

Grand Chapter State of New York

Royal Arch Masons

Mark Master Degree Introduction Lecture



My Brother:

The Degree of Mark Master Mason which you will receive tonight is a most important one, so much so that England and some other countries confine it to the Jurisdictions of a separate Grand Body. In America, however, we give it to you as the introductory degree of the Capitular Rite.

You will recall that at the building of King Solomon's Temple, there were 3300 Masters or Overseers of the Work. In this degree the setting reverts to the quarries where skilled Fellowcrafts present their work for approval of the Overseers so that each stone may fit with that exact nicety previously described.

Each Fellowcraft was required to select for himself a distinctive mark. This mark chiseled on each stone was as complete identification as the written signature of today. A mark was held by the possessor in the same honor as his good name. It was frequently handed down from father to son and was in practical use in the building of Cathedrals and public buildings down to the Feudal Ages in Europe. You will learn this evening it was also an acceptable pledge of credit in emergency. This mark, with a copy displayed when receiving wages, contributed much to that freedom from discord and confusion which prevailed among the workmen at the Temple.

The wages of a Fellowcraft were Corn, Wine, and Oil, as preferred, but history records the wages were mostly grain. The term "Penny a Day" used in this degree refers to a stated wage and in no way associated with the small coin known today.

In previous degrees you were in darkness and were directed by a guide. Here you are at work in the open quarries, and after due instruction, you proceed alone with your specimen of work to the Overseers. You then call for your wages the same as the other workmen. You become skilled in forming a perfect ashlar used in wall construction. But, what of the stones that form the arch which you have not been taught as yet to frame? This lesson you will meet tonight, bearing in mind that the Temple you are building, is your own Temple. The Temple of your present life, in which every stone is a good act or constructive deed and each bearing the mark of your own good name.

Enjoy the degree!

Produced by the Masonic Education Committee
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Special thanks to: E.: Alan Troland