

Have you ever wondered what things were like when your father or other close relative joined Las Palmas Lodge. My father, John Wesley "Jack" Frey, petitioned Las Palmas Lodge in May of 1929, was elected to receive the degrees of Masonry on June 20th and initiated on August 1st, passed on October 10th and raised on February 3rd of 1930. We know that there was no cyphers back then and when you look at the time span between each of his degrees the lapse of time would seem to be about what a candidate should be doing today.

The reason that I bring this up is because Therese and I and about 30 other Frey cousins just got back from a Frey Heritage tour of where my 7th Great Grandfather, Jacob Frey lived and worshiped in the mid 1600's. We know that he was born in Gontenschwil, Switzerland as I was able to personally view his original church baptismal record dated 10 January, 1630.

What was it like in January of 1630 in a small mountainous village of Switzerland? I am sure that it was cold due to the winter and that the only way to get heat or cook was from a wood fire. Light at night had come from the fire or a candle. What was their clothing like? Did they have wool, or some other animal skin for clothing. I doubt that cotton was readily available at that time in the mountains of Switzerland.

While the original church building is no longer present and was last replaced only 3 years ago with a new building, there was a museum house that we were told dated back about 300 years. The beams that held up the roof were all hand hewn from now darkened wood, the windows were glass and the walls were stucco or some other cement-based material. Certainly, many repairs or updates were made to this building so my curiosity about what life and dwellings were like over 300 years ago still remains.

I never had the privilege of sitting in Lodge with my father or as a Mason asking him what it was like when he took his degrees as he passed away before I petitioned Las Palmas Lodge. After having been a member of Las Palmas Lodge for over 50 years and having been Master in 1980, I wonder what the ritual was like. In reading through the old minutes of Las Palmas Lodge, I did find several instances of a newly initiated candidate being passed to the degree of Fellowcraft only 1 week after being initiated. I think that my question about the old ritual will remain forever a secret.

More particularly, what was the old Lodge room was like. The Temple where my father got his degrees was the third Masonic Temple to be built in Fresno. Design work for this building to be located at the S-W corner of Merced and Van Ness was started in 1910. It was a two and a half-story building with space for a business on the ground floor, the Lodge room on the 2nd floor and the banquet room on the third floor. It was owned by most of the Masonic groups in Fresno at that time. The stair case to the upper floors was on Merced Street near the west wall of the building. In 1911 there were few cars and many horses. I wonder where they put the horses and carriages when the members were attending Lodge?



My father's business was located 2 blocks north of the temple on Van Ness and the Fresno Camera Exchange was located across from the Temple so I do remember seeing the building, but I never went into it. Unfortunately, I do not have any pictures of the banquet room and the only pictures of the Lodge room are from old pictures of our Las Palmas officers. The 1941 officers are

shown below.

