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Freemasonry during Wartime

General Lew Armistead vaulted the stone wall, yelled "give them cold steel" and headed for the cannons that had until recently been firing on his men. As he laid his hand on one of the guns of the 4th US Artillery, the 69th Pennsylvania Infantry fired upon the gray coated General and the men who had followed him. Many went down including Armistead. He was heard to cry for help "as the son of a widow." Colonel Rawley W. Martin of the 53rd Virginia lay near by and witnessed as some of the men of the 69th Pa. rose up and came to Armistead's aid. Captain Henry H. Bingham, a physician and Mason, was brought to assist Armistead. Armistead inquired about his friend and Masonic Brother General Winfield Hancock. Learning that Hancock had also been wounded, he entrusted to Bingham his Masonic watch and personal papers to give to his friend and Brother General Hancock. Hancock and Armistead had attended West Point and had fought in the same regiment in Mexico, and were the closest of friends prior to the war. Two days later Armistead died of his wounds in a Union hospital on the Spangler farm. Bingham survived the war and in fact won a Congressional Medal of Honor in 1867. He retired in 1867 and went on to become a member of the United States Congress where he served for 33 years. He died in 1912 at the age of 70.

General Hancock survived his wounds though it was a long time until he returned to the army. He later commanded the Department of the East of the United States Army and died in 1886 still in command. In 1880, he lost an attempt for the United States Presidency to James Garfield. This incident of the famous charge at Gettysburg known as Pickett's Charge is only one of many incidents in history where one Mason has come to the aid of another or another's family and has inspired the Masonic "Friend to Friend" Monument at Gettysburg.

MASONIC BURIAL BY THE ENEMY On June 11, 1863, the Federal gunboat Albatross, with Lt. Commander J.E. Hart of St. George's Lodge #6 in New York in command, was anchored on the Mississippi River opposite the town of Bayou Sara (some accounts say St. Francisville) which was 15 miles above the Rebel fortification Port Hudson. The gunboat was part of the ships laying siege to Port Hudson, Louisiana. Commander Hart had been in a delirium for many days and was confined to quarters.

From the East

Brethren,

Please join me in congratulating Brother Peter Verbica on being raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason. We had a wonderful degree on Friday, August 29th. We have several more degrees coming up so stay tuned and watch our Calendar at www.mtmoriah292.org. Also in September, on the 11th, is the annual Constitutional Observance hosted by Zorah Grotto. Dinner is at 6:30 at the San Jose Masonic Center, and the program starts at 7:30. Please contact Bud Ramsey for dinner reservations— dinner is \$20. The program is free.

Fraternally,
 Jeff Powell, *Master*

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A shot rang out and the ship's executive officer Theodore E. Dubois and the doctor found the commander dead. The officers of the ship, not wanting to bury their commander in the river, sent a flag of truce ashore to discover if there was a local Masonic Lodge. William W. Leake, the acting Master of the lodge in Bayou Sara was approached by Captain Samuel White, who lived near the river, to hold a Masonic funeral for Commander Hart. Brother Leake replied, "As a soldier of the Confederate Army, I think it is my duty. As a Mason, I know it is my duty." On June 13th, a few members of the local lodge in Masonic regalia gathered and met the procession of 50 men from the Albatross under a flag of truce at the top of a hill. Brothers Benjamin F. and Samuel F. White of Bayou Sara, the surgeon and the two officers of the gunboat who were Masons were in the procession along with a squad of marines at "trail arms." Leake and the local Brothers marched in front of the corpse to Grace Episcopal Church Cemetery and buried Brother Hart in the Masonic Section with military and Masonic honors with the service of the Episcopal Church read over him. Brother Leake led the Masonic part of the services. The US Surgeon and officers asked the Brothers to join them on the Albatross for dinner but they declined. The surgeon then offered to supply Brother Leake with medicines for his family. Brother Leake declined but later the surgeon sent a few medicines to Leake through Brother Samuel White.

Hart's grave was marked with a wooden head plate for many years, and eventually a permanent marker covering the whole grave was dedicated. The marker states: "This monument is dedicated in loving tribute to the universality of Freemasonry."

HIS PLEASURE TO GIVE THEM RELIEF

Toward the end of the Civil War a number of Confederate prisoners of war were being held in the vicinity of Winchester, Virginia, where they were guarded by a regiment of Ohio troops. One afternoon a young major accompanied the regimental surgeon on his hospital

rounds among the prisoners.

The young officer noticed that although the surgeon stopped at each bed, at some he gave tobacco, sometimes some money which he peeled from a large roll in his pocket and to others, advice that had nothing to do with the patient's medical condition. The major's curiosity was raised as to why this surgeon would give aid over and above what was expected to the dirty, ragged prisoners. The surgeon replied that he was a Mason and that since the wounded prisoners were Masons, "it was not only his duty but also his pleasure to relieve their wants to the limit of his ability, regardless of their rank or condition." The major, touched by these actions, expressed a wish to become a Mason. At that period of time, many lodges ignored jurisdictional lines or length of residence. Later these actions would cause many headaches for the various Grand Lodges but at this point were just part of the war. Thus, Hiram Lodge #21 of Winchester elected him to receive the degrees which he proceeded to do. The lodge had had a fluctuating membership for the past 4 years since the town was constantly changing hands as the armies moved up and down the Shenandoah Valley. At times, the Federals had a majority in the lodge and at other times the Confederates did. After the final defeat of the Confederate Army at Cedar Creek in October, 1864, things finally settled down, and the lodge looked again to hold meetings while under Northern occupation. In order to do so, Brothers Brent and Legge received a letter of introduction to General Phil Sheridan from the Honorable Montgomery Blair of Baltimore Postmaster General in President Abraham Lincoln's cabinet. With this letter of introduction, they were able to get an audience with General Sheridan. When they met with the general, he was surrounded by his staff and orderlies. After showing their credentials, the Brothers stated their purpose was to ask for permission to reopen the Masonic Lodge. General Sheridan, in view of his known political and religious affiliations, turned them down. At that point, Dr. C.H. Allen, a surgeon on Sheridan's staff and a member of Aurora Lodge #22 Montpelier, Vermont, supported the Brothers with the argument that it would be a wise idea to reopen the Lodge since it would give the Northern officers and soldiers something to do while they were encamped around Winchester. This would allow the army to mingle with the townsfolk in a fraternal way and promote goodwill. Dr. Allen stated that he was a Mason and he would personally attend every meeting to see that nothing malicious towards the United States Government occurred at the meetings. Reluctantly, Sheridan gave his permission. The lodge resumed meeting on November 28, 1864. From that point to June 24, 1865, 231 men were raised in the lodge. Almost all of them were from the North.

At the time the Major's petition was acted on, a Confederate Chaplain, J.B.T. Reed was Master, and he conferred the First Degree upon the candidate on the evening of May 1, 1865. The next forenoon he was instructed by the brethren on that degree and that evening he received the Second Degree. On the morning of May 3rd, he was instructed on that

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degree and raised a Master Mason at 3 o'clock that afternoon.

Shortly thereafter the war ended, and the Ohio troops were sent home. The Major took a demit from Hiram Lodge and upon reaching home deposited it in Canton Lodge #60, Canton, Ohio. For the rest of his life William McKinley took an interest in Masonic activities and did not lose his interest even when he became Governor and later, President. His last Masonic act was to place a sprig of acacia on the casket of Brother George Washington upon the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the death of the "Father of the Country."

THE FINAL ACT BY A MASON IN THE CIVIL WAR

It was an April morning three days after General Robert E. Lee had surrendered to General U.S. Grant. The Southern troops, led by General John B. Gordon, a Mason, were marching in columns towards the Northern troops who were standing in formation waiting for the Southerners to stack arms and fold their flags. Suddenly a shifting of arms was heard. Gordon looked up with alarm, but there was nothing to fear. General Joshua Chamberlain had ordered his troops to assume the position of "honor answering honor." Immediately, the Confederate troops snapped to attention and returned the honor. It was the first act to heal the wounds of a nation that had spent four years and 618,000 lives in a civil war. That command of "honor answering honor" was ordered by a Mason.

Major General Joshua Chamberlain was a member of United Lodge #8, Brunswick, Maine. After the war, he became Governor of Maine from 1866-71 and President of Bowdoin College from 1871-83. (He is also featured in the movie "Gettysburg" for his role in holding Little Round Top.)

From the Secretary's Table

It's been relatively quiet this past month on the administration end of the lodge. We still have 15 brothers who have not paid their 2014 dues. These will have to be suspended at the end of the year, so please think about making that payment now .

Fraternally,

Wayne Heimsoth

Secretary

Wayne Heimsoth

Phone: (408) 353-3298

From the West

Brethren,
I am putting a program together for next year. Let me know of activities you would like to do with the lodge.
I encourage you to participate.

San Jose Assembly No. 5, IORG is having their installation of officers on Sunday September 21st at 2 PM at the San Jose Masonic Center. They are also having a Fall Fashion Show on Sunday October 5th at the San Jose Masonic Center. Please support the youth groups if you can.

Fraternally,
Nick Schilling *Senior Warden*

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From the South

Brethren, the menu for our September Stated Meeting dinner, which will take place at 6:30 PM on Thursday, September 4th, 2014, will consist of a Green Salad and various selections of Pizza, including a Vegetarian selection, with delicious Sorbet for dessert. The cost of the dinner will be the usual \$10 per person. If you are planning to attend the dinner, please RSVP by Tuesday, September 2nd, 2014, preferably by email, to dialdice@gmail.com. You may also RSVP via phone or text, at 408-550-5039. As usual, I will use the RSVP count when planning for how much food to supply. These dinners are always a great way to share good times with fellow brothers and their families. If you have any suggestions for a future dinner this year, please let me know. Also, any help, especially with taking money at the door or cleanup afterwards, would be greatly appreciated.

Labor Day is annually held on the first Monday of September. It was originally organized to celebrate various labor associations' strengths of and contributions to the United States economy. It is largely a day of rest in modern times. Many people mark Labor Day as the end of the summer season and a last chance to make trips or hold outdoor events. The first Labor Day was held in 1882. Its origins stem from the desire of the Central Labor Union to create a holiday for workers. It became a federal holiday in 1894. It was originally intended that the day would be filled with a street parade to allow the public to appreciate the work of the trade and labor organizations. After the parade, a festival was to be held to amuse local workers and their families. In later years, prominent men and women held speeches. This is less common now, but is sometimes seen in election years. One of the reasons for choosing to celebrate this on the first Monday in September was to add a holiday in the long gap between Independence Day and Thanksgiving.

Fraternally,
Allen Diamond *Junior Warden*

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BONE BOX

by William R. Fischer

In the early lectures of the last century, now obsolete these questions were used as a test:

Q - Have you any keys to the secrets of a Mason?

A - Yes

Q - Where do you keep them?

A - In a bone box, that neither opens nor shuts but with Ivory Keys.

The bone box is the mouth, the Ivory Keys the teeth. The key to the secrets is the tongue.

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ARK OF THE COVENANT

by William R. Fischer

The Ark of the Covenant was a chest originally constructed by Moses at God's command. It held the two tables of stone on which were engraved the ten commandments. It also contained a golden pot filled with manna, Aaron's rod and the tables of the covenant. The Ark was placed in the Sanctum Sanctorum or Holy of Hollies of King Solomon's Temple. The Ark and all it contained was lost when the Chaldeans from Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple.

The Ark was three feet nine inches long, two feet three inches wide, and two feet three inches deep. The ark was made of shittim wood overlaid with pure gold inside and out. On either side was placed two rings of gold for carrying. On the sides were two cherubim with out stretched wings covering the Ark. Over it rested a mist which was the Divine Presence and the voice of God.

The Ark is said be a conduit for the purpose of talking to God. King Solomon would sit on the ark and talk to the Divine Presence. He would receive guidance and insight through his conversations.

When the first temple was destroyed the Ark was lost. The temple was rebuilt and a new Ark constructed, but the mist did not appear in the second temple.

Rumors still persist about what happen to the Ark, but no one has discovered it, if it still exist. Again in the 1990's a new rumors has started that the Ark still exist and is being protected and watched over but no one has seen it.

Cherubim - A creature of gold facing each other on the Ark. Head and breast of a man, wings of an eagle, and belly of a lion.

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September, 2014

Calendar

www.calendarwiz.com/calendars/calendar.php?crd=mtmoriah292

September 04	(Thursday)
6:30 PM	Dinner
7:30 PM	Stated Meeting
September 11	(Thursday)
7:30 PM	Constitutional Observance
September 18	(Thursday)
	TBD
September 22	(Monday)
6:30 PM	OAM—Golden Rule #479
September 25	(Thursday)
	TBD

Changes Happen!
Call the Lodge Hotline: (408) 502-NEWS (6397)