



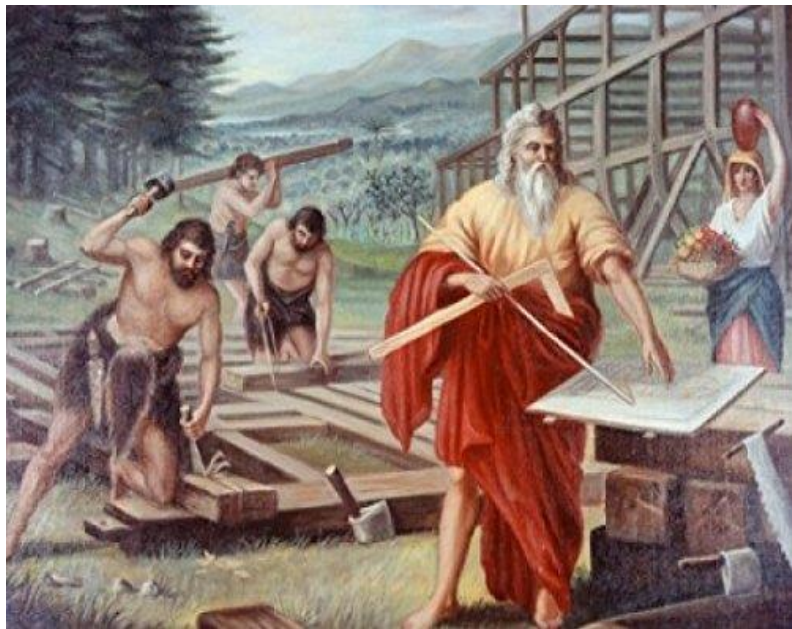
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Before Hiram there was Noah



By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

Long before the name Hiram Abiff became synonymous with our ancient craft there was another name that was used: Noah, the man from biblical writings, whom God commanded to build the Ark with his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth. This great boat held and protected Noah, his family, and the animals (two by two) from the coming global flood that destroyed all things that remained outside of the Ark.

We have not yet discovered the origins of the legend of Hiram Abiff used today in Freemasonry nor why it was changed from the story of Noah. We can read about the degree wherein Noah plays the central theme in the Graham Manuscript (1726). I recommend that you take the time to search online for this manuscript, as it is a brief interesting read of our ancient past.

Following Noah's death and burial, Shem, Ham, and Japheth all return to Noah's grave in search of a true secret. When they fail to discover the secret a substitute secret would be assumed. After arrival at the grave, Noah's remains are nearly gone from decay. The first attempts to raise Noah's remains were by grips, and when that failed, they then tried by other means.

In the Graham Manuscript we find that Noah's sons attempted to raise the body by the finger, joint, wrist, and finally the elbow, which is considered the fourth grip, an important trait of the Scots Master Degree. We also find in the Scots Master Degree that this was only to be given in a "tribal voice" which is to mean three times three, or three times. Our York Rite Brothers would find similarities in some of their degrees as this was then used in the Royal Arch in its early foundation in the 1740's.

Scots Masonry is the ancestor of many Masonic Rites, more especially the Scottish Rite as we know it today. No copies have been found of the early Scots ritual. We have been able to look at the ritual from a Scottish Union Lodge that was chartered on November 30, 1742 in Berlin, Germany by seven local brothers. Union Lodge worked in the French rituals before switching to the local German dialect.

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The Superfluous Stones



By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

Many people would not know it, but as a plumber it is often necessary to work with stone, forming and shaping the stone so that a water tight seal can be achieved when transitioning to a different type of material. We have a tool called a ratchet chain cutter that can cut the stone perfectly straight and round, but oftentimes the stone is brittle and can shatter, making the job harder and causing more damage to the piping. Before using chain cutters, you must inspect the stone to see if it is in good enough condition; if not, you must use a hammer to shape and mold the stone for the proper use.

I had one of these types of jobs this month and it brought to mind the common Gavel analogy: "The breaking off of the rough and superfluous parts of stone." We are all like stone, as each of us are brittle in one way or another. We go through life using the lessons from our various faiths, from the craft, and good council whispered from a brother to better fit us for that spiritual building.

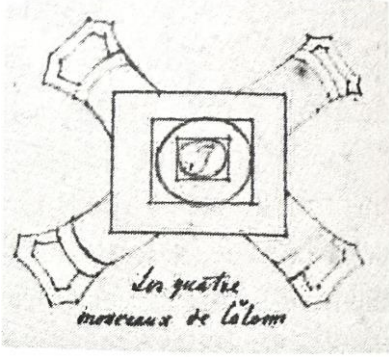
If we are too harsh on ourselves or on a brother when trying to shape and correct issues, we do more damage and cause more work at the expense of the stone. When working with stone you must be patient, slow, and deliberate, just as when using a hammer you must know where and where not to strike the stone.

While working on yourself and others, we should be patient and empathetic. We should whisper, not yell, nor strike hard and fast on the stone. Therefore, do not judge yourself too harshly; instead, go easy, working with the hammer/gavel through all parts of your life, character, and personality, knowing that we all fall short from time to time.

As you begin to shape the stone, sometimes it will crack and you will need to keep working the stone until you find a strong foundation so that you can move on until you are ready to make the transition. Keep in mind the stone will not be perfect and still holds those imperfections. Those small pieces we break off ourselves are the vices and superfluities were once part of us.

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There are those who proclaim that the Scottish Rite or Scots Masonry is French, which is not accurate. In the French ritual from Union Lodge, the titles of the officers are of English origin which is completely different than the French names of the Masonic offices and titles of that day. This shows us that Scots Masonry had its founding in the area around England and not France as some believe.



Early Scots Master Symbol (1747)

Forever would the Noah degree fade into history, being replaced by Hiram Abiff as its main character, and the rest is history.

If you would like to learn more, see *The Porch and The middle Chamber, the book of the Lodge* by Albert Pike. This is the Ritual of the Scottish Rite Blue degrees.

Something to Think About:

David defeated Goliath but lost to Bathsheba, Our real giants are the desires we haven't killed yet.

What Giants are you facing in life? The man in the mirror can be our biggest critic and obstacle. Work every day to better yourself. We all have Giants within ourselves. Many are the same as those of our Masonic brethren. Whisper good council to each other and raise up one another so that we may continue to grow stronger as fathers and leaders.

"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

As you round off those corners of the stones in our lives and in each other, we all gain the light and understanding of how to avoid those vices. Each time we reshape ourselves it will become easier and easier to watch out for those cracks that we might have missed the last time and get back to a strong foundation in which to build and make that transition.

Remember that we are all living stones for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

WE ARE BROTHERS.....

Bugs Bunny, Elmer Fudd voiced by Scottish Rite brother



Mel Blanc

Brother Blanc was one of the most accomplished voice actors ever. He voiced over 1,000 different voices, from Bugs Bunny to Barney Rubble, to a personal favorite Foghorn Leghorn. Brother Blanc joined the Sunnyside Chapter of DeMolay when he was 17 in 1925 in Portland Oregon, and was a proud member his entire life.

In 1951 he joined the Los Angeles Valley Scottish Rite while visiting and entertaining children at the Shriners Hospital in Portland, Oregon where he joined the AI Malaikah Shrine Temple. The only time Brother Blanc stopped visiting the children is when he was in a serious car accident which put him in a coma. As soon as he recovered, he sprung right back into his fraternal work of spreading joy and love to children picking up where he left off. He was truly noble and a great Brother.

Brother Blanc laid down his working tools on July 10, 1989 at Cedars Sinai Medical Hospital in Los Angeles, California. The joy this Brother spread and left behind is priceless. May we all aim to bring joy to the entire world, more especially to children.

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