

Official Publication of The Grand Lodge of Texas

TEXAS FREEMASON

SPRING 2026

190th Grand Annual Communication

The joy of reconnecting and
the warmth of fellowship

11



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SPRING 2026

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TEXAS FREEMASON

The Texas Freemason Magazine is an official publication of the Grand Lodge of Texas A. F. & A. M. It is published four times a year for the members of Texas Lodges and subscribers. Spring and winter issues are available in print. Summer and fall issues are available in PDF format at <https://grandlodgeoftexas.org>. Opinions expressed by the editors and contributing writers do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Grand Lodge of Texas Copyright 2025, by the Trustees of the Grand Lodge of Texas. All rights reserved.

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The Texas Freemason Magazine encourages submission of articles and photographs of general interest to Masons in Texas, reserving the right to edit and use the articles and pictures as needs and policies dictate.

News and articles from around the state will continue to be published in a web-based format on the Grand Lodge of Texas website The Grand Lodge website is accessible at <http://www.grandlodgeoftexas.org> Please continue to send your articles and Lodge events and news to the Editors of The Texas Freemason Magazine.

The preferred method of submission is via email with an attached Microsoft Word document. Pictures should be separately submitted in JPEG format to TexasFreemason@grandsecretaryoftx.org. If you do not have email, submissions may be sent to the Grand Lodge of Texas, Attn.: The Editor of The Texas Freemason Magazine, PO Box 446, Waco, Texas 76703. All materials become property of the magazine and cannot be returned.

Submissions

texasfreemasonmag@gmail.com

Subscriptions

\$12.50 per year U.S. and Canada, \$31.25 for three years; \$20.00 per year in foreign countries, \$50.00 for three years

Permission to Reprint

Permission to reprint original articles appearing in The Texas Mason Magazine is granted to all recognized Masonic publications, provided that credit is given to the author and attribution to The Texas Freemason Magazine.

Archives

<https://grandlodgeoftexas.org/texas-freemason-magazine>



A WORD FROM THE Grand Master Jim Rumsey



My Brethren All,

It is indeed an honor and extremely humbling to have been entrusted by the Masons of Texas with the duties and responsibilities of the office of Grand Master. I am committed to executing the duties associated with the office with common sense, brotherly love, and affection.

The Grand Lodge installation ceremony was perfectly executed by a superb team of Past Grand Masters, a bagpiper, a chorale, Sir Knights of the Grand Commandery of Texas, and members of the Grand Lodge audio-video committee. Thank you to all who took part in the production of the ceremony.

The District Deputy Grand Masters are the most trained, qualified, and prepared deputies in the history of the Grand Lodge. Now, I have no supporting documentation to prove this, but they just are! The Deputies, along with the district service teams, have begun the first round of official visits. I trust you will find the Grand Master's message to be brief, concise, and to the point.

Lodges have the option to have their opening, closing, and DDGM reception ceremonies graded by the District Instructor. This is completely voluntary. Lodges who participate will receive vanguard lodge credit regardless of score. Lodges who score 90% or higher

will receive a certificate of distinction, and the ten lodges with the highest scores will receive the Grand Master's Top 10 Lodge Award. I do urge all lodges to contact their District Deputy Grand Master and participate in this voluntary program.

I am excited to be able to work with an outstanding group of grand lodge officers this year. The knowledge and experience each brings to the team will ensure a most successful and drama free year for the Masons of Texas.

Grand Master's conferences have kicked off. There will be a total of twelve across the state. Due to the material presented in the conferences, each is restricted to Master Masons only. I urge you to review the calendar and pack up the members of your lodge and attend one of them. It is time to pick up the proverbial can that has been kicked down the road for the past few generations.

We will be aiming this year to get back the basics of what Freemasonry is; no grandiose plans, limited public engagements, and Master Mason only events. We will be focusing on fraternity, lodge health, member maintenance, brotherly love, and harmony.

Each of the historic observances recognized by the Grand Lodge of Texas honors events that occurred before the founding of the Grand Lodge of the Republic of Texas, and are not Masonic

in nature. These are not historic observances of the Grand Lodge of Texas, but rather a symbol of the Grand Lodge of Texas showing respect and paying homage to the historical observances of Texas. The Grand Lodge's Texas History Committee will be representing the Grand Lodge of Texas at these observances this year.

Lastly Brethren, we all learned how to be a Mason long before we knew what Freemasonry was. At an early age we were taught to be courteous, polite, and respectful. Let us take a moment and remember what sets Masons apart from other the men in society. It is not our history. It is not our Masonic bling. It is simply our willingness to build ourselves spiritually, to spread brotherly love and affection, and to live a life representative of those obligations by which we all swore to abide.

So Mote it Be!

Jim Rumsey
Grand Master

A WORD FROM THE Deputy Grand Master



Brethren,

As I reflect on another very successful Grand Lodge session, it never ceases to reignite my passion for Freemasonry. The opportunity to visit and join in fellowship with so many dear friends and Brothers from all across our great state always fills a special place in my heart.

First, I want to thank Right Worshipful Raborn Reeder for an outstanding year. He held the Office with dignity, poise, and an unwavering commitment to the fraternity.

I would also like to extend my sincere and heartfelt congratulations to our Most Worshipful Grand Master Jim Rumsey. I have never been more confident in a leader of our Grand Lodge than I am in Most Worshipful Rumsey, and I look forward to supporting his vision and leadership.

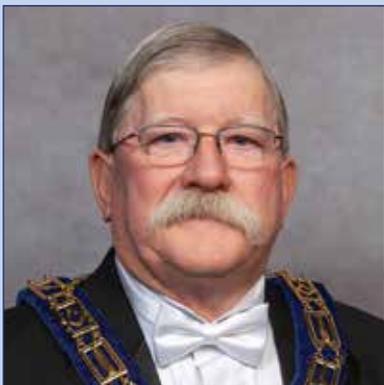
Additionally, I extend my congratulations to Right Worshipful John Wilkerson on his election to the Office of Grand Junior Warden. I welcome him to the team of Trustees and look forward to working alongside him during the years ahead.

Finally, my Brothers, I want to thank each and every one of you for your continued faith, trust, and support. As I travel the state this year in support of our Grand Master and Grand Lodge, I look forward to visiting with you, strengthening our bonds, and sharing in our Masonic experience together.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

Justin B. Duty
Deputy Grand Master

A WORD FROM THE Grand Senior Warden



Brethren,

I am both honored and humbled to have been entrusted with the privilege of serving our Grand Lodge as your Grand Senior Warden.

I want to assure each of you that I am fully committed to serving both you and our fraternity. I will diligently strive to guide

and lead us toward a brighter tomorrow. Perseverance will be our guiding principle, and while the path ahead may not be an easy one, I will do everything within my power to direct us toward a prosperous future. However, achieving this goal will require the collective effort of us all.

I urge every Brother to personally reflect on the valuable lessons we are taught in our Lodges, and to practice the same outside our Lodges. Each of us has made solemn vows to conduct ourselves with distinction, to fulfill our duties clearly, and to recognize the expectations placed upon us by our Brothers and our Lodges.

Let us strive to uphold the life of a true Master Mason. Be the kind of Brother you would wish to have by your side at a time of need. By focusing on our actions in the present, we can ensure that both

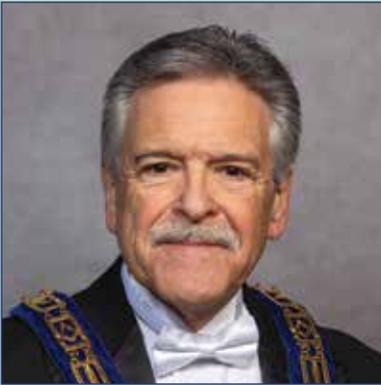
we and our fraternity will uphold a promising future.

As we consider these philosophies and principles, let us remember that our obligations and charges were never intended to be viewed as relics of the past. Rather, they are enduring decrees by which we, as Master Masons, live our daily lives. It is this commitment that sets us apart from the rest.

May we always remember, "In every endeavor exemplify Dedication, Leadership, and Community Service. Make a lifelong commitment to service, both in Masonry, and your community, that stands as a testament to Your Character and Legacy"

Sincerely & Fraternally
H.N. "Chip" Green Jr.
Grand Senior Warden

INTRODUCTION OF THE Grand Junior Warden



Brethren,

January 17, 2026; I was humbled beyond words, experiencing so many emotions, and thankful to the Masons of Texas for allowing me the honor to be their Grand Junior Warden in 2026. I have met many Masons throughout our great state over the years, often my lovely wife Maureen traveled with me, as we visited many Lodges across Texas, attended Masonic conferences, historic observances, and other Grand Lodge events. I thank all who have met with us and your warm hospitality. The brothers I met shared with me their hopes, desires, successes, and always demonstrating the brotherly love of our Fraternity. I am grateful for their faith and trust as we move our Fraternity into the future. A future full of promise, learning, improvements, what it means to be a Mason, and the connections that are unique to all Masons. This has proven to me a Mason is never truly alone. We are the Masons of Texas, and I will repay their trust with my heart, soul, and love for The Grand Lodge of Texas.

Our 191st Grand Master of Texas Masons, M.° W.° Jim Rumsey gave us his plan of action for this year during the January conference. I ask each of you to heed the tug on your cable-tow and attend his conferences already scheduled this spring and beyond. Make that effort and bring as many of your Lodge brothers with you

as you can. Big things for our Fraternity are already underway for 2026 and that success begins with each of us. Be part of the solution not part of the problem.

Long ago, I was given a poem from R.° W.° William 'Bill' G. Proctor, Past Grand Master 1962, you can find information about him on Grandview. He was an amazing man, a Collin County Judge, a Masons' Mason, a great man, and a great mentor. As I traveled around Texas these past three years many have received a card from me with a poem on the back, that I adhere to daily. I have shared this poem with many Lodges and Masons. and its meaning to me. Many Brothers have called or messaged me, thanking me for the poem, that I have literally lost count. If you would like to obtain an email copy, please send a message to wilkerson.john.m@gmail.com. We all are seeking 'more light'.

Grand Lodge's annual communications for this year are over, and we return to our respective lodges to share the recent events and experiences with Brothers not able to attend and be part. A new Masonic year has begun. Very soon, your District Deputy will begin their work and visits. Greet them and be prepared for their visits. Let us enjoy the Masonic experience.

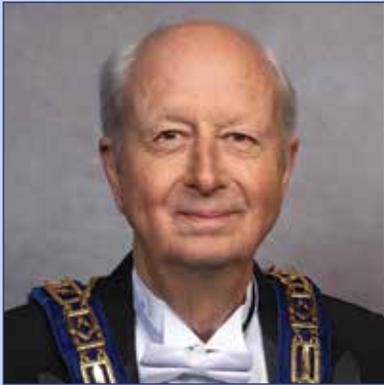
Now, it's time to go to work! Live a Masonic Life! Adhere to your Masonic Obligations and brighten our world with your Masonic Light! Maureen and I look forward to seeing ALL of you on the road this year sharing ideas, suggestions, your thoughts, prayers, and our Masonic Traditions with you. GOD Bless and travel safe.

Fraternal Regards,

John M. Wilkerson
Grand Junior Warden

The brothers I met shared with me their hopes, desires, successes, and always demonstrating the brotherly love of our Fraternity. I am grateful for their faith and trust as we move our Fraternity into the future. A future full of promise, learning, improvements, what it means to be a Mason, and the connections that are unique to all Masons. This has proven to me a Mason is never truly alone.

A WORD FROM THE Grand Treasurer



Brethren,

First, I would like to thank everyone who supported me at the Grand Communication in Waco. Many many people came up to me on Thursday and Friday wishing me good luck and congratulations on Saturday after the election. I very much appreciate the vote of confidence and look forward to serving the Grand Lodge this year.

Next, I would like to remind you of my report that happened on Friday. As I have reported to you for several years, the Grand Lodge was in excellent financial shape, with its investment accounts growing dramatically. 2025 was a very good year for our investments with the three funds growing over \$3 million during the year. I have asked several people to be on a committee to study the future needs of Grand Lodge with the goal of reducing the per capita that lodges pay the Grand Lodge each year. R.◊ W.◊ Tommy Griffin, Larry FitzPatrick, and Phil Morehead have agreed to work on this project.

I consider it inappropriate for the Grand Lodge to charge the lodges more than what its expected needs are.

This situation would be more easily identified if the annual budget, which you approve each year, was for the organization

as a whole, including investment income, rather than for a “operational budget” which is currently the case.

The most likely result of this study will be one or more resolutions which will be presented to you to vote on next January. We will work on this project in the coming months and try to come up with the best solution for all concerned.

In the meantime, thanks again for the vote of confidence, and I look forward to seeing many of you during 2026.

Fraternally Yours,

Rick Townsend
Grand Treasurer



Grand Lodge of Texas Honors Bro. Sid Miller with the Sam Houston Medal

By Chris Moyses, Contributing Writer

At the 2026 Annual Grand Lodge Communication the Grand Master, Most Worshipful Raborn L. Reader, Jr., presented Brother Sid Miller the Sam Houston Medal, the highest honor awarded by the Masonic Grand Lodge of Texas.

An eighth-generation farmer and rancher, Brother Miller is the Commissioner of the Texas Department of Agriculture. He has devoted his life to promoting Texas agriculture, rural communities, and the great state of Texas. Born in De Leon, in Comanche County, in September 1955, he graduated with honors from Tarleton State University in Stephenville with a Bachelor of Science degree in Vocational Ag Education.

A recognized community leader, Brother Miller was first elected to the House of Representatives in 2000. He was elected statewide as the 12th Texas Agriculture Commissioner in 2014 and re-elected to his second term in office in 2018; followed by a third term in 2022.

He is also a businessman who breeds and trains American Quarter Horses. In his spare time, he is a recognized rodeo cowboy who holds twelve world championship titles.

He and his wife, Debra, have been married for over forty-five years. They have two sons, two daughters-in-law, and five grandchildren. They are active members of the Cowboy Church of Erath County, where Commissioner Miller also serves as an elder.

Brother Miller was raised to the degree of a Master Mason in June 2016 at Texana Lodge No. 123. He was instrumental in launching the Texas Masonic Car License Plate Program which has been in place since 2012, and he is the sponsor of the Program through the Texas Department of Agriculture. The Program raises around \$30,000 per year for the Grand Lodge of Texas.

The Grand Lodge of Texas and its members are very grateful for the tireless work Brother Miller has carried out for the betterment of Texas Masonry and we hope this award reflects the appreciation his fellow Brothers have for him.



Thank you, Bro. Miller, for your service to Texas and Freemasonry.

2026 Summary of Proposed Resolutions

H

HOLD OVER RESOLUTION NO 24.
Adopted as Amended

1

Background Checks
Justin B. Duty
Withdrawn

2

Grand Lodge Assistance Fund Resolution
Rick Townsend
Withdrawn

3

Form Revisions
Brad S. Billings
Adopted

4

Charitable Reporting
Guy W. Anderson
Withdrawn

5

A/V Committee
Chris Holder
Adopted as Amended

6

Committee on Technology
Craig Enderli
Adopted as Amended

7

Photo Committee
Jeffrey K. Haven
Adopted as Amended

8

Temporary Committee
Jim Rumsey
Adopted

9

Committee on Communication
Jim Rumsey
Adopted

10

Committee on Grand Lodge Assistance Fund
Jim Rumsey
Adopted

11

Restoring Charters
Dennis Ross
Adopted as Amended

12

Cornerstone
Jason Parker
Adopted

2026 Election Results

Grand Master
Jim Rumsey

Deputy Grand Master
Justin B. Duty

Grand Senior Warden
H. N. "Chip" Green, Jr.

13 **Digitization of Lodge Records**
Brad W. Corley
Tabled

14 **Masonic Charges Timeline**
John D. Sisemore
Postponed

15 **Burden on Prosecution**
Gary A. Weiner
Not Adopted

16 **Time of Election**
C. D. Siems
Adopted

17 **Qualifications of Officers**
C. D. Siems
Postponed

18 **Electioneering**
R. Carlton Newberry
Adopted

19 **Deferred Adjudication**
Michael Garrett
Postponed

20 **Masonic Disciplinary Charges**
E. Brian Gray
Withdrawn

21 **Adding Skull to Art. 273**
Charles E. Maddox
Adopted

22 **Leases**
Chase C. Parsons
Withdrawn

23 **Knights of Pythias**
Daniel P. McGettrick
Adopted

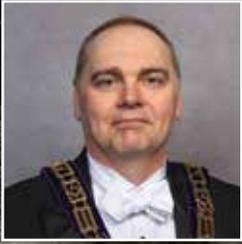
24 **Odd Fellows**
Byron C. Upton
Adopted

Grand Junior Warden
John M. Wilkerson

Committee on Work
Kevin D. Moss

Home and School Board
Bradley E. Kohanke

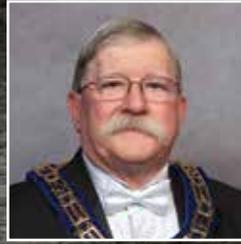
2026 Grand Lodge Officers



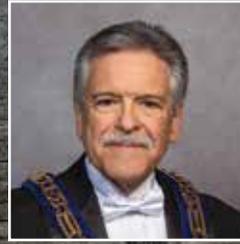
**Most Worshipful
Jim Rumsey
Grand Master**



**Right Worshipful
Justin B. Duty
Deputy Grand Master**



**Right Worshipful
H. N. "Chip" Green, Jr.
Grand Senior Warden**



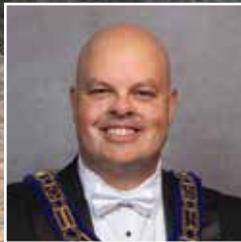
**Right Worshipful
John Wilkerson
Grand Junior Warden**



**Right Worshipful
Richard C. Townsend
Grand Treasurer**



**Right Worshipful
Brad Billings
Grand Secretary**



**Right Worshipful
Chad LaGrone
Grand Chaplain**



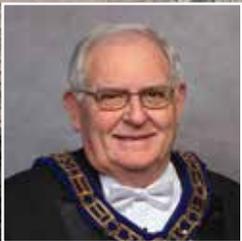
**Right Worshipful
Seth Alston
Grand Orator**



**Right Worshipful
Craig Enderli, Jr.
Grand Marshal**



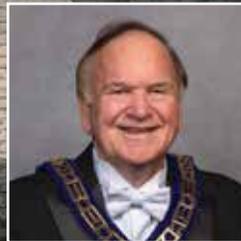
**Right Worshipful
Don Paul Payton
Grand Senior Deacon**



**Worshipful
Bob Royall
Grand Junior Deacon**



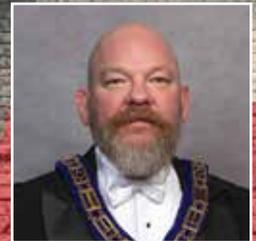
**Worshipful
Scott Stanton
Grand Senior Steward**



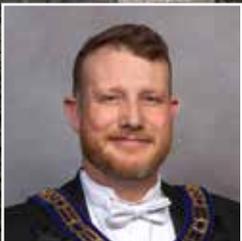
**Worshipful
Mike King
Grand Junior Steward**



**Worshipful
Donnie Lopez
Grand Pursuivant**



**Worshipful
Stoney LaRue
Grand Musician**



**Worshipful
Tyler Rowe
Grand Photographer**



**Worshipful
Bill Farmer
Grand Tiler**



The 190th Grand Annual Communication

By Dean Bryant, Staff Writer

The 190th Grand Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of Texas convened in Waco in January 2026 and drew an impressive attendance of more than three thousand Master Masons. While outside temperatures were cooler than we would have appreciated, the chill did nothing to dampen the warmth of fellowship inside the Grand Lodge building. Familiar faces filled the halls, laughter and conversation echoed throughout the weekend, and the spirit of camaraderie was unmistakable. For many Texas Freemasons, the anticipation in the weeks leading up to Grand Lodge, followed by the joy of reconnecting with old friends and forming new bonds, is one of the most rewarding traditions of the year. After all, it was Grand Lodge weekend.

Such a successful gathering requires extensive preparation behind the scenes. From facility readiness to registration logistics, careful planning and efficient setup were essential to welcome Brothers traveling from every corner of the state. The smooth, as always, check-in process and timely distribution of packets reflected the dedication of those who worked tirelessly to ensure everything was in place. Their efforts helped set the stage for a memorable and well-organized Grand Communication, and their service to the Craft deserves sincere appreciation.



Registration team, ensuring a smooth process.

First Session, Thursday Afternoon January 15, 2026

The Opening Ceremony was carried out under the direction of Right Worshipful Thomas F. Griffin, Past Grand Master of Texas Masons, followed by the opening prayer by Right Worshipful Christopher J. Lyons, Jr., Grand Chaplain.

The introduction of the 2025 Grand Lodge Officers and their ladies was, as always, most impressive. The Sir Knights, from the Grand Commandery of Texas provided a distinguished

accompaniment, creating a truly memorable entrance. The presence of the Knights is always inspiring, and we were especially fortunate to witness a spectacular Honor Guard under the direction of Sir Knight Jason L. Lesikar, Right Eminent Grand Commander of the Knights Templar of Texas.



Honor Guard Entrance, Grand Commandery of Texas, led in by Sir Knight Jason L. Lesikar, Right Eminent Grand Commander of the Knights Templar of Texas.

The support provided by several Texas Sir Knights serving in the Honor Guard was greatly appreciated. All presented an impressive appearance in their distinctive uniforms, with glistening swords and unmistakable chapeaus. The Grand Lodge Officers then processed in proper order, beginning with the District Deputy Grand Masters from the several Masonic Districts, followed by the Grand Lodge Appointed Officers and their ladies, the Past Grand Masters and their ladies, and finally the Elected Grand Officers and their ladies. The Sir Knights then formed an Arch of Steel as the Most Worshipful Raborn L. Reader Jr., Grand Master of Texas Masons, and his Lady Loretta were presented to those assembled.



Entrance of Most Worshipful Raborn L. Reader, Jr., Grand Master of Masons in Texas, and his Lady, Loretta.



Pledge to the Texas Flag led by Right Worshipful H. N. Chip Green, Jr., Grand Junior Warden.

With Most Worshipful Raborn L. Reader, Jr., Grand Master presiding in the Grand East, the reception of distinguished guests commenced with the assistance of Right Worshipful Dennis D. Reader, Grand Marshal, Worshipful Scott L. Mills, Grand Senior Deacon, and Worshipful Stephan L. Blackman, Grand Tiler.

The presentation of the United States and Texas flags marks the opening of every Masonic meeting. This dignified ceremony is both impressive and deeply appreciated by all in attendance, serving as a reminder of the values and principles the fraternity upholds.

During the afternoon, we had the distinct honor of witnessing a series of Roll Calls and Welcomes, together with formal responses and greetings offered by the assembled dignitaries and appendant bodies. We extend our sincere appreciation to all for your presence and steadfast support of our Grand Lodge.

Second Session, Friday Morning January 16, 2026

It was a prompt start for the Opening of the One Hundred Ninetieth Grand Annual Communication of The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas by Most Worshipful Raborn L. Reader, Jr., Grand Master. The first report was presented by Brother Mark D. Dieckmann, Chairman of the Committee on Credentials. This information must be timely to ensure an accurate headcount. As expected, another excellent job by the Committee on Credentials.

Additional reports were presented throughout the session, by the Grand Master, Grand Treasurer, Grand Trustees, and Grand Secretary, each providing detailed updates on their respective areas of responsibility. These presentations were followed by the reports of the various committees, which offered further insight into the work accomplished over the past year. The electronic voting devices were once again utilized with great success, allowing for efficient participation and helping to maintain a smooth, steady pace throughout the proceedings. After a full and

productive morning filled with thoughtful discussion, deliberation, and voting, the Grand Lodge of Texas was called from Labor. This pause in business gave attendees the opportunity to enjoy refreshments, reconnect, and share fellowship with brethren from lodges across the state, strengthening the bonds of fraternity before reassembling for the afternoon session.

Third Session, Friday Afternoon January 16, 2026

With refreshment concluded, the brethren returned to the Auditorium to begin the third session. A fine musical prelude once again helped settle those in attendance and set a calm, reflective tone for the afternoon's proceedings. Grand Lodge was duly called to labor and followed by an outstanding Grand Oration delivered by Right Worshipful Kevin Binder, Grand Orator, whose remarks were both inspiring and impressive.

The afternoon then turned to the presentation of Grand Lodge of Texas Awards, recognizing service and achievement within the Craft.

We were fortunate to have Worshipful Tyler Whittaker, Grand Marshal of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Indiana in attendance, who gave a very impressive presentation – “Operative Masonry in a Speculative World”.



Grand Oration being delivered by Right Worshipful Kevin Binder, Grand Orator.

Fourth Session, Saturday Morning January 17, 2026

The fourth session, convened on Saturday morning, commenced with the Grand Lodge being called to labor, after which the remaining business was brought to conclusion. The election

of Grand Lodge Officers for the ensuing year commenced at 10:00AM and was well supported by the Masons of Texas.

The elections resulted in Right Worshipful Jim Rumsey being elected as Grand Master. Also elected were Right Worshipful Justin B. Duty as Deputy Grand Master, Right Worshipful H. N. Chip Green, Jr., as Grand Senior Warden, and Brother John Wilkerson as Grand Junior Warden. Also elected were Right Worshipful Brad Billings and Right Worshipful Richard Townsend as Grand Secretary and Grand Treasurer respectively.

Finally, congratulations were offered to all newly elected and appointed Grand Lodge Officers, with best wishes for a successful and productive Masonic year ahead.

Fifth Session, Saturday Afternoon January 17, 2026

The fifth and final session on Saturday afternoon commenced with another Musical Prelude from Worshipful Keith A. McCoy. Thank you, Sir, for your wonderful support at this Grand Annual Communication.

The Sir Knights were again at hand to assist with the reception of the Grand Officers being installed. Another impressive display. Great job, Sir Knights.

The 2026 Grand Lodge officer installation was impressive and was conducted by the following Past Grand Masters:

Grand Master of Ceremonies – Right Worshipful Tommy F. Griffin, Past Grand Master, 2008.*

Installing Grand Master – Right Worshipful Donald W. Broughton, Past Grand Master, 2007.

Installing Grand Marshal – Right Worshipful Brian R. Dodson, Past Grand Master, 2006.

Installing Deputy Grand Marshal – Right Worshipful Tommy F. Chapman, Past Grand Master, 2018 and 2024.

Installing Grand Chaplain – Right Worshipful Thomas F. Griffin, Past Grand Master, 2008.

Installing Grand Pursuivant – Right Worshipful Jerry N. Kirby, Past Grand Master, 2017.

Thank you to all the Past Grand Masters for a job well done, and your continued support and commitment to our wonderful Fraternity.

*Right Worshipful M. Boyd Patterson, Jr., Past Grand Master, 2003 was scheduled to act as Master of Ceremonies, but fell ill and was unable not attend.

Thank you to all Grand Lodge Officers, elected and appointed for your dedication and commitment to the Grand Lodge of Texas. Also, a big thank you to all who worked in the background to make this weekend a great success.



The District Deputy Grand Masters for 2026, getting in position for the upcoming installation.



Most Worshipful Jim Rumsey, Grand Master of Masons in Texas. Accompanied by Right Worshipful Brian R. Dodson, PGM, Installing Grand Marshal.

ON THE MASONIC ROAD

By Bill Crow, Associate Editor

Do you recall what happened in 1685 in England, that had a significant impact on what we as Masons know about our American Masonic History?

I was perusing a volume of the Freemasons Monthly Magazine compiled by Charles W. Moore, Corresponding Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, Volume XXX(30), printed in Boston Massachusetts, by Aurthur W. Locke & Company in 1871. It was a fascinating read, having articles written, published and often presented verbally at Massachusetts Grand Communications, circa., September 1,1870 through March 1, 1872.

As we are aware in Masonry, Texas Masonry in particular, we often find and hold on to differing opinions in our lodges. Some good, some not so good, and topics of discussion that cause significant debate among Brother Masons. We tend to think some or many of those differing views are new and are part of a current progressive or conservative plan for change in Masonry.

To my amazement, as someone once said, “ there is nothing new under the sun,” and 1870’s and earlier American and Texas Masonry was prolific with debate, differing opinions, and often harsh criticism of Brother’s views and opinions regarding the same “stuff” we find ourselves discussing and debating today. Within the 534 pages of the volume, you can literally find just about any topic we may discuss currently, that was also a topic in 1870’s Masonry.

Although Massachusetts was only one of several Masonic Grand Jurisdictions at the time, it held a pivotal position in American Masonry and was partially responsible for the way Masonry grew in stature and function throughout America.

There were several penned articles that caught my eye, one in particular that spoke to our Masonic history as it grew from Operative Masonry ... “The Early Days of Masonry in America”, written and presented during the 1870 Massachusetts

Grand Lodge Communication in an address by Brother Poore ... Extract as follows.

“Our British Brethren determined in the year 1685, under the direction of Sir Christopher Wren, the Grand Master of Masons, that henceforth others than operative craftsmen might belong to the Order, and that all free-born citizens, worthy and well qualified, might be initiated. But the symbols and phrases of Operative Masonry were retained, to be used in illustrating Speculative Masonry, thus preserving the time-honored Mystic Rites to add in the elucidation of great truths, and in leading to a proper contemplation of the mysteries of revealed religion.

It was this British Speculative Masonry which was transplanted to the American colonies, not a century and a half ago, and made to some extent a social institution. The Gentlemen of Maryland and Virginia were delighted with this new “mystic tie,” and the progress of the Fraternity hereabouts was encouraged by the coming of the Brethren in the Kings Regiments, sent here to war against the French and their Indian allies. It was in these provincial and military Lodges that Bro. George Washington learned to love the Craft he afterwards adorned.

They joined because the quality and leadership of those men that preceded them in Masonry were the strength and lifeblood to many in the early days of Texas, as it was in the early days of the colonies.



The revolutionary struggle commenced, and Freemasonry cemented with the lifeblood of her noblest sons of the foundations of the infant Republic. Peyton Randolph, Grand Master of Virginia, died while presiding over the Continental Congress, at Philadelphia, and Joseph Warren, Grand Master of Massachusetts, fought and fell on Bunker Hill. Some of the Brethren who were among the first in the field to defend the liberties of their land received a Dispensation (Masonic) under which they worked, and during the revolutionary struggle, at least ten other military Lodges were formed.

Among those who knelt at Masonic altars were those gallant generals, Brothers Harry Lee of Virginia, Sullivan of New Hampshire, Putnam of Massachusetts, Caswell of North Carolina, Ogden of New Jersey, Barton of Rhode Island, Gist of Maryland, and in the East, Washington, with his allies, ... LaFayette of France, and Steuben of Germany (Both Freemasons). Truth bids me add the name of Benedict Arnold, who forgot his Masonic lesson, turned a deaf ear to the teachings of St. John, and followed the example of Judas. Alas! Bad men are to be found in every brotherhood!"

The article (Full article) penned and presented by Bro. Poore shares legacy information about the beginnings of Speculative Masonry, and an understanding of Speculative Masonry roots that presents considerations that are important and should be immovable for all time in Masonry. Additionally, the "personal commentary" by Bro. Poore provides a personal insight into the struggles in early life and culture during the revolutionary war, and the Masons who were voluntarily tasked with leading the

American Revolutionary War and some who tragically lost their lives in service to their country.

There is a parallel to be found in Bro. Poore's article that any Texas Mason should "feel." Texas, first as a Republic and then a state shares a similar history with the birth of our great nation, the United States of America. During the "colonies period", and following the revolutionary war, Masonry grew at a fast pace as our nation grew and prospered, and following the second World War, when Masonry and other fraternal organizations grew exponentially.

Similarly, Texas Masonry was established and grew with great expectancy as a significant percentage of the statesmen, farmers, ranchers and professional men joined the ranks of Masonry. They joined because the quality and leadership of those men that preceded them in Masonry were the strength and lifeblood to many in the early days of Texas, as it was in the early days of the colonies.

During the American colonies period, and following to the beginning of the Korean war, men of Masonry were builders and leaders of communities, of industry, of progress and the defense of our nation. The same was true of our legacy Texas Masons who founded the Republic and Texas statehood. They were men of purpose and of destiny that brought forth the great State of Texas through difficult times.

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



GOOD HUMOR

The Profound Pontifications of Brother John Deacon

How Should Masons Dress and The Great American Land and Cattle Company

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



I don't really know. Maybe it was just that time of the year. The weather had started getting cooler and I could see some leaves starting to change color. The squirrels that entertained us all day running and jumping from limb to limb in that big old Oak tree outside the window of the shop were busy collecting acorns. Watching them made me think it might be a colder than normal winter this year. I had been feeling a lot hungrier lately and I wondered if it was just that natural biological instinct to begin to prepare for the winter. As I was daydreaming watching those squirrels, out of the corner of my eye I saw a big black truck pull into the handicapped parking place right in front of the door to the shop. The old saying that "you better watch out what you wish for because you just might get it" popped into my head as I watched his "high and mightiness" John Deacon slide out of Ol' Blackie and amble towards the door. Me not wanting to lose a good opportunity when it was presented to me, as soon as he opened the door I said in a voice loud enough for the several customers in the waiting area to hear, "I couldn't help noticing, sir, that you have parked in the handicapped spot and your truck doesn't seem to have the proper handicap display on it. So I am assuming that since you don't seem to have a physical handicap that you must have some kind of mental deficiency." The customers all had surprised looks on their faces except one lady who began to giggle. John gave me a disgusted look and turned to the giggler and said, "Ma'am, you do know that laughing when he says something like that only encourages him. He thinks he is funny,

Vaguely I was aware that people were staring at our table in awe of John's capacity to put away food, but I was so used to it by now that it didn't bother me.

but he is not." To my disappointment she nodded her agreement with what he said but kept on giggling. He shook his head and turned to me and said, "Brother Chris, I was just passing through and I heard on the radio about a new place that we haven't tried yet so I reined Ol' Blackie in here to pick you up to take you to eat. I hear they've got a fine Chicken Fried Steak, and you can have anything you want." "Does that mean you are buying me lunch John," I asked hopefully? "Not a chance my Brother," he laughed out loud, "But you CAN still have anything you want. Now load it up, we're wasting daylight." And with that he climbed back in that big black truck and waved me to hurry up. I looked over at Roger who shook his head and told me that he hoped I had enough money, and to bring him back something sweet.

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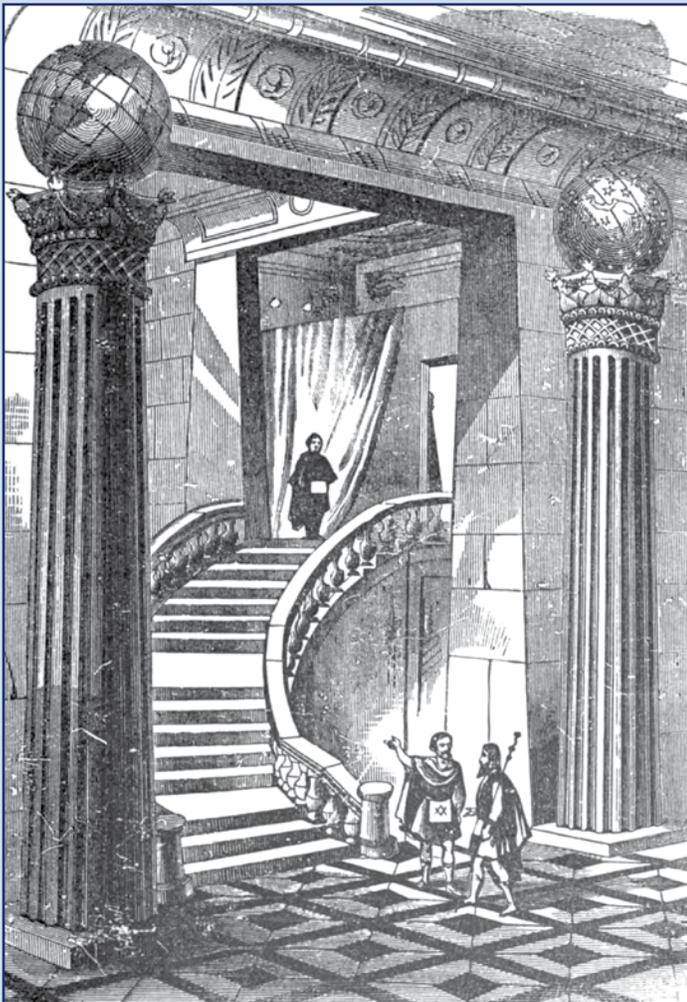
The Pillars of Freemasonry

From The Builder Magazine April 1926

By BRO. N. W. J. HAYDON, Associate Editor, Canada
Sourced By Martin Solis, Staff Writer

There are altogether ten pillars in Masonic usage, outside the temple or lodge room, three within it and five in its symbolic content. The first five are present at all times; the second five are employed for but one special purpose. As might be supposed, most of our interest and discussion gathers the first two, the famous brazen pillars that marked the chief entrance to the Temple of King Solomon, the position and significance of which have caused unlimited argument.

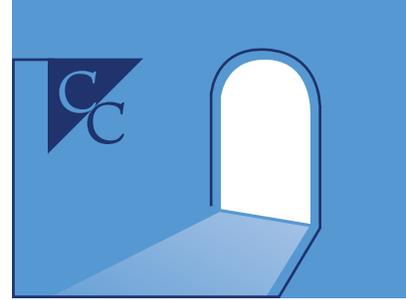
There two descriptions in the V.S.L. of the temple and its components, one in I Kings, chap. 7, and the other in II Chronicles, chap. 4, which, while appearing to disagree with each other, are said to give the inner and outer dimensions of this building and its several parts, so that without either of them it would be impossible to get a correct image of what that famous building might have been when completed.



The names of these two were first given prominence as to their Masonic connection by a man named Goodall, who published one of the earliest so-called exposures in 1762, under the title “Jachin and Boaz.” Thackery, too, poked fun at the “terrors of Jachin and Boaz” in his “Book of Snobs.” There are at least three points in connection with these pillars that have been fruitful causes of dispute and the first is, perhaps, the strangest since the records are so clear and should be equally well known. These points are their position, their use, exact nature of their capitals. As to the first, the arguments rest on whether the record is based on the act of approaching the temple or of leaving it. I have heard brethren argue stoutly that because the description says “the porchway or entrance” to the temple, therefore the position of the pillars must be that seen by one coming towards it, otherwise--say they -the word exit, or its equivalent, would have been used. On that basis the pillar on the right hand, known as Jachin, and on the left hand known as Boaz, would be on the north and south sides of the entrance. Then there are those who oppose this opinion, holding that the description applies when standing between the pillars and looking out upon the court with its great altar and ten basins for washing the sacrifices.

All this argument has been nothing better than vocal exercise, as the sacred record states in both descriptions that the “right side” meant “eastward, over against the south,” thus making it quite clear that Jachin was placed on the south of the porch and Boaz on the north, or as they would be seen by an observer who stood in the door of the temple looking outwards. Again, we read in Ezekiel 47-1, that “the forefront of the house stood towards the East, and the waters came down from under the right side of the house, at the South side of the Altar.” A fourth witness to this is Josephus, who officiated in the third temple built by Herod the Great, and witnessed its destruction by the Romans. From his writings we learn that when Herod decided to rival the work of Solomon, and pulled down the existent building, he kept careful record of the position of the material so that, while rebuilding on the original site to preserve the continuity of the edifice, he also ensured so far as was humanly possible that his work should be an exact copy of its famous original. (1) We read in his record that “the left side was that towards the north wind, and the right side towards the south,” thus leaving no grounds for any further argument on the subject.

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The Chaplain's Corner

By Chad LaGrone, Grand Chaplain

Just a few short weeks ago, we experienced an event that is the epitome of peace and harmony... a peaceful transition of administration. The Grand Officers of the 190th Installation of the Grand Lodge of Texas took their elected and appointed stations and places during a beautiful ceremony. The pomp and honor of the Knights Templar receiving line, the columns of the distinguished District Deputy Grand Masters filling the auditorium, followed by the procession of the dapper, white-tie and tails of the Grand Officers marked a historical day in Texas Masonry.

So, what was so historical about the 190th Installation of Officers of the Grand Lodge of Texas? Was it that we had great weather this year? Was it that we officially have skulls in Masonry again? Was it that we, as Masons, can celebrate each other, regardless of race, religious practice, political affiliation, or background? Perhaps these ideas are a part, but not all of the answer. I feel the answer lies in what has been inculcated in us as Masons since our first installation 190 years ago. That answer...the teachings of those who came before us. Lessons of faith, hope, charity, brotherhood, gentlemanly character, and the Golden Rule are what shaped us as a fraternity then and what continues to define us as a fraternity today.

Where did those men learn those lessons? The answer is fairly simple... from those who came before. They learned from their fathers, grandfathers, mothers, grandmothers, clergy, teachers, and the community that chose to be a part of their lives. Masonry is no different. The institution of Masonry is evident at every stated or called meeting we hold, but it is particularly apparent at our installation ceremony. Before each officer is installed, their duties are announced. And before being seated in their appropriate station and place, each officer agrees to carry out these duties by having their jewel placed around their neck. Each position has its unique set of instructions that must be performed for the harmony of the whole lodge.

The Worshipful Master, by position, has the most important role in the lodge, though some secretaries would disagree. The Treasurer and Wardens also have very important roles in the overall operation of the lodge. These positions, some would argue, are the most important and therefore receive training from Grand Lodge programs such as the L.I.F.E. and Officer Leadership Training, Secretary School, etc. But what about the other officers of the lodge? Do they receive training? Are there instructions written outside of the monitor for the installation program? To my knowledge, there is not. These positions tend to receive instruction from what has been seen during their tenure at the lodge, and perhaps from a brother who wanted to pass knowledge along since someone may or may not have taught them when they were in that position. The Lodge Chaplain is no different, but it should be.

The duties stated in the Monitor for the Lodge Chaplain are as follows:

Reverend Sir (if appropriate, or) Brother _____, it is your duty to perform those solemn services which we should constantly render to our Creator; and which, when offered by one whose example is "to point to heaven and lead the way," may, by refining our souls, strengthening our virtues, and purifying our minds, prepare us for admission into the society of those above, where happiness will be as endless as it is perfect.

How do we do that? If we are not clergy, how do we, as laymen, gain the confidence of our brethren to help be the spiritual guide that assists them in their journey to that undiscovered country and hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant." The magnitude of this responsibility is HUGE! How can we expect ourselves, let alone have someone else rely on us as Chaplains, to get us all to that ultimate finish line? Where can we turn for help and guidance for this great and laudable undertaking at hand? I have asked this question myself many times, and as the Grand Chaplain for just a few short weeks, I have been asked numerous times if there are any classes, groups, or resources available for Lodge Chaplains. These inquiries reveal a strong desire to be better equipped for the role of Chaplain, as there remains a mighty calling for us as men and Masons to have capable Chaplains in our lodges.

Therefore, as men of action, men who appreciate, inculcate, and improve upon the lessons of those who came before us, we have set in motion a solution to rectify this issue. A private Facebook group has been created for Masonic Chaplains and Prelates of Texas to share resources, training opportunities, ideas, prayers, encouragement, and life with one another, for the purpose of making us better Chaplains for our lodges, brothers, and widows. In the upcoming weeks, the listed Chaplains of each Lodge, Chapter, Council, and Commandery (Prelates) will receive an email with the link to join this page. For the sake of our brethren, I hope you, as the Chaplain of your lodge, accept the invitation and become a part of the Masonic annals of history that help shape the chaplainship and future of Texas Masonry.

My Brethren All, I am beyond excited to serve as your Grand Chaplain this year. It is my prayer that we experience peace and harmony in our lodges and in our daily lives. It is my goal to strengthen the Chaplains of our great state by providing a conduit for growth and knowledge, resulting in strengthening our lodges and brethren. And finally, it is my duty to you to be available for encouragement and prayer should you ever be in need. I can be found on Facebook, reached by email, or just a phone call or text away.

The Coin Beneath the Pillars

By Daniel Edwards, Contributing Writer

Between two broken pillars—one crowned in light, the other lost in shadow—there stood a bridge no living architect could claim. Its stones were cut by hands that understood both geometry and mortality. Beneath it, a black river moved without reflection.

The man arrived alone.

In his palm lay a coin older than his name. Upon one face was engraved:

Memento Mori.

Upon the other:

Memento Vivere.

He had only considered the first. Perhaps taught.

From the hour of his initiation into manhood, he was told: *All things fall. All temples crumble. All flesh returns to dust.* So he learned to measure life like a ledger—guarding it, rationing it, fearing its loss more than its absence.

He built walls instead of cathedrals.

At the midpoint of the bridge, he felt the presence of something unseen—neither angel nor specter, but a Witness. It did not speak, yet the air itself pressed with judgment.

He turned the coin.

The second inscription caught a thin line of moonlight, as if it had waited centuries to be read.

Memento Vivere.

And suddenly he understood the secret never spoken aloud in any lodge or book:

Death is not the lesson. Death is the margin note.

Life is the text.

He fell to one knee, not in fear, but in recognition. The pillars were not opposing truths—they were the same truth seen from different sides. The river was not an ending—it was a passage. The bridge was not meant to be crossed safely, but consciously.

He remembered every moment he had declined to speak truth. Every love he had buried for the sake of control. Every dream he had called impractical and left unbuilt.

And he realized:

A man who only remembers death becomes stone before he is buried.

So he rose.

He turned his back to the shadowed pillar—not in rejection, but in balance—and walked toward the lighted one, carrying both inscriptions within him.

Before leaving the bridge, he pressed the coin into a hidden seam between stones, where future hands might one day find it.

Not as a relic.

But as a test.

Because the worthy would not ask which side was correct.

They would understand that the true initiate must carry both.

Remember you will die. Remember you must live.

And between those two truths, build something that refuses to be forgotten.

The Turn of the Trail. Or the Life of Sam Houston after Horseshoe Bend, Part 1

By Nathan Giesenschlag, Staff Writer

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.” From a speech in 1910 given by former President and brother Theodore Roosevelt, Matinecock Lodge No. 806 of Oyster Bay, NY.

As Sam Houston lay closer to death than life on the smoking, putrid, and fetid battlefield at Horseshoe Bend in March of 1814, his life had changed forever. No longer would his robust frame of 6’4” be without scar or wound; no longer would he remain an obscure young man toiling on the edges of frontier American society; and no longer would he be without a great patron and friend—nor would he be without a great host of foes. For the rest of Sam Houston’s life until his death in 1863 from a life lived—and bloodied—in the arena of the nations, Sam Houston etched his name in the hard stone of American and Texas History.

Sam Houston should have died in the days after Horseshoe Bend; the doctors in Andrew Jackson’s army assessed Houston’s grizzly wounds and set him aside to let him expire in peace. As we know, Houston would not die at Horseshoe Bend, nor would he die twenty-two years later from an equally life-threatening ankle wound suffered on the grounds of his greatest victory at San Jacinto. After Horseshoe Bend, it took eighteen months before Houston could regain something like a normal life, yet like his friend Andrew Jackson, he would have wounds that never healed and always needed bandaging and care.

After surprising the doctors by surviving the first few weeks in convalescence, Houston endured several rough transfers from hospital to hospital, before winding up in Washington City (D.C.) to finish his recovery. In 1817 the political education of Sam Houston began in earnest as he came into contact

with the capital city’s ambitious and backstabbing elite, namely John C. Calhoun, Secretary of War.

Being a prominent friend of Andrew Jackson drew jealous slings aimed at Houston; being closely associated with the Cherokee people brought arrows as well, and this would continue for the next twenty plus years. Houston knew it would. Later in life, he remarked, “I am aware that in presenting myself as the advocate of the Indians and their rights, I shall stand very much alone.” After Houston’s incomplete recovery from his wounds, Andrew Jackson appointed him as a subagent to the Cherokee nation in east Tennessee. It was a natural fit. Both Jackson and the Cherokee could trust Houston. Jackson was well known for his hard line on the Indian tribes in today’s southeastern United States—it was Jackson that compelled the Creeks to relinquish claims to large swaths of Georgia and Alabama lands. The Treaty of Ft. Jackson in 1814 opened the door to white settlement and cotton production in the Deep South. After the Panic of 1819, many of these failed farmers moved to Mexican Texas to start over and try to grow crops—particularly cotton.

Houston lived with the Tennessee Cherokees prior to the war when he ran away from home. While sojourning with the Cherokee, he came under the fatherly care of Oolooteka (John Jolly to the whites in Tennessee) and became like a son to Oolooteka. It was here that Houston received his first Cherokee name: The Raven. Also, it was here that an eccentricity of Sam Houston emerged and caused him trouble. Houston liked to dress flamboyantly.

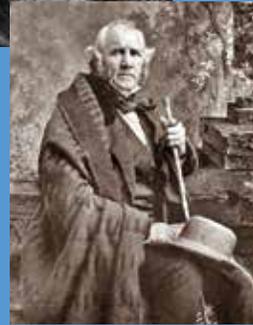
Throughout Sam Houston’s adult life, one could hardly guess what attire he would appear in. Some days, he would be dressed in home spun, while other times, he would wear the broadcloth, frock coat, and cravat of a proper gentleman. While a frock coat and cravat hardly shocked, Houston’s costume at Mirabeau B. Lamar’s inauguration as president of Texas left no heads unturned. In December 1838, outgoing Texas president Sam Houston gave a farewell address dressed as George Washington. Crowned with a powdered wig and wearing knee britches, three hours of tart and humorous oration concluded with a public offer to buy drinks for those who wanted one. That was dramatic and effective. So many citizens followed Houston into their cups, this left a galled President Lamar sputtering with rage and unwilling to read his inaugural address. Upstaging Mirabeau B. Lamar’s

“The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood...”

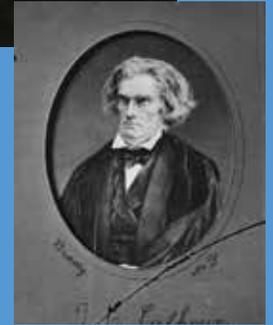
— Theodore Roosevelt



Sam Houston



John Calhoun



It was here that Houston received his first Cherokee name: The Raven. Also, it was here that an eccentricity of Sam Houston emerged and caused him trouble. Houston liked to dress flamboyantly.

inauguration was a neat trick, but turning up in the U.S. Senate, Texas Congress, or John Calhoun’s War Department dressed like a Cherokee or wearing a Cherokee blanket would send a most patrician and ambitious man like Calhoun into a conniption.

To examine the most common picture of John Calhoun would make the most uncharitable among us say that he had to be a dyspeptic, sour, and brooding man. He was. But to be fair to Mr. Calhoun, that daguerreotype was taken late in life when the ravages of Tuberculosis marred his appearance and wrecked his vigor. This was when Calhoun was known as the “Cast Iron Man” for his fierce support of southern sectionalism. In 1818 when Calhoun reamed out Lt. Sam Houston for showing up to the War Department dressed as a Cherokee, Calhoun was in the prime of life. This was the ruthless Calhoun that accused Houston of financial chicanery—Houston disproved the accusation. Here was the young and nationally ambitious War Secretary who very much looked the beau ideal of attractive manhood. Calhoun’s star in 1818 seemed destined for the brightest constellation in American politics, that of the presidency—until he crossed Andrew Jackson.

Sam Houston learned many important lessons in the decade after Horseshoe Bend. He learned that having prominent patrons brought rewards and perils. He learned that men like John C. Calhoun could be ambitious and treacherous; Houston never trusted Calhoun again and in truth, neither man liked the other.

These were crowded years for Sam Houston, to borrow Theodore Roosevelt’s turn of a phrase. Houston also added to his obligations by being raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason in Tennessee’s Cumberland Lodge in July of 1817. Thus began his lifelong affiliation with the Masonic Order in Tennessee and Texas.





ZAIDYN'S FIGHT



"No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another."

Charles Dickens

To learn more or to help children like Zaidyn, visit www.mcfstx.org where you can:

- **Give a Gift:**
By making a donation.
- **Plan for the Future:**
Create your free will at FreeWill.com/mcfstx - our gift to you.
- **Honor a Loved One:**
Consider a memorial or honorarium gift to leave a lasting tribute.
- **Sponsor Our Concert:**
Become a sponsor for this year's fundraising concert, "Banding Together for Kids."
- **Share Our Story:** Watch and share our new video to spread the word about the work we do.

Together, we are more than an organization - we are a family of compassion, making sure no child or widow is left without hope.

When Cathy heard the words "your son has brain cancer," everything stopped. Life as she knew it, changed in an instant.

For Zaidyn and his mom, the diagnosis brought fear, uncertainty, and a fight no family is ever prepared for. Along with the emotional toll came crushing financial pressure - medical bills, hospital visits, medications, and treatments piling up faster than they could keep up.

They were doing everything right - and still falling behind.

A FAMILY AT THE BREAKING POINT

In early January, Masonic Children & Family Services received an application from a family in crisis. Zaidyn was battling brain cancer, and his mom was doing everything in her power to keep their lives from unraveling.

Despite her strength, the reality was unavoidable: rent was at risk. Medical expenses had drained their resources. Without help, they faced losing the stability every child needs - especially one fighting for his life.

The signs first appeared quietly - headaches, nausea, overwhelming fatigue after school. What followed moved fast.

A doctor's visit. A CAT scan. A rushed trip to the emergency room. Then the diagnosis: a brain tumor.

Since that day, Zaidyn has endured multiple surgeries, chemotherapy, and radiation. Through it all, he has shown remarkable courage and resilience never once complaining - just fighting.

WHY THIS HELP MATTERS

For families like Zaidyn's, help isn't just financial - it's life-changing.

When parents are forced to choose between medical care and housing, children suffer. When stability disappears, healing becomes harder. MCFS exists to make sure families don't have to face those choices alone.

Because of donors like you, Zaidyn has a home to return to as he continues his battle, and a mother who can focus on what matters most: her child.

For more information, contact: Sandy@mcfstx.org | 817-503-1510

Start a New Adventure in 2026

Move to Texas Masonic Retirement Community!

With a big grin and booming voice, Don Cox welcomes friends and visitors to a late breakfast in the dining hall.

“Hey, how’s it going?” and “Where’ve you been all day?” he asks from his table near the entrance.

They respond with laughter, poke fun at him, and ask about his plans for the day.

A few years ago, Don lived a starkly different life.

“My wife passed away. I found myself in a big house in Fort Worth, with a big yard, and a lot of ghosts from 36 years of living there. I thought I could stay, but everywhere I looked made me sad.

I’ve started a new chapter in my life by moving to Texas Masonic Retirement Community. I’m totally happy here. I’ve made friends, have a beautiful apartment in The Keystone, and sit down to three meals a day. This place is one of the best kept secrets in Masonry.”

Don transformed his apartment into a garden home. Rose bushes,



Don Cox at home in his new apartment at Texas Masonic Retirement Community.

succulents, and pots of flowers fill his balcony. From his fourth-floor location, he looks down on a flowing water feature and gardens. Open sky, clouds, and gorgeous sunsets float above him.

If your life has changed or downsizing makes sense, Texas Masonic Retirement Community offers luxury high-rise apartments (one and two-bedroom), cozy efficiency apartments, and cottage duplexes.

You’ll enjoy a familiar lifestyle with residents limited to eligible Texas Masons and their qualified wives, widows, mothers, and daughters.

Move In Today – Enjoy!

- ZERO Move In Costs
- 1 Bdrm, 2 Bdrm, or Efficiency
- Fun Activities & Masonic Events
- Chef-Inspired Dining
- Weekly Housekeeping
- Onsite Security

Watch a video tour, check out apartment availability, and learn about payment options at YourTMRC.org.

Schedule an onsite tour today, as available units move quickly. Contact us at 817-275-2893 or send an email to Info@YourTMRC.org.

TEXAS FREEMASON

The Grand Lodge of Texas
715 Columbus Ave
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APRIL 1838



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Ties



Silver Coin

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