

Oxford Masonic Orphanage

I HEARD A SHORT TALK ABOUT THE OXFORD MASONIC ORPHANAGE AND EASTERN STAR HOME THAT REALLY IMPRESSED ME. BACK WHEN THE GRAND LODGE WAS MEETING IN 1872 THE MOOD MUST HAVE BEEN VERY SOBER. THE CIVIL WAR HAD ENDED IN 1865 AND RECONSTRUCTION WAS RESHAPING THE SOUTH. THE GRAND LODGE WAS PRETTY MUCH BROKE WHEN THEY HAD TO VOTE TO DECIDE WHICH OF TWO PATHS THEY WOULD TAKE.

THE GRAND LODGE WAS IN NEED OF A BUILDING, AND MANY WANTED TO PUT FORTH THEIR EFFORTS INTO THIS PROJECT. THE OTHER MOTION WAS TO BUILD AN ORPHANAGE. ONE OF THE MANY THINGS WAR CREATES IS WIDOWS AND ORPHANS, SO THERE WAS A GREAT NEED FOR AN ORPHANAGE. THE VOTES WERE CAST, AND THERE WAS A TIE. JOHN H. MILLS CAST THE SWING VOTE IN FAVOR OF THE OXFORD ASYLUM. IN 1873, THE FIRST CHILDREN ENTERED THE ORPHANAGE, AND SINCE THEN, IN 132 YEARS SINCE IT'S BEEN ESTABLISHED, THE OXFORD MASONIC HOME FOR CHILDREN, HAS HAD OVER EIGHT THOUSAND CHILDREN PASS THROUGH IT'S DOORS.

IN THE GRAND LODGE MEETING OF 1912 ANOTHER MILESTONE WAS VOTED ON. A RETIREMENT HOME WAS ESTABLISHED. WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE EASTERN STAR THE FIRST THREE RESIDENCE ENTERED THE EASTERN STAR HOME IN 1913. SINCE THEN, IN IT'S 92 YEARS, OVER 1700 SENIORS HAVE CALLED IT HOME.

THESE ESTABLISHMENTS SURVIVED WWI, II, AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION. THEY HAVE GREATLY DEFINED NORTH CAROLINA MASONRY.