

THE OCCASIONAL BULLETIN

July 2023 Number 2

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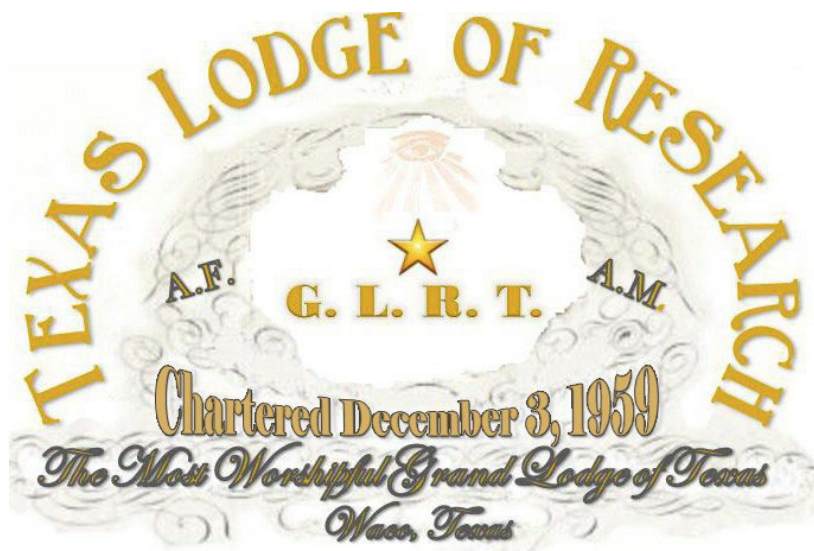
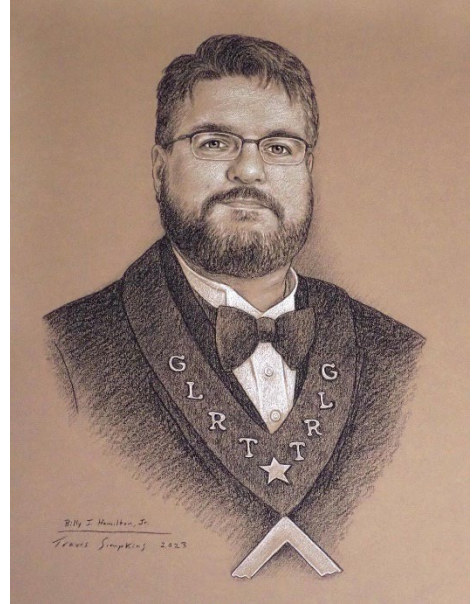
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Worshipful Master Billy Hamilton

“The benefits of education and of useful knowledge, generally diffused through a community, are essential to the preservation of a free government.”

-Sam Houston

Brethren, I would like to thank everyone who came to Fort Worth for our June stated meeting and 2023 Anson Jones Lecture. Our speaker this year was Dr. Ric Berman, who gave a fantastic presentation on the 1723 Andersons Constitutions and the (then) revolutionary statements they made. It must be remembered that when it was published, society was still very stratified and divided by religious sectarianism, and concepts such as social mobility and the equality of all men were novel ideas. Andersons Constitutions asserted that Freemasons welcome men of all faiths and economic backgrounds and that nobility and common men, rich and poor alike, come together to meet in all lodges as equals. These ideas reverberated, and as the book was copied and disseminated through the literate masses of Europe and the Americas, had a marked impact on Western society. I am very excited to see the presentation included in the Transactions for the year.

At the meeting, our Transactions editor, PM Schlaudroff, advised that he is hard at work to catch up with the publication of our pending Transactions. The hope is to have at least one to the printer by the time of our September stated meeting, with the others following as soon as possible.

Since our March stated meeting, I have traveled to visit some of our sister research lodges. On 25 March, I visited Oklahoma Lodge of Research at their meeting in Tahlequah. I am excited to report that those brethren are doing good work, and most of the meeting was dedicated to planning their recent Red River MasoniCon. Among their speakers at that event were three full members of Texas Lodge of Research, including two past Anson Jones Lecturers. On 29 April, I attended the Research Lodge of Colorado in Denver. The meeting was followed by a superb festive board, and the fellowship continued at a local establishment with lots of great conversation.

Finally, I attended the 11 May stated meeting of Quatuor Coronati in London and the presentation of the 2022 Prestonian Lecture before the lodge. I was greeted with warmth and compliments on the work that we are doing in Texas. Worshipful Master O'Neill commented that several of their members are also members of Texas Lodge of Research. The dinner following the meeting was held at a tavern directly across the street from Freemasons' Hall, and the first toast of the evening was to the newly crowned King Charles III. It was a fantastic evening, and if you have never visited Quatuor Coronati, I encourage you to do so.

It is with great pride that I end my report with an observation that the TLR apron is instantly recognizable wherever I have traveled. It is a testament to the tremendous effort put into the research and vetting of our papers and transactions. Our lodge has built a great reputation through the efforts of our Past Masters, full members, and committees. And

with the committed brethren we have in our present lodge, I am sure that standing will continue into the foreseeable future. Safe travels, and I hope to see you all in Fredericksburg for our September stated meeting!

Junior Warden Kenneth L. Cochran

If you are a member of the Texas Lodge of Research and have not presented a paper, we strongly encourage you to write one. The first thing to do is to pick out a subject. While we prefer that it be on Texas Masonry, it can be on any Masonic topic. There is a list of the previous papers that have been presented titled “All Members Papers” near the bottom on the “Research Paper” tab on the TLR website (texaslodgeofresearch.org/research-paper/). You can review this list to get an idea for your topic.

Another idea for a topic is to write a history of a lodge – it can be yours or some other lodge. Writing a paper on the career of a past Grand Master is also a possibility. For example, there is no paper on the life of Sam P. Cochran (no relation) who was Grand Master in 1912 and was extremely active in virtually all the auxiliary branches of Masonry as well as being heavily involved in the activities of the Grand Lodge of Texas until his death in 1936.

Did you know that there were two brothers who were both Grand Masters? W. S. Fly was Grand Master in 1889 and his brother W. Madden Fly was Grand Master in 1903. They were both members of Gonzales Lodge No. 30 and Madden, in particular was very active in the Grand Lodge long after he was Grand Master. Reference material on past Grand Masters can be found in the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Texas and other materials in the Grand Lodge Library.

Once you have selected a topic, the next step is to complete and submit the “Notice of Intention” (NOI) which lists the topic and some of your anticipated research sources. The NOI can be downloaded on the “Research Paper” tab of the TLR website. The editorial committee will review this and let you know if your subject has been approved. If it is, you need to download and read the “TLR Form and Style Manuel”, which is also on the “Research Paper” tab of the website. This document presents in detail the form that your paper needs to be prepared. Good luck to everyone and I look forward to seeing you in Fredericksburg in September.

Secretary Truitt L. Bradly, PM

Texas Lodge of Research members can now order directly from Eternity Creations at sales@eternitycreations.com. The cost for a name badge is \$23.50. If you have had a change of address and have not let me know, please email me or send me a note to the Lodge mailing address: P.O. Box 686, Hereford, Texas 79045-0686.



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Transactions Update:

- Volumes LI and LII should be distributed soon.
- Reprints of Vol. III are available for \$30 from the Secretary.
- The reprint of Vol IV should be ready soon.

TRESTLE BOARD

<p><i>September 16, 2023</i> Hosted by Fredericksburg Lodge No. 794, Fredericksburg, Texas</p>	<p><i>December 16, 2023</i> Galveston, Texas (More details to be announced at a later date)</p>
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2023 ANSON JONES APRON PRESENTATION



Pictured Left to Right:
Russell C. Brown (SW), Dr. Ric Berman, Billy Hamilton (WM)

Sam Houston: His Alabama Connections

Wayne E. Sirmon
PM, Texas Lodge of Research
Grand Representative of Texas near Alabama

As the only non-Texan to serve as Master of TLR, I enjoy looking for connections between Texas and my home state of Alabama. These connections include Master Masons such as William Travis, James Bonham, R. E. B. Baylor and A. C. Horton. While not a Mason when in Alabama, we may add to the list Marabeau Lamar. Less known to non-Masons are men such as Dugald McFarland.

Frequently overlooked are the strong connections between Sam Houston and Alabama. While never a resident of the "Heart of Dixie", Houston's life was strongly influenced by his activities while traveling through that state. Even brief histories of his life mention his role at the March 27, 1814 Battle of Horseshoe Bend. This battle was the capstone of General (and Brother) Andrew Jackson's campaign against the Creek Indians, and the U. S. victory led to the Treaty of Fort Jackson signed on August 9. During the battle at Horseshoe Bend, Third Lieutenant Sam Houston, although severely wounded, was the first to breach the Creek defensive barricade. This action was noticed by General Jackson who recognized Houston's potential for greatness and befriended his fellow Tennessean. Guided by the future President and Grand Master, Houston would be elected to the U. S. House of Representatives in 1823 and Governor of Tennessee in 1827.

It is reasonable to assume Jackson also influenced Houston to petition Cumberland Lodge No. 8 in 1817. By the time of Houston's initiation, the only lodge in the Nashville area was Cumberland, and it is assumed Jackson's membership was with this lodge. Brother Houston would later serve as Worshipful Master.

In 1839, between Houston's two terms as president of the Republic of Texas he planned to visit Tennessee and his route took him through Mobile, Alabama. While there he was publicized land development at Sabine Pass and met with Martin A. Lea, the brother of Houston's future wife Margaret. Martin Lea then introduced Houston to William Bledsoe, a local businessman and husband of Martin's sister Antoinette. This resulted in Houston being invited to a garden party where he would discuss the real estate opportunity with Nancy Lea, the widowed matriarch of the Lea family. Seeing good prospects in Texas, she, along with daughter Antoinette and son-in-law William, would relocate to Galveston.

As fruitful as this meeting was, the most important outcome was Houston's introduction to twenty year old Margaret Moffette Lea. During the next few weeks Houston was totally smitten by the girl described as "fascinating with graces and virtues," tall, with beautiful dark brown hair and "arresting violet eyes." While he proposed immediate marriage and she had been swept off her feet by the military hero and father of the new country of Texas, her mother implemented numerous delaying tactics. Those only delayed the wedding until May 9 of the next year in her home in Marion, Alabama.

A final connection demonstrates the Masonic side of Houston at the December 6, 1849 annual communication of the Grand Lodge of Alabama. Learning Houston would be in Montgomery, a committee was appointed to “tender to him the invitation of the Grand Lodge to a seat during this communication.” That evening at 9 pm, Bro. Houston was “announced and received with due honors, and took a seat in the Grand Lodge.”

For further reading

In addition to the hundreds of books and articles detailing the life of Sam Houston and several biographies of Margaret Lea Houston, there have been two TLR papers focusing on Houston. One is a general historical sketch while the second details events surrounding Houston and Santa Anna.

Acker, Clifford L., “A Masonic Myth Explored,” *Transactions Texas Lodge of Research*, Vol. XXIX (1993-1995): 165-186.

Tidwell, Donovan D., “Sam Houston – Freemason,” *Transactions Texas Lodge of Research*, Vol. III (1965-68—1968): 317-334.

Editor Cody M. Cockroft

I hope you are enjoying your reading of the July Edition of the Occasional Bulletin. There is much energy within and about our Lodge and it is noteworthy to understand that our leadership is carrying our banner before us.

Following is a brief article about the Cable Tow, written by Stan Shapiro, Grand Lodge Education Officer of the Grand Lodge of Minnesota. I would encourage you to reflect upon your Station as a Mason and what the symbolic meaning of the Cable Tow means to you. For me – it is a symbol of action, much like that of the Beehive.

The Cable Tow

“How long is your cabletow? It’s as long as you want it to be. It will reach as far as your moral principles go, or your material conditions will allow.”---The Craft And Its Symbols ----Allen Roberts

As Masons we cheerfully agree to abide by our obligations and promises that we took at the altar in each degree. The cable tow is an integral symbol that is part of each degree’s impact on the Mason’s conscience. We learn about the cable tow in the first degree, and it is reinforced in each additional degree a Brother will experience. An important question about this singular item is how the cable tow has been defined by different sources, depending on their interpretation of the degree.

MasonicDictionary.com indicates that the cable tow “represents the candidate’s bond to

his guide". The Masonic Dictionary maintained by masonicworld.com indicates that the length of the cable tow is symbolically measured to be three miles in the early years to go to the relief of a brother in need but "in present time it is usually considered about forty miles." These definitions are just words that an individual has made based on their personal beliefs and experiences.

In the early years, 1700's up to mid-1900's, most members of a lodge would live in close proximity to their Masonic Temple which would be consistent with a three mile cable tow. The lodge was an integral part of the local community and being able to attend Lodge Communications was essential to Masons. In the present time, members are not solely from a specific town for the lodge they belong to, but rather they can many times be from surrounding communities, driving considerable distances to attend the different functions. They have chosen to be involved with a specific Lodge for a personal reason or a specific Lodge is involved in an activity that is of interest and importance to the Mason. To better understand the length of a cable tow, we must understand the give and take a cable tow experiences and what the cable tow represents.

A cable tow consists of two separate ends connected together by a cord. One end of the cable tow is representing the individual Mason while the other end is representing the Fraternity or Lodge. When examining the cable tow, it is impossible to tell where one end starts and the other end begins. It is this fluid change that occurs while examining the cable tow from one end to another that sets Masonry apart from any other fraternal organization. The cable tow reminds each Mason of his obligations and promises to the lodge while at the same time representing the Lodge and the Fraternity's (Members of the Lodge) obligations to a Brother. How Masons fulfill their obligations differ based on their individual beliefs and interpretations.

What act or acts fulfills a Mason's obligations can vary greatly and may be as simple as a having a conversation with a brother or it could be more important and impacting such as providing emotional and even financial support of a Brother who is in need of assistance, or to the family of a brother who is called by the Grand Architect of the Universe to that house not made with hands...the celestial Lodge above. It is important to remember that the length of a Mason's cable tow is ultimately set by the individual Mason and cannot be truly judged by any other individual. When three miles may be the proper length of a cable tow for one Mason, another Mason's cable tow may be hundreds or even thousands of miles in length. Each length is determined by the individual's moral principles, beliefs, and their particular individual circumstances. Ultimately, a Mason will pass judgment on himself based on the aid they have provided to others, but more especially a Brother Mason. A quote I like that I believe is fitting when looking at your cable tow is: *"When looking at the reflection in the mirror, do you like what you see based on what you have done and what you have not done?"*

Masonry is a progressive science that helps to take good men and make them better, but it is not the lodge alone that will help to make them better. Each Mason must work toward the goal of making himself better.

By remembering our obligations and having a cable tow that is of appropriate length for providing aid and relief, Masons, with the help of the Lodge, will succeed in becoming better men to their families and to their communities.



So Mote It Be

By: Truitt L. Bradly, PM (re-print)

Four little words. Four short words that are used multiple times in every well-regulated lodge every time the lodge is opened or closed.

Definition of MOTE¹: archaic: may, might

Origin of MOTE: Middle English, from Old English mōtan to be allowed to — more at must

First Known Use: before 12th century.

If you search for So Mote It Be using a search engine on the internet, you get everything from Masonic references to Neo-Paganism and Wicca and references to tattoos. So Mote It Be is used by the occult? The results of a Bing.com search included an article by Dawn Gribble writes that “the founder of Wicca, a nature-based religion popularized in 1954 by Gerald Gardner may have been a Freemason. ... Whether Gardner was a Mason is unclear, however given the influence of the people that he spent time with, it would appear that the use of the phrase So Mote It Be in Wicca is derived from Masonic rituals.”² It is

¹ "Mote." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 28 Jan. 2014. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mote>>.

² Spirituality: So Mote It Be. ArticleBiz.com. Dawn Gribble, Web. 28 Jan. 2014. <<http://www.articlebiz.com/article/157304-1-so-mote-it-be/>>

used by the occult, but they borrowed it from Masons.

A Masonic related article from the same search is ***So Mote It Be*** written by an unknown author and published in ***SHORT TALK BULLETIN – Vol. V June 1927 No. 6***. The article explains quite well the Masonic use of the phrase and why it is used and should be a good article to share with others.³

The reason I choose this for a topic really has nothing to do with the meaning of the words, but rather the sound made at a large gathering of Masons when those four little words are spoken. There is something special about how these words resonate from a large groups of Masons after prayer. Next time you are in a large group of Masons, such as at Grand Lodge or attending a Masonic banquet, notice how the masculine voices join, sometimes it is almost as if they were a single voice, when saying So Mote It Be. Even in church, where the congregants say Amen after prayer, the sound doesn't converge quite the same. It may have something to do with the congregation having a more diverse range of voices since it includes female voices, instead of mostly the lower male voices in a Masonic gathering.

Whatever the cause, the sound of your brethren speaking those four little words, "So Mote It Be," is a sound to treasure. Listen for it next time you are praying with a large group of Masons, listen and enjoy the resonating sounds.

Reflection from the editor:

This short article speaks volumes. Words matter in our Craft and in our society. But like the ritual, it is how the words are delivered that differentiates mediocracy from greatness; from mundane to excitement. Words, when backed with solemnity and passion, delivers energy and engagement. Consider the word "Behold" in Psalms 133 and Amos 7:7. If we understand the significance of the word, perhaps our recital of the word during the respective circumambulations would deliver better quality.

³ "SO MOTE IT BE." MasonicWorld.com, Web. 28 Jan. 2014.
<http://www.masonicworld.com/education/files/artoct02/so_mote_it_be.htm>.



Petition for Membership Texas Lodge of Research

Any Master Mason who is a member in good standing of a regular Texas lodge, or of a jurisdiction in fraternal relations with the Grand Lodge of Texas, shall be eligible to become a member of Texas Lodge of Research upon being proposed by a Full Member of Texas Lodge of Research and elected by a majority vote of the members present at a meeting of the lodge.

The proposed member shall furnish the lodge Secretary with a copy of his current dues card, or a Certificate of Good Standing, and a photo identification (a photocopy is acceptable) with the petition. Membership will continue so long as the member is in good standing in a regular Texas lodge, or of a lodge in a jurisdiction in fraternal relations with the Grand Lodge of Texas, and the annual dues are current.

Full Name: _____ Texas Member ID No: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____ Work: _____ Fax: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____

Name & Number of Subordinate Lodge: _____

Lodge City: _____ Lodge State/Country: _____

Grand Lodge of _____ List additional lodge memberships, if any, on reverse side.

Past Master of a subordinate lodge: _____ Current Grand Master: _____ Past Grand Master: _____

Petitioner's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Recommendation of a Full Member of Texas Lodge of Research

Full Member Printed Name: _____

Full Member's Signature: _____

Membership Dues are \$35 per calendar year and are payable in advance.

Electronic Payments can be made at: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/TexasLodgeOfResearch>

Endowed Memberships are \$500 payable to Texas Lodge of Research

Mail petition with \$35 check, a copy of your current dues card, and a copy of a photo ID to:

Texas Lodge of Research, PO Box 686, Hereford, TX 79045-0686



2023 – 2024 Officers of Texas Lodge of Research

(left to right: Erickson Ybarra, Chris Galloway, David Hill, Russell Brown, Billy Hamilton, Ken Cochran, Mark Dermitt, Truitt Bradly, Tyler Rowe, Chuck Springer, Cody Webb, Stephen Moore)