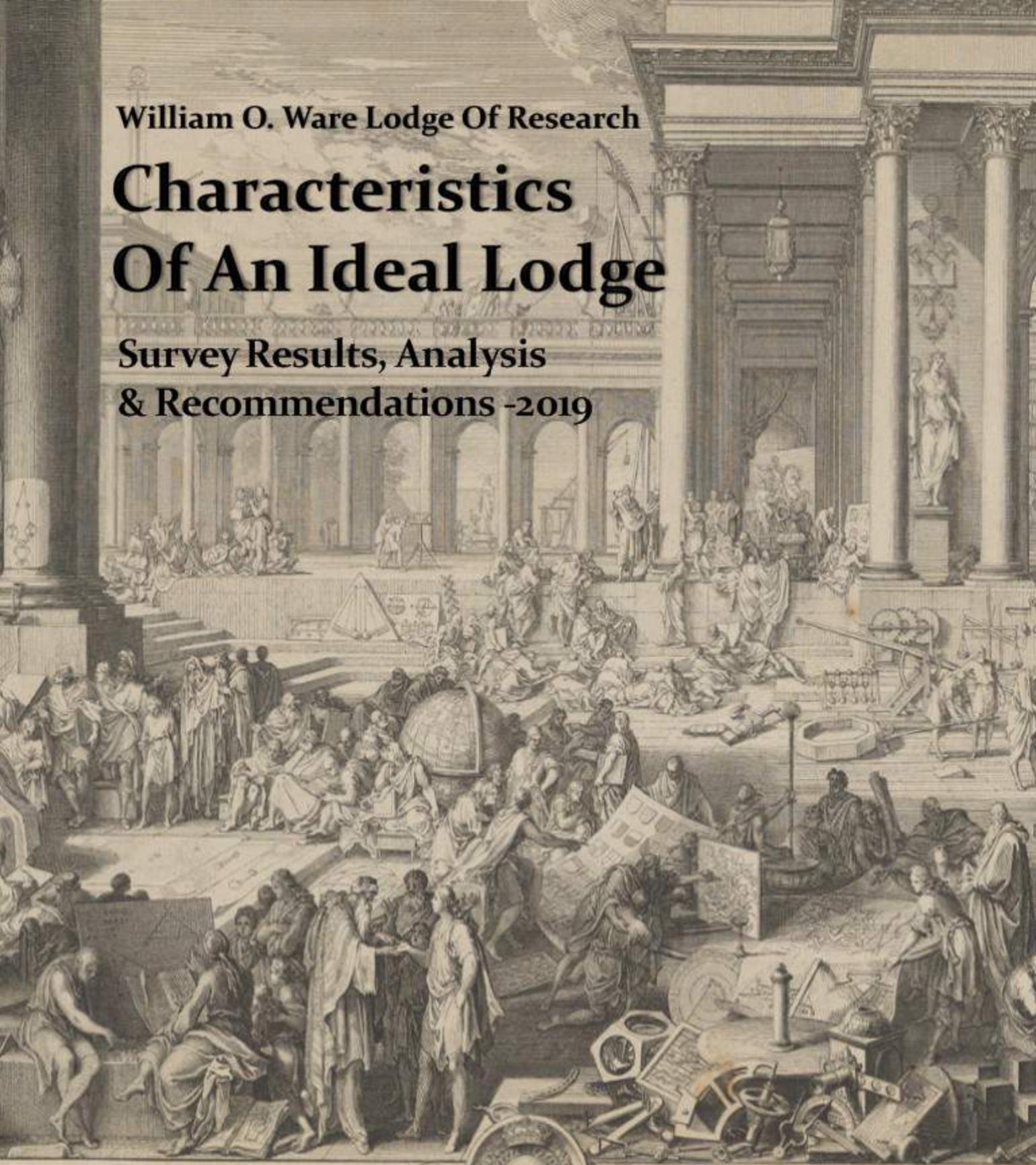


William O. Ware Lodge Of Research

Characteristics Of An Ideal Lodge

Survey Results, Analysis
& Recommendations -2019



L'ACADEMIE DES SCIENCES
DEDIEE

Par son tres humble, tres obéissant et tres

ET DES BEAUX ARTS
AU ROY

fidèle serviteur et sujet Sab. Le Clerc.

Report Cover

The Académie des Sciences et des Beaux Arts showing various methods of study and teaching with a lettered key.

Central to Masonic thinking is geometry and architecture. Humanity's progress in these sciences is recorded in this 17th century allegorical panoply [display] from Sebastien Le Clerc's 1698 engraving. The image was used as the frontispiece of Chambers Cyclopaedia, 1728.



Characteristics of An Ideal Lodge

Survey Results, Analysis & Recommendations

October 1, 2019

William O. Ware Lodge of Research



Characteristics of An Ideal Lodge

Survey Results and Analysis

ABSTRACT

Two of many findings from a 1988 Masonic survey of fifteen states continue to stand as a testament to the reality that the institution of American Freemasonry pays little attention to the findings of Masonic surveys, even when correctable problems are identified. One finding from that survey, unsurprisingly, remains common: *Masons are content to take degrees, identify themselves as a Mason, not attend Lodge, but continue to pay dues.*¹

One of the conclusions noted from the 1988 survey was foretelling: *Left to its own devices, [American Freemasonry] will be half its present size in 2000 and half again in 2010.*² In the thirty-one years since that survey, American Freemasonry lost 58.4% of its membership.³

William O. Ware Lodge of Research has found that Kentucky Masons are generally disengaged from the practice of Freemasonry and lack a comprehensive understanding of the history and philosophy of Freemasonry. Furthermore, an ancillary study indicates that 56% of all men who are currently on the rolls of subordinate Lodges in Kentucky have never meaningfully participated in the activities of their Lodge since having received their most recent Degree. A realistic rough estimate is that approximately 6% of men who are currently on the rolls of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky are actively engaged with their respective Lodges. This begs the question that if 56% of Kentucky Masons have never actively participated in their respective Lodges, and if the current level of participation is roughly 6%, where are the remaining 38% of members who at one time were at least nominally active in their Lodges but who are now absent?

This survey does not attempt to answer the question of where this 38% of members might be today. The survey shows there are much broader issues to address within the organization, especially concerning the perception of what the characteristics are of an ideal Lodge. The findings are troubling since:

- Even in the face of the dramatic decline in the fortunes of Freemasonry, 64% of respondents believe the current practices of their Lodge reflect the best way in which to practice Freemasonry;

¹ Masonic Renewal Task Force, Survey, 1988, PHASE I RESEARCH (Attitudes of Non-Masons toward joining organizations such as Freemasonry.) PHASE II RESEARCH (Attitudes of Masons toward Freemasonry).

² *Ibid.*

³ Masonic Service Association of North America, Membership Totals since 1924, <https://www.msana.com/msastats.asp>, accessed October 2019.

- 56% of respondents believe “fun “degrees are important to the Masonic experience;
- That thirty days between degrees and only sixty-days in which to become a Master Masons, is sufficient; and,
- Respondents indicated that it was highly important for an ideal Lodge to have organization, constructive leadership, consistent and wholesome education and stringent investigation committee practices – characteristics largely absent from many Kentucky Lodges and illustrative of the disconnect between what Kentucky Masons want in an ideal Lodge and what actually exists.

Nearly three-fourths (71%) of the respondents identified themselves as current or past masters of a Lodge. That so many individuals who are either now, or who have been, in leadership positions hold opinions that conflict either with other of their stated beliefs, or the practices commonly observed in Kentucky Freemasonry illustrates the absence of a genuine understanding of Freemasonry’s philosophical foundation.

Much of the data collected in this survey suggests that Kentucky Freemasonry’s current practices are contrary to characteristics that might define an ideal lodge. The conflicting and contradictory survey responses reflect the lack of uniformity in the practice of Freemasonry that has existed within the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, and its subordinate Lodges, for over two hundred years.⁴ These findings alone foretell the future of Freemasonry as an institution as did the 1988 survey noted in the first sentence of this Abstract.

⁴ See Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky.

Introduction

William O. Ware Lodge of Research gratefully acknowledges and extends fraternal thanks to those 476 Kentucky Masons who participated in the *Characteristics of An Ideal Lodge* survey.

The following narrative is offered as a catalyst for discussion regarding the current condition of Freemasonry in Kentucky and its future course. The research conducted allows the presentation of facts contained herein as what they are – facts.

In his book, *The History and Evolution of Freemasonry*, M. W. Bro. Delmar D. Darrah, Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Illinois, wrote, “Masons have believed the things concerning the origin of the institution that they wanted to believe and have gone forth and told them as facts. When links were missing, they have been supplied by drawing upon fertile imaginations.”⁵ While this report does not address the origin of Freemasonry, the information presented herein is factual and under no circumstances imaginary. The reality of the information presented is the cause of the grave concern about the current and future state of Kentucky Freemasonry that this report hopes to convey.

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Rather than relying on opinion, or anecdotal evidence, the information released in these pages is supported by documented substantiation. This analysis is not offered with the intent to ridicule, embarrass, or otherwise lower in standing, Kentucky Freemasonry. It is acknowledged that a deep love for, and devotion to, the Fraternity exists within the Craft.

It is with the same sense of affection and devotion to the Craft that William O. Ware Lodge of Research presents its findings in the hope that they will be used constructively in efforts to shape the future of Freemasonry in Kentucky.

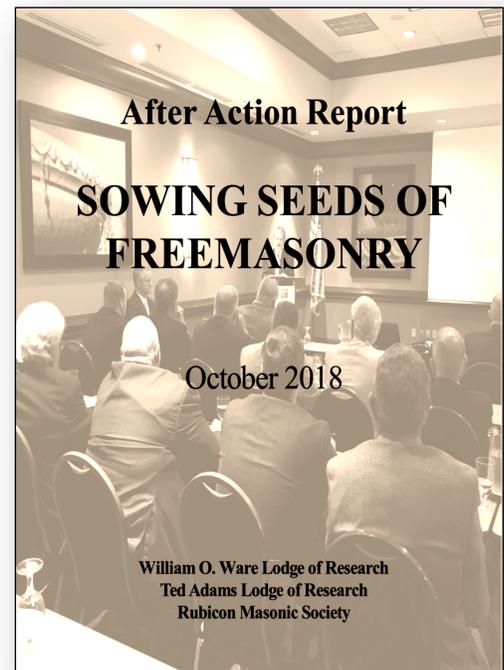
⁵ Delmar D. Darrah, *History and Evolution of Freemasonry*, The Charles T. Powner, Co, Chicago, 1954.

What Led To *Characteristics of An Ideal Lodge Survey*?

The genesis of the *Characteristics of an Ideal Lodge* survey came on the heels of the *Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry* seminars held around the state in 2018.⁶ Those seminars, were a joint venture of William O. Ware Lodge of Research, Ted Adams Lodge of Research and The Rubicon Masonic Society.⁷

That questionnaire determined:

- 20% of attendees believed politics, religion, and sex were subjects not permitted to be discussed in Lodge meetings;
- 15% of attendees believed Masons are required to keep secret the names of all members, and all that happens in Lodge meetings;
- 67% of attendees did not know the significance of Anderson's Constitution;
- 63% of attendees believed the purpose of Freemasonry was something other than to learn to subdue their passions and improve themselves;
- 42% of the attendees did not have access to a Masonic library or other education materials at their Lodge;
- 45% of the attendees believed more members needed to be added to the rolls;
- 65% of those attendees were past masters.



The Conclusion to the After-Action Report of “Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry” and questionnaire reported:

Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry exposed the deep fault between what our Lodges actually teach and what they should be teaching. That fault exists with respect to the most trivial facts and the most fundamental. It is clear that what was offered at each seminar was not commonly offered at Lodges

⁶ See Appendices for the After-Action Report of the Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry seminar and survey quiz.

⁷ The Rubicon Masonic Society is a Masonic interest group in Lexington, Kentucky. The purpose of the Society is to promote the study and understanding of the traditions of Freemasonry and the conviviality of brotherhood outside the lodge. The Society does not use or practice any part or parts of Masonic ritual or use Masonic regalia, signs or titles, has no initiatic process, and confers no degrees. Only Master Masons in good standing and active with their lodge are invited to meetings of the Society. In addition to guest speakers at meetings, the Society has sponsored Festive Boards, education symposiums, surveys, the Masonic Restoration Foundation 10th Annual Symposium and the Annual Masonic Society Conference.

represented. Equally clear is that only a small percentage of Masons in four distinct areas of the state were interested in devoting a Saturday to such an event (although free of costs) to advance their Masonic knowledge even when personally notified and invited more than thirty-days in advance (accompanied with one “reminder” at least ten days before the event was scheduled). Another interesting finding is that not all of the Lodges that contributed financially to make the seminars possible were represented at any of the seminars.⁸

The most thematic comments expressed at the seminars in the group setting by attendees were:

- “We were never told about that at my Lodge,” (referring to Anderson’s Constitutions, origins discussions, historic events in American Freemasonry, the origins of the meaning of the term charity);
- “Why haven’t we heard this before?” (referring to the same topics identified in the foregoing);
- “Our Lodge focuses mostly on fund raising more than anything else;”
- “Masonic education is discouraged in my Lodge because it makes the meetings too long;”
- “Memory work is all I was offered when moving through degrees;” and
- “We are told we cannot raise dues because members will demit.”

The report went on to note:

The value of such seminars cannot be discounted except by those with cynical attitudes toward the offering of more than what is currently offered in Kentucky Lodges. Areas in which attendees identified as wanting more in their Masonic journey were: “education, history, ritual, knowledge and understanding of the Craft, self-improvement, fellowship, origins and symbols, philosophy, community involvement, and traditionalism.”⁹

Considering the responses and data collected, two basic concerns emerged: to what extent are Kentucky Masons disengaged from the fraternity; and, what is their overall factual understanding of the history and philosophy of Freemasonry? William O. Ware Lodge of Research saw a clear need to attempt to measure the characteristics that Kentucky Masons thought would exist in an ideal Lodge, thus the survey was created.

⁸ After Action Report, Sowing Seeds Of Freemasonry, William O. Ware Lodge of Research Library, October 2018

⁹ *Ibid.*

Methodology & Process

The *Characteristics of an Ideal Lodge* survey was designed consisting of forty statements, each requiring an answer of “agree” or “disagree.” The statements addressed such subjects as meals, dress, behavior, ritual, leadership, and priorities. An additional fifteen statements were included with respect to specific items of knowledge that a member of an ideal Lodge should possess. Like the statements addressing characteristics, the statements regarding knowledge also required an “agree” or “disagree” response. Additionally, respondents to the survey were asked to prioritize sixteen distinct characteristics that might be found in a Lodge. Finally, respondents were allowed to offer any comments that they might have regarding the characteristics of an ideal Lodge.

The surveys were designed to be anonymous. Although respondents were not asked to reveal their identities, they were asked to provide the name of their respective Lodges, the number of their years in Masonry and whether or not they were a current or past Master. Those who indicated that they were either a current or past Master were further asked how many terms they had served as Master of a Lodge.

“Considering that the surveys were sent to the persons who, presumably would be the most active and engaged Masons in Kentucky, the rate of return, along with the demonstrably low interest in such a survey, is alarmingly low.”

William O. Ware Lodge of Research established an initial goal of collecting 400 completed surveys. It was believed that such a number of responses, representing more than one percent (1%) of the number of men on the membership rolls of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, would provide a suitably representative sampling of the attitudes of Kentucky Masons. Later, the goal was increased to 450 surveys and ultimately 476 completed surveys were collected.

Worshipful Brother Robby Ratliff (member of William O. Ware Lodge of Research) began the collection process in May of 2018 by visiting the stated meetings of certain Lodges in Northern and Central Kentucky and offering the survey to Masons in attendance. Additional surveys were collected from the Masons in attendance at the four Sowing

Seeds of Freemasonry events held across the state. Roughly the first seventy-five surveys were collected from the in-person visits and the seminars.

It very quickly became clear that in order to reach the desired number of completed surveys, either as originally stated or as revised, it would be necessary to devise a wider means of distribution. Accordingly, surveys were mailed to randomly selected Masters and Secretaries of Kentucky Lodges in the fall of 2018. The initial mailing netted roughly an additional 125 surveys, bringing the total number collected to 200. A similar mailing occurred in early 2019 to Masters and Secretaries installed for the new Lodge year. The results were similar and brought

the number of collected surveys to roughly 350, still short of our announced goal. A final mailing occurred in the late spring and early summer of 2019, this time targeting Lodge officers other than Masters and Secretaries. The response rate was roughly the same but was enough to meet and slightly exceed the stated goal.

It was apparent early in the process that the rate of response with respect to the mailed surveys was lower than anticipated. Potential respondents were sent the survey, a cover letter explaining its purpose and a postage paid return envelope. The rate of response to the mailed surveys was roughly 40%. In other words, collection of the final 400 surveys required more than 1,000 pieces of mail sent to potential respondents. Considering that the surveys were sent to the persons who, presumably would be the most active and engaged Masons in Kentucky, the rate of return, along with the demonstrably low interest in such a survey, is alarmingly low.

Upon receipt of the completed surveys, Worshipful Bro. S. Bradley Drew (member of William O. Ware Lodge of Research) compiled the raw data in spreadsheet form. The final survey results, as they appeared on Worshipful Bro. Drew's spreadsheets, were transmitted to James T. Morrison, Morrison & Associates, Applied Social and Public Policy Research for his statistical analysis.

In the final tally:

- 476 surveys were collected representing 202 different Kentucky Lodges.
- All of Kentucky's thirty (30) Masonic Districts were represented in the set of collected surveys.
- The average years of membership for the respondents was 21.91 years.
- Seventy-one percent (71%) of the respondents identified themselves as Past Masters or the current Master of a Lodge.
- Those identifying themselves in that fashion had served as Master of a Lodge an average of 1.92 times.

Raw Results of The Survey

Total Surveys	476		
Total Lodges	202		
Total Dual Lodges	42		
Past Master/Current Master	Y	N	No Answer
Total Count	339	115	22
Total Percentage	71%	24%	5%
Average Repeat of Mastership (Years)	1.92		
Average Membership of Participants (Years)	21.91		
Average Membership of WM/PM (Years)	25.55		
Average Membership of Non-WM/PM (Years)	11.58		
Average Membership of No Answer (Years)	16.85		
	AGREE	DISAGREE	NO ANSWER
Characteristics Questions			
High Membership is a characteristic	41%	54%	5%
High Dues is a characteristic	17%	77%	6%
Quality Meals is a characteristic	64%	32%	10%
Only light refreshments at Lodge - no meal necessary is a characteristic	38%	55%	7%
Dues should cover meals is a characteristic	27%	65%	8%
Dues should not cover meals is a characteristic	66%	28%	7%
Dues should cover festive boards is a characteristic	30%	59%	12%
Dues should not cover festive boards is a characteristic	58%	31%	11%
No festive board necessary is a characteristic	38%	44%	17%
A Lodge should be able to transact its business on the degree of its choice is a characteristic	50%	43%	7%
A Master should take not an apprentice unless he has sufficient employment for him is a characteristic	49%	36%	15%
No dress code necessary is a characteristic	34%	60%	6%

Formal (business attire) dress code mandatory is a characteristic	27%	69%	4%
Preferred dress code enforcement is a characteristic	40%	52%	8%
Preferred dress code announced but not enforced is a characteristic	53%	40%	7%
Formal protocol and etiquette required and enforced in open Lodge is a characteristic	75%	20%	6%
Casual protocol acceptable during open Lodge is a characteristic	44%	49%	7%
Candidates allowed to attend education in Lodge when called to ease is a characteristic	81%	15%	4%
Non-Masons allowed to make presentation in Lodge when Lodge is called to ease is a characteristic	76%	22%	2%
Stationary meeting place (fixed Lodge room) is a characteristic	82%	12%	6%
Meeting place anywhere there is assured privacy is a characteristic	43%	49%	7%
Emphasis on proficient ritual delivery is a characteristic	93%	5%	3%
Consistent communication with membership is a characteristic	96%	2%	2%
Emphasis on public charity and fund raising is a characteristic	76%	18%	5%
The current practices of my Lodge reflect the best way in which to practice Freemasonry is a characteristic	64%	27%	9%
Emphasis on standardized, consistent and detailed Masonic education for all three degrees is a characteristic	89%	7%	4%
No member talks of anything impertinent or unseemly in Lodge is a characteristic	75%	20%	5%
Committee work conducted during Lodge meetings is a characteristic	37%	56%	7%
Regular attendance of past masters is a characteristic	89%	8%	3%
Charity should be prioritized to assist Masons in need is a characteristic	82%	11%	7%
Consent calendar agenda for all Lodge meetings is a characteristic	78%	12%	9%
Strict adherence to progressive line concept is a characteristic	42%	44%	15%
Entertainment during Lodge meetings to make Stated Communications fun is a characteristic	29%	63%	9%

Majority of Lodge members also members of appendant bodies is a characteristic	39%	48%	12%
No member shall behave ludicrously or jestingly while the Lodge is engaged in what is serious and solemn is a characteristic	89%	6%	5%
Fun degrees are important to the Masonic experience is a characteristic	56%	35%	9%
Education in Lodge only on Masonic topics is a characteristic	50%	43%	7%
Thirty days between degrees is sufficient is a characteristic	78%	17%	5%
Master and Wardens chosen not by seniority, but for merit is a characteristic	83%	12%	5%
Side conversations are acceptable during Lodge if kept to a low voice is a characteristic	26%	67%	6%
Master Should Know at Minimum			
	AGREE	DISAGREE	NO ANSWER
The distinction between allegorical lessons, legends and facts	90%	4%	6%
The fundamental aim, purpose and factual heritage of the Order	93%	2%	5%
What is considered secret to the Order and what is not	96%	2%	3%
The contents of Anderson's Constitutions	43%	38%	19%
The By-Laws of his Lodge	92%	5%	3%
The Constitution of his jurisdiction	87%	8%	5%
The officers of his Lodge and their duties	96%	2%	2%
The protocol and etiquette expected in his Lodge	95%	2%	3%
The Ahiman Rezon	25%	37%	38%
The obligation of all three degrees	92%	3%	4%
The Lost Word	77%	13%	10%
How to join appendant bodies	73%	18%	9%
How to vouch for or try a visitor	96%	1%	3%
The meaning of the lesson of the 24-inch gauge	92%	3%	5%
Other	1%	0%	99%

Most Important Characteristics	
Organization	4.0
Formality and adherence to protocol in Lodge	5.5
Constructive leadership at all levels	4.0
Proficient ritual performances and floor work	4.7
Numerous degree classes at the same time	11.1
Consistent and wholesome education in Lodge	5.7
A long-term plan from which to labor	7.4
Dues levels at least commensurate with fixed expenses	7.5
Dues levels that support Lodge programs	8.5
Dues levels that support public charity	10.5
Recognizable presence in the community	6.8
Stringent investigation committee practices	5.8
Formal welcoming and orientation process for prospective candidates	7.4
Current, easily navigated and information website	11.5
Fellowship activities sponsored by the Lodge	8.3
Functional Lodge library	12.0
Other	5.4
Lodges Where at Least 5 of these Characteristics are Thought by Respondents to be in Place	
Question: How many Lodges with which you are familiar have at least 5 of the above 17 characteristics in place?	4.1

Independent Commentary

Based on the results of the survey as represented above, James T. Morrison, Morrison & Associates, Applied Social and Public Policy Research, Richmond, Kentucky, reviewed the responses and offered the following commentary.¹⁰

What Characteristics Constitute an “Ideal Lodge” Instrument and Survey Review and Commentary

James T. Morrison

July 27, 2019

A review and commentary concerning the instrument and accumulated responses of individuals’ perceptions and attitudes about what characteristics would constitute an “Ideal Lodge” follows below.

Note about Response Rate

The 54 or so questions posed in this instrument create an inscrutable puzzle while also illuminating some worthwhile observations. Having attempted several ways of decoding some truisms about this dataset, contradictions abound. With 476 responses, it would be very difficult to generalize too far about the population from this sample; one could make a strong argument that any such generalizations could have occurred by chance rather than inference from this dataset. One has to move beyond the response rate to look to the content of the instrument, its construction, and other relevant considerations; needless to say, this commentary will eventually return to the response rate as critical consideration.

Instrument and Audience

Concerns about the response rate should not be construed as dismissing the dataset or the overall project. Likewise, the broad research question denies utilization of an easy instrument. On the one hand, it is clear that the designers clearly understood that potential respondents would recoil and not complete the instrument if it were much more involved than this version. Likewise, it is clear that this instrument was designed to deliberately tie

¹⁰ James T. Morrison, the principle of Morrison & Associates, Applied Social and Public Policy Research, has since 1996 been involved in both public and private domains in the work of job-task analyses, training needs assessments, organizational reviews, workflow analyses, structural reviews, fiscal management, organizational behavior studies, survey design and collection, methods reviews, instrument construction, and analyses of data.

experiential perceptions from a targeted sample. Logically, and, I assume as a matter of propriety, a high number of respondents were intended to be current or past leaders of their specific Lodges; anticipating this, the designers clearly intended to listen to these voices of experience.

The constraints and opportunities valuable insights always compete. That is, the more important or high ranking the potential respondent, the less likely a respondent is willing to complete a lengthy, involved survey. Obviously, the longer that a potential respondent has been actively involved, the higher the likelihood that this would be voice to hear. While I am sure there were other considerations as well, it appears that the length of the survey is appropriate to the purposive sample.

For the structure, it is logically consistent, utilizes mutually exclusive response categories, and is well constructed for the intended audience.

Instrument Meanings and Interpretations

There are some other considerations about methodology.

First, it is worth reminding eventual readers of this publication that the survey instrument seeks respondents' views concerning "an Ideal Lodge" rather than the condition of their own Lodge. But given that 71% of respondents indicate affirmatively that they are a Current/Past Master, one can reasonably assume that these respondents are by and large influencers within their Lodges.

One can tie the conceptualization of an Ideal Lodge closer to what these respondents directed and guided their own Lodges to become. The juxtaposition of what these respondents conceptualize as "Ideal" and how they individually view their own Lodge cannot be determined by this kind of survey. One must infer, again, that these respondents are conceptualizing what they would create and develop if by fiat they could create an Ideal Lodge. How they overlay their perception of their own Lodge into and influencing this question can take several different turns and routes.

It would be convenient to equate an affirmative or negative response with an informed affirmative or an informed negative response. We do not know that from this data. But in many respects, these responses describe what respondents aspire to; the respondents are quite clear about what they believe is important. An obvious turn of this idea is that respondents are equally clear about what they do not believe is important. These are normative level interrogatives; we do not know that an affirmative response is predicated on a deep understanding of the concept of which was the target of the question. And the converse is true as well; what they do not believe to be important is not so clear cut either, that is, a negative response can mean at least two very different things: "I (absolutely) don't think that is important, or I don't know what that is and will answer with a negative because, after all, I rose

to a level of authority without having known it, how could it be that important?" This particular point may bear the most fruit in the analysis of the data and, likewise, reflect most on the conditions the survey attempts to discover.

Ignorance is not disagreement; it simply means that someone is not aware and cannot make an informed judgement. Despite the fact the instrument allowed for "no responses" to be included as valid, there persists in the results that ignorance of a topic or posed question may have crept into the responses, but we cannot measure it independently. In addition to the previously mentioned scenario is as an *articulated limitation*, the phraseology of the survey does not allow a reasonable respondent to distinguish between ignorance and disagreement/agreement.

In short, a respondent indicating a concept, foundational custom, specific body of knowledge or other item surveyed is of little importance says nothing about the respondent's understanding of that topic. One can assume that little knowledge or experience with an item included in the survey may increase the chances that it will not be ranked as important to the respondent.

Responses

There is not sufficient data to analyze beyond measures of central tendency within the dataset; these measures are conducted at the individual question level. While they are clearly constructed and equally clearly conveyed in the data tables, there are a couple of observations that may help home in on what we have before us.

1. There are two kinds of queried topics:
 - a. items or knowledge bases specific to Masonry or
 - b. behaviors or organizational features

This is worthwhile distinction. One might expect the less widely known items to be deemed less important (discussed previously); this may well be the case here. It may prove worthwhile to assemble a group of experienced members to independently rank order the items specific to Masonry in terms of how well known these should be. If the responses to the survey questions match this scale, one can surmise that ranking something as important is clearly driven by the likelihood that the respondent was not fully aware of or versed in the material queried.

2. Inferences are spurious at best concerning comparisons of groups of respondents across multiple questions. This issue, again and again, is the low response rate.

Response Inferences

The response rate was very low for an instrument that asks members of an organization to essentially describe what an ideal unit would look like. This should be an easy exercise that is

welcomed by leaders within the organization; response rates to this kind of research question and the instruments utilized for this purpose should be quite high.

One should introduce a caveat to this concern: if potential respondents have been bombarded with multiple iterations of this kind of survey aimed at answering the same kind of research question multiple times fairly recently, defection from participation should be expected. If this is not the case, that this survey follows multiple others deployed recently, the low response rate, regardless of the content of the responses, suggests that there are broader issues to address within the organization concerning the perception of what is ideal. No other anomalies were described in the administration of the instrument that would have negatively influenced the response rate; to the contrary, administration, follow-up requests and a wide window to accept responses speak to a responder-friendly process.

The preceding point is more than a research note, it is fundamental. One has to ask, what do non-respondents consider in their decision to ignore or otherwise fail to respond to this kind of survey? That there are so many non-respondents may well ought to be the banner exclamation of this study rather than the summary of the responsive members.

James T. Morrison
Morrison & Associates, Applied
Social and Public Policy Research

The Follow-Up Project

As Morrison points out, the survey's low response rate is troubling.

The Grand Lodge of Kentucky currently defines an "active" Mason as one whose dues are currently paid. But of those men, how many are actually engaged in the life of their Lodge?

The survey's response rate led to an ancillary project – that of measuring, as much as possible, the extent to which Kentucky Masons are actively engaged in the life of their respective Lodges. Using a formula to identify a random sampling of Lodges in Kentucky and using the information available in the data base of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, the results indicate that 56% of all men who are currently on the rolls of subordinate Lodges in Kentucky have never meaningfully participated in the activities of their Lodge since having received their most recent Degree.¹¹ While these men continue to pay annual dues, they do not otherwise make any meaningful contribution to their Lodge. The percentage would have been higher, but the study deliberately omitted all Brothers who became members within the last three years. The

¹¹ See Appendix A. Specific lodge results available upon request.

remaining 44% are men who, at some time in their Masonic careers, have served in some capacity as a Lodge officer or committee member.

Obviously, the Grand Lodge of Kentucky does not have a current participation rate of 44% among the members of its subordinate Lodges. Anecdotally, the Grand Lodge of Kentucky confirms this in the establishment of its criterion for an attendance award at annual District Meetings. To obtain an attendance award, a Lodge must have ten percent of its members attend the District Meeting. The thinking of the Grand Lodge officers is that the number required for the attendance award mirrors what they see in the subordinate Lodges in terms of attendance. It is important to note that not all Lodges qualify for the annual attendance award.

“...56% of all men who are currently on the rolls of subordinate Lodges in Kentucky have never meaningfully participated in the activities of their Lodge since having received their most recent Degree. While these men continue to pay annual dues, they do not otherwise make any meaningful contribution to their Lodge.”

A more realistic rough estimate is that approximately six percent (6%) of men who are currently on the rolls of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky are actively engaged with their respective Lodges.

If 56% of Kentucky Masons have never actively participated in their respective Lodges, and if the current level of participation is roughly 6%, where are the remaining 38% of our Brothers who at one time were at least nominally active in their Lodges but who are now absent? While the *Characteristic of an Ideal Lodge* survey was not designed to answer that question, it leaves open an opportunity for a very telling future study.

Commentary on Specific Survey Results

The comments offered herein are intended to place certain specific results of the survey in context and to serve as a basis for an ongoing discussion of practices and methods.

LODGE MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- A total of 41% of respondents indicated that they believe that high membership is a characteristic of an ideal Lodge (although the term “high” is not defined). The relatively low level of this response is somewhat surprising, given the consistent emphasis placed on growing the membership of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky. The response confirms the belief that Kentucky Masons generally are seeking a more intimate Lodge experience that values close relationships among its members.

RELATIONSHIP OF DUES, MEALS, FESTIVE BOARDS

- In statements two through nine, an overwhelming majority of respondents (77%) indicate that they do not want high dues (although “high” is not defined). At the same time, 64% want quality meals at Lodge, but only 27% believe that Lodge dues should cover the cost of the meals. That, of course, begs the question: How will Lodges pay for quality meals? Further, 58% of respondents indicated that they believe that the cost of a festive board should not be covered by dues. Again, the question arises: If the cost of a festive board is not covered by dues, how will the Lodge pay such an expense?

LODGE GOVERNANCE

- The response to statement 10 reflects that 50% of the respondents believe that a Lodge should have the option of conducting its business on the Degree of its choice, while 43% disagree with this position and 7% have no opinion. Although legislation on this matter, which has been presented at least five times over the last decade at the Grand Lodge level consistently failed, it is clear that a plurality of Kentucky Masons favor lodges having autonomous authority to conduct their own business on the degree of their choice.
- Statements 11, 27, 28, 32, 35, 39 and 40 are taken from Anderson’s Constitution of 1723. Encouragingly, responses to these statements show a general agreement with the principles found in Anderson’s. A plurality are in agreement with the statement that “A Master should not take an apprentice unless he has sufficient employment for him.” The relatively low level of positive responses to this statement is likely indicative of a high level of unfamiliarity with the contents of Anderson’s and an inability to apply the statement to the current common practice of Freemasonry. A surprisingly high number, 37%, agree that “Committee work conducted during Lodge meetings” is a characteristic of an ideal Lodge.
- Of special note are the contradictory responses to statements 32 and 39, which deal with the concept of the progressive line. Responses are nearly evenly split on the concept of strict adherence to the progressive line, but an overwhelming majority agree with the idea that Masters and Wardens should be chosen not by seniority, but for merit, a provision of Anderson’s Constitution.

- Statements 12 through 15 address the issues of attire in Lodge. The responses are contradictory. A majority of respondents believe that a dress code is necessary (statement 12), but a similar majority believe that a dress code should not be enforced (statement 14). A majority believe that a dress code should be announced, but not enforced. Responses in this category reflect the often-heard comment, “It’s better that a Brother come to Lodge, regardless of dress, than stay home.” The obvious inference is that while Kentucky Masons appear to desire some sort of formal dress code, they lack the will to enforce it.
- Statements 16 and 17 deal with the issues of protocol and etiquette in Lodge. Again, the responses are contradictory. While a significant majority believe that formal protocol and etiquette are a characteristic of an ideal Lodge, only a plurality disagree with the statement that “Casual protocol acceptable during open Lodge.” Much like the concept of the dress code, Kentucky Masons express a preference for formal protocol and etiquette, but simply lack either the will to demand it or the knowledge of how to implement it.

“The response to statement 10 reflects that 50% of the respondents believe that a Lodge should have the option of conducting its business on the Degree of its choice, while 43% disagree with this position and 7% have no opinion. Although legislation on this matter, which has been presented at least five times over the last decade at the Grand Lodge level consistently failed, it is clear that a plurality of Kentucky Masons favor lodges having autonomous authority to conduct their own business on the degree of their choice.”

MASONIC EDUCATION

- Statements 18, 19, 26 and 37 address the topic of Masonic education. In each instance, strong majorities express a preference for education in Lodge. A plurality prefers that such education be restricted to Masonic topics only. While it is encouraging that Kentucky Masons desire more education, the shape and focus of such education is undefined. One fears that without proper development and oversight of that shape and focus, Masonic education will be conducted in the same uncoordinated manner as it currently is.

LODGE PRACTICES

- The responses to statements 20 and 21 indicate a strong preference for a fixed Lodge room.
- Statement 22, which is “Emphasis on proficient ritual delivery,” elicited a positive response rate of 93%, the second highest rating on the survey.
- Statement 23, which is “Consistent communication with membership,” elicited a positive response rate of 96%, the highest rating on the survey.
- Statements 24 and 30 address the issue of charity. While 76% of the respondents indicated that they agree that a characteristic of an ideal Lodge is an “Emphasis on public charity and fund raising,” 82% of respondents believe that “Charity should be prioritized to assist Masons in need.” The high priority placed on charity remains troubling and is an indicator of the extent to which the efforts and energy of our Craft are improperly focused.
- Statement 25 is, perhaps, the most perplexing of all of the survey items. A clear majority, 64%, believe that “The current practices of my Lodge reflect the best way in which to practice Freemasonry.” Given the dispirited state of Kentucky Freemasonry, it is difficult to justify such an attitude. The response is more reflective of the sedentary nature of our Lodges and a general unwillingness to address in any meaningful way the dysfunction that exists therein.
- Statement 29 indicates an overwhelming majority favoring the “Regular attendance of past masters.”
- Statement 31 is a pleasant surprise in that respondents, by a substantial margin, indicated their preference for a consent agenda. This preference is consistent with previous preferences for education during Lodge meetings and is a clear indicator that Kentucky Masons desire more from Lodge meeting than routine business.
- Statements 33 and 36 indicate that a sizeable number of Kentucky Masons (a majority in the instance of statement 36) feel that entertainment and “Fun Degrees” are a desirable characteristic in an ideal Lodge. These sentiments are leftovers from the “Golden Age” of Fraternalism, when it was believed that entertainment was necessary to entice men to attend meetings.

PROFICIENCY AND KNOWLEDGE

- Statement 34 indicates that a plurality of respondents do not believe that having a “Majority of Lodge members also members of appendant bodies” is a characteristic of an ideal Lodge. Given the limited manpower available to Blue Lodges, one wonders if the appendant bodies have become a luxury that Freemasonry can no longer afford.
- The response to Statement 38 reflects a failure to critically examine one of the greatest failures of contemporary Freemasonry. A substantial majority of respondents, 78%, believe that “Thirty days between Degrees is sufficient.” The unfortunate fact is that men are rushed through the Degrees without adequate preparation for the Degree that they are about to receive or a comprehensive explanation of the Degree they just received. Such lack of grounding is responsible, at least in part, for the high attrition rate of newly made Masons. It further nourishes the incorrect notion that once a Brother has been raised to the Degree of a Master Mason, he has genuinely “mastered” Freemasonry. Such an attitude, while patently nonsensical, is widely held and reinforced.
- The final set of statements relate to what, at a minimum, a Master should know. Almost all respondents indicated their preference for a high level of knowledge in specific areas. The exceptions were the contents of Anderson’s Constitutions and the Ahimon Rezon. In both instances, the responses are more indicative of a lack of familiarity with these influential source documents than they are of a substantive disregard for their contents.

Conclusions & Observations

Freemasonry of today is not that of 1717; neither was the Freemasonry of 1717 that of the traditional past; but through it all runs a life that has pushed itself forward from an undifferentiated mass into a form largely differentiated with conflicting views and attitudes about what Freemasonry is and how best its promise, whatever it is perceived to be, might be delivered.

The *Characteristics of an Ideal Lodge* survey exposes and confirms what many observers have long determined: in general, Kentucky Masons hold deeply conflicting, contradictory views, and attitudes with respect to the practice of Freemasonry.

The rapid expansion of Masonic Lodges and membership in past eras, during which there was little to no uniform education about the factual history, purpose of practices, and originally intended features of exclusivity formed a foundation of sorts for Kentucky Freemasonry. Over the years, that foundation shifted and changed into what is now seen as the contemporary soul of Freemasonry.

Ironically, many members believe the Fraternity's contemporary soul is what Freemasonry has always been or should always remain.

“The absence of a uniform philosophical grounding in the aim and purpose of Freemasonry has created a vacuum within the Craft and generations of Kentucky Masons have filled that void with out-of-place emphasis on features such as public charity, and community service projects -- taking on strong characteristics of a service club more than the educational and philosophical fraternity originally envisioned.”

A Note About the Detriments of Rapid Expansion of Lodges and Membership Relative to Kentucky Masonic History

It is well documented that past eras in which Masonic Lodges and membership rapidly expanded did not serve well the institution of American Freemasonry in the long run, although coffers were full.¹² Every period was followed by a decline in membership and the emergence of new practices diminishing the general awareness and understanding of Freemasonry by the public and membership.

“Kentucky Masons hold deeply conflicting, contradictory views, and attitudes with respect to the practice of Freemasonry.”

There have been ample past warnings from Masonic leaders and scholars throughout the United States about the harm of rapidly expanding membership in the fraternity that conspicuously fragmented interpretation about the purpose and function of Freemasonry. Many alarms are recorded across the wide spectrum of American Freemasonry that may be found in volumes of past Grand Lodge proceedings, books, orations, journals, and periodicals.

A prime example can be found in the 1866 Grand Lodge of Kentucky Proceedings. By 1866, Kentucky, a jurisdiction whose rapid expansion of membership and Lodges over its short sixty-six years of existence, was outdistanced in membership only by the jurisdiction of New York.

Grand Master Myrix J. Williams in his 1866 outgoing address to the Kentucky Craft, cautioned the fraternity saying:

... I feel it my duty to urge them [Lodges and members] to exercise great and increased caution in the reception of candidates for initiation. A want of care in this important particular though it may, by increasing the number of members, be looked upon as an evidence of prosperity, will in the end prove to be highly deleterious; it will be the canker worm on the rose, that seems outwardly so fair and flourishing, but bearing in its bosom the cause of its decay. Let me then urge you to guard well the outward door of the sanctuary.¹³

¹² **NOTE:** Periods of rapid expansions of Lodges and membership in American Freemasonry are commonly found beginning in the late 1780s, again in 1800, post-Civil War years, and 1936-1959. Contrary to common belief, what is thought to have been a rapid expansion in membership referred to as post-World War II, the rapid expansion began during the final years of the War, in 1944, and lasted fifteen years. See Masonic Service Association of North America, Membership Totals since 1924, <https://www.msana.com/msastats.asp>, accessed October 2019.

¹³ Annual Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, October 1866, Grand Master's Address, p. 14.

As of 1866, Kentucky had over 380 Lodges chartered or operating under dispensation with a total of 15,157 members. This represents a 1,000% plus increase over the number of Lodges 33 years prior. ¹⁴

In 1866, in spite of the concerns of Grand Master Williams, the Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky reported 30 dispensations for new Lodges in Kentucky despite a resolution that year that only “the most imperative” of circumstances should govern the chartering of new Lodges. The resolution was either ignored or someone convinced the Grand line that chartering additional Lodges was “imperative” because the next year nine more Lodges were added to the rolls. Grand Master Isaac T. Martin expressed concern that the number of Lodges was increasing with “fearful rapidity.”¹⁵ By 1869, however, the Grand Lodge of Kentucky with its 20,000 members stood third in the United States in members and wealth. ¹⁶

“The avoidable detriment of the rapid expansion of membership and Lodges warned against as early as 1866 by Kentucky leadership, was not heeded then or later. The consequences of ignoring those warnings linger today as confirmed by the survey data.”

In summary, these accounts illustrate that while some leaders were leery of the results of rapid expansion of membership and Lodges, more were convinced that adding members so quickly would be thought of in terms of success and posterity for the fraternity as opposed to the decay it would cause in the interpretation of the aim and purpose of the Craft. It is reasonable to presume that some in the Grand Lodge recognized, too, the inability of the structure of the organization at the time to ensure uniform, or at least an effective measure of, instruction in all Lodges as to the aim and purpose of the institution, thus yielding that responsibility to the widely varying influences of local Lodges and their cultures.

The absence of a uniform philosophical grounding in the aim and purpose of Freemasonry has created a vacuum within the Craft and generations of Kentucky Masons have filled that void with out-of-place emphasis on features such as public charity, and community service projects -- taking on strong characteristics of a service club more than the educational and philosophical fraternity originally envisioned. Further, an apparently infinite number of side degrees that serve only to parody Freemasonry further reinforces the notion that at the core of Freemasonry is a lack of seriousness about the Craft. Such nonchalance appears to have fueled more speculative abstract reasoning about Freemasonry beyond the confines of the Masonic definition of the speculation.

¹⁴ Charles Snow Guthrie, *Kentucky Freemasonry 1788–1978: The Grand Lodge and the Men Who Made It* Lexington, KY: Grand Lodge of Kentucky, 1981, 112.

¹⁵ Grand Lodge of Kentucky, *Proceedings* (1867), 161.

¹⁶ Gurtrie.

“Kentucky Masons are overwhelmingly disengaged, and their overall understanding of the history and philosophy of Freemasonry is lacking.”

The avoidable detriment of the rapid expansion of membership and Lodges warned against as early as 1866 by Kentucky leadership, was not heeded then or later. The consequences of ignoring those warnings linger today as confirmed by the survey data.

One consequence is:

Nearly three-fourths (71%) of the respondents identified themselves as current or past masters of a Lodge. That so many individuals who are either now, or who have been, in leadership positions hold opinions that conflict either with other of their stated beliefs, or the evident conditions that exists in Kentucky Freemasonry illustrates the absence of genuine understanding of Freemasonry’s philosophical foundation.

The second consequence is:

Much of the data collected in this survey indicates Kentucky Freemasonry’s practices are contrary about what characteristics might define an ideal Lodge. The conflicting and contradictory responses reflect the lack of uniformity in the practice of Freemasonry [including a semblance of uniform education] that has existed within the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, and its subordinate Lodges, for over two hundred years.

Both of these consequences serve to underscore the long-term effect of the absence of a comprehensive and consistent plan for Masonic education. As Morrison points out in his Independent Review and Commentary, a third consequence is seen:

[the survey finds] 56% of all men who are currently on the rolls of subordinate lodges in Kentucky have never meaningfully participated in the activities of their Lodge since having received their most recent Degree.¹⁷ While these men continue to pay annual dues, they do not otherwise make any meaningful contribution to their lodge.

¹⁷ See Appendix A.

In the Commentary Section of this report two additional consequences surface:

[in four areas of the survey] strong majorities express a preference for education in lodge. A plurality prefers that such education be restricted to Masonic topics only. While it is encouraging that Kentucky Masons desire more education, the shape and focus of such education is undefined.

And,

A sizeable number of Kentucky Masons feel that entertainment and “Fun Degrees” are a desirable characteristic in an ideal Lodge. These sentiments are leftovers from the “Golden Age of Fraternalism,” when it was believed that entertainment was necessary to entice men to attend meetings, also underscores the extent to which Kentucky Masons are removed from a well-grounded understanding of the nature of Freemasonry.

Further consequences can easily be identified throughout the report. For example, while charitable, social, and service projects may all, in some fashion, be properly construed as

***“Masonic leaders no longer prioritize the same lofty ideals as did our forefathers. Focus has turned from timeless principles of our Craft to the ephemeral practices of measuring success of the fraternity by counting the number of names on membership rolls, inevitably leading to, and further embedding the trappings that project a perception that Freemasonry is a service club.*”**

attributes of Freemasonry, they were never originally intended as its dominant purpose. It is important to reiterate – the attributes of Freemasonry standing alone *are not* Freemasonry. Given the rate at which such attributes are emphasized among Kentucky Lodges, one wonders if such activities were eliminated, just how much Freemasonry would actually exist in the Grand Jurisdiction of Kentucky.

Regardless of the understandable consequences of rapidly expanding membership and Lodges without some form of uniform instruction consistently in place - and even in the face of the dramatic decline in the fortunes of Freemasonry - 64% of respondents believe in a way that cannot be explained or accounted for, that the current practices of their Lodge reflect the “best way” in which to practice Freemasonry.

While all members are certainly entitled to opinions, the extent of the conflicting contradictory views and beliefs present today seem largely rooted in anecdotal accounts presented as “evidence” rather than reliance on facts.

Some of the contradictory results identified in the survey may seem trivial – the desire for quality meals without a desire to budget for them, for example. Others speak to deep conflict with respect to the most fundamental aspects of the Craft, such as the responses related to specific sections of Anderson’s Constitutions. The presence of such a high volume of conflicting responses speaks louder than the specific responses and illustrates that Kentucky Masons simply are not grounded in the history and philosophy of the Order.

While the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, F. & A. M. has a Constitution governing the manner in which it and its subordinate Lodges transact business, a formal summary of the aims and values of Kentucky Freemasonry, or individual mission statement reflecting a definition of Freemasonry and its ultimate purpose, does not appear to have been clearly established. Subsequently, Kentucky Lodges have been left to define and interpret Freemasonry for themselves for over two centuries.

The subordinate Lodges, however, generally do not define the aim and purpose of Freemasonry, so the individual Mason is left to do so, which further complicates the matter. As a result, Lodges are left with inconsistent and often conflicting opinions regarding their purpose, and how to deliver it to the next generation except in a way that was passed on to them whether it was a constructive way or not. The result of that reality is readily apparent – a vacuum is created with respect to a well-grounded and more thorough understanding of the intended purpose of Freemasonry.

Kentucky Masons hold what might be thought of as a kaleidoscopic set of conflicting opinions about the purpose of Freemasonry. A vacuum has been seeded under such circumstances, making it easier to see what may also be thought of as a reckoning approaching the institution of Freemasonry, and certainly Kentucky Freemasonry. Sixty-years of steady decline in overall membership with no encouraging sign of abatement in that downward spiral should alone be a distinctive indicator that such a reckoning will take place as Grand Jurisdictions find they can no longer fund programs and expenses - and subordinate Lodges can no longer financially sustain themselves.

Following whatever consequences such a reckoning will have will be the historical analysis of what led to it. The decline in membership will be clearly seen by future analysts as it is today to the non-casual member: only as a contributing factor but not the exclusive culprit. Many of the findings in the *Characteristics of an Ideal Lodge* survey, other studies, and research available at

“While all members are certainly entitled to opinions, the conflicting contradictory view and beliefs present today appear largely rooted in anecdotal accounts presented as “evidence” rather than reliance on fact.”

“Further, an apparently infinite number of side degrees that serve only to parody Freemasonry further reinforces the notion that at the core of Freemasonry is a lack of seriousness about the Craft. Such nonchalance appears to have fueled more speculative abstract reasoning about Freemasonry beyond the confines of the Masonic definition of the speculation.”

this time will allow those who examine the reasons in a balanced context to easily identify the true underlying causes.

Masonic leaders no longer prioritize the same lofty ideals as did our forefathers. Focus has turned from timeless principles of our Craft to the ephemeral practices of measuring success of the fraternity by counting the number of names on membership rolls, inevitably leading to, and further embedding the trappings that create and project the perception that Freemasonry is a service club. The emphasis and over-reliance on projects and unnecessary programs, coupled with the lack of fundamental education beyond ritual rather than a system with uniform, consistent dependence on principles and dissemination of ideals, has indeed influenced, re-designed, led to, and sustains the contemporary soul of Kentucky Freemasonry.

As stated earlier, this project was not undertaken with the intent to ridicule or in any way insult or embarrass any Lodge, Grand Lodge or individual Mason. The facts reported herein speak for themselves. By any objective standard, Kentucky Freemasonry is experiencing a period of pronounced change resulting from the decreasing number of men on its membership rolls.

The ultimate value of the *Characteristics of an Ideal Lodge* survey may be that it reveals the extent to which Kentucky Masons are in need of reinvigoration --- both with respect to their level of engagement with the Fraternity and the level of Masonic knowledge which they possess. Based on the findings of the survey, recommendations in this report address those needs to more effectively meet the challenges facing this jurisdiction today.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In a meeting with the preparers of this report on August 13, 2019, Right Worship Brother Geary Laird, then Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Kentucky, quoted Albert Einstein who is reported to have said, “The definition of insanity is going the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.” As Right Worshipful Brother Laird, implies in his comment, Kentucky Freemasonry urgently needs to break out of its “that’s the way we we’ve always done it mentality.” It is in this constructive sprit that William O. Ware Lodge of Research offers the following recommendations:

A. Uniform, Structured Degree Program

A comprehensive structured program for those elected to receive the Degrees of the Order, beginning prior to the conferral of the Entered Apprentice Degree and continuing as they move through the Degrees of the Order is an indispensable need.

- For such a program to be constructive, subordinate Lodges would be required to administer the program under the guidance and specific training provided by the Grand Lodge to appointed education committee chairs designated by the Master or Education Officer for each Lodge.

A structured education program for existing members of subordinate Lodges designed for at least 12 presentations over a 12-month period at stated communications.

- For such a program to be constructive, subordinate Lodges would be required to administer the program under the guidance and specific training provided by the Grand Lodge to an appointed education committee chair or Education Officer designated by the Master.
- The existing member program would focus on providing Kentucky Masons with a comprehensive factual history of the Order and instruction in its philosophical underpinning.

To produce a productive and worthwhile program, an assembly of learned members from the around the state, research Lodges, and scholars from other jurisdictions should be gathered and charged to review what other jurisdictions have done and are currently doing to

advance the level of Masonic education of members in a uniform way; prepare a report with recommendations; and, offer a realistic and serviceable implementation plan.¹⁸

B. Recognizing and Rewarding Self-Initiated Lodge Education Programs

Constructive incentives should be incorporated into the Grand Master's Lodge of Excellence Award that would place high emphasis on consistent, well-designed education programs in subordinate Lodges that continue Masonic education beyond ritual and degree classes. Examples of such incentives might include:

- Lodges form an *Education committee* to coordinate the labor required to develop and regularly present meaningful Masonic education at each stated communication and submit evidence of such a program to the Grand Lodge.
- The Master appoints an *Education Officer* for the Lodge to design and coordinate the labor required to regularly present meaningful Masonic education in at least one stated communication a month and submits detailed evidence of such a program to the Grand Lodge.
- The Grand Lodge identifies and approves specific topics viewed as constructively contributing to the purpose of advancing Masonic literacy.

¹⁸ **NOTE:** This is a not an exhaustive list nor an endorsement for these programs offered by other jurisdictions, but rather examples used in other jurisdictions on which to base or present education programs: [Grand Lodge of Ohio](https://www.glohoio.com/pro), <https://www.glohoio.com/pro>, [Grand Lodge of Florida](https://www.glohoio.com/pro) Report, page 14, https://GrandLodgefl.com/docs/GLF_Publications/2018/2018-2019%20Committee%20Program%20Book.pdf, [Grand Lodge of Kansas](https://www.kansasmason.org/cms/images/2015_12_07-Grand-Lodge-Programs-Trifold.pdf), https://www.kansasmason.org/cms/images/2015_12_07-Grand-Lodge-Programs-Trifold.pdf, [Grand Lodge of California](https://www.freemason.org/education/masonicEducation.htm), <https://www.freemason.org/education/masonicEducation.htm>, [Grand Lodge of North Carolina](http://GrandLodge-nc.org/education-resources), <http://GrandLodge-nc.org/education-resources>, [Grand Lodge of Virginia](https://GrandLodgeofvirginia.org/education-programs), <https://GrandLodgeofvirginia.org/education-programs>, [Grand Lodge of Nebraska](https://www.nebraskamasoniceducation.com/programs.html), <https://www.nebraskamasoniceducation.com/programs.html>, [Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania](https://paGrandLodge.org/masonic-education/schools-of-instruction/), <https://paGrandLodge.org/masonic-education/schools-of-instruction/>, [Grand Lodge of Louisiana](https://la-mason.com/masonic-education/), <https://la-mason.com/masonic-education/>, [Grand Lodge of Iowa](https://GrandLodgeofiowa.org/iowa-academy-of-masonic-knowledge/education-programs/), <https://GrandLodgeofiowa.org/iowa-academy-of-masonic-knowledge/education-programs/>, and <https://GrandLodgeofiowa.org/iowa-academy-of-masonic-knowledge/> [Grand Lodge of Colorado](http://mwwglco.org/academy.html), <http://mwwglco.org/academy.html>, [Grand Lodge of Missouri](https://www.eventbrite.com/o/ms-Grand-Lodge-education-commiteems-Lodge-of-research-640-21692455648), <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/ms-Grand-Lodge-education-commiteems-Lodge-of-research-640-21692455648>,

c. Use of Research Lodges as Resources

Each Research Lodge in Kentucky is to be charged with designing and presenting at least one Masonic education seminar annually, open to members of all degrees, and financially supported by the Grand Lodge.

- Lodges with attendance of five or more members at any of the seminars are awarded points toward the Grand Master's Lodge of Excellence Award.

Under the auspices of the findings outlined in this report, further recommendations beyond the clear need identified for members to be uniformly instructed would be unworkable. Unless a majority of members are more educated in the fundamental design and purpose of Freemasonry, cursory changes and or casual directorial adjustments to address the matter would prove unavailing and inconsequential.

AFTERWORD

This report is not published with the intent to lower in standing any lodge or individual Mason. It is prepared to serve as catalyst for discussion regarding the current condition of Freemasonry in Kentucky and its future course.

The recommendations in this report are offered so that in the months and years following, Kentucky Masons can, as expressed by Right Worshipful Geary Laird, “make a difference.”

The preparers of this report are available for discussion, questions, or comments with respect to the findings, conclusions and recommendations contained herein.

This report will be posted on the William O. Ware Lodge of Research website <https://williamowarelodgeofresearch.com>.

If the report is used or cited, the correct citation is:

William O. Ware Lodge of Research, *Characteristic of an Ideal Lodge Survey, Survey Results & Analysis*, prepared by Dan M. Kemble, Master, John W. Bizzack, PM, Chair, Education Committee, Covington, Kentucky, October 1, 2019.

**Respectfully,
William O. Ware Lodge of Research
October 1, 2019**

Dan M. Kemble
Dan M. Kemble, Master

John W. Bizzack
John W. Bizzack, PM
Research Committee Chair

Appendix A

Sowing Seeds of Freemasonry

Introductory Quiz

- **Composite Results – After Four Seminars – Average Score – 17.67 (73.63%)**
- **Of the Brothers attending, 34 identified themselves as current or Past Masters, with an average tenure of 1.83 years.**

1. The Grand Lodge of England was formed in the year _____.

- a. 959 BC;
- b. 1066 AD; 2
- c. 1717 AD; or 52
- d. 1776 AD.

2. True or False: At its formation the Grand Lodge of England decreed that all subordinate Lodges conduct their stated meetings on the Master Mason Degree.

True: 10 False: 44

3. The Grand Lodge of Kentucky was formed in the year _____.

- a. 1792 AD; 18
- b. 1800 AD; 23
- c. 1826 AD; or 8
- d. 1843 AD. 4
- No Answer 1

4. True or False: At its formation the Grand Lodge of Kentucky decreed that all subordinate Lodges conduct their stated meetings on the Master Mason Degree.

True: 20

False: 31

No Answer: 3

5. How many Landmarks of Freemasonry are there, and where did they come from? _____

- a. 25, written by Albert Mackey and printed in the Kentucky Monitor; 8
- b. 7, explained by Roscoe Pound, a prominent Mason and Dean of Harvard Law School; 5
- c. 3, adopted by the Conference of Grand Masters in North America; or 3
- d. No one knows – Grand Lodges have been inconsistent in their adoption of Landmarks. 37

No Answer

1

6. True or False: The Volume of Sacred Law found in the Lodge should only be a Christian Bible.

True: 8

False: 45

No Answer: 1

7. True or False: A clandestine Lodge is a Lodge that operates without a charter issued by a regular and recognized Grand Lodge.

True: 52

False: 2

8. King Solomon's Temple was located in _____.

- a. London;
- b. Jerusalem; 49
- c. Ethiopia; or 1
- d. Tyre. 4

9. True or False: Masonic education is complete after one demonstrates his proficiency in the Master Mason Degree.

True:

False: 54

10. Where in the Bible can you find the story of Hiram Abif as we tell it in the Master Mason's Degree _____.

- a. The book of Genesis; 1
- b. The book of Jasher; 5
- c. The book of Naphtali; or

- d. It isn't in the Bible. 43
- No Answer 5

11. Who was Prince Hall? _____

- a. The king of an island in the Caribbean, who forced all of his people to become Masons;
- b. An African-American who became a Mason in Boston in 1775 and who founded a system of Masonic Lodges for African-American men; 46
- c. He wasn't a person. Prince Hall is just a name that is given to Black Masonry in the United States; or 4
- d. Prince Hall is the name of the building where the first Black Masonic Lodge in the United State met in the 1700s. 3
- No Answer 1

12. Why is the Master of a Lodge called "Worshipful?" _____

- a. In ancient times, he led the Lodge in worship; 1
- b. "Worshipful" means "honorable" and is a title of respect; 47
- c. He is considered the most religious member of the Lodge; or 1
- d. He is a symbol of deity during his term of office. 5

13. Approximately how many Masons were there in the United States in 1960, and how many are there today?

- a. In 1960 there were about 4 million Masons in the U.S., and today there are fewer than 1.2 million; 41
- b. In 1960 there were about 2 million Masons in the U.S., and today there are about 2 million; 3
- c. In 1960 there were about 10 million Masons in the U.S., and today there are about 5 million; or 19
- d. No one know. No statistics were kept. 1

14. What subjects are not permitted to be discussed in Lodge meetings?

- a. Religion; 1
- b. Religion and politics; 43
- c. Religion, politics, and sex; or 10
- d. Religion, politics, sex, and food

15. What are Masons required to keep secret?
- a. Everything about Freemasonry; 2
 - b. Everything that happens in our Lodge meetings; 5
 - c. The names of all Masons; or 1
 - d. **Our due guards, signs, handshakes, and the exact words of our ritual.** 46
16. What day is the feast of Saint John the Evangelist?
- a. June 24; 8
 - b. June 27; 9
 - c. **December 27;** or 31
 - d. December 24 6
17. When Kentucky established its Grand Lodge:
- a. **It did not have a constitution and used the Ahiman Rezon from Virginia as its constitution;** 35
 - b. Did not write a constitution until after the Civil War; 5
 - c. Used the Constitution of the United States; or 2
 - d. Adopted the constitution used in New England Grand Lodges 11
 - No Answer 1
18. What is Anderson's Constitutions?
- a. **The first book about Freemasonry as we know it;** 18
 - b. The first document written about Freemasonry in the 1300s; 7
 - c. The first Masonic ritual cipher; 6
 - d. A collection of all the U.S. Grand Lodge constitutions that is on file at the House of the Temple. 20
 - No Answer 3
19. The alleged kidnapping and murder of William Morgan in New York was the cause of which of the following?
- a. The Baltimore Convention; 6
 - b. The Anti-Masonic political party; 12
 - c. Neither of the above; or 4
 - d. **Both a and b.** 32

20. The Baltimore Convention promoted which of the following?

- a. Dues cards; 3
- b. A Standard Ritual; 4
- c. Conducting Business on the Master Mason Degree; or 8
- d. All of the above. 39

21. The success of American Freemasonry is easily measured by the number of names on a membership roster. (Agree or Disagree)

Agree: 0 Disagree: 54

22. One lunar month between Degrees is sufficient time to instruct candidates in the lessons of the preceding Degree. (Agree or Disagree)

Agree: 18 Disagree: 35 No Answer: 1

23. In Kentucky, a Lodge must fix the amount of its dues so that such dues are commensurate with the expense of maintaining itself and discharging its duties and obligations. (True or False)

True: 47 False: 6 No Answer: 1

a. I fully support this rule: Yes, I do, or No, I do not.

Yes: 36 No: 9 No Answer: 9

24. The only aim and purpose of Freemasonry is for men to learn to subdue their passions and improve themselves. (Agree or Disagree). If you disagree, please use the back of the answer sheet to write in what you consider the aim and purpose of Freemasonry.

Agree: 20 Disagree: 34

Questions 25 through 30 were added after the first seminar

25. I have been a member of a Masonic Lodge for _____ **16.24 (average)** years.

26. How many books about Freemasonry have you read (not including monitors or ritual guides)?

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| a. More than 10; | 12 |
| b. Between 5 and 10; | 4 |
| c. Between 1 and 5; or | 13 |
| d. None. | 3 |

27. What two books about Freemasonry would you recommend that other Masons read (not including monitors or ritual guides)?

Observing the Craft (5)	The Craft Unmasked
Freemasonry for Dummies (5)	Heredom
A Pilgrim's Path (5)	The Hiram Key
The Builders (3)	Lodge Leadership
Island Freemasonry (3)	The Lodge Officer's Handbook
A Traditional Observance Lodged (2)	Mackey's Encyclopedia
For the Good of the Order (2)	The Meaning of Masonry
American Freemasons	Measured Expectations
An Idiot's Guide to Freemasonry	Morals and Dogma
Anderson's Constitutions	Revolutionary Brotherhood
The Better Angels of Our Nature	The Renaissance of Freemasonry
Born in Blood	Whither Are We Traveling
The Craft Driven Lodge	

28. Does your Lodge have a library of Masonic books or other education materials?

- | | |
|------------|-----------|
| a. Yes; or | 17 |
| b. No. | 13 |
| No Answer | 3 |

29. Does Freemasonry need to add more men to its membership rolls?

- | | |
|------------|-----------|
| a. Yes, or | 18 |
| b. No. | 12 |
| No Answer | 3 |

30. In which aspect of Freemasonry are you most interested?

Education (9)

History (8)

Ritual (5)

Knowledge/Understanding (4)

Self-Improvement (4)

Charity (2)

Fellowship

Origins and Symbols

Philosophy

Community Involvement

Traditionalism

Range of correct answers:

8 – 1

9 – 1

10 – 2

13 – 2

14 – 4

16 – 7

17 – 7

18 – 8

19 – 5

20 – 4

21 – 5

22 – 5

23 – 2

24 – 1

Appendix B

William O. Ware lodge of research

Follow-Up to Characteristics of An Ideal Lodge Survey

Current Engagement in Kentucky Lodges

<u>Lodge</u>	<u>Total Members</u>	<u>Total Non- Participating Members</u>	<u>Percentage Non-Par- ticipating Members</u>
District 1 Lodge	142	114	80.29%
District 2 Lodge	32	11	34.38%
District 3 Lodge	93	30	32.26%
District 4 Lodge	39	14	35.90%
District 5 Lodge	71	31	43.67%
District 6 Lodge	38	13	34.21%
District 7 Lodge	61	30	49.18%
District 8 Lodge	42	27	64.29%
District 9 Lodge	73	41	56.17%
District 10 Lodge	43	3	6.98%
District 11 Lodge	78	36	46.16%
District 12 Lodge	169	110	65.09%

District 13 Lodge	111	70	63.07%
District 14 Lodge	141	88	62.42%
District 15 Lodge	84	36	42.86%
District 16 Lodge	45	25	55.56%
District 17 Lodge	40	10	25.00%
District 18 Lodge	136	92	67.65%
District 19 Lodge	28	6	21.43%
District 20 Lodge	238	174	73.11%
District 21 Lodge	139	87	62.59%
District 22 Lodge	39	12	30.77%
District 23 Lodge	145	81	55.87%
District 24 Lodge	44	26	59.09%
District 25 Lodge	101	51	50.50%
District 26 Lodge	77	32	41.56%
District 27 Lodge	160	120	75.00%
District 28 Lodge	99	43	43.44%
District 29 Lodge	124	68	54.84%
District 30 Lodge	74	38	51.36%
Total	2,706	1,519	56.14%

William O. Ware Lodge of Research

Characteristics of an Ideal Lodge

Survey Results, Analysis &
Recommendation - 2019

To what extent are Kentucky Masons disengaged from their fraternity? What is their overall factual understanding of the history and philosophy of Freemasonry?

The Characteristics of an Ideal Lodge survey confirms what many observers have long determined: in general, Kentucky Masons hold deeply conflicting, contradictory views, and attitudes concerning the practice of Freemasonry, and, an alarmingly high number have never actively participated in their respective lodges.

This report reveals the extent to which Kentucky Masons need reinvigoration – both concerning the level of engagement with the fraternity and the level of Masonic knowledge they possess.

Based on the findings of the survey, recommendations in this report address those needs to more effectively meet the challenges facing this jurisdiction today.



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ET DES BEAUX ARTS
AU ROY

fidelle serviteur et sujet Sob. le Clerc.