

Prologue- My past papers have centered around selfcare and alternative energies. This time we are going to take a journey into some Masonic esoterica. It would not be familiar to me were some science not mixed into the theme, so we are going to use some basic forensic science. Particularly how acacia may have come to be used by certain wretched persons.

## A Tale of the Five Ws

The five Ws are who, what, when, where, why and how. Okay I've never understood why how is a W either.

Who- In the 2<sup>nd</sup> section of the third degree we know who the villains are in this case?

What- The sprig of acacia is the symbol and topic we are looking into.

When- Right after closing the grave

Where- At the head of the grave

Why- Ostensibly to be an aid to locate the grave should a need ever arise. But, is there more?

How- Planted. Not placed, laid over or any other verb just planted.

Now to each topic in turn. We know the who as that is laid out in our work very plainly. So, let's sojourn on to what.

Acacia it turns out is many, many different related plant types ranging from weedy scrub to magnificent towering trees on the savanna. Some have edible seeds and others are poisonous to the human body. The species is native to many different parts of the world including the region of King Solomon's temple. Additionally, the lumber producing varieties are common in other parts of Africa and the Middle East. Did I say lumber? In fact, acacia is mentioned as being used to build the tabernacle, Arc of the Covenant as well as much if not all the sacred furniture. In the Bible, Exodus 37 and 38 Acacia is mentioned as a sacred tree, shittah is another name I've found given to acacia. Some scholars believe that the Crown of Thorns and the true cross were both made of Acacia. Also, Acacia was used to produce a valuable commodity that carries into modern time. A gummy substance common in the Thespian world, Arabic gum. The acacia plant was also used to mark a grave so that a priest or holy person would not walk across the buried body in violation of their beliefs. So we have a plant that was sacred in the time of our teaching and it is my belief that this was very much on the mind of that particular ruffian, as written by our founders.

The when is stated in our teaching as being after the closing of the grave. To mark the grave seems obvious in our ritual since the purpose is clearly stated. Perhaps our ruffian was also concerned

with and influenced by the religious practices of the time? After all not only is Acacia a commonly found plant but can also be seen as a symbol of everlasting life and innocence. So, we have additional layers above and beyond a simple marker.

Where is covered as being the head of the grave although the reason for that somewhat has eluded me.

How intriguing is it that the word *planted* is used. Not put, placed, laid, tossed or dropped but planted. To me that mean the sprig was intended to grow and mature. Not wither into a dry leafless twig. Again, we find that the culture of the time often required that a sprig of acacia be planted at the grave in order that the plant might flourish. As a symbol of innocence and eternal life?

So, the simple sprig used to as a marker doesn't seem so simple after all. In fact, there are layers upon layers of symbology and meaning attributed to that little twig.

As a side note there is a member of the acacia plant that grows in our own region of this country. That tree is more commonly known as the mimosa.