

Masonic Minutes—February One

The Tiler

The Tiler stands ready at the outer door to protect the Lodge from the approach of cowans and eavesdroppers. This was an important and critical responsibility as our ancient operative Brethren met on hills and in valleys and this history provides some insight as to the need for a drawn sword in the execution of the Tiler's duties. In short, he provides security and protection for the "Tiled Lodge" when it is operating on the Degrees of Masonry.

The Speculative use of the term "Tiler" partially derives from Operative Masonry where the "tiler" was the person covering a structure with roofing tiles to protect it from the harmful elements of nature. However, the Latin word *tegula* has a connotation that more closely supports the Speculative concept in which Tiling covers and conceals to describe the manner in which the Lodge is protected. Speculative Masonry applies this word to fully develop the concept of the Tiler as the person charged with protecting the Temple and the operation of the Lodge from unwarranted intrusions from the unworthy or uninitiated.

Just as Operative Masons had to contend with cowans who would pretend to be Masons by setting stones without mortar, we as Speculative Masons must contend with those cowans who purport to know our secrets in order to gain access to our ranks. The Tiler stands ready at the door to see that those who pass are properly identified before being allowed admission to the Lodge Hall, and to properly notify the Worshipful Master should a Brother seek admission into the Lodge.

The Tiler is charged with keeping the Lodge register of attending members and visitors and making sure that all Masons are properly attired with an apron upon entering the Lodge. He also has the responsibility of the care and safe keeping of the Lodge jewels, especially in instances where they may need to leave the Temple for funeral rites or special occasions. A dedicated Tiler will not only maintain custody of the jewels as required, but should also take responsibility for their general maintenance and appearance. He is also typically charged with serving summons and notices as directed by the Lodge. The Tiler may also perform other specific duties as directed by the Worshipful Master.

The additional and often implied or expected duties for the Tiler include arriving early to unlock the door and preparing the Lodge for meetings and events. He opens the Temple, turns on lights, lays out paraphernalia in the proper order for degree work and prepares specific rooms to ensure meetings and events start on time. The Tiler is typically responsible for closing the Temple and securing it after a meeting, ensuring all items are properly put away, lights turned off, and the door locked. All of these duties occur well before and well after the Lodge communication and outside of the Tiled door, meaning that for all of his efforts that the Tiler himself is not usually participating within the Tiled Lodge, but his reward comes in knowing that he is providing the environment needed for the business of the Craft to be effectively accomplished.

"Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." Mathew 7:7