

Carl H. Claudy visits Tonopah 28

One of my favorites among the “giants” of Freemasonry always has been Carl H. Claudy, often affectionately referred to as the “Father of the Short Talk.”

Many of you know the Short Talk Bulletin of today, as published by the Masonic Service Association of North America. It has been the source of uncountable educational lectures in Nevada lodges and around the world. Carl Claudy is attributed to have authored about 350.

He did so during the time when he was associated with MSA. He became an associate editor of its magazine, *The Master Mason*, in 1923. Claudy became executive secretary of MSA in 1929 and held that position until his death in 1957.

I never met the man. I never heard him talk in person. I always have respected his work.

He published “*The Lion’s Paw*” and other items of renown, most described as delightful literature. To list all of his publications and plays would fill up this space.

But suffice it to say, one of his plays entitled “*Rose Upon the Altar*” has special meaning to Nevada Masons who witnessed it performed many times with lead characters including Valdo Sei, William Hill and others.

Claudy contributed so much to our Fraternity, to list all of his accomplishments would be time and space prohibitive. But a timely web site not only acknowledges that he was a noted author, he served Harmony Lodge 17 in Washington, D.C. as its master and served as grand master of the District of Columbia in 1943.

I humbly acknowledge this outstanding Mason because the coming days mark a special anniversary between the great Mason and Tonopah Lodge No. 28.

Beginning early in March 1939, the *Tonopah Daily Times* and *Bonanza* carried an advertisement, brought prominently to the public’s attention with a square and compass, which said:

MASONIC NOTICE – Called communication Tonopah Lodge No. 28 F. & A. M., Tuesday, March 28, 8 p.m. to receive Carl H. Claudy, executive secretary of the Masonic Service Association of Washington, D. C. All Master Masons cordially invited to attend. Banquet 6:30 p.m. Order W. M. C. K. Loring, A. R. Wardle, Sec’y.

The advertisements were followed by a story in the newspaper on March 28, 1939, which read:

“Carl Claudy, executive secretary of the Masonic Service Association in Washington, D. C. and author of numerous plays and articles on Masonry, will visit Tonopah Lodge. No. 28, F. & A. M. tonight at eight o’clock.

“Claudy, who is accompanied by E. H. Bemer, Grand Master of the Nevada Grand Lodge and other dignitaries of the Nevada order is making a tour of the state. He visited in Las Vegas last night and will journey to Ely tomorrow, Winnemucca on Thursday and in Reno on Friday.

“A large delegation is expected to greet the official party here tonight with Masons from Tonopah, Goldfield, Hawthorne, Manhattan and Austin gathering to meet Claudy, who is an honorary past grand master of the Nevada lodge.

“A banquet at 6:30 p.m. will precede the regular meeting.”

In a story the following day, the front page of the *Times* and *Bonanza* proclaimed, “Carl H. Claudy visits Tonopah Masonic lodge last night.”

The story’s initial paragraphs said:

“One of the largest local Masonic gathering in recent years met last night at the Masonic hall here to greet Carl H. Claudy, executive secretary of the Masonic Service Association and honorary past grand master of the Nevada grand lodge.

“Claudy spoke of the work of the service association and delivered an interesting talk on Masonry. He spoke highly of Nevada hospitality and told of other trips throughout the United States.

“Nevada grand lodge officers honored with Claudy last night were: Elwood Beemer, grand master and Merwyn Brown, Robert Parker, Scott Jamison, Ed Peterson, A. R. Wardle and W. T. Baker.”

The story went on to list members of the Tonopah lodge in attendance. Jamison was listed (he was PGM), as was Gerald A. Roberts (a PGM of some 35 years later).

The list of visitors from other lodges included present and future grand lodge officers as well as other dignitaries.

I am sure some readers of this historical account might think it much ado about nothing. But for some of us who relish Nevada Masonic history, the visit of Carl Claudy to Tonopah Lodge in 1939 might be akin to a visit of the Pope to a small Catholic church or having President Obama drop in on a meeting of the Tonopah town board.

As I reflect on the trip of M.W. Bro. Claudy to Nevada, I am taken aback by the significance of this event in Nevada Masonic history. I simply scratched the surface in my remarks.

But the visit of our Brother was a significant event in Nevada Masonic history and I hope your interest has been piqued. Should you want the full details of the trip simply pick up the Nevada Grand Lodge Proceedings for 1939 and visit pages 33-36. You can find out:

Bro. Claudy arrived in Las Vegas on the “streamliner” shortly after midnight; he was met at the train station by the grand master and his entourage.

His party toured “Boulder” Dam and took a boat trip on Lake Mead.

The lights were dimmed at his visit to Vegas 32 and members of Doric Lodge, from Vegas and Boulder City performed “Judge Not,” one of Brother Claudy’s plays.

His visit the next day went through Death Valley and Goldfield on his way to Tonopah.

Gold and silver gifts from the local mining district were presented.

His visit in Ely and a subsequent stop in Elko brought forth not only local Brethren but many distinguished Utah Masons who came “across the line” to greet their old friend and distinguished Mason.

The visit to Winnemucca was equally impressive.

Our important visitor eventually arrived in Reno and was taken to points of interest in the city, our state capitol Carson City, Virginia City and other local points of interest.

Finally, a meeting was convened in Reno and the brethren welcomed Claudy with respect. But perhaps no other showing was more important than when Doric lodge players were brought forth under dim lights and presented “Rose Upon the Altar.”

What a fitting way to end this trip of a distinguished Mason/author/playwright.