

**“AN ADDRESS, DELIVERED TO PHOENIX LODGE NO. 8 BY WILLIAM L. (BILL)
RAMSEY, DECEMBER, 1949.”**

My Brethren,

Permit me again to express my deep and sincere appreciation for the high honor that you so generously bestowed upon me in being permitted to serve you as best I could as Master for the past year 1949. This honor is the highest that you could bestow upon any member, and coming from you my brethren, it is indeed an exalted and honored position, and I consider it second to none in the honors that have come my way. I am grateful and very humble and shall ever be thankful to you. It carried many responsibilities, and in completing that responsibility I come with my report as to the activities for the past year. In the work that I do for a livelihood, many were the times, that I had to travel over some 200 to 400 miles to attend the regular and special communications, but this was a pleasant and beneficial experience, and I was well paid for the effort put forth, for you greeted me as a friend and brother. During my year as Master, I have tried to make this Lodge, Phoenix Lodge, a FRIENDLY LODGE, and shall ever remember the many happy associations with you, and that I will be judged by what I tried to do—not by what I have done.

To have been Master of Phoenix Lodge is to my way of thinking a distinction, for it has a long and honorable record. It was formerly known as UNION LODGE, the basis or reason for the change being unknown. The change was made November 17, 1788, when the GRAND LODGE of NORTH CAROLINA was formed. Union Lodge in Fayetteville had issued a call, dated January 1, 1787, to the several Lodges in the State to meet at Fayetteville on St. John's Day, June 24, 1787, for the purpose of organizing a Grand Lodge. But owing to the great distances and the small intercourse between different parts of the State, insufficient representation was present in Fayetteville, and a second meeting was called to be held in Tarboro in December 1787. It was at this meeting that the Grand Lodge of North Carolina was formed.

There was considerable argument over the numbers to be assigned the various Lodges. St. John's in Wilmington was assigned No. 1 on the basis of its Charter from the Grand Lodge of England in 1755. Phoenix or Union Lodge, had insufficient records to substantiate claim to lower than No. 8. However, it is generally supposed that a Lodge, Union Lodge, later known as Phoenix, was organized about 1736 at the time of the settlement of the CROSS CREEK section by the migration of the Highland Scots. At the time of this migration, the Grand Lodge of Scotland had not been formed, nor was it necessary to obtain a charter from any Grand Lodge, seven or more Masons being sufficient to organize a Lodge. The Scots who settled this section were very loyal to the ties that bound them to their native land. It is felt that had the Grand Lodge of Scotland then been in existence, they would have obtained a charter from it; none having been obtained it is considered additional evidence that Union Lodge, or Phoenix Lodge antedated the formation of that Grand Lodge. It is true that the Grand Lodge of England was organized about 1717, but the Highland Scots in the Cross Cree-Cape Fear section would hardly acknowledge allegiance to this Grand Lodge.

James Hogg, the benefactor of the Lodge, who deeded its present property in 1793, had long been in this country, and by reputation was an ardent Mason. It is generally supposed he would have deeded the property only to a Lodge of long standing at that time. It is noted that in the deed from Hogg, the word Phoenix is spelled Phenix.

Phoenix Lodge No. 8 has furnished five (5) Grand Masters of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina, one of whom served two terms. Bro. John Lewis Taylor was elected to serve as Grand Master in 1802 and held office for three (3) years, again in 1814 for another three (3) years. He was also Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina.

Bro. John A. Cameron was initiated February 10, 1810, passed April 28 1810 and received the Degree Master Mason June 2 1810 and served as Grand Master from December 10, 1820-1821.

Bro. Robert Strange was Grand Master in 1822-24, and Bro. John Huske Anderson, who served as Grand Master in 1826. Bro. Anderson was a Past Master of Phoenix Lodge, and rose to receive most of the Honors that Masonry has to confer. He was a Past General Grand High Priest of the General Grand Royal Arch Chapter of the U.S.A. At his death he was Grand Secretary Emeritus of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina.

Much of the information in this report is of Historical record, but to Bro. Henry L. Anderson, the Senior Steward, credit is given, he having received same from his Father Bro. John Huske Anderson, and part is taken from the Historical Review of Freemasonry in North Carolina, as published by the North Carolina Lodge of Research #666, of which I am a member, along with Bro. T. G. Slate and the incoming Master Bro. C. Wallace Jackson.

For some reason Phoenix Lodge has received two Charters from the Grand Lodge of North Carolina, one in December 1796 and another October 15, 1801. As the Grand Lodge records do not reflect any lifting or suspension of Phoenix Lodge's Charter, the reason for two charters is not known. I too, like Phoenix Lodge with its two Charters, had the distinction of being installed twice as its Master. 1st, on December 27, St. John's Day, by Past Grand Master William J. Bundy, but, owing to the fact that the Lodge had not been called from Labor to Refreshment, I was reinstalled on January 14, 1949 by District Deputy Grand Master Thomas G. Slate.

We have held 40 meetings, regular and special. Have received 35 petitions for degrees, elected 26, rejected 9. Conferred 27 Entered Apprentice Degrees for our own Lodge and four as courtesy to other Lodges totaling 31. Conferred 26 Fellowcraft Degrees of our own Lodge, and 1 courtesy totaling 27. Conferred 26 Master Mason Degrees of our own Lodge and four courtesy, totaling 30. Making a total number of degrees conferred 88 for the year. One application for restoration, elected. Demitted 8. Died two (2): Bro. Henry Murphy, P. M., February 7, 1949 and Bro. Arthur Dixon, May 21, 1949. We have made a gain of twenty-one (21) members for the year.

On February 25, 1949, Past Masters Night was held, at which time there were 19 Past Masters Present, there being 14 of Phoenix Lodge and 5 visiting Past Masters. The Past Masters filled the Chairs and conferred the Master Mason Degree in a very commendable manner.

Your officers attended the sessions of the Grand Lodge in Raleigh during its convening in April.

On Monday, August 15, the first meeting held in this rebuilt and new larger Lodge Room, where the Entered Apprentice Degree was conferred by Phoenix Lodge No. 8 assisted by several of the members of Creasy Proctor Lodge #679. It being a joint meeting of the two Lodges.

I wish to pay tribute to the following Past Masters, who assisted me many times during the year with their help and advice in keeping the activities operating smoothly. Brothers Archie S. Lawhon, R. Vincent McBryde, Frank McBryde, George R. Brinkley. Past District Deputy Grand Master T. G. Slate, and many others whose names I cannot recall at this time. YOU HAVE BEEN A TOWER OF STRENGTH and I HAVE LEANED UPON YOU MANY TIMES.

To the Building Committee, Bro. Vivian Hollinshed, Junior Warden, Chairman; C. Wallace Jackson, Senior Warden, Master Elect; Brothers T. G. Slate, P. M.; George R. Brinkley, P. M., Bro. Roscoe Blue and Al. C. Greene of Creasy Proctor Lodge #679, and Brother D. D. McRainey, P. M. of both Phoenix and Creasy Proctor Lodges, under whose administration this building program was started while he was Master of Phoenix Lodge #8, for their fine cooperation and for a job well done. I give them credit for watching every dollar spent, and I know that we received more value by their vigilance, for it would have cost us many thousands of dollars more if we had employed an outside contractor to do the work. We are all looking forward to that day, when this building is completed and ready for rededication.

To Past Master R. Vincent McBryde and Bro. Henry L. Anderson, the Senior Steward, who were co-chairmen of the Finance Committee, and under Bro. Anderson's guidance, plans were drawn up for the operation of this building, under a Board of Governors, consisting of the Master and Wardens in their official capacity, assisted by the Elected Representatives of the Three York Rite Bodies, the Shrine Club, the Eastern Star, and the White Shrine, one representative from each body in an advisory capacity, for the help rendered in bringing to the completion this plan so that everything would be in accordance for the harmony of all concerned, a grateful THANK YOU.

To Bro. Henry L. Anderson for representing the Master and Phoenix Lodge at the 14 Masonic District Meeting held in Dunn, NC on September 9. This being the regular communication of Phoenix Lodge, I felt that my duty was with the Brethren of Phoenix of Phoenix and stayed in Fayetteville.

A letter of appreciation was written by Bros. Henry Anderson, C. Wallace Jackson, and Frank McBryde, P. M., to the Cumberland Lodge #5 Knights of Pythias, for the use of their Lodge Hall during the rebuilding program of Phoenix.

On Tuesday November 29, District Deputy Grand Master John F. Lynch held a meeting of the Masters and Secretaries of the 14th Masonic District in Phoenix Lodge to discuss the By-Laws of the various Lodges and to revise them as per the Grand Lodge Code.

To Bro. George A. Poulas whom I appointed Chairman of the Oxford Orphanage and Masonic and Eastern Star Thanksgiving and Christmas Fund, who through his efforts ably assisted by Bro. Paul Phantis has made his report as having collected some \$_____. This sum is divided two-thirds to Oxford Orphanage and one third to Masonic and Easter Star Home. In the name of each of these organization I thank each of them. Creasy Proctor Lodge #679 shared equally in this fund.

To Bro. H. W. Pigg, head coach and his assistant Bro. Harold A. Geddie, I thank you for the long hours that you contributed in coaching the candidates so that they were proficient and could receive more and further Light In Masonry. I ask them to come to the East as I have a memento to present them for a job well done.

To the Officers of 1949, I thank you for the fine spirit of cooperation and support that you so willingly displayed. No Master ever had a finer group of brethren to work with. To Bro. Jonnie B. Jones, our Secretary and one of the Greatest Secretaries of all time. His cooperation and assistance will long be remembered, and as a small token of my appreciation I wish to present him this gift in memory of a very pleasant association. (I ask him to come to the East).

I want to make a suggestion to the incoming Master, and recommend that he carry through the instruction given to the Candidate after he has been raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, calling particular attention to that Great Light in Masonry, God's inestimable gift to Man, the Holy Bible, and instruct him in the proper use of the Ballot and the way and manner it should be cast, as it is the Life Blood of all Masonic Organizations. If I can be of assistance to the incoming Master, it will be a privilege and an honor to be permitted to help him. I wish for him a Most Successful and Happy Year.

Again, my brethren, I thank you for letting me serve you. I have learned much during the past year through my associations with you, my friends, and the honor and privilege of being your Master which has been mine, to call you brother and shake your hand, are treasures that money can't buy. My Christmas card expressed my feelings.

The Comfort of Friendship.

Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort
Of feeling safe with a person
Having neither to weigh thought nor measure words,
But pouring them all right out as they are,
Chaff and grain together,
Certain that a faithful hand
Will take and sift them,
Keep what is worth keeping
And with the breath of comfort
Blow the rest away!

Sincerely and fraternally yours,

William L. (BILL) Ramsey, Master, 1949