

2002-03 LODGE PROGRAM
MASONIC LIFE IN 1803



The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ohio
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Note: This is simply a guided discussion and sharing program, the program comes from the brethren reflecting on your thoughts.

Preparation: Read through the program thoroughly and take notes. Put this program in your own words.

The format for your presentation should be as follows:

Instruction – The program tonight is about: “What do you think it was like to be a Lodge Member 200 years ago when Ohio was The Frontier?”

Demonstration – A modern Master Mason would be comfortable with the meeting once he got to it. The ritual might be strange, as prior to 1808 a Lodge used the ritual of its chartering Grand Lodge. The largest difference from today is getting there. Since "all weather roads have been a fairly recent innovation (1920's) the definition of the length of my cable tow" being defined as 20 miles or a healthy trot by a horse and buggy or wagon on a "good" day with “good roads" for one hour, makes sense. We must remember that railroads and canals had not become common in Ohio in 1803. The early organization of the responsibilities of the Deputy Grand Lecturers (later Deputy Grand Masters) and the Committee on Jurisprudence were reorganized when the railroad and canals made travel easier for these dedicated Masons.

Experience – In Allen Robert's book, "Frontier Cornerstones", we find an incident where the 1827 Grand Master, Most Worshipful Brother J M Goodenow, left his home in Steubenville, to constitute a Lodge in Barnesville - a trip that today is done in a half an hour of easy driving, took 2 days to complete in the winter of 1827. How do you feel about that?

Assessment – Do we demonstrate the same determination to "be there" today as our forefathers did? Let us not forget the Brothers that came 2 to 4 hours early and started the fire to warm up the Lodge Room. Remember this took cutting, splitting, hauling and stacking a lot of wood. Some of our Lodges holds on to the tradition of meeting as close to the "Full Moon" as possible. This quaint practice had the practical purpose of giving the Brothers coming home over those rutted and sometimes washed out roads a chance for their horse to see the hazards while they got some much needed sleep (having been up since before dawn to start the chores). The next time you debate with yourself whether to "attend Lodge" tonight, please think of a Brother long ago in a rain or snowstorm on his open farm wagon or astride a horse fighting the elements to be with his Brothers.