

## **Masonic Apron Presentation** **by Bro. Samuel S. Watson**

My Brother, having signed our by-laws, you now become a member of                   Lodge No.       Free and Accepted Masons, and it is my pleasure to properly clothe you as one of the Craft; to present you with a lambskin or white leathern apron. It is an emblem of morality and the badge of a Mason, more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter when worthily worn.

Down thru the ages, men have been known and distinguished by the wearing of some symbol or emblem, and this white apron has ever been the most sought, the most respected, and the most treasured. We are told that the men who built King Solomon's temple were clothed with such white aprons, and the manner in which they wore them testified to the character of their labors.

King Solomon, himself arrayed in all his glory, prized this emblem, plain and unadorned, among his valuable possessions. In foreign countries, across the seas, kings and princes have worn the emblem of our great Fraternity; kings and princes wear it today, and their humblest subjects, when similarly clothed, can clasp the hand of their monarch and call him brother.

Here, in our own land, Masonry has also played its splendid part. The father of our country, George

Washington, was a Mason. Those gallant men who gathered around him to risk their lives for an ideal, to build a nation on the principal that all men are created equal: Alexander Hamilton, Paul Revere, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, Baron Von Steuben who came from Germany and Lafayette who came from France, and many others; all have knelt at our sacred Altar as you have done tonight, have taken the same vows, and in the sanctity of the Lodge room had learned the lessons in friendship, morality and brotherly love. Yes, my brother it is a glorious company you join tonight and the wearing of this apron will ever distinguish you as a member of it.  
*(clothe the Brother with the apron.)*

It is a beautiful thing, white, pure and spotless. There lies the responsibility that goes with the wearing of it; the responsibility to keep it ever clean and unsullied. Occasionally, some unhappy man has forgotten the many great things taught in our great Fraternity, and has dragged his apron in the dust, and Freemasonry still survives. Day after day, attentive ears learn the lessons taught by instructive tongues, and the splendid records of the many stand forth all the brighter by comparison with the faults of the few.

This apron is now yours; yours to wear throughout a useful and honorable life; to wear until you come to the end of the trail, where the old worn road dips down into the valley, of the shadow, and your spirit shall return to the all loving father who gave it. Then, and only then, will you relinquish it, and it shall be laid upon the casket,

containing your mortal body, to be buried with the evergreen, the emblem of our faith in the immortality of the soul. Until that day, and may it be many years ahead, my Brother, wear that Masonic apron with equal pleasure to yourself and honor to the fraternity.

## Apron Address by Chester Van Vleet

My Brother:

The ritualistic portion of the Master Mason Degree is now about over, there but remains the formality of closing the Lodge, and I have been granted a few moments to speak to you as one Master Mason to another in the life of every man occasionally comes a moment which in the years that lie ahead remains bright and clear in retrospect. This is such a moment in your life for its records your elevation to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, and I, as a representative of these Brethren and of the Craft throughout the World, now have the pleasure of presenting you with your lambskin, or white leathern apron.

It carries with it a silent but eloquent message understood only by Masons, for it symbolizes all the lessons in Masonry, its aims, its objectives, its recognitions and the acceptance of those higher moral values which make life worth living. Rightfully, therefore, it is a **BADGE OF A MASON**, honored and respected throughout the ages by the powerful and influential as well as by the humble and meek. Intrinsicly its value is only nominal, but to him who regards his Masonry seriously it is a treasure beyond price. For in this materialistic world of ours, it is one of the few things, which cannot be purchased with money, cannot be obtained through stealth, strategy or cunning -

it must be earned. And we believe you have earned it by coming to this Lodge possessed of good moral character and by willingly subscribing to the principles and philosophy of our ancient Fraternity - the oldest, numerically the largest, and universally the most respected Order of Men dedicated to the service and betterment of mankind.

Like so many of us before you, you will probably place it for safekeeping in your bureau drawer or on your closet shelf, there to remain for years undisturbed and untouched, yet in your subconscious mind it will always be symbolically a shining beacon lighting your pathway ahead and enabling you to avoid the pitfalls and snares to which the flesh is err.

I now place it in your care, fully confident that no act of yours will cast a shadow upon its beauty or purity of purpose, and I also trust it will serve as a gentle reminder for you to come back to your Lodge as often as you can upon its meeting night, for then only will you receive the rich dividends that Masonry offers. Dividends not measured in materialistic values, but rather in the spiritual lift of its philosophy and in the warmth of friendship you will establish by mingling with your Brethren.

If you choose to follow this suggestion, I am certain that at the close of the evening on your way home, you will find that your cares will have faded away, your mind will

be a little clearer and your tread a little lighter for you will be at peace with yourself and with your fellowman.

Congratulations to you, my Brother Master Mason, and may I also express the sincere wish of the officers and members of the Lodge for a long life of useful accomplishments in good health and in contentment.

I will return your apron when you come back to the sidelines. You will face the East and await the pleasure of the Worshipful Master. Thank you for your kind attention.

## APRON ADDRESS AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Presented By Bro. Carl Payne

My Brother, look about you here this evening, and you will see that each one of us is wearing an apron, the likes of which I am about to present to you. This apron has been worn by Masons since time immemorial, and wherever they are seen, they are readily identified with the craft. There is no rank of higher prestige than of a Master Mason, and there is no badge of Masonic distinction, more noble than this Master Mason apron.

In Masons lodge, with darkened eyes,  
And cable tow about you,  
You swore to hail all mysteries,  
That Masons keep and Mason's prize;  
All brother's secrets whispered low,  
All words they speak and things they do,  
In mystic manner taught you.

*On yonder book that oath you took and may you break it never. Just stand by this (\*) and this (\*) and this (\*\*\*) forever and forever.*

You swore to answer and obey,  
All summons made you duly,  
By brother's hands or lodge array;  
You swore that you would never stray  
From the ancient laws and rules that bound  
Freemasons, in the days renowned,

But would observe them truly.

*On yonder book ...*

You swore in charity to care,  
    For all in sorrow hidden;  
Your brother on the darkened square,  
    His widow with disheveled hair,  
His sorrowing orphan doomed to stray  
    Upon that long and desolate way  
While tears gush forth unbidden.

*On yonder book ...*

You swore to deal in honesty,  
    With each true heart around you;  
That honor, bright, should always be  
    Unbroken bond 'twixt him and thee;  
Nor guile, nor wrong, nor cruel fraud,  
    Should break, or loose that holy cord  
With which thy vows have bound thee.

*On yonder book ...*

You swore in chastity to shield  
    Of woman true and tender;  
Of Mason's widow, wife, and child,  
    His mother, sister undefiled;  
Those pure and innocent, whose love  
    Makes Masons' homes like heaven above,

You are the sworn defender.

*On yonder book...*

You swore to guard the portals close  
    To the Masonic Temple;  
To purge the quarries of their dross,  
    To build the mystic walls of those  
In body perfect, honest heart,  
    And mind mature in mortal art,  
By precept and example.

*On yonder book...*

These were our vows; be these our care,  
    And may such light be given,  
In answer to our earnest prayer,  
    That we may always do and dare  
All that God's gracious laws enjoin;  
    And so, as life's last shades decline  
We may be found in Heaven.

*On yonder book those vows we took, and let us break  
them never. Let's stand by this (\*) and this (\*) and this  
(\*\*\*) forever and forever.*

"Once again we present you with this lambskin or white leathern apron. This time it has your name on it, and it is yours to keep. In future lodge meetings, you will perhaps wear many different aprons, most of them provided by

the lodge, except when you visit some foreign jurisdictions that expect visitors to provide their own aprons. This apron, however, is special. You will wear it on two auspicious occasions, once this evening to celebrate your being raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, the other in the casket that shall contain your lifeless remains.

Remember, this lambskin or white leathern apron is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason, more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter, or any other order that can be conferred upon you, by Prince, King, Potentate, or any other person, except he be a Mason. Remember, also, to wear it with equal pleasure to yourself and honor to the fraternity. Such being your intention, let us carry it to the Senior Warden in the West, with the order of the Worshipful Master that he teach you to wear it as a Master Mason."

*Historical Note: This Apron Address was originally given in Doric Lodge #356, Madison, Wisconsin, by Worshipful Brother Carl L. Payne, the first Worshipful Master of Doric Lodge. Brother Carl was also a Past Grand Treasurer and Past Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge F & A. M. of Wisconsin.*

NOTE:

- \* *due-guard and sign of an Entered Apprentice*
- \*\* *due-guard and sign of a Fellowcraft*
- \*\*\* *due-guard and sign of a Master Mason*

*When reciting the line, "On yonder Book ..." the presenter gestures toward the altar.*