

Photo of the Month

Rogers First Elks Lodge



Part of the crowd which met in front of the Rogers Wholesale Grocery Building on April 16, 1917, for the dedication of the new Elks Lodge building. Courtesy of the Elks Lodge. (Neg. #N007109)

The Rogers Elks Lodge #1223 was organized on February 11, 1911. Following the induction of 46 new members, a train trip brought the men to an elaborate banquet at Monte Ne.

In February 1917 the Elks secured a long-term lease on the second floor of the Vandover Building (corner of Second and Walnut Streets in Rogers) for their new home. Architect A.O. Clarke, who was also the exalted ruler of the Rogers order, had designed the building in 1909 and was therefore in charge of designing the new lodge home, including such features as a lodge room, lounge, ladies' parlors, kitchenette, toilet, and janitor's room.

(The building is currently owned by the Benchmark Group, which recently restored the Elks sign to the front facade of the building.)

The dedication for the new lodge home was on April 16, 1917. A number of dignitaries arrived from as far away as New Orleans and Dubuque, Iowa, and included Arkansas Governor Brough of Little Rock. According to the Rogers Democrat of April 19, "They were met at the [railroad] station by the Lester-Lindsey show band and Rogers Lodge en masse, and proceeded in autos to the Rogers Wholesale Grocery where a group picture was taken. The Elks then left for an auto tour..."

The bedecking shown here on the Rogers Wholesale Grocery building (now the Dollar Saver store) is also referred to in the Democrat article: "Many business houses were appropriately decorated with the colors, purple and white, and the national colors, and flags were in evidence everywhere."

Over the years the Elks contributed to many worthwhile causes by holding fundraising events such as plays and boxing contests. However, this Elks Lodge disbanded on June 9, 1934. (Other Elks Lodges were later organized in the area and continue to support charitable causes.)

