



THE LODGE GATE

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF BILTMORE MASONIC LODGE

Friendship

| | |
|------|-------------------------------------|
| | INSIDE THIS ISSUE |
| Page | |
| 2 | 20th Century Crusaders |
| 3 | Charles R. Whitaker |
| 4 | Book Review |
| 4 | Winding Staircase |
| 5-6 | Floor Cloth |
| 6 | From WM Ogus |
| 7 | Hamilton and the Masonic Myth |
| 8 | Masons and the Antarctic Expedition |
| 8 | Antarctic Lodge |
| 9 | Lodge or Temple? |
| 9 | The Archaic Term Hele |
| 10 | Great Tapestry of Scotland |
| 11 | The Life Lived |

A publication of news, history, opinion and thoughts.

I have never been the kind of person that developed a large stable of friends. Certainly I know a lot of people and find that I have good relations with most of them but of this large group I can fairly say that there is a small subset of what I consider good friends.

A good friend is a trustworthy, supportive, and reliable person who adds value to your life through consistent emotional support, honesty, and mutual respect. They celebrate your successes, offer help during difficult times, and provide a safe space to be yourself. Key traits include empathy, active listening, and, crucially, the ability to offer constructive, loving feedback.

If you recall the several Masonic lectures there are references to these traits. In the closing charge the opening line says: ‘Brethren, we are now about to quit this sacred retreat of friendship and virtue to mix again with the world.’ In the Entered Apprentice lecture the candidate is instructed about ‘Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth’ each speaking directly or indirectly of friendship. The lecture continues and explains that his conductor was a “true and trusted friend, upon whose fidelity [he] could, with the utmost confidence, rely.”

Most people will befriend people who are most like themselves, who share similar religious, political and



philosophical views. To some extent, Freemasonry upends this natural process. We are told that Masonry ‘conciliates true friends among those who might otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance’. We meet and befriend men who we would otherwise not have known and realize that we share at least one common trait, that being the desire to associate with other good men.

Epicurus was an ancient Greek philosopher who founded Epicureanism, a highly influential school of philosophy; it asserted that philosophy's purpose is to attain as well as to help others attain tranquil lives, characterized by freedom from fear and the absence of pain. Among Epicurus’ teachings, friendship held a special place. While he valued simple pleasures and freedom from fear, he believed that lasting happiness was impossible without friends. The Garden, his school in Athens,

was as much a community of companions as it was a place of study. Epicurus taught that friendship provides security, joy, and mutual support. In a world filled with uncertainty, friends help ease fear and magnify pleasure. Sharing meals, conversations, and trust created bonds that protected the soul from loneliness and anxiety. Friendship, unlike wealth or fame, was stable and enduring. He also emphasized that true friendship is not a matter of utility alone.

Though friends often help one another, their deepest value lies in the affection and goodwill they bring. In choosing friends, Epicurus urged sincerity, simplicity, and mutual respect, qualities that foster ataraxia—the tranquility of soul. The Epicurean view of friendship challenges modern individualism. It reminds us that happiness is not achieved in isolation but in connection. To live well is to share life with others, building bonds that nourish both heart and mind.

“Of all the things which wisdom provides to make life entirely happy, much the greatest is the possession of friendship.” — Epicurus



20th Century Crusaders

They came down the main avenue of Tbilisi in 1915—on horseback, draped in chainmail, swords at their sides. Not a movie crew. Not re-enactors. But real mountain warriors from Georgia’s Khevsureti region, stirring memories of a world long gone.

Locals stared. Some swore they were ghosts from the 12th century. In truth, they were Khevsurs—fierce Christian fighters from the Caucasus, whose traditions ran so deep they still bore shields, chainmail, and crosses as their ancestors had for centuries.

For generations, travelers claimed the Khevsurs were descended from Crusaders left behind during the medieval wars for the Holy Land. Their attire certainly looked the part: heavy mail, cross-emblazoned tunics, and swords forged in the old style. Though historians debate that origin story, one fact remains: the Khevsurs lived and fought as if history still breathed through them.

When Russia went to war with the Ottoman Empire in 1914, a small group of Khevsur volunteers arrived in full traditional armor. Their weapons may not have matched the modern battlefield—but their presence was unforgettable. A living echo of the warrior spirit that shaped their mountains.

Today, their legacy lives on in folk memory, in ceremonial dress, and in the Georgian flag

itself—where the Crusader’s cross still flies.

As one American traveler wrote after witnessing their arrival:

“A band of twelfth-century Crusaders... came riding on horseback down the main avenue of Tiflis. People’s eyes almost popped out of their heads.”

They weren’t ghosts.

They were Khevsurs. And they were very much alive.

A story by Robert E. Howard.





Charles Richard Whitaker

Charles Richard Whitaker was born on 11 October 1861, in Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. Shortly after the American Civil War he moved to Asheville. He is said to have liked the area enough to have invited his father Dr. Algernon Sydney Whitaker to come join him and take on the position as doctor for the Vanderbilt Estate.

Charles met Miss Harriett (Hattie) Reed, daughter of Joseph Reed in the early 1880's. Three years after her father Joseph Reed's death, on April 5, 1887, at age 18, Hattie married Charles Richard. Shortly thereafter (certainly by 1894), Charles and Hattie built a large 9-room house on the crest of the hill overlooking Biltmore Village (the house sat at the crest of the hill above Biltmore Village on Fairview Road). They aptly named their home Reedcrest, as it was built on the crest of the hill that Harriet had inherited from her father, Joseph Reed. Harriet's land included almost all the land on the south side of Hickory Nut Gap Road (Fairview Road), now known as Oakley. Harriett's new house sat not far above her childhood home. One contemporary account described the house as "a beautiful home at Biltmore on that pretty eminence opposite Kenilworth Inn".

The July 1, 1895 Asheville Citizen-Times reported that "the hennery (chicken coop) of C. R.

Whitaker at Biltmore was looted on Saturday night and 30 fowls taken." But then in 1896, C. R. Whitaker, who was involved in the Reed family businesses, decided to accept the position of manager of the Oaks Hotel on Woodfin Street in downtown Asheville. Samuel H. Reed, who was Whitaker's brother-in-law was the owner of the Hotel.

Whitaker put his house up for rent in October of 1896, and ran the following descriptive advertisement in the local newspaper:

FOR RENT- Biltmore, NC, residence which has 9 rooms and 2 halls: good range, with water connections supplied by wind mill from splendid well. Good barn and outbuildings; garden, orchard and pasture lots containing approximately 25 acres; splendid view. For more information apply to C. R. Whitaker, Oaks Hotel, Asheville, NC.

In 1897, Whitaker resigned his position at Oaks Hotel to concentrate on his other business ventures, like the Swannanoa Ice and Laundry Company, where he was in partnership with Thomas J. Reed. At that time, Charles & Hattie moved back into their house in Biltmore.

In the winter of 1907 the Whitaker's again rented out their home. They permanently moved to Hendersonville, NC, where Charles had recently purchased an "Ice and Laundry" business. Whitaker died in February 1948

and was buried in the Gashes Creek Cemetery.

Charles's father Algernon was a former Confederate States doctor and founding member of Biltmore Lodge and served as Senior Warden during its first year in 1891. Charles was proposed for membership at the inaugural meeting of the lodge.

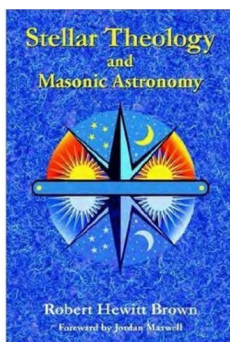




Book Review

The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read them.

Brother Mark Twain



‘Stellar Theology and Masonic Astronomy’ by Robert Brown

This book, written in 1882, starts off by showing the importance of Astronomy to the ancients and what it meant to them. Some of it may be deemed Astrology but, in those days, there was no distinction between the two. It tells of how the rites of the ancient mysteries which taught the myths of the old gods were allegories contain knowledge of Astronomy. Since we know that our Masonic ritual has its roots in those ancient mysteries, it follows that that knowledge may be incorporated into our ritual. The author proposes that these are also contained in allegorical form in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim mysticism, and explains

some of the mysteries of the ancient mysterysystems and the early forms of worship. Egyptian, Indian, Eleusinian, Bacchanal, Ceres, and Dionysiac mysteries are mentioned. Many pages are devoted to providing some astronomical facts, without which knowledge, the next part could not be understood. The next part goes into detail about what the author calls Masonic Astronomy, in the architecture, words and ritual of Freemasonry. He reveals relationships between Masonic ritual and symbols and the Temple of Solomon, and identifies these with Hiram Abif. He then shows an astronomical allegory of the death and resurrection of the sun (which was a symbol of the god of old). This allegory, in poetic form can be

found in another part of this newsletter. The last part of the book contains further explanations of the emblems, symbols, and legends of the mysteries, the Zodiac and the relationships between Masonry and astronomy. This is a very detailed work and scholarly work, and is extensively illustrated, which makes understanding the concepts a lot easier.

I recommend this book to any Mason who has an interest in ancient mysteries.

The Winding Staircase

Why Masonry Teaches You to Climb, Not Jump.

This image isn't decoration, it's instruction.

In Freemasonry, the Winding Staircase reminds us that real growth happens step by step, not all at once, and never by shortcuts.

At the base, we start with the Five Senses: Hearing. Seeing. Feeling. Smelling. Tasting.

Why?

Because before you can lead, teach, or judge, you need to observe the world properly. A man who doesn't listen or pay atten-

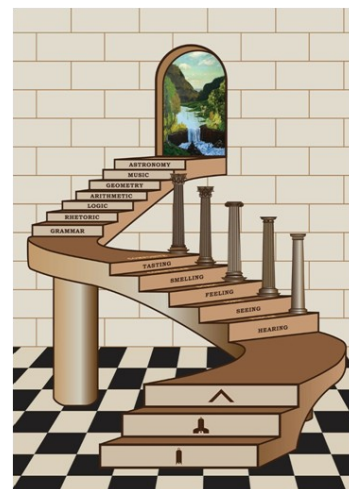
tion can't improve himself, or anything else. As we climb higher, we meet the Liberal Arts and Sciences: Grammar. Rhetoric. Logic. Arithmetic. Geometry. Music. Astronomy.

This isn't about being book-smart, it's about learning how to think clearly, speak honestly, reason soundly, and understand your place in a bigger order. And supporting the whole structure are the Orders of Architecture, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, reminding us that strength comes first, then balance, then refinement. Same goes for men.

Masonry doesn't promise instant enlightenment, it teaches Patience. Discipline. Effort. You

climb as far as your work allows. No shortcuts. No skipping steps. No titles without labor.

That staircase is still there, and every Mason decides how high he's willing to climb.





The New Floor Cloth

At the end of the Entered Apprentice Degree lecture the candidate is told about three elements that frankly don't seem to have any connection to our Craft other than a hazy symbolism. This puzzled me for years until recently I ran across some information that provided a possible answer.

As Masonic degrees developed during the first part of the 18th century, it became a custom for a Past Master of the lodge to deliver a lecture on the symbolism of the degree. These lectures were given not from an authorized Grand Lodge ritual but by whatever verbiage the speaker desired to use, although it's likely that the speaker used a memorized or written outline. Over time, those outlines were standardized into the narrative lectures we use today.

The symbols used as part of these lectures was hand drawn or painted figures and were sometimes depicted on what is called a wall chart. The wall charts grew out of those earliest outlines. Degrees in those days were often conducted in a dining room at an inn, with tables arranged in a horseshoe, leaving a space in the center of the room for a lecturer to deliver his talk. The Tyler would draw a sketch on the floor with black charcoal and white chalk, and sometimes fill in those outlines with a fine powdered clay. (These days, one of our lectures makes a reference to "chalk, charcoal, and clay.")

At the end of the lecture, these secrets were preserved by having an apprentice use a mop to obliterate the drawings.

Over time, lodges found a way to preserve these sketches: by drawing on the underside of the tops of tables in the lodge. These "trestle boards," as they were called, could be reused and hidden between meetings. Freemasons still use the term "trestle board," but nowadays it often refers to the lodge publication or newsletter.

From there, floor cloths and eventually wall charts were born. Rather than drawing on a wooden tabletop, the symbols were painted on a piece of cloth or carpet and placed on the ground in the place of the old Tyler's sketches. These floor cloths, many of which were quite beautiful, were sometimes hung on walls during the degree ceremony. Others painted the symbols onto wooden panels, called tracing boards.

Today, that history is still in evidence in Biltmore Lodge, as we continue to use a floor cloth in the Fellow Craft degree. The canvas floor cloth in use today may be as much as 100 years old. We simply don't know its age as there is no recorded evidence of its purchase or first use. If it were purchased for use when we moved to our current building then it is over 70 years old. Just imagine the numbers of times it has been unrolled for use and then rolled up again. Imag-

ine the numbers of feet that have trod over it as the stair case lecture has been delivered. If you have that in mind, you can now imagine that it is in poor shape.

It was the thought of WB CS to replace the old floor cloth with one that was very close in design. An attempt to locate a suitable replacement from a fraternal supply store turned up nothing thought suitable or was in keeping with the antique look of our current floor cloth. Seeing that no preexisting item was available it would then be necessary to have a cloth hand painted, but where to turn for that talent.

Certainly there are folks who can do the work but where to find them and then how to pay for the professional work was a problem. A call was placed to our Chaplain, Brother Alex Hanks. Bucky has many connections in the 'artsy' community of Asheville and it was supposed he might well find the needed talent. He immediately responded with a suitable artist, his wife Linda. When asked, she readily agreed.

The first step was to purchase a suitable canvas material. The original floor cloth is 51 inches wide and 20 feet in total length. We opted for a 60 inch width of #8 unprimed material donated by WB Clay Sorrells.



— Continued Next Page —



Floor Cloth, continued

The paint necessary to provide the symbolic scenes is a special latex paint and this was donated by Brother Bucky Hanks and Linda. After recovering sufficiently from knee surgery Linda began to reproduce the scenes found on the four panels that made up the whole staircase depiction. After several months, the work was completed.

It is seen here unrolled alongside the old floor cloth so you can see the how the new piece much resembled the older one but exceeded it in color and newness. Surely when new, the older cloth was as vibrant in color.

Our new floor cloth will now be used in each Fellowcraft Degree

and will hopefully see as many feet tread across it as the old one and in another one hundred years find retirement alongside its predecessor when the Masons of

Biltmore Lodge have a new floor cloth painted.

Thanks you Linda Hanks for the long hours and fine artistry.



From WM Michael Ogus

As Master of Biltmore Lodge for the current year, I have 3 main goals for the first half of my term:

Goal #1 -- Increase Membership
Our lodge is well on the way to having a good year for membership. We have 3 new Entered Apprentices, one completed petition, and one petition in process. If we have 5 new members during the first quarter, I will very encouraged about our prospects for the year.

Goal #2 -- Enhance Understanding of Ritual Among the Brethren

I want to identify ways to generate interest among the craft in learning more about our forms and ceremonies. One way I can do that is by sharing pertinent elements of our Masonic Code from time to time during meetings.

Our annual Lecture Service is one of the most important and accessible vehicles for education, and to that end we plan on having the 2025 Grand Lecturer of our Grand Lodge come to Asheville to conduct the Service.

Goal #3 -- Brainstorm Ways to Create Exposure to Masonry in the Community

This is an initiative I hope to begin later in the year by meeting with officers of Biltmore and other district lodges to gather ideas on projects and activities we can undertake to provide Masonic exposure in our community and generate desire in young men to become Masons.

A few decades ago, men were looking for friendship, fellowship, and fraternity. Masonry was a great place to get all three. Today, it's all available at the touch of an electronic device -- or is it? I think there are young men who are looking for more than an electronic screen, and I believe Masonry can help fill that void.

A few decades ago, men were looking for friendship, fellowship, and fraternity.



Hamilton and the Masonic Myth

The award-winning musical 'Hamilton' tells the story of the people long ago using the music and people of today. The success of the musical has renewed interest in the lives and stories of George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, and the men and women who helped form our great nation. Their stories are interesting and complicated, made even more so by the myths and legends that have developed around them. In 'Some Masonic Misconceptions,' a May 1990 Short Talk Bulletin from the Masonic Service Association, Brother Allen E. Roberts sought to dispel some of the more pervasive Masonic myths. A search of our own history reveals that MWB Lewis Cass (1810-1812) was instrumental in revealing the Aaron Burr conspiracy, a story that they won't be writing a musical about anytime soon.

Alexander Hamilton was never a Mason. The myth seems to stem from a painting entitled "The Petition," by John Ward Dunsmore which depicts a meeting of American Union Lodge. The Lodge met to consider a petition to create a General Grand Lodge for the United States with George Washington as the General Grand Master. The artist decided to take some artistic license and included Hamilton, a non-Mason, in the painting.

Brother George Washington was elected as Master of a Lodge, but there is no evidence that he ever presided as such. Alexandria Lodge #39 of Pennsylvania asked the Grand Lodge of Virginia for a new charter. Washington was an Honorary Member of this Lodge. When the Grand Master signed the Virginia charter, Washington's name appeared in the place where the Master's normally would. The

following December, while serving as President, Washington was elected but never installed as Master of Alexandria Lodge #22. Even though his civic duty kept him from attending Lodge, he held Freemasonry in the utmost regard and was buried with full Masonic Honors.

Anti-Masons in the early 1800s put forth the story that Aaron Burr was expelled from Masonry after his duel with Alexander Hamilton despite no evidence that Burr was ever a Mason. An interesting note in Ohio history is the Burr Conspiracy, a treasonous plot launched from Blennerhasset Island on the Ohio River. Burr's activities raised the suspicions of the Ohio Legislature, including Representative Lewis Cass. Most Worshipful Brother Cass was one of the founders of the Grand Lodge of Ohio, representing Lodge of Amity; served as Grand Master of Ohio from 1810-1812, and served as the Grand Master of Michigan in 1826 and 1844. He also served as Secretary of War, Secretary of State, and ran for President twice. His life of service to Freemasonry and his country is worthy of study and a story that should be shared with all Masons.

Creative license is often taken with the lives of important and influential people. Once you sift through the myths and legends, you often find that the stories of the people who forged our country are interesting enough without the embellishments.





The Masons and the Antarctica Expedition

In 1928, Admiral Richard E. Byrd launched the much anticipated expedition to Antarctica. He and his crew settled the base camp as they landed on the continent, and from there, they flew the first flight ever over the South Pole. Boarding the flight, there were Admiral Richard E. Byrd, the expedition leader and navigator, Bernt Balchen, the chief pilot, Harold I. June, co-pilot and radio operator, and Ashley McKinley, the photographer. For the brethren, it is a noteworthy accomplishment that three of the four crew aboard this historic flight over the South Pole were masons.

Richard E. Byrd was raised in Federal Lodge no. 1, Washington D.C. in 1921, and he demitted to Kane Lodge no. 454, New York in 1928. He had flown Kane Lodge's flag from the masthead of the ship during the expedition.

Bernt Balchen was raised in Norsemen Lodge no. 878 in 1927. A few weeks prior to the expedition, the Norsemen Lodge presented the US flag to Bernt Balchen at the Testimonial Dinner at Hotel St. George on August 25, 1928. He carried the

flag with him as he flew the plane over the South Pole.

Upon his return to America in 1930, the Norsemen Lodge welcomed him with Homecoming Dinner on June 23rd, 1930, where he presented the flag to Charles H. Johnson, the Grand Master. The flag is beautifully displayed in frame and still in care of Grand Lodge of New York Library and Museum. He was later appointed as the Grand Representative of Grand Lodge of Iceland in 1954 and awarded

the Charles H. Johnson Medal in the same year.

Harold I. June was raised in Kane Lodge no. 454 in 1931, very little is known about his Masonic activity. It is reported that he was present along with Richard E. Byrd at the unique communication of Antarctica Lodge no. 777 under the Jurisdiction of Grand Lodge of New Zealand at the Antarctica camp base "Little America" where they settled back in their first expedition.



Antarctic Lodge

The First Antarctic Lodge No. 777 was chartered under the Grand Lodge of New Zealand on February 5, 1935, during Admiral Richard E. Byrd's second expedition at Little America. Founded by members of the expedition, it was the first Ma-

sonic lodge in Antarctica. While not currently active, its legacy persists.

When Brothers Richard E. Byrd and Bernt Balchen first flew over the North and South Poles, they dropped a Masonic flag on

each Pole. Then, in the 1933-35 expedition, Brother Balchen tossed his Shrine Fez on the North Pole.



Lodge or Temple?

We refer to the building located at 6 St. Paul Street as Biltmore Masonic Lodge but the façade above the entrance is written '1892 Biltmore Masonic Temple 1954'. Why the difference?



The word lodge really has two meanings to a Freemason. It is both a place where Masonic meetings are held, and a collective term for the members who meet there. So, as weird as it sounds, you could say that a lodge meets in a lodge.

the role of religion in Freemasonry, as well as the accusation that Freemasons actually go to their lodges to "worship," many jurisdictions have asked lodges to remove the word temple from their buildings. Obviously we haven't.

Until recently, it was common for a lodge building to be called a Masonic temple. Because of a public misunderstanding about

The Archaic English Term 'Hele'

*From
Brother Bucky*

A few weeks ago there was some discussion as to the pronunciation and origin of the term "hele" as used in our degree work. I thought that I would look into this a bit further since I am ever curious about the origin of things....where did it come from and what does it mean? The term "hele", which, by consensus, appears to be pronounced "heel", is one of those archaic terms which is little used today except by certain members of the literati and Masons. It was used widely during the Middle English period, roughly from around the 8th or 9th century to the end of the 14th century, about the time of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. It is Germanic in its ultimate origin, coming into the British Isles via the Angles and Saxons in the 5th and 6th centuries and apparently it has persisted in usage to some extent in certain regional dialects, mostly in the west and northern areas of England...we could call it a "pagan", i.e. country folk, usage, certainly not used very much by city dwellers. Why is that, you might

ask? Its primary and original meaning is to cover over as when a seed or plant is placed in the soil and covered over with more soil. Another application of this idea of covering is when a house was roofed or thatched with either wood shingles, thatching, and later, slate tiles. These are activities carried out for the most part by folk who live close to the land and derive their living from it, country folk, the true meaning of the Latin term *paganus*. But no matter which type of covering the basic idea was....to cover over. The term "helmet" comes from the same root, *helan* or *helian* in its original Germanic form, which simply carries forward the idea of covering, in this case it is the head which is covered.

As time went on the idea of covering over took on a somewhat nuanced meaning, that of concealment. It is in this sense that the later usage and Masonic usage especially, became the norm. If you cover something over you have concealed it! As for its correct pronunciation we

really don't know how it was pronounced in the Middle English period....we have only modern approximations, plus the pronunciation very likely varied somewhat from locale to locale. As a side note, it might prove fruitful to hear a farmer from the western or northern parts of England today say the word "heel", as in the heel of a shoe, which might give us something pretty close to its Middle English pronunciation. As for its late pronunciation as in the period of from Grand Lodge, the Hanoverian period of the early 18th century, to the present if we think of techniques which help one to memorize a catechism then rhyme is just such a device. This would suggest that pronouncing "hele" as "heel" to rhyme with "conceal" would definitely be another aide in the "art of memorization". This is merely a guess but until we have more definitive information. I'll close with "this is my story and I'm stickin' with it!



The Great Tapestry of Scotland

Tapestry is a form of textile art which was traditionally woven by hand on a loom. Normally it is used to create images rather than patterns. Tapestry is relatively fragile, and difficult to make, so most historical pieces are intended to hang vertically on a wall (or sometimes in tents), or sometimes horizontally over a piece of furniture such as a table or bed. Some periods made smaller pieces, often long and narrow and used as borders for other textiles. Most weavers use a natural warp thread, such as wool, linen, or cotton. The weft threads are usually wool or cotton but may include silk, gold, silver, or other alternatives.

Arguably, the most famous tapestry is The Bayeux Tapestry, an embroidered cloth nearly 230 feet long and 20 inches tall that depicts the events leading up to the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, led by William, Duke of Normandy, challenging Harold II, King of England, and culminating in the Battle of Hastings. It is thought to date to the 11th century, within a few years of the battle. Now widely accepted to have been made in England, perhaps as a gift for William, it tells the story from the point of view of the conquering Normans and for centuries has been preserved in Normandy.

The Great Tapestry of Scotland is one of the world's largest community arts projects, hand stitched by 1,000 people from

across Scotland. It is made up of 160 linen panels and 300 miles of wool – enough to stretch the entire length of Scotland. It is now on permanent display in its own purpose-built gallery and visitor center in the town of Galashiels in the heartland of the Scottish Borders.

The tapestry itself tells the story of Scotland's history, heritage and culture – from the country's land formation millions of years BC right to 2013 when the last panel was completed.

The tapestry was designed by Andrew Crummy. He drew each panel but relied on the individual teams to add their own touches. Each of the panels took around 500 hours to sew, involving over a thousand volunteers from existing or newly formed sewing groups across Scotland working between Spring 2012 and September 2013.

The tapestry measures 143 meters (469 ft) long, each panel being displayed individually in approximately chronological order. The linen-cotton union fabric used is made by Peter Greig and Company (based at Victoria Linen Works, Kirkcaldy, Scotland), and the 2-ply crewel wool is dyed and spun by Appletons, of Buckinghamshire, England.

The panels include illustrations of the end of the most recent ice age in 8,500 BC, the circumnavigation by Pytheas in c. 320 BC, Viking invasions in the 9th century, Duns Scotus in c. 1300, the

Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, the Black Death in the 1350s, the foundation of the University of St Andrews in 1413, the Battle of Flodden in 1513, Mary, Queen of Scots in the 16th century, the publication of the King James Bible in 1611, the Act of Union 1707, the Jacobite rising of 1715 and of 1745, James Watt, Adam Smith, David Hume, James Boswell, Walter Scott, James Clerk Maxwell, Highland Games, the First and Second World Wars, the first-ever international rugby match (between Scotland and England in 1871), North Sea oil from the 1990s, Dolly the Sheep born 1996, and the re-creation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. A late detail was added to commemorate Andy Murray's victory at Wimbledon in 2013.

Of interest to us Freemasons is the Robert Burns panel.



Note the inclusion of the Masonic Square and Compasses





The Life Lived

As young men we were not so concerned with the idea of death. The majority of our life was ahead of us and the prospect was exciting. But, as we grew older the thought of our ultimate demise crept closer. If per chance we reach our seventh decade we are reminded of the biblical passage that all too often is prophetic. Psalm 90:10 tells us, "The length of our days is seventy years, or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away".

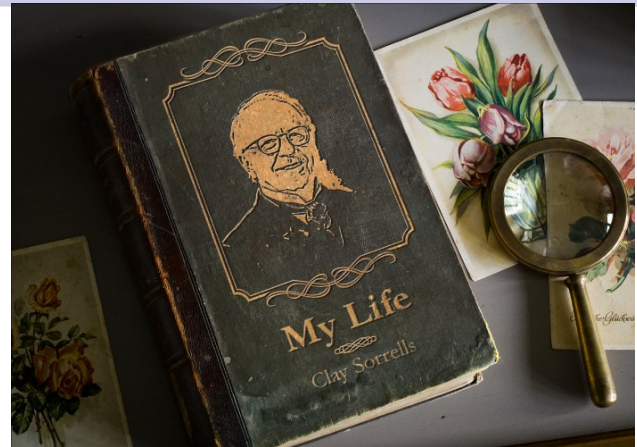
When we make it to a ripe old age much has transpired in our lives. We attended school, possibly joined the military, worked a job or two, got married and had kids, climbed a few mountains and so on. Pretty much a standard life, or so we think.

My dad was born into a family of ten children and raised in eastern Buncombe County. He was typical of his era. He hoed corn, tended to farm animals, went to school and when WWII broke out he, like so many million other Americans, signed up to defend freedom. He joined the US Navy and saw lots of battle action in the Pacific. He came home, married, raised three children and retired after many years on the job. All-in-all it was a typical life for a man of his era. And like many of the Greatest Generation, he told his children very little of his time in the war. After his death my mother allowed me to read a

short history written by my dad. I took it upon myself to expand on his letter and to add to it aspects of his life I knew and things my mother related. At the conclusion of my data gathering I had a more definitive and yet incomplete picture of my dad's life. I did this for the benefit of his grandsons and for their progeny.

Some years ago I created a project for myself to gather as many stories as possible of Freemasons who were members or otherwise were associated with Biltmore Masonic Lodge. Some of the stories included are about Confederate spies, men associated with George Vanderbilt, archeologists, military doctors, an inventor of a major safety feature, a Normandy invasion soldier, a survivor of the Bataan Death March, a former member of the Canadian Mounties and other interesting stories. Many of these men, if asked, would say that their life was no more remarkable than the next man.

Sadly most of the biographies (if it can be called such) are nothing more than very short obituaries found online. Their stories state that the man was born, possibly attended college, worked a job, married and had several children, was a member of a church and groups like Masonry or the Elks and died. A lifetime boiled down to a few lines of text. That's it. In a hundred years if a descendant goes looking for a family history, this may be all



they find. We are but one generation away from obscurity.

I have written all of this to propose to you that your lifetime is worth more than a short paragraph on a funeral home web page. Your life to you may have been ordinary but it was your life and it is different than that of any other and is worth recording. I challenge you to take time to write something of your life so that you children's children will know something of you other than you were born and died.

Whether you write an autobiography or a memoir, take the time to write something and if you do so I would ask that you share it with me so that I can include it with my collection for future Biltmore Masons to read. Here is one of many web sites that will help you in that effort.

<https://www.scanyourentirelife.com/how-write-a-autobiography-vs-memoir-difference-life-story-secret-tips/>

2026 BILTMORE LODGE OFFICERS



| Office | Officer |
|-------------|----------------------|
| Master | Michael Oagus |
| Sr. Warden | Frank Bryson |
| Jr. Warden | Tony Rice |
| Treasurer | Michael Lawrence |
| Secretary | Larry Dotson, PM |
| Sr. Deacon | Eric Willis |
| Jr. Deacon | Jamie Bradley |
| Sr. Steward | David Anderson |
| Jr. Steward | Some old Past Master |
| Tyler | Howard Hazelrigg |
| Chaplain | Alex Hanks |

Forensic Science and a Freemason

Fingerprint classification was an essential development in forensic science. The ability to match fingerprints to an individual made police tasks and litigation procedures ten times easier. Sir Francis Galton invented this concept.

At the time, manual filing systems were used since the computers were yet to be developed.

Thanks to Galton's work, fingerprints can easily be used in identification processes. In 1892, he published the book 'FingerPrints' to explain his discovery. His concept was, however, modified by other scientists over the years.

Francis was very knowledgeable in different fields. In psychology, he developed the concept of psychometrics, also referred to as 'the science of measuring mental faculties.'

His work made it easier to test actual theoretical techniques in psychological

measurements. Galton also initiated some meteorological concepts, among other things.

Galton joined Freemason via the Scientific Lodge No. 88 held at the Red Lion Inn in Cambridgeshire UK.

His Masonic career can be primarily attributed to his family since his half-grandfather Erasmus Darwin was a Lunar Member and a known Freemason.

