

History Happenings

In Preparation of #9's 150th Anniversary

April 2025 - Issue 33

Charter Received December 8, 1878



Mavrakos Candies - Forsyth & Central, Clayton, Missouri
Image: [LostTables.com/mavrakos](https://losttables.com/mavrakos)

In 1962, the Clayton Lodge was in a fair amount of debt that could only be resolved by selling their Clayton building and finding a more affordable location. The building sold by the Clayton Lodge is now a nine-story condo complex. While looking for property, #1881 meetings were held in places like Strike N Spare and a bar above Mavraco's Candy where St. Louis Suit Company now does business.

In 1963, the Lodge wrote a contract on property at the corner of Ballas and Ladue (now a very attractive gated estate), but the contract was contingent upon the owners of a school on that property, finding a new location, which did not happen, causing the purchase contract to become null and void.

On February 28, 1965 per the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, "The Clayton Elks Lodge sold their Hanley Road property as a site for a high-rise apartment building....and through W. & S. Investment Company bought 12481 Ladue Rd. John F. and Ellen Ryan were the sellers (of 12481 Ladue Rd.). The existing house is to be modified and a ballroom and lodge added. Patios, pool, women's club, tennis courts, children play area, badminton courts, putting green and extensive parking will be provided. have planned the remodeling with Hanson & Associates as structural engineers."

Not wishing to have their name changed to The St. Louis County Elks Lodge (at the time, 12481 Ladue Rd. was in unincorporated St. Louis County), #1881 petitioned the Grand Lodge for the privilege of maintaining Clayton Elks #1881 nomenclature. Without precedent, the Grand Lodge accepted #1881's petition.

Prior to leaving Clayton for Ladue Rd., three members from #1881 and forty nine others started the Kirkwood-Des Peres Lodge #2058. Instituted in 1956, the Webster Advertiser reported on April 14, 1966 that the Kirkwood-Des Peres Lodge was moving into a newly constructed house on Mason Lane. Today, the Mason Lane tenants are known as Manchester Elks Lodge #2058.

Eternally an Elk

The Men at ELKS REST Bellefontaine Cemetery and Arboretum

Eighth in the series remembering thirty-three members interred from 1883-1989.

Article provided by Sandy Schneider, Bellefontaine Cemetery and Arboretum volunteer researcher.

David Gibson, 1861-1899

Artist, Lithographer, Actor

David Gibson was born in Ireland in 1861. His was not a childhood of struggle or poverty, but of ease. That would affect his outlook on life, and how he balanced his work ethic and personal time.

'Dave', as he was called, was artistic. Even before he was twenty years old, he was practicing lithography for newspapers in Ireland. Before photography was used in newspapers, images were etched onto plates that were inked and reproduced. After coming to the United States, he worked as a lithographer in a few cities including Louisville and became a member of the Newport, Kentucky B. P. O. E. before coming to St. Louis in the mid-1880s.

Dave used his craft and his art working for the Globe-Democrat as a lithographer, and as an artist for the Post-Dispatch. Copies of some of his art in these publications will be given to Lodge #9's archives.

An article in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch of October 28, 1888, announced a new club in town called the Bohemian Club. Like the club by the same name that was started in San Francisco, this club was for artists and writers. Dave Gibson was elected its first president. The meetings were to be twice a month with a particular topic in mind. Before the meetings, the members were to prepare a "sketch" exhibiting their talent. Some would paint or draw as Dave did, and others would prepare a dramatic or comedic reading. From the minutes that were posted in the newspaper, sometimes the "sketch" was disregarded and improv and even mayhem took place.



The Bohemian Club logo. 'Weaving Spiders Come Not Here', a call for authenticity and integrity, is from Shakespeare's 'A Mid-Summer Night's Dream'. The time-honored club is based in San Francisco, with membership restricted to men only.

Another article in the Post-Dispatch on August 16, 1889, was titled "Dave Gibson's Brother." Dave went to great lengths to play a practical joke on his good friend William Schaefer, the owner of the Grand Saloon. Dave went to a new barber for a clean shave and different haircut. He bought a new suit of clothes, removed his gold spectacles, and practiced speaking with a fresh Brogue accent. He introduced himself to his friend as Dave's brother who had just arrived from Ireland. Dave, being called away for the day, left his brother to wander the town on his own.

Schaefer fell completely for the disguise. "Dave's brother" drank many ales for free until Dave revealed his farce by putting on his spectacles and dropping the Brogue accent! Schaefer took it well provided Dave told no one. He didn't, but the bartender did!

Dave married briefly in 1889 to Julia Ryan in Chicago, but the marriage was not happy, so it ended in divorce by 1891.



Image: Newspapers.com -
St. Louis Post Dispatch June 25, 1899

After several years of perfecting a "process using colored half-tones" in his newspaper work Dave was in negotiations with publishing houses. Selling this process would bring him fame and a good profit. But he began having health issues, so he took work illustrating for magazines rather than the newspaper while he waited for a deal to be finalized.

On June 18, 1899, Dave Gibson, a man who truly loved making people happy, died alone in his room at 2606 Olive. The death certificate listed "gastroenteritis—tubercular" as the cause of death. At the same time, about 8,000 Elks were in a reunion in St. Louis. Many of the Newport, Kentucky Elks joined Lodge #9 in accompanying Dave's body for burial at Elks Rest at Bellefontaine Cemetery.

Several articles told of Dave's generosity and loyalty to his friends in time of need. On June 19, 1899, an obituary in the Post-Dispatch wrote "Mr. Gibson was a raconteur of wide reputation, and a thorough Bohemian." David Gibson was 37 years old.

TRIBUTE/MEMORIAL FORECOURT UPDATE:

Progress is taking place on the relocation of the Tribute/Memorial Brick Forecourt. Ground is broken for moving the original installation with room for new brick orders to be added. The original location was going to be in the way of construction efforts, so it has been filled with sod. The excavated area will be a set depth before laying the sublevels of paving base and pads. This will make the new location less susceptible to heaving from the frost cycles. The project is expected to be completed by Mother's Day 2025.

See page 5 of this issue for brick order form.



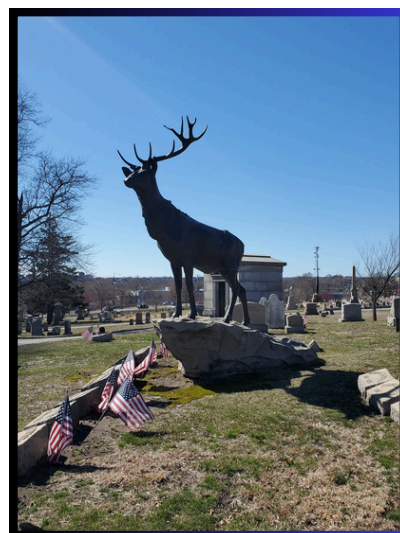
Elks REST Elsewhere

On Monday, September 24, 1905, nearly every member of Providence Elks Lodge #14 plus another 500 members of other New England Elk Lodges paraded to the North Burial Grounds to dedicate the Providence, Rhode Island Elks REST. Upon arriving at the cemetery, the attending Elk members and dignitaries were joined by twice as many on-lookers from all corners of the state. The Hon. Jerome B. Fisher spoke of the great good The Order had done since its foundation and the rapid growth of The Order because of its accomplishments. Whereas "the club took care of the elks when they were living, Elk Rests take care of them after death."

Like St Louis Lodge #9, The Providence Lodge #14, now known as The Tri-City Elks Lodge #14, is a melting pot (chartered in 1882 as The Providence Lodge #14, it merged with The Pawtucket Lodge who had previously merged with The Warwick Lodge) and like St Louis #9, the merged melting pot maintained the historic low lodge number. Furthermore, like St Louis Lodge #9 who "moved in" with the previously merged Clayton & Chesterfield Lodge on Ladue Rd in Creve Coeur, #14 "moved in" with the previously merged Pawtucket & Warwick Lodge. But unlike St Louis #9 who maintained its original "St. Louis Identity," #14 did not maintain its original "Providence Identity" post melting pot. Today, the Tri-City Lodge #14 resides in Warwick, Rhode Island.

An additional similarity exists between #9 and #14 and that similarity lies with the condition of the Elk REST itself. A recent visitor to North Burial Grounds thought that the Elk guarding the REST had an unusually thin rack of antlers, only to discover that the once 14 point Elk has unfortunately regressed to a six point Elk. As much as our spreading antler of protection guardians try they, like Elk members themselves, cannot physically last forever.

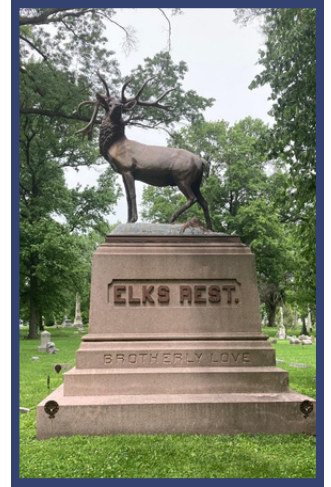
The Providence North Burial Grounds opened its gates in 1700 and today, following the acquisition of additional land, sits on 150 acres. Amongst the notables buried at NBG is Nicholas Brown II, for whom nearby Brown University is named.



"Restoring the St. Louis ELKS REST" Brick Campaign

The ELKS REST at Bellefontaine Cemetery and Arboretum is the final resting place for 33 of our brethren. Since the 1890's, the Elks Rest monument has watched over this sacred spot. Now, worn and weathered by time and the elements, it seems appropriate to restore the Elks' Rest to its original stately appearance.

By replacing the damaged Elk, improving the individual markers, and tending to the landscaping, we can move forward with certainty that we are doing all we can to honor our fellow Elks.



To achieve that goal, the History Committee has launched a fundraising campaign. All bricks sold will be laid at the base of the Elk guarding the entrance of Lodge #9. Bricks are 4" x 8" and are available two colors Nutmeg (\$125) or premium option Regimental Red (\$150).

Each brick will be engraved with the name(s) or phrase(s) of your choice; 3 lines of text, 20 characters per line.*

For questions, please contact Beth Schnettler - beth12523@gmail.com.

To place an order, complete this form and send with payment to Elks Lodge #9, 12481 Ladue Road, Creve Coeur, MO 63141, attention Beth Schnettler.

Make checks payable to "Elks Lodge #9" with the note "Elks Rest Brick Campaign" on the memo line. Payment can also be made through the Club Room Bar register.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Line 1: _____

Line 2: _____

Line 3: _____

**The History committee reserves the right to assess all orders to ensure all words and phrases used are appropriate for placement on the Lodge grounds.*

