

Blue; Blue Lodge; Blue Masonry

Blue seems to have been highly esteemed since far back in antiquity as a beneficent color, denoting immortality, eternity, chastity, and fidelity, and pale blue representing prudence and probity. Exodus 28:31 states: "thou shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue," and Esther 1:6 states: "where were white, green, and blue hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple." The people were directed to wear a blue ribbon above the fringe of their garments, and one of the veils of the Tabernacle was blue. The same color is supposed to have been honored among the Druids. The Egyptians represented their principal god, *Amun*, as colored blue. Jeremiah 10:9 indicates that the Babylonians colored their idols blue as being an appropriate color for the gods. In Medieval times, Christians regarded blue as symbolic of immortality, of perfection, of hope, and of fidelity.

It has never been discovered how or when blue became the characteristic color of Craft Masonry, but the most probable explanation is the simple analogy to *the blue dome of heaven, the clouded canopy, or star-decked firmament*. In Masonry, blue indicates universal brotherhood and instructs us that those virtues should be as extensive as the blue arch of heaven itself. There is another possible explanation. In one of the ritualistic exposures of 1730, the following dialogue occurs: "Q. How was he cloathed? A. In a yellow Jacket, and a Blue Pair of Breeches." This referred to the Master of the lodge. It originated in the fact that compasses, in those days, were customarily made of brass, except the points, which had to be of harder material, and were made of steel tempered to a blue color. In Ireland, yellow and blue were adopted as lodge colors by some lodges and sometimes the Grand Lodge warrants were sealed by using yellow and blue ribbons. Several pictures are extant, made in the 18th century showing the Master and sometimes the members of a lodge attired in yellow jackets and blue breeches. Obviously, blue coats with brass buttons would effect the same purpose, and that was sometimes adopted.

No matter how the idea may have arisen, it seems that, from the early 18th century, blue has been deemed the color appropriate to the Craft Degrees and Lodges and, hence, such terms as *Blue Lodge, Blue Masonry, Blue Degrees* have long been used, not only as a convenient method of expression but in recognition of a beautiful symbolism. It is sometimes said that "blue" is slang or otherwise disrespectful. But that is not so either as to origin or ultimate usage. *Blue* is no more slang than *Craft*.

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