

Official Publication of The Grand Lodge of Texas

TEXAS FREEMASON

FALL 2026

Edward Burleson: A Forgotten Life | 12

More than a lifetime's worth of adventure, war, service and politics

Grand Master's Activities Thus Far | 6

Family Day | 23

CONTENTS

SUMMER 2026

6



The Grand Master's activities include Dallas, Ft. Worth, San Angelo and Houston.

GRAND LODGE

- 3 A Word from the Grand Master
- 4 A Word from the Grand Treasurer
- 5 A Word from the Grand Secretary

FEATURE

- 6 Grand Master's Activities Thus Far

IN EVERY ISSUE

- 9 The Profound Pontifications of Brother John Deacon
- 10 A Look Back
- 11 The Chaplain's Corner

EDUCATION & COMMITMENT

- 12 Edward Burleson: A Forgotten Life, Pt. 1
- 16 Why Am I a Mason?
- 18 The Rising Dawn of a Nation and a Fraternity
- 22 Masonic Children & Family Services
- 23 Family Day

ON THE COVER

Edward Burleson and his followers.

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.

Publisher

The Trustees of The Grand Lodge of Texas

Editor

Larry FitzPatrick

Associate Editor

Bill Crow

Staff Writers

David Banstre, Dean Bryant, Nathan Giesenschlag, Jim Hoffpauir, Martin Solis, Jerome Weilmuenster, James C. "Chris" Williams IV, John Wheeler

Contributing Writers

Roger Jacobsen, John Wheeler

Image Credits

Grand Master's Events – R/W\ Joe Perrin and W\ Tyler Rowe, Why Am I A Mason – Roger Jacobsen

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,

Installation season is behind us, new lodge officers are in full swing, and our lodges continue to spread brotherly love and affection. To the newly installed Worshipful Masters and Wardens: Your lodge brothers have entrusted to you the leadership of your lodge. I challenge you to reflect upon the respective charges presented to you during the installation ceremony; lead by example, put the honor, reputation, and usefulness, of your lodge above all trivial and personal matters. Work as an executive team to establish and communicate goals to your lodge, identify the required objectives to achieve them, and work as a lodge to do so. The days of going through the motions are over. Do something worthwhile!

Why do you go to lodge? Is it to eat a tepid casserole on a paper plate? Is it to hear the minutes of your meetings read aloud? Is it to discuss why the bills are high this month? Is it to teach a man to memorize words? Is it to figure out how to raise more money to give away?

Dictators and fascist governments throughout civilized history did not outlaw the practice of Freemasonry because we were the best at fund-raisers or arguing over a post office box. Our beloved institution was respected, revered, and in some cases, feared because our teachings are to oppose tyranny and despotism and to practice charity. Masonic charity is not giving scholarships or making donations to a worthy cause. Consult the glossary of your Monitor; charity is universal love or

goodwill, forgiveness. The ancient Freemasons looked beyond religion and politics and practiced charity. They did the right thing, not the popular things. Is that still who we are?

Reflect upon the catechism of the Entered Apprentice degree, specifically the eleven word answer to the second question and be honest with yourself: When is the last time you learned something while attending a lodge meeting? I do not mean learning about the account balances or the monthly bills, but when was the last time you learned something meaningful and Masonic? When was the last time you improved yourself?

I have been blessed by you, the Masons of our great state, to have the opportunity to travel across Texas and experience Freemasonry. Alas, many of our lodges miss opportunities to engage and enlighten our brothers. Does your lodge go through the motions of the business of the lodge or does your lodge offer its members an opportunity to learn and improve themselves?

- Have you ever wondered why so many Master Masons no longer attend? Has your lodge honestly looked at what the lodge is (not what it was)? Is the lodge a place where men truly meet upon the level? Is it a place where peace and harmony are practiced and maintained? Is it a place where a man can learn and improve himself?
- Instead of reading the minutes, has the lodge transitioned to a model to streamline the business to focus on the tenets of Freemasonry?

- Instead of reading a random (often short) section of the law book, consider facilitating a discussion on a difficult or misunderstood section, and allow for the lodge members to openly discuss instead of hearing it dictated to them.
- Are the meetings enjoyable, and does laughter echo in the lodge room?
- Does the lodge encourage Masonic educational presentations, and if so, does it foster and facilitate open discussions related to the presentations?

Many of our lodges meet at the same time they always have, with no knowledge of why they meet on that day of the month and have not considered schedule conflicts with their members in decades. Our grandfathers' schedules are not ours. Many simply go through the recommended business agenda and close. Those are often the lodges that struggle with member participation. Be proud to be a Freemason. Mow the lawn, put on a fresh coat of paint, make it a building where men want to go. Offer them Freemasonry when they arrive. Be brothers. Focus on building your lodge and your members, not re-building. Practice Masonic Charity.

Sincerely & Fraternally,

Jim Rumsey
Grand Master

A WORD FROM THE Grand Treasurer



My Brethren,

Thank you again for allowing me to be your Grand Treasurer. 2026 has been an eventful year. Because of Susan Herring's retirement, Grand Lodge has been forced to change local accounting firms, from Hornbaker to Rex Johnson. For the last three years Rex has performed many of the accounting duties for Grand Lodge. Now he is solely responsible for the overall accounting function. This summer was when the transition occurred between the two firms and I have the utmost confidence in Rex. In addition, he is a Mason.

I am pleased to announce that all the various investment accounts have done very well this year. There are four organizations and eight funds involved. Although there are various boards and committees responsible for them, they are all invested in the same way. We have substantially reduced investment expenses and by diversifying, reduced risk. The total portfolio return for the first half of the year exceeded 7%. In my opinion the Endowed Membership Fund, your Grand Lodge, Square and Compasses Holding, and the Masonic Library and Museum are in good financial shape.

Lodges should have received their annual distribution on endowed Memberships. You should be pleased with the annual payment, which was \$5.53 per mature unit

I am pleased to announce that all the various investment accounts have done very well this year.



or 10% higher than last year. It is too soon to project next summer's payment but so far, the distribution should be even greater.

Please remember the due date for your Annual Returns and payment to Grand Lodge is August 15th and Form 71 is due September 15th. Most lodges have a due date for filling their tax return with the IRS

by November 15th and remember to send a copy to Grand Lodge.

Again, thank you for allowing me to serve as your Grand Treasurer.

Sincerely and Fraternally,
Rick Townsend
Grand Treasurer

A WORD FROM THE Grand Secretary



New Grand Lodge of Texas License Plates: Coming Soon

As many of you know, the Grand Lodge of Texas currently benefits from a specialty license plate through the State of Texas, generating approximately \$30,000 in annual revenue.

The idea of a new Grand Lodge license plate has been on the horizon since my time serving as your Deputy Grand Master in 2021. Through the continued efforts of Brother Chris Moyseos, along with the assistance of Brother Sid Miller, this long-standing initiative now appears likely to become a reality.

Under the direction of the Grand Lodge Trustees, a new agreement was signed with Commissioner of Agriculture Sid Miller that will allow the Grand Lodge to move to the **My Plates Private Vendor Program** through a “crossover.”

This deal will allow The Grand Lodge of Texas to maintain the value of its existing plate while creating a new opportunity for increased revenue, greater design flexibility and personalization while expanding our marketing support.

Two important things to note:

1. **OLD PLATES** - An important part of the crossover process is that the current Grand Lodge of Texas plate remains available while the new crossover plate is being developed and approved.

Brothers can continue purchasing the existing plate during this transition period. Once the new crossover plate becomes available, it will become the only option for new customers. The current state-program plate will then be limited to grandfathered customers— who already own the plate and remain eligible to renew it. Bottom line – if you like the old plates, buy them now and you can continue to use them in the future.

2. **NEW PLATES** – we are working diligently to have a mockup to show at the Annual Communication in January along with a sign-up sheet to be contacted once the new plates are available. My Plates offers the following:

- a. Full-color background
- b. A larger design canvas
- c. Up to seven-character personalization
- d. Greater flexibility in the overall design
- e. One-, three- and five-year terms

Under the current state program, specialty plates generally sell for \$30 or \$40, with the sponsoring organization receiving a portion of the revenue established by statute. For a \$30 plate, the organization receives \$22 while the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles receives \$8. As a crossover organization, we will receive the state's share of revenue, along with royalties provided under the My Plates contract.

For The Grand Lodge of Texas, which currently receives approximately \$30,000 annually, the potential increase could be substantial. Based on the revenue examples provided by My Plates, a crossover plate of that size could potentially generate \$120,000–\$180,000.

For The Grand Lodge of Texas, the opportunity is therefore twofold: protect the revenue and relationships generated by the current plate while creating a new, potentially much larger revenue stream through a redesigned crossover plate.

Fraternally,

Brad S. Billings
Grand Secretary

Grand Master's Activities Thus Far

By Dean Bryant, Staff Writer

Grand Masters Dallas Conference Saturday, March 7, 2026



The Dallas Conference was well attended and supported by brethren from across the State. A great turnout to witness Most Worshipful Jim Rumsey, Grand Master of Texas Masons giving another informative presentation to the brothers in attendance.

The conference was held at the Dallas Scottish Rite Temple, the home the Valley of Dallas, Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite. This Rite, one of the largest and widely recognized appendant bodies of Freemasonry.



As with all Masonic events, the proceedings begin with prayer. We are truly honored to have Right Worshipful Chad LaGrone, Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Texas, with us to offer the opening prater and officially begin the conference.

The Dallas Scottish Rite, Knights of St. Andrew were on hand to present the Flags. It was a very impressive presentation and was well received by everyone in attendance.



Right Worshipful Craig Enderli Jr., Grand Marshal of the Grand Lodge of Texas standing in position, watching over the proceedings, ensuring every aspect of the Conference unfolds according to plan. Great job Right Worshipful Sir!



Grand Masters Fort Worth Conference Saturday, March 7, 2026

The second Grand Masters Conference of the day, and another great turnout by the Masons of Texas in support of our Grand Master. It is always inspiring to see such strong fellowship, dedication, and support across our amazing fraternity.





His thoughtful presentation was both informative and inspiring, leaving a lasting impression on all the brethren present.

An evening of fellowship, inspiration, and brotherhood as Most Worshipful Jim Rumsey, Grand Master of Texas, shared his vision, and thoughts with the brethren in attendance. His thoughtful presentation was both informative and inspiring, leaving a lasting impression on all the brethren present.



Right Worshipful Craig Enderli Jr., Grand Marshal, once again in position, keeping a watchful eye over the proceedings and ensuring everything runs as smoothly as planned.



Brothers coming together, sharing fellowship, and enjoying time together. A wonderful time had by all.

Grand Masters San Angelo Conference Saturday, March 14, 2026

The conference in San Angelo was held at the Suez Shrine Temple, home of the Suez Shriners. Shriners, known for charitable work and supporting the healthcare of children by means of a network of hospitals that provide specialized medical care.



Most Worshipful Jim Rumsey, Grand Master of Texas, shares his inspirational presentation with the brethren assembled. A presentation that has inspired many across the State and added food for thought for those who have attended.



Grand Masters Houston Conference Saturday, March 28, 2026



It was great to see the Commandery presenting the flags at the start of the Grand Masters Conference in Houston. Their professionalism immediately set the tone for the event. The sharp uniforms and impressive chapeaus made for another striking display.



Right Worshipful Craig Enderli Jr., Grand Marshal once again demonstrates his dedication to the Craft by faithfully fulfilling the duties entrusted to him. With his dedication and commitment, he helps ensure that the proceedings are conducted with order, and excellence.



It was a full house at Arabia Shrine in Houston as Most Worshipful Jim Rumsey, Grand Master of Texas shares his message with all in attendance. Another inspirational presentation given, with plenty of information for the brethren to absorb, and discuss with others.

All pictures taken from the Grand Lodge Website (smugmug).
Photographer, Joe Perrin (817) 808-2715 and Tyler Rowe.





GOOD HUMOR

The Profound Pontifications of Brother John Deacon

Brotherly Love, Relief, and....Truth....Always Truth

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



I have learned in my old age (and sometimes the hard way) that some things are just meant to be. Or as my Dad would say..."It is what it is" or if he was especially philosophic "if it is inevitable, relax and go with it." At any rate I have decided that John being a big part of my life IS inevitable so I might as well relax and go with it. It's a good thing that I like him because if I didn't, it would be really bad cause he seems to show up everywhere I go.

Pam and I had been invited to one of her co-worker's wedding. It was being held on an old ranch about an hour's drive north through the beautiful Texas Hill Country. It wasn't a big wedding, but it wasn't small either with about a hundred people there. The weather could not have been better for the outdoor wedding and everything was, as Pam whispered to me while wiping away tears, "absolutely beautiful." I gazed around at the guests and saw that almost all the ladies were teary-eyed too. That's when I saw him. I was shocked that I hadn't seen John before as big as he is. He must have come in just as everything got started. As I watched him, the big softly quickly swiped a tear away while glancing around to make sure no one saw. But I saw him and then he saw me and I winked at him. His face turned a little red as his surprised expression turned to a scowl. Soon we were filing out and headed over to the big barn for the reception.

As it turned out, everyone had assigned tables and seats. John and Mrs. Deacon were friends of the groom, and Pam and I were friends of the bride, so John was at one end of the barn, and I was at the other. Pam and I went over and said hi to John and Mrs. Deacon and chatted while we were waiting for the wedding party to finish with pictures and arrive at the barn. Pretty soon they all showed up, and the formal introductions were made to everyone. There was a D.J. setting up to play music and make announcements; apparently, there was going to be dancing.

I could see John fidgeting while they were bringing out the food for the buffet. I was betting that they didn't know how much John can eat. Finally they had it all out there and announced that we were going to go to the buffet by tables, and as far away as I was I could see the horror on John's face when his table was not first to go. I could also see Mrs. Deacon giving him the "eye" and trying to get him to relax. I already knew that was not going to work as did she, but she was doing her best. The D.J. who had the microphone was given the task of choosing which table went next, and after the third table was allowed to go and John's wasn't it, I saw John motion the D.J. over.

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

The Precious Jewels

From *The Builder Magazine* October 1926

Sourced By Bros. A. L. Kress and R. J. Meekren

"The Precious Jewels" is an in-depth look at the etymology of the use of the word "jewel" in modern Freemasonry. I find it to be a fascinating insight as to how over time something as simple as a possible tongue-in-cheek reference to working tools as "play things" can evolve into an ornate representation of said "play things." As the article continues it goes into the many "lost in translation" changes made to the work during the transition from England to Modern American Lodges and convincing evidence of original interpretations of many features and furnishings of a typical lodge.

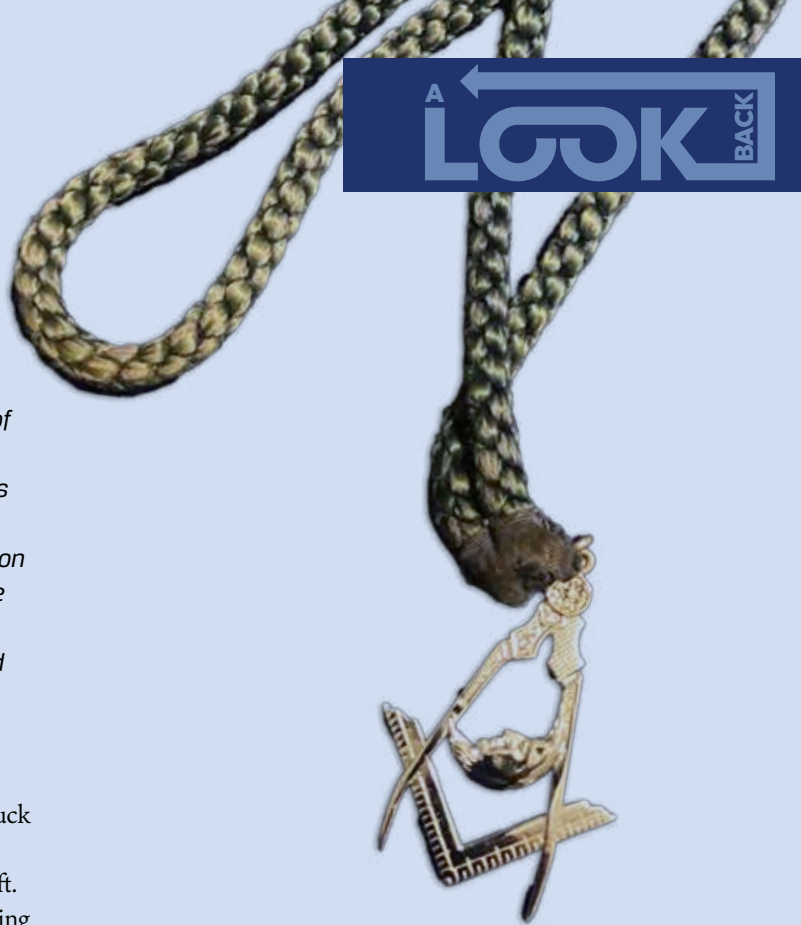
The Masonic usage of the word jewel has doubtless struck many a brother as not a little peculiar upon his first introduction to the traditional phraseology of the Craft. What is possibly its most familiar application, that of designating the badges of office used in the lodge, is, however, sufficiently in accord with the modern meaning of the word to make it appear plausible that it was through this that it came to be adopted into our terminology. These badges, worn on the breast and suspended by a ribbon or an ornamental chain, are frequently superb examples of the jewelers' art. It might thus seem not unnatural to suppose that plainer specimens were merely substitutes or imitations of such jewels, and that the other applications of the word in the rituals are derived from this by association, and as affording a secondary verbal symbolism indicating the value set by Masons upon certain emblems. There is no need to say any more of this, as like so many apparently obvious explanations, further examination shows it to be wide of the mark, for this use is not the primary one. But though secondary it is doubtless true that its accordance with the ordinary every-day meaning has had a great deal to do with the persistence of the word in Masonic forms. Such evidence as we have seems to indicate that it came into use by Freemasons a very long time ago and that it is possibly as old as anything in the system. At any rate it is pretty certain that it originally had nothing to do with ornamental badges of office.

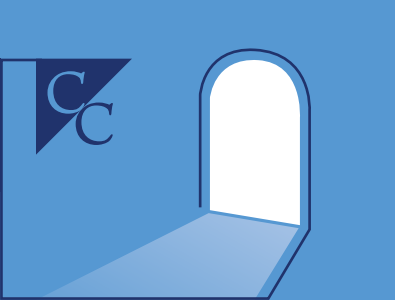
The Meaning of the Word

A jewel to us signifies something precious; this in ordinary every-day usage seems to be the root idea, whether the value be intrinsic in the material or due to its beauty and workmanship. It is therefore with something like surprise that we learn that the word is really derived from the same root as the French word *jeu*, and that it meant originally a plaything, a toy or a trinket. So fully indeed did the word connote the idea of "play" in medieval times that in Flanders the dramatic performances presented by the

Craft Gilds on the different festivals were actually called jewels. In Masonic usage, however, the idea of value seems to have always been the prominent one as far back as we can go. Whether the other was also present may be an interesting speculation. In most trades there are traditional jokes which through familiarity have become more habits of speech than occasions for laughter except when first communicated to the novice. That our old operative predecessors had a strong sense of humor is certain, and also that, like unsophisticated folk generally, they did not see anything inappropriate in mingling it with the sublime, or setting the comic side by side with the serious and sacred. Men who have the true craftsman's appreciation of, and interest in their work, are quick also to make fun of it on occasion, and it would be natural enough for them to speak of their most necessary implements and tools as "playthings." Such tricks of speech were to be heard among the elder workmen in different occupations within the memory of those still living, and may even yet survive if trades unionism, and the idea that work is essentially an evil to be reduced to an absolute minimum, have not quite killed them. The case of one old rough mason, still alive some twenty years ago, might be quoted. It was his invariable habit to speak of any particularly awkward stone, either from its shape or size, as a "trinket," which seems a curiously apt parallel. No stress, however, is to be laid on this suggestion, only it may be as well to bear in mind that at the time the word was first employed Masonically it had other meanings in common use besides those to which it is now limited, and that such meanings may have been in the minds of the men who first spoke of the "jewels" of their Craft.

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





The Chaplain's Corner

By Chad LaGrone, Grand Chaplain

In each case, we see the noble character and virtue of each man in the way they chose to respond to a difficult, ugly, or sucky situation.



E.T.S.

How many of you are familiar with the acronym, E.T.S.? This is not a Masonic acronym or a sports channel like ESPN. This phrase has its roots in military context, particularly with the marines that were in country during the 2003 Operation Iraqi Freedom; but has found its way to the civilian world in gyms, corporate board rooms, police departments, and so on. My personal favorite setting to use this phrase is in my home, when doing life with three teenagers. This phrase is “Embrace...the...suck.”

Embrace the Suck

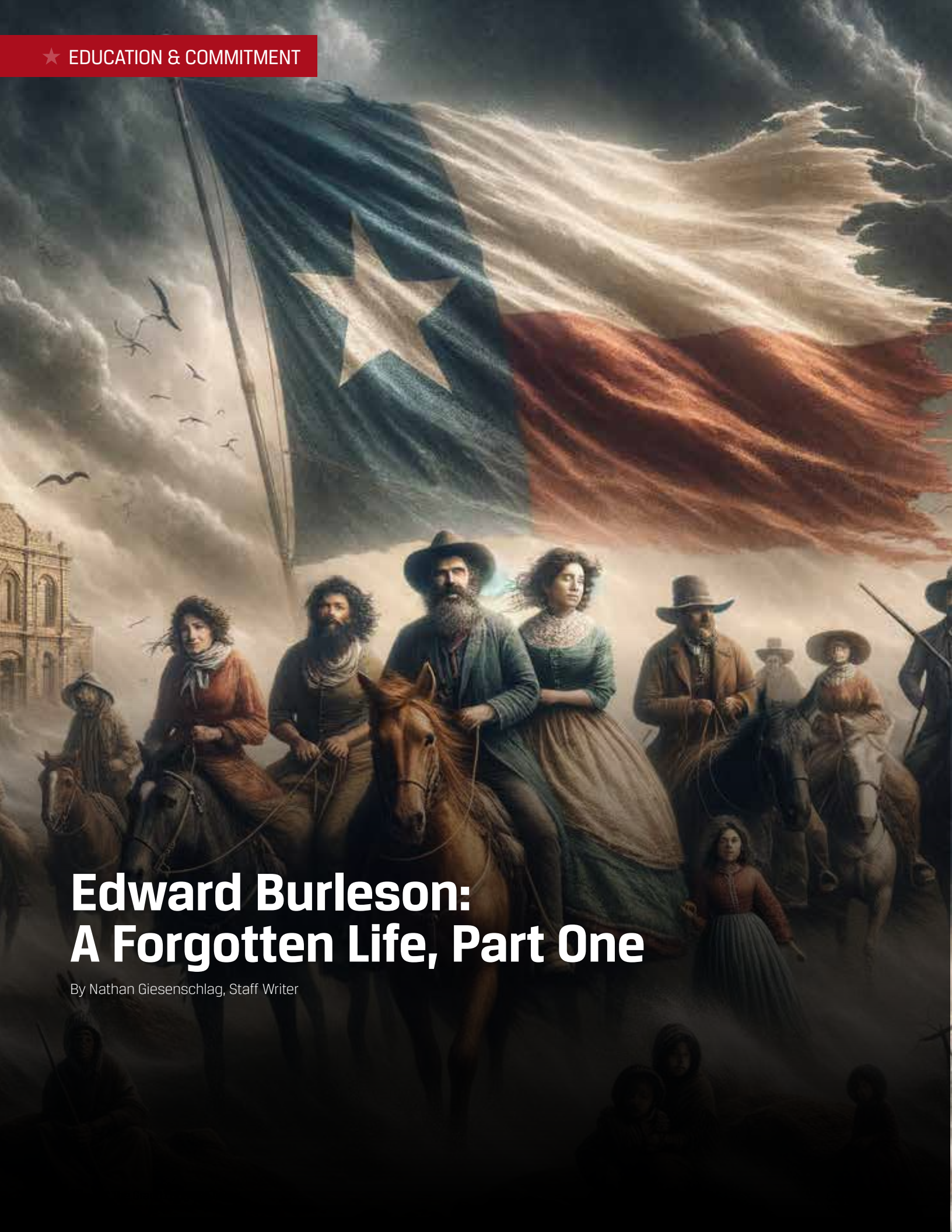
It means to accept and endure a difficult or unpleasant situation with a positive or determined attitude. My children will tell you that this is not one of their favorite “dadisms” that I share with them. As a father, I will listen to their gripes about school, their friends, their siblings, and I will empathize for them for each instance. However, if they choose to keep on with the same gripes, or if I frankly get tired of their rants, I will look them in the eye and say, “ETS.” From my son, he will stop, and say, “yes sir.” My youngest daughter will also stop, and say, “yes sir.” My oldest daughter, who of course is the middle child, will respond with an eye-roll bigger than Texas and ask if I could stop saying that, and eventually, she will acquiesce, and say, “yes sir.” I immediately follow up each ETS moment with this phrase: the sooner you accept your surroundings and circumstances, the better off you will be to be, and the faster you will be able to move forward.

As we ponder upon this phrase, we can recall our own life experiences that were difficult, ugly, or downright sucky. The question is, how did you choose to respond? Did you dwell on it for days, months, years? Did it become a part of who you are today? Did you let the difficult, ugly, or sucky define you? Or did you eventually accept it? Were you able to learn and grow from the experience? Did you not let it define you, but instead, you defined it as it relates to how you deal with the difficult, ugly, or sucky situations in your life now. Did you seek divine direction when dealing with these types of issues? Did you go to your book of faith, to find guidance with life's ugliness? If you did, you would find that the great stories of Moses, Noah, Jacob, Abraham, Solomon all exemplify hardships that were overcome by accepting the circumstances and surroundings and moving forward to do great things in the name of God.

During the Master's degree, we can see Hiram embracing the suck. We can see the craftsman embracing the suck. We can see King Solomon embracing the suck. In each case, we see the noble character and virtue of each man in the way they chose to respond to a difficult, ugly, or sucky situation. How will you choose to respond?

What are some other words that start with S we can use in this phrase, embrace the ...?

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

A dramatic painting depicting a group of people, likely pioneers or settlers, on horseback. In the center, a man with a long beard and a wide-brimmed hat sits on a brown horse. To his right, a woman in a green dress and high collar sits on a horse. Other figures, including men and women in period clothing, are visible in the background, some on horseback and some on foot. A large Texas flag with a single star flies prominently in the upper half of the image. The sky is dark and stormy, with lightning bolts visible. In the lower foreground, several figures are shown in silhouette, looking up towards the group on horseback. The overall mood is one of historical significance and struggle.

Edward Burleson: A Forgotten Life, Part One

By Nathan Giesenschlag, Staff Writer

When studying humanity's past, historians employ multiple ways to look at persons, peoples, or epochs of time. Sometimes, historians examine the society as a whole while focusing on the culture during a major event such as a civil war. Other historians might examine the great man who dominated an age. We can see this in the way we name an epoch of time. A name like Alexander or Caesar passes the lips and you automatically know the who and when. Sometimes it is an era like Napoleon's era or in an American fashion, the Age of Jackson. In Texas, Sam Houston acted as the sun in Texas' political and social sky; all other actors reacted to Houston's designs.

For all the great men in history that still have name recognition generations after their passing, other important historical figures deserve a trumpet note despite eclipse by the passage of time. In Texas, Edward Burleson led an impressive and important life that has largely passed out of our collective memory to all but the most devoted students of Texas History. Edward Burleson lived fifty-three years and crammed more adventure, war, service, and politics than most could do over two lifetimes. Loved by his admirers, and respected by his enemies, Edward Burleson epitomized the Anglo settler's doughty spirit that came to Texas beginning in the 1820s and continuing through subsequent decades.

Born in Buncombe County, North Carolina—this is in the mountainous western part of the state dominated today by Asheville—the Burleson clan moved around like so many of the restless wayfarers of early America. In Ed Burleson's life—his friends generally called him Ed and not Edward—he lived in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama prior to the War of 1812. John H. Jenkins's book, *Edward Burleson: Texas Frontier Leader*, Jenkins commented that during their traveling years, it is likely that the Burlesons knew David Crockett through hunting and politics.

These articles on Texas Masons tend to display several themes. One of the them is the fact that so many future Texians knew each other in the "old" United States before immigrating to Texas. Another theme is the impact that Andrew Jackson had—for good or ill—on the life of these men. Ed Burleson's reputation began to be made when he was in his teens while fighting Indians. Burleson noted the first time he killed a man in defense of his people against Indian attacks when he was fourteen. When the War of 1812 broke out, many Burleson men flocked to the colors that Andrew Jackson unfurled, and when Jackson's army broke Red Stick Creek resistance at Horseshoe Bend, the Burleson men served honorably. Horseshoe Bend gave Edward Burleson the nickname "Old Indian Fighter"—at age 15. According to family lore, Gen. Jackson laid his hands

For all the great men in history that still have name recognition generations after their passing, other important historical figures deserve a trumpet note despite eclipse by the passage of time.



Edward Burleson's time in Texas can be summarized by campaigns against the enemies of Texas, his active political life, and land acquisition.



upon young Ed and said, “oh, that you may be worthy of your father.” When Ed Burleson led the first infantry regiment at San Jacinto, one of his captains was his father, James.

After the war, seventeen-year-old Edward Burleson married his beloved Sarah Owen, and together, they had nine children, moved to Missouri, and eventually to Mexican controlled Texas in 1830. During this period of time is when Ed Burleson joined the Masonic Lodge at Clinton Np. 26 in Hardeman, TN. Burleson lived a full life, but multiple scholars note that whenever he was near an open lodge, Burleson was in attendance. In Texas, several Burlesons, including Ed, affiliated with McFarland No. 3 which was in San Augustine—unfortunately, McFarland lodge demised. When old Ben Milam (Hiram No. 4 KY) led the Texian Army into San Antonio to capture Bexar, he was killed by Mexican sniper fire on the first day of combat. In Burleson's post battle report he stated that, “the Masonic fraternity then present took charge of his (Milam's) body, and, with a proper detail of troops, he was buried in the yard-east side of the Veramendi house with military honors.” Incidentally, the Veramendi house once belonged to Coahuila y Texas Vice Governor Juan Veramendi. Veramendi was also

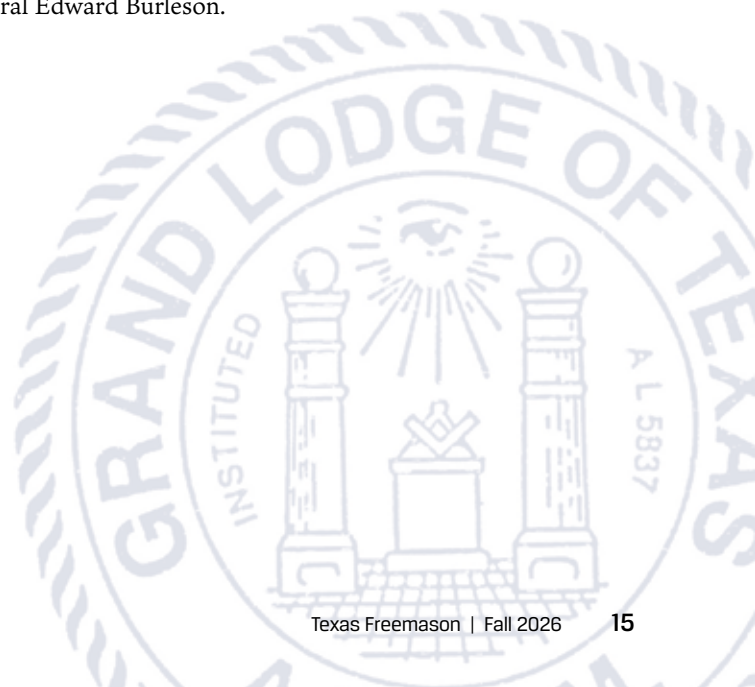
James Bowie's father-in-law. (The Cholera epidemic of 1833 killed Bowie's wife and her parents in addition to thousands of others.) Later in life, Ed Burleson joined the York Rite and was a member of Austin's Royal Arch and served as Grand High Priest in 1844. Unlike other prominent men in Texas or the United States who were members of the lodge but were largely inactive, Burleson loved the lodge, and judged by the outpouring of the Craft for his funeral, they loved him back.

Edward Burleson's time in Texas can be summarized by campaigns against the enemies of Texas, his active political life, and land acquisition. When the Burleson's moved to Texas they quickly acquired land in and around Bastrop (Mina in the Mexican period), what would become Austin, and Hayes County. Like many before him including George Washington, Burleson augmented his income and land holdings through surveying. It was Ed Burleson who surveyed the roads from La Grange to Bastrop and surveyed parts of the city of Waterloo—the former name of the city of Austin. But it was as a warrior and politician that Burleson earned his memorials.



Prior to the Texas Revolution, most military activity in Texas took the form of Indian fighting. As noted before, this was a foe who Burleson and the Burleson clan had experience warring against Native Americans, but the experience was only of limited value. Fighting the Red Stick Creeks or the Cherokees in the pine and hardwood forests of the southern United States could be dangerous and deadly, but fighting the Comanches on the prairies and plains of Texas demanded new tactics, better weapons, and swifter horses. The Comanches fiercely protected their vast territorial holdings known to us as “Comancheria” and resented Anglo settler incursion. The late Texas historian—and Brother Mason—Jefferson Carroll once told me that some of the troubles in colonial Texas between Green DeWitt’s colony and Martin de Leon’s was caused by the Comanches. The Comanches raided outpost settlements along the Balcones Escarpment (roughly I-35 from San Marcos to Georgetown in modern times). DeWitt’s colony and Austin’s “Little Colony,” where the Burlesons settled, served as prime targets for Comanche marauding. When some settlers moved southeast to escape the Comanche’s wrath, they moved onto land already claimed by De Leon’s colonists. Hence the friction.

In the pre-revolution years, Burleson and his friends stood guard as early Texas ranging companies who tried to protect the settlers. In the post-war years, Texas repeatedly called on Edward Burleson to come to the aid of vulnerable Texans. In between, it was during the Texas Revolution that he received another title, General Edward Burleson.



Why am I a Mason?

By Roger Jacobsen, Contributing Writer



In a word, friendship. Men have a very hard time making friends of the type we had when we were younger. Some of our grammar school, high school, and college friendships, we maintain for a lifetime. Our friendships are defined by shared experiences, beliefs, goals, and our own defining characteristics.

As we age, our lives are defined more by what we do rather than who we are in most cases. In our culture, when you meet a stranger, usually one of the first questions you ask is “what do you do?” Meaning, how do you make a living? It is so pervasive that we come to believe that we are what we do for a living. Yet, that is rarely the case except in the most extreme workaholics. People have an expansive range of other roles: parent, sibling, spouse, political activist, ardent hobbyist, spiritual seeker, craftsman, you name it.

Many people can find the communal connection they need as social beings within these pursuits. Work friends are great, but we deal with them eight or more hours a day and we need to get away

and form other, more lasting bonds. Many find these bonds in groups or activities where other participants have the same interests and goals. So what is it about Masonry that is appealing? Why does the appeal fade or why do so few members actively participate?

I joined Masonry because I wanted to connect with other men on a level deeper than mere acquaintance. The goals and ideals of Masonry are sublime: a spiritual component without being restrictive, a moral imperative that defines what our culture should be, and a structure that is both democratic and inclusive.

We join and go through the rigorous learning process in order to become Master Masons. If done correctly and with an open heart, this is both a learning and a bonding process. Bonding to the craft and bonding to our teachers. A shared experience, a common goal. We often refer to the veiled symbols and allegories. These require thought and discussion. They have meaning to us all, and probably many different meanings to each. Years can be



The goals and ideals of Masonry are sublime: a spiritual component without being restrictive, a moral imperative that defines what our culture should be, and a structure that is both democratic and inclusive.



spent contemplating the symbols. And new insights can be gained on the simplest of symbols or ideas.

Too often however, we retreat to the mundane in our meetings. Building committees, charity drives, rote ritual work. We hide behind the doing rather than celebrating the “being.” Now, all the above are good and necessary and deserve our devotion and hard work. But they are not the reason I joined Masonry. They are not the reason I come to meetings. I joined because I wanted to make friends. To have friends. To have friends I can trust. Not perfect friends, but friends like I used to have.

I think meetings can be more fun, and can be more rewarding if we discuss ideas rather than things, if we do things to bond our friendships. We can dispense with the business part of the meetings usually in short order. A Brother once told me that he thought Masonry was AA for non-alcoholics. Good analogy.

Things like the “short talk” program I think are meant to be a starting point. To read a short essay on some esoteric subject is itself of little interest. I want to know what YOU think about it. I want to know what you think about...

**TRUTH, JUSTICE, FREEDOM, LOVE,
HATE, SORROW, FEAR, COURAGE,
TRAGEDY, COMEDY.**

What do you find interesting in this universe? Why? What do you do about it? What made you what you are? Tell me one interesting thing about yourself. I'd be glad to tell you my story if you want to hear it, and I am willing to bet others are interested in hearing yours.

The Rising Dawn of a Nation and a Fraternity

By John Wheeler, Contributing Writer

A three-month period in 1835 holds ageless relevance for our state and our institution. The State of Texas and the Grand Lodge of Texas continue to build upon the bedrock laid 190 years ago. October through December 1835 was a cornerstone period, and many of our Masonic Brethren took the lead in the quest for independence and the birth of our fraternity.

In March 1835, Brother Anson Jones, a Physician and Past Master of Harmony Lodge No. 52 in Philadelphia, met with Masons representing Brazoria, Nacogdoches, and San Augustine near Brazoria. Under a tree later named "Masonic Oak" they drew up a petition which was sent to New Orleans requesting the Grand Lodge of Louisiana to charter a Lodge in Texas.

Our friend and Brother Chris Williams said it best: "There is no Texas without Freemasonry." We have read and heard the names of our Brothers, many of whom paid the ultimate price for our freedom. The personal connections these Brothers had-Masonic, family, military, or business, are interesting and enlightening.

Brother Ben Milam was born in Frankfort, Kentucky in 1788 where he joined Hiram Lodge No. 4. He was an artilleryman in the War of 1812. After the war he came to Texas in 1818, moving to Mexico in 1821. Failed mining ventures forced a return to Texas in 1835 where he joined a company of soldiers heading to Gonzales.



**"There is no Texas
without Freemasonry."**

– Brother Chris Williams



Mexican authorities who lent the settlers a small cannon to help protect from Comanche Indian raids sent one hundred Dragoons to retrieve it. The Texans at Gonzales had other plans.

Brother James Neill, Captain of Artillery at Gonzales, was born in North Carolina in 1798, was a member of Simpsonville Lodge No. 311 in Simpsonville, SC. He was wounded in 1814 at the battle of Horseshoe Bend. Neill moved his family in 1831, settling near Bastrop. He is often credited as the one who fired the first shot of the Revolution at Gonzales.

Almeron Dickinson, born in Pennsylvania, was also an artilleryman in the Revolutionary War. He joined Masonry in 1829 near Bolivar, Tennessee. He married Susanna Wilkerson, moving to DeWitt's Colony on the San Marcos River in 1831.

Brother Sam Houston was born in 1793 in Virginia. He joined the Army in 1813, surviving three near-fatal wounds at the battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814. He became a Mason in 1817 at Cumberland Lodge No. 8 in Nashville. He started in politics in

1819 and became Governor of Tennessee in 1827. An eleven-week marriage ended abruptly. He resigned from office and traveled to Indian Territory. Leaving his life among the Indians, he crossed the Red River into Texas in 1832. He served as a delegate at the Convention of 1833 in San Felipe, and served as a delegate from Nacogdoches to the Consultation of 1835 in Columbia, and was appointed Major General of the Texas Army November 12, 1835.

Brother James W. Fannin was Born January 1, 1804 in Twiggs County, Georgia. After attending West Point he became a close friend of Mirabeau B. Lamar. Fannin, who rose to Worshipful Master of Columbian Masonic Lodge No. 7 in Columbus, Georgia, moved to Velasco in 1834. He recruited former fellow West Point cadets to join him in Texas to lead volunteer and regular companies. On October 3rd Fannin led the Brazos Guards in the Battle of Gonzales. Soon after the victory, Texas forces headed to Bexar. Our Brothers were in leadership positions.

On October 3rd Fannin led the Brazos Guards in the Battle of Gonzales. Soon after the victory, Texas forces headed to Bexar. Our Brothers were in leadership positions.





On December 4th, Brother Milam learned that most of the army did not want to attack, making his famous plea: "Who will go with old Ben Milam into San Antonio?" three hundred volunteered, and the attack began on December 5th with door-to-door fighting.

Neill was appointed Colonel of Artillery for the Garrison at San Antonio de Bexar. Fannin took command of The Mobile Greys, volunteers from Alabama, and set his sights on Bexar. The Mobile Greys were recruited by Brother James Bonham, a South Carolina Mason, second cousin to Brother William B. Travis, who joined Masonry at Alabama Lodge No. 3 in 1829. Brother Stephen F. Austin, Past Master of Louisiana Lodge No. 109 in St. Genevieve, MO, arrived in Texas in 1821 and opened his first Colony. His attempt to Charter a Lodge in Texas in 1828 failed. He was imprisoned in Mexico for insurrection from 1833 to 1834, when he returned to Texas. In 1835 he was named Commander of the volunteer Texas Army, and was camped on Cibolo Creek near San Antonio. Brother James Bowie, a member of Humble Cottage Lodge No. 19 in

Opelousas, LA, had presented a letter of introduction to Austin in 1830 before settling in Bexar. Bowie arrived on October 16th with a small Louisiana force. Austin placed him on his staff as a Colonel. Bowie took ninety-two horsemen to Mission Concepción, southwest of San Antonio. October 26th a Mexican force of four hundred attacked his Volunteers. Brother Fannin's Mobile Greys assisted a Cavalry unit commanded by Brother Travis in the engagement.

The Texas fighting men won the Battle of Concepcion, the first large battle of the war. Following the victory Brother Fannin returned to Goliad and was elected Colonel of the Provisional Regiment of Volunteers. His unit included a task force made up from various Mobile Greys, New Orleans Greys, Georgia and



Lafayette Battalions, Red Rovers, and Kentucky Riflemen. He ordered strengthening of the fortifications at Presidio la Bahia.

Texas forces had converged on San Antonio following triumphs at Gonzales and Concepcion. The Siege of Bexar was a success, as Mexican General Cos suffered huge losses to the cannonade by Neil's artillery. On December 4th, Brother Milam learned that most of the army did not want to attack, making his famous plea: "Who will go with old Ben Milam into San Antonio?" three hundred volunteered, and the attack began on December 5th with door-to-door fighting. On the third day, before dawn, his Division advanced toward the Veramendi House, which controlled entrance to the plaza. He was killed by a sniper from the west side of the river. Masons in his unit

conducted his Masonic Burial Service near the spot where he fell, in a courtyard behind the Veramendi House. Decades later, Milam's body was moved to Milam Park in San Antonio. General Cos surrendered, and on December 11th he was allowed to withdraw to Mexico. Most of the weapons and artillery were surrendered. The Texans moved into Mission San Antonio de Valero. We now know it as the Alamo.

On December 20, 1835, John Holland, Grand Master of Louisiana, granted dispensation to open a Lodge in the Texas Territory. On December 27, 1835, St. John the Baptist Day, Holland Lodge No. 36 was instituted and opened in Brazoria. Very few meetings were held.

To be continued



TWO NEW WAYS WE ARE SHOWING UP FOR TEXAS FAMILIES



HOW TO APPLY

The application window opens in July 2026 and closes March 31, 2027, or once 400 grants are awarded. Masonic families are encouraged to apply early. Visit the MCFS website for eligibility details and to apply.



HOW TO APPLY

Apply online at the MCFS website within 90 days of the placement date. One payment per child, per placement.

• NEW PROGRAM • FOR OUR MASONIC FAMILIES

A Head Start for the Children and Grandchildren of Texas Masons

The new MCFS Senior Laptop Grant gives priority to the children and grandchildren of Texas Master Masons, helping our graduates step onto campus ready to work.

With the new MCFS Senior Laptop Grant, priority goes to the children and grandchildren of current or deceased Master Masons of the Grand Lodge of Texas. If a senior in your family just finished high school this spring and is heading to college or trade school this fall, there may be a grant with their name on it.

A laptop is no longer a nice-to-have for a college freshman; it is a requirement at nearly every college, university, junior college, and trade school. Yet the cost lands on families at the exact moment they are already stretched thin by tuition, housing, and books. The grant offers a one-time reimbursement of up to \$500 toward a laptop for seniors graduating in 2026 who are enrolling as first-year students for fall 2026. This first year, MCFS is funding up to 400 grants.

Applying is simple. Students submit one application covering their school plans and their Masonic affiliation, then send in an itemized receipt. Reimbursement follows within two weeks. Laptops bought on or after March 1, 2026 qualify, so a purchase made before applying still counts.

• NEW PROGRAM • FOSTER FAMILIES

A Little Help in the First Hard Days

Our new Foster Family Program puts money in the hands of families the moment a child arrives.

When a child is placed with a foster or kinship family, it usually happens fast. There is rarely time to shop, and the needs show up all at once: a bed, clothes that fit, a car seat, diapers, a warm meal. Those first days set the tone for everything that follows, and we did not want cost to be the thing standing in the way of a child feeling safe and welcome.

That is why MCFS created the **Foster Family Program**, a one-time payment of **\$150** to Texas foster and kinship families when a child is newly placed in their home through DFPS. It lands exactly when families need it most, and it comes with no strings attached. One payment is available per child, per placement. It is open to Texas residents caring for a child through foster, kinship, fictive kin, or legal-risk placements. Families apply online and upload page one of their DFPS Placement Authorization Form. Once approved, the check goes straight to their door.

FAMILY DAY

Saturday, October 10, 2026

Texas Masonic Retirement Community • 1501 W. Division St., Arlington, Texas

Free
ADMISSION

Open
10 AM - 4 PM

Meet

M:W: Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Texas
M:E: Grand High Priest Royal Arch Chapter of Texas

Greet

Biggest Masonic Event In Texas!
Masonic BBQ Cookoff! Car & Motorcycle Show!



Hot Dogs! BBQ! Ice Cream! Kettle Corn! Snow Cones!

Live Music & Shady Picnic Tables

100's of Unique Arts & Crafts Booths

Children's Games! Pony Rides! Jump Houses! Petting Zoo! Video Games!

Masonic Fundraising Opportunities

Open House - Texas Masonic Retirement Community!

Mobile Blood Drive! Masonic Museum!

Visit YourTMRC.org for all info • 817-275-2893 • info@YourTMRC.org

NOTE: No Pets! Due to the nature of the event, no pets allowed

TEXAS FREEMASON

The Grand Lodge of Texas
715 Columbus Ave
Waco, TX 76701



CONSTITUTED
APRIL 1838



SHOW YOUR SUPPORT OF OUR FRATERNITY WITH THE GRAND LODGE OF TEXAS MASONIC LICENSE PLATE PROGRAM!

<https://www.myplates.com/design/personalized/passenger/texas-masons/>

A great way to support the Grand Lodge of Texas and to raise awareness of Masonry in Texas, is the Grand Lodge Masonic License Plate Program. Please note that 100% of the proceeds from this program go directly to supporting Grand Lodge of Texas and its educational, benevolent, and charitable purposes.