

Trestleboard

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 3

MAY 2006

The purpose of the NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education is to foster the education of the Craft at large through prepared research and open discussion of the topics concerning Masonic history, symbolism, philosophy, and current events.

Next Communication

The New Jersey Lodge of Masonic Research and Education meets on the fourth Saturday in January, March, May and September.

Our next communication will be held on
Saturday, May 27, 2006 at 9:30 a.m. at:

Trenton Masonic Temple
100 Barracks Street
Trenton, New Jersey

ALL MASTER MASONS ARE WELCOME!



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From the East

WB Tom Thornton, Worshipful Master

Brethren, it is time for our lodge to start a new cycle. Indeed the learning never stops, nor even pauses, so it doesn't make sense for LORE to measure its progress in two-year terms or semesters or otherwise. Our future Saturdays of schooling are as certain as the sun rising in the East to open and govern the day.

One important thing will change though, but only temporarily. In case you haven't heard, let me announce that the Trenton Masonic Temple will be closed for one year beginning June 1. The long-awaited renovations to this landmark building are at hand, and so LORE will have to relocate until the building is ready to begin its new life, its new season of service to the Craft. When the work is done, I imagine there will be space dedicated for the much anticipated library and museum built of the many artifacts and treasures in the possession of Grand Lodge. LORE is committed to identifying and cataloging these items. That will be a big project, so all volunteers are welcome.

You must be wondering where we're going. Well, we don't know yet, but expect an announcement before the end of June. (If you're not already a member of LORE's Yahoo! Group, please take a moment to visit groups.yahoo.com/group/Lodge1786/ and click Join This Group.) The Senior Warden is looking for a nice lodge in central Jersey. If you have any suggestions, please let him know.

But before any of that, we have our May 27 Regular Communication. We are fortunate to have splendid ritualists to lead us through the ceremony of installation. RW. Bro. Jim Ross, PDDGM, will be our Installing Master; RW Nate Mark will be Installing Chaplain and W. Scott Gothe will serve as Installing Marshal.

After the ceremonies we'll hear several important papers, including one from the new Worshipful Master who will continue our tradition of presenting one upon his installation.

The lodge will open at 9:30 a.m. so we may proceed with our business at 10.

Fraternally,

Tom Thornton

Worshipful Master

May Meeting

All Member should make an effort to attend this month's meeting. Not only will we have our Election of Officers but we will also be voting on the Annual David A. Chase Award winner. The following papers will be balloted upon for this prestigious award. Please go to the NJ LORE website (<http://njlore1786.org>) to review these papers.

- **The Five Ages of Masonic Ritual Development**
- **The Master Key**
- **In the Beginning**
- **On the Lose of Liberty**

From The West

Bro. Jay Hochberg, Senior Warden

Brethren, in the event of my election (but let's not jump to conclusions) as your third Worshipful Master, I'll offer our education lodge a somewhat detailed plan for the coming term that will include some changes I think we need to make.

In an older, more experienced lodge of Masonic research, the officers lead by example by providing much, if not most, of the research work. Here at LORE however, we owe too much to too few. This is unsustainable and unwise for the lodge; unfair to the hardworking few scholars; and is contrary to our reason for being. I believe if LORE's officers are not handling much, if not most, of LORE's education work, then we really don't need to exist. We could do this whole thing in the less regulated venue of a study group... in Howard's living room. (Sorry Howard.)

But that's not what I want, and I'm sure it's not what you want, and I *know* it isn't what Howard wants. Therefore, going forward, our officers will have specific dates on which they'll have the floor to present their papers. The choice of topics is best left to them, but Bro. Ben Hoff generously offers to serve as "thesis advisor" to help LORE *develop* new scholars, and not just showcase them at the podium. I assure all budding researchers — officer and sideliner alike — that Bro. Ben's help will be invaluable in your getting focused, started and committed. I'll get the ball rolling and keep it rolling by presenting a paper at each of our meetings in the coming term, but our growth beyond 2008 depends on cultivating more talent every year. The schedule of dates will be published in our September trestleboard, and our officers' presentations will begin with our Jan. 27, 2007 communication.

And who are our new officers? As this trestleboard goes to press, I still have not made up my mind. We're blessed in that there are more volunteers than there are chairs to fill, so I'm agonizing over these difficult choices. Naturally I'll be in touch with all volunteers before we meet on May 27, but the full line of LORE officers will be introduced at that meeting.

On the not-so-pleasant side, we have a large number of members who are in arrears. They risk suspension for non-payment of dues. Any brother experiencing financial hardship is encouraged to contact the Master, Secretary or me right away. If your dues card does not say 2006 because of an honest oversight, please do the right thing today.

Beloved Masons, I'm very excited about all the possibilities awaiting us in our 2006-08 term! Those of you who know me from elsewhere I've served in the East (one lodge, two chapters and two councils since 2003) may have noticed that I look at the *subsequent* term more than the present one, meaning that your fourth Worshipful Master should be handed an ashlar that's a little closer to perfection, just as I'm receiving from Worshipful Brother Tom Thornton.

Worshipful Tom, I congratulate you on a terrific term! You led us through a productive period and I am most fortunate to be able to stand on your shoulders.

Brethren, you are cordially invited to the
Installation of Officers
of the New Jersey Lodge of Masonic Research & Education No. 1786
for 2006-2007-2008
Saturday May 27, 2006 – 10:00 a.m.



Missed the last meeting??
 Lost your most recent NJ LORE Trestleboard?
 Want a copy of a paper presented at a meeting?

Take a look at the NJ LORE website at

<http://njlore1786.org>

At our website, you will find all of the latest information from copies of Trestleboards and papers to important contact information and meeting dates. Be sure to check it out!!

NJ LORE NO. 1786 — MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Initial Membership Fee is \$ 25.00 and the Annual Dues are \$25.00. A personal check, bank check or money order made out to “**NJ Lodge No. 1786**” in the amount of \$50.00 must accompany this application.

Mail to our Secretary: WB Matthew Korang / 106 Wayland Rd. / Delran, NJ 08075

Please clearly print or type the following information

Brother Dist. Brother WB RWB MWB

Name _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Telephone (home) _____ (business) _____

Fax _____ E-mail _____

Lodge Affiliation (Mother Lodge or Lodge currently attending)

Your Lodge Secretary must sign and seal this section of the application indicating that you are in good standing.

Name _____ Number _____

Address _____

Grand Lodge of New Jersey _____ Grand Lodge of _____

“I respectfully represent that I am a Master Mason in good standing in a Lodge of Master Masons in the State of New Jersey or in a Grand Jurisdiction with which New Jersey maintains fraternal relations and do hereby make application for membership.”



Signature of Lodge Secretary _____

Your Signature _____

On the Loss of Liberty

RWB Howard Kanowitz

Just a few days prior to commencing this essay, I attended a meeting in a high-rise office building at the foot of Manhattan. Across the street was an archaeological dig, which had unearthed a portion of the wall that once surrounded early New York and which gave Wall Street its name. To the right of the dig no more than 200 feet away lay Battery Park, for which the foot of Manhattan is named. As I raised my eyes to horizontal, I could see the shoreline of New Jersey, interrupted by an island on which stood a solitary lady holding a torch and a tablet.

The archaeological dig drew my mind back to an age of innocence when these United States were yet to be subdivided by other than streams, rivers and mountain passes, which naturally ordained its borders. Suddenly aware of the height at which I stood over street level, I was reminded of a recent report on Good Morning America, that the ice pack surrounding Greenland was melting, and that by the time my children were my age, sea water would penetrate the carpet on which I was standing. Realizing that I was in one of the most unique places on earth, I gazed at the beacon of Liberty in the middle of the harbor and began to ask myself what lay ahead.

There was once an age when adventurers came to these shores to discover and exploit the unlimited bounty of this continent. There was an age, when families came to these shores seeking to enjoy life unfettered by the dictates of royalty, of theocracy, or of a narrow-minded society. There was a time when the West meant west of Philadelphia. There was a time when a man's footprints were the only scar he left on the surface of the continent.

The Europeans who first came to these lands brought with them, a concept in its infancy, known as liberty. It was a sense of freedom. It was the audacious idea that they could choose to live life as they sought, not as they were told. They brought to these shores the idea that they were not bound to their father's lifestyle. They exercised that liberty, and word of their success spread as more people arrived on these shores; those who came with the expectation of new wealth, those who were discontented with their lot in life in their motherland.

Very soon, artificial borders were erected and land came to be known as this or that town, this or that colony, this or that territory, or as the holdings of this or that nation. As we all know, the English-speaking people initially prevailed; threw off the yoke of their motherland, and in the greatest think tank since ancient Athens, through the philosophy of the Enlightenment, and the egalitarianism of Freemasonry, they fashioned a republic, scandalous to Monarchical Europe. It was based on equality, a system of government had been born of brotherly love, relief, and truth.

Within a century, from Atlantic to Pacific, from Canada to Mexico, all the other national influences were removed, and every inch lie within a State or territory, with a few extra acres thrown in for Hawaii, and a few more for Alaska. Shortly after the Civil War a Golden Spike was hammered into a rail in Utah, and the two oceans were connected by a continuous ribbon of iron. All that remained was for the population to fill in the blanks, and fill in the blanks they did.

The Statue of Liberty, along with her elder cousin, the Liberty Bell, became the icons of freedom, which drew the masses to these shores. By the 1900s, the cities had reached an age when they could no longer build, without first tearing down what had already been built. The great cities had reached their saturation points. Of all the great freedoms afforded by our Constitution, the right to own property, is one of the dearest. When the land was open one did as one wanted. However, when the cityscape became saturated, and there was nowhere else to build, a new concept called zoning entered the lexicon so that one man's use of his property would not interfere with another man's use of his. This was the first step in the loss of liberty.

*(The above is an excerpt from Bro. Howard Kanowitz's March 2006 presentation "On the Loss of Liberty".
Download the entire presentation at our website – <http://njlore1786.org>)*

In The Beginning....Was There Light?

WB Ben Hoff, Laureate Member of NJ LORE No. 1786

The initial reaction of most Masons when reading antique ritual material for the first time is usually some flavor of delight at recognition of the familiar, perhaps mixed with concern that such things were written. This is naturally followed by interest, alarm, or disbelief at the differences. What is often overlooked, however, is recognition of the omissions. While trying to visualize these old rituals in my mind's eye, I noticed that I would fill in the blanks, as it were, with ritual as I knew it. It took me a while to realize that I was probably filling in some blanks that should not have been filled.

This can be a problem when researching ritual history because the earliest narrative descriptions of ceremonies are not complete, nor were they probably intended to be. Moreover, the earliest catechisms, unlike our modern proficiency catechisms, contain few if any questions on ceremonial procedure. So it is difficult to say with certainty which aspects of contemporary ritual were practiced in the early days. Since Masonic tradition has it that our ceremonies date from a remote antiquity, most Masons would be inclined to assume that the lack of documentation is simply a lack of documentation. Just because a procedure is not mentioned in the records does not necessarily mean that it was not practiced. Lack of documentation is to be expected. This was, after all, supposed to be secret knowledge. But this presumption is not always justified. Indeed, a careful reading of the available sources shows that several ceremonial procedures considered absolutely necessary today, were not universally practiced in the early 18th century. These procedures include, reception, circumambulation (walking around the lodge), and most especially the bringing to light. They first appear in the record in forms quite different from any contemporary practice. They then acquire a number of variants in their mode of practice, including some forms that resemble what is practiced today. Finally, some of these variants undergo further elaboration, becoming the practices known in the current day. Against this background of development, the early lack of evidence for certain ceremonial procedures might equally suggest that they were not known in earlier ages. In all likelihood they were innovations developed by speculative Masons in the 1720's and 1730's.

The bringing to light during a degree ceremony is an especially moving experience for a candidate, and therefore is not likely to be overlooked in written accounts. Yet it is not mentioned at all in the earliest catechisms or descriptions of the ceremonies. The narrative descriptions of degrees in the Edinburgh group of documents have no mention of bringing to light or candidate preparation related to light. The Dumfries Manuscript of about 1710 mentions a rope about the neck, but no blindfold. The Sloane Manuscript of about 1700 mentions a pantomime that might refer to the cable tow, but nothing related to covering the eyes. The Masons Confession describing work of 1727 and earlier, tells of the divestiture of metals and baring of the knee, but nothing related to rope or blindfold. Neither is there any indication in these sources that the candidate was brought to light in any physical sense. Even in Pritchard's *Masonry Dissected*, the most complete of the early sources and written as late as 1730, there is no indication of any bringing to light, or candidate preparation supporting such a procedure. The answer to Pritchard's question 17 related to preparation is: "Neither naked nor clothed, bare-foot nor shod, deprived of all Metal and in a right moving Posture." No ropes or blindfolds.

From these few available documents we may be tempted to construct a hypothetical single path of development for this aspect of our ceremonies. But this also would be a mistake. Notice that each of the earliest original sources, i.e. those that do not quote a previously published account of ritual, have an entirely unique description of this aspect of Masonic ceremonial. I have not been selective in my references – all early documents I know of with any reference to ceremonial illumination have been cited. Out of only about dozen existing documents containing ritual from the 1720's and 1730's, only the four I have found contain reference to illumination. All four sources present procedures that are strikingly different from each other. I wonder if we had another dozen sources from that era whether we would find four, five or a dozen further variations? We have enough documentation of early Masonic ritual to know that ritual from that time period was far from uniform by the standards of the present day. But we do not know the actual extent of that variation. There simply is not enough documentation. This leaves open the comforting possibility that the procedure we know today may well have existed unchanged from that time as well. If so, then it too was born in darkness before being brought to light.

(The above article is an excerpt from Bro. Hoff's March 2006 presentation "In the Beginning...". The entire presentation is available on the NJ LORE No. 1786 website – <http://njlore1786.org>)

NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education

Important Information

Brethren,

You are cordially and fraternally invited to the next Regular Communication of the NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education No. 1786 to meet on Saturday, May 27, 2006 at the Trenton Masonic Temple, 100 Barracks St. Trenton, NJ at 9:30 a.m.

Order of Business

- Continental Breakfast (served 9:00 a.m.)
- Opening Lodge (9:30 a.m.)
- Short Business Meeting
- Election and Installation of Officers
- Lunch Break
- Presentation of Papers
- Closing

Officer's Dress – Business Attire

Grand Master of Masons of the State of New Jersey

Most Worshipful Douglas R. Policastro
620 Weston Drive
Toms River, NJ 08755-3271
732-240-6112

Like to Write?

Interested in Masonic History or Theory?

Why not consider submitting a paper to the NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education?

The NJ Lodge of Masonic Research and Education is looking for individuals interested in the history and activities of Freemasonry in both New Jersey and the world.

Only papers concerned directly with Freemasonry will be considered for presentation and publication: The history of Lodges, active or demised; biographies of Masons distinguished in the annals of Freemasonry; its ceremonies, usage, and practices; the speculative or philosophical aspects of Freemasonry; and any other Masonic subject of general interest to the Fraternity.

Interested? If you have a paper you would like to submit or would like more information concerning writing and submitting papers, please feel free to contact : **Bro. Jay Hochberg at 973-256-0374**

Officers for 2004-2006

Thomas W. Thornton 11 Adelphia Rd. Parsippany, NJ 07054 Cincinnati #3	Worshipful Master 973-887-8772 tomthornton@nac.net
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From the Editor's Desk.....

*Next Trestleboard will be published by September 1, 2006.
We are always looking for articles. All articles must be
submitted by August 15, 2006.*

*Matthew Korang, PM, Secretary
mkorang@comcast.net*



New Jersey Lodge of Masonic
Research and Education No. 1786

Trenton Masonic Temple
100 Barracks St.
Trenton, NJ 08608

*Bringing Light to New
Jersey Freemasonry!*

We're On the Web!!
njlore1786.org

Back Page Book Review

Bro. Matthew Korang, Beverly-Riverside Lodge No. 107

The Temple and the Lodge By Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh
Arcade Publishing, April 1991 306 pgs.

I have been asked by our regular "Back Page Book Review" author to fill in for this month as he prepares his vast agenda for his coming year in the East of NJ LORE. Having read several books on the topic of and surrounding Freemasonry, it took all of five seconds to decide which book to write about.

The Temple and The Lodge is easily one of the best books concerning the origins of Freemasonry, I have read. It is an easy and very entertaining read. At 306 pages, it provides plenty to think about while not leaving the reader thinking that there was not enough or when will this ever end.

Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh are famous for tackling touchy subjects concerning Christianity and Freemasonry. In fact, a recent lawsuit by the two authors against Dan Brown, revealed that Mr. Brown was influenced by an earlier Baigent and Leigh book titled "Holy Blood, Holy Grail". This book presented a theory that the bloodline of Christ exists to this day in Southern France and that the "secret" of this revelation is being protected by certain secret societies. The suit claimed that the DaVinci Code stole ideas directly from Holy Blood, Holy Grail.

Many readers will not like the style of thesis presented by Baigent and Leigh. I call this style a house of cards where supposition is built on supposition. The house of cards tumbles if the first supposition is incorrect. There is some of this method of suppositions in The Temple and The Lodge, but for some reason, it is not as offensive in this book.

The book follows the Knights Templar, their downfall, and their supposed exile to Scotland. From here they blend into society but keep their rituals and tradition alive through Freemasonry. These ideas eventually make the trip over the Atlantic and take root firmly in the New World. This theory is also explored in some recent movies; National Treasure comes to mind.

This idea sound Familiar? Something tells me that a discussion concerning this theory is coming to NJ LORE in September. Go out and grab a copy of The Temple and The Lodge and prepare yourself to defend the Knights Templar side of the coming debate at our next NJ LORE meeting!!

