

Masonic Hoax

Slide 1 – Title page

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Slide 2 –Introduction

Masons have always misunderstood what is meant by Masonic secrecy. This misunderstanding caused generations of Masons to believe the obligation meant that they could not discuss anything about fraternity outside the lodge room. In truth, the only "secrets" are what is often termed the "modes of recognition," or the grip, pass, word, step, and signs of each of the degrees.

For this and other reasons, Freemasons chose not to speak out against those who are confused about or acted the craft. Additionally, many are, quite frankly astonished that so many people around the world could have twisted their benevolent, fraternal, charitable organization that seeks to improve society by improving men, into fodder for ridicule, hatred, or fear.

Many people have difficulty understanding how grown men, sworn to secrecy, who meet behind closed doors, guarded by a man armed with a sword, can be up to anything that is good.

Masonry's non-response to attack helps create a vacuum of information which can be easily filled with fabrications of misinformation and just plain lies. Repeated often enough, these fabrications come to be seen as the truth. As in the past, the modern Anti-Mason continues to use misquotes, invented facts, false sources, and total fabrications, regardless of the fact many were disproven centuries ago.

This program does not represent all the misinformation, myths, hoaxes and conspiracy theories surrounding the fraternity. It does however; offer a glimpse and, more importantly the facts, surrounding some of the most common ones.

Part One

Slide 3 –Anti-Masonry

Anti-Masonry, (or Anti-Freemasonry) is defined as "avowed opposition to Freemasonry." There is no one homogenous anti-Masonic movement. Anti-Masonry consists of radically differing criticisms from often incompatible groups sharing only their hostility to Freemasonry.

- a. Freemasonry has attracted opponents from early in its history. Nineteen years before the formation of the London Grand Lodge in 1717, a pamphlet appeared in the streets of London attacking Freemasonry as being a devilish sect of men and evil-doers. The London Grand Lodge did nothing to stop the attacks on the Craft.

- b. In 1826, William Morgan disappeared from the small town of Batavia, New York, after threatening to expose Freemasonry's "secrets" by publishing its rituals. His disappearance caused anti-Masons to claim that he had been kidnapped and murdered by overzealous Masons. Arrests and trials in connection to Morgan's disappearance sparked a series of protests against Freemasonry, which eventually spread to the political realm and the creation of the Anti-Masonic Party, the first "third party" in the United States. The party held three conventions before being swallowed up by the Whig Party. The growth of the anti-Masonic movement was due more to the political and social conditions of the time than to the Morgan episode, which was merely the catalyst. Under the banner of "Anti-Masons" able leaders united those who were discontented with existing political conditions. The fact that William Wirt, their choice for the presidency in 1832, not only was a former Mason but also even supposedly defended the Order in a speech before the convention that nominated him indicates that mere opposition to Masonry was by no means the central premise of the political order.
- c. Other extremes to which Anti-Masonry can grow includes:
 - i. The Bolsheviks outlawed Freemasonry in Russia in 1922. It was not permitted to return until after the fall of communism.
 - ii. Mussolini began jailing and murdering Masons when he came to power in Italy in the 1920s.
 - iii. Franco set aside a special budget in Spain to suppress Masonry and imprisoned thousands of Masons.
 - iv. In 1934, Hitler ordered the disbandment of Freemasonry, considering it a threat against the Third Reich. Masons were imprisoned and considered political prisoners.
 - v. Freemasonry is usually an early victim to totalitarian governments and oppressive religious groups that fear free thought.

Slide 4 – The Knights Templar

The Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon, commonly known as the Knights Templar or Templars, was among the most famous of the Western Christian military orders. The organization existed for approximately two centuries in the Middle Ages, having its origins shortly after the capture of the city Jerusalem in 1099 in the 1st Crusade.

Officially endorsed by the Roman Catholic Church around 1129, the Order became a favored charity throughout Christendom, and grew rapidly in membership and power.

Known best for their combat units, non-combatant members of the Order managed a large economic infrastructure throughout Christendom. They made significant and long lasting innovations in finance, international trading, and architecture across Europe and the Holy Land.

The Templars existence was tied closely to the Crusades; when the Holy Land was lost, support for the Order faded. Rumors about the Templars' secret initiation ceremony created mistrust and King Philip IV of France, who was deeply in debt to the Order, took advantage of the situation.

On Friday, October 13, 1307, members of the Order in France were arrested, tortured into giving false confessions, and imprisoned or burned. Pope Clement V disbanded the Order in 1312.

The abrupt disappearance of a major part of the Europe industrial and financial infrastructure gave rise to speculation and legends, which have kept the "Templar" name alive into the modern day. Some credit the current day superstition that Friday the 13th is an unlucky day to that specific event.

Of all the myths and legendary beliefs surrounding Freemasonry, the most enduring or romantic is that of the Templars.

The theory that Masonry originated in the Holy Land during the Crusades was advanced by one man: Chevalier Andrew Michael Ramsey.

In his 1737 discourse presented to the Grand Lodge of France set forth his theory, perhaps to provide a more impressive genealogy, satisfactory to the French nobility being attracted to the Craft. The theory is fully rejected by legitimate historians as wholly unsubstantiated with no provable basis.

Freemasonry has a modern Order of Knights Templar. They do not profess to be descendants from the original 12th century knights.

Slide 5 –The Illuminati

Created by Adam Weishaupt, a German law professor and philosophy in the late 1700's, the purpose of the group was to use anti-Catholic and anti-Masonic positions to evolve plans to overthrow governments, nations and churches; to influence economics and enable to become a political power in the form of a shadow rather than a public party.

There is no valid evidence the Illuminati exist today, however, what gives their reputation legs is that they indeed existed in Europe during the late 1700s, although only for eight years. The man credited with founding the Illuminati is Adam Weishaupt a German law professor and philosopher.

Weishaupt did model his group to some extent on Freemasonry's principle of secrecy. Illuminati members used code names to conceal their anti-Catholic and anti-Masonic positions and their evolving plans to overthrow governments, nations and churches. The Illuminati had branches in most countries of the European continent, with reportedly some 2,000 members. The organization attracted literary men and those who believed they were oppressed by royalty and the Church. Their agenda outlined the abolition of monarchies by means of subterfuge, secrecy and conspiracy, including the infiltration of other organizations. They certainly weren't enlightened as they often were credited with being and had little success before they were destroyed by their own writings.

Documents from the group were seized and then published by the government in 1787. Weishaupt's radical rationalism and vocabulary were interpreted as seditious by the government and people of Bavaria. He was discredited and lost his position at the University of Ingostadt and then fled Bavaria. He died in 1830. The Illuminati lasted for only eight years.

Similar groups, claiming to be Illuminati, persist in the realm of the Internet and the Order is often referred to in films and books, alleging their vast influence although unsupported by valid evidence of such.

Regardless, the phantom of the Illuminati survives in the public's memory and is often mistakenly linked to Freemasonry. Dan Brown's novel, *Angels and Demons*, enlarged the legend of the Illuminati blending their one-time existence in a portrayal of the Order as what has been called the archetypical all-purpose boogey man.

Slide 6 – The Morgan Affair

is a controversial back-story which is part of the mythology of anti-Freemasonry is what is commonly known as "The Morgan Affair."

"Captain" William Morgan was a disappointed Freemason in Batavia, New York. Rejected by the local lodge, he announced that he was going to publish a book exposing Masonic rituals and secrets. Shortly before publication in 1826 he disappeared, and three Masons were later convicted of kidnapping him. Claims were made that Morgan had been murdered or had been forced (or paid) to leave the United States. Either way, the book was still published.

The incident led to a widespread crusade against Freemasons in the U.S. and eventually led to the formation of an anti-Masonic Party.

Five years of investigation and legal prosecution on the matter of Morgan's disappearance left a trail of 20 grand juries and 15 trials. Of the 54 Freemason indicted, 39 were brought to trial; 10 were convicted, but none of the charge of murder. So, in the end, we are left with a smorgasbord of facts, speculation, confusions and false confessions, sworn testimony, contradictory views, assumptions and convictions, underscored by an era in history that was heavily influenced by political suspiciousness mixed with religious predispositions stirring concerns about groups that met in secret.

From one perspective, these circumstances may lead one to believe that the Masons had gotten away with murder, although there was no evidence of murder, just evidence of a disappearance orchestrated by Masons.

From another perspective, the same circumstances may lead one to believe that Morgan, a person of questionable character in the first place, got in over his head at a time when Masons in Batavia exercised over zealousness in defense of their lodge with unrighteous, un-Masonic behavior. That behavior triggered others to surge forward with a national movement that later tried to stamp out the Fraternity once and for all.

The effect of The Morgan Affair was strong. The number of Masons dropped from 100,000 to 40,000 in 10 years. New York alone went from 20,000 to just 3,000 and down from 480 lodges to just 82, Some Grand Lodges ceased to meet. The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania surrendered its charter in 1834, having conveyed its property to trustees. It was 1859 before it was reincorporated.

Masonic clergy were dismissed from their churches.

Lodges were burnt.

Public Masonic ceremonies ceased.

The Craft was publicly discredited as an intellectual society - no longer did someone try to join in order to be socially conscious. It was only after the Civil War that Freemasonry began to stage a significant comeback.

Slide 7 – Albert Pike

Albert Pike was born in Massachusetts, lived in Missouri, and then settled in Arkansas and later Washington, D.C.

Education was, for Pike, a lifelong process. He was an attorney, and studied history, philosophy and theology. A prolific author, he was also a school teacher, a state Supreme Court justice, philanthropist newspaper editor, poet, musician, and linguist. Pike was a general in the Confederacy and commanded volunteer cavalry regiments of the "civilized tribes" of the Indian Nations.

Pike was initiated into Masonry at the Western Star Lodge No. 2 in Little Rock, Arkansas. He was clearly devoted to the fraternity and went on to become a member of the York Rite and Scottish Rites. In 1855, he was assigned to a committee charged with preparing new versions of degree rituals and ultimately rewrote all of them. In 1859 he was installed as the Grand Commander of the Supreme Council for the Southern Jurisdiction, an office he held until he died in 1891.

Pike is best known for his major work *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, published in 1871. The book is not a public declaration of principles, policies, or intentions for Masonry or even for the Scottish Rite's Southern Jurisdiction. It is, rather, an attempt by Pike to provide a framework for understanding religions and philosophies of the past.

The 850-page book should not be confused with Pike's revision of the Scottish Rite ritual. They are two different works. However, the book is still often confused as a book of "teachings" for Freemasons and what they should believe. The title in and of itself is part of that confusion and many non-Masons assume the book establishes the dogma" for Freemasonry, which it clearly does not.

Morals and Dogma is a huge, rambling treasure-house of esoteric data, particularly on ancient religions. The book is Pike's philosophical view, written in 19th century style, which is easily misread and or misinterpreted since the meanings of many of the words of context have changed since that period. While Pike was an extraordinary man, his writings are consistently mischaracterized. The shadow he casts over Freemasonry today is, for all intents and purposes, inconsequential.

Slide 8 – The Taxil Hoax

Leo Taxil, writing in France in the 1890's, intended to mock not only Freemasonry, but also the Roman Catholic Church's opposition to it through a carefully crafted hoax - a hoax that today continues to be the foundation for many people's misinterpretation of Freemasonry.

The hoax involved a series of books authored and contrived by Taxil and aimed to ridicule what he believed was the naive way the Church viewed Freemasonry. The books involved an elaborate story in which Albert Pike and his writings, particularly *Morals and Dogma*, became the brunt of his fabrication.

Taxil, whose real name was Marie-Joseph Gabriel Antoine Jogand-Pagès, invented what he called the 'Palladium' alleging it to be the most secret Masonic order. It was an order that existed nowhere except in his mind. He claimed the order practiced murder, devil-worship and more. He later admitted he'd never read Pike's book, but found it easy to interpret the writing to mean anything he wished.

In 1897, Taxil used his celebrity status to attract a large audience to a meeting in Paris, at Geographical Hall. In front of a standing room only crowd that included journalists as well as members of the Catholic hierarchy, Taxil announced that every word he had written about Masonic devil-worship was the product of his own imagination.

The crowd, who in all likelihood had gathered to hear some new anti-Masonic revelations, was angered to a point Taxil was forced to escape the hall through a back exit.

When published, his confessional speech required over thirty pages in the Paris newspaper when it appeared the following week.

Taxil moved from Paris for his own safety and died in 1907.

Following Taxil's public confession, Abel Clarin de la Rive, one of the most well-known and respected journalists in France, expressed his disgust and recanted his reviews and writings about of Taxil's previous books in the April 1897 issue of *Freemasonry Revealed*, a magazine devoted to the destruction of the Craft. Although de la Rive was against Freemasonry, he had the integrity to admit and completely condemn Taxil's hoax.

Taxil's life story reads like a history of fraud and hoaxes. He was expelled from Switzerland, fled from France to Geneva, where he changed his name, and returned to France under amnesty in 1879. The Temple of Friends of French Honor initiated him into Masonry in 1881. Embarrassed by his reputation for plagiarism and lewd fiction, the Grand Orient expelled Taxil, an affront Taxil would later seek revenge for and reconcile with Masonry in his own way.

His self-confessed hoax on the Catholic Church, using Freemasonry as his vehicle, stands today as the primary source for conspiracy theorists, illustrating once again how little, if anything, conspiracy theorists assert about Freemasonry can be taken at face value. Those who use Taxil and his hoax as an authority to "prove" their claims are as uninformed and as fraudulent in their claims as he was.

Slide 9 – Riding the Goat

Among many of the absurd and false fables surrounding Freemasonry, this one is possibly the most humorous. Freemasons do not ride goats in their lodges. It's

a joke, perpetrated often by Masons themselves, on nervous candidates. In essence, the attempt to bring levity to nervous candidates backfired, proving sometimes people should steer clear from shots at comedic relief.

The joke became wider spread for many reasons. One primary reason was that fraternal supply merchants in the late 1800s spread the gag when they offered mechanical goats for use in other fraternal organizations for fun. Many cartoons and post card made for and used by Masons, used the image of the Goat as a "joke."

The connection between the goat and Masonry may have originated in early ritual books which referred to God as the "God of All Things." This reference was abbreviated, thus spelling the acronym, G.O.A.T. The reference was changed to "Great Architect of the Universe" which is abbreviated: G.A.O.T.U. That cleared up some of the nonsense surrounding the goat issue, but later anti-masons claimed it was the name of a substitute God, G.A.O.T.U, worshiped by Masons. That idea is as silly as the one about riding goats and has no foundation of accuracy.

Part 2

Slide 10 – Masonry on the Map

When it comes to Masons and Washington, D.C., one of the most enduring and wrongheaded myths is that Freemasons, more particularly Pierre L'Enfant, the city designer, embedded Masonic symbols into the street plan. There is no question that the intersection of Rhode Island Avenue, Connecticut Avenue, Vermont Avenue and K Street NW form a five-pointed star, that is if one uses their imagination and extends Rhode Island Avenue several blocks west to complete that star. Also, there is no question that Freemasons were influential during the time the city was planned. From these two points and an abundance of imaginative conjecture, comes the myth that the city was intentionally planned to promote some hidden agenda.

Actuality, a map of any relatively large city can produce symbols if one takes the time to look for them. Maps of city streets, thoroughfares, alleyways, boulevards and blocks offer an array of patterns and can appear to look like a Rorschach inkblot tests as well, making it easy for some to form powerful images out of random lines or to interpret engineering design created to encourage growth, pedestrian and traffic flow, to mean something different than what was intended.

[Click] For example, a map of Versailles, France clearly shows the ideals L'Enfant envisioned with sweeping boulevards and vistas. Some streets in that city converge in the shape of compasses and squares. [Click] The same applies to the Place Vauban in Paris, [Click] and the Piazza Del Popolo in Rome. [Click] In 1817, Sandusky, Ohio, designed a square and compasses in the layout of the city streets - on purpose.

Slide 11 – Masonry on the Map, continued

How easy is it to plan streets to form what looks like a square & compass? [Click] Lay out vertical streets. [Click] Then horizontal streets. Note the extra distance

required to go from one quadrant to another, so lay out diagonals. [Click] You have the makings for a S&C, [Click] just add the "G".

Slide 12 – Masonry and the One Dollar Bill

Frequently, the symbols on the one-dollar bill are attributed to Freemasonry regardless of the facts. Some conspiracy theorists suggest the imagery and symbolism on the bill points to a conspiracy and an undue influence by Freemasonry on American finances and American life. Serious scholars and historians do not support these views nor other evidence-troubled theories about the Craft.

Leading the conspiracy notions is the Eye of Providence on the one dollar bill. According to conspiracists, the Eye suggests that Freemasons had some extensive and perhaps subversive influence over the founding of the United States and / or American finances and that the dollar bill is linked in some way to the occult. In fact, Freemasons did not begin to use the Eye of Providence as a symbol until over a decade after the Great Seal of the United States was created.

Another popular notion is that the word "Mason" appears within the letters of the Latin phrases surrounding the pyramid. Yes, one can find letters that spell "Mason" along with more than 120 other anagrams such as *Micronesian* (of or pertaining to Micronesia, its inhabitants, or their languages) *accordionist*, *despots*, and most importantly the word: *misconceptions*.

The Facts

The First Continental Congress assigned a committee to design a Seal to represent the United States. It took four years to accomplish this task and another two years before it was approved.

A pyramid appears on the left of the bill. Notice the face is lighted, and the western side is dark the country was just beginning; we had not begun to explore the western portions of the nation. The Pyramid is uncapped, again signifying that we will continue to build the nation. Inside the capstone you have the all-seeing eye, an ancient symbol for divinity. It was the belief of the Founding Fathers that one man couldn't do it alone, but a group of men, with the help of Gad, could do anything, thus resulting in the phrase "IN GOD WE TRUST."

The Latin above the pyramid, ANNUIT COEPTIS, means, "God has favored our undertaking." The Latin below the pyramid, NOVUS ORDO SECLORUM, means, "A New Order Has Begun." At the base of the pyramid is the Roman Numeral for 1776: (MDCCLXXVI).

Slide 13 – The Statue of Liberty, a Masonic Idea

The idea for what would become the Statue of Liberty was first conceived in 1865 by a group of Frenchmen, including successful sculptor Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, who in 1875 would be initiated at the L'Alsace-Lorraine Lodge in Paris.

The group, many of whom were already Masons, discussed what a wonderful gesture it would be for the people of France to present a monument to the people

of America commemorating the centennial of our Declaration of Independence. This monument would celebrate the two countries commitment to independence and human liberty.

O'er the years, the statue has been subject of numerous baseless claims contending that it bears secret Masonic messages and represents something other than what it clearly stands for to millions of people around the world.

The plan lay dormant for several years, during which Bartholdi served in the Franco-Prussian War. After the war, the idea was resurrected and a plan was put into action. Bartholdi sailed to the United States to propose the plan to America and garner support. It is said that while sailing into New York Harbor, Bartholdi conceived and sketched the image that would become the Statue of Liberty. He also noted that Bedloe's Island, the gateway to America, was the ideal location for such a monument.

Construction and Masonic Cornerstone Ceremony

Bartholdi returned to France in 1874 and work began. To execute his design, Bartholdi chose a firm whose craftsmen were experts in Repousse, a technique of creating sculptural forms by hammering sheet metal inside molds. This is the only method of construction that would allow such an enormous structure to be shipped overseas. The size of the statue presented structural problems as well. To design the skeleton of the statue, Bartholdi collaborated with engineer and fellow Mason Alexandre-Gustave Eiffel, who was already well known for his iron railroad bridges and would later become famous for the Eiffel Tower, Grand Lodge of New York laid the pedestal's cornerstone in an impressive ceremony in August 1884. The speech of Grand Master William A. Brodie emphasized the Masonic commitment to freedom. *"Why call upon the Masonic fraternity to lay the cornerstone of stich a structure as is here to be erected?"* asked Brodie, *"No Institution has done more to promote liberty and to free men from the trammels and chains of ignorance and tyranny than has Freemasonry."*

Slide 14 – The Holocaust

On Hitler's rise to power, the ten Grand Lodges of Germany were dissolved. Many among the prominent dignitaries and members of the Order were sent to concentration camps. The Gestapo seized the membership lists of the Grand Lodges and looted their libraries and collections of Masonic objects. Much of this loot was then exhibited in an "Anti-Masonic Exposition" inaugurated in 1937 by Herr Dr. Joseph Goebbels in Munich. The Exposition included completely furnished Masonic temples.

The persecution was carried over into Austria when the country was captured by the Nazis. The Masters of the various Vienna lodges were immediately confined in the most notorious concentration camps, including Dachau in Bavaria. The same procedure was repeated when Hitler took over Czechoslovakia, then Poland. Immediately after conquering Holland and Belgium, the Nazis ordered the dissolution of the lodges in those nations. When France fell to the Nazis the

Vichy government caused the two Masonic bodies of France the Grand Orient and the Grand Lodge to be dissolved their property being seized and sold at auction. The Nazi Primer, *The Official Handbook for the Schooling of Hitler Youth*, attacked Freemasons Marxists and the Christian churches for their “*mistaken teaching of the equality of all men.*”

Masons who became prisoners in concentration camps were graded as political prisoners and required to wear an inverted red triangle with the "P" sewn on their clothing or worn as an arm band. Many of the Freemasons arrested were also Jews and or members of German resistance circles. While an accurate number is not known, it is estimated that between 80,000 and 200,000 Freemasons died in camps or murdered at the hands of the Nazis.

However, we do know that despots never allow Freemasonry or any organization to exist that teaches free thinking and the equality of man.

Freemasons began using the Forget-me-not flower in 1926 as a symbol well known in Germany as a message not to forget the poor and desperate. Many other German charities were also using it at this time. During World War II across Nazi occupied Europe, Freemasons began wearing the flower in place of the square and compasses to avoid the danger of being singled out and prosecuted.

Today, the flower is often seen in the form of a lapel pin worn as a lapel pin by Masons as an interchangeable symbol of Freemasonry to remember those Masons who were victimized by the Nazi regime.

Slide 15 –Hollywood and Books vs. Fact

In the 1990s, book publishers and Hollywood discovered that Freemasonry could be successfully marketed into a cottage industry. Films, books and documentaries promising “a probing look” along with “riveting investigation based on fact” are, in the end, woefully short on facts and full of excessive speculation, Unfortunately, even when a production or book clearly announces that it is a work of fiction, many choose to accept it as fact.

There is no shortage of books and publications available about Freemasonry. Amazon.com reflects or 8,000 titles on the topic. The problem for the serious student of Freemasonry, Masons and those who may simply have an interest in learning more about the Fraternity, is sorting through the sources to find accurate, historical-based and contextual information as opposed to those which only offer sensationalism and in many cases just plain nonsense.

Unlike the books and films like these, these books (click) are widely recognized for their factual accounts and information about Freemasonry.

Slide 16 – In Conclusion

This booklet is not intended to be an exhaustive defense of Freemasonry. None is needed.

Freemasonry does not consider itself above criticism. The fraternity is a human institution and, like all such institutions, imperfect and open to improvement. It is also a unique human institution, generating deep loyalty in its members and great

misunderstanding among its detractors. It is difficult for some to imagine that a group of men meeting behind closed doors could be doing anything good, much less encouraging each other to live lives of greater religious, family and civic services. Yet this is what Freemasons have done since at least 1717, when the first Grand Lodge was formed in London.

Most anti-Masons are simply ignorant of the vast, fact-based and full literature about Freemasonry. Few will ever do serious research as long as little effort provides them with ready arguments to support their evidence-troubled positions.

The Mason who encounters someone condemning the Fraternity out of ignorance, misinformation, myths or similarly based nonsense that surrounds the Craft, subscribing to the philosophy that; if we must disagree, let us at least base our disagreements upon truth, will always best serve Freemasonry.

Slide 17 – In Closing

“And now may the blessing of Heaven rest upon us and all regular Masons; may Brotherly Love prevail and every moral and social virtue cement us. Amen”