

**ALBERT PIKE**

**1809-1891**

**ROGUE OR ROLE MODEL?**

**A LECTURE BY W.BRO. A.D. MATTHEWS PPJGD**

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## **ALBERT PIKE 1809-1891<sup>1</sup>**

Who was Albert Pike?

Was he:

- A genius and linguist?
- A teacher?
- A trapper and backwoodsman?
- A brilliant poet, writer of prose and orator?
- A newspaper editor?
- A lawyer?
- An advocate for Red Indians?
- An army general honoured by a monument in Washington D.C.?
- A philosopher?
- The most eminent Freemason who ever lived?



Albert Pike<sup>3</sup>

Or was he?

- A Satanist?
- Directed by a “Spirit Guide”?
- A traitor and guilty of treason?
- A man who abandoned his wife and eight children?
- A supporter of the slave trade?
- A member of the Ku Klux Klan?
- A member of the Illuminati and supporter of a “One World Order”?

All these (and other) claims have been made about Albert Pike. Which ones are true?

We in the Masonic fraternity probably recognise Albert Pike as Sovereign Grand Commander of the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite and author of *Morals and Dogma*<sup>4</sup>, a mammoth volume providing a commentary on the moral, spiritual and symbolic aspects of the 33 degrees of the Scottish Rite, including the three Craft degrees. We may also have heard of him as a famous general during the American Civil War and may even be aware of a statue erected in his honour in Washington D.C. But what of the man himself and the other diverse claims made about him?

Through this paper we will endeavour to ascertain the truth about this incredible man.

First we will have a look at the man and his Masonic career.

### **MASONIC CAREER<sup>1&5</sup>**

Albert Pike was initiated into Western Star Lodge No. 2 in Little Rock in 1850 and became Master in 1853. He was a Charter Member of Magnolia Lodge No.60 in 1852 and became the Master in 1854. Pike was active in the Grand Lodge of Arkansas, particularly in areas of education, serving as Trustee of St. John’s Masonic College.

He passed through all 10 degrees of the York Rite between 1850-1853 becoming High Priest of Union Chapter No. 2 in Little Rock in 1852. He helped form the Arkansas Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, serving as High Priest 1853-1855 and Occidental Council No. 1 of Royal and Select Masters in 1853, serving as Illustrious Master for three successive terms. Pike was also the First Eminent Commander of Hugh de Payens Commandery No. 1, Knights Templar in Little Rock 1853-56.

The Scottish Rite was, however, his main interest and he passed through the 4<sup>th</sup> to 32<sup>nd</sup> degrees in Charleston South Carolina in 1853. He was elected Deputy Inspector General for Arkansas in 1854, Grand Commander in Louisiana in 1857 and Sovereign Grand Commander of the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite (Mother Council of the World)<sup>2</sup> on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1859, following which he organised the Grand Consistory of 32<sup>nd</sup> Degree in Little Rock in 1859. He served as Sovereign Grand Commander of the Southern Jurisdiction until shortly before his death in 1891.

Between 1855 and 1857 Pike revised the rituals of the Scottish Rite for all degrees from 4<sup>th</sup> to 32<sup>nd</sup>, printing and binding these at his own cost of \$1,200. A major achievement was his resolution of standardisation issues between different versions of ritual in 1861.

There followed two years of civil war, at the conclusion of which he revised and completed additional ritual for Inauguration, Installation, Baptism, Adoption, Reception of Louveteau, Burial and Lodge of Sorrow.

### **EARLY LIFE**

Albert Pike was born into a distinguished American family that traced its line back to John and Dorothy Daye Pike, who emigrated from Landford, Wiltshire in 1635. He was the eldest child of Benjamin Pike, a cobbler and was brought up in Newburyport, Massachusetts. A gifted musician and voracious reader; he once borrowed a history in 13 volumes and returned it a few days later, when he was tested satisfactorily on the contents.

Shortly after his fifteenth birthday, he entered and passed an examination qualifying him to join the Harvard freshman class of 1825. However, he was unable to afford the requisite fees, so at the age of 16 he secured a job as a schoolteacher in Gloucester, 20 miles away, studying in his spare time for entry into an advanced class at Harvard. On achieving this, he was then advised that students entering an advanced class must pay \$100 for each year's advancement in addition to normal tuition fees. This he could not do and furthermore he felt that Harvard was seeking to charge students for services not rendered. Consequently he returned to teaching for two years in Newburyport. He was appointed principal and head teacher of the public high school, after a rebellion of the students against previous head teachers and having been rejected initially because of his young age.

Pike joined a young men's social club and formed a musical trio. He was a fine violinist and played in church on Sunday mornings. However, when he applied to the school authorities for the appointment of a teacher to assist him he was dismissed for "playing the fiddle on Sunday." After teaching for a few months in a nearby academy he returned to Newburyport and opened his own private school, which became a

centre for “musical, literary and gastronomic exercise and amusements.” By 1830 he had completed his own studies for the junior and senior years at Harvard. He was also writing fervently, with numerous poems and essays printed in Boston publications.

In 1831, Pike fell in love with one of his students, but felt that he was too poor to tell her of his love. So, feeling thoroughly discouraged, he decided to start a new life in Tennessee, but not until after a rousing farewell party in his schoolroom.

With two companions he made his way first to Nashville and then to St. Louis, where he fell in with some Rocky Mountain trappers and decided to join an expedition across Missouri, travelling across prairie, desert and mountains. After many privations he ended up in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he joined another trapping party travelling through Indian country into New Mexico and finally after 1,400 miles, to Fort Smith, where exhausted and impoverished Pike undertook farm work, before opening his own private school near Flatrock Creek. Here he continued his teaching and writing; securing the publication of an autobiographical poem “Los Tiempos” by the Arkansas *Advocate* in Little Rock in 1833.

In late June of 1833, Pike left his school for Van Buren, where he met a person named Irwin, who said that they could find work in Fayetteville 50 miles north. They set off on foot across the Boston Mountains but on their arrival they were arrested by a peace officer, who accused them of stealing otter skins. It turned out that Irwin had stolen these from his previous employer. They returned to Van Buren where they were put on trial for theft. Pike was completely exonerated whilst Irwin was publicly whipped for the theft. This episode is often quoted to falsely claim that Pike was a convicted thief.

After his trial Pike opened a subscription school in Little Piney Creek. By chance he met an Arkansas politician, who later recommended him for work as an assistant on the Little Rock *Advocate* newspaper in 1833. He entered enthusiastically into his new job, seeming to take great joy in literary battles with the rival *Gazette* newspaper on local and national politics, whilst continuing as an author and literary critic.

After a while he decided that he had few prospects in Little Rock as either a school teacher or newspaper reporter, so he determined to become a lawyer. After a period of self study he applied to the Arkansas Territory Superior Court for a license to practise. The examining judge quizzed him perfunctorily and awarded him a license, commenting that “giving a law license was not like granting a medical license: a lawyer could take no one’s life, whilst a doctor could.” Pike announced his intention to practise as an Attorney at Law on August 18<sup>th</sup> 1834 in the *Advocate*.

In 1834, he fell in love with eighteen year-old Mary Ann Hamilton, who he courted and married at the end of that year. This marriage proved to be a turning point in the fortunes of Pike, since Mary Ann’s family were wealthy, bringing slaves, property and land to the union. Shortly after the marriage, in early 1835, the owner of the *Advocate* decided to sell and he offered the newspaper to Pike for \$2,650. Pike managed this purchase by selling some of his wife’s land and by taking out a mortgage, using the slaves of his wife and her sister as security. This purchase raised Pike’s status as owner and editor of the newspaper, allowing him to indulge in further political commentary and intrigue. It brought him into contact with many persons of

influence and was instrumental in securing for him a coveted partnership in law with Cummins, a prominent local lawyer and politician.

His first child was born to Mary Ann in 1835 and by the time his fourth son was born in 1840 he had built a private mansion in Little Rock, which still stands, at a cost of \$7,500 financed by the sale of some of his wife's property. Seven more children were born in the 1840's, although not all the children survived. His marriage was blissfully happy at this time.

Pike was a great supporter of Whig politics, of statehood for Arkansas, of paper money, local banks and a national bank to regulate the issue of local bank notes. He was a prominent supporter of slavery and rounded on northern fanaticism for abolition, stating that "abolitionists were a minority in the north and were treated there with the contempt they deserved." At this point in his life his biographer<sup>1</sup> concludes that as a young editor he was a peace-loving, honourable, brave, immaculate man. He was also opinionated and factious, continually parading before the public his own virtues, whilst castigating the faults of his enemies – a characteristic he carried to his grave.

In April 1837, Pike concluded that his ownership of the *Advocate* was a financial liability and so he merged the newspaper with another in Little Rock, to form the *Times and Advocate*, with Pike as the Senior Editor. This did not diminish, however, his capacity for political mud slinging, or his political manoeuvrings, using somewhat unpleasant tactics. By late 1837, Pike had sold his share in the *Times and Advocate* for \$1,500 to concentrate on his legal work, whilst at the same time supporting the Whig political cause.

From 1835 to 1837, he was a circuit lawyer, travelling around 1,200 miles a year. In 1838, Pike was retained to defend Bill Irons, an old hunter, for murder in the court of Hot Springs County<sup>5</sup>. Regrettably, the host with whom Pike was staying advised that he could not provide him with the best fare. "I am afraid that you will have no game. We cannot get wild meat for love or money." "Never mind," Pike replied, "we will have game tomorrow." In the morning he went to Irons who had surrendered to the Sheriff saying, "You must get your horse and gun and kill me a deer and some turkeys." Irons wanted to help but had to respond, "How about the Sheriff, he's got me now, you know." Undaunted, Pike retorted, "I'll be answerable for you. You'll not be wanted today. You go and kill the meat and I'll make it all right with him." This he did, returning with a deer and two turkeys. When the case was brought before the court, Pike successfully secured his acquittal, since at the time of his offence Irons had been assisting the Sheriff to capture a thief who he had shot when someone in the posse shouted, "Shoot him!"

Around this time Davy Crockett stopped off in Little Rock on his way to Texas<sup>5</sup> and had supper with Pike. Crockett told a story of a show in Washington where they had a monkey. Crockett commented loudly, "That monkey looks for all the world like my colleague Campbell of Tennessee." There followed a severe dig in his ribs, causing him to turn round to see Campbell standing behind him. Crockett took off his hat with apparent embarrassment and said, "Campbell, I owe an apology, sir, but whether to you or to the monkey I do not know."

Success on the legal circuit enabled Pike to gain a reputation as a scholar in law circles, leading to his appointment as the first official reporter of the Arkansas Supreme Court, which office he served until 1844. At the age of 31 in 1840 he had established himself as a leading Arkansas lawyer. In the same year Pike dissolved his legal partnership with Cummins and formed his own law practice.

His other talents gained expression too. In 1843, he became President of the “Club of Forty,” devoted to literary pursuits and from 1838-1841 he was a supporter of the “Little Rock Theatre.” Pike’s “Hymns to the Gods” was published in Blackwood’s *Edinburgh Magazine*, drawing great literary praise and poems were published in “*Boston Pearl*” and “*American Monthly Magazine*”.

### **A TASTE OF ACTION AND A DUEL**

From 1837, Pike commanded the Little Rock Guards, which became known as Captain Pike’s Artillery, becoming expert under his leadership in both mounted and foot drill and in much demand for parades and displays. In April 1846, the United States went to war with Mexico over the disputed question of the Rio Grande boundary. Pike’s company was drafted into the Arkansas regiment and marched first for Washington and then to Texas and Mexico where they saw action in the Battle of Buena Vista.

Writing after the American victory in this battle, Pike was critical of a lack of discipline in the American force which he believed had led to more loss of life than was necessary. This stirred up bad feeling and on his return to Little Rock, Pike discovered that two officers had wrongly asserted that Pike’s squadron had become separated from the regiment and had taken no part in the battle. So vexed was Pike at this deception that he challenged Colonel Roane, one of the officers, to a duel.

Pike and Roane met in duel on July 29<sup>th</sup> 1847 and after two discharges of fire each, neither was hit. The seconds interceded and persuaded them to stop the combat. Pike initially replied, “I want one more fire at him and will hit him in a vital part. I believe he has tried to kill me; I have not tried to hit him.” After reflection, however, he agreed that the duel should be stopped but “do not by anything compromise my honour.”

### **A RETURN TO LEGAL AFFAIRS**

From 1848 onwards, Pike was a fervent advocate for states’ rights and a protector of the status quo for slavery. He worked tirelessly for building a Pacific railroad, advocating a preferred route to the advantage of the southern states. Whilst his proposal formed the basis of a petition to Congress, it was not successful, largely because of slavery issues. In the face of attempts by the north to exclude southern states because of their adherence to slavery, he continued to fight for the rights of the southern states within the Union, against the stance of his own Whig party, leaving Pike isolated.

Whilst Pike was not successful politically, it did not dampen his support through the early 1850s for a southern railroad. However, he championed a route which depended on securing a right of way through Mexico which again was politically unacceptable.

From 1852, Pike was committed to legal representation of Creek and Choctaw Indians for compensation claims against the American government. This work did not stop him from having a good time. Whilst in Washington, he formed the Wigwam Club, which was devoted to fine dining and good company. In the midst of the Indian claims and disillusioned with Little Rock, he decided in 1854 to open a law office in New Orleans. He read widely to prepare for admission as a civil lawyer and when examined for admission to the bar of the Supreme Court he was asked "What works have you read on the Roman law?," he gave details of one such work (where he had in fact read over 30 other volumes in preparation) and was admitted to practice in February 1855. From 1855 to 1858, Pike's residence was in New Orleans, although his family remained in Little Rock and he was working alternately between Washington and New Orleans. Finding this constant shuttling back and forth impracticable he dissolved his practice in New Orleans in 1858 and returned to Little Rock.

The Creek case was concluded successfully in 1857, leading Pike to spend three leisurely months hunting and fishing in Creek country, whilst preparing a compendium of Creek vocabulary, later extended in 1861 to cover other Indian languages and dialects.

With the Creek fee secured, Pike remained in Indian country to enjoy the hunting. During his stay a newspaper reported that he had been accidentally killed. The news travelled faster than he did, so that when he returned and met John Coyle, a member of the Wigwam Club in Washington, Coyle asked, "What right have you to be walking about when you are damned dead?" "Because," answered Pike, "I have not been waked.....and until that, how could I keep quiet in the grave?" "You shall be waked then," Coyle declared.

There followed first, a banquet to honour the "departed," where guests were entertained with Pike's stories, anecdotes and songs. Pike was indignant on only one point – he claimed that the newspapers had libelled him by reporting that he had died rich. He was, he said, a poet, soldier and lawyer. In the first two categories, no one gets rich and in the third he was a trifle too honest and free handed to become rich! Three days later his wake was attended by 150 "mourners." The eulogies greatly moved Pike, who responded quietly and seriously and then broke into a parody on his own composition of "The Fine Arkansas Gentleman," taken up in refrain by others. The revelry lasted all night and the occasion was remembered many years later as one of the outstanding social events of the decade.

Pike returned to the Choctaw compensation claim, which after much debate and amendment, was eventually settled in 1861. Payments from this and the Creek claim were richly rewarding for Pike.

### **THE KNOW NOTHING PARTY**

During the 1850s Pike fell out of favour with the Whig party and joined the American Party in 1854, which feared increasing immigration into northern states as a threat to the southern position on slavery. The party espoused an end to immigration, in order to keep America for the Americans. It was also hostile to Roman Catholicism and



papal interference in the affairs of the United States. A third degree of the order swore to discourage and oppose anything which weakened the Union. It was known as the "Know Nothing Party" because members took an oath of secrecy and were supposed to answer "I know nothing" when asked about the objectives of the party.

Pike was very influential within the party, organising membership within Arkansas and serving as President on the State Council. The party suffered from in-fighting on the "Catholic" issue (which had little interest for Pike) and came under attack from northern states on the issue of slavery, creating a north-south split in the party. Pike proposed to the National Council that the slavery issue should be kept out of discussions and that concentration should be on the three principals of the order. His resolutions were voted down and a fiery debate ensued with the anti-slavery faction coming out on top in 1856, persuading Pike to resign and stand aside from the party.

Pike suffered a considerable amount of public criticism concerning his part within the American Party. Indeed, one commentator charged him with betrayal and stated that "his very name was death to any political party ...and his desertion... has been the cause of rejoicing among true Americans."

### **SLAVERY AND SECESSION**

During the mid 1850s, Pike vigorously defended the right of southerners to own slaves in a series of *Letters to the People of the Northern States*. He protested that slave owners were paternalistic in their ownership. He considered the blacks inferior to the whites and that if they were set free they would starve. His approach was to let things take a natural course, where conditions and education would be progressively improved until the blacks could be self sufficient. Similarly he railed against those whites who wished to recommence the slave trade. He wrote<sup>5</sup>, "Slavery is a disease, whose spectral shadow lies always upon America's threshold, originating in the avarice and cruelty of the slave trade." His main motivation at this time was to protect the status quo and to protect the union.

However, the forces for secession grew stronger, with first South Carolina seceding and then, one after the other, the rest of the southern states. When finally Arkansas joined them, Pike accepted the inevitable and allied himself with the Confederacy in May 1861.

Pike's main concern at this stage was to secure Indian Territory for the Confederacy as a defence against possible attack from northern forces. Because of his knowledge of Indian affairs and his special position with the Creeks and Choctaws, Pike was appointed Commissioner, with the task of visiting Indian tribes, assuring them of the friendship of the Confederate States and to induce them to join the Confederacy. He visited the Cherokees and then the Creeks, where he learnt from the Secretary for War of the Confederate States that he had not been granted any authority for making treaties in the name of the Confederate States or authority to incur any financial obligations. He was faced with abandoning his mission or to proceed without authority. He decided on the latter course. His journeys took him into wild Indian country, often without an escort, over a period of four months and resulted in nine treaties signed on generous terms to Indian tribes - with the Comanches, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Seminoles amongst them, who were then armed and



became allies of the Confederate States. Pike then returned in October 1861 with the treaties and learned that the secretary of the treasury had refused to honour financial commitments that he had incurred in disbursements to the Indians. Pike wrote to the Secretary of War who made good his embarrassment. Pike then learnt that he had been commissioned a brigadier general, to command the Indian troops under his treaties.

Pike entered enthusiastically into his new commission, requesting that the Secretary of War should grant him authority to receive into Confederate service three regiments of white infantry, two companies of white artillery and enough Indians to bring the force up to 7,500 men; saying that he did not desire “to be merely a general of Indians.” In the meantime Pike’s Indian Treaties were submitted to Congress and eventually all were ratified after some significant amendments.

### **THE BATTLE OF PEA RIDGE AND ITS AFTERMATH**

Pike was subordinate to Major General Van Dorn who had, in 1858, made a brutal attack on a defenceless Comanche camp whilst the Indians were under a flag of truce, causing Pike to write to the War Department severely criticising Van Dorn. Van Dorn now intended a spring campaign in Missouri which was forestalled because of a defeat suffered by Major General Sterling Price, who had been forced to retreat to Arkansas, with the Federal forces under Brigadier Samuel R. Curtis in pursuit. Van Dorn and Pike were called upon to prevent Price’s forces from being over-run.

There followed the Battle of Pea Ridge, where Van Dorn’s forces were forced to retreat, leaving Pike and his forces unaware of this and exposed to the Federal force under Curtis. Federal guns started firing into his line, so in response Pike ordered a charge of his Cherokee and white forces. The hideous war whoops of the Cherokees terrorised the Federal cavalrymen, who abandoned their guns and retreated. The Cherokees became confused and out of control, not listening to orders. Once the Federal forces had regrouped, they shelled the Indians and scattered them. Pike attempted to regain control of his troops in the shelter of woods. However, being overwhelmed by the proximity of Federal forces, they were forced to retreat into Cherokee country.

Shortly after the battle, Pike heard that one of the Federal dead had been scalped and that other wounded had been brutally knifed and shot. He immediately wrote a special order to his troops condemning these atrocities and a week later, under a flag of truce, he issued a statement to Curtis, the Federal commander, stating that he condemned the atrocities and had ordered a court martial of the offender.

The atrocities were, however, picked up by the northern press who embellished and exaggerated the details. In due course, the Republican Congress ordered Curtis to formally report on the action. His report stated that “of 25 men killed in the field of my regiment, 8 were scalped and the bodies of others were horribly mutilated, being fired into by musket balls and pierced through the body and neck with long knives.” Pike was widely condemned for the barbarous atrocity. Whilst not being directly involved and widely condemning it himself, there is no doubt that Pike was not in control of his own troops at the time.

Pike made an independent decision to withdraw his headquarters to Scalesville, but before starting work Van Dorn ordered him to take his forces to the eastern part of Arkansas to assist in the defence of the state. Pike ignored the order, believing that his own plan was better and he accused Van Dorn of commandeering resources due to him. Whilst Pike was attempting to surmount the difficulties of supplying his troops and constructing fieldworks at his headquarters, further trouble developed for him. Major General Hindman was deployed as Van Dorn's superior officer, with the task of organising the defences of the state. He immediately ordered Pike and his forces to send his entire white infantry force to Little Rock "without the least delay." Pike grudgingly complied with this, warning Hindman that this order destroyed his own plan and paralysed his effort to save the Indian country for the Confederacy. From this time on the quarrel between Pike and Hindman never slackened.

The situation was exacerbated when Hindman unilaterally proclaimed martial law in Arkansas. Pike was outraged since he believed that only the President was entitled to do this. He wrote to the President as a private citizen, even though he was a serving officer, bitterly condemning the action. Hindman then commandeered Pike's guns and ordered Pike to travel night and day to Fort Smith to take command of all forces in Indian Territory and northwest Arkansas. Instead of complying with this order, Pike wrote a letter of resignation, with a request that it should be forwarded to President Davis. Hindman relieved Pike of his command and ordered him to report in person to Little Rock. Pike disregarded this command and went instead to Fort Washita in Chickasaw country, where he published an address to the chiefs and people of the Five Civilised Tribes stating that he had resigned because Hindman had ordered him out of their country to defend northwest Arkansas. He then condemned Van Dorn and Hindman for leaving the Indian troops unpaid, unarmed and unsupported. This address was suppressed by Col. Douglas C. Cooper, who had replaced Pike as commander of Indian Territory and Pike was denounced as either lunatic or traitor. Hindman forwarded Cooper's report to Richmond, withdrawing his support for Pike's resignation in order that he might court martial him "on charges of falsehood, cowardice and treason."

Warned that an armed force was on the way to arrest him, Pike escaped to Texas. There he learnt that Maj. Gen. Holmes had replaced Hindman, so he decided to report in person to Holmes in order to plead his case and to press charges against Hindman. Holmes would have none of this, recommending that the President should accept Pike's resignation.

Whilst waiting to hear whether his resignation had been accepted, Pike inexplicably returned to Fort Washita and despatched a formal notification to Holmes declaring that he had resumed command of Indian Territory because his resignation "could not and would not be accepted." Holmes continued with the practice of diverting money and supplies intended for the Indians, causing Indian discipline to deteriorate. When Cooper was ordered to lead an Indian expedition into Kansas, the Indians refused to cooperate. Cooper was routed by Federal forces and reported drunk and unfit for duty. Pike was arrested by 250 Missouri cavalymen on the orders of Hindman and taken to Washington Arkansas, where he was released on the orders of General Holmes who had learned that his resignation had been accepted.

Pike returned to his family in Little Rock, where he pressed charges against Holmes for disobeying orders and for conduct unbecoming of an officer and gentleman. When the Secretary of War ignored the charges, Pike in December 1862 released his famous *Letter Addressed to Major General Holmes* to the public, with a torrent of verbal denunciation against Holmes and Hindman. Shortly afterwards, Hindman suffered a heavy defeat, forcing him to retreat to Little Rock, leading to a general public clamour against both Hindman and Holmes. Hindman was relieved of duty, whilst Pike determined to appeal his case against him and Holmes to Congress. He had his charges printed and submitted to Congress as part of a debate pertaining to martial law. Hindman was severely condemned but Holmes was not mentioned, leading Pike to write a second public letter stating that, having preferred the charges, he would not pursue the case further. The state did not choose to prosecute and Pike returned to Arkansas, where he arrived in May 1863.

### **A RETREAT TO GREASY COVE**

Following his return to Arkansas, Pike proceeded into the mountainous region of south west Montgomery County, where he purchased a small farm in Greasy Cove on the Little Missouri River. He built a log cabin and worked on the completion of ritual for the Scottish Rite.

During this time the Federal Army advanced on Little Rock, using Pike's house as their headquarters. Pike's wife was in the house for the whole of the time it was used in this way. Marauders of the Federal Army heard of Pike's retreat in Greasy Cove and laid plans to rob and kill him. Hearing of these plans, Pike fled with his money and valuable books, but the rest of his possessions and his log cabin were burnt to the ground.

### **BACK AGAIN TO THE LEGAL PROFESSION AND NEWSPAPERS**

In 1864, Pike heard that his son Walter Lacy, a Captain in the Confederate Army, had been robbed and murdered by Federal Forces. Around this time he moved his family to safety in Lafayette County. He built a log cabin, continued working on the Scottish Rite ritual and wrote the massive volume *Morals and Dogma*<sup>3</sup>, a series of lectures on the 32 degrees of the Scottish Rite. On 8<sup>th</sup> June 1864, Pike was appointed an associate justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court.

At the end of the Civil War on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1865, Pike feared arrest and so moved his family to Boston Texas. He then travelled to Memphis where, with the help of Masonic friends, he prepared a petition to President Johnson for a pardon. In support of this, he moved on to New York, where he went before a notary public and took the oath of allegiance required for his application for pardon. He also secured another 67 signatures from Scottish Rite Masons in support of his pardon. However, whilst in New York, he wrote a letter to the *New York Express* denying responsibility for the alleged atrocities at Pea Ridge, which alerted people to his presence there. He was forced to flee to Ottawa, Canada, where he lived for two months awaiting his pardon and until President Johnson signed an order permitting him to return home unmolested.

Pike returned to Memphis and opened an office to practise law, with partner Confederate General Charles W. Adams. He then visited his wife and children Yvon, Mary Ann and Isadore, who were living in their old home in Little Rock, where he found that his property had been seized and sold and that he had been indicted for treason.

The return to Memphis in 1866 marked his permanent separation from his wife Mary Ann. They had experienced many difficulties in the 1850s and had lived separately since his move to New Orleans in 1855. Later, in 1875, he wrote that “her temper was not only very terrible, but she was capricious, unreasonable and untruthful.” His home, grounds, furniture and slaves were held in trust for Mary Ann, granting her exclusive use, with the title reverting to her in the event of Pike’s death. Other than for the period 1865-1868, the children lived with Pike and Mary Ann lived alone.

Pike’s pardon was eventually secured in 1866. It was handed to him when the Supreme Council called on President Johnson in the White House. Pike, however, refused to accept the pardon because it was conditional on him paying \$300 in costs incurred in selling his seized property.

The law practice in Memphis struggled to survive because of the economic depression, so borrowing money from friends in New York, Pike took an opportunity to purchase the *Memphis Daily Appeal*. He then embarked on various political crusades justifying cessation of the southern states and condemning attempts to win the votes of newly franchised blacks. He declared that the ballot “might just as safely be given to many Southern American monkeys .... We do not want their votes and never shall.”

### **THE KU KLUX KLAN<sup>6</sup>**

In 1868, Pike switched political allegiance to the Democratic Party, working hard to overthrow radicalism in the South. Pike, with other Confederates who had been disenfranchised and denied access to the ballot box, resorted to controversial methods to aid the Democratic cause, stating “We mean that the white race and that race alone, shall govern this country.” They turned the socially oriented Ku Klux Klan into a vigilante’s association and used it to intimidate blacks into absenting themselves from the polls. Whilst there appears to be no positive proof that Pike was a member of the Ku Klux Klan and he was certainly not the founder<sup>7</sup>, there are at least three histories of the Klan<sup>6</sup> stating that he was a high ranking official of the order, although Allen W. Trelease in a recent authoritative history casts doubt on his membership. The Grand Lodge of Columbia and Yukon mentions five such histories, three of which claim that Pike was a high ranking member. If not a member he did state in print that he supported “one great Order of Southern Brotherhood ...whose very existence should be concealed from all but its members.”

This period was quite a happy one for Pike, who was living with his children and engaging with them in musical entertainment and in literary and poetic discourse. It was clear, though, that he had not succeeded in either law or journalism, leading him in August 1868 to sell his share in the *Memphis Daily Appeal*. In his printed letter of departure he wrote, “I would infinitely rather be defeated by the negro vote than succeed by it.”

## **DRAWING TOWARDS THE END**

From 1868-1878, Pike returned to law, opening a partnership in Washington. He was, however, categorised as a rebel from the Civil War and this, together with the alleged atrocities of Pea Ridge and his political reputation, held sway against him. Despite a few notable cases the law practice did not succeed and was dissolved in 1879.

In 1869, Pike lost his beloved daughter Isadore, to an apparent accidental death caused by chloroform, distressing him greatly. He lived quietly with Lillian, his other daughter, until 1873, having barely enough money to pay expenses.

He loved the company and affection of other women and at this time he struck up a friendship with Vinnie Ream, who was a talented sculptress. Undoubtedly he expressed love for her, but there is nothing to imply that this was anything other than platonic and when she married, he treated her husband as a son. The platonic relationship acted as a conduit for Pike to write numerous poems and essays to Vinnie Ream, including his most famous poems *Every Year* and *Ma Triste Cherie* plus the five volume (2,166 pages) *Essays to Vinnie*.

Other important works published at this time were based on Pike's study of Ancient Hindu and Persian religions and his completion of *Morals and Dogma* in 1871. These fatigued Pike and were the end of his serious scholarship. The revised rituals and *Morals and Dogma* made the Scottish Rite what he believed Masonry was intended to be - "A Teacher of Great Truths, inspired by an upright and enlightened reason, a firm and constant Wisdom, and an affectionate and beloved philanthropy."<sup>5</sup>

In his latter years he concentrated on his work for the Scottish Rite, involving extensive travelling in his capacity as Sovereign Grand Commander of the Southern Jurisdiction. He was, however, impoverished and forced to apply to the Supreme Council for financial recompense, stating "I wish to devote what remains of my time to the propagation of the Rite." He was granted an annual annuity of \$1,800 and allowed to live in the House of the Temple of the Supreme Council in Washington D.C. Not wishing to be considered "a pensioner on the bounty of the Order," he donated his extensive personal library to the Supreme Council, stipulating that it should be accepted in full payment of all his indebtedness and of his right to live in the quarters of the Supreme Council.

His final years were devoted to the Scottish Rite, but were plagued by illness, leading progressively to debilitation. He expired on 1st April 1891. For five days he lay in state in the House of the Temple and then for two further days in the Scottish Rite Cathedral. At midnight on 7<sup>th</sup> April, his body was escorted to the Congregational Church for the Kadosh funeral ceremony. The next day his children, members of Supreme Council and numerous Masons and non-Masons carried him to the Church of Ascension for the burial service of the Episcopal Church.

Albert Pike is the only Confederate soldier to be honoured in America's capital, where a statue of him stands in Judiciary Square. Albert Pike Highway runs from Hot Springs, Arkansas to Colorado Springs, Colorado. A national park and several schools have been named after him.



At least four Masonic Lodges take their name from him<sup>8</sup> and the Grand Lodge of Arkansas currently gives the “Albert Pike Award” for excellence in Masonic web site design and content.



**The Albert Pike Monument<sup>1</sup>**



**Albert Pike as Grand Commander (c1875)<sup>1</sup>**

### **MORALS AND DOGMA<sup>4</sup>**

*Morals and Dogma* is possibly Pike’s best known work and was traditionally given to U.S.A. candidates upon receipt of the 14<sup>th</sup> degree of the Scottish Rite, a practice which ceased in 1974.<sup>9</sup> The Preface prepared by the Supreme Council emphasises that the teachings in *Morals and Dogma* are not sacramental, that they go “beyond the realm of Morality into those other domains of truth and thought” and that “Everyone is entirely free to reject and dissent from whatsoever herein may seem to him to be untrue or unsound.”

In *Morals and Dogma* Pike expounds upon the background and significance of the Scottish Rite ceremonies as a connected system of moral teaching. He attempts to illustrate the origins of Freemasonry through an examination of ancient and comparative religions and references to hermeticism, alchemy and philosophy. There are many references to Light within Masonry, stating that Masonry is a search after Light. In the chapter on the 30<sup>th</sup> Degree of Knight Kadosh he defines Freemasonry as “the subjugation of the human that is in the Divine; the conquest of the Appetites and Passions by the Moral Sense and the Reason; a continual effort, struggle and Warfare of the Spiritual against the Material and Sensual. That victory when it has been achieved and secured, and the conqueror may rest on his shield and wear the well earned laurels, is the true HOLY EMPIRE.”

Throughout *Morals and Dogma* Pike is clear that Masonry is not a religion whilst stressing the pre-eminence of God and placing God in the Masonic creed (Chapter 23)



as “INFINITE TRUTH, INFINITE BEAUTY, INFINITE GOODNESS. He is the Holy of Holies, as Author of the Moral Law, as the Prince of Liberty, of Justice and Charity, Dispenser of Reward and Punishment. Such a God is not an abstract God; but an intelligent and free person, Who has made us in his own image.”

With such clear references to the Deity and his own belief it is difficult to see how Pike has been claimed to be a Devil worshipper. That claim stems from this reference from Chapter 19 of *Morals and Dogma*:

*“Lucifer, the Son of the Morning! Is it he who bears the Light, and with its splendours intolerable blinds feeble, sensual, or selfish Souls? Doubt it not!”*

This extract is not only out of context, but is incomplete. The full quotation is:

*“The Apocalypse is, to those who receive the nineteenth Degree, the Apotheosis of that Sublime Faith, which aspires to God alone, and despises all the works of Lucifer. Lucifer the Light-bearer! Strange and mysterious name given to the Spirit of Darkness! Lucifer, the Son of the Morning! Is it he who bears the Light, and with its splendours intolerable blinds feeble, sensual, or selfish Souls? Doubt it not!”*

The full quotation makes the situation abundantly clear and rebuts those totally false claims of Devil Worship.

### **ALBERT PIKE’S ESOTERICA**<sup>10</sup>

Within *Esoterica* Albert Pike explains the sources and meanings of the oldest and most frequently encountered Masonic symbols. In some ways it is an even more important book than *Morals and Dogma*, for whilst the former contains lectures explaining the significance of the 33 degrees, *Esoterica* contains Pike’s research detailing likely origins of Masonic symbols and their significance. Initially a private work with only two manuscript copies, it was not originally intended for publication.

Pike believed that great truths lay concealed within the symbolism of Freemasonry. He exchanged correspondence in the 1880s with Robert Freke Gould, (author of *The History of Freemasonry*) looking at the origins of Freemasonry and sent a rough manuscript to Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076. Gould wrote to friends in Quatuor Coronati Lodge in 1888:

*“Outside the Lodge there is only one person that we who are inside it should look up to with profound veneration for his Masonic writings, and that is Bro. Albert Pike.”*

Writing to Pike on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1888:

*“There is no one amongst our British writers who could have written up to the level of your own performance.”*

Pike’s work led Gould to believe that:

*“The essential of the Masonic ceremonial can be traced behind 1717.”*

Pike’s thesis was that the meaning and interpretation of symbols had over the years been lost through their oral transmission and that in its symbolism Freemasonry is more ancient and venerable than any of the world’s living religion - that we take for

granted the symbols before us, without enquiry. He expounds on this through a series of five lessons.

The appendices of *Esoterica* contain other important information regarding Albert Pike's faith and copies of four exposés of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, including that of Samuel Prichard in 1730.

### **OTHER SPECIOUS CLAIMS**

There are a number of claims, many on web sites attacking Freemasonry, that Pike was a Satanist. In one example, Arthur Cottrell claims<sup>11</sup> that Pike "was said to be a Satanist, who indulged in the occult and he apparently possessed a bracelet which he used to summon Lucifer, with whom he had a constant communication." Cottrell also makes another unfounded claim that Pike "was the Grand Master of a Luciferian group known as the order of the Palladium (or Sovereign Council of Wisdom), founded in Paris in 1737."

The Palladium was originally identified in a hoax by Leo Taxil (born Gabriel Antoine Jogand-Pages) as "the most secret Masonic order which practised Devil worship, murder and other brutalities of an erotic nature. His works published in 1885 and 1886 were very popular with a public eager to read the horrors of Freemasonry."<sup>12</sup>

Many claims of devil worship are based on the Taxil hoax, by using the following quotation<sup>12</sup>:

*"That which we must say to a crowd is - We worship a God, but it is the God that one adores without superstition.*

*To you, Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, we say this, that you may repeat it to the Brethren of the 32nd, 31st, and 30th degrees - The Masonic Religion should be, by all of us initiates of the high degrees, maintained in the purity of the Luciferian Doctrine.*

*If Lucifer were not God, would Adonay whose deeds prove his cruelty, perfidy and hatred of man, barbarism and repulsion for science, would Adonay and his priests, calumniate him?*

*Yes, Lucifer is God, and unfortunately Adonay is also god. For the eternal law is that there is no light without shade, no beauty without ugliness, no white without black, for the absolute can only exist as two gods: darkness being necessary to the statue, and the brake to the locomotive.*

*Thus, the doctrine of Satanism is a heresy; and the true and pure philosophical religion is the belief in Lucifer, the equal of Adonay; but Lucifer, God of Light and God of Good, is struggling for humanity against Adonay, the God of Darkness and Evil."*

*Instructions to the 23 Supreme Councils of the World, July 14, 1889. Recorded by A.C. De La Rive in La Femme et l'Enfant dans la Franc Maconnerie Universelle on page 588*

Similar views were expressed by conspiracy theorist Edith Starr Miller,<sup>13</sup> who quotes a letter from Giuseppe Mazzini to Pike dated January 22 1870, claiming that Freemasonry was infiltrated by the Illuminati, with a view to involving Pike as part of a "super rite" to govern all Freemasonry and to secure world domination.<sup>7</sup>

William Carr repeated the claim that Pike was in correspondence with Mazzini<sup>13</sup> and that this correspondence was on display in the British Museum. He claimed that a letter from Pike to Mazzini dated August 15 1871, forecast that three world wars would be brought about by the Illuminati. The first two world wars accurately described the 1914-18 and the 1939-1945 world wars, whilst the third forecast a war fomented by the Illuminate between the Zionists and the Islamic World, resulting in the destruction of Christianity and atheism.

The British Museum has since confirmed that the documents referred to by Carr have never been in their possession<sup>13</sup>. Such false claims have, however, unfairly tarnished the reputation of Albert Pike.

On April 17th 1897, twelve years after Taxil first launched the hoax, he admitted it was just that.<sup>14</sup> Before an assembly at the Paris Geographical Hall, Taxil told the crowd that the last decade of anti-Masonic literature had been falsely stated fabrications. Taxil went on to describe various “pranks” based on his hoax and concluded by stating<sup>14</sup> that Palladism “is annihilated” “Palladism is now dead for good. Its father just murdered it.”

As well documented as his admission of defrauding a gullible public is, the myth of Albert Pike's statement is still used today to slander the fraternity of Masonry. In fact, some Fundamentalist Christian Web sites go so far as to attribute the false statement to Pike's book *Moral's and Dogma*. Other claims based on the Taxil Hoax, such as those of Cottrell, Millar and Carr perpetuate the damaging falsehood.

## **CONCLUSION**

Finally, let me try to sum up in order to assess whether Pike may be considered a rogue or a role model:

By his own admission, Pike was not as successful as he wished as either a lawyer or a journalist, although he had some notable achievements as a lawyer, principally as a defender of Indian causes and in securing compensation for them.

He was a prodigious intellectual, having considerable success and recognition as a poet, author, academic researcher, linguist and philosopher. Undoubtedly he had a phenomenal intellect and he authored high quality works, published across a broad literary spectrum.

He could be very self-opinionated, although many reports give testimony to his good company and as a raconteur and bon vivant, inspiring great love and personal devotion from his friends.

As a soldier he favoured independent actions and was often in conflict with his superiors, even disagreeing with and disobeying orders, in order to follow his own desires, to a point which led him to be branded as a traitor and threatened with a court martial.

Possibly his principal failure was as a Confederate soldier and for the atrocities of his troops at the Battle of Pea Ridge, even though he was not personally involved. Undoubtedly, this atrocity and his reputation as a Confederate rebel were major factors contributing to his impoverished state in latter years.

Politically he was forthright and controversial in his views and often at odds with members of his own party; leading to charges of betrayal and fraught membership of three political parties.

His attitude towards slavery and the Ku Klux Klan whilst reprehensible in today's society should perhaps be judged in a kinder light, within the context of his own life and times in Arkansas.

It is quite evident that he was more successful as a leader than as a follower. It was as a leader that he excelled in Freemasonry; as Sovereign Grand Commander of the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite and in high office in the York Rite. He left a rich legacy of Masonic teaching, particularly through his revisions to the ritual of the Scottish Rite; his epic *Morals and Dogma* and through his explanation of symbolism in *Esoterica*. He built up a truly international reputation for the quality of his Masonic writings.

Perhaps we should remember him for his many literary and Masonic achievements rather than for earlier personal issues, poor judgement and failures. He was a truly great Freemason and author, from whom we can learn much today.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

1. This paper is largely based on: A Life of Albert Pike – Walter Lee Brown, The University of Arkansas Press. Where additional source materials have been used these are identified individually and separately.
2. The Ancient and Accepted Rite in England received its Charter from the Northern Jurisdiction. For information on the establishment of the Southern Jurisdiction and the Supreme Council of England see Rose Croix Essays by John Mandelberg (published by Lewis Masonic).
3. Phil Elam, Grand Orator of Masons in Missouri (1999-2000) at the Scottish Rite Men's Luncheon Club, May 2000.
4. Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite – Albert Pike.
5. Albert Pike – The Man Beyond the Monument. Jim Tresner, published by the Scottish Rite Research Society.
6. Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon. Discredited histories of the Ku Klux Klan. Web site.
7. Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon web site. Anti-masonry Frequently Asked Questions.
8. Lodges – #33 Washington DC, #303 Wichita, #714 Little Rock, #1169 San Antonio.
9. Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon web site. Who is Albert Pike?
10. Symbolism of the Blue Degrees in Freemasonry: Albert Pike's Esoterica – Transcribed and Edited by Arturo de Hoyas.
11. Arthur Cottrell. Who Was Albert Pike? – thetruthseeker.co.uk
12. History and Mythos of The Knights Templar [www.templarhistory.com](http://www.templarhistory.com).
13. Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon web site. Pike and Mazzini.
14. Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon web site. The Confession of Leo Taxil.