



Bro. James A. Dabney, Tiler of Tuckahoe Lodge.

An unsung hero of the Masonic Lodge - The Tiler

The position of Tiler is actually and symbolically one of the more important positions in the Masonic Lodge. In actuality, he ensures the security of the Lodge when it is in session. Symbolically, using the lodge as a representation of our life and the most precious aspects of it, we are all Tilers with a duty to guard the West Gate against the approach of those who may attempt to harm or in any way diminish the Light.

What is the meaning of the word TYLE? The word TYLE is present in Masonic ritual and writings in its archaic form merely because it thus represents another connective link with the earlier days of Freemasonry. The modern spelling is TILE. The lodge is said to be "tiled" when necessary precautions have been taken to prevent the approach of cowan's and eavesdroppers, intruders or persons not properly qualified to enter a Masonic Lodge.

What are the duties of the Tiler? The chief duty of the Tiler is to guard the West Gate, or outer door, so that no one may enter the lodge who is not properly qualified. He also informs the Junior Deacon when a qualified Brother wishes to enter while the lodge is in session and should, at the same time, advise the Brother concerning the degree in which the lodge is then working. He also ascertains that all who enter the lodge are properly clothed with their Masonic Apron.

What does it mean to be "duly tiled?" In the installation charge to the Tiler we learn that, "As the sword is placed in the hands of the Tiler to enable him effectually to guard against the approach of cowans and eavesdroppers, and suffer none to pass or re-pass except such as are duly qualified, so it should admonish us to set a guard over our thoughts, a watch at our lips, and post a sentinel over our actions; thereby preventing the approach of every unworthy thought or deed, and preserving consciences void of offense towards God and towards man."