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MASONS MARKS
Greyabbey County Down

THE DEGREE OF MARK MASTER MASON WAS WELL KNOWN IN IRELAND TOWARDS THE END OF THE 18TH CENTURY AND WAS PROBABLY CONFERRED MUCH EARLIER. IT DOES NOT SEEM TO BE AS WIDELY PRACTISED AS THE ROYAL ARCH DEGREES AND THERE IS NO RECORD OF THE M.M.M. IN THE MINUTES OF LODGE 367 (IRISH CONSTITUTION) CONTINUOUSLY OPERATIVE AT DOWNPATRICK CO. DOWN N. IRELAND SINCE 1761 EXCEPT FOR A PERIOD OF THREE MONTHS WHEN THE COUNTY WAS UNDER MARTIN LAW IN 1798.

THE DEGREE WAS FORMALLY RECOGNIZED AT THE TIME THE GRAND CHAPTER WAS FIRST FORMED. (1829), BUT NOT FOR MANY YEARS WAS IT ESSENTIAL TO RECEIVE THE MARK DEGREE PREVIOUS TO EXALTATION TO ROYAL ARCH, AS NOW.

ON 1ST JANUARY, 1870 THIS LAW BECAME EFFECTIVE.

THE USE OF A DISTINCTIVE MARK BY EVERY CRAFTSMAN TO IDENTIFY HIS WORK FOR PURPOSES OF PAYMENT OR OTHERWISE IS DOUBTLESS AS OLD AS THE SKILLED CRAFTS. THE DISTINCTIVE MARK WAS USED BY THE OPERATIVE MASONS OF THE MIDDLE AGES TO AID IN DISTINGUISHING EACH MAN'S WORK IN CARVED OR STONE FASHIONING. THE EARLIEST MARKS IN IRELAND TO WHICH A DEFINITE DATE CAN BE ASSIGNED ARE FOUND AT GREYABBEY, BUILT AT THE CLOSE OF THE 12TH CENTURY.

