

A MASONIC MINUTE

When the Junior Warden is invested, he is reminded of his duties: “*To you is entrusted, with such assistance as may be necessary, the examination of visitors and **the introduction of candidates.***”

The question has often been raised by an attentive Brother, ‘*So when does the JW **introduce candidates** in our degrees?*’ To further complicate the matter and confuse the issue, when the Deacons are invested they are informed that their duties are to “*assist ... in the reception of candidates in the different degrees.*” Obviously, in our Canadian version of Emulation Ritual, the Deacon ‘*introduces*’ the candidate when he is received and admitted at the door of the Lodge. Only after the Prayer and Perambulation does the Candidate arrive at the Junior Warden’s station. Is this just another of those minor inconsistencies between word and action in our Ritual?

Recently, during an international exchange, I had the privilege of witnessing the exemplification of the Second Degree by a Lodge from the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania.¹

This jurisdiction is arguably the oldest in North America tracing its establishment to St. John’s No. 1 Lodge which met at the Tun Tavern in Philadelphia. Documented records date to 24 June 1731, but there are references as early as 1715 to Masonic lodges meeting ‘by immemorial rights.’²

Although taking its authority originally from the Premier Grand Lodge of England (‘Moderns’), allegiance was transferred to the ‘Ancients’ in 1761. The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania is descended from the Ancient Grand Lodge of England, formed in London in 1751. Hence, the Ritual practiced in Pennsylvania predates the Union of the ‘Moderns’ and the ‘Ancients’ which took place in December 1813 thus forming the United Grand Lodge of England, when the Lodge of Reconciliation negotiated the merger and established the Lodge of Emulation to standardize and demonstrate the agreed upon Ritual.

The Constitution of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario states: *The authorized Work is the English ritual with slight modifications adopted by the Grand Lodge of Canada in 1859.* (Section 5)

¹ Centennial Lodge No. 644 and Lafayette Lodge No. 662, Carnegie, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania visiting in Orillia, Ontario 20 June 2014.

² The Right Worshipful Grand Lodge of the Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania and Masonic Jurisdictions Thereunto Belonging (1786).

While we are obligated never to '*permit or suffer any deviation from the established usages, customs and landmarks*' some of the older rituals retained in our sister jurisdictions can be informative and enlightening – helpful in gaining a better understanding of our own. ³ At the beginning of the Pennsylvania Degree, the Worshipful Master and principal officers assemble at the Altar. The Junior Warden, bearing his column, was then directed to go to the anteroom and examine the Candidate. The JW then returned to the Lodge after due ceremony and '*introduced the Candidate.*'

Although academics and honest researchers admit that conjecture is risky, I suggest that the questioned phrase in our Investiture of the Junior Warden may be a vestige of the older pre-union Ritual, a phrase that was left behind, perhaps overlooked, when the negotiations of 1813 in the Lodge of Reconciliation took place. I am most grateful to our Pennsylvania Brethren for providing this insight, demonstrating yet again the value of expanding our horizons in the wider world of Freemasonry.

RSJD June 2014

³ Constitution – Section 7. Charge to the Newly Raised Candidate.