

The Goshen Garden
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Objective: This narrative is intended to spark interest and activity within the Lodge in the form of personal service and outreach to both Lodge members and members of the community. This story may be used in several settings by changing "Lodge" to the setting being addressed (church, civic organization, family, etc). It may be prefaced by the remark: "What the public needs to know about Masonry."

The Goshen Garden

While walking through town in Goshen, I noticed an elderly man caring for some beautiful flowers and some vegetables on a small patch of land left vacant following the demolition of the old town jail and city hall. I had not passed by that way for over a year, and I recall that the land that was now being cared for by this old gentleman had been covered with large hunks of cement, old bricks from the demolition, large amounts of paper, and many broken and discarded bottles. Now the small piece of land, maybe 30 by 40 feet in size, was ablaze with colors and scents from the flowers, and the vegetables were clearly healthy and abundant. The old gentleman was working some soil up around some squash plants, and he had his watering can on the edge of the garden. I commented to him that I had seen the land a year ago and that he and The Lord had worked wonders and changed it into one of the most beautiful pieces of land in our small town. The old gentleman stopped his work, shook my hand, and told me that when he first saw this piece of land, he had thought how The Lord might need some help with it, because when The Lord was taking care of it by himself, it just wasn't getting any better. We talked a while that day, and I have stopped by and visited with him on several occasions. When I think back to that meeting and the work he had done on his own to bring beauty to what was a stagnant piece of land, I think of how important it is for each of us to work in our fraternity to bring new life to the parts of it that might be slipping away. Just like the old gentleman tended to those parts of his garden as they needed his personal care, we, too, must tend to those aspects of our craft that are in need of some of our personal attention. A phone call to a brother we have not seen for a while, a visit to a brother who can no longer attend lodge, taking leadership in bettering the work of the lodge, or assisting in some of the social duties of our lodges could change a bleak and stagnant lodge into something with renewed life. I expect many people walked by that terrible looking piece of property before the old gentleman brought it back to life (I know I did), but he stopped, saw a need, knew he could fill that need, and set himself to work. We could all learn a lot from him. And after we get the garden of our lodge running again, imagine what wonders we could see if we paid a little more attention and hoed and watered a little more in all of our personal relationships.

