

A MASONIC MINUTE

CIRCUMSPICE ~ Masonic Symbols? – Hidden in Plain View

The interpretation of symbols is an important aspect of Masonic Education. Masonic symbols may be seen in many everyday objects. Obviously many architectural details may be discerned by the keen eye. However, take a closer look at a very familiar staple on the breakfast table and found on every lunch counter: a bottle of **Heinz Ketchup!**



Companions of a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons may find some surprising coincidences. First, the contents are **red** the dominant colour of Royal Arch Masonry. The Chapter is known colloquially as ‘the Red Lodge.’ Second, the label is in the form of a **keystone** which plays a significant part in the several degrees and is the logo of Grand Chapter. Third, the trade name, **HEINZ** is a scrambled acronym for the initials of the Five Principal Officers of a Chapter.

Note that the company makes **57 Varieties**. Is this a random number or does it have symbolic relevance? Five and Seven are significant numbers in Freemasonry. When the Chapter Room is prepared, **5 Banners** adorn the East. ($5 + 7 = 12$) **12 Banners** representing the 12 Tribes are arranged on the floor of the Chapter.

*“In the seventh month, in the one and twentieth day of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet **Haggai**, saying,² Speak now to **Zerubbabel** the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to **Joshua** the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to the residue of the people.” Haggai 2: vv. 1 & 2*

The FIVE PRINCIPAL OFFICERS in a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons represent ...

ZERUBBABEL	Z
HAGGAI	H
JOSHUA	J or I (interchangeable in old alphabets)
SCRIBE EZRA	E
SCRIBE NEHEMIAH	N

Rearrange to letters in **H E I N Z** and we have **Z H I E N** - an acronym for the names of the Five Principal Officers.

All of which raises the question: Is all this merely coincidence? Are we reading meanings into these symbols that were never intended? Or was the original graphic designer encoding these labels with Masonic symbols “*for those with eyes to see?*” Perhaps we will never know.

RSJD 2015