

A Day in the Life of a Masonic Librarian

by Bro. Michael S. Kaulback

[Bro. Kaulback is the Historian and Curator of the Samuel Crocker Lawrence Library, Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, in Boston. This essay won the Norman B. Spencer Prize in 1997, the first time someone from the USA had done so. We congratulate Bro. Kaulback on his work. Editor]

Introduction

MASONIC LIBRARIES ARE the repositories and “Keepers of the Flame” of masonic literature. Those who work there offer help, aid and assistance to everyone: from the scholars of Quatuor Coronati Lodge no. 2076 to Entered Apprentices who join in our Lodges. We are often the first contact that a non-mason meets when he (or she) takes the time to visit our Lodge building. What are the trials and tribulations that face a masonic librarian in today’s modern world? How do we answer the questions that are put to us by freemasons and non-mason and masonic scholars alike? How do we manage to keep a smile on our lips and a kind word for anyone who comes into our libraries day after day? How do we in America answer some of the questions regarding anti-masonry and what do we say to those who come in looking for the Holy Grail or the Ark of the Covenant which we are supposed to have? It is an interesting life and, from a personal viewpoint, one that teaches me something new about Freemasonry every day that I work in the library. This paper is not a formal study of masonic librarianship. It is intended simply to relate several incidents that have actually happened in the Boston Masonic Library over a period of several months and will be seen to contain the answers to those questions.

Some History of the Library

A brief history of the Boston Masonic Library may be in order before describing a typical day. The Library at the Massachusetts Grand Lodge dates back into the early 1800s. The date that is generally accepted is 12 December 1814. On that date a communication to the Grand Lodge from RW Bro. Rev. Thaddeus Mason Harris DD (1767–1842) was read at the Quarterly Communication on the subject of a masonic library. A special committee was set up by the Grand Lodge and at the next Quarterly Communication they made the following report :

A Masonic Library procured and kept for the use of the Grand Lodge and its branches would highly promote the knowledge and durable prosperity of our most excellent order.¹

In 1850, after the ‘Morgan Affair’ (a black period for freemasons in America), a permanent Library Committee was organized. One of the most prominent Brethren at that time was MW Bro. Winslow Lewis (1799–1875), Past Grand Master, who worked diligently to revive the interest in a masonic library. In his report of 13 December 1854 he noted that “The formation of a library of Masonic literature is attended with peculiar difficulties. Such works are not to be found on the shelves of our publishers and are only to be procured here and there, one by one, after considerable research and trouble.” This is not dissimilar to what modern masonic libraries face today in developing their collections.

Unfortunately, on 6 April 1864, fire completely destroyed the Grand Lodge and the

library it contained. The Library Committee went to work immediately and in December 1864 reported that

With the issuance of \$400, the committee has already purchased many works and several donations have been made. A Masonic Library cannot be readily obtained, for works on Freemasonry are eagerly sought and bring high prices. The committee, therefore, looks to the Brethren for their Masonic contributions².

From this small re-emergence the library grew by leaps and bounds. Many Brethren did make contributions and whole collections of masonic literature were purchased by the Library Committee, including the library of Bro. Leon Hyneman of Philadelphia, a prominent masonic editor, author and publisher, thus adding over 1200 volumes to the library. In 1911 following his death, MW Bro. Samuel Crocker Lawrence (1832–1911) bequeathed over 40,000 volumes to the library. His collection included collections such as the Enoch T. Carson Masonic Library. In his report to Grand Lodge on 12 December 1917 MW Bro. Leon Abbott (1867–1932) said

[there is] probably nowhere outside of England a finer Masonic Collection of rare books of historical and biographical value in as many different tongues as found in the Lawrence collection³

During the years 1930–1939 W. Bro. Jacob Hugo Tatsch (1888–1937), the author and an experienced masonic librarian, worked in the library assisted by an experienced cataloguer. Together they helped the library attain prominence in the field and develop a system for the cataloging of masonic books. Tatsch was born in Milwaukee and affiliated to the Fourth Estate Lodge which has since merged with St. John's Lodge in Boston. Acting not only as librarian, he was also Director of Education in Massachusetts and he worked with Macoy Publishing, a masonic publishing company that still exists today. In 1939, speaking at the Author's Lodge no. 3456 in London, he concluded with these words: "When I go home I shall leave my heart in England." He sat down, slumped over and died!

In recent years the library has been visited by experts in the field including W. Bro. Robert A Gilbert, a Past Master of Quatuor Coronati Lodge no. 2076. In a report to the Grand Master of Massachusetts following his visit and appraisal in 1988 he wrote:

Although the Library of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts is among the most important of Masonic libraries, this fact has not generally been recognized as it is both under-utilized by Brethren, and masonic libraries have yet to be integrated into the accepted academic and institutional library systems.

Some Recent Improvements

Today, with the aid of computers, the Samuel Crocker Lawrence Library is striving toward the goal of being accessible to all library systems. All of the holdings are either listed on a database or catalogued in a card system. This is something that has never been accomplished before. Three different Librarians have started this task and all three died before the completion of it. Many volumes that have not been accessible for many years can now be located. In fact, there are some we did not know we had!

Now, more than ever, masonic librarians and educators must strive to read and learn as much as they can. Freemasons from all over the USA, and from all over the world, have the ability to talk with one another via Internet using home-based personal computers. They are exchanging information and raising questions that those employed in the masonic information field must stand ready to answer. Most of our knowledge must come from the written works about Freemasonry and they must be available to loan to our borrowing populations. The new freemasons that I see coming through our

Lodges in American are eager to learn our valuable lessons and the legends that are behind them. They seem to realize that Freemasonry is a Study Society and a Philosophy – a way of life. It must be researched at length in order to be appreciated fully. These young freemasons are actively looking for the deeper meanings of our ancient Craft through reading and research. I hope that within my lifetime the old comment that ‘Masons as a rule do not read Masonic literature’⁴ becomes a thing of the past. I realize that this may be wishful thinking on my part, as Americans are by far the worst offenders of not reading. But I try to do my little part in the hope that it will change the larger picture eventually. If no one tries then nothing will ever change and change is preferable to stagnation.

In Boston the library has added computer technology to our systems and is on the Internet computer network with the Grand Lodge ‘Homepage’. We get many questions and comments on the Internet, some from as far away as California and Hawaii. There are more freemasons and non-masons alike who are utilizing this tool to become familiar with the Fraternity and I would hazard a guess that there are some people who have joined because they became interested through this computer link. If nothing else our Fraternity now has a wider base of people who are familiar with it and what we stand for. This may help us dispel some of the worst rumours against Freemasonry in this country and eventually in the world.

The library personnel in Boston are also active in the newly formed ‘Masonic Library and Museum Association’. This is an international organization of librarians, archivists, curators, and directors of masonic libraries and museums. It was formed recently, through the efforts of John Platt of Pennsylvania and Cynthia Alcorn of Massachusetts, and it links masonic libraries and librarians from all over the USA and indeed throughout the world in a common set of goals and ideas. It represents a platform for the exchange of ideas and an understanding of the problems that we face in the positions of masonic librarians and educators. I cannot easily find words to express how important it is to know that you are not the only one facing the problems. This group is working actively towards the sharing of information and the pooling of resources so that we can better serve the Fraternity in their quest for knowledge and truth.



Here we are, the jovial Library Staff

A Morning Session – a very mixed bag!

Our typical day begins at 9:00 a.m. when we have a little time to go over notes and projects that we might have underway. Both Cynthia Alcorn and I exchange thoughts on what we are doing and where we will be in case one of us should be called away or otherwise absent. To start the day off on an interesting note we have three visitors, all teenagers, who are looking for the 'Ark of the Covenant'. They had visited the Massachusetts Masonic Temple in Cambridge and not finding what they were looking for, asked the caretaker where else they might find this. He told them that all he had was a stage prop but, as they were insistent, he directed them to the Grand Lodge. I told them the same thing that the caretaker had done in Cambridge but they still wanted to see our Ark. (They must have been watching the film 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' and decided that we, not the government, had the Biblical Ark!) We told them that it was locked up and we did not have a key. They went off disappointed, still believing that we had the Ark and had no intention of showing it to them.

Next we have a call from our front desk asking if we can conduct a tour of the building for 30 English ladies, who are members of the Order of the Eastern Star, here on vacation. They come up and crowd in our library. One of the collections we have on display is a representation of masonic music from the early 1900s. We point out one song in particular written in 1910 for 'Flo' Ziegfeld's production of 'The Girl in the Kimono.' Ziegfeld (1869–1932) was an American freemason. It is entitled "I Love to Love A Mason." The ladies love the lyrics especially when they hear the second line which goes "Because a Mason never tells." They tell us that they are all members of the same Eastern Star Chapter in England and have formed a choral group within the Chapter. They ask for copies of the words and music so they can perform them at a meeting when they return home. We make sure that all of them have copies to take back. They were thrilled and enjoyed seeing our building and we enjoyed meeting them. I wonder how their husbands will react to the song when they hear it?

After this we settle in to the more mundane tasks of opening our mail and starting everything for the day. Several times a week the mail contains some interesting reference questions and this week is no exception. Today we have a question from a freemason in Washington State who is doing a survey on the position of the Compasses in the Fellowcraft Degree. He wants to know which side, either left or right, we raise above the Square and if there is any specific reason for the choice in this state. He is polling all 50 States to compare answers and find out what is most common. It is an interesting question and one that I had never considered before, but I start researching the answer to send back to him. He has promised that when all answers are in that he would tabulate the results and send all respondents a copy of the answers given. It is a good opportunity to add to my masonic knowledge and I am happy to take on the job.

Another question that comes in the mail today concerns the identity of a jewel that someone has found in a flea market. It looks masonic, but is it? After close examination I was lucky enough to determine that it was a jewel from an organization called 'The United Order of the Golden Cross'. This was a mutual benefit (Life Insurance) association that was started in the New England area in the mid to late 1800s by freemasons and they had taken some of the symbols of Freemasonry to use for the new organization. This is what led to the belief that this was a masonic jewel. There were many organizations in the USA that were called 'Imitative' meaning that they borrowed masonic ritual or symbolism or both for use in their own organizations. There were very many fraternal organizations that were active once but are now nothing but dim memories – if that. I find it amazing that for every one that I find, three more pop up! It is an education in itself to learn about these organizations.

Just as I am finishing the research on the medal, a pleasant couple from England come in. They are on holiday and noticed our building's ornamentation which identifies it as a masonic Lodge. They introduce themselves to me and I find it very interesting to meet them. They are both freemasons! The gentleman is a Provincial Grand Lodge

Officer and the lady is Master of her Lodge in England. I had never met a 'Lady Mason' before, so it was informative to me to talk to them as I guided them around our building and discussed Freemasonry in England. They thank me for my time and I thank them for the new knowledge that I have received in return. It is meeting and talking to freemasons from different countries that makes this part of our work so enjoyable. I have learned more about Freemasonry all over the world from people like these, and it never ceases to amaze me that the more differences I find in Freemasonry, the more similarities I discover in our great fraternity too.

Lunch and Chewing over the Templars, again!

Lunchtime has arrived at long last and I head out to my local 'deli' to have lunch. When I walk in the owner George is excited because he knows that I am a freemason and also a Knight Templar. He had watched a TV programme on the Templars of old and their ultimate demise in France on the Arts and Entertainment channel. He wants to know more about the Templars and I try to separate the truth and the fiction in what he saw. (They are still looking for the missing Templar 'treasure'). We talk about the Templars, DeMolay and other subjects of the crusading period. George (who is not a freemason) is very interested in the supposed connection of the Templars with Freemasonry and I suggest some books in the public library that I know discuss that subject. I also offer to give him some written information that we have available in our library and through the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar in the USA both on Freemasonry in general and the Knights Templar in particular. He and the patrons (including an Orthodox Catholic priest) who have been listening are thankful for the information and seem genuinely interested in finding out more factual information. I promise to do what I can to help, grab my sandwich and head back to the Grand Lodge to eat.

An Afternoon Session – and the pace begins to heat up!

Just as I sit down, Cynthia, who has been working hard on the Internet and the questions that have been raised there, calls me and asks me to give a tour to two young men who have wandered in. I go down to meet them and find that they are familiar with Freemasonry (one of their fathers is a freemason) and they are looking for information not only on the building itself, but how they can go about joining a Lodge. After giving them a tour and talking at some length with them, I introduce them to the Secretary of the Corinthian Lodge who happens to be in the building. He sets up pre-application committee meetings for both young men and starts them on the road to becoming freemasons. I am particularly happy that both are young (both in their mid-20s) and both indicate that they will be back to do some reading and study in the library. I tell them that I will be glad to help and wish them well on their masonic journey.

After lunch I clear up the backlog of my messages that has built up and settle down with a friend who has come in to do some serious research on freemasons in the Revolutionary War. Massachusetts has a long and interesting history in Freemasonry. There were several great American patriots who were also freemasons. George Washington (1732–1799), Paul Revere (1735–1818), Joseph Warren (1741–1775), Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790), John Paul Jones (1747–1792) and others both famous and obscure who were both zealots for independence and freemasons. Lots of American history revolves around Freemasonry, like the Boston Tea Party for example. On the night of the 'Tea Party' on 16 December 1773, St. Andrew's Lodge was scheduled to have a meeting at the Green Dragon Tavern. Unfortunately, most of the members, being also members of another organization called 'The Sons of Liberty', were otherwise engaged and could not attend. (They were throwing tea into the Boston Harbour). The meeting of the Lodge had to be cancelled! Joseph Warren was Grand Master of the

Massachusetts Grand Lodge ('Antients') through the Grand Lodge of Scotland. In 1769, he, Revere and others petitioned the Grand Lodge of Scotland for a Warrant to open a Lodge of 'Antient' freemasons in the State. In 1775 at the Battle of Bunker Hill he was killed while still the presiding Grand Master of that Grand Lodge. In the year 1798 a Lodge in Charlestown asked for permission to erect a monument in his honour. This was done and in 1824 a second monument was erected by the city to replace the first in commemoration of the Battle of Bunker Hill. This monument was dedicated by General LaFayette in a masonic ceremony and we have the apron he wore on that day in our museum. The monument is said to be on the exact spot where Warren died on the field.

My friend is conducting research on Warren. He is a member of the Lodge that erected the first monument to his honour in 1798, King Solomon's Lodge of Charlestown. He is amazed at the sources that we have at our beck and call. I sit him down with several books that deal directly with Warren and suggest that he checks the *Proceedings* of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts for information on Warren's career as Grand Master. This will be the first of many visits he will make to our library and in fact, he now comes in on a weekly basis to research various topics on Freemasonry and its history.

Just after I get back to my desk I receive a call from a local Lodge that informs me that on Friday next they will be hosting a group of 'Shrine' freemasons from Canada and asks if we can possibly arrange to give them a tour. We say fine and ask how many there might be in the party. The answer was a little bit unsettling as there would be 150 coming. We decide to take them in three groups, with 50 to a group, so that we may answer any questions they might have and give them the time they deserve as visitors. (Now I know that I should have taken that week off for a short holiday. Oh well, too late now!)

A little while later a Belgian lady stops by. She has been in several times to ask questions about Freemasonry and find out who and what we are. She is an interesting person to talk to and we have had several discussions on Freemasonry. She has researched both modern and historical Freemasonry and is most interested in the philosophy of Freemasonry. The questions she asks have already taken me to new levels and forced me to think more deeply than I have to for the stock answers we normally give to people. It is not often that a non-mason asks such penetrating questions. Over the course of several days she comes back many times with the ultimate result that she is more than happy with what she has been able to find out and she encourages her two sons to join. (They did apply and are now freemasons in Belgium).

Meanwhile the Grand Master stops by to say 'hello' and to check on the material he needs for the forthcoming 200th Anniversary celebrations in some of the Massachusetts Lodges in the next several months. Because it is the 200th Anniversary of MW Bro. Paul Revere's term as Grand Master it is a special time for these Lodges. All are lucky enough to have Charters signed by Revere and they represent some of the oldest Lodges still active in the State. Our Grand Master likes to personalize his speeches and he has a sharp wit. He advocates the use of the library and takes every opportunity to advertise us to the Brethren at large. He has made great use of our resources and feels that we have a great amount to give to our fraternity here in Massachusetts. I give him what we have available and he is well pleased with the material that he has to work with. He has managed to astound several Lodges with his speeches because they were not aware of what he has been able to tell them about their own Lodges.

Meanwhile, Cynthia has been working with a group of students from a local Baptist Bible College who have come in to research the works of Bro. Albert Pike (1809–1891). Pike is known as the 'father' of the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite Ritual in America and his book *Morals and Dogma* (1871) is one of the better known works on Freemasonry in the USA. Unfortunately, he and his book are the most misquoted sources that we have! During the 1890s a French journalist named Gabriel Jogand Pagès (1854–1907) who was also known as Leo Taxil wrote what was supposed to be an

expose on Pike including several speeches attributed to him. Several years later Taxil admitted that he had made the whole thing up. It was a hoax that is still believed to this day. These students have read the famous misquotation about freemasons worshipping Lucifer and they want to prove that we are devil worshippers. Fortunately, Cynthia is well aware of this and asks them to read the whole paragraph written by Pike, not the one line used by Taxil. When one does it becomes apparent that Pike said nothing at all about worshipping Lucifer. The students leave much chagrined and a lot wiser than when they came in.

While this was going on the Master and Wardens of one of our Lodges come in to carry on some research on their Lodge. They intend to re-write an old history of the Lodge and are looking for some facts that were not in the original, as well as new material from the last 20–30 years about the Lodge. We have material in our information files from all Lodges in our State. We also have files on a variety of masonic subjects and on famous freemasons, both modern and historical. This is a useful tool and we can answer many questions utilizing the material in the files. They go happily to work and I promise to check on them from time to time.

Shortly after this, a young man comes in, nice-looking and well-dressed. He is looking for a portrait of Beelzebub. Now he states that he knows from his reading that we are intimately connected with Beelzebub and he wants to see the picture of him. We assure him that we do not have anything like that, but he is insistent that we must have this picture. We inform him (in the best possible way) that we do not have this; that we are not attached to nor have we any connection with Beelzebub; and that we cannot assist him. He walks out – a prime example of mis-information on Freemasonry. Masonic libraries are continually trying to counter this sort of mis-information on all of the levels where it is met. This is as important, if not more so, than any other task we do in the library. It is a shame that such information exists about us, even worse that there are people who choose to believe it. A library is the prime source for information of all types, that is our reason for existing. Masonic libraries in the USA work toward the goal of bringing Freemasonry out into the public gaze so that we can be known to freemasons and non-masons alike. We serve both groups in their search for whatever information they need.

About 2:00 p.m. our part-time students come in to work. We have three of them: Jason, who is a past State Master Councilor of the ‘Order of DeMolay’ (an American youth organization for boys aged 13–21 years old who are sponsored by the masonic fraternity); Rick, who is the presiding State Master Councilor of ‘DeMolay’; and Sharon who is Grand Worthy Advisor of the ‘Rainbow for Girls’ (another youth organization for girls aged 13–21 years old who are also sponsored by the freemasons). They are working on the long-term project of listing all our library holdings that are not catalogued in our card index. Many masonic libraries in America exist only in boxes or in one small area of the Grand Lodge buildings in their States. Others, such as in Boston, have adequate space and have a large section of their holdings catalogued, but may have many volumes that have not been touched. This is the case in Boston and with the help of these part-time workers we are now finishing a complete list of our holdings. This job could not have been accomplished without their help and the use of the computer. We have 60–70,000 catalogued books, both masonic and non-masonic. We also have nearly 70,000 in boxes and on shelves in the basement that have never been listed. These represent gifts, donations and just plain accumulations from the 1800s to date. They include many books in several languages other than English. We shall soon be able to make these volumes accessible to all our library patrons for study and research. Jason and Sharon have come to work, Rick has come in to seek my help on a term paper he is preparing for college. The subject is a favourite of mine and one that I have been researching for several years: the Knights Templar. I sit down with Rick and provide him some of the information that he is looking for and I show him several books that contain references to the Templars and what happened to them. He passes on some information that he has obtained via the Internet, namely the name of DeMolay’s sword

which is supposed to be called 'Truth Seeker'. I add that 'morsel' to my own on-going research project. Many students come into our library looking for help and to use our original source material on Freemasonry and related subjects. We help all whom we can and everyone I meet is very grateful to learn more about Freemasonry from factual sources.

A young student from the University of Massachusetts comes in looking for material on Prince Hall and African Lodge no. 1. We have the original records from this Lodge and have had them microfilmed for ease of use. This student has been in many times before and has had a great deal of success in her search. She is working on a paper dealing with Prince Hall's life and times. Reading through the record books of the African Lodge, she has managed to cull out information that might not have surfaced otherwise.

Jason (our part-time worker) comes in to show us some books that are dated 1730 and some from the early 17th century that he has located in the basement. The older books deal with Rosicrucians. Some are written in German and others in English. The 1730 book is a masonic work printed in the USA and is still in fairly good condition for its age. We are still turning up these treasures and it is exciting every time we locate one. It always amazes me that Freemasonry has taught the same lessons for so many years and they are just as viable today as they were then. We take the books and enter them into the database, storing them in the rare bookcases in the Librarian's office. That area of the building is one of the few which does have some climate control for heat and humidity. We try our best, using limited resources, to protect the older books and MSS on Freemasonry that we find. So much has been lost over the course of time that we want to prevent or at least slow down this loss. We are building knowledge that future generations of freemasons will use to look back on their own history. Loss of books might make holes in that history and loss of knowledge to the Craft.

Cynthia and I take time to sit down and discuss our plans for the evening. She and I are speaking at a Lodge of Instruction at Brockton tonight. Both of us realize the importance of masonic education and we have made a point of making ourselves available, both individually and together, to go out and speak to various Lodges when requested. A Lodge of Instruction in Massachusetts is a district-wide meeting where all of the Lodges in a particular district meet at one time on one night, for the purpose of gaining further knowledge of the Craft. They do this through a list of speakers maintained by the Grand Lodge who speak on various masonic subjects. Cynthia and I talk about the library and museum of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts and we divide the talk between us. Cynthia speaks about the library and her work as the Grand Lodge Librarian, I talk about the museum and about some aspects of the library as it impacts on masonic education and Brethren. We believe that it is important to get out and show ourselves to the Brethren at large. Out of approximately 62,000 freemasons in the State we see less than 1% at our Quarterly Communications. We represent Grand Lodge to the Brethren whom we meet at the Lodges of Instruction and it is important that they know we are there to serve them and help them in anyway we can.

Just before five p.m. we have our final visitor of the day. He is a new freemason who is looking for something to read on the symbols and rituals that he has encountered so far. He would also like to see the Grand Lodge building because he has never been here before. I take him around and talk to him about the Fraternity, what it is and what it represents. He is fascinated by the history of Freemasonry and asks several questions about the Craft and our founding fathers. He is accompanied by a young lady who is equally fascinated and both are in awe of the beautiful Lodge rooms and artefacts that the building contains. When we get back to the library Cynthia and I help him to select some books to take with him that will give him a better understanding of who we are and what he has joined. We also tell him that he can share this with his lady because there is nothing in these books that cannot be read by the public at large.

The Evening Stint – lecturing and making contact

Cynthia and I close the library and start out for Brockton by car. It is roughly an hour's drive from Boston and we use the time to 'fine tune' our speeches for the evening as well as to discuss the day in general and some of the incidents that have happened. We also discuss some forthcoming events and dates that we have to keep in mind. When we arrive we see that this is going to be a bigger crowd that we had thought. The Master and Wardens of the Lodge of Instruction greet us warmly and conduct us into the meeting that has been 'called off' in order to allow Cynthia to enter. This is a first for them as they have never had a Lady speaker before and they are looking forward to it. The Lodge hall is packed with 160 members present. This is the largest audience that we have ever had! They are an enthusiastic crowd and enjoy our speech so much that we receive a standing ovation at the end.

We are invited to join them for a light collation and fellowship in the banquet hall. This is the part that both of us enjoy tremendously. We manage to meet and talk on a one-to-one basis to many people who have never visited the library. Some have questions that we try to answer, some have requests for books or materials that we can loan them. Some just want to say "Hi". We take our leave of these wonderful people, talking about some of the questions that we have been given this evening, and some of the requests we will deal with in the morning. I drop Cynthia off at the "T" station and head for home. And so our typical day ends.

A Few Closing Thoughts

This paper has been written with a touch of humour to lighten what otherwise might be a dull subject for some people. Every incident depicted in this paper, however, has happened in the library in Boston. Our days are not always as busy as this one but we manage to find enough to do. We are one of the bigger masonic libraries in America and one of the better known. There are masonic libraries in the USA that exist only in boxes in a dim corner of their Grand Lodge buildings. These are the ones that need our help as freemasons, as educators and as librarians. We can never stress masonic education too much. For too long have we remained the "Quiet Fraternity". We must make sure that our masonic 'Light' shines as a beacon of hope in an otherwise dark world.

These are trying times and times of serious uncertainty for Freemasonry and both freemasons and non-masons need to be educated to the Craft: they look to masonic scholars to show them the way. They also need instruction and direction, and for this they look to all of us. At times like these we must look to our ritual and to its deeper meanings to give us a sense of purpose and direction in our lives. The masonic libraries represent the safe-havens in a stormy sea, the beacons that guide us to our ultimate goals. The collections that these libraries hold can be the stepping stones to a far better understanding and appreciation of Freemasonry and the valuable lessons it has to teach and the people who work in the Libraries can be a guiding influence to all of the Brethren.

One of our Grand Masters in Massachusetts took for his motto "One man can make a difference." He proved this throughout his term as Grand Master. If masonic librarians and education took this as a motto and lived it day by day, we could make a real difference. If you, the reader, would like to make a difference why don't you volunteer at your local masonic library? If you don't have a masonic library, then start one! There can be no more worthwhile endeavour nor any that would be more soul-satisfying for any freemason with a love of books and reading!

Notes

¹ Grand Lodge of Massachusetts: Proceedings, 1814

² op. cit., 1864

³ op. cit., 1917

⁴Freemason's Repository. 1881