1959	*4,103,161*
1960	4,099,219
1961	4,086,499
1962	4,063,563
1963	4,034,020
1964	4,005,605
1965	3,987,690
1966	3,948,193
1967	3,910,509
1968	3,868,854
1969	3,817,846
1970	3,817,846
1971	3,718,718
1972	3,661,507
1973	3,611,448
1974	3,561,767
1975	3,512,628
1976	3,470,980
1977	3,418,844
1978	3,360,409
1979	3,304,334
1980	3,251,528
1981	3,188,175
1982	3,121,746
1983	3,060,242
1984	2,992,389
1985	*2,914,421*
1986	2,839,962
1987	2,763,828
1988	2,682,537
1989	2,608,935
1990	2,531,643
1991	2,452,676
1992	2,371,863
1993	2,293,949
1994	2,225,611
1995	2,153,316
1996	2,089,578
1997	2,021,909
1998	1,967,208
1999	1,902,588
2000	1,841,169
2001	1,774,200
2002	1,727,505
2003	1,671,255
2004	1,617,032
2005	1,569,812
2006	1,525,131
2007	1,483,449
2008	1,444,823
2009	1,404,059
2010	*1,373,453*
2011	1,336,503

Masonic Membership and the 26-Year Phenomena

Bro. Carl V. Rabstejnek

Descriptive statistics represents data in ways to clarify information and illustrate relationships that may not be apparent in a table of raw numbers. This exercise shows ways of using the "Masonic Membership Statistics" located at http://www.msana.com/msastats.asp. Before proceeding, it will be useful to load the data into Excel® or another spread sheet. Only arithmetic level math is used.

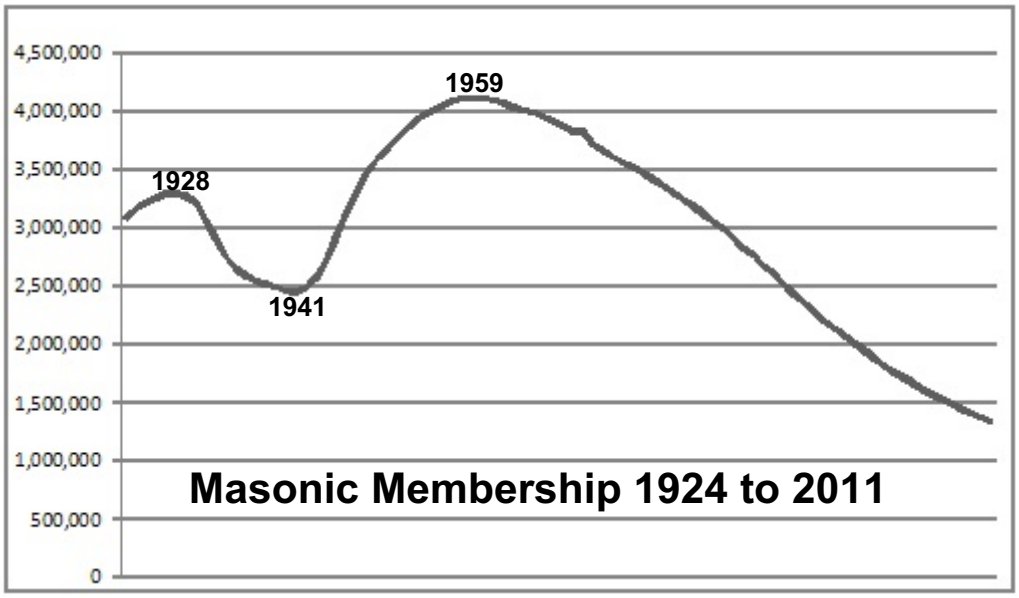
On the left is the data for two 26-year periods, 1959 to 1984 and 1985 to 2010. Calculate yearly percent change by subtracting from and then dividing by prior year. If you round the percent column to one significant digit, the decrease in membership will be zero to two percent for the initial period and then increase to an average (median and mode) of "3" for the latter period. Use the average function and the arithmetic mean will be 1.20%, then 2.95 %. We will use 3%.

The right hand columns were produced by extending the left hand columns out for two more 26-year periods using the 3% rate. As the future is uncertain, the number is a guesstimate. Membership is estimated by multiplying the prior year by 0.97. At this rate of decline, the organization will shrink to 624,113 in 2036.

These are simple spread sheet and arithmetic examples using available Masonic data. An interesting exercise would be to obtain U.S. male census data for those years and calculating the percentage of all men who were Masons over the years.

So far, only data was manipulated and an assumption made that decline might continue at the same rate out into the future. The chart below is illustrative of a graphs that could be generated. Note that the organization grew during the WWII years, which continued for more than a decade after the hostilities ended. What social changes occurred over these years that explain growth, then resignations?

This is an exercise in organizing and presenting data so it tells a story. It does not solve problems or suggest future action. Its value is in how people who have an intimate knowledge of the organization use the data for discussion and action.



2012	1,296,408
2013	1,257,516
2014	1,219,790
2015	1,183,196
2016	1,147,701
2017	1,113,270
2018	1,079,871
2019	1,047,475
2020	1,016,051
2021	985,570
2022	956,002
2023	927,322
2024	899,503
2025	872,518
2026	846,342
2027	820,952
2028	796,323
2029	772,434
2030	749,261
2031	726,783
2032	704,979
2033	683,830
2034	663,315
2035	643,416
2036	*624,113*
2037	605,390
2038	587,228
2039	569,611
2040	552,523
2041	535,947
2042	519,869
2043	504,273
2044	489,144
2045	474,470
2046	460,236
2047	446,429
2048	433,036
2049	420,045
2050	407,444
2051	395,220
2052	383,364
2053	371,863
2054	360,707
2055	349,886
2056	339,389
2057	329,207
2058	319,331
2059	309,751
2060	300,459
2061	291,445
2062	*282,702*
2063	274,221
2062	*265,994*