

**WHITE RIVER LODGE
No. 153**



Brotherhood & Friendship

Explanation of the Second Degree Tracing Board

When the Temple at Jerusalem was completed by King Solomon, its costliness and splendour became objects of admiration to the surrounding nations, and its fame spread to the remotest parts of the then known world. There was nothing, however, in connection with this magnificent structure more remarkable, or that more particularly struck the attention, than the two great Pillars which were placed at the porchway or entrance. That on the left was called Boaz, which denotes in strength; that one the right Jachin, which denotes to establish; and when conjoined stability; for God said 'In strength I will establish this Mine house to stand firm for ever'.

The height of those Pillars was seventeen cubits and a half each, their circumference twelve, their diameter four. They were formed hollow, the better to serve as archives to Masonry, for therein were deposited the constitutional rolls. Being formed hollow, the outer rim or shell was four inches, or a hand's-breadth, in thickness. They were made of molten brass, and were cast in the plain of Jordan in the clay ground between Succoth and Zeradathah, where King Solomon ordered those and all his holy vessels to be cast. The superintendent of the casting was Hiram Abiff.

Those Pillars were adorned with two chapters, each five cubits high; the chapters were enriched with network, Lily-work and pomegranates. Network, from the connection of its meshes, denotes unity, Lilly-work, from its whiteness, peace; and pomegranates, from the exuberance of their seed, denote plenty. There were two rows of pomegranates on each chapter, one hundred in a row. Those Pillars were further adorned with two spherical balls on which were delineated maps of the celestial and terrestrial globes, pointing out Masonry Universal. They were considered finished when the network or Canopy was thrown over them.

They were set up as a memorial to the children of Israel of that miraculous pillar of fire and cloud which had two wonderful effects. The fire gave light to the Israelites during their escape from their Egyptian bondage, and the cloud proved darkness to Pharaoh and his followers when they attempted to overtake them. King Solomon ordered them to be placed at the entrance of the Temple, as the most proper and conspicuous situation for the children of Israel to have the happy deliverance of their forefathers continually before their eyes in going to and returning from Divine worship.

At the building of King Solomon's Temple an immense number of Masons were employed. They consisted of Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts. The Entered Apprentices received a weekly allowance of corn, wine and oil; the Fellow Crafts were paid their wages in specie, which they went to receive in the middle chamber of the Temple. They got there by the porchway or entrance on the south side. After our ancient Brethren had entered the porch, they arrived at the foot of the winding staircase which led to the middle chamber. Their ascent was opposed by the Junior Warden, who demanded of them the pass grip and pass word leading from the First to the Second Degree. The pass grip you are all in possession of, and the pass word, I dare say you recollect is Shibboleth; Shibboleth denotes plenty and is here depicted by an ear of corn near to a fall of water.

The word Shibboleth dates its origin from the time that an army of Ephraimites crossed the River Jordan in a hostile manner against Jephtha, the renowned Gileaditish general. The reason they assigned for this unfriendly visit was that they had not been called out to partake of the honours of the Ammonitish war, but their true aim was to partake of the rich spoils with which, in consequence of

that war, Jephtha and his army were then laden. The Ephraimites had always been considered a clamorous and turbulent people, but then broke out into open violence, and after many severe taunts to the Gileadites in general, threatened to destroy their victorious commander and his house with fire. Jephtha, on his part, tried all lenient means to appease them, but finding these ineffectual had recourse to rigorous ones. He therefore drew out his army, gave the Ephraimites battle, defeated, and put them to flight; and to render his victory decisive, and to secure himself from like molestation in future, he sent detachments of his army to secure the passages of the River Jordan, over which he knew the insurgents must of necessity attempt to go in order to regain their own country, giving strict orders to his guards that if a fugitive came that way, owning himself an Ephraimite, he should immediately be slain; but if he prevaricated, or said 'nay', a test word was to be put to him to pronounce; the word Shibboleth. They, from a defect in aspiration peculiar to their dialect, could not pronounce it properly but with a small variation which discovered their country and cost them their lives. And Scripture informs us that there fell on that day, on the field of battle and on the banks of the Jordan, forty and two thousand Ephraimites; and as was then a test word to distinguish friend from foe, King Solomon afterwards caused it to be adopted as a pass word in a Fellow Craft's Lodge to prevent any unqualified person ascending the winding staircase which led to the middle chamber of the Temple.

After our ancient Brethren had given those convincing proofs to the Junior Warden, he said 'Pass Shibboleth'. They then passed up the winding staircase, consisting of three, five, seven, or more steps. Three rule a Lodge, five hold a Lodge, seven or more make it perfect. The three who rule a Lodge are the Master and his two Wardens; the five who hold a Lodge are the Master, two Wardens and two Fellow Crafts; the seven who make it perfect are two Entered Apprentices added to the former five. Three rule a Lodge because there were but three Grand Master's who bore sway at the building of the first Temple at Jerusalem, namely Solomon King of Israel, Hiram King of Tyre, and Hiram Abiff. Five hold a Lodge in allusion to the five noble orders of architecture, namely the Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite. Seven or more make a perfect Lodge, because King Solomon was seven years and upwards in building, completing, and dedicating the Temple at

Jerusalem to God's service. They have likewise a further allusion to the seven liberal Arts and Sciences, namely Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy.

After our ancient Brethren had gained the summit of the winding staircase, they arrived at the door of the middle chamber which they found open, but properly tyled against all under the Degree of a Fellow Craft by the Senior Warden, who demanded of them the Sign, Token and Word of a Fellow Craft. After they had given him those convincing proofs he said 'Pass Shibboleth'. They then passed into the middle chamber of the Temple, where they went to receive their wages, which they did without scruple or diffidence: without scruple, well knowing they were justly entitled to them, and without diffidence, from the great reliance they placed on the integrity of their employers in those days.

When our ancient Brethren were in the middle chamber of the Temple their attention was peculiarly drawn to certain Hebrew characters which are here depicted by the letter G, *WM gavels once, repeated by SW and JW*, denoting God, *all give Sign of Reverence*, the Grand Geometrician of the Universe, to whom we must all submit and whom we ought humbly to adore.

All drop Sign of Reverence.