

The Lamplight

The Quarterly Newsletter
of the Chancellor Robert R Livingston
Masonic Library of the Grand Lodge of New York
nymasoniclibrary.org
(212) 337-6620

Fall 2021

The Chancellor Robert R Livingston Masonic Library serves as the central research library of the Grand Lodge of New York. The Mission of the Library is to collect, preserve, interpret, and support the research and education for a community of scholars, including Freemasons, academics, undergraduate and graduate students, and the general public. Our institution features the foremost collections of the history, philosophy, culture and organization of American and International Freemasonry, with an emphasis on Freemasonry in New York State.

From the Director

Due to the rise in cases of the Delta variant of COVID-19, the Library and Museum will remain open by appointment only, until further notice. These guidelines are found at: <https://nymasoniclibrary.org/re-opening/>. A few highlights of the aforementioned guidelines are: The Library is open to visitors by appointment only; patrons are required to provide proof of vaccination and must wear a mask to enter the Library; sign the visitor log; and no more than five patrons are allowed in the Library at any one time (including those who have appointments). Even though patrons will still have the option to send their books back to the Library in the mail, all in-person book returns/checkouts and research sessions require an appointment. To schedule an appointment, contact me at Avastola@nymasoniclibrary.org or Joseph Patzner at jpatzner@nyasoniclibrary.org.

In this issue of The Lamplight, there is information about an article about the Library's new book-drop. There is also an article about a Masonic apron and certificate from 1805 that was recently acquired by the Library & Museum. In addition, there is information about our upcoming virtual lectures and a book review on W. Kirk MacNulty's, *The Way of the Craftsman*. Stay tuned for the next issue of The Lamplight e-newsletter, which will be circulated in December.

Fraternally yours,
Bro. Alexander Vastola, Director

From the Library Trustees

Friends and Brothers,

When I first became active in Grand Lodge programs, the late Right Worshipful George Peter, Grand Historian, was one of my early mentors. In one of our many conversations, I asked him to describe in a few words the essential nature of Freemasonry. Without hesitation, he replied, “We’re an educational institution.” I understand there can be many reasons to attract a man to Freemasonry, but certainly, the educational aspect, the impetus to learn and to understand, must rank high on anyone’s list. George was right. Whether we talk about our leadership and educational initiatives, the many lessons that underlie our Standard Work, the Reading Course, or simply the more traditional resources of your Livingston Masonic Library, opportunities for enhanced learning and understanding are two great pillars of our Institution.

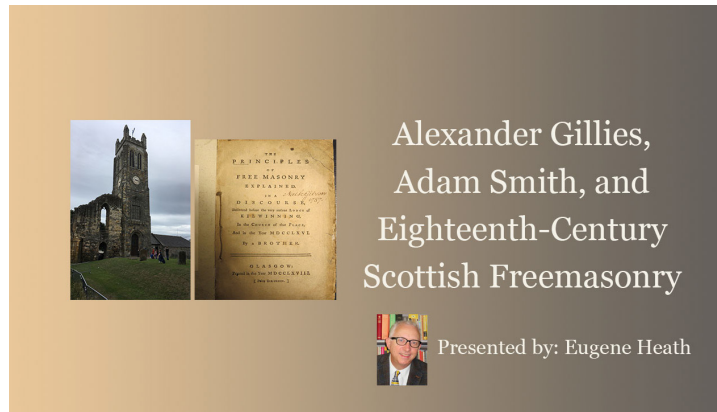
The Trustees of the Library have taken this need to heart. Our mission is to bring the intellectual and cultural treasures of the Library directly to those who, for one reason or another, are not able to visit our physical sites.

By now, many of you know of our online archive, a digital collection of images of many artifacts that are of importance and interest to anyone desiring “more light.” Our digital library of Masonic literature has also been successfully established. Now our members, no matter where they may be dispersed around the globe, have access on their PCs and mobile devices to many important volumes, including much of the Reading Course. There are also many audiobooks available. This collection is growing. To take advantage of this online library, all one needs to do is visit the Library website at www.nymasoniclibrary.org and follow the simple instructions for setting up a personal account.

I invite you to visit your one-stop portal to Masonic Education (www.nymasoniclibrary.org) and discover the many resources your Library has to offer. Please take advantage of this opportunity to learn at your own pace and pleasure. It’s a “one-stop” portal, but one to which I know you’ll return often.

Most fraternally,
Steve King, President
Livingston Library Board of Trustees

Virtual Lecture Announcement



The ruins of Kilwinning Church (left) and the title page of *The Principles of Free Masonry Explained* (right) (from the collection of The Museum of Freemasonry, Freemasons Hall, Grand Lodge of England, London) (Images by Eugene Heath).

“Alexander Gillies, Adam Smith, and Eighteenth-Century Scottish Freemasonry”

Thursday, September 23, 7:00 PM

Lecture Synopsis:

Professor Eugene Heath’s presentation returns us to the eighteenth century. Heath will focus on a student of Adam Smith’s at the University of Glasgow, Alexander Gillies, who became a freemason and a Presbyterian minister (at the Church of Kilmaurs). On December 20, 1766, Gillies delivered a talk on freemasonry and brotherly love at the Mother Lodge in Kilwinning. This discourse was then published (1768) as a small book and, much later, in two installments in *The Freemason’s Magazine* (1794). Prof. Heath’s lecture will inform us about Gillies as a student of Smith and he will show how Gillies’s discourse on freemasonry and brotherly love drew from Smith’s class on Moral Philosophy at the University. Prof. Heath will elaborate other interesting details about Gillies and offer some remarks on religion and freemasonry within the eighteenth century.

About the Speaker:

Eugene Heath is Professor of Philosophy at the State University of New York at New Paltz, where he teaches courses on ethics, political and social philosophy, and the history of modern philosophy. Along with editing or co-editing several collections of essays, he has published essays on important figures of eighteenth-century British moral thought. His current research focuses on the concept of self-love, particularly as employed by Adam Smith in his *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

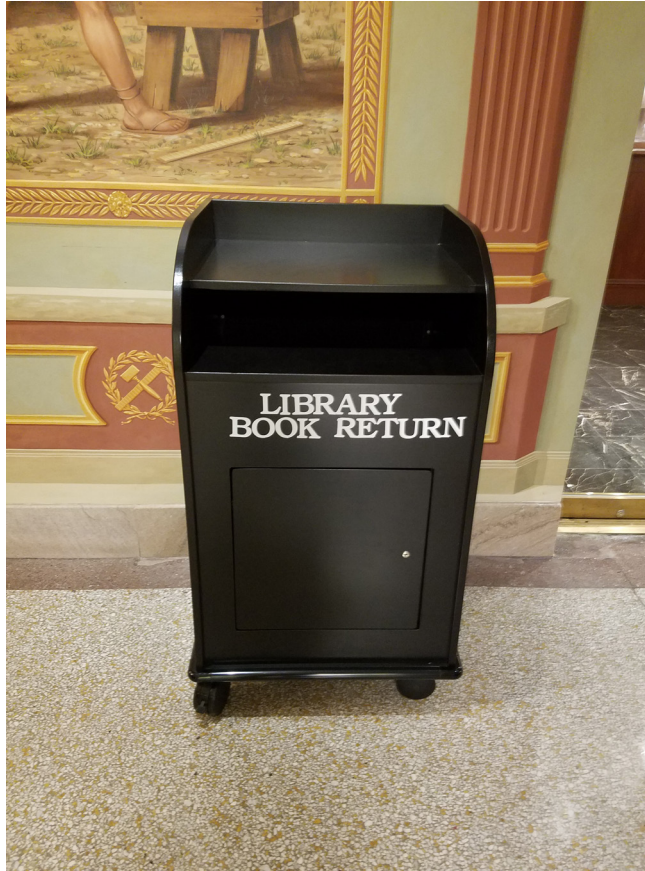
Watch Live on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/CAqNCQe-HTk>

Thank you to the 4th Manhattan District Square Club for their sponsorship of our lecture series!

Upcoming Virtual Library Lectures:

October 28, 2021: Rene Perez Liciaga: “The Secret Destiny and Prophecy of America”

New Book-Drop for the Library



In June 2021, the Library purchased a new Library book-drop, which was installed outside the Library's main entrance on the 14th Floor of the New York Grand Lodge Building. Patrons can now return their books in the secure book-drop when the Library is closed.

The Masonic Apron and Certificate of John L. Place

By Alexander Vastola
(Images by Alexander Vastola)



John L. Place's Master Mason apron.



John L. Place's Master Mason certificate

During the summer of 2021, I received an email from Ms. Jane M. Streett from South Carolina, asking if she could donate to the Library & Museum's collections an 1805 Masonic apron and certificate that belong to her grandfather (five times removed) Captain John L. Place. Over several weeks, I corresponded with Ms. Streett to make sure that the required paperwork was filled out so that the Museum could acquire these rare Masonic artifacts.

Ms. Street provided some interesting information about John Place that she sent with the Masonic artifacts. Captain John L. Place (1783-1839) was a captain of a merchant ship and a Master Mason. According to his Master Mason certificate, he was made a member of St. Andrew's Lodge No. 3 of New York City on August 5, 1805. He apparently traveled frequently as a Mason. An additional item that Ms. Street donated with the apron and certificate was a paper-bound copy of a book that Captain Place took with him to read on his travels (the book was very worn, especially on its outside cover).

I was not able to find a large amount of information on John Place's Masonic Lodge: St. Andrew's Lodge No. 3. What information I was able to find came from the New York Grand Historian's Lodges Master List and the New York Grand Lodge Proceedings. St. Andrew's Lodge No. 3 (later re-styled No. 7 on June 4, 1819) met in New York City. It was chartered on June 9, 1789 by the Grand Lodge of New York. It was first mentioned in the 1798 New York grand Lodge Proceedings, where Martin Hoffman was listed as its Master. In the 1799 Proceedings, it was listed as one of eight Lodges that met in New York City at the time. In the 1804 Proceedings, Martin Hoffman was listed as the R.'W.'. Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New York. Its charter was surrendered in 1827, but it was not listed in the New York Grand Lodge Proceedings until the 1832 issue of the Proceedings, where it was listed as St. Andrew's No. 7. Originally, this lodge was warranted as No. 169 under the Grand Lodge of England (this warrant was surrendered in December of 1835).

The Masonic apron that belonged to John Place probably dates to around 1805 (as this was the year he was raised, as indicated on his Master Mason certificate). The apron is very delicate and has many Masonic symbols that were sketched on the apron and then painted with colored watercolors by hand. This Masonic apron is an interesting example of a Masonic apron created before the Golden Age of Fraternalism (1870-1920), when many of the Masonic supply companies that today provide mass-produced Masonic aprons did not exist.

The Master Mason certificate of John Place is an interesting piece of Masonic history. It was issued by the “Antient York Masons” of New York City in 1805, the year John place was raised. This was prior to the reunification of the Antient and Modern Grand Lodges in England that formed the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) in 1813. The certificate has elaborate printed script, and still has the original red wax seal on it.

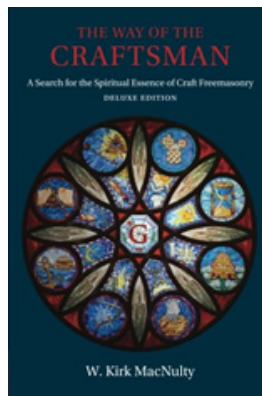
Book Review

By Alexander Vastola

*The Way of the Craftsman: A Search for the Spiritual Essence of Craft Freemasonry**

By W. Kirk MacNulty; Washington, D.C.: Plumbstone, 2017; 223 pages

*From Masonic Reading Course No. 1: “Who Comes Here?”



How can the three degrees of Masonry be interpreted? Can the degrees be interpreted in a more straightforward way, as in Allen E. Robert’s book *The Craft and Its Symbols*, which outlines the basic definitions of the symbols of the three degrees, or are there other ways to interpret and analyze the Masonic degrees? W. Kirk MacNulty’s book, *The Way of the Craftsman*, helps to answer this question by choosing to interpret the three degrees of Masonry through the lens of psychological thought.

In all, this book’s primary strength is its unique perspective in the way it interprets the three degrees of Masonry. For example, Bro. MacNulty explains that the Two Pillars of the Fellow Craft degree represent where the archives of Solomon’s Temple were stored (page 153). When the candidate passes through them from the Ground Floor to the Middle Chamber, he gets access to the archives of the Lodge, “the contents of his personal unconscious” (page 156). Rather than simply look into the history of the degrees or describe what the symbols of the degrees mean, it instead tries to analyze the symbols, working tools, and other aspects of the three degrees using a psychological lens.

The main drawback of the MacNulty’s work, at least from an American Freemasonry, is that it is written from a British perspective. For instance, Bro. MacNulty refers to certain terms that are not used in American Masonic lodges. For example, he describes the psychological symbolism of the “Inner Guard,” a Masonic officer that is present in English, but not American, Masonic lodges.

Despite this, I still recommend this book for Masons who are interested in understanding the three degrees of Masonry, through a more philosophical/psychological perspective.

Staff Directory

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Additional Library Resources

Odilo E-Resources Platform

The Livingston Masonic Library offers several Masonic books through Odilo, our new e-resources platform: <http://nymasoniclibrary.odilo.us/>. Email Joseph Patzner, Jpatzner@nymasoniclibrary.org to set up an Odilo account.

Masonic Reading Course

The Library offers 17 reading courses. Go to <https://nymasoniclibrary.org/reading-course/> or email Joseph Patzner (Jpatzner@nymasoniclibrary.org) for more information.

Genealogy Research

The Library provides Masonic information on Master Masons who were raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason within the New York Grand Jurisdiction. Go to <https://nymasoniclibrary.org/research/> or email Joseph Patzner, Jpatzner@nymasoniclibrary.org for more information.

Research Requests

For non-genealogy Masonic research requests, email, Joseph Patzner at: Jpatzner@nymasoniclibrary.org

Library Hours (Open by appointment only)

Monday: 9:00 AM-5:00 pm
Tuesday: 12:00 PM-8:00 pm
Wednesday: 9:00 AM-5:00 pm
Thursday: 12:00 PM-8:00 pm
Friday: 9:00 AM-5:00 pm

To Our Loyal Patrons

We hope you continue to support our mission to advance the understanding of, and appreciation for, Masonic history and culture in New York State. There are two ways that donations can be made. First, checks can be made out to “Livingston Masonic Library” and sent to our mailing address below. Second is through the Brotherhood Fund Campaign portal on the Grand Lodge webpage, <https://nymasons.org/>.

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