

Laurens Lodge No. 75



There is no definitive answer as to when Freemasonry “began” although most seem to point to the stonemason’s guilds of the Middle Ages. While it has been linked to any number of conspiracy theories due to its use of symbolism and secret rituals, it professes to emphasize personal study, self-improvement, and social betterment via individual involvement and philanthropy.

The Lodge is the basic organizational structure of the Masons. The first lodges that operated in America were based in Pennsylvania as early as 1715. The 75th lodge to be established in the US was the Laurens Lodge of Dublin, Georgia in 1848. It’s earliest members were considered to be the elite in Dublin’s business and government communities. Included among them was John M. Dasher, the first cousin (three times removed) of my grand-uncle.

John was appointed the masonic position of “Tyler.” As I understand it, the post is often held by an officer or sometimes a Past Master. Armed with a sword (kept drawn), he would be tasked with guarding the outer door of the lodge against ineligible masons or malicious people. He would be required to examine the Masonic credentials of anyone wishing to enter the Lodge, admitting only those qualified to attend the current business.

Some lodges permit the Tyler to “tyle from within” which would allow him to participate in the business portions of the meeting while still manning his post.

Freemasonry grew dramatically during the 1800s and many communities came to depend upon them. As our federal government was still in its infancy, there were few social programs to be had. The Masonic tradition of building orphanages, homes for widows, and homes for the aged provided the only kind of security that many people knew.

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