

Leadership and the Backstory History of the Masonic Installation Ceremony

William O. Ware Lodge of Research
Presentation at Installation Ceremony November 7, 2018

John W. Bizzack, Master- Lexington Lodge No. 1

In December 1943 the last major offensive of World War II by the German Army took place in southern Belgium near the town of Bastogne. Twenty-five German Divisions made up of 200,000 soldiers and supported by nearly 1,000 heavy tanks, executed a surprise attack on Allied Forces. The battlefield became a seventy-five-mile stretch thick forest held by four inexperienced and battle-worn American divisions stationed there for rest and seasoning.

The Germans broke through the American frontlines surrounding most of an infantry division, seizing key crossroads, and advancing their spearheads toward the Meuse River. This created a bulge in the line established by the Allies, thus giving history the name of what was to follow the *Battle of the Bulge*.

Trapped and surrounded, running low on ammunition and food as they endured relentless snow and freezing temperatures, the 100,000 American troops were threatened with annihilation. Four days

into the attack, the German commander sent an offer to the American commander, General Anthony Clement McAuliffe, to surrender.

He sent back his response in the now famous one-word rejection to the idea of surrender. All his message to the German commander said, was “Nuts!” – which was interpreted by the Germans to mean “Go to Hell.”¹

What happened next has been referred to by historians as General George S. Patton’s finest hour.² General Omar Bradley referred to what Patton accomplished at



¹ S.L. A. Marshall, *Bastogne: The First Eight Days*, Chapter 14, Lucknow Books, 2014.

² Harry Yeide, *Fighting Patton*, Zenith Press. 2014.

Bastogne as one of the most brilliant performances by any commander on either side in World War II.

Because air support was impossible due to the weather, General Eisenhower ordered Patton to make a beeline to Bastogne and save the trapped Americans and deck the German Divisions. He did just that. He turned the entire 3rd Army 90 degrees from where they were when he received his orders and headed north — with about 200,000 men and 200 tanks. It took the sheer willpower of Patton to drive his troops in the brutal winter weather 100 miles in three days – and then, with little rest, the soldiers executed Patton’s plan that committed them to a full-scale attack on both sides of the bulge until they restored the front. What they did was not only save an Airborne Division but set the stage for the final drive into Germany and victory in World War II.

Patton’s tactics in this battle rank as one of the top ten military movements in history.³ It is also the largest battle ever fought by the United States Army.⁴

Winning the Battle of the Bulge and restoring the course of the war in favor of the Allies, was clearly and deservedly to the hard-earned credit of the men of the 3rd Army. It was, however, clear to all at the time, and historians today, that it was Patton’s *determination* that not only moved the 3rd Army there in time to save our forces but who planned and orchestrated the tactics that crushed the surprise offensive by the German Command. In short, Patton’s leadership made it happen.

³ Charles M. Province, *The Unknown Patton*, Random House, 1988.

⁴ Stanley Weintraub, *Battle of the Bulge*, *Military History Quarterly*, Winter, 2007.

A few days following the battle, Patton was interviewed by a journalist who asked him to define *leadership*. Rarely at a loss for words, Patton removed his helmet and cocked his head as he stared into the forest where the fiercest fighting had taken place. Following a moment of silence, he replied in his typically direct and colorful way, and told the reporter, “I’ll be damned if I can define it, but by gosh I know it when I see it.”⁵

There are many ways to define leadership.

People have been trying to find the most all-encompassing definition since time immemorial. All attempts to do so derive from different perspectives, experiences, and core beliefs. Patton, however, may have offered the one most broadly appropriate: *we may not be able to perfectly define leadership, but we all know it when we see it.*

Conversely, we also know very well when we *do not* see leadership.

We all see people in positions of authority and consider and think of them as leaders merely because they are in those formal positions, but authority from such positions does not mean the person holding it has or will master the skills and essential features of leadership.

We often forget that leadership *is not* really a position at all - *it is a behavior.*

Today, more than ever, it has become fashionable to blanket our definition of leadership by declaring that our leaders must have vision. Vision, no doubt, is a key, but only one of many attributes.

⁵ James Dunnigan, Daniel Masterson, *The Way of the Warrior*, St. Martin’s Press, 1997.

Using only “vision,” however, to describe leadership is a bit like describing the space shuttle as a thing that flies. It’s accurate, but hardly an adequate explanation.

At the very root of a leadership, we find ordinary people with *extraordinary* determination who are challenged by changes, not threatened by them – people who foreseeing the right things that need to be done at any given moment or for the long-term. *That* is indeed one of the essential features we seek from people in positions of leadership.

Lessons from the business world over the past few decades alone paint a clear picture of what happens when long-established organizational cultures changed, but their leaders did not. When we look closely, we often find extraordinary determination was missing.

Today, this research lodge elected its members to fill positions we consider “formal stations” of leadership.

As the vote indicated, your fellow members consider you duly prepared for positions of formal leadership - and confidence has been expressed by that vote that you possess the ability to perform the duties of your stations.

Whether we always think of it this way or not, each of you sit in these chairs today because of your past *behavior*.

I offer my congratulations to each of you and well-wishes for a successful Masonic year ahead.

Let us turn our thoughts to *why* we are here today. What occurred in our history that caused us to gather for an installation of officers?

The Installation Ceremony ***The Rest of the Story***

The history of the installation ceremony is unique because, before the formation of the United Grand Lodge of England in 1717, there is no mention in the Old Charges of any ceremony for installing officers in those early operative stone mason lodges much less the new speculative lodges. The Master was always elected, but there was no ceremony following the election.

Many ancient cultures “installed” their officials. The ancient Romans, for example, installed their priests, their kings, and their magistrates; but the ceremony was called *inauguration*, and generally performed by the Augurs – the men who were believed to be able to interpret the will of the gods.

The word *installation* is of comparatively modern origin and comes from medieval Latin. The term is compounded of the word *in* and *stallum*, meaning a seat. So, in its most strict meaning and interpretation, *installation* means “take a seat.”

Now, we all know we came here to observe, participate, and perform an officer installation, but you may be surprised to learn about the events surrounding the reason we install officers – and background on the man behind the idea.

I’d like to give you the rest of the story.

We gather here today because of a fellow named Phillip. We’ll just call him Phil for now.

Phil was quite well known where he lived. He was wealthy and quite the “colorful” figure of his time. He was widely traveled and afforded an excellent education. He was prepared for a life as a public speaker

and reported to be quite eloquent and witty. We learn from historical writings that Phil had a second life as well – one that not only characterized him as a "man of letters" but also "a drunkard, a rioter, an infidel, and rake."

That second characterization arose from his later position in life as once president of London's infamous Hell-Fire Clubs. Also, contributing to his later reputation, was his instigation and involvement in the

short-lived secret society called The Germogons. He is often credited with establishing that group in 1724 in England. The original purpose of The Germogons was to stand in opposition to Freemasonry by ridiculing the fraternity, its practices, and the men in it. That purpose flourished but a brief time.

Interestingly, it is believed by some researchers that The Germogons activities contributed in some way –inadvertently or not - to sowing seeds of early anti-Masonic sentiments in England – sentiments that led to several later exposures.

Because of a notorious libel suit against his publisher for something he'd written, a second lawsuit that was about to name Phil and swallow him in years of litigation, he self-exiled himself to Spain where he was known to have close friends.



Philip Wharton, 1st Duke of Wharton.

While there he helped the King of Spain attempt a military siege to take control of the Straits of Gibraltar, which was at the time, under British rule. For that little error in political judgment, England charged him with High Treason. To escape trial and likely hanging, he remained in Spain until his death a few years later.

As flamboyant as Phil's life was, we find him with an equally colorful Masonic history.

Phil, by the way, was the Duke of Wharton. In fact, his name was Phillip Wharton.

Despite regulations against it, he was solicited to join Freemasonry for the same reason the Duke of Montague was solicited for membership a few years earlier. The reason both were asked to join the fraternity was because of their bloodline, wealth, and association with the

aristocracy in England. Having Dukes as member gave the newly organized

fraternity prestige and credibility among the upper class and public in general.

Phil didn't just become a sideline member. That was not his style. He began campaigning - and with narrowly three years as a member, arranged, in 1772, to become the sixth Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England. ⁶

⁶ Phillip, Duke of Wharton, Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon A.F. & A. M.

http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/biography/wharton_p/wharton_p.html, accessed June 2004.

This made him the last Grand Master to ever hold that office without serving as Master of his lodge.⁷

That same year he appointed Dr. James Anderson to the position of Grand Warden. In doing so, he elevated the man who became most responsible for the first Masonic Constitution, which created organized Freemasonry as we know it today.

Always tinkering, Phil attempted at the end of his term to deprive future grand masters of the privilege of appointing their deputy by making the office subject to election. Unsuccessful in his attempt and in unanimous defeat of his plan, the minutes of Grand Lodge stated, "The late Grand Master went away from the Hall without Ceremony."

From the moment Phillip Wharton left the building that day, he had nothing further to do with the Grand Lodge of England or the men in it. In fact, later that same year is when he founded The Germogons and set upon the course to poke fun and ridicule the fraternity.

And, by the way, the reason Phil went to Spain in his self-exile years, was that the close friends I mentioned he had there were Freemasons.

They were Masons because while Phil was Grand Master, he constituted the first lodge in Europe. That lodge was in Madrid and later became the Grand National Orient of Spain.

Phil did something else as Grand Master and what he did is the reason you are sitting here this evening.

When he became the sixth grand master in 1722, he decided that when a new lodge was formed, they must have an installation

of its first Master. The Masters who followed did not have an installation, under his decree - nor did any other officer.

Throughout the years, the ceremony was modified to include the rest of the elected and appointed officers and slowly evolved into the practice we witnessed today.

Because nothing about Masonic ritual was written by Masons of the time, it was not until the late 1730s that we learn of what installation ceremonies consisted.

This is an interesting twist, for we learn about our early installation ceremonies - at least in part - from the first exposures written about Freemasonry.

And, those exposures that may not have been published at all, if it had not been for The Germogons, founded by the Duke of Wharton, the sixth grand master.

Those early installations involved the act we call today, *Installing the Master and the Wardens*, that is, the act of testing them, and giving them their authority and symbols of their office - and having them all swear their allegiance.

It was not until the 1850s that Freemasonry began the practice annual the installation of all new officers - in some lodges, twice a year with elections held on each of the St. Johns days falling in June and December.

By 1872 annual installation ceremonies were becoming commonplace in England and the United States, although the manner and ritual used varied.

Installation ceremonies are closed to the public in England, but the practice of opening them to the public in the United

⁷ *Ibid.*

States became customary late in the 19th century.

The installation ceremony you heard today is one handed down from the Grand Lodge of Virginia, which was handed down to them by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, which was handed to them by the United Grand Lodge of England. So, what you saw and heard today (although some words and parts have been modified over the decades) is what Masters and officers have undertaken for nearly 250 years.

Although it is likely that the annual installation ceremony would have evolved as part of our official work at some point anyway, it was Phillip, the Duke of Wharton, the sixth Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England who is responsible for creating it - and for us being here this evening.

It is appropriate this backstory be presented here tonight at Kentucky's oldest research lodge, where such history and facts about our honorable fraternity should be part of the repository of knowledge available to all Kentucky Freemasons.

In closing – again, I add my voice to the chorus of congratulations to the installed officers of the William O. Ware Lodge of Research.

Worshipful Master – Thank you for the invitation to speak this evening.

I wish the best for you and your officers and this lodge of research in the coming Masonic year.