THE
HOUSTON VALLEY HERALD

July 24, 2025 A MONTHLY PUBLICATION Volume 4 Issue 7

Paper Stainer to Masonic Ritualist Pt 3
"Serva Modum"

Portrait by Travis Simpkins

By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

Brother Thomas Smith Webb's masonic influence did not stop at Blue lodges. Brother Webb was one of the organizers and the first High Priest of Temple Chapter R.A.M. in Albany, New York. On October 24, 1797 Brother Webb was chosen as the Chairman of the convention that would organize the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons for the Northern United States of America, whereby he was elected Grand Scribe.

Brother Webb seemed to be everywhere at once masonically speaking. We know very little of his personality, which is odd considering that we have many historical dates and titles about him. None of Webb's peers wrote about him personally: his quirks, sense of humor, or anything that would give us a good look into the mind and characteristics of a brother whose contributions would echo through time and history and affect all American Masons.

Brother Albert Mackey was not the kindest concerning Webb's contributions to our Craft. Here is one such written opinion by Mackey: "Webb was but little acquainted with the true philosophical symbolism of Freemasonry". Mackey did not mince words: another quote concerning Webb said, "The American Rite would have been more perfect as a system had its founder entertained profounder views of the philosophy and symbolism of Masonry as a science, but as it is, with imperfections which time, it is hoped, will remove, and deficiencies which future researchers of the Masonic scholar will supply."

Whatever their opinions are, no one could ignore the impact that Webb had on American Freemasonry. In 1805, he was elected Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of the Knights Templar of Rhode Island. A call was reverberating around the Grand Encampment that the Grand Encampment should be a national organization. In 1817 Brother Webb headed the committee to consider the formation of the national body of that order. The committee wasted no time drawing up and adopting the constitution of the General Grand Encampment of Knights Templar and Appendant orders for the United States of America. It was quickly ratified.

Brother Webb was not all that successful in his business life. He once again moved his business in 1816 to the Midwest. There, he continued to lecture and form Chapters and Templar

Cont'd on next page

Scottish Rite Degrees: Out of Sequence?

By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

While attending a Scottish Rite reunion, a younger brother/candidate approached me, and asked, "Why are some of the degrees out of order?" At first I thought it might have been a misprint on the program. After reviewing the program, I asked the brother why he thought that the degrees were out of order, and which ones? The brother had in his hands a copy of *Morals & Dogma: annotated edition* and we both proceeded to compare the program to the copy of *Morals & Dogma*.

I have been a Scottish Rite mason just over 17 years and what I found astonished me. We found in *Morals & Dogma* the 27° was Knight Commander of the Temple and the program for the reunion had the 27° as the Knight of the Sun, or Prince Adept. If you look at a copy of *Morals & Dogma* and in the book *Bridge to Light* by Rex R. Hutchens and compare them, you will also find that the 27th and 28th degrees have been reversed from *Morals & Dogma* as well.

In Hutchens's book *Bridge to Light* we read the following: "It should be noted from the outset that this degree is conferred as the twenty-eighth degree in many jurisdictions, as it was previously in the Southern Jurisdiction prior to the adoption of the Revised Standard Pike Ritual. The reversal in order was made to give a greater coherence in a more logical and natural order. This slight alteration helps candidates appreciate the lessons in a progressive manner."

After having missed that reversal myself all these years, I quickly reread the 26th, 27th, and 28th degrees to see what I had missed, and then spoke with other Scottish Rite brothers who were also unaware of the reversal. Understanding that others needed to be informed, this article was written.

The 26th degree, Prince of Mercy or Scottish Trinitarian, is a degree that has an overwhelming Christian theme with many references to the concept of the Trinity in Christianity. The ceremony takes place in the catacombs under Rome and studies the famous quote "What is truth?" The Christian Trinity is then compared to other faiths that also have some form of trinity in their beliefs. From the ancient Aryans of central Asia, to Hindus and Buddhist, even the ancient Sabaeans of Arabia; all had a form of trinity in their beliefs.

In the 27th degree, Knight of the Sun or Prince Adept (Revised Standard Pike Ritual), its major theme is based on the

Cont'd on next page

Cont'd from front, "Paper Stainer…Pt 3"

encampments, helping form the Grand Chapters of Ohio and of Kentucky.

On July 6, 1819 while traveling in Cleveland, Ohio, Brother Webb suffered a stroke of apoplexy and laid down his working tools. He was buried in Cleveland with full masonic honors, but later his remains were relocated to Providence, Rhode Island.

Towards the end of Brother Webb's life, he devoted his time to music and formed the Haydn Philharmonic Society in Boston, serving as the first president as well as one of its soloists and composers. Truly a remarkable end to a remarkable story of masonic work and duty. The next time you witness a Blue Lodge degree or "salute arms" in Commandery or open a Chapter R.A.M., remember Brother Thomas Webb, paper stainer and Masonic ritualist.

"The Happiness of your life depends upon the quality of your thoughts"
Marcus Aurelius

"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

---

***The Houston Valley Herald* Email List**
This publication is printed monthly and distributed at stated meetings of the Valley of Houston for the benefit of the brethren assembled. *The Houston Valley Herald* is also available online at www.HoustonScottishRite.org (Click the "Newsletter" tab). Anyone is welcome to receive this publication via email as well. To join our mailing list, email acompass@yahoo.com

---

SCOTTISH RITE
MASTER CRAFTSMAN

The Houston Valley Educational Program
Master Craftsman Zoom study group.
If you are interested in taking classes please email acompass@yahoo.com Any Master Mason in good standing may take the class.

The Houston Valley Podcast & YouTube channel
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

***Check out our latest episode of the Houston Valley Podcast, the interview of the Sovereign Grand Inspector General of Arkansas and Second Grand Equerry of the Supreme Council* 33°, Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction Illustrious C. James Graham 33°.**

Scan the QR code for the Houston Valley Podcast!

Cont'd from front, "Scottish Rite Degrees"

faith of Islam, or "Mohammedanism" as Brother Pike refers to it. The degree takes place in the open country and/or mountains which represent nature, and it focuses upon nature and how God is revealed through his creations: "The visible is the manifestation of the invisible".

Next is the 28th degree Knight Commander of the Temple (Revised Standard Pike Ritual), the first Chivalric degree in the Scottish Rite. This degree takes place in Jerusalem and revolves around knightly virtues and duties: "Be devoted to truth, honor, loyalty, justice and humanity."

We can see that, in the Revised Standard Pike Ritual, the now 26th, 27th and 28th degrees flow with the story. The 26th and 27th degrees share a religious theme, while the 28th degree's theme contains the first Chivalric degree and knightly virtues.

In 1995 the Supreme Council of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite Southern Jurisdiction began working on the Revised Standard Pike Ritual. By the year 2000 they had completed their work, but it was not until 2004 that these revisions were utilized within the Houston Valley. It is now the standard throughout the Southern Jurisdiction.

Freemason shot 17 times!

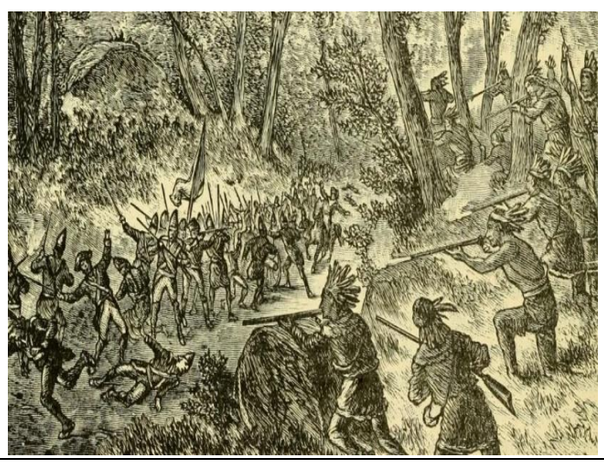
July 9, 1755, the Battle of Monongahela was raging during the French and Indian War. The Great War Chief Red Hawk had a British Officer in his sights and began to open fire. Shot after shot, Red Hawk's rifle blazed on at almost point-blank range.

The battles of that time were close combat, more especially when it involved the Native Americans. Something peculiar happened this time with the great Chief's rifle: he missed! He reloaded and fired repeatedly, seventeen times, and the result was the same: the British officer still was upon his horse and not a single bullet hit its mark, not even a flesh wound.

The Chief noticed too that his warriors to the left and to the right of him were also missing the same man. Chief Red Hawk ordered his men to stop firing upon that man, and the battle ended as a great victory for Chief Red Hawk, while the British retreated under the leadership of this unknown man.

The memories of this battle weighed heavily upon the heart of the Chief, and the unknown man that could not be shot. Several years after the battle and near death, the Chief wanted to meet the unknown man that could not be killed and asked to be taken to him and, now elderly and at peace, he did just that.

Chief Red Hawk met with George Washington face to face. He explained to Brother Washington that he was an excellent shot and never missed and after that battle he knew that this man had been protected by the Great Spirit.



Editor in Chief
Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

Copy Editor
Eric Wylie 32° KCCH