

Committee Report

The undersigned committee having been appointed by this lodge at its last regular communication, to prepare a written report of the Past Masters' Re-Union held in this hall on December 26, 1899, do respectfully submit the following:

A Master Masons' Lodge was opened in due form at 6:30 o'clock, p. m., at which time the Master Mason's degree was conferred upon Brothers Stacey B. Hall and Ernest A. Gustafson. At the close of the lodge, the members, to the number of 125, repaired to the banquet hall, where a sumptuous repast was enjoyed, after which the Worshipful Master, William S. Heller, made the following

ADDRESS OF WELCOME:

In calling you from labor to refreshment on this auspicious occasion, it is with feelings of profound pride and pleasure that I tender to you, my brethren, and you, past masters, my earnest and hearty congratulations upon being able to unite with us at this, our initial re-union of past masters of this lodge.

The first regular communication of this lodge was held April 3, 1855, under a dispensation granted by the Grand Lodge of Illinois in the fall of 1854, in the second story of the old trading post, then owned by Brother Peter A. Sarpy. In the adjoining room resided a family of the natives of the soil—the Omahas, who, in connection with many others of that tribe, exhibited quite a curiosity to know what their pale-faced brethren were doing; hence in order to elude observation and preserve the secrets of our craft, large Mackinaw blankets were hung" around the room, until the desired end was accomplished. Bellevue was then a small hamlet some nine miles to the south, situated upon the west bank of this treacherous and muddy Missouri, upon the extreme boundary of civilization, in what was then believed to be and so known on our maps, as the Great American Desert, where tempestuous winds and shifting" sands presented a scene of desolate sterility.

How great the change! Today we are assembled in this commodious temple and beautifully adorned dining" hall, surrounded by all the luxuries and conveniences of modern civilization; and as we lift our eyes from these viands and behold upon the walls surrounding' us these beautiful landscapes, the products of human skill and education, we cannot but perceive that in these 45 years Masonry has kept apace with the advancement humanity has made.

Then our membership consisted of a mere handful with barely sufficient to do the work. How great the change! Today we are proud of the fact that our roster shows an enrollment of over 200.

When it was in its infancy, yea, until it arrived at its majority, the brethren were obliged to drive miles through all kinds of weather to attend its meetings.

Today our great system of electric railways enables us to take a car almost at our door and within a very few minutes arrive at the very entrance of this hall.

And so I might consume much time telling- you of many more changes that have taken place; but brethren, it is neither my desire nor intention to preach to you a sermon, I leave that to these elderly brethren who have ruled and governed this lodge from its infancy, and whose wisdom and fidelity have made them leaders among" us. From them we may expect to hear words of counsel and instruction. But above all, we have assembled here to cultivate the social virtues too much neglected in our fraternity; for among the best influences that Masonry exerts is that of enabling us to become the better acquainted; of enabling us to reach the hearts of our brethren. It binds us with ties stronger than those of blood; it gives us friends in whom we can implicitly confide whose sympathy in the hour of trial or affliction strengthens and sustains. It admonishes us to live a true and blameless life; points out to us the way to attain, and gives us the hope of a blessed immortality beyond the grave. We ought then to have more frequent reunions, that, knowing each other better, we may love each other more.

In the name and on behalf of Nebraska Lodge, No.1, I extend to you all a fraternal welcome to this, our Past Masters' Reunion.

Since the formation of this lodge, but three out of the 19 Masters who have presided over it have passed away. They all lived to a ripe old age, and their memories are still green in the hearts of all who knew them.

We are laboring here for a great future. Our abiding place is not here. As the ancient warrior said when urged to lay down his sword and rest: "This is the place for labor," pointing to the earth: "yonder is the place for rest, pointing to the skies. Every Mason ought to recognize that fact. Our lodges require of us that we labor; that God, whom we all revere, requires the same of all mankind. No one is prepared for rest who does not labor here.

What pleasant memories we have of the fraternal dead. How they have labored in the past, how their work has been accomplished, and we are reaping the fruits of their labor. In like manner, may future generations reap the fruit of our earnest labor, as we are reaping the fruit of others today.

**As we say of them, may it be said as truly of us when through with life:
"Our brethren who rest from their labors."**

Past Master LOTHROP BROCKWAY KINNEY ...EULOGY

(Master: 1855—1858 and 1859—1862)

He was born in New Haven, Oswego County, New York, July 25, 1824, and died in Richfield, Utah, September 25, 1895. At an early age he came to Ohio with his father, Dr. Stephen F. Kinney, settling in Marysville. From there he went to Wisconsin and thence to Nebraska in 1854, settling in the village of Bellevue. Being a Master Mason in good standing, he with six others, in the fall of 1854, petitioned the Grand Lodge of Illinois for a dispensation authorizing them to commence work in due Masonic form, which was granted them early in February, 1855, and on April 3, 1855, their first regular communication was held, with Brother Kinney as its worshipful Master. With the exception of one year he held that office until June, 1862.

During his life-time he held many prominent and responsible positions, being at one time Probate Judge of Sarpy County, in this state. In the '60s he removed to Utah and was appointed Indian Agent, and later became a Justice of the Peace, in the Bingham Mining District. Under the Act of Congress, providing for County Courts in Utah, he was appointed by President Harrison, and later by President Cleveland, County Judge for Sevier County. He was also in the military service at some time during his life, and at the time of his death was the recipient of a small pension, which his' widow now draws. During a portion of his life at Bingham Canon, he was engaged quite extensively in mining, and in this enterprise he lost quite heavily, so that when he was appointed Judge of Sevier County he had little or nothing to commence life with in his new field of labor.

In February, 1866, he assisted in organizing Mount Moriah Lodge, in Salt Lake City, and was its first Master.

His father, Stephen F. Kinney, was a Royal Arch Mason in Oswego County, New York, during the Morgan excitement, and remained steadfast to his obligations. The three sons reared by him all became Masons, only one of which survives—J. F. Kinney of San Diego, California.

He was a man of sterling integrity and genial disposition, devoted to the Craft, and sacrificing for its interest much of his time and energies. His life enriched the world around him, and his death leaves us poorer in the loss of that interesting and valuable personality which summed up his character". He had reached a good old age.

**"Life's work well done,
Life's crown well won."**

The scythe of time has likewise removed from our midst our beloved

Past Master GUSTAVUS STEVENSON ...EULOGY

(Master: 1872—1874)

He was initiated, passed and raised in this lodge during April, May and June, 1868, and was admitted November 28, 1876.

He affiliated with St. John's Lodge, No. 25, Omaha, April 5, 1877—was Senior Deacon in 1878. By his death, which occurred March 30, 1885, the Masonic fraternity lost one of its staunchest friends and supporters. He was upwards of 70 years of age at the time of his death.

On April 2, 1885, St. John's Lodge expressed their sorrow in the decease of Brother Stevenson, and appointed a committee to draft suitable resolutions expressive of the universal sorrow which was felt in the lodge at the loss of a brother so highly esteemed as Brother Stevenson.

The Omaha Daily Bee of March 31, 1885, has the following:

"William R. Bowen, Esq., of this city received a telegram this morning from Craton Landing, New York, announcing the death of Major Gustavus Stevenson yesterday, a former well-known resident of this city. The major, during his life in Omaha, was connected with many public matters of a political and general character. He had considerable literary ability, and contributed Shakespearian readings on many public occasions. During the last two years of his residence here, he was a deputy under United States Marshal Bierbower, and resigned that position to go east. The cause of his death was not stated."

Brother Stevenson endeared himself to all he met by the modesty and simplicity of his character, by his genial and sympathetic disposition, and by the quiet and unobtrusive manner with which he devoted himself to whatever work was in hand. He had a loving disposition, and was polished in his manners. He was the friend of every one who knew him, and everybody liked the major. He was a wise adviser and an intellectual student of every question submitted for consideration, and a firm and unyielding friend of whatever was straightforward and honorable in action. Always moderate in the expression of his views, he yet never failed when necessary; to say what he thought was right.

**“Peace then to this man's memory;
let it grow Greener with years, and blossom through the flight of ages.”**

Past Master JOSEPH D. LUCE ...EULOGY

(Master: 1881—1882)

He was born at Harbor Creek, Erie County, Pennsylvania, on the 18th day of December, 1841. Of his early life we have been able to find no trace from any source at our command. It is evident, however that his childhood days were spent in his native state, as at the commencement of the civil war, when President Lincoln issued his first proclamation calling for volunteers, he was among the earliest to respond. He enlisted in a Pennsylvania regiment, served three months and was then honorably discharged on account of disabilities, which unfitted him for the rigors of an active soldier's life.

We trace him next to Galesburg, Illinois. From data obtained through the kindness of Alpha Lodge No. 155, of Illinois, we learn that he was made an entered apprentice, April 17, 1868; passed April 20, and raised May 2, 1868, and was demitted November 16, 1877. Thereupon he came to Nebraska and located at La Platte, in Sarpy County, and on April 20, 1880, affiliated with this lodge. On the 29th day of November, 1881, he was elected to serve as Worshipful Master, which office he held for one year. He died suddenly at Ames, Neb., October 13, 1883, from heart disease, leaving a wife, one daughter and two sons.

He was a man of strong intellect, of good habits, sober and industrious; kind and pleasant in his family relations, true to his friends and a man on whose word reliance could be placed.

As a Mason he was active and vigorous, true to his obligations and to the tenets and teachings of the Craft, charitable in his judgment on the faults and frailties of others, avoiding- as far as possible the giving of offence, thus exemplifying in his life and conduct those principles of universal brotherhood which underlie the Masonic structure, and are the foundations on which our order rests.

**Communications from our Past Masters who live at a great distance and who were
unable to be present were read, as follows:**

LETTER FROM: JOHN A. NYE MASTER 1858—1859

MINNESKLA, So. Dak., Dec. 22, 1899.

W. S. Heller, W. M.,

Omaha, Nebraska.

Dear Brother:

I am impressed by the history you give concerning our lodge.

While Master I poorly filled the place for one year, and part of another through courtesy or carelessness. We did our part in organizing the Grand Lodge, and for years the organization was merely held together by these who could not get away. Of course those years were uneventful, till Omaha, in the way of absorbing everything Worth while in reach of it, took hold of the weakling and made brilliant its prestige and its pedigree.

The tin jewels I made seem to have carried as much glory in succession as though made from the gold of Ophir, like "The Master Workman of the Temple." My Clumsy hands fashioned the same tools for Denver, for Helena and Deadwood, at their earliest meeting to organize a lodge. I was a pioneer at their staking and starting: so I recall the small incidents, though these more than, "forty years in the wilderness" have been crowded full with events, from Matamoras, Mexico to New Westminster, B. C., over mountain and plain, through winter and summer,

In 1856, I started west from Unadilla, N. Y., where a year or two before I was made a Mason in Freedom Lodge, No. 24, A. F. & A. M. Omaha was my objective point, though I did not quite reach there. In 1857 I shipped goods for Omaha and started early. My boat could get only to Ft. Leavenworth. Then it was mud and no bottom to St. Joe; then it was worse and swimming to Nebraska City; then it was poor walking to Bellevue, where some townsmen of mine had strayed to, which was reached March 8, 1857, crossing on the ice. So I stayed with my neighbors to help the Clarks, the Bangs, the Holloways and Rev. Uncle Billy crush Omaha, which had no rock bottom.

Omaha went ahead; we disappeared and scattered under the simoon of 1857 and 8. I did not even see the gold that made the Pike's Peak stampede, but sent an outfit there in the fall of 1858.

Brother Kinney preceded me as Master of No.1, as I recollect it. Being so much away, I delegated to others the details of Lodge history. Brother David Leach is an accomplished historian. Too much of the west, and on to the west creates an unrest of the soul and encourages forgetfulness of the details of the past. 'Tis not the gleam of the metal, so much as finding the land of the latest excitement. But what else has made the west the most important part of the United States?

Sometimes I wonder what talisman or mascot has kept my Nemesis at bay so many times in flood and field, and who can say that the good wishes of our brotherhood are not potent factors in our lives. I am 68 on March 24 next, though I do not feel nearly so old.

I am proud to be one of you, though of so little use. I learn from you the wondrous fact that only three of the nineteen Past Masters have "gone over the range." This century will likely lay out the balance. But many centuries may not see your work or lodge obliterated.

I thank you from my heart for your notices and good wishes, and hope to remain,

Fraternally yours,

JOHN A. NYE

(Master: 1858—1859)

LETTER FROM: DAVID LEACH, MASTER 1863—1864

WOOD LAKE, Neb., Dec. 25, 1899.

Wm; S. Heller, W. M.,

Omaha, Nebraska.

Dear Worshipful Master:

I exceedingly regret this long silence after receiving your welcome letters of the 15th and 19th instants, but it is owing to a multiplicity of cares as well as sickness. Last Sunday I read them with cool deliberation, and seeing I have erred, I make this humble apology.

During the administration of Brothers L. B. Kinney and John A. Nye, our first Masters, I frequently acted as Senior Warden, either actual or pro tern, away back in the fifties. Many times we had to rustle to get a quorum in order to perpetuate our charter; and in order to retain our Masonic standing, in 1888, by unanimous consent the lodge was moved from Bellevue to Omaha, which I trust has resulted in much good for the fraternal welfare of us all.

During those early days there existed among the brethren perfect harmony, and I am proud of the fact that Masonic harmony has prevailed in Nebraska Lodge No.1 down to the present time.

Brethren, dwell together in unity. May this ever be our theme, that we may all, under the blessings of the Great Master, dwell together in unity. May unity of spirit triumphantly prevail among all our brethren. May no envious feeling ever penetrate your noble minds, one towards another. May you all aim to fulfill your obligations—then would be peace, unity and brotherly love towards all mankind. May we go on fulfilling the great destiny before us, trusting in the Great Master of all for the result. May the gavel re-echo o'er the land, full-filling all those things desirable in the fraternity—peace and unity of spirit. Let us, with renewed vigor, press on to our task until all our designs are accomplished, and death, the conqueror of all, shall end our career. May we all meet again in that temple on high not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where the loved and parted meet again.

I have the honor to be fraternally yours,

DAVID LEACH

(Master: 1862—1864)

BOSTON, Mass., Dec. 19, 1899.

Wm. S. Heller, Esq.,

Omaha, Nebraska.

My Dear Brother:

Your kind and much appreciated favor of the 16th instant this moment received, and regret exceedingly that I cannot be with you in person on the 26th instant.

The very thought of a re-union of the Past Masters and the members of the Nebraska Lodge No. 1, (the Original Landmark of Freemasonry in the state of Nebraska) and Atkinson 1,500 miles away is to me pathetic in the extreme. That I shall be with you in spirit needs no stronger proof than the fact that after a continuity with Capitol Lodge No. 3 of 21 years, and having- served as its Master four separate and distinct terms, and where I found so many congenial spirits with whom I had spent so many of the happiest hours of my life, I should sever the ties that bound so strong and fly to the relief of Nebraska Lodge No. 1 in her distress, is a sufficient guarantee for my devotion and heart-felt interest in the success of the lodge and all of its members. It was my desire that the lodge should occupy the dignified position it should before the world, and I am pleased to note that the result of your labor in that behalf will bear the strictest scrutiny, and by the faithful exercise of Masonic duties and united efforts in years to come, you will continue to widen the platform of our usefulness and strengthen our foundation.

Let our motto be a steadfast adherence to the landmarks and fundamental teachings of the institution, as there can be nothing more dangerous to the perpetuity and harmony of the Masonic institution than to trench upon the ancient landmarks and introduce new principles. Practice assiduously the cardinal and theological virtues, the greatest of which are Justice and Charity. Even the suspicion of injustice ought to be investigated and the cause removed, and remember that post-mortem kindness does not cheer the burdened spirit, and flowers upon graves will shed no fragrance backward over the weary way by which loved ones have traveled, but act promptly and cheerfully, while hearts can be thrilled and made happier, and so brighten and sweeten their earthly home before they leave it. The conferring of the degrees in an effective and impressive manner is among the most important things to be considered in the up-building of a lodge, as no one can appreciate the worth and beauty of the degrees, without a full and perfect illustration of them.

Let these principles never be lost sight of and our venerable lodge is sure of prosperity.

Fraternally yours,

ALEXANDER ATKINSON

(Master: 1889—1890)

Brethren: In introducing to you the different brethren who will address you this evening, giving historical events pertaining to Nebraska Lodge No. 1, as well as Masonic ideas of value, I shall simply announce their names as I present them. I am certain you will be interested, for many of them have labored long within the domains of this ancient and venerable order, and are about to lay down the working tools and join those who have passed to life eternal.

Remarks were then made by the following Past Masters:

Past Master JOHN Q. GOSS ...SPEAKER
(Master: 1864—1866 and 1867—1871)

Worshipful Master and Brethren:

When I look upon this large assemblage of members of the Masonic fraternity that surround me, and realize that they are nearly all members of Nebraska Lodge No. 1, my mind instinctively reverts to a period of the long ago, when the lodge was located in a little town 10 miles to the south of this—the old historic town of Bellevue. That town being the oldest settled town in the territory, which, had just been organized as "Nebraska" was a fitting birthplace, of the order therein, and there Nebraska Lodge No. 1, A. F. & A. M., sprang into existence, and spent what may be termed the days of its childhood. I did not become a member thereof until the year 1860. From that time until 1865, I filled several positions in the lodge, such as high, private and subordinate stations. In that year I was elected Master of the lodge, which I held until the year 1870.

In looking- back over the past I can but contrast the Nebraska lodge of the then with that of the now, with all its surrounding's. Also compare the number of its members then, and now, and it gives a favorable commentary on the wisdom of the removal of the lodge from Bellevue to Omaha. When this removal took place, I was not taking- an active part in the work of the fraternity, but when I heard of the project of removal, I very much doubted the wisdom and advisability of the step, more particularly as this was the birthplace of the lodge, but the condition of the lodge at the present time, the number and character of its membership demonstrates conclusively that the change was eminently a wise one.

There it was sometimes difficult to g-et enough members tog-ether to transact business, as but few of them lived in the village,—a majority of them being from the country, and some even from the extreme western limit of the county. Now, what a change. The large membership of the lodge, and its character, insures its future growth and prosperity, and its usefulness in helping- us to divest ourselves of that coat of selfishness, which is the bane of society.

The hour is late, and as there are others to speak who can interest you much better than I am able to do, I will yield the floor, thanking" you for your indulgence.

Past Master FRANK E. CALDWELL ...SPEAKER

(Master: 1877—1881 and 1882—1888)

Worshipful Master and Brethren:

Our Master refers to me as the one who served ten years as Master of this lodge; but during- that time we did very little work. The county seat having been moved from Bellevue to Papillion it took most of our members. Consequently a great many times we hardly had a quorum. However a few of us were very anxious to keep the lodge alive, and not a few times Wm. F. Martin and myself were the only ones present—myself as Master and Brother Martin as Secretary.

If there was any important business to transact we attended to it; drove the owls out of the lodge room, and watched the corpse for ten long- years in the hope that something- would happen to give us some material to work on. But, vain hope, Bellevue still languished; sunflowers grew in the streets, and the corpse of No. 1 became unsavory, and the only hope was to bury it alive or raise it to a living- perpendicular. As you all 'know, we moved to Omaha. A few of the old members -still retained their membership, but quite a few took out demits and joined Papillion Lodge No. 39. Those who have been faithful to No.1. and helped us financially during all those years were, Win. Robinson, Jacob Slothauer, Wm. Robertson, Wm. Hogeboom and some others that I cannot recall at this time, were seldom in attendance, as there were no hotel accommodations in Bellevue, and they were justified in not coming. I believe Brother Wm. F. Martin deserves more credit than any one brother in keeping- the lodge alive. He was Secretary, Tiler, and everything- that was needed.

When I look back and remember the small quorum we often had with which to do business—Caldwell, as Master, Martin as Secretary, and his dog Dan—if some of the Grand Lodge officers had viewed the landscape, they would have concluded it was hardly a lawful gathering. But with all our inconsistencies and cutting red tape, I am proud of one fact, and that is, we always paid our debts, and an order on No. 1 was always as good as gold, and now when I visit your (or I will say our) beautiful lodge room here in Omaha, and see the Lodge presided over by such brilliant young Masters that do such excellent work, I am glad that I watched the corpse; and, furthermore, I am glad that I belong to Nebraska Lodge No. 1.

Past Master DANIEL H. WHEELER ...SPEAKER

(Master: 1888—1889)

Worshipful Master and Brethren:

It is right and proper that the Past Masters, brethren and their guests of this, the oldest Masonic Lodge in Nebraska, should meet and greet each other at the close of the year 1899. Forty-five years ago a small band of Free Masons, who had decided to make the,

then new, and almost unsettled Territory of Nebraska, their future homes, were called together by that brotherly interest they had in the Masonic fraternity, in the city of Bellevue, and which they believed would be the capitol of the new Territory, and the future metropolis of Nebraska. The brothers were from widely separated jurisdictions, but Masonically they all spoke the same language, had all worshipped at the same altar, and believing that the principles taught by Masonry would aid them in the upbuilding of the great commonwealth which they hoped to see reared west of the Missouri, on the broad, fertile plains of Nebraska, joined in a petition to the Grand Master of Illinois for authority to open a legal lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, which petition was found to be Masonic and regular. The petitioners were granted a dispensation with full power to make Masons in the regular way. From that day to this, the lodge thus authorized has continued in its work; for a time it was smooth sailing, then dark days hovered over it, and the fond hopes of the first members that Bellevue would be the great city of Nebraska, were dashed to atoms, and what was but a small hamlet in 1855, became the capitol of the Territory. Business then commenced to fall away; citizens of Bellevue, one after another departed for other fields, and dark days were indeed upon Nebraska Lodge No. 1. Its life hung by a thread, or rather, by the faithful persistence of Past Worshipful Master Frank Caldwell, the then Master, and when even his strong will was about to surrender, the brethren of Omaha and Nebraska began to interest themselves in trying to preserve its life. The Grand Master of Nebraska was appealed to, as well" as the Grand Lodge, and the Masons of Nebraska, desiring to have the initial lodge of this commonwealth remain upon the roster of Nebraska lodges, it was decided that this lodge might remove its home from Bellevue to Omaha, which removal was accomplished early in 1888, and the honor was conferred upon me to be elected as the Master of the lodge the first year of its existence in its new home. Its old members proved faithful, and as the years have gone, since then, its membership and influence have been onward and upward, and today it occupies an honorable and honored position among the subordinate lodges of Nebraska.

The most cordial Masonic feeling has ever existed among the four Masonic lodges located in this city; no single cloud has ever appeared between them. While Nebraska Lodge has not as large a membership as any of our other Omaha lodges, I can say for its membership that no more loyal and harmonious band of brethren can be found in Nebraska. As the years pass the older members will of necessity become less active. Their blood is growing thicker, their joints are becoming stiff, and their white heads indicate that they are on the down grade; but thank God, the splendid young men who have knelt at our altar and were taught our ritual, are ever ready to take our places, and while honoring us, are honoring themselves in teaching those God-given principles of faith, hope and charity which belong to the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God.

"We meet upon the level, though from every station come,
The rich man from his palace, the poor man from his home;
For the rich must leave his wealth and state outside the Mason's door,
And the poor man finds his best respect upon the chequered floor."

Past Master JOSEPH R. STAFFORD ...SPEAKER

(Master: 1890—1893)

Worshipful Master and Brethren:

It affords me great pleasure to be with you tonight, but having a very bad cold, and my voice being thereby affected, I trust you will pardon me if my remarks are brief. My experience as Master of No. 1 was that when I was elected Master, the membership was small, and its treasury had but a few dollars to its credit, but by hard work, and with the assistance of the members, we made rapid progress; our membership grew very rapidly, so that when my term of office expired we had \$800 in the treasury. During the first few years that this lodge was in Omaha, our sister lodges, instead of being antagonistic toward us, gave us all the assistance and helped us whenever they had an opportunity; and we ought to be very grateful to the Temple Craft for the kind treatment they rendered in not only giving us full and free use of the Temple, but charging us for this privilege the small rental of \$8 per month.

When I look around this hall and see so many bright, intelligent young men who have joined our number since I presided over you, I am satisfied that the prosperity of Nebraska Lodge No. 1 is assured, and so long as you continue to receive this kind of material, the lodge will grow and become an efficient and powerful factor in the development of the intellectual faculties. Let us therefore my brethren, raise the standard of our fraternity to such a plane that our sister lodges throughout this commonwealth may point to us as a proper example for them to emulate. And now, may we all so improve our lives, and strive to acquire that glory which is best worth having—the glory of good deeds.

Past Master EDWARD R. DUFFIE ...SPEAKER

(Master: 1893—1894)

Worshipful Master and Brethren:

I had the pleasure recently of attending the reception tendered by St. John's Lodge to our Grand Master. On that occasion Brother Lobinger in an address of great eloquence and varied information, made reference to a time in the history of Masonry which tested its virtues as never before, and called upon its votaries for patience and fortitude for which the Mason of today can little appreciate. I speak of what was known as the Morgan excitement. The reference to this time of persecution by Brother Lobinger recalled to my mind many events told me in my youth by those who underwent a persecution not surpassed by that suffered by the early Christians at the hands of the enemies of the early Church, and I had thought that a brief reference to these events would interest you more than the common-place happening's connected with No. 1 since I have been a member.

You, who are members of the order at this time, honored and respected in the community, can have little realization of what the Mason of Morgan's time had to endure. So deep was the prejudice against the order for a time, that not only society, but in many instances

even the church, closed the door to the entrance of a Mason, and that because one or the other of two litigants was a member of the order they sought to make it a cause of challenge of a juror who also belonged to the order. I well remember the prejudice existing in the minds of my own parents. My mother, than whom no more gentle soul ever lived, was so impressed with the universal sentiment of the time, that for years after becoming a member of the order I concealed it from her, in deference to her feelings and to avoid giving her the pain I knew she would suffer from learning that I was a Mason. The lodge in which I took the degrees had at one time surrendered its charter because of the persecution suffered.

For a time Lodge meetings were held in secret places, in cellars and garrets and wherever a few of the faithful could assemble without being observed and the last few meetings prior to a surrender of the charter of the lodge, were held in the loft of a hotel owned by a member in an adjoining village. The owner (I remember him well in my young days) was one of those who surrenders only when the last hope is gone and he preserved and hid the jewels of the lodge and welcomed the few members who had the courage to meet in the loft of his hotel, until at last a sufficient number to open lodge could not be got together, and then the charter was surrendered, the lodge dissolved, and for many years, and until brighter skies for Masonry and Masons appeared again, my native town was without a lodge.

The Mason of today can have little conception of those times, of the social ostracism, the business and political outlawry attempted against the order. No society not founded on a foundation of rock, could have withstood the storm—and that Masonry did survive, that it grew and flourished and prospered, is the best evidence to which we can point that its principles are eternal and will endure forever.

Past Master JOHN D. HOWE ...SPEAKER
(Master: 1896—1897)

Worshipful Master and Brethren:

As you have already noticed, the hour is getting late and many are anxious to catch the last car, that the wife may not accuse you of staying out all night at the lodge. It affords me great pleasure to be with you on this occasion, and I sincerely trust that when we hold our next reunion all who are with us tonight may be able to answer "Here," when the roll is called.

I can truthfully say, brethren, that Masonry has benefited me greatly in many ways, and its teachings, if we but try to live up to them, cannot but make us better men and better Masons. It is with pleasure that I look back upon and recall the many pleasant evenings spent in the lodge room, where we met on the level and parted upon the square. I see in the audience tonight brother Conrad J. Hetzler, who traveled hand in hand with me, until he took his Master Mason's decree, when he managed to get in first and left me on the outside, wondering "What Next?" On my right sits brother Stafford, who was Master of the Lodge at that time, and who conferred the degrees upon brother Hetzler and myself. We have with us tonight the different Masters who have presided since I became a

Master Mason, and in front of me I see many members of this and other lodges who have been associated with me in this work, and who have been true and faithful workers.

While in the Southern camps last summer, I visited the lodges in Mobile, Tampa and Jacksonville, and am pleased to say that the work done by the Nebraska lodges far surpasses anything I saw in those places. Upon several occasions I presided and conferred the degrees, and it was the unanimous opinion that "Nebraska work" was better than their own. I did not have an opportunity of visiting any lodges while in Cuba, as the Spanish authorities had closed up the lodges and would not allow meetings to be held. I did, however, meet a number of Masons among the officers of the Spanish army, who, although they wore no emblems, readily recognized me as a brother Mason, extended the right hand of fellowship, and did much to make my stay on the Island both pleasant and agreeable.

Several of our members have passed away during the last few years, and it was only yesterday that I learned of the death of brother Wells, which occurred during my absence in the South. Only a few weeks ago we lost another brother and a dear friend of mine, brother Albertson, so I say to you, brethren, "Let us so live that when our summons comes, we may depart in the comfort of a religious and holy hope, leaving the testimony of a useful, unselfish life and an earnest faith in a blissful immortality."

Past Master WILLIAM S. FELKER ...SPEAKER
(Master: 1897—1898)

Mr. Toast Master and Brethren:

We are assembled tonight around this banquet board of good fellowship, to welcome the Past Masters of Nebraska Lodge No. 1. All have responded with fitting expression with the exception of the three who have passed to their reward, enjoying the fellowship of that Grand Lodge where the Grand Architect of the universe presides, and where we all sooner or later hope to unite.

This being- the pioneer lodge of the state—in fact prior to its being a state—we need not expect to find the paraphernalia in use at that time, to be very grand or gorgeous, but rather in keeping and harmony with the rugged settlers of a frontier life; those who had made their way here with the energy and courage of purpose of transforming a wilderness into a garden of beauty, and erect monuments of civilization, the fruits of which we tonight enjoy and represent.

And while here upon this occasion, we are glad to receive so many of our Past Masters, and we must award to, and give credit to our numerous members who so ably assisted in promulgating the Science of Masonry, which leads to a higher and nobler life.

The example and teaching of this lodge for good from its inception in 1854 down to the present cannot be estimated. Who can count or weigh the noble and generous thoughts that have emanated from the minds of those craftsmen and which were impressed upon

the minds of those coming under its influence, taught to square their lives and actions by the square of virtue, love and truth, and they succeeded in building" in the state a lodge founded upon those principles. The spirit of Masonry was there in all its effulgent glory, teaching uprightness of character, making it a potent factor in the building of a prosperous state; and here tonight my brethren, we are enjoying some of the fruits of their labor,—for the past connects with the present and continues into the future either for good or evil,—and cherish as a memento of their zeal in promoting good examples for the incoming settlers.

The sacred altar consisted of a box with a blanket over its rude structure, an admonition to be just to his fellowmen. We find from A. R. Gilmore's Register, pages 355 and 356, in the fall of 1855, that General Peter A. Sarpy's petition was handed in. When the lodge had assembled and the ballot was in order, the craft was without a ballot box; but a pickle jar was secured and used instead, pebbles and lead bullets serving as balls. After the voting the contents of the pickle jar was examined; lead not being found therein. Peter A. Sarpy was declared elected to become a member of this ancient and honorable body. For some reason this lodge escorted General Sarpy to Council Bluffs,—perhaps on account of better accommodation, and the entered apprentice degree was there conferred upon him by our late Brother L. L. Bowen.

From this crude beginning of disseminating truth, you behold this lodge, prosperous, with every facility of carrying the sublime work of Masonry forward, and we have just reason to be proud of our present condition to carry out philosophically and practically the beautiful teachings of Masonry.

And with the insight that detects
Some great thing in the small,
To learn how each one's life affects
The spiritual life of all.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAM S. HELLER,	(Master: 1898—1899)
EDWARD R. DUFFIE,	(Master: 1893—1894)
WILLIAM S. FELKER,	(Master: 1897—1898)
DANIEL H. WHEELER, SR.,	(Master: 1888—1889)

OMAHA, January 31, 1900. COMMITTEE.

PAST MASTERS

Lathrop B. Kinney,	1855—1858
John A. Nye,	1858—1859
Lathrop B. Kinney, (deceased)	1859—1863
David Leach,	1863—1864
John Q. Goss,	1864—1866
Newell R. Wilcox,	1866—1867
John Q. Goss,	1867—1871
Newell R. Wilcox,	1871—1873
Gustvaus Stevenson, (deceased)	1873—1874
William Robinson,	1874—1875
William F. Martin,	1875—1877
Frank E. Caldwell,	1877—1881
Joseph D. Luce, (deceased)	1881—1883
Frank E. Caldwell,	1883—1888
Daniel H. Wheeler,	1888—1889
Alexander Atkinson,	1889—1890
Joseph R. Stafford,	1890—1893
Edward R. Duffie,	1893—1894
Oscar R. Alien,	1894—1895
Benjamin F. Thomas,	1895—1896
John D. Howe,	1896—1897
William S. Felker,	1897—1898
Winneld S. Strawn,	1898—1899

Copied in its entirety from the original "Past Masters' Re-Union Committee Report"
Held on December 26th 1899 and dated January 31st 1900
By Pepper Aasgaard on November 14th 2002
Items in "**RED**" added