

Past Masters Commentary

Millersville Lodge is fortunate to have active Past Masters from each of the five decades since our centennial in 1952. A few of them offer a look back ...

Bud Roberts PM, 1959

We raised so many Master Masons through the 1950's that we had a schedule down pat to handle the volume.

On the first Saturday of the month, we'd open the Lodge at 3:45 in the afternoon and do a Fellowcraft degree. Then we'd have dinner and start Stated Meeting at 7:30. It was normal to have 12 to 15 petitions every month.

On the first Tuesday we'd have preliminary lectures and Craft practice. On the second and third Tuesdays, we'd do the Master Mason degree and usually more than one. Very seldom did we open up for just one candidate.

When it got real busy, we'd set aside a Saturday and start doing Master Mason degrees early in the morning, one at a time. We did as many as 12 in one day and got done about midnight.

We had literally dozens of guys who could perform any part in the Craft. There might be five or six euchre games going on in the front room while the degree work was happening in the Lodge Room, with another 25 or 30 Brothers in there. It was very common to just come out and grab someone from one of the card games to be part for the Craft. We always had a lot of visitors from other Lodges, too. Even for Stated Meetings.

Tom Williams PM, 1967

It is hard to put into words why Millersville Lodge is special. The Brothers all seemed to get along and over the years there just haven't been any running conflicts or cliques. It's a lot of great people who have done a lot of great work in Masonry. I know that people outside the Lodge think that Millersville is special, too.

The year I was Master, the Grand Secretary and former Indiana Grand Master Dwight Smith, a good friend, called from the Grand Lodge. He had received our Trestleboard (Lodge calendar) and said he'd like to come to one of our Tuesday Lodge meetings to present a certificate from Grand Lodge to our Past Master Ed Murray who the Grand Lodge of Indiana had appointed Masonic Ambassador to another country; I don't remember which one. We had our usual crowd of around 75 Brothers there for dinner and the presentation was brief.

After dinner the Grand Secretary pulled me aside and said, "Tom, Millersville is unlike any other Lodge in the state, and I've been to most of them. It has a certain aura, and even my own lodge (Salem, Ind.) doesn't have it. You can feel it when you drive into the parking lot. Don't ever let it die."

Bill Richter PM, 1976

The world changed before our eyes in the 1960s and early 1970s. John Kennedy, Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated. Vietnam raged. There was racial rioting in America. There were shootings at Kent State. Nixon resigned. The world was a place where, truly, you didn't know what to think or what was going to happen next.

But I knew one thing: Millersville Lodge was going to meet every Tuesday night. I was going to see a bunch of fellows I could count on. And I knew the principles of Freemasonry were stable and true in a world of so much upheaval and conflict.

There have been other tumultuous eras, and there will be more. We're in one right now. But there is comfort to be found knowing that when the world crumbles, the tenets of Masonry remain solid.

Martin McAfee PM, 1985

I would say that in the 1980's we experienced change in the fraternity. We were losing more members as a result of death and demits than we were gaining new candidates.

The opportunities to perform our ritual were spotty. Some Lodges had no petitions for membership and suffered greatly. Likewise, it was difficult to find men willing to dedicate the time to fill an officer's station in a seven-year line. It was no longer trendy to belong to fraternal organizations because men, young and old, wanted to be in charge of their own time, doing what they wanted.

This phenomenon also affected the youth organizations as we witnessed the demise of *Millersville's* Order of DeMolay for boys and the Job's Daughters for girls.

Conversely, a nucleus of concerned Brethren persevered and kept the concept of fraternity alive into the next decade. As we approach this sesquicentennial, we at *Millersville* have a *Lodge* that is envied for its leadership qualities. These officers present beautiful ritual every week, offer numerous assorted activities to its members and families, fraternize with other lodges in our State, and skillfully promote the tenets of *Brotherly Love, Relief* and *Truth* to all.

Bruce Jones, 1996

Millersville Lodge experienced aging of its members and a corresponding decline in membership, however the membership that it had became more aware of the quality and dedication need to insure our success.

In my year as Master, my instructions to my officers were as follows:

"The one thing I want us to accomplish this year is to make every brother who enters this lodge to be happier when he leaves the Lodge than he was when he arrived."

If we can always endeavor to do this one thing, our Lodge will succeed for many years to come.

During the 1990s our membership has been steady and a large number of younger men have embraced the principles of Masonry. We must always remember that it is quality not quantity that will ensure the success of our fraternity.

Michael Kinder WM, 2002

As Millersville advances in this millennium, we will be taking the course that the advancement of Masonry will be done by Masons being Masons. We understand that Masonry has competition for a man's time, but we will make a man's time in Masonry worthwhile. Millersville Freemasonry will survive.

Millersville, its backbone a core of devoted Past Masters, will require a level of proficiency equal to each Brother's ability, thus insuring a solid group of brothers to pass along our gentle Craft.

We at Millersville Lodge #126 hang our hat on the quality of our ritual work making us one of the premier Lodges in the State of Indiana. Many of our Brothers have come to Millersville because of our devotion to the craft.

We believe that in a world filled with blessings and challenges, a man can come to Millersville and leave feeling good about himself and his fellow man.

Not every man should be a Mason. But for those who should, Millersville Lodge #126 will stand ready to open its portals to them with the tenets of the Institution: brotherly love, relief and truth.