

TEXAS FREEMASON

SUMMER 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



Brethren,

The 2026 Grand Lodge year is off to a booming start. Those who had an opportunity to attend one of the Grand Master's conferences this spring can attest we had different and transparent conversations about the state of Freemasonry in Texas and what the future can look like if we work toward a common goal. We have to pick up the proverbial can that has been kicked down the road for the past several generations and determine what we want Freemasonry to look like for future generations, as the version we inherited seems to have run its course. It will take time and sacrifice, but our grandsons will thank us.

It is time for our lodges to truly evaluate their role in the grand design of Freemasonry. Does your lodge excel at degree work, does it just go through the motions, or does your lodge even remember how to confer a degree? Does your lodge teach the philosophy of Freemasonry through allegory, or does it teach rote memorization of words without understanding? Does your lodge make Freemasons, or does it simply accept men as members?

Santa Anna and the Mexican government did not outlaw Freemasonry in Texas in 1828 because the Freemasons were the best at fish-fry fund raisers. The fascist governments of Eastern Europe did not

ban Freemasonry in the 1930s because we were the best at conducting raffles. The Grand Lodge of Iran is not in exile from the Iranian government because they sold more hot dogs at community events than other civic clubs. Freemasonry was respected and feared by dictators because our institution stood against despotism, and encouraged men to freely think for themselves. Our work is beautiful, and allegorically crafted to prepare a man how to die by teaching him to live a just and upright life according to the philosophy of Freemasonry. Our philosophy is taught by allegory to keep the non-Masons ignorant, and Freemasons enlightened. Our philosophy is the Light. The ritual conceals the philosophy. Be the reason our institution was revered and feared. Study the allegory, learn the philosophy, and share the Light. Do not just learn or teach words!

The next few months will be filled with financial reviews, lodge officer elections, and installations. When reviewing endowments and finances, make decisions based on what is best for the longevity of the lodge, not what is best for any individual members. Take a moment and evaluate the officers of your lodge. They should be elected based upon merit and leadership, not because they seem to be a good guy. Not every petitioner needs to be a Mason, and not every Master Mason needs to be a lodge officer. Do what is best

for your lodge and for the institution of Freemasonry, not what makes someone happy.

Lastly, I am dismayed by how much time of the Grand Master is taken up by squabbles among our brethren. Be a man and a Mason, reconcile your quarrels without creating drama for your lodge and without forcing the Grand Lodge to become involved. This can be solved by not only remembering the obligations that bind us, but by striving to live them every day.

Sincerely & Fraternaly,

Jim Rumsey
Grand Master

A WORD FROM THE Grand Secretary



Property and Liability Insurance

The Grand Lodge of Texas is proud to partner with insurance providers to leverage the collective strength of our 721 Lodges and help reduce insurance costs across the state. Both property and general liability insurance are being offered to ALL lodges. Details have been communicated in the November 2025 Grand Secretary's Newsletter for lodge property insurance and the February 2026 Newsletter for general liability insurance, however, I wanted to highlight several lesser-known, yet extremely important, aspects of these offerings:

Property Insurance

On the property side, we continue to hear from Lodges — particularly those outside the hurricane tier — that are realizing substantial savings, often reducing their premiums by half (or more). Many lodges are saving \$4,000 to \$7,000 per year, and one is even saving over \$13,000 per year under this program.

Additionally, I would remind all Lodges that they may choose to insure their building at an agreed-upon value lower than full replacement cost if budget constraints make full coverage difficult. This flexibility can make coverage far more attainable for many Lodges.

Liability Insurance

On the liability side, we have partnered with a carrier that bases premiums on the number of members in the Lodge rather than the square footage of the building. This alternative rating structure can be especially beneficial for Lodges that were built to accommodate larger memberships. It also mirrors our overall dues structure by aligning costs more directly with membership rather than the physical size of the facility.

Our Goal

For both property and liability insurance, our request is simple: reach out and obtain a quote. If your current carrier provides better coverage or pricing, by all means remain with them. The Grand Lodge does not profit from these programs; our sole purpose is to help reduce what can be, in many cases, a significant financial burden on our Lodges.

As with any group program, greater participation strengthens the program and helps improve pricing for everyone involved. We strongly encourage every Lodge to obtain a quote and review the available options. Even in cases where the pricing is similar to your current coverage, participation in the group plan can help create additional savings and stability for all Texas Lodges in the future.

For more information, please email:

Zach Haston

zhaston@grandsecretaryoftx.org



Masonic Restoration Foundation in Texas

The Masonic Restoration Foundation (MRF) will hold its first meeting in the Lone Star State at the historic San Antonio Scottish Rite from August 21-23, 2026, hosted by Merit Lodge No. 727.

The MRF Symposium is described as "the largest gathering of Masons in North America who are expressly committed to observing the highest standards of excellence in the Craft."

Registration is Now Open

Registration must be completed by Monday, August 17, 2026.

Registration Rates

Full Registration – \$125.00

Includes the entire Symposium, the Harmony on Friday evening, and lunch on Saturday.

Saturday & Sunday Only – \$75.00

Includes Saturday and Sunday sessions, including lunch.

For full information and registration, please visit

Masonic Restoration Foundation at
<https://www.masonicrestorationfoundation.org/symposium2026/index.html>

Grand Master's Activities Thus Far

By Dean Bryant, Staff Writer

Grand Masters San Antonio Conference Saturday, February 28, 2026

The San Antonio Conference was a great success and saw Most Worshipful Jim Rumsey, Grand Master of Texas Masons giving a wonderful presentation to the brothers in attendance.

The first step to entering a conference is to pass through Registration. On this event, registration was expertly covered by Right Worshipful Don Jorge Santana, District Deputy Grand Master of Masonic District No. 53 with Brother Carlton Newberry, 2026 Executive Administration. Thank you both for your dedication and support to our Grand Lodge.



Most Worshipful Jim Rumsey sharing his thoughts on Masonic membership over the years. If you have not yet attended a Grand Master Conference, you are missing insightful and very informative presentations.



The large turnout brought together members from across the state for an engaging and memorable gathering. Attendees were treated to a wonderful presentation that highlighted key initiatives, and shared insights of Texas Masonry.



Alamo Observance Saturday, February 28, 2026

The Texas Freemasons Alamo Observance was part of the 190th anniversary of the Battle of the Alamo and honored the fallen defenders. The observance featured a formal procession of Masons from the Scottish Rite Cathedral to the Alamo, followed by a solemn wreath laying ceremony and remarks from Grand Lodge leadership.

The Masonic procession began outside the San Antonio Scottish Rite Cathedral with a striking sense of ceremony and unity, with Masons that travelled from all over the State.



Masons from across Texas journeyed to San Antonio to participate in the Grand Lodge procession honoring the heroes of the Alamo. It was an impressive sight to witness and an honor for the brethren to take part in.



Grand Lodge of Texas officers in attendance to assist with the observance. Thank you all for the support you give to the Masons of Texas.



Right Worshipful, Chad LaGrone, Grand Chaplain and Most Worshipful Jim Rumsey, Grand Master laying the Grand Lodge wreath.



Hillcrest Lodge No. 1318 – Festive Board Friday, February 20, 2026

The Texas Freemasons Alamo Observance was part of the 190th anniversary of the Battle of the Alamo and honored the fallen defenders. The observance featured a formal procession of Masons from the Scottish Rite Cathedral to the Alamo, followed by a solemn wreath laying ceremony and remarks from Grand Lodge leadership.

Hillcrest Masonic Lodge No. 1318 festive board at the Hall of State in Dallas saw a large turnout in support of our Grand Master. The evening was filled with fellowship and tradition, made especially meaningful as Most Worshipful Jim Rumsey, Grand Master, is also a Past Master of Hillcrest Lodge, now serving as our Grand Master, therefore, reflecting the lodge's strong legacy and influence.

Most Worshipful Jim Rumsey, standing before the Masons assembled in the Hall of State Center, Dallas. As he spoke, the room remained attentive, with a shared sense of unity.



Brethren sitting together at the festive board, sharing ideas and stories while enjoying good food and fellowship. The conversations, easy and relaxed, with plenty of laughter and shared moments. A simple but meaningful time that brings everyone closer and strengthens the sense of fellowship.



**Dalby Springs No. 684 – Consecration
Saturday, February 21, 2026**

Dalby Springs Lodge No. 684, Chartered in December 1889, has relocated from its former out-of-town location to a new home closer to town. Following a fire, the lodge made a meaningful transition, closer to the center of the community it has long served. The new single-story building is being enjoyed by the members and will serve the community for many years to come.

Consecration of the new lodge building in Simms, Texas, on Saturday, February 21, 2026.

Many Grand Lodge officers visited Dalby Springs lodge to assist with the consecration of the new lodge building.



Following a fire, the lodge made a meaningful transition, closer to the center of the community it has long served.

The Charter has a new home, in the new single story building closer to town.



ON THE MASONIC ROAD

By Bill Crow, Associate Editor

Traveling the Masonic Road is often hazardous, in that I often make a turn and find myself on a road that leads to nowhere or worse yet, offers information, or evidence that may contradict certain practices that can take place within our Lodges.

As a citizen of the United States, I always drive on the right side of a road unless directed otherwise by official signage or instructions. I know the driving rules and consider myself to be a competent driver. However, I can easily recall when driving in New Zealand and other countries that drive lawfully on the official left side of the road, caused me considerable embarrassment, and occasional significant hand signals from others.

When we know the rules, regardless of their context, we must follow them. Masonry is the strongest when all Brothers are in full agreement, or a significant large consensus is reached. From time to time, well-meaning Brothers are ready and willing to proactively address issues without reviewing the Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas. Not intending to ignore our legal guidance, just acting proactively. Without a quick review of the

Law Book, unintended actions may result in non-compliance with the Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas.

The Laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas should be followed to the letter with exceptions granted appropriately when absolutely necessary. Generally granted through the Grand Master's dispensation procedures.

As a case in point, we often have visitors to our Lodges, some current members of other Lodges, some that might have been suspended for failure to continue their dues, others that are wanting to "come back," and just ordinary visitors, curious to find out about Masonry, possibly interested in membership.

How we receive them is extremely important to meet both our, and their expectations. While reading an article printed in the Freemasons Monthly Magazine, Volume XXX, November 1, 1870, Titled "Lawful Information", I became interested in the context of the article. The following eight statements taken from the article are synonymous with our current need to receive a visitor claiming Masonic standing our Lodges (some paraphrased).

1. It is not sufficient evidence to a Lodge of a visitor's Masonic standing, that his name appears in the printed proceedings of a Grand Lodge or in the printed catalogue of his own Lodge.

2. It is not sufficient evidence to the Lodge of a visitor's Masonic standing, that he has been seen in a Masonic procession.
3. It is not sufficient evidence to the Lodge of a visitor's Masonic standing, that he had delivered a letter of introduction to some member of the Lodge, even less if the letter was to some person not a member of the Lodge.
4. It is not sufficient evidence to the Lodge of a visitor's Masonic standing, that he has been examined and vouched for by a private member not legally authorized to do so by the Worshipful Master or Warden. None have the authority save the Master and Warden. The Lodge elects them to attend to its business, and it is improper for a private member to intermeddle therein without having been asked, or power granted from the Master or Warden.
5. It is not sufficient evidence to the Lodge of a visitor's Masonic standing, that he presents a diploma or a patent from some other Lodge of which he claims to be or have been a member.
6. It is not sufficient evidence to the Lodge of a visitor's Masonic standing, that Brother A. declares that Brother B. vouches that Brother C. knows him to be a Master Mason.
7. It is not sufficient evidence to the Lodge of a visitor's Masonic standing as a Master Mason, that some member present vouches that he sat with him in an Entered Apprentice or Fellowcraft Masons Lodge
8. It is not sufficient evidence to the Lodge of a visitor's Masonic standing, that popular opinion considers him a Mason. The voice of the people is not a voice that can admit a stranger in a Masonic Lodge.

After reading the article, I realized a time or two where I may have been less diligent, because of being familiar with a visiting Brother, admitted him improperly. We know to check his dues card unless he has been vouched for, but do we really know his current status without using the card reader to examine his Masonic profile?

Masonic standing cannot always be strictly evidenced when a Mason is suspended for nonpayment of dues and/or other connotations resulting in suspension or expulsion. If a Mason who is a member of several Grand Lodge of Texas Lodges is suspended in one, others may not know of the suspension, especially if the suspended Mason is soliciting another Lodge for Membership. Great care must be exercised when a prospective plural membership is requested.

As Masons, we should endeavor to trust our Masonic attributes and make choices that are consistent with Masonic practices including acceptance of different faith Masons, who have demonstrated their commitment to Masonic principals.

As a reminder, a Mason who has been suspended in one Blue Lodge and is a member of other Blue Lodges or appendant Masonic organizations, is also suspended in all current memberships, until the suspension is repaired .

On the occasion of having non-Masonic visitors, visiting Lodges not under labor, it is important to not be hasty in offering a petition for membership. Unless the visitor has a close tie to the Lodge through Masonic family or best friend status with a current Mason who is a member of the Lodge, we might not have any information or familiarization with a visitor.

How many times have you witnessed, or was asked to sign a petition for a person you did not know, during a first time visit to the Lodge or in the absence of the petitioner ...

We have all agreed in Masonic conference and in consensus, a best practice for communicating with visitors who may seek membership, is the use of TIME. Time to get to know the individual, time for him to begin to meet and know the members of the Lodge. Time to communicate the things that can be communicated, preparing the pre-petition interface, and sensing the visitor's willingness and aptitude to become a Mason. Time could mean two, three, maybe four Months or more. Haste in selecting candidates and offering petitions for Masonic Membership often results in waste ...

At a time when Masonry across the United States is continuing to wane, and our Lodges are seeking new members, our efforts may not be able to initiate new members in a sufficient number to overcome the loss of members due to death, lack of interest, and other reasons.

In some cases, our new member investigations are less than expected, seemingly not communicating adequate information regarding the Lodge expectations of the initiates and not foretelling the initiate and family members the amount of time necessary to successfully complete the study, and attendance that will be required.

We have all experienced the significant loss of new members following initiation, before and after giving back the proficiency.

Communication within and without the Lodge is paramount to understanding and keeping members in Masonry. We must seriously focus on communications within our Lodges and with prospective new members, to be successful in keeping our current and new masons.

When we have a serious candidate for Masonry in our Lodges, a mentor within the Lodge membership who has the Masonic background and willingness to be a mentor should be assigned to ensure appropriate communication is established between the mentor and the prospective candidate. Mentoring and appropriate communications should start long before offering a petition and preparation for initiation and acceptance as a new member.

The haste to petition and initiate new Masons can be hurtful to the new Mason as well as to his family, and the Lodge. If the Lodge fails in its duty to fully inform the prospective candidate, and his family, of the progression to become a Master Mason, he may begin a journey he cannot fulfill, or his family expectations preclude him from participating in true measure, resulting in difficult family relationships. The Lodge will also be hurt when a candidate or a new Mason fails to continue his Masonic walk. Much effort and hope are placed into our new initiates. When one stops his Masonic journey, it is hurtful to the Lodge.

Let's move to another subject that is often difficult to discuss and often hurtful to Texas Masons, and to Texas Masons that are of a different faith.

In Texas we have Masons that are diligent in their practice of faith to other religions. Some Brothers have said, "they don't belong to our faith, others have stated that Masonry in a worldwide Brotherhood and all men acknowledging a deity should have a right to become a Mason." Neither statement is absolutely correct or absolutely incorrect without full understanding and appropriate consensus.

Passion and fear contribute to a need for absolute understanding and truth in difficult times. We are living in difficult times where death, and vengeance are prevalent on just about every continent

on our earth. How should we as citizens of the United States of America respond to the news every day where death, and vengeance are publicized and televised worldwide ... As citizens we should listen and counsel wisely to understand truth and respond appropriately to those who have been elected to lead our nation.

As Masons, we should endeavor to trust our Masonic attributes and make choices that are consistent with Masonic practices including acceptance of different faith Masons, who have demonstrated their commitment to Masonic principals.

In war times past, destroying buildings and infrastructure, overwhelming strength and weapons, KIA, and territory capture,

Today's war times are ideological weapons which will never surrender regardless of the losses suffered.



often signaled the end of war, and the end was relegated to a political agreement.

Today's war is not about people, land, or buildings. Today's war times are ideological weapons which will never surrender regardless of the losses suffered. The ideology exists because large masses of people believe and subscribe to them politically or religiously and in some localities, often because of fear and retribution. Most ideology is not specifically anti-American. Ideological wars once started will never end until an ideology is completely destroyed and it becomes non-existent, an impossibility that needs no acknowledgment ...



So then, how should Masons approach an assigned duty as a member of an investigating committee ... Each candidate must receive an equitable and honest investigation by each assigned investigator regardless of race or creed. He must be given an opportunity to answer all questions and give appropriate answers to specific questions detailing his purpose for soliciting membership in a Texas Masonic Lodge.

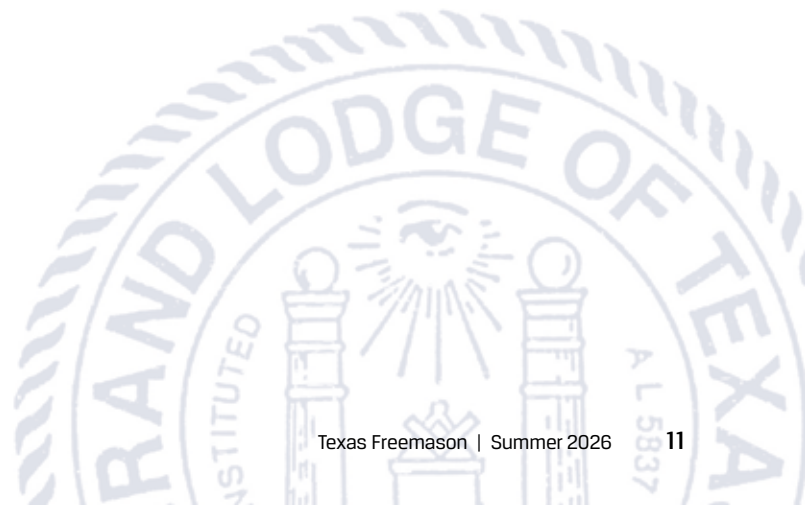
If a candidate subscribes to a religion or ideology that may be in conflict with American values, he must fully explain why he chooses to fellowship with Brother Masons where his ideology has conflict. Even so, he must be judged on his individual attributes and merit rather than as a data point in an array of information. Once the investigation committee completes its work, the petition must be balloted upon provided that the petitioner is not disqualified, and the consequences of the ballot will determine if he is entitled to receive the degrees of Masonry or consequently, be rejected for Masonic membership. Remember, the Masonic ballot is our divining wand, our decision tool ... but it is only as good or truthful as the information that it is given to it by our Brother Masons, and the investigating committee.

Finally, this edition of "On the Masonic Road" was difficult to present, but it may cause us to recall and review our Masonic guidance when and where needed.

Texas Masonry will continue to be better and better, even when Masonic population wanes, because Texas Masons are diligent, resourceful, and proud of their fraternity. Ask yourself ... What have I done for Masonry in Texas, in my Lodge or for a Brother Mason today? If you have difficulty phrasing an example of your action, get up tomorrow, look for something that you can do for a Brother Mason, your Lodge or Texas Masonry in general. Don't forget, "Bring a Brother Back" ...

Next time "On the Masonic Road" we will visit a place many Texas Masons have forgotten.

See you soon "On the Masonic Road." ★





GOOD HUMOR

The Profound Pontifications of Brother John Deacon

The Best Of All Breakfasts And The Importance of the Lodge Experience

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



As I begin to write this month's article I have to chuckle a little remembering my monthly meeting with John. I could tell when he drove onto the lot and parked in front of the shop that he was, shall we say, "in distress," as he sometimes is. As he slid out of that big F-350 I could see that he was either talking to himself or his truck. I know this for two reasons. First, he doesn't have a clue what Bluetooth is, so I know he wasn't talking on his cell phone and two, he has been known to actually talk to his truck....aka Blackie. He was still mumbling to himself as he walked in the door. "Hey Brother John," I called out in as pleasant a voice as I could muster. "Who're you talking to?" He just stared at me, and I knew he was still upset with me for what happened earlier in the month. He stood at the counter and gave me a steady stare and said with a touch of sarcasm in his voice, "Brother Chris, I have had a rough couple of weeks and as you already know, it's all your fault and there you are making it worse. Out of the corner of my eye I saw my assistant Roger shake his head. As I gazed up into the pained eyes of this six-foot seven inch two-hundred-and-seventy-five-pound Texas giant, I had to shake my head too. It was hard to imagine big John Deacon in a fragile emotional state but..... I guess he hadn't gotten over it yet. It, being a couple of incidents that had happened earlier in the month while we were together, none of which were intentional but..... sometimes stuff just happens. He obviously can't let it go, so I will have to explain it all before continuing with this article. It all started a couple of weeks ago

When I got back to the room I laughingly told John how I was going to bring him back some of my steak but finished the whole thing without realizing it and he didn't think it was funny at all.

when John and I attended one of the Grand Masters' Conferences. He had missed the one that was closest to where he lived and had heard from me and others how great it was. He called me and asked me... no he begged me to go with him to one and even offered to pick me up on the way. We agreed to share a hotel room to save money and also planned ahead to get to town the night before the conference to attend a 100-year celebration for one of the Lodges. We were told there was going to be dinner at the Lodge, but when we got there it was only finger food and rabbit food. I didn't see anything that I wanted to eat but John was starving and ate all he could, but I could tell it didn't do much for him. I got to talking with my buddy, Larry, the Grand Orator, and as usual we were deep in conversation when it was time to leave. John said he was going to ride back to the hotel with one of the other Grand Lodge officers. When Larry and I finally left we realized we were both hungry and decided to get something to eat. As luck would have it we had only gone a couple of blocks from the Lodge when we found a restaurant which looked like a popular spot. It was pretty busy even as late as it was, but we finally found a place to sit and after checking out the menu it looked like Chicken Fried Steak was the best bet. When it came it was huge and I didn't think I could finish it and told Larry I was going to take half of it back to John just in case he was still hungry. Well it turned out to be really good, and that, along with us having a lot to talk about and not paying attention, I ended up finishing the whole thing. When I got back to the room I laughingly told John how I was going to bring him back some of my steak but finished the whole thing without realizing it and he didn't think it was funny at all. Especially when I told him I was stuffed. I have never seen a grown man in such a state of distress and frustration. You'd have thought that I had wrecked his car or something.

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

The Hiramic Legend and the Medieval Stage

From The Builder Magazine February to July 1926

Sourced By Martin Solis, Staff Writer

PART 1

We are very pleased indeed to introduce to the readers of The Builder a new contributor. Bro. Thiemeyer is young both in years and in Masonry, yet already he has made more progress in knowledge than many of his seniors. He has chosen to deal with a very difficult, yet most interesting subject, and we have the promise of further articles from his pen.

A DISCUSSION IN THREE PARTS

Bro. Ernest E. Thiemeyer, Missouri

THE INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES OF THE STORY

NOTHING in the so-called Blue Degrees of Masonry even remotely approaches the Legend of the Third Degree for solemnity, beauty, impressiveness, or philosophy, it is, in fact, the summit of Craft Freemasonry. As a subject of constantly recurring interest it has appealed to students as a problem to be solved, a mystery to be unraveled, and has attracted the minds of the greatest Masonic scholars of all times. They find in it abundant opportunities for philosophizing and, further, when they attempt to trace its origin and growth, they are at liberty to occupy their inventive genius in a manner unparalleled in any other branch of Masonic research. So far as the expounding of the teachings of the Legend is concerned, everyone is entitled to his own opinion; the only boundary that can be placed on such an interpretation is that it remain within the limits of logical reasoning. To you it may mean one thing, but to me it may have an entirely different significance. We may not agree with the teachings of Socrates, Plato, or the classical philosophers any more than we do with Freud, James, or the modern schools, but we do not have that type of intelligence which will permit us to say that they are wrong. The most that can be said is that their opinions are not in accord with ours, and so it is with the teachings of Masonry; on the other hand, when it comes to investigating the sources of the Masonic Legend, we can, with a fair degree of certainty, disagree with theories advanced, and base our disagreement not on an interpretation of facts, but on facts which are conclusive in themselves.

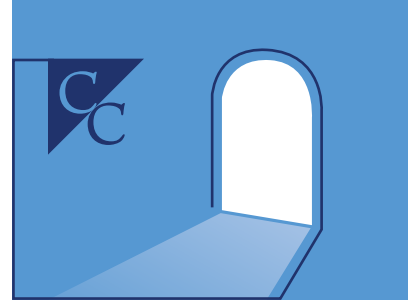
From the cradle of Masonic scholarship we find just this. The theories of many students concerning the origin of our Legend have been torn down and new structures based on new evidence erected to replace them. On investigating the field, one finds those who are firmly convinced that the Legend in its present form is

a dramatic, or narrative, account of an actual happening at the building of King Solomon's Temple. We find these extremists replaced by other students who cannot agree with the arguments advanced and substitute their own theories, gradually tending toward a more and more iconoclastic viewpoint until we reach the other extreme and find advocates of the theory that the whole fabric was invented shortly after the formation of the Grand Lodge in 1717 by some of the ritualists of that day. To most scholars of our time these theories will appear absurd. The present trend of opinion is toward a course midway between the two. It is these compromise (if I may call them such) theories that are receiving the most credence today, and it is one of these that will form the basis of this discussion.

In the Transactions of the Lodge of Research, No. 2429, Leicester for 1920-21, there appears an article by Bro. Robert Race advancing the theory that the Legend was originally a Miracle or Mystery Play. In support of this theory he advances many arguments, which on first thought appear beyond refutation. Because his reasoning is so apparently water-tight this theory has come into quite good repute, and Masonic students are feeling more and more inclined to accept this opinion as probably the true origin of the Legend. The italics above indicate the impression given by Bro. Race's arguments. However, on giving the matter deeper thought and a careful reading for a second or third time, a number of peculiarities — absurdities, if you prefer — come to light. It is with these that this article intends to deal. It is not written with any predestined course of destructive criticism tending to develop or advocate a new or at least a different theory as to the origin of the Legend, but solely to dispose of the Race theory as impracticable and untenable. There is no intention of showing what the Legend is or has been, but merely to point out what it is not.

When an analysis of Race's theory is made, we find that his discourse divides itself naturally into three sections and an introductory foundation. It is with the three sections of the main argument that we are particularly concerned; in the order of their appearance they are: — first, a ritualistic discussion which points out numerous inconsistencies and absurdities in the narrative account of the Legend; second, an explanation of these defects as consequent on the crudity of the medieval stage; and lastly, an astronomical interpretation of the Legend to which allocated the true foundation of the fabric.

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



The Chaplain's Corner

By Brother David Rogers, Grand Chaplain – 2022, and Chad LaGrone, Grand Chaplain – 2026



Brethren ALL!

What a true honor it is to share some thoughts with you!

“How good and how pleasant it is...”! Didn’t your mind jump to a great memory from your Masonic walk when you started to read that. Aren’t we all truly grateful and feel blessed for all we experienced and thankful for all the “good” we have and can do through our great Masonic Family!?

We are asked, as a reminder of our sacred ties, the Masonic rhetorical question “Am I my brother’s keeper?” In Masonic presentations or dialogs, we hear this as rhetorical, as we all know WE ARE our brother’s keeper from every taught and embraced moral principle of our Craft. We know from the Great Light, the question, ironically, was first asked by the murderous and unfaithful brother Cain, who attempted to deflect attention to his guilt by this evasive response.

I am also reminded from the Great Light of the seriousness our ancient Brethren, the founders of our degrees, believed in their duties to each other the true responsibility we have to our Brothers. An example of this is found in Deuteronomy 25:9-10 where we learn of the severe public disgrace of the brother who does not live up to his obligations. The kinsman/brother, who having refused to honor his obligation to his brother, would appear before the people and his brothers, his shoe would be removed, then the widow of his brother would spit on the disgraced brother. HARSH...yes and NO, I am not looking to add this to the Constitution for Masonic offenses!!!

Our ancient Brethren knew this as we do as they formulated the degrees, and in your own experience in your Masonic travels, you now understand more the significance of the lesson taught in the Book of Ruth, from early in our Masonic career.

I wrote all this to get to the real point of our time together here. Brotherly Love!

To that end, I want to share a story with you I heard many years ago:

“I wish I.....”

A green but enthusiastic young man was just starting out as a pastor in a very poor community in the late seventies, I believe, and found himself in desperate need of a motor vehicle as apparently his means of transportation “had been called home.” The pastor had no way to acquire a vehicle, and I will spare you the details, but the young pastor had a big brother...OH what a brother. He was THAT brother... the family “dark-grayish” sheep from all accounts of the tale given. The young pastor went to his big brother for advice, help, a ride ... just like little brothers want to do. Well, the older brother had a big heart, and he had a “GOOD TIMES” rolling bachelor pad shag carpet and bed in the back van... also an obviously warped sense of humor and a love for his brother which he offered to his brother.

Having no options, the young pastor took the gift out of desperation, and I feel certain as the young pastor drove away in it, he was thinking how in the world he was going to explain this van to the members of the church and his community. In retrospect,

I believe the brother was smiling and thinking the same thing.

So, the explanations began and a bit of sheepish embarrassment, which I will forgo here, until I get to this last one. Because on this day he was going into a particularly poor area to visit and as he pulled up in THE VAN, and all the children out playing rushed over to see it! Delight, laughter and giggles and oh the questions.

The young pastor used this as an opportunity to show how the Lord provides and helps us and it also about it being a gift! A small boy was very eager and curiously listening.

The pastor said how thankful he was for his brother who had given him the van!

The little boys face opened up in amazement!

Then the little boy said, "I wish I..."

Now, when I heard this story, the narrator stopped in mid-sentence, as you see, as if he had lost his place on his talk. Then he looked up and said, "Many of you, in your mind, finished the little boy's sentence for him, as I shuffled my papers"

"You might have thought the little boy said, "I wish I had a van like that, or I wish some would give one to me or I wish I had a brother to give me one," but the child said... 'I wish I could be a brother like that!'"

The narrator went on with the tale, but I was lost in thought... thirty plus years removed from the time heard this, I still am. Am I that Brother to my Brothers when they need me if I can?

I am also reminded from the Great Light of the seriousness our ancient Brethren, the founders of our degrees, believed in the true responsibility we have to our Brothers. In Deuteronomy 25:9-10, let us not forget of the severe public disgrace of a brother who does not live up to his obligations.

A lesson from the Great Light asks us, "Do I have the love of the Samaritan for his fellow man stricken on the side of the road?"

Do we reach out to the Brothers who are ailing or struggling, do we look for doors to open for us to step in and step up to serve?

Brotherly Love! That is the work we are to be about, isn't it?

There are three reasons we do anything which aligns to our lodges. We have to, we need to, or we want to.

"Oh crud, its 1st Tuesday and I have to go to lodge floor work class."

"Oh my, I just got a call, and I am needed to give a Lecture."

"Oh yes! Lodge tonight! I want to see what topic the program is tonight!"

Brethren, I am firmly convinced that we are in this Fraternity for a greater reason than our own decision to ask to become a Mason!

When you next leave the house, BE THAT Brother who WANTS to go to fellowship with his Brethren... not have to or needed to.

I challenge you to do that with Brotherly Love in your heart! If you have to forgive a Brother forgive him... even if he doesn't forgive you!

If you are with me on that, I ask each of you to look for the open doors The Great Architect has placed before you, to step through that door with Brotherly Love in your hearts, then roll up our sleeves and get to work.

When we are honest with ourselves, the opportunities to serve are everywhere!

I believe the Grand Architect has us all in this Fraternity for a reason and that you are reading this for a reason!

Our Amazing Right Worshipful Grand Chaplain, Chad LaGrone gave me an opportunity to share with you all my love for my God, my Brothers, our gentle Craft, and my call to action. Yes, MORE action! When you work for your Brothers, do it with love in your heart!

Brethren and dear friends, we are absolutely assured of the result if we do nothing!

My Brethren All, Masonry is built upon the experiences of the Brothers that laid those first cornerstones and stones that make up the foundation of the temple of Masonic Life in general, and in our personal journeys. David Rogers, former Grand Chaplain, is one of those Brothers that has added many stones to the Masonic Temple for all, and more especially to my personal Masonic edifice, by serving as a mentor to me, and being a darn good Brother and man. He brought forth the inspiration to begin "The Chaplain's Corner," and has charged me to WANT TO bring MORE ACTION to the office of Grand Chaplain for the good of Craft, the betterment of our Brethren, and to hopefully add more stones to our Masonic Temple as a whole.

Grand Architect of the Universe, we are eternally grateful for the blessings you bestow upon our lives. Thank you for allowing us to become better men, husbands, fathers, and Brothers. Lord, let us remember those that came before us that laid the cornerstone, added to the foundation, and those that help us construct our temple to honor you. Give us strength to lead an honorable life and forever hope that when you have placed the Keystone to complete our temple, we will hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant." God, shall we have FAITH in you, HOPE in each other, and CHARITY towards all mankind.

Amen. So mote it be.

Chad LaGrone, Grand Chaplain, 2026

Service Dogs and Freemasonry

By Jerome Weilmuenster, Staff Writer

Does your Lodge have dogs attending stated or called meetings? In the Lodgeroom? According to your Lodge by-laws, can your Lodge admit dogs into the lodge? Past Grand Master Jerry N. Kirby handed down Decision No. 1 in 2017, as follows:

Question: Can a Lodge prevent animals in the Lodge building and/or Lodgeroom?

Answer: The Lodge has the authority to establish rules that prohibit animals from being in the Lodge building and/or Lodgeroom. The rules established also apply to those organizations listed in Art. 225 and 225a. However, should the Lodge establish bylaws and other rules permitting animals in the Lodge building and/or Lodgeroom, it should be restricted to those animals that qualify under the relevant authority authorized to designate them as bona fide “service animals”.

In this case, the “authority” is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA defines a service dog as one trained to perform tasks or do work that a person with a disability cannot do. It is important to note that this disability may be physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or some other mental impairment “that substantially limits one or more major life activities.”

So a service dog is a dog that has been trained to perform a specific task. Comfort dogs receive no such training and are not recognized as service dogs. All guide dogs are service dogs, but not all service dogs are guide dogs.

Although we are likely most familiar with guide dogs for the visually impaired, there are also the following service dogs:

- **Hearing dogs** for hard-of-hearing or deaf individuals
- **Mobility assistance dogs** which provide support for balance, retrieve objects, or help with wheelchair use



Brother Erik Rasch of Bolivar Lodge No. 418 and Ginger with members of the Sanger American Legion Post helping place flags at Veteran's graves.



Left to right: Brother Mike Lafferty, PM of Lonnie Irvin Daylight Lodge No. 1309 and his dog "Princess" visiting Zebulon Lodge No. 273 in Prestonsburg, KY, where Brother Laferty's grandfather was a member.

- **Medical alert dogs** which can discern seizures, low blood sugar, or allergies, and
- **Psychiatric service dogs** for assisting those with PTSD, OCD, anxiety, and other psychiatric conditions. These dogs are trained to interrupt harmful behavior or offer calming support.

A service dog cannot be denied entry to a business or public place as a typical pet normally would. Nor can any of these places require any type of certification, identification, vest, or tag.

Management or staff may ask only these two questions:

1. Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

The Legal Rights (ADA & Texas Law)

- **No Gear Required:** The absence of a harness, vest, or patch does not strip an animal of its legal status as a working service dog.
- **Tethering Exceptions:** Service dogs generally must be on a leash or in a harness. However, if the handler's disability prevents the use of a tether, or if a tether interferes with the dog's ability to perform its medical task (like detecting low blood sugar), the dog must be under control through voice commands or hand signals.

The task the dog has been trained to do must be directly related to a person's disability. This may be guiding a visually impaired person, assisting with mobility, or even recognizing medical conditions such as blood sugar levels or seizures.

Please note that a comfort dog or comfort animal is not a service animal and is not treated the same. Neither the ADA nor the Air Carrier Access Act recognize a comfort animal as a service animal.

Regardless of the task trained for, service dogs are not "one trick" canines. Training a service dog takes time and money. Typically, a potential service dog puppy is taken in by a volunteer puppy raiser for 16 to 18 months. During this time, the canine candidate is trained following specific guidelines set down by the sponsoring organization. The dog must reliably exhibit behavior acceptable in public, stay calm and, of course, perform its tasks effectively.

After this initial training, the dog will be trained for its specific task and then matched with a human partner.

One of the more important aspects of these initial stages of training is confirming the puppy will make a good service dog according to the criteria above. In cases where the candidate is not proving himself worthy, he is removed from the program and placed in a loving home through public adoption.

When training is completed the dog is paired with a human to assess compatibility. Like humans, dogs display a "personality"



Brother Mike Lafferty with his dog Princess, and Brother Russell Flowers, Jr. with his dog Wiley at Charles W. Anderson, Lodge No. 1413.

that should be compatible with the human partner. And just as the dog had to meet certain criteria, the human partner does as well.

To qualify for a guide dog, the human must meet the following criteria:

- Be legally blind.
- Be at least 16 years old.
- Live in the United States or Canada (There are guide dogs in other countries.)
- Be responsible for the care of the dog (Feeding, relief breaks, play time, etc.)
- Have access to financial resources to cover ownership expenses.
- Walk outdoors regularly and independently.

Complete training required by the sponsoring organization.

Depending on the task, it can take up to two years of training to produce a qualified and reliable service dog. And \$50,000 a year to cover all expenses is not unheard of. Depending on the organization furnishing the service dog, a veterinarian's services might be paid for, an annual stipend for medical expenses may be provided, or medical expenses would have to be covered by the human partner.

Some interesting facts:

- Producing a service dog focuses on the dog's ability and not its breed, but the two most popular breeds for guide dogs are Labrador Retrievers and German Shepherds.
- Guide dogs don't know when NOT to cross the street. Their partner must listen for traffic noise.
- Guide dogs use "trained disobedience" in order to refuse a command that might endanger the team.
- Some guide dogs are trained to be running partners.



Above: Brother Steven Cook, PM Live Oak Lodge No. 304 and his dog "Guppy" delivering Fantastic Teeth kits at the local Elementary School. **Below:** Brother Mike Lafferty with his dog Princess, Brother Paul Sutton with his dog Abigail, and Brother Tim French with his dog Gunner attending the Grand Annual Communication.

There is a wealth of information on service dogs on the Internet. The following are just a few web pages that were consulted for this article:

- **United States Veterans Service Dogs**
<https://usvsd.org/>
- **Patriot PAWS Service Dogs**
<https://patriotpaws.org/>
- **Guide Dogs of Texas**
<https://guidedogsoftexas.org/>
- **Guide Dog Users**
<https://guidedogusersinc.org/>
- **Guiding Eyes for the Blind**
<https://www.guidingeyes.org/>



Brother Erik Rasch of Bolivar Lodge No. 418 and Ginger visiting the Brothers of Lewisville Lodge No. 201.

- **Foundation for Fighting Blindness**
<https://www.fightingblindness.org/>
- **Guide Dogs for the Blind**
<https://www.guidedogs.com/>
- **Leader Dogs for the Blind**
<https://www.leaderdog.org/>
- **Lighthouse for the Blind**
<https://lhblind.org/>
- **Train a Dog – Save a Warrior**
<https://tadsaw.org/>

These organizations are always happy to answer questions, and if your Lodge is looking for a worthy cause, they all accept donations.

Serving Two Lodge Lines: A Journey of Balance and Brotherhood

By Samuel N. Saenz, Contributing Writer

Serving as a line officer in a Masonic Lodge is a commitment that demands time, energy, and heart. Now imagine doing it in two lodges—at the same time. I've done it, and I'd like to offer some honest reflections to any Brother considering the same path.

1. Time Commitment: Double the Duty

The most obvious challenge is time. Between rehearsals, degree work, stated meetings, committee assignments, and special events, serving in one line can easily consume several evenings each month. Serving in two lodges means double the calendar—and double the preparation.

If you value your evenings with family or need downtime to recharge, consider carefully how those hours will now be spent. Make no mistake: this commitment will test your time-management skills and personal bandwidth.

2. Family Impact: They Serve Too

Masonry often speaks of “making good men better,” but we must also consider the people who support those men. Your spouse or family may not wear an apron, but they will feel your absence at home.

Open communication is essential. In my case, I discussed expectations with my wife before accepting the second role. We agreed on certain non-negotiables—family nights, vacations, and moments of rest. Even so, there were moments of strain. Be proactive, not reactive. Make room for your family in your Masonic journey.

The most obvious challenge is time ... Serving in two lodges means double the calendar—and double the preparation.

3. Work and Career: Finding the Balance

Depending on your profession, juggling two sets of lodge responsibilities may interfere with work obligations. Late nights at lodge followed by early mornings at the office can affect performance, focus, and well-being.

There were weeks when I had to choose between attending a lodge event and meeting a work deadline. If your career is demanding, unpredictable, or travel-heavy, weigh the impact carefully. Dual lodge service is a serious undertaking—it should complement your professional life, not compete with it.

4. Financial Considerations: It Adds Up

Serving in two lodges also brings added financial responsibilities, including:

- Two sets of dues
- Increased travel (fuel, tolls, wear and tear)
- More meals, fundraisers, and charitable donations

These expenses aren't burdensome for everyone, but they do accumulate. Don't underestimate the financial commitment. Budget wisely, and don't be afraid to say, “Not this time.”





5. Impact on the Lodges: Can You Give 100% to Both?

A lodge needs more than a warm body in a chair—it needs presence, participation, and leadership. When serving in two lines, one lodge may inevitably receive more of your energy than the other, or you may find yourself pulled in two directions during key events.

To manage this, I made open communication a priority with both Masters and officer lines. Setting expectations early—regarding availability, scheduling conflicts, and workload—helped prevent misunderstandings. Respect both lodges equally and serve with transparency.

6. The Rewards: Brotherhood Multiplied

Despite the challenges, serving two lodges has deeply enriched my Masonic experience. I've been mentored by diverse Brothers, learned multiple ritual styles, and contributed to two distinct lodge cultures. The experience broadened my understanding of the Craft and strengthened my leadership skills.

For the Brother who is committed, well-organized, and supported, this can be one of the most fulfilling journeys Masonry has to offer.

7. Final Thoughts: Advice to the Brother Considering It

Before you say yes, ask yourself:

- Can I realistically balance lodge, family, and work?
- Do I have genuine support at home?
- Am I willing to say no when necessary?
- Will I be able to add real value to both lodges?

If the answer is yes, then proceed with care, humility, and purpose. You will be tested—but if you are doing it for the right reasons, you will also grow.

From Rough Ashlar to the Trestle-Board: A Life of Sam Houston, Part 2

By Nathan Giesenschlag, Staff Writer

The life of Sam Houston is well known to most Texans and especially Texas Freemasons. Walking through the Grand Lodge building in Waco, or by being raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason, the Brother will be told that many early Texas and American leaders were Masons including Sam Houston. However, the Masonic education often ends there. Good histories of prominent men who were also Masons—like George Washington, Harry Truman, and Sam Houston—abound, but when one looks deeper at them, the great principles of the craft can be found in their lives.

Every Entered Apprentice Mason must learn the four cardinal virtues, but these men lived it. For Washington it was his conduct as general—going home at the end of the Revolution when he could have been king—that exhibited temperance. As president, he set prudential precedents that the country used to judge subsequent presidents. For President Truman, it was his fortitude in defending the United States and the free world from Communist aggression. For Sam Houston, he knew when to fight and when combat was unwise; as he matured, he exhibited increasing prudence, justice, and temperance.

Sam Houston arrived in Texas in 1832 reeling from the very public destruction of his first marriage to Eliza Allen in Tennessee. In 1829, most people looked upon the thirty-six-year-old governor of Tennessee as a likely heir to the older and unhealthy President Andrew Jackson, but when the governor and his young bride separated mere months after their marriage, tongues wagged. Houston resigned his governorship and limped to his Cherokee father, John Jolly. With the Cherokee, Houston licked his wounds and drowned his sorrows in strong drink.

The Texas Revolution presented many opportunities and pitfalls for those involved in it. In the War of 1812, Sam Houston was a rough ashlar. Pugilistic, bombastic, and young, he paid the price with wounds in his leg and shoulder that would never properly

heal. By the time he assumed formal command of the Texian Army in March of 1836, Houston's assessment of the Texian ability to repel Santa Anna's invading army proved largely correct. While Houston could read maps and understand the predicament any revolutionary movement in Texas faced on the battlefield, sadly, too many of his fellow Texians did not. Two men, Francis (Frank) Johnson and Dr. James Grant, pushed a scheme to sack Matamoros in late 1835. By January of 1836, the already hairbrained scheme was completely unworkable. Houston argued against it, but to no avail. The Matamoros expedition cost Grant his life and siphoned off scarce supplies the Texians needed to fight the war. Now a smooth ashlar, Houston demonstrated wisdom in knowing what might work—the Matamoros adventure could not—so he changed directions. He will do it again after the fall of the Alamo on March 6th.

The Alamo fell to Santa Anna's forces after a pre-dawn assault on the sixth of March. This development altered the strategic chess board that Houston faced. El Camino Real was one of two main highways in Texas and ran through San Antonio de Bexar into Nacogdoches and deep east Texas. The other, the La Bahia Trace, ran up the coast from Matamoros along the coast through Goliad to Galveston Bay. At Goliad, James Fannin's Ft. Defiance Garrison sat dangerously exposed. Houston ordered a speedy retreat to the Colorado; Fannin dithered, and his command was caught at Coleto Creek near Victoria. They were massacred a week later on Palm Sunday. Now, the Texas Revolution was on life support.

Sam Houston had to act, and he chose the prudent path of falling back. Other leaders such as David G. Burnet stomped and pleaded for Houston to fight at the Guadalupe River, then the Colorado, and even the Brazos, but Houston continued to retreat. It is in these hours that Sam Houston was at his most controversial and most wise.

More and more Texas historians believe that Sam Houston was trying to retreat into east Texas in order to involve the U.S. Army in the Texas Revolution. Houston and President Andrew Jackson were close friends



It is important to note several things about Sam Houston, his army, and the Texian people in the aftermath of the Alamo and Goliad disasters. Most Texas history books call it the Runaway Scrape while others at the time referred to it as the “Sabine Shoot,” but whatever name you like, the Texas population was in full flight fleeing before the Mexican Armies. Houses were abandoned along with livestock. In this supercharged atmosphere, many of the men in Houston’s ill-clad yet growing army knew their spouses and children were among the throngs of refugees running for their lives—and the soldiers wanted to stand and fight, somewhere, anywhere. Those who marched with Sam Houston in the days leading up to San Jacinto did not love him because of these decisions. He was quite

unpopular. Frankly, Sam Houston may have been looking to avoid fighting altogether.

More and more Texas historians believe that Sam Houston was trying to retreat into east Texas in order to involve the U.S. Army in the Texas Revolution. Houston and President Andrew Jackson were close friends, and circumstantial evidence suggests that Jackson had issued orders that if a Mexican Army crossed the Neches River, the U.S. Army stationed in Louisiana would intervene. Houston never admitted to such a scheme because of San Jacinto. However, we know this: on April 21st, 1836, it was Sam Houston mounted on a white horse named Saracen that led nearly nine hundred wrathful Texians into battle on the plains

and circumstantial evidence suggests that Jackson had issued orders that if a Mexican Army crossed the Neches River, the U.S. Army stationed in Louisiana would intervene.


 A blue-tinted portrait of Sam Houston, showing him from the chest up. He has a mustache and is wearing a dark coat with a white cravat. The background is dark and textured.

“Texas! Texas! Margaret!”

– Sam Houston in his final moments,
surrounded by his wife and family

of San Jacinto. Houston was gravely wounded in the 18-minute battle by a gunshot to the ankle. After the battle, it was Houston and ad-interim president Burnet that saved Santa Anna's life and compelled the Mexican caudillo to sign the Treaty of Velasco ending the revolution for all intents and purposes. That was the prudent course.

The Monitor of the Lodge talks about the trestle-board being “for the Master workman to draw his designs upon.” After San Jacinto, Houston's fame was assured. Like his mentor Andrew Jackson, Houston now enjoyed nick-names such as “Old Sam Jacinto” and “the Sword of San Jacinto.” San Jacinto also made him president of the Republic of Texas twice, Texas' first U.S. Senator, and governor during the dark days prior to the Civil War. Unfortunately, Governor Houston's fellow citizens did not heed the plans of their Master workman.

With the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860, Texas followed South Carolina and other Deep South states in seceding from the Union. Sam Houston, scarred and old from a life full of campaigns, stood athwart the young fire-eating hotspurs who were hellbent to plunge Texas into a Civil War that brought death and misery. They would not listen to counsel; the old man's time had passed, but Sam Houston, ever the dramatist, wanted the secessionists to see what war cost. James Haley records the scene in the state capitol in Austin in February of

1861, ‘I know what war is.’ He (Houston) bared his shoulder and displayed the fresh bandages over his 1814 wounds. “I have been in it often and do not want any more of it. War is no plaything and this war will be a bloody war. There will be thousands and thousands who march away from our homes never to come back.” The old general was correct. Nearly 25% of the Texans who fought in the Civil War became a casualty.

Sam Houston never saw the end of the Civil War. A body that had experienced too much finally wore out. He died in Huntsville on July 26, 1863, surrounded by his wife Margaret and family. Like so many in their final moments, Houston drifted back to “his life's work” and said, “Texas! Texas! Margaret!” as he lay down the working tools of life. At Houston's death, she removed a gold band from a finger, inside of it were the words, “Honor.” Sam Houston received Masonic burial rites and rests in Huntsville's Oakwood Cemetery.

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