

From "Notes on the History of
Freemasonry"

Read at the 24th Annual Meeting of Lodge
"Imper Fidelis" No 529 Worcester 1896

Those who have been present at the ceremony of Installation, will remember that the Master of the Lodge solemnly promises on his election, that he will not permit any deviation from the established Landmarks of the Order, which Landmarks declare that nothing can legally be added to or taken from the ritual at present in use.

It may not be inappropriate here to enumerate the "Landmarks of Freemasonry" as they are not so accessible to Masons, as are those Constitutions which bore their Origin from them; whether these Landmarks are remote or Modern it is certain that our present Book of Constitutions is founded on them.

They are:-

1. The Mode of Recognition.
2. The Division of Symbolic Masonry into 3 Degrees.
3. The Legend of the 3rd Degree.
4. The Government of the Fraternity by a Grand Master elected from the body of the Craft.

5. The Prerogative of the G. M. to preside over every Assembly of the Craft. ~~~~~
6. The Prerogative of the G. M. to grant dispensations for conferring Degrees at irregular times. ~~~~~
7. The Prerogative of the G. M. to grant dispensations for opening and holding Lodges. ~~~~~
8. The Power of G. M. to make Masters at sight. ~~~~~
9. The necessity of M's to congregate in Lodges. ~~~~~
10. The Govt. of the Craft, when congregated in a Lodge by a Master and two Wardens. ~~~~~
11. Necessity of every Lodge, when congregated, being 'pled. ~~~~~
12. The Right of every F. M. to be represented in all general Meetings of the Craft, and to instruct his Representatives. ~~~~~
13. The Right of every F. M. to appeal from the decision of a Lodge, to the G. L. or General Assembly of Masters. ~~~~~
14. The Right of every F. M. to visit and sit in every Regular Lodge. ~~~~~
15. No visitor, unknown to the brethren present, or to some of them, as a F. M., can enter a Lodge without passing an Examination. ~~~~~
16. No Lodge can interfere in the business of another Lodge, nor give Degrees to brethren who are members of other Lodges. ~~~~~
17. Every F. M. amenable to Maltese Jurisdiction. ~~~~~

18. Certain qualifications of Candidates for Initiation
19. Belief in the existence of G. necessary to Macons.
20. Belief in a resurrection to a future life, necessary to Macons.
21. The "Book of the S. Law," is an indispensable part of the furniture of every Maconic Lodge
22. The Equality of all Humans.
23. The Secrecy of the Institution.
24. The foundation of a Speculative Science upon an Operative Art, and the Symbolical use and explanation of the terms of that art, for purposes of religious and Moral teaching.
25. The Landmarks can never be changed.

The whole may be summed up as follows:-
 Freemasonry is a symbolical and secret institution governed by a G. M. who presides over the Brethren. These have certain rights, but must be qualified for admission. Their signs and ceremonies are uniform throughout the World.

No choice of definition is needed, we may say Freemasonry is a secret society, having for its objects the promotion of good fellowship & charity.

The first official issue of the Book of Constitutions is Anderson and Meoagulus edition in 1723. but further additions were made in 1738-1746-1767. 1784-1815. 1819. 1827 and 1841.

1908.

The first Masonic Almanac, was published in France, in 1752, and the first English Almanac was "The Freemasons Calendar, or an Almanac" for the year 1775. It was put forth first, as a Pocket book in 1814, in which form it existed ~~at~~ ^{until} ~~the~~ ^{present} ~~day.~~ ^{when the first number of the "Masonic Year Book" was issued.}

Having thus given as it were the skeleton of Freemasonry, we may now turn to its History.

Naturally, the first question which presents itself to the historical student is, "What is the origin of Freemasonry?"

The historians of Freemasonry, may roughly be divided into two schools - viz; the Mystical and the Authentic.

The Mystical School was inaugurated about the beginning of the last century, by Mr Anderson, while the Authentic school has only existed about

55 to 65.

Mr Anderson first promulgated the theories of the Mystical School in the "Book of Constitutions" which he published in 1723, by order of the G. Lodge, and a great part of them were incorporated into the ritual; much of which is due to the lively imagination of Mr Anderson; who assumed that Freemasonry, is to be traced for its primitive source to the building of the Temple of H. S. at Jerusalem.

The investigations of the recent or, Authentic School, have nearly demolished this theory. All of this is now explained, not historically but symbolically - And so important, and indeed, so essential to Speculative Masonry, is the Temple of Solomon as a symbol, that to eradicate it from Masonic Symbolism, would be equivalent to destroying altogether the identity of the Institution.

Nevertheless, the theories of the origin of F. M. S. are now most generally accepted, as those of the Authentic School of Masonic history; which declines to accept any statement whose Authenticity is not supported by some written or printed record.

It appears that these differences of opinion concerning the origin of F. M. S.; have arisen from the fact that the various Writers on the subject, have confused the histories of three distinct institutions viz. 1st Building Societies; 2nd Secret Societies; and 3rd Freemasonry proper.

It must be evident to anyone who takes an impartial view of the matter, that from time immemorial certain societies or guilds of builders have existed, who were possessed of secrets connected with their craft, and also of certain methods of recognition - Such a Society was formed according to one authority at a period as early as the building of the Temple of Salomon - Similar guilds, no doubt flourished

Copyright Worcester and Museum Trust

6

among the Egyptian Architects who erected the pyramids;— again amongst the Antient Roman builders in the time of Ruma Pompilius; and also in our own country, and in Germany, amongst the operative masons of the Middle ages.

And again, it is easy to trace amongst these purely secret societies, quite unconnected with the art of building, many points of resemblance to the rites and ceremonies of Modern Freemasonry. As an instance, may be mentioned the Selenes, who presented their candidates for admission, in a white garment, as an emblem of innocence, and imposed upon them a *S. O. T. U. L.* Like the Freemasons they admitted no woman into their Order, they had signs of recognition, and were divided into separate colleges or lodges.

Connected with the Selenian fraternity was the institution of the Pythagorean mysteries of Crotona. — The disciples of Pythagoras were famed for their regard for the east in the construction of their buildings, for their recommending the practice of Charity to the younger brethren, and for their peculiar rites and ceremonies.

Concerning the origin of Freemasonry proper, there is much diversity of opinion. The Authentic School are satisfied that the original society of Craftsmen, admitted non operative Masons to their

their guild, and made them free of it. The
Mystical school maintain, that, it derived from
those periods when H. Sol. and H. Cyrus, declared
the Fraternity free, at the buildings of the first
and second temples at Jerusalem.

* His Minutes
being undoubtedly acknowledged the oldest Lodge in Scotland. * His
trailed back to there dated that Thomas Borswell, Esquire, of
1598. — Auehinleed, was chosen as Warden of Lodge in 1600.

The earliest instance of this occurring in
England was in the case of Elias Ashmole, who was
made a Mason in a Lodge at Warrington on
the 16th Oct. 1646.

Many papers in England may therefore
be said to derive its origin from that date, but it is
impossible to say when the secrets of the operative
builders were first instituted on which our
present system is founded.

The whole question may be resolved into two
points about which no doubt can possibly exist.

1st. The Egyptian Architects were undoubtedly
members of a Secret Society, and possessed certain
signs and ceremonies of their own, some of which bear
a strong resemblance to those now in use amongst F.M.s

2nd. It is certain that our present symbolical ritual was arranged by the Anderson and approved by Grand Lodge in the year 1723.

Some of the Traditional School maintain that the first G. M. in England, was "St. Alban" who presided over G. L. a. d. 287. While others affirm that King Athelstan granted the first Charter a. d. 924., and his brother "Edward" formed the first "G. L. at York. 925."

Some authors have assumed that Freemasonry was first instituted at the time of the Crusades, there being no doubt that the Order of "Knights Templar" established 1118, was in reality a branch of Freemasonry.

Other writers have considered that F. M. originated from the Steinmetzen or German Architects. The actual founder of the German Lodge, is supposed to have been Abbot William, of Dischenau, between 1080 - 1091.

It may be worth mentioning that the two pillars now standing in the "Cathedral of Mayling" are exact imitations of those which stood in the porch of St. Alb's temple, and were erected by the Steinmetzen in 1042.

Tracing the history of F. M., onwards in our own country, there appears to have been a decline in the work between the 13th & 15th centuries.

Copyright Worcester and Museum Trust

chiefly caused by the opposition of the Roman & Catholic Church, who became jealous of the influence acquired by the operative Masons at that period.

Brighter days were henceforth in store for the Craft, for in 1425 Henry VI. was initiated into F. M'y. or as the order is called "The Order of St. John." Before however the King was initiated he seems to have examined with scrupulous care, the nature of the Institution, and this point is interesting, as it probably indicates the origin of those necessary questions which are now put to every candidate.

The first question the King is said to have asked was, "What made it so?" meaning "what may see enemy be?" The answer to which was "It hath the mystery of Nature, the understanding of the might that is herein, and its kindred workings, &c." The King next asked, "What doth the Masons ~~conceal~~ conceal and hide?" The answer was vaguely mysterious, viz "They conceal the art of finding new arts, and that is for their own profit and price; they conceal the art of keeping secrets, and the art of wonderworking."

"Will he teach me they same Arts?" asked the King, to which the Respondent answered cautiously "It shall be taught if ye be worthy, and able to learn."

Having thus secured himself that there¹⁰
was sought but what is good to be understood
by a Free and Accepted Mason: the King was
initiated into our Mysteries and privileges.

In 1485. Henry the VII became G. M., and
under his auspices Freemasonry, appears to have
enjoyed a flourishing existence.

From this period to 1736, Freemasonry
as tradition reports, was making rapid progress
in Scotland. The Grand Lodge of Scotland
being formed in 1736.

Freemasonry however seemed to be declining
in this County from the beginning of the 18th
century during the reign of "Queen Anne" there
were but few Lodges in existence in the south
of England.

There four Lodges are;

"Original No 1" Meeting at the "Grove & Garden"
(Now No 2 Antiquity).

"Original No 2" Meeting at the "Gloom" (now extinct)

"Original No 3" Meeting at the "Apple Tree
Farm". (Now No 12 Fortitude & old Cumberland, &c)

"Original No 4". Meeting at the "Summers
and Grapes". (Now Royal Arched House and
Inverness.

In February 1717 at the said Apple Tree Tavern, some old Brethren met, and having voted the ^{Master} Master Mason, then present, into the chair, they constituted themselves a Grand Lodge; *pro tempore*, in due form, and resolved to hold an annual assembly and feast, and to choose a *Grand Master* among themselves until they should have the honor of a noble brother at their head.

On St John the Baptist day, in that year the brethren again met, and elected Mr. Rushing Sayre Grand Master of Masons, Capt. Joseph Elliott, and Mr Jacob Lamball, being appointed Grand Wardens.

At this meeting the Four old Lodges conferred upon themselves the sole privilege of granting Warrants to other Lodges, by permission of the *G.M.*, previous to this no warrants had been granted, the consent of the chief magistrate being alone necessary.

The title of "The United Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of England" as the Grand Lodge is ^{now} styled, has its origin from the Union which took place in *1753*; of "the Grand Lodge 1717" with the "Seceders" of 1750 - 1753. These Seceders called themselves "Ancient Masons" in contradistinction to the genuine Masons, whom they misnamed "Moderns", they had their own ritual, about which one writes say. "The Catechism of the "Moderns" is the same ancient, and that of the "Antients" is the same

Modern. The special object of the Seceders was the promotion of "Royal Arch Masonry" and as many brethren preferred joining the Grand Lodge of Four Degrees - the rival body was successful in its career of innovation.

The Seceders however had no G. W. of noble birth, and the number of their Lodges scarcely amounted to five, but in 1771 the "Blade of Ashol" became their G. M., in consequence of which they were afterwards called "Ashol Masons" and being recognized by the Grand Lodges of Scotland and Ireland, they seem to have made considerable progress.

In 1813 the "Blade of Kent," father of our gracious Queen, being G. M. of the Ashol Masons, and A. A. of the "Blade of Sussex," G. M. of the Grand Lodge of England, the happy union of these two rival Grand Lodges was effected to the great good of the Masonry alike in England, and the whole world. This important event took place on the 24th day of December 1813.

- At one time there existed 4 Grand Lodges.
1. The G. L. of England estab. 1717.
 2. The G. L. of Engl. who called themselves Ancients 1753.
 3. The G. L. of All Engl. or York Masons estab. 1725.
 4. The Grand Lodge of Eng. south of the Trent. estab. 1779.
- but time will not allow of my going into the history of the two last Lodges.

Copyright Worcester and Museum Trust

10.

During the last century and a half
Masonry has made great strides, not only in this
but in other countries.

The origin of our present ritual, must be of
interest to all Masons, but unfortunately it is
almost as obscure as that of Freemasonry itself.

Proctor traces the existence of the primitive
Masonic Lecture, which was attached to the York
Constitutions, to a period as remote as the 10th Century.

It was originally in a Saxon rhyme, a kind
of composition the popular name of the Saxons in
the time of King Alststan. It is interesting as
purporting to show the present of holding a Masonic
Lodge eight hundred years ago, also as a basis
of three landmarks upon which our present ritual
and ceremonies are founded.

In this lecture the Entered Apprentice is solemnly
warned,

"His Master's Council to keep close,
Lest he his confidence should lose,
The secrets of ^{the} Brethren tell to none,
Nor out of Lodge, what there is done,
Whatever thou hear the Master say,
Be sure thou never do betray,
Lest its cause in thee much blame.

"And bring the Craft to public shame."
And in this lecture we find the origin of a clause

114

which exists in our present Book of Constitutions.
17. No

"The Master shall not, for any Advantage
"Made an Apprentice under age;
"And, as you may plainly hear,
"He must have his limbs both whole and fair;
"For to the Craft it were a Shame,
"To make a half man and a lame."

Thus, according to tradition, did our "Ancient
"Mishen" teach those principles which have been
upheld by the Craft throughout all Ages.

At present the ritual chiefly used - are,
the "Afford" and that of the "Loage of Emulation"
which ^{latter} stands first in the Estimation of the Craft.

The division of Craft Masonry into 3 degrees
is comparatively speaking a Modern innovation
Originally, it seems there was but one degree,
that of initiation in the year 1717.

An operative ritual of 1727, says that the
F. C. ceremony was the same as the E. A. P. with
the difference of the secrets.

The degrees of E. A., F. C., & M. were introduced
about 1720 - but F. C.'s and M. M.'s could only be
made in G. Loage. In 1725 Lord Pauley the
M. M. G. M. passed a decree enrolling private Loages
to confer these two degrees upon Brethren.

Before this the W. M. and W. are merely
S. G., chosen from among their Brethren & Fellows
to preside over the Lodge.

No Brother before 1725 was called a W. M.,
until he had passed the chair, or was Master of a
Working Lodge.

In 1738. the three degrees were first
formally defined in the Book of Constitutions.

The exact date of the origin of the ceremony of
Installation is enveloped in doubt - but it was evidently
in existence in 1722.

There are several other degrees, viz. the "Arch"
"Mist. Masonry" - "Free Cut" - "Mighty Stripling" and
the "Ancient and Accepted" - but the Craft - and
Royal Arch, which is indeed the Climax of Craft
Masonry, are the only degrees recognised as Masonry
proper by the Grand Lodge of England.

Towards the close of the last century, Lodges
for ladies, or as they were called "Adoptive Lodge"
were formed in France and America, but
although.

"No mortal can give the ladies a vote
Than a free and ^{an} Accepted Mason."
to admit them to ~~our~~ the secrets of our Order is
altogether another question, and these Lodges
were found favor in the Craft.

Instances are however recorded, of Ladies having

Copyright Worcester and Museum Trust

taken the matter into their own hands independently of any particular Lodge.

It is the general impression that only one of the softer sex has been initiated into the Mysteries of Freemasonry, but 4 cases are recorded 3 in England and 1 in France.

The most popular case is that of Miss St. Ledger afterwards the Hon. Mrs. Aldworth, who is said to have obtained the proceedings through the access of a Hall of a Lodge that was being held at her father's house in Monmouth Street, London. She was discovered by the Brethren and would have been in great peril of her life, but from supplication of her younger brother, she was spared conditionally on her consenting to be initiated in the First degree, for which ceremony it is stated she was properly prepared.

She was in course passed to the Second degree but for various reasons was never admitted to the Third. Mrs. Aldworth was remarkable true to her obligations and was a sincere friend to the Craft, so much so she esteemed and respected that her portrait, in Masonic clothing, hangs in many of the High Lodges.

The second instance was that of a Mrs. Peaton of Norfolk, who overheard the secrets of Freemasonry, which she faithfully kept, till she died, at the advanced age of 85.

The third case is that of a Landlady of a Bathonian Hotel, where a Lodge was held.

The French or French case is perhaps the most romantic the history being Madame de Rambailles.

The Lodge of "Bro. Achete", was about to open a "Lodge of Adoption", or Female Freemasonry, but before the female Members were introduced a regular Lodge of Freemasonry was opened in the First degree, and among the strangers in the preparation room was a young officer in the uniform of the Cavalry. On being asked for his diploma or Certificate, he handed in a folded paper, which proved to be the commission of an aide-de-camp, granted to the wife of a General de Rambailles, who had served in the Army.

This being announced to the Lodge, our Amical French Brother, decided to confer, not the "Degree of Adoption", but the first degree in Freemasonry upon the courageous woman to whom had been committed trust, discretion and bravery.

Madame de Rambailles being made acquainted with the resolution of the Lodge, acquiesced, saying "I have been a Man for my Country, and I will again be a Man for my Brethren". she was duly initiated, and afterwards frequently assisted in the Working of the First Degree.

On looking back at the list of Grand Masters who have presided over the Grand Lodge of England we may be proud of the distinguished names we find enrolled

They are divided into two sets, viz The
Pre historic, and Historic.

The Prehistoric list is of course only traditional
it includes fifty such names, some of which are
St. Alban - St. Augustin, St. Wisin, Alfred
the Great - King Ethelred - King Athelstan,
St. Dunstan - King Edward the Confessor,
Cardinal Wolsey - King James - King Charles I
and King Charles the II. - but last, but not the
least, Sir Christopher Wren the master last Grand
Master, who presided at the first Grand Lodge St.
Paul Churchyard, where the first Grand Lodge of
England met and formed the Grand Lodge of
England. It may be interesting to mention
that this old building, the first Grand Lodge has
only been pulled down during the last month,
and amongst the interesting relics that were preserved there
for many years, the bronze and Mallet with which
Sir Christopher laid the foundation stone of St Paul
Cathedral in 1675.

The Historic list includes 42 names, It commences
with Anthony Sayer (1717) George Payne (1718) and
J. Mesagulier (1719).

Our Order has ever been popular amongst the
Monarchs of this realm, not less than 16 Kings and Princes
of Royal blood having presided over Grand Lodge.

More recently the chain has been filled by H. H.
the Duke of Cumberland 1782 to 1790 - H. H. George
Prince of Wales, afterwards George the 4th 1791 to 1812

H. R. N. Duke of Sussex 1813 - 1842 - The Earl of Zetland - 1843 - 1869 - and the Marquis of Ripon 1870 - 1873.

The year 1874 will ever be celebrated in the annals of Freemasonry as the year in which H. R. N. the Prince of Wales honored the Craft by accepting the office of Most Worshipful Grand Master. he was installed in the largest Lodge ever assembled. office he held not less than 10,000 Brethren being present. which * to the name of the accession to the Craft is more than what in those who have throne of England. watched the progress of Freemasonry since his His when he was Royal Highness has presided over us. succeeded by our

At the time of ¹⁸⁵⁴ installation there were 1528 M. H. G. M. Lodges on the Grand Roll of the Grand Lodge of England H. R. N. the Duke of Cornwall had ~~Lodges~~ ^{been} ~~the~~ last Lodge ~~connected~~ ^{being} - the last Warrant issued was numbered 2582. (3363)

present
 May our Grand Master live long to preside over us, and May those branches of Freemasonry which have flourished so vigorously under his the auspices ^{of his predecessors} continue to spread over the four quarters of the Globe, carrying to the most distant climes, those excellent principles of our Order - "Brotherly Love" - "Relief" and "Truth"

R.D. 4/1/95.