

"Freemasonry in Michigan"

"Masonic labor is purely a labor of love. He who seeks to draw Masonic wages in gold and silver will be disappointed. The wages of a Mason are earned and paid in their dealings with one another; sympathy that begets sympathy, kindness begets kindness, helpfulness begets helpfulness, and these are the wages of a Mason" - Benjamin Franklin

Freemasonry is a unique institution that has been a major part of community life in America for more than 250 years.

Masonry traces its ancestry back to the operative craftsmen, primarily cathedral builders, of the Middle Ages. Because of their special knowledge and skills, these builders were permitted special travel privileges from country to country. As cathedral building came to an end during the 17th and 18th centuries, some Masonic Lodges began to accept men into membership who were not craftsmen.

In 1717, Freemasonry members created a formal organization in England when the first Grand Lodge was formed.

In a time when travel was by horseback and sailing ship, Masonry spread with amazing speed. By 1731, when Benjamin Franklin joined the fraternity, there were already several Lodges in the Colonies, and Freemasonry spread rapidly as America expanded west. In addition to Franklin, many of the Founding Fathers – men such as George Washington, Paul Revere, Joseph Warren, and John Hancock – were Masons. Freemasonry played an important part in the Revolutionary War and an even more important part in the Constitutional Convention and the debates surrounding the ratification of the Bill of Rights. Many of those debates were held in Masonic Lodges.

The French first brought Freemasonry to the Great Lakes at a time when it was Indian Territory. The earliest documented Lodge was in Detroit in 1764, by George Harison, Provincial Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of New York, with Lt. John Christie of the 2nd Battalion, 60th Royal American Foot Regiment (British) as Worshipful Master. This lodge was the first lodge established west of the Allegheny mountains. By 1772 there were at least three Lodges meeting in the Detroit area; Lodge No. 1 and two Irish Military Lodges, warranted to Masons of the 10th Regiment, then stationed at Detroit. Zion Lodge #1 was formed in 1794 and continues to work to this day. Zion also has an important part in the history of another Michigan institution; the University of Michigan which was assisted in its formation by Zion Lodge and its members.

Today there are over 240 Lodges in Michigan in both the lower and upper peninsulas. These lodges hold a membership of over 25,000 Masons. The history of Michigan is the history of the Masonic Fraternity. As the state was settled and established from the East to the West, so to the craft moved from East to West. However, lodges along the St. Joseph River in southwestern Michigan are also among the oldest in the state. This river was an important trading route during the formative years of the state and was settled earlier than the interior portion

Becoming a member of the Michigan Masons offers members opportunities to learn and lead within the organization, the community and their family.

What is Freemasonry?

Many years ago, the famous Dr. Albert Schweitzer wrote these magnificent words:

“It is not enough merely to exist... Every man has to seek in his own way to make his own self more noble and to realize his own true worth.”

Those words capture the meaning of Freemasonry. As the world’s oldest and largest fraternity, our goal is to build a man’s most valuable possession, his character.

We believe that the strength of the family, the church, the community and our country rests with men of strong conviction, firm ethical and moral values and a devotion to our democratic system of government. As Masons, we help each other intensify our devotion to these enduring values.

In a day when it seems that few people really care about rising to the highest and best in life, it is good to know that there is an organization where a man can really improve himself.

In lodge meetings, there is not talk of politics, no discussion of religious issues, even though every Mason must affirm a belief in deity according to his own understanding, and devotion to his country.

Masons are concerned with developing their minds and enlarging their scope of knowledge. In a word, Masons are dedicated to becoming better men.

Men of every walk of life belong to Masonic Lodges. They are proud of the centuries of tradition, their belief in brotherhood, country and the many Masonic acts of charity and compassion.

The origins of Masonry reach back to Medieval times when the great cathedrals of Europe were built. The stonemasons who created these inspiring Gothic structures formed craft guilds to protect the secrets of their trade and to pass on their knowledge to worthy apprentices.

In 17th century England, these guilds began accepting honorary members, men of learning and position. These new members were not working stonemasons or even associated with the building trades. As “accepted Masons,” they eventually grew into a separate organization called Freemasonry, a moral and ethical society that taught the 18th century ideals of equality and the importance of education in freeing mankind from prejudice, superstition and social injustice.

Masons continue to use the simple tools of the ancient stonemasons - the square and compasses, the trowel, plumb and level as symbols to teach their ideals. A Mason is oathbound to build his life and character with the same care and precision that stonemasons used to construct the cathedrals and temples centuries ago.

Today, there are almost five million Masons in the world, with the United States claiming about three million of the total membership.

Freemasonry has an outstanding record for helping others. Along with scholarships and loan funds to assist young people in furthering their education, Masons support many community based charitable projects. Retirement homes and hospitals for the elderly provide care for those who no longer can care for themselves.

Yes, Masons are members of a fraternity that has its secrets, but the many character-building activities of Freemasonry indicate that it is far from a secret organization. Masons are active in their dedication to improve life. Always ready to undertake a difficult task in a quiet, dignified way, today’s Masons go about the job of extending the hand of brotherhood. For the man who is looking for deeper meaning in life and who wants to be part of a fraternity committed to his growth and improvement, Masonry is filled with marvelous opportunities and limitless possibilities.

Credit to the History of Michigan Freemasonry
by J. Fairbairn Smith

Petition for the Degrees



FEES FOR DEGREES

*E.A. Degree \$ _____ F.C. Degree \$ _____ M.M. Degree \$ _____ Total \$ _____

*(Must Accompany Petition)

Date _____

To the Worshipful Master, Wardens and Brethren

Of _____ Lodge No. _____

I, the undersigned, respectfully state, that, unbiased by friends and uninfluenced by mercenary motives, I freely and voluntarily offer myself as a candidate for the Degrees of Masonry; that I am prompted to solicit this privilege by a favorable opinion conceived of the institution, a desire for knowledge and a sincere wish of being serviceable to my fellow creatures and should this petition be granted, I will cheerfully conform to all the ancient established usages and customs of the Fraternity.

Full Name _____ Age _____
(Print) First Middle Last

I was born at _____ on the _____
City/State or Country Day Month Year

I reside at _____
No. Street City-Town-Village State Zip Code

My occupation is _____ My email is _____

I am employed by _____

My telephone numbers are: Preferred _____ Alternate _____

I have resided at the address given for the last _____ years. Spouse's Name _____

For the five years last past I resided at the following addresses and places:

Have you ever before petitioned any Lodge for the Masonic Degrees? _____ If so, give the name, number and location of the Lodge with full explanation _____

I am a citizen of _____ I have _____ been convicted of a criminal offense.

Two business acquaintances

Name: _____ Addr: _____

City/St/Zip: _____ Ph: _____

Name: _____ Addr: _____

City/St/Zip: _____ Ph: _____

All of the statements I have made in this petition are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature _____

Print Name _____

We the undersigned, are personally acquainted with the above named petitioner, and from our confidence in his integrity do cheerfully recommend him as a proper candidate for the Degrees in Masonry.

Signature _____ Lodge _____ No. _____

Print Name: _____

Signature _____ Lodge _____ No. _____

Print Name: _____

I agree that I may be required to submit to a Criminal Background Check. I further agree that in the event that I am required to submit to a Criminal Background Check, the cost of **\$25.00** will be borne by me and is NOT refundable: Yes I agree. No I do NOT agree.

Recommendation of Committee

The undersigned Committee, to whom was referred the petition, after due consideration, report the same back to the Lodge, and recommend that the prayer of the petitioner be

_____.
(approved/disapproved)

(Signed)

(Print Name)

(Signed)

(Print Name)

(Signed)

(Print Name)

Committee

Date

(Initiation Date)

(Lodge)

(Passed Date)

(Lodge)

(Raised Date)

(Lodge)

Degrees