

A History of Oldham County Kentucky Masonic Lodges
By Brother Roland Stayton

Now we come to Oldham County, which also has a rich and interesting history in Masonry.

Fortitude #47 is the oldest Lodge in Oldham County, first chartered in 1818 before Oldham County existed as such. They met at Westport KY, then at Transylvania, KY described in an old letter as being in what is now present day Harrods Creek, situated then at Brownsville, then moved apparently several times, and finally re-chartered in 1844 at LaGrange.

In an old clipping from Miss Edna Goodridge dated July 1887, it states that Fortitude met in a new quarters in the Grand Jury Room at the Courthouse. Rob Morris was present for the occasion and wrote a poem for the occasion ending with '*Rally, Boys, with new delight; come to Fortitude tonight*'. This Lodge has had many distinguished and prominent men that served as masters and as members including Rob Morris who served as Master at least three different times. Rob Morris is described in many circles as being the founder of the Eastern Star. He also was the charter master of Royal Solomon Lodge in Jerusalem.

Some time back I talked to Jim Pendergast, before he passed away. Jim was a long time resident of Oldham County and he pointed out from pictures of Past Masters on the Wall, many of the Past Masters who were well known in this area. Francis Taylor was the very first Master. Avery O. Gwinn was listed as Secretary. Masters also include such names as Mr. Dawson, Editor of The Oldham County Era for many years and Tom Manby and Elliott Netherton, prominent Lawyers. Mr. Manby's father was also a Past Master of this lodge and was said to have been descended from anointed Kings. Born in Skipton England in 1828, he owned two general stores in LaGrange and one in Ballardsville. Judge Hall, County Judge for many years, Bill McManion, Vice President of Belknap Hardware Co. and Robert Wakefield had businesses. Mr. Peake, was a Funeral Home owner. In fact, I saw an old funeral home fan at the lodge, which was very old because the telephone number was #1. Incidentally this is where the funeral service was held for D.W. Griffith, one of the first movie directors who directed Birth of a Nation and he is buried in Mt. Tabor Churchyard on Hwy 22 near Centerfield. Mr. Toss, Superintendent of Schools, was an honorary member of a Lodge in Murray KY.

The history of Fortitude shares with the history of the community sponsoring the first chapter of the Grangers, an organization of farmers that was the forerunner of the Farm Bureau.

Westport Lodge #165 at Westport from 1848 to 1897. They met in the Old Masonic Hall on Clinton St. two lots from Front St. and just north of 2nd Street. I recently visited the vacant lot on which it was situated and visualized how it must have been over 100 years ago. In 1860 the population was about 500. In the early years that the lodge existed this was a thriving river community. R.W. Taylor was listed as Master and George

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Armstrong a Secretary. Also listed as Past Master is Peter Blake. Mr. Taylor was probably later a postmaster at Brownsville, later Brownsboro, however this is supposition. By the 1880's however the town started an economic decline due to being bypassed by the railroad. The River was no longer of the great importance it had previously been. I'm happy to say its looks like this area is making somewhat of a come-back it being such a beautiful area.

Oldham #169, 1848 – 1879, first met in LaGrange. A.M. Gazlay was Master in 1851 and Secretary was T.J. Bain. Mr. Gazlay was listed as an attorney in 1852 and Mr. Bain as a merchant. Might have been the owner of the Old Bain Hotel in LaGrange or a store next door to it. It later moved to then Beards' Station, now Crestwood, alongside the railroad track on the North side on the 2nd Floor of a warehouse just North of the depot. Joseph Beard, who donated ground for the railroad to be built on, was the secretary of the Lodge. He built and was the owner of Woodland, which is now the location of Waldeck on Hwy 22. It is said that he accumulated vast tracts of land and thru his foresight and philanthropy became a potent factor in the development of that Community.

They then met at Brownsboro in the Old Grange building on Broadway (329) on the north side what is now Hwy 1694, probably near the present grocery store restaurant. Incidentally Rob Morris at one time was a member of this lodge while it was in LaGrange.

Pythagoras Lodge #365 met in Sattilo, KY 1859-1886 now Goshen. They probably met at one time in the Old Grange Hall. Its first officers were: James Crutchfield, Master and Secretary, James Taliaferro, this James Crutchfield was probably the same man that was the first sheriff of Oldham County and served in that capacity for 8 years. An interesting story about him was that a slave woman had been accused unjustly of murdering her husband, and even though she was condemned to the gallows he rode to Frankfort on his horse, put the case before the governor and returned with a pardon. It seemed that the overseer on the farm had a bad reputation and had been the one who killed her husband. Captain James Talliaferro was a well-known pioneer in that area.

Robert Mallory Lodge #479 met in Ballardsville from 1869-1884. It was apparently named for Robert Mallory born in Virginia 1815, who came to Henry County as a lawyer in 1838, served as congressman from that district, stayed there about 5 years and upon his fathers' death moved to Ballardsville in Oldham Co. He lived on a 500 acre farm, originally part of a land grant from Patrick Henry. It was named Oak Knoll. Upon his death he left the city of LaGrange the funds to build the Mallory-Taylor Hospital in memory of his grandparents, which is now Baptist East. In 1869 H.E. Stone was listed as Master and Daniel McAllister as Secretary. Nothing can be found on Master Stone, but the McAllisters were a pioneer family that came to this area from Virginia.

Robert Mallory and Haden E. Stone were listed as Past Masters. MALLORY, Robert, a Representative from Kentucky; born at Madison Court House, Madison County, Va., November 15, 1815; attended private schools and was graduated from the University of

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Virginia, Charlottesville, in 1827; engaged in agricultural pursuits in La Grange, Ky.; studied law; was admitted to the bar in 1837 and commenced practice in New Castle, Ky.; elected as an Opposition Party candidate to the Thirty-sixth Congress and reelected as a Unionist to the Thirty-seventh and Thirty-eighth Congresses (March 4, 1859-March 3, 1865); chairman, Committee on Roads and Canals (Thirty-sixth and Thirty-seventh Congresses); unsuccessful candidate for reelection in 1864 to the Thirty-ninth Congress; delegate to the Union National Convention at Philadelphia in 1866; one of the vice presidents of the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia in 1876; resumed agricultural pursuits; died near La Grange, Ky., August 11, 1885; interment in the family cemetery at Spring Hill, Oldham County, Ky.

Rowe Lodge #529 in Floydsburg 1872-1886. Unable to get details of this lodge other than Grand Lodge records that J. Scott Middleton was the first Master and Joseph H. Beard was Secretary. This was probably the same Beard that had been Secretary of Oldham #169 while at Beards Station before the lodge moved to Brownsboro. No other information of Master Middleton other than a possible descendant Rebecca Middleton, raised by Rebecca Hitt Ingram.

The newest lodge in Oldham was Logos Lodge #829 and was instituted in Pewee Valley on the night of January 10, 1910, receiving their charter later that year. It was started under the personal direction of the GM of Masons in KY, John H. Cowles, who was later to become Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite Southern Jurisdiction and served from about 1924 until 1952 as its Head. The first Master was Evan T. Hammond and the Secretary was Charles A. Calvert. No information can be found on Master Hammond, but the Secretary, Charles Calvert was Postmaster. Mr. Calvert was also on the first board of Directors that established the Pewee Valley State Bank. The lodge started in the building known as McAllister's, the upper level of which had been remodeled for the new lodge which was located next door to the Herdt Motor Co on Tulip Ave & Hwy 146. When J.A. Jurey was rebuilding his store building, arrangements were made with him to add another story especially for the lodge and on completion of the building in 1912 the lodge moved to that location now known as the Little Colonel Theatre. The Square and Compass can still be seen on that building. Many distinguished persons visited the lodge and it was a credit to the town of Pewee Valley. In 1914 it was rechartered as Pewee Valley #829. In 1950 the lodge voted to move from Pewee Valley to Crestwood. The lot on which the building is located was donated by Henry T. Carpenter and J. Robert Lee and is jointly owned by South Oldham Fire Department and Pewee Valley Lodge. This lodge retains a country lodge character of wonderful fellowship and is still thriving today in Crestwood. The current Master is with us tonight, Gene Crady and the present Secretary is Ed Johnson, Past Master.