

Ellington Masonic Lodge Building Is 101 Years Old

Masonry first came to Barnesville (the original name for what is now Ellington) June 29, 1872.

The Masonic building that still stands on Main Street in Ellington was later built by the Masons, with the building completed in 1916.

Technically, members of Freemasonry meet as a lodge not in a lodge. In this context, the word "lodge" refers to a local chapter of Freemasons, meeting as a body. However, the term is often misused to refer to the buildings or rooms that Mason's meet in.

The month of September 2016 marks the 100th year of the building being used by the lodge – and for many other functions, as well.

Through all the 100 years the building has been in existence, its current status as being entirely used by the members of Barnesville Lodge #353 is unique in that there is no other business or organization sharing use of the building.

Masonic Open House

With no secondary use of the building, Lodge #353 members have determined to conduct an open house of this 100-year-old building Saturday, Oct. 29.

The open house will involve free refreshments and tours of the unique building and its history.

The open house will be

from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. and the public is invited to stop in, have some refreshments, and enjoy the workmanship of the original Mason builders, old photographs and important papers, and a walk-in bank vault from when the front rooms of the building were used by the Ellington Bank which went bankrupt in the crash of 1929.

A Long, Varied Existence

In addition to having the bank in the front section of the Ellington lodge, several businesses have rented the building for use over the years, including a Pentecostal church in the basement in the not-to-distant past.

The first lodge in Barnesville was organized by Brother B. Shepherd, Deputy Grand Master of the State of Missouri with the following officers present: Brother Henderson Chitwood, Worshipful Master; Joseph Dill, Senior Warden; and John P. George, Junior Warden. In addition to the officers were members William Copeland, Thomas Pyles and Isaac W. Cotton. The original Barnesville Lodge was assigned #455.

Barnesville Lodge lost its charter on Jan. 4, 1904. Legend has it that there was a fight in the lodge over a new member who was selling alcohol, which was against Masonic bylaws at the time. Most of the members then joined Lodge #509 in Van Buren.

The current Barnesville Lodge #353 was organized again on Sept. 27, 1906, with

the following officers: T.T. O'Dell, Worshipful Master; Henderson Chitwood, Senior Warden; and James Buford, Junior Warden.

The cornerstone of the present building was laid Aug. 14, 1915, by Dr. Tolman W. Cotton, Grand Master of the State of Missouri. The first meeting was on Sept. 16, 1916. By coincidence, Dr. Cotton also laid

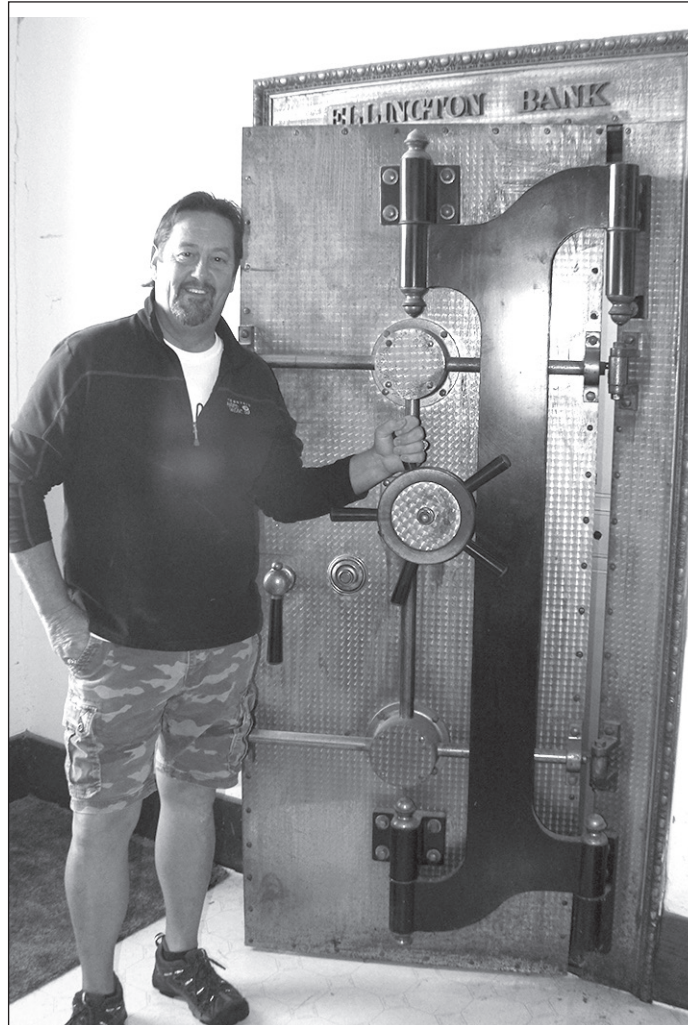
the cornerstone of the Missouri State Capitol that same year.

Brother Cotton was born and raised in Reynolds County. He was raised to a Master Mason in the old Barnesville Lodge #455.

Dr. Cotton transferred his

membership to the Van Buren Lodge and was a very successful businessman. He was instrumental in founding a bank and several businesses in Van Buren.

Barnesville Lodge #353 in Ellington currently has 132 members.



100 Years Old

THE ELLINGTON MASONIC LODGE on Main St. (above) began as a bank and lodge, but has worn many other faces as well. Mason David Martin, left, displays the antique vault door of the original Ellington Bank, which commanded the ground floor in the building's early days. Farther to the left is a picture of the cornerstone, which was laid in 1916 by local Mason Tolman W. Cotton, who also laid the cornerstone to the Missouri State Capitol building that same year.

Thomas Barnes Pioneered the Hilly Wilds of Reynolds County

Rough-and-ready Thomas Barnes pioneered his way into the hilly wilds of Reynolds County about 1837 and settled near Logan Creek at the mouth of Dry Valley. Barnes soon built a water wheel and a distillery. The water wheel ran a corn and grain mill. The distillery produced whiskey.

A village sprang up around the enterprises and the settlers named it Barnesville in Barnes' honor. A church, school and some stores and homes were built along the creek but later had to be replaced on higher ground when a spring flood washed away several buildings.

When the Civil War broke out and southeast Missouri was torn by external forces and internal strife, Barnesville became one of the victims when the entire town, with the exception of one home, was burned to the ground.

During the war, the Confederate Army stationed in Northern Arkansas regularly sent forces into the area where they camped at Doniphan, Van Buren and Barnesville while making forays against federal troops stationed at Pilot Knob. In response, Union forts were built at Van Buren and Barnesville and were used as stopovers for their own troops as they moved through the area maintaining a buffer zone between the opposing rebel army and the valuable supply routes out of St. Louis to federal forces in the West.

In 1868, after the war, the lone surviving homeowner, William Copeland, began rebuilding the town on 80 acres owned by Sina Huff Ellington, a widow and Copeland's mother-in-law. The new town was named Ellington in her honor.

In 1934, most of the homes and businesses were situated on what is now Main Street. The first railroad, the Missouri Southern, came through Ellington in 1896. The train ran on a narrow gauge rail at about 10-15 miles per hour and had a 40-ton engine that pulled 12 cars designed for hauling pine logs. There were two daily round trips between Leeper and Ellington. The tracks went all the way to Bunker, where a round-about allowed the engine to be swung around and pointed in the opposite direction.

A depot was built in Ellington in 1903 and was later moved to the northern part of town. Eventually, after the pine forests were all cut out and before they were replaced by the hardwood forests in the county today, the railroad was taken out, leaving a dual-lane Main Street in Ellington on either side of the old track path.



THE COPELAND-SHY HOUSE WELCOME CENTER, located at 155 West Walnut, next to the Ellington Auto Parts Store on Highway 106. The center is open for visitors to pickup brochures.



BLAZER BOATS custom builds all welded aluminum boats. The company currently employs 10 people at its Ellington manufacturing facility. Blazer builds 350 - 400 boats a year. Pictured above is a photograph inside the manufacturing facility during a recent tour by Congressman Jason Smith.

Chamber Meets Twice a Month

The Ellington Chamber of Commerce meets the second and fourth Thursday of every month at 12:00 noon at Copeland-Shy visitor Center.

Forest

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was located here in 1935. This area helped to re-establish Missouri's deer population. Deer Run contributed 323 white-tailed deer used to restock other areas of the state at a time when Missouri's deer herd was badly depleted. The quality of the area's forest and its abundance of wildlife are the products of sound forest management. Deer Run has been protected from fire and grazing damage longer than any other forested tract in southern Missouri. Some 66 wildlife food plots are seeded, fertilized and mowed as needed. Water holes have been built in about 40 locations. Buford Pond provides three acres of fishing water. Picnic tables are kept at the lake for your use. A nature trail also connects Buford Pond with the Deer Run fire tower. The Deer Run Unit has both an archery and rearm's shooting range. The unstaffed shooting range is handicapped-accessible and provides shooters with a 25-, 50- and 100-yard shooting station, in addition to a shotgun range. The archery range is comprised of a "static" range with targets set at various distances. It also contains a field range, which provides hunters the opportunity to shoot under more realistic hunting conditions. The Deer Run Unit also contains Fort Barnesville, a Civil War fort built by the Union's 13th Illinois Cavalry between January and April of 1863.

Carr Creek Unit

The Carr Creek Unit is located in Shannon County in the Current River hills just north of the river. The forest is located halfway between Eminence and Ellington on Highway 106 and HH. The area was expanded during the early 1990s with the acquisition of former Kerr-McGee Chemical Corporation property. Blue Springs Natural Area is part of this unit. This is the sixth largest spring in Missouri with an average daily flow of 90 million gallons. It is also the deepest spring in Missouri.

Cardareva Unit

The Cardareva Unit was named after Cardareva Mountain. The forest lies north of the Current River, and south of Highway 106. It is a large block of land that connects the Carr Creek and Deer Run units.

This area was significantly expanded with the acquisition of a tract of land formerly owned by Kerr-McGee Chemical Corporation in the early 1990s. The Cardareva Unit also contains the 80-acre Cardareva Bluff Natural Area. Legend has it that Chief Cardareva's grave-site is located on Cardareva Bluff, a west-facing dolomite bluff rising about 550 feet above the Current River. The natural area includes the shoreline and gravel bars of the Current River, backwater sloughs,

Paint Rock Unit

The Paint Rock Unit was named after the landmark dolomite bluff located on the beautiful Current River. The forest itself lies north and east of the Current River and west of Highway 21. Access to most of the area can be from off Highway D near Ellington. Paint Rock Creek is a sinking creek with permanent pools of water. Turkey and deer hunting opportunities are excellent.

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