

## Of Masons and Men

This paper has taken on a very convoluted and at times messy development process. I'd originally wanted to present a paper on either a famous Mason or a trending Masonic topic. So let's take a short tour of the path this has taken.

My first thought was to develop a lofty and idealist paper of the attributes of a Mason. Well of course we have to start with a man, right. Hmmm I seem to recall that there was an online discussion about whether or not a person that identified as a man could be considered for Masonry. Or was it about a man that now identifies as female or... Well that was a can of worms to keep a lid on.

Next up was a memory of reading further about how frequencies and energy could be used for healing and increasing awareness. Nope too much like a repeat of my last paper.

Maybe something about getting new members. Yeah, what do we use to magnetize good candidates into our orbit. Wait! Magnetism! Perfect for a self-proclaimed science nerd. What was it I am trying to recall about a Mason and magnetism? Nikola Tesla came up when that was Googled. Wow. Nikola did some really fantastic stuff like alternating current, trying to develop free energy being transmitted through the air. Man was that man bright and had a fantastic memory to boot. Just one small problem though. No reference found about a Masonic connection. Maybe that guy in Florida that built the weird castle?

Pay dirt! Edward Leeds Kalnin was a stone mason and there are references to him being a Freemason as well. Edward was rumored to have used the esoteric

powers learned from Freemasonry to move the massive pieces of quarried limestone via magnetism. Now that is interesting so let's look into the research. Oops that is a bunch of conspiracy theory. There was just a lot of hard work, ingenuity and leverage used.

Now what, I wondered out loud. So, my wonderful wife asked why not look into the benefits of memorization and brain health. Huh?

That was another series of rabbit holes to chase down. By now I'm feeling a little like a character in Alice in Wonderland. But it has worked out.

After reading more on the topic it turns out that memory is at least as convoluted and shrouded in uncertainty and how Edward Leedskalnin moved those really big rocks. I'm beginning to also feel like the characters in Steinbeck's novel Of Mice and Men going from place to place to find work.

However, forging onward with the topic of memory.

There are three types of memory, or so the theories all seem to agree on. First is working memory, then short term memory and finally long-term memory.

Short term memory resides in the hippocampus and well as the frontal orbits of the brain. Considerable evidence suggests that there is a rather limited capacity to hold information in the short-term memory. On the order of seven or so items. Association and assigning importance to the item in short-term can increase the amount somewhat but unless the working memory gets involved there is little chance of the information becoming a long-term memory. One example is if someone calls on the telephone once and you see a telephone number once there is really no association or need to develop the number into a long-term

memory. However, if that caller continues to call repeatedly then it becomes more important and a long-term memory may be triggered or developed. If for no other reason than the recollection of being annoyed.

Long term memory seems to occur when the working memory acts on what is in the short-term memory and causes the brain connections, synapses to wake up and create a strong connection to the event. If you were to look around a room full of people and wonder about the crowd size your working memory will help you determine there were 27 people present. While that process occurs the brain can then develop a long-term memory you can call on later.

The brain is akin to a muscle in that it needs exercise and use to stay healthy and help reduce the natural aging process. Keeping all those brain cells working and connected is very beneficial to our health. Physical exercise that literally gets the blood and sweat flowing will also benefit the brain through an increase of nutrients and oxygen being available. So, it behooves all of us to have a couple of hours of exercise per week, preferably in at least 20-25 minutes blocks.

A good night's sleep is also important to memory as it is believed that during sleep the brain creates and reinforces long term memory. Nutrition also is important to have the raw materials available for the body to convert into brain chemistry. Association with friends and peers is important to engender a feeling of wellbeing and cement memories.

So, it is important to stimulate our minds through association, exercise our minds and bodies, provide proper nutrition and get sufficient rest for memories to occur.

That was a very short description of how memory is formed and retained but what does it have to do with Free Masons? Well we do have to memorize quite a bit of information, we associate with our friends and fellows, stimulate our brains through conversation and all of that is healthful. So, Masonry is good for our brains.

Well it seems I've done another paper on health after all.