

M A S E F I E L D
R O Y A L A R C H C H A P T E R
No. 2034

SHORT HISTORY

Compiled by

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PEAD

at

Biennial Meeting of the Chapter

6th October 1947

MASEFIELD
ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER
NO. 2034.

The Masefield Chapter took its name from the Craft lodge to which it was attached, which itself was founded as a memorial to William Masefield, an honoured name in the annals of Worcestershire masonry.

William Masefield was one of the most interesting personalities in the history of the Province. Born in 1801, he died in 1890 at the ripe age of 89 years.

He was initiated in the Harmonic Lodge, Dudley, in 1842 at the age of 41 and was twice Master, first in 1846 and again in 1862.

In 1847 he was appointed Provincial Senior Grand Warden for Worcestershire and later became Treasurer of the Province, a position he held for 21 years.

He was appointed Deputy Provincial Grand Master for Worcestershire in 1875 by the then Provincial Grand Master, R.W. Bro. Albert Hudson Royds, which office he held for 8 years.

In Grand Lodge he held the office of Grand Standard Bearer to which he was appointed by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII), the Grand Master at the time.

William Masefield was exalted in the Dudley Royal Arch Chapter and became First Principal in 1844. He subsequently served that Chapter as Scribe E. for 25 years.

The Grand Superintendent, M. Ex. Comp. Sir A.H. Lechmere appointed him Prov. Second Grand Principal in 1880, in which office he continued for two years.

He was a distinguished member of many other Masonic Orders, and having such wide interests in Masonry and being well versed in all its ritual it is not surprising to find recorded that he performed no less than 60 installations in various degrees.

In early life, William Masefield was in business in Dudley as a draper and later as a tallow chandler.

But whether in business or in his many other activities William Masefield was one who, by reason of his untiring service to his fellowmen, was always greatly honoured and respected, and he died deeply regretted.

He is buried in the churchyard of St. John's Dudley. His tomb is simple and dignified and in an excellent state of preservation, thanks to the members of the Harmonic Lodge who undertake its maintenance.

The warrant for the formation of the Masefield Chapter is dated the 5th May 1897 and bears the signatures of E. Letchworth, G.S.E., and Thomas Fenn, G.S.N.

The Chapter was consecrated on the 22nd October 1897 at the Moseley and Balsall Heath Institute by -

M.E. Comp. Augustus Frederick Godson, M.A., M.P.
Grand Superintendent for Worcestershire, assisted by
E. Comp. William Waldron, Prov. G.H.
E. Comp. W.H. Richardson, Prov. G.S.E.
E. Comp. William Thomas Page, Prov. G.S.N.
E. Comp. G.B. Battery, Prov. G.D.C.

The founders were

E. Comp. Harry Clark, P.Z., P.P.A.G.S.B. Middx.
E. Comp. William Thomas, P.Z.
Comp. Sam G. Mason
Comp. F.E. Hallam
Comp. R. Wheeler Haines
Comp. A.C. Kellett
Comp. C.B. Bishop
Comp. W.E. Gough
Comp. P. Fryer
Comp. Samuel Mason
Comp. William Stevens

The Janitor was Charles Robbins.

Following the consecration, E. Comp. Harry Clark was inducted into the Chair of Z by M.E. Comp. A.F. Godson, M.A., M.P., Grand Superintendent for Worcestershire, Comp. Sam. G. Mason was installed into the Chair of J and afterwards into the Chair of H by E. Comp. W. Waldron, P.Z. Prov. G.H. and Comp. F.E. Hallam was installed into the Chair of J by E. Comp. W. Waldron.

The first officers were then appointed and invested as follows:-

Comp. R. Wheeler Haines	S.E.
Comp. C.B. Bishop	S.N.
Comp. A.C. Kellett	P.S.
Comp. W.E. Gough	First Asst. S.
Comp. Peter Fryer	Second Asst. S.
E. Comp. William Thomas	Treasurer
Comp. Samuel Mason	Steward.

The consecrating officers were elected as honorary members of the Chapter.

The next convocation of the Chapter after its consecration was held on the 6th December 1897, nine candidates being then examined and one elected as a joining member.

Apart from a few convocations during the war years 1939-1945 held on other dates, the meeting days provided for in the Warrant, namely, the first Mondays in February, April, October and December, have been strictly adhered to throughout the long history of the Chapter.

From the date of its consecration until 1918 the Chapter met at the Moseley and Balsall Heath Institute, from 1918 to 1937 at the Masonic Hall, Institute Road, King's Heath, and at the new Masonic Temple in Alcester Road South, King's Heath, since the dedication of that building in August 1937.

Starting with eleven founders, the Chapter, despite fluctuations in its membership through the years, may be said to have made steady progress and has now 45 members on its roll.

Amongst those exalted in the Chapter many have performed distinguished work for and attained high office in Masonry.

It may not be out of place to make particular mention of the following:-

- Ex.Comp. Ernest G. Apps, P.A.G.D.C., P.P.G.J., exalted 6th April 1905, installed as First Principal 7th October, 1912.
- Ex.Comp. A.W. Watson, P.A.G.D.C., P.P.G.J., exalted 4th December 1905, installed as First Principal 1st October 1917.
- Ex.Comp. Alfred Allen, P.A.G.D.C., P.P.G.J., exalted 4th February 1907, installed as First Principal 7th October 1918.
- Ex.Comp. W. Harvey Gibbs, P.A.G.S., Prov. G.H. exalted 5th February 1906, installed as First Principal 6th October, 1919.
- Ex.Comp. Thos. Mason, P.G. St.B., P.P.G.J. exalted 22nd November 1913, installed as First Principal 2nd November 1922.

It is gratifying to observe that Ex.Comps. E.G. Apps and A.W. Watson are still subscribing members of the Chapter and continue to take a keen interest in its affairs and Ex.Comp. Alfred Allen is a greatly respected and esteemed honorary member.

Ex.Comps. W. Harvey Gibbs and Thomas Mason have passed to the Grand Chapter above, after lives devoted to the principles and causes of Masonry.

These notes would not be complete without a special reference to the devoted services continuously rendered to the Chapter over many years by E. Comp. E.G. Apps. His extensive knowledge of all things pertaining to masonry and the Royal Arch in particular and his wise counsel have been of incalculable benefit to the Companions and in no small measure have helped to maintain that spirit of fraternal union and happiness which prevails in the Chapter.

It should be recorded that during a period of difficulty and anxiety through which the Chapter at one time passed, the Grand Superintendent, M. Ex. Comp. Seth Somers and the Prov. G. Scribe E. Ex. Comp. H.V. Stanton, maintained close contact with the Chapter and were a never failing source of help and encouragement. The Companions, in grateful recognition of these invaluable services recently invited both these distinguished Companions to become honorary members, an invitation they were graciously pleased to accept.

The celebration of its Jubilee in October 1947 finds the Chapter happy and flourishing. Its progress has been commensurate with the expansion of Royal Arch Masonry in the Province. In 1897 the Province comprised 7 Chapters and in 1947 exactly three times that number. This, surely testifies to the appeal the Royal Arch degree makes to Masons generally, and to the realization by them of its fundamentally spiritual nature.

The Companions of the Masfield Chapter are keenly aware of the sublimity of this supreme degree and of the exalted ideals which are its objects. They have a high appreciation of good working but, more, a deep sense of the dignity and high importance of the degree. They are proud and happy that their Chapter, having survived 50 years of continuous exposition of the Royal Arch degree, is this year celebrating its Jubilee and remains a living memorial to the eminent Mason whose name it bears.