



THE HOUSTON VALLEY HERALD

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Whence came you

Part 1



By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

When James VI of Scotland commissioned William Shaw as “Maister of Wark” in 1583, this would set into motion a chain of events that would change Freemasonry and also be the genesis of the Scottish rite. William Shaw proceeded to issue a series of orders, directed towards operative masons, known as the “Shaw Statutes”. The first of these statutes was named “Old Charges” and the second was named “Gothic Constitutions.”

These collections of statutes were regulations on how operative Masons should govern themselves with rules of conduct and his rules of governing and traditional history. These combined statutes are the early form of modern-day Grand Lodges throughout the world. What is fascinating about these statutes is that we get many of our Masonic officer names from them. For example, “wardenis” (wardens), “dekynis” (deacons), and “maisteris” (masters). We also find in the statutes two familiar classifications: first the “enterit prenteissis”, followed by “fellowe of craft” or “maister”. “Fellowe of craft” and “maister” were considered equals inside of the lodge, but while at work the “maister” was the employer and was in charge.

Moving forward through time to 1717 in London, England, a group of four lodges met and elected a Grand Master there while forming the Grand Lodge of England. At this time, masons were still under the two class/degree system, but eight years later this system changed to a three class/degree system. On May 12, 1725, Charles Cotton and Papillon Ball had conferred on them the earliest known Master’s degree. This Master’s degree did not have the Hiram legend, but instead Noah was the central figure in the degree. These three classes or degrees of Freemasons at the time were referred to as “Blue” or “Symbolic” or even “Craft degrees.” In 1733, Dr. Richard Rawlinson began working on a manuscript, and within was a record of Masonic lodges. Astoundingly, therein was the name of a “Scotch Masons’ lodge.” This refers to a type of Masonry, not to their nationality. Evidence of this is found in writing the following year; this same lodge was mentioned in a register of Masonic bodies referred to as Scotch/Scots/Scottish.

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Is Hanukkah a Masonic Celebration?



By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

The word Hanukkah, which translates to “dedication,” is a holiday celebrated by our Jewish brethren all over the world.

Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights, sometimes begins in the month of November, but is mostly takes place within the month of December. Before we go farther into the customs of this beautiful and sacred holiday, we must first travel back to the year 164 BCE, when the Seleucid army had taken control of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount.

In October of 164 BCE, the Maccabeus (or Maccabees), who were a Jewish priestly family, took command and defeated the Seleucid army led by Regent Lysias. Regent Lysias was from Syria in the Western half of the Seleucid Empire. Soon after the battle for Jerusalem the Maccabees had the Temple cleansed and a new alter reconstructed. The Temple was re-consecrated on December 24, which is celebrated annually as the Festival of Hanukkah.

However, a problem had arisen during the consecration: there was only enough pure oil available within the Temple for the menorah (a 75-pound golden lampstand with seven branches as described in detail in Exodus 25:31-40) to burn for one day. Miraculously, though, the pure oil lasted for eight days and nights, which then allowed them, time to make and purify more oil.

Since that time, and in honor of this miracle, customs and traditions of the celebrated Hanukkah festival include:

- Lighting the menorah, with one candle being lit each night. This custom commemorates the miracle of the light which transpired when the oil lasted eight nights.
- Foods eaten during the festival are brisket simmered in wine stock, latkes which are a fried potato pancake, and traditional puddings and casseroles.
- Daily reading of scriptures and almsgiving, and the singing of hymns.
- The tradition of giving money to children as gifts or rewards for reading the Torah. Some families give small gifts one for each night of the eight Festival nights, while other families give one large gift on the final night.

Celebrating the dedication of the Temple seems familiar to all Scottish rite masons: our Feast of Tishri that celebrates the,

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Cont'd from front, "Evolution of Scottish Rite"

It said that the "Scotch Master Masons degree was being conferred on 'normal' Master Masons."

In 1734 Benjamin Franklin produced the first book about Freemasonry that was printed in North America. Brother Franklin was initiated just three years prior in 1731 into the craft at St. John's in Philadelphia. At the same time Brother Franklin was producing literature on Freemasonry, the unfolding of the "High degrees" separate from the Master's degree and Fellow Craft was happening. The two degrees were "Excellent Mason" and "Grand Mason". Both degrees are the earliest degrees that are the forebears of modern-day Scottish rite and predate even the Royal Arch degree.



[Look for part 2 in the January issue of the Houston Valley Herald](#)

"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

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Check out our latest episode of the Houston Valley Podcast the interview of the Lieutenant Grand Commander Joe Manning Jr.



Scan me for the Houston Valley Podcast!!!

Cont'd from front, "Hanukkah"

dedication of Kings Solomon's Temple that is observed throughout the thirty-nine Orients of the Southern Jurisdiction has very similar notes. The Festival of Hanukkah should be to us as Masons to remember that God can make things happen that defy our understandings, and blesses us beyond our needs.



This Temple menorah is built to the exact specifications as detailed in the book of Exodus

IF YOUR SCOTTISH RITE RING COULD SPEAK:

"I SYMBOLIZE *the Scottish Rite and, as such, like aladdins lamp, I am possessed of miraculous powers for...*

"I BRING YOU *riches far greater than all the wealth of the fabled El Dorado: I can summon to you the help and the strength of your Scottish Rite brethren throughout the nations of our worldwide Masonry...*

"I BRING YOU *the grandeur and the splendor of a Scottish Rite Ritual: That portrayal from antiquity through the golden pen in poetry and the sacred fire in drama that inculcates lofty patriotic sentiments, high moral values, and noble spiritual aspirations...*

"I BRING YOU *the mangnetism of a Scottish Rite Mission: That neverending fight for human rights and recources freedom of the body, freedom of the mind, freedom of the soul...*

"I BRING YOU *the beauty of a Scottish Rite Vision: That revelation of truth and of greatness dimly seen in the mystic light that follows purification, initiation, and moral perfection...*

"I BRING YOU *the insight of a Scottish Rite Philosophy: That progress in human development which transforms natural ignorance into sublime wisdom, self-discovery, self-awareness, and self-enrichment...*

"I BRING YOU *the confidence of Scottish Rite Courage: That self-reliance in daily living born of an abiding faith in the guidance of him who holds the whole wide world in his hands...*

"THESE ARE *some of the things I bring to you, a true Freemason of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry."*

Merry Christmas from the Houston Valley Scottish rite

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