

— *Montana* —
FREEMASON
MAGAZINE



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EDITOR NOTES



Reid Gardiner
Editor



Articles & Correspondence

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Photographs & Artwork. Original pictures or those taken with digital cameras work best. Use the highest resolution, with 300 dpi being the ideal setting. Please do not send newspaper pictures or inkjet prints, as they will not reproduce satisfactorily. Preferred file types: JPEG, JPG, TIFF, PNG, or PSD. 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 be either typewritten or computer-generated. Submissions can be sent to the editor via email, fax, regular mail, or delivered in person to the Grand Lodge office. It's important to spell-check all articles, which will undergo peer review and evaluation. Unfortunately, we cannot offer compensation for items, photos, or other materials submitted for publication. Please email all photos and articles to the address provided below.

Reid Gardiner, Editor
The Montana Freemason Magazine
PO Box 1158
Helena, MT 59624-1158

gs@grandlodgemontana.org

Officer Installation Glendive Lodge 31 & Lower Yellowstone Lodge 90



Helena No. 3



24 folks for the Helena Lodge No.3 stated meeting. Several EA and FCs present.



Our two cooks Kevin Magill and Gary Williams along with MW Bro. Mark Bassett Grand Marshal who was kind enough to help.

Annual Picnic at Bannack Before the Bannack Historic Lodge No. 3-7-77 Meeting.

Lunch was cooked and served by four brothers of the Dillon Lodge. We had close to 140 this year. Visiting brethren this year included 12 brothers from Oklahoma, and two brothers from Alberta and Saskatchewan. The program this year was a most interesting talk by Brother Cody Johnson of Livingston Lodge No. 32 and Virginia City No. 1.



The crowd enjoying themselves and their meal. Several people had mentioned to us that our steaks this year were the best ever. Practice makes perfect for sure.



Past Grand Master Johnathon Dahlquist giving audience to a few of our curious guests for the day.

WORLD FAMOUS HELENA LODGE NO. 3 WELCOMES FIVE NEW ENTERED APPRENTICES



Lodge #3 welcomed five new Entered Apprentices on Saturday, Bro. Paul Martello held the East for the degrees. The Brothers who turned out made it a memorable morning. Even more special—two proud fathers watched as their sons were raised from Candidates to Brothers!

Mountain Lodge No. 110 Installation of Officers for 2025-2026



50 Year Member Presentation Brother Frank M. DePriest



On September 4th Bro. Frank DePriest, Chinook No. 50, received his 50yr. pin and certificate of achievement. Pictured from left to right: assisting SD John South of Havre Lodge #55, Jr. PM Brian DeRosa, Bro. Frank DePriest, and Ben Hall, PM and 50yr member. W. Bro. DePriest was Initiated on April 20, 1972, Passed September 19, 1974 and Raised February 6, 1975 in Chinook Lodge No. 50.

Helena No. 3 November Meeting



A well attended stated meeting of November 3rd. WB Ken Bates ,Jr Grand Steward in attendance along with our Lodge Secretary Sam Whitehead, Jr Past Grand Master AF&AM of Montana.

**INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS FOR 2025-2026
CHOTEAU NO. 44 PONDERA NO. 80 AND MERIDIAN NO. 105**



Congratulations to the officers of Choteau No. 44 Pondera No. 80 and Meridian No.105

**INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS FOR 2025-2026
HIRAM LODGE NO. 52**



MWGM Jason went to visit WB Marty Reiersen and to assist in the installation of the new officer line for Hiram #52 in Forsyth on September 2, 2005. Congratulations to WM Sig Helickson and the officer line for the ensuing Masonic year. Your dedication to your lodge and the fraternity are admirable!

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS FOR 2025-2026 CARBON LODGE NO. 65



The last lodge visit for the week was with WB Brice Liggett to Carbon No. 65. It was our great pleasure to install the officers and sit in on a wonderful meeting with the brothers. Carbon Lodge has a lot going on, and a first degree coming up in October. Congratulations to the brethren for their outward passion toward their lodge and their community!

Grand Master Visits Unity Lodge No. 71



This visit to Unity No. 71 was most pleasant! They were a recipient of an award that allowed them to do lodge building renovations, and they honored the donor before the officer installation. New flooring, new paint, and a new candidate for their lodge are the highlights. WB Marty and I conducted their installation, and good things are coming this year with WB Richard at the helm Congratulations No. 71!



A Speculative **CRAFT** **of Builders**

Growing Together

By Wayne Spooner

Freemasons are builders. Around the world today, we are a Speculative Craft of Builders. How often do we stop and think about what that statement really means? First, in this context, "Craft" is another name for the fraternity; similar to the old guilds or associations of skilled craftsmen known during medieval times. Next, we can begin our topic by addressing an often misunderstood distinction about the work of Freemasons throughout history. To do so, we turn to a moment in our ritual ceremony when a Brother learns that "Our ancient Brethren wrought in operative and speculative both. We work in speculative only." That ritual excerpt is easy to overlook, and therefore, many Brethren miss its profound significance. The distinction between Operative Masonry and Speculative Masonry is foundational to our learning experience in Freemasonry. Our Brethren, who were exceptionally skilled craftsmen to build monuments of architecture like the magnificent cathedrals, castles and similar edifices throughout the ages, focused on the skill of physical building while also constructing honorable men of moral and spiritual distinction, quality character, and admirable reputation in the community. While gathered together for years, decades or even generations to complete those physical structures, our operative Brethren taught, reinforced and were living examples of how good men improve themselves, behave and act in society. Said simply, they defined and lived by a standard

or code of conduct. Since the dawn of Speculative Masonry more than 300 years ago, Freemasons continue the legacy of building knowledgeable and wise men who exemplify good moral character.

With that historical context set, we can tackle an often unasked question, what does speculative mean in Freemasonry? "By Speculative Masonry, we learn to subdue the passions, act upon the square, keep a tongue of good report, maintain secrecy, and practice charity." That ritual excerpt is a meaningful contribution to answer that question. By the way, to extract a fuller meaning of that ritual excerpt, substitute the word "love" for "charity;" that change helps to communicate the broader scope intended beyond a limiting view in our more modern context of just charitable or benevolent activities. Again, a code of conduct shines through and outlines how to behave as Freemasons. Next, in a similar part of the ritual, we gain insight about spiritual growth as well; here is a relevant excerpt, "It leads the contemplative to view with reverence and admiration the glorious works of the creation, and inspires him with the most exalted ideas of the perfection of his Divine Creator." Thus, morality and spirituality are foundation stones upon which speculative Freemasons build better versions of themselves.

Moving further in our exploration, we highlight the "act of speculating" which is to think, contemplate,

reflect, ponder or wonder. To assist our Brethren in this important thinking work, some of our Masonic teachers encourage their students to regularly ask themselves these two questions, "what does that mean?" and "what does that mean to me?" Both questions spark thought, contemplation and reflection about portions of the ritual work, our Masonic symbols, aspects about Lodge operations, the purpose of our charitable programs, how to plan an event, etc. Continually asking and answering those questions help to build skill, experience and confidence as a Speculative Freemason. Overall, the valuable life lessons embedded in Freemasonry are plentiful; they are extracted and exposed through speculation done in our quiet moments alone and in groups when Brethren gather to lean, build and grow together.

So, what is the goal of this speculative work? To help us become Freemasons more than just in name only and make purposeful progress to become the best version of ourselves. Along that faithful journey, we also combine our talents, strengths and resources to build something bigger than ourselves which inspires humility, care and gratitude. Ultimately, the acquisition of wisdom is an aspiration that Freemasonry prompts us to seek; not for selfish reasons, but rather to serve as a beacon or source of Light for others. "By continued study of Masonic philosophy, symbolism, and its history, you will be traveling toward the ultimate goal of Freemasonry - Wisdom in all things. Many men are knowledgeable, good and bad. Few men are wise. And no man who is really wise can be anything but good." This excerpt comes from the book, "The Craft and Its Symbols" which is one of the Top 25 books that every Master Mason should read. Wisdom is more than the acquisition of knowledge, it is derived through focused contemplation and reflection. It is a pathway to see the purpose, patterns and order in Freemasonry and more broadly in life.

► **Morality and spirituality are foundation stones upon which speculative Freemasons build better versions of themselves.**

"Freemasons investing in self-improvement and being useful to others" is a powerful message promoted about Illinois Freemasonry. That message is prominently displayed on our website, ilmason.org for our Brethren, membership prospects and the broader public to see. Central to that message

is the self-improvement and transformative journey that our Brothers pursue through their membership experience as speculative Freemasons. That deep desire to learn and improve is literally what we came here to do. That said, do you have a clear definition about what self-improvement really means and looks like? Here is a concise perspective to consider, "self-improvement is intentionally building a better version of me!" The investment of time, talents and resources to learn, develop and grow should be intentional and not random. Rest assured that the fraternity and Brethren are here to assist and support you. Some of the genuine friendships developed in Freemasonry occur by spending decades growing together as good men, husbands, fathers, grandfathers, co-workers and members of the community. Also, did you interpret the requirement of personal accountability for that continuous improvement of "me" that is embedded in that statement?

Take ownership of the fact that you are the only person who can change you, and use that personal power to intentionally move forward! Fundamentally, Freemasonry has plenty of Light or knowledge that can turbocharge your self-improvement journey and provides the corresponding support structure to make that journey fun, satisfying and meaningful.

Making the commitment to help a Brother, your Lodge or the grand jurisdiction grow and move forward is not a topic often discussed or fully understood. In particular, for us to grow together as Brothers, we should focus on three words that underscore a realistic approach to making commitments to one another as fellow builders in Speculative Masonry. Said simply, "Commitment = Ability + Desire + Capacity."

-Important Note: Our Masonic mentors and teachers have an important role in this topic. You are the trusted friends and guides who can help provide valuable feedback and work with a Brother on how he can best contribute to the Lodge and fraternity. Help the Brother find his path, purpose and enjoyment in Freemasonry!

▼ **ABILITY** - Objectively assess the current knowledge, talent, skill, proficiency, experience and confidence possessed by a Brother to successfully get something done. We should force ourselves to embrace the reality that familiarity about how something is done is different than the specific knowledge of the discreet steps and actions needed to accomplish a desired result. Whether it is correctly setting up the lodge room, performing our ritual work or putting on a Past Master's recognition dinner



event, it is critical that we make an honest assessment for all Brethren involved. Also, if the Brother is willing to learn and increase his ability, then that information should definitely be factored in as well.

▼ **DESIRE** - Having an expressed interest in, a passion for and a willingness to make the topic a personal priority.

▼ **CAPACITY** - Honestly evaluate the realistic amount of time and energy (including health and wellness) available to follow through on the work needed in the required timeframe. Too often, Brethren are tossed into situations in which a thoughtful conversation as men and Freemasons beforehand would benefit all involved and avoid negative consequences. For example, a Brother may have the ability and desire to lead the project for the Lodge to participate in the town's community parade next month; however, he just had his second child and recently received a promotion at work. His capacity to take on that significant project responsibility is likely too low at this time; therefore, a different approach should be planned.

Lastly, keep these powerful words in mind as a foundation for thoughtful conversations to secure realistic commitments as fellow builders as we learn, develop and grow together in the years and decades ahead.

Reflecting on this journey of exploration, we can absolutely marvel at the exceptional work of and guidance provided by the Freemasons who have gone this way before us. We inherit a legacy grounded in the timeless methods in which good men grow together through a life filled with learning, love for one another, enjoyment, and service to humanity. Encourage the Brethren in your Masonic network to speculate together and extract the Light available to all of us from the ritual and broader experiences acquired as working Freemasons. Let's promote and reinstall a standard or code of conduct for what it means to live as knowledgeable and useful Freemasons. Your loyalty to the tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth along with being a living example of our Four Cardinal Virtues of temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice (amongst other treasured Masonic lessons) will continue to fuel the Masonic Renaissance occurring in Freemasonry. Remember, you do not travel alone on this journey through life so work with your Masonic mentors and teachers. Finally, we encourage and challenge you to be a local spark and shining example who provides evidence of the transformative power of our beloved Speculative Craft of Builders.

Right Worshipful Brother Wayne Spooner
Grand Lodge Membership Committee Chairman

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- ▶ For us to grow together as Brothers, we should focus on three words that underscore a realistic approach to making commitments to one another as fellow builders in Speculative Masonry.

**Commitment = Ability +
Desire + Capacity**

Meridian Lodge No. 105 Welcomes New Entered Apprentice



Meridian Lodge No. 105 EA Degree held on 3 Dec 2024.

Helena No. 3 Welcomes Three New Master Masons

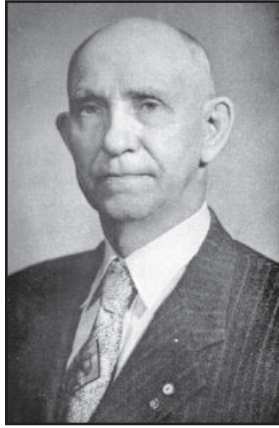


Congratulations to the 3 new Master Masons raised in Helena Lodge No. 3 on November 18th
Nicholas Scott, William Stotts and Chris Shermer.

Hands of the Workman

Percy W. Doles Grand Master 1950-1951

Percy Wilson Doles was born November 2, 1880, near Ray, Ohio. He was educated in the public schools of Ohio and at Valparaiso, Indiana. Railroading attracted his attention, and in 1900, he started working for Standard Oil Co., Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, Union Pacific, Duluth, South Shore and Atlantic Railway. Finally, in 1906, he joined the Great Northern Railway Company, where he was employed as a Dispatcher, Chief Dispatcher, or Trainmaster until his retirement on August 11, 1950. He was a member of the American Train Dispatchers Association and a life member of the Veterans' Association of the Great Northern Railway Company.



In civic life, he had served as a member and Director of the Havre Chamber of Commerce, Alderman and President of the Havre City Council, a Past President of the Havre Rotary Club, a Director of the Kennedy Deaconess Hospital of Havre, a Director of the Havre Federal Savings and Loan Association, Trustee of the Masonic Temple Corporation, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Havre Lodge No 55, and a member of the Elks and Odd Fellows.

M.W. Brother Percy received his degrees in Laramie Lodge No. 3, Wyoming: elected December 15, 1902; Initiated April 7, 1903; Passed April 21, 1903, and Raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason on May 26, 1903. He demitted to Cheyenne Lodge No. 1 on December 24, 1907. He was elected to Havre Lodge No. 55 on March 5, 1908, demitting on March 12, 1912. Affiliated with Mt. Moriah Lodge No. 6 in Wyoming on April 5, 1912, and dimitted November 21, 1913, and affiliated with North Star No. 46, Glasgow, Montana on November 19, 1914, dimitting July 6, 1914. He re-affiliated with Havre No. 55 on January 7, 1915, and it remained his lodge until his death.

He served as Worshipful Master of Havre No. 55 in 1922. Brother Doles was elected as Most Worshipful Grand Master of Masons in Montana on August 16, 1950. He presided over the 87th Annual Communication in Butte on August 21-22, 1951. While serving as Grand Master, he visited 135 lodges in the state. During the term of Grand Master Doles he presided over the following Special Communications: the cornerstone of the new temple of Belgrade No. 68; funeral for MWPGM Henry C. Smith; Dedication of the new Temple of Belgrade Lodge No. 68; Conducting the cornerstone ceremony for the new temple of Columbia Falls Lodge No. 89; funeral for MW Brother Luther T. Hauberg; funeral for MWPGM Edward Whipple; funeral for MWPGM Llewellyn Callaway. MW Brother Percy received his 50-Year certificate and pin on May 26, 1953. In 1951 there were 135 chartered lodges with 24,197 members.

In 2025, Montana has 73 lodges and 3,033 Master Masons. For comparison in 2025: Nevada has 38 Lodges and 2,900 Masons. Idaho has 45 Lodges and 2,200 Master Masons. Wyoming has 40 Lodges and 2,004 Master Masons.

Bro. Doles was exalted as a Royal Arch Mason on April 15, 1904, in Wyoming Chapter No. 1, Wyoming, and dimitted September 22, 1911, to become a charter member of Havre Chapter 19, serving as Excellent High Priest in 1920. He

was anointed as a member of the Order of High Priesthood on August 17, 1920. He was greeted as a Royal and Select Master in Chinook Council No. 4, December 7, 1929, and served as Thrice Illustrious Master in 1936. In 1940, he served as Most Illustrious Grand Master of the Grand Council of Royal & Select Masters of Montana.

On May 11, 1910, he was Knighted in Black Eagle Commandery No. 19 in Havre. He also served as Eminent Grand Commander of the Grand Commandery Knights Templar of Montana in 1930. He was a Knight of the York Cross of Honor; a member and Past Sovereign of St. Peter's Conclave, Red Cross of Constantine in Helena; a member of the Past Officers Association; a member of the Past R.W. Master of Peace Lodge No. 4, Royal Ark Mariners at Conrad. He was also a member and Past Sovereign of Peace Council No. 29, Allied Masonic Degrees at Conrad.

On May 12, 1949, he was created a Master of the Royal Secret in the 32 degree in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, Valley of Great Falls, Orient of Montana, and was made a Knight Commander of the Court of Honor in 1955. He was created a Noble of Algeria Shrine, A.A.O.N.M.S. in Helena on December 2, 1914, and was a member of the Royal Order of Scotland. He was also a member of the Order of the Eastern Star.

Over the years, Brother Doles also found time to be actively interested in the Order of DeMolay and Rainbow for Girls. He served on the First Advisory Council of DeMolay of Boys and the First Board of the Rainbow for Girls in Havre.

However, he still found time for two more activities: his loyalty to Northern Montana College and his loyalty to his church, the Van Orsdel United Methodist Church of Havre. As a staunch supporter, he served on many committees as chairman or member, and he was a loyal member of the church choir.

MWPGM Percy Doles was called to the celestial lodge on October 22, 1974, at the age of 94. On October 25, 1974, a Special Communication of the Grand Lodge of Montana was called to conduct the funeral of M.W. Brother Percy W. Doles. Public and Masonic funeral services were held in the sanctuary of Van Orsdel Methodist Church, Rev. John Pugh and M.W. Richard Rule officiating. After the service, the mortal remains of our late Grand Master were interred with the usual formalities of the Craft and were buried at Highland Cemetery in Havre, Montana.



Embracing ETHICAL LIVING EVERY DAY

A MAN'S PATH TO SUCCESS THROUGH SERVANT
LEADERSHIP, COMPASSION, AND LIFE-BALANCE

By W.B. John J. Lohrfink, Grand Orator



In today's fast-paced and often chaotic world, the significance of being ethical and civil to others cannot be overstated. Every day presents us with unique and countless opportunities to embody these values, not only for our own benefit, but also for the betterment of those around us. The teachings of Freemasonry were erected around these tenets and are further exemplified through the four cardinal virtues of temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice. Furthermore, living our lives to the fullest potential necessitates balancing our mental, physical, social, and spiritual well-being while simultaneously striving for success without shortcuts, as everything in life is connected. Success and well-being in these four areas evolve over a man's lifespan and sometimes require a greater focus and emphasis on a specific area. Nonetheless, constant monitoring and the occasional rebalancing effect must occur to maintain an equilibrium in one's life. Achieving this equilibrium is essential, allowing us to harmonize life's complexities – with gratitude, purpose, and continuous self-reflection.

Central to this virtuous journey also lies the principle of servant leadership, which underscores the importance of uplifting others as we pursue our own goals and aspirations. It is encouraged that this article be read both from an introspective viewpoint and an extrospective viewpoint, specifically of how living the principles of an upright man and Mason apply to others in your life. Consequently, sculpting and enriching our hearts and minds to become better men every day.



Building the Temple The Foundation of Ethical Living

At the core of ethical living is the commitment to treat others with dignity and respect. The principle

of rectitude of conduct resonates deeply with Freemasonry's moral teachings; these lessons advocate squaring our actions through integrity, providing compassion for others through service and charity, and keeping our passions within due bounds toward all mankind. Temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice become the four cornerstones of our character's structure. Exercising temperance demands personal restraint and our conduct to be regulated. Fortitude calls for inner strength and a steady purpose of one's mind. Prudence helps us use reason and control our actions, and justice is the moral boundary of righteousness that supports a civil society. These cardinal virtues remind us that our actions deeply reflect on our character and influence the lives of those we encounter.

When we approach each interaction with an ethical mindset, we contribute to a culture of civility that fosters trust and cooperation in society. This is how we build trust with new candidates and foster everlasting relationships with our Brothers in the fraternity. As a result, this trust and Brotherly Love is the cement that bonds individuals from all walks of life, all for the common purpose of being a better man.

Being ethical is not a one-time decision; it is a daily practice – it must take place every day for the best results. Like lifting weights to build muscle or brushing your teeth to keep them white, living an ethical lifestyle requires daily attention to detail, dedication to achieving the desired results, and a constant honing of your ethical performance. Daily self-reflection requires mindfulness and a commitment to making choices that align with the above foundational values. As a result, one can embrace the allegorical teachings of Freemasonry and allow these lessons to light each challenging pathway of life.

By being aware of our actions, we can also create an environment around us where everyone feels valued and respected. As a result, this nurtures positive relationships and encourages collaboration, which is essential for personal and communal success. This holds true not only in our own households with our loved ones but also when interacting with our Brothers in Lodge and others in society.



Living Life to the Fullest with Freemasonry

The geometric pattern of Metatron's Cube exemplifies how everything in life is interconnected. Specifically, the pattern of thirteen circles linked by lines denotes balance, harmony, and spiritual growth. Further examining interconnectedness, one must embrace ethical living and focus on holistic well-being. Balancing our mental, physical, social, and spiritual health is crucial for living life to the fullest.

Mental well-being requires us to cultivate a mindset of positivity, resilience, continuous learning, and self-reflection. Engaging in activities that challenge our intellect and foster creativity can enhance our mental capacity and enable us to contribute more effectively to society. Possessing strong emotional intelligence and maintaining a positive mindset influences how we shape our worldview and respond to various situations in life. A positive mindset also affects how we build interpersonal connections and cope with traumatic incidents in life, such as the death of a loved one. Expanding on this example, one can develop mental resilience and use post-traumatic growth (PTG) principles to transform oneself following a tragic event, gaining a greater appreciation of life and using their experience to help others.

Physical health is equally important. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, attending routine medical exams, and achieving adequate rest are essential to a healthy lifestyle. Caring for our bodies increases our capacity to engage others, pursue goals, and overcome obstacles. Many men develop barriers to their overall physical well-being throughout their lifespan – this may be related to injuries, weight, or other health-related issues. Nevertheless, this is where we circle back to the importance of having a strong and resilient mindset. Our mental well-being empowers individuals to break down barriers to our physical health and be present and active participants with our family and friends, including our Masonic family.

Our social health also plays a crucial role in our overall well-being. Cultivating strong social ties and maintaining healthy relationships are essential for emotional resilience and happiness. This is often a large part of why many men join Freemasonry. Many men seek camaraderie and are searching for a common bond akin to team sports, the military, and other fraternal and civic organizations. Engaging with others, whether through family, a professional relationship, Blue Lodge or appendant bodies, or those in the community, fosters a sense of belonging and support. In particular, and as previously mentioned, Freemasonry helps to cement a bond of trust and brotherly love based on a shared fraternal obligation.

Furthermore, our fraternal principles champion making good men better – much of this occurs through the exceptional individuals we meet and labor with in Freemasonry. Building a network of positive relationships allows us to share our experiences, offer assistance, and receive encouragement when facing life's challenges. No man should be ashamed of various hardships in life and is encouraged to reach out to their brothers during these times of need. Many others have experienced hardships with family and personal relationships, educational advancement or employment-related issues, financial struggles, personal and familial addictions, and health complications for themselves or a loved one. Others may be experiencing, or previously experienced, a similar struggle, and various resources are often available through different Masonic Aid programs. A robust social network can also enhance a sense of purpose and fulfillment, reminding us that we are not alone in our journey. Finally, our faith or spiritual self provides a more profound sense of purpose and connection. When tasked with balancing life's responsibilities, many men overlook spiritual health in the hustle and bustle of their daily lives. Whether through meditation, prayer, or reflection, nurturing our spiritual side helps us align and square our actions with our core values. This alignment fosters compassion and empathy, which are vital in our interactions with others. By cultivating a strong sense of spiritual self and purpose, we become more adept at lifting others up, and conducting them toward their own spiritual growth and success.

Cultivating strong social ties and maintaining healthy relationships are essential for emotional resilience and happiness. This is often a large part of why many men join Freemasonry.

by the positive impact we have on those around us. As we strive for our own goals, we must also seek to empower others to reach theirs.

Engaging in servant leadership requires a shift in perspective and a strong moral character. It is a paradigm that involves recognizing that our accomplishments are. Cultivating strong social ties and maintaining healthy relationships are essential for emotional resilience and happiness. This is often a large part of why many men join Freemasonry. Intertwined with the success of others. When we adopt this mindset, we become more attuned to the needs of our family, colleagues, brothers, friends, and community. We can help others overcome challenges and achieve their goals and aspirations by offering support, encouragement, and charity through compassion. This collaborative approach enhances our collective success and enriches our lives with meaningful connections.

Many men think of servant leadership as it applies to their professional role; however, it applies to much more. Servant leadership is an everyday approach to all social relationships, including family, friends, brothers, and the community.

I encourage everyone to consider and explore how the principles of servant leadership can significantly improve the health of their Lodge and the fraternity as a whole. Servant leadership subsequently supports the principal tenets of brotherly love, relief, and truth.



A Moral Compass Guided by Compassion

Freemasonry teaches the importance of a moral compass, an internal guide that aids in directing our decisions and actions toward all mankind. This compass is strengthened

by compassion and charity toward others. When people view the world through the lens of empathy, we become more aware of the struggles and triumphs of those around us. This awareness allows us to act with kindness and understanding, fostering a sense of community and belonging, all based on our values of ethics, integrity, and respect for others.

A good moral compass and personal drive propel us toward success. It reminds us that our journey is not solely about individual achievements but about contributing to the greater good of society. As Albert Pike wrote, "What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal." As we pursue our personal goals in various stages of life, we should ask ourselves how our actions and underlying faith can benefit others. Self-reflection helps ensure that our success as men and Masons is meaningful and leaves a lasting impact.



Metatron's Cube Overarching Principles of Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a philosophy that champions the idea of leading by serving others. This concept is deeply rooted in the belief that true success is not measured solely by personal achievements but



Achieving Life-Balance

Being ethical and civil to others is a fundamental aspect of living a fulfilling life, and the teachings of Freemasonry were constructed around these sacred beliefs. By balancing our mental, physical, social, and spiritual well-being and embracing the overarching principles of servant leadership, we can create a positive ripple effect around us. Specifically, as Masons, we are taught to divide our time into three parts: a part for God and a distressed worthy brother, a part for our usual vocation, and a part for refreshment and sleep. Furthermore, as we pursue personal success and growth, let us ever remember that true fulfillment comes from uplifting those around us and staying true to the four cornerstones of our character. Guided by a strong moral compass, faith, and compassion for others, together, we can navigate our life's journey as men and Masons with integrity, ensuring our legacy is one of kindness, support, and shared success. In doing so, we live our lives to the fullest, sculpting ourselves into that smooth ashlar and inspiring others to do the same – Every day.



METATRON'S CUBE *A Sacred Geometric Symbol*

Metatron's Cube is a powerful sacred geometric figure associated with balance, creation, and divine connection. It consists of 13 interconnected circles, forming a complex pattern that contains all five Platonic solids—shapes considered the building blocks of the universe. Named after the archangel Metatron, this symbol represents the flow of energy throughout the cosmos and is often used in meditation and spiritual practices to promote harmony and enlightenment. Found in ancient mystical traditions, Metatron's Cube is believed to encode the fundamental patterns of existence, bridging science and spirituality in a visual representation of universal order.

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Montana Freemason

Steve Hanser Receives Meritorious Service Medal

Beartooth District's Steve Hanser receiving the Meritorious Service Medal from Past Grand Master, Sam Whirtehead, on July 26, 2025. Brother Hanser, PM and member of Billings No. 113 and Stillwater No. 62.





By: Chuck Clampitt
MT Etna No. 333, Indiana

America's March King

The official march of the United States of America is entitled "Star and Stripes Forever" and was written by John Philip Sousa in 1896. Sousa was renowned as the "American March King", composing over 136 marches and 21 operettas. In the era of the late 1800s, through the early 1930s, live music was one of the most popular forms of entertainment from the smallest of towns to the largest cities. Every town had an opera house, vaudeville theatre, or bandstand in the park, where entertainment was provided before large audiences and Sousa's music could be heard at every venue.

Sousa was born in 1854 in Washington, D.C. At the age of six he started taking music lessons. He was soon found to have perfect pitch and sang as well as played a variety of instruments from the violin to brass instruments. At the age of 13, his father, a member of the United States Marine band, enlisted John as a Musician Apprentice in the Marine Band to keep him from running off to play in a circus band. In 1875, he left the Marine Band and by 1880 had learned to conduct, spending the rest of his life conducting and writing marches. He later rejoined the Marine Band for 12 years. During that period he conducted the Marine Band, known as the "President's Own", for five different presidents.

Over the years Sousa wrote marches which included: "The Liberty Bell", "The Washington Post", "Semper Fidelis" (official march of the U.S. Marine Corps), "U.S. Field Artillery", "The Gallant Seventh", marches for a number of universities, and "Nobles of The Mystic Shrine". After leaving the Marine Band, he formed his own band, which performed across the country and around the world. Sousa's musical interests were varied. These included 70 compositions, including waltzes and dance pieces, and gave 15,000 live performances. His musical talents were so varied that in the 1890s he invented a new brass instrument, a

tuba, which became known as the Sousaphone. Sousa's concert performances combined varied styles of music from classical to popular fare. In his 1900 tour of Europe, he introduced a style of music known as Ragtime. Another interesting aspect of his concerts was that he never spoke to the audience, and music was played without interruption.

Sousa was a man of varied interests and, in addition to his many musical accomplishments, wrote three novels and a full-length autobiography. He also wrote hundreds of articles and letters to the editor in various publications on a variety of subjects. Sousa was also an accomplished trap shooter and is enshrined in the Trapshooting Hall of Fame. He is credited with founding the first national trap shooting organization, personally registered over 35,000 targets during his career, and for years was a member of the Navy Trapshooting Team. He is remembered for his humor by the organization with this quote: "Let me say that just about the sweetest music to me when I call 'pull', the old gun barks, and the referee in perfect key announces, 'dead'."

If you hadn't already guessed, Sousa was also a fellow Mason. He was raised in the Hiram Lodge in Washington, D.C. in 1881, became a Knight Templar in 1886, and joined the Shrine in 1922. Toward the end of his career, nearly half of his band members were also members of the Shrine. By the late 1929, Sousa's popularity within the Shrine resulted in concerts being organized around the country by Shrine organizations.

Sousa was a very proud American patriot. He represented America's image in his many performances overseas as a center of cultural influence. Sousa's favorite composition was "The Stars and Stripes Forever," and he never tired of performing it. Late in his career, he was asked what single piece of music he would choose to hear just before he died. His answer: "The Stars and Stripes Forever". His reason: "I would meet my maker face-to-face with the inspiration that grows from its melodies and the patriotism that gives it meaning." Sousa died in 1932 at the age of 77 and is buried in Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C.



Reid Gardiner, Editor

This article provides a biographical and historical account of Alfred Jacob Poznansky, a Polish immigrant who became a prominent merchant and Freemason in the American West during the 19th century. It traces his family origins, departure from Poland, immigration to the United States, and journey west, leaving the states with his brothers to settle in the territories that had not yet achieved statehood. The article also highlights their business ventures, involvement in the Masonic fraternity, and contributions to the communities in which they lived.

Alfred J. Poznansky's family originally came from France, where their surname was Hoffman. His grandfather had served in the French army but, dissatisfied with Napoleon's 1812 campaign, remained in Poland and settled there. To better integrate into Polish society, the family changed their surname to Posen or Poznansky, meaning 'from Poznań', or from Poland. This was not just a matter of convenience but also a reflection of their desire to blend in with the local community. Alfred was born on May 2, 1844, near Torun, Poland. His father was Polish-born, while his mother hailed from either Germany or Prussia.

Alfred spent most of his childhood living with his parents. At age eight, he ran off to join his older brothers. Felix, born in Wloclawek, Poland, in 1830, left home at fourteen and traveled to Paris, France. Wolff, born in Poland in 1835, also left at an early age and went to England. The reasons the three brothers left home are unknown. However, possibilities faced by Polish and Jewish immigrants of the time include family or economic problems, religious discrimination, or the pursuit of a better life. Additionally, harsh conscription laws in Poland further pressured Jewish boys; those as young as eight could be sent to special military schools until age eighteen, then into the army for fifteen years of service. After leaving home, Alfred crossed into Germany without papers by buying a loaf of bread and

using it to cross a bridge over the Oder (or Odra) River, then traveled to Berlin and Hamburg. From there, he became a stowaway on a ship to England. The three brothers eventually reunited in England, worked as errand boys, and later immigrated to the United States, arriving in New York in 1855. Later that year, they relocated to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where Alfred continued working as an errand boy.

Their search for new opportunities then led them to Keokuk, Iowa, where Alfred continued his work along the Mississippi River. Alfred and his brothers moved west, seeking new opportunities and eventually settling near Brownsville, Nebraska. They relocated to the Blue River Valley near Breckenridge, Colorado, in 1859 in search for gold. Some historians assert that Felix Poznansky was the first person to prospect and discover gold on the Blue River in 1859.¹ The Poznansky brothers developed expertise in various mining techniques during their time in Colorado, which fueled their ongoing interest in mining.

Recognizing an opportunity to improve their livelihoods as merchants by supplying miners, the Poznansky brothers relocated to Virginia City, Montana Territory, and established their business there in 1864. The following year, Felix bought Sol Star's Virginia City Store inventory. By November 1867, the Poznansky's had moved their store to Helena. At that time, Jews owned seventeen of Helena's twenty dry goods stores. By 1868, Helena had a total of forty-two Jewish merchants. The other Jewish merchants who accompanied prospectors appeared to have success. Dry goods stores were established by the Poznansky brothers in Virginia City, Helena, Deer Lodge, and Butte, where they supplied the miners with clothing, equipment, and other essential items. Felix, Wolff and Alfred, and were involved in multiple business ventures, in addition to their mercantile activities, both as a group and individually. In Helena, the Poznansky brothers managed the Bee-Hive Store. A fire on April 28, 1869, destroyed most of the store and nearly all the merchandise. Despite this setback, they resumed operations.

The Poznansky brothers remained in Helena until 1875, when they moved to Butte. However, they stayed there for only two years before returning to Helena, where they resided for another five years. In 1876, Felix set up a concentrating works in Butte. The brothers also worked the Park Mine Lode near Unionville and Park City, Montana. In 1877, the Poznansky brothers worked their No. 4 east of the Mountain Lode, a copper lode of fine ore, at Butte. The brothers had also operated the True Silver Ledge mining enterprise on Browns Gulch near Virginia City.

It was common in most communities, and certainly in the Montana Territory at this time, that nearly all Jewish males in Helena were members of either the Masons, the Odd Fellows, the Order of the Eastern Star, or the Hebrew Benevolent Association (HBA). There are many

examples of Jewish and Polish merchants who operated dry goods stores in Virginia City and Helena at the time, including: Poznansky and Rosenstein Dry Goods Store, Sands Brothers Dry Goods, Star & Bullock, Poznansky & Bro., and Felix Poznansky & Louis Behm Dry Goods Emporium. The majority of them were also involved in other organizations or businesses.

Sol Star and Moses Morris were among the influential Jewish merchants and Masons of the time. Solomon Star owned a Mercantile and Hardware business in Virginia City, Montana, which he sold to Felix Poznansky in 1865 before moving to Helena and operating another Mercantile store. In Helena, he also served as Registrar of the U.S. Land Office from 1872 to 1874, Territorial Auditor from 1874 to 1875, and personal secretary to Governor Potts from 1875 to 1876. He had the distinction of being one of the first presidents of the Hebrew Benevolent Association in Helena. Sol Star was elected as the second Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Montana in 1866 and was then elected as the seventh Grand Master of Masons in Montana in 1873. In 1876, he relocated to Deadwood, South Dakota, where he operated the Star & Bullock Hardware Store, among other businesses.

Moses Morris was born in Posen, Poland, in 1844 and was from the same area of Poland as Alfred Poznansky; they were also the same age. In 1858, Moses Morris began his journey west across the United States. In 1860, he was in Kansas before proceeding to Denver, Colorado. Like the Poznansky brothers, Morris arrived in Virginia City, Montana, in 1864. In 1865, Moses and his brother David opened a crockery shop and a mercantile business in Helena, Montana. Like Sol Star, Moses Morris became President of the United Hebrew Benevolent Association and an active member of Congregation Emanu-El. Moses Morris was a lifelong member of Helena Lodge No. 3 and King Solomon's Lodge No. 9, where he served multiple terms as Master of the Lodge. King Solomon Lodge No. 9 was predominantly a Jewish lodge. Moses Morris became Grand Master of Masons in Montana in 1892.

In 1865, Felix Poznansky was an unsuccessful candidate for the position of Representative of Lewis and Clark County. He demonstrated significant commitment to the Jewish community as a member of the Hebrew Benevolent Association and regularly fulfilled the roles of Rabbi and mohel. In 1866, Poznansky acquired The Radiator, recognized as the first newspaper in Helena, from T. J. Favorite. The publication, originally known as the Northern Idaho Radiator and based in Lewiston, Idaho, was relocated to Helena along with its printing press and materials. Poznansky subsequently sold The Radiator to James Fisk, who renamed it the Helena Herald. In 1878, Poznansky moved his family and dry goods business from Deadwood to Rapid City, where he established The Montana Store for Dry Goods and Clothing. The Poznansky family was among the earliest Jewish families in Rapid City. Felix sold the store to his brother Wolff in 1888. In addition, Felix was involved in

civic affairs. Still feeling the allure of mining, he served as Secretary of the Rapid City Oil and Coal Mining Company and became involved in speculating on mining sites, such as the Glendale mines in 1888, the Silver City mines in 1891, the Hat Mountain mine in 1893, and others. Brother Felix Poznansky received the degrees of Masonry in Central Lodge No. 6, Central City, Colorado: Initiated on February 11, 1863, Passed on March 6, 1863, and Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on April 25, 1863. He Dimitted on December 27, 1865. Felix was a member of Nevada City Lodge U.D., Montana, and a charter member of Nevada City Lodge No. 4, Nevada City, Montana. In 1874, he was a member of King Solomon Lodge No. 9, Helena, Montana. He affiliated with Rapid City No. 25 on June 15, 1882. In 1892, Felix was elected Treasurer of Rapid City No. 25. Felix died at the age of 77 in Rapid City, South Dakota, in 1907.

Wolff Poznansky also participated in a wide range of entrepreneurial endeavors, including ownership of the Oyster Depot restaurant in the Stonewall building in Virginia City. He also managed both hardware and clothing retail operations and remained active in mining pursuits. In 1877, Wolff divested his assets in Virginia City and relocated. Subsequently, following the path of his brothers, he moved to the Black Hills and established himself in Deadwood and Rapid City as a merchant and miner. In 1888, he acquired The Montana Store from his brother, Felix, and continued to operate the business until its sale in 1891. Around 1892, Wolff moved to Denver, where he continued his involvement in the mining sector. Wolff was a member of Nevada Lodge No. 4 in Nevada City, Montana, and served as Lodge Treasurer in 1867. He dimitted to Butte No. 22 in 1877. He affiliated with Rapid City No. 25 on March 29, 1888. In 1890, Wolff was a member of the Black Hills Chapter No. 25 of the Royal Arch Masons. He dimitted from Rapid City No. 25 on December 12, 1918. He passed away at the age of 84 in 1919 in Denver, Colorado, with funeral services conducted at Congregation Emanuel Cemetery, Section 11, Denver, Colorado.

Alfred and his brothers worked in mining and ran businesses in Virginia City, Helena, Butte, and later the Black Hills. Like them, he joined other Jewish merchants and entrepreneurs who moved to Montana in the 1800s, looking for new business opportunities in the growing mining industry. A.J. became a key figure in Montana's early Jewish community and helped several towns grow by starting businesses that served both miners and residents. He was 22 years old when he received the mysteries of Masonry: Initiated on May 29, 1865, Passed on July 01, 1865, and was Raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason on July 8, 1865, as a member of Virginia City Lodge No. 43 (later Virginia City No. 1), Virginia City, Montana. The Grand Lodge of A.F.&A.M. Montana was formed on January 26, 1866. In October 1866, A. J. was elected Treasurer of Nevada No. 4, Nevada City, Montana Territory. He was Senior Deacon of Nevada City No. 4 in 1867 and Junior Warden of Nevada No. 4 in 1868. During the Annual Communication in October of

1866, Alfred was appointed as Junior Grand Deacon of the Grand Lodge of Montana. In 1867, he was appointed Deputy Grand Lecturer, and in 1868, he was appointed R.W. Grand Lecturer. In 1869, he was appointed R.W. Grand Lecturer. In 1869, he affiliated with Helena No. 3 in Helena, M.T. In 1870, he was appointed R.W. Grand Lecturer. In 1871, elected Worshipful Master of Helena No. 3. In 1875, appointed Grand Marshal. In 1876, he served as Secretary of Butte Lodge U.D. and Butte No. 22 in Butte, MT. He demitted from Butte No. 22 in 1882. Brother A. J. Poznansky was also a member of the York Rite. In 1866, he received York Rite Chapter degrees from Virginia City Chapter No. 1, Montana. In 1867, York Rite Council Degrees, Virginia City Council No. 1, Montana. In 1871, appointed Royal Arch Captain for the Grand Chapter of Montana, and in 1878, elected King of Helena Chapter No. 2, Helena, M.T. In 1880, the Illustrious King of Council No. 27, Helena, M.T.

Brother Alfred was educated and well-read; he held a strong understanding of the ritual work and could recite and perform it with skill and elegance. As Grand Lecturer, he was able to travel from Helena to many lodges and provide instruction. An example of this was in February 1870, when he traveled to Deer No. 14 at Deer Lodge and later in the same week went to Flint Creek No. 11 in Phillipsburg to instruct the officers of both lodges in the unwritten mysteries of the craft. A couple of weeks later, he conducted instruction to Jefferson Lodge No. 15 in Radersburg, M.T. Traveling by horse in a Montana winter was a feat not to be underestimated. One of his brothers often would accompany him on his visits to the Lodges. Montana had been a territory for two months when the Poznansky brothers arrived; twenty-five years later, it was admitted into the Union on November 8, 1889.

A. J. relocated to Rapid City in 1881 and initially worked with Felix at The Montana Store. Besides being one of the pioneer merchants in Montana, Alfred Poznansky was also one of the pioneer residents and merchants of the Black Hills of South Dakota. He had a successful business in Belle Fourche for many years and was considered one of the best in the city. At other times, he had engaged in business in various parts of the Black Hills, and in every town and community he lived in, he was known and given the same respect and esteem that was his at Belle Fourche. He also held the position of Justice of the Peace in Belle Fourche for a long time. Alfred settled in Spearfish in 1883 and reentered the clothing and dry goods industry. In 1892, Albert attempted a return to his prospecting roots when he entered the placer mining business on Iron Creek and Bear Gulch; he ultimately sold the property. In 1893, he was serving as Secretary of the Spearfish Library Association.

Alfred affiliated with Rapid City No. 25. In 1882, he was appointed Senior Deacon of Rapid City Lodge No. 25, South Dakota. In 1883, he affiliated with Spearfish No. 18 in Spearfish, South Dakota. 1887, elected Worshipful Master of Spearfish No. 18. In 1887, on the occasion of the laying of the cornerstone of the new school in

Spearfish, the cornerstone ceremony was conducted by the Grand Master of South Dakota, assisted by Spearfish Lodge No. 18. A. J. Poznansky, the Worshipful Master, filled in as Deputy Grand Master for the ceremony. Delegations from seven other lodges also attended. In 1890, he was elected Worshipful Master of Spearfish No. 18. In 1881, he served as Treasurer of Spearfish No. 18. In 1892, elected Secretary of Spearfish No. 18. In 1893, elected Worshipful Master of Spearfish No. 18. In 1894, elected Senior Warden of Spearfish No. 18. In 1887, affiliated with Cedar Lodge No. 124, Belle Fourche, South Dakota, elected Worshipful Master. On July 31, 1915, Alfred Poznansky received his 50-year membership at Cedar Lodge No. 124. In 1898, he demitted from Cedar No. 124. In 1904, reinstated with Cedar No. 124. In 1912, he became a member of Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076 (Masonic research), London, England. York Rite - In 1907, he became a Charter member of Japheth Chapter No. 41, Belle Fourche, South Dakota. In 1907, elected King Japheth Chapter No. 41. In 1909, elected Scribe Jeapheth Chapter No. 41. In 1910, elected King Japheth Chapter No. 41. In 1911, elected High Priest Japheth Chapter No. 41. In 1913, appointed Master Second Vail, Japheth Chapter No. 41. In 1914, elected Scribe Japheth Chapter No. 41. Scottish Rite - 1911, became a member of Black Hills Consistory No. 3, Deadwood, South Dakota. Shrine - 1911, became a member of Naja Temple AAONMS, Deadwood, South Dakota. Order of Eastern Star. A. J. was a member of the OES in Montana, Wyoming, and South Dakota. In 1891 and 1882, Worthy Patron of Queen City Chapter No. 7. In 1894, Alfred J. Poznansky was the Grand Patron of the Eastern Star of South Dakota.

Alfred stayed in Belle Fourche until the panic of 1893.² Like many others, he faced financial challenges. The Panic of 1893 resulted in one of the worst economic depressions not only in South Dakota but also across the nation. After paying his debts, he relocated to Sundance, Wyoming, where he remained until 1904, when he returned to Belle Fourche, South Dakota. While in Sundance, he was a special agent for Aetna Accident Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut. After relocating to Sundance, Wyoming, in 1898, he affiliated with Sundance No. 9. In 1901, he was appointed Senior Deacon of Sundance No. 9. In 1902, he was elected Junior Warden of Sundance No. 9. In 1903, he was elected Senior Warden of Sundance No. 9. In 1904, he demitted to Anchor No. 7 in Buffalo, Wyoming. York Rite - In 1899, he helped organize a Chapter of R.A.M. in Sundance, Wyoming.

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Grand Lodge of Montana, A. J. Poznansky from Belle Fourche and Sol Star from Deadwood traveled together to attend the semi-centennial event held on September 1, 1916. The Grand Master of Montana was introduced, and the minutes of the meeting that organized the Grand Lodge in Virginia City in 1866 were read. Sol Star and A. J. Poznansky, surviving founders of the Grand Lodge of Montana, and other distinguished visitors were presented. Brother Star, at the time, held

the position of the oldest living Past Grand Master of Montana. At the first Annual Communication in 1866, Brother A. J. Pozanasky was the first Grand Junior Deacon.

Alfred resided in Belle Fourche until a few weeks before his death, when his condition was such that he went to the home of his nephew, Joe Poznansky, in Sturgis. He had been a resident of the Black Hills for about thirty-eight years. He had been in ill health for several years; his advanced age brought, among other complications, hardening of the arteries.

Alfred J. Poznansky passed away on December 1, 1918, in Sturgis, South Dakota. His funeral was held with Masonic honors at Pine Slope Cemetery in Belle Fourche, led by John H. Durr, Worshipful Master of Cedar Lodge No. 124. Members of the Eastern Star and Cedar Lodge participated in the service. It was said of him that he garnered the love and respect of his fellow men and lived so that his memory would always be a joy to those who knew him. He was kind-hearted, generous to a fault, and always ready to respond to an appeal for aid from someone less fortunate.

Alfred Poznansky is the primary focus of this article; the strong bond between him and his brothers, Felix and Wolff, necessitated their inclusion. It would be historically beneficial to examine each sibling more thoroughly at some point.



Gravesite of Brother A. J. Poznansky

Note 1. A handwritten memoir, "The Felix Poznansky memoir, 1859-1864," is held by The Western History & Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library, features Poznansky's experiences gold and silver mining near Breckenridge, Colorado. A photocopy of the memoir transcription by Ester L. Hallen, a relative of Poznansky, is included in the inventory. The author of this article was not able to view the Felix Poznansky Memoir.

Note 2. The Panic of 1893 was a significant economic depression caused by various events, including the levies imposed by President McKinley in 1890, which resulted in levies increasing by up to 50%. This tax contributed to the Panic of 1893 by increasing prices and disrupting international markets, leading to foreign investors selling U.S. stocks to acquire gold and thereby depleting the nation's gold reserves. This contributed to a financial crisis that led to the failure of banks and businesses due to overexpansion and collapse in the railroad industry, fragile banking practices tied to declining gold reserves, depressed agricultural prices, and unstable federal policies. The financial crisis that followed resulted in the failure of businesses, railroads, and banks, an increase in unemployment rates, and a severe economic depression. These challenges increased support for the Populist movement and sparked debates about monetary policies in the United States, leading to the widespread economic depression of 1893 through 1897.

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Special Thanks to:

Scot Autry, Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Colorado.
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Beynon St. John, Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Wyoming.

Things to Know Before Submitting Photographs for Publication

If you are submitting photographs or articles to the Montana Freemason Magazine, please include a clear description of the event, the context, the names of those in the photo, and the location. Also, add a short written explanation, about one or two paragraphs, that explains why the image is important. This helps readers understand who is pictured and what is happening in the scene. These instructions apply to all contributors, whether you are a Mason, non-Mason, District Officer, or other Grand Lodge Officer.

Submissions are commonly received for events such as 50 Year Awards, Degree Ceremonies, officer installations, Bikes for Books, Kindles for Kids, grant presentations, and special visitations. These occasions warrant more than photographs accompanied by minimal explanation. This standard also applies to events such as the Rocky Mountain Masonic Conference, the Tri-Jurisdictional Outdoor Roaming Lodge, the Elbow Creek Rendezvous, the Mullan Pass Historic Lodge, and the Bannack Historic Lodge meetings. When sharing photos, please include relevant and engaging information about each event, such as its significance, who participated, what made it unique, and any noteworthy outcomes or stories. This added detail helps bring your submission to life for the audience.

When submitting an article with images, ensure your writing aligns with both the intended length and objective. Aim for approximately 1,500 words. Accompany each photograph with a clear, concise caption containing pertinent information (20–400 words). Submit all captions together in a standard document format (.docx) as part of your article submission.

Original or digital camera images give the best results. For a 4x6 inch print at 300 dots per inch (DPI), which is the publication standard, use a file size of 1200 x 1800 pixels. Multiply the print size by the DPI: 4 inches x 300 DPI is 1200 pixels; 6 inches x 300 DPI is 1800 pixels. Images must be at 300 DPI for publication. Accepted formats are JPEG, JPG, TIFF, PNG, and PSD.

When photographing people, concentrate on the subjects rather than the entire room. Use simple backgrounds to minimize distractions and pay close attention to lighting conditions. Highlight individuals and avoid overcrowding the frame to ensure your audience's eyes are drawn to the subjects.

The purpose of photographing for a magazine article is to create a visual narrative that engages readers and complements the accompanying text. This involves producing a series of images that convey relevant information and sustain the reader's interest, as opposed to isolated shots. Photographs should align with the article to clearly illustrate its topic or theme; unrelated pictures, such as buildings or individuals without context, should be avoided.

Please include the photographer's name and details about the event or person in each photo you submit. We cannot return printed photos. Newspaper clippings and paper copies do not reproduce well, so please do not send them. Most website images are low resolution and cannot be used for publication.

Reid Gardiner, Editor





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A New Digital Cornerstone for Montana Masonry

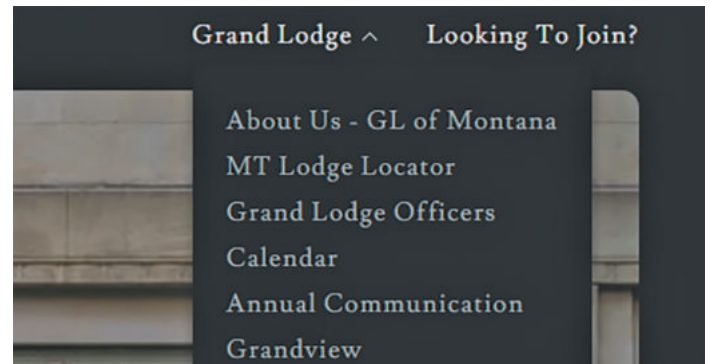
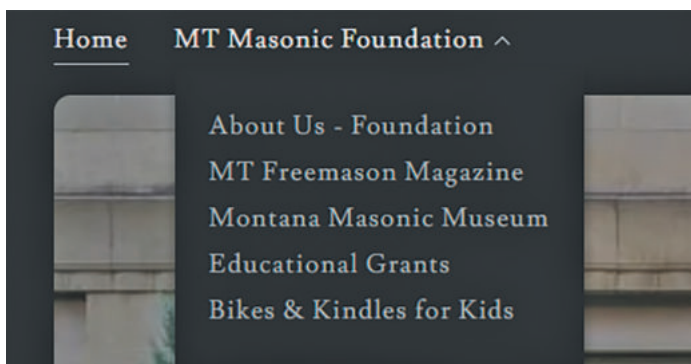
RWB Donald M. Powell

Brethren, gather round the virtual square and compass: the Grand Lodge of Montana has unveiled a refreshed online home at www.grandlodgemontana.org. Crafted with the same deliberate care as we bring to our ritual work, this new platform stands as a beacon of clarity, accessibility, and fraternal connection. Building on a proud digital legacy, the new site now adapts seamlessly to phones and tablets, ensuring every Brother—from Eureka to Ekalaka—can stay informed with a single tap.

Visitors are greeted by a crisp, full-width photograph of the Grand Lodge building itself, its stone façade bathed in Montana light. Above this dignified banner, four prominent portals invite exploration: Home, MT Masonic Foundation, Grand Lodge, and Looking to Join. No flashing distractions, no cluttered calls-to-action—just the quiet confidence of a well-set cornerstone.

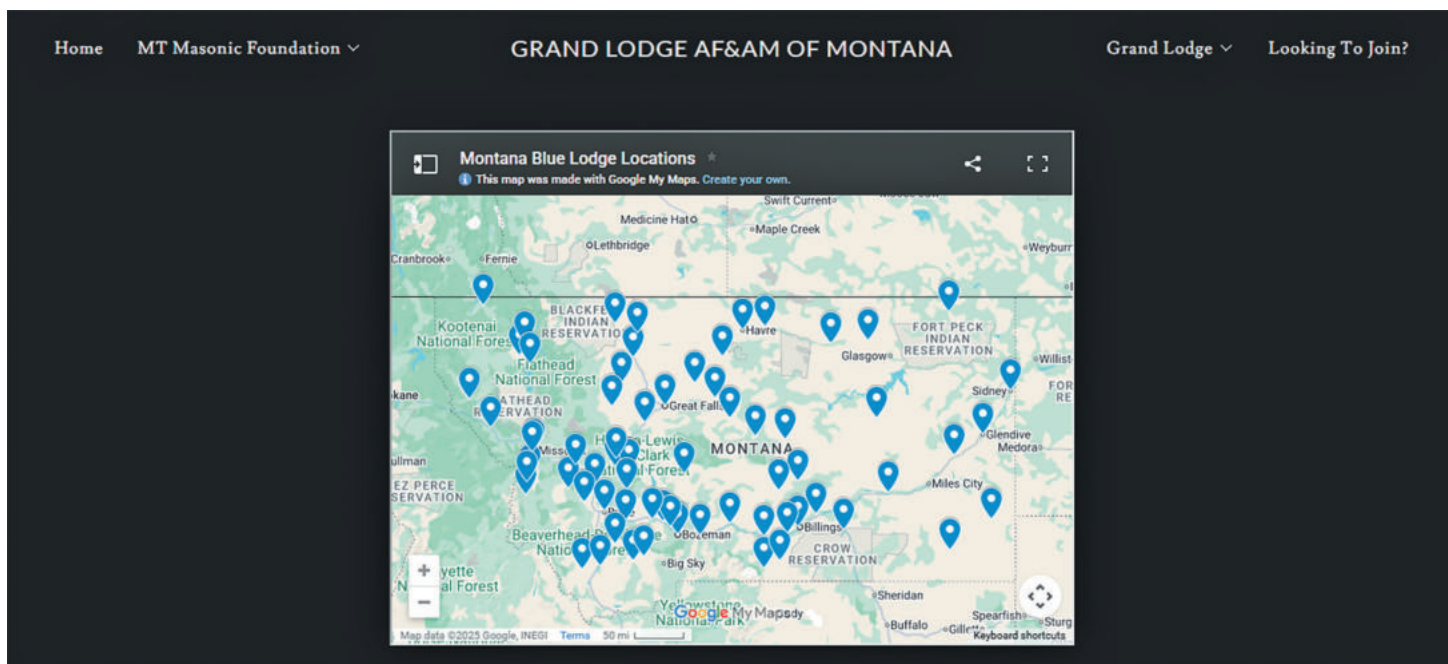


A deliberate architectural choice divides the site into twin yet interconnected pillars: the Grand Lodge of Montana and the Montana Masonic Foundation. This thoughtful separation mirrors our organizational reality—distinct in mission, united in purpose. A single click carries the visitor from lodge resources to philanthropic impact, reinforcing that every charitable act strengthens the Craft and every degree strengthens our service.



The Lodge Locator is perhaps the site's most practical jewel. An interactive map pins every Montana lodge with precision, revealing meeting nights, locations, contact details, and—where available—photographs and direct links to lodge websites and social media pages. A traveling Brother needs only to zoom to his destination; the Craft is never far.

Nearby, Key Dates appear in a clean list: historic lodge meetings, feast, the Annual Communication, and much more. Speaking of, the Annual Communication section now centralizes dates, locations, results of past communications, and more—everything a delegate needs, neatly arranged and perpetually current.



The Montana Masonic Foundation pillar shines light on two of many flagship programs. The Education Grants portal details information about applying for grants and information about the program. The Masonic Museum comes alive with high-resolution images and information about the museum.

For active members, the “Grand View” button bridges the public site to our secure membership system. Dues status, committee assignments, and personal records remain just one click away, preserving privacy while streamlining administration.

The aesthetic is unmistakably modern—crisp whites, deep navies, and sans-serif typography—yet every pixel serves Masonic dignity. Mobile visitors enjoy the same refined experience: collapsable menus, images that scale gracefully, and text remains legible from smartphone to lodge-room projector. All content from the previous platform has been lovingly migrated, refreshed, and expanded—no Brother will hunt for familiar documents.

This website is not a monument but a working temple. New photographs, updated information, and timely announcements will appear as naturally as the changing seasons. The platform is built to evolve with the Craft’s needs, ensuring relevance for generations yet to knock.

Brethren, bookmark www.grandlodgemontana.org today. Please share it with your lodge, your study group, and with the worthy men who come knocking at the door of Freemasonry, curious but uninformed. Let this digital threshold be the first impression of Montana Masonry: orderly, welcoming, and unmistakably fraternal.

The Committee extends a heartfelt thanks to every Brother whose feedback shaped this project and gave suggestions to make it a continued success. Together, we have laid a cornerstone that will serve the Craft for years to come.

GRAND LODGE AF&AM OF MONTANA

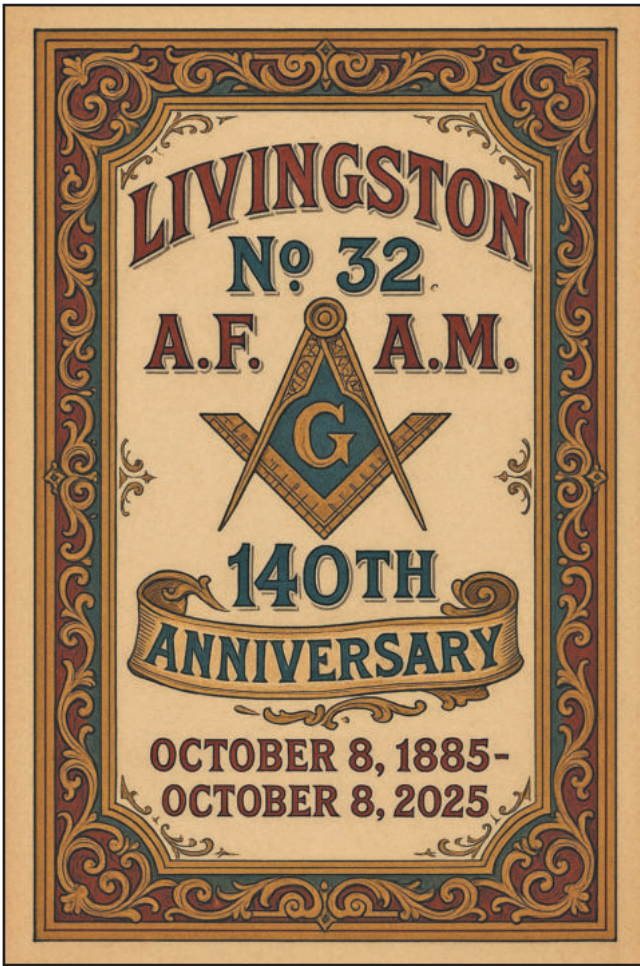


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LIVINGSTON LODGE NO. 32 CELEBRATES 140 YEARS





Brendan Heidner Ranger-Review Oct 7, 2025

A group of 25 Masons representing 13 states, including five from across Montana, met on Sept. 8, 1884 to consider establishing a new Masonic lodge in Glendive. Initial meetings were held in a building constructed by one of the early members beginning Dec. 3 that year, but the group did not receive its charter from the Grand Lodge of Montana until Oct. 8, 1885.

The Glendive Masonic Lodge No. 31, currently made up of about 74 members. Officially turns 140 years old on Wednesday, October 8th, a milestone local Masons are proud to share as they reflect on the fraternal organization's impact throughout the community.

Glendive Lodge No. 31

Dispensation issued December 16, 1884.

Chartered October 8, 1885.

Consolidated with Wibaux 81 December 31, 1976.

Barry Collins explained Masons primarily focus on upholding two principal values: charity and brotherhood. "I liked the idea that everyone's equal in here; richest, poorest, oldest, youngest," Collins said. "I really like that a bunch of guys from all different walks of life can come together in one room and make connections with people (they) would probably never associate with outside the lodge."

Jason Sasse joined the local with the understanding that many of Glendive's most impactful people were Masons at some point in time. And societal success is not a prerequisite to becoming a mason, rather members - referred internally as brothers - consistently encourage each other to be better people and upstanding, active members of society.

Local Masons Mike Mills and Logan Sasse both took notice of the charitable work the Glendive Masonic Lodge No. 31 was doing throughout the community and they wanted to be part of that, helping other local organizations, events and businesses continue to thrive.



According to Worshipful Master Michael Christensen, one more recent donation from the local masonic lodge that stands out as having a major impact on the community is giving financially to the City of Glendive Fire Department, which allowed it to purchase a new firetruck with an aerial ladder unit that was instrumental in its ability to fight the fire that consumed the Jordan Inn in the fall of 2023.

Robin Robins is possibly the best current source when it comes to the question of what the impact of the local masonic lodge has been in Glendive over the years, as he is the oldest member going on more than 50 years as a mason. He himself is a testament to his fellow members and the public that many Masons over the years left a mark on the community through their contributions; be it financial donations, volunteer service or any other form. "I just enjoy it," Robins noted. "We work together."

CREDIBILITY ENHANCING DISPLAYS AND FREEMASONRY

Brother Jordan Jacob Webber IV, MS (Ashlar No. 29)

In 2009, Joseph Henrich proposed a simple idea: that we are more likely to adopt a belief when we observe someone making sacrifices for that belief, especially if the sacrifice comes at a significant cost. He proposes that such displays are an effective means to determine the sincerity of a person professing a belief, helping to ensure we are not being taken advantage of. In short, we are biased in favor of what he calls "Credibility Enhancing Displays" or "CREDs".

There has been much research that supports this idea. Indeed, Dimitris Xygalatas has made a career of studying the psycho-social impact of ritual and has consistently found that the greater the perceived cost and risk of a ritual, the more meaningful it feels. These rituals help define and cement community identities.

Lanman and Buhrmester of Queen's University, Belfast, conducted a particularly interesting study of CREDs. Through the development and validation of a new measure and surveying 316 individuals, they were able to demonstrate that exposure to Credibility Enhancing Displays performed by role models was predictive of continued belief in a deity, as well as continued religious affiliation, as an adult, more so than simply growing up in an environment that emphasized the importance of belief.

In short, the research thus far suggests that it truly is vital to practice what you preach, and to make sacrifices for, and endeavor to live in accordance with, your beliefs, especially if you wish to transmit them to others.

As many of you know, and some of you will learn, a perennial concern in Masonry is how to attract and retain good Masons. Membership continues to decline nationwide, with lodges closing regularly. Before we can delve into this, we need to define Freemasonry's "Value Proposition".

Freemasonry is a social outlet. However, in this era of social media and hyperconnectivity, it is easy to find social groups around any niche interest, and these groups are usually free. Freemasonry, as a fraternity, offers the opportunity for men to come together and discuss issues they are facing. However, most churches today offer men's groups, and they are in a familiar space with familiar people at no cost.

What, then, are we offering? An old description of Freemasonry is "a beautiful and profound system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols." In a more updated version, we offer a value system and cultural framework designed to make "good men better," and there is a case to be made that, when pursued with a sincere heart, it is very effective.

Truly being a mason is, and should be, hard. There is nothing easy in pursuing the cardinal virtues, and making proper use of the working tools demands sacrifice. Even though we will never truly master these concepts, it is vital that we try. If each of us does not make the effort to live up to our ideals, we will not attract the best candidates, and risk losing current Masons to disillusionment.

Outside of the lodge room in Red Lodge, there is a small sign that reads "Remember, to someone you are the face of Masonry." My fellow masons, I encourage you to always carry that simple phrase with you, in lodge and in public, and govern yourself accordingly. Look for, and capitalize on, every opportunity for a credibility-enhancing display; demonstrate to brothers and laity alike the value of Freemasonry, and that the rituals, charges, and obligations are more than just words to you. The future of the craft depends upon it.

Henrich, Joseph (2009). The evolution of costly displays, cooperation and religion: credibility enhancing displays and their implications for cultural evolution. *Evolution and Human Behavior* 30; 244-360

Lanman, J.A., & Buhrmester, M.D. (2017). Religious actions speak louder than words: exposure to credibility enhancing displays predicts theism; *Religion, Brain, and Behavior* 7(1) 3-16.

Xygalatas, D. (2022). *Ritual How seemingly senseless acts make life worth living*. Little Brown Spark, Hachette Book Group.

Great Falls Area Lodges Americanism Program



Great Falls Lodges Education/Americanism meeting held on 27 Mar 2025. WM Robert Chacon, Cascade No. 34, and WM Marty Eberly, Euclid No. 58.



Bernard "Bernie" Bissell, WM Dillon No. 16

Brother Bernie is a member of Choteau No. 44 and Dillon No. 16. He has served as Past Master of Fairfield No. 127 and is currently the Worshipful Master of Dillon No. 16.



Bannack



Bannack



Meade Hotel

(Built 1875-76)

Skinner's Saloon

(Built 1862)

Cards

\$12.00 per deck

Masonic Lodge

Built 1874

Postage Included

Dillon Lodge No. 16 AF&AM is offering playing cards with Bannack featured on the front as a money maker for us, as well as to help promote Bannack and its unique history. The first one is the Meade Hotel and Skinner's Saloon. The Meade Hotel was built in 1875-76 for \$14,000.00 from local bricks and is the first courthouse in Montana. When the county seat moved to Dillon in 1882, the building fell into private ownership and was remodeled into a hotel with all the rich amenities expected of the day. Skinner's Saloon is famous for being the main gathering place of the Road Agents led by outlaw sheriff Henry Plummer. Order the decks of cards from Dillon Lodge No. 16, 11 South Idaho Street, Dillon, MT 59725.

There are two designs and can be ordered from the Lodge at \$12.00 per deck which includes return postage.

-Lee Graves

On The Road With MWGM Jason Smith Visiting Montana Lodges



Stillwater No. 62

September 25th brought the installation of the JW at Stillwater No. 62 to start off the night. Opening on the 3rd degree, the WM called the lodge at ease to do an outstanding night of instruction for upcoming EA degrees. Great job 62. Have a great year!

Gallatin No. 6

A FC degree at Gallatin No. 6, It was a grand 'ol time getting together with friends and brothers, old and new! Thank you for having us, and I look forward to seeing y'all again soon. Keep up the great work!



Cascade No 34

Well, I can say that I didn't anticipate ending up in Great Falls with WB Dennis DeForest to visit Cascade No. 34, but it happened! What else can a GM do on a random Wednesday? RW Brother, turned Worshipful Master, Bruce Lahti and the Brethren of No. 34 welcomed us with open arms and brotherly love. It was nice to see the harmony between the former Delta brothers working now as a solid Cascade lodge. I had the privilege of seeing them choose to continue into the future with Delta aprons and Cascade jewels from now on. Keep on doing the great work Brothers! Thank you for a fantastic evening.



Star In The West No. 40

Star in the West No. 40 had quite the evening! WM Greg got installed by GM Jason Smith, District Officer Brice as marshal, and WB Will as chaplain, along with the rest of the line. Later, they opened on the 3rd degree, and Billings Lodge No. 113 sat in with a healthy delegation. No. 113 brought the Beartooth District 8 ball (bad) and stole the Beartooth District traveling gavel (good)! It was a spectacular evening of masonry in Montana, and the grand lodge officers were entertained, to say the least. Great job brethren!

Corinthian No. 72

Corinthian No. 72 allowed WB Brice and I to slip in and say hi! After installation of the remaining officers, WM Cliff Brophy opened on the 1st degree, as we had an EA participating in a business meeting. They also have a FC degree coming up soon. Montana lodges, making Montana Masons- how sweet it is! Well done No. 72!



Rimrock No. 149

September 10th brought Rimrock No. 149 officers into their fully elected and appointed positions for the ensuing masonic year. A great meeting was held after the installation. Billings area, keep your eyes out for notifications of the haunted events happening at the end of October! Kudos to No. 149 for stepping up and taking over a fundraiser that the Jaycees decided to pass on. You are going to do well!





Saints John No. 92

Saints John No. 92 welcomed WB Marty and I tonight, shortly after they installed their new officer line. Bobby served as a professional photographer for a group snap. Congratulations to the new WM Robert Cauckwell!! Have a great year!

Billings No. 113

MWGM Smith had the distinct privilege to install WB Joe Roy and Billings No. 113 with WB Brice on Monday night. A great meeting followed. It was great to see their newest MM give a great proficiency prior to the meeting, and the get installed into his new office! Congratulations to all!



Carbon No 65

The last lodge visit for the week was with WB Brice Ligget to Carbon No. 65 on a wonderful meeting with the brothers. Carbon Lodge has a lot going on, and a first degree coming up in October. Congratulations to the brethren for their outward passion toward their lodge and their community!



Lavina-Temple No. 101

Lavina-Temple No. 101 hosted WB Will and I after we forgot to make reservations for food. WM Bill allowed us to finish installing a couple officers for him, and then proceeded to run a meeting centered around masonic education. Well done.

Havre No. 55

Havre Lodge No. 55 was on the surprise docket for a lodge visit from the MWGM on October 9. WM Mike and the No. 55 Brothers opened on the third degree and conducted some great business. This business included finishing up the work from the Tri-Jurisdictional that happened in Havre a couple weeks ago. Thank you to all the Brethren for keeping it light-hearted, and I look forward to seeing you again soon!



Sentinel No. 155

The 23rd visit brought me to Missoula to visit Sentinel Lodge No. 155. During the travels this year, I have been talking about the reasons why, other than esoteric value, brothers continue to attend lodge. Fun and fellowship are topics that seem to pop up all the time. #155 definitely lived up to those values! Thank you for the great night!



Recently a fellow lodge member of mine asked me, "Why Masonry is still considered by some as a secret organization whose purpose is to undermine government and take over the world?" While this might sound like some internet conspiracy hoax, there are still people who view Masonry very negatively. I thought it was a great question to be presented here for you to consider.

At least a part of the basis for anti-Masonry rhetoric goes back to what is known as the Morgan Affair. In 1826 a down on his luck Mason from upstate New York named William Morgan disappeared when he was about to write a "Tell All" book on all the secrets of Masonry. A conspiracy theory was born that opined area Masons had kidnapped and murdered Morgan to keep him quiet. Another theory was that Masons captured Morgan, threatened him, took him to the Canadian border and released him on the grounds that he never return to the U.S. under threat of death. What is known was that Morgan was never seen again. "The result was a firestorm of protest that quickly spread across New York, and then the country. The public believed Masons had killed Morgan "according to Masonic ritual" and then "cheated justice" when 6 Masons were tried and given light sentences. (Freemasons For Dummies, Chris Hodapp)

Morgan's book was released in 1827 and an anti-Masonic wave spread across New York and New England. "Their platform was simple: Masonry was antidemocratic and anti-American, and it opposed Christianity." (Hodapp). By 1829 over 100 anti-Masonic newspapers had been created and in 1831 an Anti-Masonic political party was formed. In 1832 the power of this movement was so strong that a presidential candidate received 8% of the national vote and governors in Pennsylvania and Vermont as well as several Congressmen were elected on this platform. The anti-Masonic sentiment was so widespread that every lodge in Vermont surrendered its charter or went dormant and the Grand Lodge of Vermont ceased to exist. "Lodges went underground or closed all over the country as men renounced their membership. Several Grand Lodges shut down as well. Nationwide, Masonic membership dropped from 100,000 in 1827 to less than 40,000 ten years later." (Hodapp).

Even though the Morgan Affair took place nearly 200 years ago, both truth and facts are tainted. William Morgan's body was never found so proving he was murdered couldn't be confirmed. The resultant charges against Masonry of antigovernment, anti-Americanism, and opposition to Christianity were all false, the result of anti-Masonic newspapers and baseless rumors.

Another element was what is called "The Great Awakening" in American history. This was a series of religious revivals, primarily in rural areas, that spread across the United States. They were characterized by camp meetings and emotional preaching. One

of the results was a significant growth in Protestant denominations and a number of denominational splits. Unfortunately, some of these denominations included anti-Masonry as a part of their church doctrine. While this might sound a little far-fetched today, I was confronted with this at a local university when doing research on a Masonic magazine article. I walked into the school's library wearing a Masonic baseball cap. The director walked up to the counter and seeing my cap was visibly shocked. I asked him if he had a problem with Masonry, he said no but the church denomination did. When asked why, he said that an anti-Masonic stance was written in the church's constitution. I then asked when that constitution was written. The answer – 1841. Hard to believe that a church constitution hadn't been reviewed in almost 184 years. Another present-day occurrence took place about 5 years ago when a plastic bag was found hanging from the doorknob of my lodge. Inside were 40 pages telling what a terrible, demonic, anti-Christian group Masons were and that we were all condemned to hell. What was interesting about our "gift package" were two things: the copies had been reproduced so many times that the printing was smeary and the pages misaligned; The second was that there was no identification as to its origin. Three other lodges in the area received the same package so it is safe to say that other lodges might have been recipients as well. In 2009 Dan Brown's best seller novel "The Lost Symbol" was released. It was set in Washington D.C. and based its storyline on Freemasonry symbols. While the book made for a great thriller, people forgot that the story line was fiction and not based on Masonic facts. Unfortunately, this book resulted in yet another conspiracy fog of the untold power that Masonry exerted over government and was gobbled up by the general public.

Criticism of Masonry today may be based on ignorance, defined as lacking knowledge or awareness of the subject. Most arguments against Masonry haven't changed much in the last 200 years. They are based on the misconceptions that Masonry is either a secret society, Anti-Christian, or both. Examination of each of these criticisms is needed to ensure more familiarity with Masonry. There are three requirements to become a Mason: 1) you must be a man; 2) 18 years of age; and 3) profess belief in a Supreme Being. (Note: Masonry does not profess to be a Christian organization, but instead is non-sectarian. We accept men of all beliefs.) To many Masonic dissenters, acceptance of persons of multiple faiths is proof that we are Anti-Christian. Further evidence is that we open prayer to "The Supreme Architect of the Universe" and close by saying "So Mote It Be". To many not using the same name as they do to address a Supreme Being is unacceptable. But given that God is referred to by over 600 different names in the Bible, it would be difficult to satisfy everyone. The same with prayer closing. Thus "So Mote It Be" is used in Masonry to close prayer meaning "So Be It". To the

dissenters, this is unacceptable since they feel prayer can only be closed by 'Amen'. (To many, their interpretation of Christianity can only be as tolerant as to your conformity to their practices. This lack of toleration can be seen in a wide variety of denominations and splinter groups that exist mainly by past disagreements.) Perhaps the best conclusion on this topic was provided by one of our members when he said the reasons some churches take issue with Masonry is they feel that it takes away your time and money that should be dedicated to their practices.

Calling Masonry a secret society is another catch phrase used to attack Masonry. To those who only get their information from the internet, "Secret Society" is the perfect way to paint Masonry as plain scary. They learn all about our secret passwords, handshakes, and punishments for anyone revealing "all the secrets of Masonry". As you probably know, most everything about Masonry including word for word ritual can be found on the internet. In today's world, having "secrets" is pretty difficult. Perhaps the best response to the secret society charge is the response, "We aren't a secret society, only a society with secrets". Even as we are lambasted for being a secret society, those who want to attack Masonry fail to see the many examples where information is restricted from the general public. If a public corporation is having a board meeting, the public or the media doesn't have the right to access that information. While laws have been passed that public organizations such as schools or city government have to be transparent, that is easily circumvented by declaring an "executive session", thus barring the general public. Churches, labor unions, and most organizations prohibit access to sensitive meetings details when discussing contracts, employee relations, long term planning, and finances. When you think about it, doors are often used to insure privacy whether at the bank, business office, or school. In that same vein, Masonry is also a private organization and therefore has the right to limit access to anyone who is a non-member.

Those who are Anti-Masonry will seldom be swayed by the facts. They are convinced they are right, you are wrong, and all Masons should be condemned. Unfortunately, they never take the time to learn what Masonry is truly about. It is about fraternal fellowship. It provides the opportunity to make lifelong friends. It teaches us moral principles to be held to a higher standard than the world around us. It teaches the importance of caring for others whether within our fraternal family and others. It fosters care for perfect strangers by supporting scholarships, hospitals, disaster relief, medical research and treatment centers. Perhaps the characteristic we strive to represent could best be summed up in word. Compassion. Maybe in the end, Masons aren't such a bad group. Maybe the stories about them overthrowing governments or controlling the world aren't true. Maybe instead they are the guy next door. Hard working, friendly, and involved in the community. That person who hopes to make the world a little better place to live in because he is a Mason and attempts to live by his Masonic principles.

Yuletide Greetings

We wish you, your loved ones, and your friends a joyful holiday season, including Thanksgiving, Christmas, and other celebrations meaningful to you. As the Holiday Season approaches, it is an appropriate time to pause and acknowledge the many benefits in our lives. Gathering together provides an opportunity to reconnect with the principles that have shaped our community and reinforced our unity as Masons and Americans. Let us value these moments by embracing the spirit of unity and goodwill, recognizing that even small actions can have a positive impact on those around us.

This period holds special meaning for many, whether through religious observance, cultural traditions, or spending time with family and friends. As Masons and Americans, we reflect on and appreciate our family and friends, the support and love we share, and the freedoms afforded to us as citizens, freedoms we are responsible for upholding and celebrating. Our common foundation unites us with Brothers who have passed on and those among us, binding us through friendship, morality, and brotherhood. These values connect generations and backgrounds, reminding us to express gratitude appropriately.

The term "Christmas," rooted in Christian tradition, also underscores the importance of generosity and compassion toward others, regardless of their beliefs. Our gatherings offer opportunities to share meals, gifts, and thoughtful conversations, recognizing that each individual possesses unique qualities that contribute to the broader Masonic and human communities. As Masons, our commitment includes assisting our Brothers, their widows, and orphans. We encourage consideration for neighbors, friends, and families facing challenges, both during the holidays and throughout the year. When gathering this season, please remember those who may be isolated, separated from family, or experiencing financial hardship.

Brethren, be ye all of one mind, live in peace; and may the God of love and peace delight to dwell with and bless you.

Montana Freemason Magazine



The Pursuit of Masonic Light

The following was presented by the Editor of The Square Magazine, July 2025 issue.

The pursuit of Masonic light often leads us down winding paths of history, symbolism, and philosophy.

It was on one such path, early one morning amidst my labours, sifting through the digital annals of our past for a topic worthy of our Brethren, that I stumbled upon a beam of light from a seemingly distant age.

It was a paper presented in 1735 by the distinguished Brother Martin Clare, and its opening premise struck me with the force of a revelation:

"THE chief Pleasures of Society, viz. good Conversation, and the consequent Improvements, are rightly presumed, Brethren, to be the principal Motive of our first entering into, and then of propagating our Craft, wherein those Advantages, I am bold to say, may be better met with, than in any Society now in being ; provided we are not wanting to ourselves, and will but consider, that the Basis of our Order is indissoluble Friendship, and the Cement of it Unanimity and Brotherly Love."

Clare's words, nearly three centuries old, resonated with a clarity that cut through the noise of the modern world. It prompted a chain of thought, a re-examination of my own Masonic journey.

Could it be that simple? In our search for esoteric secrets, profound allegories, and the perfection of our speculative art, have we overlooked the very first pleasure that Clare identifies as our principal motive? Is a key, perhaps the key, value of our fraternity the simple, yet profound, act of having a good conversation?

I began to consider the competition. In the profane world, where else can this unique pleasure be reliably found?

At the place of work, conversations are plentiful, but they are often transactional, tethered to projects and deadlines. The wise counsel to avoid the deep waters of religion and politics in such environments leaves the conversation paddling in the shallows.

Among my general acquaintances, I find time a constant constraint. A fascinating discussion with one person may spark a thirst for deeper knowledge, but that thirst often requires seeking out a new acquaintance, a new wellspring of information, making the connections feel transient rather than enduring.

Then my thoughts turned to my own Lodge. I recalled, with a jolt of recognition, those evenings at the Festive Board. On more than one occasion, I have found myself

seated next to a Brother I had never met before, a man from a different walk of life, a different generation, a different worldview.

Yet, as the meal progressed, we fell into a conversation so intense, so engaging and wide-ranging, that the two hours vanished in what felt like a moment.

We explored ideas, shared experiences, and challenged each other's perspectives with mutual respect and genuine curiosity. Where else in my life does that happen with such regularity and spontaneity?

It led me to a humbling question: have I been looking for too much from Freemasonry? Have I, in my quest for grand, overarching truths, been disappointed when the Craft did not deliver some earth-shattering epiphany?

Perhaps the ambition should be reset, not lowered, to a more fundamental objective: to meet for the purpose of a good conversation.

If that is the goal, then the onus shifts. It is no longer about what the Lodge can give me, but what I must bring to the Lodge.

It becomes incumbent upon me—upon each of us—to cultivate the skills of good conversation. And here, Brother Clare was already steps ahead.

His oration was not merely a statement of purpose but a lesson in its execution, outlining the very skills needed to elevate discourse beyond mere talk.

This art is built on timeless principles, captured in sayings that feel innately Masonic. Consider the wisdom in the address to the Wardens:

"what you see praiseworthy in others, carefully imitate, but what in them appears defective, in yourself amend."

This is the very essence of learning to be a better conversationalist—observing the patience, wit, and wisdom of others, and checking our own tendencies towards interruption or impatience.

True conversation is a dialogue, not a monologue. It is founded on the profound truth that

"when you speak you only repeat what you already know, but when you listen, you might learn something new."

In a world that encourages broadcasting our every thought, Freemasonry provides a space to practice the noble and illuminating art of listening.

This is what makes the experience of Masonic fellowship so uniquely rewarding. It is the practice of these skills that allows us to part with that wonderful, heartfelt sentiment ringing true:

"Happy have we met, happy have we been, happy may we part, and happy to meet again."

That happiness is the direct result of the connection forged, the knowledge shared, and the friendship cemented through our discourse.

So, let us rediscover this "first pleasure." Let us see good conversation not as a by-product of our meetings, but as one of their primary purposes.

It is in the space between two Brothers, engaged in earnest and open dialogue, that the cement of Brotherly Love truly hardens, and the foundation of indissoluble Friendship is made secure.

Let us come to Lodge not just to perform ritual, but to practice the art of connection, one good conversation at a time.

The Grand Secretary is Always Working



On Monday, October 13th, the Helena Independent Record captured a photograph of Dan Gardiner, Grand Secretary, clearing snow from around the Grand Lodge building. Snowfall reports indicated 10 inches in central Helena, with 6 to 8 inches in various parts of town.

Reprinted from:

An article published in the July 2025 Issue of "The Square Magazine" now available online

<https://thesquaremagazine.com/.../2025q3from-the-editor/>

Grand Master Whitehead At Meridian No. 105



Homecoming, Grand Master Whitehead visited the lodge where he was raised in 1998, Meridian No. 105 in Cascade, MT.

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