

FREEMASONRY— A WAY OF LIFE



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Your petition to our Masonic Lodge has been received and unanimously approved by the members, thereby electing you to receive the three Degrees of Freemasonry. We congratulate you on your acceptance and welcome you as one about to enter our membership. We hope you are earnestly seeking the benefits, the truths and the teachings of our fraternity. Millions of men before you have traveled this path and found it very rewarding.

WHAT IS FREEMASONRY?

Freemasonry is not easily described. It has been referred to as **a philosophy of life or a system of morality** which acknowledges a belief in God and in eternal life, which teaches brotherly love and recommends to its initiates a belief in certain fundamental truths and the practice of basic virtues. Or as Charles Clyde Hunt who was Grand Secretary of Iowa stated, "It is an organized society of men symbolically applying the principles of Operative Masonry and of architecture to the science and art of character building."

It has also been described by reference to **what it is not**.

It is not a social institution, but it affords the opportunity for social contact and discourse and is often basic in the formation of close bonds of friendship.

It is not a religion and it endorses no theology, doctrine or creed; yet it requires of its initiates a belief in God and in eternal life.

It is not a partisan political organization and prohibits political discussion and controversy within the Lodge, although it encourages its members to take an active interest in the body politic.

It is not a service club, but like one, endeavors to promote goodwill not only among businessmen of the community but among all men.

The desire for self-improvement is an innate quality of intelligent man. This trait has led man to his present high level of mental and physical attainment and has been a guiding torch in man's quest for the better life. Freemasonry recognizes that unfortunately, man's moral and spiritual development have not kept pace with his mental and physical achievement and so it endeavors to aid the spiritual and moral development of man by teaching fundamental truths and encouraging the practice of basic virtues.

Freemasonry is a fraternity which attempts to help each member improve himself. It does not claim the ability to make a bad man good but the means to make a good man better. In a word, the intent of Freemasonry is to build men's characters. If this is what you seek, we want you and welcome you; but we know that Freemasonry cannot assist you, or you it, unless you are willing to let Freemasonry be your guide and to practice the teachings and principles presented to you.

The Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man are two of the fundamental truths upon which our civilization is built. Freemasonry encompasses both but emphasizes the brotherhood of man through the practice of brotherly love, relief, and truth. Brotherly love, in the Masonic sense, is more than the congenial bond of good will and understanding that exists between close friends. It is, rather, genuine tolerance and charity toward all men which affords a basis for mutual respect between men in spite of their diverse backgrounds, creeds, ideals, and codes of conduct.

Freemasonry is the greatest single force for better understanding among men in the world today because it exists in nearly every nation in the world. The bitter strife and constant struggle over selfish interests and ideologies emphasizes the need for better understanding. Because of technical advancements, the natural barriers of distance, oceans, and mountains

no longer exist so the peoples of individual countries are not isolated and their heritage and ideologies are threatened by amalgamation. The only lasting salvation of civilization lies in the complete acceptance and practice of true brotherly love as taught by Freemasonry.

HOW DID IT ORIGINATE?

Freemasonry has a long and fascinating history.

Viewed as a *philosophy*, it dates back to the dawn of history. Several ancient civilizations had mystic societies organized in "lodge" form which taught a belief in a Supreme Being and moral living—the basic tenets of Masonic philosophy.

Even as an *organization* Masonry is ancient. It can be traced to the Builders' and Workmens' Guilds of the tenth century. The Guilds, which thrived in western Europe during the period Gothic cathedrals were being built, were organized as lodges with officers and three degrees of membership—the apprentices or bearers of burdens, the craftsmen or fellows who were skilled workmen, and the masters or overseers of the work. Proof of proficiency in the work was required to pass from one "degree" to the next and members

were taught and expected to live by basic moral principles. We refer to these "Guild Masons" as "Operative Masons" for they were engaged (operated) as working masons in the building of the Gothic cathedrals. During the sixteenth century, Gothic architecture declined and the Guild Lodges lost strength. Some of them began taking into their membership men of high moral character who were not workers in the builders' trade. These nonoperative members were referred to as "Accepted Masons" or "Speculative Masons," and eventually the Guild Lodges became to be known as "Speculative Lodges." In the British Isles, in particular, men from all walks of life were admitted to membership in the Guild Lodges.

Modern Masonry had its beginning in 1717 when four Speculative Lodges in London formed the first Grand Lodge known as the "Modern Grand Lodge," to give them strength and unity. Their success led to the establishment of Grand Lodges in Scotland and Ireland. In the eighteenth century there were actually four rival Grand Lodges in England proper. Two of them eventually died out; then in 1813 the original "Modern Grand Lodge" and the rival "Ancient Grand Lodge" consolidated to form the present "United Grand Lodge of England." Every Grand Lodge in the world today

traces its origin to the Modern, Ancient, or the United Grand Lodge of England, or to the Grand Lodges of Scotland or Ireland.

Freemasonry came to America with the colonists. It played an important part in the establishment of each of the thirteen colonies. It was formally recognized by the Modern Grand Lodge of England when that Grand Lodge appointed a Provincial Grand Master for Massachusetts in 1733. Early American Masons worked under the foreign jurisdictions of the Modern or Ancient Grand Lodge of England or the Grand Lodge of Scotland or Ireland. The role played by Freemasons in the formation of our country is one of the most romantic and thrilling parts of Masonic history. It is impossible to know the full influence of Masonry on revolutionary thought, but without doubt it made a significant contribution in that a majority of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and drafters of the Constitution were members of our Fraternity. George Washington and other prominent patriots like Paul Revere, Joseph Warren, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton and John Hancock were all staunch Masons, as were Lafayette and Von Steuben. George Washington was the first of fourteen Masonic Presidents and the only one to serve as President of his country and Worshipful Master of his Lodge at the same time. Other Masonic Presidents were Monroe, Jackson, Polk, Buchanan, Andrew Johnson, Garfield, McKinley, both Roosevelts, Taft, Hard-

ing, Truman and Ford. Jackson and Truman both served as Grand Masters. Masonry in the United States grew and prospered with the country and moved westward with the settlers and flourished on the frontier.

The prospectors who came to Colorado seeking gold brought Masonry with them. Late in 1858 seven Masons met together in a settlement known as Auraria, later to become a part of Denver. As one of them reported, they agreed to meet every Saturday night so that "any ideas concerning the country—, news of any mines—, or any information that might be beneficial to the brethren (Masonically or financially) would, at the next meeting, be given the Masons there assembled." Across the South Platte River from Auraria a party from Kansas started a settlement which they named Denver City. Gold had been discovered that year about forty miles west of Auraria, and the Gold Rush of 1859 was underway. Prospectors and tradesmen from the East arrived daily in Auraria, Denver City, and all the mining camps. By spring there were about one hundred Masons in Auraria and Denver City. They preempted a block of ground in Denver City and built a Masonic Lodge. More than two hundred Brethren signed the roll at the first meeting. In 1859 the Masons of Auraria-Denver City petitioned the Grand Lodge of Kansas for a dispensation which was granted. In 1860, at the Grand Lodge Communication of Kansas, Golden City Lodge was granted a charter and Nevada Lodge at Ne-

vadaville a dispensation; but the representative of Auraria Lodge did not arrive in time for the meeting so their dispensation was continued for another year. Charters for Summit Lodge at Parkville, a gold camp near Breckenridge, and Rocky Mountain Lodge at Gold Hill west of Boulder were issued in 1861 by the Grand Lodge of Nebraska. Evidently a dispensation was also issued to a Lodge in Central City at this same time, although the records are not clear. These ere requested by John M. Chivington, presiding elder of the Methodist Church for Colorado territory who had been active in Masonry in Ohio, Kansas, Missouri, and was Grand Chaplain of Nebraska at the time he came to Colorado.

The Grand Lodge of Colorado was organized on August 2, 1861 by Golden City No. 1; Summit No. 2 at Parkville; and Rocky Mountain No. 3 at Gold Hill. John M. Chivington was elected the first Grand Master. At its Annual Communication in December 1861 charters were granted to Nevada No. 4, Denver No. 5, and Chivington No. 6 (later changed to Central City No. 6). The Grand Lodge of Colorado aided the westward advance of Masonry by issuing dispensations to Lodges in Wyoming, Utah and Montana. Masonry flourished and grew in Colorado and today there are approximately 39,000 Masons in 169 Lodges under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Symbolic Lodge is the basic unit in Masonry. It confers three Degrees: the Entered Apprentice Degree; the Fellowcraft Degree; and the Master Mason Degree. Technically, every Symbolic Lodge is comprised of three Lodges—a Lodge of Entered Apprentices, a Lodge of Fellow Crafts, and a Lodge of Master Masons. A Symbolic Lodge is composed of men associated in a fraternal relationship for the avowed purpose of learning, studying and practicing Masonic principles. It comes into existence when granted a charter by the Grand Lodge which has jurisdiction over the place where it will meet. A Symbolic Lodge is given the appellation "Blue Lodge" because, foremost, blue was formerly the standard color used in all Symbolic Lodges. The principal officer of a Symbolic Lodge is its Worshipful Master. He rules and governs his Lodge under Masonic law and is answerable only to the Grand Lodge and its Grand Master. The Worshipful Master is assisted by a Senior Warden, a Junior Warden, a Treasurer, and a Secretary who are elected annually by the Master Masons of the Lodge. To aid him in operating the Lodge the Worshipful Master appoints a Senior Deacon, a Junior Deacon, a Senior Steward, a Junior Steward, and a Tiler, and in some Lodges, a Chaplain and a Marshal. A Symbolic Lodge may accept petitions for the Degrees only from the residents of a defined area. If a Lodge receives a petition from a man not residing in its

area it must obtain a waiver from the Lodge within whose area the petitioner resides before receiving and acting on the petition. In large communities a number of Lodges may have concurrent jurisdiction over the same area.

Every Symbolic Lodge is part of and governed by a Grand Lodge. There are 49 Grand Lodges in the United States—one in each of the contiguous continental states and one in the District of Columbia. Alaska is under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Washington, and Hawaii under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of California. The Grand Lodge of Colorado recognizes and maintains Masonic relations with all of the other 48 domestic Grand Lodges and with 89 foreign Grand Lodges. Every Grand Lodge is independent and owes allegiance to no higher authority. Each Grand Lodge adopts its own laws, ritual, and standards; it governs all Symbolic Lodges and Freemasons within its jurisdiction. Nevertheless, ancient Masonic usages, customs, and principles bind the Grand Lodges together. There are but slight differences in ritual and regulations and none whatsoever in basic Masonic precepts.

All Grand Lodges in the United States recognize each other as well as two other organizations—the York Rite and the Scottish Rite. These latter two expand and elaborate upon the basic principles and teachings of the Symbolic Lodge. The York Rite consists of the Royal Arch (which confers four Degrees), Cryptic or

Chapter (which confers three Degrees), the Knight Templar (which confers three Degrees). The Scottish Rite confers Degrees from the fourth through the thirty-second. It also has an honorary Degree designated the thirty-third.

Many appendant organizations are related to Masonry but are not Masonic in themselves. They predicate their membership on some form of Masonic membership or recognition. All subscribe to worthwhile purposes. Some of the best known are the Shrine, Eastern Star, Beauceant, White Shrine, DeMolay, Job's Daughters, and Rainbow for Girls. Grand Lodges (and their subordinate Symbolic Lodges) do not recognize them formally or maintain Masonic relations with them, but often encourage and aid them.

Masonry teaches by means of symbols and allegories. Symbols are visible signs of moral truths, ideals, and virtues, that is something that stands for something else, while allegories are stories with a meaning implied but not expressly stated. Much of the truth and beauty of teachings so presented remains hidden, forcing the Masonic candidate to think for himself, to interpret, to reflect, and finally to discover the basic principles for living which the fraternity seeks to inculcate.

Building and the Search for Light are two of the symbols used repeatedly by Masonry. The Search for Light is a symbol of man's quest for knowledge and an understanding of his role in life. Building is used allegorically to represent

the molding of character to fit a man for the responsibilities of life. Simply stated, the allegory and symbols of the Entered Apprentice Degree are intended to teach the candidate to build his own character, while those of the Fellow Craft Degree are intended to teach him to build a better society. The allegory of the Master Mason Degree symbolizes life, death, and immortality. Such symbols and allegories are the secret of the Masonic art, and their contemplation will unveil for the Masonic student the great truths of life.