

On the Hour

March 2021, Issue 20

From The East



Brothers,

This is a preview of a paper that will be presented to the Northern California Research Lodge by me on Tuesday, March 16. This paper is entitled, “Did Freemasonry Bring Light to Higher Education in California?” This is just the first installment of a three part article to appear in the next several issues of this Trestleboard. You are invited to attend that Research Lodge meeting and a link will be posted at the next Petaluma-Hamilton Lodge #180 stated meeting.

In 2019, I was in a room in the basement of 1111 California Street reviewing some historical artifacts with some research associates from the Northern California Research Lodge when the subject came up of the absence of any current Freemasons lodge in Berkeley. While the fact that the last Freemasons had left Berkeley and the downtown lodge building sold around 1970 did not come as a complete surprise, it was quite ironic and perhaps a sign of the times. The decline of Freemasonry in Berkeley seems to have occurred at the exact same time that free public higher education was ceasing to exist in Berkeley and in California. Perhaps this was a coincident or perhaps it can be seen as a seed for understanding how free, post-secondary education can rejuvenate California and the world in the 21st century.

Consider three periods in the development of free higher education in California: its rise from about 1870 to 1920, its zenith from 1920 to 1970, and its decline from 1970 to 2020 in order to understand the benefit for every resident of the state of California. The decline could best be laid at the doorstep of anti-free education elements who gained and lost ascendancy in state government after Pat Brown was governor

After reviewing these three periods, we can ask the question what about the next 50 years of California education. What should it look like? Should education after high school be free, what is the best way to fund higher education and what did the founders intend? Will there be a resurrection of free higher education? What of other post secondary education, such as trade schools and online certification programs? Is online education better for some students? Is hands-on, in-person education of more interest to others? Shouldn't this training also be free?

The First Fifty Years.

“The University of California began on March 23, 1868, when California Gov. Henry Haight signed the Organic Act, setting in motion the audacious idea that California should have a great public university — one that would serve equally the children of immigrants and settlers, landowners and industrial barons” according to the University of California.1

From The South



Brothers,

Our Lodge has changed since its 1855 founding, and change continues. In January, it was my honor to become a pillar officer of the Lodge. The first new one in a while. It was with some trepidation that I received this honor, having had the pleasure these past few months to have met with Past Masters, listen to their experiences, advice and thus expand my knowledge.

How impressive it is as well that the Grand Lodge programs allow us to absorb knowledge of academics and researchers from the world over and to participate in presentations on masonic topics by many experts. And how warm it is for many brothers to enrich their minds by reading articles and books where authors communicate their viewpoints and interpretations on masonic philosophy, history, and ideas that may well shape Freemasonry.

Acquiring knowledge, thinking clearly without bias and being willing to make changes when needed are keys to our future. It takes commitment to be better.

Our lodge is more than a historical building with relics where we might just meet for social activities. It is where we meet to discuss and decide

From the East Continued

We also learn from the same source, that “UC opened its doors a year later, with 40 students and 10 faculty members. In keeping with its egalitarian ideals, UC Regents in 1870 decreed that women would be admitted on the same basis as men — a step many Ivy League colleges did not take for nearly a century.”²

California’s constitution of 1849 before it was even a state, called upon the legislature to establish a university. “Members of the very first state legislature had a picture of what this university could become: It would be the Great Light of the Pacific, diffusing its glorious radiance along the shores of Western America...”³ However, due to lack of funding, land, and other resources for attracting faculty not much became of this grand vision.⁴ In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed into law the Morrill Act which would “provide states with the funding to create institutions that would educate people from all walks of life and promote research on the cutting-edge of technology — at that time agriculture and the mechanical arts...”⁵ The intent of the Morrill Act was the creation of state-run universities that would educate the wealthy and low-income alike.⁶

About this time in California the state was filling up with men who saw the value of education. According to the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of California: “Masonry has been an integral part of California for more than 150 years. During the Gold Rush of 1849, thousands of settlers came to California in search of fortune. Many of these men were Masons and

brought with them Masonic values and traditions. Not surprisingly, some of California’s first Masonic lodges were established in the mining towns of the Gold Country. In 1850 - the same year that California became a state - the Grand Lodge of California was established in Sacramento.”

“Within 10 years, the number of Masonic lodges in the new state had grown from 11 to 130, while membership soared from 258 to more than 5,000. Over the years, the Masons have played a key role in shaping the history of California. To date, 19 California governors have been Masons, and at least four California Masons have been elected to the U.S. Senate. Today there are more than 50,000 members and about 330 lodges, making the Grand Lodge of California one of the largest in the world.”⁷

The total population of California in 1860 was 380 thousand.⁸ While Masons were not an overwhelming percentage of the adult male population, there were many that played a prominent position of leadership in the state of California. In 1862, John Swett was elected California superintendent of public instruction. Swett was a Mason and had been a San Francisco school principal. He was able to get support for school taxes, and provided for textbooks for California public schools. He is now referred to as the “father of the California public school system.”⁹

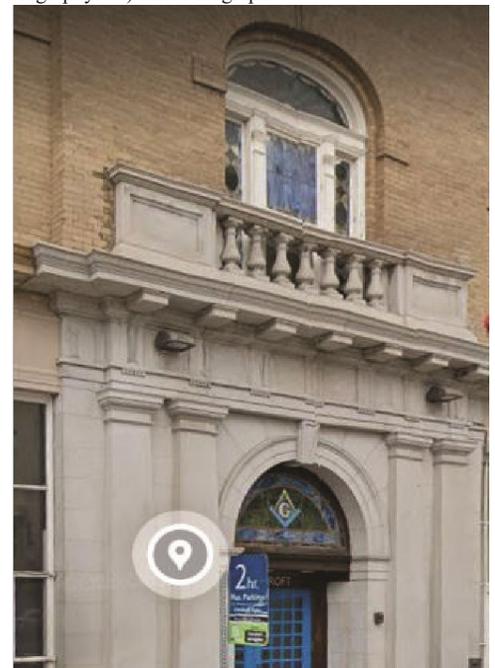
Importantly he made the California school system free for all students. He reported in 1867, “The school year

ending June 30, 1867, marks the transition period of California from rate-bill common schools to an American free school system. For the first time in the history of the State, every public school was made entirely free for every child to enter”¹⁰

In next Month’s article – 100 years of support for public education by California Freemasons and their lodges. For more on these historical issues you may want to review the following sources.

Fraternally,
Don Nicodemus, Worshipful Master,
Petaluma-Hamilton Lodge #180

- 1) <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/university-california-born>, “The University of California is born: How a world class university got its start 150 years ago.” Paragraph 2.
- 2) Ibid. Paragraph 3. 3) Ibid. Paragraph 8. 4) Ibid. Paragraph 9. 5) Ibid. Paragraph 10. 6) Ibid. Paragraph 12.
- 7) <https://freemason.org/discover-masonry/history/>, The Origins of Freemasonry / Masonry in California.” Paragraphs 3 & 4.
- 8) <http://explore.museumca.org/goldrush/curriculum/1stcalifornians/resourcesix.htm>
- 9) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Swett, John Swett: Biography. 10) Ibid. Paragraph 5



2105 Bancroft Way (at the corner of Shattuck Ave), Berkeley, California is pictured above as shown on Google Maps, a former Masonic lodge -- closed in 1969 and the building sold.

Lodge Contact Info:

<http://freemason.org> (CA Grand Lodge) ~ <http://masons180.org> (Pet.-Ham.#180 website)
Lodge Phone Number 707-762-6513, For Reservations call 707-762-4171
Secretary, Guy Chalmers: 707-477-3046 E-Mail: JMC329@aol.com

From the South Continued

on operational maintenance needs, to initiate new members and care for the well-being of our community and our assembly. With the impetus of the pandemic, our physical Lodge is now complemented by virtual gatherings whose ultimate purpose is simple: exchange and evaluate ideas, teach when the opportunity presents itself, learn, adapt, and progressively become better men. He who does not learn is he who stays behind.

Our Worshipful Master's theme this year is "2021: Self Improvement Through Ritual Practice". It certainly is worth it to become better, shape and improve our imperfect minds, and reinforce our knowledge of rituals to impart them effectively to new brothers.

Are we a society that is falling into obscurity? It might perhaps seem so as when I expressed to friends that I was going to apply to become a Mason, they said they did not know there were Masons in Petaluma. Do people even know we are here? Maybe, maybe not. That should change. Rare are newspaper notices about us. Are we disappearing? I do NOT think so and we do need to work at it.

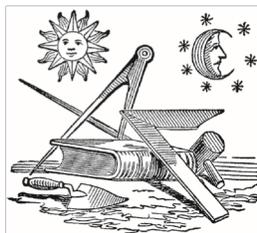
2 B 1 Ask 1: you will see that we are not forever stuck in the past. Our lodge is evolving, gradually and inexorably. Why? A few reasons quickly come to mind, among which: 1) because the pandemic has caused and continues to bring fear, upheaval and is forcing change in every one's daily life, 2) because owing in part to Shelter-In-Place orders, we have gained some time to look inward and realize the need to better educate ourselves on what it means to be a Mason, live as a Mason, and encourage our families, peers and those who come after us

after us to "walk the walk and talk the talk"; 3) because, "noblesse oblige," we are sentient beings and so we should try to think like homo sapiens are supposed to and not let our minds be in perpetual idleness; and 4) because most of us, regardless of our age, still want to improve our world, our country and ourselves.

Is it so hard to talk, rationalize our thoughts and reason out our differences and actions without the all-to-often pernicious yet powerful effects of emotions and passions? Freemasonry teaches us to sensibly control our nefarious tendencies so we may categorically reject the incredibly destructive political discourse of recent years. Whichever political side you are, know that we are better than that. Instead, let us agreeably challenge each other in disagreements and do so intelligently, by engaging others in discussions where prevail truth, justice, charity, equality and friendship towards all and malice to none. Let us all challenge ourselves to become better men, better human beings. It sometimes takes courage to challenge the status quo because often we are afraid "to rock the boat". In my humble view, the courage to bring about change by consensus and for the better is or should be a hallmark of Freemasonry.

No wonder the humble plumb is so important. Yes, I am honored to have become one of the pillar officers of our Lodge.

Eugene Jeanne



Happy Birthday

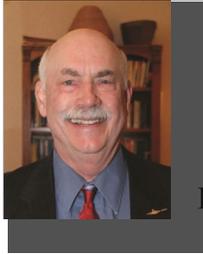
- Robert Taylor February 4th
- John Gause III February 12th
- Martin McKeay February 12th
- Richard Warren February 17th
- Don Nicodemus March 2nd
- Lawrence Runstrom March 3rd
- Vern Dorethy March 4th
- William Padgett March 4th
- David Letasi March 5th
- Michael Marham March 6th
- Guy Chalmers March 8th
- Alexander Saslow March 14th
- Michael Sullivan March 16th
- Jeffery Lister March 19th
- James Warnken March 29th



 **Masonic Homes
of California**

Need Help or Assistance ?
Contact Masonic Assistance
visit: www.masonichome.org
email: intake@mhcuc.org
or call: 888/466-3642.

Hall Association



Brethren:

I hope that you and yours are safe and healthy and enjoyed the holiday season as best as could be done under the current situation we are all living in. This past year has been a challenge for all of us and we hope and pray this pandemic is resolved this year. I want to thank the brethren for electing me to another 3-three year term as a director of the Hall Association. The other board members for 2021 are: Steve Christiansen, Richard Fonseca, Eugene Jeanne, Angus Mac Lir, John Monahan, and David Sonnenberg. Don Nicodemus and Woody Purdy will be serving as ex-officio directors.

I look forward to again serving with these fine men and working together to maintain and ready the building for its eventual reopening once the Grand Master gives us the go ahead.

Working closely with the lodge and its officers the association ended 2020 in good financial shape and feel confident we will end 2021 the same. There will again be challenges, but I am confident your directors will focus on taking the necessary actions that will result in keeping our building in tip top shape both structurally and financially. All of us are looking forward to when we can again meet in person in our building. Until then Zoom meetings are the “new norm”.

Fraternally,
George Whitten
President PMHA



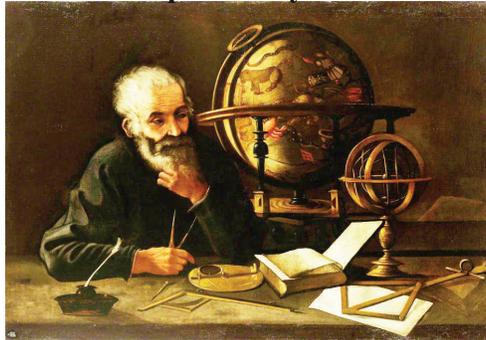
Save The Date

Join us April 15th, 2021 on Zoom

101 Years of Masonry and Public Education.

Join us as we discuss
the Past, Present and Future of
Freemasonry and Public Education

We Hope to see you there!



From The Editor



Brothers,

As we enter into a new digital era of freemasonry I encourage you to check out the new imember2.0.

Grand Lodge is working to add many new beneficial features to help us stay connected. Visit member.freemason.org to view our lodge feed where we can share upcoming events or your thoughts.

While you're there make sure to update your contact information located under “My Profile” so that we can keep all lines of communication open and flowing. There are now notification preferences so that leaders of our lodge can better understand how best to reach you.

One of the new features that has me excited is the text feature. This feature

allows leaders of the lodge to communicate via mass text with our members. This feature can be very useful on multiple levels from reminders of upcoming events to important updates that affect our Lodge and our communities.

Additionally the File Vault has been updated and has a majority of our lodge's Trestleboards from the past few years.



March Stated Meeting



Join us for our March Stated Meeting.

Thursday March 4th , 2021 at 7:30 pm

We will have a half hour for social interaction and start the Meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://nUSD-org.zoom.us/j/81066112450?pwd=Z1ZHRGU4QzIyUjZ6NzIvbnZlWkZBSZz09>

Dial by your location +1 669 900 9128
US (San Jose) 1 888 788 0099 US
Toll-free Meeting ID: 810 6611 2450
Passcode: 650685

Find your local number:
<https://nUSDorg.zoom.us/u/kcryTAHjr9>



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Petaluma, Ca 94953-0727

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Dated material-do not hold

March 2021

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1  Royal Arch #22 Virtual Meeting	2	3 Hall Association (virtual)	4  Virtual Meeting	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 Virtual Education Night	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			