
History of Hattiesburg MS Lodge 599

of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks

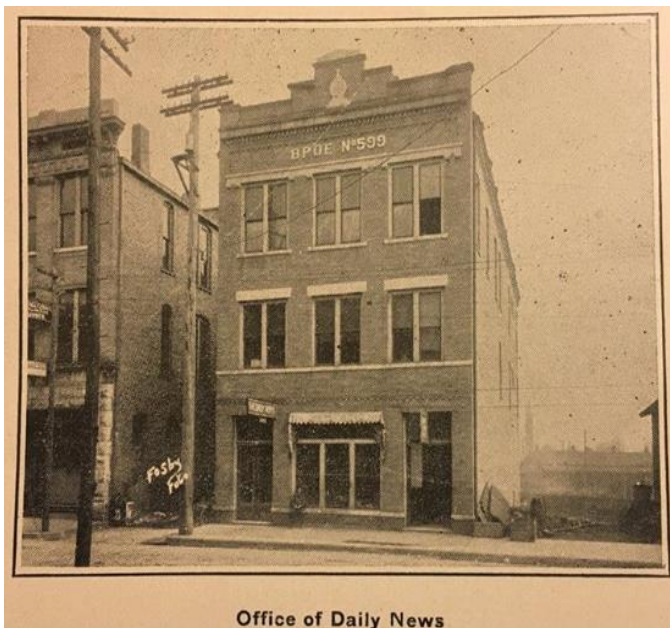
Originally written by Life Member Stanton A. Hall in June of 1975 and updated by Jean Streiff, Secretary, in 2018

On June 29th 1900 the BPOE Lodge received its charter. The following were the Charter Members:

Charles Rich	W. R. McDougle	C. E. Craven
Josep Porsel	R. E. Eaton	M. Dunn
J. L. Kearney	E. W. Woods	William Moffett, Jr.
J. M. Winston	R. Donovan	R. Collins
J. S. Wilder	B. Chapman	J. L. McGowan
T. A. Cantwell	W. M. Stemme	R. Norwood
P. W. Longre	T. H. Jones	

Our first lodge was located on Railroad Street just behind the Old Klondike Hotel. Charles W. Rich was the prime mover of the lodge. He was the first Exalted Ruler serving during the years 1900-1901. Charles W. Rich was an outstanding sportsman in this area. In 1889 when the City of New Orleans refused to allow the World Champion boxing fight between John L. Sullivan and John Kilrain to be staged in New Orleans, Charles W. Rich was instrumental in bringing the fight to Richburg Hill, just south of Hattiesburg. This fight was a seventy-five round bout, bare-fisted, and was won by John L. Sullivan.

The old lodge uptown was purchased on October 30th, 1912, and at the time the building was owned by Messrs. A. E. Keyes and O. E. Keyes, who sold the building to the lodge and we continually operated there until 1974. The old lodge in its day was the center of recreation in the City of Hattiesburg and was used extensively by all members. A. E. Keyes, a resident of Bozeman, Montana, and O. E. Keyes, A resident of Colorado, sold the building. In 1974 this lodge decided to close the uptown lodge and to sell the building to Mrs. Robert Rollings.



This original Elks lodge building was just west of the WOW building at Main & Front. (But the Elks CLUB was on Railroad Street) The "Daily News" newspaper office was on the bottom 2 floors - eventually the Hattiesburg American, taking the entire building when the Elk's moved to the building on Main street across from the Courthouse. (Courtesy of David Lyon)

During the “depression” the lodge fell to a low level, and during these years we were reduced to about 70 members who were paying dues, and about the only funds coming into our hands were those funds that we procured from the rental of the office spaces downstairs in the building.

About this time, Mr. Alec Conn, who lived in the Dixie community, advised the lodge that there were approximately 1,080 acres of land behind his house that had been sold to the state for taxes, and that if the lodge would make application to the State of Mississippi that this could be purchased for the sum of one dollar per acre. The lodge then decided to purchase this land, at which time a deed was obtained from the State, and a deed was obtained from D. Seward, Mr. Seward having bought the land at a tax sale.

It was then ascertained that the Metend Corporation of New Orleans, Louisiana owned two hundred and eighty acres adjoining this property purchased from D. Seward, and the Lodge purchased this land.

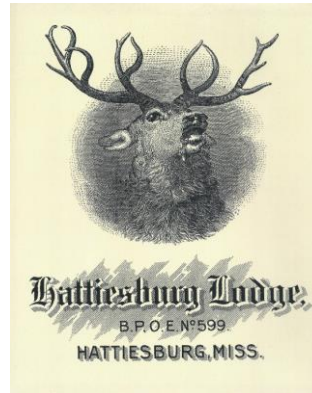
Mr. Walter J. Dreyfus, Mr. T. F. Dreyfus and Mr. Leon Dreyfus, who at that time owned the Hattiesburg Saw Mill Company, and owned forty acres adjoining this property, and they sold it to the Lodge.

Mr. Santa Cardomone and Mr. Frank Blia owned forty acres of land near and adjoining the Dreyfus property, and sold this land to the Lodge.

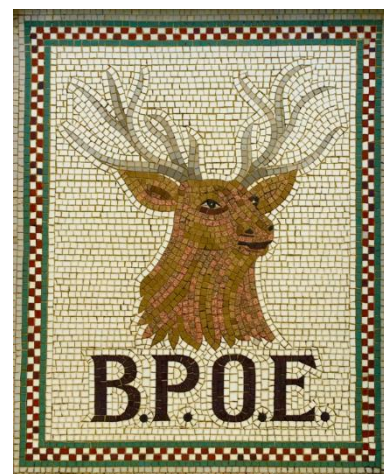
The Lodge procured a total of fourteen hundred acres from the above sources (before 1935) which constitutes the Lodge property today.



The old downtown Lodge in the 1940's. Notice the Elk head on the outside of the building on the left. This same copper Elk Head is now inside the current Lodge ballroom. (Courtesy of Steve Lyon)



This fine old engraving, was the Lodge's letterhead stationary circa 1912. Notice that the horns spell out "BPOE". None of these survived at the Lodge but were found by PER Michelle Gordon on an antique envelope for sale on Ebay. Contact Michelle for a nicely framed reproduction with proceeds benefitting the Elks National Foundation.



This beautiful BPOE Elks Head, done in colored tile, was originally in front of the older lodge downtown, and found its final home at the current Lodge in Dixie.

In order to have a lake on this property that you are now familiar with, it is necessary that a dam be built across one end of the creek that ran through this property. Mr. Neal Carpenter, who later was a Commissioner of the city of Hattiesburg, owned a dragline which he loaned to the Lodge for the building of this dam, and Mr. Frank Myers, Mr. Bob Myers and Mr. Julian Wheelless were the engineers who donated their time in the building of this dam.

After the Elks had procured this property and the dam was built, the Lodge then divided the land around the lake into lots to be used for building homes or cabins on the property. After the building of the dam, and the development of the Lake, the Lodge was then of the opinion that a recreation lodge should be built on this property.

A committee was appointed consisting of Mr. Archie Smith, who was then the president of Gulf States Creosoting Company, Mr. Paul V. Draughn and Mr. Martin King of the Collins and King Insurance Agency, who was chairman of the board. This committee then contacted the W. P. A. to initiate a project for the building of this facility.



Various photos of dam, lake, and lodge construction in 1935.
Photos provided by Mike Nobles.



Mr. Noel Harmon advised the club that he had the foundation of an old lumber company and he would donate all of the brick if they could be cleaned and used in the building of this Lodge. W. P. A. labor was used in the tearing up of that foundation and the cleaning of the brick. Mr. Paul Draughn then donated all of the cypress from his farm that was used in the construction of this building. Many of the other members furnished material, as well as private contributions, and the building was thus completed.

Postcards from 1945 picturing the finished Lodge building and a view lakeside.



The original Lodge building at the lake was renovated into an outdoor pavilion in approximately 1974, when the downtown lodge building was sold, and the new large building with ballroom was constructed beside the lake, then dedicated in 1975. The walls were taken out of the older building and a BBQ pit installed, for its use as an outdoor recreation area. With the sale of the downtown building in 1974, the Lodge ceased to have separate properties.

The New Lodge Building

C. W. "Dub" Hicks has been a member of B.P.O. Elks since 1968. He was a Past Exalted Ruler of Hattiesburg Lodge #599 twice. During that time and under his leadership, the current lodge building was constructed AND paid for. He served twenty or more years as a Trustee for the Lodge and twenty-seven years as Special Deputy for the State Elks Association to our past state sponsor Robert E. Grafton. He is a past State President of the Mississippi Elks Association, Past District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler, and a Past Grand Loyal Knight. He is one of only three Elks from Mississippi to be appointed a Grand Lodge Chair and the only member of Hattiesburg Lodge to hold a Grand Lodge office. Among his many accomplishments he was also King Elk XVIII of the Krewe of Elks.

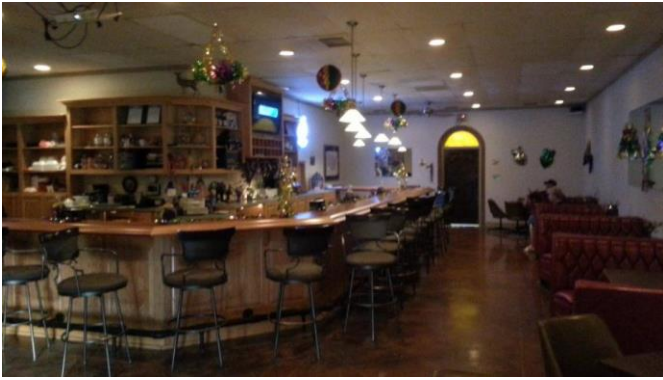
Dub was honored at a recent meeting for his 40 plus years of service. In commemoration of the occasion, he was presented a watch crafted by Rushmore Jewelers inlaid on the dial with black hills gold and the outline of a Bull Elk. Thank you Dub for your many years of service and dedication.



The current Lodge building was dedicated in 1974.



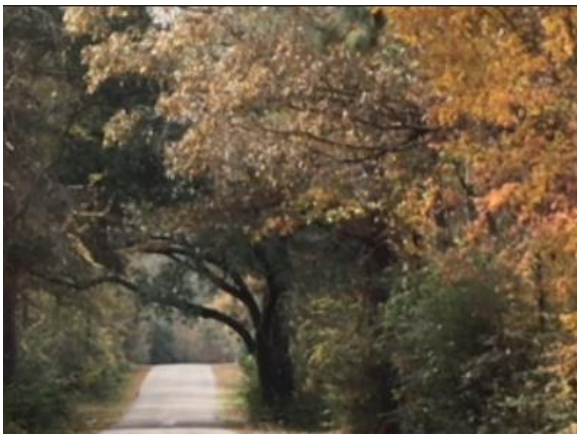
C.W. "Dub" Hicks is honored for his years of service.



The Social Quarters inside the Lodge was renovated in 2016.



Since 2012, the Lodge has maintained a display of military flags on the center pier in the Lake. The pier was renovated by the PER Association in 2011.



Lodge Road leads into the property. This particular tree was named "The Praying Tree" by Mrs. Edith Massey. She said, "When you leave this property and travel under the arm of this sheltering oak, you say a prayer for your safe journey, and on the way back in, you say another prayer that you are back." She was initiated as a member at the age of 88, probably our oldest initiate ever.



The Footbridge over the Spillway is another iconic landmark. It is scheduled for renovation in the near future.

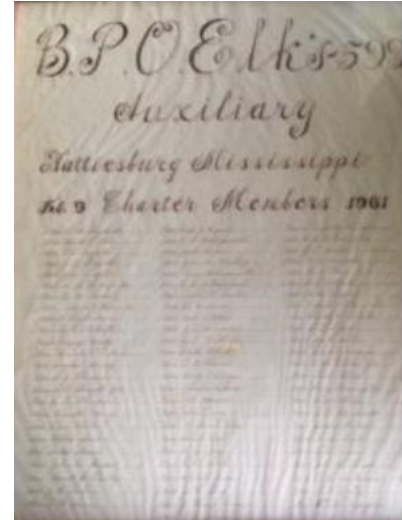
No history is complete without mention of the peoples that came before us. This collection of Indian artifacts – arrowpoints, pottery, and scrapers, were all found on Lodge land in recent years. More than likely it was the Choctaw who inhabited this land before us.



The Skinning Shed on the lake sees a lot of activity from our fishermen..

The Ladies Auxiliary has long been an active and vital part of the Elks organization. Beginning in a time when Elks was strictly a fraternal order – no women members allowed- they provided a pathway for the spouses of members to contribute in a significant way to the charities, growth, and festivities of the Lodge. The first woman Lodge member in Hattiesburg was admitted to our Lodge in 2007, and there are now over 50 women who are Lodge members. Consequently membership in a “spouses-only” organization has declined.

Our Lodge is on the edge of a rebirth in the Auxiliary, welcoming all spouses, not just women, to provide an active platform for projects, charities, and camaraderie. Stay tuned as the Auxiliary organization once again becomes a mainstay of our lodge.



This old document from 1961 lists the Charter Members of the Hattiesburg Elks Ladies Auxiliary.



The Mississippi Elks Camp is located on the back side of the lodge property and is the Mississippi Elks State Major Project, supported by all Mississippi Lodges. The facility features a large pavilion, cabins, and a swimming pool, situated on 25 acres. The Youth Camp is scheduled each summer. The facility may be rented out for private events. Visit mselkscamp.com for more info.



The Circle E Riders is the Equestrian Committee of the Lodge. Loosely formed in 1998, they began having charitable benefit trail rides in order to donate funds to local needy folks – mostly focusing on ill children. In the last twenty years of operation, they have donated over \$150,000 to such good causes.

The Trail Ride is a weekend camp out, charging a gate fee for the privilege of bringing your own horses and camper, and providing a catered meal, live music, charity auction, T Shirt sales, and of course the trail riding.

Over the years, the ride has become the premier charitable event for the lodge, often clearing in excess of \$10,000 for the weekend, all donated to charitable causes.

The lodge covers 1400 acres of mixed pine and hardwood forests, crossed by dirt roads, woods trails, and the power line. Clear Creek runs from the lake through the area. There are two campgrounds, a swimming pool, and a tennis court, as well as the lake and lodge building.

***Leave nothing but footprints,
take nothing but pictures.***



The Krewe of Elks Mardi Gras organization was started in 1967, holding annual Mardi Gras festivities. The Krewe is open to any Lodge member, and you must be a registered Krewe member in order to serve on the Court.



The Court consists of a King and Queen, Lord and Lady Elk, and numerous Dukes and Duchesses. Shrouded in secrecy as is the traditional for Mardi Gras in the south, the King and Queen are unveiled at the annual Mardi Gras Ball and Coronation. The event is preceded by numerous parties and work days throughout the year.

Past Kings and Queens of Hattiesburg Krewe of Elks

1967	I	Louis Schweitzer, Lois Henington	1993	XXVII	Johnnie Fairchild, Sr, Charlotte Shoemake
1968	II	Henry Henington, Sr, Maxine Walters	1994	XXVIII	Robert Shoemake, Joan Slay
1969	III	James J. Mordica, Dorothy Regan	1995	XXIX	David Lyon, Nadine Sumrall
1970	IV	Henry Henington, Jr, Ruth Centanni	1996	XXX	Hub Fairchild, Joann Fairchild
1971	V	Robert S. Ogden, Jr, Mary Beth Bounds	1997	XXXI	Bill Bond, Kathy James
1972	VI	Sidney Malone, Dottie Burt	1998	XXXII	Ray Roberts, Judy Carney
1973	VII	Harold Hale, Sr, Jane Ezelle	1999	XXXIII	Mike Sanders, Kay Smith
1974	VIII	B.J. Thompson, Rosa Lee Mordica	2000	XXXIV	Alan Jackson, Kim Jackson
1975	IX	Randolf Langford, Linda Ligon	2001	XXXV	John Thomsen, Diane Warren
1976	X	Chester Moulder, Arlene Pace	2002	XXXVI	Tommy Pittman, Dawn Gillis
1977	XI	Charles Finnegan, Tiny Hicks	2003	XXXVII	George Pollitz, Sarah Campbell
1978	XII	Duwayne Ezelle, Joanne Riley	2004	XXXVIII	Dan McGee, Sue Lyon
1979	XIII	Jimmy Moudy, Margaret Langford	2005	XXXIX	Chris Moore, Ann-Michelle Sanford
1980	XIV	Gary Lowry, Lottie Vance	2006	XL	Ray D, Hawkins, Mary Thomsen
1981	XV	John Beaumont, Frances Bond	2007	XLI	George Huffman, Debbie Pollitz
1982	XVI	Ray Bonones, Cathy Mohawk	2008	XLII	Mike Nobles, Amy Stromeyer
1983	XVII	Andy Moore, Lorita Finnegan	2009	XLIII	Mike James, Jeanette Baylis
1984	XVIII	Dub Hicks, Madolyn Cross	2010	XLIV	Steve Oshrin, Ritchie Malone
1985	XIX	Leonard Lowe, Patsy Hawkins	2011	XLV	Kevin Malone, Sue Walters
1986	XX	Harold Hale, Jr, Janet Pascale	2012	XLVI	Charles Phillips, Peggie Pittman
1987	XXI	Rick Leonard, Shelby Dove	2013	XLVII	Kevin Rogers, Robin Morse
1988	XXII	Woodrow Lyon, Pam Nobles	2014	XLVIII	David Brown, Bonnie Malone
1989	XXIII	Bobby Cubley, Betty Love	2015	XLVIX	John Gillis, Christine Sumrall
1990	XXIV	Joe Winstead, Myrtle Scovill	2016	L	Mike Warren, April Phillips
1991	XXV	Ralph Cross, Peggy Moore	2017	LI	Ed Shaw, Lou Murphy
1992	XXVI	Tony Pascale, Martha Johnson	2018	LII	Scott Miller, Pam Compton

Past Exalted Rulers

1900-01	C.W. Rich	1958-59	John P. Scott	1990-91	C.A. Andy Moore
1901-04	B.E. Taylor	1959-60	Robert Owen	1991-92	Kent Mohawk
1904-07	Virgil Jones	1960-61	Ray Yorty	1992-93	J. Stephen Lyon
1907-08	M.J. McGraw	1961-62	Joe Gobel	1993-94	Michael L. Sanders
1908-09	P.L. Gastom	1962-63	Joe McDuff	1994-95	Charlie P. Daughdrill
1909-19	E.A. Kernaghan	1963-64	B.G. Holland, JR	1995-96	Jerry Lynn Pucket
1919-24	E.B. Causey	1964-66	Gerald Francikato	1996-97	Timothy J. Williams
1924-25	James A. Swayne	1966-67	James F. Thompson	1997-98	Tim A. McNair
1925-26	W.M. Chambliss	1967-68	James J. Mordica	1998-99	David L. Mabijs
1926-27	A.S. McLain	1968-69	A.C. Dossett	1999-00	J. Michael Parks
1927-28	W.A. Thompson	1969-70	Randolf Langford	2000-01	Randy Allen
1928-29	V.B. McWhorter	1970-71	Charles A. Barnette	2001-02	Lionel Campbell
1929-30	R.A. Fowler	1971-72	O.C. Hill	2002-03	Chris Moore
1930-31	W.P. Blumenthal	1972-73	Henry Hennington, Jr	2003-04	Ron Clark
1931-32	Sam Forbert	1973-75	C.W. Hicks, Jr	2004-05	George Pollitz
1932-33	Leon Dreyfus	1975-76	Amos Jones	2005-06	Craig Little
1933-34	J.L. Wheless	1976-77	Henry Linton	2006-07	Mike Nobles
1934-35	R.E. Busby	1977-78	Harold Hale, Sr	2007-08	Curtis Goff
1935-36	C.C. Buchanan	1978-79	Raymond Bonones	2008-09	Mike Warren
1936-37	Sam Miller	1979-80	L. Eldon Thornton	2009-10	Kevin Malone
1937-38	A.B. Hassell	1980-81	Robert Wiggins	2010-11	Nick Goff
1938-39	M.D. King, Jr	1981-82	Ralph D. Cross	2011-12	Hugh McGowen
1939-40	Dr. C.S. Williams, Jr	1982-83	Duwayne Ezelle	2012-13	David Brown
1940-41	Fulton J. Welsh	1983-84	Harold Hale, Jr	2013-14	Robert Cook, Jr
1941-42	Louis Schweizer	1984-85	James T. Williams	2014-15	Kevin Malone
1942-43	J. Ed Turner	1985-86	Marcus Luckie	2015-16	Jimmy R. Roberson
1943-44	H.H. Bell	1986-87	Larry J. Wilson	2016-17	Michelle Gordon
1944-45	Bernard Welsh	1987-88	Bobby J. Crosby	2017-18	Walter Hearn
1945-46	L.S. Jones	1988-89	Woodrow G. Lyon	2018-19	John Michael Compton
1946-47	WM. R. Anderson	1989-90	Jack R. Anderson		
1947-48	Albert Trotter				
1948-49	Sidney Barrow				
1949-50	W. Harry Robertson				
1950-51	T. Ed Rawls				
1951-52	George M. Jones				
1952-53	Archy Fairley				
1953-54	Charles Reedy				
1954-55	James McKee				
1955-56	R. L. Calhoun				
1956-57	John A. Bevon				
1957-58	Henry L. Henington				

Past State Presidents

1923-28	P.G. Jones	1985-86	Harold F. Hale Sr
1937-38	Sam Miller	1989-90	Harold F. Hale Jr.
1950-52	T.E. Rawls	1995-96	Bobby Wiggins
1972-73	James T. Thompson	2007-08	James T. Williams
1981-82	C.W. "Dub" Hicks	2013-14	T.M. "Mike" Nobles

Grand Lecturing Knight

C.W. "Dub" Hicks

Special Deputy Grand Exalter Rulers

C. W. "Dub" Hicks - Past

T.M. "Mike" Nobles - Current

A final word from the original history written in 1975 by Mr. Stanton Hall: "The Hattiesburg Lodge is the outcome of the hard work of a large number of Elks members going back many years, who realized that the lake should be developed and the downtown location given up. The young members of the B. P. O. E. are dedicated to the development of our Lodge, and they will not be deterred from their ultimate goal, to have this Lodge as one of the best recreation areas of any Elks Lodge in the United States."