

# History of Star Lodge No. 115

## 1959-2008

The facts presented in this history are only as accurate as the meeting minutes from which they were gleaned. In discussions with fellow Brothers, I discovered that there are many interesting facts (or stories) that went unrecorded in the minutes. I did not attempt to record these oral histories since sometimes Brothers did not agree on the “facts”.

**1959** – December, The brothers approved a motion approved to purchase a 50 Star United States flag.

### **1960 through 1973 in General**

Many new Brothers were raised during the period of time from 1960 to 1969. The minutes reference regular communication from the Masonic Sanitarium in Bettendorf and regular contributions to their Sunshine Fund. Building maintenance including windows, doors and especially the roof was always a topic of discussion. Dinner was typically served by the ladies from the Order of the Eastern Star prior to the stated meetings. Many discussions were documented on the need to educate members on the Masonic Brotherhood.

**1963** – January, the by-laws were amended to form a Charity Committee after discussion about Masonic purpose. The Charity Committee was authorized to draw up to \$50.00 to relieve the distress of a worthy brother without lodge approval. Assistance of over \$50.00 required affirmation from the lodge.

**1964** – May, the by-laws were amended a second time to establish a \$300.00 Charity Fund to be maintained through an annual \$0.25 assessment for each member.

**1965** – March, Approval to purchase the Fellow Craft Middle Chamber Stairs for \$96.30. After much discussion and a definite need, the lodge approved the replacement of the roof at a cost of \$1,138.00. A motion was made and approved to advertise for sale the extra room (the West room) over Gayer Drug. Included in the motion was instruction to turn off the gas, water and electric. This room was purchased from the Madrid Veterans of Foreign Wars in 1957 for \$200.00. The room was original purchased for extra space and storage.

**1967** – April, After much discussion about lack of finding someone to purchase the West room, the brothers decided to use the West room. In September, a motion was approved to place markers on the graves of deceased Masons. The motion included the purchase of twelve markers per year, to be placed first on the graves of the oldest date of 50-year members, then on the oldest date of past Masters and then on the oldest date of Master Masons within Star Lodge No. 115 jurisdiction.

**1968** – March, District Lecturers Kenneth Akers and George Nelson were instructed to display their display their D.L. certificates in the lodge hall. Darrell Drumn received his

M.L. certificate on March 30, 1968 in Des Moines. The Madrid Boy Scouts were allowed to use the West room and discussion began concerning the OES moving the kitchen from the West room and making a kitchen in the dining area of the lodge. Many subsequent meetings referred to moving the kitchen with no action until September of 1970.

**1969** – April, The Madrid Lions Club paid \$60.00 to the Masons for use of the West room by the Madrid Boy Scouts. It was also documented that the Scouts discontinued use of the West room, but no explanation was given.

**1970** – September, It was reported that the work to move the kitchen from the West wing was nearly complete. The Jordan, Mahoney, Jordan law firm notified the lodge that Adolph Peterson had willed \$2,000.00 to Star Lodge No. 115. The money was invested with the intent to accumulate interest. There was much discussion as to how to use the interest. A scholarship fund was discussed, but no formal action was ever recorded that establish this fund, nor was there any discussion on the award of any local scholarships directly from the lodge.

**1972** – June, The West room (building) was authorized to be sold to the Madrid Jaycees, but no purchase amount was documented.

**1973** – May, The West building was finally sold to the Madrid Jaycees.

#### **1974 through 1980 in General**

No significant events were noted, although several of our current members were raised during this time period including. Regular communications were received from the Rowley Masonic Home in Perry and the Bettendorf Masonic Home. Problems with building maintenance were still a prime topic of conversation and well documented. Members still enjoyed “delicious” meals prepared by the OES and those December chili and oyster stew dinners.

#### **1981 through 1987 in General**

Although discussions about a new building began much earlier, this topic became a focus in the 1980's.

**1981** – November, There was discussion about Woodward and Madrid sharing a new building, but this was not referenced again in the minutes.

**1982** – September, There was much discussion about a \$330.00 natural gas bill, the condition of the building and cost of heating. Heating problems seemed to be compounded by the fact that the building below the lodge was vacated and the lodge counted on heat rising from that building to supplement heat in the lodge. Brothers were encouraged to patronize the business in the building below to help keep it from closing before winter.

**1983** – The City of Madrid was making plans to celebrate their centennial over Labor Day weekend and the brothers were planning to help with the celebration. Discussion continued concerning the cost of maintaining the lodge building. The Order of the Eastern Star agreed to pay \$30.00 each time they met to help with the cost of heat.

Heating and leaks in the roof continue to dominate the discussion. Discussion recorded on the possibility of looking for a new lodge, but it was decided that the lodge should be sold before considering the purchase of a new building. Star Lodge celebrated their 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a dinner at St. Malachy's Catholic Church prepared by Fr. Charles Yetmar. Rev. Yetmar gave the meal prayer and the benediction.

**1984** – Discussion continued about the cost of heating the lodge and maintaining the building roof and hot water heating system. In September, brothers discussed going dark for the winter or meeting in the home of Br. John Theisen to help save heating costs. Meetings continued at the lodge. In November, a committee consisting of Brothers Don Shearer, Jim Riker and Bill Hegna were assigned to investigate the possibility of constructing a new building. The committee reported to the brothers in December and informed them that a new metal building would cost \$40,000 plus the cost of land. Communication from the Grand Lodge of Iowa stated that Star Lodge needed to have 60% of the cost of a new building in cash and pledges before any acquisition or construction could begin.

**1985** – Problems continue with the leaky roof and the hot water heating system. It was reported that a 50'x70' frame building would cost \$105,000 plus the cost of land. Brothers Kenny Akers, Harold Shearer and Gene Morning were assigned to locate a lot. The first mention of acquiring "the building next to the SAM Center" was in September. In November, a report was presented on the general cost of renovating the South State Street building. Although no specific cost was recorded, the costs seemed to total about \$10,000. Br. Kenneth Akers purchased the building from Boone County for \$35.00. Thus began several months of renovation.

**1986** – Efforts in the lodge centered on renovating the South State Street building. Work groups gutted the building to the shell before construction began. In July, a motion was passed to sell the old building to any perspective buyer for \$1.00. No interest was expressed in the building. On September 11, 1986, Worshipful Master Don Shearer conducted the first meeting in the new lodge. It was noted in the minutes that the absence of stairs allowed some brothers to attend the meeting for the first time in many years.

**1987** – January, a motion was approved to consolidate C.T. Granger Lodge #620 with Star Lodge #115. The motion required C.T. Granger to sell their building before the consolidation would be official. In February, \$2,000.00 was received from the C.T. Granger lodge funds. Although the minutes were not specific, the \$2,000 was implied to be from the sale of the Granger building. In May, a motion was approved to give the old Star Lodge building to the City of Madrid. The City demolished the entire quarter block including the Joe's Pharmacy and Lawrence Hardware buildings. MidWest Tech is now located on this West Second Street site.

### **1988 through 1999**

Work continued on "finishing" the lodge with discussion directed toward the completion of the rear of the building and the basement. Few brothers were raised during this time period. Discussions moved from heat bills and building maintenance to improving meeting attendance and retaining members. The one consistent activity enjoyed by brothers was the "chili and oyster stew" dinners. The lodge mourned the loss of fellow brothers Kenny Akers in 1992 and the sudden loss of Steve Barker in 1994. Kenny and

Steve excelled in the memory work and actively participated in the raising of many Master Masons in the 1960's through 1980's.

**1991** – The lodge enjoyed extra income from the rental of the basement by Show Time Dance Studio for several years starting in 1991 and ending in 1995.

**1998** – December, Br. Walter Anderson received his 75-year certificate. This was the only 75-year certificate noted in the minutes to be issued between 1958 and 2008.

### **2000 through 2008**

This period of time began with a question of whether Star Lodge No. 115 would survive. This question of survival led to a resurgence within the lodge.

**2000** – January, As recorded in the minutes, Br. Bob Hollis asked the question, “at what point should a lodge consider turning in its charter or merge with another lodge.” After considerable discussion, it was determined that the lodge should remain active until “the lodge is unable to fill a viable service in the community and unable to maintain financial needs.” No brothers were recorded as being raised in 2000 or 2002. Discussion continued on membership retention, attracting new members and community involvement during this time period.

**2003** – February, Discussion centered on the desire to contribute to the Madrid Fire Department for the purchase of a defibrillator. Worshipful Master John Kincart appointed a committee consisting of Brothers William Sowder, Leland “Buster” Haidsiak, Frank Schoff and Gary Goodsell, assigning them the task of “developing a continual project to bring financial means to benefit the community.” W.M. Kincart stated, “The lodge needs to move in a positive direction.” On March 13, 2003, Br. Bill Sowder made the motion to develop the Dunk Tank project for the annual Labor Day celebration. Funds raised by the Dunk Tank project were to be divided 20/80 with 20% going to the general fund or building fund. Br. Marvin Sowder contacted local businesses to help sponsor the project. The Dunk Tank was a huge success and attained the goal of raising funds for the defibrillator and other community projects. Proceeds from later years funded educational programs and scholarships at Madrid schools.

**2004** – The Dunk Tank project was not only successful at raising money, but it was also successful at creating interest in Masonry in general. Star Lodge was suddenly busy with degree work. Five new candidates were approved for membership in 2004 after only one new brother was raised between 1999 and 2003. This trend of new members continued with eight additional new Masons between 2005 and early 2008.

**2007** – This was a momentous year for the lodge. The Grand Lodge of Iowa recognized Star Lodge #115 with two awards. Star Lodge received the “Plus One Membership Award” and the “Lodge of the Year” award. Star Lodge was represented at the Annual Grande Lodge of Iowa Communications in Cedar Rapids, Iowa for the first time since 1987.

**2008** – Discussion begins on the possibility of building a new building. The momentum continues as we celebrate our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!