

## TENNESSEE SUPPLEMENT

Robert B. Beam, P.C., Editor  
200 Tower Drive  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37912  
beamerkt@yahoo.com



Clarence Loyd Crump  
Grand Commander

### REMEMBER TO SUPPORT OUR PHILANTHROPIES

The past several months have been difficult for all of us. However, imagine the difficulty of a child who suffers from vision problems. The beauty of nature that has been a source of hope and comfort for many of us during these past several months might not be available to such a child. The virtual learning that many children are participating in might actually be a barrier to learning if vision problems interfere with one's ability to focus on a computer screen.

This is where our work as Knights Templar can continue. The Knights Templar Eye Foundation provides millions of dollars toward vision research. We have the ability as Knights Templar to be a part of this work even if our Commanderies are not meeting.

The Holy Land Pilgrimage, our other activity as Knights Templar, helps ministers as they seek to improve their ministry. While the Holy Land Pilgrimage is not at this time allowing travel, we can continue to build up our Endowment in anticipation of the time when ministers will once again be able to walk where our Savior walked. We can identify ministers whom we wish to nominate for the Pilgrimage. We can talk about the Pilgrimage with non-Templar Masons and with others not associated with our Fraternity.

While Grand Master Nelson's edict does prohibit meetings at this time, we must remember that we are Templars not only in the Asylum but every day. Let us find ways to support our philanthropies so that once we are able to resume everyday activities, we will not have fallen behind in our commitment to helping others.

### NOVEMBER AND ELECTIONS

As we know, National and State elections are held during even-numbered years in November. But why this month instead of some other time? Generations ago, life revolved around the agricultural calendar. On that calendar, spring is busy with planting, the summer with tending crops, and harvest occurs in the fall. Also, until the early 1900s, the majority of people lived on farms rather than in cities; it was not until 1920 – within the

life of some still with us – that the US Census Bureau reported that over half the nation's population lived in cities. As late as 1870, almost three-quarters of the population was still rural. Not only were the activities of farmers important in determining the events of daily life, but distance was a factor as well. Most folks had to travel to reach a central location. The US Highway system did not exist until the 1920s; cars and paved roads were not common. Such were the conditions until about a hundred years ago.

Local and state authorities needed to set elections when the most people could participate. Spring and summer were not feasible as most were busy with planting and working in the fields; wither weather prohibited travel. This left the fall. Also, most farmers following harvest would travel to town with crops to sell, so they would be in a central area anyway. It made sense to hold elections in November, right after harvest and when people would naturally be together.

Early elections were not the somber events we think of today. Because they occurred when people were gathered for other reasons, they were a part of the larger time of harvest festivals and other social events. During colonial elections, candidates were pretty much expected to set up tables or booths with liquor, food, and other amenities. Even today, candidates spend money on promotional items such as keyrings and nail files in addition to the more mundane yard signs and bumper stickers.

It helps to recall that elections are or at least at one time were exciting and happy times, a part of our national social life as much as corn mazes and football games are today. Elections should also remind us of our advancing commitment to equality and opportunity. Andrew Jackson, one of our own, is associated with what historians call the "Era of the Common Man" because of the advancement of political rights during that time. While our nation has its faults, and we have at times not lived up to all our ideals, on the balance we have worked more toward advancing political and individual freedom than any nation or society in history. We should be proud of that.

We should cherish our system of elections as a celebration not only of freedom and liberty, but as a reminder that elections, being the forms and ceremonies of liberty, are what unite us as Americans.

#### References:

- Andrews, Evan. "Why Is Election Day a Tuesday in November?" *HISTORY*, 2 Dec. 2019, [www.history.com/news/why-is-election-day-a-tuesday-in-november](http://www.history.com/news/why-is-election-day-a-tuesday-in-november).
- "Elections in Colonial America Were Huge, Booze-Fueled Parties - HISTORY." *www.History.Com*, [www.history.com/news/colonial-america-election-day-parties](http://www.history.com/news/colonial-america-election-day-parties). Accessed 1 Oct. 2020.
- Gauthier, Jason. "Urban and Rural Areas - History - U.S. Census Bureau." *Census.Gov*, 2018, [www.census.gov/history/www/programs/geography/urban\\_and\\_rural\\_areas.html](http://www.census.gov/history/www/programs/geography/urban_and_rural_areas.html).
- "History of the US Highway System." *Gbcnet.Com*, 2019, [www.gbcnet.com/ushighways/history.html](http://www.gbcnet.com/ushighways/history.html).