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Exempli Gratia

By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH



We find in the Twenty-First degree, Noachite or Prussian Knight “Morals and Dogma” Brother Albert Pike charges a Mason to be “modest and humble, not vainglorious nor filled with self-conceit”. To be “modest also in your intercourse with your fellows and slow to entertain evil thoughts of them”.

In a today’s world slander and calumny is an everyday occurrence, from our politicians, churches, media, and even in our Blue Lodges. The world more than ever needs the guiding light of good men. How do we as Masons set these examples and make right the wrongs of the world? We first must push away those vain and hopeless beliefs of atheism and condemn them as a lost and fruitless enterprise. Atheism is the root of selfishness and blame: the thought of taking something from nothing and by randomness our world is formed and is meaningless; what a hopeless idea indeed!

Through our faith and beliefs in our creator, and by bettering ourselves through work and knowledge, we then can start to change the world. We must strive to purge our hearts from strife and personal demons so that we can lead our families as fathers, grandfathers, sons, husbands, and leaders in our communities. This process begins at home. Practicing the tenants of your faith and the lessons set forth in our noble degrees. Love and justice being practiced at home and in our communities makes an everlasting impression on those around us. Much like tossing a rock into a body of water and watching the ripples go out, affecting everything all around it, so do our works and deeds and words we use. Do you point out others’ faults in public, or do you pull that person aside and speak with them? Remember “public reproofs are like shooting a deer in the herd: it not only wounds him, to the loss of blood, but betrays him to the hound, his enemy.”

We must be cautious on how and what we build inside of our hearts and minds. Let not yourself build that Tower of Babel inside your heart and mind. Submit yourself to God’s superior wisdom without challenge, trust in His providence, and pray daily

Continued on next page

Masonic Pirates, Found?

By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH



Yo Ho, Yo Ho! A pirate’s life for me!!

From Errol Flynn to Johnny Depp the life of pirates has been romanticized in entertainment and in popular literature such as the timeless classic Treasure Island. Were any of these pirates members or former members of our craft? Were the Knights Templar naval fleet that vanished turned into privateers? Are the flags that pirates flew over their ships Masonic symbols? Is the pirate “Code” (the rules that governed the crews of the pirate ships) similar to Masonic beliefs and practices?

Much of what we have read about the connections between Freemasonry and or the Knights Templar is either myth or over romanticized history based very loosely on facts. It began on that fateful night on October 13, 1307 when scores of Templars were arrested by agents of King Philip. Shortly thereafter was issued the papal bull by Pope Clement V, with orders to hunt down and destroy the Knights Templar. The entire Templar naval fleet then fled from where they were based in La Rochelle, France. The fleet looked to find safe harbor and escaped en masse to various ports, from the Mediterranean to northern Europe. No one knows for sure just where the naval fleet ended up.

Coincidentally, European piracy began around that same time. Many ships that were attacked were French, Spanish and Italian, all of which were practicing Catholic countries. It has thus been proposed that the flags flown by pirates have a connection to Freemasonry.

The most common and most recognizable of all pirate flags is the “Jolly Roger”: a skull and crossed bones in white on a black flag. We can all agree that the skull and bones is just one of many masonic symbols, but it is also used by Christians on crucifixes and churches, and has been depicted through art without any Masonic references.

Many other flags were flown by pirates as well. For example, Edward Teach, also known as “Black Beard”, flew a flag with a skeleton holding a cup and pointing a spear at a red heart on a black background. All would know what is about to happen when attacked by that ship.

Continued on next page

with thanks and supplication.

Remember in your prayers to not just ask for deliverance from your troubles and woes, but to give thanks and worship also in those times of great joy, when our cups overflow with the blessings from our creator. Once we have built our temples on solid ground within ourselves, only then we are ready to go forth and shine the light into the world, as living temples that reflect God's glory and infinite wisdom.

God our father is a protector who loves, sympathizes, and is compassionate. His eternal ways are above our ways, and we must trust in Him and let His love, knowledge, and justice shine through us.

"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 through a journey throughout the Valley of Houston and the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite. To learn more and to get your passport, contact Brother Jason Rees 32° KCCH at: acompass@yahoo.com

The Houston Valley Herald Email List

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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. *The 1783 Francken Manuscript* by Henry Andrew Francken with introductory essays by Allan Foulds, Aimee Newell, Jeffrey Croteau
5. *Albert Pike's Esoterika* edited by Arturo De Hoyos
6. *Scottish Rite Ritual Monitor & Guide* by Arturo De Hoyos

New Release Masonic Books:

The Perfect Elect : A Transatlantic Adventure The 'Sharp' Documents Volumes 1 & 2 by Jean-Pierre Gonet, edited and translated into English by Joseph Wages

Important Manuscripts to research for Masonic Education:

- Regius MS 1350-1450, Halliwell MS 1390,
- Cooke MS 1450, Trinity College Dublin MS 1711,
- Graham MS 1726, Copiale MS 1730s,
- Richard Rawlinson's MS 1734, Kloss MS (year unknown),
- Baylot MS 1750-1760, Francken MS 1764

The "Code", or pirate law, was by all accounts democracy on the high seas. Some of these codes/laws are every man has an equal vote, equal portion of loot, liquors, or treasures. Pirates were also compensated for injuries such as losing a limb, and were offered lifetime work if they survived to old age by being given less strenuous jobs so they could remain on board.

Finally, were there any Pirates that were confirmed to be Freemasons or Knights Templars? The short answer: no.

But, before we close out this chapter, let's talk about Samuel Bellamy, aka "Black Sam", Captain of the Whydah Galley, known as the most successful and richest pirate in history who was worth \$120 million dollars in today's dollars. "Black Sam" captured the Whydah Galley, a slave ship that was carrying chests loaded with over 10,000 gold coins. After capturing the ship, "Black Sam" transferred all of his own ship's cargo to the Whydah Galley, including 10 cannon, adding to its existing compliment of 18 cannon. He then traded ships, released the crew he had captured, and headed to the Eastern Coast of America, starting at New York and down to the Carolinas. On April 26, 1717, the ship ran into a massive storm off the coast of Wellfleet/Cape Cod Massachusetts. The masts broke and the ship entered shallow waters and capsized. Out of the 146 crew, only two survived. The location of the shipwreck remained a mystery for 270 years until 1984 when archeologist Barry Clifford discovered the wreck. The ship's bell was discovered confirming without a doubt the wreck.



"Whydah Pirate Museum" plate and spoon with square and compasses

Amongst the treasure discovered at the shipwreck site was a Pewter Plate and spoon with the square and compasses scratched on them. If you look closely at the top center of the plate above you can see the square and compass.

So the question at hand is this: did the pirates loot a ship and steal a plate and spoon from a Brother Freemason? This seems an odd thing to steal when other plunder much more valuable would have been at hand. Or was one of the pirates serving under the command of Captain "Black Sam" a member (or former member) of our craft?

This is one of the earliest, if not THE earliest, use of the square and compasses ever found. Keep in mind that the Grand Lodge of England did not form until June 24, 1717, but three months prior the pirate ship Whydah carrying Masonic artifacts and/or a Brother Mason sank off the eastern coast of Massachusetts. We report you decide.....

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