



THE CALIFORNIA ENCOMPASSER IS THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GRAND YORK RITE BODIES OF CALIFORNIA AND IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE MEMBERSHIP. THE ENCOMPASSER IS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE MEMBERSHIP AT ALL CONVOCATIONS, ASSEMBLES AND CONCLAVES OF THE YORK RITE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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## Transition Theory versus the Monastic Theory

By Andrew Torok

*Southern California Research Lodge F&AM [From The Illinois Lodge of Research Transactions Vol. 7 No. 2]*

Alphonse Cerza was probably the most outstanding Masonic scholar of our time. As a member of Quatour Coronati Lodge #2076 he was involved in many facets of Masonry. His most notable effort was the separation of the myth from the facts.

Regarding the origins of Freemasonry, he supported the great Masonic historian R. F. Gould and the theory of Harry Carr, especially the Transition Theory. The Transition Theory holds that men not actively involved in the operative mason's trade were admitted into operative mason's lodges that were concerned solely with matters relating to the mason's trade: and that, as the mason's trade declined, these outsiders became sufficiently numerous to be able to take control of those lodges; and by eliminating the trade aspects entirely, they were able to change the ceremonies, and gradually bring about the evolution of our present day Non-operative or Speculative Masonry.

This theory is now challenged by C. N. Batham, successor to Harry Carr as Secretary of Quatour Coronati Lodge. The theory that he presents is that within the English monasteries there were inner SANTA, with membership restricted to senior and learned brethren, in which time honored rites were practiced; and that on the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in 1538, there followed the disendowment of the religious fraternities in 1547.

Although most of them disappeared, some survived as secret cells until late in the sixteenth or early in the seventeenth century. Then, in more favorable conditions, they emerged, expanded and gradually evolved into the form of Speculative Freemasonry known to us today.

It is virtually impossible to think in terms of the environment of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, but the effort must be made if we are to understand, even in general terms, Br. Batham's theories.

Try, therefore, to put yourself in the position of a senior member of a monastic order in the mid-sixteenth century. You are a devoted Catholic and your whole life revolves around your faith, the supreme of which is the Pope. The King is about to destroy that authority and place himself at the head of the church in England solely because he wants to divorce his Catholic wife and marry a Protestant heretic. Your monastic order is about to be dissolved and you are to be deprived of the time-honored customs that are so vital to your faith. You would know of the executions of so many Catholic priests who had celebrated Mass in secret, and the Catholic laity who had befriended them. You would be aware of the constant danger of betrayal, even members of your monastic order, who might well break down when threatened with torture of the most inhuman kind. Thus would secret cells be formed, though eventually, in less dangerous times, it would be essential for them to emerge and attract other adherents if they were not to disappear entirely. But how could this be done? It would be suicidal for the cells to emerge in their original form as extreme Catholic units. It was imperative to find a disguise. But what?

The construction of monasteries and other religious buildings throughout the country meant that the clergy were always in close contact with the operative masons. Some monks worked as architects, Masters of the Work,

## Transition Theory

*(Continued from Page 1)*

and it is known that some actually worked as operatives along with their lay brethren.

The Hall of the London Company of Masons stood on land owned by the Priory of the Holy Trinity, to which it attached itself. And even as late as 1665, a banner of the Holy Trinity was carried in all its processions.

Many other examples could be quoted of the common interests and close relations existing between masons and monks. What is more natural than that they should take on the guise of being a society whose members were essentially interested in architecture? The study of architecture, after all, was universally accepted as being a pastime of gentlemen.

Granted this, why should men who had no connection with religious fraternities have joined such a newlyemerging movement? Man is a social animal, but in the Middle Ages the only unit had been the family. In the sixteenth century, the winds of change began to blow. There was a social awakening that would lead to the establishment of clubs and coffee houses in which there would be animated discussions on matters concerning the newly discovered world. And, for the first time, men would be able to express opinions social, religious, and political, - that would have been impossible in more restricted circles.

Freemasonry, in an elementary form, certainly began to emerge at that time. According to theory, it evolved from the secret monastic cells. To be sure, there are no records of them dating from that time for strict secrecy was still a paramount necessity. It was dangerous to put forward views that were not in accord with official policy. Many who did so were put to death. Thus there was an obvious need for secret societies having carefully guarded sips for recognition by others of similar persuasion. As a matter of fact, such secret societies were to be the feature of European life during the nineteenth century.

The first record of an initiation in an English Lodge is on 16 October 1646 when Elias Ashmole and Colonel Henry Mainwaring were made Masons in Warrington. This quite definitely was a meeting of nonoperatives. Obviously the members present on that occasion must have been initiated some time previously. But where and when is unknown. There is no official record of that meeting nor of the existence of a Lodge at Warrington at that time. It is known only through an entry in Ashmole's diary.

The Natural History of Staffordshire, published in 1686 refers to the society, and he adds: I found persons of the most eminent quality, that did not disdain to be of this Fellowship." He further states: "into which society when any are admitted, they call a meeting or Lodge which must consist of 5 or 6 of the Ancient of the Order." Exactly what their ceremonies were Eke is unknown. At first, no doubt, they were basically religious, with a cloak of masonry, but

as the movement grew and as men were admitted who had no connection with any religious fraternity, the emphasis on religion would diminish. Nevertheless, traces of a religious inheritance lingered for a long time. Some Masonic catechisms before 1730 show a very strong Christian influence.

Apart from the Warrington ceremony there are very little indications of Masonic activity in the seventeenth century. The York No. 4 manuscript of 1693 gives the names of six members of a lodge of which nothing is known. There were references to Masonic meetings from time to time in the press. This is not a very inspiring list. C. N. Batham's theory is that some of the Old Charges were written in the seventeenth century. New clauses were introduced that could only apply to operative Masons. The compilers were failing into the temptation, the desire to improve the ritual. They were following the long established custom of an operative cloak, something that Dr. Anderson perpetuated in his Constitutions of 1723 and 1728.

Has Br. C.N. Batham persuaded you? Proof he did not promise, but remember that there is no proof of the Transition Theory.

Alphonse Cerza worked hard to separate the Myth in Masonry from the facts. I think he would agree to introduce a 'second opinion.' However we'll never know if he would accept or refute it.

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### Quick Quotes

*The mother's heart is the child's schoolroom.*

— JEMRU WARD BEECER

*If you educate a man you educate a person, but if you educate a woman you educate a family.*

— RUBY MANIKAN

*When I am getting ready to reason with a man, I spend one-third of my time thinking about myself and what I am going to say and two-thirds about him and what he is going to say.* — ABRAHAM LINCOLN

*Prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.* — FRANCIS BACON

*There are two things to aim at in life: first, to get what you want; and, after that, to enjoy it. Only the wisest of mankind achieve the second.*

— LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH

*Ignorance is an evil weed, which dictators may cultivate among their dupes, but which no democracy can afford among its citizens.*

— WILLIAM HENRY BEVERIDGE

*If a good person does you wrong, act as though you had not noticed it. They will make note of this and not remain in your debt long.* — GOETH

*Opinions that are well rooted should grow and change like a healthy tree.* — IRVING BATCHELLER

## Deputy Grand Master Reveals Plans for the Next Cryptic Year

Thank you for supporting me in the quest of the distinguished office of Most Illustrious Grand Master and demonstrating your faith in my ability to fulfill the duties associated with that office by your agreement to continue to serve Grand Council in the 2004-2005 Cryptic year.

If I am elected to that office, I believe that we can have a glorious year and benefit the Craft by using the three precepts that I have adopted as the theme for my proposed year.

### ● PROVIDING AN INSPIRATION TO INSPIRE OTHERS

What is inspiration? How do you give it to someone?

Inspiration is the imparting of an idea, emotion or action. If we are working for the craft and are zealous in our performance of that work, it will encourage others to want to join in our endeavors. "THAT IS INSPIRATION."

### ● REVITALIZING OUR PRIDE IN BEING A MASON

Are you proud to be a York Rite Mason? I AM! I want others to know it too.

When we are enthusiastic about our own attendance at meetings and include our activities in our conversations positively we show pride in what we are able to accomplish. That is what generates interest in the organization.

### ● TRAVELING WITH US IN THIS EXCITING YEAR

Do come often and stay long.

I am excited about this year. I plan to travel to all forty-one councils. I have my itinerary posted on the Fraternity Web Page and it is linked to our own Grand Council Web Page. I cordially invite all of you to join us as often as you are able. That is what demonstrates the strength and brotherhood of fraternity.

I have prepared this document to provide much information and assistance throughout the coming year. Reference to all relevant material is included in each section.

I am available to serve you. I ask that you send corrections, inclusions, or questions to me in some written form of communications. That way I remember to enter the data, correct the error, or answer the questions. Otherwise, ...you have probably heard of senior moments? I am getting closer.

Fraternally,  
Larry A. Reynolds, Sr.  
Deputy Grand Master

## THE GREAT LIGHTS IN THE EAST

*by Roy L. Denning, S.W., Utah Research Lodge  
From the Beehive State Trestleboard, February 1996,  
Southern California Research Lodge F&AM*

Many of us have had the pleasure of visiting Lodges in other jurisdictions within our country, and some have even had the opportunity to visit in foreign countries and observe the differences in ritual and arrangement of the Lodge room. I have not been fortunate enough to have enjoyed the latter, but have often wondered about procedures in some of these jurisdictions — how do they obligate a candidate who is not of the Christian or Jewish faith? What is used on the Altar in place of the Bible, and how are the Great Lights arranged?

While reading through a copy of the Year Book of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, I came across some information which helped to satisfy my curiosity and which I thought might be of enough general interest to summarize here.

*(Continued on Page 4)*

## Grand Chapter to Celebrate 150 Year Anniversary!

Your Grand Chapter will offer some GREAT memorabilia in the coming months. Please watch your e-mail or check with your Chapter secretary for details.

We have a handsome stone coffee mug, polo shirts, ball caps, and even red jackets....all with the official Sesquicentennial logo ... available at prices which will fit your budget.

Your Chapter can order the shirts for an "official uniform" during the warm months!

**Information will be forthcoming,  
but if you cannot wait,  
contact Jerry Wohlfarth at  
[jerrywohlf@cox.net](mailto:jerrywohlf@cox.net)**

## THE GREAT LIGHTS IN THE EAST

*Continued from Page 3*

Before proceeding farther, it may be advisable to consider briefly a few of the features of our Order which might ease the appreciation of some of these Eastern customs:

a. Belief in a Supreme Being is a prerequisite to membership: and we believe that each individual has the freedom to worship according to his own beliefs.

b. We accept that Volume of the Holy Writings which Speculative Freemasons have adopted from the Operative Lodges and on which a great deal of our ritual is dependent.

c. A prime role of the Holy Writings is to provide an acceptable medium for taking and sealing our Obligations so that candidates will consider such Obligations to be solemn and binding upon them.

If the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible are taken to be separate Volumes, there are no fewer than seven sets of Holy Writings in use in the Lodges of the East, in the band of countries stretching from Israel to New Zealand. These are:

1. The Bible (Old Testament) for Hebrews.
2. The Bible (Old and New Testaments) for Christians.
3. The Dhammapada for the Mahay-ana Sect of Buddhists.
4. The Gita for Hindus.
5. The Granth Sahib for Sikhs.
6. The Koran for Muslims.
7. The Zend Avesta for Parsees and Zoroastrians.

All of these Sacred Books allude to a Supreme Deity.

It is a universal practice, throughout this area, to have the Old Testament of the Bible open on the altar (either open or closed — the custom varies). It is not generally considered necessary to have a separate Bible open at the New Testament since Christian Masons accept the whole volume as one Sacred Book. In Israel, however, where the Old Testament alone is the Holy Writings of the majority community, a New Testament is also open if there are Christian members present.

Lodge Singapore No. 7118 (E.C.) has all seven volumes always on the Altar, of which six are open. The Bible used contains both Testaments and is open only at the Old Testament.

The Square and Compasses are normally placed on the Bible, but when a candidate is taking an Obligation on another Book, a separate set of Square and Compasses is placed on that Book. The Koran is normally kept closed until required for an Obligation and must not be handled by the bare hands of a non-Muslim. Brethren, therefore, wear gloves as part of the Lodge regalia, and the Koran is usually covered with a white cloth.

The Grand Lodge of India has six Sacred Books upon the Altar, with five open — again the Bible is opened at the Old Testament only. Since there are no Buddhist Masons in India, the Dhammapada, is omitted. The Square and Com-

passes are placed on the Holy Writings to which the MWGM owes allegiance. At installations, they are placed on the Book of the MWGM-Elect's faith.

Constituent Lodges under the Grand Lodge of India follow the same procedure. Lodges under other Grand Lodges but residing in India place the Bible on the Altar and, usually, the other Sacred Books representing the faith of their members. Some Lodges display only the Bible on the Altar, but provide the other Volumes when required for an Obligation.

The Lodges of the Grand Lodge of Israel have the Old Testament always open on the Altar with the Square and Compasses thereon. If Christian and Muslim Brethren are present, the New Testament and Koran are added and one large set of Square and Compasses covers the three Volumes.

There are several variations to the usual method of taking Obligations, kneeling with the hands on the Bible, as we are accustomed. In Singapore, Muslims kneel, but have the Koran held over the head and use the words "hereby and hereunder" rather than "hereby and hereon." In one New Zealand Lodge, the Charter is held over the head over the head of the candidate, at the beginning of the Obligation, and the words "hereby and hereunder" are used. Brethren in Israel of the Orthodox Jewish faith take their Obligation standing, with their hands on the Old Testament and with the head bowed towards it. Since the destruction of the Temple, Jews do not kneel, except on the Day of Atonement. Jewish Brethren, also, usually have their heads covered when in Lodge, as in the case when in the Tabernacle.

The method of sealing the Obligation also varies from area to area. Christians, Jews, and some Muslims seal their Vows by kissing the Holy Writings, as we do. Other Brethren may touch the Book with the hand or the forehead, or salute with the hands before the face, palms together, and bowing. There has even been an occasion when a Buddhist candidate had a candle burning during his Obligation and considered his vow binding when, at its conclusion, he extinguished the flame.

It is most interesting to note, that the many problems, which could have arisen from the meeting of Brethren of various creeds, have been anticipated and procedures have been adopted, to promote Peace and Harmony within the Lodges and the welfare of Freemasonry in general. While other Holy Writings may be introduced in various Lodges as occasion demands, the Old Testament Scriptures still perform their traditional traditional function as a Landmark of our Order which has United men of every country, sect, and opinion, through the fundamental belief that above all things, there ever reigns Supreme but one Grand Architect of the Universe.—*THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN*

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December 1997*

## FREEMASONRY AND SCOUTING

By: W.A. Bainbridge

Bro, Bainbridge is a member of Baden-Powell Lodge #381, Auckland, V.Z and has also been active in the Boy Scouts for many years.

(This STB was taken from a paper given to United Masters Lodge 9167, Auckland, N.Z Printed in Vol. 31, No. 13, September 1997 Lodge Transactions). -Editor

Sir Robert Baden-Powell (1857-1941), returning from the Boer War which had lasted from 1899 to 1902, was suddenly a public figure. During this war he became famous in Britain for the defence of Mafeking. This town, under his command, had withstood a siege of 215 days, in spite of famine and sickness in his ranks. Baden-Powell maintained the defence successfully and earned the rank of Major-General. On his return to England he felt most strongly that the courage and skill of the scouts in the army should not lie lost, These scouts had made such a significant contribution to the successful outcome of the war, that their skills should be passed on. Simultaneously he was convinced that the young people in Britain were not receiving enough physical exercise and experience in the outdoor life. He knew that by teaching scouting skills to young people — who would become the leaders of the future — he would be meeting two objectives.

In 1907 he started the Boy Scout movement in Great Britain by working with just twenty boys. To keep track of the many useful facts he was teaching the boys he wrote notes. These developed into a book that was first published in 1908 as the Boy Scout Handbook. In the years that followed, many millions of copies were sold and avidly absorbed by young boys throughout the world. From the sale of this book came the need for leaders and the huge organization which scouting is today. The scouting world is extensive by anyone's standards because scouting is active in over 150 countries and is recognised by the World Bureau in 117 countries with more being recognised each year.

In the 1990s there were more than 23 million scouts and adult leaders belonging to Boy Scout units in countries belonging to the Boy Scout World Conference. While the numbers have dropped in recent years the membership has been broadened to include girls, younger boys and female leaders in all areas. The range of ages in the movement at the present day are Keas from 6-7 years, Cubs from 8-10 years, Scouts from 11-14 years, Venturers from 15-20 years and Rovers from 18-26 years old. After this leaders may take out warrants from the age of 18 with apparently no age limit but after many years some leaders join (with ex Guide Leaders) the Baden-Powell Guild for the rest of their lives.

Adult leaders of the organization have, over the years, taken their training in various camp grounds throughout the world but the most famous is Gilwell Park in the south of England. This is the International Training Camp. All leaders who have completed the training courses wear with pride the Gilwell Scarf and woodbeads, all over the world.

With the large number of men in the scouting movement and many common interests it was fairly natural that scouter's lives would become interwoven in different ways. Many attended the same churches and had similar hobbies — most loved the outdoors. Due to the principles inculcated in scouting, which in many ways parallel those

in Masonry, many scouters gravitated towards the masonic order and found they attended lodges with other scouters. The common interest in scouting gave them strong bonds to other scouters within the Craft.

The parallels are easily found and in fact nothing can be found in the Scout Law and Promise that is not found in Masonry. The first important thing is that each scout must make a promise to abide by certain guiding principles and subscribe to the Scout Law in the same way a mason does in his obligation, promising to practise masonic precepts. The scout and mason must both believe in God and cannot be accepted in either organization if they are atheists. Like Masonry, the Scout Movement does not involve itself in any form of political activity.

A meeting of scouters was held at scout headquarters, 19 Elizabeth St., Melbourne on 6th June 1929 for the purpose of forming a Masonic Lodge. This meeting was chaired by the Chief Commissioner, Arch Hoadley. The idea for such a venture had been a regular topic for discussion between Lord Somers, then Grand Master, Chief Scout and Governor of Victoria, and W.D. Kennedy, C.A. Hoadley and W.E Waters during the years 1927-30 when Lord Somers was able to devote considerable time to his scouting interests and outdoor activities. The ten scouting brethren at the meeting agreed to hold meetings on the 4th Monday of each month and to approach United Service Lodge No. 330 to sponsor a petition to Grand Lodge seeking permission to form a new, and as yet unnamed lodge.

M.W. Bro. His Excellency Lt.-Col. the Right Hon. Arthur Herbert Tennyson, Baron Somers, K.C.M.G., D. S. O., M. C., Governor and Chief Scout of Victoria, and Most Worshipful Grand Master of the day was appointed to be the first Master of the new lodge. W. Bro. Charles Archibald Hoadley was appointed as Deputy Master, for it was realised that Lord Somers would have difficulty in regularly attending meetings. Bro. George Homan Thomas was appointed as S.W. and Bro. Witham Duncan Kennedy as J. W. In Britain, and many other countries, when a masonic lodge exceeds fifty members, the members begin to discuss whether to start another lodge and split from the mother lodge. Several lodges were in this condition when the Third World Jamboree was held at Arrowe Park 'in August 1929. During this gathering, a meeting of over one hundred masonic scouters discussed the possible formation of scout lodges with members being drawn exclusively from the scout movement. In this way they could form a double bond of fraternity. These 100 men with this aim left the Jamboree for homes throughout the world. The leader of the Australian Jamboree contingent, C.A. Hoadley, in conjunction with W.D. Kennedy were charged to mention the proposed new lodge to the newly created Baron Baden-Powell of Gilwell, and to seek his consent to the use of his name for this new Scout lodge. He readily consented.

It is worthy of note that the naming of the lodge after a living person was not only unusual, but naming it after a man who himself was not a freemason, was a break with tradition. Lord Baden-Powell had often openly expressed his admiration for our fraternity, and while in Melbourne in 1931 he suitably inscribed the flyleaf of their Volume of the Sacred Law, 'With best wishes for the success of the Lodge in its good work. Baden-Powell of Gilwell. 12 May 1931. (The following issue noted that Baden-Powell had presented this VSL to the lodge.) This most treasured pos-

(Continued on Page 6)

## Scouting — (Continued from Page 5)

session is still in regular use. On 22nd August, 1930 the United Grand Lodge of Victoria granted a Charter to form a new lodge to be named Baden-Powell Lodge No. 498. Approval was also received for the proposed Foundation Members' jewel. Apart from the masonic content and traditional scouting green, a yellow diagonal arrow across the jewel was designed to perpetuate the Arrowe Park Jamboree discussions relating to the naming of the lodge. It is noted that this arrow is also part of the design of the Baden-Powell New Zealand lodge.

The first lodge recorded as a scout lodge therefore was Baden-Powell Lodge No. 488, United Grand Lodge of Victoria, Australia. The Australian brethren were single minded in doing what they said and wasted absolutely no time and the lodge was consecrated on 29th September, 1930, just one year later. The foundation Master for this lodge was Lord Somers, Governor of the State of Victoria.

The names of scouting lodges are interesting in their direct relationship to scouting. Some of these names are: Quest, Venturer, Gauntlet, Venture, Pathfinder, Pinewood, Red Scarf, Arrowhead, Kudu (die African Deer), Compass, and Woodsmoke.

Although it has often been argued that Lord Baden-Powell was a mason, there is no evidence of this and Dame Olive Baden-Powell denied it categorically. The confusion may have arisen because his younger brother, Major P. Baden-Powell, was indeed a member of the Craft and Bro. the Hon. David Michael Baden-Powell, (grandson of the founder), is at present Junior Warden of Baden-Powell Lodge No. 488, Victoria. There have, however, been other masons who were also heavily involved in scouting and some of these were: M.W. Bro. H.R.H. the Duke of Kent, Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England and President of the Boy Scout Movement in 1975; V.W. Bro. Archbishop Lord Fisher; Bro. Rudyard Kipling, M.W. Bro. Edward, Prince of Wales — Chief Scout in 1911; M.W. Bro. The Duke of Kent, GM, UGLE 1939-1942, Commodore of the Sea Scouts 1929-1942; V.W. Bro. the Very Rev. Israel Brodie, Chief Rabbi, who was a member of the Boy Scouts Council; and Lord Somers, Governor of Victoria and foundation Master of Baden-Powell Lodge No. 488, who became Chief Scout in 1941 upon Lord Baden-Powell's death.

Scout lodges differ little from regular lodges except the name and the background of the members. In addition, the members usually have one meeting each year when they attend in scout uniform and wear masonic regalia over their uniform. At the festive board of scout lodges it is fairly common to add to the list of toasts, 'Lord Robert Baden-Powell of Gilwell.' These lodges often have meetings where Scouters and or Rovers may be asked to attend for presentations. When this happens, and the lodge has been called off for this purpose, the young men see the leaders they admire in a fraternal setting. It is through this first contact with masonry and seeing the principles of masonry in operation that induces many young men to aspire to membership in the Craft.

This is a wonderful opportunity for the Craft to expand

its teachings. Indeed in Auckland we also have a short commemoration to Baden-Powell which we adopted from Queensland and through our regular contacts with the Australian lodges we even place the scarves of both countries together on the pavement with the 'lemon squeezer' on the centre, all surrounded by the pennants of the four patrols at Baden-Powell's first camp at Brownsea Island in 1907, to represent the going home of our founder.

## The Many Faces of Benjamin Franklin

*"If you would not be forgotten, As soon as you are dead and rotten, Either write things worth reading, Or do things worth writing."*

— BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Benjamin Franklin lived by this motto and has certainly not been forgotten. He wrote untold things worth reading and did things worth writing to an even greater extent. Among his writings, this motto in itself is among his most important. It is an ingenious guide for forward thinking men, and from having followed it himself, Benjamin Franklin will be ever looked upon as The Enlightened American.

Ben was an extremely complex man, many of whose ideas are still alive in today's world. Among the most important of our founding fathers, he further became famous as a printer, statesman, scientist, inventor, philosopher, musician and economist.

Born in 1706, Ben began an apprenticeship in his brother's Boston printing shop at age 12. He ran away from Boston at age 17, later moving to London where he continued his printing training before relocating to Philadelphia at age 20. At age 22, he opened his own printing shop before becoming sole owner and publisher of the Pennsylvania Gazette at age 23. As Postmaster for Philadelphia (appointed at age 37), his idea of a unified American postal system was perhaps the first step leading to unification of the American Colonies. His Postmaster position enabled him to get postal distribution for the Gazette and also started a chain of events eventually leading to his 1775 appointment as Postmaster General for America by the Continental Congress.

Other accomplishments of the younger Ben Franklin included his founding of the first Circulating Library at age 25 and publishing his first issue of "Poor Richard, an Almanack" (Poor Richard's Almanac) at age 26 and annually for 26 years. The middle-aged Ben published his first electrical writings and organized the first Militia at age 41. He published "Experiments and Observations on Electricity" in London at age 45, performed his famous kite experiment and founded the first fire insurance company at age 46 (1752) - all these things preceding his fame as a founder of our nation. And the Orient of California designated 2002 as "The Year of Benjamin Franklin" in tribute to and in honor of this truly great Mason.