

Vigorous and Rapid Growth of the Woodmen of the World

Striking Story of the Woodmen of the World

The Woodmen of the World, one of the largest and most successful fraternal and benevolent organizations, has its national headquarters in Omaha and is counted one of its most valuable institutions. The story of its origin, rapid growth and promising prospects is an interesting chapter of western enterprise. As told to a representative

which was a called meeting at Omaha, June 3, 1890. Governor Shegman of Iowa, Senator Erwin of Wisconsin, Hon. Charles C. Farmer of Illinois, General Thomas of Colorado, and other influential gentlemen had consented to be identified with the enterprise.

"At this meeting laws were adopted. A

the order was regularly incorporated, received certificate of authority from the insurance department of the state. The first camps were organized at Omaha, Davenport, St. Louis, City and Lyons, Ia., Dallas, Tex., Indiana, Ill., and Columbus, O. The Sovereign Visitor was first issued by me in December 1890, when the membership did not exceed 300, and has been issued ever since, its present circulation being 125,000 and its editor is Sam W. Smyth of Omaha.

"A most determined opposition was encountered in the middle and east. They were suspicious of any fraternal organization, especially of insurance companies from Omaha. It is surprising how many people our organization has won over. I have seen people who think our order is a desperate and infatuated scheme, so we did the winning the eastern part of the country. It was all right and utilized, until now, even in the classic city of New Haven, we have two flourishing camps."

"What are the characteristic features of the Woodmen of the World?" was asked.

"Well, we have revised and amended our laws from time to time, until our plan is known as the Accumulative Reserve Fund plan. In a word, we issue certificates of from \$500 to \$3,000 each that produce one-half if a member dies during the first year, three-fourths if he dies after one and less than two years from joining and thereafter the full amount is paid. For instance, a man died last year who had been a member only two months. He had actually paid, including his entrance fee, only \$7.50 and his beneficiary received \$1,500. The average cost to all our deceased members to date has averaged less than \$6.50 per \$1,000 paid their families. We have a graded monthly assessment according to age, ranging from 50 cents upward, and an additional assessment ranging from 5 cents upward, according to age, which we call our emergency fund and which is further increased by the surplus

TED BEE. General Wheeler on the Philippines

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SANTA RITA, Philippine Islands, November, 1899.—I have now seen much of the country and the people in that part of Luzon for about fifty miles north of Manila. In every town there is a magnificent stone church and a convent or monastery. The insurgents have a great antipathy to the priesthood of friars and they have dismantled many of the churches. The value of the church and monastery of a town seems to be equal in many cases to the

having ample time, they have pursued scientific and other studies and have done a great deal toward the education of the people.

The religious orders are very rich. They have been acquiring property for nearly three centuries. It was the custom of organizations and individuals to acquire property by settlement and occupation, and title thus acquired is recognized as valid even with no paper title whatever. The religious orders have acquired vast properties in this way, and while it is supposed that the proceeds and the income is to be used for religious and charitable purposes there is no doubt that much has been used for their personal comfort and benefit.

The statement I have seen that 70 per cent of the people of Luzon can read and write is a great mistake. It may be true of Manila, but it is not true of the rural districts, and the percentage of illiteracy in the other islands is much greater than in Luzon. The method of peopling the islands is much like that of the United States. The best reads the essentials, all add our to the prosperity of our home city.

"At our last general meeting \$50,000 was authorized to be expended for the erection of a building. This matter has been deferred, but will be considered at our next (1900) executive meeting. Several have expressed a willingness to have a sovereign office removed, but local officers continue reminding them that the office should continue as near the center of the United States as possible, and Omaha appears to be the most pretentious city in that vicinity."

"The Woodmen of the World are to have a modest exhibit at the Paris exhibition, also headquarters at Buffalo, American Exposition and members are ranging to erect a charitable Woodmen cabin at the 1902 exposition at Toledo, O."

"Our order had 15,000 volunteers enrolled in the army for the war. We have paid fifteen death losses to soldiers, which included a colonel, major and a captain. Our order is a patriotic order, the pride of the nation is recognized to be placed prominently in our lodge, as we call our lodge room. We have one camp in the Republic of



SOVEREIGN COMMANDER J. C. ROOT.

of The Bee by its founder and sovereign commander, Mr. J. C. Root, it is as follows:

"There is not much romance about the promulgation and promotion of the Woodmen of the World, although its entire history has been the chopping of underbrush of opposition and prejudice. During the winter of 1889 it was determined to extend the beneficence of Woodcraft, as originally evolved by myself, in 1882, as a distinctive and original fraternity, with a peculiar ritualistic work and a distinctive philosophy.

"An eastern writer suggests: 'Thus, notwithstanding the relatively novel emblems, the beetle and wedge, duplication of some of the rites of the Ancient Order of the Golden Fleece in England, it attempts as far as practicable to tread in paths less



SOVEREIGN CLERK JOHN T. YATES.

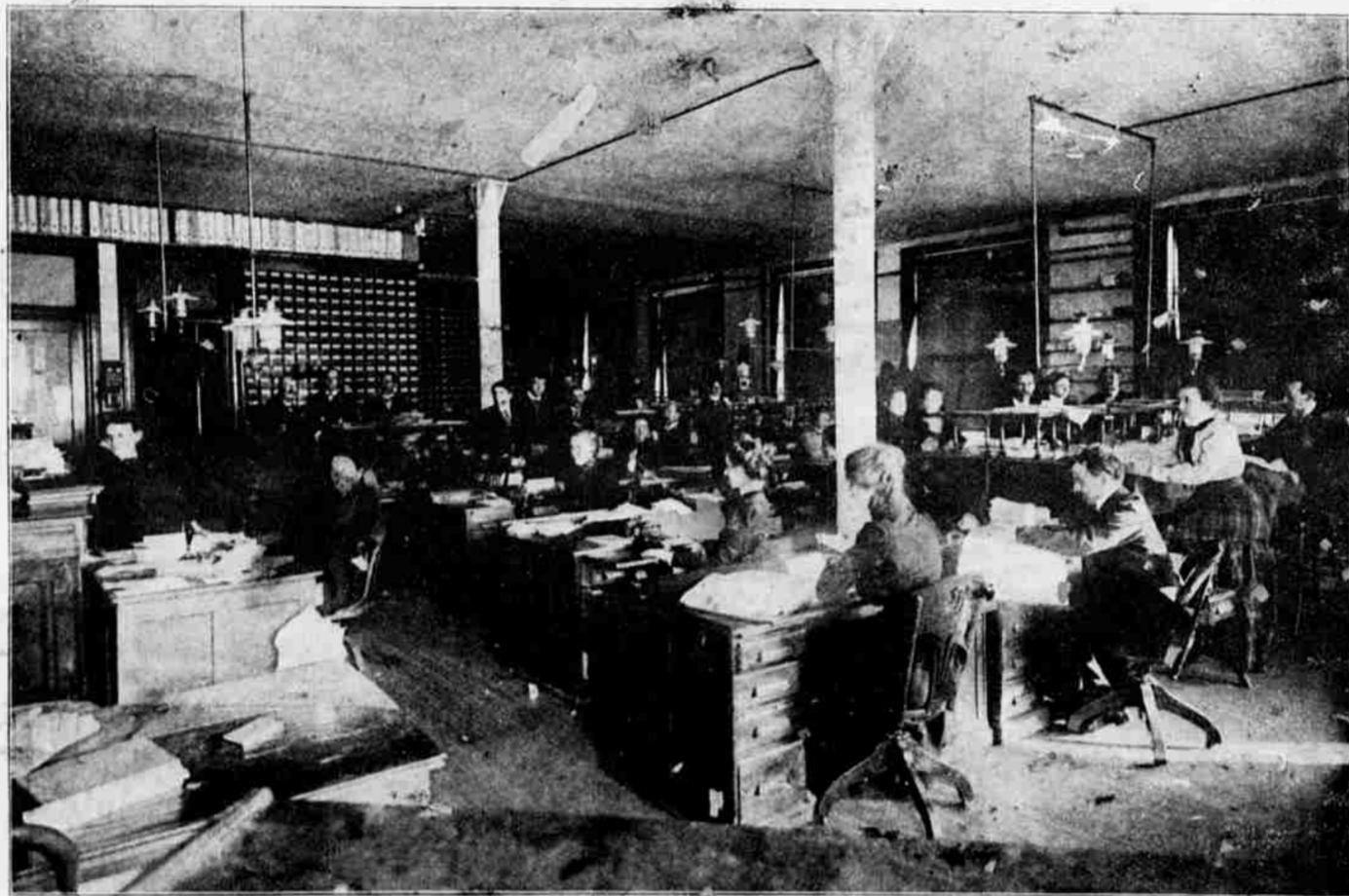
ritual written by myself and an amplified addition to same from Mr. Falkenburg's pen were accepted, and Mr. Falkenburg and myself recognized as the co-founders of the order. Colonel B. W. Jewell of Manchester, Ia., was elected sovereign clerk, Dr. W. O. Rodgers of Omaha was appointed sovereign physician, and F. F. Roose of Omaha was elected sovereign banker, with Governor Sherman, Senator Erwin, Mr. Farmer, Mr.



SOVEREIGN PHYSICIAN IRA W. JEWELL, M. D.

frequented by modern secret societies, ritualists, the idea evidently having been to parallel efforts of earlier secret societies, to utilize in ceremonials customs and implements employed in some of the primitive occupations of mankind. Results of this method are seen not only in Masonic rituals, but in the suggestiveness of titles, the Ancient Order of Shepherds, the Fishermen of Galilee, the Ancient Order of Foresters and the Ancient Order of Gardeners. In the Woodmen of the World an additional step is taken by preserving in form and ceremony implements and teachings drawn from woodcraft. I might add to this writer's effusion that I had never even heard of the Ancient Order of the Golden Fleece until I read this criticism, and have not yet had an opportunity to see and compare its rituals with ours.

"During the winter of 1889 I had considerable correspondence with F. A. Falkenburg of Denver, one of the most successful organizers in the United States, the result of



WOODMEN OF THE WORLD—PARTIAL VIEW OF ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT AT OMAHA.

Falkenburg and others, on the executive board.

"On June 6, 1890, the Associated Press announced the formation of the Woodmen of the World society. Mr. Falkenburg proceeded at once to Denver to organize the Pacific jurisdiction of the order, which comprises Colorado and the states north and west. His success was phenomenal from the beginning and the jurisdiction now numbers nearly 50,000 members.

"Mr. Jewell resigning in a few months, John T. Yates was appointed sovereign clerk, and in November, 1890, headquarters were established at Omaha. The following May

of expense dues paid monthly by every member.

"This emergency fund is available when twelve assessments per annum do not meet the death losses. We have about \$160,000 in government bonds in this fund. It is confidently expected that this fund will accumulate to such proportions that it may be used to keep the cost of protection down to the minimum. Another feature is the payment on and after a member reaches the age of 70 years, and each year thereafter, one-tenth the amount of his certificate for total physical disability. The most unique, expressive and original feature of our order, in addition to the payment of the insurance, is the placing of a \$100 granite monument at the grave of every deceased member. About 3,000 monuments have been erected at a cost of nearly \$300,000. Sick and insane members, on proper proof, are kept insured by the camp during their disability."

"I understand you have a Canadian jurisdiction?"

"Yes, we started work in Ontario in 1891. In 1893, owing to adverse legislation in that province, I went to Ottawa and succeeded in getting a Dominion charter, by special act of Parliament, the only charter ever granted to a fraternal benefit order under its fraternal law. We regard this as the most practical endorsement our order has ever had. We have a nice head camp and membership there, with headquarters at London.

"As to the progress of the Woodmen, it is regarded as marvelous. During the past three years only two American orders have exceeded its increase of members. Our combined present membership is about 100,000. We have fifteen large and flourishing camps in Omaha and adjacent cities. We employ in our Omaha office over sixty people and our immense membership look

liberal advertising, fair compensation to officers, deputies and employes and original methods of interesting the people. We have endeavored to be strictly up to date and as far in advance as possible. "Our business methods of handling business are quite complete, as visitors to our headquarters will observe. Sovereign Clerk Yates has a very efficient corps of bookkeepers, auditors, certificate writers and stenographers. The millions of money passed through the Omaha Clearing house, the thousands of dollars paid for labor, printed



SOVEREIGN A. D. CLOYD, M. D.

Mexico and are expecting a special charter from President Diaz by act of congress. The writer, as he appears favorably disposed, we also expect to introduce our order into other foreign countries in due time, as our ambition is unlimited and we wish to reach worlds to conquer."

One Grateful Son

Chicago Tribune: "This," said the guide, "is the grave of Adam!"

Historic spot! With reverential awe, nay, with a feeling of deep thankfulness, the wealthy merchant turned on his first trip to the tomb drew near and cast a flower on the tomb.

"Erring ancestor," he murmured, "I should be the last man on earth to revile your memory! To your sin I owe my prosperity!"



WOODMEN OF THE WORLD—PARTIAL VIEW OF CERTIFICATE DEPARTMENT AT OMAHA.



WOODMEN OF THE WORLD—OFFICE OF THE SOVEREIGN CLERK, JOHN T. YATES.