

History Happenings

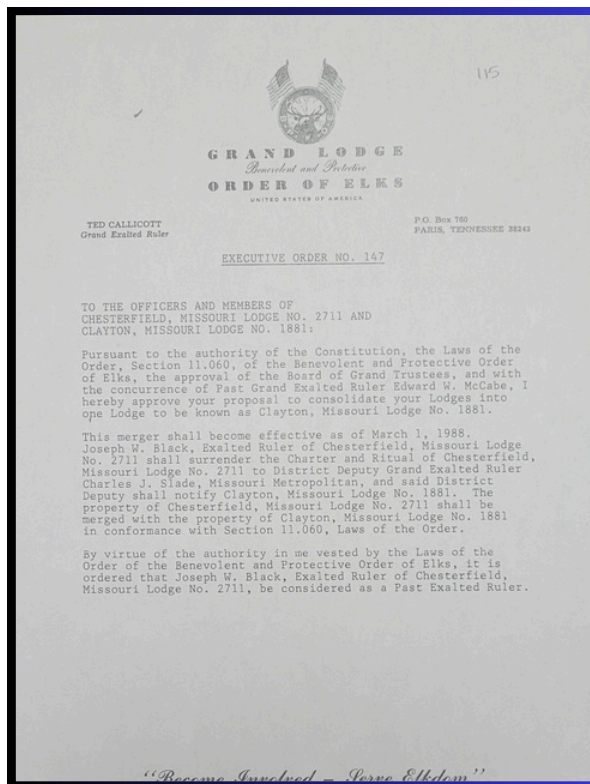
In Preparation of #9's 150th Anniversary

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Charter Received December 8, 1878



Following its November 23, 1986 Lodge Institution, Chesterfield #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 Road, Chesterfield's first desire was to purchase and build on a lot approximating 7 acres. Properties for purchase and build were considered on both Wild Creek Road and Pond Road before it became apparent that such plans were financially unattainable. The lodge next looked at acquiring the former 9600 square foot Mooring's Restaurant, financed via a Grand Lodge approved plan involving interest free loans totaling \$300,000 from members, but plans could not be finalized. The lodge eventually rented space in a nearby American Legion for \$75 a meeting. At the December 8, 1987 lodge meeting, local officers discussed the unsuccessful efforts to find a permanent home. They also discussed a potential consolidation with the Clayton Lodge.



Voting for a Clayton - Chesterfield Elks Lodge merger was held on January 19, 1988 at the Clayton Lodge and on January 26, 1988 at the Chesterfield Lodge. In both instances, members from each lodge overwhelmingly voted in favor of the merger. The now Grand Lodge State Sponsor for Missouri, Ted Callicott, announced the approved merger request of the two lodges, effective March 1, 1988. The Clayton - Chesterfield Lodge merger added an additional PER (Joe Black) to the Past Exalted Rulers Association of Lodge #1881, as well as an infusion of \$10,000 to the new entity's balance sheet. This money was earned by the Chesterfield Lodge from concessions at recent St. Louis County air shows.

With the merger of Clayton Lodge #1881 and Chesterfield Lodge #2711, officially now called Clayton - Chesterfield, Missouri Elks Lodge #1881, half of the Ladue Road Melting Pot was in place. It would only take a couple more years for the Ladue Road Melting Pot scenario to find completion.

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 third 'BCA #9 Notable'.

Fitz W. Guerin, 1846-1903

Medal of Honor recipient, Society and celebrity photographer

You could easily miss Fitz Guerin's modest gravesite if it weren't for a small blue flag next to his marker. That flag indicates that he had received a Medal of Honor, the highest military award given for bravery in combat. It only took a few minutes of researching to reveal an amazing story, not only of Guerin's bravery in the Civil War, but of his artful mastery of photography for thirty-four years in St. Louis.



The 1860 census lists that Fitz Guerin was born in Ireland, but the family emigrated shortly thereafter, living first in New York City, and then St. Louis. He left his family at age thirteen to find employment. Yes, thirteen! He found work at Merrill Drug Company, and at Western Union.



*Civil War Medal of Honor
Image: US Department of
Defense*

Guerin was a teenager when he enlisted in Battery A, 1st Missouri Light Artillery in the U.S. Army. He fought under Sherman, Lyon, and Grant. On April 28 and 29, 1863 at Grand Gulf, Mississippi Guerin at age seventeen, Henry Hammel, and Joseph Pesch, both in their twenties, volunteered for what was considered a suicide mission. The three soldiers chose to remain onboard the steamship J. W. Cheeseman which was not operable but loaded with ammunition and artillery for its battalion. Because of this act of courage, the ship withstood heavy bombardment but did not fall into enemy hands. All three of the men survived and were honored for their bravery with the Medal of Honor. Incidentally, all three of the heroes are buried at Bellefontaine Cemetery and Arboretum and along with seven others from different battles and wars are part of our Medal of Honor tour.

During the war, Guerin first saw photography being used. It impressed him so much that after the war he wanted to learn about the chemistry and the technique of this early craft. Briefly he left this pursuit for better wages stringing telegraph wires for the railroad, but he returned to studying photography in Ottumwa, Iowa, and then to working for other photographers in St. Louis.

Finally able to own his own business, Guerin used his technical skills to create artful photos that appealed to wealthier clients. His style was called celebrity or society photography, and this era of the late 1870s is sometimes referred to as the Pictorialism movement. The scenes he created featured attractive women who usually had some prominent features or unusual details to further catch the viewers' attention. Some of these involved scantily clothed models, and that was tagged as bachelor art. His work was sold in galleries as art and in stores as fine home furnishings. Guerin did have detractors because some of his work was seen as evocative. But even his critics credited him for his technical expertise.



A young woman reclines on a sofa holding a burning cigarette. The smoke rings etched in the glass background speak to Guerin's attention to detail. Photo by Fritz W. Guerin, c. 1902. Image: <https://www.shorpy.com>

Guerin spent hours building sets with painted backdrops and usually included bizarre or unique details. Besides lovely women, babies and children were also favorite subjects. He was a pioneer in flash light photography, a technique using a sudden burst of light to not only illuminate dark scenes, but also to capture fast-moving objects. His work became very well known in national competitions, earning medals in nineteen competitions--fifteen gold medals and four silver. Guerin also won a medal at the Paris Exhibition in 1878. In addition, he was elected several times as president of the National Photographic Association.



Fitz W. Guerin signed the initiation book of Lodge #9 on July 6, 1893

Guerin was married and had five sons. When his wife Ella became ill, he decided that perhaps the warmer climate of San Francisco would be beneficial, so he made the decision to sell his beloved photography business after thirty-four years and relocate till her health improved. Guerin sold his shop to the Gerhard Sisters, pioneer photographers in their own right. Their work photographing indigenous people at the 1904 World's Fair has been recognized as ground-breaking, especially for women.

Ella's health improved, but in 1903 as the Guerins were preparing to go back to St. Louis for a visit, he became ill and died suddenly of a heart attack at age 57. His body was returned to St. Louis for a simple ceremony at Bellefontaine. His name was read at the memorial service in December 1903, along with the others who had died that year.

The following year some of Guerin's work was awarded a medal posthumously in a competition at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. More information about Guerin's heroism in the Civil War can be accessed at theedgeofmemory.com. "Heroic Defenders of the J. W. Cheeseman: Epilogues—The Edge of Memory."

Elks REST Elsewhere

On June 01, 1879, in the Cemetery of the Evergreens, New York Elks Lodge #1, dedicated its burial plot "here after to be known as the Elks Rest." The ceremony, which included the unveiling of a life-sized bronze Elk, was witnessed by nearly 400 people. Delegations from the lodges established in Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, San Francisco, Chicago, St. Louis, Louisville and Pittsburg were present.

Per the Brooklyn Eagle, "In it (the plot) were the new made graves of the five deceased Elks who were removed from the Lingard plot in Cypress Hills Cemetery last week. Upon the plot were arranged the stands of the Officers, in the same manner as in a lodge room.



*Elks Lodge #1 Memorial, established June 1, 1879.
Many of the original Jolly Corks are buried here.
Evergreen Cemetery, Brooklyn, NY.
Image: www.tommyjones.org*

The Exalted Knight desired to know through the Esteemed Leading Knight whether the members desired to present any request. The Esteemed Leading Knight answered that the members desired that the plot might be dedicated in the name of charity. The same question was put to the Esteemed Loyal Knight who answered that the desire was the plot might be dedicated in the name of Justice. In answer to the same question, the Esteemed Lecturing Knight desired the plot to be dedicated in the name of sweet brotherly love. The exalted Ruler replied that all of the requests were in strict accord with the rules of the order and commanded the Marshal to proceed to each of the knights and receive their wishes."

Cemetery of the Evergreens, also called the Evergreens Cemetery is located in Brooklyn, New York. Established in 1849, this large 225-acre cemetery is the final resting place for over 500,000 people. In addition to the Elks REST and other group monuments, Evergreens houses a monument for victims of the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire..... "the bodies of six victims of the 1911 fire to be identified were buried under a monument of a kneeling woman. They could not be identified after the inferno because they were burned beyond recognition and had been buried without names. A century after the tragedy, in 2011, they were identified by historian Michael Hirsch as Maria Giuseppe Lauletta, Max Florin, Concetta Prestifilippo, Josephine Cammarata, Dora Evans and Fannie Rosen."

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire occurred on March 25, 1911, in New York City, killing 146 garment workers. It remains one of the worst industrial disasters in United States history.

"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.*

