

Burlesquing Freemasonry

“The Working Jacket of a Master Mason”

Ruffianism and Crudity

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ABSTRACT

The institution of Freemasonry does not have rules prohibiting members from touching hot stoves because the understandable reasons to not touch one, and conspicuous evidence of the consequences of doing so, makes it unnecessary to regulate. That is not the case when it comes to burlesquing our rituals.

Whether someone, something or a particular activity is fun or funny differs from person to person. Circumstances and surroundings naturally influence what may be thought of as either. Burlesque and slapstick humor, for example, may have their place but are inappropriate when they occur where they do not belong. The idea of levity, roughness, horseplay, and laughter in places where reverence and a level of high etiquette is expected is frowned upon, yet it happens. And yes, one of those places it has and does happen is in lodge rooms – worse yet, during ritual.

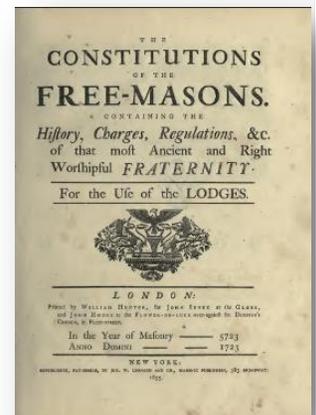
Fortunately, it does not happen in all lodges. Members who may claim that it has not happened are simply uninformed. Those who may claim it does not happen at all are not well traveled. In a cursory review of grand lodge regulations throughout the United States we find that “hazing, horseplay, *levity*, *roughness*, audible laughter, physical mistreatment of any kind, or other noise” which could distract the attention of a candidate are all forbidden. Prohibitions like these appear because they are deemed necessary and remain so.

We find in 1723 an attempt to set the behavioral tone for the newly organized institution of Freemasonry in *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons, Containing the History, Charges, Regulations, &c. of that most Ancient and Right Worshipful Fraternity, For the Use of the Lodges.*

The 1723 edition of the Constitutions was edited and reprinted by Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia in 1734, becoming what is believed to be the first Masonic book printed in America. A second edition appeared in England in 1738 and the same regulations pertaining to behavior remained effective.

In Section VI - Of BEHAVIOR, we find:

You are not to hold private Committees, or separate conversation, without leave from the Master, nor to talk of anything impertinent or unseemly, nor interrupt the Master or Wardens, or any Brother speaking to



the Master, nor behave yourself ludicrously or jestingly while the Lodge is engaged in what is serious or solemn; but to pay due Reverence to your Master, Wardens, Fellows and put them to worship", that is, pay them the respect due to them. Bearing this in mind, the Master of a Lodge must be particular to see that nothing boisterous creeps into the ceremonial work of his Lodge. The Degrees must be conferred not only in as perfect a ritualistic form as is possible, but also with impressiveness. The impression made upon a candidate in his First Degree will remain with him throughout his life. Hums of conversation, restless moving about, have no place in the ceremonial work of any Lodge. Particularly in the conferring of the Master Mason Degree must all crudity and ruffianism be cut out. Neither has any place there.

Can we simply dismiss out of hand what these and other early Masonic documents tell us about our behavior and how we should conduct ourselves in lodge? Yes, we apparently can, and do. So, it is necessary to have such regulations outlining the behavior expected of Freemasons.

We find examples of how we dismissed such expected behavior in early Freemasonry even before it was organized. Masonic historian, Robert L.D. Cooper, Curator of the Grand Lodge of Scotland Museum and Library tells us, that from the Dublin Manuscript of 1711, we can form an idea of the ritual of an operative lodge at the end of the 17th century. On taking the oath of an Entered Apprentice, a Mason was entrusted with appropriate signs, a "Mason's Word," and a catechism. This was accompanied by much horseplay, which was probably excised as the craft became more gentrified.¹

We find example after example in early American Masonic journals and publications railing against the casualness, frivolity in and lax approach to ritual work. Grand lodge proceedings also provide us with information that shows great concern about levity, horseplay, and roughness in our ceremonies.

One such journal article in 1900 notes:

... the necessity of reformation is very apparent. The great and underlying purpose and principles of the institution are rapidly being obscured and rendered secondary by the disposition to levity and superficiality. Horseplay has no part or lot in the symbolic teachings of wise traditions of Freemasonry and should be relegated to the rubbish heap."²

Another article from 1923 reports, "Many Masonic publications at the present time are publishing stories about horseplay during initiations." One story is noted about a candidate seriously injured during an initiation and how the Grand Master of Michigan evidenced his refusal to tolerate such "foolish intrusions" that "distract from the lesson the degrees are designated to convey." It was reported the Grand Master stated, "that any Worshipful Master who will let such actions take place in his lodge room is not the type of man to fill the East."³

The condemnations found in other journals and Masonic writings are equally acerbic, if not more so. It is easy to recognize such problems we might find today has a heritage.

¹ Robert L.D. Cooper, Cracking the Freemason's Code, Rider 2006

² The Super Excellent Degree, A Strong Protest Against the Introduction of Levity and Burlesque, The Masonic Standard, Vol. IV, No. 13, New York, January 1900.

³ The American Tyler-Keystone, James G. Frey, Managing Editor, January 1923.

In the section of the 1940 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky titled, *Decisions*, where the actions of Grand Master Boswell B. Hodgkin are recorded, he declared, “Burlesquing the degree should be absolutely prohibited.”⁴

Grand Master Hodgkin’s remark in 1940 was in reference to a question about the use of a “straight jacket” in a lodge, which brings us to the question of why we find references to a “working jacket of a Master Mason” in Kentucky Masonic records but in no other jurisdiction.

THE WORKING JACKET OF A MASTER MASON?

Tracing the existence and use of a “working jacket of a Master Mason” in Kentucky is not so much of a challenge as is piecing together the information as to why it was introduced and why such an item (whatever it was originally) was allowed to be used during ritual. Any lodge ever using one has its own story about it, of course, but few have written or noted in their histories, if mentioned at all, how its use came about, the design of the item or how it was specifically used when introduced. Today, there are members who have seen it used and members of this generation of Masons who were draped in what is called the “working jacket of a Master Mason,” so there remains no doubt of how it was used, at least over the past ninety-years or more. Fortunately, most of these jackets seem to have been dispatched to storage.

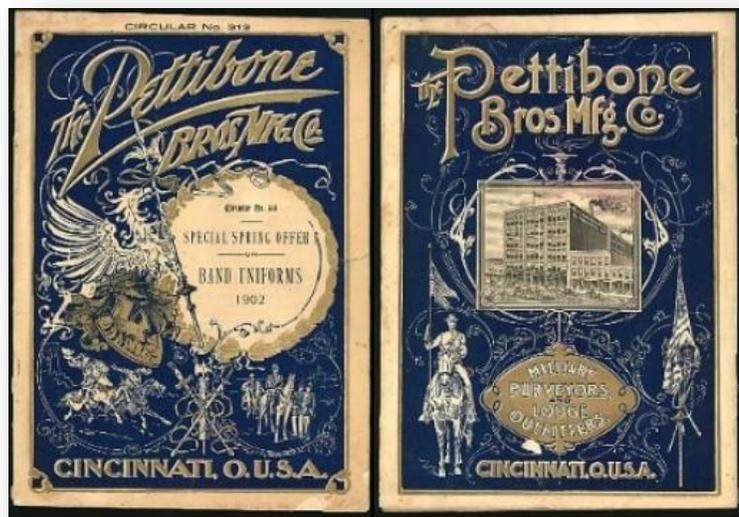


Putting into context what was going on in the country and fraternal organizations in America once records appeared about the working jacket helps to better understand why such a garment appeared in Kentucky Freemasonry.

TOOLS OF BURLESQUING

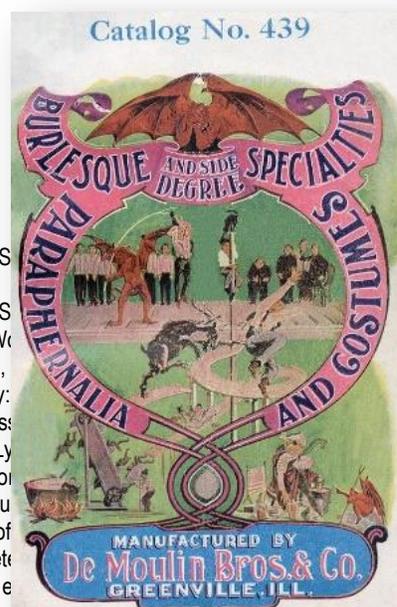
⁴ 1940 Proceeding of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, p.66.

For those who may remain skeptical that any burlesquing took place in fraternal lodges, much less Masonic lodges anytime and anywhere in the past should take some time and read William D. Moore's, 2007, *Secrecy, Masculinity, and Fraternal High Jinks in the United States, 1845–1930*.⁵ In his in-depth research, Moore, a professor and Director of Public History at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, chronicles the evolution of high jinx and pranks in American fraternities during an eighty-five-year period. Importantly, Moore points out how Freemasonry was not the core of the burlesquing yet carries much of the stigma from it. Some of which is deserved, and some not. Consistent with Moore's work we find a number of scholarly books and other publications that well-document not only what those "tools of burlesquing" were but how they were put to use in many organizations during the Age of Fraternalism (latter third of the 19th century and continuing into the first part of the 20th), and why.⁶



Harriet McBride's well researched 2005 essay, *The Golden Age of Fraternalism*, offers valuable insight to the period.⁷ It is quite clear that men who were members of some fraternities using "burlesque tools" were also Freemasons or became members of the fraternity while belonging to another fraternal organization in that era who adopted horseplay as a standard practice. It is folly to think the influence of high jinx and frivolous entertainment was not carried back into Masonic lodges or influenced members who provided the lingering perspective and idea that Freemasonry was all about having fun in lodge.

The DeMoulin Bros. & Co., Greenville, Illinois (founded in 1892), the Pettibone Manufacturing Company, Cincinnati (1882 circa), and W.E. Floding & Co. of Atlanta, Georgia (1920s-30s) were the largest purveyors of burlesquing tools. Their extensive and far from subliminal marketing declared that having fun in any fraternal organization at the time was a good thing.



⁵ William D. Moore, *Riding the Goat: Secrecy, Masculinity, and Fraternal High-Jinks in the United States* (Winterthur Portfolio 2007 41:2/3, p. 161-188).

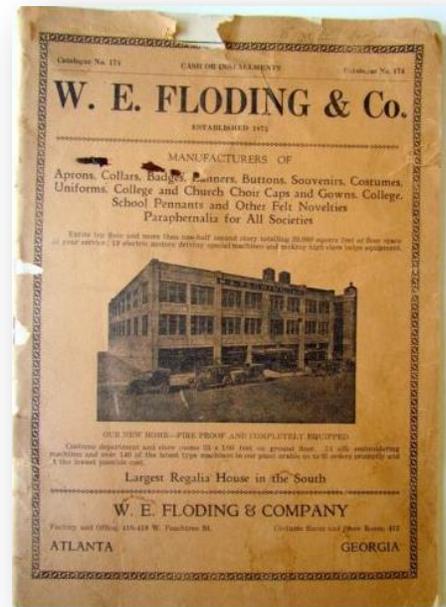
⁶ Gary Growth, Charles Schneider, *Catalog No. 439: Burlesque Paraphernalia and Side Degree Specialties* (Fantagraphics, 2010), Julia Suits. *The Extraordinary Catalog of Peculiar Inventions: The Curious World of Fraternal Lodge Prank Machines - from Human ... Goats to Electric Carpets and Smoking Camels*, and Adam Parfrey, *Ritual America: Secret Brotherhoods and Their Influence on American Society: C. Carnes, Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989); *Brotherhood: Class, Gender and Fraternalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); *Ly Culture, 1880–1930* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); Jason Kaufman, *For the Color: The Golden Age of Fraternity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); John Hamilton, *Material Culture: Museum of Our National Heritage*, 1994); Barbara Franco, ed., *Fraternally Yours: A Decade of National Heritage*, 1986); Barbara Franco, "The Ritualization of Male Friendship and Virtue in Nineteenth-Century Fraternal Organizations," in *The Material Culture of Gender: The Gender of Material Culture*, ed. (Winterthur, DE: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1997), 281–97.

⁷ Harriett W. McBride, *The Golden Age of Fraternalism*, Heredom, Vol. 13, 2005.

Although these three companies dominated the market, there were many smaller supply houses scattered across the nation.⁸ As one writer noted, the big three companies are what would have happened if the Three Stooges had gone into the furniture business.⁹ Wares, however, did not stop at prank furniture. Products included caps, band uniforms, costumes, art, posters, jewelry, swords, badge embossing, and a variety of unique novelties like exploding cigars, the joy buzzer, trick mirrors, uniforms, squirting cameras, electric chairs, aprons, tracing boards, hoodwinks, ballot boxes, flags, and banners, to list but a few of the items in their inventories.

No matter the size of the burlesque tool supply companies, they had no problem identifying buyers or their prime market audience. In 1897 fraternal groups claimed five and a half million members, while the total adult population of the United States was approximately nineteen million. At about the same time, Albert C. Stevens, the compiler of the invaluable *Cyclopedia of Fraternities*, estimated that 40 percent of the adult male population held membership in a fraternal order.¹⁰

Regardless, the “working jacket of a Master Mason,” at least by that description, is not found in the catalogs of the major manufacturers of such supplies of this genre of merchandise. So, back to the original question: How did the working jacket come about and how was it used in Masonic ritual?



FOLLOWING THE TRAIL LEFT BY THE WORKING JACKET

While no specific date or location can be identified as to exactly when the working jacket of a Master Mason was first introduced, we can follow the trail of the times in which the jacket began to appear in writings.

FINDING 1

A sixteen-page, four inches by six-inch pamphlet sold by the Grand Lodge of Kentucky at its 220th Communication in 2019, was a surprising find. There is no author noted, date of publication or printer. The pamphlet is clearly the floor work of the second section of the third Degree – the Legend of the Temple, also known as the Hiram Legend. Although the cover of the pamphlet is blank, a paper taped to the cover for purpose of identifying it for sale, read: “Degree Team.”

At top of page five of the pamphlet we see a line for the Senior Deacon, “*I will now invest you with the working jacket of a M.M.*”

⁸ Moore, p.183.

⁹ Suits, Forworde by David Copperfield.

¹⁰ NOTE: Moore, p.162. In an article in the *North American Review* from 1897, the writer H. S. Harwood reported that fraternal groups claimed five and a half million members, while the total adult population of the United States was approximately nineteenmillion.⁶ At about the same time, Albert C. Stevens, the compiler of the invaluable *Cyclopedia of Fraternities*, estimated that 40 percent of the adult male population held membership in a fraternal order.

One theory of the origin of this booklet suggests it is from 1919 and originated in Louisville, Kentucky.¹¹ This would have been only a few years after the period recognized as the Age of Fraternalism (1870-1910).¹² It is also suspected to have been written by Henry Pirtle, a Kentucky Mason who also authored *The Kentucky Monitor: Complete Monitorial Ceremonies of the Blue Lodge*, published in 1921.¹³



Henry Pirtle

While we do not have any further description from the author as to what a “working jacket of a M.M.” was, it appears to have been freely interpreted as to what it was in the pamphlet and evolved into what is found today.

FINDING 2

The records of a lodge in Kentucky that asked not to be identified in this essay had extensive minutes for review. Although in operation, no minutes of this lodge prior to 1924 are known to exist. It is theoretically possible that the working jacket could have been used prior to 1924. Regardless, the trail of the search for the origins of the working jacket in lodge records starts here.

The 1924 records show the secretary was directed to order a “working jacket to be used in the Master Mason degree.” It is not known if this was the first “working jacket” for the lodge or a replacement.

In 1939 we find “a new one [working jacket] was purchased,” to replace the one used since at least 1924, suggesting, perhaps, that the one acquired in 1924 was unsuitable or had been simply worn out from raisings. Records do not reflect where the jacket was purchased. Interestingly, 1924 was the same year the Master of that lodge called for members to offer suggestions for programs the lodge might develop that “entertained” and “kept members interested” in Freemasonry. Apparently, the work of this lodge was dull and listless at the time, or they forgot the intended purpose of meeting as Freemasons. No matter, the notations correspond with the times when much of Freemasonry was still a casualty of the influence of the Age of Fraternalism, where attending lodge meant performing ritual and the idea of having fun in doing it lingered. Equally as interesting, is that nineteen years later, in 1943, the minutes tell us the lodge was still having discussions at stated communications about what different forms of “entertainment” might increase attendance of its over 500 members. Only one meeting in the preceding eight years was devoted to a Masonic Education presentation. The topic was not included in the minutes.

FINDING 3

At a 1947 anniversary celebration dinner with 185 Masons from around the state present, the lodge was the recipient of a gift from a Louisville Mason of what was described as a “Master Mason’s working jacket.” This entry makes one wonder again, if the jacket from 1939 wore out in just nine years or was otherwise unserviceable. Perhaps a new design was introduced.

In 2016, after at least 92 years since the jacket’s first known reference and use in the lodge - perhaps longer - a motion was made at a regular stated communication to put an end to the use of the jacket. The

¹¹ NOTE: In discussion with Carroll M. Curtis, Past Grand Master of Kentucky, (69-70), he noted that PGM Alpheus E. Orten (23-2 4) informed the pamphlet may have originated from Louisville and that Pirtle may be responsible for the document.

¹² McBride, p.1

¹³ NOTE: Henry Pirtle was a judge in Louisville, Kentucky, one of the founders of the Kentucky Historical Society, past master of Falls City Lodge No. 376 Louisville, a president of the Louisville City National Bank, professor of equity jurisprudence and commercial law in the University of Louisville, associate editor of the Masonic Homes Journal (1918).

motion was unanimously approved. The Master, following a motion, renounced the “working jacket of a Master Mason” and instructed that it be relegated to a closet packed in storage box with other unnecessary remnants of the past.

MORE BACKGROUND

In the section of the 1940 Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky titled, *Decisions*, we find a report on the actions of Grand Master Boswell B. Hodgkin. The report offers other clues relative to not only the use of a jacket but the apparent unruliness of degree work at the time in some lodges. Although he could not answer whether the grand lodge had ruled on what he called “phases of dramatizing the third degree,” he was quite clear when he wrote, “Burlesquing the degree should be absolutely prohibited.”¹⁴ Later, in the same section and in response to a question posed to him, Hodgkin wrote, “With reference to a straight jacket for a degree team, [I] will state that I do not approve of a straight jacket but recommend that an overall coat or its equivalent be used to protect the clothing.”¹⁵

The idea that using a straight jacket even came up as a question is alarming, but so was the last part of Hodgkin’s sentence in which he recommends an overall coat or its equivalent be used “to protect the clothing,” begging the question: Why would a candidate’s clothes need to be “protected” to start with during conferment of a Masonic degree?

While asking the grand master if using a straight jacket in degree work is indeed troubling, the grand master’s comments were confusing because there was no background or clear context given in the Proceedings to the question he was trying to answer. The only thing made clear is that, unsurprisingly, he did not approve of a straight jacket being used in degree work and opposed to burlesquing the degree. Yet, he thought an “overall coat or its equivalent” would be a better solution to whatever the circumstance was. This begs yet another question: Why was anything at all needed?

We can speculate on the answer to that question, but it is plausible that a candidate needed to wear something other than his regular clothing because of the prone position he assumes at one point in the ceremony on the floor of the lodge. That consideration makes sense since suits were considered appropriate dress in lodges, at least prior to the late 1960s and early 1970s, and few would want to lie down on a floor in their best clothes. Another aspect to consider is that lodge room floors were dirty for whatever reason, thus something covering the regular clothes of a candidate might be preferred.

In spite of those two practical possibilities, neither satisfactorily tackle the real subject: Why did anyone even think a straight jacket has a place in a Masonic degree? What plausible reason could there be?

The reason may be found in the success of Pettibone Manufacturing, the DeMoulin Bros., the Folding Co., and many other fraternal supply shops that did so well during the Age of Fraternalism: many members of fraternities were looking for fun and saw no harm in roughhousing with the candidates for their respective Orders.

Grand Master Hodgkin’s comments tell us something else: the grand lodge relied on the good, common sense of their members to regulate behavior during degree work so there were no written guidelines to follow or enforce when it came to burlesquing rituals. It seems there was long-standing over-reliance on

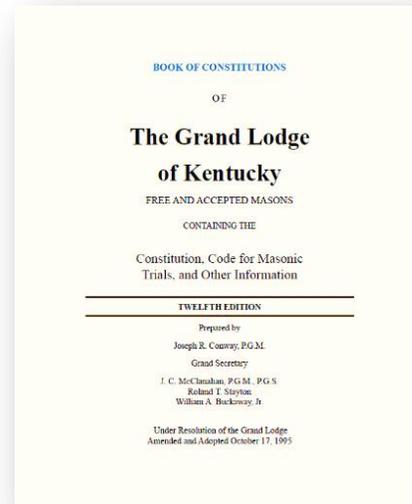
¹⁴ 1940 Proceeding of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, p.66.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p.64.

the expectation that appropriate reverence of the purpose of degree work would simply occur in all lodges. Such an expectation of mature, adult members, especially in an institution like Freemasonry is quite reasonable and laudable of those responsible for behavior, however, it is not as pragmatic as it may seem nor a principle of adequate management and administration.

Thirty-five years later, in the Twelfth Edition of the 1975 Kentucky Constitution, Section 142 appears on page 24 in the under the title, **Degrees** – specifically, **Third Degree**.¹⁶ It reads:

The Second Section of the Third Degree constitutes a most solemn and impressive portion of our ritualistic work. In it we are taught the ultimate lessons of Masonic philosophy—victory over death and the immortality of the soul. Nothing must be allowed to impair the deep impression which should be made upon the mind of the candidate. The Grand Lodge forbids any unnecessary levity, roughness, horseplay, talking, audible laughter, or any other noise which could distract the attention of the candidate. Failure to comply with this provision, or any action by any officer or member in violation or inconsistent with this provision shall constitute grounds for Masonic discipline. Any part of the third degree may be conferred on more than one candidate at the same time, except the Second Section of that degree, which can be conferred on but one at a time.



Since there was no context in 1975 document explaining its appearance, it can be reasonably assumed that behavior in some lodges was not endurable, so a written rule had to be adopted that spelled out appropriate behavior. It is foolish to think this Section was adopted for no reason.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Having witnessed the Master Mason degree delivered and the Legend of the Temple performed in several jurisdictions, it must be noted that solemnity and appropriate Masonic protocol is followed and not absent in all Masonic lodges in Kentucky or elsewhere. There are many conducting their meetings and ritual with dignity, solemnity and without the “ruffianism” and “crudity” to which Anderson refers in the first Constitution.

Important questions remain.

1. **If the working jacket was not in the inventory major suppliers, where was it acquired?**

The item may have been a special-order item that did not warrant listing in the multiple dozens of

¹⁶ **NOTE:** Today the section is called Article 17- Degrees and is noted as Section 5, p.39. On October 17, 1995, the Revised Edition of the Book of Constitutions of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, F.&A.M. was presented to the delegates at the One Hundred Ninety Sixth Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge by the Committee on Jurisprudence (William G. Hinton, P.G.M., Chairman; Elroy Johnson, P.G.M.; and Barber L. Shelton, P. G.M.). It was adopted as presented and amended (Grand Lodge Proceedings 1995, pg. 208) as the Twelfth Edition and is now published as the 1995 Edition.

numbered catalogs issued by the larger supply companies. It is possible none produced, even special order of the jacket, while it is possible smaller companies did, particularly those in Louisville, Kentucky at the time.¹⁷ In the absence of some uniform design of working jackets, it is likely they evolved in use from genuine or modified working jackets or were homemade.

2. Is the use of such a jacket a layover of the merriment of the fraternal age?

There is no reasonable explanation to believe otherwise.

3. Why does the use of the jacket appear to be indigenous to Kentucky?

It does not appear to have been used only in Kentucky. It is only in Kentucky where we find any specific written records of its use. There is a report about an Inspector or Deputy District Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Ohio relaying a 1960-70s account of reprimanding a lodge for using what was described as a “straight jacket.” Another Ohio Mason states a “similar item” was used on him when he was initiated in 1975, but if it was a widespread practice the 1986 edict issued by then Grand Master Hilmer Neumann forbidding hazing likely ended its use. In checking with Masons from Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Texas, and Tennessee, no accounts of the use of a working jacket was reported.

4. What was the purpose of the working jacket?

While it is reasonable to believe, as noted earlier in in this essay, that it may have started as a way to keep candidates from getting their clothes dirty when in the prone position during the second section of the third degree or to protect the regular clothing of a candidate from any damage to his clothes when the working tools are symbolically used in the degree. We know from the experience of members who were vested with a “working jacket of a Master Mason” who are still members today, that some jackets had handles sewn to the sleeves, chest area and back, as well as a belt around the waist, and carried the appearance of a garment for purpose of restraint. We also know from the same sources, that candidates were grabbed, pushed and pulled along when wearing the garment, and from most accounts came the behavior characteristic of possibly well-intentioned, but nonetheless, unnecessary levity, laughter, and a distraction that did not contribute to the solemnity of the occasion. Those accounts indicate the use of the jacket was nothing more than entertainment of those in attendance rather than for the purpose of instruction of the candidate. The very presence of the jacket signals an atmosphere of levity and casualness to the solemnity expected in a Masonic lodge room.

Lodges continuing to use the jacket anywhere in the United States may say, it is used because it is “traditional” to do so in their lodge. If records exist for such a lodge, it is doubtful if they could find reference to that claim prior to the Age of Fraternalism. The fact that such a garment is not mentioned in the most popular of the Masonic exposes` of the 18th and 19th century where one would expect to find such a disclosure, is another reason to point the finger of blame to attitude and subsequent thinking that lodge or our ritual are designed to be fun.

¹⁷ **NOTE:** Correspondence from Dan M. Kemble to author on October 30, 2019: *Before becoming Master of the Lodge of Research, I went to the Grand Lodge library to review copies of the Masonic Home Journal to try to find articles either about William O. Ware or written by William O. Ware. I recall that during my search, I saw at least one advertisement in the Home Journal for “working jackets.” I don’t recall if they could be purchased through the Grand Lodge, or from a local regalia company. I do remember that they were advertised as “genuine canvas.” I also recall that the ad said that “only a few are left.*

According to veteran Masons in a Kentucky lodge where the jacket was in use prior to the 1970s, the origins of the jacket was never explained to them, so it was assumed by these veteran Masons and other members that its use was part of the sanctioned practices of Freemasonry. The “working jacket of a Master Mason,” became yet another example of those things that become part of practices that have been merely passed one from generation to generation without explanation or awareness of origin.

A comment from another veteran Mason in the same jurisdiction where the jacket was used, tells us something more about the lack of explanation not only about the jacket but how such an item is confused with what historically Freemasonry is designed to be, and what underprovided instruction and understanding of our ritual produces. When the member was asked why candidates were approached in such a physically aggressive manner by the brothers playing the roles of the three men who are referred to “ruffians,” confront the character of Hiram Abiff, he said, “Isn’t it obvious? Our ritual calls them ruffians so they should approach and treat candidates roughly.”¹⁸

While our fraternity encourages well-grounded speculation by its members, it does not encourage unlearned guesswork. Those interpretations represent the quintessential example of the lack of Masonic education in too many of our lodges. Since 1975 it also represents a violation of the Constitution in Kentucky.¹⁹

The “working jacket of a Master Mason” in American Freemasonry is a mere prop and distraction from what is supposed to be a revered experience in our ritual. Once something like this passed on with no contextual explanation, it becomes tomorrow’s “tradition.” Serious minded Masons today agree, the only value of the jacket today is as a relic – a reminder of a time when the intended aim and purpose of Freemasonry began to drift.

¹⁸ **NOTE:** The word ruffian has nothing to do with roughness of being rough. The word originates from Italian (rofia, ruffiano) meaning scab or scurf, which is thought to be of Germanic origin. In Middle French (rufien), the word describes one who is a panderer, swaggerer, turbulent and unsettled. The word in early Scottish Gaelic refers to a low, worthless fellow or one of valueless character. Later our understanding of the word evolved into a fitting description of a ruthless fellow, ready for any desperate enterprise or crime.

¹⁹ The Grand Lodge of Kentucky Free and Accepted Masons, Containing the Constitution, Code for Masonic Trials, and Other Information, Twelfth Edition, Prepared by Joseph R. Conway, P.G.M. Grand Secretary, J. C. McClanahan, P.G.M., P.G.S. Roland T. Stayton, William A. Buckaway, Jr. Under Resolution of the Grand Lodge Amended and Adopted October 17, 1995: SECTION 142 - THIRD DEGREE. *The Second Section of the Third Degree constitutes a most solemn and impressive portion of our ritualistic work. In it we are taught the ultimate lessons of Masonic philosophy—victory over death and the immortality of the soul. Nothing must be allowed to impair the deep impression which should be made upon the mind of the candidate. The Grand Lodge forbids any unnecessary levity, roughness, horseplay, talking, audible laughter, or any other noise which could distract the attention of the candidate. Failure to comply with this provision, or any action by any officer or member in violation or inconsistent with this provision shall constitute grounds for Masonic discipline. Any part of the third degree may be conferred on more than one candidate at the same time, except the Second Section of that degree, which can be conferred on but one at a time.* **NOTE:** The 7th Edition of Constitution in 1927 does not address levity. The 8th Edition in 1947 does not address levity. Levity is addressed in the 1975 Constitution – a major re-write – where all “Regulations” became “Declarations.” Section 142 noted above is in the 12th Edition of the Constitution adopted on October 17, 1995.