

Brief History of Mt. Moriah Two Bridges Nahe Lodge No. 823

Mount Moriah Lodge No. 823 began in summer of 1955 when a group of American masons stationed at Pirmasens gathered at the US Kaserne to form an English-speaking Lodge. At that time due to lack of an English-speaking Lodge, many American Brethren had affiliated with the German speaking Lodge "Zur Treue am Berge Horeb No. 701". With the help and support of the German Lodge and the approval of the United Grand Lodge of Germany, the English-speaking "Mount Moriah" Lodge operated as a deputy Lodge of the local German Lodge. In early 1955 they petitioned the United Grand Lodge of Germany and on 19 November 1955 Mount Moriah Lodge was issued its own charter from the United Grand Lodge of Germany and the number 823 was assigned giving it the authority to operate as a legally constituted Lodge.

The Hotel Matheis was the first Lodge Hall used together with our German sister Lodge. After that, both Lodges moved to different places within the city of Pirmasens always sharing the same Lodge Hall. Membership primarily consisted of US military members and a few local nationals mostly employed by the US forces.

In 1962 the Masters of the American and Canadian Lodges throughout Germany obtained representation on the United Grand Lodge of Germany Senate and the right to form themselves into the American Canadian Provincial Grand Lodge later renamed to American Canadian Grand Lodge (ACGL).

In the 1990's, at the end of the cold war and the subsequent drawdown of US Forces in Germany many ACGL Lodges lost resident members. So did Two Bridges Lodge No. 877 in Zweibrücken, approximately 20 miles away from Pirmasens. Due to the closure of the Zweibrücken Airfield, 877 suffered a major loss of their resident membership. In 1993, 877 decided to consolidate with Mount Moriah Lodge No. 823. Mount Moriah was then renamed to Mount Moriah Two Bridges Lodge No. 823. In 2003 and for the same reason, the members of Nahe Temple Lodge No. 824 in Idar-Oberstein also decided to consolidate with Mount Moriah Two Bridges Nahe Lodge No. 823. After the consolidation, the Lodge was given its present name Mount Moriah Two Bridges Nahe Lodge No. 823.

The US Military drawdown also hit the Pirmasens Military Community. Only a small group of Military personnel remained in Pirmasens. Except for a small area (USAMMCE Medical Depot), the US Military installations were all closed and returned to the German Government.

Due to the consolidation with 877 and 824, Mount Moriah had gained many stateside members. Some members from 877 and 824 demitted before or after the consolidation but most members retained their membership with the newly formed Lodge. In 2005 the Lodge had a total of 177 members.

For many years the Lodge was lucky to have the necessary little group of resident members to keep the Lodge active and running. Members consisted of American, German, English and French Brethren. The American Members mostly consisted of former DA Civilians retired and residing in Germany and a few active Soldiers. In the last few years, one after the other either passed away or went back to the US.

Our current resident membership consists of a few American, but mostly German and French Brethren. The Lodge lost many stateside Brethren due to Age and/or death. Our current membership (2025) is down to a total of 43 Brethren.

Due to the loss of so many Brethren, especially stateside, we could not afford to pay our share of the rent in the building we shared together with the German Lodge any more. In 2019 the Brethren decided to move out of the building and look around to find a more reasonable Lodge Hall. We finally found one at the Hotel/Restaurant "zum grünen Kranz" in Rodalben, a small town approximately 5 miles away from Pirmasens, where we used the Restaurants side room to meet.

In 2023 our French Brethren suggested to change our monthly meeting day from Monday to Saturday to enable more French Brethren to attend the Lodge meetings. The Problem for the French Brethren was the driving distance to the Lodge on weekdays. After many discussions, the Brethren voted for the Saturday meetings. But on Saturdays, the Restaurants side room was not available for us. We again looked around for another place available on Saturdays. We found a nice room at the Unterhammer in the Karlstal about halfway between Pirmasens and Kaiserslautern. Since April 2024 this is our new Lodge Hall.