



The Ashlar



March 2020

Kempsville Lodge No. 196, A.F.&A.M.
www.kempsvillelodge.org

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A (Very) Short History of Masonic Ritual Development

The Grand Lodge of Virginia website states that “our ritual teaches through an allegory the symbolism of our language where one Mason will be able to recognize another Mason in the light as well as in the dark.” It goes on to say that “our beautiful ritual must be preserved in a perpetual state of purity by constant supervision and schooling.” The curious Mason will, however, ask where our ritual came from and how it actually developed over time.

An excellent paper written in 2005 by a Brother Bernard Hoff from New Jersey Lodge of Research and Education No. 1786 entitled “The Five Ages of Masonic Ritual Development” provides a well-researched answer to these questions. In this paper he states that “Masonic ritual has changed significantly over time and is not uniform from place to place. Most of our ritual consists of innovations made between 200 and 300 years ago.” He goes on to divide the development of Masonic ritual into the following five ages:

The Operative Age: This was the ritual as it was worked in the days of the operative Masons; those who were actual stone cutters and craftsmen by trade. Their ritual was much simpler than is ours today and its symbolism was purely operative, but it did include crucial elements such as an obligation not to reveal any secrets of the craft. The earliest description of the operative degree conferrals is from England in the late 1600s, and consisted of only two degrees: The Entered Apprentice, and the Craft (or Fellow) degree. This ritual was worked in Scottish Operative Lodges until the early 1700s.

The Tavern Age: During this period Speculative Masons met in rented rooms in taverns. Feasting took place along with a question and answer type lecture led by the Master and punctuated by numerous and elaborate toasts. Rehearsal of these lectures was called a “communication”; this is why our meetings today are called communications. Degree ceremonies were brief and included a minimum of explanation. The Master Mason degree first appeared during this period, with the first mention occurring in 1724 and involving Noah and his sons.

The Moralizing Age: This period, which occurred in the mid-1700s, saw the introduction of moral symbolism and instruction and biblical references into the Masonic ceremonies. The working tools and a lesson on charity were added during this period, and the lectures were expanded. Symbolism pertaining to a specific religion was diminished, probably to reduce conflicts within the Lodge and increase membership. During this time the various Grand Lodges did not consider it their business to dictate to individual Lodges how they should conduct their work.

The Age of Lecturers: In the late 1700s and early 1800s, influential and self-appointed teachers of ritual promulgated their versions of the ritual work. These included William Preston in England and Thomas Smith Webb in the United States, who published the first American Masonic monitor. They recorded portions of ritual in code as it expanded well beyond where most men could learn mouth to ear. Their efforts influenced the drive toward development of standardized ritual.



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From The East



The last month has been a very busy and satisfying one indeed. The ritual team conferred each of the degrees on various candidates, and we have been busy every week with both degree work and catechism examinations. We attended a number of stated communications at other Lodges, including all of the official visits by our DDGM, R.:W.: Dave Crook. We hosted R.:W.: Crook at our own stated communication in February, where we celebrated the 65th anniversary of the Lodge receiving its charter in 1955. We also attended the official visit of the Grand Master to the 36th and 56th Masonic Districts at a superb dinner held at the Khedive Shrine Center.

Something new we tried this month was a dinner out with our wives at Mangia Qui Italian Bistro in Virginia Beach. Our own MOTY, Brother Bob Hughes, organized this event and we had both a great turnout and a very good time enjoying their Wednesday night pizza and wine special. We will continue these dinners every month; the next will be held at the Butcher's Son on Battlefield Boulevard in Chesapeake in mid-March.

We continue to make steady progress on the elevator. Worshipful Roger Taylor has been meeting regularly with our architect, who is in the process of developing both an updated site survey (the last one was done when the building was built in the 1950s) as well as building drawings which include actual measurements of the inside and outside of the building, both upstairs and downstairs. We expect these to be completed by mid-March. Our architect is also working with the city codes and permits office to identify any code issues that may need to be addressed during construction. All of this is leading up to us being able to get an accurate estimate of the cost of the elevator installation.

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to Worshipful Claude Watkins for generously donating his boat to the Lodge. As of this writing we are in the process of selling it to help cover part of the cost of the new furnace and the foundation repairs. That being said, we are still in need of additional donations not only to cover these significant expenses but also to build back up our building fund for any future needs.

Brother Dave Trzeciakiewicz, Worshipful Master

From The West



What are the duties of a Mason to his Lodge? His first duty should be to pay his dues. For this is the means by which the business end of the Lodge functions. Without fiscal solvency the physical property will cease to exist and by default the Lodge itself will fold.

Along these lines, the Worshipful Master has established a financial committee to work hand in hand with the Treasurer from a budgeting and planning perspective. As such, we still have a fair number of outstanding dues for 2020. I won't belabor the issue here in detail but needless to say Kempsville has had a couple of large unexpected building repairs of late which have put pressure on our accounts. Thank you to those who have donated so generously to help offset some of these costs.

A second duty is to attend meetings, visit your Lodge, and participate if you are able. If it has been a while since you came by the Lodge, please consider coming by again. We do honestly have a good time and there are plenty of activities to interest all members. If you are in need of a ride, please reach out and we will do our best to ensure your access to the Lodge. Our members are our most valuable asset!

Brother Mike Denning, Senior Warden

From The South



How do you see yourself advancing in your journey to the light in the East? Are you preparing your passage with a clear vision and understanding of each step? As we walk by aid of the Lights of Masonry, advancing our proficiency in the ritual, we must remember the lessons of our last step, heed the importance of our current step, and welcome the responsibilities of the next step.

The journey to the East is comprised of three components- memorization, movement, and omnipresence. We must be able to convey our positions with the correct words, walk in the appropriate direction, and carry ourselves with suitable authority. Every seat in a Lodge room possesses a specific brand of responsibility, and when we volunteer to fill the role of a vacant chair, we must be ever ready and willing to press our proficiency to suit the part.

Your commitment to the demonstration of Masonic

proficiency in your station serves as a sound testament to the fact that, although the mechanics of our roles may be literarily limited, the certainty of our performances speaks volumes of the excellency of the Craft.

Brother John Settle, Junior Warden

History of Masonic Ritual (cont'd)

Age of Standardization/Unity: This period, which began in the early 1800s, saw efforts to create a uniform ritual. American Grand Lodges appointed Grand Lecturers responsible for ritual "purity". During this time, public drinking fell out of favor and with it, the Table lodges with their many toasts held in taverns. This resulted in the elimination of the "question and answer" dialogue lectures held around the festive board and the subsequent expansion, reformatting, and emphasis of the lectures. Efforts were made to create a national Grand Lodge and ritual in the United States, but with very limited success. By the mid-1800s Masonic ritual in established American jurisdictions was the same as it is today. However, addition of new states with their own independent Grand Lodges led to slightly different rituals and mix of practices the new settlers brought with them from where they came from.

Meet the Senior Steward

Kempsville's new Senior Steward is Brother William Fraga Oliveira. Brother Bill was born in São Paulo, Brazil and came to the US in November 2004 under a working visa as a Chef in a resort in Phoenix, AZ. He fell in love with the country that embraced him and subsequently enlisted the US Navy in 2007 immediately after receiving his green card. He currently has 12 years of service and is a Petty Officer 1st. Class Culinary Specialist (CS1). Anyone who attended the December Officer installation saw his amazing and professionally crafted Masonic bible cake! Bill is a motorcycle, firearms and bourbon enthusiast as well as woodwork student. He is married to his college sweetheart Dani and is the very busy father of his very adorable "big boy Lucas and little princess Laura." Welcome to Kempsville Bill, we are proud to have you as a Brother!



Kempsville Area Food Bank

(Bro. Bob Hughes) Kempsville Masonic Lodge continues to collect food items for a local church food pantry and cash donations that go to eliminate Virginia Beach Schools Student Lunch Debt. We are off to a great start for 2020; in January we collected over 250 lbs. of food and \$250 for school lunches. The generosity of our members and their families is truly inspiring!

February Beehive Award

The winner of the February Beehive Award, given to the Brother who, in the Master's opinion, has accomplished the most for the Lodge during the preceding month, is Brother Sean Wills. Brother Sean is a Navy Seabee (Construction Battalion), and his professional building skills have been put to good use helping us to maintain our Lodge building. In the month of January, Brother Sean spent many hours of his own time helping to patch up the many cracks in our cinderblock and drywall caused by our (recently fixed) settling foundation. Brother Sean, a member of Orange Grove Lodge No. 635, Grand Lodge of Mississippi, just recently submitted his application for affiliation and, pending a favorable ballot at our next stated, will be a member of Kempsville Masonic Lodge No. 196 in March. Congratulations Brother Sean! We are the better for presence with us.



Trestleboard

February 29 Monthly Lodge Breakfast, 8-10AM
 March 3 Fellowcraft Degree, 7PM
 March 4 DDGM Official Visit to Princess Anne Lodge No. 25, 7:30PM
 March 6 Division Leadership Conference 6-8:30PM, Norfolk Scottish Rite Temple
 March 10 Stated Communication Dinner 6PM, Lodge 7PM
 March 17 Master Mason Degree, 7PM
 March 28 Monthly Lodge Breakfast, 8-10AM

For the latest, up-to-date schedule, check our web site at www.kempsvillelodge.org.

Grand Masters Official Visit

On Saturday, February 1st, Most Worshipful Douglas Vernon Jones, the 175th Grand Master of Masons in Virginia, paid his official visit to the 36th and 56th Masonic Districts at a dinner held at the Khedive Shrine Center. The dinner was very well

attended and greatly enjoyed by the Brothers of Kempsville Masonic Lodge No. 196, their wives and friends, and our widows. Our newest Entered Apprentice (just 19 years old!) was also in attendance.

Most Worshipful Jones was born in Richmond, Virginia and graduated from Deep Creek High School. After college he started his professional career with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), with whom he had thirty-five years of service prior to his retirement. M.:W.: Jones holds the position of Grand Master only 18 years after being raised to the degree of Master Mason, a very impressive accomplishment indeed!

Masonic Birthdays for March

Franklin W. Beard, Jr. '73	George W. Messinger '94
R. Craig Belda '00	Robert C. Metz '92
Jackson R. Bell, Jr. '09	Sidney T. Moore '69
Orlando C. Bitanga '98	Leonard T. Newbern '67
Donald R. Blair '77	Gary B. Nye '06
James D. Boone '76	Charlie L. Pallett, III '87
William E. Combs '80	Michael S. Polychroni '85
Michael L. Denning '15	Donald K. Robinson '93
James F. Dombey '11	Frederick W. Rudiger '03
Wayne S. Flora '67	Connor J. Schweitzer '17
Ivan Godinez '16	Michael D. Scott '83
Christopher J. Jaeger '58	Adam W. Tarr '17
William M. Johnson '93	Roger W. Taylor '11
J. Duane Johnstone '64	Russell J. Tjepkema '10
Thomas W. Lang '05	Richard L. Tsikuris '18
Robert L. Lankford '72	Linwood R. West '91
R. Dale Leonard, Jr. '05	Clifford J. Williams '13
Thomas E. Lindner '83	

The Brethren shown above have a total of 942 years in Masonry!

To Our Masonic Widows

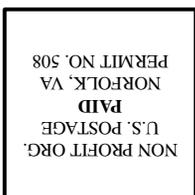
Happy Birthday to our special ladies in March:

Edna St John	March 1 st
Kaye Peters	March 18 th
Mary Nickerson	March 22 nd
Carol Wicks	March 24 th
Mary Hawker	March 25 th
Bettu Williams	March 26 th
Carol Leszczynski	March 27 th
Jean Mordica	March 28 th
Sharron Nolan	March 29 th
Elizabeth McBride	March 30 th

If any of our ladies are in need of assistance from the Lodge, please don't hesitate to contact Right Worshipful Bill Knowles or the Secretary.

Lodge Officers

Worshipful Master	Dave Trzeciakiewicz	620-8311
Senior Warden	Mike Denning	651-0712
Junior Warden	John Settle, III	675-9695
Treasurer	Chris Anders	635-7617
Secretary	Bob Stanek	255-8336
Senior Deacon	Pat Blankenship	406-6166
Junior Deacon	Doug Dunn	781-389-6557
Senior Steward	Bill Oliveira	748-3206
Junior Steward	John Gabor	408-1541
Chaplain	Keith Ingraham	613-5474
Musician	R. Scott Foxwell	536-1659
Marshal	Dickie Cooper	971-7347
Tiler	Roger Taylor	478-5498
Instructor of Work	Tom McGowan	497-3881
Education Officer	William Rawson	724-4867
MAHOVA Ambassador	Ray Connard	630-5797
Blood Coordinator	Michael Blankenship	438-2862
Youth Advisor	Eddie Foley	581-8144



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