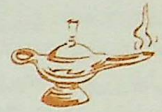


The Occasional Bulletin



Texas Lodge of Research, A.F. & A.M.

P. O. Box 684684 • Austin, Texas 78768-4684



2002 - 2003

January 2003

No. 3

Stated Communication Saturday, January 18, 2003

Corpus Christi Lodge No. 189
4114 Weber Road
Corpus Christi, Texas

9:00 A.M.
Gather at the Lodge

9:30 A.M.
Activities for Ladies & Guests
Corpus Christi Museum
of Science & History

10:30 A.M.
Open TLR
Business Meeting

12:00 Noon
Lunch at the Lodge

1:00 P.M.
Presentation of Papers
A SOJOURN WITH A MAN
CALLED 'BUCK'
By Howard R. Stewart, MD
YORK RITE MASONRY IN
SOUTHWEST TEXAS
By Roy A. Harrell, Jr.

Future Meetings

Saturday, March 15, 2003
San Marcos Lodge No. 342
San Marcos

From The East

Recently, three events have impressed upon me the real value of Masonry, how it binds us together in personal values that have a lasting influence upon our lives. The first one was a letter I received from one of our newest members, Frank Baker, in which he wrote a wonderful tribute to those who brought him into Masonry and how they had changed and enriched his life.

The second event was a letter from a Tom Wimberly of Corpus Christi some time ago informing me that his Lodge would be glad to host TLR in January. So, I recently drove down to Corpus to scout out plans for our meeting. I went to his house expecting to meet a rank stranger. But as soon as I got out of the car, he remarked, "We have been together before. Now where was it?" It turned out that he was one of the officers on the aircraft USS Intrepid in 1962 when I was the Chaplain and we served in the Mediterranean. He recognized me after all these forty years. We had a wonderful time together in visiting again and he drove me all over Corpus seeking to make the best arrangements possible for the TLR meeting. Masonry brought us together again, and made a wonderful meeting possible.

The third event was a recent interview I had with Governor Preston Smith. When I asked him what Masonry had meant to him, he replied, "It is the best place possible to meet a lot of good people that bring enrichment and pleasure into our lives."

This is also true in our participation in the activities of TLR. It was an announcement that I made in Lodge one night that caused Ray Bronk to say I want to be a member of TLR. He and his good wife Margie have been an inspiring addition to all of our meetings since then. I am grateful for personal values and inspiration I have received from many who I have known in Masonry who otherwise might never have touched my life. May we all continue to make Masonry a rewarding and enriching fellowship and brotherhood.

Fraternally, L. Randall Rogers

TLR Changes

This is a reminder that TLR is undergoing administrative changes resulting from relocating our Lodge records. The Lodge is now receiving assistance with many of the administrative functions from the Austin Scottish Rite Bodies.

Most general correspondence for the Secretary should be directed to the new address. The mailing address for dues payments, petitions for affiliation, and most Lodge business is:

Texas Lodge of Research
P.O. Box 684684
Austin, Texas 78768-4684

Specific correspondence for the Secretary should be mailed to his address listed in the table of officers.

As reported in the last *Occasional Bulletin*, the printing and mailing of the quarterly newsletter and the *Annual Transactions* will also be handled in Austin. These changes may result in some minor glitches as we develop a new routine for conducting our business. We again ask for your patience as we implement these changes.

2003 Dues Statements

The 2003 dues statements were mailed in early November and you should have received that notice. If you have not already remitted your dues, please do so as soon as possible to the new Austin mailing address.

If you did not receive a notice, this is an indication of one of those glitches mentioned earlier. Please remit your \$15 annual dues immediately to the Austin address and include a note that you did not receive a dues notice so the mailing list can be double checked for correctness. If you fall into this category, be sure to include your name and current mailing address.

In addition, several members who are endowed members of TLR were inadvertently sent dues notice. Please note this is another glitch in our transition. Feel free to return the dues notice indicating you are an endowed member.

Finally, everyone is reminded that the laws of the Grand Lodge of Texas calls for payment of dues in advance and the automatic suspension of all members who are in arrears on June 30. Please make sure your dues are current as you do want to lose your membership in TLR.

Texas Lodge of Research, A.F. & A.M. Officers 2002-2003	
Master	Dr. Randall Rogers P.O. Box 834 Buchanan Dam, TX 78609 512-793-2722
Senior Warden	Gordon Kelso P.O. Box 3672 Austin, TX 78764 512-472-7247
Junior Warden	Douglas Collins 80 Cheryl Lane Brownsville, TX 78521 956-544-1697
Treasurer	James F. Brumit, PM 819 Twilight Dr. Cedar Hill, TX 75104 972-291-7315
Secretary	Plez A. Transou, PM 11255 Garland Rd. Suite 1302, #113 Dallas, TX 75218 214-321-0744
Chaplain	Merlen Howe 700 Jagged Rock Cedar Park, TX 78615 512-260-8276
Senior Deacon	George Beeler 883 Fleming Prairie Rd Victoria, TX 77905 361-575-2107
Junior Deacon	Bob Melear 410 W. 13th St Quanah, TX 79252 940-663-5803
Senior Steward	James C. Yelvington 1711 San Antonio Austin, TX 78701 512-495-9988
Junior Steward	Joe Everett 901 N. Hill St Burnet, TX 512-715-0050
Marshal	W. Oscar Orum 8607 Azelea Trail Austin, TX 78759 512-346-4310
Master of Ceremonies	Brian Dodson 2738 Oakland Dr Sugar Land, TX 77419 281-265-1678
Tiler	Ray Bronk 100 Quirt Dr Burnet, TX 78611 512-756-2756
Transactions Editor	Dr. William P. Vaughn, PM 908 Hilton Place Denton, TX 76201 940-387-3005
Occasional Bulletin	Dr. Michael L. Wiggins, PM P.O. Box 720397 Norman, OK 73070 405-364-7164

E.T. Branch: Early Texas Mason

Michael L. Wiggins, PM

On September 22, 1861, the pioneer lawyer, early Texas legislator and Mason, Edward Thomas Branch died in Liberty, Texas at the age of 49. By happenstance, Branch came to Liberty in 1835 and became enmeshed in the history of Texas and Texas Masonry during the last twenty-six years of his life.

Born in Chesterfield County, Virginia on December 6, 1811, little is known of Branch's early life. Records suggest he was well-educated and living in Jackson, Mississippi by 1835 when he decided to seek fame and fortune in Cuba. He sailed for Cuba aboard the brigantine, *Montezuma*, only to be captured by a Mexican cruiser, robbed of all his possessions, and put ashore at Anahuac, Texas. From Anahuac, Branch made his way to Liberty where he settled and spent most of the remainder of his life.

Upon arriving in Liberty in 1835, Branch was employed as Liberty's first public school teacher. In response to the call from the Alamo for aid in 1836, he enlisted in the Texas Volunteers and headed for San Antonio. Upon hearing of the fall of the Alamo, Branch's company joined with Sam Houston's army and fought in the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836.

Branch served in the army until October 7, 1836, when he was elected to represent Liberty County in the First and Second Congresses of the newly created Republic of Texas from October 1836 until May 1838.

In 1838, Branch was elected Judge of the Fifth Judicial District, which automatically made him an Associate Justice of the Texas Supreme Court. He married Anne Cleveland Wharton, the adopted daughter of William H. Wharton, on August 15, 1838 and they moved briefly to Nacogdoches while he served as a district judge. In 1840, Branch resigned his judgeship and returned to Liberty.

While in Liberty, Branch was active in public affairs and with his business interests. He was a successful farmer (owning 3,343 acres of land at one time), practiced law in Liberty County, and was a co-owner of a steam-powered sawmill during the 1850's. Branch served as postmaster of Liberty in 1842 to 1843 and was elected in 1846 to represent Liberty County in the First Legislature of the State of Texas, briefly serving as Speaker of the House of Representatives.

During the early years of the Republic of Texas, several men met at the capitol in Houston on December 5, 1837 to organize The Philosophical Society of Texas. The first meeting was attended by twenty-four charter members including Mirabeau Lamar, Thomas J. Rusk, William H. Wharton, John A. Wharton, Patrick C. Jack,

Anson Jones, Littleton Fowler, T. J. Chambers, Sam Houston, and E.T. Branch. Many of these names are recognized for their contributions to Texas and Masonry. Branch, twenty-six, was surely influenced by these men and leaders of varied backgrounds. And on December 13, 1837, the minutes of Holland Lodge No. 36 reflect that the Masonic petition of Edward T. Branch was received and referred to an investigating committee.

The minutes of Holland Lodge for December 20, 1837 report the activities of a called meeting held in the Senate Chamber in Houston. One entry states "On motion of Bro. Treasurer Western, resolved, that we now proceed to vote for Edward T. Branch, the report of the committee on his petition being favorable. It being an extraordinary case and one of emergency he was balloted for and the ballot was unanimous." Branch was then duly initiated as an Entered Apprentice and received the lecture. At the same meeting the lodge was opened in the Fellowcraft degree and Bro. Branch was balloted upon, elected, and passed to the degree of Fellowcraft. Branch was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason in Holland Lodge at an adjourned meeting held December 31, 1837.

It is interesting to remember that on December 20, 1837, the same day Branch was initiated and passed, representatives of the three Texas lodges under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Louisiana, Holland Lodge No. 36, Milam Lodge No. 40, and McFarland Lodge No. 41, met in the Senate Chamber at Houston to organize the Grand Lodge of the Republic of Texas. Perhaps Bro. Branch and Wm. M. Shepherd, who was also passed to the degree of Fellowcraft at this meeting, represented the entertainment for the brethren assembled to create the Masonic Grand Lodge Texas.

Branch's Masonic career was not filled with leadership positions as much of his time was spent with public affairs. He demitted from Holland Lodge No. 1 in 1842 when he returned to Liberty full-time. In 1848, Branch was instrumental in organizing a lodge in Liberty. He was a charter member of Liberty Lodge No. 48 and served as Junior Warden while the Lodge was under dispensation. That lodge recognizes the contributions of Bro. Branch to Texas and the Liberty community with the annual E.T. Branch Outstanding Teacher Awards.

E.T. Branch, public school teacher, lawyer, judge, legislator, patriot, and Mason, made a lasting impression upon the face of Texas during his brief life. Public servant and respected citizen, Branch left a legacy of which Texas Masons can be proud.

The Richland Hills Meeting

Bobby Lynn Shehorn

Substituting for our distinguished Brother Martinez is no easy task, but as he was unable to attend our last meeting, I accepted the challenge. Unable to duplicate Pete's usual description of a momentous drive to the lodge, I can only report that my thirty-minute trek from Dallas to Richland Hills, a suburb of Fort Worth, was uneventful. Although definitely not a bad thing, the drive was highlighted by the scant traffic and no accident delays, due to the fact that the millions of Metroplex party animals were fast asleep after Friday night.

I arrived at Richland Hills Lodge No. 1348 in time to set up the book sales table as the room started to fill. The hospitable Richland Hills brethren had excellently prepared coffee, biscuits and gravy in a manner indicative of Texas tradition. A trip was planned for our guests to travel at 9:30 AM to the Cowgirl Museum in Fort Worth, a move that I am sure would have made Dale Evans, wife of Bro. Roy Rogers and a native of nearby Italy, Texas, very proud.

The Texas Lodge of Research was opened at 10:30 AM in due and ancient form. At the request of the Worshipful Master, Past Master and Fellow Dexter Sammons provided the invocation as Chaplain pro tem. Other pro tems included Worshipful Jim Dougherty, Grand Photographer and editor of *Texas Mason*, as Senior Deacon. The meeting was attended by R.W. Leonard P. Harvey, PGM, several other Past Masters and Fellows, many members and guests, including Bro. John King, Worshipful Master of the Oklahoma Lodge of Research.

The first order of business was the installation of our Master of Ceremonies, Worshipful Brian Dodson, Grand Pursuivant of the Grand Lodge of Texas. Past Master, Right Worshipful Leonard P. Harvey, PGM,

administered this honor in his usual "due and ancient form" and Brother Dodson took his place as an officer of the Texas Lodge of Research.

The necrology report was given. Secretary Plez Transou read the minutes of the last meeting, which were corrected and approved. Bro. Transou then presented two petitions for affiliation, which were accepted for membership by the Brethren.

Worshipful Master Rogers then announced he had appointed a special committee consisting of Chairman Chuck Bukin, Pete Martinez and Pete Normand to assist the Book Sales Chairman in recommending book titles to order.

Bro. Leonard Harvey then read the finance report and motion to approve the same was made, seconded and affirmed. He then announced that the Finance Committee was recommending that certain funds be transferred from our checking account to an interest-bearing fund. Motion for this transfer was made, seconded, approved and referred to the directors for action.

Pitch hitting for Webmaster Pete Martinez, "yours truly" reported that our TLR web site is still visited daily. I also reported that the new addition of the *Concise Index* posted online by Bro. Martinez should be well used.

SW Gordon Kelso reported on the special committee meeting held prior to the Grand Lodge Special Communication on September 21 in the Grand Lodge Library. This meeting was attended by the Master, Wardens, Treasurer Jim Brumit, Sec. Transou, Past Masters Martinez and Harvey, and Book Sales Chairman Shehorn to discuss the possibility of selling books on the Internet. Bro. Kelso reported that the committee recommended that the Lodge launch the book sales system as presented by Bro. Shehorn on a temporary basis, pending any permanent decision. After much discussion as to details of taxation, shipping and logistics, a motion was made,

made, seconded and approved to permit the online book sales on a trial basis. Bro. Shehorn pledged to make regular reports on the progress of this trail. The Lodge was then called to refreshment and the Brethren and guests enjoyed a wonderful lunch provide by Richland Hills Lodge.

At 1:00 PM we all assembled in the lodge room and the meeting was called to order, guests welcomed and pledges made to the flags of our Nation and State. Bro. Rogers then called upon Bro. Kelso to introduce the presenters of papers. Bro. Gene D. Bethel appeared first and presented his paper, "The Life and Times of Sweet Home Lodge No. 576," which was well received. This history of a short-lived but influential lodge in southwest Texas was no small feat due to the lack of records, and impressively reflected Bro. Bethel's diligent efforts.

Bro. Roy D. Harris was then took the podium and presented "A Fallen Masonic Brother: A Search for Answers." This excellent study of expelled Grand Master Bascom Giles contained first-hand information, as Bro. Harris had previously worked with this former Brother. Following the discussion of this fine work with several Brethren, Bro. Harris made a pledge to write a second paper.

After our guests were thanked and escorted from the lodge room, the Worshipful Master called the Lodge to labor whereupon motion was made, seconded and approved to honor Bros. Bethel and Harris with Full Membership in Texas Lodge of Research. After a request by our Senior Warden, Bro. Rogers allowed Bro. Kelso to make the apron presentations at the altar, where the newest Full Members were presented with their TLR Apron, which we know they will wear with equal pleasure to themselves and honor to our Lodge.

After some discussion of our next meeting in Corpus Christi, there being no further business, the Lodge was closed in due form at 2:55 PM.

New Members

Elected September 28, 2002

Full Members

Gene D. Bethel, Farmers Branch, TX

Roy D. Harris, Austin, TX

Members

Darryl J. Moshler, Shertz, TX

Matthew Seher, North Richland Hills, TX

Back Issues of *Transactions* Wanted

Arlington Lodge No. 438 is looking to collect a complete set of TLR's *Transactions* for the lodge library. The lodge library serves the members of the Texas Masonic Retirement Center as well as it's own members. The lodge is looking for Vols. IV, V, VI, VIII, IX and X. If you can assist Arlington Lodge in this project, contact the lodge librarian, Thomas A. Spencer at 817-460-4889. You can contact Bro. Spencer by mail at P.O. Box 23, Arlington, TX 76004.

TLR Online Book Sales

In an effort to promote Masonic education, TLR now provides an online Masonic book order system. Most of the titles TLR carries may be purchased on the Internet by using a major credit card, check or money order. The site also lists the remaining back volumes of the TLR *Transactions* that may be obtained by only paying for shipping and handling. Purchases will be required to pay for shipping and handling. TLR Book Sales may be accessed direct at <http://www.tlrbooks.org/> or the TLR website <http://pentium2.gower.net/Community/tlr/>.

Bulletin Deadline – January 10

The Occasional Bulletin solicits brief articles and news items of general interest to the membership of Texas Lodge of Research. These items will be reviewed by the editor and utilized on a space available basis. The deadline for the March 2003 bulletin is January 10. Submit materials to Michael L. Wiggins, P.O. Box 720397, Norman, OK 73070.

The Corpus Christi Meeting January 17-18, 2003

Corpus Christi Lodge No. 189 will host Texas Lodge of Research for the January quarterly meeting. The lodge building is located at 4114 Weber Road in Corpus, approximately 1 mile North of Padre Island Drive. The lodge building and headquarters hotel are all in close proximity and easy to find

The Fairfield Inn located at 5217 Blanche Moore Drive will serve as the headquarters hotel. The TLR rate is \$59 per night plus tax. Call the hotel direct at 361-985-8393 for reservations and ask for the special TLR rate.

The hospitality room will be located at the Fairfield and will open around 3:00PM Friday afternoon. Arrangements for a group dinner are being made for Friday evening around 7:00 PM at Sam's Clams, which is a seafood restaurant as indicted by its name. Sam's is within walking distance of the hotel.

Activities will begin at the lodge building Saturday morning at 9:00 AM where doughnuts and coffee will be served. Activities for the ladies and guests are planned and they will begin around 9:30 AM. A special tour of the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History has been arranged for the morning. The special admission price is \$5.50. The Museum has undergone a recent renovation and includes a recreation of a sunken Spanish galleon, an exhibit related to Columbus' voyage to the New World, and artifacts from the temporary exhibit "The Mystery of La Salle in Gulf."

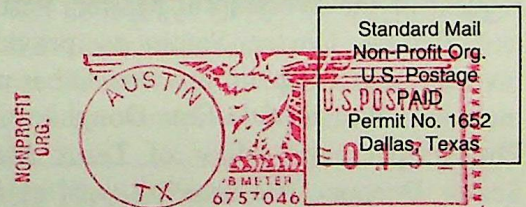
Lodge will open at 10:30 AM and the morning will be dedicated to business. Lunch will be served at Noon with papers being presented at the 1:00 PM open session.

Hotel Directions: The hotel is located at 5217 Blanche Moore Drive, which is just off of TX 358, which is Padre Island Drive. Exit off Padre Island Drive at Everhart and proceed on the feeder roads to the hotel. The elevated hotel sign is easy to recognize from the highway.

Lodge Directions: If arriving from the north on US 181, proceed on Shoreline Drive – Ocean Drive to Doddridge. Turn right on Doddridge and 1.2 miles to the lodge building on the left. (4114 Weber Road)

If arriving from the south, west, or I-37, take Padre Island Drive (TX 358) southeast to Weber. Exit at Weber and proceed north 1.1 miles to the lodge building on the right. (4114 Weber Road)

Texas Lodge of Research
P.O. Box 684684
Austin, TX 78768-4684



Grand Lodge of Texas
PO Box 446
Waco TX 76703

