



MORE
LIGHT IN
MASONRY

MORE LIGHT IN MASONRY

*A primer for new Masons on
leadership, service, and the
real secrets of Masonry*

Committee on Masonic Ceremonies
and Miscellaneous Publications

The Grand Lodge of AF & AM
of North Carolina

2007

On the cover

On October 12, 1793, Grand Master William R. Davie convened the Grand Lodge of North Carolina to Masonically set the cornerstone of the University of North Carolina's Old East, the first building erected on a state university campus. The date is still observed as University Day by UNC. This depiction of the event is from Allyn Cox's historical murals at the Grand Lodge headquarters in Raleigh, NC.

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Chapter 1

What do you most desire?

Greetings, brother, and welcome to a long and distinguished line of North Carolinians who are proud to call themselves Masons. You have knocked on the door of your lodge and taken your first step in Masonry. Once you learn your catechisms and return for additional instruction and enlightenment, culminating in the Master Mason degree, your journey ends. Right?

Well, no. Not if you want a return on your investment.

Our ancient fraternity has been perpetuated because, through the years, a relatively small group of men has been determined to keep the fires of learning lit. These men are hungry for more light. They want to experience real brotherhood. They want to serve their communities. They want the symbols to come alive. They want to pursue the real secret of Masonry.

Once you are entitled to all of the rights or benefits afforded by membership, you will have a decision to make. Will you settle for just being a member? Or are you going to be a Mason?

Some lodges open, rush through the order of business and close in 30 minutes flat. The lodge door is locked tight until the next stated communication, when the rush to close begins again. Other lodges hum like beehives. The meetings are lively, the brothers are active in their communities and the lodges open their doors for educational, cultural and civic functions. And for some reason the secretary has to keep restocking the petitions.

If you find that your lodge falls into the second group you are fortunate! If it is in the first, do not despair. After all, it is better to light a candle than curse the darkness.

You already have the matches. We'll just give you a few ideas on how to strike them.

A final thought: your Masonic journey will be as long as the Great Architect wills it. Shouldn't it be a meaningful and pleasurable journey too? By seeking more light in Masonry you will reap numerous personal benefits, make your community a better place to live and have the time of your life. At the same time you will strengthen the fraternity.

The future of the craft is in *your* hands for a brief moment in time. Will you build and improve it? Or be content to just go through the motions?

If you want to build and improve it, let's get started.

Chapter 2

A short history of Masonry in North Carolina

Just as the origins of Freemasonry are lost in the mists of time, so too are the details of Masonry's beginnings in North Carolina. Thomas C. Parramore pieces the story together in *Launching the Craft: The First Half Century of Freemasonry in North Carolina*. The book, published in 1975 by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina, is out of print but the text is available on the Grand Lodge's Web site.

Legends abound of two coastal lodges, Solomon and Hanover, at work as early as 1735, but no written evidence exists of Masonic activity prior to the 1750s. However, individual Masons – including early colonial governors – were present in the state.

The first known lodge here was St. John's 213 in Wilmington, chartered in 1754 by the Grand Lodge of England. By 1755 there is evidence of a lodge, possibly older than Wilmington's, operating in New Bern, but details of its charter

are unknown. Royal White Hart was chartered in Halifax in 1764, and Crown Point lodge was chartered in Pitt County about the same time.

The particulars are obscured by the passage of time and the absence of records. Parramore notes the “chaos” in the manner of chartering lodges: local brethren applied for charters from the grand lodges of England and Scotland, from provincial grand lodges including those in Massachusetts and South Carolina, and even from the master of the Wilmington lodge. Other lodges operated without charters.

Nevertheless, these early lodges were good training grounds for Masons and helped propagate the craft. By the 1780s dozens of lodges were at work from the mountains to the coast.

During this time, most lodges met in taverns, inns or homes. The meetings “were not all somber speeches and pious ceremonies,” Parramore says. “They included a generous amount of merriment as well.”

Thomas Cooper of Pitt County, appointed deputy grand master of North Carolina in 1767 by the grand master of Massachusetts, was the first Tar Heel authorized to preside over the state’s Masonic affairs. There is no record that Cooper ever exercised his powers.

The state’s earliest claim to Masonic fame dates to 1771 when the Duke of Beaufort, Grand Master of England, commissioned Joseph Montfort of Halifax as “grand master of and for America.” This is the highest Masonic rank ever attained by any person on the North American continent.

Every year in Montfort’s honor, the grand master of North Carolina awards up to three Joseph Montfort Medals for distinguished Masonic service or achievement. Montfort is buried on the front lawn of Royal White Hart

Lodge in Halifax, and his home site is just down the street from the lodge.

North Carolina had a Provincial Grand Lodge chartered by the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1771. It became dormant during the revolution, and the present-day Grand Lodge was organized in 1787. It was not until 1791 that the Grand Lodge started numbering lodges, apparently because of a dispute among the lodges as to which should be number 1.

The first grand masters were Samuel Johnston, Richard Caswell and William R. Davie. Davie envisioned a public university for North Carolina, and as grand master he laid the cornerstone of UNC's Old East building in 1793. This Masonic ceremony marks the birth of public higher education in the United States. Freemasons built the first state university and designed its early curriculum, which included grammar, logic, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy. The arrangement of Old East, Old West and South buildings, with the Old Well in the center and open space to the north, duplicates the layout of lodge rooms. And the motto of UNC, displayed on its seal, is *Lux Libertas*, or Light and Liberty.

Over the next 200 years Masons played prominent roles in building and shaping the state, with governors, senators, members of Congress, business leaders and philanthropists claiming allegiance to the craft.

In the 19th and 20th centuries N.C. Masons created two other well-known institutions: The Masonic Home for Children at Oxford, opened in 1873 to shelter, feed and clothe indigent orphans, and the Masonic and Eastern Star Home in Greensboro, which opened in 1913 to give dignity and comfort to aging brothers and sisters. These are the two main charities supported by our lodges today.

For more information see:

- *Launching the Craft: The First Half Century of Freemasonry in North Carolina* by Thomas C. Parramore (1975), published by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. Out of print but available from used book dealers, or on the Web at <www.grandlodge-nc.org/nclor/main.htm>.
- Historical table of lodges in North Carolina <www.grandlodge-nc.org/education/history/LodgeHistoryV1.PDF>
- The Masonic Home for Children at Oxford <www.mhc-oxford.org/>
- The Masonic and Eastern Star Home <www.meshhome.org/>

Chapter 3

Masonic ideals and their applications

Every human being has a claim upon your kind offices. Do good unto all.

— From the closing charge

We look forward to your continued leadership, not only in the lodge but also in the community in which you live.

— From the 25-year award citation

We belong to a venerable and special fraternity. We do not solicit members, but once one asks to join and is accepted as a brother, much is expected.

Sharing our time and talents for the benefit of others is not only a worthwhile endeavor, it's part of our tradition.

Service meets important needs in our communities. It strengthens the bonds of fellowship among brethren. It keeps the craft relevant, makes us more visible, and encourages our friends, neighbors and potential members to form favorable opinions of the craft.

If your lodge has a community service

project, get involved. If not, find a need that you and your brothers can address, and meet it.

The North Carolina Mason, published every two months by the Grand Lodge, has ideas you can borrow. For example:

Sponsor a Red Cross blood drive. It's easy and cheap to do. Just provide the site, and several volunteers to help with unloading and setup.

Host a chess tournament for kids. Find the chess club advisor in a local school or check with the parks and recreation department. If there's no club, consider starting one.

Sponsor a youth sports team. This is a fun and highly visible project, but verify the costs before proposing this to your lodge. If your lodge sponsors a team, brothers will enjoy attending the games to cheer on the kids and the lodge will build goodwill in your community.

Partner with local police to hold a bicycle safety clinic or another activity. Ask the chief or the sheriff how you and your brothers can help.

Hold a cookout or other activity with children at the Masonic Home. Call the home and ask how your lodge can brighten the youngsters' day. They'll have good ideas!

Winterize the home of one of your lodge's widows. Ask your brothers to spend a fall Saturday doing this and you'll all feel better at the end of the day. (If your lodge doesn't have a list of its widows and a plan for calling and visiting them, make the list and sign up brothers to help.)

Visit residents at the Masonic and Eastern Star Home, or arrange to hold a meeting there.

Get involved with Relay for Life, the CROP Walk, Special Olympics or another annual charitable activity in your town. There are plenty of opportunities to partner with local organizations. It's a win-win: they have needs and know-how and you can offer manpower.

Your lodge's secretary has a directory with the names and phone numbers of every lodge master and secretary in the state. If you read about a project in the *NC Mason* that you'd like to try, call a brother in that lodge, introduce yourself and ask how they did it.

You will be amazed by how much a handful of brothers can accomplish – and by the deepened sense of brotherhood and personal growth that you gain from these experiences. That is the real secret of Freemasonry, and it is also one of ways we exemplify Masonry's unofficial slogan “making good men better.”

For more information see:

TheNCMason archives at <www.grandlodge-nc.org/ncmason.htm>.

Chapter 4

The traveling man: Visiting other lodges

Visiting other lodges is one of the privileges of being a Mason. Just as our ancient brothers could be assured of finding safe and hospitable companionship in lodges as they made their way through unfamiliar lands, we know that we can find brothers in almost any community in the nation and many parts of the world.

Besides enjoying fellowship with new brothers, visiting other lodges is a fascinating experience. Although the ritual performed in your lodge is the same as in other North Carolina lodges, you'll spot differences. Lodges in various regions of the state have different customs. As you go through the chairs in your own lodge, you'll see how your counterpart in another lodge handles his part. And you may pick up an idea for a community service or fund-raising project.

As an Entered Apprentice you can visit

other lodges when they perform the first degree ritual. Let your coach or another brother in your lodge know that you want to see the degree performed.

Once you are a Master Mason you can drop in on other lodges on your own. Your lodge's secretary has a directory with all North Carolina lodges, their meeting schedules, and contact information for the master and secretary. It's a good idea to call ahead and confirm that the lodge will meet at the date and time you expect. Arrive a half-hour before the meeting time with your current dues card. You will be examined to ensure that you are a Mason. If you have any questions about the examination process, ask your coach or another brother.

Chapter 5

New brothers and coaches

Many brothers say that for them, the best part of getting involved in Masonry was the coaching. Strong bonds are formed when a new brother rolls up his sleeves and sits down with a knowledgeable coach. The best coaches share their time and expertise freely. They know the material frontward and backward, but they also dispense a lot of wisdom when you think you're just taking a break from memorizing the catechism.

Coaching shouldn't end with proficiency in the third degree catechism. We are always searching for more light and deeper meaning in our Masonry. So if you have a great coach, keep him. Make him your mentor. Ask questions, work with him on your parts as you go through the chairs and seek his help when you are learning a role for degree work. If your coach is unavailable for some reason, find a mentor in your lodge. And become a coach. It may be the most important role you ever play

in your lodge.

Good coaches instruct, reassure and serve as role models for young brothers at a critical point in their development as Masons. Coaching perpetuates the craft. You will find that you grow and learn as you help others begin their journeys.

Chapter 6

Masonry and the family

We pledge to aid and assist distressed brother Masons – so long as such aid does not cause injury to our selves or families. We are not to let our duties to our lodge detract from other duties, including family.

Clearly, families are important in Masonry, and we should find opportunities to involve our families.

Members of your family may want to join one of the appendant bodies – organizations such as Eastern Star, Rainbow, DeMolay and Job's Daughters that are related to Masonry and offer spouses and children opportunities for personal growth, fellowship and community service. See Chapter 7 for more information on these organizations.

Another way is to plan lodge activities that include families. Make a summer picnic or cookout for families part of your lodge's annual calendar. Have a pool party or go to a baseball game. Encourage brothers to bring their families to the St. John's Day celebration at the Masonic Home for Children in Oxford.

In wintertime you can organize a ski trip, go bowling, or invite families to decorate a lodge float for your town's Christmas parade. Then invite them to ride on it.

Share the light with your family and your brothers' families. Extend the fellowship that

you enjoy by inviting families to take part.

Chapter 7

Your lodge, the Grand Lodge, and appendant bodies

Your Lodge

Your lodge is affiliated with the Grand Lodge of North Carolina and is part of a worldwide fraternity. It dispenses charity and contributes to the moral and spiritual uplift of your community. Your lodge deserves your regular attendance and loyal cooperation in all endeavors. For more information see *On the Threshold*, a pamphlet published by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina.

The Grand Lodge

The Grand Lodge of North Carolina is not a building on Glenwood Avenue in Raleigh. The Grand Lodge is YOU and every other North Carolina Mason. The Grand Lodge is made up of more than 350 lodges consisting of nearly 50,000 members. Line officers of the Grand Lodge generally mirror those of our own lodges, with a grand master, senior grand warden, junior grand warden, etc. Each grand master appoints a grand steward who, after progressing through the chairs, is nominated for election to grand master. The grand master appoints brothers from across the state to serve on boards and committees that help guide the craft and provide services to the lodges.

For more information see <www.grandlodge-nc.org>

Appendant Bodies

Appendant bodies are organizations affiliated with Freemasonry. In North Carolina some appendant bodies are:

The Order of the Eastern Star

The Order of the Eastern Star is a Masonic-

related fraternal organization of women and men dedicated to charity, truth and loving kindness. This order is comprised of people who embrace the moral, ethical and spiritual values of Freemasonry. Although not a part of the Masonic fraternity, membership is based on Masonic affiliation or relationship, a belief in God and a desire to acquire additional knowledge and for self-improvement. The degrees of the order teach lessons of fidelity, constancy, loyalty, faith and love.

For more information see <www.oes-nc.com>.

Scottish Rite

The Scottish Rite is one of two appendant bodies offering further education and involvement in Masonry by offering degrees beyond the third (up to the 32nd degree, with an honorary 33rd degree). The Rite teaches of the importance of becoming more patient, generous, tolerant, compassionate and thoughtful, and helps society by supporting education, museums, the arts, medical research, speech and hearing clinics and aid for the needy. The Scottish Rite is organized into valleys, with offices in Asheville, Charlotte, Enfield, Greensboro, Raleigh, New Bern, Wilmington and Winston-Salem.

For more information see <www.orient-nc.org>.

York Rite

The York Rite also offers additional degrees. It is recognized as a premier Masonic organization and is one of the largest and oldest fraternities. Of his own freewill and accord, a petitioner knocks at the door of this symbolic order of Freemasonry. After acceptance he may enter therein and be impressed and perhaps overwhelmed by the magnificence of its ritual.

For more information see <yorkrite.com/nc/>.

Shrine

The Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine of North America (A.A.O.N.M.S.) is a social and charitable arm of Freemasonry. Shriners are members of the Masonic order and adhere to the principles of Freemasonry, brotherly love, relief and truth. The Shrine is an international fraternity with temples located throughout the US, Mexico, Canada and Panama. Shriners support what is known as the World's Greatest Philanthropy – the Shriner's Hospitals, which care for crippled and burned children at no cost to their families. They also enjoy parades, trips, dances, dinners, sporting events and other social occasions. For more information see <www.shrinershq.org>.

Chapter 8

Additional resources

Masonic books and Web sites

Books

Countless books – good and bad – have been written about Freemasonry. We suggest visiting your local bookstore or library to review their holdings, searching online booksellers for interesting titles and asking your brothers for their recommendations. Some grand lodge Web sites, particularly the Grand Lodge of California, offer lists of suggested readings.

We enthusiastically recommend two books: *Freemasons for Dummies* by Christopher Hodapp (Wiley Publishing, 2005) and *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Freemasonry* by Brent Morris (Alpha Books, 2006). If you're concerned that carrying these books around will mark you as a newbie, fear not. Gray-haired past masters and Grand Lodge officers have snapped up and devoured both books. Both are written by

Masons for a general audience and both offer a great deal of information in a highly readable and even lighthearted style.

Web sites of special interest to NC Masons

- **The Grand Lodge of North Carolina**

www.grandlodge-nc.org

The best starting point and source of official information for North Carolina Masons. Includes links to AF & AM lodges and appendant body sites and a searchable version of *The Code* (rules and regulations for lodges and members). Features an online archive of *The North Carolina Mason* newspaper and a link to the NC Society for Masonic History and Research. You may also contact the Web master for information on free Web hosting for your lodge site.

- **Tar Heel Out and About**

www.grandlodge-nc.org/thoa.htm

Offers information on events around the state, including degree work, activities sponsored by appendant bodies and lodge fund-raisers.

- **Freemasonry Revealed**

www.grandlodge-nc.org/freemasonryrevealed/index.htm

This pamphlet, written by Reynold S. Davenport, a former editor of *The North Carolina Mason*, is a simple and illuminating introduction to the craft. Recommended reading for Masons, potential candidates and others interested in Freemasonry.

- **Other sites:**

Brothers seeking more light have access to an amazing amount of material on the Web. Searching for and surfing Masonic sites can be rewarding and informative. However, a great deal of misinformation, as well as anti-Masonic and clandestine sites, resides on the Web. While

the following pages are deemed reputable we cannot vouch for pages found by following links from these sites.

A Page About Freemasonry

[<web.mit.edu/dryfoo/Masonry/>](http://web.mit.edu/dryfoo/Masonry/)

Established in 1994 and billed as the world's oldest Masonic website. A rich source of information and links.

Civil War Lodge of Research #1865

[<www.bessel.org/cwlr/>](http://www.bessel.org/cwlr/)

For those interested in the role of Masons during the war. Chartered by the Grand Lodge of Virginia. Calendar listings include reenactments with battlefield lodge meetings.

The E-Mason-Philalethes Web Portal

[<freemasonry.org/>](http://freemasonry.org/)

Maintained by Nelson King, editor of *The Philalethes* magazine. With links to the Philalethes Masonic research society, foreign and domestic lodges, sites maintained by individuals and commercial sites offering Masonic gifts, books and merchandise.

The Masonic Service Association of North America

[<www.msana.com/>](http://www.msana.com/)

Founded in 1919. Offers a wealth of publications and information on Freemasonry. The MSANA also responds to critics of Masonry, coordinates appeals for disaster relief and arranges for volunteers to visit patients in VA hospitals.

Mastermason.com

[<www.mastermason.com/>](http://www.mastermason.com/)

Large collection of links to lodges, grand lodges, appendant bodies and other Masonic organizations.

Zen Masonry

[<www.geocities.com/zenmasonry/>](http://www.geocities.com/zenmasonry/)

An unconventional and fresh approach to

Masonic education and thought, including resources for Masonry, meditation and Zen, Masonic education, Zen koans and parables based on Masonic teachings and information on Contemplative Masonry.

Conclusion

Welcome to our fraternity. You have received light in Masonry, but partially, and we encourage you to continue your search for more light. Not only will your lodge and your community be improved, but your efforts will be rewarded. Brothers who remain active in their lodges and engaged in their communities find more light and deep personal satisfaction. They also perpetuate the craft.

We have attempted to provide an introduction to the Masonic ideal of leadership and service and basic ideas on which you can build. We encourage you to take this guide and practice its precepts while keeping your eyes and your mind open to new opportunities for leadership, service and fellowship in your lodge and your community.

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