

South Dakota Supplement

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***Greetings from our Grand High Priest
Most Excellent Companion Roger H. Hansen***



Companions:

With June around the corner we need to reflect on the past several months. Did my Chapter accomplish anything or have we just existed? I realize that time passes rapidly and sometimes we have no sense of urgency to go forward.

My Chapter invited all Masons within about 50 miles to come and witness the Mark Master Degree. We had 12 new Masons come. Five Brothers said they wish to continue and complete all the York Rite Degrees and Orders. This was a very worthwhile endeavor. We filled all the chairs and had one practice ahead of

time. Believe me, it wasn't perfect, but we gained knowledge. I was so proud of everyone that took a part. We didn't just gavel the Degree open and closed. We opened and closed in full form which made some of us scramble to memorize our parts.

Do you read the Royal Arch Mason magazine when you receive it or just toss it to never be seen again? I have been reading some old editions and they are very interesting. A lot of time goes into each issue. Take the time to read them and you will also find them interesting.

I have been going through my Chapters membership petitions and am finding it quite informative. I have even called some of the Brothers we haven't heard from in some time, and they have thanked me for keeping them in the loop of things happening. You can do this also -- it might be fun and start a worthwhile new project for your Chapter.

As your Grand High Priest, I have spent some time traveling and with more yet to come. It will have been a full year by the time of our Grand Session in September. My travels have kept me informed about the York Rite activities in other states.

Remember to visit those Brothers who are in firm and not able to get out and participate in Masonic activities. If need be, pick them up for meetings. A little kindness goes a long way, and is appreciated.

Fraternally,

Roger H. Hansen

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Most Excellent Grand High Priest

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South Dakota York Rite officers visiting the Nebraska York Rite Sessions:



Photo left to right: Companions Roger Hansen, George Bauder, Rich McBride, Nebraska officer, and Bruce Chrisman



Photo left to Right: Roger Hansen, George Bauder, Rich McBride, Bruce Chrisman and Teko Foly, General Grand Scribe (demonstrating a new York Rite step)



Photo left to right: Bruce Chrisman, Anthony (A.J.) Johnson, Regional Deputy Grand Master, Roger Hansen, George Bauder and Rich McBride



Melancthon Hoyt

First Master of "The Mother Lodge of the Dakotas"

Excerpted from a monograph of the South Dakota Lodge of Masonic Research, Harold L. Tisher, Grand Historian, 1960

Many influential men have made important inputs into the development of Freemasonry in South Dakota and Dakota. However, one individual stands out among most of them. Melancthon Hoyt was born in South Norwalk, Connecticut on February 13, 1809. He entered Yale College at the age of 17. He graduated with a degree in law in June, 1830.

Hoyt practiced law for one year, but claims he could not associate himself with some of the ethics of the legal profession of that time, so he decided that he could make a greater contribution to

humanity through the Church. He, therefore, entered the General Theological Seminary at New York City in 1831 and was a student there through 1834, while studying for the Episcopal ministry. He had to withdraw from the Seminary for a while and teach school in order to earn enough money to pay his debts and finish his theological training.

In 1833, while still a student at the Seminary, he was married to Ann Eliza Yarrington in Trinity Church in New York City. Ten children born of this marriage.

Hoyt received his theological education and served in parishes throughout the country and territories. He also organized many of the churches he served in.

The first known Masonic record that has been found for Melancthon Hoyt is in Wisconsin. Grand Lodge records in that State show him belonging to Watertown Lodge U.D. at Watertown, Wisconsin in 1852. There is no earlier record of his Masonic activity. He served as Grand Chaplain for the Grand Lodge of Wisconsin for 3 years.

From Wisconsin, Hoyt left for assignment in Sioux City, Iowa and then to Yankton, Dakota Territory. He held services in Elk Point, Vermillion, Yankton and as far as Niobrara, Nebraska.

In 1861 Hoyt organized St. John's Parrish in Yankton with funds of \$250, given to him by friends in the East. Yankton then needed a High School. He then traveled to the East to procure funds for an educational facility called Dakota Hall.

During the Indian uprisings in 1862 Reverend Hoyt was appointed a Brigade Chaplain with the rank of Captain by William Jayne, Governor of the Territory, and was attached to the Staff of the Dakota Cavalry.

The first Masonic activity in Dakota Territory was his signing (along with several other Masons) of a petition, to the Grand Lodge of Iowa, for a Dispensation for Dacotah (Dakota) Lodge No.1 at Fort Randall, Dakota Territory. The date of his petition was about March 1, 1862. Brother Hoyt's connection this Lodge is not clear. The Dispensation was issued on April 23, 1862 by the Grand Lodge of Iowa. At the Grand Lodge Communication in 1863 the Dispensation for Dacotah Lodge was renewed without charge. It appears that no further steps were taken to complete the organization at Fort Randall. A charter was never issued.

Late in 1862 Brother Melancthon Hoyt and the requisite number of Brethren petitioned the Grand Lodge of Iowa for a Dispensation to organize a Masonic Lodge in Yankton, Territory. On December 2nd, 1862, a Dispensation was granted to be designated Saint John's Lodge. U.D.

Brother Hoyt served as Worshipful Master of St. John's Lodge in 1863, 1864, 1866, and 1870. Dakota's oldest Masonic Bible was given and dedicated in St. John's Lodge by Brother Hoyt. Its sacred pages are worn thin by the touch of thousands of Masonic hands resting thereon. Today this prized possession of St. John's Lodge holds a place of honor, having been placed permanently under glass in the Altar. Brother Hoyt served the Grand Lodge of Dakota as Chaplain from 1875 through 1881.

In the summer of 1863 he was appointed United States Commissioner for the Second Judicial District by Chief Justice Philemon Bliss, a Freeman and a member of St. John's Lodge. This was the first appointment to this office made in the Territory.

When the fourth annual session of the Legislature of Dakota Territory convened in Yankton on December 5, 1864, the Reverend Melancthon Hoyt was appointed Chaplain.

Melancthon Hoyt's hospitality was proverbial, and his time and abilities were given to the promotion of all things beneficial to the community and to his fellowmen. While he was a rigid Episcopalian, he was a broad-minded, great-hearted Christian gentleman who reminded one of the unostentatious divine individuals who took a personal interest in the material as well as the religious welfare of all the people, and all the people bore for him a warm affection.

Near the completion of his last edifice in Scotland, Dakota Territory, Brother Hoyt conducted his last Christmas service, which was poorly heated. He contracted a cold which then turned into pneumonia causing his passing on January 2, 1888.

Brother and Mrs. Hoyt burial site in Yankton



A short note from your Supplement Editor

If you have a pertinent article, news item, or jpg photograph (clear, sharp jpg.) you wish to be considered for publication, please forward it to me as soon as possible. Please note that I have strict deadlines to submit material to the magazine editor. The next deadline will be September 1, followed by December 1, March 1

With best fraternal regards,
Doug McFarland

An important note from your Supplement Editor: Please note that my position is the Supplement Editor of the South Dakota RAM magazine. I am not to be the head writer of the supplement. I need input from the officers of the Grand Chapter and Grand Council. The leadership needs to direct its members to send me photos with legends, articles and other materials to include in the issues.