



Masonic Home
of
Montana

1916

Masonic Home of Montana



A home for aged, infirm or destitute craftsmen of Montana, their wives
or widows, maintained by the

Grand Lodge of Masons of Montana

supported from its funds, and those of the Auchard Trust, and
operated by a Board of Trustees subject to its
approval and direction

Location—Eight Miles North of Helena, Montana, in the Beautiful Helena Valley

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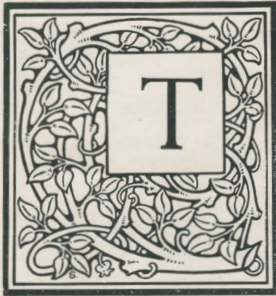
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REV. D. B. PRICE

August 15, 1916



THE HOME



TO THE LATE CORNELIUS HEDGES, for 35 years Secretary of the Grand Lodge, are the Masons of Montana under lasting obligations for the establishment of a Home for dependent brethren, though that brave soul was not permitted to see the dream of his lifetime finally completed. In season and out he spoke of the Home; wrote about it, and commended it to the generosity of the craft. Years ago he caused to be incorporated the Grand Lodge Charity Fund with power to take and hold real and personal property and to it was paid annually the surplus of the Grand Lodge revenues.

At the Thirty-Sixth Annual Communication, held Sept. 20, 1900, the Finance Committee recommended the creation of a Masonic Home Fund and transferred to it \$8,500.00 from the Grand Lodge Charity Fund. At the same session, on motion of Bro. J. H. Rinehart of Billings, the Grand Lodge Dues were increased to \$2.00, of which fifty cents were to go into the Masonic Home Fund. On motion of Bro. C. W. Pomeroy, now Past Grand Master, a committee of five was appointed by the incoming Grand Master to select a site and recommend a plan of operation. The Grand Master (Bro. Brantley) appointed on this committee



THE HOME FAMILY

Brothers H. L. Frank, F. C. Berendes, D. A. McCaw, A. D. Edgar and John A. Luce. At the next annual communication (1901) the Committee reported that they were unable for lack of funds to recommend a plan or site.

A few days before the opening of the Annual Communication in 1902 there died in Lewis and Clark County, Montana, Bro. David Auchard, a wealthy land owner who, by his will dated July 24, 1886, drawn by Bro. Hedges, left his entire estate, with the exception of his homestead and a legacy of \$5,000 to his wife, to the Grand Lodge of Montana. The terms of the bequest are as follows:

THE AUCHARD TRUST.

"FOURTH, all the rest and residue of my estate both real and personal. I hereby give and bequeath to the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Montana, with instructions to my executor hereinafter named to convert the same into money and that the same be invested in good, reliable public securities, and that the same and similar subsequent investments be held in trust forever, the annual income thereof to be devoted to the support and maintenance of a Home or Asylum for the use of aged, infirm and destitute craftsmen, their widows and orphans as soon as said Grand Lodge, from other means and resources shall provide a suitable place, not less than three miles from any city or large town and suitably furnished buildings, free from incumbrance, for the use of such institution. And I do hereby nominate and appoint the Grand Master, Grand Treasurer and Grand Secretary of said Grand Lodge for the time being and their regular successors in office forever as the Trustees for the administration of said trust to be known as the Auchard Trust.

"And until said Home or Asylum is ready for use and occupancy I direct that the annual income from said trust funds shall be added to the principal thereof."



DINING ROOM

LOUNGE

BED ROOM

Owing to the non-joinder of Mrs. Auchard in her husband's will, she was entitled to a half interest in his property. She was greatly interested in the generous gift of her husband and readily consented that the will might be probated and the estate amicably partitioned, one-half to Mrs. Auchard and one-half to the Grand Lodge. And in 1903 Bros. Brantly, Callaway and Day, the latter of whom had acted as Attorney for the Grand Lodge, were appointed a special committee to agree upon a method of distribution. At the same session a special committee was appointed consisting of Bros. Lew L. Callaway, H. L. Frank, Frank E. Smith, W. R. C. Stewart and Francis D. Jones to formulate a plan for operating a home and procuring a site.

Bro. Auchard's estate consisted largely of grazing lands some of which were under contract of sale. The proceeds of these latter were easily divisible. But as the lands were in widely separated tracts of varying values the Committee called to its assistance Bro. James M. Page who had been connected with the State Land office, and a man of wide experience in valuing lands. He met with a representative chosen by Mrs. Auchard and easily reached an agreement by which the Grand Lodge received a distribution of 14,659 acres, chiefly grazing lands, and Mrs. Auchard 11,618 acres, included in which was the homestead and



A GLIMPSE THROUGH THE GROVE

dwelling-house. The cash received from the Estate, together with the interest and rentals up to the establishment of the Home amounted in round numbers to \$25,000. The acreage of the lands was slightly decreased by defects in title.

The Committee on Site was continued,—Bro. E. C. Day taking the place of Bro. Smith who had resigned, but did not select a site until April 1906, when the Gamer Ranch, consisting of 590 acres and situated 8 miles from Helena, was selected, and the sum of \$10,000 paid therefor, of which the Masons of Helena contributed \$5,000 as a bonus. The Committee also selected a plan for a building prepared by Mr. Robert C. Reamer, architect, which was originally estimated to cost \$23,000.

A contract was let, and on December 27, 1906, the corner stone of the building was laid with full ceremonial by the Grand Lodge, the Grand Master Bro. A. D. Macdonald presiding, and Bro. Hedges present as Grand Secretary. The minutes of this meeting of the Grand Lodge are the last signed by him, for on April 29, 1907, after weeks of decreasing strength, he fell asleep to awake only in the presence of the Supreme Grand Master, there to receive the rewards of the faithful craftsman.

Though the master workman had died the work went on—the Com-



THE GAMER CABIN

mittee met with difficulties of many kinds, some of which men of less enthusiasm and more experience would have foreseen, others, such as defects in the site chosen, were not so obvious. The building was not ready for occupancy until 1909. In 1908 a new corporation known as the Masonic Home of Montana was created to administer the Auchard Trust and other funds belonging to the Home, and Bros. E. C. Day, Theodore Brantley, H. G. Pickett, Joseph J. Hindson and George L. Ramsey were selected as the first Trustees. In 1909 the building was completed, costing with its equipment and grounds, about \$75,000. Of this amount the Grand Commandery of Knights Templar gave \$1,000, the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons \$1,000, the Grand Chapter of the Eastern Star and its Chapters for furniture about \$3,900. Algeria Temple \$1,964.82, William Williams legacy \$2,934.50, Mary A. Pryce legacy \$2,462.59, and other subscriptions making a total of about \$23,000.00. The balance of the expenditures have been made from the Grand Lodge Masonic Home Fund or borrowed on bonds. The funds for the support and maintenance of the Home are derived from the rentals of the Auchard Lands, interest on the Auchard Funds, and the appropriation of \$1.00 per member of Grand Lodge dues.

The Home is managed by a superintendent, under supervision of the

Board. Since it was opened, twenty-eight members have been admitted of whom nine have died—sixteen are at present at the home. Two have been there continuously since it opened.

The experience of the management is doubtless that of all such institutions. A recital of its difficulties, discouragements and mistakes would be lengthy, tedious and useless. Throughout it all there has been ever present the ideal of a Home, with an environment and atmosphere calculated to bring rest, peace and comfort at the close of life's brief day, to those of our brethren, who having been wounded in life's battle still have a claim to a brother's attention and a brother's affectionate care. Perhaps in some degree this ideal has been realized.

This little booklet is written to commend the work of the institution to your attention, with the hope that more of those entitled to its privileges may be induced to seek them, and more of those generously endowed with the world's wealth may be moved, when laying it down, to remember their less fortunate brethren. Its doors are open, without charge to any dependent Master Mason in good standing in a regular masonic body in Montana, his wife or widow, or any member of the Eastern Star in Montana. For the present we have no facilities for caring for young children.

There are accommodations for about thirty members, and the cost of maintenance would be but slightly increased if the Home was filled. The present superintendent, the Rev. D. B. Price, is well fitted by training and nature to render useful and sympathetic service, while his charming wife gives a touch of gracious hospitality to the social life of the place. Members are admitted upon formal application made for them by the Lodge of which the applicant is a member. The Secretary of the Board or the Grand Secretary will gladly furnish blank applications, copies of House Rules and any other information.

For the Board of Trustees,

E. C. DAY, President.

Helena, Mont.

Aug. 15, 1916.

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