



Fellow Craft



Start your journey

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1. Introduction

At the start, as you were already a Freemason, you were entitled to be in the temple.

Before you progressed through the Ceremony you had to prove yourself by answering some questions about the First Degree.

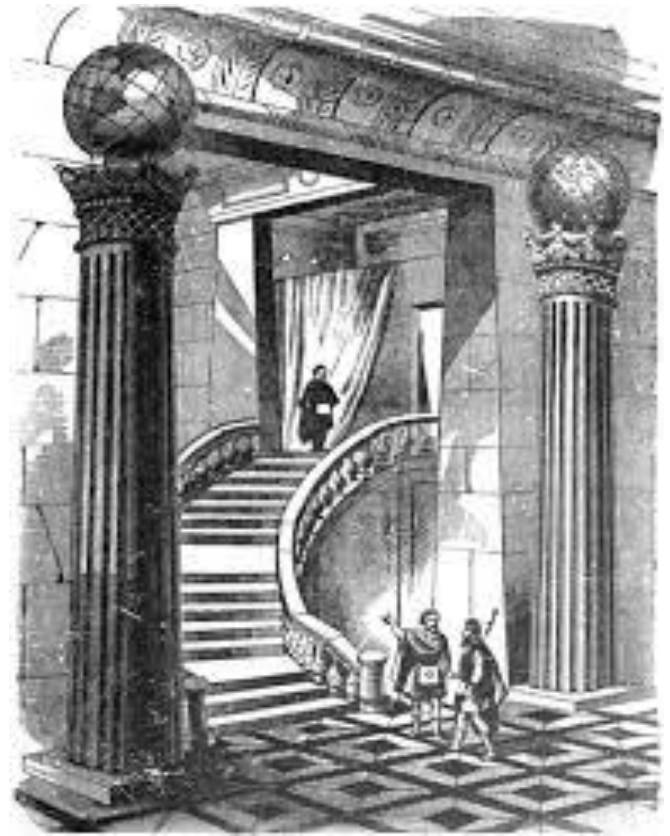
The First Degree symbolically dealt with birth of the man and of knowledge, including knowledge of the self. In the Second Degree, the focus is life after birth, the journey through life, and the development of the self with its new-found knowledge and increasing wisdom.

You were not blindfolded and the signs and steps demonstrated to you were different, indicating your progress in the Craft.

After you had taken your obligation you were given another apron, one still made of lambskin, but this time with two blue rosettes on it to indicate your progress.

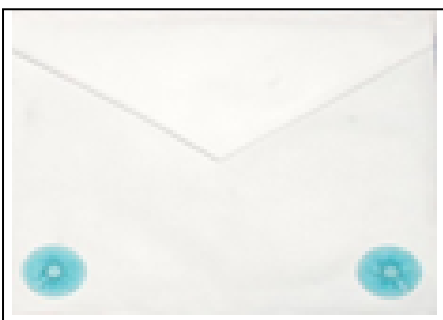
The explanation of the Second Degree Tracing Board is a long piece of ritual and demonstrates how Freemasonry uses various articles and drawings to present moral lessons to us all. The explanation begins at the completion of King Solomon's Temple and draws particular attention to the two great pillars placed at the porchway or entrance, which represent strength and stability.

The second part of the explanation was about the building of the Temple. At initiation, you were placed in the Northeast corner to represent the foundation stone. The allegorical meaning of this is that the temple is not a physical building, but rather something within you. Something which you have just begun on your journey to complete.



You symbolically climbed the winding staircase to the middle chamber. This denotes the need for courage and above all, faith. For the very fact that the staircase is winding, means that we do not know what lies before us.

2. Fellow Craft Apron



Probably introduced in about 1720 derived from the working apron of the Stonemason to protect the clothing of skilled craftsmen, a badge of their trade.

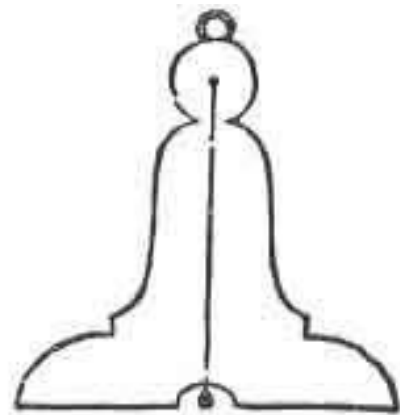
Historically made of a whole lambskin, with the skin remnants of the legs used to tie the apron in place, the apron of the Speculative Mason was halved in length by the end of the eighteenth century.

Your Fellow Craft apron is embellished with two pale blue rosettes. This was developed from the practice of turning up the left bottom corner of the apron to signify that a Mason was a Fellow-craft, and then both corners once he had progressed to 'Master Mason'. He then had a ready-made pocket for his essential tools, hence the two buttons.

Most aprons will have a blue border (a colour normally associated with the Craft) but some will have a red border; these are worn by Grand Stewards and Provincial Grand Stewards. Grand Stewards were first appointed in 1723 to arrange the Annual Festival of Grand Lodge.

3. The Working Tools

The Square, Level & Plumb Rule have been the basic tools of construction work through the ages. In our Lodge Temples they have been used symbolically to represent the Worshipful Master and The Senior and Junior Wardens. It is no coincidence that they are also the working tools of this degree making us reflect on morality, equality and uprightness of life and actions.



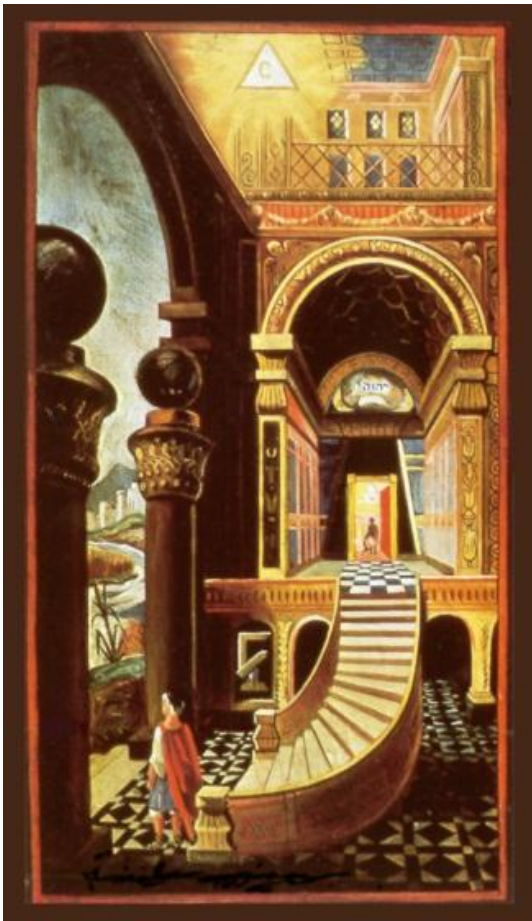
‘The Square teaches us to regulate our lives and actions according to the Masonic line and rule, and to harmonise our conduct in this life so as to render us acceptable to that Divine Being from whom all goodness springs, and to whom we must give an account of all our actions.’

‘The Level demonstrates that we are all sprung from the same stock, partakers of the same nature, and sharers in the same hope...yet ought no eminence of situation make us forget that we are Brothers...’

‘The infallible Plumb Rule which, like Jacob's ladder, connects heaven and earth, is the criterion of rectitude and truth. It teaches us to walk justly and uprightly before God and man, neither turning to the right nor left from the paths of virtue...’

Before the eighteenth century there were only two degrees in recognised Craft Freemasonry, those of the Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft or Fellow. In everyday life this derived from when operative masons acknowledged an apprentice who had served his time and was recognised as a craftsman entitled to practise his trade.

Hence these important working tools were used in what was then the principal degree of the Masonic craft of the time.



The Fellow Craft tracing board is very different from the Entered Apprentice Board. It is not a collection of symbols, but representative of a specific place. It is modelled on the Entrance to King Solomon's temple, otherwise known as the porch. This is the natural progression for the apprentice, he has already been given the name and explanation of the first column or pillar, through the Fellow Craft degree, he is given the second column's name.

4. Summary

During the First Degree you were reminded of the duties you owe to God and to your fellow creatures, the Deity being referred to as an Architect (TGAOTU).

In your second degree (Fellow Craft) you are led to consider man's relationship with the world in which we live, created by a Geometrician (TGGOTU).

Your progression is illustrated by the position of the square and Compasses on the Volume of the Sacred Law. One point of the compasses is disclosed, implying that you are now in the midway of Freemasonry, superior to an Entered Apprentice, but inferior to the degree of a Master Mason to which you will

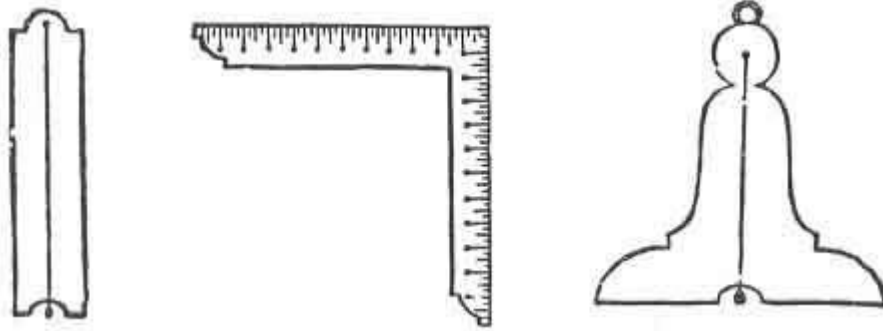
hopefully soon progress. This implies that there remains still to be discovered a further Degree beyond Fellow Craft.

The step you have taken is further signified by the different apron you are now wearing.

During the ceremony you were told that you are now in the midway of Freemasonry, however, it is generally thought that before 1725 there were only two degrees in Freemasonry, those of Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft (Fellow of the Craft).

It was from the Fellow Craft that the Master of the Lodge was elected each year, provided that he had served at least one year as a Warden. Modern Freemasonry comprises of three degrees, the third being that of Master Mason.

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