

## THE HISTORY OF CUMBERLAND MASONIC LODGE NUMBER 8 F. & A. M.

By

Rick Jones, Past Master, Cumberland Lodge No. 8

*Brother Jones compiled this history while serving as Secretary of Cumberland Lodge. It was published as part of the booklet, Cumberland Lodge #8, 200 Years of Brotherly Love, Friendship, and Enlightenment, which commemorated the bicentennial of Cumberland Lodge in 2012.*

Cumberland Lodge #8 was chartered by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina and Tennessee on June 24, 1812 as Cumberland N.C. #60, then with the formation of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee became Cumberland Lodge #8. Dispensation was given by M.W. Robert Williams, Grand Master of "North Carolina and Tennessee." Cumberland Lodge was chartered just seven days after the United States stunned the world by declaring war on Great Britain June 18, 1812. The war was known as The War of 1812.

Proc. 1812: Dispensation to Cumberland Lodge 8.

June 24: No Proceedings are available for the meeting on this date, but we quote from *Tannehill's Portfolio* of September 1847, page 73 as follows:

Cumberland Lodge, in the town of Nashville, was instituted on the 24th June 1812, by Dispensation from the Most Worshipful Robert Williams, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina and Tennessee, by the name and style of Cumberland 60, and the following persons named in the Dispensation were duly installed on the same day by W. Robert Searcy, the oldest Past Master present, viz: John Overton, W. Master; Lemuel T Turner, Sr. Warden; Wm. P. Anderson, Jr. Warden.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of December, 1813, just 25 years after the signing of the United States Constitution and the Grand Lodge of Tennessee having been established, Cumberland Lodge No. 60 surrendered the charter received from the Grand Lodge of North Carolina and took out a Dispensation under the Grand Lodge of Tennessee bearing the date of February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1814; and at the following annual Communication of the Grand Lodge, a charter was granted by the name, 'Cumberland Lodge No. 8', "*under which it has been in continued existence from that time to the present.*" The original charter, in good state of preservation, is still in possession of the Lodge, and exhibited occasionally along with Cornerstones from Temple 1 (1825) and Temple 3.

From the date of its organization in 1812 until 1860, Cumberland Lodge elected officers semi-annually, though the Master was often re-elected for several terms. John Overton was the first Master of Cumberland Lodge 8, in 1812. The members of Harmony Lodge, and later members of Cumberland Lodge, included most of the prominent citizens of the period.

On March 25, 1813, the first Degrees were conferred upon George Morgan, Samuel V. D. Stout and Joseph Ward, being the first work done by the Lodge. April 24, 1813, the first Master Mason Degree conferred was on Wilkins Tannehill. After that time, the lodge rapidly increased in numbers.

With the growth and expansion of the city of Nashville, new Lodges were formed. Some of these were formed out of Cumberland #8, and have become as strong and influential as the mother Lodge. Among these was Nashville Lodge #37, chartered 1821, but expired in 1828, surrendering its Charter. Cumberland #8 continued the sole Masonic center until 1847. Then came three: Phoenix

#131 (1847); Nashville #142 (1848); and Sequoyah #156 (1848); but four years later (1852) the three consolidated as Phoenix #131.

Freemasonry came to Tennessee with the earliest settlers. As early as 1789, only five years after the village of Nashbrough was named and platted and just ten years after General James Robertson, with seven other pioneers, a Dispensation was granted to a number of Brethren at Nashville by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina for a Lodge to be known as St. Tammany 29, or 1 of Tennessee. Its name was changed by request November 30, 1800, to Harmony Lodge 29, or 1 of Tennessee. Three years later, December 9, 1808, having made no returns, its Charter was arrested and its labors ceased.

(Polk) Tennessee Lodge 2, (41 of N.C.) was chartered at Knoxville by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina November 30, 1800 naming as its founder Gen. James Robertson. During the next few years seven other Lodges were chartered in Tennessee by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina (and Tennessee) in the following order:

Dec. 11, 1801, Greeneville 43 (3 of Tenn.) @ Greenville  
Dec. 5, 1806, Newport 50 (4 of Tenn.) @ Newport  
Nov. 21, 1807, Overton 51 (5 of Tenn.) @ Rogersville  
Dec. 9, 1808, King Solomon (6 of Tenn.) @ Gallatin  
Dec. 11, 1809, Hiram 55 (7 of Tenn.) @ Franklin  
June 24, 1812, Cumberland 60 (8 of Tenn.) @ Nashville (by Dispensation)  
Nov. 21 1822, Western Star 61 (9 of Tenn.) @Port Royal

What is now Tennessee was initially part of North Carolina, and later part of the Southwest Territory. Tennessee was admitted to the Union as the 16th state on June 1, 1796. Tennessee was the last state to leave the Union and join the Confederacy at the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, and the first state to be readmitted to the Union at the end of the war. Now with Tennessee being recognized as a State in 1824, a formal release of jurisdiction, *as was stated in the instrument*, over the Tennessee Lodges was issued. Contingent upon their successfully constituting a Grand Lodge for the State of Tennessee, the North Carolina Grand Lodge released all authority and jurisdiction. From the date that Tennessee had become a state the Lodges possessed the right to establish a Grand Lodge. However, at that time it took any three Lodges (all 9 requested) to exercise that right, with Cumberland Lodge #8 being one of those Lodges. The Grand Lodge of Tennessee was formed December 27, 1813. The Grand Lodge of Tennessee constituted all the Lodges in Missouri but their own Grand Lodge was formed in Missouri April 23, 1821.

### **Welcome President Monroe**

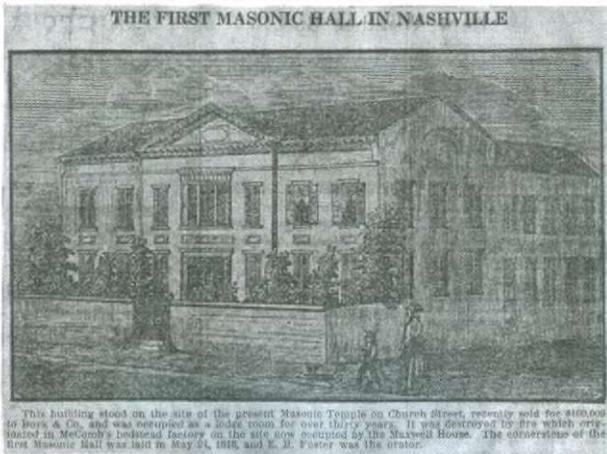
A meeting of the lodge was called on the morning of June 8, 1817 with 42 members and visitors present. The following extract from the minutes explains the object of the meeting:

Information having reached the lodge that James Monroe, Esq., President of the United States of America, would arrive in the town today; whereupon it was, "Resolve, that as a small tribute of respect to Mr. Monroe, a distinguished statesman and upright man, and a brother of the craft, the members of this lodge and visiting brethren do march to the suburbs of the town, in procession, to meet him." Worshipful Master, Bro. W. Tannehill, delivered him an address congratulating President Monroe his arrival in Nashville. The members and visitors, having complied with the foregoing resolution returned to the lodge-

room.

From the, *History of Nashville*, we learned that he was the guest of General Jackson and that a public dinner and ball was given by the citizens in honor of the President during his stay.

### First Masonic Hall of Cumberland Lodge



The first Masonic Hall erected in Tennessee was completed in Nashville in 1825. The building, a large brick structure, two stories high, seventy-three feet in front and forty-five feet back with apartments in the second story for the use of the bodies and the Royal Arch Chapter, was begun in 1818 after purchasing a the lot belonging to William Tait, a former member of the lodge, for \$1,500, and that subscriptions to the amount of \$1,035 had been received. The Grand Lodge, at its meeting in 1820, “donated the sum of \$500 to assist the lodge in the completion of the Masonic Hall in

this town,” and the next year loaned the lodge another \$500 for the same purpose.

In 1826, Cumberland Lodge directed by resolution, “that the Grand Lodge be allowed the free use and privilege of the Masonic Hall in the town of Nashville, so long as said Grand Lodge shall continue its sittings in said town, without charge or rent” Upon receipt of this offer the Grand Lodge at once cancelled the \$500 debt due by Cumberland Lodge to the Grand Lodge.

The location of the original “lodge room” was located, “on lot No. 77, on which the Masonic Hall stands, was somewhere on Market St. (now 2nd Avenue), near the public square.” The records of the lodge indicate that a portion of this lot was sold to the “corporation of Nashville and that they will erect nothing thereon except a reservoir for the water-works.”

The Corner Stone was laid June 24th in that year by Wilkins Tannehill, Grand Master. Also assisting were officers of the Grand Lodge and the officers and members of Cumberland Lodge, followed by an address by U.S. Senator John Eaton, also a member of Cumberland Lodge. Also appearing on the building subscription list is the name of Andrew Jackson.

In the first story was a large Hall for public purposes. It appears the Masonic Hall was a large part of the social life of the day. Many balls, concerts, and dramatic readings were held there. One person wrote that concert goers entered a large room that was lit by candles. They sat on rows of benches in front of a platform. In 1847, a spacious addition was added to the upper story which was fitted up for an encampment room for the Nashville Encampment of Knights Templar and the appendant Orders. The lower story contained a dining room connected by folding doors in the Hall in front.

This was an event of major importance not only to Cumberland Lodge and Chapter, whose home it was to be, but also to the Fraternity at Large. From here, the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons was established and it became the home of both the Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter for many years until its destruction by fire in 1856. The money for the purchase of a lot was raised by contributions from the brethren, (a total of over \$1,100), Andrew Jackson being among the contributors.

There is some evidence that at least a portion of the funds for the erection of the original building was raised by means of a legalized lottery. The Legislature in September 1813, meeting in Nashville, passed an

Act entitled “An Act to authorize the drawing of a lottery to raise a Masonic Hall in Nashville.” Although this plan was authorized by the Legislature in 1813, for some unexplained reason it was not put into effect until nearly five years later. An official announcement was placed in the “Nashville Gazette” dated February 25, 1818, which ran through several issues. The notice gave the number of prize tickets as 36 with a total value of \$50,000.00. In the wheel there was placed a sufficient number of “blanks” to raise the whole number to 2,000. This number of chances against \$50,000.00 fixed the value or price at \$25.00. Drawings commenced on May 11, 1818, and were announced in subsequent public notices giving details of “winning numbers” and also announcing the advance in the price of tickets as the number within the wheel decreased with each drawing. The Act limited the profit to the fraternity to \$5,000.00 or 10%. Just how this was arrived at is not explicitly explained, but presumably 10% was retained from the winnings of the successful participants. All prizes were payable “after 90 days after the drawing is finished”; and all prizes not demanded within twelve months, “were considered as relinquished for the benefit of the Lottery.” The old newspapers contain no final statement of the general result or of any thanks for the reception given by the public. Even the Minutes of the Lodge are silent in like manner.

This Masonic Hall served as a home for the State Legislature from 1843 to 1853 when the Capitol Building was being built. July 4, 1845 Cumberland Lodge officiated the Laying of the Cornerstone for our State Capital. The State Capital was finally completed in 1859 just prior to the Civil War.

The first Masonic Hall erected in Tennessee was completed in Nashville in 1825. The building, a large brick structure located on Church Street, was begun in 1818, and the Corner Stone was laid June 24 in that year by Wilkins Tannehill, Grand Master and member of Cumberland Lodge 8.

In May 1825, the city of Nashville, and the Grand Lodge of Tennessee in particular, was honored by a visit from the distinguished French patriot and Mason, General LaFayette while on his tour of America. The Grand Lodge, together with Cumberland Lodge #8 and Nashville Lodge #37, and the three Royal Arch Chapters at Nashville, Franklin, and Clarksville, united in one of the most memorable occasions in the annals of Tennessee Masonry.

A public reception was arranged for General LaFayette by personal friend and Grand Master Andrew Jackson along with the other Grand Officers while at Cumberland Lodge #8/Grand Lodge. That evening a Committee was dispatched in carriages to escort General LaFayette to the Lodge. Upon his arrival the General was conducted to the Lodge Rooms in the new Temple, received with appropriate honors and heartily welcomed. General LaFayette was honored with an appropriate address in the name of the Masonic Fraternity of Tennessee.

On the following day, May 4, the Grand Lodge met according to adjournment. A procession was then formed by the Grand Lodge, together with three Chapters and subordinate Lodges, that proceeded to the Nashville Inn where they were joined by LaFayette and suite. They then returned to the Hall, where George Washington LaFayette, (son of the General) and Brother LaVasseur were announced and introduced. General LaFayette was then introduced by Andrew Jackson and George W. Campbell, received with the Grand Honors and seated on the right of the Grand Master, who addressed him in the most eloquent terms and officially informed him that he had been unanimously elected as Honorary Member of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee. General LaFayette replied with an affectionate and gracious response. While no record exists of those present, it is believed that among those in attendance with Grand Master Wilkins Tannehill of Cumberland Lodge were Samuel Houston, also from Cumberland Lodge and other Cumberland Lodge Brethren. The masonic apron worn by General LaFayette remains in the Lodge archives today.

Still another event of interest, in 1825, was the laying of the Corner Stone of Hiram Lodge #7 at

Franklin, the oldest Masonic building in the State. The Corner Stone ceremony was performed by the Grand Master, other Grand Officers and members of Hiram Lodge 7, Cumberland Lodge 8 and Nashville Lodge 37.

As previously mentioned, Sam Houston was initiated April 19, Passed June 20, and Raised July 22, 1817 in Cumberland Lodge #8 at Nashville. Sam Houston enlisted in the War of 1812, was wounded at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, and gained the admiration and lasting friendship of General Jackson. He later settled in Nashville at the close of the War, where he was successful in Law. Sam Houston, Governor of two states (Tennessee and Texas), member of Congress, U.S. Senator and “President of the Republic of Texas” was a member of Cumberland Lodge #8 and also later joined Holland Lodge #1 while in Texas. He helped to form the “Grand Lodge of the Republic of Texas.”

Lodge Minutes reflect that at a Called Meeting on November 2, 1826 the Lodge was opened for the purpose of filing Unmasonic Charges against two Cumberland Lodge members, Sam Houston and John P. Erwin for dueling. The Lodge minutes read:

With a sense of the deepest regret this lodge has heard of the dissensions among members of the fraternity which have resulted in personal altercations and in some instances in a resort to personal combat. Under any circumstances the laws of Society are violated and disturbed when such evils exist.

Taken in connection with the intimate and more than social duties that bind the Mason to his Brother such disputations and acts of violence tend to prostrate and entirely over throw the most sacred ties of the Craft.

Therefore, Resolved that in the opinion of this lodge Bros. Sam Houston & Wm White in engaging in a personal combat (on motion it was resolved that a standing resolution of this lodge requiring a committee to be appointed to investigate any differences that may exist between Brothers be in the present case dispensed with) and Bro. John P Erwin in sending a challenge to Bro. Houston to fight a duel have acted contrary to their duty as Masons and in consequence deserve the highest punishment of the lodge. But in tender regard to human frailties and under the peculiar circumstances that produced such evils this lodge is not disposed to proceed to any further Judgment and do earnestly recommend to all concerned a restoration of that harmony which ought to exist among Masons. (pages 118–119)

After much investigation and deliberations the Lodge minutes dated, January 20, 1831 reflects that Sam Houston was discharged for Non-Payment of Dues (page 272) and it appears the need for a Masonic trial came to a conclusion.

More about Brother Houston later in the section, “More Distinguished Craftsmen and Founders of Cumberland Lodge #8.”

Other valuable information relating to the early years of work is also lacking on account of the loss or destruction of the first Minute Book, covering a period of almost five years, from June 24, 1812 to April 1817. Bro Tannehill’s written accounts help bridge those years.

The Cornerstone (presently in possession of the Lodge) reads:

On the 24th June, A.L., 5818, A.D. 1818 Was laid This Foundation Stone of a HALL To Be

Erected by the Members of Cumberland Lodge No. 8

Thus saith the Lord God, behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a Stone, a tried Stone, a Precious Corner Stone, a sure foundation.

The copper plate was found on the cornerstone of the Church Street Hall after the sale of it to Burk & Company in December, 1912, along with a small Bible in pristine condition.

In 1851 an attractive architectural front for the Masonic Hall was designed by Major Adolph Heiman, a veteran of the Mexican War, a Colonel of the C.S.A., and a member of Cumberland Lodge. A beautiful drawing by an associate or contemporary of our Bro. Heiman was deposited in the archives of the Tennessee Historical Society before our Civil War, where it was later discovered. A daylight fire destroyed the First Masonic Lodge Hall in July 1856.

### **Cumberland Lodge's Narrow Escape in 1828**

It seems impossible for brethren in a lodge to always "dwell in unity." Trouble will arise, despite all you can do to avoid it, and Cumberland Lodge had a narrow escape from having its Charter arrested.

During the canvass proceeding of the first election of Andrew Jackson to the presidency, politics were at a fever heat in Tennessee. Unfortunately, the election created strife in Cumberland Lodge. Members became involved in quarrels, bitter language was used, and in some instances members became involved in fights. In one or two cases challenges were issued.

The lodge took cognizance of these actions, trials were held and numbers suspended for unmasonic conduct. The result was that the lodge, in dealing with the question, found they were too quick to punish in certain cases and too willing to overlook infractions in others. In fact, the lodge was swayed by the partisan majority. Finally it was cited to appear before the Grand Lodge at its meeting in 1828 to answer charges. The committee who heard the evidence, in a lengthy report, submitted the following resolution:

Resolves, that the meetings and operations of Lodge No. 8 be suspended for twelve months from this time; provided, that said suspension shall not be construed to work a dissolution of said lodge or forfeiture of its charter, or prevent them from collecting all their dues and debts of every description whatever. And provided further, that said lodge may hold and possess the house or hall they now occupy, and all other property now held by them.

This resolution was adopted by the Grand Lodge less than a month previous to the election which was the cause of all the bickering, and proved a salutary lesson. Of course, the failure to meet retarded the progress of the lodge, but in the end encouraged all to renew efforts, bitterness passed away, and the lodge doubtless was better for having been tried in the crucible of fire.

## Nashville Grows From “Town” Status to “City” Status

In the minutes of November 18, 1825, they state that it was held in the “town” of Nashville, while the next week they state for the first time the meeting was held in the “city” of Nashville. Here is evidence as to the time when Nashville became a city, evidence that must be accepted as true, for the Secretary of Cumberland Lodge was there and attests the facts.

In the lodge minutes dated August 17, 1833 the following appears, “At request of sundry members, the Secretary was directed to state in the minutes of this meeting that the cause of the failure of this lodge to meet in the month of June and elect, as usual, its officers, was the presence of the epidemic of cholera, the absence from town of many members, and the impossibility of getting together a sufficient number to do business.”

### Second Masonic Hall of Cumberland Lodge

A tragic daylight fire originating in a bedstead planning mill and cabinet shop of J. W. McCombs located on the lot where Third National Building is now standing (at that time the Maxwell House stood there) destroyed Cumberland’s first Masonic Hall. Along with the lodge hall several other buildings including, “the paint shop of Beaxley & Ruth, Sloan & Mitchell’s marble works, Mrs. Snow’s Boarding House, Dr. Kelly’s office, and a residence owned by Dr. Overton and occupied as a boarding house,” and other offices were destroyed within the block on July 9, 1856.

Not only were the records of Cumberland Lodge lost but also other valuable and irreplaceable Masonic Body records of The Grand Lodge, Grand Royal Arch Chapter, Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters and their subordinate bodies, and the Nashville Commandery of Knights Templar. Three other Lodges meeting there since 1848 may have lost records also. They were Sewanee No. 131, Nashville No. 142 and Sequoyah No. 156, each with a membership too small for



THE MASONIC TEMPLE OF 1858, TORN DOWN IN 1914.

practical purposes, which, “for the good of the Order,” were united by the Grand Lodge under the name of Phoenix Lodge No. 131 in 1852. Immediate steps were taken to rebuild on the same lot. All these bodies had no permanent place of meeting until after the Civil War.

Undismayed by the loss of their meeting hall, Cumberland Lodge No. 8 and Phoenix Lodge No. 131 met at Metropolitan Hall on College Street on July 11, 1856. After a full discussion of the situation, John S. Dashiell, Joseph Ferris, C. A. Fuller, W. Freeman, D. F. Wilkins, and Williams Porter were appointed to a committee on behalf of the two lodges with full authority to receive proposals for building the new Masonic Hall, make a contract, etc., reporting from time to time to said lodges for approval. When Phoenix dropped out of the project is not known, but the lodge got out in some manner not

shown in the minutes.

But the building of the Second Masonic Hall was still on track and, with the aid of a Bond Issue, building was begun shortly after the fire in 1856. It was a five story building on Church Street which also met with many delays. The worst being the period of the Civil War, which almost resulted in foreclosure for the \$30,000 bonded debt then existing. However, friends came to the rescue and the debt was eventually liquidated.

A five-story building was designed with three stores on street level, the 2nd floor contained a theatre (playhouse) and a gallery, the 3rd and 4th floors were designed for Masonic purposes, with an elevator which was frequently out of commission. The 5th floor contained a hall which was large enough for the Grand Lodge's annual meetings. On October 6, 1858 the Cornerstone of the second Temple was laid by John McClelland, acting Grand Master.

### **The Civil War and Cumberland Lodge**

Nearly everyone was affected by the Civil War. During this era Cumberland Lodge had its moments too. The Federal Army moved into Nashville and took possession of all available houses for military purposes. The Masonic Hall escaped until sometime in March 1864, when it was taken over by the Federal Government for a hospital supply store. Lodge minutes show that on February 26 the lodge met in their own hall, but the regular meeting on March 19 was held in the I.O.O.F. Hall. At that time, "Bros. McClelland, Wilkins, and Seiferle were appointed to a committee to wait upon the military authorities and request the use of the upper floor of said hall for the transaction of our business." It seems that the committee must have been unsuccessful in their mission, as the lodge continued to meet in the I.O.O.F. Hall until September 19, 1865.

Once the war was over and they were back in their own lodge, the lodge business affairs started moving along as before. The lodge took a fresh start. Applications came pouring in and the brethren found plenty of work to do while maintaining the Masonic Standards of the lodge.

### **Cumberland Lodge and The Grand Lodge of Tennessee—The Early Years**

Should an attempt be made to write the early history of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee, it would contain an almost complete history of the early history of Cumberland Lodge, so inseparable are the two. From the organization of the Grand Lodge many of her Grand Lodge Officers have come from Cumberland Lodge. Of the 9 lodges forming the Grand Lodge of Tennessee on December 27, 1813, only 5 remain active today, Greenville, Overton, Hiram, Cumberland, and Western Star.

### **Third Masonic Hall of Cumberland Lodge**

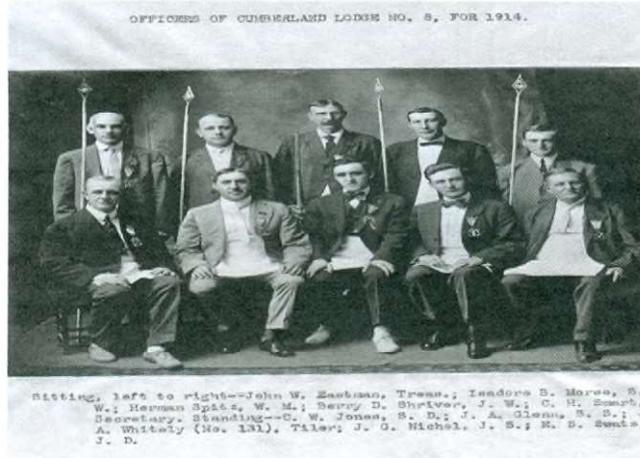
With the growth of Nashville came the increase of noise and bustle of a growing metropolis. The Lodge membership decided; "to seek a more retired location". On December 6, 1912, the sale of the Masonic Temple property on Church Street was authorized by the Lodge for \$100,000 to Burk & Co.



NEW HALL OF CUMBERLAND LODGE NO. 8, COMMENCED IN 1914.

A third Temple, a magnificent stone structure was built at 319 Seventh Avenue, North, formerly known as, “the Briggs Property.” It was approved in June 1914; the Cornerstone was laid October 10 of the same year. The Temple was completed in 1915 at a cost of about \$150,000. It was the home of Cumberland Lodge and Cumberland Chapter along with the Grand Lodge and Nashville Scottish Rite bodies. The Temple was known as “Free Masons Hall.” A booklet entitled “Ceremonies Attending Laying of Corner Stone of a New Masonic Temple erected by Cumberland Lodge No. 8 F.& A.M. 1914” rests in the Lodge’s Fire Safe Archives Room.

The first meeting was held in the building on December 13, 1915. On December 15, 1915 the First, Second and Third Degrees were conferred, being the first work in the new Temple. The Dedication took place on St. John’s Day, December 2, of the same year with Grand Master T. A. Hisey presiding. A souvenir booklet entitled “Dedication Souvenir Cumberland Lodge F. & A.M. 1915” showing Cumberland Lodge’s history, program and meal (Appetizers—Oysters on half shell and main course—Roast Turkey) rests in the Lodge’s Archives Room today.



OFFICERS OF CUMBERLAND LODGE NO. 8, FOR 1914.  
 sitting, left to right—John W. Eastman, Treas.; Isadore B. Moore, S. W.; Herman Spitz, W. M.; Berry D. Shriver, J. W.; C. H. Smart, Secretary. Standing—C. W. Jones, S. D.; J. A. Glass, S. D.; J. A. Witaly (No. 131), Tyler; J. G. Nichol, J. S.; H. S. Sente, J. D.

Lodge records reflect that, “the cost of operating said building has become a burden to the Cumberland Lodge, and the annual cost of maintaining and taking care of said building, has exceeded the yearly revenue, and that said building, has been operating for the past several years at a loss. . . . it would be feasible and practical to dispose of said building.” The lodge sold the building. In December of 1965, the sale of the Lodge Hall on Seventh Avenue was authorized by the Lodge after National Life & Accident Insurance Company agreed to pay \$150,000.

After the old Masonic Temple had been torn down and no Cornerstone was found, the brethren unwillingly came to the belief that no Cornerstone was ever laid. Brother W. F. Foster and other

members of the Lodge were greatly disappointed when the old Masonic Temple was torn down and no Cornerstone could be found. Brother Foster was confident that there was one, “somewhere there concealed.” He obtained the promise of Mr. Bush, one of the contractors, to “keep on the lookout for it”.

On Saturday August 22nd as the workmen progressed in the work of blasting the rock to make a deep basement, they at last began to tear the foundation wall away, and in the northeast corner, over two feet below the surface of the street, they came upon the Cornerstone. As promised, Mr. Bush telephoned Brother Foster that he had found it. He stated that it was found in a solid rock way below the level of the street. The box was covered with tar to keep out the moisture and that it became necessary to break the stone in pieces to remove the box.



Once retrieved, Brother Herman Spitz, the Worshipful Master, then stated that on top of the casket was found an engraved brass plate in the form of a keystone.





### Cornerstone Casket Opened

Lodge Secretary C.H. Smart recounts to the event in the Lodge Minutes:

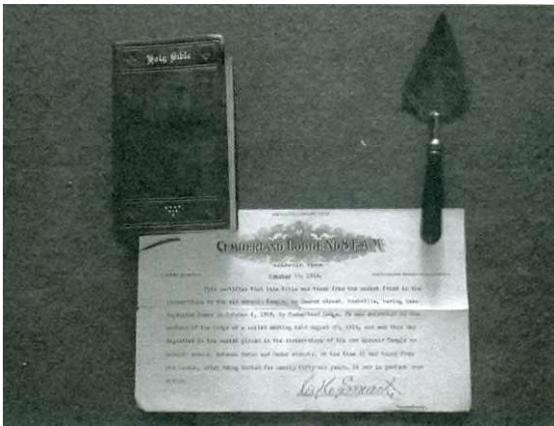
The casket, which was made of lead, being about 6x8x12 inches, was then opened by the Worshipful Master, assisted by Brother T. D. Thompson, Jr. of Corinthian Lodge No.414.

The contents announced to the brethren present follows:

- Holy Bible, diamond, 32-mo., printed by G.E. Eyre and W. Spottiswood, London, England, in 1857. (Even today it remains in pristine condition)
- Written list of the officers and members of Cumberland Lodge No. 8, F. & A.M., on October 6, 1858
- Written list of the officers and members of Phoenix Lodge No. 131, F. & A.M., on October 6, 1858
- Copy of the annual return of Cumberland Chapter No.1, R.A.M., dated October 4, 1858, giving a list of the officers and members
- Written list of the officers and members of Nashville Encampment No. 1, Knights Templar, on October 4, 1858
- Annual Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee for the year 1857
- *The Master Mason's Manual*, by Wilkins Tannehill, printed by Cameron & Fall in 1845, and having written on the fly leaf the signature of John

McClelland, who was Worshipful Master from June, 1855 to June, 1856 and from June, 1857 to June, 1858.

- Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Assembly of the Grand Commandry of Pennsylvania, held at Harrisburg, Pa., June 22, 1857.
- Volume LV., Number 10, of, “The Home Circle,” published in Nashville by J.B. McFerrin, Agent of the M.E. Church, South, edited by L.D. Huston, dated October, 1858.
- Copies of the acts of the Corporation of Nashville and Legislature of Tennessee, authorizing the subscription of \$500,000 of stock in the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad Company. Passed July 9, 1847, and December 9, 1847, respectfully. The acts were printed by W. F. Band & Co.
- Printed letter of V. K. Stevenson, of Nashville, to John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina, relative to the contemplated Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad, dated December 12, 1846
- Address of Mr. V. K. Stevenson of Nashville, on the subject of “Internal Improvement”, delivered before both branches of the Tennessee Legislature, January 6, 1848.
- Proceedings of the first annual meeting of the stockholders of the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad, January 24, 1848.
- Tenth annual report of the Directors of the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad, December 14, 1857
- Pastors of the Churches of Nashville, as follows: Rev. Dr. Edgar, First Presbyterian; Rev. Dr. Hays, Second Presbyterian, Rev. Dr. Howell, First Baptist, Rev. William G. Dorris, Rev. Simon Whitten, Rev. Berry M. Stevens, Rev. William Burr, Rev. John B. Ellis, Rev. W.R. Warren, Rev. Thomas N. Langford, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Rev. C.D. Elliott, President of the Nashville Female Academy; Right Rev. R.P. Miles, Bishop, Father Schollard, Father Lynch, Catholic C Clergy; Mr. Pearl, Superintendent of the Nashville City Schools.



All the articles, were securely wrapped and sealed in separate packages, and all were wrapped in one bundle, with a copy of a Pennsylvania newspaper around the whole. The last item, the paper giving the clergy of the city was evidently an afterthought, as it was folded inside a contents letter from John McClelland.

The pictured plaque and ceremonial trowel commemorates this event. Cement is still on the face of the towel from the setting

of the Cornerstone. Inscribed on the small trowel's edge is, "THIS TROWEL WAS USED IN LAYING THE CORNERSTONE IN WHICH IS ENCLOSED OTHER MEMORIALS IN CASKET BENEATH." In the center of the trowel is inscribed, "if ye will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people, for all the Earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a Kingdom of Priests and an Holy Nation."

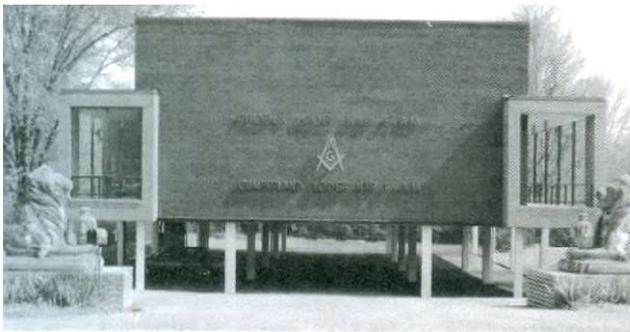
The Cornerstone was removed and inside was a small bible in pristine condition. Inside the bible was a letter of authenticity stating, "This certifies that this Bible was taken from the casket found in the corner-stone in the old Masonic Temple, on Church Street, Nashville, having been deposited there on October 6, 1858, by Cumberland Lodge, and was this day deposited in the casket placed in the corner-stone of the new Masonic Temple on Seventh Avenue, between Union and Cedar streets.

It was exhibited to the members of the Lodge at a called meeting held August 27, 1914. At the time it was taken from the casket, and having been buried for nearly fifty-six years, it was in perfect condition.

Signed C. H. Smart, Secretary.

The brass Cornerstone plaque, trowel, Bible and the letter of authenticity pertaining to the Cornerstone's removal also remains in the Lodge's archives today.

#### **Fourth & Present Masonic Hall of Cumberland Lodge**



Ground-breaking for the fourth Temple was on December 18, 1966 at 4607 Sloan Road. On December 16, 1967 the Cornerstone was laid by Grand Master Daniel Porter Henegar. The following year, with the Lodge Hall completed, Grand Master James Philip Quisenberry presided over the dedication on December 7, 1968. One of the items in the Cornerstone at Sloan Road is a copy of a book entitled, *Sketch of Cumberland Lodge No. 8, F. & A. M.* written by Bro. C. H.

Smart and was published in "The Nashville Daily American" on May 2, 1897. Along with many of our Past Masters' photos it also contains a history of the Lodge's first one hundred years.

#### **Cumberland Lodge and Phoenix Lodge Years**

Throughout most of the Masonic history of both Lodges, Cumberland Lodge No. 8 & Phoenix Lodge No. 131, the two lodges have been linked with an exception of 23 years.

The one exception was in 1960, when Phoenix Lodge acquired a parcel of property located at 3410 Hillsboro Road for a new Lodge building. Phoenix Lodge #131, which had utilized Cumberland Lodge facilities since its formation in 1852, decided to construct their own Lodge Hall on the aforesaid property. The first Stated Meeting was held on July 17, 1961. On August 7, 1984, the property at 3410 Hillsboro Road was sold to Belle Meade Builders, Inc. The last Meeting of the Lodge at this location was a Called Meeting to confer an Entered Apprentice degree on August 20, 1984. On September 1, 1984, the Lodge began meeting in the Hall of Cumberland Lodge #8.

After careful search, the members of Phoenix Lodge #131 were unable to locate a suitable location upon which to erect a new Lodge Hall. In 1988 it was resolved by both Phoenix and

Cumberland Lodges that Phoenix Lodge #131 would purchase a 1/2 interest in the Cumberland building, located at 4607 Sloan Road. After consideration by both Lodges, terms were agreed on and the property was conveyed to joint ownership by Cumberland and Phoenix.

### **First and Only German Lodge Meets at Cumberland Lodge**

Through the kind research of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee records by Grand Historian Walter Seifert, Jr., he noted that the only German Masonic Lodge once met in Cumberland's Masonic Hall. The Lodge was known as Germania No. 355 and met therefrom 1868–1891.

### **Tennessee State Capital and Cumberland Lodge**

Our First Masonic Hall served as a home for the State Legislature from 1843 to 1853 when the Capitol Building was being built. The State Capital was finally completed 14 years later in 1859 just prior to the Civil War. The Capital was built by William Strickland from Pennsylvania, a member of Columbia Lodge No. 91, Philadelphia, and Past Master of same. He won a competition in 1808 to design a new Masonic Hall for Philadelphia, his first independent project, and built many great buildings during his lifetime.

Through our Grand Lodge Museum Director, Michael Villines, we learned that on July 4, 1845, Cumberland Lodge officiated the Laying of the Cornerstone for our State Capital. Cumberland Lodge also celebrated the State Capital's 100th anniversary on the Capital lawn on July 4, 1945 at 10:00 AM.

### **More Distinguished Craftsmen and Founders of Cumberland Lodge #8**

Cumberland Lodge has had eleven Grand Masters, five Grand Secretaries and eleven Grand Treasurers.

#### **Grand Masters of Cumberland Lodge:**

Thomas Claiborne 1813–1814

Robert Searcy 1815–1816

Wilkins Tannehill 1817–1818–1820–1821–1824–1841–1842

Samuel McManus 1838–1839

Joseph Norvell 1843

John S. Dashiell 1854–1855

John Frizzell 1858–1859

W.F. Foster 1879

Thomas O. Morris 1886

W.H. Bumpus 1898

Leslie L. Farmer 1979

#### **Grand Secretaries of Cumberland Lodge:**

Wilkins Tannehill 1815–1816–1823 (3 years)

Moses Norvell 1817–1822 (6 years)

Moses Stephens 1826–1840 (15 years)

John S. Dashiell 1841–1851 (11 years)

John Frizzell 1870–1893 (25 years)

### **Grand Treasurers of Cumberland Lodge:**

Wilkins Tannehill 1814 (1 Year)  
Jno. C. McLemore 1815–1819 (5 Years)  
David Irwin 1820–1825 (5 Years)  
Joseph Norvell 1825–1829–1841–1842 (6 Years)  
Henry R. Cartmell 1830 (1 Year)  
Enoch Welborne 1831–1835 (5 Years)  
James W. McCombs 1836–1840 (5 Years)  
Wm. D. Dorris 1843 (1 Year)  
Williamson H. Horn 1844–1848 (5 Years)  
John McClland 1870–1874 (4 Years)  
G. N. Morgan 1924–1933 (10 Years)



**Thomas Claiborne**, Charter Member of Cumberland and 1st Grand Master of Masons in Tennessee, 1813–1814, was a member of Cumberland Lodge. Thomas Claiborne came to Nashville in 1807 and practiced Law. He was a representative from Davidson County in the General Assembly 1811–1815, served on the staff of General Jackson in the Creek War of 1813, was a Member of Congress from Tennessee 1817–1818, was elected Mayor of Nashville in 1818 and again served in the Legislature in 1831–1832. He was an eloquent speaker; a lifelong friend of General Jackson and was one of the pall bearers at his funeral. He represented Cumberland Lodge in the Constitutional Convention at Knoxville when he was elected Grand Master at the organization of the Grand Lodge. He was probably one of the early members initiated in Cumberland Lodge shortly after its organization in 1812. It appears most likely

that he was one of the early initiates of Cumberland Lodge and a Charter Member. He passed away January 9, 1856. He was buried by Cumberland Lodge, John S. Dashiell, Grand Master, officiating.



**Robert Searcy**, Charter Member of Cumberland and 2nd Grand Master of Masons in Tennessee. He was a pioneer of Nashville and Davidson County, a lawyer and Treasurer of Metro District, 1797–1803 and Clerk of the United States Court at Nashville for many years. In the Spring of 1812, at age 44, he showed his love for Cumberland Lodge and the Craft by riding the long difficult journey horseback from Nashville to Raleigh, N.C. and obtained from Grand Master Robert Williams a Dispensation for Cumberland Lodge. He organized the Lodge, installed its officers, became its second Master, serving two years, 1815-1816. He died in Nashville, August 6, 1820 and was buried in the Deadrick Cemetery, which is now known as Mount Olivet Cemetery in Nashville.

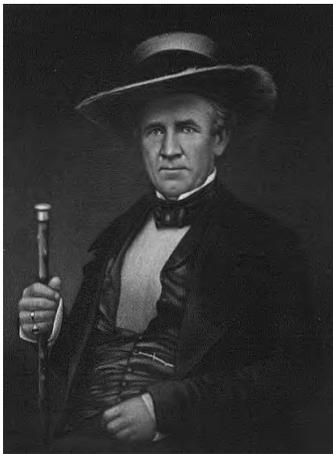
**Andrew Jackson Donelson**, was the nephew of Rachel and Andrew Jackson and brother of Confederate Brigadier General Daniel Smith Donelson after whom Fort Donelson was named. After his mother remarried he came to live at the Hermitage with his aunt and uncle. In 1820 he graduated West Point and spent the next two years as an officer in the United States Army as aide-de-camp to Andrew Jackson. He

obtained the rank of Major General as Jackson campaigned against the Seminoles in Florida. After the war he studied law and practiced law in Nashville.

Lodge records show that he petitioned for Initiation on September 16, 1824, and received the first degree on October 24. On November 1 he was given the second and third degrees, the lodge declaring it, “a case of emergency, as he was going to Washington” He became Jackson’s private secretary when his uncle was inaugurated as President of the United States and remained so throughout his administration. During his stay in Washington, Donelson had his new home, Poplar Grove (later renamed Tulip Grove), constructed on the land he had inherited from his father, which was adjacent to the Hermitage.

Donelson was very involved in presidential politics, helping James K. Polk. President John Tyler appointed him as Charge d’Affaires of the United States mission to the Republic of Texas, probably hoping that Jackson’s nephew would help persuade former Tennessee politician and Masonic Brother Sam Houston, to endorse the United States’ annexation of Texas. Donelson was successful in this endeavor, and Texas joined the United States on December 29, 1845.

He was then made Minister to Prussia from 1846–1849. Between September 1848 and November 1849, during the time of the Frankfurt Parliament, he was the U.S. envoy to the short-lived revolutionary government of Germany in Frankfurt. In 1851, Donelson became the editor of the *Washington Union*, a Democratic newspaper but resigned in 1852. In 1856, Donelson was nominated as the running mate of former President Millard Fillmore on the American party ticket but failed to win the election.



**Sam Houston**, American patriot and political leader who was governor of Tennessee (1827–29), president of the Republic of Texas (1836), and governor of Texas (1861). Houston studied law at Nashville, being admitted to the bar in a few months, and practiced at Lebanon.

According to Cumberland Lodge Minutes, Sam Houston joined Cumberland Masonic Lodge, No. 8. He was *Initiated* on April 19, *Passed* to the degree of Fellow Craft on June 20, and *Raised* to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason on July 22, 1817.

Sam demitted from Cumberland Lodge on November 20, 1817, and re-affiliated on June 21, 1821. During this period he supposedly was a charter member of Nashville Lodge, No. 37. He served Cumberland Lodge as Junior Warden and, in 1824, attended Grand Lodge as a Past Master. He was recorded in one place as having demitted from Cumberland Lodge on January 20, 1831; however, he is listed in the proceedings of 1828 as having been suspended for “un-Masonic conduct.”

The Texas Masonic Convention of December 1837: By the end of 1837, three lodges had been chartered in Texas by the Grand Lodge of Louisiana: Holland Lodge No. 1 which had moved to the city of Houston, Milam Lodge No. 40 at Nacogdoches, and McFarland Lodge No. 41 at St. Augustine. On the 20th of December 1837, Sam Houston, President of the Republic of Texas presided over a convention meeting in the city of Houston consisting of the representatives of these three lodges.

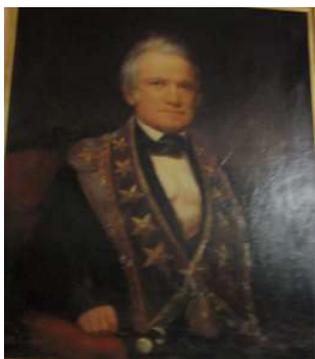
#### The Battle at the Alamo:

Sam Houston led the fight for the Independence of Texas during which time the Battle at the Alamo was fought. An interesting note of that battle was that President Andrew Jackson (*Harmony Lodge No 1—Nashville*), a Masonic Brother, in writing to Sam Houston, (*Cumberland Lodge No. 8 at Nashville, Tennessee*), implored Houston to spare Santa Anna’s life, reminding Houston that “while he is in your power, the difficulties of your enemy, in raising another army, will be great. . . . Let not his blood be shed,

unless imperious necessity demands it. . . . Both wisdom and humanity enjoin this course in relation to Santa Anna.” It seems Santa Anna, who had disowned the Masonic fraternity and outlawed its practice in Mexico, was in fact a Mason. With his many offenses against Mexican and Texan Freemasons it placed him outside the protection of any Masonic obligations.

There has existed for many years the story or myth that General Santa Anna, captured on April 21, 1836 after the defeat of the Mexican Army at the Battle of San Jacinto, was able to save himself from execution by giving secret “Masonic signs” when he was captured, and again when he was brought before General Sam Houston. Texas historian James D. Carter recorded in his book, *Masonry in Texas*, that “Texas Masons contemporary with [the Battle of] San Jacinto stated emphatically that Santa Anna ‘filled the air’ with Masonic signs after his capture and had given a Masonic grip to Houston.” C. R. Wharton, in his book, *El Presidente*, stated that, “Santa Anna, fearing for his life, gave the Masonic distress signal to John A. Wharton”. Where it may be true that the captured Mexican dictator did appeal to his captors to spare his life using his knowledge of Masonic signs and grips, they were under no obligation to do so.

Houston was elected to congress on 1823 and 1825, and in his last year fought a duel with General White, whom he wounded. Houston is reported to have been expelled from the Masonic Lodge in 1828 for ‘un-masonic conduct’ (dueling). (Folmsbee, et al, Vol. 1). He died July 1, 1863.



#### **Wilkins Tannehill, Seven times Grand Master & Nashville Mayor**

Wilkins Tannehill served as Nashville’s Mayor from 1825–1827. Tannehill was an especially well-known Mason and was one of the founders, in 1813, of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee. Tannehill held high positions more often than anyone else. “The first man raised to the degree of Master Mason in this Lodge was WILKINS TANNEHILL, who was initiated on the 24th of April, 1813, and passed and raised on the 8th of the same month. After that time the Lodge rapidly increased in members and the work of masonry was diligently pursued.”

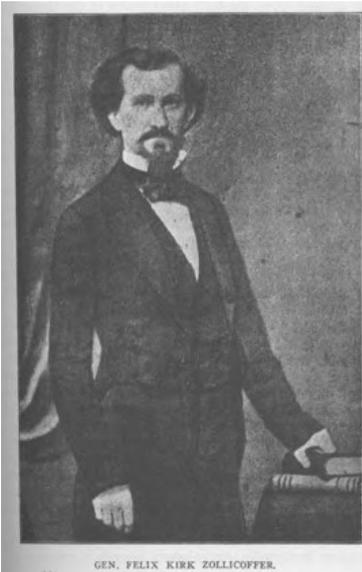
In the late 1840s and early 1850s, he blended his interest in Masonry with his interest in education. Partially as a result of his influence, money from area Masons supported the Montgomery Masonic College in Clarksville, Jackson College in Columbia, and small colleges at Huntingdon and Macon in West Tennessee and at Bradley in East Tennessee. A list of the Charter members, along with other details of the organization, was preserved for us by our most distinguished Brother Wilkens Tannehill, who in 1847 published a *Literary and Masonic Magazine* in Nashville. The publication was only 25 years after the beginning of the Lodge’s activities, and Brother Tannehill had attained great prominence in the Craft and was otherwise an eminent and leading citizen of the state, and having access to this now lost Minute Book, he has preserved for us the names of the Charter members and other details of this period. His final years were spent in blindness. He is considered, “The Greatest Mason Tennessee has produced.” He died June 2, 1858, in Nashville at the age of 71 and is buried in the Old City Cemetery at Nashville.

His son, Colonel Thomas Claiborne, also a member of Cumberland Lodge and a Royal Arch Mason, was a prominent lawyer and editor and distinguished himself in the Mexican War.



**Joseph Norvell**, 17<sup>th</sup> Grand Master of Masons in Tennessee. He and his brother Moses founded *Nashville Whig* in 1812. He was City Treasurer for many years in Nashville. He served as Grand Treasurer and his brother, Moses, served as Secretary of the Grand Lodge. He died January 7, 1847 and was buried in the Old City Cemetery in Nashville.

**Joseph S. Carels**, a member of Cumberland Lodge, is a Mason who has an enviable record. Born and educated in Philadelphia, PA., he later moved in October of 1845 to Murfreesboro, TN, where he engaged in the mercantile business. In 1857, he moved to Lebanon, TN where for five years he was a bookkeeper and teller in the Old Bank of Tennessee. In 1862 he was appointed Assistant Paymaster United States Navy and attached to the United States steamer, *Clifton*, in Admiral Farragut's fleet, West Gulf Squadron. He later resigned due to ill health. In 1864, he was appointed bookkeeper and stamp clerk in the Nashville Post Office. After several years with the Post Office he was appointed as the Superintendent of Watkins Institute, and also Librarian and Treasurer of the Tennessee Historical Society. He was a member and served as Worshipful Master of both Murfreesboro Lodge No. 205 and Lebanon Lodge No. 98. He served for 46 years as the Secretary of Cumberland Lodge.



**General Felix K. Zollicoffer**, U.S. Congressman from Tennessee, 33rd–35th Congresses, 1853–59; Brigadier General in Confederate Army. He became a printer and was in newspaper work in Paris and Knoxville, Tenn. until 1832, and then in Huntsville, Ala., from 1835–43. He was state printer of Tennessee in 1835. He served as a lieutenant in the Seminole War. He was owner and editor of the *Columbia Observer* and *Southern Agriculturist* in 1837 and editor of *Republican Banner* in 1843. He was a member of the 1861 peace conference in Washington to devise a means to prevent the impending war. He commanded 10,000 troops as a Confederate brigadier general in the Civil War. As Brigadier General his main responsibility was to guard the Cumberland Gap. Inadvertently, General Zollicoffer wandered into the Union position, thinking they were Confederate soldiers with his nearsightedness and the gathering darkness. While studying the field he came across another officer on the same mission. He told that officer not to fire on his own men. But the other man was Colonel Speed S. Fry of the 4th Kentucky, a Union regiment. After riding away Colonel Fry, realizing his mistake that he had been talking to a Confederate Officer, turned and shot the Confederate. Now alerted by Colonel Fry's shots, other Federals also fired upon and hit General Zollicoffer. He was struck several times by enemy bullets and soon died from the wounds he had received near Mill Springs, KY on Jan. 19, 1862.

General Zollicoffer is one of the Tenn. generals whose figure is carved on Stone Mountain in Atlanta, Ga. He was a member of Cumberland Lodge No. 8, Tenn.



The apron above was found in the saddle bags of General Zollicoffer at his death.



**John Snyder Dashiell**, 24<sup>th</sup> Grand Master of Masons in Tennessee. Dashiell was a steamboat captain, Alderman of 3rd Ward and Mayor of Nashville. He was very active in all Masonic Bodies in Nashville. He was also Past Grand Master of the Grand Council. He died June 8, 1887 and was buried in the Old City Cemetery in Nashville.



**John Frizzell**, 26<sup>th</sup> Grand Master of Masons in Tennessee and General Grand High Priest of Royal Arch Masons, was also a member of Cumberland Lodge. John Frizzell was made a Mason in Cumberland Lodge 8, Dec. 21, 1850, elected Master in 1853, Junior Grand Warden 1853, and served as Grand Master 1858 and 1859.

He was a Captain in the Confederate Army. For eleven years he served as Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. He was admitted as a member of the Bar in 1854 and became a Judge. He later became a law partner of Gov. A. S. Marks and Gov. Peter Tarney.

He held numerous offices within Masonry before moving to Winchester, TN where he organized Winchester Chapter 51, 1860. Frizzell served as Grand Master of the Grand Council in 1861. He was knighted in Nashville Commandery and was Grand Commander of Knights Templar in Tennessee in 1867. He presided over all four York Rite bodies and was Grand Secretary for all. He was General Grand High Priest from 1877–1880. He was also initiated into the Scottish Rite on September 11, 1859, by Albert Pike and received the Thirty-third Degree April 1866. He was also elected as President of Order of High Priesthood in 1866. Frizzell died in Nashville, November 30, 1894.



**John Overton**, eminent jurist and pioneer, practiced Law in Nashville beginning in 1787. He was appointed supervisor of Customs for Washington County by President Washington, continued until 1804. He was Judge of Superior Court, 1804–1810; Judge of the Supreme Court of Tennessee, 1811–1816, when he resigned. He was the author of *Overton Reports* covering the period. In January, 1819, he contracted with Andrew Jackson and General James Winchester, then owners of the Rice land grants on the Mississippi, to lay off a town, now the city of Memphis. John Overton was a Charter member and first Master of Cumberland Lodge #8. He died in Nashville, April 12, 1833.

**Colonel John C. McLemore**, Charter Member of Cumberland and the first Senior Deacon in 1812. He purchased a large portion of General Jackson's share in the Rice land grants on which the city of Memphis now stands. He also purchased large tracts in Nashville and other parts of the State.

He was elected Surveyor General of the Military District and a large portion of the State in 1811. He was a life-long associate, confidential friend and advisor of General Jackson. He was reputed to be very charitable, never failing to assist; and lost heavily in endorsing for friends, yet he was very rich and always enjoyed the popular confidence. He was also Grand Treasurer of the Grand Lodge from 1815 to 1819 inclusive.

**Josiah Nichol**, Charter Member of Cumberland. He was proprietor of King's Salt Works before moving from Virginia to Tennessee. While in Tennessee he became a prominent Dry Goods Merchant and President of the United States Bank. He was a Charter member of Cumberland Lodge #8. He died May 31, 1835.

**John Eaton**, Statesman & Lawyer. He was a member of the General Assembly, 1815–1816; United States Senator, 1818–1829; Secretary of War, 1829–1831; Territorial Governor of Florida, 1834–1836, and United States Minister to Spain, 1838–1840. He was a member of Cumberland Lodge #8, in Nashville, and died in Washington, D.C., November 17, 1856.

**Wilbur Fisk Foster**, 41st Grand Master of Masons in Tennessee. He was a Civil Engineer. He served as a Major in the Confederate Army and laid the defenses of Forts Donelson and Fort Henry. He also drew maps for the Atlanta Campaign. He served as the head of the four York Rite Bodies of Tennessee and was elected President of Order of High Priesthood in 1871–1872. He was also a 33rd Degree Scottish Rite Mason. He died March 26, 1922 and was buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Nashville.

**Thomas Owen Morris**, 47th Grand Master of Masons in Tennessee. He was a businessman connected with K. J. Morris & Co. He was also Mayor of Nashville. He was a member of the county court for many years and a member of the Tennessee Legislature. He presided over the four Grand York Bodies of Tennessee and was elected President of Order of High Priesthood in 1893. He died November 8, 1924 in Nashville and is buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Nashville.

**Bradford Nichol**, General Grand Master, General Grand Council. R. & S. M. received his Degrees in Cumberland Lodge #8, September 6, 1867. Among the many offices he held were Grand High Priest in 1887 and Illustrious Grand Master of the Grand Council in 1877. He was elected General Grand Steward in Washington, D.C., advanced, and elected General Grand Master October, 1897.

**William Hill Bumpus**, 59th Grand Master of Masons in Tennessee. He was a teacher, lawyer and physician. For 52 years he was with the L&N Railroad Company serving as a General Agent before retiring. He was the father of our Masonic Widows' and Orphans' Home. Bumpus died October 27, 1926 and is buried in Mt. Olivet in Nashville.



**Leslie Leon Farmer**, 141st Grand Master of Masons in Tennessee. He was employed as a Shipping Foreman for AVCO Corporation. Farmer was a Knight York Cross of Honour. Farmer passed away August 10, 1986 and is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in Nashville.

### **Post World War II to Current Membership**

At the beginning of the 1900's Cumberland's Dues Structure was:

- For the Degree of Entered Apprentice— \$10.00
- For the Degree of Fellow Craft—\$10.00
- For the Degree of Master Mason—\$15.00
- Annual Dues—\$4.50

In each year, 1929 through 1940, the number decreased—no doubt due to the economic depression. In 1928 the number of Masons on roll in Tennessee Lodges was 50,732. In 1940, the number was 35,890, the lowest it had been since 1919 throughout Tennessee. After World War II, the largest increase in any one year was 55,076. This occurred in 1946, increasing membership to a peak of 98,125. Cumberland's membership for that year was 361 but started to decline in the years 1977 through 1993. Tennessee membership in 1993 was 76,800 members with Cumberland's membership being 241. Today, 2012, we have 44,691 Masonic Members on roll at the Grand Lodge of Tennessee (a net loss in 2010 of 884 Brothers) with Cumberland Lodge #8 having 126 of them currently on our roll.

## **Lodge Discipline**

It is important to note that lodge discipline sometimes is needed keep our lodge standards high, among ourselves and before the eyes of the community, and keep peace and harmony prevailing. The disciplines enforced upon its members which, to Masons of the present day, may seem harsh and exacting but are intended to elevate the moral character of the members and cause them to lead better lives. No Mason wants to find himself summoned before the lodge to answer for an offense. One such notable example, *without names*, occurred:

One afternoon in 1818 an incident occurred in which two of the most prominent members of the lodge, also the most influential citizens of the town, became involved in a fight upon the Square. The Master of the lodge called a meeting for the next morning, charges were preferred, and the offending brethren summoned to attend a meeting the next night and stand trial. After hearing the evidence, both members were expelled, but a reconsideration of the vote, probably had on account of the severity of the sentence, changed the penalty to suspension for eighteen months. This is a sample of the discipline enforced in those early days, a discipline that resulted in great good to the lodge and to the individual members.

C. H. Smart, Lodge Secretary

While the lodge looked closely after the morals of its members, they did not think it wrong to patronize a lottery. We find that at a meeting in August, 1817, the Worshipful Master, “authorized to purchase for the benefit of the lodge, two tickets in the Russellville Lottery, now drawing, and that the Treasurer advances the sum necessary for that purchase.” A careful search of the records fails to show whether or not the lodge received any returns on the investment. It may be taken for granted that the lotteries of those days were like those of the present.

## **In Summary**

Because of the large influx of persons joining the Fraternity in the immediate post World War II era, and the declining membership since 1977, the average age of the Masons in 1994 was about 70 years. Men of this age group desire fellowship with others of like mind. Men in their 30's and 40's are working hard in their careers and in raising their families. Beyond this age they tend to look to broader aspects of life; true friendship, loyalty to country, and to God. Men who have been extroverts during their working careers find Masonry to be an outlet for those characteristics in later life.

Some writers attempt to express in words the bond between Masons. More frequently the actions and feelings, which are not expressed in words, are more meaningful. Masons have an undefined form of recognition which extends beyond the mere hand grip. It may be related to attitude and demeanor. Will Rogers, at a Chamber of Commerce meeting in South Carolina, said to a trio of men: “I knew you were Masons the minute you entered the room.”

Because of the secretiveness of the Fraternity and because of its good works, or lack of harmful acts, the Lodge is accepted in the community, but not well understood. Masonry, considered by some to be “a harmless bunch of old men” has led to many improvements in the social wellbeing of Americans. Masons were active in caring for the orphans and elderly long before Social Security came into being in 1935. Masonry was active in efforts of the separation of Church and State long before the Supreme Court acted on these matters. Masonry was active in supplying medical care to

crippled children long before the idea of Universal Health Care was formulated. Masons sent aid to victims of natural disasters long before the Federal Emergency Management Agency was established in 1978–79.

The number of chartered Lodges in Tennessee in 1888 was 394. There was a gradual increase to 1924 when there were 476. Since then there has been a general decrease to today's number, in 2012, of 334 chartered Lodges remaining in Tennessee. Although membership is presently down throughout the Masonic Order, through the strong leadership skills of the Officers, past and present, Cumberland Lodge #8 stands economically strong and has always helped throughout the West Nashville area and the City of Nashville as a whole. It still remains a beacon of Masonry throughout Tennessee.

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Wharton, C. R. *El Presidente*.

## Special Thanks To:

Author Bob Ellenwood

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Bro. Michael Villines, Sr., Grand Lodge Library and Museum

Bro. Virgil John Henry Vaughn, Cumberland Lodge #8 Senior Deacon/Treasurer 2012