

Brethren:

Freemasonry in movies and in books has become quite noticeable and popular in the last few years. However, for many years there were references to Freemasonry; for example, in the 1942 movie "Across the Pacific" starring Humphrey Bogart. His character Captain Richard Lomas Leland, after being dismissed from the United States Army sets sail for Yokohama on the "Genoa Mar". On board he witnesses a judo demonstration in which the participants turn and bow to a small shrine. He asks a fellow passenger, played by Sydney Greenstreet, what is it all about? Greenstreet's character replies that its devotees form a brotherhood, similar in many respects to our western Freemasonry. It too has its degrees and its secrets as well as its religious, or should I say philosophical background. Not an accurate comparison but the movie was still enjoyable.

A friend of mine saw the movie "National Treasure" a few months ago and the next morning couldn't wait to tell me how he enjoyed it and what a great light it showed Masons in. I went to see the film that night and it was indeed an enjoyable film, somewhat along the lines of an Indiana Jones movie. Nicholas Cage plays the lead, Benjamin Franklin Gates who descends from a family of treasure-seekers. The entire film is about the search for a lost treasure that is said to have been collected and protected by the Knights Templar and then by the Freemasons, particularly Masons who were among the founding fathers of the United States. There are many references throughout the film to Freemasonry, almost all positive.

Here are some interesting tidbits: In the movie "True Grit", Kim Darby instructs that her father be buried with his Masonic apron. Errol Flynn in the movie "Robin Hood" appears to perform the F.P. of F.

An enjoyable movie was “The Man Who Would Be King” which was filmed in 1975 and starred Sean Connery and Michael Caine, and was directed by John Huston. It is a story about mercenary soldiers that convince Kafiristan tribespeople that they are gods after discovering Masonic symbols on religious artifacts.

Have any of you read the book “Da Vinci Code”? If you have read it, I think you will be excited to hear that Ron Howard is directing a new film starring Tom Hanks as the Harvard symbologist, Robert Langdon. If the film is anywhere as exciting as the book, it is going to be a blockbuster.

I have through my speech pointed out in film and in book references to our beloved Craft. I am not suggesting that everything that is written or shown on film portrays our Craft in an accurate manner, but it is enjoyable to watch. I do prefer to skip books and/or films that are really negative against our Craft. However, the interesting thing that I have noticed is Freemasonry seems to be more and more popular and in the most part is being portrayed in a positive and proper manner. My friends and non-masons that I come in contact with are showing great interest in the subject. There is a noticeable increase in applicants wishing to join in the lodges in our district as well as throughout the jurisdiction of our Grand Lodge. There is plenty of help through our Grand Lodge programs for ways and means of reaching out to those who are looking for something special and interesting in their lives.

In closing, I came across a bit of humour on the Internet. On an Allen's Alley segment, the question was posed, “What is the Worst Storm You Remember?” One reply was that “it was so cold, my uncle was a 33°, and he dropped ten degrees.”

Brethren, thank you for your kind attention.