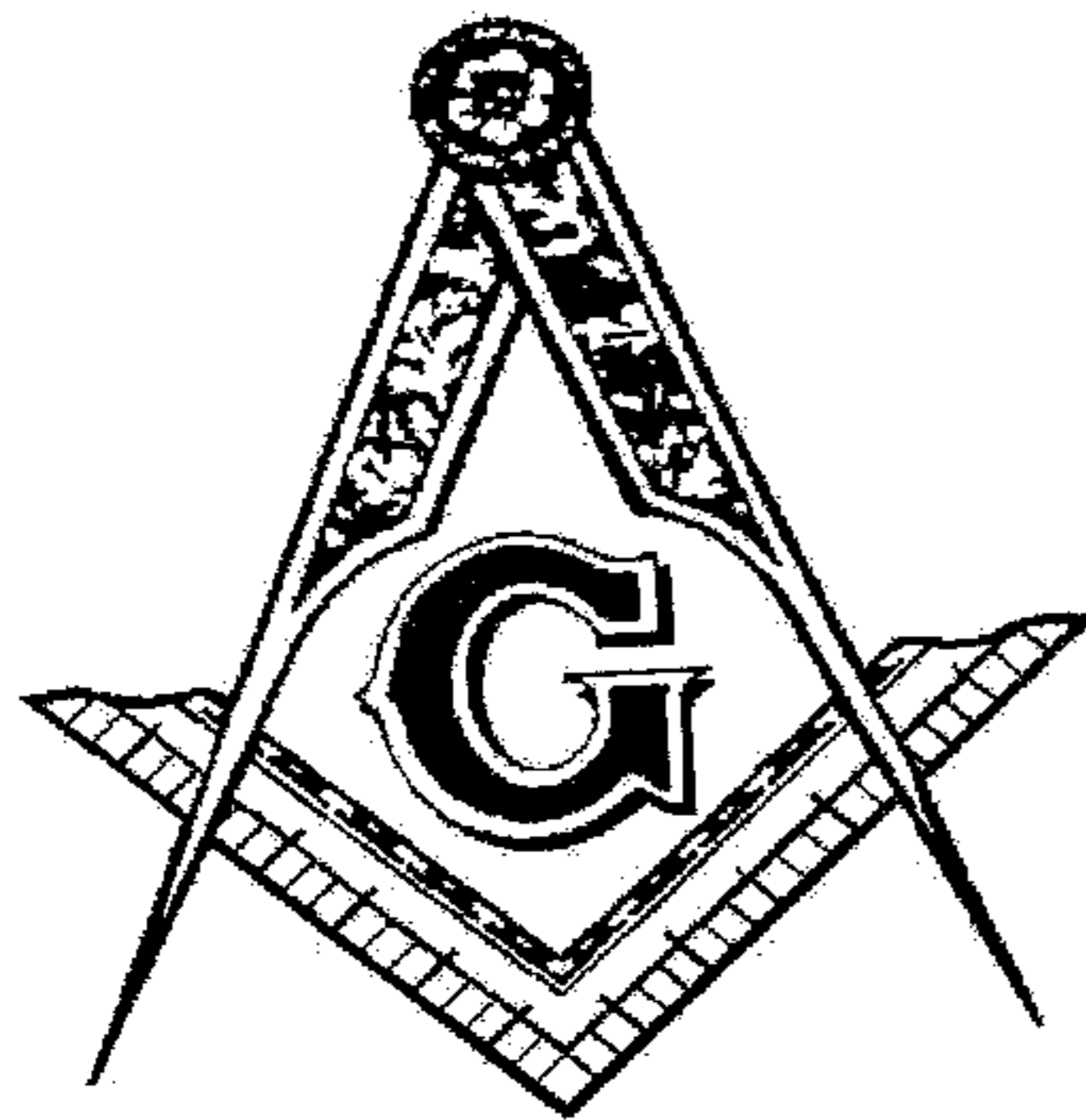


INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE



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Duties of the Investigating Committee

There is agreement throughout the Masonic world that the character of a candidate for Masonry should be investigated before his petition is accepted, but the method of ascertaining his fitness is not always the same.

A lodge may have many committees of varying degrees of importance to assist in the transactions of business but none is as important to its welfare as the Investigating Committee to review the fitness of a candidate for Freemasonry.

If the Investigating Committee is ignorant of its duties, or careless in performing them, great harm may come to Masonry in general and to the lodge in particular. Every Mason should become acquainted with the duties of this important

committee, for he may be called at any time to serve. If he knows his duties and performs them, he will be a credit to his lodge and realize that he has been given a privilege as well as a duty.

“On the reception of the petition, the Master shall appoint a committee of three to inquire into the character and fitness of the applicant to be made a Mason.” (Chapter 25, Section 1, Laws for Subordinate Lodges, Masonic Code of Iowa.)

Each member of the committee should be provided with a copy of the petition of the petitioner. In preparing to visit him, each committee member should carefully read the petition.

If the Committee is convinced that the applicant is barred by reason of age or

residence, such fact shall be specially reported, and the Master shall order the petition returned to the petitioner without ballot. In case a petition is so returned, such fact shall be made known to the petitioner, and he may again petition whenever the requirements of the law are met. (Chapter 25, Section 2, Laws for Subordinate Lodges, Masonic Code of Iowa.)

Before visiting the prospective candidate, there are resources available that should be consulted to better prepare the members of the Investigating Committee. They include, but are not limited to, contacting the references and recommenders listed on the petition and a search of the public records available at Iowa Courts online: www.iowacourts.state.ia.us. If any questions or concerns arise, make sure to address them at a future meeting with the

prospective candidate.

It is the duty of the Committee to make diligent inquiry into the character and habits of the petitioner. At least one visit to the petitioner's home is recommended. This enables the Committee to observe the petitioner's home life. It also allows the Committee to determine the attitude of the petitioner's family toward Freemasonry.

Make the interview informal and help the petitioner to feel at ease. Ask the petitioner's lady to stay during your visit.

The following questions are suggested as a guide for Committee members to have in mind as they visit with the prospective member. While such questions might be appropriate on some occasions, they will be unwise on others. They are included

to impress upon you the necessity of thoroughness.

1. How long has he been acquainted with his recommenders?

2. How long has he resided within the jurisdiction of this lodge?

3. Why does he desire to become a Freemason?

4. Does he believe in a Supreme Being? No man can become a Mason unless he has faith in a Supreme Being.

5. What is his conception of the Masonic Institution?

a. What does he think it is, and why, in his opinion, do Masons congregate and what do they endeavor to accomplish by their associations with one another?

b. Does he understand that Masonry is not a financial institution and that no financial returns are to be

expected by either the applicant or his family?

6. Is he of a charitable disposition?

a. Does he contribute financially to charitable causes so far as his ability permits?

b. Is he charitable in thought and action toward his fellow men or is he bigoted and prejudiced, considering all men in error who do not view life through his particular line of vision?

7. Financial Information:

a. Is he generally considered to be fair and upright in his business dealings?

b. Does he understand that there are yearly dues required from each member, and that he will be expected to promptly meet these and any other obligations of a similar nature?

8. Does his family concur in his desire to become a Freemason?

9. Do you consider him to be a man who will attend, with reasonable regularity, the Communications of the lodge, and will endeavor to educate and better himself by an extensive study of Masonry?

10. Does he impress you as being one who will "live" Masonry, who will endeavor to bring into actual practice the tenets of our profession?

Observe his natural reactions, his friendliness, his views on charity, and his general attitude. If he lacks some of these desirable characteristics, you should also be able to observe this.

Your visitation should be completed before the next Stated Communication of your lodge. If more time is required, it may be granted by vote of the lodge.

The committee may report any information it has obtained which the members present should have to guide them in casting their ballots, but this information is strictly confidential and should not be entered of record either on the petition or the minutes.

Conclusion

Brethren, when the Worshipful Master selects you to serve on an Investigating Committee, he entrusts to you a Masonic duty. You are the guardians of our portals. This duty, well done, is a service to the petitioner, the Lodge, and the Fraternity. Let quality, not quantity, be your watchword.

Always remember as a member of an Investigating Committee, you are selecting the Brothers who will determine the future of our Fraternity.