

MASONIC HERITAGE DEGREE

Worthy Advisor: Today (or Tonight) we are honoring our Masonic supporters and our Masonic Heritage. This is a heritage of which we, and all members of the Masonic Family, are very proud. Let us remind you of some very prominent Masons who played important roles in our history.

At first, America was a dream. It was a dream of Hope; a dream of Freedom; a dream of the Future. It was a dream that became a reality.

By the early 1700's, Masonic Lodges were established in America. The Masonic ideas, once established in the colonies, became an integral part of the lives of men who would one day be shaping the future of an emerging nation.

Speaker 1 (WAA): One of the most famous acts of rebellion, the Boston Tea Party, is usually credited to members of the local Masonic Lodge. Later, when it came time to formally sever ties with England and draft the document that would lead the colonies to war, it was Freemasons such as Benjamin Franklin and John Hancock who led the way.

Speaker 2 (Charity): When a leader was needed to unite and command these new 'United States', a Master Mason - George Washington - was selected. Other Masonic Revolutionary figures such as Benjamin Franklin, Paul Revere, John Paul Jones, Robert L. Morris, and John Marshall played integral parts in defending, and later shaping, the government which emerged from the victory over England.

Speaker 3 (Hope): The War of 1812 was the last test this young country faced from abroad. Financing for the War of 1812 was mainly private and the largest financier was Stephen Girard, a Mason from Pennsylvania. Masonic heroes such as Andrew Jackson distinguished themselves during this war. Jackson went on to become President.

Speaker 4 (Faith): Attention turned Westward and, again, prominent Masons played a part in shaping our destiny. The Louisiana Purchase negotiated by Master Mason, and later President, James Monroe, brought vast new areas to the United States. This land was surveyed by Master Masons Lewis and Clark.

Speaker 5 (Love): The road West was difficult due to many natural barriers. The idea for a body of water running East to West was conceived by Master Mason DeWitt Clinton, Governor of New York. Through his efforts, the Erie Canal was built. The Northwest Territory was opened up and surveyed by Rufus Putnam, the first Grand Master of Ohio.

Speaker 6 (Religion): In 1836, a brave group, led by Col. William Travers, fought the Mexican Army at the Siege of the Alamo. Many of the men who died were master Masons. Independence for Texas was gained through their sacrifices as well as the efforts of Master Mason Sam Houston, Commander of the Texas Army.

Speaker 7 (Nature): Additional new lands were added to the United States under Masonic President James Polk's Oregon Purchase. Later, the discovery of gold in California attracted pioneers to make the dangerous Westward migration. In Nevada, the men of the partnership owning the gold and silver mines of the famous Comstock Lode were Master Masons.

Speaker 8 (Immortality): As the United States grew, prominent Masons played important roles. Industrial leaders such as automotive giant Henry Ford of Michigan, agricultural leader Oliver Kelley of Minnesota and labor leader Samuel Gompers of Washington, D.C. were all Master Masons. These gentlemen and many other Master Masons helped shape the United States as a power steeped in Masonic Heritage and traditions.

Speaker 9 (Fidelity): By the dawn of the 20th Century, this dream of liberty and freedom called the United States of America had been realized. But, like many dreams, it demanded a price. The new nation found itself in the position of being called upon to defend the ideals of democracy and freedom abroad. In 1918, Master Mason John J. Pershing became Commander in Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces sent to Europe to fight victoriously in a "War to End All Wars." America had now come full circle.

Speaker 10 (Patriotism): What is America? It is the founding of a dream. It is a dream built upon the teachings of the Masonic Order, tested with the lifeblood of Master Masons throughout History, and dedicated to freedom and equality.

Speaker 11 (Service): What is America? It is a Pot of Gold - Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow. A Pot of Gold from which there comes another treasure, which is founded upon these same Masonic ideals and teachings. The International Order of the Rainbow for Girls is a Promise for Tomorrow.

Worthy Advisor: This Promise is deeply rooted in our Masonic Heritage. Our Founder, the Reverend W. Mark Sexson, a Past Grand Master of Oklahoma, gave us a priceless legacy when he penned our beautiful Ritual. He was a devoted member of both our parent organizations and succeeded in sharing their ideals and beliefs with us as he blended them with his vision of color.

WAA: The very beginning of our meetings emphasizes this fraternal bond. Our Mother Advisor, Drill Leader and Musician, enter the Assembly Room in the shape of a triangle. This is the first of many times that we use this formation in our work.

Confidential Observer: Our doors are secured and opened with raps. Permission must be secured from the Worthy Advisor if a person wishes to enter or leave. Together with the Outer Observer, I guard the doors against intruders and misuse.

Outer Observer: Just as your Tyler guards the Out Door of your Lodge Room, so must I. Our jewel is also similar - the sword. Persons must make themselves known by our signs and password, before I will ask that they be admitted.

Drill Leader: One of the first actions in our ritualistic opening is the presentation of, and salute to, our flag. As Drill Leader, this is one of my proudest duties. It is also the duty of the Drill Leader to serve as escort for our guests and candidates. We do not regularly use a baton as your Marshal does, but we do use it for proclamations.

Hope: As we open our meeting, we also open the Bible on our Altar. With great solemnity, we open the White Light of Promise at its designated place and adorn it with the emblem of our Order. This is a practice we share with our parent fraternal Orders.

Chaplain: Our beliefs in a Supreme Being as a Source of all Knowledge is very evident at our meetings, just as it is in yours. Not only do we make reference to this belief and respect the area between the Altar and the East, we reverently engage in prayer. Prayer is an integral part of our regular opening and closing as well as during our initiation.

WAA: Like yours, our Order of Business calls for dealing with the general operation of the Assembly before conferring of any Degrees. Some of our officers are elected and some are appointed. Those who are elected are done so by secret ballot and under the watchful eyes of three tellers.

Recorder: Both of our Orders realize that the general business of the organization must be maintained with accuracy. This is done for ourselves and to provide a historical record of our action. The jewel of my office is the pen.

Treasurer: Money is the basis of all organizations and the control and recording of all expenditures is most necessary. As you know, the responsibility of this office are great. The jewel of my office is the key.

Faith: My station is near the Altar in order that I may lead my sisters to the Source of All Light. It is my duty to meet and escort our candidates during our Initiatory Degree. It is my understanding that many of the duties of my office are similar to those of your Senior Deacon.

Choir Director: Music plays an important part in our ceremonies. Some of our music is ritualistic, but much of it is hymns of faith that accentuate our heritage in both our beliefs and the expression of those beliefs. My jewel is the harp, much like the lyre of your Organist.

Musician: Music provides that extra expression found impossible in our limitations of words. Both of our orders depend on harmony and there is no better way to illustrate this than through music that is especially designed to enhance the ceremony.

Love: Our candidates travel through seven degrees of initiation in one ceremony. The first of these degrees explains the importance of Love. One of the most illustrative references to Love is the Love of God and the belief in God as the source of everlasting life.

Religion: Religion is important to both of our Orders and both do honor to the biblical definition that "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted before the world.:"

Nature: The beauty of the out-of-doors is an integral part of our Ritual. Here, in the quietness, we have the opportunities to commune with God.

Immortality: Immortality and eternal life provide thoughts for all of us to consider. Our sisters are urged to remember that "whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

Fidelity: Loyalty, trueness, faithfulness: all are evidence of fidelity. Our Order honors God's first promise of the Rainbow. Lives given in faithfulness to God's promises have given us the great stories of our religion which form the foundation of both Orders.

Patriotism: Our Masonic heritage is most evident when we think of Patriotism. At the station of Patriotism, we urge devotion to one's country and obedience to its laws.

Service: Fraternal 'slash' Service organizations are what we often call ourselves. Members of both Orders are urged to serve others and actively seek those who need our assistance.

Charity: Our last lesson of initiation, that of Charity, is, perhaps, our strongest link to our Masonic parentage. The journey to this station brought our candidate past it once, much as one would travel through darkness, searching for Hope. It is during this final lecture that we re-emphasize our biblical and patriotic heritage and the related responsibilities. The miniature lambskin apron is given and explained as the binding link within our two Orders. You may be interested to know that our aprons are made from the remnant pieces of yours. This station truly symbolizes the bond between our two Orders.

Worthy Advisory: We hope we have illustrated to you how very similar our two organizations are. Just as we honor our Heavenly Father and love our earthly fathers; we have a very special bond with our fraternal fathers. We thank you joining us (inviting us here) this evening (morning/afternoon). We hope that you will join with us again.