

Down Through the Years



Hope Lodge No. 150

F. & A. M.

Hope : Indiana

came the first Post Commander of Charles Porter Post No. 469, G.A.R. As has been mentioned he demitted in 1877 to become the first Master of Hartsville Lodge No. 547. He returned to Hope Lodge in 1880 and continued an invaluable member for the remainder of his life. Besides holding most of the other offices he was Master nine times and Trustee for at least sixteen years. His only son, Herman S. Miller, had an equally distinguished Masonic record. During his fifty-three years as a Mason there were only six scattered years when he was not an officer of his Lodge. He is the only son of a former Master ever to be elected to that office. His eleven terms as Master and twenty-nine years as Trustee are both records for Hope Lodge. His work as Master in 1909 included the many activities connected with the erection of the new Temple. He also gave the Masonic burial service many times both in his own and other Lodges. Both father and son were successful cabinet makers and contractors and the latter served as postmaster of Hope. Mrs. Pearl Aspy, daughter of John A. Miller, is the only person who has held membership in both the Mizpah and Esther Chapters, O.E.S. Four of John A. Miller's brothers—William Simeon, Charles Van, Levin O., and James A.—have also been members of Hope Lodge and one of them, Levin O. Miller, was Secretary for twenty-three years from 1898 through 1920, longer than any other Secretary.

Other local Masonic relatives of Brother Miller include one grandson, five nephews, seven great-nephews, and one great-great-nephew. The latter, Merrill J. Clouse, was Master in 1950 while two of the great-nephews have also headed the Lodge, Verl R. Clouse in 1935, and Eugene A. Norman in 1937. The grandson, Dr. John A. M. Aspy, was a prominent Indianapolis physician before his death in 1945.

Fifty-Year Members

It seems fitting to include in this discussion special reference to those men to whom the privilege was given to enjoy fifty years of Masonic fellowship. So far as can be determined from our records, they are:

*Lewis Marshall Blades.....	60	years	6	mos.	(to Apr. 1953)
Dennis Cook Hopkins.....	59	"	8	"	1 day
John Thomas Blades.....	55	"	10	"	29 days
Thomas Jefferson Essex.....	55	"	4	"	10 days
Dr. Lewis DeWitte Reed.....	54	"	11	"	16 days
George Washington Kemp.....	54	"	9	"	17 days
*Edward James Seward.....	54	"	1	"	(to Apr. 1953)
William Prescott Kennedy.....	52	"	9	"	25 days
Thomas Edward Reed.....	52	"	8	"	18 days
Franklin Frederick Neligh.....	52	"	8	"	
Herman Sylvester Miller.....	52	"	5	"	10 days
Lewis Dillman.....	50	"	8	"	23 days
John Henry Kluge.....	50	"	6	"	15 days
Thomas Moore Vinnedge.....	50	"	5	"	13 days

Some have been spared into the fiftieth year:

Clinton Ellsworth Marlin.....	49	years	11	months	16 days
Clinton Kiff McDermond.....	49	"	6	"	22 "
Dr. Eugene George Regennes.....	49	"	6	"	6 "
*Ormand Hayes Woodard.....	49				(50 yrs. Aug. 8, 1953)

The three Brethren whose names are starred are still with us and we pray that they may be for years to come. It is entirely possible that there are others among those whose original Masonic membership we have not been able to locate. Among such possibilities are James Styers, George Couchman Moore, Dr. William James Norton, and John Wesley Cook. Brother John T. Blades' record includes only the time after he affiliated with Hartsville Lodge by demit on March 1, 1890. Several of the men in this list were out of the Lodge for short periods. The Masonic life span of Brothers Kemp, Essex, L. D. Reed, and Hopkins covered sixty-four, sixty-three, sixty-one, and sixty years respectively.

Space does not permit more than a mention of these fine men. Brother Kemp, who died in 1938 on his eighty-seventh birthday, was for many years chairman of the Cemetery Committee of the Moravian Church. Brother Essex, who was raised in the now defunct Taylorsville

OUR LIVING FIFTY-YEAR MEMBERS



LEWIS M. BLADES
Age 96
Raised October, 1892



EDWARD J. SEWARD
Age 84
Raised March, 1899

Lodge No. 238, carried his membership with him, first to Camon Lodge at Clifford, then to Saqui No. 160 at Osborne, Kansas, and finally to Hope. He was the grandfather of six more recent members of Hope Lodge—Past Masters Homer Essex and Wallace Ray, and Brothers Joseph, Leonard, and George Essex, and Harry Harker. Three other grandsons and several great-grandsons belong elsewhere. Brother Hopkins, a successful farmer, was a trustee of the Methodist Church at the time the present church was erected in 1887. Dr. L. D. Reed and Thomas E. Reed were brothers. The latter had a grocery on the south side of the Hope town square; he served six terms in the subordinate offices of the Lodge. This last was true also of Brother Vinnedge who was one of Indiana's best and most widely known auctioneers. Brother Kennedy was the husband of Mrs. Alice Vogler Kennedy, a Past Worthy Grand Matron of the Indiana Grand Chapter of the Eastern Star. Brother McDermond, a Hope grocer for many years, was one of the writer's sponsors in Masonry. No man ever gave a truer expression to the principles of Freemasonry in his personal and professional life. The other men in this group have been or will be mentioned in other connections.

Most of our fifty-year members lived before the Grand Lodge began making its Award of Gold to such Brethren. Five, however, have received this Award: Brothers Lewis Blades, John T. Blades, L. D. Reed, Seward, and Kennedy. At least four men raised in Hope Lodge have received the Grand Lodge Award elsewhere. William E. Vogler received it in Edinburg Lodge No. 100 and John H. Albright in Mystic Tie Lodge No. 398 of Indianapolis. The presentation was made to Leroy E. Snyder in Evergreen Lodge No. 713, also of Indianapolis, in 1945, sixty-seven years after he was raised in Hope Lodge. Albert A. Neligh, who was Master of Hope Lodge in 1908, received the Award in Loogootee Lodge No. 626 shortly before his death in 1944. He was Master of Loogootee Lodge at that time. This occasion was made particularly happy by the presence of Brother Neligh's son, Lieutenant Robert Neligh who flew home for the ceremony. Lieutenant Neligh escorted his father to the altar where the actual presentation was made by Brother Dwight L. Smith, then Deputy Grand Master and a close friend of the honored guest.

An interesting and unusual situation is that the only men to be made Master Masons at Hope in 1887—Brothers

Vinnedge, Vogler, L. D. Reed, and Albright—all experienced more than a half century of Masonic fellowship.

Brother Lewis M. Blades who has already established the record for uninterrupted consecutive service in Hope Lodge is one of the most respected and best loved men in this and the neighboring Flat Rock community where he has lived for many years. He was born March 15, 1857, and at this writing has passed his ninety-fifth birthday. On that occasion the Lodge presented him with a birthday cake decorated with the Masonic emblem. He received the Grand Lodge Award of Gold in 1944 and it was this writer's privilege to make the presentation. He served two terms as Master, in 1898 and 1899.

Unusual Circumstances

At the other extreme from the experience of Brother Blades is that of John Michelborough who was a member of the Lodge for only one month, from September 30 to October 30, 1884. The petition of this Brother, who came and left by demit, states that he was principal of the Hope Normal School and Business College. The shortest membership terminated by death was that of Floyd Robertson, from June 14 to October 3, 1918.

The oldest man ever raised in Hope Lodge was Brother Charles A. Rominger whose age was sixty-four years, ten months, fifteen days when he received the Master Mason degree. The youngest was Charles Roscoe Haymond who was initiated on his twenty-first birthday and received the Master Mason degree just eighteen days later, October 3, 1911.

The longest interval between the first and second degrees was ended in 1876 when Thomas H. Applegate was granted permission to continue the work seventeen years after he had been initiated. In 1924 John R. Sator had a similar experience when he took the second degree thirteen years after he had had the first. On twelve occasions emergencies have been declared and candidates permitted to take more than one degree the same evening. The longest period without work began November 23, 1893, and continued for three and one-half years until March 6, 1897. Until 1905 there had never been more than eight men raised in any one year. Sixteen were raised in that year but that number was not equalled until the war

years of 1918 and 1919. The largest number since then was fifteen in 1946. The all-time average number of new Masons per year in Hope Lodge has been slightly less than five but there have been almost twice as many during the last fifty years as during the first fifty.

The Officers

The Lodge owes a great deal to the men who have served in official capacities down through the years. At least two hundred forty-three, more than one-third the total membership, have served at least one term in some office. The centennial Worshipful Master, Brother Robert A. May, is the fifty-eighth man to hold that office. He is also the first grandson of a former Master ever to be elected to that office. His grandfather, Brother Arthur May, was Worshipful Master in 1913.

Some interesting changes in custom have taken place. In the eighty-one elections held prior to 1930, Past or incumbent Masters were elected forty-seven times, in more than fifty per cent of the elections. Since 1930 there have been twenty-five elections; no Past Master has been returned to office and only once has there been a re-election. Another change involves the policy of advancing men through both Wardens' stations to the Master's Chair. The first such regular advancement took place when George M. Trotter, Junior Warden in 1858 and Senior Warden in 1859, became Worshipful Master in 1860. This did not happen again for thirty years and then the man involved, Herman S. Miller, had already been Master six times when he became Junior Warden in 1898. This policy of regular advancement was followed three times between 1900 and 1930—in the cases of John A. Moore, Frank I. Rominger, and Rommie K. Ferry—but since that time eleven of the twenty-three Masters have served as Wardens during the two years immediately preceding their service in the East.

The following list shows the record for longevity in each office:

Worshipful Master.....	Herman Sylvester Miller.....	eleven years
Senior Warden.....	Lewis Dillman.....	nine
Junior Warden.....	Lewis Dillman.....	five
Secretary	Levin Owen Miller.....	twenty-three
Treasurer	John Austin Moore.....	twenty-one

Senior Deacon.....	Jesse Bennett Miller.....	fourteen
Junior Deacon.....	William T. Hinshaw.....	seven
Tyler	Daniel W. Pangborn.....	fourteen
Steward	George William Bruner.....	eight
	Levi Ketner.....	eight
Chaplain	Mignon Boaz.....	ten
Trustee	Herman Sylvester Miller.....	twenty-nine

None of these periods of service were consecutive except those of the Secretary and the Treasurer. Brother Lewis Dillman was also Master four times. Twenty-two years after he had completed a two-year term in 1880, he was elected again in 1902 and then re-elected for 1903. Forty-nine years intervened between his service as Junior Deacon in 1865 and the last of his ten terms as Trustee in 1914. Brother John A. Moore, in addition to his long service as Treasurer, was Master in 1905 and 1906. His Masonic membership lasted almost forty-nine years until his death in 1948.

Edward T. Porter holds the record for continuous time in office. Except for five months in 1867, he was in office from 1864 through 1894. During those five months he was out of the Lodge and community and on his return the Lodge voted to return his reinstatement fee "for faithful services to and services rendered the Lodge." Brother Porter was a member of the first Board of Town Trustees of Hope elected in 1859. He was Master of the Lodge nine times, his five-year tenure from 1868 through 1872 being the longest in the Lodge's history. He also served in various other offices including almost twenty years as Secretary. Brother Porter, who was a Hope druggist for many years, was the great-grandfather of Brother U. R. Fishel, Jr., and of the wife of Brother Raymond McKee.

Another prominent Mason affiliated with Hope Lodge the same year Brother Porter was raised, 1863, John Henry Kluge was at that time a Past Master of Lebanon Lodge No. 226 in Pennsylvania where he had been raised May 5, 1848. Brother Kluge was born near the present city of Anderson, Indiana, December 31, 1805, the son of a Moravian missionary to the Delaware Indians. He grew up in North Carolina and Pennsylvania, taught in the Nazareth Hall School for Boys in Pennsylvania, served as the first County Superintendent of Schools in Lebanon County of that State, and came to Hope in January, 1859, to become

principal of the new Moravian Day School which was a forerunner of the widely-known Young Women's Seminary.¹¹ This school was located in a new two-story brick building located on a campus across the street from the present Moravian Chapel. Brother Kluge was Secretary of Hope Lodge from 1863 through 1865 and was Chaplain in 1884 and 1885. He died November 20, 1898, at the age of ninety-two. His gravestone in the Moravian Cemetery bears the inscription, "First White Child Born in Indiana," a distinction which probably belongs to some child at Vincennes. As a matter of fact his father's diary reveals that John Henry was the third child born in the Kluge family while they were at the White River Mission.¹²

Louis Schmidlapp was another officer of great zeal for the Fraternity. He was in office practically all the time he was a member from 1860 to 1865. He was serving for the second time as Master when he demitted and moved to Warrensburg, Missouri. He was a son of Caleb Schmidlapp who had served as Deputy Grand Master for Indiana in 1846 and who was the great-grandfather of Mrs. Lola Mullendore, daughter of Past Master Jesse Bennett Miller and widow of Brother Jerome C. Mullendore. Caleb Schmidlapp came to America as a youth from Germany and while still on shipboard met a young German girl who later became his wife. Mrs. Mullendore recalls hearing her grandmother recall with pride that the latter's father "sat in the East with Lafayette." After Louis Schmidlapp went to Warrensburg, he became a charter member and the first Worshipful Master of Warrensburg Lodge No. 135 in 1866.

Interesting Members

The roster of the Lodge contains many other names about which there was much interest. John Callahan, a member in 1859-1865, had served with Company H, Fourth Ohio Volunteer Infantry throughout the Mexican War. In later years he was a prominent citizen of Columbus and served as County Recorder. Another county official was Isaiah B. Barrett, a member from 1859 until his death in 1898; he was Auditor at that time. Rev. William Mont-

¹¹This Seminary was operated by the Moravian Church (at large) from 1866 until 1881 and was attended by several hundred young women who received instruction in both cultural and practical arts. Prof. Francis R. Holland was principal during most of this time.

¹²See Gipson: "Moravian Indian Missions on White River" in the Indiana Historical Collections XXIII.

gomery, a Methodist circuit rider who belonged to the Lodge just before the Civil War was a native of Ireland and the father of Rev. James Shera Montgomery, for many years Chaplain of the United States House of Representatives. Rev. Samuel G. Longdon, another man who was a member while serving the local Methodist Church, was the father of Dr. Henry B. Longdon, once Vice-President of DePauw University. Turning for the moment to the more mundane realm of sport and earning one's daily "meat," Peter Fry, a member in 1871-1800, is identified in an old county directory as "one of the oldest settlers and hunters, having killed fifteen hundred squirrels in two weeks."

Major William T. Strickland, already mentioned as the first Master at Elizabethtown under the charter and as the representative of the Grand Lodge in instituting the Lodge at Hartsville, belonged at Hope from 1876 to 1879. He had already been Superintendent of the Decatur County Schools and had served in the General Assembly. While at Hope he taught school but he later became a prominent Columbus attorney and still later a prosperous farmer. The records show that he assisted the Lodge many times in legal matters and that he also returned to Hope on several occasions to conduct Masonic funerals.

Wesley M. Robbins, a Mason for forty-five years, is probably the only man who at various times belonged to the four neighboring Lodges—Elizabethtown, Hartsville, Farmers, and Hope. He was a charter member at Hartsville and their Worshipful Master in 1880 and 1881. He is the only Mason in the well-known photograph which has been published frequently under the caption, "Ten Hope Pioneers." F. Marion Stewart and Freeman Harker were prominent farmers and brothers-in-law who together served over twenty-one years in the office of Treasurer between 1896 and 1916. The latter died while holding the office. It is difficult to appraise the work of the less active members but certainly the men of the Masonic Lodge down through the years have been loyal to the Fraternity and responsible citizens of the community.

On January 1, 1953, there were two hundred ten members. In addition to our two fifty-year members, Brothers Blades and Seward, and Brother Woodard, who will attain that record in the Centennial year. Hope Lodge has seven-

teen members who have proudly worn the Square and Compass for more than forty years: Dr. Roy C. Lorts, Frank Klipsch, Carl W. Norman, J. Edward Dalmbert, Elmer Billman, L. Marshall Vogler, Ralph A. Chitty, Roscoe H. Martin, Earl C. Wasson, P.M., Walter L. Rominger, Martin Essex, Horace G. Weinland, Dick C. Buell, Raleigh E. Robertson, James Downey, William C. Kissling, and George A. Spotts. Two others, Ora W. Robertson and J. Delbert Ridgley, P.M., will attain this standing in 1953. For some time the ritualistic work was carried largely by Brothers Eida J. Clouse, Master in 1925, and Harmon S. Dixon, Master in 1933. More recently, however, a number of the younger Brethren have become proficient in this phase of Masonry. Brother Dixon, who has also served as Secretary, Chaplain, and Trustee for long periods, has performed a great service for many small Lodges through his co-operation in providing the stereoptican and slides for the lectures. Many of our members live in other parts of the country, from New York to California and from North Dakota to Georgia; some are for the present in military service in foreign lands. They represent countless trades and professions and many have achieved positions of responsibility in civic and professional life.

The By-Laws have been revised twice during the twentieth century. In 1922 a new set called for dues of four dollars per year and an initiation fee of forty dollars. By amendment the dues were later increased to five dollars and the fee reduced to thirty dollars. The purpose of the second revision in 1949 was to provide the Lodge with the model By-Laws suggested by the Grand Lodge, with minor variations, of course, to fit local needs.

Social Events

Down through the years the Lodge has found frequent opportunity for festive occasions or "sociables" as they were usually called in the minutes. On December 20, 1870, "it being a pleasant evening there was a good turnout and 1st was music and singing by some of the Ladies and then the newly elected officers took their seats and were installed by Bro. T. W. Jones (pastor of the M. E. Church), after which he made a few brief remarks in regard to Masonry and then some refreshments were passed around. Also singing and music by some of the Ladies after which the audience retired." Numerous affairs are similarly de-

scribed in the minutes. On November 1, 1881, arrangements were made to purchase "three dozen tin cups, lapboards, sugar bowls, and teaspoons for use on festive occasions." Installations were usually public, frequently in the Methodist Church after opening ceremonies in the Lodge Hall. The group would then return to the Hall for the party or perhaps go to a downtown emporium known as the "Trade Palace." Occasionally the meeting seems to have been rather "semi-public" as in 1865 when the Lodge "resolved to have . . . supper at 5 o'clock in the evening the members of the Lodge and their families to be admitted to supper free all others to be charged 20c each." In 1883 a joint installation was held with the newly chartered Mizpah Chapter of the Eastern Star. Sometimes joint installations were held with neighboring Lodges and on occasion the Lodge joined in community celebrations of the Fourth of July. A feature of many of these meetings, particularly when they involved marching, was the presence of the Hope Cornet Band. This group also formed an escort at most Masonic funerals and appears to have been paid eight dollars for such service.

In recent years periods of fellowship have usually been held after degree work. A most enjoyable custom, too, has been that of having an annual Family Night when members and their families have gathered, usually in March, for a pitch-in dinner and a variety program of amateur and professional talent. Widows and daughters of departed Brethren and sojourning Masons are always special guests. The meeting on March 25, 1952, was one of special significance because the Lodge was honored by the presence of Grand Master and Mrs. Oswald A. Tislow and Past Grand Master and Mrs. John E. Baldrige. This meeting had been planned originally to honor Brother Clinton E. Marlin and for the presentation to him of the Grand Lodge Award of Gold for fifty years of Masonic membership. The date chosen was the exact anniversary of his being raised to the Sublime Degree. However Brother Marlin passed away just eleven days before the anniversary. By permission of the Grand Master the Fifty-Year emblem was placed upon his lapel by his nephew, Worshipful Master Richard L. Marlin, and then just before the burial given to his son, Brother William S. Marlin. Brother Marlin was a farmer all his life and served one term as Trustee of Hawcreek Township. A widower for more than fifty years, he had reared his three children and then

when his daughter was left a widow with three children, he became both father and grandfather to them. In his family, in the Lodge and community, and as a public official, Clinton E. Marlin exemplified the highest ideals of Freemasonry.

At the Family Night, the Grand Master gave a most helpful and challenging address built around the theme that "the spirit of brotherly love which is the center of Masonic ritual and practice is the only ultimate hope of a lasting peace among the nations of the earth." Past Grand Master Baldrige presented the silver lapel buttons for twenty-five years of membership to Past Master Ferris Conner and his father-in-law, Floyd R. Stam and, by proxy, to Carl E. Hege of Whittier, California. The visit of Most Worshipful Brother Tislow to Hope was of special interest to many of the Moravian Brethren, because he was the architect for the new Christian Education Building of the Moravian Church.

Brotherly Love

Down through the years the Brethren of Hope Lodge have brought the message of Masonry to many men, they have kept their physical organization abreast of the times and in compliance to the rules of the Grand Lodge, they have enjoyed the pleasantries of Masonic friendship and fellowship, and they have also continued to hear the cry of the poor and distressed. Reference has already been made to the circulars formerly sent out describing disasters which befell Lodges or individual members. Whenever the cause seemed especially worthy and the treasury would permit, Hope Lodge responded to the call. Sometimes a special collection was taken among the members. The requests and responses seem woefully small now, usually one dollar and never more than five. Several of the appeals were quite interesting. On January 10, 1865, a communication was received from George Washington Lodge No. 143 at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, "appealing for aid they having had their property destroyed by the Rebels." The ghost of the Civil War seemed to stalk again when, in 1876, a letter was received from an Alabama Lodge commenting "that on the 2nd day of April, 1865, our Lodge room was taken possession of and our Library and Lodge furniture scattered and destroyed, and our Jewells carried away by the Federal forces under Gen'l

Wilson." This calamity had been followed by a fire in 1872 and a resulting mortgage; hence the appeal for "One Dollar." In 1875 several appeals were received from "the grass-hopper area" of the West. Such communications are now prohibited by the Grand Lodge for obvious reasons.

The helping hand of brotherly love has often been extended in more personal situations. In 1875 it came to the attention of the Lodge that the widow of one of the charter members was in need. On at least seven occasions assistance was given to this family. More than seventy-five years later a daughter of the household writes, "My mother and her family were invited to a Masonic supper at that place (the Hall that burned in 1879) and it has been a wonderful memory to me. The Masons were so kind and good to my mother . . ." On numerous occasions the Lodge assisted with funeral expenses and with widow's aid particularly for Brethren away from home. In recent years the Public Welfare and Social Security programs have reduced the necessity for financial assistance but sometimes money does not fill the need.

Three times the doors of the Indiana Masonic Home at Franklin have swung open to receive a Brother of Hope Lodge. On September 12, 1944, the Lodge adopted resolutions recommending the admission of Brother Robert Scott Harris to the Home. He was admitted and remained a guest there until his death, May 14, 1947. Brother Oliver E. Ruede was received at the Home in 1948 and for four years enjoyed the comfort and convenience of the splendid facilities offered by this fine institution. He died November 29, 1952. Brother William A. Webb spent a few months at the Home from November 28, 1950, until he passed away January 20, 1951. He was eighty-eight years old at the time of his admission. It is a source of pride to Hope Lodge that in the Voluntary Contribution Program inaugurated by the Grand Lodge in 1950, on the basis of one dollar per member, Hope has had a one hundred per cent rating each year. "From time immemorial, Freemasonry has taught a proper reverence and veneration for age. . . . It is to age that we look for wisdom and it is upon wisdom that Freemasonry builds each and every laudable enterprise."¹³

¹³From a form approved by the Grand Lodge for use in the presentation of the Fifty-Year Award of Gold.

Thus we have tried to survey the past. It has not been particularly glorious or spectacular; but it has been sturdy and honorable. Though the way must have seemed at times a long and toilsome journey, there was never even a hint that the search for Masonic Light should be abandoned. The Halls of Hope Lodge have never been lavish or magnificent but there has always been a place for the Craft to carry on its work. Hope has contributed no officers to the Grand Line but has sent a multitude of Brethren to carry the ideals of brotherly love, relief, and truth into every walk of life. Yes, for many reasons it has been worthwhile to survey the past. But Shakespeare has said, "The past is but the prologue to the future!" Let us look to that future with a faith and confidence born of our heritage from the past. "Yet we must realize that there is only one 'I' in faith, and each of us is the one to put it there. . . . Likewise we must put the 'I' in morality; virtue; dignity; fidelity; integrity; and circumspection. . . . Let us carry our banners high, and fearing no one but God, go forth with the torch of truth, ever remembering that God has given each of us wisdom, strength, and the power to decide between good and evil and that He expects each to employ those talents to the utmost and for the good of man, in order that we may prepare for ourselves a fitting place in that land from whose bourne no traveler returns."¹⁴ Then, we too shall become a part of the past that inspires the future, and so the cycle goes on. But come, the second century of Masonic life in Hope is about to begin. Let us carry on!

¹⁴From, "An Evaluation of Freemasonry," by Chandler C. Cohagon, Grand Master of Montana. "The Indiana Freemason," July, 1952.