



Trestleboard

June 2010

Culver City Foshay No. 467 F. & A. M.



FROM THE EAST

Well...we are almost half way thru the year and it's been a lot of fun! We just had our Table Lodge and it was an absolute success! There were friends present, fathers with their sons and Brethren from other Lodges that collectively made the Table Lodge more than fun...it became a truly fraternal event! We still have much more to look forward to as the year progresses, including the Reception of our dear Brother Richard Pierce as a Grand Lodge Officer and also, we hope to have a Magic Castle Night, a day at the Range, BBQs at the Beach or Park and countless movie nights...now that we have started the installation of a brand new Digital Projection System upstairs in our main lobby/library. Brother Beckmann has been working very hard to get all the pieces together to make our new system worth every penny that the Lodge has invested for its purchase. Personally, I feel it is a wise investment and that is for the simple reason, in my belief, that a penny invested in the brotherhood of our members goes much further than a penny invested in any other fund!

All that said...we have a great month ahead of us, lots of fun activities planned and more importantly, we have several new Candidates for the Entered Apprentice Degree! I hope to see even more come in from our Table Lodge, since there were many inquiring men present.

Let's all keep active in the sharing of Masonry with our friends and those who we feel could benefit from its teachings and principles and let us continue to build our Lodge into a force to be reckoned with!

To all the Officers and Brethren, keep up the great work and let's keep the ball moving!

Fraternally,
Jonathan P. Dilley
Worshipful Master



FROM THE WEST

Cowboys, Indians, and Masons

This month, we will take a break from the more academic subjects we have been exploring to recount the lives of two 19th century Masons, reflecting on what the Junior Warden's column in this issue calls idealistic brotherly love.

The story of these extraordinary men begins in 1863 with the establishment of the Phoenix Lodge in Weatherford, Texas. This lodge came into being during turbulent times. The Civil War was at a highpoint and lodge members could not be assured that their country would survive. In addition, a local conflict was heating up with the nearby Comanche tribe; lodge meetings were occasionally interrupted by Comanche raiding parties on horseback. Weatherford at this time was a classic frontier town. A settlement based around the westernmost rail line in that area of Texas, it was the last significant U.S. outpost in its region. A traveler who ventured further west would encounter a difficult, semiarid region dominated by the Comanche.

Charles Goodnight, a member of Phoenix Lodge and later a governor of Texas, distinguished himself by developing a ranching-based economy in this unlikely region, and in doing so, spread Freemasonry further into the west. A methodical, scientifically-minded man, he forged into the hostile Texas panhandle, developing water sources, building ranching facilities, creating new breeds of cattle capable of surviving in the desert-like region, and blazing a new cattle trail, the Goodnight-Loving Trail, to the emerging cattle markets in New Mexico and Colorado.

During these years, Goodnight's commitment to Masonry was demonstrated by his policy of paying the room and board for

those of his cowboys interested in Masonry to return to Weatherford to receive the Degrees and “learn the Work” so that a chain of lodges might be started through the newly developed territory. Even more significantly to Masons in Texas was Goodnight’s legendary commitment to keeping a Masonic promise to his friend and Phoenix Lodge Brother, Oliver Loving.

Loving was Goodnight’s business partner in developing the panhandle ranches and the New Mexico/Colorado routes. On their cattle drives, they sometimes had to fight battles with the Comanche, who were understandably upset at these major incursions into their lands. In one such battle, Loving was wounded and died later at Fort Summer, New Mexico in the fall of 1867. Before dying, he asked Goodnight, as his Masonic Brother, to conduct his body back to his wife and children in Weatherford, desiring to be buried near them and not, as he put it, “in a foreign country.” He expressed to others at the time that he had little hope that Goodnight could fulfill the promise, as the entire distance would have to be covered on horseback, completely without the benefit of even rudimentary roads. Nevertheless, Goodnight, true to his word, built a special coffin and wagon and conducted his friend’s body home once the worst of the winter had passed. The journey took over a month and covered over 600 miles. Western historians call the feat unprecedented for that era, one writer describing it as “one of the truly great epics of the West.” Nor did Goodnight’s Masonic commitment to Loving’s widow end there; he continued to pay her Loving’s share of cattle drive profits even though his contract with Loving did not require such payments after his death. When Loving was finally buried in Weatherford, most of the town marched in the funeral procession. A newspaper article by the Phoenix Lodge bid farewell to their brother with these words:

Adieu, a heart fond, warm, adieu
Ye brother of our mystic tie.

The other Mason I would like to discuss in this article had an even more extraordinary life, and as will be seen, had a close connection to Charles Goodnight. His name was Quanah Parker, the last independent Chief of the Comanches. He has a European last name because his mother, Cynthia Ann Parker, was taken as a captive when she was a young girl by a tribe of Comanches and raised as one of their own. She married the Chief of the Comanches, Nocona. In 1860, at the battle of the Pease River in Northern Texas, she was “rescued” by a force of Texas Rangers who were endeavoring to destroy the Comanches as a threat to white settlers. Having spent most of her life as a Comanche, Cynthia Ann was fully assimilated to their culture and was returned unwillingly to the Parker family. She lived with them unhappily and died a few years later.

Her son Quanah grew up to become Chief despite being a child of two worlds. Unsurprisingly, he maintained a hostile view towards the people who took his mother and strove to drive his tribe from their native lands. He continued to fight against the white settlers, including Goodnight, until his final defeat and capture in 1874. After giving up his war, however, he proved to be a highly intelligent diplomat and negotiator. By securing money and other compensation for the Comanches in return for their land, he achieved for his people in peace some of the things he could not in war. He formed the Native American Church, a pan-Native American religion with Western influences, carrying out a legal campaign that resulted in the U.S. government’s first sanction of a psychoactive drug (peyote) as a legitimate religious sacrament. He became a wealthy man and an important fixture of Northern Texas business and culture until his death in 1911. He also became a Master Mason and a close friend of his old enemy Charles Goodnight. There is no record to indicate if Quanah and Goodnight ever sat in the same lodge together, but it is a great testament to Masonry that such bitter enemies could eventually come together as brothers, symbolically under the same roof in the house of our fraternity.

The stories of these men have some personal resonance for me, as I grew up in the area described above. My grandparent’s house in Southwest Oklahoma is just a few hundred yards from a drinking well at which the Apache Chief Geronimo often drew water from on his way from his quarters in Fort Sill, Oklahoma to visit his friend Quanah in Texas. Seven miles across the Texas boarder from where I grew up is the town of Quanah. Nearby, at the site of her “rescue” an annual celebration of Native American culture, Cynthia Ann Parker Day, takes place. Further west is the town of Goodnight, which I have been through many times. Traveling in this area, I sometimes feel as if I am walking in the footsteps of these great men and Masons.

The information for this article comes from the book “Phoenix Lodge: The First Twenty-Five Years,” which I have donated to our library. Take a look at it sometime; it makes interesting reading.

Curtis S Shumaker, Senior Warden



FROM THE SOUTH

MANY A NATION, ONE BROTHERHOOD

“By the exercise of Brotherly Love, we are taught to regard the whole human race as one family: the high and the low, the rich and the poor; who, being created by one Almighty Parent and inhabitants of the same planet, ought to aid, protect and support each other.”

The statement above has been exerted from the Master’s lecture to the Apprentice and is regularly delivered to the candidate as an element of his initiation. Accordingly, its words first fell upon my ears nearly forty years ago. I had embraced them especially at the time, consequentially to the idealistic sentiments they aroused in me by nature. Although I was not oblivious to the affairs of the

world as an idealist, my awareness of trends that seem to reveal poor compliance by the human race with such a basic tenet has steadily increased over the years. Hope within our fraternity has sustained me, however, for the tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth are inculcated during every occasion at which freemasons gather together, instilling in them a proper concept of equality and inciting in them also the primal instincts of compassion and love endued them by God.

At a recent gathering of Scottish Rite freemasons in Scottsdale Arizona, I had witnessed a touching incident in which the tenets taught in our Symbolic Lodges (Blue Lodges) came into fruition. It happened to follow a performance of the Fifteenth Degree, called "Knight of the East, of the Sword, or of the Eagle," depicting the resolve of the ancient Jews to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem under the political might of the Persian Empire to which they had been subjected and to which their captivity under the Chaldeans had been transferred. The degree was heard under the tongues of English, Hebrew and Persian (Farsi), and represented a condition of Peace and Harmony in which the two latter languages in combination are rarely regarded, stemming from what might be perceived as traditional hostility. The performance, under the direction of Worshipful Brother Mahmoud Ghafarri and several other Scottish Rite members of our lodge was exceptional. Of especial note to the membership of freemasonry, within and without the Rite, would be what occurred posterior to the performance. The cast was surrounded by approaching brethren, congratulating them and their performance and praising the work. Yet, one brother among them stood out with such remarkable serenity as I have rarely seen. With arms extended to include as much of the cast as he could in fond embrace, he humbly exclaimed with tears flowing from his eyes: "Now I know why I came to freemasonry and I know what our purpose is."

Although the tearful brother did not explain his words, but merely repeated them with no less a sense of passion than that which had prompted his first utterance, I believe that he had met with a glimpse of the idealism that could one day change the world and that, as a freemason, he would become part of a great event in which the human race would be reestablished upon a fraternal foundation. It is a duty incumbent upon all Freemasons to learn and pick-up the working tools of his craft to improve himself. It is his rite of destiny to apply what he has learned to uplifting the human condition and to make the world a better place in which to live. Perhaps the teary brother's epiphany adumbrated a future age in which human beings of divergent beliefs and customs of worship will reaffirm the brotherhood ordained by a universal parent; a fatherhood which blesses all children of earth, by whatever name they call their God. Fraternally,

Merrick Rees Hamer, P.M., Junior Warden

CRACKING THE FREEMASONS CODE: THE TRUTH ABOUT SOLOMON'S KEY AND THE BROTHERHOOD. ROBERT L.D. COOPER

Author Robert Cooper writes a book that challenges the origins of Ancient Freemasonry as well as refuting previously accepted beliefs on Masonic history and symbolism. Think the eye within a triangle on the dollar bill is a Masonic symbol? Separately yes, but together no. The design was made by Pierre du Simitiere, who was part of the first committee to design a seal for the United States along with Ben Franklin, who didn't submit anything of a Masonic nature. Indeed, the All Seeing eye did not come into existence as a Masonic symbol until 1819.

The book's beginnings follow the dominant theory that current Freemasonry derives directly from the Knights Templar. It follows the accepted history of how the Templars lost their purpose after the fall of the Holy Lands to the Muslims in 1291 with the fall of Acre. Then, the advent of Philip the Fair, who had 2 popes killed (Boniface VIII and Benedict XI) before he had his man, Pope Clement V installed on the Throne. Clement passively went along with the persecution of the Knights after he failed in an attempt to have the Templars conjoin with the Knights Hospitallers, now a powerful naval force. Seeing what Philip did to his predecessors, Clement realized he had to commit to the persecution of the Templars. But they found a refuge in Scotland under Robert The Bruce, who utilized the Knights in the pivotal battle of Bannockburn. After having secured independence, Bruce had to appease the Pope no Templars were not in Scotland, so according to the author, he helped create the Freemasons to hide this fact from the Holy See. There is plenty of physical evidence in the graveyards along with the existence of charters and documents. The story of the St. Clair clan who built Rosslyn Chapel in 1446 is recounted, but the Author debunks the accepted belief of the clan always being the Hereditary Grand Master of the Masons in Scotland. Cooper maintains that it was the Stonemasons who appealed to the St. Clairs, apologizing for allowing the patronage to lapse. Being poor, they could not afford legal fees to attend court for their disputes. This is what they wanted St. Clair for. But he, being Roman Catholic, ran afoul of the Protestant authorities and fled to Ireland after an affair with a Miller's daughter. The Stonemasons tried again with St. Clair's son in 1628 and had better success, but the younger St. Clair was bested by Sir Anthony Alexander in having jurisdiction over the Stonemasons. This plan to tie in the St. Clairs was hatched by William Schaw, the Father of Freemasonry according to Cooper. His first and second statutes gave the lodges structure, order and stability. Memory work was mandatory, and fines administered for mistakes. (Schaw learned Memory work from Bruno, the heretic.)

The mysteries of the early Masons are depicted, which included Neoplatonism, hermeticism, and it is the Stonemasons of biblical history that captures the author's attention and he expounds this is a variety of theories. The incorporation of the Trades within the burghs (walled towns) of Scotland provide the early beginnings, and Cooper lists the dates of the Seals of Cause for the various craftsmen, with the incorporation of Wrights and Masons in 1475 a key date. The reason that St. John the Evangelist became the Patron Saint of Masonry began when the Edinburgh Lodge was granted the pew of his name for their use.

The book is rich in historical photos of past lodges and charters and prominent historical Masons. It gives a good insight on the writings of early Masonic History. The author claims most books and lectures created their own historical reality without evidence. Anderson's Constitutions and Ramsey's lecture come under severe scrutiny. Ramsey couldn't bear to have the Craft come from an origin of simple Stonemasons, so he spun a tale that was banned by the Censor in France, Cardinal Fleury. Ramsey believed Freemasonry was refined by the Templars fighting in the Holy Land, and made it chivalric. The sales job Anderson did with Masonic History starting with his biblical figure of Adam: Ancient Egypt, Greece and the Roman Empire, finally coming to King Arthur's Court via the Druids worked. The romantic version of Craft history appealed to the nobility, and they joined in droves. Masonry went through tremendous changes in the middle ages, as written records were kept, and the first rituals appeared. Finally, it was 17th Century authors like William Preston and William Hutchinson who gave Scottish Masonry a more structured account. The author gives these historical figures leeway, as present day methods for research simply did not exist at the time.

George Washington's early military career is gone over in great detail, and the painful lessons he learned in the French and Indian wars fighting with the British. The near disaster of Fort Necessity, where he and his men were allowed to leave without their weapons was pure grace. His Masonic history is also given ample coverage, and how he dealt with the Presidency.

Appendixes consisting of Original Masonic Documents and Famous Freemasons are also included. The oldest written Masonic Ritual, the Edinburgh Register House in 1696 is reproduced in old English, and one can see the differences and similarities to present day language. I recommend this book for all Masons, and it is a must for the Lodge Library.

Fraternally,
Brother Rick Gorton

God and Lord over all time- Past,Present,and Future;
Teach us the importance of rationing our time through the use of the 24-inch guage,
so that we may do the really important things in life.

Remind us about the reality of time represented by the level so that we will
spend our time wisely,since we live in the shadow of eternity.
Show us from the hour glass that time is relentless so that each moment is precious
and never to be squandered.

Enable us to learn from the scythe the restraints of time, and not procrastinate,
thus to do our duty before the cutting, and destructive effects of time make us a
part of its harvest of men's lives. Grant us the wisdom to use our time with care
and skill as we live our lives. For we ask in Your Holy name, O God. Amen

Ed C. Chaplain