

A Masonic Time Machine

By

Sir Knight Kenneth W. Davis, Ph.D.

Several years ago, at the Colorado River Fall Festival in Laughlin, Nevada, I found myself in the hotel bar, sitting next to a brother whose name and state I've promised to always hael. As we talked, we discovered each other's interest in both the western esoteric tradition and contemporary science.

After a couple of glasses of a very good rye, he said, "Brother Ken, I am going to tell you something I have never told anyone else. I am working on a Masonic time machine."

My first reaction was that the rye was talking, but the brother was compelling, and I thought it would be amusing to keep listening.

"I have discovered," he said, "that ritual magic really works at the quantum level and that Masonic ritual contains enough authentic magic that it opens up a time portal whenever a lodge is opened. At this end of the portal, the ritual magic isn't enough, so some subatomic technology is required. I am working on that right now, but I expect soon to be able to observe—without interfering and without being seen—any Masonic lodge meeting in the past."

"Brother Ken," he continued, "you seem to know more about Masonic history than I do." "It can't be much more," I replied. "Masonic history isn't my specialty."

"Still, I trust you," he said. "Could you put together a list of, say, ten past lodge meetings that would be interest-

ing to visit?"

Hmm, I thought. This brother is clearly a crackpot, but as an intellectual exercise, his question fascinated me. "OK," I said. "I'll work on that."

I've kept in touch with the brother, and he keeps saying he's close to solving the technological problem. When I spoke to him last week, he claimed to be just weeks away from a solution. I've heard that before, but I've had fun making the list for him.

1. The Lodge of Edinburgh, July 3, 1634

The Lodge of Edinburgh, also called "Mary's Chapel," is the oldest Masonic Lodge still meeting. At the time of its first known minutes, July 1599, it was a Lodge of operative Masons, but on July 3, 1634, it admitted the first three known speculative Masons, all members of the Scots nobility.

2. Warrington, England, October 16, 1646

On this date, Elias Ashmole, the first known English speculative Mason, was initiated. A scholar, Ashmole may have been interested in the esoteric elements of the craft, elements that may have already been in place in operative Lodges.

Ashmole had a large library and collection of curios that he donated to Oxford University. This donation provided the basis for Oxford's Ashmolean Mu-

seum, perhaps Europe's first public museum. It is still in use.



Elias Ashmole

3. The Goose and Gridiron, London, June 24, 1717

Any list of important Lodge meetings would have to include this one. On Saint John's Day of 1717, four London Lodges—three mostly operative, one mostly speculative—gathered at the Goose and Gridiron



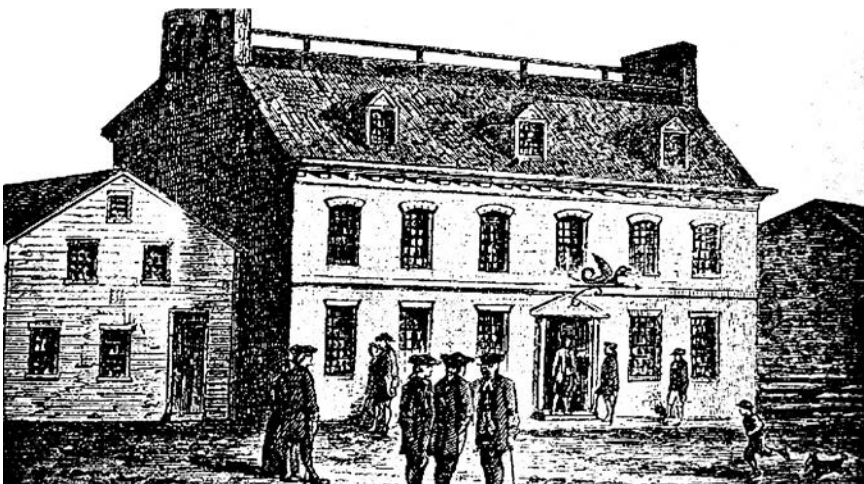
The Goose and Gridiron, London

and formed the world's first Grand Lodge, the Lodge of London and Westminster.

The four Lodges were named after the pubs where they met: the Goose and Gridiron, the Crown, the Apple Tree Tavern, and the Rummer and Grapes.

4. St. Andrew Lodge, Boston, December 16, 1773

The minutes of this meeting, held at



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The Green Dragon, Boston

the Green Dragon Tavern, state that it closed early for low attendance. Tradition has it that Masons left the meeting to participate in the Boston Tea Party that night, boarding British ships and dumping their cargo of heavily taxed tea into Boston Harbor.

This assumption raises at least two questions: How did the anti-British Masons square their actions with their obligation to not commit treason? And how well did the lodge observe the landmark rule of not discussing politics? Some members of St. Andrew were Tories, supporters of British rule in North America.

A few members of St. Andrew likely did participate in the Boston Tea Party that night, but it's doubtful that plans were made there.

5. The Irish Military Lodge 441, Boston, March 6, 1775

At this meeting, also in Boston, Prince Hall became the first known African American Mason. A former slave, he was



Prince Hall

freed by 1770. Turned down by a British colonial Lodge, he was initiated by an Irish military Lodge.

6. La Loge des Neuf Sœurs, Paris, April 4, 1778

British rule was, of course, overthrown, and the new country was struggling to create a government and define its place in the world. Benjamin Franklin, one of the most learned of the Founding Fathers, spoke French and was named ambassador to France, the country that had given the most support to the American Revolution.

In Paris, Franklin joined the Lodge of the Nine Sisters (named for the nine Muses) and began making the acquaintance of the country's intelligentsia. On April 4, 1778, he escorted France's leading writer, Voltaire, to a Lodge meeting, where he was made a Mason. Voltaire died the following month. In 1779, Franklin became the Lodge's master.



Voltaire



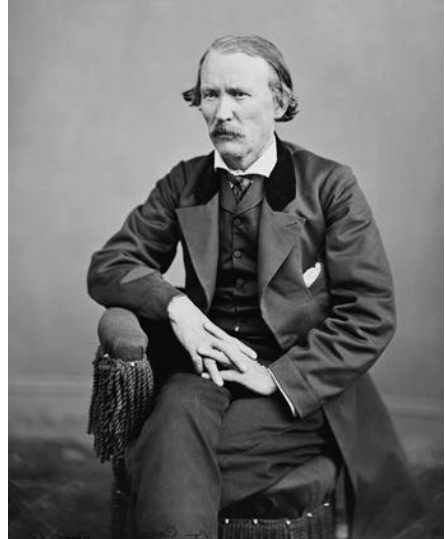
Benjamin Franklin

7. Three Lodges in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, September 18, 1793

On this date, Masons from three Lodges in the area—Maryland’s Lodge 9, Virginia’s Alexandria Lodge 22, and Washington’s Federal Lodge 15—processed to a rise variously called “Jenkins Hill” and “New Troy” to Masonically lay

the cornerstone of a Capitol building. Presiding in full Masonic regalia was President George Washington.

The cornerstone itself has been lost in two hundred years of remodeling.



Christopher “Kit” Carson

8. Montezuma Lodge 109, Santa Fe, New Mexico, December 26, 1854



Laying of the Capitol Cornerstone
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As a New Mexican, I have to include on my list the raising of pioneer and army scout, Christopher “Kit” Carson, to the degree of Master Mason. In 1854, the New Mexico Territory had been part of the United States for just four years. No Grand Lodge had been established in New Mexico (that wouldn’t happen until 1877), and Monte-

zuma Lodge was chartered by the Grand Lodge of Missouri. Today this Lodge is Montezuma Lodge 1.

Carson's home, in Taos, New Mexico, is now owned by Bent Lodge No. 42 and operated as a museum.

9. Absalom zu den drei Nesseln, Hamburg, Germany, May 26, 1945

Along with Jews, Catholics, homosexuals, the disabled, and others, an estimated 80,000 to 200,000 Masons were murdered in the Holocaust. The number is difficult to determine since many Masons also fell into other categories.

Hamburg fell to the Allies on May 4, 1945, and the war in Europe ended four days later. The first Lodge meeting after the war took place less than three weeks after that, on May 26. It's hard to imagine the mix of grief and celebration that must have been shared by the members.

10. Beech Grove Lodge, Indiana, October 15, 1948

In 1945, Vice President Harry S. Truman, Past Grand Master of Masons in Missouri, succeeded President Franklin D. Roosevelt, also a Mason, upon his death. In 1948, now-President Truman ran for that office for the first time.

A whistle-stop campaign tour brought Truman to Indiana. One version of that visit recounts that when the president finished an afternoon speech, he recognized a young Navy sailor, Donald Earl Bauermeister, who served on the presidential yacht. Truman asked Bauermeister what had brought him to Indiana, and the young man answered that he was from Indiana and that evening was being raised to Master Mason in Beech Grove, a small town at the edge of Indianapolis.



President Harry S Truman Visiting Beech Grove Lodge for the Raising of Donald Earl Bauermeister (standing far left)

The president offered Bauermeister and his father a ride to Indianapolis on the presidential train and that night attended the meeting of Beech Grove Lodge with the young sailor. Like any other first-time guest, Truman had to establish his credentials and was, of course, addressed in Lodge not as “Mr. President” but as “Most Worshipful Brother.”

It’s said that when Truman’s Secret Service detail protested not being able to enter the Lodge room, the president replied, “I am safer there than in the White House.”

That’s my list. I’ve sent it to my inventor brother. I wonder if we’ll ever get to use it. As for this account, that’s my story, and I’m sticking to it.

What lodge meetings would you add to the list? Send your nominations to kennethwdavis@mac.com.

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