

George W. Wright Pavilion

Robert E. Simpson

Virginia Research Lodge No. 1777

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With the single exception of the Masonic Home of Virginia, the construction of the George W. Wright Memorial Tubercular Pavilion at the Blue Ridge Sanatorium in Charlottesville, Virginia, constitutes the most lasting monument to the relief of a suffering humanity by the Masons of Virginia.

In about 1922, the Masonic Relief Foundation, Inc. was organized by the Grand Lodge of Virginia, and chartered by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Its major objective was to build a Tubercular Pavilion at the Blue Ridge Sanatorium near Charlottesville.

The late Governor of Virginia, Most Worshipful James H. Price, was charged with organizing this corporation, which he did. The first officers were: Most Excellent J. W. Timberman, President; Most Worshipful James B. Wood, Vice-President; Most Excellent D. P. Sigourney, Secretary; and Most Worshipful James H. Price, Treasurer. A contract was negotiated with the State, that upon completion of the Pavilion, the administration would be turned over to the Commonwealth of Virginia. The only stipulation was that any Masonic designated patients would be admitted within ten days.



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The cornerstone of the Pavilion was laid with appropriate pomp and ceremony by the Grand Lodge of Virginia on July 14, 1926. Mt. Wor. Ben W. Beach, Grand Master of Masons in Virginia, opened the Grand Lodge of Virginia in the social hall of the First Methodist Church in Charlottesville.

The day was a Masonic holiday for the Craft and their families, as they came to Charlottesville on special trains, and automobiles from all sections of the State. Throughout the day the streets of Charlottesville were crowded with visitors. About noon, a special train arrived from Richmond bearing 800 Masons representing the then twenty-three lodges in the capital city. The train, consisting of ten cars, also brought three of the Richmond Masonic bands, ACCA Temple band of forty pieces, under the leadership of R. T. Mountcastle; the Samis Grotto band, and the Masonic Home band, composed entirely of children from the Masonic Home at Richmond.

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From Alexandria came a special train bearing 600 Masons from that city and Washington. The train consisted of twelve coaches, and was drawn by engine No. 1379, in complete holiday attire. On top was a pencil sketch of Mt. Wor. Charles H. Callahan in a frame. The counter of the engine had a huge Masonic emblem in colors, and the pilot of the locomotive was finished in red, white and blue. There were two metallic eagles on the front, numerous electric bulbs, flags and other decorations. The electric lights were lighted on the return trip to Alexandria. With the Brethren from Alexandria came the Citizens' Band.

The General Chairman for the event was Rt. Wor. Charles Hill Ergenbright, a Past Master of Widow's Sons' Lodge No. 60, assisted by the Publicity Chairman, Wor. James A. Leitch, Past Master of Charlottesville Lodge No. 55, the Lunch Chairman, Wor. Solomon D. Kline, a Past Master of Widow's Sons' Lodge No. 60, and the Chief Marshal, Bro. Randolph H. Perry, a member of Charlottesville Lodge No. 55.

The various Masonic Bodies were formed into a procession under the direction of the Chief Marshal assisted by John S. Graves, J. Callan Brooks, Thomas J. Michie and H. J. Fickling, and marched some three-thousand strong to the site of the new pavilion. They were followed by the Grand Lodge officers, and many visiting brethren in automobiles. To this day, it was the largest parade ever held in Charlottesville. It was a colorful scene with six bands furnishing the music, and the Knights Templar in plumed head gear and snappy looking uniforms. The line of march was two miles long forming at the corner of Park and High Streets. Heading the procession was the Charlottesville Municipal Band and 250 Masons from that city. Thousands of persons stood on the sidewalks along the procession route. It was estimated that a crowd of seven thousand persons witnessed the cornerstone laying ceremony.

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The ceremony was scheduled for 2:30 P.M., but was delayed for about thirty minutes because of a rain shower. During the delay, odes were sung by the Girls' Glee Club from the home, and the ACCA Temple Chanters. The Governor, Bro. Harry F. Byrd, extended the greetings of the state. He stated, "Never were funds raised in a more worthy cause than in the voluntary movement to establish and erect the George W. Wright Tubercular Pavilion." He stated, that it would in reality be a refuge for the suffering, and haven for the unfortunate." He went on to say, "that it symbolized that spirit of fraternity, benevolence, humanitarianism, and love for our fellow man, which had come to be so characteristic of Masonic lodges." Dr. F. T. McFaden, a Presbyterian Minister and Grand Junior Deacon from Winchester, delivered an address on "The Influence of Fraternalism, as Illustrated by Masonry, on Some Phases of American Life." Things have not changed very much, as Dr. McFaden took the occasion to correct many misconceptions of Masonry that existed at that time arising from ignorance and sometimes from prejudice. He stated, "Masonry is not a secret order in the sense which that term is used today." He went on to say, "Nor is it a political organization, nor a religion, though it is strongly religious. Nowhere does it teach that it is a substitute for religion. There may be some who make it their religion, but that is the fault of the individual, not of the Order."

The lowest bid for the construction was submitted by The Wilson Construction Co. of Charlottesville, Virginia for \$137,097. The Wilson Construction Co. was owned by Rt. Wor. Harry M. and Rt. Wor. W. Ronald Wilson, who were Past Masters of Widow's Sons' Lodge No. 60. All the subcontractors were also Masons. The architect was a Richmond Mason, Bro. Marcellus E. Wright.

The building is 228 feet by 60 feet, and is located on a beautiful knoll overlooking the City of Charlottesville. The center portion is 54x60 feet, and includes three stories and a basement. The wings are 88 feet long and each are two stories. When it was used for tubercular patients, the basement contained the diet kitchen and storage. The first floor

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consisted of fourteen wards for two patients each, two isolation rooms, utility rooms, operating room, toilets, linen rooms, nurses office, and a reception room. A screened porch sixteen feet wide ran the entire length of the building. The second floor was practically the same as the first floor except that the Alpine Lamp Room took the place of the operating room. The nurses quarters were on the third floor. The capacity of the building was sixty patients and ten nurses. It is equipped with an Otis automatic push button elevator running from the basement to the roof garden. The roof garden was used for sun treatment and is paved with tile. There are two fire roof stairways, and fire escapes are located at each end of the building.

The operating room was furnished by the Charlottesville Brethren at a cost of \$2,000. The Alpine Lamp Room was equipped by Alexandria Washington Lodge No. 22 at a cost of 2,500 as a memorial to Dr. William M. Smith, President of the State Board of Health at the time of his death. The cost to furnish the remaining rooms, ranged from \$131.82 to \$589.20 each. Each room was furnished through the generosity of forty Masonic Lodges, six Royal Arch Chapters, three Commanderies of Knight Templars, two Scottish Rite Valleys, one Shrine Temple, two Eastern Star Chapters, the Masonic Home Children, and six individual Masons.

FIRST FLOOR

ROOM 1001

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY LAKELAND LODGE NO. 190, ROANOKE, VA

ROOM 1002

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY TEMPLE LODGE NO. 9, RICHMOND, VA IN MEMORY OF RT. WOR. JOHN R. CHARLETON

ROOM 1003

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY ANDREW JACKSON LODGE NO. 120, ALEXANDRIA, VA, IN MEMORY OF MT. WOR. HENRY KNOX FIELD

ROOM 1004

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY PLEASANTS LODGE NO. 63, ROANOKE, VA, IN MEMORY OF MT. WOR. WILLIAM H. PLEASANTS

ROOM 1006

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY RAMAH LODGE NO. 70, DANVILLE, VA, IN HONOR OF MT. WOR. BEN W. BEACH

ROOM 1009

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY ROCKINGHAM UNION LODGE NO. 27, HARRISONBURG, VA, IN HONOR OF WOR. JOSHUA WILTON

ROOM 1011

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY JOHN A. LEJEUNE LODGE NO. 350, QUANTICO, VA, IN MEMORY OF WOR. FRANKLIN STEARNS

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ROOM 1036

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY WINCHESTER HIRAM LODGE NO. 21, WINCHESTER, VA, IN HONOR OF WOR. ALEXANDER M. BAKER

ROOM 1037

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY MILLBORO LODGE NO. 28, WARM SPRINGS LODGE NO. 253, HOT SPRINGS LODGE NO. 275, COVINGTON LODGE NO. 71, CLIFTON FORGE LODGE NO. 166, IN MEMORY OF RT. WOR. J. T. McALLISTER

ROOM 1038

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY RT. WOR. E. E. DINWIDDIE, WIDOW'S SONS' LODGE NO. 60, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA, TO THE MEMORY OF HIS WIFE

ROOM 1039

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY ST. TAMMANY LODGE NO. 5, HAMPTON, VA, CONSTITUTED FEBRUARY 26, 1759

ROOM 1042

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY THE MASONIC BODIES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA

ROOM 1043

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY WIDOW'S SON LODGE NO. 150, EMPORIA, VA, IN MEMORY OF RT. WOR. E. L. TURNER, RT. WOR. W. E. BAILEY, AND BRO. HARRY SCHWARTZ

ROOM 1044

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY THE ANCIENT AND ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE OF FREEMASONRY, VALLEY OF ALEXANDRIA, IN HONOR OF BRO. JOSEPH CARSON, 32 KCCH

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ROOM 1065

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY MT. WOR. H. O. KERNS IN LOVING MEMORY OF HIS SON
MARVIS VERNON KERNS

ROOM 1066

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY JOPPA LODGE NO. 40, RICHMOND, VA

ROOM 1069

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY MT. VERNON ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER NO. 14, ALEXANDRIA,
VA, IN MEMORY OF MT. EX. JAMES E. ALEXANDER

ROOM 1071

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY EUREKA LODGE NO. 195, BRIDGEWATER, VA, IN MEMORY
OF WOR. J. A. STONE

ROOM 1073

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY OCEAN LODGE NO. 116, WACHAPREAGUE, VA

ROOM 1074

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY SEABOARD LODGE NO. 56, PORTSMOUTH, VA, IN MEMORY
OF RT. WOR. E. A. WOOD

ROOM 1075

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY PYTHAGORAS LODGE NO. 239, PULASKI, VA, IN MEMORY
OF RT. WOR. M. E. MUIRE

ROOM 1076

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY FAIRFAX LODGE NO. 43, CULPEPER, VA

SECOND FLOOR

ROOM 2002

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY COVINGTON LODGE NO. 171, COVINGTON, VA

ROOM 2003

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY GEORGE W. WRIGHT LODGE NO. 346, NORFOLK, VA

ROOM 2004

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY DORIC LODGE NO. 44, BERKLEY, VA

ROOM 2006

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY THE CHILDREN OF THE MASONIC HOME IN HONOR OF BRO. RAMON D. GARCIA

ROOM 2009

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY ELECTA CHAPTER NO. 33, ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR, ROANOKE, VA, TO THE GLORY OF HIM WHOSE STAR IN THE EAST IS THE INSPIRATION OF OUR ORDER

ROOM 2011

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY MURRAY ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER NO. 22, ROANOKE, VA, IN HONOR OF MT. EX. JAMES BOWMAN

ROOM 2036

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY BRO. W. G. DEARING, UNITY LODGE NO. 146, FRONT ROYAL, VA

ROOM 2037

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY ANDERSON LODGE NO. 258, GRETNA, VA, IN HONOR OF WOR. E. B. FITZGERALD, SR. AND RT. WOR. F. I. GRABER

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ROOM 2038

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY DR. WILLIAM MORGAN SMITH, PAST MASTER ALEXANDRIA WASHINGTON LODGE NO. 22

ROOM 2039

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY JOHN WALTERS ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER NO. 68, DORIC LODGE NO. 44, SCOTTISH RITE BODIES OF NORFOLK, OWENS LODGE NO. 164, NORFOLK UNITED ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER NO. 1, RUTH LODGE NO. 89, SOUTH NORFOLK LODGE NO. 339, BERKLEY LODGE NO. 167, GEORGE W. WRIGHT LODGE NO. 346, OCEAN VIEW LODGE NO. 335, ATLANTIC LODGE NO. 2, IONIC ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER NO. 46, GRICE COMMANDERY NO. 16, AND ELIZABETH LODGE NO. 34

ROOM 2041

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY HENRY KNOX FIELD LODGE NO. 349, ALEXANDRIA, VA, IN HONOR OF MT. WOR. CHARLES H. CALLAHAN

ROOM 2042

THE ALPINE LIGHT SYSTEM INSTALLED BY ALEXANDRIA WASHINGTON LODGE NO. 22, ALEXANDRIA, VA

ROOM 2043

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY OCCOQUAN LODGE NO. 310, OCCOQUAN, VA, IN MEMORY OF WOR. NATHAN C. DAVIS

ROOM 2044

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY CORINTHIAN LODGE NO. 266, NORFOLK, VA

ROOM 2066

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY BAYARD COMMANDERY NO. 15, K.T., ROANOKE, VA

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ROOM 2068

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY RT. WOR. L. T. CHRISTIAN, JOPPA LODGE NO. 40,
RICHMOND, VA

ROOM 2071

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY RT. WOR. W. C. WOODING, DEDICATED TO ROMAN EAGLE
LODGE NO. 122, DANVILLE, VA

ROOM 2073

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY ACCA TEMPLE, A.A.O.N.M.S., RICHMOND, VA, IN MEMORY
OF ILL. NOBLE GEORGE L. STREET, PAST IMPERIAL POTENTATE

ROOM 2074

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY RICHMOND LODGE NO. 10, RICHMOND, VA

ROOM 2075

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY NORFOLK LODGE NO. 1, IN MEMORY OF MATTHEW PHRIPP,
DELEGATE TO FIRST GRAND LODGE OF VA

ROOM 2076

THIS ROOM FURNISHED BY STRICT OBSERVANCE LODGE NO. 207, RICHMOND, VA

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When the Pavilion was dedicated by the Grand Lodge of Virginia on April 5, 1927, it was the most modern and complete tubercular hospital in America. The first Superintendent and Medical Director was Dr. and Brother William Edward Brown, a member of Widow's Sons' Lodge No. 60. The first patient admitted was Bro. Charles N. Savage, a Richmond Mason. For over fifty years this facility constructed by the Masons of Virginia served Mason and Non-Mason who suffered from the dreaded disease, tuberculosis.

In addition to the facility, the Masonic Relief Foundation, on behalf of the Masons of Virginia contributed to the recreational needs and comforts of the patients. This took the form of television sets, pool tables, books, night clothes, bath robes, and drapes. On February 10, 1981, the Masonic Relief Foundation surrendered its charter, and turned over its funds to the Masonic Home of Virginia.

The Wright Pavilion is currently being used by the University of Virginia Medical Center. The University plans to renovate the building, and would like the Masons of Virginia to again be a part of the rededication program. The plaques over the rooms mentioned above will be removed, cleaned and reinstalled in an appropriate location within the main entrance of the facility.

The Wright Tubercular Pavilion constructed so many years ago, continues to meet the needs of a suffering humanity. Each of the Virginia Masons today can look with pride on that which was accomplished in 1926.

May it always be so.