

Did you know?

Tidbits of Masonic Trivia - III

* There is only one road leading from Eilat Israel to the Egyptian border at Taba. In the middle of the last traffic circle before arriving at the border you will find this Masonic Memorial. There is only one Lodge in Eilat, Solomon's Pillars No. 59.

They were allocated a traffic circle by the Eilat Mayor (who was also initiated few years ago!) in recognition of their activities for the benefit of the people in need in Eilat. The monument was designed by Bro Avi Baranes and erected by members of the Lodge.



* The earliest record of a speculative Mason being admitted to a lodge is the record of the Lodge of Edinburgh, June 8, 1600, when John Boswell, the Laird of Auchenleck, attested his presence with his mark.

* Col. Paul Revere was initiated in St. Andrew's Lodge, Boston, Mass., Sept. 4, 1760, and was Grand Master from December 12, 1794 to December 27, 1797. In a letter to the secretary of the Massachusetts Historical Society relating to the events of April, 1775, he wrote: 'We held our meetings at the Green Dragon tavern. We were so careful that our meetings should be kept secret that every time we met, every person swore upon the Bible, that they would not divulge any of our transactions, but to Messr. Hancock, Adams, Doctors Warren, Church, and one or two more.'

* MW Harry S Truman, Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Missouri was a Mason for 63 years and received his fifty year Masonic veteran's emblem in 1959. About the ceremony he said, "I don't think I've had anything touch me as that did."

* Jewel Lodge No. 374, San Francisco, is the only lodge in the world that opens at midnight. It holds a special midnight meeting once a year during the annual communication of the Grand Lodge, conferring the Master Masons degree for the benefit of visiting Grand delegates. The membership of Jewel Lodge includes many musicians, theatrical men and newspapermen to whom midnight is a convenient hour, and does not overlap any of the Grand Lodge proceedings.

* Philately (the collecting of postage stamps) is a popular pastime for many thousands of people. It was on 6th May 1840, that the first adhesive backed postage stamp in the world, 'The Penny Black', was issued in Great Britain. It was printed by Jacob Perkins, an American Freemason and an engraver. Soon other countries followed suit. Within a decade the first serious stamp collectors appeared on the scene. The objective of Masonic Philately was the furtherance of Masonic Research via the media of postage stamps, the dissemination of knowledge gained and the quiet enjoyment of this interesting hobby. The area of study now includes special event covers, postcards and postal seals related to the Fraternity.

* In 1892, the tallest building in the world was the Masonic Temple at Randolph and state Streets, in Chicago, Illinois.

* Bro. General Lafayette received his Masonic Degrees in Military Lodge #10 in Valley Forge, PA while George Washington served as Worshipful Master.

* Lieutenant Marcellus Jones, of the 8th Illinois Cavalry, fired the first shot at the Battle of Gettysburg. Jones was a Mason, as was Christian Sharps, the inventor of the breech-loading carbine, bearing his name that Jones was using. Approximately 300 Generals, from both Union and Confederate brigades, were Masons who served during the War.

* In Masonic lodges of the 1700's, the emblems and symbols of the different degrees were drawn on the floor of the lodge with chalk or charcoal, and obliterated at the end of each meeting. Because lodges met in rented rooms, they did not want strangers viewing their secret writings. As this was troublesome and messy, they were next painted on cloth or canvas, carried to each meeting and laid on the floor, hence the name 'carpets'. Around the 1940's, these carpets, or 'charts' as they were called, were hung from walls or in frames. Today, most often the emblems and symbols of the degrees are projected by slides or computer images on a screen.

* In Christchurch, New Zealand, there are two natural eroded stone pillars standing at the entrance to Tumbledown Bay. Looking from the land, the one on the right is Jachin and the other on the left is Boaz. It leads one to believe that the city's founders were indeed members of The Craft.

* In the Wisconsin Masonic Journal we find it stated that John Wesley, the Founder of Methodism was made a Mason in Downpatrick Lodge #36, in Ireland, on October 30, 1738.

However, according to Brother Alphonse Cerza writing for the Masonic Service Association, a thorough investigation of this statement was made by Brother W. J. Chetwode Crawley who says: "Reviewing the circumstances of the supposed initiation of the Reverend John Wesley ... we are driven to the conclusion that the idea is false, and based on a palpable confusion of identity." Also, the Reverend Wesley's diary proves that he was in England on the night another John Wesley was made a Mason in Downpatrick, Ireland. (3)

* Lux in Tenebris Lodge # 3856 in London is for blind Masons. The Latin words mean "Light in Darkness."

* In all my research of Brother George Washington, I found only two references to his having or wearing a sash. One is the blue sash he wore in the famous painting by Charles Willson Peale. The other is the bloodstained sash given him in 1755 by the defeated and dying British general Edward Braddock at the Battle of Monongahela. Washington was just 23 years of age at the time. He kept Braddock's sash and pistol and carried them throughout the remainder of the war of Independence.

* Well known actor Jack Carson, whose Hollywood career in motion pictures ran from 1937 to 1969, was the first of five candidates to receive the Entered Apprentice degree at Cecile Daylight Lodge #305 in Independence, MO in 1936. He was taught the proficiency while the other four candidates were being initiated. At his request, he then recited his Entered Apprentice proficiency that same evening, even examining himself with letter perfect proficiency!

* The examination of a candidate for proficiency in the previous degree was first introduced in 1850 in Louisiana.

* For more than 138 years, the Lodge St. George of Bermuda has paid Bermuda's Governor "one peppercorn" as annual rent of the entire second floor of the old state house, which is used as their Lodge room.

* A lodge is opened by its Master in "due and ancient form" meaning according to ancient customs and usages, the laws and ritual of its Grand Lodge. A Grand Lodge is opened by the Grand Master in "ample form" meaning he has the power and authority to deviate from common ritual to save time.

* The oldest known Masonic writing, the Regius Manuscript or "Poem of Moral Duties," was discovered to be a Masonic document by a non-Mason, J. O. Halliwell, in 1839. It was written about 1390 and was given the name "Regius" because it was found in the Royal Library of England. It now resides in the British Museum.

* Masonic dates are written "A.L." for "Anno Lucis" or "In the year of Light" which is 4000 years plus the current year. i.e. the year 2008 written Masonically would be 6008. This is because the practice has followed the ancient belief that the world was created when God said "Let there be light", 4000 years before Christ.

* The first American Masonic ritual, "Freemason's Monitor", was published in Albany, NY in 1797 by Brother Thomas Smith Webb. It was largely based on William Preston's writings in England.

Masonic Trivia III: tidbits gathered from original research and numerous sources including the Masonic Service Association, the publications of Bros. Ray Dotson, Alfonse Cerza (IL), Ray McKinley (CA), and Charles Wilkinson (NZ)

Doug Messimer, PM, LEO
Tuckahoe Lodge 10-08