

W. M. and Brethren,

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For how long non-operative or speculative Freemasonry existed before the advent of its first governing body it is impossible to say, an exact date can never be assigned to something which has evolved over a long period of time.

Undoubtedly what is now known as Free and Accepted or Speculative Masonry emerged from early operative masonry - the craft of the stone mason, the builders or workers in stone. Unlike other crafts the ~~stone~~ masons needed to travel the country to seek localities where building was in progress, whence on the completion of the work, they moved on once more. For this reason it was seldom possible to organise themselves into static Guilds as many other crafts did. An exception was the London Company of Mason's which regulated the operative craft in and around ~~London~~ the City of London. The itinerant masons congregated themselves in Lodges at the building site wherein the work was planned, discipline enforced and matters affecting the craft discussed. They were also places for refreshment and relaxation.

It is known however from the records of Edinburgh (Mary's Chapel) No.1. that at Newcastle on the 20th days of May 1641, a certain number of masters and others being lawfully convened, admitted Mr. the Rt. Hon. Robert Moray, General quarter to the Army of Scotland, and the same being approved be Master ~~of~~ Mason of the Lodge of Edinburgh. This Sir Robert Murray became Secretary of State to the for the Kingdom of Scotland, he was ~~first~~ founder and first President of the Royal Society. (Masonic Mark).

One of the earliest Lodges was that at Alnwick in Northumberland, There minutes show that in 1701 the masons of that town met in a Lodge, with every indication of having been in existence for a ~~very~~ long time as an operative body. The list of brethren's signatures were shown by a mark instead of a signature, and at one time it was thought that they referred to those members who could not write. It was later found that these members were entitled to use these marks, being operative, and marked men.

Elias Ashmole, the distinguished antiquary, recorded that he along with others was made a Freemason at Warrington in Lancashire in 1646. There are many other examples of well known persons of this period having been made masons.

Mention should be made of the Old Charges consisting of a legendary history of the mason craft with a code of regulations governing the behaviour of the craftsmen. In the absence of a central body these 'Charges' were a kind of binding force for the craft. Many versions are in existence today the earliest being that known as the Regius Poem (sometimes called the Halliwell MS- and written

about the end of the 14th century, and now in the British Museum. Another is the Cook M.S. of the early 15th Century, and the third oldest is the Grand Lodge MS No.1. of about 1583. The ancient Charges known today are their counterparts, many of the individual charges being reminiscent of those read to our predecessors. They form one of the closest links between the operative masons of yesterday and the Speculative masons of today.

Some Masonic scholars believe that much of the framework of our Masonry of today was inherited from the London Company of Masons. Certainly its mode of government, its coat of Arms, its system of accepting none-operative masons into a Lodge, and probably some of its esoteric character were adopted by Grand Lodge. (Coat of Arms.) The earliest reference of an acceptance into Masonry was in 1621.)

Gentleman Masons as they were sometimes called- were being accepted into craft Lodges in various parts of England in the 17th Century, a practise which continued into the early 18th century. It was four of these Lodges that agreed to band together and form a Grand Lodge. There is no contemporary account of this historic event, but Anderson in his second book of Constitutions (1738) records that in 1716, a few Lodges in London thought fit to cement under a Grand Master as a centre of union and harmony. The four Lodges that met were those at "Goose and Gridiron" Ale-house in St. Paul's Church yard (Now the Lodge of Antiquity No.2.); At the Crown Ale-house, in Parkers Lane, near Dury Lane (No longer in existence); at the Apple Tree Tavern in Charles Street, Covent Garden (Now the Lodge of Fortitude and Old Cumberland No. 12), and at the Rummer and Grapes in Channel Row Westminster (Now the Royal Somerset House and Inverness Lodge NO.4.). They and some brothers met at the "Apple Tree" and, having placed in the chair the oldest Master Mason present (who was at that time a master of a Lodge) they agreed to constitute themselves into a Grand Lodge pro tempore and forthwith "revive the quarterly communication"

The use of the word revive has been the subject of conjecture because in spite of Andersons History, there is no record or suggestion of any similar previous Grand Lodge. The meeting resolved to hold an Annual assembly and Feast and to choose a Grand Master from among themselves, until such times as they might have the honour of a noble brother at their head. Accordingly at the feast on June 24th 1717, and, by a majority, Mr. Anthony Sayer, was elected Grand Master of Masons and invested. Capt. Joseph Elliot and Mr. Jacob Lambhall, carpenter were appointed Wardens. He commanded the Master and Wardens of Lodges to meet the Grand Officers every quarter in Communication at a place he should appoint in the summons. The new Grand Lodge steadily improved its status, by the admission of Noblemen and other

persons of quality. Its jurisdiction was extended by the adherence of more of the self constituted Lodges, and by the constitution of new Lodges, so much that in 1721, the assembly and feast had to be held in the Stationers Hall.

In 1718 George Payne, the second G.M. desired brethren to bring to Grand Lodge any old writings and records concerning masons and masonry in order to shew the usages of the antient times. This year several of the Old Charges were produced collated. Thus steps were taken for the production of the first Book of Constitutions which Anderson prepared and published in 1723. That year saw the commencement of recorded minutes, which continued until 1868 (thereafter only printed minutes have been maintained. (Read 1st Minute from 1723 book of Constitutions)

At first the jurisdiction of Grand Lodge was confined to the cities of London and Westminster and adjacent localities, but by 1721 there were 61 Lodges several of these being in the Provinces. The earliest Lodge in Worcestershire as listed on the first of the engraved lists was that of the Talbot, Stourbridge 1733.

Prior to the formation of Grand Lodge and for some years after, no formal documentary authority was ~~required~~ deemed necessary to constitute a Lodge. It would seem that lodges were probably formed by brethren joining together in meetings, who then regarded themselves as a Lodge, or by a possession of a copy of the Old Charges. After Grand Lodge became firmly established new Lodges were formed by the issue of dispensations of Deputations authorising some well know brother to constitute a number of brethren into a Lodge. The ^{date} ~~date~~ of the first English Warrant of Constitution is not known but by 1750s Warrants were being regularly issued. It was common a practice of certain brethren to sell or assign a warrant to a number of brethren wishing to form a Lodge (with the prestige of a a lower number) a masonic offence today. 1799 Passing of the secrets act. followed by the passing of the Seditious Meetings Act 1817.

There has been more than one Grand Lodge since the founding of the Premier Grand Lodge in 1717. With in 20 years three others came into being - An old Lodge in the City of York constituted itself a grand Lodge in 1725, under the title of the Grand Lodge of all England. After a chequered existence it finally dissapea-red, During its life time it constituted some 11 Lodges mainly round the York area* and in liason with the Lodge of Antiquity formed the Grand Lodge South of the River Trent. (Few words on this). The Grand Lodge of Ireland was formed in 1725, the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1736. and the Antients Grand Lodge in 1752. This latter Grand Lodge uniting with the the Premier Grand Lodge in 1813.

As I have already stated the growth of Masonry was very rapid, after the formation of Grand Lodge. As early as 1724 there is evidence of Clandestine Masons some calling themselves honary masons, being made and irregular meetings being held, in 1735 measures were enacted against those admitted in this style, as well as against any regular mason attending or holding these meetings. Irregularity in making these masons in the middle and later 1720s was undoubtedly stimulated by the publication of a number of so called exposures, the first a Masons Examination in 1723 and Samuel Pritchards Masonry Dissected in 1730. Pritchards work went through many additions in the following years and was infact used as a ~~basiss~~ basis for similar works, it also proved invaluable to brethren as a book of ritual., hither to they had to rely on ritual being handed down by word of mouth.

The steady growth of the first 20 years was arrested in the ~~1~~ 1740-50. A number of unfortunate factors built up over a period of time, to create serious ~~stax~~ deterioration in the affairs of the craft, in its Grand Lodge and in the popularity of Freemasonry, ~~and~~ resulting in the division of the craft into two oposing camps.

Such a state of affairs created fertile ground for the establishment of a rival grand Lodge which came about in 1751, when six lodges agreed to establish ~~sa~~ such a body. The purists as well as the malcontents were soon attracted to its ranks. The newly created Grand Lodge claimed that it practised a more ancient and purer form of freemasonry, and there upon ~~xxxx~~ named the Older Grand Lodge the Moderns because of its neglect of the old forms and recent innovations. The new body spelt their name Antient which might imply that they were the older body, the unfortunate use of this term has caused confusion ever since, and clearly to differentiate between the two, it is more logical to refer to the earlier body as the ~~4~~ premier Grand Lodge.

Not all Lodges under the Premier Grand Lodge adopted the ritualistic charges, many of them although remaining true to the Grand Lodge, continued to practice the old ritual. Some Lodges even went so far as to obtain warrants from both Grand Lodges. The spread of the Antient or traditional ritual overseas was due to the Military Lodges. Such Lodges were constituted in Regiments of the British Army by means of ambulatory warrants issued by the Grand Lodge of Ireland from 1732, 18 years before the first military Lodge was formed under the Grand Lodge of England. The Premier Grand Lodge was also accused by the Antients of de christianising the ritual, ignoring the St. Johns days and discouraging the esoteric character of the Installation ceremony. Another important difference was

between the two was the attitude towards Royal Arch, which at this time was beginning to take firm roots. The Premier Grand Lodge refused to recognise it (Although many of the members took the degree as individuals), whilst the Antients actively supported it by encouraging its confarment in its craft Lodges.

The growth of the Antients Grand Lodge was due in no small way to the work of Laurence Dermott, an Irish Mason, who joined the Antients Grand Lodge and became Secretary in 1752. Like the Premier Grand Lodge, they looked forward to having a Noble Grand Master at its head. ~~In 1756~~ Though the first Noble Grand Master was appointed in 1756, ~~in 1771~~, the first of the Atholls was appointed in 1771, in the person of the 3rd Duke of Atholl (A P.G.M. of Scotland).

The Premier Grand Lodge did its best to ignore the Antients, it was during the 1753, that the following measures were taken to tighten up the control over the making of Masons,

1. No Lodge should make a Mason without due enquiry into his character, neither should a Lodge make and raise a Brother at one and the same meeting. As a further means of identification, it was decided that Certificates granted to a brother should, in future be sealed and signed by the Grand Secretary for which a copper plate and vellum was ordered. Hitherto such certificates, issued by individual Lodges had been hand written. That a fee of 5/- be paid to the General Fund of Charity.

Lodges continued to default in their payments of dues, and as a result were erased from the roll. Internal disputes disrupted many Lodges, was made clear from the many claims made on the Committee of Charity to resolve them. These conditions were also taking place in the Antients Grand Lodge as well. In fact the latter half of the century saw much strife and dissension.

One matter which may have caused more bitterness than any other, was the attempt by the Duke of Beaufort (Grand Master 1767 -71). The purpose being to strengthen Grand Lodge as a legally constituted Corporation, in its fight against the 'Antients. This matter was pressed in the Committee of Charity in 1768, but so many Lodges were against the scheme, that the idea of a Royal Charter was dropped in ~~1772~~ Grand Lodge, but in 1772 a bill with the same object was introduced in ~~Parliament~~ Parliament. This bill was ultimately withdrawn, but ~~as a result~~ the resulting ill-will lived on.

From the 1784 book of Constitutions I found the following entry; Information had been given to the Committee of Charity that on Nov. 14 1783 two brethren had held an irregular Lodge in the Kings Bench Prison, where they had unwarrantably pretended to make masons. One of the Secretaries was ordered to write to the brethren concerned and inform them that unless they disprove the charge, they would be censured at the next Grand Lodge. Bro. White reported that he had written to them, and from the answer, it appeared that several masons had been in the said prison, they had assembled in that character and had raised some brethren to the third degree., but doubt arising as to the propriety of their conduct, the Royal Military Lodge at Woolwich, adjourned with their constitution to their master in prison, this being one of the Lodges with a travelling warrant, the master judged that wherever he might be, he had the right to hold lodges, and make masons.

The division of the craft into two Grand Lodges in the 18th Century both with their own traditions and ritual, each refusing to recognise the other, and taking every opportunity to decry the other, might have brought down the whole edifice of freemasonry. However before irreparable damage could be done, moderate men on both sides believing reconciliation was possible, and essential for the good of the order, made active moves towards this end. These moves were active for over twenty years before the union was effective. Three of the people to who should share the honours for this uniting of the two Grand Lodges were Lord Moira, Acting Grand Master of the Premier Grand Lodge from 1790-1813 and the Dukes of Sussex and Kent, both brothers, both of whom were G.M of the Premier and Antients G.L. respectively. The Duke of Kent had held high office in both grand lodges. In 1809 G.L. with Lord Moira as G.M passed a resolution "That it was no longer necessary to continue in force those measures which were resorted to in 1739. respecting irregular masons, and do therefore enjoin the several Lodges to ~~resort~~ resort to the ancient landmarks of the order. The year 1809 also saw the setting up of the The Lodge of Promulgation by the Premier Grand Lodge, it was charged with the task of reviewing and revising the ritual. It introduced the office of Deacons, hitherto unknown in "Moderns Lodges". Other matters dealt with included the giving of honours, adjournment to refreshment and return to labour and the arrangements of Wardens Columns. The Lodge lasted until 1811.

In 1810 a meeting was held between both sides, it was a historic occasion but little was achieved.

It was clear from the Antients minutes that the Premier Grand

representatives were prepared to accept the Antients form of obligation and working.

In 1813 the Duke of Sussex, Deputy Grand Master was appointed Grand Master the Duke of Kent of the Antients being present at his Installation. At the last meeting of the Premier Grand Lodge in August 1813, the G.M. expressed his anxious wish that that a union of the two societies should be effected upon terms equal and honorable to both parties. Delegations of both G.L. headed by the Duke of Sussex and the Duke of Kent met at Kensington Palace on Nov. 25th 1813, and the articles of ~~the~~ union were signed. On Dec. 1st 1813, the Duke of Kent succeeded the Duke of Atholl as Grand Master of the Antients, and was duly installed in the presence of the Duke of Sussex G.M. of the Moderns.

The union of the two Grand Lodges took place on St. John's Day, December 27th 1813, the articles were read and placed in ~~the~~ an Ark of the Masonic Covenant.

Under the articles of the Union a Lodge of Reconciliation was ~~from~~ ~~formed~~ constituted, the first duty was to undertake the re-obligation of Masters, Wardens and Past Masters. The Lodge's main task was to "Promulgate and enjoin the pure and unsullied system" of ritual and ceremonial- in short to reconcile the two former systems. For this purpose Masters and Wardens attended to learn an agreed ritual and to be enabled to instruct the members of their respective Lodges. It demonstrated or exhibited the opening and closing of the Lodge ceremonies and the ceremonies of the Three Degrees before Grand Lodge. Members present were forbidden to take notes, and it is well to stress here that that no ritual has ever been printed and issued as an approved ritual. The Lodge ended its work in 1816.

The first task of the Board of General Purposes was to supervise and finally approve the compilation of the book of Constitutions, which was finally approved in 1815. The board of works considered the matter of regalia and in due course prepared regulations as to design etc. The lists of Lodges were amalgamated with new enumeration resulting in the names of 648 lodges appearing on the new list.

Lodge renumbering was carried out in the G.L. of the Moderns in 1770, when the numbers were closed up due to the eraser of Lodges. The next alteration was made on the uniting of the two G.L. when No. 1. of the Atients became no L. of the United G.L. and No. 1 of the Moderns (Premier G.L.) became no 2. of the U.G.L. Later the numbers were closed up again in the latter half ~~of~~^{of} the nineteenth Century It should be noted that the Grand Stewrds Lodge was placed at the head of t the list of Lodges with no number.

W. M. Brethren I hope that tonight I have been able to give you an insight into the History of the Craft, and have let you look into a few of the ups and downs sustained by freemasonry since the inception of the Premier Grand Lodge in 1717. Time does not permit to go any deeper into the history, but I believe that there is a great deal which might be taken up by members of your Lodge in writing short papers if only lasting 10 to 15 minutes on several of the sections of this talk. ~~It is the intention of the Grand Lodge to publish a series of papers on these subjects in the near future.~~

In the preparation of this talk I wish to acknowledge, The books of Constitution for 1723, 1728, 1744. Prestonian Lecture for 1967 given by W. Bro. A.R. Hewitt, P.A.G. D.S., Grand Lodge 1717-1967, Proceedings of Quatuor Coronatorum Lodge No. 2076.