

CHAPTER TEN

'MOON' or 'MOONLIGHT' LODGES

In the 'horse and buggy' days in both Canada, and the U.S.A., many country lodges would set their meeting nights to coincide with, or near to, the full moon.

In those early days both street lights and good roads were usually few and far between, and the members desired to be able to return to their homes 'by the light of the moon', when their meeting ended at the midnight hour. These lodges were called '**moon**', or '**moonlight**', lodges. One long-time American Moonlight Lodge (DeSoto Lodge, No 105, Florida), was fraternally known as the 'Moonshine Lodge'.

The meeting night of a 'Moon' Lodge would be described, for example, as being held:

- on the **FRIDAY** on or before the full of the moon, or,
- on the **WEDNESDAY** on, or following the full moon, or,
- on the **THURSDAY** nearest the full moon.

There were such large numbers of 'Moon' lodges in Kentucky that their Grand Lodge went so far as to publish, in their 1874 Proceedings, an Almanac of Full Moons. At the turn of the century, there were more than 3,000 Moon Lodges in U.S.A.

Alberta, at one time, had a large number of 'Moon' lodges. In 1919, 49 of the 108 lodges in Alberta were 'Moon' Lodges. In 1928, Alberta had 53 'Moon' Lodges, reducing to 9 only in 1948, and disappearing entirely by 1964. The last two hold-outs in Alberta were Hand Hill Lodge No. 98, at Delia, and Carbon Lodge No. 107.

The Grand Lodge of Manitoba, in 1906, with a total of 96 Lodges, had 48 Lodges meeting as Moon Lodges; and in 1925, with 148 Lodges, had 57

'Moon' Lodges, reducing down to one hold-out in 1970 which met 'on the Friday on or before full moon'.

In practical experience, meetings set by the 'Lunar System' had many drawbacks. In 1942 the Alberta Grand Lodge Committee on the Condition of Masonry (G.L. Proceedings) reported as follows:

"There are still a number of lodges, about 18, which set their meeting night by the full moon. The disadvantages of this method far outweigh the advantages and your committee recommends, as other committees have done in the past, that this system be given up and a set date of the month selected. In one case it was noted that this method brought the regular meeting of two neighboring lodges on the same night on at least one occasion, making it impossible for fraternal visiting to take place between them."

By 1922 the G.L. of Iowa had abolished this system and required that Lodge meetings be held on a certain week day of the calendar month, and, the Grand Master of Illinois, in 1923, indicated that 'Moon' lodge dates be brought to an end with these words:

"In this day with automobiles equipped with electric lights, there is hardly the same need for moonlight, to travel, as was the case, no doubt, when the custom was established."

The 1932 G.M. of Missouri, M.W.Bro. Roy V. Denslow, commented on 'Moon; Lodges in these terms:

"The practice of holding stated communications of lodges in accordance with the condition of the moon should be discouraged. There may have been a time when such a practice was advantageous, but in these modern days it is bothersome and should be abolished."

He also recommended that each lodge be required to fix its time of stated meetings on calendar dates "which will not necessitate the use of a drug store almanac."

The Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Kansas, 1943, appealed as follows:

“sentiment should be forgotten and specific days, or dates, set for the Communications.”

To which, M.W. Sam Harris, P.G.M., G.R.A., responded in 1943,

“all Grand Secretaries and others charged with interpretations in time will speak a heartfelt, 'Aye'.”

The disappearance of 'Moon' lodges brought to an end a colorful era in Masonic history.

ALBERTA MASONIC LODGES WHICH WERE ‘MOON’ LODGES

Lodge	PLACE	MEETING NIGHT
5 Cascade	(Banff)	Thursday, on or before full moon
13 Victoria	(Fort Sask.)	Tuesday, on or before full moon
16 Mountain View	(Olds)	Friday, on or before full moon
20 Carstairs	(Carstairs)	Thursday, on or before full moon
21 King Hiram	(Didsbury)	Tuesday, on or before full moon
26 Sentinel	(Hillcrest Calgary)	Wednesday, on or before full moon
29 Kenilworth	(Red Deer)	Wednesday, before full moon
33 Stavely	(Stavely)	Tuesday on or before full moon
36 Gleichen	(Gleichen)	Tuesday on or <u>next after</u> full moon
38 Hope	(Mannville)	Monday, on or before full moon
40 Joppa	(Granum)	Thursday on or before full moon
41 King Solomon	(Cochrane)	Friday, on or before full moon
42 Bowden	(Bowden)	Tuesday, on or before full moon
43 Tuscan	(Killam)	Wednesday, on or before full moon
44 Buffalo Park	(Wainwright)	Wednesday, on or before full moon
45 Ionic	(Alix)	Thursday, before full moon
48 Crossfield	(Crossfield)	Monday, on or before full moon

49 Robert Bums	(Carmangay)	Monday, on or before full moon
60 Acme	(Acme)	Thursday, on or before full moon
64 Bow Island	(Bow Island)	Tuesday, on or before full moon
66 St. Andrew's	(Trochu)	Thursday, on or before full moon
69 Connaught	(Viking)	Tuesday, <u>nearest</u> full moon
72 Coronation	(Coronation)	Thursday, on or before full moon
74 Vulcan	(Vulcan)	Tuesday, on or before full moon
75 Harmony	(Sedgewick)	Monday, on or before full moon
76 Fidelity	(Bashaw)	Tuesday, on or before full moon
(Original meetings were on set day, changed to 'Moon' Lodge in 1928, then back to set night in 1942)		
79 Morning Star	(Lougheed)	Thursday, on or before full moon
80 Excelsior	(Strome)	Thursday, on or before full moon
82 Acadia	(Youngstown)	Tuesday, on or before full moon
85 Suffield	(Suffield)	Wednesday, on or before full moon
88 Wahpun	(High Prairie)	Thursday, on or <u>after</u> full moon
95 Kitchener	(Rimbey)	Friday, on or before full moon
98 Hand Hill	(Delia)	Wednesday, on or before full moon
99 Mount Moriah	(Sibbald)	Thursday, on or before full moon
100 Verdigris	(Milk River)	Thursday, on or before full moon
102 Edgerton	(Edgerton)	Monday, on or before full moon
106 Lake Saskatoon	(Wembley)	Wednesday, on or before full moon
107 Carbon	(Carbon)	Tuesday, on or before full moon
109 Pyramid	(Lamont)	Monday, on or before full moon
115 Crocus	(Chinook)	Wednesday, on or <u>after</u> full moon
120 Monitor	(Monitor)	Thursday, on or <u>after</u> full moon
121 Clive	(Clive)	Wednesday, on or before full moon
122 Rising Sun	(Gadsby)	Wednesday, on or before full moon
123 Rockyford	(Rockyford)	Thursday, on or before full moon
125 Cavell	(Delbume)	Thursday, on or <u>after</u> full moon
129 Meridian	(Stony Plain)	Tuesday, on or before full moon

130 Hussar	(Hussar)	Thursday, on or <u>after</u> full moon
131 Kitscoty	(Kitscoty)	Wednesday, on or before full moon
132 Craigmyle	(Craigmyle)	Tuesday, on or before full moon
136 Cresset	(Cresset)	Monday, <u>after</u> the full moon
141 Efficiency	(Hughenden)	Monday, on or before full moon
144 Gratton	(Irma)	Monday, on or before full moon
148 Mayerthorpe	(Greencourt)	Thursday, on or before full moon
153 Whitecourt	(Whitecourt)	Tuesday, on or <u>after</u> full moon

We take pleasure in copying, from the 1915 Alberta Grand Lodge Proceedings, the stanza of a beautiful poem apropos of the Moon Lodge era.

THE LODGE ROOM OVER SIMPKIN'S STORE

By: Lawrence N. Greenleaf, P.G.M. of Colorado.

The plainest Lodge room in the land was over Simpkin's store,
Where Friendship Lodge had met each month for fifty years or more.

When o'er the earth the moon, full-orbed had cast her brightest beams,

The Brethren came from miles around on horseback and in teams,

And O! what hearty grasp of hand, what welcome met them there,

As mingling with the waiting groups they slowly mount the stair,

Exchanging fragmentary news or prophesies of the crop,

Until they reach the Tiler's room and current topics drop,

To turn their thought to nobler themes they cherish and adore,

And which were heard on meeting night up over Simpkin's store.

ONCE IN A BLUE MOON

[So very rarely does a 'blue moon' occur that the expression "once in a 'blue moon'" connotes a time that seldom, if ever, occurs.]

When a month has two full moons, the second is known as a 'blue moon', though it only rarely has the blue tint that unusual atmospheric conditions sometimes supply.

In 1999 there were two full moons in January, none in February (with 28 days it is the only month to accomplish that feat), and two full moons again in March (2nd and 31st).

In 2001, there were full moons on November 1st and 30th. February previously lacked a full moon in 1961, and will miss one again in the year 2018.

In December 2009 there were two full moons