

Francis Marion Zuck:

“Arizona Pioneer Mason”

By Peter H. Johnson, Jr.

The old Chinese maxim, “that one might live in interesting times”, could certainly apply to the first High Priest of Temple Chapter, No. 8, Royal Arch Masons, Winslow, Arizona, Francis Marion Zuck. Born in 1838, Zuck, lived to the age of the Biblical, “three score and ten”, succumbing in 1909. Zuck was not an observer, but an actual participant in one of the most turbulent eras in American history. Zuck fought with the Union Army in one of the most significant campaigns of the Civil War and also ended up as an entrepreneur and civic leader one of the old west’s toughest towns, Holbrook, Arizona. Francis Zuck’s greatest achievements, however, occurred in the last decade of his life as an accomplished leader of Freemasonry in the Arizona Territory.

F.M. Zuck seems to have left us few reminiscences of his personal activities. However, a good effort will be made to reconstruct his most interesting life from news articles in old Holbrook newspapers and references found in the unpublished “History of Chalcedony Lodge No. 6”, by Lloyd C. Henning (PGM of 1928), and Harold C. Wayte, Jr’s 1962 Master’s thesis, “A History of Holbrook and the Little Colorado Country”.

Francis Marion Zuck was born on July 31, 1838 in Greenburg, Pennsylvania. His parents were John Zuck (1814-1855) and Sarah Anne Johnston Zuck (1818-1852). We know little of Zuck’s childhood other than the family moved to Marion County, Iowa in 1850. At age 20 we find young F.M. Zuck as a “merchandiser” in Wayne County, Indiana. We know nothing of Zuck’s educational background. At his death, Zuck was described as a “well read, scholarly gentleman”. Perhaps he was a self-educated man as were many great men of his time.

Back in Iowa at the beginning of the Civil War, Francis Zuck enlisted as a corporal in Co. B, Third Iowa Volunteer Infantry. He was mustered in in Keokuk on June 8, 1861. On June 27th, the Regiment was sent on a steamer to Hannibal, Missouri. The regiment saw action in the Battle of Blue Mills on September 17th and continued operations against insurgence in northern Missouri until October 18th. In November, the regiment took time to recuperate from the privations of war in Quincy, Illinois. After Christmas, 1861, the regiment was assigned to guard duty in Mexico, Missouri, protecting the Northern Missouri Railroad until March of 1862 when the regiment was ordered to Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee. The Third Iowa was now part of the Army of the Tennessee under the command of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant,

The Third Iowa Volunteer Infantry took part in the great Battle of Shiloh on April 6th and 7th, 1862 and was definitely in “the thick of things”. Capt. M.M. Trumble describes the conduct of the division that included the Iowa regiment:

“Let this division remember that for five hours on Sunday it held under terrific fire the key point of the left of the army and only fell back when flanked by overwhelming masses of enemy, pressing through points abandoned by our support. Let them remember that when they fell back it was in good order, and that the last line of resistance in the rear of the heavy guns was formed by this division. Let them remember that on the morning of Monday, without food and without sleep, they were ordered forward

to reinforce the right, and when the brigade of this division appeared on the field, they were in time to support the broken flanks and hold the line.”

There is no hard evidence of Corporal Zuck seeing any more action after the Battle of Shiloh. His participation in the Battles of Fort Donnelson and Shiloh is mentioned in his obituaries. It is likely that Zuck was ill and unfit for duty for at least a portion of the time before he was discharged for reasons of disability on November 20, 1863. A summary of the casualties incurred by the Third Iowa Volunteer Infantry speaks for itself:

Total enrolled 1109

Killed 76

Wounded 370

Died of wounds 30

Died of disease 109

Discharged for wounds, disease, and other causes 270

Captured 71

Buried in national cemetery 116

Transferred 23

Zuck now returned to his family home in Knoxville, Iowa. Within a week after returning home, F.M. Zuck was initiated an Entered Apprentice Mason in Oriental Lodge No. 61 on November 27, 1863. He was passed to the degree of Fellowcraft on February 11, 1864 and raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason on April 28, 1864. Zuck served as Senior Deacon of his lodge in 1865 and Senior Warden in 1866. He demitted from Oriental Lodge on December 1, 1867.

Francis M Zuck married Miss Jennie Brobst, also of Knoxville, Iowa on June 21, 1864. Miss Brobst was the daughter of Josiah Brobst and grand-daughter of Judge Joseph Brobst. Their union produced four children: Frank A., Harry Z., Myrtle J., and Grace Mary. In his early married years, Zuck ran his late father's harness business in Knoxville. In 1867, the Zuck's moved to St. Louis where Francis would make a living as a traveling salesman for the next 19 years.

In 1882, it was determined that Zuck's wife Jennie's health required a move to a drier climate. The Zuck family moved to Arizona in 1882 and are said to have arrived on the first scheduled passenger train on the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad between Albuquerque and Winslow. The Zuck's spent their first five months in the Arizona Territory in Carrizo. They arrived in the high desert town of Holbrook in the fall of 1882.

Francis Marion Zuck's twenty-seven years in Holbrook would see him flower as a business man and leader of his community. He would even garner the unofficial title of "Father of Holbrook". But if Zuck was indeed the father of his new community, his offspring was turbulent and troubled child.

Author Harold C. Wayte, Jr. gives the founding date of Holbrook as the day the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad reached the original town site on September 21, 1881. The new and present Holbrook townsite

was located by Santago Baca, Pedro Montano, and F.W. Smith on an even numbered section by the railroad. The plat was filed at the Apache County Courthouse in St. Johns in March of 1884. Little is known of the first two years of Holbrook's history. However, Holbrook pioneer Albert E. Potter relates that he arrived in Holbrook on December 6, 1883. On that day, he recalls that there was a hearing before Justice of the Peace Francis Zuck involving three cowboys that had been arrested by Sheriff Tom Perez for shooting a sheep herder up on the Little Colorado River. This proves that F.M. Zuck was already a leader in his fledgling town at this early date.

In 1884, Francis M. Zuck opened his trademark hotel, "The Holbrook House". It was also in March of 1884 that Zuck and his son purchased the interests of Santago Baca and Pedro Montano. The Zuck's now owned most of the Holbrook townsite. Between the Hotel business and the selling of lots in the townsite, the Zuck family would make a comfortable living.

The Aztec Land and cattle Company, also known as the "Hashknife Outfit", also began operations in Holbrook in 1884. The Hashknife soon became the second largest cattle ranch in the United States with some 60,000 head of cattle. The Hashknife Outfit featured an aggregation of thugs, rustlers, and general lawbreakers. Although they were a huge boost to the local economy, the Hashknife cowboys made Holbrook one of the most wild and woolie towns of the old west.

In 1886, Holbrook had 26 murders with a population of only 256 souls. This was also the year when a number of Mexican cowboys were killed in a shoot out at Terrell's Cottage Saloon. The saloon and its later incarnations would forever be known as "The Bucket of Blood Saloon" after the horrific incident that occurred there.

The following year, 1887, was another year of violence in early Holbrook. The legendary Blevin's shootout occurred on September 4, 1887. The sheriff of Apache County, Commodore Perry Owens, was serving a warrant for the arrest of Andy Blevins, a.k.a Andy Cooper, for cattle rustling. A gunfight ensued at the Blevin's family home and in less than a minute Andy Blevins and two others including Andy's 15-year-old half-brother were killed. Another half-brother was also wounded.

The year 1887 was also the year that Holbrook's Masonic Lodge, Chalcedony Lodge No. 6, was Chartered on November 9th. Chalcedony Lodge has the distinction of being the first lodge chartered by the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Arizona Territory. The previous five lodges were chartered either by the Grand Lodges of California or New Mexico.

The charter members of the lodge were only nine in number and included Francis Marion Zuck. During the next eighteen years of life, Brother Zuck would stand out as the lodge's most illustrious member. His record of service in Chalcedony Lodge is prodigious, offices held include:

Senior Deacon 1887-1888

Junior Deacon 1898

Secretary 1902 to 1908 with the exception of 1906

Worshipful Master nine times: 1889-1892-1894-1895-1897-1899-1900-1901-1906

On January 12, 1888, Dep. Grand Master Morris Goldwater (1852-1939) of Prescott constituted and dedicated Chalcedony Lodge No. 6 in "due and ancient form". Brother Goldwater spent an additional two

days in Holbrook and gave the Holbrook brethren nightly instruction in the California ritual. Morris Goldwater was the uncle of the famous Arizona senator Barry Goldwater. Sen. Goldwater was the unsuccessful Republican nominee for president in 1964, and was also a prominent Freemason,

The year 1888 was a disaster for Holbrook as a raging fire destroyed most of the business district on June 26th.

The fire started in a wool warehouse next to Zuck's hotel. The fire may have started by spontaneous combustion caused by the sun's rays being amplified by window glass and igniting the oily wool. Like many early western towns, the buildings were mostly of framed construction and burned easily. The Holbrook business district was largely rebuilt with more fireproof masonry construction. Zuck's "Holbrook House" was reconstructed as a stone structure.

In 1889, F.M. Zuck was Master of Chalcedony Lodge for the first time. On May 1st, now Grand Master Morris Goldwater was back in Holbrook confirm the appointment of Brother Zuck as Grand Representative to the Grand Lodge of Arkansas. Grand Master Goldwater thanked Worshipful Master Zuck for his hospitality, but also acknowledged that Chalcedony lodge was facing some difficult challenges due to the transient nature of its membership.

In 1894, no one from Chalcedony Lodge was present at the Grand Lodge Communication in Phoenix when Brother Zuck was appointed Grand Standard Bearer. In 1895, Grand Lodge met in Prescott where Brother Francis Zuck was appointed Senior Grand Deacon, part of the progressive line that leads to the office of Grand Master. His abilities and zeal for the Craft were finally being recognized.

One aspect of Francis Zuck's life not touched on thus far was his political persuasions. Zuck was definitely a strong adherent of the Republican party. He is credited with serving as the chairman of the Arizona Territorial Republican Convention, but the date of his service is unknown. He also campaigned vigorously during the 1890s for the separation of Navajo County from Apache County. Legislation was passed creating Navajo County in 1895 with Holbrook as the county seat. F.M. Zuck was appointed the first Probate Judge of the new county during that same year.

Zuck's Masonic career continued to advance. In 1896, the Grand Lodge met in Tucson where Zuck was elected Junior Grand Warden. On December 6th of the same year, Junior Grand Warden Zuck assisted the Grand Master William F. Nichols in the constituting of Winslow Lodge No. 13 in nearby Winslow, Arizona Territory,

The Grand Lodge met again in 1897, this time underground in the caverns of the Copper Queen Mine in Bisbee. A famous picture of the Grand Lodge meeting in full Masonic regalia was taken at this auspicious event and has been widely published. Unfortunately, Junior Grand Warden Zuck was not present. He remained back in Holbrook suffering what was described as "nervous prostration". Zuck expressed the following in a letter to Grand Secretary George J. Roskruge:

"My heart is almost broken that I cannot be present at the coming session of the Grand Lodge, but it is to say the least, imprudent for me to make such an attempt."

As a result of his absence at Grand Lodge, Zuck lost his position in the Grand line. However, he was again elected Junior Grand Warden at the annual communication held in Tucson in November of 1899. In 1900 the session was held in Phoenix and Zuck advanced the station of Senior Grand Warden. This was also a

good year for Zuck politically having the good fortune to be elected Treasurer of Navajo County. In 1901, Zuck advanced to the high office of Deputy Grand Master of Masons in the Arizona Territory at the annual communication held in Prescott in November of 1901.

The following year was a monumental one in the Masonic travels of Francis Marion Zuck. Most Worshipful Brother Henning relates the following in his unpublished "History of Chalcedony Lodge No.6":

"The Grand Lodge convened in Phoenix on November 11th (1902) and this was an important session for us, for upon Bro. Zuck was conferred the highest office in Masonry within the gift of the fraternity in this territory. Grand Master of Masons-a title this noble Brother was eminently fitted to carry and at last he who had labored so hard for the fraternity was justly rewarded."

True to form, Francis M. Zuck proved to be an able conscientious Grand Master. He promoted the idea of developing a cipher ritual for use in Arizona lodges but was unsuccessful. Grand Master Zuck made a diligent effort to visit all nineteen Masonic lodges in the Arizona Territory. Due to unreliable train schedules, he was only able to visit seventeen of the lodges; still quite an accomplishment for 1903. While still serving as Grand Master of the blue lodge, during the summer of 1903, Zuck assisted Grand High Priest of Royal Arch Masons, Dr. C.D. Belden, in the instituting of Temple Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Winslow, Arizona. Zuck would also be chosen to be the first High Priest of this chapter. It is not known where and when Zuck received his chapter degrees or when he was Exalted to the Holy Royal Arch.

We do know of some of F.M. Zuck's other fraternal memberships. He was a Sir Knight in Ivanhoe Comradery No.2, Knights Templar, in Prescott and belonged to the Shrine in Phoenix. He also was a charter member of B.P.O.E. No. 536 in Winslow. A collection of Zuck's Masonic jewels now hangs on the wall in the lodge room of Chalcedony Lodge No. 6 in Holbrook.

On November 11, 1903, Grand Master Francis M. Zuck presided at the Grand Lodge of Arizona Territory's annual communication in Tucson. It was a good year for Arizona Masonry, as membership and finances both increased. A special committee of the Grand Lodge commented on Grand Master Zuck's address to the Craft: "We desire to thank our Most Worshipful Grand Master for the fidelity with which he has fulfilled the trust committed to his care. His labors have not been in vain as the condition of the Craft throughout the jurisdiction testifies. Peace and harmony prevails and fraternal intercourse with our sister jurisdictions continues with unabated cordiality."

Brother Zuck's Masonic career continued to flourish. After stepping down as Grand Master, he was elected Grand Scribe of the Arizona Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons in 1905 and in 1907 rose to be the presiding head as Grand High Priest.

One important aspect of F.M. Zuck's life has yet to be mentioned, his religious affiliations. The only reference that has turned up is that of Zuck and his wife Jennie's participation in organizing the Union Congregational Church in Holbrook on November 4, 1899. This effort was evidently unsuccessful. Holbrook is said to have had the distinction of being the only county seat in America that did not have a permanent church. That finally changed in 1912 when a Methodist Church was established in the community.

In other pursuits, Zuck was involved in at least couple of irrigation projects to create productive farmlands around the Holbrook area. It was thought that Holbrook had the potential to be another Rio Grande Valley. Zuck even made a trip to Chicago in an attempt to raise capitol for one of these ventures. In the early 1900s Zuck was involved in an unsuccessful plan to sink a network of Artesian wells around Holbrook to create a viable irrigation system. In the last few years of his life, Zuck received another governmental appointment, U.S. Court Commissioner to Navajo County.

Francis Marion Zuck laid down the working tools of his life on Wednesday, June 16, 1909. The Holbrook Argus of June 22, 1909 ran the sub-headline, "Another Pioneer Passes into the Great Beyond". Zuck died in his Holbrook home around 7:00 p.m. surrounded by his family, The cause of death was attributed to a heart attack as the result of a paralytic stroke.

F.M. Zuck's funeral took place at the Navajo County Courthouse on Friday, June 18th at 2:00 p.m. Rev. Robert C. Wright is said to have delivered a "masterful sermon". The graveside service rendered by the brethren of Chalcedony Lodge No. 6 was deemed "impressive". A contingency of ladies from Ruby Chapter No. 3, Order of the Eastern Star, in Winslow was also noted as being present as were a number of members of the Winslow Elks Lodge. No doubt it was a tearful day as brethren, friends, and loved ones paid their last respects to "The Father of Holbrook".

The impressive head stone of Francis Marion Zuck, fashioned from a beautiful marble slab and adorned with bronze oval containing the square and compasses, now stands as a silent sentinel in the older section of the Holbrook Cemetery. It is hoped that this essay, in some small way, is a fitting tribute to Francis Zuck and other forgotten men of his ilk who brought civilization to the old west and carried the lamp of truth and goodness that others might follow.

