

After Action Report

SOWING SEEDS OF FREEMASONRY

October 2018

Early in his term as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, F. & A. M., Most Worshipful Brother Timothy D. Sanders granted his permission for William O. Ware Lodge of Research, Ted Adams Lodge of Research and The Rubicon Masonic Society to enter into a joint venture known as “Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry.”¹ This marked the first time that any of Kentucky’s Lodges of Research engaged in a joint project. Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry was also co-sponsored by a number of other Lodges and Masonic bodies across the Commonwealth, as follows:

Lexington Lodge No. 1
Good Faith Lodge No. 95
Golden-Rule Covington Lodge No. 109
Robert Burns Lodge No. 163
DeMoss Lodge No. 220
Orion Lodge No. 222
Boone-Union Lodge No. 304
Paintsville Lodge No. 381
Henry Barnes Lodge No. 607
Crittenden-Dry Ridge Lodge No. 694
Phoenix Lodge No. 719
Latonia Lodge No. 746
Buechel Lodge No. 896
Society of Past Masters of Northern
Kentucky
Greater Louisville Masonic Education
Association

Background and Purpose

¹ Marlin White Lodge of Research, in Cave City, Kentucky, had not yet been organized at the time the “Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry” project began.

The idea for Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry was born at the 2017 Communication of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, F. & A. M. During debate on legislation, a delegate stepped to the microphone and opined that there was no reason to change certain Lodge practices, since “we have been doing it that way for thousands of years.” Reflection on that particular comment, and the lack of response that it elicited from any level, led to the realization that our Lodges of Research and other educational groups need to be more assertive in teaching the Craft the facts about the history of the Fraternity and its traditional practices.

The concept on which Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry rests is this: once equipped with a solid factual understanding of the true aim and purpose of the Fraternity, our members will be better enabled to appreciate and evaluate our current practices. We hoped to provoke a thoughtful and insightful analysis as to how Freemasonry arrived at its current state, rather than passively accepting an approach of “we’ve always done it that way.”

The agreed purpose of the Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry seminars was:

1. To expose members of the fraternity to the factual origins of organized Freemasonry;
2. To offer a factually balanced and present-day commentary on the unfolding of American Freemasonry from the 1730s through 2018; and
3. To present attendees with other historic observations and facts about the Craft and its practices.

Although it was believed by coordinators that the seminars would primarily attract those members who may be characterized as the more active and involved members of their Lodges, it was not (and is not) expected that our seminars, through the dissemination of a factual history of the Craft, would produce an overnight change in the culture of Kentucky Freemasonry. It is, however, anticipated that by enlightening individual Brothers we are Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry that will bear fruit in their individual lives and in their Lodges in years to come.

Organization and Planning

The Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry Committee met for the first time on November 7, 2017. William O. Ware Lodge of Research was represented by Worshipful Bro. David V. Cassesa and Worshipful Bro. Dan M. Kemble. Ted Adams Lodge of Research was represented by Worshipful Bro. Eddie R. Hazelett and The Rubicon Masonic Society was represented by Worshipful Bro. Cameron C. Poe and Worshipful Bro. John W. Bizzack. The Committee was later assisted by Worshipful Bro. John D. Cissell, of Buechel Lodge No. 896 and the Greater Louisville Masonic Education Association, Worshipful Bro. S.

Bradley Drew of William O. Ware Lodge of Research and Worshipful Bro. Robby Ratliff of William O. Ware Lodge of Research. The Committee met monthly through May of 2018. The four seminars were specifically designed to explore the facts surrounding the history of Freemasonry, the history of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky and issues facing Freemasonry in the 21st Century.

Bro. Jerry Johnston, of Lexington Lodge No. 1 and The Rubicon Masonic Society, designed a website (www.sowingseedsoffreemasonry.com) for "Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry." The website provided detailed information about the seminars, the speakers who made presentations and afforded the opportunity for those interested to pre-register for the seminars. The website also contained photographs from each of the events.

Locations and Presenters

Each seminar was presented at no cost to the attendees and was open to any person having an interest in Freemasonry.

The seminars were held in:

Bowling Green on June 30;
 Hebron on July 28;
 Louisville on August 25; and
 London on September 29.

Presenters at the several seminars included Worshipful Bro. Cameron C. Poe, Worshipful Bro. John W. Bizzack, Worshipful Bro. Patrick Craddock, of Franklin, Tennessee, and Worshipful Bro. Rich Graeter of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Attendance

A total of 54 persons (53 Masons and one person interested in Masonry, but not yet a member) attended the seminars. Of the 53 Masons in attendance, 52 were Master Masons. One Fellow Craft Mason attended one of the seminars. Thirty-four Kentucky Lodges were represented, and three out-of-state Lodges were represented (West Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania). Average attendance was 13.5 attendees per seminar. Attendance, engagement, and discussion with each group was within the realm of expectations, and, certainly by any standard, considered constructive.

Quiz and Questionnaire

At each seminar, a brief quiz and questionnaire was presented to the attendees. Specific results of the quiz and questionnaire may be found at the end of this document. The answers provided by the attendees offered valuable insight as to the current thinking of the Craft.

Content and Format

As previously stated, the seminars were not designed, much less intended, to offer a one-day educational setting to turn attendees into Masonic scholars. The aim and purpose was to offer a one-day seminar about Freemasonry by utilizing an outline

and factual presentation by DVD of the origins of organized Freemasonry.² Other sections of the seminars included collegiate and lecture style presentations about how Freemasonry unfolded in America, and the current state of the fraternity with respect to membership levels, historical eras and those events that influenced its current condition and standing.

Thematic Comments from Attendees

Comments often expressed at the seminars in the group setting by attendees must be weighed. The most thematic comments noted were:

- “We were never told about that at my Lodge,” (referring to Anderson’s Constitutions, origins discussions, historic events in American Freemasonry, the origins of the meaning of the term charity);
- “Why haven’t we heard this before?” (referring to the same topics identified in the foregoing);
- “Our Lodge focuses mostly on fund raising more than anything else;”
- “Masonic education is discouraged in my Lodge because it makes the meetings too long;”
- “Memory work is all I was offered when moving through degrees;” and
- “We are told we cannot raise dues because members will demit.”

² Tristan Bourlard, François De Smet, *The Scottish Key, The Scottish Key: An Investigation into the Origins of Freemasonry* - an enigmatic and mysterious topic, subject to allegations and fantasies of all sorts by members and public alike. How is this movement born? Horace Origins veiled and secrecy? For the first time based on the most recent findings, a critical documentary investigates the question of the origins of Freemasonry. What are its links for to the Knights Templar, if any? Are they descended from stone Mason from the Middle Ages? How did

the first Lodge come to be? The DVD addresses the events that led to the creation of the Grand Lodge in London 1717 and examines the true ambitions of the men who launched this incredible adventure, and how the most intriguing fraternal Society in modern times was born. The DVD also explore centuries of Old Stone Mason Lodges and their ties to the birth of Freemasonry in London and Scotland. Digital Versatile Disk (DVD), 44 minutes, Simon Go Productions, 2015.

Conclusions

Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry exposed the deep fault between what our Lodges *actually teach* and what they *should be teaching*. That fault exists with respect to the most trivial facts and the most fundamental. It is clear that what was offered at each seminar was not commonly offered at Lodges represented. Equally clear is that only a small percentage of Masons in four distinct areas of the state were interested in devoting a Saturday to such an event (although free of costs) to advance their Masonic knowledge even when personally notified and invited more than thirty-days in advance (accompanied with one “reminder” at least ten days before the event was scheduled). Another interesting finding is that not all of the Lodges that contributed financially to make the seminars possible were represented at any of the seminars.

It could easily be surmised that no-cost, well-promoted Masonic education seminars held at various times of the year at convenient locations offer little interest to the body of the Craft at large. Some may presume that reflects a lack of interest in Masonic education. Some may say members will not devote a weekend date to such a pursuit. Those may claim the topics were not interesting enough to attract attendance (if that is the claim then the claimant is completely unaware that the topics attendees listed as being their greatest interests, in fact, turned out to be what was offered). Those who theorize that men attended these seminars because they were not receiving what they seek from their Lodges may be most accurate.

The value of such seminars cannot be discounted except by those with cynical attitudes toward the offering of more than what is currently offered in Kentucky Lodges. Areas in which attendees identified

as wanting more in their Masonic journey were: “education, history, ritual, knowledge and understanding of the Craft, self-improvement, charity, fellowship, origins and symbols, philosophy, community involvement, and traditionalism.”

As a pilot, Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry, achieved its purpose, collected important data, introduced members to issues, subjects, and topics they sought, familiarized co-sponsoring Lodges with the ease with which such projects can be created and implemented, and met the expectation of the majority who attended.

Encouragingly, the question commonly asked by attendees was whether more of these seminars would be sponsored and coordinated throughout the state in the future. Encouragement was consistent to do so.

Whether in attendance at one of the seminars or not, you too may become a sower of seeds. First, you may become a sower of seeds by affiliating with one of Kentucky’s Lodges of Research. You will find that the Lodge of Research is a place where the seeds of Freemasonry may be obtained as well as sown.

Freemasonry exists to make good men better. If each Mason will resolve to fix for himself a goal of daily improvement in all aspects – appearance, behavior, thought and worship, and if we bring that daily improvement into our Lodges, we will very quickly exemplify the true aim and purpose of the Fraternity.

Freemasonry is a transformative, life changing journey. It is the labor of a lifetime. If we sow the seeds of Freemasonry in our lives and in our Lodges, and we watch that seed bear fruit over the years, our conversations will not be about how society has changed Freemasonry, but

rather, about how Freemasonry has changed society. And that will be as it was intended and as it should be.

Masons of all degrees to be coordinated by William O. Ware Lodge of Research in conjunction with other state Research Lodges, participating Blue Lodges, and other Masonic Bodies;

Recommendations

1. That William O. Ware Lodge of Research, with approval by the Grand Master, initiate plans to examine a continuation of similar seminars across the state;
2. That William O. Ware Lodge of Research examines and pursues a formal request to the Grand Master for a grant to further offerings of Masonic education and engagement, events/presentations and offering to
3. That future quizzes and/or surveys be designed with thematic purpose to collect data on what Kentucky Masons most seek in the form of education, delivery mechanism, and topics; and,
4. That William O. Ware Lodge of Research continues to develop and execute similar programs for the good the order.

Composite Results of Introductory Quiz Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry

Composite Results – After Four Seminars – Average Score – 17.67 (73.63%)

Of the 54 Brothers attending, 34 identified themselves as current or Past Masters, with an average tenure of 1.83 years.

Correct answers are noted in red.

1. The Grand Lodge of England was formed in the year_____.

- a. 959 BC;
- b. 1066 AD; 2
- c. 1717 AD; or 52
- d. 1776 AD.

2. True or False: At its formation the Grand Lodge of England decreed that all subordinate Lodges conduct their stated meetings on the Master Mason Degree.

True: 10 False: 44

3. The Grand Lodge of Kentucky was formed in the year_____.

- a. 1792 AD; 18
- b. 1800 AD; 23
- c. 1826 AD; or 8
- d. 1843 AD. 4
- No Answer 1

4. True or False: At its formation the Grand Lodge of Kentucky decreed that all subordinate Lodges conduct their stated meetings on the Master Mason Degree.

True: 20 False: 31 No Answer: 3

5. How many Landmarks of Freemasonry are there, and where did they come from? _____

- a. 25, written by Albert Mackey and printed in the Kentucky Monitor; 8
- b. 7, explained by Roscoe Pound, a prominent Mason and Dean of Harvard Law School; 5
- c. 3, adopted by the Conference of Grand Masters in North America; or 3
- d. **No one knows – Grand Lodges have been inconsistent in their adoption of Landmarks.** 37
- No Answer** 1

6. True or **False**: The Volume of Sacred Law found in the Lodge should only be a Christian Bible.

True: 8 False: 45 No Answer: 1

7. **True** or False: A clandestine Lodge is a Lodge that operates without a charter issued by a regular and recognized Grand Lodge.

True: 52 False: 2

8. King Solomon’s Temple was located in _____.

- a. London;
- b. **Jerusalem;** 49
- c. Ethiopia; or 1
- d. Tyre. 4

9. True or **False**: Masonic education is complete after one demonstrates his proficiency in the Master Mason Degree.

True: False: 54

10. Where in the Bible can you find the story of Hiram Abif as we tell it in the Master Mason’s Degree ____

- a. The book of Genesis; 1
- b. The book of Jasher; 5
- c. The book of Naphtali; or
- d. **It isn’t in the Bible.** 43
- No Answer** 5

11. Who was Prince Hall? _____

- a. The king of an island in the Caribbean, who forced all of his people to become Masons;
- b. An African-American who became a Mason in Boston in 1775 and who founded a system of Masonic Lodges for African-American men; 46
- c. He wasn't a person. Prince Hall is just a name that is given to Black Masonry in the United States; or 4
- d. Prince Hall is the name of the building where the first Black Masonic Lodge in the United State met in the 1700s. 3
- No Answer 1

12. Why is the Master of a Lodge called "Worshipful?" _____

- a. In ancient times, he led the Lodge in worship; 1
- b. "Worshipful" means "honorable" and is a title of respect; 47
- c. He is considered the most religious member of the Lodge; or 1
- d. He is a symbol of deity during his term of office. 5

13. Approximately how many Masons were there in the United States in 1960, and how many are there today?

- a. In 1960 there were about 4 million Masons in the U.S., and today there are fewer than 1.2 million; 41
- b. In 1960 there were about 2 million Masons in the U.S., and today there are about 2 million; 3
- c. In 1960 there were about 10 million Masons in the U.S., and today there are about 5 million; or 19
- d. No one know. No statistics were kept. 1

14. What subjects are not permitted to be discussed in Lodge meetings?

- a. Religion; 1
- b. Religion and politics; 43
- c. Religion, politics, and sex; or 10
- d. Religion, politics, sex, and food

15. What are Masons required to keep secret?

- a. Everything about Freemasonry; 2
- b. Everything that happens in our Lodge meetings; 5
- c. The names of all Masons; or 1
- d. Our due guards, signs, handshakes, and the exact words of our ritual. 46

16. What day is the feast of Saint John the Evangelist?

- a. June 24; 8
- b. June 27; 9
- c. December 27; or 31
- d. December 24 6

17. When Kentucky established its Grand Lodge:

- a. It did not have a constitution and used the Ahiman Rezon from Virginia as its Constitution; 35
- b. Did not write a constitution until after the Civil War; 5
- c. Used the Constitution of the United States; or 2
- d. Adopted the constitution used in New England grand Lodges 11
- No Answer 1

18. What is Anderson's Constitutions?

- a. The first book about Freemasonry as we know it; 18
- b. The first document written about Freemasonry in the 1300s; 7
- c. The first Masonic ritual cipher; 6
- d. A collection of all the U.S. Grand Lodge constitutions that is on file at the House of the Temple. 20
- No Answer 3

19. The alleged kidnapping and murder of William Morgan in New York was the cause of which of the following?

- a. The Baltimore Convention; 6
- b. The Anti-Masonic political party; 12
- c. Neither of the above; or 4
- d. Both a and b. 32

20. The Baltimore Convention promoted which of the following?

- a. Dues cards; 3
- b. A Standard Ritual; 4
- c. Conducting Business on the Master Mason Degree; or 8
- d. All of the above. 39

21. The success of American Freemasonry is easily measured by the number of names on a membership roster. (Agree or Disagree)

Agree: 0

Disagree: 54

22. One lunar month between Degrees is sufficient time to instruct candidates in the lessons of the preceding Degree. (Agree or Disagree)

Agree: 18 Disagree: 35 No Answer: 1

23. In Kentucky, a Lodge must fix the amount of its dues so that such dues are commensurate with the expense of maintaining itself and discharging its duties and obligations. (True or False)

True: 47 False: 6 No Answer: 1

a. I fully support this rule: Yes, I do, or No, I do not.

Yes: 36 No: 9 No Answer: 9

24. The only aim and purpose of Freemasonry is for men to learn to subdue their passions and improve themselves. (Agree or Disagree). If you disagree, please use the back of the answer sheet to write in what you consider the aim and purpose of Freemasonry.

Agree: 20 Disagree: 34

Questions 25 through 30 were added after the first seminar

25. I have been a member of a Masonic Lodge for _____ 16.24 (average) years.

26. How many books about Freemasonry have you read (not including monitors or ritual guides)?

a. More than 10;	12
b. Between 5 and 10;	4
c. Between 1 and 5; or	13
d. None.	3

27. What two books about Freemasonry would you recommend that other Masons read (not including monitors or ritual guides)?

Observing the Craft (5)

Freemasonry for Dummies (5)

A Pilgrim's Path (5)

The Builders (3)
Island Freemasonry (3)
A Traditional Observance Lodge (2)
For the Good of the Order (2)
American Freemasons
An Idiot's Guide to Freemasonry
Anderson's Constitutions
The Better Angels of Our Nature
Born in Blood
The Craft Driven Lodge
The Craft Unmasked
Heredom
The Hiram Key
Lodge Leadership
The Lodge Officer's Handbook
Mackey's Encyclopedia
The Meaning of Masonry
Measured Expectations
Morals and Dogma
Revolutionary Brotherhood
The Renaissance of Freemasonry
Whither Are We Traveling

28. Does your Lodge have a library of Masonic books or other education materials?

a. Yes; or	17
b. No.	13
No Answer	3

29. Does Freemasonry need to add more men to its membership rolls?

- a. Yes, or 18
- b. No. 12
- No Answer 3

30. In which aspect of Freemasonry are you most interested?

Education (9)

History (8)

Ritual (5)

Knowledge/Understanding (4)

Self-Improvement (4)

Charity (2)

Fellowship

Origins and Symbols

Philosophy

Community Involvement

Traditionalism

Range of correct answers:

8 – 1

20 – 4

9 – 1

21 – 5

10 – 2

22 – 5

13 – 2

23 – 2

14 – 4

24 – 1

16 – 7

17 – 7

18 – 8

19 – 5

Summary Analysis of Quiz

It is not surprising to see that attendees answered many of the fundamental questions on the quiz without difficulty. It is interesting to find that some questions, when all choices for answers were tallied, show the majority answered the question incorrectly or answered with an opinion suggesting unawareness of what is currently occurring in American Freemasonry and/or what has been shown to be unworkable and untenable.

Question 3 offers curious results in that while 23 of 54 attendees knew the Grand Lodge of Kentucky was formed in 1800, there were 31 who did not (57%).

As a result, the question then becomes of what importance is it that Masons know when the Grand Lodge of Kentucky was founded? Perhaps it is not important to know the year, but when a majority does not know, the question arises as to what it is, specifically, that is being taught in Masonic Lodges in Kentucky.

For example, question 14 tells us that 20% of attendees believe subjects not permitted to be discussed in a Lodge meeting are politics, religion, and sex. Again, although the majority answered correctly (politics and religion), the fact that 11 did not, leads back to the question of what, exactly, is being instructed in Masonic Lodges in Kentucky.

To continue examples:

- a total of 15% believe Masons are required to keep everything about Freemasonry a secret along with the names of all members and what happens in our Lodge meetings, which, as stated above, leads back to the same question of

what is instructed in our Masonic Lodges and how well is that instruction is understood, whatever it may be. (question 15);

- a total of 67% do not know the significance of Anderson's Constitutions. (question 18);
- a total of 35% believe that a 60-day path (30 days between degrees) to being raised to the degree of Master Mason is adequate (question 22);
- a vexing total of 63% believe the purpose of Freemasonry is to do something other than to learn to subdue their passions and improve themselves. (questions 24);
- a total of 42% do not have access to a Masonic library or other education materials at their Lodge. (question 28); and
- a total of 45% believe more men need to be added to the membership rolls. (question 29).

The quiz alone does not offer enough range or specificity to broad brush findings applicable to the entire membership of Kentucky Freemasonry. A valid inference, however, can be drawn that there is a bothersome lack of familiarity of what is occurring in American Freemasonry and/or what has been shown to be ineffectual and untenable in practices and processes. That condition certainly intimates that this deficit is what is at the core of many Lodge cultures and more commonly than not passed on.

Once again, that consideration leads back to the valid question of what is it that is being taught and how well is the instruction given and understood? Whatever that instruction may be and however it may be delivered is far from uniform, nor is it offered

with consistency. Also, it is apparent men who seek more of those things in which they are most interested (question 30) are pursuing such interests on their own, hence their attendance at the seminars on a Saturday.

The overall quiz score of 73.63% is, at best, a low average score on any grading scale. If the original assumption of the coordinators that seminar attendees represent the most engaged and active members of their respective Lodges is correct, then it immediately becomes necessary to wonder what the average score of the remainder of the Craft would be. More troubling is that 65% of those who attended are current or past masters, who, one would hope, should score more highly on such a quiz. It is logical to conclude that contemporary Kentucky Masons have received imperfect instruction with respect to Freemasonry and are imparting imperfect instruction to newer members.