

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF WESTERN STAR LODGE NO. 240 ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS

In 1857, March 27, Petition for a Masonic Lodge under Dispensation in West Urbana (Champaign) was mailed to the Grand Master with the fee of \$25.

In April 1857, Dispensation was issued (exact date unknown).

May 11, 1857, Lodge under dispensation was duly instituted in Whitney Hall (Lincoln Building), 44 Main Street.

On October 7, 1857, Charter was granted as Western Star Lodge No. 240 A.F. & A.M. to A.M. WHITNEY, JOHN DALLENBACH, A.P. HENSLEY, M.L. DUNLAP, W.B. FOWLER, H.C. WHITNEY, and N.C. BEASLEY. These names were no doubt the original petitioners for it was the custom at that time not to add other names in the Charter.

On January 12, 1858, the Lodge was duly constituted and set to work by Worshipful Brother Washington C. Cassell of Urbana Lodge No. 157, as the proxy of the M. W. Grand Master, with eighteen members.

ALFRED M. WHITNEY was elected as the first Master, and his building at 44 Main Street was home for Western Star until 1865.

On August 3, 1857, DR. H. C. HOWARD was the first man to petition for the degrees and was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.

In 1865, during the Civil War, nearly 30% of the membership answered the call to arms — two members served in the Rebel Army.

In 1868, buildings of this era were mostly of wooden construction; fire destroyed the entire block of the Lodge Secretary's office and all records prior to this time.

In 1867, stated meetings were scheduled for the second and fourth Mondays of each month. This practice still prevails.

On February 2, 1876, the first State School of Instruction was held in Champaign.

On September 26, 1881, the Lodge attended the public memorial services of the late President, Brother James Abram Garfield, 14^O Mason.

For thirty odd years beginning in 1887, the Lodge met in the Temple for a funeral occasions, opened on the third degree, attended the religious services and preceded by a brass band marched in front of the hearse to Mt. Hope cemetery, observed the last Rites of the Craft, marched back again, and closed in due form.

On April 25, 1910, the Kuhn corner, 202-204 West Hill Street, was purchased and a building committee was instructed to erect a building thereon.

On January 22, 1912, the general contract for the new Temple was let to A.W. Stoolman, a member of this Lodge.

On April 23, 1912, excavation commenced. Dr. Howard, our oldest member, throwing the first shovel.

On September 4, 1912, the Corner Stone was laid by M.W. Grand Master, D.D. Darrah.

On January 8, 1914, the Masonic Temple was dedicated by M.W. Grand Master Henry T. Burnap, and the first meeting of the Lodge held therein immediately after the ceremony.

On November 11, 1918, World War I conscripted all of our members under 32 years of age, 78 of whom went into training camps and about half of them were sent overseas.

The Lodge was very active until the Great Depression of 1931, when the membership dropped rapidly as many could not pay their dues.

A total of 32 Masons were raised from 1932-1938 due to the depressed conditions.

Again members of the fraternity answered the call of our country December 7, 1941, and served proudly in Europe and in the Pacific.

Our greatest year in recent times, 1946-47, R.W. Br. Paul McWilliams as Master, held 23 stated meetings, 58 special meetings; conferred 192 degrees of which 64 were Master Masons Degrees.

February 28, 1966, the Masonic Temple, 202 West Hill Street, was sold to the Thomas Jefferson Life Insurance Company.

On November 28, 1967, a committee consisting of Brothers L. Bly McElroy, Ross P. Strout, W. Raymond Howard, J. Garrie Burr, Philip C. Holdcroft, Lyle Blue, and H.O. Norman, recommended to the Lodge, the purchase of five acres, located on Windsor Road between South Neil Street and South Prospect Avenue. This site was chosen after consideration of 25 other locations. This land was a part of the Mattis Estate.

On June 25, 1968, Worshipful Master Marion B. Smith, Sr., finalized purchase of the property at 14 Bel Aire Court, and a committee was appointed to erect the new Temple.

Under the leadership of the Master, Kelley Garrett, the Lodge moved August 11, 1970, to temporary quarters in the Odd Fellows Hall at 109½ North Neil Street.

The Grand Master granted dispensation to meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays until a new Temple was completed.

Ground-breaking ceremonies for the new Temple were held May 3, 1972. Those present included: Leon B. Corray, Master, John R. Murphy, Grand Master, Lloyd R. Smith, District Deputy Grand Master, Virgil C. Wikoff, Mayor of Champaign, F. Dale Dillman, Chairman of the Building Committee, and Millard L. Berry, Lodge Secretary.

The Cornerstone was laid September 3, 1972, with the usual ceremony of the Craft. John R. Murphy R.W. Grand Master, and the Grand Lodge officers presided, with the assistance of Marion B. Smith, Jr., Master of Western Star Lodge and his officers.

Keith O. Bundy, Worshipful Master, presided at the first meeting April 17, 1974, in the new Temple. At this Special meeting, W.B. Leon Corray conferred the first degree on his son, Melvin Eugene Corray.

On July 8, 1974, W.B. Glen A. Grindley was elected by unanimous ballot to Honorary Membership in the Lodge. He is presently our only Honorary Member.

On August 11, 1976, Worshipful Master David D. Dillman, authorized the sale of the south 2/3 of our five-acre tract to Br. Harlan E. Moore. Br. Moore donated this 3½ acres to the Champaign Park District. The park, known as the Harlan E. Moore Park, is being developed by the Park District.

A copy of the flyleaf from the original Western Star Bible, plus a program of the installation of officers for 1976-77 were placed in a time capsule on November 11, 1976, and buried in West Side Park, Champaign.

Brother Vance C. VanTassell, Most Worshipful Grand Master of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Illinois, along with the Grand Lodge officers dedicated the Temple at 14 Bel Aire Court on April 16, 1978, in due and ancient form.

Present at the dedication was Worshipful Brother David Price, Master (1919-1920). He has served as Head of all York Rite Bodies, and has been awarded the Knights of the York Cross of Honor.

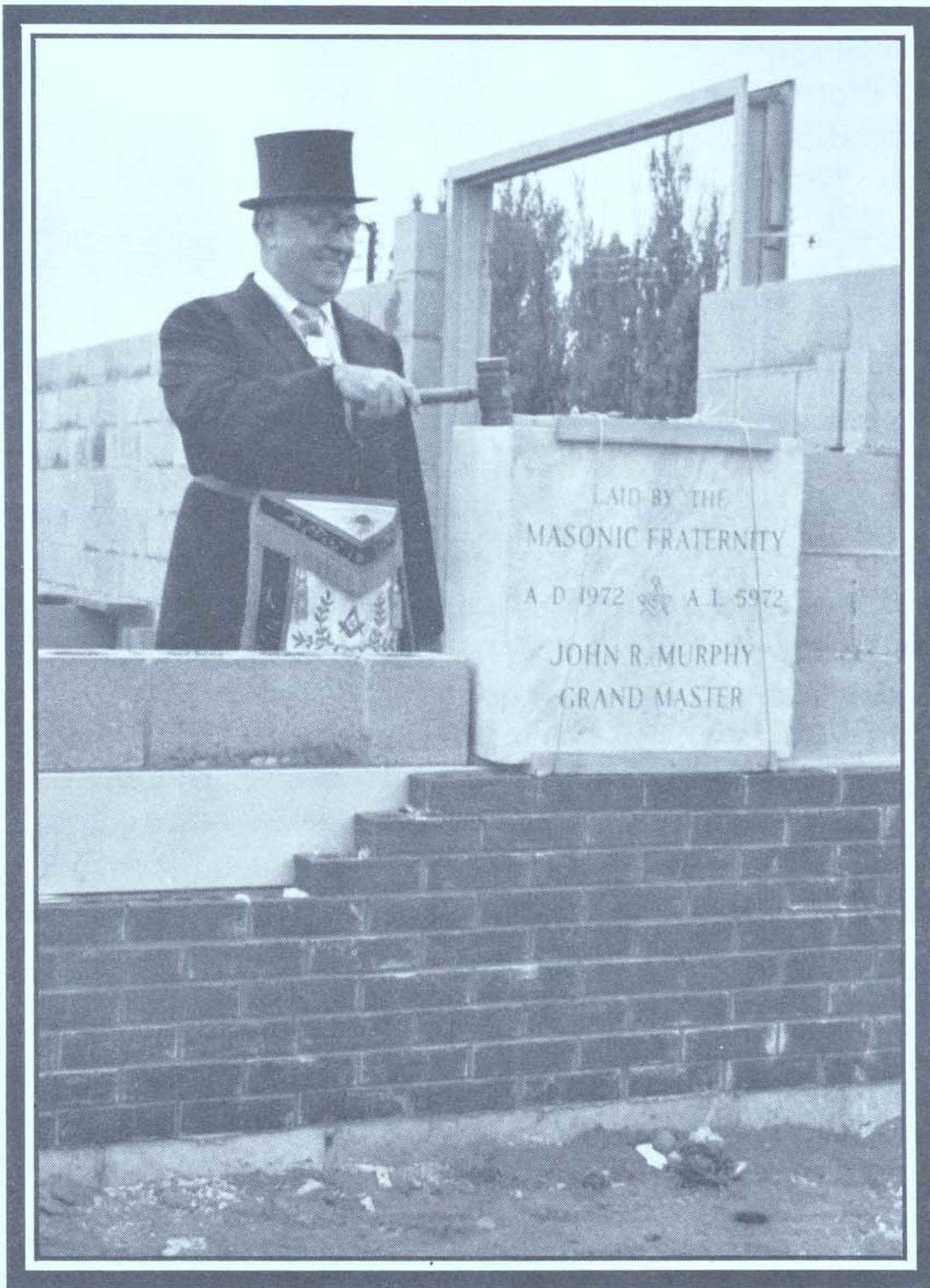
LIST OF OFFICERS 1977-1978

Thomas E. Smith	Worshipful Master
Elmer R. Luther	Senior Warden
C. Lowell Cannon	Junior Warden
Millard L. Berry	Secretary
Marion B. Smith, Sr.	Treasurer
James A. Adkisson	Chaplain
Robert C. Dillier	Senior Deacon
C. David Wheatley	Junior Deacon
Louis Hallstrom	Senior Steward
O. Dale DeMotte	Junior Steward
Donald E. Reed	Marshal
David D. Dillman	Tyler



GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONIES — May 3, 1972

*(L to R) Lloyd Smith, Virgil Wikoff, John Murphy -
Grand Master, Leon Corray and F. Dale Dillman*



LAYING OF THE CORNERSTONE — September 3, 1972

John R. Murphy, *Grand Master*

The Lodge has been at home in the following places:

Whitney Building (Lincoln Building), 44 Main Street (1857-1865)
Gardners Building, 5 Main Street (1866-1869)
Mather Block, 65-67 Market Street (1869-1871)
Bailey Block, 47-49 Neil Street (1872-1898)
Masonic Block, 20-22 Main Street (1899-1913)
Masonic Temple, 202-204 West Hill Street (1914-1970)
IOOF Hall, 109½ North Neil Street (1970-1974)
Masonic Temple, 14 Bel Aire Court (1974-)

The Main Street numbers have never been changed. The rear of the Lincoln Building now occupies the Market Street site, and the Bailey Block is now numbered 219-221 North Neil Street.

Western Star Lodge has met on the second and fourth Mondays of each month since 1867, the four years in the IOOF Hall excluded. The history of Western Star Lodge prior to 1928 is from previously published books written by Edwin A. Kratz, Historian, Lodge Secretary for 30 years, and Master for 9 years. Worshipful Brother Kratz had the further distinction of presiding at the first degree to be conferred in the Hill Street Temple. He also conferred the final degree given there, a span of over 60 years.

The last 50-year chronicle was taken from Lodge Minutes and personal interviews by Thomas E. Smith, Worshipful Master, 1977-78, when the Temple at 14 Bel Aire Court was dedicated.

Living members of Western Star Lodge who have received recognition for their Masonic activities are as follows:

Honorary 33^o

L. Bly McElroy	1955	Millard L. Berry	1970
F. Dale Dillman	1960	Lloyd R. Smith	1972
Luther A. Lovingfoss	1966		

Knights Templar Cross of Honor

Donald L. Dunlap	1977
------------------	------

Honorary Legion of Honor International Order of DeMolay

F. Dale Dillman	1976
-----------------	------

Grand Lecturers

David L. Price	1922	Luther A. Lovingfoss	1961
L. Bly McElroy	1938	Lloyd R. Smith	1966
Millard L. Berry	1957	Paul H. McWilliams	1969
Raymond B. McNattin	1960	J. Garrie Burr	1971

Meritorious Service Award

Miles Spencer	1969	Leon B. Corray	1976
Roy F. Crouse	1974	Ross P. Strout	1977

MASONIC FAMILY

In addition to Western Star Lodge the following bodies share our Temple:

Champaign Chapter #50 Royal Arch Masons
Chartered September 30, 1859

Vesper Chapter #128 Order of the Eastern Star
Chartered October 3, 1888

Champaign Commandery #68 Knights Templar
Chartered September 2, 1903

Mizpah Shrine #11 of the White Shrine of Jerusalem
Chartered October 25, 1905

Champaign Assembly #21 Order of the Rainbow for Girls
Chartered March 21, 1941



The Office of Secretary of Western Star Lodge has long been a position of great support to the Masters who have served this Lodge. In this regard, special attention is directed to R.W. Brother L. Bly McElroy 33^o, who served as Secretary for 26 continuous years. Equally as faithful is R.W. Brother Millard L. Berry 33^o, who has been an officer for 30 years, the past 8 as Secretary. These Bretheren are to be commended for their dedication to the Craft in Champaign.

GRAND LODGE OFFICERS, 1977-1978

Vance C. VanTassell, Grand Master, Robinson
Norman R. Buecker, Deputy Grand Master, Springfield
Raymond H. Bachman, Senior Grand Warden, Joliet
E. Gene Ross, Junior Grand Warden, Granite City
Harold R. Kopfman, Grand Treasurer, Chicago
Roy L. Wyckoff, Grand Secretary, Rushville
Charles H. Willey, Grand Chaplain, Moline
W. Harold McElvaney, Grand Orator, Rockford
Lyle H. Paisley, Deputy Grand Secretary, Rushville
E.L. "Roy" Darr, Grand Pursuivant, Casey
John T. Neeley, Grand Marshal, Littleton
Lloyd D. McCain, Grand Standard Bearer, Robinson
Harold D. Oakley, Grand Sword Bearer, Mattoon
Glen W. Ford, Senior Grand Deacon, Ottawa
George T. Lovins, Junior Grand Deacon, Greenup
Charles F. Allen, Grand Steward, Arlington Heights
W. Doyle Tracy, Grand Steward, Moline
Clyde W. Wilkey, Grand Steward, Springfield
Walter H. Brown, Grand Steward, Normal
William F. Meyers, Grand Tyler, Chicago
Clarence O. Soland, Assistant Grand Tyler, Windsor

Grand Examiners

Wayne H. Harper, Chairman, Alton	Lloyd R. Smith, Champaign
Lawrence D. Inglis, Secretary, Zion	Willie B. Elliott, Lovington
Edward E. LaSuer, Fox Lake	

District Deputy Grand Master of the 11th Eastern District

Glen A. Grindley, Champaign

Appointed to Grand Lodge Committees

Virgin C. Wikoff, Champaign	Millard L. Berry, Champaign
C. Lowell Cannon, Champaign	