) up the path that marked Pennsylvania Avenue to where the capitol was being built, and were met at the site by the grand master of Maryland Masons.

At the construction site Washington was met by Joseph Clark, Maryland's grand master, and three lodge masters. They climbed down into a builder's foundation trench where Washington was handed a silver plaque made by a local silversmith, which he placed on the cornerstone. The plaque was inscribed with a tribute to Washington's "military valor and prudence". It dedicated the capitol in the "first year, of the second term, of the presidency of George Washington...and in the year of Masonry 5,793". Then grains of corn, wine, and oil were placed on the cornerstone, which are Masonic symbols of prosperity, health, and peace. With the ceremony over, Washington and those with him left the trench to a 15-gun salute (one for each state) by the Alexandria Volunteer Artillery, and Clark said a short invocation. After that, a 500-lb (230 kg) ox was slaughtered, roasted, and eaten by those assembled.

Freemasonry was at that time at the center of public culture in the United States. There were then about 200 local masonic lodges under nine state grand lodges. By 1800, there were more than 500 local lodges and about 25,000 members, representing about 3% of the adult, white male population recorded in the 1800 census. That was many more than the percentage of men that were minimally propertied and therefore qualified to vote. They were men that could or would afford the Masonic order's dues and assessments.

The Masonic Order was considered a remedy for partisan disagreement. At their regular lodge meetings, rituals instill in members principles of disinterested virtue and brotherly love. The Order requires of its members rectitude and moderate conduct and forbids all strife and ill-tempered debate, riot and intemperance.

The Holy Saints John

It is stated in the monitorial lecture that "our ancient brethren dedicated their lodges to King Solomon, who was our first Most Excellent Grand Master, but modern Masons dedicate theirs to St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, who were two eminent patron of Masonry."

Since all lodges are now dedicated to these saints, Masons today are said to come from "the lodge of the Holy Saints John at Jerusalem."

In the third century the church adopted the two pagan festival days of the summer and winter solstices and made June 24 St. John the Baptists day, and December 27 St. John the Evangelist's day.

Biblically John the Baptist was the son of the Jewish priest, Zacharias, and Elizabeth, cousin of Mary. His life, built on the strength of faith sustained to his martyred death, is an example of unshaken firmness in the right and in his inflexible fidelity to God. John the Evangelist, author of the Gospel and Epistles bearing his name, was the son of Zebedee, brother of James and youngest of the Apostles. His constant admonitions to the cultivation of brotherly love and the mysticism of his vision undoubtedly led to his inclusion with John the Baptist as the Holy Saints John, who as the patron saints of Masonry have become enshrined in the memory of every Mason.

Reference:

Coach's Handbook, Section Four, Montana Masonic Manual.

Within the Grand Lodge of AF&AM of Montana:

Annually, every lodge shall hold the following observances: Holy Saints John Day, during the month of January, excluding Sunday, which shall consist of a tyled table lodge and a luncheon or dinner.



THIS BEAUTIFUL CONCEPTION OF LANGFORD'S DESCRIPTION
OF THE FIRST MEETING OF MASONS IN THE TERRITORY OF
MONTANA, (1862) AS TOLD BY THE LANDOWNER, JESSE
STEM STONER — HELENA LODGE NO 3

THIS BEAUTIFUL CONCEPTION OF LANGFORD'S DESCRIPTION
OF THE FIRST MEETING OF MASONS IN THE TERRITORY OF
MONTANA, (1862) EXECUTED BY THE ARTIST SELTZER, WAS
MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROSITY OF
JESSE STEM STONER — HELENA LODGE NO 3

Polishing the Craft: Why Presentation Matters in Freemasonry

Sebastian Søk, Galway Lodge 5408

Freemasonry, a fraternity with roots that go back centuries, is steeped in a rich legacy of rituals, traditions, and symbols, where every element is thoughtfully designed to foster a profound sense of unity, respect, and personal growth.

The practices of the Craft aim not only to encourage ethical development and philosophical reflection but also to create an atmosphere that visually and emotionally supports these principles.

A key aspect of this experience is the idea of presentation—the visible expression of Freemasonry's values through its symbols, attire, and the decorum upheld within the lodge.

In Freemasonry, presentation includes the condition, design, and arrangement of furnishings, the quality and significance of regalia, and the overall aesthetic of the lodge's architecture.

As W. L. Wilmshurst discusses in *The Meaning of Masonry* (1980), these physical elements serve as a means for spiritual growth, creating a space where members can fully engage with the teachings of the fraternity.

The lodge's design and symbolism foster a powerful atmosphere that reinforces the values of the Craft, encouraging an experience that inspires and transforms individuals.

Wilmshurst perceives the lodge as a space of transformation, not just a place for gathering, but as a tangible embodiment of Freemasonry's spiritual purpose, its artistry, and its ethical principles.

The thoughtful arrangement of furniture and decor, along with meticulously maintained regalia, ensures that the environment reflects the moral discipline and respect that Masonry upholds.

Therefore, the presentation in Freemasonry is not merely incidental; it is a deliberate and vital component in cultivating a setting that promotes both personal and communal reflection.

This article delves into the deeper significance of upholding high standards in Masonic presentation.

It analyses the symbolic meanings found in Masonic regalia and furnishings, their importance in rituals, historical views on craftsmanship, the potential repercussions of neglect, and how a well-kept lodge environment can enhance the experience for members.

Lastly, it will provide practical steps for lodges aiming to maintain or improve their presentation standards, ensuring the dignity and influence of the Craft are preserved.

1. The Symbolic Value of Regalia and Lodge Furnishings

Within Freemasonry, regalia and furnishings hold much more significance than just being practical items or decorative pieces; they embody deep symbolic meaning and reflect the fundamental ideals of discipline, unity, and reverence. A. W. Waite, in *A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry* (1970), describes Masonic regalia as a connection between the individual and the collective memory of the fraternity, linking members across different times and places in their shared quest for ethical and spiritual truth.

Waite sees regalia not just as ceremonial clothing but as vital links that immerse members in the fraternity's rich history, inspiring them to view their membership as a lifelong journey of self-improvement.

Foster Bailey, in *The Spirit of Masonry* (1996), supports this perspective by referring to the symbols in Freemasonry as "tools for building the spiritual temple" within each member.

He argues that every Masonic item—from aprons to jewels to the layout of the lodge—serves as a reminder of the moral duties and responsibilities each member holds.

These symbols motivate members to embody Masonic virtues like honor, humility, and respect.

The ongoing use and preservation of these items reflect a commitment to uphold the fraternity's teachings, making its enduring principles tangible.

By maintaining high-quality regalia and well-crafted furnishings, lodges are not just preserving physical objects; they are also showing respect for the values these items represent.

As Morris (2019) points out, regalia act as a badge of honor for members, fostering a sense of connection across generations.

This bond is strengthened by the care taken in preserving regalia and furnishings, which illustrates unity and respect for tradition. Each item, made with care and maintained with pride, stands as a living testament to the resilience of Masonic principles.

2. The Role of Presentation in Masonic Rituals and Ceremonies

Rituals and ceremonies are central to Freemasonry, serving as the foundation for the fraternity's teachings.

These ceremonies go beyond mere procedures; they are transformative experiences designed to foster introspection and connection among members. James Tresner, in his book *But I Digress: Further Light on Freemasonry* (2001) emphasises that the presentation of regalia and furnishings is vital not just for aesthetics but also for creating the solemn atmosphere necessary for Masonic rituals.

He argues that when regalia and furnishings are well-presented, they allow rituals to unfold with the reverence and dignity they deserve, enhancing the spiritual and philosophical impact on participants.

The importance of presentation in ritual goes beyond mere function; it underpins the entire experience that enables members to engage deeply with Masonic teachings.

Stevenson (2020) points out that a well-crafted altar, suitable lighting, and thoughtfully arranged furnishings create an environment that encourages reflection and reverence.

He stresses that high-quality presentation within the lodge not only adds beauty but also aligns members' mind-sets with the values of the Craft.

Thus, the placement and condition of Masonic symbols have a psychological effect on members, helping them to enter a state of respect and introspection that fosters a meaningful connection to Masonic philosophy.

Tresner emphasises that a well-kept lodge is more than just a venue for meetings; it serves as a revered space that enhances rituals and ceremonies, transforming them into experiences rich in moral and spiritual significance.

With careful attention to detail, the lodge becomes a sacred ground where the fraternity's traditions and values are honoured and celebrated.

This environment enables rituals to connect on a profound level, strengthening members' dedication to the principles of Freemasonry and ensuring the Craft's integrity is maintained through the ages.

3. Historical Perspectives on Craftsmanship and Maintenance in Freemasonry

Freemasonry has always valued craftsmanship as a fundamental principle, reflecting the cultural values and artistic standards of different historical periods.

According to Stillom (1982) in his work, *History of the Ancient and Honourable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons and Concordant Orders*, early lodges placed great importance on intricate craftsmanship, often hiring artisans whose work exemplified quality and artistry.

These attributes went beyond mere aesthetics; they represented integrity, tradition, and a deep respect for the fraternity's values.

This commitment to excellence highlighted the members' dedication to the Craft, with every aspect of the lodge's design symbolizing the permanence and stability that Freemasonry aimed to embody.

The Grand Lodge of England and other significant Masonic institutions worldwide upheld this tradition, focusing on materials and designs that honoured their heritage.

Jackson (1980) in *Beyond the Craft: The Fine Art of Masonic Tradition* discusses how historical lodges invested in furnishings made from the finest materials, recognising that these artefacts would serve as lasting symbols of Masonic tradition.

By decorating lodges with intricate artefacts and impressive architecture, these spaces evolved into more than just meeting venues—they became visual representations of Masonic principles such as honour, tradition, and unity, reinforcing the fraternity's values for future generations.

4. The Impact of Neglect on the Lodge's Image and Integrity

Neglecting the presentation within Masonic lodges can harm the positive image that the fraternity strives to maintain.

Stillom (1982) points out that the decline of Masonic spaces can create an impression of indifference, potentially damaging the fraternity's public perception and affecting members' pride in their lodge.

Failing to care for symbols, furnishings, and other key elements of the Masonic experience can weaken the impact of rituals, turning these symbols into distractions instead of reinforcing the Craft's values.

This lack of maintenance can also influence potential members, who may view a neglected lodge as a sign of diminished commitment to Freemasonry's high standards.

Matthews (2018) emphasises that worn or damaged items can detract from the dignity and solemnity of Masonic ceremonies, which are meant to convey respect and discipline.

Therefore, maintaining high presentation standards is essential for preserving the lodge's image and creating an environment that reflects Freemasonry's principles of respect, pride, and unity.

By ensuring proper upkeep, lodges can instill pride in their members and strengthen their commitment to these core values.

5. Psychological Effects of a Well-Presented Lodge on Members

A well-kept and visually appealing lodge positively influences its members, instilling a sense of pride and respect for their fraternity.

Bailey (1996) suggests that an organised and attractive environment aligns with the principles of Freemasonry, promoting personal and spiritual growth among members.

Research in environmental psychology, such as that by Kapelus (2021), indicates that individuals often feel a stronger sense of pride and respect in well-maintained spaces, which can motivate members to embrace Masonic values more fully.

For newcomers, a lodge that honours tradition through its maintenance creates a powerful first impression, welcoming them into a space that reflects care and respect.

Roberts (2022) points out that a meticulously maintained lodge can strengthen new members' commitment by reinforcing their dedication to the Craft.

In this manner, Freemasonry utilizes the influence of well-kept environments to encourage members to uphold ideals of reverence, unity, and discipline, with every detail serving as a gentle reminder of these principles.

6. Practical Approaches to Maintaining High Presentation Standards

Maintaining high standards in lodge presentation requires ongoing commitment to budgeting, preservation, and organised maintenance.

Jackson (1980) recommends that lodges set aside a specific budget for the restoration of regalia and furniture, ensuring that there are funds available for regular repairs, cleaning, and the replacement of essential items.

Establishing a routine maintenance schedule, complete with clear guidelines for cleaning, storage, and handling, enables lodges to sustainably uphold the quality and symbolic significance of their furnishings.

In some instances, lodges may want to update certain aspects to enhance functionality while still respecting traditional aesthetics.

Young (2017) suggests blending historical charm with modern standards, which can improve both visibility and usability without compromising the lodge's visual identity.

Educating members about the importance of maintenance encourages a sense of shared responsibility, with everyone playing a part in preserving an environment that embodies Masonic values. These efforts help ensure that lodges stay true to their aesthetic and symbolic heritage.

Conclusion

Presentation within Freemasonry goes beyond mere aesthetics; it is a fundamental part of the Craft's identity and values.

The regalia, furnishings, and decor represent Freemasonry's principles of unity, reverence, and tradition, acting as tangible symbols that reinforce its teachings.

As Stillom and Jackson have pointed out, this focus on detail has deep historical roots in craftsmanship and artistry, which continue to uphold the solemnity of rituals and instill pride among members today.

By adhering to high standards of presentation, lodges pay tribute to Freemasonry's legacy while creating an environment that embodies its values of discipline, respect, and unity.

Wilmshurst and other prominent Masonic thinkers stress that maintaining these standards is crucial for the fraternity's ongoing relevance and legacy.

By upholding these symbols, lodges play an active role in preserving the Craft's history, enriching the Masonic experience for future generations.

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hear ye!

hear ye!

AUTHENTIC

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