

THE MASONIC NUMBER 7 REFLECTED IN ART
by Frater James A. Marples, VIII^o
Life Member of Nebraska College of S.R.I.C.F.



Example of a Masonic playing-card

Freemasonry is first and foremost a Fraternity. In many ways, too much emphasis has been spent by Masons and non-Masons on any one specific element of Masonic symbolism.

The Fraternity is more than a lapel-pin showing "The Square and Compasses."

The Fraternity is more than just a charitable-outlet which sponsors scores of charities ranging from Masonic Homes for the elderly; to the magnificent Shriners' Hospitals for Children.

The Fraternity endeavors to "take good men and make them better men".

It is no substitute for any Religion.

The Fraternity requires each of its members to believe in Almighty God, a Deity, a Creator.

The Fraternity isn't a "numerology society." There is almost no numeral which hasn't been somehow ascribed to the Craft. This probably arises from a mixture of circumstances. Little kids may see their father or grandfather's Masonic ring saying "32" or "33" -- and, admittedly, that designation has some allure for young men joining Masonry. It is almost as compelling to one's attention, as seeing the weather forecasts and awaiting that subtle forecast between 32^o {freezing} and 33^o {above freezing}.

Most people realize that a basic Masonic Lodge confers the first three Symbolic Degrees. To be a 3^o Mason {or Master Mason} is technically the highest degree a Mason



can attain. Other Degrees are really just amplification and elaboration in finer details, of the history, symbolism, and solemnity of the Third Degree.

Contrary to opinions held by some members of the public: Freemasons aren't all "fuddy-duddies" who are fussy, old-fashioned, or dull. One core element of Freemasonry are three traits that are held most dear by most members: "FRIENDSHIP," "FELLOWSHIP" and "FUN."

The above illustration at the heading of this Article shows a "playing card" with a photograph of the Masonic Temple at Honolulu, Hawaii. Whole decks of such cards illustrated Masonic sites around the world. At one time, a 7 of clubs card with a Brooklyn NY Masonic Hall was a part of this article, but it has since disappeared from my computer.

The number "7" is also the number of colors in the spectrum of a Rainbow which is visible to the human eye. They are: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet.

The Masonic scholar Dr. Albert G. Mackey, M.D., 33^o and a Knight Templar stated probably the most concise statement regarding Freemasons and Numbers. Mackey said: "The respect paid by Freemasons to certain numbers all of which are odd, is founded not on the belief of any magical virtue, but because they are assumed to be the type or representatives of certain ideas.

He notes the number 3 which is often equated with "an allusion to a sacred object or holy thought" as in an Equilateral Triangle, symbolic of the Deity --- which Masons who are Christians readily recognize as symbolic of The Holy Trinity.

The number "7" {along with various other numbers} plays an important role in Masonic symbolism. Bro.: and Sir Knight Mackey said that in the 17th Degree of the Scottish Rite {The Degree of Knight of the East and West} is "a representation of a man clothed in a white robe, with a golden girdle round his waist, his right hand extended, and surrounded with seven stars." Mackey notes that this Degree was heavily inspired by the Book of Revelation in the New Testament of the Holy Bible. (Revelation 1:16)

Bro.: Mackey also enumerated the Seven noble or liberal arts and sciences. He listed: Geometry, Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Music and Astronomy.

I recently purchased a booklet from the United Kingdom. It was published in the year 1956. It is titled "The Intermediate Degrees of the A. & A. Rite, preliminary to perfection in the ROSE CROIX" by Bro.:The Rev. Canon W.W. Covey-Crump, 32^o. In ENGLAND, that Rite is called "The Ancient and Accepted Rite." The word 'Scottish' is omitted. Hence, there is no labeling of a 'Scottish Rite' in England. There, it is strictly the A.& A. Rite.

In that booklet, Bro.: Covey-Crump describes the IV^o of the A. & A. Rite. He states: "The Secret Masters' Lodge is assumed to be meeting in the still unfinished Temple, under the presidency of King Solomon, to repair the loss of H.A.B. and more especially to complete and guard the S.S. and the beautiful golden fittings which had been made for use in the sanctuary. For this purpose, King Solomon is said to have selected seven worthy and expert Menatzchimwho together with himself, constitute the Lodge --- leaving one vacant place.....who the candidate aspires to fill.



Thus in that context, Bro.: Covey-Crump alludes to the numbers 7 and 9, each, having separate types of importance; yet interconnected in Masonic symbolism and allegory.

The above illustrated playing-card is strictly a souvenir keepsake, much akin to a business-card or calling-card. Yet, the knowledgeable Mason will find it both amusing as well as a subtle reminder of the solemn promises, oaths, Obligations, and honorable vows he took upon at his initiation.

Just as some women wear locketts with pictures of their loved ones inside, or even bearing a lock of a baby's hair ---- Freemasons have their own wide spectrum of sentimental reminders of special moments in life. The reminders can range from humorous to the sublime. In the end: is up to each Mason to live up to the virtuous principles that the Fraternity strives to inculcate.

Sources / References / Exhibits /Recommended Readings:

- 'THE INTERMEDIATE DEGREES' OF THE A. & A. Rite preliminary to perfection in the ROSE CROIX" by Bro.: The Rev. Canon. W.W. Covey-Crump, 32°. Published at London, England at the "Masonic Record Office," 38 Great Queen Street, London, West Central 2, England. Publishing year 1956
- "The Rosicrucian Fama." Combined issue of Numbers 37 & 38 for January and July 1969. Issued by The Supreme Magus and published by The High Council S.R.I.C.F. for The United States of America.
- 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".

About the Author:

Frater James A. Marples, VIII° 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; South Dakota Lodge of Masonic Research; 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).

