

A HISTORY OF ROANOKE MASONIC LODGE 668

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Masonry in the Roanoke area began at Elizabethtown, Denton County, a thriving community two miles west of Roanoke. On June 16, 1871 a group of men petitioned the Grand Lodge of Texas for a special dispensation to begin a Masonic Lodge to be known as W. C. Young Lodge. They were P. C. Bush, H. C. Foster, F. S. Perry, William Bush, J. G. Johnston, J. J. Honeycutt, J. W. Washburn, E. C. Collett, D. Wise, and two men who had belonged to Prairie Point Lodge (later Rhome) during its existence, W. W. Fair, and D. M. Davis.

On June 14, 1872, the Grand Lodge of Texas granted a charter to this lodge to be known as W. C. Young Lodge 349. It was to meet the third Saturday of each month. The officers were P. C. Bush, Worshipful Master; H. C. Foster, Senior Warden; F. S. Perry, Junior Warden; with eleven members. In 1875 W. C. Young Lodge reported forty members.¹

As Elizabethtown began to die and many of the people moved to Roanoke, the lodge lost its meeting place. In July, 1883, W. C. Young Lodge requested permission from the Grand Lodge of Texas to move to Roanoke because a more favorable place to meet could be found there. Later, in 1885, trouble had overtaken them again, so they asked if the lodge could be moved to Keller for a better meeting place. However, since there had been such a long time since there had been a meeting, the Grand Master instructed the District Deputy Grand Master to pick up the Jewels and Charter, and W. C. Young Lodge was dissolved.²

¹Archives of Masonic Grand Lodge of Texas, Waco, Annual Reports of Local Masonic Lodges.

²Archives of Masonic Grand Lodge of Texas, Waco.

"Whereas: On the 2nd day of June, A D 1888 A L 5888. W. M. Anson Ramey, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Texas, granted a Warrant of Dispensation to Brothers P. C. Bush, Z. T. Davis, J. W. Joy and sundry other Master Masons to open and hold a Lodge of A. F. & A. Masons in the town of Roanoke, Denton County, Texas, to be known as Roanoke Lodge U.D. ..." ³ (Under Dispensation). On the ninth day of June, 1888 J. A. Elder, District Deputy Grand Master of the 44th District and sundry brothers met in the Lodge room at Roanoke and, acting under the instructions of Most Worshipful Grand Master Ramey, proceeded to open the first Master Mason's Lodge. Officers were P. C. Bush, Worshipful Master; Z. D. Davis, Senior Warden; S. P. O'dell, Junior Warden; W. E. Davis, Treasurer; J. T. Barton, Secretary; T. E. Woods, Senior Deacon, J. S. McGinnis, Junior Deacon; and J. S. Weare, Tiler. Many of these men were those who had formed the W. C. Young Lodge. There were 14 members and three "visiting brothers" present at this first meeting. Regular meeting night was set for Saturday "on or before the full moon of each month."

On December 13, 1888, the Grand Lodge of Texas issued a charter to the lodge at Roanoke to be known as Roanoke Lodge 668. The charter officers were: R. B. Merrell, Worshipful Master; S. P. O'dell, Senior Warden; T. E. Wood, Junior Warden; S. J. McGinnis, Treasurer; J.T. Barton, Secretary.

For several years the lodge was very active, but again it fell on hard times and was experiencing difficulty finding a good meeting place. From 1892 to 1898 there was little activity, but in April 1898 it again got a renewed start and was renting a place to meet. In early 1900 a place was rented from Mr. J. W. Medlin for \$5.00 per month.

³Roanoke Masonic Lodge AF & AM 668 minutes Book I, page 351.

Realizing it needed a permanent home, the lodge set to work trying to get a suitable place. From 1905 to 1908 various building committees were formed to obtain a hall. In 1908 there was a proposal to buy the old Roanoke Hotel (a two story hotel) and make the top story the lodge room, but after more consideration this was abandoned. The decision was made to buy a lot and build a two story building. On September 5, 1908, the Lodge voted to buy a lot and build on the corner of Oak and Austin Streets.

On October 3, 1908 the first meeting was held in the new building. The lot was purchased from J. A. Lee, and he also loaned the money to build the building.

While the upper story has always been used as a meeting room for Roanoke Lodge 668 since the building was built, the lower floor has had a variety of uses. Some of these include fellowship time and banquets or dinners for Lodge members and their families; a community center for showers, school parties, receptions, Christmas parties, etc.; and a meeting place for several groups including Woodmen of the World, Womens Home Demonstration Club, Boy Scouts of America, Parent-Teacher Association, Chamber of Commerce and others.

After nearly a century of use with very little upkeep, the building needed a general refurbishing. Also, traffic on Oak Street on the west side of the building had become very heavy. Since the west end of the building was on the property line and virtually on the street, the Lodge decided to relocate the building to the east side of the lot some 60 feet.

On October 5, 1981, the building was moved, a good foundation was placed under it, and the building put back into good condition.

So, on December 13, 1988 Roanoke Masonic Lodge 668 rolled into the start of its second century.

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