

PINTLALA



HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Defusing a Myth and Accepting a Challenging

A test, nicknamed "Nation's Report Card," was conducted in 2001 and revealed that six in ten high school students lack a basic knowledge of American history. We wring our hands over the ignorance of today's youth. Yet the *Stanford Report* cites professor Sam Wineburg who contends that such has always been the case. In the March issue of *The Journal of American History*, Wineburg argues that students have always performed dismally on history tests designed to gauge factual knowledge. He references tests dating back to 1917. The professor contends, "The only thing growing seems to be our amnesia of past ignorance."

Sam Wineburg's beef has to do with the kind of tests administered to students. He debunks the multiple-choice tests which rank students according to a symmetrical bell curve.

However, the historian concedes that students fail to learn history because the subject is so poorly taught. In a 1994 national survey, 1500 adults were asked to "pick one word or phrase to describe your experience with history classes in elementary or high school." The most frequent answer was: "BORING"

When the majority of kids leaving school cannot date the Civil War and are confused about whether the Korean War predated or followed World War II, the methodologies for teaching should be called into question.

Unlike English or math teachers, more than 80 percent of today's history teachers did not study that discipline in depth in college. States Wineburg, "I believe you can't teach what you don't know... I don't think there's any rocket science here. This notion that somehow a good teacher can teach anything is the biggest canard in the world."

Courses on how to teach mathematics and how to teach science are offered in graduate school. However, instruction on how to teach history has been absorbed into a mishmash called "teaching social studies," which has become an umbrella term under which every fad and trend gets attention.

Sam Wineburg concludes that psychologists define a crazy person as someone who keeps doing the same thing but expects a different result. If our approach to communicating a love of history does not fundamentally change, then we are crazy to expect different results.

Would it not be wonderful if the Pintlala Historical Association could do something to move people from apathy to enthusiasm for local history? Such an objective is worthy of future conversations.

GARY BURTON, President PHA

PINTLALA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION WILL MEET ON JULY 25TH AT 2:00PM AT PINTLALA BAPTIST CHURCH. PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE IN DATE AND TIME! We will have a short business meeting promptly at 2pm and at 2:30 will leave Pintlala and travel to the Winter-Loeb Building at 105 Tallapoosa Street in Montgomery. Mary Ann Neely will meet us there and we will tour an exhibit of historical Montgomery photographs dating from 1850 to 1950. This exhibit of people, places, and events in Montgomery history was organized by Landmarks Foundation and will be interesting and in some cases revive memories of PHA members. The photographs feature the Alabama River, Capitol Hill, Dexter Avenue, "around the town" shots, and ceremonial events in the life of the city, including Grover Cleveland's visit to Montgomery on October 18, 1887.

We will take the church van and carpool. Please join us for this important business meeting and interesting tour. Bring friends - we need new members! See you on July 25th at 2:00!

HEARTFELT SYMPATHY: We extend deepest sympathy to our members and friends who have lost loved ones, including the families of Wayne Brackeen, Kadra Robinson Spear McKenzie, Llewellyn Duggar, Shelby Paulk, and Catherine Black Sellers.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES: June 1954 must have been a VERY GOOD time for marriage, as evidenced by the number of Golden Anniversaries celebrated in our community this year:

Ray and Mildred Morgan, Pintlala, were married June 15th. (Also, Mildred will celebrate a birthday on July 15! Happy birthday, too, Mildred!)

Thomas Sanford and Wilkie Norman, Ramer, were married June 19th.

Leonard and Sylvia Philips, Sellers, were married June 26th.

James and Dot Cline were married June 27th.

CONTINUED LOVE AND CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF YOU!

WELL WISHES: PHA sends warmest wishes that our members and friend who are feeling "unwell" will soon feel MUCH better! These include Fran Bush, Hattie Smith, Nancy Peavy and Felix Lassiter.

HOMEcoming AT TABERNACLE METHODIST CHURCH & CONCORD METHODIST CHURCH CEMETERY ASSOCIATION: Tabernacle Methodist Church will hold its traditional HOMEcoming on August 1, 2004, followed by a covered dish dinner. Also, a Concord Methodist Church Memorial Association is being organized and an initial meeting is scheduled at Tabernacle about 1:00, immediately after the Homecoming dinner. Concord Cemetery is a pioneer cemetery located just West and North of the Intersection of Highway 26, Wasden Road, and Highway 6, Tyson Road, in Lowndes County. Family members buried there include Albert Gallatin McGehee, Powell, Ramey, Stark, Venable, Worthy, Hargrove, and Williams. The grounds are in need of cleaning and fencing. If you know of anyone interested in this cemetery, please let them know about this meeting.

BUTLER REUNION AUGUST 14, IN EDGEFIELD, SC: Descendants of James Anthony Butler Sar (1740 - 1811) and Winifred Brooks Butler (1743 - 1831) will meet at the Thompkins Library, 104 Courthouse Square, Edgefield, SC.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. The program starts at 10 a.m. We will eat a light lunch around noon. Attendees should bring a sack lunch. Drinks and chips will be provided. Fast food restaurants are located about one mile away. Many motels are located in nearby Augusta, Georgia.

Please bring information on your branch of the family (Bible data, Wills, Deeds, stories of ancestors, photographs, memorabilia, family tree update, etc.) If possible, bring about 30 copies for sharing with others. If you can not attend the Reunion, please send information for sharing to Clanton Mosley before August 3. We will adjourn at 3 p.m. and meet at 3:30 p.m. at Old MacDonald's Fish Camp for a Dutch treat dinner. Please invite other Butler descendants to our Reunion.

Butler booklets are available for \$10 each. For further information, contact Clanton Mosley (Phone: 803-652-2989 or e-mail: wcmosley@aol.com).

SPECIAL THANKS to our contributors for this newsletter, including Mary Ann Venable, Clanton Mosley, Alice Carter (who somehow always manages to plan an outstanding program!) our President, Gary Burton and Alan M. Davis for his articles on Masonry. This organization is especially interesting when we realize that the Masons were founded upon the tenets held by the master craftsmen of the times when most of our great cathedrals were being built. This is the second of Alan's three part series on Masonry in general and, in particular, on our local lodges, their members and associates, and the events of their times. He has researched the Lodge minutes, and has offered to make their complete information available.

POLITICALLY CORRECT?: This interesting prayer was given in Kansas at the opening session of their Senate. It seems prayer still upsets some people. When Minister Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas Senate, everyone was expecting the usual generalities, but this is what they heard:

"Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says: 'Woe to those who call evil good,' but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values.

We confess that we have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and call it Pluralism.

We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery.

We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare.

We have killed our unborn and called it choice.

We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable.

We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self esteem.

We have abused power and called it politics.

We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition.

We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression.

We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

Search us, Oh, God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free.

Amen!"

The response was immediate. Although a number of legislators walked out during the prayer in protest, within weeks the Central Christian Church, where Rev. Wright is pastor, logged more than 5,000 phone calls with only 47 of those calls responding negatively. Commentator Paul Harvey presented this prayer on his radio program, "The Rest of the Story," and received a larger response to it than any other he has ever aired.

HISTORY OF FLETA LODGE: THE MT. CARMEL ERA 1884 - 1922

By Alan M. Davis

On January 12, 1884, Bro John C. Fonville was appointed a committee of one to see Mr. James T. Giddens of Mt. Carmel in reference to the Lodge Hall, which was above his store at Mt. Carmel, he reported to the Lodge that Mr. Giddens assures "That Sandy Ridge Lodge No. 223, shall have the use of the hall and ante-rooms free of such charge and that such use shall extend indefinitely at the options of the Lodge", the By-Laws were also changed to read as such. Mr. James Thomas Giddens joined the Lodge after it started meeting in his store and he became a very active member of the Lodge until his death in 1914. February 9, 1884 was the last regular communication held at the "Old Hall" in Sandy Ridge. The aftermath of the "*War between the States*" and the "*reconstruction period*" must have caused population shifts as people were migrating west to Texas and California and other western states. Placement of railroads was another cause of towns to "*dry up*" or to relocate and about the time the Lodge moved, cotton was on its way out as the main cash crop in the area and maybe that caused the Lodge to relocate. The Lodge, which met in its new location at Mt. Carmel, continued to use the name Sandy Ridge until March 17, 1893, when the Lodge voted to change their By-Laws and Seal indicating the name change. During this time we found the Lodge met on the Saturday before the second Sabbath in each month.

On May 10, 1884 the first regular communication was held at the "New Hall" on the second floor of Giddens store at Mt. Carmel. According to accounts giving by Charles, Lurline, and Richard Hall, in Volume XVI, Number 1 January 2002 issue of the *Pintlala Historical Association Newsletter*, page 3 and 4, *GIDDEN'S STORE*: "*I'll have to start with stories I know little about. The memory of the store is only hearsay and it is the Giddens store, which was owned by Mr. Ansley Giddens who lived where Dr. Brown's house stands now, next door to the Edgar's place. Mr. Giddens employed Mr. Ed Moore as clerk and he later married Mr. Gidden's daughter. The store stood in front of Gidden's mill, behind where the Will Guy house stands now. It had two stories and the upper story was used as a meeting place for the Masons...*" By 1884 James T. Giddens was apparently the owner of all the stores owned by his

father and by the time the members of Sandy Ridge Masonic Lodge conferred with him about the use of the upper story for a meeting place, his father, Ansley Giddens died in October of 1876, This fact was also mentioned in a previous P.H.A. Newsletter (Volume XIII, No. 3, July 1999, page 11 and 12).

This was an interesting time in the Lodge's history in which many events that occurred throughout Alabama and the South were recorded in the minutes. Much of the information contained in the minutes of the Lodge is regular lodge business but other information of local and regional interest can be found in them as well, such as natural disasters, disease epidemics and other events that merited mentioning in the minutes. The Secretary whose "*Duty is to record all things proper to be written*" is considered the life-blood of a Lodge. It is he who is mostly responsible in conducting the unseen business of the Lodge such as receiving and sending communications with the Grand Lodge, other Lodges and conducting business with members of the Lodge. In practice, the secretary is often a continuing officer, who serves year after year while the other officers, including the Worshipful Master, usually serve only one year. The secretary accumulates experience, which is valuable to the Lodge and to the Wor. Master and therefore becomes very important in being able to guide and advise the Master and the Lodge. Here is an example of a correspondence a secretary might receive in the mid 1800's:

To all men enlightened,

This is to certify that Bro. L. M. Matthews late a member of Ezel Lodge No. 175 in the village of Dublin Montgomery county Alabama U.S.A. was on the 27th of Sept. allowed to demit on good standing as a Master Mason and we the Sec. & W. M. on the part of the lodge do cheerfully recommend him to all masons with Whom his lot is cast.

William L. Foster, Sec.

A. Boyd Wor. Master

That was a letter from the secretary of Ezel Lodge No. 175, which as indicated above was located in the village of Dublin (Note: Ezel Lodge had been chartered in 1852, located in Pleasant Spring, Oak Grove, Olustee and Brier Hill prior to being located at Dublin). The letter was sent to the Lodge, when it was located at Sandy Ridge because Ezel Lodge ceased to exist in 1882. Another note about the letter above is the positive manner in which they recommended

the brother in question, “cheerfully”. We should all strive today to receive such an accolade as that. Back in those days it must to have been the practice or requirement for a Brother to demit from one lodge before he could affiliate himself with another lodge. When a man petitioned or affiliated with a lodge for membership he had to join the lodge nearest to his residence. If there were two lodges near his residence, which is common in large cities and towns, it would have had to have been determined which lodge was closer to the petitioner and obtain a release of jurisdiction from the other lodge. This was not a great of problem for country lodges because there was usually only one lodge in a village the size of Dublin, Fleta, Lapine, Mt. Carmel, Ramer, Pike Road, Pine Level, and Sandy Ridge.

Masonry is often misunderstood as a secret society or a religion. In the true sense of the words *Freemasonry* is not a secret society but a society with secrets. Modern Freemasonry is a fraternity, not a religion or a cult. In a secret society no one outside that society knows who the members are. It is common knowledge that most colleges around the country usually seem to have at least one secret society in addition to the fraternities and sororities. Movies have been made about them. Masonry is visible to all. Many Grand Lodges publish lists of their members. I will present a list of all officers (1854-2004) and members who are and have been a member of Fleta Lodge (1854-2004) in the conclusion of this series. We, who are members, proudly display the Masonic emblems on our clothing and jewelry. All members who are initiated into Masonry take an obligation of secrecy, which through the course of their Masonic life they will be illuminated as to why they took such an obligation.

Secrecy is a common fact of everyday life. Our private affairs are ours, not to be shouted from the housetops. Businesses, diplomats, board meetings of business companies all have secrets which are often of value in proportion to the success of keeping them to be successful in the endeavors for which they have planned. A man and his wife have private understandings for no one else to know as well. *“From all of this some things are secret and hidden that might be open and known-- if we had the wit or would take the trouble to learn. Fine music is a secret to the tone deaf. Mathematics is a secret from the ignorant (I can relate to that!). Philosophy is a secret from the commonplace mind. In school the teacher is anxious to instruct all who seek the classroom in the secrets of geometry and not all students wish to study geometry and not all who*

do, have the wit to comprehend. The secrecy of Masonry is an honorable secrecy; any good man may ask for her secrets; those who are worthy will receive them but not all are worthy, and not all the worthy seek". But it can best be said about some secrets and secrecy as Christ admonished the crowds and his disciples who gathered to hear him on the mountainside as he taught them in Matthew, chapter 6, verses 1-4, and I quote the forth verse "*Give your gifts in secret, and your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you*". Also Paul says something similar to that in Colossians 3: 23-25. Many things which are accomplished in Masonry must have had that verse of Scripture in mind and to add to that, most of the practices, which are done in Masonry, are Biblical in nature and the fraternity was formed to enhance the character of the man, whose faith was in God, who joined the fraternity.

To continue with the history of Mt. Carmel Lodge No. 223 we find many more interesting events that were recorded in the minutes. In the minutes of January 10, 1885, the secretary was instructed to purchase new jewels to replace those, which became missing during the move from Sandy Ridge to Mt. Carmel. Each officer of a Lodge wears a jewel, which represents the office he is currently elected to, (i.e.: Wor. Master-Square; Senior Warden-Level; Junior Warden-Plumb-Bob and so on). The cost of the new jewels amounted to \$5.00. The author discovered in the minutes of May 8, 1885, that a committee was appointed to wait on a Mr. Davis and tender a donation of ten dollars for service rendered to our brother (Charles W. Cottingham who died May 10, 1879 or Dr. James B. Fonville who died April 12, 1885) during his sickness. The \$10.00 was raised to \$15.00. There were two members listed on this committee, James T. Giddens and Dr. Beverly Caswell Poole. My great-grandfather, Charles Chilion Davis, lived on the north side of Hickory Grove Road at that time, between Devenport (Hickory Grove) and Mt. Carmel on the hill or ridge east of the Hickory Grove Cemetery, which is on the next hill, could have been the Davis mentioned in the minutes. Joseph and Violet Coker own the property now. Mr. Charles Chilion Davis married Lula Adelle Cross, daughter of John Pipkin Cross, they had two daughters who lived there: Nancy Jeffries, who died in 1969, and Miss Kate Davis, who died in 1957. Another daughter, May Davis Powell, wife of Dr. George Norman Powell, Jr., died in 1952. May Davis and George N. Powell, Jr. lived in a house where Waverly Guy used to live. They are all buried in Hickory Grove Cemetery. To my knowledge there is no record of my

great-grandfather, Charles Chilion Davis, ever joining the Masons.

In November of 1885, the minutes mention a letter from the Grand Master calling for aid to our yellow fever suffering Brethren at Jacksonville, Florida. The Lodge voted to send five dollars to their relief. Also in those same minutes there was a letter from Forrestburg Lodge No. 523, Texas, requesting information about a certain individual. The secretary was instructed to inform Forrestburg Lodge No. 523, "That for twenty years this Lodge has known nothing of (that person) as a Mason and nothing good as a man."

In those days that would have been pretty bad for the brother or possible member to have received such a negative review. The Lodge also took care of its members and widows and children of its deceased members as indicated in the minutes of June 8, 1889. The Lodge paid \$12.00 to Mr. George E. Blackwell for rent of a house for the widow of George W. Cottingham for a period of one year. As I read through the minutes I could tell when there was a financial depression in the Country, which occurred every eight to ten years prior to the Great Depression of 1929 to 1940, due to the amount of contributions given for charitable causes during those times.

On April 11, 1891, suitable resolutions were suggested on the death of Bro. Dr. James J. Stephens and on the second Sunday in May at 10 o'clock to attend the burial of their deceased Brother. A committee appointed to draft suitable resolutions of respect on the death of our deceased Brother consisted of Henderson H. Norman, James T. Giddens, and George S. Morrison. It was moved that the Lodge invite the following Lodges for the funeral: Montgomery Lodge No. 11, Andrew Jackson Lodge No. 173, Helicon Lodge (Lapine) No. 201, Ramer Lodge No. 243, Braggs Store Lodge No. 84 (Euophotic), and direct Bro. Perry to invite Fort Deposit (No. 291) Brethren who are in good standing and Camp Creek Lodge No. 251 (Honoraville). It was moved "That Bro. J.M. Stephens take our regalia and have them washed and ironed". The funeral for Bro. Stephens was held in Sandy Ridge at the cemetery (now the Payne Cemetery). He must have been respected in the area due to his being a doctor and a member of the Lodge to have most of the Lodges in the area invited to attend his funeral. The minutes record that the members met and formed a precession at the "Old Masonic Hall" and repaired to the Church, Sandy Ridge Methodist; from there they reformed the precession to the cemetery and the grave

and after attending to the burial service of our Brother repaired back to our "Old Hall". The Masonic Funerals back then were very impressive ceremonies with all the members wearing the insignia and regalia of their office and of the Fraternity. The *Masonic Funeral* and *Laying of a Cornerstone* are two ceremonies in Masonry that are totally open to for all to see. Today, few Masonic funerals held due to the fact that Masonry's membership has declined over the years due to the demise of its many elderly members and lack of interest and participation in organizations of that nature.

On March 17, 1893, the secretary began using the name Mt. Carmel in the minutes. The by-laws were changed to read as "Striking out Sandy Ridge and substituting Mt. Carmel" and in the minutes of February 17, 1893 the name Sandy Ridge was struck through as described above. In the minutes of June 10th, 1893 there was a letter from Lodge No. 504 in Midland City near Dothan asking for help to rebuild their Lodge, which was destroyed by a cyclone on the 19th day of April. By motion the Lodge voted them a donation of five dollars. As I read through the minutes, I noticed that fires seemed to have occurred quite often, and was a major cause that forced many Lodges to ask other Brother Lodges for financial help.

One of the more interesting events of 1893, which occurred, was the trial of a brother who was charged with an accusation of "unmasonic conduct". The unmasonic conduct was the charge of seducing a woman in the community. A committee consisting of George Norman Powell, George S. Morrison, and Henderson H. Norman was appointed by the Wor. Master to investigate the charges. A trial date was set on the Saturday before the second Sunday in August 1893. This was a special communication to investigate the case. The minutes read as follows: *"The Committee on the case made their report in the shape of an interrogation of (the woman) taken under oath before B.B. Carter-N.P. Ex. J.P., (the accused Brother) was absent, his whereabouts being unknown. Consequently he was not notified to appear however after hearing the report of the committee and the testimony of (the woman) the Lodge proceeded to take vote on the guilt of (the accused Brother), which resulted as follows: Guilty-14 votes; Not Guilty-1 vote."* After that vote another vote was taken as to the punishment to be inflicted, which resulted in the expulsion of the Brother from the Masonic order by a vote of ten for expulsion and five for indefinite suspension. Nine years later on Sept. the 10th 1902, the expelled brother petitioned the

Lodge and by unanimous vote restored him to the “rites and privileges of Masonry”. He thanked them by letter for the “*charitable manner*” of the restoration. Later that day at the regular communication, Bro. J. W. Cook preferred charges against Bro. B.C. Pool, a demitted member of this Lodge. The charges were for unmasonic conduct for using “unmasonic and abusive” language to Bro. George S. Morrison and speaking disrespectfully of this Lodge and of Master Masons on the 10th day of June 1893. The Committee made their report in the September meeting and a trial date was set for the November meeting but evidently nothing else was done because the minutes do not mention the matter again. In the September meeting an account of one dollar was paid to J. B. Cross for carrying Bro. Henry Clay Armstrong (who was Grand Secretary for many years) to Sprague Junction on May the 20th when he attended the meeting to raise Bro Walter Rice Watson to the Third Degree or Master Mason Degree. Bro. Watson later demitted from the Lodge in 1910.

As I mentioned before, Laying of a Corner Stone is one of the few occasions where the work of the Lodge is open to the public. There are pictures of George Washington depicting him leading the ceremony in which the cornerstone of the first Capital Building in the new Capitol City of Washington D.C. George Washington was and still is one of the most revered Masons this country has ever produced. In the minutes of March 10th 1894 there was a resolution offered by Bro. James T. Giddens “*That this Lodge take part in the ceremonies of laying the Corner Stone of the M.E.C.S. at this place (Mt. Carmel) at our next regular communication and that we invite our sister Lodges to join us in this occasion also invite Bro. Henry Clay Armstrong to give an address on said occasion*”. The church mentioned above was Rehobeth Methodist Church and the initials M.E.C.S. stood for Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The church building evidently must have stood next door to Gidden’s store, which housed the Lodge.

The Country must have been going through another mild depression or recession around the year 1897, (the country suffered a depression in 1893) because a brother wrote a letter to the Lodge stating that he was pressed financially but would make a sacrifice if the Lodge were in need of money. By motion Bro. J. D. Norman was instructed to write him and inform him that the Lodge was in need very much of money and that the Lodge would grant him a demit if he would send the five dollars. In the minutes of June 1897 there was a motion passed that stated

“All standing committees here after that fails to report within two months time will be fined 25 cents unless a reasonable excuse be given for not reporting for each and every month”. During the next five years there must have been disharmony in the Lodge because the November minutes of 1897 were declared stricken from the minutes book and subsequently they were removed. During that same period the minutes record many lectures giving on improvements in Masonry. The end of the nineteenth century was quiet for the Lodge but there was one item mentioned about Bro. Edward Bedsole being expelled from the Lodge on Sept. 8th 1900, for reasons not mentioned in the minutes and that some of the minutes are missing during this period.

The Minutes of April the 12th 1902 recorded an event, which was probably common those days throughout the South the Lodge loaned \$10.00 to assist Bro. James S. Giddens in paying his way to attend a Confederate Reunion in Dallas, Texas. In the next meeting there was a letter from Respectable Lodge of Puerto Rico requesting aid to help build a lodge room. That letter displays that no matter what part of the world a Brother Lodge or Brother Master Mason is in, they can always ask for assistance of an other Brother Lodge or Master Mason if that cause was found worthy. On September 19, 1903 the Brethren were ordered to meet at the Sandy Ridge schoolhouse at 9 o'clock on the 20th of September for the purpose of burying their esteemed Brother, Andrew Jackson Perry, who was a charter member of the Lodge when it formed at Sandy Ridge nearly fifty years before. It was a feat for a member to reach his fiftieth year back then and even more of one today. Not as many men join the fraternity today and most who do join are older. Many of their fathers were Masons, yet they wait until they retire to join the fraternity because, at that age, they have more time for their Lodge and to visit other Lodges. During the year 1903 it was noticed in the minutes that Camp Creek Lodge had changed its name to Honoraville.

We find in the minutes of June 18, 1904 that Bro Dr. R. H. L. Garrett offered a resolution to change Mt. Carmel Lodge to Sellers Lodge. There must have been much opposition to that because he withdrew the resolution at the next meeting. In 1905 the Lodge suffered the loss of another beloved Past Master, Bro. George S. Morrison. Here below is the Memorial in which a page of the minutes was dedicated to his memory. An equally as eloquent page was dedicated to the memory of other beloved members. The last such memorial page dedicated to a member was

for Bro. John Culpepper Fonville February 1913.

**In Memory of George S. Morrison
Worshipful Master of Mt. Carmel Lodge A.F. & A.M. No. 223**

**Who rested from Labor January 28, 1905
High Twelve**

“The announcement is from on High. Then comes the order that our Worshipful Master George S. Morrison be called from Labor to refreshment of the Celestial Lodge. Waiting for the hour, for his work was done: listening; expectant, for the order, he was full ready when it came. For more than seventy-five years he played the drama of life. He made his exit; full of years, full of good deeds, full of charity, full of Brotherly love, rounding a long life with all that is excellent in man. Honest, truthful, just charitable he adorned citizenship, Masonry, Christianity, living so as to attract and bring men to him. His death brought general genuine sorrow to acquaintances- to community- to Brotherhood, to Church. He was a good man, none who knew him but to love him; none who named him but to praise him. His body, committed to the dust with loving hands, awaits the Resurrection Morning to be reunited to his spirit, which has returned to God; our thoughts gather in sadness about his new made grave but turn with joy to the contemplation of his everlasting rest in The House not made with hands eternal in the Heavens.”

Committee: James t. Giddens, J. J. Devenport, John C. Fonville, J. B. Stockard

The Lodge made some furniture purchases in 1905 for two Brazen Columns representing the ones in front of King Solomon’s Temple described in 2nd Chronicles 3:15, and 1st Kings 7:15-22. In 1910 they also purchased rods and staffs for the Deacons and stewards of the Lodge, which cost \$10.77, and also for pressing of the By-Laws (made 100 copies). The great earthquake of 1906 that occurred at San Francisco, California did not go unnoticed in this part of the country because the Lodge received a communication asking for assistance and the Lodge voted to send \$5.00 to that worthy cause. It was during this time period between 1905 –1910 that the Masonic Home for widows and orphans was being built. In the fall of 1910 there were discussions of sending representatives to the laying of the cornerstone of the Widow and Orphan Home in Montgomery. The Lodge placed in the cornerstone a copy of the By-Laws and a current list of members and the charter members. The Masonic Home stood and was used from 1910 to 1978 when a new and modern structure was built adjacent to the original “Old Home”. When the

Masonic Home was built, it was on the edge of town. With progress and population growth, Montgomery grew around and way out past the Home, and now it may be considered in the middle part of town.

I remember many times playing around the "Old Home" when my mother, Frances C. Davis, who is a member of Liberty Chapter No.254 of the Eastern Star, took my brothers and me there when the Eastern Star held spaghetti suppers in January or February. Sadly, they do not do that any more. I believe the old Masonic Home was demolished around 1980 because it was in need of much repair that would have cost too much to do. Due to circumstances beyond the control of the Grand Lodge of Alabama, the Masonic Home closed its doors on December 31st, 2003. This was a sad note for the Masons of Alabama. Residents who were occupying the Home at the time of its closure were moved to other facilities where they are still being cared for by the *Masonic Home Endowment Fund* until death.

In August of 1911 the Lodge agreed to let the Woodmen of the World use its hall for meetings. This is allowed by the Grand Lodge to let each Lodge dictate who can and cannot meet in its building as long it is a reputable and worthy organization. That was a common practice in those days. It was evidently an other practice for Lodges to form their own conferences, which is done by the Grand Lodge today. In March of 1913 the lodge voted to have three pictures to be hung in the Lodge consisting of three worthy Brethren and Past Masters Bro. George S. Morrison, John Culpepper Fonville, and Alexander Burnett McWhorter. January 14, 1914 was a notable account of the Lodge because one of its long time members Bro. James Thomas Giddens recorded the meeting as secretary Pro Tem. One of the main discussions was the repair of the Lodge building itself. The committee on repairs held a conference with a L. P. Giddens. This was Bro. J. T. Giddens younger brother who by now was managing their father's estate (according to page 12, Vol. XIII, NO.3 of the *Pintlala Historical Assoc. Newsletter*) James T. Giddens by then was 78 years old. The minutes mentioned that the Lodge would go halves in the expense of repairs of the Masonic Hall and the store house. The committee was discharged in the June meeting and the Lodge voted to postpone repairs indefinitely. Bro. James T. Giddens died in August of 1914 and is buried in Mt. Carmel Cemetery. There was a Special Communication held at Hickory Grove Church on January 31, 1915 to pay the last respects to

Bro. George H. McQueen. In 1915 the Lodge was dealing with Dr. James Mack Brown and his wife Allie Lois, (J. T. & L. P. Giddens sister) concerning repairs to the Lodge as indicated in the minutes of February 20, 1915. It appeared that relations between the Lodge and the Browns became strained because after the death of Bro. James Giddens the Lodge began making overtures of moving the Lodge to an other location. On October 20, 1917 the building committee reported they accepted a proposition of W. C. Norman to build a Lodge room over his store at Fleta. The Motion of the committee was voted on and was accepted by the Lodge. Lafayette Duncan, Wor. Master, was appointed to ask the Grand Lodge to pass a resolution to move Mt. Carmel Lodge to Fleta and also change the name from Mt. Carmel to Fleta. It is a requirement of all lodges to ask permission of the Grand Lodge to do either of the above. Between October of 1917 and February of 1922 brothers voted on and accepted, built, changed the name, and moved the Lodge to Fleta on the southwest corner of the crossroads above W. C. Norman's store. The last time the name Mt. Carmel was used in the minutes was Saturday January 21st, 1922 and it was a Special Communication. The first time Fleta was recorded in the minutes was February 18, 1922. On the night they voted to change the name of the Lodge, a brother made a confession to the Lodge that he had been guilty of unmasonic conduct by the reason of having operated an illicit distillery in the manufacture of whiskey against the peace and dignity of the State of Alabama. On motion, he was suspended indefinitely from the Lodge. However, minutes show that he was restored six months later.

In the next installment we will explore the Lodge, as it existed at Fleta Crossroads and at its present location today.

**Pintlala Historical Association
c/o Pintlala Public Library
255 Federal Road
Hope Hull, AL 36043**

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