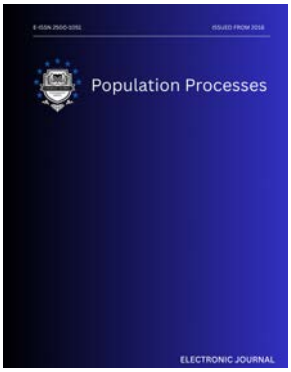
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Membership Dynamics of the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. during the Second World War (1941–1945)

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Abstract

The paper examines the membership dynamics of the Grand Lodge of Texas Ancient Free and Accepted Masons during the Second World War. The materials of the study were the annual reports of the Grand Lodge of Texas, published in the official collections *Proceedings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M.* The study employed historical-comparative, historical-statistical methods, and the method of quantitative analysis. Particular attention was paid to changes in the total membership of the organization, the distribution of members across 121 districts, as well as the dynamics of initiations, reinstatements, and membership reductions in individual statistical categories.

As a result, it was established that during the period under study, the Grand Lodge of Texas demonstrated steady membership growth. While in 1941 the organization had 103 thousand members, by 1945 their number had reached 138 thousand. Thus, the absolute increase amounted to 35 thousand members, or 34.2 %. The most intensive growth occurred in 1943–1945. The average membership of one district increased from 854 to 1,146 members. At the same time, there was a significant increase in the number of new initiations, while the number of suspensions for non-payment of membership dues decreased.

Keywords: Grand Lodge of Texas Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, Freemasonry, Texas, Second World War, demography, statistics, Great Depression, districts, initiations.

1. Introduction

The period of the Great Depression became a serious challenge for public and fraternal organizations in the United States. The economic crisis affected various aspects of public life, including the activities of voluntary associations, whose existence largely depended on the number of members and the regular payment of membership dues. In this respect, Masonic organizations were no exception.

The outbreak of the Second World War marked a new stage in the history of American society, as changes in the economic and social situation created new conditions for the activities of fraternal organizations. Of particular interest in this regard is the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M.,

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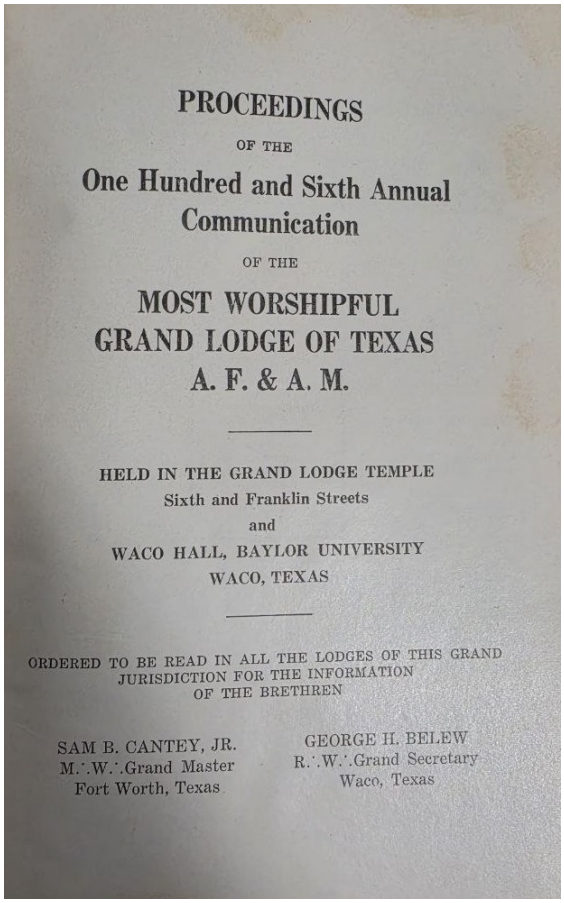
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which united Masonic lodges throughout the state of Texas. The surviving annual reports of the Grand Lodge contain extensive statistical information that makes it possible to trace changes in its membership, the dynamics of initiations, reinstatements, etc.

Thus, the purpose of our study is to examine the membership dynamics of the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. during the Second World War, that is, in 1941–1945. Particular attention is paid to determining the absolute increase in membership, as well as comparing membership figures across individual districts. This will make it possible to describe quantitative changes in the activities of one of the largest Masonic organizations in the American South under wartime conditions.

2. Materials and methods

The materials for our study were the annual reports of the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. for 1941–1945, published in the official collections *Proceedings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M.* (Figure 1) (Proceedings..., 1941; Proceedings..., 1942; Proceedings..., 1943; Proceedings..., 1944; Proceedings..., 1945). These materials contain extensive statistical information on the membership of Masonic lodges united within the Grand Lodge of Texas, as well as changes in membership across individual statistical categories (Figure 2). Of particular value is the information on 121 districts, which makes it possible to examine both the overall membership dynamics of the organization and changes at the level of individual territorial divisions.



PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

One Hundred and Sixth Annual Communication

OF THE

MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE OF TEXAS A. F. & A. M.

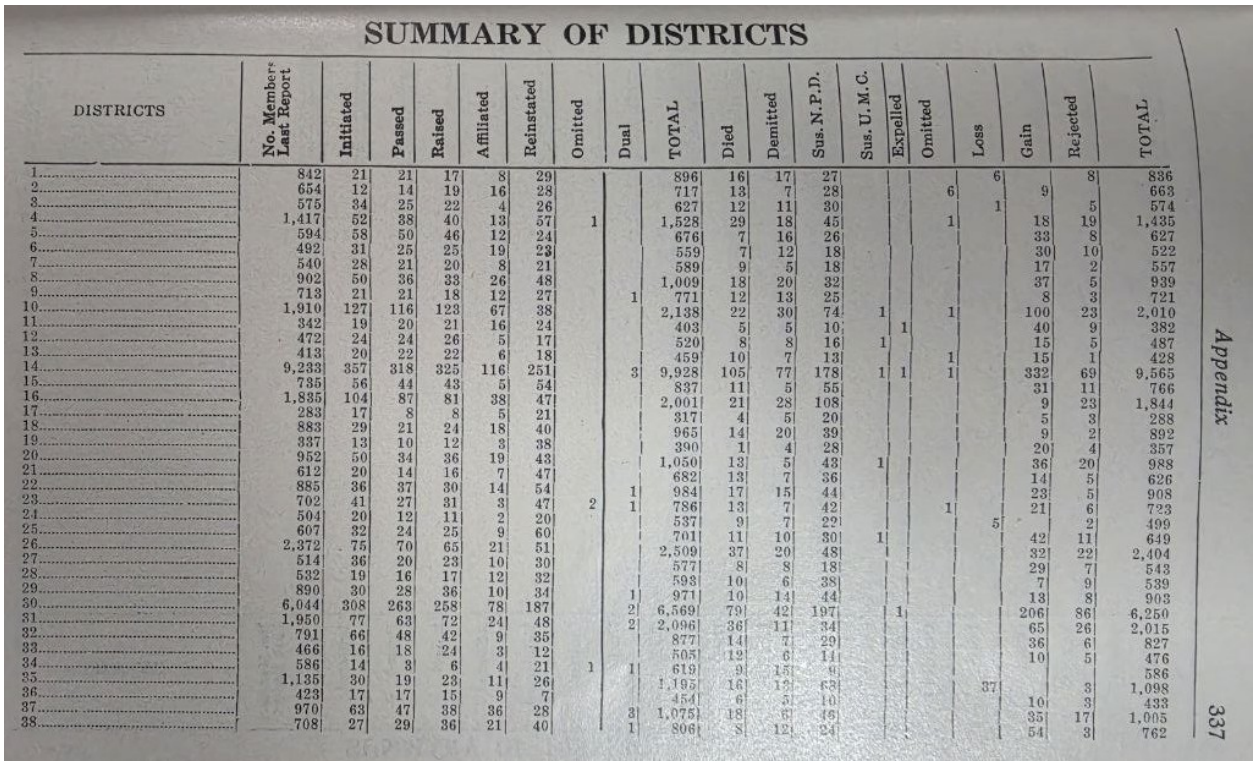
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ORDERED TO BE READ IN ALL THE LODGES OF THIS GRAND JURISDICTION FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE BRETHREN

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Fort Worth, Texas

GEORGE H. BELEW
R.·.W.·.Grand Secretary
Waco, Texas

Fig. 1. Title Page of the Proceedings of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. for 1941 (Proceedings..., 1941)



SUMMARY OF DISTRICTS

DISTRICTS	No. Members Last Report	Initiated	Passed	Raised	Affiliated	Reinstated	Omitted	Dual	TOTAL	Died	Demitted	Sus. N.P.D.	Sus. U.M.C.	Expelled	Omitted	Loss	Gain	Rejected	TOTAL
1	842	21	21	17	8	29			896	16	17	27				6		8	836
2	654	12	14	19	16	28			717	13	7	28			6		9		663
3	575	34	25	22	4	26			627	12	11	30				1		5	574
4	1,417	52	38	40	13	57	1		1,528	29	18	45			1		18	19	1,435
5	594	58	50	46	12	24			676	7	16	26					33	8	627
6	492	31	25	25	19	23			559	7	12	18					30	10	522
7	540	28	21	20	8	21			589	9	5	18					17	2	557
8	902	50	36	33	26	48			1,009	18	20	32					37	5	939
9	713	21	21	18	12	27		1	771	12	13	25					8	3	721
10	1,910	127	116	123	67	38			2,138	22	30	74	1		1		100	23	2,010
11	342	19	20	21	16	24			403	5	5	10		1			40	9	382
12	472	24	24	26	5	17			520	8	8	16	1				15	5	487
13	413	20	22	22	6	18			459	10	7	13			1		15	1	428
14	9,233	357	318	325	116	251		3	9,928	105	77	178	1	1	1		332	69	9,565
15	735	56	44	43	5	54			837	11	5	55					31	11	766
16	1,835	104	87	81	38	47			2,001	21	28	108					9	23	1,844
17	283	17	8	8	5	21			317	4	5	20					5	3	288
18	883	29	21	24	18	40			965	14	20	39					9	2	892
19	337	13	10	12	3	38			390	1	4	28					20	4	357
20	952	50	34	36	19	43			1,050	13	5	43	1				36	20	988
21	612	20	14	16	7	47			682	13	7	36					14	5	626
22	885	36	37	30	14	54		1	984	17	15	44					23	5	908
23	702	41	27	31	3	47	2	1	786	13	7	42			1		21	6	723
24	504	20	12	11	2	20			537	9	7	22				5		2	499
25	607	32	24	25	9	60			701	11	10	30	1				42	11	649
26	2,372	75	70	65	21	51			2,509	37	20	48					32	22	2,404
27	514	36	20	23	10	30			577	8	8	18					29	7	543
28	532	19	16	17	12	32			593	10	6	38					7	9	539
29	890	30	28	36	10	34		1	971	10	14	44					13	8	903
30	6,044	308	263	258	78	187		2	6,569	79	42	197		1			206	86	6,250
31	1,950	77	63	72	24	48		2	2,096	36	11	34					65	26	2,015
32	791	66	48	42	9	35			877	14	7	29					36	6	827
33	466	16	18	24	3	12			505	12	6	11					10	5	476
34	586	14	3	6	4	21	1	1	619	9	15	9							586
35	1,135	30	19	23	11	26			1,195	16	13	63				37		3	1,098
36	423	17	17	15	9	7			454	6	5	10					10	3	433
37	970	63	47	38	36	28		3	1,075	18	6	46					35	17	1,005
38	708	27	29	36	21	40		1	806	8	12	24					54	3	762

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Fig. 2. Statistical Data on the Membership of the Grand Lodge of Texas by Individual Reporting Categories (Proceedings..., 1941: 337)

Methodologically, the study is based on historical-comparative and historical-statistical methods, as well as the method of quantitative analysis. Taken together, these methods made it possible to compare the membership figures of the Grand Lodge of Texas during different years of the Second World War and identify the characteristics of their changes, systematize data from annual reports, determine the absolute increase in membership, and calculate average figures. In addition, individual categories of membership changes were examined, including initiations into Masonic degrees, affiliations, reinstatements, deaths, and voluntary withdrawals from the organization.

3. Results

As of 1940, the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. had 100,618 members (Proceedings..., 1941: 339). The entire territory of the state of Texas was divided into 121 districts.

The Annual Communication proceedings published all data on changes in the membership of the Grand Lodge of Texas. The statistics included information on Initiated, Passed, Raised, Affiliated, Reinstated, Omitted, Dual, Total, Died, Demitted, Sus. N.P.D., Sus. U.M.C., Expelled, Omitted, Loss, Gain, Rejected, and Total.

The districts varied in membership size. Let us examine the districts with the largest numbers of members. For example, the 14th District had 9,565 members in 1941, the 64th District had 6,407 members, and the 30th District had 6,250 members. As for the districts with the smallest numbers of members, the 52nd District had only 53 members in 1941, the 57th District had 169 members, and the 112th District had 188 members (Proceedings..., 1941: 339).

According to the results for 1941, the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. demonstrated positive dynamics. Almost all districts, without exception, showed an increase in membership. Exceptions included, for example, the 66th District, whose membership decreased from 176 to 174 members (Proceedings..., 1941: 338). A similar situation was observed in the 112th District, whose membership decreased from 111 to 110 members (Proceedings..., 1941: 339).

On average, there were 854 members per district.

In 1942, the trend toward increasing membership in the Grand Lodge of Texas continued. Nevertheless, even in 1942, some districts showed a decline in membership. For example, the 100th District had 268 members in 1941, while in 1942 its membership decreased to

258 members (Proceedings..., 1942: 293). Almost all other districts showed membership growth. As a result, the membership of the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. reached 106,028 members (Proceedings..., 1942: 293), while the average membership per district increased to 876 members.

In 1943, the membership of the Grand Lodge of Texas continued to grow and reached 112,278 members in absolute terms (Proceedings..., 1943: 361). Moreover, the membership of the 14th District exceeded 10,000 members for the first time since the Great Depression, reaching 10,611 members (Proceedings..., 1943: 359). Despite the overall trend, there were also districts in 1943 whose membership decreased slightly. Thus, the 114th District had 189 members in 1942, while in 1943 this number decreased to 188 (Proceedings..., 1943: 361). Overall, the average membership per district in the Grand Lodge of Texas exceeded 927 members.

In 1944, the membership of the Grand Lodge of Texas increased to 123,999 members (Proceedings..., 1944: 407). All districts, without exception, showed membership growth. At the same time, the average membership per district amounted to 1,024 members.

In 1945, the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. already had 138,687 members (Proceedings..., 1945: 323). The largest, the 14th District, had 14,074 members in 1945, while the 30th and 64th Districts exceeded 9,000 members, reaching 9,089 and 9,463 members, respectively. Overall, in 1945, there were an average of 1,146 members per district.

For better visualization, we prepared a chart showing the average membership per district within the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. in 1941–1945.

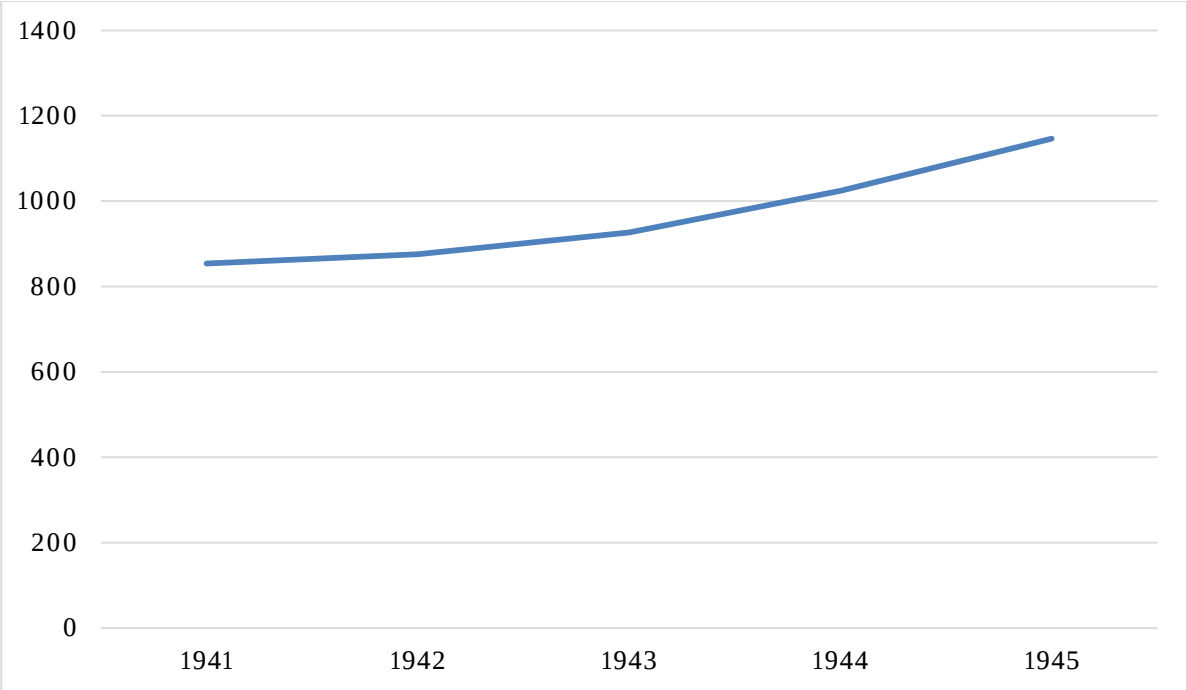


Fig. 3. Average Membership per District within the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. in 1941–1945

Figure 3 shows that during the Second World War, the Grand Lodge of Texas was in a period of membership recovery following the Great Depression.

All data on changes in the membership of the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. in 1941–1945 by category are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Changes in the Membership of the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. in 1941–1945 by Category (Proceedings..., 1941: 339; Proceedings..., 1942: 293; Proceedings..., 1943: 361; Proceedings..., 1944: 407; Proceedings..., 1945: 323)

Years	No. members Last Report	Initiated	Passed	Raised	Affiliated	Reinstated	Omitted	Dual	TOTAL	Died	Demitted	Sus. N.P.D.[1]	Sus. U.M.C.[2]	Expelled	Omitted	Loss	Gain	Rejected	TOTAL
1941	100618	4632	3830	3856	1814	3881	10	31	110210	1555	1564	3708	8	6	15	225	2961	859	103354
1942	103354	4991	4006	3965	1685	3752	12	12	112794[3]	1578	1481	3629	4	8	66	140	2814	868	106028
1943	106028	7122	5113	4888	1659	4977	25	33	117610	1590	1399	2271	6	7	59	13	6263	1008	112278
1944	112278	12025	9006	8947	2292	5568	38	48	129171	1735	1820	1533	10	3	71	75	11796	2070	123999
1945	123999	15244	12479	12173	3100	4991	96	68	144427	1900	2486	1304	2	6	42	1	14689	2935	138687

[1] Suspended for Non-Payment of Dues.
[2] Suspended for Un-Masonic Conduct.
[3] The total reported for 1942 (112794) exceeds the sum calculated from the individual membership categories (112780) by 14. The original reported figure has been retained.

Analyzing Table 1, we can draw attention to the Initiated category, which in 1945 was three times higher than in 1941. Accordingly, the numbers in the Passed and Raised categories also increased threefold. At the same time, the number of Affiliated members fluctuated: in 1941, it amounted to 1,814 members, while in 1942 and 1943 it decreased to 1,659, and only after this decline did it begin to increase again. The number of Reinstated members remained relatively high throughout each year of the Second World War, ranging from 3,752 to 5,568 members, with these figures recorded in 1943 and 1944, respectively.

The mortality of the membership was directly related to the total number of members: the fewer members there were, the fewer deaths occurred among them. In 1941, there was one death per 66 members; in 1942, this figure was one death per 67 members; in 1943, one per 70 members; in 1944, one per 71 members; and in 1945, one per 73 members. Thus, while in 1941 there was one death for every 67 members, by 1945 there was one death for every 73 members. In other words, the demographic situation was steadily improving.

However, no such correlation was observed in the Demitted category. The number of Demitted members decreased between 1941 and 1943, after which it began to increase again. At the same time, the number of members Suspended for Non-Payment of Dues steadily declined. While in 1941 their number was 3,708, in 1945 it was only 1,304, representing a reduction of more than 2.5 times in membership losses for this reason. Overall, between 1941 and 1945, the membership of the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. increased from 103 thousand to 138 thousand members, representing a growth of 34.2 % over four years. Considering that the Second World War was taking place during this period, this growth can be regarded as highly significant.

4. Conclusion

Summarizing the results of the study, we would like to draw the following conclusions.

First, during the Second World War, the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. demonstrated steady positive membership dynamics. While at the end of 1941 the organization had 103,354 members, by 1945 their number had increased to 138,687. Thus, over four years, the absolute increase amounted to 35,333 members, or 34.2 %. This indicates a significant expansion of the organization during the period under study.

Second, the membership growth of the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. accelerated annually. While in 1942 the increase amounted to 2,674 members, in 1943 it reached 6,250 members, in 1944 it amounted to 11,721, and in 1945 to 14,688 members. Consequently, the most intensive growth of the organization occurred during the final years of the Second World War.

Third, positive dynamics were observed not only at the level of the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. as a whole, but also in the overwhelming majority of its territorial districts. The average membership per district increased from 854 members in 1941 to 1,146 members in 1945. At the same time, the largest districts demonstrated particularly significant growth. Thus, the membership of the 14th District increased from 9,565 to 14,074 members. Furthermore, while in the early years of the period under study some districts still showed a decline in membership, in 1944 growth was recorded in all districts.

Fourth, one of the most important factors contributing to the membership growth of the Grand Lodge of Texas A.F.&A.M. was the increase in the number of new initiations. In 1941, the Initiated category amounted to 4,632 members, whereas in 1945 it reached 15,244 members, increasing more than threefold. Similar dynamics were observed in such categories as Passed and Raised. At the same time, the number of members Suspended for Non-Payment of Dues decreased from 3,708 in 1941 to 1,304 in 1945. As a result, membership growth was ensured both by the influx of new members and by the reduction of losses in individual statistical categories.

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