

THE DUNCAN BEARD CLOCK OF UNION LODGE NO.5

It was a pleasure to serve Delaware College Societas Rosicruciana this past year as Celebrant and to end my year with the opportunity to prepare and give a paper.

Freemasonry is an institution designed to enlighten the intellect, improve the moral nature and raise up distressed humanity the world over.

Yes Fraters, these words are our Masonic teachings, which we all strive to live up to, and practice in our daily lives. I know many in the room join with me in our concern for the lack of interest of our members, attendance at meetings, officers to start in the line and the overall apathy of the Craft.

I went back to the days when I was the youngest member of my Lodge and tried to see what was the influence for my enthusiasm and interest in Freemasonry. I have to give credit to the Brother who signed my petition, R.W. Albert V. Jeuell, P.S.G.W. Shortly after I was raised, he invited me to travel with him on a visit to Jackson Lodge #19 in Delaware City. We drove down and found out it was the wrong evening, but we could go to Union Lodge #5 in Middletown to visit them, as it was their regular meeting. This was my first visitation and I was impressed with the Lodge, its officers and one thing in particular, the sheaf of wheat over the Junior Warden's chair in the South. Over the years, whenever I met anyone from Union Lodge #5, I always asked them what was over the Junior Warden's chair, many of them couldn't remember.

My interest in Masonry grew stronger as I traveled throughout our State, Pennsylvania, Maryland and New Jersey with the officers of Temple Lodge, visiting with other Lodges. I feel this was the one strong influence that kept me interested and active in our Fraternity and gave me the opportunity to see the various Lodge rooms, architecture and furniture of the Lodges.

The following is a good example of a visitation and the interest it can arouse even in a new member. I traveled with R.W. Walter F. Lokey, Past Grand Secretary, to a meeting held on Tuesday, March 6, 1990 at Union Lodge #5. It was the occasion of the Grand Masters Visitation. Due to my health and diet problems, I did not attend the dinner and went directly to the Lodge room at approximately 7:00 P.M.

The Secretary, P.M. Earl Emerson, was at his desk making preparations for the meeting. Near the desk, I noticed a large Grandfather clock in a beautiful wooden cabinet. I went up to look it over and he got up to welcome me and presented me with one of the Lodge's commemorative pins which the Lodge had struck to celebrate their 225th Anniversary.

He then explained that the clock had been made by Duncan Beard and had a date of 1781. The clock was located in Boyertown Antiques of Boyertown, Pennsylvania. A large law firm of Philadelphia had an opportunity to purchase an older clock made by David Rittenhouse who was a noted instrument maker, astronomer and mathematician and lived during the period April 8, 1732 to June 26, 1796.

The Duncan Beard clock had a special place in the history of Union Lodge as Duncan Beard was a charter member of the Lodge and served as the Charter Junior Warden when they received the charter from the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania on June 24, 1765.

Duncan Beard's occupation was a silversmith and clock maker. He was born in 1740 and died in

1798 at the age of 58 years. He bought a small one-acre piece of property two miles south of Cantwells Bridge (which is now Odessa). He ran his business from that location and was proud of living in Appoquinimink.

The minutes of Union Lodge #5 of February 5, 1990 tell us that P.M. Burris had been contacted by Brother Harry Roberts about locating an original Duncan Beard clock that was valued at \$22,500, but it would only cost the Lodge \$5,000 with the rest being donated.

P.M. Bruce Murry made a motion that the Lodge buy the clock under two conditions: 1) that it be authenticated prior to purchase and no other strings be attached and 2) that the clock be delivered to the Lodge, set up and in running condition before the final check was paid. The motion carried.

Also, it was approved that only two members of the Lodge be allowed to care for the clock. Past Masters Alston and Pisor, who live near the Temple, meet each Sunday morning, wind the clock, inspect and lubricate if needed.

The clock is in a large elaborate walnut cabinet approximately seven feet high with doors and windows on each side and a door and lock that covers the pendulum and weights. There is also a lock on the front of the cabinet. Around the face of the clock is printed "Duncan Beard, Appoquinimink 1781". The face made of brass is ornamented with beautiful engravings. Above the face are phases of the moon. The clock has a second hand and an aperture to show the date. It is an 8-day clock with a crank to wind the chimes and lift the weights, which were all original. The clock chimes each hour.

Union Lodge #5 had an old Duncan Beard clock which was destroyed in a fire at the Middletown Town Hall on December 31, 1918.

The oldest minutes of the Lodge dated May 7, 1766 showed the Lodge met at "Old Drawers" which was built in 1705. The present church was designed by Duncan Beard and was built in 1773. The minutes show Duncan was commissioned to make all the Lodge's jewels (which were all destroyed in the fire of 1918, except the Secretary's which he had worn home by mistake. This jewel is kept in the Lodge safe and it's a beautiful piece of work.)

The highlight of the meeting came when the Secretary, P.M. Emerson, was reading the minutes and had just passed the section concerning the clock when it chimed 8 times.

Yes, Fraters, this was a most interesting meeting and I strongly recommend all present to visit Union Lodge #5, enjoy the fellowship of the members, look over this beautiful clock which dates back to 1781 and is an example of our Masonic Heritage.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to give my paper.

P.C. William J. Littel
Presented in Delaware Conclave, S.R.I.C.F.

June 13, 1990