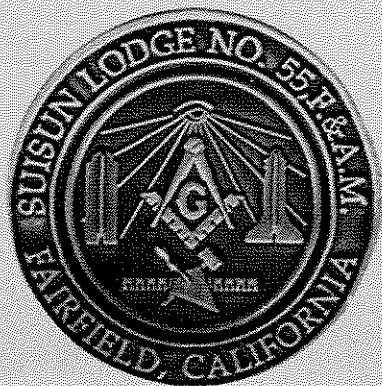
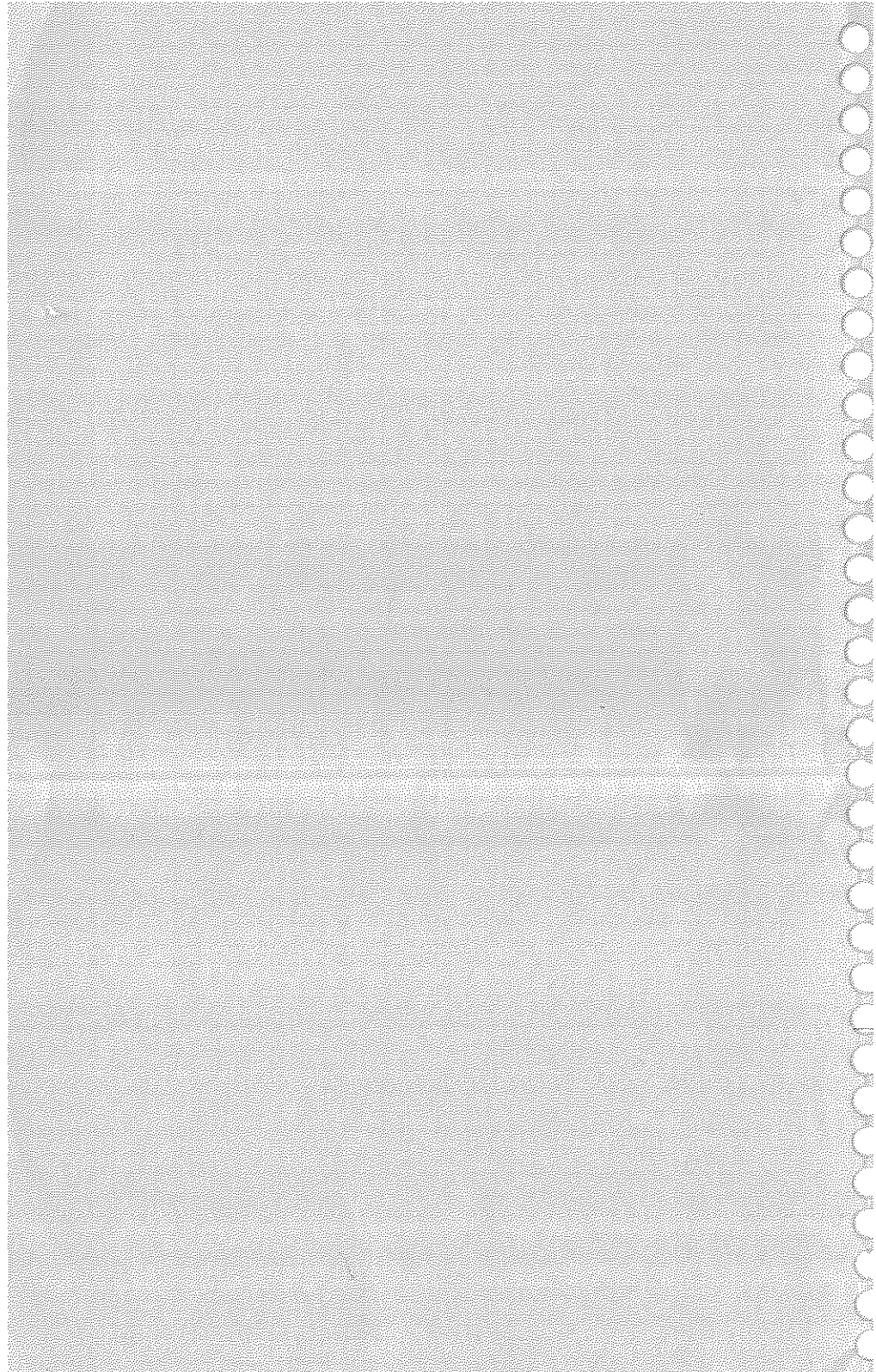


**A History of
Suisun Lodge No. 55, F&AM
1854-2004**



**Compiled and edited
by
Warren C. Sheldon, PM
Fairfield, California
2004**



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Fairfield, California
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Authorization

Suisun Lodge No. 55, F&AM in Fairfield, a constituent lodge of the Grand Lodge of California, authorizes the printing of this edition of A History of Suisun Lodge No. 55, F&AM, 1854-2004 A .D., A. L. 5854-6004.

This is done in preparation for the sesquicentennial celebration of this lodge to take place in May of 2004.

While all rights are reserved, permission to quote is granted.

Approved at the stated meeting of the 4th day of February 2003 A. D., 6003 A. L.

X *Robert J. Jolley*

Worshipful Master

X *David E. Wolfe, PM*

Secretary

Published in Celebration

of

One hundred fifty years

of

Freemasonry

in

Suisun and Fairfield, California

May 5, 2004, Anno Domini; 6004, Anna Lucia

Acknowledgments

The writer wishes to acknowledge
the assistance of

THE FAITHFUL LODGE SECRETARIES
who kept the records in such a careful manner;

THE MEMBERS WHO LIVED THE HISTORY
Participated and died within this jurisdiction;
who stopped briefly as sojourners or stayed
awhile before moving on;

and most especially,

THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED
their time and talent,
serving as officers, builders and contributors
to
the basic tenets
of
BROTHERLY LOVE,
RELIEF
and
TRUTH.

Warren C. Sheldon, PM

Author's Notes

There was a serious fire in 1888 and, along with half of Suisun, all Suisun Lodge records burned. Even the charter under which Suisun Lodge currently meets is a copy of the original that went up in smoke with everything else. The only items not consumed by that fire were the bricks, which were scraped and used again in building the new hall at 623 Main Street in Suisun. While Abraham Farr Hitchcock, PM, made diligent effort to restore as much information as he could by visiting the California Grand Lodge in San Francisco, the main result of his effort was a copy of the charter and a list of members who signed the By-laws from 1854 to 1888. Since the minutes exist only from that time, the early information has to be obtained from secondary sources. Assiduous effort has been exerted in the compilation of this work but history is only memory on paper and memory is not always accurate.

The works of several others are quoted directly with commentary by the author as deemed appropriate. None of that material is under copyright and Suisun Lodge No. 55 claims copyright only in an attempt to prevent unauthorized or malicious use.

One other note: While the difference is only one letter, lexicographers have been arguing over the difference between "demit" and "dimit" for years.

Mackey, in his "Encyclopædia of Freemasonry," brands "dimit" as a bastardization of "demit" and devotes a page and a half to the subject while Macoy, in his "Cyclopædia," defines it as a derivative of the Latin "dimmito," to permit to go.

While "demit" is found in dictionaries and "dimit" is not, the writer will use the latter as that term is preferred by the Grand Lodge of California.

PREFACE

Oral history traveling among a few old-time members of Suisun Lodge had it that Suisun's first Masons assembled on the banks of "The Island" by the light of the full moon. It would have been easy to file such a meeting and it may have happened that way. The writer's father told him that in the old days Suisun Masons were known as "swamp angels." Moonlight figured into the system of meeting times because it was needed in order to find one's way home afterward. If a person rides a horse at night without the benefit of a full moon, there exists the very real possibility of receiving a sharp tree branch in the eye. Indeed, the writer learned this lesson from a past master that slept on the ground until morning rather than take a chance by riding home at night without the benefit of moonlight. Suisun Lodge now meets on the first Friday of the month but this is a holdover from when they met on the first Friday after the full moon. Three California lodges still meet by the full moon. They are known as lunar lodges and can be found up in the Mother Lode. It is easy to see how Masons got some of the names they have been called . . . "devil worshipers, moon mongers, swamp angels" and others.

Of course, there is an explanation for all of this. The so-called secrets pertain to certain signs, words and modes of recognition but there is no secret regarding the central purpose of the fraternity. Masonry is, primarily, a progressive moral science taught by degrees only. Tools and implements of architecture are used for the purpose of illustrating great moral lessons, among them: brotherly love, relief and truth. These are transmitted to our fellow inhabitants of this planet through a system of philanthropy. The total philanthropic contribution of the Masonic Fraternity and its concordant bodies currently (2004) runs in the neighborhood of \$2.5 million *daily*. This is only the documented expense for items such as the Masonic Homes, Knight Templar Eye Foundation, Scottish Rite Language Disorder Clinics, Shriners' Hospitals for

Children, etc. It does not include things like individual lodges providing wheelchairs and walkers to the infirm, bicycles for deserving students and countless other acts that go unnoticed by the general public.

Being a member of a Masonic Lodge signifies to the world that a man has sought membership (Masonry does not solicit members), been investigated and found worthy. The writer acknowledges there are some who end up not being Masonry's best ambassadors. Every year Grand Lodge holds sessions on those who have behaved in an un-Masonic manner and are subjected to Masonic discipline up to, and including, dismissal.

The fraternal bond between Masons is strong. One night during the Revolutionary War, English military men who were Masons left their charter, Bible and other paraphernalia behind during a hasty retreat. General Washington, himself a Mason, saw that the items were returned across the enemy line, under special escort.

History books are full of accounts regarding fraternal courtesies extended to POWs by their captors on both sides of the line. Such things as conferring degrees and conducting funerals as well as avoiding the commandeering of a Mason's house for use as a command post.

With this background let us begin a study of Suisun Lodge No. 55, F&AM, how it came to be, where it has been during the last one hundred fifty years and what it is today.

FOREWORD

As early as 1850, Curtis Wilson and Dr. John Baker sail up Solano County's Suisun Creek in an open boat to land on the present site of Suisun City, in the Suisun Marsh north of Suisun Bay near the end of Suisun Slough. "Suisun" is an Indian word meaning "West Wind," an accurate description and an appropriate name. In fact, strong winds blowing across open country produce high concentrations of positive ions, a phenomenon known by the Italians as *the sirocco*. The French call it *the mistral*. The Spanish refer to it as *the solano*, which could, directly or indirectly, account for how the county got its name. Wilson and Baker get credit for discovery of the place but they fail to see anything remarkable and leave for "a more captivating impress." Later, Captain Josiah Wing begins to run various watercraft to "The Island," as it becomes known.

In 1852, Captain Wing erects a warehouse, and his schooner, *Ann Sophia*, begins transporting area produce to San Francisco. In 1854, Captain Wing and John Owen lay out the town of Suisun City; the first Caucasian child is born there; and Bro. Stephen K. Nurse, a Past Master of Benicia Lodge No. 5, recommends a dispensation for a lodge of Masons in Suisun Valley.

In the mid-1850s, Benicia is an incorporated city of great expectations. It is the headquarters of the Pacific Division of the U.S. Army, with a large number of Army officers and men quartered there, among them a Lt. U. S. Grant, who has run afoul of the authorities for "conduct unbecoming an officer." It is the depot for the ships of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company where the fresh waters of Suisun Bay remove the barnacles that have accumulated on the ships' hulls without great expense to the company. The Steamship Company has extensive shops for the repair of their ships and, for that purpose, an army of workmen.

S. Clinton Hastings, Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court resides in Benicia. Many retired captains of seagoing vessels have chosen Benicia as their places of residence

and business. Many merchants and traders have established businesses in the city, adding to its thriving economy.

By June of 1856, Captain Robert Henry Waterman has purchased from Captain Archibald A. Ritchie an undivided one-third interest in about 15,000 acres in Suisun Valley and laid out the plat for the City of Fairfield.

In 1858, Captain Wing builds himself a house in Suisun, and on September 2 of that year the residents of Solano County vote to move the county seat from Benicia to Fairfield. The California Pacific Railroad inaugurates rail transportation between Vallejo, Fairfield and Suisun on June 24, 1867. The area Masonic Lodges take part in the inaugural trip and Suisun incorporates as the City of Suisun City on October 9 of the following year, but it will be another thirty-four years before Fairfield follows suit and votes to incorporate in 1902 . . .

IN THE BEGINNING . . .

1854

On Thursday, May 4, 1854, Bro. W. H. Howard, from the Committee on Dispensations and Charters, in his report [to the Grand Lodge of California] said, "They have also had before them a petition in due form, recommended by Benicia Lodge, for a dispensation to open a Lodge in Suisun Valley to be called Suisun Lodge, and recommend that a dispensation be granted." The report of the committee was adopted and the dispensation issued. At the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge on May 4, 1855, a charter was granted to the following named officers and Brethren as Suisun Lodge, No. 55: Officers - J. H. Griggs, W. M.; M. Dean, S. W.; W. B. Brown, J. W.; C. Manka, Treas.; S. Maupin, Sec.; P. O. Clayton, S. D., C. Maul, Tyler. Master Masons-C. W. Brown, J. Cutler, N. Cutler, G. W. Hays, A. P. Jackson, M. A. Long, J. Longmire, J. W. Owen, P. Palmer, D. D. Reeves, S. Smith, W. Wright. Entered Apprentice, F. Jackson. Of these, unless it be W. B. Brown, who may be the W. B. Brown who was then Junior Warden, none of the charter members are now on the roll, which numbers seventy-three. The present officers [1898] are: Albert Alex. Dickie, W. M.; Oscar Rapier Coghlan, S. W.; Wm. Corydon Sheldon, J. W.; Edgar Ernest Long, Treas.; Ferdinand Wm. Gabriel, Sec.; Abraham Farr Hitchcock, Chaplain; Jerome Bonaparte Richardson, S. D.; Chester Wetmore, J. D.; Wm. Gustavus Davisson, Marshal; James Bennett Robinson, James Robinson Lamont, Stewards; Wm. Kimball Hoyt, Tyler. Past Masters-Sampson Smith, Eben Dorman Perkins, John Bonaparte Lemon, Stephen Kirby Nurse, Jerome Bonaparte Richardson, Allen Charles Miller, Wm. Gustavus Davisson, Abner Elias Charles, Albert Alex. Dickie, Meyer Dinkelspiel, George Anthony Gillespie, Abraham Farr Hitchcock.

Suisun Lodge, No. 55, is named after the town and bay of Suisun. Its work from the beginning has always been of the highest standard, its officers skilled in their ritualistic labors, and the members earnestly devoted to the principles and the practice

of Freemasonry, and with such men and Brethren who have adorned its roll, administered its charity and government, it is no wonder that in spite of the destruction of its hall, records, and property by fire, yet with renewed courage, energy and undaunted determination, the lodge has not only maintained its existence but performed all its duties toward the craft and now has one of the finest halls in the State. Here is where Suisun Lodge for a period of forty-four years has labored and wrought its good work.

In 1866, among the material added to the fraternity we find the name of a comrade veteran of the Mexican War, Bro. H. W. Kurlbaum, who was a member of the Louisiana Volunteers in 1846-7, a brave and faithful soldier, and a true Mason in spirit in every respect. When at Suisun he was a lumber merchant, but removed from there and dimitted from Suisun Lodge in 1866. He is now one of the Board of trustees of the Associated Veterans of the Mexican War in San Francisco. The Brethren who are veterans of the Mexican War - who fought for their country, and by their privations, hardships, and undaunted courage, which never knew defeat, acquired California and a vast other portion of territory- and the pioneers, who came like our late first Grand Master Jonathan D. Stevenson and other citizen soldiers, to develop it, wherever they have united and become connected with Masonic Lodges, it is but right and proper to mention it as history of Masonry and the State combined.

Among the Past Masters who have gone to receive their reward in the Celestial Grand Lodge above was the late good and faithful W. Bro. Moses Dinkelspiel, who passed away during the last year [1897], leaving a worthy son, W. Bro. Meyer Dinkelspiel, who has also ably filled the Oriental Chair and is enrolled among its Past Masters who have all rendered the best of service to the Craft and equally deserving of all praise for their good work in the East. W. Bro. Jerome Bonaparte Richardson's record will be found elsewhere in this work; but as Master and counselor of the Craft, and Grand Bible Bearer and an officer of the Grand Lodge of California, he has honored Suisun Lodge by his membership and given it a high place of recognition as one of

the most efficient Lodges of the State, in common with the rest of its Past Masters, which it well deserves.

The preceding is taken from "Fifty Years of Freemasonry in California," vol. 1, no. viii, published in 1898. The following is taken from History of Solano County, published in 1879:

"The Lodge was instituted in the Armijo adobe in Suisun Valley and held a number of its meetings there in 1855. Shortly after, however, a move was made by the brethren to erect a lodge building, and the result was that in the fall of 1855 a neat wooden structure, two stories in height, was erected at what was then known as Barton's Store, in Suisun Valley. The lower story of the building erected was used as a school room, and the upper story was used by the craft. In 1856 the town of Suisun began to assume some importance, and the brethren, after considerable parleying, decided to move the lodge to Suisun, and just at that time Bro. Hiram Rush began the erection of a large brick store-room in Suisun and the brethren bargained with him to add a third story to his building for a lodge-room for the Order. This he did, the lodge paying all the expenses of the third story and on its completion Bro. Rush deeded it, the property, with a right-of-way of ingress and egress. For about twenty-three years the lodge has occupied its present [1879] hall, and which is to-day one of the most comfortable and suitable Masonic halls in Solano County. The lodge has prospered from the first, and at the present time [1879] numbers about seventy-five members. The present officers are: W. G. Davisson, W.M.; J. Frank, S.W.; William Leithead, J.W.; Co. P. Reeves, Treasurer; George A. Gillespie, Secretary; J. B. Richardson, S.D.; John A. Lockie, J.D.; N. Anderson, Tyler.

"Suisun Lodge, No. 78, I.O.O.F.: - was organized September 13, 1858 . . . about the year 1866, when the lodge made arrangements with the Masonic lodge and moved into their hall."

The Odd Fellows appear to have stayed about six years, having purchased another building in 1872 for \$8,000. This was a considerable sum when one considers local Episcopalians built an entire church sixteen years later (1888) for \$2,400. That building

still stands on Main Street and is currently the home of Christian Science.

1954 was Suisun Lodge's centennial year and the Master was Colin C. Hutcheon. There was a big celebration in the newly completed (1953) gymnasium at Armijo High School. Many representatives from appendant bodies were present and introduced. There were drill teams from the Vacaville Knights Templar and the Vallejo Rainbow Girls in performance. The speaker was Grand Master Henry C. Clausen.

The following is taken from the remarks made at the centennial celebration by Colin Hutcheon.

"Sometime in early 1854 there were probably a dozen Master Masons living in Suisun, Suisun Valley and the immediate surrounding area and in April of that year they prepared a petition for a charter to present to the Grand Lodge. On April, 24, 1854, Benicia Lodge No. 5 signed a recommendation that the petition be granted and, accordingly, on May 4, 1854, the Grand Master of Masons in California, Bro. W. H. Howard, granted a Dispensation for a lodge to be known as Suisun Lodge No. 55. History books and the records of Grand Lodge state that our Charter was granted on May 4th rather than May 5th as our copy of the charter shows. However, on a copy of the Grand Master's order granting the Dispensation, Bro. Howard did not affix his signature until May 5th and I presume that is the reason our copy of the Charter bears the date May 5, 1854.

"One year later, May 5, 1855, Grand Lodge issued a Charter and the Grand Master sent a letter to Bro. S. K. Nurse, Worshipful Master of Benicia Lodge No. 5, authorizing him to take to himself suitable assistance and to open and institute Suisun Lodge No. 55 in Suisun and to install the Master-elect and others. On May 17, 1855, Bro. Nurse duly installed officers and instituted our Lodge in the Armijo Adobe in Suisun Valley with 19 Master Masons and 1 Entered Apprentice as Charter Members. The Armijo Adobe, as nearly as I (Colin Hutcheon) can find out was located on the old Pierce ranch and the foundations can still be seen. Jose Francisco Armijo, for whom the Adobe was named,

was one of the first three settlers of Upper Solano County.

[Editor's note: The exact location was near the lower end of the Rancho Solano golf course, visible from where Mankas Corner Road intersects with Ledgewood Road. All trace of the adobe was removed with the building of the Rancho Solano Golf Course.]

"Several meetings were held in the Armijo Adobe until the fall of 1855, when the Lodge was moved to what was known as Barton's Store. The lower floor of this building was used for a school and the upper floor for the Lodge room. Again, history books are vague but it is my understanding that this building was in what is now the City of Fairfield. [Actually, Barton's Store was what is now Manka's Corner. After going into business, Barton took Christley Manka (a charter member of Suisun Lodge) as a partner and the enterprise became known as Barton and Manka. Shortly after, Barton went to Fairfield and purchased a full city block. The enterprise then became known as Manka's Corner.]

"Around 1856 Suisun City began to take on considerable importance and the members decided to move into town and, accordingly, dickered with Bro. B. F. Rush to build a third story on the building he was then erecting in the heart of Suisun City. [Actually, it was his father, Hiram. Benjamin was born in 1852 at Fourteen Mile House in Sacramento County and, therefore, only four years old at the time.] The Lodge paid all the expenses of building the extra floor and so gained a permanent home for the lodge. This building was located in the block where Sorenson's Electric Store is now. [In 1954, Sorenson's was located on the West side of the Suisun Plaza directly across from the currently restored Lawler House.]

"In 1877 there appeared to be considerable feeling that Suisun Lodge should build a Masonic Hall and, accordingly, on December 24, 1877, the Masonic Lodge was incorporated and three trustees were empowered to purchase property on which to erect a Masonic Building. A lot with a building on it was purchased and the old building torn down and a contract signed for the erection of the new building. The Lodge borrowed some \$3,250 from the Royal Arch Masons, Chapter No. 43, and with

the cash on hand paid for the lot and building. On May 21, 1888, the trustees, after some difficulty, obtained a loan from a James Mc Cudden for \$12,000, giving a note with interest at 8 percent and as security they also gave a mortgage on the lot and building. The contract for the new building called for the use of the existing North and South walls of the old building but, before any work could be started, a disastrous fire occurred on July, 9, 1888, which destroyed these two walls, half the City of Suisun, and all the personal effects and records of the lodge.

"Some of the older members here tonight [1954] remember that as kids they helped clean up after the fire and scraped the old mortar from the bricks which are in our present [1954] building. A report of the trustees in our files tells how many bricks were salvaged and how many were used in specific sections of the various walls.

"On October 1, 1887, the Secretary's report to Grand Lodge shows there were 58 Master Masons, 1 Fellow craft, and 2 Entered Apprentices on the rolls.

"The 'rivalry' between the Odd Fellows and the Masons appears from the records to have been limited to the Pedro games played over a period of years because from 1866 to 1872 the Odd Fellows held their meetings in the Masonic Hall and then from the time of the fire in 1888 until our building was completed, the Masons held their meetings in the Odd Fellows Hall. [In the mid-1950s, the Odd Fellows and Masons were still holding their annual Pedro Tournaments. They would have a dinner and then play Pedro, the winning fraternity earning the right to tease the losers until the next annual tournament. There were enough men who were members of both organizations to equalize the teams.]

"Financial troubles beset the Lodge from the start of the new building. The original loan of \$12,000 was not sufficient for the completion of the building because of the additional work involved at the time of the fire and another loan for \$3,000 was obtained from Mc Cudden. In May, 1897, the trustees executed a note for \$15,000 replacing the two original notes but the interest proved too heavy a load for the Lodge to carry and in November,

1899, the lodge voted to turn the property over to Mc Cudden in liquidation of its indebtedness. Mc Cudden at that time refused to accept this proposition, but on February 7, 1903, after Mr. Mc Cudden had passed on, the Lodge conveyed title to the property together with \$715.00 to Veronica Mc Cudden, Executrix of the James Mc Cudden Estate, in full settlement of Mc Cudden's claim, which, with unpaid interest, had now grown to the sum of \$21,480.97. The Lodge rented back the second and third floors at a monthly rental of \$20.00 for two years and then \$25.00 for three years.

"The Lodge then rented the hall from the heirs and assignees of James Mc Cudden, turning down an offer to repurchase it for \$11,500, until March of 1921, when a resolution was passed authorizing the purchase of the property for \$12,500. Again, the Royal Arch Masons came to the aid of Suisun Lodge No. 55 and made a donation of \$1000, which with the cash on hand and \$1650 borrowed from the Bank of Suisun, paid for the building in full and Suisun Lodge No. 55, at last, became sole owners of the building.

"So it took 33 years to pay for a building which originally cost approximately \$15,000. The building was well built and has withstood the rigors of the weather and time exceptionally well [1954]. As far as I [Hutcheon] have been able to ascertain, nothing of a major character was done to the building other than maintenance and repair until 1952 [Editor's note: My father was master in 1952 and I was janitor.] when the inside of the lodge room was completely re-plastered and the front windows were repaired. This major operation was necessitated by the damage done by the explosion at the Port Chicago Naval Ammunition Station) during World War II (August 1944).

"In March, 1899, there was a proposal by Suisun Electric Light Works: "for wiring Masonic Hall, One light in Hall downstairs, One light in Hall upstairs, Two lights in banquet room [third floor] One light in an Anteroom, One light in room adjoining anteroom, and Eight lights in main room, to be drop lights concealed, shades and Sixteen candle power lamps already

to run for \$28.00. And to furnish power for running above named lights 50 cents each time lodge room is lighted, that is 50¢ per night." On motion duly seconded the lodge authorized the trustees to make arrangements.

"A new temple was talked about in 1951 when a Committee was appointed to locate and purchase a suitable site. In 1952 the Fairfield-Suisun Masonic Building Association was incorporated and the Directors have made several attempts at securing a suitable site within our financial means. Problems, of course, have arisen but some day and some how Suisun Lodge No. 55 will have a new temple of which the members and the community can well be proud.

"I think that brings us up to May, 1954, where our membership is now some 240 and who are scattered all over the globe. If we will continue in the future as we have in the past the future Masons can look back with pride on the men here assembled and on those who have gone before us who made this first hundred years of Masonry possible."

[This concludes Bro. Colin Hutcheon's remarks at the centennial celebration in May of 1954.]

It made sense to look for a new location. Downtown Suisun had become a string of drinking establishments. Rainbow Girls were forced to walk between the drunks on the sidewalks in order to catch their rides home after meetings. The Lodge was very active owing to the fact that World War II had forced many military men to put their Masonic careers on hold for the duration. On frequent occasions, it was necessary to do two Third Degrees on a Saturday morning with a third Third after dinner. This would be followed by a lecture for all three candidates. In those days, the Lodge was truly a "degree-mill." In one year during this period, Suisun Lodge conferred ninety degrees. The building did need a lot of work but most members were not interested in repairing it in its present location. Some members argued that it was fine where it was, but they were in the minority. In fact, on December 8, 1949, the Eastern Star passed a resolution and sent it to Suisun

Lodge requesting that it "take immediate steps to erect an adequate Masonic Temple."

The Fairfield-Suisun Masonic Building Association made diligent effort to find a new location. At one point they did, in fact, purchase an entire block bounded by Broadway, Ohio, Madison, and Taylor Streets. Financial support was not forthcoming and the site was sold to an entrepreneur who built apartments on it. The next site considered was from the estate of Bro. Lloyd. M. Robbins, a member of Suisun Lodge and a younger brother of Reuel Drinkwater Robbins, P.M. His estate made land available to the Episcopal Church, Fairfield School District and Masonic Lodge at a more than reasonable rate. As time went on, however, the city required more land for streets, etc., and the land seemed to always be taken from that portion reserved for the Lodge. The Lodge finally backed out. This was unfortunate since the school, the church, and the lodge are all active at different times and there would never have been a time where the intersection would have been overly congested. The Episcopal Church did locate on their site but was unable to complete the planned building because the city demanded more off-street parking. They abandoned their plans for a large sanctuary and devoted that land to parking. The Fairfield School District did build Fairview School on the school's portion.

In retrospect, it probably turned out better. The site at Kentucky and Hawaii Streets consisted of four lots. The present site is much larger with no parking problem, better visual location, and a larger building than could have been built on the Fairview Addition site. In addition, the Episcopal Church has purchased a larger site in the north area of Fairfield and contemplates leaving for lack of space.

In 1963 the 1888 building at 623 Main Street in Suisun was sold and the current site at 412 Travis Boulevard in Fairfield was purchased. Final site selection was handled through Bro. Arne Digerud, P.M., recently deceased, who was a member of the site acquisition committee for the Lutheran Church. Suisun Lodge

No. 55 purchased the present (2004) site from the adjacent Lutheran Church.

1967: Master was Stanley M. Emerson. The cornerstone for a new, single story, lodge facility in Fairfield was set. Bro. Clarence B. Mc Fee, P.M., was the successful bidder on construction, since he only took a workman's wages and the balance of the labor was provided by the members of the lodge on weekends.

The new building was dedicated with appropriate ceremony on August 14, 1971. On January 11, 1977, Grand Master Kermit Jacobson presided at the mortgage burning. The balance of the mortgage had been paid by a generous bequest from E. Ruth Sheldon, widow of Bro. Roy J. Sheldon, Grand High Priest of California Royal Arch Masons in 1947 and a member of Suisun Lodge No. 55.

1979: Master was William R. Jewer. The 125-year celebration was a scaled down version of the one in 1954. It took place in the "new " temple, which was then twelve years old. Grand Master Donald Ingalls was speaker.

1982: Master was Warren C. Sheldon. Suisun Lodge initiated a life membership program. At this writing, the life membership roll includes a number of members. An explanation of the life membership program and a list of life members are listed elsewhere in this document.

In 1998, Suisun Lodge raised its first member of the fifth generation. Ward C. Sheldon II, the author's nephew, was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on May 15. Just one year earlier, another fifth generation Master Mason was raised as a courtesy to Washington Lodge No. 4, in Battle Ground, Washington, on May 16, 1997. He is Christopher Rust, the author's son. The author raised them both.

Members of Suisun Lodge No. 55 who have served as Grand Lodge Officers are: Jerome Bonaparte Richardson, P.M., and Arne Digerud, P.M. Both served as Grand Bible Bearer.

As striking evidence of Masonic involvement in the public schools of this area, the writer points out that of the thirteen

Suisun-Fairfield schools named after persons, seven are named after members of Suisun Lodge No. 55 and two are named after members of Suisun Chapter No. 2, Order of the Eastern Star. In addition, there is a school in Rio Vista named after a member of Suisun Lodge. They are:

- Samuel G. Bransford Elementary School located on Travis Blvd.
- Charles L. Sullivan Middle School on Union Avenue in Fairfield
- Dan O. Root II Elementary School on Harrier Drive in Suisun
- David A. Weir Administration Building converted from David A Weir Elementary School on Pennsylvania Avenue in Fairfield
- H. Glenn Richardson Elementary School on Meadowlark Drive in Fairfield
- Kenneth I. Jones Elementary School on Winston Drive in Fairfield
- E. Ruth Sheldon Elementary School on Woolner Avenue in Fairfield
- Anna Kyle Elementary School on Kidder Avenue in Fairfield
- Mark G. Woods Elementary School on Delaware Street in Fairfield no longer exists, having been removed about 1980.
- D. H. White Elementary School is located in Rio Vista

At this writing (2004) Suisun Lodge has presented sixteen Hiram Awards. The recipients are listed separately.

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