



The Masonic Messenger

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GRAND LODGE OF F&AM OF ALABAMA

FALL 2012



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THE ANNUAL SESSION of the Grand Lodge of Alabama is set for November, and the complete schedule of activities, prepared by our Grand Secretary may be found on Page 3.

THE ROOTS OF Freemasonry in south Alabama are revealed in an article by Bro. Wayne Sirmon on Page 3.

ALABAMA LODGE OF RESEARCH highlight Alabama Masonry's role in history. See Page 2.

THE GRAND MASTER reviews his activities and reflects on his year as the fraternity's top officer. See Page 3.

THE GRAND SECRETARY outlines some issues of concern on the Masonic Messenger and other topics. See Page 4.

Two Lodges Join To Rebuild After April 2011 Tornado

By **RON ANDRESS, PGM**
On April 27, 2011, a tornado came through Tuscaloosa and changed the

lives of many people. The members of Rising Virtue No. 4 and Von Bayer No. 699 were no exception. Both

lodges were destroyed in a matter of minutes and rebuilding has been very difficult. The City of Tuscaloosa took the opportunity to change and strengthen its building codes and requirements. After a 90-day moratorium, the city also implemented a green requirement because of the loss of so many trees and shrubs. As a result, some parking was lost to plant trees and shrubs.

Rising Virtue had an 11,000-sq.-ft. building on one level, but could not rebuild anywhere near that size and had to plan on a two-story building. Von Bayer could not rebuild on their lot due to not having enough space under the new requirements.

The brethren of both lodges realized the predicament and decided to merge and become one strong and vibrant lodge. (See TORNADO on Page 2)



Rising Virtue Lodge No. 4 After Tornado

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GRAND LODGE OF F&AM OF ALABAMA

Alabama Lodge Of Research Is Recording, Preserving Masonic History In Alabama

By LARRY W. STINSON, PGM

On August 30, 2010, the Grand Lodge of Alabama issued a warrant to allow the Alabama Lodge of Research to begin working.

The purpose of ALOR is to collect and preserve the history of Alabama Freemasonry. This is to be done, for the most part, in digital format. To this end, we have started converting the Alabama Grand Lodge Proceedings, papers, books and other Masonic publications to searchable Adobe PDF format. We are also collecting infor-

mation from various sources to assist in researching our history, our lodges and our members.

The members are collecting information on their lodges and other lodges in their area to compile a history of them. This is also being done for outstanding members of the fraternity.

If anyone has a history of their lodge, lodge member, or information on the lodges that exist or have existed in their county or area, and would be willing to share it with the Lodge

of Research, we would welcome any and all contributions.

One outstanding Mason was a member of my lodge, Eureka 64. His name was James C. Batchelor, and he joined in 1846. He left Alabama and distinguished himself in the Yellow Fever Epidemic in New Orleans in 1850. He was a member of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana in 1867 and was elected Grand Secretary of Louisiana in 1891.

When Albert Pike passed away, Brother Batchelor succeeded him as the ninth Grand Commander of the Supreme Council. Alabama has had Two Grand Commanders of the Supreme Council, the other being Brother George F. Moore (the 13th).

One of our Past Grand Masters has his final resting place in Brazil. Colonel William Hutchison Norris, PGM, and a reported 154 families emigrated to Brazil and founded a city of 170,000, "Americana".

Among other things he and his Brethren founded was the George Washington Lodge in their village.

What did these remarkable Masons bring to Brazil? They brought watermelons for one thing, grown from their American seed. Watermelons became so popular that as many as 100 railroad carloads a day were shipped from Americana by the late 1800s. The Confederate Masonic families had no trouble raising meat, vegetables and fruit to feed their families. More of this Story can be found at <http://204.3.136.66/council/journal/jun01/klein.html>.

If you travel U.S. Hwy, 84 from I-65 toward Mississippi, west of Monroeville on the south side of the highway you will see the oldest build-

ing in Monroe County. Behind it you will see the restored and relocated home of William Barrett Travis, an Alabama Mason. His fame, however, is not associated with Alabama, but a small mission in Texas called the Alamo. The building in front of Travis' home is a building erected in 1824 from the proceeds of a public lottery. The lower floor served as a church and a courtroom. The upper floor was Perdue Hill Masonic Lodge No. 3. This was the Lodge General Lafayette visited on April 6, 1825.

Alabama has a rich and colorful history which deserves to be preserved and shared with posterity. The Alabama Lodge of Research, with your help, intends to do just that.

Membership in the Lodge of Research is open to all regular Masons. If you would like to join, submit papers, or donate to the Alabama Lodge of Research, you may reach them on the web at <http://alabamalodgeofresearch.org>. The website has a public portion where some articles and videos are available.

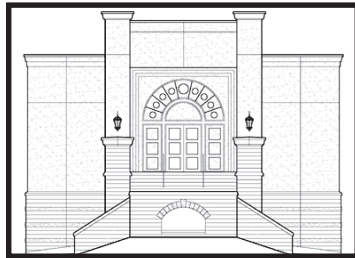
TORNADO

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able lodge.

An architect was hired, and construction companies interviewed. The rebuilding process started with members from both of the merged lodges on the building committee. A cornerstone was laid in October of 2011.

After months of waiting, and approaching one year from the destruction of the lodges, it was decided to change architects and try again.

This time, it seems that we had a good match with the architect and construction company. Ground was broken, and now the slab for the first floor has been poured. The new building will have 7,500 sq. ft., with the lodge room on the second floor. The lodge has been designed with our older members and the handicapped in mind. There will be an elevator to



Front Elevation Of New Lodge

help those who do not, or cannot climb stairs. The occupancy date is set for Dec. 21. This new building will be a very special Christmas present for the brethren.

The brethren of Rising Virtue No.4 want to thank the members of J. Collier Foster Lodge No. 906 and Moundville No. 123 for their support during this time of rebuilding.



Von Bayer Lodge Also Destroyed in Storm



Marker At Entrance To Americana



Restored Travis Home In Monroe County

The Masonic Messenger

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*Please send all changes of address
and membership status to your
lodge secretary.*

Grand Master Reflects On Year Of Service To Alabama Masons

By C. Sterling Hughes
Grand Master

"The hour glass is an emblem of human life, behold how swiftly the sands run." It doesn't seem possible that our Masonic year is almost completed. It was only yesterday that I was being installed as your Grand Master for the ensuing year, yet our annual Communication is again rapidly approaching.

It has been a very active year for Shirley and me. We have had the good fortune to visit many of the Lodges throughout Alabama and several of the surrounding Grand Jurisdictions. Wherever Shirley and I have traveled, we have always been welcomed and received with courtesy and kindness.

Our Annual Communication will be at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Montgomery on Nov. 12, 13 and 14. The issues that are discussed and voted on will affect our fraternity, not only for the ensuing year, but the years to follow. I encourage each of you to get involved, put forth the extra effort to attend and participate in your Grand Lodge. Let this be your year to make a difference.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to all

of those who have given me their encouragement and support this year. It has meant a lot knowing that the brethren of this Grand Lodge were there when I needed them. It has been a great honor for me to serve as your Grand Master, and I can tell you from experience, Freemasonry is alive and well in the great state of Alabama. God bless and I look forward to seeing you at Grand Lodge.



MWGM Sterling Hughes

Schedule For Alabama Grand Lodge Meeting

By JERRY M. UNDERWOOD, PGM
GRAND SECRETARY

The annual meeting of the Grand Lodge is coming up Nov. 13-14 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in downtown Montgomery. If you have never attended the Annual Grand Lodge Communication, you should consider doing so. If you are not a Lodge Officer with Grand Lodge credentials, you can be seated as a non-voting Master Mason.

You can bring a paid Lodge dues card and present it to the Credentials Committee on arrival. The Communication activities actually begin on Sunday, Nov. 11. All activities take place in the Embassy Ballroom of the Embassy Suites Hotel.

A brief overview of the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge is as follows:

Sunday, Nov. 11

- 2:00 p.m. Committee on Work Practice of the Third Degree
- 5:00 p.m. Religious Worship Service

Monday, Nov. 12

- 9:00 a.m. Committee on Work Exemplification of the Alabama Masonic Degree Rituals
- 7:00 p.m.: Grand Lodge Banquet

Tuesday, Nov. 13

- 9 a.m. Opening of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of F&AM of Alabama
- First Session Business
- Lunch
- Second Session Business
- 5:00 p.m.: From Labor to Rest for the day

Wednesday, Nov. 14

- 8 a.m. From Rest to Labor
- Third Session Business
- Election of Officers
- Installation of Officers
- Closing of the 2012 Grand Lodge Annual Communication

Bro. Sirmon Presents Historic Roots Of Freemasonry In South Alabama

By WAYNE E SIRMON, PM
Mobile Masonic Lodge No. 40

Grand Representative of Texas near Alabama

(AUTHOR'S NOTE: This article is based on a longer presentation at the New Orleans Scottish Rite History and Research Symposium held in June, 2011.)

From the earliest days of the French efforts to colonize the central gulf coast, Mobile has played a critical role in the development of the region.

Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville was commissioned by France to "reconnoiter the mouth of the Mississippi and fortify the entrance to it."

In the fall of 1701 he directed his brother, Jean Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, to establish Mobile. Initially established as an Indian trading post at Twenty-seven Mile Bluff in 1702, Mobile was literally moved downstream to its present location in 1711, when the small French settlement disassembled the buildings and had the timbers conveyed by floats down the river where the buildings were reassembled on the lots laid out around Fort Louis.

The early days of Freemasonry on the Central Gulf Coast are a complex story. By 1812, Louisiana had seven lodges bearing allegiance to three Grand Lodges. As statehood became a reality, Perfect Union Lodge drew together representatives of these lodges to consider the creation of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana.

Five Lodges joined in this effort resulting in the establishment of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana on June 20, 1812.

A group of Masons residing in Mobile received a charter from the newly formed Grand Lodge of Louisiana, and on September 4, 1813, Friendship Lodge No. 6 began its labors. The initial officers were James Lyon as Wor-

shipful Master, S. H. Garrow as Senior Warden and Charles Stewart as Junior Warden. Lyon published the first newspaper in Mobile, The Mobile Gazette.

Samuel Garrow would serve as Mayor from 1824-27 and 1829-31. Since Garrow moved to Mobile from New Orleans, where he "commanded one of the gunboats at the battle of New Orleans," the current assumption is that his Masonic connections in that city led to the request for a charter from Louisiana to create Friendship Lodge.

The Mobile Gazette printed several items of a Masonic nature during 1819. The first is a notice of a funeral which included "Masonic honors." Another was the announcement of the celebration of St. John the Baptist which was to convene on June 24, 1819. This Lodge forfeited its charter on March 17, 1820, under unknown circumstances.

The second lodge in coastal Alabama to receive a Louisiana charter was Eureka Lodge No. 16. Chartered on July 12, 1819, this Lodge was located at Blakeley, which was at the time a rapidly growing port on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay. The third and final of Alabama's Louisiana Lodges received her charter on July 12, 1821.

Mobile Lodge No. 22 was to be established in what was soon to become the state of Alabama. Very little is known about this lodge, and it is not even mentioned in the Street or Jackson histories of Freemasonry in Alabama. Jordon's history of Louisiana Freemasonry, "Let There Be Light," only states that "... on July 12, 1821, Mobile No. 22 was chartered at Mobile. Eureka No. 16 became extinct while Mobile No. 22 forfeited its charter."

While several Masons from Mobile attended the June 11, 1821, convention which established the Grand Lodge of Alabama, they did not possess a

(See HISTORY on Page 4)

From The Desk Of The Grand Secretary—

There Are Some Issues Facing Our Fraternity

JERRY M. UNDERWOOD, PGM
Grand Secretary

Brethren, this will be the second publication of the Masonic Messenger, and as the previous first publication, will also be distributed to the entire Alabama Membership.

I would like to take the full membership distribution opportunity to mention particular issues of concern.

There is some thought as to the need or desire for the Masonic Messenger publication to be distributed to the total membership by mass mailing, or be made available electronically due to the cost.

The cost of the previous first publication was \$6,528.00 for a distribu-

tion of 27,200 copies mailed. Some of the Brethren didn't receive their copy of the first mailing of the Masonic Messenger. This brings to mind the issue of addresses.

There were 1,640 bad addresses corrected by the postal service. There were approximately 200 returned that could not be delivered.

There were numerous member records with no address. Please be sure your Lodge Secretary has your current address.

As most of you may know, the Grand Lodge established a Perpetual Membership Program several years back (Masonic Code Edict 18.4).

HISTORY

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valid lodge charter. This condition was quickly addressed when a dispensation was granted on October 17, 1821, and the charter of Mobile Lodge No. 10 was issued on December 19, 1921, during Alabama's first Grand Lodge Communication. Therefore, Mobile became the location of the first Lodge charters issued by the Grand Lodges of Louisiana and Alabama.

Mobile Lodge No. 10 is listed in the current Proceeding of the Grand Lodge as forfeiting its charter in 1831. However, the Proceedings of 1829 state "Mobile Lodge No. 10 (Charter Forfeited)." Mobile Lodge, along with nine other lodges "having failed to make returns, pay their dues and be represented at the present communication, were reported by the Grand Secretary as delinquent." In accordance with the requirements of the Grand Lodge constitution, these lodges forfeited their charters. The next year the Grand Secretary reported collecting \$58.68 from Mobile Lodge No. 10. Mobile Lodge was again reported as being delinquent in 1831. No Grand Lodge communications were held in 1834 and 1835 and the Grand Lodge was reorganized in 1836. Shortly after that meeting the Masons of Mobile began to seek a new charter. Dispensation was granted by Grand Master John C. Hicks and a charter as "Mobile Lodge No. 40" was issued on December 5, 1838. Eight years later, Howard Lodge No. 69 became the second Lodge in Mobile County to be chartered. The nineteenth century would see four more charters issued within Mobile County, but the rapid growth of Mobile during the first half of the twentieth century led to issuing of twenty new charters. The tens of thousands of men who have passed through the inner door of a Mobile lodge can trace their Masonic roots back 200 years to a small group of Masons who met as Friendship Lodge.

— Child I.D. Program Needs Expansion —

By **JOHN R. STRICKLING**
Junior Grand Warden

While visiting Lodges earlier this year, I have had the opportunity to talk to the brethren about issues facing our fraternity. The topics that I addressed were membership involvement and civic or community projects outside of the lodge.

A specific project that all the Lodges could participate in was needed. A project that provided good exposure, affected large numbers of people (preferably children or young adults), and that would be enjoyable and rewarding to our brethren.

Your Grand Lodge has such a project; its name is the Child Identification Program. This program has been around in some form for approximately 10 years.

It has been used in some parts of the state and has been virtually unheard of in others. It is a terrific program and meets all the criteria of a great community project.

It collects all the personal data for a child or young adult, including their photographs and fingerprints. The information is given to the parent or guardian. We do not retain any of the information, and it is free.

If we are able to save the life of one child, it is worth all the effort and expense. What greater gift can we give a community than that of helping parents and children?

Let me show you the possibilities compared to our sister state of Georgia. The Grand Lodge of Georgia currently has 70 ID kits with the goal of having 120 total. Alabama currently has 10 ID kits and two of those were recently purchased.

Georgia has identified in excess of 70,000 children. Alabama Lodges only used our ID kits eleven times in 2011. We are in the process of "gearing" up this program so that we can attain Georgia's success. We now have color flyers for this project and

If you know you have purchased and paid for a Grand Lodge Perpetual Membership and have not received a certificate and pocket card (Masonic Code Edict 18.4C) certifying your membership, please contact your Lodge Secretary immediately.

Please be sure of your life membership program. Many Lodges have their own life membership programs independent of the Grand Lodge Perpetual program.

There is some confusion about the various life memberships.

If you are a dual member (membership in two Lodges) in Alabama, you fail to pay dues in either Lodge, and

the Lodge suspends you for non-payment dues, you are a suspended Mason in both of your Lodges.

Masonic Code Edict 17.20 states that "Any matter that affects membership in either Lodge will likewise affect membership in both."

This also applies if one of your Lodges is in another Grand Jurisdiction. Non-payment of dues to one of the dual member Lodges is not the proper procedure for membership withdrawal.

A member who is suspended for any reason, or expelled from Masonry, is not entitled to a Masonic burial (Masonic Code Edicts 19.9 and 19.10).

information featured on the Grand Lodge website.

We have passed out some flyers in the Decatur area to local law enforcement and schools. We have since been contacted by one of the schools systems inquiring if we could do the program in their schools.

These kits can be utilized by every Lodge in the state at any civic func-

tion, county fair or school. This program offers a great opportunity for our Lodges to have positive exposure in their communities and to help save children.

Best of all, brethren, this is just one program your Lodge can do to be relevant in your community. The possibilities are endless.

Mortality And Immortality

By **REV. RICHARD R. LOSCH, 33°**
Past Grand Chaplain

As Entered Apprentices we were reminded of our mortality when we were admonished that "from it [the earth] we came, and unto it we must shortly return." As Fellowcrafts we confronted it again when we were informed that "the level [is] to remind us that we are traveling upon the level of time to 'that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns.'" This passage is from Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy, in which he contemplates the futility of a life without purpose or honor.

Finally, as Master Masons, "we doubt not but in the glorious morning of the resurrection our bodies will be raised and become as incorruptible as our souls." Thus, we were taught that death is not the end, but that a virtuous life and honorable death will be rewarded with salvation and immortality of the body and soul.

Death has been called "the great leveler," because regardless of who we are or what we have accomplished in our earthly life, death makes us all equal at the end.

Ecclesiastes said, "As it happeneth to the fool, so happeneth it even to me." In one thing, however, we are not all equal; we differ in the choices we make, and the way we live our lives. Some choose honor and virtue, and some choose "a lesser object, and are content with a lower flight."

Masonry will not cause us to make the right choices, but it will give us all the tools and the support we need to do so. As it has been often said, Masonry does not make bad men good, it makes good men better.

Not long ago a young Entered Apprentice told me that what he finds most exciting about Masonry is that it gives him a higher standard to live by. That young man truly understands what Masonry is all about.

The theme of mortality threads its way to the highest degrees of the Scottish and York rites. This is not because Masonry is a morbid fraternity, but because it is a joyful one.

The joy is that we are taught to make the choices that can help us become virtuous and honorable men, and as such we need have no fear of death.

Death, more than any other single thing, has terrified mankind from the very beginning. One of the greatest gifts of God is the promise that those who are true to Him have no need to fear their mortality.

As Masons we are taught to fear falsehood and dishonor far more than death, and to recognize that our mortality is nothing more than the inner door to the Celestial Lodge above, where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides.