

**History of Claremont Lodge 879**  
taken from the  
**75th Anniversary Program**  
**1903-1978**  
**September 22, 23, 24**

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## History of Claremont Lodge No. 879, B.P.O. Elks

Claremont Lodge #879, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, was instituted on October 20, 1903, by District Deputy James Chickering of Portsmouth, N.H., assisted by the officers of Manchester Lodge #146. Forty-three charter members were initiated at that time and of these the following were elected as officers and installed: Wyliss Redfield, Exalted Ruler; George McPherson, Esteemed Leading Knight; D.J. Smith, Esteemed Loyal Knight; F.E. Coy, Esteemed Lecturing Knight; E.H. King, Secretary; Harry Eaton, Treasurer; Russell Jarvis, Esquire; James Daly, Tiler; Frank Bailey, Chaplain; John Hoban, Inner Guard; George Kelly, Organist; and John Branch, E.A. Winter and F.E. Thompson, Trustees. It is interesting to note that three generations of the family of one charter member are, or have been, members of Claremont Lodge. The late William Keating was a charter member, his son Elton, deceased, was a member, another son Winston is now a member as is Winston's son Raymond.

The meetings for the first few years of the new Lodge were held in rented quarters in the Union Block but in 1910 the Lodge purchased the Tyler property on the corner of Pleasant and Summer Streets, its present quarters. The home was remodelled in 1926 and again in 1951 when an addition was built on the south side for a cocktail lounge and banquet hall. In 1966 further changes were made and in 1975 an extensive renovating and remodelling of the interior was made resulting in club quarters second to none in the area.

The 25th anniversary of the Lodge was observed in 1928 with a week-end of events including a carnival and dance held on the premises of Roseland Ballroom on Bowker Street. At that time the newly purchased cast Elk was dedicated which is on a pedestal on the lawn of the Lodge. This Elk was one of two that were originally on the Denman Thompson property in Swanzey, N.H.

In 1953 Claremont Lodge observed its 50th anniversary with a week-end of activities culminating in a banquet on September 27 held at St. Mary gymnasium. A large class of candidates was initiated during the weekend by a team of Past Exalted Rulers of Claremont Lodge and dignitaries from many New England Lodges were present including Grand Exalted Ruler John Fenton of Lawrence, Mass.

There are six Elks Lodges in the Connecticut Valley which have originated from Claremont Lodge; namely, Brattleboro #1499, Hartford #1541, Springfield #1560, Bellows Falls #1619, Windsor #1655, and Lebanon #2099. Claremont Lodge is proud to be the "mother lodge" of these six Lodges, all of which are successfully carrying on the tradition of Elksdom in their communities.

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Through the years seven members of Claremont Lodge have been appointed as District Deputy Grand Exalted Rulers to represent the Grand Lodge in New Hampshire. They are Judge William Kinney, Dr. Herman H. Rice, Clarence L. Hurd, Joseph L. Collette, Francis Hart, Walter Fish and Theodore M. Monetta. Of these seven, Hart, Collette and Fish have also served terms as president of the New Hampshire State Elks Association, as has John Goggin, a Past Exalted Ruler. Elsewhere in this publication is a list of all those who have served as Exalted Rulers of Claremont Lodge.

Claremont Lodge has through the years been active in supporting the various activities of the Grand Lodge, particularly its Youth Activities and the Elks National Foundation, founded in 1927 by the late John Malley of Boston, a Past Grand Exalted Ruler. The Foundation grants scholarships each year to deserving students for college education and contributes to youth activities and countless charitable causes and health organizations. These contributions run into millions of dollars. Several local high school graduates have received scholarships in the past from the Foundation. The late Eugene Hunter, a member of Claremont Lodge, on his death left a sum of money to be known as the Elks Educational Fund. His will stipulated that when the fund reached a total of \$50,000 the earnings would be used as a scholarship to assist a boy from St. Mary High School or Stevens High School to further his education. Trustees of the fund were to be elected annually from Claremont Lodge and one to be appointed by the City of Claremont. Present trustees are Emerson Brown, Raymond Denault and Raymond Bodeur. A number of local youths have benefitted from this fund and presently two boys are being assisted in their college careers.

Another Youth Activities project supported by Claremont Lodge is Copper Cannon, a summer camp in Franconia in the White Mountains. This camp is operated by the New Hampshire State Elks Association for underprivileged children who would otherwise not be able to enjoy the privileges of a summer camp. Many children from the Claremont area have attended this camp as guests of Claremont Lodge.

Other Youth Activities projects supported by Claremont Lodge are: Spelling Bee sponsored by the Manchester Union Leader and the State Elks Association; Hoop Shoot contest of the Grand Lodge, a foul shooting contest; Boys State in co-operation with the local high school.

Plans are now underway for a gala Jubilee celebration the weekend of September 22, 23 and 24 in honor of the 75th birthday of Claremont Lodge. In commemoration of this event Claremont Lodge is donating a football trophy to the newly formed Connecticut Valley Football League which will open its schedule in the fall of 1979. Nine high schools in the valley will compete for this trophy, on a rotating basis, and the school winning the League championship three times will retire the trophy and become its permanent possessor.

Many changes have occurred since the inception of Claremont Lodge of Elks in 1903. We hope that our contributions to the Claremont area have been beneficial, particularly to the youth of the area, the future leaders of our great country.

The Elks National Home is a beautiful structure, most effectively combining classic and Spanish mission features of architecture. In its appropriate setting, the first view compels an admiration which grows as the details of its arrangement and its furnishings, and the completeness of its equipment, are more carefully noted.

The resident Brothers are given individual rooms of their own. Additional cottages are to the rear of the main building and house the balance of the members. Each room is comfortably furnished and equipped with a lavatory, having hot and cold running water. While maids take care of the cleaning and changing of linens, most of the guests add their personal touch in decorating the rooms.

Write the Executive Director, Elks National Home, Bedford, Virginia, 24523, for complete details on becoming a Resident of the Home.

