



Education Monthly

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The Season of Light

We are entering that time of the year when light is about to return to our lives; a time when many religions celebrate the coming of light and peace into our lives. The days will get longer, the lights will burn brightly and the hopes and dreams of mankind will be re-awakened.

"Lead, Kindly Light, amidst th'encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me."

Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-1890)

The understanding of the symbolism of light is vital to the Mason. Without such a basic understanding the newly initiated Mason will struggle to understand the more complex symbolism that follows. "Light" is central to any understanding of Masonry. Are there any Masons who fail to understand the profound lesson to be learned by being hoodwinked upon their first entry into Lodge? Are there those who only understand this as referring to a short inconvenience and fail to see its far greater relevance? In a later degree there is reference to "darkness visible" during a particularly memorable part of our journey into Masonry. Those words originate in Milton.

" A dungeon horrible on all sides round
As on great furnace flamed; yet from these flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all"

John Milton 1608-1674 "Paradise Lost"

Masonry provides a route to the overcoming of darkness and leads us to the light of understanding. At this season of the year, where many religions celebrate light, let us give thanks for all the blessings of this life. More particularly our membership in a great light giving fraternity.

A happy festive season to you all.

Committee on Masonic Education

Brock University Partnership Committee----- FAQs

(Contributed by R.W.Bro Gareth Taylor, Chairman of the Brock University Partnership Committee)

The public perception of Freemasonry is largely formed by fiction rather than fact. Rather than leave the definition of Freemasonry to the lunatic fringe and the conspiracy theorists, this partnership will encourage professional historians and sociologists to study the positive impact Freemasonry has made on the history of this country over the last three centuries.

WHY WAS BROCK UNIVERSITY CHOSEN FOR THIS PARTNERSHIP?

This area is the cradle of our history and where Freemasonry was established in Upper Canada. The extensive Masonic collection of R.W. Bro. Charles A. Sankey, R.W. Bro. Laurence Runnalls, and others in the James A. Gibson Library provides one of the richest resources for research in Canada. Scholars have used the material for their studies. Its location in St. Catharines in Southern Ontario is easily accessible from both sides of the border.

WHAT IS THE ANNUAL CHARLES A. SANKEY LECTURE SERIES?

The first phase of this project was initiated in 2010 with the assistance of the College of Freemasonry. A distinguished scholar is invited to present a public lecture. The inaugural lecture was given by Dr. Andreas Önnersfors, Director of the Centre for Research in Freemasonry and Fraternalism, Sheffield University. The second was given by Dr. Jessica Harland-Jacobs in the spring of 2011. Dr. Steven C. Bullock, author of the book, *Revolutionary Brotherhood: Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order 1730-1840* (1996) has accepted an invitation to present the third lecture on Sunday, 6 May 2012. Tickets are required, but they are free. For further information go to <http://www.sankeylectures.ca>

WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY?

First held in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 2007, the purpose of this biennial conference is to illustrate and exemplify the wide range of scholarly work being undertaken on the history of Freemasonry, thereby establishing the history of Freemasonry as a distinctive field of a historical research in its own right. Subsequent conferences have been held in Edinburgh (2009) and Alexandria, Virginia (2011). The 2015 Conference has been awarded to Brock University and the Grand Lodge of Canada as joint sponsors. The Grand Master's Project No. 2937 has provided the funds for this phase of the Partnership.

HOW WILL THIS PARTNERSHIP BENEFIT OUR FREEMASONRY IN GENERAL AND OUR GRAND LODGE IN PARTICULAR?

Gaining academic credibility would do much to enhance the image of Freemasonry in the public perception and restore it to the place of respect it once enjoyed in society. If we do not take affirmative action to set the record straight, no one else will. This partnership between two great educational institutions will provide for the inspiration for future generations to take Freemasonry seriously. The Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario has more members than all the other nine Grand Lodges in Canada put together. With those resources at our disposal, we have the responsibility to take a leadership role.

WHAT ARE THE LONG TERM GOALS OF THE PROJECT?

It is hoped that a major capital fund will be established to provide scholarships and research grants to students engaged in studies related to Freemasonry at the post-secondary and graduate level thereby increasing the awareness of our history and the role played by Freemasonry in shaping society. The ultimate goal is to establish a Chair in Masonic Studies at Brock University.

HOW CAN I ASSIST GRAND LODGE WITH THIS PROJECT?

Many Brethren have already supported this project by attending the Sankey Lectures, and by contributions to the Grand Master's Project 2937 to fund the ICHF in 2015. Donations to the capital fund may be made to the Masonic Foundation of Ontario, Project #2937, which are tax deductible.

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of your brethren as you can**

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