

Masonic Messenger



Official Publication of the Grand Lodge of Georgia, Free & Accepted Masons

Spring 2025



**Great Mentors
Wise Guidance
Brotherhood & Fellowship**

Grand Lodge Officers

Table listing Grand Lodge Officers: Grand Master Mark A. Bradley (36, 766), Deputy Grand Master Bill Shepard (717, 214), Senior Grand Warden Brian C. Coffey (271, 749, 710), Junior Grand Warden Tom D. Bruce (42, 216), Grand Treasurer Jeffery L. Anderson (200, 376, 06), Grand Secretary Van S. McGee (26, 70), Grand Chaplain Douglas A. Koschel (711, 36), Grand Marshal Wiley A. Gammon, Jr. (729), Grand Orator Johnie M. Garmon (114, 137, 753), Senior Grand Deacon Scott W. Johnson (68, 376), Junior Grand Deacon Wiley Q. Forrester, III (292), First Grand Steward W. David Baxter (35), Second Grand Steward Jeff L. Smith (131, 216), Third Grand Steward Paul Carter (26), Grand Tyler Lucien T. Hays (36, 766, 294).

Publications

Table listing Publications: Editor of the Messenger Daniel P. Bennett (364,154) at 728 Baugh Mountain Rd. NW, Sugar Valley, GA 30746, Email: messenger@glofga.org, 770-608-6232; Chairman of Publications Wiley Q. Forrester, III (292).

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THE GEORGIA MASONIC MESSENGER

VOL. 136 SPRING 2025 NO. 1

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Please send changes of address to the Grand Secretary at 811 Mulberry Street, Macon, GA 31201 on your lodge secretary's monthly report.

The editor does NOT keep the list of addresses.

Form for Changing Address for Messenger. Includes fields for Name in Full, Lodge Name and Number, Street or P.O. Box, City, Zip Code. Instructions: TYPE or PRINT information requested and mail to the Grand Lodge address on the back cover. If you have moved, PLEASE RETURN YOUR ADDRESS LABEL ABOVE TO THE GRAND LODGE OF GEORGIA along with your new address. Briefing: It is your responsibility to make certain your address is correct. Be certain your Lodge secretary has your correct address. Current addresses are kept in the Grand Secretary's Office in Macon. The editor of the Masonic Messenger DOES NOT keep a list of addresses.



From the Desk of the Grand Secretary Right Worshipful Van S. “Mac” McGee

How to register for Grand View

Below is a link to a video that will show you how to set up your user account and the step to set up your account. If you have already created your user account and forgotten your password you can click on "Forgot your password?" under the sign-in button, enter your email address in the box and click "Send me to reset password instructions."

Video link- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ilx-WliihfcM>

Step 1. Enter the URL for your jurisdiction. <https://ga.grandview.systems>

Step 2. Click on Member Portal

Step 3. Click on Member Registration (or you can Click the "Sign up" next to forgot password) Step 4. Enter your Lodge Number

Step 5. Enter your Member ID

Step 6. Enter your Last Name - (case sensitive)

Step 7. Click on Check Membership Status

Step 8. Enter your email address

Step 9. Enter a password that you can remember (password must contain at least 8 characters) Step 10. Enter Confirmation by entering the password again

Step 11. Click on Submit

Now Available

You may now find the 2025 Georgia List of Lodges, Officers Planning Tool, and DDGM Contacts under My Portal on Grand View.

Grand View Secretary Training

The Grand Lodge Office is encouraging secretary training in all districts. Anyone can attend the training classes.

Please contact the Grand Lodge Office if you are interested in organizing a training class.

2025 District Conventions

District	Date	Time	Location	Host Lodge
1st District	March 22, 2025	10:00AM	Statesboro	Ogeehee Lodge No. 213
2nd District	February 22, 2025	9:00AM	Bainbridge	Orion Lodge No. 8
3rd District	March 15, 2025	10:00AM	Dawson	P.T. Schley Lodge No. 229
4th District	August 16, 2025	9:45AM	Greenville Lodge No. 321	Sylvan Lodge No. 429
5th District	September 13, 2025	9:00AM	College Park	College Park Lodge No. 454
6th District	May 3, 2025	9:00AM	Griffin @ Meridian Sun Lodge No. 26	Davidson Lodge No. 334
7th District	May 9 & 10, 2025	9:00AM	Rome	Cherokee Lodge No. 66
8th District	May 17, 2025	9:00AM	Danielsville	John H. Jones Lodge No. 348
9th District	September 27, 2025	9:00AM	Gainesville	Gainesville Lodge No. 219
10th District	June 14, 2025	10:00AM	Milledgeville	Benevolent Lodge No. 3
11th District	September 20, 2025	10:00AM	Valdosta Masonic Temple	Azalea Lodge No. 216
12th District	April 19, 2025	9:00AM	Eastman	Eugene Smith Lodge No. 279

Snow Day 2025 !!!

The Kids had a Blast playing in the Snow



Thank You !!



On behalf of the Children and Staff I would like to Thank all Mason's and Lodges that held an event, provided a Christmas Gift to the Children and Staff and supported the Masonic Home this Holiday Season.

The Christmas Appeal was a huge success with Donations of more than \$135,000. We have been pleased with your generosity and I can't Thank You enough how grateful we are.

2025 has started off well - the children enjoyed their 3 Snow Days on January 21, 22 and 23. The Staff was happy that they did return to school on Friday, January 24.

Events

Due to the January Weather - the month was a little slow.

We had to cancel our January 11 Skating Trip with Hudson # 294.

McIntosh # 735, Turin #337, Madison # 376, Fickling # 129, Widow Sons (Oglethorpe Chapter, Roosevelt Chapter and Knights of the East Chapter) held a Christmas Event with the kids on January 12

Ezel # 335 took us to Crystal River to Swim with the Manatees on January 31 - February 2



Upcoming Events



April 12, 2025

Workday at The Home

Biscuits in Dining Room at 7:30 AM

Work Begins at 8:00 AM



May 10, 2025

Get Ready for our 5k Road and
Trail Run for the Children

For More Information and to
Register:

Scan QR code



Front Muzzleloader Raffle

Scan the QR code



We Are Hiring

Maintenance Manager & Houseparents

Share Your Love For Children

Maintenance Manager

The primary purpose of the Maintenance Manager is to maintain the buildings, grounds, facility, automobiles, and equipment in a safe and efficient manner; Analysis of Operational processes, Resource allocations, Safety processes, with recommendations for implemented improvements.

Houseparents


Our Houseparents are a vital part in helping the children they serve. Our Goal is to nurture the “whole” child by providing supervision, structure and assistance in meeting children’s social, emotional, spiritual and physical needs while teaching them crucial life skills.



Requirements for Both Positions:

- 21 years of age
- No Criminal Background
- Clean Driving Record
- Valid Georgia Driver’s License
- High School Diploma / GED



 Apply



PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

of the Grand Lodge of Georgia



Brethren of the Grand Lodge of Georgia

In an attempt to standardize publication dates and deadlines, the Publications Committee has determined to put in place the following deadlines for submissions.

Spring (March) Issue: deadline for content-Feb 1

Summer (June) Issue: deadline for content-May 1

Fall (September) Issue: deadline for content- August 1

Winter (December) Issue: deadline for content- November 1

When you make a submission to messenger@glofga.org, you should receive an automatic reply noting that your submission was received. If you are submitting a 50, 60, 70+ Award, you will get a second email notifying you when your award will run in the Messenger.

IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE A CONFIRMATION EMAIL, please check the email address or call the Editor at 770-608-6232 for issues.

2025 GEORGIA MASONIC LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

**DO YOU WANT TO BE A BETTER
LEADER IN YOUR LODGE
AND COMMUNITY?**

JOIN US!

WHEN: JULY 11-13, 2025
**WHERE: GEORGIA COLLEGE
MILLEDGEVILLE, GA**
WHO: MASTER MASONS
COST: \$275 PER APPLICANT
FINAL
DATE TO APRIL 15, 2025
REGISTER:

“BUILDING BETTER LEADERS”

SINCE 2014



2025 MASONIC LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE APPLICATION
(FINAL DATE FOR REGISTRATION: APRIL 15, 2025)



APPLICATION DATE: _____

LODGE NAME: _____ LODGE NUMBER: _____ MASONIC SUBDISTRICT: _____

APPLICANT NAME: _____ MEMBER NUMBER: _____

APPLICANT ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

WHAT NAME DO YOU WANT ON YOUR NAMETAG?: _____

WHAT SIZE SHIRT DO YOU WEAR? _____

APPLICANT EMAIL ADDRESS: _____ @ _____

APPLICANT TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

APPLICANT AGE: _____ PAST MASTER?: _____ YEAR: _____ LODGE NO.: _____

CURRENT LODGE / DISTRICT / GRAND LODGE OFFICE: _____

DOES THE APPLICANT HAVE ANY FOOD ALLERGIES OR DIETARY REQUIREMENTS? _____

DOES THE APPLICANT HAVE ANY MEDICAL NEEDS THAT WE NEED TO ACCOMMODATE? _____

APPLICANT'S EMERGENCY CONTACT: _____

WHAT IS THE EMERGENCY CONTACT'S PHONE NUMBER?: _____

APPLICANT: _____

PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE

WORSHIPFUL MASTER: _____

PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE

*(Each application must be signed by the applicant and applicant's Worshipful Master,
and the fee must be paid by a check issued by the applicant's Lodge, payable to:
Grand Lodge of Georgia - Memo: "Leadership Conference")*

Mail Application & Payment to: Grand Lodge of Georgia, 811 Mulberry Street, Macon, Georgia 31201

(For Grand Lodge / MELD Use)

ATTENDEE TYPE:	RECEIVED DATE:
LODGE CHECK NO:	CONFIRM DATE:

Boil the

DEPUTY GRAND MASTER

with us!



**THE DEPUTY GRAND MASTER'S BOIL
OCTOBER 11, 2025
BRUNSWICK SHRINE CLUB**

**SEE DETAILS & PURCHASE
TICKETS (\$55) AT
BRUNSWICK717.COM**

HIRAM'S BLUFF



April 26, 2025 at 10 a.m.

1379 Masonic Home Camp Road NE
Townsend, GA 31331

Outdoor Master Mason Degree

Both sections--full cast

\$10 entry fee per person
includes lunch



Bring a chair & current dues
card to this Tyled meeting

Hosted by Brunswick Lodge #717

est. 2022

Questions? Contact info@brunswick717.com.

"THE DEGREE ON HALLOWED GROUND"

APRIL 26 10:30 AM



**RESACA, GA
CHITWOOD ROAD 30735
THE WOOL HAT BOYS**

- Memorial Service
- Guest Speaker: Brother Norman Dasinger Jr., noted Civil War historian, author, speaker, and battlefield guide. You won't want to miss Brother Norman's talk about the Battle of Resaca, on whose grounds this event will take place.
- Lunch
- The Wool Hat Boys will confer the Masters Degree
- Drawing Prizes: Masonic engraved Henry rifle, Shelby sword, hand-made rounded Masonic apron, bowie knife, and more. You must be present to win.
- Bring your own comfortable chair. Dress is "Masonic casual".
- In the event of bad weather, an indoor venue will be available.
- Questions? Contact WB Eddie Gurley, (770) 480-9937, WB Tim Adair, (404) 550-0935, or any of The Wool Hat Boys.



GRAND
CHAPTER
Joey E. Jackson,
ME Grand High Priest



GRAND
COUNCIL
Timothy K. Starling
MI Grand Master



GRAND
COMMANDERY
Tyler W. Pledger
RE Grand Commander

THE YORK RITE IN GEORGIA

Editor: Michael H. Sampsell Email: mike@thesampsell.com
<http://www.yorkriteofga.org>



FIFTENTH ANNUAL YORK RITE FESTIVAL MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND MASTER'S CLASS APRIL 5th, 2025

Location-Grand Chapter Building
811 Mulberry Street, Macon, GA 31201

Class In Honor Of 4 Presiding Officers

Most Worshipful Grand Master Mark A. Bradley
Most Excellent Grand High Priest Joey E. Jackson
Most Illustrious Grand Master Timothy K. Starling
Right Eminent Grand Commander Tyler W. Pledger
All Degrees and Orders of York Rite Will Be Conferred

Registration Fee: \$15.00 for All

Registration 6:30am To 7:30am

Work Begins Promptly At 7:30am

Candidates Must Have Proper Paper Work

Contact: Michael Sampsell

E-MAIL: mike@thesampsell.com

Cell: (770) 366-1800

PETITION FOR YORK RITE BODIES
<http://www.yorkriteofga.org/bpfiles/combpet.pdf>

GEORGIA YORK RITE WEBSITE
www.yorkriteofga.org

FIND YOUR CLOSEST YORK RITE:
<http://www.yorkriteofga.org/yorkrite-by-city.html>

Ambrose Baber and Macon No. 5

By Brother Jerry Purvis

Macon Lodge No. 5

As Macon Lodge # 5 celebrates the 200th anniversary of its charter, we reflect on one of the first leaders of the Lodge.

Ambrose Baber was a physician and a founding father of Macon, Georgia. He served as the first Worshipful Master of Macon Lodge and served the Grand Lodge as Grand Master in 1831-1832.

Brother Baber was born in Buckingham County, Virginia in 1792 (or 1793 according to some sources). His early education began at While Hall Institute in Virginia. He began his medical training at the age of 17, studying under Dr. Nelson of Norfolk, Virginia and later at the Medical College of Philadelphia. His studies were interrupted when he enlisted in the American Forces during the War of 1812. He sustained a wound in the Battle of Bladensburg, which would trouble him for the remainder of his life.



After the war, Brother Baber returned to the study of medicine and eventually moved to Georgia for its warmer climate. He initially settled in Dublin before relocating to the village of Hartford near Indian Territory. It was during this time that he accepted an invitation to join the medical staff under Andrew Jackson during the Seminole Campaign of 1817-1818. Following this service, he made his home in Twiggs County, where he continued his medical practice.

Bibb County was established in 1822, and Dr. Baber played a pivotal role in the planning of the new city of Macon. He was called upon to help map out this new city. His medical expertise and understanding of public health guided his advice to situate the city “not too near the river, but well away from the swamps, on the hills overlooking the river.” Although his recommendations were initially disregarded, with the first settlement along the flats of the Ocmulgee River, settlers soon realized the wisdom of his counsel and moved to higher ground. Dr. Baber’s insights contributed to the foundation of a healthier and more sustainable city.

Macon soon became Dr. Baber’s permanent home, and he became a leader in the community. He was instrumental in establishing Macon Lodge #34 (In 1829 it became No. 19, in 1836, No. 6 and in 1849 its present No. 5) and served as the first Worshipful Master after it was chartered in 1824. He also played a key role in founding Constantine Chapter #4, Royal Arch Masons. Brother Baber’s contribution to Masonry culminated in his election as Grand Master of Masons in Georgia for the 1831-1832 term. Unfortunately, this period coincided with the rise of the anti-Masonic movement brought on by the Morgan Affair. This unrest resulted in the Grand Lodge of Georgia being unable to hold its annual communication in 1833 and 1834 due to not having a quorum; but the leadership of men such as Brother Baber provided the stability and inspiration needed to weather this temporary storm.

In 1825, General Lafayette visited Macon on his Southern Tour. The brethren of Macon Lodge, headed by Ambrose Baber, greeted the General. Brother Baber’s speech began with the welcome words, “Brother and General Lafayette, in our humble capacity as brothers of the mystic union, we welcome you to our infant village.” General Lafayette responded with appreciation of the reception and with the achievement of the Masonic order.

Dr. Baber’s life was not without controversy. The events leading to this began when Dr. Baber was the

attending surgeon for a duel between Major Robert Beall and Thomas Mitchell. This duel culminated with the firing of shots by both occupants, with neither shot striking the intended target. The combatants, choosing to end their hostilities, agreed to shake hands and depart. Unfortunately, Dr. Baber made a remark to Thomas Mitchell which was the beginning of a war of words both privately and publicly. Mr. Mitchell published an article in the newspaper which described Dr. Baber as a coward and a villain. Dr. Baber then challenged Mr. Mitchell, and he accepted. The choice of weapons was short rifles at 15 paces. The combatants stepped off their 15 paces and both fired. Both shots missed their intended mark. The Seconds attempted to alleviate the situation with verbal negotiations. Dr. Baber agreed, provided that Mr. Mitchell would retract the aspersions cast upon his character. Mitchell refused stating that he believed the validity of his statements, and therefore, "he neither could, nor would, retract them". The rifles were again loaded, the 15 steps were made, and when the smoke cleared, Thomas Mitchell lay mortally wounded with the bullet from Dr. Baber's rifle penetrating his left breast and passing through to the right shoulder.

Despite this incident, Dr. Baber's political career and community involvement flourished. He was elected to the State Senate, serving multiple terms between 1827-1839. During his time in office, he was a strong advocate for public education, serving on the Committee on Public Education and Free Schools. He also supported the Montpelier Institute and was a driving force behind several projects, including the Macon and Savannah Railroad. He was appointed to the Board of Examiners for the Medical Department of the University of Georgia in 1825. This same year, he figured heavily in an endeavor that would lead to the founding of the Christ Episcopal Church in Macon.

In 1829, Dr. Baber married Mary Eliza Sweet, a young woman of 19. The couple settled into a beautiful home on Walnut Street. The landscaping was accented with cedar, magnolia, wild olive and mimosa trees. The home contained one of the finest private libraries and became a gathering place for literary discussions, leading to the formation of the Macon Lyceum and Library Society, with Dr. Baber serving as its president.

A call to duty soon took Dr. Baber out of his beloved city. In 1841 Dr. Baber was appointed as Charge d'Affaires to Sardinia. He served in this capacity until 1844 when he was able to return again to Macon and the practice of medicine.

Dr. Baber's life came to a sudden and tragic end on March 8, 1846. While treating a patient he copied a prescription from Ellis' Formulary, published by the Medical College of Philadelphia. His patient, Leroy Jarrel took the prescription to Payne's Drug Store to be filled. The druggist filled the prescription but warned Mr. Jarrel that the prescription could be fatal as written and to consult his doctor before taking it. Mr. Jarrel consulted Dr. Baber as requested. To prove to his patient the safety of the prescription, Dr. Baber poured a dose and swallowed it. Within 20 minutes, Dr. Baber lay dead. Unbeknownst to him, the pharmacy book contained a typographical error, which resulted in an overdose. Dr. Baber was 53 years old at the time of his death.

The manner of Ambrose Baber's death often overshadows his colorful life of service to his community and to his fraternity. Instead of remembering how he died, we should reflect on how he lived. He was a physician, a soldier, a city planner, a bank president, a Senator, a horticulturist, a politician, a husband, a father, a beloved citizen, and a dedicated Freemason. Brother Baber is buried in historic Rose Hill Cemetery in Macon. In 1847, a large monument was erected in his burial plot by a joint action of the Grand Lodge, Macon Lodge and Constantine Chapter #4.

A large portrait of Doctor and Brother Ambrose Baber hangs in Macon Lodge #5 and holds a place of distinction in the East.

2025: An Imperial Year

By Most Worshipful Brother Jan Giddens, PGM
Kennesaw Lodge No. 33

The reason men are attracted to Freemasonry is as varied as the men who join. For some it is a family legacy, for others curiosity, the need for fellowship with good men, or sometimes it is circumstance that brings a good man to want to be part of something to help him grow while in the service to others. A life changing event that will alter the course of your life and that of your family. Just such a circumstance, a family tragedy, in 2002, the death of an 8 month old granddaughter would bring an incredible man and his family into the fraternity. That man is Richard Burke and his wife Judy who would turn this tragedy into a lifelong effort to help other children through the work of Shriners Hospital for Children.

While babysitting their two granddaughters, Bailey and Leah, Judy put Leah in the bathtub and when she turned away Leah turned on the hot water, scalding her badly. She was rushed to Grady Trauma Center where they determined she was burned over 80% of her body and that she needed to go to Shriners Hospital in Cincinnati Ohio where the burn center was located, a jet was dispatched to transfer Leah to the burn center. When the family arrived they were met by counselors for the family, the medical staff was doing all they could to help not only Leah but the entire family, they were told it was more serious than they were told in Atlanta. After about 4 days little Leah succumbed to her burns, she was days short of her first birthday. The family was devastated.



Tragedy inspired action on behalf of Richard, the experience at the hospital, the incredible care, the staff and more especially the Shriners. Who are these men who give so much for children and families? Back at home he investigated the Shrine and learned you had to be a Freemason to be a Shriner, after visiting a few lodges he was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in Buford Lodge No. 292 in 2003 joining the Shrine at YAARAB Temple in Atlanta in 2003. He wasted no time getting involved, got elected to the Divan and served as Potentate in 2014. Served on the Hospital Board for Shriners Hospital. Illustrious Sir Richard Burke then ran for the Imperial Divan serving in that very long line until being elected Imperial Potentate in 2024. First Lady Judy's project is "ON ANGELS WINGS" a benefit for the burn center and hospital for children. Her goal is that the memory of Leah will live on by helping other children.

This summer the city of Atlanta will host the Imperial Shrine Session June 29-July 3, with Imperial Sir Richard Burke and First Lady Judy hosting. There are many activities for Masons and Shriners and their families so make your plans to attend. For hotel and event information go to the YAARAB facebook page, yaarabshrine.net, check with your local Shrine Temple. It will be an event not to be missed, Georgia has not had an Imperial Potentate since Imperial Sir Gene Bracewell in 1985.

Georgia Masonry is blessed to have among its ranks a man, a Mason, a Brother, a Shriner and an Imperial Potentate like Imperial Sir Richard Burke. He represents the best of our fraternity and the Masons and Shriners of Georgia have no better example of the incredible good we do.

Hope to see you there.

Freemasonry and Leadership

By Right Worshipful Brother Bryan Coffey
Hinesville Lodge No. 271

Masonry is a unique organization; our leaders have almost ultimate power with few checks and balances. The Worshipful Master is basically sovereign and only the Grand Master can curtail his actions. Similarly, when Grand Lodge is not in Session, the Grand Master is imbued with the authority of the Grand Lodge. This being said, how do we survive under what could be a dictatorial situation? We survive because the men that we elect to these positions are dedicated to our Craft and the founding principles of our Fraternity.

Most of our leaders understand the phrase in the Installation Ceremony for the Worshipful Master that he is ...” not only its leader, but its greatest servant. As such you should endeavor to actually serve, not for the sake of your glory and honor, but for your lodge and brethren. First, last, and always.” The newer literature on Leadership calls this “Servant Leadership.” It seems like they have finally caught up with some of our principles.

How do we grow Servant Leaders? We start with what we have, Brother Masons. We treat them well; we give them opportunities to work within their individual skillsets and we nurture their strengths. But we don't stop there, we must teach them what it means to be a Servant Leader. Leadership is a learned skill; it can be taught, and we should be teaching it. We just had the 10th Annual Masonic Leadership Conference; this Grand Lodge is investing in the idea of helping Brothers become better leaders. There are some changes coming to the curriculum and format for this year's conference and I am excited to see how we continue to grow our leaders.

The Masonic Education and Leadership Development Commission is also working to develop Leadership training that will be available to Brethren in your Lodges and Districts. I encourage you to participate in these opportunities even if you are not currently an Officer or think you will never be an officer again. Do this for yourself, but more importantly for your Lodge and your Brethren. Many have discussed how our current leadership training has helped them, not only within the Craft, but also in their vocations.

The only cost is your time, and it will pay dividends for the future of our fraternity.



Seven Past Masters: A Night to Remember

By Worshipful Brother Jim Robinson

Fraternal Lodge No. 37

On my first night in the East as Worshipful Master of Fraternal Lodge No. 37, something extraordinary happened—something that left a profound impression on everyone present.

As many Masons know, during the opening ritual, there is a moment when Past Masters are invited to participate in a specific way. It's a quiet, unassuming moment in most lodges, including ours. It's rare—almost unheard of—for anyone to step forward. But on that night, not one, not two, but seven Past Masters rose and joined me in the East.

Among them was a Past Grand Master of Hawaii, a Brother whose journey through the Craft is inspiring and humbling. His presence and six others elevated the moment to something truly unforgettable.

The East represents leadership, responsibility, and, at times, solitude. It is a place where the Worshipful Master must guide the lodge with wisdom and care. To have seven Past Masters—men who had walked this path before—join me that night was a powerful reminder that while leadership responsibilities may feel solitary, they are never carried alone.

While entirely unexpected, their action embodied the very essence of Freemasonry: Brotherly love. It was a

visible, tangible display of the strength of our Brotherhood and a reassurance that, as a Worshipful Master, I would not face the challenges ahead without the steadfast support of those around me.

The lodge was visibly moved. The image below captures the candid moment, and Brethren later shared how deeply this spontaneous moment resonated with them. It reminded us why we gather and labor in this timeless fraternity.

The principles of Freemasonry—faith, hope, and charity—are often most powerfully expressed through action. That night, those seven Past Masters exemplified these values, turning an ordinary tradition into an extraordinary memory.

Fraternal Lodge No. 37 has always been a place of support and belonging, where every Brother knows he has a place. My first night in the East was a testament to this legacy, one I am honored to carry forward.

Moments like these define the Craft and remind us why we call each other Brother. Together, we build something greater than ourselves, one step, one act of love, and one moment of unity at a time.



Photo (left to right): WB Charles Pierce, WB Tim Reed, WB Joey Martin, WB Tommy Croy, WM Jim Robinson, WB Tom Carder, WB Troy Thomas, and MWB Monty Glover (Hawaii).

Credit: Br. Aaron Lansford (Fraternal Lodge No. 37)

Funeral Thoughts

By Brother Joel Natt

Duluth Lodge No. 480

From the moment we initiate into the brotherhood of Freemasonry, we are assured that our brothers will be there for us. Even after we are gone and have put our working tools down to join the supreme architect of the universe. We know that our brothers will be there for our families in their times of need, having them simply apply to us and we find them worthy.

On September 26 of 2024, one of my friends and mentors in Freemasonry, laid down his tools. For my friend Scott, left behind two wonderful children in their early 20's and a wealth of extended family in the form of aunts, uncles, and cousins, yet no guidance on what he would like in terms of funeral services. My friend was a Past Master of his Lodge and involved in the York Rite, but overly did not share with his daughters what he desired when it came to him laying down his working tools. His daughters simply knew he was a Freemason, and of his friends so were a few like me. As they stressed, with all the sudden decisions they had to make for their father, I found myself inquiring if they needed any help with anything. All they could ask was "We do not know how or who to contact within the Freemasons.", so there I was telling these young girls, do not worry "I am here to help and have that one covered for you."

Promising my friend's daughters, I had this for them, I found myself reaching out to a Lodge Secretary, that I did not know or may have met only once or twice in my masonic career. Working through a series of exchanges via email, I was able to ensure that my friend's lodge knew of his

passing and ensured some of the brothers would be available and able to provide a Masonic Funeral Service. But, as I worked through this, I also knew in my heart working with his Lodge Secretary that I could not let my friend (and brother) go on this final journey without being there myself. I committed to not only making sure he had his lodge brother's there, but that I would be part of the brothers that participated. Through this



decision, I was committing to participate in my first Masonic Funeral Service for my friend and one of my mentors in Freemasonry.

Having never participated in one of these services before, I had no insight into what was needed or how it was performed. Honestly, it is not something we study during lodge education sessions or at other times. I had heard from other brothers that it is a beautiful service and helps bring some comfort to the family about their loved one's involvement within our fraternity of Freemasonry. But outside of that I had no clue of what was involved, forcing me to look for

resources to not only help me prepare, but also be able to comfort my friend's daughters should they have questions. In my preparation and through my search to be sure I would be ready to both participate and support my friend's daughter's too, I turned to our Masonic Manual (*in my case the 2021 publication*) and read about all the different Funeral Services that could occur, from a Lodge Service to a Church Service and finally onto a Graveside Service.

As the day of the funeral arrived, I found myself the only Mason Brother attending the actual funeral at the funeral home. But I knew that his Lodge Brothers would meet his family and I once we drove to the cemetery in Atlanta. As I drove with my wife from the funeral to the cemetery for my friend's graveside service and to participate in my first masonic funeral, I worried that all the research would not be enough, and I would not uphold the honor of our brotherhood for my friend and his family. At the grave for the Masonic Funeral was my own Lodge's Secretary WB Joseph Keyes, a member of the 7th District Masonic Memorial Team, to help my friend's lodge out and lead the service. At that moment I knew all my fears would not occur and my friend was in good hands as we conducted this ceremony, and his family would have a great final experience of the importance of our brotherhood.

I could honestly go on about my own emotions and thoughts along with the fact my own wife was witnessing this for the first time knowing someday others will do this for me, but this is not the time

for those reflections, and so as I close these thoughts out, I reflect on all that I did and learned, gained and discovered through this new insight into a masonic level of education that as I mentioned before we seem to overlook.

The only thoughts I do want to share are that I found myself reflecting on what I might want when it is my time to lay down my own working tools. How I want to ensure my family and others know to honor my time as a Freemason and more importantly, how I want my brothers to help honor my involvement in the world as a Child of Light.

Thus, in closing these thoughts out, I want to thank my friend and our WB J. Scott Vandiver of

Atlanta-Peachtree Lodge #59 for everything he ever did to encourage me to join and being there for me as I began my journey in Freemasonry. I especially thank him for ensuring his final lesson to me about freemasonry is the importance of ensuring our family know how we want to be honored and remembered as Freemasons. Your guidance will always be remembered, and I hope to accomplish as much in my Masonic career as you did within yours. Rest well my friend and know your

daughters will never need to apply to me for me to help. Thank you for every story and piece of knowledge you shared with me.



Four Generations at Newington Lodge No 503

By Worshipful Brother Roger Coursey

Newington Lodge No. 503

I started my Masonic journey on June 18, 1981 when I was initiated as an Entered Apprentice Mason in Pace, FL. Even though I was in the US Coast Guard, I was stationed in Milton, FL on an exchange tour as a Flight Instructor for the US Navy in one of their training squadrons, VT2. Due to flight instructor duties and having a hard time getting a coach for my EA catechism, I was not passed to the degree of Fellow Craft until 12 November 1981. I was raised to the degree of Master Mason on 19 December 1981 at Pace Lodge No. 349, F&AM, in Pace Florida.

Being in the military, I was transferred about every two to three years and was not very active in Masonry during those years. I did have the opportunity to visit lodges in Michigan and North Carolina among other places.



Pace Lodge No. 349 in Pace, Florida



Springfield Lodge No. 440

Upon retiring, I demitted and transferred my lodge affiliation to Springfield Lodge No. 440 in Springfield, Georgia. I finally had the opportunity to start advancing through the chairs and was Worshipful Master of Springfield Lodge No. 440 in 1998.

Newington Lodge No. 503, F&AM, Newington, Georgia was chartered on November 1, 1906. The first Worshipful Master of Newington Lodge No. 503 was Robert M. Colson, a 1st cousin three-times removed. He served as Worshipful Master for the first three years that the Lodge existed. As a matter of fact, he was the Worshipful Master for five of the first seven years.

Over the years, Newington Lodge No. 503 suffered from lack of membership and lack of participation. Several Masonic Brothers who are close friends of mine, including Most Worshipful Past Grand Master Clyde E. Griffin, had started to attend the Lodge meetings at Newington to help the Lodge out. They wound up joining Newington Lodge # 503. So, I joined in with them, joining as a Plural Member with a Perpetual Membership to honor my Great Grandfather who I knew had been a member.

I had known that one of my Great Grandfathers, William Colson Coursey, was a Mason. His obituary in the Augusta Chronicle on April 6, 1936, stated that he was a member of Newington Lodge No. 503, F&AM. Over the years, I have attempted to find out more about his Masonic history. I had worked with the Secretaries at Grand Lodge of Georgia, but very little information was in the files there. I was able to get from there, two pieces of documentation that not only was my Great Grandfather, William Colson Coursey, a member of Newington Lodge No. 503, but his son, my Grandfather, Walter Lamar Coursey, was also a member. My father had mentioned in passing one time years ago that his father had been a Mason.

I was now more determined than ever to try and find out more about the Masonic history of this grandfather and great grandfather. After being a member of Newington Lodge No. 503 for about two years, I decided to go and see if there was anything at the Lodge in any files that might further educate me. In the bottom of the Treasurer's desk drawer, amidst chewed up papers from years gone by, I found about ten old petitions for Newington Lodge No. 503. Among those few petitions I found the following:

Walter Lamar Coursey dated September 5, 1909, age 21 (my Grandfather)

William Colson Coursey dated May 13, 1910, age 59 (my Great Grandfather)

William Wardlaw Coursey dated October 14, 1910, age 24 (my Great Uncle)

Who would ever have guessed that among those few petitions, the two I really wanted to find would be there? These petitions were over 114 years old. The Lord certainly had a hand in me finding those.

I then found some old books of minutes from years gone past. In them I found more interesting things. I was not able to find when all of them were initiated, passed and raised in the minutes, but I was able to find a few of the dates.

I also found in the minutes that Walter Linwood Coursey, my Daddy's brother, was Initiated, Passed and Raised in Newington Lodge No. 503 in 1953. I also found in the minutes where those present are listed, that another brother of my Daddy's, W. A. Coursey, a member of Landrum Lodge # 48, visited Newington Lodge No. 503 on March 11, 1955.

So even though my Daddy was never a Mason, there are four generations of Courseys that have been members of Newington Lodge No. 503: William Colson Coursey (Great Grandfather), Walter Lamar Coursey (Grandfather), Walter Linwood Coursey (Uncle) and Roger Warren Coursey. I am hoping that I can convince my oldest son, who was raised in Allen, TX to join Newington Lodge No. 503, to make it five generations.

I had the fortune of being installed as Worshipful Master of Newington Lodge No. 503 on December 11, 2023 by Most Worshipful Past Grand Master Clyde E. Griffin. It was a real honor and pleasure for me to fill that chair considering all the family history I have in Newington Lodge #503.



Newington Lodge No. 503

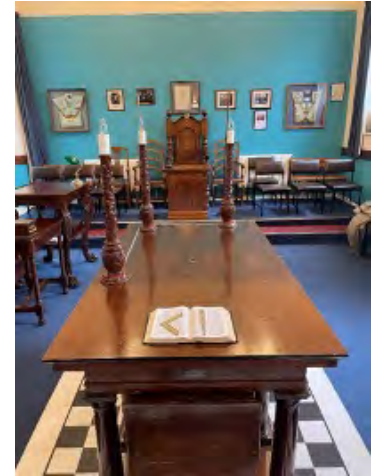
Traveling in Foreign Lands

By Brother David Cooper

Buford Lodge No. 292

In August of 2024, my wife and I travelled to Ireland to cheer on the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets. While there, we took the opportunity to connect with brethren in Bushmills and Dublin, Ireland. Our experience proved that “no matter where I may travel in the world, I am welcome to visit a place where good fellowship prevails.”

In Bushmills, Northern Ireland, my wife and I were met at our hotel by WB Lenny McIlroy and WB Crawford Batchelor. WB Lenny is the Worshipful Master of Bushmills Lodge #414, working under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Antrim. From the outset, we were treated like visiting family! Hoping to trace some ancient ancestral connections to the area, we were introduced to potential cousins in the town of Portballintrae and visited the Lodge at Bushmills.



WB Lenny (who may be related to famous golfer Rory McIlroy) and WB Crawford provided commentary and insight on the rich tradition of Irish Freemasonry. These two raconteurs would find themselves among kindred spirits at any of our gatherings back home in Georgia. In addition to viewing the beautiful Lodge furnishings, we learned of similarities as well as a few notable differences between Freemasonry in Georgia vs. Ireland.



For example, a significant difference we noticed immediately was the lack of the Letter “G” inside the square and compasses. Turns out that the Letter “G” is only given to a Mason when he is installed as Worshipful Master! There is a separate degree called the Installed Master degree where the newly elected Master is installed and given the word of an Installed Master. While this word begins with the letter “G”, it represents neither God nor Geometry! At the same time, the Hiram legend is alive and well in Irish Freemasonry. The decorations in Bushmills Lodge represent familiar landmarks in our own local Lodges.

Additionally, the 3 working tools of a Master Mason in Ireland are given as the Skirret, Pencil and Compasses. The Skirret – Used operatively to mark a straight line for foundations / As speculative masons it symbolically guides us towards a straight line of conduct as laid out by our VSL. The Pencil – Used to draw up plans for buildings / Reminds the speculative Mason that his deeds are recorded by the GAO TU. The Compasses – Used operatively to describe circles and measure figures / As speculative Masons the compasses remind us of the Deity's unerring and impartial justice and is a symbol of Virtue.

Another interesting distinction: In Ireland, the Secretary and Treasurer sit together in the NE Corner and in the SE Corner there are 2 positions that we don't find here in Georgia. The office of Almoner, an elected position, exists essentially as the Lodge Welfare Officer. The Almoner keeps track of Lodge widows, sick and distressed brothers and their families. Additionally, Irish lodges have a position called Steward of Charities. This officer is responsible for working with members and urging charitable contributions which will in no way conflict with their familial and other duties. Charitable efforts are a hallmark of Freemasonry in Ireland and my wife and I learned of several local examples.

WB Lenny's very own Freemasonry story begins with the tale of a wayward family member who had made bad choices and found himself in front of a juvenile court judge. On the verge of incarceration, this young lad was vouched for and "saved" by local Freemasons. He was sponsored and taken into the Irish equivalent of our Masonic Children's Home. Today, this man is an esteemed professor at a leading University in Ireland! Prior to this, WB Lenny had never heard of Freemasonry and was so impressed with this effort by local Masons that he was inspired to be initiated into Bushmills Lodge #414.

We were told of a local man that needed heart surgery in England who was sponsored by Irish Masons who paid every expense related to travel and surgery for the man and his family! WB Lenny also told us of a local youth that needed a prosthetic leg as a child who was supported by local Lodges that annually donate the funds for a new prosthetic to meet the needs of a growing young man. Listening to these and other stories of Masonic charity was truly inspiring and moving to this couple from Georgia!!



WB Lenny regaled us with the true tale of Elizabeth St. Leger Aldworth, the "Lady Mason." Her father was an active Freemason, and his Lodge meetings were often held at his place of residence. Around 1710-1712, young Elizabeth St. Leger fell asleep while cleaning their home. Awakening and hearing noises from an adjacent room, she removed a few bricks and found herself witness to Masonic rituals just as a meeting was in progress. Attempting to flee the scene, she was apprehended by the Tiler (also the family butler) and brought before the Lodge officers. Rather than impose penalties upon this young lady, she was immediately initiated into Masonry so that she would be sworn to secrecy. Evidence shows that she was, indeed, a Master Mason, and today her portrait can be found in nearly every Lodge in Ireland!

Before leaving Bushmills Lodge, WB Lenny proudly displayed one of the gems of this beautiful Lodge. Adjacent to the vestibule is a licensed pub! Their pub that serves as a gathering place after meetings and a magnet for local participation in Lodge open house events. Our Irish brethren chuckled at the idea that alcohol was considered taboo in our Georgia blue Lodges!



In summary, the hospitality extended by our Irish brethren was truly exceptional! This opportunity to "travel in foreign lands" was an experience not to be forgotten. Learning about the history and traditions of Irish Masonry was a fulfilling and impactful adventure. In appreciation of this brotherly love, a presentation was made to WB Lenny McIlroy and WB Crawford Batchelor. Bro. David Cooper of Buford Lodge #292 presented them with the Grandmaster's lapel pin on behalf of Most Worshipful GM Benjamin Polston and the Buford Lodge 150th anniversary coin on behalf of Buford #292. Good fellowship among brethren is a concept that is alive and well all over the world! So mote it be!

Kingston Lodge #394 F&AM Cornerstone Re-Dedication

By Worshipful Brother Tim Story

Kingston Lodge No. 394

In a small town in Bartow County called Kingston, GA, population approximately 750, Kingston Lodge #394 F&AM celebrated 130 years of masonic service to their community.

The brethren of Kingston Lodge originally met upstairs of a building downtown on the square. Due to significant costs for maintenance and repairs, the brethren decided to purchase property at 17 Cemetery Street in 1973. In 1974, the brethren of Kingston built a beautiful two-story building at this location to accommodate for future growth. Currently, Kingston Lodge has 44 Master Masons serving their masonic community.

On September 22, 2024, at 2:00pm, a beautiful Sunday afternoon, the Grand Master, Benjamin W. Polston II accompanied by Grand Lodge Officers, brethren of Kingston Lodge, brethren from surrounding lodges, family, and friends witnessed a very special moment for Kingston Lodge – Cornerstone Re-Dedication Ceremony.

The Grand Master welcomed all. The ceremony was opened with prayer, followed by The Pledge of Allegiance to our flag, and the Grand Master spoke on the purpose of the Cornerstone.

The Grand Lodge Officers went right to work. Under the direction of the Grand Master, the other Grand Officers ensured that the Cornerstone was square, plumb, and level and upon their report were then instructed to consecrate the Cornerstone with oil, wine, and corn to symbolize prosperity, health, and peace. These are considered a Freemason's "wages" or "wages of nourishment." Upon completion, the Grand Master then struck the granite with his gavel to ceremoniously "set" the stone. The ceremony then concluded with the Rite Worshipful Grand Master giving public Grand Honors which are reserved for such events.

After the gavel was returned to the Worshipful Master of Kingston Lodge, W.M. Bryan Silvers thanked the Grand Master, Grand Lodge Officers, and all in attendance for making this ceremony a special day for Kingston Lodge. W.M. Bryan presented the Grand Master with a picture framed Honorary Membership to Kingston Lodge #394.

It was truly an honor to have such a wonderful turnout of approximately 100 people to witness this historic masonic event surrounded by such esteemed brother Masons, both in white aprons and the purple and gold of the Grand Lodge officers.

After the Cornerstone ceremony, all gathered inside for finger foods, great fellowship, and cold air.



“...More Especially This of Ours.”

By Worshipful Brother Josh Blakley

Lavonia Lodge No. 241

If you’ve spent any time in Freemasonry, you no doubt recognize this phrase from its place in the opening and closing of a Lodge. “...Peace and harmony being the strength of all well-regulated institutions; *more especially this of ours.*”

Before proceeding further and making my point, let’s take a few lines to break this statement down more fully. The most apropos definition of “peace” is “a state of tranquility,” or “harmony in personal relations.^[1]” Similarly, “harmony” is best defined as “agreement, accord.^[2]” The remainder of this oh-so-important statement is pretty straightforward, so I’ll forego any further explanation.

When I first thought about writing this article, I hoped to make an argument that “peace” and “harmony” were similar concepts to “darkness” and “silence;” peace as the absence of conflict or strife; and harmony as the absence of discord. I was wrong.

There were a few notable periods in our history that I have encountered over my years of reading and study; namely, the “Pax Romana,” the “Pax Britannica,” and the “Pax Americana.” In Latin, *pax* translates to *peace*. They were recorded in our histories because of the peace and prosperity that prevailed during those eras... and that is where I ran into my first stumbling block. They were notable because peace was not the norm.

I next looked at the word *harmony*. Harmony is best illustrated in terms of music, whether it be the pleasing arrangement of instruments in a composition or the voice of The Beach Boys in their hits from the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. The harmony comes from the arrangement; not the absence of discordant sounds... stumbling block number two.

When we look to the third verse of both the Torah^[3] and the Holy Bible^[4], it reads “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.” *Light* was one of God’s creations; it did not exist before God spoke, and unlike darkness, its existence is not defined by the absence of something else. When you flip a light switch in a darkened room, light is created by the completion of an electrical circuit through a bulb of some sort,

generating light. When you turn off that same switch, the electrical circuit is broken and the bulb stops generating light. Darkness is not created or generated by an action: it is the result of the absence of light.

In the same vein, sound is an act of creation. A singing voice, the call of a bird, the cry of an animal all emit sound waves. Those waves disperse and are received, and translated, by the human eardrum and, through the miracle that is our brain, transferred into a sound that we hear. Silence, however, is not a creative act: it is the absence of sound.

To bring this article back to the original premise, I *hoped* to make the point that a Lodge could preserve *peace* and *harmony* in its midst by avoiding the things that run counter to those principles. What resulted, however, is that I have realized that *peace* and *harmony* are not the natural state of things: chaos and entropy are the default.

The Brothers in a Lodge must continually make a positive, constructive effort to establish and maintain an environment of peace and harmony. Peace and harmony are creations, and just as God spoke light into existence with His words, Freemasons must create peace and harmony in their Lodges through their words and deeds. The instruction manual for Masons to do this is found within our ritual; the obligations, the charges, and the written and unwritten laws.

It is my sincerest hope that Georgia Masons can learn this lesson from my written words and not from my incorrect assumptions. We cannot sit idly by and hope that peace and harmony prevail through our avoidance of controversy and discord. We must all press forward with creative acts that promote a positive environment in our Lodges, so that peace and harmony may prevail. After all, they are the strength of all well-regulated institutions... more especially, this of ours.

[1] Merriam-Webster. (n.d.) Peace. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/peace>

[2] Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Harmony. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved May 30, 2024, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/harmony>

[3] <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/bereshit-genesis-chapter-1>

[4] <https://biblehub.com/kjv/genesis/1.htm>

National Sojourners Inc, Military Masons

Fraternal Greetings to all Veterans. I would like to introduce you to “THE” Masonic Military organization of the Masonic Fraternity. We are looking for a “FEW GOOD MEN” to join our ranks and help with the programs that we support. JrROTC/ROTC, Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge Youth Leadership camp, and promoting Patriotism in our Community and State.

National Sojourners, Inc., has an unequalled military Masonic history. Born of the requirements of wartime, the Order has been nurtured by the desire of displaced military Masons to seek each other’s company, counsel and aid.



In August, 1898, with the arrival of the North Dakota Regiment, to the Philippines with its Field Lodge dispensation, a group of Masons organized an informal club and named it “Sojourners.” In 1901, these Sojourners provided the funds and paraphernalia to charter Manila Lodge under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of California. (One of the original Sojourners, Surgeon Captain Harry Eugene Stafford, 33rd, Chartering Master of Manila Lodge, and in 1913 became the first Grand Master of the newly created Grand Lodge of the Philippine Islands.)

The Philippine “Sojourners Club” resurfaced in 1907, open to ALL Masons who were not just members of local Lodges; within a year it had nearly 200 members from every state and territory and eight foreign countries. Most of the Philippine Sojourners eventually became scattered throughout the United States. A group of these Masonic military officers sojourning in Chicago in 1917 formally organized the “Chicago Sojourners Club.” as a Commissioned Officers Club only. We are now open to all ranks both Enlisted and Commissioned. From E1 to O10. (Enlisted , Warrants, & Commissioned)

I would like to invite all military Veterans to attend one of our meetings and check us out. If you like what you see and what we do then join our ranks to further the cause of Patriotism.

We have 10 Chapters in Georgia and we have members from all 10 Chapters that take turns presenting the Colors at Grand Lodge each year. We also present Colors at local District Conventions when asked to do so.

Our Chapters are Ft Benning #8 in Columbus, Ft McPherson #60 in Snellville, Clarence Cohen #162 in Augusta, Ft Stewart #396 in Hinesville, Dobbins #434 in Marietta, Hunter #502 in Savannah, Warren Robins #526 in Warner Robins, Blood Mountain #555 in Blairsville, Lyman Hall #557 in Gainesville, and Kings Bay #563 in Kings Bay.

If you are interested you can contact the following: WB Brian Coffey Past Nat Commander: 706-910-4560 coffeybr@gmail.com WB Roger Coursey Area Representative Georgia Area: 912-398-8055 captrog2000@yahoo.com WB Rick Conn Regional Representative: 678-873-3491 rickconn@bellsouth.net.

The Georgia Lodge of Research: A Beacon of Masonic Light

By Brother Danny McHale

Lodge No.

For over half a century, the Georgia Lodge of Research (GLR) has stood as a beacon of enlightenment, curiosity, and fellowship within Georgia Freemasonry. It is a unique lodge, where the focus is not on ritual proficiency or degree work but on the pursuit of Masonic knowledge. Through its dedication to education and scholarship, GLR has become a hub for brethren who seek to deepen their understanding of the Craft's history, philosophy, and symbolism.

The Birth of an Idea

The modern story of GLR begins in 1965 with a simple yet profound observation. A sojourning Brother from overseas at an Atlanta Masonic Club meeting lamented the absence of a research lodge in Georgia—a place where Masons could explore the deeper meanings and rich history of Freemasonry. This comment struck a chord with Worshipful Brother Walter M. Callaway Jr., (before becoming the long-term editor of this Masonic Messenger,) a passionate advocate for Masonic education, who went up to the Brother and inquired about a Lodge of Research. Inspired by this vision, Callaway rallied support from prominent Masonic leaders such as Most Worshipful Brothers Dewey H. Wollstein and Otis Dixon, and Right Worshipful Brother D. Warner Wells. Together, they laid the foundation for what would become one of Georgia Masonry's most enduring institutions.

On July 28, 1966, Masonic Research Lodge No. 104 was officially chartered under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge's Educational and Historical Commission. (This was actually a resurrection of the 1933 Lodge of Research No. 6, which the lodge subsequently changed its name to.) Its first meeting was held in the Scottish Rite classroom of the Atlanta Masonic Temple, attended by an impressive array of dignitaries, including four Past Grand Masters. From its inception, the Lodge was envisioned as a space where brethren could present research papers, engage in intellectual discussions, and preserve the history and traditions of Freemasonry.

A Lodge Like No Other

Unlike traditional lodges that focus on conferring degrees or performing ritual work, GLR's mission has always been unique: to promote education and inspire its members to seek "more light." Early meetings featured papers on topics ranging from Masonic symbolism to historical figures who shaped the Craft.

Over time, these presentations evolved into original research that delved into Freemasonry's influence on society, its philosophical underpinnings, and its role in shaping history.

In 1988, the Lodge underwent a transformation that solidified its statewide appeal. Under the leadership of Worshipful Brother F. Lamar Pearson Jr., it was renamed the Georgia Lodge of Research to better reflect its mission and broaden its reach beyond Atlanta. This rebranding coincided with several initiatives that elevated GLR's profile: the establishment of the Walter M. Callaway Jr. Memorial Lecture, the introduction of Transactions (a publication featuring members' research), and statewide Called Communications that brought GLR's programs to brethren across Georgia.

The Heartbeat of GLR: Scholarship and Fellowship

What makes GLR truly special is its dual commitment to scholarship and fellowship. Over the years, members have presented original papers on an astonishing variety of topics: women in Freemasonry, Masonic architecture, symbolism in rituals, biographies of famous and infamous Masons, local events involving Masonic lodges, and Freemasonry's role in pivotal moments like the American Revolution and Civil War. These presentations spark lively discussions that challenge conventional thinking while fostering camaraderie among brethren.

One hallmark event is the Walter M. Callaway Jr. Memorial Lecture—a prestigious presentation honoring one of GLR's founding fathers. This special lecture has featured some of Freemasonry's most distinguished scholars and continues to be a highlight of GLR's calendar. Beyond education, GLR emphasizes inclusivity and connection. Events like Ladies Night invite members' families to experience the fellowship that defines Masonry. Statewide Called Communications ensure that brethren from all corners of Georgia can participate in GLR's programs without needing to travel far.

Honoring Excellence: The Honorary Members

GLR has also recognized extraordinary contributions to Masonic scholarship through honorary memberships—a rare distinction reserved for those who have profoundly impacted Freemasonry

worldwide. To date, three individuals have received this honor:

- Allen E. Roberts, a prolific author whose works like *House Undivided* remain essential reading for Masons.
- Terence Osborne Haunch, an English scholar whose meticulous research bridged international Masonic communities.
- Alphonse Cerza, a legal expert whose writings on Prince Hall Masonry and fraternal organizations enriched our understanding of inclusivity within Freemasonry.

These honorary members symbolize GLR's commitment to intellectual excellence and global collaboration.

A Growing Legacy

Today, GLR continues to thrive as a hub for Masonic enlightenment. Membership has grown steadily over the decades—from just 30 attendees at its first meeting to over 800 members by 2002—and it remains open to all Master Masons who share a passion for learning.

For those who join GLR, membership is not just about attending meetings or reading papers—it's about becoming part of something greater: a community dedicated to preserving Freemasonry's rich heritage while exploring new frontiers in knowledge.

Why Join GLR?

If you've ever wondered about Freemasonry's deeper meanings or felt inspired by its timeless values, then GLR is your gateway to discovery. Here are just a few reasons to consider joining:

1. **Expand Your Knowledge:** Learn about topics you won't find in standard lodge meetings—from ancient rituals to modern interpretations.
2. **Connect with Like-Minded Brethren:** Meet Masons who share your curiosity and passion for learning.
3. **Contribute to Masonic Scholarship:** Present your own research or simply enjoy thought-provoking presentations by others.
4. **Be Part of History:** Help preserve Freemasonry's legacy for future generations.
5. **Build a Masonic Library:** Membership includes a copy of the annual transactions.

Membership in GLR offers not only access to thought-provoking presentations but also the opportunity to receive *Transactions*, our annual publication featuring the best research papers from our meetings. These volumes are treasured resources for Masons seeking deeper insights into the Craft. With 2023 marking the 30th anniversary of published

Transactions, there has never been a better time to join and contribute to this rich tradition.

Whether you're a seasoned Mason or newly raised Brother seeking more light, GLR offers something for everyone.

Looking Ahead

As we look toward the future, the Georgia Lodge of Research remains steadfast in its mission: to illuminate Freemasonry's past while inspiring its future. Through education, fellowship, and dedication to truth and light, GLR continues to uphold the ideals that have defined our Craft for centuries.

GLR's regular communications are held on the fifth Friday of the month, which equates to four meetings a year. GLR currently meets at the Marietta Masonic Temple at 547 Roswell Street NE, Marietta, Georgia.

We invite you to join us on this journey—whether by attending a meeting, presenting your own research paper, or simply engaging with brethren who share your love for learning. Even if you are unable to attend the meetings, members receive a handsomely bound volume of that year's original articles as well as other original and historic papers. Together, we can ensure that Freemasonry remains not just relevant but thriving in an ever-changing world.

The Georgia Lodge of Research isn't just a lodge—it's an experience that will deepen your connection to Masonry and leave you inspired for years to come.

Invitation to Join GLR

Joining the Georgia Lodge of Research is simple and rewarding. If you're ready to become part of this vibrant community of Masonic scholars and enthusiasts, we invite you to take the next step. Membership is open to all Master Masons in good standing. To join, send a check for \$50, made payable to "Georgia Lodge of Research," to:

Rick Conn, Secretary
2683 Brocklin Drive
Grayson, GA 30017

Your membership includes access to thought-provoking meetings, opportunities to present or enjoy original research, and a beautifully bound volume of *Transactions*—a treasure trove of Masonic knowledge. Whether you attend in person or participate by enjoying the annual publications, your membership supports the mission of GLR and connects you with brethren who share your passion for learning.

Samuel S. Lawrence Chapter, Order of DeMolay Co-Installs their Officers with Fidelity Court #6, Order of Amaranth

By Matt Mauldin

On January 4th, 2025, Samuel S. Lawrence Lodge F. & A. M. sponsored the DeMolay and Amaranth Chapters for their Installations of Officers. The Masons of the Lodge that were present from the Lodge were as follows: Greg Hill – Worshipful Master, Rob Simpson – Senior Warden, Herman Johnson – Junior Warden, William English – Secretary, Doyal Martin – Chaplain, David Groves – Senior Deacon, and Junior Deacon – Tom Chadwick. They uplifted the DeMolay and Amaranth as they held their events.

Samuel S. Lawrence Chapter Order of DeMolay held their Installation of Officers at 10 am at Samuel S. Lawrence Lodge F&AM in Marietta, GA. 30008. The day started by waking up early and meeting everyone at the Lodge in the bitter cold, however the day started to warm up as all the Masonic family started to arrive. Fidelity Court #6, Order of Amaranth's own Jeff and Jennifer Self showed up to help prepare lunch.

As everyone all came together, by 10 am, the Installation of DeMolay was underway. The Chapter opened with its Installing team which were as follows: Jimmy Flanagin-Installing Officer, Matt Mauldin-Installing Senior Councilor, Peter Bard-Installing Junior Councilor, Installing Senior Deacon-Justin Nobles, Installing Chaplain-Lyle Chadwick, and Installing Marshal-Geoff Bard.

The Chapter called for the Arch of Steel, which was performed by Jacob Somers (Past State Master Councilor of GA) and Christopher Somers (Past Master Councilor). They then introduced the "Honored Guests," Most Worshipful Grand Master of Masons of Georgia, Mark Bradley and Right Eminent Grand Commander, Order of the Knight Templars of Georgia, Tyler Pledger.

The Officers were then installed which were Tyler Mauldin-Master Councilor, Haden Nobles-Senior Councilor *pro tem*, Eli Nobles- Junior Councilor *pro tem*, Wheaton Flanagin-Chaplain, and Alex Wicks-Scribe.

After the new officers were installed, the presentations were underway, starting with Dad Jimmy Flanagin presenting his son Wheaton with his merit bars and patent of membership. Then Dad Vic Somers stood up and presented to Wheaton a hand-crafted gavel that he had made himself. After that Dad Justin Nobles (Past State Master Councilor of GA) and Beth Nobles presented both Eli and Haden with their merit bars.

The Chapter then called for Mom Debbie Vinson to present her grandson and Past Master Councilor, Mr. Alex Wicks with his merit bars. Somers then came up and presented Wicks with his DeMolay One pin (for signing one new member) and his Founder's Membership Award (for signing five new members).

Next, Dad Matt Mauldin called Crystal and Micheal Asherbranner (which are Tyler Mauldin's Mother and Stepdad) to present Tyler with his merit bars, of which Somers came up and gave his mom his DeMolay One pin. Somers then presented Tyler with a hand-crafted gavel that he had made himself.





Dad Mauldin then called Dad Lyle Chadwick up to present Bradley and Pledger with Honorary Membership within the Chapter, which is only given through DeMolay International with the approval of the Executive Officer. Somers then came up and presented Pledger and Bradley with a hand crafted and laser engraved pen that he made himself.

Dad Mauldin then called Mrs. Renee Burton up who sang "Amazing Grace" A Capella. Then Grand Master then spoke, and the DeMolay chapter closed, and everyone came together in communion and ate lunch.

As the crowd migrated back to the chapter room the Amaranth had already set up for their

Installation of Officers and then called everyone in to witness their ceremony. The program started with a farewell speech from Past Royal Matron Honored Lady Bonnis Porter and past Royal Patron Sir Knight Jim Bard. The Installing Officers for the Installation were as follows: Installing Officer Sir Knight Jim Bard, Installing Marshal Honored Lady Bobbie Fisher,

Aide to the Marshal Sir Knight Matt Fisher, Installing Secretary Honored Lady Ada Tomasko, and Installing Prelate Honored Lady Dawn Torow.

The new Officers of Fidelity Court #6, Order of Amaranth are as follows: Royal Matron Honored Lady Jennifer Self, Royal Patron Sir Knight Jeff Self, Associate Matron Honored Lady Kat Allen, Associate Patron Sir Knight Billy Beckum, Treasurer Sir Knight Lloyd Leinbaugh, Secretary Honored Lady Delaine Hughes, Conductress Honored Lady Minnie Sanders, Associate Conductress Honored Lady Helen Leinbaugh, Trustee 2 Year Sir Knight Jim Bard, Trustee 1 Year Sir Knight Mike Sampsell, Marshal in the East Honored Lady Bonnie Porter, Marshal in the West Honored Lady Bonnie Wells, Standard Bearer Honored Lady Fronie Buffington, Prelate Sir Knight Peter Bard, Truth Honored Lady Jane Malcom, Wisdom Honored Lady Virginia Lamberson, Charity Honored Lady Janis Mooney, Warder Sir Knight Jim Phillips, and Sentinel Sir Knight Walter Waddell.

The Honor Guard consisted of Sir Knight Dan Sims, Sir Knight Jay Bratcher, Sir Knight Mike Sampsell, and Sir Knight Ron Wolbert. The New Royal Matron then had her coronation ceremony and named her committees.

Matt Mauldin from the DeMolay Chapter presented her with a gift as a thank you for their support of the DeMolay chapter and Victor Somers presented her with a hand-crafted gavel that he had made himself.

The Court then closed, which made for a fantastic day.

Sincerity Lodge Raises Three New Master Masons



Sincerity Lodge 430 Raised three new Master Masons in October. Pictured with the Degree Team are (ctr, l to r) Jason Matthew Williams, Steven Duane Mitchell, and Ray Ivey Bridger Jr.

Sincerity Lodge Celebrates 125 Years



In November 2024 Sincerity Lodge No 430 of Gray will celebrated its 125th Anniversary. The Lodge was chartered on 2 November 1899. The first Worshipful Master was Brother George WF McCay. Originally located in Clinton, Ga the Lodge moved to Gray in 1920 and moved into its present location in 1972.

Jones County has a long association with Freemasonry with Sincerity Lodge No 23 being chartered in 1821. It was active until 1835. In 1828 Sincerity Lodges number was changed from No 23 to No 11. Wornam Lodge No 116 served from 1850 to 1866. Haddock Lodge in Haddock, Ga was active from 1909 to 1911.

Coosawattee Lodge Donates to Ray of Hope



Members of Coosawattee Masonic Lodge No. 306 presented Shelia Calloway, Director of Ray of Hope Foundation, with a donation to help support elderly in Gordon County with medical supplies and prescriptions. The Lodge makes numerous donations yearly to those in need.

Jonesboro Lodge Celebrates 175th Anniversary and Rededication



Jonesboro Lodge No. 87 recently celebrated their 175th Anniversary with a Rededication Ceremony at which were present the officers of the Grand Lodge of Georgia including Past Grand Master Benjamin W. Polston.

Seven Hills DL Donates to Elementary School



Members of the Seven Hills Daylight Lodge # 751 F. & A.M. in Rome presented a donation of \$800.00 to Main Elementary School to be used for Christmas gifts for students in need.

Pictured (left to right) are W.B. Roland Davis, W.B. Phillip Fisher, W.B. Jim Alford, W.B. Gary Jones, W.M. Phillip Martin, W.B. William Edgar, Julie Gatanis (School Counselor), W.B. Doug Ackerman, and Hillary Daniel (Assistant Principal).

Jonesboro Lodge Celebrates 175th Anniversary and Rededication



Members of the Gwinnett County Masonic Association along with cadets from the Civil Air Patrol put up the Christmas tree at the VA Medical Center in Decatur, GA.

L-R: WB Dren Baker, WB Warren Burger, WB Steve Carson, WB Bill Lord, Br. Hugh Woodruff, and the CAP cadets.

Columbian Lodge No. 7 Installs Officers



Sincerity Lodge Raises Three New Master Masons



Guyton Lodge No. 428 celebrates 125 years of masonry in Effingham County. Image above shows newly installed WM Harry Capwell is surrounded by his officers for the ensuing year.

Tennille Lodge No. 256 Celebrates a Special Installation



Tennille Lodge held their elections on Tuesday, December 10th, 2024, and elected WB Thomas Taylor as their WM. This was an especially historic night for WB Tommy as he also saw his son, Bro. Jacob Taylor stand his proficiency on the Master's Degree. WB Tommy served as Bro. Jacob's coach through all three degrees.

Fulton Lodge re-claims 7th Masonic District Traveling Gavel



Fulton Lodge No. 216 reclaimed the 7th Masonic District Convention Inter-District Traveling Gavel from Mableton Lodge No. 171 on Monday, December 16th.

Cornelia Masonic Lodge F&AM Installs Officers for 2025



Temple Lodge Donates to Hurricane Relief



Temple Lodge No. 322 would like to thank the Lodges of West Georgia and the Brethren within for donating to the Temple Masonic Lodge relief initiative. With your help, we filled a

48' tractor trailer with essential items like food, water, clothing, blankets, toys, and other relief items. In addition, we raised almost \$4,500 in monetary donations and delivered cash to a Brother working with the Western North Carolina region for hurricane relief. He was able to move two elderly ladies from tents into tiny homes right away. The outpouring of support from our community and fraternity has made this possible.

Cornelia Masonic Lodge F&AM Donates Shoe Cubbies



Cornelia Lodge #92 F&AM has donated shoe cubbies for all Habersham Elementary schools. These cubbies will hold donated shoes to be used during physical education. They will be used by students unable to provide their own shoes. Pictured is L-R: Lauren Brown, PE Instructor; Carrie Trotter, CES Principal; Brother Robert Barron; Bradley Sullens, 2024 Worshipful Master of Cornelia Lodge.

Dooly Lodge No. 367 Installs Officers. Grand Master Attends.



At a very special installation of the 2025 officers of Dooly Lodge No. 367, Grand Master Mark Bradley had the opportunity to install one of Georgia Masonry's long-time mentors to many—WB Wade Smith—as Worshipful Master. WB Wade is 91 Years Young.

Young Cane Lodge Installs Officers for 2025 Including Three Generations of Masons



Young Cane Lodge No. 597 recently installed officers for the 2025 Masonic Year. A special part of this installation was the fact that the Worshipful Master, Junior Deacon, Senior Steward, and Chaplain are all members of the Potts Family. WM Mike Potts, Junior Deacon, Kevin Potts, Senior Steward Jeff Potts, and Chaplain Gerald Potts.

Sincerity Lodge and Children Participate in Christmas Parade



In 2023 Sincerity Lodge 430 took over the Gray Christmas Parade in order to keep this long running tradition alive for the enjoyment of the citizens of Jones County. 2024's parade was a great success with over 100 floats, big trucks, walkers, horses, and Shriners. Kids from the Masonic Children's Home carried the banners at the start of the Parade and rode Sincerity Lodges float with Santa and Mrs. Clause at the end.

Grand Master and Worshipful Master Honor Immediate Past Master



Most Worshipful Grand Master Mark A. Bradley and incoming Worshipful Master Gordon Ruthruff present outgoing Worshipful Master Tony Rickman a plaque for his service to William A. Davis Daylight Lodge #753 for the year 2024. Most Worshipful Brother Mark Bradley also installed the officers of William A. Davis DL including WB Gordon Ruthruff.

Chamblee-Sardis Lodge No. 444 Installs Officers for 2025





t Refreshment: The Junior Warden's Corner

By Brother William Brewer
Fayetteville Lodge No 711

So Mote It Be.

This expression really constitutes a Masonic 'amen' and was first found in the Regius Poem of about 1390 and again in the famous Cooke manuscript of about 1400. Both these sources conclude a section of the Old Charges with 'Amen, amen, so mote it be – so say we all for charity', thus 'may it be so' or 'so shall it be'.

Mote is derived from an old Anglo-Saxon word *motan* whose general meaning was "to be allowed." Amen is originally Hebrew with a range of meanings related to fidelity, consistency, and trust.



The two do not have the same original meanings but have virtually acquired them over centuries of use. In England, the preference is for "Amen" at Grace before refreshment after a ceremony and "So mote it be" within the Lodge room as indicated by the ritual. In Australia, "So Mote It Be" is used in the Lodge room and at Grace.

But the phrase is especially in modern Masonry, (while holding fast to its roots in our Lodge room) gained so much more power for us as a Fraternity. It's another way we identify as Masons. It's found on hats, stickers, bumper stickers, I've received emails from brothers with "so mote it be" under their name at the bottom of the email. Brothers from all over the world notice this simple phrase that is universal within Freemasonry. And while some will point out that it's used out of context, (as a way of agreeing with a prayer said out loud or a term for amen), I would argue that it is much more to us as a Brotherhood. It is a way of showing our thought process; a way of showing our commitment to the values we hold dear: living on the level, letting our light shine. It's akin to hearing the phrase "ebbs and flows." Our mind goes back to that first time at the Holy Altar and our promise to ourselves and to our Brothers.

Even now as I sit here jotting down this, (So Mote It be) it stirs up so many powerful memories for me of times past, times of Brotherhood, friendship, charity, the reward of hard work, and seeing people in need get help. The fellowship of like-minded individuals the lifelong bonds made, my personal growth and an enduring hope for our future.

Brothers I am proud to be a Mason, proud to have had this chance in my life to live on the level blessed to be able to help others, to share my ramblings and to support other Brothers who our out in our communities making a difference.

VETERANS CORNER

By Worshipful Brother Rick Conn

Attention all Brother Veterans who are on Tricare. On April 1 2025, the TRICARE Online Patient Portal (tricareonline.com) will no longer be available. The Department of Defense's new electronic health record – MHS GENESIS – has replaced the TOL Patient Portal. As part of the transition, the DOD is decommissioning the TOL Patient Portal. If you want to keep a copy of your legacy health records for personal use, you must download them from the TOL Patient Portal before April 1. The following statement has been published:

“All military hospitals and clinics have transitioned to MHS GENESIS. We encourage you to take these important steps to save your personal health records before the TOL Patient Portal decommissions,” said Rear Adm. Tracy Farrill, Principal Deputy, Assistant Director for Health Care Administration, and Military Health System EHR Functional Champion at the Defense Health Agency. “Your medical history is a valuable resource for managing your health, and saving your records now ensures you have access if you need it.”

Here's what you need to know before the TOL Patient Portal decommissions. Why is the TOL Patient Portal decommissioning? The MHS GENESIS Patient Portal has replaced the TOL Patient Portal. As detailed in the TRICARE Choices in the United States Handbook. MHS GENESIS allows you to access your EHR 24/7. You can also book and cancel appointments, request prescriptions, refills and renewals, see Clinical notes and certain test results. And exchange secure messages with your military healthcare team. The change from TOL to MHS GENESIS eliminates the need to maintain two systems and streamlines EHR management.

What will happen to my records?

- Provider access: Your provider will continue to have access to your complete health records.

- Personal access: You can use the steps below to download your legacy records for personal use before April 1. You can also request a physical copy from your military hospital or clinic's records management office. To do this, you'll need to complete a request form in person, and then return at a later designated time to pick up the records. Beginning April 1, if you want your legacy health records, you'll have to follow this process.

What should I do now? To keep copies of your legacy health records, follow these instructions:

1. Visit www.TRICAREOnline.com
2. Log in: Sign in using your DS Logon, CAC, or DFAS myPay credentials. If you don't have a DS Logon, you'll need to create one by clicking “Need An Account.”
3. Access: On the TOL homepage, click the blue “Health Record” button to view your personal health data.
4. Find data: Select “Download My Data.” You'll see several data categories.
5. Customize: Choose the person, data types, date range, and format for the records you want to download.
6. Download: You can choose to download your records in portable document format (.pdf) or as a (.xml) continuity of care document. The CCD format allows you to share your data with family, caregivers, providers, and healthcare systems, or to document data in your preferred personal health record.
7. Save: After downloading, you can either open the file or save it securely for future use. You can also print your records and store them in a safe place.

Important details

- Your records won't transfer to MHS GENESIS once TOL decommissions.

- Your TOL health records only reflect periods of time when your military hospital or clinic was using TOL. Note: If you moved from one duty station to another, and one military hospital or clinic used TOL and the other used MHS GENESIS, your records in MHS GENESIS may have gaps. You'll find these "gap" records in the TOL Patient Portal. Be sure to download them.
- You can only download your records from the past 30 years, from the date you log in to TOL.
- Protect your health information. When you download or print your personal health information, it becomes your responsibility to keep it safe. Use secure options. Avoid saving personal data on unsecure devices or platforms.

Brothers, it's also important to know that if you're planning to file a claim with the Department of Veterans Affairs, this decommissioning won't affect your ability to do so. Providers will still have access to your complete health records.

If you have children dependents can you see your children's health records? YES

You can view all available health data for your children under the age of 12. For children aged 12 to 17, you may view COVID-19, coronavirus, and flu test results, as well as allergies, vitals, and immunization data. Due to state privacy laws, there are limits to what health data you can view online for your children aged 12 to 17. You can request printed results from your child's clinic or provider.

Don't wait—take action now. Remember: The TOL Patient Portal will only be available until April 1. Take the time now to download and store your health records to ensure you can easily access them if needed. To get started or learn more, visit the TOL Patient Portal now before it is decommissioned. You have about 2 months to transition over to the new Genesis system.

Brother, Are you a Veteran who served at least two periods of service? In other words, did you reenlist? If so, there's a chance that you're eligible for additional G.I. Bill benefits. VA announced that it has updated its process for awarding G.I. Bill benefits. This means that many Veterans who served multiple periods of

military service (for example, Veterans who reenlisted) may be eligible for additional benefits for themselves or their beneficiaries. Specifically, under the previous policy, eligible Veterans who served at least two periods of service were forced to choose between the Montgomery Bill and the Post-9/11 GI Bill for a maximum of 36 months of G.I. Bill benefits. Under the updated policy, Veterans will no longer have to make that choice when they apply for benefits, meaning that they can qualify for up to 48 months of G.I. Bill benefits. Many Veterans are also now eligible for additional, retroactive benefits. Specifically, Veterans who served at least two periods of service—one that qualified them for the Montgomery G.I. Bill and a second that qualified them for the Post-9 GI Bill—may be eligible to receive up to 12 months of additional G.I. Bill benefits (bringing them to a total of 48 months). These Veterans may be eligible to receive 12 months of additional, retroactive G.I. Bill benefits (bringing them to a total of 48 months).

Questions you may ask:

1] Do you qualify for this expansion? Veterans who served at least two periods of service—one that qualifies for the Montgomery G.I. Bill and a second that qualifies for the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill—may be able to receive additional GI Bill benefits.

2] Will I be notified if I'm eligible? Yes, VA will be distributing communications to potentially impacted beneficiaries.

3] My G.I. Bill benefits expired. Will there be an extension if I'm found eligible? To receive an expiration date extension, applications must be submitted by Oct. 1, 2030.

4] Do I need to do anything? Of the 1.04 million Veterans who may potentially be eligible for additional benefits, VA will be able to automatically adjudicate the claims for approximately 660,000 without any further action required on their part. For all remaining Veterans, VA will be reaching out to them directly to encourage them to file a claim.

Brothers the deadline to apply for those who need to take action is the 1st of October, 2030. If you are eligible, start the process now.

Book Review by F. Scott Kroll

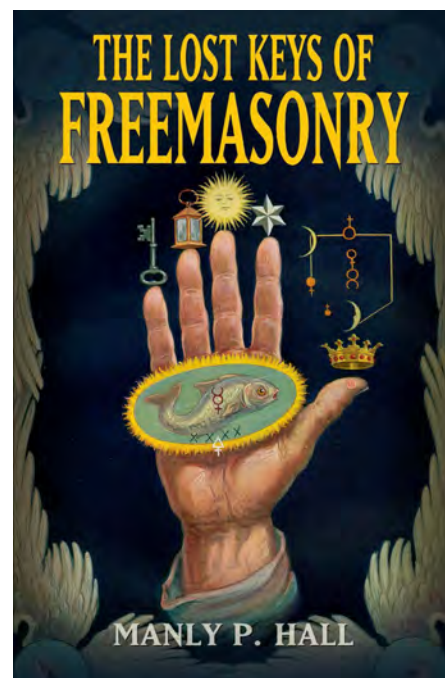
The Lost Keys of Freemasonry

Manly P. Hall

Penguin Random House Books

Available on the internet from \$10.95 to \$18.95

In this review of *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*, by Manly P. Hall, I will be reviewing an edition that actually contains two other books, *Freemasonry of the Ancient Egyptians*, and *Masonic Orders of the Fraternity*. If you purchase the Penguin Random House publication, it will contain all three books. For this review, I will only be reviewing the first of these books, with the subsequent books being reviewed in later issues of this magazine. While the previous books I have covered have been investigations of the meaning and deeper symbolism of many of the emblems and phrases we use in Freemasonry, Brother Manly P. Hall's book is different. He is not so much divining meanings from Masonic symbols as he is using the tenants and structure of the Fraternity to illustrate his philosophical views. The book also has the distinction of being written thirty-one years before Brother Hall was raised as a Master Mason.



Structurally, the book opens with a brief publisher's note that gives a general overview of Brother Hall's career as a Mason. A table of contents follows which lists the pages at which each of the three books begin. Next, there is a Publisher's Foreword which was added in 1976. It gives a brief overview of the book's publication history. Following this is a Foreword by Brother Reynold E. Blight, 33^o, KT. In this foreword, Brother Blight discusses the journey of a Master Mason and what it means to be a Mason. A preface to the tenth edition, written in 1967, follows. In it, Brother Hall lays out his reasons for writing the book and a briefly discusses his source material. There is then another table of contents which is specific to *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*. There are several illustrations throughout the book that were created by J. Augustus Knapp, 32^o.

Hall opens the book with an introduction in which he discusses his arguments for the book. He begins by contrasting that which is of the spirit and that which is material. He discusses the place of theology in regards to science and further explores the quest for truth illustrated by the construction of King Solomon's Temple. He also discusses how by labor man can discover countless things through the revelation of nature. He believes that Masonry is the labor through which one can make this discovery.

The next section is a Prologue entitled "In the Fields of Chaos." It is an allegory man's fall from that which is cosmically divine and it's ensuing search to return that which was lost to an eternal state of perfection. Hiram the builder represents the means by which the Creator will have his celestial temple built. He (Hiram) creates three entities to assist him in the creation of the great work. These three workers then turn on Hiram and strike him dead with his own working tools, reminiscent of subjects covered in the third degree of the Blue Lodge. These murderers represent perverted thoughts, uncurbed emotions, and also destructive actions. As a punishment, the Creator stops the work on his temple, hides the body of Hiram, and assigns the three ruffians the task of finding the Builder to complete the task. This represents the quest for more light.

Following a vignette entitled "The Temple Builders," the chapter named "The Eternal Quest" follows. In this chapter, Hall lays the foundation for the general direction the rest of the book is going to take. He makes his argument that Masonry is much more than material, and in its symbols lies deeper meanings hidden there by wise men who are our Masonic Ancestors. Masonry, in his view, is not just a system of symbols and rituals, but how we live our lives in regards to the eternal. He discusses the origins of Freemasonry as coming from the Mystery Schools of antiquity. He also discusses how building our ceremonial temple (ourselves) is a duty we owe to God.

After this chapter, there is another short vignette entitled "Thoughtlessness," which is a brief exhortation extolling the importance of thought in regards to those things which are infinite. This then sets the stage for the

following chapter, "The Candidate." The general theme of this chapter relates to how a perspective member for the fraternity should prepare himself before undertaking his journey through the Craft. The candidate is compared to a prisoner pining for his freedom from the darkness of that which is material. To Hall, the candidate is searching for freedom through enlightenment, which moves us towards the eternal voice calling to all. Masonry, therefore, is to give the candidate the tools to complete this search.

The following chapter is named "Entered Apprentice." In this section of the book, Hall begins by discussing the three Masonic ages and what they symbolize. He once again reiterates that Masonry is not a physical journey as much as it is a spiritual one. He discusses how growth is a gradual process which is exemplified by the opening and closing of the Lodge. He discusses the various science and liberal arts and how they relate to the varying degrees of consciousness. The duty of any Entered Apprentice, at this point, is beginning the process of constructing his symbolic temple. This is achieved through actions as manifestation of one's inner thought life. The quarry symbolically represents all the natural resources available to a Mason. Hall then discusses five requirements of an Entered Apprentice that prepares him for the spiritual aspects of his journey.

"The Fellow Craft" is the next chapter of the book. Hall continues his journey through the various facets of Masonry by discussing the growth into manhood and the process by which we begin to master our emotions. The subject he focuses on in this chapter is self-mastery. He discusses the positions of the compass and square and what that symbolizes. Also discussed is the balance one should achieve with his emotions and the proper expression of the same. Hall then lists five points he believes one must achieve to truly be called a Fellowcraft Mason.

We then proceed to the next chapter which is "The Master Mason." Hall goes on to describe the Master Mason of one who is old in the sense that he is full of wisdom and understanding. He has obtained this wisdom through his labor as a Mason and his attainment of truth. The Master Mason's life is defined by the fulness of his experiences. His duty is to be a vessel through which the light of the Creator is shined upon a world trapped in darkness. He becomes the missing stone needed to complete the celestial temple. Hall describes how through the attainment of these higher ideals, the Master Mason becomes the keeper of his own Masonic trestle board. The author then spends the rest of the chapter discussing the defining points of transmutation.

After the close of this chapter, there is another short vignette entitled "The Presence of the Master." He discusses in great detail those duties which we owe to the great celestial lodge and the importance of answering the call of the Builder whenever it comes. Following this chapter is another short discussion labeled as "Masons, Awake," in which Hall exhorts the Mason to accept his role in seeking to illuminate the darkened world. An epilogue follows entitled "The Priest of Ra," in which he briefly discusses parts of the Egyptian mystery religion and its relationship to Freemasonry. Following this is an addenda with the title of "The Robe of Blue and Gold." In this, Hall describes the Three Fates as representing a weaving of thought, action, and desire. He then describes what our reactions should be in regards to the fate that befalls us through life. Next is a short discussion of brotherhood entitled "Friendship."

Hall finishes the book with two chapters, one named "The Emerald Tablet of Hermes," and one named "The Egyptian Initiate." He discusses the earliest known representation of the Hiram legend, and he investigates further the ceremonies of the ancient Egyptians and how they relate to modern Masonry. In future articles, I will discuss the other two books contained in this volume, "Freemasonry of the Ancient Egyptians," and "Masonic Orders of Fraternity." While Hall's theosophist and universalist beliefs may not be to every Mason's liking, he does an admirable job of highlighting the more spiritual aspects of Freemasonry and their application in life. As it always is in Masonry, feel free to agree or disagree with the subjects put forth. "The Lost Keys of Freemasonry," is though provoking, and definitely worth the read.

50 Year Awards



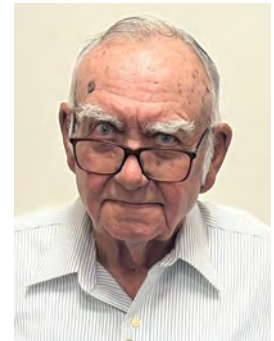
Mark Foshee
Chamblee-Sardis #444



Jerry Seaman
Auburn #230



John A. Fitzner, Jr
Sylvania #301



Jessie C. Boyd
Sylvania #301



Fred F. Pitts
Clarkesville #325



James C. Welch
Lafayette #44



Benny Huggins
Chatsworth #664



Levert R. Chance
Guyton #428



Robert Greer
Jonesboro #87



George R. Cole
Jonesboro #87



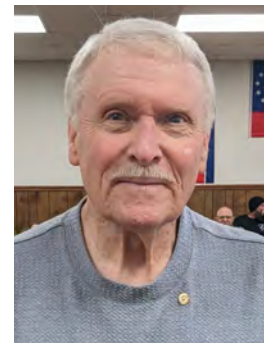
Norval M. Knight
Caledonia #121



Michael W. Worthington
Caledonia #121



Giden C. Hartley
Caledonia #121



Charles A. Walley
Caledonia #121



James H. Brooks
Palmetto DL #755



Joseph L. Smith, Sr.
Ocean #214



Billy W. Freeman
Ocean #214



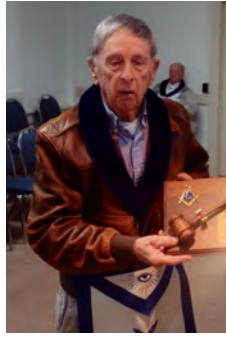
James R. Tuten, Jr.
Ocean #214



Gregory A. Burkhalter
Lindale #455



Danny R. Cox
Ducktown #572



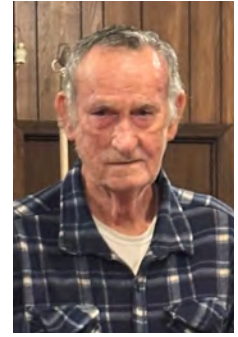
Charles E. Benns, III
Fickling #129



Michael A. Pickett
Dallas #182



Phil Pearce, Jr.
Dallas #182



Horace O. Ervin
Hebron #564



Charlie Lasseter
Moultrie #381



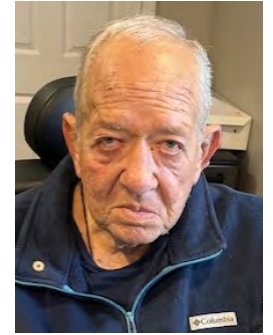
Bobby Owen
Moultrie #381



Robert G. Banks
Fayetteville #711



Lorenzo Hands
Bacon #56



Robert A. Chisolm
Lindale #455



Wayne Collins
Richmond #412



Clarence Newborn
Tallapoosa #126



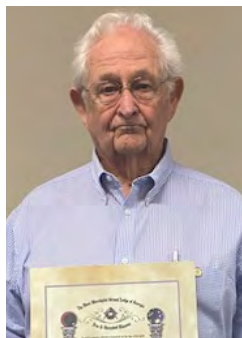
Billy E. Bass
Generous Warren #20



Jimmy Evans
Hamilton #16



Winford P. Smith
Harmony #405



Neil McCullough
Philogia #178



Billie Campbell
Fleming #718



Robert C. Wells
Acworth #176



James C. Moore
Nelms #323



Wilbur Justice
Washington #359



Chuck Albert
Nelms #323



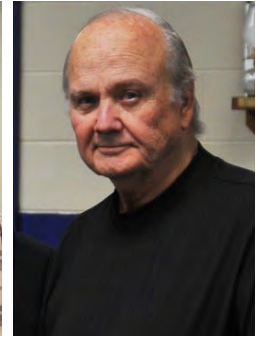
William M. Davis
St. John's #45



Erik Ekstrom
Madison #376



Ralph M. Douglas
Bacon #56



Gary Davis
Chatsworth #664
55 Years



Edward L. York
Clarkesville #325



Charles A. Barnett
Lafayette #44



Donald M. Major
Lafayette #44



Douglas E. Sorrells
Lafayette #44



Theodore C. Lisenby
Macon #5



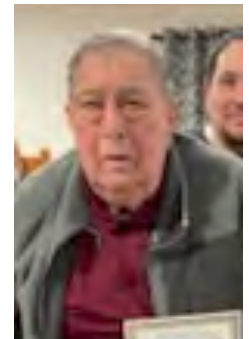
Coleman Ricks
Philogia #178



Sims M. Eliot, Jr.
Davidson #334



Carrell T. Pruitt
Lafayette #44
65 Years



Harry Anderson
Sincerity #430
65 Years



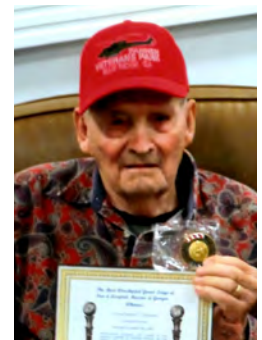
Jimmy Hope
Phi Delta #148
65 Years



James R. Pritchett
Strict Observance #18



Benjamin J. Kennedy
Marshall #188



Ulas B. Thomas
Ocoee #201

In Memoriam

Members Reported
Deceased November 2 to
February 1, 2024

Beil III, Frederic Clarence	1	Dycus, William Thomas	64
Eubanks Jr., William MacOlm	1	Farrar, Marvin Kenneth	64
Jones Sr., Charles Wayne	3	Wood Jr., John William	69
Minter, Dallas	3	Hodges, Daniel Pierce	73
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