



Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Dedicated Members for Change

November 10, 2012

Dear Dedicated Members for Change,

Odd Fellowship, as you know, has been around for hundreds of years. Many books have been written about this history of this Order. Unfortunately, there are no books or manuscripts at the inception. There is no clear record of this origins of Odd Fellowship, and so we are left to speculate, to some extent, as to when, why and how Odd Fellowship came into being.

I recently came into possession of a worthy 896-page tome entitled Official History of Odd Fellowship - The Three-Link Fraternity which was written and published over a Century ago and which has some gravitas and credibility. The book truly is official in that it was declared the "official history of the Sovereign Grand Lodge" in 1897 and reaffirmed in 1899. The latest revised edition that I have was published in 1910.

One of the more interesting theories regarding the origin of Odd Fellowship is that we are the successor, if you will, of "The Ancient and Noble Order of the Bucks" - a society that dated their formation in 1723 in England. In the 1700's, Freemasonry was the largest Order in England, but the "Order of Bucks" ranked second in size. The presiding officer of the Bucks was called "Most Noble Grand". In the beginning, the Bucks also had a "Senior Vice Grand" and a "Junior Vice Grand" which eventually just evolved into a "Deputy Noble Grand". There was a Grand Lodge organization, as well, with a presiding officer called "Grand Master". The Grand Lodge was composed of "Noble Bucks" who were past grands or their deputies from each Lodge. The Bucks "were given to charitable work" - one Lodge contributing the sum of 70 pounds "toward clothing our brave troops abroad, and the relief of the widows and orphans of those who fell nobly in their country's and liberty's cause" - a large amount of money for the time. Prior to 1756, they adopted the Lodge system. Interestingly, "the objects of the order were declared to be 'innocent mirth and good fellowship' lodge meetings being held weekly - when the warden collected the dues - in club rooms or taverns, where 'candor, sociability, freeness, and honesty are celebrated' as the accomplishments of fraternity." They wore regalia of different colors. Unanimity was taught by "the bundle of sticks". One of the principal symbols of the Bucks was, interestingly, three buck's heads, with antlers entwined.

Are the "Order of Bucks" part of the family tree which evolved into Odd Fellowship? It is certainly possible.

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Dave Rosenberg

p.s. I have written a book, myself, entitled The Future of Odd Fellowship - To Be or Not to Be. It's not 896 pages like the Official History above - it's a "mere" 300 pages - and it focuses not so much on the past, but rather on the future of this Order. The book will be published by the end of this month. I will provide more information in this newsletter in the near future, in case you wish to order one or more copies for yourself, for a brother or sister of the Order, or for your Lodge.