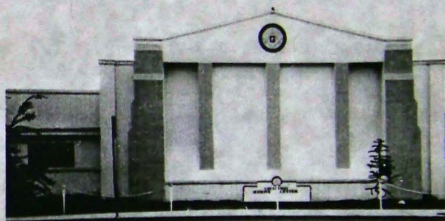


**HISTORY
OF
CHULA VISTA LODGE
No. 626 F. & A.M.**



**Chula Vista Masonic Center
732 Third Avenue
Chula Vista, California**

**Researched and Written by:
Robert E. Barnhart
Past Master**

Through August 2000

W.D.S.
Printed August 2000

CHULA VISTA MASONIC LODGE
A HISTORY

The City of Chula Vista was incorporated in 1911. At that time it was truly "The Lemon Capital of the World". Most of the 550 residents were either directly or indirectly connected with the growing, packing, and shipping of lemons of the groves that spread from the Sweetwater River to the Otay River. Lemon groves occupied 95% of the developed area.

Masons living in the area could attend Southwest Lodge #283 in National City by traveling the dirt roads of that time, though inclement weather sometimes made the journey hazardous.

On March 17, 1925 an organizational meeting was held in Plaza Hall by twenty-five Brothers, recognized by each other as Master Masons, for the purpose of establishing a Masonic Lodge in Chula Vista. Brother Randall Austin was elected Chairman, and Brother Edmund Barker Garner was chosen to be Secretary of the group. Other Brothers in attendance were as follows: Sidney Elmer Clyne, Howard Lawrence Carrell, Joseph Dudley Codington, William Thomas Lyons, William Hasen Guptil, James Jackson, Charles Burton Kendall, Walter Hunt Wood, Fred Ward Stafford, William Earl Riley, Howard Randall

WDB

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Jackson, Charles Hawes Wright, Evan Scammon
Crockett, Huley Phelps, Elmer Winship Kinmore,
Charles Leslie Fulton, Charles Harry Stuart,
George Green Johnson, Robert Tondy Conyers,
Irving Melville Kellogg, Charles Sumner Timmins,
Harvey Lester Jones, and Warner Edmons.

They drew up a Petition for Dispensation, having
affixed the signatures of those present, and
named the following Brothers to be Officers of the
proposed Lodge:

Randall Austin PM	Master
Howard Lawrence Carrell	Senior Warden
Edmund Barkham Garner	Junior Warden
James Jackson	Treasurer
Charles Leslie Fulton	Secretary

On August 22, 1925 the Most Worshipful Grand
Master, David John Reese, issued a Dispensation
to the petitioners. At the next Annual
Communication of the Grand Lodge, the Charter
for Chula Vista Lodge #626 was issued, dated
October 25, 1925.

The Lodge worked in the Plaza Hall Building, near
the southwest corner of Third Avenue and F
Street, until November 28, 1928 when it moved to
the Heller Building next door. Another move was
made in December 1936 when it relocated to the

Wigginton Building at 371½ Third Avenue. This
location was, as customary, on the second floor of
the building and was directly over a popular bar.
Many of the older Brothers still remember
conferring degrees when the juke box in the bar
below could be heard booming out "San Antonio
Rose" or some other current ballad.

Progress was slow until the advent of WWII and
the influx of servicemen and defense workers to
the area. It then became common to read five to
ten petitions at Stated Meetings. There were
times when the Officers opened Lodge on a
Saturday afternoon at 1:00 P.M., conferred five
Third Degrees, and finally closed Lodge at 9:00 or
10:00 P.M..

There was a strong desire to build a Masonic
Temple in Chula Vista and, after many problems,
mostly financial, had been solved, a vacant lot on
Third Avenue was purchased with funds donated
for the purpose by the Brethren and appendant
bodies. A survey was made of Southern California
Temples and a floor plan was adopted retaining
features of other Temples thought to be most
desirable.

Construction of the new Temple commenced on
June 4, 1955 with Brother Percy Burnham having
been appointed Chief Architect and Brother Lloyd

Reuter as Supervisor of Construction. These extremely capable Brothers directed the efforts of many other volunteers who donated their evenings and weekends for over a year to the joyful task of construction. On-site lunches and refreshments were often supplied by wives and ladies of the various orders. The Cornerstone was set in place by Most Worshipful Edgar V. Stewart Jr. on December 1, 1955. The Temple was completed on August 22, 1956, free and clear of debt, except there were no funds remaining to pay some of the suppliers of the materials. Three of the Brethren made sizeable interest-free loans to the Temple Board for the purpose of clearing these obligations.

The first Stated Meeting in the beautiful new Temple was held on August 7, 1956 with Worshipful Brother Samuel L. Brinkley in the East.

The cost of building the Temple, which was around \$61,000, was met about halfway with Lodge funds and the rest by donations commencing as early as 1952. These were in the amounts of a few dollars to as much as \$500. There were also pledges of \$100 made by individual Brothers and several Masonic groups such as the Acacia Club, Order of the Eastern Star and O.E.S. officers of four separate years,

Rohr Square and Compass Club, Job's Daughters Bethel, and Chula Vista Chapter of DeMolay. Several individuals made more than one pledge as did the DeMolay Chapter.

Pledges were honored, some by a one-time payment and others by \$5 at a time, for a total of about \$27,700. Separate donations came to around \$3,800. Those were substantial amounts at that time as a \$100 pledge was well worth over \$500 in today's dollars.

Small cards were issued with each pledge and partial payments could be accounted for on the reverse side. Upon completion of payment a certificate was issued.

Some of the Brothers making pledges are still seen in Lodge activities today. They include Worshipful Brothers Sam Brinkley, James Fortner, Walter Neumann and Carl Stewart. Also Brother LeRoy Malinski, whose certificate is on display.

There is a great deal of structural steel in the framework of the building and this was supplied at the wholesale price and set in place at no cost in one weekend. The name of the Brother responsible for this is not recorded, but he is an example of the dedication that prevailed in those

days, which resulted in the beautiful Temple we have used and enjoyed for over 40 years.

In these forty-four years many organizations in the Masonic family have met here. They include Claude H. Morrison Lodge No. 747, Order of the Eastern Star, White Shrine of Jerusalem, York Rite Chapter and Council, and the three Masonic Youth Groups. The building has served well the purpose for which it was built.

Chula Vista Lodge has, in it's seventy-five years of existence, seen membership fluctuation similar to most other Lodges, with a maximum number of over 700 Brothers to the current count of 529. Life memberships were first available in 1982 when dues were \$36 per year. The number of Brethren whose payments will continue to benefit the Lodge in perpetuity is now 112, with the current annual dues being \$60.00.

In 1966 the lifetime collection of 850 Masonically related books and pamphlets from Brother Charles Palmer, by bequest in his will, provided a nucleus for the fine library the Lodge now maintains. Additional donations of books by many Brothers plus purchase of contemporary volumes has made Chula Vista Lodge's Library one of the best in the jurisdiction.

Served by a sequence of able and dedicated officers with the support of the Brethren, Chula Vista Lodge has established an enviable past record of Grand Lodge program participation and stands ready to meet the future of Freemasonry in California.

LODGE HISTORY

KEEP

Only First 3 Years

HISTORY

Brethren, this being our fortieth birthday it is appropriate that we reminis for a moment. What has happened in the past forty years?

On March 19, 1925 a meeting was held, by a group of Master Masons, mostly from Southwest Lodge in National City, in PLAZA HALL, 614 1/2 Broadway Avenue near F Street in Chula Vista and it was decided to apply for a DISPENSATION to start CHULA VISTA LODGE.

The DISPENSATION was granted by the Most Worshipful DAVID JOHN REESE, Grand Master of Masons in California and CHULA VISTA LODGE #62; it was called to order for the first time by Worshipful Brother FUNDAL AUSTIN, our first Master on September 3, 1925.

On October 15, 1925 GRAND LODGE issued our Charter and we became a full fledged Lodge with 25 charter members, of which three are still living and holding membership.

~~In December 1928 the Lodge moved from PLAZA HALL TO THE HELLER BUILDING~~ located at the corner of 3rd Ave and "F" Street where meetings were held until February 3, 1937 when the Lodge moved to WIGGINGTON HALL located at 347 Third Avenue.

In Sept. 1952 Brother Charlie Fulton passed away. Thus ending his tenure in the Office of Secretary which he had served well since the first meeting of the Lodge.

On June 4, 1955 actual work was begun on this Temple with the excavating for the foundations and footings and on Dec 2, 1955 Most Worshipful EDGAR V. STEWART JR. Grand Master of Masons in California laid the corner stone. On Aug. 7, 1956 the first meeting was held in this beautiful building which had been constructed by so many, generously donating of their time and money. These donations came from both Masons and non-Masons and for which I am sure, we are all very appreciative.

Most Worshipful EDGAR V. STEWART JR. dedicated the Temple Aug. 22, 1956 at



JOSEPH E. BURNHAM
New Chute Viste
MASONIC
TEMPLE





The Club With
MASONIC
TEMPLE

— TEMPLE BUILDERS —

SAM
BRINKLEY

ROY
SWAIN

FRANK
GIARDINA

PERCY
BURNHAM

JIM
FORTNER

RAY
STONE

PAT
ROBISON



↑
HARRY
MC CREA

↑
ROBERT
MC NEIL

↑
KENNETH
OHM

↑
JOHN
STYN

↑
ERNEST
JINDRA

ALVIN
NELSON



VERN
McLEAN



SAM
BRINKLEY



PERCY
BURNHAM



LLOYD
RUETER



RALPH
PAXON, JR.



↑
MIKE
DELLA ROCCA

↑
ART
SPENCER

↑
FRANK
BARNHOUSE

— AUGUST 27, 1955 —



LODGE HISTORY

Art Spencer

Taken June 4, 1955

June 4 - 1955

STANDING - LEFT TO RIGHT

D. Hood, A. Spencer, ~~Wm~~ M. Sean, Davis, Barnhouse
L. Reuter, P. ^{Burnham} ~~Barnham~~, M. Bellarose, E. M. Logan
Builder FOREMAN, architect

C.V. Masonic Lodge # 626
Building Committee.



LODGE HISTORY

Art Spencer

taken June 4, 1955

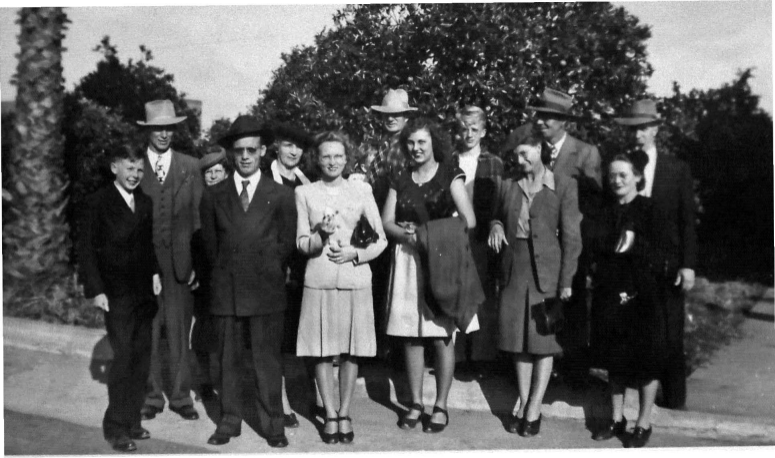
JUN 4-1955

Building committee.

Karone Building committee

L. J. R. S. Gove, A. Spencer, Barnhouse, Davis

V. McLain, P. Burnham, E. M. Logan



Thomas A. Spencer,
 Major, Infantry AUS (Ret.)
 1100 Wayland Drive
 Arlington, TX 76012-2041
 (817) 460-4889

Back Row

Nina Permon

F.

F.

Mrs Head Tom Spencer

Art Spencer Dean Spencer
 Son

Rolin Downs ^{PM}

m

m

Front Row

Boy

m

m

F

MRS Downs

F

Nora Spencer

F

Member of DU Lodge @ Visit to
 Masonic Children's Home - 47-49?





OREGON MISTERY
LODGE NO. 148 A.F. & M.
FRANKFURT, GERMANY

Members of CV Lodge
 at Installation of Tom Spencer
 as Master in 1974 of Oregon
 Military Lodge #626 in Frankfurt
 Germany.

John L. Greete Installing Marshall
 P.M. of FFM Lodge #661 Frankfurt Germany

FROM L - John L. Greete, Tom Spencer
 & Art Spencer;

Dec-7-1974.



A. SPENCER

PAST MASTERS OF CHULA VISTA LODGE

L T O R.

626

A. WATSON	-	1944
J. SMITH	-	1947
A. SPENCER	-	1942
R. O. DOWNS	-	1948
C. E. SMITH	-	1931
K. HILBERT	-	1935
W. BINNEY	-	1936
W. HENDERSON	-	1939
P. MATHEWS	-	1940
W. P. ROBISON	-	1945

40TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING.

CHULA VISTA No. 626



GRAND MASTER'S VISIT

"LAYING OF THE CORNERSTONE,
EASTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL"

TOWN HALL MEETING

GRAND MASTER'S AWARD

11

1992

GRAND LODGE
OF
FREE-ACCEPTED MASONS
CALIFORNIA

11 6 '92

