

MASONRY IN NEBRASKA.

Nebraska Lodge No. 1, A. F. & A. M.
Celebrates its 41st Anniversary,

With an Elaborate Spread, Eloquent
Speeches, and Sweet Songs, Friday
Evening, Feb. 15, 1895.

Probably in the history of Free Masonry in Nebraska there has never been a more enjoyable evening spent by the members of the craft, their wives, daughters or sweethearts than was spent last Friday evening in Masonic Temple in Omaha.

On that evening more than one hundred Master Masons, in response to the invitation sent out by the chairman of the committee on arrangements, repaired to the temple, in company with a lady—either their wife, daughter, or a friend—and participated in the exercises which were to commemorate the introduction of Free Masonry into Nebraska forty-one years before.

Worshipful Master, Oscar R. Allen, acted as master of ceremonies. His first care was to see that every person was feeling perfectly at home, after which he called the meeting to order, and bade the brethren and the guests assembled welcome in the following language:

"Ladies and Brothers: This meeting is called to celebrate the 41st anniversary of the lodge.

"I feel most grateful to those members located at a distance and these ladies for their presence tonight.

"Forty-one years ago this month this lodge was established, by dispensation of the grand lodge of Illinois, at Bellevue, Neb.

"It is unnecessary to refer to the hardships undergone by its early members in Bellevue, where Indians, more or less hostile, were more plentiful than white men, or to their efforts to build up and maintain Nebraska Lodge, No. 1. Suffice it to say, that until Omaha was made the terminal of the Union Pacific railroad, it was in a flourishing condition; but our members scattered in their efforts to better their condition, and at one time it was almost decided to surrender its charter, but it being the first lodge established in Nebraska, certain brethren located in Omaha, decided, if possible, have it brought here, and succeeded in their efforts, since when its advancement and increase in membership has been all its warmest friends could ever have hoped for.

"This lodge has the honor of having upon its roster of members the name of the first Mason ever made in Nebraska, Brother Henry T. Clark.

Its first jewels were made of tin, and they are now in our possession and are safely taken care of.

"There are present tonight those who became members of this lodge over thirty years ago, and I would say that we are today in a most flourishing condition, and there are yet good things in store for this old Nebraska lodge, No. 1.

"I bid you all welcome, and trust there may be acquaintances established here tonight pleasant and profitable to all."

The Temple Quartette then rendered "Welcome Song," by White.

Brother Allen then introduced Judge W. S. Felker, who delivered an excellent address, drawing upon the history of Free Masonry not only in Nebraska, but also in the world. It was such an address as any person would be entertained and instructed in listening to; and few, indeed, if any, of his words fell upon inattentive ears that evening.

The judge spoke as follows:

"Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: Owing to the limited time at my disposal, in which to prepare an address, it will not be expected of me, on this occasion, to give more than a few fragments of thought upon this grand subject of ancient craft, Masonry, an insight of which embraces all human knowledge.

"Many of the scientists and philosophers of past ages have devoted years of laborious study and research in endeavoring to discover the true origin of this worthy and grand institution, and when their labors were ended, they found that the origin was hidden in the night of time.

"We may speculate and conjecture, gaining glimpses of the true origin by bringing certain known facts to the altar of reason, and, upon a strict test, we find the waters pure—hence declare the fountain incorrupt.

"Free Masonry is synonymous with the word virtue, in all that the word imports. It embraces all the liberal sciences, and more especially geometry. And when we behold the vast expanse of the universe and its unerring laws, we conclude that it is not the work of man that brought forth and ushered into existence the sublime principle of Ancient Masonry, for its garlands are richly blended with the goodness of an unseen hand.

"We read in the history written by Josephus, that, after the deluge, the handwork of the craft was visible in Enoch's pillars, erected by Seth, who lived with Adam, until the year of light, 930, both disciples of the arts. Upon these pillars were an abridge-

ment of the arts and sciences found in the land of Shinar. After the deluge Noah and family journeyed from the east to the west to the plains of Shinar where they dwelt and improved themselves in Masonry, and were known as Noehi do, or Noah's sons, by which name many of the craft are known in France at the present day.

"The life saving ark of Noah was constructed upon Masonic principles, and waited him to a haven of safety.

"The second son of Ham introduced the mysteries into Egypt in all of their original purity. A part of their labors are still extant under the name of Pyramids, which, in their decaying condition are the wonderment of all beholders. The Israelites practiced Masonry in Egypt as received by their master, Moses. We read in one of the lights of the order which is replete with Masonic lore that they were trained up to the building of two cities with stone. In the year 1715, before the Christian era, Numa Pompilius instituted 131 societies of Artisans. With these, as with all of their predecessors, a due and proper regard for religion was paid.

"A crowning point of Masonic lore is a delightful submission to the supreme will of the Grand Architect of the universe. Some of the most celebrated scientists and philosophers have made journeys into strange lands that they might become proficient in the mysteries of Masonry. Plato and Pythagoras were among the number that were initiated and obtained the mysteries of the ancient craft that chanted the musical praise to an All-wise Being. From Shinar, the science and art was carried to distant parts of the world, notwithstanding the confusion of the dialects. Faithful breast signs, symbols and grips were their chart of knowledge which crowned their future efforts with success.

"In all ages of the world, this craft, by whatever name known, has been celebrated for its knowledge and virtuous bearings. Pythagoras was a great lover of the art, and that he might better acquaint himself with its sublime doctrine, was thirty years travelling in Arabia, Phœnicia, Judea, Babylon, Gaul and India, the cradle of the human race. During this time he made great proficiency, and became so delighted and enamored of the subject that he spent his life labor in its study. He died at the age of 76, leaving behind him a record as a Master Mason that time cannot efface. From his school or lodge, two eminent pupils came forth, polished by the art of Masonry, in the persons of Damon and Pythias, whose acts of brotherly love, for one another are in harmony and keeping with the spirit of Masonry.

"As I promised fragments in my opening, I will proceed, not in point of time, but with the crowning piece of architecture carried forward and consummated by the craft—it was that of Solomon's Temple, in the year 1012, before the Christian era. Hiram, a Master Mason, the son of Abihal, king of Tyre, was one of the principal architects at the building of the temple—this stupendous edifice, which has been and always will remain the admiration of the world, was Masonically dedicated to the only living God. It required seven years in its construction, during which time it rained not, that the craft might not be impeded in their work. There were engaged in and about its construction 80,000 apprentices, 70,000 fellow crafts, 3,300 overseers, three grand masters; Solomon, king of Israel, represented by the pillar of strength; Hiram, king of Tyre, represented by the pillar of strength; Hiram, the wonderful architect who excelled in fine work, represented by the pillar of beauty. It naturally occurs to us that it would require years to initiate and train so large a number of skilled workmen. During its construction, peace and harmony prevailed, indicative of Masonic worth. Many of the ancient records of the order were lost or destroyed in the wars of the Saxons and Danes. A portion of an old record reads, 'St. Albans loved Masons well, cherished them much, made their pay right good, for he gave them two shillings per week and three pence to their cheer; before that time in all the land, a Mason had but a penny a day and his meat; he procured a charter and held a general council and named it assembly and thereafter did himself help make Masons.' Thus you see they received their just pay without the trouble of a modern strike. During the early existence of the craft the country was governed by ecclesiastical power.

"The moral tone, skill and learning of the craft was so extensively known, they were largely sought after by people in all stations of life; by the ruling power they were given exclusive privilege of building all edifices, monasteries and monuments; they were granted special privileges, allowed to make laws to govern themselves, were freed from taxes, hence arose the appellation of Free and Accepted Masons.

"The first establishment of the order in England was by virtue of a charter from King Athelstan in the year 936. There still exists a lodge in London, that traces its existence from this period. Edwin, the king's brother, was its first master by virtue of that charter; for the first time, a grand lodge was established at York. Kings, princes and noblemen were there made Masons—

from this meeting originated the name of Ancient York Masons.

"While the craft has had its votaries in all ages, it has not been wanting in the fair sex. In 1598, Sir Thomas Gresham laid the cornerstone of the London Exchange; at its completion in 1567, Queen Elizabeth opened it in person and was pleased to dine with Brother Gresham. So, in the reign of Catherine II, who gave encouragement to the craft, Masonry shone forth with resplendent vigor in her domain. The temples of St. Petersburg were beautiful places. She founded many beneficial establishments all through the inspiration of Masonry. At York, England, lodge No. 236, have in their possession an ancient manuscript roll No. 4, dated 1683, written by Mark Kipling. It is ten and one-half feet long, and six inches in width. The peculiarity of it is that it speaks of women being made Master Masons. The lodge has a tradition to the effect that, if the master dies, his widow can take his place and direct the labors of the craft. In 1717, four lodges formed in England a new grand lodge; from this we date our philosophical Masonry, a change from operative to speculative, keeping and holding steadfastly to the ancient landmarks.

"Speculative Masonry has become universal throughout the world. Signs, symbols and grips are the silent but impressive admonition of our duty to God and our fellow men. There is a peculiarity in Masonry that I may be permitted partially to call your attention to. The most noted number is the figure three in Ancient Craft Masonry. There are three degrees; three principal officers of the lodge; three supports, three ornaments, three greater and three lesser lights, three movable and three immovable jewels, three rounds of Jacob's ladder, representing Faith, Hope and Charity; three working tools of a fellow craft; three principal orders of architecture; three Ancient Grand Masters. Masonry is a fraternal institution for the bettering of the world. Free Masons are brethren by one common heritage who voluntarily sought the light set upon an eminence, being worthy and well qualified, were admitted to its benefits, which are intellectual, social and refining.

"Its foundations were laid in obscure antiquity and the building of its temples was completed by a race, leaving a warning that no vandal hand shall alter so much as a hair's breadth of its original design and symmetry as laid down upon the ancient tressel board.

"One of the vital points of the order is its secrets—beautiful, instructive and universal in their tendency. The mother mystery of the modern world having in view the object of binding men together for intellectual culture, it appeals to the nobles instincts of the soul.

"To Heaven's High Architect, all praise
All gratitude be given,
Who designed the human soul to rise
By secret, sprung from Heaven."

When Brother Felker ceased speaking, he was heartily applauded.

Brother Allen then requested every person to spend a few minutes in getting acquainted with every other person present, after which they would retire to the banquet hall.

All restraint was laid aside, and a real sociable time was had until the master gave the order to fall in line and march to the banquet hall.

Canon A. W. Whitmarsh, before the guests were seated, asked God's blessing upon the bountiful spread.

The banquet was spread in the large hall, which occupies the east half of the second story. There were two hundred and sixty-five covers, on five large tables. The tables were decorated with beautiful flowers, and each plate supported a beautiful rose or a fragrant hyacinth.

The menu consisted of: New York omelets, olives, celery, gherkin pickles, sauterne, French rolls, cold turkey, cranberry sauce, escalloped oysters, ham, roast beef,utton, Saratoga chips, lobster salad, potato salad, shrimp salad, claret, ice cream, assorted cake, fruit, nuts, tea, coffee, milk, cigars.

The banquet over, the Temple Quartette, consisting of Brothers Arthur J. Van Kuran, first tenor; Edgar B. Treat, second tenor; William S. McCune, first bass, and J. F. Barton, second bass, rendered Emerson's "In Silent Mead," in an exceedingly praiseworthy manner, so well in fact that they were encored, and sang "Down in the Corn Field."

Brother Allen then requested Judge Winfield S. Strawn, because of his well known ability, and his long association with the craft, to act as toast master. The judge accepted the position, and performed the duties devolving upon him in a most satisfactory manner.

The first toast was "Nebraska Lodge No. 1," which was responded to by Brother E. R. Duffie, in the following happy manner:

"Mr. Toast Master, Ladies and Brothers: Our goat is 41 years old. We meet to commemorate that event and to celebrate his 41st birthday. He was born 41 years ago tonight at the frontier town of Bellevue, the first of his kind to open his eyes in the then almost unknown and unexplored northwest. He was the first of his kind to make his advent in this part of the country, and for the time being his associates were the wild red men of our western plains, the deer and buffalo,

the wolf and the coyote, with but a little sprinkling of the civilized white men by whom we are surrounded today. His birthplace was a high structure of aristocratic proportions (it was of two stories), and no member of the F. F. V.'s is prouder of his origin or his lineage. He has been nurtured with tenderness and care, and now on his 41st birthday, no lodge can boast a healthier or more vigorous beast.

"If you doubt me, ask those who have attempted to ride. Let us hope that each recurring anniversary will find him in equally good condition and greeted by an ever increasing band of friends; and that when we who are now gathered here shall have gone the way of all the earth, that he will still continue in the service of those who follow us, honored and protected as he has been from the first. May his beard never grow less, be the prayer of all whom he assists to the sanctum of our mysteries.

"But, seriously speaking, worshipful master and brethren, this day forty-one years ago, was an important one for this lodge, and for the Masonic fraternity of Nebraska. The solemn ceremonial of the first dedication of a Masonic lodge, and the installation of its officers took place for the first time within the boundaries of Nebraska, and marked the most important event in the Masonic history of the state. The occasion was not an accident, but a result. It was the result of the devotion of Masons to the principles which are taught in the lodge room, and their desire to see them grow and extend and prosper with the growth and prosperity of the new country in which they had made their new home.

"At that time a little hamlet of log houses had been erected by a band of hardy pioneers at a spot about twelve miles south of where we are now gathered. This little band of settlers from the far east, and the red natives of the great northwest mingled there together, a mixture of the civilized and the barbaric. It was a rude hamlet, but a few log huts, this town of Bellevue, forty-one years ago. Among those sturdy frontiersmen were a few members of the mystic tie, and though far from the homes of their youth, and the altars where their Masonic vows were taken, their fervor had not abated, and they determined to raise in their midst a Masonic altar around which they could again gather.

"It was not an easy or a simple matter at that time and place to establish a lodge, and many a weary mile of almost trackless prairie stretched between them and the nearest grand body on the east, and to the west was a wild, and almost unexplored country, in which no one had yet the hardihood to hope even that any city would rise, or any considerable settlement plant itself. The grand lodge of Illinois was then the nearest to which application could be made for authority to institute a lodge, and to the grand master of that state application was accordingly made.

"The petition was signed by Brothers L. B. Kinney, A. R. Gilmore, P. J. McMahan, George Hepner, A. W. Hollister, A. H. Burch and A. Lockwood. The grand master of Illinois was pleased to grant the petition, and a dispensation was granted in the fall of 1854, and given to Brother Gilmore who had gone to Chicago to receive it. This was the first dispensation for the territory of Nebraska.

"The first regular communication held under this dispensation was on the evening of April 3rd, 1855, in the second story of the old trading post then owned by Brother Peter A. Sarpy. In a room adjoining the lodge was a family of the red natives of the soil, the 'Omahas,' and they displayed quite as much curiosity to know what their pale faced brothers were engaged in as has ever been exhibited by our uninitiated white friends, and to preserve the secrets of the order, use was made of Brother Sarpy's stock of goods, and large mackinaw blankets were hung about the room to darken any peepholes in the walls.

"The first officers of the lodge were: L. B. Kinney, W. M.; L. L. Brown, S. W.; A. Stockwood, J. W.; A. W. Hollister, secretary, and W. Barnum, treasurer.

"It seems to be well authenticated that an earthenware jar was first used to spread the ballot, and white and black beans were the ballots used.

"The first authentic report of membership I am able to find is from the returns of subordinate lodges made to the grand lodge sitting at Brownville in 1860. At that date the roster contained the names of twenty-two master Masons, and one entered apprentice, and from that we have grown to what you now find us, one of the most prosperous in the state, with a membership of 171, surrounded by every comfort and meeting in a spirit of harmony of fellowship and good will which we allow none other to surpass.

"From the little beginning which I have so hastily and feebly described, the order has grown and prospered in this state, until on the 30th day of April, 1894, there were in the state 220 chartered lodges, and seven others acting under dispensations granted by the grand master with a total membership of 11,486.

"It is not needed at this day, and especially at this place, to enter into any discussion of the principles of the order,

or to show that the improvement and advancement of the human race is the one great object that the fraternity seeks, and does accomplish; concededly the oldest institution which the world holds, the growth and development of the order is the best argument that can be advanced to prove its benefits. No institution outlives its time and its usefulness. That Masonry has survived all rude attacks, that it has prospered where most oppressed that it has triumphed over religious intolerance and bigotry, that it has out-lived political persecution and the warfare of political tyrants, that it has prospered most where political and religious freedom most abound is its strongest commendation to a progressive and an enlightened people.

"I know you will all join with me in wishing a long and abundant prosperity to Nebraska Lodge No. 1."

"Our worthy brother was frequently interrupted with laughter and applause. The next toast was "Our Sister Lodges," which was responded to in a very happy vein by Brother W. W. Keyser, master of St. John's Lodge. The judge spoke substantially as follows:

"Mr. Toastmaster, Brothers and Ladies—Probably I had better say Brothers and Sisters—I do not know why I was selected to respond to this toast. Now, there is Bro. Parker, just as able and a great deal more handsome, and Bro. Gipson, who has a great deal more hair. You might have called on them, but you did not, so I shall do the best I can. I know you do not expect a great deal from me this evening, in fact the committee which waited on me and asked me to respond to this toast, after being assured that I had no time to prepare a speech, that my time was completely occupied, but my time with charming assurance that we don't expect much from you. So, with that understanding, I agreed that I would respond, but after the committee had retired I got to thinking about it, about what they had said, 'we don't expect much from you,' and I felt a good deal like I imagine the gentleman who went to a photograph gallery in a frontier town to get some pictures taken. The photographer had not been having very good luck for several days, in fact he had spoiled about every negative he had made, so when he got the customer seated and everything was ready, he appeared before the scenes with a large horse pistol and remarked in a way that was not to be misconstrued, 'Now, you look pleasant.' As I said, I have had no time to prepare anything, and you will excuse me if I do not do the subject justice. I was speaking to my wife this evening, asking her what I should say and she inquired what toast I was to respond to and I said "Our Sister Lodges." She then wanted to know why we called them sister lodges and I told her I did not know, unless it was because they talked so much. You who are acquainted with my wife will notice she is not here tonight. I do not know that I can give you any reason why we call them sister lodges. Brother Strawn has said Nebraska Lodge No. 1 was the mother lodge of all the lodges, yet she is the daughter of the grand lodge. Probably he can tell you how the daughter of the grand lodge can be its own mother. He has said that Nebraska Lodge was the oldest and the best lodge in the state. That remark reminded me of two gentlemen who were engaged in a law suit. They got to discussing their attorneys, and one of them said "I've got the best attorney in the city of Omaha,"—probably he had retained Brother Strawn; I do not know that he had; and the other fellow retorted, "you can't prove it." "I don't have to," said the other gentleman, "he'll admit it." That is what our brother has done for Nebraska Lodge, he has admitted it. But, while we all admire Nebraska Lodge, we do not forget there are other lodges, other sisters, younger and stronger if not more beautiful, in Nebraska. I believe it has been stated that there are more than 200 in the state. Of that number Omaha contributes a number. We have Capital Lodge, a magnificent young sister, the strongest, in point of numbers, of them all. We have Covert Lodge, and St. John's Lodge, and the lodge at South Omaha, which go to make up the sisterhood. Of them we are also proud. And now, my brothers, and ladies I hope you will not expect me to continue longer. There are many things I could say, and many things I should like to say, but as other toasts are to be responded to I shall take my seat after telling you that I feel very much as the young lady did, whose young man, after weeks of suspense, finally mustered up sufficient courage to ask her to be his wife. She told him she would, and was much obliged, too." I am much obliged for this opportunity to meet with you to commemorate this event, and I hope Nebraska Lodge No. 1 may see many more such anniversaries, and that she may always prosper."

The judge's speech was such a one as would have put every body in the best of spirits, if they had not already been in that state. As they were already in that happy frame of mind, they applauded, laughed and waited for the next number on the programme, which consisted of a song, "In Absence," by Dudley Buck, and was rendered in a masterly manner by the Temple Quartette.

The next toast was "Our Absent Members." The response was made by Rev. W. P. Murray.

Brother Murray prefaced his answer proper with a query as to why he, probably the youngest Mason in the hall, one who had hardly learned to talk, should have been selected to respond to this toast. It may have been as it is in the family when the youngest member learns to walk, you wanted to see how well I could talk. When I was informed that I was to speak of "Our Absent Brothers" I thought of writing what I desired to say and read it here tonight, but upon reflecting I thought if it was presumptuous for a child who had only learned to talk to attempt to speak, how much more presumptuous would it be for that child to attempt to write?

He then continued:

"Unlike the coffin at the Egyptian feast, it is not my lot this evening to darkly remind you of mortality, but to speak the good cheer of immortality. I come not to put out the lights of the feast, but as a taper-bearer, whose opportunity it is to light candles of immortal hope in every heart.

"Our departed brothers, whose white souls find fellowship together now in a higher lodge than this—if, and why not, their presence in spirit be invoked by me tonight to throw over this banquet board no pall of death, but shed the bright radiance of celestial life. Unworthy we, in truth, if gathering here in fraternal festivity we grudge their stainless memories place, or feel their recalled faces unwelcome.

Yet the words, departed brothers, are too sadly true. Alas! except in memory they no more return. In vain we scan the board for the familiar face or listen for the wonted voice. This is death's cruel decree.

"Say's Tennyson in that matchless regulum of his 'In Memoriam':

"I wage not any feud with death,
For changes wrought on form or face,
No lower life that earth's embrace
May loved with him can fright my faith,
Nor blame I death because he bear
The use of virtue out of earth.
I know transplanted human worth,
Will bloom to profit elsewhere.

For this alone on death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart,
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak."

"It is our grief tonight that we are deprived of the fellowship of our 'de-

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Notice of Incorporation of James A. Clark Company.

Notice is hereby given that a corporation has been organized under the general statutes of the state of Nebraska, in the name and for the purpose hereinafter specified, and its articles of incorporation were on the 15th day of December, 1894, filed in the office of the county clerk of Douglas county, Nebraska:

ARTICLE I.
The name of the corporation is "James A. Clark Company," and its principal place of business is in the city of Omaha, Douglas county, Nebraska.

ARTICLE II.
The general nature of the business to be transacted by said corporation shall be buying and selling Farm Produce, Fruits, Nuts, Butter, Eggs, Chickens, Turkeys, Ducks, Geese, Calves, and all Wild Fowls and Animals. Also to buy and sell the above named produce on commission, and in fact to do a general commission business, and the corporation shall also have the power and authority to buy, construct, rent or lease necessary real estate and buildings to carry on its business and to bind or mortgage the same.

ARTICLE III.
The authorized capital stock shall be five thousand dollars (\$5,000) divided into shares of one hundred dollars (\$100) each and to be fully paid up at the time of issuance. The existence of this corporation shall continue on the 15th day of April, 1895, and continue during the period of twenty (20) years, unless sooner dissolved by a vote of the stockholders holding two-thirds of the capital stock issued.

ARTICLE IV.
The highest amount of indebtedness to which said corporation shall at any time subject itself shall not be more than an amount equal to two-thirds of its paid up capital stock, and in no event shall the private property of said stockholders be liable for the indebtedness of said corporation.

ARTICLE V.
The officers of said corporation shall be conducted by a board of three directors; President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

In testimony whereof, said James A. Clark Company have caused this notice to be prepared and published.
JAMES A. CLARK COMPANY.
By JAMES A. CLARK,
President,
B. RATEKIS,
Secretary. 2-15-4