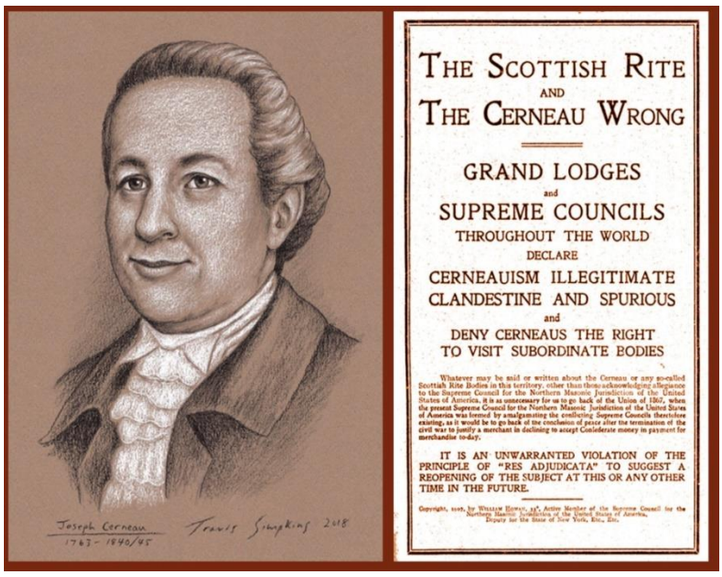
THE
# HOUSTON VALLEY HERALD

June 25, 2026 A MONTHLY PUBLICATION Volume 5 Issue 6

## The Cerneau Problem, part 2




**By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH, KYCH**

Things were getting so far out of hand regarding Joseph Cerneau and his illegal conferring of degrees that any Mason who visited a Lodge in Pennsylvania "should not only be properly examined on his Masonic knowledge but he would also have to swear that he is not, nor has ever been a part of the Cerneau Rite." By 1813, word had reached Charleston, South Carolina and the Scottish Rite Supreme Council where it was decided to quickly send an investigator. Brother Emanuel de la Motta, Grand Treasurer of the Supreme Council, 33°, Southern Jurisdiction was sent to meet with Joseph Cerneau and examine his credentials along with investigating another group, the "Bideaud organization" The latter was founded in New York City in August of 1806 by Antoine Bideaud who was a former member of the Supreme Council for the French West Indies.

Joseph Cerneau and his companions refused access to allow Brother de la Motta to see Joseph Cerneau's Masonic records or his credentials. This left the Supreme Council little choice, for with no credible credentials or charter, they labeled Joseph Cerneau "an imposter of the first magnitude, and whom we have expelled from Masonic Asylum within our Jurisdiction." Despite this condemnation of Joseph Cerneau's Masonic actions, this did not slow his Masonic activities. In fact, he continued as Grand Commander of his own "Grand Consistory for the United States of America, their Territories and Dependencies, of Supreme Chiefs of Exalted Masonry." After Brother de la Mott's investigation of the "Bideaud organization," he found them legitimate, and his findings were later confirmed by the Southern Jurisdiction Supreme Council on December 24, 1813. As the Mother Supreme Council, they issued letters of Constitution for the Bideaud Supreme Council on January 7, 1815.

Joseph Cerneau knowing his twenty-five degree system was in serious competition with the Charleston Supreme Council and Bideaud Supreme Council, he moved to "put on the same level" as the other Supreme Councils and adopted the degrees up to the thirty-second. Joseph Cerneau, in 1827, left New York for France. In his absence, Cerneau's "Grand Consistory" thrived in both irregular Masonry degree conferrals as well as in conflict.

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## Elu of the Twelve or Prince Ameth

**By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH, KYCH**

The word Ameth is a Hebrew word commonly spelled Emeth and translates to truth, firmness and steadfastness. According to the Talmud, Emeth is one of the three words that were engraved on the ring of King Solomon, the other two words were his name "Solomon" and the other word was "I'dor v'dor" (generation to generation). How can we as Masons become a Prince Ameth, and what are those characteristics?

In the 11° - Sublime Elect of the Twelve or Prince of Ameth, we are instructed of the distinguishing attributes that we should have or be working on refining in our everyday lives. In Morals and Dogma, Brother Albert Pike lines these out. We are to be true unto all men, you are to be frank and sincere in all things, earnest in doing whatever it is your duty to do, and that no man repent that he has relied upon your resolve, your profession or your word. Always relying on truth, no matter how difficult it may be, the truth must have its day. Truth is light/knowledge and pushes out the darkness of ignorance. Following through with what you promised in your obligations is fundamental. In Masonry, and more especially in politics, we see all too often men agree to be appointed or elected to an office and then little to no work is done and no progress is made., where no progress is made is where ground has been lost. Are we agreeing to a responsibility for the title or name sake that it comes with or are we looking to dedicate ourselves to duty of those promises made by ourselves?

These duties should not only be practiced by Masons but are universal with all peoples of the earth - no matter their faith or creed. God hears all prayers even if the answers are sometimes 'no.' A Mason should labor to make better the world in which he exists. The Mason's world can be as a leader on a national level, state level, and even in our communities. More importantly, these attributes should be practiced in our everyday lives: when raising our children and grandchildren, at our places of employment, and our everyday dealings in life. A Mason should labor to better and defend the lives of the people. How many times have we given or accepted flattery when truth should have been said? Concealing our true opinions through smiles and compliments only prolongs the problems that may exist.

There are many forms of schools to learn these attributes; all of life is a school. Life is a place of instruction and discipline to all - rich or poor, powerful or weak. The prosperous attend higher education while the poor man has the education of the streets and

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Joining the state of Pennsylvania, the state of New York lost patience with Cerneau's irregular Masonic groups—now lumped together with other such irregular groups. Under the name "Cerneau" or "Cerneauism" was the claim of all irregular or clandestine groups. The Cerneau Supreme Council had many influential members of mainstream Grand Lodges of the States they resided in. This resulted in the Bideaud Supreme Council and the Cerneau Supreme Council existing in the same jurisdictions for years as adversaries.

Both supreme councils would denounce the other in public, print or otherwise. On February 3, 1848 Joseph Cerneau died in France, although the exact location seems to be up for debate. The Cerneau Supreme Council continued until 1867 when the Bideaud Supreme Council and the Cerneau Supreme Council combined to form the Supreme Council for the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite. There were attempts to revive the Cerneau Supreme Council in 1872 and 1881; all of which failed, and the Cerneau Supreme Council was now on its last breaths of life. The crusade to revive the Cerneau Supreme Council came to an end in 1919 with the death of M.W. Bayliss, who is believed by some historians to have been the last remaining Cerneau officer. Another contributing factor to the final demise of the Cerneau Supreme Council was Grand Lodges asserting their authority as the ultimate judge of Masonic regularity within their jurisdictions.

There is much more to this interesting tale of "a man who would be king," and I encourage all brothers to research deeper into this subject, it makes for an interesting story that spans the United States.

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**"Freemasonry has endured not because of its antiquity, its influence, or its social standing, but because there have been so many who have lived it."**

**By: Brother G. Wilbur Best**

**"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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**Check out our latest episode of the Houston Valley Podcast. We interview *Past Grand Master of Masons in Texas*, R∴W∴ Tommy F. Griffin. Find out what it is like once elected to the office of Grand Junior Warden and behind the scenes and the challenges of being Grand Master and difficult decisions. So much is covered in this interview with one of the most beloved Past Grand Masters of the Grand Lodge of Texas.**

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*Cont'd from front, "Prince of Ameth"*

firsthand knowledge of how things work. The poor man learns to complain gets him nowhere, but through action, by toil of the body, and the sweat of your brow does one succeed. Death is a life lesson that affects us all equally, for death does not respect social standing or wealth; it is the great leveler of us all. Always remember it is never too late for a man to learn to be zealous and show a real appetite for his duty. Zeal for the Scottish Rite and all things Masonic can give you knowledge and the drive to help your fellow brothers and the world through the lessons presented in its degrees.

Morals and Dogma says "God, who counts by souls, not by stations, loves and pities you and me; for to him all vain distinctions are as pebbles on the sea." Be a man of TRUTH even if it may cost you in the short term, for truth is a divine attribute that we all must aspire to daily. We see *a flaming heart* on the apron and cordon for the 11° - Sublime Elect of the Twelve or Prince of Ameth. A Bridge to Light tells us this represents "zeal and devotedness that ought to animate all Masons and of those noble and heroic souls that have in all ages suffered and sacrificed themselves for their fellows or their country."

Remember these words well;

VINCERE AUT MORI

"Death rather than Dishonor"

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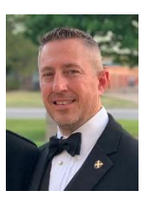
## THE RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX

**The Riddle of the Sphinx is a famous ancient Greek myth where a monster is guarding the city of Thebes, which was an ancient Egyptian or Greek city. The Sphinx would devour anyone who failed to answer it correctly.**

**What creature has one voice, but has four feet in the morning, two feet at noon, and three feet at night?**

**Editor in Chief**
**Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH, KYCH**



**Guest Copy Editor**
**Seth D. Hudson 32° KCCH**