THE MAGNOLIA TROWEL

OFFICAL PUBLICATION OF SCOTTISH RITE BODIES OF THE ORIENT OF MISSISSIPPI



Vol 1, Issue 4

Aug/Sep/Oct

COMMANDER'S QUOTE



"A kind word, an attentive ear, or just being present can change a life."

The Orient of Mississippi newsletter is published for the members, family and friends of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Orient of Mississippi, and is available electronically to all current Scottish Rite Freemasons in Mississippi's Valleys. The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the Orient of Mississippi or its officers. The official registration and financial information of the organization may be obtained from the Mississippi Secretary of State's office by calling 1-888-236-6167. Registration by the Secretary of State does not imply endorsement

2024 Lodge of Perfection Meetings

Clarksdale, 1st Tuesday of each month Mar 5, Apr 2, May 7, Jun 4, Jul 2, Aug 6, Sep 3, Oct 1, Nov 4

Corinth, 2nd Thursday of each month Jan 11, Feb 8, Mar 14, Apr 11, May 9, Jun 13, Jul 11, Aug 8, Sep 12, Oct 10, Nov 14, Dec 12

Gulfport, 3rd Friday of each month Jan 19, Feb 16, Mar 15, Apr 19, May 17, Jun 21, Jul 19, Aug 16, Sep 20, Oct 18, Nov 15, Dec 20

Hattiesburg, 1st Friday of each month Jan 5, Feb 2, Mar 1, Apr 5, May 3, Jun 7, Jul 5, Aug 2, Sep 6, Nov 1, Dec 6

Jackson, 1st Tuesday of each month Jan 2, Feb 6, Mar 5, Apr 2, May 7, Jun 4, Jul 2, Aug 6, Sep 3, Oct 1, Nov 4, Dec 3

Meridian, 1st Thursday of each month Jan 4, Feb 1, Mar 7, Apr 4, May 2, Jun 6, Jul 4*, Aug 1, Sep 5, Oct 3, Nov 7, Dec 5

For more information, contact the General Secretary in your Valley

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James Case, 33° IGH (Gulfport)	.(228) 324-4262
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Bill Sellers, 33° IGH (Jackson)	(769) 230-5760
Micky McMahan, 33° IGH (Meridian)	.(601) 527-6194

A MESSAGE FROM

Ill. Billy W. Sloan, 33° SGIG



IT'S REUNION TIME! The year 2024 is rapidly coming to an end as we head into fall and leave the warm days of summer behind. Fall is the time where everything begins to prepare to hibernate or draw up for winter. The leaves are turning and will begin to fall, temperatures are very pleasant as I write this, but will soon move toward jacket weather. Fall is also REUNION TIME! Have you been thinking about our upcoming Reunions that begin the first Saturday in October and end on the first Saturday in November. Have you begun preparing for the rituals by refreshing the parts you must or may play? Have you committed the time to learning it and becoming a part of it or it becoming a part of you. This will ensure that it has feeling and meaning and will touch those around you if properly performed. Have you asked a Brother from your Lodge to join so that he can become



For submissions or articles, please contact Ben Jones at bejonesii@bellsouth.net or call (601) 927-8479. Whenever possible, please include a high-resolution (300 dpi/PPI) photo with your submission. All submissions should be received at least 45 days before the date of publication. Submissions for the Nov-Dec 2025 newsletter must be received no later than mid January for consideration. Articles are subject to editing and if published, become the property of the Orient of Mississippi. No compensation is given for articles, photographs or other materials submitted or published.

a little more educated in Masonry? Have you given thought to the camaraderie and fellowship that will take place during the Reunion. Seeing old friends and making new ones should be part of your day. I look forward to seeing you at the Reunion and listening to each of you perform a meaningful part that could mean the difference to someone.

I am also pleased to announce that we have begun raising funds to establish an Endowed Scholarship for children and grandchildren of Mississippi Scottish Rite Masons. It requires a minimum of \$50,000 to establish and keep it working. The first year after establishment you pay a recipient \$1,000 and \$1,800 each year thereafter. This is an opportunity to expand educational support to one of our own for just a few dollars of investment on your part. I have asked that each member donate at least \$40 and another \$40 for a brother who just absolutely cannot do so. I am pleased to say that some have decided to donate an even \$100. What will you donate? Donations should be mailed to me at 11087 Bayou Bernarde Rd, Gulfport, MS 39503. Checks should be made out to MS Scottish Rite Foundation or Edward Jones with "SCHOLARSHIP" annotated in the memo section of the check. It is tax deductible and will help our children with their future education. Contact me if you have questions. Let's make this a success for our children or grandchildren.





CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW AND

III. Matt B. Mahan, 33° §* (Meridian/Gulfport)
III. Jude A Loya, 33° * (Meridian)
III. James A. Case, 33° (Gulfport)

* = 1 renewal; § = 3 renewals

RETURNING MEMBERS!







\$1,000 Scholarship in the 1st year

\$1,800 in each year after the 1st

Orient of Mississippi Endowed Scholarship Donation Form

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Mail Checks to Address Below:

Mississippi Scottish Rite Foundation 11087 Bayou Bernard Rd. Gulfport, MS 39503-7639

EVENT CALENDAR

Thu Sep 12 - Valley of Gulfport Stated Sat Sep 14 - Congressional School -Monticello #610

Fri Sep 20 - Valley of Gulfport Stated Sat Sep 21 - Congressional School -Richmond #97 Sat Sep 28 - Water Valley YR Festival

Tue Oct 1 - Valley of Clarksdale Stated Tue Oct 1 - Valley of Jackson Stated Thu Oct 3 - Valley of Meridian Stated Thu Oct 3 - Rosh Hashana Sat Oct 5 - Valley of Gulfport Reunion Thu Oct 10 - Valley of Corinth Stated Sat Oct 12 - Yom Kippur Sat Oct 12 - Dirt Pit Degree

Mon Oct 14 - Columbus Day Fri Oct 18 - Valley of Gulfport Stated Sat Oct 19 - Valley of Meridian Reunion Fri/Sat Oct 25-26 - Valley of Corinth Reunion Sat Oct 26 - Congressional School -

Clarksdale #286 Thu Oct 31 - Halloween

Fri Nov 1 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated Sat Nov 2 - Valley of Jackson Reunion Sun Nov 3 - Daylight Saving Time Ends Tue Nov 5 - Valley of Clarksdale Stated Tue Nov 5 - Valley of Jackson Stated Tue Nov 4 - Election Day

Thu Nov 7 - Valley of Meridian Stated

Sat Nov 9 - Joppa & Hamasa Ceremonials Mon Nov 11 - Veterans Day Thu Nov 14 - Valley of Corinth Stated Fri Nov 15 - Valley of Gulfport Stated Sat Nov 16 - Congressional School -St John #308 Thu Nov 28 - Thanksgiving

Tue Dec 3 - Valley of Jackson Stated Thu Dec 5 - Valley of Meridian Stated Fri Dec 6 - Valley of Hattiesburg Stated Sat Dec 7 - Wahabi Ceremonial Thu Dec 12 - Valley of Corinth Stated Sat Dec 14 - Congressional School -Coldwater #409

Fri Dec 20 - Valley of Gulfport Stated Sat Dec 21 - St. Leonard RC Wed Dec 25 - Christmas Day Fri Dec 27 - Feast of St. John Tue Dec 31 - New Year's Eve

An Encounter with Bro. Thomas Cole and the Stages of Life

III. R. Lane Dossett, 33° Personal Representative, Valley of Hattiesburg

Nature has secrets known only to the initiated. To him she speaks in the most eloquent language.
--Thomas Cole, The Wild (1825)

While attending the Biennial Session of the Supreme Council in Washington D.C., I decided to accept a Brother's recommendation to see the National Gallery of Art. I am not an art aficionado, and I was uncertain about going. To my amazement, it was a wonderful experience. After seeing several unimpressive old paintings, I was immediately drawn to the symbolism of a four-piece series entitled The *Voyage of Life*, created by Thomas Cole in 1840. As I looked around the gallery off the East Garden, these paintings denoted *Childhood*, *Youth*, *Manhood*, and *Old Age* were hanging in each of the four corners.

One of the four pieces, the last in the series, *Old Age*, made a deep impression on me, as I experienced the painting's beauty blended with the Gallery's own architectural majesty. The painting was God's prized work of humanity within the totality of the created world. Collectively, these paintings were far and away the most impressionable to me, and I left the Gallery intent to learn more about the artist.

Upon returning to my hotel room that night, I began to research Cole and the paintings. He was considered America's leading landscape painter during the first half of the nineteenth century. Cole was born in Bolton-le-Moor, Lancashire, England on February 1, 1801. In 1818, his family emigrated to Ohio. Regarding this series, Cole's diary entry for March 24, 1839, reads:



Childhood (1842) oil on canvas, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund, Public Domain



Youth (1842) oil on canvas, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund, Public Domain

I have received a noble commission from Mr. Samuel Ward, to paint a series of pictures, the plan of which I conceived several years since, entitled, The Voyage of Life. I sincerely hope that I shall be able to execute the work in a manner worthy of Mr. Ward's liberality, and honorable to myself. The subject is an allegorical one, but perfectly intelligible, and, I think, capable of making a strong moral and religious impression.





Manhood (1842) oil on canvas, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund, Public Domain

Old Age (1842) oil on canvas, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund, Public Domain

In a bit of unexpected serendipity, I learned that Cole was a Freemason. Cole became a Freemason in 1822 while travelling the new National Road between Pennsylvania and Ohio by joining Amity Lodge No. 5 in Zanesville, Ohio. According to David Bjelajac's 2011 article from the *Journal for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism*:

During the summer of 1822, he joined the Lodge of Amity No. 5 in Zanesville, Ohio. Needy itinerant artists depended on the welcoming handshakes of lodge brothers as they traveled from one unfamiliar town to the next. Lodge members could be expected to commission paintings, lend money and assistance, and provide references to brother masons in nearby communities. Within a few weeks, Cole advanced through all three of freemasonry's craft degrees.

Bjelajac states that the paintings track the progressive path of three craft degrees:

Cole's Voyage of Life: Youth draws upon these lessons of freemasonry's Entered Apprentice degree. The picture represents an overly imaginative young man on the river of life unwisely transixed (sic) by an exotic, castleshaped cloud in the sky. Having declared his independence from a near-by guardian angel, Cole's youth is oblivious to his immediate surroundings

and fails to notice that the river he navigates takes a sharp right turn toward rocky rapids.

These paintings capture, by the passage down the river of life, the care-free innocence of childhood, blind ambition of youth, trials of manhood, and the cyclical return to heaven by death at old age. Each painting shows the voyager and his guardian angel in a different part of the river, with the boat's direction sequentially reversed. *Childhood* contains smooth waters, symbolizing the sheltered experience of our primitive years. In Youth, the man has a firm grasp of the tiller, symbolizing the effort of taking control of one's life. His forward thrusting pose demonstrates his energy and enthusiasm toward the sky of his ambitious dreams, while in the bottom right the river begins to turn turbulent. In *Manhood*, the figure is now grown, and he has let go of the tiller, which has disappeared. In the face of peril and danger, he has turned to God in prayer. Of Manhood, the sonorous words of Dr. Ellen Miles, Curator Emeritus of the Gallery, convey its impressionistic power:

Trouble is characteristic of the period of *Manhood*. In *Childhood* there is no cankering care; in *Youth* no despairing thought. It is only when experience has taught us the realities of the world, that we lift from our eyes the golden veil of early life; that we feel deep and abiding sorrow; and in the picture, the gloomy, eclipse-like tone, the conflicting elements, the trees riven by tempest, are the allegory; and the Ocean, dimly seen, figures the end of life, to which the voyager is now approaching. The demon forms are Suicide, Intemperance, and Murder, which are the temptations that beset men in their direst trouble. The upward and imploring look of the voyager, shows his dependence on a Superior Power, and that faith saves him from the destruction that seems inevitable.



In *Old Age*, the river waters have calmed and flow into eternity, as the landscape has entirely faded away. An angel descends from heaven, with another gesturing forward. The man is calm with the assurance of his faith and the fulfillment of the promise of heaven. Both of his hands are up, perhaps in a Masonic fulfillment of the promise of heaven. Both of his hands are up, perhaps in a Masonic gesture, as if to peace-

-fully surrender himself up Jacob's ladder, which Cole might have seen on a tracing board.

In an 1840 letter to his dear friend Ver Bryck, Cole discussed his progress on the series:

You ask me how the Voyage of Life is progressing. I can hardly say. I think the first picture is about finished, that is, will be in three or four days. But it generally happens that when I have just finished, I have not half done. Little things that appear easy, and of a few minutes only, sometimes, by some unaccountable infelicity, if I may use such a word, require days. The Angel's face has given me a great deal of trouble. Angels' visits to me are really so few and far between that I forget their features. Sometimes the expression would be sulky, sometimes cross, and sometimes silly. I have, at length, finished one which I suppose will be found a compound of all the expressions of which I have spoken. But I will not disparage myself. I hope the picture is the most complete one I have ever painted. I should be happy to have you see it. I want other eyes: mine are accustomed to the picture.

While the stages of life are not as clearly demarcated as the edges of paintings, it is nonetheless possible to know, in the words from Albert Pike's *Esoterica:* "whence came you and wither do you travel." Men wonder occasionally what separates youth from manhood, even, perhaps, among older immature men. In the movie "33 & Beyond: The Royal Art of Freemasonry," Dr. James T. Tressner, 33°, GC, states:

Men don't become fully autonomous adult males without some form of initiation. For many, it is the military, or some other organization like that. If you go way back in history, in every society which we have record, there has been a necessary moment, a necessary point in which the man goes through a ceremony, a ritual, an understanding which divides his life and he talks things which happen before and things which happened after."

Throughout time, as Tressner states, men have noted the stages of life by different metrics, but it has always been considered. There are numerous ways of dividing one's life, such as by astrological events, such as the Zodiac. A popular demarcation is made based the astrological transit of the planetary returns. Under this system, a planetary return occurs when a planet makes one full orbit and returns to the same



sign and degree that it was in when you were born, with the most significant being the outer plants, Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus. Jupiter returns approximately every 12 years and signifies phases of growth and development, first into adolescence and puberty and secondly into adulthood. Saturn returns approximately every 30 years. It first marks the aging process with the fullness of responsibility and, secondly, the next phase of life, usually retirement. Uranus returns every 84 years and marks the completion of life. However, one of its most important points is noted at the half-way point, when mid-life crisis and pre-menopause typically occur, around 42 years.

As I reflected on these paintings, I examined my own life and where I was in the continuum. I also thought about my father, who is 90 years old, and firmly within the "Old Age" painting. We often sit and discuss what is to become of certain possessions and my children's future, which gives him peace.

I personally find comfort in evaluating the sands of time and thinking about where I am in this great experiment called life. I am thankful for living long enough to feel content with life's blessings such that every day is a gift.

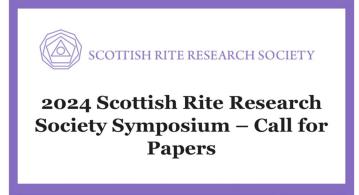
I humorously recalled my youthful aspirations and being a millionaire by age 30, believing such material goals to be of the utmost importance. As I embarked on my own voyage in collage, rudder firmly in hand, I too was knocked back by the waves of reality. While I hope to be within Cole's category of adulthood, I have not always let go of that rudder and turned to the Great Architect as I should. I look forward to the peaceful waters of older age, and I hope I can welcome that final day with open arms just as Cole envisioned. I believe this is the goal that we labor towards as Masons.

The Supreme Council's Master Craftsman College has a new, free course for candidates and newly-made Prince of the Royal Secret. "The Ivory Key" is a short course that will help initiates get the most out of their Scottish Rite Reunion experience. Plus, it is a great refresher course for all. Enroll at mastercraftsmancollege.org





On the heels of the 2024 Scottish Rite Cinematic Reunions, the first of thirteen episodes of the Missouri Scottish Rite Academy premiered on Sunday evening, September 8, 2024. During the two-hour session attendees explored the Secret Master (4th) and Perfect Master (5th) degrees. Each episode delves into the symbolism and meaning of one to three degrees, followed by an interactive panel discussion with renown masonic scholars. It's no accident—you'll learn more in the discussion. There no official date set for the next episode which will cover the Intimate Secretary (6th), Provost and Judge (7th), and Intendant of the Building (8th).



This year's Scottish Rite Research Society Symposium will convene in Memphis, Tennessee, on Saturday, October 19, 2024 at 1:30 PM CT. Scottish Rite members may attend in person or remotely/virtually. Additional details will be shared soon, including a link to view the symposium virtually. Anyone who is not a member of the SRRS, should consider joining to get more information on this event.

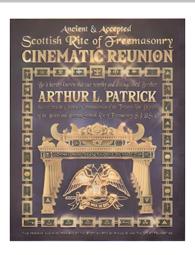
VALLEY OF HATTIESBURG



Announced as approved in February, the Valley of Hattiesburg sponsored the Hon. R. Lawrence Hicks, 32° KCCH of the Valley of Philadelphia, PA, and his exemplification of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction's 19th Degree, "Brothers of Trail." The degree focuses on the past, how it affects the present, and how it influences our future. In this degree, a pioneer on the Oregon Trail lives up to his sacred obligation to care for his Brother.

The Brothers assembled from across the state for the Friday evening event. After an excellent meal, Brother Hicks performed the degree in a highly proficient manner. The assembled brethren were impressed and grateful to view the work. "A Mason's word is good as gold anyplace in the world where a man's word still counts for something."

VALLEY OF HATTIESBURG (CON'T)



In July Hon. Arthur Patrick, 32° KCCH was pleasantly surprised to receive a certificate for attending the February 1-4, 2024 Valley of Missouri Cinematic Reunion. Attendees now receive a certificate for attending these almost six-hour virtual reunion sessions during the prescribed four-day period beginning in 2024. For more information, visit scottishrite.live/

VALLEY OF CLARKSDALE

VALLEY OF CORINTH

In keeping with their commitment to public service, the Valley of Corinth Knights of St. Andrew sponsored a Saturday lunchtime blood drive in May.

In July, III. Stephen Reed 33° visited the French Quarter of Charleston, South Carolina, and the Shepheard's Tavern marker, the birthplace of Scottish Rite Freemasonry. Located near the intersection of Broad and Church Streets at the southwest



corner of the South State Bank, the marker has inscriptions on all sides, including an image of the tavern on the top. Charleston can be proud of its 223-year

history of Scottish Rite Freemasonry.



Finally, Singer-songwriter Bro. Noah Richardson 32° serenades the Valley of Corinth at a recent Family Night dinner. Food, fun, and fellowship were enjoyed by all.

VALLEY OF JACKSON

VALLEY OF GULFPORT

In a Facebook local history group, a lady shared a find recently, a Valley of Gulfport treasure from April 1963. Several group members recognized family, neighbors, and friends.



VALLEY OF MERIDIAN

Beginning August 26, the Master Craftsman Online College opened a free, fun short course called "Monday Morning Masonry." Each Monday, students receive a short lesson from the Lodge of Perfection degrees via email. You can then log into the MCOC and take a short quiz on the material. Once all the LOP degrees are complete, the College will hold a drawing for a special prize from all the completed entries. It's not too late to sign up and join the fun at mastercraftsmancollege.org





COST: \$1.00 COST: FREE COST: \$5.00

www.mastercraftsmancollege.org



