

Why I became a Mason

When I sat to ask myself the question “why did I become a Mason,” my mind just became flooded with names and events. George Washington, Mark Twain, Paul Revere, Meriweather Lewis & William Clark, Aleister Crowley, John Wayne, Harry Houdini, Davy Crockett, John Wayne, and William Cody aka Buffalo Bill. I grew up idolizing some of these renown men for their unique contributions to the world and the mark they left behind. Their impression that remains well after they passed on and their legends and legacies helped form my imagination and experiences as a child. There’s a quote in Corinthians that says “When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.” As a man of curiosity, one can’t help but examine and try to, shall I say, connect the dots around things that arouse the interest and those who influence you. What was is a common thread among all these historical figures and unique individuals? They were all Freemasons.

I wasn't even aware of my first introduction to Freemasonry at the time but it's a fond and vivid memory from my childhood. We moved to Marco Island, FL in 1990 from New York where my father opened his own business and I remember their being big parades around Christmas time on one of the Island's main roads. My favorite part of every parade was the men with the funny hats swerving and laughing like maniacs in their tiny cars while throwing candy all over the place for the kids. My two younger sisters and I would scramble over the tootsie rolls and lollipops like wild animals and a heated trading match would ensue shortly there after. Looking back, I remember wondering, “who are these guys?” They were Brothers of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine or, as we like to say, Shriners. Just like all the legendary men from my childhood, they were all Freemasons.

Brother Albert Pike said “What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.” As a man in today's world, I'm always contemplating how to better the world around me, how to make a good life for myself and my loved ones, how I can make an impact for the better on mankind, or just simply how I can become a better person. So naturally being a fan of history and culture I look at people such as Benjamin Franklin, Winston Churchill (and his father Lord Randolph Churchill), Franklin D. Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt, Walter Chrysler, Henry Ford, Bach, Voltaire, Mozart, Beethoven, Clark Gable, John Elway, Cy Young, Ernest Borgnine, Phil Collins and all seven Ringling Bros. in admiration for their impression and influence on history, art and culture and the tremendous legacies they left behind. The impact they had spread far and wide and the trestle boards on which they drew their plans differed

in many ways but there is one commonality which binds all these men together in history forever; they are/were all Freemasons.

I had been researching Freemasonry for a while and had always been interested in it's alluring symbolism and ancient history but had never taken any steps in the direction of joining. I remember a conversation I had with a friend and Mason and me asking him "what would be the first step in joining a Lodge?" He looked at me with a big grin on his face and said "go over there and knock on the door." He told me he could not solicit people to join but my asking was enough for him to point me in the right direction. Visiting the website of my local Lodge and seeing pictures of the Officers adorned in the jewels and symbols of their respective positions was mesmerizing. A fan of U.S. history, I couldn't help but think of all the pictures i've seen of these same jewels around the necks of men like Harry S. Truman, Andrew Jackson, Lyndon B. Johnson, William Howard Taft, and James Garfield. All Presidents of this great country we live in and all of them Freemasons.

Brother Oscar Wilde said "Our ambition should be to rule ourselves, the true kingdom for each one of us; and true progress is to know more, and be more, and to do more." I took that very important first step in 2013 and was Initiated, Passed, and Raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason at Cypress Lodge No. 295 in Naples, Florida in 2014. I was overjoyed to be joining ranks with all of the aforementioned as well as other incredible brothers i've met since. The quest for greatness and the thirst for knowledge is a burning emotion that pushes the human race forward. The desire for freedom and the need for friendship and connection is a truth as old as time itself. The Masonic Fraternity is the oldest and most respected Fraternity on the planet with members reaching into every far flung corner of the earth from every background imaginable all bound by the same common thread. Looking back on my life and my influences, it's funny to see how much Masonic influence and inspiration I had...even if I didn't know it at the time. Now being one of the first and only members of my family I know of who can call themselves a proud Freemason, I am part of a rich tapestry and ancient heritage I strive to know better every day and will hopefully pass on someday. I would have to answer the question "Why did I become a Mason" with the following statement; I don't think I found Freemasonry as much as Freemasonry found me.

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