



ABSTRACT

In this thesis the arrival of Freemasonry in America, as well as the Masonic contribution and influence upon important events in the history of the United States were investigated. Further aims were to discuss the organizational structure of the Masonic family, the American Rites, and the functions of the lodge room. Finally, Freemasonry's significant role within American society, the Masonic foundation in the organization of American institutions and Freemasonry's charitable work were examined, as well.

Both historical and quantitative methods were applied. The former provided the beginnings, growth and expansion of Freemasonry, and it revealed facts and relevant events through a study of the historical course of the influence, participation and contribution of Freemasonry within American society. The latter offered a rich, in-depth description of the Masonic activity over the course of U.S. history.

The results of the study revealed that Freemasonry actively participated in the building of social life, culture and history, becoming the cornerstone of U.S. society. Freemasonry as a fraternal order and a voluntary organization reached the top of social prestige and popularity's institutional structure proved to be unique due to the complexity and beauty of its ceremonies, tools, degrees, rites and lodges.

In conclusion, Freemasonry's contribution to the organization of U.S. social life, culture and government, the Masonic heritage within countless of American organizations and its service efforts and philanthropic work for the good of the mankind constituted clear evidence of Freemasonry's central role upon the development of U.S. history and the improvement of American communities.

KEYWORDS: Colonial America, American Revolution and Constitution, U.S. Capitol, U.S. Founding Fathers, Masonic Ritual, Masonic Degrees, York Rite



and Scottish Rite, Fraternal and Voluntary Organizations, Masonic Philanthropy and Shriners, College Fraternities



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DEDICATORY

First and foremost, I wish to dedicate this undergraduate thesis to my devoted mother, who encouraged and supported me all through the years of my university experience—without her I would not have achieved this academic accomplishment. Thanks, Mom, for being always there so that I can turn to you and feel your great love in times of trouble. There are no words to express how important you have been throughout my life, and will continue to be until my last days.

Diego Ortega A.



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INTRODUCTION

Freemasonry is regarded as the world's oldest secret organization, which from the moment of its origin to the present has been a subject of conversation because of its rituals, symbols, secrets, obligations, principles, practices and charitable efforts. However, most people know little or nothing about Freemasonry and its great contribution and influence upon wars for independence in America—whose agitators and supporters were deeply influenced by the Masonic philosophy that included liberty, fraternity and equality. During American colonial times, Freemasonry began its early activities, initiated a membership consisting of patriots and other influential people, conferred the first degrees, expanded its principles, ideals and teachings, and without realizing it began to shape the thinking and social life of American society. The principal Masonic tenets or virtues—brotherly love, relief and truth—impacted the birth and early life of the United States of America. Thousands of American organizations, societies and fraternities incorporated elements derived from Freemasonry, and still others were organized based upon a Masonic foundation—either way created a great number of Masonic-like institutions.

Throughout the chapters of this thesis we are able to explore Freemasonry's early activities in the American colonial times, and the decades following it; its influence and contribution to American historic events, such as the American Revolution, the development of the U.S. Constitution and the cornerstone laying ceremony of the U.S. Capitol; its principal early leaders,



commonly known as U.S. Founding Fathers; its growth and nationwide expansion; its structural organization, including Masonic ritual, lodge, symbols, degrees and rites; its Masonic-like organizations; the Masonic heritage within American college fraternities; and Freemasonry's charitable contributions to U.S. society.

In addition, this work will provide the reader with an account of Freemasonry's official English beginnings and arrival in America, Military Freemasonry and its existence in early American colonial, and the Masonic activity after the American Revolution. We will learn of the Masonic mission consisting of three main tenets and its work in improving the individual and the American community as a whole. Besides, reasons will briefly be provided on why American men have joined Freemasonry, probably the most important being a desire to improve themselves through the Masonic journey from darkness to light. In doing so, the Freemasonry has encouraged men to come to its lodges to preserve, by the exercise of moral teachings, values that are disappearing in the world outside.

Throughout colonial and early U.S. life, Freemasonry played a central role in the lives of thousands of Americans, who were highly benefitted by their Masonic affiliation. This provided them with the means to improve their lives and communities through self-improvement, to obtain wisdom and knowledge, to achieve brotherly love and a truthful life, to practice philanthropy, to promote good conviviality, values, morality and virtues, as well as to ascend socially and economically in their communities. Over the years, Freemasonry has been the parent organization for countless American fraternal and voluntary



organizations, which were either founded by Freemasons or had Freemasons as early members. These organizations made use of the Masonic organizational model to create their structures, constitutions and rituals. Freemasonry's influence also manifested itself through symbolism representing virtues, which started to appear in popular everyday items, such as household utensils and furniture; symbols associated with the Brotherhood were incorporated into the American currency and the Great Seal of the United States of America, as well.

Over the early history of the U.S., many of the leading citizens in almost every part within American society were Freemasons, including patriots, presidents, generals, noted servicemen, senators, judges, statesmen, prominent clergy, businessmen, professors, inventors, civil-rights leaders and entertainers. Freemasonry was present everywhere—in the executive, legislative and judicial branches—within the new republic. For instance, the founding fathers of the United States—Freemasons—laid the cornerstones of government and private buildings, national monuments and churches, and consecrated them with full Masonic ceremonies, rites and elements.

In their role of founding fathers, Freemasons gave special support to promoting liberty and equality and to fighting against ignorance and tyranny. More important, they were main figures in the planning, development and success of the American Independence. They were given credit for the organization of the Boston Tea Party that led to the revolution; these same men enthusiastically joined the fight for the Revolutionary War, carrying out many key activities. They were involved in leading the American Continental Army



and troops, obtaining military aid from the French, and making artifacts for the war, to mention a few. In brief, Freemasons were recognized as virtuous and patriotic men who were willing to sacrifice wealth, security, and even life itself, to fight for their country and to give their fellow people freedom and a better life.

Most importantly, this work will reveal and make the reader aware of the great importance and influence of Freemasonry within American society, including both the founding and the shaping of the world's most powerful government, the United States of America, as well as Freemasonry's precursory participation in the American Revolution, its prominent contribution to the U.S. Constitution, and its key support to the field of relief and philanthropy in America. Within the lines of this work we will find the most important pieces of Masonic philosophy, such as liberty, equality, loyalty, brotherhood, fraternity and charity, which have shaped the thinking and the lives of thousands of American Masons who have become leaders in their communities and in the world as a whole, as well. Therefore, Freemasonry is here revealed not only as a unique secret, controversial group, but also as a nationwide U.S. fraternal and voluntary organization that has played an integral role in the lives and communities of millions of Americans, in the organization of countless American institutions and, most important, in American history itself.



CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS OF FREEMASONRY IN AMERICA

1.1. Freemasonry in Early American Colonial Times

A small number of fraternal societies were exported from Europe to America during the eighteenth century. The most significant group was known as the Freemasons, having been officially established as a secret, fraternal organization in London in 1717. Freemasonry, also referred to as Masonry, the Craft, the Order, and the Brotherhood, was brought from England, mainly by British army officers, to the American colonies. This happened sometime prior to 1717, the year of the formation of the first British Grand Lodge. In fact, the expansion of British immigration to and trade with the colonies played a key role in the establishment of Masonic lodges in the American Colonies, as well. It should be noted that Freemasonry was passing through its formative stages in the American colonial period at a time when this same group in England was undergoing strife and change.

A brief review of eighteenth-century Freemasonry in London will help us understand the Masonic activities throughout its early official period. During the first decade of the eighteenth century Freemasons and four London lodges united in forming a Grand Lodge and elected a Grand Master, who holds the highest lodge ranking. In London there were also other lodges, primarily Scotch and Irish Masons, though many of these groups did not subscribe to the customs and policies adopted by the 1717 Grand Lodge. As a result, other Grand Lodges were formed on British soil. Between 1717 and 1813 there were



five rival Grand Lodges in England, but they were not all active at the same time. In 1751, one of the latter lodges to be formed became a strong contender for supremacy, and was known as the Ancient Grand Lodge, its adherents being called "Ancients." The 1717 Grand Lodge, meanwhile was titled the Modern, and its adherents were known as "Moderns." These terms, however, did not refer to the relative ages of the two lodges being analyzed, but to the different forms and ceremonies practiced. The Ancients disliked certain omissions of parts of the ritual, stating that an Ancient Mason could with propriety sit in a lodge of Moderns, but a Modern could not sit in a lodge of Ancients. The Modern Grand Lodge was largely supported by the nobility and aristocrats, while members of the Ancient Grand Lodge were mostly craftsmen. This rivalry between Ancients and Moderns became stronger and was not resolved until their union in 1813.

One key factor in the cause of this rivalry was that pure Ancient Masonry consists of three degrees or levels only: the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason (including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch).

This rivalry extended to the American Colonies, where at times it was also bitter. The Revolution occurred at the height of this British Masonic rivalry; in America, as well as in London, the Moderns were supported by wealthy men, while the Ancients were mostly working men. To put it into Colonial terms, American Modern lodges contained more Tories (British supporters); American Ancient Lodges more Patriots. As mentioned, Freemasonry was largely brought to North America by British officers; in this regard H. Paul Jeffers, author of *The*



Freemasons in America, adds “Wherever the British army went, Freemasonry accompanied it in the form of regimental field lodges. They were mobile and carried their Masonic regalia in trunks along with their regimental colors, silver and other purely military equipment” (3). In *The Temple and the Lodge* by Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, book used by Jeffers in his work, the authors state that “often the colonel commanding would preside as the lodge’s original master and then be succeeded by other officers” (qtd. in Jeffers 3).

The first British army lodge to be officially recognized was the First Foot Guards. In this military lodge Jeffrey Amherst, a remarkable man in terms of victorious British battles, held distinguished leading positions. He entered the First Foot Guards as a British navy officer, and there is regimental history evidence that records his initiation in November 1735. In 1758, Amherst sailed for America as Major General to carry out an assault on Louisbourg, a town in French Canada. He made a successful military operation against the town. As a result of this victory, Amherst became commander in chief in America. Then he travelled to New York, where he made plans and logistic arrangements for the 1759 campaign, which contained another attack on Canada; “based on orders from London,” writes Jeffers, “stating that it was ‘the great and essential object’ ” (3). Although Amherst’s full Masonic History is not known, he was the single most important British commander from early colonial America. In the colonies, there were, at that time, five regimental lodges, including the Royal Scot Fusiliers, the Gloucester Regiment, the Duke of Wellington’s Fusiliers, and the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers, and the earliest one—First Foot Guards—as mentioned before.



Jeffers notes that “Americans who served British contingents and received military training and instructions in strategy and tactics were also introduced to the rites and rituals of a branch of Freemasonry that was not chartered by the Grand Lodge of England, but by the Irish Grand Lodge” (4). Although, Amherst was not the first English Mason to arrive on American soil, he was credited with the bringing of military Freemasonry to the colonies. John Skene was the pioneer—the first Freemason in America. He was born in Newtyle, England, and he, his family, and other daring venturers sailed into the New World in 1682. He became a Mason in 1684 in Aberdeen Lodge, Scotland. In America, he settled at Mount Holly, New Jersey. Later on, he became the Deputy Colonial Governor of West Jersey. He died in 1690. Records of Masons and Masonry began to appear in the early part of the eighteenth century, and as the Craft grew increasingly more and more lodges were formed in colonial America. In the second quarter of the century Masonry became more formal.

The first Freemason born in America, Andrew Belcher, was the son of Jonathan Belcher, former governor of two important colonies—Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Jonathan Belcher became a Mason in 1704, while his son was initiated in 1733. In 1732 Daniel Coxe, the first Grand Master of the New World, was the first Mason to suggest a union of the Colonies; this suggestion was repeated by Benjamin Franklin in 1754. The expansion of Freemasonry did not stop at any time in the thirteen colonies during the mid and late 1700s, and as evidence of this great popularity and acceptance of the Craft the first convention of Masons was held in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on December 18, 1786. After Jeffery Amherst’s death, some Americans who had learned



about Freemasonry through participation in Amherst's army gained knowledge of warfare; some of these same men were then engaged in the writing of a constitution for the United States of America, proclaimed in a Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Furthermore, nonmilitary Masonic lodges were established in some states, including New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania; however, these lodges were considered irregular because they were not chartered by the Grand Lodge of England. The first lodge to be given official authorization from England's Grand Master, Lord Montague, was a Bostonian lodge. Jeffers comments that "he[Henry Price] and several now formally recognized 'brethren' claimed the title 'the first lodge in Boston' and named it 'St. John's Grand Lodge.' None of the members of the Boston lodge had ever been employed in stone working [the skill to make objects from stone]" (6). These former members were mainly attracted by Masonic principles, as well as by intellectual, philosophical and religious aspects, and the opportunities for social advancement that Freemasonry afforded its Brethren for their good conviviality and social interaction.

In November 1752, a dispensation was granted to the petitioners of St. John Grand Lodge. This was constituted a regular Lodge under the title of "St. Andrew's Lodge, No. 82." Dr. Joseph Warren was appointed as Grand Master of the new lodge. This lodge held special importance since among its members were Boston silversmith Paul Revere, attorney-at-law John Hancock, and other relevant American men who have been remembered and venerated over the course of U.S. history, frequently being called the Founding Fathers of the new



republic. Likewise, Fredericksburg Lodge in Virginia was also established. Here George Washington was initiated in 1753 (George Washington's Masonic membership will be discussed later in this chapter). In the records of this lodge are found the oldest known minutes, referring to the conferring of the Royal Arch Degree (an ancient degree that complements the Master Mason's Degree) in North America; these minutes state that three candidates were conferred with the degree of Royal Arch Mason in December 1753. Fredericksburg Lodge was regularly chartered in 1758.

In America, Colonial lodges were small, generally having fewer than fifty members. Minutes of this period show that lodge procedure was pretty much the same as now. This procedure can be described as follows: Business was transacted, candidates elected, and degrees conferred (degrees are plays; each Masonic degree uses symbols to teach lessons of life, such as the importance of honor, integrity and moderation, to mention a few). Differences, however, existed in colonial Masonic lodges. Many lodges conferred only the Entered Apprentice and the Fellow Craft Degrees. Business was conducted in the E.A. Degree, as it is now in lodges under English Constitutions. The Master Mason Degree was sometimes conferred in lodges formed for that purpose. Many Masons did not advance beyond the Fellow Craft Degree, and others were satisfied to remain Entered Apprentices. Lodge officers were not always Master Masons. Occasionally a lodge had the authority of warranting the formation of new lodges; these lodges called themselves Grand Lodges.



In 1770, acts of violence started with the Boston Massacre, and Freemasonry became involved in leading a party which burned the British ship Gaspee. In the same year, a very strong committee was organized in Boston to alert, make aware and protect the colonies against oppressive and cruel British acts. Similar committees were organized in other colonies, as well; and out of these committees grew the Continental Congress. In 1773, England, on the other hand, ended the taxation of almost all the products in the colonies, but taxes on tea went on. Many attempts were made to force collection of the tea tax; this roused the majority of the citizens of Boston, and their resistance to this long-term injustice won the sympathy of patriots in the colonies. In Boston, ships containing cargos of tea reached the Griffin Wharf, and local authorities refused to accept them. By law tea tax was supposed to be paid in twenty days, and then the cargo could be unloaded. At the end of this period the cargo was subject to confiscation. England was extremely determined to collect the tax or confiscate the tea. Therefore, British authorities threatened to sink the ships if they left the harbor with the cargo.

In Boston, there were a number of town meetings that dealt with the taxation problem being discussed. December 16th, 1773 was the deadline of the twenty day grace period for collecting the tea tax, and that very same day a group of men boarded the ships and threw boxes of tea into Boston harbor. Members of St. Andrew's Lodge took an active part in the "Tea Party." Joseph Warren, along with Paul Revere, John Hancock (early Bostonian Masons) and others are credited with organizing and leading the party. It was probably the starting point that led men to gather together in the upcoming struggle for



freedom against the British enemy. In fact, the minutes of St. Andrew's clearly indicate the planning and participation of the aforementioned American Masons in this historic event.

In the American colonies, there were many brave, virtuous and patriotic men who were key figures in leading the revolution. They were willing to sacrifice wealth, security, and even life itself to achieve freedom for all their compatriots. For instance, Dr. Joseph Warren, one of the important men of his day, was an organizer of exceptional ability, a great leader and an active Mason. He was President of the Provincial Congress, Grand Master of Masons, and with great honors he was appointed as Major General. He took part in several important battles, including the battle of Lexington and Concord. Unfortunately, he was killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill in 1775.

1.2. Freemasonry's Contribution to the American Revolution and the U.S. Constitution

In 1775, the beginning of the American Revolution brought a transformation of the colonial Masonic lodges, and the communities in which these lodges were situated. Freemasons from different lodges gave their service and support to the Sons of Liberty, a secret organization that supported the American rebellion. Freemasonry and the Sons of Liberty could not easily be distinguished due to the similarities regarding their private meetings and recognition sings and words; these two groups were, in addition, present at the Green Dragon Tavern the night of the Boston Tea Party. For instance, Robert



Newman, a member of St. John's Lodge, hung lanterns in the steeple of a church in Boston. This place holds significant importance since it was there that Paul Revere, St. Andrew's Lodge former member, started his heroic horseback ride to Lexington so that John Hancock, his fellow Mason, and others could be warned of the British army's march that was supposed to take place in Concord.

As a result of the British's upcoming attacks and of Dr. Joseph Warren's death, the Grand Master of the "Ancients" Grand Lodge in Massachusetts, American colonists were made to choose sides. It should be noted that not all Masons supported the cause for American Independence and the revolutionary movement. Because of the revolutionary hard days, many Masonic lodges suspended their regular meetings in the different colonies. Some lodges with a large membership of loyalists did not remain strong enough to survive this troubled period; however, some of them moved to Canada to carry on with their Masonic activity. Other lodges, with members considered to be "more rebellious" citizens or brave patriots remained very active throughout the colonial times, instead.

As time went by, hostilities continued in the revolution, and a number of important Masonic American leaders began to appear, playing a key role in agitating, organizing, and leading activities in favor of the war for independence. Mark A. Tabbert, Masonic scholar, director of collections at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial and author of *American Freemasons*, points out that "many well-known Freemasons were deeply engaged in fomenting the American rebellion" (42). The number of military lodges also increased by about 50 per cent, and they were spread all over the



colonies. At the end of the French and Indian Wars there were, in addition to the military lodges, about one hundred lodges established throughout the pioneering colonies. These lodges were warranted by the Ancient and Modern Grand Lodges of England, the Grand Lodges of Scotland and Ireland, and the Provincial Grand Lodges of Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and New York. In short, military mobile lodges and military Freemasonry had been the foundation of Masonic activity on American soil. More importantly, this kind of early lodge and its traditions greatly accelerated the growth of Freemasonry in colonial America.

Over the course of American history, many scholars have connected Freemasonry with the planning, development and success of the American Revolution, since some remarkable American leaders and figures from the revolutionary period were freemasons; these included Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Paul Revere, Dr. Joseph Warren, John Hancock, Prince Hall, and John Paul Jones. Neil York, in his online article "Freemasons and the American Revolution," comments that "Bernard Fray, a French historian who exposed Masons to the Nazis in occupied France during World War II, [. . .] saw Freemasonry as the 'main instigator of the intellectual revolution' of that age and 'the spiritual father of its political revolutions' " (par.1). With this in mind, emphatic claims have been made for Masonic key aid to eighteenth-century revolutionary movements in France, and especially in the American colonies. "Freemasons engendered among a limited but very prominent class of people a feeling of American unity," says Fray, "without which American liberty could not



have developed-without which there would have been no United States” (qtd. in York).

The American colonies had to make quick decisions on how to act in response to the two pioneering battles of Lexington and Concord. In doing so, some acts were carried out in order to try to stop the British invasion, and one was of crucial importance: the creation of a Continental Congress held in Philadelphia in 1776. This Congress was expressly created to deal with the development of a Declaration of Independence. Among the many colonial delegates present on that occasion, nine of the 56 signers are known to have acquired Masonic membership. There is also evidence of Masonic membership and/or affiliations of other “nonmasonic” signers who were greatly attracted by the Brotherhood’s ideals and philosophy. Most notably is the fact that many other signers later became Masons, such as William Richardson Davie Jr., Jonathan Dayton, and Dr. James McHenry, to mention a few. Tabbert explains that “some historians have claimed a higher number, yet it is still significant that men from different colonies, such as John Hancock of Massachusetts, Richard Stockton of New Jersey and George Walton of Georgia, could recognize each other as fraternal brothers” (40-41).

Acts of American rebellion increased, generating an environment for a bitter and bloody Revolution against the British, and George Washington, the most venerated Freemason, was designated as commander in chief of the American army. One of Washington’s greatest achievements of this early period was to unite colonial regiments, consisting of men with various types of skills, and a great deal of bravery, too. This challenge was partly achieved through the



involvement, support and influence of Freemasonry. Following the British tradition with regard to the formation of military lodges, American regiments also formed this kind of lodge. American Union Lodge was the best known military lodge at the time; during a military operation in Boston this lodge was born within a Connecticut regiment. This American mobile lodge operated all through the revolutionary war. The Massachusetts Provincial Grand Lodge charted the operations of the lodge from its very beginning. According to the Masonic authority Mark Tabbert, the Masonic activity during the American Revolution could be described as follows:

The officers of the regimental lodges invited brother Masons from different colonies to their meetings and social gatherings. The Craft served as a point of introduction among strangers. Freemasonry's solemn obligations also reinforced loyalty to each other and to the Americans' cause. Fraternal loyalty was especially significant when foreign officers who were Freemasons—such as Lafayette, DeKalb, and Von Steuben—joined the patriots' cause.[. . .] Lodge meetings, especially during winter encampments, provided social activities and fellowship that boosted morale while offering charity to wounded and imprisoned brothers or to the families of fellow Masons who were killed.(41)

The Craft's fraternal spirit deeply appealed to Continental Army officers, and the Brotherhood's tenets, hierarchy and rituals were key elements that helped unite army officers as friends and brothers in the revolutionary cause. As a man's social status, in the colonial days, was the main factor involved in reaching the greatest military rank, it prevented lower-class patriots from being at the head of the army. Besides, the British Crown was supported loyally by



many of the highest-class colonists; however, Masonic membership and army service elevated aspiring men and promoted them to higher and higher social-class levels. By doing so, supporters of the revolution were also rewarded with a more important rank than the common soldiers, and they were able to work their way up with regard to their personal affiliations and social connections. By the last days of the revolution, many army officers became Masons in different regimental lodges throughout the colonies, and at least 33 of 78 generals of the Continental Army were Freemasons.

Freemasons enthusiastically joined the fight for American Independence, so it is very important to have a good sense of Freemasons' activities during the revolutionary war. It is a well-known fact that George Washington was at the head of the Continental Army, and he supported, in so many ways, the revolution from the very beginning to its end. Benjamin Franklin traveled to Paris to try to convince the French to join to the American rebellion. In France, he joined Loge des Neufs Soeurs, and served as the Lodge Master, taking part in the Voltaire's initiation in 1778. Franklin obtained reliable French support, and also met the Marquis de Lafayette, who was a French aristocrat and Freemason, as well. Lafayette provided Franklin with all the assistance needed to go back home in 1780. Regarding Paul Revere's revolutionary aid, he never left Massachusetts; he served there as an artillery officer, being delegated the work of making gunpowder and casting cannons for the Continental Army.

An important African-American Freemason of his day was Prince Hall. He was in charge of making leather drumheads for a regiment in Massachusetts; he also arranged many antislavery petitions to the



Massachusetts legislature. All through his life he was a great supporter of slavery abolition and an untiring protector of his African-American community. He made many efforts to protect free Negroes from being kidnapped and sold into slavery. Hall campaigned for education for Negro children in Boston, opening a school in his own house; he also supported a benevolent society in his community. Jeffers adds that “for many years, the black churches of America and Prince Hall lodges were the strongest organizations in black communities. Masonic lodge halls were used as locations for church services and teaching blacks how to read and write” (19). In addition, Prince Hall, along with his brothers, established their own African-American lodge—the first of its nature on American soil. After Prince’s death, the existing Masonic African-American organization was called “Prince Hall Freemasonry.” Tabbert comments, “A clergyman would later call Prince Hall ‘the leading African in Boston’ ” (38).

William Davis, who has been recognized as the first American Knight Templar, was very active in politics during the revolution, struggling against unfair British taxation, especially. He is also credited with the invention of “the barrel defense,” consisting of barrels filled with stones and earth rolling down from Breed’s Hill towards the British army. In 1775, Joseph Warren was appointed major general by the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, and was in charge of the rebel regiment on Breed Hill (later called Bunker Hill). Some years earlier, on an anniversary of the Boston Massacre, Warren talked to a large crowd; he knew that repressive British officers were usually present on such occasions in order to prevent pro-revolutionary colonists from



deliveringspeeches and encouraging fellow people to join the American rebellion.

Freemasons have been credited with stirring the fire of the American Revolution. On December 16, 1773, Freemasons were among the dozens of men who, disguised as Native Americans from the Mohawk Indian Tribe, boarded the British East India Company's merchant ship Dartmouth in Boston Harbor. They did so to dump crates of tea into the water; this cargo of 342 chests valued at 10,000 pounds. Jeffers states, "Enshrined in U.S. history as the 'Boston Tea Party,' this milestone on the road to the Revolution is proudly claimed by Freemasons as the work of the St. Andrew's lodge" (13). The Boston Tea Party was planned at The Green Dragon Tavern, a well-known meeting place of Freemasons like Paul Revere and John Hancock.

The morning following the sudden attack, Paul Revere, St. Andrew's lodge member and Knight Templar, rode his horse to New York to let its people know about the raid. With a great deal of participation, Freemasons once more played a leading role in one of the most relevant events of early U.S. history. Later on, when the Battles at Lexington and Concord were over, and the British soldiers were back in Boston, local Freemasons organized another attack as the "Red Coats" crossed the bay from Boston. At that moment, Joseph Warren, St. Andrew's Grand Master, set fire behind barricades on Breed Hill. The shooting lasted less than an hour, and the Americans ran out of ammunition. Warren, the main agitator and leader of this raid, was shot in the back of his head and fell dead. He was the first Knight Templar killed in the cause of



independence, and Freemasonry claims its first American hero in the person of the courageous, patriotic Grand Master and first departed Knight Templar.

As previously stated, Freemasons were among the signers of both the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. Especially with regard to the Constitution, Freemasonry had a prominent influence upon the process of creation and ratification in 1789. One-third of the signers of the United States Constitution were Freemasons; that is, 13 of the 39 signers. In the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia George Washington, the undisputed delegate of fifty-five representatives, acted as the presiding officer, and Benjamin Franklin was also a key delegate. That same day, very important Masonic ideals were taken into account during the debate that came with the formation of such a historic, founding document of the new republic. Religious freedom was guaranteed by the Constitution, and it was solidly supported by American Masonic founders and their brethren, who held the idea of a single scientific Creator. In an online article called “Masons and the Making of America” his author, Mitch Horowitz adds that “as a radical thought movement that emerged from the Reformation, Freemasonry was the first widespread and well-connected organization to espouse religious toleration and liberty—principles that the fraternity helped spread through the American colonies.”

James David Carter, a Masonic scholar and author of “Masonic Education and Service for the Grand Lodge of Texas” (work used in *The Freemasons of America* by Paul Jeffers), tells us that Masonic principles, including religious toleration, freedom of speech, equal law penalties and fair punishment can be found in the first ten amendments of the U.S. Constitution.



Many scholars agree with Carter's observation by saying that the same principles and ideals, which comprise Freemasonry's universal philosophy, were used to create the U.S. Constitution, revealing that the documents are essentially the same. Moreover, all the Constitutional Convention members were aware that such principles could not be taken from any other source, since there was such a close similarity both in structure and in theory between the U.S. Government and the Masonic body of universal principles.

Freemasonry was truly in synchronization with the ideals of the new republic—United States of America. Carter adds, "The role of Freemasonry and individual Masons prior to and through the American Revolution was that of the destruction of the traditional social and political order based on an authoritarian philosophy and characterized by inequality and privilege" (qtd. in Jeffers 26). In addition, the Craft's principles and symbols were incorporated into early American social life and culture. Tabbert comments that "each symbol expressed a significant virtue for maintaining a free and equal civil society" (43). Pieces of Masonic symbolism started to appear on household utensils and furniture, even on a bill of American currency. One of the greatest symbols associated with Freemasonry, the eye-and-pyramid of the Great Seal of the United States, can be found today on the back of the dollar bill. The Great Seal's design began on July 4th, 1776, and it was mainly structured by Freemasons, along with Masonry supporters.

1.3. The Laying of the U.S. Capitol Cornerstone

After the American Independence, a tradition became very common with regard to the laying of cornerstones of major public and private buildings and



monuments; these were consecrated with complete Masonic ceremonies, using the Craft's rites and elements. George Washington left New York for the most historic cornerstone ceremony in a city named after him in the federal District of Columbia. On September 18, 1793, the most famous Masonic cornerstone laying ceremony took place in America. George Washington was in charge of the ceremony, and laid the cornerstone of the United States Capitol, under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of Maryland and in the presence of Officers and Brethren of Lodge No. 22 of Virginia, Lodge No. 9 of Maryland and Lodge No. 15 of the city of Washington. The U.S. Capitol Masonic cornerstone ceremony was an event that caused Freemasonry to achieve great prestige and social acceptance in early American life. That day, George Washington, first U.S. President, wore elegant Masonic regalia during the laying ceremony on the top of Capitol Hill. Tabbert notes that "using a Masonic trowel, Washington spread the symbolic cement of the brotherly love that would both unite the building into one common mass and bring all Americans together as one common people" (44).

On the day of the cornerstone laying ceremony, the assemblage was composed of government officials and commissioners; the Virginia Artillery; stonemasons; military units; Masons of the first, second and third degree; two sword bearers; bearers of Bibles &c. on the Grand Cushions; Grand Master P.T. George Washington; Worshipful Master from Lodge No. 22 of Virginia; a band; and common citizens. All were gathered together with the U.S President through this event, in which the cornerstone was put in its place using the three main Masonic tools: the plumb, level, and square. Corn (standing for plenty),



wine (happiness), and oil (peace)—Masonic symbolic elements for cornerstone laying ceremonies—were used to perform an emblematic blessing of the Capitol cornerstone.

The cornerstone ceremony of the National Capitol was preceded by a parade, and followed by celebration and feasting. In order to inform everyone of this greatest Masonic ceremony, newspaper reports were published, telling the reader of very specific details of the organization and performance of the ceremony, the greatest attendees, the Masonic ritual elements, and the Masonic ceremony itself. In addition to the ceremony, The Most Worshipful Grand Master spoke to the multitude; he began by asking a question, and it was as follows: “Why call upon the Masonic Fraternity to lay the cornerstone of such a structure as is here to be erected?” His quick, astonishing answer can be summed up in the following lines: On earth there is only one entity—the Masonic Fraternity—that has made so much effort to endorse liberty and equality, as well as to rescue men from oppressive forces and the poisonous tentacles of ignorance and tyranny.

It is important to bear in mind that in the U.S. the National Capitol is not the only site with Masonic heritage. The cornerstone laying ceremonies, overall structures, pieces art and symbolism of U.S. national monuments and buildings are clear examples of the influence of Freemasonry in both the founding and the shaping of the world’s most powerful government, the United States of America. In addition, the design of U.S. capital city—Washington, DC.—is another evidence of Freemasonry’s influence and contribution found within American society today, since the city was almost entirely designed by



Freemasons, integrating within its architecture, artwork and features the “keys to the Craft.”

1.4. The Three Principal Masons as Founding Fathers of the U.S.

1.4.1. George Washington

George Washington has been the most representative Masonic figure of all time, both in the political and social fields in the U.S. Therefore, for the prominent role he played in the Masonic world in America, he is worthy of receiving special consideration in this work. We will briefly explore Washington’s Masonic initiation, life and activities.

In 1752, he became a Freemason in Fredericksburg Lodge, Virginia. He was, in addition, the first Master of what today is called Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22. He joined the Craft at the age of twenty one, having come from a leading Virginia family. He was also a soldier who fought in the French and Indian Wars. After that, he was elected to Virginia’s House of Burgesses and married to a wealthy widow. Washington became a very respected, leading man because of his many public titles: prominent landowner, retired officer, representative in the House of Burgesses and distinguished sexton in his church. For some people Washington’s Masonic membership is considered to have a completely different purpose than the traditional conception. This reasoning comes from the idea that lower-class men from American colonial times sought Masonic membership because it helped them go higher in social-class levels and, consequently, to have better opportunities. Supposedly, in



knowing this Washington wanted to enjoy all the privileges and social status offered by the Brotherhood.

In colonial America, it was very common for young men to join Freemasonry, hoping to occupy important social and government positions in their communities, since early Masonic figures were seen as virtuous pillars in the colonies. In fact, most men who joined the Order before the American Revolution never thought of reaching such high social-class levels and occupying influential offices in the executive, legislative, and the judicial branches of the new government. In keeping with this fact, George Washington was the greatest example of Masonic achievement; in the first place, he was the commander in chief of the American army, a key revolutionary figure, and then he became the first U.S. President. All of this reveals that Freemasonry helping its Masons to obtain social and political advancement in America could be quite true.

As president of the United States, Washington wrote many pieces of writing inspired by his Masonic membership; the following lines stand out: “Being persuaded that a just application of the principles on which the Masonic Fraternity is founded must be a promotive of virtue and public prosperity, I shall always be happy to advance the interest of the Society and to be considered by them as a deserving brother.” One of Washington’s most impressive thoughts is as follows: “The United States will become a virtuous temple—something that Freemasonry is already.” During the Congress under the Articles of Confederation the resolution for an executive branch was declared, and the new



representatives were George Washington and John Adams (non-Mason) as president and vice president, respectively.

In April 1789, Washington's inauguration ceremony was performed and administrated by important American Masonic figures, such as the Most Worshipful Grand Master of Free and Accepted Masons of New York and Chancellor of the State, Robert R. Livingston, who was in charge of administering Washington's oath of office. "General Jacob Morton, Worshipful Master of St. John's Lodge—the oldest in the city—and Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of New York," adds Jeffers, "served as marshal of the inauguration ceremonies" (28). When Washington recited the presidential oath of office, the Bible was opened to chapters 49 and 50 in Genesis, and these words were printed on the second page of this same Bible (it has too been used in other inauguration ceremonies): "On this sacred volume, on the 30th day of April, A. L. 5789, in the city of New York, was administrated to George Washington, the first president of the United States of America, the oath to support the Constitution of the United States" (qtd. in Jeffers 28).

In addition, all those who were with Washington at his inauguration ceremony were Masons except John Adams. The thirteen governors of the American colonies were all Freemasons at the time. The people who Washington chose for his first government cabinet were from the Brotherhood or sympathetic to the ideals of it. All of this means that Masonic membership was a real indication of men's trustworthiness and strength for keeping universal values. One of the first duties of Washington was to assign men to take charge of these five high-ranking offices: the chief justice and four



associate justices of the Supreme Court—of whom four of those appointed were Freemasons. In addition to this, several Masons were elected to be members of the first Congress and to compose the first group of senators, as well.

Washington had a Masonic funeral; his lodge was allowed to do so even though his desire was to have a simple, private funeral. Washington's lodge made all the arrangements for his funeral procession, which took place at Mount Vernon. The formal procession consisted of horse and foot soldiers, clergy, Washington's horse with an empty saddle, a military band, the bier, and many mourners. A reverend and Dr. Elisha Dick, both Brethren of Washington's lodge, conducted the traditional Masonic funeral rites. On that day, it was said that the American hero of all times, the great benefactor of the U.S., the remarkable Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the United States, could rest in peace; his life, bravery, efforts, service, commitment and strength had always been at the disposal of his country, and the presence of so many paid fitting tribute.

Many years after Washington's death, the construction of a decorated obelisk 600 feet high began to be built in the U.S. capital city. This memorial called Washington Monument was aimed at honoring the first Masonic president in his namesake city. These days it is the highest edification in Washington, D C., enabling visitors at the top to have a wonderful view of the city and the surrounding states. During a Masonic ceremony, its cornerstone was laid in 1848; on that occasion the same trowel that Washington had employed at the laying of the cornerstone of the Capitol was used again. Even though the memorial was left incomplete for almost fifteen years due to financial problems,



it was finally dedicated in 1885. There are 188 special memorial stones in the interior walls of the monument. Some stones are believed to have been donated by Masonic lodges all over the world, while others were given by individuals, societies, cities, states, and nations of the world. Masonic critics have said that the monument has satanic symbolism as result of significant, occult Masonic numerology found within the amount of materials, weight, height and number of the components, and the cost of the memorial. These critics point out that it was built at that particular location to face both the White House and the U.S. Capitol so that residents and visitors to these places could face the monument at any time.

1.4.2. Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin was another key Masonic figure, with great capacity for leadership, who played a very important role in early U.S. history through his tireless support and countless efforts throughout the revolutionary cause of independence. St. John's Lodge is traced back as the oldest in Philadelphia, and this lodge has the distinction of numbering one of the best-known American patriots among its members—Benjamin Franklin. In 1731, he became a Mason in St. John's Lodge. After a few years of successful membership, he became Provincial Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania and took part in the special ceremony of American's first Masonic Hall in Philadelphia. He mainly worked as a publisher, and was in charge of the Pennsylvania Gazette. He was also the first to reprint the Anderson Constitutions, which is now classified among the rare books of the Craft, containing its history, charges,



regulations, etc. As a printer and philosopher his writings were widely read; there provide visible proof of his excellent leadership, which caused him to occupy an important place among the most versatile non-Masonic and Masonic leaders in colonial America. Tabbert adds that “his migration from Boston to Philadelphia and quick rise to the highest social, intellectual and political circles remains a model for the American dream” (35).

Furthermore, Franklin was both a scientist and an inventor, who proved that lightning and electricity were the same natural force. He invented bifocal lenses, and made many other contributions to scientific progress. In addition, he was a leading politician and respected diplomat, who provided the colonies with his multiple services in a significant manner. During his diplomatic career, Benjamin Franklin was Ambassador to France in the years of the American Revolution, for instance. He also formed affiliations with the country's Masonic lodges and received important distinctions, including venerable and honorary membership in outstanding French lodges. Jeffers comments that “one scholar of Franklin's contributions to Masonry writes that no catalog of his offices, services, dates, names, and places could adequately convey his importance and facets of a many-sided jewel which best reflect the influence Freemasonry had upon him” (25). Franklin was also involved both in the creation and the endowment of educational and city institutions. For instance, he was the founder of the University of Pennsylvania and established a library, an insurance company and a hospital. In doing so, he earned both public honor and social respect within his community and beyond, as well. In addition, he received honorary degrees from the Universities of St. Andrew and Oxford.



Perhaps most importantly, during the American Revolution, Franklin used French Masonic contacts and connections in order to obtain military aid against the British.

As stated, Franklin's life was deeply influenced by the Craft's ideals, principles, tenets and teachings. His life can be viewed through not only his remarkable Masonic membership, but also his many contributions for mankind and, especially, his key support of the war of American Independence. When he took part in public affairs, he showed clear evidence of his Masonic membership. For instance, lines from Franklin's speech during the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia were interpreted as obvious evidence of his Masonry. With regard to Masonic tenets, initiated body, labor and wages Franklin made these impressive observations:

[. . .] These [Masonic tenets] are of no small value; they speak a universal language, and act as a passport to the attentions and support of the initiated in all parts of the world. They cannot be lost as long as memory retains its power." He also observed, "Masonic labor is purely a labor of love. He who seeks to draw Masonic wages in gold and silver will be disappointed. The wages of a Mason are earned and paid in their dealings with one another; sympathy that begets sympathy, kindness begets kindness, helpfulness begets helpfulness, and these are the wages of a Mason. (qtd. in Jeffers 25)



1.4.3. Paul Revere

Paul Revere, the grand Bostonian venerated patriot, revolutionary agitator, and one of the U.S. Founding Fathers, was Dr. Joseph Warren's most trusted associate. In Freemasonry, Paul Revere followed closely in the footsteps of Joseph Warren, Major General and President of the Provincial Congress and Grand Master of Masons. In 1760, Revere became a Mason Lodge of St. Andrew in Boston. He was America's second Knight Templar. Revere was in charge of the messenger work for the Committee of Correspondence and had to travel long hours on horseback. Among his best-known rides in U.S. history is his "midnight ride" to Lexington to warn his fellow countrymen that the Red Coats were coming. Revere came from a lower-class family whose father was an artisan; these facts limited his prospects in colonial Boston.

In colonial times, Revere was able to work his way up in a successful manner because he was a determined man with many skills. Among his skills we can list the following: engraving, silverwork, casting bells (some still in use), dental work, and the art of rolling copper into sheets. Revere was recognized not only as a highly talented silversmith but also as a trustworthy businessman. In 1795, Revere supplied the fittings for the "Constitution" and the "Essex," two of the first three ships ordered by the Navy. Besides, Revere was commissioned Lieutenant Colonel, but was absent from the battle field because his skill in metals kept him busy making war weapons. He became involved in many social clubs and political committees, leading him to improve his social standing in his community. Tabbert notes, " Unlike Franklin and Washington, Revere considered his participation in the Masonic community to be as means



of establishing himself in Boston society both as an individual and as a businessman.[. . .] [Therefore,] Paul Revere saw Freemasonry as a step toward both self-improvement and social advancement” (37).

Revere’s Masonic accomplishments were remarkable. First of all, he served as secretary in the lodge that witnessed his initiation in Masonry, and then continued onto become Master Mason. Later on, he was appointed Grand Master of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge; this very same lodge, several years earlier, had united the “Ancients” and “Moderns” groups of American Masons. During his Masonic administration of three years as Grand Master, Revere granted permission for the creation of 23 new lodges. Lodges in Massachusetts were almost doubled in number during Revere’s term. In 1795, he had the honor of performing the cornerstone laying ceremony of the new Massachusetts State House.

Through his Masonic membership Revere learned a great deal, expanding his knowledge on important issues for his colonial life; for instance, he gained knowledge of the art of rhetoric and public speaking by practicing recitation of the Brotherhood’s rituals and lectures. He also became skillful at business and political issues through the organization and the monitoring of lodge meetings. Also, as the result of socializing and contemplating Masonic symbolism, he and his fellow brethren obtained good manners, politeness and courtesy. Through the participation in Masonic social and public celebrations he, along with his active brothers, had the opportunity to meet with higher levels of society. Tabbert states, “To Revere and his middle-class community, the Fraternity provided the skills and status they sought to associate with Franklin’s



and Washington's society and the membership of the more elite St. John's lodge" (37).

The influence, support and contribution of the Masonic American Founding Fathers over the course of the War for Independence had a prominent role to reach the desired, common objective of freedom. Principles of liberty, equality, loyalty, brotherly fraternity and "the rights of mankind" taken from Masonic literature and philosophy shaped both the thinking and the lives of these protectors of the revolutionary cause. These Founding Fathers played a leading part both on the creation and main events of the Revolutionary War and birth of the new republic; events that were organized, carried out, and successfully completed with the support and participation of their fellow Masons.



CHAPTER II

MASONIC RITUAL, SYMBOLS, DEGREES, RITES AND LODGE ROOM

2.1. Freemasonry, a Ritual-Based Fraternal Brotherhood

Freemasonry is very popular among fraternal organizations and secret societies for its ritualism and secrecy; these also make it a suspicious, controversial and peculiar fraternity, since the origin of the Brotherhood and its rituals are unclear. The beauty and the complexity of the rituals were the pillars by which Freemasonry attracted its impressive membership all across the U.S. It should also be noted that the phenomenon of Freemasonry as a ritual-based fraternity emerged mainly from the appeal and pleasure of mystery within American society. Tabbert comments that “some Masonic writers have been eager to argue that its rituals are divinely inspired and ancient. Many scholars contend that the founders merely wrote rituals laced with architectural and biblical metaphors” (5).

However, despite the usage of rituals coming from obscure origins, Freemasonry has expanded throughout the world, operating in hundreds of thousands of lodges with a membership of over three million men worldwide. The Order cannot be understood without a study of its rituals and symbols, and their interpretation and usage. Freemasonry differs mainly from all other fraternities because of the peculiarity of the rituals employed by its brethren in initiation ceremonies. The initiation rituals attempt to promote and foster three important concepts among the members: brotherly love, the necessity of relief,



and a constant search for and love of truth. In brief, Freemasonry, from its early days, has sought to improve individuals by teaching moral truths through rituals and obligations.

In today's world, just as in the past, rituals represent the strength, vitality and togetherness of Freemasonry that has been operating for centuries, surviving attempts at destruction by many sources, such as religious fanaticism, Communism, racism, and commercialism. It has been possible because its rituals are performed in an environment of secrecy, involving oral traditions and rituals, and codified rituals, as well. In short, Freemasonry has sustained its activities up to modern days by passing down its rituals from one generation to the next from mouth to mouth within the lodges' walls. These rituals have taught generations of Masons important lessons for their daily living, as well as for their harmonious Masonic life. The rituals are closely connected to important ideals from the European Enlightenment in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. That is to say, Freemasonry and the Enlightenment were largely in synchronization with their way of thinking and viewing the world. Mankind and its communities, Enlightenment sages said, could be improved by three key actions: a search for knowledge, rational study and systematic applications.

When discussing Masonic ritualism, it is important to bring up two well-respected Masons: William Preston and Albert Pike. Preston, a Scotsman, visited London Masonic lodges to gather their oral rituals and lectures. When Preston presented his work, it was about the fiftieth year of the creation of the first Grand Lodge in London. In 1772, Preston wrote *Illustrations of Masonry*, containing Freemasonry's first organized, rational and literary published



lectures. Nine editions of his work were published during his lifetime, and much of this work currently composes the Masonic ceremonial work in the U.S. Preston's aim was partly to codify the rituals and teachings in order to preserve Masonry's message against "the lapse of time, the ruthless hand of ignorance and the devastation of war" (qtd. in Tabbert 7). Preston's view of Freemasonry was as a universal charitable organization that instructed men of good will through a system of morality, principles and teachings. Also, the basis of Masonic universal language consists of tools and implements of architecture that are used as Masonic symbols, and of means of teaching which make complex life lessons easier and more understandable for the brethren.

Albert Pike is credited with the creation of modern U.S. Freemasonry. He was an American Masonic revolutionary, poet, philosopher, school teacher, lawyer, Civil War general and Mexican War captain. He became fascinated by Masonic symbolism and was raised a Mason in Arkansas. He received all the Blue Lodge degrees and the thirty-three degree of the Scottish Rite, as well. Pike met Dr. Albert Mackey, a well-known Masonic historian and the Secretary General of the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite. Dr. Mackey was impressed with Pike's intellect and vitality, so he gave Pike written rituals to study and revise. Carefully, Pike examined the rites and rituals, finding a chaotic, incoherent, trivial collection. After revising the rituals, Pike wrote that no man of intellect and knowledge could regard them "with any respect." "So many pains had been taken to conceal the meaning of the symbols, he [Pike] said, that their true meaning was for the most part lost, and 'ignorance or dullness had supplied others, invented by themselves'" (qtd. in Jeffers 81).



Pike's revisions were accepted by the Southern Jurisdiction around 1858, and he was then designated as the Southern Jurisdiction's Sovereign Grand Commander, holding that office for life. Pike copied all the rituals in a book, which was his greatest contribution to Freemasonry. This work was titled *Morals and Dogmas of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*. In short, Pike's work reconceptualized American Freemasonry. Jeffers adds, "It was an attempt to provide a framework for understanding the religious and philosophies of the ancient past" (82), while Tabbert states that "[Pike] left it as a system of understanding human existence and with a philosophy that urged men to seek harmony and unity with the universe" (145).

Throughout the world the majority of the Masonic body of initiates wants to learn ritual in the most convenient, practical manner. Most of them, however, learn over the course of years through frequent lodge attendance and self-study of universal Masonic philosophy. Masonic members memorize a new part of the ritual as they ascend positions within the lodge. As centuries go by, millions of brethren learn Freemasonry ritual in different parts of the world; they do so in a step-by-step, gradual process which requires hard work, dedication and analysis. In brief, Freemasonry study is like any other body of knowledge. The Masonic Order is well-organized both in structure and theory, so becoming knowledgeable can seem to be a hard challenging task for new members. As stated before, learning Masonic ritualism is achieved in a time-honored fashion, carried out by listening to rituals during lodge meetings and studying to memorize them. Ritual work is not, however, required to be learned by candidates of Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft, since this type of work is



exclusively performed by Master Masons. It is believed that the best way for Entered Apprentices or Fellow Craft to learn ritual is to attend all lodge meetings and to begin studying for an officer position.

On the other hand, in addition to attending each of the lodge meetings and studying on one's own, Freemasonry provides its members with practical means to learn ritual. There are three different ways which are helpful for new members to obtain a good understanding of Masonic ritual. First, new members can do so with the help of Masonic Mentors. In modern Freemasonry, many lodges have designated instructors who mentor their members. These Masonic Mentors volunteer their services or are requested by the Worshipful Master to share their knowledge with the brethren. Second, a Ritual Team is considered for many members as the fastest and most efficient approach to learning Masonic ritual. It consists of Master Masons who assist and enable the new brethren to perform the degree ceremonies, and, especially, the ceremony for the second part of the third degree. Third, Warden's Clubs are offered by some Masonic lodges. The Warden's Club consists of Junior Wardens, Senior Wardens, Worshipful Masters, Past Masters, Ritual Team members and any other lodge member who desires to attend the meetings to watch, listen and learn Freemasonry ritual. During Warden's Club meetings lodge officers and other members become more proficient in ritual so that they are able to perform ceremonies for their own degrees without outside help.



2.2. The Masonic Square and Compasses

Historically, both the square and compasses are tools employed in the construction field to create true and perfect lines and angles. Operative stone masons (ancient stone workers) used them as the primary tools of their trade. Operative stone masons began their career as an entered apprentice under the supervision of a master mason. On its official Web page, the Masonic Education Center writes that “in the operative stone mason era, the 90 degree angle of the square was a necessary tool used to test the accuracy of the sides of a stone to ascertain that the stone's angles matched the square's ‘true’ right angle.” For so many years the square and compasses, ancient stone working tools, have constituted the single most universally identifiable symbol of Freemasonry. This symbol usually has the letter “G” at its center, which stands for the Great Architect of the Universe, and it reminds Masons that God is at the center of Freemasonry. In an online article titled “G in the Square and Compasses—The Explanation,” we find this further observation of “G” as a Masonic letter: “The letter can also stand for Geometry, described as being ‘the noblest of the sciences’, and ‘the superstructure upon which Freemasonry is founded.’ ” In speculative Freemasonry, the square and compasses are used in Masonic ritual, being emblems to teach the brethren symbolic lessons of conduct, morality, honesty and moderation, to mention a few.

The Masonic Lodge of Education in its online article “Square and Compasses” comments, “The Square is an emblem of virtue in which we must ‘square our actions by the square of virtue with all mankind.’ The Compasses exemplify our wisdom of conduct, . . . the strength to ‘circumscribe our desires



and keep our passions within due bounds.’ ”When these two Masonic tools are placed together with the Creator as their central point of attention, the result is peace and harmony. Put simply, the square represents morality or honesty; the compass, boundaries or moderation. However, the specific date on which the Masonic square became an official Masonic symbol is not known. The roles or official Masonic usage of the square and compasses are as follows: they are two of the three Great Lights of Freemasonry (the Square, the Compass and the Bible), they are the working tools of a FellowCraft, and are the official emblem of the Master of the lodge.

In addition, the square and compasses, when regarded as a single symbol, teach the brethren morality, truthfulness, honesty and moderation. In order to give the square and compasses a deeper meaning within the Masonic world, we can recall these lines by Albert Pike: “The Compass, therefore, as the Symbol of Heavens, represents the spiritual, intellectual, and moral portions of this double nature of Humanity; and the Square, as the Symbol of the Earth, its material, sensual, and baser portions” (qtd. in Tabbert 142). Besides, the furniture of the Masonic lodges was declared to be the Bible, Compasses and Square. God and the Square, religion and morality must be present as governing principles in every lodge around the world. There are also two other stone working tools which are part of universal Masonic symbolism—each one expresses a significant virtue, and they are as follows: the level represents equality; the plumb, rectitude.

The acceptance of Freemasonry’s universal symbolism has gone beyond the Masonic world, communicating to mankind as a whole the very same



concepts of morality, moderation, equality and rectitude on a daily basis. “Square,” says Halliwell, Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words, “means honest, equitable, as in ‘square dealing.’ ” The Masonic Dictionary in its Web page agrees, “To play upon the square is proverbial for to play honestly. In this sense the word is found in the old writers.” Everywhere Freemasonry has been present; its universal symbol has preserved its original significance. Since old times, people who have tried to obtain wisdom and knowledge have made use of the Compasses and the Square as guidelines to reach such a goal.

2.3. The Three Degrees of Craft Masonry

Men interested in Freemasonry are supposed to seek out acceptance in the fraternity. Prospective members’ first contact with Freemasonry will be the degrees collectively known as Craft Masonry or Blue Lodge. This system of three degrees is sometimes called the Symbolic Degrees, the Lodge Degrees, and even the Blue Degrees. Within Freemasonry, the color blue is a symbol of universal friendship and benevolence, while it is also considered to be the color of the vault of heaven. Blue is the only color other than white, which should be used in a Master's Lodge for decorations. Craft Masonry is the starting point for all men who wish to become Masons, and it confers the following Symbolic Degrees: First, the Entered Apprentice Degree, second, the Fellow Craft Degree, and finally, the Master Mason Degree. Tabbert points out “Freemasonry uses [these] terms [. . .] to describe a progression from ‘darkness’ of ignorance of Masonic principles to the ‘light’ of their knowledge” (7).



In addition to the Symbolic Degrees, there are several bodies of Masonry that have been erroneously referred to as higher degrees. It is important to point out that in Freemasonry the third degree, the Master Mason, is the highest degree, and while interested Master Masons will greatly benefit from an association with either the Scottish Rite or the York Rite, these degrees are just seen as additional degrees, not higher at all. All of this means that after the Blue Lodge, a Master Mason may receive further Masonic teachings and additional degrees through the Scottish Rite and/or the York Rite. In order for the brethren to join the York Rite, Scottish Rite or any other organization with Masonic affiliation, they must be members of a recognized Craft or Blue Lodge and have completed its three degrees.

Furthermore, the degrees of the Craft Masonry place special emphasis on the building of King Solomon's Temple. The building of King Solomon's Temple is of central importance to Freemasonry's philosophy and, especially, to the initiation ceremonies of the Symbolic Degrees being analyzed. Therefore, in order to be able to obtain a good understanding of these degrees, it is important to briefly discuss the building of King Solomon's Temple. In the first place, people of different faiths gathered together in a lodge, accepting the Temple as a symbol of respect and brotherly love. This Temple became a theologically neutral symbol of Freemasonry's spirituality and brotherly love to which all believers in a Supreme Being could relate. Some ancient philosophers believed that the Temple's architecture and decorations had some kind of mathematical and geometrical keys and explanations which can be helpful to create an understanding of the nature of God and His creation. In early Freemasonry the



Temple was used as a symbol to unify initiation ceremonies. Tabbert, Masonic authority, offers some thoughtful insight with regard to the degrees of Craft Masonry and the role played by the King Solomon's Temple during initiation ceremonies:

The first degree (Entered Apprentice) symbolically begins on the Temple's 'checkered pavement' where the candidate receives instruction on the morals, virtues and tenets of the fraternity. In the second degree (Fellowcraft), he symbolically climbs up to the Temple's 'middle chamber' and is educated in architecture, the liberal arts and sciences, and intellectual improvement. The third degree (Master Mason) begins in the uncompleted and unconsecrated Holy of Holies, where the candidate assumes the role of the Temple's master builder, Hiram Abiff. Within the third degree, a member is charged with building God's Temple in his heart and employing the tenets of brotherly love, relief and truth within his community. (23-24)

2.3.1. Entered Apprentice

The first degree of Craft Masonry, the Entered Apprentice Degree, is symbolic of birth. This degree begins a candidate's journey into Freemasonry and represents youth, as well. The candidate in a state of complete darkness is brought into the lodge without any knowledge of what will happen there, but trusting in the Masonic officer who leads him through the search for light and knowledge. The candidate is instructed about the internal workings and principles of the Order, and is taught by a Junior Warden of the antiquity of



Freemasonry as well as the symbolism, building, completion and dedication of King Solomon's Temple. The candidate agrees to never reveal any of the Masonic secrets and the hidden mysteries of Masonry. Second, he promises to always obey superior Masonic authority, and never to cheat, wrong or defraud a fellow Mason. "Freemasons Kidnapped & Murdered Capt. William Morgan in 1826," an online article, written by John Daniel, there we find the three blood oaths under one of headings of the same article titled "Oaths of the Blue Degrees," which candidates are supposed to take when receiving the degrees of Craft Masonry; the first oath is stated as follows (the two remaining oaths will be taken from the same source):

All this I most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, with a firm and steadfast resolution, to keep and perform the same without any equivocation, mental reservation or secret evasion of mind whatever, binding myself under a no less penalty than that of having my throat cut across, my tongue torn out by its roots and buried in the rough sands of the sea at low water mark, where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours.

2.3.2. Fellow Craft

The second degree of Craft Masonry has a similar initiation pattern to the first one. However, it centers on the intellectual improvement of its candidates, and it is symbolic of life. This degree symbolizes man in adulthood and represents work. As the candidate enters the lodge room, he has to prove that he has a good command of the lessons learned in the previous degree. He is



instructed in the advancement of the operative workmen of biblical and medieval times, and how they were paid for their labors. The Senior Warden provides the candidate with a lecture which expands the candidate's understanding of the completion and importance of King Solomon's Temple in Freemasonry. The Fellow Craft candidate then has to take the following blood oath (the beginning of each oath is the same for all three degrees, differing only in the punishment):

All this I most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, with a firm and steadfast resolution, to keep and perform the same without any equivocation, mental reservation or secret evasion of mind whatever, binding myself under a no less penalty than that of having my breast torn open, my heart plucked out and given as a prey to the beast of the field and the fowls of the air.

2.3.3. Master Mason

Master Mason Degree represents the candidate in old age and connects him with wisdom and knowledge. The initiation cycle of Craft Masonry finishes in the third degree, or sublime degree of Master Mason. The candidate, once more, accepts the obligations of the degree, and in this stage the Hiram legend unfolds in a dramatic, theatrical performance. He is taught the legend of Hiram Abiff, the Grand Master of the Masons, who built Solomon's Temple, and how Abiff was murdered for refusing to betray the secret of his craft.

In the process of receiving the Master Mason Degree, the candidate assumes the role of King Solomon's master builder. The candidate must refuse



to break his sacred trust while suffering a symbolic death performed by his attackers. This degree's ritualistic performance is completed when the candidate is raised a Master Mason by the lodge Master's right hand. Therefore, the third degree of Craft Masonry is obviously symbolic of death. Once again, the candidate has to prove that he is in full control of the lessons learned in the previous degree. The lodge Master gives the candidate a lecture by which he furthers his understanding of the legendary history, symbolism, teachings and philosophy of Freemasonry. Finally, the Master Mason candidate has to take this oath:

All this I most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, with a firm and steadfast resolution, to keep and perform the same without any equivocation, mental reservation or secret evasion of mind whatever, binding myself under a no less penalty than that of having my body severed in twain, my bowels taken from thence and burned to ashes, and the ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven, that no trace or remembrance may be had of so vile and perjured a wretch as I. Should I ever knowingly violate this my solemn obligation. So help me God, and keep me steadfast in the due performance of the same.

The oaths for the Craft Masonry Degrees have played a crucial part in the success of Freemasonry's ritualism and secrecy over the course of its history. Freemasonry's ability to maintain secrecy among its members has determined its worldwide success at all times. When the candidate of any of the three degrees takes the required oath, he has to keep the secret obligations of Masonry as long as he belongs to the fraternity. According to an online article



titled “American Freemasons,” Freemasons at each level or degree swear never to reveal Freemasonry’s secrets, and the punishments when revealing them become progressively more severe with each successive degree: an Apprentice Mason’s tongue is torn out; a Fellowcraft Mason’s heart is torn out; a Master Mason’s bowels are burned; and a Royal Arch has the top of his skull sliced off. Therefore, when discussing initiation Masonic rituals and blood oaths, a controversial man comes onto the scene of Freemasonry’s history—William Morgan, who disobeyed his obligations and failed to keep the secrets and hidden mysteries of Freemasonry. In a written work, Morgan tried to reveal all the Masonic rituals and secrets, recognition signs and secret words—such a troublesome event ended up in a crisis for the Brotherhood.

Morgan reached a point in his life when he was no longer worthy of belonging to Freemasonry because of his dishonest acts and, consequentially, bad reputation within his community. As a result of his bitter feelings, Morgan made the most dangerous threat ever made against Freemasonry: he said he had written a book that would reveal all the Masonic rituals and secrets, by which he would earn a half-million dollars for its publication. Therefore, the Order became very furious and fearful that its innermost secrets would be exposed to the public. Obviously, if Morgan’s attempt had been crystallized, Freemasonry would have been deeply affected in its roots as a ritual-and-secret-based fraternal brotherhood.

Morgan went into jail for not paying a debt. After somebody paid the debt, Morgan disappeared, and rumors started to spread that his Masonic brethren had kidnapped and killed him to prevent the publication of his book.



Masons denied absolutely any participation in such an event. Later on, it was discovered that there was a Masonic conspiracy to release Morgan's kidnappers and murders, since some of the judges and jurors in charge of this trial were Freemasons. These events led to the creation of an anti-Masonic movement, which, along with anti-Masonic Party leaders, sought to decrease Freemasonry activity and to eventually eliminate all Masonic influence and participation in any social, civic and political event in American society.

The anti-Masonic movement, party and agitation of the 1820s and 1830s significantly weakened the Order in the U.S., and its membership declined substantially. Tabberts adds that "try as it might, the Masonic fraternity would never regain the public prestige and reclaim the honor it held in the eyes of the nation prior to William Morgan's disappearance" (65). To learn about the American population's feelings and view of the Morgan affair and Freemasonry, Jeffers gives us the following insight:

Popular feeling that Masons considered themselves above the law produced a public campaign against Freemasonry. It was claimed that their secrecy hid illegal and immoral activities, that Masonic oaths were unlawful and 'bloody,' and that Masons sought to subvert American political and religious institutions. Women joined the anti-Masonic movement by demanding that their husbands resign because of the exclusion of women from Masonry.(47)

2.4. Masonic Rites

In the following lines we will analyze the two principal Masonic Rites with major influence and membership on American soil. To begin with the Scottish



Rite comes from France and has 33 degrees, while the York Rite is made up of dozens of different degrees which were joined together in the U.S.; there its name was given to the rite. From 1790 to 1820, younger American Masons imported two new higher-degree systems of Masonry, the York Rite, following English traditions, and the Scottish Rite, following French practices. The York Rite offered higher degrees, in addition to other Masonic achievements after acquiring the Blue Lodge Degrees. In the United States, the Scottish Rite flourished as a Masonic civilian rite; however, it was created in France by English expatriates. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, this new generation of American Masons wanted institutional order and ritual uniformity because of the great diversity existing in rituals and ceremonies.

At the time, there were two main groups of Masons who deeply shaped and influenced the Brotherhood's future. One of the groups was centered in New England and established the York Rite, being focused on the British degree system. The other was centered in Charleston, South Carolina, and used the continental European degree system to bring order to the Scottish Rite. By the 1850s, these two groups had primarily become very dominant and well-structured; they had spread all over the United States. Other groups also existed, but could not prosper to gain structural order and ritual consistency. Basically, the Scottish Rite and the York Rite both encourage the brethren to obtain more ritual instruction in morality, knowledge and wisdom and to receive further Masonic teachings and lessons.



2.4.1. The York Rite

The York Rite is a branch of Freemasonry which provides Master Masons with further Masonic teachings, in addition to offering additional degrees. In the U.S. the additional Masonic degrees offered by the York Rite are found in three separate bodies, including Royal Arch Chapters, Royal and Select Chapters and Knight Templar Commanderies. These degrees are progressive within the York Rite; for instance, a candidate first has to receive the degrees of the Royal Arch and Royal and Select Masters to become a Knight Templar. Each of the York Rite body meets in regional locations and conferred its degrees individually. Usually, Royal Arch Chapters obtained members from numerous local American lodges; most of these members went on into the York Councils and Commanderies. The degrees of Craft Masonry, the Royal Arch and Royal and Select Masters are representative of imaginary rituals based upon the stories of the construction of the first and second Jerusalem Temples. However, the Knight Templar Degrees differ from their preceding ones, emphasizing the crusaders' sacrifices made to help and to protect Christian pilgrims trying to reach the Holy Land.

As mentioned, the York Rite consists of three broad groups or bodies with further degrees, which can be obtained by the brethren after completing the three Craft Masonry Degrees. Each of these York Rite bodies consists of three or four degrees which go in ascending order; they are titled as follows: The Royal Arch body starts with Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master and Holy Royal Arch Mason. The next body, the Royal and Select Masters, starts with Royal Master, then moves on to Select Master and finally Super



Excellent Master, which is the 10th degree in the York Rite. The highest body of the York Rite is the group known as the Commandery of Knights Templar. This starts with the Order of the Red Cross, moves on to the Order of the Knights of Malta, and then the Order of the Knight Templar Commandery.

Going a little deeper into each of the York bodies will provide us with a good sense of how the York Rite is constituted, both in organization and philosophy. In doing so, let's begin with a quick definition of the Royal Arch Chapter by Mason Brother Gage, who, on the Internet, gives us this insight: "The Masonic Truths taught by the Chapter Degrees (The Royal Arch) or are practical, and applicable to the problems of our everyday lives. The instruction is not dogmatic, but is so broad that any good Mason can find in it personal help and encouragement." The Royal Arch Chapter is the second step into the York Rite. Within this Chapter the brethren will receive the necessary instruction and information to fill in some of the missing pieces from Masonic history acquired in the degrees of Craft Masonry. The degrees of the Royal Arch Chapter are referred to as "Capitular Freemasonry," providing the candidate the opportunity for further advancement both in teachings and knowledge of the Order. The Council of Royal and Select Masters is referred to as "Cryptic Freemasonry," and takes its name from the Greek word "crypt," meaning a concealed place or subterranean vault. In fact, the first two degrees of this council—Royal Master and Select Master—deal with the vault under the Temple of Solomon.

Furthermore, when considering the last body of the York Rite—Commandery of Knights Templar—it is important to discuss the unarguable connection between Freemasonry and the Knights Templar, since certain



Masonic degrees were established due to this association. Despite the various speculations regarding Freemasonry's origins, the fact that the York Rite and the Scottish Rite carries within their degrees Templarism heritage is certain. In the York Rite the highest degrees are found in the Commandery of Knights Templar, known also as "Chivalric Masonry;" these degrees are collectively recognized to contain Templarism, providing the brethren further knowledge and purpose.

At this point, in order to have a better understanding of the relation between Freemasonry and Templarism, it is important to recall something of the history of the Knights Templar. They were basically a mysterious order composed of monks. In 1118 A.D., these knights took up arms to protect Christian pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem. According to legends of the Knights Templar, this group discovered the greatest treasure in history buried in the ruins of King Solomon's Temple. The Knights became exceedingly rich, and in doing so, became the targets of envy and suspicion. In 1307, King Philip IV of France arrested all the Knights Templar so that he could take possession of their great wealth. It is uncertain what happened to the Knights after their imprisonment; however, it is believed that they went into hiding and continued their work in secret.

Scholars say that during the 1700s the Knights Templar reemerged as the modern Freemasons in Europe. In the early 1700s, this theory was presented by Andrew Michael Ramsay and the Baron Karl Von Hundt; they stated that the Freemasons began in the medieval deserts of the Levant with the Crusaders and Knights Templar. This theory has met with acceptance by



many Freemasons worldwide, but others have rejected it as inaccurate. According to some Masonic scholars, Freemasons trace their true roots to the building of King Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. The builders of the temple were the original stonemasons, and the forefathers of today's Freemasons. In the Middle Ages, these stone workers were hired by kings and churches in England, Scotland and France to build great castles, cathedrals and temples.

2.4.2. The Scottish Rite

The Scottish Rite is another branch of Freemasonry, which offers further teaching and offer additional degrees to Master Masons after they have completed the three degrees of the Blue Lodge. The Scottish Rite degrees originated in France and were based on legends that came from Scotland. This rite is a collection of eighteenth-century French rituals and contains both Ecosais and Templar Degrees; there are also other influences, such as chivalry, alchemy, and Rosicrucianism. As stated, in the New World, a group of Masons was centered in Charleston, South Carolina, and used the continental European degree system to organize Scottish Rite in a better manner. In 1801, the Scottish Rite was officially founded. The Scottish Rite is a Masonic organization that continues a Master Mason's education of the first three degrees and is one of the several appendant groups of Freemasonry. Although there is no higher degree than that of a Master Mason, the 29 degrees of Scottish Rite serve to enrich the philosophy and teachings of the Blue Lodge. A Mason who chooses to further his Masonic experience by becoming a 32° Scottish Rite Mason will expand upon the fundamental principles of



Freemasonry. This rite will, in addition, answer some of the questions raised by the Blue Lodge Degrees. In short, the Scottish Rite aids, supplements and reinforces Craft Masonry in every way.

The full name of the rite is the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry; however, it is commonly known by its short form—the Scottish Rite. In the early 1800s, the Scottish Rite was divided into two jurisdictions that still remain in U.S. Freemasonry. The Southern and the Northern jurisdiction are each governed by a separate Supreme Council. The Northern Jurisdiction's headquarters are situated in Lexington, Massachusetts, and consist of 15 Northeastern and Midwestern states. The Southern Jurisdiction is in charge of the remaining 35 states, and its headquarters are in Washington, D C. Tabberts states, "Each Supreme Council has the authority to confer the 33rd degree, which is by invitation only and is presented to a limited number of Scottish Rite Masons in recognition of their contribution to Freemasonry, their community, the nation or the world" (196).

Each Jurisdiction has up to four Scottish Rite bodies, and each body confers a set of degrees. These degrees are divided as follows in the Northern Jurisdiction of the United States. The Lodge of Perfection contains the following degrees: 4° Master Traveler, 5° Perfect Master, 6° Intimate Secretary, 7° Provost and Judge, 8° Intendant of the Building, 9° Master Elect of the Nine – North, 10° Master Elect – North, 11° Sublime Master Elected – North, 12° Grand Master Architect, 13° Master of the Ninth Arch, 14° Grand Elect Mason. The Princes of Jerusalem Council has the next two degrees, including 15° Knight of the East or Sword and 16° Prince of Jerusalem. The Rose Croix



Chapter also has two degrees: 17° Knight of the East and West and 18° Knight of the Rose Croix. The Consistory contains the next 14 degrees: 19° Grand Pontiff, 20° Master ad Vitam, 21° Patriarch Noachite, 22° Prince of Libanus, 23° Chief of the Tabernacle, 24° Prince of the Tabernacle, 25° Knight of the Brazen Serpent, 26° Friend and Brother Eternal, 27° Commander of the Temple, 28° Knight of the Sun, 29° Knight of St. Andrew, 30° Grand Inspector, 31° Knight Aspirant and 32° Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret.

As mentioned before, the Supreme Council for each jurisdiction confers an honorary 33rd Degree of Sovereign Grand Inspector General to certain 32nd Masons for merit and exceptional service, plus a daily lifestyle encompassing the true meaning and ideals of Freemasonry. Unless the candidate is at least 33 years of age, he cannot apply for the degree. Moreover, the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States is organized somewhat differently and has few different names for some York Rite Degrees. The names of its bodies, the symbols and the number of degrees within each body differ a little from the Southern Jurisdiction; these bodies are as follows: Lodge of Perfection (4°–14°), Chapter of Rose Croix (15°–18°), Council of Knights Kadosh (19°–30°), and Consistory (31°–32°).

2.5. The Masonic Lodge Room

A “lodge” refers to a certain number of Freemasons who gather together to work, having authority to do so from an official charter which comes from a Grand Lodge. A lodge room, called also a lodge, is a properly arranged and furnished space, where Freemasons meet. In a PDF article titled “The Masonic



Lodge Room: A Sacred Space of Masculine Spiritual Hierarchy” written by William D. Moore, we find this analysis of the importance of this Masonic spot: “The lodge room was where Masonic rituals were enacted. It was where the abstract idea of a fraternity of men took concrete form, and where a lodge defined itself” (27). Masonic lodges are believed to contain very beautiful and antique rooms, which have various parts and uses. Lodge rooms are elongated; that is, they have a shape that it is longer than it is wide. These rooms are typically oriented to the east and west. On a Web page sponsored by the Masonic Towel, Bro. Ed Greenberg, in his article “Anatomy of a Lodge Room,” notes that “even if the room must be oriented in another direction, the ‘front’ of the Lodge room is always symbolically the East, and the back, where the doors are located, is considered the West.”

Individual lodges maintain their own set of internal rules. Members of each lodge have their own secret passwords, handshakes and signs to recognize one another. The lodge consists of the following Masonic officers, who have specific obligation: the head is the Worshipful Master, who is elected through a regular voting system, and he must ensure that the lodge is following all the required regulations. The Senior Warden helps the Worshipful Master with the lodge duties and takes over when he is away, while the Junior Warden makes sure that visiting Masons have the correct credentials. The Treasurer collects dues and pays the lodge's bills, and the Secretary records meeting minutes and handles other administrative duties. The Senior Deacon guides visitors and new members into the lodge, and finally, the Junior Deacon serves as messenger of the lodge.



Buildings that have a meeting lodge room are known as either a Masonic Hall or a Masonic Temple, where Freemasons hold their meetings in a private manner. Around 1870s, these kinds of structures were usually multiple-use buildings, like the Charlestown, Massachusetts Masonic Hall, dedicated in 1876. This hall was built by the Charlestown Savings Bank, which occupied the first two levels, while the Masons occupied the top floors. By the 1910s and 1920s, Masonic temples were often devoted entirely to Masonic purposes. Formerly, certain characteristics of lodge rooms were quite alike. Basically, these rooms were above street level and longer than they were wide and had a high ceiling and an altar in its center with doors symmetrically placed on one end. Lodge rooms simultaneously transformed the members staying at it and elevated their personal worth. Most importantly, lodge rooms served as both theaters and sites of worship, and the concepts of hierarchy and incorporation were central to their function and design.

2.5.1. As a Space of Entertainment and Worship

The lodge room is a place devoted to fulfill specific functions. First, this type of room emphasizes hierarchy, attracting the regular brethren's attention by placing certain important people or Masonic officers on ritually and physically elevated furnishings. Second, it privileges membership incorporation by centrally locating an altar where Masonic solemn promises are taken. Finally, it reinforces corporate definition by placing the members in positions where they can be in contact with their brothers, as well as by keeping them away from the outside, temporal world.



The function of the lodge room as a cultural space, along with the theatrical qualities of Masonry, has attracted American male population with the passing of the years. Earliest Masons saw the floor of the lodge room as a stage and understood the rituals performed there as a popular participatory theater. The evenings of ritual in the lodge room included community theatrical performances with which Masons entertained themselves in a time when there were no movies, radio programs, television, or any of the modern forms of entertainment. At the time, even Masonic literature supported the understanding of Masonic ritual as theater within the lodge room. In this regard Freemasons' view of the lodge room and the theatrical qualities of the fraternity was very impressive. In order to provide the reader with a special observation of the theatrical significance of the lodge room and the central legend of Masonic ritual, we will consider the thoughts of the nineteenth-century actor and Mason Edwin Booth, who wrote the following lines:

In all my research and study, in all my close study of the masterpieces of Shakespeare [. . .] I have never, and nowhere, met tragedy so real, so sublime, so magnificent as the legend of Hiram. [. . .] To be a Worshipful Master, and to throw my whole soul into that work, with the candidate for my audience and the Lodge for my stage, would be a greater personal distinction than to receive the plaudits of people in the theaters of the world. (qtd. in Moore 31)

In addition, many of the Masonic rituals are participatory performances organized around memorized dialogues and standardized floor movements. Masonic ritual takes the appearance of lectures and plays within



the lodge. The lodge room is understood as a space for theatrical performances because the rituals are performed by members in elaborate costumes and makeup. More importantly, these rooms are used to teach new initiates the value of true friendship, the benefits of knowledge, and the necessity of charity. To put it simply, the lodge room can be viewed as a theatrical space, where American men have preserved disappearing values and where these same men have entertained one another through the performance of morality plays.

On the other hand, Masonic scholars support an interpretation of the lodge room as a religious area, since ever the lodge room has frequently been identified and treated as a holy space by the brethren. A Brother Mason expressed this idea in 1890, when he noted, "Freemasonry is not only a brotherhood but a church.... It is an essential part of our ceremonial to joyfully recognize our relationship to God, our dependence upon Him, and to express our sense of need. A Masonic temple is a religious temple. The very word 'temple' implies worship" (qtd. in Moore 34). Some Masons even agree that lodge meetings should be performed with as much dignity as a church service. This fact comes from the understanding that the lodge room is a spiritual space where men find religious meaning and worship the Great Architect of the Universe.

Furthermore, at the end of the nineteenth century both forms of ritual space at lodge rooms and churches were furnished with the same items. For instance, the seating of the Masonic Worshipful Master and that of the Christian minister were physically similar that they assumed the same functional forms. In addition to this, there was in Massachusetts a fraternal furniture manufacturer,



who issued two lines of catalog offering the same merchandise for both entities. In order to broaden our view in this regard, Moore states, “Both catalogs included a number of identical engravings with identical prices. The only deviation between these images is that in the ecclesiastical catalog the chairs were labeled pulpit chairs, while in the fraternal catalog they were called lodge chairs” (34).

Over the years, spiritualists have sought salvation at home, while Freemasons have built temples with elaborate interiors in business districts, finding nothing profane about worshiping at an altar under the same roof as a bank, boutique or restaurant. Freemasonry using lodge rooms as sacred, religious spaces has offered its members a spiritual system, which helps find solutions to their religious enquiries and existential questions. This system provides not only a source of comfort for the present, but also satisfactory explanations for the present, the future and the past. As a result of such a spiritual system that is exercised in lodge rooms, Freemasonry claims to be both a temporal and eternal source of relief from religious distress in troubled times. In 1908, W. C. Atwood expressed this idea: “The principles of Freemasonry are as unchangeable and eternal as God Himself. They are hoary with age; they have endured the crucial tests of generation succeeding generation” (qtd. in Moore).



CHAPTER III

FREEMASONRY WITHIN AMERICAN SOCIETY

3.1. Masonic Stated Mission: “To Make Good Men Better”

In order to have a better understanding of the subject to be analyzed, we first need to examine the word “tenet.” According to the Masonic Web page of the Black Hawk Lodge 65 in Cedar Falls, Iowa, “a tenet is some theory or teaching so universally accepted that no one questions its truth. It is something that has held true in every instance without question for so long that everyone takes it for granted.” Freemasonry’s principal tenets and its mission are so closely connected because the tenets serve as pillars for the Masonic mission. After the American Civil War, these very same Masonic tenets had a significant role in American society—these were viewed as a main source for good conviviality, values, morality and virtues. By the exercise of these tenets American society was able to meet some of the new challenges during post-war years.

Anywhere Freemasonry has developed in the U.S. it has spread its mission with great success, improving its members’ life along with their communities. Freemasons have tirelessly made valuable contributions to their local communities through the exercise of the key principles making up the Brotherhood’s mission. Freemasonry’s mission as a fraternal organization is to take good men into a rigorous, thorough process so that they can become better people—this involves becoming better people both internally as well as



externally, and acting honestly in all life spheres. Tabbert adds, “Freemasonry is therefore an art and science for improving individual men” (93). Therefore, a Mason hopes to become a better citizen of his home land, a better husband and father within his family environment, and a better friend and co-worker on a daily basis.

Freemasonry is collectively understood as both a body of knowledge and a system of ethics based upon the belief that men have a responsibility to improve themselves through an ever-lasting, devoted dedication to their family, faith, country and fraternity. Members are expected to believe in God, engage in morality, practice philanthropy and obey the laws of their place of residence. At lodge meetings, Masons discuss intellectual issues but are prohibited to talk about politics and religion. They are encouraged to gain knowledge of different topics to be able to contribute to their communities and to find solutions to common problems. In addition, Freemasonry teaches its members to exercise the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity in the world outside. In April 2005, in the Masonic Bulletin of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon, Bro. John L. Copper comments, “The chief concern of our lodges is with the welfare, happiness and Masonic development of its members [. . .]” (2).

We can now start examining the three principal Masonic tenets, including brotherly love, truth, and relief. In Freemasonry these tenets symbolize three columns: Brotherly Love is the Column of Strength, which unites the brethren as one single family through real fraternal affection; Truth, the Column of Wisdom, penetrates and enlightens the very private and remote places of the Lodge; and Relief, the Column of Beauty, whose real objective is not any earthly material



decoration at Masonic buildings, but the satisfaction of providing the less fortunate with assistance, joy and happiness. Before going any further in the subject under examination, let's recall Benjamin Franklin's words regarding Masonic tenets:

Freemasonry has tenets peculiar to itself. They serve as testimonials of character and qualifications, which are only conferred after due course of instruction and examination. These are of no small value; they speak a universal language, and act as a passport to the attentions and support of the initiated in all parts of the world. They cannot be lost as long as memory retains its power. (qtd. in Jeffers 25)

3.1.1. Brotherly Love

With regard to brotherly love Masons hold the following ideas: Around the world Masons are required to achieve brotherly love with all their brethren and within their communities, as well. Masons must be willing to overlook faults and forget bitterness and offenses. They must strive to see the positive things in their brethren so that negative feelings have no room in their hearts—only pure, unconditional love. Freemasonry aims to develop this virtue within its worldwide members by providing opportunities to experience real fellowship and service and to encourage the brethren to understand it and to practice it on a daily basis. In short, Freemasonry wants its members to consider brotherly love as one of the most important human laws for the good of the mankind, which exists to be skillfully mastered through constant practice.



On the Web page of the Black Hawk Lodge 65, we find the article “Principle Tenets;” there this remark regarding brotherly love is written: “We [Masons] must cast aside our passions and prejudices and remember that, ‘All men are my brethren.’ By the exercise of brotherly love, we are taught to regard the whole human species as one great family; and that we must aid, support and protect each other.” Through this universal principle, Masonry has been able to unite men of every country, sect, race and opinion. As a result, Freemasonry is regarded as a reliable source that fosters and promotes service, true friendship and understatingamong worldwide people, who would otherwise have remained separated by cultural differences and political issues.

3.1.2. Relief

The form of relief Freemasons practice is charity, providing a great variety of assistance to the distressed and impoverished people since their fraternity's early days. This type of relief has a deep meaning among the Masonic membership, who holds the view that public charity is the responsibility of everyone. Masons agree that every regular citizen has the obligation to relieve the distressed and to assist the poor with charitable work. In the article regarding Masonic tenets by the Black Hawk Lodge 65, this impressive thought stands out: “A person must contribute more than his natural share before he can be classed as one who has donated to relief. Anything less than this is classed as an obligation, not relief.” Freemasonry claims that there many ways of giving relief. With this in mind, Masons are also able to provide another type of relief—a relief that has nothing to do with money. In Masonic Philosophy this



reasoning is as follows: Human beings can be distressed in many different ways, not only financially.

According to Freemasonry, people may have life issues with regard to health, business, or family that discourage them so badly that a helpful suggestion, advice or counseling may give them the relief and strength to carry on striving for a good life. Besides, people may feel lonely and unlucky because of the lack of proper friendship and connections, so true support, financial aid and cheerful words may give the necessary relief they seek. Most importantly, when it comes to true relief, Masons have in view these aims: to sympathize and assist the distressed in their misfortunes, to console them in their sorrows, and to restore peace to their troubled minds. Masons are highly encouraged to recognize opportunities in which they can exercise Freemasonry's tenets, and to offer their services of relief in the best way possible.

3.1.3. Truth

The last principal tenet is truth, which is a necessary pillar for a harmonious life in any fraternal organization. In this regard, if Freemasonry is supposed to have a permanent brotherhood, its members must be truthful in all their acts; they must be reliable, men of honor and honesty. In other words, Masons are encouraged to be men on whom their brothers can rely to be faithful fellows and loyal friends. As such, in Freemasonry one of the first lessons to be taught to its members has to do with truthfulness, which is viewed as one of the fundamental requirements of good citizenship. To be good and true are the real pillars for all activities in the Masonic world. Therefore, in order to qualify to become a



member of Freemasonry, prospective members are required to be truthful, since without truth there can be no chance of trust and fellowship within the fraternity. More than any other fraternal organization, Freemasonry gives truth a truly deep meaning, since the fraternity claims that there is a never-ending search for further truth and light as the brethren explores and progresses in the Masonic journey for wisdom. According to Masons, truth and light are untransferable and must be obtained by personal search, generally resulting in a unique interpretation for each Mason.

3.2 Masonic Fraternalism and Voluntarism in America

Freemasonry is regarded to be the parent organization of almost all American fraternal and voluntary organizations, which had Masons as either founding fathers or early members within the organization of these types of societies. To begin with, let's examine the background of American fraternalism and the Masonic influence upon it. Before the American Civil War, fraternalism, also known as social organizations, was already largely established in the country, but obtained its membership only from a select or elite group of the male population. At that time, the two biggest fraternities—Freemasonry and the Odd Fellows—drew their members from men with high social and economic status. These select few fraternal members considered their affiliations as honorary and beneficiary, thus having no great impact on their life at lodge activities. Even though the fraternal movement and its lodge activities were affected by the Civil War, it did not put an end to fraternal orders. Harriett W. McBride in his article "The Golden Age of Fraternalism: 1870-1910," confirms



that “the American Civil War interrupted and slowed the growth of fraternal orders in this country [U.S.], but it did not destroy the secret societies” (3).

Years after the Civil War, fraternal orders began to experience changes with regard to the select group of members they consisted of; this allowed the orders to grow in number and type in the four decades which followed. As such, prospective candidates, who were from different social and economic class and even from several immigrant ethnic groups, were accepted as official members in many American fraternities. In following years, this prevented the fraternities from recruiting elite people only within American society. As a result, lodges of the fraternal orders grew rapidly in number, being able to expand their activities throughout the country, in addition to creating more fraternal chapters nationwide.

From 1870 to 1910 fraternalism played an important role upon both the male and female population. Fraternalism took over the social life of a great number of the American population, who focused their social interactions and connections around collateral Masonic bodies, brotherhoods, sisterhoods and fraternal auxiliaries. In most fraternal orders, there were youth organizations whose members usually continued their affiliation all the way through the governing adult fraternities. This phenomenon was passed down from generation to generation—just as a common family tradition. This Great Fraternal Movement, lasting forty years (1870-1910), reflects an enriching and important contribution to U.S. social and cultural life. Throughout these years men and women joined fraternal orders by the thousands, all across the



country, and found themselves highly interested in creating new orders, ranks, ceremonies, ritual, and fraternal regalia.

During the years of the Great Fraternal Movement in the U.S., the dominant fraternal orders were as follows: the Grand Army of the Republic, the Masonic orders, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and the Knights of Pythias. American men from a variety of backgrounds, besides, formed a great deal of new fraternities that imitated the features of established fraternities. As a matter of fact, most of the American secret societies were founded after 1870, and most of those were founded by members of other secret societies. For instance, members of Freemasonry, the Ancient Order of United Workmen, the Royal Arcanum, the Knights of Honor, and the Odd Fellows established the Royal Society of Good Fellows in 1882. A group of Masons, Odd Fellows and Knights of Pythias with special political inclination founded the Knights of Reciprocity in 1890.

In those days, it would be very common for those interested in fraternalism to belong to two or three, or even more, fraternal organizations; in this way, fraternities' secret rituals were shared among lodge members due to the growing tradition of being affiliated in multiple fraternities. Frequently, a man who was an Odd Fellow also became a Freemason, a Pythian Knight, a Maccabee, or some other knight or fellow. According to fraternal scholars all American fraternal organizations shared basic similarities, and their rituals and degrees often borrowed exotic titles and dramatic scenarios from ancient legends or mythology, while fraternal regalia provided fantasy and drama to lodge ceremonies.



Collectively, Freemasonry is viewed as a voluntary organization somewhat similar in some ways to popular orders, such as the ELKs, Rotary, Lions International, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, Boy Scouts and many more. Freemasonry, however, differs from these other voluntary orders because its prospective members are not allowed to attend any lodge meeting before obtaining admission; full membership is not to be gained until multiple obligations are taken by oath, and a series of three initiation rituals have to be solemnly performed by each candidate at a Masonic lodge. Over the course of American history, Freemasonry has stimulated the creation of a great number of voluntary and fraternal organizations, in addition to having had significant influence in the organization of American community life. From the early years of Freemasonry, Masons carried their fraternity's principles, ideals, tenets, rituals and symbolism into their local communities and abroad, as well.

Over the years, many Masons and non-Masons alike have adjusted Masonic ritual, philosophy, symbols and regalia to form thousands of fraternities on American soil. These Masonic-like organizations have taught moral values, brotherly love and charity to countless communities consisting of people from a variety of social, economic and cultural backgrounds. Tabbert comments, "Other Masons used Masonic relief to develop mutual benefit associations and life insurance companies or build hospitals, orphanages, and retirement homes. [. . .] Still others, dropping the rituals and symbols, formed social, business, and educational and community service clubs, such as Lions International" (13).

Freemasonry is regarded as one of the most important fraternal and voluntary organizations and the strongest surviving secret societies from the



golden years of American fraternalism. Over those years, the Civil War had a strong effect upon the decline of fraternities' membership. In addition to this, Freemasonry found itself deeply affected by Morgan's affair and the Anti-Masonic Party that caused a decline in membership within the Order, a loss in social prestige and power, and the destruction of many of its lodges. However, new generations of Masons were able to rebuild their fraternity, and even expand Masonic activities to other areas of American society. As a result, new organizations and collateral or appendant bodies were admitted into the traditional Masonic framework, in addition to new Masonic-related organizations for women and children. Groups for fun and social interaction were also created based upon Masonic principles and ideals. On the other hand, some Masons who did not fully agree with the fraternity's traditions and principles started to form new fraternities. For instance, in 1842, Masons who disagreed with total alcohol abstinence at lodges helped create the Sons of Temperance. Likewise, Jewish Masons who did not support religious neutrality helped form B' nai B'rith.

The years following the Civil War witnessed the creation of a significant number of fraternal organizations by Masons. The Masonic founders and the principal fraternities organized after the post-war years are as follows: Justus Rathbone founded the Knights of Pythias to help reunite the country after the Civil War; Oliver Kelley organized the Patrons of Husbandry for rural families; John Upchurch formed the Ancient Order of United Workmen for skilled craftsmen; General John Logan created the Grand Army of the Republic for Union veterans; Melvin Jones started Lions International for business and



community service; and Paul Harris began Rotary International for community service.

In addition, non-Masons made use of Freemasonry's organizational model in order to create the structure, constitution, and ritual for new organizations. As a result, new ritual-based fraternities began to appear on American soil, including the Order of Odd Fellows and the Improved Order of Red Men. In brief, many fraternal organizations demonstrated the outstanding influence of, and close similarities to, Freemasonry. Tabbert comments, "After the Civil War, Freemasonry became the model for countless organizations as America entered into 'the golden age of fraternalism.' [. . .] Freemasonry achieved a new preeminence among American voluntary associations, as it strove to remain within its social niche and attract prominent and innovative men" (72).

From 1865 to 1990, over 235 fraternal orders were established with six million members. These organizations, along with Freemasonry, tried hard to improve the community life in America by teaching moral truths through secret rituals and obligations. Being a central role in the life of thousands of Americans, voluntary organizations and fraternal orders were the principal means to improve American communities and to establish benevolence, solidarity, and morality. Through their affiliation with Freemasonry, new generations of Americans were able to expand brotherly love, service, harmony and order within American society as a whole. Albert Stevens, the scholar who wrote the first in-depth documentation of America's golden age of fraternalism in 1897, notes that "the Masonic fraternity is directly or indirectly the parent



organization of all modern secret societies, good, bad or indifferent” (qtd. in Tabbert 88).

The years following the Civil War, fraternal organizations were held in very high esteem in the U.S., representing a positive influence upon Americans’ way of living. The secret ritual work of Freemasonry and Masonic-like organizations taught moral lessons and virtues to their members who were younger men, trying to obtain respectability and success within their communities. Fraternal and voluntary members received prominent aid during hard times—this assistance manifested itself both spiritually and financially. Primarily, members were instructed in self-improvement, attracted by dramatic initiation rituals, supported through health and death benefits, entertained through countless social activities and helped to expand their network of friends and social connections. A clear example of this fact is the assistance given to wives, widows and children of Masons who were either unable to provide for their families or died during the Civil War or in the decades following it.

In 1920, Masonic membership increased to more than ten percent of the adult male population in the U.S. Unlike many voluntary organizations that changed their mission and even eliminated all their rituals, Freemasonry remained basically the same and expanded its activities to new organizations that had Masonic affiliation as the main requirement. Moreover, many men who were attracted by Freemasonry’s ideals and popularity continued on to create new voluntary and fraternal organizations, combining Masonic principles with community service, social life, benevolence and charitable work. More importantly, Masonic rituals became the primary source for new fraternities over



the course of the golden age of fraternalism and voluntarism in the U.S. Thousands of different types of American organizations, even college fraternities, incorporated elements, including initiation rituals, symbols, secret handshakes and passwords, which were substantially borrowed from the Masonic Order. All in all, Freemasonry, over the course of American history, has occupied a central, special part of countless lives, families, and communities.

3.2.1. Rotary International

Rotary International is a voluntary organization founded in 1905 by Mason and attorney Paul Harris, who combined Freemasonry's principals with community service. This American organization has expanded to different parts of the world, reaching great popularity and prestige because of its practical, charitable and community service work in thousands of cities around the world. The organization first began its activities in Chicago with its former name—the Rotary Club. The genesis of the club came from Paul Harris' ideas of promoting fellowship among business acquaintances and incorporating into a professional club the same friendly atmosphere he had experienced in the small towns of his youth. The club's meetings, in its early days, were held at no specific place; they rotated among the earliest members' offices, so the name Rotary was derived from such a practice. A year after its foundation, the organization adopted the name Rotary International, already being regarded as one of the most important voluntary organization in the world of service. The world of community service has witnessed how the distinguished reputation of Rotary



rapidly spread throughout the world, obtaining an impressive membership from all walks of life, but including presidents, prime ministers and celebrities.

As Rotary International has grown in countries of the six continents, its mission has extended beyond recognition because its members always try to share their resources for local and international charitable causes, and to contribute their talents to assist communities in times of need. The Rotarians strive to be consistent with their organization's motto—Service Above Self—while trying hard to exercise this key principal of their club: “He Profits Most Who Serves Best.” In 1917, Rotary International President Arch C. Klumph proposed to raise a donation “for the purpose of doing good in the world.” In 1928, Klumph's initial idea grew with great success to the creation of the Rotary Foundation, which is regarded as a distinct entity within Rotary International.

In the following years of the creation of the Foundation, it made its first financial contribution by giving a grant of \$500 to the International Society for Crippled Children. In 1978, the Health, Hunger and Humanity Grants program was then created to help improve communities suffering from these problems, and Rotary Volunteers started as a part of this program in 1980. The Foundation also contributed to promote world peace through the organization of studies programs. In an online article “History of The Rotary Foundation,” there is this observation regarding Rotary's work in the field of world peace: “Such strong support, along with Rotarian involvement worldwide, ensures a secure future for The Rotary Foundation as it continues its vital work for international understanding and world peace.”



In 1932, Rotarian Herbert J. Taylor created a code of ethics called the Four-Way Test, which was adopted by Rotary eleven years later. The test has been translated into more than 100 languages. The test requires answering questions about the things human beings think, say or do. In 1942, Rotarians called for a conference to promote international educational and cultural exchanges. This event inspired the founding of UNESCO. Nowadays, Rotary actively participates in United Nations conferences by sending observers to major meetings and covering the United Nations in its published works. At the turn of the twenty-first century, Rotary worked to meet society's changing needs, and to expand its service efforts in order to contribute to the finding of solutions to common problems, such as environmental degradation, illiteracy, world hunger, and children at risk. Nowadays, each club can decide its own service activities through a system called the Four Avenues of Service that includes Club Service, Vocational Service, Community Service and International Service.

3.2.2. Lions International

In 1917, Melvin Jones, a Chicago business leader and Mason, encouraged members of his local business club to go beyond business issues and work for the betterment of their communities and the world. Jones' fellow businessmen were respected members of the Business Circle of Chicago who agreed with his idea. The next step in this process was to contact similar groups around the United States, and then an organizational meeting was organized in June 1917, in Chicago. As a result, a new social organization was born, deriving



its name from one of the invited groups, The Association of Lions Clubs. That same year a national convention was held in Dallas, during which a constitution, by-laws, objects and a code of ethics were approved and adopted by the new organization. Three years after its foundation, Lions became an international organization. As time goes by, Lions International continues to be held in high regard because of its reputation as a well-run organization with a steady vision, clear mission and proud history. This internationalism has allowed thousands of people to become Lion members; they are regarded as active volunteers, members of a respected international organization, and, more importantly, leaders in their communities and friends to those in need.

This organization has one central international ruling body that strives to take its mission everywhere in the world. Its mission is stated as follows: provide service to people and communities by utilizing a grass roots structure. Considering the Lions' mission, its motto is best expressed in these two words: "We serve." Lions Club membership is open to both male and female and has affiliated groups, including the Leos, Lioness, and Lionettes. Several years ago, Lions Club was an entity for men only; however, its Lions International membership has now turned into a mixed-gender group. In 1968, Lions Club established a philanthropic organization called Lions Clubs International Foundation. Since its creation, it has provided worldwide Lions with assistance in far-reaching, global and local humanitarian projects. As a result, Lions are able to meet the needs of their local and international communities through the help of their own Foundation. Mason and Lions leader Bro. James F. Kirk-White, in an online article titled "Sharing Freemasonry Within Your



Community,” comments that “every community which has a Lions Club can, and will, be proud to show off their Lions Club projects and service accomplishments. The glue that binds Lions together throughout the world is pride in service.”

3.3.Masonic Relief and Charitable Work Within U.S. Society

Freemasonry is regarded as one of North America’s greatest charitable and social organizations of all time. In the Masonic philosophy, charity is a fundamental principal, and a primary virtue that rules its members’ activities and life. From the very beginning, the brethren learn that charity and philanthropy are to be the greatest achievements in life, and they are taught the central, significant role that relief, benevolence and service play upon each Mason during his earthly existence. Since the early days of its activities on American soil, Freemasonry has provided its brethren with service, benevolence and organized charity; these activities have reached beyond the U.S., as well. Firstly, the fraternity started to take care of Masons’ families in times of need, providing them with shelter, food, and health and death benefits.

As time went by, Freemasonry was able to extent its service efforts and charitable work to American society as a whole. The Brotherhood has been doing so in a personal and quiet manner, trying to assist all those in need—Masons and fellow citizens—through a variety of practical means, including welfare programs, philanthropic institutions, relief centers, foundations and hospitals, to mention a few. Masonic relief, along with the fraternity’s charitable work, has been in operation in American society for over two hundred and fifty



years, with great impact on thousands of impoverished communities throughout the country. Masonic philanthropy has become the Brotherhood's most outstanding and rewarding practice, as well as having been the primary aim among generations of Masons who have worked together and shared their talents and resources to help improve Masonic and non-Masonic communities. In 2005, in the article "Masonic relief" sponsored by the Masonic Bulletin, Bro. John L. Copper writes these lines: "Freemasonry is thus much more than a 'relief society' dedicated to doing good works. It is an idea and an ideal—a force for good that changes the world for the better" (2).

For the purpose of this work it is necessary to write an overview of the Masonic assistance and charity provided for the good of the U.S. society. Let's start with a relevant occurrence of Masonic relief in early years of U.S. history. Before Social Security and welfare entities started operating in America, Freemasonry was an important source of practical assistance for its members, basing its activities upon the ideals of older customs of hospitality, good conviviality and aid to the destitute. Many lodges created charity committees to investigate members' circumstances who reported being unable to provide care for their families and being in distress for any reason.

Freemasonry provided a quick assistance to the distressed and needy group of Masons. Therefore, small amounts of money were distributed among Masons affected by poverty so that they could use this financial help to meet their primary living necessities, such as food, rent, medical expenses and other essentials. Masonic lodges also gave financial aid to Masons with chronicle diseases, such as tuberculosis and leprosy. In addition to the care-giving



benefits of belonging to the Masonic Order, its members were also benefitted with preferential treatment at the moment of applying for employment and establishing business contacts. In 1723, *The Book of Constitutions* was published with the purpose of giving clear guidance and formal regulation to Freemasonry's activities; these lines are found in the book: "Specifically enjoined members to relieve brethren in need, and to 'employ him . . . or else recommend him to be employed.' "

When hard times of economic instability and disasters struck the U.S., Masonic charity played a primary charitable role for thousands of Masons, along with their families and communities as a whole. Lodges designated a special member to look after sick and indigent brethren so that these men could be provided with proper assistance. Masons preferred to seek financial aid from their lodges rather than churches or family members because Freemasonry kept in secret the charitable and financial assistance provided to the destitute. Practical and private Masonic aid became a direct benefactor of needy Masons, in addition to helping them maintain self-respect within their local communities. In the Masonic world, such benevolent assistance was also used as a primary financial source for departed Masons' widows and orphans. It is said that the greatest secret of Freemasonry may be the measureless aid given throughout its history, since nobody can truly know how many people have been assisted by its charitable activities and service efforts.



3.3.1. Masonic Service Association

The Masonic Service Association (MSA) of the United States of North America was founded in 1919 to provide assistance and service to nationwide Freemasons, who find difficulties in providing for themselves and their families. MSA has tirelessly dedicated its efforts and activities to service to the Masonic community, no matter where it is situated on American soil. In the Masonic Trowel, a scholar Masonic Web page, the organization's altruistic statement of purpose reads as follows: "The Masonic Service Association of the United States is a servant of freemasonry. Formed of and supported by American grand lodges, it is a voice they may command to speak, a hand they can move to action, that the great heart of the fraternity be made manifest and that the will of a united craft may be done."

The genesis of this Masonic organization dated back to the days of World War I. At that time, several American voluntary organizations made efforts to provide care for the servicemen in the army. Other organizations, such as the Young Men's Christian Association followed the example of the Red Cross, creating clubs and canteens for soldiers. The Knights of Columbus formed almost 150 clubs for American servicemen in Europe, while the Jewish Relief Board, Salvation Army, American Library Association, Young Women's Christian Association and even the Rotary Club started service activities abroad, providing many kinds of relief to thousands of Americans all through this war period. Unfortunately, Freemasonry was not allowed to take part in similar activities as a united national organization, although many Masons played a prominent role in the war. For instance, General John Pershing and



Corporal James D. Heriot, both Freemasons, led the American Expeditionary force and earned the Medal of Honor, respectively. Moreover, noted Masonic Army Generals led the American troops at that time, such as Generals George Marshall and Douglas MacArthur.

Furthermore, back in the U.S. both local lodges and state grand lodges strove to provide care, service and relief for individual Masons during the war. In those days, Freemasonry was divided into 49 grand lodges, which made it impossible for them to function as a whole; this fact did not permit the Brotherhood to coordinate relief overseas as a single, united national entity. Tabbert adds, “The U.S. War Department preferred to deal with national organizations and simply refused to allow such a disjointed organization to work overseas” (154). In order to find a solution to such a frustrating experience, Iowa Grand Master George L. Schoonover made an important step by encouraging the formation of a Masonic convention two weeks after the war was over. In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 22 grand lodges gathered together to find solutions to the disjointed organizational problem within American Freemasonry. As a result, the Masonic Service Association was born at this convention, and its mission was stated clearly: “Its purpose was to provide ‘the Service of Mankind through education, enlightenment, financial relief and Masonic visitation, particularly in times of disaster and distress...’ ” (qtd. in Tabbert 154).

In addition, in an attempt to make the association strong and far-reaching, every American grand lodge was invited to join this new Masonic cause. However, the MSA was not accepted nationwide by each grand lodge; several grand lodges dropped their support, while others held suspicious views



of it. Therefore, funding for the MSA was obtained through voluntary grand lodge contributions, and MSA membership remained voluntary. This nationwide Masonic organization, however, did not mean an attempt to create a governing national grand lodge for American Freemasonry; such a thing was not even close to developing, since regulations were passed to prevent the formation of this entity.

Grand Lodge Masters authorized the MSA to provide countries with financial assistance and charitable work in times of major natural catastrophes. In 1923, the MSA assisted for the first time with charity in a disaster overseas—the Japanese earthquake. Besides, the MSA made more financial contributions to countries suffering from different types of natural disasters such as Chile, Canada, Austria and the Philippines. In the U.S., the MSA provided financial aid to thousands of Americans during the Mississippi flood of 1927, and many more disasters all across the country. In addition, the MSA provide further assistance in other fields through two major programs called Education/Information Publications and Hospital Visitation Program. The former produces a free catalog of educational publications, informative bulletins and other materials. The latter provides service and aid to sick or wounded veterans all over the country. In brief, the primary function of the MSA has been to contribute to mankind in times of major disasters through its charitable work, service and assistance, from 1923 to the present day.



3.3.2. Charitable Contributions and Philanthropic Institutions

For over two hundred and fifty years, Freemasonry has played a major role in providing benevolent efforts, charitable work, and service to countless American communities in times of disasters, such as floods, earthquakes, hurricanes and wild fires. Freemasonry had, in addition, expanded its philanthropy by building libraries and colleges, and organizing charity funds, welfare programs and other philanthropic institutions—all of which provided a key assistance and brotherly support, not only to millions of Masons, but to the country as a whole, as well. In doing so, many Masonic grand lodges strove to promote knowledge within American society. Therefore, many colleges were established by lodge efforts before 1861, while other lodges started to create libraries for the betterment of their members' knowledge. Over post-war years Masonic state charitable entities, national relief funds and philanthropic institutions were organized, such as the America's first Masonic home in Louisville; in other American cities, similar facilities were later created. Grand lodges extended their charitable efforts and benevolent activities to their brethren in different jurisdictions all over the country, providing vital assistance in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, the Johnstown flood of 1889, the Galveston hurricane of 1900 and many other disasters.

Grand lodges' efforts were directed toward those less fortunate within the Freemasonry, so these lodges continued to build and maintain homes for older Masons and orphans of departed members. As a matter of fact, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Freemasonry's charity centered primarily on Masons and their families' needs. Although Freemasonry focused its



attention on assisting its brethren only for a long time, it later expanded its charitable and benevolent efforts to American society as a whole. During the years of World War I, American Freemasonry became aware of the need to provide care, service and assistance beyond its membership. The fraternity, therefore, turned from a private relief organization into a public charitable entity. With regard to philanthropy, Freemasonry's mission at that time simply became service for all those in need—Masons and non-Masons alike. In other words, Freemasonry's special emphasis in the twentieth century was to improve American society as a whole rather than the individual only.

As time went by, Freemasonry's commitment to good works grew significantly. By 1980, almost every Masonic branch or affiliated organization was involved within charitable and/or community service programs. To have a good sense of Freemasonry's far-reaching philanthropic efforts in the U.S., we want to make a brief overview of Masonic programs in the American medical field. In 1974, the Central Auditory Processing Disorders began to receive funding from the General Grand Chapters of Royal Arch Masons. Masons expanded their charitable efforts to support health associations and programs, such as Dentistry for Handicapped Children, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the American Cancer Society and the American Diabetes Association. In addition, many grand lodges started their own charitable work. For instance, the Grand Lodge of New York established a medical research laboratory, and the Grand Lodge of Kansas created a foundation that later funded cancer research at the University of Kansas.



Furthermore, we want to mention two prominent Masonic philanthropic institutions with great medical contribution to the American society—the Eye Foundation and the RiteCare Childhood Language Program. The Eye Foundation was founded in 1955 by the Knights Templar of Freemasonry; its mission consists of helping children born with visual disabilities, and anyone else requiring surgical treatment to recover their sight, as well as providing funds for medical research in curing diseases of the eye. The RiteCare Childhood Language Program was established in the early 1950s in Colorado by the Scottish Rite of the Southern Jurisdiction. This program’s mission is to help children with speech and language disorders. The program gradually led to the creation of 178 RiteCare clinics and centers located throughout the U.S. These clinics and centers provide medical evaluation and treatment for speech and language disorders and learning disabilities. Treatment is available to preschool children and to those in the early grades who have difficulty speaking, reading, or understanding the spoken or written word. Some centers also offer literacy training for adults. Most importantly, the services of the Eye Foundation and the RiteCare Childhood Language Program are available regardless of people’s ability to pay, race, creed, color, sex, or national origin.

3.3.2.1. Shriners Hospitals Program

Shriners was founded by a group of Masons, who wanted to create an organization with Masonic affiliation in which fun, charity, service and fellowship would be emphasized more than ritual and obligations. Shriners trace their roots back to when a luncheon group of thirteen Freemasons came up with the idea



of a new fraternity at Knickerbocker Cottage, a restaurant in Manhattan, New York City. Some years after its creation, Shriners made the greatest philanthropic contribution to American society by creating a system of hospitals for children. Of all the Masonic charitable organizations, the Shriners' philanthropic work is probably the best known and most recognized attempt at helping to relieve children suffering from serious diseases through nationwide health services and medical treatment at no cost.

By 1871, two noted Masons came on the scene in the early organization of the Shriners: William F. Florence and Dr. Walter Fleming. Florence was a well-known American comedian. During a visit to Europe in 1870, he attended a party given by an Arabian diplomat in France; at the end, he and other guests were initiated into a secret society, called the "Bektashy." This special kind of entertainment was like an elaborately staged musical comedy. Florence recalled the idea of creating this new Masonic organization and thought his experience in France might be the foundation for it. Upon his arrival to New York, Florence told Dr. Fleming about what he experienced at the party and showed him some notes and drawings of the ceremonies. In 1870, Fleming, a doctor and thirty-three-degree Scottish Rite Mason, took the ideas provided by Florence, adapting them into the organization of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, commonly known as Shriners.

Additionally, with the help of the other Freemasons from the aforementioned luncheon group, Fleming planned the ritual, the emblem, ritual costumes and established a salutation for its members, and the fraternity's distinctive article of clothing—a red fez. Jeffers notes, "Initiation rites were



drafted by Fleming with the help of three brother Masons: Charles T. McClenachan, a lawyer and expert on Masonic ritual; William Sleigh Paterson, a printer, linguist, and ritualist; and Albert L. Rawson, a prominent scholar and Mason who provided much of the Arabic background” (162). It should also be noted that the permanent setup of the Shriners’ ritual took a long time, and its Oriental splendor became a very popular theme for parties at the time. It was decided that membership would only be available to Freemasons who reach the highest degrees of either York Rite or Scottish Rite; that is, Knights Templar in the former group, and thirty-second-degree holders in the latter.

In June 1896, a governing body was organized and was given the name of Imperial Grand Council of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine for the United States; its first imperial grand potentate was Dr. Fleming. This new body established regulations for membership and the formation of new temples. As a result, Freemasons finally felt they had a national organization. The Shriners group was viewed as the bridge that was able to firmly hold the nationwide superstructure of Freemasonry in the U.S. With the passing of the time, Shriners attracted thousands of upper-class Masons; this organization was able to surpass Scottish Rite and Knights Templar in membership. This rapid success is credited to the organization’s pure love of fun and local freedom. Shriners were free to open their own clubs under the supervision of their temples. Shriners who enjoyed activities such as hunting, fishing or other recreational activities were encouraged to open a Shrine unit, as were those members with musical preferences encouraged to form bands and choruses. In other words, Shriners are highly engaged in social



life, both at their temples and in the world outside. Tabberts adds, “Shrine Temples hosted luncheon clubs, held evening banquets and all-day outings at parks and ballgames” (129).

In 1919, the Imperial Council session voted to establish a health program called “Shriners Hospitals for Crippled Children” to help kids with orthopedic injuries, diseases and birth defects. In order to support this initiative, each Shriner gave a yearly \$2 assessment. After months of research and debate, the committee designated for this program decided to start the creation of not only one hospital, but a system of hospitals all across the U.S. This committee’s ambitious proposal was also approved with enthusiasm during the 1921 Imperial Session in Iowa. In 1922, the first Shriners Hospital was opened to the public in Louisiana, and by the 1930s, thirteen hospitals were operating in different American cities. Shriners Hospitals are nowadays referral centers for complex and specialized orthopedic treatments for children. In 1996, during an Imperial Council session in New Orleans, the program’s name was changed to “Shriners Hospitals for Children” to emphasize the far-reaching, philanthropic multiple health services provided through the assistance and care of the Shriners Hospitals in America.

The Shriners Hospitals Program’s stated mission, over the course of its history, has been unchangeable—providing people under eighteen with expert, specialized medical care and free-of-charge treatment. As is usual in Masonic philanthropic organizations, all the services offered by the Shriners Hospitals are provided regardless of race, religion or nationality. At the hospitals, the admission criteria for children is quite simple; it states that if a specialist



believes that the child can be helped through the hospital's services, admission is then granted immediately. In addition, Shrines in the early 1980s wanted to expand their care for children through the creation of America's first spinal cord injury rehabilitation centers, which are located in Philadelphia, Chicago and Sacramento. In 1989, during the 115th Imperial Council session, Shriners voted to build a new hospital in which children can be provided with orthopedic, spinal cord injury and burn care in a single facility. All of this means that the Shriners organization has always sought to help the suffering population of sick children in many ways, and its philanthropy has represented a great contribution to the medical world as a whole.

3.4.Masonic Influence Upon the Origin of American College Fraternities

Masonic roots and influence found within student fraternal organizations in higher education is one more example of Freemasonry's contribution and impact on the civic social life of American society. College fraternities play a central role in the lives of thousands of students during their higher educational experience; they are helped to develop skills and learn new things by partaking in a variety of extra-curricular activities. Early fraternities supported fidelity, scholarship and the development of speaking skills through debate and literary circles. In modern times, college or campus fraternities offer a diversity of organized activities, including intramural sports, community service projects, dances, special social ceremonies and parties.

In the U.S., the history of college fraternities have been influenced by both the symbolism and philosophy of Freemasonry, which played a central role



in the early organization of many college fraternities, known also as “Greek-letter” organizations, throughout U.S. campuses. Many Masons found themselves engaged in the creation of these types of organizations as either founding members or early members. David E. Stafford, Masonic authority, wrote a detailed article titled “Freemasonry and College Fraternities,” in which these lines are found: “In some cases, the influence was little more than an association of ritual and secrecy, but in many cases the relationships between Freemasonry and college fraternities are much stronger and enduring.” Similarities between Freemasonry and college fraternities are still quite evident, mainly because both entities hold their meetings in secrecy, and they require their body of initiates to take voluntary oaths of fidelity.

Phi Beta Kappa, the parent Greek-letter society of fraternal college organizations, had strong Masonic influences during its period of emergence and development. In Williamsburg, Virginia, this college fraternity was created by William and Mary College students who had the custom of gathering together in the upper room of the Raleigh Tavern to discuss the affairs of the day. In December 1776, five close college classmates stayed at the tavern after the others had left; at the end of this meeting, Phi Beta Kappa had been born. The stars of this organization’s silver membership medal symbolized fraternity, good conviviality, morality and literature. The three Greek letters of Phi Beta Kappa stand for Philosophia Biou Kybernetes, representing “Love of Wisdom, the Guide of Life,” a view similar to Freemasonry’s key estimation for knowledge. More importantly, Phi Beta Kappa developed secret signals of recognition for its members, as in Freemasonry, and the secret group also created mottos, rituals,



ceremonies and a distinctive badge—all of which were borrowed from the rites and the ritual of Freemasonry.

During the 1800s, college fraternities grew in number in the U.S. These new fraternities took Phi Beta Kappa's organizational model to establish their structure, philosophy and lodge activities; this single fact reflects the Masonic heritage within American college fraternities of that period and those later created based upon this same foundation. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the creation of more college fraternities continued to show visible influences derived from Freemasonry; however, these societies had no official connection to the Masonic family. Jeffers adds that "influences of Freemasonry on college fraternities are found in the rituals of 'rushing' and 'pledging,' the rules of membership, including barring an applicant ('blackballing'), and the use of 'hazing' " (156). It should be noted that at that time American men pursuing higher education were often of an older age than those doing so in modern times, so it was normal for these men to have been introduced to Freemasonry before their college days, or by the influence of their Masonic professors.

College fraternities later changed their meeting places which had included student dormitory rooms, vacant classrooms, rented facilities and even in woods—these places provided social and intellectual interaction for the members. The new facility for the gathering of college fraternity members was called the Chapter House; this new location responded to the need for a larger facility space for a rapid growing number of student fraternal membership on American campuses. With the support of prosperous and influential fraternity



alumni, chapter houses began to operate in a successful manner. With the establishment of chapter houses, campus fraternities took after Freemasonry a little more since a Masonic lodge represents the outward symbol for its organization, as does the chapter house for its counterpart. In both places meetings can be held peacefully and secretly, and some chapters houses and many Masonic lodges have become historic sites in the U.S. More importantly is the fact that campus fraternities, over the course of ever-changing social times in America, have survived with their Masonic background unbroken—although, few college fraternity members nowadays are aware of their fraternities' Masonic heritage.

We particularly want to point out three early, outstanding American college fraternities with deep Masonic influence. Phi Kappa Sigma was created at the University of Pennsylvania in August 1850; its primary leader was Samuel Brown Wylie Mitchell, who was a Freemason and would become a distinguished physician. This fraternity has principals and symbols that are familiar to Master Masons. For instance, the badge of the society, designed by Mitchell, reveals the influence of Freemasonry and Knight Templar as sources of inspiration. Delta Tau Delta was established in March 1858 at Bethany College, West Virginia. William R. Cunningham, a Freemason and religious minister, was one of the principal leaders in the organization of this fraternal order. Cunningham had been initiated into the Masonic fraternity before the creation of Delta Tau Delta; he provided a key contribution in the development of the fraternity's ritual and constitution; these two orders' pillars had Masonic language. The elements found within this fraternity's badge and shield have great significance



for Masonic symbolism. For instance, the blazing star is symbolic of true Masons. Kappa Alpha Order was founded in December 1865 at Washington College (now Washington and Lee University), Virginia. Its founders were all Master Masons during their lives. The ritual for Kappa Alpha was created by Samuel Z. Ammen who became to be known as the practical founder of Kappa Alpha Order. The ritual of Kappa Alpha Order employs both the symbolism of Masonic Knights Templar and Craft Masonry. Ammen stated, "I drew heavily upon my experience as a Master Mason in crafting the new ritual" (qtd. in Stafford).

In the culture of higher education, there were always social clubs and fraternal organizations for students and professors who were Masons; however, it was not until the turn of the twentieth century that college fraternities exclusively for Freemasons started to come together. The first unified campus fraternity officially connected to Freemasonry was the Acacia College Fraternity. The founders' primary goal was that Acacia's teachings be dedicated to scholarship, and that they contribute to strengthen the greatest principles of Freemasonry. Unlike common student fraternal organizations, which use a series of Greek letters as their names, Acacia Fraternity uses one Greek word only "Akakia" to represent its order's name. With the formation of Acacia at the University of Michigan in 1904, Freemasonry officially became part of the college fraternal movement. This campus fraternity was founded by fourteen Masons, and restricted to men who were members of the Brotherhood, but it is no longer a prerequisite. However, because of Acacia's Masonic heritage, it still has informal and spiritual ties related to Freemasonry.



Earliest leaders of Acacia Fraternity wanted to recruit Master Masons only with high standards of conduct. Stafford declares that “thusly, Acacia was selective of an already elite group of men. Acacia wished to be an entity of high moral standards, offering a refuge and fraternity for those who wished not to participate in the debauchery of college fraternities of the time.” By 1993, the fraternity had created forty chapters all across the U.S. with a membership over 41.000. Nowadays, the fraternity does not have any official relationship to Freemasonry, but many Acacia chapters still have close connections with Masonic lodges. In 1997, in an attempt to fortify the former connection between Freemasonry and Acacia Fraternity, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania started to allow the college fraternity to use their lodge rooms to carry out ceremonies of initiation and to perform the three Acacian degrees. In 1999, Pennsylvania lodges, in addition, decided to provide Acacians native to Pennsylvania with grants. As a result, the Acacia College Fraternity has grown in reputation, influence and strength within American society, and so long as Acacia continues to stand for scholarship, brotherhood and service its Masonic heritage will never fade away.



CONCLUSION

“Freemasonry in America,” since the very idea of its elaboration, has been a challenge due to the lack of articles, books and information in our area, and because of difficulties regarding the access and acquisition of references when it comes to dealing with a secret and ritual-based order like Freemasonry. However, by the end of the delightful journey of researching and writing this thesis we had learned about the early days of Freemasonry, along with the theories of its origin, as well as the official, modern British account of this controversial, secret social organization—the world’s oldest and most important of all times. Undoubtedly, one of the most exciting parts of this thesis was exploring the arrival of Freemasonry on American soil, along with its establishment, growth and expansion into every segment of American society.

Furthermore, another interesting part of this work was learning about Freemasonry’s unique ability for drawing millions of members from one generation to another in the U.S. This study included how Freemasonry in America was able to reach the highest point of prestige, popularity and influence in an ever-changing society, which was mainly achieved by means of the countless service efforts and valuable contributions in assisting, supporting and improving the individual, communities and the country as a whole.

As this research came to an end, we were able to better understand Freemasonry’s influence in the charitable spirit of the American people, who have shared their talents and resources to set their country apart in the world of



philanthropy, assisting and relieving in a variety of ways to those in need, both at home and overseas. As time goes by, these actions have contributed to enriching Freemasonry's long, proud history of success and social prestige within American society. Therefore, an understanding of the Masonic activity, role and significance in America should not be absent from people's knowledge rather an in-depth study should be devoted to understand the far-reaching contribution and influence of the Craft not only to the U.S. society but also to mankind. This is why this work was carried out, aiming to cultivate, improve or further an understating of Freemasonry's emergence in, importance upon, and contribution to the world's most powerful nation—the United States of America. It is truly a satisfaction, having finished this investigation and given a thorough account of Freemasonry's colonial times, revolutionary period and post-war years in America, as well as of the main events, leaders, activities, and works that have caused Freemasonry to occupy an important place in today's world.

Furthermore, the information in this research work proved that Freemasonry, over the years, has contributed to the history of the United States by both recording important events in its pages and by servicing the country through the leading role of its earliest members, known also as the American Founding Fathers. Likewise, Freemasonry and its philosophy provided the foundation for thousands of people to come together in the struggle of the American Revolution, and then built the nation with Masonic ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality. In this investigation Freemasons came to be the virtuous pillars of their communities, and were central in the development of social life,



culture, and public and private institutions, and became main actors in the building of U.S. history itself. In sum, we have come to learn that without a study of American Freemasonry we cannot have a complete understanding of the early, young and modern life and culture of the United States of America.



RECOMMENDATIONS

It is highly recommendable the study of Freemasonry in courses dealing with American history in the English Language and Literature School at the University of Cuenca, mainly because the study of U.S. history and culture will lack fundamental pieces and even a central part if Masonic activity and participation are left out of a course of study with regard to the history of the United States.

Another suggestion is a study of the cornerstone laying Masonic ceremonies of multiple national American monuments, especially the Statue of Liberty, and their consecration with Masonic rites and elements, and a thorough investigation of Freemasonry's influence upon the design and building of the U.S. capital city, Washington, D C., in where Masonic architecture and artwork can be found today.

For research on Freemasonry, it would be important to investigate in more detail the anti-Masonic movement and party in America, which mainly rose after the Morgan affair. In this regard, an account of the forces that provoked the decline of Freemasonry within American society is of equal importance, and consequently Freemasonry's attempts to regain its social prestige and success.

An investigation on Freemasonry within black communities, which exist as a result of Prince Hall's influence, Hall having been a Mason and African-American leader who was an early supporter of slavery abolition and a protector



of his community. The fraternity's association with Native Americans from several tribes should also be considered, when these two groups gather together to perform Masonic ritual in unique, appealing, and entertaining ways.

For the author of this thesis the most important of all the aforementioned recommendations is a study of Freemasonry's contribution and participation in wars of independence around the American continent, especially in South American Revolutions, in conjunction with an investigation of the Masonic philosophy, its influence and central part these had in the lives of both patriotic men and important South American figures, such as Simon Bolivar and Eloy Alfaro—who belonged to Freemasonry and had integral roles in the struggle for freedom and equality.



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