

The act organizing Porter County was passed by the State Legislature in January, 1836. The Governor, the Lieut. Governor and the Speaker of the House signing the bill were all Masons. The Commission appointed by the Governor located the county-seat at the present site of Valparaiso but it was then called Portersville. The plat of the town bears the date of July 7, 1836 and it was recorded October 31, 1836. The incorporators were the Portersville Land Company composed of J. D. F. Lanier, who was Grand Secretary of Masons of Indiana from 1826 to 1830, and who was the real financial backer of the enterprise. Enoch McCarty, a member of Harmony Lodge No. 11 of Brookville was another member of the Company as were also most of the other stockholder. In fact members of the Masonic Fraternity had much to do with the establishment of Porter County and of the town of Portersville.

In May, 1842, six years after the organization of the County, the following Porter County Masons met at the home of Brother Adam S. Campbell which was situated on the north side of the present Route #2 just over the Washington Township line, for the purpose of organizing a Lodge of Masons: Brothers John E. Harris, Adam S. Campbell, Arthur Buell, Jonathan Griffin, William K. Talbott and James Luther. These Bretheren resolved to ask for a lodge in Valparaiso and received a dispensation dated June 22, 1842 naming John E. Harris W. M., Adam S. Campbell, S. W. ; and Arthur Buell as J. W. The first initiation under the U. D. Lodge was Edwin E. Abbott and on March 7, 1843 Brother George C. Buell was raised in this Lodge. Considering times and circumstances this U. D. Lodge was fairly successful. The report of the Committee on Charters and Dispensations for that year was in part as follows:

FIFTHLY-- As to Porter Lodge U. D. at Valparaiso, the Committee <sup>reports</sup> that the the proceedings were somewhat informal and irregular in several matters and that Brother Abner Bailey of LaPorte be appointed an agent to visit and

instruct them in the manner of work and advise the adoption of a new code of By-laws. The Committee, notwithstanding these irregularities, recommended that a Charter be granted them as Mason Lodge No. 49. This was adopted by the Grand Lodge and it was ordered that John E. Darris be the first W. M.; Brother Adam S. Campbell the first S. W.; and Brother George C. Buell the first J. W.      Allowed-- Edwin C. Abbott Representative for Lodge #49,  
For 10 days travel at \$1.50 ----- \$ 15.00  
For 4 days attendance Grand Lodge      6.00

With encouragement as directed this Lodge No. 49 would probably have been successful even against the anti-masonic feeling of the time. However Brother Baily seems to have not been in sympathy with the establishment with a Lodge in Valparaiso and made an unfavorable report to the Grand Lodge. The Committee reported on Brother Baileys communication as follows: "consequitly we think Brother Bailey OUGHT TO HAVE PROCEEDED TO DISCHARGE THE DUTY assigned to him by the Grand Master--(delivering the Charter and establishing the Lodge) For the fact that the Brethren of Porter Lodge having acted too hastily ought not to have prevented Brother Bailey from discharging his duty. In expressing this opinion we would not be understood as implying any centure against Brother Bailey, for we have no doubt that he acted from good and praiseworthy motives. On the subject of the legal existance of the Lodge we have had some difficulty, but beleive that it could not now ( because of the neglect of duty of Brother Bailey) be recognized as a intergal part of this Grand Lodge. It is small wonder that this discouragement of Brother Bailey ended the existance of the first Masonic Lodge in Porter County.

The early Masons of Porter County, scattered as they were to all parts of the county were made of stearner stuff. Scarcely <sup>s 1 x</sup> eight years after the failure of their first attempt to establish a Lodge we find them again asking for a dispensation which was granted June 25, 1850 and it is the eightieth anniversary of this event that we celebrate tonight. The Charter was Granted to Porter Lodge No. 137 on May 27, 1852 and the first

officers were George C. Buell, W. M.; Isaac W. Bowman, S. W.; and George Z. Salyer, J. W. The first initiation in this Lodge was that of George N. Underwood which took place October 15, 1850. My own father, Charles W. Dickover was raised in Porter Lodge in 1854 and for a time acted as janitor receiveing as his pay the sum of twenty-five cents per meeting for building the wood fires and lighting the candles. There are many amusing things recorded in the minutes of the lodge which are complete even for the first Lodge No. 49. In several places we find recorded the appointment of committees to visit certain Brethren to demand satisfaction because of the too ardent use of spirituous liquors so we see that even grocery sale of alchoholic liquors was not entirely satisfactory. The Lodge has had a steady growth during the last 20 years. On January 1, 1910 there were 168 members, on January 1, 1911 there were 200 members; On June 9, 1914 there were 300 members; on Dec. 4, 1917 there were 400 members and one fourth of them in the World War service. On October 25, 1921 there were 500 members and there are now somewhat over 600 members.

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