

THE MYSTERIOUS LETTER "G"

A Humorous Short Story

by

Charles T. Addis, PM

I found that, as I grew up on my grandfather's farm in Habersham, Georgia, at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, just below the Tennessee line, strange and mysterious things surrounded me. Like, for example, the mystery of the cows knowing just the right time to come back to the pasture gate for milking each evening. Or why "If it thunders before noon, it'll rain before dark." Or why "If the wind's from the east, the fishing's the least, and if the wind's from the west, the fishing's the best." Although I was a hungry-for-knowledge nine-year-old boy, I found that many things had no explanation. They were cloaked in ominous secrecy, known only to some long-forgotten author, or to nature itself.

But of all the abstruseness that surround me, the most intriguing was the prominent display of an emblem painted in striking green on the bright white gable of my grandfather's house. This painting of a carpenter's square and a draftsman's compasses surrounding a capital letter "G" could be seen from as far away as the county road a quarter of a mile from the house. The square and compasses was easy for my acute nine-year-old mind to discern. It had to be that Grandpa was proud of his work in designing and building the house, so he announced his accomplishment to the world by painting the emblem in the most prominent part of the house. That told everyone that he was a proud master builder. But why the letter "G"? That was easy. It stood for Grandpa.

"Not so," said my Aunt Inez, when I proudly boasted of my interpretation. "That's a Mason's sign." Right away, that started the wheels turning in my mind. Mason? I knew some people by the name of Mason who lived over in the mill village, but why would Grandpa want to put their sign on his house? Another mystery to tax my youthful mind. I finally determined that Mr. Mason must have helped Grandpa build the house, and Grandpa, a fair and generous man, had put their sign on the gable of the house in gratitude for the assistance. But, to let everyone know it was his house, he put the big letter "G" (which I was still convinced stood for Grandpa) in the middle to show who was in charge and who the house belonged to. But just to be sure I was right, I asked Aunt Inez, who had painted the sign. "Why? Why did Grandpa want that Mason's sign painted on his house?" "It's to keep them there Yankees from a-burning the house," she replied. Now, that worried me. This was the 1940's. Was there still a danger that the Yankees might burn the house? I decided to ask no more questions and went about nature's business of growing up.

Many years later, and many miles from the little farm in Habersham, I noticed a ring on the finger of a good friend. It had the same emblem on it as was on my

grandpa's house! I was amazed! Was Grandpa's work known even here... even now? It was then that I learned that the emblem of the square and compasses enclosing a capital letter "G" was the symbol of the Masonic Fraternity. Although I didn't know why it contained the square and compasses, at least I knew what they were used for. But there was still the question. What did the letter "G" stand for?

Some time later, after curiosity had prompted me to ask a friend about the Masonic Fraternity, I petitioned the lodge and was about to receive the Entered Apprentice degree ... the initiation, they called it ... I felt I had finally solved the mystery of the "G". I was told that I would have to ride a goat during the initiation. So, that was it. The "G" stood for goat, the goat I would have to ride during the initiation. I lost all interest in pursuing the question of the meaning of the letter "G" the evening I went to the lodge for initiation. There were two candidates that night... an older gentleman and myself. The older gentleman was chosen to receive the degree first. I waited anxiously, and somewhat nervously, in the hallway outside the door with a man armed with a sword. A sword?! Now, that bothered me. That fellow looked serious. I racked my mind, trying to remember if I had read of an instance where someone in town had been run through by a sword. I hadn't. I studied on that for a bit, but soon dropped the thought when the old man sat down beside me and leaned the sword against the wall between us. Surely, I thought, with that lackadaisical attitude, he had no intention of using it. I finally concluded that it had to be just a ceremonial prop.

Somewhat relieved, I sat in silence, but still anticipating all sorts of things that might be going on inside. I strained to try to hear of what I thought would be the clatter of a goat's hooves behind that closed door. I was suddenly surprised by a loud knock on the door from the inside. Jolted from his resting position, the old man quickly grabbed the sword, jumped up, and hurried over to the door to answer the knock. The door swung open. A voice from inside said, "Here, this belongs to Brother," (he called the first candidate's name). Put it on the shelf with his hat for him. He'll get it later." The temptation to try to see inside the room was abated by what was handed through the door. It was a glass of water, and at the bottom of the glass, rolling gently in pitiful motion from side to side, sadly staring at me during the tumbles, was an eye! An eye! They took his eye! The eye! I had seen that somewhere too, but it had also remained a mystery. Did this allude to that? Was this what's behind one of the other mysteries I had not yet solved, The All-Seeing Eye? Were they thinking of doing that to me, too? I tried to shrug it off, but they had said it belonged to the candidate. It was his. He's still inside and it's out here in the glass of water.

I suddenly had the urge to visit the restroom, which fortunately, was downstairs. I didn't stop until I got home

(Continued on Page 4, bottom)

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Dear Brethren:

Your help is needed for our hospitalized troops. When Masons come together in support of a cause, it can be a powerful thing.

I have the privilege of writing about how you can help today. If this were a news report, it would be a story about a vital effort: bolstering our Masonic network of support for wounded troops in our military Hospital Visitation Program. **The Green Envelope Appeal** is essential to the support of Masons volunteering their time and effort.

If ever a news story carried importance, this one does. It's **an appeal to your generosity and patriotism.**

Our brotherhood has been at the forefront of support for our wounded veterans since the formation of the Masonic Service Association in 1919. Masons have been volunteering to visit America's wounded troops during the intervening wars and we continue our presence in numerous VA and military hospitals. It's our way of letting these young men and women know how much we care for them and their sacrifices. We work to build their morale and sustain their resolve to mend and return to the society they have chosen to defend.

Brother Masons visit these hospitals to the tune of some 200,000 volunteer hours each year. Not every member of our fraternity is able to be present in a hospital room but each of us has the chance to **be there in spirit by contributing to the Green Envelope Appeal.**

Masons at work, coming together, supporting our troops and honoring their patriotism. Please make checks payable to:

Masonic Service Association "GREEN ENVELOPE"
8120 Fenton Street
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Most sincerely and fraternally,



David C. Goodnow
CNN anchor/editor (Ret)



(Brother Goodnow is a member of Vincennes Lodge #1, Vincennes, IN; and Nelms Lodge #343 in Symrna, GA.
He also serves on the Masonic Information Center Steering Committee)

"MASONS CARE AND WILL ALWAYS BE THERE"

**Contributions are tax deductible. Thanks for your participation.*

MASONIC WORDS

Solution: 12 Letters

A P R O N O I T A S N E P S I D E
S E N I O R W A R D E N A W O C V
Y R O G E L L A N D M A R K I O I
N T D E D I C A T I O N T T I N T
O C I T S Y M O S A I C N G I S A
M O U N T A I N S D N E G E L E R
E L W A R E G U L A R T F A R C E
R U O R I E A N S P L U M B G R P
E M L R T T T A P T A E S K N A O
C N L A U N E A R A I S E R O T N
S T E W A R D G R A N D S O L I O
M I F R L E G A G F O R M W B O C
E L G P R U D E N C E L L A O N A
L E T E F O R T I T U D E T I R E
B R T E M P E R A N C E T I M E D
M N O I T A C I N U M M O C I O N
E R E T S A M L U F P I H S R O W

ALLEGORY
APRON
CEREMONY
COLUMN
COMMUNICATION
CONSECRATION
COWAN
CRAFT
DEACON
DEDICATION
DEMIT
DISPENSATION
EMBLEM
ENTERED APPRENTICE
FELLOW

FORM
FORTITUDE
FRATERNITY
GAGE
GATE
GRAND
GRANT
LANDMARK
LEGEND
MOSAIC
MOUNTAINS
MYSTIC
OBLONG
OPERATIVE
PARK

PASSWORD
PLUMB
PRUDENCE
RAISE
REGULAR
RITE
RITUAL
SEAT
SENIOR WARDEN
SIGN
STEWARD
TEMPERANCE
TILER
WARRANT
WORK
WORSHIPFUL MASTER

RULES FOR PLAY:

You must *circle each of the letters* in each of the words listed above contained in the puzzle. Then line out the word found from the list. **Do NOT BLACK or BLOT out** the letters in the puzzle as each letter may be used in a different word also. When all the words have been lined through, you should then have 12 letters left in the puzzle which have not been circled. Write down **these letters only**, from upper left to lower right and this will spell out the word which is the answer! You should know you have the right answer, because it is something that ALL Lodges have once a year. **Good Luck!**

October's answer: CANDIDATES

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You feel stuck with your debt if you can't budge it

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RP 08-05

"Happy Holidays"

(From Page 1)

and I certainly didn't talk about the experience with my wife. When asked how the initiation went, I laconically replied, "Fine, just fine." My friend, from whom I had asked the petition for the lodge, visited me the next day. When asked why I didn't stay for the degree, I answered that I had a stomach problem and had suddenly felt the urge. It wasn't exactly a lie. He smiled as he asked if I had seen the eye that they had sent out. I didn't lie about that. He said that was very unusual, for the candidate had just one good eye, and had just recently been fitted with a glass eye, which he had not become accustomed to. Somehow, during the degree it came out and fell onto the floor. Of course he couldn't put the eye that had rolled on the floor back into the socket, so he asked the secretary to place it in a glass of water and put it near his hat outside until after the degree. I was relieved by the explanation and agreed to return to the lodge the following week for my initiation.

It didn't take long to disprove the theory about the goat, but the experience of the degree had once again taxed my mind about the letter "G"... this time with ardent determination to get to the bottom of it. I was a Mason and I felt it was not only time to get to the truth, but it was my duty. Some of the answers I toyed with seemed to make sense, and, in my mind, could have been correct. After taking the first degree, I thought the answer could have been that the letter "G" stands for "Great." I mean, after all, it was a great fraternity. Then, from the impression the second degree made on me, "Glorious" would have also been appropriate. Or, after the third degree, maybe it was "Grand." Still, another thought was, judging from the age of most of the

members of the lodge, especially the Past Masters, I might have been right all along. That letter "G" really could stand for "Grandpa."

The second degree brought me into more light and finally to the conclusion of my long search to solve the mystery of enigmatic letter "G." As a Mason, and after getting to know the brothers of the lodge, the friendship, the morality, and the brotherly love exemplified by each of them, I knew I had finally found the right answer. It stood all things that are good - the Supreme Good. Still there was somewhat of a mystery surrounding it. You see, I think it should be a double "G", because there is no longer a question in my mind about the meaning of that letter "G." Notwithstanding any other allegory given to it, it certainly would be appropriate that the ubiquitous letter "G" simply stood for... "Good Guys."

The above article was provided to our secretary by one WB Gerald W. Brooks, who stated that it had been printed in the Summer 2008 edition of the Texas Mason. He thought this would be a good article for our newsletter. Brother Brooks is a member of the Missouri Lodge of Research (MLR), a member of two Lodges, a 33° Scottish Rite Mason, a member of York Rite Bodies and a Shriner. He enjoys our newsletter.

We were not able to track down WB Charles T. Addis, the author.