

York Rite American Freemasonry From Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor

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The information contained in this talk is derived from Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor, which is their guide to the three symbolic degrees of the ancient Rite.

This ritual also contains the degrees of Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master and the Royal Arch. There is no date on this ritual but appears to be about 50 years old.

This publication must have been available to the public, for it states the purpose of this work is not so much to gratify the curiosity of the uninitiated, as to furnish a guide to the new members of the order, by means of which their progress from grade to grade may be facilitated.

It would be observed through reading it, that the uninitiated would not have sufficient information to gain admission to a Lodge.

Let us look at some of the differences between their Lodges and ours.

1. Their Lodges require seven Freemasons (as do ours) but theirs with six entered apprentices and one Master Mason can initiate a candidate.
2. They meet once a month, as do ours, but special meetings are held as often as required, even every night of the week if necessary.
3. The Master, Wardens and Deacons are placed the same as ours but the treasurer sits at a table to the right of the Master with the secretary at the left of the Master at another table.
4. The Master's throne is on a small square, three-stepped dais.
5. The candidate moves on an oval circuit not a square.
6. The Deacons when risen, have their wands at all times with the top at about 45 degrees forward.
7. Members and visitors enter through a door to the right of the Senior Warden while the candidate enters on the left of the Senior Warden, directly from the preparation room.
8. All normal business at a regular meeting is done in the third degree. None but Master Masons and above can be in attendance.
9. At the time of receiving a petition an inquiry committee of three is appointed to look into the character of the candidate.
10. Upon reception of the report a ballot is held.
11. They require only one black ball for rejection.
12. No business is done in the first degree except to initiate a candidate.
13. Similarly in the second degree.
14. The Worshipful Master always wears a hat when presiding over his Lodge but not on visitations.
15. No mention is made of how many officers are needed to make an entered apprentice but five can pass a fellowcraft. They are the W.M., the Wardens and the Deacons.
16. Three Master Masons can constitute and open a Masters Lodge but there are generally seven there.
17. They do not have an Inner Guard.
18. Their Tyler wears a jewel of two crossed swords like our inner guard.
19. Their first-degree Lodge is called the floor. The second degree is called the middle chamber and the third degree, the sanctum Sanctorum.
20. The Tyler, on admission of the visitors gives one knock if in the first degree, two if in the second, and three if in the third.

21. The Junior Deacon admits visitors and candidates.
 22. The Tyler reminds visitors in which degree the Lodge is open, as does the Junior Deacon as they pass him.
 23. The Altar is in the centre of the Lodge.
 24. Visitors advance to the centre, west of the altar and give the due guard and the sign of the degree in which the Lodge is open.
 25. There are three due guards, one for each degree.
First degree: Two hands one under one over.
Second degree one hand on and one the hailing sign.
Third degree two hand both on, all followed by the sign of the degree.
 26. The home Lodge supplies the aprons for visitors.
 27. All officers wear a yoke as different from our Officers collars (An oval shape)
 28. The Tyler's sword is with the W.M. until he is about to open the lodge. His first question is, "is the Tyler present? If so, let him approach the East." He then answers the question usually put to our Junior Warden. He is presented with the sword by the WM and retires to his position.
 29. The Lodges may be opened directly in any one of the degrees.
 30. The WM repeats a passage of scripture: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for the Brethren to dwell together in unity, etc". "Amen So mote it be" all brethren. The Lodge is then declared open.
 31. The Senior Deacon attends the to the book on the Altar.
 32. The minutes of the Lodge should be read at the close of each meeting, so that the Brethren may suggest any alterations or additions, and then at the beginning of the next meeting, they may be confirmed.
 33. **First order** of business is any petitions.
Second order of business Petitions are read.
Third order of business committee reports.
Fourth order of business any ballots will be proceeded with.
Fifth order of business degree work.
Sixth order of business any unfinished business.
Seventh order of business any other lawful business.
- EA Degree**
34. The candidate's preparation in the first degree is similar to ours but the cable tow hangs down the front.
 35. The candidate is brought into the Lodge from the preparation room by the Junior Deacon and is stopped by the Senior Deacon using one point of the compasses, which he has brought, from the Altar. After the questions he is taken over by the Senior Deacon, the Junior Deacon returns to his seat.
 36. The obligation is similar to ours but using some different phraseology. ie I will not print, paint, stamp, stain, carve, mark, engrave.
 37. After the obligation the brethren gather around the candidate holding the due guard.
 38. He is raised with the grip and they press the thumb nail on the joint.
 39. The entered apprentice apron is similar to ours but with a curved flap which is raised up above the cord.
 40. The North-east charge is completely different to ours but is finished after the collection box, when he goes out to resume his personal comforts.
 41. After the working tools, he is told, " Brother , there is a lecture in this degree consisting of three sections, which you will, at your earliest opportunity commit to memory. (This is an extended catechism covering fifteen pages of the ritual).
 42. The final charge is similar to but shorter than our Senior Wardens charge, with a special section should he be a minister of religion.

1. In this degree the Junior Deacon prepares the candidate in a similar manner to ours but he is hoodwinked and a cable-tow is put twice around his right shoulder, hanging down the right side.
2. As in the EA degree the Junior Deacon brings the candidate from the preparation room through the door to the left of the S W followed by two stewards.
3. The Senior Deacon meets them at the door and asks the candidate several questions and asks for the password same as ours. He then closes the door and reports to the WM.
4. He then takes the square from the altar and returns to the door and asks him to enter in the name of the Lord.
5. When going around the Lodge both Wardens ask several questions of the candidate while at the Worshipful Masters place the Senior Deacon is asked several more.
6. The SW is ordered to teach the candidate how to approach the Altar which is by two steps starting with the right foot bringing the heels together in the form of a square.
7. The secrets are given by catechism between the Master and the Senior Deacon but over the Altar.
8. The same long catechism is carried out by the Junior Warden and the Senior Warden.
9. The WM then orders the SW to teach the candidate how to wear the apron. He turns the flap down, then turns up one corner of the apron and tucks it under the cord.
10. The Master presents the working tools which read from a text specially printed. The candidate then retires to resume his personal comforts.
11. Before he returns two large pillars approximately two metres high are placed near the door about one and half metres apart.
12. Then 15 pieces of painted board 60 x 20 cm are placed on the floor 3-5-7 as a winding staircase, from the two pillars to pass in front of the Masters chair.
13. The candidate is brought in by the Senior Deacon, up to but not through the pillars.
14. The Senior Deacon then gives a charge similar to our second tracing board.
15. The candidate is then taken to the JW where he gives our password.
16. The conductor then gives the charge containing the explanation of the password.
17. He is then taken to the Senior Warden (ie the middle chamber). He is tested as a fellowcraft and given a charge similar to that part of our tracing board.
18. The WM gives a short version of our Senior Wardens charge after investiture.
19. Then follows five pages of catechism on the whole degree before the Lodge is closed. This must be learned by the candidate.

York Rite Master Masons Degree

1. The candidate is prepared similarly to ours except that a cable-tow is wound three times around his waist hanging down his left side. He is hoodwinked.
2. The Junior Deacon who prepares the candidate in each of degrees gives three even knocks on the door. The Senior Deacon from the inside the door announces the alarm. He then gives three even knocks, which is responded by one knock, which he replies with one knock, then opens the door.
3. The Senior Deacon asks questions of the Junior Deacon and receives from him the password, which is the same as ours.
4. The Senior Deacon then goes to the centre at the Altar, gives three even knocks which is responded to with the Masters gavel and the Senior Deacon reports and answers several questions from the WM.
5. The Senior Deacon takes the compasses off the Altar returns to the door to receive the candidate on both points.
6. On the first circuit one knock by the JW, SW and WM, Second time, two knocks, Third time, three knocks. There are no questions or signs on the first two circuits but on the last there are by all three Officers.
7. The candidate approaches the Altar by three steps left foot forward right heel in, right foot forward left heel in, left forward then heels together in the form of a square.

8. The obligation is similar to ours but worded differently ie "further, I will not aid or be present at, the initiation, passing or raising of a woman, an old man in his dotage, a young man in his nonage, an atheist, a madman, or a fool, knowing them to be such.
9. On the hoodwink being removed and the altered position of the tools being explained he is raised and the secrets are given.
10. The W.M. steps towards him saying, "you discover me approaching from the east under the due guard of a master mason."
11. The due guard is both hands about waist high, palm downwards as if on the Holy Bible. Secrets are given by question and answer.
12. He then receives his apron from the Senior Warden, which is similar to ours but no rosettes. On the flap is embroidered the all-seeing eye.
13. The working tool of a master mason is a trowel but really the tools of a master mason are all the tools of masonry but more especially the trowel. "The trowel is an instrument made use of by operative Freemasons to spread the cement, which unites the building in a common mass. But we as free and accepted masons are taught to make use of it for the more noble and glorious purpose of spreading the cement of brotherly love and affection; that cement which unites us into one sacred band, or society of friends and Brothers, among whom no contention, or rather emulation of who best can work and best agree."
14. The candidate then retires to resume his personal comforts and the Lodge is then called off. The method is: The Master gives three even knocks and says, "Brother Junior warden, what is the hour". The JW replies "High twelve Worshipful Master". W.M. "If you are satisfied it is high twelve, you will erect your column and call the craft from labour to refreshment for thirty minutes (or other time) calling them in at the third degree sound of the gavel". The JW takes from his dish a small wooden column about fifty centimetres in length and sets it upright, gives three raps with the gavel and says; "Brethren you are accordingly at refreshment". The SW turns his column down.
15. The Lodge is then made ready. A strong canvas about two metres by one and half metres with three handles loops on each side plus a bag stuffed tight with horsehair. The room is cleared of fellowcraft furniture, the steps, the Altar and two pillars and the lights.
16. The candidate is dressed, he wears his Master Mason's apron with one corner tucked up and a yoke with the senior warden level attached.
17. When he is ready, the door is unceremoniously thrown open and he enters. There is a short charade, where the brethren gather around him, congratulate him, ask him how he enjoyed the ceremony etc. The JW then goes to his pedestal, gavels and turns his column down. While the SW turns his up, all are then seated, the candidate with them.
18. The WM asks the SW and the JW if they have anything for the benefit of the Lodge. They have not. He then asks the candidate to be presented in the East by the Senior Deacon.
19. As he approaches the East the Senior Deacon comes in behind him with the hoodwink.
20. The WM asks, "Brother -----, I now presume you consider yourself a Master Mason and as such are entitled to all the privileges of a master mason, do you?" The candidate answers, "yes". The WM says I presumed that you did from the jewel you wear.
21. WM "Brother -----, you are not yet a Master Mason; neither do I know that you will ever be, until I know how well you will withstand the trials and dangers that await you". Then follows a charge when he kneels, gets hoodwinked and is asked to rise, where he then proceeds three times around the room. As he is conducted the conductor recites a charge similar to our retrospect.
22. The first time around they stop at the South Gate where a ruffian grabs him by the collar in a very rough manner and demands the secrets giving a sudden twitch to the collar. He shakes the candidate again demanding the secrets. The ruffian then brushes his arm across the candidate's throat before releasing him to proceed.
23. They then approach the West Gate with the conductor pulling him along. The second ruffian (S.W.) grabs him by the collar more roughly than before and demands the word. The SW then brushes his hand across the candidates left breast and lets him pass.
24. At the East Gate stand four Master Masons with a canvas with handles on the sides. As he approaches, the WM grabs him by the collar with both hands and swings him around with his back to the canvas,

which is leaning, back at an angle. The WM then makes similar demands and strikes him a solid blow on the head with the padded bag at the same time pushing him backwards. His ankles trip against the lower edge of the canvas and he falls back onto the canvas, which is lowered, to the floor.

25. The WM, SW and JW ,the three ruffians, roll the canvas around and over the candidate, where he fell. All remain quiet and still. The WM rings the hour of high twelve. A sufficient number of Brethren take up the candidate, on their shoulders and pass three times around the Lodge, as if over rough ground, up and down hills. In the East, they lay him on the floor.
26. The three ruffians converse as they make a long journey of escape and try to leave by ship but were not successful. They fled inland to hide as long as possible.
27. A great deal of effort goes into the calling of the rolls, assembling search parties and finding the grave.
28. The capture of the ruffians is played out with one team rushing about, jumping over stools and chairs etc. A lot of time is spent on confessions of the ruffians.
29. The Raising of the body takes up several pages of the ritual similar to ours - traditional history, grips, words and signs similar to ours. The Grand hailing sign is given during the attempts to raise the body.
30. The grips are similar to ours but slightly varied.
31. Their five points are foot to foot, knee to knee, right breast to right breast, and cheek to cheek or mouth to ear. The words used are different in each position but only one secret word is used MMB.
32. Their historical account is pretty much a rehash **of** the raising but runs to nearly seven pages.
33. Instead of a tracing board they have a Masters carpet.
34. The symbols they use are, three steps, pot of incense, beehive, the book of constitutions and the Tyler's Sword, a sword pointing towards a heart, the all seeing eye, the anchor. Also the ark of the covenant, the 47' proposition of Euclid, the hour glass, the scythe, the setting maul, the coffin, grave and acacia and the spade.
35. The final charge is only about two pages with some points similar to ours.
36. All this is followed by thirteen pages of catechism While the variations are great, yet the result turns out to be quite similar to our own.

In all a total of sixty-two pages of ritual.

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