



The Trestle Board



The Voice of Franklin's Masonic Bodies

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Learning about Scottish Rite Symbolism

by T. Richard Rust, Jr.

To help the Scottish Rite Mason better comprehend the Rite's structure, history, and philosophic teachings, The Master Craftsman Program was designed. There are six reading assignments and six open book quizzes. In reading the material for the program, I became increasingly aware of the abundance of symbols in the Scottish Rite. I knew of course that symbolism was important but not to the extent that I know now. Also, I am more aware that it is impossible to fully understand Masonic ritual without joining the meaning of the words to the symbols associated with them. The physical representation has to be connected to the spiritual idea. I am reminded that symbols are a lot like shorthand, and like shorthand, you have to study it to know what it means.

As I studied, I started to wonder why there was such a proliferation of symbols. Two statements from *A Bridge to Light* gave me some insight. Dr. Rex Hutchens writes, "Scottish Rite Masonry uses symbolism as its method of instruction and teaches philosophical, moral, religious and political lessons." The author quotes Albert Pike's *Morals and Dogma*, "The human mind still speculates upon the great mysteries of nature, and still finds its ideas anticipated by the ancients, whose profoundest thoughts are to be looked for, not in their philosophies, but in their symbols, by which they endeavored to express the great ideas that vainly struggled for utterance in words." The saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words" is applicable to these two explanations of Freemasonry as represented by symbols.

It has become quite evident to me that symbols in Freemasonry are meant to be interpreted individually by the person trying to understand them. Symbolism is subjective. Some may see meanings in different parts of the rituals while others may not. Judging from my experience, I am quite sure that many Masons who think they know the meaning of the ceremonies are actually clueless and perhaps don't even comprehend simple symbols in their Blue Lodge. The personal relationship has not been established.

If I had not enrolled in The Master Craftsman Program, much of the symbolism would have gone unnoticed or misunderstood as I attended Scottish Rite reunions or meetings. I am learning that symbolism is the method to use in discovering the hidden meanings of the various degrees. A quote from Albert G. Mackey's *The History of Freemasonry* summarizes my thought. He said, "The Freemason has no way of reaching any of the esoteric teachings of the Order except

Lodge Dates

- Oct 1** —6:00 pm Dinner & 2 EA Degrees
- Oct 9** ---6:00 pm MM Civil War Degree
@ Carnton Plantation
Dress Warm—No Dinner
- Oct 10**—10am—4pm Lodge Open House
Public Invited— Hot Dogs, Cake & Ice Cream
6:00 pm Formal Gala Dinner @
Cool Springs Marriott
- Oct 29** 6:00 pm Dinner & FC Degree

York Rite Dates

- Oct 12**—6:00pm—Stated Meeting

OES Dates

- Oct 13** —6:30pm— Refreshments
7:30pm—Stated

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Hiram Lodge No. 7 F. & A.M.
115 2nd Ave. S.
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through the medium of a legend or a symbol.”

Symbols presented in the Scottish Rite are there for personal insight and growth. I have started a journey into making sense of the profound lessons as I use the symbols and think about them -- that's what makes them meaningful. Knowing the significance of Masonic symbols and utilizing them will help foster active reflection instead of passively accepting the degrees. If I can gradually put together some of the pieces of the puzzles found in the vast array of words and symbols in Masonry, it will help me form a good philosophy of how to live.



York Rite News

DePayens Commandery inspection has been changed to Wednesday, October 28 at Hiram Lodge. Dinner at 6 pm. Knights Templar Degree and Inspection starts at 7pm.



Eastern Star News

Our official visit was a wonderful success. We served 81 at our History of Franklin Banquet and had a packed house with standing room only at Otey Hall in St. Paul's Episcopal Church for the visit of our Worthy Grand Matron, Debbie Linson.

We are planning to have an initiation at our October meeting so please come support our officers and our candidate for the degrees on Tuesday, October 13th at 7:30. We will have refreshments before the meeting at 6:30.

