

Historic Preservation Commission Local Landmark Designation

March 9, 2023

<i>Staff Recommendation</i>	Approval
<i>Historic Preservation Commission Recommendation</i>	To be Heard 3/9/2023
<i>City Council Action</i>	

Address	19 N 8 th Street
Acreage	+/- 0.117 acres
Request	To designate the property as a local historic landmark
Owner	Giblem Lodge, Owner
Agent	Historic Wilmington Foundation, agent
Staff Contact	Jessica Baldwin, 910.3413251 jessica.baldwin@wilmingtonnc.gov



19 N 8th Street aka Giblem Lodge No.2., 2022, Submitted by Applicant

Case Overview

The applicant requests designation of the Giblem Lodge No. 2 F. & A.M. at 19 N 8th Street as a local historic landmark, which is on the Local Landmark Study List (date of listing unknown). On February 1, 2023, the Historic Wilmington Foundation and Giblem Lodge No. 2 submitted an application to designate the property at 19 N 8th Street as a historic landmark.. On February 9, 2023, the report was sent to the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The following property description is adapted from the Wilmington Historic District Boundary Expansion and Additional Documentation report, dated 2003 (originally listed 1974) as well as City Archives and Sanborn Insurance Maps 1893-1955

The site consists of one lot, 19 N 8th Street, totaling approximately 0.117 of an acre. The structure was built between 1871 and 1873 with alterations dating between 1898 and 1904, again c. 1939.

The lodge is located in the National Register of Historic Places Wilmington Historic District. The Wilmington Historic District incorporates the large historic core of Wilmington. Wilmington like many cities of the colonial era, was dependent upon the Cape Fear River. Incorporated in 1739, the city encompassed the eastern edge of the river. By 1849, due to population growth, major development increased the city boundary north to Red Cross Street and eight blocks east of Fifth Avenue. The population continued to grow well into the Nineteenth century, being home to 20,000 people by 1890. The population was diverse both racially and socioeconomically and through 1900 about half of the population was Black, both free and enslaved.

19 North 8th Street was purchased in 1871 by Giblem Lodge from Francis W. and Lydia Catherine Kerchner and the Lodge quickly began construction. The lodge has seen many uses throughout the years, including a market, voting place and library; ultimately the structure has continued to serve the community that built it since its inception.

There have been several structures on the property since its purchase by the lodge. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps are as follows:

- **1893 Map.** A one-story meat market on the eastern property line along North 8th Street. A one-story wood working shop, one-story blacksmith, and carriage shop, listed as J. Lowery Carriage Shop appear along the western property line. The Lodge is noted as a 1st story painting facility, 2nd story public hall, and 3rd story Masonic Hall.
- **1898 Map.** No changes appear except the carriage shop is now annotated as John Bennett Carriage Shop.
- **1904 Map.** The former meat market on the eastern property line is now labeled as a blacksmith. The buildings along the western property line are demolished and a small one-story wood frame, shed appears. Also, on the property in the southeastern corner of the lot is a one-story wood frame building labeled undertaker. The Lodge is noted as 1st story Meat and Grocery, while the upper floors remain the same.
- **1910 Map.** The lot size has decreased along the western edge. The Lodge is noted as the 1st story Creamery and 2nd and 3rd stories remain.
- **1915 Map.** The buildings labeled undertaker and blacksmith are now garages. The lodge is only listed as a Garage.
- **1955 Map.** The only building on the property is the Lodge and it is listed as a store with the 3rd story a “Colored Lodge Hall”.

As described by the National Register of Historic Places Wilmington Historic District report, the lodge is an austere three-story Italianate building, with pilasters and stucco and low-pitched hipped roof. Today the clearly articulated structure of the building is showcased and a simple, yet rhythmic pattern is present.

IMPLICATIONS OF LOCAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION

The local landmark designation would make the property owners eligible for a 50 percent deferral in city and county property taxes. The 2023 assessed value for the property is as follows:

- Total Land: \$129,300
- Total Buildings: \$676,200
- **Appraised Total: \$805,500**

If this property is designated as a local historic landmark, major exterior alterations would be reviewed by the historic preservation commission (HPC) for approval of a certificate of appropriateness (COA). The HPC's design review is based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the *Wilmington Design Standards for Historic Districts and Landmarks*.

SIGNIFICANCE

Adapted from Giblem Lodge Local Landmark Application

Giblem Lodge is the second oldest Prince Hall Masonic Lodge in North Carolina and the oldest in Wilmington. The lodge represents the wealth, agency, independence and resiliency of the Black population of Wilmington prior to the Civil War and well through the 21st Century.

By 1870 over 57% of Wilmington's population was Black. Post-Civil War economics had proven successful for its Black population, and Black fraternal organizations were beginning to establish themselves. The Prince Hall Freemasons, with origins dating back to 1775, were forerunners, often overlooked by white Masons. In 1870, the group established the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the State of North Carolina, and in August of 1871 they purchased the property that would become home to Wilmington's Giblem Lodge.

William H Thurber, Henry Taylor and George Mabson led the committee to construct the new lodge. And it is reported that on November 14, 1871, the cornerstone of the building was laid. Almost three years later to the day, the Masons held their first meeting in the building, with Mabson orating a speech of hope, safety, and excitement for the future of the Masons and their constituents at large.

The early years of the lodge were just the start to its multi-purpose life. The building became a polling place for the Third Ward, exhibitions and festivals were also held at the lodge during its early years. In 1875 the lodge served as the location for the first "Colored Industrial Fair" in the state, and perhaps the nation. The Fair promoted and showcased Black farmers, craftspeople, teachers, and many students. The exhibition was such a success that it continued for years to follow, until it grew so large that it was moved to the state capital, Raleigh. The lodge continued to serve as a meeting place for the Masons, with the third floor dedicated to the ceremonies and practices of the Masonic organization.

As the political climate of North Carolina changed throughout the 19th century, Giblem Lodge was a safe haven for Black politicians who were often the subject of virulently racist attacks. As Black politicians began to gain power in North Carolina, Giblem Lodge became a target of the white supremacy campaign spreading in Wilmington.

That campaign led to the 1898 Massacre and Coup that devastated the Black population of Wilmington, with many leaving their homes in the city for safer destinations, and those who

remained facing financial ruin. As a result, by 1900 Giblem saw a significant decline in membership, and remaining members were less able financially to support the lodge. Unable to maintain their property, the members had to sell a portion of the lot.

Racist political and journalistic tactics through the 20th century left Giblem Lodge out of the public eye and forced the Black community and Masons to lose social, economic, and political standing. The segregation of schools, libraries and many municipal facilities due to Jim Crow era laws forced Blacks to find resources and develop their own means of learning, gathering and socializing. In 1926 a grassroots organization was created to establish a Black Public Library and in June of the same year a library officially opened on the second floor of Giblem Lodge. The library continually operated out of Giblem Lodge for nearly twenty years.

Today Giblem Lodge Masons still hold meetings at 19 N 8th Street and in 2020 the Lodge and its members celebrated its 150th anniversary. A community task force today seeks to see it rehabilitated to further meet the needs of its surrounding community.

Giblem Lodge stands today as a symbol of the deep-rooted ancestry of Wilmington and its Black population. The Lodge since its inception has been a place of gathering, idea sharing, and community building. The structure, as well as the people that built it, and the people that continue to maintain it, is a powerful physical reminder of resiliency, agency and support of a community that has and continues to strive for an equal society.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED PLANS

Create Wilmington Comprehensive Plan

The plan encourages preserving Wilmington’s unique history and making sure that the built and natural environments that have shaped and defined the city’s identity are not overlooked. Approving the local landmark designation would preserve the existing property and buildings and all future changes would be subject to the review of the Historic Preservation Commission.

The following analysis examines the proposal relative to the policies of the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Policies that most pertain to the proposed amendment are provided below. Not all policies carry equal weight and may depend on the specifics of the proposal. The following symbology is employed:



Policies		11 Historic Preservation
Wilmington’s Historic Identity		
11.1.1	Historic resources, including buildings, landmarks, landscapes, natural areas, public view sheds, cemeteries, brick streets, and archaeological resources should be identified, preserved, and protected.	
11.1.2	The city’s historic resources and heritage should be recognized and promoted as an economic asset. As the city grows and redevelops, stewardship of neighborhoods, places, landmarks, historic districts, and landscapes should be fostered.	

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- 11.1.4 The city should continue to collaborate with nonprofit organizations and other public agencies and private entities to provide the most effective programs and services in support of historic preservation. ●
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Planning, Zoning, and Neighborhood Conservation

- 11.2.4 When considering historic resources, the complete context should be preserved, when possible, as historic landscapes, open spaces, streets, and public view sheds are critical to the context of our historic buildings and the city's overall character and uniqueness. ●
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Designation of the property as a local historic landmark supports the strategic plan focus areas of *promote culture, arts, and public spaces, engage in civic partnerships, and provide sustainability and adaptability*. Local landmark designation will help preserve the historic buildings, structures, and landscape of the property for the benefit of all citizens.

CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED LANDMARKS ORDINANCE

The property at 19 North 8th Street meets the criteria for designation under Historic Preservation Commission Policies and Procedures Regarding Designation of Local Historic Landmarks: Section 2 of the *Rules of Procedure: Wilmington Historic Preservation Commission*, approved by Wilmington City Council on October 17, 1017.

Section 2: Criteria for Landmark Designation

2.2 Age: *A property should be at least 50 years old to be considered for local landmark status. The Commission may make exceptions for properties less than 50 years old which are threatened with demolition, and which meet the special significance and integrity criteria.*

Having been constructed in 1871 Giblem Lodge is 152 years old.

2.3 Special Significance. *The property's special historical, prehistorical, architectural, or cultural significance must be evidence by meeting one or more of the following criteria:*

- (4): *The property is an especially important site associated with persons, groups, institutions, or movements that contributed significantly to the heritage, culture, or development of Wilmington.*

Giblem Lodge's contributions to the Black population of Wilmington have been felt since its construction in 1873. The lodge's multifaceted use not only for the Masonic practices but also as a gathering space, a exposition center, public market and a public library give the building special significance to the diverse history of the City of Wilmington.

2.4 Integrity:

- (6): *Integrity of association – The property is the place where significant activity or event occurred or where significant person lived or engaged in historic actions. The property is sufficiently intact that the observer can experience the property's connection with the significant event, activity, or person.*

The Lodge has seen a series of alterations, and though many of those dates are unknown, the lodge today resembles the description from the Wilmington National Register Report.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The subject property is located in the Wilmington National Register District of Historic Places, which was listed in 1974. Designation of the building and its tax lot as a local historic landmark will help preserve the property and acknowledge the unique history and cultural significance of Giblem Lodge and the Giblem Lodge Masons to the City of Wilmington.

The lodge served as a safe gathering space, idea-sharing, and community engagement center for more than 100 years. The lodge has been a place of support and a symbol of resilience since it was created. The Lodge has served the Black population of Wilmington through the years by providing services in its markets, social events in its public hall, and political activism in its existing despite the collected efforts of white supremacy and racism it faced.

Designation of the structure and tax lot at 19 North 8th Street as a local landmark is consistent with the recommendations of the *Create Wilmington Comprehensive Plan* and the city's strategic plan and is in the public interest. Staff strongly recommends approval of this request.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTACT

	Historic Preservation Commission	City Council
<i>Signs Posted</i>	02/24/2023	
<i>Property Owner Letters</i>	02/22/2023	
<i>Advertisement Date(s)</i>	03/03/2023	
<i>Other – Contact(s)</i>		

ATTACHMENTS

1. Giblem Lodge Local Landmark Application (dated 2/9/2023)
2. Boundary Map (dated 2/9/2023)
3. Aerial Map dated (2/9/2023)

1. **Name of property:** Giblem Lodge No. 2 F. & A.M.
2. **Name and address of current property owners:** Giblem Lodge No. 2 F. & A.M.
3. **Location of the property:** 19th North 8th Street Wilmington, N.C. 28401
910-762-2511 (Historic Wilmington Foundation, Agent for Giblem Lodge)
Deed: Book 362 Page 601-603
PIN: R04817-027-011-000
4. **Date of Construction:** c. 1871-1873
5. **Historical Significance:**
Areas of Significance: African American History, Political, Economic, Social
Period of Significance: 1871-1903; 1926-1946
6. **Architectural Description:** The architectural style of Giblem Lodge is best described as Greek Revival. Classical architectural details include Doric pilasters delineating bays on the building's facade. Further investigation is required to determine the historic appearance of the facade thanks to the rediscovery of a c. 1939 photograph of Giblem Lodge.
7. **Statement of Significance:** Giblem Lodge No. 2 represents the aspirations of Wilmington's Black community during Reconstruction and their resiliency during the Jim Crow Era.
8. **Historical Background and Significance:** See narrative
9. **Additional Information:** See narrative
10. **Property Included in Designation:**
 - a. **Exterior features:** The three-story building is located on the southwest corner of North 8th Street and Princess Street. The building is a smooth, stucco, masonry building with unadorned, one-over-one windows and a low-pitch, hipped roof, with overhanging eaves. The building's two street facing facades are articulated by projected, stucco spandrels and full-height piers with Doric capitals. The eastern façade has three upper-story, recessed bays formed by the projected spandrels and pilasters. The central bay is slightly larger than the flanking bays and each bay has a centrally-located window with a projecting sill. The first story is four bays wide with a single pilaster dividing the larger, central bay. The northern façade has four equally-sized, recessed bays on all stories framed by the projected spandrels and pilasters. Marching the eastern façade upper stories, the bays have centrally-located windows with projecting sills. The building has seen a series of alterations throughout the years including window replacement and the infill and redesign of several ground-floor windows.
 - b. **Interior features:** Giblem Lodge's interior represent the hierarchical access afforded to classes of people in the Masonic tradition. The first floor was historically open to the general public and used for commercial purposes, typically through tenants. On the second floor, known historically as Mariah Hall, was used by the Black community for social and religious gatherings as a public

hall. In the 20th century, the second floor contained a library for Blacks. Lastly, the third floor was the most restrictive space, reserved for Masons. High above the street-level, the third floor provided the privacy required of the secretive Masonic rituals. The third floor still contains remnants of the Mosaic Pavement, a black-and-white checkerboard pattern painted onto the floor where Masonic rituals occurred. This hierarchical, tiered structure of Giblem Lodge's mirrors the interior uses of the contemporary, white St. John's Lodge No. 1, A.F. & A. M., located at 125 Market Street. Constructed in 1841-1842, St. John's Lodge featured public, commercial spaces on the first floor, a public hall on the second floor, and a highly-restricted Masonic Hall on the third floor.

- c. Landscape features:** The landscape around Giblem Lodge has no distinctive features. It is assumed that grass grew around the Lodge and the various other buildings that were erected on the property. While no distinctive landscape features are known, the various buildings erected on the property in addition to the homes and other structures in this neighborhood are important. Giblem Lodge was constructed in the midst of a rapidly growing and changing urban environment. Various maps and deeds show that the property surrounding the Lodge was used for both residential and commercial purposes by a racially mixed neighborhood.¹ Within the same decade Giblem Lodge was built, Black carpenter Frederick Sadgwar Sr. built his family home with his father, David Sadgwar, next door. Giblem Lodge and the Sadgwar house shared a garden wall with the home of Hugh MacRae, known as "The Castle." Hugh MacRae was a white supremacist and one of the key conspirators to overthrow the biracial, fusionist government in Wilmington in 1898. MacRae and other white supremacists in town held meetings at his home in the months leading up to the coup d'état of 1898.² Through unique circumstances, MacRae acquired a portion of Giblem Lodge's property in 1902 taking away the opportunity for Blacks to advance their enterprises at a Black owned place.

11. Tax Map: See attachment

12. Legal Description: BLK 171 E END 1 PT 2

13. Photographs: See attachment

14. Source Credits: See bibliography

15. Application/ Preparer Information

- a. Applicant's Name: Historic Wilmington Foundation (Agent)
- b. Address: 211 Orange Street, Wilmington, NC 28401
- c. Applicant's Phone Number: 910-762-2511

¹ Jeanne Barnes, Research, Fraternal Organizations, Giblem Lodge, Research Library, Cape Fear Museum of History and Science, Wilmington, North Carolina.

² LeRae Umfleet, *A Day of Blood: The Wilmington Race Riot* (Raleigh, NC.: North Carolina Office of Archives and History, 2009),

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Narrative

Giblem Lodge is Wilmington's oldest Prince Hall Masonic Lodge and North Carolina's second-oldest lodge. Through the Lodge's political, religious, educational, and fraternal uses, Giblem Lodge represents Black Wilmingtonians' wealth, political agency, and independence following the American Civil War and their resilience following the coup d'état of 1898. The Lodge and its neighborhood represent an epicenter of Black society in North Carolina's largest city during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As a font for the expression of Black agency, Giblem Lodge served as a tool to affect change on the political, economic, and social landscape in Wilmington and across North Carolina.

The story of Giblem Lodge and its members starts before the American Civil War with the relationship between whites, freed blacks, and enslaved persons in Wilmington. This port city relied heavily on skilled freed blacks and enslaved people to function. In 1860, forty-six percent of the people living in Wilmington were black (this includes free and enslaved people).³ The process of hiring out enslaved people was common and sometimes the hired-out individuals were able to save some disposable income. This money and the money and property freed Blacks were able to accrue allowed skilled artisans to slowly start creating a black economy.⁴ After the Civil War, these two groups of Black people had already made a name for themselves in town through

³ U.S. Census Bureau, 1860 Population Schedule, New Hanover County, NC., <https://www.ancestry.com/> (accessed April 30, 2021). U.S. Census Bureau, 1860 Slave Schedule, New Hanover County, NC., <https://www.ancestry.com/> (accessed April 30, 2021).

⁴ Leslie Randle-Morton, "A Case Study of Urban Slavery: Wilmington's Bellamy Mansion Museum" (master's capstone project, University of North Carolina Wilmington, 2016), 7. David R. Goldfield and Blaine A. Brownell, *Urban America: From Downtown to No Town* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), 156-157.

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their skills and had already started creating a foothold in the local economy.⁵ By 1870, over fifty-seven percent of people living in Wilmington were Black.⁶

Robert Kenzer argues in his book, *Enterprising Southerners: Black Economic Success in North Carolina 1865-1915*, that while there were several black fraternal orders established in North Carolina after the Civil War, “none was as influential in fostering black economic advancement as the Prince Hall Freemasons.”⁷ Prince Hall Freemasons origins date back to 1775 when Prince Hall and fourteen free black men were initiated into freemasonry. Due to growing racial tension and the Revolutionary War, Black Masons were often overlooked and not included by mainstream, white Masons.⁸ Following the Civil War, Prince Hall Masons from northern states wanted to create lodges in the former Confederacy. Under the authority of the Grand Lodge of New York, King Solomon Lodge No.23 (now No. 1) in New Bern and Giblem Lodge No. 25 (now No. 2) were created in 1866. On March 1, 1870, the first four Prince Hall Lodges created in North Carolina came together in Wilmington to form the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the State of North Carolina.⁹ The men met “in the Masonic Hall, on Walnut Street, between 4th and 5th Street, formerly known as the Poor House.”¹⁰ In August 1871, Giblem Lodge purchased the property on the corner of 8th and Princess from Francis W. and Lydia

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, 1870 Population Schedule, New Hanover County, NC., <https://www.ancestry.com/> (accessed April 30, 2021).

⁷ Robert Kenzer, *Enterprising Southerners: Black Economic Success in North Carolina 1865-1915* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1997), 69.

⁸ Sibyl E. Moses, ‘Prince Hall Freemasonry: A resource Guide,’ 2019, Library of Congress, <https://guides.loc.gov/prince-hall-freemasonry/introduction> (accessed August 14, 2021).

⁹ Kenzer, *Enterprising Southerners*, 69.

¹⁰ “Colored Masons,” *Daily Journal* (Wilmington, NC), March 1, 1870, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/90189665> (accessed September 19, 2021). “Laying the Corner Stone of Giblem Lodge,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, December 30, 1871, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54324531> (accessed May 3, 2021). Newspaper clipping, March 1, 1870, Masonic Lodges, Bill Reaves Collection, North Carolina Room, New Hanover County Public Library, Wilmington, North Carolina.

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Catherine Kerchner.¹¹ The following month, the Lodge appointed William H. Thurber, Henry Taylor, and George L. Mabson to the Finance Committee to solicit proposals to build the new lodge.¹²

The members of Giblem Lodge emulated the Masonic Hall built by St. John's Lodge No. 1, AF&AM in 1842 when they designed their lodge on the corner of 8th and Princess.¹³ Due to the members' economic success in the years leading up to and following the Civil War, the Masons constructed Giblem Lodge, a three-story, 5,000+ square foot building, and furthermore, the economic success of the Masons allowed them to participate in Wilmington's civic and social spheres in an unprecedented manner. Through intentionally emulating the white social and political order, the members of Giblem Lodge advanced black enterprise and met the needs of the black community, allowing Black Wilmingtonians to extend the Reconstruction Era in the city well past 1877.¹⁴ The coup d'état of 1898 halted this era of prosperity for the Black community. And while Giblem Lodge had some setbacks in the years following the massacre, the Lodge and the land that was left continued to be used to meet the black community's needs through the Jim Crow Era.

Through the members' financial stability and fundraisers, construction started on the Lodge just a few months after the members purchased the property on the corner of N 8th and Princess Streets.¹⁵ It was reported on November 1, 1871, that the foundation of the Lodge had

¹¹ New Hanover County Deed Book CCC pages 331-332.

¹² "The Colored Masons," *Wilmington Morning Star*, September 6, 1871, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54324139> (accessed May 9, 2021).

¹³ "A New Lodge," *Wilmington Morning Star*, August 31, 1871, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54324119> (accessed May 9, 2021).

¹⁴ Kenzer, *Enterprising Southerners*, 73.

¹⁵ Newspaper clipping of them meeting in town and events at city hall. Sep 27, 1871; Dec 3, 1871; March 17, 1874 newspaper about a Jubilee festival at city Hall

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been laid.¹⁶ The first brick was laid on November 14, 1871, with the announcement that the ceremony for the laying of the cornerstone would not take place till later.¹⁷ On December 28, 1871, the cornerstone ceremony was held by members of Giblem Lodge. The members of the Lodge and their fellow brethren met at their Lodge Room on Walnut Street and held a procession to their new building.¹⁸ Several items were inserted in the cornerstone including a Holy Bible; constitution and a list of officers and members of the Grand Lodge of North Carolina and of the Giblem Lodge; a city directory; names of the Finance Committee; names of the Building Committee; a list of Wilmington Township Officers; a list of Alderman of the City; the name of the person who presented the stone, J.W. Schenck, Jr.; a list of the City Officers; copies of different newspapers; city maps; silver coins; and the name of the architect and builder.¹⁹ By April of 1873, two stories of the building were completed, however, work had been suspended for a time due to a lime shortage.²⁰ It was not until the end of June that it was reported that work resumed.²¹ The final brick was laid on October 2, 1873.²² Finally, on November 10, 1873, Giblem Lodge held their first meeting in the new building. The first meeting included a ceremony of music and prayer, as well as an address by George L. Mabson. Mabson spoke about how grateful the Masons were to assemble in their own structure and envisioned future

¹⁶ Newspaper clipping, *Wilmington Morning Star*, November 1, 1871, Masonic Lodges, Bill Reaves Collection, North Carolina Room, New Hanover County Public Library, Wilmington, North Carolina.

¹⁷ *Wilmington Morning Star*, November 12, 1871, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54324371> (accessed May 15, 2021).

¹⁸ "Laying the Corner Stone of Giblem Lodge," *Wilmington Morning Star*, December 30, 1871, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54324531> (accessed May 3, 2021).

¹⁹ *Wilmington Post*, December 31, 1871, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/57133706> and <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/57133715> (accessed May 3, 2021). Reaves, *Strength Through Struggle*, 22. The only known list of the architect and builder is located in the cornerstone. The cornerstone is still intact.

²⁰ "Giblem Lodge (Colored Masons), *Wilmington Morning Star*, April 2, 1873, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/53795462> (accessed May 16, 2021).

²¹ "Local Dots," *Wilmington Morning Star*, June 29, 1873, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/53795766> (accessed May 16, 2021).

²² "Giblem Lodge," *Wilmington Morning Star*, October 3, 2021, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/53991025> (accessed May 16, 2021).

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generations gathering around Giblem Lodge. He discussed the purpose of Giblem's construction, the people who reared it, and reminded the audience that the Masons built Giblem Lodge as a safe space for themselves and the larger Black community.²³

Even before the building was completed, the property already exemplified a multipurpose use. In October 1872, the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners ordered that the Third Ward polling place be moved from Gerkin's store to the lot where Giblem Lodge was being built.²⁴ In exchange for allowing residents of the Third Ward to vote at the Lodge, the county would pay the Lodge for election expenses. Citizens voted inside Giblem Lodge or various buildings on the property for nearly 50 years.²⁵

From the onset, Giblem Lodge played an integral role in the social environment of not just Wilmington's Black community, but for Black people across the state. In 1875 alone, two festivals were held at the Lodge. The first was held on April 5th and 6th to benefit Giblem Lodge. Some of the exhibitions included quilts, clothing, artwork, food, mechanical demonstrations, and cookery.²⁶ The Lodge received rave reviews from the community and the festival served as a practice for the North Carolina Black Industrial Fair that was to be held in December of the same year.²⁷

²³ "Giblem Lodge. Preceding in their new Lodge Room," *Evening Post* (Wilmington, NC), November 13, 1873, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/56186422> (accessed May 16, 2021).

²⁴ "County Commissioners," *Wilmington Morning Star*, October 16, 1872, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/53990276> (accessed May 3, 2021).

²⁵ "Notice of Registration and General Primary" *Wilmington Morning Star*, March 27, 1920, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/56158490> (accessed May 17, 2021).
March 27, 1920

²⁶ "Local Dots," *Wilmington Morning Star*, March 25, 1875, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54045325> (accessed September 19, 2021). "Fair and Festival," *Wilmington Morning Star*, March 26, 1875, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54045353> (accessed May 16, 2021). "Fair and Festival," *Wilmington Morning Star*, April 7, 1875, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54045615> (accessed May 16, 2021).

²⁷ "Giblem Industrial Fair Association," *Wilmington Morning Star*, May 5, 1875, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54046386> (accessed September 19, 2021).

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The Industrial Fair was promoted as being the first of its kind to be held in North Carolina and possibly in the United States. The original organizing committee for the fair was made up solely of members of Giblem Lodge.²⁸ Prior to the exposition, carpenters built stalls, sheds, and coops for the exhibitions and children practiced math problems and compositions to compete in various events.²⁹ The fair began on December 27th and went through December 29th. The site was divided into three sections: the Grounds, Floral Hall, and the Agricultural and Mechanical Hall. On the Grounds, there were outstanding displays of both industrial products, such as carriages, buggies, wagons, as well as agricultural products ranging from pigs and fowls to crops and plantings. Floral Hall had expositions of various quilts, drawings, clothing for children and adults, and unusual rocks and sea creatures preserved in alcohol.³⁰ Located on the second floor was the Agricultural and Mechanical Hall. Exhibitions in this hall included, various comestibles, wood and metalwork, footwear, medicines, and implements of war used by Henry Berry Lowery.³¹ In addition to the fair committee providing 150 Christmas presents to Black orphans, one of the fair's main attractions was the performances by Black children from the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, and the Blind. One person reported that not only was this atmosphere great for the children, but also gave honor to this institution and strengthened its reputation in a unique and vital way.³² One W.R.H. wrote to the editor of *The Weekly Era* that

²⁸ "Fair by the Colored People of our City," *Daily Review* (Wilmington, NC), October 26, 1875, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/61968621> (accessed September 19, 2021).

²⁹ "The Colored Fair," *Wilmington Morning Star*, November 19, 1875, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54327842> (accessed May 16, 2021).

³⁰ "Industrial Fair Exposition. First Colored Fair Ever Held in the State- The Procession, Speeches, Articles on Exhibition, &c.," *Wilmington Morning Star*, December 28, 1875, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54327966> (accessed May 16, 2021).

³¹ "Industrial Fair Associations," *Wilmington Journal*, December 31, 1875, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/57123486> (accessed May 16, 2021). Reaves, *Strength Through Struggle*, 57. Wrenn, *Wilmington, North Carolina*, 193-194.

³² "Industrial Fair Associations," *Wilmington Journal*, December 31, 1875. W.R.H., letter to the editor, "Fair at Wilmington," *Weekly Era* (Raleigh, NC), January 13, 1876, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/59007775> (accessed May 16, 2021).

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the fair was very successful and the skills of the exhibitors “reflect the highest credit upon their authors, and furnished incontestable proof colored men have the capacity to become great and famous as inventors, machinists, and architects.”³³ With such success, the Industrial Fair was held the following year at the same location.³⁴ To Blacks in and around Wilmington, the fairs brought economic growth, a sense of unity, and a place to show off their skills and knowledge. Through the local, organizational precedent, the Industrial Fair grew, eventually moving to the state capital, Raleigh.³⁵ All of this was achieved because of the members of Giblem Lodge and what they were able to provide through their three-story building and the land around it.

The multiple fairs held at Giblem Lodge led the way for the creation of markets for the local wards. In late 1888, a proposal for a third ward market located on the first floor of Giblem Lodge was presented to the Board of Alderman.³⁶ The city officials were already familiar with the lodge, since it had been used as a voting place for the ward in the past. During January, 1889, a motion was carried to allow the city to rent the lower level of the building at \$12.00 a month for the purpose of a third ward market.³⁷ The following month, four stalls were auctioned to three individuals.³⁸ The market received excellent reviews and an additional building was constructed

³³ W.R.H., letter to the editor, “Fair at Wilmington,” *Weekly Era* (Raleigh, NC), January 13, 1876.

³⁴ “Industrial Fair Association,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, December 17, 1876, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/54435152> (accessed October 27, 2021). “Second Annual Fair: Industrial Fair Association-Special Programme,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, December 24, 1876, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/54435393> (accessed December 14, 2021). “The Industrial Fair,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, December 28, 1876, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/54435487> (accessed October 27, 2021). “North Carolina,” *Raleigh News*, December 31, 1876, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/59122403> (accessed December 14, 2021).

³⁵ “Raleigh: Formal Opening of Colored People’s Industrial Fair- Addresses, &c., &c.,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, November 19, 1879, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54542482> (accessed December 14, 2021). William H. Bernard, “The Colored People’s Fair,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, November 20, 1879, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54542484> (accessed December 14, 2021).

³⁶ “Board of Aldermen. Proceedings of Regular Meeting Held Last Night,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, December 4, 1888, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/55417821> (accessed May 17, 2021).

³⁷ “Board of Aldermen. Proceedings of Regular Meeting Held Last Night,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, January 8, 1889, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54475322> (accessed May 17, 2021).

³⁸ “The New Market,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, February 14, 1889, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54476570> (accessed May 17, 2021).

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on the property to expand the market.³⁹ Giblem Lodge prospered from the third ward market, not only financially, but also by providing a space for the Black community to live and work, and ultimately providing the community it served with a safe haven to conduct business.

Unfortunately, the third ward market was discontinued in October 1889.⁴⁰ However, the lack of local government support did not stop the members of Giblem Lodge from renting the first and second floors of the building and the various structures on the property.⁴¹ During the last decade of the nineteenth century, the first floor of the lodge was used as a print shop, the building west of the lodge was rented out to butchers, and the structures behind the lodge were rented to various men including John Bennett, James Lowery, and Alfred Hargrave, who established a carriage shop.⁴²

One of the best examples of economic wealth and unification of the Black community in Wilmington was the creation of the Knights of Giblem. Similar to the modern-day benefit corporation, the Knights of Columbus, the Knights of Giblem was incorporated with

³⁹ “Local Dots,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, February 21, 1889, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54476770> (accessed May 17, 2021). “Local News,” *Daily Review* (Wilmington, NC), March 12, 1889, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/61975284> (accessed November 12, 2021). “Pithy Locals,” *Wilmington Messenger*, March 13, 1889, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/53139104> (accessed November 10, 2021).

⁴⁰ “Market Stalls For Rent,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, September 20, 1889, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/55281966> (accessed November 10, 2021). “Board of Aldermen. Proceedings of Regular Meeting Held Last Night,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, October 8, 1889, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/55282091> (accessed November 10, 2021).

⁴¹ “For Rent!,” *Wilmington Messenger*, January 14, 1890, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/56951812> (accessed May 17, 2021). “Notice,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, October 7, 1891, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54424240> (accessed May 17, 2021). Sanborn Map Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Wilmington, New Hanover County, North Carolina, Nov. 1893*, map (New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Limited: 1893), from Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3904wm.g3904wm_g065181893 (accessed May 15, 2021). *J.L. Hill Printing Co.'s Directory of Wilmington, N.C. 1897* (Richmond, VA: J.L. Hill Print. Co., 1897), 179.

⁴² Sanborn Map Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Wilmington, New Hanover County, North Carolina, Nov. 1893*. Kenzer, *Enterprising Southerners*, 73. Sanborn Map Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Wilmington, New Hanover County, North Carolina, April 1898*, map (New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Limited: 1898), from Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3904wm.g3904wm_g065181898 (accessed May 13, 2021).

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shareholders promoting themselves as a benevolent association.⁴³ In early 1883, forty-eight Blacks, many of them members of Giblem Lodge, organized the Knights of Giblem. The association started with a capital stock of \$8,000, with \$5,000 already invested in real estate.⁴⁴ It is believed that \$3,000 of the \$5,000 in real estate was the property Giblem Lodge stood on.⁴⁵ By February 1884, Knights of Giblem reported its third dividend of six percent.⁴⁶ Over the next ten years, the Knights of Giblem announced stakeholder meetings at Giblem Lodge in local newspapers.⁴⁷ By October 1894, the stakeholders dissolved their stocks in Knights of Giblem and Giblem Lodge masons had acquired their property back.⁴⁸ While it is unclear why the Knights of Giblem were created or the cause of the organization's dissolution, the creation of such an organization that supported the Black community is a powerful and remarkable milestone of agency. By creating Knights of Giblem, economic growth and advancement was supported and encouraged throughout the Black population in the community.

Giblem Lodge was also used for various social gatherings. Under the command of Col. George L. Mabson, Black military companies would use the Lodge for meetings, events, and parades.⁴⁹ Reverend J.C. Price gave a speech on the railroad industry in 1883; this was just one

⁴³ "Notice," *Wilmington Post*, February 11, 1883, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/55393436> (accessed September 25, 2021).

⁴⁴ "Colored Masonic Co-Operative Association," *Wilmington Morning Star*, February 23, 1883, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54435083> (accessed September 25, 2021).

⁴⁵ New Hanover County Deed Book XXX pages 527-528.

⁴⁶ "Knights of Giblem," *Wilmington Morning Star*, February 12, 1884, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/55369665> (accessed May 17, 2021).

⁴⁷ "Local News," *Daily Review* (Wilmington, NC), May 16, 1887, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/63377119> (accessed September 25, 2021). "Our Colored People," *Wilmington Messenger*, May 25, 1890, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54000675> (accessed September 25, 2021).

⁴⁸ New Hanover County Deed Book 14 pages 177-178. **1895 act**

⁴⁹ Reaves, *Strength Through Struggle*, 335. "Boys in Blue," *Wilmington Post*, October 31, 1880, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/57471642> (accessed May 17, 2021). "Tuesday's Meeting," *Wilmington Post*, October 31, 1880, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/57471642> (accessed May 17, 2021). "The Boys in Blue," *Wilmington Post*, January 23, 1881, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/55389036> (accessed May 17, 2021). "Looking Back: Visiting Military Unit," *Wilmington Morning Star*, October 9, 1975, NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current. <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.proxy128.nclive.org/apps/news/document->

of many public lectures at the lodge.⁵⁰ Churches would also use the building for events, Sunday School, and even services. Schools held graduations in the Lodge and welcomed special guests like Miss Ida K. Hinds to orate.⁵¹ In 1883, member and well-known artist and politician Joseph C. Hill painted a drop curtain for the second floor, also called Mariah Hall.⁵² One of the most unique ways the Lodge was used was in 1884 when a skating rink was installed on one of the building floors.⁵³ In 1892, the Lodge and the buildings around it were used for Colored People's Day.⁵⁴ Unfortunately, not every event that occurred at the Lodge was well received by the public. On a few occasions, events in or around the building were labeled as "nuisances" by locals.⁵⁵ A local newspaper, *Wilmington Messenger*, investigated one complaint in 1891 regarding weekly balls. The newspaper reported a police officer saying, "Giblem Lodge is a perfect hell hole every Monday night."⁵⁶ In response to the article, Giblem Lodge member James B. Dudley wrote in the *Wilmington Messenger* that characterizing Giblem Lodge as "a perfect hell-hole" does "great injustice" to the Lodge. Dudley goes on to report that a separate organization-controlled Mariah

[view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A14CC20F7A816DE29%40EANX-NB-1775D3BFE65DA521%402442695-1775D08459BB85CC%4018-1775D08459BB85CC%40](https://www.wilmington-messenger.com/?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A14CC20F7A816DE29%40EANX-NB-1775D3BFE65DA521%402442695-1775D08459BB85CC%4018-1775D08459BB85CC%40) (accessed June 8, 2021).

⁵⁰ "Local Dots," *Wilmington Morning Star*, April 19, 1883, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54436152> (accessed May 17, 2021).

⁵¹ "Miss Hinds' Readings and Character Recitals," *Wilmington Messenger*, January 10, 1891, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/53996179> (accessed May 17, 2021).

⁵² "A Picture by a Colored Artist," *Wilmington Post*, August 24, 1883, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/55394368> (accessed January 2, 2022).

⁵³ J.E. Grant, Proprietor, "Skating Rink," *Daily Review* (Wilmington, NC), November 5, 1884, <https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn84026535/1884-11-05/ed-1/seq-1/> (accessed July 31, 2021). "The Day," *Daily Review* (Wilmington, NC), November 28, 1884, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/61885153> (accessed September 25, 2021).

⁵⁴ "Colored People's Day," *Wilmington Morning Star*, November 23, 1892, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54460765> (accessed September 25, 2021).

⁵⁵ "Disturbance Complained of," *Wilmington Morning Star*, August 18, 1887, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/55426042> (accessed May 17, 2021). "Board of Alderman," *Wilmington Morning Star*, June 5, 1894, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/53901805> (accessed January 2, 2022).

⁵⁶ "Abate the Nuisance," *Wilmington Messenger*, June 11, 1891, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/53998168> (accessed May 17, 2021).

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Hall.⁵⁷ The separate organization Dudley was referring to was likely the Knights of Giblem.

Following this report, Mariah Hall was mainly used for political purposes through the remained of the 1890s.⁵⁸

In addition to serving the Black community as a gathering place for social, fraternal, and religious purposes, Giblem Lodge served the Black community as a facility for political organizing and strategizing. Even before the construction of Giblem Lodge, the Masons' meeting space on Walnut Street became a regular facility for Republican conventions.⁵⁹ This precedent continued after the completion of a Giblem Lodge in 1873, as recorded in the local press. Additionally, leadership at Giblem Lodge became a critical stepping stone for appointed, municipal offices or elected positions. One historian reported that more than half of the members of Giblem Lodge were landowners in its formative years.⁶⁰ In addition to being some of the wealthiest Blacks in the community, the majority of the members were skilled tradesmen, merchants, and public servants.⁶¹ In 1878, the Lodge reported there were forty-eight members and the building was valued at \$5,700.⁶²

As fusionism between Republicans and Democratic, yeoman farmers took root in North Carolina during the 1890s, Giblem Lodge provided refuge for Black Republicans to assert their

⁵⁷ James B. Dudley, "Not Giblem Lodge," *Wilmington Messenger*, June 12, 1891, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/53998213> (accessed May 17 2021). "Our Answer," *Wilmington Messenger*, June 13, 1891, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/53998269> (accessed May 17, 2021).

⁵⁸ "Local Dots

⁵⁹ "City," *Wilmington Post*, June 16, 1870, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/57133049> (accessed September 19, 2021).

⁶⁰ Kenzer, *Enterprising Southerners*, 70 and 148. In the notes of his book, Kenzer wrote that twenty-eight of the fifty members (56%) of Giblem Lodge were landowners based on the 1870 census information for New Hanover County. Members of Giblem Lodge could have owned property in other counties and it was not counted in this statistic.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁶² "Colored Masons," *Wilmington Morning Star*, June 26, 1878, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/53896539> (May 17, 2021).

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opposition to the Republican political machine.⁶³ In 1895, a political assembly of Black Republicans met at Giblem Lodge to debate their support of Daniel Lindsay Russell as the Republican nominee for Governor.⁶⁴ The following April, an anti-Russell faction of largely Black Republicans left the New Hanover Republican Convention at Ruth Hall in protest. The protestors reconvened at Giblem Lodge, a long-established sanctuary for Black political agency.⁶⁵ As the political landscape in North Carolina grew tense during Governor Russell's administration, Giblem Lodge continued to serve as a meeting place for Republicans, which resulted in negative attention from the press, both locally and statewide. The press launched a propaganda campaign against the fusionists there were in elected power. One newspaper described Giblem as a locale for a "radical pow-wow" where Blacks listened to speeches described as "incendiary" and "ribald." Giblem's notoriety as a center of Black political expression consequently led to white supremacists and their journalistic partners to target the Lodge in the lead up to the 1898 massacre and coup d'état.

Following the 1898 massacre coup d'état, a change in Giblem Lodge's membership occurred. Kenzer reported that "only two of those who were officers in 1890 were still officers by 1900. In fact, five of the twelve members who were also officers in 1900 had not even been members a decade earlier."⁶⁶ Furthermore, some of the newer members were not as financially stable as some of the earlier members of the Lodge. For example, fewer new members owned real estate in 1900 compared to 1890.⁶⁷ While Giblem Lodge Masons remained some of the

⁶³ "To Consider The Situation: Judge Russell and Gen.. Manning Get the Republicans Together and Urge the Support of Harrison," *Wilmington Messenger*, November 3, 1892, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/53241781> (accessed May 17, 2021).

⁶⁴ "A Stormy Meeting," *Wilmington Morning Star*, October 25, 1895, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/55272804> (accessed May 17, 2021).

⁶⁵ "The Political Pot: The New Hanover Republican Convention," *Semi-Weekly Messenger* (Wilmington, NC), April 16, 1896, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54038726> (accessed May 17, 2021).

⁶⁶ Kenzer, *Enterprising Southerners*, 71.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

leading Blacks in the community, the damage of the 1898 massacre and coup d'état were evident within Giblem Lodge and the larger Black community.

Struggling to gain financial stability, Giblem Lodge was cored to sell a portion of the lot they owned.⁶⁸ In 1902, the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners (made up of all white members) deemed the charitable organization a profitable business due to the rental of its floors to various groups and required the Lodge to pay taxes for the first time since construction.⁶⁹⁷⁰ All the other charitable organizations the commissioners reviewed were not required to pay property taxes.⁷¹ In December, 1902, the Lodge was listed as a property intended to be sold in a public auction in January of 1903.⁷² On January 15, 1903, the Lodge voted twenty-one to three to sell a portion of their property.⁷³ The members of Giblem Lodge sold the property to Thomas W. Davis for \$1,200 on February 9, 1903.⁷⁴ Just six days later, Davis sold the piece of property to Hugh MacRae, a conspirator in the 1898 massacre and coup d'état, for \$1,200.⁷⁵ The purchase of this piece of property allowed MacRae to extend his personal holdings and residence (known as “The Castle”) by encroaching on Giblem Lodge and the assets used by the Black community for decades.

⁶⁸ Minutes of Giblem Lodge, Fraternal Organizations, Giblem Lodge, Research Library, Cape Fear Museum of History and Science, Wilmington, North Carolina.

⁶⁹ “The County Fathers,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, March 4, 1902, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/55229396> (accessed May 17, 2021).

⁷⁰ “County Affairs,” *Wilmington Messenger*, April 8, 1902, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/53152281> (accessed May 24, 2021).

⁷¹ Ibid. “Affairs of County,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, April 8, 1902, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/55229580> (accessed May 17, 2021).

⁷² “Sale of Lands For Taxes Unpaid for 1902,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, December 7, 1902, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54539443> (accessed May 17, 2021).

⁷³ Kenzer, *Enterprising Southerners*, 73.

⁷⁴ New Hanover County Deed Book 35 pages 189-191. “Real Estate Transfers,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, February 10, 1903, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/55314584> (accessed May 17, 2021).

⁷⁵ New Hanover County Deed Book 36 pages 376-377.

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Prior to the 1898 massacre and coup d'état, newspapers regularly published what was happening at Giblem Lodge and what the Masons were doing. However, following the massacre, coup d'état, and the Lodge being forced to sell portion of their property, newspapers rarely reported about events at the Lodge or the Masons themselves in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The racist tactics of the new political power in Wilmington forced the Black community and the Masons to lose social, economic, and political standing. Giblem Lodge was still used through the early decades of the twentieth century, despite its lack of publicity. The structure was used for religious practices; an office for Greene and Harris, architects; a creamery and grocery store; as well as continuing to serve as a meeting and event space for Giblem Lodge and other Prince Hall Masons in the area during the early twentieth century.⁷⁶ On the rest of the property, various buildings were constructed over time to accommodate a blacksmith shop, a meat shop, a garage, and other entrepreneurial endeavors.⁷⁷ Additionally, Giblem Lodge Mason's sister society, Sisters Of Giblem Chapter No 646 Order Of Eastern Star, would occasionally donate money and host events at the lodge.⁷⁸ The Black community and the Masons faced many

⁷⁶ Minutes of Giblem Lodge, Fraternal Organizations, Giblem Lodge, Research Library, Cape Fear Museum of History and Science, Wilmington, North Carolina. *Wilmington, N.C. Directory 1909-10*, (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory, 1910), 439. "Local Dots," *Wilmington Morning Star*, September 10, 1905, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54534413> (accessed September 25, 2021). "Church Building Torn Away," *Wilmington Morning Star*, August 4, 1907, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/54041715> (accessed May 17, 1907). "Event In Colored Circles," *Wilmington Dispatch*, September 8, 1911, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/55581659> (accessed May 17, 2021). "Colored Masons Celebrate," *Wilmington Morning Star*, February 11, 1917, <https://newscomnc.newspapers.com/image/55275538> (accessed May 17, 2021).

⁷⁷ Sanborn Map Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Wilmington, New Hanover County, North Carolina, Nov. 1904*, map (New York: Sanborn Map Co. Limited: 1904), from Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3904wm.g3904wm_g065181904 (accessed May 15, 2021). Sanborn Map Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Wilmington, New Hanover County, North Carolina, Nov. 1910*, map (New York: Sanborn Map Co. Limited: 1910), from Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3904wm.g3904wm_g065181910 (accessed May 15, 2021). Sanborn Map Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Wilmington, New Hanover County, North Carolina, Nov. 1915*, map (New York: Sanborn Map Co. Limited: 1915), from Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3904wm.g3904wm_g065181915 (accessed May 15, 2021).

⁷⁸ Minutes of Giblem Lodge, Fraternal Organizations, Giblem Lodge, Research Library, Cape Fear Museum of History and Science, Wilmington, North Carolina.

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setbacks during the early 20th century, yet the building itself continued to serve as a place of prosperity, financial profit for the Masons, and a safe haven for the entire community.

As the twentieth century continued, the building found new life as a library serving the Black community that had been segregated from the publicly accessible libraries in the city. A movement in 1926 started by several Black citizens in Wilmington provided Blacks with access to more books than just the books available from the churches and schools of the community. David Clarke Virgo, principal of Williston Industrial School, with the Colored Chamber of Commerce, submitted a request to the city commissioners asking to use the public library, at that time, on the second floor of City Hall. The city commissioners informed the delegates that the public library was owned and operated by the civic group, the North Carolina Sorosis, and they would need to submit an appeal to the group.⁷⁹ Quickly realizing the city's public library was not going to allow Blacks access to their collections, Rev. George D. Cranes headed a committee to fundraise \$2,500 toward establishing a black public library in Wilmington. In April of 1926, the committee announced they had secured the second floor of Giblem Lodge.⁸⁰ The library officially opened on June 24, 1926, with 800 books.⁸¹ With the support of Robert R. Taylor, former Tuskegee Institute architect, the Colored Chamber of Commerce continued supporting and advocating for the library.⁸² Giblem Lodge, yet again, was able to fill a void for the Black community in Wilmington by housing the Wilmington Colored Library on the second floor for nearly twenty years.⁸³

⁷⁹ Reaves, *Strength Through Struggle*, 11.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 319-320.

⁸³ *Hill's Wilmington (New Hanover County, N.C.) City Directory, 1943* (Richmond, Va: Hill Directory Co., 1943), 875. *Hill's Wilmington (New Hanover County, N.C.) City Directory, 1947* (Richmond, Va: Hill Directory Co., 1947), 491. The exact year the library moved from the second floor of Giblem Lodge to 529 Red Cross Street is unclear. Per the 1947 City Directory, the library was located at the new location.

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In order to provide a source of consistent revenue, Giblem Lodge Masons leased the first floor of the building to O’Crowley Cleaners starting in the early 1930s.⁸⁴ Over time, the cleaners was permitted to make alterations to the first floor and construct a small building next to the lodge.⁸⁵ The cleaners continued to rent on the premises for nearly thirty years.⁸⁶ The only-known photograph depicting Giblem Lodge’s façade without stucco depicts the owners and staff of O’Crowleys Cleaners outside the business.

In 1932, the property and the buildings owned by Giblem Lodge Masons was sold to David Bryant, Charles L. Bryant, Jackson Watkins, Enoch Winfield, Charles P. George, Robert H. Scott, Peter Barber, and Theodore Alexander for \$1.00.⁸⁷ All of the men were members of Giblem Lodge and claimed they constituted the entire membership of the Lodge. Allegedly, the men had paid for all the expenses and maintenance for the Lodge and the building. They stated in the deed that Giblem Lodge was indebted to them “in a sum in much excess of the value of the lodge building and premise.” Furthermore, the men “desired to settle the said indebtedness by making a conveyance over to the parties of the second part for the land and premises.”⁸⁸ The men offered Giblem Lodge to continue using the building “for lodge purposes only.”⁸⁹ The statewide organization of Prince Hall Masons filed legal suit, and after five days of litigation, Judge Luther T. Hamilton handed down a decision in favor of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge F&AM of North Carolina.⁹⁰ This decision not only clarified the question of ownership of

⁸⁴ *Hill's Wilmington (North Carolina) City Directory, 1932* (Richmond, Va: Hill Directory Co., 1932), 311.

⁸⁵ New Hanover County Deed Book 268 pages 428-430.

⁸⁶ *Hill's Wilmington (New Hanover County, N.C.) City Directory, 1961* (Richmond, Va: Hill Directory Co., 1961), 269.

⁸⁷ New Hanover County Deed Book 353 pages 17-18.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁹⁰ George F. King, “Important Decision Won By Masons: N.C. Court Decision Establishes Precedent For The Recovery Of Dormant Masonic Lodge Property,” *New York Age*, February 23, 1946. “North Carolina Grand Lodge Of Masons Wins Litigation,” *New Journal and Guide*, February 23, 1946,

https://uncw.summon.serialssolutions.com/#!/search?bookMark=eNrjYmDJy89L5WQw8csvKslQcE4sys_JzEtUcC

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inoperative properties in the state, but it also established a precedent that dormant properties be reverted to grand lodges. Trustees for the Grand Lodge, Carnes, Lawrence, and Hall, were tasked with overseeing the property and working with the current members of Giblem Lodge to acquire back the property from the Grand Lodge.⁹¹ With Sam Hicks, D.L. Grady, Harvey Jones, and J.H. Smith acting as trustees for Giblem Lodge, the members of the Lodge were able to regain their property within a few months.⁹² In order to generate income, Giblem Lodge released the first floor of the lodge.⁹³ In August 1946, it was reported that Giblem Lodge regained their property from the Grand Lodge.⁹⁴ Furthermore, the members who instituted the litigation were expelled from the Lodge.⁹⁵

After 1946, public records are scarce with reports of the members and activities of Giblem Lodge. Continued racism practiced across the county most likely contributed to the lack of documentation during the mid-twentieth century. In 1970, Prince Hall Masons from across the State traveled as their forefathers did one hundred years before to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the creation of the Grand Lodge of the State of North Carolina.⁹⁶ Along with co-

[9KzEtR8MIPSU9V8E9T8E0szs8rVgjPBBL-mSWZ6Yklmf15PAysaYk5xam8DCwlRaWp3Ayybq4hzh66BUX5haWpxSXXGXkF8aZm5paGxoYmJsaE5AE2WStR](https://uncw.summon.serialssolutions.com/#!/search?bookMark=eNrjYmDJy89L5WTQDspMzygpVshPU3AvSsxLUfDJT0IPBXH99Jz1FHwTi_PzihVCCzJSc1J4GFjTEenOKU3kZWEqKSI05GWTdXEOcPXQLivILS1OLS-Iz8griTY0NTc3MTA1NjAnJAwAp4ScM) (accessed July 17, 2021). “Rights of Grand Lodge of N.C. Masons Upheld,” *Baltimore Afro-American*, February 23, 1946,

https://uncw.summon.serialssolutions.com/#!/search?bookMark=eNrjYmDJy89L5WTQDs_MScpJzVXwyU9JT9VR8E0szs8r1IEISK1PzMwrVvAsKVYIKMovSC0qqeRhYE1LzCIO5WVgKSkqTeVmkHVzDXH20C0oyi8sTS0uicIK4g3NTO3MDe0NDU2JiQPAHoKKAY (accessed July 17, 2021).

⁹¹ New Hanover County Deed Book 362 pages 601-603.

⁹² “Giblem Lodge, Masons, Regains Its Property,” *New Journal and Guide*, August 3, 1946,

https://uncw.summon.serialssolutions.com/#!/search?bookMark=eNrjYmDJy89L5WTQDs_MScpJzVXwyU9JT9VR8E0szs8r1IEISK1PzMwrVvAsKVYIKMovSC0qqeRhYE1LzCIO5WVgKSkqTeVmkHVzDXH20C0oyi8sTS0uicIK4g3NTO3MDe0NDU2JiQPAHoKKAY (accessed July 17, 2021).

⁹³ New Hanover County Deed Book 396 pages 162-163.

⁹⁴ “Giblem Lodge, Masons, Regains Its Property,” *New Journal and Guide*, August 3, 1946.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ “Anniversary celebration Set Monday for Masons,” *Wilmington Morning Star*, March 1, 1970, <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.proxy128.nclive.org/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A14CC20F7A816DE29%40EANX-NB-1775B623D0CCBFF6%402440647-1775B05A11DAD9F0%402-1775B05A11DAD9F0%40> (accessed June 6, 2021).

hosting the event with other Lodges in town, Giblem Lodge used their Hall for the ritualistic ceremonies of the order.⁹⁷ Over the last thirty years, the members of Giblem Lodge have strived to preserve their building. In the early 1990s, the lodge was condemned and the masons were required to meet elsewhere.⁹⁸ Representatives from Giblem Lodge and other Prince Hall affiliated lodges in the area joined together to form a group called the Wilmington Masons United, Prince Hall Affiliated.⁹⁹ Through grants, this group was able to secure funds to start repairing the historic structure.¹⁰⁰ The money would not be enough to make all of the structural changes needed in order for this building to operate in the multifaceted way it was designed to do, but enough repairs were made for the members of Giblem Lodge to hold meetings in the building again. However, instead of the Lodge meeting in their Hall on the third floor, in 2020 the first floor of the building was converted into their meeting room. Additionally, in 2003 Giblem Lodge was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.¹⁰¹ Today, Masons continue to meet at Giblem Lodge. In early 2020, the Prince Hall Masonry in North Carolina celebrated the 150th anniversary of its formation by returning to Wilmington. Today, efforts facilitated through an all-volunteer, community-based task force seeks to rehabilitate the Lodge so the

⁹⁷ Ibid. The Grand Lodge also met in Wilmington in 1883, 1958, 1974, and 2020.

⁹⁸ Philip Hervey, "Projects win cash to save landmarks," *Wilmington Morning Star*, December 23, 1994, <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.proxy128.nclive.org/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A14CC20F7A816DE29%40EANX-NB-177E21AD2542AC0D%402449710-177E1FC268B55A70%4010-177E1FC268B55A70%40> and <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.proxy128.nclive.org/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A14CC20F7A816DE29%40EANX-NB-177E21AD2542AC0D%402449710-177CD364AC702A31%4011-177CD364AC702A31%40>. (accessed June30, 2021).

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Myers, "Freemasons' home preserved as black cultural site," *Wilmington Morning Star*, August 2, 1993, <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.proxy128.nclive.org/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A14CC20F7A816DE29%40EANX-NB-177E255A0628DD89%402449202-177E22851AC9EDEE%408> (accessed July 5, 2021). Newspaper clipping, March 23, 1995, Giblem Lodge Hall, Subject File, North Carolina Room, New Hanover County Public Library, Wilmington, North Carolina.

¹⁰¹ "Wilmington Historic District: Boundary Expansion and Additional Documentation," *National Register of Historic Places- Nomination and Inventory*, 2003, 231.

ATTACHMENT 1

historic building “remains a monument to black Wilmington’s post-war independence and post-riot continuity.”¹⁰²

¹⁰² Ellen Weiss, *Robert R. Taylor and Tuskegee: An African American Architect Designs for Booker T. Washington* (Montgomery, AL: NewSouth Books, 2012), 7.

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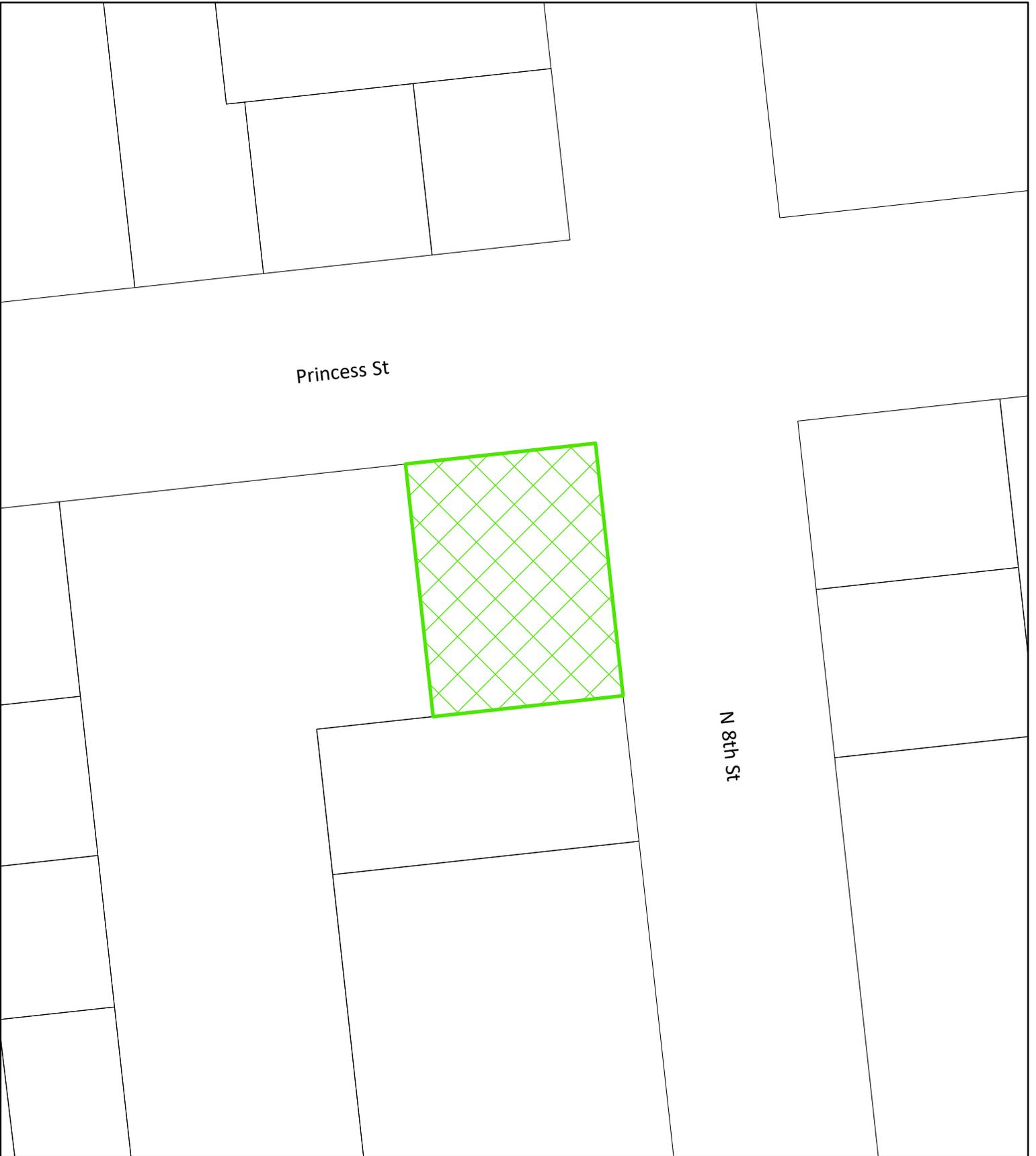
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Princess St

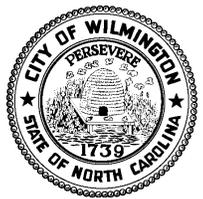
N 8th St

Proposed Designation Boundary Map

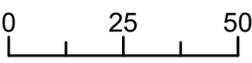
City of Wilmington

19 N 8th St

2/9/2023



Proposed designation boundary

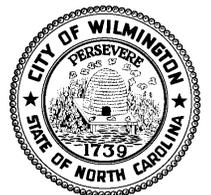


Proposed Designation Boundary Map

City of Wilmington

19 N 8th St

2/9/2023



Proposed designation boundary