HISTORICAL OUTLINE of STOUGHTON LODGE NO. 72 for its 100th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Written by Thoreld S. Curtis, P. G. Read by Oscar Hinds, P. G.

Let us for a few moments try to go back and see what conditions existed at about the time our lodge was instituted.

againg Daniel Webster as Secretary of State five years later. Territorial expansion and the increasing settlement toward the West was progressing rapidly. Discussion favoring the admission of Texas as a state in the Union was current, the slogan "Fifty-four Forty or Fight" was heard everywhere in connection with the Oregon Territory, and boundary disputes and friction between the United States and Mexico over California and New Mexico forecast eventual settlement by war. Strong division in the interests of the North and South were becoming more evident. The Mexican War, the Gold Rush and the Civil War all lay ahead.

The principal occupations in Stoughton at that time were farming, bootmaking and weaving, and most men worked long hours under difficult conditions to obtain not much more than a bare existence. Communication was slow; the first telegraph line was being installed between Baltimore and Washington. Up to this time, transportation here was about the same as it had been for 150 years provious, but on March 18, 1865, the railroad tracks were completed and the first steam train ran into Stoughton. Medical and surgical treatment as we know it was in its infancy, sanitation and hygiene were practically unknown and the health and social agencies had not reached us.

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vegetables, and perishable foods including meats hung or laid exposed to the heavy dust from the roads and the flies, were on the merchants shelves sometimes side by side with bolts of cloth, hardware and general merchandise.

There were no telephones, no electric lights, no automobiles and no movies.

Nevertheless, food was cheap, wants were few, and neighbors helped in the care of the sick and unfortunate. Stoughton was a happy, progressive community according to the standards of the time.

Into this community came a new organization with an old ideal of mutual assistance in practical form. On the evening of May 5, 1845, the Grand Master of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows of Massachusetts instituted what was then known as North Stoughton Lodge No. 72, I.O. O. F. on the petition of eight Odd Fellows, all former members of Middlesex Lodge No. 17 of Malden. Officers were chosen and installed by the Grand Master and members were then initiated. The twenty-three Charter Members were Elisha Page, Noble Grand, Elbridge Jones, Vice Crand, Ezra Stearns, Secretary, William W. Hawes, Treasurer, . Hosea Osgood, Jr., Warden, Luther Hayden, Conductor, Nathan Withington, Jr., Right Supporter of the Noble Grand, Josiah Adkins, Left Supporter of the Neble Grand, John F. Craig, Right Supporter of the Vice Grand, R. Warren Jones, Left Supporter of the Vice Grand, William Hayden, Right Scene Supporter, George Marden, Left Scene Supporter, Jefferson Fitts, Inside Guardian, Elijah Hawes, Outside Guardian, and Samuel S. Jones, Absolom Osborn, Lysander Teague, Samuel Phinney, Asa Cock, Jr., Samuel S. Capen, Jonathan S. Curtis, William Page and Simeon S. Page.

was at North Stoughton, formerly the property of Elisha Page, now 357 Page Street and stood at right front from the present barn. The building was afterward moved to Stoughton Center and in 1915 stood on the corner of Washington and Walnut Streets, numbered 886 Washington Street, opposite the old blacksmith shop and across the road from the Porter Coal Company coal yard. At a special meeting, Rising Star Lodge No. 76 I. O. O. F. of Randolph was also instituted in this building on June 3, 1815, and Mount Hebron Encampment No. 24 was instituted there on October 22, 1816.

In 1847 Samuel W. Hodges became a member of the lodge by transfer. By 1853 the lodge had become nearly bankrupt and seemed about ready to surrender its charter, it being almost impossible to obtain a quorum at the meetings. Brother Hodges used his influence to move the lodge to the Center village and it was largely through his efforts that the change was made on May 26, 1853, and the second hall, occupied on this date, was called Washington Hall and was in Norton Square, owned by Nathaniel Norton, and is believed to be the largest of four buildings off Norton Square facing the railroad tracks. The strife engendered by this removal led many of the brothers to give feeble support to the lodge, many were suspended and many dropped out. Brother Hodges remained true to Odd Fellowship and to interests of Stoughton Lodge, which eventually prospered, as did Brother Hodges, who rose in the order, becoming Grand Master in 1865.

Prior to this removal, however, on February 2, 1852, the lodge voted to procure a work book containing the degree of Rebekah and on March 1, 1852, Mrs. William Tozer, Mrs. G. E. Monk, Mrs. N. Withington, Jr., Mrs. G. Marden and Mrs. O. Jenkins were initiated into the degree of Rebekah.

The third hall was occupied on March 16, 1859, and was the large building owned by Nathaniel Morton and stood facing Wyman Street on land now or formerly owned by the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad and used as a freight yard. Some years later this building was acquired by Rising Star Lodge of Masons and moved across Wyman Street and the Railroad tracks, which in itself is an interesting story. It stands opposite the Railroad Station and is still owned and used by Rising Star Lodge of Masons.

Several members served with honor in the Civil War but there is record of only one death in active service, Brother John M. Drake of Sharon, Orderly Sargeant of Co. K, 33rd Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers, aged 33 years, who was killed at the battle of Lookout Mountain on October 29, 1863.

The lodge was invited by the G. A. R. to unite with them in their first Memorial Services on Saturday afternoon, May 29, 1869. About twenty of our brothers had served as Civil War soldiers. We joined the G. A. R. for the same purpose in May of 1870, 1871 and 1872 and assisted in descration as we have many times since.

We have always been great visitors, but from 1870 to 1900 we were particularly active, probably through the initiative of Bro. Albert E. Standish in getting special trains and reservations on the railroad. From Taunton to Boston, and from Mansfield to the Weymouths, as well as to the several lodges in Brockton and further into Plymouth County, frequent and congenial visitation was the order of the times.

Our fourth home, Odd Fellows Hall in the new block on Washington Street, built and owned by Bro. Newell S. Atwood, was appropriately dedicated to the uses and purposes of the order on the evening of Tuesday, August 9, 1881, by the officers of the Grand Lodge. This block was afterward owned by

Cornelius Murphy and was displaced by the Stoughten Building. On that evening the Noble Grand was presented for the use of the lodge a wand each for the Warden and Conductors chairs from a delegation representing Forest Lodge No. 148 of Hyde Park.

On May 22, 1889, a committee of five was appointed consisting of the Trustees: Charles Tenny, Albert E. Standish and Albert H. Whiting, together with James W. Richardson and Richard B. West, to take under consideration the purchase of a lot of land for the purpose of building a hall. The preliminary work of the Building Committee of five having been completed, on April 9, 1890, a committee of 30 was appointed to devise ways and means to raise funds forerecting a building, and about a year later it was voted to erect the building and sarry out the plans recommended by the Trustees. This was to be our fifth and present hall, the first meeting being held there on June 8, 1892. Nuch time and thought was given by them to the lay-out and we are grateful to them for their judgment and foresight in the planning and construction.

On May 1, 1901, the Trustees paid \$1,500 on the mortgage on the building as voted by the lodge. This was the first large payment, \$1,350 of which was the proceeds of our Anniversary Fair held in April, little detail of which is found in the records, but which must have been a large and successful affair. They believed in deeds, not words.

On January 13, 190h, Stoughton Lodge No. 72 met in special session at 2:30 p. m. to attend the funeral of R. Warren Jones, Past Grand, held in the Lodge Room by request of the deceased, Rev. Leon O. Williams of the Universalist Church being the officiating elergysan. Brother Jones was the last charter member of Stoughton Lodge No. 72.

Our elequent and revered brother, Rev. A. St. John Chambre died in Lowell on December 7, 1911, after a full life in the Christian ministry and in Odd Fellowship. He had always been deeply interested in Stoughton Lodge and had been an active member for many years, having been initiated in 1864 beginning in his first office in the lodge as Chaplain on July 6, 1864. He later became Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. He acted as District Deputy Grand Master for many years and was ever faithful, exerting great influence for good not only in our order but also in the community.

In World War I, we lost brothers Francis Kennedy, who died somewhere in France with the British Army, John McCarvey, who also died in France, and Lester Whitten who died at Fort Devens, Serving faithfully a cause which all America hoped would put an end to the brutality and oppression of aggressor nations.

At the 75th Anniversary Celebration on May 19, 1920, an interesting musical program was enjoyed and a historical outline of events since our institution in 1845 was given by Bro. Oscar A. Marden, P. G., followed by supper and speeches.

On February 10, 1922, Albert E. Standish, P. G., William L. Russell, N. G., and Bro. William Lutted, as a committee, and with a large delegation from Stoughton Lodge, journeyed to Sharon and presented to the newly instituted lodge the gift of a ballot box from Stoughton Lodge.

One of the greatest occasions in our history was the "Burning of the Mortgage" on Saturday evening, November 24, 1923. Events leading up to this began on January 4, 1922, when a committee of the following brothers was appointed to proceed with a campaign to pay off the mortgage:

Oscar H. Hinds, P. G., Chairman, Elmer G. Royce, P. G., Walter M. Russell, P. G., Charles E. Dodge, P. G., Willis E. Long, P. G., Ernest E. Goward, P. G., William Lutted, William L. Russell, Harry R. Holbrook, J. Edward Bete, Harry Baines, Lester M. Cay, Edgar M. Eussell and Victor E. Cornish. In two years of splendid activity, powered by the enthusiasm and persistence of Oscar H. Hinds, pledges were secured, plays given in the Town Hall by Odd Fellows and Sister Rebekahs, and many dances held until funds were secured to make the final payment. On that evening Bro. J. Edward Bete, Noble Grand, was master of Ceremonies, Bro. Oscar A. Marden introduced the Grand Master and Marshal, the Berseverance Rebekah Lodge No. 97, the District Deputy Grand Master and his Marshal, and a large group of members were present. After the banquet the lodge orchestra, assisted by Mrs. Ethel Lutted, opened the entertainment. An original poem appropriate to the occasion, written by Bro. Edgar M. Russell, Recording Secretary, was read, and the Treasurer of the Trustees turned the mortgage over to J. Edward Bete, Noble Grand, Edwin R. Cay, Vice Grand, and Oscar H. Hinds, Chairman of the Committee, while the Grand Master, Rev. Frank G. Potter, held the torsh which ignited the document and consumed it to ashee. Speeches, music by the lodge quartette and professional entertainment were enjoyed.

The only thing to detract from the event was knowledge of the death of Bro. Albert E. Standish, P. G., ten days before. He had completed fifty years of service in the order and had been one of the best known Odd Fellows in this and surrounding towns, having served many times as District Deputy Grand Master and in various offices, particularly as Master of Ceremonies at celebrations and memory of him is still green to many Odd Fellows present.

On March 12, 1924, the lodge set under the most unusual conditions within the memory of our oldest members, as a severe storm of snow driven by a high northeast gale had been raging for over 48 hours, making travel almost impossible. Electric lights and telephones were out of service. Neverthe less, a quorum was collected and the meeting held by candle light.

During the 1920's there were a number of members with marked dramatic talent active in the lodge and several fine plays were produced in coeperation with the Rebekahs. Occasional short and often extemporaneous sketches by the members were enjoyed by the lodge, a particularly comical one having been given by J. Edward Bete and Occar H. Hinds in black face on the evening of April 15, 1925.

For years a quartette consisting of brothers Walter Mueller, William L. Russell, Arthur Day and Fred C. Churchill gave us pleasing music at our special occasions. From time to time a mixed quartette sang, consisting of brothers Walter Mueller and William L. Russell, Mrs. Oscar H. Hinds and Mrs. Willis E. Long being received with hearty appreciation on many an occasion.

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Peter Wood, P. G., was Degree Master of the First Degree and J. Edward Bete as Floor Director. J. Edward Bete, P. G., was Degree Master of the Second Degree with Arthur L. Day as Floor Director, and William L. Russell, P. G., was Degree Master of the Third Degree with Oscar H. Hinds as Floor Director.

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lodge officers. A delicious chicken pie supper was served by a committee of Perseverance Social Circle consisting of Mrs. Walter J. Muellar, Mrs. Harriet Glapp, Mrs. Gertrude Smith, Miss Olive Chase, Miss Lydia Holmes and Miss Beatrice Barrett. In behalf of the lodge, Grand Master Herbert B. Bond presented to Walter G. Pratt a Past Grand Veterans Jewel in recognition of 25 years of faithful service as an officer and member of the lodge. The Noble Grand, in behalf of Mrs. Hattie and Mrs. Carrie Russell, presented to the Lodge a Chaplain's pedestal in honor of their late husbands, Walter M. and Edgar M. Russell, who had long served the lodge faithfully as members and officers. Addresses were given by the distinguished guests, including one by our own Bro. Oscar A. Marden, Past Grand Patriarch of the Grand Engampment I. O. O. F. of Massachusetts as well as Past Grand Representative.

The next month, on June 29, 1927, the lodge accepted a gift of money under agreement made that day, from Mrs. C. Anna Downes, to be known as the George Minot Hunt Fund in memory of our late Brother Hunt of Canton, she being his sister. The income of this fund, while not large, has been a welcome addition to our work in Odd Fellowship because under the terms of the agreement executed by Mrs. Downes and the Trustees, Bros. William L. Russell, Fred D. Clapp and Edwin R. Cay, it is to be "used by the Lodge for the purchase of flowers and the relief of its members standing in need of relief beyond that to which they may be entitled in the form of Lodge Benefits, and for other cognate charitable purposes to which the general funds of this Lodge could not, under the laws of the order of Odd Fellows, properly be applied."

On September 21, 1927, at a Roll Call evening, the oldest member present was Ero. Richard B. Ward with a record of 51 years as a member.

Next was Bro. Oscar A. Marden with 49 years, who gave an extremely interesting

and reminiscent talk acknowledging with pleasure his years of membership and stating that during his half century as a trial justice, he could not recollect of having a member of this lodge brought before him on a criminal charge.

On the evening of December 2, 1931, an Old Timers' night was celegrated and Eldon F. Holmes, in honor of his 50th anniversary as a member, was presented a 50 year veterans jewel by the lodge, District Deputy Grand Master Thomas M. Chisholm making the presentation. The occasion was notable because Erother Holmes' father, Wadsworth Holmes, was an Odd Fellow and his five brothers also joined the order here. They were Berthier W. Holmes, Sr., and Nathan Holmes, both living at the time, and Herbert O. Holmes, Henry Holmes and Charles Holmes, deceased.

About 1932 the paraphernalia room was converted to a small social or club room and has been in continuous operation since that time, until recently, giving much enjoyment and opportunity for recreation to our members.

Few of us realize that the span of the period of membership of two of our brothers, one deceased, almost covers our entire 100 years of existence, but Brother Ernest E. Goward, P. G., who is present, was one of the brothers who watched at the last illness of Brother Charles R. Seaver, who became a member of the lodge on January 12, 1846, only eight months after the lodge was instituted.

Length of service in office is considered an indication of efficiency and faithfulness. We have always depended greatly on the advice and experience of our desk officers and have had several giving long terms of satisfactory service. Bro. Charles R. Seaver served as Treasurer for 28 years, first being elected in July, 1860. Beginning in January 1876, Bro. James W. Richardson

served as Financial Secretary for 31 years. We have been fortunate in having as Recording Secretaries a succession of three careful, conscientious brothers; Bro. Wilbur F. Fuller served more than 21 years, Bro. Edgar M. Russell for 13 years, passing away suddenly in office on January 27, 1926, and our late Bro. Charles S. Stickney served 13 years as Treasurer and more than 13 years as Recording Secretary, making 31 years as a desk officer.

Our present Treasurer, Bro. William B. Kimball, had served over 11, years, but the outstanding record for length of service, faithfulness, and soundness of judgment in counsel seeing established by our against Financial Secretary, Bro. Walter G. Pratt, P. G., who had served continuously in that office since

January, 1910, a period of more than 35 years, and die don Feliniary, 1965

We have six brothers who have been members for more than 50 years:

We regret that it was not possible for some of them to be with us tenicher

Nathan A. Holmes 63 years Robert S. Johnson, P. G. 53 years Henry M. Bird, P. G. 61 years Ernest E. Coward, P. G. 52 years James A. Graham, P. G. 57 years Fred N. Cohenno 51 years

From a study made by our late Pro. Charles S. Stickney, P. G., covering a period of only ten years, we find that we

191 brothers received 3662 weeks sick benefits 27 widowed families relieved 37 funeral expenses Bonations Watchers and nurses Other charitable purposes Support of I. O. O. F. Home	\$ 5,689 540 1,850 113 168 202 1,252
Total.	\$ 9,814
Received for dues	\$13,064
Total Relief	9,814

We have had suppers and evenings of special exercises and entertainment by the hundreds, we have visited and been visited by other

There have been several unusual occasions such as presenting a Bible and \$100 in cash to the Blue Hill Lodge of Canton as a token of friendship, and of having given the hall many times for observances of Golden Weddings and other family celebrations of our members. Many divine services have been attended in a body at local churches including dozens of Memorial Services, and we have been able to place several of our older brothers in our Odd Fellows Home, of which we are all so proud.

These are merely the highlights in our activities of 100 years and as the records were scanned for interesting events for this outline, we were impressed by the fact that for these 100 years every page of our records is spread with the activities of many men finding great satisfaction in acts of benevolence, charity, kindliness, good counsel and payment of weekly sick benefits, which is not charity, but that which is rightfully due to every member whose dues are properly paid up.

No organization with such a record for making the world a better place in which to live deserves anything except a bright and successful future, and we of Stoughton Lodge look forward to increased brotherhood and service during the next 100 years.