

SPOKANE LODGE NO. 34

A History that Brought About Change

First Lodge in Spokane

Unfortunately Grand Master Oliver P. Lacy was unable to attend Grand Lodge in 1880 because an attack of measles ravaged his family. His report was read for him and he announced that he had granted dispensations for five new Lodges, an exceptional growth for that time. They were: ...On January 8, 1880, to Louis Ziegler, WM and 15 others for the first Lodge at Spokane Falls or in Spokane County (both now Spokane). This Lodge was chartered as Spokane (now Spokane) No. 34 on June 3, 1880 and rapidly became one of the largest and strongest Lodges in the state.

More Grand Masters have come from Spokane Lodge No. 34 than from any other Lodge in the state. This first Spokane Lodge has supplied seven since it was chartered in 1880.

In 1889, a serious fire almost wiped out the business district in Spokane. Spokane Lodge lost its hall and all other property except its Charter.

The Case of Spokane Lodge

Of all disciplinary steps taken by our Grand Lodge none was more interesting or more important than that placed before the 1887 Grand Communication by Grand Master Louis Ziegler. He described it as "one of the most remarkable cases that ever engaged the attention of this or any other Grand Lodge."

Brother Ziegler reported that he had ordered the Master of Spokane Lodge, No. 34, his own Lodge, to try an accused

Brother for un-Masonic conduct in refusing to pay a debt owed to a brother Mason. The Master of Spokane Lodge thereafter summoned the Grand Master to a Lodge meeting. This attempt of a Master to exercise authority over a Grand Master brought a protest from Brother Ziegler. It had no effect, and the Grand Master thereupon deposed the Master of Spokane Lodge and appointed a proxy to take charge of its affairs. This resulted in what Brother Ziegler called an insurrection. However the Lodge in the end obeyed the Grand Master's order to bring the accused to trial. The verdict was not guilty.

The Grand Master, believing the decision was unjust, then arrested the Charter of Spokane Lodge. He also referred the case to Temple Lodge, No. 42, at Cheney, and ordered it to conduct a new trial. Brother Ziegler in his report to Grand Lodge said that numerous members of Spokane Lodge appeared at the trial in Temple Lodge, denounced their Grand Master and created a commotion. This second trial also resulted in acquittal.

Brother Ziegler then suspended the Senior Warden and Secretary of Temple Lodge and appointed a High Commission to investigate. It was composed of Past Grand Masters Thomas M. Reed, Granville O. Haller and Lewis Sohns, and R.:W.:Bro. Fred Furth, Grand Marshal and a Past Master of Spokane Lodge.

Uprising Called a Conspiracy

Grand Master Ziegler asked Grand Lodge to annul the Charter of Spokane Lodge and to hear the report of the Commission. He also urged revision of our Constitution so as to clarify the authority of the Grand Lodge and the Grand Master.

The High Commission in its report declared the uprising against the Grand Master was a conspiracy. It said Spokane Lodge was in an "open, notorious and flagrant state of insubordination, if not rebellion to the Grand Lodge and its edicts, and the orders of the Grand Master thereon made." It

added that Temple Lodge was in a deplorable condition. It quoted one witness as saying, "The curse of our Lodge is the gin mill. It (the trial) was discussed in saloons and on the streets (of Cheney) by Masons."

The Commission said there was no remedy under the Constitution for the "insubordination and anarchy, bordering on sedition," in Spokane Lodge. It recommended that four members of Spokane Lodge and four members of Temple Lodge be expelled for gross unMasonic conduct, and that the Senior Warden and Secretary of Temple Lodge be deposed, and that the Grand Lodge Constitution be revised.

Report Toned Down

The Grand Lodge adopted this report with some important modifications offered by R.: W.:Bro. Walter J. Thompson, Senior Grand Warden, of Tacoma. As amended the report decreed that its Charter be restored to Spokane Lodge after June 24, 1887, a little more than three weeks in the future, on the ground that the members acted more from ignorance of Masonic law "than from a willful disposition to violate the laws and Ancient Landmarks." The report as amended also uttered a solemn admonition "that the Master, Wardens, and Brethren of said Lodge look well to the East in the future for Masonic Light, before speaking or acting in any such manner as may have the appearance of disloyalty to this Grand Lodge, or disrespect for the dignity of the Grand Master."

The Grand Lodge in fact later in its session restored the Charter of Spokane Lodge as of June 3. It also removed the disabilities imposed by the deposition from their posts of the Master of Spokane Lodge, and of the Senior Warden and Secretary of Temple Lodge. It then voted that the accused member of Spokane Lodge, whose trial caused all the trouble, be suspended from the rights of Masonry for one year.

Ziegler Conciliates Differences

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Grand Master Ziegler evidently took the decision of Grand Lodge in good grace. He later told the session that he had called to his aid a council of Past Grand Masters to "consider some matters of serious difficulty existing between certain brethren of one of the Subordinate Lodges, threatening the destruction of the Lodge, and greatly damaging to Masonry." He added that "the differences appear to have been amicably settled and harmony restored." The Proceedings say that "for this gratifying result a vote of thanks was tendered the Grand Master." The name of the Lodge involved was not mentioned, but certainly it was Spokane Lodge, No. 34, which then had 60 members on its roll and proceeded to grow rapidly.

Grand Lodge at this same time authorized a revision of the Constitution as requested by Grand Master Ziegler. This task was placed in the hands of Past Grand Masters Thomas M. Reed, James R. Hayden, Granville O. Haller, Louis Sohns and Levi Ankeny. They drew up the laudable Constitution of 1888, which was adopted in that year. It enlarged the powers of Grand Lodge and of the Grand Master as a result of the Spokane affair, and simplified the government of Grand Lodge and of the Subordinate Lodges.

What Is A Masonic Offense?

Masonic offenses, as defined by the Code, are of two classes: (1) Those acts which are morally wrong in themselves; and (2) those acts which are wrongful only because they are expressly prohibited or enjoined in our laws. Acts which are morally wrong run the gamut of immorality from murder to fraud, and their lower ranges must necessarily be in tune with the moral sensitivity of the average Mason. In public law no act is a crime unless a definite statute makes it so. It would be impossible for our Code to list all acts that might or should be considered Masonic offenses, though an abortive effort in that direction was once launched. It is left to the good judgment of the Lodge to decide if a member has offended Masonry by

beating his wife, accepting a bribe, defrauding his brethren, conducting himself in a scandalous manner or committing any of the hundreds of deeds that outrage the consciences of good men.

Our Moral Controls

The actions of Masons in Grand Lodge, in their Lodges and while abroad in the world, according to See. 31 of the Code are regulated and controlled by the Masonic Law consisting of:

"1. The moral law; our obligations, charges and rituals;

"2. The common law of Masonry; which is the immemorial law, and includes the Ancient Landmarks;

"3. The written law of Masonry, which includes our Constitutions and the general and special laws, rules and edicts, resolutions and By-laws enacted by competent authority;

"4. Usages and customs of Masonry: Usages, which are those practices and modes of behavior of brethren, individually and collectively, in Grand Lodge and in Lodges and toward each other, long observed in this jurisdiction by voluntary consent; Customs, which are usages of such universality and antiquity as to have acquired the force and effect of law."

This, of course, covers the entire range of good conduct and upright living

all of that morality which "is the supreme dignity of man." Therefore there is little need for our laws to list more than a few unusual acts that constitute a Masonic offense or un-Masonic conduct.

It is a Masonic offense for a Mason to violate the secrecy of the ballot, or to divulge how he or any other Brother voted. (See. 2014). Or for a Mason to manufacture or sell intoxicating liquor as his principal business. (See. 2905).

Or to solicit for membership in any concordant order any Mason before he has passed his proficiency examination in the Third Degree and received his card of membership. (See. 2906).

It is also a specified act of un-Masonic conduct for a candidate to make a misrepresentation, or to be deceitful to an investigating committee. (See. 1929). Or for a Mason to use the Masonic emblem for business purposes, or to use his Masonic membership in any manner in a public appeal for patronage. (See. 2901).

These misdeeds are subject to reprimand, suspension or expulsion after a Masonic trial.

The Value of Discipline

Thus the moral, common and written law of Masonry, together with Masonic usages and customs, provide the conscientious Mason with that "prudent and well-regulated course of discipline as may best conduce to the preservation of (his) corporeal and mental faculties in their fullest energy."

Yes, discipline is the thing, the essential, for boys and girls, for men and women, and especially for Masons. Its importance was recognized by our founding fathers, and for precisely the same reason that the Duke of Edinburgh, husband of the Queen of England and an eminent Mason, once propounded this dictum:

"Discipline is the force which causes a man to play the part required of him in the organization to which he belongs."

His reference was to the British Navy. Read it again and note how aptly it applies to you and to all Masons.

Excerpts from the Lodge Minutes

The Lodge Hall was located at the Southwest corner of Sprague Avenue and Lincoln Street (1900?).

Lodge practice on Stated Meeting nights was to open on the Master Mason degree; call Lodge from labor to refreshment; open the Lodge on a lower degree for conferrals; close the Lodge on the lower degree, resume labor on the Master Mason degree and close the Lodge.

1902 – 383 members, net gain of 36.

May 26, 1903 – A Special Communication of the Lodge was called for the ground breaking ceremony of the proposed Masonic Temple; Theodore Rossevelt, President, in attendance.

Lodge Life Membership (9/1/1903) \$100.00.

During the years 1903 & 1904 more members lost by dropping for non-payment, demitting, and death than gained by degree work or membership petitions.

February 7, 1905 – Stated Meeting, 6 degree petitions and 5 membership petitions read and referred to committees.

It was the practice of the Lodge to present a resolution concerning the life and accomplishment of a Brother upon his death. This was read in Lodge and a copy sent to the family.

Five Fellow Craft Masons were made Master Masons on the same night.

The Lodge changed its meeting place to the New Masonic Temple in August 1905.

Not all petitions reported favorable were elected by the Lodge to receive the degrees or for membership.

Other Spokane Lodges (Oriental, Tyrian, Hillyard) notified that they received petitions from candidates and this recorded in the minutes but no action noted.

March 10, 1906 – A motion was made to allow the Worshipful Master to form a reception committee for the Grand Lodge Officers visitation.

Lodge funeral costs were noted as: \$21, \$15, \$122, \$5, \$8.

Lodge was requested to confer courtesy degrees on candidate from the province of British Columbia, Canada; the vote was favorable.

The Lodge conferred 13 Master Mason degrees in one month – May 1906.

June 14, 1906 – Dedication of the New Masonic Temple,

Research by V. :. W. :. Dean W. Heinemann, Grand Historian

banquet cost \$113.44.

Cigars cost the Lodge - \$16.90, \$6.50, \$10.00

The Lodge conferred the Master Mason degree went to refreshment then conferred 3 Entered Apprentice degrees in one day (started at 4 pm).

The Lodge paid the Tyler \$1 per meeting and the Musician \$2.50 per night for services performed.

December 1907 – 17 members were dropped for non-payment of dues.

For the Year 1907

59 meetings

39 special (7 funerals)

138 degrees conferred

EA – 39

FC – 45

MM – 43

Courtesy degrees

EA – 1

FC – 5

MM – 5

Membership

January – 520

Gain – 80

Lost – 31

Financial

Cash on hand January \$2679.19

Collections 5509.25 (petitions & dues)

Disbursements 7101.03

Balance December \$1084.41

References

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“Not Made With Hands” by V.:W.: Paul W. Harvey, Grand Historian; The Centennial History of the Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons of Washington; Second Edition Revised; 1958.

Meeting Minutes, Spokane Lodge 34, January 1897 to February 1900.

Meeting Minutes, Spokane Lodge 34, January 1903 to February 1910.