

Risen from the Ashes



February 2022 Journal and Trestleboard

Vol 2, Issue 2, Table Mountain Masonic Lodge Journal / Trestleboard

Worshipful Master's Corner

Brothers and friends,

This is our February **2022 Journal and Trestleboard**. We decided to rename this, monthly communication, adding *Journal*, because this publication is so much more than the sparse calendar of events and few advertisements that most lodges produce. This month we begin with the important calendar of events, and some information about the content of our next stated meeting. Then there is information about




our recent Hiram award, installation of officers, our recent 2nd degree and other projects. There is an interesting article by a young professional about how he applies the lessons of his Masonic degrees to his professional career. Then our in-house researcher discusses controversy about how old Freemasonry really is, and comes to some surprising conclusions. By popular request, we have another wonderful Masonic poem. Due the popularity of the recent about the California Masonic Mining, in the future we will have similar articles, but this month we have included some pictures of historical California Masonic lodges. How to pay your lodge dues and get your dues card is describe on pages 23 and 24. Please pay your dues as soon as possible. As always, contact information is provide on the final page. However, this month we have added contact information for the youth organizations, Eastern Star, the Shrine, and for both the York

and Scottish Rites. Your suggestions concerning our monthly Journal and Trestleboard are always appreciated.

Calendar of Events

Table Mountain Lodge Events

- Feb 5, 2022, Saturday, Stated Meeting starting at 2 pm. Lunch at 1 pm.
- **Tentative** - Feb 26, 2022, Saturday, 2nd Degree starting at 2 pm.
- March 5, 2022, Saturday, Stated Meeting starting at 2 pm. Lunch 1 pm.
- **Tentative** - March 19, 2022, Saturday, Lodge Workday, starting at 1pm.
- April 2, 2022, Saturday, Stated Meeting starting at 2 pm. Lunch 1 pm.
- **Tentative** - April 7 and 14, 2022, 3rd Degree practice starting at 6:30 pm.
- **Tentative** - April 16, 2022, Saturday, 3rd degree starting at 2 pm.

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Golden Feather Chapter Eastern Star

Note: Golden Feather Chapter of Eastern Star is a combination of the old Paradise and Oroville Chapters. As such they split their events between those locations. They will be meeting in Paradise for their May Official Visit event, and for their regular meetings in June and September.

Other scheduled Community Events at the Table Mountain Masonic Center

- February 12, Saturday, Paradise High School Dance.
- March 12 and 13, Homespun Holidays Crafts Fair
- Paradise Rod and Gun Club – Executive meeting first Wednesday of every month at 6pm. General membership meeting third Thursday of every month 6:30pm
- Butte County Family Health classes and counseling , Every Wednesday until May 2022, 4:30 to 9 pm.

Note: Several private parties are looking to book our facilities on various dates. When the contracts are finalized, those events will be added to the calendar.



Next Stated Meeting

Our Table Mountain Masonic Lodge (Paradise) will have our next **Stated Meeting on Saturday February 5th at 2 pm. At 1pm, lunch will begin.** Lunch will be prepared by Brother Cole Hamilton and his wife Lisa. There is no charge for the lunch. In the Stated Meeting, in addition to our regular business, we will be discussing progress on our plans with the local schools. The dates and preparation for our future degrees, recent improvements to our facilities, the scheduled *brothers workday* to accomplish simple repairs. We will also discuss our plans for visiting and working with other lodges in the region. Finally, we want to plan a strictly social event. **Please be there. The stated meetings are now on the first Saturday of every month to facilitate your attendance.**



New Masonic Lodge Sign for the Entrance to Paradise

The City of Paradise has erected the first of two large sign boards at the entrances to Paradise. The current sign board is on Skyway, just after the city limits. With the permission of the Table Mountain Masonic Building Association Board, Worshipful Nelson, designed and had the below sign produced for that sign board. The sign will be posted sometime soon by the City of Paradise. Look for the sign the next time you drive up the Skyway.



Brothers Cole Hamilton and Phil Howard holding the new sign.

Table Mountain Lodge Hiram Award Ceremony

On Saturday, Jan 15, at a well-attended and formal ceremony, Brother Bob McElroy was presented the Hiram Award for outstanding Masonic character, and service to our Masonic community. Congratulations Brother Bob.



Brother Bob McElroy and his wonderful wife Peg



Table Mountain Lodge 2022 Installation of Officers

Immediately after the presentation of the Hiram Award, the 2022 elected and appointed officers of Table Mountain Masonic Lodge #124, were installed. The Installing Officer was Richard Sutherland PM of Oroville lodge, assisted by John Barneson PM of Chico lodge, Master of Ceremonies was Miles Mallette PM and a district inspector. Installing Chaplain was Bill Spencer PM of Table Mountain lodge #124 and our guest musician was Dana Campbell.



The 2022 Table Mountain Lodge Officers

Worshipful Master – Harwood (Woody) Nelson PM, *Senior Warden* – Scott Miller,
Junior Warden – Douglas Campbell, *Chaplain* – Bob McElroy,
Treasurer – Richard Gingery, *Secretary* – Brian Grandfield PM,
Senior Deacon – Justin Purcell PM, *Junior Deacon* – Ehren Hawkins,
Senior Steward – Phil Howard, *Marshall* – Matt Sutter,
Tiler – Caleb Chinn PM

Celebrations

After the presentation of the Hiram Award and the Installation of officers, all joined together in the downstairs dining room for food, refreshment and wonderful fellowship.



Recent 2nd Degree

On Saturday Jan 29, at 2pm, Table Mountain Masonic Lodge # 124 presented a double 2nd (Fellowcraft) degree. After opening the lodge on the 2nd degree of Masonry, the lodge reconvened on the 1st Degree for Entered Apprentices Steve Kane and Cole Hamilton to present their proficiency.

Brother Steve Kane was assisted by his coach Brother Caleb Chinn PM. Brother Cole Hamilton was assisted by his coach Brother Doug Campbell. Both successfully passed their proficiency. The lodge was then call work on the 2nd degree of Masonry, and proceeded with conferring the Fellowcraft degree.

Both candidates experienced the first part of the degree independently, and then together experience the second part. Worshipful Glenn Story of Chico-Leland Stanford Lodge presented the lecture, and our own Brother Ehren Hawkins delivered the Charge. We greatly appreciate the side-liners from Chico and Redding. We shall be visiting those lodges in the near future.

Afterwards, we met downstairs for refreshments, including “corn, oil and wine”, and cake, ice cream and sparking cider.



Our next 2nd Degree is tentatively scheduled for Saturday Feb 26, 2022, , starting at 2 pm.

Masonic Formation: Applying to your life the lessons of Freemasonry

Editor's Introduction,

While all this is very true, applying the lessons of the degrees to your life requires reflection and It has been said that the three degrees of Freemasonry, specifically the Blue Lodge, symbolically represent the three stages of life: youth, manhood, and old age. The lodge symbolizes the world as a whole with the Entered Apprentice representing the youth entering the world and the Master Mason about to leave it. The Fellowcraft degree represents manhood, the period in which a man is in the prime of his life prepared to face the trials and tribulations of the world, and equipped to do its work deep understanding. The following article was written by a medical student who reflected upon and then applied the lessons of the Entered Apprentice degree and the Fellowcraft degree to his medical education and his transition to a practicing physician. It is highly unusual to have anything about Freemasonry published in an academic Medical Journal. This is the only article I could find in any medical publication specifically discussing the relevance of the Masonic education to professional practice. While the author is applying Masonic principles in the context of the medical profession, his approach to applying Masonic principles is applicable to other professional pursuits. Please enjoy. This article was edited for readability.

A fellowcraft's application of the plumb, the square, and the level in medical practice

By Jonathan Kopel, MD

My journey as an entered apprentice (EA) mason was long and arduous, requiring dedication and learning the lengthy responses to questions about the fundamentals of Freemasonry and the lessons of an EA. The oral transmission of information required a new method for memorizing the topics needed to demonstrate proficiency. At moments, I doubted whether I would be able to overcome the challenges. After completing my proficiency as an EA, I progressed to the fellowcraft degree. In Freemasonry, the fellowcraft degree represents the transition from youth to adulthood whereby lessons, skills, and moral character are further refined to prepare for the tasks and challenges ahead. Each degree is taught through unique working tools. In the EA degree, the working tools are the 24-inch gauge and the common gavel, which represent the discipline and initial transformation of individuals as they progress through life in maturity and in their chosen profession. For the fellowcraft, the lessons of the degree are represented by the square, level, and plumb. As Albert Mackey summarized, "The *Plumb* is an instrument made use of by operative masons to raise perpendiculars; the *Square*, to square their work; and the *Level*, to lay horizontals; but we, as Free and Accepted Masons, are taught to make use of them for more noble and glorious purposes." Whereas the EA focuses on the fundamentals of Freemasonry, the fellowcraft

mason learns that every transition or transformation in life requires a greater degree of commitment and refinement in one's character, conduct, and responsibilities.

As an MD/PhD student, I observed similar parallels in my transition from medical school to doctoral training. Through my doctoral studies, I learned the importance of patience and diligence dealing with the vast uncertainties, mistakes, and complications performing experiments while working to complete my doctoral requirements. In each circumstance, I had to retrain my own thinking and response to disappointments, frustrations, and setbacks. As a medical student there is immediate gratification in performing well on an exam, having a good patient encounter, or learning a new skill. In contrast, research requires comfort in the unknown and stumbling in the dark without any guarantee of success. Failure can be more common than success. The two mindsets clashed and required me to transition from thinking as a future physician to thinking as a future physician-scientist. The training required me to take responsibility for balancing both aspects of my career despite the challenges. Given my experience, I wanted to explore the fellowcraft working tools and their relationship to the transformation physicians experience through the physician-patient relationship while balancing the ethical and professional requirements of their profession.

THE SQUARE

The Square is the symbol of morality, truthfulness and honesty. It symbolizes accuracy, not even varying by a single degree. When we part upon the Square, we go in different directions, but in full knowledge that our courses in life will be going according to the angle of the Square (which means in the right direction), until we meet again.

The square is unwavering in its form, with equal dimensions on either side. This emblem for Freemasons represents the constant requirement to treatment their fellow man with integrity and honesty regardless of race, ethnicity, or previous actions. In Freemasonry, "the square is the symbol of regulated life and actions. It is the masonic rule for correcting and harmonizing conduct on principles or morality and virtue." Thus, the square is a reminder that the ethical principle of beneficence should be unwavering in the physician-patient relationship. Physicians have an obligation to be truthful in the assessment and prognosis of a patient's medical condition. Such honesty empowers patients to take charge of their own health decisions, evaluate their goals, and develop a greater sense of control and peace facing the vast unknowns of their disease. Yet there are some circumstances when the truth may conflict with a physicians' responsibility to maintain beneficence, nonmaleficence, and the autonomy of their patients. For example, debate continues on whether patients with cognitive deficits or dementia should be told the full truth, given their inability to comprehend or make informed health care decisions for themselves. Although there are other circumstances where being truthful may harm a patient, physicians should always seek to bring truth and openness to a patient despite the inconvenience, suffering, or potential conflicts that may arise. When our

medical decisions provide patients beneficence, the physician and patient benefit from the exchange, growing deeper in love, trust, and respect.

For masons, the square embodies the hope and promise of living an honest life, not only for the individual but for society and the grand scope of human history. For physicians, the square is a reminder that temptations to avoid difficult situations, delivering a poor prognosis, or being honest should never compromise their ability to preserve a patient's beneficence, nonmaleficence, and autonomy.

THE LEVEL

The Level is a symbol of equality. We do not mean equality in wealth, social distinction, civic office, or service to mankind; but, rather, we refer to the internal, and not the external, qualifications. Each person is endowed with a worth and dignity which is spiritual, and should not be subject to man-made distinctions.

In the EA degree, masons are taught that a person is qualified to be made a mason by their internal and not external characteristics. For Freemasons, all human beings are viewed as equal before God; therefore, individuals' social, political, or economic standing in society should not dictate their worthiness. The fellowcraft degree expands on this lesson with the level, which emphasizes the equality between all members of society regardless of race, gender, or ethnicity. Although people do not possess equal ability, gifts, and talents, Freemasons believe human beings should be treated with equal respect and opportunity to thrive. In the medical profession, the level represents the beneficence with which physicians and health care professionals should treat their patients. In the medical community, physicians should treat each patient equally and judge, if so lightly, based on the person's character rather than physical appearance, sexual identity, or other external qualifications. For example, many patients with limited proficiency in the English language are among the most disempowered and disadvantaged, which increases the cost of care, mortality, and morbidity. Clinicians who are aware of these inequalities and have access to interpreters and other health care resources for these populations improve health care outcomes and solidarity in minority communities. By leveling their minds from biases, physicians can better empathize, connect, and improve the quality of care given to patients.

Despite improvements in social, political, and racial equality, the medical profession still has issues related to the prevalence of minority groups and women in the profession. With the rise in globalization, inequalities among minority groups in several countries have risen given the increased demand and resources needed for physicians to address the complex medical needs of these communities. However, physicians can unshackle themselves from destructive thinking and better prepare their minds to live a larger life dedicated to service, love, and compassion. In this manner, the level is a constant reminder for physicians to be unbiased, fair, and equal with all their patients while remaining diligent in their civic duty and charitable

to all human beings. The daily “leveling” of the mind through meditation, reflection, and dialogue with different social, ethnic, religious, or political groups can remind physicians of the importance of remaining equal toward every patient. The practice reminds physicians that despite their status and skill, they share a common bond with their patients in their mortality, frailties, and journey to live peacefully and in harmony with all people.

THE PLUMB

The Plumb is a symbol of uprightness of conduct. By understanding the Plumb, a Mason is to judge his Brothers by their own standards and not those of someone else. When the Plumb line is thought of in this way, it becomes a symbol of an upright life and of the conscience by which each person must live. This idea is closely tied to the concept of Justice. For, in truth, Justice is giving another man his due.

In Freemasonry, the plumb reminds masons to equally apply their own standards of justice and moral character to themselves and society. The tool is meant to prevent hypocrisy while encouraging Freemasons to engage society as a means of maintaining social order and moral conduct. Furthermore, the plumb admonishes all Freemasons at all stages of life to live a life in which any person will know “how he will act, and what he will do, because he stoops to nothing mean or petty, a debt of a few cents is just as sure to be paid as one of a thousand dollars.” According to the plumb, a physician can practice justice through providing care equally to all who need it, distributing resources properly based on need, providing equal access to care, maximizing the benefits of available treatment, respecting the autonomy of patients, and limiting the waste of government funding and other medical resources.

A just physician impacts not only patient care but the larger scale of social, political, and economic trends in society. Justice can be practiced through the physician-patient relationship and the physician’s commitment to fight for a patient’s access and affordability to medical care. Specifically, this activity is directly related to a physician’s professionalism, which includes maintaining the primacy of patient welfare, patient autonomy, and social justice. In this manner, the plumb reminds physicians to act with proper conduct within and outside the clinic, remembering that their calling is one that represents the central ideals of society and the pursuit of health and happiness. Physicians are held to a higher standard given the sacred nature of their work dealing with patients at their moment of weakness or at death’s door. Overall, the plumb reminds clinicians that their actions, standards, and ethics extend beyond the clinic into society and with their creator, with whom they will be held accountable for every decision.

DISCUSSION

As learned in the EA degree, the symbols of Freemasonry are meant to teach an EA the “importance of integrity and honor, reliance, self-control, trustworthiness, the realization that humans have a spiritual nature as well as a physical or animal nature, knowing how to love and

be loved, and the importance of keeping confidences.” Starting as an EA, the symbols teach the fundamental purpose, mission, and organization of the Freemason fraternity. The fellowcraft degree expands upon the ethical and moral aspects of Freemasonry, whereby masons fit themselves for their eternal home with their creator by continually refining and improving their character. Through the square, level, and plumb, masons are reminded how to conduct themselves and interact with others. The fellowcraft is constantly reminded through the working tools that upright conduct and character must be practiced diligently without ceasing or reservation. Furthermore, the tools serve as a warning of “how easy it is to misread the plan, and how we need a good light. We have only to seek, and we will find the light that we need. The light of a Master Mason is but darkness visible, that is, ignorance realized, for there is no greater darkness than ignorance not realized.”

As in the fellowcraft degree, the transition from a medical student to a physician requires a greater appreciation and growth beyond technical and clinical skills toward embodying the character needed to maintain the physician-patient relationship. In this process, the medical student is taught the application of the four principal components of medical ethics: autonomy, justice, beneficence, and nonmaleficence. Through the cauldron of medical training, the medical student is molded to fit the image of a physician tried and tested and willing to be tried again. In this manner, the working tools of a fellowcraft remind prospective doctors that their journey as a physician extends beyond their technical abilities to their values, moral character, and conduct. As Sir William Osler eloquently summarized:

The cultivated general practitioner. May this be the destiny of a large majority of you You cannot reach any better position in a community; the family doctor is the man behind the gun, who does our effective work. That his life is hard and exacting; that he is underpaid and overworked; that he has but little time for study and less for recreation—these are the blows that may give finer temper to his steel, and bring out the nobler elements in his character.

Acknowledgments

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The Researcher: How old is Freemasonry? More than 300 years!

By Doug Campbell Ph.D

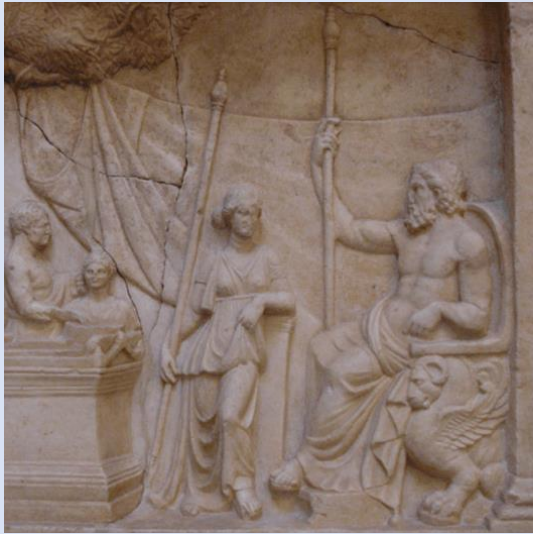
Several years ago, there began a concerted effort by some Grand Lodges to date Freemasonry to what is claimed as the establishment of the First Grand lodge in England. Thus, you have likely seen some banner such as “300 years of Freemasonry”. They justified this dating by claiming that the transition from operative masonry to purely symbolic (speculative is a word choice that makes little sense) Freemasonry began or was completed with the creation of the first Grand Lodge, and from that there arose a necessary standardization of Masonic practices and rituals. These claims have been accepted by many people without real scrutiny. However, many of our brethren are irritated by these claims, see them as false, and as an effort to glorify an already over glorified and controlling Grand Lodge system. Thus, I chose to investigate the true age of Freemasonry, and the form of it we now practice.

We are told in one of our degrees, that ancient masonry was both operative and symbolic. Additionally, the sciences of archeology as well as anthropology tells us that when ancient people gather to build structures, it was necessary that a moral/philosophical/spiritual code be established to ensure the functionality of community, and thus *morals and values based communities* were established. Freemasonry was and is a *morals and values based community*. The discovery of ancient records as well biblical sources tell us that behavioral and ethical codes were established in ancient times to ensure coordination and timely completion. Most ancient structures had some spiritual significance at the time, so it is logical that the moral working code had some spiritual component. Both physical and intellectual skills needed to be taught in an effective manner, requiring the creation of linear or semi-linear instructional processes and a sort of curriculum. Considering what we now know of basic human psychology and level of sophistication of the ancients, It is hard to imagine that their teaching were just limited to how to hold a chisel. Also, we know that in many cultures common items and tools were used as symbols for instructive purpose to communicate concepts. Additionally, archeological discoveries tell us that the workers who built the pyramids and temples wore different types of garments to facilitate their work and that these garments would have logically indicated their status or role in the project. From the Bible and archeology, we know that the ancients understood the concept of division of labor. We know that all over the ancient world symbols were used to communicate concepts, processes, techniques and principles to both literate and especially illiterate populations.

Symbols have the advantage over written words of being able to have multiple and broader meanings and to communicate multiple concepts. The symbols that decorate ancient buildings were not fanciful, instead they were intentional communications. It is reasonable to conclude that ancient artisans and builders used their tools to represent and communicate the ethical and spiritual principles of the profession and behavioral rules. Symbols are especially

necessary when the majority of the people were not able to write or read, as was the case in most of history.

In ancient Rome, there were societies of people called *Collegia* that held status as a legal entity. Collegia could function as guilds, professional groups, religious cults, social clubs, or burial societies. These Collegias provide care and support of its members, and met in formal meetings run in a generally democratic manner and according to some established ritual. The Roman *Collegia Fabrorum* (society of builders) was likely the inheritors of the ancient trade craft lodges, and possibly a predecessor of the trade craft lodges of the middle ages.



ROMAN COLLEGIA

FIRST ROMAN WORKERS ORGANIZED INTO GUILDS

Numa Pompilius (the second King of Rome) organizes Roman workers into various Collegia. He attaches one to each legion of the Army so that Roman arms and arts go hand in hand into the outlying parts of the Empire.

The stone workers, or masons, are the most numerous because of their use in defense works, and so become the most powerful. Each Collegia has at least three members. They use their tools as symbols and look after the widows and orphans of members.

Masonic historian and author H. L Haywood described the Collegia in the following words:

“Each collegium aspired to control or own a hall or meeting place, which it called schola, or in some cases, curia. For officials it had a kind of president called by different names, magistri, curitarious, quinquennales, perfecti praesides, and so on. Decuriones were a kind of warden, and there were factors or quaestors to manage the business affairs. Each society had its own laws, called lex college, and its house rules or by-laws, and these regulations were based, as already explained, on the imperial statutes. Fees and dues went into a common chest, called the arca. It has been alleged by some writers that the funds thus accumulated were used for charitable purposes but the best informed archaeologists dissent from this opinion, and say that the income was employed to defray necessary expenses for the upkeep of headquarters, and for memorial banquets. Oftentimes some well-to-do member or friend left behind a legacy, usually with the directi on that it be used for memorial banquets, but sometimes for the benefits of the membership as a whole. Most collegia besought the graces of a patron, often a woman, who, in return for signal honors, helped defray the expenses of the little group. It is supposed by a few chroniclers that these patrons, who often belonged to the upper classes, were more or less useful in controlling the activities of the collegia in the interests of the established order.”

The fall of western Roman Empire was not sudden, it took place over hundreds of years. populations and organizations relocated from Rome and Italy to throughout Western and Eastern Europe, the British Isles, and the Middle East. Even when Western Europe was within the darkest period following the collapse of the western Roman empire, the eastern Roman empire continued from the city of Constantinople, with their crafts, artistic and construction communities. The craft guilds of the middle ages were the logical inheritors of their knowledge and also their moral, ethical and spiritual based codes and symbols.

Magistri (Master) Comancini (a style of architecture) is an Italian term from the early Middle Ages for master architects who supervised the construction of medieval cathedrals. It first appeared in writing in 643. Some researchers think that the Magistri Comancini can be linked back to the Roman Collegia Fabrorum; however, other researchers think It is unlikely. These Magistri appeared throughout medieval Europe. They often were granted charters and were organized along the lines of a corporation or guild, but their history is obscure, perhaps due to a secrecy that then excluded outsiders. Evidence indicates that a few monks served as architects, but most master builders were laymen; mastership seems to have passed from father to son. The masters moved from place to place and developed an international style in their work. Their artistic styles tended to break with classical and Byzantine traditions.

The highly organized Italian lodges of architects and masons continued in existence to early modern times and played an important part in the development and spread of Baroque architecture in Italy and south Germany, and some say in Freemasonry. *The Arte dei Maestri di Pietra e Legname* was one of the Guilds of Florence that represented the Master stonemasons, woodcarvers, and sculptors, and it came to absorb multiple building crafts in the Florence area. It was listed as *Muratori e Scarpellini* (builders and stonemasons) in a 1236 list of the guilds.



Note that their emblem included the *compass* at the top, the *square* on the right, and the *trowel* at the bottom



This is an image from a builders guild's drinking cup, and was made in the Netherlands in 1633. Note the symbolic imagery of the *square* and *compass*.

With the decline of European cathedral building in 16th–17th centuries (1500 to 1699) many of these lodges began to initiate non-operative masons into their organization and secret rituals in order to maintain their membership and treasury: thus, they moved from being operative and symbolic lodges, to purely symbolic knowledge societies. This was before the first declared Grand Lodge in England.

Diligent researchers have over many years compiled a significant library of scrolls, manuscripts, old charges, constitutions, ritual fragments and other records showing that the Foundations, organization, operation and symbolic dogma of Freemasonry was present well before the creation of the first Grand Lodge in 1717.

Since both writing skills and writing materials were not yet common, historical records of those old times are somewhat limited. However, taken as a whole we see that most structural elements of lodge based Freemasonry predates 1717. These include the process of prayers, invocation, declaration, the use of symbols, the seven liberal arts, (logic, grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy), extolling geometry, two degrees, foundational myths, pillars of knowledge, and statements that Masonry was taught to the children of nobility as an instructive discipline. That were many lodges in Ireland, Scotland and England, some hundreds of years older, than the first Grand Lodge. There is also evidence of lodges in Europe during this period.

Most importantly, there are records of lodges, prior to 1717, consisting entirely of non-operative masons, specifically in Scotland a lodge of individuals who were not primarily construction or artisans. Additionally, there is some good evidence that a small Masonic lodge bestowing “three” degrees, operating in the colony of Rhode Island as early as 1658, which is particularly interesting since during the transition in 1717, we believe that most Masonic lodges in the British islands practiced only two degrees for some 20 years. We simply don’t know how many strictly symbolic lodges there were in that timeframe. However, it is clear that transition from operative and symbolic to entirely symbolic was a natural progression and an occurring process.

Why then was a Grand Lodge established? This is the question that many researchers have investigated and many are still investigating. Consider the arrogance of the leaders of only four lodges in the London area, holding their meetings in taverns, and without any authority to do so, declaring themselves the Grand Lodge, and taking it upon themselves the authority to modify the ancient rituals and teachings of Freemasonry, invent new so-called landmarks and then expect allegiance and compliance from other lodges. It is not surprising that the Lodge of York, perhaps the oldest lodge of Masons in England, in opposition declared itself the Grand Lodge, and in Scotland and Ireland Grand Lodges were formed in opposition to liberties being taken with historical Masonic practices by the newly declared Grand Lodge in England. Clearly, the many Masonic Lodges of Scotland and Ireland were not keen on surrendering their independence, and certainly not to a Grand Lodge based in England.

Some researchers have come to the conclusion that the formation of a Grand Lodge was encouraged by the state authorities. The 100 year period prior to 1717 and the next 50 years afterwards, were turbulent periods of internal and religious wars, plots and conspiracies, changing royalty and conflicting claims for the crown. Much of the conflict was regional, Scottish and Irish based forces in conflict with English authorities. Only ten years earlier Scotland had been forced into a union with England, and a year prior there was a major uprising in Scotland. Some researchers consider it very likely that the authorities were concerned about secretive societies of independent thinking individuals, with unique allegiances. Brothers in London might have sought security and protection by creating a “loyal” Grand Lodge with the sponsorship for influential royalty. The idea of centralized control and the loyalty oaths to the government might have been very reassuring to the authorities. One could certainly argue that the sponsorship of certain nobility had a major positive effect on the growth and power of Freemasonry. This would have been similar to the Roman and Middle Ages period when collegia and trade guilds sought to align with religious establishments and powerful authorities for self-protections and additional wealth.

Yet another idea put forth by a researcher is that the creation of the Grand Lodge was a sort of friendly takeover by certain scientific and philosophical interests that wanted to co-op an

existing organization to have a very private venue to discuss and explore their interests, and promulgate their views.

The argument that the creation of the first Grand Lodge brought needed standardization to Masonic practices is rather questionable. In modern organizational science, *standardization* is sometime considered just the *illusion of progress*, and often just an exercise in the power to control. Yet we agree that some standardization has been shown to result in positive outcomes.

In the era of the first Grand Lodge obstacles such as distance, slow transportation and lack of communications did not facilitate control and standardization. If there was some standardization beyond loyalty oaths to the new Grand Lodge and to the authorities, it was primarily within England. Lodge practices remained somewhat different in Scotland and Ireland, and became significantly different in Scandinavia, other places in Europe and even in British colonies. Despite the centralized attempt to control Freemasonry, various rites and degrees were developed in many countries, reflecting the religious environment, economic conditions, philosophical movements, and the degree of government involvement. It can be argued that these innovations enriched Freemasonry and made it a more adaptable and sustainable worldwide movement. Certainly, Freemasonry as it currently exists in the United States is unique, having developed from the Masonic influences of several nations, and from our unique attitudes and events, and unique environments.

Conclusions:

The history of operative and symbolic Masonic lodges (construction and artisan guilds) is ancient, so ancient that the line between fact and myth is obscured. The nature of historical research is that we discover evidence which suffice only as clues, and that sufficient objective proof is difficult or impossible to find. Thus, historians are left with bits of information that presents an incomplete picture. Researchers then must fill in blanks using logic and imagination to create sufficient links to come to a theory of what occurred. The individual that claims that something did not occur because the evidence is insufficient to establish objective proof, is being illogical and unscientific.

The available evidence will always be too incomplete to establish a complete and entirely accurate history. However, there are sufficient manuscripts and other records, both original and copies, to show that the trip from operative masonry to symbolic masonry was not linear, began long before record keeping was common, and that purely symbolic masonry did not arrive with the first Grand Lodge.

Thousands of years ago ancient craft and artisans of ago formed communities with shared professions, values and morals, and created forms of instruction and training to facilitate their work and their profession. It is acknowledged that the ancient forms of Masonry were both

operative and symbolic, and their values, morals and teachings evolved and were added to again and again, over great spans of time. These communities of shared professions, values and morals passed through many forms, in many places and by different routes all contributed to what we now know as modern Freemasonry. These are historical links that should not be lost, for such history enriches our understanding.

Eventually, through natural community and organizational evolution many of the old Masonic lodges of England, Scotland, Ireland, and in parts of Europe ceased to serve just operative masons, and eventually these lodges were dominated by other professionals, seeking the knowledge, wisdom and fellowship of symbolic Masonry.

The available records and manuscripts, and the findings of many excellent researchers, as well as the diversity of Masonic rites and practices do not support the claim that purely symbolic Freemasonry began with any grand lodge, nor that significant standardization resulted from its creation. Instead, Freemasonry, with many of the elements and practices simpler to today's variations, existed before the attempt to establish the first Grand Lodge, and today there is surprisingly less standardization and far more diversity of practices than what is often claimed within regular Freemasonry worldwide.

The first Grand Lodge was likely formed for political expediency in an age of political and religious turmoil. There was no specific historical precedence or authority for the creation of a Grand Lodge, and considerable argument resulted from its founding. Modern Freemasonry, as currently practiced, is the result of innovations and reorganizations that occurred in many places after the formation of the Grand Lodge of England, and often in opposition to that bureaucracy. The primary benefit that Masonry received from the creation of a Grand Lodge, at the time, was official royal sponsorship and increased visibility, which made it appear more attractive and less suspicious, and thus facilitated its extraordinary growth.

As Freemasons, truth is our guide. The more we know and understand about the past and about societal development, the more we appreciate what we have achieved, the more we learn from the past, and the better prepared we are to succeed in the future.



California Masonic History

Pictures of some of the old California Masonic Lodges



Tehama County California



Susanville, California



Enterprise, California



Hornitos, California



Redding, Shasta County California



Willits, California



Porterville, California



St. Helena, California

Masonic Poetry

My First Degree - They All Came Just For Me

Something big is going on here.
Or so I thought that night,
As the Masons came to gather round
the Great and lesser lights.

One from here and one from there
From places far and wide,
They came to do, I knew not what,
As they gathered there inside.

But from each man I was greeted
With a smile and voice of cheer.
One said, "so you're the candidate.
The reason that we're here."

I scarcely knew just what he meant,
For this was my "first degree."
There must be much for them to do
Before they got to me.

Surely these guys would not travel
for the sake of just one man.
Yes, there must be much for them to do,
Before my part began.

The "Brother Tiler" was my company
As I waited at the door
To step into this brand new realm
I had not known before.

They shared with me the three Great Lights
and some tools of the trade,
That I might learn a thing or two
of how a man be better made.

When at last I had been seated
In this brotherhood of men
The Master then began to bring
The meeting to an end.

And with all things then completed,
They stayed a little more,
To eat and drink and share a laugh
Before heading toward the door.

But as we left, I understood
And then began to see.
That they all came for one reason.
They all came just for me.

Dear brothers I pray every lodge
Will make new ones like me,
Feel as welcome as these brothers did,
When they held my First Degree.

Author Unknown

*FREEMASONRY promotes a way of life that binds
like-minded men with the principles of Brotherly
Love, Relief and Truth in order to serve God,
Family, Country, Neighbor and Self.*



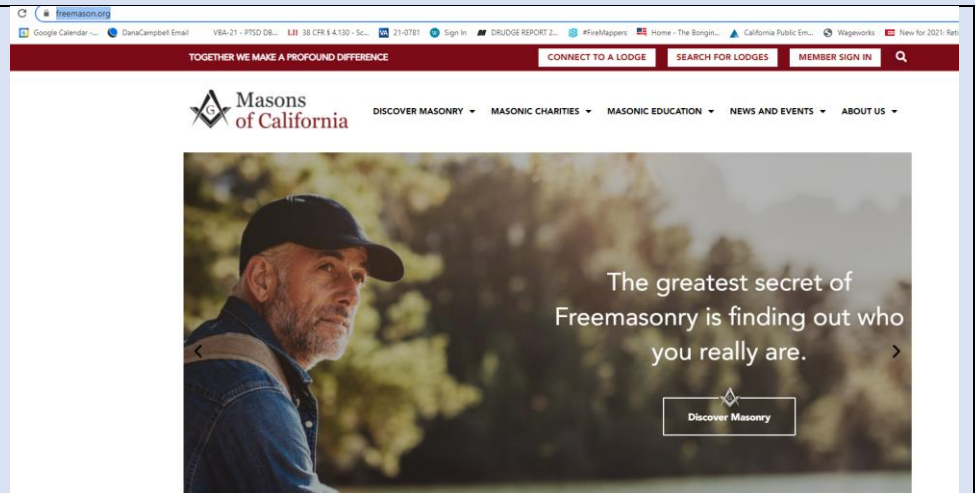
Paying your dues and getting your 2022 dues card

Brothers of Table Mountain Masonic Lodge. Yearly dues should be paid before January. To pay your dues, you now have two options. You may still pay your dues by sending a check to the lodge secretary.

However, you can also speed the process by paying online with a credit card. This is an easy, safe and secure process, and you can then immediately print your official dues card. Simply link to the dues notice and the pay page will appear. You will be charged an additional small processing fee of about \$6. After paying by this method, you can immediately print your dues card.

Using your computer, open your browser and go to <https://freemason.org/>. You will see this website.

In the right corner, push “member sign in”

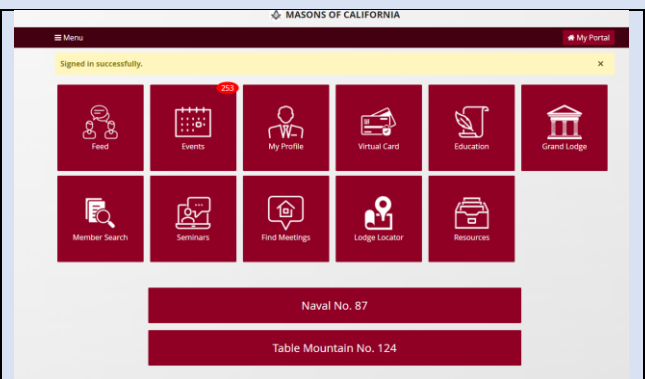


This is the “sign up” and the “sign in” page. If you have never been to this website before, then go to “Sign up” in the lower left. It will only take you a minute to create your password. You will need your member number which is on your dues card. After that you sign in using your email and password

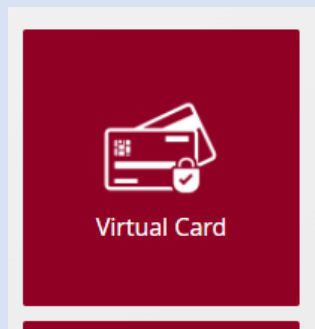
A screenshot of the "Sign In" page on the Masons of California website. The page has a dark red header with the "Masons of California" logo and links for "Sign in", "Member Registration", and "App". The main content area is light gray and contains a "Sign In" form. The form has fields for "Email" and "Password", a "Remember Me" checkbox, and a red "Sign in" button. Below the form are links for "Sign up", "Forgot your password?", and "Didn't receive unlock instructions?".

This will be the page you see after signing in

There will be a notice posted on this page if you have not paid your dues. There will also be a link so that you can immediately pay your dues using a credit card.



To download and print your dues card, go to "Virtual Card"



Follow the very simple instructions to print your Due card. The new dues card does not have to be signed by the lodge secretary.

You can access the Grand Lodge Website from your computer or your smart phone. There is no cost and no risk. This website is very easy to use. Please try it. If you have any trouble using it, ask one of us (your brothers) for assistance.

There is also a I Member 2.0 app for your smart phone. Information about how to obtain and use it can be found at <https://masonichome.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Intro.iMemberLOApp.pdf>

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