

A Masonic Civil War Incident

By BILL YARBROUGH

(We are indebted to Brother Bill Yarbrough, a member of Memorial Lodge No. 698, A.F. & A.M., Lexington, for the following story and believe it will be of interest to many of our readers.)

John Preston Arthur, in his book, "Western North Carolina," tells of an incident that happened at Patterson, N. C., during which the life of Clem Osborne of North Fork was saved because of a sign he made which was recognized as a Masonic sign.

A more extensive account of the incident can be obtained from a letter written about 1925 by Clem Osborne's son, W. A. Osborne, and from conversations with other descendants of Clem Osborne.

It seems that Clem Osborne was camping at Patterson factory sometime about 1865, near the close of the War Between the States. He was packing yarn and tobacco. After he had taken his horses loose from the wagon, a group of Yankee soldiers came up and started to take his horses, but Osborne resisted them. One of the Yankees fired at him and the bullet went through his leather cartridge box into his back, setting his clothes on fire. Members of his family say he was left somewhat crippled for life.

After being shot, he fell and then crawled into the factory, where someone put out the fire. He managed to get up to the third story of the factory and up into the belfry. He stayed there in hiding for some time but he happened to make the bell ring.

The reason for the bell's ringing, as handed down in the Osborne family, is that Clem was cutting the tongues out of his shoes and was going to use them as gloves to slide down a rope in an escape attempt. In any event, when the bell rang the soldiers came running and set the factory on fire.

Osborne then surrendered and was ordered killed. He asked to speak one word, but was refused permission. It was then that he gave a sign which was recognized by one of his captors,

who then demanded that Osborne be taken to the commanding officer. The officer ordered Osborne's wound dressed and his horses returned, and he was soon on his way.

Freemasons' Hall, London

Every American Masonic visitor to the British Isles will be well repaid for the time and trouble expended upon a visit to Freemasons' Hall in London. In fact, as he makes this pilgrimage he will be part of a company which averages 1,000 visitors per month, 40% of whom are brethren from overseas. This is not surprising when one recalls that the Grand Lodge of England is the Mother Grand Lodge of the world.

Freemasons' Hall is the administrative center for 6,000 local lodges scattered throughout the British Commonwealth of nations. It is also a memorial to the British Freemasons who fell in World War I and is the meeting place for the regular communications of the United Grand Lodge of England. Within its walls are seventeen lodge rooms, no two alike, seating from fifty to five hundred each and the Grand Temple which accommodates approximately 2,000 brethren.

The building is located in a most interesting section of London, at the intersection of Great Queen Street and Murray Lane, the latter made famous by the presence of the Globe Theatre of Shakespearean fame. Prior to its construction ninety-four architects engaged in an international competition to determine who would design the structure. The winners were H. V. Ashley and Winton Newman. The building which they planned made impressive use of the rather odd-shaped plot that was available with the tower entrance on a corner. It covers a total area of more than two acres.

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