

EMESSAY NOTES

June, 2016

LAST MASONIC RITES PERFORMED IN U.S. FOR JOHN PAUL JONES -- FINALLY

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The Grand Lodge of Maryland has completed the formal cycle of Masonic rites for one of the nation's greatest military leaders, who was also a Mason.

John Paul Jones, "Father of the American Navy," died in 1792 in Paris and was buried with Masonic Honors there. Some 113 years later, President and Brother Theodore Roosevelt ordered the body of Jones recovered from the cemetery in France, brought to the United States, and placed in a crypt at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, where visitors today can view the crypt and displays about his life.

Brother Jones, probably the best-known Naval figure in the Revolutionary War, was born in Scotland. He went to sea at the age of 12 and before he was 13, made his first trip to America. In 1770, during his career as a merchant seaman, he was initiated into St. Bernard Lodge #3122, in Kirkcudbright, Scotland. "Masonry played a big part in Jones' life from then on," according to an April, 1998, *Short Talk Bulletin*.

His career as a merchant seaman ended in 1773, at the age of 26, when he inherited his brother's plantation in Virginia. There he met many patriots, including George Washington, Patrick Henry, and Benjamin Franklin. In 1775, shortly after the battle of Lexington and Concord, Jones offered his services to the American cause and his great service to the American Revolution began.

At a later time, Jones was invited to join the Lodge of Nine Muses, in France. Brother Ben Franklin had been the Master of this Lodge for two years and they welcomed the new American hero with open arms.

But John Paul Jones never received any Masonic funeral services in the land he helped free and where his body lays.

So, about 250 years after his death, on April 24, 2016, more than 500 persons, including about 300 Masons clothed in full Masonic regalia, led by Grand Master Kenneth S. Wyvill, Sr., marched in a parade from Annapolis Lodge #89, down Main Street to the Naval Academy in Annapolis. The belated Masonic Service was performed in the Academy's Dahlgren Hall.

'IT'S IN THE UNDERWEAR DRAWER' IS A QUICK REMINDER FOR MASONIC FUNERAL PLANNERS

Because many Masons only wear their own apron twice – the night they receive it and at their funerals – they tend to forget information about what their funeral plans should be.

One of the best lines to remind the family where a Mason's apron is stored was written by Past Grand Master Dennis V. Siewert, of Wisconsin, as the headline for his column in the Grand Lodge's monthly publication in 2012. The title: "It's in the underwear drawer."

**FUNDING FOR "EMESSAY NOTES" HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY
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The subject is worthy of consideration by all Masons. Do you have a plan for a Masonic funeral? That is the key question, and Masons should tell their spouses, next of kin, or caretakers exactly what they want.

Next, where is your Masonic apron? And the underwear drawer just might be a useful place to store, but make sure someone knows.

The Grand Lodge of Wisconsin has published a "Request for Masonic Funeral" Form, which can be downloaded from their webpage. (www.fam.wisc-freemasonry.org and look for the form among "Secretary Lodge Forms.")

(Information taken from Southern California Research Lodge's Fraternal Review, February, 2016.)

REVISION OF POPULAR POEM PENNED

The *Bridge Builder* is a familiar poem, written by Will Allen Dromgoole in 1900, which is frequently used by Masonic speakers because of its positive message for Freemasonry.

Sam Katz, a Past Master of Equity Lodge #591 of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, and later a member of Endeavor Lodge #17 of the Grand Lodge of Delaware, revised the poem to give it a specific Masonic tone. Brother Katz is a recipient of the Meritorious Service Award from the Scottish Rite and currently serves on the Grand Staff of Nathan Zahn, Grand Master of Delaware.

Brother Katz calls his revision, *The Masonic Bridge Builder*.

An old Brother on a lone highway,
Came at the evening, cold and gray,
To a chasm, vast, and deep and wide,
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.

The old Brother crossed in the twilight dim;
For the sullen stream had no fear for him;
But he turned, when safe on the other side,
To build a bridge to span the tide.

"Old Brother," said a fellow pilgrim near,
"You are wasting your strength in building here:
Your journey will end with the close of day;
You never again will pass this way;
You've crossed the chasm, deep and wide –
Why build this bridge at the evening tide?"

The Brother lifted his old gray head:
"My Brother, in the path I have come," he said,
"There followeth after me today,
A young Brother, whose feet must pass this way.

"This chasm, that has been naught to me,
To that young Brother may a pitfall be.
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
My Brother, I'm building this bridge for him."

A GOOD STORY OF 'INTEGRITY'

Joseph R. Conway, Past Grand Master and Past Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, likes to tell this story about the concept of "integrity."

Pulling into my service station 45 minutes late one morning, I shouted to the customers, "I'll turn the pumps on right away!" What I didn't know was that the night crew had left them on all night. But by the time I got to the office, most of the cars had filled up and driven off. Only one customer stayed to pay. My heart sank. Then the customer pulled a wad of cash from his pocket and handed it to me. "We kept passing the money to the last guy," he said. "We figured you'd show up sooner or later."