

FIRST HOME
(Harder Hall)



FIRST LODGE-OWNED HOME
(Tobin Block)



THIRD HOME
(Arrowhead Hotel)

FOURTH HOME
(Masonic Hall)



FIFTH AND CURRENT LOCATION
(2618 Kenilworth)



ER Claude Howerton PDD notes from Elks 75 year history in Sebring

From the beginning of Elks in Sebring they have been known for their charitable work and support of local youth activities. As well as our state and Grand Lodge programs. Before Harry Anna hospital in Jax. Fl. And since H.A. we have been very supportive of the hospital and now our youth camp and therapy services. We have been very active in supplying needs of under privileged children and needy families in the area and local Boy Scouts and Athletic organizations as well as natural disaster relief in other areas.

In 1928 Lodged formed boys marching 6 and that participated in G.L. parade. Started 1st Girl Scout troop to be sponsored by Fl. Lodge. The person responsible for this activity was the wife of past ER Jack Masters Sebring Lodge has been guided by admonition. "Be Charitable to all Mankind."

In 1979 Sebring Lodge started a State Golf Tournament and raised an average of \$5,000.00 per year for State Major projects. We have had 5 DD's from the lodge and one DD transfer in from another district, President State Treasurer, Joe Bryant. One PER transferred to Lake Placid and became DD and President of TSFSEA.

In 1926 Elk Ed Wolf one of the foremost developers and civic leaders in Sebring and a member of Bluffton, Ind. Elks Lodge saw a need for organizing an Elks Lodge. A dispensation for Sebring Lodge # 1529 was granted under sponsorship of Lakeland lodge #1291 and help of DD Dr. W.S. Irvin. The lodge was formed with a class of 23 initiates and 3 transfers. Ed Wolf. R.N. Durrance and W.H. Williams as charter members.

The Charter was granted in July 1927, others in the community became anxious to become associated with the order and at the 2nd meeting 23 more applications for membership and at the end of six months the roster was at 105. The first meeting place for the lodge was in a room at Harder hall Hotel but this soon became too small for the lodge activities and the Lodge moved to a rented two story structure built over Lake Jackson Known as Brewtons" Tea Ro

Windows opened on all sides of the bldg. allowing breezes from the lake to cool the room which was fine in summer but proved to be too much in the winter since no heat was available. Attendance dropped drastically. In early 1928 the lodge was moved to the Arrowhead hotel on W. Center St. with intent of purchasing the property for \$30,000.00 but negotiations failed and the deal was not consummated. Negotiations to buy the Masonic hall were unsuccessful so the lodge moved back to Harder Hall. Purchase of the property at Circle and W. Center St. known as Tobin Block proved to be a good business venture.

The upper floor was used for lodge and club functions and lower floor was rented for store and office space. The income from this provided funds for maintenance and expenses as well as paid payments on the mortgage. After the mortgage was paid 1/3 of the lower floor was converted to lodge and club use. Freedom of debt and challenges was of no advantage to the lodge. Interest and attendance dropped and members became lax in participating in functions. Membership dropped from approx. 400 to 200 and it became difficult to get enough members at meetings to hold offices. Older members disliked stairs and lack of parking space.

Some Members opposed idea of a new building and incoming debt. In 1963 serious consideration was given to securing new lodge home. \$100.00 bonds were sold to members to start construction. Work started in 1965 on this building and the lodge moved in August 1966-sixth home of 1529. The lodge was dedicated in March 1967 with GER Raymond Dobson as honored guest. The mortgage burning ceremony for the original construction loan was held April 22, 1978.

The lodge, having one of the best dining rooms in the area prospered and was very active.

In April 1981 the lodge voted to expand the dining room and make other improvements at a cost of approx. \$300,000.00. The money was raised through bond sales to members. About that time restaurant competition became very big in the area and business declined. Membership dropped again when Lake Placid lodge was formed with many members transferring to the new lodge. Our tolls dropped from over 1300 to about 600.

The bonds matured in 1986 and with no funds set aside to pay principal or interest we were compelled to borrow money to satisfy the obligation. We obtained a \$325,000 loan from a local bank and those payments held the lodge activities to a minimum. We were under pressure to sell the property and pay off the mortgage.

At one time the members voted to sell but some hard working dedicated Elks and especially our ladies would not give up and the motion was over said. The lodge went to a full force of volunteers for the dining room eliminating a large payroll and various fund raising events were held.

This is evidence that when a challenge exists there are people in the Elks to respond. Our ladies deserve a great deal of credit for the success of the lodge and we are very grateful to them for their efforts on our behalf.