

ANSWERS TO “WHAT DO YOU KNOW”

- 1.) The Grand Lodge of Missouri. Burlington Lodge U.D. at Burlington, the capital city of the Iowa Territory, received a dispensation from the Grand Lodge of Missouri dated November 20, 1840. This marked the beginning of organized Masonry in what is now the State of Iowa.
- 2.) The Lodge at Fredericksburg, Virginia. Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 is not correct, as Fredericksburg Lodge received its number from the Grand Lodge of Virginia. The Grand Lodge of Virginia came into being in 1787. Washington was raised in 1753. Fredericksburg Lodge at that time had no charter from any Grand Body. It was of those unique Colonial Lodges that met by immemorial custom, merely a few brothers getting together and saying “we are a lodge.” Five years after Washington was raised, Fredericksburg Lodge received its first charter from the Grand Lodge of Scotland.
- 3.) None. He was proposed as Grand Master of Virginia in 1777, but declined on the dual grounds that he was too busy with affairs of national importance to accept private responsibilities and as he had never been Master of a lodge he was not eligible. Washington was thrice proposed as General Grand Master of a General Grand Lodge of the United States, once by the American Union (Army) Lodge in New Jersey, 1779, and twice by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, 1779 and 1780, but declined the honor.
- 4.) Between 1700 and 1730. The first regularly constituted lodge was “The First Lodge in Boston,” now St. Johns. Other lodges, like Fredericksburg Lodge, met under “immemorial custom” at earlier dates. No one knows exactly when the first colonial lodge met, except that it was early in the eighteenth century.
- 5.) Des Moines Lodge No. 41, Iowa Lodge No. 42, Dubuque Lodge No. 62 and Iowa City Lodge No. 63. The Grand Lodge of Missouri chartered all four of these lodges Des Moines Lodge No. 41 at Burlington and Iowa Lodge No. 42 at Bloomington (now Muscatine) on October 20, 1841; Dubuque Lodge No. 62 and Iowa City Lodge No. 63 on October 10, 1843. There was another lodge who wished to be seated at the convention, Rising Sun Lodge at Montrose, but was not allowed to participate because its charter was suspended by the Grand Lodge of Illinois on October 2, 1843.
- 6.) The first brother installed as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Iowa. Oliver Cock was born in New York on November 22, 1808, came to Burlington in 1839 and received his degrees in Des Moines Lodge No. 41 in June of 1841. He was elected Worshipful Master of Des Moines Lodge No. 41 on June 6, 1842 and was installed as the Grand Lodge of Iowa’s first Grand Master on January 8, 1844. He continued to be an active Mason and resided in Burlington until his death in 1861.
- 7.) At the Grand Lodge Annual Communication held in Burlington in 1860. “Resolved, that the Grand Lodge now as heretofore declares its unalterable adherence to the ancient Webb work and having the fullest confidence in the evidence furnished that the work as exemplified by the Custodians and under their direction by Brothers Morris and Willson [is the ancient Webb work], does hereby adopt the same as the work and the only work hereafter to be taught in this jurisdiction.”

- 8.) June 7, 1888. The final vote to adopt the Constitution and Code of the Grand Lodge of Iowa was taken at the Grand Lodge Annual session held in Cedar Rapids on June 7, 1888. The work was began in 1885 by the Committee on the Grand Master's Address which stated "We have a Constitution framed over forty years ago for four lodges with one hundred members. We now have four hundred and twenty-five working lodges and with over twenty two thousand Masons. Necessarily that Constitution is inadequate to our present needs." In 1886 a committee was appointed to complete codification of Masonic law and draft a new Constitution. Past Grand Master Charles T. Granger was appointed to be Chairman of the committee.
- 9.) "From time immemorial it has been the custom of the ancient and honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons, upon request, to lay, with their ancient forms, the corner stones of buildings erected for the worship of God, for educational or charitable objects, for Masonic uses, or for the purposes of the administration of justice and free government, and of no other buildings."
- 10.) Concerning God and Religion. The first of the six Old Charges is vitally important as a fundamental law of the Ancient Craft, as it sets forth the non-doctrinal, non-sectarian, character of Freemasonry. "*A Mason is oblig'd, by his Tenure, to obey the moral Law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid Atheist, nor an irreligious Libertine. But though in ancient Times Masons were charg'd in every Country to be of the Religion of that Country or Nation, whatever it was, yet 'tis now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that Religion in which all Men agree, leaving their particular Opinions to themselves; that is, to be good Men and true, or Men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever Denominations or Persuasions they may be distinguish'd; whereby Masonry becomes the Center of Union, and the Means of conciliating true Friendship among Persons that must have remain'd at a perpetual Distance.*"
- 11.) The Committee on Masonic Research. In 1913 Legislation was passed during the Grand Lodge Communication in Council Bluffs authorizing a Standing Committee to be known as the Committee on Masonic Research. Then in 1921 at the annual session in Waterloo the title was changed to the Masonic Service Committee and at the 1946 session in Des Moines it was again changed to the Iowa Committee on Masonic Education. The committee received its current title of Lodge Service Committee at the 1977 session in Cedar Rapids.
- 12.) An uninstructed Mason, a Mason without the word, or a partially instructed Mason. Today, Cowans are Entered Apprentices or Fellow Crafts who have been stopped from further advancement or Masons who have been suspended for Nonpayment of Dues. In operative days a man who erected walls without mortar, of unsquared stones, or unskillfully was a Cowan or uninstructed Mason. The Cowan is distinct from the eavesdropper; literally, one who listens at the eaves of a house (in older days the roof and the walls were separated by a space for ventilation). The eavesdropper tries to learn secrets to which he has no right. A Cowan might well be taught to be a Mason; an eavesdropper would never be taught.
- 13.) One hundred oxen. Pythagoras, in delight at having erected the forty-seventh problem of Euclid, in the joy of his heart called eureka, in the Grecian language signifying "I have found it," and upon the discovery of which he is said to have sacrificed a hecatomb. The statement in the ritual, however, can hardly be founded in fact. Pythagoras, eminent teacher and mathematician born in 586 B.C., may have discovered the mathematical wonder that Euclid later embodied in his Geometry as the forty seventh problem. But Pythagoras was a vegetarian, revered animal life, and was poor. He could hardly have possessed a hundred head of oxen, riches in those days,

and even if he owned them, would not have been so cruel as to sacrifice them to mark his pleasure.

- 14.) Fourteen. George Washington (1789-1797), James Monroe (1817-1825), Andrew Jackson (1829-1837), James K. Polk (1845-1849), James Buchanan (1857-1861), Andrew Johnson (1865-1869), James A. Garfield (1881 Mar.-Sept.), William McKinley (1897-1901), Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1909), William Howard Taft (1909-1913), Warren G. Harding (1920-1923), Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1933-1945), Harry S. Truman (1945-1952), and Gerald R. Ford (1974-1977)
- 15.) Two. Andrew Jackson, Tennessee (1822 and 1823) and Harry Truman, Missouri (1941).
- 16.) The members of the Grand Lodge are and shall be: each of its officers, each past elective officer while a member of one of its subordinate lodges, each member of each of its boards and standing committees, the Master and the Wardens of each of its chartered lodges. These members are enumerated in the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of Iowa.
- 17.) Never. There is not nor has there ever been a General Grand Lodge of the United States. The Grand Lodges of the United States are sovereign and independent bodies within their own jurisdictions. Washington was proposed as a General Grand Master of a General Grand Lodge, but thought the formation of such a body unwise and declined. There have been movements from time to time to form a General Grand Lodge, but so far the arguments against such a body have prevailed. No important movement to establish one has been started since the National Masonic Convention held at Chicago in 1859.
- 18.) No. There is no law compels him to do so. Wearing a hat in Lodge is his privilege and as much a badge of his office as is his jewel. He wears a hat while others remain uncovered as a sign that he is the Master, in authority, to whom all should pay respect. It is a survival of the custom of uncovering before the King, who kept hat or crown upon his head as a symbol of his supremacy.
- 19.) Worthy of respect as honorable as in a judge's title. "Worshipful" is an old English word, meaning "to be respected." In the Wycliffe Bible the word "Honor thy father and thy mothers is rendered "Worship." We use the word in its ancient sense, as meaning greatly respected, worthy of veneration and honors not in its modern sense of denoting awe and humility before a Supreme Being.
- 20.) Not a Mason, not initiated, or outside the temple. It comes from two Latin words "pro" meaning before, and "fanum" meaning a temple. When we speak of a man as being "a profane" we mean that he is uninitiated, not that he takes the name of God in vain. It should not be confused with its ordinary meanings; blasphemous, irreligious, wicked.
- 21.) His father or My father. Hiram Abif is correctly translated "Hiram, my father." "My father," being a term of great respect. Hiram, the Widow's Son, was the father of all his workmen in the same sense that the patriarchs of old were the fathers of their respective tribes.

- 22.) No. No appeal lies to a subordinate lodge from a decision of its Master. His decision can only be reviewed by the Grand Master during the recess of the Grand Lodge, subject to final action by the Grand Lodge at its regular communication, or by appeal directly to the Grand Lodge. Such appeal can be taken only by the person or persons against whom the decision is made. It may not be taken by any other member of the lodge who may differ from the Master in judgement.
- 23.) Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Masonic students and observers have often claimed, through the years, that the Iowa Masonic Library and Museums is the "largest and the greatest in the world." Recognizing that such claims are almost impossible to substantiate, that it is difficult to compare apples and oranges even if the quantities in each basket were known, Iowa is satisfied that its Library is without question one of the greatest in the world.
- In size and in service this Library does equal the best. Certainly, its service is outstanding. Anyone, regardless of Masonic affiliation or lack of the same, race, creed or color may borrow books from this library. T.S. Parvin established this "open door" policy: "In accordance with one of the earliest lessons learned by the Grand Secretary in the Masonic Lodge, 'it is one of' your greatest duties as a Mason to dispense light and knowledge to the uninformed Mason,' and another lesson learned from the Great Light, ever open upon the Masonic altar when Lodge is at labor, is that we are to 'so let our light shine before men that they may see our good works,' and that 'no man when he hath lighteth a candle putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on the candlestick, that they which come in may see the light," (therefore) he opened the building to the public."
- 24.) December 27. Masons have held the two Saints John in veneration for hundreds of years. The "Point within a circle" and its two parallel lines, representing those Saints, is one of the oldest and most important symbols of the Craft. The point representing an individual brother; the circle, the boundary line of his duty to God and man, beyond which he should never suffer his passions, prejudices or interests to betray him on any occasion. This circle is embordered by two perpendicular parallel lines, representing St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, who were perfect parallels in Christianity as well as Masonry; and upon the vertex rests the book of Holy Scriptures, which points out the whole duty of man. In going around this circle, we necessarily touch upon these two lines as well as upon the Holy Scriptures, and while a Mason keeps himself thus circumscribed, it is impossible that he should materially err. The Day of St. John the Baptist is June 24. These two festivals, survivors of the celebrations of the summer and winter solstices, have always been important Masonically.
- 25.) None. Brethren naturally think of the thirty-three degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite when asked this question. Even the thirty-third degree of that Rite, while larger numerically than the Third Degree of Ancient Craft Masonry, does not make its possessor any more a Mason than he was when he was raised. What is true of the Scottish Rite degrees is also true of the degrees and orders of the York Rite; they amplify the Masonic story, add to knowledge, and increase interest, but they cannot make more complete that which is already perfect. No degree can be considered "higher" than the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.