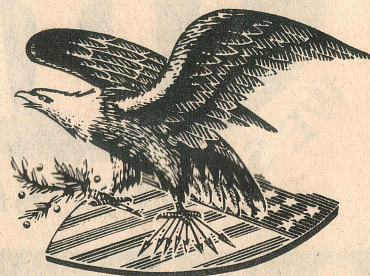


MADRID

AREA

BICENTENNIAL

1776-1976



"Rememberances of Days Gone By"

Madrid Odd Fellow Lodge Organized in 1881

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows is one of the largest fraternal and benevolent orders in the United States. The order was founded in England, sometime in the early 1700's. The members founded a system of benefits and helped one another in time of misfortune.

In 1819, the Washington Lodge of Odd Fellows was organized in Baltimore.

By 1843, many lodges had sprung up around the United States and separation from the parent order in England began. The United States grand lodge became the head of the order in America. Canadian branches started in 1852 under a separate charter. Later that year, the society in Canada merged with the grand lodge of the United States. Odd Fellows now have a world membership of about three million with almost half of that coming from the United States and Canada.

The chief purpose of the group is to give aid, assistance and comfort to its members and their families. It is a secret society with its own system of rites and passwords. The three links in the symbol represent friendship, love and truth. The skull and crossbones speaks of mortality while the single eye represents the all-knowingness of God.

A local lodge can confer three degrees of membership upon an Odd Fellow. When a member has reached the highest degree of three grades he is ready for membership in an encampment. The encampment also has three degrees of membership, the Patriar-

chal, the Golden Rule, and the Royal Purple. The Patriarchal is an English degree and since 1884 there has also been a militant or uniformed degree called the Patriarch Militant. Holders of the Royal Purple degree are eligible for the degree in Patriarch Militant.

Charter Granted in 1881

The founding of the I.O.O.F. lodge (Independent Order of Odd Fellows) in Madrid dates back to Oct. 20, 1881 with the issuance of the charter to the Madrid chapter.

Two meetings were held before the charter was given and a stipulation of the grant was that five names were needed in order to apply for the charter. This order still applies today, as does the rule that at least five members must be present to hold a meeting.

Eight names appear on the charter of the Madrid Odd Fellow Lodge number 433. They are M. Keith, J. W. Milligan, W. Mason, John A. McHugh, Isaac Williams, Ina W. Dougherty, Joseph Rohr and L. D. Woodard. It was issued by John Van Valkenburg, grand Master of Iowa, attested by William Garrett, grand secretary.

Originally, the Odd Fellows met on Friday nights, but in recent years it has been changed to Wednesday. Meetings are held in the Odd Fellow Hall which is over Lawrence Hardware and Appliance.

Qualifications to become an Odd Fellow were 1) you must be white 2) over 18 years of age 3) be of sound mind. The original order dates back to the time of slavery in the mid-1800's, hence the white specification.

The goal of the organization is the seeking to improve the quality of man. The I.O.O.F. makes available loans and scholarships to students, are active in the Eye Bank project, have rapidly become a world-wide organization, sponsor youth tours each summer to the United Nations and also have a home for the elderly in Mason City. The home is open to any elderly Odd Fellow, whether they can pay the rent or not.

The I.O.O.F. is like any other organization in that they carry out business meetings and have certain rituals they perform. However, the group is more secretive than most. Each member has a certain password to say before entering the hall, and the password, which is usually a Biblical term or name, depends on the degree you hold in the lodge. There is always an opening and closing ceremony and the chaplain delivers a prayer at each meeting. Bible passages are also discussed at each meeting.

The different steps or degree depends on the office you hold or the authority granted to you by the office. There are four degrees in the Lodge which begins at the initiatory degree or the color white with blue trimming. From here it advances to pink, blue and finally scarlet, the highest degree.

A one-time tradition in the Madrid lodge was their degree team, which consisted of a group of about 50 men that would go to the different lodges throughout the state and perform the installation ceremonies. These services were apparently quite impressive and

beautiful to watch because each person wore a Biblical-type costume that corresponded with his respective office. The group was so large because if someone of the local group couldn't attend the installation there is someone to step in and perform the ceremony.

The group used to pay sick and death benefits, but this hasn't been done for many years. However, each Odd Fellow who dies receives an Odd Fellow wreath that is placed on the grave.

There is a younger branch of the I.O.O.F. for those between the ages of 11-17. Madrid doesn't have such an organization, and the closest one around here is in Adel.

To become a member of the Odd Fellows, each new person must sign a form or petition signifying their membership. A part of the statement is that they allow no drinking during the meetings or in the hall.

For many years, the Swedish Lodge and Miner's Lodge held their meetings in the theater across from the hall. It was also that the initiation ceremonies were held. These two branches lasted only a short time and are no longer functioning today.

At the present time, there are 15 members in the Madrid lodge but it has been as high as 300. Present local officers of the I.O.O.F. are Jim Pittman, Noble Grand; Kenny Akers, Vice Grand; Harlin Keigley, secretary-treasurer. The positions are held for one year.

Fifty years members of the Lodge, past or present, include Ed Ostberg, George Young, L. H. Waldo, Rollin Keigley, Cliff Luther, Verge Kenison and Jim Williams. Other men playing an important role in the history of this organization were J. O. Wilson and Jess Swan.