

Quest Book #6

Your Masonic Roots: The Grand Lodge of Minnesota (1853-1878)

The Land

The Minnesota Territory at the time of its formation in 1849 was already populated by a mixture of people drawn here by the natural resources of the area. Water transportation and water-power had led some early entrepreneurs to form the nucleus of a lumber industry at both Stillwater and St. Paul. These two original centers of population continued to grow and prosper through the next quarter century together with the budding village of St. Anthony, destined to become the city of Minneapolis.

The Minnesota Territory was then the westward limit of American expansion, but in those days of "manifest destiny," this was only temporary. The Minnesota Territory in 1849 encompassed not just our present state boundaries, but also most of the present states of North and South Dakota as well. Except for two small pockets of population along the great rivers of its eastern edge, the Territory was still the undisturbed home of the Sioux and Ojibwa nations. It was controlled by the presence of Fort Snelling astride the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. The bloody conflicts with the Sioux Nation resulting from the pioneers' westward migration were still in the future, and fur trading in the interior of the Territory attracted only a few active and daring men.

Early Masons

Many early settlers from the eastern and southern states brought their Masonry with them to this new frontier territory. In the growing and thriving villages of Stillwater and St. Paul, these men sought the companionship of other Masons. The first recorded Masonic meeting in the Territory was held on May 31, 1849 in St. Paul. A meeting notice had been published in the first newspaper in the Territory, the Minnesota Pioneer. The meeting was held in a room above the newspaper office.

No written record exists as to what transpired at this, or at two subsequent meetings; it may be surmised, however, that this group of Masons discussed the varied forms of "the work" from their home jurisdictions. They also made plans for obtaining a dispensation to confer the degrees on willing and deserving candidates. Similarly, other Masons were meeting and talking about the formation of a Lodge in Stillwater as early as November of 1849. Not until 1851 would a third group of Masons seek to form a Lodge in the hamlet of St. Anthony.

Pioneer Lodges

In order to form Lodges in the Minnesota Territory, where no Grand Lodge had authority, dispensations had to be obtained from other jurisdictions. Typically one Mason would request a dispensation from the Grand Master of his home jurisdiction on behalf of a group of Masons known to him. In this manner, the first three Lodges in Minnesota were originally chartered as Lodges of three different Masonic jurisdictions. The dispensation was temporary permission for a Lodge to meet and confer degrees under the auspices and ritualistic forms of the granting jurisdiction.

The actual chartering of a Lodge under dispensation was a more serious matter, and sometimes was delayed for years. For a new Grand Lodge to be formed, a minimum of three chartered Lodges had to exist in the proposed new jurisdiction. The three Lodges thus formed prior to the creation of our Grand Lodge were: St. Paul Lodge 223 of Ohio, dispensation granted August 8, 1849; St. Johns Lodge 39 of Wisconsin, at Stillwater, on October 12, 1850; Cataract Lodge 121 of Illinois, at St. Anthony, on February 5, 1852. Following the chartering of these three constituent Lodges, the Grand Lodge of Minnesota was formed in 1853. The original three Lodges are of particular importance, but not because of their antiquity alone. The men who formed them were of flesh and blood, and gave their various talents not only to Masonry, but to the Territory as well. A closer look at some of these men provides a representative cross section of the territorial population.

St. Paul Lodge

Minnesota Territorial Secretary Charles Kilgore Smith served as the focal point of Masonry in St. Paul. He was a personal acquaintance of the Grand Master of Ohio and obtained the dispensation for St. Paul Lodge in 1849. He also served as the first Worshipful Master of this Lodge, the first Lodge under dispensation in the Territory. Some other charter members of the Lodge were: James M. Goodhue, Publisher of the Minnesota Pioneer; Aaron Goodrich, Chief Justice of the Territorial Court; and Daniel Brawley, trader. It is interesting to note that, when twelve of these Masons met to sign the petition for dispensation, Goodhue at first refused to sign. One man present, James Hughes, had not proven himself a Mason to Goodhue's satisfaction. Hughes, a lawyer, was also publisher of the Minnesota Chronicle a rival newspaper to Goodhue's Minnesota Pioneer. Hughes was subsequently dropped from the membership rolls, and left the Territory shortly thereafter. One can only hope that Goodhue was prompted by a proper zeal for the Fraternity in his challenge of a rival publisher.

The first Lodge room of St. Paul Lodge was in the attic of the St. Paul House, a log hotel, and was a primitive facility indeed. The floor was of rough pine boards, with kegs and barrels for the officers' seats and pedestals. A packing case was appropriated from a dry goods store to serve as an altar. The sole capital investment was a set of jewels fabricated by a tinsmith. The illumination was furnished by tallow dips and was both scanty and smoky, but Masonic Light was present in ample quantity. To these rough accommodations came initiates, the first of which was Charles P. Scott who was raised on October 24, 1849. He was the first recipient of the Masonic degrees conferred in Minnesota.

The ritual used by the Lodge at this time was a potpourri of what each member recalled from his own home jurisdiction, complicated by the prevalent inherent differences. The evolution of the Masonic ritual in Minnesota is an entire story in itself. A brief appendix at the end of this booklet sheds some light on it. The second initiate of St. Paul Lodge, Oliver H. Kelly, related memories of his own 1849 reception and initiation, at the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Lodge in 1899. According to Kelly, he was prepared in a corner of the room which was draped with blankets. His entrance into the Lodge and progress about the room were accompanied by much discussion and debate among the members present as to the "proper nature of the work." Worshipful Master Smith arbitrated all impasses and delivered an excellent lecture, Kelly related. Obviously this disorganized approach was

overcome by much practice since, by 1853 when the Grand Lodge was formed, the Lodge had raised twenty candidates and had conferred one or more degrees on seven other candidates.

St. Paul Lodge met somewhat sporadically in the years 1849 to 1853, and did not file proper returns with the Grand Lodge of Ohio. Thus their charter from Ohio was not issued until January 24, 1853. Of the original three Lodges, it is ironic that St. Paul Lodge was the first to meet, the first to receive dispensation, the first to confer degrees, but the last to be chartered as a Masonic Lodge.

St. Johns Lodge

The second pioneer Lodge to receive a dispensation was St. Johns Lodge of Wisconsin, located at Stillwater. In November of 1849 Harley Curtis, a lawyer in Stillwater, wrote to Charles Kilgore Smith, the Master of St. Paul Lodge. He informed Smith that he and eight others wished to form a Lodge under dispensation from the Grand Lodge of Wisconsin. Since none of them was acquainted with the Grand Master of that jurisdiction, Curtis asked Smith to intervene on their behalf. Smith obviously did so, since the dispensation was granted on October 12, 1850. F.K. Bartlett was designated as Worshipful Master. The name chosen for this new Lodge, St. Johns, was that of Bartlett's home Lodge in Boston, the oldest regularly constituted Lodge in North America. Despite this propitious choice of a name, no record exists of any regular meetings for two years. The members surely must have met, at least socially, and also corresponded with the Grand Lodge of Wisconsin, because on June 9, 1852 a charter was issued by the Grand Master. This made St. Johns the first regularly chartered Lodge in Minnesota. No candidate was raised in this Lodge, however, until August of 1853, after the formation of the Grand Lodge of Minnesota.

Cataract Lodge

The third pioneer Lodge to be instituted was Cataract Lodge 121 of Illinois. It was located in the village of St. Anthony, now part to Minneapolis. This Lodge was the brainchild of Alfred Elisha Ames, a physician, who arrived in St. Anthony in 1851. He was destined to be the first Grand Master of Masons in Minnesota. Ames was made a Mason at Joliet, Illinois in 1840. He then helped form Lodges in four other settlements in Illinois, serving as Master in each of them. Hence it was inevitable that Ames should seek out the Masons of St. Anthony and form a Lodge. With eight other Masons, he was quick to apply to the Grand Lodge of Illinois for a dispensation. This was granted on February 5, 1852, after the Grand Master of Illinois had secured a supporting recommendation from the Master of St. Paul Lodge.

The first communication of Cataract Lodge was held on February 14, 1852 in the home of Ard Godfrey, one of the charter members. So anxious was Worshipful Master Ames to have the entire Lodge in the parlor for this meeting, that he asked Godfrey's sister to serve as Tyler. After the Lodge was opened, the dispensation was read and appointments made. Then the remarkable number of sixteen petitions were received, in effect tripling the Lodge membership! The Lodge subsequently held its meetings in a small Lodge room under circumstances similar to those of St. Paul Lodge. Cataract Lodge had the additional problem of multiple candidates, however, thus ruling out the blanket-draped corner for preparation.

The brethren overcame this difficulty by locking a group of candidates in the nearby grocery store of Emanuel Case. Then, when another candidate was to be received, a window was raised in the Lodge room and a whistled signal given.

Cataract Lodge was undoubtedly the most active of the pioneer Lodges. It received its charter from Illinois on October 5, 1852, just eight months after their dispensation. In this brief period, the Lodge under the indomitable Doctor Ames had received forty-two petitions and raised thirty new Master Masons. Among these were two well-known founders of the lumber industry in the village of St. Anthony, Charles T. Stearns and Franklin Steele.

A Time of Progress

Thus in 1852, the stage was set for the formation of the Grand Lodge of Minnesota. Progress and changes in Minnesota Territory between 1849 and 1852 were not all of a Masonic nature, however. Statehood was only six years away, and the primitive frontier of 1849 was already yielding to the advances of civilization. During the preceding three years, constant pressure was exerted on the Indians by traders, closely followed by the pioneering farmers moving ever westward, resulting in almost one half of the present state being ceded to the government by the Sioux and Ojibwa nations. This confrontation would soon erupt into warfare, but the outcome would be inevitable.

On the national scene, acute polarization of North and South was becoming apparent, and was only temporarily masked by the recently passed Missouri Compromise. Franklin Pierce was elected president in 1852, inheriting the national unrest which would lead to civil war in only eight years. These issues were, for the most part, remote from the people of the Minnesota Territory. They looked only westward in 1852 for both their potential problems and their economic opportunities.

Formation of the Grand Lodge

After the chartering of St. Paul Lodge in early 1853, immediate steps were taken to form a Grand Lodge. A.T.C. Pierson, Master of St. Paul Lodge, sowed the first seed. He invited the Masters and Wardens of all three Lodges to meet in St. Paul to form a Grand Lodge. This meeting was held on February 23, 1853, in the Lodge room of St. Paul Lodge. The Masters and Wardens of St. Paul and Cataract Lodges were present, but due to a breakdown in communications St. Johns Lodge was not represented. Thus the Convention was incomplete, and it looked as if the idea of a Grand Lodge would be delayed.

The original invitation to St. Johns Lodge had not reached Stillwater until that day. Both the Master and Junior Warden were absent from Stillwater on business, and only the Senior Warden, Henry Setzer was in the village.

Later that night in Stillwater, Setzer called a hurried meeting of the available members, and informed them of the Convention. One member, Abram Van Vorhes, raised an objection. He maintained that, while three Lodges were indeed the legal minimum required to form a Grand Lodge, more would be desirable. He contended that if one of the three Lodges should surrender their charter for some reason, the Grand Lodge would cease to exist. The remaining two Lodges would thus lose their authority to meet and work. Van Vorhes' premonition proved true just three years later. Fortunately, additional Lodges had been

chartered by then. However, his objection was withdrawn at that time. Setzer and Van Vorhes left Stillwater before dawn the next morning to represent St. Johns Lodge at the convention.

Meanwhile, awaiting the arrival of the legal representatives of St. Johns Lodge, the convention had proceeded in their absence. A.E. Ames of Cataract Lodge was elected President of the convention, and Pierson was elected secretary. Ames appointed Judge Aaron Goodrich of St. Paul Lodge to draft a constitution for approval. The judge sat up all night writing and, by the morning of February 24, had produced a constitution for the Grand Lodge of Minnesota. It was a concise, but masterfully written, document of only four articles, nine rules of order, and three resolutions. In spite of its brevity, it sufficiently professed obedience to the Ancient Landmarks, and to all established laws, usages, and customs of the Fraternity.

With the arrival of Setzer and Van Vorhes that day, Ames reconvened the convention. The first order of business was to read and ratify the proceedings of the previous day, as if all three Lodges had been present. The constitution was then read and approved section by section, and adopted unanimously. Finally the great moment had arrived! All Masonic prerequisites having been satisfied, the Grand Lodge could now officially be formed. A resolution to this effect was offered by Judge Goodrich, and unanimously adopted by the convention. The members present then elected the officers for the ensuing year: A.E. Ames, Grand Master; A. Goodrich, Deputy Grand Master; D.F. Brawley, Senior Grand Warden; A.E. Van Vorhes, Junior Grand Warden.

The First Grand Officers

Grand Master Ames completed his official family with the following appointments: E. Case, Grand Treasurer; J.G. Lennon, Grand Secretary; D.W.C. Dunwell, Senior Grand Deacon; D.B. Loomis, Junior Grand Deacon; S. Partridge, Grand Sword Bearer; A.T.C. Pierson, Grand Marshall; H.N. Setzer, Grand Pursuivant; L. Moffet and C.W. Borup, Grand Stewards; the Reverend J.S. Chamberlain, Grand Chaplain. It is interesting to note that the Grand Chaplain, Chamberlain, was not even a Master Mason. He was actually raised two days later to qualify him for the position.

The First Charters

Following the installation of officers the Convention was closed. Grand Master Ames then immediately opened the first official Communication of the Grand Lodge of Minnesota. The only order of business was to grant new charters to the three constituent Lodges. A debate ensued as to which Lodge would be honored with the "number one" designation. Grand Master Ames quickly explained the time-honored Masonic procedure whereby the original chartering date determined the priority. Thus the first three Lodges were re-chartered as: St. Johns #1; Cataract #2; St. Paul #3. The early histories of each Lodge as described above indicate that some dissatisfaction might result from this assignment of #1 to the least active of the three Lodges. The resentment took many years to die out, but at this time at least harmony prevailed, thanks to Grand Master Ames. Thus the first Communication ended, until the next annual meeting should occur.

Who were these first elected officers of the Grand Lodge? Grand Master Ames was a physician and land speculator. The Deputy Grand Master, Judge Aaron Goodrich, was the Chief Justice of the Minnesota Territory. Daniel Brawley, Senior Grand Warden, was a builder and brick-maker. Junior Grand Warden Van Vorhes headed the Territorial Land Office. These men, and also their companions in the appointive Grand Lodge offices, gave freely of their time and talent to the fledgling Grand Lodge.

Before The Civil War

Grand Master Ames served for two years, providing a strong hand at the helm. In this period, the Grand Lodge grew from infancy to adolescence. At the Annual Communication of 1855, three additional Lodges were in existence. These were Hennepin #4 at St. Anthony, Ancient Landmark #5 at St. Paul, and Shakopee #6. At this Communication, Moses Sherburne was elected Grand Master. He was an Associate Justice of the Territorial Court. During his term as Grand Master, a new Grand Lodge constitution was adopted. This document, though revised over the years, is the one which governs us today. Sherburne served only one term as Grand Master. In 1856, he was succeeded by A.T.C. Pierson.

Grand Master Pierson served in the office until 1864. This period of years saw both tragedy and triumph for the Grand Lodge. Minnesota Masons owe much to this Grand Master. His patience and steadiness provided a strong foundation for the Craft, through crisis after crisis. In the fall of 1857, a financial panic hit the Territory. Checks drawn on Minnesota banks were worthless, and many individuals suffered great loss. Some Lodges were forced to require payment of dues in silver or gold in order to maintain solvency. This panic subsided in 1858 with the admission of Minnesota into the Union. The resulting stability was not to last. By the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge in the fall of 1861, the Civil War had already decimated the constituent Lodges in terms of the number of members away in military service.

The Civil War Years

At the Annual Communication of 1861, Grand Master Pierson summarized the situation of the Grand Lodge. He stated that "Every Lodge in the state has lost, for the time being, more or less of its numbers. In some all of the acting members are gone, engaged in the service of the country" After polling the Lodges present, the Grand Master decided to not call an Annual Communication for 1862. The situation was desperate. As Grand Master Pierson stated, "Not a company has gone from this state but that some of our Lodges were represented in it; not a regiment but that at least one half of its officers were members of our Order." Pacific #10 at St. Paul was an extreme example, suffering a mortal blow. This Lodge numbered among its members many prominent young men of St. Paul, and was the first in the state to confer the degrees in formal dress. So complete was this group's response to their country's call that the Lodge ceased to exist. The charter of the Lodge was surrendered in December of 1861.

All was not completely dark during this period, however. Masonic principles many times transcended the devastations of war. A notable example was the Grand Master of Louisiana who, in spite of public criticism, provided aid to Union prisoners in New Orleans. Some of these prisoners were from the First Minnesota Volunteers, captured at Bull Run. When these

soldiers were exchanged, they carried this story back to the Grand Lodge of Minnesota, where it was not forgotten.

The Military Lodge

In the summer of 1862, with the military strength of the state at a low ebb, another tragedy struck. The Sioux Indians of the Minnesota River Valley rose up and drove most of the settlers of that area eastward with loss of life on both sides. The following year the uprisings spread, and troops were sent West to control the situation. One battalion of cavalry was stationed

at Fort Pembina, Dakota Territory. There were many Masons with this unit and they formed a Military Lodge under a dispensation from Grand Master Pierson. Upon the transfer of this unit from Fort Pembina, a renewed dispensation was given to the Masons of the Red River settlement at Fort Garry, in 1864. This was the only instance in which the Grand Lodge of Minnesota was instrumental in the formation of a Lodge in a foreign jurisdiction.

Grand Master Pierson worked tirelessly during these years to keep the Fraternity intact. He spent long weary days traveling to the Lodges around the state, often in the severest of weather. Pierson was a profound student of Masonry. He was a true master of the "work" and much of his time was spent in teaching it to those Lodges he visited. His efforts to unify the ritual in the Lodges about the state resulted in the acceptance of a standard ritual in 1865. This set of ceremonies and forms was the "Prestonian-Webb Work," practiced in our Lodges today.

When Pierson first became Grand Master in 1856, only eight Lodges existed. During his almost nine year tenure, another forty-one were chartered. Most of these can, in one way or another, be attributed to the efforts of Pierson. Masonic growth paralleled the growth of the state during this period. The lumber and milling industries were well established by 1865. The first railroad in the state spanned only thirty miles in 1864, but was a prediction of things to come. St. Paul was linked to the rest of the Union by telegraph in 1860. Gone was the brawling frontier. In its place was a new member of the United States, about to realize the power of its industries and the plenty of its resources. It was at this turning point that Pierson retired as Grand Master in 1864. His labors did not end, however, for he served as Grand Secretary for ten more years, and then in other Grand Lodge offices until his death in 1889.

The Grand Lodge and Reconstruction

In the years immediately following the Civil War, the Grand Lodge grew under the leadership of two Grand Masters. George Prescott, who succeeded Pierson in 1864, served until 1866. Charles W. Nash served until 1871. Grand Master Prescott was the first man to occupy that office who had been made a Mason in Minnesota. He had been raised in Ancient Landmark #5 at St. Paul in 1854. Nash was one of the original applicants requesting the dispensation that led to the Military Lodge at Pembina. Upon his discharge, Nash had come to St. Paul. He purchased the newspaper then known as the St. Paul Pioneer. This paper still exists today, and is known as the St. Paul Pioneer Press.

These same years following the war saw great suffering in the South. Lincoln's plea to "bind up the Nation's wounds" was to a large extent forgotten by Congress after his tragic death.

The southern states existed under the yoke of both military and political occupation. Economic recovery for some of these states would not come until the Eighties, and some were still occupied by troops well into the Seventies. In 1867, Grand Master Nash issued a call to the Lodges of Minnesota to raise funds to aid in the relief of their brethren in the South. The Masons of Minnesota, many of them former soldiers, answered the call. More than two thousand dollars were raised. This was distributed to the Grand Lodges of those southern states which were the hardest hit. This act of generosity went counter to the prevailing attitude of revenge by the victorious North, and should be considered an admirable example of Masonic principles.

The Mackubin Fire

In 1861, the Grand Lodge had found a home in the Mackubin Building. This was a three-story structure, and acknowledged to be the finest building in St. Paul. In 1868, the entire Mackubin Block was consumed by fire. Many valuable records and artifacts of early Minnesota Masonry were lost. This affected not only the Grand Lodge, but also other Lodges and related Masonic bodies using these same quarters. The Oddfellows of St. Paul came to the rescue. They offered the use of their Lodge rooms, free of charge, for as long as necessary. On January 12, 1869, the Grand Lodge moved into the new Masonic Hall, on the northeast corner of Third and Wabasha Streets in St. Paul. They occupied these quarters until 1891.

The Grand Lodge in the Seventies

In 1871, Charles W. Nash retired as Grand Master. He had seen the Grand Lodge come through an era of growth and prosperity, which heralded more to come. He was followed by Grove B. Cooley, who served only a single as Grand Master. Cooley has the distinction of being the first Grand Master to come from a Lodge outside the Twin Cities area. He was a member of Mantorville #11, and practiced law in Dodge County. Cooley also was unique in that he probably was the only Grand Master of Minnesota to be known as a poet. He served as Grand Orator in 1876, giving his entire address at the Annual Communication in verse. The Proceedings of that Communication describe this speech as "a very interesting and peculiar address, a copy of which Past Grand Master Cooley declines to furnish for publication, much to the regret of the brethren fortunate enough to be present." We can only wonder now as to its content.

The next Grand Master, Charles Griswold, held the office from 1873 to 1875. His term saw the preoccupation of the Grand Lodge with legislative matters. Many benchmark decisions were made in his term of office which still govern us today. This is indicative of a transition of Minnesota Masonry at that point away from the basic issue of simple survival, which occupied so much of the Grand Lodge's energy and time in the Fifties and Sixties.

The eighth Grand Master, James C. Braden, completed his first year in office and was into his second year when he died in 1877. His short life of only forty-two years had been a full one. He had been a farmer, a teacher, a minister, and a soldier. At the time of his death he headed the United States Land Office in Minnesota. The Deputy Grand Master, Edward Durant, filled out the term in 1877, and was elected to the office of Grand Master in 1878. Durant was an early resident of Minnesota, having arrived in 1848.

As we end this brief history of the Grand Lodge in the year of its twenty-fifth anniversary, we must consider Grand Master Durant as a convenient symbol. How appropriate it is that one of the earliest Masonic arrivals to the Territory should be in an ideal position to observe the very changes which have been described here. In 1848, the young Territory was populated primarily by Indians, with only a handful of settlers at the eastern edge. By 1878 the forests of the North and the fertile lands of the West lay open to development. The great postwar migrations from northern Europe provided the raw material to bring this development to maturity. The tiny settlements of 1848 had by 1878 matured into centers of commerce and transportation for the Upper Midwest. Minnesota now looked to the East for their opportunities, and our economic peaks and valleys would now follow the United States as a whole. The frontier of 1848 had moved westward.

Progressivism had replaced survival instincts in the priorities of Minnesota. The Grand Lodge of Minnesota had followed this same path, which is as it should be. Thus it can be said that through the hard work and determination of our pioneer brethren, and by the assistance of the Grand Architect of the Universe, early Freemasonry in Minnesota survived “the lapse of time, the ruthless hand of ignorance, and the devastations of war.” Simple frontier survival gave way to the “the rise of cities, to societies, and birth to every useful art . . . and thus, through a succession of ages” our pioneer brethren “transmitted, unimpaired, the excellent tenets of our institution.”

Ritualistic Work in Minnesota

The evolution of the Masonic ritual used in the Lodges of Minnesota began with the first degree conferred by St. Paul Lodge in 1849. As described earlier, this ritual was based on the memories of those present as to what was the prescribed form used by their various home jurisdictions. That debate and discussion should arise from this circumstance is not surprising; each jurisdiction or state Grand Lodge held autonomy from all others, and in each the ritual had evolved independently. The situation had been further complicated by infusion into the American Masonic scene of two different versions of the work from England, the “ancient” and the “modern.”

During his tenure as Grand Master, A.T.C. Pierson (1856-1864) traveled extensively throughout the state. He instructed the Lodge officers in one unified version of the ritualistic work. This ritual, commonly known as the “Pierson Work” sufficed well in those years during the war when Masonry almost ceased to exist in Minnesota.

Also during this period a movement was afoot to create a national Masonic organization; the intent initially was to bring to the various autonomous Grand Lodges a measure of unity and uniformity. Grand Master Pierson was an early supporter of the idea. Into the picture strode Rob Morris of Kentucky. He created an organization known as the “Conservators of Symbolical Masonry” with himself as Chief Conservator. The intent of this group was to “regularize” the ritual from within the Lodges of the various jurisdictions. This was done by secretly recruiting key members in each Lodge. A fee was paid to the Chief Conservator, in return for which the local conservator would be instructed in the ritual as prescribed by Morris. This attempt to found a secret sub-society within the Fraternity met with overwhelming opposition in every jurisdiction.

In his 1858 address to the Grand Lodge of Minnesota, Grand Master Pierson spoke out strongly against the Conservators, and a select committee supported his position. The movement did exist in the local Lodges for a few years thereafter, but died out with the adoption of a recognized system of ritual. At the 1869 Annual Communication, Grand Master Nash announced appointment of five District Deputies responsible for the regulation and teaching of a uniform ritual. This was the "Webb work," which is substantially the same as the ritual used today in Lodges in Minnesota.

Masonic Governors

The close connection between the Fraternity and the growth and progress of the State of Minnesota is illustrated by the continual involvement of our members in public life. The list that follows shows one example of this; it is a list of the Masons who have served as Governor, together with the year that they assumed the office. Also shown is the Lodge in which they held membership.

Stephen Miller (1864)	Prudence #97
Lucius F. Hubbard (1882)	Red Wing #8
Samuel R. VanSant (1901)	Winona #18
Adolph O. Eberhart (1909)	Mankato #12
Winfield S. Hammond (1915)	Madelia #66 (now Mankato #12)
Theodore Christianson (1925)	Atelier #202
Floyd B. Olson (1931)	Hennepin #4 (now Minneapolis #19)
Elmer A. Benson (1937)	Appleton #137 (no longer in existence)
Harold E. Stassen (1939)	Shekinah #171 (now Fellowship-Shekinah #257)
Edward J. Thye (1943)	Social #48
Luther W. Youngdahl (1947)	Lake Harriet #277
C. Elmer Anderson (1951)	Aurora #100
Orville L. Freeman (1955)	Khurum #112 (now Khurum Sunlight #112)
Elmer L. Anderson (1961)	Tusler #263 (now Tusler Summit #263)

Note: In addition to the above, the second Territorial Governor, Willis A. Gorman, was also a Mason.

In addition to these prominent Minnesota politicians, one Minnesota Mason also gained national political prominence. Vice-President Hubert H. Humphrey belonged to Cataract Lodge #2. His Shriner's fez is on display at the Hubert H. Humphrey Center for Public Affairs, located on the campus of the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

Sources:

Centennial History of The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Minnesota; E. Johnstone; published by the Grand Lodge, 1953

The Golden Jubilee - A Chronicle of the Semicentennial Observance of the Founding of the Grand Lodge of AF&AM of Minnesota, G.R. Metcalf (ed); published by the Grand Lodge, 1903

Proceedings of the Grand Lodge Of Minnesota, 1853 through 1878, published by the Grand Lodge of Minnesota