

TEXAS FREEMASON

FALL 2025



2025 Grand Master Activities Thus Far

MOST WORSHIPFUL RABORN L. READER, JR.,
GRAND MASTER OF TEXAS MASONS
ENJOYING 2025, TRAVELING OUR GREAT STATE.

6



CONTENTS

FALL 2025



TEXAS FREEMASON

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Please continue to send your articles and Lodge events and news to the Editors of The Texas Freemason Magazine.

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The Grand Master's official visit to John Sims Lodge No. 458

GRAND LODGE

- 3 A Word from the Grand Master
- 4 A Word from the Grand Treasurer
- 5 2026 Grand Lodge Gala

FEATURE

- 6 2025 Grand Master Activities Thus Far

IN EVERY ISSUE

- 9 The Profound Pontifications of Brother John Deacon
- 10 A Look Back

ACROSS THE STATE

- 12 Making History, Strengthening Masonry and Brotherly Love

EDUCATION & COMMITMENT

- 15 Family Day
- 16 Before He Was Old Sam Jacinto
- 19 A Legacy of Hope: for Texas Families

ON THE COVER

The Grand Master's Official Visit at Huffman Lodge No. 1428.



A WORD FROM THE Grand Master Raborn L. Reader, Jr.



My Brethren All,

Freemasonry teaches us that to lead is not to command, but to serve. To make an impact is not to leave a mark of pride, but a legacy of light.

Leadership, especially within our Craft, is a sacred duty. It begins not with authority or recognition, but with introspection and transformation. True Masonic leadership starts within—with the rough ashlar, with the moral compass shaped by our tools and symbols, and with the charge to improve ourselves before ever attempting to guide others.

The twenty-four-inch gauge reminds us that leadership demands balance. A leader gives time to his faith, his family, his work, and his Lodge. The plumb teaches upright living, the square teaches fairness, and the level teaches humility. These are not just principles—they are our daily guides.

In Masonry, leadership is not found in commanding others, but in serving them. The leaders who make the deepest impact are often the most unassuming. They are the Brothers who open the Lodge early, who quietly mentor the newly initiated, who notice when a Brother is missing, and who offer help without being asked. Their leadership is quiet, consistent, and powerful.

Every Brother, whether he holds an office or not, has the opportunity to lead by example. We lead when we act with honor, when we resolve conflict with grace, and when we extend Brotherly love to those who need it most. Leadership in the Lodge is not limited to the East—it radiates from every corner when men choose to live by the principles we hold dear.

Mentorship is another cornerstone of Masonic leadership. We are charged to pass on the light—to ensure the future of our Lodge by building up those who will one day lead it. This means offering our wisdom with patience and humility. It means listening as much as we speak. And it means understanding that our traditions, while sacred, must also live and breathe through the Brothers of tomorrow.

But leadership must also extend beyond our Lodge walls. We must ask ourselves: How do we bring Masonic values into a world that so desperately needs them? How can our commitment to truth, justice, and brotherly love serve our neighborhoods, our cities, and our country?

Let us be men who carry our principles proudly—but not boastfully. Let us live lives that reflect the working tools we use in ritual. Let our leadership be a quiet light in the world—a light that shines not for attention, but for guidance.

A leader gives time to his faith, his family, his work and his Lodge.

In the end, the impact of our leadership will not be measured by titles, gavels, or honors. It will be remembered in how we made others feel. In the encouragement we gave. In the young Brother who chose to stay in Masonry because we showed him what it truly means to be a Mason.

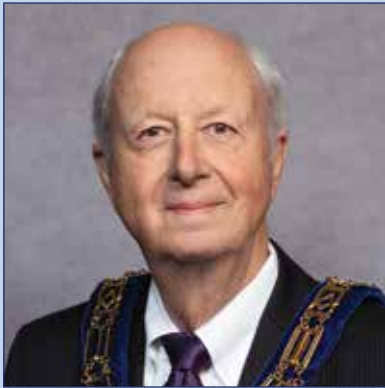
Let us be the kind of leaders who uplift, who unite, who labor with love and leave behind something greater than ourselves.

Let us lead with humility, serve with compassion, and walk uprightly in all our actions.

Sincerely & Fraternaly,

Raborn L. Reader, Jr.
Grand Master

A WORD FROM THE Grand Treasurer



Brethren,

I would like to update you on several financial matters.

Update on Masonic investments at Vanguard

By way of background and a reminder, four Masonic organizations were invested in Vanguard mutual funds at various times in 2021 and were initially managed by Vanguard who sold their institutional management division to Mercer about a year and a half ago. We still deal with the same people.

1. Square and Compasses Holding has one fund.
2. The Grand Lodge Library and Museum has three funds.
3. The Grand Lodge of Texas has three funds.
4. The Endowed Membership Fund has one fund.

All the funds are invested in basically the same way and are considered long-term investments. While different masons are responsible for the different funds, we coordinate our efforts and share thoughts and experiences.

Our investment philosophy has been to pick an allocation that with which we are comfortable and not change it and

not try to time the markets or individual industries. In May after three years, we decided to make two small changes.

1. To have a goal of allocating money from 60% equities and 40% fixed income to 65% equities and 35% fixed income.
2. For the Grand Lodge and Endowed Membership investments to place almost all the equity portion in index funds rather than managed funds. Index funds have outperformed managed funds over extended periods for many years.

In my opinion, our investments are efficiently and effectively invested in a very broad-based, very low-cost manner which will outperform most other investments over the long term.

Treasurer Schools

We had a very good Zoom meeting for lodge treasurers on August 4th. It was very well attended, and a great deal of information was shared which should be helpful to lodge treasurers in the future. I hope many more of you will sign up for the other two schools scheduled for this fall. The dates are October 6th and November 3rd.

In my opinion, our investments are efficiently and effectively invested in a very broad-based, very low-cost manner which will outperform most other investments over the long term.

Proposed resolutions I will submit for consideration next January

I am proposing two resolutions to address an issue, I believe, that will help the Grand Lodge of Texas in the future. The Assistance Fund was created many years ago and is restricted up till now to help Texas masons and their families by adding to payments made by lodges upon recommendation of the Finance Committee and approval of the Grand Lodge Trustees. The fund has grown to over \$2,000,000 through investment income. Annual disbursements have averaged only about \$32,000 over the last four years, which is less than 2%. Each year \$.25 of the \$27.50 per capita paid by the lodges is deposited into this restricted fund. It is very unlikely that most of this fund will be needed in the future.

The first resolution would transfer the \$.25 annual addition to the restricted Assistance Fund and add it to the unrestricted portion that goes to the Grand Lodge General Fund.

The second resolution would allow other philanthropic expenditures, which the Grand Lodge regularity makes, to be paid out of the Assistance Fund rather than the General Fund.

Both changes would allow the Grand Lodge, which will soon be operating at a negative cash flow due to declining membership, to defer asking the lodges for an increase in per capita.

Sincerely and Fraternally,
Rick Townsend
Grand Treasurer

2026 ★ GRAND LODGE GALA

Mark your calendars!

Join us in Waco for the second-ever **Grand Lodge Gala** immediately following the Grand Lodge Installation on **Saturday, January 17, 2026.**

This special evening will be held at **Hotel 1928**, the beautifully restored historic home of Karem Shrine, now transformed into a world-class five-star hotel. Our inaugural Gala in 2022 brought together more than **500–600 Masons and guests**—and this year's celebration promises to be even bigger and better!

DATE Saturday, January 17, 2026

LOCATION Hotel 1928, Waco, Texas

COST Includes a meal of heavy hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and one complimentary cocktail

- **FREE** for Brothers staying at recommended hotels
- **\$25** for those staying outside Waco or at an Airbnb

Come and enjoy an unforgettable evening of fellowship, food, and celebration with your Masonic family. We look forward to seeing you there!

For the list of hotels as well as other pertinent information around the Annual Communication, please visit:

texasgrandannualcommunication.secureserversites.net

2025 GRAND MASTER ACTIVITIES THUS FAR

By Dean Bryant, Staff Writer



Each year, the Grand Master of Masons in Texas, as part of his official duties, travels the state and visits many lodges. These visits are moments of connection, and inspiration for all Masons in Texas.

Texas is home to more than 850 Masonic lodges, which are spread across the great state. The Grand Master's official visits help to ensure each lodge stays in harmony with the Constitution and Laws of the Grand Lodge. But more importantly, they bring the Grand Lodge Officers of Texas Masonry directly to the Brethren.

These visits give the Masons of Texas the opportunity to ask questions, and share the successes of their lodges, while reinforcing that each and every Brother from all the lodges plays an important role in our Masonic fraternity.

When the Grand Master arrives for an official visit, the members and visitors honor him, and the other Grand Officers in attendance. It is common to see formal Grand introductions, special events, fun, and a great meal.

The Grand Master is given an opportunity to give an address to share his vision for the year, and share with the Brethren the successes to date, and what is hoped for during the remainder of the year.

One of the most exciting outcomes of the Grand Master's visit is the renewed energy it brings to a lodge. For many, it is the highlight of the Masonic year, and something that lodges plan for some time, thus ensuring a successful event. Introductions, great fellowship, incredible food, and of course a bit of banter makes for a wonderful event.

Official visits reflect the ongoing tradition of Freemasonry in Texas. Each handshake, each word of encouragement, and each moment of recognition, contributes to a stronger and more unified Craft.

As we look forward to the rest of this Masonic year, let us remember the significance of these visits, and the leadership, Brotherhood, and inspiration they represent.

Monday, April 8, 2025 Huffman Lodge No. 1428

Huffman Lodge No. 1428 was honored to host a well-attended official visit from the Grand Master. The evening brought together a distinguished group of Grand Officers, District Deputy Grand Masters, and Master Masons for a memorable occasion.

The event was marked by a strong sense of fellowship, enjoyable conversations, and a delicious meal. Attendees shared in the camaraderie making it a night to remember for all.

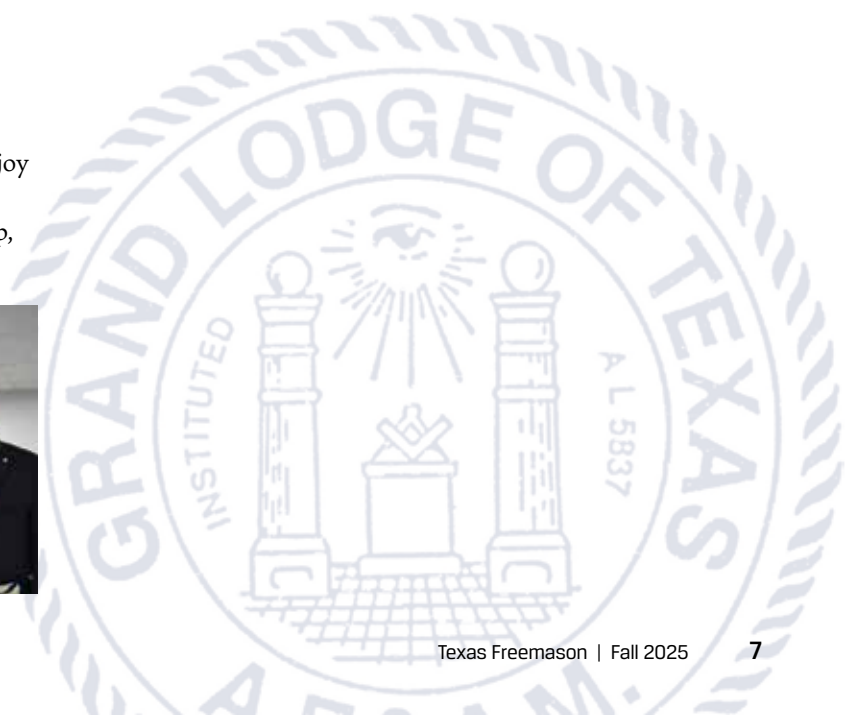




Most Worshipful Raborn L. Reader, Jr., Grand Master of Texas Masons enjoying 2025, traveling our great State.

Thursday, May 1, 2025
John Sims Lodge No. 458

John Sims Lodge No. 458 was honored to host an official visit from Most Worshipful Raborn L. Reader, Jr., Grand Master of Texas Masons. There were many Brethren in attendance to enjoy the evening, and share stories, experiences, plus more with the Grand Officers. A wonderful evening with great fun, fellowship, and an awesome meal.



Tuesday, May 13, 2025

Deer Park Lodge No. 1362

On Tuesday, May 13, Deer Park Lodge No. 1362 hosted a cornerstone ceremony for Deer Park Volunteer Fire Station No. 2. A Masonic cornerstone ceremony is the formal laying of a cornerstone by Freemasons to dedicate buildings, such as schools, fire stations, government facilities, lodges plus more. This long tradition has a deep meaning and roots going back many years, reflecting the Freemasons ties to Stonemasons. The ceremony is hosted by a local lodge, and conducted by the Grand Master or one of his designates.



Most Worshipful Raborn L. Reader, Jr., Grand Master of Texas Masons conducting the Cornerstone ceremony.



Right Worshipful Doug Hudson, District Deputy Grand Master at Large, assisting with the ceremony, and ensuring the cornerstone is level.



Right Worshipful Johnny Cobb, District Deputy Grand Master 30-G confirming the cornerstone is square, assisted by Right Worshipful Cecil Vaden, District Deputy Grand Master at Large as Grand Marshal Pro-Tem.





Quantity Or Quality, What Did You Give Up For Masonry?

By James C. "Chris" Williams IV, Staff Writer

I am almost sure that John must have a locator beacon on my phone or something. Pam and I were having a nice lunch at Mimi's Café. She had gotten a chance to get away and asked me if I wanted to have lunch with her and that was an offer I couldn't refuse. We were sitting there enjoying a steaming bowl of French Onion soup...one of their specialties and sharing a tuna sandwich and a pleasant quiet conversation when I glanced over Pam's shoulder and I saw him.....big....and I do mean big John Deacon. Without thinking I slid down in the booth and laid down on the seat and waited for him to go by. I could hear Pam asking me what the heck I was doing (it should have been obvious, I remember thinking). I waited and waited but I never saw him go by. So I turned my head slightly to peer over the table to see where he went and I was looking straight at a huge belt buckle. I knew I was had, and I straightened up and said, "Hey Brother John, I didn't know you were in town. You didn't call me." "Well, my cell phone stopped working so I went by the shop," he said with raised eyebrows. "Roger told me you were having lunch so I figured I would just see you next month. As I was driving down the freeway I glanced over and saw your truck sitting in this parking lot, so I came in to give you some company, but I didn't know you were having lunch with a beautiful lady. What is your wife going to say?" Of course Pam was grinning at John, so I said, "You aren't going to tell her are you?" That got Pam to stop grinning, but she slid over and told John to sit down and much to my dismay handed him a menu. He had already been checking my soup out which caused me to move it out of his reach. Marcie, our very capable server came up and John immediately ordered one of everything on the menu. At least it sounded like it. He also hit all the good stuff which is pretty much everything they have. He ordered the Turkey Club with the guacamole and two bowls of the French Onion Soup and the meatloaf...what a combination. It didn't take long for his food to come, and he dug in and lapsed into total silence. Pam sat there with a puzzled look on her face, and I told her that John's brain stops working when he eats so he can't communicate. She nodded like she understood (go figure), and I think I heard John mumble something about a form of communication that he couldn't convey in front of my wife. She patted him on the back and said she was going to walk over to the department store next door and do some shopping. He slid out to let her out and she gave him a hug as she walked by him and waved at me (go figure again). I just sat there waiting for him to finish and finally he looked up and said, "Have you ever thought about what the tradeoff is for being a Mason or what you give up by being a Mason?" "I never thought about it that way John," I replied, a little confused at where this was going. I need to think



about that a minute before I answer." "Ok," he said. "While you are thinking about it let me tell you why it is a problem. Before we can talk about the tradeoff we have to understand that there are Brothers that cannot benefit from Masonry for a variety of reasons. Reasons like time, background, what they expect to receive from being made a Mason, their actual level of interest, preconceived ideas about what Masonry is, and others. These men must be identified in the beginning and honestly told to either wait or to not become a member. Masonry requires a lifelong commitment in time and effort and those men who find that out too late do not end up having a happy and rewarding Masonic career.

Visit <https://grandlodgeoftexas.org/texas-freemason-magazine> for the rest of the story.

A Look Back

Great Men Who Were Masons – Kit Carson and Edward F. Beale

By BRO. GEORGE W. BAIRD, P.G.M., District of Columbia – From the Builder Magazine, September 1925

THE first of the two subjects of this sketch was born in Kentucky, the second in Washington, D. C., but an adventurous disposition threw them together in the then scarcely explored West, and they are especially connected together in their acquaintance with, and efforts for, the welfare of the various Indian tribes.

Christopher Carson, who will always be known as Kit, is one of the better known of those picturesque, trapper, pioneer, and frontiersman figures of the days when the white man was beginning to reach out to take possession of the Golden West. As mentioned above he was born in Kentucky, but his parents moved into the State of Missouri when he was a year old, and there he spent his boyhood. He went to school until he was fifteen and was then apprenticed to a saddler. Whether he gained much proficiency at this craft, history does not say, but at the age of seventeen he joined a trading expedition going overland to Santa Fe. Perhaps his knowledge of saddlery may have had something to do with this adventure, as many repairs to the harness would naturally be required on such a long journey.

After this taste of travel and adventure, the youth found it impossible to settle down to any sedentary pursuit. He became a trapper and explorer, wandering all over the plains and through the Rockies to the Coast. It is said that for sixteen years "his rifle supplied every particle of food on which he lived." At one time he was employed by a Trader's Company to supply their fort with meat, and this he did for eight years.

In this life he became well acquainted with the Indians, and was always on good terms with them. He married an Indian girl. By this marriage he had a daughter who was educated in St. Louis, Mo., and grew up to be very well known and popular in that city. His wife died in 1842.

When Fremont made his famous expedition to explore the Rocky Mountains he employed Carson as guide, and it would have hardly been possible for him to have found any one better fitted for the post. After this expedition Carson returned to New Mexico, where he married again, a Spanish lady, and resumed his old life of hunting and trapping; but when Fremont made his second expedition Carson joined him again and remained with him all through the military operations which resulted in the addition of California to the territory of the United States in 1846-7.

Later on Carson was sent to Washington, where President Polk nominated him for a commission in the Army, but this



nomination was not confirmed by the Senate. He then returned to New Mexico and in 1853 he collected a flock of over six thousand sheep which he took to California, where they were in great demand.

After this successful venture he returned once more to New Mexico, and was later appointed Indian Agent. It was a most happy appointment, for his knowledge of the Indians and his reputation among them fitted him in a peculiar manner for this responsible post. Owing to their trust and confidence in him he was enabled to negotiate several treaties of benefit both to the Indians themselves and the Government at Washington.

With the outbreak of the Civil War Carson was loyally on the side of the Government, and rendered most valuable services; so that at the end of the War the man whom the Senate refused to accept as a second Lieutenant was retired from the army with the brevet rank of Brigadier General.

Carson joined the Masonic Order in 1854, receiving the degrees in Montezuma Lodge, No. 109, at Santa Fe. He afterwards dimitted with several others to become a charter member of Bent Lodge, No. 204, at Taos, named after Governor Charles Bent, whose wife was a sister of the lady Carson had married. Carson was named Junior Warden in the charter of the new lodge, and in spite of his constant expeditions was a faithful attendant. The lodge was later obliged to return its charter, and the surviving members, including Carson, returned to membership in Montezuma Lodge.

Carson was absolutely fearless, but so modest and retiring that no one could ever get him to speak of his exploits. He was greatly beloved by all who knew him personally, and deeply regretted when he died.

In the National Museum at Washington is a bronze relief showing Carson and Beale in their hazardous journey to gain reinforcements for the American forces in the second Californian expedition. The inscription tells the story:

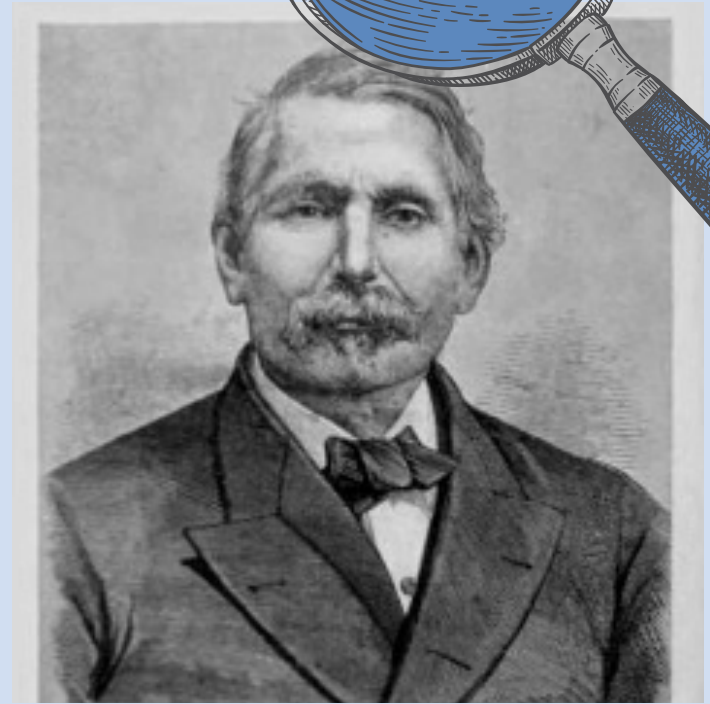
“The Army, sent from Santa Fe to occupy California was met and defeated by the Mexicans at San Pasqual. The American forces were driven upon a dune in the desert where there was no water, and there surrounded by the Mexican forces. Edward F. Beale and Kit Carson, both famous explorers of the west, volunteered to get through the Mexican lines and get reinforcements from Stockton's fleet at San Diego. They succeeded in crawling past three cordons of Mexican sentries in the night: by hiding in ravines in the day and traveling by night they reached Stockton's fleet after enduring great hardships.”

This memorial, in the largest museum in the country, is seen and read by many thousand visitors every year.

Our second subject, Edward Beale, was the son of George Beale, a Naval Paymaster, and his mother was the youngest daughter of Commodore Truxton, who commanded the *Constellation* in her famous engagement with the *Vengeance*. Very naturally he followed in the footsteps of his forbears and went into the naval service. He was appointed Midshipman by order of President Andrew Jackson, was promoted to Master in 1849, and Lieutenant in 1852. At the time of the event above described he was commanding a naval battery, serving with the army. It was Beale who was called the hero of San Pasqual, and it was Beale and Carson who crossed the plains bringing reports to Washington, and it was Beale who brought the first gold from California to the East. He eventually resigned from the Navy and President Fillmore appointed him Superintendent of Indian Affairs in California, while Congress appropriated two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to carry out the plan he had proposed of establishing Indian colonies, or reservations. Had this plan been strictly adhered to and honestly carried out much of the later trouble with the Red Men would have been avoided.

Beale kept a diary, which he illustrated with very clever pencil sketches; a most interesting account of his adventures, and one that should find some day a competent editor. He noted the deplorable condition of the Indians held in peonage by the Spaniards and Mexicans, and from these observations eventuated his plans for the care of these wards of the nation.

The question of transportation in the Southwest was then a very serious one, and Beale suggested the use of camels, which the then Secretary of War, Davis, approved, and Commander David D. Porter was sent to Syria to secure a number of these animals. The experiment proved a great success, and but for the advent of the railroads the use of camels would probably have been continued.



The first wagon road was surveyed from Fort Defiance to California, the second step in solving the transportation problem, and then came the railway surveys from Fort Smith to the Colorado.

President Lincoln reappointed Beale as Surveyor-General of California and Nevada, though he had expressed a desire to re-enter the Navy and take a part in the active operations of the Civil War, but the President wanted him where he felt he was really indispensable. Beale proposed the acquisition of Lower California, but this was not favored at Washington.

At the end of the Civil War, Beale resigned his office with the intention of making his home on his ranch at Tejon, but his annual visits to Chester, Pa., revived his liking for politics. His land holdings in California had yielded him a good fortune, and he purchased the old home of Commodore Stephen Decatur in Washington, and settled down in close neighborhood with many of his old Mexican War comrades. He had been, for many years, a close friend of General Grant and General Sherman. The difference between Grant and Blaine was reconciled through his intermediation. President Arthur wanted to appoint him Secretary of the Navy, but did not succeed. He died in Washington on April 22, 1893, and his ashes interred at Chester, Pa.

He was a member of California Lodge, No. 1, though the date and place of his initiation have not come to the knowledge of the writer. His services to the Government in regard to the establishing and settling arrangements with the Indians, like those of Carson, are worthy of remembrance.

Making History Across Generations

Thank you to the Brothers at James H. Lockwood Lodge No. 1343 for this article



On Wednesday evening 7-9-25 the installation of officers of James H. Lockwood Lodge #1343 was held at Karem Shrine Temple in Waco TX. A meal preceded the event with 57 family, friends, and brother masons attending. Then Right Worshipful Justin Duty, Grand Senior Warden along with Right Worshipful Brad Billings, Grand Secretary both of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas began the ceremony of installation. The three principal officers for the ensuing 2025-2026 Masonic year are Lee Roy Wachtendorf as Worshipful Master, his son Brendan Lee Wachtendorf as Senior Warden, and his son Landon Lee Wachtendorf as Junior Warden. This is the first known recorded account in Texas Grand Lodge history of three generations of the same family being installed in the same Lodge for the same Masonic year. Lee was previously Master of his Lodge in 2002-03 having been raised on 5-17-76. Brendan and Landon were both raised as Master Masons on 11-30-21. They are all three members of Crawford Lodge #585, Waco Scottish Rite Bodies, and Karem Shrine Temple also.

On Wednesday evening, July 9, 2025, the Installation of Officers of James H. Lockwood Lodge No. 1343 was held at Karem Shrine Temple in Waco, Texas. The evening began with a meal attended by fifty-seven family members, friends, and Brother Masons, followed by the formal Installation Ceremony.

The ceremony was conducted by Right Worshipful Justin Duty, Grand Senior Warden, as Installing Master, and Right Worshipful Brad Billings, Grand Secretary, as Installing Marshal.

The three principal officers installed for the 2025-2026 Masonic year are:

- Lee Roy Wachtendorf, Worshipful Master
- Brenden Lee Wachtendorf, Senior Warden
- Landon Lee Wachtendorf, Junior Warden

This marks a milestone as the first known recorded instance in the history of the Grand Lodge of Texas in which three generations of the same family have been installed as the principal officers of the same lodge for the same Masonic year.

Lee previously served as Worshipful Master in 2002-2003, having been raised a Master Mason on May 17, 1976. Brenden and Landon were both raised as Master Masons on November 30, 2021. All three are also proud members of Crawford Lodge No. 585, the Waco Scottish Rite Bodies, and Karem Shrine Temple.

This historic installation stands as a remarkable example of Masonic heritage and family tradition, reflecting the enduring legacy of Freemasonry in Texas.



Strengthening Masonry Around the World

By Dustin Tunello, DDGM of Masonic District 31-A, Contributing Writer



In late April of this year, a delegation led by R.W. Brad Billings, R.W. Dustin Tunello, DDGM of District 31-A, and six Worshipful Masters of their respective lodges, journeyed to Manila to attend the 2025 Grand Annual Communications of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines (GLOP). In total, thirty-five Master Masons participated in this historic occasion, marking the first time a Texas delegation was formally received in the Philippines.

The hospitality of the GLOP was nothing short of exceptional, as they warmly welcomed delegates from jurisdictions around the world, including the Grand Lodges of Alberta (Canada), New South Wales (Australia), New Jersey, China, Japan, Italy, and many others. Of the estimated 5,000 attendees, nearly one-third were visitors

from foreign jurisdictions, a true testament to the global reach of our Craft.

As Texas Masons, we often speak of strengthening the fraternity within our own communities, but this journey served as a powerful reminder that our Brotherhood knows no borders. The bonds forged in Manila stand as lasting proof that our obligations and values transcend language, culture, and geography.

The next Grand Annual Communications (ANCOM) in the Philippines will be held April 23–25, 2026, in Tagaytay City, a beautiful and cooler region nestled in the highlands. This year, we were proud to be the second-largest delegation behind the Grand Lodge of Alberta. Next year, we hope to bring an even larger group and prove, once again, that everything is bigger in Texas!

When Brotherly Love Becomes Life Itself

Thank you to Brothers Bruce Calvery and Michael Sherman for sharing their story

At the core of our teachings stand the rungs of Faith, Hope, and Charity (or Love). Brotherhood is an extension of that love, and it forms the very foundation upon which the superstructure of our great Fraternity is built. To some, these lessons may seem like words in a ceremony—spoken once, then forgotten. But for others, they are guiding truths to be lived out in daily life. Through their example, we are reminded of the brilliance of Brotherhood and how much better our world becomes when we pursue the tenets of our profession.

Such an example is unfolding in Abilene, Texas, where two Brothers have written themselves into history with a testimony of selflessness and love that deserves to be shared.

Brother Bruce Calvery, a dedicated Mason of Abilene Lodge No. 559 and a member of Suez Shriners in San Angelo, has been in need of a kidney for nearly two years. His daily life has been shaped by dialysis treatments and the ongoing trials of illness. Yet through it all, he has remained a steadfast husband and father, looking forward most of all to seeing his daughter graduate.

Standing beside him was Past Master Michael Sherman, also of Abilene Lodge No. 559, and a fellow Shriner. A father of five and a devoted leader in Masonry, Brother Sherman is known in his community as a man of faith and service. Upon learning of Brother Calvery's need, he did more than offer words of comfort—he offered himself. After more than a year of testing,

appointments, and preparation, Brother Sherman was confirmed as a match and resolved to donate his kidney to his Brother.



This story is far more than a medical milestone—it is Masonry in action.

Last month, the surgery was completed in Dallas, and both men are now doing well. For Brother Calvery, the surgery represents renewed hope and health and being able to travel to games to support his daughter – as he did almost immediately after being released. For Brother Sherman, the donation was a natural extension of the principles he holds dear. Though he does not see it as such, his sacrifice sets an example for us all to follow.

This story is far more than a medical milestone—it is Masonry in action. In this act, our teachings are no longer abstractions but are written in the lives of two men. Their bond shows that Masonry is not confined to ritual or Stated Meetings but is lived out in the world through actions that change lives.

In describing the tenet of Brotherly Love, we are charged to “aid, support, and protect each other.” In Abilene, that call has been answered with a gift as profound as life itself. May the example of Brothers Calvery and Sherman inspire each of us to reflect on true Brotherly Love and how we might, in our own small way, live up to the highest principles of the Craft.

FAMILY

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2025

DAY

**FREE
Admission**

**Open
10 am
to
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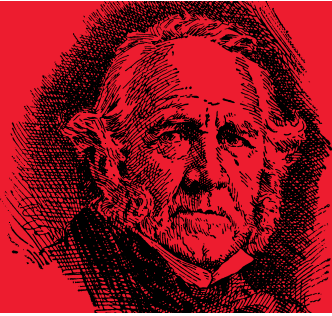
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Before he was Old Sam Jacinto: Sam Houston at Horseshoe Bend

By Nathan Giesenschlag, Staff Writer



"Always remember my son that you looked upon the face of Andrew Jackson."

– Sam Houston to his son Sam Houston Jr. at the Hermitage a few hours after Jackson's death in June of 1845.

When reading history, or living life, nagging questions often confront us. One question is: was an event merely luck or fate, or is it the hand of the Grand Geometrician of the Universe? Those who take the view that God is active in the affairs of the world and man cannot reasonably argue for luck. Those who are more deistic in their concept of God, might allow for some admixture of fate and providence. Texas History provides one such fateful encounter: would we have remembered the Austin family name without the "chance" meeting of Moses Austin and the Baron de Bastrop in New Orleans in 1801? It was there that the two men would eat supper together after Austin sold lead at the Port of New Orleans. They would never see nor write to each other over the next nineteen years. Then, as providence would have it, their paths crossed again when Austin most needed help to bring Anglo settlers to Spanish Texas. This encounter made Austin a Texas name.

For Sam Houston, nothing about his birth or early life indicated an appointment with greatness. His story is well known, but being a middle child in a large brood of children threatened to subsume Houston and drown out his future—especially after his father Samuel died. In the aftermath of Samuel's death young Sam's older brothers tried to chain the teenage Houston to a plow and lash him to the family store. Houston rebelled and ran away to the Cherokees who also lived in east Tennessee not far from the Houston family land in Blount County. Here Sam Houston met the first of three older men who would have an outsized impact upon his life. The Cherokee chief who took the young Houston in was Oolooteka ("He puts away the drum"). Known to the whites in east Tennessee as John Jolly, Oolooteka would offer the young Houston protection, encouragement, and support. It was the Cherokees and Oolooteka who gave Houston the moniker, "The Raven." In tribal lore, a raven possesses a wandering spirit; the life of Sam Houston certainly demonstrates restlessness. In Houston's life, he traveled widely, his clothes were heterodox,

and his personal life sent him soaring to the heavens or crashing to the ground.

The best biography of Sam Houston's life is probably the account written by James Haley published in 2002. Haley asks the pertinent question about the decisive moment in Sam Houston's teenage life:

"What would Sam Houston's life have been had he not bucked the family traces, had he knuckled under to his mother and brothers and spent himself guiding a plow and shelving dry goods—if, in sum, he had been satisfied reading Homer's *Odyssey* instead of setting off to create his own? The only thing known is that he was not content there."

He found some independence with the Cherokee and some identity—he would occasionally don Cherokee garb or wear a Cherokee coat later in life—but after leaving home, he was his own man, and he never really went back to his family though he would visit them from occasionally. Thankfully for Texas and the United States, Sam Houston embodied the American Dream by coming out of obscurity and becoming a noteworthy figure.

War has the effect of radically altering the lives of many of the men who are swept up by it. For good or ill, war changes you. For Sam Houston, the War of 1812 brought him into contact with another man who would act as a surrogate father, and that man was Gen. Andrew Jackson.

In 1813, Sam Houston was young and somewhat rudderless when he joined to U.S. Army largely because the recruiter offered cash inducements to join. Early in his army career, Houston's regiment merged with Thomas Hart Benton's 39th regiment. They wouldn't know it in 1813, but these two men would serve together in the U.S. Senate from 1846-1851.



The road to the Battle of Horseshoe Bend revealed the deep flaws of Andrew Jackson's army. At various points, Jackson faced down men who tried to go AWOL in the field. He also dealt with men who would not take orders unless threatened with the severest punishments. And sometimes, Jackson simply had to stand aside as men whose enlistments ended strolled home and out of camp. As the army approached the climactic battle against the Red Stick Creeks at Horseshoe Bend in Alabama, Jackson bolstered his legions with loyal Cherokee and Creek warriors and U.S. Army regulars including Sam Houston.

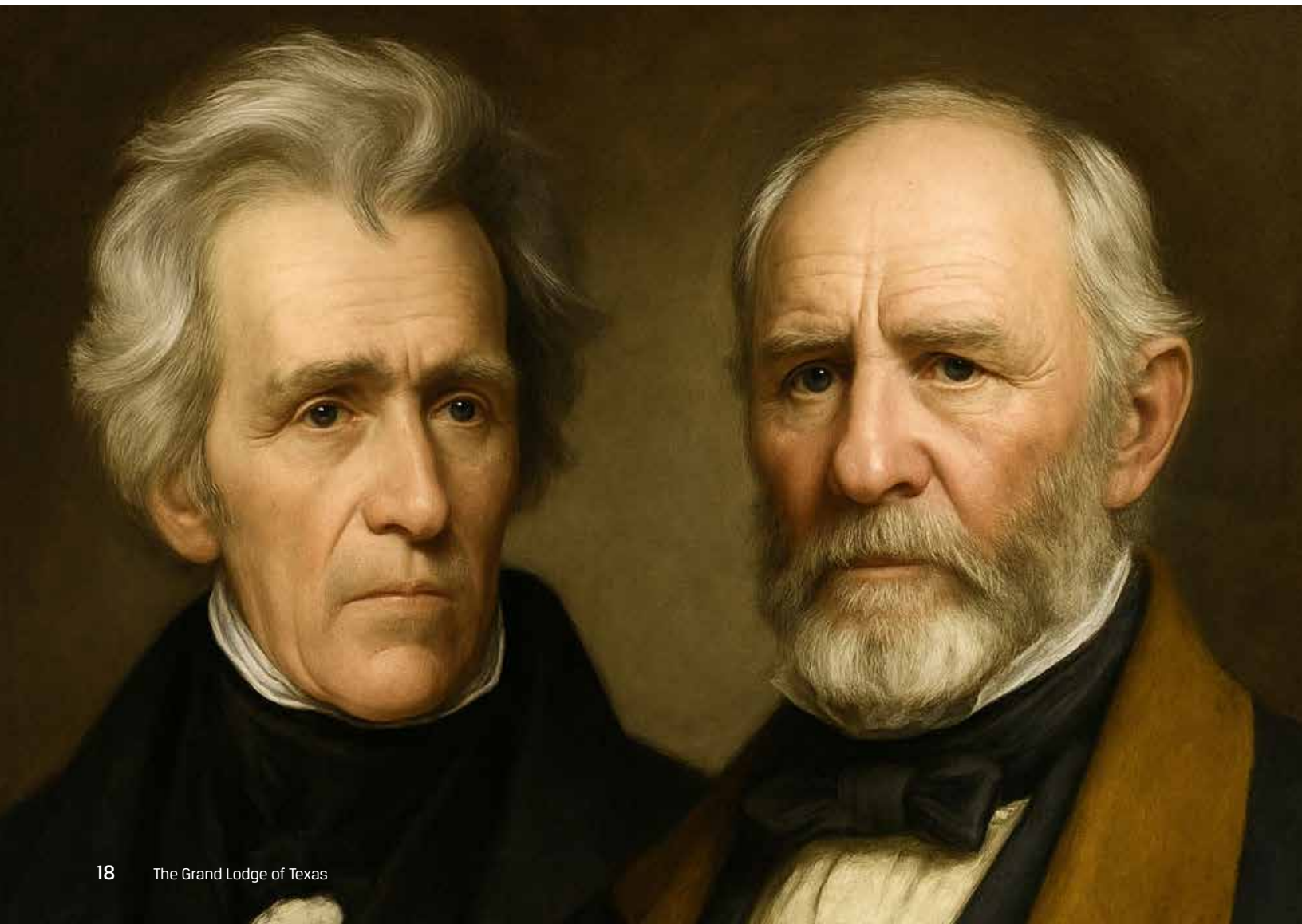
The battle of Horseshoe Bend began late in the morning on March 27th, 1814. The name comes from a horseshoe bend in the Tallapoosa River near present day Alexander City, Alabama. Jackson's meager artillery opened the battle. This distracted the Red Sticks while Jackson's Cherokee allies slipped behind the Red Stick fortress along the Tallapoosa. With their enemies unaware, the Cherokees destroyed the escape canoes and boats bobbing on the banks of the river.

Along the front of the Red Stick fortification was an impressive six- to eight-foot-tall wall of logs stitched together with rifle ports

cut into the structure to create a crossfire effect. In his after-battle report and years later, Jackson remarked that he believed the Red Sticks had help from their British allies in building such a formidable structure. The little artillery piece in Jackson's army was useless against the wall; the fortification would have to be stormed.

At about 11 AM, the order to assault Horseshoe Bend was given and the first man to try to breach the wall was Major Lemuel Montgomery. He was shot dead instantly. (Montgomery, AL and Montgomery County, TX are named for the fallen officer.) The second man on the wall was Ensign Sam Houston. Those who witnessed the fighting at the wall remembered how savage it was. It was at the wall that Houston received the first of three wounds suffered that day. An arrow lodged in Houston's thigh and when he tried to pull it out, he could not. Houston then ordered a private to pull the arrow out. The man demurred. Houston threatened to slash the private with his sword if he failed. Now motivated, the man yanked the arrow out along with muscle, tissue, and copious blood. Houston realized his error and staggered to the rear with a grievous wound. The battle roared on.

After several hours of battle, Gen. Andrew Jackson entered the garrison and tried to bring the battle to an end by securing the surrender of the remaining Red Stick Creeks. General Jackson was nearly shot; his translator was shot in the shoulder. This would now be a fight to the death. Jackson called for volunteers to storm the last Red Stick redoubt and Sam Houston answered the summons. Nearing dusk, a hobbling Houston led men towards the Red Stick stronghold. The bullets flew hot as Houston approached. He ordered the charge. However, no Americans charged because Houston's men fled in face of Red Stick rifle fire. At that moment Houston suffered two more wounds in his right arm and shoulder. Somehow Houston staggered out towards the log stitched wall and collapsed. Sam Houston should have died that night or in the ensuing days. He did not. Houston's valor and fearlessness brought him to Andrew Jackson's attention. Thereafter, Jackson never forgot Sam Houston. Though the two men could not know it at the time, the Battle of Horseshoe Bend changed the trajectory of their lives, the United States, and Texas.



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