



## Digital Missouri Message

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## Love the Lord for He is Great!

### GRAND COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Greetings Sir Knights,

Your Grand Commander, through the grace of God, is still with you. On March 18th, I had a significant discharge of my defibrillator which rendered me unconscious. I was rushed by ambulance to Mercy Hospital.

I am so thankful for the three nurses who performed CPR and saved my life. If not for their terrific efforts, I would not be here to give you this message. I thank my nurses and the Lord above for the grace of being alive. I am so very proud to be a Christian Knight. I thank God that He still has work for me to do in this life.

We need to thank the Lord for the work that He does in our lives. We need to help each other each and every day. The little things that we can do for each other can make a big difference in someone's life. Our efforts can even save someone's life. Each and every one of us should thank God for His involvement in our lives each and every day.

I thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers.

### **Walking with Christ in a Return to Normalcy!**

Sir Knight Harry L. Tripp, Jr., Grand Commander

### **AN ORIGIN STORY - ONE PERSPECTIVE ON MASONIC HISTORY**

The origins of the fraternity that we call Freemasonry have been lost to antiquity. However, there are many tantalizing tidbits of our origin story in many historical anecdotes and documents. One such account to which I was recently introduced is the history of the Schaw Statutes. The Schaw Statutes consist of two separate documents written by William Schaw at the end of the 16th century.

#### **The Schaw Documents**

William Schaw was born sometime around 1550. His grandfather was Sir James Schaw and his father was John Schaw. The Schaw family were associated with the Royal Court of Scotland by having kept the wine cellar of the King. The family fell onto hard times in 1560. John Schaw was accused of murdering a servant of a Scottish Lord. John was proclaimed a rebel. John failed to appear at court to answer for the alleged crime and his property was forfeited. However, the family name was subsequently reinstated at a later date.

At the time that the Schaw family name was recovered, William Schaw was very likely a page in the court of Mary of Guise. If he was indeed a page, then he would have been in Edinburgh Castle. Also

at this time, the siege of Leith was taking place. William might have witnessed William MacDonald, Master of Work, reinforcing the defenses of Edinburgh Castle.

In 1580, William Schaw's name was included in a letter about the royal court sent to England by an informant. In 1581, William signed a "negative confession" which allowed members of the court to pledge allegiance to the Scottish Reformation. He was given the rights to the lands of Kippen, a village in west Stirlingshire, Scotland. In 1583, William was in Paris, France when one of the King's favorite Dukes died and he returned the deceased Duke's heart to Scotland.

At the end of 1583, King James VI appointed William as Master of Works. By the terms of the appointment William held the job for the rest of his life. He was responsible for all royal castles and palaces. The terms of the appointment also included being the Warden General over the master stonemasons who built the King's structures.

As the Warden General, William was responsible for making sure that the Stonemason Lodges were organized and operated efficiently. To that end, in 1598, he issued the first of the two statute and ordinance documents that would come to be called the Schaw Statutes. The first Schaw Statute was ratified at the end of 1598 by a convention of stonemasons. The first Schaw Statute was based on the "Old Charges" of the stonemasons. To this William added provisions to describe the hierarchy of wardens, deacons, and masters. The first Schaw Statute provided guidance and structure for the smooth operation of the Stonemason Lodges in general.

At the end of 1599, William issued a second document containing additional statutes and ordinances. The second Schaw Statute was directed at specific Stonemason Lodges, such as the Lodge Mother Kilwinning which had jurisdictional authority over western Scotland. The second Schaw Statute reaffirmed the provisions of the first Schaw Statute. It added administrative functions including keeping records and collecting certain fees. It also addressed certain workplace health and safety concerns.

This provides an interesting connection to early Freemasonry. It is speculated that the Schaw documents form the beginning of modern Freemasonry. The documents, in general, set out the duties of all Lodge members, imposed penalties for certain infractions, required Lodges to keep written records, required all Lodges to meet on certain dates and provided the foundation for future fixed permanent Lodges and new Lodges.

To the Freemason, these documents contain familiar titles and terms. However, they are not used in the manner to which we are familiar. For example, the warden appears to be a presiding officer. The warden, together with the deacon, appears to exercise control over and responsibility for the master stonemasons, fellowcraft stonemasons, and apprentice stonemasons within the bounds of their jurisdiction. To the more enlightened Freemason, we can see in the Schaw Statutes language that is very familiar to both York Rite Freemasons and members of the York Rite College. However, we must remember that these documents were written for the governance of Stonemason Lodges, not Freemason Lodges.

### **A Connection to Freemasonry**

In approximately 1526, a group of Cistercian monks were permitted by King James V of Scotland to build a port in a place called "Gilbertis-draucht." One group of monks was from the Holyrood Abbey and the other group of monks was from the Newbattle Abbey. At some point the Abbot of these two Abbeys decided to lease the port to a man named Alexander Aitchison. Alexander operated the port

and harbor to his benefit and that of the Abbey. The monks collected income from port and custom duties.

Eventually the port and harbor became known as Aitchison's Haven and was also known as New Haven. In addition to the port and harbor facilities, there was at least one mill and a stone fort associated with the property. There was also a Stonemason Lodge in Aitchison's Haven.

The original permanent Stonemason Lodges, eventually identified in the Second Schaw Statue, created additional lodges in their jurisdiction. It is not certain how the Lodge Aitchison's Haven was formed, but the Lodge records show that it began operating in January of 1599. Note that the Lodge began operating soon after the ratification of the First Schaw Statute.

While the Lodge Aitchison's Haven began as a lodge for operative stonemasons, over the course of its existence it eventually began to admit men who were not actual stonemasons. As the stonemason trade began to wane, the speculative masons became more influential and ultimately operated the Lodge Aitchison's Haven. By the 18th century the Lodge had become known as the Aitchison's Haven Masonic Lodge. The Lodge decided to remain an independent Freemason Lodge when the Grand Lodge of Scotland was formed in 1736. However, in 1814 the Aitchison's Haven Masonic Lodge did join the Grand Lodge of Scotland.

The Lodge was continuously operated until 1853 when it finally closed. So, this particular Lodge had a significant written history. The record of original minutes of the Lodge were eventually obtained by the Grand Lodge of Scotland. They provide interesting, tangible written documentation of the operation of one of the earliest Masonic Lodges.

However controversial, the Statutes published by William Schaw in 1598 and 1599 provide compelling evidence that they contributed significantly to the formation of modern Freemasonry. It cannot be denied that they were written for Lodges of Stonemasons. However, the history of Lodge Aitchison's Haven, demonstrates that they led to the creation of Aitchison's Haven Masonic Lodge. This provides a tantalizing path for the origin of our Masonic Fraternity.

Sir Knight Russell S. Hanson, PGC

## **JUST WHAT IS IT ABOUT MAY?**

In the Northern Temperate Zone, May is one of the most beautiful months of the year. The snow and ice of winter are usually gone, but the hot temperatures of the Summer season haven't arrived. The first gardens begin to sprout in May. Wild flowers, such as forsythia, dogwood, and violets, are blooming. The trees are leafing out. And the grass has turned green.

Here are some little facts about this third and last month of the Spring season.

The month of May was named for the Greek goddess of fertility, Maia. The Romans called the month Maius. The name is related to a Latin word that means increase or growth. The name changed over the years and it was first called May in the 1400s near the end of the Middle Ages.

According to the early Roman calendar, May was the third month. Later, the ancient Romans used January 1st for the beginning of their year, and May became the fifth month. In any given year, no month ever begins or ends on the same day of the week as May does.

Lewis and Clark began their epic trip up the Missouri River on May 14, 1804.

Most Worshipful Brother, Companion, and Sir Knight Harry S. Truman, 33rd President of the United States, and a Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Missouri, was born in Lamar, Missouri on May 8, 1884.

Memorial Day or Decoration Day is observed in the United States on the last Monday in May. It was first observed in 1866. It is a legal holiday and is observed in memory of those who died while serving the United States in war.

Mother's Day is celebrated in honor of Mothers on the second Sunday of May. It was first observed in 1908. It was originally designated by Presidential proclamation, but was recognized officially by Congress and the President in 1914.

The U.S. began the first regular airmail service on May 15, 1918. May 15th is also National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day!

Sir Knight Russell S. Hanson, PGC

## **A HEALING PRAYER**

Dear Lord of Mercy and Father of Comfort,

We turn to you for help in times of need. We ask that you be with our Brethren Knights struggling with injury or illness. In the name of Jesus, drive out all infirmity and sickness from their bodies. Please send your healing Word to them. Lord, we ask that your healing touch turn their weakness into strength, their suffering into compassion, their sorrow into joy, and their pain into comfort.

"The LORD sustains them on their sickbed and restores them from their bed of illness." – Psalm 41:3

Sir Knight Russell S. Hanson, PGC