

Historical Sketch of Concord Lodge No. 307, A.F. & A.M.
(Read at "Reunion Meeting held September 19, 1929 by RW J. Fred Oertel)

Concord Lodge arose, Phoenix like, from the ashes of Crescent Lodge No. 236 which was abolished by the Grand Lodge of Virginia.

One night in March 1909, 10 Brothers met at the house of Brother L.M. Dow to discuss plans for the formation of a lodge in Vienna.

The first order of business was to ascertain if all present were in accord and in sympathy with the movement. This was done and a letter drafted to Most Worshipful Joseph W. Eggleston, Grand Master of Masons in Virginia requesting a dispensation be granted to hold a lodge at this point.

The name at that time was given as "Vienna Lodge". The Grand Master issued and on April 20, 1909, the dispensation for holding Vienna Lodge was presented by RW William Lewis Allen, District Deputy Grand Master of District No. 1 in which district we were then included.

The officers named in the Dispensation were:

**Brother O.F. Jones, Worshipful Master
Brother W.D. Dixon, Senior Warden
Brother L.M. Dow, Junior Warden**

These were duly installed after which an election was held and the following non-stationed officers were elected and installed:

**Brother W.H. Goldsmith, Senior Deacon
Brother A.M. Hoge, Junior Deacon
Brother A.G. Coumbe, Treasurer**

Application for membership was made at this meeting by Brother John S. Collins, who presented a Grand Lodge Certificate of good standing. He was duly elected on the 16th of May, thereby being the first to join the new Lodge.

On June 1, 1909, at a regular meeting of the Lodge, Worshipful Master O.F. Jones presented a handsome gavel which had been the property of Honorable Joseph G. Cannon, used by him when he was Speaker of the House of Representatives and given to the Lodge.

Vienna Lodge continued to work under dispensation until the next meeting of the Grand Lodge, February 14, 1910, at which time a charter was granted.

Brother Jones requested that the name be changed from Vienna Lodged to “Concord Lodge” in view of the fact that there had been concord amongst its members and as a reminder of the spirit which should continue to exist so long as it bore that title. Accordingly, Concord it was named and was assigned the number “307”. This is a most significant number – the “Three” of a Master Mason’s Lodge and the “Seven” of an Entered Apprentice.

On April 5, 1910, the charter was presented by the District Deputy and a Provisional Grand Lodge formed. The lodge was duly constituted and all the officers of the U.D. Lodge installed as the regular officers for the year following.

During the term when working under dispensation, 11 members were admitted and Concord Lodge began its career as a chartered Lodge with a membership of 21.

Growth in numerical strength was necessarily slow as out territory was limited, extending to only half the distance to the surrounding Lodges – Henry at Fairfax, Herndon at Herndon and Kemper at Falls Church. This was further limited and a number of members lost when, in February 1917, Sharon Lodge at McLean was chartered. This Lodge may be said to be the child of Concord as, not only did it draw members from our ranks, but some of our officers and members joined (taking dual membership) and attended meetings regularly, assisting the baby until it was out of swaddling clothes, able to walk and take care of itself.

At that time it was no easy task to attend in McLean. There were no automobiles running over the road like today and the road was most of the year in bad condition. However, these conditions did not keep our boys – and some from Henry – from going over to help almost every meeting. I have, myself, very distinct recollections of nights on that road – cold, wet, darkness and mud. In spite of the restricted territory and adverse conditions, Concord slowly, but surely, gained strength.

Concord Lodge, when organized, was in District No. 1, which included all the lodges from Manassas on the South to Herndon on the West with the two lodges in Alexandria as the hub, around which the others revolved. Indeed, for many years the Alexandria lodges had dominated the District and it was seldom that a District Deputy was appointed from any of the smaller lodges. The District was so large that the deputy often did not visit the outlying lodges at all during the year. This left the Lodges without supervision of any kind – and they were left to get along as best they could. This condition continued until, in October, 1912, Concord took up the matter of having the District divided, and at the next meeting of the Grand Lodge, introduced a resolution to that effect. This resolution was not acted on at that time by the Grand Lodge, but it was suggested that the various lodges get together on the matter and “take such action as will harmonize with their interests.”

Accordingly, on November 4, 1913, Concord Lodge issued a call for a joint meeting of representatives from all the lodges in District No. 1, to consider the matter of division. This meeting was held at Clarendon on December 2, and most of the lodges were represented.

The plan of Concord was to include all the lodges above Alexandria and on the railroads, in the new District. This was opposed by the Alexandria lodges and Kemper – Falls Church. However, the matter was put before the Grand Lodge at the next meeting in February, 1914, and despite the powerful opposition of the above lodges, little Concord won and District 54 was created. This District included Herndon, Henry, Sharon, Concord and Columbia (Clarendon). To this Cherrydale has since been added, (and of course, Arlington Centennial Glebe and Kemper Macon Ware has been added and Henry and Herndon moved to District 4)

It was agreed by the lodges in District no. 54 that the recommendation each year which was made for the selection of a District Deputy should, so far as possible, pass down the line that each one might in turn have a chance to receive that honor.

The division of District No 1, for which Concord was responsible, has resulted in a great benefit to all the Lodges concerned. They have, from year to year, not only had a district Deputy who was on the job and kept in touch with all his lodges but have visited freely among each other until a Mason of 54 is about as much at home in other lodges as his own. Friendships have been formed which will endure through life and a feeling of good fellowship has been fostered which, under the old regime, did not exist.

In all activities, both of the district and the state, Concord has held up its end. Though none of its members are, or have been, wealthy, obligations have been met when due, and contributions cheerfully made to all worthy objects.

For many years after its organizations, the Lodge continued to use this hall – known as “Bouton’s Hall” – as it was first constructed. Being at that time, the only hall in the village, it was used by all organizations and for all purposes. Most of you will recall the form of the old hall – with stage and dressing rooms and one small anti-room littered with the paraphernalia of half a dozen organizations. Five big kerosene lamps, hanging from the ceiling cast a sickly light through a smoky and vile smelling atmosphere. The walls were innocent of paint and darkened with the smoke of years. After each meeting, all of our poor belongings were lugged out to the little anti-room and piled up along with the costumes, implements and weapons of Red Men, Woodmen, Mechanics and even Good Templars. Often did we indulge in dreams of the day when we would have a hall of our own – a real Lodge room – and many schemes were from time to time suggested with a view to attaining that end. Poverty, however, stood like a lion in the way and years went by with no change in conditions

At last a rift in the clouds and a ray of light shone through, which was, in the future, to break into a brighter day and bring us that for which we had so long hoped and striven. On October 19, 1920, Bro J. Parker Milburn purchased the property and made the Lodge a proposition by which we were enabled to lease the hall and have entire control. This was a most generous offer. Payments were to extend over a number of years, without interest, and the whole amount was much smaller than we would ever have dared to hope

for. Under no other conditions could we have even begun to acquire the property, and to Brother Milburn should be given most of the credit for what we have been able to accomplish. In the mean time a town hall was built and, being relieved of having to rent the hall for all sorts of meetings and entertainments, we at once began to remodel it and have, at last, a real lodge room.

The first move was to have electric lights installed and relegate the smoky old lamps to the scrap heap. One of our members did all the work without charge. Next, some lumber was purchased and the remodeling began. For this, various gifts were made by the members – doors, locks, nails, paint and the like, and then the boys took off their coats and went to work. The old stage and dressing rooms were demolished, partitions and stations built and floor laid, all by the willing hands of members of Concord Lodge. Carpenter work, painting – all was done without the expenditure of a cent of Lodge funds. I doubt if there is such an instance of such unswerving loyalty and devotion in any lodge in the state – or any other state.

Then, the time came when we had either to buy the whole property or lose what had up to that time been invested. Again, Brother Milburn came forward and, though he himself was in great financial difficulty, he made us a most generous offer to purchase his interest. This was accepted and the whole property taken over.

It seems unnecessary to recapitulate what has been done in the last few years. In the transaction of leasing the lower floor of the building to the Post Office for a long term of years, which provided revenue to enable us to come clear on the whole property? Again, in the remodeling of that floor, much of the work was done by Lodge members.

Some of the money borrowed from members when the hall was first taken over has been repaid, with interest, notes at the bank for money borrowed to equip the Post Office, have been regularly met and curtailed until now only a small amount remains due, and this year will wipe that out. There is left only a small mortgage which can be easily paid in the next few years, leaving

Concord with the property clear and in a position to do many things to beautify and improve its quarters, as well as to have more to give for the betterment of its members and mankind.

“Slow but sure” has been our motto; cooperation has been the motive power; Concord has been the watchword. With such a spirit, how could we not help but succeed. There is a bright future ahead for Concord Lodge, especially as we now have the help and cooperation of Harmony Chapter, OES. This hall is now a real HOME for both organizations and, with all working together, there is no reason why it cannot be made better as the years go on, no reason why these organizations should not be of great use in carrying out the principles on which they were founded.

There is still much to be done as time goes on and we must not fail to maintain the standard we have set and hold the position Concord Lodge has earned and occupied, in the District and in the Grand Jurisdiction of Virginia.

Of our other lodge work I have not spoken, nor is it necessary. While attending to material matters, the widow and the orphan has not been neglected.

During the 20 years of our existence, 11 members who were forced to move to distant points have demitted though we still have in other states 9 who still hold membership. The city of Washington and nearby towns has absorbed 19 of our members, most of whom we seldom see, and 14 have gone to “that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns.” You will see that about half of our membership of 60 is scattered over the broad land, yet the faithful few who have borne the burden of heat of the day still stand true to the name of Concord and maintain its reputation and traditions. A notable thing in our attendance is the large proportion of Past Masters who, having been so honored by the Lodge and served their terms, have not, as is too often the case, laid down the working tools and shirked their duty, but continue to serve even more zealously.

In proportion to our available membership we have a larger attendance at our regular meetings than any lodge in the District.

With this record behind us, let us go forward with confidence to the future.

The Building History

The building was erected in 1894 by the Bouton family. Clarissa Bouton, a widow, bought the 8000 sq. ft. upon which it stands on 20 September 1894 for \$200. The building consists of two floors, the first of which housed E.L.S. Bouton's General Store. The second floor includes a large hall suitable for diverse functions.

In 1902 the building was conveyed to S.R. Donohoe, Publisher of the Fairfax Herald for \$3,000.

An ad appeared in the December 29, 1905 edition of the Fairfax Herald (Read Ad). S.R. Donohoe did not sell the Hall at this time but leased the lower floor to Cross and Ginnelly for their general merchandise store.

It wasn't until March 13, 1920 that Donohoe sold the building to J. Parker Milburn.

Milburn, a Mason of Concord Lodge No. 307, which was instituted on April 5, 1910 in Bouton Hall, leased for 99 years the second floor and stairwell access to the trustees of Concord Lodge. The lease terminated on September 29, 1924, when Milburn sold the entire building to Concord Lodge, who has owned the building since.