



Blackmer Buzz

June - September 2010

Volume 7, Issue 3

From the Master's Seat

Special Events:

- October 23rd – 6th Annual Blackmer Lodge Charity Fun Shoot.
- November 2nd – "Brother Buffalo".
- November 16th – Regular Lodge Meeting.
- December 4th – Grand Lodge Officer Installation, Raleigh.
- December 7th – Blackmer Lodge Annual Meeting.
- December 21st – Christmas Gift Basket Pickup.

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Brethren, this year has gone by extremely fast and I wonder to myself, just where has the time gone. It seems like just last month that we were being sworn in to our respected offices and trying to get a feel for what was ahead. As I sit back and think about what the Lodge has accomplished this year, I am reminded of an email that was sent to me by one of my nursing friends. I thought the message fitting for this venue. I am unsure of the original author but the core of the message is thus.

"Their marriage was good, their dreams focused. Their best friends lived barely a wave away. I can see them now, Dad in trousers, tee shirt and a hat and Mom in a house dress; lawn mower in his hand, and dish-towel in hers. It was the time for fixing things. A curtain rod, the kitchen radio, screen door, the oven door, the hem in a dress, things we keep.

It was a way of life, and sometimes it made me crazy. All that re-fixing, eating, renewing, I wanted just once to be wasteful. Waste meant affluence. Throwing things away meant you knew

there'd always be more.

But then my mother died, and on that clear summer's night, in the warmth of the hospital room, I was struck with the pain of learning that sometimes there isn't any more. Sometimes, what we care about most gets all used up and goes away ...never to return. SoWhile we have it ...its best we love it ... And care for it And fix it when it's broken ... And heal it when it's sick.

This is true ...For marriage ... And old cars ... And children with bad report cards ... Dogs and cats with bad hips ... And aging parents ... And grandparents, aunts and uncles and friends. We keep them because they are worth it, because we are worth it.

Some things we keep. Like a best friend who moved away or a classmate we grew up with. There are just some things that make life important, like people we know who are special ... And so, we keep them close in heart and mind and spirit."

This passage is true for Masons as well. We just seem to fit right into this thought. We have spent the year working on the

building, mending things that were broke and improving things that were not. We have even had to deal with the theft of exterior equipment, twice. We worked hard to try to shift the Lodge building from a place to a destination. We have honored those from the past that have helped us to move forward and we have grieved for those we have lost.

I started out the year stating that I was honored and humbled to be the Master of the Lodge and this still rings true today although I believe I am even more humble than when I began the journey. As the year draws to an end and I begin to fill the chair for the last few times, I will continue to think of how lucky I was to be afforded this opportunity. I want to thank everyone that has helped to make this a great year for Blackmer Lodge and as the passage above stated, "There are just some things that make life important, like people we know who are special ... And so, we keep them close in heart and mind and spirit."

- Ashley Cooke, Master

2010 Lodge Dues

We still have a few members who have not paid their 2010 lodge dues. Please send your

check to Brother Stimpson McRae or call him if there is situation or problem that we

can help you with: 910-439-6281, 910-439-5529 or 910-572-9829 (cell).

Jingle in the Jar

Our lodge members and guests have been kind enough to donate \$140.00 to The Masonic Home for Children this quarter. Thank you!

Rummage Sale Report

The Building and Grounds Committee, headed by Brother Steven Campbell, organized and manned a "Rummage Sale" at our lodge on October 9th which netted \$605.00. Thanks to all who donated items to the sale!

The proceeds from the sale are earmarked for the lodge building fund.

Grand Lodge Appointments

R.W. Brother Lewis R. Ledford, Grand Master Elect, has appointed W.B. A. Gene Cobb as Grand Marshall and W.B. Larry B. Thompson, Jr. as Grand Tyler for 2011.

W.B. Cobb served as Master of Blackmer Lodge in 1995 and W.B. Thompson in 2004.

From the Ground Up *a building and grounds report*

On August 17th our newly restored Mosaic Lodge floor was dedicated to the memory of Bro. Marcus Andrews and in honor of Marietta Andrews. The event was highlighted further by the presence of Most Worshipful Grand Master William L. Dill.

- Our foyer no longer resembles a warehouse entryway. As a result of a lot of hard work by Bro. Randy Browning and his crew, along with a generous donation from Mrs. Debbie Campbell, the entrance now sets the tone of welcome to one and all.
- Within a two week period, two misguided souls "did steal, take and carry away" the Lodge's exterior air conditioning units. Yet, as a result of exceedingly fast work by Bros. Jeff Morris and Ben Wallace, no one suffered the "heat of the season." New units have been installed, new lighting put in place and further security measures are forthcoming. (Postscript: The Mt. Gilead Police Department did charge and arrest two local men for the theft.)
- A continued thanks to Bro. Jim Sharpe for having our lawn mowed all summer.
- The Town of Mt. Gilead has installed (at no charge) a new digital water meter at the Lodge.

If any Brother has any ideas, insights or suggestions, please contact me at your convenience.

Steven Campbell
910-439-4994

Brother Buffalo *continued from Issue 2*

Along with holding hearings on criminal matters, he also presided over weddings. He wrote regarding his first wedding: After consuming a few drinks, "I could not find the marriage ceremony in the Nebraska statute book. I told the couple to stand up. Do you take this woman to be your lawful wedded wife, to support and love her through her life?" "I do," the groom replied. "Do you take this man to become your lawful wedded husband through life, to love, honor and obey him?" The bride said "I do." "Then join hands, I now pronounce you to be man and wife and whomsoever God and Buffalo Bill have joined together let no man put asunder. May you live long

and prosper. Amen." The 5th U. S. Cavalry was deployed to Arizona resulting in Cody's transfer to the 3rd U. S. Cavalry per the direct orders of Gen., Philip H. Sheridan. The popularity of big game and buffalo hunting drew the attention of Russia's Grand Duke Alexis, and in 1872 Buffalo Bill served as the hunting expedition's guide. Several influential businessmen from New York City joined the Duke, as did Generals Sheridan, Ord and Custer. It is reported that champagne flowed like streams and the event was a grand success. The business contacts Cody made established him with many of the "movers and shakers" back east. As a result of this media spectacle and his

service, Bill was offered an Officer's commission, which he declined. After obtaining a leave, and for the first time in his life, Buffalo Bill left the frontier. He traveled by train to Chicago, Niagara Falls, Buffalo and Rochester, each time being lauded as a great hero, resulting from his exploits being heralded in Buntline's books and newspaper articles. In New York City he was wined and dined by the men he had guided on the Plains. Ned Buntline wrote a play entitled "Buffalo Bill, King of the Border Men," which Cody viewed and was offered the lead role, which he declined (being offered \$500 per week!).

See "**Brother Buffalo**" on Page 3.

Brother Buffalo *continued from page 2*

He traveled to Philadelphia to visit his uncle, Henry Guss, who owned the Green Tree Hotel. After two months, he returned to his family and Ft. McPherson, where he undertook scouting assignments and yet more than ever popular hunting expeditions. In the fall of 1872 Bill resigned his Army Scout position and was elected State Representative of Nebraska's 26th District. The following year (1873) he resigned his seat and traveled with his family to St. Louis to visit relatives, and then relocating and setting up house in Rochester, New York. Realizing that vast sums of money could be made from further hunting expeditions he traveled to Boston and New York City where he lined up contracts for this service. Cody spent time between The Plains and New York (1872-73). Sensing the public's interest in the adventures of the west, Bill, along with his partner "Texas Jack" Omohundro and Buntline (as their promoter) debuted with their first stage production "Scouts of the Plains." The idea was an immediate success. Cody even enticed "Wild Bill" to come east and play himself on stage, yet between his drinking, concern of percentages and the inability to remember his lines, the ever growing temperamental Hickok left the show. While performing in Springfield, Mass., Buffalo Bill received a telegram from Louisa informing him that their son Kit was seriously ill with scarlet fever. Traveling by train through the night, he arrived at their Rochester

home. Cody wrote, "I found my little boy unable to speak but he seemed to recognize me and putting his little arms around my neck he tried to kiss me. On that evening at 6 o'clock my beloved little Kit died in my arms." (Thursday, April 20, 1876) His son's death at the age of 6 deeply saddened Bill and Louisa and he would write, "He was too good for this world. We loved him too dearly, he could not stay. And now his place is vacant and can never be filled, for he has gone to be a beautiful Angel, in that better world, where he will wait for us." (Kit Carson Cody is buried in the Mt. Hope Cemetery in Rochester, NY.) Bereaved by the death of his only son, Cody would dote upon his three daughters (Arta, Orra, Irma) though his wandering life would prove challenging to his relationship with them as well as his wife of 50 years. (Purportedly, at one time Cody sought a divorce from Louisa, however her strong religious convictions would not allow her to agree to such an action.)

With his son's death, Cody sought refuge in the familiar scenes of the West. In conjunction with the government's plan to rein in hostile Indian tribes, the 5th U.S. Cavalry was redeployed from Arizona to The Plains, and upon the defeat of the 7th U. S. Cavalry at the Little Big Horn, became the main strike force for a shaken military. Buffalo Bill was reappointed Chief of Scouts. Seeing the success of the Sioux and other tribes, the main Cheyenne Nation decided to unite with Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull's

forces. Coming from the south, the Cheyenne body of several thousand warriors, along with their families, had to pass through War Bonnet (or War Hat) Gorge (Nebraska). The consolidation of Army forces was to be miles away, yet Cody convinced the commanding officer to divert and block the pass. On Monday, July 17, 1876, Cody led a delaying action to enable the main cavalry body to get into position. Riding out in front he observed a Cheyenne War Chief known as Yellow Hand (or Yellow Hair). Seeing Cody, Yellow Hand yelled "I know you Pahehaska (Long Hair); if you want to fight, come ahead and fight me." The men charged each other on horseback and within 30 yards, fired at each other. Yellow Hand's shot missed; Cody's took Yellow Hand's horse down. At about the same time, Cody's horse stepped into a hole. Both men, now afoot, ran toward one another and at about 20 paces (60 feet) fired again. Yellow Hand's shot failed to hit its target, however Cody's found his foe's chest. Rushing upon the fallen warrior he plunged his knife into his heart and in front of the opposing forces took Yellow Hand's top knot of hair, yelling "the first scalp for Custer." The ensuing engagement resulted in a Cheyenne defeat and their being escorted to a nearby agency reservation.

See "**Brother Buffalo**" on Page 4.



Grand Master Visits Blackmer

Grand Master William L. Dill visited Blackmer Lodge on August 17th for our new lodge room floor dedication to the memory of Brother Marcus Andrews and in honor of Mrs. Marietta Andrews.

On the same evening, the Grand Master presented 50-year Veteran's Awards to Brothers Benny Haithcock, Jimmy Haithcock and David Wilder for their many years of service to the fraternity.

Grand Master Dill himself was presented with an honorary membership to our lodge by Master Ashley Cooke and W.B. Larry Thompson, Jr.

"The men charged each other on horseback and within 30 yards, fired at each other. Yellow Hand's shot missed; Cody's took Yellow Hand's horse down."

Brother Buffalo *continued from page 3*



"In the 1880's while traveling by train through Davidson County, N.C., near present Linwood, the Wild West's train derailed. As a result, overnight the young Annie Oakley's hair turned white!"



Yellow Hand's father, Cut Nose, who knew Cody, sent word offering four mules for his son's war bonnet, guns, pistols and ornaments. Though he wanted to comply, the Army would not permit the trade. Bill continued scouting until the fall of 1876, then traveled eastward to visit Louisa and his daughters in Rochester.

The Showman and Investor

Again, Bill Cody left scouting the Plains and re-instituted his even more popular stage show, touring along the East coast's largest cities, across the nation to San Francisco, yet taking time to visit his (now married) sisters in Denver. Louisa traveled with him on this 1877-1878 tour. The year 1878 found him establishing his first large cattle ranch with partner Major North along Nebraska's Dismal River. He developed a large ranch outside of N. Platte (Nebraska) as well, with Louisa overseeing the construction of their new home. (This ranch, Scout's Rest, still exists today and is open to visitors.) Whether a need for funds or just a result of his restless spirit, Buffalo Bill took to the road again in 1878, touring Washington, D. C., New Haven, Conn., Savannah, Ga., and across the country again. It was also during this time that Bill Cody penned his only autobiography (1879). In witnessing the degradation of the Indians and their habitat, he began to speak out as an advocate for the Native Americans, stating: "Every Indian outbreak that I

have ever known has resulted from broken promises and broken treaties by the government." He professed: "Never make a single promise to the Indians that is not fulfilled."

In Omaha, Nebraska, in 1883, a production that was to endure for three decades began, "The Wild West" (and regardless of popular lore, it was never called The Wild West Show). Without today's modern means of entertainment, live performances were the rage of the public, and Cody, the showman, realized this. Depicting the lives of Americans on the Western Plains, spectators lined up to see real cowboys, Indians, horsemen and sharpshooters. (In the 1880's while traveling by train through Davidson County, N.C., near present Linwood, the Wild West's train derailed. As a result, overnight the young Annie Oakley's hair turned white!)

Even though away from Nebraska, Cody was not forgotten and was appointed to the rank of Colonel in the Nebraska National Guard. Now known as "Nature's Nobleman", Cody and The Wild West troupe embarked upon a tour of England where he was personally received by Queen Victoria. They returned to the United States for a brief time before heading to Europe for a four year tour, where he was greeted by the crown heads of the continent, as well as the Pope. The popularity of The Wild West skyrocketed, as did the box office receipts. In 1890, the Ghost Dance Uprising among several Indian tribes resulted in bloodshed. Gen. Nelson

Miles requested Cody to return to duty with the U. S. Army to confer with its leader, Sitting Bull; however the Sioux leader's death at the hands of Indian police negated his presence. Exposure to other cultures, beliefs and ideas found Buffalo Bill proving to be an advocate for women's suffrage, equal rights and conservation. In 1895 he established the TE Ranch in Wyoming, near Yellowstone, and in essence becoming one of the founders of Park County's seat of government, Cody, Wyoming. In 1899 he established "The Cody Enterprise" newspaper, which is still in print.

1900 found Cody diversifying large sums of money into crop development, irrigation projects, conservation programs, as well as oil and coal production. In 1902 he formed a mining company in Oracle, Arizona, in which he would lose a great deal of currency. With the town of Cody growing and an awareness of the developing tourist trade, he built the Irma Hotel, which he named after one of his daughters (which, based on personal experience, is an excellent place to dine and to view the hand carved cherry bar that Queen Victoria presented to Bill, finding its way to him by ship, rail and wagon). From 1903 - 1907 The Wild West returned to the crowds of Europe with updated productions including Arabs, Turks and Mongols along with cowboys and Indians.

See "Brother Buffalo" on Page 5.

Brother Buffalo *continued from page 4*

Though away, Cody agreed to and supported the development of the irrigation and electricity project Shoshone Dam (now the Cody Dam), in Park County.

The Curtain Lowers

From 1910-1913, an aging Buffalo Bill would begin and end a series of farewell tours across the United States, with the last show concluding in Portsmouth, Virginia. At this time Buffalo Bill Cody was probably the most famous American in the world. The next four years found him traveling and spending time with his dwindling family. In early 1917, while traveling, he developed a cold and stopped at his sister May Decker's home in Denver. On Wednesday, January 10, 1917, William Frederick Cody departed this world at his sister's home surrounded by Louisa, family and friends (COD kidney failure). Condolences poured in from around the world. Though earlier he had requested to be laid to rest upon Cedar Mountain just outside of Cody, Wyoming, he left the decision to Louisa. There is speculation (only) that the bereaved widow was unduly influenced by local and state politicians to have him buried in Colorado. No matter the reason, Buffalo Bill was laid to rest upon Lookout Mountain, Jefferson County, Golden, Colorado. Louisa would pass away four years later (Oct. 21, 1921), outliving all of her children, and be buried next to her husband.

Cody the Freemason

One of America's most

famous Freemasons was initiated in the Platt Valley Lodge No. 32, in N. Platte, Nebraska, on March 5, 1870, passed to the Degree of Fellow Craft on April 2, 1870, and raised to Master Mason on Jan. 10, 1871. At the age of 40, Bill Cody was advanced to the degree of Mark Master, inducted into the Oriental Chair and received and acknowledged a most excellent Master on Nov. 14, 1888, and then exalted to the Royal Arch degree on Nov. 15, 1888. On April 1, 1889, Brother Cody was duly elected and received the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross and on the next day received the Order of Malta and was dubbed a Knight Templar. March 22, 1892, found him accepted into the Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine of Omaha, Nebraska. In April 1894 he was made a member of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry for the Northern Jurisdiction of the United States in the Valley of New York City, along with having joined The Lodge of Perfection, the Council of Princes, the Chapter of Rose Croix, and the Consistory. Throughout his many, many miles of travels across the United States and the world, William F. Cody's name, without doubt, can be found upon the register and records of countless Lodges in his 46 year Masonic membership.

The Final Curtain Call: a Masonic Burial

However the decision was made where to lay the mortal remains of Bro. Buffalo Bill Cody, there can be no doubt of the degree of

the respect which was paid to the man. Lookout Mountain, 18 miles southwest of Denver, in Golden, Colorado, is composed of solid granite. For nearly six months the famed frontiersman's remains were sheltered until a tomb and monument could be drilled and carved into the mountain top. Per the request of his Lodge (Platte Valley No. 32, N. Platte, Nebraska), the Golden City Lodge No. 1 performed Bill Cody's Masonic funeral. Prior to his burial, Louisa had his coffin laid in state in Denver's Capitol building. It is reported that over 30,000 people lined by his body to pay their respects. Along the funeral procession route police officers wore their white leather aprons. Accounts placed 15,000 people in attendance at his funeral, making it one of, if not the largest Masonic funerals in American history. On the afternoon of June 3, 1917, at 3:00 pm, W. M. G. W. Parfet stated: "His spirit ascends to God who gave it. His memory we cherish in our hearts. His body we consign to the earth." The Freemasons of the West have not forgotten Bro. Cody, nor should we. The Grand Lodge of Wyoming laid the cornerstone to his memorial statue in Cody in 1927 and later dedicated the Cody Museum.

Bro. Buffalo Bill Cody was many thing to many people and to the American West. His early life was difficult.

See "*Brother Buffalo*" on Page 6.

"Prior to his burial, Louisa had his coffin laid in state in Denver's Capitol building. It is reported that over 30,000 people lined by his body to pay their respects."



Blackmer Lodge No. 127



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If you would like to contribute to a future edition of the "Blackmer Buzz" please contact the Editor at: larry@thompsonenv.com or by phone at: 704-301-4881

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

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.blackmerlodge.org

Brother Buffalo *continued from page 5*

He proved to be a self-made man; poor; wealthy; advisor to Presidents (Grant to Wilson); self-promoter; advocate, and visionary. It is reported that he lived his life as a true Freemason; he was a man of his word and dealt

equally with people of all races. Yet perhaps Annie Oakley summed him up the best "... he was the simplest of men as comfortable with cowboys as with kings."

A Vex: More than 50 actors from Roy Rogers, Joel

McCrea, Charlton Heston to Paul Newman have portrayed Buffalo Bill on film, yet do you know the first person ever to portray him on celluloid was?

- Brother Steven Campbell

Membership Changes

Congratulations to Brother Riley Beaman, who was made a Master Mason on August 10th, and also to Brother Brian Greer who was made an Entered Apprentice on July 12th.

On a sad note, Brother Pressley R. Rankin, Jr., MD passed away on October 9, 2010 and was laid to rest in Mount Gilead on October 16th. Dr. Rankin was a veteran of both the US Army and the US Air Force. He received his undergraduate

degree from Davidson College and his MD from Bowman Gray School of Medicine.

Dr. Rankin operated a medical practice in Ellerbe from 1957 until retiring in 2001 and, unlike present day practices, he made house calls daily to patients in Montgomery, Moore and Richmond counties.

Brother Rankin served many organizations during his life and was a member of numerous boards. He was an avid collector of artifacts and

enjoyed research in the fields of history, archaeology, paleontology, and anthropology and founded the Rankin Museum of American Heritage in 1984.

Brother Rankin was a 33^o Scottish Rite Mason and a 58-year member of Blackmer Lodge.

The family requests that memorials be made to The Rankin Museum of American Heritage, P.O. Box 499, Ellerbe, NC 28338.

About Our Fraternity...

"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!

Mount Gilead, NC 27306

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Blackmer Lodge No. 127 A. F. & A. M.