

In a previous issue of the Masonic Square I described the visit of 35 American Brethren from Mosaic Lodge 125, Dubuque, Iowa, to Mosaic Lodge 5028, Dudley, Province of Worcestershire.

Early this year I wrote to the Grand Master at that time, Harry Muellich, to inform him that I had booked a coast to coast tour of the U.S.A. I received a reply that wherever we were they would collect us from the tour, entertain us for as long as we could spare and then return us to the tour. Also that they had already set up a special committee to decide how best to entertain us.

The Past Grand Master Harry Muellich and W. Bro. E. Binks, duly collected us at 6 p.m. in Chicago and after an excellent meal drove us some 180 miles to Dubuque. My wife and I had been joined for the tour by W. Bro. K. Buckler also of Mosaic Lodge and his wife and the four of us were accommodated at the house of Harry Muellich. Next morning we were taken on a tour round the most attractive town of Dubuque situated on the banks of the Mississippi. We had lunch with some of the Brethren who had visited Dudley, together with their wives, at a lovely hotel in what was formerly a colonial house. At 3 p.m. we went to the temple and it was pleasing to see a full size coloured photograph of our own banner in the centre of their large entrance hall. We were provided with a buffet by courtesy of the Iowa Milk Marketing Board and the dairy queen in an attractive evening dress complete with crown was also in attendance !!

This is a practical arrangement as it provides a free buffet for the Brethren and publicity for the Iowa Milk Marketing Board.

We then had to give a rather lengthy interview to the press complete with numerous photographs.

The ceremony was the second and third parts of the 3^o and about 250 masons were present. It was specially laid on for us and the second part was performed by the Grand Lodge Officers of Iowa, some of whom had travelled nearly 400 miles for this evening. The candidate was the son of the reigning W.M. of Mosaic Lodge. The ceremony was much more extensive than ours and I believe of greater antiquity. Certainly it was much more dramatic as the Hiram legend was fully enacted; complete with the three ruffians, JUBELA, JUBELO and JUBELUM. Contrary to what I had been led to expect, there was no rough handling of the candidate. The Officers were all immaculate in Dinner Jackets and the standard of ritual was very high. There was no special dressing up for the three ruffians and other characters in the drama though I was told that this used to be done and is now occasionally done by special demonstration team.

The temple was quite magnificent with a balcony all the way round with the alter and candles in the centre of the room. The W.M. was on a large stage and at the back of the stage was a most impressive representation of the temple of King Solomon.

At the conclusion of this part of the ceremony a huge screen was lowered on to the stage for the third part of the degree. In effect this was a lecture given by W. Bro. Ed. Binks of Mosaic Lodge illustrated by lantern slides of great antiquity. It described many symbols, emblems, etc., rather like a tracing board in content but many of which have long disappeared from our ritual, e.g. the beehive, incense fat, heart pierced with a sword, etc. Incidentally, the chief working tool of the degree is the trowel.

It was a wonderful experience and we both felt that our masonic knowledge had been considerably enriched. We were guests of honour at the banquet which followed where we were joined by the ladies. Background music was provided by the Dubuque High School string band, the meal was arranged by the ladies and it was nice to see boys dressed in white with the Demolay emblem on their shirts, serving coffee (Demolay is a youth organisation for the sons of Masons).

Gifts were exchanged from our respective Mosaic Lodges and we also received many personal presents. The speech of welcome was given by Harry Muellich to which I responded. After the meeting the Brethren were queuing up to shake hands with us and express how much they had enjoyed their visit to Dudley in 1978.

Afterwards a group of us went to the house of Ed. Binks where he and his wife entertained us to drinks and a late night buffet. Thus ended one of the most memorable days of our lives.

Next day we attended Tri-State Lodge. This is a Lodge specially formed to meet the needs of Brethren who are on night shifts and always meets at 10.a.m.

It was really a business meeting but we were very impressed with all their efforts for charity plus their organisation rotas for "shut ins" (Brethren either in hospital or household). At 12 noon we attended the 'High Noon' meeting. This in fact is a study circle, albeit a very large one that meets for lunch and we were asked to address the Brethren on the different facets of our own 3^o.

We then rejoined our wives who had been entertained by Mrs. Kaufman, wife of Walter Kaufman the W.M. of Mosaic Lodge at the large Woolworth Store in Dubuque of which he is the manager. There, by chance, we met a very old mason who was the oldest living past master of Mosaic 125. He occupied the chair in 1928 which, by one of these extraordinary coincidences, was the year in which our own Mosaic Lodge was consecrated.

Later in the day we were taken to a private airport in Dubuque where we boarded a six seater Cherokee plane owned and piloted by Brother Newell the S.W. of Metropolitan Lodge, one of the other Craft Lodges in Dubuque. Sadly we waved goodbye to that most wonderful mason, Harry Muellich, who had driven us to the airport. We had a marvellous flight to St. Louis, about 400 miles away where we rejoined our tour.

Such is a brief resume of the three days when we renewed fraternal friendship with our American Brethren. We have nothing but praise for their ceremonies and standard of work, their hospitality and above all how much their masonry means to them in their everyday lives.

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