



# THE HOUSTON VALLEY HERALD

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## Since Long Ago

By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH



Illustration to Robert Burns' poem "Auld Lang Syne" By James Gibson 1856

The poem/song starts off with a rhetorical question, "Should old acquaintance be forgot". This should remind each of us to remember all those in our lives and to not forget our loved ones. Next, it proceeds to recite old friends and loved ones toasting and talking about their adventures over the past year. As Scottish Rite Masons, this immortality of the soul is what gives us faith and hope. Whether we are apart for travel or by death, it is only temporary; our souls are everlasting and immortal. We are all on the same journey, just via different paths. How important it is to be with family and friends and cherish those moments and the coming together throughout the year, not just the end of the year, celebrating all that has happened!

We learn in the 24th degree, Prince of the Tabernacle, that we grow into a better understanding and love for one another, regardless of the differences we have in life, politics, or the Craft. We learn how important it is to share our lives with others, and how it is Divine nature to love and dwell in peace with one another. We all need to celebrate our lives each and every day and not just at the end of the year.

Do we know where the song came from and who wrote it? When it was written and, more importantly, what the song actually means? Was the song written by Freemasons?

The authorship has long been attributed to Robert Burns, the National Poet of Scotland. Brother Burns was raised to the degree of a Master Mason on October 1, 1781 and depending upon who you ask, which lodge he was either St David 174 or St James Tarbolton  
*Continued on the back.*



Houston Valley Journey Passport Coin 2022 By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

## Knight Rose Croix

Researched and submitted By Seth D. Hudson 32° KCCH

A.B. Leigh, in *New Age*, March 1916

I read wherein a Master of our Order gives his wise interpretation of the great degree of Knight Rose Croix, and as I read I saw my soul in progress through the glooms of doubt.

Beneath the Awful Shadow of despair and Fear—

At last emerging from the gloom to find

The glory of a light Divine.

I passed through evil, suffering and supreme despair—

Saw evil crowned—war loosed and people mad.

I saw great armies swarm like ants

And lay waste lands with ages blessed

Of goodly farms and homes and fanes.

I saw Laws, Courts, and Constitutions pass—

Chaos reign king. It seemed God died

And Moloch ruled the sordid world.

Pulpit and Press grew clamorous, cried for war

And lauded murder. Greed deadened sympathy,

Stifled each kindly impulse of the soul,

Crushed honor and sweet generosity.

Black doubts assailed me—doubt of God and Love

Of Rights and Revelation, and I thought how vain

*Continued on the back.*

**Continued from front "Since Long Ago"**

Kilwinning No 178 .First written in 1788, "Auld Lang Syne" would not be printed until after Burns' death in 1796. It was published in Volume 5 of James Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*. Brother Burns claims the words "Auld Lang Syne" were "taken from an old man's singing", and the poem had been set to a different tune than the one we are familiar with today.

But where did Brother Burns get his idea from? Before Brother Burns wrote his poem earlier pieces existed: Sir Robert Ayton, who died in 1638, wrote "Old Lang Syne", a poem that was published in 1711 and sometimes referred to as Brother Burns' inspiration. Sir Robert Ayton was born at Kinaldie in Scotland in 1570. Sir Ayton was a poet and philosopher in the court of James VI. In addition, in 1720, a poem was written and published by Scottish poet Allan Ramsay where he the poem begins with "Should auld acquaintance be forgot". Other than that line it holds no other resemblance to Brother Burns' poem.

The melody that goes with the song as we know it today existed before Brother Burns' version, written by the English composer William Shield whom we know to be a Freemason. It is recorded that, on February 21, 1776, he was in Durham, England where he attended the meeting of the city's Masonic lodge at the Marquis of Grandy tavern. The lodge minutes show that he was a mason in good standing. He later became a member of Sunderland Phoenix Lodge. Brother Shield used an almost identical melody in his comic opera Rosina in 1782. The poem and melody as we know it today were united in 1799 in a Scottish song compilation published by George Thompson.

In conclusion, "Auld Lang Syne" was written by a Freemason, as was the melody. I believe we all draw our inspirations from our surroundings, and so did Brother Robert Burns.

**"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**

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**There will be a Super Bowl Party at the Houston Scottish Rite building on Sunday, February 11, 2024 beginning at 5:00 pm**

**Continued from front "Knight Rose Croix"**

Was hope of progress. Back to brutes went man  
Wallowing in was and death and hate.  
And what was man?  
Sport of a blind relentless fate?  
Was not philosophy delusion?  
Religions but creation wild, fantastic,  
Tissues of human vanity and self-conceit?  
And what in great creation's scale was man,  
With worlds so many shining down as stars  
Each with a retinue as vast—sun—worlds,  
With myriad millions living lives  
Like to his own. Was he God's child—  
God's special care—God's love for him  
Giving him Christ? It was a dream,  
A fallacy, a thing wrought out by minds  
Of Ancient peoples with a childish faith.  
And full of shivering doubt and gloom  
I saw and saw the world grow dark  
And weary asked, "O where is Truth?"  
Then came the light. I saw Love come,

His pure face shining full of peace.  
I heard a voice speak to the world  
The blessed doctrine of a love  
That made man godlike, lifted up  
To beauty hearts that crushed with fear,  
Ached as my heart had ached. The merciful,  
The pure heart, the meek he held  
Blessed and knowing great vast truths  
That would in practice lift the world  
To be a Heaven, give men peace.  
They shall see God. No need for further search, the calm,  
The peace that passeth understanding comes  
With knowing that in brotherhood  
Is God and Good and Love and Right:  
And holy and most blessed Truth. God reigns,  
Wars cease—Order prevails and over all  
Faith in mankind like a dove  
Broods in calm beauty.

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