

Highland Lodge History

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Highland Lodge No. 110

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A Brief History of the Lodge in Celebration of Their 150th Anniversary

Compiled by Ross C. Morland, District Deputy Grand Master for the 19th Masonic District

Nestled in the charming mountain town of Monterey, Virginia, the members of Highland Lodge No. 110 A.F. & A.M. boast a rich Masonic heritage and history. Like all other similar organizations, the Lodge has had its seasons of prosperity, adversity, gains, and losses since its formation over 150 years ago. Prior to 1869, few residents of Highland were members of the Craft (having been Raised the Sublime Degree in other counties of Virginia or West Virginia). Recognizing the advantages and lofty ideals of a fraternal order based on the teachings of the Supreme Architect of the Universe, the Brethren united to conceive the idea of instituting a Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons in Highland County. Accordingly, they secured a charter from the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M., of the Commonwealth of Virginia to form a Lodge and called it "Highland No. 110."

Under a special dispensation from the Grand Lodge, the first regular communication of Highland Lodge was held on May 20, 1869 in the upper story of the County Courthouse. Worshipful James C. Newman presided in the East. Three petitions for the Degrees of Freemasonry were received that

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evening. These applicants were afterwards Initiated, Passed, and Raised to become trusted and useful members of the Lodge. At that communication the Lodge adopted, with slight modification, the by-laws of Eureka Lodge No. 195 for its use. It was not until December 10th of that year when Highland Lodge received their official charter from the Grand Lodge.

The Lodge conducted meetings in a room of the Female Seminary building until March of 1873, whereupon they acquired permission from the Highland County Board of Supervisors to meet in the upper story of the Courthouse. The meetings were held there until 1881. The records of the Lodge and the Highland County Circuit Court Clerk's Office show that in September of 1880 Brother John Trimble sold the trustees of Highland Lodge a lot for the erection of a Masonic Temple in the northwest extremity of the town of Monterey. The two-story structure was well-constructed on the summit of a beautiful hill overlooking the town and afforded a spacious home for the Brother Mason – a fitting memorial to the zeal of the Brethren who erected the structure. The cornerstone was laid April 6, 1881 in remarkable Masonic fashion. The following articles were deposited in the box of the cornerstone:

- Copy of the Lodge charter
- Copy of the Lodge by-laws
- Roll of the Lodge members
- List of Grand Lodge officers
- List of state board of education members
- List of Court of Appeals of Virginia judges
- Specimen of the coin of 1880
- Copy of the Highland Recorder published in 1880
- Program of the Masonic ceremonies at the laying of the cornerstone

On December 2, 1881 the first meeting was held in the new Temple and the Brethren of Highland Lodge enjoyed positive growth and prosperity within her walls for the next twenty-eight years.

It was the First National Bank of Highland who, on October 1, 1909, sold their part of Lot No. 1 to the members to the Lodge. The site, situated along West Main Street and facing High Street, was to become the location of the Masonic Temple that is cherished to this day. Having sold the property and compelled to vacate (the purchaser wanting to take immediate possession), the Lodge moved their meetings to the Odd Fellows Hall on the third floor of the Sieg Building, opposite the Courthouse, until the new building could be completed.

The Highland Recorder gave an account of the August 3, 1910 cornerstone laying ceremony as being performed "under as sweltering August sun." By ten o'clock, the town was "taken by storm" as one of the largest crowds ever seen on hand (later estimated between 1,500 to 2,000 townsfolk) assembled near the courthouse. The morning was spent on other such diversions as music, a trap-shooting competition, a ball game, and a merry-go-round.

The Craft was assembled and promptly at 1:30 P.M. sixty Freemasons, including the Grand Master of Masons in Virginia, Most Worshipful William Baylor McChesney, marched down Main Street from the Odd Fellow's Hall to the new building site, led by the Dayton Band Boys. A chorus of fifteen young ladies of the town sang odes and rendered music with the aid of stringed

instruments. The prescribed forms of laying cornerstones, consecration and invocation were impressively carried out. Services concluded on the court-lawn with an oration by the Grand Senior Warden, Right Worshipful William Luther Andrews. All enjoyed his topic of Masonry and were captivated by his splendid style. It is also of curious note the reporter stated "The good order which prevailed was most gratifying and speaks well of the town and county. Not an arrest was made and there was but little drinking."

The handsome new Temple was completed and opened for the dispatch of business on November 3, 1911. Built of brick at a cost of \$7,000, it remains the tallest structure in town. Original blueprints called for a two-story structure; however, the railroad was desirous of renting office space in town and the building was heightened to three floors to accommodate their needs (hence the steel rods and endcaps through the second floor). At present, three commercial offices occupied the first floor, residential apartments on the second floor and a very large and classically adorned meeting room and reception area on the third floor, which is used by the Lodge. The passage of time has governed various building repairs and renovations and the membership has done well to preserve their historic home.

For more than 150 years, Highland Lodge has remained as the only Masonic Lodge to ever exist in the Town of Monterey and Highland County; and continues to serve as a superb example of brotherly love, fellowship, and charitable works throughout the community. The real story of the Lodge is best told not in the story of its Temple or in the triumphs of the exceptional

few, but in the lives of the hundreds of Brethren who have been Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason. Some were wealthy and prominent, others were strong in character and modest in means, but all were rich in that Brotherhood that serves mankind and enriches the years and souls of the initiated with light sublime.

Historic Tidbit: The last surviving charter member of Highland Lodge was the charter Worshipful Master, Worshipful James Clark Newman. He was born on the 14th day of August, 1843 in Blue Grass, Virginia and laid down his working tools on 27th day of December, 1927 in Staunton, Virginia in the 84th year of his life. He was a well know contractor who was instrumental in the construction of the 1881 and 1910 Masonic Temples. Brother Newman also built portions of Mary Baldwin University and Stuart Hall in Staunton and many businesses and houses in and around Monterey. He is the great-great uncle of the current Worshipful Master, Worship John Marvin Colaw.

Charter Officers of Highland No. 110

James C. Newman, <i>Worshipful Master</i>	George W. Fraley, <i>Secretary</i>
Austin W Campbell, <i>Senior Warden</i>	John S. McNulty, <i>Senior Deacon</i>
William M. Chew, <i>Junior Warden</i>	William Kinkead, <i>Junior Deacon</i>
Peter H. Kinkead, <i>Treasurer</i>	Konrad Kramer, <i>Tiler & Steward</i>

Charter Members of Highland No. 110

James C. Newman	L. H. Stephenson	J. M. Layne
Austin W Campbell	Thomas H. Slaven	Jacob C. Matheny
William M. Chew	Jesse A. Bussard	Adam H. Fleisher
George W. Fraley	Jeremiah E. Arbogast	Henry M. Tomlinson
Peter H. Kinkead	John Trimble	A. R. Ball
Konrad Kramer	William. M. Wilson	Silas R. Suapp
William Kinkead	Charles W. Peterson	John Waybright
Samuel A. Gilmore	John T. Huff	Henry M. Patterson
Sam Wilson	Samuel C. Eagle	
Jesse M. Chitester	Jacob L. Shumate	

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The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M., of Virginia