

FIND A GRAVE
THE ALABAMA GRAND MASTER PROJECT

By CLAUDE NEAL HUDSON,
GRAND HISTORIAN

The seed for this project was planted in 2012 on a visit to Decatur City Cemetery with MWPGM Gene Anderton to establish a F.A.G. (Find A Grave) Memorial for Honorary PGM James M. Brundidge.

The purpose of the project is to establish memorials to honor our deceased Grand Masters and their families and to promote Freemasonry via this online database.

The final resting place of all our Grand Masters, especially those who perished before the end of the Civil War, may never be known due to the erosion of time, ravages of war, desecration and small family cemeteries being overgrown or plowed under and converted to farm land and shopping centers.

This project could not have moved forward without the approval of the Corporate Board to use Grand Lodge images and the tireless work of MWPGM Ron Andress for editing and restoring them.

We'd like to extend a Special Thanks to Donna R. Causey who gave her blessing to use biographical excerpts from her book The Grand

Masters of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Alabama 1811-2011 on F.A.G. Memorials.

A Custom Flower is placed on each memorial with the year(s) the Grand Master served.

To date we have created 8 Memorials and 83 Flowers, 66 pictures and 41 bios have been added to existing Memorials.

The F.A.G. Project has yielded a never-before-known portrait of our first Grand Master Thomas Wadsworth Farrar and a 66-page family timeline/bio of him until his death of cholera in 1832. Efforts are being made to have the portrait available for display at the 2015 Annual Communication.

It always seems that COST is the bottom line question for any GL project. The answer is a 100% totally FREE vehicle of promoting Freemasonry 24/7/365.

It is our vision that this project will always be a work-in-progress and will eventually expand to establish memorials for as many Grand Lodge officers as possible and for all Lodges to begin a Find A Grave project of their own to honor their Past Worshipful Masters and other Lodge Officers.

wait for anyone.

I started this article telling you about my Father and though he has been gone for over 24 years, it seems like yesterday that we were talking to one another. Ask yourself this question: where do you think your Lodge will be in 24 years? Is there a possibility that somebody might say "It only seems like yesterday that there was a Masonic Lodge in our town"!

DISTRICT NEWS

We want to hear from you! This section features news and events from Lodges across the state, so if your Lodge or District has any upcoming events or news to share, contact Parker Moore at pdmoore@gmail.com with details.

Upcoming Events

May 2, 2015, Hatton Lodge #879, Cornerstone Laying & Dedication

May 16, 2015, Rising Sun Lodge #29 (Decatur), Cornerstone Laying & Dedication. Contact: David Glenn 256-654-9687

May 23, 2015, J. Collier Foster Lodge # 906 (Northport) Boston Butt Sale (\$35.00 each). Contact: Greg Durr, 205- 292- 7305

October 3, 2015, J. Collier Foster Lodge # 906 (Northport) Annual Eagle Wings Charity Motorcycle Ride. Contact: Greg Durr 205- 292- 7305

Lodge News

Montgomery Lodge #11

Montgomery Lodge #11, under the leadership of Worshipful Master Rick Selfridge, is having a good year. We are thankful that we have five new EAs so far this year with the prospect of several more in the near future, in addition to several brothers becoming active again or joining our lodge after moving to our area. Our current Senior Warden, Rick Boyett, recently became the Potentate of Alcazar Shrine, and we have seen a number of our brothers join the Shrine, with which our lodge has a close and positive relationship. In other news, our oldest member, Bro. David Corrie, recently passed away and will be missed. He was almost 101.

Grand Lodge in November is a highlight we look forward to every year. Lodge #11 has hosted a dinner on the Monday of Grand Lodge for the past few years and we have had a long line of new Master Masons raised that night, the most recent being Bro. Stan Horn. Brother Steve Starr, our current Treasurer, always tends to every detail with great care. We look forward to hosting the dinner this fall and invite you to join us.

We have a discussion class Sundays at 7 a.m., in which we usually study some aspect of Hebrew or Christian scripture, but occasionally we also investigate other traditions, such as Taoism. All are welcome and anyone may suggest a topic or tradition to study as we seek light in God's creation.

Our Lodge holds a monthly fellowship breakfast for Masons, their families and friends Please join us at 8 a.m. on April 18th for the next one.

With our unanimous vote to allow participation in the use of Grand Lodge approve teaching aids and our new efforts to increase the financial wellbeing and visibility of our lodge, we have a new sense of enthusiasm in our venerable lodge and we look forward to the future. Please join us on the first and third Mondays at 6:30 p.m. Our meeting is preceded by a dinner around 5:30 p.m.

Fraternally,
J.E. Smith, Secretary

BELOVED BROTHER OTIS "DOC" JACKSON



Brother Otis 'Doc' Jackson was installed as W.M. on his 97th Birthday on July 15, 2014. In November of 2014, he attended the Grand Lodge Communication where he was brought out onto the main floor where in front of six hundred plus people, he was recognized as the oldest W.M. at the time and received a standing ovation. He was looked up to by many, and made lasting impressions. Always with a chuckle, he had a clever word.

He was born on June 15, 1917 and was initiated as a Mason on April 1st of 1970 and was Passed (August 5th) and Raised (September) in the same year. He passed away on December 31, 2014.



THE MASONIC MESSENGER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GRAND LODGE OF FREE & ACCEPTED MASONS OF ALABAMA



VOL. 4 -NO. 1

GRAND LODGE OF F&AM OF ALABAMA

SPRING 2015

IN THIS EDITION....

SECRETS AND TRUST

FROM THE DESK OF THE
GRAND SECRETARY

FREEMASONS,
FREETHINKERS

AGE, THE CROWNING
GLORY OF MAN

DISTRICT NEWS &
UPCOMING EVENTS

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!
SEND IN PHOTOS, NEWS AND
EVENTS AND WE WILL TRY TO
PUBLISH THEM IN THE NEXT ISSUE
OF THE MESSENGER!

THE PASSAGE OF TIME

By JOHN STRICKLING, MWGM

My Father passed away November 3, 1990. About a year before his death we had a conversation about time. I was 42 at the time and mentioned how quickly the time was passing. His comment was "you haven't seen anything yet, wait until you turn 50, time shifts into overdrive". Truer words have never been spoken, he has been gone 24 years and 4 months and it seems just like yesterday that we were having that conversation!

So it is with my year as Grand Master; it has already been 4 months since Grand Lodge and it seems that there is not enough time to accomplish all of the goals I set, to have the personal contact with the Committees that I hoped for, or even visit as many Lodges as I had planned. I have reached the conclusion that

once you have finally figured out this job, it is time to step down and hand over the reins to the next man in line.

It is my opinion that I am no different than all those Brothers who served as Grand Master before me. They wanted to see the Fraternity grow and flourish during their tenure and all had the desire to leave it in as good a condition, if not better, than when they assumed office. Like them, I love this Fraternity and it is my earnest desire that it survive so that our Grandsons and their sons can have the opportunity to become Masons.

During the month of January, I had the opportunity to meet with the Brethren of our Five Groups at various locations across the State; to present ideas and proposals that could assist in retaining members, attract new

members and give us the finances to support new programs. Part of the goal of these meetings was to inform the membership of our current status, show projections for our future, to educate and plant the seed that we can no longer do business as usual.

Historically, this fraternity does not adapt to change in a very timely manner. In other words we are slow to adopt new ideas or change the way we do things. Time is not on our side! The average age of an Alabama Mason is 64.5 and 45% percent of our membership is 68 years of age and older. At the current rate of decline, our membership will decrease by approximately 11,000 in another ten (10) years! For those of you who insist that it has "always been done a certain way" and "we have never done it that

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way before "- you must either adapt to changing society or your Lodge will cease to exist.

Our Fraternity can have a bright future and last for generations, if we will only open our minds to new ideas and quit living in the past. We should be proud of our history, but we can't afford to live there for if all we have is the past, then we have no future. Time, my Brothers, really does not

"Taking Care of Our Own" - Social Services Program

Financial assistance is available to our Brethren and Widows who are in need!!! Contact the Grand Lodge for more information on the program or visit the website to download program details:

www.alafreemasonry.org/committees/coprog



A new license plate design was submitted to the State of Alabama this past November and will be sent for approval in late Summer or early Fall of this year. If approved, the new tag will go on sale in January 2016.

Show your pride in the fraternity and purchase a Masonic Tag at your next renewal date.

MEETING PLACES OF THE GRAND LODGE OF ALABAMA



By BRYAN M. LEAGANS

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Alabama has met in the capital city throughout its history. The Grand Lodge met in Cahaba from 1821 to 1825, Tuscaloosa from 1826 to 1846 and finally in Montgomery from 1847 to the present. Each time the Grand Lodge followed the Capital.

During its time in Cahaba, the Grand Lodge met at the hall of Halo Lodge. The hall of Halo Lodge appears to still be in existence today. According to the book, "Selma, Queen City of the Blackbelt" by Alston J. Fitts III, Jesuit priests moved the Masonic hall in Cahaba to Selma in 1880 and today it is known as St. Andrew's Hall (pictured above), which is now part of the Queen of Peace Catholic Church located at 309 Washington Street in Selma. This will be researched further when time allows for more detailed research.

In Tuscaloosa, the Grand Lodge was convened at the hall of Rising Virtue No. 4. At the 1830 communication, the Grand Lodge authorized funds, in an amount not to exceed \$2,000, for the building of a Masonic hall to be occupied jointly by the Grand Lodge, Grand Chapter, Tuscaloosa Chapter, and Rising Virtue No. 4. Just before the Grand Lodge convened in 1836, the Hall was lost by sale "under execution for the cost of its erection." In 1837, the Grand Lodge met at "Cantley's Room." In 1838, the Grand Lodge once again met at the hall of Rising Virtue No. 4. The last few meetings were held at the "Grand Lodge Room" or "Grand Lodge Hall" in Tuscaloosa.

The Grand Lodge did try and secure a hall of its own in December of 1844 when a motion was made to purchase the "Old Court", but it had already been sold. The Grand Lodge continued to meet in Tuscaloosa for three more years, until the Grand Lodge moved to Montgomery.

SECRETS AND TRUST

By BOBBY PITTS, RWJGW

Much is said in the first degree about keeping Masonic secrets, but little is said about exactly what Masonic secrets are. This can and does cause some confusion. For example:

Some Masons feel that placing a meeting notice in a newspaper violates Masonic secrecy. They feel that anything having to do with Masonry is not for public view and is only proper in the confines of a tiled lodge.

Other Masons believe the fraternity should place itself in the public view. To them, the only secrets we are bound to keep are certain words and modes of recognition.

Much is also said in the First Degree about writing anything that could reveal anything about the degrees, the oaths, or our teaching.

Again, there are some Masons who believe that absolutely nothing should be written or published that in any way might disclose our workings. Other Masons believe that the interpretation that NOTHING can be put in writing is overemphasized and not warranted.

Secrecy without trust is worthless. Another way of saying a man can't keep a secret is to say he can't be trusted.

One of the basics of the marriage vow and the responsibility of a family is trust. Again, saying a man is a good father or a good husband is another way of saying he can be trusted.

There is nothing about Freemasonry intended to create an individual separate from the people he lives around.... Including his family. Many of the lessons we learn in the First Degree find their basis in TRUST.

FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND SECRETARY

By TEDDY R. GROGAN JR., PGM
GRAND SECRETARY

Brethren, I want to take this opportunity to remind you of the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) requirement that each lodge file Form 990-N or e-Postcard. Any lodge failing to file for three consecutive years will lose its tax exempt status. Filing electronically is easy. You will need your EIN number. If you do not know what it is, you can contact us here at Grand Lodge. We have the number for each lodge in the state. Do not get your own.

To file, go to the IRS web-site. Click on "Filing". Then click on "Charities & Non-Profits". Click on "e-file for Charities and Non-Profits". Find and click on "e-Postcard (Form 990-N)". Find and click on "How to File use this link". You will then click on "Leave IRS Site". You will then be directed to the Urban Institute web-site which handles the e-Postcard filings for the IRS. This web-site was recently hacked, so you will need to change your password before entering this site. If you do not have a password, you can register as a new user. Once there, you will only need to answer a couple of questions and you will be finished.

You have four and a half months from the end of the fiscal year to file this report. Our fiscal year ends September 30th, so you have until February 15th of the next year to file.

There is no penalty for filing late. However, if you lose your tax exempt status, the fee for getting it back is \$400.00 if your net assets are less than \$250,000 which includes your building. If your net assets are more than \$250,000, the fee is \$850.00. We have lodges in the state that have faced this situation, so please keep your e-Postcard current.

The second thing I want to remind you about is it will soon be time for your lodge's Annual Communication. The Masonic Code states that officers will be elected at the regular communication preceding June 24, and be installed as soon as practicable after the election, but in no case longer than 45 days after the election. Also at this communication, you will vote on two proposed Constitution changes. We will send the proposed changes to you sometime around the end of April. Each lodge must file all annual reports with Grand Lodge no later than August 14. A complete list of the reports may be found in Article 6-Section 21 of the Constitution and report dates in Edict 8.13 of the Alabama Masonic Code. There are five things we will need:

1) Your Master and Secretary (short form). 2) Lodge officers (long form). 3) Your vote on the proposed changes to the Constitution. 4) The Annual Report. 5) Grand Lodge dues. Please remember to send these reports in on time.

FREEMASONS, FREETHINKERS

By RON THOMAS, RWSGW

Mama often said that you're known by the company you keep, and encouraged us not to associate with people of bad character. Mama was right, but I've found that we are sometimes better defined by our differences from our enemies or detractors. This is particularly true of Freemasonry.

Over the centuries Masonry has attracted its share of enemies and detractors, and it is sometimes hard for us to understand why. Probably the most notable episode linking Masonry and persecution involved the suppression of the Knights Templar. This well-known attack on Masonry, led by Pope Clement V and King Philip IV of France, was but the opening chapter in a long history of Catholic adversity to Freemasonry.

Since then, the Vatican has made several decrees forbidding Catholics from becoming Freemasons under threat of excommunication. A 1983 statement from the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith approved by Pope John Paul II stated "The faithful who enroll in Masonic associations are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion." and "... membership in them (Masonic associations) remains forbidden." It was in reaction to this declaration that the 85 year old priest Rosario Francesco Esposito declared himself a Freemason even though he was once commissioned by the Church to study the Church's teaching on masonry.

This brings to mind a situation much nearer to home, and one that some of you may know better than I. In the early 1990's suspicions about Masonry had surfaced in the Southern Baptist Convention. Seeking to gather information about the fraternity prior to taking a vote to denounce Freemasonry, the Home Missions Board of the SBC commissioned Dr. Gary Leazer to conduct a study of the Order. Far from finding a secret nest of non-believers, Dr. Leazer reported favorably concerning the Masons, joined the fraternity himself, and is now the Senior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of Georgia.

The church has not been Masonry's only foe. Kings in several European countries have at some time banned Freemasonry. Evident in these bans in Europe is the correlation between anti-Masonry and absolute monarchies. Where the ruler or

ruling family has or tries to maintain complete political control, Masonry is not welcome. Where constitutional monarchies existed and where the people exerted more power and influence, Masonry flourished. Or, perhaps where Masonry flourished, the people came to exercise a greater degree of self-government.

The story of the birth of our nation is a Masonic Who's-Who, but even here in the US the Anti-Masonic Party came to power following the Morgan Affair, winning a number of gubernatorial and state legislator elections. It nominated William Henry Harrison for president in 1840, but he ran, and won, as the candidate of the Whig Party.

The 20th century saw several instances of persecution of Freemasonry. In Hungary, there were raids by communist army officers on Masonic lodges, along with theft, and sometimes destruction, of Masonic libraries, archives, paraphernalia, and art works. Several Masonic buildings were seized and used for anti-Masonic exhibitions. Masonry was outlawed by decree in 1920.

In Italy in 1924 Benito Mussolini decreed that members of his Fascist Party who were Masons must choose between the organizations, and in 1925, he dissolved Freemasonry in Italy, claiming that it was a dangerous political organization.

During Spain's civil war, under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, both the communists and nationalists attacked Freemasonry. Masons were shot, tortured and murdered by organized death squads in every town in Spain. The slightest suspicion of being a Mason was often enough to earn a place in a firing squad, and the blood-letting was so fierce that, reportedly, some Masons were even hurled into working engines of steam trains. By 1937, according to the annual Masonic assembly held in Madrid, all Masons that had not escaped from the areas under nationalist control had been murdered.

As Adolph Hitler rose to power in Germany, he, too, sought to persecute Freemasons. The Nazis claimed that high-degree Masons were willing members of the Jewish conspiracy and that Freemasonry was one of the causes of Germany's defeat in World War I. Special police were assigned to ferret out and imprison Masons. Like the yellow Star of David badge used to identify Jews, Masonic concentration

camp inmates, branded as political prisoners, wore an inverted red triangle as the badge of their crimes. The total number of Freemasons from Nazi occupied countries who were killed is not known, but it is estimated that between 80,000 and 200,000 Freemasons were murdered under the Nazi regime.

From the 1700's Freemasonry has been considered heresy in most of the Islamic world. On July 15, 1978, the Islamic Jurisdictional College, declared Freemasonry to be "dangerous" and "clandestine".

In the Far East in 1938, as Japan sought to expand its empire, a Japanese representative to a world conference said, "Japan is at war not with China but with Freemasonry, represented by General Chiang Kai-shek, the successor of his master, the Freemason Sun Yat-sen."

Isn't it amazing that dictators, fascists, and extremists across the political spectrum seem to find a threat in Freemasonry? Yet Freemasonry has survived, and is

indeed making a comeback in Europe, in South America, and in Africa.

Have the dictators, and absolutists misjudged us? Not really. We ARE dangerous: Dangerous because we think; dangerous because we ARE international in scope; dangerous because we believe in individual freedom, and freedom IS the enemy of tyrants, bigots, zealots, dictators, and fundamentalists. We are dangerous because we are not sheep.

I challenge you to be dangerous. Defend freedom relentlessly, but never blindly. Be strong enough in your own convictions that you can weigh different, or even opposing, beliefs. Question the motives of all, particularly mass media, who seek to mold your opinion to theirs, especially if they seem to be telling you what you want to hear. Hardly anyone with a political agenda is ever completely wrong - or completely right. Above all, study, learn, and grow. Never forget your duty - to God, to humanity, to your country, and to your Masonic brethren.

AGE, THE CROWNING GLORY OF MAN



From left to right: Greg Durr, RWDGM, 70 yr. member Bro. George E. Koon Jr. and 60 yr. member Bro. J. B. Pugh, both of Gordo Lodge #564

By GREG DURR, RWDGM

Brethren I ask you to think about a part of our verbiage in our fifty year award presentation, as well to other times in our Masonic teaching when we talk about age. What an honor it has been to present fifty, sixty and seventy year awards to our brothers who have reached this high and distinguish honor. Brethren I could not help but reflect upon the stories that these men shared with me, their pride in becoming a mason, and what it meant to them, how important it

was in their lives. They talked about the brothers that taught them their lessons, the master that raised them to the sublime degree of master mason. They talked about their military career, and how masonry played a part in their lives. Brethren don't neglect talking, visiting, or checking on our shut in brothers. Age is the "Crowning Glory of Man". It affords an opportunity to reflect upon the past and from the experiences of the past, the present receives its most useful counsel and guidance.

THE MASONIC MESSENGER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GRAND LODGE OF F. & A.M. OF ALABAMA

Published Semi-Annually at Millbrook, Alabama

To stay up to date on all the Grand Lodge and District news, please send all changes of address and membership status to your Lodge Secretary and become an E-M@son, just visit:

www.alafreemasonry.org/emasons

