

# Masonry in the Tri-County Area

There are 12 Masonic Lodges chartered by the Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of Washington in the Kitsap, North Mason, North Pierce County area. The first one was Franklin #5 at Port Gamble, chartered in 1859. Other lodges were established as the the logging industry, ship building, and the population expanded:



Franklin, No. 5, Port Gamble - 1859  
Kane, No. 8, Port Madison - 1860 (closed 1908)  
Mount Moriah, No. 11, Valley Junction - 1864  
Union City, No. 27, Valley Junction - 1878  
Renton, No. 29, Winslow - 1879  
Port Orchard, No. 98, Port Orchard - 1894  
Bremerton, No. 117, Bremerton - 1902  
William H. Upton Naval and Military, No. 206, Bremerton  
Steadfast, No. 216, Bremerton - 1916  
Warren G. Harding, No. 260, Poulsbo - 1924  
Charleston, N0. 269, Bremerton - 1926 (merged w/206 1  
John Paul Jones, No. 271, Gig Harbor - 1926  
Hood Canal, No. 288, Belfair - 1948  
Silverdale, No. 311, Silverdale - 1985

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## A Collection of Short Subjects From the Masonic Service Association about Masonry

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### History of Freemasonry

No one knows with certainty how or when the Masonic Fraternity was formed. A widely accepted theory among Masonic scholars is that it arose from the stonemasons guilds during the Middle Ages. The language and symbols used in the fraternities rituals come from this era. The oldest document that makes reference to Masons is the Regius Poem, printed about 1390, which was a copy of an earlier work. In 1717, four lodges in London formed the first Grand Lodge of England, and records from that point on are more complete.

Within thirty years, the fraternity had spread throughout Europe and the American Colonies. Freemasonry became very popular in colonial America. George Washington was a Mason, Benjamin Franklin served as the head of the fraternity in Pennsylvania, as did Paul Revere and Joseph Warren in Massachusetts. Other well-known Masons involved with the founding of

America included John Hancock, John Sullivan, Lafayette, Baron Fredrick von Stuben, Nathanael Greene, and John Paul Jones. Another Mason, Chief Justice John Marshall, shaped the Supreme Court into its present form.

Over the centuries, Freemasonry has developed into a worldwide fraternity emphasizing personal study, self-improvement, and social betterment via individual involvement and philanthropy. During the late 1700s it was one of the organizations most responsible for spreading the ideals of the Enlightenment: the dignity of man and the liberty of the individual, the right of all persons to worship as they choose, the formation of democratic governments, and the importance of public education. Masons supported the first public schools in both Europe and America.

During the 1800s and early 1900s, Freemasonry grew dramatically. At that time, the government had provided no social "safety net". The Masonic tradition of founding orphanages, homes for widows, and homes for the aged provided the only security many people knew.

Today in North America, the Masonic Fraternity continues this tradition by giving almost \$1.5 million each day to causes that range from operating children's hospitals, providing treatment for childhood language disorders, treating eye diseases, funding medical research, contributing to local community service, and providing care to Masons and their families at Masonic Homes. The four million Masons worldwide continue to help men and women face the problems of the 21st century by building bridges of brotherhood and instilling in the hearts of men ideals for a better tomorrow.

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### Organization of Freemasonry

Freemasonry is the oldest fraternal organization for men in the world, and its organizational structure shows its age. The basic organizational unit of the fraternity is the lodge. We believe the term comes from the lodges (shelters) constructed at the building sites of cathedrals and castles during the Middle Ages. Masons worked and lived in these shelters.

Each lodge is headed by an officer called the "Worshipful Master." "Worshipful" means "highly respected" or "honored." The term comes from the judicial system of England and carries no religious implication. "Master" means "leader," or "best qualified," as in "Concert Master" or "Master Architect."

>Each officer of a lodge has a title that originated during the Middle Ages. These titles may vary somewhat from state to state, but in general the officers and their contemporary equivalents are:

<b>Worshipful Master President</b>	<b>Marshal Master of Ceremonies</b>	<b>Senior Warden 1st Vice President</b>	<b>Deacon Messenger</b>
<b>Junior Warden 2nd Vice President</b>	<b>Steward Page</b>	<b>Treasurer Financial officer</b>	<b>Tiler Door Keeper</b>
<b>Secretary Recorder</b>	<b>Chaplain Chaplain</b>		

Until 1717, each lodge of Masons was autonomous. On June 24, 1717, four of the lodges operating in London met together to form the first Grand Lodge of England. It became the first administrative or policy-making body of Freemasonry.

Masonic lodges still retain autonomy over their finances, activities, officer election, fundraising, and joining ceremonies. But administratively, each State or Province has a Grand Lodge which co-ordinates activities, serves as a central source of record keeping, and performs other administrative and policy functions for the fraternity. The state president is called the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge. He has broad powers in overseeing the progress of the fraternity and while there is no national spokesperson for the fraternity, within his own state (Jurisdiction)

he is the chief spokesman.

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### **Freemasonry and Brotherhood**

The fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons has members from every ethnic group and every continent in the world. Brotherhood is a primary teaching of Masonry--that each person must be judged as an individual, on his own merits, and that such factors as race, national origin, religious creed, social status, or wealth are incidental to the person's character.

Freemasonry was brought to North America in the 1700s, a time when racial attitudes were very different from today. As happened with many churches and social organizations, these attitudes caused Freemasonry for African-American men to develop independently. In 1776 a group of African-American Masons in Boston began meeting as a Lodge; they were formally chartered by England in 1784 as African Lodge #459. African Lodge and its descendants developed a separate Grand Lodge system, known as Prince Hall Masonry (after the first Master of African Lodge). Prince Hall Grand Lodges ascribe to the same beliefs and rituals of Freemasonry as do all regular Masonic Lodges throughout the world.

Since a petition for membership in Masonry does not ask a petitioner's race, statistics on ethnic breakdowns are not kept by any Grand Lodge. Collecting such information is considered as inappropriate as collecting information about a Brother's financial standing. A lodge is not permitted to accept or exclude a candidate on the basis of his race or national origin. To petition for membership, the petitioner must be "a man of legal age, good reputation, and possess a belief in God." While election to membership in the fraternity is a matter for the local lodge to decide, the qualifications for membership are standard, and all Masons are required to observe them.

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### **Statement on Freemasonry and Religion Prepared by the Masonic Information Center**

**Basic Principles.** Freemasonry is not a religion, nor is it a substitute for religion. It requires of its members a belief in God as part of the obligation of every responsible adult, but advocates no sectarian faith or practice. Masonic ceremonies include prayers, both traditional and extempore, to reaffirm each individual's dependence on God and to seek divine guidance. Freemasonry is open to men of any faith, but religion may not be discussed at Masonic meetings.

**The Supreme Being.** Masons believe that there is one God and that people employ many different ways to seek, and to express what they know of God. Masonry primarily uses the appellation, "Grand Architect of the Universe," and other non-sectarian titles, to address the Deity. In this way, persons of different faiths may join together in prayer, concentrating on God, rather than differences among themselves. Masonry believes in religious freedom and that the relationship between the individual and God is personal, private, and sacred.

**Volume of the Sacred Law.** An open volume of the Sacred Law, "the rule and guide of life," is an essential part of every Masonic meeting. The Volume of the Sacred Law in the Judeo/Christian tradition is the Bible; to Freemasons of other faiths, it is the book held holy by them.

**The Oath of Freemasonry.** The obligations taken by Freemasons are sworn on the Volume of the Sacred Law. They are undertakings to follow the principles of Freemasonry and to keep confidential a Freemason's means of recognition. The much discussed "penalties," judicial remnants from an earlier era, are symbolic, not literal. They refer only to the pain any honest man should feel at the thought of violating his word.

**Freemasonry Compared with Religion.** Freemasonry lacks the basic elements of religion: (a) It has no dogma or theology, no wish or means to enforce religious orthodoxy. (b) It offers no sacraments. (c) It does not claim to lead to salvation by works, by secret knowledge, or by any other means. The secrets of Freemasonry are concerned with modes of recognition, not with

the means of salvation.

Freemasonry Supports Religion. Freemasonry is far from indifferent toward religion. Without interfering in religious practice, it expects each member to follow his own faith and to place his Duty to God above all other duties. Its moral teachings are acceptable to all religions.

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### **Freemasonry and Secrecy**

People sometimes refer to Freemasonry as being a "Secret Society." In one sense the statement is true. Any social group or private business is "secret" in the sense that its business meetings may be open only to its members. In Freemasonry, the process of joining is also a private matter, and its members are pledged not to discuss with non-members certain parts of the ceremonies associated with the organization.

Freemasonry does have certain handshakes and passwords, customs incorporated into later fraternities, which are kept private. They are means of recognizing each other--necessary in an organization which spans the entire world and which encompasses many languages.

The tradition of using handshakes and passwords was very common in the Middle Ages, when the ability to identify oneself as belonging to a building or trade guild often made the difference in getting a job or in obtaining help for yourself and family. Today, Freemasons make the same pledge to every member that he will be offered assistance if he, or his family, ever requests it.

Freemasonry can't be called a "secret society" in a literal sense. A truly secret society forbids its members to disclose that they belong to the organization, or that it even exists. Much of the Masonic ritual is in books called "Monitors" that are widely available, even in public libraries. Most Freemasons wear rings and lapel pins which clearly identify them as members of the fraternity. Masonic lodges are listed in public phone books, Masonic buildings are clearly marked, and in many areas of the country Masonic lodges place signs on the roads leading into town, along with civic organizations, showing the time and place of meetings.

In terms of what it does, what it teaches, who belongs, where it meets, there are no secrets in Freemasonry! It is a private fraternal association of men who contribute much toward the public good, while enjoying the benefits of the brotherhood of a fraternity.

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### **Freemasonry and Women**

In Freemasonry, as in all other areas of life, women play an important role. The opportunities for women to participate in Freemasonry are widespread and meet a variety of needs, from social interaction in the Orders for both men and women, to the unique needs met in the "women only" Masonic-related organizations. The moral and ethical values that Freemasonry encourages are universal and not gender-based.

Masonic Lodges maintain today a long-standing tradition of restricting membership in Freemasonry to men. This tradition is based on the historical all male membership of stonemasons guilds. During the Middle Ages, men traveled far from home and lived in lodges while constructing great cathedrals throughout Europe.

However, in the middle 1800s the fraternity took the progressive step, for that time, of creating organizations that included women, so that men and women could share Masonic fraternalism. The Order of the Eastern Star (the largest of these Masonic-related groups) was established in 1855, the Order of the Amaranth in 1873, and the White Shrine of Jerusalem in 1894.

>Two national Masonic-related youth organizations are for young women: the International Order of Jobs Daughters, founded in 1920, and the International Order of Rainbow for Girls, founded in 1922. Rainbow and Job's Daughters are involved with local charities, community services, and educational programs.

Other Masonic-related organizations limit their membership to women only, such as the Ladies Oriental Shrine of North America, Daughters of the Nile, the Daughters of Mokanna, and the Social Order of Beauceant. These Masonic-related organizations, like many organizations in

North America, both social and professional, base their membership on gender. Junior League, P.E.O., National Association of Female Executives, and Girl Scouts, for instance, are organizations created exclusively for women, established to fulfill their unique interests and specific needs.

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### Youth Organizations

While there are several youth organizations sponsored or supported by the various Masonic organizations, three are the largest and best known.

The Order of DeMolay is an organization for young men aged 13 to 21. Young men do not need to have a Masonic relative to join the organization. DeMolay was founded in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1919, and is now international in scope. Like the other Masonic Youth Orders, DeMolay Chapters (local groups) usually meet in a room at a local Masonic Lodge. Adult leadership is provided by men (usually Masons) known as Chapter Dads or advisors. The Order takes its name from Jacques DeMolay, the last Grand Master of the Templars, who was martyred in the Middle Ages for refusing to compromise his honor. The Order teaches the virtues of reverence, love of parents, comradeship, patriotism, courtesy, cleanliness, and fidelity. The Order provides many social events and activities, which help to teach social skills and leadership.

The International Order of Rainbow for Girls is an organization for young women aged 11 to 20. It was founded in McAlester, Oklahoma, in 1922. No relationship to a member of the Masonic Order is required for membership. Local groups or Assemblies are generally sponsored by either a Masonic Lodge or a Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star. Women known as Mother Advisors give adult supervision and guidance. Each of the colors of the rainbow is associated with a particular virtue or source of inspiration. Like the other Youth Orders, Rainbow is deeply involved with local charity and support of education. It teaches character development, planning, leadership, and social skills through training programs and social events.

The International Order of Jobs Daughters takes its name from a story in the Biblical Book of Job. It was organized in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1920. Membership requires the young woman be related to a Mason. The local organization is called a Bethel. The teachings of the Order are Biblically based, and similar virtues are stressed as in the other Masonic Youth Orders. Job's Daughters places special emphasis on community service. Many Bethels work with drug education programs and with the Hearing Impaired Kids Endowment (HIKE) Program. Membership is for young women age 11 to 20.

The youth organizations are separate and independent organizations that stress the importance of character development, community service and leadership. While members of the youth groups are free to seek membership in Freemasonry or the Eastern Star, it is a personal choice and not a requirement of membership in a youth order.

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