



# THE HOUSTON VALLEY HERALD

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## Masonic Library for the New Mason



Written by Dr. George H. T. French 32° KCCH in 1973

Submitted by Victor Palla 33°

### Curator, Library & Museum of the Valley of Houston

Some years ago, it was my pleasure to seek help from Dr. Tidnell. That tower of strength in Masonic knowledge. The purpose of the consultation was to prepare a list of books to be read and discussed in a Study Group at Holland Lodge. The books selected would enable a new Mason to gain the knowledge and understanding that might lead him to appreciate the Masonic Order, to the benefit of himself and the Craft.

### List of Books

After careful consideration the following books were decided upon:

1. Claudy, Carl H. INTRODUCTION TO FREEMASONRY. 1931. 175 pp. Information about the Fraternity not wholly imparted in the ceremonies.
2. Bede, Elbert. THE LANDMARKS OF FREEMASONRY. 1954. 56 pp. A frank discussion of a most intriguing subject.
3. Newton, Joseph F. THE BUILDERS. 1945. 131 pp. What Freemasonry is, whence it come, what it teaches, and what it is trying to do in the world.
4. Street, Oliver Day. SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES. 1924. 178 pp. A clear exposition of Masonic symbolism.

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## The Floating Axe head of the Bible



By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

We should always be searching out knowledge and looking for meanings and understanding in our faith. I found a story in the Bible that had me puzzled on its meaning. It is a short story that starts and ends very abruptly, found in 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 6:1-7.

Now the company of prophets said to Elisha, "As you see, the place where we live under your charge is too small for us. Let us go to the Jordan, and let us collect logs there, one for each of us, and build a place there for us to live." He answered, "Do so." Then one of them said, "Please come with your servants." And he answered, "I will." So he went with them. When they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. But as one was felling a log, his ax head fell into the water; he cried out, "Alas, master! It was borrowed." Then the man of God said, "Where did it fall?" When he showed him the place, he cut off a stick, and threw it in there, and made the iron float. He said, "Pick it up." So he reached out his hand and took it.

This passage had me guessing why, seemingly out of nowhere, this story appears, why is it so important, and what can we learn? If you read the passages before and after you find Elisha doing miracles: healing a valiant soldier from leprosy in the preceding passage, and in the following passage Elisha blinds an entire army. Neither explains the mystery of the floating axe head.

I believe it is to remind us that, whether great or small, in all circumstances in life God is there for us. When adversity comes

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5. Coil, H.W. A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW OF FREEMARSONRY. 1954. 234 pp. Written for the young American Mason.

Masonic Knowledge: It is not possible to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge unless one makes a decided effort to learn. And to advance daily one must learn something daily, every day: Furthermore, advancement should be comprehensive and include ritual, research, history, doctrine, and even moral conduct in everyday living.

And fine books read with this purpose in mind must be carefully selected, such as the five enumerated above. There are good Masonic books available, but there are also many inadequate ones for beginners. During its 300 years or so the Craft has come through changing times and the society it has served has varied greatly. Moral standards in literature have similarly varied, and Masonic books have served the conditions of their period. At times they have been emotional, verbose, and almost unreadable to the modern casual student.

Indeed, such books may even be dangerous to the young (new) Mason because they tend to give him a completely wrong view of the meaning and value of the Craft. Some of the high-flown Masonic philosophy and doctrines available in them are quite indigestible, and only of value to the more advanced student who is able to trace in them the development of Freemasonry in the changing conditions of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

An Educated Freemason: An understanding of Masonry's evolution and philosophies is essential to be able to appreciate fully the Order and enable it to play its part in today's world. But the Mason's education must not be limited to that acquired in the cloisters of our Lodges. Not only must he become a Mason educated in Freemasonry but also an educated Freemason.

If a Freemason is to take a hand in guiding his own destiny and that of his Craft and community, and if he is to temper the enthusiasm of youth with the wisdom and experience of age, he must also be educated in it.

**Editor's Note:** This is the original paper as written by Bro. French. The paper was edited and published in the Texas Freemason Magazine in Vol. 11 n. 1, January 1973. The Library and Museum of the Houston Scottish Rite also has copies of these books available from the Burnett Reading Room and Lending Library. The Library and Museum of the Houston Scottish Rite was gifted all the research papers and manuscripts of Bro. French.

**"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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:acompass@yahoo.com)

**What's in your Library??**

**Books Every Scottish Rite Mason should have:**

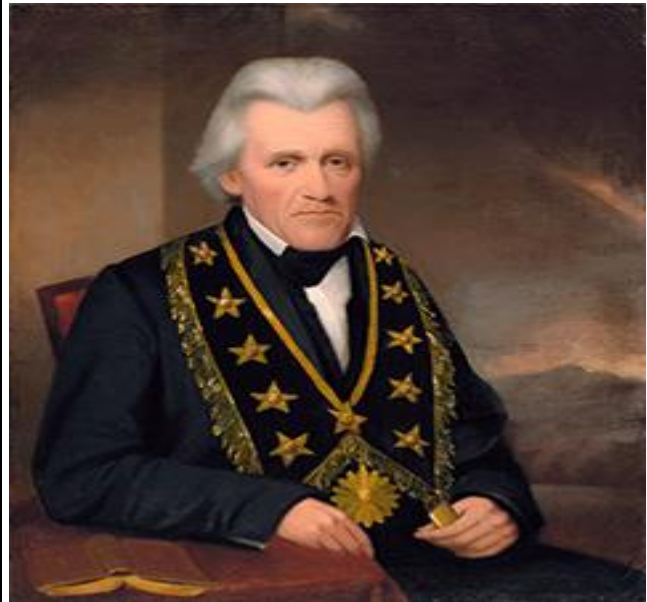
1. *A Bridge to Light* by Rex Hutchinson
2. *Morals and Dogma (Annotated Edition)* by Albert Pike and annotated by Arturo de Hoyos
3. *Freemasonry's Royal Secret, The Jamaican "Francken Manuscript" of the High Degrees* by Arturo De Hoyos
4. *Rite Ritual Monitor & Guide* by Arturo De Hoyos

Cont'd from front, "The Floating axe head of the bible"

against us that can potentially derail the work of God's people, 'down to the smallest degree he has his eye on us. Not even a sunken axe head was too small to overlook.

We have all heard that no problem is too big for God. I would like to amend that statement by adding this: No problem great or small is beyond God's control and help. Follow your faith, work hard, do your duty, and you will be rewarded.

**The Grand Master who Hunted Witches...**



Portrait of Andrew Jackson

Legend has it that the famed Bell Witch had an encounter with then future President Andrew Jackson. Jackson owned property on the Red River and desired to visit the Bell farm after hearing the stories. One of his wagons became stuck by an unseen force and could not be moved, despite whipping the horses, examining the wheels, and having it pushed by the men in his party. He exclaimed, "By the eternal, boys, this is the Witch." To which the Witch replied, "All right, General, let the wagon move on, I will see you again tonight." The wagon started of its own accord and they continued on their journey. That evening at camp, a self-proclaimed "witch layer" or "witch hunter" said he had a silver bullet and regaled the men with tales of hunting witches. Jackson whispered to a colleague, "I'll bet this fellow is an errant coward. By the eternals, I do wish the thing would come, I want to see him run." After which silence followed. Suddenly there was the sound of light footsteps prancing on the floor and the voice stated, "Alright General, I am on hand and ready for business." The Witch bade the witch hunter to shoot but the gun did not fire. The hunter was struck by an unseen force, claimed to feel the pain of being stuck by needles, exclaimed he had been grabbed by the nose, and fled from the tent. The Witch exclaimed, "How the devil did run and beg; I'll bet he won't come through here again with his old horse pistol to shoot me. I guess that's fun enough for tonight General, and you can go to bed now. I will come tomorrow night and show you another rascal in this crowd." Jackson was eager to stay but his party had enough and Jackson returned to Nashville shortly thereafter.

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