

THE FLORIDA MASON

FREE & ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE GRAND LODGE OF FLORIDA

VOLUME 102 ISSUE 3 NOVEMBER 2003

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*"Today's Basics provide
Tomorrow's Light"*



ARTWORK COURTESY OF THE GRAND LODGE OF MONTANA

MONTANA 3-7-77

"HOW FREEMASONRY TAMED A TERRITORY"

SEE STORY ON PAGE 5

**M.:W.:JOHN R. GIVENS
GRAND MASTER (2003-2004)**

THE FLORIDA MASON

VOLUME 102 ISSUE 3
NOVEMBER 2003

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GRAND MASTER'S THEME

"Today's Basics provide Tomorrow's Light"

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THE FLORIDA MASON is the official magazine of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of the State of Florida. It is published bi-monthly and made freely available to Masons and friends of the fraternity.

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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

"Failing"

This December marks the end of my term as Worshipful Master of Sutherland Lodge No. 174 F.& A.M. in Palm Harbor. Like any Master, I experienced the usual ups and downs but, overall, I think I had a pretty good run and hope the Craft at Sutherland feels that I left the Lodge better off than when I was first installed Master.

Perhaps the biggest lesson I learned this year was from a Past Master who warned me, *"Don't be afraid to try new things and fail."* Excellent advice which I'll pass on to the incoming Worshipful Masters for 2004.

If we do nothing but maintain the status quo, then our story is told. We should always be looking for new and imaginative ways for improving the fraternity. Change is natural and we should embrace it, not fear it. This is why I tried new things this year and although some things were successful, I also experienced my share of flops. Fortunately, there wasn't anything catastrophic and this is why I feel a little smarter than just a year ago.

If we as a Fraternity are to make any progress, either at the Lodge level or higher, we must be willing to try new ideas and be willing to accept our failures. I am reminded of the passage from Bro. Rudyard Kipling's poem, *"IF"*:

*"If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;"*

(I've included Kipling's poem in its entirety on page 22.)

Some people fear failure of any kind, large or small, whether it be a major business transaction or a game of tiddlywinks. No, I do not suggest we should deliberately try to botch something, but we should accept failure with dignity, learn from it, and become stronger. But to do absolutely nothing, because we are afraid of making a mistake and looking bad, would be tragic.

So, did I bat 1.000 this year as Worshipful Master? Hardly. I went down swinging a few times. But I also hit a few out of the park and drove in some runs. Because of this, I would like to believe that we are better off simply because we weren't afraid to try.

Let me leave you with this quote from Bro. Theodore Roosevelt of Matinecock Lodge No. 806 F.& A.M.; entitled, *"Daring Greatly"*:

"It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better.

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes up short again and again; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails Daring Greatly so that his place shall never be with those timid souls who know neither victory or defeat."

Best of luck in 2004. Happy holidays!

Keep the faith!

W.: Tim Bryce
timb001@attglobal.net
Editor

For a list of other Grand Lodge e-zines and Florida Trestleboards, please see our web site at:

<http://www.phmainstreet.com/flmason/>

P.S. Don't forget to add me to your *Trestleboard* mailing list.



DOWN THE ROAD CALENDAR OF EVENTS



For the Grand Master's Itinerary, see:

[http://www.gflmason.org/
Grand_masters_itinerary1.htm](http://www.gflmason.org/Grand_masters_itinerary1.htm)

For other Grand Lodge activities, please see:

<http://plus.calendars.net/gloffla/>
or <http://www.gflmason.org/>

Saturday, November 1st, 4:30pm

GM's official visit to District 25, Wauchula. To be held at the Wauchula Civic Center. For info: R.:W.:Jason C. Miller, DDGM/25; Tel: 863/452-6007; E-Mail: ffh@strato.net

Saturday, November 1st, 5:30pm

SGW Homecoming, Wauchula. For R.:W.:John F. Kavanaugh, PDDGM. To be held at the Wauchula Civic Center. For info: R.:W.:Jason C. Miller, DDGM/25; Tel: 863/452-6007; E-Mail: ffh@strato.net

Tuesday, November 4th

U.S. Election Day; Grand Lodge Work Day, Jacksonville.

Friday, November 7th

GM's official visit to District 15.

Saturday, November 8th, 4:30pm

GM's official visit to District 16, New Smyrna Beach. To be held at: The Brannon Community Center For info: R.:W.:Phillip A. Hudson, DDGM/16; Tel: 321/267-0649; E-Mail: hudson@gnc.net

Saturday, November 8th, 5:00pm-7:00pm

Dave's Texas Stew/Chili Dinner @ Lake City Lodge No. 27; To assist Cherry Hill Lodge No. 12 of Ft. White with its new building fund. For info: Frederick Young; E-Mail: flyboy34@bellsouth.net

Saturday, November 8th, 6:30pm

Hillbilly Dinner Show @ Turkey Creek Lodge No. 248, Plant City. The cost is \$20 per couple and \$30 for the entire family. Tel: 813/754-7700; E-Mail: dmason@cemcomp.com

Saturday, November 15th

District 22/23 Outdoor MM Degree @ Masonic Park & Youth Camp, Tampa

Sunday, November 16th, 11:00am

Grand Lodge Board of Trustees Meeting at the Masonic Home, St. Petersburg.

Wednesday, November 19th, 8:00pm

SunCoast Masters & Wardens Association meeting (Dists, 20 & 21) at Tampa Bay Lodge No. 252, Safety Harbor. For info, R.:W.:Ron MMillan, 727/539-1645, fiddgm97@mpinet.net. Dinner: 7:00pm, Meeting: 8:00pm. Open to all Master Masons.

Saturday, November 22nd, 9:00am

Zone 6 School of Instruction @ Scottish Rite Masonic Center, 5500 Memorial Hwy, Tampa, FL; Tel: 813/886-0578

Saturday, November 22nd, 5:00pm

GM's official visit to District 13, Lake Como. For info: R.:W.:James A. Thompson, DDGM/13; Tel: 386/649-4459, E-Mail: jjthompson@gbso.net

Saturday, December 6th

York Rite One-Day Class, Orlando. For info: W.:Don Harriott, PM; Tel: 727/393-7963, E-Mail: pm24dth@aol.com

Friday, December 12th, 7:00pm

Worsipful Master Roast of W.:Tim Bryce, Sutherland Lodge No. 174, Palm Harbor. For info: <http://www.os2ss.com/connect/masons/roast.htm>

Saturday, December 20th, 1:45pm-4:00pm

Palm Harbor Holiday Parade (Masonic Float). Sutherland Lodge No. 174, Palm Harbor.

Saturday, December 27th

Sts. John Day.

Got an important date you want listed here? Send your announcements to THE FLORIDA MASON either through our web site at:

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Or e-mail it to timb001@attglobal.net

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MONTANA 3-7-77

"How Freemasonry Tamed a Territory"

by W.:Tim Bryce

Editor, THE FLORIDA MASON



Montana Bumper Sticker



INTRODUCTION

"No institution contains more valuable undeveloped history than Masonry."

- Nathaniel P. Langford (1867)

As we all know, law enforcement personnel are easily distinguished by certain symbols, such as a badge, a helmet, a uniform, or a shoulder-patch. Different jurisdictions, different symbols. But the shoulder-patch worn by the State Highway Patrol of Montana is an interesting design bearing one of the most intriguing insignias found in the law enforcement world: "3-7-77", a simple set of numbers which many people, including the Montana troopers themselves, have trouble explaining. In its simplest terms, it refers to how "Law and Order" was introduced to Montana and represents the basis for the founding of the state.

For years, historians have been at a loss as to the exact meaning of the mysterious "3-7-77." Theories abound to try and rationalize this cryptic numbering convention; everything from the dimensions of a grave (3 feet wide, 7 feet deep, and 77 inches in length), to a countdown to warn an outlaw or undesirable to get out of town (3 hours, 7 minutes, and 77 seconds) or face the consequences of vigilante justice. These theories are logically flawed and, as such, lack conviction. The only thing historians and scholars can agree upon is that it stood for a vigilante movement in the 1860's which cleaned up Montana and made it safe from thieves, armed robbers, claim-jumpers, and cutthroats. Bottom-line, the numbers "3-7-77" struck fear into the hearts of the outlaws of the day and, as such, must have been developed by a force to be reckoned with....Freemasons.

Nathaniel P. Langford

1862 represented a chaotic year for the United States. The young country was at war with itself over ideology. After just one year of conflict, both the Union and the Confederacy started to realize their differences weren't going to be settled any time soon. The outlook for prosperity was bleak. People in both the North and the South were beginning to experience economic hardships. Those not interested in the righteousness of either side of the conflict wanted a way out. The western frontier held potential for those not afraid to embark into the unknown. Gold and silver had been discovered in the Northwest, making the temptation to move west irresistible to many people, including Nathaniel Pitt Langford of Minnesota.

In the summer of 1862, Langford, was one of dozens of men who signed on to an expedition, led by Capt. James L. Fisk, to cross the northern plains by wagon train and head into Western Montana to seek their fortunes and create a new life for themselves. At this time, Langford was 30. He was a tall man and had a beard to offset his slowly receding hairline, but more importantly he had a steely gaze that could penetrate your soul if you got on his bad side. Born in 1832 in Westmoreland, New York, Langford was raised and educated in New York state. In 1854, at age 22, he started his migration west by first stopping in Minnesota where he became a merchant and was raised a Master Mason under the Grand Lodge of Minnesota, an event which proved to be a key development in his character often overlooked by historians. He was proud of his Masonic heritage and was proficient in his degree work. Little has been recorded of his personal life, other than he was strong willed and spoke with conviction.

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Like many others, Langford moved west to seek his fortune but he also suffered from wanderlust, the American frontier fascinated him and he found the temptation to explore it irresistible. Now, at age 30, he felt compelled to do something with his life and the Fisk Expedition represented the opportunity he had been waiting for.

Montana

The name "Montana" is Spanish meaning "mountainous." Those visiting the state are struck by the beauty of the Rocky Mountains that follow the continental divide in the western part of the state. However, there are also vast plains in the state. Other than the plentiful mineral resources in the western part of the state there was little else in Montana of the 1860's but buffalo and Indians, lots of Indians. Montana was an excellent refuge from the white man's advancement to the west. Consequently, Montana became the home of many tribes including the Blackfeet & Crow, Northern Cheyenne, Flathead, Salish, Pend d'Oreille, Assiniboine and Sioux. The plains provided the perfect hunting grounds for bison representing the food, clothing and materials to sustain the tribes.

Bros. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark (St. Louis Lodge No. 111, MO) brought the first group of white explorers across Montana in 1805 and 1806 as part of their expedition to the northwest. They were closely followed by fur trappers and traders. Aside from this, Montana remained the domain of the Indian...until gold was discovered.



Nathaniel P. Langford

Well before Montana was recognized as a territory of the United States, gold was found in southwestern Montana in the early 1860's. With this news, prospectors hurried to the area and makeshift villages began to pop-up. Since there was not yet a territorial government formed, law was governed by mining camps who would hire private sheriffs to administer justice, usually with mixed results.

The Fisk Expedition

Langford and the Fisk Expedition found its way through the plains of Montana with little incident. It had been a long and hard trip, but they were now approaching the end of their journey. Shortly before they reached the mountains, the expedition split into different directions with Langford's group heading towards the southwest.

The group of about a dozen men stopped along a river bank one day at noon to take refreshment and were about to resume their journey when three or four horsemen appeared, coming out of the mountains, dressed from head-to-toe as mountain men. As such, the Fisk group eyed them suspiciously and checked their weapons in case of trouble, particularly Langford who was attending to his horse towards the back of the group. Fortunately, the riders presented no threat as all but one rode past the group without stopping to talk. The one lone rider stopped and dismounted to talk to the men at the front of the group who were yoking the oxen. Langford was out of earshot as to what was being said but the conversation was brief and the rider mounted his horse again. As he was about to leave, he turned and asked,

"Whose train is this?"

"Nobody's; we own the wagons among ourselves."

"Where are you from?"

"From Minnesota."

"How many men were there in your train?"

"About one hundred and thirty."

"Was there a man named H.A. Biff in your train?"

"No, sir! No such man."

"Did you ever hear of such a man?"

"I never did," replied one.

"I know of no one of that name," said another.(1)

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This dialog, of course, caught the attention of Langford. Before the rider could leave, Langford approached him on horseback and offered him the token and word of a Master Mason. The two shook hands fervently for both had found a Brother they could talk to and trust. The two rode the rest of the day together describing their backgrounds and talking about Bannack, the small mining town where Langford was heading. Langford found the man to be a warm and intelligent brother Mason and enjoyed his company immensely. Likewise, Langford was the first Mason the rider had met in Montana and they talked as long-lost friends for hours, much to the bewilderment of the others.

After the two had established a warm rapport and described their Masonic upbringing, the rider began to give Langford a picture of the lay of the land. He warned Langford how the area was growing due to the gold rush, and how some miners who struck gold had a tendency to disappear or were found dead. There was little, if any, law enforcement or government in the area. Consequently, he advised Langford to keep a low profile and watch his back.

The two eventually parted on the square with the rider heading off to rejoin his comrades. Langford took heed of his Brother's advice.

First Meeting

As the Fisk group continued their trek, Langford marveled at the power of Freemasonry and dwelled on his chance meeting with his fraternal Brother. Summer had given way to Autumn and Langford knew their trip to Bannack was coming to an end. The group camped on the Mullan road near the summit of the Rockies. It was a picturesque spot where the mountains surrounded them and was lit at night by the moon and a curtain of stars. The glory and grandeur of the Rockies stirred Langford's soul and he wanted to celebrate their arrival. Knowing

there were two other Masons in his party, he recruited Bro. George Charlton and Bro. George Gere, who, like Langford, were all members of Minnesota Lodges and the trio ascended the summit for the purpose of opening an informal Lodge of Master Masons as generations of Masons have done before them, complete with Bible, square and compass. Being more proficient in Masonic custom than his Brothers, Langford acted as Worshipful Master. Inspired by the moment, the Masonic words and ritual came back to Langford with fluidity and precision. All agreed it was a beautiful degree and confirmed their faith in their Masonic heritage. None realized the significance of this "epochal" event as Langford would call it, representing the very first Lodge of Master Masons ever held in Montana and ultimately foretold the events to shape the territory. The date: Monday, September 23rd, 1862.

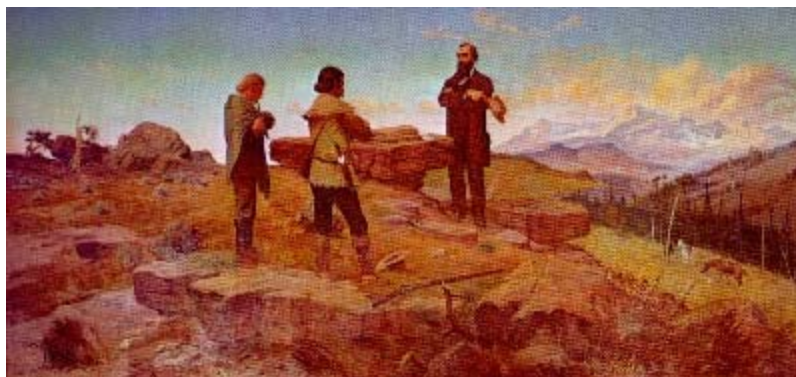
These three Brothers, by their actions, became the "3" in "3-7-77".

Bannack

Bannack was located on the southeastern edge of the newly created Idaho Territory (the southwest corner of modern Montana). The name "Bannack" was derived from the local Bannack Indians and the town was situated next to the Grasshopper Creek, a tributary of the Beaver Head. Grasshopper Creek was ultimately the source of the gold and the reason for people migrating to the area. Although the river had already been named by Lewis & Clark, local miners promptly renamed it "Grasshopper" due to the inordinate amount of insects that would swarm around as you walked about the area. Gold had been discovered in the Grasshopper on July 28th, 1862 and by the end of the year, hundreds of people had gravitated to the area, with a thousand by the end of 1863.

In 1862 Bannack was a typical American frontier boomtown. Buildings sprouted up seemingly over night, some were nothing more than simple cabins or shacks.

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Mural from inside the Grand Lodge of Montana's Library & Museum, Helena

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Although tents were commonly used by the miners at first, wooden structures were needed to withstand the harsh Montana winters. Consequently, several establishments sprung up quickly, including hotels, stables, a barber, even a bakery; and more than one saloon. Other structures would soon follow based on private donations, including a church, a jail, a school, and eventually a Masonic Lodge.

When people heard about the gold in Bannack, they swarmed to the area to seek their fortune. Most came to mine for gold, others came to create the infrastructure needed to support the miners, e.g., hardware, hotels, saloons, food, etc., but other lawless characters inevitably appeared on the scene to rob and steal from the work of others. Most of the residents were law-abiding citizens, others were outlaws looking for quick money, parasites sucking the decency out of society.

Although one would be captivated by the beauty of the area and unbridled freedom of Montana, you were always reminded that Bannack was an outpost in the "Wild West." In the early days, fights and duels would erupt at a moments notice, primarily due to liquor, gambling, a word spoken out of turn, or to simply prove manhood. Wrote Bro. Thomas J. Dimsdale, a writer who documented the era, *"such men find themselves removed from the restraints of civilized society."* This was a very masculine dominated society and the absence of female companionship only contributed to problems. To make matters worse, there was nothing to do during the brutal Montana winters except drink; consequently, many fell victim to "cabin fever."

Bannack was isolated from any true territorial jurisdiction, without any form of government. But man is a social animal requiring structure in the form of agreed upon rules, regulations and laws. Without them, chaos quickly follows, which Bannack fell victim to, and became a convenient target for outlaws who organized into gangs of roving desperados.

The citizenship of Bannack eventually took steps to bring a rudimentary form of law and order to the town. It was common in the old west for mining camps to elect their own sheriffs to settle disputes and try to keep a general sense of order. Bannack followed suit. Such sheriffs had a free hand to keep the peace, regardless of their methods. Suffice it to say, the tactics of the sheriffs would be unthinkable by today's standards. Again, this was the "Wild West."

Such was the environment Langford and his party rode into in the Fall of 1862. Bannack was far from the

civilization known to Langford in New York or even Minnesota. Such an environment would test any Freemason who believed in justice, religion, and brotherhood - as it did with Langford, who would stand out as a pillar of Bannack society based on his strong moral convictions.

Whether you were a miner or not, everyone at least dabbled in the search for gold, including Langford. But Langford was more of a businessman by nature and quickly recognized Bannack was rapidly expanding with plenty of miners looking to spend their gold dust. Consequently, he headed up a small partnership to build a sawmill outside of Bannack in a place called Godfrey's Canyon.

Langford restricted his close confidants to those he could trust, especially Brother Masons. Among his friends was Bro. William H. Bell who was a Mason from St. Louis. In November 1862, Bell fell victim to mountain fever and, as his dying wish, requested Langford give him a Masonic funeral. When Bell passed, his body was taken to the cabin of Bro. C.J. Miller and Langford spread the word from mouth to ear for all Masons in the area to assemble at Miller's cabin for the funeral. He did not anticipate the response his call would result in, nor the chain of events that would ensue.

Word of the Masonic funeral was carefully passed from one Brother to another around Bannack. As the sun set on November 12th, the Masons began to assemble at Miller's cabin, some came alone, others in groups, but they kept coming. Langford had expected perhaps a handful of Masons to heed his call. Instead, dozens appeared to pay their Masonic respects to their fallen Brother. So many Masons appeared that they moved the funeral to a larger cabin nearby. Langford conducted the services personally and 76 Brothers deposited the evergreen in Bell's grave.

These 76 Brothers, along with the deceased Bell, became the "77" in "3-7-77".

The Masons were pleasantly surprised by their numbers. Prior to the funeral, it had not occurred to anyone that the fraternity was so well represented in the area. Consequently, they began to hold lodge meetings in the security of the mountains, away from prying eyes and easy to tye. These meetings became important to the Masons, not only to reaffirm their Masonic obligations but to establish the support network they needed to survive in dangerous times.

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“7”

The “7” in “3-7-77” is the keystone of our algorithm and represents the culmination of our story. Although, it is the main component that lead to law and order in Montana, it would be for naught without the first two variables in place.

As the Masons held Lodge in the mountains, a new force arrived in the Spring of 1863, Henry Plummer a New Englander who had come to town via California. In Plummer’s youth, he was sickly and, based on his doctor’s advice, left New England as a young man and traveled west to San Francisco where he tried his hand at odd jobs. Eventually he moved to Nevada City where he became a successful baker. Politics intrigued him and he was elected Marshall of Nevada City where he learned to be tough in order to survive as a lawman.

Plummer’s record as a lawman was tarnished in 1857 when he gunned down John Vedder. Although Plummer claimed self-defense, the jury believed he may have been romantically linked to Vedder’s estranged wife, Lucy. Consequently, he was convicted of second degree murder and sentenced to ten years in San Quentin. While in prison, Plummer’s health again deteriorated; so much so, that on the recommendation of prison doctors, he was granted a pardon from the governor after serving only six months in prison. He returned to Nevada City to recuperate and work with his partner in his bakery. Eventually, he took up mining but was unsuccessful with the several claims he tried.



Drawing of Henry Plummer by C.M. Callison Diaz

No longer a lawman, Plummer felt free to live a wild lifestyle which would include liquor, women, and fighting. He was drawn into a drunken confrontation and shot a man named William Riley dead. Not wishing to take his chances with the local legal system again, Plummer left California in October 1861, before Riley’s inquest. By fleeing the state before the inquiry, Plummer had become a fugitive from justice.

Plummer crossed over the California state line into Nevada but his name was known in these parts and, fearing arrest, he kept moving northward away from Nevada and California to Washington state. Learning of the gold strike in 1862 and seeking anonymity in the wilderness, Plummer headed to Montana where he could start anew and arrived in Bannack in the Spring of 1863.

Bannack at this time was still growing and lawless. The first flashpoint in its development towards law and order came when Charlie Reeves, and his accomplices Moore and Mitchell stirred up trouble by attacking a nearby Indian camp and, in the process, killed and wounded white men, as well as many Indians. The local citizenship was aghast by this and called for justice. In March of 1863, the mining districts became part of the newly formed Idaho Territory, but it took time for the word to reach Bannack. Feeling isolated but compelled to do something about the murders, the citizens of Bannack ordered a trial, the first of its kind in a miner’s camp. In the past, miner camp trials were used to settle disputes over mining claims, not for murder cases. As such, Langford got involved and insisted on a trial by jury, not by the miners in mass as was the usual custom. Consequently, a judge, jury, prosecutor, defense attorney, and sheriff were appointed to hear the case with Langford sitting on the jury. The trial of Reeves, Moore and Mitchell was well attended by the miners and although the organizers had good intentions, it was far from perfect in terms of jurisprudence.

There was no doubt about the guilt of the accused, only their motivation. Unmoved by their arguments, Langford alone insisted on the death penalty while the rest of the jury wanted to seize their property and banish them from the area. After much deliberation, Langford settled for the seizure and banishment.

The acting sheriff felt uncomfortable in the role and quietly abdicated his position shortly thereafter. This left the door open for Henry Plummer who, with his New England charm, was elected sheriff of the mining district in May of 1863. Plummer was only 27 years old at the time. He was a handsome man of medium build, with a long mustache, customary for the time. He could change his disposition at a moment’s notice, going from polite

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MONTANA 3-7-77

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and engaging one minute, to crude and insensitive the next. Plummer was intelligent and his advice was often sought on a variety of matters, including mining. His disarming charisma could sway people and helped to break up fights and settle disputes. However, the educated citizens of Bannack saw through his charm and treated him suspiciously, as was the case with Langford who felt Plummer's New England charm beguiled a darker side to his character.

Plummer courted and eventually wed Electa Bryan in June of 1863. However, the marriage was brief, lasting just three months before she left him for her native Iowa under mysterious circumstances. The trouble between Plummer and his wife seemed to be caused by his frequent absence from home; he was either at his office, on patrol in the district, or, unknown to Electa, at the Rattlesnake Ranch, headquarters for the outlaws.

Plummer wouldn't allow anyone to challenge his authority and made it a point to reaffirm to everyone he met that he alone represented "Law and Order" in the area. His reputation as sheriff quickly grew; so much so, that he was nominated a Deputy U.S. Marshall for the Idaho Territory. But his nomination was blocked by Langford who, by this time, was President of the Union League and saw through Plummer's charm. This incensed Plummer who tried to sway Langford to endorse him, to no avail. Consequently, Langford became Plummer's sworn enemy.

Plummer had heard of the Masonic meetings in the mountains and, thinking it would be a shrewd political move, tried to join them only to be rebuffed by the fraternity who refused to let him in. This concerned Plummer greatly. He knew there were many Masons in the area and was concerned about the goings-on in their secret meetings, consequently, he sent spies to check on the Masons, only to be turned away by Tylers who safeguarded the meeting.

Despite the presence of a seemingly strong sheriff with his hand-picked deputies, crime did not abate, in fact, it proliferated. Robberies increased, as did disappearances and killings. Admittedly, Bannack was growing at an alarming rate. But if Plummer was half the sheriff he claimed to be, the town should not have been experiencing the problems it was. Further, it had not gone unnoticed that Plummer was absent from town whenever a robbery occurred. This was too remarkable a coincidence to be overlooked.

The Vigilantes

The second flashpoint came in the Fall of 1863 when two stagecoach robberies took place between Virginia City and Bannack, along with the killing of Nick Tiebolt who was robbed of two mules and murdered. Although the outlaws covered their faces, those riding on the stage suspected George Ives, a known local ruffian, as the person leading the raid.

The brutality of the crimes infuriated the citizenship, particularly the Masons who discussed the problem at length in their meetings. The Brethren did not trust Plummer and his deputies, nor did they have faith in the jurisprudence of the newly formed territory.

Suspecting Ives' involvement with the stage coach robbery, a group of Virginia City citizens (Bannack's neighbors) seized Ives and brought him to trial. Ives' trial can be described as "clumsy" at best. Nonetheless, he was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged.

Subsequent to the trial, a core group of citizens, all Masons, met in secret. Impatient for justice and incensed by recent events, they decided to take law into their hands and formed a vigilante committee. Recognizing the need for organizing a tightly bound group, seven members swore allegiance to bring law and order to the area. On December 22, 1863 a vigilante oath was administered by Wilber Sanders, nephew of the new Chief Justice of the territory, Sidney Edgerton, both Masons from Ohio. It was these seven Brothers, by their actions, that became the "7" in "3-7-77".

They formalized the oath in writing the next day:

"We the undersigned uniting ourselves in a party for the purposes of arresting thieves and murderers and recover stolen property do pledge ourselves on our sacred honor each to all others and solemnly swear that we will reveal no secrets, violate no laws of right and never desert each other or our standard of justice and seal them 23 of December 1863."

Vigilantes were not uncommon in the wild west, particularly in the wilderness and loosely governed territories. But this Montana group developed an oath and a set of obligations based on honor, secrecy and righteousness; characteristics of Freemasonry.

The ranks of the vigilantes swelled immediately with Langford and many other Masons joining the group, as well as other non-Masons concerned with law and order. Merchants, miners, and professional men alike joined the committee, but membership in the vigilantes was a well guarded secret since they probably feared reprisals from the outlaws.

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Naming Names

On the gallows, George Ives' last words were that it was his confederate, Alex Carter, and not himself, who had actually committed the murder of Nick Tiebolt. With this information, the newly formed Vigilante Committee sprung into action and went in search of Carter. Warned the committee was looking for him, Carter made his escape. Instead, the committee found Red Yeager, an accomplice of Carter's, and took him prisoner. Under questioning, Yeager revealed the names of the outlaw gang and the roles they served. Shockingly, he named Sheriff Plummer as Chief of the Gang, along with his deputies as accomplices. This made sense to the vigilantes, as all the pieces of the puzzle began to fall into place.

On January 10th, a group of 50-75 vigilantes from Bannack split into three squads and picked up Plummer and his two deputies, Ned Ray and Buck Stinson. Plummer had heard of how Ives' was arrested and executed and was probably not surprised to see the arresting squad on his doorstep. He didn't resist arrest, thinking he could talk his way out of the situation. He was wrong. The deputies were also easily apprehended and all three were hung on the Bannack gallows.

Following the hangings, the vigilantes in both Bannack and Virginia City wasted little time hunting down the remaining members of the outlaw gang, including Alex Carter who had escaped earlier. By the end of February 1864, Plummer's gang had been eliminated and peace was restored to the area. The vigilantes activities eventually subsided after this but was not totally abandoned until a few years later when the citizenship was convinced of the effectiveness of the legal system.

Historians question whether Plummer was, in fact, the



The Bannack gallows where Plummer and his deputies met their fate; remarkably, they were ordered constructed by Plummer himself.

leader of the outlaws and perhaps was innocent. The fact remains, with Plummer and the rest out of the way, law and order prevailed and Montana flourished.

EPILOGUE

It is not known who specifically invented the expression "3-7-77", but it became the calling card of the vigilantes. In fact, the mysterious numbers actually did not appear until the 1870's as the vigilantes were disbanding. It would be found carved in trees and brandished around towns as an intriguing warning to outlaws not to disrupt the peace and harmony of Montana. For if they did, the warning implied the vigilantes would not hesitate to reassemble and take justice into their hands again.

Vigilantism in today's society is unimaginable. But given the climate of the times, e.g., alone in the wilderness with the "civilized" country at war with itself, it is understandable how the turn of events came about. Were the vigilantes wrong for taking the law into their own hands? Perhaps. But we, as members of the 21st century, are not fit to judge. Bottom-line, we must look at the end result: the robberies and killings stopped and law and order came to Montana.

There have been numerous books and articles written on the Vigilantes of Montana. Over the years, historians sifted through newspaper clippings of the time and available court and territorial records. We must remember American journalism, particularly in the west, had a flare for the dramatic at the expense of actual facts. Further, governmental records in a frontier town were practically non-existent. Regardless of how historians today protest Plummer's innocence, they had no way of knowing in any precise detail of the events that occurred. More importantly, they didn't have any knowledge of the customs and character of the Masonic Fraternity. In this author's opinion, most of the historians simply "missed it."

Langford

Nathaniel Langford spent a total of fourteen years in Montana. In 1870, he led an expedition to explore the upper Yellowstone and became the first superintendent of Yellowstone National Park. In his later years, he authored four books on both the formation of Montana and his explorations of Yellowstone, all of which are still available for sale from on-line book stores. He died in 1911 at the age of 79.

A lifelong Mason, Langford was very active in the Fraternity for many years. In 1867, he was appointed Grand Historian and, at the Grand Lodge of Montana's

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Third Annual Communications in Virginia City, he delivered an eloquent description of the accounts mentioned herein. His oratory, which was re-discovered not long ago, is available on-line at the Grand Lodge of Montana web site; specifically at:

http://www.grandlodgemontana.org/Masonry%20in%20Montana/Langford/langford_speech.htm

Montana

With law and order restored in Bannack, Montana become a U.S. territory in 1864 with Bro. Sidney Edgerton, Langford's friend and confidant, becoming the first territorial governor. Remarkably, Bannack had grown to a respectable size and, as such, became the capital of the new territory. But the gold-rush inevitably subsided and the populace moved on. By the time Montana became the 41st state in 1889, the capital was moved to Helena.

By 1938, Bannack was deserted and declared a ghost-town. Today, it is a state park where 60 buildings remain as a mute reminder of what was at one time the "Toughest Town in the West." Amongst the buildings, stands a small two story dwelling bearing the square and compass. The Masons built the building in 1874 with the bottom story donated as the town's school and the upstairs used as the Masonic Lodge.

Bannack Historical Lodge 3-7-77 A.F.& A.M.

Bannack Masons obtained the Lodge's original dispensation on April 27, 1863 from the Grand Lodge of Nebraska. But as the Grand Lodge of Montana was formed in 1864, the Brethren reapplied in 1871 and became Bannack Lodge No. 16 A.F.& A.M. As the population moved away, the Lodge was forced to consolidate with Dillon Lodge in 1921.

The Lodge in Bannack remained dormant for many years until 2000 when the Grand Lodge of Montana rechartered it as a historical lodge. Today, any Master Mason in good standing and belonging to a Lodge recognized by the Grand Lodge of Montana can apply for a Life Membership in Bannack Lodge. For a petition, please see:

http://www.grandlodgemontana.org/Masonry%20in%20Montana/images/bannack_historic_lodge_Petition.htm

The monies derived from membership in Bannack Lodge are used to maintain this historical structure. To date, the monies have been used to shore up the building without disturbing the past. So much so, that a Lodge of Master Masons is now held once a year to honor and remember the Brothers who helped tame a territory and forge a state.

So, what does 3-7-77 mean? "Law & Order"? Perhaps. As for me, I will always look upon it as a sign that we should never underestimate the power of the Craft.

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Bannack Historical Lodge 3-7-77 A.F.& A.M. as it stands today in Bannack State Park. Photo courtesy of W.:Bro.F. Lee Graves, PM



Inside Bannack Lodge today. Photo courtesy of R.:W.:David L. Prewett, Deputy Grand Master, Grand Lodge of Montana

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(continued from page 12)

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The author wishes to express a personal note of gratitude to W.:Bro.F. Lee Graves, PM (flgraves1@msn.com), Past Grand Historian of the Grand Lodge of Montana, now residing in Stuart, Florida, for his assistance in editing this article.

Also, thanks go out to R.:W.:J. Paul Stellrecht, PDDGM/21 (S5319377@aol.com), for his review and advice regarding this article.

FM



Masonic pin for Bannack Lodge

**NEW ADDRESS FOR GOLDEN
GLADES LODGE NO. 334**

Please be advised that Golden Glades Lodge No. 334 F.& A.M. has a new moved to a new address:

1725 NE 164 Street
North Miami Beach, FL 33162

- W.:Donald (Don) Bruder
Worshipful Master
dbworshipfulmaster@webtv.net

FM

NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

AMELIA LODGE HOLDS FT. CLINCH CIVIL WAR-ERA MM DEGREE

FERNANDINA BEACH, FL (October 18, 2003) - Masons from predominantly around the south gathered at historic Ft. Clinch to attend the "George W. Call Master Mason Degree" performed in full Civil War-era military uniforms. The special degree is performed only once a year by Brothers from Amelia Lodge No. 47 F.& A.M. who did an outstanding job. George W. Call was the first Worshipful Master of Amelia Lodge and died in the Civil War.

Ft. Clinch is located near picturesque Amelia Island (just north of Jacksonville), and is laid out in accordance with a Masonic Lodge. The fort was built just before the Civil War and changed hands a couple of times during the war by Union and Confederate troops. Consequently, the MM degree was performed in both Northern and Southern uniforms.

The weather for the degree was beautiful with a cool and comfortable breeze coming off the ocean and stars overhead. Approximately 200 Masons were on hand for the degree including Brothers from around the Jacksonville area, southern Georgia, Orlando, Lakeland, Tampa Bay, Tennessee, New Mexico, and Scotland.

Raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason were Bros. Vance Herbert LaPear and William Edward Kirkland. The degree team for the evening included:

Section I -

WM - R.:W.:Danny Fullwood, PDDGM
SW - Bro.John Drew
JW - Bro.John Martin
SD - Bro.David Sturgis
JD - Bro.Todd Ericksen
SS - Bro.Orlando Avila
JS - Bro.Lee Burchett
Sec - W.:Al Constant, PM
Cha - W.:Al Constant, PM
Tyl - Bro.Billy Taylor

Section II -

KS - R.:W.:Danny Fullwood, PDDGM
SGW - W.:Tom Applewhite
SD - Bro.David Sturgis
JD - Bro.Todd Ericksen
JA - Bro.John Martin
JO - Bro.David Sturgis
JU - W.:Jimmy Jones, PM
NOVEMBER 2003



The fort is located near Amelia Island; just north of Jacksonville.



Inside the fort just before the degree.



The degree team with newly raised Bros. Vance Herbert LaPear and William Edward Kirkland

FC10 - R.:W.:Carl Amos, DDGM
FC11 - W.:Richard Cobb
FC12 - W.:Jack Love, PM
SC - Bro.Lee Burchett
WFM - Bro.Orlando Avila
GS - W.:Al Constant, PM
Cha - W.:Al Constant, PM

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THE FLORIDA MASON

NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

FT. CLINCH CIVIL WAR-ERA MM DEGREE

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Lecture - R.:W.:Wilmer T. Atwell, PDDGM

W.:Richard Cobb is the current sitting Worshipful Master of Amelia Lodge.

For some RealOnePlayer comments from the participants, please see:

<http://www.phmainstreet.com/audio/ftclinch.ram>

Prior to the degree, Amelia Lodge hosted a good old fashioned shrimp boil that was simply delicious.


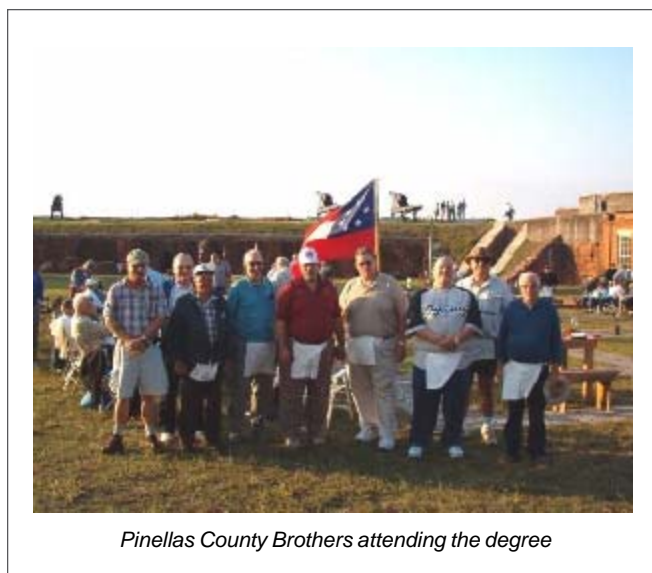
Fort Clinch State Park, one of the oldest parks in the Florida park system, was acquired in September 1935. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was responsible for some of the initial development of the park.

The park has a very well preserved Civil War era fort with a long and storied history. The structure served during the Civil War, Spanish-American War, and World War II. Many of the fort's structures were rebuilt and repaired by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s as part of the public works program enacted by President & Brother Franklin Delano Roosevelt (Holland Lodge No. 8 A.F. & A.M., New York). The coastline along the Cumberland Sound, where the fort is located, has the remnants of many buildings scattered along its beach. Some of these were associated with the fort and later the caretaker residence after the fort was abandoned. Another remnant is a brick fireplace that can be seen when the sand level allows. This fireplace is assumed to be all that is left of a beacon house that was situated on the sound. An attached light beacon helped ships navigate the entrance into the St. Mary's/Amelia River. Along the park drive is the masonry structure believed to have been the oil storage house for another beacon located near there. These two beacons, the one on the Cumberland Sound and the one on the park drive, were used to line up with larger Amelia Island Lighthouse when ships were coming into the channel to visit the port of Fernandina.

Congratulations one and all on a superb degree!

- W.:Tim Bryce
Editor, *THE FLORIDA MASON*

FM



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NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE



HARBOR CITY, MERRITT ISLAND, AND BREVARD CONFER JOINT MM DEGREE

MELBOURNE, FL (September 13, 2003) - Harbor City Lodge No. 318 F.& A.M. (<http://www.geocities.com/hcl318>) conferred the Master Mason Degree jointly between Harbor City Lodge No. 318, Merritt Island Lodge No. 353 (<http://www.mi353.org/>) and Brevard Lodge No. 113 with over 45 Brothers in attendance. The newly raised Brothers include:

Bro. Michael Raymond Hutzler - Harbor City No. 318
Bro. Evan Michael Nitz - Harbor City Lodge No. 318
Bro. Curtis Bret Stickle - Merritt Island No. 353
Bro. Stephen Proctor Mangum - Merritt Island No. 353
Bro. Stephen John Costianes - Merritt Island No. 353
Bro. Robert Reeves Perry - Merritt Island No. 353
Bro. James Leon Lewis - Brevard Lodge No. 113

The degree team for the day included:

WM - Bro.Fran Cirillo
SW - Bro.Mike McAfee
JW - Bro.John Ellis
SEC - W.:John Paniccia
TR - W.:Ron Trinkle
CH - Bro.Chuck Frost
SD - Bro.George Goddard
JD - Bro.Paul Beaudoin
MA - Bro.Otto West
SS - W.:Jake Ashman
JS - W.:Barry Shaeffer
TY - W.:Jim Kerrigan
TY - Bro.Harry Stewart
FC #1 - W.:Ron Trinkle
FC #2 - R.:W.:George Malone
FC #3 - R.:W.:J.C. Smith
FC #7 - W.:Dayle Schrock
FC #8 - Bro.Mike Murphy

FC #9 - Bro.Mark Simmons
FC #10 - W.:Charles R.R. Walle
FC #11 - R.:W.:Tom Moore
FC #12 - W.:Charles Bryant

The Master Mason lecture was delivered by W.:Charles Bryant and the Charge was delivered by Bro.Fran Cirillo, both from Harbor City Lodge No. 318.

Worshipful Master Ron Trinkle said, "When we have several Lodges who want to work together, and support one and other, it only helps to strengthen the fraternity".

Congratulations to all.

- George Goddard
ggoddard@cfl.rr.com

Senior Deacon, Harbor City Lodge No. 318 F.& A.M.
<http://www.geocities.com/hcl318>

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE



(L-R) Front Row: EA Bros. DiNardo, Gaughen, Scott, Wallace, Williams, Zawacki.
Back Row: R.:W.: Tom Cox, SW Bro. Thomas, and W.: Bryce

SUTHERLAND INITIATES SIX BROTHERS; THAT'S RIGHT - 6

PALM HARBOR, FL (September 23, 2003) - Sutherland Lodge No. 174 F.& A.M. (<http://www.os2ss.com/connect/lodge174/welcome.htm>) initiated six new members into the fraternity as Entered Apprentices, the largest number to join the Lodge at one time in ten years. The group included:

Dave DiNardo - Seminole
Frank Gaughen - Palm Harbor
Greg Scott - St. Petersburg
Brian Wallace - Oldsmar
Doug Williams - Holiday
Joe Zawacki - St. Petersburg

The degree team for the evening included:

WM - W.: Tim Bryce
SW - Bro. Lou Thomas
JW - Bro. Steve Pelicos
Trs - FC Bro. Scott Crum
Sec- W.: Ken James, Sr., PM
CH - Bro. Tom Collias
SD - JW Bro. Jack Bostrom
JD - Bro. Larry Lytle
SS - Bro. Ken Warner
JS - Bro. Robert Fischer
Mar - W.: Alan Leverock, PM
Con - W.: Bill Weber, PM, East Gate Lodge 355 F.& A.M.
Org - Bro. John Tyrkala
TY - Bro. Warren Bundy, Sr.

The EA lecture was delivered by R.:W.: Tom Cox, PDDGM/21 of Gulf Beach Lodge No. 291 F.& A.M. in Madeira Beach, and the charge was delivered by Sutherland's Master, W.: Tim Bryce. Refreshment was provided by Junior Warden Jack Bostrom.

"This was an exciting evening for us," said Worshipful Bryce, "I believe what you are seeing here is a resurgence of interest in the fraternity. 2003 has been a good year for Freemasonry, not just here at Sutherland, but throughout Districts 20 and 21."

Congratulations one and all.

- W.: Tim Bryce
Editor, THE FLORIDA MASON

FM

NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

NEWS FROM HIBISCUS LODGE NO. 275 IN CORAL GABLES



First Pitch

Hibiscus Lodge No. 275 F.& A.M. (<http://www.hibiscuslodge.com>), located in Coral Gables, the 35th District, is proud to announce that a Past Master (2001), W.: Joseph R. Eason, wounded while performing his duties during Operation Iraqi Freedom was selected to throw out the ceremonial first pitch before the largest crowd in Major League Baseball Division Series history—over 65,000 strong. The hometown Marlins won the game and the series. For related story, see the article by the Sun-Sentinel at:

<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/sports/baseball/marlins/sfl-1003game3gallery,0,4407342.photogallery?coll=sfla-sports-marlins&index=4>



Scholarship

Hibiscus Lodge is also proud to announce that on September 9th, 2003 it presented its annual \$1,000.00 scholarship in honor of Robert Tendrich to Lucia Obregon. Miss Obregon, was selected for her community involvement and academic success, finishing near the top of her class, despite difficult circumstances, including working over 30 hours per week to help support her family. She is now attending the University of Miami.



On October 14th nine Brothers from Biscayne Bay Lodge No. 124 F.& A.M. visited Hibiscus Lodge to claim the 35th District Traveling Gavel from W.: John R. Holian. The Biscayne Bay group, beat out the six Brothers from Coconut Grove Lodge No. 258 F.& A.M. who also showed up to claim the Traveling Gavel for themselves. Hibiscus Lodge claimed the Traveling Gavel from Coconut Grove Lodge in the previous month.



Also on October 14th, Hibiscus Lodge initiated six Entered Apprentices as pictured from left to right: Roger S. Wydler, Rony Morales, Jason O. Catarineau, Joe A. Catarineau, Luis R. Canas, and J.T. Montgomery.

- W.: Roger M. Dunetz, PM
dunetz@bellsouth.net
Treasurer, Hibiscus Lodge No. 275 F.& A.M.

FM

NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE



INDIAN RIVER LODGE NO. 90 DONATES TO AREA SCHOOLS

TITUSVILLE, FL (October 10, 2003) - Indian River Lodge No. 90 F.& A.M. presents Principal George Nolan of Pinewood Elementary School with notebook paper for use by the students of the District. A total of 50 cases will be delivered to thirteen area elementary, middle, and junior high schools in Superintendent Ronald Bobay's District. Principal Nolan accepted the paper on behalf of Dr. Bobay. This marks the fourth year they have provided notebook paper.

Additionally, Lodge Members felt so strongly about supporting public education, they dug into their pockets and contributed enough money to purchase \$25.00 gift cards to a local office supply store for a special education teacher at each of the schools. Senior Warden Barry McAmis was the coordinator for this year's project.

During May of each year, the lodge honors the District Superintendent's "Teacher of the Year" from each of these schools with a dinner and presentation of plaques. Additionally, they have provided a \$500.00 scholarship to each of the two high schools in the district. During the 2003, the applicants for the scholarships were so strong that four scholarships were presented under the leadership and guidance of Dennis Bestwick, Worshipful Master.

We realize that Public Education is the future of our great country. *"The youth of today will be the leaders of tomorrow"* said Roger K. Paul, District Deputy Grand Master of the 26th Masonic District, who is a member of Indian River Lodge No. 90. We need to support the educators and students anyway we are able.

- Bro. David Hardesty
davethemason@cs.com
FM



Bro. Royce A. Yancey

NEWS FROM OLIN S. WRIGHT LODGE NO. 79 F.& A.M.

Once in a great while a man enters our Fraternity whose star is so bright that it outshines the rest. Such a man is Olin S. Wright's Mason of the Year, Bro. Royce A. Yancey. The name of the winner is normally kept secret until our annual awards night by the nominees being asked to leave the lodge room while the balloting takes place. This year, however, there was only one nominee and the vote was unanimous so *"the cat was out of the bag"* so to speak.

Brother Yancey is a relatively new Mason, having been raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in May of 2002. Since that time his performance and service to the Craft has been truly outstanding. He presently is the Lodge's Junior Warden, having been selected after the previous officer resigned and moved out of the area. Prior to that, he served as Senior Deacon. Moreover, Brother Yancey is proficient in virtually every chair in the Lodge, having recently sat in the East and conducted an Entered Apprentice Degree ceremony.

Brother Yancey was awarded his Silver Proficiency Card in May of 2003 and has aided the Lodge immeasurably in instructing our new Brethren in the various degrees and examining them in open Lodge to demonstrate their proficiency.

Brother Yancey's father, W.:Olin Yancey, a Past Master of our Lodge, passed away last year. He must surely be proud of his son. I'm sure you'll be hearing more about Brother Yancey in the months and years to come.

- Bro. Bill Wilson
Billrob66@msn.com
Treasurer, Olin S. Wright Lodge No. 79 F.& A.M.
Plant City
FM

MASONIC EDUCATION, OPINIONS & POETRY

NOT ONE PERSON

by W.:Dan Weatherington, PM

Not one person ever joined Masonry because George Washington was a Mason.

Not one person ever joined Masonry because Harry Truman was a Mason.

Not one person ever joined because of any of our great Masonic heroes.

Joining doesn't make you any of those people.

Not one person ever joined in order to give a million dollars a day to charity, or homes, or crippled children.

You don't have to be a member to give money.

Not one person ever joined because our ritual is outstanding, or our minutes are accurate, or a hundred other things we worry about.

They don't know about our ritual.

They joined because someone they knew and admired was a Mason.

It could have been a father, a friend, a man down the street, or someone a thousand miles away.

Who, it didn't matter.

They admired him and wanted to do the things he did, and they did it by the millions.

Want to help our growth?

Be the kind of man someone admires.

Someone will notice.

*- courtesy of W.:Gil Weisman, PM
BCC1953@aol.com
High Twelve Lodge No. 317 F.& A.M.
<http://home1.gte.net/kwdean/index.html>
Tampa*

FM

MASONIC VIRTUES/MASONIC ATTRIBUTES

Honesty - to show the Craft as it is, and how we wish it were.

Charity - to forgive those who speak out of malice or ignorance.

Strength - to refrain from being drawn into irrelevant arguments.

Temperance - to moderate the passions, and not rise to taunts.

Fidelity - to ever be mindful of our obligations.

Rectitude - to correct in ourselves what we see wrong in others.

Piety - to understand that our opinions are just that, opinions.

Tolerance - to know that others' opinions are also just opinions.

Courtesy - to observe the rules of etiquette.

Equality - to appear neither condescending nor unduly humble.

Joy - to be happy, and communicate happiness.

-Anonymous

- courtesy of W.:Gil Weisman, PM

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MASONIC EDUCATION, OPINIONS & POETRY

MASONIC HISTORY: THE FORGET-ME-NOT IN GERMANY, "DAS VERGISSMEINNICHT"

It all started back in the year 1933, when Adolph Hitler declared that all secret organizations were harmful to his criminal plan for world conquest. Not only were the Jews and Catholics murdered, but also ordered the Masonic hatchet man to conduct the bloody purge that was to come. At the time, there were 85,000 Masons of good standing in Germany. Eichmann secretly issued strict orders that every single one of them would be put to death. Needless to say his orders were carried out and 80,000 Masons met an untimely death. The other 5,000 German Masons, for some reason had not had their names on on the books of the Grand Lodge, and their lives were spared. That was only because Eichmann did not know who they were. Immediately the remaining 5,000 went underground. They hid all of their Masonic records and also stopped wearing Masonic rings and pins. They adopted a little flower, the Forget-Me-Not. Therefore they communicated in this way without the Nazi's ever finding out. Ironically, this was Hitler's favorite flower and was impressed that men would wear this symbol as a tribute to him! Eichmann never found out the true meaning of this pretty little flower called the Forget-Me-Not. This symbol of Freemasonry is still used in Germany in memory of those who were murdered trying to live up to the teachings of the Masonic Order. This certainly was a real tragedy, and from all documents and accounts, this story is true.

As early as the year 1934, soon after Hitler's rise to power, it became apparent Freemasonry was in danger. In the same year, the German Grand Lodge of the Sun in Bayreuth (one of the pre-war German Grand Lodges), realized the imminent problems facing them and elected to wear a little blue flower, the Forget-Me-Not, in lieu of the traditional Square and Compasses, as a mark of identity for Masons. It was felt the new symbol would not attract attention from the Nazis, who were in the process of confiscating and appropriating Masonic Lodges and property. Masonry had gone underground and it was necessary that the Brethren have some readily recognizable means of identification.

Throughout the entire Nazi era, a little blue flower in the lapel marked a Brother. In the Concentration Camps and in the cities a little blue Forget-Me-Not, distinguished the lapels of those who refused to allow the light of Masonry to be extinguished.

In 1947, when the Grand Lodge of the Sun was reopened in Bayreuth by Past Grand Master Beyer, a little Blue pin in the shape of a Forget-Me-Not, was proposed and adopted as the official emblem of the first Annual convention of those who survived the bitter years of semi-darkness, bringing the Light of Masonry once again in the Temple.

At the Annual Convent of the United Grand Lodge of Germany, A.F.& A.M. in 1948, the pin was adopted work under adverse conditions. At the Grand Master's Conference in the United States, Dr. Theodor Vogel, the Grand Master of the newly-formed UGL, A.F.& A.M. presented one of the pins to each of the representatives of the Grand Jurisdictions with which the UGL, A.F.& A.M. enjoyed Fraternal relations.

Thus did a simple flower blossom forth into a meaningful emblem of the Fraternity and become perhaps the most widely worn pin among Freemasons in Germany. Most German Lodges present this pin and it's history to their newly raised Master Masons.

Many members of National Sojourners, Inc. have served in the U.S. Armed Forces in Germany and have learned to love and respect DAS VERGISSMEINNICHT and what it stands for.

For more information on the Masonic Brotherhood of the Blue Forget Me Not in North America, please see:

<http://www.bessel.org/mbbfmn.htm>

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MASONIC EDUCATION, OPINIONS & POETRY

IF

by Bro. Rudyard Kipling

Hope and Perseverance Lodge No. 782. E.C., Lahore, India

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or, being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with triumph and disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with wornout tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;

If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on";

If you can walk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings - nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty-seconds' worth of distance run -
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!

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MASONRY IN EARLY AMERICA; DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The first assembly of the Continental Congress was presided over by a Master Mason, Peyton Randolph, Provincial Grand Master of Virginia. The Revolutionary War was a distinctly Masonic enterprise. The Boston Tea Party was organized in St. Andrews Lodge, at an adjourned meeting, and that every "Indian" who threw the tea into the harbor was a member of that Lodge. Paul Revere, made his immortal ride, when he was the Junior Warden of that Lodge. More than fifty of the fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence were members of the Masonic fraternity.

All but one of the five members of the Constitutional Convention were Masons. Richard Henry Lee, who moved the Resolution of Independence in the Continental Congress, was a Mason. Lee, and all five members of that committee — Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman and Robert R. Livingston — were Masons. The American Flag was made by the widow of John Ross, a Mason, and was placed in the hands of George Washington, who was elected Grand Master of Virginia, but did not accept because of his duties as commander-in-Chief of the American Army, which absorbed all his attention and time. Washington took the oath of office as President of the United States upon a Bible brought from St. Johns Lodge No. 1, of New York. The oath of office was administered by Chancellor Livingston, Grand Master of the state of New York. The Governors of every one of the original thirteen states at the time Washington was inaugurated were Masons. Washington demanded that Lafayette coming from France, and Von Stuben coming from Germany, be made Masons. All of Washington's Brigadier Generals except one were Masons. The Constitution of the United States was written by Masons. Free Speech, Free Religion, and Free Schools were the gifts of Masonry America, and these were opposed by all anti-Masonic institutions. The four Major Generals who almost ruined Washington and the cause of Freedom were the four who were not Masons. These are historical facts and are a part of the rich heritage of our nation. HOWEVER, no part of the above facts are now taught in our free schools, which were made possible by the foresight of our Masonic forebears.

*- courtesy of Bro. C.J. Jennings
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Gulf Beach Lodge No. 291 F.& A.M.
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MASONIC EDUCATION, OPINIONS & POETRY

THE FUNDAMENTAL NATURE OF THE CRAFT

by M. W. Neil Neddermeyer
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Grand Master, Grand Lodge of Minnesota A.F. & A.M.



An age old question that has plagued many for centuries has to do with the fundamental nature of the Craft. Three questions that continually need to be considered are: Who we think we are? Who does the public think we are? And truly who are we? We seem to have divided ourselves in the following three groups:

GROUP A

This group believes that we are a social club and a support group. They believe that the Craft exists for bonding through events that are both member and family oriented. They support our concordant and appendant bodies and are very much in favor of public relations and new member initiatives. They may feel that the lessons learned from the ritual and the public charities that we support are valid but the main reason for us to exist is for fun and fellowship.

GROUP B

This group feels that our sole function should be to support our philanthropies and our community service programs. It may be apparent to them that Masonic fellowship and teachings are compelling, but they are necessary in order to have an organization in place for the continuation of public giving.

GROUP C

These members of the Craft are involved primarily to receive Masonic light. They believe that the histories and philosophies of Masonry are the principal reasons for our existence. They may feel that the best way to increase our membership is through word of mouth and that the mystery of the Craft is what sets us apart from

other organizations. They seek introspection and edification.

These three groups represent the reasons that many of us give for Masonry to exist, namely Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. These three groups are often at odds with each other as to how the Craft should be managed and lead. This becomes apparent when new ideas are explored and old customs are challenged. Of course the lines of definition that separate the three groups are sometimes vague and we may individually change our thoughts as to who we are over time. Many true Masons, however, feel that we can equally serve all three beliefs. This is not, however, as easy as it seems.

Non-members who examine the Craft may feel that these three concepts do not dispel rumors or false accusations that have been directed towards Masonry. They may feel that our purposes are not clear and that more explanation is needed. We have adopted a more definitive slogan that the public can more easily understand and can identify with. This motto comes from hundreds of years of Masonic tradition and explains much as to who we are and what we stand for. The motto is simply "*Religious Tolerance, Political Freedom, and Personal Integrity.*"

There is a need for each one of us to have a working definition of what Masonry is, not only as an explanation to others but also to ourselves. Each of us needs to decide what we personally feel the Craft is and how we fit in to it. We need to respect the opinions of other Masons who may not see the Craft in the same light. The fundamental nature of the Craft may be as simple as Tolerance, Freedom and Integrity. You decide.

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MASONIC EDUCATION, OPINIONS & POETRY

THE PIGEON DEGREE

This is a true Masonic story of what happened at one Masonic Blue Lodge. A Brother of Coral Gables Lodge No. 260 F.& A.M. told me the following story.

A few years ago, the Lodge was having trouble with flocks of pigeons roosting on their roof. These pigeons caused the worst smell from their droppings, which were bringing insects to borrow into the droppings. The Worshipful Master, and other elected officers of the Lodge became alarmed at this situation and formed a committee to take care of this pigeon problem.

Well the Lodge committee, on removal of pigeons, met to study and talk about a solution, and what matters to take to bring about the permanent removal of the pigeons. The first thing the committee did was to go up on the Lodge building's roof and tie several strips of cloth in various areas to scare the pigeons away. These efforts did not work and the pigeons remained there.

The committee then, as was planned, bought several decoy Owls and placed the Owls in several areas of the roof, again in an attempt to scare the pigeons away. Again these efforts brought no relief and the pigeons had covered the roof by now.

When after several fruitless attempts were made for the removal of the pigeons the committee then, as was planned, hired a professional pigeon removal company who advertised and guaranteed in writing the permanent removal of the pigeons or they would refund all monies to anyone having this problem if they failed to cause the permanent removal of the pigeons. Well this company came to the Lodge building and after several weeks, and several attempts, to cause the permanent removal of the pigeons, and all attempts failed, the company refunded all of the Lodge's money.

My Brothers, I am happy to report to you there was not a sad ending to this pigeon problem. It so happened that the following month the Most Worshipful Grand Master of Masons of Florida was in Miami on Masonic business, and the Grand Master came to Coral Gables Lodge on an unofficial visit. After the business of the Lodge had been conducted, and the Lodge was closed, the officers, members, and visitors retired to the Lodge dining room where the Lodge Stewarts had prepared and served dinner for all. While the Brothers were sitting eating and talking in general, and near the end of dinner the then Most Worshipful Grand Master, whom was sitting

next to the then Worshipful Master of Coral Gables Lodge, asked the Worshipful Master how the business, and Masonic work, of Coral Gables Lodge was going on under his Mastership of the Lodge. The Worshipful Master then told the Grand Master that all of the Lodge business and degree work were being held and preformed in all Masonic principles in due respect and honor of Freemasonry. The Master then said to the Grand Master that there was only one problem the Lodge was having and that was the pigeon problem the Lodge was experiencing for seven months and of all the attempts which were made to relive the problem. The Master also told the Grand Master this pigeon problem was becoming out of control and that the Lodge could not find a solution to end this problem.

My Brothers all this will perhaps sound strange to you, but there are those Brothers who will confirm what you are about to read next as it is all true and it did happen in Coral Gables Lodge. Upon hearing this tale of woe from the Worshipful Master about the pigeon problem, the Grand Master stood up and told the Lodge's Master that he could solve his problem for the Lodge then and there. The Grand Master asked the Master to show him the stairway to the roof and the Master led the Grand Master, with the pigeon committee, up and onto the Lodge roof. The Grand Master seeing the thousands of pigeons then and there raised his hands skyward toward the starry-decked heavens and the Grand Master said these words.

"By the power in me invested I now declare all pigeons Past Masters."

And lo and behold, all of the pigeons disappeared and never came back to the Lodge.

Thank you my Brothers all for your attention in reading and consuming this very important Masonic knowledge. I know by now you believe, and understand this Past Masters pigeon Degree.

Yours in Brotherly Love, and Masonic Education.

W.: John E. Gardner, PM

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Coral Gables Lodge No. 260 F.& A.M.

FM

MASONIC EDUCATION, OPINIONS & POETRY

FOR THE VETERANS

This gets my vote as one of the best patriotic e-mails I have received!

It is the VETERAN, not the preacher,
who has given us freedom of religion.

It is the VETERAN, not the reporter,
who has given us freedom of the press.

It is the VETERAN, not the poet,
who has given us freedom of speech.

It is the VETERAN, not the campus organizer,
who has given us freedom to assemble.

It is the VETERAN, not the lawyer,
who has given us the right to a fair trial.

It is the VETERAN, not the politician,
Who has given us the right to vote.

It is the VETERAN,
who salutes the Flag,
who serves under the Flag,

ETERNAL REST GRANT THEM O LORD, AND LET
PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON THEM.

FM

PAST MASTER HUMOR

Masons have a standing joke about Past Masters which might be instructive for those who might still harbor any doubts as to the power which a PM holds. The joke is that the 'sign and word' of a Past Master consists of poking a finger into the chest of anyone who'll listen accompanied by the words, "*They didn't do it that way in my term....*". This light-hearted remark reminds every Past, present or future Master that they have risen but briefly from the ranks and to the ranks they will soon return. It is an honor to serve the membership of the Lodge; it is not a grab at deification nor an opportunity for world domination. We trust this joke is instructive to those who think that a Master has some sort of all-encompassing power! Please feel free to tell it to any Mason; you'll consistently get a great belly laugh and strong agreement from those who've served as Master of a Lodge.

- courtesy of W.:Gil Weisman, PM
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MASONIC HUMOR

courtesy of W.:Edward C. Avance, PM
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Secretary
Clearwater Lodge No. 127 F.& A.M.

THE EA

A candidate for initiation was to be picked up and driven to the Lodge, but before this could happen the car broke down. The candidate said as no great distance was involved he would go on his bicycle. Just when he reached the top of the hill his chain broke. As the Lodge was at the bottom of the other side and all he needed was a backpedal brake, so he repaired the chain with a cord he had in his pocket and free-wheeled downhill to the Lodge. Later that evening in reply to a toast in his honor, he said how proud he was to be a Freemason but could not understand, as he had told no one, how the Worshipful Master knew that he had come on his own free wheel and a cord.

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MASONIC EDUCATION, OPINIONS & POETRY

MORE HUMOR

by Bro. Richard Brooks

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Junior Steward, Sutherland Lodge No. 174 F.& A.M.

Palm Harbor

GOOD FOR CLEARING YOUR MIND

1. At lunch time, sit in your parked car with sunglasses on and point a hair dryer at passing cars. See if they slow down.

2. Page yourself over the intercom. Don't disguise your voice.

3. Every time someone asks you to do something, ask if they want fries with that.

4. Put your garbage can on your desk and label it "in"

5. Put decaf in the coffee maker for three weeks. Once everyone has gotten over their caffeine addictions, switch to espresso.

6. In the memo field of all your checks, write "for sexual favors."

7. Finish all your sentences with, "in accordance with the prophecy."

8. Dont use any punctuation marks

9. As often as possible, skip rather than walk.

10. Ask people what sex they are. Laugh hysterically after they answer.

11. Specify that your drive-through order is "to go."

12. Sing along at the opera.

13. Go to a poetry recital and ask why the poems don't rhyme.

14. Put mosquito netting around your work area. Play a tape of jungle sounds all day.

15. Five days in advance, tell your friends you can't attend their party because you're not in the mood.

16. Have your co-workers address you by your wrestling name, Rock Hard Betsy.

17. When the money comes out the ATM, scream "I won!", "I won!" "3rd time this week!!!!!"

18. When leaving the zoo, start running towards the parking lot, yelling "run for your lives, they're loose!!"

19. Tell your children over dinner, "Due to the economy, we are going to have to let one of you go."

And the final way to keep a healthy level of insanity:

20. Send this e-mail to everyone in your address book, even if they sent it to you or asked you not to send them stuff like this.

FM

MASONIC EDUCATION, OPINIONS & POETRY

A LETTER TO MARATHON LODGE FROM KRYSTAL GLOVE (US ARMY), TIKRIT, IRAQ

NOTE: The following letter was recently received (mid-October, 2003) by R.:W.:Jay Glover, PDDGM of Marathon Lodge No. 323 F.& A.M. from his daughter, Krystal, stationed in Iraq.

Hello and greeting from Saddaam's kitchen in his palace in his home town of Tikrit, Iraq.

I am about to go on duty, but before I do, Daddy read this letter in its entirety to the Lodge!

My Daddy has been a Mason since I can remember. I remember playing on the stage area where the Worshipful Master sits when Mr. Morrison, Grandpa Card and Mr. Waycaster were building it. All the time I was in Lodge I got to play on that old piano. I remember all of the school and cheerleading sponsorships, the many fundraising meals that the Lodge held or allowed others to hold for the kids in local schools. The many hours we spent wrapping, fundraising for many children over the years that got Christmas presents that would have had nothing. I remember Mr. Heber and Mrs. Cookie working all those hours shopping and wrapping. I went to school and the various children that were helped seeing how happy they were. I remember my mom and dad taking Christmas trees into people's houses and setting them up with lights and decorations, the countless other Masons from all over that I have seen my father give money or food to without saying a word, how the Masons came to the aid of another Mason no matter what was accused, or what any of the untold circumstances were, the many trips to the Masonic Home to help with the Valentine parties. Every time we went to Tampa to see my Grandmother, Dad would go to Costco and buy a box of socks or baby powder or something like that and take it over to the home where I would sit in the lobby and watch Mason after Mason come in and drop off things like that from all over Florida, most just passing through.

The stories go on and on, like the on-going verbal assault between Mr. Peryam and Dad (all done out of love). These are not just examples of the American way but the Masons and what you stand for are the reason we are fighting, for the freedom we all enjoy. I see these widows and orphans that this murdering regime created and I want you to personally know that no matter what you see in the papers or on the news, the far vast majority of these oppressed people want us here and truly appreciate us being here.

When my son was born, the Army gave me a choice to
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get out or to go to war. How could I look my son in the face as he became a man and not lived the example of fighting to keep this country free and to fight for that freedom for the children of Iraq that one day they can enjoy the same freedom as my son? One has to do what is right in life; this should be a Masonic motto because you all stand for what is right and doing what is right no matter the cost to yourselves.

Now to my point, there are no words that can express what it means to me to see my son's pictures on the Lodge web-site. It brings a tear to my eye to see how much he has grown and how happy he is. It warms my heart to also know that he is on his Grandpa's Masonic web-site. I know that I cannot be there when he is made a Mason. However, I will guarantee you that he will be made a Mason and it will be in his Grandpa's Lodge.

I am so proud to be the daughter of a Mason and I am proud to call Marathon Lodge my home Lodge, for all to know.

Now to Mr. Meinke, you are truly an incredible man and Mason. I ask my Dad to give you a hug from me and know that you and Janet have had and continue to have a great and long lasting influence on my life.

You would not believe how many men have come to me wanting to know my involvement with the Masons. They miss all their Lodges. There was a Lodge meeting held here a few months ago, so I was told. Anyway, you should put a counter on your site because I know for a fact that many of these men look at your site everyday because they tell me when Ethan's picture changes which I already know...

Got to go. Oh, Yes, my Sgt.Maj. said, "*Keep traveling East.*"??

I Love You Daddy
Krystal

- courtesy of Bro. David W. Meinke
bearpauzz@yahoo.com
Treasure & Webmaster
Marathon Lodge No. 323 F.& A.M.
Marathon

FM

AND FINALLY...

*Leaving their mark on Freemasonry.
Photos courtesy of "Find a Grave" (<http://www.findagrave.com/>)*



Gene Autry



Roy Rogers



Carl "Alfalpa" Switzer
"Our Gang/Little Rascals"

"Alas, my Brothers."

THE FLORIDA MASON



END