

# History of Kansas Masonry

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Council of Administration-1974

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## *Introduction*

The settlement of the area which now comprises the State of Kansas was unique. The natural development of the United States had been the gradual expansion of agriculture westward from the Alleghenies generally following the course of rivers which provided a means of transportation. During the great migration to California in the late 1840's and 1850, thousands of people came by way of the Ohio and Missouri rivers to the junction of the Kansas river where water transportation to the southwest and California terminated.

The land west of the Missouri border was designated Indian territory and settlement was restricted to Indians and only such white persons as were then in the capacity of service to the Indians. The emigrant tribes of Indians residing in the territory had been removed from the east where they had lived near and had much intercourse with white people. They possessed and enjoyed many of the institutions of civilization. The leading tribes were the Wyandots, Delawares, Shawnees, Miamis and Kickapoos. In all these tribes were men of education and influence. It was obvious to them that they were occupying the country through which the great highway to the Pacific Ocean must be built in the future. Along this line of road must be settlers, and these settlers must live on land then belonging to the Indians. To enhance the value of their

lands it was necessary that white men should have liberty to settle in their vicinity in numbers. Therefore, the tribes moved for the organization of the Territory and that a provisional government be established.

The Wyandots had been named by the other tribes to be keepers of the Council fire, and adhering to their ancient custom the others looked to the Wyandots to take the initiative. Subsequently, under the leadership of William Walker, the other tribes were asked to send delegates to a convention to be held in the Council House at Wyandot on July 26, 1853.

It was the intention of William Walker that one of his brothers, either Matthew R. Walker or Joel Walker, splendid business men of great energy and both possessing fine executive ability and several years younger than him, should be selected Provisional Governor. White men in the service of the Government and residing in the Territory were requested to attend and participate in the work.

In accordance with the resolutions adopted the following officers were elected as the first provisional government of the territory: William Walker, Governor; G. I. Clark, Secretary of the Territory; R. C. Miller, Isaac Munday and M. R. Walker, Councilmen. The two Walker brothers and Clark were to become prominent in the establishment of Kansas Masonry.

## *The Struggle for Control*

The Kansas-Nebraska Bill passed by the Congress of the United States on, May 25, 1854, provided that the people of the territory should themselves determine whether it should be free or slave. Kansas lay beyond Missouri and Missouri was a slave state. The border counties of Missouri had a large slave population and an intensive pro slavery sentiment. In the natural order of things people of Missouri would have passed over into Kansas and shaped her institutions to suit themselves. But this was not to be the case. Pro Slavery men could come to Kansas but they would not dare bring their slaves until the issue was settled.

In New England and other eastern states movements were initiated to migrate a sufficient number of anti-slavery people to control the elections and adopt a constitution prohibiting slavery. The New England Emigrant Aid Company was chartered for the purpose of facilitating emigration to Kansas. Dr. Charles Robinson and Charles H. Branscomb were sent to explore the territory and to select a site for a colony. As a result of their explorations they chose a location just west of the junction of the Wakarusa and Kansas rivers which later became the town of Lawrence named for Amos A. Lawrence, one of the principal promoters of the Aid Company.

Thousands of easterners left their comfortable homes to go to Kansas to prevent the expansion of slavery. Hundreds were unable to cope with the hardships and returned home. Drouths, grasshoppers and countless other irritants were certainly justified reasons for surrendering their high principles for the comfort of

their families. Timber was scarce, so the early settlers were forced to make their homes in tents, primitive log cabins, sod houses or "hay tents". Transportation was limited. You could walk, ride horseback, travel by wagon or the occasional stage lines operating between military posts such as Fort Leavenworth, Fort Riley and Fort Scott. Those who remained were sincere men, dedicated to a cause and possessing the fortitude to challenge their opponents. The pro slavery advocates were, to a great extent, just as sincere and dedicated to their cause. Their way of life which had been passed down for generations was being challenged. It is never easy for people to accept radical changes in their mode of living that effects their home, economic status and culture.

In reviewing accounts written by qualified historians of both north and south, it is obvious that emotions, prejudices and personal ambitions made it impossible to reconcile the differences between the opposing sides. It is also a matter of record that both sides had individuals who were not a credit to their cause. John Brown, a fanatic, and Jim Lane, an opportunist, could not be pointed to with pride by the free staters. Quantrill and several other pro slavery activists were a disgrace to the pro slavery advocates.

Rumors, emotions and those grasping for unnecessary justification of their commendable actions influenced statements that could well have been discarded. Dr. Richard Cordley, pastor of Plymouth congregational Church in Lawrence from 1857 to 1875, a highly respected, brilliant and eminent author,

stated: "There were secret societies, called Blue Lodges, in which the main purpose was to control Kansas for slavery. The members were bound together by pledges, and armed for the battle." We will never know whether Dr. Cordley was aware of the fact that some of his closest associates in the free state cause were prominent characters in the formative period of Freemasonry in Kansas. It is a credit to the resident Masons that they were willing to overlook their political differences and establish an independent Grand Lodge at a time when this critical schism existed. Various attempts were made to form a Territorial Government,

## *Freemasonry Enters the Territory*

### GROVE LODGE U.D. (WYANDOTTE)

The first action to establish Masonry in the territory west of the Missouri River was by an undated petition addressed to the Most Worshipful Grand Master of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Missouri, requesting dispensation to meet as a regular Lodge at the home of Matthew Walker, in Wyandot Territory, to discharge the duties of Masonry in a constitutional manner, etc.. The petition also requested that the new Lodge be named Grove Lodge, No. , and recommended that John M. Chivington be appointed Worshipful Master; Matthew R. Walker, Senior Warden and Cyrus Garrett, Junior Warden. (Garrett was a nephew of Matthew Walker and later served as third Master of the Lodge.) The petition was signed by: John M. Chivington, Butlerville Lodge No. 135, Ohio; Matthew R. Walker, Heroine Lodge No. 104, K. C., Mo.; Cyrus Garrett, Heroine Lodge No. 104, K. C., Mo.; L. C. Matthews, Mitchell Lodge No. 86, Columbus, Mo.; Jacob Branson, Heroine Lodge No. 104, K. C., Mo.; Lewis Farley, Heroine Lodge No. 104, K. C., Mo.; Russell Garrett, Heroine Lodge No. 104, K. C., Mo.; A. P. Searcy. (Heroine Lodge No. 104, was chartered in 1849, the first to operate in Kansas City, Mo.)

The petition was referred to Compass Lodge No. 120, Parkville. Under date of July 5, 1854, it was recommended to the Grand Master of Missouri, that a dispensation be granted to the Brethren whose names appeared on the petition. On August 4, 1854, M. W. L. S. Cornwall, Grand Master, issued letters of dispensation to Grove Lodge, U.D., authorizing them to meet as a regular Lodge at the home of Matthew R. Walker, naming John M. Chivington, Worshipful Master; Matthew R. Walker, Senior Warden and Cyrus Garrett, Junior Warden. This action set the stage for the first meeting of a Masonic Lodge to be held in the territory.

On August 11, 1854, a meeting was called to institute the Lodge, when R. G. Piper, Deputy Grand Master of Missouri, installed the officers and authorized them to work in the three degrees of Masonry. This meeting was held in the Hall of the Sons of Temperance. There is a legend that the wife of Matthew Walker acted as Tyler during the first Masonic meeting. Obviously, this has no foundation for there were present the eight who had signed the petition for authorization to organize the Lodge; four members of Golden Square Lodge No. 107 and two from Heroine Lodge No. 104. With fourteen

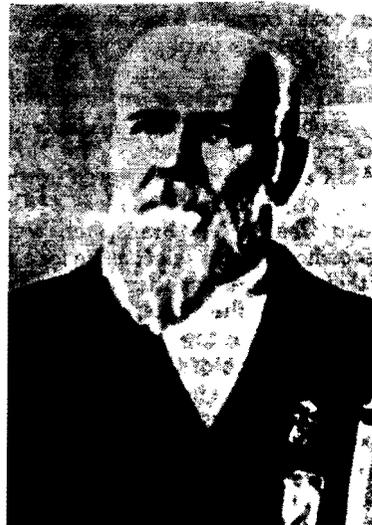
each effort being supported by biased participants. Eventually, the Free Staters won out and Kansas was admitted to the Union on, January 29, 1861. The years between the first provisional government and the climax of the struggle have been covered by scores of competent writers recording the history of Kansas.

The purpose of this volume is to record the origin and development of Freemasonry in Kansas. The foregoing pages were written only to give a background describing the men who gave birth to our Fraternity in this State, why they were here, how they lived and their motivation.

Masons recorded in the minutes as being present, there would have been no reason to induct a lady to perform as a Lodge Officer. After much research, it is the writer's opinion that Mrs Walker may have been used in a Tyler's capacity during the preliminary discussions prior to the granting of the dispensation.

The second meeting of the new Lodge was held in August 25, 1854, when G. I. Clark, D. Dofflemyre, Edwin Garrett and Henry Garrett were elected to receive the degrees. The first three listed were initiated on September 15, 1854, passed on September 20, and on September 22, 1854, G. I. Clark and D. Dofflemeyer were raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. Thus, G. I. Clark, Secretary of the first provisional government in the Territory of Kansas, became the first to receive the degrees of Masonry in Kansas and D. Dofflemeyer, the second. Clark was almost immediately appointed Treasurer of the Lodge. He was the last Head Chief of the Wyandots. This event could well have been the inspiration for the design of the Seal of The Grand Lodge of Kansas which was adopted later.

J. M. Chivington presided as Master at seven meetings of the Lodge between August 11 and November 14, 1854, when he moved to Omaha,



M. W. J. M. Chivington

Nebraska where he became Presiding Elder of the Methodist Church. He was made a Mason in Butlerville Lodge No. 135, Ohio, in July, 1846. He was educated as a Methodist minister and was a circuit rider in the M.E. Conference, Pleasant Grove, Missouri, for several years. He affiliated with what is now Capitol Lodge No. 3 on September 3, 1857 and was present at the formation of the Nebraska Grand Lodge September 20, 1857, where he was appointed Grand Chaplain. He, also served on several Grand Lodge Committees.

From Nebraska Brother Chivington went to Colorado where he became a charter member of Union Lodge No. 7. He was elected the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Colorado when it was organized on August 21, 1861. He was re-elected in December of that year but was unable to attend the second annual communication owing to being in the United States Army. He had been called to Colorado to assume the position of Presiding Elder of the Rocky Mountain District. Two years later he entered the Army as a Major and rose to the rank of Colonel.

John Milton Chivington was a man of commanding physique, being 6 feet 4 inches tall and weighing 200 pounds. At the conclusion of the Civil War he resigned his commission and returned to his home state of Ohio. He returned to Denver in 1875 filling various civic offices with distinction and was engaged in the freighting business. He died October 4, 1894. At his request the Grand Lodge conducted funeral services. His Lodge, Union No. 7, acted as escort for the Grand Lodge and more than 600 Masons were in the procession. Interment was in Fairmount Cemetery, Denver.

#### SMITHFIELD LODGE U.D. (SMITHTON)

The pioneers in Masonry in the northeast corner of Kansas were guided by John W. Smith and Daniel Vanderslice. In the late summer of 1854, seven Masons residing in that area determined to establish a Lodge in the community and had several meetings at the abode of Brother Smith, which was a "dug out", in the southeast part of Doniphan County, or at the home of Brother Daniel Vanderslice at the Nemaha Indian Reservation, of which he was the Indian Agent. This Agency was located in the northwest part of the county. John W. Smith hoped to establish a town on his property but his dreams only progressed to a partially completed building. Other villages sprung up and the possibility of a town named Smithfield disappeared.

Under date of September 23, 1854, the group submitted a petition to the Grand Lodge of Missouri requesting authority to establish a Lodge at Smithfield. The petition was signed by Harvey Foreman, John Whitehead, William Richardson, Joseph Crippin, J. W. Smith, E. W. Reinhart and D. D. Vanderslice, recommending that Smith be named Master; E. W. Reinhart, Senior Warden and D. D. Vanderslice, Junior Warden. The petition was referred to Savannah Lodge No. 71.

Under date of September 23, 1854, Thomas H. Clarke, Secretary of Savannah Lodge reported to U. B. Giddings, D.D.G.M. for the First District of Missouri,

that his Lodge had approved the establishment of the new Lodge and recommended that authority be granted to establish a Lodge at Smithfield. In view of this action, Giddings wrote the Grand Secretary of Missouri on September 23, 1854, requesting that a dispensation be forwarded to him as there was no mail service in the Territory. The dispensation, dated October 6, 1854, was issued and mailed to Giddings.

The first communication of Smithfield Lodge, U.D., was held November 30, 1854, on the top of a hill overlooking the Missouri River and close to the abode of Brother Smith. The Great Lights of Masonry were placed on a burr oak stump and the Tyler who faithfully guarded the Lodge was mounted on a horse. The Lodge was opened on the Third Degree by John W. Smith, Worshipful Master; E. W. Reinhart, Senior Warden; D. Vanderslice, Junior Warden; John H. Whitehead, Secretary; W. P. Richardson, Treasurer; J. H. Merrill, S.D.; G. R. Wilson, J.D.; Joseph Crippin, Tyler. Four visiting Brethren from Savannah Lodge No. 71 were also present.

The records indicate that the Lodge continued to hold their meetings on this hill during the time they worked under dispensation and until the first communication after receiving their charter, when they met in a warehouse at the residence of John H. Whitehead, Secretary of the Lodge, which was about ten miles from Smithton. Changing the name of his town apparently paid no dividends to Smith for it never became a reality.

The move to Whitehead was intended to be temporary but as Smith's building was never completed, the Lodge moved to the town of Iola on June 13, 1856, which was about eight miles northwest of Troy, where they met in a storeroom built by Vanderslice. On November 8, 1856, they returned to the Nemaha Indian Agency, meeting in the home of T. J. Vanderslice, whose family was obliged to go to the house of Daniel Vanderslice near by, during the Lodge meetings.

The location was changed to Iowa Point, June 5, 1857. At that time it was a prosperous town on the Missouri River and an important trading point as many boats landed there. It was not until this time that the location of the Lodge was inserted in the charter, the space having been left blank when the charter was issued by the Grand Lodge of Kansas. The Lodge remained at this location until January 20, 1872, when the location was changed to Highland where it still remains.

Various reasons are given for the many relocations. Some attribute it to the political conditions of the day. Other that it was done for the convenience of the greatest number of members. Political opinions were at variance, but all disagreements were dispelled as soon as they entered the Lodge. Certainly no question can be raised as to their Masonic zeal, for neither distance, danger nor weather prevented them from meeting, many being obliged to ride twenty-five miles and to remain over night.

## LEAVENWORTH LODGE U.D.

Simultaneously with the seeds of Masonry bursting into fertility at Wyandotte and in Doniphan County, there emerged a person with an abundant knowledge and experience in the Craft, in the City of Leavenworth.

Richard Ridgeway Rees had crossed the river from Platte County, Missouri, in 1854. He immediately sought out Brother Masons in the community for he had gained distinction as Master of Independence Lodge No. 35 from 1845 to 1850 and had served as District Deputy Grand Master of the fourth Masonic District of Missouri, which included Jackson County. He was the Charter High Priest of Independence Chapter No. 14 of Royal Arch Masons from 1848 to 1850 and served as Deputy Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of Missouri for one year.

Brother Rees succeeded in his efforts to organize a group interested in establishing a Lodge in Leavenworth. No record has been found indicating the activities during the formative period but an undated petition was mailed to D. P. Wallingford, Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Missouri, stating their desire to form a new Lodge in the town of Leavenworth, Kansas Territory, to be named Leavenworth Lodge, recommending that Richard R. Rees be named Master; Archibald Payne, Senior Warden and Auley McCaulay, Junior Warden. The petition was signed by: William O. Webster, Joel Hiatt, W. G. Evans, G. B. Panton, LaFayette Mills, Leander Ker, A. McCaulay, Richard R. Rees, Lucian J. Eastin, J. Marion Alexander, John J. Benz, A. Payne and Charles Mundee.

The application bore the following endorsement:  
Hall of Platte Lodge No. 56, Platte City, Mo.

Dec. 4, A.D. 1854, A.L. 5854

The within petition---, praying the D.:G.:M.: of Missouri to grant them a dispensation to open a new Lodge at Leavenworth, Kansas Territory, by the name of Leavenworth Lodge, was presented to this Lodge, and on motion this Lodge recommends that the prayer of the petition be granted.

William A. Fox, W.:M.:.

Attest:

P. Jackson Collins, Sect'y p.t.

Complying with the application and it's recommendation by Platte Lodge No. 51, a dispensation was granted to the signators of the petition to open a regular Lodge near the town of Leavenworth by the name of Leavenworth Lodge and naming Richard R. Rees, Master; Archibald Payne, Senior Warden and Auley McCaulay, Junior Warden. The dispensation was signed by D. P. Wallingford, Deputy Grand Master and attested by A. O'Sullivan, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Missouri, under date of December 30, 1854.

The first communication of Leavenworth Lodge U.D., was held January 19, 1855, opened by Richard R. Rees, Worshipful Master with Archibald Payne and Auley McCaulay in their stations respectively as Senior and Junior Wardens. The Lodge elected the junior officers

as follows: G. B. Panton, Treasurer; Charles Mundee, Secretary; L. J. Eastin, Senior Deacon; J. J. Benz, Junior Deacon. It was agreed to dispense with the election of a Tyler for the present. J. M. Alexander served as Junior Deacon for the opening and J. J. Benz as Tyler.

Visitors present were: Beverlin Beck, Weston Lodge No. 53 and Dr. S. F. Few, Friendship Lodge, Virginia. Petitions for initiations, accompanied by a \$5.00 fee, were received from Dr. J. H. Day and Dr. Samuel Phillips.

It was resolved that the fee for an admitted Brother should be \$2.00. Petitions for affiliation were received from Christian Beck and Beverlin Beck of Weston Lodge No. 53 and S. F. Few of Friendship Lodge, Va.

This meeting was a memorable occasion for Kansas Masonry, for those present included the following: Richard R. Rees, the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Kansas, who served in this capacity from 1856 through 1859; the first Grand Treasurer, Beverlin Beck in 1856; Christian Beck, Grand Treasurer from 1858 through 1891 and Charles Mundee, Grand Secretary from 1856 through 1860. Rev. Leander Ker served as the first Grand Chaplain in 1856 and reappointed in 1857.

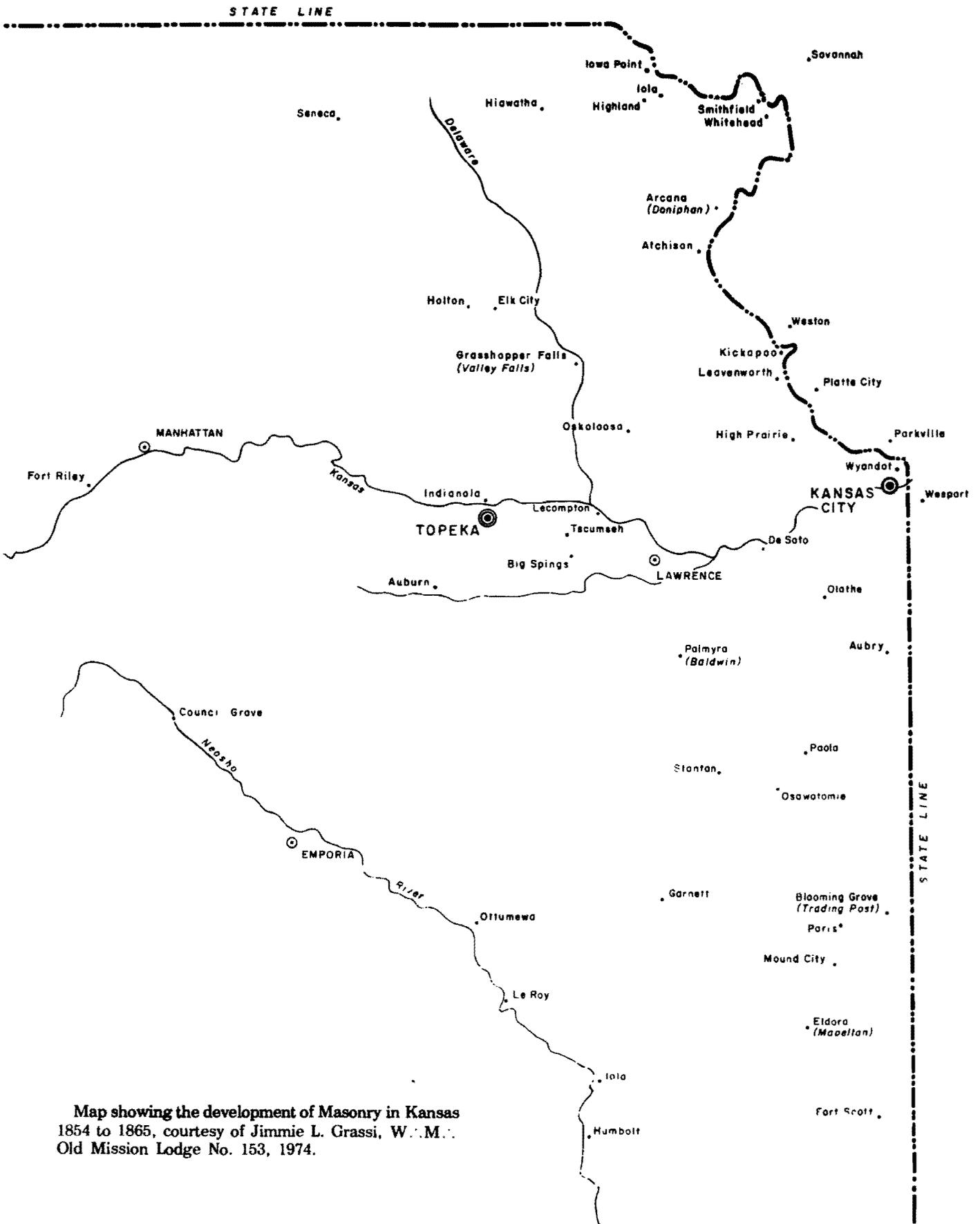
## LAWRENCE LODGE U.D.

The records of Lawrence Lodge No. 6 were destroyed by fire during Quantrill's raid on Lawrence, Friday, August 21, 1863. Fortunately the Lodge, realizing the importance of obtaining first hand information regarding the formation and early years of the Lodge, prevailed upon Brother James Christian, the first Master, to write an account of the events preceding the receipt of their dispensation to operate as a regular Lodge.

At the time of the request he was living in Arkansas City where he had moved from Lawrence on October 15, 1875. His report was printed in full in the history published by the Grand Lodge for the Semi-Centennial celebration held in Topeka on February 22, 1906. It is well and securely preserved in that volume, therefore, we will only use pertinent excerpts for historical purposes in this compilation. It is dated January 16, 1888.

James Christian was Master of Prairie Lodge No. 90, Harrisonville, Missouri, in 1854. L. S. Cornwall, Grand Master of Missouri, paid an official visit to his Lodge during the summer of 1854. Christian relates that he mentioned to Cornwall that he intended to move to Lawrence and that he asked how he should proceed to obtain a dispensation to work as a Lodge in his new home community. Cornwall, among other instructions, informed him that it would be necessary to obtain the recommendation of the nearest Masonic Lodge of Missouri. This was located at Westport, Jackson County.

Quite a number of settlers had located in the city of Lawrence during the spring of 1855, when Christian arrived there. He stated that political difficulties existing at that time made it difficult to find a man who would acknowledge himself to be a Mason or anything else but a Free-State or Pro-Slavery man. By summer



Map showing the development of Masonry in Kansas  
 1854 to 1865, courtesy of Jimmie L. Grassi, W. M. M.  
 Old Mission Lodge No. 153, 1974.

419	Delia	Delia	Feb. 17, 1921	1st Wednesday
202	Delphos	Delphos	Feb. 17, 1881	1st and 3rd Mondays
372	Denison	Denison	Feb. 15, 1905	1st and 3rd Tuesdays
449	Denton	Denton	Feb. 19, 1931	2nd and 4th Thursdays
365	Derby	Derby	Mar. 15, 1956	2nd and 4th Thursdays
40	De Soto	De Soto	Oct. 20, 1868	1st and 3rd Mondays
92	Devon	Devon	Feb. 18, 1897	2nd Thursday
156	Dexter	Dexter	Oct. 21, 1874	2nd and 4th Mondays
279	Dighton	Barney	Feb. 16, 1887	1st and 3rd Tuesdays
222	Dodge City	St. Bernard	Feb. 22, 1883	1st and 3rd Mondays
81	Doniphan	Arcana	Oct. 17, 1860	1st Saturday
151	Douglass	Douglass	Oct. 21, 1874	2nd and 4th Wednesdays
138	Dover	Dover	Feb. 20, 1902	2nd Thursday
204	Downs	Downs	Feb. 15, 1882	1st and 3rd Mondays
374	Dwight	Dwight	Feb. 20, 1906	1st and 3rd Thursdays Except July and August
45	Easton	Easton	Dec. 20, 1864	1st and 3rd Saturdays
127	Edgerton	Palestine	Oct. 17, 1872	1st and 3rd Mondays
345	Edna	Edna	Feb. 18, 1892	1st and 3rd Tuesdays
48	Effingham	Mackey	Oct. 17, 1866	1st and 3rd Mondays
97	El Dorado	Patmos	Oct. 19, 1871	1st and 3rd Thursdays
132	Elk City	Carsun	Oct. 15, 1873	2nd and 4th Thursdays
126	Elk Falls	Meridian	Oct. 17, 1872	2nd and 4th Mondays
422	Elkhart	Elkhart	Feb. 17, 1921	2nd and 4th Thursdays
217	Ellinwood	Ellinwood	Feb. 22, 1883	1st and 3rd Thursdays
297	Ellis	Apollo	Feb. 15, 1888	1st and 3rd Mondays
146	Ellsworth	Ellsworth	Oct. 21, 1874	1st and 3rd Mondays
12	Emporia	Emporia	Dec. 20, 1864	1st and 3rd Fridays
413	Ensign	Ensign	Feb. 22, 1917	1st and 3rd Thursdays
437	Enterprise	Enterprise	Feb. 28, 1924	2nd and 4th Mondays
76	Erie	Erie	Oct. 21, 1869	2nd and 4th Wednesdays
205	Eskridge	Eminence	Feb. 15, 1882	2nd Monday
83	Eudora	Doric	Oct. 20, 1870	2nd and 4th Tuesdays
106	Eureka	Fidelity	Oct. 19, 1871	1st and 3rd Tuesdays
163	Fall River	Greenwood	Oct. 21, 1875	1st and 3rd Wednesdays
114	Florence	Advance	Oct. 16, 1872	2nd Tuesday
181	Fontana	Equity	Oct. 15, 1873	1st and 3rd Tuesdays
336	Formoso	Formoso	Feb. 18, 1891	2nd and 4th Mondays
311	Ft. Leavenworth	Hancock	Feb. 20, 1889	1st and 3rd Thursdays
8	Fort Scott	Rising Sun	Oct. 19, 1857	1st and 3rd Fridays
67	Frankfort	Frankfort	Oct. 17, 1877	1st and 3rd Wednesdays
337	Frederick	Frederick	Feb. 20, 1895	1st and 3rd Mondays
95	Fredonia	Constellation	Oct. 20, 1870	1st and 3rd Wednesdays
310	Fulton	Fulton	Feb. 23, 1883	2nd and 4th Mondays