

100th ANNIVERSARY of the founding of  
King Hiram Lodge No. 31 A.F. & A. M.  
Jordan Masonic Hall

Jordan, Minnesota

December 2, 1960

A history of King Hiram Lodge No 31 A. F. & A. M. Jordan, Minnesota:

Outstanding among states, Minnesota is one of the great states of the American Union. Minnesota Territory was formed on March 9, 1849, with St. Paul as the Capital. The Territory made rapid progress in population, manufacturing and farming. Its healthful climate and high reputation as an agriculture region rendered it very attractive to settlers. The soil of the new Territory was fertile and well adapted to agriculture, in which industry the territory had made astonishing progress. The winters were sometimes short and intensely cold; but the dry uniform temperatures rendered them far more endurable than those of the New England states. Immigration into the new territory was increasing at a very rapid rate. Many of these settlers came from the Eastern, and Mid-Atlantic states, and many from lands across the seas.

Westward the march of civilization became the order of the day. The American pioneer is daunted by no danger, baffled by no difficulty, and discouraged by no adversity. The time had come for the opening up of the Western Wilds, and nothing but the hand of providence himself could stop or delay the work. By 1870, a greater pasture of the fertile lands of the new state of Minnesota had been taken over by the hardy settler.

Minnesota was a territory from 1849 to 1858. A state constitution was adopted September 21, 1857, and the state was admitted into the Union on May 11, 1858 when the present boundaries were established.

Our Minnesota River Valley country and nearby lands were settled in the 1850's, and the early 1860's of the last century. These sturdy hard working purposeful pioneers came into this beautiful region when it was yet in the hands of nature. Many of the lived to see the day when their great Northwest part of the nation blossomed out into one of the favored lands of this great country of our. Among those early pioneers, were members of the Masonic Fraternity of Free Masonry followed in the wake of civilization. A group of these Masons had assembled in the pioneer Borough of Belle Plaine, and it was a wish of theirs to found a Masonic Lodge. On the third of March, 1859, a dispensation was granted to certain Masonic Brethren upon proper application by the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Minnesota, to assemble as a Lodge for Masonic work and instruction. Brother George Bradley was appointed to be Worshipful Master, Bro. E. G. Covington, Senior Warden, and Bro. R. H. Rose, Junior Warden.

The first regular communication of Belle Plaine Lodge U. D. was held at the Town Hall on Saturday the 12th day of March, 1859. Present were Bro. George Bradley, Master; Bro. J. W. Bennett, Secretary; Bro. E. G. Covington, S.W.; Bro. J. F. Baldwin, S. D.; Bro. R. H. Rose, J. W.; Bro. E. C. Wells, J. D.; Bro. David M. Smith, Treasurer; Bro. V. B. Hathway, Tyler; and Bros. A. G. Chatfield and N. Southworth. Meeting nights to be held on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month.

On the twenty fourth day of October, 1860, the Grand Lodge issued a Charter to the above mentioned Lodge to be known and recognized as King Hiram Lodge No. 31; A. F. & A. M.

The following named Brethren were the charter members:

George Bradley	E. G. Covington	C. T. Metzner	F. Driscoll	M. L. Sperry
R. H. Rose	D. M. Smith	S. B. Woolson	E. C. Wells	N. Southworth
O. D. Chatfield	A. G. Chatfield	D. W. Pond	S. O. Tyler	C. B. Tyler
B. F. Howell				

At a stated communication of King Hiram Lodge No. 31 held in the Masonic Hall in Belle Plaine on Feb. 24, 1877, a committee of five were appointed to go to Jordan to ascertain if there was a suitable room that could be obtained for a Lodge room. At a meeting held in the Masonic Hall, Belle Plaine on March 24, 1877 the committee on Lodge room reported no room could be found suitable for Lodge purposes. It was voted

by two thirds of the members present that this Lodge be moved to Jordan as soon as a suitable room was prepared. In the meantime one of the members of King Hiram Lodge No. 31, named Charles Rodell, who lived in Jordan, built a two story brick building, the second story or the top floor of this brick building, was finally to house King Hiram Lodge No. 31, when they moved to Jordan from Belle Plaine.

The first meeting of the Lodge held in Jordan was on May 22, 1877, a special communication with the following present: Bro. D. L. Howe, Master Pt.; Bro. E. W. Snyder, Sec'y., Pt.; Bro. Carter, S. W. Pt.; Bro. Charles Rodell, S. D. Pt.; Bro. Samuel Bowler, J. W.; Bro. McClellan, Tyler Pt.; Bro. Eisenhardt, J. D. Pt.; Present Bros. Mossberg and Chadderdore, also Bros. Howe, Lincoln, Start, Sencerbox, Carter and and Bandy of King Salomon Lodge No. 44, Shakopee.

The Lodge was formerly opened in the Masonic Hall in Jordan on October 27, 1877. King Hiram Lodge A. F. & A. M. No. 31 received several new members in the Lodge in the fall of 1877.

Brother Charles Rodell, was the builder of the Masonic Hall in Jordan, Minnesota known as Rodell's Hall. He passed on to his Eternal Reward on February 14, 1880. A special communication of the Lodge was held on Tuesday February 17, 1880, with the following members and visiting Brethrens present. Officers present: Bro. E. W. Snyder, W. M.; Bro. M. A. Larson, J. D.; Bro. R. P. Wells, S. W.; Bro. Fred Scott, Sec'y.; Bro. B. B. Read, J. W.; Bro. J. Bragg, Treas.; Bro. F. S. Wood, S. D.; Bro. A. Smail, Tyler. Members present: John Beer, G. M. Kempton, J. F. Cook, C. M. Caswell, A. Vanousterhout, G. Hewitt, S. Bowler, F. Eisenhardt, John bruestle, Charles Bryson and John Bandy. Also, J. W. Callender and R. H. McCulland. Visiting Brethren: Oscar Malmgren and Charles Bachman from Humboldt Lodge No 132, Norwood, Minn. and W. O. Botton from St. Pauls Lodge No. 124 Auburn, New York. Brother Charles Rodell was buried in Spirit Hill Cemetery on February 17, 1880 with Masonic Ceremony.

On March 12, 1880, a committee was appointed consisting of Bros. J. W. Callender, M. A. Larson and F. Matchett to look for another Lodge room. On May 13, 1881, the committee had reported that they had conferred with Mr. Nicolin relative to renting the third floor or top floor of that building known as the Nicolin Building. Mr. Nicolin agreed to rent his hall to the Jordan Lodge of Masons for a term of five or ten years for an

annual rental of \$100.00 which report was accepted. King Hiram Lodge No. 31, A. F. & A. M. of Jordan, Minn. moved into their new hall on Jan. 13, 1882.

The fraternal order of A.O.U.W. wanted permission to use the new Masonic hall for the holding of their meetings, so the Lodge agreed to let them use the hall for the purposes above stated by paying an annual rental of \$60.00, and pay for half the fuel used in the hall, and the necessary janitor fee. The E.A.U. Lodge of Sand Creek asked permission to use the Masonic Lodge for their Lodge meetings, same held on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month, same was granted by Lodge they agreed to pay annual rental of \$60.00, paying for one half the fuel used in the Masonic hall, and the necessary janitor fees. The Sons of Herman, also rented the Lodge hall. There was great activity by the several Lodges that held their meeting in the Masonic hall, many social functions took place their.

King Hiram Lodge No. 31 remained in their Lodge hall in the Nicolin Building for about 15 years. A Brother Mason by the name of Henry A. Engler who joined Chaska Lodge No. 151 A. F. & A. M. of Chaska, Minn. on April 27, 1894 came to Jordan, where he built a two story brick building in 1897. On October 8, 1897, the Brethren of King Hiram Lodge No. 31, made arrangements to rent the Engler hall from Brother Engler for a Masonic hall.

The Jordan Lodge of Masons held their Lodge activities in the Engler Hall from 1897 to 1913. Many different Lodges held their regular meeting in Engler's hall, namely the Order of Eastern Star, the Workman and Degree of Honor, the Modern Woodman, the Royal Neighbors, the Sons of Herman and the Eagles. The Fraternal Spirit was indeed riding high in Jordan. On January 24, 1913, King Hiram Lodge No. 31 A. F. & A. M. made arrangements with Otto Rodell, owner of Rodell hall to move back there, agreeing to except lease of hall for 5 years at \$28.00 per year including heat, light and janitor service. Otto Rodell, was a son of Brother Charles Rodell who built the hall. The many different Lodges that held their meetings in Engler's hall, continued same in Rodell's hall. By 1931 the former Engler building was owned by Bother Joseph Carlson of our Lodge, who has since passed on to his Eternal Reward. On September 18, 1932 it was decided by the Lodge to rent the Carlson hall. At a meeting of the Lodge on November 14, 1932 it was agreed to lease the Carlson hall, and a joint meeting of the Order of Eastern Star and Masons be held to dedicate the new hall. Same took place on December 19, 1932, many people were there from far and near. At present, Chapter

No. 108, Order of Eastern Star and King Hiram Lodge No. 31, A. F. & A. M. are holding their meeting in the hall.

King Hiram Lodge No. 31, A. F. & A. M. has a membership of 90 members. The officers of the Lodge are as follows:

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|-----|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1.  | Walter W. Borchart     | Worshipful Master |
| 2.  | Paul J. Komarek        | Senior Warden     |
| 3.  | Kenneth L. Haferman    | Junior Warden     |
| 4.  | William Baier          | Treasurer         |
| 5.  | Marshall B. Darlington | Secretary         |
| 6.  | Loren G. Harding       | Senior Deacon     |
| 7.  | Emil Dvorak            | Junior Deacon     |
| 8.  | Harold G. Dubbe        | Chaplin           |
| 9.  | Keith C. Armstrong     | Senior Stewart    |
| 10. | Melvin M Laabs         | Junior Stewart    |
| 11. | Robert F. Slavicek     | Marshall          |
| 12. | Gustav A. Slavicek     | Tyler             |

The history of King Hiram Lodge No. 31, A. F. & A. M. of Jordan, Minn. has been written 100 years, after the founding of our Lodge as of today on Oct. 24, 1960. I want to thank the other members of the Historical Committee, namely William Baier, Clarence Baier, Harold Dubbe and Ermin Morrell for their hearty cooperation in bringing about this Historical write up.

Gratefully yours,

Marshall B. Darlington, Chairman