



The Ashlar



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The Holy Saints John

By history, custom, tradition and ritualistic requirements, the Craft holds dear the days of St. John the Baptist on June 24, and St. John the Evangelist on December 27. A lodge which forgets either forfeits a precious link with the past and loses an opportunity for the renewal of allegiance to everything in Freemasonry symbolized by these Patron Saints. No satisfactory explanation has as yet been advanced to explain why operative Masons adopted two Christian saints, when St. Thomas, the patron of architecture and building, was available.

Most Freemasons are agreed that the choice of our ancient brethren was wise. No two great teachers, preachers, wise men, saints, could have been found who better showed in their lives and works the doctrine and teachings of Freemasonry.

St. John the Evangelist apparently came into our fraternal system somewhere towards the close of the sixteenth century; at least, we find the earliest authentic lodge minute reference to St. John the evangelist in Edinburgh in 1599, although earlier mentions are made in connection with that may be called relatives, if not ancestors, of our Craft. For instance "The Fraternity of St. John" existed in Cologne in 1430. "St. John's Masonry" is a distinctive term for Scot Lodges, many of the older of which took the name of the saint. Thus, in its early records, the Lodge of Scoon and Perth is often called the Lodge of St. John, and the Lodge possesses a beautiful mural painting of the-saint, on the east wall of the lodge room.

Other Lodges denominated "St. John's Lodges" were some of those unaffiliated with either the "Moderns" or the "Ancients" in the period between establishment of the Ancients (1751) and the Reconciliation (1813).

In many old histories of the Craft is a quaint legend that St. John the Evangelist became a "Grand Master" at the age of ninety. It seems to have its origin in a book printed in 1789, in which one Richard Linnecar of Wakefield wrote certain "Strictures on Freemasonry," although his paper is really an eulogy. Whether this writer really continued a tradition, or invented the tale which was seized upon by Oliver and kept alive as a legend, impossible though it is, no man may say.

One Grand Lodge has ruled that Saints John's Days are Landmarks. Of course any Grand Lodge may make its own laws, but it is beyond the power of any Grand Lodge either to make a Landmark by pronouncement, or to unmake a Landmark by denying it. Inasmuch as Landmarks are universally admitted to be handed down to us from "time immemorial", and Saints John's Days as Masonic festivals, are neither extremely old nor universal among the Craft (England using Wednesday after St. George's day; Scotland St. Andrew's Day; and Ireland St. Patrick's), we must consider only that Grand Lodge's intent to honor our patron saints, and not the validity of her results.

Historians believe that only after 1717, when the Mother Grand Lodge was formed, did Freemasons generally hold festival meetings on either or both June 24 and December 27.



From The East



I hope everyone present at the September Stated enjoyed our Senior Warden's Night, I know that I certainly did. Brother Chris Anders did an excellent job in the East and I am very happy to note with extreme confidence that in two and a half short months he will take over as leader of our Lodge. In highlighting this upcoming transition, I would also like to point out that Brother Chris will have quite a bit on his plate and will need the support of you the Brothers. I encourage each of you to consider supporting Brother Chris with your time and efforts, and to reach out to him with any intentions you may have in any area of your interest as he forms his 2018 team, trust me there is much to do and there are plenty of positions for Brother Chris to fill.

Regarding the remainder of 2017. As mentioned during the September Stated, our Temple Building efforts are progressing well. We have now received gifts and pledges of approximately \$18,000 toward our \$120,000 construction goal. Acquiring the necessary construction funds will take time so please consider filling out your donation cards to lend a financial hand toward achieving our goal of providing access to our Lodge room and restroom facilities to those in need of mobility assistance...and remember that at some future time this could be you or one of your loved ones who may need the same assistance that we are trying to provide to our current members in need and to members of the other organizations using our Temple.

Our Lodge Building efforts are also progressing very well. How about that picnic put on by our Junior Warden Brother Roger Taylor? And how about that awesome music provided by Doyle and Dunn, with a guest appearance by Worshipful Bill Nelligar? Oh yeah, we have now completed three of our five nights supporting the Kempsville High School Band and Football Team. A special thanks to our support mainstays: Brother John Settle III, Brother Scott Sherman, and Brother Dave "T-Rex" Trzeciakiewicz! Come on out and enjoy the game and some friendship and brotherly love during our last two events on October 6th and November 3rd. Also, there is still room for anyone interested in our final fraternal visit of the year, we will be accompanied by our ladies as we visit Fredericksburg Lodge on Friday October 13th.

I hope to see you in Lodge soon!

Brother Greg Muir, Worshipful Master

From The West



We have all heard that the Rough and Perfect Ashlars are two of the movable Jewels of the Lodge. We know that the Rough Ashlar is a stone taken from the quarry in its rude and natural state while the Perfect Ashlar is the stone after it has been cut, squared, and fitted for the builders use. We are taught to symbolically use the Common Gavel and the other implements of Masonry to transform the Rough Ashlar into a Perfect Ashlar. These two stones are meant to be used as Masonic symbols to teach this important moral lesson; The Rough Ashlar represents man in his imperfect state and symbolizes the uneducated man unaware of his potential. The Perfect Ashlar represents the educated man who is striving to perfect his relationship to God and his fellow man.

Throughout the initiation process, the candidate is constantly admonished to develop his mental and spiritual self. This development is meant to be a continual task as Masonry is a life-long journey designed to strengthen men intellectually and morally. The Rough and Perfect Ashlar represents the Mason's transformation from an imperfect state to a state of perfection at which he hopes to arrive by a virtuous education and the blessings of God.

Throughout this journey we are also exposed to issues related to fraternity and equality. The basic concept being that no man should consider himself better than another and that he should always be willing to contribute his time, talent, and resources to the betterment of not only Masonry but mankind in general. Masons should be ever ready and willing to teach the principles of Masonry to fellow Masons. We are very fortunate in our lodge to have Masons who live a true Masonic life. The lessons we observe from these men revolve around characteristics of moral excellence and responsibility. It is a lesson all of us should strive to emulate in our daily lives. We can think of these virtues as ashlar or building blocks waiting to be arranged while we are constructing our perfect moral and Masonic building. I encourage every new Mason to seek out a brother in the lodge who can serve as a mentor as you are travelling through your Masonic journey. Your time spent will be both rewarding and enriching. I hope to see you in lodge.

Brother Chris Anders, Senior Warden

the final donation total. Y'all donated 38 units of whole blood donation and 22 Platelet donations. Let us keep up the good work for the 2018 blood year by donating at the Next Drive at Bayside Lodge on October 16th from 2-7PM.

Patrick Blankenship, Lodge Blood Coordinator

Masonry (Not So) Universal: Continental Freemasonry

Brethren, I had originally planned to discuss the history and practice of Freemasonry in France this month, but after doing some research on the subject I decided to take a detour and first talk about Continental, or Liberal, Freemasonry. Continental Freemasonry originated in 1877 when the Grande Orient de France (GODF), one of the Grand Lodges of France, changed its constitution to remove the requirement that its members express a belief in deity thus allowing in atheists. This caused the Grand Lodge of England to withdraw its recognition and declare the GODF as "irregular". This divide between Anglo/American Freemasonry (which is in the majority) and Continental Freemasonry continues to this day. None of the mainstream US Grand Lodges, including the Grand Lodge of Virginia, recognize Continental lodges.

Continental Freemasonry has been concentrated in traditionally Catholic countries such as those in Central and South America, where they are in the majority. They are also prevalent in Belgium, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. One of the reasons cited for the concentration in these countries is that Continental Masonry was seen as an outlet for

those unhappy with the Catholic Church and its traditional dominance in their societies. The GODF, for example, removed all references to the Grand Architect of the Universe from its rite, and removed the Volume of the Sacred Law (which in France was the Bible) from its ritual.

One example of a Continental Freemasonry organization located in the US and Canada is The George Washington Union (GWU). This began as a single lodge, named "George Washington No.1", on December 10, 1976 as a result of a meeting between French GODF-chartered Freemasons and American Freemasons just prior to the bicentennial celebrations. This lodge received its Charter from the GODF in 1977, and in 2002 was official recognized by them as a separate Grand Orient operating in North America with the ability to charter lodges. George Washington Union lodges are mixed gender and allow both men and women as candidates. Interestingly, I could not find the names or locations of any their lodges on the internet and the only way to contact the GWU is via a form on their website (<http://gwunion.webs.com/>). No addresses, telephone numbers, or officer names are listed there.

David Trzeciakiewicz, Senior Deacon



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