



## UNION LODGE # 3 A. F. & A. M. OF OREGON

PO Box 453 McMinnville, OR 97128

### **MASONIC NEWS & TRESTLEBOARD August 2015**

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#### **Greetings from the East**

A famous Brother once said "If you would not be forgotten, as soon as you are dead and rotten, either write things worthy of reading, or do things worth the writing." A few months back I started a piece on the William Morgan Affair. Its effect on Masonry in America was profound, and even a quick overview took quite a few installments. Thank you, Brothers, for putting up with my four-month effort at writing something worthy of reading. Here's the conclusion...

In 1827 the forces that would lead to the American Civil War were already growing and pushing the country to the brink. The practice of slavery, which was the main economic foundation for the South, was losing political support and would soon be so reviled that only rebellion would have a chance to save it. In Great Britain, the same sea-change was occurring and would result in the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833. Ironically, even though the British practice of slavery was cited as one of the reasons for the American Revolution, slavery was outlawed throughout the British Empire decades before the same could be said of America.

During the time of the Morgan Affair, those same social forces were leading to the formation of a third political party for the first time in the history of the Republic. Thurlow Weed, an opponent of Brother Andrew Jackson, would trade ruthlessly on the rancor of the times; rising in political power by attacking the Masons who had helped found the nation. A newspaper that he started, the *Enquirer*, would become the lightning-rod around which the disaffected and those who did not trust the Masons would coalesce. The Anti-Masonic Party was formed in 1828, on the single issue of opposing Freemasonry. Many churches would join in on what amounted to a religious crusade against the Freemasons. Priests attacked the Fraternity from the pulpit, forcing their congregations to choose between the church or the Lodge. Freemasons were given the choice of renouncing their vows to Freemasonry, or having themselves and their families expelled and shunned.

In many small towns, where everyone belonged to the same church, that was really no choice at all. Membership in the Fraternity plunged.

The voices against Freemasonry were by no means Unanimous. In 1827, at the first organizational meeting for the Anti-Masons, Henry Clay was asked to renounce his Masonic ties and lead the party. He declined, and would later go on to found the Whig party. When the Anti-Masons held their first Convention in 1832 they nominated William Wirt for President. A former Mason, he spoke in defense of the Fraternity at the convention which nominated him. But voices urging reason and calm were few, and Freemasonry suffered grievously as it was dragged into the political discourse and social upheaval of the times.

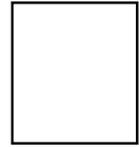
In the decade during which the movement against the Masons started, membership in the Fraternity dropped from about 100,000 to 40,000. In New York, where the Morgan Affair occurred, Freemasonry went from a membership of 20,000 to 3,000; dropping from 480 active Lodges to just 82. The impact was just as severe in six other states, and every Grand Lodge in the North was affected. Many Grand Lodge officers resigned their positions, and replacements sometimes could not be found. A number of Grand Lodges stopped meeting, for all intents and purposes ceasing to exist.

And yet the light of Masonry would not die, as many Brothers fought to keep their Lodges alive even in the midst of the vicious public attacks brought against them. The Anti-Masonic Party, always a single-issue party, only held three nominating conventions before it was supplanted by the Whigs and the new Republican Party. By the 1840s the Masonic Fraternity had begun to recover.

It was during this period, in 1846, that a petition was delivered to the Grand Lodge of Missouri and referred to Committee. The petition sought a charter for Multnomah Lodge in Oregon City, which was the first Masonic Lodge on the Pacific coast. Willamette and Lafayette Lodges would soon after be chartered by the fledgling Grand Lodge of California. And in 1851 the three Lodges would come together and by proclamation found the Grand Lodge of Oregon. So you see, our entire Grand Jurisdiction is part of the re-growth in Masonry that followed the decline precipitated by the William Morgan Affair.

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS:**

- Aug 1** Tuality # 6 Stated 10:00 am
- Aug 4** Union Lodge # 3 Stated 7:30 pm
- Aug 4** Holbrook #30 Stated 7:30 pm
- Aug 5** Rickreall # 110 Stated 7:30 pm
- Aug 6** Newberg # 104 Stated, 7:30 pm
- Aug 12** Sheridan-Dayton # 64 Dinner 6:00 pm  
Lodge 7:00 pm
- Aug 25** Union Lodge Trustees 6:30 pm - Officers 7:30pm

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Throughout our 300-year history, Freemasonry has seen many times when circumstances or political and social forces have caused our membership to decline. Like the rising and falling of the tide, we have seen times when our membership has ebbed. But the light of Masonry has always returned, and the Fraternity has once again grown stronger. I believe we have seen the bottom of the decline in membership that followed the 1950s, and that we are beginning to see the tide rise again. Our challenge now is to see that we build well; and found our actions on Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. So long as we stay true to the tenets of Masonry, the light of Freemasonry will continue to shine in the Grand Jurisdiction of Oregon.

So mote it be.

John Porter  
Worshipful Master  
Union Lodge # 3

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**Reminder**

For our August Stated meeting we will dressing in our **summer uniform**. So put away the suit and tie for one more month and relax in slacks and a sport shirt. Call it "business casual" if you please. Just remember, jeans and shorts are not considered "business casual."



Keep up with current happenings in Union Lodge # 3 on Facebook, and be sure to Like us.