

# Masons influenced all areas of Haywood County development

As we celebrate the 200th anniversary of our nation we might well pause and consider the contribution made by the members of the Masonic Fraternity in the establishment, progress and welfare of our nation. Many of the signers of the Articles of Confederation—The Constitution and the Declaration of Independence were Masons. Our first President, George Washington, with his Masonic Lodge, laid the cornerstone of the capitol. Down through the years many of our Presidents have been Masons including the present Gerald R. Ford.

In Haywood County, where this year Waynesville Masonic Lodge celebrates its 110th birthday, we pause with pride to comment on the influence Masons have had on the religious, educational, political and financial development of our area.

Waynesville Lodge No. 259 Ancient Free and Accepted Masons now have in their possession all of the minutes of the meetings held since it was granted a dispensation to form the lodge in 1866. These records are in excellent condition written in excellent penmanship and recording many interesting happenings in the area.

Waynesville Lodge was organized soon after the close of the Civil War. This was five years before the incorporation of the Town of Waynesville. The first location was in the old Welch Building which stood on the lot where the new Waynesville Fire and Police Department building was recently erected. Many of the organizers and early members were officers and veterans of the Civil War.

The Grand Lodge of Masons in North Carolina issued a dispensation on June 29, 1866, authorizing Daniel B. Nelson, master; J. C. L. Gudger, senior warden; H. M. Rogers, junior warden and others named in the dispensation to open and hold a lodge of Free and Accepted Masons to be called Waynesville Lodge under Dispensation. The lodge opened on June 29 and the master appointed Samuel L. Lover, secretary; A. J. Osborne, treasurer; R. G. A. Love, senior deacon; Mathew H. Love, junior deacon and B. B. Edmondson, Tyler. At this meeting the lodge voted to hold its regular communications on the Friday night of or preceding the full moon in each month and on the anniversary of

Saint John. The reason for this time of the moon was to facilitate travel to the meetings which was by horseback or carriage.

The first candidate to petition for membership was John A. Henry. He was accepted and initiated at this meeting. Many of his descendants are living in the county today.

The men mentioned in the dispensation were all prominent citizens of Haywood County. The first master, the Rev. Daniel B. Nelson, came to this area on a secret mission for the 31st Tennessee Infantry during the Civil War and later located in the county. He was ordained to the ministry in July 1866 at Old Locust Field Church at the forks of Pigeon, now Canton. Both he and Dr. J. M. Mease were principals at the Bethel Academy. In 1869 Nelson moved to Hendersonville where he was the first master of Kedron Lodge and became pastor of Hendersonville Baptist Church in 1875. At a later date he became master of Biltmore Lodge. J. C. L. Gudger was a Confederate veteran, lawyer and superior court judge. H. M. Rogers was a doctor, veteran and Main Street merchant.

Samuel L. Love was a doctor, veteran served as state auditor for 4 years and in 1875 was a representative to the Constitutional Convention. He served on the staff as surgeon for Governor Z. B. Vance.

R. G. A. Love was a colonel in the Army and represented Haywood County in the N. C. General Assembly in 1848, 50, 52, 54.

H. M. Love was a captain in the Army and a lawyer.

During the Lodge Dispensation Period petitions for the degrees were received from John Kindred Reeves, J. T. O. Wilbar, S. W. Swager, H. L. Herren, Garland S. Ferguson, William L. Norwood, Hiram Rogers, James A. Blaylock, J. M. Tate, W. C. Brown, Thomas Green, Robert H. Platt, H. C. Lee, R. N. Henry, T. F. Glenn, the Rev. D. C. Howell, A. Francis, John Turpin, the Rev. T. D. Wright, F. M. Davis, L. M. Welch, J. F. Hartgrove and L. J. Smith. All of these men were doctors, lawyers, judges, ministers, teachers, merchants and farmers in Haywood County.

On Dec. 6, 1866 the Grand Lodge granted a charter and gave the lodge the number 259. The Lodge prospered and a public installation of officers was held on Oct. 18, 1867 and the lodge dedicated. The service was held in the Methodist Church with Robert V. Vance of Asheville, installing officers and speaking.

It is interesting to note prices and the scarceness of money. The lodge authorized the purchase of 1 dozen chairs at \$1 each; 45 cents for candles; 15 cents for oil; 50 cents for cleaning up; lodge \$2 for spoons; \$4.45 for medicine for a sick Mason and \$14.55 for the funeral expense of a deceased member.

Only two years after the chartering of the Lodge the members became aware of the dire need of a school in Waynesville. On Oct. 20, 1868 on a motion by W. L. Norwood a committee was appointed "to investigate the propriety of building an academy." The committee F. M. Davis, J. W. Norwood, G. D. S. Allen, H. M. Rogers, Robert H. Platt, D. V. McCracken, L. J. Smith, A. J. Osborne and B. B. Edmondson made a report on Feb. 26, 1869 and the academy was established. This was the first school in Waynesville after the Civil War.

The school was named "Waynesville Academy" and was opened in a building on a site between the First Methodist Church and the present Landmark Apartments. The building contained school rooms on the ground floor and the lodge room on the second. Later this building was torn down and a better brick structure for the grammar and high school was erected on the same spot. This building was torn down in 1924. Academy Street now extends through the property to Tate Street.

The school prospered and grew and the records show that on April 27, 1877 the school committee reported, "The school is going on under the control of John K. Boone as principal and R. A. Sentell as assistant and has about 55 students and is in prosperous condition. The patrons of the school seem to be well satisfied with the present teachers." Signed by J. Ratcliffe Jr. and S. J. Shelton.

Other teachers at a later date were Dan Jones, Mrs. L. J. Ratcliffe, Miss Ball, D. W. Kerr and others. Major W. W. Stringfield and W. L. Norwood were substitute teachers during an emergency.

The Lodge operated the school for a period of 22 years and in March 1892 the Lodge voted to option the school property to the Town of Waynesville, or any association of persons in the neighborhood for \$1,500 on the expressed conditions that the said property shall be held and used for school purposes only. The committee of John K. Boone, W. B. Ferguson and J. M. Davis purchased the school on behalf of the citizens of the Town of Waynesville.

On Feb. 28, 1874 the Lodge stewards were instructed to purchase a bell for the school. They arranged with the school committee and the bell was purchased. Waynesville Lodge now has this bell on display in the memorial and archives room on the lower level of the new temple.

The Masonic Lodge was very generous in allowing the use of the old school and lodge buildings by other organizations. Records show that at various times it was used by The Sons of Temperance, The Good Templars, The Macabees, Odd Fellows, Royal

Arctum, Friends of Temperance, Modern Puritans, various Sunday Schools and on Dec. 22, 1882, to the Episcopal Church for a Christmas festival.

On Jan. 7, 1887 the Lodge passed a resolution requesting that the general Assembly not modify in any way the Act of The General Assembly which incorporated Waynesville Academy which act regulated against the sale of liquor within two miles of the Academy.

On Dec. 22, 1897 the Lodge sent two delegates to the Grand Lodge meeting in Asheville for the laying of the cornerstone of the Governor Z. B. Vance Monument on Pack Square. W. B. Ferguson and J. N. Peacock attended and were allowed \$1.20 each for expenses.

On May 6, 1899 the Grand Lodge requested contributions from the lodge to help match funds given by Mr. Duke for the building of a girls home at Oxford Orphanage.

On June 21, 1907 the Lodge accepted an invitation from the pastor to attend the Episcopal Church Service on Saint John, The Baptist Day. On many occasions in the life of the lodge Masons have attended services in many of the churches in the county on Saint John's days and Easter.

Gen. Harley B. Ferguson, a member of the lodge who raised the ill-fated Battleship Maine, which was sunk in Havana Harbor during the Spanish American War presented the lodge with a mahogany gavel made from a piece of furniture in the ship. The gavel is on display in the archives of the Lodge.

The Waynesville York Rite Bodies were organized with the chapter chartered in 1909 and the council and commandery in 1923. These bodies have prospered throughout the years. Several Waynesville Masons have been state leaders in the rite. Dr. John R. McCracken was grand master of the grand council and grand high priest of the chapter. Odas W. Crisp, grand high priest of the grand chapter, William A. Coble, grand commander of the grand commandery, T. Troy Wyche, Lawrence E. Green, C. B. Hosaflook and E. Paul Martin have served as grand master of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters in N. C.

When the Haywood County Courthouse was erected in 1931 the Grand Lodge met in the Waynesville Lodge Room with several Waynesville Masons filling the stations. The Grand Lodge proceeded to the construction site and laid the corner stone of the building in Due and Ancient Form.

Grand Master J. Wallace Winborne of

Marion presided and Dr. Hubert Poteat professor of law at Wake Forest delivered the address.

In September 1935 the first Summer assembly of the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters was held in Waynesville under the direction of T. Troy Wyche. On July 5, 1937, a deposit of Masonic and historic material was made at Black Camp Gap which was to be recovered at the time of the Waynesville centennial celebration and a large group of prominent Masons from all over the United States were present. T. Troy Wyche was the originator of the idea of erecting a Masonic marker at Black Camp Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway. J. R. Boyd, president of the First National Bank contributed approximately one acre of land for the marker. Wyche secured stones having geographical, historical, religious, fraternal and Masonic significance from every state in the union, the Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia and the Isles of the Seas assembled them in a monument in a fitting tribute of the Freemason's belief in the brotherhood of man and the

fatherhood of God. The marker contains over 400 stones, weighing from ounce to 130 pounds. The monument is dedicated to "universal benevolence" and truly symbolizes the "universality of Freemasonry." Masons from all over the world have visited Black Camp Gap to view the marker.

The Lodge from its very beginning has been charitable. Even in the very depressing days after the Civil War a collection was taken at the meetings for the orphanage. At times, such items as 15 bushels of wheat and two sacks of flour and other items were contributed. Today the Lodge members make annual contributions to The Oxford Orphanage and Masonic Home. In 1975, \$1,864 was sent to the orphanage and \$600 to the Masonic home. The Haywood County Shrine Club which is composed of Masons contributed \$4,010 to the Shrine Hospital for crippled and burned children in 1975.

In 1970 the lodge purchased a lot on the corner of East Marshall and Broadview Streets and a new Temple was erected. The first meeting in the new building was on June 1, 1973. The Grand Lodge of

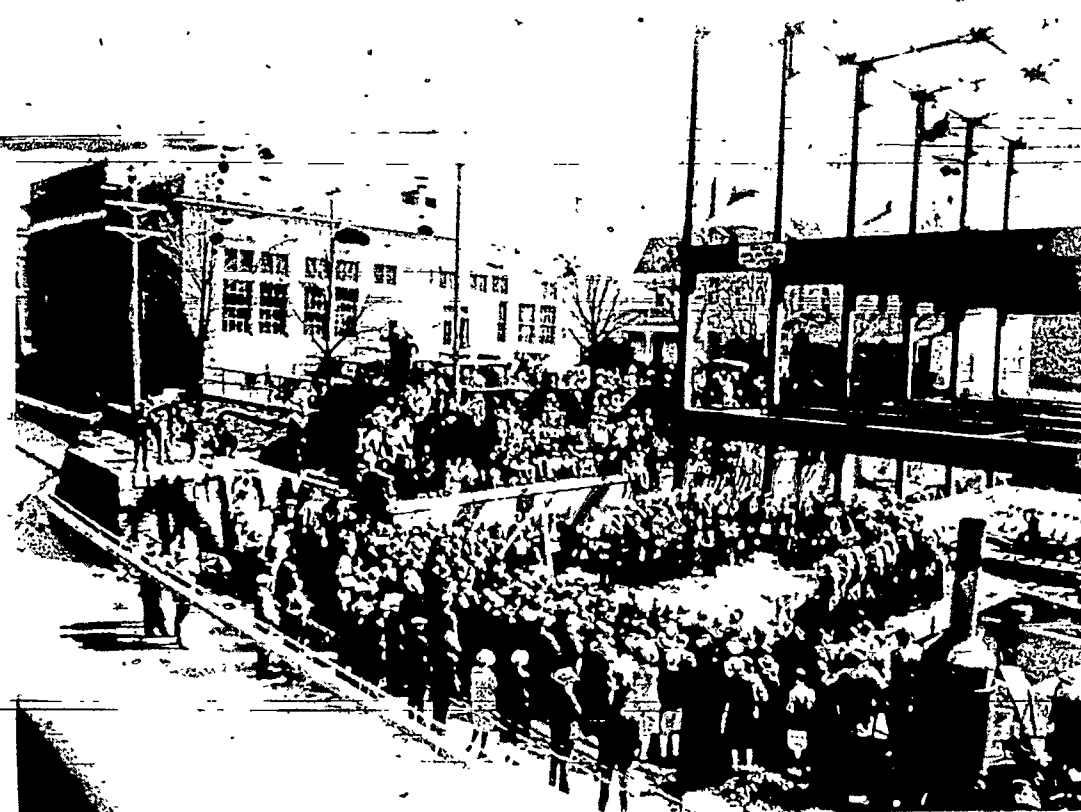
North Carolina met in an Emergent Communication on September 29 to dedicate the building. Grand Master Nathaniel C. Dean presided. In April 1976 The Waynesville-Hazelwood Woman's Advisory Committee awarded the Lodge "The Orchid Award Plaque" in recognition of the construction of the handsome new temple and beautification by appropriate shrubbery.

During the administration of Carl McCracken Jr. as master of the Lodge photographs were secured of all who had served as master from the year 1866 to date and placed on the wall in the Memorial Room. Seventy-two men have served more than one year.

The Lodge has published a monthly bulletin for the past 25 years containing news and announcements concerning Masonic activities in the area.

One hundred and ten years after the chartering of the first lodge in Haywood County, Masonry continues through its teachings and ceremonies to make good men better and thereby make the world

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LARGE CROWDS attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the Masonic Temple on Church St., now the Pisgah Building

## Maggie

(Continued from preceding page)

and Mrs. Floyd Rippetoe moved there from Morristown, Tenn. to operate the commissary. Mrs. Clyde Caprien operated the boarding hall. Later in 1918, the Kessawayn Company sold to the Suncrest Lumber Company which worked the Black Camp Gap area.

The lumber industry initiated many changes in the remote community of Maggie. There was more contact with the outside world, and thus the seeds of tourism were sown.

The ideal temperature climate in addition to the scenic wonder of the remote, rural valley with its towering mountains appealed to the "lowlanders." People from Georgia and Florida were coming by train to Waynesville and hiring wagons to the community and spending the summers in the spare bedrooms of the year-round residents. In the 1930s, electric power was lined through the valley, bringing with it a much higher standard of living.

In 1936, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Hall built three small frame cabins for rent to tourists which are now remodeled in the Rocky Waters Motel. In 1948, the eight-member telephone party lines were made available to the community. In 1949, there were two roadside restaurants, Platt Restaurant and Maggie Coffee Shop, in the community.


In 1951, when the Indian drama, "Unto These Hills," began annual summer production in Cherokee, there was a great influx of visitors to the area. Craft shops, restaurants and motels sprang up to accommodate the people. Now 2,000 overnight accommodations exist. Land sales increased along the highway and land prices soared. In 1953, a Chamber of Commerce was organized, and with the assistance of Carolina Power and Light Company some 20 street lights were installed on a cooperative basis.

A recreational facility was built in 1953 by the late Joseph Campbell called the "Maggie Playhouse" which provided a dance floor for the square dance of which some sets remain in the original form as in Old England. The square dance was a typical form of recreation of the old settlers and was danced to the mournful tunes of the banjo and "fiddle."

In 1961, a tourist attraction called "Ghost Town" was developed by R. B. Coburn and associates of Orangeburg, S. C. The incline railway and chair lift rises to the top of 4,000 foot Buck Mountain where the western town replica has attracted thousands to the area with its extensive advertising.

A volunteer fire department and future city hall was built in 1966 by donations and volunteer laborers.

Indeed the community has been blessed with thrifty, industrious settlers availing natural resources and scenic beauty. The challenge today remains for unity of spirit in developing in an orderly fashion if growth is to continue.



# I pledge allegiance to the flag...

of the United States and to the republic for which it stands, one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. This 4th of July, during the era of the American Revolution Bicentennial, let's show our colors, take pride in our heritage! Let's stand by our flag and repledge ourselves to the American way of life. This is a good time to remember how privileged we are to live in a country where there is freedom for all. The Declaration of Independence set the standard for us. Through the years since 1776, we have had to struggle to uphold the meaning of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But even through times of tribulation our ideals stand strong—strengthening the patriotism of our citizens. We celebrate Independence Day and our nation's 200th birthday, let's proudly pledge our allegiance to the land of the free.

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