THE
# HOUSTON VALLEY HERALD

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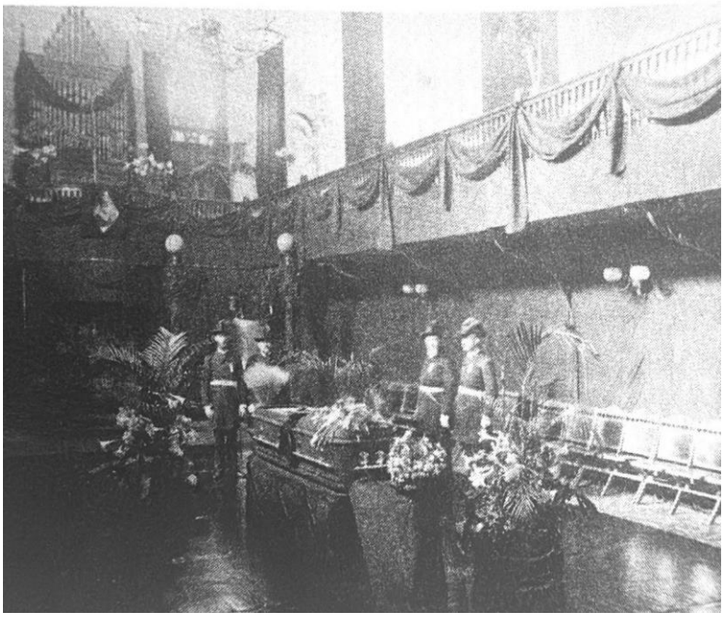
## The Passing of an Icon



**Brother Pike's body lying in state at the Scottish Rite Cathedral, April 9, 1891, Archives of the Supreme Council, 33°, SJ**

**By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH, K.Y.C.H.**

The Masonic funeral is one of the highest honors that we as Masons can provide for our departed brother who has laid down his working tools. As all Masons should know that death is not a creature that stalks us our entire lives looking to take us away from our families and friends, but as a companion and a natural part of life that we all must take part in. This final journey that calls each and every one of us home to the father is part of God's plan no matter how a brother comes to his eternal reward.

The earliest Masonic funeral dates back to London, England around 1730. We read in Masonry Dissected written by Samuel Prichard, where it provides details about the funeral of Hiram and speaks of brothers wearing white gloves and aprons. Even within the Scots Master's degree which has been recognized by Masonic scholars as the first high degree after the Master Mason degree (precursor to the Scottish Rite degrees), a ceremony for Hiram's funeral and how solemn and sacred we should perform such a ceremony. Some earlier accounts might even trace back to 1717 but yet are not completely confirmed.

The Masonic funeral most brothers are familiar with evolved from "Illustrations of Freemasonry" by Williams Preston 1772, and are performed all over the United States by brothers paying their final respects to their beloved brothers. One of the most well-known American Masonic funerals is that of Brother George Washington. On December 18, 1799 Alexandria Lodge No. 22 would carry out one of the country's most solemn and sacred masonic funerals with six Revolutionary war veterans and associates as pallbearers, five of those pallbearers were Freemasons. Brother Washington received a full Masonic funeral and with a Masonic apron placed upon his coffin during the ceremony and then placed inside the coffin and laid upon him for burial where it still remains to this day. The ceremony was thought out to the last detail by Alexandria's Masonic Lodge No. 22, which started at three o'clock in the afternoon and extended until the softly setting sun dipped west just below the horizon emblematical of Brother Washington's life.

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## The door does not open outward; It opens inward.

**By Edgardo Arroyo 32° KStA**

There are degrees that may be contemplated as a representation, and there are degrees that, if the heart is willing, open like a luminous wound within consciousness. The Fourth Degree, Secret Master, begins in mourning for Hiram Abif; yet its mourning is not immobility. It is a dark chamber in which the eye learns to distinguish what ordinary brightness had concealed. Before the candidate are three columns (Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty), and around them burn nine lights gathered into three triangles, as though the number it was uttering was a warning: no man ascends toward the Mystery by one virtue or one path alone. The ritual arranges nine virtues upon a symbolic form of the Tree of Life and introduces the Kabbalah as a philosophical and symbolic language, not as a substitute for religion, but as a map for examining the material world, consciousness, and moral duty.

Here ends what the stage reveals, and here begins what the symbol asks. Boaz and Jachin, together with the black-and-white Checkered Pavement, may be contemplated as guardians of polarity: matter and spirit, darkness and light, action and contemplation, falling and rising. Strength belongs to the realm in which man labors, errs, endures, and tries again; Wisdom belongs to the inward lamp that discerns direction. Yet neither is sufficient by itself. Strength without Wisdom becomes tyranny; Wisdom without Strength becomes a vision that never takes form. Between them rises Beauty, imagined here as the central red pillar: blood, life, sacrifice, and harmony. It is neither moral neutrality nor a confused blending of good and evil. It is lived equilibrium, the capacity to hold opposites without being torn apart by them and to choose rightly from the center.

From among the many Judeo-Christian interpretations, the Lion and the Lamb may be contemplated upon the two outer columns. Yet when we reflect upon the Three Columns, the Nine Virtues, the Veiled Sanctuary, and the Ivory Key, we open a door toward the depths, as though passing between the pillars that carried us through the portal of the Vesica Piscis. This meditation, however, must not confuse reflection with ritual doctrine. The Lamb represents Jesus Christ through sacrifice and redemption: "the Lamb of God" who bears the sorrow of the world (John 1:29). The Lion of Judah represents him as King, conqueror, and Savior, for in Revelation the Lion who has prevailed appears, mysteriously, as a Lamb who was slain and yet remains standing (Revelation 5:5–6).

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*Cont'd from front, "Passing of an Icon"*

As in the Symbolic Lodges, the Scottish Rite has its own funeral ceremonies and rituals. The Rose Croix and Kadosh funeral rituals are very beautiful and I would recommend every Scottish Rite brother to purchase the most recent book by the Scottish Rite Research Society "Lodges of Sorrow" to gain more knowledge about these rituals.

Grand Commander Albert Pike wrote the Kadosh funeral ritual and expressed particular directions for his own Masonic funeral rites which included the Kadosh funeral rites to be performed. Brother Pike asked for a simple ceremony without "pomp's", the Scottish Rite Valley of the District of Columbia of which Brother Pike was a member performed the Masonic funeral rites. There were no public ceremonies for Brother Pike's funeral, his body laid in state for five days at the House of the Temple's Council Chamber. With an escort consisting of Knights Kadosh from Albert Pike Consistory No 1, the brothers lead his remains to the Scottish Rite Cathedral. Brother Pike's son in-law Major William O. Roome, 33° who was also the sitting Venerable Master of Mithras Lodge of Perfection No 1, was quoted when asked about the ceremony "It was dignified and impressive sight".

Brother Pike's remains were marched silently without song by a long line of uniformed Knights of Kadosh, all remaining in step with one another. Brother Pike's remains lay in state there for another two days with an honor guard of Knight's Kadosh the entire time. Brother Roome 33° gave a report of the details of Brother Pike's funeral.

"When the remains of the Grand Commander were brought into the church Thursday evening they were placed within the boundaries of nine candles, arranged in triangles on the east, west, and south of the casket. On the upper end of the coffin-lid rested a chaplet of white roses, below it the insignia of the Order and the sheathed sword of a Knight Kadosh.

"Upon it table near the coffin was a skull wreathed with ever-greens, and surrounded by seven large candlesticks bearing no lights. At the head of the coffin stood a large iron cross, painted black, and the presiding officer held in his hand an iron hammer of similar color. Shortly after the stroke of twelve the presiding officer, followed by twenty-one Knights, all bearing tapers, attired in black, with scarfs of crepe, and their heads bare, filed one by one stage silently as shadows, and arranged themselves in a semi-circle on the west, south, and north sides of the coffin, facing the east, while the presiding officer took his station on the east side of the coffin, behind the cross and facing west. After standing thus silently two or three moments few notes of plaintive music were heard, and the presiding officer began the reading of the ritual".

A solemn and sacred way of saying goodbye to a fellow brother makes such an impact not just on ourselves but on family and friends who may not be members of the Craft.

You can find more details about the funeral of Brother Albert Pike at "A Solemn Midnight Service, Midnight Ceremonies over the Remains of General Albert Pike"

**Journey Passport" Program**

The Houston Valley is participating in the "Journey Passport" program which includes 33 challenges that allow participants to earn six unique Scottish Rite challenge coins. The passport program is designed to take brothers throughout the Valley of Houston and the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite. To learn more and get a passport, contact Brother Jason Rees 32° KCCH at: acompass@yahoo.com

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Please like and subscribe to our channel, it helps promote the Scottish Rite and allows us to continue this great work.

https://www.youtube.com/@HoustonValleyScottishRite

*Cont'd from front, "the door does not open outward"*

The Torah preserves the roots of both images: Judah is compared to a lion (Genesis 49:9–10), while the Passover lamb signifies liberation and covenant (Exodus 12). The Qur'an honors Jesus as a messenger of God (3:45; 4:171), although it does not employ those titles, and the Book of Mormon does call him the Lamb of God. In this reflection, the Lion expresses Strength; the Lamb, Wisdom through mercy and self-offering; and their reconciliation produces Beauty.

Then the Ivory Key appears. The ritual presents it as the jewel of the degree, a sign of self-knowledge, and "Clavis ad Mysterium" (the Key to the Mystery). It opens the entrance to the Sanctuary, but does not yet grant passage; the candidate remains upon the threshold. The key touches the lips, joining knowledge with silence and discretion. Upon its bit is the letter Z, the initial of the degree's traditional secret word, which is omitted here out of respect for ritual reserve. The sign is small, yet its zigzag form seems to contain an entire biography: the seeker crosses from Boaz to Jachin, from matter to spirit, from certainty to error, and from error to correction. He does not walk like an arrow; he advances like lightning between two clouds.

Our interpretation proposes that this key is also philosophical, for it opens the barrier or doorway of consciousness toward the Kabbalah and its symbolic language. Yet no inward door yields to curiosity alone. "Prepare the way," one might hear within the desert of the soul; and, as before the burning bush, the seeker must remove the sandals of pride, prejudice, and vanity. The true lock is character. Duty aligns the hand; study recognizes the mechanism; silence protects what has been received; perseverance turns the key. When the Z ceases to signify wandering and becomes a lesson, man discovers that the third column was not hidden within the Temple; it was waiting to be raised within him.

Beyond the theater, therefore, the Fourth Degree does not ask how much we have seen, but how much we are willing to transform. The Sanctuary remains Veiled because consciousness is not conquered by applause. Strength must bow before Wisdom; Wisdom must become incarnate through Strength; and both must be reconciled in Beauty. Only then does the Secret Master understand the paradox: the key was given from the beginning, but the door does not open outward. It opens inward.

## They All Came Just For Me

### By Richard L. Jenkins

**Something big is going on here. Or so I thought that night,**
**As the Masons came to gather round, the Great and lesser lights.**
**One from here and one from there from places far and wide,**
**they came to do, I knew not what, as they gathered there inside.**
**But from each man I was greeted with a smile and voice of cheer.**
**One said, "So you're the candidate, the reason that we're here."**
**I scarcely knew just what he meant, for this was my "first degree."**
**There must be much for them to do before they got to me.**
**Surely these guys would not travel for the sake of just one man.**
**Yes, there must be much for them to do, before my part began.**
**The "Brother Tiler" was my company as I waited at the door**
**To step into this brand new realm I had not known before.**
**They shared with me the three Great Lights and some tools of the trade, That I might learn a thing or two of how a man be better made.**
**When at last I had been seated in this brotherhood of men**
**The Master then began to bring the meeting to an end.**
**And with all things then completed, They stayed a little more,**
**To eat and drink and share a laugh Before heading toward the door.**
**But as we left I understood and then began to see.**
**That they all came for one reason, they all came just for me.**
**Dear brothers I pray every lodge Will make new ones like me,**
**Feel as welcome as these brothers did,**
**When they held my First Degree.**

**Editor in Chief Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH, K.Y.C.H.**