

Questions & Answers

Question: Can a Pennsylvania Mason be a Member of more than one “Blue Lodge” at the same time as permitted in various Grand Jurisdictions?
Answer: It is not permissible for a Pennsylvania Mason to be a Member of two “Blue Lodges” at the same time, either in the jurisdiction of Pennsylvania, or in our jurisdiction and another jurisdiction. Dual membership has been prohibited since 1874.

Question: Was Masonry involved in the first oil wells drilled in Pennsylvania?
Answer: Only the fact that the world’s first oil well was successfully drilled on August 27, 1859, at Titusville, Pa., by “Colonel” Edwin L. Drake, a retired railroad conductor, and a Member of our famous Oil Creek Lodge, No. 302, now Titusville Lodge, No. 754, held at Titusville, Pa.

Question: I have heard that John Wanamaker, prominent American merchant and founder of the Wanamaker Department Store, was opposed to Freemasonry. Can you enlighten me on this rumor?
Answer: John Wanamaker was not only a prominent American merchant and founder of the Wanamaker Department Store, but he was a prominent Mason. Brother Wanamaker was made a Mason at Trenton, New Jersey, on August 27, 1859, at Titusville, Pennsylvania, and a Member of the Wanamaker Department Store, No. 302, now Titusville Lodge, No. 754, held at Titusville, Pennsylvania.

Question: In addition to showing a “Blue Lodge” current Due card, when visiting Lodges in American and foreign Jurisdictions, do we have any other type of confirmation of a Pennsylvania Master’s Good Masonic Standing?
Answer: There are two items. One is a Grand Lodge Certificate, a beautifully printed certificate with a gold Grand Lodge seal attached, which costs $4.00. A second item is a Commission to a Brother to Visit Foreign Grand Lodges and Lodges which is typewritten on a Grand Lodge envelope addressed and issued free of charge. Each of these documents must be processed through your Lodge Secretary who, in turn, obtains them from the Office of the R. W. Grand Secretary. Please allow reasonable time before you depart on a trip.

Question: What Masonic organizations exist between our selves and Masons.
Answer: Well, our first question is pretty much answered by the list of the Masonic organizations that exist between our selves and Masons. The Masonic order is one of the oldest and most respected organizations in the world, and it has been around for centuries.

Every individual is by nature endowed with certain traits of character which form the basis for reasoning and the conduct of life. In fact, these natural traits or tendencies are but signposts along life’s highway, directing us in our words, our thoughts, and our actions. If, by self-analysis, we can discover and discard those traits which seem to lead us in the wrong direction, and at the same time, cultivate those natural tendencies which point the way to higher achievement, then we have carried into effect one of the great principles of Freemasonry.

Our station in life is fixed many times by circumstances or conditions over which we have no control. Consequently, the individual is master of his own destiny only in a certain degree. It would, therefore, seem that the more we can place in our own hands the more control we have over our lives. If, by self-analysis, we can discover and discard those traits which seem to lead us in the wrong direction, and at the same time, cultivate those natural tendencies which point the way to higher achievement, then we have carried into effect one of the great principles of Freemasonry.

In the Masonic order, the individual is encouraged to develop his natural traits and tendencies, and to use them to the best of his ability in order to achieve his goals in life. The Masonic order is a place where individuals can find guidance and support in their personal and professional development.

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McKeesport Mason Cited For Good Samaritan Act

Bro. James W. Wetzel, a member of Alleghenies Lodge, No. 375, McKeesport, was honored for assisting a lady who suffered a broken shoulder in a fall during a snowstorm. While driving his company van in McKeesport, he spotted the lady lying almost helplessly in deep snow. Bro. Wetzel took her to his home and persuaded her to hospitalization, preventing possible complications. The award was presented by Mr. Robert C. Baker, General Operations Manager.

Freemasonry—A Way of Life

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provides the opportunity for social contact, that Fraternal Fellowship, wherein men from every walk of life may meet upon a common plane or level. Here, are taught the correct principles of right living. Here, we learn to get along with our neighbors and our fellowmen. Here, we are taught the three great virtues—Faith, Hope and Charity. These should remind us of our obligations and our duties as Freemasons those we owe to God, to our Brethren, and to ourselves.

If the inestimable influence of Freemasonry shall continue, then we must have faith in God, faith in our Brethren and faith in ourselves. Our Hope in the future depends on the quality and the sincerity of our lives. While the journey of life itself will be judged by the greatest of all virtues, Charity, which is the chief cornerstone of that spiritual temple, that house built with hands, eternal in the heavens.

A GIFT TO THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE—Shown on its still to be completed base, is the Benjamin Franklin-Craftsman Statue now located directly across North Broad Street from the Main Entrance of the Masonic Temple, Philadelphia. The statue, the work of the renowned sculptor, Mr. Joseph Brown of Princeton, New Jersey, was dedicated and unveiled as a highlight of the five-day celebration commemorating 250 years of Freemasonry in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on Saturday afternoon, June 27, 1981, following a Masonic parade down the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia. The statue is a gift to the City of Philadelphia from the Masons of Pennsylvania and is so indicated by a bronze plaque on the base.
Program Commemorating 250 Years of Masonry
Was a Great Experience

The five-day schedule of events and activities commemorating 250 years of Freemasonry in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is now history also, but it is history that several thousand Masons, their families and friends will long remember and cherish.

An observance of the few reproductions of photographs surrounding these two pages will attest to the excitement and joy experienced by so many. A legend included near this article attempts to briefly describe each of the photographs.

The five-day program included the following:

On Wednesday, June 24, 1981, at 2:00 o'clock, P.M., a Special Communication of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania was held in Gesu Church at Second Street above Market in Philadelphia. This excellent service, conducted by three of our Grand Lodge Officers, was attended by several hundred.

At 7:00 o'clock, 30 minutes, P.M., a Vesper Service was conducted in the Old Christ Church at South Street above Market to Philadelphia. This excellent service, conducted by three of our Grand Lodge Officers, was attended by several hundred.

On Thursday evening, June 25, 1981, a black-tie dinner was held in the Franklin Room of The Philadelphia Sheraton, an elegant dining room with several hundred Masons in attendance. A black-tie dinner was held on the return to Philadelphia.

The Aniversary Banquet, held in the spacious Dominion Room of the Philadelphia Sheraton, was also a sight to behold. Nearly 2000 brethren participated in the parade. Observing the line of march of Grand Lodge Officers, Distinguished Guests, seven divisions of "Blue Lodge" Officers from throughout our Jurisdiction, and the Officers of York Rite, Scottish Rite and other Masonic Bodies, was a sight never to be forgotten.

On Sunday morning, June 28, 1981, at 8:30 o'clock, 30 minutes, A.M., a breakfast was served in The Grand Ballroom of The Philadelphia Sheraton, followed by an Intensive Estate Service conducted by the Grand Master. Following the breakfast and service, the Grand Lodge Officers formed a "departing line" to say farewell to all and to conclude one of the greatest events ever planned and conducted by our Grand Lodge.

Re: The Photographs Herewith
(Beginning with the photo above and reading clockwise)

Grand Lodge Elective Officers from receiving line
Bro. Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., delivering address
Old Bro. Ben overlooking black-tie dinner
Grand Sword Bearer leads them all
One of several divisions of Lodge Officers
Bonnets and sun glasses were in order
A few Masons, their families and friends
Sitting in the sun and the band plays on
Another acre of wall-to-wall Masons
A time for prayer
Three Distinguished Guests enjoying it
One Past Grand talk, two listen
An unveiling predication
Grand Master and his sculptor laugh it up
Bro. Ben making an impression
Elective Grand Officers say: "So Mote It Be!"
ONE GOOD DEED DESERVES ANOTHER—Bro. Joseph E. Funk, R. W. Grand Master, is shown presenting Gov. Dick Thornburgh with his Grand Master’s Medallion commemorating 250 years of Freemasonry in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as various Grand Lodge Officers look on approvingly. The presentation took place in the Governor’s Reception Room at the Capitol Building, Harrisburg.

Recent Appointments of Right Worshipful Grand Master

Recent Grand Lodge appointments made by Bro. Joseph E. Funk, R. W. Grand Master, include the following:

Bro. W. Edward Sell, Lodge No. 45, Pittsburgh, Trustee of Title to the Masonic Temple and other Real Estate of Grand Lodge, vice Bro. Harold Obernauer, deceased.


ERRATUM

We regret, sincerely, that after twenty-eight years of editing, we made a serious error in an article in the February-March edition of “The Pennsylvania Freemason.”

Our article covered a testimonial honoring two Past Masters of Zion-thian-Philite Lodge, No. 368, held at Philadelphia, on the occasion of their fiftieth year as Past Masters. An error was made in signaling that our past Master Alfred Hoffman’s age in excess of his correct age. And, we compounded our error by referring to the evening as “This Is Your Life,” instead of “A Night to Remember.”

We apologize for these errors. And, we also apologize for the disturbance these errors have caused.

Itinerary of Grand Lodge Officers Through September

August 9 to 15—International DeMolay Leadership Training Conference, Patton School Campus, Elizabethville.

August 28—Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Homes Meeting, Masonic Homes, Elizabethtown.

September 2—Grand Lodge Committee on Finance Meeting, Seminar sessions; Quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge, The Embers Motor Inn, near Carlisle and the Cumberland Valley High School complex, near Mechanicsburg.

September 3—District Meeting for “A” Masonic District, William L. Elkins Lodge, No. 646, Philadelphia.

September 4—30th Masonic District Meeting, Beaver Lodge, No. 325, Stroudsburg.

September 9—District Meeting for “E” Masonic District, St. Alban-Swan Lodge, No. 528, Philadelphia.

September 10—Special Communication of Grand Lodge for Dedication of new Lodge Rooms for High Lodge, No. 327, Anzalone Lodge, No. 687 and Fellowship Lodge, No. 771, Hazleton.

September 9—12th Masonic District Meeting, Delaware Lodge, No. 508, Pittsburgh.

September 12—District Meeting for “F” Masonic District, St. Alban-Swan Lodge, No. 519, Philadelphia.

September 15—5th Masonic District Meeting, Collegeville Lodge, No. 564, Philadelphia.

September 24—129th Anniversary, Erzeka Lodge, No. 302, Mechanicsburg.

September 24—Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Homes Meeting, Masonic Homes, Elizabethtown.


Five Ancient Charges Used by Our Symbolic Lodges Form Basis for a True and Meaningful Masonic Life

The following brief excerpts taken from five of the Ancient Charges, used by our “Blue Lodges,” relates the duties of our Fraternity. Every Mason could have on our individual lives if we would only get involved with the basic lessons taught in our Lodges and govern ourselves accordingly. (NOTE: A folder of these five Ancient Charges, printed in their complete form, is available upon request. Write to the Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Culture, Masonic Temple, One North Broad Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19107.)

Excerpts from Charge at the Opening of a Lodge:

As useful knowledge is the great object of our desire, we ought to apply ourselves with zeal to the practice and profession of Freemasonry. . . . If we are united, our Fraternity must flourish. Let all previously mentioned, if any, and we will give place to peace and good fellowship. . . . Let us promote the useful arts . . . let us cultivate the moral virtues, and improve in all that is good and amicable. . . . Let the genius of Freemasonry preside over our conduct. . . . Our recreations be innocent and pursued with moderation . . . never let us suffer irregular indulgences to expose our character to derision and contempt.

Excerpts from Charge at Initiation:

The world’s Great Architect is our Supreme Grand Master; and the unerring rule He has given us, is this: love one another, in obedience to the will of God . . . . Let us study the liberal arts, that valuable branch of education which tends so effectually to polish and adorn the mind, is earnestly recommended to your consideration. . . . As the solemnity of our ceremonies requires a serious performance, you are to be particularly attentive to your behavior in your regular assemblies; . . . and to preserve the Ancient Usages and Customs of the Fraternity sacred and inviolable, and induce others, by your example, to hold them in due veneration.

Excerpts from Charge at Passing:

But, honor, and gratitude, now bind you to be faithful to your trust; to support the dignity of your character on all occasions, and strenuously to enforce, by precept and example, a steady obedience to the tenets of Freemasonry. . . . The laws and Regulations of the Fraternity you are to support and maintain . . . . Your virtue, honor, and character are concerned in supporting with dignity the respectability of your Masonic profession. . . . Let no motive, therefore, make you swerve from your duty, violate your vows to God, or betray your trust; but be true and faithful. Thus will you render yourself deserving of the honor and worthy of the confidence your Lodge has conferred and reposed.

Excerpts from Charge at the Closing of a Lodge:

You are now about to quit the sacred retreat of friendship and virtue, to mix again with the world. . . . Ever forget not the duties you have heard so frequently inculcated and forcibly recommended within this Lodge. . . . And remember that around this Altar you have solemnly and repeatedly promised to befriend and relieve, with unshrinking cordiality . . . every Brother who shall need your assistance. . . . If you faithfully observe these duties, the way will ever deserve how Freemasons love one another, in obedience to the Will of God. . . . These solemn rites are as binding on your consciences out of the Lodge as within it.

NOTE: Many Symbolic Lodge Officers have memorized the five Ancient Charges in their entirety. Others have made it a practice to stay familiar with them by reading them often. The important thing, however, is to become so well acquainted with them that each of these Ancient Charges will have a lasting influence upon your Masonic life.