

# History Happenings

## In Preparation of #9's 150th Anniversary

July 2025 - Issue 36

Charter Received December 8, 1878



Mid-way through #9 Summer Fun Time, check-out this edition:



- *the #9 'melting pot' is becoming a reality*
- *meet W.C. Steigers, a fascinating St. Louisan AND #9 member*
- *Wilkes-Barre Elks Lodge #109's REST in Hollenback Cemetery*

The first organizational meeting for a potential Elks Lodge in Chesterfield, Missouri was held on Tuesday, February 4, 1986, at Blayney's on The Runway. "At the present time there are many elk living in Chesterfield who are not active elk participants, primarily due to the fact that there is no local lodge for them to attend. Fifty elk members pay dues to their home lodge out of the district - seventeen states are represented by these brothers. While our intent is not to raid other district lodges, members are free to join Chesterfield" (circular penned at and entered into the minutes of an early Chesterfield Lodge Organizational Meeting).

In total, 39 Organizational Meetings were held for the Chesterfield Elks Lodge prior to Institution Day for Chesterfield Lodge #2711 on November 23, 1986 at the Breckenridge Frontenac Hotel at 1335 Lindbergh Blvd at Highway 40. Institution ceremonies were conducted by Special Deputy and next Grand Exalted Ruler Ted Callicott.

Following its Institution, Chesterfield Lodge #2711 had \$12,700 in the bank, but nowhere to call home. Attracted to the land and set up of Clayton Lodge #1881 on Ladue Rd., Chesterfield's first desire was to purchase and build on a lot size approximating 7 acres. Not finding a suitable or affordable place to build, Chesterfield Lodge #2771 began discussing a potential consolidation with the Clayton Lodge.

Voting for a Clayton-Chesterfield Elks Lodge merger took place at each of the two individual lodges in January of 1988. In both instances, members from each lodge overwhelmingly voted in favor of the merger. The Grand Lodge announced the approval of the merger, effective March 1, 1988.

Chesterfield Elks Lodge #2771 did not have time to distinguish itself within the Charity circles of St Louis County. Its two designated charities were Cystic Fibrosis and Cerebral Palsy.

With the merger of Clayton #1881 and Chesterfield #2771, officially now called The Clayton-Chester Missouri Elks Lodge #1881, half of the Ladue Rd. Elks Melting Pot was in place. It would only take a short while for Ladue Rd. Melting Pot scenario to completely unfold.

# Elks REST Elsewhere



“A monument more beautiful or more appropriate exists nowhere.” So was said by the keynote speaker on a late September, 1896 afternoon at the Wilkes-Barre Elks Lodge #109’s Elk Rest Dedication at Hollenback Cemetery.

The Wilkes-Barre Weekly Times reported “as it stands there completed, the monument as well as its surroundings

and everything in connection there-with, is one of fitting grandeur to mark the resting place of departed Elks. It is true that in Hollenback Cemetery may be found the white and beautiful marble, the chiseled granite, as perfect as the sculptor’s genius could design or his skill execute. But, the Elks monument is not one of such style of beauty. It is not of polished marble nor of chiseled granite. It is one of rugged and natural grandeur, and in its naturalness lies its chief beauty.”

As to the cost of this 850 pound bronze Elk statute sitting on top of an 11 1/2 foot long, 5 1/2 foot wide and 5 foot tall boulder, the donor (Exalted Ruler Dilley) “will not talk on that subject and all questions regarding it, no matter how ingeniously put, fail to bring a satisfactory answer. Those who claim to know, however, say that the Rest has necessitated an outlay somewhere between \$6000 and \$8000 (or more than a quarter of a million dollars today).

Hollenback Cemetery was established in 1855. Over 16,000 people are buried within its 20 acres, including eleven Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justices. The cemetery has the highest concentration of Civil War veterans in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

*In preparation for the 1904 Worlds Fair themed History Committee Trivia Night, bits of trivia will be included in upcoming History Happenings Newsletters. The trivia question for July:*

*I opened the 1904 worlds fair by telegram and following the 1904 elections, I attended in person. Who am I?*

*The answer can be found in this newsletter!*



# Eternally an Elk

## *The #9 Notables at Bellefontaine Cemetery and Arboretum*

*Many prominent St. Louisans interred at Bellefontaine were also Lodge #9 members.*

*Thanks to Sandy Schneider, Bellefontaine Cemetery and Arboretum volunteer researcher, we are delighted to introduce our second 'BCA #9 Notable'.*

### **William Corbet Steigers 1847 - 1923**

*Civil War veteran; Early baseball promoter;  
Newspaper business manager*

Civil War vet, early baseball promoter, and long-time manager for Pulitzer's Post-Dispatch...any one of these could make William Corbet Steigers a candidate for being notable. But he was all three, and much more.

W. C., as he was called, was born in St. Louis. His father was in the grocery business, so fittingly his first home was at 12th Street and Market. He attended St. Louis public schools including Wyman School and Washington School before attending Christian Brothers College, then at 8th Street and Cerre.

In 1862, when he was only 15 years old, W.C. decided to leave school to volunteer for the 8th Missouri Regiment, three years under the required age. He was in Grant's lower Mississippi campaign. Shortly after enlisting, W.C. passed an academic test to put him into a new division made for better battlefield communication called the Signal Service. According to the National Museum of Civil War Medicine, this test was "a strict exam of reading, writing, arithmetic, surveying, and topography." Passing this indicates that W.C. must have applied himself to his formal studies.

A signal party was usually several privates under the direction of one officer. The officer was tasked with decoding incoming, and encoding outgoing signals while the privates waved flags, spelling out letters of words holding the flags in different positions. Their equipment consisted of "different sizes of flags, torches for night signaling, and telescopes," all carried as they traveled by horseback. The rides were usually dangerous and timely, and because

NAME OF SOLDIER: Steigers, William C.				
NAME OF DEPENDENT: Widow, Minor				
SERVICE: A.S. Missouri Inf. Signal Corps U.S. Vol				
DATE OF FILING: 1916 May 24	CLASS: Invalid, Widow, Minor	APPLICATION NO. 1423934	CERTIFICATE NO. 1186279	STATE FROM WHICH FILED: Mo.
ATTORNEY: R. L. O'Brien				
RECEIVED C 2451179				

of their high visibility, the men were usually in extreme danger from not only artillery but snipers. Their signals could be seen from 8 to 15 miles away, and often a series of stations were set up to relay messages. Ideally, the last station would have access to a telegraph. For example, using this type of system in the Battle of Antietam in 1862, President Lincoln received updates of the battle in only 30 minutes. Today the Signal Corps uses radios and GPS satellite systems.

The nature of the work demanded “arduous physical requirements,” the Post-Dispatch wrote. Late in summer in 1863 W. C. was on a long and difficult ride. Two horses collapsed under him, and then finally, W.C. collapsed and was taken to a service hospital. He remained for a few days, and then was deemed physically disabled for future service, and honorably discharged. In 1916 W.C. was given a pension of \$50 a month. (That has a buying power today of about \$1,475.)

Once home, W.C. began working at Eagle Foundry as a bookkeeper. His father Francis Steigers died in 1863, and W.C. had to be support for his mother and two younger siblings. He took a job in 1868 as a collector for the Evening Dispatch in St. Louis, officially beginning his long career in the newspaper business. Four years later he resigned and worked as advertising manager for the St. Louis Morning Times.

By 1878 W.C. began his association with Joseph Pulitzer as advertising manager for the Evening Post. When the Post consolidated with the Dispatch, W.C. remained as advertising manager. For almost 2 years, 1895-1897, Pulitzer sent W.C. to his New York World newspaper but brought him back to St. Louis where he finished his career, rising to business manager and second vice president.

During the mid-1870s, W.C. became involved in the Union Base Ball Club of St. Louis, headed by Asa W. Smith. This baseball club has been linked to the founding of what is today the National Baseball League. Two amateur teams formed - the Unions and the Empires. W. C. played “occasionally.” But in September 1874, W.C. was one of 50 men of some wealth and notoriety in St. Louis who gathered at the Southern Hotel to organize the Professional Base Ball Club. W.C. was elected as secretary. His position as advertising manager at the Post-Dispatch was an asset to him in this endeavor.

The new club set out to sell 400 shares at \$50 each with the purpose of bringing a professional baseball team to St. Louis. Ultimately, the St. Louis Browns were established in St. Louis, and its close affiliation and love affair with the game began! (For more information about the Union Base Ball Park, its field location, and its early supporters, visit the [Society of American Baseball Research](#)).

In 1882 W.C. was initiated into Elks Lodge #9. In addition, he was a member of at least a dozen men’s organizations, clubs, and civic campaigns in what is considered the Golden Age of Fraternal Orders. (Remember, no television, no ESPN or FanDuel!) In June of 1894, W.C. was on the Lake Fund Committee, overseeing the money raised and spent building the Post-Dispatch Lake in Forest Park. Over 4,000 workers were employed in this project. He was the Exalted Ruler in 1895 at the time of the beloved actor and Elk John Norton’s death and elaborate funeral.

W.C. remained with Joseph Pulitzer’s Post-Dispatch, becoming business manager, and second vice president. In 1921, he resigned as business manager stating health issues but held his elected office as second vice president. He suffered a total of three strokes in about a year and died in May 1923 at the age of 77. He is buried in his family lot in the Blair section of Bellefontaine Cemetery and Arboretum.

# "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.*

