

EMESSAY NOTES

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Historic Meeting Place Once Masonic Boarding School



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The only known Masonic boarding school was built in 1858 in Effingham, New Hampshire. It operated from 1861 to about 1882, and in its initial years, had 146 students enrolled from this rural farming region and as far away as Massachusetts and Vermont.

According to Chuck Fuller, a Mason from Wells, Maine, who currently lives in Effingham, the multi-story Italianate structure uses post-and-beam construction, with a six-story bell tower and cupola. It is built on a hill overlooking the small village and is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The second floor of the building houses the Masonic Hall, which was formally dedicated on August 24, 1859. During the dedication ceremony, the Lodge was presented a piece of the Charter Oak, a famous Revolutionary War tree in Hartford, Connecticut, and the Lodge became known as Charter Oak Lodge.

The Masonic Temple walls and ceiling are unique. The elaborate murals were first documented in the Charter Oak Lodge minutes of December, 1859. Local legend identifies the painter as a traveling itinerant farmhand (and Mason) from Lawrence, Massachusetts, named A. Butler. Stories claim he spent two years laboring on the paintings, using "stale beer and sour milk in mixing his watercolors, and tinted them with roots and berries, and that he was given free board and room and a pint of rum per day."

Charter Oak Lodge sold the building to the town of Effingham in 1891, retaining "life rights" to portions of the building, including the second floor where the Lodge meets.

Since 1893, the Effingham Public Library has been located in the building. Today, citizens of Effingham have begun a multi-year historic preservation project to be completed for the town's 250th birthday. For pictures of the building, its renovation progress, and more information, visit www.historiceffingham.org.

MSA Podcast Program Exceeds 100,000 Downloads

The Masonic Service Association's Podcast Program continues its acceleration of acceptance by the Masonic community.

The program, now 18 months old, has exceeded 100,000 free downloads of outstanding Masonic educational and inspirational material.

In its first year, the program began generating momentum with 50,000 downloads. It took just six months more to double in quantity.

About 168 different Podcast episodes have been created, according to Michael Smith, of Maine, the brother who is directing the program. Each episode is the recording of a Short Talk Bulletin (STB). More new episodes are added to the list each month, with the latest new STB being recorded, as well as outstanding messages from past STBs. Often, if possible, the original author is asked to record his contribution.

"The Hiram Legend" is the most popular STB podcast in the program, and has been downloaded more than 1,000 times.

Anyone, a Mason or not, can access all of these recorded Short Talk Bulletins at www.shorttalkbulletins.com at no cost.

Many Lodges around the country are depending on these generally 5-to-10 minute Podcasts for education programs during stated or special meetings. Others are just content to listen as they drive in their cars or when walking and running.

Brother Roosevelt Helps Arthur Godfrey

During World War II, according to an often related story, radio personalty Arthur Godfrey wanted to fly for the U.S. Navy. Turned down repeatedly, he sought aid from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was a Master Mason.

The President called in a Navy officer and asked why. The officer told FDR that the Navy couldn't give Godfrey a commission because of leg injuries he had sustained in an auto accident.

According to Godfrey, FDR said, "Can he walk?" "Yes, he can *walk*," the Navy aide replied. "Give it to him," Brother Roosevelt answered impatiently. "I can't walk and I'm the Commander-in-Chief."

Masonic Product is Good; Delivery System Needs Work

In his message to his brethren in the Spring, 2020, issue of the Virginia Masonic Herald, Grand Master Douglas Vernon Jones explained that "Part of life is looking for answers to one thing or another, answers surrounding the human condition and the good and really tough things that can, and most assuredly do, happen in life." He continued:

Some answers will never come. That is just the way life is. Success and failure, experience, and hard knocks are among our greatest teachers. I believed it is in simple and profound moments of everyday life that so often offer up the answers for which we are looking — sometimes even before we have the question in the first place.

To me, it comes down to this: listen patiently, soak in those simple and profound things that happen around you every day, immerse yourself in good books, especially the Bible. Do not neglect art, music, conversation with smart people, or those who possess wisdom; do this, and the answers will come. . .

. . . From my perspective, the message is this: as Masons we have the tools to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. The values that we embrace, such as loyalty, kindness, love, and faithfulness, are values which resonate with American men. If we want to see our Lodges survive and thrive for the long-term, we need to understand there is nothing wrong with our product, but instead, it is our method of delivery that needs work.

Brother Harry S. Truman Always On The Level

In this election year, references to previous election years are found. Here is one often-repeated story:

President Truman was campaigning for reelection in 1948, and the campaign was in its last days. He was in Indianapolis, and gave one of his last speeches in the campaign.

A young seaman, who worked on the Presidential Yacht on the Potomac, was being raised a Master Mason in a Lodge near Indianapolis that night, and invited the President to come.

Brother Truman went, but refused to be introduced as President, but rather as a Past Grand Master of Missouri. What a thrill it must have been for the young candidate to have the President there when he was made a Master Mason. It also demonstrates that in Lodge, all meet on the level.