



John Palmer, Grand Secretary of Masons for Tennessee

On Saturday, December 31, 2005, a historic tradition of 157 years was held at the Flat Creek Community Center in Williamson County. The Owen Hill Lodge No. 172 F & A. M. (Free & Accepted Masons) held their annual St. Johns Day dinner. This annual event, first held in December 1848 on the first Saturday following Christmas, is held in honor of (2) St. Johns; St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist to whom modern day masons dedicate their lodges.

The dinner menu, unchanged since the first dinner, consists of country ham, roast turkey, corn bread dressing, green beans, giblet gravy, oyster stew and cranberry sauce. This year's dinner was attended by lodge members,

their families and friends. The speaker for the event was John Palmer, Grand Secretary of Masons for Tennessee.

The Grand Lodge of Tennessee granted a charter to the Owen Hill Lodge No. 172 in October 1849. The membership which organized in 1848 was mostly from the College Grove, Allisona, Eagleville, Arno and Flat Creek areas.

The first known lodge building was a 2-story brick structure on Owen Hill that was sold by George C. Kinnard to James S. Oglivie, C. M. Comstock and J. B. Wilson all of Owen Hill Lodge No. 172 F & A M and to Rev. Wm. Burns, W. N. Haley, James P. Allison, E. L. Jordan, J. B. Wilson and Johnson Jordan; all trustees of the Owen Hill Female Academy. The Owen Hill masons used the upper floor as their meeting place and the ground floor served as the female academy. (A road-side historical marker currently marks this spot.) This meeting place served the membership until 1885 when the Owen Hill Lodge membership bought a 2-story building known as the Jordan-Swaim Store in Allisona located next to the Allisona Mill Co. What happened to the original brick lodge-academy building is unknown at this time since the minutes of meetings and other records were burned when their building in Allisona was destroyed by fire in the 1955.

The Worshipful Masters of the Owen Hill Masonic Lodge #172 were:

1849-50	Rev. Wm. Burns	1951-52	Marvin Clendenin
1851	C. M. Comstock	1953	David H. Hughes
1852	J. S. Oglivie	1954	Carl Graham
1853	G. C. Kinnard	1955	Thomas H. Johnson
1854	Wm. H. Haley	1956	T. K. White
1855	Matthew Wilson	1957	G. V. Arnold
1856	M. H. Dobson	1958	Thomas H. Johnson
1857	George M. White	1959	David H. Hughes
1858	Wm. H. Haley	1960	T. K. White
1859	B. G. Drumwright	1961	John W. Hood
1860-61	Rev. Wm. Burns	1962	Ennis Wallace
1862-64	M. H. Dobson	1963	Chas. Armstrong
1865-66	Rev. Wm. Burns	1964-65	David H. Hughes
1867-68	Wm. J. Petway	1966	Chas. Armstrong
1869-72	Tom P. Giles	1967-68	Jerry D. Wilson
1873-75	Wm. J. Petway	1969	James L. Chrisman
1876-88	John C. Anderson	1970	Robert A. Flippen
1889	I. E. Smith	1971	Tom Ghee
1890-94	John C. Anderson	1972	Chas. Neal
1895-98	M. G. Corlett	1973	John Perrell
1899-1900	John C. Anderson	1974	James Speakman
1901-02	T. C. White	1975	Thomas Wiley
1903-04	Will C. Lanier	1976-77	Tom Ghee
1905-08	M.. G. Corlett	1978	Thomas Wiley
1909-10	W. B. White	1979	Dallas Johnson
1911-16	D. H. Corlett	1980	Presley Hughes
1917	J. T. Graham	1981	Michael Duncan
1918-19	D. H. Corlett	1982	Franklin D. Wilson
1920	W. B. White	1983	Presley Hughes
1921-24	G. A. Lanier	1984	Dallas Johnson
1925-26	T. C. White	1985	Tom Ghee
1927-29	G. G. White	1986	Edward Wittenberg
1930-31	G. V. Arnold	1987	Jerre M. Fly III
1932	D. H. Hughes	1988	Timmy Wilson
1933	T. K. White	1989	Pleas Skinner, Jr.
1934	T. S. Lee	1990	E. W. Hill, Jr.
1935-36	W. E. Beasley	1991	Tom Ghee
1937-38	James L. Chrisman	1992-97	Edward Wittenberg
1939	G. V. Arnold	1998	Pleas Skinner, Jr.
1940	Reed Corlett	1999-2001	Ed Wittenberg
1941-42	Chas. P. Grigsby	2002-03	Tom Ghee
1943	D. H. Hughes	2004-05	Richard Davenport
1944-45	W. E. Beasley	2006	Ed Wittenberg
1946	W. B. White		
1947	John R. Turner		
1948	Wm. H. Landis		
1949	James L. Chrisman		
1950	Carl Graham		

Below: Allisona Mill Co. & The Owen Hill Masonic Lodge (The Lodge Building Is On The Far Right)



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The Allisona Mill Co. and Owen Hill Lodge building, which burned, was located in what is now Rigsby's store-garage parking lot, and the building fronted on Arno Road. After the fire in 1955, meetings were held in Chapel Hill for a short time. After a new site was selected and a block building was constructed, College Grove became the home of the Owen Hill Lodge No. 172, where it continues as an active lodge today.

The membership of the Owen Hill Lodge included some very prominent men through the years. One of those was the well-known and respected Methodist circuit rider, Reverend Jeremiah Cullom. In his journal, he mentions attending the lodge meetings and he records that on April 6, 1906, there were 13 present for the meeting and he was elected treasurer. On December 17, 1906 he also recorded; "by request took the cars to Christiana and installed officers of the Masonic Lodge. I have been a Mason for 53 years and never saw anything bad in it". Reverend Cullom died in 1915 at the age of 87.

Clifford Ralston, an Eagleville resident and member of Owen Hill Lodge, was made a Master Mason on April 11, 1930. Exactly 50 years later on April 11, 1980, Clifford passed away.

Finis E. Tucker, another Eagleville resident and ancestor of several Eagleville citizens was also a member. His mason guide, *Richardson's Monitor of the Free Mason* by Jabez Richardson, A.M. of New York and published by Lawrence Fitzgerald currently remains in the Tucker family.

Over the years several members have attained a 50-year membership. At the present, there are three members, Aubrey Ghee, Buddy Cromer and Pollard Crick, who have reached that mark. One outstanding record of the lodge belonged to the late Will C. Lanier with a 78-year membership record. Mr. Lanier died at the age of 99. Presently, there are 53 Owen Hill Lodge members.

The 2006 officers are:

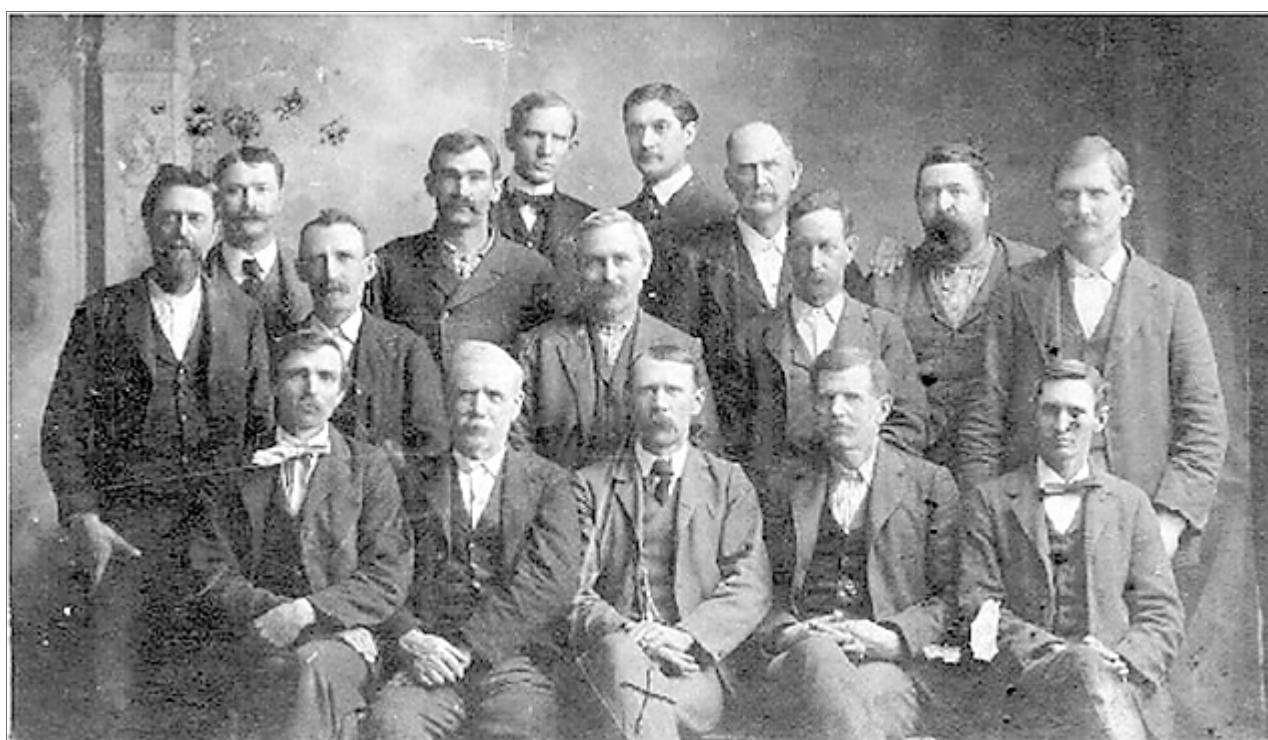
- Worshipful Master—Ed Wittenburg
- Senior Warden—Tom Ghee
- Junior Warden—Joseph Riley
- Treas—Ennis C. Wallace Sr.
- Secretary—Frank D. Wilson
- Chaplain—J. T. Davenport
- Senior Deacon—James Maupin
- Junior Deacon—Mike Freeman
- Senior Stewart—Richard Davenport
- Junior Stewart—Dave Wittenburg
- Tiler—Richard Oechel



Present Owen Hill Masonic Lodge #172, located in College Grove



Owen Hill Masonic Lodge #172 (circa 1850)



Owen Hill Masonic Lodge #172, early 1900. Only two positive identifications: Front row, center - Finis Tucker, Third row, far right - James H. Webb (I would like to identify others, if known please call Bobbie S. Shelton 615-274-6282)



Historical Marker placed on Owen Hill Road at the 1st Owen Hill Masonic Lodge Location