

“AN ADDRESS, DELIVERED TO PHOENIX LODGE NO. 8 AT THE DEDICATION OF THEIR PRESENT LODGE BUILDING BY JAMES BANKS, JUNE 24, A. L. 5858, A. D. 1858.”

FORWARD

This transcript has been retyped as true as possible to the 1904 reprint of the original.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, Officers and Members of Phoenix Lodge, No. 8:

The dedication of a new Masonic edifice for Phoenix Lodge, No. 8, is an event of no common occurrence – an event that calls up recollections of the past and suggests an inquiry into the origin of Masonry in your town, and dictates a tribute to the memory of the early Fathers, whose names add a lustre to the roll of the Workmen of the Temple.

In 1787 Union Lodge of Fayetteville was represented by James Porterfield, in the convention that assembled in the town of Tarboro to resuscitate the Grand Lodge of North Carolina, that had been dormant during the Revolutionary war. On that occasion eight lodges were represented, a temporary constitution and by-laws adopted, and the following officers elected, viz.:

The W. M., His Excellency, Samuel Johnson, G. M.; the R. W., the Honorable Richard Caswell, D. G. M.; The R. W., Michael Payne, G. S. W.; the R. W., John Mare, G. J. W.; the R. W., Abner Neale, G. Treasurer; the R. W., Secretary of State, James Glasgow, G. Secretary.

In July, 1788, a convention was held in Hillsboro to deliberate on the adoption or rejection of the Constitution of the United States. At the same time and place a communication of the Grand Lodge was called. The Grand Master of the lodge was elected president of the convention. No business of importance was transacted by the lodge. The convention determined to adopt the United States Constitution and both bodies adjourned.

On the 3d day of November, 1788, the Legislature met in Fayetteville, surrounded by all the pomp and splendor decorated for the occasion, distinguished visitors from other States were in attendance, striving to influence public opinion to the adoption of the Constitution. Old and Bow streets presented a holiday appearance, Scotch Town wore its sunniest aspect, and Cross Creek maidens – lovely then as now, and now as then – bestowed their sweetest glances, and brightest smiles on the dignitaries of State, most of whom had achieved renown in the War of Independence, then recently brought to a happy close.

On the 17th of November, 1788, a communication of the Grand Lodge was held in Fayetteville, and neither the cares of State nor the smile of woman prevented the members from a punctual attendance on its deliberations. His Excellency, Governor Johnson, left his chair of State to fill the “Oriental Throne,” Ex-Governor Caswell nightly filled the west, James Glasgow, Secretary of State, promptly responded from his station ON THE LEFT, while Alex. Martin,

then Speaker of Senate, and subsequently Governor of the State, and a host of others, filled to overflowing the recently erected Masonic Temple on Green street.

At this communication it was moved by Bro. Stephen Cabarrus that Bros. James Porterfield and John Winslow act as a committee in having a Masonic dinner prepared and furnished at Barge's Hotel on Bow street, and that the visiting brethren be admitted to join the procession and participate in the dinner.

The records of the Grand Lodge show that Joseph Douglass, Henry Montfort, Duncan McAuslan, James Robertson, Benj. Douglass, Thomas Stewart, Wm. McCauley, Richard Singleton, Peter Penny, Alex. Drongoole, James Mitherow, Ambrose Ramsey, John Kingsborough, William Porter, Guilford Dudley, A. Hodge, Thomas Davis, William Randall, Frederick Hargett, Isaer Gregory, Alex Martin, William Goudy, Curtis Jones, Edward Jones, John Sibley and John Macon were introduced to the lodge and joined the procession, which moved to Barge's Tavern, where the evening was spent in the greatest harmony, festivity and decorum, after which the brethren returned in the same order to the lodge-room and respectively retired. At this communication Governor Johnson declined a re-election, and was succeeded as M. W. G. M. by the Ex-Governor Caswell. It was during this session of the Grand Lodge that a petition was presented from the brethren in Fayetteville, praying that the name of their lodge be changed from Union to Phoenix, and suggesting James Porterfield as W. M., John Winslow, S. W., and Thomas Davis, J. W. The prayer was granted and Phoenix Lodge dates her existence from November 17th 1788, and is now enjoying the honors and immunities awarded to three score and ten years.

In November, 1789, Fayetteville was filled to overflowing, and was the centre of interest to many an anxious heart. The Grand Lodge and the Legislature were both in session, as well as the Convention that did adopt the Constitution of the United States, under which we have so long and so happily lived. IN the midst of the bustle and excitement that prevailed, tidings reached town that the Right Worshipful, Richard Caswell, Grand Master of North Carolina, had breathed his last, on the 10th of November, 1789. Brothers Guion, Stokes and Cabarrus were appointed a committee to report resolutions expressive of the melancholy feelings of the Grand Lodge on the death of so good a Mason and so great a man. The committee reported and regulated the mode of mourning to be observed on a given day, by all the lodges in the State, and prescribed the religious and devotional exercises each lodge was to observe.

The Grand Lodge formed into procession, the Legislature adjourned, the Convention suspended its deliberations and all those bodies, together with the citizens generally, marched from Phoenix Lodge-room to the State House 'midst the tolling of Barfge's Tavern bell (the only bell in town) and paid the last tribute of respect to the memory of Richard Caswell, first Governor of North Carolina under the Constitution, second Grand Master of the State, one of the heroes of Moore's Creek battle, and a member of the committee who prepared and reported the Bill of Rights, the "Magna Charta" of our political and personal freedom.

It thus seems that Phoenix Lodge, No. 8, has a glorious past history, to which her members can point with pleasure and pride. She was one of eight lodges which resuscitated the dormant Grand Lodge. Her lodge-room was the temple in which that honored and dignified

body often met. Her infant years were guided, directed and instructed by such men as Johnson, Caswell, Martin and Cabarrus – men who have stamped their names on the page of history, as well as on the fairest portions of the State.

In her early career the exuberant joy of Phoenix Lodge was smothered and her members bathed in tears as he announcement was made within her walls that Richard Caswell was no more, and that funeral obsequies should be paid his memory, in the presence of the representatives of the people of the State, within her lodge. Yet, in a few days thereafter, the hearts of all her members were gladdened and rejoiced as the shouts of the multitude, assembled round the State House, reverberated throughout the lodge in tones that were echoed and re-echoed from the banks of Cross Creek and Cape Fear. The Constitution of the United States has been adopted, North Carolina has wheeled into line with her sister sovereigns, and her sons and daughters have become the sons and daughters of the Union, and countrymen of Hamilton, Hancock, Franklin and Washington, entitled to the protection of the Stars and Stripes that then, as now, floated in triumph over land and over sea, making the Union a guarantee of safety to the brave and the free. It will then be seen that Phoenix Lodge, No. 8, has acted no unimportant part in the history of the Old North State. She was one of eight lodges that called into existence the Grand Lodge; one of eight that paid funeral honors to the first Governor of the State; one of eight, and the chief mourner on the death of Grand Master Caswell; one of eight that made the welkin ring when North Carolina adopted the United States Constitution and declared liberty and union, now and forever, one and inseparable within her borders.

True, in her early years, lights and shadows alternately prevailed. Now the shouts for joy on the inauguration of Bro. George Washington as President of the United States; but again, in the inscrutable wisdom of Divine Providence, he heart is made sad as she joins the nations' wail upon his death and dropped upon the new-made grave the tear of fraternal sorrow that unbidden dimmed the eye on the patriot Mason's death.

From this brief review it appears that Phoenix Lodge No. 8, was organized and called into existence by the men of the Revolution – the Patriot Fathers of the Republic; that her origin is coeval with that of the Grand Lodge, and anterior to the time North Carolina joined the Union. The rank she assumed then on the calendar of Masonry she yet retains; the career she began then is yet continued and will be, my brethren, if you are true to yourselves, true to her past memory, and true to the principles and precepts taught within her venerated walls.

From this brief review we learn further that whenever government was established, a written Constitution adopted, and North Carolina had joined the union, Phoenix Lodge retired to the shades of her lodge-room, and we no longer find her name associated or interwoven with State or national affairs, and for her subsequent history we are dependent on the archives of the lodge.

Fortunately for you, an older and a better Mason – Bro. E. L. Winslow, P. W. M. – has written a history of your lodge. The names of its officers and members will live forever in his pages; there and in the inner chamber of the temple their names will be preserved and their memories revered, and to none is more honor paid than to James Porterfield and John Winslow, the first officers of the lodge.

James Porterfield was raised in Fayetteville, and espoused the Whig cause in the Revolutionary struggle, and served his country as a true soldier. He was present at the battle of Camden, and retired to private life when peace was attained. He lived on what is known as the McLauren lot, on the west side of St. James Square, where he entertained hospitably in his bachelor abode all who favored him with a call. He was a successful merchant, and one of the Merchant Princes of Green street. He died in 1795, and his estate was inherited by his brother John and his sister Ellana, who was married to Thomas Owen, of Bladen, father of Governor John and General James Owen. During his lifetime Phoenix Lodge flourished and averaged about sixty members. From the organization of the lodge to his death he was honored by being elected Master. On his death his mantle fell upon John Winslow, who, in all respects, was worthy to succeed him in the honors and the confidence of the lodge, over which he presided nearly twenty years, and in which his venerated picture has been suspended nearly forty years more.

William B. Grove was a contemporary and Masonic companion of the men just named, and his liberality was as unbounded in Masonic charities as it was in the hospitality that characterized his fireside. He represented the Fayetteville District in Congress and died in 1818, mourned by all who knew and appreciated his valor, patriotism, goodness and worth.

But time will not permit me, even to enumerate the roll of the Temple, much less can I recount their many virtues, exhibited in a long and honorable career, and must content myself by a brief attention to the names of those members whose public services have given them State and national reputations.

High upon the roll of the distinguished sons stands the name of John Louis Taylor, a native of Ireland, who, when quite a young man, settled in Fayetteville and soon rose to eminence in the profession of law. In 1792, '93 and '94, he represented Fayetteville in the Legislature of the State with signal ability and success. In 1798 he was elected one of the Judges of the Superior Court, and in 1810 was chosen Chief Justice of the Court of Conference. In 1818 he was elected one of the Judges of the Supreme Court, and by his associates was assigned the position of Chief Justice, which station he filled with honor to himself and to the manifest interest of the State until January 1829, when, in the midst of his labors, he was called to rest, and in the twilight of a Sabbath evening he was interred with Masonic honors and his death deplored by the people of the State.

Chief Justice Taylor was the companion of James Porterfield, John Winslow, W. B. Grove, David Anderson and Robert Donaldson, and with them aided in the erection the old and venerable building which your new and elegant structure has displaced. He was one of the earliest and probably the ablest lecturers the Grand Lodge ever commissioned.

In 1797 a constitution was prepared by Wm. R. Davie, James Glasgow and Robert Williams, which was adopted by the Grand Lodge. In the subordinate Lodges John Louis Taylor labored zealously for its adoption; success crowned his efforts, and in 1802 he was elected to preside over the destiny of the Grand Lodge, a position he resigned in 1805 and was succeeded by Judge Hall.

In 1804 Judge Taylor held a Superior Court in Fayetteville, and availed himself of the pleasure of visiting Phoenix Lodge. His old companion, John Winslow, filled the East and gladly welcomed him on his return to his mother lodge, bearing with him as he did the brightest honors of the craft, being at the time Grand Master of the State. He was received with the time-honored ceremonies awarded to his rank and station and in return addressed the lodge in an elegant and eloquent manner, the traditional history of which has tended to keep green his memory in the lodge, and to inspire every member with an honest pride in the name of Bro. John Louis Taylor.

William Duffy is another of the early Masons Phoenix Lodge produced. In the lodge he was an efficient workman, and for some years was its representative in the Grand Lodge, and in 1805 and '06 was elected G. J. W. About the latter period of the last century he settled in Fayetteville and soon acquired distinction at the bar. Among those who read law under Mr. Duffy may be named Judge Murphy, W. R. King, late Vice-President of the United States, and Colin Shaw, the first native of Cumberland who read and practiced law. In 1806 Duffy represented Fayetteville in the Legislature of the State. He was an Irishman by birth, and was much indebted to the kindness of John Haywood, Treasurer of the State. Duffy had witnessed the splendid displays of Davie and Moore, had profited by their example, was deemed one of the finest readers in North Carolina and devoted much his time to literary pursuits, and through Chatham county contains his ashes, yet his memory is cherished in Cumberland, and especially is it revered by Phoenix Lodge, for which he retained a feeling of veneration throughout life.

John A. Cameron is another son of Phoenix Lodge, who labored for her prosperity, and zealously endeavored to make her career illustrious. He represented Fayetteville in the Legislature in 1810, '11, '12, and '20, and 1820 and '21 was elected Grand Master of the Grand Lodge. He was appointed United States Consul to Vera Cruz, and subsequently United States Judge in Florida. He perished in the ill-fated steamer, Pulaski, on the 12th of June, 1838. He was a brilliant writer, an accomplished scholar, and the memory of his princely hospitality is often mentioned in our town. His first wife sleeps the sleep of death in Ardrossan Graveyard, Scotland, on the banks of the lovely Clyde, within a mile of your speaker's native place. A beautiful monument is erected to her memory, and, long before your speaker contemplated casting his lot among you, Fayetteville was a familiar sound. His last wife was recently interred in yonder graveyard, full of years and full of honor, while he sleeps in the Atlantic sea that rolls between.

Another of the sons of Phoenix Lodge, who has added the lustre of his own bright name to her roll of workmen, is Robert Strange, who, from 1820 to 1854, was an active, zealous and efficient member, always ready to speak or labor in her behalf, and who highly valued the moral teaching and sublime principles of the order. He was a native of Virginia, settled in Fayetteville in 1815, and soon attained eminence and distinction at the bar. He frequently represented Phoenix Lodge in the communications of the Grand Lodge and in 1823 and '24, was elected Grand Master of the State, and ably discharged the duties of that exalted station. In 1825, when General LaFayette visited our town, Robert Strange was Commandant of the Fayetteville Independent Light Infantry Company, consequently chief of his body guard, and when LaFayette, under the escort of Duncan MacRae and Hon. John D. Toomer, paid a visit to

Phoenix Lodge, he was surprised to find the commander of that noble corps presiding as Master of the lodge, ready to welcome his presence among the Sons of Light. In 1821, '22, '23 and '26 Robert Strange represented Fayetteville in the Legislature. In the latter years he was elected one of the Judges of the Superior Court, and continued to preside with dignity and ability 'till, in 1836, he was elected by the Legislature of North Carolina to the Senate of the United States. In that new and untried theatre he gathered fresh laurels, but resigned in consequence of instructions in 1840 and returned to the bar of which he was one of the most eminent and distinguished members. For many years he served his State faithfully and well as solicitor of the fifth judicial circuit. His literary attainments were of a high order. His various addresses before seminaries of learning and upon public occasions, it collected and republished, would add much to the literary reputation of our town. In his intercourse with his brother Masons he was affable and polite. Possessed of a commanding presence, graceful address and elegant manners, he shone as the polished and accomplished gentleman in every circle in which he moved, but on the 19th of July, 1854, death called him from our midst, and with grief-stricken hearts and tearful eyes we laid his remains to rest in the bosom of his much loved Myrtle Hill, where the greater portion of his life was spent.

About 1805 William R. King, late Vice-President of the United States, was initiated into the mysteries of Masonry Phoenix Lodge, and, although his fame and history belong to the nation, yet they are nowhere cherished with more veneration than by the members of Phoenix Lodge, as was evidenced by the funeral obsequies paid his remains in 1854. His first Masonic apron was painted, at his personal request, by my friend, Mrs. Ellen McIntyre, when but thirteen years old, together with two others for his friends.

Another name that can never die: General Edmund P. Gaines in early life was made a Mason in Phoenix Lodge. In 1796-'97 he was stationed with United States troops near Averagesboro, in Cumberland county. Business often led him to Fayetteville, and among the kind and hospitable spirits that presided over the Lodge he formed intimacies and friendships that but expired with their lives.

In this catalogue of names, who have done honor and good service to Phoenix Lodge, the name of Thomas L. Hybart is entitled to honorable mention, not so much because he was possessed of transcendent talents, or shone conspicuously in public life, but because he was a true Mason and loved the memory of the past history of the lodge and served with perseverance and fidelity as Worshipful Master from 1831 to 1844. During the term of his office bitter partisan political factions assailed the institutions of Masonry; reckless and malicious slanders threatened to destroy the fair fabric of many centuries' creation; the lukewarm and timid deserted the institution; few knocked for admission within her gates; north and south, east and west, everywhere throughout the Union, charters were surrendered and lodges were broken up before the onset of political demagogues.

Phoenix Lodge, No. 8, experienced the violence of the assault; her lamp flickered in the socket, but Thomas L. Hybart resolved that it should not be extinguished; that her regular meetings should be held; that her ancient charter should not be forfeited, and he gathered around him good and true Masons – men who loved the institution for itself – and by the attendance of such men as Henry McLean, Robert McIntyre, William Widdifield, Joseph Arey, John Selph,

John McRae, William Mitchell, and last, but not least, Esek Arnold and Rev. Colin McIver, the chartered privileges of Phoenix Lodge, No. 8, were preserved and handed down to us untarnished and unimpaired. For his indomitable perseverance in the dark and trying period in her history Phoenix Lodge owes the memory of Thomas L. Hybart a debt of gratitude; a debt the measure of which will increase with the lapse of time. He was a sound lawyer, active and zealous in any cause in which he was engaged, and represented Fayetteville in the Legislature of the State in 1835, the last time the town was entitled to a borough member. He died in 1846 and was buried with Masonic honors January 2, 1847, and sleeps the sleep of death in yonder graveyard within sound of the same stream that ripples past your lodge-room.

These are a few of the bright names that are to be found on the roll of Phoenix Lodge, No. 8. But we do not mean to convey the idea that they were better men or more useful and devoted Masons than many others that are to be found in the address of Past Master Winslow, and to whose history and memories time will not permit me to refer.

In 1793 James Hogg, a zealous and worthy Mason, conveyed to the lodge the land on which your new and beautiful edifice now stands. In that year the members of the lodge erected the building which you have recently taken down. Among those who most liberally contributed to its erection were David Anderson, Robert Donaldson, Guilford Dudley, Lee De Keyser, Richard Cochran, Robinson Mumford, Duncan McRae, Duncan McAuslan, Isaac Hawley, Samuel Murley, Elisha Stedman, W. B. Grove, John Winslow, John McMillan, James McIntyre, John Kelly and Archibald McLean. IN the erection of a Masonic temple they had an eye to the mental and moral training of the young, and to intellectual enjoyment of the citizens generally, and provided ample space for a commodious school room and theatre. The principal of the school for many years was the eminently distinguished John Robinson, D. D., a minister of the Presbyterian denomination, a man of dignified deportment, commanding presence and elegant address, in whom were blended soft and winning manners and firmness of character rarely equaled. He was fortunate in securing the affection of his pupils and advancing them rapidly. He died some years since, and those of his scholars who lived in our midst erected to his memory a tablet and were permitted to place it in the vestibule of the Presbyterian church.

For a portion of the time W. B. Meroney, a worthy Mason, acted as assistant to Dr. Robinson and subsequently as principal. He was a man of remarkable attainments, elegant address, and one of the most accomplished readers of his age, and was accustomed on Sabbath – in the absence of pastors – to read Blain’s Sermons to the manifest delight and improvement of his hearers. Under Dr. Robinson, Mr. Meroney, Rev. W. L. Ferrer, A. Flinn and Colin McRae, the Fayetteville school acquired an unprecedented popularity, scholars flocked from all quarters of the State, and from adjoining States, and men have been trained for positions of usefulness, honor, profit and trust within your old Masonic building. From that venerable building men have gone forth into the world and been distinguished for eloquence, learning and moral worth. John D. Eccles and Colin Shaw have ably represented us in the legislative halls of the State. John Owen has presided over the destiny of the Old North State as one of its most accomplished Governors, while Willie P. Mangum, on the bench of the Superior Court, and as Senator from North Carolina in the Senate of the United States, has gained a lasting national fame. In the navy the Stars and Stripes have been borne aloft in triumph on every sea, upheld by William H. Harrington, Owen Davis and Joshua Cochrane, while the embryo republic of Mexico had no

more daring spirit than Alexander Hamilton McRae, who early fell a martyr, in his career of glory, and the monument to whose worth now adorns your graveyard. In the army, in the war of 1812, John P. Leonard, Charles P. Mallett, James Baker, Lewis Barge and Thomas McRackan marched at the tap of the drum to repel an expected invasion of our soil, and by their soldier-like bearing aided in casting around the Fayetteville Light Infantry Company that halo of veneration she now so modestly wears, while at New Orleans General Jackson had no more daring soldier in his ranks to repel the British than Robert Henry Sibley, who was trained within those walls and whose father, John Sibley, was an honored member of the lodge. In the Congress of the United States General James Owen has represented his district with credit and manifest ability, while William R. King has honored his alma mater by acquiring distinction and renown in the Legislature of his native State, in the House of Representatives and Senate of the United States, as Minister plenipotentiary to France, and was finally honored by being elected Vice-President of the United States.

Within your venerable walls, too, the daughters of North Carolina were trained for spheres of usefulness and honor under the gifted Miss Taylor and others of a later period. Some of those who were the beloved companions of William R. King, John D. Eccles, C. P. Mallett, John McRae and William Sibley still linger in our midst and impart the dignity of their characters to their grandchildren, and some others exhibit the dignified courtesy and graceful congee in a manner that excites the admiration of young or old; others have wandered far, far from Cross Creek and the loved Cape Fear, and have imparted the loveliness of their characters to a new generation in other States, and in the capitol of the nation have been extolled for their wit, grace and beauty, and have led the poets of our country to celebrate their charms as is done in the beautiful lines of which "Johnson's wife of Louisiana" forms the chorus of a song that immortalizes the name of Miss Sibley, who was educated within the walls of Phoenix Lodge.

In that part of the building devoted to the theatre, the celebrated Hardinge acted well his part. There, too, Tunbull, the bosom crony of the poet Robert Burns, has delighted field have each triumphantly walked the boards, while many a beautiful bouquet, in a spirit of gallantry, has been showered at the feet of Mr.s Plaude and daughter, and celebrated Mrs. Barret, and the no less distinguished Clara Fisher. There, too, the Thalian Association performed, and the public assembled to witness the triumph of J. D. Eccles, R. H. Sibley, John McRae, J. M. Wright, C. P. Mallett and John P. Leonard, as each excelled in his particular line the histrionic art. In this connection it is due to the Thalian Association to say that with a laudable zeal they kept up their organization until, from the profits of their earnings, they contributed largely to the erection of the academy on Green street that was destroyed by the fire of 1831. For a number of years the theatre portion of the Masonic building continued the principal, if not the only place of amusement, the town afforded. There strolling players performed; there musicians and dancers exhibited their respective feats of skill; there, too, Allan Ramsey Ferguson, the wandering piper, exhibiting himself as a highland chief, "in the garb of old Gaul," and discoursed the music of his native land on the bagpipes whose tones echoed and re-echoed throughout its vaulted roof, and occasionally the Blue Lodge and Chapter rooms were diverted from their accustomed use and opened to the friends of Terpsichore to trip it on the light fantastic toe.

Again, when the fire of 1831 laid waste the temple, dedicated to the Most High, the lodge-room was tendered to and occupied by one of our religious denominations as a place of worship, from which the incense of pure and upright hearts ascended to the throne of grace.

From this brief and imperfect review of the reminiscences and history of Phoenix Lodge, No. 8 – a building around which so many of the recollections and memories of the past still linger – can we wonder that some of the older and even some of the younger members of the lodge were averse to pulling it down, and with zeal and warmth battled for its longer existence and urged their views in tones and sentiments nearly akin to those of Morris in his beautiful ballad:

Woodman, spare that tree,
Touch not a single bough,
In youth it shelter'd me,
And I'll protect it now;
'Twas my forefather's hand
That placed it near his cot;
There, woodman, let it stand,
Thy ax shall harm it not.

That old familiar tree,
Whose glory and renown
Are spread o'er land and sea –
And wouldst thou hack it down?
Woodman, forbear thy stroke,
Cut not its earth-bound ties.
Oh! Spare that aged oak,
Now towering to the skies!

When but an idle boy,
I sought its grateful shade;
In all their gushing joy,
Here too, my sisters play'd.
My mother kiss'd me here;
My father press'd my hand –
Forgive this foolish tear,
But let the old oak stand!

To the anxiety, manifested by the members of Phoenix Lodge, to let that old house stand, I can bear honorable testimony, but decay had fastened upon its vitals; it became unsafe to be tenanted or used for lodge purposes. The only thing left us to do, we have done; we have reared a new and beautiful building upon the old site, and, in dedicating the new lodge, your spokesman has endeavored to preserve the history of the old, by associating with it, in this narrative, the names of her sons and distinguished visitors; names which the world nor the lord will ever suffer to die.

The task, undertaken at the too partial and unanimous request of the lodge, I have discharged to the best of my ability, interrupted as I have been by the pressure of other cares and other pressing obligations, but I cannot resume my seat without congratulating Phoenix Lodge on

its present prosperous condition; she has a full membership, a new Masonic edifice, and above all, possesses in an eminent degree the confidence and esteem of a community where, for three score years and ten, the character and demeanor of her members has been subjected to the strictest scrutiny.

Through the kindness of General Warren Winslow, who is ever mindful of all that reflects light on the past history of the town, I am enabled to present you, from a newspaper of that day, an account of the original dedication of Phoenix Lodge.

FAYETTEVILLE, JUNE 25, 1793

Yesterday being the anniversary of St. John the Baptist, the brethren of Phoenix Lodge of Ancient York Masons met at their room at 10 o'clock in order to add to the celebration of the day, by laying the corner-stone of the new lodge, intended to be built for the craft. After forming the procession they marched from the lodge-room to the lot, the donation of Brother Hogg, on which the building is to be erected in the following order:

Two Tilers, the three Lights, a Brother, the Architect, with a plan of the building, the standard of Masonry properly supported, Past Officers, the Secretary, the Treasurer, Senior and Junior Wardens, Chaplain, Master with the inscription.

On arriving the brethren passed three times round it, and then formed a right angle at the corner. The Architect placed the stone and the Master tried it by the square. The Senior and Junior Wardens then presented the level and plumb, by which the Master also tried the stone, and finding it to be just, he presented the different tools to the Architect that he might complete the building on the same level principles with which the corner-stone was laid.

The brethren then joined in the honors of Masons and reformed the procession; they again passed from thence round the ground. The procession as above formed moved to the church, where Rev. Brother Kerr delivered an elegant discourse particularly adapted to the occasion. The craft then returned to the lodge-room, and, after partaking of an elegant entertainment, they closed the day with that literary and fraternal affection characteristic of their most ancient and honorable institution.

The following is the inscription, which was inclosed in a phial, sealed hermetically, and placed in the stone:

“The Phoenix Lodge, No. 8, of Fayetteville, laid the first stone of Free Masons Hall, on the 24th day of June, in the year of Masonry, 5793, the year of our Lord, 1793, the Independency of the United States, seventeen, under the presidency of George Washington, at which time, supported by the favor and patronage of illustrious, wise and learned men throughout the world, the society of Free Masonry was held in the highest estimation. From heaven descended. Know thyself.

Such were the dedication services in 1793. The actors, one after another, have passed to their final rest; none who took part in those services stand in your ranks today.

But, in your dedication services today, you have been honored with the presence of the Independent Light Infantry Company, an organization but of a year's standing yesterday, yet one that bids fair to be a noble companion-in-arms to the old and veteran company that has so long existed in town. The kindly sympathy existing in your behalf has collected together this large assembly of the sons and daughters of the place.

In your new edifice, and in your future conduct, may you never so act as to lessen the respect now entertained for you; then will your career be glorious and becoming the memory of the past; a past in which you all feel a pious and patriotic pride, and which is alike honorable to your heads and hearts, and is a certain guarantee of the halo of glory that will yet be gathered to, and in the distant future decorate, the venerable brows of Phoenix Lodge, No. 8.