

**Wilkerson College Lodge No. 760  
meeting at  
Mount Hebron Lodge No. 42 P.H.A., Wilson, NC  
February 21, 2009**

## **Masonic Landmarks**

### **Proverbs 22:28 (King James Version)**

28 Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.

### **Job 24:2 (King James Version)**

2 Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof.

### **Deuteronomy 27:17 (King James Version)**

17 Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.

**Merriam-Webster** 1: an object (as a stone or tree) that marks the boundary of land 2 a: a conspicuous object on land that marks a locality b: an anatomical structure used as a point of orientation in locating other structures **3: an event or development that marks a turning point or a stage** 4: a structure (as a building) of unusual historical and usually aesthetic interest; *especially*: one that is officially designated and set aside for preservation.

**The Grand Lodge of North Carolina has no established landmarks, although there are several references:**

### **CONSTITUTION of THE GRAND LODGE of North Carolina: Preamble**

WHEREAS, The Grand Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina is an absolute sovereign Masonic body with inherent power to form a Constitution as its fundamental law and to enact laws for its own government and that of its subordinate lodges, subject to the Ancient **Landmarks** of Freemasonry, THEREFORE, the Grand Lodge does hereby ordain, establish, and promulgate this CONSTITUTION, and every Mason within this Grand Jurisdiction is obligated to obey and to conform to the provisions thereof and the laws enacted pursuant thereto.

### **I. DECLARATION CONCERNING GOD AND RELIGION:**

The Grand Lodge acknowledges belief in God to be the great fundamental principle and **landmark** of Freemasonry upon which our Fraternity is erected.



'It's unanimous then ... we'll return to the basics. Anyone remember what they are?'

## **Charge at Raising to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason:**

“The **ancient landmarks** of the Order, intrusted to your care, you are carefully to preserve, and never suffer them to be infringed, or countenance a deviation from the established usages and customs of the fraternity.”

North Carolina Lodge Manual by Charles F. Bahnson, P.M. Raleigh, NC 1995, p. 68

## **Ceremony of Instituting a Lodge Under Dispensation**

Last sentence in the Charge to the Master:

“In short by a diligent observance of the laws of our Grand Lodge, the **Ancient Landmarks**, the regulations of Masonry, and above all, the Holy Scriptures, which are given as a rule and guide to our faith, you will be enabled to merit the confidence reposed in you.”

North Carolina Masonic Ceremonies, 1991, p. 12

## **Ceremony of Installation (Officers of a Subordinate Lodge)**

“I promise on the honor of a Master Mason that I will, to the best of my ability, conform to and abide by the **Ancient Landmarks**, regulations and usages of Masonry, the Constitution and laws of The Grand Lodge of North Carolina and the laws of this lodge, and that I will faithfully perform the duties of the office to which I have been selected.”

North Carolina Masonic Ceremonies, 1991, p. 32

According to the [General Regulations](#) published by the [Premier Grand Lodge of England](#) on January 17, [1723](#) "Every Annual Grand Lodge has an inherent power and Authority to make new Regulations or to alter these, for the real benefits of this Ancient Fraternity; provided always that the old Land-Marks be carefully preserved."

1. Belief in the existence of God
2. Secrecy
3. The modes of recognition – signs, grips and words
4. Must congregate in regular lodges
5. Lodges must be tiled
6. Lodges must have a Book of the Law
7. Qualifications of Candidates: must be Sound, mentally and physically;  
Freeborn, of Lawful Age and well recommended
8. Secret Ballot
9. Division into three degrees: E.A., F.C., and M.M.
- 10 Legend of the Third Degree
11. General government by a Grand Master
12. Government of Lodges by a Master and two Wardens
13. Right of appeal
14. Right of representatives in Grand Lodge
15. Visitors must be vouched for, or examined.
16. Prerogatives of Grand Master to preside over any Assembly of the craft,  
and to grant dispensations.
17. That Masonic instruction is a right and a duty of a Mason

Dr. Albert Mackey's 25 Landmarks are used by many Grand Lodges in North America. However, these landmarks were not defined in any manner. The first attempt at this was in *Jurisprudence of Freemasonry* [1856](#) by Dr. [Albert Mackey](#). He laid down three requisite characteristics:

1. notional immemorial antiquity
2. universality
3. absolute "irrevocability"

He claimed there were 25 in all, and they could not be changed.

1. The modes of recognition are, of all the Landmarks, the most legitimate and unquestioned
2. The division of Symbolic Freemasonry into Three Degrees is a Landmark that has been better preserved than almost any other . . .
3. The Legend of the Third Degree is an important Landmark, the integrity of which has been well preserved.
4. The government of the Fraternity by a presiding officer called a Grand Master, who is elected from the body of the craft, is a fourth Landmark of the order.
5. The prerogative of the Grand Master to preside over every assembly of the craft, wheresoever and whensoever held, is a fifth Landmark.
6. The prerogative of the Grand Master to grant Dispensations for conferring Degrees at irregular times is another and a very important Landmark.
7. The prerogative of the Grand Master to give Dispensations for opening and holding Lodges is another Landmark.
8. The prerogative of the Grand Master to make Freemasons at sight is a Landmark which is closely connected with the proceeding one.
9. The necessity for Masons to congregate in Lodges is another Landmark.
10. The government of the Craft, when so congregated in a Lodge, by a Master and two Wardens, is also a Landmark.
11. The necessity that every Lodge, when congregated, should be duly tiled is an important Landmark of the Institution which is never neglected.
12. The right of every Freemason to be represented in all general meetings of the Craft, and to instruct his representatives, is a twelfth Landmark.
13. The right of every Freemason to appeal from the decision of his Brethren, in lodge convened, to the Grand Lodge or General Assembly of Freemasons, is a Landmark essential to the preservation of justice.
14. The right of every Freemason to visit and sit in every Regular lodge is an unquestionable Landmark of the Order.
15. It is a Landmark of the Order, that no visitor, unknown to the Brethren present, or to some one of them, as a Freemason, can enter a Lodge without first passing an examination according to ancient usage.
16. No Lodge can interfere in the business of another Lodge, nor give Degrees to Brethren who are members of other Lodges.
17. It is a Landmark that every Freemason is amenable to the laws and regulations of the Masonic jurisdiction in which he resides, and this although he may not be a member of any Lodge.
18. Certain qualifications of candidates for initiation are derived from a Landmark of the Order. These qualifications are that he be a man – unmotivated, free born, and of mature age.
19. A belief in the existence of God as the Supreme Architect of the Universe is one of the most important Landmarks of the Order.
20. Subsidiary to this belief in God, as a Landmark, is the belief in a resurrection to a future life.
21. It is a Landmark that a Book of the Law shall constitute an indispensable part of the furniture of every Lodge.
22. The equality of all Freemason is another Landmark of the Order.
23. The secrecy of the institution is another and most important Landmark
24. The foundation of a Speculative Science upon an Operative Art, and the symbolic use and explanation of the terms of that art, for the purposes of religious or moral teaching, constitute another Landmark of the Order.
25. The last and crowning Landmark of all is that these Landmarks can never be changed.

However subsequent writers have differed greatly as regards what they consider the Landmarks to be. In 1863, [George Oliver](#) published the *Freemason's Treasury* in which he listed 40 Landmarks. In the last century, several American Grand Lodges attempted to enumerate the Landmarks, ranging from West Virginia (7) and New Jersey (10) to Nevada (39) and Kentucky (54).<sup>[2]</sup>

Joseph Fort Newton, in *The Builders*, offers a simple definition of the Landmarks as: "The fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the moral law, the Golden Rule, and the hope of life everlasting."

[Roscoe Pound](#) subscribed to six landmarks:

1. Belief in a Supreme Being
2. Belief in a persistence of personality
3. A "book of law" as an indispensable part of the "furniture" (or furnishings) of the Lodge
4. The Hiram legend of the Third Degree
5. The symbolism of the operative art
6. That a Mason be a man, freeborn, and of age.

In the 1950s the Commission on Information for Recognition of the Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America upheld three "ancient Landmarks"<sup>[3]</sup>:

1. Monotheism — An unalterable and continuing belief in God.
2. The Volume of The Sacred Law — an essential part of the furniture of the Lodge.
3. Prohibition of the discussion of Religion and Politics.

## **References**

1. Mark A. Tabbert, *American Freemasons: Three Centuries of Building Communities*. National Heritage Museum, Lexington, MA: 2005, [ISBN 0-8147-8292-2](#), p.109.
2. [Masonic Landmarks](#), by Bro. Michael A. Botelho. Accessed [7 February 2006](#).
3. [Standards adopted for use by The Commission for Information for Recognition of the Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America in the 1950's](#) accessed 30th July 2006.

William Henry Simpson, Stokesdale 428, Grand Master of Masons in North Carolina in 1996, has suggested that the Grand Lodge of North Carolina formally adopt the following landmarks:

1. A belief in the Supreme Being
2. Brotherhood of Man
3. Future Life
4. Volume of Sacred Law
5. Must be a freeman of adult age according to the law at the time, amenable to the moral law
6. Secrecy of Ritual Signs and Passes
7. Legend of the Third Degree
8. Symbolism of Operative Masonry
9. Lodge must be tiled

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