

This Presentation is a concise version of a talk given by Frater James A. Marples, VIII<sup>o</sup> on behalf of Nebraska College S.R.I.C.F. at the Stated Meeting of Hickory Hill Masonic Lodge #156 in Avinger, Texas, on Thursday November 20, 2014. It was well-received as a form of Masonic Education. That particular Lodge and others have reported Entered Apprentices that have not progressed forward. And, this presentation was applauded by the Brothers in attendance.

## FRANCISCO CORONADO and THE IMPORTANCE OF AN APPRENTICE GOING FORWARD

By Frater James A. Marples, VIII<sup>o</sup>  
Life Member, Nebraska College of S.R.I.C.F.



Portrait of Francisco Coronado

Most of us who have studied History are somewhat familiar with the name Francisco Vasquez de Coronado y Lujan {commonly known as Francisco Coronado} who was born in 1510 and who died September 1554. He was born to a noble family in Salamanca, Spain. He went to "New Spain" {present-day Mexico} in 1535 at about the age of 25. He was known as a conquistador and explorer, who led a great expedition which ranged from The Grand Canyon to the West, to modern-day Kansas in the North. As a matter of History: his expedition headed-out with approximately 400 European soldier-explorers (mainly Spaniards), 1,300 to 2,000 Mexican Indians, four Franciscan monks -- the most famous of whom was Father Juan de Padilla --- who was later killed in modern-day Kansas and considered the first Christian martyr in North America.

It is fascinating that all of this occurred in the 16th Century....nearly 500 years ago. Relics of Spanish headgear and chain-mail are found in museums in Kansas and in Texas.

Coronado was motivated to search for the mythical "Seven Cities of God". He and his men discovered the Colorado River and were persuaded to continue northward and eastward. Coronado encountered vast numbers of bison --the American buffalo. He recorded in his journals that "there was not a day that I lost sight of them".

In short, Coronado fell short of his goal -- yet he was assured by native peoples that the mystical treasures were still to be found. Coronado send out other scouting expeditions, again to New Mexico, the Texas panhandle and up as far north as Lindsborg, Kansas. Today, near the town of Lindsborg, Kansas, is a modern (1930s era W.P.A.-project building)... a castle-like structure atop a relatively high hill denoting the approximate spot where Francisco Coronado and his men, camped. It is aptly called "Coronado Heights."

Coronado returned to Mexico and was badly injured from a fall from his horse. He considered himself a failure. Yet he was a success in many ways. He married Beatriz de Estrada, called "the



Saint" (la Santa) and had eight children by her. He remained Governor of Nueva Galicia until the year 1544. He was eventually replaced and accusations were made that he dealt too harshly with the Puebla Indians. However, in later years, no significant impact was proven. Coronado died a decade later in 1554. At his death, he never lived to see the fabulous stories written about him.

It can be said with absolute clarity that Francisco Coronado was a traveling man. Plus, he was a man of firm conviction.

Although it is clear that Francisco Coronado was not a Freemason, he embodied many virtuous traits within his heart and soul. He had the sheer will and determination to proceed forward. Many a man has languished due to procrastination or feeling discouraged or fear of "the unknowns" which lie ahead. In his chapter on the Entered Apprentice Degree, Pike writes:

"The onward march of the human race requires that the heights around it should blaze with noble and enduring lessons of courage. Deeds of daring dazzle history, and form one class of the guiding lights of man.... To strive, to brave all risks, to perish, to persevere, to be true to one's self ----these are the examples that the nations {and individual people} need."

Pike goes on to say that the Entered Apprentice Mason should never become discouraged. He writes:

"We never know at what moment success awaits our efforts--generally when most unexpected--nor with what effect our efforts are or are not to be attended. Succeed or fail, individual Masons must not succumb under discouragement."

The Grand Lodge of Ohio has a very articulate statement which succinctly states the above more eloquently. I will only quote a small portion therefrom:

#### "ENTERING THE LODGE

As an Entered Apprentice takes his first step into the Lodge room, he enters into a {progressive, lifelong journey} that is almost a new world. Entering the world of Freemasonry is not an idle formality, but a genuine experience, the beginning of a new career in which duties, rights and privileges are real. If a Candidate is not to be an Apprentice in name only, he must stand ready to do the work upon his own nature that will make him a different man {a better man} better man. Freemasonry offers no privileges or rewards except to those who earn them; it places working tools not play things in the hands of its Members. To become a Mason is a solemn and serious undertaking. Once the step is taken, it may well change the course of a man's life."{for the better}

Although Francisco Coronado felt he failed in his mission, he succeeded on several fronts. Coronado endured and persevered. It isn't everyday that a man has his name remembered in recorded-history for half a millennium. Let all of us as Masons do our best in Life. Let each of us make his own "mark" ---whether it be large or small.

Albert Pike's best known phrase is fitting: "What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us -- - What we have done for others and the world remains, and is immortal." Motivation is the key, and a group of Masons can usually accomplish much more than one individual member, alone.

A genuine devotion in the heart is a good start and continued dedication is an bonus and a blessing to BOTH the Lodge and to the individual member. In one sense, true Masonic Degrees aren't randomly conferred: they are EARNED.

An Entered Apprentice is never a failure, if he tries his best. Our Fraternity makes no unreasonable demands on a member or his family. We take good men ...and make them better men. One of my own Masonic mentors {if I can call him that} notes that he tries to make any prospective candidates that he encounters, fully aware of the time and effort involved. He fields questions & concerns from them from their days as a prospect; he shepherds them when they



decide take their Entered Apprentice Degree, to their days as a Fellow-Craft, to their days as a Master Mason. His efforts are long-term; and his dedication has helped a wide variety of fellow Masons. Many of the men he has helped to progress through the Degrees aren't just pin-wearers after becoming Master Masons, but they have the spirit of the Mystic-Tie of Masonry in their hearts. Due to his excellent example of leadership and diligent oversight: A great many of those men didn't just "join" ---they "learned by the experience." Many of them have become active Members and Lodge Officers. Determination and Encouragement work wonders.

Coronado was not a failure {even though he thought he was}. We all must to be grateful for what we CAN achieve... even if it comes in baby-steps. Just avoiding languishing made Coronado a legend for 500 years. We need to emulate Francisco Coronado's courage and his "sheer will {and desire} to go forward" in Life.

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Sources / References / Recommended Readings:

- Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry by Dr. Albert G. Mackey, M.D., 33° and a Knight Templar.
- Archives of The Masonic Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon, Canada.
- Macoy's Masonic Manual by Robert Macoy, 33° and a Knight Templar. Fifteenth Edition. New York. Published in New York, Year 1861 by Clark, Austin, Maynard & Company located at 3 Park Row & 3 Ann Street, New York, New York. "A Pocket Companion for the Initiated".
- "Morals and Dogma" by Albert Pike, 33° and a Knight Templar. Pike was was a past presiding officer of all the York Rite Bodies in Little Rock, Arkansas...including being the FIRST Eminent Commander of Hughes de Payens Knight Templar Commandery #1 in Little Rock. He joined all the York Rite Bodies BEFORE any Scottish Rite Degrees were conferred upon him.
- The Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of Ohio...."A Basic Masonic Education Course for Entered Apprentices with Questions".

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About the Author:

Fratr James A. Marples, VIII<sup>o</sup> is a Perpetual Life Member of Mulvane Masonic Lodge #201 A.F. & A.M. in Mulvane, Kansas. He is a Life Member of The International Peace Gardens Lodge of Freemasons (Canada-USA) and also an Honorary Member of Golden Rule Masonic Lodge #562 in Willard, Ohio; as well as an Honorary Member of Nelson Masonic Lodge #77, in Nelson, Nebraska, which has recently consolidated with the Superior Masonic Lodge at Superior, Nebraska.

Companion and Sir Knight Jim is a Life Member of the Wichita York Rite Bodies (Wichita Chapter #33 R.A.M.; Wichita Council #12 R. & S.M.; and Mt. Olivet Commandery #12 K.T.). He is also a Life Member of the Lincoln Nebraska Scottish Rite Bodies; The Robert-the-Bruce Association (California); The George Washington Masonic Stamp Club; Masonic Order of the Gordian Knot (Indiana); Masonic Order of the Sword of Bunker Hill; Kentucky Chapter #134 of National Sojourners and Heroes of '76; North Texas York Rite College #118 of Sherman, Texas; and Nebraska College S.R.I.C.F.

He is a Regular Member of The Allied Masonic Degrees; Grand College of Rites; St. David Conclave of The Red Cross of Constantine; Shawnee County Kansas Square and Compass Club; and Holyrood Council #61 of Knight Masons (Nebraska).

