

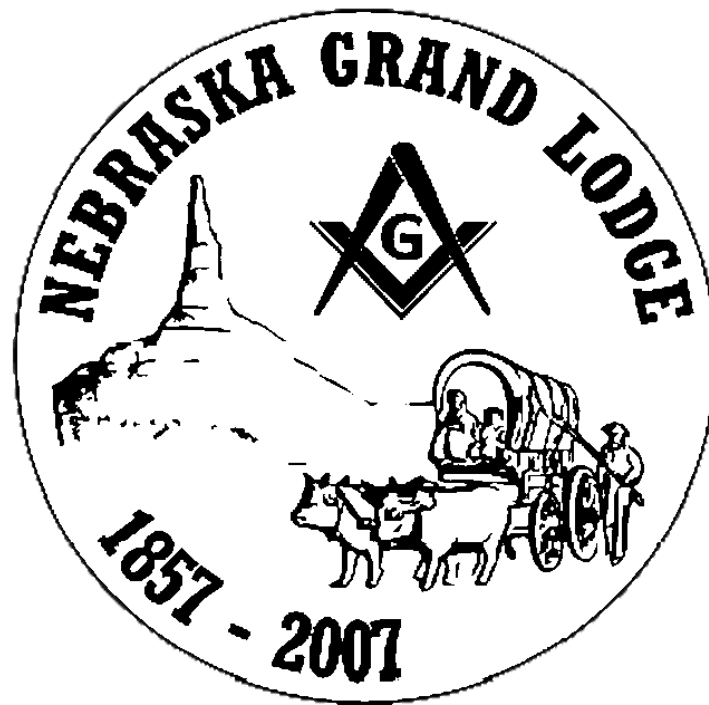
**A Sesquicentennial History of the
Grand Lodge of Nebraska 1857-2007**

Reno

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A Sesquicentennial History of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska

1857-2007



**A Sesquicentennial History
of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska**

1857-2007



by R.:W.: Brother Russell G. Reno

MACOY PUBLISHING COMPANY

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ISBN: ?????????

Library of Congress: ?????????

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Grand Master’s Foreword	i
Author’s Preface	ii
Dedication	iii
Souvenir Signature Page	iv
Robert C. Jordan, Nebraska’s First Grand Master	v
2007 Grand Lodge Officers	vi
1855.....	1894.....
1856.....	1895.....
1857.....	1896.....
1858.....	1897.....
1859.....	1898.....
1860.....	1899.....
1861.....	1900.....
1862.....	1901.....
1863.....	1902.....
1864.....	1903.....
1865.....	1904.....
1866.....	1905.....
1867.....	1906.....
1868.....	1907.....
1869.....	1908.....
1870.....	1909.....
1871.....	1910.....
1872.....	1911.....
1873.....	1912.....
1874.....	1913.....
1875.....	1914.....
1876.....	1915.....
1877.....	1916.....
1878.....	1917.....
1879.....	1918.....
1880.....	1919.....
1881.....	1920.....
1882.....	1921.....
1883.....	1922.....
1884.....	1923.....
1885.....	1924.....
1886.....	1925.....
1887.....	1926.....
1888.....	1927.....
1889.....	1928.....
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	1996.....
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	1998.....
	1999.....
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	2002.....
	2003.....
	2004.....
	2005.....
	2006.....
	2007.....
Appendix – 150 Famous Masons.....
Index

Grand Master's Foreword

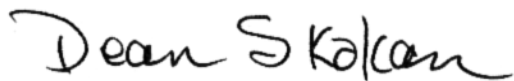
June 2007

Tradition is an important part of Freemasonry. The history of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Nebraska is a story of strength, growth and passage. As our Masonry was passed from Grand Lodges in Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa, to three small lodges on the Missouri River, the Grand Lodge of Nebraska chartered Masonic Lodges throughout the territory and across the Mountain West. When the Grand Lodge of Nebraska was formed in 1857, the Nebraska Territory comprised what are now six states. Eleven men, representing these three lodges on the eastern boundary of that vast frontier, took it upon themselves to bring Freemasonry to that expanse. We are their heirs, and this book documents our ancestry and efforts. It is not intended as an exhaustive record of our labors, but rather as an outline for those who would seek further information concerning our history.

At its highest point, the Grand Lodge of Nebraska consisted of 276 Lodges and 46,213 brethren. At this writing, we have about 14,500 brethren assembled in 153 lodges. Many of those lodges are in difficulty and will not survive. Many of our older Brethren will not observe the 175th anniversary of the Grand Lodge. As the population of the state shifts from a widely-spread agricultural society to an increasingly concentrated industrial and technological one, Masonry will shift as well. We will have fewer, but stronger lodges, and our membership may continue to decline for a time. It is clear to me, however, that Freemasonry in Nebraska has turned a corner and that regardless of numbers of members or lodges, the light of Masonry will continue to shine in Nebraska.

Freemasonry in Nebraska has survived many challenges, and doubtless will adapt and change to meet the needs of an increasingly complex society. There will, however, always be a need for men of integrity, honor, and character. Such men will be raised to Freemasonry. They will join together upon a common platform and practice the great tenets of the Masonic profession, Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. They will be brethren of the Nebraska Grand Lodge, and Freemasonry in Nebraska will never, never die.

The Grand Lodge of Nebraska is indebted to Grand Senior Warden Russell G. Reno, the author of this volume. It is a testament to his talent and perseverance. The Grand Lodge of Nebraska would also like to thank Grand Junior Warden John T. Parsons for compiling the list of 150 Famous Masons appearing in the Appendix.



Dean Skokan
Grand Master
Grand Lodge of Nebraska, A.:F.:&A.:M

Author's Preface

June 2007

Now that this book is concluded, it seems impossible that work on it began a decade ago. At the time, I offered to provide copy for *The Nebraska Mason* newsletter by writing a couple sentences about key events from selected years in our history for a column called "Cornerstones of the Past." Six years later, the Grand Lodge officers discussed the need for a 150th anniversary book to accompany the previous histories written for the Grand Lodge's landmark anniversaries. It made sense that since I had already read about half the Proceedings, I should compile my notes and continue reading and writing about the remaining Proceedings. That's how this book was born.

After thousands of hours perusing the remaining Proceedings, I realized I hadn't given the previous Proceedings the same attention to detail. I read them again and gleaned more information. A few references in this book also come from the previous histories.

As I excitedly told my brothers about what I was discovering, they gave me looks that indicated I was the only person who thought that reading the Proceedings was interesting. That may be, but this book stands as proof of the treasures residing in our Proceedings. It is my hope that you, too, will find these historical tidbits interesting.

Typically, Grand Lodge histories focus on key subjects. This book, however, covers a multitude of topics through a summary of each year. This history represents a cross section of Masonic interests in an effort to provide a comprehensive overview of the evolution of Freemasonry in Nebraska. I realized it could be troublesome and tiresome for researchers tracking the progress of specific topics. A review of about 2,500 paragraphs in this book yielded an index that includes at least one reference to every paragraph, and quite often more. You will find the extensive index helpful in identifying the years that a topic is mentioned. To further assist you, key words are in **boldface** to speed your search.

What impressed me most in my readings was the moral fiber of the brothers who preceded us. They held themselves and their brothers to the high level of character and deportment symbolized in Freemasonry. Those who didn't abide by the expected mores often were summarily dismissed from the fraternity. That attitude is clearly reflected in the quote from Nebraska's first Grand Master, Robert C. Jordan, on the dedication page, and the quote from Grand Master Edwin F. Warren that follows this preface. Our ancestors most certainly set a high standard for us to emulate.

A project of this magnitude is not completed by one person. The Grand Lodge office staff - Michelle Fulmer, Carol Schroeder and Jean Holt - located information, proofread the copy, found photographs of the Past Grand Masters and coordinated its printing. In addition, I must thank my family for their understanding, especially my wife, Julie, as I spent many, many evenings and weekends with the Proceedings and this book and not with them.

To our past brethren, I hope this history portrays your service to our fraternity well. To today's brethren, our history illuminates the precepts we are to learn from our fraternity. To tomorrow's brethren, may this serve as a resource as you strive to improve yourself and this fraternity.



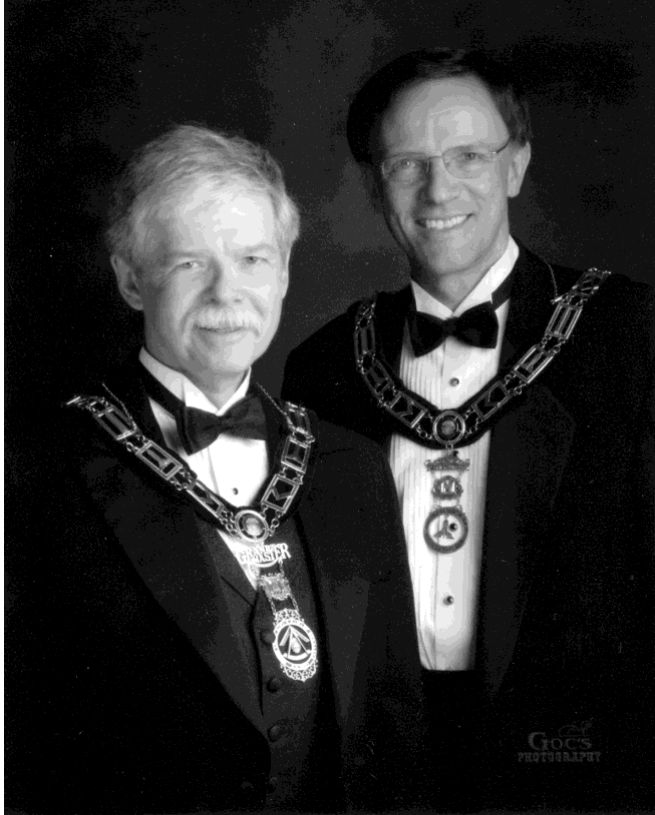
Russ Reno
Grand Senior Warden

"It is easy to be virtuous when no temptations assail us; it is easy to be patriotic when no danger threatens our land, and it is easy to be Freemasons in times like these, when no persecution harasses, when to be such involves no sacrifices and requires us to undergo no hardships; but to those of our number who founded this Grand Lodge is due the need of

earnest praise from our lips and the warm affection of our hearts, for they were zealous when it cost time and money and patience. Let them be this day remembered and honored accordingly.” - M.: W.: Edwin F. Warren, Grand Master at the 25th anniversary of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska, 1882

Dedicated to
the Brethren of Nebraska
who Founded, Established and
will Continue to Advance
the Most Worshipful, the Grand Lodge,
Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Nebraska
and the Masonic Lodges in this Great State

**Special Souvenir Edition:
A Sesquicentennial History of
the Grand Lodge of Nebraska
1857-2007**



**Greetings from your
Grand Master
and
the Author**

**M.: W.: Brother Dean Skokan
Grand Master**

**R.: W.: Brother Russ Reno
Grand Senior Warden**

Copy No. _____

This autographed copy of *A Sesquicentennial History of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska 1857-2007* is one of a limited number offered to Masons wishing to have a distinctive souvenir.

Robert C. Jordan
Nebraska's First Grand Master
1857-1860

(Photo of Jordan)

Robert C. Jordan
January 10, 1825 – January 9, 1899

“I have seen the broad prairies of Nebraska when they were traversed only by the winding trail of the buffalo; now they are crossed in every direction by the great thoroughfares carrying the world's traffic. Let us not suppose that our zenith has been reached. It is not impossible that there awaits the next generation revelations far surpassing anything we have witnessed in our time. These advantages impose upon man new burdens. Increasing power brings increasing responsibility. It must never be forgotten that there is that which is more to be desired than material prosperity. ... Of far greater consequence than all these is the character of those who dwell within our gates. To this most important object let us hope that in the future, as in the past, our Fraternity may contribute.” – *Robert C. Jordan, 1896.*

Robert Carrel Jordan became a Mason in Aurora Lodge No. 48 in Portsmouth, Ohio in 1847. He went on to become a Royal and Select Master in the York Rite in the same year and in 1848 he was initiated as a votary of the Commandery. In 1849-1850 he was elected Worshipful Master of Aurora Lodge No. 48. After his arrival in Omaha in May, 1857, he immediately became active in Capitol Lodge No. 3. In 1859, while serving as Grand Master of Nebraska, he was elected to the office of High Priest of the Omaha Chapter of Royal Arch Masons founded that same year. Some years later he was elected to the high office of Grand High Priest. He was also instrumental in organizing the Scottish Rite Bodies in Nebraska. He was honored by election to receive the highest degree in Scottish Rite Masonry, that of thirty-third Degree Honorary. In 1868 he was elected as the Grand Almoner of the Supreme Council and Sovereign Grand Inspector General for the Territory of Nebraska and neighboring Jurisdictions. On moving to Grand Island in 1871, he took an active interest in Ashlar Lodge No. 33 and became one of its charter members and first Worshipful Master.

**2007 Grand Lodge Officers
of the
Grand Lodge of Nebraska**



Left to right, front row: John T. Parsons, Grand Junior Warden; Reginald S. Kuhn, Deputy Grand Master; Dean Skokan, Grand Master; Russell G. Reno, Grand Senior Warden; Bruce A. Watkins, Grand Secretary; middle row: John T. Maxell, Grand Senior Steward; E. David Watts, Grand Senior Deacon; Thomas L. Hauder, Grand Junior Steward; Kent B. Broyhill, Grand Orator; Bruce A. Baker, Grand Junior Deacon; back row: Joe D. McBride, Grand Marshal; Dennis E. Rix, Grand Tyler; Stephen C. Kennedy, Grand Historian; Gerald D. Verbeek, Grand Custodian; and Randall L. Hart, Grand Chaplain.

A Sesquicentennial History of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska 1857-2007

1855

The **Grand Lodge of Illinois** chartered **Nebraska Lodge No. 184** at Bellevue on October 3, 1855.

On April 3, 1855, on the second story of the Old Trading Post in Bellevue, owned by Peter A Sarpy, was held the **first Masonic meeting** in the Territory of Nebraska at Nebraska Lodge No. 184. In the adjoining room lived members of the Omaha tribe. Their curiosity of the proceedings prompted the members to hang Mackinaw blankets around the room to preserve their work.

The **altar** improvised for meetings of **Nebraska Lodge No. 184** was a bale of Indian blankets or two trunks covered with a blue blanket.

The **officers' jewels** were crafted from tin by Johnny Nye, the second Master of the lodge. He also made the officers' jewels for lodges starting in Denver, Colorado, Helena, Montana, and Deadwood, South Dakota.

After opening the meeting, a committee prepared bylaws and received a **petition** from Isaiah Bennet. He died before the next meeting of the lodge on May 29, 1855. Another petition was received from Stephen Decatur, but he moved from Bellevue.

1856

Giddings Lodge No. 156 at Nebraska City was chartered by the **Grand Lodge of Missouri** on May 28, 1856.

The first candidate for a Nebraska lodge to be initiated was **Peter Sarpy**. His initiation into **Nebraska Lodge No. 184** occurred in Bluff City (Council Bluffs), Iowa, on January 5, 1856.

When **Peter Sarpy** petitioned for initiation, it was discovered the lodge did not have a box and **ballots**. An empty gallon pickle jar and small gravel stones were substituted. Lead bullets were available for the "darker-colored" service.

The **first Master Mason degree** was conferred on Henry T. Clarke at **Nebraska Lodge No. 184** by **Robert C. Jordan**, the first Grand Master.

1857

Robert C. Jordan, Grand Master

The **Grand Lodge of Iowa** chartered **Capitol Lodge No. 101** in Omaha on June 3, 1857.

On September 23, 1857, Masters and Wardens of three lodges of Masons from the Territory of Nebraska **organized a Grand Lodge**.

Transportation on the Missouri River consisted of an occasional steamboat. When the members of **Giddings Lodge No. 156** in Nebraska City were ready to leave for the meeting in Omaha to organize the Grand Lodge, no steamboat had arrived to journey up the Missouri River. The brothers walked the entire distance to and from Omaha and slept under the stars.

A committee of three was appointed to determine how to carry out the **formation** of a **Grand Lodge**: **Robert C. Jordan** of Capitol Lodge, **L. L. Bowen** of Nebraska Lodge, and **H.N. Cornell** of

Giddings Lodge. The group decided the Master of the oldest lodge present preside over the first meeting. Brother **David Lindley** of Giddings Lodge presided.

The three lodges attending changed their names:

- Nebraska Lodge No. 184 at Bellevue was changed to **Nebraska Lodge No. 1.**
- Giddings Lodge No. 156 at Nebraska City was changed to **Western Star Lodge No. 2.**
- Capitol Lodge No. 101 at Omaha was changed to **Capitol Lodge No. 3.**

Robert C. Jordan, Junior Warden of Capitol Lodge in Omaha, was **elected Grand Master**. Jordan was elected to membership at Capitol Lodge No. 3 in September 1857, and became Master of the lodge at the next election in December. He served as Master of Capitol Lodge and the Grand Lodge at the same time. Jordan previously served as Master of Aurora Lodge No. 48 in Portsmouth, Ohio, in 1849-50.

Other officers were **L. L. Bowen** of Nebraska Lodge in Bellevue, Deputy Grand Master, and **David Lindley** of Giddings Lodge, Grand Senior Warden. They were installed by Most Excellent Brother J.A.W. Buck of Illinois.

L. L. Bowen, David Lindley and George Armstrong of Capitol Lodge were appointed to draft and procure passage allowing **incorporation** of the **Grand Lodge** from the Nebraska General Assembly.

Grand Secretary George Armstrong was authorized to collect \$50 from each lodge to meet the **expenses** of the **Grand Lodge**.

The **Rules of Order** for conducting the business of the **Grand Lodge** included the following:

- When the M.:W.: Grand Master, or presiding officer, rises, all debate shall cease, and there shall be strict silence.
- Every member shall stand when he speaks, and shall address himself with respect and decorum to the presiding officer for the time being. He shall not be permitted to say anything which will have a tendency wantonly to inflame or irritate, as the sole objects of debate are to enlighten and expand the mind on the subject under discussion, to elicit truth, and to conscientiously endeavor to have everything done decently and in order.

1858

Robert C. Jordan, Grand Master
September 23, 1857 – June 3, 1858
Reported at the 1st Annual Communication

The **Grand Lodge of Ohio** was the **first** to welcome the Nebraska Grand Lodge into the family of Grand Lodges.

The Grand Secretary was authorized to purchase **jewels** for the **Grand Lodge** officers.

Non-affiliated members concerned the Grand Master. He pointed to men claiming to be Masons “in our midst for a year” who had failed to connect with a Nebraska lodge. “It is admitted by all to be a great evil,” he said.

Nebraska’s **lodges** were not **visited** by the Grand Master, but he said, “...I am pleased to learn that all the lodges have been prospering and are in a healthy condition.”

After the Grand Master provided instruction in the **work**, delegates voted that Cornelius Moore’s Craftsman work be used in the jurisdiction.

Charters were issued to **Nemaha Valley Lodge No. 4** in Brownville, **Omadi Lodge No. 5** in Omadi (near South Sioux City) and **Plattsmouth Lodge No. 6** in Plattsmouth. Their delegates were seated at the Annual Communication, which increased the number of voting delegates attending to 15.

In 1857, **fees** were set at \$5 for each initiation and \$1.50 for dues. The Grand Master a year later said the fees were “...a burthensome tax upon the lodges, calculated to do injury, particularly during

the present prevailing difficulties in monetary affairs...” An amendment was adopted that reduced the fees to \$3 for initiation and \$1 for dues.

The **Bible** is God’s Holy Word, said the Grand Master. He noted other Grand Lodges were questioning that opinion and whether they could demand a candidate’s agreement to proceed with degrees. He asked the delegates to go on record declaring the Bible as God’s Holy Word.

Other Grand Lodges had also stated there was too much **religion** in lodges. “Gambling, profanity, intemperance and debauchery in general prevailed to an alarming extent among the members,” the Grand Master said in asking the delegates to express their opinions regarding these vices.

The Grand Master said he was concerned that Nebraska members hailed from nearly every state in the Union, resulting in important variations in the work. “A **uniform system of work** is one of the most desirable objects to be obtained,” he said. He proposed that all lodges exhibit their work at that Annual Communication.

The Grand Master remarked that a **history** of the start of each **lodge** should be prepared for the interest of future generations, and a resolution passed requesting a history from each lodge. The origins of the first six lodges were included in the 1860 Proceedings, and the Grand Master required that before a charter could be granted, each application must include “facts, incidents and preliminary steps connected” with its organization.

It was recommended to Nebraska lodges that they send funds to the Grand Lodge of Virginia to purchase the home and grave of **George Washington** to bring him “into the circle of our mystic tie.”

The Grand Master issued an edict forbidding lodges from receiving visitors from **New York** not in possession of a required Grand Lodge certificate. His action was prompted by a similar action of the Grand Lodge of Illinois. A schism in the Grand Lodge of New York that resulted in the creation of a competing Grand Lodge caused concern that unrecognized Masons may try to visit lodges.

The **Grand Lodge of Nebraska** was **incorporated** by the House of Representatives of the Territory of Nebraska on June 1, 1858. The act was titled, “An Act to Incorporate the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Nebraska.”

1859

Robert C. Jordan, Grand Master

June 3, 1858 – June 15, 1859

Reported at the 2nd Annual Communication

The Grand Master said an error was made when blank paper **charters** were purchased instead of parchment after forming the Grand Lodge in September 1857. It was done for the sake of economy. But, just two years later, some charters were already “mutilated.” He ordered blank parchment charters be obtained and the Grand Secretary fill them out and forward them to each lodge. The lodges were then to return the original charters to the Grand Secretary.

The Grand Lodge Rules and Regulations were amended and required that every candidate apply to the lodge nearest his **residence**.

It was required by the rules and regulations that all lodge officers should be **elected**. The rule was changed so that the Senior Deacon and Tyler were appointed by the Master, and the Junior Deacon was appointed by the Senior Warden.

The Grand Master appointed a **School Fund Committee** to provide education for the **orphans** of Master Masons.

The subject of organizing a **General Grand Lodge of the United States** was discussed in some jurisdictions. A resolution was approved supporting the Grand Master’s opposition to these efforts.

The Grand Master objected to an amendment that would have changed the date of **election** and installation from the “almost universal custom” of electing officers before St. John the Evangelist’s

Day (December 27) and installing on that day, to electing before St. John the Baptist's Day (June 24) and installing that day.

Although **no new lodges** were started in the territory the previous year, the Grand Master said the existing lodges had made steady improvement and good and true men were made Masons. "If this course be pursued in the future, there can be no doubt of success."

Three **requests** were received to create **lodges** in the territory, but the Grand Master postponed acting on them because of "extreme difficulties" related to "monetary affairs" and the lack of suitable rooms to meet. He added that a large increase in business the previous year indicates a return to prosperous times, and more lodges could be expected in the coming year.

The fifth rule of the Grand Lodge stated all **business** occurred in a **lodge** of Master Masons, except the conferring of inferior degrees. The Grand Master said it was an injustice to Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts who could not ballot for candidates for those degrees. "I consider the rule has another objectionable feature, that is, in consuming much time in the opening of the different lodges for examining, balloting, etc." He said in other Grand Lodges where the rule had existed, it was rescinded, which he recommended to the delegates.

The Grand Master urged Nebraska Masons to help the Grand Lodge of Virginia assist the Ladies Mt. Vernon Association purchase the homestead, tomb and some of the land that was once the home of **George Washington**. The group asked a donation of \$1 from every Mason, and a resolution was passed that Worshipful Masters ask members to participate.

The Grand Master pointed out that some lodges elected a **Master** who was perfect in ritual but "whose **deportment** will not bear the test of the square." He continued, "The consequence frequently is that before his term of office expires he is guilty of some misdemeanor which is looked upon as disgraceful..."

Noting that the current time was called the "progressive age," the Grand Master said the foundations of Masonry were laid by workmen who did not intend it would be experimented with by "uneasy minds which are never satisfied to let alone that which is good. Hence the wise provision made in the installation ceremony of every Master of a Subordinate Lodge 'not to suffer any **innovations**.'"

Lacking instructions about how much to spend on **jewels** for the **Grand Lodge** officers, the Grand Secretary did not purchase them.

1860

Robert C. Jordan, Grand Master

June 15, 1859 – June 6, 1860

Reported at the 3rd Annual Communication

The Grand Master was **unable to attend** Annual Communication, his third and final year as head of the fraternity. L. B. Kinney served in his office as pro-tem.

The discovery of **gold** in the West put a burden on the six **lodges** comprising the Grand Lodge. A number of members "possessed with a spirit of adventure" left lodges with barely enough members to perform the duties of the lodge.

Western Star Lodge No. 2 in Nebraska City **burned down**, and many brethren lost property. A resolution passed at the Annual Communication urged Nebraska brethren to assist them in building a new lodge. A duplicate charter was issued to the lodge.

A committee appointed to purchase Grand Lodge **jewels** and to print 25 parchment **charters** submitted a bill for \$128.50.

Three Nebraskans attended a national school of instruction in Cleveland, Ohio, where they acquired the **Webb-Preston work**.

The bylaws allowed Grand Secretary **Robert W. Furnas** to be paid a \$150 **salary**. In consideration of the state of the Grand Lodge's finances, he donated that amount to the **Grand Lodge** and did not charge for his services.

1861

George Armstrong, Grand Master

June 6, 1860 – June 5, 1861

Reported at the 4th Annual Communication

With no new lodges started the first three years and membership maintaining a slow growth, the Grand Master attributed the situation to a poor economy and older brethren abandoning lodges to find fortune in the **gold** fields. To cope with the resulting low funds, the Grand Secretary's **salary** was reduced from \$150 to \$50 per annum.

A previous **reduction of fees** for dispensations and charters did not result in the establishment of a new **lodge** in the state. The Grand Master said the challenges to commerce the past three years continued in the sparse and scattered settlements in Nebraska.

The Grand Master granted dispensations to sojourning Craft for the following **new lodges**: Summit Lodge, Parkville, Colorado; Rocky Mountain Lodge, **Gold Hill**, Colorado; and Central City Lodge, Central City, Colorado. The dispensations for Summit Lodge and Rocky Mountain Lodge were issued to **John M. Chivington**, past Grand Chaplain in Nebraska, who became Colorado's first Grand Master.

The Grand Master urged the six Nebraska lodges to work toward **uniformity** in their **ritual work**. A motion to adopt uniformity in work, as taught by Thomas Smith Webb, was approved unanimously, as well as Webb's "Freemason's Monitor or Illustrations of Masonry."

A circular received from the Grand Lodge of Tennessee asked the nation's 500,000 Masons to demand "arresting this terrible fraternal strife" of the **Civil War**. "I doubt not their appeal will enlist your hearty sympathies and ready cooperation," stated Grand Master Armstrong. A resolution was approved urging a **convention** of Masons from the north and south in Washington D.C. to restore the union. It was sent to all Grand jurisdictions.

"In this hour of our country's peril, what is the duty of the entire Masonic Fraternity of the country?" asked **Grand Orator** J. F. Kinney, referring to the **Civil War**. He pointed out that every Mason promises to be true to his country. He urged Nebraska's Masons to remain steadfast supporters of the government and trade the gavel for the musket, the trowel for the sword and labor to the designs on the military trestle board. He also suggested the fraternity's support of efforts of Masons in the north and south to end the conflict.

The Grand Master of Louisiana announced their adoption of the "**Grand Lodge Representative System**," and asked for the appointment of a Brother as a representative to their Grand Lodge. North Carolina requested the same. Because these states were in rebellion and were "concerned in plots and conspiracies against government," it was decided to be guarded in affiliations with Masonic organizations in those states. The Grand Lodge delayed a decision for one year.

A recommendation by Past Grand Master Jordan that Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts be allowed to **ballot for candidates** in those degrees was dismissed. The Grand Master said except for some Canadian and Kentucky **lodges**, this is not allowed by the Craft, including the 50-year-old Ohio Grand Lodge from whom Nebraska adopted its bylaws and rules and regulations.

The Committee on Permanent Location of **Grand Lodge** reported it would not be good policy to fix the **meeting place** because of sparse population, few lodges and doing so could be a hardship to new lodges.

A resolution of thanks was sent to Brother M. J. Drummond, publisher and editor of the *Masonic Messenger* in New York City, for gathering \$300 to aid **Western Star Lodge No. 2** in Nebraska City which lost its property in a **fire**.

1862

George Armstrong, Grand Master

June 5, 1861 – June 4, 1862

Reported at the 5th Annual Communication

The prosperity of the **lodges** was retarded, the Grand Master reported, by the absence of members who left to fight for the Union Army in the **Civil War**. “The blood-stained banner of war still waves aloft in the fratricidal contest, and the horrid spectacle which excited our most poignant grief a year ago has been rendered more ghastly by the many bloody tragedies which have succeeded.”

A meeting of Grand Masters at Louisville, KY, which was agreed to at the last Annual Communication to try to resolve the **Civil War**, did not occur. The Grand Master said the idea was “infeasible” because the fraternity’s relations with both governments “are not such as to permit its interference with any line of policy either may see fit to adopt.”

Nebraska organized and installed officers of two **lodges** in Colorado under charters granted by the Grand Lodge of Nebraska. Since the Grand Lodge of Colorado had been organized, the lodges were moved under its jurisdiction, and Nebraska recognized the Grand Lodge of Colorado.

The “Freemason’s Monitor, or Illustrations of Masonry” by Thomas Smith **Webb** was adopted as the “text-book” to be used by subordinate lodges when performing work.

R. W. Furnas, the Grand Secretary, was absent from Nebraska Territory when commissioned by the President as a **Colonel of Volunteers**.

It was reported that progress was made in effecting a **uniformity of work** following the use of “Webb Work.” A substitute stepped in to work with three lodges, when the **Grand Lecturer**, who held a commission in the Regiment of Volunteers, was absent most of the year.

A committee was appointed to prepare a code of **bylaws** for subordinate **lodges**.

Dispensations were granted for the formation of **lodges** in Peru and Decatur, the first lodges in Nebraska since 1858.

1863

George Armstrong, Grand Master

June 4, 1862 – June 23, 1863

Reported at the 6th Annual Communication

The Grand Master **wasn’t able to attend** the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge due to “duties connected with my position as an officer in the Second Nebraska Cavalry compel me to leave for the West.” He left one week before Annual Communication.

A resolution was adopted stating the “**Webb work**” as the true and ancient work practiced by the fraternity in America a century or more ago. And, it ordered each Nebraska lodge to adopt the work at their earliest convenience.

The Grand Secretary communicated with the maker of the Grand Lodge **jewels** about “the kind and quality of said jewels, for which \$100 was paid,” and asked to exchange them for others.

A new dispensation was issued for a **lodge** in Bannack City, Idaho Territory. Because the dispensation took more than three months to return to Idaho, the Grand Lodge renewed the dispensation for another year.

By a vote of the Grand Lodge, **Masters** of subordinate lodges were required to **read the Rules** and Regulations governing lodges.

A resolution was passed ordering a **lodge** under dispensation in Peru to be discontinued.

The **Installation Ceremony** and **Masonic Funeral Service** were adopted and published by the Grand Lodge, the first ceremonies to be published.

1864

Daniel H. Wheeler, Grand Master

June 23, 1863 – June 24, 1864

Reported at the 7th Annual Communication

A dispensation was granted authorizing the organization of **Monitor Lodge** in the First Nebraska Regiment Infantry, located in the field. Military responsibilities prevented representatives from attending Annual Communication. It continued until 1866 when the dispensation was surrendered after 20 were initiated, 16 passed and 14 raised.

The Grand Master noted that little had been seen in “our young and beautiful territory” of the **Civil War**. He referred to the Charge that states Brothers should be true to their government and not rebel. He also discussed the Ancient Constitutions that members not act unjustly to any Brother.

The constitution was amended by adopting a resolution making the first five **Grand Officers elective** and the others appointive by the Grand Master. In addition, “Grand” was added to the titles of officers.

The **Conservators Association**, a group dedicated to the use of the ancient Webb-Preston work, and twice affirmed as the only ritual used by our Masonic fathers, received the Grand Master’s endorsement. Attacks on the Conservators were unjustified, he said.

A committee was appointed to investigate the “genealogy” of the **Webb-Preston work**. Its conclusions were that the work approved by Nebraska was received by Barney from Webb in 1815; Webb from Preston about 1795; Preston from his predecessors about 1775. That no other work practiced in the U.S. has a genealogy worthy of consideration. And that nothing in its examination “has shaken our confidence in the work heretofore adopted by this Grand Lodge.”

A motion was passed requiring **lodges** to obtain a sufficient number of lambskin or white leather **aprons** to initiate new members.

A new dispensation was issued to a **lodge** in Bannack City, Idaho Territory, to continue its work. Another was granted at Nevada City, Idaho Territory.

It was pointed out by the Grand Master that although **membership** numbers had steadily increased, there was no “unnatural growth, indicating a diseased instead of a healthy condition.”

1865

Daniel H. Wheeler, Grand Master

June 24, 1864 – June 24, 1865

Reported at the 8th Annual Communication

The Grand Master noted that Nebraska had enjoyed comparative peace while brethren in many states suffered the horrors of the **Civil War**. “...the darkness of war’s night is fast passing away, and the angels of mercy and peace are descending upon our nation,” he said.

A resolution was passed praising R.: W.: Brother **A. G. Mackey**, Grand Secretary of the South Carolina Grand Lodge, “for the noble aid he has extended to distressed brethren, who, as soldiers of the Union were confined in Southern prisons, thereby proving himself a Mason in truth.” It noted that his faithfulness to his vows impoverished himself in furnishing aid and comfort to Union soldiers, which saved many lives.

The Grand Master stated a section of the Grand Lodge Constitution was “irregular and unmasonic” that related to the election of the **Deputy Grand Master**. He urged the body to make the position **appointed** because “Masonic custom and law teach” that as his representative, the Grand Master is responsible for his actions. The Grand Lodge rejected the idea.

Although brethren in **Columbus** sent funds to the Grand Lodge, no **charter** had been issued. The Grand Master provided a dispensation and recommended a charter be issued bearing the date June 24, 1864.

The Grand Lodge adopted a resolution stating it was “unwise and irregular for any subordinate lodge in this jurisdiction to initiate, pass or raise **more than one candidate at a time**.” But, it did allow the giving of the lectures and charges to any number at the same time.

The Committee on **Foreign Correspondence** hadn’t reported for two years because of low **finances** to print a report, and the committee received proceedings from other states at a date that didn’t allow them to prepare a thorough report. A resolution was passed making the Grand Secretary the chair of the committee since he received the proceedings throughout the year.

1866

Robert W. Furnas, Grand Master

June 24, 1865 – June 23, 1866

Reported at the 9th Annual Communication

The **Civil War** placed “our Order, and us, as individual Masons, in a more unpleasant attitude toward each other, than ever before known in the world’s history,” said the Grand Master. He reminded the body never to forget the duties of mercy and charity, and, “In this nature, the acts of our order peculiarly shine forth.” He urged Masons to “ever be ready to welcome the return of erring ones, ready to forget the past, and to buy all dissensions in the joy of re-established fraternity.”

The Grand Master said that in his travels to most of the state’s lodges, “...there is yet no little dissimilarity in the **work** of the Order.” However, he said all officers and members perform the work well and with zeal and ability.

For the first time in the history of the Grand Lodge, the official **decisions** of the **Grand Master** were listed in the Proceedings.

The Grand Master stated, and the Masonic Jurisprudence Committee agreed, it was unlawful for Masons to “**work**” in lodge on the **Sabbath** day. He said meeting on the Sabbath was a violation of the “law of the land.”

A committee of five was appointed to establish **uniformity of work** and report at the next Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge.

It was unlawful for lodges to confer degrees on a man who could neither read nor write, the **Grand Master** said, and the Masonic Jurisprudence Committee agreed. Such persons are incapable of comprehending the principles of Masonry and are without any moral responsibility for a violation or neglect of the fraternity’s duties, he said.

The question of **physical qualifications** in order to take the degrees was raised for the first time in the history of the Grand Lodge. A report of the Jurisprudence Committee said that the loss of the index finger with the middle finger so stiff that it could not be straightened did not make a candidate **ineligible**. However, in 1868 it was decided that the committee had intended to say that the loss of the finger did render him ineligible.

The Grand Lodge adopted a resolution that appointed a committee to found an institution to educate orphans of deceased Masons. This was the origin of the **Orphans Educational Fund**. To start a fund, an annual levy of \$1 was charged each member and \$2 for each non-affiliated member in the state. In addition, an annual festival or fair was ordered to be held to raise money for the fund.

In issuing dispensations for additional lodges in Omaha and Nebraska City, the Grand Master stated multiple lodges in a community must notify each other when a **candidate** is rejected. He suggested that Nebraska Grand Lodge law be changed to require secretaries in lodges to notify all lodges in the state of a **rejection**.

No report had been received from **Monitor Lodge**, a military lodge with the First Regiment Nebraska Volunteers, since its creation. Since then, men raised in Monitor Lodge requested **dispensations** to join other lodges in the state. The Grand Master granted the dispensations noting that some provision should be made for these members despite the apparent non-existence of Monitor Lodge. At Annual Communication, it was decided that all who were made Masons in the lodge would be issued certificates so they could affiliate with lodges in the jurisdictions where they lived.

The incoming **Grand Lodge officers paraded** from its meeting, led by the Nebraska City Band, to the First Methodist Episcopal Church to hear the Grand Orator's speech. A public installation followed.

It was voted to send \$50 to Audalasia Lodge No. 239 in Alabama to **build** a Masonic Hall since their previous hall was destroyed during the **Civil War**.

1867

Robert W. Furnas, Grand Master

June 23, 1866 – June 21, 1867

Reported at the 10th Annual Communication

The Grand Master said that although the **Civil War** caused divisions in the nation's fraternity that may never be healed, the mercy of Freemasonry "hovered over many battlefields, ministered its loving charities, relieved suffering, preserved the sacred ashes of the honored dead," and our "principles of brotherly love did stand the fiery trial."

The Grand Master urged the Grand Lodge and lodges to provide relief to brethren and their families in the South who suffered from hunger and whose homes were desolated by the **Civil War**. The body approved a \$150 donation to Georgia, and lodges were encouraged to raise funds. "Our brethren whose homes have been desolated by war ask of us bread for themselves and families. Let Freemasons of the north, whose storehouses, through the smiles of Providence, are well filled, contribute liberally and as becomes the great emergency. I have official information from some of the southern jurisdictions that there has been among our own brotherhood absolute famishing and death from want of food."

Establishment of a **Representative System** was approved that would help "draw the ties of brotherhood in the different jurisdictions closer," especially necessary after the Civil War.

The Grand Master provided a dispensation for the creation of Peru Lodge in Peru. A **dispensation** also was given before the **Civil War** to start a lodge in Peru, but it was surrendered when the war began because of the difficulties in maintaining the lodge during the conflict.

An order was drawn on **Nemaha Valley Lodge No. 4** in Brownville to return lodge furniture that formerly belonged to Peru Lodge U.:D.: to **Peru Lodge No. 14**.

A committee checking into **uniformity of work** reported the "**Webb Work**" as the genuine work of Ancient Craft Masonry, as confirmed by its adoption by the Grand Lodge in 1861. And yet, work differs in other jurisdictions using the same work. "This deplorable state of affairs...is the result of the departure of Webb's successors." A committee was appointed to exemplify the work of the Grand Lodge, and the bylaws were amended to state that the Grand Lecturer visit lodges each year to give instruction in the work.

Although lodge requests for dispensations to confer degrees expeditiously were approved, the Grand Master said **proficiency** was rarely attained. He recommended the Grand Lodge prohibit this practice.

A committee, assigned to examine the startup of an institution to **educate the children** of deceased Masons, said the effort “is the most important measure ever yet presented for your consideration as an order, or that, perhaps, ever will be.”

With brethren moving to Nebraska and wanting to begin **new lodges** near them, the Grand Master said lodges should ask whether they could be sustained. After turning down one application, he asked if the Grand Lodge and Grand Masters “do violence to the Order in making too great haste to increase the number of lodges?”

Proxies held by a brother for one of the three principal officers of the lodge were not allowed.

The **dues** of the **Grand Lodge** were reduced from \$3 to \$1.50 annually.

Monitor Lodge U. D. ., a military lodge, provided \$105.60 in dues to the Grand Lodge, the first payment it had made since its creation.

1868

Orsamus H. Irish, Grand Master

June 21, 1867 – June 25, 1868

Reported at the 11th Annual Communication

The Grand Master made the following rulings:

- The Grand Master said it was the right and responsibility of all persons claiming to be Masons to **prove** themselves as **members**. The Master was in charge to make certain members followed through.
- **Ballots** for membership could be passed a second, and in exceptional instances, a third time when the Master thinks a black ball may have been cast by mistake.
- Members’ **dues** were assessed when he was raised, but Entered Apprentice or Fellow Craft Masons could not be charged.
- The Grand Master turned down all dispensations to **confer degrees quickly**, stating that laws were liberal enough for lodges to handle any situation.

Proficiency examinations of Masons varied from understanding part of the work before permitted to advance, while other lodges barely went through the form of examination or merely asked questions. The Grand Master said the latter two methods “fall far short of the spirit and meaning of the requirements.”

A question from Tecumseh Lodge about a brother who was initiated and raised, asked if it was legal to conduct a ballot for the third degree when known objectors weren’t present. The Jurisprudence Committee said that when an **objection** was made, the Master was to declare the brother rejected without a ballot.

It was approved that all Master Masons must **sign the constitution and bylaws** of his lodge, and a brother would not be considered a member of the lodge until he had.

The Grand Lodge adopted a requirement that applicants for **membership** must have lived in the state for at least **one year**.

On a unanimous vote, Lodge Secretaries were asked to report on **rejections** made by his lodge.

The Rules and Regulations of the Grand Lodge were amended requiring that all applications for **membership lay over** at least one lunar month.

The Grand Master said too much caution could not be exercised in admitting **members**. “Numbers alone never yet gave strength. Real sterling and moral worth, only elevate Masonry, and give it that high stand among men to which it is entitled.”

A robber stole \$700 from the **Grand Treasurer's vault**. The Grand Lodge was asked to restore the funds, but ordered the Grand Treasurer to recover the funds by the next communication. If not, then the Grand Lodge "shall take definite action upon the subject."

The **Grand Lodge's fiscal year** was changed to the calendar year.

A **Grand Lodge Library** was started with the Grand Master asking for the donation of books. About 90 volumes were received.

Given the size of the Grand Lodge, a resolution was adopted stating it was not expected that brethren and citizens would open their homes to those attending **Annual Communication**.

1869

Orsamus H. Irish, Grand Master

June 25, 1868 – October 28, 1869

Reported at the 12th Annual Communication

U.S. President Ulysses Grant **appointed** the Grand Master as **United States Consul** at Dresden, Saxony, which prevented him from presiding over Annual Communication.

The Deputy Grand Master stated that "scarcely two lodges work alike in the details" of Masonic **ritual work**. He suggested using a plan similar to Iowa that had a Grand Lecturer and several Custodians. The state was divided into districts and they personally visited each lodge, and when their work was found correct, a certificate was issued. A resolution was laid over to the next session that defined the duties of the Grand Lecturer as well as the authority to **appoint Custodians** to assist him.

Past Grand Master Daniel Wheeler of Plattsmouth proposed a resolution that a committee report at the next session on a form of **ceremonies** for the installation of Grand Officers, cornerstone layings, funeral ceremonies and others.

A resolution created a committee of five brothers "known for their zeal and proficiency in Masonry, whose duty it shall be to meet...for the purpose of comparing, adjusting and arriving at a **uniform work**" and report at the next session of the Grand Lodge.

The Council Bluffs & St. Joseph **Railroad** was thanked for providing **free passage** for the delegates from Annual Communication in Nebraska City to their homes.

To facilitate the construction of a **Masonic temple in Omaha** to house the Grand Lodge and subordinate lodges, chapter and commandery, the delegates at Annual Communication passed a resolution creating the first **Board of Trustees**, provided that the Grand Lodge would have use of the building "when it shall desire, free of charge."

A **fire** destroyed **Tecumseh Lodge**, U.:D.: in September 1868 and all proceedings were burned. Its bylaws were presented and a charter was granted the lodge. A resolution donated the costs of dues and fees for a charter to the lodge because of the fire.

In August 1868, the Grand Secretary, in compliance with a resolution adopted the previous year, asked all sister Grand Lodges in the U.S. and Canada to receive the appointment of a **Grand Representative**.

A Past Master of another lodge was elected Master of **Capitol Lodge No. 3** for the purpose of "harmonizing with the adopted **work** of the Grand Lodge." The Master of Capitol Lodge ruled that his election as Master made him a **member** of the lodge. The **Grand Master ruled** that the Past Master couldn't be made a member by implication, and only by following the process spelled out by the bylaws.

The Grand Secretary was directed to secure a **photograph** from each **Past Grand Master** to be kept in the archives of the **Grand Lodge**.

An offer was extended by J. N. Rippey of Omaha to provide a high school **education** to the **children** of deceased Masons at half price in a school he had established.

Following extensive debate, it was decided the Grand Lodge **Orphans Fund** would pay the costs of education, clothing and “furnishing necessaries” to indigent children of deceased Masons. It required that at the next session, a plan to properly disburse funds be developed and submitted to subordinate lodges for approval.

Falls City Lodge No. 9 was the only lodge that hadn’t paid \$1 per member for the **Orphans Fund** in 1868 as directed the previous year. The Grand Treasurer was directed to collect the funds.

The **Grand Lodge** paid \$925 to **Western Star Lodge**, the amount due for borrowed money.

The following resolution was adopted: “*Resolved*, That it is the sense and utterance of this Grand Lodge that the vices of **intemperance** and **gambling** are unmasonic, in the highest sense, and derogatory of the best interests of the Fraternity; hence, it is hereby made the *imperative* duty of the Masters and Wardens of the subordinate lodges, to prefer charges against any brother who persistently indulges in either of said vices, and **try** him in the regular form for such offense.”

The Grand Lodge laid the **cornerstone** of the **State University** in Lincoln on Sept. 23, 1869. This was the first official announcement of a cornerstone laying in Nebraska.

1870

Harry P. Deuel, Grand Master

October 28, 1869 – June 23, 1870

Reported at the 13th Annual Communication

Twelve lodges **rejected** 44 petitioners for **membership**.

The Grand Master granted a dispensation to establish a **lodge** at South Pass City, Wyoming, in 1869 named Wyoming Lodge.

Donations to the **Orphans School Fund** totaled \$119 and were made through certificates of mileage and per diem by 12 Masons.

It was decided that when the Grand Lodge **Orphans Fund** reached \$5,000, no further collection from the lodges would be made, and the assessment for the fund was reduced from \$1 to 50 cents.

At the previous Annual Communication, a resolution held the **Grand Treasurer** responsible for the loss of \$700 and demanded that he provide reimbursement. He said the funds were stolen from his **vault** along with personal funds and those of his express company. An investigation resulted in the adoption of a resolution absolving him of any wrong-doing.

Lodges in the state were divided into five **districts** for instruction in the **work**.

At Annual Communication, a resolution was approved requiring the **passage of at least one lunar month** between the **conferring of each degree**.

In response to questions from lodges, the **Grand Master ruled** that a man who lost a thumb could not be made a Mason while the loss of a forefinger did not restrict him from receiving the degrees.

Recognition was extended to the **Grand Lodge of Quebec**, and it was noted, “...we are not influenced by any feelings of hostility to the **Grand Lodge of Canada** ... and that the said Grand Lodge will also, at no distant day, extend the right hand of fellowship to the Grand Lodge of Quebec.”

The Council Bluffs and St. Joseph **Railroad**, Union Pacific Railroad and Burlington and Missouri Railroad were thanked for providing free travel for delegates to and from Annual Communication.

The Grand Lodge of South Carolina said most of its lodges suspended their labors during the **Civil War**. Lodge rooms were destroyed, the jewels, furniture and records lost and members scattered. In November 1865, only 20 lodges attended its Annual Communication. In 1870, the state boasted 6,000 members and 143 lodges. “So marked an increase among an impoverished people in a

period of great distress speaks eloquently of the strength and vitality of the Masonic feeling in our state,” the Grand Master said.

The Grand Lodge of Virginia refused to recognize “colored Masons” asking fraternal **recognition** and representation. A special committee in that state said they were “illegally made Masons.”

1871

Harry P. Deuel, Grand Master

June 23, 1870 – June 23, 1871

Reported at the 14th Annual Communication

The number of raisings of **new members** doubled between 1870 and 1871.

After the first year of appointing a Grand Lecturer and assigning Custodians to **districts** to ensure conformance to the **work**, several lodges reported they hadn’t been visited. The Grand Master said if **Custodians** didn’t have the time to visit lodges twice a year and the Grand Lecturer couldn’t visit each lodge each year, then they should resign their office. He suggested the Grand Lodge pay them if time away from work was too demanding.

A committee was appointed to examine the actions of the commanding officer at **Ft. McPherson**, Col. W. H. Emory, 5th U.S. Cavalry, who forbade all officers, soldiers and civilians employed by the government from visiting the building where **Platte Valley Lodge No. 32** met. His actions made it impossible for the lodge to hold regular and special meetings because so many officers were members. In General Order No. 16, dated May 19, 1871, Emory claimed he was a warm friend of the fraternity.

In response to a question from Ashlar Lodge U.:D.: in Grand Island, the Grand Master ruled that a brother could be **examined** at a **special communication** and needn’t wait for a regular communication.

Requests for lodge charters in **Fairbury**, **Seward** and **Central City** were not granted by the Grand Master, citing the law which states **lodges** under dispensation must make an exhibit of their **work** to prove their ability to **confer degrees** and management of the lodge. With time running out before the Annual Communication of Grand Lodge, he deferred dealing with the requests to the next Grand Master.

At Annual Communication, a motion was passed that outgoing Grand Masters be presented a **“suitable testimonial” for serving** the Grand Lodge of Nebraska.

The following **railroad** companies were thanked for transporting members to the Annual Communication and back home at no charge: Midland Pacific, Union Pacific, Council Bluffs and St. Joseph, Omaha Southwestern, Omaha Northwestern and Burlington and Missouri.

1872

William E. Hill, Grand Master

June 23, 1871 – June 21, 1872

Reported at the 15th Annual Communication

Annual Communication was held in the Senate Chamber of the State Capitol.

The Grand Master reported that a few **lodges** had done little or no work in the previous year and some were unable to secure a **quorum** to hold a regular communication. These lodges were “located in small towns that were once prosperous and growing but now are on the decline.” He suggested they surrender their charter and join another lodge. “One or two lodges in a county, as a general rule, are sufficient for all needful purposes, except where there are large towns or cities.”

Dispensations were issued to seven **lodges** to organize. The Grand Master said he received numerous other requests that did not receive dispensations until it was determined a lodge was needed, could be sustained and a lodge room could be secured. He also said checking that new lodges could confer degrees in a correct manner had been neglected too often.

After **visiting** all but two or three lodges, the Grand Master termed the system of a **Grand Lecturer** and **custodians** a success. He found the brethren “anxious and willing” to learn the true **work**, and many lodges had it correct. As a result, two **Schools of Instruction** were scheduled in the northern and southern sections of the state to make at least one **brother of each lodge proficient**.

Reports by the **Grand Lecturer** and two **Custodians** indicated they had **visited** few lodges during the first year of their appointment. The Grand Lecturer attributed it to being unprepared for the appointment, and one Custodian was on a business trip to California and was left snowbound during the winter and unable to return to the state.

It was approved at Annual Communication that a **Past Grand Secretary’s jewel** be designed and presented to retiring Grand Secretary **Robert W. Furnas** at a cost of not more than \$100.

Past Grand Master **Robert W. Furnas**, on behalf of the trustees of the **Orphan School Fund**, reported the fund contained \$5,154.65. Since the amount was more than the goal for the fund, he proposed an amendment that was adopted abolishing the tax on lodges that supported the effort.

To alleviate the **indebtedness** of the **Grand Lodge**, the Grand Master recommended the grand officers and past grand officers not be entitled to mileage or **per diem** for their attendance at **Annual Communication**. He said borrowed money needed to be paid to the **Orphans Fund**, and the debt cripples the usefulness of the **Grand Lecturer** and custodians.

The Grand Master reminded lodges that it was improper to make a Mason of “one who has a **cork-leg**. The Grand Lodge of Nebraska says that it ‘will ever hold the ancient landmarks of the Order inviolate.’”

Calling a “real estate gift enterprise” highly improper and unmasonic, the Grand Master said lodges could not hold **lotteries**. He said lotteries are immoral and he hoped the Grand Lodge would take action to prevent lodges from engaging in such “demoralizing speculations.”

Immoral practices and vices of some Masons, such as **saloon-keeping, gambling**, swearing, and drunkenness, pointed to the need to bear in mind “both the precept and example to impress the moral principles of our Order upon all with whom we associate,” said the Grand Master. “We have no use for the gambler, the profaner, the violator of the holy Sabbath, the intemperate, and especially those who keep drinking saloons where men become intoxicated and degrade themselves.”

The **Constitution** was put to the Grand Lodge in form after two-thirds of the subordinate lodges adopted it.

The following question was posed of the Masonic Jurisprudence Committee: “Is the God of the Mason the God of the **Bible**, and is the denying of the God of the Bible a Masonic offense? Is the denying the authenticity of the Bible a Masonic offense?” The committee responded that the denial of the existence of God as set forth in the Holy Bible, and the denial of the divine authority and authenticity of the Holy Bible were Masonic offenses.

Platte Valley Lodge received a dispensation to move their charter from Cottonwood Springs to North Platte.

1873

William E. Hill, Grand Master

June 23, 1871 – June 18, 1873

Reported at the 16th Annual Communication

The charter of **Western Star Lodge No. 2**, Nebraska City, was destroyed in a **fire** on July 22, 1872. The Grand Master ordered a duplicate charter be issued.

A resolution passed at **Annual Communication** invited all Master Masons in good standing to **attend** the deliberations of the Grand Lodge.

The Grand Secretary submitted a design for a **seal** for the **Grand Master**.

Falls City Lodge No. 9 requested permission to confer degrees on a man who lost one leg that was replaced with an **artificial leg**. The Grand Master declined the request, preferring to have the issue voted on at Annual Communication, where the request was rejected.

A resolution was passed appointing five Masons to consider organizing a **Masonic Life Assurance Association**.

After the Grand Master ruled that **Palmyra Lodge No. 45** in Palmyra and **Oliver Lodge No. 38** in Seward met in rooms unsuitable for meetings, he denied their dispensation until they were in proper condition. The dispensation for Palmyra Lodge was renewed in May 1873, nearly a year later. At Seward, changes in the building were completed in September 1872, but due to discord in the lodge, the Grand Master ordered an investigation before proceeding with its creation.

The great **Chicago fire** in 1871 totally destroyed 18 lodges. The Masonic Board of Relief, organized after the fire, returned \$114 to the Grand Lodge of Nebraska from the remaining funds donated by various jurisdictions. The money served as the beginnings of a **Charity Fund**.

After the **Grand Lodge of Canada** announced a \$2,000 donation to provide assistance after the great **Chicago fire**, the chairman of the Nebraska Committee on Foreign Correspondence commented, "Is that **charity**? Is it right to give that we may proclaim our giving? ... Many of our Grand Lodges annually parade the amounts and names of recipients, of what they term charities. We condemn the course. We believe in the giving generously and freely, but save the humbled poor and their friends from being humiliated by the unworthy publication of gifts."

A **Past Grand Treasurer's jewel** was created and awarded to George Graff who served in that position from 1868-1872.

The **Grand Lodges of Canada** and Vermont ended recognition of each other after Vermont attempted to "coerce" Canada into recognizing the Grand Lodge of Quebec.

1874

Martin Dunham, Grand Master

June 18, 1873 – June 26, 1874

Reported at the 17th Annual Communication

The Grand Lodge adopted a report recommending the organization of a **Masonic Life Assurance Association**. The committee recommended charging three age groups \$3-\$6 to join. On the death of any brother, all others in the same age group would be required to pay \$1.10. Interest that accrued on funds above expenses would be used as a sinking fund for the use of the association in cases of emergency. A committee was appointed to prepare a constitution and bylaws for the organization.

The Grand Secretary proposed the creation of a revenue fund of one-fifth of the annual gross receipts to "render the Grand Lodge self-sustaining" and to use to assist **new lodges**. The money could be loaned on real estate. While it passed at Annual Communication, it was not approved by the local lodges.

A "**compendium**" was published and placed in the lodges for Secretaries to record information about members of each lodge. Before these were provided, Lodge Secretaries were required to devise their own method to track membership. In addition, books of blank receipts and demits were also provided lodges.

A **quarterly circular** was issued from the Grand Secretary containing matters of interest to the craft.

After the Committee on Unfinished Business reported it was unable to ascertain the culpability of Past Grand Treasurer T.W. Bedford in the **loss of Grand Lodge funds**, five brothers were appointed to a committee to examine the situation and report at the next Annual Communication.

The **proceedings** from each year were ordered to be reprinted on good paper. Because it would require labor, time and funds, the job would be accomplished over several years with every lodge receiving a copy.

The Grand Secretary observed the need to **print** and provide the **laws** of the Grand Lodge to every lodge so they could be observed. He also advised that the **seal** of the Grand Lodge be enlarged and re-cut because it was worn, and recommended the appointment of 11 **standing committees**.

To reduce the **travel time** of the **Grand Lecturer**, two Schools of Instruction were held in Omaha and Lincoln for three days each. Even so, the Grand Lecturer admitted, "I have not devoted as much time to the visiting of lodges as I desired, or, perhaps as was expected..."

The **Grand Lecturer** was placed on the Grand Lodge's **payroll** at \$10.

The trail to the lodges was sometimes tedious but the brethren there made the journey worthwhile. **Grand Custodian** and PGM Daniel Wheeler reported on his trip to Red Cloud. "After a most disagreeable drive of forty miles, we reached our destination, where we found the brethren awaiting us with hearty greetings and cheer for the tired and dusty travelers, who, traveling from afar, were weary and needed rest and refreshment, which was generously furnished by the brethren. The brethren were ready and anxious to be taught the true work."

Funds totaling \$1,000 were placed in the **Orphan School Fund** to repay a **loan** to the Grand Lodge to meet the costs of operation.

Lincoln Lodge No. 19 assumed the financial **costs of burying** a destitute member of a lodge in Noblesville, Indiana. When the bill was received by the Indiana lodge, it refused to pay stating the cost was too high. In a similar situation between Wyoming and Ohio, the eastern Grand Lodge agreed the local lodge should pay the cost.

1875

Frank Welch, Grand Master

June 26, 1874 – June 25, 1875

As reported at the 18th Annual Communication

Robert W. Furnas, who served as Grand Master in 1865-1866, took office as **governor** of Nebraska in 1873 and left the office in 1875. During that time, he served on several committees and was a custodian who visited lodges to ensure their work was in accordance with the work accepted by the Grand Lodge.

Brethren in Furnas County appealed to the Grand Lodge for **assistance** in the face of a bad year in agriculture. After consulting with older Masons the Grand Master was satisfied the craft was contributing as liberally as they could. He added that agencies were also efficient and trustworthy and he declined their request.

The Grand Lodge passed a resolution thanking Brigadier General E.O.C. Ord of the **U.S. Army** for "**sustaining care** extended to the suffering Masons of Nebraska during the past year."

A committee looking into the **loss of Grand Lodge funds** at the hands of a Past Grand Treasurer recommended that no action be taken.

On recommendation of a committee, it was approved that the Grand Secretary keep the financial accounts of the Grand Lodge in a **ledger** showing all monies received and disbursed.

An **assurance association** benefiting the state's Master Masons was incorporated.

The Grand Lodge of **Indian Territory** (Oklahoma) asked **recognition** of Nebraska. The Grand Master asked for additional information, but hadn't received an answer.

The Grand Lodge decided to reimburse **Lincoln Lodge No. 19** for the cost of **burying** an indigent brother from Indiana after their requests for funds from his home lodge were refused. The total cost was \$83.

It was reported by the Grand Secretary that during the previous year a majority of **lodges** selected **seals** that were then approved by the Grand Master.

A train was arranged for those attending the **Annual Communication** to tour the **penitentiary**.

The Grand Master ruled that a man “if **stiff in joint** of left knee cannot be made a Mason.”

1876

Alfred G. Hastings, Grand Master

June 25, 1875 – June 21, 1876

As reported at the 19th Annual Communication

The Grand Master of Wisconsin initiated an effort to provide a suitable **mausoleum** to the memory of **George Washington**. A committee appointed to investigate the idea recommended that lodges collect \$1 from each member for its construction. “The members of our Fraternity in this young state should lead, not follow, in this act of honor to our distinguished brother.”

In an attempt to **standardize the work** of the order, the Grand Master of Florida proposed a meeting of the nation’s Grand Masters in Jacksonville. Nebraska’s Grand Master did not attend due to a lack of funds in the Treasury and his bank account. He stated that “a time may soon come when such a meeting will be of great benefit to the Craft.”

The Grand Lodge of the Indian Territory (**Oklahoma**) was extended fraternal **recognition** by Nebraska’s Grand Master.

As directed at the last Annual Communication, the Grand Master appointed **District Deputy Grand Masters** to oversee the work of the lodges in seven districts.

Nebraska **lodges** showed as few as 8 **officers** and as many as 10. Smaller officer corps did not have Stewards and no lodges had the office of Chaplain.

A motion was passed that allowed **lodges** to “meet as a body of Masons and appear in full clothing...to celebrate the **100th anniversary of our national independence**, on July 4, 1876.”

Several lodges suspended members for **nonpayment of dues** without placing them on **trial**. This was considered a violation of Masonic law. Rule 18 was revised to require a trial before suspending them. After the rule was changed, the suspensions of members by several lodges were then allowed.

A committee was appointed to examine the question of **recognizing** lodges comprised of **black men**. Noting that the Nebraska Grand Lodge had denied recognition, the Grand Master said, “...sooner or later, we, as a Grand Lodge, must reach some definite conclusion and assume some positive position upon this embarrassing question...” He appointed a committee to examine the issue.

Uniform **diplomas** identifying Nebraska Masons as members were supplied to lodges to give their brothers who travel so they could attend lodge in other locations.

Two **Schools of Instruction** were held, one in Sutton for four days and the other in West Point for two days. The Grand Master commented that good progress was made in achieving **uniformity of work**.

The **Grand Secretary** was named the **ex-officio librarian** of the Grand Lodge.

Two committees were appointed to develop **bylaws** and a criminal code for the government of the lodges. A report from the committee on bylaws to not proceed was adopted after it was pointed out that each lodge had the right to make their own bylaws and most lodges had adopted them. A subsequent resolution ordered lodges to send their bylaws to the Grand Lodge for review by a committee to report “any desirable modifications.”

The annual **dues** for lodge members were reduced from \$1 to 75¢. An attempt to reduce the initiation fee of \$5 was lost.

It was decided that the **Grand Master** must sign all **orders** upon the **Grand Treasurer** and be attested to by the **Grand Secretary**.

A report was adopted that expressed with dismay the lack of a response of an Indiana lodge to pay the expenses for a member who was hospitalized, died and was **buried** in Nebraska City. It suggested that the Grand Lodge of Indiana should reprimand the lodge and if that body refused to do so, then Nebraska should discontinue communication with it.

The **Jurisprudence Committee** responded to a question asking why a **ballot** was taken for the Fellow Craft and Master Mason degrees. The committee stated the ballot was for both the degree and proficiency.

Seven **railroad** companies were thanked for providing reduced fares for delegates to the Annual Communication.

1877

George H. Thummel, Grand Master

June 21, 1876 – June 20, 1877

Reported at the 20th Annual Communication

The committee investigating a disagreement between the Grand Lodges of Nebraska and Indiana regarding payments by lodges to tend to and **bury** two members, suggested the matter be laid to rest with no action to terminate relations. It stated that it was better to suffer injustice than to sever fraternal intercourse especially since there is no uniformity in practice among the Grand Lodges.

A survey of Grand Lodges asked if they care for the sick and **bury** dead brothers without expectation of reimbursement by the home lodge. Of 20 lodges, nine didn't expect to be reimbursed, eight did and three accepted, but did not demand, payment.

A report on recognition of "African or colored lodges" was issued by the special committee's chair, Robert Furnas. He said the committee held unswervingly to the universality of Freemasonry. Nebraska had recognized the division of jurisdictions by territory in the cases of the Grand Lodge of Hamburg in New York and the Grand Orient of France in Louisiana, as well as the autonomous power of a Grand Lodge. Furnas said lodges organized in a jurisdiction and not authorized by that Grand Lodge were clandestine. "This principle is universal – not applicable alone to 'colored persons or colored organizations.'" He added that a national schism in the **Prince Hall lodges** needed to be resolved. Furnas commented that an Ohio proposal to establish a second Grand Lodge in their state destroyed the concept of universality.

Responding to a question whether a **lodge** must **open stated meetings** in all three degrees, the **Jurisprudence Committee** said, "...it is not necessary, but would recommend that it be so opened at all stated meetings for the purpose of instruction."

The **Grand Master** received a plain lambskin **apron** from the Masonic Temple Craft of Omaha that was worn by him at the ceremony of laying the cornerstone of Freemasons' Hall. The group announced its wishes that successive Grand Masters receive the apron.

The **Grand Chaplain** of the Grand Lodge was **expelled** by his lodge and he lost his office.

The **Annual Communication** of the Grand Lodge was held in the new **Freemason's Hall** in Omaha. In October 1876, the Grand Lodge laid the cornerstone for the building.

The Grand Master stated he was in favor of **paying one representative** from each lodge attending **Annual Communication**, as had been done in the past, rather than three. "We are certainly too poor to stand the outlay of so much money at present." The motion on the issue passed without dissent.

The Grand Lecturer continued to struggle to complete his duties. With the expectation that a permanent holder of the office would be appointed, William Hill accepted it only to find himself still in that position a year later. He admitted he **hadn't visited any lodges** due to the demands of his business. He suggested the appointment of Custodians at Annual Communication instead of afterwards and their examination by the Grand Lecturer to prove they could teach the work. He announced he couldn't continue in the office.

Custodian George Lininger reported that while the lodges had the **ritual work**, they did not have the floor work. He added, "In too many cases the Master and Wardens are the only well posted brethren in the Lodge, and to them alone is left the entire work of the third degree, instead of calling to their assistance 10 or more brethren, and fitting them for the different parts. The order has plenty of good workers; only give them a chance."

An **assistant** to the **Grand Secretary** was hired, enabling the office to be open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day except Sunday.

The **Grand Secretary** requested that annual **dues** and **fees** be paid in May instead of waiting until Annual Communication met in June so the financial condition of the Grand Lodge would be known.

Regretting that he hadn't **visited** all lodges, the **Grand Master** said his involvement in the extended presidential election (Rutherford Hayes and Samuel Tilden which resulted in the Electoral College giving the win to the Republican Hayes despite his lower vote total), serving in the Nebraska Senate and operating his business prevented him from traveling.

Washington Lodge No. 21 in Blair asked permission to **change the name** of a member on its records from James Redfield to his real name of Charles Critchell. As a minor he ran away from home, due to problems with an insurance company, and joined the "volunteer service during the late war" and later the regular army. His family knew nothing of his whereabouts. The lodge asked if a Masonic offense occurred. The Grand Master said he was guilty only of "a boyish indiscretion" and permitted the name change.

1878

George W. Lininger, Grand Master

June 20, 1877 – June 19, 1878

Reported at the 21st Annual Communication

Thanks were offered by the **Grand Master** for elevating him to the office after having only arrived in the state four years earlier.

The Grand Master said that in the face of the "great financial depression," Masons didn't **assist each other**, or the destitute widow and helpless orphan, as they should. He lamented that many Masons had joined other secret societies and commented that a Mason risks something when he **joins another society**. In addition, he said too many secrets get outside the lodge room and too many members indulge in **alcohol**, profanity, **gambling**, quarreling, backbiting, cheating and defrauding. "The fact is, Brethren, we have in our ranks too many **men who are unworthy**," he said.

More than half the state's lodges hadn't paid their **dues** to the Grand Lodge nearly one and one-half months after the deadline.

The "black book," or Constitution and **Bylaws** of the Grand Lodge, was **printed** and distributed to the lodges so they would have an updated copy and wouldn't need to review Proceedings from 1872-1877 to know them.

Fifty dollars were approved to rent a fire-proof vault to protect Grand Lodge records too valuable to keep unprotected from **fire**.

The Grand Master presented to the Grand Lodge an ebony **gavel** and a Grand Master's **jewel** and collar.

The **Jurisprudence Committee** overruled the Grand Master's **decision** that seven members were necessary to open a lodge of Master Masons even if not all those in attendance were members of that lodge. The committee said a **quorum** was eight members of that lodge because the Constitution states a lodge's officers number eight and include the Master, Senior and Junior Wardens, Treasurer, Secretary, Senior and Junior Deacons and Tyler.

The Grand Orient of France changed its constitution to create a system of Masonry that ignores the Deity. Because the Nebraska **Grand Lodge** discontinued **recognition** several years earlier for establishing lodges in Louisiana, no further action was needed.

1879

Edward K. Valentine, Grand Master

June 19, 1878 – June 25, 1879

Reported at the 22nd Annual Communication

Memorial services were held in Congress for Past Grand Master **Frank Welch**, 42, of Norfolk, who was the state's Representative to the U.S. Congress. The current **Grand Master** was unable to attend the **Annual Communication** because he was elected to Welch's Congressional seat three months earlier.

The **Past Grand Masters' Association** held its first **Lodge of Sorrow** since the organization's creation two years previous. The observance honored Past Grand Master **Frank Welch**.

Authority was given to Masons in Sidney to hold lodge with the name **Frank Welch Lodge**.

The Grand Master asked Nebraska lodges to **donate funds** to assist brothers in the South suffering from **yellow fever**. The *Omaha Herald* mentioned the donation which prompted the Grand Secretary to write to its editor, "...it was done as our Grand Master asked it should be, 'quickly and quietly.'" He continued, "May it not be safely concluded by the *Herald* and its readers, that in the present distress the Freemasons of Nebraska are doing their whole duty, and yet the record be not published for years to come, if ever."

In separate **decisions**, the Grand Master stated there was no law prohibiting a **lodge** from meeting in the same hall with **other secret orders**, but it was not advisable where it could be conveniently avoided. He also said a Masonic lodge couldn't hold property with a Grange.

After the previous Annual Communication, the **Grand Treasurer** deposited **funds** in a bank that closed four months later with \$711 in Grand Lodge monies. Unable to secure the amount due the Grand Lodge, he promised to pay it back with interest within a year.

Local lodges arranged for **newspapers** from across Nebraska to be sent to the **Grand Secretary** for use by Masons looking for locations and business in the state.

1880

Rolland H. Oakley, Grand Master

June 25, 1879 – July 7, 1880

Reported at the 23rd Annual Communication

The Grand Master noted that recently instituted **lodges** were not only doing good work, but wielded a **strong** influence in their communities which many older lodges had neglected. He continued that younger lodges were generally more prosperous, better governed, collected delinquent dues and enforced laws better than older ones.

Grand Lodge **funds** that were lost when the **Grand Treasurer** deposited them in a bank that later failed, were restored by him with interest. He also lost his personal monies deposited there. The Grand Master remarked that under a "misapprehension of the facts connected with this case, we feel that an injustice was done him one year ago."

A letter was sent to lodges from the Grand Master urging Masters to take any steps under the bylaws to ensure the prompt payment of **dues**. Some lodges were **delinquent** \$500-\$1,200 and others hadn't reported at all. More than \$500 was remitted, but total lodge indebtedness was more than \$9,900.

The Grand Master's recommendation was approved that the **Black Book** containing the names of men expelled, suspended and rejected be issued annually to all lodges.

Robert Jordan, Nebraska's first Grand Master, sent a letter in his absence at Annual Communication about the **proliferation of secret societies** and the alienation of brothers' interest in Masonry. He said the fraternity offered additional opportunities for involvement that included the York Rite and Scottish Rite. Jordan continued that the fraternity needed to perform more **charity** work, and added, "What the order ought to do, and what the world at large has the right to expect of us, is organized effort to accomplish good on a grander scale than has been attempted, at least in Nebraska. This can only be done by being united and owning allegiance to Masonry alone."

A resolution passed commending the actions of the **Grand Master**, who personally **visited** two-thirds of the state's lodges, and it stated, "...we most heartily endorse and commend the example of Brother Oakley to the careful consideration of all future Grand Masters of this jurisdiction."

The Grand Master ordered charges brought against a Mason of Fortitude Lodge No. 69 in Ulysses for **intoxication**, including at a brother's funeral. When the lodge refused to punish the brother in spite of his admitted guilt, the Grand Master **suspended** its **charter**. It was noted that "quite a number" of members had the habit of drunkenness. Good, exemplary men and Masons, he said, were in the minority in the lodge.

The **Grand Secretary visited** many eastern jurisdictions and congratulated Nebraska Masons on several points in which they favorably compared with older and wealthier grand lodges.

James Tulleys was **elected Grand Master** but because of the severe illness of his wife, he was unable to attend Annual Communication. He was notified of his election by telegraph. Tulleys was installed Grand Master two weeks after the regular installation.

1881

James A. Tulleys, Grand Master

July 7, 1880 – June 23, 1881

Reported at the 24th Annual Communication

Blue Valley Lodge No. 64 in Wilber was destroyed by **fire** on February 25, 1881. It was ordered that the lodge's charter be replaced.

The Grand Master recommended that the **custodian system** be **abolished** because it had failed to accomplish its goals. He said the Grand Lecturer should be the sole custodian and responsible for work in the state. "While this might necessitate the incurring of some additional expense, yet the advantages to be derived from thoroughness and uniformity of work would more than compensate the additional outlay." He added that few custodians qualified for the office, and those who performed their duties were even fewer.

A committee examining the Grand Master's opinion of the **custodian system** proposed amendments to the constitution and bylaws that changed the system. The Grand Lecturer's title was changed to **Grand Custodian**, and references to the Custodians were recommended struck.

In an attempt to get lodges to pay their annual **dues** on time, the Grand Lodge passed a motion that the Committee on Returns add 10 percent of the gross amount to each lodge's dues and fees. Depending on the date dues were received, three-tenths to nine-tenths of the **penalty** was returned to lodges.

At the 1880 Annual Communication, it was ordered that lodge secretaries report on those **rejected, suspended** and **expelled**. The Grand Secretary reported the task was more than could be

accomplished for many secretaries in one year and only 60 percent were returned. He and the Grand Master deemed it wasteful to print the reports received.

A plea from the Grand Master of the District of Columbia for a \$100 **donation** to benefit the **Masonic Hall Association of Washington** City resulted in total contributions from the state's 74 lodges of \$9.

The Grand Secretary reported that with growth in membership and reducing office expenses, the Grand Lodge's annual **dues** could be **reduced** from 75¢ to 60¢, and to 50¢ if the Grand Lodge kept operating as usual.

The Grand Master observed that the **financial books** of recently chartered **lodges** are "nearly worthless" because they failed to use proper blanks and books. "A little labor, at the outset, with convenient books, avoids an incalculable amount of trouble and confusion after the lodge has been running two or three years," he said.

Past Grand Master **George Lininger**, who had returned from a year's travels to Europe, Egypt, Palestine and Syria, described his travels in foreign countries and presented the Grand Lodge and each Past Grand Master an olive-wood **gavel** made in Jerusalem.

Responding to a question, the **Jurisprudence Committee** stated that the Master has the right to appoint a committee to **examine a Mason** from another lodge when he visits.

1882

James R. Cain, Sr., Grand Master

June 23, 1881 – June 21, 1882

Reported at the 25th Annual Communication

U.S. President James Garfield, a brother, was **assassinated** September 19, 1881. The Grand Master commented, "...after a painful and protracted illness, borne with that manly and heroic fortitude and forbearance characteristic of the man, he died from the effects of his wounds. Our country was at once plunged into the deepest sorrow, and the good and true men everywhere shared our grief, and from hearts overflowing with sympathy poured forth their comfort and consolation."

The Grand Lodge appropriated \$1,000 to celebrate the **25th anniversary** of the **Grand Lodge**.

Because of lack of funds, the Ways and Means Committee recommended against a suggestion from the **Grand Custodian** that he exemplify the work in **every lodge**. The committee estimated the cost would be not less than \$5,000.

It was authorized for the Grand Secretary to purchase a set of **Grand Lodge jewels** for \$50 described as "unusually low priced."

An apprentice once **rejected** should be examined in open lodge before proceeding to ballot a second time for his advancement, it was **ruled by the Grand Master**.

The Grand Master said he was prevented from "feeling inclined to lead" in arranging a **Congress of Grand Masters and Grand Secretaries** as suggested by Past Grand Master **Lininger** at the previous Annual Communication. "The idea is a good one, and if properly conducted, such a convention would undoubtedly result in much advantage to the craft," he said. "In the event of such a meeting, questions for consideration should be clearly defined and fully understood before any action is had."

The **Grand Master** urged Masters to **consult the Proceedings** instead of submitting questions to him to reduce the time involved in researching and making decisions. With 80 chartered lodges, he said, every year sees an increase in requests for **decisions**.

The Grand Secretary suggested the **Masonic year** for lodges begin on the Festival of St. John the Baptist (June 24) instead of the Festival of St. John the Evangelist (Dec. 27). He said that under the system in place, office holders took office in mid-winter thus dividing the working season and creating a lack of continuity. The new officers were barely in office when spring arrived and recess

was taken until cool weather in about October. With the election of officers a few weeks later, he added there was a tendency to let matters go until new officers were installed. "The year is cut in two and the reins are twice taken up, much to the detriment of the lodges and the Grand Lodge." He urged **lodge elections** be held just before Annual Communication with **installation** afterwards. Officers would then have an unbroken term of up to eight months and would be better prepared to help the Grand Lodge in its work based on their experience.

The Grand Master praised the work of the **Grand Custodian** and recommended that his efforts be "suitably and substantially recognized." The Committee on Accounts authorized an expenditure of \$121.75 for his expenses and per diem. No action was taken on a proposal made by a special committee to provide \$1,000 for the Grand Custodian to visit all lodges in the state.

Four brothers of Ashland Lodge No. 18 asked for a **dispensation** to start **Palmyra Lodge No. 45** in Palmyra after the Grand Master **arrested the lodge's Charter**. The Grand Master made the granting of the dispensation contingent on payment of a claim to a brother. The lodge had, according to Masonic law, illegally disposed of lodge property.

The **Grand Master ruled** that although there was no regulation designating the manner of **voting on petitioners** for a new lodge, he said it should be done by **secret ballot**. The Jurisprudence Committee countered the Grand Master stating that not only was a secret ballot unnecessary, but the vote should be taken in the same manner as other business.

A letter was received from the **Grand Lodge of Utah** explaining why **Mormons** were excluded from membership. Pointing out the loyalty of Masons to their government, it was stated that contrary to U.S. law, Mormons believed in polygamy, which "civilized nations consider a relic of barbarism." The writer said the application of this dogma on all Mormons as a duty commanded by God "constitutes their criminality." The Grand Lodge of Nebraska said that Utah had its support.

Albert G. Mackey died June 21, 1881, at Fortress Monroe, Virginia. He was the author of several books recognized as standard authority in America as well as Europe. The Grand Master said his "memory will long be cherished as one of the pillars in the temple of Masonry."

A **Grand Lodge of Ontario** requested formal **recognition**. The Committee on Foreign Correspondence said it occupied territory over which the Grand Lodge of Canada had jurisdiction. Information from Ontario said the purpose of the Grand Lodge was to become a Supreme Grand Lodge for all the Grand Lodges of the dominion. However, that failed when the independent Grand Lodge of Quebec was created and widely recognized by other jurisdictions. This was followed by the establishment of independent Grand Lodges in four other provinces. Not being informed of Ontario's territorial limits, the committee advised against recognition.

1883

Edwin F. Warren, Grand Master

June 21, 1882 – June 20, 1883

Reported at the 26th Annual Communication

A **Quarter-Centennial Celebration** was held in Omaha September 23, 1882. At a **table lodge**, it was noted that all Past Grand Masters, except Frank Welch, were living. Following several toasts and responses, it was decided that a bottle of wine be sealed that night to be opened at the 50th anniversary of the Grand Lodge. A bottle of pure Riparia wine, made that year by Past Grand Master **Robert W. Furnas**, was sealed and ordered to be opened in 1907 in the presence of the surviving signers of a note accompanying the bottle.

The **Quarter-Centennial Committee** furnished each **lodge** with recognition badges – a blue ribbon to wear bearing the name, number and location of the wearer's lodge. The Grand Secretary urged members to wear the badges at Annual Communication to promote good fellowship.

The Grand Master commented that the **growth of Masonry** had kept pace with the material growth of the state. He said the “enormous increase of population” in the northern and western parts of Nebraska would support the number of new lodges recently started. That year, he approved **dispensations** for 20 new lodges.

The Grand Lodge prohibited lodges from charging **affiliation fees**. While that was a step in the right direction, the Grand Master said all barriers should be removed from affiliation, and unaffiliated Masons be encouraged to renew their membership. The Grand Master added unaffiliated Masons had been voted on when they joined and didn’t need to go through that again, and should only be subjected to an investigating committee’s report.

A **fire at Riverton Lodge No. 63**, as well as prior lodge fires, resulted in significant losses because of uninsured jewels and other property. An edict from the Grand Master ordered lodges to purchase and maintain insurance on uninsured property and report its amount to the Grand Lodge. An amendment to the bylaws was also adopted.

A **fire-proof vault** was rented to keep **Grand Lodge** records safe from destruction. The Grand Secretary said the Grand Lodge ought to have a fire-proof office room as well.

Noting that securing late payments of **dues** from lodges was “onerous” and the duty was “little appreciated,” the Grand Master appointed the Master of **Thistle Lodge No. 61** in Lexington to collect them from his lodge’s members.

Added to the Grand Lodge bylaws was credit of one cent to lodges for each member of a lodge for each day the **annual report** from lodges was received before the deadline.

The **Grand Custodian** said he officially **visited** few lodges. He said uniformity of work can only be accomplished if the Grand Custodian visits every lodge. This would demand his entire time and he suggested a \$1,000 salary be provided. He also recommended that the title be dropped and that “we ‘return to our first love,’” and call the officer the Grand Lecturer.

Past Grand Master **Robert W. Furnas** was unexpectedly called to the Pacific coast and could not fulfill his responsibilities as chairman of **Foreign Correspondence**. “I am working from four o’clock in the morning until twelve at night. So you see how it is. I must be relieved from my active work in the Order. Thirty-eight years in active work in the Fraternity is enough for one brother. Don’t you think so?” The Grand Master said Furnas had earned his rest and asked, “But to whom shall we turn for assistance?”

The **Grand Secretary** commented that some lodges complained because he sent a **receipt** with every document mailed to them, expecting they return it acknowledging they received the document. “I venture the remark that ‘red tape,’ like most sublunary things, is useful if not abused; ‘hence these tears,’” he said.

1884

Samuel W. Hayes, Grand Master

June 20, 1883 – June 25, 1884

Reported at the 27th Annual Communication

While praising lodges for their peaceable demeanor, the Grand Master added that consumption of **alcohol** by members of a few lodges brought trouble and discredit to the fraternity. He asked members to eliminate its use so that “it shall be a guarantee that he is temperate and discreet, worthy of trust, and faithful to his vows; a man temperate in habits, firm in the right, prudent in actions, and just to himself and his fellow men; for such, and such alone, can in the fullest sense become just and upright Masons.”

The Grand Secretary recommended the creation of a committee to **codify the law**, incorporate amendments, resolutions and decisions. He made the request because “in my term of service, I have seen several important rules of action vanish from our law simply because they had not been

whipped into shape. It will be difficult, for instance, to find in our law any precept against a Nebraska Freemason retailing **intoxicating drinks.**”

A request from the commissioner of Public Lands and Buildings to lay the **cornerstone** of a new **capitol building** was accepted. It occurred July 15, 1884. A public procession of Nebraska Masons, followed by other societies and Lincoln citizens, paraded to the site, where Past Grand Master and former Governor **Robert W. Furnas** provided an oration.

An oil painting by Mrs. Edwin Davis of Omaha of **Robert C. Jordan**, Nebraska’s first Grand Master, was presented to the Grand Lodge by Past Grand Master **George Lininger** on her behalf. In a resolution of thanks, the Grand Lodge said the painting would “remind us of the wisdom, fidelity and zeal that he always displayed in the earlier days of our history.”

A report of the Committee on Accounts was adopted providing for the collection of the **Orphans’ Educational Fund** to establish an Orphans’ and Widows’ Home.

Twenty-two new **lodges** were **chartered**.

The **Grand Custodian** said he could have visited more lodges if a sufficient **salary** was paid for full-time work. He added that general **Schools of Instruction** were not as effective as visits to individual lodges. He urged that a salary of \$1,500 be established for the position.

Disastrous **floods on the Ohio River** prompted 70 lodges to **donate** \$2,026 to relieve the suffering. Of that amount, \$225 was returned by the Masonic Flood Committee of Cincinnati.

The **Grand Master ruled** that a man living in another state could become a **member** of a Nebraska lodge with the permission of the lodge in his home area where he lived.

A brother who refuses to pay **special assessments**, as in the care of the sick, cannot be disciplined, ruled the Grand Master, but “no good Mason will refuse or neglect this, one of the first and most imperative duties of Masonry.”

The **Jurisprudence Committee** ruled that a man who **lost his leg** in the war could not join the fraternity. “The loss of a leg disqualifies, and, while disposed to be liberal, we cannot override a landmark,” the committee said.

The **Grand Master** did not submit a statement for **expenses** he incurred in office. A motion was accepted, made by an appointed committee, to pay him \$75.

1885

John J. Wemple, Grand Master

June 25, 1884 – June 25, 1885

Reported at the 28th Annual Communication

Worshipful Brother **Albert Pike** of Arkansas attended this **Annual Communication**. Pike was Sovereign Grand Commander of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction. He addressed the group of 500 Nebraska Masons for three hours and discussed Freemasonry, its secrets and symbolism.

The Grand Master expressed concern that with 129 lodges, and 18 under dispensation and so many **charters** granted the previous year, the fraternity in Nebraska was **growing** too fast.

When asked if a “half-breed **Indian**” could be made a Mason, the Grand Master answered, “I know of no law prohibiting the same, but question the propriety.” Later, a vote of the delegates struck the words “but question the propriety.”

The Grand Master enjoined the **owning of real estate** with Odd Fellows, or any other organization. A ruling of the Jurisprudence Committee, approved by the delegates, stated there were circumstances where it might be proper to own property with other organizations, but only with the consent of the Grand Master.

Calling participation in such events as **parades** for Decoration Day as “promiscuous processions,” the **Grand Master ruled** they were not in agreement with the principles of Masonry.

Men **missing the third and fourth fingers** of the right hand were ruled by the Grand Master ineligible to join Masonry.

The Grand Lodge of the District of Columbia invited Nebraska Masons to attend the dedication ceremonies of the **Washington monument** held February 21, 1885.

Stating the bylaws were in a lamentable condition, the Grand Master urged the creation of a committee to use the **decisions of the Grand Masters** to draft bylaws for consideration at an Annual Communication. He said the rulings, accumulated from year to year, were left in a “promiscuous and chaotic state” and should be **printed in the Proceedings** each year and the law be reprinted every three years.

The Grand Master recommended that “our law read that the habitual frequenting of **saloons** or drinking resorts be sufficient grounds for discipline, and that all we need be obliged to prove, is that one does habitually frequent such resorts.”

A resolution was passed that it was a Masonic offense for a Mason to sell intoxicating **liquors** as a beverage.

It was recommended by the Grand Master that a rule requiring Masters to cause to be read in open lodge the **constitution, rules, decisions and proceedings** of the Grand Lodge “be so emphasized as to make it obligatory, taking no excuse for its not being done.” He said this would help the Grand Master because Masons would find answers to their questions in the law.

Another recommendation of the Grand Master was to change the title of the **Grand Custodian** to Grand Instructor. No action was taken on the recommendation.

The Grand Master suggested that action be taken regarding the **Monitor** to be used in Nebraska. He said he found many different Monitors in use and Nebraska needed a standard Monitor to achieve **uniformity of work**.

It took the **Grand Custodian** one-half to two-thirds of his time to complete his work across the state. Noting the **detriment to his personal business**, the Grand Master recommended he be paid \$1,200-\$1,500 a year. A motion to pay him \$1,000 was later proposed by the Committee on Ways and Means, but was amended to give him \$500.

At the Annual Communication, a report by the **Committee on Charters and Dispensations** was approved calling for lodges under dispensation petitioning for charters adopt the **code of bylaws** prepared by the Grand Secretary.

A special committee appointed to refer matters from the report of the Grand Master to committees recommended that a standing **Committee on the Doings of the Grand Office-Bearers** be created. It would save time because many recommendations made by the Grand Master were not considered due to a lack of time. Their recommendation was adopted.

The **bylaws** were amended to add a **Committee on Codification of Law**.

The Grand Master recommended holding **Annual Communication** the Wednesday after the 14th of June. He said it would enable the Grand Custodian to hold a three-day **lodge of instruction**, one day for each degree, and the standing committees would have time to perform their duties, thus reducing the labor and saving the time of the Grand Lodge. “This saving of time and labor becomes necessary from the fact that our Grand Lodge is increasing in **membership** so rapidly as to make it impracticable to hold long sessions, and renders it necessary to do much of the work in committee.” He added that this schedule would allow revival of the Festival of St. John the Baptist and he recommended lodges be required to hold installation of officers on that day.

The **cornerstone** for the **Nebraska State Capitol** was laid July 15, 1884.

1886

Manoah B. Reese, Grand Master

June 25, 1885 – June 18, 1886

Reported at the 29th Annual Communication

Rob Morris Lodge No. 46 in Kearney and the Grand Master officiated in the burial of Captain Emmett Crawford, a brother from Pennsylvania. He was killed while serving along the Mexican border fighting **Apaches** who crossed into the U.S. to kill American citizens. While patrolling, he was killed by Mexican soldiers who were waiting in ambush for Apaches. The Grand Lodge thanked the Master of Rob Morris Lodge for exhibiting at Annual Communication Crawford's photographs, swords and implements.

The brothers of **Nebraska Lodge No. 1** voted barely by a majority to **move their lodge** from Bellevue to Omaha. The Grand Master declined to issue a dispensation stating he believed that only the "power that created and located the lodge" could change its location, and because the lodge was a landmark, he was reluctant to move it. He left the decision to the Grand Lodge.

When asked whether a **black man** claiming to be a Mason from another jurisdiction should have been denied admission to a lodge, the Grand Master said if he belonged to a lodge chartered by a Grand Lodge recognized by the Nebraska Grand Lodge, then he should have been admitted. The man claimed to be "free-born" and on that point the Grand Master said, "God made all nature free. If the barbarous laws of the American Dark Ages were so framed as to consign an infant to bondage during its life, that fact is no indication it was not free-born."

The Grand Secretary held the property of several **lodges** that had closed. It was decided to **sell the property** to new lodges.

Pointing out that the **Grand Lodge's funds** were in excess of its needs, the Grand Master suggested \$8,000 be returned to the lodges giving \$1.25 to each member. He also said other options could include a suspension of dues or initiation fees.

In response to the formation of **lodges** on either side of the Nebraska-Iowa line, the Grand Master suggested to Iowa's Grand Master that each state **waive jurisdiction** over men living closer to lodges in the other state. Iowa's Grand Master said he would consider the idea, but did not reply again.

Calling the Grand Lodge's **laws** "practically worthless in their present form," the Grand Master asked that they **be indexed** and provided with marginal notes so that a decision or clause could be found without needing to read the entire bylaws. He said simplifying bylaws was a better alternative than reading them in open lodge, as had been proposed the previous year.

The Grand Master criticized the process for **forming lodges**. He explained that forms furnished by the **Grand Secretary** were completed and sent to the Grand Master. The Grand Master sent the petition to the nearest lodge for endorsement. After its return, the Grand Master sent it to the **Grand Custodian** who investigated the lodge, all which took considerable time. He suggested the petition be sent to the Grand Secretary who would forward it to the Grand Master when all forms and endorsements were received.

The Grand Secretary requested an appropriation above the \$500 budgeted to pay for **reprinting of proceedings** prior to 1874. Approval was granted for \$150 to be spent.

Omaha Masons provided the **Grand Lodge** with a **fire-proof room** free of rent for its **library and archives**.

The **Grand Custodian** thanked the officers of the B&M and UP **railroads** for courtesies extended "which have greatly benefited the Masonic fraternity" as he performed his duties across the state.

Two lodges under dispensation requested to change their names. Boaz Lodge in Cambridge asked to change its name to **Cambridge Lodge**, and Unity Lodge in Hartington asked to change its name to **Hartington Lodge**.

June 18, 1886 – June 17, 1887
Reported at the 30th Annual Communication

At the Annual Communication, a motion passed that a **commission be appointed** to ask for proposals to locate a **Masonic Orphan Home and School** and a **Home for Aged, Infirm and Indigent Masons**. It also obligated 20-cents of the Grand Lodge's 50-cents per capita **dues** be designated to support and maintain those institutions, and \$10,000 from the General Fund was appropriated to help establish them. Later, a resolution passed loaning \$5,000 to assist in establishing an Orphans Home.

It was pointed out by the Grand Master that not since 1868 had any standard and authoritative **forms and ceremonies** been published. The Nebraska Grand Lodge was without any standard and authoritative forms and ceremonies for important occasions. He added that the Grand Lodge had **no tools and implements or vessels** for the consecrating of the elements, and its officers had dilapidated clothing for officers. He recommended that a committee be appointed and given sufficient funds "to accomplish the purposes in these ceremonies." It was approved.

Minnesota's Grand Master sent a letter to Illinois, Ohio, Iowa and Indian Territory to convene a **General Masonic Convention** for consultation and advice on common areas of interest to the Craft. Nebraska's Grand Master said such a meeting could result in uniformity of action on questions where jurisdictions differ.

The **Grand Custodian** said there was too much **haste in conferring degrees**. He suggested two, three or even six months between degrees so brothers would have a better idea of the lessons taught.

Masters were warned by the **Grand Custodian** that late **lodge meetings** did more to destroy interest in attending meetings than anything else. He urged them to meet early, open promptly, and transact business quickly to return home early.

An attempt to **change the title** of the **Grand Custodian** to Grand Lecturer was defeated. The salary of the Grand Custodian was increased from \$1,000 to \$1,200.

An amendment was adopted that required lodges to **install officers** on the festival of St. John the Baptist unless a two-thirds vote of the members moved the ceremony within one week before that date.

A motion passed naming a **board of three trustees** for the **Orphans Educational Fund** to invest the fund's monies in loans with interest not less than 7 percent secured by first mortgages on Nebraska farmland. The maximum loan amount could not exceed \$2,000 or one-third of the property's appraised value.

A petitioner had **lost sight in one eye**. The Grand Master ruled he could join.

The **Jurisprudence Committee** voided the election of **Papillion Lodge No. 39** held in June 1887, because only six members were present and eight were required to open the lodge. Seven visiting brethren also attended the meeting.

Fremont Lodge No. 15 received a request for courtesy Fellow Craft and Master Mason degrees for a man from Tipton, Indiana. After proving he was proficient as an Entered Apprentice, the ballot was spread and he was rejected. The **Grand Master ruled the ballot was irregular** because Fremont Lodge couldn't determine who should and should not become members of the Indiana lodge.

It was required that a Mason must sign the **bylaws** of his lodge with his own hand, and not by proxy, before he could **demit** to another lodge.

1888

Milton J. Hull, Grand Master
June 17, 1887 – June 22, 1888
Reported at the 31st Annual Communication

To fight high **summer temperatures** at **Annual Communication**, the Grand Tyler was instructed to purchase one gross of fans.

A commission appointed at the previous Annual Communication to study creation of a home for orphans, the indigent and aged related to Masons suggested the creation of a corporation for a **Nebraska Masonic Home**. It was approved.

With the incorporation of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, shares were sold at \$100 each. A maximum of 5,000 shares was authorized to raise \$500,000. The corporation wasn't to be "perfected" until at least 500 shares of capital stock were subscribed. The incoming Grand Master appointed a committee of seven members to prepare a plan to establish The Nebraska Masonic Home. Past Grand Master **George Lininger** became its chairman.

The report of a committee examining the need for **forms and ceremonies** was sent back to the committee for further consideration after several Past Grand Masters were appointed to it. The committee had recommended that 2,500 copies be printed.

After Masons in Ogallala voted to **name their lodge** after their town, the Grand Lodge **Charters and Dispensations Committee** rejected the name and chose to name it Adoniram. The committee's report was approved at the previous Annual Communication, but the Grand Master ordered the Grand Secretary to cause the charter of the lodge to be issued under the name **Ogallala Lodge No. 159** instead. His action was approved by the delegates.

The Grand Master authorized the **move of Nebraska Lodge No. 1** in Bellevue to Omaha "with bright prospects of future prosperity and usefulness."

Stating that one-third of Nebraska's 172 lodges were "eking out a precarious existence in the vain hope that tomorrow may bring to them the prosperity so much needed," the Grand Master said he had refused to grant a dispensation many times for the **formation of a lodge**. He suggested the law be changed to require the signatures of 20 men rather than eight. The Jurisprudence Committee and the delegates disagreed.

The **Grand Master** recommended that \$400 be provided his office for his use and benefit because, after traveling 5,000 miles, his **business suffered**. He said the time required to complete his work was "more time and labor than should be required of an unsalaried officer." He added that the office of **Deputy Grand Master** should be appointive instead of elective, or that a system of **District Deputy Grand Masters** be started.

Noting that delegates to **Annual Communication** were notably absent during regular sessions, the Grand Master said they did manage to appear to sign the payroll near the close of session. He recommended every member be required to attend every session or forfeit his mileage and **per diem**.

A committee examining what to call the gatherings of brethren conducted extensive research of other jurisdictions and concluded that "**meetings**" was to be applied to subordinate **lodges** and "communications" for the Grand Lodges.

Grand Custodian Lodges, designed to teach the work of the fraternity, were held in 11 towns along with 15 Schools of Instruction. Despite their promotion by local lodges, the Grand Custodian Lodges were not well attended, the Grand Master said. He added attendance did not justify the continuance of the present system. "Experience teaches that this work can only be satisfactorily accomplished by the Custodian visiting each individual lodge..." It was approved to **pay** the **Grand Custodian** \$1,200 a year to visit each lodge to instruct them in the work, with the local lodge paying his **expenses** while there. The resolution called the present system an "ignominious failure."

Grand Representatives appointed to more than two jurisdictions were asked to indicate which one they preferred to retain. The remaining 10 jurisdictions were then **assigned** to other brothers.

Pointing out that other jurisdictions limited the years a brother could serve as a **Grand Representative**, the Grand Master limited their **service** to three years.

The Grand Lodge laid the **cornerstone** for the "great **bridge** across the Missouri River at **Nebraska City**" in 1887. A procession was composed of civic and military societies.

Indebtedness amounting to \$20 by **Waco Lodge No. 80**, then extinct, caused the **Grand Master** to recommend selling the upstairs of the building it occupied to satisfy creditors, even though it would be sold at a considerable loss.

Fortitude Lodge No. 69 was **closed** by the **Grand Master** when observing that the lodge, which hadn't met in over a year due to disagreements among the members, "had become as a stench in the nostril to all respectable citizens of Ulysses." The Jurisprudence Committee and delegates disagreed, but the lodge became extinct.

The Committee on **Charters and Dispensations** advised that a **dispensation not be continued** to Battle Creek Lodge, U.:D.: because the lodge had only 11 members after two years of existence and for "irregularity of proceedings and the slovenly manner in which their records were kept." A lodge was chartered in 1899 in Battle Creek as **Sincerity Lodge No. 244**. It was closed in 1928.

1889

George B. France, Grand Master

June 22, 1888 – June 20, 1889

Reported at the 32nd Annual Communication

A request from **Lincoln Lodge No. 19** asked the Grand Master permission to confer the Fellow Craft and Masters degrees on **John Joseph Pershing** in **less than the constitutional time**. It was reported that Pershing was to leave the state on a long voyage. The Grand Master prefaced his decision saying it was "all wrong" to confer degrees out of time, adding that there was but one way to enter Masonry and that was to serve the proper time. However, he agreed to grant a dispensation in this instance due to the circumstances.

While funds were quickly appropriated at the previous Annual Communication to create a **Masonic Home** for the elderly and orphans, the Board of Directors deemed it more prudent not to act hastily. "No steps will be taken that sound business methods will not justify..." said the Grand Master. On June 17, 1889, the home was **organized under the laws** of Nebraska and its Articles of Incorporation were printed in the Proceedings.

The Grand Lodge recommended to the trustees of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** that no **construction** begin on a Home until \$50,000 was raised, and then only the excess amount above that sum be used. Robert Furnas moved, and it was agreed, that the Master of each lodge be appointed as its active canvassing agent to secure subscriptions to the stock in the home.

Since setting out the conditions for making **loans** from the **Orphans Educational Fund** the previous year, more than \$15,000 was loaned to 19 farmers resulting in accrued interest of over \$600.

A resolution urged lodges to celebrate the anniversaries of **St. John the Baptist** and **St. John the Evangelist** "thus reviving an old time custom of our Fraternity, promoting sociability, cementing friendship and possibly providing a penny for the poor." It was advised that **The Nebraska Masonic Home** would gladly receive all proceeds.

The Grand Master turned down numerous applications to **start a lodge** stating it would not be for the best interests of the Craft. "...I do not believe it to be the policy of this jurisdiction to establish a lodge in every village, particularly when there can be no possibility of such lodge ever having a membership which will make it strong and healthy." The large number of requests led the Grand Master to request passage of a law relieving him of this responsibility. He labeled the many requests to start lodges as harassment.

An attempt to increase the number of Masons required to **start a lodge** from eight to 20 was rejected by the vote of chartered lodges.

When asked if it was unmasonic for the officers and members of a Masonic lodge, as members of a **board of trustees in a village**, to grant license to sell intoxicating **liquors**, the **Grand Master**

responded, "Yes; it is unmasonic for any Mason to do any act which is an injury to the community and tends to degrade humanity." The **Jurisprudence Committee** disagreed, and the delegates sustained the committee's decision, stating the Grand Master's decision, "...undertakes to control the action of a civil officer in the discharge of his official duties under the law of the state."

The report of a special committee, looking into cases where **lodges** were located above **saloons**, received positive backing at Annual Communication for its recommendation. It proposed that a lodge's charter be forfeited when it was known that a saloon was or would be operating in the lower level. However, in instances that it was not known a saloon would be located there, the committee said a lodge would be granted a year to locate another meeting place.

Consuming **alcohol** in the **lodge** hall during refreshments was deemed "grossly unmasonic" by the **Jurisprudence Committee**, which said the person doing so was subject to discipline.

Following up on a recommendation made the previous year, the **Grand Master** said it was not feasible for the Grand Lodge to pay for his services, however, he suggested \$500 be given the Grand Master each quarter to pay for a private **secretary**.

Territorial jurisdiction over men was an important authority that generated disputes between lodges over candidates. The **Grand Master** ruled that the general territorial jurisdiction of a **lodge** extends in every direction to the geographical center between it and adjacent lodges, provided the jurisdiction cannot extend into another state unless upon the consent of the Grand Lodge of such other state.

The **Grand Master** said it was recognized that two Grand bodies of the same grade cannot lawfully exist in the same state at the same time, and the first established Grand body held exclusive jurisdiction. He was referring to the creation of **Cerneau Masons** in other jurisdictions, which created controversy among the **Scottish Rite** Supreme Councils.

Noting that some felt that too much time was spent perfecting lodges' **work**, the Grand Master said lodges that devote the time to perform work correctly "are the ones whose members are those 'with whom the burdened heart may pour out its sorrows, and to whom distress may proffer its suit' with the best prospect of receiving a favorable answer."

The **Grand Custodian** advised that Masters should lecture their brethren about "the duties we owe to ourselves, to the lodge, our brethren, and to the community. Such instruction will have great effect in sustaining the weak, and in eradicating any vice that may prevail among the Craft." This followed his expression of concern that some **officers** were not prepared for the responsibilities of their station.

Included in the duties of the **Grand Custodian** when making **visits** to lodges was not only instruction in the work, but also the keeping of lodge records and evaluation of their condition. During the previous year, he had visited all but 20 of the state's 167 lodges.

Lodges were told by the **Grand Custodian** to give **lectures** in full immediately after a degree was conferred, instead of directing the newly-made brother to read the lectures in the Monitor or deferring the lectures to a subsequent meeting.

In addresses to the brethren during the year, the **Grand Master** spoke about the **principles** of the Craft. "The vices of intemperance, profanity, Sabbath breaking, evil speaking, licentiousness and gambling were in a special manner mentioned as unmasonic," he reported. "Men will all die and pass away; the nations of the earth will cease; the granite will crumble to dust; the moon may wax pale and reflect no more her silver beams; but the truths and principles of the Masonic institution will live and operate when time shall be no more."

The **Jurisprudence Committee** ruled it was unmasonic for a lodge to install officers on a **Sunday**.

Pawnee Lodge No. 23 in Pawnee City asked what the full title was of the principal lodge officer. **Jurisprudence Committee** said it was Worshipful Master. An amendment passed that said, "A Master should sign himself as '**Master**,' and not as 'Worshipful Master.'"

A committee examining **forms and ceremonies** stated it was “very desirable” that they be uniform, and their report was adopted.

The Masters of Omaha’s four lodges arranged for carriages to give those attending **Annual Communication** a ride about the city. **George Lininger** hosted brethren at his **art gallery**.

Trustees for **The Nebraska Masonic Home** voted to accept **Omaha’s offer to locate** the home. The total amount of subscriptions for stock totaled \$28,500. However, a resolution in the Grand Lodge stated no capital stock could be used for construction of buildings until subscriptions surpassed \$50,000. (*The Trustees took no further action until 1902.*)

1890

John J. Mercer, Grand Master

June 20, 1889 – June 20, 1890

Reported at the 33rd Annual Communication

After the previous Annual Communication’s vote to not enter discussions about the legitimacy of Scottish Rite bodies, several “honored” Masons distributed among the Craft “garbled, inaccurate, false and forged reports” of the Grand Lodge’s action. The **Grand Master** issued an edict that the **Scottish Rite** headed by Brother Albert Pike was regular and lawful and declared **Cerneau Rite** as unlawful. **Nebraska Lodge No. 1**, at a meeting in August 1889, protested his action and said the Grand Lodge hadn’t expressed a preference for which body was legitimate. Faced with this “insubordination,” the Grand Master **arrested the charter** of Nebraska Lodge No. 1 on August 20, 1889, stating their distribution of a circular caused “widespread discord and strife” in the state, including publication in the newspapers. He also suspended the Master and Senior and Junior Wardens of Nebraska Lodge No. 1. His decisions were approved at Annual Communication. In addition, the Grand Master was told to convene Nebraska Lodge No. 1 within 60 days to restore its charter if the lodge filed a renunciation of its action. It was also ordered that charges be preferred against the Master and Senior and Junior Wardens if they didn’t express regret for their conduct.

The **Grand Master recommended** that the title of the **Grand Custodian** be changed to Grand Lecturer, and the delegates agreed. An amendment was prepared for consideration at the next Annual Communication.

The **Grand Custodian** said lodges that did not send their three principal **officers** to a **School of Instruction** could not open or close meetings properly and failed to **confer degrees** effectively. He suggested the Master and Senior and Junior Warden be required to qualify to open and close lodge, confer degrees and give the lectures in an acceptable manner while showing a reasonable knowledge of the usages, customs and laws of Masonry before they could be **installed**.

The **Grand Master, Grand Treasurer and Grand Secretary** were authorized to **borrow funds** to meet the running expenses of the Grand Lodge.

Nebraska’s **Grand Representative** to Virginia made an appeal for assistance to erect a **memorial** temple in Fredericksburg, Virginia, to honor **George Washington**. The Annual Communication delegates agreed with the Grand Lodge Committee on Ways and Means that given the financial condition of the Grand Lodge, a donation would not be made to the project.

An amendment failed that called for one **ballot** on a **candidate** for all three degrees.

It was ordered that the **ceremonials** with the **Jurisprudence Committee** be referred to the Past Grand Masters residing in Omaha for report to the Grand Master within 30 days. If given his approval, they were to be printed.

The Grand Lodge laws did not allow for the **consolidation** of neighboring **lodges**. The **Grand Master recommended** the Grand Lodge provide a method enabling lodges to do so.

The Grand Master reported that while harmony generally prevailed in Nebraska lodges, “There still exists, however, the usual degree of confusion and discord resulting from the abuse and misuse

of the **ballot**, and the unseemly desire for office, constant sources of trouble and vexation. ...the lodges are now suffering, justly perhaps, from the neglect of prudent and thorough investigation of the material composing them. The chief defect in the management of many lodges is their anxiety for work and the consequent increase of **members** at the expense of almost all the other essentials of Masonic purpose and practice. These evils will continue to annoy and embarrass until the brethren learn to appreciate the fact that, unlike all other organizations, Masonry derives no strength from numbers merely, that intelligence and virtue are the only proper pre-requisites for admission and the practice of the moral and social virtues.”

1891

Robert E. French, Grand Master

June 20, 1890 – June 19, 1891

Reported at the 34th Annual Communication

The **charter** of **Nebraska Lodge No. 1** was restored on August 20, 1890, after the lodge complied with the requirements of a resolution passed at the previous Annual Communication. Lodge members voted to rescind and expunge a resolution passed in 1889 protesting the Grand Master’s edict that the **Scottish Rite** headed by Brother Albert Pike was regular and lawful.

The third year of a severe drought in western Nebraska prompted the Grand Master to call a conference of Grand Lodge officers and Past Grand Masters to decide what to do to **help farmers**. It was decided to ask lodges to contribute 50-cents per member to help Masons appealing for assistance. Nearly \$4,700 was raised, and the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons contributed \$1,000 to the cause. **Lancaster Lodge No. 54** protested the assessment, but the Committee on Grievances ruled it was within the authority of the Grand Master. Lodges still owing the assessment were given more time to pay.

The **ghost dance** and outbreak of the **Sioux** in 1890 caused the Grand Master to ask the Masters in Valentine, Gordon, Hay Springs, Rushville and Chadron if members needed assistance. He instructed one Master to inform a brother to take no chances on the lives of his family or himself and to go to a place of safety. The Grand Lodge would **provide help** if needed. However, it was reported that the outbreak came to a speedy end and no assistance was necessary.

A motion to change the **title** of the **Grand Custodian** to Grand Instructor failed.

Addressing the Grand Lodge, the **Grand Treasurer** stated his apprehension that the brethren did not know the financial situation of the Grand Lodge, which would be without **funds** in 10 days after the close of the Annual Communication.

The **Grand Secretary** listed 11 actions he could take to **reduce costs**, but also outlined the consequences of adopting them. He pointed out that since he became a Mason, Grand Lodge dues had dropped from \$1 to 35-cents, and that the Grand Lodge was liberal in assisting **new lodges** getting started compared to other jurisdictions. A committee was appointed to evaluate his ideas.

The Grand Lodge began a “**double entry**” system on recommendation of the **Committee on Accounts**.

The **Grand Custodian visited** 174 lodges, held 346 meetings of lodges for instruction and conferred 48 degrees. He reported that the too frequent change of **officers** in lodges interfered with attaining a high standard of performance of the work. To cut costs, the Grand Lodge reduced the Grand Custodian’s **salary** by \$200 to \$1,000, but added \$500 for travel and “subsistence.”

M.:W.: Brother **Robert Furnas**, chairman of the **Orphans Educational Fund**, reported to the Grand Master that he had given a bond to secure the fund to the **Grand Secretary**, who was unable to find it. The Grand Master requested of Furnas that he give him a bond. This resulted in lengthy correspondence between the **Grand Master** and Furnas, who concluded the situation stating it was

impossible for him to comply with his request and he would resign and turn over the job to the Grand Master.

Illness befell M.:W.: Brother **Robert Furnas** which prevented him from attending **Annual Communication**. It was the first year he had missed attending since the creation of the Grand Lodge in 1857.

The Grand Master requested that **Grand Lodge officers** make official **visits to 25 lodges**. He divided the state into seven districts and assigned the lodges they were to visit. He said he hoped a plan would be adopted so that every lodge would receive one official visit a year.

After Past Grand Masters were given the responsibility at the previous Annual Communication to decide what to do with the Craft's ceremonies, they determined that the **forms and ceremonies** contained in **Webb's Monitor** were generally used across the state. They said it was inexpedient to adopt or prescribe any further forms or ceremonies.

The stockholders of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** and the **Grand Master** requested that each lodge survey its membership to identify the number of **widows and orphans** of Master Masons. Two men, five women and four children were found to be indigent.

The **Grand Master** commented that the state had about as many lodges "as the good of the Order will warrant," and consolidations among existing lodges would benefit Masonry. At the time, Nebraska had 1,062,656 citizens. Nine **new lodges** were instituted that year, bringing the total to 200 with 9,717 members.

Too little attention was paid by lodges to the qualifications of Masters. The **Grand Master** said Masters must be acquainted with Masonry as a science, the principles and doctrines of the Craft and able to teach them. He said no one is ready to be Master in one or two years. "But few perform it well even with long experience – none with a brief experience." He added that **rotation in the office** does not prepare officers for the responsibility. "Permanency in office is more inviting. The democratic feature is sadly out of place in all this business."

The **Grand Orator** was unable to attend **Annual Communication** because of flooded railways.

A motion passed asking **Beatrice Lodge No. 26** to move from its location because the owner of the building rented a part of the building for a **saloon**.

It was decided that books in the **library** of "sufficient value" be **stamped** in not less than 10 places with information that they were the property of the Grand Lodge.

1892

Bradmer D. Slaughter, Grand Master

June 19, 1891 – June 17, 1892

Reported at the 35th Annual Communication

A letter was sent by the Grand Master urging **lodges** to hold four meetings inviting mothers, wives, sisters and daughters to attend to emphasize the social character of the Craft. He encouraged lodges to continue the **social meetings**.

He also decried the emphasis of lodges on **ritual work**. "There is a fund of information attainable by each lodge that would so increase **Masonic knowledge** among the brethren, that a wise Master will not only study his lectures, the symbols of his lodge, but will at each meeting furnish something new to the fraternity for their enjoyment and enlightenment."

The Grand Master said 249 Masons died in the previous three years and the Grand Lodge had no record of dependent **families**. "This is not as it should be." He said lodges should report every Master Mason's widow, her financial condition, number of children, their ages and whether they were being educated. "It is a duty this Grand Lodge owes to the Masons of this jurisdiction and to every member who has taken upon himself the vows to watch over and care for the widows and

orphans of the fraternity.” The Committee on **Relief** proposed, and delegates accepted, an amendment requiring lodge secretaries to provide a report of such families.

M.:W.: Brother **Robert Furnas** was praised by the Grand Master for his years of service in building the **Orphans Educational Fund**. “To Brother Furnas, more than any other one person, belongs the credit of having for 20-odd years carefully guarded this sacred fund, devoting his time and best labors to its careful investment and profitable increase, without compensation or hope of reward except the thanks of his brethren, and the blessings of those who in the future shall receive its benefits.” The **fund** was over \$21,000.

Grand Secretary **William Bowen** was honored by the Grand Master for his 20 years of **service** in that capacity.

After dropping the **Grand Custodian’s salary** from \$1,200 to \$1,000 at the previous Annual Communication, a special committee examining the issue recommended he receive \$1,500 a year. The delegates disagreed.

An attempt to reduce the **mileage paid delegates** from 6-cents per mile to 4-cents per mile was lost.

A committee appointed to consider ideas forwarded by the **Grand Secretary** at the previous Annual Communication to **cut costs**, recommended no changes in how he conducted business.

The delegates approved payment of \$1.25 for a boy to “attend the **telephone**” during **Annual Communication**.

To supply all lodges with a complete set of **Proceedings**, the Grand Master reported that electrotype plates existed for all except three and one-half years. He suggested those years be electrotyped. He said steel-plate engravings of 12 of 25 Past Grand Masters were available, and he asked for \$160 to complete portraits of Robert Jordan and George Armstrong to complete volume one.

Requests to publish a Masonic **funeral service** prompted Omaha lodges to offer copies of the service they had adopted until Grand Lodge had time to determine what action to take. Their offer was accepted.

In a review of news from other Grand Lodges, the Grand Secretary reported the **Cerneuism Scottish Rite** was a dead issue. “...every Grand Lodge that has passed upon it has condemned it; it is no longer active except in a remote corner of the United States; many of our brethren who were beguiled into it, in Nebraska and elsewhere, have renounced their allegiance or quietly dropped it; in medical parlance the foreign matter has been encysted and it is harmless now.”

A destructive **storm** in northeastern Nebraska on June 24, 1891, prevented many country **lodges** from **installing officers**.

The **Grand Master** noted that at the close of the year as leader of the Grand Lodge, he felt more competent to “do good work toward building up and assisting the fraternity than ever before.” He said that he failed to seek the advice of **Past Grand Masters**, as many had also failed to do, only to see another man elected Grand Master who would then “go over the ground again.” He added, “...I only wonder at the sum total accomplished year by year.”

1893

Samuel P. Davidson, Grand Master

June 17, 1892 – June 16, 1893

Reported at the 36th Annual Communication

As part of the **World’s Columbian Exposition** in Chicago in 1893, the Grand Lodge of Illinois proposed holding a “**Fraternal Congress**.” The Grand Master endorsed holding the Congress for consultation, but not to establish a national grand body that would have authority over other Grand

Lodges. He recommended the appointment of a commission of 6 members attend the Congress from Nebraska.

An amendment to the bylaws was introduced for consideration at the next Annual Communication that required only **one vote on a candidate** to receive the degrees of Masonry versus conducting a vote before each degree.

Three-thousand copies of the **funeral service** used by Omaha lodges were ordered printed and made available for sale to the other lodges in Nebraska.

Coteau Lodge No. 54 in Webster, South Dakota, sent a \$134.06 bill for expenses incurred caring for a member of **Jordan Lodge No. 27** in West Point. Coteau Lodge paid for the brother's expenses while ill as well as **funeral costs**. While Jordan Lodge paid \$64.62 of the bill, they refused to pay the remainder stating the costs were too high. The Grand Master agreed but said he felt that in "fraternal courtesy" Jordan Lodge should pay the amount.

Ark and Anchor Lodge No. 131 in Ainsworth, an extinct lodge, owed the First National Bank of Ainsworth \$156.25 in **rent**. The **Grand Lodge** paid all but \$54.65 from dues it collected, and received a notice in garnishment from Brown County District Court. The rent was paid after a judge ruled the Grand Lodge was indebted for the amount.

Past Grand Master William Hill conferred several **degrees** during the Grand Master's visits to lodges. The Grand Master said Hill's **stereopticon** view "impressively illustrated portions of the lectures."

The **Grand Custodian** said "too frequent **changes of lodge officers**; rapid promotion to office is not to the benefit of the Craft; time is required to qualify our officers for the intelligent discharge of their duties."

The bylaws were suspended allowing the **installation of officers** of Lodges within 30 days of June 24, 1893.

When asked whether using **robes** to confer the Master Mason's degree were in accordance with Masonic custom and usage, the **Jurisprudence Committee** ruled that they were not and did not sanction their use in subordinate lodges.

On recommendation of the **Ways and Means Committee**, a copy of **Worcester's Dictionary** given by Brother **John Taggart**, a charter member of **Palmyra Lodge No. 45**, was returned to his lodge. Brother Taggart had died 21 years earlier.

Concern for **stereotype plates** stored in the Grand Lodge's fire-proof **vault** prompted the **Ways and Means Committee** to begin a search for a place outside of Omaha where they could be stored separate from the **Proceedings**. They said it was desirable that the plates be kept at some place removed from the fire-proof library so that no one fire could destroy both the proceedings and the plates. The committee's preference was to place the plates outside the city.

The Grand Lodges of Iowa and Pennsylvania abandoned the **Grand Representative** system and the commissions of Nebraska Grand Representatives were withdrawn.

The **Grand Lodge of Oklahoma** was formed in Indian Territory. The Grand Lodge of Nebraska extended recognition. (It would be 10 more years before statehood was granted.)

1894

James P. A. Black, Grand Master

June 16, 1893 – June 22, 1894

Reported at the 37th Annual Communication

A **Masonic Congress** was held at the **World's Columbian Exposition** in Chicago attended by 106 Masons from 36 jurisdictions. The Congress discussed Grand Lodge sovereignty, improved proceedings, Grand Representatives, the prerogatives of Grand Masters, the Ancient Landmarks, the

creed of a Mason, appeals for aid, non-affiliates, physical qualifications and the right to inspect lodge charters.

The nation was hit with a **depression** that forced many businesses to close, and labor strikes arose across the country. The **Grand Master** said that although he had arranged his affairs so he could dedicate most of the year to his duties, the depression forced him to **return to his business** to take care of matters.

A circular from the Grand Lodge of Colorado urged Grand Lodges to join together to hold an observance on the **centennial of the death** of W. Brother **George Washington** at his tomb on December 19, 1899 at Mt. Vernon. It suggested each Grand Lodge provide a brother to serve on a committee to plan the event. The Grand Lodge of Nebraska endorsed the project if a majority of other Grand Lodges also agreed to participate.

The new **Grand Custodian** reported that after observing lodges during the year, too frequent **changing of lodge officers** did not aid in “secure” good work. “Observation has shown me that the lodges that are the most proficient are those who have re-elected their officers, or at least their Master, for a term of years. Good work, and the nearer perfect the better, is essential to the welfare and prosperity of a lodge.”

An amendment allowing only **one ballot for a candidate** to receive all three degrees, instead of a ballot for each degree, was defeated.

Papillion Lodge No. 39 in Papillion proposed for consideration at the next Annual Communication a resolution requesting the Grand Lodge take steps to prohibit the **use of the name “Masonic”** by any person or corporation for private gain, such as the so-called “Masonic Insurance” companies then conducting business in the state.

Delegates rejected a resolution from the Master of **Barneston Lodge No. 165** authorizing the Grand Master to hold a convention with neighboring Grand Masters to consider **inter-state jurisdiction** on candidates residing in another state but nearer a lodge in an adjacent jurisdiction.

A resolution from the **Jurisprudence Committee** was passed that made it unlawful for a lodge of 50 or more members to hold **meetings in rooms** used by organizations other than Masonic bodies.

The **Grand Custodian** died during the year, and for nearly four months members of **Beatrice Lodge No. 26** provided him constant attention. The Grand Lodge paid \$293.86 for his **funeral expenses**.

A member of **Keystone Lodge No. 62** in Phillips died, leaving a wife and two sons. The Grand Lodge Committee on **Relief** gave \$120 to the lodge to assist her, and the lodge agreed to look after her farm for two years if she was able to keep her farm.

Silver Cord Lodge No. 224 in Ainsworth was formed after **Ark and Anchor Lodge No. 131** became extinct. Since the majority of Silver Cord members were also members of Ark and Anchor, the Grand Master agreed to let them use the former lodge’s **furniture** for one year for a \$5 lease. He stipulated that if the lodge became chartered, the furniture would be given to them.

A standing **Committee on Grand Lodge Office** was created.

It was decided that the **Orphans Educational Fund** change from loans and securities for first real estate **mortgages** to city or county bonds or other governmental bonds. Although the interest rate was lower, the funds were more safely invested and easier to manage.

Montezuma Lodge No. 1 in Santa Fe, New Mexico, suggested the establishment of a **National Masonic Home for Consumptives**.

Ashlar Lodge No. 33 of Grand Island lost its **charter** and a new one was granted.

1895

John A. Ehrhardt, Grand Master
June 22, 1894 – June 13, 1895

Reported at the 38th Annual Communication

The Grand Master warned Past Grand Masters in August 1894 that **crop failures** would increase **requests for aid** beyond the \$5,000 expended in 1890. The Past Grand Masters decided to borrow from the **Masonic Home Fund** to be given local lodges to assist their members. No security was required to receive funds and it was expected that some brothers would be unable to pay back the funds. While not all requests were filled due to the lateness of applications, after the passing of winter all brethren and their families had their needs met. The Grand Lodge declined any assistance from other jurisdictions stating, "...it was our ambition to care for our own membership."

The Grand Lodge decided not to purchase stock to set up a **National Masonic Home for Consumptives**. "...inasmuch that in the past year this Grand Lodge and its subordinate lodges haven't been taxed to their utmost capacity, and we are pleased to say that we have in no instance solicited or accepted foreign aid."

A committee of the Grand Lodge of Wisconsin proposed that it was the duty of each lodge to take care of its own **members in distress** wherever they may be, or if the lodge can't, then the Grand Lodge should do so. They added that lodges should not provide beyond actual necessities without authority from the body paying expenses. The Grand Master said the proposal was in direct opposition to the conclusions of the **Fraternal Masonic Congress** held in 1893 in Chicago.

A member of **Hastings Lodge No. 50**, who lived in Fairfield and had affiliated with Hastings Lodge, became ill and was unable to pay his dues. After he was suspended by Hastings Lodge, brethren in Fairfield made donations to pay his past dues, but Hastings Lodge rejected reinstating him. Meanwhile, **Fairfield Lodge No. 84** in Fairfield incurred \$117 in expenses in caring for him and for his **funeral** expenses and expected Hastings Lodge to pay them. The Grand Master said he was not inclined to enforce the letter of the law where the actions of Fairfield Lodge violated the spirit of the law. The **Grievances Committee**, however, disagreed and ordered Hastings Lodge to pay Fairfield Lodge.

The Grand Master said all non-elected **officers** of local **lodges** should be appointed by the Master.

As a continuance of the action of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, the Grand Lodges of Kentucky and Wyoming revoked the commission of **Grand Representatives** to their state.

The **Grand Secretary** suggested that lodge record books that had been filled be sent to the Grand Lodge for safekeeping and the data be transferred to compendiums. He made the recommendation because the record books of **Nebraska Lodge No. 1** and **Western Star Lodge No. 2** were **burned** and lost.

An organization titled "Nebraska **Veteran Freemasons**" was organized in 1888 for brothers who had been members for 21 years or more. Its purpose was to "bind still stronger the veteran brethren who have given the best years of their manhood to our best interests and the upholding of the sacred teachings of our Fraternity." A motion was adopted to include the minutes of the group's meetings in the Grand Lodge's Proceedings.

A recommendation from a committee examining whether companies could use the word "**Masonic**" in their names received an approving vote of the delegates. They stated the word should not be used in any case unless the corporation was controlled and managed exclusively by members of the Masonic fraternity.

1896

Henry H. Wilson, Grand Master

June 13, 1895 – June 11, 1896

Reported at the 39th Annual Communication

The Grand Master congratulated the people of Nebraska for the returning prosperity. He added that the Grand Lodge had never convened “when the prospects for material prosperity in Nebraska were fairer.” His comments followed three years of a **depression** and two years of crop failures.

The **Relief Committee** reported that nearly \$8,000 had been **loaned** to lodges to assist needy brothers who lost crops during the 1894 drought. Because of the continued drought in 1895 and 1896, the Grand Lodge voted to extend the due date of the loans until 1897.

The Grand Master allowed notices of **lodge meetings** to be **published** in newspapers.

An Illinois Mason living in Lincoln applied for **relief**. After informing the Illinois Grand Master of the situation, he responded that the man had been suspended for nonpayment of dues three times but had paid them. While his lodge reinstated him, Illinois laws permitted a lodge to deny membership in the lodge, which occurred. The Illinois Grand Master said he couldn’t do anything for the man. Lodges in Lincoln were advised of the man’s situation, and they provided assistance.

A rule established two years previous that lodge secretaries annually report the number of **widows and orphans** of deceased Masons, their financial condition and need for aid was being ignored, stated the **Committee on Relief**. The committee’s report was adopted that recommended the Grand Lodge insist and require secretaries to furnish the information in the future.

Past Grand Master **Robert C. Jordan**, Nebraska’s first Grand Master, lived in Omaha, the location of this Annual Communication. Because of his age and infirmities, he was unable to walk from home to the meetings. It was decided that two Masons would obtain a carriage to take him to meetings with expenses paid by the Grand Lodge.

The Grand Lodge voted to give \$300 to Past Grand Master **Robert C. Jordan** as he was “in very poor health and is not provided with much of this world’s goods,” and had filled with honor the principal offices in all branches of the York Rite and Scottish Rite. The funds were given as a “small recognition and **compensation** for his valuable services on behalf of the Craft of Nebraska.”

In a speech at Annual Communication, the state’s first Grand Master, **Robert C. Jordan**, who was feeble and requested the Grand Master speak for him, stated, “I have seen the broad prairies of Nebraska when they were traversed only by the winding trail of the buffalo; now they are crossed in every direction by the great thoroughfares carrying the world’s traffic. ... Let us not suppose that our zenith has been reached. It is not impossible that there awaits the next generation revelations far surpassing anything we have witnessed in our time. These advantages impose upon man new burdens. Increasing power brings increasing responsibility. It must never be forgotten that there is that which is more to be desired than material prosperity. ... Of far greater consequence than all these is the character of those who dwell within our gates. To this most important object let us hope that in the future, as in the past, our Fraternity may contribute.”

The **Grand Custodian** reported he held 44 **lodges of instruction** of three days each, and one of two days, across the state as well as visited lodges individually. He stated that substantial progress was made in **uniformity of work** the previous year.

1897

Charles J. Phelps, Grand Master

June 11, 1896 – June 17, 1897

Reported at the 40th Annual Communication

Robert Jordan, Nebraska’s first Grand Master, sent regrets that he was unable to attend the 40th **Annual Communication** due to poor health. A response by PGM **Robert Furnas** stated, “We call to mind in grateful remembrance and recognition his long, unremitting and valuable services in the cause of Freemasonry; we fraternally extend to Brother Jordan our sympathy and condolence, praying for him Divine protection and perseverance to the end that the Craft may be long favored with his Masonic counsel...”

On April 22, the Grand Lodge and 1,000 Freemasons laid the **cornerstone** of a building for the **Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition** with an escort by Mt. Calvary Commandery. Over 20,000 people attended the cornerstone laying. Grand Master Charles Phelps said the exposition, set for the summer of 1898, would result in “great good to this western country, and Nebraska may well congratulate itself upon having secured so great a prize.”

Of all Nebraska **Lodges**, 127 had their property insured against **fire**, 62 lodges carried no insurance, and 39 lodges did not report.

The **Grand Master ruled** that neither a bookkeeper for a brewing association, a man who rented a building for a **saloon** nor the signing of a saloon-keeper’s bond were subject to Masonic discipline. However, the **Jurisprudence Committee** disagreed with his rulings, as did the delegates at Annual Communication.

A question of the Grand Master asked whether a man, who received the Entered Apprentice Degree and then **lost a hand and foot**, was eligible for the next degrees. The **Grand Master ruled** that he was eligible for advancement, all other requisites existing.

It was passed at the 1896 Annual Communication that Masons in good standing for 30 years who were 65 years old were **exempt from dues**.

The Grand Master made his son, Harry Phelps, a **Mason on sight** and the three degrees were conferred. The **Jurisprudence Committee** ruled, and delegates agreed, that he did not have that prerogative and disapproved the action. “The Grand Master is the creature of the constitution of this Grand Lodge, and his prerogatives are defined and limited thereby,” the committee said.

The **Committee on Relief** received reports from lodges with lists of **widows and orphans** of Masons. Together, there were at least 400 widows and 500 orphans, and one-half of those numbers occurred in the previous five years. The adopted report called on the Grand Lodge to provide a sufficient relief fund and appoint a committee to assist lodges in the “proper care and support of their indigent widows and orphans.”

Three volumes of **Proceedings** from Annual Communications were printed in 1896, giving each lodge in the state all Proceedings from the history of the Grand Lodge.

The Grand Lodge of Nebraska’s first Grand Secretary and second Grand Master, **George Armstrong, died** at 77 years of age. In 1862, he was commissioned as major in the Second Nebraska Cavalry, and assisted in recruiting and organizing an independent battalion of cavalry. He became its commanding officer, which was called the First Nebraska Infantry. It was merged into a cavalry regiment and he served as Senior Major until the close of the Civil War.

Four lodges failed to submit their **annual report** by the deadline and were denied a rebate per member. Instead, they were assessed a 10 percent penalty.

The Grand Master mentioned that **Spain** was at **war** against “liberty-loving Cubans, which in cruelty is as atrocious as ingenious tyrants dare make it.” He commented that patriotic citizens of the U.S. sympathize with the Cubans and “will rejoice to see some way by which our government may do something to reflect the sentiment of its people.”

1898

John B. Dinsmore, Grand Master

June 17, 1897 – June 17, 1898

Reported at the 41st Annual Communication

Nine **family** members left behind by deceased brothers were assisted at an average of \$86.25 each from the **Relief Fund**.

The **Jurisprudence Committee** ruled that the **Grand Master** could not issue a dispensation to make a Mason of one who had **lost a limb**. However, the committee said the loss of a foot or hand after initiation was not a bar to advancement.

The Grand Custodian held 42 **lodges of instruction** of three days each, and four of two days each. The schools were held in smaller lodges. He said the work there was nearer the work than lodges in larger towns. "This I attribute to the fact that the smaller lodges do not hear so much work from brethren coming in from other jurisdictions," he said.

A committee worked with other Nebraska bodies to establish a Masonic headquarters at the **Trans-Mississippi Exposition** in Omaha at a cost of \$1,250.

The Grand Master approved conferring **degrees out of time** for a traveling salesman whose territory was outside of the state, and for a man who was leaving the state for several months, possibly permanently.

When a drought in 1894 and 1895 **wiped out the crops** of many farmers, **Plumb Lodge No. 186** in Grant was closed after the Grand Master was told many brethren had left the town and there were no prospects for new members.

The Grand Master recommended that unpaid notes given lodges through the **Relief Fund** totaling \$7,600 be paid during the coming year. He said the payments would enable the Grand Lodge to return funds borrowed from **The Nebraska Masonic Home Fund**, and provide for the needs of destitute brothers who endured the 1890 and 1894 droughts.

Correspondence with a number of lodges revealed they were in financial straits because they hadn't **collected dues**. In some cases, lodge officers didn't collect the late dues fearing they would suspend so many members that the lodge would close. "There should be some means devised whereby the failure to collect the lodge dues would be an official misconduct on the part of the Master," the Grand Master said.

The Grand Secretary suggested **lodge returns** be due March 31 instead of April 30. He said with the increase in members, it takes longer to prepare information for **Annual Communication**.

The Grand Lodge of Virginia invited the Grand Master to a commemoration of the **centennial anniversary of the death of George Washington**. His attendance was approved by the Grand Lodge.

"**Slight errors**" had entered the **ritual** since its adoption caused by the lapse of time and changes in the office of **Grand Lecturer**. A committee assigned to investigate the situation reported the current Grand Lecturer was qualified to present the ritual, and that the ritual be re-approved and confirmed.

After a brother of **Edgar Lodge No. 67** moved to California, he was injured and died. Edgar Lodge received from a California lodge a \$150 **bill for his care**. In line with the Nebraska Grand Lodge's experience years before in the case of an Ohio Mason who died in Nebraska, it was decided to not respond to the bill.

A committee was formed to submit at the next Annual Communication a plan to perpetuate the memory of **Robert Jordan**, Nebraska's first Grand Master.

1899

Frank H. O. Young, Grand Master

June 17, 1898 – June 9, 1899

Reported at the 42nd Annual Communication

An emergent communication was held January 13, 1899, to attend the **funeral** of Nebraska's first Grand Master, **Robert C. Jordan**. He was nine days from his 75th birthday.

A committee appointed to remember Nebraska's first Grand Master, **Robert C. Jordan**, agreed that a bronze medal be struck, similar to a medal commemorating Albert Pike. A total of 1,000 medals were made, with a pin and purple ribbon hanger, at a cost of 43.5 cents each. They were sold for \$1 each.

William Bowen, Grand Secretary for **27 years**, died May 6, 1899. He brought innovation and structure to the Grand Lodge and local lodges through his office and tireless work for the fraternity. He also held the following offices until his death: Inspector General of the Scottish Rite, Grand Secretary of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, and Grand Recorder of the Grand Council Royal and Select Masters, Grand Commandery and Order of High Priesthood as well as Secretary of the Masonic Veterans Association.

The Grand Lodge voted to make John S. Bowen, youngest **child of the late Grand Secretary**, “the child of the Grand Lodge, A.:F.: & A.:M.:, Nebraska.” In a resolution, the Grand Lodge pledged to “exercise paternal care for his future practical education and welfare, from available means of the ‘**Orphans Educational Fund**.’” He became one of the first recipients of assistance from the fund. The **Grand Master ruled** that Masonic **funeral services** could be held over the remains of a brother who was **cremated**. He also stated that a profane could participate as a pall bearer at a Masonic funeral, but he could not be between the Tyler and the Master “as the lodge on such occasions consists of all who are between these two officers and should be at all times duly tyled.

Grand Lodge laws gave **perpetual jurisdiction** over a **rejected candidate** as well as requiring a waiver to join a lodge in another state. California only required the lapse of one year to authorize a waiver. Nebraska took exception and urged California to reconsider.

A contribution was requested by the Grand Lodge of Virginia to commemorate the 100th **anniversary of the death of George Washington**, but the Grand Lodge decided not to send a donation.

It was the **ruling** of the **Grand Master** that a lodge member could be installed into office even though his dues were not paid.

In another **ruling**, the **Grand Master** said a Mason living in another jurisdiction could **join** a Nebraska lodge.

Superior Lodge No. 121 conferred degrees on two men from Kansas. The Grand Master of Kansas complained the lodge **invaded its jurisdiction**. After investigating, Nebraska’s Grand Master ordered the lodge to refund the fees to him for distribution to a lodge in Kansas that held jurisdiction. Superior lodge responded that it would appeal his decision. Deeming the response disobedient, the Grand Master visited Superior Lodge and later received payment.

The **charter was arrested of Lebanon Lodge No. 58** in Columbus after the Grand Master discovered “work in the lodge had been prevented for the last eight years by reason of a factional fight within the Masonic bodies at that place, with no prospects of abatement.” A committee was appointed to investigate the troubles of the craft and report at the next Annual Communication.

The Grand Master recommended the appointment of a committee to consider whether the Grand Lodge should furnish **Monitors**.

The Grand Master proposed that the **Orphans Educational Fund** be used for its intended purpose, and that a standing **committee** be appointed to investigate claims for assistance without exceeding 80 percent of the annual net increase of the fund.

In 1897, the Grand Master of Peru issued an edict abolishing the **Bible** from the altar. After several Grand Lodges stopped relations with Peru, the edict was rescinded the following year.

A suggestion from the Grand Master of Wyoming to create a supreme **tribunal in the U.S.** was rejected by the **Jurisprudence Committee** and Grand Lodge after observing that it was “impractical, un-American, and unmasonic, from an American standpoint.” The idea emanated from controversy between the Grand Lodge of Washington “and its fellows.”

Among actions by the Committee on **Relief** were payment of \$5 a month to assist a retired brother of **Parian Lodge No. 207**, and \$8 a month to **Scribner Lodge No. 132** to help the family of a deceased brother of that lodge.

1900

William W. Keysor, Grand Master

June 9, 1899 – June 7, 1900

Reported at the 43rd Annual Communication

In his address, the Grand Master noted the drought and stagnant business had ended, and national honor was maintained at home and abroad after the end of the **Spanish-American War**. He said of soldiers who died in the conflict, "...as Freemasons we cannot feel otherwise than proud of the record made on battlefield and ocean wave by the brave men who wore the square and compass on their breasts ..."

The Grand Master represented Nebraska at the centennial memorial service at the tomb of **George Washington**. He reported that more than 3,000 Masons comprised the funeral procession, including the President, Brother William McKinley, who participated in the ceremony and later spoke to the crowd. The Grand Master said of the experience, "As I stood that gray December day on that beautiful eminence which overlooks the broad Potomac and many historic spots hallowed with patriotic and fraternal blood, and listened to the last President of the United States, a Freemason, voice the affection and veneration of a mighty nation for the first President of the United States, also a Freemason, and one of the sublimest characters in all history, my bosom swelled with love and pride for ancient craft Masonry, and I left that sacred place with a clearer and profounder conception than I ever had before of the power, grandeur, beauty and beneficence of our beloved institution."

Christian Hartman, Grand Treasurer for more than 20 years, died September 28, 1899. The Grand Master did not appoint a replacement.

After the sale of **medals** commemorating Nebraska's first Grand Master, **Robert C. Jordan**, faltered, the Grand Master urged lodges and members to buy more so the Grand Lodge could at least break even on the costs. The bill for the 1,000 medals was \$435.

At its 1898 Annual Communication, the Grand Lodge of Washington recognized what was called "**Negro Masonry**" and its right to establish a second grand lodge. While some states severed relations with Washington, Nebraska decided to wait under the assurance Washington would rescind their action at the next Annual Communication. In 1899, Washington reaffirmed their stand on the issue. Nebraska's Grand Master left the decision up to the members at the state's 1900 Annual Communication which decided to sever relationships with Washington.

A **cyclone** demolished the town of Herman and destroyed **Landmark Lodge No. 222**. Unaffected members journeyed to the town to help their brothers. Nearly \$1,200 was donated to assist the lodge and brothers. **Tekamah Lodge No. 31** loaned their jewels to Landmark Lodge to conduct a third degree and installation of officers in a church that escaped the storm.

Past Grand Master **George Lininger** donated Benares brass **consecrating vessels** for use in laying **cornerstones**. The Grand Lodge lacked suitable vessels for the corn, wine and oil. They were first used in laying the cornerstone of Blair High School. PGM Lininger also provided wine and oil he purchased in Jerusalem.

On realizing that several **Grand Representatives** represented more than one foreign grand jurisdiction, the Grand Master ruled that one brother could represent just one grand jurisdiction.

The **charter** of **Lebanon Lodge No. 58** in Columbus was returned after it had been arrested the previous year.

It was reported that the Master of **Zeredatha Lodge No. 160** in Reynolds had a habit of being **intoxicated**. The Grand Master held a trial and ruled the charges were not proved to the point he would withhold the Master's jewel. He returned the jewel to him with a letter of advice and reprimand.

The **Grand Master ruled** that **honorary membership** in other lodges was not recognized in Nebraska.

Only members of the Grand Lodge were appointed to committees by the Grand Master to avoid paying an additional **per diem** to attend **Annual Communication**. The Grand Master said paying a per diem to non-members of the Grand Lodge was a custom, but not authorized by the bylaws. He said the payroll accounts for 25 percent of the **Grand Lodge's budget** and should be reduced. In another recommendation, he suggested that lodge representatives could not receive per diem and mileage that was greater than it paid the Grand Lodge during the year. His idea would reduce per diem to railway fares.

A standing committee on **Fraternal Dead** was added to the bylaws on recommendation of the Grand Master. He said it would allow Grand Masters to omit this information from their annual reports.

A bylaw change was approved that trustees of the **Orphans Educational Fund** could not have personal interest in any **loans**.

The addition of a **clerk** to the Grand Lodge office was approved on recommendation of the Grand Master to help with the work of the office and to expand services. He said this would give the **Grand Secretary** time to welcome guests to his office and other responsibilities, along with a month's vacation. He remarked that he feared the duties of the office may have contributed to the death of the previous Grand Secretary, **William Bowen**.

It was also approved that the laws be amended requiring the **Grand Treasurer** keep **Grand Lodge funds** separate from his personal bank account. When the Grand Treasurer died in 1899, this was discovered to be the case. "...if it had not been for the ability and willingness of his wife to pay over to the Grand Lodge what was due, before the settlement of his estate, we would have been seriously embarrassed for a long time for the want of money," he said.

Petitions from **Lincoln Lodge No. 19**, **Lancaster Lodge No. 54** in Lincoln, and **Landmark Lodge No. 222** in Herman were allowed to replace destroyed charters. A **fire** destroyed the charters of the Lincoln lodges and a **tornado** hit the lodge in Herman.

Newly installed Grand Master Albert Crites said in his closing remarks that Past Grand Master **George Lininger** deserved to be known as the "**Landmark of Masonry** in Nebraska."

1901

Albert W. Crites, Grand Master

June 7, 1900 – June 7, 1901

Reported at the 44th Annual Communication

Past Grand Master **George Lininger** made several presentations at Annual Communication, including:

- Presentation of a **chair** he found in Italy that was an exact reproduction of one taken from Frescobaldi Palace belonging to a 16th century Florentine family with its coat of arms on the back. He gave it to the Grand Lodge for use by the Grand Master.
- Presentation of a **gavel** to the Grand Lodge from a tomb in Egypt that was supposed to be about 4,000 years old.
- He discussed his **trip to the Mideast** and described a visit with Masons in Joppa. They said they could not form a Grand Lodge out of concern that the Sultan of Turkey would break it up. They added that they must be secret about meetings as well.
- He talked about introducing the **Grand Representative** system in the Grand Lodge of England 20 years earlier. He was Nebraska's first Grand Representative to England.

To support a recently-completed temple in **Lincoln**, two lodges attempted to **raffle** a piano. The Grand Master prohibited the raffle, but it was held and attributed to the temple's corporation. The Grand Master let the raffle stand given that considerable financial loss would have resulted. The **Jurisprudence Committee** recommended that any similar future incidents be cause for discipline.

The **Grand Master ruled** that funeral **grand honors** and private grand honors were the only grand honors in Masonry. He said funeral grand honors were not appropriate at **cornerstone layings** and the dedication of buildings. He decided to give private grand honors at a public laying of a cornerstone.

When men in **Bassett** petitioned to form a **new lodge**, it was presented to **Long Pine Lodge No. 136** for recommendation. Long Pine Lodge refused to certify the new lodge which prevented the application from reaching the Grand Master. While recognizing the rights of Long Pine Lodge, the Grand Master said the law reposes "...a power too despotic in any of our constituent lodges whereby they may, if so disposed, absolutely prevent the formation of new lodges."

Two **Omaha homes** were given to the **Orphans Educational Fund** at 4420 Harney and 609 North 32nd, valued at \$3,400.

1902

Robert E. Evans, Grand Master

June 7, 1901 – June 5, 1902

Reported at the 45th Annual Communication

The Grand Master pointed out that the Grand Lodge hadn't adopted **ceremonies** for the installation of officers, dedication of lodge rooms, instituting and constituting lodges, funerals and funeral lodges. He recommended that a committee be appointed to prepare these ceremonies for adoption at the next Annual Communication.

Bylaws were passed to create a Committee on **Relief**.

The **Grand Custodian** held 319 **schools of instruction** in 67 different lodges in the state.

In 1887, \$5,000 was appropriated to build a **Masonic Home**. The funds were transferred to the **relief** fund in 1895. The Grand Master restored them to the Masonic Home fund.

Mrs. Charles Willard of **Hebron** offered her home to the Grand Lodge for the purpose of establishing a **Masonic Home**. It was valued up to \$25,000. The **Orphans Educational Fund** Committee recommended the offer be refused.

After **Long Pine Lodge No. 136** rejected a petition from Masons in **Bassett** to **form a lodge**, the Grand Master investigated. He suggested a new petition be drafted and that Long Pine Lodge "deal fairly and kindly with the Bassett brethren." Long Pine Lodge declined to act on the petition which the Grand Master considered a refusal to recommend. The **Jurisprudence Committee** advised that a dispensation be issued to Bassett by the Grand Master.

A resolution passed that Masters must submit **amendments** under consideration at **Annual Communication** to the **vote of their members** before April 1, and if they failed to do so, the lodge would pay 25¢ per member.

Three brothers were appointed to a committee pertaining "to the **work** of this Grand Jurisdiction, its preservation in its original form and purity....if it is being taught and promulgated as adopted..." In addition, it was charged to investigate the method of "**promulgation of the work**" in other jurisdictions and report their findings at the next Annual Communication.

The **Jurisprudence Committee** urged passage of an amendment to the law that it was unmasonic to communicate **objections** to the initiation or advancement of a candidate by **telephone**.

While conducting a Central School of Instruction at Tekamah, Brother **Isaac Gibson**, a member of that lodge, remarked to the Grand Custodian that he believed he was the oldest Mason present and maybe the oldest in Nebraska. The Grand Custodian took a Jordan medal, which was created to commemorate the death of Nebraska's first Grand Master, from its case, pinned it on Gibson and ordered him to wear it with pride as long as he lived as the color bearer for **Robert Jordan**. This was the beginning of the tradition of presenting the **Gold Jordan Medal**.

The Grand Master suggested repealing a law requiring the publication of a **black book**, identifying men rejected, suspended or expelled, for the reference of lodges. He said the law had been ignored for years, and the **Ways and Means Committee** recommended eliminating the requirement.

A Master did not violate Masonic law by signing a petition asking the city council to grant a **saloon** license, ruled the Grand Master, but he said, "...in my opinion, a Master of a Masonic Lodge will do well to see that his name appears on no such petition." The **Jurisprudence Committee** disagreed.

U.S. President **William McKinley**, a Mason, was **shot** and died September 14, 1901. The Grand Master commented, "Benumbed, we failed to comprehend as we listened to his last words, 'It is God's way. His will be done.'"

William McKinley Lodge No. 431 of Ohio requested permission to ask lodges for aid to build a **McKinley Memorial** at Canton, Ohio, honoring the U.S. president who was assassinated. Although the Grand Master approved of the lodge's goal, he refused the request.

It was proposed that lodges be able to attend **church** services as a lodge at any time without a **dispensation**.

The Swiss Grand Lodge Alpina proposed that a **Universal Congress of Freemasons** be held, but it never occurred.

A committee appointed on the **volcanic eruption** on **Martinique** in the West Indies extended sympathy to the French and assured "them of our kindly interest in their future **welfare** and prosperity." More than 29,000 people died from the explosion and the town of St. Pierre was destroyed.

The Grand Lodge laid the **cornerstone** of the **Thayer County Courthouse**. Participating in the ceremony were brothers from 27 lodges representing states from the "Atlantic Ocean to the Rocky Mountains."

1903

Nathaniel M. Ayers, Grand Master

June 5, 1902 – June 5, 1903

Reported at the 46th Annual Communication

A total of 916 initiations were held in the state, increasing **membership** by 509, the **largest one-year jump** in members since the organization of Grand Lodge.

Roscoe Pound was installed Grand Orator of the Grand Lodge.

The Grand Custodian discovered that **Solar Lodge No. 134** in Clarks lost its only **charter** in an 1894 **fire**. Since then, the lodge had operated, but the Grand Master ordered them to cease their work. A couple weeks later, he lifted the ban and a new charter was sent to the lodge.

The Grand Master ruled that a brother sending **insulting replies** to a notice to pay **dues** should be "summoned to show cause." And, if the brother disregarded the summons, then he should be tried for sending "insulting letters and for disobedience of summons."

The Grand Custodian held 334 Custodian's **Schools of Instruction**.

On a vote of 122 to 109, a proposal was passed **locating** the **Grand Lodge** in Omaha.

It was recommended by the Grand Master that a **Master-elect** in a lodge be required to **exemplify the work** and **pass an examination** on law, ritual, history, and customs and their usages, adding, "...too much rotation (in the Master's office) with a lack of proficiency, are conditions found in many of the lodges."

In answer to the effect of a severe **drought**, the Grand Lodge **donated** \$757 to farmers.

Acacia Lodge No. 34 in Schuyler complained that **Fidelity Lodge No. 51** in David City had "**infringed on its territory**" by initiating five **members** from its area. Fidelity Lodge countered that

the map used by the Grand Master was incorrect and only one member lived in Acacia's territory. A committee was appointed to further investigate the matter.

After looking into complaints that a Master excessively used **alcohol**, the Grand Master arrested his jewel and placed the Senior Warden in charge of the lodge. Three months later, the Master abstained from using alcohol and his jewel was restored.

Commenting on the **influence of the U.S. in the world**, the **Grand Master** said, "The passing of another year finds us as a nation at peace with the world, with an influence felt in every civilized nation on earth; and our advice and counsel as a nation is sought by other world powers when difficulties arise, and in these councils is always found the influence of Masonry."

The Grand Master recommended to **Euclid Lodge No. 97** in Weeping Water that charges against a brother be withdrawn for **embezzling funds** of the lodge. While acknowledging the brother, who then lived in Chicago, used lodge funds and didn't replace them, he said he was the victim of circumstances and hard times and was deprived of the privilege of Freemasonry for about 10 years, which was sufficient punishment.

A man claiming to be a Mason was prosecuted in South Omaha for **fraudulently obtaining money** from **members** of the Craft in many states and territories. He carried forged receipts for dues, bearing the imprint of a seal from a Kentucky lodge. The Grand Master took the forged receipts but was unable to locate the seal. The Grand Lodge issued a circular to other jurisdictions about the man with pictures of him.

The Grand Master commented on the prospects of **building a Masonic home**, "The hearts of the members of this body should be opened to the old, infirm and helpless unfortunates who are dependent upon us, and we should build a Home that will bring sunshine and comfort to these people as they move with feeble steps to a nearby grave." Past Grand Master **George Lininger** was president of The Nebraska Masonic Home.

Committees appointed at the previous Annual Communication to adopt **ceremonies** and to investigate **promulgation of the work** asked additional time to complete their work.

Zeredatha Lodge. No. 160 in Reynolds obtained a \$500 **loan** from the Committee on **Relief** and then re-loaned the money to brothers. Of the loans, \$159.25 had been paid back. The Master of the lodge paid another \$70 and the other loans were forgiven.

Grand Secretary **Francis White** offered his **home** in Plattsmouth for **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, indicating the trustees could have the property at whatever price they wanted.

1904

Frank E. Bullard, Grand Master

June 5, 1903 – June 10, 1904

Reported at the 47th Annual Communication

The Nebraska Masonic Home in Plattsmouth was **dedicated** October 30, 1903, after it was "tendered to the Grand Lodge by our M.:W.: Brother **George W. Lininger**, the president of the Board of Trustees." The Board of Trustees purchased the home for less than one-third of its value. The home was formally dedicated during the 1904 Annual Communication.

A **record number of initiations** occurred when 1,060 men joined the Craft. The Grand Master sounded a note of warning, by stating that **large numbers** of members may be superficial. "...what we fancy to be strength, may be really weakness, for our real strength lies not in numbers but in absolute unswerving fidelity to its principles and teachings."

The Grand Custodian held 411 sessions of official **schools**, 77 more than were held the previous year.

To ensure laws were being followed, lodges were ordered to return certificates under their seals confirming that **ciphers** were not used in lodge **ritual work**.

A report of the **Committee on Promulgation of the Work** stated it reviewed how other jurisdictions handled their **ritual work**. They found as many approaches as there were jurisdictions, and recommended maintaining the current method (including the **title of Grand Custodian** rather than Grand Lecturer). “Further, we find that the Grand Lodge...is as liberal in its appropriation for disseminating the work as any other Grand Lodge, and more so than many.”

The report of the **Committee on Monitor and Ceremonies** said it would propose a new Monitor and Ceremonials at the next Annual Communication.

The Grand Master recommended the creation of a **committee** responsible for the **work** of the order. He said only two brethren are letter perfect, and the work needs to be firm. After an objection, the suggestion was held until the next year.

A fragment of a **rope** which was part of the cord used in a bed that came to America in the **Mayflower**, was presented to the Grand Lodge by the Grand Master on behalf of Past District Deputy Horace White of the **Grand Lodge of New York**.

The Grand Master said Freemasonry couldn't compromise with **intemperance, gambling** and profanity. The ancient charges, he said, obligate a Mason to obey moral law and the law of God. These violate that law.

The Grand Lodge was invited to take part in the ceremonies celebrating the **50th anniversary** of the organization of the **Territory of Nebraska**.

St. Johns Lodge No. 25 in Omaha celebrated on the evening of **Thanksgiving Day** at the lodge. The Grand Master urged other lodges to celebrate holidays with their families at lodge.

Acacia Lodge No. 34 in Schuyler said five initiates of **Fidelity Lodge No. 51** in David City were from its territory. The Dodge County surveyor, a member in Hooper, was appointed to make the measurements, and all but one of the brethren was found to be within the jurisdiction of Acacia Lodge.

It was voted that Nebraska **law** not be printed in the **proceedings**, but be electrotyped and printed in pamphlet form and distributed.

When the holder of the **Gold Jordan Medal** died in April 1904, it was passed to M.:W.: Brother **Robert W. Furnas**, Past Grand Master, as the oldest Mason. He died 14 months later.

The Grand Master said some weak lodges were “incapable of doing their **work** with dignity and impressiveness,” or lacked harmony. “These lodges should be either purged and cleansed of their iniquity, or be no longer suffered to exist,” he said, “...there are mortal sins even in Masonry, and the brethren guilty of them should be made to feel the smart and sting of Masonic discipline.”

After visiting lodges, the Grand Master criticized the “cloud of smoke pervading the lodge room.” He noted that **smoking** during open **lodge** detracts from the dignity of the meeting.

The Grand Master stated that it had been “practically impossible” for him to give the time necessary to investigate the condition of several **struggling, small lodges**. “I presume my predecessors have been similarly situated, and that my successors will be. Some means should be devised to remedy this weakness.”

“The Acacia,” the **Grand Lodge's newsletter** for members, was recommended by the Grand Master for the consideration of the brethren. “There are many, I am sure, in this Grand Lodge who possess the ability to aid in raising its standard, and at the same time be doing real service to less-informed brethren.”

It was **ruled** by the **Grand Master** that a man who lost his right index **finger** and part of his thumb, and another man with a paralyzed leg, were not eligible to be received as candidates. He also decided that a man whose father or mother was an **American Indian** was eligible.

1905

Charles E. Burnham, Grand Master
June 10, 1904 – June 7, 1905

Reported at the 48th Annual Communication

Former governor of Nebraska and Past Grand Master **Robert W. Furnas** died just three days before the 1905 Annual Communication. The Grand Master called up the assembly and “Nearer My God, to Thee” was performed by the organist. His body lay in state at the Masonic Temple in Lincoln guarded by the Knights of Kadosh. A Masonic funeral service was held for the “Father of Nebraska” in Brownville the morning of the opening of the Annual Communication.

The Grand Master reported that the only menace in the jurisdiction was from “commercialism” in the lodges. That is, the tendency to increase the number of **members** simply to obtain fees and dues, overshadowing the principle that **quality** would strengthen the institution and not quantity, he said.

A form for a **burial service** was approved and distributed to local lodges. It was written by Past Grand Master **Samuel Davidson**.

Acacia Fraternity was founded at the University of Nebraska. Fifteen young Masons, including **Roscoe Pound**, were initiated on February 14, 1905. A group of faculty who were Masons organized the fraternity. It was the fourth chapter in the country.

An amendment passed at Annual Communication created the **Committee on Work**.

The **Orphans Educational Fund** reached \$40,000, spurred by a “spirit of charity” that accompanied the establishment of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, the Grand Master reported.

The Committee on **Orphans Educational Fund**, which was created in 1901 to assist orphans of Masons, recommended it be abolished and that its funds be given to **The Nebraska Masonic Home** to reduce the assessment per member from 50 cents to 30 cents. The committee cited the state’s public school system and that only one child had been aided by the fund as reasons for its demise.

After the Grand Lodge of **California** sent a letter calling **Grand Representatives** “useless” because jurisdictions should communicate through the Grand Master, the Grand Master cancelled the commission of the states’ representative in California.

The **Grand Master ruled** that a man who had lost a **thumb** and another who lost a foot, even if he could use a “cork foot,” were not eligible to **join** Masonry. He said an Entered Apprentice could continue in the degrees after he became “crippled.”

He also ruled that a **lodge** room dedicated to Masonry could not be used for **dancing**.

A **card system** to **register members**, costing about \$400 a year, was approved with the hope it would lessen and simplify the work of the lodge Secretaries and could provide indefinite expansion with the growth of the Order.

Due to the large number of requests for decisions from the Grand Master that he said were clearly outlined in the **laws**, he issued an edict requiring the law be **read in open lodge**. He observed that despite this effort, the law “was not read understandingly” and he received numerous inquiries anyway.

Fires in Pawnee Lodge No. 23 in Pawnee City, and **Wausa Lodge No. 251** in Wausa, displaced both lodges, but Wausa Lodge was able to save some furniture and its charter.

The Grand Secretary asked clerks in the Post Office to compute the most expeditious route to **Annual Communication** of lodge representatives. The total **mileage** was 1,000 miles less than submitted by the representatives.

In its first year of operation, **The Nebraska Masonic Home** received and cared for 18 **residents**. When the year closed, the home had 12 residents; three women, six men, two boys and one girl.

A question was raised about **taxing Masonic property**. The issue was referred to the **Jurisprudence Committee** with instructions to make a test case and adjudicate the question.

June 7, 1905 – June 6, 1906
Reported at the 49th Annual Communication

The Grand Master commented that among **officers in a lodge**, there needed to be more “cranks” in the Master’s chair. “We would have more good lodges. The **Master** cannot do all the work; but he can do a great deal. A lodge never dies of inanition that has a wide-awake Master. It is an impossibility.”

An edict was issued by the **Grand Master forbidding** the sale or use of keys or **ciphers**. When discovering their use at a Lodge, he directed the **Grand Custodian** to investigate and gather up any ciphers. A number were turned over to the Grand Secretary. “I am satisfied that the pernicious habit of using spurious publications heretofore indulged in by some of the brethren, has been almost if not entirely broken up,” he said.

A large **earthquake in San Francisco** in 1906 prompted the Grand Master to send \$500 to the Grand Master of California to help brethren in need of **assistance**. In addition, local lodges sent money. The money was used to feed the starving. As many as 700 people were killed by the quake that was equal to 8.25 on the Richter scale.

The Grand Master commented on law that exempted brothers reaching **50 years of membership** from paying Grand Lodge **dues**. He said the list was growing longer every year and members of less than 50 years pay for the expenses of those exempted. He noted that a brother exempt from paying dues loses interest in his lodge. “Masonry is worth the small sum charged as annual dues, and it is worth it each and every year, regardless of a brother’s age or the number of years he has been a member.” He recommended the law be changed.

A member of **Bloomfield Lodge No. 218** spread stories derogatory to the good name of the Master. The Grand Master investigated the situation and vindicated the Master, and ordered charges be filed. The perpetrator admitted his guilt and a **reprimand** was given by the Grand Master and read at a special communication of the lodge.

The Grand Custodian held 40 **Schools of Instruction** across the state with three days in each location and three sessions a day.

A committee of 15 was appointed to develop plans to celebrate the **semi-centennial of the Grand Lodge**.

Past Grand Master **George Lininger**, president of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, thanked the Grand Lodge for endowing the home. He announced he proposed to build on the grounds and **donate** to the home a **lodge room and chapel**. Lininger also presented a **gavel** from **Palestine** to the Grand Master.

1907

Zuingle M. Baird, Grand Master
June 6, 1906 – June 6, 1907
Reported at the 50th Annual Communication

A committee appointed to make **plans** for the observance of the Grand Lodge’s **50th Anniversary** planned an event in Omaha with speeches on the purposes of the fraternity and the history of Masonry in Nebraska. Other activities included a street parade and another meeting and a banquet the following day.

A bottle of **wine** sealed by 46 Masons 25 years earlier on the anniversary of the organization of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska, was drunk at the **50th Anniversary** observance by the remaining 22 Masons. Two bottles of wine were then sealed, one to be opened at the 75th anniversary and the other at the 100th anniversary.

All but three governors of Nebraska at that time were or had been Masons. **Governor and Brother George Sheldon** spoke to the observance of the **50th Anniversary**. “No matter in what

nation or country Masons may live, their influence is always for a better government within that country," he said. "If there is any characteristic of Freemasonry that stands above another, it is that which causes Masons to raise themselves and their fellow men to higher and more lofty purposes."

About 220 Masons from five states gathered in Omaha on March 7, 1907, to witness the passing of the **traveling silver trowel** from the Grand Lodge of South Dakota to the Grand Lodge of Nebraska. The trowel was sent by Justice Lodge No. 853 of New York City, New York, to spread the cement of brotherly love and affection throughout the world. Following the presentation, Past Grand Master **George Lininger** hosted the group at his home and private art gallery, and Capitol Lodge No. 3 then hosted a dinner.

A **cornerstone** was laid for the **Kearney County Courthouse** on July 16, 1906. The Grand Lodge also laid a cornerstone at the **Kearney Military Academy** where **William Jennings Bryan** addressed the thousands assembled for the ceremony.

The **Orphans Educational Fund** was **placed under the control** of the Board of Trustees of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**.

In just four years, Nebraska Masons had **contributed** \$20,000 to purchase and improve the grounds and buildings of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, and an additional \$20,000 was appropriated by the Grand Lodge for new buildings, \$25,000 for maintenance and \$50,000 as a perpetual endowment. The fixed contribution to the home was 50 cents per year for each Nebraska Mason.

The **Grand Master** commented on **The Nebraska Masonic Home**: "If there is anything of which we should be proud, it is the establishing and maintaining of a place where those who have struggled against adverse conditions, who in their declining years find themselves without the necessary means to care for themselves, where the sick, the infirm, the aged may go without any thought of tomorrow, or as to who will provide for their wants."

While on his deathbed, Past Grand Master **George Lininger** gave \$5,000 to **The Nebraska Masonic Home** for the erection of a chapel. "This was his last and I may say, his most sacred contribution to Masonic charity," said Deputy Grand Master William DeBord at the **50th Anniversary** observance of the Grand Lodge. "Great and strong and beautiful was his life, unselfish, peaceful and glorious his death." He was buried with Masonic rites on June 10, 1907.

After confusion erupted over the length of a lunar moon between **lodge meetings**, the bylaws were changed requiring four weeks between meetings.

Commenting on the state of the fraternity and **candidates**, the Grand Master said the general condition was all that could be desired, "with perhaps a slight disposition on the part of some lodges to consider quantity as being more desirable than **quality**, and if I have one special message to transmit to the fraternity it is to see that no unworthy candidate is admitted within the sacred precincts of our lodges."

The Grand Master allowed a lodge to start again in **Indianola (Endeavor Lodge No. 262)** after its **charter** had been suspended three years earlier. On investigation, he said discord in the lodge was no longer evident, but he ordered a certified transcript of every meeting be sent him to monitor the situation.

The **Grand Secretary** reported that all lodges were in compliance with an order from the Grand Lodge that their **seal designs** be separate from the others.

The **Jordan Medal Committee** recommended that a medal be made of **gold** for the oldest Mason to receive.

A report of the Special Committee on Documentary Evidence was approved that recommended that no **lodge** receive **visitors** from another lodge unless he was known to be a Mason, vouched for, showed a certificate of good standing and passed examination.

The community of Creighton requested a **cornerstone** be laid for its new school building. On arrival, a delegation met the Grand Master and asked that "for the sake of harmony in the community" that either the letters A.:F.:&A.:M.: be erased from the stone or the stone be laid

with the engraved side to the wall and another message be engraved on the stone with no mention of the Grand Lodge. The Grand Master responded that the **ceremony would not take place**. The remainder of the day was spent touring Creighton and enjoying a meal. The cornerstone was taken to **Creighton Lodge No. 100** in Creighton and placed in the northeast corner.

1908

Ornan J. King, Grand Master

June 6, 1907 – June 11, 1908

Reported at the 51st Annual Communication

A dispensation was granted to Omaha Masons to establish a **lodge** bearing the name of Past Grand Master **George W. Lininger** who died June 8, 1907.

In honor of **Lininger**, a **draped chair** was placed in the East during **Annual Communication**. A souvenir button was presented to all in attendance by the lodge bearing his name with a portrait of Lininger.

The Grand Master called **Lininger** the **father of The Nebraska Masonic Home**, and added, “His long and loyal devotion to Masonry, his zealous and generous efforts in establishing The Nebraska Masonic Home, his ever timely counsel and encouragement are enduring monuments to his memory. Truly, ‘Death loves a shining mark.’”

In celebration of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska’s **50th Anniversary**, a **committee spent** about \$2,500 of its \$3,500 budget.

Worshipful Brother **Roscoe Pound** was installed **Grand Orator** of the Grand Lodge.

To reduce expenses, the Grand Master recommended that the mileage and **per diem** paid to lodge representatives at **Annual Communication** be reduced to the actual sum paid for railroad fare. The previous year, the amount paid represented 30 percent of all Grand Lodge expenditures.

A solid gold **Jordan Medal** was produced and presented to the Nebraska Mason with the longest membership.

Past Grand Master **Samuel Davidson** tested the courts to determine what **property of Masonic lodges** was liable for **taxation**. **Plattsmouth Lodge No. 6** had sued Cass County in District Court and lost. On appeal, the Nebraska Supreme Court reversed the District Court’s decision and fully adjudicated “every question involved in the litigation in our favor.”

The **Jurisprudence Committee** held that it was unmasonic for a lodge to pay for a public lecture on any subject in a public hall for the purpose of **obtaining petitions** for initiation. It also agreed with the Grand Master not to permit a lodge to meet in a room above a public **dance hall** because it was “not for the best interests of Masonry.”

The annual **cost per resident** of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** was \$230.

It was recommended by the Committee on **The Nebraska Masonic Home** that its **articles of incorporation** be **amended** to provide that the wives, mothers, sisters and daughters of needy or deceased Master Masons be cared for at the home.

The Grand Custodian said he felt the approach taken by the Grand Lodge to achieve a higher standard of **proficiency** in the **work** was not accomplishing the desired results. He also said he had no suggestions for improvement.

After the members of **Pomegranate Lodge No. 110** in Ashland attended church services where nearly **\$11 was raised** for **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, the Grand Master suggested all lodges attempt to arrange similar activities.

Zeredatha Lodge No. 160 in Reynolds lost its **charter**, paraphernalia and records to a **fire** in December 1907. The Grand Master rejected a substitute location until a new lodge could be built. With no other meeting room in Reynolds, the Grand Master refused to grant a dispensation to meet.

Following a request by the Veiled Prophets of the Enchanted Realm (**Grotto**), the **Grand Master decided** against recognizing them.

A total of \$100 intended for use by brothers impacted by the **San Francisco earthquake** was returned by the Grand Lodge of California after meeting the needs of their brothers.

1909

William A. DeBord, Grand Master

June 11, 1908 – June 10, 1909

Reported at the 52nd Annual Communication

After receiving an invitation from Ohio's Grand Master, Nebraska's Grand Master attended the **conferring of degrees** on **William Howard Taft**, just two weeks before he was sworn in as the 27th president of the United States. He said Taft was obligated and instructed in the unwritten work of each degree and received the charge in the third degree before being declared a Master Mason.

The making of **Taft** a **Mason on sight** caused the Grand Master to state that the action was within the powers of Ohio's Grand Master, and he noted that Nebraska did not allow the practice. A special committee examined the issue and stated that although the Grand Lodge of Nebraska's constitution didn't grant or deny that authority, it was an ancient landmark of the fraternity and a prerogative and power of the Grand Master "to be exercised by him in his discretion." Later, in a substituted report, the committee said there was no error in the action of the Grand Lodge in 1897 denying that authority on a 515 to 27 vote. And, the right to make a Mason on sight did not exist now or previously in landmark, ancient regulation or law. After several hours of discussion, the substitute report was adopted 295 to 144 votes.

The name given **Lodge No. 264** – Rolland H. Oakley – by the **Charters and Dispensations Committee** was not to the liking of its members. They preferred the name under which they operated under dispensation – **Franklin**. The Grand Master ordered the Grand Secretary not to print the permanent charter until the Grand Lodge could take final action, which it did in favor of the lodge's preference.

A considerable number of lodges had not collected **delinquent dues**. Up to \$700 a lodge was delinquent. Only two or three lodges had no delinquent dues. The Grand Master required that lodges report the number of delinquent brothers in their annual report. After he sent a letter to lodges, delinquent dues were substantially reduced. In one instance, he found that a lodge's finances were depleted because of excessive expenditures on cigars and banquets. After members gave \$5 apiece to the lodge, its debt was eliminated.

Pointing out that lodges lost significant revenue by exempting members from paying **dues** after reaching certain **years of membership and age**, the Grand Master recommended that an amendment be adopted prohibiting lodges from the practice. He said one lodge had 90 members that were exempt from paying dues. In other jurisdictions he said from 25-35 percent of members were exempt which left lodges unable to "take care of regular business and philanthropic enterprises of the lodge."

The Grand Master had the **petition form changed** so that a candidate would need to specifically answer in writing if he had **previously petitioned** another lodge and whether he was rejected. The change grew out of incidents in two lodges where petitioners were rejected and then petitioned another lodge and received the degrees.

A **monitor** and **ceremonies** reported by a special committee was adopted for Nebraska to be used by all lodges and all other monitors and ceremonies were forbidden.

Stating a law served no good purpose that required the **approval by the next nearest lodge** in order for a new **lodge to be created**, the Grand Master recommended its repeal. He said the Grand Master and Grand Custodian could adequately investigate the situation and the Grand Master could

issue a dispensation with the signatures of at least 15 Master Masons, eight residing within a one-mile radius of the lodge's meeting place.

The Grand Master discovered that 20-30 lodges hadn't attended **Schools of Instruction** for six-eight years. He found that a few lodges failed to have **annual elections** and **degree work**. After surveying other American jurisdictions, the Grand Master recommended that a new committee titled **Custodians of the Work** be formed as the supreme authority on the esoteric work. He also suggested the Grand Custodian's **title** be changed to Grand Lecturer in line with the title used in most other Grand Lodges. And, that the state be divided into 20 or more **districts** with a district lecturer in each to ensure uniformity in the esoteric work. An amendment proposed by a special committee implementing the suggestion did not receive unanimous consent. A committee was appointed to review the issue in the upcoming year.

Commenting that the officers of several lodges could not properly open and close the lodge and **confer degrees**, the Grand Master proposed consideration of an **examination of Masters-elect** before their installation and denial of office if they were not "reasonably well versed in Masonic law and qualified to confer degrees." A special committee proposed an amendment for consideration at the next Annual Communication requiring each Master-elect to earn, following examination, a certificate signed by the Grand Custodian, Deputy Grand Lecturer or three Past Masters and approved by the Grand Master before entitled to the Past Master's degree.

A survey of American Grand Lodges was conducted to discover who served on their **Jurisprudence Committee**. Only four states comprised their committees of all Past Grand Masters, as did Nebraska. A special committee proposed an **amendment** for consideration at the next Annual Communication that would **reduce the size** of the committee from its then 25 Past Grand Masters to five or seven members.

The Grand Master said he learned that the Grand Lodge had "never received any interest upon any Grand Lodge funds in the hands" of the **Grand Treasurer**. He suggested the Grand Lodge provide for the deposit of the funds in **interest-bearing accounts**.

Instead of waiting in **Annual Communication** for committees to report, the Grand Master arranged for **brothers to speak on various topics** suggested by the members. The topics included: how to secure and promote regular attendance and interest in the lodge; the use and abuse of the blackball; lodge finances; social features and banquets at lodges; and table lodges.

The **Grand Master ruled** that Masons **could not invite their friends to join**, a lodge could not meet in a room over a public **dance hall**, and **smoking was not allowed** in the lodge or preparation room during hours of labor.

An immediate amendment was delayed to the next Annual Communication that called for **one ballot** to receive all three **degrees**, but a ballot on a candidate's **proficiency** would be taken.

Noting that the Grand Lodge of Tennessee took a firm stand against other Grand Lodges that authorized the use of **cipher rituals**, the Grand Master agreed. He said the Nebraska Grand Lodge should take steps to "secure concerted action by all of our Grand Lodges similarly minded, to the end that the landmarks of our Ancient Institution may not be swept aside...I am convinced that a firm presentation of this matter will bring back our erring brethren to a full appreciation of their duties in this respect and to wholesome amendment."

Lodges that suffered the loss of their lodge room and paraphernalia due to **fire** included: **Parian Lodge No. 207** in Callaway, **Gilead Lodge No. 233** in Butte, and **Zeredatha Lodge No. 160** in Reynolds.

After conferring with several insurance companies, it was recommended by a special committee that the Grand Lodge should not pursue a system of co-operative **insurance** to protect lodges from **fire**.

With the organization of the state of Oklahoma, the two Grand Lodges in that state became united. The Grand Lodge of Indian Territory, with 193 lodges, and the **Grand Lodge of Oklahoma**, with 141 lodges, became **organized** as one lodge on February 10, 1909.

1910

Michael Dowling, Grand Master

June 10, 1909 – June 8, 1910

Reported at the 53rd Annual Communication

The Grand Master reported a **record number of initiations** occurred during the previous year, and the Grand Lodge's coffers were ample to provide a "fair appropriation for charity."

A law repealed at the last Annual Communication striking down the requirement that the **nearest lodge must vote to allow formation of a new lodge**, was not also changed in the constitution. The Grand Master declared the action null and void and ordered the Grand Secretary to make no mention of the repealing of the section in the proceedings.

Pointing out that there existed "a higher conception of the principles of our Order and a more conscientious discharge of the ennobling duties" than before, the **Grand Master** urged Nebraska's members to incorporate the principles in their everyday lives.

Brother **Jacob King**, a member of Capitol Lodge No. 3 in Omaha, died in January 1910. He had served as **Grand Tyler** for 23 years.

Approved at Annual Communication were recommendations of a special committee proposing no change be made in the "present method of **promulgation of the work**." However, it suggested that whenever necessary, the **Grand Master** could name competent brethren to assist him. The **Grand Custodian** announced that members desirous of perfecting their work to contact him in case they were called on by the Grand Master to assist in his duties.

It was voted that the **Committee on the Promulgation of the Work** be continued for another year as a committee of advisors.

A recommendation of the Grand Master was approved to change the law to allow brethren who, for religious or conscientious reasons, desire to leave a lodge to do so without needing to be **delinquent** on payment of **dues**. "Many of them do not like to remain under sentence of suspension, preferring to pay their dues and leave the lodge with a clean record," he said.

Fidelity Lodge No. 51 in David City asked that it and **Acacia Lodge No. 34** of Schuyler be granted **concurrent jurisdiction** over a township. The law at that time provided that each chartered lodge had exclusive territorial jurisdiction "half way in an air line to each surrounding chartered lodge." Because the Grand Lodge could not invade the jurisdiction of Acacia Lodge, the Jurisprudence Committee recommended that the two lodges discuss the matter and try to reach a determination in the best interests of Masons living there.

Dispensations were denied by the Grand Master for **lodges** at **Bladen** and **Mullen**. "My experience has taught me that there are too many lodges in existence that ought not to have been created," he said. "It requires some money and much time and labor to maintain a lodge, and unless the brethren are willing to give freely of all of these, they cannot reach the high plane upon which a lodge should stand."

The Grand Master said the Grand Lodge should set a **standard** for **lodges** to maintain and weak lodges be given a reasonable time to reach that standard. If they didn't, then their **charters** were to be arrested and the lodges declared extinct. "I believe the time has now arrived when action should be taken looking towards the elimination of every lodge in the state that can offer no good and valid reason for its existence."

Forty of the 244 lodges in the state **didn't pay their per capita tax** by the deadline. The Grand Master sent letters to the lodges stating the Grand Lodge would **arrest their charters**. Noting the penalty for nonpayment was not sufficient, he suggested charters be arrested of delinquent lodges that didn't pay their per capita taxes by the deadline. The **Jurisprudence Committee** said it was within the Grand Master's power to take that action.

Commenting on the new **Monitor and Ceremonies** book, the Grand Master said, "I am certain the Monitor is supplying a long-felt want and furnishing the brethren with the information so necessary to conduct a well-governed lodge." However, no provision was made to hold an **emergent communication** of the Grand Lodge in case of the death of an officer. The Grand Master said the funeral ceremony calls for the lodge of a Grand Officer to conduct the ceremony with the Grand Master in charge, if he attends. He said he thought it was better for the members of the lodge to pay tribute to a deceased member.

The Grand Master reported that he had received considerable information from the Grand Lodge of Virginia concerning the construction of a **national memorial** to **George Washington** and his Masonic connection. The **Committee on Jurisprudence** endorsed the idea and agreed that a **committee** be appointed to investigate the proposal.

The annual cost to maintain a resident at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** was \$247.89 in 1908. An electric light plant and a fully-equipped laundry were installed in the home.

The **Grand Custodian** participated in conferring the Entered Apprentice Degree at **Faith Lodge No. 181** in Crawford on a Quarter-Master Sergeant from **Ft. Robinson**. Except for the Grand Custodian, all attending were either military or government employees.

A fire burned Geneva Lodge No. 79 in Geneva.

1911

Harry A. Cheney, Grand Master

June 8, 1910 – June 7, 1911

Reported at the 54th Annual Communication

The Grand Master recommended, and a vote of the delegates agreed, that the office of **Grand Treasurer** be **abolished**. The move would, he said, rid the need to pay for a surety bond for the office. Following the vote, Grand Treasurer John Dinsmore, who stated he wished to be relieved from the office due to poor health, provided a letter relating to the care of Grand Lodge funds. He was thanked by resolution for his care of the funds over the years. Past Grand Master John Ehrhardt was named the Grand Treasurer and was ordered to send a statement showing the effect of the law change and the reasons for the change.

After examining several Masons, the **Grand Custodian** recommended 13 **assistants** to help him in his duties, the first in the history of the Grand Lodge. In doing so, he pointed out that in his 10 years in the office, he had visited every lodge, held 4,202 sessions in 647 schools, and "if this actual service does not qualify the present Grand Custodian to know all the conditions of each of the lodges of this Grand Jurisdiction, as to their proficiency, furniture and accessories, there must be one fool in the Grand Lodge's roster, and you cannot miss the fool of the family by hitting the present Grand Custodian," he said.

Mrs. George Lininger presented new **officers jewels** to George W. Lininger Lodge No. 268. Past Grand Master Lininger's ring was given to Brother Richard C. Jordan. On that evening, "Many beautiful toasts and responses were made by the brethren in memory of our noble-hearted brother, George W. Lininger, the best beloved Past Grand Master of Masonry in Nebraska," the Grand Master reported.

The Grand Custodian's reports showed a number of brethren **delinquent** in paying **dues** for several years. The Grand Master ordered lodges to contact these members and ask them to show cause why they remain delinquent or be suspended. "A Mason who does not think enough of Masonry to keep himself in good standing should not expect his lodge to do so for him," he said.

In seven and one-half months, the **Grand Custodian** held 91 regular and 12 special **schools** attended by 5,038 Masons.

Noting that the law was ambiguous about **smoking** in the lodge room, the **Grand Custodian** said that “to fill a lodge room proper or a preparation room full of smoke of the filthy weed, then close all the doors and windows after the sound of the gavel is heard, leaves it in a fine condition to represent the ‘middle chamber’ or ‘Sanctum Sanctorum’ of the Most Holy Place of the temple,” he said.

“Don’t smoke in your lodge room, with the vile weed,
Act the gentleman by showing you are of good breed.”

The special **committee on Promulgation of the Work** recommended it be discharged from further service and a committee of three be appointed, and not including the Grand Custodian, at his own suggestion.

Past Grand Master and Judge **Melville Hopewell** died and was buried with Masonic honors in Tekamah. The **funeral** was described as “the largest and most imposing that was ever held in that part of the state. The Governor of the state, state officials, statesmen, members of the bench and bar of Nebraska, hundreds of Freemasons, prominent citizens...” At Hopewell’s request, Past Grand Master Robert French conducted the service.

Trowel Lodge No. 71 in Neligh asked if it could use a **wicket**, or small door, in the door of the lodge room to announce brethren seeking admission. The **Grand Master** would not allow it.

A souvenir **gavel** was received by the Grand Lodge from Brother **Henry Clarke**. In addition, Clarke sent a gavel to every lodge in the state.

A motion to **print** a uniform **receipt for dues** to supply Nebraska’s lodges did not pass.

The Grand Master sent Past Grand Master Milton Hull to Alexandria, Virginia, to a meeting considering the construction of a memorial to **George Washington**. The Washington Masonic Memorial Association was founded in 1909, but it wasn’t until the 1911 meeting that the constitution of the organization was approved by representatives from 26 Grand Lodges. The Grand Lodge **endorsed the project** and a request to give the group \$100 to defray the costs of the annual meeting was also approved.

The **Grand Master dropped in** unannounced on **The Nebraska Masonic Home** and found residents well cared for, happy and contented, and they expressed thanks for the care they received.

1912

Henry Gibbons

June 7, 1911 – June 5, 1912

Reported at the 55th Annual Communication

All **finances of the Grand Lodge** were **transferred to the Grand Secretary** after the office of the Grand Treasurer was abolished by a vote of the lodges and reported at this Annual Communication. Grand Treasurer and Past Grand Master Charles Burnham paid the premium on his official bond and donated his salary to **The Nebraska Masonic Home**.

Although noting that the finances, number of initiates and **increase in membership** were the most successful in the history of the Grand Lodge, the **Committee on Doings of Grand Officers** said, “We beg to remark, however, that unless the character and standing of those who are received into our Fraternity are of the very best, the increase in membership and the large number of initiations may be a source of weakness and not of strength.”

The **Grand Lodge of Colorado** sent a **receipt card for dues** to the Grand Master asking if it would be accepted by Nebraska lodges in place of a diploma. The **Jurisprudence Committee** ruled, and the delegates agreed, that the card did not fulfill the requirement of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska’s law.

After attending a luncheon at **Acacia Fraternity** at the University of Nebraska, which was chartered in 1905, the **Grand Master** said, “I was glad to note the spirit of brotherly love and

friendship predominating, and I believe this fraternity is deserving of more than passing notice by the Grand Master.” The Grand Marshal chaperoned the fraternity.

Requests were denied by the Grand Master to allow the **Grand Custodian** to **leave his duties** with the **Schools of Instruction** to deliver an address and conduct a funeral service as they would have taken three days to a week each.

Reports from the Grand Custodian said that **Schools of Instruction** were poorly attended. The Grand Master suggested he discontinue the schools in April, which was done. Arrangements were then made to hold special schools for officers-elect at several sites in Nebraska. With little interest showed, all but one or two were called off.

The **Committee on the Promulgation of the Work** expressed concern about increasing violations of “**innovations** and additions to our work-both esoteric and monitorial” in the Entered Apprentice and Masters degrees and at funerals where “there seems to be no limit to the flights of fancy that are indulged in.”

The **Grand Custodian** said it takes more than rote memory to **fulfill his office**. He said he must exemplify the tenets, cardinal virtues and principles of Freemasonry, be able to explain the history and significance of the forms, ceremonies, symbols, jewels, signs, words and legends of the Fraternity, and be well versed in parliamentary law and jurisprudence.

During his 11 years as **Grand Custodian**, he did not recommend petitions for nine **lodges** under **dispensation** and held five in abeyance. No Grand Master reversed his decision. He said he erred in judgment by approving some lodges that should not have been chartered.

A supplemental report stated each **Assistant Grand Custodian** should be required annually to pass a careful and rigid **examination** by the Grand Custodian. A motion passed that the system of promulgating the work be continued with an increase in the number of assistants to the Grand Custodian as needed.

The **Grand Master** **arrested the jewel** of the Master of **Plattsmouth Lodge No. 6** after he did not announce an **objection to advancement** of a candidate and conferred the degrees anyway.

A member of **Lone Tree Lodge No. 36** informed the Grand Master he had **cast a black ball** that was not announced by the Master or Wardens. After the matter was investigated and no evidence was found that the charges were true, the member was brought to trial and expelled.

In a report by a representative of the Grand Master on **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, it was pointed out that the youngsters staying at the home should not be there. “The constant association of youths with those advanced in age is not healthy in any sense, and the time will come, and very soon, when the young and the old should be segregated.” He recommended the establishment of a **home for orphans and dependent children of Masons**. The idea was forwarded to a special committee for consideration.

The International Masonic Club of London asked the Grand Lodge to **promote** universal **peace** among nations. The Grand Lodge passed a resolution pledging support for the judicial settlement of international controversies substituting “the reign of reason for the arbitrament of the sword.”

The Grand Lodge took time at Annual Communication in **Omaha** to **break ground** for a new **Scottish Rite Cathedral**.

1913

James R. Cain, Jr., Grand Master

June 5, 1912 – June 4, 1913

Reported at the 56th Annual Communication

Grand Master **James Cain, Jr.** was both the first “**native son** of Nebraska” and the first son of a Past Grand Master (**James Cain, Sr.** who served in 1881) to be installed in that office. The Grand

Master thanked his father for tending to his business affairs while he served the Grand Lodge, which enabled him to devote more time to the needs of the fraternity.

In response to a request for an “unofficial opinion,” the **Grand Master** said it was his **opinion** the Grand Lodge would not permit a **lodge** to meet in a hall over a **moving picture theater** where shows were offered on Sundays. The **Committee on Jurisprudence** held its opinion to review the decision and report at the next Annual Communication.

Pointing out that some jurisdictions required **Masters** to prove **proficiency** before they could be installed, the Grand Master suggested the Grand Lodge’s consideration of making a similar requirement.

The Grand Master renewed a recommendation of previous holders of the office that **balloting on candidates** only be required for the Entered Apprentice Degree and none others. He said balloting before each degree took too long and discouraged attendance at lodge, and Entered Apprentices and Fellow Crafts were brothers bound by the mystic tie.

It was recommended by the Grand Master that the **diploma** given newly proficient Master Masons be revised so that it would be **smaller** and drop the signatures of the Senior and Junior Wardens from the five then required for the diploma.

After a committee was authorized at the 1912 Annual Communication to investigate establishing a **home for Masonic orphans**, the three members sent letters to lodges asking for information necessary to determine the need for a home. Two-thirds of the lodges in the state replied showing 55 orphans in the state and 323 children of Masons with just one living parent. Of those amounts, 18 needed assistance. A motion passed leaving the decision of whether to send children to military or other schools to the president and board of trustees of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**.

In addition, the president of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** arranged with the **Grand Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star** to take a cottage belonging to the home, furnish it, and care for the **children** there. He said it was a one-year experiment.

A resolution was approved to appoint a committee of five to investigate the best **location** for a **children’s home**. Once a site was selected, the committee was authorized to purchase it and construct buildings to provide adequate care. Another motion appropriated \$10,000 to initiate and complete plans for a children’s home.

The **Grand Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star** assessed its members 5 cents a year, which provided \$850 each year to support Nebraska **orphans**.

The Grand Lodge should consider a constitutional amendment creating the office of **Assistant Grand Secretary**, or make provision for a chief clerk due to the numerous calls he receives and other demands on his time, said the Grand Master.

The Grand Master commented on **Achoth Sorority**, chartered a few years earlier at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, stating that it, “...seems to be meeting a hearty reception and popular recognition in university circles around the country.” The sorority was designed for young ladies belonging to **Eastern Star**.

The **Committee on Promulgation of the Work** reported the need for more **monitors**, which was an impediment to uniformity of work. A suggestion that non-Nebraska monitors be exchanged for the new monitor was not approved.

A motion failed that would have allowed the **George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association** to solicit memberships among Nebraska Masons.

After attending a conference of **U.S. Grand Masters** in Indianapolis, the Grand Master reported “practically no sentiment at all in favor of a **General Grand Lodge**.”

At the laying of the **cornerstone** for the **Blair city hall**, the Omaha High cadets performed. The group was in camp as Company E of the **Nebraska National Guard**.

The **cornerstone** for the **Scottish Rite Cathedral in Omaha** was laid October 2, 1912, in a steady downpour of rain.

1914

Alpha Morgan, Grand Master

June 4, 1913 – June 10, 1914

Reported at the 57th Annual Communication

After asking lodge secretaries to provide a list of **members** who four years earlier either had not been raised or were suspended, the Grand Master said some were neglected by lodges and lost interest and others found dues to be too expensive. He requested that lodges interview **suspended** Master Masons and attempt to convince them to become **reinstated**. Of lodges that did so, they reported 10-25 percent of suspended Masons applied for reinstatement.

An invitation was received from the **Grand Lodge of Canada** in the Province of Ontario to attend its Annual Communication and the **Grand Peace Festival** in commemoration of 100 years of continuous peace between Great Britain and the U.S. The event was held at Niagara Falls, Ontario, in July 1914. It was approved for the Grand Master to attend.

A new form of **receipt for dues** and a new form of **diploma** were printed and distributed to lodges to begin using on January 1, 1914.

On the recommendation of the Grand Master, it was decided to place a **memorial stone** in the **George Washington** Memorial as other jurisdictions had done.

The Grand Lodge passed a resolution opposing a **General Grand Lodge** in the U.S. as advocated by **Oregon's** Grand Master who invited the nation's Grand Masters to a meeting to discuss the idea. The resolution stated the Grand Lodge of Nebraska was "...absolutely and unalterably opposed to any movement or program seeking the establishment of a General Grand Lodge. The Grand Lodge of ... Nebraska is a sovereign body, and will never yield its sovereignty."

The **Committee on Unfinished Business** recommended the **Jordan medals** be distributed to the lodges and used as decoration for the Master Mason in each **lodge** who had been a Mason the longest time, as certified by the Grand Secretary. It was stated the program would assist in locating the brother entitled to the gold medal for the oldest Mason in the state.

Concurrent jurisdiction over all petitioners was granted to all **lodges** in **Omaha** and the nearby towns of Florence, Benson and Dundee.

Added to the Grand Lodge's budget was \$1,200 for an **assistant** to the **Grand Secretary**, which represented half his annual salary.

An amendment offered for consideration at the next Annual Communication would have created a **Committee on the Promotion of the World's Peace**. Its charge would be to recommend measures to "promote the judicial settlement of international disputes and promote the cause of universal peace."

An **orphanage** furnished by the **Eastern Star** was established on the same block with **The Nebraska Masonic Home** and was under the direct charge of the "ladies of the Eastern Star."

At a meeting of the **Grand Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star**, a resolution created a committee to purchase a site and erect a building for an **orphanage**. A similar committee was created by the **Grand Lodge** to work with the Eastern Star to alleviate the problem of "inadequate rooms for our Masonic orphans."

Past Grand Master **Frank Young**, president of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, and Grand Secretary **Francis White** were praised by the Grand Master for their work to keep the home running at no salary for them.

It was proposed that a bronze tablet be placed at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** memorializing Past Grand Master **George W. Lininger**, who served as president of the home from its organization to his death in 1907. The Royal Arch Masons contributed \$100 for the project and the Grand Lodge budgeted \$200.

A **refrigeration plant** was installed at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** for the preservation of food.

On the suggestion of The Nebraska Masonic Home's president, Frank Young, brethren attending the **Annual Communication** left their pennies from their mileage and **per diem** to be used to provide amusements for the **children**, such as swings, hammocks and a pony and cart. A total of \$100 was raised. This action came after Young told them of a donation by the **Grand Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star** and that the brethren should "follow the good example of the members of that organization."

The Grand Lodge appropriated \$10,000 to purchase lands and construct buildings for a **home for children**. A special committee invited **proposals** from lodges. Four towns submitted proposals, including Fremont, Kearney, University Place (Lincoln) and Plattsmouth. Fremont offered several sites and **Fremont Lodge No. 15 pledged \$10,000** in cash to purchase 40 acres adjoining the city. The Grand Master approved Fremont's proposal and the purchase of the land. The cost of the property was \$20,000. The Grand Lodge committee purchased the east 20 acres, and the **Grand Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star** bought the west 20 acres.

Fremont offered several sites to a committee considering the location of a **children's home**, and **Fremont Lodge No. 15** pledged \$10,000 toward the purchase of the land. A 40-acre tract north of Fremont was selected, and \$20,000 was paid for the property. The Grand Lodge committee purchased the east 20 acres, and the **Grand Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star** bought the west 20 acres.

Plans for a **cottage** in Fremont to house 10 **children** and matron were drafted. Its cost was estimated at \$5,000. Some features were left incomplete until the Grand Lodge could act to appropriate more funds, making the total amount \$12,000.

With the help of Assistants to the Grand Custodian, 78 **Schools of Instruction** were held in the state. The **Grand Custodian traveled** 11,172 miles during the year.

Henry Andrews, Past Master of **Parian Lodge No. 207** in Callaway, presented the Grand Lodge with a **setting maul gavel** made from the wood of a holly tree in Wakefield, Virginia, the birthplace of George Washington. Its handle was part of a spire of the Tabernacle Church of Salem, Massachusetts. The first four missionaries of the colonies were sent from this church to foreign countries, and within its shadow were the jail, courthouse and graves of those confined, tried and buried from the Salem witchcraft trials.

The Grand Master reported that the members of **Acacia Fraternity** celebrated its **10th anniversary** at the University of Nebraska and its members "stood the highest in scholarship (and)...took a prominent part in the athletics of the University, and are ranked among the best, mentally, physically and morally." He said he hoped, like another jurisdiction, the Grand Lodge could "substantially contribute" to a home for the fraternity.

Fires afflicted **Level Lodge No. 196** in Stockville, **Unity Lodge No. 163** in Greenwood, and **Cambridge Lodge No. 150** in Cambridge.

1915

Thomas M. Davis, Grand Master

June 10, 1914 – June 9, 1915

Reported at the 58th Annual Communication

Opening his address, the **Grand Master** said a true Mason battles for the weak and oppressed, and upholds the banner of the universal brotherhood of man. "If all men were good and true, there would be no wars, men would love one another and not murder their brethren, and no king or emperor could force his subjects into war." (*The World War began the previous summer, but the U.S. didn't enter the war until April 1917.*)

The Grand Master was elected to the executive committee of the newly-created **Masonic War Relief Association** initiated by an Ohio Past Grand Master. Funds raised were used for brothers and their families in distress in the **European war** zone. Lodges were asked to donate \$1 per member to the fund and **Eastern Star Chapters** were also solicited by the Grand Master. Nearly \$7,800 was raised for the cause, but \$2,000 was sent with 40 percent designated for the families of Masons in Belgium, 40 percent to Masonic families in Poland and 20 percent at the discretion of the association.

The Grand Master declined a request for **funds** to help purchase articles for **soldiers** engaged in the war. He said, "...we are in duty bound to aid those who were made destitute on account of the war, but could not assist those who were actively engaged in it."

A **Master** of a Nebraska lodge was **in Germany** at the outbreak of the war. His relatives asked for the Grand Master's help in locating him. He contacted the Secretary of State who cabled the U.S. embassy in Germany that located the brother and reported him safe.

Past Grand Master Henry Wilson attended on behalf of the Grand Master the **Grand Peace Festival** at Niagara Falls, Ontario, in July 1914, two weeks before the start of the **World War**. The festival recognized 100 years of continuous peace between Great Britain and the United States. He addressed the gathering.

A lodge asked the **advice** of the **Grand Master** about embroidering the lodge's name and number on the **U.S. flag**. The Grand Master told the lodge to refrain from placing anything on the flag of our country.

The Grand Lodge **contributed** \$100 to help the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Association organize the group.

Growing out of a meeting of the Board of Trustees of The Nebraska Masonic Home, the Grand Master was urged to investigate **incorporation of the Grand Lodge**. A special committee prepared an amendment and presented it to the Nebraska Legislature. It was passed and signed into law. The Grand Master also asked the committee to investigate **incorporating local lodges**. The committee discovered that lodges needed to merely file their charter with their county clerk.

Enthusied by the actions to start a **children's home**, the **Grand Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star** increased its annual dues from five cents to 25 cents per member to support the effort.

A **home for children** was **constructed** near Fremont at a cost of \$4,996. An additional \$12,000 was appropriated to add porches, finish the second floor, place a cement floor in the basement, and other needs for the home. Another motion authorized plans for a building for boys to be awarded at the next Annual Communication.

It was reported that the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** was home for nine girls, while **The Nebraska Masonic Home** still housed six boys.

Mt. Moriah Lodge No. 57 in Syracuse was assessed **taxes** for the second story of a building used exclusively for lodge business. A protest to the Otoe County Board of Commissioners was refused. The matter was taken to **district court** where judgment was in favor of the lodge. The Grand Master, who testified at the hearing, said all **lodges** should act immediately if they were assessed taxes on their building.

Believing that the presentation of the Gold and Bronze **Jordan Medals** were notable, the Grand Master asked the **Committee on Promulgation of the Work** to prepare an informal **ceremony** that could be used on such occasions.

A request to insert in **petitions** a question of **religion** "was disposed of by saying that a firm belief in Deity was all that is necessary on this line."

Delegates approved an amendment directing lodge secretaries not to make the character of the **report on petitions** for initiation or affiliation a **matter of record**.

The **Grand Custodian** reported that the relatively new system of **Assistants** to the Grand Custodian takes additional time to prepare them to instruct the work. While admitting this system is

far from perfect, he asked the Grand Lodge to consider a systematic method to conclude the process. He added that it should not all be left to the Grand Custodian to pass on their qualifications. Nineteen brothers served in that capacity.

Noting that the past two Grand Masters asked him to include a “**study of Masonry**” in **Schools of Instruction** because of an increased demand for more light, the **Grand Custodian** said, “...if this subject matter has to be dealt with from an intellectual standpoint with oratorical powers, better cut it out, for I am not made that way.” He said it takes time away from instructing the letter of the work and requires ardent study on his part.

The **Grand Custodian** said he **traveled** 12,934 miles to hold 82 schools of instruction that were attended by 6,469 brothers.

Approval was given at the previous Annual Communication to provide a **memorial stone** for the **Washington Monument**. But, the Grand Master discovered approval was necessary of the War Department to place a stone in the monument and similar requests had been refused. He canceled the order for the stone. Twenty-four Grand Lodges had furnished memorial stones.

So many **requests for contributions** outside Nebraska were received by **local lodges** to erect temples, monuments and for business purposes that the **Grand Master** suggested a law be enacted requiring **his consent** to solicit funds.

A resolution was passed that lodge **treasurers** should **deposit funds** in the name of the **lodge**.

Approved by the delegates was a report by the **Committee on Ways and Means** recommending paying the **Grand Master** \$1,000 a year in **compensation**. The next Grand Master, Samuel Whiting, declined the salary.

The **decision** of the **Grand Master** to not allow a **lodge** to **meet over a pool hall** for one meeting because of fire damage to its lodge was endorsed by the **Jurisprudence Committee**.

The Grand Master lamented the practice of each lodge charging **dues** at **different times** of the year.

The new **Scottish Rite Cathedral** in **Omaha** was visited by delegates at **Annual Communication**. It was called beautiful and “its elaborate furnishings and the many evidences of great care taken in providing for the pleasure and comfort of the members” was obvious.

At the request of the **Grand Lodge of South Australia**, the Grand Lodge sent a piece of Nebraska wood to join wood from other U.S. states in a **setting maul** to use at the laying of **cornerstones**.

A resolution was adopted authorizing the **construction** of a second cottage at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**. The Grand Lodge appropriated \$12,000 to build the new cottage.

A **gavel** made of **Cuban mahogany** with a rosewood handle was sent to the Grand Lodge by Brother **John Early**, a member of **Blue Valley Lodge No. 64** in Wilber, a resident of La Gloria, Cuba.

A **fire** in **Hubbell Lodge No. 92** in Hubbell destroyed everything the lodge owned.

1916

Samuel S. Whiting, Grand Master

June 9, 1915 – June 7, 1916

Reported at the 59th Annual Communication

Bemoaning the waste and suffering of the **World War**, the **Committee on Promotion of the World's Peace** called for a “more humane, a more rational, a more economic method of settling international disputes.” The committee suggested a **court with jurisdiction over the world**, and it claimed the U.S. and Freemasonry should lead the charge for such a solution. It stated the fraternity's members “belong to every race and nation, and whose principles teach us to subject our passions and prejudices to the rule of reason, justice and equity.”

No request for funds was received by the Grand Lodge from the **National Masonic War Relief Association**, so none of the nearly \$6,000 gathered to help **European Masons** affected by the **World War** were sent to the association.

Assistants to the Grand Custodian, since implemented in 1910, had proved their worth, said the Grand Master, noting that the program was no longer new or an experiment.

The **Grand Custodian** reported an **apathetic indifference** existed in some **lodges** and members felt there was nothing in Masonry for them to do but attend the conferring of a degree. They soon tired of that, he said. "Freemasonry should not be an asylum for drones and laggards and listless idlers. The vessel will sail the better if the barnacles are occasionally scraped from the bottom."

The Grand Master directed the **Grand Custodian** to devote his time principally to **examining lodge officers** and to carefully inspect the records, ledgers and compendiums to see that they were up to date.

The Grand Master condemned **electioneering for office or other Masonic honors**. He said brothers involved in such a practice were a Mason in name only and did not possess the spirit of the fraternity. Masonic honors, he continued, obtained by scheming men cease to be honors and rob Freemasonry of its greatest glory.

Pointing out that various **organizations were seeking to be established** in Nebraska that required Masonic membership, a resolution passed that the Grand Lodge declared it unlawful for a Mason to join such an organization except the York and Scottish Rite bodies, Order of the Eastern Star, the Shrine and Acacia Fraternity.

Brother **Frank Young**, president of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, devoted almost all his time and considerable funds handling the affairs of the home, and **refused to be reimbursed** for even his actual expenses. "The brethren do not generally realize the amount of work connected with the management of an institution like our Home, and that members of our Fraternity can be found who are willing to give so freely of their time and money to manage this charitable institution, indicates that they are actuated by the true principles of charity and brotherly love," said the Grand Master.

The Nebraska Masonic Home Trustees sent a letter to Nebraska Masons urging caution in whom the lodges make **members** because of the possibility of increasing aid to the needy. "We should exercise the greatest scrutiny and care in the selection of material out of which we make Masons. Do not admit a man to reform him. Do not admit a man who in a few years is almost certain to be a burden to the Fraternity and his lodge. Act with 'prudence and caution,' get the best material, hold the standard even higher..." the letter stated.

The annual **cost of food** at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** totaled nearly \$4,500, including food raised at the home, a per capita cost of \$75.

A **home** was completed at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** in Fremont **for the daughters of Masons** at a cost of \$13,000 and it was dedicated in December 1915. About 1,000 fruit, forest and ornamental trees were planted on the 40-acre site.

The Grand Master ruled that a **candidate** wearing an **immovable ring** could be allowed to take the degrees.

The **Committee on Jurisprudence** recommended rejection, and the delegates agreed, of the Grand Master's desire to require that **lodges fix the time of their meetings**, instead of a time in reference to the full moon.

When several **Past Grand Masters** indicated they did not want memorial circulars sent to lodges after their **deaths**, the Grand Master proposed that the individual pages then placed in the **Proceedings** recognizing them was sufficient. The Committee on Jurisprudence Committee suggested memorial announcements be sent consisting only of the fact of the Past Grand Master's death and a brief reference to his Masonic life, while all eulogies be left to the **Committee on Fraternal Dead**.

Trustees of the Temple Craft of **Omaha** agreed to provide "suitable and ample accommodations" for the **Grand Lodge office** in a new temple to be built.

The **Committee on Memorial to Washington** the Mason said 43 Grand jurisdictions in the U.S. were members of the **Charter Roll of Honor** at a cost of \$100. In proposing the appropriation of funds to include Nebraska on the roll, the committee asked the delegates if the Grand Lodge of Nebraska would be read as a member when the memorial was dedicated. The Grand Lodge approved the expenditure.

Lodges burned by **fire** included **Square & Compass Lodge No. 213** of Miller, and **Wood Lake Lodge No. 221** of Wood Lake.

1917

Andrew H. Viele, Grand Master

June 7, 1916 – June 6, 1917

Reported at the 60th Annual Communication

Two months before **Annual Communication**, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson declared **war** with Germany. At the annual meeting of the Grand Lodge, the American flag was escorted by M.:W.: Brothers George Thummel, the oldest Past Grand Master present, and John Ehrhardt, a veteran of the Civil War. The flag was greeted with “the most enthusiastic and hearty greeting ever witnessed in the Grand Lodge.” The Grand Master spoke to loyalty, devotion and patriotism, and the Grand Chaplain prayed for protection of those who were risking their lives in defense of “our country, our rights, our freedom and liberty.” He then spoke to the duty of Americans to help sustain the right of a free people to govern themselves. “If the enthusiasm of the members of the Grand Lodge is any criterion of the feeling of the people, it can be said that they are united in their loyalty to our country, and that there is a firm resolution, no matter what follows, that we will make any and all sacrifices necessary until our honor is vindicated and every right restored.” The Proceedings noted that tears trickled down the cheeks of men as they were overcome by emotion “as in their hearts they consecrated themselves to the cause of liberty, freedom and fraternity.” The Grand Orator then spoke as the U.S. flag, the British Union Jack and the French Tricolor were held aloft in a triangle, stating, “...we now group together the Stars and Stripes, the Tricolor and the Union Jack in the pending contest for liberty and freedom around the world.”

A **resolution** passed promising the unswerving loyalty of the Grand Lodge to the **President**, and that it was a patriotic duty to assist and contribute toward the success of “perhaps man’s decisive **war** for liberty, possibly autocracy’s last stand.”

The Grand Lodge approved the decision of **The Nebraska Masonic Home’s** Board to subscribe for \$10,000 in **Liberty Bonds**, and authorized the **Grand Lodge’s purchase** of \$5,000 of the same bonds turned over to the home for its endowment fund.

The delegates contributed \$250 to the **War Relief Society**. In another action, the **Grand Lodge** agreed to “maintain” two French **orphans** for two years, a boy and a girl, to be selected by the Grand Master. The cost was \$146.

When **Annual Communication** went from labor to refreshment and refreshment to labor, the delegates sang **patriotic** songs.

“Is this the enlightened Twentieth Century of which we so proudly boast?” asked the **Grand Master**. He urged the delegates not to give up hope as “there is a potent force that has stood the test of all time.” He referred to the “church of the living God and the brotherhood of Masonry” that he wanted to be comrades in arms because they had the same aims.

The Grand Master said he entered office determined not to issue dispensations to **confer degrees** without regard to time, but with the start up of **World War I**, “I concluded that Masonry would be better served in some instances by granting these dispensations. I believe that we are justified in granting special dispensations for men who are willing to offer their lives as a sacrifice on the altar

of their country, and Masonry would be doing herself an injustice did she refuse to assist these noble patriots.” He approved 10 dispensations.

Only \$2,000 of \$7,790 raised for the **Masonic War Relief Association** in 1914 had been expended. The Grand Master ruled that although the money was intended to help Masons overseas, if **interest** from the remaining amount was needed in America, then it should be retained for use here. It was decided by the delegates that the disposition of funds be left to the Grand Master and Grand Secretary.

The **Committee on Promotion of the World’s Peace** said that although the U.S. was now involved in the **war**, three-fourths of the human race was on the side of peace. They said the ability to organize that many people should be able to develop a World League of Enforced Peace, or **world tribunal**, that nations could appeal for redress.

An immediate amendment passed that the names of brethren serving in the military be provided by each lodge secretary to be printed in the **proceedings** of the Grand Lodge under the title of “**The Roll of Honor.**”

The delegates of the **National Masonic Relief Association** met in Omaha in September 1917.

The **Nebraska Masonic Home** Board of Trustees passed a motion that the reception and care of persons who were “**mentally unbalanced**” be referred to the Grand Master. He added it was impossible to care for the “mentally unbalanced” and their relatives don’t want to send them to state asylums “where they properly belong.” Recognizing the difficulties in caring for them, he said the home has seemed more like a hospital than a home, and many require nursing facilities. “It is only a question of time when we must seriously consider hospital service in connection with our home,” he said.

The average **age** of the 24 women at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** was 76.7 years and for the 20 men, 71.3 years.

A second building was **constructed** at the **children’s home** in Fremont to house the 11 boys that previously were located on the grounds of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**.

A re-examination of the **Grand Custodian’s duties** led to changes in the program after reviewing how other jurisdictions handled them. Where lodges had not held a **School of Instruction** in two years, and were in need of it, an **Assistant Grand Custodian** would be sent to conduct the school. Eight Central Schools were set at a central point between lodges. He recommended continuance of this approach, and that the one-man system had “outlived its day and generation by reason.”

At the laying of the **cornerstone** for the new **Omaha Masonic temple**, a **gavel** presented to the Grand Lodge by Past Grand Master **George Lininger** in 1901 was used. Information about the gavel stated it came from an Egyptian tomb, and PGM Lininger was present when the tomb was opened. The Grand Master said it showed evidence of being used by a stone cutter.

Realizing he could not visit all 270 lodges in the state, and to save the Grand Lodge his expenses, the **Grand Master** made **visitations** at a central point where area lodges could easily travel to attend.

The **Grand Master** advised lodges to treat the “**chain-letter** nuisance” as waste paper. “I believe there are too many people imploring God to be on their side, and making no effort to get on God’s side.”

The **Children’s Home** hired a **superintendent** to perform **farm work** and to employ the boys during vacation periods.

The **Grand Master ruled** that brothers were not in violation of the law by holding a policy with the **Masonic Protective Association**. That company became Paul Revere Life Insurance Co.

Lodge funds could not be given to a “civic league” for **charitable purposes**, the **Grand Master** said.

Brethren residing in **Chester** petitioned to form a lodge, but nearby **Hubbell Lodge No. 92** refused to recommend its creation and wouldn’t sign a petition to do so. Hubbell’s Master said the

new lodge would take so much of their territory that it would “kill” his lodge. The Masons in Chester said they would grant **concurrent jurisdiction** with Hubbell. Not finding a precedent for the action, the Grand Master referred the matter to the Grand Lodge.

For the second time in two years, **Hubbell Lodge No. 92** experienced a **fire** that destroyed its belongings.

1918

Frederic L. Temple, Grand Master

June 6, 1917 – June 5, 1918

Reported at the 61st Annual Communication

The **Grand Master** noted in his address the many problems confronting the fraternity in the face of **World War I**, “but I believe they will be met and solved in that noble, generous spirit shown by Nebraska, which has ever been faithful to the demands of mercy, as indicated by the **generous contributions** to the Red Cross, the Young Men’s Christian Association, and all of the many patriotic and charitable war works, the prompt and ready response for the purchase of **Liberty Bonds** and **War Savings Stamps**, in which Nebraska leads the whole nation – in all of these activities the Masons of Nebraska have taken a prominent part.”

In response to **government appeals** to conserve resources and avoid unnecessary expense and waste, the **Grand Master** discouraged the practice of serving banquets when he visited lodges. He also issued an order that every Masonic lodge in the state **display the American flag** in its lodge room, and asked the Assistant Custodians to report to him any violations. “I am glad to say that the order was obeyed, and from the patriotism displayed by every lodge I visited, I have concluded the order was unnecessary,” he said.

Observing that the Grand Lodge had always allowed lodges to pay for banquets and cigars with lodge funds for “Masonic purposes,” the **Grand Master** asked how that practice could be reconciled with the Entered Apprentice’s charge “to be true to your government and just to the country in which you live?” He also cited the Masonic tenet to **relieve the distressed**. “The terrible crisis in which we find our country placed has added to the duties and responsibilities of Masonry, and I interpret Masonic purposes as meaning aid and assistance in every way in our power to those who are sacrificing their lives for our defense,” he said. “Who can deny the great and efficient aid of the Red Cross in the present **war**?”

The **Grand Master** said the press of personal business, due to **employees entering military service**, kept him from completing some responsibilities of the office.

The 275 requests to **confer degrees without reference to time** “probably exceeded” all previous years combined because of the war. The Grand Master granted dispensations only to those entering military service.

Six lodges raised 426 Master Masons, an average of 71 each and **conferred five degrees a week**. The lodges (and their total membership) were **Lancaster Lodge No. 54** in Lincoln (719), **Capitol Lodge No. 3** in Omaha (761), **Nebraska Lodge No.1** in Omaha (850), **St. Johns Lodge No. 25** in Omaha (876), **Lincoln Lodge No. 19** in Lincoln (884) and **Covert Lodge No. 11** in Omaha (888). A rivalry between Covert Lodge No. 11 and Lincoln Lodge No. 19 to become the largest lodge in the state was recognized. A special Committee on Dues to Lodges said the interest of Masonry was best served by lodges of not more than 400 members. They urged lodges over that number to encourage their members to form new lodges.

The **Committee on Dues to Lodges** recommended all lodge **dues** be at least \$4 a year, in addition to Grand Lodge dues. Fifty-nine of 270 lodges were under that amount. They added that at least \$1 be designated for a charity fund and that any balance at the end of year be used to pay **The Nebraska Masonic Home** per capita tax.

At the 1917 Annual Communication, an amendment ordered the names of brethren serving in the military be printed in the **proceedings** of the Grand Lodge under the title of “**The Roll of Honor.**” The Grand Secretary asked whether the 1,500 names as well as the names of departed brethren should be printed in the proceedings because of the additional cost.

The Grand Secretary recommended the Grand Lodge stop electrotyping and publishing **bound volumes** of **proceedings**. He said surrounding Grand Lodges did not follow the same expensive system.

The **Grand Lodge office** moved into the new Masonic Temple in **Omaha**. The Grand Secretary estimated the 121½ hours of moving 22½ tons of **electrotype plates** required 51 trips by team and wagon.

Remarking on the inability of some **lodges** to become **proficient** in the **ritual**, the Grand Custodian said, “The paramount interests of Masonry should be protected from the apathetic, the indolent and all lodges that do not rigidly adhere to the letter of the law of proficiency should be held in abeyance by suspending charters until such time as they will cheerfully observe, obey and enforce the law.”

In a report about the number of Masonic **funerals** he conducted, the **Grand Custodian** pointed out that Masters had the prerogative to preside at and conduct “obsequies” of members who had passed away. “Why should there be any necessity of calling on anyone from outside of his own lodge?” he asked.

The Grand Master said the **Central Schools of Instruction** worked well the previous year and they should be continued as long as practical results were obtained. Eight cities were selected to host the Schools.

It was recommended by the Grand Master that **Assistant Custodians** not conduct **Central Schools** in their home lodge because it places them in the embarrassing position of reporting his own lodge as not proficient in the work.

A resolution was proposed to formulate an **annuity plan** to handle the income from bequests, whereby a person would receive an income from property given to the Grand Lodge until his death when it would be given to the Grand Lodge.

The **Order of the Eastern Star** received words of praise from the Grand Master who complimented them for their support of the **Home for Boys and Girls**. “Their generous donations of money and provisions for these children prove to us that while they cannot be members of the Masonic Fraternity, they have caught the true spirit and are following its precepts.”

It was advised by the Grand Master that lodges review carefully the official circulars of the **Masonic Relief Association** of the U.S. and Canada to identify imposters “living at the expense of their kind-hearted but uninformed brethren.”

Chester Lodge No. 298 in Chester was instituted despite the reluctance of **Hubbell Lodge No. 92** in Hubbell to approve its creation.

Bancroft Lodge No. 145 in Bancroft was granted a special dispensation to elect officers since the community was under a quarantine for **flu** at the time for the regular election.

1919

(Photograph not available)

Ambrose C. Epperson, Grand Master

June 5, 1918 – June 4, 1919

Reported at the 62nd Annual Communication

Veterans of the **Civil War**, **Spanish-American War** and the **World War** escorted the American flag into the **opening** of **Annual Communication**.

The Grand Master said that while the **World War** ended seven months earlier, general unrest existed across the world and he warned that poverty and distress could follow. "Let our **charity** be as boundless as the needs of our fellowmen. Let us prepare to meet the situation when it arrives that we ourselves may not be distressed when suddenly confronted with dire necessity."

Reverend Brother Titus Lowe, who served in the **World War**, said to the delegates, "When the Council at Versailles succeeds in having the peace terms signed, that will not mean that peace has come again to the world. Certain of the foundations of what we have called civilization have been thoroughly shaken. Fixed orders of life have been broken up, and today every continent and almost every country is in a turmoil, some of them, indeed, are far beyond this stage, and have reached the lamentable condition of frightful chaos."

Stating the proposed Treaty of Peace confirms the dissolution of empires while establishing new republics, the **Committee on the Promotion of the World's Peace** said, "As Americans we may take a just pride in the effect of our influence and example. We have achieved our place in the sun, not by physical force, but by the force of our example as a great self-governing nation – a nation in which all honors and power must come from the people. The doctrines of the American Declaration of Independence have, as a result of this war, become the doctrines of the civilized world."

An invitation from the United Grand Lodge of England was received for representatives of the Grand Lodge to give thanks to the Great Architect of the Universe for the **end** of the **war** and the blessings of peace on June 27, at the Royal Albert Hall in London.

The **Grand Master** issued 408 dispensations to **confer the degrees** on candidates who had entered or been called to **military service**, as well as the United War Work Societies that were under the authority of the military.

A **Roll of Honor** including Nebraska Masons who served in the **World War** was printed in the **Proceedings** in 1918 and 1919. The number totaled about 2,900 and it was reported that about 50 were killed. The first officer from Nebraska who lost his life in the war was a member of a lodge in the state. The Roll of Honor listed Grosvenor P. Cather, a member of **Blue Hill Lodge No. 129** in Blue Hill, as the first Mason killed in the field of honor on May 28, 1918.

Of 274 lodges, two-thirds of them, or 188, sent in all or part of an assessment of \$1 per member for the **War Relief Fund** amounting to \$19,763. The Grand Lodge approved a resolution that the Grand Secretary notify lodges delinquent in sending a \$1/member assessment, and to pay the amount within 30 days or face Masonic discipline.

On order of the Grand Master, \$1,000 was paid from the **Committee on Relief and Care of Orphans** from the **Relief Fund** to help care for members of the fraternity in France or on their way home.

It was approved to **support two French orphans**, who were identified in the Proceedings, for another year.

The **Relief Committee** provided \$1,006 to the children of Nebraska Masons in military service. Since repayment would have been a hardship on their parents, the Grand Master recommended the money owed be paid from the **War Relief Fund**.

Reminding members of the principle that Masonry considers the inner man and not outward appearance, the Grand Master recommended that **candidates** with **physical defects** be eligible to join and that they conform to ancient forms and ceremonies as nearly as their physical condition permitted. The Grand Lodge rejected his recommendation.

The Grand Lodge adopted a requirement that **amendments** be read at a regular meeting and **lie over** at least one regular meeting before acted on, and that the Master explain their effect.

Mrs. **John (Ella) Monell** donated about 2,000 **books** to the Grand Lodge, as well as her husband's collection of **weapons**, ancient and modern, **bronzes**, etc.

An amendment was passed requiring lodges to vote only once on **candidates** taking the degrees instead of **voting on them for each degree**.

The **Committee on Jurisprudence** approved the Grand Master's decision that a **ballot** could be spread only for **one candidate at a time**.

The Grand Master found it impossible to visit most lodges because of the state's quarantine laws prompted by the raging **influenza**.

Attendance at the **Schools of Instruction** was far below previous years, and 60 schools were canceled. Some schools weren't held because of officers "**over there**," by laws prohibiting meetings because of the **flu** epidemic and severe winter storms.

A decision by the Grand Master was approved that a Masonic **funeral service** may be given at a grave if the rules of a board of health **prohibit lodges from gathering**. Only "well known" Master Masons would be permitted to participate.

The Grand Custodian said the **ritual work** of the following lodges was at least **90 percent correct** and, "If all the lodges in this jurisdiction were up to the standard of these lodges, there would be no necessity" of inspecting them. The lodges included: **Nebraska Lodge No. 1, Omaha; Capitol Lodge No. 3, Omaha; Covert Lodge No. 11, Omaha; Lincoln Lodge No. 19, Lincoln; St. Johns Lodge No. 25, Omaha; Ashlar Lodge No. 33, Grand Island; Lancaster Lodge No. 54, Lincoln; and East Lincoln Lodge No. 210, Lincoln.**

A change in how lodges would be examined for **proficiency** was approved. The Grand Custodian suggested lodges work directly with **Assistant Custodians** to make arrangements for examination.

The evil effect of the continued use of "spurious keys and **ciphers**" was apparent to the Grand Master. His recommendation was approved that lodges prefer charges against a brother who violated the law by using them.

The **Grand Master** was overruled by the **Committee on Jurisprudence** in his recommendation that men involved in vocations requiring frequent moves should not be subjected to the law of **one-year residence** in a community, but would need only one year in the state to be eligible. He said men in that situation were engaged in public school work and ministers, for example.

A special committee examining the establishment of an **annuity plan** reported it was in the best interest of the Craft to create a society to provide such a plan under the supervision and control of the Grand Lodge. They cited not only giving members a secure income, but development of a large endowment fund to benefit the Grand Lodge's **charities**.

Approval was given by the Grand Master for **Lancaster Lodge No. 54** to use a schedule of amounts for **life membership**, creating a scale depending on the age of the member from \$10-\$60.

An amendment to Grand Lodge law provided for **concurrent jurisdiction** among lodges in and near **Lincoln**.

The Grand Master urged construction at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** of facilities to meet the needs of residents who required hospital services. The **Order of the Eastern Star** was receiving stock subscriptions to raise funds to build a **hospital**. This prompted the Grand Lodge to purchase \$1,000 in stock for the Eastern Star Hospital.

The **Home for Children** raised \$691 from the **sale** of produce, livestock, and in interest, and added, "Our farming operations last year were rather unsatisfactory, because of the drought..."

Arrangements were being made, subject to the approval of the Grand Lodge, for the **Order of the Eastern Star** to **convey** their interests in 40 acres of **real estate** at the **Children's Home** to the Grand Lodge for \$10,000.

The Grand Lodge approved a resolution that the **Committee on Relief and Care of Orphans** be empowered to **purchase land**, up to \$20,000, necessary to extend the **Children's Home** grounds.

The Grand Master stated a plan should be made for management of the **land and upkeep of buildings** at the **Children's Home**. "There has not been room sufficient at the home to care for all our wards during the present year."

A meeting attended by the Grand Master, and representatives of 22 other jurisdictions, was held November 26-27, 1918, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and resulted in a tentative plan to organize the

Masonic Service Association. Its purpose was to cooperate in distributing **relief** when calamity struck, such as the world war, and to serve mankind through education, enlightenment, making visitations and administering to, cherishing, comforting and relieving the members of the fraternity and others.

A proposed amendment held until the next year asked that the Order of the **White Shrine of Jerusalem** be included among recognized Masonic-related bodies that Masons could join. The **Committee on Jurisprudence** ruled that those who had joined should abstain from participating in the initiation of a Master Mason into the group.

1920

John J. Tooley, Grand Master

June 4, 1919 – June 9, 1920

Reported at the 63rd Annual Communication

The Grand Master's father died the evening before the start of **Annual Communication**, but he opened and remained at the meetings.

Past Grand Master John Ehrhardt, the Grand Lodge of Nebraska's representative to the United Grand Lodge of England's **Grand Peace Festival** in June 1919 of the end of the **World War**, reported meetings were held on board the ship with representatives of 14 jurisdictions. "...we received some valuable instructions with reference to our actions, so that the brethren in England would not be horrified at our uncouth western ways," he said.

While on the trip, Ehrhardt said the group attended the Royal Joint Meeting of Antiquity Lodge No. 2 and Royal Somerset House and Inverness Lodge No. 4, two of the original lodges that met at the Goose and Gridiron in 1717 to organize the Grand Lodge of England. Their records were complete since 1685.

Nearly 9,000 people attended the **Grand Peace Festival** from all parts of the British Empire. The London Times stated that all eyes were on the American Masons, some who had been in England's lodges in 1918 while tending to the sick and wounded, but had previously not worn any distinction of rank.

The Pro Grand Master, Right Honorable Lord Amptill, said at the **Festival**, "Freemasonry is one of the greatest forces of good, and we have striking proofs that this is recognized in the world at large. We are here, therefore, to make a steadfast resolve to persevere more earnestly than ever before in those aims which we profess, and in the duties to which we are pledged." He also paid tribute to the U.S. representatives for its "gallant army." He added that even though the U.S. and England are separate nations, "...we are proud to belong to the Anglo-Saxon race, and I trust and firmly believe that, as Masons, and as men, and the principles of our institution – Brother Love, Relief and Truth."

While in London at the **Festival**, the treaty was signed officially ending the **World War** Ehrhardt said the streets were filled with crowds at the news.

The Grand Secretary emphasized that in his travels about England at the **Festival**, he noticed that their homes for children segregated boys and girls in different towns. He advised that this was the "only way to proceed with safety" for the Grand Lodge of Nebraska's **home for children**. "Let us follow their example, profit by their experience and make the change as soon as possible, and not wait until some result follow that we would all regret but could not cure."

In his address, the **Grand Master** asked delegates to the Annual Communication whether they were their **brother's keeper** and pointed out that Freemasonry had always assumed its share of the burden. He said false theories, selfishness and greed must be combated by civilization, and there was no neutral ground that any institution could stand on with self-respect. He added, "The forces that

would destroy civilization are united in a common purpose and it is important that the forces for righteousness should act together and discard the policy of selfish isolation.”

At the previous Annual Communication, the remaining lodges were ordered to pay \$1 per member to a **War Relief Fund** or face discipline. The Grand Master was successful in securing funds from the delinquent lodges, and the total amount stood at \$27,000. He urged the delegates to determine how the money should be spent. He said a strong demand existed to equip the homes for indigent Masons, their wives and orphans. A committee was approved to report its recommendation at the next Annual Communication.

More than 4,000 **initiations** occurred in Nebraska, resulting in a net increase of nearly 2,700. Most of those were “the flower of our young manhood and comes largely from men who saw service in the Great War.” In addition, 724 men were **rejected membership**.

Delegates approved a recommendation of the **Committee on Foreign Correspondence** that a special committee be appointed to investigate the question of the **physical qualification** of petitioners growing out of soldiers returning home from the World War.

The Grand Master was authorized at the last Annual Communication to act on applications for **reinstatement** of members suspended for more than three years for nonpayment of dues. He handled 55 applications, but suggested a committee deal with applications in the future and have the power to require his appearance if necessary to gather more information. His recommendation was approved.

More **Schools of Instruction** were held the previous 12 months than during any year thanks to the hard work of the Grand Custodian and his assistants. The Grand Master suggested **higher payment** for their dedicated service was in order, and Assistant Custodians’ pay increased from \$4 to \$5 a day. A total of 125 schools were scheduled in a three-month period. Twenty-one schools were canceled by the Grand Master because of a coal strike.

The donation from **Mrs. John Monell** of more than 2,000 books, ancient weapons, bronze vessels and souvenirs was causing a problem “for future disposition.” Some books were called “exceedingly rare and of great value.”

Boys at the **Children’s Home** in Fremont raised \$370 working for local market gardeners and nurserymen. Older girls were taught to sew and cook and perform laundry work to **earn money**. Each child over 12 years was given a 10-cent allowance a week, if their behavior warranted it.

A tract of land adjoining the **Children’s Home property** on the north was purchased for \$17,500.

The Grand Master praised an organization of **lodges** in Holt County that held a **joint meeting** at a different lodge each year.

A motion passed creating a committee of three to ask members for a \$1 **donation** or more for the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Association.

The **first annual meeting** of the **National Masonic Service Association** was held in November 1919. The Grand Master called the meeting “a distinct and lasting epoch in the Masonic history of the world. It only remains for each individual Mason to make these noble purposes a reality.” He said the gathering was the most noted Masonic meeting ever assembled on the continent.

1921

Joseph B. Fradenburg, Grand Master

June 9, 1920 – June 9, 1921

Reported at the 64th Annual Communication

Even though more than 4,300 men had been **raised as Master Masons**, the Grand Master stated no one knew how many Master Masons had been made. “The amount of work which has been done by some **lodges** has been really appalling, and has left little time for the social and educational side of Masonry. The ritualistic side has **predominated** and much remains to be done in our lodges, not

merely repeating to our candidates our beautiful lessons, but to impress our members, new and old, that Masonry is an actual living vital force which if properly applied will do much toward solving many of the trying problems of the day. In that way, its real aims and purposes can be accomplished and Masonry maintains the exalted position it has ever held and will always hold.”

While visiting **Nebraska Lodge No. 1** in Omaha, the Grand Master was approached by Dr. William Mick about an organization for young women his wife was working to start. After listening to Dr. Mick explain the concept, the Grand Master said it was an excellent idea and he gave his endorsement and approval to establish **Job’s Daughters**.

A large number of requests for **reinstatement** of members who had been suspended for nonpayment of dues for more than three years were received by a committee created at the previous Annual Communication. The committee granted many reinstatements, but also refused others.

On discovering that the three principal **officers** of several lodges could **not confer any degree**, the Grand Master allowed them 90 days to confer the degrees or their jewel of office would be arrested. It was necessary to do so in only one case. “While to some of you the steps I have taken may seem drastic and harsh, yet the apathetic conditions in some of the lodges demanded in my judgment vigorous measures, and the results which have been attained, to my mind, justify the means,” he said.

The report of a special committee considering the **physical qualifications** of petitioners was approved that recommended no change in the current standard for acceptance.

A **portrait** of Nebraska’s first Entered Apprentice Mason, **Peter Sarpy**, was presented by Past Grand Master **George Thummel** to the Grand Lodge.

The fad of **rotating officers** annually in **lodges** should have no place in Masonry, the **Grand Custodian** said. He suggested a law be added requiring every Master-elect pass a thorough examination of proficiency and the law before he could be installed.

The **Committee on Foreign Correspondence** asked that a limit be placed on the use of membership in Masonry as a basis for **membership in other organizations**. “In our lodges, very few Master Masons are permitted to stop and attain adequate knowledge of the Craft before they are importuned to ‘advance.’” The committee proposed that petitions state that they would not seek membership in other organizations for one year after becoming a Master Mason. A **Committee on Jurisprudence** amendment to the law was approved requiring members must attend at least 12 regular meetings and must have been a member for one year to join the **Scottish Rite** or **York Rite**, and two years before joining the **Shrine**.

Since 1910, the **Committee on Promulgation of the Work** had operated as advisor to the **Grand Custodian** at his request. The Chairman requested that the committee be **discharged from service** as its duties were “merely nominal and of no practical benefit.”

The Grand Master proposed a system of **District Deputy Grand Masters** because the jurisdiction was too large for the Grand Master to maintain contact with all lodges. He said the Grand Master could contact the Deputy Grand Masters to discover the condition of local lodges. The **Committee on Jurisprudence** and the delegates agreed. A committee was formed to present a districting plan for the state at the next Annual Communication.

A report by the Committee on **Annuity Plan** was adopted that endorsed the creation of an annuity plan for the Grand Lodge. Another motion approved providing \$5,000 to a committee for incidental expenses.

Listed on eight pages of the 1921 **Proceedings** were the names of **Masons who had died** the previous year. A motion to no longer print those names was defeated.

Plattsmouth Lodge No. 6 presented a “**moving picture machine**” to **The Nebraska Masonic Home** and through the courtesy of the film exchanges in Omaha, a movie was shown weekly. The Commercial Club of Plattsmouth also presented “valuable property” to the home which added to its attractiveness.

The average **cost per capita** for each meal served at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** was 13.8 cents, and the average food cost per capita per month was \$12.62.

The city of Plattsmouth vacated and donated the street west of the original block of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, and the Chamber of Commerce and citizens **purchased a half a block** and gave it to the home.

Delegates to the **Annual Communication** traveled by train to Plattsmouth to survey **The Nebraska Masonic Home**. They were greeted by townspeople, **Plattsmouth Lodge No. 6** and the Elks Band. Home Chapter No. 189, Order of the Eastern Star, served refreshments while the Elks Band played music. A photograph was taken and an article was placed in the Sunday Omaha World-Herald (June 12, 1921). The Plattsmouth Evening Journal distributed an edition devoted to the home and fraternity.

The Grand Lodge appropriated \$30,000 to **build another building** on the grounds of the **Children's Home** in Fremont over the objections of the **Committee on Finance**.

Because of "a very distressing incident," the Grand Master emphasized that a **hospital** was necessary for Masons and their families. He was the attorney for a company that had completed a hospital. The hospital was for sale and he said it would save the Grand Lodge up to \$200,000 if purchased. The **Grand Commandery of the York Rite** and **Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star** endorsed the hospital project. A motion passed that created a committee to confer with other bodies, including the Order of the Eastern Star, the **Shrine**, the Grand Commandery and others, concerning the advisability of establishing a hospital.

Representatives of the Cornbelt Division of the **National Masonic Service Association** (Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska) met to discuss the methods of placing before individual Masons the plans for **education** as adopted by the association.

More than \$650,000 had been collected to build a memorial honoring **George Washington** on 20 acres purchased from a contract drawn with the Washington-Alexandria lodge. The Grand Master chided Nebraska Masons for not **contributing** more liberally to the cause. A total of \$6,374 was raised, and 25 lodges had paid 100 percent for their membership which earned them a spot on the Roll of Honor. About half the lodges hadn't contributed at all.

1922

Lewis E. Smith, Grand Master

June 9, 1921 – June 7, 1922

Reported at the 65th Annual Communication

The Grand Master required strict **obedience to Grand Lodge laws** after observing "a distinct tendency of the **lodges** and brethren to stray away from the tenets" of Masonry. He said the dignity of the Craft was not being maintained and there was too much laxity in enforcement of the law. "My conception of conditions leads me to believe that if we are to maintain our dignified position in the world as Master Masons, we must, ourselves, dignify the institution." He said the **rapid growth** in recent years brought in **younger members** who didn't realize Freemasonry had a foundation peculiar to itself and every member should have high and lofty ideals.

Smaller growth in **members** did not concern the Grand Master. "We have been, in the last few years, **growing with abnormal rapidity**," he said. "Too many are knocking at our doors and gaining admission to our lodges who have but a faint conception of the real purpose of Freemasonry."

The Grand Master said the biggest problem facing Freemasonry was **finding real men** of unselfishness, rugged and old-fashioned honesty with vision, courage and cleanliness of mind and body. "If we will measure our applicants by these standards we have no fear of the future," he said.

The crisis facing the fraternity, he said, was whether high standards of its members would be maintained, or if “we shall become simply a lodge proud of our numbers and our wealth.”

In concluding his address, the **Grand Master** said the call for **good citizenship** was never clearer, and Masons should stand squarely behind honest government, clean politics and the public school system. He said every Master Mason should make it his duty to see that his community is cleaned of grafting and unscrupulous politicians. “What a power for good we may be if we will but do our part,” he said. Too many brethren permit others to persuade them not to take part in public affairs. “Brethren, are we going to sit in contentment and self-complacency, or are we going to be a force in the world?”

In enforcing the law, the Grand Master **suspended the charters** of four lodges and directed lodges to conduct **trials** of brothers in 12 instances. He later returned charters to the lodges after they complied with his orders. “That the brethren who will succeed me as Grand Masters may know the desire of this Grand Lodge and that the enforcement of law may never again be questioned, this should be settled here and now,” he said.

Bee Lodge No. 259 in Bee was left with two members in the town and seven living outside the community. The Grand Master said that while the community at one time had been American, “It is now composed largely of Bohemians who are ardent Romanists.” He gave them one year to improve their situation or **surrender their charter**. “They are, in my judgment, entitled to our consideration, as they may be likened unto a listening post in no-man’s land,” he said.

The Grand Master said six lodges were identified by Assistant Custodians as **unable to confer degrees** and give lectures. He ordered Assistant Custodians to work with the lodges and if within 90 days they couldn’t confer degrees, their **charters would be arrested**. It wasn’t necessary to lift the charter of any lodge.

The **Committee on Doings of Grand Officers** noted in its report that the **Grand Master encountered numerous obstacles**, including organized opposition, during his year, but he brought “to this Grand Lodge the garnered sheaves of duty heroically performed in endeavoring to maintain the standard of Ancient Craft Masonry throughout this Grand Jurisdiction.”

The requests of seven communities for a **dispensation to form a lodge** were refused by the Grand Master. He pointed out that most weak lodges were in small towns of 600 or less.

The State Tax Commissioner announced he intended to **tax the property of all fraternal institutions and societies**. “So long as church property of all kinds is not assessed, I see no reason why our property, which is used exclusively for charitable and benevolent purposes, should be taxed,” said the Grand Master. He urged the Grand Lodge to consider the issue and take a unified action.

The **Grand Master** said he **traveled** 18,500 miles by the railroad and several hundred miles by auto during his year in office.

A recommendation from the Grand Secretary that an **assistant to the Grand Secretary** be appointed resulted in the **Grand Master** being named to the post.

The Grand Master and Grand Custodian wanted to add interest in perfecting the esoteric work. **Certificates of Proficiency** were awarded to lodges able to confer all work of the degrees and to any brother who could confer all degree work. Certificates were presented to eight lodges and 49 brethren.

Under official order, the **Grand Custodian** made formal **inspections of the work** of 43 lodges. Thirteen were found to be substantially correct, but 30 could not confer degrees in a suitable and impressive manner. **Schools of Instruction** were assigned to be held for them. He added that some officers were not and wouldn’t be proficient in the work, contrary to law, which could have resulted in **suspension of their charter**. The Grand Custodian suggested that a **Master-elect** must have a formal certificate of **proficiency** earned by presenting the work to an assistant custodian that he is competent to perform the duties of the Master. “There must be a uniform system of the expression, manner and method of disseminating and promulgating the letter of the work; otherwise, we will

have no work, but a potpourri of confusion worse than the confusion of tongues at the building of the tower of Babel,” he said.

Only eight Central **Schools of Instruction** were scheduled and two didn't occur. The Grand Custodian commented, “I have about concluded that they are another experimental failure because the practical results sought for are not obtained. The center of attraction is mostly in the last two sessions of the day...” the Master's Degree and refreshments. He advised that Regular Schools of Instruction took more time and Grand Lodge funds than they were worth. He said individual instruction would accomplish more than “hastily skimming over the surface.”

The **Grand Custodian** questioned the **need for his office**. With so many proficient craftsmen, he said he could step down from office and not be missed, except by the railway companies and hotels.

A plan was adopted to divide the state into 22 **districts**, and gave the Grand Master the power to appoint an **Assistant to the Grand Master** in each district. His duties consisted of visiting each lodge and reporting to the Grand Master on his findings and to promote the welfare of the lodge.

A committee was appointed to prepare a form of a **questionnaire** to be used with **petitions**.

The Temple Craft of the Masonic Temple in Omaha, which housed the **Grand Lodge Office**, asked to terminate the **lease** at the end of 1922. The Grand Master appointed a committee to negotiate with the Temple Craft, and a five-year lease was signed. The Grand Lodge was excited because the new contract provided for space to display the **John J. Monell** Collection.

A committee pursuing plans to buy or build a **hospital** recommended that in view of the financial condition of the state, that no effort be made to provide for one.

Tentative plans for an **infirmary** at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** were reviewed by its Board of Trustees which unanimously agreed it was necessary to be built in the near future. The **Grand Commandery of the York Rite** donated \$10,000 to the cause.

The Nebraska Masonic Home purchased ground to its east and west.

The Grand Lodge approved the expenditure of \$30,000 to **build a permanent building** at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** in Fremont, despite concerns about the financial condition of the country and the Grand Lodge. The **Grand Chapter of the Eastern Star** provided about \$20,000 to build an **infirmary** in connection with the new building funded by the Grand Lodge.

After attending the third annual meeting of the **Masonic Service Association**, the Grand Master suggested a committee be appointed to carry the program into the lodges. Noting that it would be difficult to find the brethren to organize a **speaker's bureau**, he felt brethren would enjoy the information from the Association. He added that jurisdictions implementing the program had seen increased lodge attendance. However, in accordance with the bylaws and constitution, **relations with the association were severed**.

Two-thirds of the **funds** necessary to build the **George Washington** National Masonic Memorial was raised across the U.S. It was hoped construction would begin in 1922. Nebraska had raised \$7,500 toward the project, which was considerably short of the quota of \$1 per member asked from each jurisdiction. The state had over 37,000 members. Lodges supplying their quota received a diploma and a stone engraving with the outline of the building.

1923

(Photograph not available)

Edward M. Wellman, Grand Master

June 7, 1922 – August 31, 1922

Reported at the 66th Annual Communication

Edward Wellman was installed Grand Master June 7, 1922, and **died** August 31, 1922. Deputy and Acting Grand Master **Charles Chappell** presided over Annual Communication.

Lodges were required to use a **questionnaire** developed to accompany **petitions**.

A committee investigating the creation of a **Nebraska Masonic Hospital** advised against it after arranging for one wing of a hospital to be set aside for Masons and their families. There was so little interest among Masons that the committee advised not to pursue a Masonic hospital.

Ancient weapons were displayed in the Grand Lodge reading room. The weapons were donated by **Mrs. John Monell** along with hundreds of books. In addition, **Mrs. George Lininger**, widow of the Past Grand Master, loaned to the Grand Lodge Office for an indefinite period curios from the Lininger collection.

The Grand Custodian offered to give his **Masonic library** to the Grand Lodge.

A resolution from the **Jurisprudence Committee** was adopted that discussed the existence of the **Ku Klux Klan** in Nebraska. While recognizing Masonry's tolerance of religious beliefs, the Grand Lodge urged its members not to join the Klan and to support lawful efforts to suppress them.

A design for a new Grand Master's jewel was approved.

Grand Lodge withdrew its membership in the **Masonic Service Association** (MSA) in 1922. The Deputy and Acting Grand Master attended MSA's annual meeting in 1923, and noted the association offered opportunities for service. He suggested the Grand Lodge give membership further consideration. MSA's Executive Secretary addressed the Annual Communication and explained that the organization was an attempt to bind the U.S. grand lodges into an association to provide greater assistance in a disaster. He pointed out that when Grand Lodges tried to help during the **World War**, the government felt it couldn't confer with so many jurisdictions. He said in the event of another world war, Nebraska Masons would be able to help on a larger scale by joining MSA. The delegates voted to join MSA.

The Deputy and Acting Grand Master recommended continuing the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Committee for another year. The memorial's **cornerstone was laid** in November 1923. The amount of funds raised for a monument honoring George Washington reached \$8,500, which was considerably less than \$1 per member in Nebraska.

A Mason who was **not proficient** should not have the right of demit or holding **office**, said the Deputy and Acting Grand Master while urging amendment of the bylaws.

The Deputy and Acting Grand Master said **rules** governing the awarding of the **Bronze Jordan Medal** should be established so they would be uniformly applied by the lodges.

Claiming jurisdiction over a university student, **Bayard Lodge No. 301** in Bayard received his fees for degrees conferred on him by **East Lincoln Lodge No. 210** in Lincoln. Because the young man returned home in the summers, it was ruled he had not established residence for 12 months in Lincoln.

At a meeting of the **Grand Chapter, Royal Arch Masons of Nebraska**, it was suggested a committee from the Grand Lodge, Grand Chapter and Grand Commandery consider **consolidating all Masonic charities**. The Deputy and Acting Grand Master referred the matter to the membership at the next Annual Communication.

It was proposed that a **certificate** be made for the **wife, mother, sister or daughter** of a Master Mason to use when traveling. The **Jurisprudence Committee** said a simple letter from the Masonic relative would be sufficient.

The Deputy and Acting Grand Master **ruled** that it was not permissible for a **lodge** to use funds to organize a Chapter of the Order of **DeMolay** because the organization did not make membership in Masonry a basis for membership.

The **Committee on the Relief and Care of Orphans** said it had received numerous and increasing applications for relief. Payments totaled more than \$2,700.

Diamond Lodge No. 291 in Orchard and **Emmet Crawford Lodge No. 148** in Broken Bow distributed **circulars** to lodges in the state to rescind amendments to the bylaws at the previous

Annual Communication. The Deputy and Acting Grand Master condemned their actions because the circulars were not approved by him or the Grand Lodge.

Tehama Shrine asked permission to **raffle** a car, but the Deputy and Acting Grand Master said it conflicted with law. “Masonry cannot speak too clearly in upholding law and order,” he said.

The Deputy and Acting Grand Master commented that citizens were participating in “the organized effort to break down the enforcement of the **prohibitory amendment**...and we are told...the foes of this amendment are organized not only in an endeavor to create a popular belief that this amendment cannot be enforced but also to demonstrate the futility of the effort for its enforcement.”

There were few requests for monies from the Grand Lodge’s **War Relief Fund** by brethren who served in the **World War**, their widows or children. Treatment by the national government of wounded and disabled brethren reduced demands for funds. It was expected that requests eventually would increase, especially for admission to **The Nebraska Masonic Home**. The Board of Trustees of the home would receive interest income from the Fund to be used to assist soldiers and their relatives.

The **Committee on Promotion of the World’s Peace** pointed to the **League of Nations**, which involved more than 80 percent of the world’s population, and the establishment of a permanent **Court of International Justice**, as important steps in achieving world peace.

1924

Charles A. Chappell, Grand Master

June 7, 1923 – June 5, 1924

Reported at the 67th Annual Communication

The Grand Lodge voted to take a train to Plattsmouth to participate in the laying of a **cornerstone** at the new \$125,000 **infirmary at The Nebraska Masonic Home**. The Grand Lodge paid the expenses for about 1,200 Annual Communication delegates to attend.

Besides the 20 men and 12 women at **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, the costs for nine others were paid by the home for their care at home or other institution. A number of these would have been housed in the **infirmary** if the building was ready. In its history, the home housed 209 men, women and children since opening its doors in 1903.

U.S. President **Warren G. Harding**, a Mason, **died** August 2, 1923, of a heart attack in San Francisco. The Grand Master praised him for endeavoring “to accomplish the things of peace and of right.” He also cited a speech Harding gave on behalf of Marion Commandery No. 36, Knights Templar of Ohio, to Hollywood Commandery No. 56, of the International Traveling Beauceant of the Order. The Grand Master sent word to Mrs. Harding expressing the sorrow of the Nebraska fraternity. Lodges in Lincoln met in a Lodge of Sorrow to honor Harding and the Grand Master delivered the address.

The Grand Master attended the laying of the **cornerstone** for the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial in what he termed “perhaps the largest Masonic gathering ever witnessed on this continent.” All Grand Masters in attendance took part in spreading the cement used in laying the cornerstone with a replica of the trowel Washington used to lay the cornerstone of the U.S. Capitol. The trowel was theirs to keep. Nebraska sent the following items to be included in the cornerstone: a bronze **Jordan Medal**, a bronze plaque with a photo of Past Grand Master **George Lininger**, and a 1907 **semi-centennial badge**.

A committee of Grand Lodge and **York Rite** members, appointed to examine whether Masonic **charities** should be under one body, reported a resolution that passed at Annual Communication. The resolution stated Masonic charities “be under the control and direction of one head, and that head should be without question the Grand Lodge...”

After attending the annual meeting of the **Masonic Service Association**, the Grand Master said it was “earnestly endeavoring to faithfully carry out the **educational program** which has been entered upon.”

The Grand Lodge of Nebraska **withdrew** from the **Masonic Service Association** by a vote of 98-80. It was immediately followed by another resolution that passed, stating that Masons in Omaha had established a **Masonic Relief Association and Employment Bureau** that was affiliated with the Masonic Relief Association. Two-hundred dollars was given to the Omaha organization. In addition, the opinion was stated that the Association’s services had been used to introduce **Masonic education** in the state, but there were “no marked impressions” left by use of the program.

A resolution was adopted that **appointed** a **Committee on Masonic Education** with a budget of \$1,500. The committee was asked to promote Masonic reading circles or study classes and that a lecture bureau be formed. It was noted that Masonry exerted a significant influence in U.S. history, and Masons must be provided with a “larger conception of the possibilities of Masonic influence in various lines of activity other than the **ritualistic work** of the order.”

The **charters** of three lodges – **Sterling Lodge No. 70** in Sterling, **Pythagoras Lodge No. 156** in Ewing, and **Holbrook Lodge No. 257** in Holbrook – were replaced after **fires** destroyed them.

It was recommended by the Grand Master that a law be passed requiring that the majority of the **stock** in **The Nebraska Masonic Home** be held by the Grand Lodge.

Minnekadusa Lodge No. 192 in Valentine asked if lodge funds could be used for a **donation to church** activities, which the **Grand Master ruled** against. In another ruling, he said there could be no action a lodge could take against a brother who did not attend church.

Calling Past Masters of lodges who did not attend **Annual Communication** to receive the **Past Master’s degree** as “rotary-machine made Masters,” the **Grand Custodian** invested authority in Assistant Custodians to confer the degree after the statewide meeting.

The Grand Master said that a person with “**Indian blood**” could be made a Mason.

An amendment was proposed by the Grand Master that the **Deputy Grand Master succeed** to that office in the event of the **death of the Grand Master**.

A recommendation from the Grand Master was approved by the **Jurisprudence Committee** making it **unlawful to discuss in lodge a petition** for the degrees or affiliation either before or after the ballot.

The Grand Lodge’s **Committee on Promotion of the World’s Peace** noted unsettled conditions in the world and that good will was fundamental to Masonry. The Grand Lodge committed to aid the pacification of war-like conditions. “This Grand Body is unalterably **opposed to aggressive war** at any time,” the chairman stated in his report.

1925

Robert R. Dickson, Grand Master

June 5, 1924 – June 11, 1925

Reported at the 68th Annual Communication

In his opening address, the Grand Master said, “As a nation, we are at peace at home and abroad; we are prosperous, happy and contented; sectional strife and contentions no longer exist; from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the Gulf to the Great Lakes, the wheels of progress and industry proclaim the beginning of an era of new and welcome **prosperity** such as our nation has never experienced. The nations of the world acknowledge our supremacy on land and sea...”

Worshipful Brother **Alexander E. Porter**, who served 10 years as **Grand Tyler**, died in February 1925. He was a member of **Lincoln Lodge No. 19**.

The Grand Lodge and **Grand Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star** agreed to form a **committee** of seven to set a clear and definite plan of operation, **management** and control of the

Children's Home in Fremont. Each body provided three members and a seventh was jointly appointed who served as chairman.

Past Grand Master and Grand Custodian **Robert E. French** presented his **library** to the Grand Lodge "without money and without price." He said the Grand Lodge of Iowa offered to build a crypt for it, if presented to them, but he wanted Nebraska Masons to have them. He added that many of the books were valuable and his collection should not be in a circulating library.

The Grand Masters of Texas, Arizona and New Mexico appointed a committee to investigate the prevalence of **tuberculosis** among Masons in their jurisdictions. It was of great concern to them because Masons moved there to benefit from the milder climate. Many became a charge on local lodges, communities and charities, and many died because they became impoverished and could not secure hospital care and treatment. The committee reported that 500,000 Masons died annually in the U.S. from tuberculosis, and many could be cured. It recommended construction of 10 **hospitals** around the country at a cost of \$12.5 million, or \$5 for each Mason, and an annual charge of \$1.75 for their operation. A committee was appointed to make a recommendation.

A large crowd attended **Mosaic Lodge No. 55** in Norfolk to witness the presentation of the **Past Grand Master's jewel** to M.:W.: Brother **Andrew Viele**, who served in that position in 1916. The observance also marked his 50th year as a member.

Schools of Instruction were changed so that the **Grand Custodian** turned them over to Deputy Grand Custodians to conduct. This gave him more time to manage the 20 deputies, direct the schools and answer questions.

The Grand Custodian reported that had he known the **proficiency of the lodges**, fewer **Schools of Instruction** could have been held because many lodges were proficient on the 19 points of work.

If **certified brethren** would "comply in the spirit of their petition by assisting the **officers** of their lodges to become **proficient** in their work as the law requires," it would save the Grand Lodge money by not holding a **School of Instruction** there, said the Grand Custodian.

The previous year, the Grand Custodian was given the responsibility to confer the **degree of the Past Master** or Master-elect on those who did not attend the ceremony at **Annual Communication** by having Deputy Custodians perform it at their lodge. After requesting those who hadn't received the degree to notify him when and where they would receive it or pay a \$10 dispensation fee, he said few responded. He added that some jurisdictions did not require the degree, including Iowa. He also commented that the Master-elect should attend Annual Communication as his lodge's representative so he would receive a per diem to help with expenses.

The Grand Custodian stated a **Master-elect** obligated himself to abide by the law and discharge his duties to the best of his abilities. "How can a Master of a lodge discharge all the duties and responsibilities of that office when he cannot **confer the degrees** or give any of the lectures correctly...?" If it was his decision, he would have required every Master-elect to be proficient, he said.

Investigation of the destitute condition of a brother Mason's sister by the **Committee on Relief and Care of Orphans** provided an opinion that the brother was able to care for her as required by law and Masonic obligation. He gave the committee \$1,500 for her support, which was thought to be "sufficient to care for her in keeping with her station in life." The sister demanded larger amounts the committee said were unjustified. She instituted an action in court to receive the money she requested.

The Grand Master noted the "**depressing financial period**" that produced more requests for an extension of time to pay their **dues**. He said many brothers were unable to meet their obligations even when the deadline was extended. Given the increased demands for help for worthy brothers due to the financial conditions, he said dues could not be reduced.

Recognizing that a number of lodges didn't have a Bronze **Jordan Medal** to present to its Nebraska member with the longest membership, the Grand Master ordered the Grand Secretary to

send medals at no charge to lodges as long as the supply lasted. He also asked him to write a history of the award so lodges would understand its purpose.

The Grand Master ruled that the widowed **mother** of a Master Mason may be admitted to **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, even though her husband was not a Mason.

Pointing out that other jurisdictions that made all Past Grand Masters members of the **Jurisprudence Committee** had moved to a **smaller committee**, the Grand Master recommended that a seven-member committee be appointed. He asked that his recommendation be considered the following year. His goal was to make the committee as helpful to the sitting Grand Master as possible because of the numerous requests for his interpretation of the law from the lodges.

The Grand Master said three circulars sent to lodges commanding them to **read** parts of the previous **proceedings** and the law did not result in required responses from lodges.

The Grand Master recommended that a **Finance Committee** be created to take responsibility from the **Grand Secretary** to **manage** the large amount of **funds** of the Grand Lodge.

All dispensations to **form new lodges** in towns with a population of less than 300 were **refused** by the Grand Master.

A professor from the University of Nebraska, and his assistants, worked on **cataloguing** ancient **weapons** from M.:W.: **George Lininger's** estate and books from Brother **John Monell** that were donated to the Grand Lodge.

Construction on the \$125,000 **infirmary** at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** continued. The **Grand Lodge** appropriated \$100,000 and the Grand Chapter, **Royal Arch Masons**, and Grand Commandery, **Knights Templar**, each pledged \$10,000.

More than 100 automobiles took 500 **Annual Communication** attendees in Omaha on a 90-minute ride to the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** in Fremont. On the return trip, many cars stopped at the **James G. Megeath Masonic Home for Boys** in Omaha for dinner where they visited with the boys living there.

The Grand Lodge contributed \$110,000 to the **Children's Home** for livestock, tools and equipment. The **Grand Chapter, Order of Eastern Star** donated \$33,000 for cottages located on the home's 56 acres.

The **Committee on Relief and Care of Orphans** said more applications for assistance were received that year than any time since it was organized.

Stating the work of the **Board of Masonic Service Annuities and Gifts** would be "one of the great achievements of the Grand Lodge," its chairman said it was hampered by members too widely scattered.

The first report of the new **Masonic Education Committee** said a large number of Trowel Meetings were held, which increased devotion and strengthened bonds of fellowship. In addition, the anniversary of **George Washington's birthday** was more widely observed along with a presentation on Masonry and the development of America. The chairman held 60 meetings and 78 addresses. "We may weary of the repetition of the ritual but the application of its teaching to the duties we owe to God, to our country, to our neighbors, to ourselves, has always opened a field of entrancing interest, in which the symbols of Masonry, will live anew, through the vitalizing atmosphere of practical brotherhood," stated the committee report.

The chairman of the **Committee on Promotion of the World's Peace** said it was becoming more and more obvious that had the U.S. not participated in the **World War**, the Western Allies would have been defeated. "From that day to this, America, although usually not participating in world affairs officially, yet, by its history and experience, has had a profound effect upon the world's course in international matters" and a profound influence on the peace of the world, he said.

An amendment passed providing for **succession to the office of Grand Master** in the event of his death.

1926

John Wright, Grand Master
June 11, 1925 – June 10, 1926

Reported at the 69th Annual Communication

The new **infirmary** at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** was **dedicated** September 5, 1925, with a ceremony conducted by the Grand Lodge officers. At **Annual Communication**, more than 150 cars carrying about 550 people were placed in parade formation and escorted by motorcycle policemen to the outskirts of Omaha for the drive to Plattsmouth to visit the infirmary.

Past Grand Master **George Thummel** was presented a basket of 50 golden roses as a memento of the **Golden Anniversary of his installation** as Grand Master. He was 28 at the time.

A request from Texas, New Mexico and Arizona the previous year to consider building **hospitals** to care for Masons with **tuberculosis** was deferred by the Grand Master. He said, "...in view of the fact that our jurisdiction is at the present time reasonably well loaded down with financing our **Homes** and infirmary, I feel that it might be well to consider the taking care of our own patients with the facilities we have at hand rather than to enter into any agreement with an organization outside of our own jurisdiction."

Pointing out the time and travel involved for the chairman of the **Masonic Education Committee** to present an educational lecture across the state, the Grand Master suggested the **Masonic Service Association** could best provide Masonic education and that Nebraska should **join** it again. Otherwise, he said the committee should be authorized to secure assistance to prepare and present programs.

Calling the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial national and international in character, the Grand Master pointed out that Nebraska brethren had made 20 percent of its \$1 **contribution** per member while other states have exceeded 100 percent.

The Grand Master endorsed the **Schools of Instruction** and recommended that every **lodge** in the state be examined every year for **proficiency** since the same Master is seldom in charge of the lodge for more than one year. The Grand Custodian said he supported an examination of lodges every three years. He also recommended that **individual certificates** be renewed each year "for the reason that ours is a work which if neglected or permitted to go without checking, readily allows minor changes to get into the minds of the brethren who perhaps a year ago had it practically perfect." The **Jurisprudence Committee** disagreed stating, "...there are many lodges in the Grand Jurisdiction that do not require annual examinations." The opinion of the committee was approved by the delegates.

Management of the **Children's Home** in Fremont was transferred to a new joint **committee** consisting of six persons appointed by the Grand Master and six appointed by the Worthy Grand Matron of Eastern Star. The Grand Lodge and **Grand Chapter** deeded each other their property at the **Children's Home** to become joint owners.

A "very rapid and decisive decrease" in **membership** gains occurred during the previous four years. Since 1900, the average annual gain in membership was about 8.5 percent, compared to 1.6 percent in 1925, the lowest percentage increase in the history of Nebraska. Gains in the Midwest ranged from South Dakota with 1.7 percent to 7 percent in California and 5 percent in New York. "...present **economic conditions** in this middle-western country undoubtedly play an important part in the apparent retarded growth of Masonry these years."

The **Committee on Returns** noted in its report, "While it is a truth that Masonry was never intended for the 'masses,' it is also true that it was not intended exclusively for the wealthy." They questioned whether young men of limited means could pay the larger **fees** charged for Masonic degrees. They said such charges place "our Order in the class of luxuries not to be thought of under present conditions."

The Grand Custodian reported that about 15 percent of the state's membership was **active in lodge**. The reason for low involvement was due to a lack of understanding of **esoteric masonry**.

The **Board of Masonic Service Annuities and Gifts** was engineered by Past Master Dr. David Hilton of Lincoln Lodge No. 19. After its creation, he gave \$2,500 for the Board to start its work, but that was the only money it had received in its existence.

A recommendation of the Grand Master was unanimously approved that established a **trial commission**. He said in many lodges the brethren were usually closely associated with the accused brother which caused conflict in the lodge. At the time, a trial and a vote of the members of the lodge were required.

A **card** form of **dues receipt** was approved on the Grand Master's recommendation as opposed to the paper dues receipt that was termed "unwieldy and not at all convenient or durable, becoming easily lost or mutilated." It was decided to start using the new form January 1, 1927.

Due to the numerous requests for waivers of jurisdiction over members, **concurrent jurisdiction** was given to **Waterloo Lodge No. 102** in Elkhorn, **Pomegranate Lodge No. 110** in Ashland, **Wahoo Lodge No. 59** in Wahoo and **Victory Lodge No. 310** in Valley.

An attempt by the Grand Master to provide a **per diem to lodge secretaries** to attend **Annual Communication** won approval over the objections of the **Jurisprudence Committee**. He claimed that lodge secretaries were the mainstay for the Master and were frequently asked for information, and should be encouraged to attend Annual Communication.

The Grand Master recommended the Grand Lodge develop a plan to help less financially able lodges to finance **ownership of their own building**. His proposal was defeated.

The **average age** of the 48 residents at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** was 74.5 years.

A resolution was passed that established a rule to present a **jewel** to the **retiring Grand Master** not to exceed \$100.

A resolution was adopted calling for the **construction** of an additional house for the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** at a cost of \$30,000, split between the Grand Lodge and **Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star**.

Immediate consideration and approval was given to an amendment stating that no lodge could establish a **Masonic charitable institution** or undertake charitable work nor use the word "Masonic" in such work unless **authorized by the Grand Lodge**. It added that these provisions did not apply to the **James G. Megeath Masonic Home for Boys**, and the Grand Lodge had no responsibility for that home.

1927

Edwin D. Crites, Grand Master

June 10, 1926 – June 9, 1927

Reported at the 70th Annual Communication

The birthday of **George Washington** was celebrated in more lodges after the **Masonic Education Committee** suggested an outline for a program. The committee recommended outlining additional programs in hopes that lodges would increase education activities.

Committees adopted designs for new **jewels** for the **Grand Officers and Past Grand Masters**.

A **stereopticon** study titled "The Call to the Colors" was being finalized for use in lodges. It included paintings of the flag in history.

The Grand Master suggested the state be divided into 20 **districts** with a **Deputy Custodian** in each, responsible for the "efficiency of the lodges" in learning degree work.

Donations by the Grand Lodge and local lodges to assist others totaled \$100,000.

Noting the solo flight of Brother **Charles Lindbergh** across the Atlantic Ocean, it was stated that the “dove of peace” had perhaps done more to promote international goodwill than any number of diplomats.

About 125 cars furnished by Omaha Masons took those attending the **Annual Communication** for a visit to the **Children’s Home** in Fremont, and ate a picnic supper at the **James G. Megeath Masonic Home for Boys** courtesy of the 11 Omaha lodges.

The constructed **infirmary** at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** in Plattsmouth was hailed as fine a hospital as could be found in the state.

The Grand Master recommended that **life memberships** not be granted. He called it unsound financially, usually resulting in impairment of the lodge’s resources and an unequal distribution of the burden of support for the lodge.

Past Grand Master **Robert French**, who had served as Grand Custodian for 26 years, **died**. He was appointed Grand Custodian in 1901 by Grand Master **Albert W. Crites**, and he died while in service to Grand Master **Edwin D. Crites**, the son of Albert. “His lectures were classics, and attracted great crowds to his schools. His verses lightened the days for many. The welfare of the fraternity was his one thought. By his will he gave it his library,” said Grand Master Edwin Crites.

It was recommended by the Grand Master that **trials for Masonic offenses** be held before a **commission**.

The Grand Master ruled that men with the following **disabilities** were not eligible for membership: loss of a right thumb, loss of one leg, foot or arm, and the stiffening of one leg so the knee is rigid. He said some lodges had waived jurisdiction to Iowa Lodges where men with these situations could join. He added the practice should be discontinued.

Applications for **The Nebraska Masonic Home** and **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** were reported as increasing every month. If the situation continued, the Grand Master said new buildings would need to be built. The Plattsmouth home had 60 residents, and the Children’s Home had more than 50 residents, with a higher than usual number of infants admitted.

Plans were approved in May 1927, to **construct** an additional house at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**.

A **lease** for the **Grand Lodge office** was renewed for five years at an annual rent of \$1,800.

Ashlar Lodge No. 33 in Grand Island completed a seven-story, “fire-proof” **building** that was described as containing lodge rooms and other quarters arranged “in the best of taste, of great convenience and unexcelled in beauty by any other in the state of Nebraska.”

1928

Albert R. Davis, Grand Master

June 9, 1927 – June 7, 1928

Reported at the 71st Annual Communication

The Grand Master attended a banquet June 28, 1927, to give “due recognition” to the work and service of those connected with **DeMolay**. He encouraged every lodge to cooperate with and **promote the organization**.

By ruling of the Grand Master, the awarding of the **Gold Jordan Medal** would be presented only **to residents** of Nebraska who have been members the longest time.

Parian Lodge No. 207 in Callaway was dedicated. The Grand Master commented that it was the only Lodge in Nebraska that actually **constructed the middle chamber and winding stairs**. Also dedicated were **Oshkosh Lodge No. 286** in Oshkosh and **Blue River Lodge No. 30** in Milford.

The Grand Master recommended that a **digest** be made of the **Grand Master’s decisions** to secure uniformity among the lodges and lighten the load of the Grand Master. The Grand Secretary prepared the document.

A **Grand Master's recommendation** in 1927 was approved by the **Jurisprudence Committee** to **try Masonic offenses** before a **commission**. Past Grand Master Edwin Crites was appointed to prepare the legislation.

Two hundred and twenty-five **50-year badges** were presented following actions at the previous Grand Lodge to create the award. The Grand Master commented, "The originating of this plan and carrying it into effect among the Craft is not only commendable, but properly emphasizes the service of the individual Brethren and is an inspiration to the younger Masons."

The Grand Marshal and Grand Senior Warden noted that the Grand Lodge didn't possess the **Holy Bible**, or **square and compass**, and **donated** them to the Grand Lodge. At some Grand Lodge events, it had been necessary to borrow a Bible from a bookstore and the square and compass from a hardware store.

The **Grand Master decided** that a lodge could not use its funds **to maintain a room in a hospital** in a city where the Lodge was situated.

To conserve time and expenses, the **Schools of Instruction** in remote parts of the state were arranged "in chains similar to the Chautauqua circuit," or consolidated, so the Grand Master could attend the last day of each school. Average attendance was 427 from 20 lodges.

A total increase of 362 **members** was said to be retarded by the business **depression** in the state, just as other fraternal bodies had been similarly impacted.

The largest numbers of **raisings** were in three Omaha lodges: 44 in No. 302, 25 in No. 290, and 24 in No. 303. No initiations occurred in 27 lodges, 36 had no passings, and 26 showed no raisings. Seven lodges had no work at all.

The Grand Lodge's **Mississippi Valley Flood Relief Fund** collected \$6,601.35 from Nebraska lodges during the year. All Masonic bodies and Eastern Star Chapters contributed about \$600,000 to the cause.

The **Children's Home Endowment Fund** was started with funds remaining in the Maintenance Fund.

The Grand Master suggested the **Grand Secretary's salary** be increased from \$2,400 to \$3,600. He said the salary hadn't been increased since 1912 when Nebraska had 22,679 fewer Masons, and he was responsible for more than one-half million dollars in assets.

A fleet of 160 cars traveled from **Annual Communication** to **The Nebraska Masonic Home** in Plattsmouth for a tour and a visit with the residents.

The Grand Custodian encouraged the development of more **study clubs** and informed lecturers so speakers on Masonic education could be found locally that would not require more costly expense fees.

A new house was **constructed** and furnished for older girls at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** at a cost of \$40,000. More than 70 children resided at the home, with the need for a home for babies and tiny children.

In the six months of its operation, the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Committee received funds representing a \$1 donation for about 20 percent of Nebraska's Masons, while in some states donations represented 100 or 200 percent of their members. Fifty-three lodges had donated to the cause.

The Grand Lodge's **Committee on Promotion of the World's Peace** reported that the U.S. State Department sent requests to Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Japan asking for a multilateral draft treaty proposing to **outlaw war** as an instrument of national public policy.

Forty male voices, members of the **choir** of **Bee Hive Lodge No. 184** of Omaha, sang to the attendees of the Grand Lodge **Annual Communication**.

A large square and compass was made from **flowers** on the grounds of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**. And, steps leading from the infirmary to the home consisted of three, five and seven **steps** ornamented by **Sesostris Shrine Temple** with two large bronze columns and five columns representing the five orders of architecture with lit globes.

Creighton Lodge No. 100 requested an \$800 **loan** from the Grand Lodge because of the closing of the bank in Creighton where all its funds were deposited. The loan was denied out of concern for the demands from other lodges that would be made if the loan was granted.

Following the purchase of four **jewels** for **Grand Lodge officers** the previous year, seven jewels were purchased for the remaining Grand Lodge officers.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** netted a “nice return” from its farm. Products produced on the farm helped feed the children and gave the boys practical experience in agriculture, gardening, dairying, and poultry raising.

A **cornerstone** was laid for the courthouse in Kimball for the **Kimball County Courthouse**.

1929

Frank H. Woodland, Grand Master

June 7, 1928 – June 6, 1929

Reported at the 72nd Annual Communication

More **cornerstones** were laid for **Masonic temples** in the previous 12 months than in the previous five years.

It was noted that advances in **machinery had eliminated a number of jobs** for people past mid-life. Faced with no income, Nebraska Masonry expected continued “very heavy calls for **assistance**,” the Grand Secretary reported.

The **Grand Orator** in 1929 was former U.S. Senator **Norris Brown**, the author of the 16th Amendment to the Constitution, which allowed government to collect income taxes.

The Grand Master recommended the conferring of the **Past Masters Degree** at the installation of Grand Lodge officers be made optional. He said many lodges and Masters could not afford the expense of attending and could only afford to send the Senior Warden. “If a Master-elect is not duly impressed with his duties and responsibilities by the beautiful and majestic ritual found in our installation service, the conferring of the Past Master’s Degree is time wasted on him,” the Grand Master said.

Even though the Grand Lodge endorsed plans for the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial years earlier, Nebraska Masons failed to donate \$1 per member as pledged. In seven years, the state’s Masons donated \$8,231. Brother Edward Huwaldt was appointed to raise funds. In 18 months, additional donations totaled nearly \$4,500. In spite of the improvement, Nebraska’s support lagged behind other jurisdictions.

More than 500 persons attended the **Annual Communication** in 1929 in Omaha. The large group caravanned to the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** in Fremont, thanks to Omaha’s 11 lodges that arranged sufficient automobiles to handle the task.

Ninety-five lodges hosted **Central Schools of Instruction** which were attended by representatives of 222 of 294 lodges in Nebraska.

The **Committee on Promotion of the World’s Peace** reported the **Paris Peace Pact** was signed by a “very large majority” of nations who agreed to abandon war as an instrument of national policy. The nations also agreed to submit all controversies to **judicial** determination and to abide by the results.

The 25th **anniversary of the dedication** of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** was recognized during ceremonies in October 1928.

New **Articles of Incorporation** were approved for the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** after the Grand Lodge failed to act on them at the previous Annual Communication due to an oversight. All properties were transferred to the new corporation. The **Grand Chapter, Order of Eastern Star** approved the Articles a year earlier.

1930

Ira C. Freet, Grand Master

June 6, 1929 – June 5, 1930

Reported at the 73rd Annual Communication

The **number of Masons** in Nebraska totaled 42,150, making the state's Masonic population the 26th largest in the U.S.

The **Relief Committee** saw requests for assistance increase \$1,100 to \$6,300 from the previous year, indicating demands for relief were slowly growing.

The Grand Master warned members that given the “present day **industrial conditions**,” calls for **relief** from brethren will increase and lodges should give more careful consideration to assisting the **Masonic Relief Association** of the U.S.

The **Nebraska Masonic Home** reported **all rooms were occupied** and beds were placed on the sleeping porch to accommodate the demands. It was noted that in the near future additional housing would be necessary.

It was reported that lodges were experiencing serious difficulties because of **delinquent dues**. A 4 percent increase in delinquent dues occurred that year, totaling \$40,153.25 from 4,687 members. The Grand Master recommended that a committee be appointed to work with lodge officers to reduce the amount.

To provide incoming Grand Officers information about the market value of **bonds** in various funds, the Grand Secretary was requested to consolidate a list of bonds and their value. The purpose of providing the report was to show whether the total of the bonds increased or decreased in value, and would help the officers determine the advisability of buying or selling bonds in the coming year.

With the Grand Lodge holding \$75,000 in **Liberty Bonds**, the **Finance Committee** suggested to the Grand Lodge officers that they consider selling the bonds in the near future “on account of the present market,” and invest in other suitable bonds.

The **Nebraska Masonic Home** reported that its Committee on Relief had expended more money in the past year than in any previous year. The committee advised lodges to check the affiliation of those asking for assistance since they may have received their degrees in other jurisdictions. They suggested lodges begin to lay away a fund for the care of the members of their lodge.

A \$5,000 loan to a farmer in 1915 was unpaid and an inspection of the farm indicated the **Orphans Educational Fund** of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** would take a considerable loss. The Masonic Home wouldn't get possession of the land until 1931. The renter was a poor farmer who saw, every day he stayed there, the value of the land decrease. The Orphans Educational Fund had 20 loans to farmers amounting to \$91,600. The value of the fund totaled \$163,442.

Noting that large numbers of men were being convicted of **bootlegging** as a result of national and state prohibition laws, the Grand Master stated that all members convicted of the crime should be expelled. He said some lodges were not consistent in their punishment.

The Grand Lodge conveyed by **Warranty Deed** all the right, title and interest of the Grand Lodge in the personal property of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**. The transfer allowed the home to receive all forms of trusts and bequests.

The Grand Master recommended that conferring of the **Past Master's Degree** at Annual Communication be discontinued. He said the ceremony took too much time from the regular work of the Grand Lodge, and the installation ceremony properly impressed on the newly-elected Master the importance of his work.

After discovering there was no Grand Lodge inscription on a **cornerstone**, the Grand Master refused to lay it. The inscription was included at the last minute and he recommended that a **bylaw** be prepared requiring what must be inscribed on a cornerstone.

An appropriation of 5 cents per member, per year for five years was recommended for the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial. The Nebraska jurisdiction was \$21,209 short of its quota to provide **donations** of \$1 per member for the memorial. A total of 74 lodges completed their quota and 219 had not. With 18 months until the memorial's dedication, local lodges were called on to reach their quota.

Wahoo Lodge No. 59 contributed \$132 to the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial, the most of any lodge in the state that year.

The **Committee on Promotion of the World's Peace** reported on the **London Naval Conference** involving Great Britain, America, Japan, France and Italy. They agreed to postpone for five years the rebuilding of aircraft carriers and ships, saving the nations \$1 billion.

A **War Relief Fund** held by the Grand Lodge totaled \$37,434.

On an afternoon during **Annual Communication**, more than 150 cars caravanned to Plattsmouth to tour **The Nebraska Masonic Home** and infirmary and take stock of their conditions. Afterwards, the group traveled to the **James G. Megeath Masonic Home for Boys** in Omaha for a picnic dinner.

The first time the **Grand Commandery**, Knights Templar of Nebraska participated in the laying of a **cornerstone** was May 1, 1930, at North Platte High School.

1931

Orville A. Andrews, Grand Master

June 5, 1930 – June 11, 1931

Reported at the 74th Annual Communication

In celebration of the approaching **75th anniversary** of the creation of the Nebraska Grand Lodge, **Nebraska Lodge No. 1** planned to unveil a **monument** in the **Bellevue City Park** indicating the location of the first Masonic Lodge hall in the state.

The Grand Master warned that the **dues** of 58 lodges were too low at only \$2.75-\$4.50 a year. And, many lodges had no surplus or **relief funds**. He offered that lodge dues should be no less than \$5 a year, leaving \$3 for the local lodge after paying the Grand Lodge per capita.

The number of **delinquent members** totaled 6,060 compared to 4,687 the previous year. The financial impact of delinquent members was \$56,500 in 1931, \$40,100 in 1930, \$39,500 in 1929, \$36,800 in 1928 and \$35,800 in 1927. In response, the Committee on Delinquent Dues and Suspensions sent a letter to each Master asking for suggestions to address the problem. In addition, the committee and 32 lodge secretaries met to discuss the issue. They concluded that lack of follow up in collecting dues and that too few delinquent members grasped the principles of Freemasonry were the main causes. Besides creating a committee in each lodge to help collect dues, the group recommended continued Masonic education and the payment of dues by lodges for brothers desiring to continue membership but who couldn't afford it.

Gross **revenue** for the Grand Lodge was nearly even from 1927-1930. However, in 1931, it dropped about \$6,000. "But we cannot refrain from pointing out to the Grand body the uncertainty of the next year or two...(and) we must warn the Grand Lodge of the reduction in gross revenue and the problems arising from the reduction...in the next year or two of its existence."

The **Masonic year** was changed from March 31, to December 31, leaving nine months in the previous year. The Grand Master attributed a **drop in membership** to this change, but expected it to equalize the next year.

After the previous Grand Master recommended the creation of a committee to study how to best handle the Grand Lodge's various funds and how they should be handled, a **Special Committee on Finance** was appointed. Chairman and Past Grand Master Edwin Crites reported that until 1925, the **investment** of Grand Lodge monies was not practiced, except the **Orphans Educational Fund**. Since then, bank balances dropped as money was invested in bonds and farm mortgages. That

burden mostly fell on the Grand Secretary. In 1930, they totaled \$680,000. He advised against placing all that money in the 11 funds under the consideration of a **Board of Trustees**, but also suggested moving it from the Grand Secretary, who was too busy anyway. He proposed the creation, though, of a **Committee on Funds and Investments** to approve every purchase, sale, exchange or conversion of real estate or security, and every collateral or mortgage loan, as well as review investments. His changes were held to the next Annual Communication.

More supervision by the Grand Lodge was necessary in the financing of the **construction of lodges**, the Grand Master said. After avoiding the foreclosure of one lodge hall, he said, “Our lodges have suffered from the professional high-powered salesman for some corporation organized to promote temple building and apparently whose only interest is that of collecting their fees, whether their ‘intensive campaign’ for raising the funds” was completed. He urged that the articles of incorporation, financial plan, building plan, provisions for upkeep and rental requirements be **submitted to the Grand Lodge** for approval. His recommendation was approved, and a **committee was created** to review proposals.

Large cottonwood logs offered to the Grand Lodge that were believed to be from the first Masonic lodge room in the state – **Peter Sarpy’s trading post** – were investigated by a special committee. It found that the logs were from the old Mission Building in Bellevue and not from the trading post which was built in 1810 of small round logs. The committee said part of the trading post fell into the Missouri River and the remainder was used for firewood by local residents in 1868.

A proposal to create a **trial commission system** for Masonic offenses was approved at Annual Communication. It replaced trials in lodges before the members.

Degree work was not required to make an active **lodge**, said the Grand Master. **Small lodges** could exert influence for good as well as a **large lodge**. Stating that many city lodges were too large, he added, “I am converted to the belief that smaller lodges will assist in the progress of Masonic education, likewise to multiplying Masonic influence for good.”

“Better and more careful **supervision**” of **DeMolay Chapters** in the state was suggested by the Grand Master after he criticized the group’s “modernization” by allowing basketball, playing other games and the conferring of degrees on the Sabbath. He also chided DeMolay’s Grand Scribe and State Deputy for permitting lodges to sponsor Chapters while knowing that Grand Lodge law did not permit it. He concluded that unless supervision was improved that the privilege of meeting in Masonic Temples should be withheld “until harmony is restored.”

The Grand Master requested authority to issue a dispensation to **The Nebraska Masonic Home** for an **Emergent Lodge** designating the president, superintendent and physician as the three principal officers who would perform a Masonic **burial service**. This took the burden off **Plattsmouth Lodge No. 6** to conduct the services, which was taxing its officers. A special committee was appointed to consider the request.

With 16 Past Grand Masters living who hadn’t received a **Past Grand Masters jewel** from the Grand Lodge, it was agreed the four oldest would receive a jewel during the following four years.

The Grand Master recommended that law be changed to allow men to join who had lost members of their body. “What matters if the **physical body has imperfections**, providing the heart is right?” he said. The **Committee on Jurisprudence** did not agree.

With the recent completion of the **Veterans Hospital in Lincoln**, the Masters and Wardens of Lincoln’s lodges organized a **Hospital Service Club** to regularly visit Masons staying there.

A **Committee on Masonic Education** was appointed by the Grand Master to provide “**ritual interpretation**” as a means to awaken “a fuller knowledge and appreciation of the high ideals and standards” of Masonry. The group organized a corps of speakers that addressed the Central **Schools of Instruction** and other Masonic gatherings.

Ten Central **Schools of Instruction** were held of three days each. The Master’s Degree was conferred on the afternoon of the last day, and the evening was handled by the Committee on

Masonic Education. The Grand Master advised that the schools be held over two days instead of three, and that the presentations of the Masonic Education Committee be held at another time.

The Grand Master suggested all newly-made **Entered Apprentices be presented a copy of the Monitor.**

An inquiry from **St. Paul Lodge No. 82** in St. Paul to **present prizes or medals** to high school students for meritorious school work was rejected by the Grand Master. The **Committee on Jurisprudence** agreed and cited the law which stated funds could only be used for Masonic purposes.

The **Committee on Relief and Care of Orphans** said it saw an increased number of appeals for **relief** in the previous year, including assistance to 32 Masons, 23 widows of Masons and 41 orphans. The chairman praised 12 widows who were caring for their babies in their own homes and for taking on menial work to provide for them.

An ever-present nuisance was **chain prayer letters** sent to Masons. The Grand Master said some advertised a **lottery**. He told members the letters prey on the ignorance and superstition of humans, and they should be thrown away.

Brother Colonel **Thomas Majors** of Peru, the last surviving member to receive his Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft degrees from **Monitor Lodge U. : D. :**, was congratulated by the Grand Master for attaining 89 years of age. Monitor Lodge was the only “army lodge” working under dispensation from Nebraska during the **Civil War**.

More than 550 delegates and wives at **Annual Communication** were transported by a large fleet of cars driven by Omaha Masons to **The Nebraska Masonic Home** in Plattsmouth to tour the infirmary and visit with residents. They were then taken to the **James G. Megeath Masonic Home for Boys** in Omaha for a picnic supper.

While serving about 100 residents at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** and with an escalation each month in requests for admission, the Grand Master sent a letter to the Master of each lodge proposing several options to raise funds for **construction** of a new building during the Grand Lodge’s 75th anniversary. The majority of Masters preferred that voluntary contributions fund the work. **Plattsmouth Lodge No. 6** in Plattsmouth set the pace with a \$2,600 donation, or \$10 for each member. A committee was appointed to raise \$200,000.

Brother **Charles Veazie** left \$25,000 in his will for the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** to **build a fire-proof cottage** for babies. The Grand Lodge and **Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star** each added \$10,000 so construction on the building could begin.

Out of 50 **contributing** jurisdictions, Nebraska was 42nd on the list for contributions to the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial providing only 50 percent of its pledge of \$1 per member. The Grand Master said Nebraska Masons “cannot take very much pride in the results of our 10 years of intermittent effort.”

The Grand Master said every lodge should join with the **George Washington Bicentennial Commission** in celebrating the 200th anniversary of his **birth** in 1932 by holding ceremonies. He also said Nebraska Grand Lodge should be represented the following year at a dedication ceremony for the Masonic Memorial Building in Alexandria, Virginia, the second week of May.

On invitation of the Imperial Potentate of the Shrine, the Grand Master attended the unveiling of a \$100,000 **Peace Monument** provided by the Imperial Council of the Shrine honoring more than **100 years of peace** between the **U.S. and Britain**. The event occurred in Toronto, Ontario.

1932

John R. Tapster, Grand Master

June 11, 1931 – June 9, 1932

Reported at the 75th Annual Communication

About 150 cars transported delegates at **Annual Communication** to Bellevue to dedicate a **monument** commemorating the location of the **first Masonic lodge** in Nebraska in 1855. The Grand Lodge of Illinois instituted Nebraska Lodge No. 184 at the John Jacob Astor Fur Trading Company. The event was attended by the Grand Masters from Illinois, Iowa and Missouri, the three jurisdictions that started lodges in Nebraska before the Grand Lodge was formed in 1857. That evening, a banquet with several speakers reminisced about the early days of the Grand Lodge.

General **John J. Pershing** attended the presentation of the Master's Degree and Past Master's Jewel in September 1931, at **Lincoln Lodge No. 19**, his home lodge. Pershing spoke to the crowd.

Like many other jurisdictions, Nebraska saw a decrease in **membership**. "I would remind you that our strength lies not in numbers, but in **quality**. If we are to keep this fraternity what we believe it to be – a group of law-abiding, square-dealing, God-fearing men with a desire for knowledge and of being serviceable to our fellow creatures, we must of necessity pay more attention to the selection of those who present themselves for membership in the Order," he said.

The number of **delinquent** members was 7,811 compared to 6,060 the previous year. The number suspended was 1,137. The amount delinquent was \$70,600 compared to \$56,500 in 1930.

Pointing out that some **lodges** were **financially and numerically weak**, the Grand Master said it was in the best interest of Masonry for them to **consolidate** with stronger lodges. "It is a fact that good roads have materially affected the affairs of many lodges in rural communities throughout our Grand Jurisdiction," he said. "Small lodges, located within five to 10 miles of each other, suffer not only from lack of attendance, but membership."

The **Depression** continued to place a strain on lodges and the Grand Lodge in the following ways: **The Nebraska Masonic Home** postponed a drive to raise money for a new unit; some lodges reduced their annual **dues**; the Grand Master turned down a petition to form a **new lodge** in Omaha; no-interest **loans** totaling \$16,775 were made to 87 brothers in Northeast Nebraska affected by a drought and grasshopper infestation to buy feed and seed; after making the loans, the Grand Lodge **Relief Fund** stood at \$1,867 which would have limited its annual assistance until \$6,000 was transferred from the Permanent Reserve Fund; the Grand Lodge foreclosed on two farm **loans** totaling \$10,500; bank failures prevented 15 lodges from paying their **dues** in full; over \$500 was lost when the **State Bank of Omaha closed**, but the receiver of the bank paid one-half that amount to the Grand Lodge; with gross revenue down \$6,000 compared to the previous four-year average, the **Finance Committee** said it must curtail all possible expenses of the general fund; and the Grand Master recommended that a special committee be appointed to examine the Grand Lodge's **relief** efforts which had doubled in a four-year period, noting a limit must be made in providing relief.

Commenting on the impact of the **Depression**, the **Grand Master said**, "...I would say that the conditions through which we are passing have brought the brethren to understand each other better, and have proved beyond doubt that Masonry functions best when the emergency comes, and that the **conferring of degrees in large numbers** is not the only mark of progress, nor always the best."

The Grand Master commented on lodges that lowered their **dues**, "No practice could be more fraught with danger. It is, in effect, placing Masonry upon the bargain counter, which, if continued will spell ruin to the organization." He continued that lodges must also protect themselves from emergencies and to provide **relief**. Lodges that didn't have funds to help brothers must then turn to the Grand Lodge for assistance, he said. "Masonry has a glorious past, but we cannot feed the hungry and clothe the naked with sentiment."

Through exposure to light, the signed names of Grand Lodge Officers on lodge **charters** were fading. Lodges requested permission to retrace the names. The Grand Master denied the requests and recommended that each lodge send its charter to the Grand Lodge for placement in the vault to protect it. A **photo-static copy** would be sent to each lodge. The **Committee on Jurisprudence** rejected his recommendation and allowed lodges to retrace names or produce a photo-static copy.

The Grand Master observed that brothers should desire to know more about the deeper things of Masonry such as its moral and spiritual aspects. "The history of Freemasonry is written in **deeds**, not

in words. When the outer world comes to recognize a Mason by his deeds, by his daily walk and conversation instead of by watch charms and emblems upon his person, there and then only will Masonry have accomplished its purpose. Let us therefore, strive to make the fundamental principles laid down upon the trestle-board of Masonry the dominant star of our attainment.”

The **Masonic Education Committee** was laying the foundation for a program that would “be of great benefit to the fraternity,” said the Grand Master. The delegates approved the **addition of the Committee to the Bylaws**. In its report, the committee suggested that **publication** of the Masonic News and Educational Bulletin be continued, and that it develop a **circulating library** for members, particularly those in smaller towns and villages.

Deputy Grand Master R.: W.: **John Ringer died** August 23, 1931.

The Grand Master recommended that a committee of three be appointed to revise the **burial service** to eliminate depressing sentences in the ceremony such as, “that we, too, will be whelmed beneath death’s awful waves” and “the sad and solemn scene now before us” and “with sorrowing hearts and tears of anguish.”

Since the beginning of the Central **Schools of Instruction**, it was customary to hold three-day sessions. The Grand Master instructed the Grand Custodian to limit the schools to two days because of the increasing number of brethren who were proficient and the advent of **Deputy Custodians**.

The first **district conferences for lodge secretaries** were held. Satisfied with the results, the Grand Master urged their continuance.

The Grand Master said the adoption of **trial commissions** was “one of the best pieces of legislation ever enacted by this Grand Lodge.” Its manner of dispensing justice exceeded trial by lodge, he said, “...I wonder why we sanctioned the old form so long.” He said involving disinterested Masons was far better than the dissension fostered by friends of the accused packing the lodge room on the night of the trial. The **Committee on Grievances** reported its labors were lightened as no appeals were received from the 12 trials held in the previous year.

The Nebraska Masonic Home was about **full to capacity** with 99 residents and a “considerable” waiting list. Additional ground was purchased to complete a **park** surrounding the home.

After reviewing the number of deaths at **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, it was decided to continue asking **Plattsmouth Lodge No. 6** in Plattsmouth to perform **Masonic funerals** for its residents. A report said that of 45 deaths in seven years, Plattsmouth Lodge performed the Masonic service for 11 Masons. The lodge stated they had never complained about performing the service.

Brother **James Brenizer** of Broken Bow left \$100,000 in his will for the Grand Lodge to build a **home for the elderly**.

The **Veazie Memorial Cottage** was completed at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** in November 1931, thanks to a \$28,800 donation from the estate of Brother Charles Veazie, and \$10,000 each from the Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter of Eastern Star.

In observance of the 200th anniversary of the **birth of George Washington**, the Grand Master issued instructions for lodges to hold special meetings to celebrate his birth during the week of February 22nd. All but a few lodges participated and some lodge events attracted up to 700 people.

A **dedication** ceremony was held in Alexandria, Virginia, for the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial. More than 18,000 Masons paraded to the ceremony that was led by Past Grand Master of Virginia Charles Callahan who conceived the idea. President Herbert Hoover attended the festivities and was honored by a 21-gun salute by artillery fire and responses from the frigate “Constitution.” About \$650,000 was necessary to complete the building.

Of Nebraska lodges, 107 had contributed \$1 per member to the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial, and 185 had not.

The Grand Master and Junior Past Grand Master attended a celebration in Philadelphia, **Pennsylvania**, observing the **200th anniversary** of that Grand Lodge. The itinerary included Old Christ Church, Valley Forge and the Masonic homes.

The **Committee on Promotion of the World's Peace** reported that negative reaction around the world to **Japan's invasion of China** prompted it to agree to pursue a peaceful course. Japan's actions resulted in the U.S. refusing to recognize its gains by force of arms.

1933

Edwin B. Johnston, Grand Master

June 9, 1932 – February 11, 1933

Ralph O. Canaday, Grand Master

February 13, 1933 – June 7, 1933

Reported at the 76th Annual Communication

Edwin Johnston served as Grand Master from June 9, 1932, until his **death** February 11, 1933. R.:W.: Deputy Grand Master **Ralph Canaday** was installed Grand Master on the day of Johnston's funeral, February 13th, 1933 and served just four months in office. In closing his address, Canaday said, "My chief regret in turning over the gavel at the close of this communication of the Grand Lodge will be that I was not of greater service to you."

It was noted that for the second time in its history, a **Grand Master died in office**. For more than 60 years, every Grand Master survived his term of office by not less than four years, while in the previous decade, the Grand Lodge lost two Grand Masters and a Junior Past Grand Master.

An amendment was adopted changing the month of **election of lodge officers** to December and installation in January. The Grand Master ruled that lodge officers elected in May had the right to be installed in June, however, their terms would expire in January.

The Grand Master said the **Grand Lodge** was in excellent **financial condition**, as were lodges that exercised foresight in their finances. He reported more activity and interest in the fraternity.

Lodges had greater trouble than ever before paying their Grand Lodge **dues**. A bank moratorium was declared just prior to the deadline, making it impossible for some lodges to pay their dues. The Grand Master thanked lodge officers for trying their best to pay dues on time, and that "no local lodge which has done its best...need fear the action of the Grand Lodge with reference to it." The number of **delinquent** members was 11,233, compared to 7,811 the previous year, representing \$101,807.

The **Committee on Returns** was concerned that so many lodges reduced their **dues**. They commented that the lodges were hampering "their important duties."

Of total **uncollected dues**, about \$10,000 would have supported the Grand Lodge's **charity** efforts.

A **special finance committee** appointed to examine finances stated their hope that the appointment of a **membership committee in each lodge** would help to overcome delinquencies. If not, then the committee said the **delinquent dues** charge should be wiped out or those who hadn't paid their dues should be suspended. The committee said brothers who didn't pay their dues likely were careless with other obligations and were not good for the fraternity, and could become a burden if they became ill, aged or experienced other misfortunes.

Membership dropped by 2,094 to 39,265 at the end of 1932 from 41,359 the year before. Thirty-eight lodges gained in membership, 220 lost members and 34 maintained their membership levels.

Long, continued **unemployment** resulted in numerous calls for help to the **Committee on Relief and Care of Orphans**. "It is of such serious importance that it behooves us as Masons to do all in our power to see that our brethren are more generally re-employed as speedily as possible," the committee said.

Mitchell Lodge No. 263 in Mitchell presented a resolution stating that in light of a "revival of work and employment of laborers and tradesmen in all lines of industry throughout this country," that the Grand Lodge create an **employment committee** to maintain contact with employers about

available positions and with lodges for available workers. It was referred to the **Finance Committee** which stated no funds were available to perform the responsibilities.

After asking lodges to complete a tentative **balance sheet**, the **special committee on finance** reported more than half the lodges spent more money than they received. The committee doubted what bookkeeping methods were used in lodges and said personal visits would be required to enforce the adoption of a double-entry bookkeeping system.

The balance sheet showed total lodge **charity** at \$25,250, a little more than 10 percent of maximum dues collectible. The **Committee on Relief** said each lodge should set aside funds for investment to pay for relief. They also pointed out that a large number of lodges established **fees** for each degree below the minimum of \$40 to join.

Authority was given to the Grand Master to work with the Grand Lodge of the Independent Order of **Odd Fellows** to ask the state's Banking Department to secure the release of **funds** belonging to local **lodges** on deposit in failed and restricted banks.

A number of **lodges** did not hold regular **meetings** or activities. The Grand Master said that while a **small lodge** in a small community can provide valuable service, a lodge that doesn't function is a detriment to the fraternity.

The **Special Committee on Consolidation of Weak Lodges** reported that with improvements in roads, means of travel and younger men leaving smaller communities, it was inevitable that consolidations would occur. They praised older brothers who carried on their lodge's work. Given the situation, the committee said it was no time to rock the boat or make radical changes.

One change suggested by the **Special Committee on Consolidation of Weak Lodges** called for lodges holding regular **meetings** on days of a full **moon** to change to a specific day. Lodges following that path were seeing higher attendance. "With modern ways of travel, less attention is paid to the light of the moon, and many calendars omit even mentioning it," their report said.

The committee also said the **condition of lodge halls**, ante-rooms and entrances should be improved that through a lack of work had become unattractive.

Unpaid interest on **loans** resulted in borrowers providing additional security and chattel mortgages on crops and livestock, but no loans were foreclosed. The Grand Lodge did have title to two farms and received ownership of three others.

The committee appointed to revise the Masonic **burial service** said many meetings would be required to complete its work, and given the economic conditions, they didn't feel the effort justified the expense. However, they recommended a continuation of plans to revise the service.

Plans to develop a **circulating library** and establish study clubs in local lodges required more time and more books than available. The **Committee on Masonic Education** delayed the idea until a time when the funds were more favorable.

Masonic education should be carried out in all lodges, especially weak lodges, said the Grand Master. He urged that the **Grand Custodian** initiate programs in local lodges until someone could be hired to handle the duties.

The Grand Master recommended that \$5,000 be set aside in deference to paying premiums for a **bond for lodge officers**. He said bond costs were higher, many bonding companies were of doubtful solvency and most lodges had few funds.

The **Committee on Finance** said the amount of **money available** for general fund expenditures was \$2,300 less than a year ago. The chairman said the committee would watch "with extreme care all items of expenditure and perhaps we will have to cut appropriations of different departments..."

About \$2,000 was paid back to the Permanent Reserve Fund from a \$6,000 **loan** made through the **Committee on Relief** to brothers in Northeast Nebraska. The chairman of the **Committee on Finance** observed that the remainder would be returned to the fund as loans were collected. The loans were made with the stipulation that if paid before the deadline, the 5 percent interest would be waived.

In 1931, a **Committee on Funds and Investments** was proposed to **approve every purchase**, sale, exchange or conversion of real estate or security, and every collateral or mortgage loan, as well as review investments. The Grand Secretary handled most fund-related activities. On recommendation of the chairman of the **Special Committee on Finance**, the issue was dropped because the change “would not attain the desired result.”

It was recommended that two **safes** be purchased to store original records of the Grand Lodge to protect them from **fire**. The cost was \$840.

The **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial was built on a “pay as you go” plan. Nebraska **paid** 56 percent of its commitment of \$1 a member, but several states had paid several times their quota. The Grand Master said that given the economic conditions, it was unwise to insist the brothers pay their quota.

The **Symbolic Grand Lodge of Germany** in Berlin requested recognition, but because of “unsettled political conditions...and the reported interdiction of the Order as we know it,” the **Committee on Foreign Correspondence** deferred consideration of the application. **Adolf Hitler** had been appointed chancellor of Germany in January 1933, and established the Dachau concentration camp two months later.

1934

Archie M. Smith, Grand Master

June 7, 1933 – June 6, 1934

Reported at the 77th Annual Communication

Lodges that appointed a **Membership Committee**, as authorized by a recently-passed bylaw, saw greater interest in lodge, reduced **delinquency in dues**, and a more sympathetic view of brothers needing help to pay dues, said the Grand Master. He urged all lodges to appoint a Membership Committee.

All but two lodges had paid their 1932 **dues** totaling only \$113, but 47 lodges owed \$9,000 in dues for 1933. The books were closed on 1931 when **Joppa Lodge No. 76** in Bloomington paid \$22.20 in dues. The Grand Secretary renewed his emphasis that lodges needed good business management, especially a budget based on annual dues.

The number of **delinquent** members was 11,180, compared to 11,233 the previous year. The amount delinquent was \$107,300 compared to \$101,800 in 1932.

Initiates in the state in 1931 totaled 771, and in 1932 were 808. During 1933, the number of **new members** dropped to 451, and fell again in 1934 to 319. In 1931, Nebraska had 42,077 Masons, but membership was down in 1934 to 37,092. There were nearly 2,200 fewer Masons at the end of 1933 than at the end of 1932.

The Grand Lodge imposed a **fine** of 1 percent per member per day for **delinquent dues**. While Grand Lodge officers were lenient because of the **Depression**, the **Committee on Finance** recommended that fines for delinquencies be regularly and consistently imposed on lodges. However, it suggested if a lodge found itself “financially embarrassed” and unable to pay dues, that it inform the Grand Master who would have authority to grant an extension.

During the previous year, the **Committee on Relief and Care of Orphans** expended \$10,000 for relief in Nebraska, an increase of \$1,300, and it appeared demands in the coming year would increase again. The chairman encouraged each lodge to start a **lodge budget** and include a line item for **relief**.

Just one **Secretaries Conference** was held because the Grand Secretary was busy collecting unpaid **dues**, farm **loans** and conducting a survey of Northeast Nebraska brethren who previously received loans.

The **Committee on Jurisprudence** recommended that the Grand Master appoint a committee to investigate setting aside \$5,000 to pay for a **bond for lodge officers**, as proposed at the 1933 Annual Communication.

The Grand Master attended the annual meeting of the **Masonic Service Association** while at the **Conference of Grand Masters and Grand Secretaries**. He praised the work of the association while noting the Grand Lodge of Nebraska withdrew its membership a few years earlier to reduce expenses. He said the **economic conditions** prevented him from recommending that the Grand Lodge rejoin the association, but suggested reconsidering when the times were better.

No action to revise the Masonic **burial service** was taken because two of the committee members moved from Nebraska. Chairman Past Grand Master **Ira Freet** said he would continue work on the ceremony if ordered by the next Grand Master.

Applications for admission to **The Nebraska Masonic Home** and **relief** outside the home greatly increased during the previous year, while revenue for the home decreased.

Due to a moratorium on farm mortgage foreclosures, **The Nebraska Masonic Home** could not foreclose on a \$6,000 **loan** in 1933. The home decided not to loan any money on land until the Moratorium Act was repealed or modified.

W.:Brother **William Evers**, superintendent of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, presented a set of **gavels** to the Grand Lodge he made from walnut trees planted on the home's grounds by Brother George Vallery, Most Eminent Past Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of the U.S.A. In addition, he built a case for the gavels from walnut that was part of a stage station erected in Plattsmouth in 1853. The gavels bore the markings of each office, and the case's dimensions symbolized "the mechanical unity of Freemasonry." He said he made the gavels after "being inspired by affection for the officers and brethren of this body."

The **200th anniversary** of the chartering of the **first lodge in America** was observed by the Grand Master when he attended ceremonies in Boston in June 1933. About 11,000 Masons attended a mass meeting during the occasion.

Masonry may need to protect civilization against the "isms" of **Hitlerism**, Nazism, Fascism and Communism that were flourishing around the globe, warned W.:Brother Earl Lee of **Fremont Lodge No. 15**.

The Report on **Foreign Correspondence** stated that under **Hitler**, Germany had "abandoned her duties as a civilized people" for the second time with a generation that would bring discredit on a barbarian. A recent news item said that after a meeting of Masonic and government representatives, all **German Masonic lodges were dissolved** and reorganized on a purely Christian basis. The word "Freemason" and Old Testament ritual disappeared, and lodges were reorganized under the name of the National Christian Order of Frederick the Great. Jews were refused admittance.

1935

Virgil R. Johnson, Grand Master

June 6, 1934 – June 5, 1935

Reported at the 78th Annual Communication

Although 2,049 **members** were lost during the prior year, it was less than the previous year when 2,173 left the fraternity in Nebraska. **Reinstatements** were 100 percent more than the past year. "This leads me to the conviction that when we have returned to a reasonable degree of normalcy, as to **economic and agricultural conditions**, we can well expect one of the greatest records of reinstatement growth to good standing of suspended members this Grand Lodge can ever hope to have," commented the Grand Master.

All but \$114 of **dues** owed by lodges for 1933 was paid. The outstanding amount of unpaid dues for 1934 was \$5,800, and considerably less than the \$9,000 owed the previous year.

The **Committee on Finance** said two practices by lodges make it difficult for them to pay their Grand Lodge **dues**: lack of satisfactory business methods, and placing funds for Grand Lodge dues in building projects. To reduce the impact of one large payment, the chairman recommended that lodges be allowed to make payments on a monthly or quarterly basis.

Lodges were holding more Masonic **activities** after the **Depression** slowed the number of their gatherings in previous years.

Nearly \$10,000 was provided by the **Committee on the Relief and Care of Orphans** to assist 46 men, 59 women and 50 children. The chairman added that no budget increase was expected in the coming year since the amount was \$45 less than the expenditure the previous year. Almost every local lodge performed its “full responsibility and share in the work,” he said. However, he reminded other lodges that relief was their responsibility and the committee was created to supplement their efforts.

Delegates at Annual Communication voted to give \$250 in **relief** to the Red Cross to aid residents in southwestern Nebraska where the **Republican River flooded** after 24 inches of rain in 24 hours. The rains made the river rise 10 feet in 12 minutes in McCook. The flood destroyed 341 miles of highway, 307 bridges and killed 113 people.

Of the \$2 paid by members to the Grand Lodge in **dues**, 75¢ was for **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, 25¢ for the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**, 25¢ for the Building and Improvement Fund, 60¢ to the General Fund and 15¢ to the **Relief Fund**. The per capita cost for relief doubled between 1931 and 1935: 1931 - 14¢; 1932 - 16¢; 1933 - 22¢; 1934 - 27¢; and 1935 - 28.4¢.

Out of concern that Masons would seek information about the fraternity from possible **clandestine sources**, the Grand Master said every effort should be made by the **Committee on Masonic Education** to supply the brethren with illuminating information.

The Grand Master said there were a few benefit organizations in the state **using the word “Masonic”** in their name that had no relationship with the Grand Lodge. While the organizations were owned by and only served members of the fraternity, he said it resulted in misunderstandings about the role of the Grand Lodge. He referred it to the **Jurisprudence Committee**.

The **James G. Megeath Masonic Home for Children** in Omaha requested permission of the Grand Master to **solicit funds** from Omaha Masons. The Grand Master gave permission while also noting his concern that the home referred to itself as a “**Masonic**” home. He said no permission was previously granted to use the name.

A committee looking into the **bonding** of lodge **Masters and Secretaries** urged the Grand Lodge give up its Lodge Trust Fund and secure coverage from a reputable company. It said the Grand Lodge should seek about 20¢/\$100 in coverage.

The **infirmary** at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** required an addition, the Grand Master said, to care for an additional 100 people.

Noting that eight children from the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** were attending college or normal training, the Grand Master offered that funding be provided the students through their sophomore year in **college**. He suggested the children be required to repay any costs borrowed for schooling after that year.

The **Jurisprudence Committee** concurred with the Grand Master that although a café beneath a lodge served **3.2 beer**, it did not constitute a “saloon menace.”

The wife of a man who experienced a stroke asked to make his dues current. When **allowed by the Grand Master**, the widow then asked the Grand Lodge to pay the funeral bill after he died. The situation prompted the Grand Master to suggest the law be changed so that if dues were paid within one year of suspension, the suspension would be removed. And, for those who paid dues after one year, a two-thirds vote by his lodge would be required to be **reinstated to membership**. While approving the Grand Master’s action, the **Jurisprudence Committee** disapproved his recommendation.

The Grand Master referred an idea to the **Jurisprudence Committee** he had about appointing a committee to make recommendations on requests to confer degrees on men with **physical limitations**. The Committee turned it down.

Ashlar Lodge No. 33 in Grand Island held a Master's degree on the **birthday of George Washington** attended by 450 men from 58 lodges in eight states.

A **photostatic copy** of a **charter** was provided to **Ogallala Lodge No. 159** in Ogallala, which lost its original copy.

1936

William C. Ramsey, Grand Master

June 5, 1935 – June 10, 1936

Reported at the 79th Annual Communication

A slow, but gradual improvement in the condition of lodges was seen by the Grand Master, although Nebraska experienced a sixth consecutive year of **loss of members**. Since 1929, more than 8,300 members had left the fraternity. However, for the third straight year, the decrease was less than the previous year.

The Grand Secretary said he had observed that brethren were taking a **greater interest in Freemasonry** and the fraternity was on a better foundation than in several years. He said, "...the trials through which we have passed (*Depression*) have strengthened the Masonic character of our membership."

A total of \$352 in **dues** was yet to be collected for 1934 from six lodges. For the 1935 dues, 41 lodges owed \$4,200 in dues.

Noting that the annual **dues** charged by all 291 lodges averaged less than \$6, the Grand Master commented that the cost per day was less than 2¢, which he said everyone should be able to pay. He expressed concern that those dropping membership could least afford it because they could be **assisted by the fraternity**. Fearing that Masons did not understand the assistance offered to distressed worthy brothers, he recommended that the **Committee on Masonic Education** be **enlarged** and given more power to provide speakers to teach these principles.

Many **lodges** were struggling to keep their membership numbers up, said the Grand Custodian. He pointed out that some lodges were working against good roads and fast-changing conditions "who eventually will have to meet the issue with **consolidation** or **surrender of charters**."

Little funds were available to **relieve** brethren because nearly \$17,000 was loaned to **farmers/members** in Northeast Nebraska in 1932, and few payments had been received even though a letter was sent requesting just \$10 so that money could be used to help others. The chairman of the **Committee on Finance** recommended that the Grand officers make personal visits to the borrowers to encourage payment.

About \$50 less than the previous year was provided to **relieve** members, but over \$9,900 was spent.

Visits by the Grand Master or his representative were suggested by the **Committee on Finance** to **lodges delinquent** in paying **dues**. In addition, the committee advised that an audit be made at the visit.

No applications for **annuities** were received by the **Board of Masonic Service, Annuities and Gifts** which reflected the financial condition throughout the country caused by the **Depression**. The board asked permission to attend **Central Schools of Instruction** to explain the purpose of the board and the advantages it offered members.

A recommendation from the **Grand Master** that a low-priced **automobile be purchased** for his use was disapproved by the **Committee on Jurisprudence**. He argued that often the Grand Master deprived his family the use of a car while he was on business.

The **Grand Master** was elected **chairman** of the **Conference of Grand Masters**. He recommended that other Grand Lodge officers attend the conference for a better understanding of the fraternity's problems and a deeper knowledge of Freemasonry.

Past Grand Master **Lewis Smith** presided as president of the **Masonic Relief Association**.

DeMolay members were "keenly interested in the better and more abiding principles of life," said the **Grand Master** after attending an initiation ceremony.

Because **The Nebraska Masonic Home** was full, 39 **applicants** for admission were placed outside of the home. The **per capita cost** to care for residents increased from \$358 the previous year to \$387 due to a large number needing medical care.

The Grand Master said it was embarrassing to attend the annual meeting of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Association because Nebraska had **not paid \$1 per member** for construction of the building. The state had contributed \$24,300 of the \$33,800 it was obligated to pay. The Association said it needed an additional \$458,000 to complete the building.

1937

Chancellor A. Phillips, Grand Master

June 10, 1936 – June 9, 1937

Reported at the 80th Annual Communication

The **loss of members** in the last year was about one-half as many as the previous year, and the number of lodges **delinquent in paying dues** significantly decreased. The loss in members was the lowest since 1930. At the end of 1935, a total of 31 lodges were delinquent, but at the end of 1936, only 18 hadn't paid dues totaling about \$2,000.

Delinquent lodge dues for 1934 were paid in full. Less than \$200 in dues from three lodges was still delinquent for 1935.

About 60 percent of all correspondence sent by the Grand Secretary pertained to the **returns of lodges** and was prompted by a lack of cooperation from the lodges and failure to send in reports.

The number of **delinquent members** in 1936 was 8,473, owing more than \$87,600.

Ninety cases of direct **relief**, representing 132 recipients, were requested of the **Committee on Relief and Care of Orphans**.

The **Temple Building Advisory Committee** reported an increase of activity in the **purchase of buildings** to be remodeled and rebuilt, and for refinancing mortgages on buildings. "All of this would indicate that Masonry is on the upgrade again after a few years to practically lying dormant," the chairman said.

It was decided at a cabinet meeting of the Grand Lodge officers that a recommendation the previous year that they arrange personal visits to collect **funds loaned to farmers** in Northeast Nebraska in 1932 be not followed because of the ongoing drought. Instead, the officers ordered the Grand Secretary to write each lodge secretary asking for assistance in collecting the debt. Two recipients of the funds died and the repayment of their loans was unlikely.

Many requests were received for special dispensations to **elect or install officers** out of time because of the weather, road conditions and the flu epidemic.

Reminding delegates of the fraternity's high regard for the letter perfect regularity of its esoteric language, the Grand Master recommended that the Grand Lodge should take action "at the earliest possible moment" to arrange for the **preservation of the work**. He urged the next Grand Master to appoint a committee to study the matter.

The **Committee on Finance** said the newly-passed **Social Security Act** didn't apply to the Grand Lodge because of its charitable, benevolent and educational nature. No tax was paid. The Grand Lodge of Iowa was considering a test case, and invited the Nebraska Grand Lodge to join in the action. The committee appropriated \$200 to help with the test case if the incoming Grand Master

agreed. The chairman said, "We are convinced that taxation is the opening wedge toward a further curtailment of the liberties we now enjoy..." The Finance Committee also recommended that a special committee be appointed to study whether to formulate a pension plan or old age retirement fund to compensate the Grand Lodge's employees.

The entrance of the **U.S. flag** at **Annual Communication** was announced by the Grand Master and a color guard presented it before the delegates. It was claimed to be the first time in the history of the Grand Lodge that the flag was **formally presented**.

The **Grand Master** recommended that a decision be delayed on whether the Grand Lodge should provide a **car** for the next holder of the office. A car was leased for his use during the 1936-37 year, and he traveled 19,500 miles. The next Grand Master preferred using his own vehicle.

Brethren of Des Moines, **Iowa**, were hosted by Omaha's 11 lodges after arriving by special train manned by Masons only. The Grand Master of Iowa also attended. The visitors conferred the **Master's degree**.

Additional property across the road and south of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** was **purchased** to be maintained as a park for Fremont and the home. The Grand Lodge paid \$3,650 for its share. One reason influencing the decision was that U.S. Highway 30 was rerouted through Fremont so that it passed by the home.

The Grand Master made a presentation at the **Conference of Grand Masters** on obtaining funds for **Masonic charities**. The conference was presided over by **Past Grand Master William Ramsey**. **Past Grand Master Lewis Smith** missed several presentations because he was asked by attendees from other jurisdictions to confer on their procedures, policies and problems.

A request of the **Grand Master** to support a **magazine** devoted to the interests of Nebraska Masonry was **denied**. He said other jurisdictions had bad experiences with such enterprises.

The Grand Secretary advised other lodges to consider the standard set by **Right Angle Lodge No. 303** of Omaha. It hadn't shown a loss in **members** since receiving its charter in June 1920.

The **Masonic Education Committee** suggested adoption of a **program** of instruction for candidates used in other jurisdictions. The goal was to make him feel comfortable in lodge and educate him about the fraternity.

A number of jurisdictions, especially in the far west, were troubled with **Communists** joining lodges and then causing dissension. The **Grand Lodge of Oregon** made it a Masonic offense for members to belong to Communist organizations and expelled one member.

The Grand Master of Kansas said some meetings were missed because of **blowing dust** and snow, as well as fog. He reported that for many weeks, almost daily, the dust blew continuously in the western one-third of the state, rendering it was unsafe to hold meetings. "I was personally in three storms so bad that I could not see the radiator on my automobile or the pavement on which I was driving, and was only able to move at all by driving my automobile about two to three miles an hour with my head out of the window and my flashlight extended at full arm's length to see the black line in the pavement, and this in broad daylight."

1938

William A. Robertson, Grand Master

June 9, 1937 – June 8, 1938

Reported at the 81st Annual Communication

The Grand Master was presented a **gavel** crafted from oak comprising the first Sarpy County Courthouse that was built around 1857, the year the Grand Lodge of Nebraska was organized.

Two years after serving as Grand Master of Nebraska and one year after holding the chairmanship of the Conference of Grand Masters, **William Ramsey died** at the age of 53.

Past Grand Master Robert Dickson commented at Annual Communication that Masonry is so intermingled with the **history of the U.S.** that they are inseparable, and the destruction of one would be the destruction of the other. "In my judgment, there never was a time in our national and Masonic history when the duties, obligations and responsibilities of Masons were as great and far-reaching as today," he said. "...he who advocates the **teachings** of a **Hitler**, Mussolini or **Stalin** is a domestic enemy and should find no resting place under the stars and stripes."

In welcoming delegates to Annual Communication, Worshipful Master Eugene Dinsmore of **George W. Lininger Lodge No. 268** in Omaha commented that the nation was beset with many dangers brought on by **economic and social reforms**. "We are promised a more abundant life, and numerous economic and social reforms are popularly acclaimed by the masses whose misapprehension of what is involved leads us undeniably toward a totalitarian state," he said.

A call to appoint a special committee to consider a plan for an "**old age retirement fund**" for Grand Lodge employees was renewed by the **Committee on Finance**. The same request the year before did not result in the appointment of a committee.

The Grand Custodian observed, "Notwithstanding the fact that many of our communities and lodges were handicapped by **loss of crops** again this year, the brethren still have their heads up and have shown their loyalty and faith by keeping the fires burning and they are to be heartily commended for this spirit."

Membership dropped by 757 to 32,423 in 1937. A total of 1,111 members were suspended, 571 were raised, 232 affiliated and 450 were reinstated. Since 1931, the Grand Lodge lost more than 22 percent of its membership.

Continued crop failures over most of the state made the collection of interest and supervision of property difficult for the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**. Anticipating additional crop failures, the Grand Master said more land would be added to the home's holdings, entailing even more work. To protect its interests, a **supervisor of the properties** was hired.

During 1937, farmers in Northeast Nebraska paid \$25 to the Grand Lodge as part of a \$16,755 **loan** in 1932.

Farm loans from the **Orphans Educational Fund** totaled \$61,600. The Grand Lodge had title to seven farms after foreclosing on two farms. Thirteen loans from the **Children's Home Endowment Fund** totaled \$47,100. Funds under the control of the committee were \$225,000.

The **Committee on Relief and Care of Orphans** handled 97 cases of direct relief for 127 persons, expending \$9,300.

The 1935 **dues** owed by lodges were paid, but six lodges were in arrears a total of \$530 for 1936 dues. At the end of 1937, 21 lodges were **delinquent** with dues totaling about \$2,200. The number of members delinquent was 7,417, representing a total of about \$76,900, compared to 1,056 the previous year.

Four lodges showed a gain in **membership** and no **delinquent members** at the end of 1937: **Western Star Lodge No. 2** of Nebraska City, **Lancaster Lodge No. 54** of Lincoln, **Craftsmen Lodge No. 314** of Lincoln, and **Cairo Lodge No. 324** of Cairo. The chairman of the **Committee on Returns** said these lodges were successful because they "work toward the idea of renewing some brother's interest in Masonry and having many members **reinstated**."

For the first time, the Grand Master had a blank inserted in annual returns sent to lodges requesting the **name of the brother** and the date he received the Bronze **Jordan Medal**. A few lodges hadn't awarded a medal to a member, and a replacement medal was offered at no cost if it had been misplaced. "There is no ceremony, which the Grand Lodge provides, which seems to bring forth so much interest and enthusiasm, as the meetings where these medals are presented," said the Grand Master.

So many lodges returned their **charters** to the Grand Lodge for safe keeping that additional storage was purchased. **Photostatic copies** of the charters were returned to the lodges.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Student Fund Committee** reported residents who graduated from Fremont High School and recommended by the home's Board received **support** in their educational pursuits. Each child was required to earn room and board, but all other expenses (tuition, books, supplies and clothing) were paid, in addition to \$5 a month for incidental expenses.

Observances by lodges of the **150th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution** were ordered by the Grand Master for September 16, 1937, to remind members of their duties as American citizens.

When the Committee on **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial was created in 1928, the state made a **pledge** of \$1 for each of its 42,000 members. After **financial difficulties** hit the state, the work of the committee to collect a \$20,000 shortfall was ceased in 1931. The chairman urged lodge secretaries to make a list of the members who had paid their \$1, and perhaps "at an early date we can finish the task."

After attending the annual meeting of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Association, the Grand Master said the failure of Nebraska lodges to **pay** \$1 per member for its construction "advertises to the world that Masonry lacks either skill and ability or unity." He was selected to place a **wreath** on the tomb of Washington and attended a meeting of Alexandria Washington Lodge No. 22 in the room where Washington presided as Master.

Five Past Grand Masters and the Grand Master attended the raising of **Major General Stanley H. Ford** in **George W. Lininger Lodge No. 268** in Omaha. Ford served in the Spanish-American War, China, Mexico and World War I.

The **raising** of Grand Master **William Robertson's** son, a Midshipman in the U.S. Naval Academy, attracted representatives from five jurisdictions and 27 lodges.

1939

Walter R. Raecke, Grand Master

June 8, 1938 – June 7, 1939

Reported at the 82nd Annual Communication

A **50-year badge** was presented to **General John J. Pershing** on January 5, 1939, in Tucson, Arizona, by Past Grand Master **Henry Wilson**, who conferred the degrees on him in December 1888. Wilson presented the badge to Pershing because the general attended the awarding of his 50-year badge in 1931 and spoke at the event. It was noted that this was probably the first time the brother who conferred the degrees also presented a 50-year badge to the same brother. The Proceedings stated that Pershing was the first general commissioned by the United States who was a Master Mason, and the fourth general commissioned by the government of the United States (**George Washington** held the commission of general from the Continental Congress).

In welcoming delegates to the Annual Communication to Omaha, W. Frank Burbridge, Master of **Covert Lodge No. 11** in Omaha, observed the joy of being able to assemble while brethren in other countries could not or the **fraternity was dissembled**. "Thanks to the teachings of Masonry, brotherly love and the search for truth cannot be taken from them; and it is for us to encourage our distressed brethren."

The Grand Lodge saw a net loss in **membership** of 687 in 1938, and except for one year, it was the smallest decline since 1931. The Grand Master urged members to not be discouraged. "Masonry has never relied solely upon members for its strength, but rather upon the steadfast adherence of the faithful to the sublime principles which it teaches to its votaries," he said.

Unpaid dues prior to 1938 were written off by the Grand Lodge. In 1938, 21 lodges owed \$2,000. The number of delinquent members was 7,552 representing \$74,400, compared to 7,433 delinquent members the previous year for \$76,975.

It was suggested by the **Committee on Returns** that money be set aside to assist lodges unable to pay their **dues**.

The **Committee on Returns** said not enough effort was exerted to collect **delinquent dues**, and some lodges did not want to sell their investments to pay dues.

The Grand Secretary asked how far the Grand Lodge should go to assist **lodges having financial difficulties**. He pointed out that the Grand Lodge helps many individuals, but not lodges.

Approval to **reinstate** 90 former **members**, as well as an increase in requests in years leading up to 1939, indicate “a real desire on the part of suspended brethren to again participate in our labors and to receive the benefits of the Craft and a recognition that Masonry offers something without which they are not fully satisfied,” said the Grand Master.

It was pointed out by the **Committee on Relief and Care of Orphans** that while **membership** dropped 25 percent since 1931, Grand Lodge dues had remained the same, while expenditures had increased beyond **per capita income**. “You should not, however, expect this Grand Lodge to continue on this basis for an indefinite period of time. Neither this business, nor any other business, can long endure under similar conditions.”

A total of \$105 was received by Grand Lodge from **farmers** in Northeast Nebraska who were loaned \$16,755 in 1932. One man paid off his **loan**.

Since hiring a **farm manager**, some of the farms owned by the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** were cleaned up and repairs made to rundown buildings and fences. The home also had **loans to farmers** totaling \$72,850.

Ninety cases of direct **relief**, representing 133 recipients and \$9,200, were handled by the **Committee on Relief and Care of Orphans**.

The Grand Master said there were a large number of **lodges**, particularly small ones, that hadn't had a **visitation from a Grand Master** for more than 20 years, if ever. He said Grand Masters receive many invitations and it was impossible to accept all of them.

Grand Lodge laws were changed so that an Entered Apprentice or Fellow Craft would not be required to **petition for advancement** in the **degrees** unless he was rejected or five years had passed between degrees.

A year earlier, the **United Grand Lodge of England** issued a statement of **Declaration of Principles** reiterating the traditional foundations upon which Freemasonry in Great Britain existed. After studying them, an American committee, which included **Roscoe Pound**, formulated principles and presented them for consideration of **Grand Masters attending their national Conference**. The Grand Master offered them to the Annual Communication for adoption, but the **Committee on Jurisprudence** recommended against adopting them.

A special committee examining the feasibility of establishing a **pension system** for Grand Lodge employees recommended that it not be created. They said, “The committee feels that the number of employees and the character of the work of the larger part of them, and the location of the institutions in which they are employed justifies the Grand Lodge in taking no action...”

Several complaints were heard by the Grand Master regarding the **political activities** of individuals who gave the appearance of activity by Masonry as a body. A hand bill was sent to lodge secretaries and other members giving the religious and Masonic affiliation of candidates for state office. In another case, the roster of lodge members was made available to a candidate and was used by him on behalf of his campaign.

The **Committee on the Promotion of the World's Peace** said for a world which longs for peace, the **military arms race** was unprecedented. “...some nations seem determined to get that which they can get only by war and others feel that they must be prepared to defend that which they, in good faith, believe to be their own.”

The chairman of the **Committee on the Promotion of the World's Peace** reported peace had never been threatened more since World War I. “Some nations have frankly proclaimed that military power is the only influence they recognize in international relations. ... In a world, most of which longs for peace, there is an unprecedented **race in military and naval armament** anything like the vast sums that are now being spent in preparation for war.”

It was suggested by the Grand Master that the next one to hold the office should resume participation in funding the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial. The chairman of the Committee said, "Other jurisdictions, no more favorably situated than ours, have continued to make contributions during the **strenuous years** we have just passed through. It does not seem reasonable nor is it a tribute to Nebraska to be singled out each year as one of the few states where economic conditions are so low that our Master Masons are unable to contribute \$1 each to the Memorial Fund." He asked the Grand Lodge to donate \$500 a year for five years.

The **Committee on Jurisprudence** ruled against the **Grand Master's decisions** that approved the actions of **Covert Lodge No. 11** of Omaha to purchase two sheets of Christmas seals at \$1 each, and **Lincoln Lodge No. 19** in Lincoln that gave \$25 to a charity worker to buy clothing for poor children for Christmas because the expenditures were against Grand Lodge law.

A recommendation by the Grand Master to develop a joint **installation ceremony** with Eastern Star Chapters was rejected by the **Committee on Jurisprudence**.

The Grand Master referred to the **Grand Representatives** as the state department of the Grand Lodge, and added, "It is not our desire to change the form of any other country by imposing our system on them, but at the same time we do desire to let them know that our **form of government** works."

In response to the Grand Masters' introduction, a **Grand Representative** said, "We should appreciate the fact that the institution of Freemasonry is a democratic organization built upon brotherly love and truth. If that same spirit could be instilled into the hearts of the dictators, and the rulers of the world, humanity would be protected by a great **democracy**."

Freemasonry did not exist in Germany, Italy, Poland and Hungary, it was stated in the Report on **Foreign Correspondence**, and the Masonic world was waiting to see what would happen in Austria and Czechoslovakia. In 1938, Austria "joined with" Germany and **Hitler's** troops occupied Czechoslovakia in 1939.

1940

William J. Breckenridge, Grand Master

June 7, 1939 – June 5, 1940

Reported at the 83rd Annual Communication

Expressing thanks for the hospitality of Omaha's lodges at Annual Communication, W. Brother Paige Hall, **Geneva Lodge No. 79** in Geneva, said, "It may be true that many of us have much less to live on than we had a year ago, but it is certainly just as true that we have just as much as ever to live for. The real values of life are unshaken and solid. Even in an age of material well-being, this must be so, else how explain the happiness we feel in **helping a needy brother**." He also expressed concern about the threat from groups espousing fantasy leaders in a world of social and economic chaos, which leaves **democracies** to fear the future of self-government.

Commenting on the **Masonic Relief Association**, the Grand Master said it was assisting brothers in **Europe** who were suffering from oppression.

The Grand Master noted with sadness that some **Grand Lodges** in the world **no longer existed** or were in jeopardy because of the ambitions of dictators. He urged **Grand Representatives** for those jurisdictions to strengthen them by making contact and offering words of **encouragement**.

Funds were allowed in the budget for contributions to **help needy brothers** in countries touched by the **war** that started in September 1939.

For the fifth consecutive year, the number of raisings of new **members** increased, although total membership dropped by 406. **Reinstatements** totaled 137. Most cited the **depression** and lack of employment as reasons they did not pay their dues.

All but \$277 from two lodges in **delinquent dues** were paid for 1938. Fifteen lodges could not pay their Grand Lodge dues in full in 1939, and owed over \$1,100. The number of delinquent members was 7,260, about 250 less than a year earlier, who owed a total of \$71,280 in dues, down \$3,000 from 1938.

The **Grand Secretary's** attention to the **financial matters** took the Grand Lodge through the **depression** and drought in "first class shape," said the chairman of the **Committee on Doings of Grand Officers**.

Many brethren who **borrowed** from the **Relief** Account no longer lived in Nebraska or were suspended. The Grand Secretary was confident that most of the notes would be collected over a period of years.

Farmers in Northeast Nebraska who received \$16,755 in **loans** in 1932, paid \$970 on their loans.

With the exception of two farm mortgages, almost no interest payments on **farm loans** were past due. It was hoped that the two farms would be sold that fall.

Attendance at the 44 **Schools of Instruction** was 10 percent higher than the year before. At the last session of a school in Scottsbluff, the Grand Master **installed** the **officers of the nine lodges** in the North Platte Valley.

The **Committee on Jurisprudence** disapproved of the Grand Master's recommendation that a **Service Committee** be appointed to develop ways to create **greater lodge activity for weak lodges**. He had proposed that before Grand Masters could understand lodge problems, his year was almost over and little could be done to help. The committee would have provided continuity between Grand Masters.

A requirement that Masons must **wait one year** after joining **before petitioning the York Rite or Scottish Rite** was removed from the law on recommendation of the Grand Master, concurrence of the **Committee on Jurisprudence** and vote of the delegates.

The Grand Master recommended that two members of the **Committee on Jurisprudence** meet with the Grand Master with the power to approve candidates for membership with slight "**physical defects**" that did not interfere with their earning a living or where artificial means were used. The Jurisprudence Committee decided to delay a decision until the following Annual Communication.

The seal of the **Grand Lodge** was adopted as the **official seal**. It had been used since the **incorporation** of the Grand Lodge.

Although the name of **Gibbon Lodge** was changed to **Rob Morris Lodge No. 46** when it was moved to Kearney in 1877, there was **no record it was authorized** by the Grand Lodge. A resolution from Rob Morris Lodge verifying the name change was approved at Annual Communication. The charter of the lodge had indicated its name was Gibbon.

While the Grand Master did not criticize the work of Omaha's **James G. Megeath Masonic Home for Boys**, he commented that its **use of "Masonic"** in the home's name was embarrassing to the Grand Lodge as their circulars solicited funds in other jurisdictions. Correspondence from other Grand Secretaries pointed out that all Masonic homes were supported by their own Grand Lodge. He reminded the president of the home that the Grand Master must approve all solicitations.

The **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial showed the world that Masonry was not dead or dying, passé or outmoded, said the Grand Master. "With the **dictators** knocking away right and left and getting a very good score against us, with the **depression** putting its terrific claws into our system and drawing our blood, now is the time, if ever there was a time, to prove to the passer-by that this stands as a symbol of living, militant Twentieth Century Freemasonry, and that this building can be completed, and that it will be looked upon by the people who pass by, of whom there are millions, as evidence that Freemasonry can put the job across, in spite of dictators, in spite of depression, in spite of adverse circumstances around about."

Enough money was finally raised to build steps to the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial.

At age 90, Past Grand Master **John Wemple**, who served in 1884, was the **oldest living Past Grand Master in the country**. He resided in Cleveland, Ohio.

On his death, Brother Almon DePue, **secretary of Trestle Board Lodge No. 162** in Brock, was two months short of serving 48 years in that office.

The 806th **50-year badge** of membership was presented at Annual Communication.

1941

Earl J. Lee, Grand Master

June 5, 1940 – June 4, 1941

Reported at the 84th Annual Communication

Referring to **Germany's conquering of most European states**, the Grand Master pointed out that Freemasonry was closely aligned with democratic governments. "...never have two diametrically opposed philosophies of government come to grips with such intensity," he said. "On the one side is totalitarianism with its aggressive brutality and on the other, democracy, which has been the great goal of man for the past two centuries." He said only in England and Switzerland could Masonic Lodges continue their business, and England "stands alone in its valiant battle for democracy and human rights."

The **Committee on Foreign Correspondence** reported that most **grand bodies in Europe** had suspended their activities except for Great Britain, Switzerland, Sweden and Finland. The others were abolished or suppressed and their property confiscated. "But the seed is in the soil, and while policy demands that under the conditions as they exist in continental Europe, the activities of Masonry be suspended, we must remember that 'there is a spark of fire in the heart of every man in every land that will ask for liberty again, and win it if need be. If the principles of Masonry were ever true, they are true forever.'"

Fleeing Europe's dictators, **Freemasons fled to Switzerland**. In response to the Grand Lodge there, the Grand Lodge of Nebraska sent \$200 to be used to assist in **caring for the refugees**. Another \$500 was sent to the **Grand Lodge of England** for the **relief** of Masons who defended England from Germany.

Desiring that every **Nebraska Mason in the armed forces** be contacted by a Mason near his training quarters, a request was sent to the state's lodges to provide the **name, rank and location** of their brothers. The Grand Master suggested the service be continued as more Masons were inducted.

Collection of **loans** was as good, if not better, than recent years, the Grand Secretary reported. All brethren with loans had been contacted, but there were "a lot of promises, but very little results." He said if there was a crop in the state that year, he and the **farm manager** would visit each brother to "see if we cannot work out this problem."

The number of **delinquent members** was 6,764 compared to 7,260 the previous year, totaling \$66,500, down \$5,000 from the year before. The net loss in **members** for 1940 was 411, compared to 406 in 1939.

Petitions for **reinstatement** were received from 117 former members who cited "out of employment" and "the **depression**" as reasons for letting their membership drop.

One lodge owed \$256 in **delinquent dues** for 1936 and 1937, one lodge owed \$70 for 1939 dues and 16 lodges owed \$970 for 1940 dues.

In an attempt to collect **delinquent dues** from lodges, the **Grand Secretary** sent letters to lodges. The chairman of the **Committee on Returns** admonished some lodges for sending their letters back to him. "When officers of subordinate lodges take offense at these letters and write the type of letters that some of them do, they have no doubt lost sight of some of the Masonic teachings they learned in previous years."

Total cash and securities of the **Grand Lodge** increased \$15,000 over 1939 despite reduced revenue from lodges, a loss in **membership** and increased expenses. The increase was due to the “conscientious management and good judgment” of the **Grand Secretary**, said the chairman of the **Committee on Doings of Grand Officers**.

Assistance was provided by the Grand Lodge to 125 persons totaling about \$9,900, an increase over the previous year. From 1930 to 1940, Grand Lodge **relief** for brethren increased \$4,100 from \$5,800 to \$9,900.

There were reasons for optimism for the **Board of Masonic Service, Annuities and Gifts**: higher industrial production, wages and farm prices; tax advantages for using the board’s services; and a demonstrated need for strengthening Masonry by working together through the board.

To ensure the public ceremonies of the Grand Lodge were impressive, it was proposed that the office of **Grand Marshal be dropped** from the Grand Lodge line officers. Rather than changing the officer each year, the idea was to appoint an officer for continuing years so that he would become familiar with his duties and the ceremonies and be available to respond on short notice. The **Grand Senior and Grand Junior Deacons** said they were willing to stay in their offices for one year in order to implement the change, leaving no new appointment to the line the following year. The **Committee on Jurisprudence** stated there was no need for a change in law, but that the Grand Masters could handle the change through their appointments.

In an attempt to develop a sound **Masonic education** program, the Grand Master asked Deputy Grand Master **Edward F. Carter** to organize a program. Only one-fourth of the state’s lodges responded to a survey, and it was pointed out that the Craft must first be aroused from its lethargy. Noting that most **men wait to join** Masonry until they are in their 40s because of the substantial membership fee, the committee said the fraternity should create a favorable impression among younger men. It was also suggested that the Grand Lodge assist Masters and officers to develop “an organized program of lodge functioning.” Other recommendations included:

- Publication of a **booklet** to introduce candidates to Masonry at four meetings before **initiation** and after each degree.
- Publication of a pamphlet to give Masters ideas and help **plan lodge activities**.

The Grand Master sent a **gavel** to the Grand Master of the **Grand York Rite of Mexico** that was carved by W. Brother **William Evers** from a walnut tree planted by W. Brother George Vallery, both of Nebraska. Vallery later became Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the U.S.

Craftsmen Lodge No. 314 of Lincoln and **George Armstrong Lodge No. 241** of Craig **burned down** in early 1941. Both lodges had **photostatic copies** of their **charters**. The originals were stored at the Grand Lodge office.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** offered to the **Grand Lodge of England** to care for **12 English refugee children** during **World War II**, but as England was not continuing to evacuate children, the offer was not accepted.

Events observing the **25th Anniversary of the Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** were held. Former residents of the home attended from as far away as the East Coast. In memory of the founders of the home, a “Founders’ Gate” was erected at the main entrance.

Discord among Nebraska Masons about the **James G. Megeath Home for Boys**, in Omaha prompted the Grand Master to appoint a committee to meet with the home’s board. The committee said the Grand Lodge had previously recognized the **use of “Masonic”** in the home’s name and allowed solicitation of Omaha Masons for funds. “...by our failure to act when action was required we find that we have lulled the home into a sense of security which we cannot now in good conscience disturb,” said the chairman. The committee made several recommendations that were approved by the home’s board and the Grand Lodge:

- That its name be changed to the **Omaha Masonic Home for Boys**.

- Solicitation of Masons was restricted to Masons who were members of lodges in Douglas County.
- Solicitations could be made outside of Nebraska only with the Grand Master's permission.
- All letters, pamphlets and advertising would be approved by the Grand Master and state the home's relationship with the Grand Lodge: "Organized and operated by individual Masons independent of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska."
- The home's annual budget and monthly treasurer's report be submitted to the Grand Master, and its articles of incorporation be changed that no indebtedness could be incurred.
- That an Omaha Masonic Home Committee be appointed by the Grand Master to see that the agreement be carried out to protect Masonry.
- Neither the Grand Lodge or subordinate lodges would be liable for debts, obligations or contracts of the home.
- That lodges and other jurisdictions be notified of action on these recommendations.

Attempts were made at several lodges in the state to collect **taxes on initiation fees**. The Grand Master advised lodges not to pay any tax. A ruling by the U.S. Internal Revenue Department stated the Grand Lodge was subject to the **Unemployment Tax**. As a result, the Grand Lodge of Nebraska joined a Massachusetts effort to test that decision that was later abandoned. Another ruling on **Social Security** laws, sent to a committee appointed in 1938 at the **Grand Masters' Conference**, said that although Grand Lodges were viewed as a "fraternal beneficiary system," and exempt from income taxation, they were not exempt from Social Security law.

The Grand Lodge paid to the federal government a **Social Security and Unemployment tax** under protest, and commenced legal efforts to recover the amount through a test case. The **Committee on Finance** recommended that the Grand Lodge make future payments under protest.

A proposal by the Grand Master that a committee be appointed to study the establishment of a **retirement system** for Grand Lodge employees was rejected by the Grand Lodge on recommendation of the **Committee on Jurisprudence**.

A Grand Master's recommendation was approved by the **Committee on Jurisprudence** that a committee be appointed to develop a uniform **bookkeeping system** to be installed in **lodges** within five years.

An attempt to give permission to **lodges to sponsor DeMolay Chapters** was disapproved by the **Committee on Jurisprudence** and the Grand Lodge.

The **Committee on Jurisprudence** disapproved a recommendation of the previous Grand Master that power be given the office and a committee to approve **candidates** for membership with slight "**physical defects**."

The **Red Cross of Constantine, National Federated Craft and Allied Masonic Degrees** were added to the list of Masonic-related organizations **recognized** in the state.

The 1941 Proceedings include the first mention of a **loud speaker system** and the use of microphones for the delegates to use when addressing **Annual Communication**.

A recommendation by the Grand Master to **set aside \$200** a year for 14 years in preparation to celebrate the **100th anniversary** of the Grand Lodge was disapproved by the **Committee on Finance**. They said the additional time of the Grand Secretary to monitor the fund and the low return on investments wasn't worth the effort.

The **Grand Lodge of New York** conferred its Grand Master's **Medal for Distinguished Achievement** in 1939 on Right Worshipful **Roscoe Pound**, Past Deputy Grand Master of Massachusetts and member of **Lincoln Lodge No. 19**.

The **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial had enough funds to complete lodge rooms and the **replica of the old lodge room** in Alexandria, Virginia, presided over by Washington. While visiting the memorial, the **Grand Master** was permitted to **sit in the chair** Washington used while serving as Master.

A **traveling Bible** from Community Lodge No. 1005 in Chicago visited **Nebraska Lodge No. 1** in Omaha. After events were held in one lodge in each state, the Bible was presented to Community Lodge in November 1940.

The Grand Master attended a **special communication** of the **Grand Lodge of Wyoming** convened at **Independence Rock**, located 65 miles southwest of Casper. The first Masonic meeting was held atop the 27-acre in size boulder on July 4, 1862, by members of a wagon train. From 1843-1867, more than 350,000 people passed by the rock to points further west.

1942

Edward F. Carter, Grand Master

June 4, 1941 – June 10, 1942

Reported at the 85th Annual Communication

The Grand Master was a **justice of the Nebraska State Supreme Court** while serving the Craft. He became a justice on the Supreme Court in 1935 and held the office until 1971.

A **simultaneous meeting** of 12,000 Nebraska Masons was held in March 1942, to mobilize brethren to support “an all-out prosecution” of **World War II**. Meetings were held at designated locations across the state. An address written by the Grand Master, titled “Reveille for Masonry,” was presented at each site. Many previously non-involved members attended to support the patriotic event.

President **Franklin Roosevelt** received a **message** from the Grand Master as a result of the **simultaneous meeting** pledging wholehearted support of the war effort. Through his secretary, the President returned his thanks to Nebraska Masons. “Your words manifest a spirit which augurs well for the Nation in prosecuting to a successful conclusion the great task in which we are all now engaged.” A similar cablegram was also sent to General Douglas MacArthur, who said he was grateful for the inspiring message.

Responding to the welcome of the Omaha lodges to Annual Communication, Worshipful Brother Otto Kotouc, Jr., **commented** on **World War II**, stating, “In America we have not only the ingenuity to win wars but we have also the strength and wisdom to prevent these catastrophes, if we will only apply our best efforts to achieve that end. As Masons we must take a prominent part, after the war is terminated, in promoting that perpetual peace for which all mankind so desperately longs. ... We must assist in dispelling the omnipresent world-girding racial lusts and hatred and help substitute the omnipotent teachings of Him who said, ‘I am the way.’”

The Grand Master **commented** that while Masonic teachings require members to be quiet and peaceful citizens, they must resort to force to prove loyalty to the country, reverence to God and a firm belief in the principles of the Craft. “There was never a more insistent demand for real leadership in the affairs of men than now,” he said. “Freemasonry requires it as never before.”

With the start of **World War II**, a **Masonic War Service Committee** was formed by the Grand Master. All lodges were requested to furnish the **names of brethren or their sons** in the armed forces. Initially, 1,000 names were sent to the committee, which was charged with communicating with them and rendering service as the circumstances required. The Grand Master asked grand secretaries of other jurisdictions and local Masters and Wardens Clubs to contribute to their welfare, and pledged that the Grand Lodge would do the same for brethren or their sons stationed in Nebraska.

The **Committee on Promotion of the World’s Peace** was **abolished** on unanimous consent of the delegates at Annual Communication.

A brother in America from the then defunct **Grand Lodge of Vienna, Austria**, requested his diploma be treated as a **demit** to affiliate with **Mosaic Lodge No. 55** in Norfolk. The **Committee on**

Jurisprudence ruled Nebraska law did not allow that to occur, but stated he could petition to join in the usual way.

Euclid Lodge No. 97 in Weeping Water asked the Grand Master for a special dispensation for a **lodge in California to install their Master**, who had been called into the armed forces, as a courtesy. He ruled with reluctance that it couldn't be done out of his concern that it would set a bad precedent.

A resolution proposed by **Plumblin Lodge No. 214** in Adams asked that special dispensations be given lodges with less than 50 members to transact business with a **quorum of five members** until six months after the **war** due to local members out of the state with the armed forces. It was laid over to the next Annual Communication.

Another resolution, offered by **Nelson Lodge No. 77** in Nelson, said any member in the U.S. **armed forces** would be **exempt** from the payment of **dues**. In recommending no change, the **Committee on Finance** said the budget was strained and such a move would impair lodges and the Grand Lodge. It pointed out that lodges could remit dues and a program of recognition of members in the armed forces had been proposed. The matter was laid over to the next Annual Communication.

The responsibility of **investing the Grand Lodge's funds** was enlarged by the start of **World War II**, said the Grand Master. He suggested that the responsibility be shared with others rather than just leaving them with the **Grand Secretary**, and he advised that "changes be speedily made."

Grand Lodge investments included few government bonds, the Grand Master said. "We pride ourselves on being a patriotic organization, and I feel that we should live up to it by making substantial purchases of **war savings bonds**," he said. His recommendation to purchase \$50,000 in government bonds was endorsed by the **Committee on Finance**.

Twenty-eight fewer Masons were **raised** in 1941 compared to 1940, the **Committee on Returns** reported. The drop was partially attributed to a population shift from Nebraska to **war** production centers. "If so, it may be offset by the opposite trend during 1942," said the chairman.

Leniency and cooperation with lodges during the **depression in collecting funds** proved to be a sound policy, said the chairman of the **Committee on Returns**. Unpaid warrants were reduced from \$1,300 in 1941 from 16 lodges to \$325 from five lodges in 1942.

Membership in Nebraska dropped by only 67 members. The Grand Master said continuing the **educational program** developed the previous year and stimulation of indifferent lodges would result in an **increase** by the end of 1942.

The number of **delinquent members** was reduced from 6,764 at the end of 1940, accounting for \$66,500 in dues, to 5,458 in 1941, amounting to \$52,000.

More **reinstatements** occurred in 1941-42 when 429 men asked to rejoin Nebraska lodges compared to 328 the year before. The Grand Master commended lodges for their work to bring men back to their lodge.

Total property and **investments** amounted to \$401,000 in 1930, and by the end of 1941 stood at \$659,000 despite a significant **membership** decline in the same period. "But it will not profit the fraternity to make the accumulation of wealth a primary consideration while our loss in membership continues at an alarming rate," said the Grand Master. "It seems to me, sound logic dictates that we should spend more of our income in the **promotion of Masonry**, especially when it can be done without drawing upon capital assets."

The total **relief** provided in 1941 was \$9,800 to 123 people.

The work of a farm manager to collect on **loans** was "most pleasing," said the Grand Master. "The only difficulty we have in this department is that too many loans are being paid off, and it is very hard to find good loans to replace them."

Unauthorized versions of the **funeral service** were conducted across the state mainly because "some parts of our present service are not as sympathetic and consoling as they might be" causing greater sorrow and despair, said the chairman of a committee considering its revision. The

committee suggested the service be rewritten to eliminate some less-than-sympathetic language and combine the consoling parts of three services in the monitor into one.

All bond interest, preferred stock interest and interest on **farm mortgages**, except for two, were paid in full. The Grand Master said the collection of **relief notes** was very unsatisfactory, and the Grand Lodge was doing its best to collect it.

A request to dedicate a **memorial in a private cemetery** set aside for Masons was **rejected by the Grand Master**.

The Grand Lodge did not have a uniform **bookkeeping system**. A committee was appointed to develop a system, including a required minute book, books of account, cash receipts journal, cash disbursements journal, member's ledger sheet, monthly report, receipt forms, Treasurer's record, checks, vouchers and audits. Purchasing these items would cost the Grand Lodge \$6 for each lodge. The issue was laid over to the next Annual Communication.

On recommendation of the Grand Master, the **Committee on Finance** concurred that a committee of five be appointed to investigate, formulate and submit a plan for handling all stocks, bonds, mortgages and other **securities and property of the Grand Lodge**, and propose amendments at the next Annual Communication.

The **Committee on Jurisprudence** said no action was necessary by the Grand Lodge to accept an agreement with the **Omaha Masonic Home for Boys** because the home had complied with its conditions.

Although addenda to the **law** had been issued to lodges over the years, an investigation revealed many had been lost. As a result, most lodges did not have a complete and accurate statement of the law. A special committee proposed that the constitution, bylaws and decisions of the Grand Masters be **printed under one cover**. The matter was tabled until the next Annual Communication.

A review of the Grand Lodge's contributions to the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial found that Nebraska ranked 41st among the jurisdictions for the percentage it paid of the \$1 per member pledged. The chairman said Nebraska Masons should spare no effort to fulfill their obligation. It recommended each lodge **pay \$1 for each member** who hadn't contributed, each new Mason contribute \$1 to the fund, that each lodge reaching 100 percent of its quota be recognized, and an educational campaign be conducted with lodges about the memorial.

A committee examining whether lodges could sponsor **DeMolay** Chapters reported that Grand Lodge **bylaws** forbid use of lodge funds for other than Masonic purposes, and DeMolay disavowed any claim to be a Masonic organization. Therefore, it was unlawful for lodges to sponsor and assume financial responsibility for DeMolay chapters.

1943

George A. Kurk, Grand Master

June 10, 1942 – June 9, 1943

Reported at the 86th Annual Communication

The **Grand Master**, who was elected to office six months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which brought the U.S. into **World War II**, said, "There can be no compromise in this struggle. Only by annihilation of the dictator powers who thrust this war upon the world, can the philosophy that governments are created to serve the people prevail."

Responding to an introduction at Annual Communication, Past Grand Master **Walter Raecke** said, "...we find that in a time such as this, it is necessary for individuals to give up many of the things which they have thought were theirs by right...(and) submit to regimentation, restriction and regulation. All of these things we cheerfully submit to as temporary measures, but as we do, we must keep in mind that we must be challenged by the fact that it is through the efforts of the individual that final success must be obtained."

While there were reports of possible gas rationing, nothing was announced so **Area Meetings** were held, although attendance was low because of other restrictions imposed by the **war**. When rationing took effect in December 1942, the Grand Master felt it was the Grand Lodge's patriotic duty to cancel the remaining meetings.

The War Savings Staff of the U.S. Treasury designated November 15-December 31, 1942, for a **National Masonic War Savings Bond Campaign**. The Grand Master ordered every lodge to conduct a campaign. The total amount of bonds purchased by Masons and lodges was \$1.4 million and \$3 million in bonds was sold to others. While congratulating lodges that participated, he said some lodges did not conduct a campaign because they felt their community had been thoroughly solicited. "The particular period designated for a Masonic campaign is over, but every lodge can continue the campaign until the victory is won, and the three ruffians – Mussolini, Hirohito and Hitler – are brought to punishment," he said. The **Grand Lodge invested** \$70,000 in U.S. Government bonds.

The **Masonic War Service Committee** was praised by the Grand Master for **corresponding** with Nebraska brethren and sons of brethren who were serving in the armed forces all over the world. The committee also contacted brethren from other jurisdictions stationed in Nebraska. During the previous year, 783 Nebraska brethren or sons of brethren registered at a **Masonic Service Center**.

More than 3,400 names of service men were held by the **Masonic War Service Committee**. Of these, about 1,500 were Masons and 1,900 were the sons of Masons. Letters sent to them were received by all but about 150, and 264 sent letters to the committee in thanks with nearly all sons indicating their interest in **joining the fraternity** when the war was over.

The most difficult responsibility of the **Masonic War Service Committee** was writing letters of sympathy to families who lost a soldier. "The faith and courage needed to meet this situation can be given strength in the knowledge that we as a fraternal group are feeling the loss with them, and give our prayers and aid in their behalf," said the report.

A recommendation was made by the Grand Master that the next brother to hold that office appeal to members for contributions for the **Masonic War Service Committee**.

Calling past decisions made on the **physical qualifications** of men for membership as ridiculous, the Grand Master said he agreed that the law be modified to allow men with missing or crippled limbs to join. He recommended the appointment of a committee to report at the next Annual Communication its suggestions on changes in the law, and the **Committee on Jurisprudence** agreed.

The Grand Master apologized that the duties of office and restrictions on gasoline and tires imposed by the **war** prevented him from **visiting more lodges**. In addition, attendance at the **Schools of Instruction** was down 80 percent.

An amendment to **exempt soldiers** from paying **dues** while in the armed forces was defeated.

High praise was given by the Grand Custodian for older officers at local **lodges** who stepped in to **substitute for installed officers** called into the service. "The spirit of Masonry which has always been foremost in the ranks in times of emergency, is again called upon to take its place in the upholding of American ideals, and never has the opportunity and responsibility been greater than at the present time, when men are being slaughtered, and nations wiped out because of their faith in the things we, as Masons, hold dear," he said.

A **director was hired** by the **Committee on Masonic Education** for \$3,600 to implement its plan. Only \$2,700 of that amount was spent on his salary, the salary of a part-time stenographer, an office and printing of materials. The remaining amount reflected the curtailment of the program because of the **war**. The chairman expressed regret for discontinuing the **Area Meetings**, but provided assurance they would be resumed when conditions permitted.

Past Grand Master **Edward Carter** said the work of the **Committee on Masonic Education** was the best insurance against a loss in **membership**. He said the committee's program could not be

credited with the recent increase in membership because the **war** was making a major contribution to new interest. "We have labored under conditions which handicap us at every turn," he said. "We feel, however, that good is being accomplished. ... We must not become the slaves of custom. We must not become too **ritualistic** with the result that the spirit, philosophy and idealism of the Order are submerged in meaningless form. We insist upon a live, breathing Masonry which enriches the mind and embellishes the character of every brother of the Craft."

A young Army soldier from Tekamah, **Thomas R. Morrow**, sent \$102.50 in 1942 and \$110.50 in 1943 for Christmas gifts to children at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**. He had never lived at the home or visited it.

Permission was granted by the Grand Master to **reinstate** a member of **Olive Branch Lodge No. 274** in Walthill who was a captain in the Army. While stationed in the Philippines, a letter he sent to a lodge member was lost asking that his wife be notified to pay his **delinquent dues**. Three years later, the letter was received and his wife paid the dues owed. Because of the passage of time, the lodge asked if an application would be necessary. In 1942, the soldier became a prisoner of war of Japan.

Requests from lodges for permission to **donate lodge funds** to the **Red Cross** were approved by the Grand Master with the provision that funds be retained to meet all Masonic relief obligations of the lodge.

Twenty-five graduates of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**, one who had recently left and two soon-to-be graduates were in the **armed forces**. One was a junior when drafted and he was declared "on leave of absence" to ensure him a place to return to and complete his studies.

The **home** was considering accepting children of Masons and Eastern Star members engaged in **war** work who were unable to supervise or look after their sons and daughters. The policy was in effect only during the war emergency.

The **war** delayed completion of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial, but in the previous year the lodge and replica rooms were completed. However, George Washington's relics were stored in a concrete vault "safe from Hitler's bombs," said the Grand Master.

At the **dedication of the lodge room** at the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial, the nation's Grand Masters, including Nebraska's, were formally received and permitted to sit in the chair Washington sat in while serving as Master.

A total of **\$925 was raised** for the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial after the Grand Master asked lodges to collect \$1 from every new Mason and members who had not yet contributed.

Membership increased by 510 in 1942, the first net gain in 13 years, 573 were reinstated, the largest number in 25 years, and fewer brothers were suspended since 1925.

Delinquent members totaled 4,676 in 1942, compared to 5,458 the year before, amounting to \$44,477 in dues or about \$8,000 less. The number of former **members reinstated** in 1942 was 172. A total of 324 applications were approved after the Advisory Committee investigated. The Grand Master thanked the committee for their dedication in handling the vast amount of **work** the committee had thrust upon it during the past year.

More than 260 dispensations were authorized to **confer without regard to time** the Fellow Craft and Master Mason degrees. All but a few were for men called to military service, or employed in the defense industry outside Nebraska. The Grand Master waived the dispensation fee because the work was essential to the **war** effort.

A recommendation by the **Special Committee Regarding Finance** was adopted that established a **Board of Trustees** to annually report their analysis of securities, while funds for investment would be considered quarterly, and develop an investment philosophy.

The **Committee on Revision of Funeral Service** delayed its report until the next Annual Communication, as was the report of the **Committee on Uniform Bookkeeping System**.

The Grand Lodge's **Masonic education program** was credited for stimulating more interest in Masonry than anything done in Nebraska in recent memory, even though the restrictions imposed by the **war** curtailed the committee's efforts.

Every dollar of past due interest on **loans**, with the exception of one, had been paid, and there was no past due interest on any bonds or preferred stock owned by the Grand Lodge. All past due money owed by the lodges also had been paid, and for the first time in 12 years all **dues** for the current year were also paid. On account of gas rationing, it was impossible to meet and work on notes owed for **relief**, but 1942 was a very good year for collections.

With a good crop in 1942, the **Grand Lodge** realized good results from their **farms**. The Grand Secretary said it was his hope to sell several more farms.

Recordings were made of interviews with Past Grand Masters **John Wemple and Francis White** about Past Grand Masters from **Robert Carrel Jordan** to that day. The records were to be preserved in the archives of the Grand Lodge.

The Grand Master declared September 21-26, as **Masonic Guest Week** and asked each lodge to hold an event. Nearly 140 lodges participated and showed attendance of 6,000. "Masonry has kept its ideals and principles to itself too long, and it is fitting and proper that we should tell our friends and neighbors what Freemasonry stands for," he said.

Lodges in Western Nebraska were thanked by the president of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** for their annual donation of potatoes and vegetables, and **Fremont Lodge No. 15** for turkeys at Thanksgiving.

The dairy barn at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** burned down and an adjacent silo was damaged.

Past Grand Master **John Wemple**, who had been the oldest living Past Grand Master in the U.S. for several years, **died** in Cleveland at 93 years of age on May 28, 1943.

While visiting the **Grand Lodge of Colorado**, the Grand Master served as the candidate to receive the **Past Master's Degree** from among more than 30 Past Masters. He was glad to receive the degree since Nebraska discontinued conferring the degree the year before he served as Master in 1931-1932.

1944

William B. Wanner, Grand Master

June 9, 1943 – June 7, 1944

Reported at the 87th Annual Communication

The first day of **Annual Communication** occurred on **D-Day** as Allied troops stormed onto the beaches of France to gain a foothold in Europe. "We stand here this morning on the threshold of a great event in history," said the Grand Master. "The first startling news we have had this morning should inspire all of us to greater achievement."

He continued in his address, "Soon the cost of **war** will be known in black bordered columns, all too long. This is a struggle for the continuation of our civilization and all democratic forms of government as well as Freemasonry. We must, with undaunted determination as American citizens, face calmly and unafraid, the dark days that lie ahead."

Commenting on the news, Past Grand Master **James Cain** said, "...we rejoice this morning in the stupendous and colossal blow that has been struck by freedom-loving men for human liberties, and for the perpetuation of those eternal principles for which this Grand Old Institution has ever contended."

A fund drive for the Nebraska **Masonic War Service Fund** netted \$11,000 from 184 lodges. Of that amount, \$3,500 was given to the **Masonic Service Association, Nebraska War Service Committee, Lincoln Salvation Army** and **Omaha American Red Cross**. It was requested that

each member donate 50-cents to the fund, but it was urged that lodges offer the opportunity for brothers to make a larger donation.

The top 10 lodges donating to the **War Service Fund** were: **Covert Lodge No. 11**, Omaha, \$512; **Nebraska Lodge No. 1**, Omaha, \$402; **Lincoln Lodge No. 19**, Lincoln, \$365; **Lancaster Lodge No. 54**, Lincoln, \$330; **Bee Hive Lodge No. 184**, Omaha, \$319; **St. Johns Lodge No. 25**, Omaha, \$287; **Florence Lodge No. 281**, Omaha, \$256; **Ashlar Lodge No. 33**, Grand Island, \$254; **Western Star Lodge No. 2**, Nebraska City, \$250; and **Emmet Crawford Lodge No. 148**, Broken Bow, \$242.

Soldiers receiving letters from the **Masonic War Service Committee** were very appreciative and many expressed the desire that when the **war** was over, they would like to join. The Grand Master was concerned how Freemasonry would handle them if they returned home without a hand or foot, and he appointed a committee to study the issue of **physical qualifications**. He said his desire was that any soldier disabled as a result of his service would be made eligible to join. "We cannot demand heroism today and ignore it tomorrow," he said. The committee recommended no change in the law because physical qualifications were a landmark that couldn't be changed, and out of concern that they could become a financial burden to the local lodge and Grand Lodge. Delegates at Annual Communication disagreed and did not approve the report.

Besides sending letters to Masons and sons of Masons who were soldiers, the **Masonic War Service Committee** made small loans to them if they needed extra money when on furlough. The committee's aim was to keep their morale at its highest point of efficiency through fraternal contact and Masonic friendship. In addition, after other jurisdictions contacted the Nebraska Grand Lodge, the committee made contact with their members stationed in the state.

Of the 5,236 service men who received mailings from the **Masonic War Service Committee**, 2,153 were Masons and 3,083 were sons of Masons. It was reported at Annual Communication that 34 were killed in action, 16 were listed as missing and 20 were prisoners of war. In light of the D-Day invasion, the committee requested lodges to notify them of any deaths so letters could be sent to next of kin.

Responding to a mailing of the **Masonic War Service Committee**, a soldier said, "Sometimes the men on the war fronts begin to wonder if the people at home have forgotten them, but when we receive letters such as yours we know and again realize what a great country ours is...I am indeed proud to be the son of a Mason."

Small town lodges were hit hard by the **war**, which led the Grand Master to believe there were too many **lodges** too close together. He said nothing could happen until after the war when it would be known whether soldiers would return to Nebraska.

The Grand Secretary said that a majority of lodges were again active and **conferring more degrees** than the officers could find brethren to help confer them. Despite the absence of young men at **war** and working in defense plants, he said attendance at lodge meetings and interest in the Craft was surprising.

As a gift to the **Masonic Service Association**, Hollywood brethren provided the film, "Your Son is My Brother." It was touching and illustrated what the **Masonic Service Centers** provided soldiers.

Attending a dinner at the **Grand Master's Conference** were **General George Marshall** and **Admiral Ernest King**, members of the Craft. The Grand Master commented that it was inspiring to realize that the safety of brethren rested in such hands.

The president of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** Board paid tribute to the home's superintendent, **William Evers**. His **son**, a West Point graduate, was a pilot in the Army Air Corp and was killed in the skies over England.

Due to the **war**, the **Masonic-Eastern Star Student Fund Committee** had fewer former residents of the Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children in their charge.

About 30 young men who lived at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** were fighting in the **war**, and the home kept in close contact with them. When they were given leave, they usually returned to the home to visit. The superintendent at the home sent a newsletter to former residents in the armed forces. Both boys and girls returned testimonials of the love and care they received at the home.

Although the financial situation of the country had improved and enrollment was lower at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**, the president of the board expected more children to enroll after the **war** due to broken homes and casualties of the war.

The Grand Master consented to rebuild the dairy barn at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** that burned down the previous year. Since then, the cattle were housed in an open shed which made milking during the winter difficult. Since Dodge County was in a **war** defense zone, government construction requirements for new buildings were strict, which significantly increased the cost of building the barn.

Room was set aside in the rebuilt barn at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** for butter churning equipment. It was expected that after the **war**, the home would have a surplus of butter for elsewhere.

About \$770 of the **Committee on Masonic Education's** unexpended funds was the result of the need to scale down its **program** because of the **war** through transportation and rationing restrictions. It deferred personal trips to mailing information.

In talking about the importance of **Masonic education**, Past Grand Master **Edward Carter** said, "It takes more than a fine lodge building to make a good lodge. Money in the bank is a fine thing if it is properly controlled, but its purchasing power can never be used to buy elements which make up a good lodge. Ideals, morals, ethics and all those things which adorn the character of a true Master Mason, are attributes of the mind which cannot be purchased over a bargain counter. The philosophy of Freemasonry as a way of living is the very keystone of the Masonic structure. It lacks the power to generate itself – it must be excited in such a way that the recipient acquires a desire for further light upon the subject."

The **Omaha Masonic Home for Boys** developed a fund to erect housing units at 52nd and Adams. Construction was delayed because of the **war**.

Membership increased 1,157 in 1943. **Delinquent members** totaled 3,286, amounting to \$31,000, compared to the previous year's totals of 4,676 and \$52,000.

A total of 343 dispensations were issued to confer **degrees without regard to time** for brethren in or headed to the armed forces. The Grand Master told lodges that it was a "dangerous practice," and lodges should properly instruct these brethren when they returned home after the **war**.

Applications for **reinstatement** were approved for 389 men. The total number of men reinstated in 1943 was 737, the largest in several years.

Several hundred pieces of **ancient weapons** donated to the Grand Lodge in 1919 by **John J. Monell**, a member of **Nebraska Lodge No. 1**, were taken off display and stored. After no Omaha institution would take the collection, it was loaned to the University of Nebraska State Museum. It was discovered that 94 pieces of weaponry were from the **George W. Lininger** estate.

At the first meeting of the **Grand Lodge Trustees**, \$50,000 was **invested** in U.S. Government Bonds, and \$25,000 was invested in the same at a second meeting. The trustees also praised the Grand Secretary for keeping the Grand Lodge's money working, preserving the assets and securing the greatest possible return without undue risk.

The proceeds of the **Orphans' Educational Endowment Fund** "should be used for a good purpose" such as **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, said the trustees. Faced with increasing costs and the need to endow the home, they recommended the Orphans' Fund become a **supplemental endowment fund of the home**.

The Omaha Temple Craft rented **offices** and other space to the **Grand Lodge**. In 1943, the government condemned the lower two floors of the building, moved into them and expressed interest

in using the offices occupied by the Grand Lodge. The Grand Master asked that the incoming officers be authorized to move the Grand Lodge offices if the government made good on rumors they also wanted the third and fourth floors. The **Committee on Finance** said the necessity of moving was very remote and no action was taken.

With more prosperous times at hand, the Grand Master warned lodges to pay off any money owed, collect **delinquent dues** and adopt a budget system to govern expenditures. "Set aside funds for the rainy day that is coming," he said. "Let us be in a position that no lodge in Nebraska will suffer when **depression** strikes again, and it is surely coming."

After attending the centennial observances of the Grand Lodges of Iowa and Wisconsin, Nebraska attendees decided it was time to begin planning for this state's **100th anniversary**.

Every dollar of **past due interest**, excepting one, had been paid, including all **past due membership dues** owed by the lodges, the Grand Secretary said.

The Grand Lodge sent more than \$2,500 in donations to the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial, leaving the amount of the **pledge** yet to pay at \$12,527.

Past Grand Master **Lewis Smith** was re-elected **treasurer** of the **Masonic Relief Association**.

The **Funeral Service** was revised and adopted to eliminate unsympathetic parts that caused greater sorrow and despair to the deceased Mason's family.

Home Lodge U.:D.: was formed in Plattsmouth to conduct Masonic funerals. They met at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** and were authorized to only provide funeral services at the home. It had become difficult and a burden on Plattsmouth Lodge No. 6 to perform all the services. Although the lodge never complained about conducting them, the chairman of the **Committee on Charters and Dispensations** said the lodge should be relieved of this duty.

An amendment was delayed to the next Annual Communication that proposed creating a **Committee on the Work**.

The **Committee on the Masonic Code** completed compiling and annotating the Constitution and Bylaws.

Of the 284 **lodges** in Nebraska, 140 were **incorporated**, 16 weren't incorporated, 12 said they would become incorporated soon and 116 didn't respond to a survey.

The auditor suggested setting up a **Farm Profit and Loss Account** in the **Orphans Educational Fund**. At the time, it had a credit of about \$6,000. As farms were sold, the account would be credited so that when the farms were all sold, it would be known whether money was made or lost.

Approval was given to **Geneva Lodge No. 79** in Geneva to change the emblem in its official **seal** and to add new wording.

For a number of years, the **officers of the Grand Lodge** and **Independent Order of Odd Fellows** held a joint dinner in Omaha.

1945

William C. Schaper, Grand Master

June 7, 1944 – June 6, 1946

Reported in 1945

The 88th **Annual Communication** of the Grand Lodge was **canceled** in compliance with a **war** emergency order of the government in order to alleviate the critical transportation situation existing at the time.

In a tribute to Grand Master **William Schaper**, it was pointed out that he served two years as **Grand Master** and they were strenuous, the first time that had happened since 1872. Elected on D-Day, when the U.S. was filled with apprehension, **war** time restrictions only increased the burdens of the office.

The following year's **budget** for the **Grand Lodge** was sent to lodges by registered mail, and unless more than 50 percent of lodges in the state objected to it, the Grand Master said it would be considered accepted.

Two-day Central **Schools of Instruction** were held in 38 lodges, and 18 hosted one-day schools. The Grand Custodian said attendance was above average even though gas and tires were hard to get thanks to brethren traveling together to the schools.

"The **interest in the Craft** has been very noticeable, and the older brethren have renewed their efforts in order to keep the **lodges in operation for the boys** when they return to their homes from across the sea, and from the camps in America, thus showing their real Masonic character and zeal," said the Grand Custodian.

Total cash donations received from lodges for the **Nebraska Masonic War Service Fund** was \$18,300. Among expenditures from the fund were: \$200 to the **United War and Community Fund**; \$500 to the **Grand Lodge of England**; \$2,500 to the **Masonic Service Association**; \$200 to the **American Red Cross**; and \$1,000 to the **Philippine Grand Lodge**.

All **government bonds** purchased by the Grand Lodge were retained, which amounted to \$148,000. Another \$50,000 was purchased during the **Sixth War Loan**.

With travel conditions worse in the past year, the Grand Secretary resorted to sending letters to brethren in northeast Nebraska who received \$16,775 in **relief money** in 1932. Collections totaled \$835 and left an outstanding balance of \$7,425.

A large number of **farm mortgages** held by the **Grand Lodge** were paid in the previous year, and nearly all others were reduced. The Grand Secretary said if the same conditions exist for two more years, the Grand Lodge would be out of the "farm mortgage business."

One farm was sold leaving five **farms yet to sell**. Altogether, a profit of \$8,100 was received on sold farms.

The Grand Secretary said conditions in the Craft were a far cry from his reports made in previous years when it was an exception to find a **lodge** that was **busy and active**. But in 1945, it was an exception to find a lodge that wasn't active, he said. In fact, he observed, many lodges were too busy.

Despite all the positive activities of lodges, the Grand Secretary expressed concern for some **weak lodges**. He asked that they be given some consideration so that when the next **depression** hit, they would be able to withstand the challenges. "We hear a lot of brave talk these days about a 'New World,' but in a few years from now this will all be forgotten, and we will be back just where we were before, or even worse."

The net gain in **membership** at the end of 1944 was 1,673, resulting in a total membership of 34,192.

A total of 2,288 members were **delinquent** in paying their dues, compared to 3,286 the previous year. They represented \$19,700 in unpaid dues at the end of 1944 and \$31,100 in 1943.

The largest number of lodges ever to report no outstanding dues was recorded in 1944-1945. The Grand Secretary suggested lodges collect dues from **delinquent** members or remit them so their books could be cleaned up and in a business-like condition.

The **Grand Secretary** proposed a reduction in his annual **salary** by \$1,200, and an **assistant** was hired to help with his duties.

1946

William C. Schaper, Grand Master

June 7, 1944 – June 6, 1946

Reported at the 88th & 89th Annual Communication

This **Annual Communication** was titled as both the 88th and 89th after the **previous year's session was canceled**. The Grand Lodge was directed by the federal government's office of war mobilization not to hold meetings in 1945 that would be attended by 50 or more persons unless it was "of purely local nature." In an edict, the Grand Master said Nebraska Freemasons had always been patriotic and would cheerfully comply. All Grand Lodge officers and committee members retained their stations. A budget was sent by registered mail to each lodge, and unless more than 50 percent objected, it would be considered approved, he said.

After serving the Grand Lodge as Grand Secretary for 21 years, Past Grand Master **Lewis Smith** stepped down from the office. Including his year as Grand Master in 1921, and other offices, he served the Grand Lodge continuously for 31 years. With the **canceled of Annual Communication** in 1945, he was unable to relinquish the office. An assistant was hired, and Smith voluntarily reduced his salary by one-third in order to provide a salary to the assistant. The **salary** provided by the **Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons**, and a monthly payment to the Grand Secretary Emeritus who died, were also given to the assistant along with \$600. Smith turned down a monthly emeritus **salary**.

Area Meetings were not held due to gas rationing and restrictions on travel. The annual meetings of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Association, the **Masonic Service Association** and the **Grand Masters and Grand Secretaries conferences** were called off in 1945.

With the end of **World War II** ten months earlier, the **Grand Master said** the nation was in a period of readjustment when there was a "let down" since the war and many time-honored institutions and customs were being reassessed. "We Masons will need to hold firmly to the tenets of our profession," he said. "Out of this readjustment will come a new day with better things, if we hold firmly to the principles of our order."

Commenting on the **death** of President and Brother **Franklin Roosevelt**, the Grand Master said the Grand Lodge received messages of sorrow from jurisdictions throughout the world. Lodges around the globe held special memorial services while also placing confidence in President and Past Grand Master **Harry Truman**.

Because the 88th Annual Communication was canceled, the election of officers could not be held and **William Schaper** served a full **two years as Grand Master**, the first time that had happened since 1872. He was praised by a Past Grand Master who said, "To you it was a greater burden because you served at the most terrible time that the world has ever known. Consequently, the demands upon your time and upon the office were greater. You served with distinction and honor."

Dispensations were issued by the Grand Master to confer **degrees without regard to time** to 670 brethren from June 1944 though May 1946.

Local lodges were duty bound to provide **further instruction to soldiers who received degrees** without becoming proficient in the work, said the Grand Master. "Otherwise, the Masonic order to them will be simply another club or organization and they will not receive the full benefits of Masonry and profit by its teachings," he said.

The work of the **Nebraska Masonic War Service Committee** dropped off considerably after V-J Day. The greatest number of soldiers the committee communicated with was nearly 7,200 in October 1945. Of those, 94 were killed in action, 30 were missing, 21 were prisoners of war and 244 were discharged. The committee sent letters at Christmas time. The increased work of the committee necessitated the need to rent a downtown office in Lincoln with full-time help.

Among the varied services provided by the **Nebraska Masonic War Service Committee** were: buying flowers for the wives of men in the service, locating living quarters for servicemen and their families, giving men information about how to join a lodge and writing them letters. The committee received hundreds of letters from soldiers. The chairman said he was most disappointed that the committee could not provide more financial assistance to men as there were few requests.

In suggesting that the **Nebraska Masonic War Service Committee** be discharged, the chairman said, "We have endeavored to perform the functions of the committee in a manner which was

creditable to the fraternity, and we sincerely believe that the cause of Freemasonry has been advanced by the work of the committee.”

Questions arose about whether the **Nebraska Masonic War Committee** should also send communications to the daughters of Masons serving during World War II. The committee considered the work could best be performed by the **Grand Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star**.

It was recommended by the **Committee on Finance** that \$11,800 remaining in the **Nebraska Masonic War Service Fund** be disposed of at the discretion of the incoming Grand Master and Grand Lodge officers.

For three consecutive years, Thomas Morrow, a **sergeant in the U.S. Army, made donations** to the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** of at least \$100 each. The Grand Master sent him a letter asking if he was a Mason, and if he had visited the home. He replied that he wasn't a Mason, but he planned to join after the war, and he hadn't ever visited the home. His parents died when he was young, but his father was a Mason.

A communication from the **Grand Lodge of California** said the Grand Master and Deputy Grand Master of the **Grand Lodge of the Philippines** were killed by Japanese. The Grand Master had been imprisoned since the start of the war. After his camp was liberated, the Japanese bombed it, killing the Grand Master. The Deputy Grand Master was executed. The Nebraska Grand Lodge **sent \$1,000 to California** to assist in their \$10,000 payment in support of Philippine lodges in distress. A note of thanks was sent by the Grand Representative of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska near the Grand Lodge of the Philippines, stating, “I am personally conveying to you the gratitude of the recipients who are mostly widows, orphans and sufferers from the tragedy that has befallen us during the Japanese occupation and during the battle for the liberation of the Philippines.”

Two **payments** totaling \$1,000 were sent to the **United Grand Lodge of England** from the **Masonic War Service Fund**. In response, the Grand Secretary said it would be used to relieve suffering brought on by “enemy air activity in this country.” He added that the southern part of England and suburbs of London were hit by “flying bombs,” and the distress was widespread.

The Grand Lodge of France helped German Masons and their families after the war by opening their lodge halls and providing food and clothes in large amounts.

After receiving a letter from a U.S. Army officer stationed in Germany, who formed a **Masonic club** named Frankfurt on the Main, the Grand Master suggested the Grand Lodge consider addressing the need for **dual memberships**. The soldier said the club would like to organize as a lodge. He said some members wanted to retain their membership in their home lodge and he inquired about Nebraska's standing on dual membership. He pointed out that the soldiers would return home in a few months or years. The club was meeting in a bomb-damaged former Masonic building undergoing reconstruction by the U.S. and being used by the Army.

An amendment was submitted by the **Committee on Jurisprudence**, by recommendation of the Grand Master, allowing **dual membership** that brothers could be members of not more than two lodges.

A donation of \$25 was received from the **Square & Compass Club** of Island “X” in the Southwest Pacific to use for charitable purposes in Nebraska. “I directed the Grand Secretary to credit it to the **Masonic War Service Fund** for the reason that the donation, no doubt, was an expression of appreciation of the service Masons render to those in the military service,” said the Grand Master.

The Grand Master received honorary memberships in several **Square and Compass Clubs**, such as the Bloody Nose Ridge Square and Compass Club and the Hong Club of New Guinea. The clubs were organized by servicemen overseas who were Masons. The clubs usually met in a chapel or hospital. One club had about 800 members from nearly every state in the U.S., as well as Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Panama, Australia, Egypt, China and England.

The lack of men in smaller towns, due to the **war**, resulted in the **consolidation** of four **lodges** with lodges in larger communities.

The Grand Master ruled that a lodge could not use its **funds** for the **United War Fund Drive**, and they should only be used for Masonic purposes.

Among topics at the 1946 **Grand Masters Conference** were: Extending Our Masonic Cable to Masons in **War** Devastated Countries, Masonic Postwar Assistance to Veterans, How Can Masonry Avoid Repeating the Mistakes Made Following World War I?, and Postwar Developments in Masonic Educational Programs.

More than \$800 was collected on **money loaned** to brethren. The Grand Secretary said the notes were paid down leaving mostly those who were unable to pay and would need to be canceled in the coming two years.

A small profit was made on the **sale of a farm** held by the **Grand Lodge**. The Grand Lodge owned four other farms, which they expected to sell in the following year.

Exhibiting the financial change in the situation confronting the country, the **Committee on Relief and Care of Orphans** reported total disbursements for the year ending May 31, 1945, of \$7,100. A year later that amount dropped to \$4,000. It was the lowest expenditure in at least 13 years.

Getting back to a normal schedule after the **war**, 41 **Central Schools of Instruction** were held the previous year and one-day schools were conducted in 22 communities.

The failing health of the Grand Custodian prompted the Grand Master to propose that more **Schools of Instructions** be assigned to assistant custodians.

It was forwarded by the Grand Secretary that the **Grand Lodge** should have its own **office building** and not rent space from the Masonic Temple Craft of Omaha. He cited the lack of storage space, little parking area and out-of-date rooms as reasons to move. More than \$45,000 was in the Permanent Reserve Fund that was established 20 years earlier that could be used, he said. He urged the appointment of a committee to examine the issue.

The **Committee on Masonic Education** developed a **program** to extend its range of effort, free from the limitations imposed by the **war**. The program was based on the **accelerated conferring of degrees** and the need to educate the new brethren "before they lose their interest and drift away from the principles, ideals and philosophy of Freemasonry," said the chairman. Included in the plans were a revival of district or area meetings and revisions of bulletins and pamphlets.

Commenting on the purpose of the **Committee on Masonic Education**, the chairman said, "The ideals and philosophy of Freemasonry are too important to be neglected. They can make such a contribution to our social order and our personal living that we have a moral obligation to the fraternity to promote them to the utmost. Character, honesty and moral fiber are still praiseworthy virtues and the attributes of a good Mason. ... We must do more than render mere lip-service to our assertions that we are a character-building institution. We must furnish the source material that will inspire a living Freemasonry which enriches the intellect and embellishes the mind of every brother of the Craft. An institution without a mission has no valid reason for its existence and one with a mission must halt the busy, moving throng and cry out its principles and ideals so loud that the heedless ones will be impelled to listen."

The **Committee on Reinstatements** reported that 417 applications were recommended during 1945-1946, and 507 were received in 1944-1945.

Under the nation's "managed economy," the **Board of Masonic Service, Annuities and Gifts** said the government was borrowing funds at the cheapest rates "ever known." The situation made it impossible to attract participants. The board suggested the **annuity program** be shelved or even abandoned, but it would try to develop a financially sound substitute. "However, those now manipulating our national financial affairs appear to have a monopoly in rabbit-out-of-the-hat schemes and we are not too optimistic about our ability to overcome these abnormal handicaps and to produce something from nothing," said a member of the board.

Stating the “dignity of this institution forbids direct solicitation” of bequests, the **Board of Masonic Service, Annuities and Gifts** requested that a certificate signed by the Grand Master be sent to donors of financial gifts.

The Nebraska Masonic Home faced a serious **employment** problem because the Glenn L. Martin Bomber Plant located near Plattsmouth offered higher wages. The superintendent also was challenged with rationing food and coal during the **war** years.

In April 1945, a campaign was begun by **The Nebraska Masonic Home** to raise \$350,000 to enlarge the **infirmary**. A year later, they raised \$225,000. It was the first appeal ever made by the home for capital funds. Plans for the expansion were approved in 1924, but a lack of funds followed by the **depression** made it impossible to begin construction. The president of the home said the additional space was necessary because of the urgency in caring for residents in fire proof buildings.

The president of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** said it had as many as 90 **residents** when 85 was normal occupancy, and had postponed accepting applicants by making arrangements with relatives and friends to care for them until vacancies occurred. Including the latter, the total number the home could have housed was 135.

It was stated during Annual Communication that many attending the session were there to place **The Nebraska Masonic Home** in Plattsmouth on a more solid foundation and to extend it.

More than 90 cars transported over 300 **delegates to visit The Nebraska Masonic Home**.

The original building for **The Nebraska Masonic Home** was termed a serious **fire hazard** by the president of the board. He hoped the **infirmary** could be enlarged to take care of all residents.

Sarah Holly, a member of Maple Leaf Chapter of Eastern Star in Omaha, **left property to The Nebraska Masonic Home** with income derived from it for the home or a new building.

The president of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** commented on the difficulties experienced during the **war**. “We were short of help, short of clothing and certain items of food, also urgently needed replacements in household necessities and furnishings. It seems like a bad dream now and how we got the job done, I don’t know but the Board will always remember with deep appreciation the loyal and hearty cooperation we had from those in charge at the home,” he said.

Emergency repairs were necessary to get by during the **war** at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**, but the president said it was time to spend money on essential needs. He requested \$3,500 to help restore the heating plant at one home that was threatening to explode, while a flood and wind storm two years before resulted in considerable damage.

It was recommended by the president of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** that the **articles of incorporation** be changed to allow a member of its board to serve longer than the two consecutive three-year terms.

A **liquor and dance hall** permit was requested directly west of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**. The home successfully fought off the application.

The **Committee on Nebraska Work** was established.

An amendment passed in 1944 was codified giving **Papillion Lodge No. 39** and all **Omaha lodges concurrent jurisdiction**.

Two **checks** totaling \$4,527 were sent to the **George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association** in 1945 and 1946 toward the Grand Lodge’s commitment to pay more than \$42,000. The amount remaining to be paid was \$8,000.

A resolution was proposed to the **George Washington Masonic Memorial Association** by the Grand Master that the building not be used, nor space provided, for memorials to any Masonic body, man or men, or space allowed for the headquarters of any organization except Masonic bodies.

Mosaic Lodge No. 55 in Norfolk **dedicated its Masonic temple** in 1946 that was constructed in 1933 at a cost of \$50,000. The ceremony was postponed until the temple was free of debt.

National Bible Week was observed by the Grand Lodge after the Laymen’s National Committee asked Masons to participate. Observances were held in 1944 and 1945. The **Committee on Masonic Education** prepared suggested programs and informed lodges about the week-long events.

It was approved to purchase new **aprons** for all **Past Grand Masters**.

About 125 members of the **Masters and Wardens Club of Kansas City**, Missouri, conferred the Master Mason degree on a candidate at the Scottish Rite Temple in Lincoln. A dispensation was granted to **Lincoln Lodge No. 19** to host the event.

It was decided at the **Conference of Grand Secretaries** that lodges requesting **courtesy degree** work should collect **fees** from candidates, and not leave it to the conferring lodge to handle these funds.

National Sojourners held their 26th **National Convention** in Omaha in May 1946.

The **Grand Lodge of New York** adopted a resolution enabling its **Grand Master to communicate with Grand Lodges** around the world directly descended from the mother Grand Lodge even though they weren't recognized by New York. The resolution advised New York brethren to be "messengers of good will" whenever and wherever they were in contact with foreign brethren that "they may contribute to their utmost to the **cause of peace** by encouraging confidence, sympathy, understanding and cooperation among the peoples of the world." Nebraska's Grand Master related the action as a point of information and added that other Grand Lodges had done the same.

1947

Benjamin F. Eyre, Grand Master

June 6, 1946 – June 5, 1947

Reported at the 90th Annual Communication

Attendance was lower at **Annual Communication** due to flooding on the Republican River.

Because of a substantial increase in **membership**, it appeared Nebraska was well on its way to recovery of the losses endured a decade previous when the number of Masons dropped from 42,150 in 1930 to 30,852 by 1941.

The **Committee on Masonic Education** mapped out a program to inform Masons of the ideals of the fraternity, so Masons would be well grounded in its traditions and philosophies. The program was prompted by the return of **WWII** veterans who received **Masonic work in a short time**. The committee reported that it was necessary to revise much of the work that was done during the war, to revive some of the procedures of pre-war days and to add others.

The five **farms** in the **Orphans Educational Fund** were sold at a net profit. The total amount received was nearly \$12,000.

A veteran of **World War II** who lost an arm in battle was **not eligible to receive the degrees** of a Mason, it was ruled by the Grand Master.

Episcopal Bishop **George A. Beecher** stepped down as **Grand Chaplain** of the Grand Lodge after serving 37 years in that position. The Grand Lodge voted to name him Grand Chaplain Emeritus.

On recommendation of the Grand Master, the requirement to receive a lodge's **Bronze Jordan Medal** was the same as that of the **Gold Jordan Medal** that the member must live in Nebraska. In addition, **ceremonies** for presentation of the **Bronze Jordan Medal and 50-year pin** contained in a Masonic biography of the state's first Grand Master, Robert C. Jordan, were adopted as the authorized ceremonies.

The Grand Master recommended to the incoming Grand Master that a committee be appointed to investigate whether arrangements could be made for a suitable marker, plaque or plate to be placed on **Robert C. Jordan's gravestone** that he was the state's first Grand Master and first Sovereign Grand Inspector General for the **Scottish Rite**.

An amendment passed that allowed **dual membership** in not more than two lodges.

A **committee** of three was appointed by the Grand Master to begin preparations for the Grand Lodge's **100th anniversary** observance in 1957. The committee recommended that a history be published and that the Annual Communication be held in Omaha, the site of the first meeting of the Grand Lodge. In addition, the committee urged that 20 pre-centennial celebrations be held in the year leading up to the 100th anniversary. The theme of the meetings was to be "Masonry in Modern Living," the history of the Grand Lodge or the historical background of the degrees.

The **Committee on Finance** approved the **appropriation** of \$2,000 a year to observe the Grand Lodge's **100th Anniversary**.

The **Board of Masonic Services, Annuities and Gifts** reported they initiated a solicitation for donations, but the Board was ordered to hold on that effort because "some of the members of the **Jurisprudence Committee** think we should dispense with this type of service." The Board halted their work pending "final disposition of this Board, our proposals and plans for securing funds..."

The funds of the **Nebraska Masonic War Service Fund** were distributed by the Grand Master and Grand Lodge officers per a decision made the previous year at Annual Communication. Of the \$11,835 in the fund, \$10,000 was given to the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial, \$1,635 to the **Relief Fund** and \$200 to the **Omaha Community and War Service Fund**.

It was authorized the **Grand Master be paid 6-cents per mile** for using his car in traveling for the Grand Lodge, and that liability and property damage insurance be paid by the Grand Lodge.

The Grand Master pointed out that there was confusion both in and outside Nebraska about whether the **Omaha Masonic Home for Boys** was a charity operating under the direction of the Grand Lodge. He said, without minimizing their good work, that the Grand Lodge had only two charities – **The Nebraska Masonic Home** and the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**.

The Grand Lodge laid the **cornerstones** of the Carl A. Anderson and Allen C. Scott homes at the **Omaha Masonic Home for Boys** on September 21, 1946. They were named after two donors, both members of **Capitol Lodge No. 3**, of Omaha.

The **Grand Master granted permission** for a noonday luncheon club to call themselves the **High Twelve Club**.

Past Grand Master and Grand Secretary Emeritus **Lewis E. Smith** proposed an **amendment** signed by 12 Past Grand Masters that would have eliminated a requirement that Masons couldn't petition the **Shrine** until one year elapsed. The motion failed to receive unanimous consent and it was held over for consideration the next year.

A fund drive by **The Nebraska Masonic Home** to expand the **infirmary** was two years past its deadline for raising the needed money and at 77 percent of its goal (\$268,000). Seventy-three of 279 lodges had met or exceeded their quota.

The President of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** asked the Grand Lodge to increase its **donation** to the home from \$11,000 a year to \$15,000 to keep up with increasing expenses. He noted that during **World War II**, the home didn't spend money on replacements or repairs because of difficulty in getting material or labor. With the wearing down of equipment and furnishings, they needed to be replaced, he said. In addition, he said the home has had problems keeping workers.

The **Committee on Masonic Education** arranged three area meetings at which the Grand Secretary held a **Conference of Secretaries**. He met with more than 150 lodge secretaries to discuss mutual problems.

A petitioner of **Robert W. Furnas Lodge No. 265** in Scottsbluff, who returned from the armed services, made temporary residence in Gering because of a housing shortage and retained his business in Scottsbluff. The Grand Master ruled he had removed his **residence** from within the jurisdiction of the Lodge in Scottsbluff and could not join there.

For the first time in the history of the **Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America**, all U.S. jurisdictions were represented and Canadian Provinces were invited. Seven of the nine provinces were in attendance. Among the topics was "Assimilating **War-Time** Masons,"

“Should the war change our viewpoint on **physical qualifications?**”, and “Do we have an obligation to **Negro Freemasonry?**”

1948

Edward Huwaldt, Grand Master

June 5, 1947 – June 10, 1948

Reported at the 91st Annual Communication

The Grand Master wore a collar presented to Past Grand Master **George Lininger** by **Edward VII**, Prince of Wales and later King (1901-1910), when he was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England. PGM Lininger was Nebraska’s **Grand Representative** to England and on one of his visits was received by Edward VII and presented the collar and a matching apron as a personal gift commemorating his appointment as Representative. The Grand Master wore it at Annual Communication to honor PGM Lininger. His granddaughter had presented the collar and apron to **George W. Lininger Lodge No. 268** in Omaha.

Judge **Edward F. Carter**, Associate Justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court (1935-1971) and Past Grand Master (1941), could not fulfill his duties as chairman of the **Masonic Education Committee** because he spent about nine months as a **judge at the Nuremberg trials** in Germany that prosecuted Nazi crimes during **World War II**.

After teasingly calling the Past Grand Masters in attendance “not properly clothed,” the Grand Secretary presented the 15 in attendance with a **Past Grand Master’s apron**.

The Grand Master gave the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Association in 1947 a \$13,000 check representing Nebraska Masonry’s **pledge** of \$1 per member. Of the total, \$8,000 was earmarked for the Memorial’s Building Fund, and \$5,000 was designated for its Endowment Fund.

The Grand Lodge agreed that each **newly-made Mason** be assessed **\$1** for the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial, and that each lodge that had not donated \$1 for each member continue to solicit funds until they met their quotas. Each lodge completing the pledge received a certificate from the Memorial Association.

The Masonic Temple at 16th and Capitol in Omaha burned down in 1947, and its **cornerstone** was opened at the 1948 Annual Communication. Among the items placed there 72 years earlier were: lists of officers of **Capitol Lodge No. 3**, **Covert Lodge No. 11**, **St. Johns Lodge No. 25**, and other Masonic organizations; copies of three Omaha newspapers from October 1876; a collection of American and foreign coins and currency including \$20 and \$50 Confederate bills. The contents were presented to the **Grand Lodge** for display in a future **library** or museum.

In the year since the Grand Lodge allowed **dual membership**, four Masons became members of a second Nebraska Lodge.

The chairman of the **Masonic Service, Annuities and Gifts Committee**, which was created in 1921, recommended the dissolution of the committee. During its 27 years of existence, only one brother made a bequest and **annuity** agreement with the Grand Lodge.

The Grand Master approved the formation of a **Square and Compass Club** at **McCook Lodge No. 135**. After reviewing the constitution and bylaws of the group, he ruled it wasn’t contrary to Masonic law because its purpose was to promote social activities and no ritual was involved.

More than 60 **applications** to enter **The Nebraska Masonic Home** were pending with all rooms occupied. The Grand Master appealed to lodges to make a donation for their quota of the cost to add to the **infirmary** to replace a section that was a fire hazard and to add beds.

Of the 277 lodges in the state, 111 had **donated** their quota to **The Nebraska Masonic Home** to build additional wings on the infirmary. Because of increasing costs since the campaign began, \$50,000 was still needed to finance the construction.

Noting that some Masons believed the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** was an Eastern Star Home, the Grand Master said 28 of the 39 residents lived there through Masonic lodge affiliations.

The Masters and Wardens Club of Omaha gave the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** \$850 to build a **tennis court**. It was planned to also use the court for badminton, shuffle board, volleyball and ice skating. Lodges in the North Platte valley provided their annual **donation of potatoes and vegetables**.

Grand Island's two lodges sent a year's supply of flour and sugar as well as canned goods to **The Nebraska Masonic Home**. This was followed in 1949 with several lodges in Central Nebraska contributing to the project and amassing 24,000 pounds of **food**, which started an annual tradition.

An **amendment** was defeated to eliminate a one-year waiting period before Masons could **petition the Shrine**.

The **Committee on the Relief and Care of Orphans** collected and spent \$2,885 to assist Masonic and Eastern Star families in the Cambridge area, which experienced a **flood** in June 1947.

The **Omaha Masonic Home for Boys** was warned by the Grand Master not to expand too rapidly. Stating that the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** and **The Nebraska Masonic Home** would soon need more funds for their growth and maintenance, he said he knew the Masons of Omaha wanted to "carry their full share of the cost of the two Grand Lodge charities, it might become a heavy burden to them if the Omaha Masonic Home for Boys should expand too rapidly and too far."

The Grand Master commented at Annual Communication during that election year on **communism**, "Now, after 172 years (since the creation of the U.S.), this Freedom is threatened by an ideology that falsely but cleverly promises greater and better things. Let no thinking man be deceived! The alertness and watchfulness of every true citizen is our Salvation! Let no man prefer slavery to liberty! These are the days of decision! Let us, here and now, rededicate ourselves to the defense and perpetuation of Freedom's Holy Light. ... We must not fail. To do so would be to turn back the pages of history to the dark ages and rule of the tyrant."

Four days after the **Fraternal Relations Committee** received a pamphlet from Czechoslovakia describing how well the Grand Lodge had progressed since the war, the **Iron Curtain** descended on that country. The chairman said he wondered about the fate of the brethren there.

1949

Elmer E. Magee, Grand Master

June 10, 1948 – June 9, 1949

Reported at the 92nd Annual Communication

Approval was received from the granddaughter of **Robert C. Jordan**, Nebraska's first Grand Master, to place a **bronze plaque on his gravestone**. He died 50 years prior.

The Grand Master asked delegates to the Annual Communication if lodges were providing the leadership that was needed, or if a lethargic attitude was being allowed. Noting the **increasing number of petitions**, he said it was imperative that leaders keep the interest of new members. The rapid growth of lodges concerned him. "I am convinced that a small or medium-sized lodge is better able to interest and inspire its membership. In some lodges the officers are so overburdened with **conferring degrees** that there is no time for anything else."

One lodge received 42 **petitions** in one month, and the Master limited **degree work** to five members a month. The Grand Master suggested that a committee study the feasibility of limiting the amount of degree work or size of lodges to "provide a sounder future for the Grand Lodge of Nebraska."

The **Committee on Reinstatements** said a 50 percent decrease in the number of men seeking reinstatement occurred the previous year. "This should call for a more concerted effort on the part of brethren of the constituent lodges in interesting desirable brethren to again renew their Masonic activity," the chairman said. Of the 190 applications, 40 percent were between 50-60 years old.

Pointing out that lodges requiring only payment of one year's **dues for reinstatement** saw fewer suspensions, the Grand Master urged passage of an amendment that would make the practice statewide.

Some of the Grand Master's lodge visits sparked interest, including one town where 12 **petitions** resulted after he spoke there.

The **Grand Lodge officers** were assigned to **visit** all lodges with fewer than 75 members.

An amendment passed that adopted automatic **suspension** of members for **nonpayment of dues**.

The amount of **delinquent dues** was \$11,197 for 1948, which was the lowest since 1941 when the amount totaled \$52,086.

The Grand Master attended the annual meeting of the **Masonic Service Association (MSA)**. Although not a member of MSA, Nebraska Masons contributed to its activities during and after **World War II** to help soldiers and veterans. He recommended Nebraska consider becoming a member after learning that MSA representatives visited more than 900 Nebraskans in Veterans Hospitals and 987,000 others. He also recommended that \$1,000 be donated to MSA to assist with hospital visitation costs. The **Jurisprudence Committee** disapproved joining MSA and the delegates agreed.

Harold H. Thom, a member of **Nebraska Lodge No. 1**, was named the **first Grand Historian**, and was charged to work with the **Centennial Committee** to compile a history of the Nebraska Grand Lodge.

The **Finance Committee** recommended that \$22,000 of the Permanent Reserve Fund be earmarked for a fund to celebrate the **Grand Lodge's centennial**.

The **blizzard of 1949** blocked roads making it impossible for brethren to attend most of the **Schools of Instruction**. Four schools were cancelled and others were "stormed out" after beginning. More than 100 inches of snow fell on parts of the state accompanied by 50-70 miles per hour winds. The highest snow drifts were 30-feet deep and didn't melt until June.

It was decided that lodges **remit \$2** per year of their lodge **dues**, instead of \$1 per year, for maintenance expenses of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** and the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**. This increased the per capita tax from \$2 to \$3 a year.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Home** purchased their **first tractor** and some farm equipment after receiving money from an estate. Previously, the home used horses or mules and borrowed machinery. The purchase saved the home on costs for labor, two new harnesses and feed.

The president of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** reported **increased enrollment** of children and he said he expected it to continue due to "aftermath of **war** conditions." He noted a shortage of older boys who normally helped with chores, so he had hired extra labor. The youngest resident was a three-year-old boy.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** was faced with replacement and repairs delayed because of the **war**.

The Grand Master recommended that \$250 be spent to give **Assistant Custodians** an identifying **jewel or apron** to wear in lodges.

Calling individual **Schools of Instruction** for "less proficient lodges" a vital need, the Grand Master recommended the appropriation of another \$1,000 to pay for additional expenses.

W.:B.: **Lute Savage**, who served 22 years as **Grand Custodian**, suffered a stroke and resigned his office. He and his wife moved to **The Nebraska Masonic Home** where they later that year celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Blueprints were completed for new wings of the **infirmary** at **The Nebraska Masonic Home**. A committee examined building plans of many of the nation's Masonic homes.

The Grand Master **presented a check** for \$21,918.90 to the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Association, completing Nebraska's full quota of \$1.70 per member. The total given by Nebraska at that time was \$71,446.

A petitioner for membership at **Wymore Lodge No. 104** was hard of hearing and needed the use of a hearing aid to understand others. The Grand Master ruled he could join and the use of a **hearing aid** was no different than a man who wore eyeglasses. The **Jurisprudence Committee** agreed.

The officers and directors of the **Omaha Masonic Home for Boys** were very cooperative, the Grand Master reported, in working to iron out difficulties that arose with their **agreement** with the Grand Lodge concerning solicitation of funds. "While this Home is doing a great service to homeless boys, it is well to remember that the only charities of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska are **The Nebraska Masonic Home** for the aged at Plattsmouth, and **The Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** at Fremont," he said.

A committee appointed in 1947 studied the **physical qualifications** necessary to petition for membership, and gave special consideration to physical injuries received while in the armed forces. In its report, the chairman said some Grand Lodges were relaxing physical requirements to join, and mentioned the difficulty in denying a veteran membership because of dismemberment in war. But, he said the membership requirement was an ancient landmark that couldn't be changed, and the committee suggested no change.

In response to the committee's decision, the Senior Warden of **Omaha Lodge No. 288** proposed an amendment that would allow a candidate "suffering from **loss of any limb** or part thereof, an ear or any other portion of his flesh which does not impair his manhood, or loss to some degree of sight and hearing provided that the candidate by use of an artificial appliance can amply see, hear and take part in the work of the lodge" to be eligible for a waiver from the Grand Master when accepted by a lodge. The amendment was held until the following year.

The next morning of Annual Communication, the Grand Master said two sections of the Grand Lodge Constitution would also need to be changed, in particular a statement "That the ancient landmarks of the Fraternity be held inviolate," and that the powers and authority of the Grand Lodge were supreme, limited only by the strict adherence to the ancient landmarks. He said the **amendment** proposed by the member of **Omaha Lodge No. 288** was illegal, but he suggested to the incoming Grand Master that a careful study be conducted of the amendment's legality.

The chairman of the **Foreign Correspondence Committee** said it was possible to **recognize 102 foreign Grand Lodges**, and Nebraska recognized only 36. "We have been quite conservative, perhaps too much so. In these days of 'cold wars,' the universality of Masonry should become a reality in fact, rather than a ritualistic statement, among all those Grand Lodges whose standards coincide with those adopted by this Grand Lodge."

Judge **Edward F. Carter**, chairman of the **Masonic Education Committee**, said the committee concerned itself with the fundamental principles of the Order and stimulating interest in its philosophy and ideals. "It takes more than a lodge hall and a membership to make a lodge. A lodge which neglects the strength of Masonic philosophy and idealism will surely die on the vine. It is the primary reason for the existence of the lodge itself," he said.

A painting of **Albert Pike** found in 1922 in the basement of the temple at 16th and Capitol streets in Omaha, was given to the **Omaha Scottish Rite** bodies. They had previously met in the lodge building until they built a new building at 20th and Douglas streets.

Silver Cord Lodge No. 224 in Ainsworth was forced to temporarily move its charter to **Long Pine** after it was given 30 days notice to **vacate its rented area** to make way for U.S. government offices. The Ainsworth Temple Craft was formed and purchased a former public hall and gymnasium for \$6,500.

The **Grand Representative** of New York quoted that state's Grand Master when he espoused the beliefs of Masonry in the U.S. as unalterably opposed to **Communism**, which stands against the

tenets of our fraternity, increasing wholehearted devotion to the free public school system because it is the cornerstone of democracy and the separation of church and state.

1950

Ernest S. Schiefelbein, Grand Master

June 9, 1949 – June 8, 1950

Reported at the 93rd Annual Communication

The title of **Honorary Past Grand Master** was conferred on Brother **Roscoe Pound** as one who “has rendered distinguished and unusual service to the Masonic Craft throughout the world and is recognized as the greatest living authority and writer on Masonic jurisprudence.” **Lancaster Lodge No. 54** also elected him to **life membership** after the Grand Lodge authorized dual membership as well as life membership in that lodge’s Past Masters Association. The honors were bestowed at the 75th anniversary of Lancaster Lodge No. 54, his home lodge.

A bronze **plaque** was unveiled at the gravesite of **Robert Carrel Jordan**, the first Grand Master of Masons of Nebraska. More than 200 Master Masons attended the event at Prospect Hill Cemetery in Omaha.

The Grand Master said one of the weaknesses of the fraternity was **rushing new members** through the degrees and a subsequent apparent lack of interest in them. He suggested that lodges spend more time **educating them** in the principles, philosophy and historic background of the Craft.

The high point of the **Conference of Grand Masters** was the unveiling of a 17-foot bronze statue of **George Washington** at the George Washington Masonic National Memorial in Alexandria, Virginia, contributed by **DeMolay International**. The event was attended by President **Harry Truman**.

A **memorial fund** was established by the trustees of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**. It was reported that quite a few donations were received to perpetuate the memory of a loved one.

A special committee investigated an **amendment** proposed in 1949 by the Senior Warden of **Omaha Lodge No. 288** that would allow a candidate “suffering from **loss of any limb** or part thereof, an ear or any other portion of his flesh which does not impair his manhood, or loss to some degree of sight and hearing provided that the candidate by use of an artificial appliance can amply see, hear and take part in the work of the lodge” to be eligible for a waiver from the Grand Master when accepted by a lodge. The committee said the issue was long established as a Landmark, the highest form of Masonic law that is unalterable and unchangeable, and the Grand Lodge had no right to adopt the amendment. It called the amendment an “opening wedge to more destructive changes,” however they left the decision of the consideration of the amendment to the Grand Master who followed their advice and took no action.

After a hearing with several Omaha Master Masons who requested a dispensation to **form a new lodge**, the Grand Master denied the request.

Throughout past proceedings, the **Webb-Preston work** was recognized as the accepted work for Nebraska. The **Committee on Work** acknowledged there was no way to determine the exact wording of the Webb-Preston work as referred to in the past, but those proficient could agree on the work and it was **adopted** as the authorized esoteric and monitorial work of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska.

The President of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** said enough funds were raised to start a building program to add two wings to the **infirmary** so all residents would live in one fireproof building. The cost of the project was bid at \$453,949.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** announced plans to build a **recreation and meeting hall** that would accommodate 150-200 people, and the Grand Lodge granted authority to proceed with plans.

In opening Annual Communication, the Master of **Nebraska Lodge No. 1** said, “This meeting is held at a time when the whole world is in turmoil. So many of our brethren, in distant lands, do not have the opportunity of meeting such as this. Two opposite **theories of government** are in mortal combat, with the forces of fundamental America on the one side, in its struggle for the preservation of truth, justice and liberty, and on the other side stand the forces of a Godless philosophy and atheism who offer security for liberty and who seek the concentration of power in the hands of a few men who demand that their followers shall never question orders, but follow them explicitly.”

An investigation of Germany by the **Masonic Service Association** found that most Masons had joined the **United Grand Lodge of Germany**. “This was accomplished only by the giving up by some of the Grand lodges involved of some cherished right in favor of the unity and harmony of the whole. It was a wonderful achievement,” said the chairman of the **Committee on Foreign Correspondence**. But, he also noted the presence of four Grand Lodges in Berlin and he did not make a recommendation on recognition.

The Grand Lodge recognized the **Grand Orient of Italy** in 1949. The chairman of the **Committee on Foreign Correspondence** said that was an error and it was approved to **rescind that recognition**. He said Italy had 10 Grand Lodges and their right to exist was dependent on “the whim of cabinet officials of Italy” and the interpretation of a **new constitution**.

1951

John S. Hedelund, Grand Master

June 8, 1950 – June 7, 1951

Reported at the 94th Annual Communication

Past Grand Master **Benjamin Eyre** presented a **gavel** to the Grand Lodge made from wood taken from the **White House** that was being renovated by President **Harry Truman**. Brother **William F. Evers** made the gavel. A plate on the gavel stated, “Original White House material, destroyed in 1950.”

Brother **William Pieper, Lincoln Lodge No. 19**, offered the Board of Trustees of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, a **gift** of \$100,000 if matched by the Masons of Nebraska. The money was earmarked for a special building fund. The funds were presented to the home.

Requests for special dispensations to **expedite degree work** totaled 109 in the face of renewal of the draft law and the **Korean War**.

In the second year of a new law that required **automatic suspension of delinquent members**, it was reported there were far fewer suspended brethren.

The Grand Lodge of Nebraska presented a four-volume treatise, “Footprints on the Sands of Time,” a **biography** about General **John J. Pershing**, to the library at the **George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association**. Pershing was a Mason from Nebraska.

The Grand Lodge began preparing for its **Centennial** in 1957 when the Grand Historian began gathering facts, information and statistics.

The **Grand Master** agreed with the Grand Master of Texas that the proliferation of **splinter Masonic groups** “detracts from the principle of the universality of Masonry. It results in a fragmentation of Masonry...It dissipates our efforts and confuses our viewpoints.”

The Grand Master refused to permit a **degree team** in **Knights Templar** uniform to confer a degree. He ruled that the growth of degree teams “has no right to operate or do degree work unless it is sponsored by a chartered lodge.”

Nebraska Masonry recovered its loss of **members** in the **depression** years of the 1930s with the total number of members surpassing the previous all-time high.

The **Masonic Education Committee** published a monthly **bulletin**, and several special bulletins about ladies nights, patriotic meetings, special days, guest nights and other topics.

A long-range, overall plan for the **The Nebraska Masonic Home** resulted in the **construction** of two wings. All room furnishings were made possible by several Masonic-related organizations.

The Grand Master reported that with the steady **increase of residents** at **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, it could be called on to care for about 365 residents by 1980.

The word “**Masonic**” was **dropped** from the name of the **Omaha Home for Boys** by a vote of the membership after questions were raised about fundraising outside of Omaha. The effective date of the action was April 1, 1952, to give the home time to change materials.

1952

Thomas J. Aron, Grand Master

June 7, 1951 – June 4, 1952

Reported at the 95th Annual Communication

A challenge issued in 1951 by **William Pieper** of Lincoln to match donations for **The Nebraska Masonic Home** up to \$100,000 was surpassed. Over \$225,000 was donated.

The Grand Master recommended, and it was approved, that \$30,000 from the Building and Improvement Fund be used to equip the **kitchen** at **The Nebraska Masonic Home**.

The Grand Master of Massachusetts presented the **Henry Price Medal**, in recognition of that state’s first Grand Master, to the Nebraska Grand Master. In making the presentation, the Massachusetts Grand Master recognized **Roscoe Pound** as Nebraska’s “great contribution” to Masonry.

Lewis E. Smith, PGM, a member of **Long Pine Lodge No. 136** in Long Pine, was recognized for attending **50 consecutive** Grand Lodge **Annual Communications**.

The **Central Schools of Instruction** attracted the largest participation to date from a greater number of lodges. A total of 3,996 Masons from 178 lodges attended the 20 Central Schools.

It was reported that in **China** the Grand Master and his family were **beheaded**, while the Grand Secretary and his family were arrested and not heard from again. The chairman of the **Committee on Fraternal Relations** observed, “The **Iron Door** is closing!”

A **new addition** at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** was dedicated.

The per capita **cost to care for residents** of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** was \$1,173, an increase of more than \$200 from the previous year.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** was forced to sell its raw milk and buy back **pasteurized milk** for use at the home after the State Board of Health threatened to not renew its license if the home didn’t pasteurize its milk.

After being ordered to **drop “Masonic”** from the name of **The Omaha Masonic Home for Boys** the previous year, the home’s board refused to change the name. The Board asked permission to continue soliciting Masons in Douglas County in order to operate the home. Disciplinary action was recommended.

The **Grand Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star** refurbished the **Junior Boys Home** at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**. Much of the furniture had been used since the home was built and was in deterioration.

The Grand Lodge **dedicated** a new lodge building for **Thistle Lodge No. 61** in Lexington.

Past Grand Master **Lewis E. Smith** was re-elected treasurer of the **Masonic Relief Association** of the United States and Canada.

The sixth floor **library** of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial was completed and **dedicated**. Of the memorial’s nine floors, the third floor was the only other one completed.

1953

Edward M. Knight, Grand Master
June 4, 1952 – June 11, 1953
Reported at the 96th Annual Communication

In compliance with the adopted recommendation of the **Committee on Jurisprudence**, the Omaha Masonic Home for Boys submitted amended Articles of Incorporation to the Secretary of State **changing its name** to **The Omaha Home for Boys**. With the name change, the Grand Master authorized Omaha and Douglas County lodges to proceed with an annual solicitation of funds.

Stones bearing Masons' marks were found in the **foundations** of the **White House** when it was gutted for rebuilding. President. **Harry Truman** ordered that each Grand Lodge receive one stone.

The great granddaughter of **Robert C. Jordan**, Nebraska's first Grand Master, and his only living descendant, found his Masonic ring, a pin and jewel, and a book of memos. She gave them to the Grand Lodge where they were placed with **historic relics**.

The large number of men in the **armed forces** resulted in a continuation of requests for special dispensations to **confer degrees without respect to time** or proficiency.

A committee prepared a **model set of lodge bylaws** for use as a guide in preparing new and revised bylaws.

The **Grand Secretary's salary** was increased to \$6,000 per year, and the **Grand Custodian's** was upped to \$4,500.

The number of lodges that failed to **confer degrees** doubled from the previous year to 12.

Attendance at the 19 **Central Schools of Instruction** increased to 4,196 registrations from 221 lodges.

The number of members given **individual certificates of proficiency** doubled in four years.

Permission was granted to lodges wanting to **confer degrees in full form**, including the use of tuxedos, full dress or costumes.

A committee **planning** the **centennial observance** of the Grand Lodge recommended that all lodges carry out regional celebrations during the 100th year.

More than 150 members of McKinley Lodge No. 712 in **Hammond, Indiana**, visited **Alliance Lodge No. 183**. A former resident of Alliance was Master of the lodge and it was a tradition of that lodge every year to visit a distant lodge.

Two **new wings** were completed at **The Nebraska Masonic Home**.

The Grand Master ruled that **High Twelve Clubs** could continue to operate in Nebraska.

The **200th anniversary of the initiation** of **George Washington** was observed at each **Central School of Instruction** banquet with a talk by the **George Washington Masonic National Memorial Committee** or **Masonic Education Committee**.

Lodge secretaries preparing hand-written **reports** were urged to use greater care so they could be read more easily.

A **deaf man** was ruled physically **unable to meet the requirements** for initiation.

New lodges were dedicated for **Frank Welch Lodge No. 75** in Sidney and **Omadi Lodge No. 5** in South Sioux City.

1954

Fay Smith, Grand Master
June 11, 1953 – June 9, 1954
Reported at the 97th Annual Communication

The Grand Master attended the **Missouri Grand Lodge's** Annual Communication and ate breakfast and dinner with M.:W.: **Harry S. Truman**, former U.S. President.

A 50th anniversary celebration of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** was held. M.:W.: **Lewis Smith**, the only brother present who was also present at the time of the origin of the home, addressed the group.

The Nebraska Masonic Home dedicated new windows in the Chapel at the opening of the **Grand Chapter of the Eastern Star**, which raised the funds for the windows.

Masonic organizations in the Grand Island area donated more than \$3,500 worth of **food** goods to **The Nebraska Masonic Home**.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** sold about two acres of its property for the construction of the **Masonic Lodge in Fremont**.

The Grand Master called for members to attend a **statewide breakfast** on March 28, in recognition of **Masonry's support of religion**. A total of 5,601 Masons across the state attended breakfasts, followed by attendance at churches of their choice. The event resulted in favorable newspaper coverage.

While attending the **Conference of Grand Masters** in Washington, D.C., the Grand Master entertained the **Nebraska Congressional delegation** at dinner, all of whom were Masons.

The Grand Master presented "another volume" of the **Pershing biography** series to the library at the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial.

The Grand Custodian, representing the Grand Master, visited a lodge and enforced a law forbidding the use of **ciphers** or keys to the work. The officers of the lodge had refused to cease using them.

Forty brethren were certified proficient. The Grand Custodian noted that it was not an easy task to contact and examine more than 500 **proficient brethren**.

The **Committee on Work** stated that although the work in lodges was excellent, brethren should **study the historical**, philosophical and modern aspect of the work. "It is only in this way that Freemasonry will become something to tie to in times of trouble and adversity."

The **Orphan's Educational Endowment Fund** stood at more than \$265,000. It also served as a supplemental endowment fund of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**.

The Grand Master's decisions included: **Acacia Fraternity** could not solicit Masons to assist in membership drives; five men were **ineligible for membership** who respectively lost a foot, was near blindness, was partially deaf, had a stiff leg, and had no motion in his hip joints. He also ruled that a lodge could not rent the first floor for a **pool hall**; Masons owning a business block would be subject to charges if any of it was rented for a **liquor store**; and members of affiliated Masonic bodies **could not wear any head dress** during a tyled meeting.

A resolution was ruled contrary to the Ancient Landmarks and out of order that would have allowed men with an "**artificial appliance**," who were able to communicate the proper signs and grips, to be granted a waiver for initiation by the Grand Master.

The Grand Master recommended that the custom of giving the **Junior Past Grand Master** his new **apron** be dispensed with and that he receive a new apron at the beginning of his term. He stated that the Grand Master wears his apron a great deal and it becomes soiled and worn, when he should "look the brightest of all on these occasions."

A brother living in Missouri, who was a member of **Nebraska Lodge No. 1** in Omaha, was found guilty in Nebraska of unmasonic conduct by being involved in the **liquor** business. This was not a Masonic offense in Missouri. Upholding the Nebraska decision, Missouri expelled him from the fraternity.

1955

Charles F. Adams, Grand Master

June 9, 1954 – June 9, 1955

Reported at the 98th Annual Communication

Brother **Victor Anderson, Governor of Nebraska**, was introduced at Annual Communication.

Nebraska Lodge No. 1 in Omaha invited Masters or representatives from each lodge in the state to **sign a Bible** commemorating the **centennial** of the lodge. The oldest lodge in Nebraska, it received a newly-designed certificate to commemorate the anniversary from the Grand Lodge.

A **Bronze Jordan Medal** was presented to M.:W.: Carroll Hughes, **Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Illinois**, in recognition of the two Grand Lodge's close relationship and Illinois' chartering of **Nebraska Lodge No. 1** in 1855.

The Grand Master recommended the **Jurisprudence Committee** prepare rules for the **floor work**, procedures and **introduction** of distinguished guests to prepare lodges to host distinguished visitors during the Grand Lodge's Centennial year.

Grand Lodge officers assembled for a **conference** in July 1954, and January 1955, to discuss the "affairs of the Grand Lodge."

Several **lodges** built or were **constructing** new buildings in the state. Two cornerstones were laid for new Masonic Temples, five were dedicated and about 20 lodges were in the process of construction or remodeling.

The increased **construction** of **lodges** and the formation of temple craft associations prompted the passage of laws delineating the duties, power and authority of the **Temple Building Advisory Committee**.

The **Temple Building Advisory Committee** had **basic designs** developed for the review of Nebraska lodges considering construction of new lodges. A brother and architect freely prepared the designs.

Bellevue Lodge No. 325 in Bellevue was **instituted** in March, the first lodge to be created under dispensation since 1936.

The Grand Master noted **weaknesses** in "extremely large **lodges**" in Lincoln and Omaha. He said the difficulties of transportation from home to lodge, parking problems and diminished opportunities for active participation as a lodge officer were affecting membership. He encouraged the formation of lodges in suburban areas, such as the startup of a lodge in **Bellevue**.

The **Grand Master ruled** that just because a man was a member of the armed forces did not constitute an "exceptional case" and was not good cause to **expedite his degrees**, since the U.S. was not at war.

A program was begun to protect subordinate lodges and the Grand Lodge by providing comprehensive liability insurance.

The Grand Custodian reported that 10 lodges certified the previous year were not able to be certified in 1955 because of one or two officers who refused to accept their responsibility. "This type of officer, who lets his lodge down because he is apparently uninterested, or unwilling to give the necessary time and effort to his Masonic duties, or who is, in some instances, too mentally lazy to learn his work, should be very ashamed and humiliated that he, and he alone, is responsible for the loss of lodge certification," he said.

Imperial Potentate Frank S. Land, the father of DeMolay, was commended for furthering the formal presentation and giving of honors by Masonic-related bodies to Grand Masters. "There is a growing awareness of the fact that, first and foremost, we are Master Masons," the Grand Master said.

A breakfast hosted by Imperial Potentate Frank S. Land, the father of DeMolay, at the Grand Masters' Conference in Washington, D.C. honored President Dwight Eisenhower and was attended by the Grand Master. Guests included members of the Supreme Court, the President's cabinet and other high government officials.

Herbert T. White, Grand Master
June 9, 1955 – June 7, 1956
Reported at the 99th Annual Communication

The Grand Master requested a \$13,000 **appropriation** to add to \$22,000 previously provided to observe the **100th Anniversary** of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska in 1957.

As part of the observance of Nebraska's **100th Anniversary** as a Grand Lodge, the **Bronze Jordan Medal** was presented to a representative of the **Grand Lodge of Missouri**. *(The medal was also presented to the **Grand Lodge of Iowa** in 1957 in recognition of its role in creating one of the first Masonic lodges in Nebraska.)*

The Grand Master and Grand Secretary attended Annual Communications of several Grand Lodges celebrating significant **anniversaries** to get ideas for Nebraska's observance, including Ontario, Kansas and New York.

On June 24, 1955, the Grand Master **constituted Bellevue Lodge No. 325** in Bellevue, the first chartering of a Nebraska lodge since 1937. Ironically, Bellevue Lodge was constituted 100 years after the first Nebraska lodge, **Nebraska Lodge No. 1**, which moved to Omaha, was created in Bellevue.

Centennial Lodge No. 326 in Omaha was formed in 1955. It was chartered in 1956 the year before the Grand Lodge of Nebraska's **centennial** year.

Despite a drought in 1955, the Grand Master reported that **lodges** continued to **build**, remodel and acquire buildings throughout the state.

Nebraska Governor **Victor Anderson**, a member of **George Washington Lodge No. 250** in Lincoln, was introduced at the 1956 **Annual Communication**.

While attending the **Conference of Grand Masters** in Washington, D.C., the Grand Master and other officers entertained the state's senators, representatives and their wives. It was noted that the **state's congressional delegation** was 100 percent Masonic.

In 1955, after President **Dwight Eisenhower** became the first sitting president to suffer a **heart attack**, the Grand Master issued a bulletin recommending that all **lodges pray** for the President's recovery. President Eisenhower replied with thanks.

A **Memorial Administration Recreation Building** was approved at the 1955 Annual Communication for construction at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** with the understanding that construction could not start until all funds were raised. With a drought hitting the state, the Grand Master did not allow solicitation of members, but a special bulletin was sent to all lodges. The estimated cost of \$80,000 was raised before the 1956 Annual Communication.

The **Grand Custodian** started a program recognizing brethren who were **certified 20 or more years** by presenting them a certificate. Ninety-six Masons received the award.

The Grand Custodian reported several lodges in the state whose **officers** did no **ritual work** other than opening and closing the lodge. Past Masters confer degrees while younger members sit on the sidelines with nothing to do. "Then there is the ever-present evil of **'borrowing' brethren** from neighboring lodges to give lectures..."

The "old Home" at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** in Plattsmouth was **razed** after residents moved to the new building.

Following action by the Grand Lodge in 1951 that gave the **Omaha Home for Boys** five years to find other **sources of income** other than soliciting Omaha Masons, the home said it wasn't able to raise enough funds to supplant those raised through the local campaign. It requested a three-year extension to further develop its fundraising efforts.

The **Grand Master ruled** that a man who had **lost a thumb** could not petition for Masonry. After personally inspecting another man who had lost parts of his first, second, third and fourth fingers, he decided he could petition to join.

The **Grand Master held** that **Masonic clothing and regalia** could not be worn at the rededication of a Masonic memorial held on a **Sunday**. He stated that wearing regalia would give the impression the lodge was at work, and that the decision was in line with a law that stated Masonic clothing could not be worn on a Sunday.

The **Masonic Education Committee** prepared and sent out information to Masters for the use of their Educational Committees containing **lists of resources** and educational items of interest.

It was reported that four states in the U.S. showed **decreases in membership**: Arkansas, District of Columbia, Illinois and Vermont. Illinois had the largest loss of 492. The Grand Master of Arkansas said too much lodge time was taken up with **degree work**. Other Grand Masters decried placing too much time and emphasis on ritual work in deference to education and leadership skills.

Among the **cornerstones** laid was one for the **Fremont Masonic Temple** on ground purchased from the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**.

Many cabinet members and Supreme Court judges attended a **breakfast** given by **Frank S. Land**, the founder of DeMolay, along with Nebraska's Grand Master and others attending the **Conference of Grand Masters** in Washington, D.C.

1957

Merle M. Hale, Grand Master

June 7, 1956 – June 6, 1957

Reported at the 100th Annual Communication

Twenty Pre-Centennial **Banquets** were held across the state leading up to the 1957 **Centennial** Communication. Attendance ranged from 150 to more than 600 in Nebraska City. About 5,000 Masons and their ladies attended. The Grand Custodian provided a history of the development and evolution of the ritual. No **Central Schools of Instruction** were held that year, although local lodges received individual schooling. Each Mason received a centennial edition of "100 Questions about Freemasonry."

The **activities** held in observance of the Grand Lodge's **100th anniversary** included: a Thanksgiving Worship Service held in the Music Hall of the Omaha Civic Auditorium that was "in the form of an Anglican Even-song" and an Episcopalian Archbishop from Ontario, Canada, who spoke; 14 buses visited **The Nebraska Masonic Home** and the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**; the laying of a wreath at the tomb of the first Grand Master, M.:W.: **Robert C. Jordan**; a visit to a monument commemorating the **first lodge in Nebraska** at Bellevue; a concert by the University of Nebraska Symphony Orchestra; music at the Grand Master's Banquet was provided by members of the music faculty at Hastings College; the presentation of a centennial poem; and music at the Ladies Banquet was furnished by the University of Omaha choir and string ensemble. More than 1,000 Masons gathered for the Grand Lodge Dinner and received a dinner plate decorated with a Masonic seal and on the back were facts about the centennial. The guest speaker was a Past Grand Master of Massachusetts.

Distinguished guests from more than 35 jurisdictions and national Masonic bodies, including 30 states, Brazil, Canada and Nationale Francais were present at the observances of the Grand Lodge's **100th anniversary**.

The Grand Master presented a **Grand Lodge banner** for display in the East during its meetings, which was used to educate new members.

Centennial Lodge No. 326, Omaha, received its **charter** on July 7, 1956, in the year observing the **100th year** of the existence of the Grand Lodge.

Nelson Lodge No. 77 in Nelson presented to the Grand Lodge in honor of its **centennial** a picture of **George Washington** and the signing of the Declaration of Independence donated by Brother Harry R. Follmer. Follmer also gave **Geneva Lodge No. 79** the final of three volumes of his

book on the life of General **John J. Pershing** entitled, “Footprints on the Sands of Time,” which the lodge presented to the Grand Lodge. Pending changes, the volumes were not bound.

The report of the **Committee on Grand Lodge Business Affairs**, appointed at the previous communication, was approved that stated a favorable market resulted in a significant increase in Grand Lodge assets. They said the Grand Lodge needed to change some **business practices** commensurate with its size and responsibilities. The committee made recommendations for the **Grand Board of Trustees**, adding a committee on **Appropriations**, consolidation of accounts, the **Board of The Nebraska Masonic Home** and its articles of incorporation, and the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** and the need for separation of management from bookkeeping, accounting and management of funds.

The **Committee on Grand Lodge Office**, which was created on recommendation of the **Jurisprudence Committee** after disapproving the Grand Master’s recommendation to spend \$31,500 to remodel the Grand Lodge **office space**, met for the first time in 1956 to review the needs of the office. The committee discovered several less costly ways to solve the office’s problems and spent about \$4,300 to resolve them.

The Grand Custodian reported that of the top 10 lodges with the greatest number of **certified men**, five were located in **Lincoln**.

It was reported by the chairman of the **Committee on Relief and Care of Orphans** that requests for **assistance** were at their lowest point in 25 years of his experience on the committee, encompassing the **Great Depression** and **World War II**.

Except for one minor change, the **Articles of Incorporation** for **The Nebraska Masonic Home** had not been changed since 1924, and were antiquated and unfit to conduct the business of the home. The home’s Board proposed changes and asked the Grand Lodge for its approval.

The **Orphans Fund**, which was created at the close of the Civil War, had received sufficient funds that no per capita assessments were needed. The assessment at that time was 50 cents per member. The total **amount in the fund** in 1957 was \$298,000. The chairman of the committee said there was no Mason living who ever put a dime in this account.

The **Committee on Temple Building Advisory** said that despite the current drought, it was a good time for lodges to lay the ground work for a **building program** consisting of site location, building plans and appraisal of incomes and expenses of the lodge in order to establish a reserve fund for future building purposes.

A resolution was introduced that the Constitution of the Grand Lodge be amended by striking the words “**subordinate lodge**” and substituting “**constituent lodge**.”

A **cornerstone** was laid for the Administration-Recreational Building at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** in Fremont.

1958

Roy I. Babbitt, Grand Master

June 6, 1957 – June 5, 1958

Reported at the 101st Annual Communication

The Grand Master reported the Nebraska Grand Lodge’s gain in **membership** was not nearly as large as in past years. But he said, “...we did show a gain when many other Grand Jurisdictions barely held their own or suffered distinct losses.” In the year 1957, the number of Masons in Nebraska hit a **peak** in its history of 46,213.

The Grand Custodian said the health of the fraternity was not conclusive because of a **lack of attendance** due to brothers giving time to “third-rate things.” He said, “We give precedence to light, frothy and time-consuming things that won’t raise the moral or spiritual or intellectual level of the

world by one hair's breadth." All lodges were experiencing a loss in attendance, he continued, but the few who attended Masonic funeral services "is a disgraceful public exhibition..."

The **Committee on Masonic Education** said the focus of its area meetings the following year would be to make members conscious of the necessity of building up the lodge instead of looking entirely to appendant bodies. The committee said it felt it had made progress getting officers to see the necessity of doing more than **degree work** in their lodges.

With more than \$2 million in securities and cash, the Grand Lodge was "now engaged in big business," and the **Business Affairs Committee** reported several steps necessary to formalize the **business practices** of the Grand Lodge.

A committee appointed to investigate the **District Deputy Grand Master system** recommended it not be adopted because it was "neither practical nor desirable for our Nebraska jurisdiction and would have far-reaching and damaging results to the basic concept of constitutional procedure and constitutional authority of the Grand Master of Masons of Nebraska."

The Grand Master appointed a **parliamentarian** after a resolution passed at the previous **Annual Communication** calling for a parliamentarian to serve at all communications.

Two-thirds of Nebraska **lodges** voted against consideration of an amendment that would have changed all references from "**subordinate**" lodges to "**constituent**" lodges.

A resolution proposed that lodges in Waterloo, western Douglas County and Omaha would have **concurrent jurisdiction** over all petitioners in their area, but the **Jurisprudence Committee** held the issue for further study.

An amendment passed in 1957 that reduced **membership** on the **Jurisprudence Committee** from all Past Grand Masters to five was reversed, and the previous language was returned to the bylaws. The Grand Master said the larger committee had been a tradition since the establishment of the Grand Lodge, and the change had created disharmony in the Craft. "The work of this committee is of such importance that it is entitled to the collective experience and judgment of all Past Grand Masters in attendance at a Grand Lodge session," he said.

The Omaha **Civil Defense** Rules Committee invited Masonic organizations to join a Group Participation Unit of Civil Defense. The **Grand Master ruled** lodges could not participate.

A **Shrine** club had advertised and sold tickets for a **Sunday night dance**. Believing it improper for a Masonic body to sponsor a commercial venture because it could result in adverse publicity, the Grand Master directed the club to renounce its sponsorship and advertise that fact, and it complied.

A committee comprised of members of the Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter, Order of Eastern Star, studied how to make profitable use of excess **facilities** at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**.

The threat of **Asian flu** kept many members away from attending the **Central Schools of Instruction** after mid-October.

The number of **certified lodges** continued to grow for the 10th consecutive year.

Brother **Roger Dehning**, a member of **Lancaster Lodge No. 54**, earned a **certificate of proficiency** just three months after he was raised at age 22. The records showed that he was the youngest Nebraska Mason ever to be certified so soon after taking his Master Mason Degree.

Nebraska Lodges with the greatest number of **certified members** was led by **East Lincoln No. 210** in Lincoln with 31, **Lancaster Lodge No. 54** in Lincoln with 30, **Bee Hive Lodge No. 184** in Omaha with 27, **Lincoln Lodge No. 19** in Lincoln and **Robert W. Furnas Lodge No. 265** in Scottsbluff with 20. Lodges with the highest percentage of members certified included **Sioux Lodge No. 277** in Crawford with 10.41%, **Victory Lodge No. 310** in Valley with 7.55%, **Square Lodge No. 51** in Valparaiso with 7.46%, **Cable Lodge No. 225** in Arnold with 7.14% and **Comet Lodge No. 229** in Ceresco with 5.81%.

The Grand Lodge considered the economic advisability of operating the **farm** at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**. They found the farm self-supporting and advised that as long as the children were involved in 4-H then it should remain an operation of the home.

More than one-third of the **Grand Lodge office's** card files were **microfilmed**. In the coming year, the remainder of the files was scheduled to be completed before moving to microfilm annual returns. As a result, additional vault space was made available.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** became licensed to care for up to 75 children. The number of **residents** was 38.

More and more lodges were distributing four candidate booklets, along with the Centennial edition of "100 Questions about Freemasonry." Lodge Education Committees reviewed them with new members. The **Committee on Masonic Education** also reported that it was **recording** talks and speeches to make them available to local lodges.

The **Grand Lodge of China** had requested recognition since 1951, and the **Committee on Fraternal Relations** said they withheld it because its members fled to Formosa after a Communist takeover of the country. The committee recommended recognition, pointing out that half its members were Americans and some brethren stationed in the area would benefit.

Vice President **Richard Nixon** spoke at the **Conference of Grand Masters** in North America when it met in Washington D.C.

1959

John E. Beaver, Grand Master

June 5, 1958 – June 10, 1959

Reported at the 102nd Annual Communication

The Grand Custodian said the **condition of ritual work** in Nebraska was that good lodges got better and the poor ones became terrible. He attributed the situation to lack of manpower, pride, tradition, leadership and most of all, desire.

Three district meetings were held by the **Grand Custodian** on the **Middle Chamber lecture**. Brethren who had given, were then giving or intended to give the lecture were invited. More than 300 attended. The program provided an explanation of the symbolism and meaning of the ceremony and an analysis of the lecture.

A resolution was passed creating a **Committee on Masonic Information** to examine the need to disseminate information concerning the operation of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** and the history and philosophy of Freemasonry. It was felt that information could be expedited and less costly with better results if handled by one committee.

The **Committee on Relief and Care of Orphans** said persons assisted by the committee were the lowest in its history. Several factors contributed to the situation, including, old age assistance, Social Security, retirement benefits and pension plans, and a healthy economic condition. The chairman pointed out that the Grand Lodge had no **retirement plan** for its salaried employees at **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** as well as the **Grand Secretary**.

A recommendation that the Grand Lodge investigate developing **housing for senior citizens** was held for further study.

At no cost to the Grand Lodge, the Grand Master and Grand Secretary traveled to Long Beach, California, and presented a **50-year pin** to **Arthur L. Palmer**. As a member of **Springfield Lodge No. 112** in Springfield, he was a generous donor to **The Nebraska Masonic Home** and the Grand Master said he had done "so much for Masonry in all parts of the world..." More than 200 Masons in the Long Beach area attended the presentation.

The **Committee on Jurisprudence** said Lodges could **sponsor DeMolay** Chapters provided there was no financial responsibility.

The Grand Master recommended the **Committee on Nebraska Work** review the **Masonic Monitor and Ceremonies** and recommend changes. He said the **Funeral Service** was outdated.

Attendance at the **Schools of Instruction** in Hastings nearly doubled after it was decided to hold it during three consecutive weeks instead of the usual two days with three sessions each day.

An **office** was secured for the **Grand Custodian** at a cost of \$800 per year and \$1,758 to remodel and furnish it.

The **Nebraska Masonic Home** reported it opened a **store** staffed by residents. A record was kept of items obtained in the store by residents, but there was no charge for them.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** said that in 1958, the **Grand Lodge** appropriated \$27,500 toward the home's budget of \$65,855.

The **Committee on Fraternal Relations** reported that since 1937 at least 20 nations that operated under constitutional government were ruled by **communism** and **fascism**. "We thought we were liberating the world in [World War II], and yet today nearly half the people of the world are living under some form of dictatorship. Today in not nearly so many places as in 1937 can Masonry be practiced."

1960

Joseph C. Tye, Grand Master

June 10, 1959 – June 8, 1960

Reported at the 103rd Annual Communication

Individually certified Masons in the state totaled 719, the greatest number in the Grand Lodge's history. Thirty were certified during the year, the smallest number than in the previous 11 years. **East Lincoln Lodge No. 210** in Lincoln had the largest number of certified Masons with 34, and **Golden Rod Lodge No. 306** in Lodgepole had the highest percentage of members certified with 8.235%.

A **Public Relations Committee** was **formed** to call to the attention of the public Masonic activities and activities of individual Masons.

The Grand Lodge "cooperated" with the three-year-old **Shrine Bowl Game**, and the Grand Master called it a grand **success**.

A year after Alaska and Hawaii were admitted to the Union, **Nebraska Lodge No. 1** in Omaha presented a new 50-star **flag** to the Grand Lodge.

Without identifying the action of the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia, and the resulting reaction of the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, the chairman of the **Committee on Fraternal Relations** said, "This matter is important, for I believe that sooner or later, this whole matter of **color** will have to be met by our Grand Lodges head-on."

A review of the **Monitor and Ceremonies** was planned with four committees appointed to consider assigned sections of the publication.

It was recommended by a committee that the Grand Lodge proceed in constructing **housing for senior citizens**. The committee identified property between 39th and 40th streets on Cuming in Omaha. The delegates at Annual Communication approved the project.

The **Jurisprudence Committee** ruled that it was unmasonic to list Masonic membership on **political** cards and ads but not a violation of Masonic law.

A proposal to **recognize lodges** for meeting attendance, number of new members and program activities was disapproved by the **Jurisprudence Committee**, but was subsequently approved by the Grand Lodge.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** changed its bylaws so that it could **accept children** from the six states bordering Nebraska.

The **endowment fund** of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** reached \$100,000. Income from those funds made it possible for the home to not increase its budget request from the Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star.

A report from **The Nebraska Masonic Home** observed that “changing conditions” forced them to move to a five-day **work week** in order to deal with a labor shortage, which increased the cost of operation.

People living longer and entering **The Nebraska Masonic Home** later in life affected its operation by filling one floor and moving **residents**, who were bedridden and needed constant care, to the second floor. This increased costs to the home.

A committee was appointed to study the publication of a **newsletter** to provide information to Nebraska members about the activities of the Grand Lodge and local lodges.

The interior of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial was completed, but some exterior **construction** remained, 50 years after the cornerstone of the building was laid.

The Grand Master sent the former superintendent of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** to the Golden Anniversary of the **White House Conference on Youth and Children** in Washington D.C. Started by Teddy Roosevelt in 1909, its purpose was to discuss what the future held for children. The 8,000 delegates attended workshops and Nebraska’s representative was assigned to communications. He said that although the impact of television was unknown, its affect on youth was tremendous because all leisure time was “funneled into” watching **television**, and parents were concerned about violence and sex on TV. He said the greatest social revolution ever place was occurring in the U.S., the role of the family was changing and business had strayed from free enterprise.

The **Grand Lodge of Italy** invited representatives of Grand Lodges around the world to a **World Congress** in Rome during the Olympic Games.

1961

John F. Fatcher, Grand Master

June 8, 1960 – June 7, 1961

Reported at the 104th Annual Communication

Citing competition from such activities as radio, television, golf and bowling, the Grand Master pointed to a small **decline in membership**. He said young family men preferred togetherness with their wives and families rather than a “men only” relationship.

An amendment passed that qualified men to join who had “**artificial parts or limbs**,” provided they were under practical control of the petitioner. The amendment held Masters and lodges accountable for the observance of the provisions of the law.

The **Masonic Education Committee** developed the booklet, “**Looking Toward the East**” for Senior Wardens and Secretaries in preparing for their year of leading their lodge.

The final piece of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial was the placement of **dioramas** about our first president’s life.

Past Grand Master **Charles Chappell** received a certificate recognizing his attendance at the **50th consecutive Annual Communication** of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska.

A committee was appointed to formulate a long-range plan to solicit money for the **Endowment and Bequest Fund** for **The Nebraska Masonic Home**. Increasing costs threatened to force the home to convert securities to keep it in operation.

A **new wing** to house 25 residents was completed at **The Nebraska Masonic Home**.

The Grand Master recommended that Nebraska apply for **membership** in the **Masonic Service Association** of the U.S. since the Grand Lodge and its officers and members had long benefited from its services.

Eight **Secretaries’ Meetings** were held by the **Masonic Education Committee** prior to the Area Meetings to provide information and exchange ideas.

A total of 726 Masons became **certified in the work**, the 13th consecutive year of an increase. They represented the largest number of Nebraska Masons certified to date.

Three meetings to discuss findings about the **Middle Chamber lecture** were presented. For five years, the lecture had been researched and meetings were held to make it more meaningful and easier understood by initiates, and rank and file members.

A **retirement plan** was started for Grand Lodge **office employees**.

1962

Herbert A. Ronin, Grand Master

June 7, 1961 – June 6, 1962

Reported at the 105th Annual Communication

Grand Master **Herbert Ronin's** daughter, Joyce, was installed Grand Worthy Advisor, Order of **Rainbow for Girls**, one week after his installation.

Val Peterson, U.S. Ambassador to Denmark (1957-61), served as the **Grand Representative** to that country. He also served as Governor of Nebraska (1947-53) and Ambassador to Finland (1969-73). He was a member of **Antelope Lodge No. 276** in Elgin that merged with Trowel Lodge No. 71 in Neligh, which merged with **Diamond Lodge No. 291** in Orchard.

The Grand Master recommended that **lodges** be permitted to **sponsor Order of the Rainbow for Girls** and **Job's Daughters** in addition to the **Order of DeMolay**. And, he proposed a bylaw change that allowed lodge funds to be used to support these organizations.

The **Monitor** was **revised** contributing "to a greater and more meaningful interest in our ritual and ceremonies." The **Committee on Nebraska Work** had worked on its content for three years.

A motion was approved for the Grand Lodge to pay for 325 copies of the **Monitor** to send to local lodges.

After a worker at a missile base **petitioned** to join, it was discovered he hadn't lived long enough in one community to establish residence. The Grand Master rejected a request for a dispensation so he could join.

For the previous four years, 50 percent or more of Nebraska **lodges** were **certified** annually.

East Lincoln Lodge No. 210 led lodges in the state with 38 **certified members**, **Lancaster Lodge No. 54** in Lincoln had 34 and **Bee Hive Lodge No. 184** in Omaha had 32. Lodges with the highest percentage of members certified were **Cable Lodge No. 225** in Arnold with 11.48 percent, **Sioux Lodge No. 277** in Harrison with 10.63 percent, and **Golden Rod Lodge No. 306** in Lodgepole – all were merged with other lodges.

Grand Historian George Rosenlof completed a **history of the Grand Lodge** in recognition of its **100th anniversary** five years earlier.

The committee on **Fraternal Relations** reported that **Cuba** was a question mark and a problem. It was claimed that Castro had not interfered with the lodges.

Eight **meetings of secretaries** were held to exchange ideas. The secretaries expressed a desire to hold them again.

At the **craft shop**, which was installed at **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, residents painted, and worked on plastic bags and other easily-made objects.

The Nebraska Masonic Home gave Ms. Verna Leonard, retiring librarian at Plattsmouth, a plaque thanking her for giving 40 years to the home. She was the niece of **Francis E. White** whose home became the first Masonic Home in the state.

The Grand Lodge bylaws said **Annual Communication** would be held in **Omaha**. In 1962, they were amended to add any "such other place designated by the Grand Master."

The Grand Master attended the **dedication** of seven **new Temples** during the year, including **Cotner Lodge No. 297** and **College View Lodge No. 320**, both in Lincoln, and at **Wisner Lodge**

No. 114 in Wisner, **Charity Lodge No. 53** in Red Cloud, **Tecumseh Lodge No. 17**, in Tecumseh, **Superior Lodge No. 121** in Superior and **Wauneta Lodge No. 217** in Wauneta.

A fire destroyed **Union Lodge No. 287** in Palmyra. The lodge planned a new temple and interest in Masonry was reportedly renewed.

1963

Ernest O. Van Wey, Grand Master

June 6, 1962 – June 5, 1963

Reported at the 106th Annual Communication

In response to a loss in **membership**, the Grand Master recommended a change in bylaws that each Lodge have a **Masonic Education Committee**. He noted that only 5 percent of members attended meetings, but Masonic education could entice them back.

Progress on **Masonic Manor**, a pilot apartment project in Omaha, would make the lower floors available for occupancy later in the year. The project provided economical and comfortable apartments for Masons and their wives.

The **Committee on Work** adopted a change that honorary certificates of proficiency be given to **members** who had been **proficient** for 25 years or more.

For the first time since 1948, **individual certification** showed a loss of six to 731 certified members. The loss was blamed on aging members who moved or died.

Proficient members weren't appreciated, the Grand Custodian stated. Intended to replace keys, **ciphers** and rituals, these "Living Rituals" were the "flower of the Craft and the only hope of good Masonic work."

For the fourth consecutive year, 50 percent or more of Nebraska **lodges were certified**. A total of 143 lodges were proficient.

The Grand Custodian suggested that lodges participate in annual **Schools of Instruction** held at their lodge, instead of every other year as required by the rules. That year, 139 schools were held in lodges.

It was proposed that the **Grand Lodge Office Committee** be given authority to **supervise staff**, set salaries, employ and discharge them.

Salaries were increased \$300 for the **Grand Secretary** to \$8,100, and for the **Grand Custodian** to \$6,600.

A different way of handling the expenses incurred by the **Grand York Rite**, which paid some expenses and **salaries** of the **Grand Lodge office**, was suggested. Actual expenses were figured and charged to the York Rite.

The Grand Master proposed that the **Committee on Work** consider the **titles** of the **Grand Custodian** and **Assistant Custodians** so they better defined their duties.

It was expected that in the coming year, the **Grand Lodge** would secure a room in the Omaha Masonic Temple to display **museum** pieces and a library.

Eleven **Central Schools of Instruction** were held. Four had 300 or more registrants, three had 200 or more and two had 175. Two others had attendance much below normal, following a trend of fewer members attending.

A meeting providing research about the **Middle Chamber lecture** was held in place of a 12th **Central School of Instruction**. W.:B.: David Menagh developed and presented the program.

Approval was given by the Grand Master for a blind man, a man with an **artificial leg** and a man who lost three fingers to receive degrees, based on an amended section of the bylaws leaving such decisions to the Master and the Lodge.

The Grand Master gave permission for **Chester Lodge No. 298** in Chester to rent the lower portion of its building to a barber shop with snooker tables. He charged the Lodge to ensure that no **gambling** would occur.

Cotner Lodge No. 297 in Lincoln received approval from the Grand Master to pursue using the basement of its building as a **fallout shelter**. He warned that they investigate all details before getting “involved with government agencies.”

The **Grand Historian** prepared interesting facts about **cornerstone layings** from 1869-1962 and made a handout for the Annual Communication.

The **Committee on Work** completed a new **Monitor**. The new revised Monitor and Ceremonies, including the Funeral Ceremony, were the only approved work in Nebraska.

Brother and Mrs. **Glen Forner** of Niobrara offered 50 acres of land located on **Lewis and Clark Lake** to the Grand Lodge to develop a Masonic Retreat. The intent was that Masonic families could vacation there, or summer camps could be developed for youth organizations. A committee was appointed to report at the next Annual Communication.

New Masonic buildings were **dedicated** for **Pilot Lodge No. 240** in Lyons, **Union Lodge No. 287** in Palmyra, and **Guide Rock Lodge No. 128** in Guide Rock.

1964

Ralph M. Carhart, Grand Master

June 5, 1963 – June 10, 1964

Reported at the 107th Annual Communication

The loss of **membership** in 1963 was more than twice as large as the previous year due to increasing deaths, a larger number of suspensions and a decrease in raisings.

Facing the largest loss in **membership** since the **depression**, the Grand Master stated Masonry has “for too long worshipped at the altar of bigness. We have insisted on **quantity**, rather than quality, of candidates.” He said it was no wonder so many members were suspended for nonpayment of dues.

The shift of population from rural to urban accelerated a trend in the loss of **members**. Thirty percent of all lodges did not raise a candidate.

While **membership** in the Masonic world gained, only five jurisdictions had an increase of more than 1,000 compared to 11 jurisdictions the year before. Reasons cited for the losses was lack of attendance at lodge meetings, too many large lodges and too few new lodges, failure of young men to join, meetings too long and too routine, lack of public relations, and the failure of committees to make a real investigation of candidates.

Memorial Lodge of Omaha conducted nine memorial services while it was under dispensation.

Out of fear lodges were not observing the **Saints John Days**, the Grand Master asked all Lodges to hold a **dinner meeting** on December. 27, with an appropriate program. Of all lodges, 27.5 percent participated.

The Grand Master threw his support behind the Nebraska **DeMolay Foundation** that was established to generate interest in local chapters leading to new chapters and an increase in membership and influence on young men.

Three **Central Schools of Instruction** attracted more than 1,000 registrants.

For the fifth consecutive year, more than 50 percent of **lodges** were certified **proficient**. Certificates were presented to 153 lodges, the best in history.

The number of Masons with **individual certification** decreased for the second consecutive year. **East Lincoln No. 210** in Lincoln had the most of any in the state with 37, followed closely by **Lancaster Lodge No. 54** in Lincoln with 36, and in third was **Bee Hive Lodge No. 184** in Omaha with 28.

The **Masonic Manor** had 12 floors ready for occupancy. Thirty-three residents were housed there.

A **new wing** was completed at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** with no extra burden to brethren.

It was decided by a committee examining the possible change of the **title** of the **Grand Custodian** that a more suitable title could not be found, and it should remain.

In 1950, the **Committee on Work** suggested words to use describing how to perform the **Grand Hailing Sign of Distress**. The committee recommended it be incorporated in esoteric work due to its wide acceptance.

The **Committee on Work** recommended adoption of the **floor work** of the degrees as the official floor work of this jurisdiction.

A **mock lodge** staged at **Area Meetings** was deemed a practical and interesting educational tool.

In March 1963, the **Washington Lodge No. 21** in Blair was severely damaged by **fire**. The lodge decided to build a new building with insurance returns.

After investigating an offer from Brother and Mrs. **Glen Forner** of Niobrara to give 50 acres of land located on **Lewis and Clark Lake** to the Grand Lodge, a committee stated financial reports showed not enough funds to develop a Masonic Retreat. It recommended the offer be turned down.

The project of the **Grand Historian** was to write the **history of Past Grand Masters**. The first year of the project was devoted to the life of **Robert Carrel Jordan**, the first Grand Master, and the volume was presented to the Grand Lodge.

Cedar River Lodge No. 89 at Fullerton was **dedicated**.

Cornerstones were laid for a building at the **Omaha Home for Boys** and the **Masonic Manor** in Omaha.

1965

Harry A. Spencer, Grand Master

June 10, 1964 – June 9, 1965

Reported at the 108th Annual Communication

A **tornado** leveled **Crescent Lodge No. 143** in Primrose. The Grand Lodge **Relief Fund** sent \$3,000 to the lodge to aid in rebuilding. All records were intact in a safe.

The **Grand Historian** reported that a manuscript titled, “**Robert Carrel Jordan, Our First Grand Master**” was printed and distributed, as well as a compilation of 20 **orations** delivered between 1857 and 1882 at the Annual Communications of the Grand Lodge that focused on the history of Masonry, its philosophy, teachings, ideals and demands on brothers. The latter was suggested by M.:W.: **Harry Spencer** who saw some educational value to them. The opening chapter provided an historical view of the Grand Orator’s office.

As a part of the celebration of Saints John Day, **Wisner Lodge No. 114** in Wisner held a **table lodge** described by the Grand Master as “a revival of an old custom in some of our older jurisdictions.” He urged lodges to contact Wisner Lodge or the **Masonic Education Committee** for more information.

The original **purpose** of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** was to care for orphans. A check of the residents showed none were orphans. The Grand Master said neither sponsoring organization knew the guidelines were changed, and he urged the incoming Grand Master to appoint a committee to reevaluate the home’s original purpose and make a recommendation at the next Annual Communication.

A subcommittee of the **Committee on Nebraska Work** began meeting to establish the **floor work** that would be used henceforth in Nebraska.

Lodges were told to follow up ritual work with **education** about the meaning of Masonic words and symbols so initiates understood the objectives of the degrees, said the Grand Master. “For me, I

visualize this objective to be the making of a man conscious of his God and his destiny; the instilling into his heart of an ever-growing love of honor, justice, mercy, morality and charity,” he said. “It is my sincere conviction, brethren, that unless Masonry accomplishes these purposes, it is no more than a series of unmeaning rites.”

The Grand Lodge sent instructions to lodges about the responsibilities of **Investigating Committees** after the Grand Master expressed misgivings about how investigations were conducted in larger communities. “If the influence of Masonry is declining, the answer may be found in the thought that we cheapen the order and dilute its influence when we admit those who never should be Masons,” he said.

In his address, the Grand Master said that a **lodge with membership** of 1,000 was no virtue to Masonry. “When a lodge is too big to give the benefits to or hold the interest of its members, the formation of a new lodge is in order,” he said.

The **Masonic Manor** was **completed** with funds from the Pennsylvania Teachers Retirement Association in Philadelphia and Farmers Home Administration. Supervision of the manor was placed in the hands of four Grand Lodge officers and three residents.

All rooms were filled in the new wing of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, which was completed the previous year.

Plans were approved for a **memorial marker** in honor of Superintendent Emeritus **William Evers** and to identify 144 **graves of former residents** at the cemetery at Plattsmouth. “It should last until eternity in honor of him and of our dead and will reflect on our Fraternity who did not forget,” said Bill Patterson, president.

In three years of sending **envelope seals** twice a year to the fraternity, **The Nebraska Masonic Home** had raised more than \$100,000.

The Grand Custodian noted that for the third consecutive year, the number of **Masons** who became **certified** declined. The usual number of certifications had been 35-40 a year, but it declined to 27.

After 16½ years, **Raymond Clark** retired as **Grand Custodian**. He was appointed an Assistant Custodian in 1933.

The Grand Master attended the raising of a **fifth-generation** Mason in **Aurora Lodge No. 68** in Aurora.

In 1964, the Grand Master visited the **New York World’s Fair** and visited the Masonic Brotherhood Center that was organized by the Grand Lodge F.: & A.:M.: of New York. He called it a must-see for those attending the fair.

Roscoe Pound, Honorary Past Grand Master and author of books on Masonry and Masonic jurisprudence, **died** July 1, 1964. He was a Past Master of **Lancaster Lodge No. 54** in Lincoln and Grand Orator (1906-08).

1966

Louis V. Sylvester, Grand Master

June 9, 1965 – June 9, 1966

Reported at the 109th Annual Communication

Calling a loss of 328 **members** as “not alarming,” the Grand Master added he was hopeful the trend could be reversed. Noting a shift in the population from rural to urban, he suggested stabilizing the Craft by encouraging the establishment of more **lodges in metropolitan areas**.

At the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge, it was approved to establish a **revolving fund** of \$500 to assist in the formation of **new lodges**.

Louis Sylvester was the **100th Grand Master** of the Nebraska Grand Lodge.

A **questionnaire** that accompanied petitions was discontinued in favor of adding them to the questions on the **petition**.

Offices of the Grand Lodge were **moved** from the fourth to second floor of the Masonic Temple in Omaha. The increased space allowed for the creation of a library and museum.

The casket inside the **cornerstone** from the ruins of the **Omaha City Hall** was recovered. It was laid in 1890 and weighed six tons. The stone was moved to the grounds of the **Masonic Manor** in Omaha as an historical object. The casket was opened at the Annual Communication.

A number of Grand Lodges asked for information about the Nebraska **Masonic Education Committee's program** to incorporate in their state's efforts.

The Grand Lodge received a bequest of the library of Brother **John J. Monell** and his collection of **ancient bronze vessels** and other souvenirs. The latter items were placed in the University of Nebraska and Nebraska State Historical Society Museum.

The Grand Master left the decision to the Master and **McCook Lodge No. 135** in McCook whether a petitioner with an **artificial limb** extending above the knee was eligible to take the degrees. He stated the decision should be based on whether the petitioner could substantially comply and conform to the rites and ceremonies.

There was no precedent for a **funeral service** for a brother who was cremated, the Grand Master ruled. He said that his ashes constituted the brother's earthly remains, and there was no reason to change the wording of the ceremony from "body" to "ashes."

Pointing out that subordinate **lodges** were required to have a committee on membership, the Grand Master said few were familiar with their duties. He recommended the name of the committee be changed to **Membership Sustaining Committee**, which more realistically described their duties.

The **Grand Trustees** suggested, and the Grand Lodge approved, that funds of the Grand Lodge be consolidated into two **funds** – The General Fund and a Grand Lodge Retirement Fund.

The number of **50-year buttons** presented during the past year totaled 351, which was 126 more than the previous year. Nebraska had 1,445 brethren who wore the button.

The **Omaha and Lincoln Relief Associations** were praised by the Grand Master for assisting out-state lodges in hospital calls as well as sojourning Masons, their widows and orphans.

Seventy-eight individual **Schools of Instruction** were held for **non-certified lodges**. This increase was spurred by a need for more basic instruction.

Lodges certified to perform ritual work totaled 151, or 55 percent of all lodges in the state.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** celebrated its **50th anniversary** on December 12, 1965. An alumni reunion also was held.

A special committee on the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** found that of the 43 **residents**, 88 percent, or 38, had a grandparent **relationship** that qualified them to stay there.

Due to the assistance from local, well-qualified men assisting the staff of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**, participation by the children in **4-H Club** work substantially increased resulting in positive benefits.

The **Masonic Manor** in Omaha reported that it became fully occupied.

The **Evers Memorial** was placed in a cemetery near **The Nebraska Masonic Home**. The president of the Board said, "You made it possible and it should endure forever for all to know the resting place of over 100 of our departed residents."

The Grand Master was appointed chairman of a committee of six Grand Masters at the Annual Meeting of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial to represent the Association at a **wreath laying ceremony** at Washington's tomb at Mt. Vernon.

The new **George Washington Museum**, located on the fourth floor of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association, was **dedicated** on the first president's birthday in 1966. It featured the Washington family's Bible.

The **civil rights** issue prompted Arkansas lodges to petition its Grand Lodge to break off relations with New York and New Jersey. The Arkansas Grand Lodge's Fraternal Relations

Committee deterred any action on the petitions. The Grand Master of Oklahoma charged that because New Jersey had a black chaplain and for more than 100 years permitted an all-black lodge to operate, they were disturbing the peace, harmony and concord of the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma and he withdrew fraternal relations. The Nebraska **Fraternal Relations Committee's** report stated that Oklahoma should know better, and in response to the impact on that state said, "Poor abused Oklahoma!"

The **Fraternal Relations Committee** reported that **Cuba** continued "to be a puzzle. According to some reports, the Grand Lodge of Cuba continued to work, showed gains and claimed they were not disturbed by the existing government. Castro, unlike most dictators, had allowed Masonry to continue but on his terms."

Japan raised 234 Masons during the year, the **Fraternal Relations Committee** said, but only 16 were Japanese. A report said the lack of Japanese joining lodges was the lodges' greatest weakness. Progress was being made, however, moving lodge halls from military bases, and the ritual had been translated into the native tongue.

At a meeting of the **Masonic Relief Association** of the U.S. and Canada, the devastation to **Alaska** as a result of a 9.2 Richter scale **earthquake** in 1964 was reviewed and thanks were given for the contributions from Masons around the world. It was the largest earthquake recorded in North America.

At the request of the Hall County Museum Board, which was organized in 1961, a **cornerstone** was laid in 1966 for the main museum of the **Stuhr Museum** of the Prairie Pioneer.

Since the inception of **Wayne State College**, it was the policy of the college to ask the Grand Lodge to lay the **cornerstone** of every building. In 1965, a cornerstone was laid for a new dormitory.

A **cornerstone** was laid for the new **Gering Senior High School** in 1965. The trowel used for the ceremony was also used in 1938 when a cornerstone was laid for an addition to the old high school.

1967

Lewis R. Ricketts, Grand Master

June 9, 1966 – June 7, 1967

Reported at the 110th Annual Communication

Pointing out that Masonic **membership** in the state was lower than previous years, the Grand Master urged the Grand Lodge to discover and correct the underlying problem. "It is naïve, and no solution at all, to attempt to lay the blame on a social revolution involving the many competing interests of the swift current of modern living. This type of competition...has always existed." He added that lodges should "cultivate" and sponsor Masonic youth groups, particularly **DeMolay**. He said the largest losses were in metropolitan lodges for nonpayment of dues, and "when there are too many laborers to be gainfully occupied in the quarry, those who are unemployed will soon lose interest."

The **United Grand Lodge of England** celebrated the **250th anniversary** of its existence.

The Grand Master **visited** more than 80 **lodges** during the past year, which included 65 lodge communications.

Shiloh Lodge No. 327 in Omaha was the first lodge to be **chartered** in 10 years when ceremonies were held in 1966. The Grand Master commented that there should be many more lodges chartered in metropolitan areas where a large number of lodges were too big for "proper Masonic fellowship."

The **Grand Historian** wrote an **historical account** of the establishment of the office of **Grand Custodian**, which was printed in the Proceedings. He observed that the Grand Custodian has

“contributed more to the preservation of the traditions and the landmarks of Grand Lodge Masonry in this state of ours than any other agency that we could mention here.”

The **charter of Upright Lodge No. 137** in Burchard was surrendered when it hadn't attended Annual Communication for two consecutive years. Nineteen of the lodge's 30 members signed a petition asking restoration of their charter. The Grand Master temporarily restored the charter until Annual Communication, giving the members time to consider whether to continue or merge with another lodge.

It was reported the **Vietnam War** greatly increased the workload of the **Masonic Service Association's** field agents in Veterans' Hospitals. Visits totaling 3,500 were made to Nebraskans. The Nebraska Grand Lodge didn't contribute funds for hospital visitations but did budget \$500 to investigate the program. Further study was continued.

Two **consolidations of lodges** occurred, and the Grand Master suggested other lodges should consider merging as well. “The attrition of population in the rural areas still goes on apace. We have 39 Lodges in these areas whose total **membership** is less than 50.”

The Grand Master ruled that a brother about to obtain a **bottle club license** was not in violation of bylaws against involvement in the liquor industry because state statutes said such activity “shall not be deemed or considered a sale of alcoholic liquor.”

A detailed study of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** completed in 1965 suggested that the **Grand Lodge reduce its support** of the home from 50 percent of its costs to 25 percent. The Grand Master noted that administrative problems had been resolved. Although the home was not caring for Masonic-related, orphaned **children**, he said he was “far from certain that this was its exclusive original purpose and intent, or that it should be our present sole aim. Any dependent child should have a claim on our care and concern.” Support of the home continued as in the past.

At a special meeting of the stockholders of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** in October 1966, the **Articles of Incorporation** were **amended**. Besides to aid, care for, maintain and educate the children of members of Masonry and Eastern Star, it was added that the home could assist “**other dependent children** under such conditions as the Board of Trustees may provide.”

The **Articles of Incorporation** for the **Masonic Manor** in Omaha, adopted in 1960, called for the Deputy Grand Master, Grand Wardens and Grand Secretary to serve on its Board of Directors. The Grand Master recommended they be eliminated as members of the **Board**. He said their attendance “has not worked to the advantage of the Masonic Manor.”

In a report from **Masonic Manor**, the president of the Board said Nebraska Masons should be mindful of the Manor's potential to **financially benefit** the Grand Lodge as its obligations were met.

Grand Secretary **Carl Greisen**, who had served in that office for 22 years, was made an **Honorary Past Grand Master**. He was Grand Junior Warden when elected Grand Secretary.

W.:B.: **Charles Amidon**, president of the Master and Wardens Club of Omaha, reported the group spent \$2,000 each Christmas to give residents of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** and **The Nebraska Masonic Home** what they most wanted. Funds were raised by the Omaha lodges and others around the state. Each resident received their three requested **gifts** and \$3 was left to give residents on their birthdays.

An automobile called the “**Sunshine Buggy**” was donated by the Tangier Shrine Mobile Nobles to **The Nebraska Masonic Home**. It reportedly was used every day to take residents on excursions. Wheel chairs rolled through its side door to transport residents.

A total of 364 **50-year buttons** were presented, which was 13 more than the previous year.

Eighty Individual **Schools of Instruction** were held that attracted 5,500 members.

With the concurrence of the Grand Master of Missouri, the Grand Master gave permission to a Nebraska Lodge to confer the **Masters Degree** on a Nebraska candidate in Missouri, and also gave permission to invite a Missouri Lodge to do the same in Nebraska.

Five new lodges were **dedicated** in the previous year, including **Crystal Lodge No. 191** in Scotia, **Globe Lodge No. 113** in Madison, **Silver Cord Lodge No. 224** in Ainsworth, **Seneca Lodge No. 284** in Thedford and **Mitchell Lodge No. 263** in Mitchell.

The number of **Assistant Custodians** was increased from 35 to 40 to reduce distances some were required to travel to visit lodges.

The **floor work** used in Nebraska was approved at Annual Communication that would henceforth be used by lodges in the state. The Committee on Nebraska Work was directed at the 1964 Annual Communication to establish floor work. The adoption of floor work, preceded by approval of the monitorial work in 1962, as well as earlier “steps to preserve and perpetuate the esoteric work,” provided “assurance against change and error will, we trust, meet the expectations of the Craft, the approbation of its members and result in uniformity of work and purpose in this Grand Jurisdiction,” said the chairman of the Committee on Nebraska Work.

During the Grand Lodge Annual Communication, Brother Walter Miller, Executive Officer of Nebraska **DeMolay**, bestowed on M.:W.: **Lewis Ricketts** the rank, honor, insignia and degree of active **Legion of Honor** of DeMolay, and **Honorary Legion of Honor** on R.:W.: **John Bottorf**.

The second **Midwest Conference on Masonic Education** was led by W. Howard Hunter, chairman of the Nebraska **Masonic Education Committee**.

The state of **Nebraska** celebrated its **centennial** the previous year in 1966. The Grand Master noted that many members of the state’s first three lodges held important offices in the local and Territorial governments and were instrumental in securing the admission of Nebraska into the Union. He encouraged members to be challenged and inspired by their example.

It was reported by the **Fraternal Relations Committee** that Masonry in **Israel** eliminated all mention of penalties in their obligations, and ruled that no Masonic titles should be mentioned in the presence of women.

A **cornerstone** was laid for the new Junior Boys Home at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** in May 1967. The new home was occupied in fall 1967.

1968

John A. Bottorf, Grand Master

June 7, 1967 – June 5, 1968

Reported at the 111th Annual Communication

The Grand Master attributed a **536-member loss** to: YOU, for not allowing more time for Masonry, and lack of LEADERSHIP and COMMUNICATION. The Grand Master sent letters to 559 suspended Masons to ask why they left Masonry. He attributed their leaving to apathy and lack of communication from their Blue Lodge.

The Grand Master and Assistant Custodian Curtis Griess authored a **re-obligation ceremony** that was exemplified for 231 lodges and recommended for their use.

The Grand Custodian was directed to collect all printed **keys of esoteric work** across the state and destroy them in compliance with the bylaws.

An **audit** was conducted after a report of irregularities in the handling of Grand Lodge funds was made to the Grand Master. It was discovered that funds belonging to **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, the **Masonic Eastern Star Home for Children**, **York Rite Bodies**, Seal Program and Nebraska **Veteran Freemasons Association** mingled in one account. His recommendation passed that the funds be kept in separate accounts, and that the **Grand Secretary** be prohibited from holding any position with any other organization that involves handling money. He added that the Grand Lodge office would not be used for any purpose not directly connected with Grand Lodge business.

Following 22 years of service to the Grand Lodge, **Grand Secretary Carl R. Greisen** stepped down from the office, citing the need to slow down. He was elected Grand Secretary Emeritus.

An amendment was proposed and held for the next Annual Communication that would not allow **honorary officers** of the Grand Lodge.

Approval was given to research changes in the **Grand Lodge office's accounting system** and to retain an accountant or bookkeeper.

Lodge officers attending **Annual Communication** wore the **apron and jewel** from their home lodge at the request of the Grand Master.

A **fire** destroyed the lodge housing **Wisner Lodge No. 114** in Wisner. They met at **Beemer Lodge No. 253** at Beemer until they found a permanent home in Wisner.

The Nebraska Masonic Home placed in its budget a request for **air conditioning** which was termed "not a luxury but a real necessity."

Home Lodge U.D. was operating at **The Nebraska Masonic Home**. It was noted that the lodge met infrequently.

A **painting** titled, "Trek West" was painted by Mrs. Etha Brooks and eight residents of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** under her tutelage. It was placed on display at the home.

A new **Junior Boys Home** was completed at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**. The **Grand Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star** raised all the funds needed to furnish the building.

It was decided by the **Committee on Nebraska Work** that brothers seeking a certificate of **proficiency** could make no more than 15 errors.

Eighteen **Central Schools of Instruction** were held in order that the **Standard Floor Plan** could be taken to as many lodges as possible. More than 9,000 members attended.

The **Committee on Relief and Care of Orphans** provided about \$3,000 in assistance which amounted to 67-cents per member.

In an attempt to get **photographs** of all **Past Grand Masters**, lodges were requested to send pictures to the Grand Lodge office. At the end of the year, 47 photos either were not sent or not available.

Because of casualties from the **Vietnam War**, the **Masonic Service Association** requested additional Masons to visit soldiers in the 85 **hospitals** where the wounded were sent. At that time, the association had 5,000 volunteers in its Hospital Program and about 300 were members of **DeMolay**.

A **cornerstone** was laid for the **Acacia Fraternity** house at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

After a lodge asked whether they could enter a float in a centennial **parade** and what emblems or signs they could display, the Grand Master replied, "No," and "None."

A request to form a **Square and Compass Club** at **Offutt Air Force Base** was refused by the Grand Master, and he added that he would prefer charges against any Mason applying for membership.

Members of **Beaver City Lodge No. 93** in Beaver City were told by the Grand Master that they could serve on a community **betterment committee**, but not as a representative of their lodge.

1969

Norris W. Lallman, Grand Master

June 5, 1968 – June 4, 1969

Reported at the 112th Annual Communication

While calling the **loss of members** a "grave concern," the Grand Master said, "I do not believe that we can measure our progress in terms of membership alone. The Fraternity is properly judged, not by the number of members, but by the number of members who develop into Masons. Our real

strength lies in the caliber of the individual members of each lodge, and the desire of each Brother to live according to the teachings he has received.”

Included in the rules governing a **lodge proficiency** examination was the requirement that the Junior Warden confer the Entered Apprentice degree, the Senior Warden the Fellow Craft and the Master the Master Mason degree. The rules were first established in 1926 and were modified by the **Committee on Nebraska Work**.

In a report on **suspended members**, a survey led to the conclusion that the **loss in membership** in the state was a Blue Lodge problem. “The Grand Lodge cannot shoulder the duties and responsibilities of the Masters of all local lodges.” Personal communication was seen as the main ingredient to keeping members. Also cited were studies in Minnesota and Missouri that found the need for more fellowship, Masonic teachings and a complete investigation by lodge Investigating Committees instead of accepting any man in order to swell numbers.

The Chairman of the **Masonic Education Committee** noted that the day of “just opening lodge and reading the minutes and putting on a degree and thinking there will be good attendance is...gone. Our members demand a better overall program of **meetings**, and they want Masonry! It is up to the Master, his officers and his Education Committee to plan the trestle board months in advance for continuity of interest and sustained attendance...”

As the **Vietnam War** escalated, approval was given by the Grand Master for special dispensations to **confer degrees** on 24 soldiers.

The **Masonic Service Association** reported it was “extremely active” in **visiting** Veterans’ Hospitals due to the influx of wounded veterans from the **Vietnam War**.

The Grand Master said he **traveled** 45,000 miles the previous year in the performance of his duties. He was a guest at a **Knights of Columbus** banquet at their state convention.

Unanimous consent was requested to vote on an immediate amendment that would have provided for **concurrent jurisdiction among lodges in the state**, meaning members were not tied geographically to a lodge. After the request received objections, the amendment was held until the next Annual Communication.

It was reported by the **Grand Trustees** that **The Nebraska Masonic Home** operated at a deficit of \$69,000, and experienced a loss in 1967. Except for capital gains in 1965 and 1966, the home would have had a deficit in those years as well. It was requested to increase the **per capita tax** on members.

Two-thirds of residents at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** were bed-ridden. The **cost to maintain a resident** in the home rose to an all-time high of \$3,696 per person with the average stay of almost eight years.

Of the 31 children at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**, nine had no Masonic or Eastern Star relationship. A cement patio and driveway, and air conditioning were installed. Funds came from a project by **Eastern Star** Past Grand Matron Joan Steen.

The **Grand Trustees** reported **bond interest rates** had reached an historical high not seen in 100 years. The Trustees delayed entering the stock market, but bought corporate bonds which had climbed to 6.25-7.25 percent interest. The retirement fund showed assets of \$118,463, an increase of almost \$31,000 from the previous year.

All that remained to be completed at the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial was a granite facing around the outside base estimated to cost \$750,000.

1970

Hugh W. Eisenhart, Grand Master

June 4, 1969 – June 10, 1970

Reported at the 113th Annual Communication

R.:W.: **Warren Urbom**, Grand Senior Warden, announced at Annual Communication that he had been appointed U.S. District Judge for the District of Nebraska and was unable to continue in the Grand Lodge line.

Commenting on the **loss and aging of the membership**, the Grand Master said the only alternative to even greater losses was participation in lodge activities and development of knowledge and faith in Masonic ideals in order to effectively communicate them to prospective members.

Noting the social upheaval at the time, the Grand Master commented, "We must not blind ourselves to think that when the general tone of moral standards is low that Freemasonry can remain untouched. Our churches and fraternal societies are suffering **losses in membership** and we cannot escape the retribution to our Craft. We are living in times that call for a greater effort by each of us to counteract the attitude of lethargy and lack of interest in becoming involved and taking part in activities that will promote greater interest and resulting in good to all concerned."

York Lodge No. 56 in York requested a **ruling** of the **Grand Master** whether it could support a resolution passed by York's City Council protesting inhumane treatment of prisoners in **Vietnam**. The Grand Master ruled it was not proper to support any actions by a governmental body.

The Grand Master recommended that the Grand Lodge and **The Nebraska Masonic Home Trustees** cooperate on the production of a quarterly "**bulletin**" to send to all Nebraska members.

A resolution requested that the Grand Lodge participate in the **Masonic Service Association's Veterans Hospital visitation program**. The group presenting the motion stated that well-trained visitors would present a proper Masonic image "which is needed" in Nebraska.

To encourage greater **attendance** at **Annual Communication**, the Grand Master recommended it be held on a Friday and Saturday versus Tuesday and Wednesday.

About 60 percent of the **Lodges** were **certified**.

The Grand Master wrote personal letters to the Master of each lodge inviting his lodge's participation in **Area Masonic Educational Meetings**. Higher attendance resulted. He said he was convinced that Masonic education would develop lodge leadership. The theme of the Grand Masters Conference that year was "Masonry in Action," where the consensus of opinion was that a greater emphasis was needed on leadership development in lodges through an expanded educational program.

The appointment of a Grand Lodge **Public School Committee**, as well as one in each local lodge, was recommended by the Grand Master to safeguard "the rights and promoting the welfare of our public schools," and to consider awarding scholarships.

A recommendation at the **Grand Masters Conference** to create a committee that would make plans to celebrate the **bicentennial** of the **United States** was approved.

In a question from **Beaver City Lodge No. 93** in Beaver City, the **Grand Master ruled** that it could erect **signs** at the entrances to the town with the square and compass and the lodge's name and meeting times.

The **per capita cost** of maintaining a resident in **The Nebraska Masonic Home** rose to an all-time high of \$4,100.

The Grand Master recommended the appointment in each **lodge** of a **committee** to promote **The Nebraska Masonic Home** and the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** among its members.

The **Committee on Grand Lodge Office** said high inflation took its toll on salary and expenses. **Salary increases** for three **staff** totaled \$1,000.

A proposed amendment to provide for **concurrent jurisdiction** among lodges in the state, meaning members were not tied geographically to a lodge, was rejected by the delegates at Annual Communication.

The **Committee on Nebraska Work** recommended an optional memorial service that was not required to be memorized and not a part of the esoteric or monitorial work. It was not intended as a substitute for the **Funeral Service**.

An amendment was proposed to lower the **age limit for membership** to become a Mason from 21 to 19. It would be considered at the following Annual Communication.

The **Grand Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star** organized **Children's Home Representatives** in each chapter across the state for the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**. A total of 123 chapters were represented at a kickoff event to acquaint them with the home.

The **Grand Lodge of Iran** requested **recognition** by the Grand Lodge of Nebraska and stated it had 27 lodges, including 11 in Tehran. The Grand Lodge was created in 1969 with members of the Christian, Jewish and Moslem faiths as members.

The **Grand Lodge of Massachusetts** loaned to the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial a display of memorabilia about Washington, including a lock of his hair in a silver casket fashioned by Brother Paul Revere.

To help **landscape** the grounds of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial, the Grand Master recommended the Grand Lodge agree to a request for the donation of 1 cent for each member.

A total of more than \$200,000 was donated by the Craft to the **relief** of the Grand Lodges and local lodges affected by **Hurricane Camille** along the Gulf Coast. In the aftermath of the hurricane, more than 300 people were killed and 20,000 buildings were destroyed or damaged.

1971

John H. Brown, Grand Master

June 10, 1970 – June 12, 1971

Reported at the 114th Annual Communication

In his address, the **Grand Master** observed that the U.S. was in the midst of a **social revolution** where values were questioned by young people who had become rebellious “to a society they have not yet given themselves time to understand.” He added that Masonry’s time-proven truths, belief in God, universal brotherly love and morality was a force to save civilization. “Let us not censor our youth unduly because they do not understand us and the society of today, which we more than they have permitted. Let us, with real compassion and intelligent understanding, while being more critical of ourselves and less of others, accept our sure responsibility and make the effort to do what we can, in our time, to build the world and leave it better than when we came.”

Noting the increasing difficulty of brothers to get time off work to attend all day **Central Schools of Instruction**, the Grand Custodian suggested that more evening meetings be held in order to increase attendance.

The Grand Custodian commented that he was shocked at the **lack of knowledge** of the philosophy of the **ritual work**. “I find everywhere a complete void....My brethren, where have we been and what have we been doing?” he asked.

The **title** of Assistant Custodians was officially changed to **Deputy Grand Custodian** by passage of a Grand Master’s recommendation.

The **Committee on Nebraska Work** recommended that in lieu of a **salary** increase for the **Grand Custodian**, the Grand Lodge should buy or lease a car for him.

A resolution failed with 154 votes for and 249 against to lower the **age to join** Masonry from 21 to 19.

The **Grand Historian** finished a second volume of “**Selected Orations**” delivered by **Grand Orators** from 1882-1907. He intended they would be used by lodges for “many instructive experiences.”

It was **approved** by the **Grand Master** that a **manager of a motel**, which housed a bar and café, was qualified to join a lodge since his position didn’t require him to handle or dispense **liquors**.

The **bylaws and regulations** of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** were updated for the first time since 1948. Eligibility to reside at the home was extended to a Mason's mother, sisters and daughters.

The Nebraska Masonic Home reported an ongoing population of 70-80 people. The **per capita cost** to maintain a resident was \$4,739, about \$600 more than the previous year. The total cost to operate the home divided by the number of brothers was equivalent to \$66.55 each.

The **Grand Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star** donated more than \$21,300 for **The Nebraska Masonic Home** as the project of the Worthy Grand Matron Kathryn Brock and Worthy Grand Patron Bob Metcalf. Their session was called "The Nebraska Masonic Home Session."

Until this year, the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** provided calves and sheep for the students to use in the **4-H program**. They discontinued using sheep because wild dogs had killed most of the sheep.

The State Fire Marshal required that two homes at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** install **fire alarms** or lose their licenses to operate. The total cost was almost \$8,300.

A committee worked on a new volume of the **Constitution and Bylaws** of the **Grand Lodge**.

The **Committee on Fraternal Relations** said that for the first time since 1966, no requests were received for **recognition** from Grand Lodges around the world.

Past Grand Master **Herbert Ronin** was elected vice president of the **Conference of Grand Masters in North America**.

It was reported that the **Hospital Visitation Program** of the **Masonic Service Association** stepped up its activities because of the **Vietnam War**. A resolution was passed authorizing the Grand Lodge's participation in the program at the three Veterans Hospitals in Nebraska.

1972

Russell L. Fickes, Grand Master

June 12, 1971 – June 10, 1972

Reported at the 115th Annual Communication

The Grand Lodge voted to donate 1 cent per member to the **Grand Master's Conference** for use in 1976 for the **200th Anniversary** of the founding of the **United States**.

It was decided that carrying the **Bible** to and from the altar at each lodge opening, calling off, calling on and closing served no purpose. The amount of time consumed and sometimes awkward handling of the Bible was cited as reasons to place the Bible, square and compass on the altar before lodge opened.

An amendment failed to pass by a 154 to 227 vote that would have required two black balls to **reject** a candidate for **membership**.

Brother Walter Miller, Executive Officer of Nebraska **DeMolay**, pointed out that the installation of **Howard Hunter** as Grand Master, marked the eighth Senior DeMolay to serve in that office. He said that made the Grand Lodge of Nebraska the state with the most Senior DeMolays to have been Grand Master.

Area meetings were held by the **Masonic Education Committee** to keep local lodge officers and their ladies in touch with the Grand Lodge officers and their ladies. They provided an opportunity to discuss lodge issues between Annual Communications. The chairman suggested smaller meetings also be held with lodges of similar size to pursue suggestions and ideas from successful lodges.

Fairmont Lodge No. 48 in Fairmont asked permission to rent its basement to the Lions Club for bingo. The Grand Master ruled playing bingo was **gambling** and a violation of Masonic law, and denied the request.

Hospitalization insurance for **Grand Lodge office employees** was approved.

The Nebraska Masonic Home noted a year-round population of between 70-80 people. The **per capita cost** of maintaining a resident was \$5,241. An **intensive care room** was established, and a **dental room** was set aside after George Leschinsky, a retiring dentist and former Trustee, donated his equipment. This eliminated the need to transport residents to a dentist's office.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** reported 29 children in the home, 22 boys and seven girls.

Past Grand Master **Benjamin Eyre** was presented a money bag containing 50 silver dollars in recognition of **50 years** of continuous attendance at Annual Communication.

The **Grand Historian** mentioned the splashdown of **Apollo 16** after making a trip to the moon, stating it would "go down in history as representing another milestone in man's progress in the realm of scientific discovery and, dare we say, another and finer realization of the extent to which God...has led us 'lo these many years.'" Apollo 16 was the fifth mission to land men on the moon.

The **value** of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial was \$14 million. The building was constructed at a cost of \$5.75 million. It attracted 110,000 visitors a year.

A Japanese flag was presented to the international headquarters of **Job's Daughters** in Omaha by the **Grand Lodge of Japan** in recognition of the Bethels located in that country. The **Committee on Fraternal Relations** said that while Japan saw an increase in members, their greatest need was to initiate Japanese into lodges rather than just soldiers.

1973

Howard J. Hunter, Grand Master

June 10, 1972 – June 9, 1973

Reported at the 116th Annual Communication

The Grand Master noted that lodges were "sadly lacking in **membership** in younger ages and are out of balance age wise." He encouraged **support of Masonic youth groups** and holding more activities interesting to younger members.

North Dakota and **Idaho** adopted 18 as the **age** when a man could **join** Masonry. Ten other states also considered lowering the minimum age, but a large majority defeated the proposals. At the Supreme Council Session of **DeMolay**, members voted against lowering the age limit for boys to join. Nebraska's Grand Master presented a message on "Masonic Age," which was printed in several Masonic publications.

The **Jurisprudence Committee** recommended disapproval of the Grand Master's recommendation to adopt the Scottish "Lewis" practice of allowing the son of a Mason to petition between ages 18 and 21. Instead, the committee suggested the drafting of an amendment to reduce the **age of a petitioner** from 21 to 19 years.

A **Bicentennial Committee** was authorized to be appointed to plan a Masonic celebration of the **200th anniversary** of our nation.

The Mobile Nobles of Tangier **Shrine** presented a Sunshine Buggy to **The Nebraska Masonic Home** that used a hydraulic tail gate lift to raise wheel chairs.

The **Masonic Education Committee** held Mini-Area Meetings, consisting of about six lodges, to instruct in the **Table Lodge**. Every Lodge in the state attended.

The Grand Master recommended appointment of a **Youth Committee**, but the **Jurisprudence Committee** pointed out that he had no authority to appoint a special committee and ruled against him.

A recommendation by the Grand Master that a three-man committee work to establish publication of a low-cost, quarterly **bulletin** for every member was rejected by the **Jurisprudence Committee** because the income of the Grand Lodge wasn't sufficient to support it.

The Grand Master approved acceptance of a petition of a **Korean War** veteran to **McCook Lodge No. 135** in McCook who could not conform to our ceremonies because he **wore protective hose** in order to walk.

Extra funds remaining in Worthy Grand Matron Catherine Kennedy's and Worthy Grand Patron Earl Hanel's project fund were used to purchase four **air conditioners** for the senior boys and girls homes at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**.

Past Grand Master **Benjamin Eyre** was honored for 50 years of **certification**.

Carl Griesen, Honorary Past Grand Master, was recognized for **50 years of attendance** and dedicated service to the Grand Lodge.

Granite was installed on the base of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial, and exterior lighting was added to the upper floors.

1974

Frank J. Mattoon, Grand Master

June 9, 1973 – June 15, 1974

Reported at the 117th Annual Communication

With 250 **lodges** in the state, Grand Masters weren't able to **visit** them all. Borrowing an idea from South Dakota, a program was implemented allowing personal representatives of the Grand Master to visit 60 lodges.

Using an idea from California, a **Youth Committee** was appointed to devise ways of coordinating with and encouraging Masonic youth groups. Lodges were urged to appoint a Youth Committee that would receive the Grand Lodge committee's plans for implementation in local lodges. In addition, a vote at Annual Communication approved the **establishment** of a Youth Committee of the Grand Lodge.

Wanting to increase awareness of the role of Masonry in the history of the U.S., a **Bi-Centennial Committee** was appointed to develop programs of celebration for the Grand Lodge and local lodges. The committee planned to develop materials for lodges to use in celebrating the historic date.

The **Membership Sustaining Committee** suggested local lodges use **guest nights** to recruit new members, similar to a **Scottish Rite** program.

Masters and Wardens Conferences were held to provide leadership training to the leaders of local lodges.

The Grand Master urged lodges to plan for immediate **improvement** of their **lodges** and to make a **five-year plan**.

The **Public Relations Committee** studied the feasibility of a **publication** that would be sent to all members.

A total of 130 **lodges**, representing about 52 percent of all lodges in the state, were **certified** to perform degree work.

To help fund the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial's Endowment Fund, the organization created **Life Memberships** costing \$100 and Sustaining Memberships for \$1,000 donations. A plaque at the memorial listed the Nebraska Grand Lodge as a Sustaining Member.

The **Nebraska Grand Chapter, Order of Eastern Star** celebrated its 100th anniversary. The Grand Historian prepared an abbreviated historical account of the Grand Lodge's role in founding and subsequent support of the Grand Chapter.

1975

Donald R. Swanson, Grand Master

June 15, 1974 – June 14, 1975

Reported at the 118th Annual Communication

Although **membership** continued to drop, the Grand Master took note of several bright spots in the situation. He said initiations were up from the previous year and younger candidates went through the degrees. “The lowering of the **age** to nineteen has produced results far beyond my fondest expectations,” he said.

An amendment to the bylaws was adopted that deleted a section excluding men from membership who were engaged in the **manufacture of alcohol**.

The recently-formed **Youth Committee** recommended that the youth leaders of **DeMolay**, **Job’s Daughters** and **Rainbow for Girls** be invited to appear at the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge, and that the Grand Master attend the state meetings of the groups. It was also suggested that information about each group’s activities be published in the new Grand Lodge publication, **The Nebraska Mason**.

The Grand Lodge approved a recommendation of the Grand Master that after a Worshipful Master was installed, he could open a Lodge for **Emergent Communications** that would remain open for the duration of his term and closed before his successor was installed. This eliminated the need to go to Lodge before and after a funeral service.

In the first year after authorizing participation in the **Hospital Visitation** program of the **Masonic Service Association**, a plan was completed to implement the program in Nebraska.

The **backdrop** for the **Annual Communication** was six “13-star, Betsy Ross flags” in commemoration of the U.S. **Bicentennial** celebration. They were declared the symbol of the Grand Lodge and would appear wherever a Grand Lodge officer was officially present.

The **Bicentennial Committee** gave all Senior Wardens a **kit** to assist them in planning local bicentennial celebrations. Suggestions included donating Masonic books to the local library, performing a dedication ceremony that was provided for patriotic and historically significant buildings, an outline for a public meeting to hold during April, which was Masonic Month, and that they hold a Table Lodge during the year.

A commission planning the move of the town of Niobrara to avoid the Missouri River desired to place the Masonic hall in one building with city services and a **bar**. The Grand Master ruled that **Ionic Lodge No. 87** in Niobrara would be in violation of Masonic Law because members would need to walk through the bar to attend meetings. The Jurisprudence Committee recommended disapproval of the ruling and the Grand Lodge concurred, which allowed Ionic Lodge No. 87 to hold their meetings in the building.

Despite offering help to Masons affected by a May 6, 1975, **tornado in Omaha**, no requests were received by the **Committee on Masonic Relief**. The tornado killed three people, injured nearly 150 and caused damages estimated up to \$500,000.

Past Grand Master **Charles Adams** served as **first vice president** of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial when President and Brother **Gerald Ford** visited the annual meeting of the association to view a plaque commemorating him as the 14th president to hold membership in the fraternity. A tape of the President’s comments was made available to Lodges.

A drive to increase the endowment of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial by the end of the Bicentennial year was enhanced by donations from Nebraska, including \$1,000 from the Grand Lodge and \$4,000 from the newly-organized Scottish Rite Foundation of Nebraska.

The duties of **Grand Representatives** were questioned by Past Grand Master **Merle Hale**, Grand Representative to Minnesota. He said he received no instructions about what was expected in the position, and the Grand Lodge of Minnesota had no communication with him. He suggested the next Grand Master issue instructions to the Grand Representatives and that the issue should be discussed at the Conference of Grand Masters.

1976

Harold Hultman, Grand Master

June 14, 1975 – June 12, 1976

Reported at the 119th Annual Communication

As a result of the work of the **Bicentennial Committee**, the Grand Master said more **U.S. flags** were flying in front of Masonic **lodges** in the state than ever before. A survey revealed 81 percent of Nebraska lodges were flying flags. Other results: 84 percent planned a bicentennial observance, 97 percent improved their temples, 58 percent sought participation of appendant bodies, 54 percent presented books on Masonry to libraries, 71 percent displayed historic items, and a commemorative dues card was sent to all members.

Requests from three **lodges** to have a float in a **parade** were denied by the Grand Master. He suggested they set up a window display instead.

The Grand Custodian decided to hold all **Central Schools of Instruction** in evening sessions, abandoning all-day schools. He said the change resulted in higher attendance at the 33 schools.

A total of 187 lodges were represented at 11 **Masonic education meetings** across the state with 750 Masons in attendance. The program included a variety of subjects as well as instruction on how to present a program geared to enlist new **members**.

The Grand Lodge funded half the cost of a **Hospital Visitation** program under the **Masonic Service Association**.

The Grand Lodge had participated in the educational side of the **Masonic Service Association** since 1960, but in 1975 added the Veterans **Hospital Visitation** program which was pilot tested in Omaha. Visitations averaged 125 a month. In 1976, the Grand Lodge looked to add a Masonic Field Agent for the Veterans Hospital in Lincoln.

A dispensation was granted for **Fremont Lodge No. 15** in Fremont to perform courtesy work on a petitioner for **Faith Lodge No. 181** in Harrison who took ownership of a **bar** after he passed the ballot. The Grand Master ruled that since the candidate did not own the bar at the time of balloting on his petition, he could receive the degrees.

A “serious problem” arose at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** in finding **house parents** with the qualifications to work at the home. The Board President stated, “It may very well be that both salaries and working conditions at the home are not as they should be in the context of today’s labor market.”

The **Monitor** was reprinted and included the adopted **Memorial Service**.

The annual meeting of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Association was moved to Philadelphia to coordinate with the activities of the **Conference of Grand Masters of North America** in its celebration of the **U.S. Bicentennial**.

1977

T. Leo Stines, Grand Master

June 12, 1976 – June 11, 1977

Reported at the 120th Annual Communication

A **Tri-State Bicentennial meeting** was held at Burlington, Colorado, in October 1976. A lodge of Master Masons was held in Goodland, Kansas, and opened by that state’s Grand Master. A caravan of 30 cars then dedicated plaques on both sides of Interstate 70 in Colorado at rest stops. At Burlington, the Colorado Grand Master opened three Master Mason lodges from Kansas, Colorado and Benkelman, Nebraska. The three Grand Lodges promised to hold a similar event each year.

The Grand Master recommended that a committee be appointed to find a **new home** for the **Grand Lodge office**. Located in the Masonic building in downtown Omaha, he pointed to

deterioration of the neighborhood, parking and other factors beyond the control of the Omaha lodges that owned the building. He thanked them for housing the Grand Lodge office, often at a financial loss.

Past Grand Master **Herbert Ronin** was unanimously elected chairman of the **Masonic Service Association**.

William L. Larkins, Chester Lodge No. 298 in Chester, a **Bronze Jordan Medal holder** and member for 58 years, became **proficient** in the work at the age of 85.

A resolution was defeated that would have deleted from the bylaws a section declaring the possession or use of a key or **cipher** of ritualistic work was a Masonic offense.

Representatives of **DeMolay**, **Job's Daughters** and **Rainbow** were invited and attended most of the 11 **Area Educational Meetings** held across the state.

As with the previous year, following the **Area Educational Meetings**, a dinner with membership information was presented.

Requirements were changed to live at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** so that an eligible person could pay the actual cost of maintenance and support, without turning over all **assets** to the home.

A **donation** to **The Nebraska Masonic Home** of \$4.5 million nearly doubled its invested assets. The Trustees purchased securities so that scheduled maturities would occur every year from 1979-2000 to defray expenses.

The **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial reported its **endowment fund** reached \$3.3 million and produced income of \$170,000, which was \$100,000 less than the cost of operating the site. Inflation had escalated costs, such as utilities which had doubled since 1970.

1978

Alfred B. Saum, Grand Master

June 11, 1977 – June 10, 1978

Reported at the 121st Annual Communication

A committee advised against **moving** the **Grand Lodge headquarters** at 19th and Douglas in Omaha, where it had been located since 1965. The group cited the adequacy of the current space, and the cost of moving, remodeling or constructing a new building as reasons to abandon the idea.

An amendment allowing the possession and use of keys or **ciphers** to the ritualistic work was “soundly defeated.” The Committee on Work opposed the amendment and stated its passage would be “the greatest regressive step this Grand Lodge could take.” The chairman said there would be no need for Deputy Custodians and it brought into question the need for a Grand Custodian. He added that individual certificates of proficiency would be meaningless.

More than half of all **brothers certified** in the work had 20 years or more of service, which earned them Certificates of Merit.

No controversial matters were submitted to the **Committee on Work** because of the wide acceptance of the esoteric and **standard floor work** approved by the Grand Lodge, the chairman said.

A \$100 **scholarship** for Masonic-related youth groups that was instituted the previous year proved to be well received based on the number of entries from members of **Job's Daughters** and **Rainbow**, said the chairman of the **Committee on Youth**.

Undue hardships were placed on some **Masonic-related youth groups** by Masonic temples imposing exorbitant **rental fees**, placing restrictions on use of their buildings and exhibiting a general lack of concern for their welfare, the chairman of the **Committee on Youth** said.

Twelve **Area Educational Meetings** were staged by the **Committee on Masonic Education**. A banquet was held at the conclusion of the day to demonstrate how to host a guest night.

Only about half of the lodges in the state sent a representative to the **activities** of the **Committee on Masonic Education**. The chairman pointed out that committee members took days off work and traveled thousands of miles to find few Masons in attendance. "Is it any wonder that some **lodges** are wallowing in the **depths of despair**, while others with active leadership, providing interesting programs and intense activity, are enjoying the fruits of their efforts?" he commented.

Lodges were apparently doing a good job providing relief as the **Committee on Relief** spent only \$300 the previous year to assist brothers.

The Master of **Rob Morris Lodge No. 46** in Kearney welcomed the delegates to **Annual Communication** in his hometown. He noted concern was expressed four years earlier when it was held in Kearney and whether the "city boys" would travel that far to attend. But, it turned out to attract more attendees than in recent years.

The Nebraska Masonic Home reported it would complete converting part of its building into **apartments** by fall 1978.

The **per capita cost** of maintaining a resident in **The Nebraska Masonic Home** was at an all-time high of \$10,100, and the president of the board said they saw no end in sight with the high inflation.

A significant increase in the **budget** for the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** was attributed to the high rate of inflation. The superintendent of the home said the rising cost of utilities, food, clothing, insurance and Social Security taxes was staggering.

Representatives of Eastern Star Chapters from across the state attended meetings at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** to learn more about the home. The meeting was designed to provide a more effective means of communication between the home and the membership.

A **chapel** at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** was formally dedicated.

Federal intervention in child care agencies could result in additional regulation and financial strain on the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**, said the superintendent.

The **Grand Lodge Office Committee** increased the **contribution** to the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** through a 50 percent matching fund with the Eastern Star. This increased the amount from \$10,800 to \$20,000. The cost per member was about 57 cents.

The **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Association changed its bylaws so that **directors** could serve no more than two terms of three years each, except those who were members of the Executive Committee. The move allowed more states to be represented on the board of directors. It had been the custom to re-elect directors until their death or resignation.

A plaque was dedicated at the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial listing the names of **Bicentennial Contributors** who donated \$1,000 or more. The Grand Lodge, the four Valleys of the Scottish Rite and one Mason in Nebraska were included on the plaque.

The number of Nebraska Masons paying \$1.50 annually to subscribe to the **Masonic Service Association's** monthly "**Short Talk Bulletin**" increased from eight the previous year to more than 50 the next year. It was also sent at no charge to all lodges.

The **Scottish Rite Foundation of Nebraska** donated \$2,500 to fund one-half the cost of the Grand Lodge expense for the **Masonic Service Association hospital visitation program**.

The Grand Lodge of Nebraska was in its third year of providing a **hospital visitation program** for the Omaha Veterans Hospital through the **Masonic Service Association**. Six volunteers at the Lincoln Veterans Hospital operated the game rooms, took coffee to patients and visitors, tracked volunteer hours and visited brethren in the hospital.

It was reported there was no appreciable increase in the **endowment fund** for the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial, said the chairman of the Grand Lodge's committee. He said that more vigorous means would be necessary to add \$2 million for the association to reach its goal of \$5 million. The funds would be used to maintain the Memorial.

Regular inspections by the **Cuban government** of Masonic lodges in that country made it difficult for Masons to operate. Lodges in violation of government regulations resulted in fines, suspensions and dissolutions. The right of appeal was severely limited, said the chairman of the **Committee on Fraternal Relations**. Nevertheless, the Grand Lodge of Cuba continued its work with 326 lodges and more than 23,000 members.

1979

Jack H. Hendrix, Grand Master

June 10, 1978 – June 9, 1979

Reported at the 122nd Annual Communication

An amendment was defeated requiring the Grand Lodge to provide keys or **ciphers** of the work to lodges desiring them. Another amendment was defeated that would have prevented amendments being introduced that were substantially the same in intent as ones defeated the previous two years at Annual Communication.

Bond yields the previous year climbed to a record 9.56 percent.

Eight **Area Educational Meetings** were held across Nebraska to discuss educational materials and how lodges could be more effective in locating **candidates**.

Twenty-nine **area leadership chairmen** were assigned six to eight lodges each to show them the ingredients of a successful lodge.

Lodges were encouraged to contact Masonic **widows** and involve them in lodge programs, and see to their needs.

An attempt failed to amend the bylaws that would have required lodges to allow Masonic-related **youth groups** to use lodge facilities on a **rent-free** basis with no interference.

Several questions about initiating **handicapped persons** drew an approving response from the Grand Master, who quoted bylaws that the decision was with the lodge. "I did relate that I am personally in favor of a liberal interpretation of any restrictions, but, in order to alleviate embarrassment, the lodge and the candidate should recognize the problems which may be presented by the initiation ceremony," he said.

Dual memberships made it possible for a brother holding the **Bronze Jordan Medal** in one lodge, to also receive it in the other lodge. A recommendation was approved stating no one was entitled to hold more than one of the medals.

The Nebraska Masonic Home constructed **apartments** in its northwest wing. Most were occupied by June.

The **endowment fund** of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** continued to flourish toward its goal to become totally endowed, said its president. It was boosted by a large endowment from the McInnich estate.

Worshipful Brother **Bob Boon**, who for 30 years organized the **collection of food** for **The Nebraska Masonic Home** from lodges in the Grand Island area, was recognized with a plaque for his work hard. He died less than two months later, but the food drive continued.

A problem on the horizon, according to the superintendent of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**, was increased **governmental interference** in the home's operation.

Concerns about the few **child-residents** who lived at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** were answered by the superintendent who said demand for institutional child care had significantly declined because of America's affluent society. He said the willingness of relatives to care for children, the preference of government to place children in private homes and the availability of welfare benefits were specific reasons for the drop in enrollment.

A multi-purpose **recreational facility** was completed at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** north of the Administration Building. Complete with an illuminated sports court, the facility was a project of Past Worthy Grand Matron Betty Pauley.

The chairman of the **Committee on Finance** began a program of reviewing the **investment portfolio** of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** with several financial consultants. They made recommendations to the Board of Trustees about buying or selling stocks and bonds.

Contributions to the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial again were insufficient to maintain the expense of the increased **costs** of power and light, heating and cooling and staff costs.

Donations from the **Masonic Service Association** and a few Nebraska Masons allowed a **chapel** to be built in the **Lincoln Veteran's Hospital**.

It was reported by the **Masonic Service Association** that 96 of 172 Veteran's Hospitals in the U.S. had trained **Masonic field hospital agents** serving the fraternity and their families.

The **Committee on Fraternal Relations** reported that since mid-1977, a growing concern was a ban proclaimed by the **Arab Boycott League** against Freemasonry based on the erroneous belief that Masonry supported the Zionist cause. And, it was difficult to get information from **Iranian lodges** after the revolution began in January 1979, which put the Ayatollah Khomeini in power.

Recognition of the **Grand Lodge of Belgium** was in jeopardy after it allowed inter-visitation with irregular Masonic bodies and equivocated about requiring candidates to declare a belief in a Supreme Being.

The Master of **Mitchell Lodge No. 263** in Mitchell told the Annual Communication about a tradition started in the Panhandle nine years earlier of holding an **open air lodge degree**. In 1979, it was held in the Wildcat Hills south of Gering.

1980

Warren D. Lichty, Jr., Grand Master

June 9, 1979 – June 14, 1980

Reported at the 123rd Annual Communication

After several years of holding **Area Education Meetings**, they were discontinued in favor of **Deputy Grand Custodians** becoming involved locally. The Grand Master appointed them his personal representative in their district and directed them to visit each lodge and prepare a report on its situation. They met with lodge officers to discuss educational materials provided by the **Committee on Masonic Education**. They found that the lodges and Masters who accomplished the least, and were the most in need of help, did not attend the previously-held meetings.

As an incentive to encourage the sons and grandsons of Masons to join, the Grand Master recommended the status of "**Lewis**" for them. He pointed out that the sons of English Masons have long taken pride in that designation. However, the **Jurisprudence Committee** disapproved.

Grand Master **Warren Lichty** was elected **vice chairman** of the **Conference of Grand Masters**, and journeyed to the White House to visit President **Jimmy Carter**. He also was elected temporary chairman at the annual meeting of the **Masonic Service Association**.

The **supply of Bronze Jordan Medals** at the Grand Lodge office was depleted. Lodges were advised to do their utmost to retrieve their Jordan Medal when the holder passed away.

Recognizing that some men who would be good Masons were "terrorized" of passing their **proficiency** in open lodge, the Grand Master recommended that they be allowed to present proficiency to not less than three Master Masons. The **Jurisprudence Committee** struck down the proposal.

High **inflation** continued to adversely affect the **Grand Lodge** through higher rent, postage, printing and travel expenses.

Low **attendance** was evident at the **Central Schools of Instruction**, and the high cost of travel was the main reason that kept some brothers away, said the Grand Custodian.

Rent for the **Grand Lodge office** at the Masonic Temple in downtown Omaha increased almost \$4,400 a year from about \$12,100 to \$16,500, a 36 percent increase.

A distressing report was presented by the president of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** who said the **prices** of commodities continued to mount with no end in sight.

After receiving a large endowment from the **McInnich** estate, **The Nebraska Masonic Home** felt they were near to becoming fully endowed, but **inflation** prevented it from happening.

A plaque was given to Brother **J. C. Peterson** in Scottsbluff for his efforts in arranging the gathering and delivery of **food** to **The Nebraska Masonic Home**. Food trucks again arrived at the home from the Scottsbluff area at Thanksgiving time, as well as the Grand Island area from the Robert W. Boon Memorial food drive.

The male residents of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** attended a **Master's degree** conferred by **Bellevue Lodge No. 325** in the chapel. For some, it was the first time they had seen the work performed in 20 years.

The **Grand Lodge** received an **inheritance** to benefit children who were crippled, but it was contested by the **Shriner's Hospital Corp.** A vote of the Grand Lodge offered to settle by giving 50 percent to the Shriners, who countered offering the Grand Lodge 10 percent. The District Court held in favor of the Grand Lodge, and the Grand Master said the inheritance provided an opportunity for "broadening the scope of Masonic charity in Nebraska." However, it was suggested that the decision may be appealed to the Nebraska Supreme Court.

Past Grand Master **Herbert Ronin** completed 16 years on the Executive Committee of the **Masonic Service Association**, the last three as its chairman. He did not stand for re-election at the 1980 meeting and was made chairman emeritus.

Nebraska Attorney General and Brother **Paul L. Douglas** addressed the **Annual Communication**, noting the symbolism of the square for morality, the compass for self-control, the level for equality, the plumb for uprighteousness and the trowel for brotherhood. He said these qualities were needed and Freemasonry was not fulfilling its destiny. "If you happen to feel that you are out of tune, I remind you that the eternal verities never go out of style," he said. "Today, there are thousands of young men looking for a rock for which to claim."

Each lodge's **Junior Warden** received a publication called "Think Tank" to assist them in planning their term as Master, and Senior Wardens received "Tried and Proven," a program to **educate candidates** as they proceeded through the degrees.

The **Membership Committee** encouraged lodges to hold a non-Mason or **friendship night** where a program would be presented that could spark a man to ask to become a member.

Certified Lodges totaled 124 out of 239 lodges statewide. Thirteen Lodges had held the certificates for more than 50 years. **Individual** cards for **certification** were issued to 545 brethren.

The total **number of residents** at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** was 64 with an average age of 86. Sixteen were admitted during the year. Their **average age** was 85. The average time of residence was six years. The **per capita cost** was almost \$10,000.

Two amendments were defeated that would have charged new members \$5 for the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial, and to allow **ciphers**.

On recommendation of the Grand Master, Grand Lodge law was changed to expand the law to permit **plural membership** in two or more lodges.

Observing that lodges were sometimes seen as not charitable because the law didn't allow them to participate in non-Masonic **community drives**, the Grand Master recommended the law be changed to allow such expenditures with a two-thirds vote at two consecutive stated meetings. The **Jurisprudence Committee** disagreed.

The Grand Master recommended, and the **Jurisprudence Committee** concurred, that opportunities had been lost to lay **cornerstones** because work was not allowed on **Sundays** except for funerals. The law was changed to allow cornerstone ceremonies on Sundays.

The presentation of **60-year badges** was added to the law along with encouragement for lodges to present **25-year badges**. The idea was recommended by the Grand Master.

The **Jurisprudence Committee** endorsed an idea of the Grand Master to investigate the possibility of buying a **computer** for the **Grand Lodge office**. He said they were more affordable and the Grand Lodge of North Dakota was able to provide many new services to lodges.

Harlan Lodge No. 116 in Alma asked for guidance in **renting** the first floor dining room of their building to a religious group not in sympathy with Freemasonry. The Grand Master agreed with the **Lodge Advisory Committee** that advised not to rent the room to the group.

Past Grand Master **Charles Adams** died. He was installed president of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Association, but because of illness was unable to preside at its annual meeting. He had also served as Grand Sovereign of the United Grand Imperial Council, Knights of the **Red Cross of Constantine**, and brought that group's Annual Assembly to Lincoln.

DeMolay celebrated 60 years of existence in Nebraska.

Masons were **attending installations** of local Masonic-related youth groups, it was reported by the chairman of the **Youth Committee**. He said if all lodge officers would attend **DeMolay, Job's Daughters** or **Rainbow** installations, it would be the most talked about event of the youth leader's term.

A **tour of England** and Scotland was hosted by Grand Master **Warren Lichty**.

Following the 1979 **Iranian hostage crisis** at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, another hostage crisis occurred at Iran's embassy in London when Iraqis took it over. The president of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** said hostage taking had become vogue. But, the clear light of Masonry still shined where men met on the square and he thanked God for the Craft.

It was felt that **persecution** of Masons in **Iran** had been more closely related to political leanings rather than Masonic connections.

After withdrawing **recognition** of the **Grand Lodge of Belgium** the previous year, the Grand Lodge granted recognition to a newly-created Grand body in that country.

Included in the nearly 1,200 Masons who left Freemasonry in **Cuba** were 400 men who were "lost" when they left that island. The **Fraternal Relations Committee** said that while the United Grand Lodge of England still **recognized** Cuba, five jurisdictions withdrew it. "However, communism is atheistic and genuine Masons are not atheists, so how long can oil and water mix?" The committee maintained a "wait and see" attitude.

When the **Franco** regime was replaced in **Spain**, Freemasonry was up and running again.

1981

Byron C. Jenkins, Grand Master

June 14, 1980 – June 13, 1981

Reported at the 124th Annual Communication

Shortly before the founding meeting of the **Grand Lodge of Alaska** in February 1981, the **Grand Lodge of Washington** informed the 19 Alaska lodges under its jurisdiction that it would not grant immediate interim **recognition**. Nebraska Grand Master **Byron Jenkins**, who had committed to attend the meeting, was notified that the new Grand Lodge would not be recognized, but they invited him to attend anyway. After Alaska's lodges voted 12 to 7 to form a Grand Lodge and had installed its officers, Nebraska's Grand Master announced that he was granting immediate, temporary fraternal recognition to the Grand Lodge of Alaska until confirmed at this communication. His action made chartering possible for the Grand Lodge of Alaska. As stated in

Alaska's historical records, "It was an intensely emotional and exciting moment. For a few minutes, pandemonium reigned." The Grand Lodge of Alaska was the first Grand Lodge formed in the U.S. in 93 years. (*From the 1987 Proceedings.*)

At the **installation** of the first corps of officers for the **Grand Lodge of Alaska**, Nebraska Grand Master **Byron Jenkins** served as Installing Marshal. In thanks for his participation, the Grand Master was made a lifetime member of the Order of the Alaskan Walrus as authorized by that state's governor. He also received a sample of the first oil from the Prudhoe Bay Masonic Club that traveled down the 800-mile Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

During a visit of Grand Master **Byron Jenkins** to Omaha, the 1966 Past Masters of the Omaha Lodges presented a 16-pound **rock maul** with a bronze head to be used as a traveling trophy. The maul had been used in a stone quarry and was refurbished with a square and compass worked in the metal. The Grand Master awarded it to **Geneva Lodge No. 79** as the best all around lodge in Nebraska.

Commenting on the state of the Craft, the Grand Master said the condition of the lodges was better than most thought. "I believe that we are beginning to turn the corner on this **membership** problem," he said. "A good many lodges are bringing young men into the lodge. Many lodges are putting those young men to work as officers. Many lodges are expecting leadership from the officers, and selecting brothers as officers who can give that leadership. Many lodges are carrying out programs other than coming to lodge, reading the minutes, paying the bills and going home."

The **Membership Committee** encouraged lodges to hold **informational dinners** and invite non-Masons and their wives to attend. Because of positive results, the committee pursued the program the following year with lodges located on or east of Highway 14. The Grand Lodge, **Omaha Scottish Rite**, **Grand York Rite** and **Tangier Shrine** underwrote the cost of guests' dinners up to \$5 each. Nearly 100 petitions resulted from informational dinners held in 47 lodges. A total of 141 lodges had been contacted and urged to hold such a dinner.

Evening **meetings** were held across the state by the **Masonic Education Committee** covering such topics as administration, lodge programs, sustaining membership, conducting open meetings and the duties of the lodge education committee.

The effects of the **energy shortage** at gasoline pumps alarmed the Grand Custodian. With that in mind, the **Central Schools of Instruction** were changed the following year so that one night covered the Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft degrees, and a second evening was devoted to both sections of the Masters degree.

To provide **relief** from the seven **tornadoes** that struck **Grand Island** in June 1980, the Committee on Relief sent \$250 to Grand Island lodges. The tornadoes killed five people and caused more than \$260 million in damage.

Changes in bylaws were approved including the payment by each candidate of \$5 for the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Association, and **Past Grand Master's Jewels** and the **Gold Jordan Medal** were made the property of the Grand Lodge. The jewels and medal were to be returned after the death of the wearer, and the bearer's name perpetuated on the Past Grand Master's Jewel.

Stating he could not equate a Godfather's Pizza franchise with a **saloon**, the Grand Master approved the rental of the first floor of **Crete Lodge No. 37** to the restaurant. He cited previous **Grand Master's decisions** and **Jurisprudence Committee** rulings in 1975-1977 as the basis for his decision.

Approval was given for brethren in the Omaha-Lincoln area to form **The Nebraska Masonic Research Society**.

With income barely covering the **expenses** of the Grand Lodge, the **Grand Lodge Office Committee** said it was considering charging some expenses to **The Nebraska Masonic Home** for work the **Grand Lodge office** provided the home.

The Nebraska Masonic Home appointed a new committee to conduct long-range **planning**.

Two **flu** epidemics at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** resulted in quarantines.

A fenced-in parking lot was completed at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** in hopes that it would stop **vandalism** that was plaguing the home.

A truck load of **food donated** by lodges within 100 miles of Grand Island was donated to **The Nebraska Masonic Home** valued at just over \$8,000. That amount was \$1,500 more than a similar load, mainly because of **inflation**. The president of the home said donated food from the **West Nebraska Builders Club** and Bob Boon Memorial Food Truck significantly contributed to the home's bottom line.

Benjiman Harvey was hired to head the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** in Fremont in September 1980. At the time, only eight children were **residents** at the home.

An "**Ambassador Program**" was begun at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** to provide information about the home to interested groups in a defined geographical area. The ambassadors were trained in making presentations.

After the **secretary** of the Board of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**, who lived in Omaha, retired from office, the office of the home's secretary was moved to the home.

It was suggested that the **per capita** paid by lodges to the Grand Lodge would need to increase because **inflation** made drastic inroads on the budget with higher rents, postage, printing, travel costs and other expenses.

Pointing out that **donations** to the **Masonic Service Association** from Nebraska were very weak, the field agent to the Lincoln Veterans Hospital recommended that an envelope be included with dues notices asking for a contribution to the expenses of field agents.

For the third year in a row, the **Masonic Service Association** doubled subscribers to ***The Short Talk Bulletin***.

An amendment to allow **ciphers** of the ritual work was again defeated at Annual Communication.

It was reported by the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Committee that Grand Lodges across the country had raised the once-in-a-lifetime **contribution** from \$1 to \$5. The committee encouraged the Grand Lodge to take similar action.

Masonry in **Iran** was completely destroyed after the revolution led by the Ayatollah Khomeini. All lodges were closed and Masons unable to escape were **persecuted** and some were executed.

1982

Harold C. Wurdeman, Grand Master

June 13, 1981 – June 12, 1982

Reported at the 125th Annual Communication

The Grand Lodge received a gift of \$58,194 from **Glenn O. Emick** to fund **scholarships** for members and former members of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**.

The second of a two-year program by the **Masonic Education Committee** to inform Lodges about **leadership** was concluded. In 1982, lodges west of Highway 14 received the training.

Five Masonic temples were **dedicated** which was more than any year in the previous 12 years. The Grand Master said it indicated "a good sign" for the state of the Craft. The buildings dedicated were for **Acacia Lodge No. 34** in Schuyler, **Franklin Lodge No. 264** in Franklin, **Lebanon Lodge No. 323** in Columbus, **Republican Lodge No. 98** in Republican City, and **Papillion Lodge No. 39** in Papillion.

The **square and compass** used at the first **Annual Communication** of the Nebraska Grand Lodge was displayed at Annual Communication.

Five communities hosted **Area Educational Meetings**. The sessions provided a history of the Craft in Nebraska.

Attending the Grand Master's Banquet at the **Conference of Grand Masters** in North America in Washington, D.C., were Brothers **U.S. Senator J. James Exon** and **U.S. Representative Hal Daub**.

A resolution was defeated that would have allowed the Grand Lodge to provide a key or **cipher** that could be used to practice the ritual work.

A **cornerstone** was laid in the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children's** new Arts-Crafts-Maintenance Building.

The offices of the Grand Secretaries of the **Order of the Eastern Star** and **Grand York Rite** of Nebraska were located on the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children's** grounds until a suitable building could be constructed to serve as permanent headquarters. The move was prompted by the beating of the Grand Recorder of the Grand York Rite after he left his office in the Masonic Temple in downtown Omaha. The home made a similar offer to the Grand Lodge, but a motion to do so was withdrawn.

1983

Paul R. Pierce, Grand Master

June 12, 1982 – June 11, 1983

Reported at the 126th Annual Communication

Wisner Lodge No. 114 in Wisner suffered a **fire** loss of the interior of their lodge. A call went out to lodges across the state for furniture, working tools and jewels. The response reportedly was "tremendous."

A presentation for **60-year membership pins** was written by Past Grand Master **Herbert Ronin** and then-Grand Chaplain Dallas Gibson. The ceremony was to be tried for several years, and then printed for use by lodges.

Friendship Dinners were heralded as the most effective way to put a positive image of Masonry before the public. They said the number of younger men coming into Masonry because of the dinners "is amazing." Financing for the meals was provided by the **Shrine, Scottish Rite, and York Rite**.

An 18-page mimeographed paper entitled Diagrams of **Floor Work** for the **Dedication of Masonic Temples** was completed by Past Grand Master **Harold Wurdeman**.

Grand Junior Deacon **Paul Eveland** was asked to investigate the cause and possible solutions for 20 percent of **Entered Apprentices not advancing**. As one solution, the **Masonic Education Committee** printed a booklet titled, "Welcome to a Mason's Lady" to help alleviate the problem of Entered Apprentices failing to continue to the other degrees.

After three years of increases in new Entered Apprentices, the number dropped by 41 which shocked the Grand Lodge. On the whole, **membership** dropped 2.5 percent.

Membership in the **Nebraska Society for Masonic Research** grew to about 50 including members in Italy, Germany, New Zealand, Maine, Montana and Georgia. But the most significant growth was in its **library** collection which totaled over 400 books, 650 slides, and several magazines.

A questionnaire was sent to 44 lodges that didn't **attend** the 1982 **Annual Communication**. Of the 32 that responded, 10 were in good shape, 10 were waiting for their lodge to die. Half the lodges did not hold a **Guest Night** and did little but the minutes and bills at their meetings. Sixteen were not **proficient**.

The **Jurisprudence Committee** recommended that the **decisions** of the **Grand Masters** over the years be recorded, and that decisions since 1977 be recorded and available for the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Grand Wardens and Jurisprudence Committee.

It was reported that additional **younger men** were **joining** Masonry and more lodges were **building** temples with “ground floor, walk-in facilities designed for more social life.”

Past Grand Master **Norris Lallman** updated the history of **cornerstone layings**, and added a history written by former Grand Historian **George Rosenlof** that covered 1857-1963.

Henry Greenwalt was asked by the Grand Master to make new **working tools** for use in laying **cornerstones**. He made the tools out of old rifle stocks owned by the Grand Master.

Ten **Area Educational Meetings** were held for lodges east of Nebraska Highway 14. The theme was Masonic education.

An amendment to the bylaws that would have removed a restriction on the use of **ciphers** was defeated.

1984

Bevin B. Bump, Grand Master

June 11, 1983 – June 9, 1984

Reported at the 127th Annual Communication

As part of the Grand Master’s program to make Grand Lodge officers more visible and approachable, he assigned them to attend at least one **School of Instruction** and to be received as his personal representative.

Monthly **meetings** of the **Grand Lodge officers** were held during the year and included leadership training, program development, Grand Lodge laws and long-range planning.

The **Masonic Education Committee** conducted 33 **Masters’ and Wardens’ Workshops** across the state. The Grand Lodge officers presented the program which included leadership training and information about Grand Lodge programs.

The **Midwest Conference of Grand Masters**, consisting of 11 jurisdictions, was **organized**. A meeting was held to exchange ideas, projects and programs.

A **meeting** of **Grand Lodge officers** from Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado and Wyoming was held.

The **Grand Historian** made cassette and videotape **interviews** of **Past Grand Masters** for historical, educational and promotional purposes, and updated the 1957 history of Nebraska Masonry. By Annual Communication, cassette interviews had been conducted with 15 Past Grand Masters, and 10 had been videotaped.

The **Grand Lodge** purchased its first **computer** for the use of office staff to provide new services to local lodges including rosters, mailing lists and detailed membership records. The budget allowed \$50,000 for its purchase and expenses.

A committee appointed to study the **moving** of the **Grand Lodge offices** from Omaha, recommended that a Grand Lodge building be erected in Lincoln.

It was reported by the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Committee that most Grand jurisdictions passed the \$5 one-time, life-time **contribution** for new Master Masons. The increased revenue resulted in several improvements, although the organization was still not fully endowed.

The **Statue of Liberty Centennial** Celebration Committee was appointed in 1984 to celebrate its landmark anniversary and to help raise funds for its restoration. The committee set a goal of \$30,000, or \$1 from each member, to **contribute** to the statue’s refurbishing. Contributors’ names would be included in a memorial book that would be presented to the Statue Foundation.

For the first time, the annual **budget** for **The Nebraska Masonic Home** exceeded \$1 million.

The **Emick Masonic Youth Scholarships**, financed by Dr. Glenn and Evelyn Emick, were awarded for the first time. Glenn was a 68-year member of **Samaritan Lodge No. 158** in Chadron.

An amendment to the bylaws stated that **lodge funds** may be used for charitable purposes and to support **Masonic and community youth organizations**.

Meetings of lodges could not be held on **Sundays**, according to an amendment passed at the Annual Communication, except to conduct a **funeral**.

A change in the bylaws allowed dispensations to **Special Purpose Lodges** to perform “customary, special purpose functions relating to Masonry.” Passage was followed by the announcement that a **Masonic research lodge** would be created the following year.

To eliminate use of the word “**subordinate**” when referring to local **lodges**, the Grand Master recommended that the word “constituent” be used in the bylaws instead. **The Jurisprudence Committee** found references in Nebraska statutes to constituent lodges and suggested that such a change could jeopardize the Grand Lodge’s tax-exempt status. The change was not made.

Bylaws passed in 1981 stated that **Past Grand Masters (PGM) jewels** were the property of the Grand Lodge and were to be returned upon his death. His name was then placed on the back of the jewel and the next PGM’s name was engraved on the front. Due to the thinness of the gold and longevity of PGMs, the Grand Master’s recommendation was approved that left the jewel with the family.

1985

Robert A. Metcalf, Grand Master

June 9, 1984 – October 12, 1985

Reported at the 128th Annual Communication

Due to the “total computerization” of the Grand Lodge office, it was decided to change operation of the office to an **office management system** by hiring a manager to handle the duties of the Grand Secretary. The **Grand Secretary’s** responsibilities changed from serving as office manager to joining other Grand Lodge officers in promoting Masonry and assisting lodge secretaries.

The **Grand Lodge Office Committee** recommended the **Grand Lodge Office** be **moved** from Omaha to Lincoln. It was unanimously approved by the Grand Master and Grand Lodge line officers.

The **Nebraska Masonic Foundation** was **begun** as the result of the Grand Lodge’s approval to build a Nebraska Masonic Center on the southeast corner of 16th and L streets in Lincoln.

The **Stephen C. Houghton** Trust gave the Grand Lodge \$15,000 for funding, through the investment of the donation, for the care, maintenance and **education** of orphan children.

The Nebraska Masonic Home decided to pay for **funeral expenses** of residents instead of making it the obligation of the lodge that submitted the application for the deceased. The change was the result of problems the home experienced collecting the costs from lodges, and the policy created poor relations with lodges.

A **long-range planning committee** was organized by the Board of Trustees for the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** to develop goals and objectives and to define its mission for the rest of the century.

To educate lodge Masters and Wardens and help them better understand their responsibilities, the format of the **Masonic Education Committee** was changed to hold informal “**Masters and Wardens Workshops**.”

The **Annual Communication** was **opened** by a select team of Worshipful Masters from 11 lodges across the state.

The American flag was presented at the **opening** of **Annual Communication** by members of Omaha Chapter No. 19, **National Sojourners** and Joseph Warren Camp **Heroes of ’76**, which included **Charles Folsom**, a member of **Fremont Lodge No. 15** in Fremont and **National President** of National Sojourners.

Deputy Grand Master **Charles Amidon** represented the Grand Master at the laying of the **cornerstone** in the base of the **Statue of Liberty** in August 1984 as part of the restoration of the statue. U.S. Masons pledged to raise about \$3 million for the project.

A goal of \$30,000 was set for Nebraska lodges to **donate** to the restoration of the **Statue of Liberty**. At the 1985 Annual Communication, 86 of 225 lodges had donated a total of \$13,000.

1986

Charles W. Amidon, Grand Master
October 12, 1985 – December 6, 1986
Reported at the 129th Annual Communication

Given the 16 percent decline in **membership** in the previous 6 years, the Grand Master warned that, if that trend was followed, within the coming 15 years the state would have only 60 lodges in 14 locations and a total membership of 9,000. By 2010, membership would be reduced to 2,000.

The **average age** of Nebraska Masons was reported to be about 65.

The **Membership Committee** said that in view of the significant losses of members, it “is appropriate for a serious consideration of modification of our long established ban on **direct solicitation**.”

Declining **membership** was discussed at the **Conference of Grand Masters** in North America. While several jurisdictions had formed committees to address the situation, the Grand Master reported that “realistic solutions are still a matter for each jurisdiction to analyze individually.”

The Grand Master told delegates that with the demands on men’s time, a way must be found to reduce the necessity of a candidate spending an inordinate amount of time learning redundant **ritual**. He continued that he would be making a recommendation that future **proficiency examinations** be shortened to only the obligation.

Grand Master **Charles Amidon** and Junior Past Grand Master **Robert Metcalf** were the first in many years whose **terms** in office were more than 12 months. In 1984, the Grand Lodge moved the **installation** date of officers to December to give the incoming Grand Master the time following his election to prepare for his term, and to synchronize the Grand Master’s term of office with those of the subordinate lodges.

After talking with members at **Area Educational Meetings**, the Grand Master decided a “key” or “**cipher**” was necessary to verify proper wording and to learn the ritual, as allowed in other jurisdictions. He recommended a change in the bylaws to permit ciphers and it was approved 308-129.

A **Secretary’s Guide Book** was developed by the Grand Secretary to make the lodge secretary’s duties more understandable and simplified. It also aimed to improve record keeping and reporting and assist new secretaries.

To negate criticisms from religious groups, the Grand Master recommended that prior to administering the three obligations in the **ritual**, it be explained to the candidate that references to physical **penalties** were symbolic. The **Jurisprudence Committee** suggested it be included in the Preparatory Address instead and it was approved by delegates 294-134.

A paper was presented at the 1986 **Conference of Grand Masters** suggesting the removal of the ancient physical **penalties** from Masonic obligations. The penalties had been removed from the obligation in Australia, Scotland and several U.S. jurisdictions.

The **Nebraska Masonic Foundation** received a letter from the Internal Revenue Service stating that effective June 12, 1985, it qualified for Section 501(c)(3) of the Tax Code. Its effect made donations **tax deductible**.

The **Temple Advisory Committee** suggested that **Grand Lodge officers visit** one-fourth of the state's lodges each year so that all lodges will be visited at least once every four years. A similar South Dakota program was tried a decade earlier but later abandoned.

Brother Floyd Kalber, a former NBC-TV correspondent and at that time co-anchor in Chicago, emceed a banquet in recognition of the **65th anniversary** of the **Omaha Home for Boys**. The program ended with videotaped interviews with national leaders of the York Rite, Scottish Rite and Imperial Shrine. The highlight of the interviews was a message from Vice President George H. W. Bush. The event was attended by Grand Lodge officers, their wives, the home's Board of Directors, their wives, the staff and boys living at the home. More than 600 people also attended.

The **Omaha Home for Boys** celebrated its **65th Anniversary**. A **cornerstone** was laid for a new 12-boy cottage.

A special committee on the 100th anniversary of the **Statue of Liberty** reported that 79 lodges **donated** 100 percent of the goal for their membership, bringing the total for Nebraska Masonry's donation to the restoration to \$21,307.68.

The **Nebraska Masonic Home** hired a firm to provide **strategic planning** assistance to determine the demand and need for home services, what services the home should provide, the quality of the services the home wanted, the current condition of facilities and their suitability for current or future services.

The **Senior Girls' Home** at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** was being readied for occupancy after sitting vacant for 16 years.

Permission was granted for **Fremont Lodge No. 15** in Fremont to host two Yankton, **South Dakota**, lodges that conferred a Master Mason's degree.

Delegates and their wives attending the **Annual Communication** spent Thursday evening at the **Omaha Home for Boys** where a barbecue was held.

A new Masonic lodge for **Golden Rule Lodge No. 236** in Allen was **dedicated**.

1987

Wayne G. Luenenborg, Grand Master

December 6, 1986 – February 6, 1988

Reported at the 130th Annual Communication

The **Grand Lodge of Alaska** presented a gold pan to the Grand Lodge of Nebraska for being the first jurisdiction to recognize them in 1981. Inscribed on the bottom of the pan was, "the **Gold Pan Trophy** awarded annually to the Nebraska Lodge showing the greatest improvement or most significant contributions to Masonry in Nebraska." The gold pan was given in honor of Past Grand Master **Byron Jenkins** and the Grand Lodge of Nebraska.

Bookstores offered a King Solomon edition (or **cipher**) of Nebraska work, but it was found to contain errors. Following revisions, a contract with the printer provided for exclusive distribution of a revised book in Nebraska through the Grand Lodge office.

New rules were established for **individual proficiency** allowing a brother to be examined in any one degree, instead of only all three degrees. Added to the rules was a requirement that the proficiency examination included all floor movements. The total number of certified brothers was 449. Observing that there were more new certified men in the past year, the Grand Custodian commented, "We had to do something because our ritualists are fewer and fewer; and, if you look around at the age of our certified men, it is obviously going to continue this way if we don't do something to turn it around."

A new "**Officers Manual**" was developed for **lodge officers**. Its purpose was to enable all to learn more about Masonry, and inspire lodge officers to use that knowledge for the good of members, their communities, and to develop a planning program for Nebraska Masonic leadership.

Substantial **losses** of **members** from deaths and suspensions for nonpayment of dues were not being offset by new members. The Grand Master said lodges were competing for the time of non-active Masons and prospective candidates. "Local lodge activities must be attractive enough to warrant at least part of that valuable time," he said. "Masonry will grow or depreciate according to the efforts of you and me."

The Grand Master added that Masonry needed to be more public in order to earn the commitment of **members'** time at **lodges**. "We have to make our **meetings** at the lodges attractive enough so that we may warrant some of that time."

The Honorable **Hal Daub**, member of the U.S. House of Representatives and a member of **Florence Lodge No. 281** in Omaha, gave the opening address at **Annual Communication** on Masonry and the drafting of the Constitution.

The **Secretary's Guide Book** was reportedly especially helpful to new lodge secretaries. Completed in 1985, the guide book was scheduled to be edited and input from lodge secretaries was received.

A **toll free telephone** number for the **Grand Lodge office**, and the homes of the **Grand Secretary** and **Grand Master**, was initiated to save on paper and postal costs.

Artifacts and memorabilia of the history of Freemasonry in Nebraska were displayed at **Annual Communication** by **Roscoe Pound Lodge for Research No. 329** in Lincoln and the **Nebraska Society for Research**. The Society was custodian of a vast amount of historical material formerly stored in the Grand Lodge archives, and at that time it was moved to **East Lincoln Lodge No. 210** in Lincoln where it was displayed in cases. The Grand Lodge provided a grant to the Society to purchase the cases. Books were rebound, documents preserved and artifacts refurbished. It also conducted **table lodges** in other lodges and presented programs of interest, and they responded to lodges' requests for information.

The Grand Secretary recommended that the **Grand Lodge** discontinue handling **accounting** for **The Nebraska Masonic Home**. He said the majority of the clerical and secretarial help in the Grand Lodge office was devoted to this task.

Included in dues payments was \$2 for **The Nebraska Masonic Home**. The home's chairman said that amounted to less than 4 percent of its **budget**. He said the generosity of Masons in the past allowed the home to maintain its level of service, and he asked Masons to put the home in their wills. An appeal for donations resulted in a response of less than 2 percent of members.

The Robert W. Boon Memorial Food Truck project from central Nebraska took 485 cases of canned **food**, with a total weight of 20,000 pounds and a wholesale value of over \$10,000, to **The Nebraska Masonic Home**.

The Nebraska Masonic Home announced a drive to raise funds to for a \$2.5 million 100-bed **infirmary**. By Annual Communication, the home had raised 20 percent of its goal.

For the first time, a Masonic **float** was in the **Rose Bowl Parade**. It was sponsored by California Masons.

The meeting **date** of **Annual Communication** was changed from June to the first Friday of February.

Failing to receive sufficient voting results from lodges on whether an amendment to the Constitution could be brought up for a vote at Annual Communication, the Grand Master ruled it could not be considered. It would have made all **Past Masters permanent members** of the **Grand Lodge**.

An amendment to create a pre-paid **life membership** program failed to receive enough votes to pass, but it was recommended that the next Grand Master appoint a committee to examine the issue.

The scheduled opening of a remodeled **Senior Girls Cottage** and staff additions were the main reasons for a large increase in the budget for the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**. The cottage was built in 1927 and closed in 1970. Its renovation enabled the home to serve more children.

1988

Wayne G. Lueningborg, Grand Master

December 6, 1986 – February 6, 1988

Reported at the 131st Annual Communication

Annual Communication was held February 5-6, 1988, after the meeting **date was changed** at the previous Annual Communication held on June 12-13, 1987. At the election of **Grand Lodge officers** in 1988, it was discussed that the officers elected in 1987 had not been **installed**. It was suggested in 1988 that the election of officers be reaffirmed, and they be elected to be installed that year.

An amendment to the bylaws passed that allowed **asking non-Masons to join** a lodge. Another amendment eliminated a section in the bylaws that stated an Entered Apprentice or Fellow Craft could not **receive the next degree** until 28 days after receiving the previous **degree**.

Another change to the law reduced the amount of time from 12 months to six months that a man must **reside in Nebraska** in order to petition for **membership**.

Perpetual Memberships were authorized in a bylaw change approved by the delegates at Annual Communication.

The **Masonic Education Committee** developed an **Officers' Manual for Leadership Training** that was distributed to Senior Wardens at area meetings.

Following a vote in 1986 to adopt a **cipher**, 5,000 copies were made available at the next Annual Communication, and more than 2,500 were sold in the following year. In addition, 5,000 sets of individual Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason question and answer ciphers were printed for new initiates.

A new **Masonic Funeral Service** was authorized by the Grand Lodge in addition to the 1962 service in the **Monitor and Ceremonies**.

Since the start of the **Nebraska Masonic Foundation** five years earlier, it had held off plans to construct a Grand Lodge building in deference to a campaign by **The Nebraska Masonic Home** for an addition. A resolution was prepared to, in effect, destroy the foundation, but it was ruled that not enough lodges voted on the resolution for it to be considered.

The Grand Master expressed his concern about a resolution passed at the Imperial Session of the **Shrine** allowing a Shriner to retain his membership even if his **membership** was **suspended** by a Masonic Grand Lodge.

The Grand Lodge of Nebraska was unusual in its approach to education, said the chairman of the **Committee on Masonic Education**, because it did not have an organizational structure for education. Other states had brothers designated to handle ritual instruction, program promotion and Masonic education. He suggested that **educational representatives** be added to the areas covered by Nebraska's Deputy Grand Custodians.

Eight years after **Ben Harvey** began work as the head of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**, the number of **children residing** at the home rose from eight to 28.

The report of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** said life in most homes in the U.S. had changed, and not for the better. With both **parents working**, they were able to see their children only a short time each day, and the home was seeing the results of those situations. The report said the home was making every effort to provide a real home for the children.

The **Stephen C. Houghton Trust** made a payment of more than \$115,000 to the Grand Lodge Houghton Fund, bringing its total to nearly \$260,000. Its purpose was to fund the care, maintenance and education of orphan children.

Ground was broken for a new 100-bed **infirmary** at **The Nebraska Masonic Home**. The estimate to construct the building was \$2.5 million, and about 40 percent of its cost had been raised

by Annual Communication. The largest donation was from Mr. and Mrs. **Vernon Nicodemus** of David City who turned over stock to the home valued at more than \$23,000.

Raymond Evers, who succeeded his father as Superintendent of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, took over the responsibilities as Director of Development. **Arthur Sharp** took early retirement from his job with a telephone company to accept the position vacated by Evers, which was changed to Executive Director.

Amendments to the Grand Lodge Constitution were not allowed to be discussed because not enough lodges voted to submit them to the delegates at Annual Communication. The issues would have required that a committee of Past Masters recommend a candidate for **Grand Junior Warden** who would be **elected** from the floor, all Past Grand Masters and Past Deputy Grand Masters would not be **permanent members** of the Grand Lodge, and all Past Masters would be permanent members of the Grand Lodge.

An attempt failed on a vote of 147-148 to delete the following from Nebraska **work**: “The obligation you are about to take, contains reference to certain physical **penalties** which are symbolic in nature and are intended only to impart the historical lessons of fidelity.”

The Robert W. Boon Memorial Food Truck delivered 472 cases of **food** weighing over 10 tons to **The Nebraska Masonic Home**.

1989

Paul R. Eveland, Grand Master

February 6, 1988 – February 12, 1989

Reported at the 132nd Annual Communication

Lodges were allowed to conduct alternate educational programs and omit the usual repeating of the question and answer **proficiency** in the degrees. The Grand Master commented, “...there is a potential to attract good men to Masonry that we might never get otherwise because they won’t do the memory work until they become members and become motivated by what they find in Masonry. The real key is that we must get good members, we must teach them about Masonry, and motivate them to become active in the fraternity. If an alternate system of education can accomplish this, then we should use it.” A Special Committee on Proficiency reviewed the results and determined that each lodge should have a common educational program. This resulted in the **Masonic Education Committee** editing a **mentor’s manual** from the **Grand Lodge of Mississippi**, which was sent to each lodge as a guide.

The **Grand Custodian** met with the Committee on Nebraska Work to correct 22 errors in the Nebraska **cipher**, which was approved for publication in 1986.

Twenty-nine area **leadership chairmen** were assigned six to eight lodges each to show them the ingredients of a successful lodge.

A **Statement of Principle Concerning Freemasonry and Religion** was adopted at Annual Communication.

Lodges were encouraged to contact Masonic **widows** and involve them in lodge programs, and see to their needs.

A **ritual competition** was held in December 1988. The winning team, **Lancaster Lodge No. 54** in Lincoln, performed at Annual Communication. It was the first time a competition had been held in many years.

The Grand Custodian enforced Grand Lodge law requiring all subordinate **lodges** to demonstrate **proficiency** in opening and closing lodge in all three degrees within 90 days following the installation of officers.

The **Perpetual Membership** program was begun and aimed at adding financial stability to the fraternity while enabling men to remain Masons “when you no longer control your affairs.”

The state was divided among **Grand Lodge officers** so they could attend a function of every lodge in Nebraska. One officer made over 60 **visits** that year.

The **Robert Furnas** House in Brownville was presented Masonic **artifacts** for display in a room dedicated to Furnas' Masonic career. He was Nebraska's fourth Grand Master in 1865-66, and the state's third governor from 1873-75.

Among new efforts by the Grand Master were the establishment of a **museum and library** at the **Grand Lodge office** and development of a scholarship program where money was made available to lodges on a matching basis.

A series of short Masonic education **lessons** were prepared by the **Masonic Education Committee** and sent to each lodge.

The **Public Relations Committee** arranged for several **radio spots** about Masonry, and manned a booth at the Nebraska State Fair for the first time in memory.

The Grand Lodge authorized a new **Masonic Funeral Service** and a **Monitor and Ceremonies**.

An addition was constructed to the **infirmary** at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** allowing for 100 more beds. A fundraiser to pay for the addition was \$1 million short of its goal.

"**The Nebraska Masonic Home** is the **main charity** of Nebraska Masons," said President and Past Grand Master **Harry Spencer**. "Yet, the \$2 every Mason contributes with his dues toward its support raises only \$51,200. With a 1988-89 Home budget of \$1.9 million, this is approximately 3 percent of our budget. I am afraid that, rather than the Masonic Home being the main Masonic charity of our Grand Lodge, it is more accurate to say it is the forgotten charity of most Nebraska Masons."

A proposed amendment to change the **Jurisprudence Committee membership** from all Past Grand Masters to five was defeated 93-156.

1990

Thomas W. Tye, Grand Master

February 12, 1989 – February 11, 1990

Reported at the 133rd Annual Communication

At the **Conference of Grand Masters in North America**, held in February 1989, a task force reported on the history and legitimacy of **Prince Hall Freemasonry**. The Grand Master called the report a "very learned and thorough presentation."

A resolution was passed on February 3, 1990, that extended fraternal **recognition** of the **Prince Hall Grand Lodge, F&AM of Nebraska**, as a duly constituted Grand Lodge of Masons within the state. The members of Prince Hall Grand Lodge also recognized the Grand Lodge A.:F.: & A.:M.: of Nebraska. A transcription of the conversation between the two Grand Lodges was included in the 1990 Proceedings.

The **Masonic Renewal Task Force** was created in 1988. It reported at the 1989 **Conference of Grand Masters** its findings about the attitudes of American males about joining Freemasonry.

How proficiency should be achieved was never defined in Nebraska law, said the **Committee on Nebraska Work**. The committee also noted that rote memorization of the questions and answers in each degree was a stumbling block to the advancement of some candidates and eliminated some petitioners. They stated the purpose of Masonry was to educate members on the history and philosophy of the fraternity. Proficiency was defined as satisfactory completion of materials contained in the Standard Proficiency Manual, and the ability to give the signs of recognition. With that, the committee proposed a new **Standard Form of Proficiency** that was adopted in August 1989. The immediate result was an increase in work throughout the state. A total of 434 men were raised in 1989, compared to 325 in 1988 and 247 in 1987. The Grand Master said the change was not the sole answer to membership problems, but a step in the right direction.

Deputy Grand Master **John McHenry** was asked to conduct a workshop at the 1990 **Conference of Grand Masters** on Nebraska's **Standard Proficiency**. In addition, Grand Senior Warden **Jim DeMoss** was selected as **chairman** of the 1991 conference. He was responsible for determining and selecting the agenda and speakers. "Nebraska is, and has become, a leader in Masonic thought and education throughout the United States," said the Grand Master.

An annual **retreat** was instituted for **Grand Lodge officers** to brainstorm the future direction of the Craft, plan Grand Lodge sessions and develop duties of responsibility.

After attending the **Grand Lodge of Michigan** two years prior, Grand Senior Warden **Jim DeMoss** brought back the idea of **directorship leadership**. That is, to assure continuity of leadership, the Grand Master relinquished to the line officers the powers and authorities granted him in the Constitution and Bylaws. Major decisions were made by the group instead of the Grand Master only.

The Grand Master's **Humanitarian Award** was created to honor outstanding citizens and Masons.

The **Awards Committee** was **created** to select the recipients of the **Rock Maul** and **Gold Pan** awards.

A committee was appointed to revise the **Monitor** and divide it into two publications: one with **monitorial work** and the other with **ceremonies**.

Besides handling the ritual work of the Craft, the **Deputy Grand Custodians** were asked to take Grand Lodge programs to lodges and assist them to be more successful.

Funds in **The Nebraska Masonic Home Endowment and Bequest** were transferred to the new **Nebraska Masonic Home Foundation**.

A deficit **budget** was proposed to the delegates at Annual Communication for the coming year. The Deputy Grand Master said it would help reverse the decline in **membership** and take Masonry out of the lodge rooms and into the community. It passed.

The Spencer Wing of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** was dedicated in honor of Past Grand Master **Harry Spencer**, who served as president and member of the Board of Trustees. The \$3 million cost of the project was paid through donations.

The state's lodges were divided into 32 areas by the **Committee on Masonic Leadership**. **Area leadership chairmen** visited with lodge officers twice during the year to help lodges plan their year, develop leadership, inform lodges of Grand Lodge programs and motivate them.

The solutions to **membership** problems, according to the **Committee on Grand Lodge Membership**, were a broad and appealing **public relations** program and a knowledgeable, communicative pride in all members. They said the education of current members was necessary for the solutions to be successful. The committee also suggested programs to increase lodge visibility: open installations, open houses, fellowship nights, special ladies' nights, youth activities nights, table lodge, rusty nail degree, church Sunday and all-Masonic picnics.

A committee of lodge **secretaries** and Grand Lodge office staff completed a new **Secretary's Handbook**.

Twenty-six **Central Schools of Instruction** were held across the state. There were 412 **certified Masons** in the work and 20 new certified men.

To discuss misunderstandings and miscommunications, the **Grand Lodge officers, York Rite, Scottish Rite** and **Shrine** officers met. The meeting was so well received that it was decided to hold them every other year.

The **Grand Lodge of Nebraska** was the **first to recognize** the **Grand Lodge of Hawaii**. At Annual Communication, Hawaii's Grand Master declared the week as Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Nebraska Season throughout Hawaii. He presented a set of **poi pounders** to the Grand Lodge in appreciation.

The Grand Master was hired by the Board of Trustees of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** as a **director of development** to keep pace with the times and ensure continued support for the home.

With the **purchase of a lot** near **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, it owned the entire block south of the home.

The **cornerstone** laying ceremony for a 4-H building at the **fairgrounds in Geneva** in July 1989 caught the attention of the brothers in the **Holy Protection Gnostic Orthodox Monastery** near Geneva. They expressed interest in the ceremony, and invited the laying of a **cornerstone** at the **monastery** in November 1989.

Past Grand Master **Joseph Tye**, father of Grand Master **Tom Tye**, died. He served 32 years on the Board of Trustees of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**.

1991

John M. McHenry, Grand Master

February 11, 1990 – February 10, 1991

Reported at the 134th Annual Communication

Norman C. Hall, Grand Master of the **Prince Hall Grand Lodge**, observed one year of recognition between the Prince Hall family and Grand Lodge A.:F.:& A.:M.: of Nebraska. “Nebraska has been bold enough; Nebraska has been filled with courage to step out on untested land....it takes a certain type of man to say we must do the things that are right,” he said.

During the first year of joint recognition of **Prince Hall Grand Lodge** and Grand Lodge A.:F.:& A.:M.:, Masons from both bodies participated in each other’s **degree work** and a **Table Lodge**.

Three **meetings** with representatives of several **Masonic-related organizations** were held to improve communication and cooperation, and to come to a consensus on common issues. The meetings were recommended by the **Masonic Renewal Task Force** that had studied membership issues nationwide and formulated recommendations.

Continuity of leadership was achieved in the **Grand Lodge** through the implementation of **directorship leadership**. The Grand Master stated he hoped lodges would adopt a similar style of leadership.

A bylaws change directed the **Appropriations Committee** to submit proposed **budgets** that didn’t exceed the anticipated revenues of the **Grand Lodge**.

The Grand Lodge laid a **cornerstone** at the new **International Center for Job’s Daughters** in Papillion. Dignitaries from across the nation attended the event.

The **Membership Committee** completed the final draft of the **Nebraska Table Lodge** ceremony. After demonstration of the ceremony and adoption by Grand Lodge, it was referred to lodges to help increase interest and participation in lodges.

The **Nebraska Masonic Foundation** paid the travel expenses of presenters at the **Conference of Grand Masters** about Nebraska’s new proficiency.

A joint committee of the Grand Lodge A.:F.:& A.:M.: and **Prince Hall** provided financial support to the **Drug Awareness Resistance Education Program** (D.A.R.E.) that educated students about the dangers of drugs.

The **Masonic Education Committee** completed a complete set of 35-millimeter **slides** for use in lodge **degree lectures**, and made them available to lodges.

Changing the **format** to tabloid and printing it on newsprint paper reduced the publishing cost of “**The Nebraska Mason**.”

The **Nebraska Masonic Foundation** purchased a **building** site at 11th and J Streets in Lincoln to house the **Grand Lodge offices, museum and library**. Committees were formed to finance, raise funds and design and build a Grand Lodge building for \$750,000. Plans for the building were down from the originally proposed \$2.5 million structure.

The recommendations of a committee, charged to revise the **Monitor and Ceremonies** for Nebraska, were approved.

1992

James N. DeMoss, Grand Master
February 10, 1991 – February 8, 1992
Reported at the 135th Annual Communication

The **Nebraska Masonic Foundation** received permanent **exempt status** from the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) organization in December 1991. The Grand Master said its purpose was to educate the general public about Freemasonry, what it stands for and what it does. During the previous year, the Foundation contributed \$10,000 to the Grand Masters of North America **Committee on Masonic Renewal** to help produce videotapes and other promotional information for membership recruitment and retention. It also purchased supplies and materials for the Drug Awareness Resistance Education (**D.A.R.E.**) program which was coordinated by the Nebraska State Patrol.

A meeting was hosted by the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts in April 1991, and was attended by jurisdictions that had **recognized Prince Hall Grand Lodges**, and the R.:W.: Grand Secretary of the United Grand Lodge of England, and others from his jurisdiction. Its purpose was to “bring a semblance of order to the actions of the **United Grand Lodge of England** and to resolve whatever differences may exist.” The Grand Master appointed P.G.M. Thomas Tye to represent Nebraska at the meeting. The final outcome of the meeting wasn’t known at the time Annual Communication was held.

The Grand Master served as the **chairman of the Conference Committee** for the **Conference of Grand Masters** of North America. In addition, Past Grand Master **Thomas Tye** gave the keynote address.

The **Conference of Grand Masters** of North America accepted the report of the **Masonic Renewal Task Force** and made it a standing committee of the Conference. Past Grand Master **John McHenry** and the Grand Master served on the task force.

With acceptance of changes in the bylaws, the **responsibilities** of the **Grand Secretary** were significantly changed from administrative in the Grand Lodge office to the honors of a Grand Lodge officer.

A special committee was appointed to develop a complete **annotation of Grand Lodge law**. Past Grand Master **Donald Swanson** was placed in charge. A previous annotated version of the law, including previous rulings, was lost.

Degree Team competition was **canceled** because of lack of interest with only three teams wanting to participate. The **Committee on Nebraska Work** suggested that the next competition portray conferral of the Entered Apprentice Degree instead of the second section of the Master’s Degree to allow smaller lodges to compete on a more equal footing with lodges that had larger memberships.

In **closing a lodge**, the lectures between the Master and officers were almost exactly the same as in opening. The **Committee on Nebraska Work** recommended changing the closing to eliminate the redundancy.

In another change to the ritual work, the **Committee on Nebraska Work** omitted the requirement that lodges must **open** in the degree in which a candidate took his proficiency examination. To save time, lodges opened in the higher degree.

The Nebraska Masonic Home completed a \$1.7 million **renovation** of its 1952 facility, which concluded its major improvement program. And, **The Nebraska Masonic Home Foundation** was activated after it received **exempt status** from the IRS.

The recommendation of a committee of the Board of Trustees of the **Nebraska Masonic Home** was approved by the Board of Trustees to allow female **members of the Grand Chapter of Nebraska, Order of Eastern Star**, without the previously required Nebraska Masonic relationship, to be **admitted** to the home. The recommendation also required acceptance by the Grand Chapter of certain monetary requirements. It was submitted to the **Grand Chapter of Eastern Star** for their approval, but was rejected.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** was ranked second lowest for lowest total **employees** and lowest operating **budget** of children's homes in the Masonic Home Executives Association.

For the first time in many years, all **beds were filled** at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**.

The **Committee on Nebraska Work** prepared a **Standard Floor Work Manual** and a **Revised Standard Monitor and Ceremonies** was published.

Pins were produced for wear by members participating in the Grand Lodge's **Perpetual Membership Program**.

Honored at a special dinner was Past Grand Master **Harry Spencer** for his 50 years of service on the Board of Trustees of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**.

The meals of guests at **Friendship Night dinners** held at lodges were reimbursed by the **Nebraska Masonic Foundation**.

The centennial observances of two county courthouses were commemorated by the Grand Lodge with laying of **cornerstones** of courthouses in **Gage** and **Jefferson** counties.

1993

James L. Eatmon, Grand Master
February 8, 1992 – February 7, 1993
Reported at the 136th Annual Communication

The **Masonic Education Committee** revived monthly **Masonic Education Lessons** which were sent to individuals in each Lodge. They were designed for a five-minute reading at each regular meeting.

The **Public Relations Committee** developed **news releases** for local **lodges** to use for local activities and involvement in Grand Lodge programs. This resulted in increased coverage statewide of lodge activities.

The Grand Master represented the Grand Lodge of Nebraska at the **United Grand Lodge of England's celebration of 275 years** of existence.

The **Committee on Membership** provided **pins** for presentation to **new members** to encourage pride in their membership.

Copies of the revised **Ceremonial Work**, **Monitorial Work** and a **Floorwork Manual**, which was two years in development, were made available the previous year. The **Cipher** was revised and reprinted in 1993.

Twenty-seven **Schools of Instruction** were held across the state.

The **Awards Committee** evaluated current Grand Lodge awards and developed criteria and new awards to recognize the work of Masons, lodges and non-Masons. Included were the revised **Rock Maul** and **Gold Pan** awards. Introduced at workshops was the **Masonic Leadership Award**, to recognize a Mason's lodge and community work, and the **Masonic Achievement Award** to non-Masons for community work.

The bylaws were changed so that one officer could hold both the elective offices of **Treasurer** and **Secretary** in a lodge.

The **Grand Lodge** faced its fourth year of a **deficit budget**.

The Grand Lodge of Nebraska became the first jurisdiction to pass a 50-cent per capita **assessment** to help support the maintenance of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial.

The **Masonic Renewal Committee** of North America developed a manual and a series of video tapes for a lodge **membership development** program. Lodges were encouraged to purchase the **kit**.

The **Committee on Doings of the Grand Lodge Officers** was **ended**. It had referred topics mentioned in officer reports to committees for their and the Grand Lodge's consideration.

Recommendations seeking to increase **dues** by 50-cents to cover costs for **the Nebraska Mason**, the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** and the general fund were defeated. A recommendation by the Grand Master that the mileage and per diem paid to delegates attending Annual Communication be eliminated also failed.

Ben Harvey, Administrator of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**, was installed **president** of the **Masonic Home Executives Association of North America** at its national conference in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Student Fund**, which provided financial assistance to former students of the home to further their education, was **eliminated** because no residents had qualified for several years. The **Grand Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star** had previously **dissolved the committee**.

Remodeling of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** was completed. The task added 20 apartments, two fire stairs and the installation of a new generator. The cost was \$1.7 million.

A total of 108 **residents**, the largest number in history, were at **The Nebraska Masonic Home**. Assisted living services were made available.

More than \$10,000 worth of **food** products was **donated** to **The Nebraska Masonic Home** by lodges in and around Grand Island as part of the Robert W. Boon Memorial food drive.

A new **aviary** was placed at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** that housed 25 tropical and exotic birds. The executive director said the site brought smiles to faces that hadn't smiled in years.

About \$2.5 million a year was necessary from **The Nebraska Masonic Home Foundation** to supplement the annual operating **budget** of the home. Past Grand Master **Thomas Tye**, Executive Director of the Foundation, said unless gifts, bequests, trusts and annuities expanded, it would be necessary to use some principle to continue quality care.

The **Caring Club**, which required an annual donation of \$250 or more to **The Nebraska Masonic Home Foundation**, raised more than \$70,000.

Freemasonry was called an ally of the devil by a member of the **Southern Baptist Convention** and President of Mission Ministry to Men, Dr. James Holly. The **Masonic Service Association** started a Masonic Information Center to combat charges brought against Masonry. It was funded by **John Robinson**, **author** of "Born in Blood," who donated \$5 from the sale of each copy of his new book, "A Pilgrim's Path," for its establishment.

Masonic youth groups – **Rainbow for Girls**, **Job's Daughters** and **DeMolay** – were invited to set up **promotional tables** at **Annual Communication**.

Work was **suspended** on all projects except the windows and roof of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial to deal with those repairs. Closing the building to tours was considered to save on costs because of the lack of revenue.

A **cornerstone** was laid in November 1992 for the **Nebraska Museum of the Arts** in Kearney.

1994

Donald L. Pohlman, Grand Master
February 7, 1993 – February 13, 1994
Reported at the 137th Annual Communication

The Grand Lodge and **Prince Hall Grand Lodge** jointly laid the **cornerstone** for a building at the **Omaha Home for Boys**. It was thought to be the first time that representatives of the two Grand Lodges laid a cornerstone together anywhere in the U.S.

Delegates to the **Annual Communication** were given the option to assign their **per diem** to Masonic youth organizations in Nebraska – **DeMolay**, **Job's Daughters** and **Rainbow for Girls**. A total of \$2,640 was divided among the groups. Masonic youth pins were given to each delegate who assigned their per diem to the youth organizations.

The **Committee on Nebraska Work** completed **floor work manuals** for each lodge officer and distributed them to lodges. The committee discovered it was difficult to integrate the several manuals during a **School of Instruction**, and they decided to develop a continuous manual.

A **Memorial Service** was written that could be used for funerals of brothers of a variety of faiths.

A **Lodge of Research** was authorized at the **Holy Protection Monastery** at Geneva. They gathered **Masonic music** from England and Australia from more than 200 years ago. Audiotapes were produced for Lodges to use in degree work.

Nebraska **DeMolay** presented their first "**Mason of the Year Award**" to Past Grand Master **Robert Metcalf**.

A list of all **members** of **DeMolay** who were of age to **join a Blue Lodge** was forwarded to the lodge closest to each young man.

At the suggestion of the **Deputy Grand Custodians**, the **Committee on Nebraska Work** advised that a **closing prayer** be reinstated during the closing of the lodge in all three degrees.

Eight-foot **banners** displaying the emblems of Masonic bodies in Nebraska were sold to lodges and appendant bodies for their use.

The Grand Master attended the bicentennial celebration of the laying of the **cornerstone** of the **U.S. Capitol** in September 1993, and was one of several who spread mortar on a replacement stone. The Grand Master said his greatest thrill was holding **George Washington's** family Bible.

Grand Master Donald Pohlman and Past Grand Master Norman Hall of the **Prince Hall** Grand Lodge of Nebraska presented a program on the joint recognition of their lodges in Nebraska at the **Midwest Conference on Masonic Education**. (Following their presentation, the 11 other Grand Lodges and the Prince Hall Grand Lodges of the conference also provided joint recognition.

The **Grand Master traveled** more than 30,000 miles during the year he served in office.

With an average **deficit** of \$30,000 in the **budget** the previous four years, actions were taken to reduce costs, including: reduction of **expense reimbursements** for officers attending the **Conference of Grand Masters**; elimination of meal expenses for officers and **travel costs** for spouses; and no longer paying for rooms and meals for **visiting Grand Masters** and **Grand Secretaries** and their spouses at **Annual Communication**. The latter resulted from a survey of U.S. Grand Lodges conducted by the Grand Lodge of Nebraska. Its results were presented at the **Midwest Conference of Grand Masters** and other jurisdictions also mentioned they intended to make changes.

Flooding in nine Midwest states, including Nebraska, killed 50 people in 1993 and caused more than \$15 billion in damage. At the time of Annual Communication, more than \$52,000 in **relief** was collected to help victims. An application was sent to all Nebraska Masons to help those in need apply for the funds.

After approving a 50-cent **per capita** increase in 1993 to help with maintenance costs for the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial, four other states followed Nebraska's lead and also approved a per capita assessment.

A **per capita** of 50 cents was passed to support the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**.

The **Grand Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star** rejected a proposal from the Board of Trustees of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** that Eastern Star members with Masonic relationship

outside of Nebraska were eligible to live in the home. “I believe...the delegates did not understand the real import of the proposal,” said the president of the home.

1995

Steven F. Mattoon, Grand Master
February 13, 1994 – February 5, 1995
Reported at the 138th Annual Communication

A new award presented by the Nebraska Chapter, **Order of DeMolay** was the “**Sponsoring Body of the Year**.” It was given to the Grand Lodge of Nebraska.

St. John the Baptist Lodge of Research No. 330 at the **Holy Protection Monastery** near Geneva developed **musical tapes** for use by lodges in Masonic **ritual**. It was decided that the **Monitors**, which had been revised the previous year, did not need to be reprinted to include music as it was deemed “not a part of the official work of the Grand Lodge.” Between 200 and 300 tapes were sold to lodges around the country.

The **Grand Lodge office** was **moved** to 1530 South Street in Lincoln when the building at its previous location, 1630 K Street, was sold.

An attempt at the Imperial meeting of the **Shrine** to **cut its ties with Freemasonry** was defeated with 75 percent of Shriners voting against the proposal forwarded by the Imperial Potentate.

A **Committee on Freemasonry and Religion** was **created** to respond to critics of the Craft. The move followed the 1993 rejection of the **Southern Baptist Convention** of a motion that would have condemned Freemasonry and disciplined Southern Baptists who were Masons.

Disaster **relief** funds totaling \$15,400 were given to **Auburn Lodge No. 124** in Auburn, **Parian Lodge No. 207** in Callaway and **Peru Lodge No. 14** in Peru to help mitigate **flood** damage the previous year.

It was reported that the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** was 88 percent complete in their long-range **renovations**.

Of all Masonic children’s homes in the Masonic Homes Executives Association of North America, Nebraska’s **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** operated with the lowest number of **employees**, lowest **budget** and lowest ratio of employees to residents.

After **Cambridge Lodge No. 150** in Cambridge and **Endeavor Lodge No. 262** in Indianola merged with **Bartley Lodge No. 228** in Bartley in 1992, a complete set of **lodge furniture** was delivered to **The Nebraska Masonic Home**. The gift made possible the holding of regular lodge meetings without transferring furniture from **Plattsmouth Lodge No. 6** in Plattsmouth.

Falling in compliance with a new law that required safety committees in all businesses, the number of **days lost** due to work-related incidents dropped from 252 in 1992 to 15 in 1993 at **The Nebraska Masonic Home**. The improvement made the home the first nursing facility ever to be removed from the Workers’ Compensation high-risk pool.

The Nebraska Masonic Home became a member of Nebraska **Food Bank** to receive food and medical supplies, and saved the home about \$350 a month on its food bill.

1996

Jerry L. Rittenburg, Grand Master
February 5, 1995 – February 2, 1996
Reported at the 139th Annual Communication

The Grand Lodge sponsored a **band camp** for the first time at the Shrine Bowl Football Classic. Borrowing the idea from the **Grand Lodge of Kansas**, the band performed in the Shrine Bowl Parade and during halftime of the **Shrine Bowl Game**.

The first “**One-Day Class**” was held that initiated men into Masonry, the **Scottish Rite** and the **Shrine**. A total of 147 candidates were raised.

For the first time, the number of **suspensions for nonpayment of dues** grew so that they equaled the number of deaths of members.

Letters were sent by the Grand Master to brothers **suspended for nonpayment of dues**. Noting that some had fallen on hard times and could not pay their dues, the Grand Master pondered, “In these cases, I wonder what happened to our vows of assisting our Brethren...In several instances, brethren in nursing homes, maybe even not capable of knowing that dues were delinquent, were suspended without any inquiry as to their well-being. Even members who had died during the course of the year were suspended because no one contacted them to see why they didn’t pay their dues.”

It was announced the **United Grand Lodge of England recognized the Prince Hall Grand Lodge** of Massachusetts and indicated they were the “Mother Prince Hall Grand Lodge.” The result was that all other Grand Lodges of Prince Hall Masons took their authority from them.

References in the law addressing **physical defects** prohibiting membership were **deleted**.

The **Jurisprudence Committee** ruled that a proposal allowing **Past Masters** to be **members of the Grand Lodge** could not be voted on because a sufficient number of lodges did not approve it to be brought up at Annual Communication.

Two lodges received funds from the **Committee on Masonic Relief**. **Canopy Lodge No. 209** in Elmwood was granted \$22,000 to repair their lodge hall damaged by fire. **Western Star Lodge No. 2** in Nebraska City was given \$13,000 for roof repairs as the result of water damage.

Musical research by the **St. John the Baptist Lodge of Research** in Geneva reported its tapes of lodge **music** had been sold to 25 states and several countries overseas. Some Grand Lodges and the Macoy Publishing Co. purchased large quantities to sell.

Grand Master **Jerry Rittenburg** presented a paper on **long-range planning** at the **Conference of Grand Masters** in North America. He pointed out that the Grand Lodge of Nebraska is known and respected as a leader in Masonry.

Staff of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** reviewed studies and worked with architects to analyze the future needs of the home, including the “possible” addition of an **Alzheimer’s Unit** and future kitchen additions.

At the **Midwest Conference of Grand Lodges**, the Grand Master **Jerry Rittenburg** presented a paper on Nebraska’s **recognition of Prince Hall Masonry**.

Lancaster Lodge No. 54 in Lincoln participated in a **Multi-State Degree Festival** in Missouri.

During the previous 12 months, 322 **50-year membership pins** were presented, 42 **60-year pins** and 16 **70-year pins**. Among the **70-year pin** recipients was Past Grand Master **Harry A. Spencer** at the centennial celebration of **North Star Lodge No. 227** in Lincoln.

Ramps and lifts for the handicapped were **installed** at the **George Washington Masonic National Memorial**.

After hiring a part-time **librarian**, the **George Washington Masonic National Memorial** was nearing completion of cataloguing its books. This project tied into the effort to create a home for the new **Masonic Leadership Center**, which was created as a clearing house for research, development and educational material relating to Masonic leadership, growth and knowledge.

1997

V. Kaye Ramsey, Grand Master

February 2, 1996 – February 23, 1997

Reported at the 140th Annual Communication

A **cornerstone** ceremony was held at the **Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center** in Omaha. The Grand Lodge worked closely with the Nebraska State Historical Society, which operates the center.

For the first time, **All-Masonic Sunday** was held to give Masonic buildings in the state the chance to open their doors to the public to increase awareness of the fraternity. About 230 Masonic Lodges, Eastern Star Chapters, youth organizations and appendant bodies participated. The **Public Relations Committee** provided instructions to lodges.

The Bishop of the **Catholic Church** in Lincoln **banned membership** by parishioners in Blue Lodge Masonry and several affiliated bodies. By responding in a positive manner to the news media, most of the coverage was favorable.

The **Nebraska Masonic Foundation** sold **property** near the state capitol in Lincoln for about \$330,000. The offer was accepted so that a location could be found to display the artifacts of Nebraska Masonry. The foundation announced it was actively looking for a suitable building to house the Grand Lodge offices and foundation activities.

With nearly two-thirds of lodges not initiating new **members**, the Grand Lodge officers decided to offer **One-Day Blue Lodge** Multiple Candidate Conferrals in Omaha, Beatrice and Hastings where 209 candidates were raised.

The Grand Lodge adopted laws for **ritual proficiency** that required the completion of a manual and examination in open lodge of shortened memory work.

The **Indian Degree Team** of Oklahoma conferred the Master Mason Degree in Beatrice at the Civic Auditorium.

Bro. John D. VerMaas, a member of Hickman Lodge No. 256 in Lincoln, served as the **Imperial Potentate** of the **Shrine** of North America.

Permission was granted by the Grand Master to constitute a **Council of Knight Masons** of Nebraska that was headquartered at the **Grand York Rite** office in Fremont.

The number of **lodges** earning a certificate of **proficiency** was 76 out of 178 lodges.

Twenty-four **Schools of Instruction** were held across the state.

The **Masonic Education Committee** undertook a **strategic planning** process to determine a five-year plan of action.

Macoy Publishing Co., the largest outlet for Masonic supplies in the U.S., included in its catalog a tape of **Masonic music** recorded by the **St. John the Baptist Lodge of Research No. 330**, in Geneva. (*The lodge was located at an Eastern Orthodox monastery, which relocated to California and the lodge charter was surrendered in 1998.*)

The Nebraska Masonic Home's Caring Club, an innovation of Past Grand Master **Tom Tye**, received contributions totaling \$35,659 in 1996.

An actuarial study of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** stressed that it required increased funding from the **Foundation** to meet operating expenses.

Arthur Sharp, executive director of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, was elected to serve as **president** of the **Masonic Homes Executives Association** of North America in 1998.

"**The Hour Glass**," a newsletter of **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, began publication.

Nearly \$8,900 worth of **food** was **donated** to **The Nebraska Masonic Home** through the Robert W. Boon Memorial Food Drive in Central Nebraska.

1998

Kenneth G. Fleming, Grand Master
February 23, 1997 – February 15, 1998
Reported at the 141st Annual Communication

The **Masonic Education Committee** passed out samples of a new newsletter, “**To Light.**” Subscriptions were sold to finance its production.

All chairmen of **lodge education committees** were presented a workbook by the **Masonic Education Committee** on developing a Masonic education program.

A guideline was prepared by the **Committee on Nebraska Work** to assist lodges in conducting **One-Day Classes**.

The **Masonic Education Committee** demonstrated a “simple” **Web site** for the **Grand Lodge**.

A resolution passed that allowed for a **ballot** to be spread for **multiple candidates**.

The **Committee on Youth** held what was believed to be the first **meeting** of the three Masonic youth groups. They discussed how the committee could support their membership, and encouraged the groups to interact with each other.

The **Nebraska Masonic Home’s** Board recommended **construction** of an **Alzheimer’s Unit**. Preliminary plans called for a \$6 million facility. The plans were later put on hold pending the start of a fund drive to raise at least \$2 million.

A heavy **snowstorm** at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** caused the parking lot to cave in. The lot was built over the debris from the original Home that was torn down in 1924 when a new wing of the home was added.

The **Nebraska Masonic Home** Trustees held a **retreat** to determine its mission. The meeting was so successful that another retreat was scheduled to include the home’s **Foundation** Executive Directors.

The **Nebraska Masonic Home** reported that the \$2 in **donations** it received from each Mason’s dues represented less than 1 percent of the home’s budget, leaving 99 percent of its budget to be raised by the home’s trustees.

A **Fundraising Committee** was created within the Board of Directors of **The Nebraska Masonic Home Foundation** to “assure perpetuation of the 94-year tradition of Masons taking care of other Masons and their families.”

An office for **The Nebraska Masonic Home Foundation** was established at the home.

In the past year, a third full-time staff **person** was **hired** to work in the **Grand Lodge office**.

Seventeen **lodges** had been **certified** for 60 or more consecutive years. With more expected in the count, 297 **brethren** were certified.

The Grand Master presented a paper on periodic Grand Lodge publications at the **Conference of Grand Masters** in North America. “The Nebraska Mason” was complimented for its economical production costs and the efficiency of the office staff.

1999

Don E. Rasmussen, Grand Master

February 15, 1998 – February 14, 1999

Reported at the 142nd Annual Communication

A ruling of the **Jurisprudence Committee** that every member had a right to vote caused the **Committee on Nebraska Work** to change the manner in which the vote was collected so that the **Tyler** was included.

Three **Multiple-Candidate Conferrals** were held in the state, raising 125 Master Masons.

A \$10 **fee for dispensations** was removed from the bylaws. It was argued that Grand Masters had traditionally waived the fee.

The **Grand Lodge** was on the World Wide Web after the development of its first **Web site**. **The Nebraska Masonic Home** also established its first Web site.

The **Public Relations Committee** provided **Kevlar gloves** to lodges to give science departments in local schools to protect students from burns and chemical spills.

A new **computer system** was added to the **Grand Lodge** office. A **Web site** allowed lodge secretaries to file reports via the Internet.

Success stories from **lodges** showing increases in **membership** revealed a similar **program**: formation of committees that developed a list of possible members, invitation to an information event with a discussion of Masonry locally and generally, and providing brochures and petitions. In addition, the Membership Committee reminded lodges to hold events involving their members to keep their interest.

The laying of a **cornerstone** at the **Omaha Home for Boys** was **videotaped** to use to promote the ceremony to groups considering it for their community.

The **Nebraska Masonic Foundation** purchased a **building** at 1240 North 10th Street in Lincoln for \$140,000. The 3,600-square-foot building would be used for administrative purposes, meetings and to house a museum and library. It was expected the Grand Lodge would occupy the building for about 10 years.

The **Masonic Education Committee** hosted its first **breakfast** at Annual Communication. The program consisted of how to put together a lodge education program.

The Board of Trustees of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** authorized architects to prepare drawings for an **Alzheimer's Unit**.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** implemented a **long-range plan** in 1977. It was reported that the plan essentially was completed.

The largest **Masonic emblem** in the world, measuring 60' by 70', was completed and dedicated in front of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial and memorialized in respect to the bicentennial of Washington's death. Attendees toured Mount Vernon before the ceremony which was accented by the firing of an 18th century cannon at the beginning and ending of the ceremony. Following remarks, a concert by the U.S. Army Band was provided, along with fireworks.

2000

Dwight E. Smith, Grand Master

February 14, 1999 – February 13, 2000

Reported at the 143rd Annual Communication

A change in the bylaws made **lodge secretaries voting members** of the **Grand Lodge**.

The **Membership Committee** developed **awards** to be presented to a large and a small lodge in the state with the highest percentage of growth.

The **Nebraska Masonic Foundation** reported that remodeling costs for the new **Grand Lodge office building** at 1240 North 10th Street was \$126,949, with an additional \$941 for an emergency control system, \$4,254 for building signage and window coverings totaling \$2,154 for a total cost of \$137,260. (*A cornerstone ceremony would be held for the building in June 2000.*)

An amendment to the bylaws was passed that increased the annual **per capita** tax by 50 cents to fund distribution to every Mason in the state of "**To Light**," the educational newsletter of the **Masonic Education Committee**.

The **Appropriations Committee** proposed a resolution to increase **dues** \$1 for each year for five years, to be voted on at the next Annual Communication.

The Nebraska Masonic Home launched a drive to raise funds to pay back the **Masonic Home Foundation** for building its **Alzheimer's Unit**. A groundbreaking ceremony was held for the 14-bed facility in July 1999.

In recognition of the **Grand Lodge's contribution** to erect a **large Square and Compass** at the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial, a stone plaque was placed there with the Grand Lodge of Nebraska engraved on it.

The Grand Lodge officers hosted the **Midwest Conference of Grand Masters** and Secretaries in Lincoln. A presentation was made about the Grand Lodge's **Masonic All-Star Marching Band**.

As part of an ongoing effort to protect middle and high school science students from injuries in laboratories, Nebraska lodges purchased and distributed more than 1,000 pairs of **Kevlar gloves**.

A permanent **committee** was created in the bylaws to plan the camp for the **Masonic All-Star Marching Band**.

To provide funds for the **Nebraska Masonic Foundation**, a "**Ten Cents Per Day**" program was initiated to ask the state's Masons to contribute \$36.50 to help fund its educational, cultural, historical, literary and charitable activities.

Jason Wood, DeMolay International Master Councilor and the first DeMolay from Nebraska to attain that position, addressed the Annual Communication.

The **United Grand Lodge of England** recognized both a state and a **Prince Hall** Grand Lodge within 17 states, including Nebraska. The **Grand Lodge** decided to seek reciprocal **recognition** with every Prince Hall Grand Lodge recognized by their state's Grand Lodge who were members of the **Conferences of Grand Masters** in North America.

The **Committee on Masonic Relief** authorized \$6,000 from the disaster fund to assist in repairs in Oklahoma and Kansas from **flooding**.

2001

James F. Brown, Jr., Grand Master
February 13, 2000 – February 11, 2001
Reported at the 144th Annual Communication

The Grand Master ruled that small **class initiations** of up to **five candidates** at a time were permissible. Fifteen were held in individual lodges the previous year. The **Committee on Nebraska Work** prepared a **floor work manual**.

A dinner was held with the **Prince Hall** Grand Lodge F.: & A.:M.: of Nebraska to celebrate 10 years of joint **recognition** between the two Grand Lodges in the state.

Grand Lodge **dues** were approved at Annual Communication to increase \$1 a year for five years.

The **Saints John Lodge of Education No. 331** was issued a dispensation to establish a special purpose lodge to promote Masonic education "at any Masonic edifice in Nebraska."

An amendment to the bylaws was passed at Annual Communication allowing an **appendant body** to sell or dispense **alcohol** except during a tyled meeting of a lodge.

Added to the duties of **lodge secretaries** was the requirement that they annually complete an application for the **Rock Maul Award**.

The **Masonic Education Committee** reported that with passage of a 50-cent per capita increase, its "**To Light**" publication would be received by every Nebraska Mason starting in 2002.

Four Masonic youth **scholarships** from the Grand Lodge were increased from \$750 to \$1,000.

Planning began to stage a **Masonic Youth Leadership Weekend** for members of **DeMolay**, **Job's Daughters** and **Rainbow for Girls**. Members of appendant bodies joined in the planning sessions for the event that would be held in 2002 and coordinated by the Grand Lodge **Youth Committee**.

A long-term goal of the **Grand Lodge** office staff was to archive the 4" x 6" **membership card** history information into the computer. The cards, with information dating back to the beginning of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska, were to be entered into the computer over two to five years.

The **Nebraska Masonic Home** completed its 14-bed **Alzheimer's Special Care Unit**. A **cornerstone** ceremony was attended by 300 people in June 2000.

North Star Lodge No. 227 in Lincoln presented Past Grand Master and former Judge **Harry A. Spencer** his **75-year pin** at The Nebraska Masonic Home.

Past Grand Master **Byron Jenkins** (1980), who implemented the Rock Maul and Gold Pan Awards, **died** in September 2000.

An animated figure of **George Washington** was placed at the **George Washington Masonic National Memorial** thanks to the Supreme Council, Ancient and Accepted **Scottish Rite**, Northern Masonic Jurisdiction. With the push of a button, the figure stood up and delivered a Masonic message.

At the annual meeting of the **Shrine** of North America, legislation passed stating that once a man became a Master Mason, he could join the Shrine, thus eliminating the requirement that a man must be a member of the **York Rite** or **Scottish Rite** before becoming eligible to join. The motion passed about 85 percent in favor to 15 percent opposed.

2002

Philip A. Lorenzen, Grand Master

February 11, 2001 – February 10, 2002

Reported at the 145th Annual Communication

The **library and museum** at the **Grand Lodge Office** experienced increased use by the public, but lack of organization of the materials prompted contact with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Masters Degree candidates in Library Science to help catalogue the library.

At the request of trustees of the Prospect Hill Cemetery in Omaha, the **Grand Lodge** of Nebraska A.:F.:&A.:M.: and the **Prince Hall** Grand Lodge of Nebraska F.:&A.:M.:, performed a tribute to the contributions made by Masonic forefathers to the founding, settlement and development of the Nebraska Territory, the state and many communities. The **grave** of the first **Grand Master** of Nebraska, Robert Carrel Jordan, and the grave of the first Master of a Prince Hall lodge of Masons, both located at the cemetery, were appropriately honored.

When 264 students attended the **Masonic All-Star Marching Band Camp**, it was the largest group yet to participate.

An amendment to the bylaws was passed requiring **lodges** to become **certified** annually in the opening and closing of a lodge. Previously, the law stated lodges must become certified within 90 days of the installation or face suspension of their charter.

Help Teams were set up by the **Lodge Advisory Committee** to provide advice and help **lodge officers** and members find solutions for troubled lodges. During the past year, 11 teams worked with lodges throughout the state. In response to encouragement from the Grand Master, several lodges posted signs in their communities noting the presence of a Masonic lodge.

The name of a **candidate** could be submitted for membership and election in a lodge before he signed a **petition** under an amendment approved at Annual Communication. It was stated this would help avoid the risk of embarrassment to the lodge and candidate should an unfavorable **vote** occur.

The Grand Master commented on the deaths of about 3,000 people after **terrorists** hijacked and flew two passenger airplanes into the twin towers of the **World Trade Center** in New York City, one into the **Pentagon** in Washington, D.C. and a fourth hijacked plane crashed in Pennsylvania when passengers overtook the hijackers. "Tragic events in 2001 reminded us vividly of the fragile nature of humanity. Yet to me the greater lesson presented to us is that of the vibrant strength of the human spirit, the resolve to survive, the desire to move on, the knowledge that with God's strength we will be able to handle any situation that is presented to us."

The **charter** of **Saints John Lodge of Education** as a special purpose lodge was presented to the chartering members.

PGM **George W. Lininger's art and gun collection**, originally under the control of the Grand Lodge, appeared to become scattered. Records were sketchy and some items were supposed to be in

personal collections. Grand Master **Philip Lorenzen** took on the task to attempt to locate the items and determine if they were appropriately accounted for and controlled.

The number of men becoming Masons through **One-Day classes** nearly doubled in 2001 over 1999.

The bylaws were changed so that the **Grand Tyler**, who previously wasn't allowed a **vote** at Annual Communication, could do so.

A recommendation from the Grand Master was accepted adding to the bylaws that no **commercial use** could be made of a **roster** of members, and requests for a list of members would need to indicate how it would be used and that it could not be sold.

Presenters from Nebraska provided programs at the **Conference of Grand Masters** meeting on this jurisdiction's "**director style**" of Grand Lodge leadership and the successes of **Masonic education** in the state.

Over the years, the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** received five parcels of **farm land**, which were kept as working farms operated by renters. Three board members were appointed to look after the farms.

A record high number of **residents** (105) were served at **The Nebraska Masonic Home**.

The **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Committee was requested to prepare a celebration in Nebraska recognizing that November 4, 2002, was the 250th anniversary of Washington's **initiation as a Mason**.

2003

Michael E. Jones, Grand Master

February 10, 2002 – February 8, 2003

Reported at the 146th Annual Communication

Motto and vision statements were developed for the **Grand Lodge**. **Motto**: Nebraska Masonry - Men putting ethics into practice. **Vision Statement**: Nebraska Freemasonry will establish itself as the premier fraternal organization promoting universally acknowledged values of friendship, morality, and brotherly love.

The **loss in members** was reduced by 49 percent (319) compared to the average of the previous 10 years (622). Nonpayment of dues continued as the largest component of that net loss.

The Grand Master held a Masonic **summit** of leaders of all **appendant bodies** which resulted in a brainstorming session that developed a list of goals. This was the first event of its kind.

A **scholarship** was given by the **Past Grand Masters and Widows**.

The first **Masonic Youth Leadership Conference** was held in September 2002 that brought together 435 youth and leaders of Masonic-related youth groups. Under the leadership of the Grand Lodge **Youth Committee**, the conference was the first time members and leaders of Nebraska's **DeMolay**, **Job's Daughters** and **Rainbow for Girls** gathered in one meeting. The conference involved five years of planning and fundraising, and several nationally-known speakers discussed leadership qualities. More than \$33,000 was raised from Masonic bodies and received through registrations to finance the conference.

The bylaws were amended so that a two-thirds **vote**, instead of a majority vote, was necessary for a lodge to **consolidate** with another lodge.

The **Committee on Nebraska Work** noted that 259 Masons were raised in 10 **One-Day Classes** and it urged the continuance of the program. The chairman added, however, the "possible deterioration of Degree Work Proficiency by abdicating to outside One-Day Classes, should be of continuing concern to all subordinate lodges." He suggested lodges consider performing up to **five candidate classes** when possible to maintain proficiency and establish closer brotherhood with new members.

The first **Grand Master's Golf Tournament** was held in September 2002, and raised \$6,000 split between **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** and the **Nebraska Masonic Foundation**.

A silent **auction** fundraiser for the three **Masonic youth** organizations held at Annual Communication raised nearly \$5,500.

Three **display cases** were built and placed in the **museum** located in the Grand Lodge office and were paid for by the **Nebraska Masonic Foundation**. Three brothers designed and built the cases at no charge.

It was reported that professional librarians volunteered their time to **catalog** the volumes, documents, periodicals and artifacts of the Grand Lodge **library** and **museum**.

Since September 11, 2001, when **terrorists** hijacked planes that destroyed the **World Trade Center** in New York City and heavily damaged the **Pentagon**, questions were asked of the **Committee on Freemasonry & Religion** about Grand Lodges in Islamic countries. The committee responded that Masonry requires the belief in a Supreme Being and there were many good, non-violent **Muslims** in the world who are or could be members of our fraternity.

The **Masonic Education Committee** presented a program of "Educating the New Mason" at Annual Communication in response to a need to develop a mechanism or attitude to give **new Masons** more knowledge about Masonry.

"**To Light**," a publication of the **Masonic Education Committee**, was made available to Nebraska Masons as part of the "**Nebraska Mason**" newsletter, and its publication changed from twice a year to quarterly.

A **Committee on Internet and Computer Technology** was **created** to review both hardware and software used by the **Grand Lodge Office**. After perusing equipment and software, the committee recommended upgrading hardware and replacement of software, along with a new server.

The **Grand Lodge museum and library** held an open house in November 2002. The **Grand Historian** made a presentation about **Masonry in Nebraska**. Additional open houses with guest speakers were scheduled.

W.:B.: Larry Jacobsen of Omaha, was the keynote speaker at the **Conference of Grand Masters**. He explained the **strategic planning** model used by the Grand Lodge for its committees' activities.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** added a home **storage business** on its property. While it increased the work load of the staff, income to the home appeared to make it a good investment.

The **100th anniversary** of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** in Plattsmouth was kicked off with a dinner by the **Caring Club** on September 14, 2002, followed three months later with an open house appreciation tea for lodges and chapters.

To commemorate the **250th anniversary of George Washington** becoming a Master Mason, **Hastings Lodge No. 50** in Hastings conferred a Master Mason degree in Colonial costume with assistance from the **Heroes of '76**. An evening banquet was attended by 110 people and commemorative aprons were given to Masons. Other events held during the three-day observance included a tour of the Hastings Naval Ammunitions Depot, and the appearance of young George Washington at the banquet.

Renovation of the Washington Museum in the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial was completed.

Nebraska was recognized in the **Grand Lodge** of the Month Program at the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial. Nebraska Masonic artifacts and memorabilia were displayed at the Memorial.

Ten **cornerstones** were laid, including the **Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center** at Chadron State College.

2004

Kenneth D. Beebe, Grand Master
February 8, 2003 – February 7, 2004
Reported at the 147th Annual Communication

Seventeen lodges, representing about 10 percent of all lodges, were recognized as members of the **Plus Club** for achieving an increase in **membership** during the previous year.

Training in key elements of lodge success was provided through Wardens and Deacons Schools, later called the **Lodge Leadership Program**, held in three locations. At least one officer from 60 percent of the lodges in Nebraska attended.

The major concern of the Grand Master for the future focused on the level of **activity** in some **lodges**. “Activity is a good indicator of organizational health, and there are lodges that are just not active enough to show their communities why they exist. We find strength and support in our traditions, but we must address the future with vision and enthusiasm.”

The bylaws were amended so that mileage and a **per diem** were no longer allowed to be paid to retiring Grand Lodge officers, Past Grand Masters, Past Deputy Grand Masters and one representative from each lodge to attend Annual Communication. The per diem allowed was \$10 a day, with the mileage set annually. For a number of years, delegates attending Annual Communication had returned these funds to be divided equally among the **Masonic youth groups**.

Lodges were permitted to participate in **parades** “at community celebrations” without asking the Grand Master for approval after the bylaws were changed on recommendation of the Grand Master.

Raffles were allowed to be conducted by lodges through a change in the bylaws. The change stipulated advance written approval of the Grand Master for the raffles.

The **Masonic Education Committee** started a monthly “**To Light Moment**” to provide Masonic education for lodges. It was sent through e-mail to Masons requesting the information.

The **Grand Master’s Charity Golf Tournament** raised about \$12,000 that was shared equally among **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** and the **Nebraska Masonic Foundation**.

The **Committee on Nebraska Work** approved the addition in the **cornerstone** ceremony of opening the cornerstone previously laid. A cornerstone ceremony was held at **Hillcrest Country Club** in Lincoln, which until the 1930s was the home of Sesostris **Shrine**. In addition, 11 other cornerstone ceremonies were held.

The **Fraternal Relations Committee** began a study of the effectiveness of the **Grand Representative** system. Pointing out that the role of the Grand Representatives was misunderstood and confusing, the chairman said the committee required better understanding of the program’s direction.

Eight **One-Day Classes** were held resulting in the raising of 125 members.

A 10-step lodge **renewal program** was used to assist the **Lodge Advisory Committee** in revitalizing lodges.

A **housing development** east of the property of the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** brought the home more inside the city. “When our founders looked at this property nearly 100 years ago, we were considered a farm in the country,” said the president of the Board of Directors.

The Nebraska Masonic Home in Plattsmouth had an average of 103 **residents** during the year, and it was reported that couples were attracted because of the full continuum of care services offered.

Past Grand Master **Warren Lichty** served as **president** of the **George Washington Masonic National Memorial Association**. In a report to the Grand Lodge, he praised the Grand Lodge for approving a 50-cent per member **donation** to the memorial a number of years ago. Since then, 16 other Grand Lodges followed Nebraska’s example.

A letter of reciprocal **recognition** was received from the National Grand Lodge of **Togo**, West Africa, after the **Grand Lodge** of Nebraska recognized them in 2003. The Grand Historian of Togo's National Grand Lodge attended Annual Communication and offered thanks for the recognition.

Eliminated as committees of the Grand Lodge were the **Masonic Memorial Service** and **Temple Building Advisory** committees.

2005

Lester R. Seiler, Grand Master

February 7, 2004 – February 13, 2005

Reported at the 148th Annual Communication

Twenty-nine lodges saw increases in **membership** and were recognized as members of the **Plus Club**. That number was up from 17 lodges the year before. In 2004, 770 new members joined the ranks as Master Masons.

The first “dry-run” of the **Child Identification Program (CHIP)** was held in Nebraska during 2004 for high school students participating in the **Masonic All-Star Marching Band**. It was followed by events in Norfolk, South Sioux City, Plattsmouth, Columbus and Imperial. The **Nebraska Masonic Foundation** provided \$25,000 to assist in purchasing cameras and other equipment needed to conduct the events. The program was headed up by Deputy Grand Master Ivan Vrtiska and endorsed by the Nebraska Sheriff's Association, Nebraska Dental Association, Nebraska Dental Hygienists Association and Nebraska Dental Assistants Association.

Lodge paraphernalia and **furniture** from closed lodges that had been stored for several years were **auctioned** off by the **Grand Lodge** at Annual Communication. About \$4,800 was raised to benefit **CHIP**. A silent **auction** was also held to raise funds for **Masonic youth groups**, and more than \$2,000 was bid on items.

Mike Birnstihl, who was Grand Senior Warden when an aneurysm burst which forced him to end his service to the Grand Lodge, was given status as a **Grand Senior Warden Emeritus** in recognition of his contributions to the fraternity. At the time, he was also president of the **Nebraska Masonic Foundation** and was named a **Deputy Grand Custodian Emeritus**. “This honor is rarely given and richly deserved as it recognizes his commitment, dedication and hard work on behalf of the more than 15,000 members statewide,” the Grand Master said.

A new program lead by R.:W.: Brother Dean Skokan was begun allowing the formation of subordinate **lodges** by soldiers deployed in areas without a Grand Lodge, such as Afghanistan and Iraq. The Grand Lodge provided compact paraphernalia necessary to open and operate a lodge, including degree work. The materials were included in a **Swisher Kit**, named for Staff Sergeant Chris Swisher, a Nebraska Mason and member of Lincoln Lodge No. 19 who was killed in Iraq in 2003.

Between May and October, 2004, the **Grand Master** held 13 **area meetings** around the state to ask brethren their thoughts and vision of Masonry. He said he found that whether the comments came from members of large or small lodges, their opinions about the challenges they faced were similar. “The biggest success was the exchange of ideas between lodges and the idea of working together as neighboring lodges in conferring degrees and having social events together,” he said.

The **Grand Master** outlined five **goals for lodges** to complete. Twenty-two Masters achieved his **Grand Master's Leadership Award**. The program recognized Worshipful Masters who demonstrated excellence in leading and governing their lodge to accomplish goals and objectives for the good of Masonry.

Proficiency manuals for each degree were beginning to be updated by the **Committee on Nebraska Work**.

The **Committee on Membership** prepared a **Membership Handbook** to help lodges recruit new members, retain present members and reduce the number of suspended members. A calling tree was implemented for 13 areas of the state, each with a leader who was responsible to communicate with each Master or Lodge Membership Committee about the goals of the program.

A **cornerstone** was laid for the **Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center** in Nebraska City. Grand Lodge officers dressed in period costumes to perform the ceremony, and marched to piccolo and drums played by members of the Masonic All-Star Marching Band.

The **10th Masonic All-Star Marching Band** was celebrated, which attracted about 230 high school students from across Nebraska.

While attending the Imperial Session of the **Shrine**, the Grand Master joined the Colorado Grand Master in laying the **cornerstone** for the **Public Library in Pueblo, Colorado**. The Grand Master and line officers also joined the Kansas Grand Master and line officers in **Mankato, Kansas**, in laying a **cornerstone**.

The Grand Master attended Washington Lodge No. 111 at White, South Dakota, which held its 50th **Table Lodge**. He was presented the ceremonial war ax made by the Pipestone Indian Shrine Association.

The Grand Master pointed to Masonic unity in the state such as the **One-Day Blue Lodge Classes** in which the Entered Apprentice Degree was performed by Tangier **Shrine**, the Fellow Craft Degree by the **Scottish Rite** and the First Section of the Master's Degree by the **Grand Lodge officers**.

An **8th Degree Team** was formed by the **Grand Lodge officers** to perform at **Scottish Rite Reunions**.

Walter F. Miller, long-time Executive Officer of Nebraska **DeMolay**, died.

An audit by the Internal Revenue Service for the year 2001 was completed and it was reported that "everything appears to be in order."

Plans were completed for construction of a **learning center** at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**. Its purpose was to provide tutoring under close supervision and to address individual problems. The home worked with the Fremont school system and Midland College to explore solutions to the challenges facing the children.

A change in state law no longer exempted **The Nebraska Masonic Home** from licensure, which resulted in a large amount of time spent in preparing to **comply with state law**.

After serving on the Board of Trustees of **The Nebraska Masonic Home** since 1941, Past Grand Master **Harry Spencer** resigned effective January 2005. He was its president from 1983-1991. The Executive Director said he "is responsible for professionally and personally guiding our Board in looking to the future in order to set an example for other facilities in the field to follow."

2006

Ivan A. Vrtiska, Grand Master

February 13, 2005 – February 11, 2006

Reported at the 149th Annual Communication

After the first full year of offering the **Child Identification Program (CHIP)**, 27 events across the state identified about 6,000 **children**. The events were funded, manned and promoted by local lodges. Local and county law enforcement officers, and dentists, dental assistants and hygienists also helped with the effort as well as law enforcement professionals. Child identification kits were provided at no cost to parents. Local lodges, and in some instances other Masonic-related organizations, paid \$4 for each kit.

An annual **dues** assessment of \$1 per member was approved by the Grand Lodge to help support **CHIP**. In addition, the creation of a **CHIP Committee** was approved.

After the **Conference of Grand Masters** in North America voted to make **CHIP** an official Masonic program, Grand Master **Ivan Vrtiska** was named a member of the **National MasoniCHIP Committee**.

Deputy Grand Master **Scott Krieger, Sr.** was appointed to the Planning Committee for the 2006 **Conference of Grand Masters** in North America.

For the first time, **awards** were presented to the lodge and individual who made significant contributions to **CHIP** during the past year.

Past Grand Master **Harold Hultman** was presented a gold-plated **rock maul** in 1976 by Omaha lodges in honor of attaining the office and in recognition of the Bicentennial of our country. On his death in 2005, his family presented the rock maul to the Grand Lodge. It was decided to present the golden rock maul, titled the "Harold Hultman Traveling Maul," in recognition of the hard work of the winner of the Rock Maul Award, with the admonition that it be delivered to another lodge within 30 days after receiving it. **Cotner Lodge No. 297** in Lincoln won the Rock Maul Award and delivered it to **Omadi Lodge No. 5** in South Sioux City. Each lodge receiving the golden rock maul was also charged to deliver it to another lodge within the same number of days.

An over-sized gavel, crafted by W.:B.: **John Ferguson** of Kimball, was presented to the Grand Lodge in honor of his father-in-law Past Grand Master James L. "Sonny" Eatmon. As a token of leadership, it was to be presented to the lodge of the next Grand Master. It was given to Mid-West Lodge No. 317 in Hastings, the lodge of Deputy Grand Master **Scott Krieger, Sr.** **Mid-West Lodge** had 30 days to deliver it to another lodge and visited **Wallace Lodge No. 279** in Wallace. Each subsequent lodge receiving the **traveling gavel** had the same deadline to deliver the gavel.

The Second Triennial **Youth Leadership Conference** was coordinated by the **Youth Committee** with the assistance of volunteers from other Masonic organizations. The **Masonic Youth Foundation of Nebraska** raised nearly \$50,000 to fund the nationally-known speakers. About 600 members of **DeMolay**, **Job's Daughters**, **Rainbow** and their adult sponsors attended the two-day event, which featured an air show at the Kearney Airport that attracted more than 2,000 conference attendees, Nebraska Masons and area residents. The air show, coordinated by Rob Morris Lodge No. 46 in Kearney, was lead by international award-winning pilot Debbie Furstenberg Rihn-Harvey, a past honored queen of Job's Daughters from Omaha.

The Most Worshipful **Prince Hall F.: & A.:M.:** of Nebraska and Grand Lodge **A.:F.: & A.:M.:** of Nebraska observed the 15th anniversary of joint and full **recognition** without restrictions or limitations. A dinner was held and plaques were exchanged. The two Grand Lodges were the first in the nation to take that action.

The date **dues** became **delinquent** was changed from June 1 to March 1, and the date of automatic suspension of members for nonpayment of dues changed from September 30 to April 30.

A total of 257 high school students participated in the **Masonic All-Star Marching Band Clinic** held prior to the **Shrine Bowl** football game. It was the largest band in several years.

New **membership software** was purchased by the **Nebraska Masonic Foundation** for use in the **Grand Lodge office**.

The **Committee on Fraternal Relations** continued to study the effectiveness, viability and participation of the appointees to the office of **Grand Representative**. Other jurisdictions also were attempting to better define the program.

Seven **One-Day Classes** were held during 2005 in Omaha, Lincoln, Bellevue and Hastings resulting in the raising of 231 new brothers.

The **Proficiency Manuals** were updated by the **Committee on Nebraska Work**. They also reviewed the **cipher** and noted necessary corrections for the next reprinting.

Past Grand Master **Warren Lichty** ended his three-year term as **president** of the **George Washington** Masonic National Memorial Association. While serving as president, he was successful in securing a limit on the years that the president of the Association could serve in that position. In

recognition of his service, the Grand Lodge purchased a memorial tree in his honor that was planted on the grounds of the Memorial.

Past Grand Master **Harry Spencer** achieved **75 years of proficiency**.

During the year, pins were presented in honor of years of membership: two for 80 years, 10 for **70 years**, 121 for **60 years** and 277 for **50 years**. Later in the year, Lawrence Mandelko, who received an 80-year pin, was presented the Gold Jordan Medal.

Twenty-nine **lodge secretaries** were recognized for submitting **reports** to the Grand Lodge office by the deadline. There were 155 lodges in the state.

A special award was presented to the **Secretary of the Year** for the first time. W.:B.: Arthur S. Dye, secretary of Mid-West Lodge No. 317, was selected by the office staff.

The first **Swisher Kit**, or lodge in a briefcase, was sent to W.:B.: Ritchie Inns, Past Master of **Cotner Lodge No. 297**, in **Afghanistan**. A special dispensation was granted to establish Swisher Lodge U.:D.: in Kabul. Other inquiries were made for additional Swisher Kits.

The Grand Master sent a letter to all lodges urging them to contribute to the **relief** of lodges in Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama and Texas that were hit by devastating **hurricanes** by sending donations to the Masonic Service Association. In addition, the Grand Lodge offered to send excess furnishings and paraphernalia to lodges needing them.

At the request of the **Grand York Rite** bodies, discussions were held with the Grand Lodge to explore the feasibility of moving the York Rite operations to the **Grand Lodge office**. It was decided the Grand Lodge office did not have enough office space, staff did not have additional time to handle the Grand York Rite's business and equipment was being efficiently utilized.

The **Potentates** of Nebraska's three **Shrine** centers were Past Masters. In recognition of their leadership and in the spirit of Masonic unity, each received a Past Master **apron** from the Grand Master. The Shrine emblem and year they served was embroidered on the bib and a Past Master's emblem was placed on the apron.

A resolution was proposed at the Imperial Session of the **Shrine** that would have eliminated the requirement of **Masonic membership** as a prerequisite to joining. While observing that the motion was soundly defeated, the Grand Master said that while Nebraska Masonic-related organizations work together well, it was "unfortunate that conditions exist in other states that would generate even the thought."

In honor of its 90th year, the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** published a **history** of the home containing articles about the facilities and thousands of children who lived there.

A site was cleared and construction begun on a **learning center** at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children**, and infrastructure was updated.

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services **licensed** the assisted living and nursing facility at **The Nebraska Masonic Home** in December 2005. The second step in the process was to have inspections completed of its nursing facility and **Alzheimer's Unit** in 2006. The necessary changes at the home to meet state requirements necessitated large increases in the annual **budget** that "will continue to be an annual burden to the organization."

2007

Scott J. Krieger, Sr., Grand Master

February 11, 2006 – February 10, 2007

As reported at the 150th Annual Communication

Two **forums** were held with the **Masters** and **Senior Wardens** of local lodges across the state to exchange ideas and answer questions in an informal atmosphere.

In the face of high **suspensions** of members for nonpayment of dues, an **Enrollment Program** was developed and presented at two workshops. The training encouraged lodges to provide mentors

for members. It focused on getting members committed to their lodge by explaining various aspects of Masonry through the degree work and for several months afterwards.

The newly **constructed** Education Center at the **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** served as a site for the Enrollment Program training.

After operating the Child Identification Program (**CHIP**) for about two years, 13,000 children in Nebraska had been identified thanks to Nebraska Freemasonry. A \$1 assessment on members passed at the previous Annual Communication allowed the hiring of a part-time CHIP coordinator.

To provide tax deductible donations for **CHIP**, work began on establishing the Nebraska Freemasons Child Identification Program **Foundation**.

The Grand Master commented that young men returning from the **Iraq war** said they were looking to continue the brotherhood they experienced overseas. That, along with recent popular books and movies mentioning the fraternity, prompted the Grand Master to urge that lodges conduct **membership** drives. "To those of you who say it's quality not quantity we are looking for in Masonry, I will agree," he said. "However, in order for you to attract quality members, you must make your lodge, philanthropic work and membership attractive to them."

The Grand Lodge officers performed the first section of the **Master's degree**, and Grand Lodge officers of **Prince Hall** performed the second section for four candidates at the Omaha Scottish Rite.

During the year, the Grand Lodge **saw** a gain in **membership** of 598 in the state and 1,042 losses. Deaths claimed 433 members while suspensions totaled 512, which were up by 85 from the previous year. Total membership at the end of the year was 14,396.

Before receiving a **diploma**, candidates completing a **One-Day Degree** were required by a Grand Master's recommendation passed at Annual Communication to return to their lodge and prove to the Master that he completed all questions in the Standard Proficiency Manuals.

On recommendation of the Grand Master, amendments were passed stating lodges considering consolidation or the **surrender** of their **charter** had to meet at least twice with the **Lodge Advisory Committee**.

Fifty-year pins were presented to 339 brethren, 60-year pins to 229 members and 70-year pins to seven Masons.

At the end of the year, 73 **lodges** were **certified** in the work with 10 nearing completion. Of that number, 24 lodges had been certified for more than 60 years. Eight **brothers** became **certified** in the work, including Deputy Grand Master **Dean Skokan**. Grand Master **Scott Krieger** achieved 20 years of certification.

The **Gold Jordan Medal** was presented to Past Grand Master **Harry Spencer** at the **Plattsmouth Masonic Home**. He celebrated 81 years as a Mason in 2006.

Cotner Lodge No. 297 in Lincoln was given permission to hold a meeting in the skyboxes overlooking Tom Osborne Field at **Memorial Stadium** at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to conduct Master Mason proficiency. The brother was a chaperone with the Masonic All-Star Marching Band. Brothers representing 17 lodges, including two Past Grand Masters and six Grand Lodge officers, attended the meeting. It is believed to be the first Masonic meeting held in Memorial Stadium.

The **Committee on Awards** expanded current awards and created others. The **Rock Maul Award** was divided into large and small lodge competitions. The **Grand Master's Leadership Award** included recognition for Masters whose lodges accomplish a statewide membership goal, and added the selection of one recipient as the Master of the Year. The **Nebraska Pillar Award** prescribed activities lodges must accomplish in order to earn recognition. Entry forms for the awards provided lodges with activity ideas to plan their year.

It was decided after the Nebraska Legislature passed a bill allowing citizens to carry **concealed weapons** that they would be banned in the **Grand Lodge office** and a sign was posted on the door.

At the **Conference of Grand Masters** in North America, Grand Master **Scott Krieger** was selected to serve a seven-year term on the **Commission on Information for Recognition**. The

commission decides the legitimacy of a Grand jurisdiction's request for recognition. He also served on the Planning Committee for the conference, and Deputy Grand Master **Dean Skokan** was appointed to the **Time and Place Committee** to select future conferences.

A recommendation from the Grand Master passed that required **Grand Lodge committees to meet** at least twice annually.

Grand Lodge law was changed to enable the **Committee on Masonic Relief** to conduct **fundraisers** to provide financing for the committee to help meet the needs of others.

Tabula Rasa Lodge No. 332 in Lincoln was approved at Annual Communication to receive a **charter**. It had been 35 years since a regular purpose lodge had been chartered in Nebraska.

A Grand Master's recommendation that passed allowed lodges with no permanent location to annually request permission for unlimited ability to **move** their **charter** to various locations within their city.

A new **Web site**, patterned after the Grand Lodge of California's site, was launched.

The Nebraska Masonic Home completed two years of preparation to comply with State of Nebraska rules and regulations of **licensure**. While noting that its ability to provide excellent care was not in question, the state licensed the home for both assisted living and nursing care.

Of the 92 **residents** at **The Nebraska Masonic Home**, 70 were women and 22 were men.

The **Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children** had 36 available beds, and 30 were occupied.

A fire destroyed **York Lodge No. 56** in York in October 2006.

Appendix

150 FAMOUS NEBRASKA MASONS Compiled by R.: W.: John T. Parsons, Grand Junior Warden

NAME	LODGE	REMARKS
Adams, Paul	Lebanon #3 (PHA)	Tuskegee Airman, Neb Aviation HOF
Aldrich, Charles H.	Canopy #209	Neb Gov
Anderson, Victor	G. Washington #250	Neb Gov, Lincoln Mayor
Ashburn, Richie	Mystic Tie #166	Baseball HOF
Alexander, Grover C.	St Paul #82	Baseball HOF
Bail, P. Milo	G.W. Lininger #268/Neb SR, 33	Business leader
Beam, C. Arlen	North Star #227/Neb SR, 33	Federal judge
Bekins, Frederick	G.W. Lininger #268	Businessman
Bible, Dana X.	Neb YR Mason	Athletic Dir, Texas
Borglum, Gutzon	New York lodge	Sculptor
Boslaugh, Paul E.	Hastings #50	Justice, Neb Supreme Court
Boyd, James E.	Capitol # 3	Neb Gov
Brodkey, Donald	St. Johns #25	Justice, Neb Supreme Court
Brown, Edward W.	Jewel #149	Major League Baseball Player
Brown, Norris	Rob Morris #46	US Senator, GL Grand Orator
Bryan, William Jennings	Lincoln #19	US Congress, Sec of State
Buffett, Howard	Covert #11/Neb SR, 33	US Congress
Burke, Edward R.	Omaha #288/Neb SR, 33	US Senator
Burkett, Elmer J.	Lincoln #19	US Congress, US Senate
Burney, Dwight W.	Hartington #155/Wausa #251	Neb Lt Gov, Unicameral
Butler, David	Pawnee #23	First Neb Gov
Butler, Hugh A.	St. Johns #25	US Senator
Callan, Clair A.	Wymore #104	US Congress
Carsten, Calvin F.	Euclid #97	Neb Unicameral
Carter, Edward F.	Scotts Bluff #201/Neb SR, 33	Chief Justice of Neb, Nuremberg Judge, GM
Chappell, Ellwood B.	Liberty #300	Neb Supreme Court
Chase, Jackson B.	G.W. Lininger #268	Judge, Congressman
Cochran, Robert L.	Gothenburg #249	Neb Gov, US Senator
Cody, William F.	Platte Valley #32	Indian Scout, MOH, Showman
Coffee, Harry B.	Samaritan #158	US Congress, 50-yr member
Cooperman, Harold	Omaha #288	Businessman
Copsey, Robert L.	Lincoln #19	MG, USAF
Curtis, Carl T.	Minden #127/Neb SR, 33	US Congress, US Senator
Daub, Hal	Nebraska #1/Neb SR, 33	US Congress, Omaha Mayor
Davidson, James E.	G.W. Lininger #268	Corporate director
Dean, James R.	Custer Lodge #148	Neb Supreme Court
Denney, Robert V.	Superior #121	US Congress
Dern, George H.	Utah lodge	Sec of War
Dietrich, Charles H.	Lancaster #54	Neb Gov, US Senator
Douglas, Paul	East Lincoln #210	Neb Attorney General
Durham, Charles	G.W. Lininger #268	Business leader

NAME	LODGE	REMARKS
Eberly, George A.	Northern Light #41	Neb Supreme Court
Elsasser, Albert W.	Covert #11	Neb Legislature
Eppley, Eugene C.	Ohio lodge	Aviation pioneer
Exon, J. James	Lincoln #19/Neb SR, 33	Neb Gov, US Senator
Flippin, George	True America #40 (PHA)	Neb football, Neb football HOF, physician
Ford, Gerald	Michigan lodge/SR, 33	US President
Ford, Stanley	G.W. Lininger #268	Lt Gen, USA
Furnas, Robert	Capitol #3/Brownville #4	Neb Gov, GM
Gooch, Herbert E.	Illinois lodge	Businessman, publisher
Good, Edward E.	Wahoo #59	Neb Supreme Court
Goss, Charles A.	Covert #11	Chief Justice of Neb
Green, J. Reid	Lancaster #54	Neb legislature
Griswold, Dwight F.	Arcana #195/Neb SR, 33	Neb Gov, US Senator
Haas, T.O.	Lincoln #19	Businessman
Harrington, Ralph E.	North Star #227	Businessman, Neb legislature, 50-yr member
Harris, Robert A.	Robert W. Furnas #265	Major League Baseball Player
Hastings, William C.	Newman Grove #305	Chief Justice of Neb
Havekost, John	Hooper #72	Neb Legislature
Hawkins, Frederick	G.W. Lininger #268	Businessman (construction)
Hitchcock, Phineas W.	Capitol #3	US Senator
Holderman, Nelson M.	California lodge	WWI Medal of Honor recipient
Howell, Edward E.	St. Johns #25	Neb football, E-W Shrine Game
Howell, Robert B.	Nebraska #1	US Senator
Hoover, Richard	Pennsylvania lodge/Neb SR, 33	College President
Hruska, Roman	Covert #11/Neb SR, 33	US Senator
Irish, Orsamus H.	Omadi #5	Publisher, business leader, GM
Izard, Mark W.	Capitol #3	Neb Territorial Governor
Jeffries, Albert W.	Nebraska #1	US Congress
Jordan, Robert	Capitol #3	First Grand Master
Kalber, Floyd M.	Centennial #326/Neb SR, 33	Newscaster
Karnes, David K.	G.W. Lininger #268/Neb SR, 33	US Senator
Kiewit, Peter	G.W. Lininger #268	Business leader
Laird, Melvin	Wisconsin lodge/Neb SR, 33	Congressman, Sec of Defense
Laughlin, Loren H.	Beatrice #26	Neb Legislature
Lee, Earl J.	Fremont # 15/Neb SR, 33	Speaker, Neb Unicameral, GM
Leeman, Charles W.	St. Johns #25	Omaha Mayor, Business leader
LeMay, Curtis E.	Ohio lodge/Neb SR, 33	Gen, CSAF, USAF
Lemmon, Clarence E.	Pomegranate #110	Church leader
Lininger, George W.	Capitol #3	Business leader, GM
Lloyd, Harold	California lodge	Movie star/producer
Manderson, Charles F.	Nebraska #1	US Senator
McCabe, Ira Emmett	Thistle #61	Aviation pioneer
McCollister, John Y.	Mizpah #302	US Congress
McKelvie, Samuel R.	Lincoln #19	Neb Gov
McLaughlin, Melvin O.	Bennett#94/Neb #1/York #56	US Congress, College pres
McMullen, Adam	Wymore #104	Neb Gov

NAME	LODGE	REMARKS
Messmore, Fred H.	Beatrice #26	Justice, Neb Supreme Court
Miller, Arthur L.	Kimball #294	US Congress
Mitchell, Clarence E.	Franklin #264	Major League Baseball Player
Morehead, John H.	Falls City #9	Neb Gov
Nance, Albinus	Osceola #65	Neb Gov
Neville, M. Keith	Platte Valley #32	Neb Gov, US Senator
Norris, George	Beaver City #93	US Congress, US Senator
Nunamaker, Les	Massachusetts lodge	Major League Baseball Player
Paddock, Algernon S.	Capitol #3	US Senator
Paxson, James M.	Mizpah #302	Business leader
Pershing, John	Lincoln #19/ Neb SR, 33	CG, US AEF WW I
Peterson, Val	Wayne #120	Neb Gov
Pound, Roscoe	Lancaster #54	Dean, Harvard Law School
Raecke, Walter	Lone Tree #36	State Senator, GM, WGP
Reavis, Charles F.	Falls City #9	US Congress
Reece, Charles S.	Minnekadusa #192	Neb Legislature
Reynolds, R. C. "Bobby"	Lincoln #19	Neb football, All-American, E-W Shrine Game
Reynolds, Samuel W.	G.W. Lininger #268/Neb Sr, 33	US Senator
Ricketts, Matthew O.	Excelsior #110 (PHA)	Neb Legislature (1 st Black), Dr, GM
Robinson, Richard E.	Covert #11	Federal judge
Rosenblatt, John	Omaha #288	Business leader
Rosewater, Charles C.	St. Johns #25/ Neb SR, 33	Newspaper/magazine publisher
Roskens, Ron	G.W. Lininger #268/ Neb SR, 33	President, U of Neb; Dir, Ag. for Int'l Devel.
Sarpy, Peter	Missouri lodge	Pioneer settler, fur trader
Savage, John S.	Covert #11	Photo journalist, Neb Unicameral
Seacrest, Joseph W.	Lincoln #19	Publisher, Business leader
Sears, Willis G.	Tekamah #31	US Congressman
Seaton, Frederick A.	Hastings #50	US Senator, Sec of the Interior
Schissler, Paul J.	Hastings #50	NFL Football Coach
Shallenberger, Ashton C.	Harlan #116	Neb Gov, US Congress
Sick, Theodore A.	Lancaster #54	Business leader
Simmons, Robert G.	Robert Furnas #265/ Neb SR, 33	US Congress, Ch Justice, Neb Supreme Court
Sloan, Charles H.	Geneva #79	US Congress
Smith, Fay	Purity #198	Doctor, GM
Sorensen, Alexander V.	Grand Island #318/St. Johns #25	Omaha Mayor
Spencer, Harry A.	Bee Hive #184/North Star #227/ Neb SR, 33	Neb Supreme Court, GM
Spire, Robert	G.W. Lininger #268	State Attorney General
Stark, Arthur R.	Fremont #15	Kansas State football, college coach
Stefan, Karl	Mosaic #55	US Congress
Swanson, Clarence	Lancaster #54	Neb football, All-American, College football HOF
Terry, Leland R., Sr.	Miloma #328	Newscaster
Thayer, John M.	Capitol #3	Neb Gov, US Senator, MG
Thomas, Augustus O.	St Paul #82	Educator

NAME	LODGE	REMARKS
Thompson, Arthur W.	York #56	Auctioneer, Neb HOF
Thone, Charles	Lincoln #19	Neb Governor
Thummel, George	Ashlar #33	State Senator, GM
Thurston, John M.	St. Johns #25	US Senator
Towl, Roy M.	Bee Hive #184	Omaha mayor, 50-yr member, Bronze Jordan Medal holder
Urbom, Warren	Craftsmen #314/ Neb SR, 33	Judge
Vance, Dazzy	Florida lodge	Major League Pitcher, Baseball HOF
Vermaas, John D.	Hickman #256/ Neb SR, 33	Businessman
Vrtiska, Floyd	Pawnee #23	Neb Unicameral
Warner, P. Jerome	Lancaster #54/ Neb SR, 33	Neb Unicameral
Weaver, Arthur J.	Falls City #9	Neb Gov
Weber, Del	G.W. Lininger #268/ Neb SR, 33	Chancellor, UNO
Webster, Harvey L.	Tekamah #31	Neb Legislature
Wehrbein, Roger	Plattsmouth #6	Neb Unicameral
Weir, Edwin S.	Superior #121	Neb football, All-American, College football HOF
Wenke, Adolph E.	Roman Eagle #203/Northern Light #41	Neb Supreme Court
Wherry, Kenneth	Pawnee #23	US Senator
Wilson, Howard S.	Lincoln #19/ Neb SR, 33	Insurance Co. President
Yeager, John W.	Mizpah #302	Justice, Neb Supreme Court
Zanuck, Darryl	California lodge	President, 20 th Century Fox