

Blackmer Buzz

January – March 2006

Volume 3, Issue 1

From the “Hot Seat”

After being raised in May of 2003, I had no idea that I would become Master in 2006. I want to thank everyone for their help and support. I know if we work together this will be another successful year for our lodge.

It seems our finances have taken the forefront in our priorities for the year... not only for our lodge but our charities as well. I have entrusted our fundraising to a very capable group of

Brothers and I am confident that with their creative efforts, coupled with our support, we will make great strides towards reaching our financial goals.

I have continued the tradition of donating \$10 to our general fund each time we have 30 Master Masons present at a lodge meeting. If you want to see me pay, your attendance is necessary!

We have some exciting events planned this year. The Building and Grounds

Committee have some projects to help spruce up our lodge. The Education Committee has planned some interesting programs for us. If you have not been to lodge lately, please come and see what is going on.

If we all apply the precepts and tenets of the Craft to our daily lives, there can be nothing but good come from it.

- Harvey Safrit, Master

Special Events:

- March 21st – “Our ABC’s in Texas” (Lodge Night Program).
- April 4, 2006 – Brother Walter Klein will present a program on Brother Zebulon Vance.
- April 8th – District School of Instruction (Marietta No. 444).
- April 22nd – Breakfast at the Lodge (8:00 AM bring a friend).
- May 1st – Red Cross Blood Drive at the Lodge (2:30 – 7:00 PM).
- May 20th – Blackmer Fun Shoot at Dewitt’s Game Farm.

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Masonic Education - *Kickin’ It Up a Notch at Blackmer*

Kicking it up a notch – that’s what Emeril Lagasse, famous chef and TV personality, would say about Masonic Education at Blackmer if he could see what is going on at 127. We don’t know if Emeril is a Mason, and we’re sure he has never been to Gilead; but if he had, we’d surely get a “BAM!” out of him for our Masonic Education effort this year.

For the last two years, our policy has been to have a program at every meeting except when degree work or elections were taking place. This year, we have made a special effort to take Masonic Education to a new level, bringing in guest speakers as often as we can.

Of course, we have talent in our midst. Worshipful Brother Gil Haywood will be bringing us a program on some things of interest to the lodge regarding late Brother Marcus Andrews. Worshipful Brother Larry Thompson is on deck for an upcoming program. Our resident historian, Brother Steve Campbell has several programs planned. You will recall that one of Steve’s articles was published in a recent “North Carolina Mason”. We have recently had Mike Daniels, Bush Hill’s Senior Warden, in for a magnificent program. John Rose from MESH and Chris Richardson from MHCO will be coming to speak to us. With the help of our

MESH Committee and our MHCO Committee, we will follow up with visits to each home. Hopefully, on our trip to Oxford, we can work in a stop by the Grand Lodge and get a mini-program on the mural from Ric Carter.

Regardless of which meeting you attend, we guarantee you’ll take something away with you. Bring someone to lodge with you next time. And be sure to come for the meal. Emeril isn’t doing the cooking, but Sylvia Blake’s cooking is just as good!

- Bill Bruton, PM, DDGM
Chairman, Masonic Education Committee

Our ABC's in Texas



The Alamo

“President Santa Anna marched northward, through severe winter weather, to crush the rebellion.”



Brother James Bowie

Upon gaining our independence from Great Britain, much of North and South America were still possessions of France, Spain, Portugal, Holland and England. The American frontier pushed westward toward the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. In need of cash, Napoleon Bonaparte sold the United States over one million square miles of French owned North America in 1803. This opened up vast lands to eager frontiersmen, traders, entrepreneurs, and settlers. It was during our early westward expansion that the Mexican people won their independence from Spain. What now encompasses the states of Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and southern California were part of the Republic of Mexico. Hoping to see the land prosper as well as to discourage American expansion into this region, Mexican officials opened up the lands of Texas to settlers under the agreement that they, along with local inhabitants, would be loyal citizens of Mexico.

Thus is the setting in Texas in the 1830's. Speculative and hard working Americans in this province prospered and their concerns of uncompromising rule from Mexico City fanned the thoughts of independence. In 1833 a 39-year-old Gen. Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, who helped liberate Mexico from Spain, suspended the government and seized power. Within two years, eight Mexican states rebelled. With European trained officers, Santa Anna crushed the

rebels. The Mexican State of Coahuila y Tejas (Texas) rebelled in November of 1835. Several skirmishes took place between Mexican troops and the settlers. On March 2, 1836, under the political leadership of David Burnet, Brother Stephen Austin and others, the Republic of Texas was formed. A settler from Virginia, Brother Sam Houston, was placed in command of the Army of Texas. There was only one flaw in his appointment: with the exception of a few men, there was no Army of Texas. Houston would have to raise one. Meanwhile with an army of nearly 6,000 troops, cavalry and artillery, President Santa Anna marched northward, through severe winter weather, to crush the rebellion.

A - The Alamo

The 18th century Spanish mission is located in San Antonio, which in the 1830's was not much more than a village. Deserted as a church, it had been used over the years as a frontier post. Early in the Texas Rebellion, settlers had driven Santa Anna's soldiers from the fort. Realizing the importance of the few cannon and supplies at the post, Sam Houston ordered Col. James Bowie to San Antonio to remove those stores. Upon his arrival, Bowie, who assumed command of all volunteer forces in the region, decided to remain at The Alamo, as it was the only barrier between the Mexican Army and Houston's fledgling force.

B - Brother James

Bowie, who was born in Kentucky in 1796, grew up in Louisiana. He received a basic education, hunted and trapped game. In 1813, he enlisted in the Louisiana Militia to fight against the British in the War of 1812. After the war, Brother Bowie moved to the east coast of Texas, where it is reported that he allied himself with the pirate Jean Lafitte (hero of the Battle of New Orleans) in a lucrative smuggling trade. Becoming a “man of means” Bowie returned to Louisiana. It was during this time that he gained his reputation as a highly skilled knife fighter. As a result of a duel (the Sandbar fight) near Natchez, Bowie was shot in the lower chest and run through with a sword cane. Though grievously wounded, he fatally stabbed his assailant, Norris Wright. The legend of the Bowie Knife was born. In September 1829 his 24 year old fiancée died and a year later he immigrated to Texas, where he became a Mexican citizen. Bowie married the 18 year old daughter (Maria de Vermendi) of the wealthy mayor of San Antonio, and they had two children. Sadly, in 1833, Bowie's wife along with his young daughter and son died of cholera. For a time he served as a Colonel in a Texas unit and was in this capacity when he reported to The Alamo.

Brother William

Barrett Travis was born in Saluda County, SC, in 1809.

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ABC's *continued from page 2*

Young Travis became an attorney. At 19 he married Rosanna Cato. They had one son, and though their marriage was rocky, his pursuit for recognition continued as a local newspaper publisher and militia officer. Sadly he separated from his family and moved to Texas in 1831 where he set up a law practice. He was one of the first to join the Army of Texas when the Texas Rebellion erupted. Travis arrived at The Alamo with 30 regulars. Viewed as somewhat vain and egotistical, his leadership style did not coincide with Brother Bowie's.

C - Brother David Crockett was born in Limestone, Tennessee in 1786. He was a hunter, pioneer, militiaman, humorist/writer and politician. A bit of a self-promoter, he preferred to be called David. He could talk to anyone, rich or poor, and was plainspoken. At 20 he married Polly Finley and had two sons and a daughter. In 1816 he remarried to Elizabeth Patton and had four children. As a Tennessee Militiaman he fought in the Creek War (1813) and in 1815 was elected Lt. Colonel of the 57th Regiment of Tennessee. Elected to a Tennessee state office in 1821, Brother Crockett went on to win three terms in the U. S. Congress (1826-1834). While in Congress he was known to speak for the people and against big government. Taking issue with some of Brother Andrew Jackson's policies, he was defeated for re-election in 1835 and left Tennessee for Texas, writing "I want to

to explore Texas well before I return." (Crockett wrote several works: Autobiography in 1834, "Tour to the North and Down East" in 1833, "Sketches & Eccentricities, Etc".) Upon arriving in Texas he took an oath to join the Texas Volunteers, and in turn received 4,600 acres of land for his service, as did all volunteers. On February 6, 1836, Brother Crockett arrived at The Alamo with less than one dozen volunteers. He was greeted by Brother Bowie, with whom he lodged.

The Battle of The Alamo For twelve days (23 Feb - 6 March 1836) less than 200 men withstood the siege of Santa Anna's army. Unfortunately, the crumbling adobe walls, though somewhat enhanced with wooden palisades, were no match for continual rifle fire, artillery and rocket barrages. When asked to surrender, Travis' reply was to order a single cannon shot in defiance. Santa Anna, wishing to crush the rebellion and to set an example, ordered that no prisoners were to be taken. A messenger did escape The Alamo with a request for reinforcements. The closest unit was met by Mexican troops and wiped out. Houston's Army of Texas was too weak to respond. It is reported that upon learning that no reinforcements could reach them, Travis "drew a line in the sand" with his sword stating any man who wished to escape could "leave without infringing their honor", otherwise crossing the line meant they would stay until the end. Sole command now rested with Travis, as Bowie was confined to his bed with

a delirious fever (either from malaria or pneumonia).

Tradition holds that Bowie ordered his cot be carried across the line to show his solidarity with Travis' order. Upon the early morning (4 am) of the 13th day of the siege, four separate Mexican Army columns attacked the fort simultaneously. Crockett commanded the south wall in front of the chapel. Travis, commanding an artillery battery on the north wall, was killed by a single gunshot wound to the head just as the final attack began. James Bowie was killed on his cot. Overwhelmed by superior forces, The Alamo fell after 2 1/2 hours of combat. All of the defenders of The Alamo were killed. About two dozen women, children and slaves were spared so that they could tell all what the fate of the men at The Alamo had been. Santa Anna ordered the bodies to be chopped into pieces and burned.

Wishing to defeat Houston's army, Santa Anna split his force into three wings. To his regret the wing he commanded was encountered by Houston's army at a place called San Jacinto and defeated in less than 20 minutes. President Santa Anna was captured, and in agreement for his release signed the Treaties of Velasco, in which Mexico "acknowledged the full, entire and perfect independence of the Republic of Texas." For nine years (1836-1845) Texas was its own nation until admitted to the United States as the 28th state.

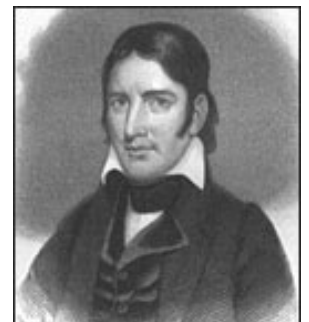
(P.S. Whilst not well reported, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna too was a Freemason.)

- Steven Campbell



Brother William B. Travis

"Overwhelmed by superior forces, The Alamo fell after 2 1/2 hours of combat.."



Brother David Crockett



BLACKMER LODGE No. 127 FUN SHOOT

WHERE: Dewitt's Game Farm Ellerbe, NC

WHEN: May 20th, 2006
9:00 AM

COST: \$ 40.00

Blackmer Lodge will host an "open" sporting clay shoot as part of our 2006 fundraising initiative on Saturday, May 20th at Dewitt's Game Farm located in Ellerbe (www.dewittsgamefarm.com). Just like last year, this event will be open to the public and we encourage you to invite a guest!

We will begin at 9:00 AM with an orientation to sporting clays (rules, safety issues, golf cart info) and will finish the course in time for a lunch consisting of grilled pork chops & chicken, potato salad, green beans, coleslaw, garlic toast, and homemade banana pudding. After lunch you will be able to shoot another round of clays at member cost (\$14.00 per round of 50).

You will need to bring eye protection, ear protection, and your own shells to the shoot (Dewitt's will have these items for sale in their Pro Shop).

Again, this is a fundraising event for our lodge and we would certainly appreciate your support and donations! Please respond with your intent (registration and money) no later than Monday, May 15th to:

Larry Thompson
Joel Howard

(704) 301-4881
(910) 995-5836

thompsonenv@earthlink.net
joel.m.howard@us.army.mil

Registration Deadline – May 15th, 2006
ALL NSCA RULES WILL APPLY

From the Ground Up *A Building and Grounds Committee Report*

The warmth of the sun: Pay now, pay later. Our new climate controlled heating/ac system is up and running. Now the upstairs is comfortable for our evening meetings.

We still need members' assistance in finding a reputable person to trim overhanging limbs touching the roof and building. Plus, the building's gutters are not functioning due to being full! This matter does need to be resolved. Any input and ideas are welcomed.

Call it a "pledge" or a "challenge" - either way, several members have "stepped up" and given cash donations to assist on the costs of the new heating/ac system. Our "creature

comfort" level is now achieved. Each member is asked to donate whatever amount they can to aid in this cause. (Any amount, small or large, will help)

While some may not think about this, acquiring necessary supplies such as toilet paper, soap, paper towels, cleaning products and light bulbs are necessary in running our Lodge. Our Committee thanks the never-ending efforts of our Secretary, Stimpson McRae, for his tireless work in this area.

"Shutters up" - the goal of approving, ordering, painting, and placement of the shutters on the front of the Lodge has been achieved. Many thanks to the Brothers who envisioned

them, voted to approve them, and finally Brother Randy Browning III who completed the arduous task of mounting them. Without a doubt the looks of the building are greatly improved.

Any ideas, suggestions, or comments that you may have for this Committee are welcomed. We've many members who see things from many aspects, and all angles offer different viewpoints.

Questions or comments - contact Steven Campbell @ 439-4994.

- Steven Campbell, Joel Howard, and David Kime;
Building and Grounds Committee

"Any pledges or donations for these efforts would be greatly appreciated."

Wilkerson College – Part 1 *The Masonic Home for Children at Oxford*

Since this was my first session of Wilkerson College, I really did not know what to expect. While I was full of apprehension on the way there, by the time I got out of my car all apprehension was gone. It finally dawned on me that I was among my fellow Masons, "Brothers" if you will. This realization quickly lay to rest any thoughts of apprehension. By the time Saturday rolled around, I was just trying to keep up with all that was taking place. Wilkerson College presents a Mason with a full plate of ideas, aspirations, and an invaluable support base that is second to none. All of this was great. However, it paled in comparison to what took place on Saturday afternoon.

After our breakfast and

team building exercises, for our last activity, we were taken on a tour of The Masonic Home for Children at Oxford. It was great to see what the home is doing not only in their renovation endeavors, but also in their overall concept of providing the closest thing that they can to a "family atmosphere." We toured the new cottages and even met one of the child care providers. It would be nice to live in a world that never had to hear the word "orphanage." Since this is not the world in which we live, it is nice to know that the good Lord has blessed certain people with a burden to care for children. After our tour and our final goodbyes, I was on my journey home. Exhausted, I began to reflect upon some

of the things that our various speakers mentioned. Almost every single one of them talked about what it takes to be the Master of a Lodge. We were given advice on how to react to different scenarios, materials to help plan our year, and most of all, confidence. All of these things are not only necessary but, they are paramount in becoming an effective Master. However, there was one thing that stuck out most in my first experience at the children's home. It kept resonating over and over in my mind. Chris Richardson, the administrator of fund raising at the home, mentioned that only 16% of Masons have ever been to visit the home.

See Wilkerson College, page 6



St. John's Administration Building

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If you would like to contribute to a future edition of the "Blackmer Buzz" please contact Larry Thompson, Jr. at: editor@blackmerlodge.org or by phone at: 704-888-1796

Meets 1st and 3rd Tuesdays
6:30 PM Dinner
7:30 PM Meeting

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.blackmerlodge.org

Wilkerson College *continued from page 5*

When he said this most of us could not believe it. Here we were, all of us Master Masons. All of us took an oath to care for widows and orphans, and only 16% have ever even been to the home. I realize that it is not possible for every Mason across this great state to take part in Wilkerson College, but, I do

believe every Mason has an obligation to at least visit the home.

I am looking forward to visiting the home again. I plan on taking the Youth group from the Baptist and Methodist churches here in Mt. Gilead, to the home to help do whatever they need. I am glad that I was able to attend this session of

Wilkerson College. It not only helped prepare me for my journey in Masonry, but it solidified the true purpose of **what** Freemasonry is all about, helping our fellow brethren, widows and orphans.

- Casey Harris, Senior Deacon

Membership

There is nothing quite as exciting as seeing our fraternity grow. Since our last newsletter, Blackmer has received a Petition for the Degrees and has had the privilege of making Brother Jim Sharpe a Master Mason!

Our lodge continues to grow for a number of reasons. First and foremost,

Blackmer is fortunate enough to have a group of Brothers who enjoy talking to others about "their" fraternity. Secondly, we continue to open our doors to the public through our blood drives, breakfasts, and open lodge night programs. When you add all of this together, it intrigues the men within

our community. They want to know what is going on at Blackmer Lodge!

Brothers we need to continue to talk about our fraternity and invite our friends to join us whenever we can. As W. Brother Robert Smith says, "If you ain't growing, you're dying!"

About Our Organization...

"The mission of Freemasonry in North Carolina is to raise the moral, social, intellectual, and spiritual conscience of society by teaching the ancient and enduring

philosophical *tenets* of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, which are expressed outwardly through service to God, family, country, and self under the Fatherhood of God within the Brotherhood

of Man." - *NC Lodge Manual. Freemasonry is the largest and oldest fraternal order in the world. If you would like more information on the fraternity, please contact us!*

BLACKMER LODGE NO. 127 A. F. & A. M.

PO Box 265
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