Questions & Answers

Question: Why are we called "Freemasons"?
Answer: There are many theories. A man was called a "freemason" because his ancestors were not slaves nor was he a slave. He was so called because he was free within his Guild, or free of the Guild's laws and could choose his work where he desired. He was a Freemason because he worked to found—any story which can be cut, unrolled, carved in any direction. He was free when he passed his apprenticeship and became a Fellow of the Craft. He was free when the title of an angle or triangle and legally became free. The conclusion is that a Masonic ring is an award to those who see it that the wearer is a Master Mason. The tip of the ring should be pointed toward the wearer so that he is a Master Mason. The Masonic ring should be worn with the tips of the companies toward the wrists.

Question: Is "The Pennsylvania Freemason" mailed, free of charge, to all Members of our Pennsylvania Lodge?
Answer: Yes. Every Member of our Pennsylvania Lodge becomes a member of The Pennsylvania Freemason. The use of this publication is a means of communication among the Members of the Grand Lodge.

Question: What is the primary purpose of The Pennsylvania Freemason?
Answer: The primary purpose of The Pennsylvania Freemason is to provide a forum for the expression of ideas and viewpoints within the Masonic community in Pennsylvania. It serves as a medium for the exchange of information, news, and opinions among Members, Officers, and others interested in Freemasonry.

Question: Is there a fee associated with The Pennsylvania Freemason?
Answer: No. The Pennsylvania Freemason is a free publication, mailed to all Members of our Pennsylvania Lodge without any charge.

Question: How should I wear my Masonic ring?
Answer: Masonic rings are customarily worn on the ring finger of the left hand. The ring should be worn so that the tip of the ring points towards the wrist, indicating that the wearer is a Master Mason.

Question: How do I report a change in my mailing address?
Answer: If you need to update your mailing address, please notify your Lodge Secretary immediately. Your Lodge Secretary has special forms for reporting such changes to the Distribution Office for The Pennsylvania Freemason. Failure to report your correct mailing address can result in improper handling of your copy of The Pennsylvania Freemason. Copies of The Pennsylvania Freemason with incorrect addresses are destroyed except for the name and address portion of your copy is attached to a Postal Return Form and mailed back to our Distribution Office. These Postal Return Forms cost less than two cents each. One at a time, these Postal Return Forms do not seem much, but multiplied by 1,000 or more makes them quite expensive.

Your cooperation in making certain that your correct mailing address is always listed with your Lodge Secretary will be greatly appreciated. By doing so, you will assure yourself of future copies of The Pennsylvania Freemason.

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THE PENNSYLVANIA FREEMASON

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Image of Freemasonry Should Be Constant Concern of All Members

In another month, practically all of the 669 Masonic Lodges in Pennsylvania will call off from labor and prepare for the so-called vacation periods. However, before our members become scattered and relaxed, I take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for the wonderful response to my appeal for the Great Fund at the Masonic Homes at Elizabethtown.

Brethren, I asked Pennsylvania Masons to provide more than $250,000 to permit the Committee on Masonic Homes to continue to make Elizabethtown a "Home" and not just another institution.

March 15, 1965, ended the 1964 appeal. I am very happy to report that the total collection was $253,456.00. I deeply appreciate this response, and to those Brethren who participated I extend a personal "thank you," my Brethren, as we approach the summer season, I again would appreciate your giving some consideration to the Image of Freemasonry. Don't consider our fraternity as a secret society. Certainly we have secrets, just as you have in your family group. You don't openly discuss family secrets.

A secret society in most people's opinion is a group of individuals conspiring in secret, conspiring against our government, whose membership is composed of schemers, plotters, atheists, and those who have views opposite from right-thinking, God-fearing men. Freemasonry is a private society, based on Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. Its tenets, its cardinal virtues and its teachings are not secret, and are open for inspection.

Freemasonry has existed through the ages because it emphasizes the observance of the moral law. We must admit to the existence of the Great Architect and the immortality of the soul.

Contrary to the ideas of some people, not members of the Craft, Masonry is not a religion and never has been. It teaches that our first responsibility is to our church of our own choice.

I have often been told by church leaders, "A good Mason is a good church worker. I look to men who belong to the Masonic Fraternity for leadership."

Brethren, our private society has earned the respect of thinking men throughout the world. Because of this, we are not permitted behind the iron curtain.

In considering the image of Freemasonry, my Brethren, keep in mind that each one of us is the custodian of that respect. Then Freemasonry can be judged on what we are and what we do as Masons.
From Our Grand Secretary's Office
March Quarterly Communication

The March Quarterly Communication culminated the two-year period just concluded, during which the Grand Lodge held 96 meetings in various locations throughout Pennsylvania and the United States. The meetings ranged from small gatherings of members to large gatherings of thousands of Masons.

The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania is currently the largest Masonic body in the world, with over 1 million members. The Grand Lodge is responsible for overseeing the activities of the various Masonic lodges throughout the state.

The Masonic Temple at A Horssburg

The Masonic Temple, located at 120 W. Main St., Horssburg, is one of the largest Masonic temples in the world. The temple has several large rooms, each of which can hold thousands of people. The temple is currently undergoing an expansion, which will include the addition of several new rooms.

The Masonic Temple is a popular venue for Masonic meetings, as well as for other events such as concerts and conferences.

The Masonic Temple is also home to the Masonic Library, which is one of the largest Masonic libraries in the world. The library is open to the public and contains a vast collection of Masonic books, as well as other materials such as videos and CDs.

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The Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America was held in the Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D. C., on February 23 and 24, 1965. This Conference is the keynote of a series of meetings, which takes place annually at the time of Michigan and Wisconsin was. It is a Masonic Service Association of the United States, which is the Grand Master of the Masonic National Memorial Association and the Masonic Service Association of the United States. It is the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Michigan and Wisconsin, which included an address of welcome by the Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge of Wisconsin.

The Conference of Grand Masters affords an opportunity for the Grand Masters of the various jurisdictions in North America to come together to exchange ideas, information and opinions. The Conference has legislative, executive or judicial powers and is divided into two main sections: the first subject, which was adequately covered by the Grand Masters of the District of Columbia, and the second subject, which was adequately covered by the Grand Masters of the District of Columbia.

The Conference was handled by Bro. George S. Holmes, who has distinguished himself in the past twenty-two years. He has served as Worshipful Master of Richmond Lodge No. 230, located in the city of Richmond, Virginia, and as Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge of Richmond, Virginia.

Another of our senior Masonic Masters who has distinguished himself in terms of Masonic longevity and service is Bro. George S. Holmes of Richmond Lodge No. 230, held at Philadelphia.

Bro. Holmes was elected on February 12, 1896. Bro. Holmes served as Worshipful Master of Richmond Lodge in 1902. He has served as an Appointed Officer or Elected Officer of his Lodge for sixty-eight years. For the past twenty-two years he has been the Representative in the Grand Lodge of his Lodge.

Born in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on March 18, 1874, he later moved to Pennsylvania and after attending public schools graduated from the College of Philadelphia, and Temple University, having studied mechanical engineering, a profession he followed for many years.

Bro. Holmes and his wife, Emma, now reside in Upper Darby, Pa., and he just tucks in to get to his Lodge when it meets; or his Chapter, Triumvir B. Freeman Chapter, No. 243, where he has been a member for 67 years; or his Scottish Rite Bodies, Valley of Philadelphia, and eighteen years of age and have been regular members of a Masonic Lodge. He must be of good character and of good standing in the community. He must be mentally and physically capable of working in the Lodge. He must be a Mason of good standing in the Lodge. He must be a member of a Masonic Lodge.

The new Decision is 440-A, which states: "The boy must be of good character and of good standing in the community. He must be mentally and physically capable of working in the Lodge. He must be a Mason of good standing in the Lodge. He must be a member of a Masonic Lodge. If the boy is an orphan with either one or both parents deceased.

The examination of the candidate permitted in the Masonic Lodge at the time is for Boys. Elizabethtown, Pa. 17022.

Learn to Live

We cannot practice our Freemasonry until we have learned to know. Co-operating with us in this endeavor, we will clearly see that there is not one of our modern perplexities that can not be solved by an application of Masonic principles and precepts.

The examination of a candidate in the Lodge. I see nothing wrong with this practice, providing the Lodge is open in the degree which the candidate is received.

"If the examination is in the Lodge, the candidate should not be embarrassed or humiliated."

New Decision 440-A Designates Use of 'Temple' and 'Hall'

The Grand Master has materially liberalized a Decision that will permit the wider use of the designation, "Masonic Temple." He said it was done to permit the new type of Masonic buildings to be called 'Temples.'

The new Decision is 440-A, which states: "Masonic Buildings that house a Lodge Room (or Rooms), with associated quarters which may be utilized as authorized, can be designated 'Masonic Temples.' Masonic Buildings which include stores, offices or other commercial space may be designated 'Masonic Halls.'"
New Decisions Cover Masonic Dress, Use Of Ancient Charges

The Grand Master has issued two Decisions for the Digest of Decisions, dealing with Masonic Dress and Ancient Charges.

Masonic Dress

Decision No. 790: "The Masonic Dress of Lodge Officers, with the exception of the Worshipful Master (or Acting Worshipful Master), will be: (1) black coat, black vest, black tie, black shoes and white gloves; or (2) black coat, black vest, black tie, black shoes and white gloves. The dress of Grand Lodge Elected Officers, Past Grand Masters, Grand Lodge Appointed Officers (other than Grand Chaplains), District Deputy Grand Masters, Past District Deputy Grand Masters and Worshipful Masters (or Acting Worshipful Masters), will be: (1) black coat, black vest, black tie, black shoes and white gloves; or (2) black coat, black vest, black tie, black shoes and white gloves. The dress of Grand Lodge Elected Officers, Past Grand Masters, Grand Lodge Appointed Officers (other than Grand Chaplains), District Deputy Grand Masters, Past District Deputy Grand Masters and Worshipful Masters (or Acting Worshipful Masters), will be tail coat, black vest, black tie, black shoes and white gloves. The Grand Master and Worshipful Masters (or Acting Worshipful Masters) will wear the high black waist coat (or the white trousers, as permitted) when appropriate.

The normal dress for Masonic Funeral Services is black coat, black necktie, black shoes and white gloves for participating Lodge Officers, or their wearing in their place instead. It is recommended that those attending Brethren wear dark clothes. This is in accordance with Article XIV, Section 2, and Page 151 (Masonic Funeral Services) in the Ahiman Rezon. However, if a Masonic Lodge elects to have a Lodge Service, in accordance with Page 147 of the Ahiman Rezon, Masonic Dress must be worn by Lodge Officers. If a visit to the Funeral Home, church or cemetery follows the Lodge Room Service or Lodge Meeting, Masonic Dress (without collars and aprons) may be worn by Lodge Officers."

Ancient Charges

Decision No. 27-A: "The Ancient Charges are not a part of the masonic work. Therefore, I decree that the Charges at the Opening and the Closing of a Lodge at all stated meetings, and the Charge at the conclusion of degrees, are not mandatory, and their use is left to the discretion of the Worshipful Master. If the Charges are used, they can be recited from memory or read. If the Charges are used at the conclusion of degrees, it is not required, that the Worshipful Master (or the Acting Worshipful Master) personally give them."

March Communication OfGrandChapterWell Attended and Active

The March Quarterly Communication of the Grand Chapter of Pennsylvania, held March 6, 1965, in the Scottish Rite Cathedral and Masonic Temple, Harrisburg, Pa., was the best attended Quarterly Communication held for the December Quarterly Communications held in Philadelphia. Eighty Chapters were represented by 381 members.

Washington Family Memorabilia Presented to National Memorial

The annual meeting of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association was held on February 22, 1965, in the National Masonic Memorial building, Alexandria, Va. The meeting was well attended and much interest and enthusiasm was evident.

Contributions received from the various Grand Lodges included $300,100.00 for the Building Fund; $119,636.56 for the Endowment Fund; $30,023.00 for the Maintenance and Operations, which included $5,801.00 from the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania in accordance with our plan to contribute one dollar per initiate each year. Contributions amounting to $30,635.70 were also received. The grand total of contributions received at this annual meeting amounted to $210,996.26.

The highlight of this meeting this year was the announcement of the acceptance of the Washington Family Memorabilia from two ladies attending the meeting, Miss Ann Washington and Miss Pettie Washington, fifth generation descendents of John Augustine Washington, brother of George Washington. Among the valued gifts presented to the Association, was the Washington Family Bible, containing the fly-leaf the signature of George Washington and on the pages between the Old and New Testaments the family statistical data.

The officers of the Association were elected to serve another year. Bro. John H. Jefferson of Indiana and Bro. Ralph W. Temple, Past Master, of Philadelphia, were re-elected to fill vacancies, due to deaths, on the Board of Directors.

The annual meeting of 1966 will also be held at the National Masonic Memorial in Alexandria, Va.