

Freemasonry has infiltrated the Boy Scouts?

By John Salza

It is a special blessing for me to be a Catholic apologist and to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Whenever I am confronted with errors against the Faith, I do my best to expose these errors for the salvation of souls according to the gifts that God has given me. It was by God's providence that I discovered a very dangerous movement that is attacking the Faith and the Church. It is a secret society within the Boy Scouts of America called the "Order of the Arrow" (OA). The OA was founded in Philadelphia on July 16, 1915 by two 32nd degree Freemasons named E. Urner Goodman and Carroll A. Edson. The OA society is purportedly an honor society for Scout campers who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives.

As both I and members of the OA demonstrate, Messrs. Goodman and Edson patterned their OA rituals directly after Masonic rituals, as well as from pagan, native-American spirituality. These rituals – which include a blood covenant – are being conferred upon innocent boy scouts throughout our country and are harming their souls. I know this first hand – the secret rituals I am posting below came from a scout who had experienced demonic spiritual manifestations after his initiation into the OA. His spiritual director, a priest with a healing ministry and the gift of discerning spirits, sent me the rituals for my review to determine whether they were in fact Masonic (for those who don't know, I am a former 32nd Degree Freemason). I have confirmed that they are Masonic, which is no surprise, given that the authors of these rituals were high-ranking Masons.

The OA rituals consist of three rites called *Ordeal*, *Brotherhood* (formerly known as the "Blood-Rite" degree) and *Vigil Honor*, corresponding to the three Masonic degrees of *Entered Apprentice*, *Fellowcraft*, and *Master Mason*. Both the OA and Freemasonry are organized into Lodges. Both the OA and Masonic rituals seek esoteric spiritual knowledge and illumination. Both orders have blood oaths. Unlike Freemasonry, the OA requires its candidates to fast (refrain from food and drink) before they are initiated, which is a spiritual exercise to facilitate union with the deity.

Before I went public with this information, I contacted Mr. Clyde Mayer, the National Executive Director of the OA, to discuss these rituals. In our telephone discussion, Mr. Mayer admitted to me that the OA rituals are indeed Masonic in origin, but he would not admit that these rituals are incompatible with the Christian faith. Mr. Mayer also denied that the *Brotherhood* degree has a blood-covenant ceremony (he evidently knows only the origins of the rituals of the organization he runs, but not the rituals themselves – even though the original Brotherhood rite was called the Blood-Rite). I asked Mr. Mayer, if I could prove to him that the blood-covenant rite and other incompatibilities with Christianity did exist, whether he would take action by addressing these errors.

Mr. Mayer invited me to send him the rituals (he didn't have them?) and agreed to get back to me with his thoughts and recommended action steps. I sent Mr. Mayer the rituals which included references to the problematic parts of the ceremonies. In my written

communication, I advised Mr. Mayer that if he did not respond to me, I would interpret this silence as adverse to my position, and I would then post these rituals on my website revealing to the public that they are Masonic (which is not a secret, since many members of the OA proudly profess their Masonic nature). Neither Mr. Mayer nor anyone else from OA has made any effort to contact me.

Following are the secret rituals for the *Ordeal* and the *Brotherhood* in PDF format (they include a priest's handwritten notes which are helpful in understanding the problem areas):

<http://catholicintl.com/articles/OrderoftheArrowRituals.pdf>

These rituals were taken from the password protected OA website with the help of a boy scout who gave us the codes and severed his affiliation with the OA. The web address containing these rituals is www.showcase.netins.net/web/alloquep/oa/resources.html. The official OA Boy Scout website is <http://www.oa-bsa.org>.

Below, I have also attached two articles about OA. The first article was written in 1997 by OA member John R. Goodwin called *The Order of the Arrow – Another Masonic Ritual?* In this article, Mr. Goodwin praises the connection between OA and Masonry, both of which he says “are most dear to my heart.” The second article was written by S.M. Adkins called *Freemasonry, Scouting and the Order of the Arrow*. In this article, Adkins discusses the history and connections between OA and Freemasonry.

To Parents

What should parents do? First, parents must terminate their sons' membership in the Order of the Arrow secret society. They should also pray with their sons the Deliverance Prayers (<http://www.scripturecatholic.com/dprayers.pdf>), have their sons renounce their unholy covenant with OA in the Sacrament of Penance (if they are Catholic), and contact their local bishops and other religious leaders so that this information can be communicated to the faithful. Priests and pastors must also encourage their parishioners to disavow any affiliation with the OA. As with Freemasonry, getting this secret information out to the public is essential to dealing with the problem and eliminating the confusion.

Second, their son's participation in the OA rituals raises the grave and legal issue of parental consent. It has been reported that parents have been refused to be present at their sons' OA initiation ceremonies. How can parents give informed consent to their minor sons' participation in OA when OA requires their sons to maintain secrecy, and refuses parental participation? If true, this fact should be alarming to any parent of a boy scout in OA, and parents should take action to redress this grievance.

Parents, here is Mr. Mayer's contact information:

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Following are some examples of the similarities between Masonic and OA rituals. This list is not all-inclusive. Fundamentally, the OA rituals attack the spiritual life of the Christian through the invocation of evil spirits and the administration of covenant oaths in the form of simulated blood contracts. One can cross reference the OA rituals with the rituals of Freemasonry (http://www.scripturecatholic.com/three_degrees.html). For more information, please visit my website www.ScriptureCatholic.com or contact me at johnsalza@scripturecatholic.com.

Order of the Arrow Rituals and Masonic Rituals: **A Comparison**

- Both were written by Freemasons
- Both have three degrees
- Both meet in Lodges
- Both call potential members “candidates” and members “brothers”
- Both rituals exclude participation of the general public
- Both maintain that their secret rituals were taken from past “legends”
- Both have secret handshakes, passwords and signs
- Both have formal ceremonies to open and close the Lodge
- Both emphasize certain shapes in the Lodge (e.g., OA = emphasizes the circle; Masonry = emphasizes the square)
- Both meditate on the deity without ever defining who or what he/it is (e.g., OA = requires “silent meditation” in contemplation of our “maker” and his “holy purpose”; Masonry = members pray to the “Grand Architect of the Universe”)
- Both view the rituals as a journey of struggle toward enlightenment which they call “further knowledge”

- Both encourage a search for self-fulfillment outside of God's grace
- Both encourage the attainment of spiritual illumination and empowerment (e.g., OA = seeks the "the spirit's higher purpose"; Masonry = seeks resurrection to the celestial lodge above)
- Both encourage spiritual subjectivism (e.g., OA = encourages one to follow "the whispers, urgings, promptings deep within your hearts and spirits"; Masonry = encourages one to follow the Great Lights of Masonry)
- Both have formal ritual books and elaborate diagrams which are subject to governing authorities and which dictate the spoken words and physical movements to be made about the Lodge
- Both rituals have officers/principals that play specific roles (e.g., OA = Allowat Sakima; Masonry = Worshipful Master); in the pre-Ordeal ceremony, it says the principals' "individual personalities have been cast off and they become Kichkinet; Nutiket, Meteu, and Allowat Sakima" which are names of native-American idolaters and evil spirits
- Both rituals require certain officers/principals to announce their duties of preventing non-members from eavesdropping on the rituals (e.g., OA = Nutiket in the south protects the lodge from "unauthorized persons"; Masonry = Junior Deacon and Tiler prevent the reception of "cowans and eavesdroppers")
- Both gather in their rituals around fire or flames (e.g., OA = fire lay; Masonry = Lesser Lights); both use three lit candles (i.e., OA = representing the Scout Promise; Masonry = representing the sun, moon and Master of the Lodge)
- Both use three taps or knocks during the ritual (i.e., OA = Kichkinet taps Nutiket on the right shoulder three times; Masonry = candidate raps on the Inner Door three times; Worshipful Master raps his gavel three times)
- Both candidates are conducted around the Lodge by an officer (e.g., OA = by the elangomat; Masonry = by the Senior Deacon) while bound by a rope
- Both rituals examine candidates three times to determine their worthiness, e.g.:

OA – Who are these strangers who seek admission to our circle?

Masonry – Who comes here?

OA – How do they expect to obtain this privilege?

Masonry – How do they expect to gain admission?

OA – Have they passed the Ordeal without flinching?

Masonry – Have they made suitable proficiency in the preceding degree?

- Both allude to pre-Christian pagan astral worship (e.g., OA = references to “moons” and “sun”; Masonry = Lesser Lights represent the “sun” and “moon”)
- Both place mystical significance on three directions within the Lodge (e.g., OA = North is the place of the mighty chief Allowat Sakima; Masonry = East is the place of the Worshipful Master; OA = eliminates East; Masonry = eliminates North)
- Both refer to the “rites,” “mysteries,” and ritualistic position of the brotherhood as “the mystic circle”
- Both orders are represented by symbolism which act as power sources (e.g., OA = Red Arrow; Masonry = Square and Compass)
- Both candidates take three steps forward toward the fire/lights in search of “further knowledge”
- Both require candidates to take “obligations” of secrecy which they must repeat after the master of ceremonies (OA = Allowat Sakima; Masonry = Worshipful Master)
- Both hold the obligations sworn in the Lodge to last for a lifetime
- Both candidates carry in the Lodge a “heavy burden” which, spiritually, signifies his former faith and which is relieved in the ritual after the obligation is taken (OA = represented by a piece of canvas or buckskin; Masonry = represented by the cabletow)
- Both initiates, after their obligations, are symbolically released from their life of bondage by being divested of a rope which formally bound them
- Both view silence as the bond of unity between the brotherhood (which is a manifestation of spiritual bondage)
- Both give lectures to the initiate at the end of the ritual to explain its mystical significance (e.g., OA = “Explanation of the Ordeal”; Masonry = “Lecture”)
- Both require the candidates to symbolically offer their blood to the Lodge in exchange for the brotherhood and its Gnostic secret knowledge, e.g.:

OA – “Kichkinet: They are ready to shed their ‘blood’ in token of brotherhood”; Allowat Sakima: “You who choose to proceed will present your left hand to Meteu who will symbolically draw blood so that you may mingle your blood with that of your brothers, thus sealing the bond in the world-old way.” Then Allowat Sakima and the candidates exchange their blood through the “Arrow handclasp, allowing the blood to flow

together” (Note: This is clearly an anti-Christian blood covenant which has dire spiritual consequences.)

Masonry – the candidate offers his blood in sacrifice at the Masonic altar by swearing the self-curses of bodily mutilation and death.

THE ORDER OF THE ARROW, ANOTHER MASONIC RITUAL?

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JANUARY 25, 1997

Thank you for the invitation and opportunity to speak to you today. I welcome this opportunity as it allows me to speak on two of the institutions that are most dear to my heart, Freemasonry and the Order of the Arrow. Many of you, were no doubt, Boy Scouts as a youth. Many of you were also members of the Order of the Arrow. For you who were not, permit me to briefly describe the order and give a history of its organization. The purpose of the Order is: To recognize those campers, Scouts and Scouters, who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and by such recognition cause other campers to conduct themselves in such manner as to warrant recognition. To develop and maintain camping traditions and spirit. To promote Scout camping, which reaches its greatest effectiveness as a part of the unit's camping program, both year-round and in the summer camp, as directed by the camping committee of the council. To crystallize the Scout's habit of helpfulness into a lifelong purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others. ¹

The Order of the Arrow was founded during the summer of 1915 at treasure Island, the Philadelphia Council Scout Camp, by E. Urner Goodman and Carroll A. Edson. Treasure Island was part of the original land grant given to William Penn by King Charles II of England. The camp was located on a 50 acre wooded island located in the Delaware River between New Jersey and Pennsylvania, 30 miles upriver from Trenton and 3 miles from Point Pleasant. Historical records show that it was an early camping ground of the Lenni Lanape or Delaware Indians. Goodman and Edson wanted some definite form of recognition for those Scouts in their camp who would best exemplified the spirit of the scout Oath and Law in their lives. Since the Delaware Valley was rich in Indian tradition, and the island had been used in early times as an Indian camping ground, it seemed only natural to base this society, this brotherhood of honor campers, on the legend and traditions of the Delaware Indians. ²

Last February I was selected to join the Order and went through my ordeal in March. My Son, who is now thirteen years old, had joined the Order the year before. I was excited at the prospect of becoming an Arrow man because it would mean I could share more scouting activities with him. As I went through the ordeal, I noticed ritual movements and phrases that were very similar to Masonry. I have researched the j similarity, but have not found any documentation to link Masonry and the Order.

I would like to relate the experience of my ordeal and let you decide for yourself if there is a link. The ordeal began on a Friday night. A group of us were gathered. We were directed to enter into a period of silence, which would last for approximately twenty four hours. We then took an extended hike through the woods. We were not permitted to have flashlights and, therefore, walked in darkness. We spent the night in the woods and the next day we performed chores for the camp. At this point I did not perceive any relationships. Saturday evening, however, things began to change.

Our group was again led into the woods. It was night, we were still not allowed to have flashlights, and it was very dark. We walked for what seemed a long time. We arrived at a path at the foot of a hill. I later found out that this hill is affectionately called "cardiac hill." It was steep. We were asked to hold onto a rope as we walked up the hill. It was still very dark. At the top of the hill I had one of the most wonderful experiences of my life. We were led, still holding onto the rope, through long parallel lines of Arrow men who were -holding candles to light our way. As I looked to my left I saw the face of my son illuminated by his candle. You will recall I indicated he had joined the Order a year earlier. My emotions stirred wildly. It suddenly occurred to me that I had had many situations to be "there" for him. This was his first opportunity to be "there" for me. He, along with about one hundred fifty Arrow men had climbed cardiac hill and waited for us to come out of the darkness to welcome us to the Order. I should have indicated earlier that the temperature was only twenty-eight degrees.

While we were still holding onto the rope, we were conducted to a circle by a boy who was dressed as an Indian. In the center of the circle was a huge fire. It was built in the shape of a triangle. Positioned around the fire were three other boys dressed as Indian Chiefs. As we began to enter the circle, we were halted by one of the Chiefs. We heard this dialogue. "Who are these strangers who seek admission to our circle?" An answer was given by our conductor. Another question was asked. -"How do they expect to obtain this privilege?" An answer was given. Another question was asked. "Have they been given the admonition?" The answer was, -"They have not, but fi have received it, and will give it to you for them." The question was asked, "What is the admonition?" Our conductor answered and was then told, '-You have been given the admonition correctly, you may pass." We were conducted to the next Chief who asked the same questions with the same answers being returned as before. Then we were conducted to the third Chief where the same sequence was initiated. As we made our circuits around the fire, I noticed 'Chat we walked in a clockwise direction.

When we finished our circuits, one of the chiefs approached us. He told our conductor, finish their preparation by placing them in the proper position to receive further knowledge." We were then told, "you will now take three steps forward and pause before the council fire." We were given an obligation. At the conclusion of the obligation, he told us we could let go of the rope we had been holding. He then presented his hand to each of us and gave us a grip and a password which we were to share only with other Arrowmen.

As I drove home the next stay I thought over the ceremony and the similarity it had to our Masonic rituals. In Masonry we are blindfolded during our ritual. In the Boy Scouts, youth protection laws prohibit blindfolding. However, walking in the darkness of the night is almost the same as being blindfolded. As we held onto the rope we were led up the hill and around the fire from chief to chief That rope seemed very much like a cabletow. We walked from the darkness of the night into the light provided by the parallel lines of Arrowmen holding candles. How similar this is to the parallel lines of Brothers stretching forth their hands to assist the Worshipful Master in bringing us from darkness to Masonic Light as we kneel at the altar. We made a clockwise circuit around a fire stopping before three chiefs for an examination. The three chiefs could very easily be the three stationed officers of a lodge. The questions of the examination anti the answers returned are remarkably similar.

The use of the triangle for the shape of the fire is interesting. We use it in Masonry to represent the Diety. The fire being in the center of the circle seemed very similar to the position of the altar in the lodge. The three steps we took forward toward this fire are much like the steps by which we are taught to advance in Masonry toward the altar. We were placed in the proper position to receive further knowledge previous to the assumption of an obligation. We assumed an obligation as we do in Masonic ritual The big Chief came before us and gave us the grip and password of an Arrowman and told us to release the rope. What a reminder this is of the Worshipful Master obligating candidates, ordering their release from the cable-tow, and presenting them with the grip and word of their particular degree.

There are other similarities. The Order has three levels of membership. Each of these has its own ritual. I have not gone through the other two levels, but I am told that each has its own grip and password. The grips coincidentally use the same number of interlocking fingers relative to the level of membership as we Masonically use our knuckles for the three degrees. I have also been told that each subsequent ceremony explains more of the "real" meaning of the Order. This sounds like our receiving more light in Masonry as we progress through our degrees.

Were the ceremonies of the Order of the Arrow derived from Masonic ritual? I do not know. I have found no documentation to support that it was. I have questioned many Arrowmen, who are also Masons, and have been told that both E. Urner Goodman and Carroll A. Edson were thirty-third degree Scottish Rite Masons. I have been asked by some of those same Arrowmen if there was any doubt in my mind as to the origin of the ceremonies of the Order. The lack of physical documentation forces a sense of doubt. But the similarities are staggering. Staggering enough to make me wonder. Perhaps, they make you wonder too.

1. Boy, Scouts of America. Order of the Arrow Hanbook. (Irving, Texas: 1993) 8.

2. Ibid., 16-17

Freemasonry, Scouting and the Order of the Arrow

S.M. Adkins

In the latter-half of the 19th Century the United States witnessed an explosive growth in the number of societies and organizations aimed at bringing people together and improving society. It was the current of the times. “Reform” was key. As an agrarian society evolved into an urban industrial one, people dealt with an increasing sense of dislocation by banding together with like-minded folks. Not surprisingly, many of these groups were aimed at youth. Young people were seen as increasingly dissolute, falling to the temptations of the city as the old social mores that bound them fell away. At the dawn of the 20th Century dozens of youth groupsexisted. Some of these were social, some had a martial aspect to them and many of them were religious. Two groups that were to have a profound influence on the development of the Boy Scouts of America were Ernest Thompson Seton’s *Woodcraft Indians* (1902) and Daniel Carter Beard’s *Sons of Daniel Boone* (1905). Both men were naturalists, authors and artists with a penchant for the outdoors who sought to establish organizations that would combat the debilitating influences of the city and help restore to young men self-sufficiency and virility.

In England, Lord Robert Baden-Powell (B-P) regarded these organizations with interest. Baden-Powell was a veteran of the British colonial wars in South Africa. In 1899 7,000 Boers laid siege to 700 British at Mafeking and B-P, short on men, used uniformed boys as messengers, lookouts and orderlies. 217 days later he was relieved; Mafeking had not fallen, and he was regarded as a hero. When he returned to England in 1903 he found that the manual he had written for his boys—Aids to Scouting—had been bootlegged and was being widely used by boys for fun. He saw a need and began doing what any good Victorian would—organize. By 1908 he had put his ideas to the test at Brownsea Island and transformed his manual into Scouting for Boys. He based his book on his own martial experiences, Victorian notions of chivalry and duty, and much of what he found in the work of Seton and Beard. Within a few years troops dotted England.

The Transatlantic exchange continued. An apocryphal tale has it that American businessman William Dixon Boyce was lost in the London fog one night and stopped to ask a young lad for directions. The youth took him to his destination and refused to be compensated, saying he was a Scout and it was his duty to assist others. Boyce was impressed, made some inquiries and returned to the States primed to transplant the movement. On February 8, 1910 the *Boy Scouts of America* (BSA) was incorporated. Seton wrote the first manual, based in turn upon the B-P manual and his earlier work The Birch Bark Roll. In these early days there was a lot of debate about the direction Scouting in America should take: follow B-P’s martial model or Seton’s example which was influenced by Native American lore and traditions. The B-P model won out, albeit with significant “Americanization” of the language of the law and the promise. It should be noted that the *Boy Scouts of America* (BSA) did not at first hold a monopoly on Scouting. William Randolph Hearst had funded two more militaristic groups called

American Boy Scouts and *United States Boy Scouts*. Peter Bomus had started the *Boy Scouts of the United States* (which had merged with the BSA by the Fall of 1910) and William Verbeck the *National Scouts*. The plethora of groups in this early period is more than an interesting historical footnote; it indicates just how much the notion of Scouting appealed to white America. Seton once claimed that B-P told him his original aim had been to prepare youth for war. The idea that Scouting was somehow a response to the dwindling colonial interests of Great Britain—and that its’ even wilder success in America a response to the beginnings of colonialism in this country (the Spanish-American War of 1899 being commonly regarded as America’s first colonial war)—merits further examination. The original Scout uniform, after all, is essentially that of a Rough Rider, or a doughboy.

B-P’s Scouting movement had emphasized campaigning, camp life, tracking, chivalry, lifesaving, citizenship, etc. He devised the promise and law, the sign, salute and handshake. Each grade of Masonry, of course, has its own promises (obligations), hailing signs and handshakes (grips). One could also point out that the hierarchy of Scouting, a system of ranks culminating in the Eagle, is similar to Freemasonry, a system of degrees that in the Scottish Rite culminates in the Double Eagle. There are seven ranks in Scouting; seven steps figure prominently in the Middle Chamber Lecture of the Masonic 2nd Degree. Philosophically, a Scout’s duty to God and Country, his brotherhood and the slogan “Do a good turn daily” is something with which any Freemason would concur. B-P himself was not a Freemason, but his good friend Rudyard Kipling was, and it is known that Kipling influenced B-P in the formation of the Cub Scouts. B-P himself stated that he could not be a Freemason because he did not want to offend Roman Catholic Scouts, but he seemed to have approved of it, and Freemasons of him. In Australia, for example, there are four Lodges named after B-P, one of which he visited and signed its Bible. Furthermore, B-P was a *Knight of Grace of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem*. Freemasons recognize a bond with this order and both Saint John the Baptist and John the Evangelist are the Patron Saints of Craft Masonry (*Craft*, or *Blue Lodge* Masonry, refers to the first three degrees). The symbol of John the Evangelist is of course the Eagle; the Boy Scout Eagle is superimposed upon a *fleur-de-lis*, the international symbol of Scouting.

The *fleur-de-lis*, incidentally, is a symbol used by nearly all civilizations past and present, from 3rd millennium B.C. Assyria to modern-day Quebec. It has been variously interpreted as an iris, lily or lotus and said to stand for purity, light and perfection. It has been associated with both Christ and the Virgin Mary and used as a military emblem by Joan of Arc and units of the United States Army. It’s association with the French monarchy dates back to the Merovingian King Clovis, who was said to have received the symbol directly from God upon his baptism. Another story is that Clovis, on his way to fight the Aquitaine King Alaric near Poitiers, was led by a doe to a hidden ford in a river. After crossing, he placed one of the yellow irises growing on the banks in his helmet. He was eventually victorious. Perhaps one story is the metaphorical retelling of the other. When exactly the *fleur-de-lis* was adopted as a heraldic emblem by the French kings is still a matter of divided opinion, but it appears on coins and scepters as early as the 10th century. One author states that it was probably under Saint Bernard’s influence that

Louis VII (1154-1180) adopted it as a personal emblem, having by that time acquired a strong religious significance. Incidentally, Saint Bernard is also said to be the primary inspiration behind the Knights Templar—the highest grades of York Rite Masonry are called Knights Templar.

Back in America, there are other affinities. The Church of Latter Day Saints, whose Temple Ceremonies are based upon Freemasonic ceremonies, was the first religious body to officially recognize the BSA, in 1913. The *Lone Scouts of America*, begun in 1915, became a BSA program in 1922. William Dixon Boyce commissioned one F. Allen Morgan to develop tests by which Lone Scouts could earn degrees. Morgan said Seton, Beard and Freemasonry influenced him. In 1924 the Lone Scout program was fully absorbed by the BSA, but Lone Scouts continued to earn *degrees* until the mid-1930's.

In New Zealand, another Boer war veteran and friend of B-P named Major David Cossgrove (probably not a Freemason) started something for older boys called the "Empire Sentinels." Sentinels were organized into "Towers" and the scheme had three degrees based on religious duty, patriotism, sacrifice and work, each with a corresponding "Watch," or ritual. A quick list of other details, gleaned from letters between Cossgrove and B-P, shows that the idea had very direct Masonic affinities: The Tower is opened on the third Watch and dropped to the first or second as required; Sentinels enter the Watch using a password and a salute; the alarm is a series of knocks; halters and blindfolds are used; the phrase "So Mote it Be" is used; there are four principal officers; the Watch works in darkness with the symbols of each Watch illuminated. Substitute the word "Lodge" for "Tower" and "Degree" for "Watch" and one finds practically no difference from describing the workings of a Masonic Lodge. In a letter to B-P dated 1919, Cossgrove writes: "...the scheme has already been taken up enthusiastically in Africa, America and in Austria, I believe, and will be here when our young warriors return and settle down..."^[1] He is presumably referring to young men abroad in the British colonial army, and the attitude of his letter does much to support the theory that Scouting was given impetus by colonial psychology. They were, after all, the *Empire Sentinels*. But where, if Cossgrove was not a Mason, did the Masonry of the Empire Sentinels come from? That remains a mystery.

While there is no evidence that the Empire Sentinels blueprint was "taken up enthusiastically in...America," there is plenty of evidence, much more copious, of another scheme that was. On July 16, 1915, two Scouters named E. Urner Goodman and Carroll A. Edson founded the Order of the Arrow at Treasure Island, the summer camp of the Philadelphia Council. Edson was a 32° Scottish Rite Mason; Goodman only became a Mason after the OA was founded but also eventually attained the 32°. The writing of the ritual, however, was entrusted to another, unknown 32° Mason. (Interestingly enough, the Masonic affiliation of its founders is omitted from the official OA history from which the following details were culled. There is, in fact, not one single reference to Freemasonry throughout the book.) By 1922, the year the first Grand Lodge of the OA was formed, ten Lodges were known to be in existence. This was also the year of the first OA "crisis." In September of that year a biennial national BSA meeting was held to

discuss various topics; one of the first items on the agenda was the existence of camp fraternities and secret societies, which some present felt ought to be discouraged. Carroll Edson rose to their defense by saying: “If we find...that we can effectively use ceremony and symbolism in furthering Scout ideals of personal service, why should the entire body...say you shan’t do it?”^[2] Edson was not only articulating the *raison d’être* of the OA but reveals a very Masonic point of view. Most definitions of Freemasonry speak of it as an organization which uses “ceremony and symbolism” to instill in its members the purpose of the Craft. In any event, the OA was not banned and allowed to continue if its growth was not actively promoted—another similarity to Freemasonry, which traditionally does not promote itself through recruitment. An interesting innovation of the OA is that non-members elect Arrowmen; it may be the only organization of its kind that follows such a practice.

By 1934 there were 45 active OA Lodges and the BSA officially approved the OA for use nationwide. As part of this approval, however, several changes were required of the OA by the BSA. According to the official history, “The BSA requested these changes to avoid confusion with other usages of these same terms.”^[3] For “other usages” substitute “Masonic usages.” The changes included using “tribe” instead of “lodge,” “national” instead of “grand,” “honor” instead of “degree” and “admonition” instead of “password.” These changes have persisted into the present with one exception. In 1936 the use of “lodge” was re-approved, ostensibly to avoid confusion with the use of “tribe” by Lone Scouts.

What happened in 1934 was a “de-Masonification” of the OA *nomenclature*, but the basic Masonic structure remains. The Order of the Arrow consists of three honors: *Ordeal*, *Brotherhood* (known in 1927 as the “blood-rite” degree!) and *Vigil Honor*. These correspond to the three Masonic degrees of *Entered Apprentice*, *Fellowcraft* and *Master Mason*. In the OA, each honor has its own handshake, hailing sign, and “password”. (For the Ordeal this is called the admonition. The Brotherhood member responds to a ritual question. The Vigil Honor has three watchwords.) Each honor has its own obligation and ceremony that intensifies the teachings of the Order. In Masonry, each degree has its own grip, step, sign, password and obligation. We have already noted that they are both organized into Lodges; in the OA one National Lodge enforces regularity. For Freemasonry there is a Grand Lodge for every state.

And what of the OA initiation ceremonies? First, the Lodge is opened after it has been determined “all present are members.” This is done by demanding the handshake and password of the honor to be performed from those present. In the Ordeal, for example, the admonition is whispered into the ears of a member by a chief called Kichkinet while hands are clasped, and the member responds by whispering its’ definition. The Lodge is then opened during which time the sign of the degree is given. The candidates are announced and Kichkinet is sent out to greet them.

In Freemasonry the Lodge is opened in the same manner. Membership is determined with the grip and word, whispered into the ear, hands clasped, and the Lodge

is opened on the sign of the degree. The candidates are announced and the Junior Warden is sent out to greet the candidates.

In the Ordeal ritual, the OA candidates are conducted by an “elangomat” (friend) to the ritual circle where they meet Kichkinet, who becomes their conductor and prepares them by symbolically binding them with a rope by which he leads them into the circle. They are led clockwise around the circle and challenged three more times by other chiefs—Nutiket, Meteu and Allowat Sakima—where the same questions are asked and answered. Kichkinet, Nutiket, Meteu and Allowat Sakima represent the guide, the guard, the medicine man, and the mighty chief. They exchange three ritual taps on the shoulders, before Kichkinet is asked:

“Who are these strangers who seek admission to our circle?”

Answer.

“How do they expect to obtain this privilege?”

Answer.

“Have they passed the ordeal without flinching?”

Answer.

Here Nutiket lets them enter, but Meteu and Allowat Sakima inquire further:

“Have they been given the admonition?”

Answer: “They have not, but I, their friend, have received it, and will give it to you

for them”

“What is the admonition?”[\[4\]](#)

In Freemasonry, candidates are led by a steward, already “bound” by rope and blindfolded, into a similar situation. The Junior Deacon, who exchanges three ritual taps on the Lodge door with the steward, meets them. A challenge follows. Although the language is different from that of the OA, the essence is the same. Who are these strangers? How do they expect to obtain the privilege of entry? Have they the password? They do not, but their guide does and gives it for them. They are then turned over to the care of the Junior Deacon and led clockwise, around a square, and meet the same challenge three more times. In these instances the three ritual taps are banged out on mallets and answered by staves banged on the floor.

After their circuit of the Lodge, Allowat Sakima orders the candidates placed in “the proper position to receive further knowledge,” [5] just as the Worshipful Master orders in Freemasonry. They do this by taking three steps forward, mimicking the steps a Masonic candidate makes. When they have received the Obligation, they are told to drop the rope they have been carrying and taught the hailing sign, handshake and admonition. They are then presented with the sash that marks their membership in the Order. The sash is worn over the right shoulder, is white, and represents a red arrow. In Masonry the candidate, when he has received the Obligation, is released from the cable-tow and given the signs, token, grip and word of his degree. He is then presented with a white apron, which in the Entered Apprentice degree is worn with one corner tucked up so as to form a triangle. In both Freemasonry and the OA, there then follows an explanation of the ritual. Following that, the Lodge is closed, with each principal recapitulating his role in the Lodge. Both OA and Craft Lodges follow this procedure.

There are differences. The OA candidate does not take his Obligation upon a Volume of Sacred Law, (i.e. a Bible, Torah or Koran) nor does he take the Obligation blindfolded. Much of the dramatic and symbolic effect of this moment of Freemasonic ritual depends upon the removal of the blindfold, but the effect is not entirely absent in the OA. Three candles placed in a triangle around the Volume of Sacred Law represent the light in Masonry, and the OA candidate takes his Obligation in front of a campfire, which in a small pre-Ordeal ceremony the night before, remained unlit. While current ritual handbooks require nothing specific of the campfire other than it be in the center, a reconstruction of the original 1915 ceremony says the fire should be made in the shape of a *triangle*. (Some Lodges continue this tradition today. Incidentally, Masons use the triangle to represent Deity and the sash of the Vigil Honor has a triangle with three small arrows inside superimposed upon the larger red arrow of the Ordeal sash.) Three candles, however, are also present; they represent the Scout Promise and are placed in the North. Furthermore, because OA ceremonies usually take place after nightfall in a remote location, the effect of being brought into the circle is in itself similar to being brought into the light.

Other differences should be mentioned here. For example, the OA Lodge is not a square, but a circle. Additionally, the challenges made in an OA Lodge occur in the South, West and North, the North being the position of the mighty chief Allowat Sakima. In Freemasonry the challenges occur in the South, West and East, the East being the position of the Worshipful Master. It is tempting to say that the East, by its very exclusion in the OA, is emphasized. In the 1915 ceremony Kichkinet was called “Guard” and acted as “guardian of the trail.” Nutiket was called “Sachem” and acted as outer guard. “Sakima” was inner guard, and “Medeu” was head of the Lodge. His position in the north was explained thusly: “As in the heavens, the north star is fixed and all the other stars revolve around it, so stands Medeu in the north for the lodge circle to revolve around him. He, alone, opens, directs, and closes the lodge.” [6] (Interestingly enough, the *Chief Sentinel* in the Empire Sentinels scheme was positioned in the north.) In Freemasonry, a different astronomical metaphor is used to explain the Worshipful Master’s position and duties in the East, but the language is strikingly similar.

In the 1915 ceremony the closing bears a sharper Masonic character than current practice; the characters' functions are explained in a language and fashion much more reminiscent of Freemasonry than one finds in current ritual, and in other parts of the ritual one finds reference to "rites," "mysteries" or "our mystic circle," but no longer. The move away from this Masonic character is probably a result of the de-Masonification of 1934, but the original ceremony surely lies closer to the *founders'* inspirations. Interestingly, the letter of introduction which accompanies this earlier ritual is dated "October 1, 1915 + 60" (i.e. 1975), a dating method which brings to mind Masonic methods of dating. According to Craft Lodge dating, for example, the current year is 6003 A.L., i.e. 2003 A.D. + 4000. What is clear from the two methods, despite their differences, is that a new timeline begins with the founding of the Lodge.

The OA rituals are much simpler than those of Freemasonry, but the basic structure is the same: the Lodge is ceremonially opened, the ritual performed, a recapitulation of the ritual is given and the Lodge is ceremonially closed. In 1927 the OA Grand Lodge proposed a series of questions to test the Brotherhood candidate's knowledge of the structure and significance of the Ordeal ceremony in a fashion clearly modeled on the "questions and answers" a Masonic candidate must know before advancing to the next degree. The OA ceremonies, however, unlike Masonic rituals, become shorter and simpler as one progresses; the Brotherhood ceremony retains the structure summarized above, but the Vigil Honor abandons it all together. Thus the highest honor of the OA is ritualistically the least Masonic; it appears to derive from Seton. The OA seeks to instill the value of Brotherhood, Cheerfulness and Service into its members and in that there is no disaccord with the expressed values of the Craft. Both groups share common values, are traditionally male and share a similar hierarchic structure. In the OA we do not find any explicit interpolation of Masonic values; rather, there is an intensification of values already present in Scouting. The Masonic values are almost incidental. What is more important, however, is the *very* Masonic vehicle Goodman and Edson chose to communicate these values. They understood the power of ceremony and symbolism as a means of instilling ideas. Not surprisingly, a candidate for the OA must be a more advanced Scout, *1st Class* or higher, which requires a lad to be a slightly older adolescent. The OA is an intensification of the Scouting experience, a rite of passage for young lads embarking on the path to manhood. Like many others before them, Goodman and Edson drew upon a familiar and proven system, Freemasonry, for their inspiration.

A cursory glance over the history of fraternal organizations in America will reveal that the majority of them have drawn heavily on Freemasonry. From college fraternities to the Knights of Pythias, one finds the Masonic stamp. On the more esoteric side of things, in England we find Freemasonic influences in the rituals of the Golden Dawn, the O.T.O. and Gardner's Wicca. In America we find Freemasonry behind Mormon rituals and in a host of irregular and crypto-Masonic practitioners of ritual magick, some of them practicing along legitimate lines of inquiry opened up by Freemasonry. Perhaps it should not be surprising that BSA literature ignores the obvious Masonic characteristics of one its most popular institutions.

I originally conceived of this article to focus on the correspondences between Freemasonry and the Order of the Arrow. By the time I sat down to write it, a text appeared on the Internet entitled “The Order of the Arrow, Another Masonic Ritual?” by John R. Goodwin. The author cites a number of parallels between Craft Masonry and the OA but concludes: “Were the ceremonies of the Order of the Arrow derived from Masonic ritual? I do not know.” Also: “I have been asked....if there was any doubt in my mind as to the origins of the Order. The lack of physical documentation forces a sense of doubt. But the similarities are staggering.”^[7] The similarities *are* staggering, and the reticence of Mr. Goodwin to take a firm stand leads one to wonder why, because there *is* physical documentation in the rituals themselves. Perhaps it is scholarly prudence; perhaps he would rather have his audience draw their own conclusions.

The BSA in recent years has expressed an increasingly conservative moral tone. The President of the United States used to sign an Eagle Scout’s certificate, for example, but the BSA eliminated the practice during the Clinton years as a form of chastisement in response to his perceived moral laxity. In addition, the BSA’s expulsion of and refusal to admit homosexuals and atheists, and the ensuing lawsuits, has caused conservative Christians nationwide to view the BSA as a bastion of traditional morality and a defender of shared values. The widespread knowledge that millions of Scouts belong to an organization of a decidedly Masonic character might prove troublesome for some of its’ Christian defenders, be they fundamentalists, Southern Baptists or Roman Catholics, all of whom have condemned Freemasonry at one time or another. Type “Freemasonry” in any internet search engine and you will find as many watch groups condemning Masons as the servants of Lucifer as you will pro-Masons. One plucky website includes *both* Freemasonry and the OA in it’s list of “demons to be exorcised.” This is not the kind of publicity the BSA wants.

Some might argue that characterizing the OA as essentially Masonic is a bit spurious. They might point out that the OA ceremonies contain symbolic tests which do not correspond to anything in Masonic ritual, and that Masonic rituals contain lectures and symbolic dramas that have no corollary in OA ceremonies. They might also point out that the inspiration for the OA is explicitly stated in the OA legend: as the Native American imagery indicates, it lies in the legends of the Delaware Indians. But Masonry has its’ own legendary founder—Hiram Abiff—and the OA legend probably bears about as much relation to authentic Lenni Lenape traditions as Hiram Abiff does to Jewish ones concerning the building of the Temple of Solomon. That is to say, very little to nothing at all.

The Native American imagery one finds in the OA does not appear out of thin air. Baden-Powell was inspired by his military experience, Victorian morality, Seton and Beard. When Scouting came to America, its’ organizers did not receive the movement ready made but sought to redefine it upon their own terms. Seton wrote the first prototype of the Boy Scout handbook, but there was a great controversy as to whether or not American Scouting should follow his model, drenched as it was in Indian lore and inspirations, or B-P with his martial and chivalric adaptation of *Seton*. A remarkable cross-fertilization occurred which led to the BSA. By 1915 there was a definitive break

with Seton, but also in 1915 the Order of the Arrow was born. The OA, like the BSA, represents a synthesis of influences. On the surface, its message of brotherhood and cheerful service derives from Lenni Lenape legends and is ritually expressed by representatives in Native American garb. Not very far below the surface, however, one finds a ritual system so Masonic in character that to dispute it is next to impossible.

Finally, there will also be those on the other side of the argument, that will see in the Order of the Arrow a kind of “B-team” DeMolay for Masonic recruitment. When one reads Cossgrove’s assertion that his Empire Sentinels had been “enthusiastically embraced” in America, one is tempted to speculate if perhaps what he was actually referring to is the Order of the Arrow. But this is rather whimsical speculation. That two 32° Scottish Rite Masons in America would together come up with a Scouting scheme based upon their Masonic experiences is in no way fantastic; one need not make the leap that they were under some higher directive. There are many who see in Freemasonry the same kind of monolithic structure that many used to see in Communism. But in Masonry, there is no Moscow, no central direction, and no global plan. The cat has been out of the bag a long time, and it has left its’ prints everywhere.

Works Consulted

Davis, Kenneth P. *The Brotherhood of Cheerful Service: A History of the Order of the Arrow*,

2nd ed. Irving: Boy Scouts of America, 1996.

As the title indicates, I used this book for details concerning the origins and development of the OA. It was especially useful for details concerning the 1934 changes in nomenclature outlined in the text of my article. I was flabbergasted that no mention of Masonry is to be found in the book.

End-Time Deliverance Ministry. “List of Demons to Cast Out in the Name of Jesus.”
Date

unknown, accessed 7 July 2002: <http://www.demonbuster.com/z14lod.html>

This is the “plucky website” that includes both the OA and Freemasonry in its list of “demons.” Ironically, the author doesn’t seem to be aware of the Masonic connections of the OA, for it is included in a separate section with aspects of Native American lore and culture.

Goodwin, John R. “The Order of the Arrow, Another Masonic Ritual?” Jan. 1996;
accessed 7

July 2002: <http://www.vamason.org/ra1753/papers/1arrow.htm>.

This text is a transcript of a talk given by Goodwin before the Virginia Research Royal Arch Chapter No. 1753 on January 25, 1996. Goodwin doesn't point out any similarities between Masonry and the OA I had not already noted when I read this, but his caution motivated and helped me to crystallize my own thoughts on the matter.

Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon. "Freemasonry and Lord Baden-Powell."
Date

unknown, accessed 7 July 2002: <http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/Writings/baden-powell.html>.

This article introduced me to the Empire Sentinels, which in turn was originally posted by Edward Robinson, Westminster Lodge 308 New Zealand, in Issue 32 of " ", located here: The relationship between B-P and Australian Freemasonry is also detailed.

Hittner, Phillip M. (open letter), October 1, 1975.

This letter by Hittner, Chief of Unami Lodge in 1975, details the origins of the reconstruction of the 1915 ritual. It also uses a dating system (1915 + 60) by which the current date is given relative to the date of his organization's founding. This strongly echoes Masonic practice. For a summary of Masonic Dating, see <http://www.bessel.org/masdates.htm>.

Order of the Arrow. Ceremony for the Ordeal. Boy Scouts of America, 1981.

All quotes and details from the Ordeal Ceremony come from the 1981 version, revised in 1999. I consulted earlier versions other than that of 1915, but the changes appear to deal mainly with the ritual tests. I passed through the Ordeal and Brotherhood Ceremonies in Florida in the latter half of the 1980's.

Peterson, Robert W. The Boy Scouts: An American Adventure. New York: American Heritage

Publishing Co., 1984.

An excellent overview of Scouting's origins and development. Info on Seton, Beard, B-P, Boyce and Morgan are to found here. Although Peterson notes that Morgan was influenced by Freemasonry, he doesn't mention that Beard was himself a Mason. I chanced upon that fact in Jasper Ridley's The Freemasons (NY: Arcade, 1999), p. 273

The Pine Tree Web. "Lord Baden-Powell, Benefactor of Boyhood," Date unknown, accessed

7 July 2002: <http://www.pinetreeweb.com/bp-freemasonry.htm>.

This article establishes that while B-P was most likely not a Freemason, perhaps out of respect for Catholic Scouts, he was a Knight of Grace of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem. It also discusses the well-corroborated influence of Kipling and provides a short introduction to the Order of St. John.

Unami Lodge, Ritual for the First Degree of the Wimachtendienk, Philadelphia: Unami Lodge, One, 1975.

Quotes and details of the 1915 Ceremony come from this reconstruction widely available online in .pdf format. The script was originally prepared in 1971 in consultation with surviving charter members. When presented in 1975, Goodman was present and he believed it to be “very much like” the original. Bearing in mind that it came 56 to 60 years after the fact, it is likely to be a fairly accurate reconstruction.

Velde, Francois. “The Fleur-de-lis,” *Heraldica*. Date unknown, accessed 7 July 2002:

<http://www.heraldica.org/topics/fdl.htm>.

All information on the fleur-de-lis in my text comes from Velde, with one exception; curiously, he does not mention that it is the international symbol of Scouting.

Supplementary details and observations come from my experiences as an active Freemason and a former Boy Scout and Brotherhood Member of the Order of the Arrow. Needless to say, my conclusions and opinions are not necessarily shared by members of these groups or by the authors of the works I have consulted in the preparation of this text.

[1] “Freemasonry and Lord Baden-Powell”: par. 8-14.

<http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/Writings/baden-powell.html> [7 July 2003].

[2] Kenneth P. Davis, *The Brotherhood of Cheerful Service*, 2nd ed. (Irving: Boy Scouts of America, 1996), 20.

[3] *Ibid.*, 49.

[4] Order of the Arrow, *Ceremony for the Ordeal*, (Boy Scouts of America, 1981), 12-13.

[5] *Ibid.*, 13.

[6] Unami Lodge, *Ritual for the First Degree of the Wimachtendienk*, 6.

[7] John R. Goodwin, “The Order of the Arrow, Another Masonic Ritual?” *Virginia Research*

Royal Arch Chapter No. 1753 (Jan. 1996) : par. 11.
www.vamason.org/ra1753/papers/1arrow.htm [7 July 2003].