

Sunday, August 13, 2000

Dear Brethren,

Here are some answers to questions posed concerning:

Anecdote No. 3

How many Worshipful Masters have presided over the lodge?

Question: Why is Worshipful Thomas Semmes listed with several consecutive terms of office, rather than with one continuous term? Was he elected specifically for these terms, in succession?

Answer: Please look carefully at how the Past Masters are listed. In the case of Thomas Semmes, you have him serving six different *periods* or ten total years---these are not consecutive. Between each of these periods you have another brother serving as Master. Let me write this out consecutively:

Semmes	December 1815 – December 1816
Deneale	December 1816 – December 1817
Semmes	December 1817 – December 1818
Semmes	December 1818 – December 1819
Semmes	December 1819 – December 1820
Snowden	December 1820 – December 1821
Semmes	December 1821 – December 1822
Williams	December 1822 – December 1823
Semmes	December 1823 – December 1824
Semmes	December 1824 – December 1825
Chapin	December 1825 – December 1826
Chapin	December 1826 – December 1827
Eaches	December 1827 – December 1828
Eaches	December 1828 – December 1829
Semmes	December 1829 – December 1830
Cloud	December 1830 – December 1831
Semmes	December 1831 – December 1832
Semmes	December 1832 – December 1833

Question: I would be interested in an exposition concerning the anti-Masonic years, as it affected Virginia Masonry in general, and our Lodge in particular. I presume that Worshipful James Irwin served for 6 years because of that dark period - am I mistaken?

Answer: The anti-Masonic period of the United States is generally accepted to have begun in 1826 with the disappearance of William Morgan lasting up to about 1840. This period therefore covered eight different administrations of our lodge. The frenzy was also erratic. Virginia and Delaware for example, were little affected, while Maryland and DC were hit very hard. I will be happy to write an article about this subject at a later date.

Question: I would be interested in learning more about the impact of the Civil War on our lodge, noting that WB Lambert, who went on to become Grand Master, served for that entire period.

Answer: This most interesting period in our lodge's history will be of course treated as time permits.

Question: During Reconstruction, it appears that it was the norm for Masters to serve for two years. Was this by election for that period, or by unwritten convention, or just a coincidence?

Answer: The term of office for an elected officer has always been twelve months as regulated by the grand lodge. Thus, if you see a Master holding office for two years, he was elected and installed and then re-installed. It is purely coincidental that there were several consecutive two-year periods. One might note that in Europe (especially in the Scottish Rite), it is common that a Master's term of office be two years, but again, this is not the case as relates to our lodge.

Question: I see that Worshipful William D. Stewart returned after 20 years to serve the lodge again as Master. This has me wondering about your numbering system. Would it make sense to refer to Wor. Stewart as both the 31st and the 42nd Master of AW22?

Answer: The Past Masters' Register is based on how many *different men* have served as Worshipful Master. Once a brother is installed in the *Oriental Chair*, he is declared with the title of Worshipful Master. This Masonic title remains with him for life, unless bestowed a higher responsibility by the grand lodge. Therefore, in the truest sense of the word, a brother can only be fully installed once---changing his Masonic title from "Brother" to Worshipful Brother". Those Past Masters that returned, or continued to serve as Worshipful Master, were re-installed to help the lodge in a situation where the Junior or Senior Warden was not ready to fulfill the office.

On the other hand, we could have enumerated the register year by year---from one to two hundred seventeen (based on the PA Warrant), but I believe this would confuse matters. In the case of William Dunlap Stewart, we must count him only once no matter how many years elapsed before he *AGAIN* served as Worshipful Master.

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