

THE STORY OF THE RISE OF ODDFELLOWS

American Branch Organized in Baltimore Ninety-seven
Years Ago. Seventeen Hundred Thousand Members

American Odd Fellowship dates from April 26, 1819, and the celebration of the ninety-seventh anniversary, which has been carried on in all parts of the country during the past week, has attracted the attention of many not members to the origin and history of this strange fraternal order.

Like many other modern institutions it began from small attempts to better the conditions surrounding individuals. The beginning of Odd Fellowship is traced to groups of men in London, England, who met for social intercourse, and these groups met so far back as 1788. A number of these groups united into what was called the Loyal Union Odd Fellows.

In 1809 Thomas Bolton, of Manchester, organized what has become known as the Manchester Unity Odd Fellows, an organization that now has a membership of 1,500,000 in England and America. It is entirely separate from and differs in its secret degree and symbolism work from the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, although from it the I. O. O. F. originated. Its general principles are the same.

American Odd Fellowship was established by Thomas Wildey, who associated with him John Welch, John Duncan, Richard Rushworth and John Cheatham, all of whom were Englishmen who had belonged to the order in England. They first met on April 26, 1819, at the Seven Stars inn, in the city of Baltimore, and organized Washington lodge No. 1, which two years afterwards was chartered by the Duke of York lodge, of London, as the mother lodge of the United States. The formation of an independent order was necessitated by the circumstances existing at that time and changes in the ritualistic work and symbolism from time to time has greatly differentiated it from the parent body. The general principles are to care for the sick and afflicted, bury the dead and assist the widow and orphan.

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows has an initiatory and three degrees, while the Manchester Unity continues to have an initiatory and five degrees.

The Sovereign Grand Lodge of the I. O. O. F. has established lodges in 68 states, provinces and countries, and includes Australia, Germany and several other European and South American countries. Its total membership of nearly 1,700,000 and the amount of its benefits extended to membership runs into the millions annually. Members are assured of decent burial, and in case of sickness and distress, practical assistance which is not limited by any definite amount as a maximum, but only as a minimum sum. The charities carried on by the different grand lodges for the care of the aged, the widows and the orphans are very great. Nearly every grand lodge has a home for the aged members and a home for the orphans. In Oregon especial pride is taken in both these institutions, which are located in Portland, and in which has been invested \$60,000, with annual appropriations of \$15,000 and caring for 25 aged members and 30 orphans.

As an instance of the way in which the Odd Fellows rise to demands upon them, over \$200,000 was contributed to assist the Odd Fellows and their dependents in 1906 when the great disaster at San Francisco threw out upon the world many thousands of people.

The officers of the Sovereign Grand lodge are J. B. A. Robertson, Oklahoma City, Okla., grand sire; Frank C. Goudy, Denver, Col., deputy grand sire; John B. Goodwin, Baltimore, Md., grand secretary and adjutant general; William H. Cox, Louisville, Ky., grand treasurer.

The Rebekah degree was not formally and fully recognized by the sovereign grand lodge of the order until 1868, but secured partial recognition in 1850, after a strenuous series of struggles in the grand lodges led by Schuyler Colfax of Indiana, afterward vice president of the United States. This auxiliary and sister organization numbers over 500,000 sisters and nearly as many brother Odd Fellows.

As early as 1847, attempts were made to establish a lodge of the I. O. O. F. in Oregon. Chemeketa lodge of Salem is No. 1, and was organized on December 6, 1852, by E. M. Barnum, deputy district grand sire, with B. F. Harding, noble grand; E. N. Cook, vice grand; C. S. Woodworth, secretary; Joel Palmer, treasurer, and Al Zieber the first initiated member. There are now 221 lodges in Oregon, with nearly 20,000 members, and a Rebekah organization of women and men of over 17,000, with nearly 200 lodges.

Officers of the grand lodge of Oregon are: John F. Hall of Marshfield, grand master; H. S. Westbrook of Portland, deputy grand master; G. W. Trefren of Ashland, grand warden; E. E. Sharon of Portland, grand secretary; O. D. Doane of The Dalles, grand treasurer; H. J. Taylor of Pendleton, grand representative; William Galloway of Salem, grand representative; B. M. Miller of Halsey, grand marshal; Leo Wise of Astoria, grand conductor; J. E. Engebretson of Bend, grand guardian; A. M. Johnson of Baker, grand herald; A. R. V. Snyder of Dallas, grand chaplain.

BLANNERHASSETT ISLAND.

And Its Owner's Connection With the Schemes of Aaron Burr.

Fourteen miles below the mouth of the Muskingum, in the Ohio river, lies an island comprising about 200 acres, which forms a part of Wood county, W. Va., and is known as Blennerhassett island.

Nearly a hundred years ago it was the scene of one of the most dramatic events ever presented in the west. To that island Harmon Blennerhassett, son of a wealthy and noble family of Ireland, says the Columbus Dispatch, brought his equally cultivated and aristocratic young wife in 1797, lured by descriptions of the beauty and wealth of the western America, to establish their home.

Aaron Burr, bent on the establishment of a sovereign government somewhere in the west, with himself at the head of it, met the Blennerhassetts on a western tour and drew them into his scheme. When the government discovered the plot Blennerhassett was arrested with Burr, his princely home on the Ohio river was wrecked and despoiled and the real estate attached by a

creditor of Burr, who held notes that Blennerhassett had indorsed.

In spite of this Blennerhassett stood by Burr even in his disgrace, and it was not until he found that Burr, having got from him all his property or caused him to lose it in one way or another, was willing to cast him aside, that his eyes were opened to the fact that he had been duped. Blennerhassett never recouped his fortunes. The wreck and ruin of his life and estate were complete and permanent.

In the trial for treason both Burr and Blennerhassett were acquitted, but were later haled before the state court of Ohio at Chillicothe to answer to a charge of violation of the laws of that state. Those charges never came to trial.

Blennerhassett was born shortly after the middle of the eighteenth century. He died in poverty on the island of Guernsey in 1821. His widow, returning broken hearted to the United States, secured the introduction of a bill in congress giving her \$10,000 damages for the destruction of the Blennerhassett home by the militia of Virginia on the occasion of the discovery of the Burr plot. Henry Clay championed her claim, but while it was pending she died.

The Blennerhassetts had three sons. The eldest became dissipated and died in a New Orleans debauch, the second was an imbecile and died in New York about 1854, and the other one was killed while serving as a soldier in the Confederate army.

The Tearkerchief.

In some parts of the Tyrol a beautiful though curious custom prevails. When a girl is going to be married and just before she leaves for the church her mother gives her a handkerchief, which is called a tearkerchief. It is made of newly spun and unused linen, and with it the girl dries the natural tears she sheds on leaving home. The tearkerchief is never used after the marriage day, but is folded up and placed in the linen closet, where it remains till its owner's death, when it is taken from its place and spread over her dead face.

A Hater of Newspapers.

An Austrian army officer who died some years ago left the whole of his fortune to a nephew on the condition that he should never read a newspaper. The will stated that this nephew, who held a post in a government office, was too fond of reading newspapers—a habit which the testator considered most pernicious. Three trustees were appointed to keep a watch over the heir,

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and in the event of a single infringement of the prohibitory clause the fortune was to be distributed among other members of the family.

Borrowing Time.

"Is your mamma at home?" asked a caller of five-year-old Lola, who answered the bell.

"No, ma'am," answered the small miss. "She went out to get some time."

"To get some time!" echoed the caller.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Lola. "She said she was going over to one of the neighbors for a minute."—New York Globe.

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