



# The Ashlar



September 2022

**Kempsville Lodge No. 196, A.F.&A.M.**  
**[www.kempsvillelodge.org](http://www.kempsvillelodge.org)**

Volume 67-09

## **Worshipful John Edward Marr**



In keeping with “The Lifesavers” theme for 2022, the Worshipful Master has requested each issue of The Ashlar to feature an article honoring a deceased member of our Lodge who has preserved life in addition to being a distinguished community member. “Distinguished” could mean anything from notable military service, an esteemed political career, or virtually any other qualifying instance elevating that member to recognition on a local, statewide, and/or national scale. For this month’s article, we feature Worshipful John Edward Marr.

Marr was born in Norfolk County in 1896 to William & Mary Marr. He and his three brothers attended school there and in the City of Norfolk for the duration of their childhoods. After graduating from Maury High School in 1913, he would marry Adele Mae Sawyer, with whom he would have four children.

In 1919, Marr relocated to the Davis Corner area of Princess Anne County (now Virginia Beach), where he began a lifelong career as a farmer. He was an active member of the local farm bureau, and was notably industrious in his agricultural undertakings, having expanded into dairy farming, milk distribution, and cattle marketing by the onset of the Great Depression. His farm was located in the northeastern corner formed by the intersection of Newtown Rd and Virginia Beach Blvd, and had grown to a baronial stature by the end of the 1930s. In the early 1940s, he decided to rehabilitate one of his retired barns on Virginia Beach Blvd into a dance hall and restaurant. Known officially as “Marr’s Regular Meals,” but referred to locally as “Marr’s Barn,” the restaurant served ice cream and fifty-cent chicken dinners for nearly 20 years.

After Marr established his restaurant, the Davis Corner area began to experience the early stages of suburban development. To assist in securing his new neighbors’ safety, Marr and 10 others organized the Davis Corner Fire Dept. in 1943. While his co-organizers raised funds, he ventured to a Richmond military installation to purchase a surplus truck that was later converted into the Dept.’s first engine. After housing the engine in a barn, he sold a lot on Davis St to the Dept. for \$10 in 1944- this land contained a small building that housed the Dept. until a new building was completed. In the meantime, Marr served as Fire Chief, whilst simultaneously serving as the Davis Corner Civil Defense Coordinator until the Dept.’s new building was completed in 1955.

Later that year, Marr was elected Sheriff of Princess Anne County, replacing Bro. C. Roger Malbon. He was reelected several times, and unified the Sheriff’s Office during the tumultuous political climate that typified the consolidation of Princess Anne County and VA Beach in 1963. His surviving deputies recall his many humanitarian acts, culminating annually with his personal preparation of Thanksgiving dinner for the jail’s inmates. An influential political figure, he retired from his post and was replaced by Bro. Joe Smith in 1974- he remains the longest-serving Sheriff in the histories of both Princess Anne County and VA Beach. His retirement years brimmed with community involvement, wherein he served as a charter member of the Kempsville Lions Club, Treasurer of the Princess Anne Livestock Market, and a Trustee of Kempsville Baptist Church.

The early history of Kempsville Lodge is deeply intertwined with Marr’s personal, professional, and Masonic undertakings. He petitioned VA Beach Lodge No. 274 in 1936 and was initiated, passed, and

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## From The East



Masonic Lodges brim with friends and Brothers who converge to better their fellow man and advance their Masonic journeys. Fellowship is the central tool in our chest of instruments

necessary to fulfill these purposes- its maintenance is paramount to the survival of our Fraternity. In the most basic sense, good fellowship is interpreted within the context of our Craft as friendly and fraternal association. However, the periphery of this term can be used to outline the fraternal decorum necessary in the event of insignificant variances.

Merely rehearsing degree work can expose a Mason to a significant volume of advice and constructive criticism. These instances are essential to the development of a Mason's Masonic knowledgebase, and will occupy landmark positions in their fraternal memories. Our most solemn obligation reminds us of the importance of admonishing our Brothers of their errors, and aiding a reformation. The cherishment of this tenet must be viewed from two standpoints. Firstly, as seasoned Masons offering good counsel to those new to degree work, this tenet serves as a concise instruction on how to offer corrections to those new to degree teams. Secondly, it explains to the recipient of the counsel that the advice being conveyed is being done so in a most friendly manner, and is not meant to embarrass and/or offend them. Ultimately, the importance of the concept of "praising in public, punishing in private" is implicatively taught in the practice of this tenet.

All Masons agree that the ritual of our degree work can be frustrating, stressful, and tedious to convey, learn, and perform. Words, movements, and timing must be mastered to ensure that our work is conducted properly. All Lodges strive for perfect degree work from every degree team, and often hold themselves at above-average standards to guarantee that their work does not fall below the minimum standards. In the due performance of this endeavor, it is not uncommon to become hypercritical of oneself in the event that a mistake is made. To alleviate ourselves of this necessary but overbearing pressure, we must remind ourselves of those important teachings instilled in us at the beginnings of our Masonic journeys. Namely, that we are all men, imperfect by our very nature, and that, synonymously, our minds are like rough stones. Only faith, practice, time, and

fraternal reassurance can reform our minds into the ashlar necessary to suit that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Brother John Settle, III, Worshipful Master

## From The West



Are there Cowans among us? What makes a Cowan of today? It is their lack of faith and spiritual values. It has been said that just as the Cowans of long ago could never build a cathedral because he built without mortar, the man of today cannot build the spiritual temple of his life if he does not have faith and spiritual values, and therefore should not be admitted to Freemasonry. Unfortunately, a man's ability to appreciate things of spiritual nature is not easily seen and examined other than saying to an applicant that he must have belief in God. When we ask the question-"In whom you put your trust," the candidate knows the answer we want to hear, often through prompting, and is going to answer accordingly, whether he believes or not. Remember, this is one of the Landmarks of Freemasonry we are speaking of. If we admit a non-believer, a candidate without faith or spiritual values, we are admitting a Cowan. It has nothing to do with having, or not having, Masonic knowledge, or acquiring Masonic knowledge later as he progresses through the degrees. A Cowan initiated, passed and raised, is still a Cowan, just as admitting the Cowan of old into stone mason's Lodges did not make him a skilled stonemason. Freemasonry, through its lessons may lead a man to think more deeply about his own place in the scheme of things and so enhance his faith. There is hope, that Freemasonry may bring a Cowan to light. Beware the Cowan!

Brother Pat Blankenship, Senior Warden

## From The South



Brethren, our Junior Warden, Bro. Doug Dunn continues to deal with a few medical issues but seems to be progressing nicely. We anticipate Brother Doug to be back in the lodge by late August. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers.

Brother John Settle, III, Worshipful Master

## Trestle Board

August 27 ..... Lodge Breakfast, 8-10AM  
September 10 ..... Lodge Picnic, 12-4PM  
September 13 ..... Stated Communication  
Senior Warden's Night  
Dinner 6PM, Lodge 7PM  
September 24 ..... Lodge Breakfast, 8-10AM  
September 27 ..... Past Masters Night, 6PM  
October 11 ..... Stated Communication  
Dinner 6PM, Lodge 7PM  
October 14 .... Grand Master's Official District Visit  
6PM at Bayside Lodge No. 218  
October 17 ..... District Blood Drive  
2-7PM at Bayside Lodge No. 218

## Masonic Birthdays for September

Christopher K. Adkins '99	Leandro F. Herculanano '21
Christopher M. Bardin '07	Larry M. Maples '82
Patrick F. Barnes '95	Shepherd W. McClenny '92
James M. Beighley '08	Blake C. Miller '14
David Borntrager '87	R. Scott Nester '11
Earl F. Bray '83	Larry D. Rummel '95
Fred A. Brewer '68	John Paul Tewalt, III '92
Ronald W. Clark '16	John M. Thomas '10
Gregory R. Cort '11	Fritz E. Trojahn '14
Richard A. Davis, III '75	Richard W. Walker, II '93
Cacey E. DeFord '11	Mark R. Wegesin '05
Todd C. DeFord '11	Christopher C. Widen '96
Robert D. Eberle '11	Clifton J. Williams '19
Robert J. Eisenberg '88	Glenn R. Wintemberg '76
Larry R. Hale '03	Matthew H. Zardeskas '09

These Brethren have a total of  
758 years in Masonry!

## Kempsville Lodge Foodbank

Greetings, Brothers from the desk of your Food coordinator for Feed Kempsville Project.

A little history of our success:

- 2019 cash donations, \$1500, food donations, 1056lbs.
- 2020 cash donations, \$1200, food donations, 3142lbs.
- 2021 cash donations, \$1428, food donations, 3786lbs.
- 2022 cash donations, \$1657, food donations, 1827lbs (as of June).

Goals are wonderful to measure success, but with an economy not as friendly as previous years we still have great numbers thus far for 2022. Kempsville has made an impact on the hunger needs in our community. Your generosity has not waned; year-end totals of donations have been

awesome, continuing to increase each year. Thank You!

We are on track to meet and exceed previous years. Our success has not gone unnoticed; all of the lodges in the 56th Masonic Districts have followed our lead and have active food pantries. This is a testament to the charity of Masonry.

It is my sincere hope that you all are as proud of our success as I am. We have 6-months left in 2022, let us finish strong!

Brother Bob Hughes, Food Coordinator

## To Our Masonic Widows

Happy Birthday to our special lady in September:

Kathi Whitehurst	September 8 <sup>th</sup>
Linda Ferris	September 14 <sup>th</sup>
Judy Moyers	September 20 <sup>th</sup>
Sherry Stanworth	September 23 <sup>rd</sup>
Lilo Driscoll	September 28 <sup>th</sup>
Carolyn McCoy	September 30 <sup>th</sup>

If any of our ladies are in need of assistance from the Lodge, please don't hesitate to contact Right Worshipful Bill Knowles or the Secretary.

## Worshipful John Edward Marr (cont'd from page 1)

later that year- his signers were Worshipful Charles Augustus Cartwright and Worshipful Stephen Charles Salzer. He later served as Master of VA Beach Lodge in 1949. He was a charter member of Kempsville Lodge No. 196, serving as its Treasurer under dispensation in 1954. At the Lodge's first and second meetings in the Kempsville Ruritan Community House, the officers sat on milk crates from Marr's dairy farm. He was also instrumental in securing the second floor of the Davis Corner Fire Station as Kempsville Lodge's first regular meeting place, and served as Treasurer from 1955 to 1978. He was also a charter member of Willis V. Fentress Lodge No. 296.

Following the completion of the Lodge building in 1957, Marr began the Lodge's long-held tradition of a ham and turkey dinner at the annual stated meeting. On the day before the stated, the ham and turkey were cooked and cleaned- the bones and scraps were used as seasoning in a large pot of collards that would cook for the entirety of the following day. In 1958, he repeated this process

with the help of an inmate work assignment. The following year, it was undertaken by members of the Lodge with Marr present, uniformed, armed, and prominently displaying his badge.

Marr and his wife were also active in the Order of the Eastern Star, and donated the chairs from their restaurant to the Lodge for use in its fellowship hall. A member of our Lodge for 24 years and a Mason for 18 more, he died in 1979 at age 83, and was survived by his wife, daughter, sons, and grandchildren. Following his death, his wife gave Kempsville Lodge his detailed instructions on how to cook, order, and prepare all of the food necessary to continue the annual stated ham and turkey dinner tradition- these instructions proved

invaluable in the years immediately following his death.

Marr's deep-seated commitment to community, emergency management, and law-enforcement exemplify him as a humble and incalculable advocate for public safety and the preservation of concord. For the entirety of his life, he devoted his energy, resources, and time with those of his employees, neighbors, and fellow public servants to make certain the safety and sanctity of his community. His undertakings are ineffaceable, and formalize his celebration in this series as a conspicuous lifesaver. If you're aware of a deceased member of our Lodge who may fit "The Lifesaver" criteria, please email [johnrs4@vt.edu](mailto:johnrs4@vt.edu).



The illustration above depicts (left) a late 1940s/early 1950s scene at "Marr's Regular Meals". This building later housed the B&F Tire Co. which was located at 5548 Virginia Beach Blvd., and (right) a photograph of one of the 62 surviving chairs from Marr's restaurant that were donated by him to the Lodge for use in its fellowship hall.

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