

WHY, THE NORTH-EAST CORNER?

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Published in Masonic Light, Quebec, December, 1950

A Brother whom we know to be a well-skilled craftsman, has placed the following question in the "Question Box" of Royal Alexandra Lodge: (textual) "Why the N-E corner and what is its significance?" Frankly, this Brother has us guessing as to exactly what his question means . . . and we are wondering if our good friend has not been indulging in a bit of good natured leg pulling to test our knowledge of things Masonic . . . but we will take his question at his fact value and take it to meant he enquirer wishes to know why the apprentice is placed in the North East corner of the Loge to receive his first lesson Masonic symbolism.

"Why the North-East?" Well, it was a custom of the medieval craftsmen, from which we speculative masons descend, to always place the corner stone of the wall of a building they were erecting according to plan, in the North-East corner of the projected building. This custom had come to them from the Jews, who, in turn, had taken it from the Egyptians, the latter holding the belief that N.E. was the point of the compass from which the sun began its journey when it was first created.

So the newly admitted apprentice is placed in the North-East corner because he is held to figuratively represent the corner stone of the Lodge - it is while in this corner he will receive those lessons on which he will base his future moral and Masonic edifice. In other words in the apprentice is placed in the N.E. it is to impress upon him all the qualities required to constitute a "well-trying, true and trusty corner-stone"; truthfulness and uprightness of character; purity and holiness of life, which just at that time and place, the candidate was most pressingly charged, in consecrated language, to maintain.

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