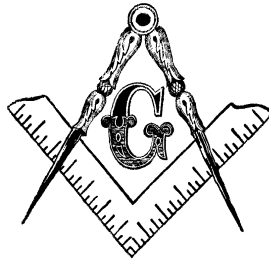


HISTORY



150 YEARS

RISEING SUN LODGE # 4

1853 ***** 2003

In the days predating the Civil War and during the time of Slavery, a few free men of color living in the town and surrounding communities of Milton, Delaware had a craving to become a part of the Masonic Order. The records show that these men were well respected in their communities and were staunch, active members of the various churches in the area. Some of these men were working in the Wilmington Delaware area, became exposed to the Masonic Order and became desirous of organizing a Lodge in Southern Delaware.

On March 17, 1852, a group of 15 men, who later became known as “seekers of light”, organized and met at the home of Mr. Lott Purnell on a site which now stands the Milton Middle School, (formally Milton High School), for the purpose of discussing and setting up a Lodge. On April 2, 1852, a Lodge was opened at Mr. Purnell’s home, using the upstairs as a lodge room. “Rising Sun Lodge # 4” was adopted as the name of the organization. The meeting was attended by W.M.- Jessie Shockley, S.W.- James White, J.W.- Amos Watson, Secretary-- George Gumby, Treasurer - Joseph Oliver, S.D. - David Comwell, J.D. - Radcliff, Chaplin - Nathaniel Young, Tyler - Andrew Young, Bros. Robinson Shockley, L. C. Mosley, Alexander Young, P. W. Hazzard, R.W. Sammons, and Noah Holden.

On July 3, 1852, James White was empowered to purchase a building to use as a lodge hall. At this time, the treasury contained \$26.25. On September 3rd, a fund drive was held to raise money and a total of \$27.50 was added to the treasure.

This is most of the first years’ records, before the Charter from the Grand Lodge was officially granted the following year on April 1, 1853. At this writing, the Lodge still holds the original Charter with signatures of the following Grand Lodge officers: M.W.G.M., Levi Anderson; D.G.M., Purnell Russell; R.W.G.S.W., John W. Layton; R.W.G.J.W., Michel Sterling; R.W.G. Chaplin, Harry Weeks; R.W.G. Tyler, Bernie Hill.

The following are excerpts from minutes over the past 150 years.

On March 17, 1873, Rising Sun Lodge # 4 held their annual St. Johns Day, not at a church, but at the Lodge Hall.

“Notice”

To the Worshipful Master, Wardens, and Brothers of this Worshipful Lodge of Rising Sun # 4, Milton, Delaware: You are hereby invited to visit Bethel A.M.E. Church of Milton Delaware to hear a Sermon preached on Sunday, April 29, 1895 at 3:00 P.M. To give publicity, join us and help the cause of the Church by your presence.

Signed, the Steward Board,
Z. W. Nichols, Pastor

October 15, 1895 – a bill, \$1.43 was paid; for wood, heating, water bucket, and refreshments.

1902 – “Rising Sun # 4 paid in full, \$1.05 for County, Road, and Poor taxes for Broadkin Hundred, Sussex County, Delaware.

November 6, 1906 – moved, seconded, and adopted to pay oil bill of \$.36 and secretaries supplies, \$.49.

September 21, 1906 – motioned, seconded, and carried that Rising Sun Lodge # 4 will travel as a group to Temple Lodge # 8, Milford on the 6th of October for visitation. We will leave our lodge hall at 5:30 P.M. to be in time for 7:30 P.M. meeting. Each Brother who has a horse and carriage will take a Brother with him.

1911 – the Lodge purchased 11 master mason aprons @ \$.75 each.

The corner stone was laid at the present Lodge Hall on June 24, 1934 by the Most Worshipful Hiram Grand Lodge of Delaware. The Most Worshipful Grand Master, Conwell Banton, Deputy Grand Master, G. Oscar Carrington, and other Grand Cabinet Officers officiated and were escorted by the Knight Templers of the Grand Commandry of Delaware. Music was furnished by the Silver Star Band of Federalsburg, MD. This was followed by a St. Johns’ Day Celebration at Bethel A.M.E. Church, Milton. Sermon was preached by Rev. R.W. Thomas of Nassau, DE.

November 4, 1939 – a copy of a receipt from a Lawyer reads “I hereby acknowledge the receipt of \$55.00 from Rising Sun Lodge # 4, Milton, Delaware in the form of \$10.00 in cash and a check payable to my order in the amount of \$45.00. It is understood that I am to use the money for the purpose of effecting a final settlement between Rising Sun Lodge # 4 and Central Jurisdiction Methodist Church, Delaware Conference, Dover District, for the purchase of a lot of land and building there-on erected, located at the corner of Chestnut and Church Streets in the town of Milton, County of Sussex, State of Delaware, the balance due upon said contract of sale unto Central Jurisdiction Methodist Church, aforesaid being \$53.00...”. This property became known as “the up-town Church”.

Prior to purchasing this property, the Lodge held meetings in a building that was located on Coulter Street, next to the home of Past Master John W. Clark, Jr.

Rising Sun Lodge # 4 has produced one M.W. Grand Master; **Hershel Drain** (elected), and five H.P.G.M., Courtland H. Burton, A. Martin Conaway, H. Ranford Allen, John R. Burton, and John W. Clark III, all 33rd Degree Masons.

One Hundred, Fifty years have passed into History. Our heritage has left us greatly enriched as we reflect upon seemingly impossible achievements of our pass and the challenges ahead as we embark on a determined and unpredictable future. Our Forefathers began with little but a Prayer of Deliverance in their hearts. Their prayers and ours have helped make the names of our ancestors illustrious in local, national, and world politics, scientific research, music, education, and social welfare. To these, we will add our contributions, with increased devotion to an All Seeing Eye, which has guided us through. From Him who has received much, much is expected, so let us continue. “We will not fail”!

Fraternally and Respectfully Submitted,

John W. Clark III, 33°
Lodge Historian & Keeper of the Archives

