MARTHA'S VINEYARD LODGE A. F. and A. M. MARCH 9th. 1916



RECORDS OF THE BURNING OF THE MORTGAGE AND OF LADIES' NIGHT

Martha's Vineyard Lodge A. F. and A. M.

Vineyard Haven, Mass.

Records of the Burning of the Mortgage and of Ladies' Night of Martha's Vineyard Lodge, A. F. and A. M.

Vineyard Haven, Mass., March 9th, 1916.

King Solomon, Grand Master of the Primeval Lodge at Jerusalem, once declared to his people, "There is a time to laugh, and man should rejoice in his works."

It was his custom to call the craft to a great feast that together they might rejoice over work accomplished.

In humble imitation of him, the Worshipful Master of Martha's Vineyard Lodge, called the brethren and their friends together on the night of March 9th as a time of rejoicing had arrived.

The lodge was to burn the mortgage that night, which for twenty years had been as a cloud in the starry canopy above them.

2

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Arrangements for the night were in the hands of Past Master Herbert N. Hinckley, who chose for his assistants Brothers Alton C. Tuckerman, Abbott Baker and Stephen Carey Luce, Jr.

A cordial invitation was extended to Celestia Chapter of the Eastern Star to be present, also to a member of the Grand Lodge, to Past Master Herbert Chase of Mispah Lodge, Cambridge.

A delightful entertainment was provided by the committee. The artists who took part and received great applause were Brother F. B. Allen from Boston, Miss Maida Fairbrother, Miss Frances Renear, Miss Mildred Renear, Miss May Briggs and Miss Elinor Cleveland.

Historical papers were read by the Right Worshipful Brother Gilbert L. Smith and Brother Stephen C. Luce, which were intensely interesting, packed with Masonic history, and are worthy to be kept in the archives of the lodge forever.

3

Brother Smith, who was introduced as the oldest living member of the lodge, read the following paper:

To us members of Martha's Vineyard Lodge this is indeed a joyous occasion, for not only do we feel it a joy to welcome our friends to our festivities, but we meet to burn the paper which for nearly twenty years has been a constant reminder of an obligation we must sometime meet. But before speaking of that more particularly, I think it would be well to say something of the history of the Lodge from the beginning of this building, on account of which this debt (the evidence of which is this paper we are to destroy this night) was contracted.

In July, 1852, there arrived in this village Joseph T. James, who was an enthusiastic Mason. Somehow, Benjamin Clough learned that Mr. James was a Mason, became interested, the result of which was, that he induced several of his friends to join with him in applying to Marine Lodge, of Falmouth. (the nearest Lodge) for the Blue Lodge degrees. The names of these brothers were. Daniel F. Worth, Alexander W. Smith, Henry Bradley, William Leach and Alexander Newcomb. In due time they were received into the order. To these six, with James, a dispensation was granted August 10th, 1859, by the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, with James as Worshipful Master, B. Clough as Senior Warden, and Bradley as Junior Warden On September 12th, 1860, the Charter was granted bearing the names above, with the exception of Worth and Newcomb, who during the year intervening had gone to other climes, and Jared W. Crowell, and Henry W. Beetle were substituted, and Martha's Vineyard Lodge of Tisbury, was instituted during the year. Brother Worth spent several years abroad, but on his return here, about 1894, he became much interested in the project of a new home for this Lodge, the result of which was, that he induced a member of the Lodge to join with him in furnishing the money to the Lodge for the purchase of this building, then known as "Capawock Hall," and convert it into Masonic quarters. Brother Worth, while absent, joined Paul Revere Lodge of Brockton. He has never severed his connection with that Lodge. After living here a few years, he again returned to Brockton and is still living there, at the ripe old age of eightysix. Of all those mentioned he is the only one living, with the possible exception of James.

To many here, the places and names I am about to mention will be familiar, but to some they will be new.

The first Lodge Room was over Jenkins' paint shop on Main Street. The Lodge met there until about 1883, when it moved to a hall on Main Street. This Lodge Room was very nicely furnished, and we thought we were well fixed for many years to come, but alas! August 11th, 1883. came our great fire. Our Lodge Room was no more, and with it, went our Charter, records, and most of the furniture. We saved most of our Jewels, and our Bible. Nothing daunted by this disaster and considering the saving of these relics a good omen, the Lodge procured a Lodge Room over Swift Brothers' store. Here it remained until the present quarters were fitted up. In the fall of 1895, this hall was dedicated October 25th, 1895. A large delegation from the Grand Lodge was present, including Grand Master Holmes. Marine, Oriental and Union Lodges were invited, and had representatives present. Eloquent speeches were made, and the Lodge was abundantly complimented upon its courage in assuming so large a debt as was necessary to obtain such commodious and altogether desirable quarters.

In the address of the Grand Master his exposition of the principles of Masonry was so clear, that it could not fail to be of interest to all who are not Masons, while his advice to the fraternity was so good, that it has seemed to me equally applicable now, so I have ventured to copy the whole address, thinking that all who hear it, whether Masons or not, will be equally interested.

The address is as follows:

"Worshipful Master and Brethren of Martha's Vineyard Lodge :---I congratulate you upon your entrance into these new apartments, and trust that this Lodge will have great pleasure and prosperity in the possession of them. From time immemorial it has been the custom of the Masonic fraternity to dedicate their halls to Freemasonry, to Virtue, and to Universal Benevolence. The fathers, who instituted this dedicatory service, were certainly thoughtful and wise, as no other purposes more worthy, far-reaching and inclusive can easily be imagined. They include the great principles upon which the Masonic institution stands; the conduct of the lodges and of their members toward each other, and toward men, and also imply that manliness and morality should be taught in this place, and exemplified in the lives of the brethren.

"We have dedicated this hall to Freemasonry; that is, we have dedicated it to the propagation of those principles stated in the constitutions of our order. In the first section of the constitutions of 1792 we learn that Masonry demands unshaken faith in the eternal God, "the great Architect and Governor of the Universe." It proclaims the moral law, condemns atheism and libertinism; shuns bigotry and superstition, and urges its votaries to 'follow the right' in every relation and duty of life.

"Freemasonry stands for peace—peace everywhere, always, and teaches obedience to the civil authority, respect for magistrates, and loyalty to one's country. We dedicate this hall to Freemasonry, whose principles are exalting, helpful and permanent—principles that receive the commendation of all good men, and are a source of constant happiness to him who seeks and gains them. Therefore, we ask:

"'Genius of Masonry, descend;

And with thee bring thy spotless train Constant our sacred rites attend,

While we adore thy peaceful reign.'

"We have dedicated this hall to Virtue; not simply that virtue which signifies courage or manliness; not that which reaches forth to grasp morality alone, but this virtue includes virtues. Here should be proclaimed not alone the tenets of our profession nor the four cardinal virtues, but here the whole realm of virtues—the all-including virtue—is before us. While brotherly love, relief and truth should be studiously applied, and temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice should be earnestly cultivated, yet no virtue should be thought unworthy of our possession. Patience, meekness, self-denial, forbearance, and charity are all mentioned in the old constitutions, as well as industry, diligence and others, by the use of which man can the better perform all his duties to his Creator, his country, his neighbor and himself. Therefore we sing:

> "'Bring with thee Virtue, brightest maid; Bring Love, bring Truth and Friendship here; While kind Relief will lend her aid, To smooth the wrinkled brow of care.'

"We have dedicated this hall to Universal Benevolence; not simply to benevolence, not simply to promise that we will help, aid and assist a needy brother, his widow or orphans, but we have dedicated it to universal benevolence. We will succor the distressed, we will feed the hungry, we will put the misguided traveler on his way, and not shut our ears against the complaints of any of the human race. To such glorious purposes have we dedicated this hall. None more glorious was ever announced in any holy place; none more so ever received the obedience of man. Therefore we sing:

> "'Come, Charity, with goodness crowned, Encircled in thy heavenly robe; Diffuse thy blessings all around, To every corner of the globe.'

"Upon you, therefore, brethren, who constitute Martha's Vineyard Lodge, and who are to occupy this consecrated place, a great responsibility rests. You are to represent the noble principles of Freemasonry; to

7

exemplify exalting virtue and to practice a benevolence that is universal. A loftier aim cannot claim human endeavor; a lower aim is unworthy of your profession, To make this hall a place for teaching such principles is to make it sacred, and therefore consecrated to the highest purposes of life.

"'To be good men and true,' which is our first lesson, is also our last. To be good is to fashion our daily lives in accordance with the Masonic Trestle Board—to be true is to be true to God, true to country, true to neighbor, and true to one's self. Nothing higher than to be good men and true can win your affection or enlist your effort. May nothing less than the possession of goodness and truth satisfy the longings of the members of Martha's Vineyard Lodge."

The Lodge to pay the large debt incurred in the purchase and fitting up of the hall found it necessary to hire \$3,278.65. The Lodge gave its note for that amount, and secured it by a mortgage on the property; this mortgage was dated March 24th, 1897. Each and every year since something has been paid on this debt, until the spring of 1915, when it had been reduced to something less than one thousand dollars. About this time an old friend of the Lodge and a former member-Charles Bolles-died. He was a member of this Lodge for many years, and while always very much interested and a regular attendant on its meetings, was prevented from taking the higher positions by his deafness. When he changed his residence from here to New Bedford, he thought it best to affiliate with a Lodge there. So he took his demit from Martha's Vineyard Lodge, but he always showed an interest in it, and before his death made his will, and gave this Lodge one thousand dollars. With this money we have paid our debt; and to-night, we meet debt free, to burn that mortgage; and have invited our friends to share in our happiness; and while thus rejoicing our joy will be tempered by the thought, that the dear Brother whose love and

generosity has enabled us to discharge this obligation is no more with us; but we will think of him with love, and imagine that he has joined a higher Lodge, and is waiting for us there.

A word as to this building. It was built for a Methodist church in 1833, and was used by that denomination until 1845, when the present Methodist church was built. I remember it as a boy when I attended Sunday-school here. I remember many of the old members of the church. I remember some of the ministers; one a Revivalist. I remember "Reformation John Adams"; he was something of a poet. I recall a couple of his lines:

> "Holmes Hole it has grown cold, The Lord revive them down the Neck."

After it was abandoned as a church, it was used for many years as a public hall until it was puchased by Martha's Vineyard Lodge, and here has been the Lodge's home since then, and it indeed seems fitting that it should be used for such a purpose. Built as it was originally for the worship of Almighty God, it is now in the hands of, and used by an association, upon whose altar rests the Book of Holy Scriptures, and one of whose requirements is, that every candidate must believe in God.

Brothers, nearly forty-five years ago, I was made a Mason, and joined this Lodge. Most of the members since then have crossed the Great Divide. They were good men, mostly; where they failed—and we all have our faults—it was not the fault of Masonry, or its teachings, rather it was when they departed from those teachings. Masonry teaches only what is good.

The officers of the Lodge whose names appear on my Diploma have all passed on. They were:

S. A. Thomas, W. Master. Daniel A. Cleveland, S. Warden. Warren Luce, J. Warden. A. W. Smith, Secretary. The life is but a span, but the principles of Masonry are eternal, and shall endure until time shall be no more.

Historic Paper by Brother Stephen C. Luce

The first Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons to be organized on the Vineyard, was chartered in the Town of Tisbury under the title of King Solomon's Lodge in Perfection, in 1783, by the thrice illustrious brother Moses Michael Hayes, Deputy Inspector General S. R. for North America.

It was authorized to confer fourteen degrees, through the Royal Arch, in addition to its functions as a Lodge of Master Masons.

The Scottish rite Masons derived their authority from the order in France, established in Paris, under the title, The Sovereign Lodge of St. John in Jerusalem.

The Grand Lodge of Free Masons in France, in conjunction with the Scottish rite body, issued to Stephen Morin in 1761 a joint warrant, to establish symbolic and Scottish rite lodges in America.

Morin first went to the West Indies, where he instituted lodges and granted charters in several of the colonies belonging to this Archipelago.

In Jamaica he met Moses Michael Hayes, a Portuguese Jew, and conferred upon him the title and powers of Deputy Inspector General of the Scottish rite for North America.

Hayes first went to New York and later to Newport, R. I., where he instituted a symbolic Lodge, called King David. Little was known then about Freemasonry, and the higher degrees were looked upon with suspicion even by the Blue Lodge Masons.

Hayes finally moved to Boston, where he soon became identified with the existing order, working under the Grand Lodge of England, and through the influence of John Warren (brother of General Joseph) he dropped the new-fangled Scottish rite work and was made Grand Master of Massachusetts, in recognition of his labours for the craft.

The earliest documentary evidence of the life of the lodge has recently been found dated May 16th, 1787 A. D., and is a certificate of membership engrossed and signed by the Master and Wardens. It is worth quoting verbatim, because of its prime importance, as establishing the status of the lodge so early.

"And the darkness comprehended it not. In the East a place of Light, where reigns Silence and Peace."

"We the Master, Wardens and Secretary of the Royal Arch King Solomon Lodge, held at Edgartown, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts do certify that the bearer hereof, our worthy brother, Arthur Fenner, has been regularly initiated into the Third Degree of Masonry.

"As such, he has been received by us, and being a true and faithful brother, he is hereby recommended to the favour and protection of all Free and Accepted Masons wheresoever dispersed.

In witness thereof, we have caused the seal of our said lodge to be affixed this sixteenth day of May in the year of our Lord 1787, and of Masonry 5787.

ARTHUR FENNER.

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JOHN COOK, W. M. JOHN PEAS, S. M. DAVID REED, J. W. BENJ. SMITH, Sec."

While it is believed that the lodge was instituted in 1783, yet the actual proof is not available. The language of the certificate raises some interesting questions. It will be noticed that the location of the lodge is omitted, while the meeting was held at Edgartown, and that all the officers are residents of that town it is not supposed that there was a lodge room or building used exclusively by Masons for their meetings at this time.

It was customary elsewhere to hold these communications in taverns or private houses, and doubtless this was the situation here, and we may suppose the lodge met both at Edgartown and Holmes Hole to accommodate the brethren. The lodge is specifically called at Holmes Hole 1797, and for that reason it may be assumed to have always belonged here, by its official location, and that the brethren met at Eastville and Tisbury in taverns at each of these localities.

Both towns bordered on Holmes Hole. The settlement on the West side was always known as the precinct or village of Holmes Hole.

The Masonic Observer of March 7th, 1910, states that the original certificate is in the possession of the Masonic Library Association of Minneapolis, Minn. The name of the Master, John Cook, is believed to be an error, for Thomas Cook was known to be a member of the lodge in later years. There was then no John Cook residing in Edgartown.

The size of the document is 6 x 8 inches, and the seal referred to is a square piece of paper affixed diagonally to the upper left corner by wafer. The text is enclosed in a border of double lines. It is not known to whom this certificate is made, as no person of that name resided here as far as can be learned. There were several Arthur Fenners residing in Rhode Island in 1790, but why this person came to the Vineyard to join a lodge when one existed at Newport is not understood.

No record of the lodge is known to be in existence, and but fragmentary reference to it remains.

In 1797 a new Charter was granted by the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, and in 1799 a complaint was filed against it with the supreme officers, but nothing of its character is known, and nothing appears to have been done.

In 1798 Abijah Luce was W. M., and in 1802 the following officers are on record: W. M., Dr. Rufus Spaulding; S. W., Elijah Hillman; J. W., Jonathan Luce; Sec., Benjamin Smith; Treas., Jesse Luce; Tiler, Jesse Luce Jr.

Other known members of this period were David Pease,

Levi Pease, Thomas Cook, Paul Dunham, Lot Luce, Samuel Luce, Silas Daggett and John Pease.

These names include residents of Edgartown as well as Tisbury. Dr. Spaulding was Master in 1807, and it is probable he continued as such until his departure from Holmes Hole years later.

The lodge was represented in Grand Lodge each year at the Annual Communication, usually by proxy, but after 1812 it ceased to send any representative regularly and fell into arrears.

This condition lasted until 1820 when the report of the District Deputy of the Twelfth Masonic District states "King Solomon's Lodge in Perfection, at Holmes Hole, is eight years in arrears and has manifested a spirit of insubordination inconsistent with its obligations, and the known and acknowledged principles of Masonry.

A committee was appointed to investigate the status of the lodge, and it reported that the lodge had held no meetings for eight years.

Elijah Hillman, who was probably Worshipful Master in succession to Dr. Spaulding, in a letter to the D. D. G. M. for the 12th district admitted the conditions reported, but threatened, by implications, if the Grand Lodge revoked their Charter, to continue to work the Degrees under the original Charter granted by Hayes.

At the Quarterly Conference of the Grand Lodge, held December 12th, 1822, it was reported that this lodge after being many years in arrears, finally surrendered its charter and had gone out of existence.

In July, 1821, Joseph Dias sold as Grantor to Elijah Hillman, Lot Luce, Jonathan Luce, Richard Luce, William Andrews, Silas Daggett and other members of the Masonic Lodge under the name of King Solomon Lodge in Perfection, situated in Holmes Hole in Tisbury, a tract of land now owned by Mrs. Otis Foss on Main Street, Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts.

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The Records and Jewels of the lodge were surrendered

to the Grand Lodge, and were destroyed at the burning of the Masonic Temple in Boston.

Twenty-five years elapsed before the interest in the craft was again revived.

At that date, 1852, but three members of the old King Solomon Lodge survived, and when approached by a recent arrival in the town, Mr. Joseph T. James, with a proposition to reorganize they could not be persuaded to join the movement. After some time this zealous Brother interested Captain Benjamin Clough, Henry Bradley, Alexander W. Smith, Dr. William Leach, Daniel F. Worth and Alexander Newcomb to apply to Marine Lodge, Falmouth, for the necessary degrees. After these men were made Master Masons in that lodge, application for a dispensation to work was presented to the Grand Lodge and granted.

Mr. James stated that he had laboured hard to have the old Records and Jewels of King Solomon's Lodge restored, but the Grand Lodge would not give them up.

A lodge room was fitted up in Hiram Nye's building, on the location of the present Bank building, at a cost of \$1,000.00, and in September, 1859, these seven Brothers with James as W. M., Clough as S. W., and Bradley as Jr. W., was restored speculative Masonry to its respected place in the community.

A charter was granted September 12th, 1860, and from that time the growth of the lodge was rapid until the close of the term of Mr. James as Master, 1863, when the lodge numbered about seventy members.

In the half century of its life the lodge has prospered through much adversity and many discouragements. In 1883 a new lodge room was just completed at great cost, when the great fire of that period swept it out of existence after but one meeting had been held within its walls.

With it went the Records and Jewels. After recovering from the disaster a room was fitted up over the Swift Brothers' store on Main street, and there the regular meetings of the lodge were held for twelve years. In 1895, a charter member, Capt. Daniel F. Worth, who had returned to his old home after an absence of thirty-five years, urged the acquisition of a building which should be used exclusively by the lodge, and as a result of his efforts, with the aid of Captain Gilbert L. Smith, the old Capawach Hall was purchased and remodeled in the interior to meet the special need of the order at considerable added cost.

It was dedicated October 25th, 1895, with the elaborate ritual of the order by the Grand Master of Massachusetts, assisted by other Grand Officers.

The Masters of the lodge since granting of the charter have been Joseph T. James, 1859-63, Benjamin Clough, 1863-64; Henry Bradley, 1865-66; William Leach, 1867; J. Wheldon Holmes, 1868; William Leach, 1869; S. A. Thomas, 1870-72; Henry Beetle, 1873-75; William Leach, 1876; Andrew Hillman, 1877-78; Matthew Smith, 1879-80; Gilbert L. Smith, 1881-90; John Crowel, 1891; Charles F. Chadwick, 1892; Gilbert L. Smith, 1893; William W. Neifert, 1894-95; William A. Harding, 1896-97; Gilbert L. Smith, 1898-99; Herbert N. Hinckley, 1900-01; Henry McLellan, 1902-03; William J. Look, 1904-07; Alvin Cleveland, 1908-09; Abbot L. Baker, 1910-11; U. E. Mayhew, 1912-13; Norman Johnson, 1914-15.

Right Worshipful Past Master Gilbert L. Smith was then called upon to perform a very happy task, viz. the burning of the mortgage, which had been made possible by the generous gift of our late brother Charles E. Bolles, who for many years was a member of Martha's Vineyard Lodge.

Just as the clock pointed to the hour of 9.50, March 9th, 1916, the smoke of the burning mortgage (called the death gage by the old Anglo Saxons) ascended to the cloudy canopy, and was soon lost sight of forever amid the general rejoicing of the Masons and their friends.

At 10.20, the Marshall formed a procession, headed by the Worshipful Master Brother Lester H. Bumpus and his worthy spouse, and marched to the dining room. Here everybody did justice to the viands bountifully provided. At eleven o'clock, the Master, in a neat speech, congratulated the lodge on its freedom from debt, welcomed the Celestia Chapter and thanked those friends who had assisted in making the occasion so joyous and successful.

Additional Thoughts re Masonry by Stephen C. Luce at the Post Prandial Exercises

The history of Martha's Vineyard Lodge, A. F. and A. M. and the Masonic Lodges which preceeded it, date from very early times in the history of masonry, in the United States.

To trace the history of masonry, would be a task too great, taking us back to a period almost unknown. For our purpose in establishing authentic data, to show that the interest developed among the men of Martha's Vineyard in the principles of masonry, we shall be obliged to go back to the Seventeenth Century.

There is no doubt in my mind, but that in the very early days, possibly prior to 1780, our people became very closely allied with Masonic Lodges of Massachusetts, if not with other States.

Our men were probably vitally interested in, yes, and took part in the early controversies between the York rite, and the Scottish rite, and the struggle of each for supremacy.

The fact that the men of Martha's Vineyard were so early interested in Free Masonry, is a fact to be justly proud of as Masons. They must have been in touch with the great men of the times—A. D. 1780.

It is evident from Masonic History, as far as Massachusetts is concerned, that all her leading men were Masons, and were in closest relationship with each other, and the fact indicates that a strong fraternal tie existed, and the only contention was, that contention between the so-called Ancients and Moderns, which contention was amicably settled.

It is of great interest to us to know, that Samuel Hancock of Chilmack, was made a Mason in 1801, at Greenock, Scotland, at Mount Stewart Lodge, which worked under a Charter from the Mother Kilwinning Lodge, which in Masonic History, occupies a prominent place.

I have no doubt, but that the fraternal intercourse with such men as Paul Revere, Gen. Joseph Warren and others of such character, made strong appeals to the men of Tisbury, and of other parts of Martha's Vineyard, in their estimation of the high ideal of life which were, and are, so beautifully and impressively outlined in our Masonic ritual, both written and unwritten.

We as Masons particularly, do well to remember that we have the actual record of a Lodge in 1783—and also that we have the undisputed record that in 1796 A. L. 5796, one Elijah Hillman took the degrees of Masonry in the Rising States Lodge of Boston, Massachusetts. The officers of that lodge were amongst the most prominent men in the State.

It is an interesting fact, that this certificate of membership bears the signature of Paul Revere, Jr., as J. W., whose father Paul Revere himself, was one of the most prominent Masons of that day.

We also find that Paul Revere, by profession was a worker in gold and silver, and an engraver on metals, and that he executed the steel engraving, from which this imprint on parchment was taken.

Now we know that George Washington was a Mason. Amongst historians, the fact that he was a Mason, does not seem so much a matter of importance, as the fact, that the craft has the honour, and distinction, of having enrolled upon its records, the names of such men as Washington, and others of his type, whose records for high, and lofty ideals stand unimpeached.

Such men as he, standing as sponsors for Masonry, gave to it that which has never been lost.

Speakers who responded to the call of the W. M. were Miss Marian Wright, Worthy Matron of Celestia Chapter, who brought the greetings and congratulations of every member of the Chapter, Brothers Eben Bodfish and A. Fairbrother were the last speakers of the evening.

At twelve of the clock the assembly was dismissed by the Master, everyone feeling that the gathering had marked an epoch in the history of Martha's Vineyard Lodge, all hoping and each wishing for a bigger, brighter, and better work in the spread of fraternalism by the brethren of Martha's Vineyard Lodge, A. F. and A. M.

The present officers of 1	Martha's Vineyard Lodge are:
Worshipful Master	Lester H. Bumpus
Senior Warden	
Junior Warden	Alton C. Tuckerman
Treasurer	Herbert N. Hinckley
Secretary	Roy W. Norton
	J. Russel Look
Chaplain	A. Fairbrother
	George W. Walker
Junior Deacon	Stephen C. Luce, Jr.
Senior Steward	Aleric K. Swift
	John W. Carey
Tiler	Frank L. Eddy

Edited by A. Fairbrother, D. D., Chaplain of Martha's Vineyard Lodge, March 9th, 1916.