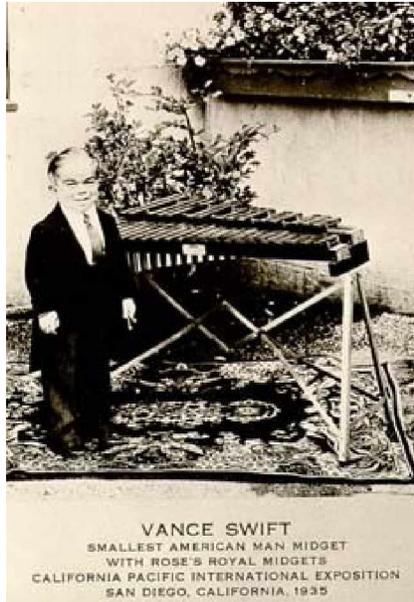


Shortest & Tallest Masons

http://www.phoenixmasonry.org/10,000_famous_freemasons/Volume_4_Q_to_Z.htm

Vance Swift A Midget. Contests with "Tom Thumb" the title of "The World's Smallest Mason." When he was 26 years old, he was 26 inches tall and weighed 34 pounds. He was raised in **Pythagoras Lodge No.355 of New Albany, Indiana**, in March 1943.

http://www.phreeque.com/vance_swift.html



James Vance Swift was born in Floyd, Indiana, in 1916, to average-sized Roxanna and James Swift. Known as "America's Smallest Man", Vance stood 31" tall as an adult and was recruited by Ike Rose to perform with Rose's Royal Midgets and Rose's Parisian Midget Follies, where he worked as a burlesque comedian. He was a resident of several Midget Cities at the grand World's Fairs of the 1930s, including the California Pacific Exposition in 1935 and the Queens County Fair in New York in 1939, where he played the role of deputy sheriff. Vance played the xylophone and enjoyed cooking, building model airplanes and playing bridge, and he aspired to meet President Franklin Roosevelt.

Vance was troubled by poor health, however; an elder brother, Jewett, born with the same type of dwarfism as Vance, passed away at the age of 6. While on vacation with his parents in New Albany, Indiana, in 1946, he died suddenly from a heart attack.

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Reuben A[llen]. Steere (1838-1 Mar 1915) Midget. b. 19 Oct 1838 in Glocester, Providence, RI. He was called the "Second Tom Thumb" and "Colonel Steere." He entered Stone & Murray's Circus in 1870, at the age of 31; weighed 43 lbs. and was 44 inches tall. He was later with Karl Stefan Bailey's Circus, North American Circus, and others. Reuben another midget—Rebecca Ann Myers—7 Mar 1880, and both traveled with circuses until 1906, when they retired to his home in Chepachet, RI. Was made a Mason in **Friendship Lodge No. 7**, Chepachet, RI, in May 1889, and served as its Tyler for 15 years.



On March 7, 1880 Reuben married fellow Lilliputian Rebecca Ann Myers of Indiana (41 inches tall and 41 pounds) at Rochester, NY. Their attendants were also members of the Company. The couple settled down in Chepachet in 1882, where Reuben made a living as Chepachet School's Truant Officer. His wife "Annie" operated a restaurant and confectionary shop next to the Masonic Hall, just north of the present-day Sunoco Station. [photo at right]. Reuben was the son of [Bennett Steere \(1799 - 1876\)](#) and [Louisiana Tourtellot Steere \(1804 - 1899\)](#); he had at least 4 siblings.



< Photo by Chas. Eisenmann, Photographer, 229 Bowery, NY.

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=23466692>

Here's a "short" biography of Rebecca Ann [Turnbull] Myers & Col. Reuben Steere—Rebecca was born 4 Apr 1853, North Bend Twp, Starke County, IN; married 7 Mar 1880, Rochester, NY, to Col. Reuben Steere (44" tall); died 4 Apr 1927, Ober, Starke County, IN while visiting her brother Alfred Turnbull; Rebecca was 41" tall and weighed 39 lbs.

Reuben and Rebecca were members of the famous Lilliputian Opera Company during the 1880s and 1890s. Upon retiring, the couple had a poultry farm in NY. Reuben also served as a truant officer, and Rebecca ran a restaurant in Chepachet, RI.

http://www.phoenixmasonry.org/10.000_famous_freemasons/Volume_4_Q_to_Z.htm

Charles S. Stratton (1838-1883) Midget made famous by P. T. Barnum as "General Tom Thumb." b. 4 Jan 1838 in Bridgeport, CT. He was first exhibited by Barnum in his American Museum in N.Y.C. on 8 Dec 1842. At that time he was not more than two feet high and weighed 16 pounds. Was engaged at a salary of three dollars a week and traveling expenses. In 1844 he visited Europe under Barnum's management, appearing at the courts of England, France and Belgium. He accumulated a large fortune, and settled at Bridgeport. In 1863 he married Lavinia Warren, also a midget exhibited by Barnum. His title to the "world's smallest Mason" was also claimed by two other midgets —Vance Swift and Reuben Allen Steer, qq.v. Later in life Stratton became stout, weighing 70 pounds and was 40 inches in height. He and his wife traveled throughout the world giving exhibitions. He was raised in **St. John's Lodge No. 3, Bridgeport, CT**, 3 Oct 1862; exalted in Jerusalem Chapter No. 13, 8 Oct 1862; greeted in Jerusalem Council No. 16, R. & S.M. on 21 Jul 1863, and knighted in Hamilton Commandery No. 5, 23 Jul 1863; received 32° AASR (NJ) in Lafayette Consistory in 1866, all being in Bridgeport, CT. Hamilton Commandery No. 5, K.T., displays his Knight Templar uniform with the little sword and other proportionate equipment. d. 15 Jul 1883.

Caspar H. Weis

http://books.google.com/books?id=NyPnAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA210&lpg=PA210&dq=%22Caspar+H.+Weis%22&source=bl&ots=WD1sAvZThD&sig=m-DiUVfrGPpm9ky-EYCshYW-q8Y&hl=en&ei=TiYoTrGkH9O30AH4y8TgCq&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CUBUQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22Caspar%20H.%20Weis%22&f=false page 210.

We present herewith two portraits of **Bro. Caspar H. Weis**, of Philadelphia, the smallest Mason, supposedly, in the world. He is 28 years of age, **three feet eleven inches in height** and perfectly proportioned. He is a member of **Richard Vaux lodge, No. 384, of Philadelphia**, in which he was made a Mason, June 10, 1901. His raising of course attracted considerable attention and a large attendance, but Bro. Weis takes all such curiosity in the best of humor, for he has grown used to it. He experienced the same sort of thing when he took six degrees in the Odd Fellows, as well as when he was on the stage as a member of the Lilliputian Company, in which he made himself famous as "Commodore" Weis.

Bro. Weis is a jeweler by trade and does the finest kind of jewelry repairing. He was born in Merschingen, Bezirk Trier, Rheinland. His father was gamekeeper on one of the Emperor's preserves, a man of splendid stature and robust frame. His mother was a healthy woman of average size.



Yet both Bro. Weis and his sister are midgets. His sister is two inches shorter than he and is teaching the children of a wealthy Parisian. Bro. Weis learned, when he was young, the trade of a watchmaker, for which his tiny fingers made him eminently suited. When it came time for him to serve in the army the government put him to work taking care of the compasses and the delicate instruments on board a warship. He tired of this, secured five months' leave of absence, came to America with the Lilliputians and hoped the government would forget him. But when his leave was up the long arm of Germany began groping for him. Bro. Weis appealed to the German consuls in Philadelphia and New York, and finally, after much trouble, the German army was convinced that it could dispense with the little man. Bro. Weis then left the stage and went to watch making in Waterbury, CT, moving later to Philadelphia. He has never known serious illness; his skin is clear, his eyes bright, and he carries himself with an elastic step which bespeaks the best of health.

J[ames]. [Jim] G[rover]. Tarver A Giant with Ringling Brothers Circus. He was a member of **Alba Lodge No.633 of Alba, Texas**. He was also a 32nd Degree Scottish Rite Mason (SJ) and a member of Hella Shrine Temple, both at Dallas, Texas.

<http://www.thetallestman.com/jimtarver.htm>

Jim Tarver (James Grover Tarver) was born on 17 September 1885 in Franklin, Texas, moved to Memphis and retired to Arkansas so he was always a Southerner. He entered the show business in 1914 and was billed variously as "The Texas Giant", "Texas Jim" or "What-A- Man-Tarver". Jim Tarver travelled with various circuses for 26 years and spent his time off on his Arkansas farm. Plagued by diabetes, he died on his beloved farm in 1958 at age 72.

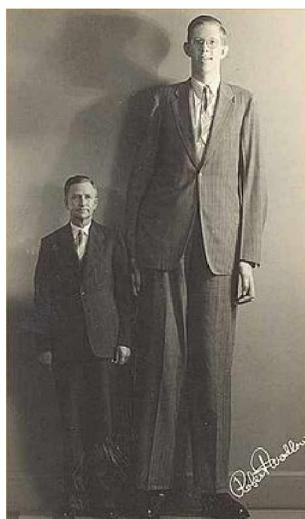
The story goes that he was replaced as giant with the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus when they visited the town where Jack Earle lived (El Paso?) and Jack Earle went to visit the circus to see the giant. Jack Earle proved to be taller. For a short time they toured together with this circus.



Jim Tarver and Major Mite

Robert Pershing Wadlow (1918-1940) - The tallest person in medical history.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Wadlow



< *Robert Wadlow compared to his father, Harold Franklin Wadlow (6 ft 0 in)*

Robert Pershing Wadlow (22 Feb 1918 – 15 Jul 1940) was the tallest person in history for whom there is irrefutable evidence. Wadlow is sometimes known as the Alton Giant or Giant of Illinois because he was born and grew up in Alton, Illinois.

Wadlow reached 8' 11.1" in height and weighed 439 lb at his death at age 22. His great size and his continued growth in adulthood was due to hypertrophy of his pituitary gland, which results in an abnormally high level of human growth hormone. He showed no indication of an end to his growth even at the time of his death.

Wadlow's size began to take its toll: he required leg braces to walk, and had little feeling in his legs and feet. Despite these difficulties, Wadlow never used a wheelchair. On June 27, 1940 (eighteen days before his death), he was measured at 8 ft 11.1 in (2.720 m) by doctors C. M. Charles and Cyril MacBryde of Washington University in St. Louis.

Wadlow was an American celebrity; he was well-known due to his 1936 U.S. tour with the Ringling Brothers Circus and his 1938 promotional tour with the INTERCO. He continued participating in tours and public appearances.

Wadlow was a Freemason. In 1939, he petitioned **Franklin Lodge No. 25 in Alton, Illinois**, and by late November of that year was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Illinois A.F & A.M.

On July 4, 1940, while making a professional appearance at the Manistee National Forest Festival, a faulty brace irritated his ankle, causing a blister and subsequent infection. Doctors treated him with a blood transfusion and emergency surgery, but his condition worsened and on July 15, 1940, he died in his sleep at age 22.

An estimated 40,000 people attended Wadlow's funeral on July 19. He was buried in a 10-foot-long, half-ton coffin that required twelve pallbearers to carry and was interred in a vault of solid concrete. It was believed that Wadlow's family members were concerned for the sanctity of his body after his death, and wanted to ensure it would not be disturbed or stolen.

A life-size statue of Wadlow stands on College Avenue in Alton, opposite the Alton Museum of History and Art. The statue was erected in 1986 in honor of the hometown native. Another statue of him stands in The Guinness Museum in Niagara Falls and the Ripley's Believe It or Not Museums in Myrtle Beach, New York City, Ocean City, Maryland and Genting Highlands, Malaysia. A group of 6 life-size models, made before his death by artist James Butler, exist, and are shipped and displayed in replica caskets.