



We congratulate you, Friend.

Please be informed that your Petition to our Lodge has been granted and you have been elected to receive the Degrees of Freemasonry herein. There are three degrees conferred by this or any Blue or Symbolic Lodge: the Entered Apprentice Degree, the Fellow Craft Degree and the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.

The following introductory papers or lectures are given to help prepare you to understand our Fraternity. They may be given in the form of Lectures, but it is strongly suggested that you also read them before the First Degree. Information about the individual Degrees will be given to you after the conferral of each. If you or your family has any questions regarding Freemasonry, please contact your mentor.

Subject No. 1: A SHORT HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY

In the book of human history Freemasonry has a chapter of her own. When you become a member of a lodge it is a chapter you will wish to read, as much for its own fascination as for the light it will throw upon your path as a Mason. A little of that story will enable you better to understand the three steps of initiation which lie before you.

In all ages and in all lands men have formed societies, made use of ceremonies of initiation, employed symbols, emblems and means of recognition. When Freemasonry came into existence it inherited much from such societies.

The oldest existing written record of our craft is a manuscript written by some unknown person in England, about 1390, nearly six centuries ago. The document itself shows that even then Freemasonry was very old. It is known as the Regius Manuscript. At the time this document was written all Freemasons were operatives; that is, they were workers engaged on buildings. There were many kinds of masons, but the evidence indicates that "Freemasons" were those builders of a superior type who designed, supervised, and erected the great cathedrals and other marvelous structures in the Gothic style of architecture.

Operative Freemasons were involved in the construction of the building from the designing to the fitting of the stained-glass windows in place. Their work was difficult and called for a high degree of skill. It required much knowledge of mechanics and geometry as well as of stone-masonry. They were the great artists of the Middle-Ages.

Training men for such work called for a long period of severe discipline. At the ages of 10 to 14, boys, sound in body, keen in mind, and of good reputation, were apprenticed to a Master Mason for a number of years, usually seven. This Master Mason taught him both the theories and the practices of the craft. At the end of his apprenticeship the youth was required to submit to exacting tests of his proficiency before being accepted into full membership in the craft. The beginner in the builders' art was called an Apprentice. After he had served a sufficient time to give evidence of his fitness, his name was entered in the lodge's books, after which he was called an Entered Apprentice. At the end of his seven years of apprenticeship he was called into open lodge, his conduct was reported, and he then had to prove his skill by producing what was called a "Master's Piece."

If he passed his test satisfactorily he was made a full member of the craft. He was then equal in duty, rights, and privileges with all others, a member or Fellow of the Craft. He had now mastered the theories, practices, rules, secrets, and tools of his trade.

When a number of Freemasons worked together on a building over a period of years, they organized a lodge. Such a lodge was governed by a Master assisted by Wardens. The lodge had a charity chest from which to dispense relief to the members in accident, sickness, or distress, and to widows and orphans of Master Masons.

Completing their work in one community, the Freemasons would move to another, setting up their lodges wherever they met. Other types of masons were compelled by law to live and work in the same community year in and year out, and under local restrictions. Historians believe that it may have been because they were free from such restrictions that the Gothic builders were called "Freemasons."

Such was the fraternity in its operative period, and as such it flourished for generations; then came a great change in its fortunes. Euclid's geometry was rediscovered and published, thereby giving to the public many of the Mason's trade secrets. The Reformation came and the Gothic style of architecture began to die out. Social conditions underwent a revolution, laws were changed. These and other factors brought about a decline in the craft. During the sixteenth and

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seventeenth centuries, Freemasons became so few in number that only a few small lodges clung to a precarious existence.

After the Reformation, Freemasons began a new practice of admitting non operative members. During the transition period, gentlemen with no intention of becoming builders were received as "Accepted Masons." At first there were few of these, but as time passed, their number increased until by the early part of the eighteenth century they were more numerous than the operatives, and were more influential.

The craft then took a step destined to revolutionize it. On St. John the Baptist's day, June 24, 1717, four lodges of London and Westminster met in London and organized a Grand Lodge. Within a few years of that date the craft had completed the transformation of an operative body into a speculative fraternity. "Speculative" means Masonry uses building concepts symbolically. The two old degrees were reorganized into the three degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason. This was the beginning of organized Speculative Freemasonry as we know it. In 1751 a second Grand Lodge was organized in England; prior to that, Grand Lodges had been created in Scotland, Ireland and on the continent.

Most American Lodges were chartered by these Grand Lodges and ruled by Provincial Grand Masters appointed by the Grand Lodge in England and Scotland. As a result of the Revolution, one after another American Grand Lodges became sovereign and independent; Georgia in 1786.

As the years passed one Grand Lodge was organized in each state, sovereign within its own limits, no other Grand Lodge having any right to control Masonic affairs under its jurisdiction. Today in the United States there are fifty-one Grand Lodges, one for each state, and one for the District of Columbia. On their rolls are thousands of lodges with approximately 2,500,000 members. Some of these Grand Lodges have established fraternal relationships with individual Prince Hall affiliated Grand Lodges in their own geographical jurisdictions.

Speculative Freemasonry did not spring full-formed out of nothing in 1717, but came as a gradual transformation from Operative Masonry. Through an unbroken line we can trace our lineage back to those builders of the early Middle-Ages. We as speculative Masons build lives instead of buildings. We use the tools of operative Masons as glorious emblems of great and everlasting spiritual and moral truths. All of these are embodied in our practice of the Royal Arts of brotherly Love, Morality and Relief. All that was living and permanent in their craft we have preserved to use in behalf of good will, kindness, charity and brotherhood among men.

Freemasonry began in Georgia in February, 1734, with the organization of a lodge in Savannah. General James Edward Oglethorpe, founder of Georgia, was the organizer and first Master of the lodge. In December, 1735, the lodge was enrolled on the register of the Grand Lodge of England and was known as "the Lodge at Savannah in Ye Province of Georgia." In 1736, Roger Hugh Lacey arrived in Savannah with a Deputation from the Grand Master of Masons in England to constitute the Lodge at Savannah of Georgia in America. This lodge is now known as Solomon's Lodge No. 1, Savannah. (It was the second regularly constituted lodge in North America and is now the oldest continuously operating lodge in the Western Hemisphere.) It continued as a subordinate lodge of the Grand Lodge of England until it and other lodges created and proclaimed the new and sovereign Grand Lodge of Georgia, F. & A. M., on December 16, 1786.

Such is our heritage and, as you enter into it, you will discover it inexhaustible in its interest, life-long in its appeal, a power in your life to enrich, to ennoble and to inspire.

Subject No. 2: THE QUALIFICATIONS

Since the lodge decided that you possessed the qualifications required of a petitioner, you may question the need of giving any further need to the subject. But qualifications are not merely a test of a petitioner's fitness to become a Mason; in a larger and more important sense they determine also a man's fitness to remain a Mason. They are the qualifications of a Mason, not merely of a man who desires to become a Mason. They always remain in force; therefore, we do not outgrow them when we pass the ordeal of the ballot.

The word "qualification" is derived from a Latin Term meaning "value." (These values are of two kinds, internal and external.) One of the internal qualifications is that a petitioner must come of "his own free will and accord." He must come unsolicited and not in deference to any pressure due to ulterior motives. The necessary corollary of this is that no Mason shall solicit a man to petition for membership. Another internal qualification is that a petitioner shall come



uninfluenced by mercenary motives. He is not to expect that in the fraternity he will find business, professional or financial gain for himself; and no brother already in membership has any right to solicit such favors from him. Both of these qualifications are "internal" because they have to do with motives, and only a man himself can know what his motives are. The external qualifications may, for the sake of convenience, be divided under several heads:

Physical: A petitioner must be a man in the full sense of the word. He must be of lawful age, which in our own jurisdiction of Georgia, is twenty-one years, because no person can undertake all the Masonic obligations except he has reached years of discretion and is legally responsible for his acts. This rules out a young man under age; it also rules out a man who has lost the powers by which a man recognizes and discharges his responsibilities.

Mental: The mental qualifications in Georgia are that one should be capable of learning the art of Freemasonry and he must be able to both read and write. If initiated through inadvertence, he may not advance until he shall have learned to read and write. Much is taught and much is demanded of a Mason. To meet the demands, he must possess at least average intellectual abilities.

Civic: By these are meant all that have to do with good citizenship and a man's life as a neighbor and as a member of his community. It is required that he be a free man, his own master, free to discharge his Masonic duties without interference from outside. He must possess a sound reputation among those who know him best. He must be a good citizen.

Moral: A Mason must be a "good and true man," a man "of honor and honesty." So imperious are the Fraternity's moral requirements that to think of a Mason as not devoted to integrity and rectitude of character is a contradiction in terms. It is required of a petitioner that he believes in God. It is required that all Masons practice tolerance and that no petitioner be questioned as to the peculiar form or mode of his faith. He must not question his brethren.

In this life of qualifications is a portrait of the Mason drawn by the fraternity. That portrait is official. How necessary it is to you to grasp this fact in your endeavor to arrive at a true understanding of Freemasonry it is difficult to exaggerate.

A Mason must be a man of such bodily equipment as will enable him to satisfy the demands of the work and be of mental competency. He must have reached the age of responsibility and discretion, and be of sound character and reputation. A Mason must be a good citizen and a man of well founded religious faith. He must be devoted to the aims of brotherhood, acceptable to the members of his lodge. The purpose of Freemasonry is to accept such men and to weld them together into a fraternity.

The qualifications stand at the center of the craft, expressing its standards, describing who may be Masons in reality, and setting before us the goal of all Masonic endeavor. It is not sufficient that a man shall possess such qualifications for the mere purpose of petitioning for membership; they are required of us all, all of the time, so long as we remain in the craft.

Subject No. 3: LODGE ORGANIZATION

You have been elected to receive the degrees of Masonry. Before you become a member you will appear three times in the lodge to receive the degrees. Since you will thus come into contact with the lodge and later become a member, it will be of assistance to you to learn how a lodge is organized and what its machinery is. Much about a lodge is to be learned only through initiation.

A lodge is an organization of seven or more Master Masons empowered by a Grand Lodge to confer the three degrees of Masonry and to do such work and to carry on such activities as appertain thereto. Authority is conferred by a Charter issued by a Grand Lodge. You will later be shown the Charter of our own lodge. It was issued to us by the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Georgia. A lodge can retain its Charter only if it obeys the laws of the Grand Lodge and works according to the traditions and ancient usages and customs of the Masonic fraternity.

Each lodge can make Masons only of such elected petitioners as live within its jurisdiction. ~~A petitioner may offer his petition to a lodge in the county in which he resides, or to a lodge in a county which borders said county by the common term "County Line".~~ This jurisdiction is now defined as being state-wide for each lodge; county or adjacent county restrictions no longer apply.



A lodge is governed by the Grand Lodge according to laws in the Book of Constitutions. In Georgia, this is referred to as the Masonic Code. Those laws define the province within which a lodge governs itself. Certain of the laws and rules of its self-government are embodied in its book of by-laws.

Each lodge in this jurisdiction has at least eleven officers, five of whom are chosen by ballot. These are the Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Secretary and Treasurer. They are elected at the regular meeting of the lodge on or next preceding the Festival of St. John the Evangelist, which is December 27th.

The primary executive power of the lodge is vested in the office of Worshipful Master. The Senior Warden is the second ranking officer. If the Worshipful Master is absent the Senior Warden presides in his place; if, through absence or inability, the office of Worshipful Master becomes vacant the Senior Warden succeeds to all his prerogatives and duties for all purposes except such as pertain to installation of officers. The Senior Warden has other duties which you will learn at another time. Next in rank is the Junior Warden who governs the lodge in the absence or inability of the Worshipful Master and Senior Warden. Neither a Master nor Warden may resign his office.

The Secretary of the lodge keeps its minutes, observes the proceedings, records' all things proper to be written. He receives all money due the lodge and pays it to the Treasurer. By direction of the lodge and Master, he prepares all reports and returns to Grand Lodge. He also conducts correspondence, has charge of the lodge seal, and files petitions and documents relating to lodge business.

The Treasurer receives lodge money from the Secretary, keeps a just and true account of it, and pays it out by order of the lodge upon warrants certified by the Master and Secretary.

The lodge meets at regular and called "Communications." Regular or stated communications are held at regular intervals on dates specified in the by-laws. Special communications are called by the Worshipful Master.

There are three degrees or steps of initiation in Masonry. These are conferred only at communications of the lodge, either stated or special. A lodge opens, closes and conducts its business on the Third Degree. When it confers either the Entered Apprentice or Fellow Craft Degree, it changes to the degree to be conferred, and then closes on the Third.

An Entered Apprentice may sit in a lodge only when it is working in that degree; a Fellow Craft, only when in the Fellow Craft or Entered Apprentice Degrees. A member of the lodge has the right to sit and to vote in any meeting. Visitors can sit in lodge only by consent of the Worshipful Master. The right of visitation is subject to the prerogative of any member to object on the ground that the peace and harmony of the lodge would be disturbed.

When he becomes a Master Mason, he must pay annual dues, also fixed in the by-laws; for special purposes he is also required to pay any assessments the lodge may vote to levy upon its members. These fees, dues, and assessments comprise the principal sources of income of a lodge, though the lodge may also receive income from endowments and other similar sources, such as interest from savings accounts, dividends from stocks and bonds, legitimate fund raising activities and others.

In brief outline, such is the machinery and form of organization of a Masonic Lodge. In due course you will enjoy privileges of membership in this lodge and find it exceeds all your expectations.

Subject No. 4: THE POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE WORSHIPFUL MASTER

You have already learned that the principal officer of a lodge is called the Worshipful Master and, as you are yet unfamiliar with the language of Masonry, this may sound strange, but as you progress in the craft you will learn that it is singularly accurate.

"Worshipful" means that the Master is entitled to the respect of every member of his lodge; "Master" means that he is, in strict truth, the master, not, as in so many other societies, only a presiding officer, but a controlling executive with many sovereign rights.

His powers and duties are, broadly: (1) to congregate his lodge upon any emergency; (2) to summon its members; (3) to



see that the duties of the officers are faithfully performed; (4) to discharge all the executive functions of the lodge; and (5) to recommend the removal of any appointed officer for sufficient cause. But it is only when we begin to examine his office in detail that we discover the full scope of his powers and functions.

It is a prerogative of the Worshipful Master to convene his lodge either for stated meetings at times provided in the by-laws or for special communications which are called by him for special business. When the lodge is convened, he is to set it to work and to give its members proper instruction for their labor. It is not necessary for him to request or persuade the lodge members to do their duties; he may order them, and they are under obligation to obey.

It is his prerogative to preside at the meetings of his lodge. The only exception to this being when the Grand Master, or representative officially appointed by him, takes the gavel of authority; then the right of the Master is superseded for the time. The Master may choose a brother to preside temporarily during his presence. If one of the officers of a lodge is absent, or if the office is temporarily vacant, the Master may appoint some competent member of the lodge to fill it.

It is the duty of the Master to keep order in his lodge. At his installation the gavel is placed in his hands to signify that he is given the power necessary to discharge this duty, for the gavel is an emblem of authority. He has the right to initiate, control, and terminate discussions.

A lodge can neither be convened, opened, nor transact business unless its Charter is present. When the Master is installed, the Charter is given into his keeping and he is henceforth responsible for its custody and for transmitting it to his successor, whom it is his duty to install or arrange therefore. The Master determines what business shall come before the lodge, in what order, and the manner in which it shall be conducted. This is a more important responsibility than it may appear, because only certain kinds of business may legally be brought before a lodge. The members may not always be familiar with Masonic law and hence may not know whether a given matter is Masonic business or not. It is for the Master to know and to decide, and this power is a lodge's protection against possible violation of Masonic law.

It is a duty of the Master to supervise all ritualistic work. This is one of the heaviest of his responsibilities. He should himself be able to take any part; he should be able to instruct and train others; and he should supervise the work as a whole to see that it is properly carried out.

Many matters of business or social functions may arise which do not fall within the province of any elective or appointive lodge officer; to carry on such work, committees are necessary. Not the least of the Master's responsibilities is his power to appoint all committees.

Brethren in sickness or distress are the Master's peculiar charge. If he cannot visit them, it is his duty to appoint others to do so and, in general, to see that the lodge properly discharges its duties to its unfortunate members.

His authority to see that the duties of the Secretary are properly and punctually discharged includes, as perhaps its most important responsibility his seeing that the lodge minutes are kept in order and up to date, that nothing is included in them that should not be, and nothing omitted that belongs in them. The minutes are not only for future reference, not merely a diary of the lodge, but are of immediate importance; many matters of business are carried over to succeeding meetings and their future discussion and decision must be on the basis of official record kept in the minutes.

When the lodge votes to disburse funds, it orders warrants drawn upon the Treasurer; these must be signed by the Master who is thus charged with the duty to supervise the finances, to see that they are in sound condition and that no irregularities creep into the books.

The Master represents the lodge in Grand Lodge; in his absence he is represented by proxy. To discharge the duties and functions of Worshipful Master it is necessary that he possess the corresponding qualifications. He must be a Mason of experience, well versed in the art, competent to lead and direct, worthy of the respect of his lodge, in character, fit to represent and to exemplify the Masonic life, impartial in treatment of his members, wise and trustworthy in counsel, and inspired by such zeal and vision that he may be a leader as well as an executive.

The Master is indeed Master of his lodge, its chief executive, its head. He is vested with great authority, and with great



powers. There can be nothing arbitrary, nothing willful in his use of these powers and that authority, because they are defined and regulated by laws and by ancient customs. His duties an equal to his powers and he must be a true Mason indeed to discharge them with credit to himself and honor to his lodge.

It is for this reason that his title is "Worshipful," for if any one is worth, of honor, of deference, of respect, he is a man who, with no thought of reward for himself, is willing to carry the load of such authority and to undertake the labor necessitated by such duties.

Subject No. 5 DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF LODGE MEMBERSHIP

In petitioning for the Three Degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry, your ultimate desire was to become a member of this lodge. It will be helpful to you to have some concept of what this implies. Most of it can only be learned by immediate experience, yet there is much that you can and should understand at this stage of your journey.

You will become a member by receiving the three degrees and by proving your proficiency in each of them. By taking the obligations of the degrees and by proving your proficiency in each, you enter into a contractual relationship with the lodge, wherein you bind yourself to perform certain duties, and the lodge binds itself to protect you in certain rights and privileges.

Your first duties will be loyalty to the fraternity, faithfulness to your superior officers, and obedience to the laws. This is a fundamental condition of your continuing in membership.

It will be your duty to hold membership in some lodge. If necessary, you may transfer your membership from your first lodge. Any Mason in this jurisdiction not affiliated with a lodge for six months is not permitted to make Masonic visitations nor appear in any Masonic procession, and if he has not applied for affiliation within six months, is not entitled to relief or Masonic burial service. The purpose of such laws is to encourage each Mason to maintain active membership in a lodge.

It will be your duty to pay regularly and promptly such dues as your lodge may levy. No option is given; to do such is a necessary condition of membership. And it will be your duty, as your conscience shall guide and your means permit, to do your share in maintaining the charities of the lodge and to stand ready to lend a helping hand to a brother Mason in sickness or distress.

If you are present at a communication of the lodge when a ballot is held on a petition for initiation, advancement or affiliation, you must vote. This is only another way of saying that the responsibility for deciding who shall be Masons rests on every member. To cast a vote is a duty.

It will be your duty to attend the communications of your lodge, to join in its deliberations, to have a voice in its decisions, and to assist in discharging its responsibilities. You are not required to attend if it works a hardship on your family, but otherwise your attendance is expected.

If the Worshipful Master, acting according to the provisions of the Grand Lodge Constitution, issues a summons to you to attend a communication of the lodge for some special purpose, or to discharge some duty required of you as a Mason, it will be your duty to obey the summons, unless circumstances render it impossible.

These duties are inherent in membership in a lodge; others will be made clear to you as you progress from one degree to another. In many fundamental respects a lodge differs from any other organization; membership is not a mere gesture of honor, with duties and obligations to be laid down or taken up at pleasure. The Mystic Tie by which he is bound to his fellows has in it a strand of steel held fast by stringent laws.

Certain rights and privileges accompany these duties and are equal!} maintained and made secure by the fraternity. If you move away from the jurisdiction of your lodge, you will have the right to transfer your membership to another lodge, providing you are in good standing in the first lodge and you: petition for membership in the second is favorably acted upon.

Also, you will be permitted to accept Honorary Membership in some lodge, if it so elects you, without derogation from your standing or rights in your own lodge. As a member of a lodge you will be eligible to any office in it. You will have

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the right to visit other lodges in this or any other Grand Jurisdiction providing always the Worshipful Master is willing to admit you after you have been properly vouched for or examined.

As a Mason in good standing you will have the right to join in public processions, a privilege carefully guarded and protected by our laws, since to join in such is to identify oneself with the fraternity.

In case of sickness or distress you will have the right to appeal for relief Masonic law does not guarantee that under all circumstances relief will be given, or if given how much and what form, because ours is neither an organized charity nor an insurance society, but to ask for it is a Masonic right in time of need.

If you unfortunately expose yourself to formal discipline you will have the right to a hearing, of counsel, of appearing in your own defense, of submitting evidence under legally controlled conditions, and, if found guilty, of making an appeal to Grand Lodge.

In all communications of the lodge you will have a voice in its discussions and a vote on questions decided by ballot.

The lodge and Grand Lodge give many services and extend many opportunities for entertainment, good fellowship and educational advantages. As a Mason you will have the privilege of enjoying these equally with all others.

These duties, rights, and privileges of Masonic membership are not exhaustive. We have just touched the fringe of a great theme, but it is our hope that, with such light as this has given you, you will go forward with a livelier understanding of what Masonry will mean to you and also what you may mean to it.