



HENRY KNOX FIELD JOHN BLAIR LODGE

NO. 349 - A.F. & A.M. - VIRGINIA

JULY 2018

TRESTLEBOARD

MASONIC DISTRICTS 1A & 54 JOINT PICNIC

June 30, Noon

Elmer Timberman Lodge, No. 54

6911 Columbia Pike, Annandale

All of the sitting Worshipful Masters have agreed to face the dunking machine to raise money for the Masonic Home (bring cash).

STATED COMMUNICATION

July 10, 2018

Independence Day (casual attire)

Fellowship Dinner 6:30 p.m.

Stated Meeting 7:30 p.m.

Lodge Breakfast

July 14, 2018, 9:00 a.m.

All are welcome!

LaCasa Restaurant

4551 Duke Street, Alexandria

Lodge Ritual School: MM Degree

July 17, 2018, 6:30 p.m.

Alexandria Scottish Rite

Work in the Degrees:

Master Mason's Degree

July 21, 2018, 8:00 a.m.

Alexandria Scottish Rite

Lodge Fellowship Dinner

July 31, 2018, 6:30 p.m.

All are welcome!

Alexandria Scottish Rite



A MESSAGED FROM THE EAST

Brethren—

June was jam packed. I hope that you were able to join us for one of our many events and meetings! I somehow feel like I should apologize for the busy schedule, but I am simultaneously excited to be part of such an active, engaged, and vibrant lodge.

Degree work remains a wonderful constant. We will only have one Degree conferring meeting in July, but it will be a big one. We will raise five men to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason. What is most exciting is that our lodge, for the first time in many years, has enough resources to field its own Master Mason's Degree Team. With it being summer, folks on travel, etc., we may still be calling on our friends from other lodges, but this is still important news! However, the work does not end—we always need more catechism coaches and ritualists to keep the lodge in good stead.

June was a month for celebrating. Thank you to those that were able to join us for the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria's Annual Awards Ceremony (see page 10). In addition to celebrating our scholars, the lodge is also thankful to Mrs. Christina King (Wor. Brian's wife) for sitting on the selection board at SFA. The St. John the Baptist Table Lodge at the Stated Communication was very successful and the food was delicious! It was fantastic to have Rt. Wor. Ron Morris come up from Southwest Virginia and provide a program at his mother lodge. Grand Master Gary Wallace Taylor's Official Visit to Districts 1A, 1B, & 54 was an enjoyable evening. He challenged us all to assist in introducing one new man each to Masonry this year. (And, since it isn't yet 6/30) Don't miss the Districts 1A, 54, and Elmer Timberman Lodge picnic at ETL on June 30—the event is family friendly and an exciting way to celebrate our coming district merger.

As we are very nearly finished with the consolidation process, I want to thank all of you who have contributed time and talent. Especially to Rt. Wor. Mike Aulicino and Wor. Ken Reynolds as they complete their terms as transition trustees. We will now rely on these two to keep our money straight as Treasurer and Asst. Treasurer respectively. The last piece of the puzzle is cleaning out the storage closet—to this end, I have put together a request for proposals for document scanning (moving us to a digital archive). If you have a company or the personal ability to scan, please reach out and let's see what we can do.

Our July Stated Communication will be casual attire to celebrate summer. Please come ready to eat burgers and dogs. Our Stated program will have a patriotic theme for Independence Day.

Sincerely & Fraternaly,



Message from the Master, p. 2; Officer Contact Information, p. 11;
Articles relating Gilgamesh, p. 3; July Enlightenment, p. 8

JULY DISCUSSION

Our Senior Warden's fascinating article last month on storytelling and the role of stories in our society reminded me that I had never read the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. This 4,000 year old story is the first to be preserved and passed down through human existence. Interestingly, the story line has been compared to the Masonic journey. I have included two interesting perspective here, and for a quick refresher of the Gilgamesh story, visit www.mythpodcast.com (episodes 54 A-C).

Hiram Abiff, Noah, and Gilgamesh. Mythology "Repurposed"

By Bro. Tavitt Smith (Dec. 2005)

As a young college student, I was fortunate enough to spend a semester studying in Puebla, Mexico, at the University Of The Americas. I lived nearby in a small village called San Andres, which sat at the base of a mountain that had been excavated to reveal a buried pyramid, the great Cholula Pyramid. According to an online article, this "temple-pyramid complex was built... starting from the 3rd century BCE through the 9th century CE," and "is, in fact, the largest pyramid...ever constructed anywhere in the world."^[1]

Sitting atop of the yet unexcavated part of this temple sits the *Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de los Remedios* (Church of Our Lady of the Remedies), which was built by Spanish Missionaries in 1594. When I asked a professor at the University why the church was built upon a pyramid, I was told that the Catholic Church simply built where the people were already coming to worship – that it was an easy way to convert the indigenous population to a new and unfamiliar religion. I later learned that this is called "repurposing" a religious site.

Since then, I have learned that the idea of "repurposing" is not only done with religious sites, but also with religious myths. A general example of this would be the several myths, which have been passed along from the Babylonians to the Egyptians to the Jews, and finally to the Christians. Interestingly enough, a more specific example of repurposing can be found in the stories that form the basis of one of our own Freemasonry rituals.

Many brothers may be surprised to learn that the Hiram Abiff legend was not always a part of Masonic lore. Prior to 1730, our masonic brothers were taught that "the secret word" that they sought was buried with the Old Testament biblical character, Noah.^[2] According to the story, Noah's sons were in search of the "word" that they believed God had given to Noah so that he might start a new civilization after the flood. After a failed attempt by his sons to raise him from his grave, a substitute word was chosen. The secret was never revealed, and remained lost.

While there are minor differences between the Hiram Abiff story and the earlier story of Noah and his sons, the general outline remains the same – a great builder is in possession of a word (or words), which will allow the building to continue. However, the word(s) are lost, and mankind continues to this day to search.

Let us now jump ahead to 1844 when a British researcher, named Austen Henry Layard was traveling in Northern Iraq around the town of Mosul. Excavating the ruined palaces of Nineveh, the ancient capital of Assyria, he discovered of a hoard of stone tablets inscribed with cuneiform script. At the



time, it was considered to be an interesting, but minor find. ^[1] These tablets remained un-deciphered until 1872 when a young British museum curator named George Smith translated the Akkadian writing. Reportedly, when he deciphered one particular section of the tablets, he became so excited that he tore off his clothes and began running around the laboratory. You see, the tablet he deciphered, which had been written more than three thousand years ago, told the story of a Babylonian "Noah" who survived a great flood. The similarities between what was written on the stone tablets and the Old Testament flood story were remarkable.

This three thousand year old story is about a man/god named Gilgamesh who sets off on a journey with a man, named Enkidu (formed out of dust by the god, Aruru) to

do battle with a great monster. During the journey Enkidu dies and Gilgamesh, having never known death, is filled with fear and grief, lamenting:

"Must I die too? Must I be as lifeless as Enkidu? How can I bear this sorrow that gnaws at my belly, this fear of death that drives me onward? If only I could find the one man whom the gods made immortal, I would ask him how to overcome death."^[3]

Here then, in one of the earliest written stories that civilization has yet uncovered, we find man's first search for the secret of everlasting life – immortality. Over three thousand years ago, man's greatest fear was written in stone.

Could the story of Gilgamesh have been "repurposed"? Is the story of Hiram Abiff's assailants, and Noah's sons search for the secret word actually a "repurposing" of Gilgamesh's search for everlasting life? Is the search for the lost word(s) – so that we may continue to build the temple – an allegorical story of man's search to find the one thing that will allow us to continue to build our own allegorical temples – our lives?

In all three stories the content centers on a search – a search for the greatest of secrets. In the Hiram Abiff story, Hiram is a supervisor of build-

ers, Noah is the builder of the ark, and Gilgamesh is ruler of a city that he describes by saying

"See how its ramparts gleam like copper in the sun. Climb the stone staircase, more ancient than the mind can imagine ... walk on the wall of Uruk... inspect it's mighty foundations, examine its brick-work, how masterfully it is built..."^[4]

Continuing with the Gilgamesh epic, we learn that Gilgamesh eventually meets with Utnapishtim, the Babylonian "Noah" who survived the great flood, and asks him to intervene on his behalf and ask the gods to grant him eternal life. Utnapishtim refuses, but tells Gilgamesh where to find a magical plant that will give him everlasting life. Gilgamesh finds the plant only to later lose it to a snake. In the Gilgamesh story, we are not told what this magical plant is. Could it have been from the acacia plant? If not, it certainly, at least symbolically, shares the same traits, as it is the antidote to death.

In masonic lore, the acacia plant is the symbol of everlasting life.^[5] It is the sprig of acacia that marks the grave of Hiram Abiff, and the sprig which the three searchers find when they search for him. As an aside, it is interesting to consider the following question: Did they mistakenly miss the true object of their search (for the secret to everlasting life), and instead look for the secret in the decomposing body of their master? Is the hidden message that the secret to everlasting life not to be found in material or transient things?

Finally, in the Noah legend, while aboard the ark, we are told that Noah sends a dove out to search for signs of life. The dove returns after the seventh day with an olive branch in its beak. And although the olive branch is usually considered a symbol of peace, doesn't it make more sense that it actually represents what Noah was searching for, the "continuance of life," much as the acacia sprig?

In all three stories, Hiram Abiff, Noah, and Gilgamesh, there is a search for the ultimate secret. In all three stories, the secret remains forever lost, and forever sought. Most importantly, in each of the three legends we are reminded that God (or in the case of Gilgamesh, gods) holds the ultimate answer. In the end, we find ourselves frail and painfully human, forever seeking solace from the ultimate question in life: our own demise.

Are the legends similar enough in traits to merit consideration? Were the stories of Hiram Abiff and Noah "repurposed" from one of mans' earliest recorded stories? Is there an answer to mans' ultimate question? Perhaps it depends upon the searcher to discover that answer for himself. Perhaps it should be sought in the allegorical and symbolical stories of our brotherly fraternity.

^[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Pyramid_of_Cholula (December 5, 2010)

^[2] See: http://www.masonicsites.org/Graham_Ms.htm for a discussion of the Graham Manuscript (1726).

^[3] Gilgamesh, by Stephen Mitchell, Free Press, NY, ©2004.

^[4] Ibid.

^[5] http://www.masonicworld.com/education/files/artoct02/sprig_of_acacia.htm

^[i] In my opinion, the best and most complete translation of the tale of Gilgamesh can be found in the book "Gilgamesh" by Stephen Mitchell, Free Press, NY, ©2004. Mitchell tells the tale twice, once with full commentary and background. For additional reading, read "The Buried Book," by David Damrosch, Henry Holt & Company, © 2006.

The Journey of the Initiate

by Michael Baigent (APR 2009), from *Freemasonry Today*

Freemasonry is a journey of initiation. But what inspires anyone to seek initiation? The answer is put by the Sufi poet, Rumi: "Jars of spring-water are not enough anymore. Take us down to the river." And we must swim in this river. To be initiated, we need to be part of the process itself. Initiatory ritual needs our involvement. The ancients knew this path very well, Seneca wrote of "...initiatory rites, by means of which are revealed, not the mysteries of a municipal temple, but of the world itself, the vast temple of all the gods."¹

Initiation involves an encounter with the sacred. And here we touch upon something which is integral with our very humanness. Deliberate burials of early Homo sapiens, date to 120,000 years ago. From around 70,000 years ago, Neanderthal burials are found. This practice existed across species and across cultures and remained consistent from that time on. Furthermore, a number of the Neanderthal graves reveal ritualistic associations. Such a respect for the dead indicates that ancient peoples knew of the simultaneous existence of two worlds; that physical world of existence where we are born and die; and that non-physical world into which death leads us.

Thousands of years later, writing developed. By the third millennium BC, a complex language had evolved. And with this new means of expression, what stories were told of humanity and its destiny? That of Gilgamesh who travelled from this world into the next. Gilgamesh was a king of ancient Uruk. Grippled by a fear of death, he wished to find the secret of eternal life. He abandoned his throne and began a life of wandering, seeking entrance into the other world, in order, he said, to "Let my eyes see the sun and be sated with light".² Entering this world, he journeyed through the vast regions of darkness to the garden of light. But, by failing to stay awake, he was not granted immortality and was required to return to this world. He had the vision, but afterwards had to return to his earthly task until death should finally call him. Gilgamesh was, by any definition, an initiate.

Initiation is the entrance into direct knowledge of that eternal other world, one suffused by omnipresent Divinity, perceived, to this very day, in the form of an endless clear and living light. Research argues the existence of a "common core" to religious experiences which cuts across the differences of faith and culture. Numerous Christians, Muslims, and Jews have all described having religious experiences of "intense light and a sense of encompassing love." The researchers suggest that humans "share a common spirituality regardless of religious affiliations."

We are not here speaking symbolically. The Divine world exists, however much we may be forced by the limitations of language to express it symbolically. Furthermore, it is possible for us to cross over to this other world, to glimpse – like Gilgamesh - its splendour, before returning to our allotted tasks. This is initiation – standing for a moment, on the threshold of this eternal world. It can never go away; it can only be forgotten, the maps to its entrance mislaid. And here lies the importance of ritual: for part of the process involves being reminded where that door is and what lies beyond.

Initiation takes place in the eternal here and now; it is a spiritual transformation aided by ritual which raises one's consciousness so that profound,



rather than mundane, events might be given the chance to occur. But first the foundations of personality and social conditioning must be shaken, even shattered, for the candidate must move beyond the safety and comfort of his ordinary world. For this, he must have courage. This knowledge can be found embedded in our rituals: it is this upon which Freemasonry is built, the journey towards knowledge of the Divine world. And along the way, we learn our responsibilities to this world.

At the very beginning of the First Degree ceremony, the candidate for initiation is blindfolded, put into a state of darkness, symbolising the unenlightened state of man. A masonic ritual from 1751 explains that the blindfold and the subsequent perambulation around the Lodge is to remind the candidate, "that a man, who is in darkness, should advance towards the light and seek it."³ The candidate is led, blindfolded, to the east, where, upon a sacred book, he takes his obligation. Only then is he restored to light. With this, he comes to the end of his first journey in Freemasonry; yet, it immediately proves to be the beginning of another. And this is the way of Freemasonry. Each apparent ending stands one upon the threshold of another journey.

Ritual is at the heart of Freemasonry, a sharing in the timeless; its unchanging form helps free it from mundane time. There are moments when a stillness and a silence precipitates out of the words and the movement. And, sitting in the lodge, one is aware of the soft embrace of the eternal.

Freemasonry will always remain a journey: from ignorance to knowledge; from selfishness to compassion and charity. When we enter masonry, with our first words to the Master of the lodge, we attest to our freedom. It is that freedom which allows us to move ahead on our own journey from darkness to light; from sipping at the jars of spring-water to drinking from the great river itself.

¹ *Epistulae Morales*, xc, 29.

² *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, A George, London, 1999, p.71.

³ *Le Maçon Dêmasqué*, in *The Early French Exposures*, H. Carr, London, 1971, p.427.

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

The Worshipful Master and Brethren of Henry Knox Field—John Blair Lodge, No. 349, participated in the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria's (SFA) Annual Awards Ceremony on the evening of June 6. The recipient of the Walter Scott Downs Memorial Scholarship, Mr. Bryce Cook, will attend the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University where he will be a Cadet in the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps. Bryce hopes to someday be a fighter pilot for the United States Air Force. The recipient of the Henry Knox Field Memorial Scholarship, Miss Tsedal Tshome, will attend American University and will study International Business. Tsedal wants to work on establishing businesses in developing countries. The 2018 student recipients show great potential for the future. Both recipients are outstanding representatives of the Alexandria community.



Pictured (L to R): Wor. Brian Mitchell King, PM; Mr. Bryce Cook; Bro. Mark Allen Boughner; Wor. Daniel E. Froggett; Wor. Kenneth Rhames Reynolds; Miss Tsedal Tshome; and Rt. Wor. Michael Robert Aulicino.

MASONRY TUESDAYS

Erect temples to virtue & dig dungeons for vices.

Regular Masonic gatherings are the lifeblood of strong lodges. Henry Knox Field—John Blair Lodge will host Tuesday night ritual schools all year (check Trestleboard for changes). Each brother should make Tuesday evenings a priority for Masonic Work. Get in the habit.

UPDATE YOUR EMAIL

The Trestleboard will be sent via email and posted on the website ONLY. Please send your updated email to fieldblairlodge349@gmail.com. To continue to receive hardcopy, please call/mail a note to the Wor. Master.

JULY ENLIGHTENMENT

This monthly section will explore aspects of the Craft for further thought and consideration. If there is a topic that you would like to share with the brethren in this section, please email it in a Word document to Wor. Froggett.

SUN, MOON AND STARS

From **SHORT TALK BULLETIN** - Vol.VIII **March, 1930** No.3

In these modern days it is difficult to visualize the vital importance of the heavens generally, to early man. We can hardly conceive of their terror of the eclipse and the comet, or sense their veneration for the Sun and his bride, the Moon. We are too well educated. We know too much about "the proportions which connect this vast machine." The astronomer has pushed back the frontiers of his science beyond the inquiries of most of us; the questions which occur as a result of unaided visual observations have all been answered. We have substituted facts for fancies regarding the sun, the moon, the solar system, the comet, and the eclipse. Albert Pike, the great Masonic student "who found Masonry in a hovel and left her in a palace" says:

"We cannot, even in the remotest degree, feel, though we may partially and imperfectly imagine, how those great, primitive, simple-hearted children of Nature, felt in regard to the Starry Hosts, there upon the slopes of the Himalayas, on the Chaldean plains, in the Persian and Median deserts, and upon the banks of the great, strange River, the Nile. To them the universe was alive - instinct with forces and powers, mysterious and beyond their comprehension."

Pythagoras knew the earth to be a ball. The ecliptic was known before Solomon's Temple was built. The Chinese predicted eclipses long, long before the Europeans of the middle age quit regarding them as portents of doom! Astronomical lore of Freemasonry is very old. The foundations of our degrees are far more ancient than we can prove by documentary evidence. It is surely not stretching credulity to believe that the study which antedates "Geometry, the first and noblest of sciences," must have been impressed on our Order, its ceremonies and its symbols, long before Preston and Webb worked their ingenious revolutions in our rituals and gave us the system of degrees we use - in one form or another - today.

Measures of time are wholly a matter of astronomy. Days and nights were before man, and consequently before astronomy, but hours and minutes, high twelve and low twelve, are inventions of the mind, depending upon the astronomical observation of the Sun at Meridian to determine noon, and consequently all other periods of time. Indeed, we are taught this in the Middle Chamber work, in which we give to Geometry the premier place as a means by which the astronomer may "fix the duration of time and seasons, years and cycles."

The "world celestial and terrestrial" on the brazen pillars were added by modern ritual makers. Solomon knew them not, but contemporaries of Solomon believed the heavens to be a sphere revolving around the



Allegory of Astronomy

1650 Laurent de La Hyre (French, Paris 1606–1656 Paris) oil on canvas
Musées des Beaux-Arts, Orléans, France

earth. It is to be noted that terrestrial and celestial spheres are both used as emblems of universality. They are not mere duplications for emphasis; they teach their own individual part of "universality." Real universality appertains to the whole universe. While a Mason's charity, considered as giving relief to the poor and distressed, must obviously be confined to this particular planet, his charity of thought may, so we are taught, extend "through the boundless realms of eternity." Hence "the world terrestrial" and "the world celestial" on our representations of the pillars, in denoting universality mean that the principles of our Order are not founded upon mere earthly conditions and transient truths, but rest upon Divine and limitless foundations, coexistent with the whole cosmos and its creator.

We are taught of the "All Seeing Eye whom the Sun, Moon and Stars obey and under whose watchful care even comets perform their stupendous revolutions." In this astronomical reference is, oddly enough, a potent argument, both for the extreme care in the transmission of ritual unchanged from mouth to ear, and the urgent necessity of curbing well-intentioned brethren who wish to "improve" the ritual.

In the early days of Masonry, both in England and in this country, many if not most lodges, met on dates fixed in advance, but according to the time when the moon was full; not because the moon "Governed" the night, but because it illuminated the traveler's path! In days when roads were but muddy paths between town and hamlet, when any journey was hazardous and on black nights dangerous in the extreme, the natural illumination of the moon, making the road easy to find and the depredations of highwaymen the more difficult, was a matter of some moment!



2018 OFFICERS

- Daniel E. Froggett, Worshipful Master
- Erik N. Schultz, Senior Warden
- Timothy J. Fisher, Junior Warden
- Rt. Wor. Michael R. Aulicino, PDDGM
- Wor. Patrick A. Wood, Secretary
- Wor. Kenneth R. Reynolds, Asst. Treas.
- Clayton J. Mitchell, Senior Deacon
- Mark A. Boughner, Junior Deacon
- Ronald E. Markiewicz, Chaplain
- James F. Cordes, Senior Steward
- Eric F. Kephart, Junior Steward
- Edward R. Wilcox, Marshal
- F. Paul Norris, Musician
- Wor. Brian M. King, Tiler
- Wor. Jaime H. Flores



LODGE HISTORY

Henry Knox Field Lodge, No. 349, A.F. & A. M., was chartered in the Town of Potomac, Virginia, on February 12, 1925. It was named in honor of Henry Knox Field, a local businessman and community leader from Alexandria, Virginia, who served as Grand Master of Masons in Virginia, in 1917. Most Worshipful Field was raised to the degree of Master Mason on February 20, 1890, at Andrew Jackson Lodge, No. 120, A.F. & A.M. On June 24, 1893, he was installed Worshipful Master of that Lodge. Most Worshipful Field was born on April 20, 1860 and passed away on August 1, 1917, while serving as Grand Master.

John Blair Lodge No. 187, A.F. & A.M., was instituted on July 31, 1970, and chartered at Henry Knox Field Lodge No. 349 on February 10, 1971. The lodge was named in honor of Virginia's first Grand Master and inaugural United States Supreme Court Justice John Blair, Jr. Jewels, aprons, the bible, and tiler's sword were given by Worshipful Raymond L. Colins. The speakers podium for the Lodge was constructed and donated by Right Worshipful Clarence A. Dains. The brazen pillars were constructed and donated by the Charter Treasurer, John Newton Crawford, and the altar cover was later donated by Most Worshipful Werner Herman Morlock, Grand Master of Masons in Virginia in 1993, who died in office on Saturday, March 5, 1994.

The lodges initiated the consolidation process in February 2017, with the Resolution on Consolidation being adopted in June of the same year. Henry Knox Field—John Blair Lodge, No. 349, A.F. & A.M., officially began work January 1, 2018.

HENRY KNOX FIELD—JOHN BLAIR LODGE, No. 349, AF&AM
 1430 WEST BRADDOCK ROAD
 ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22302
 WWW.JBL187.ORG
 Stated Communication:
 Second Tuesday 7:30 p.m., Fellowship Dinner 6:30 p.m.