

THE LODGE SYSTEM OF MASONIC EDUCATION

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Foreword

The LODGE SYSTEM OF MASONIC EDUCATION, including revisions through 1969, was originally prepared by the Board of Custodians of the Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina and authorized and promulgated by the Grand Lodge. It was updated by the Masonic Ceremonies & Miscellaneous Publications Committee in 2010 and is herewith set forth for use in the lodges of North Carolina.

It is simple, practical, and employed under the direction and immediate authority of the lodge. It works where education is most needed and appreciated. The method, when used consistently and intelligently, guarantees positive results.

The Plan in Brief

The *essentials* of the *LODGE SYSTEM OF MASONIC EDUCATION* are:

1. Name: The lodge, first and foremost, carries it on.
2. Purpose: To guarantee each candidate is properly instructed in the fundamentals of the Craft which each newly-made Mason must know.
3. Machinery & Methodology: Three members appointed by the Worshipful Master and any assistants deemed necessary. The candidate meets with the committee once before receiving the First Degree; once after the First Degree; once after the Second Degree; and twice after the Third Degree- five times in all.

The Purpose

Realize that each candidate is a stranger to Freemasonry. He not only joins the lodge but a Fraternity with over 4,000,000 members and 16,000 lodges nationwide; the world's oldest Fraternity stretching back centuries with a thoughtful system of laws, ideals and obligations; with the rights, privileges and duties which are his to preserve.

Without informed guidance, no candidate can take his proper place in the work of Masonry nor bring credit to himself or honor the Fraternity. Each candidate has the right to expect proper instruction; without such, he may cease to attend regular meetings.

By using the Lodge System as your guide, your candidates will profit and the lodge will be strengthened. Such fully informed Brothers should be better prepared -- and more willing -- to regularly participate in the activities of your lodge.

Machinery & Methodology

The machinery & methodology of the Lodge System of Masonic Education are:

The Worshipful Master appoints a committee of three; these three may select such assistants as they may deem necessary. (Regs. 61-7 & 61-10).

After a petition has been favorably balloted upon, the petitioner is notified by the Secretary to meet with the committee at a specified time and place.

At the first meeting, the committee will give the candidate such instruction as he needs to enable him to receive the First Degree in the proper spirit, and will furnish him such information about the principles and teachings of Masonry as will give him a clearer understanding of the kind of society he is about to enter.

The candidate, again instructed by the Secretary, will meet with this committee four more times, once each after the First and Second Degrees, and twice after the Third Degree. When he is ready to accept the responsibilities of membership, he can do so intelligently and with a clearer knowledge of "What it is all about".

The Committee

The committee should be composed of Master Masons of experience, knowledge, and tact who feel a genuine interest in their work and who can be trusted not to neglect it. It would be wise to have at least one Past Master in its membership. Some lodges have only Past Masters on this committee. The committee should have a chairman and a vice-chairman but needs no other officers; if desired, the chairman can report to the lodge upon each candidate after the candidate has attended the last meeting.

The candidate meets the committee at the specified time and place and hears a few words of greeting from the chairman in explanation of the purpose of the meeting. After that he listens while each member in turn reads (or recites) one of the papers herewith printed under the heading, "Meeting No. 1." When the candidate has heard the subjects presented, he can then be encouraged to ask questions and to take part in an informal discussion, the committee explaining any questions arising out of those subjects as far as it would be proper to make such explanation at the time. If ten minutes are allowed for preliminaries, fifty for the subjects, and thirty for questions and discussion, the entire time will be only one and one half hours.

The candidate has nothing to do but listen; no books to read, no papers to write, nothing to memorize. His participation will not interfere with his learning the degree catechisms.

After the last meeting he will have heard sixteen fundamental subjects presented, a larger amount of carefully digested, useful, and connected information concerning Masonry than most Masons acquire in twenty years.

The system is no great burden on the committee. It is no financial burden on the lodge or on anyone. Each member of the committee familiarizes himself with the subjects assigned to him and attends the meetings. It is essential that each member confine himself to the material as it is presented herein; thus all candidates hear the same papers, which have been authorized by the Grand Lodge. The chairman will see to it that each member of the committee is thoroughly prepared to present in an effective and impressive manner the particular subject which has been assigned to him. The presentation may be read, or may be spoken after being committed to memory or restated from notes made by the committee member; but it is imperative that each member stay within the time limit and subject matter allotted to him. A careful chairman will go over with each member all of the material assigned to him in order to assure the proper pronunciation of words and the effective reading or presentation of the material.

It is important that every committee member confine himself to his subject as written. First, it guarantees that the member will take the same amount of time at every meeting; and not run on and on, transgressing on the time belonging to other members, as often happens with extemporized talks. Second, it assures that all candidates hear the same papers. Third, it enables the chairman to call in a substitute at a moment's notice if a member cannot attend. Fourth, since the papers have been approved by the Board of Custodians of the Grand Lodge, each candidate hears only that which has been authorized and carries the weight and responsibility of the Grand Lodge.

The candidate should understand clearly that what he hears is not the random opinion of an individual, but a statement sanctioned by the Craft, and therefore to be accepted in all seriousness and acted upon.

Programs for the Five Meetings

THE FIRST MEETING (Preceding the First Degree)

(For the guidance of the committee only) The purpose is to introduce the candidate to Freemasonry. His teachers should impress upon him that becoming a Mason is not a frivolous undertaking; and that Initiation, Passing, and Raising are not perfunctory, mechanical ceremonies performed merely for the purpose of getting a degree, but that they are indispensable steps. He should be taught that Freemasonry is a life to be lived, not a set of hollow forms to be hypocritically observed; that he must first become prepared "in his heart." He should also learn that in the committee and in the officers of the lodge he has guides and friends to whom he may go at any time for counsel.

For these purposes four papers on as many subjects are printed herewith for the use of the committee. These are:

1. Introduction by the Chairman
2. A Definition and a Short History of Freemasonry
3. The Qualifications
4. The Machinery and Organization of a Lodge

THE SECOND MEETING (Following the First Degree)

(For the guidance of the committee only) The candidate is now an Entered Apprentice. His initiation has been an experience very different from what he expected. He feels somewhat mystified by the strange ceremony. The language is strange, and the symbols are unusual. He wonders what to do next, and what his duties and privileges as an Entered Apprentice are. The object of this meeting is to give him an interpretation of the degree, to describe an Entered Apprentice, to explain briefly some of the symbols and allegories, to give him a clearer concept of Masonic tenets and to prepare him for the next step. To this end the following four subjects are herewith presented:

1. The Meaning of the term Entered Apprentice
2. An Interpretation of the Ritual of the First Degree
3. The Principal Tenets
4. Symbols of the First Degree

THE THIRD MEETING (Following the Second Degree)

(For the guidance of the committee only) The degree of Fellow Craft seldom commands the interest it deserves. In truth, it is a very essential degree filled with important lessons, and provides a magnificent opportunity to present all aspects of Freemasonry's appeal to the intellect -- since education, symbolized by the liberal arts and sciences, is its foundation.

The candidate is now midway on his journey. After meeting the committee twice and taking part in two degrees, he begins to feel at home. If the committee has done its part, he has learned that Masonry has no "horseplay."

The candidate, aided by the liberal arts and sciences and the five senses, may climb the symbolic steps to a middle chamber where wisdom is found in the midst of culture and enlightenment.

At the center of this degree, one of the finest and most beautiful in Masonry, we may find an impressive picture of the awakening and cultivation of the mind under the influences of Masonry.

It is important that the committee emphasize the philosophy of Masonry, its great teachings, and its message of education, enlightenment, and toleration. For this purpose four subjects are herewith presented:

1. Meaning of the Term Fellow Craft and the Duties and Privileges of a Fellow Craft
2. Interpretation of the Ritual of the Fellow Craft Degree
3. Symbols and Allegories of the Fellow Craft Degree
4. The Teachings of the Fellow Craft Degree

THE FOURTH MEETING SPECIAL INSTRUCTION (Immediately after the Third Degree)

(For the guidance of the committee only) We have been negligent in our duty to the brother who has just received the Third Degree. We have expected him to find his way as best he can. This is the most critical period in his Masonic career, and if the lodge gives him encouragement and a reasonable amount of instruction and guidance until he has had time to form habits of interest, he should develop into a working Mason; otherwise he is apt to lapse into chronic indifference and be just another dues-paying member.

To neglect the proper instruction and guidance is a dereliction in Masonic duty to the future Masons in our state.

Initiation, Passing, and Raising are only the beginning. The newly Raised brother needs to know and to understand his duties as a Master Mason, his rights, his privileges, and his financial obligations; he should be taught how to visit a lodge; he needs facts about the Grand Lodge, and the customs, landmarks, and jurisprudence of the Craft. He should be taught what NOT to do as well as what TO do. At no other time in his Masonic career will he be so eager to learn as in the impressionable period immediately following the Third Degree. In the fourth meeting the committee has the vital part of making a capable Masonic worker. To this end the following program of instruction is presented.

The seven subjects should not require more than thirty minutes, and should be presented immediately following the Raising of the brother; and before the officers and the committee have dispersed, or as an educational program during the next stated communication. See page 38 for the list of subjects.

THE FIFTH MEETING (Following the Third Degree)

(For the guidance of the committee only) This meeting should be held within a very short time after the brother is Raised. The Third Degree is the climax of initiation in the Symbolic Lodge and the greatest, the most profound, and the most influential degree in Masonry. The time for the candidate to learn its meaning is while it remains fresh in his memory and warm in his feelings. In this meeting the committee has an opportunity to put him into possession of that meaning, as well as to give him more general information on those subjects presented in the oral instruction and those concerning the traditions and work of the Craft. It is your opportunity to help one who has just become a member in name to become a Mason in fact, in the sense that throughout his Masonic career he will continue serving and working for the Craft. To this end the following four subjects are herewith presented:

1. Interpretation of the Ritual of the Third Degree
2. Symbols, Emblems, and Allegories of the Third Degree
3. The Laws of Freemasonry
4. The Duties, Privileges, and Rights of a Master Mason

SUMMARY:

The Lodge System of Masonic Education is simple and effective. For best results:

1. The System should be put into effect by the Master.
2. The Master appoints a committee of three, and the work of the lodge and the committee should be so arranged that perfect harmony and cooperation may be attained. The committee will select such assistants as may be necessary.
3. A chairman and a vice-chairman are named, either by appointment by the Master or by election by the committee.
4. Each candidate is required to meet with this committee five times: once before the First Degree, once after the First Degree, once after the Second Degree, and twice after the Third Degree.
5. At every meeting except the fourth, a committee member reads from manuscript or recites from memory one of the short papers herewith provided.
6. At the fourth meeting the particular instruction must be given orally.
(See page 38).
7. The lectures should be followed by a period for appropriate questions and discussion.

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE (To be given by the chairman)
Subject No. 1 - Meeting No. 1

My Friend:

As you are a candidate for membership in the Masonic Fraternity, having been unanimously elected to receive the degrees, you will be given certain instruction before receiving each degree. This instruction, which begins prior to your initiation, will continue throughout the course of the three degrees. It will clarify some things, which may be obscure, emphasize the significance of much of what you will see and hear and give you a sort of mental picture of the structure and purpose of Masonry.

You and Freemasonry are strangers to each other, never having been introduced before. As you are a stranger and since you are going on a strange journey, it is the definite responsibility of the members of the Fraternity, who are your friends and who will later on be your brothers, to point out the signposts and landmarks, which will guide you in your journey.

You should approach Masonry with a receptive mind, and as you progress through the degrees, interpret for yourself, as far as possible, all that you hear and see.

The desire to become a Freemason should be very seriously considered and carefully analyzed. No one should enter upon that undertaking hastily, unadvisedly, or because of persuasion by any person.

If you are genuinely serious in your purpose when you cross the threshold of the Masonic lodge, then it should become a sacred place for you. In a very vital sense the lodge can become a home wherein you should be content to honor your God, to love and serve your brethren, and to learn the many valuable lessons which Masonry will teach you.

Before you enter the lodge, you should be careful to attend to these duties:

First - You should be clear in mind. Your mental faculties should be free from distracting thoughts that would tend to divert you from the instruction you will receive; you should set aside all prejudice and be free to accept and use the lessons of the degrees.

Second - You should be pure in heart. Put away evil thoughts. If you have done wrong to anyone, seek honestly to make amends.

Third - You should be clean in body. Let this be symbolic of the genuine purification of your heart and mind and of the integrity of your intentions.

Fourth - You should be prayerful in spirit. Whether or not it is your daily habit to pray to your God, pray on the eve of your Initiation for His blessing upon what you are about to do, for wisdom that will help you to understand, and for strength that will make you steadfast.

Fifth - You should be confident of your good intentions. Be certain that you still sincerely desire to proceed in Masonry because there is no rightful place in the Fraternity for those who are half-hearted, undecided, indifferent, or unstable.

The symbolism of Freemasonry deals with the intellectual, moral, and spiritual values of life. I assure you there is nothing of a light or trifling character in the degrees of Masonry. Any intimation or suggestion you may have had to the contrary is entirely false. There is a profound significance in every step you will be caused to take. You will be amply rewarded for your earnest study of those principles and for your faithful application of them in your everyday life, as thousands of other men have been rewarded in the past.

The rights and privileges of Freemasonry impose corresponding duties and responsibilities. Your duties and obligations as a member of the Fraternity will in no manner conflict with those duties and obligations you have already assumed by virtue of your being a part of modern society. On the contrary, the Masonic fraternity reiterates, reinforces, and re-emphasizes those duties and obligations.

Thus when you ask Masonry to share with you its past, present, and future, and the privileges of its brotherhood, you must clearly bear in mind the fact that Masonry will require you to share a part of your time, your talent, your means, and yourself with it. You must understand that our obligations are mutual and reciprocal. When you expect your brethren to fulfill their duties, they also expect you to fulfill your duties.

A DEFINITION AND A SHORT HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY

Subject No. 2-Meeting No. 1

My Friend:

At the beginning of your instruction in Masonry it is proper to give to you, as best we can, a short definition of Freemasonry.

What is this mysterious art we call Freemasonry? There have been a great number of definitions offered, but one of the simplest and most direct is used by our English brethren:

"Freemasonry is a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols." The idea of teaching by symbols and allegories is not new; all great teachers have more or less followed this system.

Albert Pike, a great Masonic scholar and writer, says, "Freemasonry is the subjugation of the Human that is in man by the Divine; the conquest of the appetites and passions by the moral sense and reason; a continued effort, struggle, and warfare of the spiritual against the material and sensual." Of course, these definitions need a great deal of explaining. Yet Masonry is, when clearly understood, a great worldwide system of emancipation, in that it teaches its initiates to liberate themselves from the slavery of all forms of ancient superstitions, obsolete creeds, and beliefs that do violence to the reasoning faculties of every intelligent, enlightened, and untrammelled human mind. Freemasonry is a system of morality by the practice of which its members may advance their spiritual interest. But it is definitely erroneous to suppose that Freemasonry is a system of religion. It is but the handmaiden of religion, although it largely and effectually illustrates one great branch of it -- the practice of virtue.

The system of morality, to which we have just referred, is that which every Mason is bound to profess and practice. If it includes principles with which he was familiar before he became a Mason, he will nevertheless find these presented here in new ways and under forms different from those with which he was previously familiar.

If he does not find in Masonic teachings anything surprisingly new, he should remember that in many respects at least there is "nothing new under the sun"; and that the essence of morality is to be found in the utter simplicity (though not the ease) of its requirements.

Freemasonry is neither a religion, a political organization, nor a social club. It interferes with none of these. It has for its foundation the basic principles of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. It teaches a belief in a Supreme Being, in the immortality of the soul, and that the Holy Book is the inestimable gift of God to man as the rule and guide for his faith and practice.

It is a Fraternity or brotherhood pledged to the building of character -- thoughts, words, motives, and deeds being the materials used. It strives to teach man the duty he owes to God, his country, his neighbor, and himself. It inculcates the practice of virtue and morality in daily conduct, and it conveys its teachings through ceremonies and symbols.

During almost every period of human history men have set themselves apart from their fellows in groups (or clans). In many of these groups the members were bound by secrets known only to those selected for membership.

In the primitive eras of man's existence, the idea seems to have developed that group protection would afford the greatest security against the harsh forces of nature and the evil actions of man; that such groups secure sympathy, support, and protection for those whose bond of union was made in a common cause. Early Freemasonry doubtless originated out of similar causes.

There are no precise historical records now available to establish the first origin of Masonry; and if any ever existed, they are now completely buried in obscurity. However, its philosophy may be traced back to the remote ages, where records actually exist in many cases. Its operative symbols are older than the Temple of Solomon or the Law of Moses, and many of its ceremonies may have been practiced in the ancient mysteries when Egypt stood as the most enlightened power of the world as then known.

The mission of Masonry now, is to teach men to curb their intemperate passions and to reconcile conflicting interests; to extend to nations those principles of humanity, benevolence, and virtue which should move individuals to overcome the pride of conquest and the pomp of war; to destroy local prejudices and unreasonable partialities; to banish from the world every source of hatred, hostility, and ill will; and to introduce those voluntary social dealings among men which can preserve peace and good order better than penal laws or political regulations ever could.

The advantages which mankind in general reaps from this science of morality are beyond calculation. Its blessings are not confined to any one country but are diffused by the Craft throughout the world. Men of every country, sect, and opinion are united in a strong bond of brotherly affection with the sole object of improving men and blessing mankind.

A Mason is at home in every country and with his friends in every lodge. On the level of Masonry, we know only God and man. We know neither rich nor poor, neither royal blood nor peasant stock. Men of wealth, men of simple toil, philosophers, royal heirs, and hard-handed peasants meet here upon the level, upon a common ground as brothers; and God is the Father of them all.

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The Masonic fraternity is in no sense an insurance society; neither does it pay benefits in case of sickness or death. In a broad and correct sense, it is both educational and charitable. It extends such assistance only as it is willing and able to grant. It knowingly admits none to membership except those who are able to provide for themselves and those dependent upon them. Freemasonry teaches and gives opportunity to its members to inculcate morality, honesty, and integrity in all walks of life, and to worthy members it renders assistance to a limited extent. It expects its members to obey the moral law and to practice charity towards all mankind; it believes that its members should have a strong desire to aid their fellow creatures. It has its own laws, rules, and regulations, and it requires a strict obedience thereto.

Admission into Freemasonry must not be sought through idle curiosity or because of ambition for honors, in the hope of monetary gain or of business or political advancement, nor for mercenary or other unworthy motives. The aim of the true Mason is to cultivate a brotherly feeling among men, and to help, aid, and assist whomsoever he can.

The right to petition for the degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry is rarely denied to any man, but this right goes no further than granting the privilege of petitioning; all who petition are not admitted. Masonry does not solicit members; it wants and welcomes men of high character and integrity who should seek admission entirely of their own free will and accord.

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A short review of Masonic history may help you to better appreciate the degrees, and may induce you to seek a further study of the subject.

Masonry is very old. No one knows how old it is. I believe that this subject can be best presented if divided into three periods. The first period begins in the obscure past and comes down to the twelfth or thirteenth century. In this period Masonic students will find evidence of societies that held the same principles, taught the same lessons, and used similar methods; yet they were not called Masonic, that is, they had names other than Masonic lodges.

The second period begins with the twelfth century and comes down to 1717. It is impossible to find an exact, definite starting point for this middle period such as may be found for the modern period; but out of the Middle Ages have come certain important manuscripts and lodge records now preserved in the British Museum, the libraries of the Grand Lodges of England and Scotland, and in some private libraries.

The third period extends from June 24, 1717, when the first grand lodge was organized in London, to the present day. This is a period of well-kept records, also of an extensive literature.

Each of these periods invites the student of Freemasonry and the last two offer rich rewards for his labors. In the Ancient Mysteries of Egypt, India, Persia, Phoenicia, Greece, Rome, Gaul, Britain, and the Orient, you will find many of the principles, lessons, and methods with which the Mason of today is familiar.

The oldest of all written records of our Craft is a manuscript called the "Halliwell" or "Regius" Manuscript, written by some unknown brother in England before 1390, which contains a description of the Ancient Landmarks of Freemasonry. The document itself shows that over 600 years ago Freemasonry was already very old.

At the time this document was written all Freemasons were operatives; that is, they were workmen engaged on buildings. Such a builder was called a "Mason." There were many kinds of Masons, but the evidence indicates that those who were called "Freemasons" were those builders of a superior type who designed, supervised, and erected the great cathedrals and other marvelous structures in the Gothic style of architecture. These Operative Masons designed such buildings as a whole and in each detail; dressed the stone from the quarries and laid it in the walls; set up arches, pillars, columns, and buttresses; laid the floor; built the roof; carved the decorations; made and fitted the stained glass windows; and produced the sculptures. Their work was difficult to perform, called for a high degree of skill and genius, and required a great deal of knowledge of mechanics and geometry as well as of stone-masonry. They were the great artists of the Middle Ages.

Where a number of Freemasons worked together on a building over a period of years, they organized a lodge, which probably met in a temporary structure or in one of the rooms of the uncompleted building. Such a lodge was governed by a Worshipful Master assisted by Wardens; it had a Secretary to keep its books, a Treasurer to keep and to disburse its funds, a charity fund from which to dispense relief to the members in accident, sickness, or distress and to widows and orphans of Master Masons; it met in stated communications, divided its membership into grades, admitted members by initiation -- in short it was in all essentials what a Masonic lodge is today.

Completing their work in one community, these Freemasons would move to another, setting up their lodges wherever they worked. Other types of Masons were required, by law, to live and work in the same community year in and year out and under local restrictions. Some of our Masonic historians believe it may have been because they were free of such restrictions that the Gothic builders were called "Freemasons."

Such was the Fraternity in its "operative" period; and as such it flourished for generations. Then came a great change in its circumstances.

The Religious Reformation of the sixteenth century ended the extensive ecclesiastical building program, especially in the Gothic style of architecture, resulting in disaster to the building trade. Social conditions underwent a revolution, and laws were changed bringing about a decline in the Craft. In England and Scotland, however, the Craft maintained its existence; and as already indicated, very important Masonic manuscripts dating from 1390 to 1693 are still preserved. These sources indicate that the lodges were then made up of operative Masons only.

During the Reformation, Euclid's geometry which had been carefully preserved by the Arabs, was rediscovered and published, thereby making the Mason's trade secrets known to all and causing the Craft to decline as an operative institution.

Owing to these conditions the Freemasons, to build up their membership, adopted a new practice -- they began to accept non-operative members.

In the old days only an operative Mason in the literal sense could become a member; but during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries gentlemen with no intention of becoming builders, probably from interest in the ancient customs of the Craft, or for many other reasons, applied for admission and were received; because they were thus accepted, they were called "Accepted Masons." There were a few of these at first; but as time passed, their number increased until, by the early part of the eighteenth century, they outnumbered the operative Masons and exerted more influence.

As a result of this condition the Craft took a revolutionary step, which set it on a new path of power and importance. On St. John the Baptist's Day, June 24, 1717, four or more old lodges of London and Westminster met in London and organized a grand lodge. This was the beginning of the modern period of Masonic history.

Not all of the lodges in the British Isles acknowledged the authority of this grand lodge, because it was believed that this body had altered some of the Ancient Landmarks. However, in 1751 another grand lodge was organized in England. In 1813 these two grand lodges adjusted their differences and united under the present organization. Prior to 1751 grand lodges had been set up in Scotland, Ireland, and on the European continent.

American lodges, of which the earliest one with authentic historical record was The First Lodge at Boston in 1733, were under the government of provincial Grand Lodges which were ruled by provincial Grand Masters appointed by the Grand Lodge of England, or Scotland, or Ireland. ¹

After the Revolutionary War, American grand lodges became sovereign and independent. It was questioned at that time whether or not there should be one grand lodge for the whole United States. But the wisdom of the Craft prevailed, and a grand lodge was created in each state and was sovereign in its own jurisdiction. Today we have 51 grand lodges, one for each state and one for the District of Columbia; plus the Grand Lodges of Prince Hall Masonry in many states..

The first lodge in North Carolina is said to have been Solomon's Lodge in Wilmington, which was chartered by Viscount Weymouth, Grand Master of England in 1735, but the North Carolina records show nothing concerning this lodge.² St. John's Lodge No. 1 at Wilmington, which was chartered in 1755 by the Grand Lodge of England, is still in existence. The present Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina was organized December 11, 1787.

Speculative Freemasonry did not spring full-formed out of nothing in 1717 but gradually evolved from operative Masonry and from the distant past.

¹ Undoubtedly other lodges were formed in other places at earlier times, but we have no authentic record of such times and places.

² See "Launching the Craft" on the Grand Lodge Website.

Through an unbroken line we can trace our origin back to those builders of the early Middle Ages; we are Masons too, except that where they erected buildings, we try to build manhood; their working tools we have transformed into emblems of moral and spiritual laws and forces; their practices and secrets we have embodied in the Royal Art of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth; their rituals, mellowed, enriched, and made more beautiful with the passing of time, we employ in the Initiating, Passing, and Raising of our candidates. All that was living and permanent in the ancient Craft, we have preserved; and we use it in behalf of goodwill, kindness, charity, and brotherhood among men. Such is our heritage; and as you enter into it, you will discover it inexhaustible in interest and lifelong in appeal, a power in your life to enrich, to ennoble, and to inspire you.

THE QUALIFICATIONS

Subject No. 3 - Meeting No. 1

My Friend:

Inasmuch as you have been duly elected to receive the degrees in Masonry, there may be a question in your mind as to the need of giving any further notice to the qualifications of a petitioner. But qualifications are not merely a test of a man's fitness to become a Mason; in a larger and more important sense they determine also a man's fitness to remain a Mason. The initial qualifications of a man who desires to become a Mason always remain in force. We do not outgrow them when we are elected, or after we receive the degrees.

The word "qualifications" is derived from a Latin term meaning **value**. The English term for the same idea is **worth**, from which we have *worthful* and *worshipful*. A man's value and worth determine his fitness for Masonry.

There are two kinds of values, internal and external.

The chief **internal value** is that you must come of "your own free will and accord." It is a condition of the mind. You must come unsolicited, and uninfluenced by mercenary, selfish, sordid, or ulterior motives. You are not to expect that, in becoming a Mason, you will gain professionally, politically, financially, or in business. A man's motives are essential to his fitness for Masonry. You know your own inner motives for becoming a Mason. They may be concealed until you become a Mason, but they will reveal themselves afterwards and may be a great factor in your being and remaining a Mason.

There are several external qualifications:

First, **Physical**: A petitioner for the degrees in Masonry must be a man, not a woman nor a child; he must have the senses of a man, especially those of hearing, seeing, and feeling; he must be able mentally and physically to earn a livelihood and must have no disability which would make him a burden or a charge upon the Craft; he must have no deformity which would prevent him from performing the candidate's part in the several degrees, and performing when receiving and giving instruction. However, in certain cases, the Grand Master has the authority to dispense with some of these physical requirements.

Second, **Mental**: He must be of mental worth and of sound mind. You will observe that the mental qualifications are not precisely defined; however, the Grand Lodge of North Carolina demands that a petitioner be able to read, write, and understand English. These mental qualifications are definitely implied and are as binding as if they were clearly expressed. Much is taught a Mason; much is demanded of him. It is impossible for him to assimilate the teachings or to meet the demands unless he possesses at least average intelligence and is mentally free of odd traits which tend to make him constantly morbid or irritable.

Third, **Political**: By these we mean all qualifications that have to do with citizenship and with a man's life as a neighbor, or as a member of his community, state, or nation. Under this subject it is required that you are a free man. This means not only that you are not one who has lost his rights of citizenship, and that there are no restraints or controls over you that would prevent you from freely and fully discharging your Masonic duties at all times, but it also means that you have a good reputation among those who know you. It is of greatest importance that you be a good citizen, that you obey the law, that you be obedient to the civil magistrates, and that you keep yourself from entanglement in rebellion and mobs in defiance of the claims of public order. A discussion of partisan politics in our lodges is not tolerated under any circumstances.

Fourth, **Moral and Religious**: The petitioner must be of upright life and good morals; he must be a good man and true, a man of honor, virtue, and honesty.

The moral requirement of the Fraternity is so imperative and exacting that it is a contradiction in terms to think of a Mason as not being devoted to integrity and rectitude of character.

As to religion, it is required that a petitioner believe in God and in Immortality; that he recognize the Holy Book as the rule and guide of his faith; that he practice tolerance; that he not be questioned as to the particular form or mode of his faith; and that he not question his brethren on those subjects. A discussion of sectarian or denominational religious matters in our lodges is not tolerated under any circumstances.

In short, a petitioner for the degrees in Masonry must be a man of such bodily equipment as will enable him to provide a livelihood for himself and those dependent upon him, and to satisfy the demands of the ritualistic work; mentally competent, responsible, discreet; of sound character and reputation; a good citizen, with a well-grounded religious faith; his own master, free from external controls; devoted to the principles of brotherhood; and acceptable to the members of his lodge.

Freemasonry is an organized society of men, devoted to the high principles of character building. If you give no service to the Institution, you will receive little from it (because character is developed far more by rendering than by receiving service). Unless you are prepared and willing to give the Fraternity your constant and undivided loyalty, it would be better for you to remain outside its ranks. You may say that we are insisting on this in advance of your full knowledge of its significance; but we are, likewise, assuming much in your behalf, and we are prepared to admit our obligation to you in advance of actual fraternal association. If we have made no error in accepting you, we have no doubt that the principles of Masonry will deserve not only your loyalty, but your active and sincere cooperation in furthering the interests of the Craft.

There will not be a word spoken or an act performed which can hurt your dignity or your feelings. There is no physical or mental test to degrade you or Masonry. Be assured there is nothing of a light or trifling character in any of the degrees. There is a profound significance in every part of the ceremonies. You should try to interpret for yourself all that you experience. If you go through the ritual of Initiating, Passing, and Raising, wondering what is going to happen to you, you will miss the importance of what should be a great and ennobling experience.

THE MACHINERY AND ORGANIZATION OF A LODGE

Subject No. 4 - Meeting No. 1

My Friend:

The lodge to which you have applied for admission is one of the working units, not only of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina, but of Masonry as a world-wide institution.

At this time it is not appropriate to give you a complete insight into lodge organization; however, there are some particular things that you should know about it.

Even though we are a part of a world society, it is nevertheless to be understood by a beginner that each lodge is a separate unit and has its own charter, officers, and by-laws.

In North Carolina a lodge is an organization of twenty or more Master Masons empowered by the Grand Lodge to confer Masonic degrees and to perform other Masonic work.

The charter is issued to a lodge only by the Grand Lodge. This charter can be retained only so long as a lodge obeys the laws of the Grand Lodge and works according to the traditions, ancient usages, and customs of the Masonic fraternity. The lodge is governed by the Grand Lodge Book of Constitutions, called The Code.

The lodges in North Carolina have ten officers, five of them elected, namely: the Worshipful Master, the Senior Warden, the Junior Warden, the Secretary, and the Treasurer. The Worshipful Master appoints all the other officers and names the members of all committees unless otherwise provided in The Code.

The Worshipful Master is also the presiding officer of the lodge; but in the absence of the Master, the Senior Warden, who is the second ranking officer, presides in his stead. The Junior Warden, next in rank, presides in case neither the Worshipful Master nor the Senior Warden is present.

The Secretary of the lodge keeps the minutes and receives all money due the lodge.

The Treasurer receives lodge money from the Secretary, keeps an accurate account of it, and pays it out by order of the Master and the consent of the lodge.

The Tyler guards the outer door of the lodge to see that no one enters or leaves the lodge except those entitled to do so.

The meetings of the lodge are called communications. There are two kinds: stated and emergent. Stated communications are held at regular intervals on the day and at the hour set in the by-laws and include all business requiring action or approval of the members. Emergent communications are called by the Worshipful Master for conferring degrees or handling matters not reserved to a Stated Communication.

A lodge can make Masons only of elected petitioners who have lived six months within the state immediately preceding the date of the petition. [Code: 66-1.8] There are certain exceptions to this rule of which you will learn later. The lodge receives a petition only at a stated communication and it is referred to an investigating committee of three members who return a report in writing. The lodge must then ballot upon the petition at a stated communication. No ballot can be taken within one month of the date the petition was received and read in the lodge. The petitioner must receive a unanimously favorable ballot to be elected to receive the three degrees, which are entitled: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason.

In order to complete the petition, a candidate must pay an initiation fee, which is fixed by the lodge by-laws. All members must pay the annual dues named in the by-laws; they are payable in advance on January first each year. A lodge cannot levy an assessment on its members for any purpose, but it may increase its annual dues by changing its by-laws.

There are regulations for the conduct of the business of the lodge; these govern the conduct of the members when assembled. This will be explained to you after you have become a Master Mason.

This is a brief idea of lodge organization. Yet before concluding this subject you should be given some idea of the office of the Worshipful Master. This term may sound strange to you but you will learn, as you progress, that it is quite accurate. "Worshipful" means "worthy of honor" and indicates that the Master is entitled to the honor and respect of every member of the lodge. He is, in fact, the Master, and as such he has very broad powers. He has the power and authority to convene his lodge for stated or emergent communications; to see that the duties of the officers and committees of the lodge are faithfully performed; to discharge the executive functions of the lodge; to remove any appointed officer or any member of a committee for cause. The Master is indeed the Master of his lodge, its chief executive, its head; vested with great authority, entrusted with great powers; but there should be no arbitrary use of such powers and authority since they are defined and regulated by law and ancient custom. He is a person charged with high duty and must exemplify the Masonic ideal. Because of his authority, duties, and character we are indeed mindful of his worth.

MEANING OF THE TERM APPRENTICE

Subject No. 1 - Meeting No. 2

My Brother:

As you have taken your first step in Masonry, you are now called an "Entered Apprentice."

I hope you will never forget your experience in the First Degree. A degree in Masonry is not an isolated event, but a continuing privilege. Your possession of the degree is now complete; you can continue to enjoy it as long as you live, and the more you study its words and symbolism, the more it will mean to you.

A brief explanation of this degree may be useful because its ceremonies are unusual and its ritual contains strange phrases and names. At the end of Initiation, most of us were bewildered. Even the name of "Entered Apprentice" may be strange to you. Operative Masons used the apprenticeship system to train new craftsmen.

The word "apprentice" means "learner" or "beginner," one who is taking his first step in mastering a trade, an art, or a profession. The operative apprentice was a boy, usually between twelve and fifteen years of age. He had to be sound physically in order to do the required work. He had to be of good habits, that is, obedient, willing to learn, and of unquestioned reputation; and had to be well recommended by Masons already members of the Craft.

When such a boy had been selected, he was called into the lodge where all members could assure themselves of his mental, moral, and physical qualifications. If they voted to receive him, he was given valuable information about the Craft: what it required of its members, something of its early history and tradition, and what his duties would be. He gave a solemn promise to obey his superiors, to work diligently, to observe the laws and rules, and to keep the secrets of the builders craft as well as the secrets of recognition.

After being thus obligated, he was bound over, or indentured, to one of the more experienced Master Masons who was called an "Intender." Usually he lived with that Master Mason and day after day learned from him the methods, secrets, skills, and the use of the working tools of the Craft. This apprenticeship lasted in most cases for a period of seven years. The boy was then usually 21 years of age or more. When this young man was able to show proof of his mastery of the art and his fitness to become an acceptable member of the society, his name was then officially written or entered on the books of the lodge, and he was given a recognized place in the Craft organization. This official entering of his name gave him the title "Entered Apprentice."

Great care was given by our Operative Masonic forebears to the selection and training of these young apprentices. Much responsibility was placed on the Intender to whom the apprentice was assigned for training. He spent years in preparing the boy to prove his proficiency by meeting the most rigid tests of skill before he was permitted to advance to a higher degree in the Craft. The apprentice was given moral instruction, his conduct was carefully scrutinized, and rules were laid down to control his manner of life, all of which was in addition to the practical training in the trade or art. Other Master Masons with whom the apprentice was set to work were also his teachers.

In reading the ancient documents of the Craft, we are impressed by the amount of space devoted to Apprentices. As time passed, there grew up about the rank, duties, and regulation of the Apprentice an established set of customs, ceremonies, rules, and traditions. These were eventually organized into an Operative Entered Apprentice Degree. After the Reformation, as Operative Masonry gradually evolved into Speculative Masonry, the lessons of the Entered Apprentice Degree were retained as one of the degrees of the Speculative lodge.

As an Entered Apprentice you are not yet a member of the lodge, you have no voice in the lodge, and you cannot vote or hold office therein; you are not subject to dues; you are not entitled to walk in our public processions.

You may sit in a lodge when opened on the First Degree; however, you cannot visit a lodge other than your own except by permission of its Master. You cannot be examined for the purpose of visitation, but must be vouched-for by a Master Mason.

You have the right to be instructed in the work of the First Degree and to apply for advancement when proficient in that work.

As an Entered Apprentice Mason, or a beginner in Speculative Masonry, certain things are expected of you:

First, you must have guides and teachers; you must show obedience to them and be willing to have them lead you.

Second, you must learn certain portions of the degree, so as to prove your proficiency in open lodge. But you are to learn these parts not merely to pass this test; you should master them so thoroughly that they will remain with you through life, because they contain fundamental Masonic teachings which are forever binding on every Entered Apprentice and which you will need many times in the future.

Third, you must study to improve yourself in Masonry in other ways. This lodge will not be content merely to have your name on its books and to receive your annual dues; it requires that you become an active Mason, not merely a member.

In the lodge during your initiation you were taught a certain lesson about a cornerstone. The meaning of that lesson should now make sense to you. You are a cornerstone of the Craft. Today you are an Entered Apprentice; in a short time you may be a Fellow Craft; after that you may become a Master Mason. The day may come when into your hands will fall the responsibilities of the lodge. What Masonry is to be in the future depends on what you are now, as an Entered Apprentice. You are the cornerstone on which the Fraternity is now building for the future. It is our hope that you will prove a solid foundation, true and tried, set foursquare, on which our great Fraternity may safely build for its work in many years to come.

INTERPRETATION OF THE RITUAL OF THE FIRST DEGREE

Subject No. 2 - Meeting No. 2

My Brother:

The oblong Masonic lodge is described in the ritual as a symbol of the world. It refers back to early times when men believed the earth to be square and the sky to be a solid dome. Of course, this does not represent our modern concept of the physical shape of the world. It is entirely symbolic. The First Degree is not a treatise on geography or astronomy.

The world thus represented is the world of Freemasonry; the Masonic career from beginning to end including all that lies between. The West Gate, through which the candidate enters, represents birth. In the First Degree the candidate is ushered into Masonic life, poor, blind, helpless, like a newborn babe. The old life with all its encumbrances should have dropped from him completely. He now enters a new life in a new world.

Masonry is systematic, well proportioned, and balanced. Duties and work are supervised and regulated; controlled through laws written and unwritten; expressed through landmarks, traditions, usages, constitutions, and by-laws; guided and directed through officers vested with power and authority. The candidate obligates himself to uphold that lawful system. When he salutes the Master, he signifies his obedience to the legally constituted officers. When he follows his guide and fears no danger, he expresses his trust in and loyalty to the Fraternity.

This new world of Freemasonry is a lawful world in which whims, fickleness, or arbitrariness have no part. It has a definite nature, it is devoted to specified purposes, it is committed to well-defined aims and ideals. Its members cannot make it over to suit their own whims or to conform to their own purposes; they must make themselves over to conform to its requirements. A man should not become a Master Mason in order to become a lodge member; he should become a member in order to become a real Master Mason. One of the first requirements of the Apprentice is that he shall offer himself as a rough stone to be shaped under Masonic law and influences for a place in the Temple of Masonry.

Masonry satisfies the needs of the whole man -- physical, moral, intellectual, social, and spiritual. It requires of its members that they be good and true men, able to meet the test of the Square, the Plumb, the Level, and the Compasses. It offers abundant opportunities for good fellowship and social contacts. It satisfies the mind with the great teachings of a profound philosophy. It worships God, prepares its altars, opens the Sacred Books, and leads the life of prayer according to the needs of each individual soul. To learn such a life as this an Apprentice must study to improve himself in Masonry; he will not be permitted to come merely for the loaves and fishes, or only to be entertained, or to seek some personal advantage.

This world of Masonry is dedicated to brotherhood. Unless the Apprentice is willing and qualified to lead the brotherly life, he will never master the Royal Art. Unless he is willing in all sincerity to abide by his obligations and the laws which exist to define, regulate, and control the brotherly life, he will be out of harmony with the Fraternity -- unable to establish a foothold in that world of Masonry which he seeks to enter. All of our rituals, symbols, emblems, allegories, and ceremonies, in all the richness and variety of their meaning, point in the same direction. Unless an Apprentice understands and accepts them, he will fail to grasp the Masonic teaching.

In the First Degree, an Apprentice takes his first step into this life; leaves the darkness, destitution, and helplessness of the profane world for the light and warmth of this new existence. This is the great meaning of the degree; it is not an idle formality, but a genuine experience, the beginning of a new career in which duties, rights, and privileges are real and are as actual as anything can be. If a candidate is to be more than an Apprentice in name only, he must stand ready *to do the work upon his own nature that will make him a different man*. Members are called "craftsmen" because they are workmen; lodges are called "quarries" because they are scenes of toil. Freemasonry offers no privileges or rewards except to those who earn them; it places working tools, not playthings, in the hands of its members.

To become a Mason is a solemn and serious undertaking. Once the step is taken, it may well change the course of a man's life.

THE PRINCIPAL TENETS (Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth)

Subject No. 3 - Meeting No. 2

My Brother:

To understand this subject clearly we must first get a definition of the word "tenet." A "tenet" is a theory or concept that is so universally accepted that no one questions its truth. It is something that has held true in every instance without question for so long that everyone takes it for granted. We do not ask: "Is it true?" The question is, "What are we going to do about it?"

There are many tenets included in Masonic teachings. They are so numerous that it would be impracticable to try to discuss all of them. Our topic is therefore confined to the outstanding ones, which we call the "Principal Tenets." These principal tenets are: Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. Let us briefly consider each of them separately.

Brotherly Love - One of the closest associations that could possibly exist between two people is Brotherly Love. We love our blood brothers because they truly are our brothers. We have no hope of any material gain by associating with them. We would refuse such gain if it were offered. We enjoy being with them just for the pleasure we receive from their presence. We want to aid and assist them without thought of gain or reward. Their presence satisfies an inner desire that nothing else can. We overlook faults of our brothers that would be repulsive in others. We would come to their rescue even if we were convinced they were in the wrong. Petty grievances and peculiarities are overlooked or ignored. There are bonds of attraction, which are virtually unbreakable but cannot be reasonably explained. All these things exist because we are brothers. In the Masonic sense we must strive to achieve that feeling with our Masonic brethren. We must be willing to overlook or forget petty grievances or peculiarities. We must strive to see the good things in our brethren that will make us love them. We must cast aside our passions and prejudices and remember that, "All men are my brethren." We must remember that, "By the exercise of brotherly love we are taught to regard the whole human species, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, as one great family; and that we must aid, support and protect each other."

Relief - The most common interpretation of Relief is some form of charity. The word suggests relief from pauperism. Organized charity is set up in almost every community to relieve the distressed. This charity is supported by taxation and public subscription. Its purpose is to assist worthy people who, through some misfortune beyond their control, become destitute. It is the duty of every normal person to contribute to this relief.

Masonic relief has a much deeper meaning. To contribute to public charity is the responsibility of everyone. Every normal citizen is obligated to society to carry his normal share of worthy charity expense. Unless he contributes his share of this burden, he does not pay his lawful debt to society. A person must contribute more than his natural share before he can be classed as one who has donated to relief; anything less than this is classed as obligation, not relief.

Masonic relief has still another meaning. A person may be distressed in other than financial ways. He may have a business or a family problem that discourages him, and a helpful suggestion may give him the relief he needs. He may be lonely because he lacks proper associations; then a cheerful word may give him relief. In many cases a pleasant smile may give him the relief he seeks. We claim that there are many ways of giving relief.

To relieve the distressed is a duty incumbent on all men. To sympathize with them in their misfortunes, to console them in their sorrows, and to restore peace to their troubled minds -- these are the great aims we have in view. We, as Masons, must be alert to recognize these opportunities and offer our services in the way that will best bring relief.

Truth - We commonly think of Truth as the opposite of falsehood. When a person's word is as good as his bond, he is classed as being truthful. To be good and true is one of the first lessons we are taught in Masonry. Unless a person has a reputation of being truthful, he is not morally qualified to become a member of our order. Truthfulness is one of the fundamental requirements of good citizenship. Without truth there would be no foundation for trust and fellowship.

Freemasonry's motto is, "Let there be light." In this sense truth has a much deeper meaning. In Masonry there is a never-ending search for more truth and light. There is a great storehouse of truth for every Mason to explore. It cannot be transferred from person to person in the same manner in which we communicate our ritual and our secrets. It must be found by personal search. To each person it presents a different interpretation. With this in mind we urge you to consider carefully the teachings of the Craft as you progress in your Masonic journey.

SYMBOLS OF THE APPRENTICE

Subject No. 4 - Meeting No. 2

My Brother:

Albert Pike, a leading Masonic scholar and writer, said: "The symbolism of Masonry is the soul of Masonry. Every symbol of a lodge is a religious teacher, the mute teacher also of morals and philosophy. It is in its ancient symbols and in the knowledge of their true meanings that the preeminence of Freemasonry over all other orders consists. In other respects, some of them may compete with it, rival it, perhaps even excel it; but by its symbols it will reign without a peer when it learns again what its symbols mean, and that each is the embodiment of some great, old, rare truth."

Each of the symbols, emblems, and allegories of the First Degree has a meaning, which contains a lesson of the degree. No attempt will be made to give you a complete interpretation of the ritual of this degree. But you will be given enough insight to help you begin a further study of it.

The Hoodwink represents the darkness in which an uninitiated man stands before he enters into Masonic life. It is removed at the moment of enlightenment to suggest that great things in our existence (such as goodness, truth, and beauty) are not created by us -- *we find them*, sometimes suddenly. Strange as it may seem, these great things have always existed; but, our minds being in darkness, they were concealed from us.

All through Masonry you will find that light has a great symbolic meaning. Light as opposed to darkness suggests many contrasts, with light always symbolizing the principles for which Masonry stands; and its opposite – darkness -- typifying those things which are antagonistic. Moreover, before your initiation you were in darkness concerning Masonry, but later you were partially enlightened; and in this sense light is a means of discovery. Mental or spiritual blindness cuts off the individual from all that makes life worth living; but as light comes with increasing intensity, he finds himself entering a new existence. Light has made this possible; but it remains for him to explore, to understand, and to conform. An enlightened mind is not hoodwinked.

The Cable Tow is a symbol of all those external restraints by which a man is controlled by others, or by forces outside himself over which he has no control. It is also a symbol of our own passions and vices, which may control our thoughts, words, and actions. When a man does not keep the law of his own accord, he must be compelled to keep it. The removal of the cable tow signifies that *when a man becomes master of himself*, he has no need of someone else to keep him within due bounds but he does it out of his own character.

The lodge is Masonically understood to be the world, which has been explained to you in a previous lecture. The Ceremony of Entrance, your experience at the entrance, signifies your birth into the Masonic world, there to live a new, richer, and happier life.

The Reception points to the real penalty for the violation of your obligations, the destructive consequences to the nature of any man who is faithless to his vows, untrue to his word, or unfaithful or disloyal to his allegiance.

The Rite of Circumambulation, or walking around the lodge room, is an allegorical ceremony rich with many meanings, and it tends to illustrate to you that Masonry is a progressive journey from one attainment to another, always in search of more light.

An equally significant ceremony is that of Approaching the East. The East is the source of light. Since Masons are the sons of light, we face the East.

The Altar is a symbol of the place which the worship of God holds in Masonry. It is the center around which all else revolves.

The Three Great Lights in Masonry are the Holy Bible, the Square, and the Compasses. The Holy Bible represents the will of God as understood by man, the Square is the emblem of virtue, and the Compasses signify the moral and spiritual life. If a man acts in obedience to the will of God and according to the dictates of an enlightened conscience, he will be living in the illumination of the Great Lights and cannot go astray.

The Word and Grip are our means of recognition when among strangers and in distant places. By them we are able to prove others and ourselves to be regular Masons in order that we may enter into fraternal fellowship.

The Rite of Salutation, the respectful salute given by the candidate, is a means of signifying his acceptance of the authority of the principal officers. It is a further symbol of a Mason's respect for, and obedience to, all just and duly constituted authority.

The Worshipful Master is a symbol, as well as the executive officer of the lodge. As the sun rules the day, so should he endeavor to rule and govern the lodge with equal regularity. His title signifies that he has by service, training, and responsibility earned the reverence, respect, and obedience of the brethren.

The Apron is an emblem of purity and is the distinctive badge of a Mason. By purity we mean that the wearer should walk blamelessly, loyally, obediently according to the laws of the Craft, and with sincere good will among the brethren. As a badge of a Mason, the apron signifies that Masons are workers and builders, not drones or destroyers.

The symbolism of the Rite of Destitution comes to us from antiquity when man believed that planets determined human fate and controlled human passions. It was supposed that each planet was controlled by a metal. Anciently candidates were compelled to leave all metals behind lest they bring some disturbing planetary influences into the lodge. This superstition is no longer believed, but the old point about keeping out all disturbing influences is still invoked with vigor. No candidate or Mason may bring into the lodge room any of his passions or prejudices lest he destroy the peace and harmony so vital to Masonry.

The North East Corner is traditionally the place where the cornerstone of a building is laid. You, an Entered Apprentice, one of the noblest symbols of the Craft, stood there as a cornerstone of the future Craft. You represented man willing to submit to discipline, ready "to receive your first instructions" in order to learn the Great Art of Life, the Royal Art as represented by all the mysteries of Masonry. What Apprentices are today, Masonry will become in the future.

The Working Tools represent the moral and spiritual virtues, habits, and forces by which a man reshapes the crude and often stubborn materials of his nature to adjust himself to the requirements of human society. To become a Mason, a man who has lived carelessly without plan, aim, or ideal must learn to systematize and regulate his life as signified by the Twenty-four Inch Gauge. If he has traits of temper, habits of speech, or defects of character that disturb or injure others and interfere with his taking his proper place in the brotherhood, as "corners of rough stones" interfere with putting them into their allotted places in the building, he must rid himself of them. This is symbolized by the Common Gavel.

I hope this brief summary of First Degree symbols may lead you to seek further light, not only that you may become a well-trained Mason, but also that in your life outside the lodge room you may experience and enjoy the real value of the teachings of Masonry.

**MEANING OF THE TERM FELLOW CRAFT
AND THE DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF A FELLOW CRAFT
Subject No. 1 - Meeting No. 3**

My Brother:

"Fellow Craft" is one of a large number of terms which have a technical meaning peculiar to Freemasonry and which are seldom found elsewhere. A craft is an organization of skilled workmen such as masons, carpenters, painters, and sculptors. A fellow means one who holds membership in such a craft, obligated to the same duties and allowed the same privileges. Since the skilled crafts are no longer organized as they were anciently, the term is not now used in its original sense.

In Freemasonry the term, fellow, has two meanings, one which we call operative, the other, speculative.

In its operative period Freemasons were skilled workmen engaged in some branch of the building trade or art of architecture; and like other skilled workmen they had an organized craft of their own, the general form of which was called a "guild." A lodge was usually a local and temporary organization within the guild. This guild had officers, laws, rules, regulations, and customs of its own which were rigorously binding on all members.

It divided its membership into two grades; Apprentices and Fellows of the Craft (or Master Masons). The lower grade was composed of Apprentices. In a previous lecture you were told that Operative Freemasons recruited members from qualified lads of twelve to fifteen years of age. When such a boy proved acceptable to the members, he was required to swear to be teachable and obedient; upon which he was bound over to some Master Mason who was required to teach him the theory as well as the practice of Masonry. If he proved worthy, his name was formally entered in the books of the lodge, thereby giving him his title of Entered Apprentice. For seven years this boy lived with his master, gave him implicit obedience in all things, and toiled much but received no pay except his board, lodging, and clothing. In the lodge activities he held a place equally subordinate because he could not attend a lodge of Master Masons, had no voice or vote, and could not hold office. During his long apprenticeship he was really a servant with many duties, few rights, and little freedom.

At the end of his apprenticeship he was examined in the lodge; if his record was good, if he could prove his proficiency under test, and if the members voted in his favor, he was made a full member of the Craft with the same duties, rights, and privileges that all others had, and was called a "Fellow of the Craft." Because he had mastered the art and no longer needed a teacher, he was also called a "Master Mason." So far as his grade was concerned, these two terms meant the same thing.

Now that the craft is no longer operative, the term possesses a very different meaning; nevertheless, it is still used in its operative sense in certain parts of the ritual; and, of course, we frequently meet with it in the histories of the Fraternity.

You have also been told in a former lecture that Operative Freemasonry began to decline at about the time of the Reformation in the 16th century when lodges became few in number and small in membership. A few lodges in England began to admit men who had no intention of practicing Operative Masonry, but who were attracted by the Craft's antiquity, customs, and traditions. These were called Speculative Masons. At the beginning of the eighteenth century these Speculative Masons so increased in numbers that they gained control, and during the first quarter of that century completely transformed the Craft into the Speculative Fraternity that we now have.

Although they adhered as closely as possible to the old customs, they made some radical changes to fit the Society for its new purposes. One of the most important of these was to abandon the old rule of dividing the membership into two grades, or degrees, and to adopt the new rule of dividing it into three. The second was called the Fellow Craft Degree; the third, the Degree of Master Mason.

The term Fellow Craft is now used as the name of the Second Degree. It also applies to the ritualistic ceremonies and other contents of that degree, to a member of the degree, and to a lodge when opened in the Second Degree.

You have passed through the ceremonies of the Fellow Craft Degree, assumed its obligation and duties, and are registered as a Fellow Craft in the books of the lodge. If you are not in default as provided in the law, you may sit in a lodge when opened on the First or the Second Degree; however, you cannot visit a lodge other than your own except by permission of its Master. You cannot be examined for the purpose of visitation. You cannot vote, hold office, or have a voice in the business of the lodge; nor can you have the privileges of relief, or of joining in public processions.

You have the right to be instructed in the work of the Second Degree and to apply for advancement when proficient in that work, as provided in the law.

It is your duty to live according to the obligations and teachings of this degree, to prepare yourself for advancement, and to study that you may understand the meaning of the degree as a preparation for your Masonic life in the future.

Freemasonry is too extensive to be exemplified fully in a single ritual or through initiation in one evening. There is far too much for a man to learn in many evenings. One degree follows another, and the members of each stand on a different level of rights and duties. This does NOT mean that the Masonry presented in the First, or in the Second Degree, is less important, or less binding, than that presented in the Third Degree. All that is taught in the First and Second Degrees belongs as vitally to Freemasonry as that which is taught in the Third.

Therefore, do not look upon the Fellow Craft Degree as a mere stepping-stone to the Third Degree. Freemasonry gave to you one part of its teachings in the First, another portion in the Second; and in the Third it will give you yet another; but each degree is Freemasonry throughout. Therefore we urge the same studious attention while you are a Fellow Craft that you doubtless expect to give when you are a Master Mason.

INTERPRETATION OF THE RITUAL OF THE FELLOW CRAFT DEGREE

Subject No. 2 - Meeting No. 3

My Brother:

You are now a Fellow Craft Mason. I will try to explain some of the meaning of this degree.

Many great ideas are set forth in the Second Degree; which, if you understand, will lead you into an understanding of others. One of these ideas is that of adulthood or maturity.

The Entered Apprentice represents youth standing at the entrance of life, his eyes on the rising sun; and the Master Mason represents a man of years, already on the western slope of the hill facing the setting sun; but the Fellow Craft is a man in the prime of life -- experienced, strong, resourceful, able to bear the heat and the burden of the day. As a Fellow Craft representing manhood in the middle years of life, you should apply your knowledge to the discharge of your respective duties to God, your neighbor, your country, and yourself.

Adulthood or maturity cannot be described accurately in terms of years. When he experiences adulthood, a man discovers that the mere fact that he is 30 or 60 years of age has very little to do with it.

Adulthood is a condition, or a state of life, charged with many duties.

The man in his middle years carries great responsibilities. His family depends upon him for support; the burden of business rests upon his shoulders; science and the arts are sustained by his skill and experience; and the destiny of the state is entrusted to his keeping. It is said that in the building of his Temple, King Solomon employed 80,000 "fellow crafts," or hewers on the mountains and in the quarries. This description is suggestive, for it is by men in the fellow craft period of life that the hewing is done, on the mountains or in the quarries of life.

And it is not their responsibilities for toil alone that tests the metal in their natures; they live in a period of disillusionment. Youth is enthusiastic, carefree, filled with high hopes. Old age is mellowed by the many battles of life behind it. Young men see visions; old men dream dreams. The Fellow Craft walks in the full, uncolored light of noon. Everything stands rigidly before him in its most inflexible reality; if he has been lifted up by boyish illusions as to the ease of life and the sufficiency of his strength, those illusions have now evaporated in the heat of the day. After a few more years he will become mellow and resigned. But at high noon that time has not yet come. It is for him to bend his back and bear the load.

The Second Degree emphasizes that the Fellow Craft must so equip himself that he will prove equal to the tasks, which life will lay upon him; he must gain experience from contact with the realities of life. Recall what you heard about the Five Senses.

This was not intended as a lecture about the senses; it was symbolic, and represents how a man learns through immediate experience by seeing, feeling, tasting, hearing, and smelling. A man gathers such experience only with the passage of time. Each day he comes into contact with facts. What he learns one day must be added to what he learns the next day, and so on from year to year until at last, through his senses, he comes to understand the world in which he lives, how to deal with it, and how to master it.

Therefore, if we are to be happy in a world of toil, we must understand and be able to cope with its complexity. We must be able to meet situations that have never arisen before. Imagine a symphony being played by an orchestra. Each player must be able to see, to touch, and to hear, or his instrument becomes useless in his hands; he must have knowledge of his own musical score and of the capacities of his instrument. But the conductor must have all this, plus an understanding of all the instruments and of the composition as a whole. His skill and knowledge must embrace not only each instrument as well as each player's score, but all of them together. Thus, an orchestra conductor is a typical symbol of wisdom.

A man may see, hear, touch, and handle things to win rich experience and yet not have knowledge; and a man may have mastered some task, or art, or trade and yet be unhappy and a failure as a human being because he cannot adjust himself to the complex system of realities, experiences, and facts which make up life as a whole. He may lack wisdom or the competency to deal with each situation individually and with his life in its entirety.

The Middle Chamber has many symbolic meanings, one of which is wisdom. By the experience of the Five Senses, through the knowledge gained of the Liberal Arts and Sciences, the candidate is called on to advance as on Winding Stairs, to that balanced wisdom of life in which the senses, emotions, intellect, character, work, deeds, habits, and soul of a man are knit together in unity -- balanced, poised, and adequate.

SYMBOLS AND ALLEGORIES OF THE FELLOW CRAFT DEGREE

Subject No. 3 - Meeting No. 3

My Brother:

Among the allegories peculiar to this degree the most striking and important is that ceremony in which you acted the part of a man approaching King Solomon's Temple; you came into its outer precincts, passed between the two Pillars, climbed a Winding Stair, and at last entered the symbolic Middle Chamber. During this journey you listened to what Masonry calls the Middle Chamber Lecture. This allegory is a picture of the inner meaning of initiation. The Temple symbolizes the Life into which a man is initiated. That which lies outside the walls of the Temple represents what in Masonry is called the profane world -- not profane in the usual sense of the word as being blasphemous, but meaning literally "without the Temple," and signifies all who are not initiated. A profane is an uninitiated person, that is, one who is not and never has been a Mason.

The stairs you climbed represent the steps by which the life of initiation is approached -- qualification, petition, election, and the Three Degrees. There is a symbolism in the fact that the stairway winds. The winding stairway is one, which tries a man's soul. He must approach it with faith. Nothing is clear before him but the next step. He must believe that there is a top; that if he climbs long enough he will reach a Middle Chamber, a goal, a place of light. Thus the Winding Stair and the Middle Chamber are symbols of life and manhood. No man can see what he will become. As a boy he may have a goal as he starts his ascent. But he may arrive at Middle Chambers other than the one he visualized.

A man cannot know whether he will ever live to climb all the stairs. The Angel of Death may stand just around the corner of the next step. Yet, in spite of not knowing what is at the top, and in spite of the fact that a Flaming Sword may bar his ascent, man keeps on climbing. He climbs in confidence that there is a goal, and that he will reach it. And if perhaps he does not, a Mason has faith that if he never sees the glory of the middle chamber in this life, a lamp is set to guide him to one beyond his mortal gaze; in that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The Pillars represent birth. When you passed between them, it signified that you were no longer a profane, but had now entered the circle of initiates. The Middle Chamber represents initiation completed; once arrived there, the candidate receives the rewards for the ordeals and arduous labors he has endured on the way; he has arrived at his goal in this degree. It symbolizes the experience of every man who seeks the good life. By interpretation it teaches us how the good life is found, and may be explained by this example:

Ignorance is one of the greatest of evils and is the chief enemy of human freedom. Enlightenment is one of the greatest of blessings.

How does a man pass from ignorance to enlightenment? In the beginning a man is a profane; he stands in the outside darkness, he is in that ignorance from which he would escape into the Middle Chamber of Knowledge.

How is he qualified? By having the necessary desire to learn and by possessing the required faculties and abilities.

How does he find his way? By trusting to his guides, his teachers; who may be teachers in the professional sense, or they may be others who have themselves learned that which the seeker needs to know; or they may be found in books.

What kind of path does the seeker follow? A winding path on which he must feel his way from step to step because he has never walked it before; it is an ascending path, laborious, difficult, for there is no easy road to learning.

What is the door through which he can enter? It is the door composed of two pillars, which means birth; this signifies that knowledge must be won inside our own natures, through what happens there; others may assist but their assistance is limited. Each man must learn by his own efforts, and knowledge is never permanently won until it is made a part of ourselves.

What are the rewards? They are found in knowledge, which is useful not only because of what it enables us to do, but because knowledge may be enjoyed for its own sake -- like food or sleep or music. The value of enlightenment is represented by the Temple, Holy and Sacred. Holy, because it is set apart from the world of ignorance. Sacred, because it has been won at a great effort by ourselves and at a great cost by our forefathers.

By the same methods a man wins all the great blessings of life;

religion, which is knowledge of God;

brotherhood, which is a life of fellowship grounded in good will;

art, by which we enjoy the beautiful;

citizenship, by which we participate in the benefits of community life;

science, by which we learn the nature of the world we live in;

literature, by which we enter into communion with the life of all mankind.

A good life is one which enjoys the great blessings of life.

You may say that all of this is commonplace. It is commonplace only in the sense that it conforms to the experience of wise men everywhere and always. It is NOT common in the sense that all men understand it or follow it. For we are certain that many men do not understand it; or, if they do, they do not have the will or the courage to follow it, or else they do not honestly believe in the rewards of toil.

Many young men are so impatient, or indolent, or self-assured, that they refuse to submit to a period of training or apprenticeship. They rush into adult life with all its tasks and responsibilities, immature, without training, or knowledge, or wisdom, trusting to their luck. This belief that the wholesome things of life can happen by chance or good fortune is a fatal blunder. The satisfying values of life, -- spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical -- cannot be won by luck like a lottery prize, nor can they be dropped into a man's lap by accident. Rewards come only from toil, and even then only by changes in our own natures, which are often painful and costly to make.

Such is one meaning of your allegorical entrance into Solomon's Temple, as a candidate in the Second Degree. Other symbols and allegories in the degree may be interpreted in the light of that meaning. The degree as a whole becomes a living pattern by which to shape and build your own life -- to gain maturity -- not only in the lodge room, but in the world of human experiences of which the lodge room is but a symbol.

TEACHINGS OF THE FELLOW CRAFT DEGREE

Subject No. 4 - Meeting No. 3

My Brother:

You should have discovered by this time that Freemasonry has a certain teaching of its own, and that it is one of the principal functions of the ritual to interpret that teaching. Masonry's method of instruction is unlike that of the schools; it uses ritual, symbol, emblem, and allegory in the place of textbooks.

This is not as easy to follow as the schoolroom method, but it has two great advantages: it encourages a Mason to study and learn for himself; it challenges him to search out the truth. The purpose of secrecy is not to keep a candidate in the dark, but to stimulate him to seek the light; the symbols and emblems do not conceal the teaching; they reveal it, but in such a manner that a man must find it for himself. I can suggest only a few interpretations of Masonic teachings of this degree. I can suggest only what you may find by your own efforts, how you may find it, and where you may find it. Only when a man finds truth for himself does it become a permanent possession.

Masonry is dedicated to God, the Great Architect of the Universe. An altar in every lodge room bears the open Holy Book upon it. Its members must believe in God. Its religion, like the rest of its teachings, is not set forth in written creeds. Each Mason must come upon it for himself and put it in such form as will satisfy his own conscience, leaving others to do likewise.

Masonry teaches the necessity of morality, requiring its members to be good men; righteous, as symbolized by the Square; upright, as symbolized by the Plumb; their passions kept in due bounds, as symbolized by the Compasses; just in their dealings with their fellows; charitable, truthful, and honorable.

A Mason must extend a helping hand in relieving the need of an unfortunate brother or his dependents, but there is a limit to our ability and opportunity, and we are not asked to give relief when it would cause injury to ourselves or hardship to our families.

Another important Masonic teaching is equality, symbolized by the Level. It does not teach that impossible doctrine which erases all distinctions and holds that all men are the same in all respects. In many ways men are quite unequal, as in physique, in talents, in mental capacity, in other abilities, and in character. Our belief in equality is manifested in the fact that we recognize as a principle that we owe goodwill, charity, tolerance, and truthfulness equally to all; and that within our Fraternity all men travel the same road of initiation, take the same obligations, and have the same duties, rights, and privileges.

A similar importance is attached to the need for enlightenment. Much of the Second Degree is a drama of education which suggests that personal experience is limited. If we learn only that which comes to us by our senses, we would be poorly equipped to deal with life's complexities and responsibilities. To our store of hard-won experience we must add the experience of others, supplementing our own insights by the information of countless men brought to us through many channels; our own knowledge must be made complete by the knowledge taught us by mankind.

In the days when Masons were builders of great and costly structures, the Apprentice was a mere boy when beginning his service, scarcely knowing one tool from another, ignorant of the secrets and arts of the builders. Yet after his apprenticeship he was able to produce his master's piece and perform any task to which the Master might appoint him. How was this miracle accomplished? Not by his own unaided efforts, but by wise and patient teaching, as the Master guides the youth's clumsy hands and passes on those skills the Master himself had been many years in acquiring.

FOURTH MEETING – The Conduct of a Master Mason (Oral instruction for the Newly Raised Mason)

(For the guidance of the committee only) The material for this instruction cannot be presented in written form. Therefore, it should be presented orally by Masons well versed in the Craft and capable of precise and consistent instruction.

The purpose is to give to the newly Raised Master Mason concise instruction in the seven subjects outlined below. These rules of conduct must be presented for his use in the lodge, as well as when he moves among the profane.

Immediately after the closing of the lodge, at the same communication at which the Raising has taken place, the committee should meet with the new brother. Encourage the officers of the lodge to be present, as well.

Or, you may conduct this session in open lodge just before it is closed or, as Masonic Education at the next Stated Communication.

Allow ample opportunity for the new brother to ask questions and to receive enlightening instruction. Remember that he is now a Master Mason and is entitled to ask any questions concerning Masonry that may come to his mind.

OUTLINE FOR INSTRUCTION (Note: The instructor should be thoroughly familiar with The Code as referred to under the subjects below; it is NOT intended or desired that these excerpts be read. He should also be able to explain the unwritten work.)

Preliminary Instruction

1. Examinations for the purpose of visiting and of vouching for another Master Mason. (Be certain to explain what NOT to do.) (Chapters 50 and 51. Be specific in explaining Visitation by candidates Regulations 50-2 and by clandestine Masons 50-3.)
2. Signs, tokens, words, and methods of recognition. (These should be carefully practiced. Explain when NOT to use them.)
3. Protocol for entering and leaving a lodge when it is open on each of the three degrees.
4. The secret ballot. (This should be practiced several times.)
[Regs. 59-2(45); 68-3; 68-5; 68-16; 68-17]
5. Conduct of Masons at all times. (Particularly NOT to discuss Masonic matters in the hearing of the profane) [Regs. 52-3; 52-7; 86-1; 86-2]
6. Conduct of Masons within the lodge. (Chaps. 45-23)
7. Recommending petitioners for the degrees. (Explain what NOT to do.)
[Regs. 65-1; 86-2 (22); 65-8 (Emphasize the last line); 66-1; 86-2 (23)]

INTERPRETATION OF THE RITUAL OF THE THIRD DEGREE

Subject No. 1 - Meeting No. 5

My Brother:

You have been raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason. It is indeed "sublime", a degree, one may study for years without exhausting its lessons.

Any interpretation must necessarily be only a hint; yet a hint may stimulate you to reflect upon it for yourself and to study it more thoroughly in the future.

In the First and Second Degrees you were surrounded by the symbols and emblems of architecture; in the Third Degree you found a different type of symbolism; one that speaks the language of the soul -- of life, its tragedy, its triumph. To recognize this shift in emphasis is the first step in interpretation.

Recognize that the ritual of the Third Degree has many meanings. Its lesson is not intended to be finished and closed; but an inspiration to awaken all of one's faculties. Like any great drama, painting, or symphony one may always return to the Third Degree and find new meanings.

This degree has many interpretations, each one true. Essentially it is a drama of the immortality of the soul setting forth the truth that although a man wither away and perish, there is always a part of him which never dies.

In the language of the Craft we say that a man is *Initiated* an Entered Apprentice, *Passed* a Fellow Craft, and *Raised* a Master Mason. Thus, it is the Raising that most Masons find at the center of the Master Mason Degree.

What does this Raising signify? The answer is the key to the other meanings of the degree.

In the life of a man he deals with many experiences. Some are associated with his passage from childhood, through manhood, to old age. Others are associated with the life of the body, such as hunger, sleep, weariness, senses, feelings, and moods. Still others have to do with religion, worship, God, the meaning and purpose of life. There are those which have to do with a man's work, his trade or occupation, how he makes a living for himself and his dependents. There are those which center about his life in the community, a social being, a neighbor, a citizen. For a man to be happy, he must be able to live in, and to deal with, each of these groups of facts, circumstances, realities, and experiences.

Now it is probable that the most difficult of all these to deal with -- one not mentioned above -- are those made up of the evils of life; among which are such hard experiences as sin, defeat, suffering, disease, pain, loss of friends or fortune, hostility, treachery, crime, wickedness, sorrow, -- and death. Herein lie our greatest problems, our most trying ordeals, our severest testing. If we can find the wisdom to deal with these negative influences, if we can triumph over them and solve the problems they cause, our characters will be made stronger and our happiness will be assured.

Life demands each of us to ask this question, "What am I doing about evil in myself, and in the world around me?" If we fail to have the right answer, the worst of all penalties is enforced upon us.

Let us carry this further. Evil comes to us in two forms: it may be brought upon us by our own acts, or it may be brought upon us through no responsibility of our own. When evil comes upon a man by his own acts, we feel that any consequences are his just compensation; but what of the evil that comes upon a good man?

Evil in the form of tragedy is set forth in the drama of the Third Degree. Here is a good and wise man, a builder, working for others and giving work to others, the highest work we know because it is dedicated wholly to God. Through no fault of his own he experiences an evil tragedy at the hand of his friends and fellow Masons. Here is evil pure and unalloyed, the stark picture of all human tragedy.

How did the Craft meet this tragedy? The first step was to impose a penalty on those who had the will to **destroy**. They had to be destroyed themselves lest another tragedy follow. The greatest enemy of man is that which makes war upon the good. To that enemy no quarter can be given.

The next step was to discipline and to pardon those who acted not out of an evil will, but out of **weakness**. Forgiveness is possible if a man himself condemns the evil he has done, since in spite of his weakness he retains his faith in the good.

The next step was to recover from the wreckage caused by the tragedy whatever of value it had left undestroyed. Confusion had come upon the Craft; order was restored. Loyal craftsmen took up the burdens dropped by the traitors. The nature of such tragedy is that the good suffer for the evil. It is one of the prime duties of life that a man shall toil to undo the harm wrought by sin and crime; else in time the world would be destroyed by the evils that are done in it.

But what of the victim of the tragedy? Here is the profoundest and most difficult lesson of the drama, difficult to understand, difficult to believe if one has not been truly initiated into the realities of the spiritual life. Because the victim was a good man, his goodness rooted in an unvarying faith in God, that which destroyed him in one sense could not destroy him in another. The spirit in him rose above the reach of evil; by virtue of that spirit, he was raised from a dead level to a living perpendicular.

Let us imagine a genuinely good man who has been the victim of a tragedy. Let us imagine this to have been one of the most terrible kinds of tragedy, one caused by the treachery of friends. Let us further imagine that this treachery has brought destruction upon one of the foundations of his life, his home, his reputation, or his ability to earn a livelihood. How can he be lifted above it? How can he be raised above the clutch of such circumstances? How can he emerge as possibly a happier man than he was before? By his spirit's rising to the level of understanding, forgiveness, and resignation; a refusal to stoop to retaliation or to harbor bitterness. In such a spirit as this the truest happiness is found.

The secret of such a power is in the Third Degree, symbolized by the Word. If that Word is lost, a man must search for it; if a man possesses that Word, he has the secret of the Masonic Art. To rise to the height of spiritual life is to stand on a level above the reach of tragedy or the powers of evil. To have one's spirit rest in God, to have a sincere and unwavering faith in truth and goodness, is the Royal Art, the inner secret of a Master Mason.

SYMBOLS, EMBLEMS, AND ALLEGORIES OF THE THIRD DEGREE

Subject No. 2 - Meeting No. 5

My Brother:

In your experience with the ritual and in your meetings with our committee, you have learned that each phrase, event, and other detail in the ceremonies of initiation is full of meaning. No item is merely for effect or as an ornament. In the Third Degree you will find the deeper secrets and profounder teachings of our Fraternity. You passed through the Degree in a few hours; to understand it will require many additional hours; and though you may study it for years, you will never exhaust its lessons. We can give you only a few hints of its meaning in the hope that they may inspire you to study the degree for yourself.

The symbolism of the three Degrees centers around the art of architecture. Its purpose is to teach you, in the First Degree, to be a builder of yourself; in the Second degree, a builder of society, and in the Third, a builder of the spirit.

The Third Degree deals with life and death. Its principal teaching relates to immortality. Though a man might permit himself to be buried under the rubbish of sin and his unchecked passions, it is possible, if he has learned the secret of the spiritual life, with the help of God to rise again into a new life either here or hereafter. This gives us the key whereby all its symbols, emblems, and allegories may be understood.

The Scripture reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes pictures a man, once flushed with health and filled with strength, brought weakened by old age to the brink of the grave. This final breakdown is one of life's bitterest experiences; but as the passage from Ecclesiastes tells us, even the approach of death will become a light burden to one who has learned to trust in God. God is the God of old age and of the soul after death, as much as He is the God of youth and strength.

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The working Tools of the degree are all the implements of Masonry, but more especially the Trowel by which we are taught to spread the cement of Brotherly Love. But Brotherly Love itself has its source and foundation in the soul. To love a man notwithstanding his sins, to cherish him in spite of his faults, to forgive him in all sincerity, to bear with him and to forbear, is possible only as we live the spiritual life and have our souls purged of self-centeredness.

The Tragedy of Hiram Abif is the climax of the degree; it is, indeed, the climax of all the ceremonies of Freemasonry of whatever degree. But we must look further to understand the symbolic significance of the legend, and our search will carry us back to the very beginning of spiritual thought among men.

The Legend of Hiram is allegorical. There is a Hiram in the Biblical story of the building of Solomon's Temple. He is probably the same Hiram. But of the legend of his death as we have it, there is no trace in history. To pass through the second section of the Third Degree with the thought that you are portraying an historical event is to miss the basic meaning of the degree.

The first step in understanding the story of Hiram Abif is to see that the whole of the degree is **symbolic**. Some few facts borrowed from history are used in it, but not many, and in each case not for the sake of history. Ritual cares for neither time nor place, takes its materials where it finds them, works them over to suit its own purpose. It moves in a timeless, space-less region, makes its appeal to the mind through the imagination, and has as its sole purpose; making effective, in the experience of a man, certain realities of the moral and spiritual life. If, therefore, no such record is found in the Book of Kings and Chronicles as the story of Hiram, or if it is found that the historical facts given in it are at variance with written records, or if they appear to contradict those outright, such a fact need cause no uneasiness. History, is reshaped for ritualistic purposes, just as Shakespeare reshaped the chronicles of the English kings in his historical dramas, or as Milton worked over with a free hand the materials from the Book of Genesis in his Paradise Lost.

The idea that lies behind the **Hiramic legend** is as old as is religious thinking among men. The same elements existed in the story of Osiris, which was celebrated by the Egyptians in their ancient temples. The ancient Persians told it concerning Mithras, their hero god. In Greece the Dionysian Mysteries had the very same elements in the story of Dionysus; for the Romans, Bacchus was the god who died and lived again. There is also the still older Syrian story of Tammuz, older than any of these. These are collectively referred to as the ancient mysteries. They were celebrated by secret societies, much like ours, with allegorical ceremonies, during which initiates were advanced from one degree to another. Read these old stories for yourself and marvel that men in all ages have taught the same great truth in the same effective way.

Next in importance and in many ways equal in interest, is the allegorical **Search For That Which Was Lost**. This has an historical background. To the early Jewish people a name was something peculiarly identified with a person, and held in reverence. Sometimes it was secret, and a substitute name was used in daily life. The name of God was held in extreme reverence. This holy name was never pronounced above a whisper; after a while only the priests were permitted to use it; finally only the High Priest and then only when he was alone in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. Tradition tells us that during a national calamity, perhaps at the time of the Babylonian captivity, the High Priest was killed before he had opportunity to pass it on to his successor, and in that way the Name was lost.

The Lost Name might have been preserved in the sacred writings of the Jews except that their written language had this peculiarity -- the vowels were understood not written, just as in our own language pronunciation is understood. The consonants of the Divine Name were known, J H V H, but not the vowels, and therefore not the name.

All this appears in our ritual in the form of an allegory. A Word was possessed; the Word was lost.

Like all symbols this means many things. One of its deeper meanings is that a man who has lost the ideals and standards of his youth, his moral or spiritual character, his faith in truth and goodness, or the secret of what it is to be a man, must go in search for that which he has lost, and continue searching until he finds it: his true Masonic journey.

You may wonder why the ritual does not explain fully, and clearly, the meaning of this symbolism, why it leaves the candidate to find the meaning for himself? It is assumed that we are dealing with grown men, intelligent men, not children, and that each Mason does his own thinking. Also, the purpose of the ritual is to bring us into the presence of the greater truths of life so that their mere presence will have a deep influence over us.

The Emblems of the Third Degree are set before us, one after another, apparently in no special order, and each with only a hint of what it signifies. Yet each of them stands for some great idea or ideal necessary throughout our lives; and the purpose is to plant them in our consciousness, to keep them always before us. It is left to each individual to develop them for himself, according to his need.

Each of them is a master truth. In the Three Pillars we have the three great ideas of wisdom, strength, and beauty. The three steps remind us of how youth, manhood and old age is each a unity in itself, each having its duties and problems, each employing its own philosophy. The Pot of Incense teaches that, of all methods of worship, to be pure and blameless in our inner lives is the most acceptable to God. The Book of Constitutions is an emblem of law, teaching that our moral and spiritual character is grounded in law and order as much as is government or nature. The Sword Pointing to a Naked Heart means that one of the most rigorous of these laws is justice; and that if a man be unjust in his heart, the inevitable results of this injustice will find him out.

The All-Seeing Eye shows that we live and move and have our being in God; that we are constantly in His Presence, wherever we are or whatever we do. The Anchor and the Ark stand for that sense of security and stability one has if his life is grounded in truth and faith. Without that sense there can be no happiness. The Forty-seventh Problem of Euclid is an emblem of the arts and sciences; by it we are reminded that, next to sinfulness, the most dangerous enemy of mankind is ignorance. In the Hour Glass we have the emblem of the temporary nature of life; no man lives forever in this world; there is a set time for the work he has to do. The Scythe reminds us that passing time will bring an end to our lives as well as to our work; and if ever we are to become what we ought to be, we must not delay.

Unhappy is the man who reaches middle years having missed these undeniable and all-important truths.

Yet there is hope for him. The central teaching of the Third Degree, expressed in the Tragedy of Hiram, is a way for him to recover possession of his life. He can be raised to a new manhood. He may be called back from a condition that is more terrible than the dissolution of the body. By repudiating and dying to his old life, by gaining again his faith in God, by the power of brotherhood, he finds the path of recovery.

THE LAWS OF FREEMASONRY

Subject No. 3 - Meeting No. 5

My Brother:

Every Master Mason is obliged to observe and obey the laws, resolutions, and edicts of his Grand Lodge and the by-laws of the particular lodge of which he is a member, and to maintain and support the landmarks and ancient usages and customs of the Fraternity.

It is impossible to obey any law if we do not know what it is. The laws of Masonry, like the laws of nations, are both the unwritten "common law", and the written law. The written law, based on the General Regulations and the Old Charges is the Constitution and Regulations of our own Grand Lodge, its resolutions and edicts, and the by-laws of the particular lodge. The Ancient Landmarks are a part of the written law in some jurisdictions; in others they are a part of the unwritten law.

A Mason is subject to the law of the jurisdiction in which he sojourns as well as to those of his own jurisdiction. In this duality of allegiance Masonry follows the civil law; thus, an American residing abroad is subject to the law of the nation in which he lives, but is also expected to obey the laws of his own nation; for instance, an American residing abroad is not exempt from the United States income tax laws. Neither is a Mason from North Carolina exempt from the laws of the Grand Lodge of this state, merely because he happens to be traveling in Tennessee.

The General Regulations as set forth in Anderson's Constitution of 1723 were adopted shortly after the formation in 1717 of the First, or Mother, Grand Lodge in England. The work was first published under the date of 1723 and unquestionably embodied the laws of Masonry as they were known to the members of the four ancient lodges which formed the first grand lodge, and hence it has the respectability of an antiquity much greater than its printed life of nearly three hundred years would indicate.

In general it may be said that the Old Charges are concerned with the individual brother, and his relations to his lodge and his brethren; the General Regulations with the conduct of the Craft as a whole. The General Regulations permit alteration by a Grand Lodge, the Old Charges do not.

Law in Masonry is very much more a matter of the heart than of the head; it is much more concerned with setting forth good conduct than with assessing penalties; therefore, to comprehend it, we must be willing to revise our ideas of law, as we understand law enacted by legislatures.

A Masonic lodge in North Carolina has only such powers as are conferred upon it by the laws of the Grand Lodge; it cannot do just anything its members may decide to do. There are definite limitations on its powers and authority set forth in the Constitution and laws of our Grand Lodge. You may study these at your leisure in The Code.

Many civil laws are provided with measures of enforcement and penalties for infringement. Masonic law knows but three penalties for un-Masonic conduct: reprimand, definite suspension, and expulsion or Masonic death. These Masonic penalties for infraction of Masonic law may be ordered only after a Masonic trial, and a verdict of guilty.

The purpose of Masonic discipline is to maintain the respect and esteem to which the Masonic Fraternity has been entitled from time immemorial. The reputation of the institution must be preserved unsullied, and this can be accomplished only by following the time honored customs and usages which have safely carried us through the years and are to be found in the ritual, landmarks, customs, usages, unwritten law, and in The Code. The Constitution of our Grand Lodge provides that the primary purpose of Masonic discipline is to preserve the good repute and integrity of the Masonic institution by the prosecution and punishment of a lodge or of a brother whose acts or omissions tend to injure the Craft as a whole, or who has inflicted injury upon a brother Mason or upon any other person. The punishment of a member (if guilty) is for two purposes only:

First - To protect the reputation of Masonry that its character may remain unsullied, and to forestall unpunished crimes among its members from injuring the reputation of the organization as a whole.

Second - To prevent the future violation of Masonic law by teaching others, through the impressive force of example.

To punish a member merely as a satisfaction to the law partakes of the nature of private revenge or retaliation and is not a worthy Masonic motive, since the protection of the good and the punishment of the bad are parts of the contract entered into by the Order and each of its members for the vindication generally of the reputation of all Masons.

Infractions of Masonic Law resulting in trial and punishment are rare compared to the number of Masons, the vast majority of whom are willing and anxious to obey the laws; therefore, enforcement is seldom required.

Masonic law is not exactly the same in all jurisdictions. However, in all of the essentials it is virtually the same. Most grand lodges in the United States adhere to the spirit of the Old Charges and they adhere, when modern conditions permit, to the sense of the General Regulations.

A Mason who desires to understand the law by which the Craft is governed, and the legal standards by which the Grand Lodge measures its "laws, resolutions, and edicts," should read both the Old Charges and the General Regulations of 1723. When he reaches the thirty-ninth and last of the General Regulations, he will read "every Annual Grand Lodge has an inherent power and authority to make new Regulations or to alter these, for the real benefit of this Ancient Fraternity; provided always that the Old Land-Marks be carefully preserved".

The "Old", or "Ancient Landmarks" are those foundations of the laws of Masonry, which are not subject to change. If the Grand Lodge, which first adopted these General Regulations, had formulated the Ancient Landmarks, it would have saved much trouble and confusion for grand lodges that followed. Apparently the unwritten law of Masonry -- the common law -- was at that time so well understood and practiced that it was not thought necessary to codify it.

There is still a great body of unwritten law which Masons customarily observe. These laws are called the "ancient usages and customs", and are not specified in print now any more than they were then. Certain landmarks have been reduced to print and made a part of the written law in many jurisdictions. Mackey lists twenty-five landmarks which were adopted as official in many American Masonic jurisdictions; others have condensed his list into a smaller number, still keeping all of his points. A few jurisdictions have a greater number of landmarks, including some not specified in Mackey's list. Jurisdictions, which do not include a printed list of the Ancient Landmarks in their written law usually follow and practice them as a part of their unwritten law. In a few instances some of the landmarks as listed by Mackey are not recognized as such. For instance, Mackey's Eighth Landmark, the inherent right of a Grand Master to "make Masons at sight" was specifically revoked by the Grand Lodge in North Carolina. In general, however, whether written or unwritten, Grand Lodges adhere to the spirit of Mackey's entire list.

Mackey's explanation of the landmarks is too long to be discussed here, but his twenty-five definitions are the most universally used. The Grand Lodge of North Carolina has not adopted them in their entirety but treats them as follows:

These Landmarks are included in the written laws of North Carolina

Landmark	Description
2	The division of Symbolic Masonry into three degrees.
4	The government of the Fraternity by a Grand Master.
5	The prerogative of the Grand Master to preside over every assembly of the Craft.
7	The prerogative of the Grand Master to give dispensations for opening and holding lodges.
9	The necessity for Masons to congregate in lodges.
10	The government of the Craft when congregated in a lodge by a Master and two Wardens.
11.	The necessity that every lodge, when congregated, should be duly tyled.
12.	The right of every Mason to be represented in all general meetings of the Craft.
13.	The right of every Mason to appeal from his brethren in lodge convened to the Grand Master.
15.	No visitor unknown to the brethren present, or to one of them, as a Mason can enter a lodge without first passing an examination according to ancient usage.
16.	No lodge can interfere with the business of another lodge.
17.	Every Freemason is amenable to the laws and regulations of the Masonic jurisdiction in which he resides.
18.	A candidate for initiation must be a man, free born, un-mutilated, and of mature age.

19. A belief in the existence of God as the Grand Architect of the Universe.
20. Belief in a resurrection to a future life.
21. A "Book of the Law" constitutes an indispensable part of the furniture of every lodge.
22. The equality of all Masons.

These Landmarks are included in the unwritten laws of North Carolina:

1. The modes of recognition.
3. The Legend of the Third Degree.
11. The necessity that every lodge, when congregated, should be duly tyled.
15. No visitor unknown to the brethren present, or to one of them, as a Mason can enter a lodge without first passing an examination according to ancient usage.
19. A belief in the existence of God as the Grand Architect of the Universe.
20. Belief in a resurrection to a future life.
21. A "Book of the Law" constitutes an indispensable part of the furniture of every lodge.
22. The equality of all Masons.
23. The secrecy of the Institution.
24. The foundation of a speculative science upon an operative art.

These Landmarks are not admitted as landmarks in North Carolina:

6. The prerogative of the Grand Master to grant dispensations for conferring degrees at irregular intervals.
8. The prerogative of the Grand Master to make Masons at sight.
25. The landmarks can never be changed.

This specific Landmark is not recognized as an unlimited right in North Carolina:

14. The right of every Mason to visit and sit in every regular lodge.

With the landmarks as a foundation, the Old Charges for precedent, and the first General Regulations for organic law, grand lodges write and adopt their constitutions, regulations, and by-laws; and particular lodges write and adopt their by-laws, which are subject to approval by the Grand Lodge Committee on By-laws. When the Grand Lodge is not in session, the Grand Master formulates and issues edicts and makes decisions; often, these are later incorporated by the Grand Lodge into the written law of the jurisdiction. All of these together, except where they conflict (as some of the earlier General Regulations necessarily conflict with later enactments made to supersede them) form the legal structure of Freemasonry.

Masonic law in general is not as rigid as the body of law for the government of a state or a nation. If Masonic law were interpreted wholly by the letter -- as is necessarily the case in civil law -- the government of the Craft might often be as loose as its statutes. But, as a matter of fact, the Craft is well governed. Its "ancient usages and customs" soon win their way into the hearts of new brethren, and there is a great resistance to any attempt to change the old order unless necessity shows that change is absolutely necessary.

The Fraternity in this state and in our nation deals with very large sums of money. The Craft erects and maintains expensive Temples, Orphanages, and Homes for helpless Masons and their dependents. The Institution disburses a large amount for charity. The vast majority of its executive officers serve long and arduous apprenticeships, giving their services for love, not money. These very practical matters are all conducted in accord with a more or less loosely woven body of law -- and yet the Fraternity as a whole can take pride in the undoubted fact that it is orderly, well governed, almost completely law abiding, and very reluctant to make any more new laws for itself than are absolutely necessary.

The reason may be found in the answer to the classic question: "Where were you first prepared to be made a Mason?"

THE DUTIES, PRIVILEGES, AND RIGHTS OF A MASTER MASON

Subject No. 4 - Meeting No. 5

My Brother:

You will not find the duties, rights, and privileges of a Master Mason anywhere fully or clearly numbered, stated, and catalogued. They are scattered here and there, some in the form of symbols, others of customs, others of laws. Some are clearly and explicitly stated; others merely implied.

A Master Mason's first duty is to live by, and act consistently with, his obligation; unless this is done, he cannot perform his other duties nor should he be able to claim his rights and privileges. With the most solemn obligation as his foundation, here are a number of additional duties and rights of a Master Mason.

It is a Master Mason's duty, legal and moral, to pay his share of the financial costs of the Fraternity promptly and ungrudgingly. The payment of his annual dues is a specific obligation upon each member (Reg. 77-4).

If he is unaffiliated, he has the right to petition for membership in any regular lodge. He may choose the lodge to which he makes his petition. An unaffiliated Mason should seek membership in a lodge.

He has the right of affiliation. If he moves permanently to some other community, he is not required to maintain membership at a distance in his first lodge, but may petition for membership in a more convenient lodge. He may also become a member of any other lodge; that is, become a member of two or more lodges at the same time, so long as he is willing to maintain "good standing" (by paying dues) to each lodge.

Visiting lodges in which he does not hold membership is both a right and a privilege, though not a duty. It is a right in the sense that he may seek admittance into any regular lodge; it is a privilege in the sense that his admission into that lodge is contingent upon his being vouched for, or examined, and being permitted to enter by the Worshipful Master. If a Mason is not permitted to enter a lodge at a certain time, the fact does not cancel his right to seek to visit it at another time or to seek to visit any other lodge. The right to visit is subject to the law in each grand jurisdiction. (The Code, Chapter 50)

Masonic relief, like visiting, is both a right and a privilege. Every Mason has the lawful right to ask for it when in need, without harm to his dignity or danger to his standing. He is privileged to ask a lodge or a Master Mason for relief, but neither a lodge nor a Master Mason is compelled to give relief. The lodge is not an insurance society, an organized charity, or a death benefit association, nor is any guaranty given any member that he will receive what he asks. Each lodge and each Mason is under obligation to heed the call for relief, but each is free to decide whether or not to extend relief; and if so, in what form and to what extent.

A Master Mason has the right to ask for a demit or a transfer certificate; and if he is clear on the books and no charges for un-Masonic conduct have been, or are about to be, preferred against him, the lodge must grant it. It is not compulsory that a Mason shall remain a member of any given lodge; for if it were, membership would thereby be degraded into a penalty. One may hold his membership where he is happiest or where it is most convenient, provided he is elected to membership in that lodge. (The Code, Chapter 75)

If he is brought to trial on charges of un-Masonic conduct and found guilty, he has the right to appeal to the Grand Lodge. This right is his guaranty against possible injustice, more particularly against prejudice or spiteful persecution by some private enemy. (The Code, Chapter 16)

Every Master Mason has the right of Masonic burial. In practice his family has the right of requesting this honor. This right is of more importance than may at first appear. If, without giving cause, a lodge should refuse to give Masonic Honors at death, the community might infer that some secret disgrace known only to the lodge was attached to the dead; and both his name and his family would suffer accordingly. It is however, the rule in some jurisdictions that he must himself have requested Masonic burial. (The Code, Chapter 82)

A Master Mason's privileges are to be described in principle and in spirit rather than in detail because they vary much and depend on local conditions. He has the right of a voice in his lodge, a vote, and to hold office. He also has the privilege of giving Masonic service, one of the principal sources of the joy in Masonic life. Membership gives no man the right to demand these things of either the lodge or the Grand Lodge; but if, thanks to circumstances and good fortune, they are offered, each member has the same right as any other to enjoy them.

Beyond all these specific duties, rights, and privileges there are more general duties, rights, and privileges; the whole domain of Masonry's teachings, its ritual and symbols, its history, its ideals of jurisprudence, its philosophy, its literature, the whole Royal Art; that Royal Art which includes truths, ideals, and teachings. It is the duty of every Master Mason to be faithful to them. It is his right to be taught that Art and to have it in its fullness, none of it being reserved for a privileged few. It is his privilege to enjoy all it offers to the spirit, the mind, and the heart. All that Freemasonry is, all that it means, all that it has to give or to offer belong to every individual Mason in the same way and to the same extent as to all other Masons. However heavy your duties may prove to be, or however rigidly your rights may at times appear to be regulated, such burdens sink into nothingness in comparison with this one privilege – that Freemasonry in its height, and breadth, and length, and depth, and richness belongs to you to use and enjoy.

SUGGESTED READING

The Internet is a growing source of information. Start at the Grand Lodge of NC website: <http://www.grandlodge-nc.org>

Many Masonic books can be obtained from The Temple Publishers, on the web at: <http://www.thetemplebooks.com>

See also the Masonic Service Assn. of North America at <http://www.msana.com>

Masonic Jurisprudence, by Albert G. Mackey.

Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, 3 volumes, Albert G. Mackey.

Beginnings of Freemasonry in America, by Melvin M. Johnson.

The Builders, by Joseph Fort Newton.

The Men's House, by Joseph Fort Newton.

Designs Upon The Trestleboard, by A. R. Herman. A handbook for Masters & Wardens.

The Master's Book, by Carl H. Claudy. (An invaluable aid to the Worshipful Master.)

Washington The Great American Mason, by John J. Lanier.

Freemasonry in the Thirteen Colonies, by J. Hugo Tatsch.

The Great Teachings of Masonry, by H. L. Haywood.

Speculative Masonry, by A. S. MacBride.

Masonic Lodge Methods, by L. B. Blakemore.

The Pocket History of Freemasonry, by Pick and Knight.

House Undivided, by Allen E. Roberts. (Freemasonry during the Civil War.)

Introduction to Freemasonry, by Carl H. Claudy. In 3 volumes. (These are the well-known "Claudy" Books, presented by some lodges after conferring each degree.)

Symbolism of the Three Degrees, by Oliver Day Street.

The Symbolism of Freemasonry, by Albert G. Mackey.

The Religion of Freemasonry, by Joseph Fort Newton.

The Little Masonic Library, 5 volumes by various authors. (Contains following subjects: Anderson's Constitutions of 1723; Landmarks of Freemasonry; The Comacines; Modern Masonry; The Morgan Affair and Anti-Masonry; Mormonism and Masonry; York and Scottish Rite of Masonry; Masonry and the Flag; Masonry and Americanism; Freemasonry in the American Revolution; Great American Masons; The Great Light in Masonry; Degrees and Great Symbols; The Ethics of Freemasonry; The Meaning of Masonry; The Old Past Master; A Master's Wages; Masonic Poems; and other interesting subjects.)