



What It Means To Be An

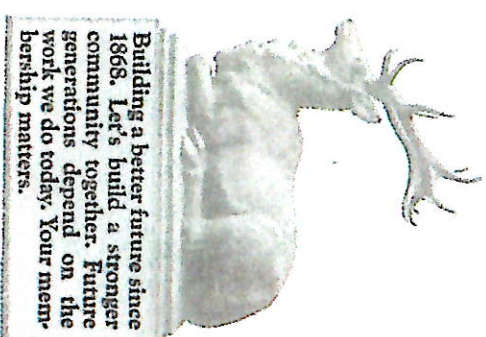
Elk

A Guidebook for New Members

The Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks, U.S.A.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN ELK

The Benevolent and Protective
ORDER OF ELKS
of the United States of America



A Guidebook of information published especially for the instruction of Initiates and under the authority of Grand Secretary Bryan R. Klatt in cooperation with the Grand Lodge Public Relations and Membership Marketing Committee.

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ELKS' CREED

**BELIEVE IN THE GOODNESS IN THYSELF
AS WELL AS IN OTHERS.**

**PROTECT CHILDHOOD WITH TENDERNESS,
OLD AGE WITH RESPECT,
CHERISH WITH REVERENCE THE MEMORY OF
THOSE WHO HAVE PASSED.**

OBSERVE FAITHFULLY THE GOLDEN RULE.

**ENJOY THE GOOD THINGS OF EARTH. KEEP WITHIN
THEE THE GLORIOUS SUNSHINE OF YOUTH AND
REMAIN ALWAYS OF GOOD CHEER.**

Exalted Ruler

Secretary

PLACE SEAL HERE

Whereas, having made application and complied with all requirements of the Laws of our Order, and the By-Laws of this Lodge, and Whereas, being an American Citizen of upright character, and having been duly elected to membership, Now, Therefore, Be It Hereby Attested, that _____, Membership No. _____ has been honorably and ritually initiated into _____ Lodge No. _____ The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America on this date, _____

I The Elks' Point of View

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks is one of the premier charitable organizations in the United States. We are a nationwide organization whose membership over 15 decades has consisted of tens of millions of America's finest citizens. We continue to grow, connect, educate, and engage people nationwide. We are driving positive messages, expanding the Elks brand, and engaging new audiences every day.

We do not question one's religion, nor do we exclude anyone because of creed, race, ethnic origin, gender identification, sexual orientation, educational attainment, vocation, socioeconomic status, material status, mental or physical abilities.

You will marvel at Elks' strength, unyielding spirit, and admire in amazement how we do it for more than 150 years. We love our country and desire to preserve its cherished institutions, traditions and values; respect our neighbors and constantly seek to promote their well-being; and love and enjoy life and believe this enjoyment is increased by sharing it with family, friends and all with whom we come in contact.

You are now joined with millions of fine and noble American Elks who have helped better the destiny and way of life for countless generations in our country for more than 150 years. Generosity is without fanfare and often even without the recipient's knowledge. You may even have been helped at some point along the way. We have always been there, quietly providing help and encouragement.



II Your New Journey As An Elk

● DAY ONE AS AN ELK

Congratulations on your membership in the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks! With your new Elks card, you would be entirely justified for feeling proud of the more than 150 years of the Elks accepting only America's best citizens. Tomorrow and in the years to follow, you will continue a program of learning and growth devoted to enriching your membership. We encourage visiting Elks.org and registering today. Visit the Elks Membership Guide under "Manuals". Click on "My Journey Begins", take the journey like the thousands before you. Find your passion and join a committee. You can also watch the Orientation video and take the new Member survey.

● DAY TWO: RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES & OPPORTUNITIES

We hope you had a wonderful Initiation celebration with memories that will last a lifetime. But now that you are recognized as an Elk, both within the Lodge and out in the community, what are you expected to do differently from your previous day-to-day life?

● WEAR YOUR EMBLEM PROUDLY!

Now that you're entitled to wear an Elks Pin, wear it proudly and often. *Why?* From this day on, your actions and concern for others will, of course, bring justifiable credit to you. But now your conduct will also reflect favorably on your Lodge and the entire Elks organization, whether you are acting individually or as part of an Elks group endeavor. The public image and awareness of our Order's strong and benevolent influence in your community are important in the success of most of your Lodge programs. Don't leave home without your Elks Pin. Additional pins can be obtained through your Lodge Secretary.

● LEARN ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION!

In addition to this guidebook, you were provided with personal copies of the national organization's Constitution and Statutes (Laws) and of your Lodge Bylaws. Whenever you have time or a question arises, read these reference works to understand your rights and responsibilities, as well as how our whole structure operates. If you don't understand a particular Bylaw or Statute, many knowledgeable associates in your Lodge would be available to explain it. To whet your appetite, we suggest the "starter" Statutes:

INTRODUCTION TO RULES OF ELKDOM

ARTICLES OF B.P.O.E. CONSTITUTION and STATUTES by CHAPTERS

CONSTITUTION

Preamble (& Purposes)
Article I — The Supreme Law
Article II — Departments of Government
Article III — Legislative Department
Article IV — Executive Department
Article V — Elks National Foundation
Article VI — Judicial Department
Article VII — Local Lodges
Article VIII — General Provisions
Article IX — Amendments to Laws (& Chapter 17)

STATUTES

Chapter 1. Definitions
Chapter 2. Rituals
Chapter 3. Elections
Chapter 4. Grand Lodge
Chapter 5. Funds and Expenditures of the Order
Chapter 6. Elks National Home Corporation
Chapter 7. Grand Forum
Chapter 8. Local Forum
Chapter 9. Offenses and Penalties
Chapter 10. Pardons
Chapter 11. Dispensations and Charters
Chapter 12. Local Lodge Officers
Chapter 13. Local Lodge Committees
Chapter 14. Local Lodge Membership and Revenues
Chapter 15. Local Lodge Meetings
Chapter 16. Local Lodge Operations
Chapter 17. Amendments
Chapter 18. State Associations

Before we leave the discussion of laws of your Lodge and Order, one important point deserves attention. The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, America's leading service organization, has grown in size and influence since 1868 because it is truly democratic. The Elks reflect our country's rejection of rule by a "privileged few." From the moment you first hold your Elks membership card, you are empowered to propose changes to any laws that you consider unsuitable. Once you have spoken your mind in your Lodge, only the will of the majority can prevail. Our Order is firmly dedicated to "the consent of those governed" for all adopted regulations. If you do not choose to voice your opinion, then you do yourself and your colleagues a disservice. Your right to a voice is guaranteed; use it.

But our Order of Elks is not just a collection of rules. We are also proud and happy beneficiaries of rich traditions, powerful sentiments and unforgettable acts by people significant in America's history. In every Lodge can be found the HISTORY OF THE ORDER OF ELKS. We encourage you to read it for enjoyment, for deeper appreciation of your new-found society and for an introduction to the many interesting Americans who served both their country and their Order.

While the Elks go back deep into history, we are also ageless and modern, due mainly to our responsiveness to the changing needs of our country and its people. A small portion of your annual dues maintains your monthly subscription to *The Elks Magazine*. Its pages describe the hundreds of programs for underprivileged and those with special needs being conducted all across America by your Elks peers. After reading about all these charitable and patriotic achievements, you will become more fully aware of our purpose and stimulate your own participation in your Lodge. If you don't start receiving *The Elks Magazine* within three months of your Initiation, ask your Lodge Secretary for assistance.

Most Lodges also send a monthly bulletin to their members. When the bulletin arrives, take the time to read it and note those Lodge events coming up so that you (and your family) can enjoy the benefits of membership.

Some new members are apprehensive when they learn of the many doings in the Lodge, thinking that they will be expected to join every activity. New members should choose those suited to their wishes, plus possibly try some that might expand their horizons. Lastly, as a new member, you may have a hobby or personal interest for which the Lodge does not yet have a matching activity. Don't hesitate to talk to the officers and leaders about starting a new program. Every Lodge is constantly on the lookout for new ideas that will keep the Lodge calendar lively and adapted to the times. The input from new members is what will continue to shape our organization with modern viewpoints and guarantee our position in America's mainstream.

● ATTEND LODGE MEETINGS REGULARLY!

To provide a forum for open discussion, planning and allocation of responsibilities, the Elks long ago found that regular meetings with an agenda are ideal for furthering Lodge goals. Meetings are set by each Lodge to accommodate the needs of its membership. Mark these days down on your calendar, and don't let minor distractions prevent you from attending. This practice will earn you the respect of your Lodge's true-blue Elks, its workers and leaders.

Unlike meetings in the outside world, however, those held at your Lodge are firmly tied to the character of our Order. First and foremost, discussions are always conducted in an atmosphere of friendliness and tolerance, with concern for the self-esteem of your colleagues, even those with whom you may disagree on a particular subject.

Regulating the conduct of each meeting is the Exalted Ruler, your Lodge's chief executive officer, who is elected for one year and likely has held other offices leading to this ultimate responsibility. Near the head station (or podium) is the Lodge Secretary through whom all the funds and reports of the Lodge and its committees are channeled. The Lodge Secretary is knowledgeable about every aspect of the Lodge. If you seek your Secretary's assistance, you will discover immediately that this officer's advice and information are pillars of Lodge life year-round. Assisting the Exalted Ruler is a dedicated group of leaders who handle the Lodge planning and administration.

BASIC AREAS OF LODGE OPERATIONS

Auditing & Accounting
Lodge Activities
Community Activities
Membership
Club Management
Youth Activities
Elks National Foundation

(NOTE: *Special committees may be created to suit each Lodge.*)

The purpose of these leaders is not to decide issues unilaterally. They obtain information on important topics and then present it to the membership for the final decision in a democratic and open manner. Once all the facts are known, the vote is taken to decide the majority's will. Your right to address the Lodge and to vote is safeguarded with the full authority of our laws as long as you are a member in good standing.

At various Lodge meetings you attend, initial plans for some upcoming function will certainly be presented. You can help ensure that the Lodge continues to have an inviting assortment of activities by answering the call for volunteers, which is made on the Lodge floor. By giving a few hours of your time to a program you like, you form sturdier friendships working side-by-side with your committee colleagues. You learn the Lodge's systems, and the Lodge thrives in this mutually beneficial environment.

Although it's a little early to begin discussing whether you might become a Lodge Officer, there are a few points worthy of mention. Every current Lodge officer was a new member like you at some time, and each began to be considered by senior Elks for leadership potential when the first step into committee service was taken. Success built upon success until they were ready for the major role in the Lodge as its officers. Once individuals have learned to be responsible and confident leaders within the Order, the same qualities will make them better in their outside occupations and dealings.

● **WITNESS INITIATIONS!**

It is completely understandable if you don't clearly recall all details of the Initiation by which you were made an Elk, considering both your own excited state of mind and complexity of this elaborate and

impressive ritual. So that you can gain a deeper appreciation of its beauty and meaning, we highly recommend that you plan to attend your Lodge's next Initiation. We promise you an enjoyable and enlightening experience. This will also be your first opportunity to welcome and offer guidance to the newest Elks. As some of your senior colleagues can tell you, bright remembrances from each one's own Initiation are recollected whenever you have the privilege of watching the pageantry of an Elks Initiation Ritual, either in your own Lodge or elsewhere.

● **SPONSOR A NEW MEMBER!**

The most significant way to experience the richness of Elks Initiation is to sponsor a friend into our organization. This is another privilege which comes to you through your valid membership card. Because our Order is selective, to maintain the quality of our membership and thereby perpetuate the good works that stem from our rigorously-guarded good character, no person can simply walk into one of our Lodges. Only through the sincere invitation and character endorsement of one who is already an Elk can one become an Elk. We give no honorary memberships to outsiders.

● **SPECIAL SERVICES!**

The Order of Elks is motivated by deep feelings of reverence for the family, nation, flag and sworn duty to our colleagues. Very early in our existence, these strong sentiments resulted in the creation of special rituals that are required to be performed in every Lodge at specified times of the year. These ceremonies, which occur almost simultaneously wherever Elksdom has taken root in a community, bind our hearts together and renew the commitments to service. Our Order does not make attendance at these special services mandatory. No such explicit directive has ever been considered necessary. If you are an Elk in name and in your heart, you will want to be with your Elk associates on these sacred days.

MOTHER'S DAY — 2nd Sunday in May/Meeting Closest

The reasons behind this observance are self-explanatory and existed long before the Order began. Our desire to add our sincere endorsement to tributes to the women who shape our own individual destinies, moved us to create a special Elks Mother's Day Ritual in 1918. This annual ceremony continues today in every Lodge, usually with accompanying musical or choral presentations. The ceremony sometimes is preceded by brunch and followed by a social gathering.

FLAG DAY — June 14th/Meeting Closest

History reveals that the first Flag Day ceremony, written by a Wisconsin school teacher, was conducted by him on June 14, 1885, commemorating the flag's adoption by Congress on that date in 1777. Long before 1885, however, our Rituals had incorporated various expressions of loyalty and respect for the flag as part of our meetings and activities. Those expressions continued as the popularity for this special observance developed.

In 1896, the Grand Lodge Session in Cincinnati adopted a recommendation by Arthur C. Moreland, New York Lodge No. 1, that: "the Altar drapery shall be the Flag of the United States, upon which the Bible shall rest, surmounted by the antlers." This was the first official use of the National Flag by the Order. James R. Nicholson, a Grand Exalted Ruler and outstanding figure in Elksdom for many years, wrote of this change:

"The placing of the American Flag on the altar of our Subordinate Lodges was a significant and far-reaching act. It was a great factor in the successful growth of the Order, for it put the visible stamp of patriotism upon every Lodge and associated the banner of our country, the Bible and our Order's emblem in an immortal trinity."

(Note: In response to prevailing attitudes in 1956, the Order ceased draping the Flag on the Altar and moved it to the right of every Elks Lodge's Altar.)

In 1904, San Diego Lodge, aware of the growing practice, held its first Flag Day observance, and in 1907 Grand Lodge encouraged all Lodges that had not already done so to follow suit. By 1911, the observance was made mandatory in all Lodges, making the Elks the first organization in the United States to officially do so. As a result of the efforts of our Order and others, President Wilson in 1916 proclaimed national observance of Flag Day, and on August 3, 1949, President Harry S. Truman, himself an Elk, proclaimed June 14 for the yearly nationwide observance. Our Order likewise can take great pride in that the late Joseph Vrtel, a Florida Elk, designed the current 50-star United States Flag. Our Ritual presents the history of Freedom's Banner in rich narrative scenes and sparkling oratory. It makes this celebration of the flag's birthday an unforgettable Elks experience.

ELKS MEMORIAL SUNDAY — First Sunday in December

Another outgrowth of our shared beliefs, our shared drives and our shared friendship, is the significance we place on the loss of our Elk associates with respect to Rituals and Lodge observances. At the time of death, proper last respects are given in the deceased member's home Lodge, and a special service is performed during funeral rites. You are urged to join in these whenever possible.

Once each year, however, in recognition of those who have died in the preceding year and before, each Lodge conducts a program of remembrance. Its message of hope, against a backdrop of music and poetic radiance, ensures that every deceased Elk will be remembered as long as Elksdom lives.

● SUPPORT CHARITABLE AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS!

As a non-Elk, you likely responded to various charitable appeals. We ask that you continue that policy within the Order of Elks. Our experience as humanitarians has clearly demonstrated that good-hearted citizens acting as a group can produce more good works than by acting separately. We list here only the good works that the Elks support nationally. Your Lodge undoubtedly has many of its own.

ELKS NATIONAL FOUNDATION

This special program of our Order, "*The Great Heart of Elksdom*," was started in 1928 with the premise that every cent contributed would become part of its permanent endowment fund, never to be spent or subtracted, and this "core" would continue to grow. The Elks National Foundation Endowment Fund is distributed each year through our Scholarship Programs, in funding the nationwide Drug Awareness Program, which reaches tens of millions of young people and their families, in financial support for the Elks "Hoop Shoot" free throw contest where more than three million youths participate, plus substantial annual grants to each of the 48 State Associations to continue and expand their programs that help the disadvantaged to lead happy and productive lives throughout America. The Elks National Foundation appreciates your support in helping so many underprivileged children and adults share in the American dream.

VETERANS SERVICE PROGRAMS

We Elks are constantly mindful that the rights and freedoms we enjoy continue to exist only because of our armed forces, whose members set aside their normal lives to defend our country against its enemies. Many paid the supreme price. Many more returned to our home shores broken in mind and body, unable to enjoy the blessings they had purchased for all of us. We Elks will never forget them. We have dedicated ourselves to repaying this debt of honor by bringing care and comfort to these patriots in our VA Medical Centers and Domiciliaries, and throughout our communities. Whether asked to contribute books and personal items, to invite a hospitalized veteran to your home for a holiday dinner, to assist in an outing for veterans or to contribute leather hides for therapy, always bear in mind the pledge the Order made in 1946 on behalf of every Elk:

"So long as there are Veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them."

STATE MAJOR PROJECTS

Lodges in each State Association have selected one significant area of need in their state. They conduct events and fund drives throughout the year to support this commitment, whether it be an annual donation toward cancer or cerebral palsy research, or operating expenses for an Elks hospital or clinic.

Your Secretary can refer you to the Lodge's Major Project Committee for full information on the work it does and how you can help.

HOLIDAY FOOD AND CLOTHING DRIVES

Almost universally, our Lodges collect food and/or clothing for needy families at Thanksgiving and Christmas, either by themselves or in collaboration with government agencies. While elaborate campaigns may be necessary to generate support for such programs among non-Elks, the strong feelings of concern that prevail within our Lodge families year-round result in outstanding participation on behalf of those in need. These programs will be announced in the Lodge and in your bulletin.

CHARITABLE OVERVIEW

Your Order of Elks is composed of Americans who may appear ordinary but our achievements can only be described as extraordinary. Our motivation can be summed up in the phrase, "*If you cannot give a million, be one of a million to give.*" In 25-year increments, here are the expenditures Elksdom has made for charitable, educational, community and patriotic purposes since the birth of our Order in 1868:

First Twenty-Five Years	\$179,374
First Fifty Years	\$8,296,646
First Seventy-Five Years	\$56,684,852
First One Hundred Years	\$214,099,221
First One Hundred and Twenty-Five Years	\$1,468,505,543
First One Hundred and Fifty Years	\$11,720,728,917

Any attempt to estimate what our benevolences will reach for our 175th Anniversary is pointless, because previous guesses have always fallen far short. Suffice it to say, now that our 150th Anniversary year is past, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks has easily surpassed \$11 billion and is cheerfully heading for the next milestone.

● ENJOY YOUR LODGE FACILITIES!

The first time you set foot in the Lodge was probably as the guest of a member, which led to your eventual membership. Now the Lodge is the site of casual conversation before and after meetings, plus socializing at various Lodge activities. Perhaps it hasn't registered why gatherings are so pleasant in Elksdom.

Primarily, all members were brought in by Elk friends, so that everyone present at a given time is part of a "friendship club." But an additional element is also at work. The founders of our Order knew that minor disagreements on certain critical subjects could destroy the Order. As a result, members are strictly forbidden to discuss religious or political matters, or engage in any business dealings within any Elks Lodge. Strong differences in such matters are left at the threshold in favor of those beliefs all members have in common. Whatever the level of education, income, occupation or fame we may have outside, in the Lodge we all meet on grounds of equality and respect.

Finally, all good Elks strive to conduct themselves in a manner that is above reproach. Any members can freely bring their families and friends into our midst without fear of harm to their reputations or sensibilities. In meetings or in social settings, loud voices and harsh words are taboo, and an atmosphere of consideration and good manners can be found. This is why Elks membership is highly treasured by the families who bring their laughter and enthusiasm to the Order.

To reinforce this friendship, most Lodges offer dinners, dances and other activities, another reason to introduce your friends to the positive influence Elksdom brings to their lives.

● AND VISIT OTHER LODGES!

Your membership card is also a passport of trust and friendship into the Lodges located in more than one thousand eight hundred cities and towns from east to west coasts (plus Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, Panama, Puerto Rico and the Philippines). Whether traveling for your job or on vacation, these are your "homes away from home." Plan your next trip and then ask your Secretary for the addresses of the Lodges along your itinerary.

Of course, it's not necessary to pack up and drive thousands of miles to sample the atmosphere of another Elks Lodge. The Order groups Lodges into districts, and each Lodge in your district has activities similar to your own Lodge's. Copies of Lodge bulletins with listings of planned functions are exchanged by these "neighbor" Lodges. Your Secretary can advise you on their future offerings so you have a wide selection of outings. The fun to be had from these small trips is greatly increased if you can arrange a group adventure for your Lodge.

The Lodge itself recognizes the benefits and friendships that result from these inter-Lodge social encounters, and has some already included in its calendar each year. Details are provided in your Lodge bulletin.

● VISIT ELKS NATIONAL MEMORIAL BUILDING!

Another special destination that deserves prime consideration of every Elks Member, is the Elks National Memorial Building in Chicago, Illinois.

After World War I, our Order acted on behalf of those members who took up arms in the nation's defense, including the 1,037 Elks who died in this service and those who lived the remainder of their lives broken in body and spirit. Determined that such acts of heroism would not be forgotten, the Order of Elks erected in 1926 the Memorial Building along Lake Michigan. Its exterior grandeur and artistic splendor inside convey the tragic necessity of war, along with undying love and respect for those who pay its price to protect the homeland. This eternal symbol has been rededicated in each generation to the memory of 1,674 Elks in service who died in World War II, plus those who fell in Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Iraq, Afghanistan and other conflicts. A restoration of all its price-

less artwork, funded solely by more than \$4 million from contributions of our Members, was completed in 1994. Every Elk should personally experience its awesome and poetic serenity at least once in their lives.



● ATTEND DISTRICT/STATE/NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

The same fine Elks and families you meet on visits to Lodges also gather periodically through each year to discuss matters of importance and renew friendships. These conferences or conventions are held among the Lodges located in your district and state. Lodges also meet nationally in July in a major city. The dates and locations for these gatherings are planned well in advance so that those who look forward to these festive reunions can fit them into work and vacation schedules. Ask your Lodge Secretary for details.

Each get-together has a distinctive character with parades, sight-seeing, shopping excursions or other social activities. However, just as important is the interaction of the workers in every Lodge who share, not only the difficulties each deals with, but also the solutions that are carried back to improve every Lodge's organization. Every Elks convention is a goldmine of new ideas, new vitality and new direction.

● AND ON AND ON . . .

The full menu of activities available to every Elk and Elk family in the Lodge, district, state and nationally is almost endless. If you will attend your Lodge regularly, the information will be amply provided to permit you to enjoy your Elks membership for the rest of a rich and happy life. Now, to help you understand just how such a fun-filled organization dedicated to helping people came into existence and grew, continue reading about our origin and early history.

III Birth and Growth of Elkdom

STRANGER IN TOWN

On November 15, 1867, a commercial sailing vessel arrived in New York City after a stormy Atlantic voyage from Southampton, England. From its decks stepped a 25-year-old singer who had been attracted by accounts of rapidly expanding opportunities in American entertainment as told to him by U.S. performers touring the music halls of his native London, less than three years after the Civil War.

Charlie Richardson, or Charles A. Vivian under the stage name he preferred, faced a lack of food, lodging and employment in a strange new land. A handbill thrust at him from a stack carried by a grimy-faced boy told of John Ireland's Star Hotel & Chop House, so he merged into the crowd of people passing through the Customs House and headed out into the city.



Although he had heard "Yanks" speak often enough over in England, the strange dialect from two New Yorkers he stopped for directions still amazed him. Nevertheless he found his way to Lispenard Street and the brightly lit Star Hotel. Pushing through the door of the Chop House, the voices and warmth surrounded him and brought back memories of his favorite pub back in London, right down to the sawdust on the plank floors. Unwrapping his scarf, he walked over to the mahogany bar running the length of one wall, put his derby down on its shiny surface and propped his foot on the brass rail as he surveyed the noisy crowd reflected in the long mirror behind the bar. Over the heads of the cheerful customers seated around numerous tables, his attention was drawn to the mustachioed piano player carrying on a serious discussion with a large thick-browed man who kept pulling his pocket watch out of his flowery vest and pointing at it. The smiling face of the bartender blocked Vivian's view. He ordered a schooner of ale and began to sip from its foamy edge, lost in worries of how far he could stretch his small bundle of coins and bills. Movement at his elbow interrupted his thoughts, and he turned to find the same ornately vested individual, his bushy eyebrows lowered in a scowl as he addressed the bartender. "Dere'll be a mountain of ice in Hades 'fore I ver let that lowlife warbler, Billy Martin, talk me in ta lettin' him sing on Friday evenin'! Now I'm stuck wid da no show 'n a full house gittin' ready ta walk!" A small smile crept onto Vivian's face, which didn't escape the big man's notice. Turning to Vivian, his voice took on an ominous note, "And jist what are ya findin' so funny, little man?" It took some fast and smooth talking before Vivian's charming manner could defuse Big John Ireland's temper enough to discuss a mutually beneficial arrangement, followed by a short talk with Dick Steirly at the piano. What followed on that evening long ago was the American debut of Charles Vivian, whose tenor voice and mirthful smile accompanied an almost endless repertoire of new songs that wove a spell of enchantment over the crowd at the Star that night.

JOLLY CORKS

Charlie Vivian went on to become a huge singing success starting with a nine-week engagement at Butler's American Theater three days later. But even more important, he attracted a large group of theatrical folk and set up regular gatherings under the name of the Jolly Corks, an informal society Vivian had belonged to in London. How this group evolved into the Elks continues two days after Vivian first walked into the Star Chop House. That Sunday, November 17, Charlie awoke at Mrs. Giesman's Boarding House where piano player Dick Steirly had secured him lodging, only to find that the Star was closed all day Sunday, along with every single music hall, saloon, restaurant, theater and gathering place within the city limits of New York, courtesy of a strictly enforced "Blue Law." This brand of forced idleness was not to Vivian's liking, as he had to have a constant diet of friends, laughter and song. Over the next few weeks he began planning a solution to this predicament with his friends. He succeeded in getting the message out to a dozen other entertainers from his new circle of friends to meet in the attic of the boarding house on Sunday, December 15. With the half dozen who already lived at Mrs. Giesman's, they proceeded that evening — one month to the day after he set foot in America — to have the first real meeting of the Jolly Corks, with each of the talented attendees adding a large share of merriment to produce an impromptu variety show.



Soon the word was out: The Jolly Corks had the finest — and only — variety show in town on Sundays. Each Cork was allowed to bring guests — prospective members — to meetings. The second Sunday, more than a dozen additional performers showed up. This session was so successful, in fact, that it ended abruptly with a cease-and-desist notice from Mrs. Giesman, prompted by complaints of other non-theatrical roomers, possibly because they were excluded from the frivolity. To a personality like Vivian, this was only a minor setback, especially as the rapidly growing throng was finding the attic too cramped. The Corks searched out an unused storage loft over Paul Sommer's saloon on Delancey Street. Subsequent meetings were rousing good times, due partly to their practice of storing up a bountiful supply of food and beverages before the next Sunday rolled around.

The names of the first eight Jolly Corks are known. Charles Vivian was certainly the first, and the founder of the group. Richard Steirly (who was also born in England) was second. The next members were John T. Kent, Frank C. Langhorne, William Lloyd Bowron, John H. Blume, Harry Bosworth and J. F. Norris (stage names Hilton or Wilton), many of whom lived at Giesman's. The grapevine fame of the Sunday evening festivities soon drew many more to their group, such as Tom

WINDS OF CHANGE

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Riggs, Matthew Ash, George McDonald, William Shepard, Edgar Platt, Henry Vandemark, William Carlton, George Guy, Hugh Dougherty, Harry Stanwood and Hugh Egan. By the time the Elks would officially come into existence, the ranks of the Corks had swelled to more than 200 quasi-official members, not all of whom would make the transition into the Elks.

It was now apparent that potential membership in the organization was tremendous. The rapid growth and new type of member coming in immediately created a certain difference in viewpoint. Vivian's first Corks had nothing in mind except conviviality — to get together and pass an otherwise blue Sunday in grand style. But as the group grew, and the potentiality was seen, other members, mostly legitimate professionals, felt the Corks could and should have some purpose higher than fun and games — a real society. A larger club had to have some kind of real organization, plus a serious purpose or it would fragment and go out of existence. A formalized group would mean regular membership, dues, a responsible treasury, regulations, and — following the custom of all such societies — some sort of ritual. With his wit and personality, Vivian had created a vitally important nucleus around which greater things might be built.

Had this jovial group of Jolly Corks been able to insulate themselves from the real world outside their gatherings, they undoubtedly would have followed the same jolly path and eventually drifted apart. But, as the calendar moved through December and winter tightened its hold, one or another of the regulars would fail to show up, either because of sickness or lack of funds (caused by too long a stretch without an engagement). In the lulls between each song or dramatic recital, conversation would turn to those who were missed and why. These were all souls whose livelihood came from the wildly fluctuating world of show business, with occasional well-paying bookings sprinkled over lean, dismal stretches of near-poverty and late rents. This experience certainly contributed something to their "eat, drink and be merry" attitude, but it also gave them a deep understanding and compassion for those in distress. It happened that one of the original Corks died unexpectedly, and left a wife and children without any funds just before Christmas. This crystallized the benevolence of the group. They established a continuing collection to support the fatherless family, as well as for other misfortunes that would befall members of the group. In the process, they formed one of the first performers' protective associations in America.

ELEVEN STROKES

Since Mondays meant going back to work (or because some legitimate gathering spots opened at the stroke of midnight), the meetings would break up around eleven. Any leftover food would be consumed or sent off to the unemployed performers along with the charitable collection. This left the beverages and brought about the first ritual to be transplanted into Elksdom. All would fill their glasses and drink a toast to those whose misfortunes had made them absent from the gathering, patterned

after a custom Vivian relayed from the English Order of Buffaloes in commemoration of the eleven o'clock curfew imposed by William of Normandy after the Battle of Hastings. The same prayerful sentiment for friends at risk out in the world in 1066 was appropriate for those who were absent from the circle of friends in 1867. Thus came into existence both the Jolly Corks' eleven o'clock toast — from a tradition spanning eight centuries — and a few months later the Elks' eleven o'clock toast to deceased or distant Elks. By the time the Corks met on Delancey Street in January 1868, this custom was informally but well established.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

At a Sunday session on Delancey Street, George McDonald made a motion that "we resolve ourselves into a benevolent order, and that a committee be appointed to draft rules and a ritual and to select a name."

As presiding officer, Imperial Cork Vivian put the motion to a vote, declared it carried and immediately appointed the required committee. It consisted of George McDonald as chairman, William Sheppard, Edgar Platt and Thomas Riggs. Vivian also appointed himself as an ex-officio member.

The committee that was to devise the name, regulations and purposes of the new organization met, made a partial report on February 2 and agreed to give its decisive recommendations in open session on February 16, 1868, in new quarters on the top floor of Military Hall at 193 Bowery. The departure from the Jolly Corks, and the birth of something new, was at hand.

The committee appointed to create a new benevolent order from the ranks of the Jolly Corks seems to have hit only one major snag: what to call the new organization. The Imperial or Head Cork, Charles Vivian, was a member of the British Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes. He was deeply influenced by both the ancient traditions and the impressive rituals of that order. With these in mind, he urged that the new American group also be called "Buffaloes."

The idea of being the offspring of an *English* order, however, did not go over with a majority of the membership. (Five of the 15 corks who signed the original B.P.O.E. Constitution were born in England: Vivian, Sterly, Bowron, Kent and Ash; Carlton was born in Ireland. The remaining nine were American-born.) They wanted the new society to be thoroughly American, with a truly American name. While "Buffaloes" seemed to fit, the English order was actually named after the African buffalo. At any rate, after some discussion, the committee decided to name the new order after a more suitable animal.

The name "Bears" was put up, but they were thought to be rather savage and surly animals. "Beavers" were industrious, but they were also destructive pests. "Foxes" seemed to be worse. Finally Tom Riggs remembered the massive power and graceful towering antlers of a truly gigantic preserved North American elk that he had seen on display in P.T. Barnum's Museum on Broadway & Ann Street, which burned

down the year before. Galvanized by the image from his memory, he passionately swayed the rest of the committee to research the possibility. This they did in the two weeks that followed, in the Natural Histories of Buffon and Goldsmith at the nearby Cooper Institute Library. They read that the elk was: "distinguished by its fleetness of foot" and "timorous of wrongdoing." Besides being fast and avoiding evil, the elk also avoided aggressive combat. The elk preyed upon no other species for its existence and destroyed nothing — but it would fight valiantly in defense of its own life and those of its mate and young. The idea of an animal that lived in peace, but would fight to defend its rights and protect the weak and helpless, appealed strongly to the group. The elk, with its spreading antlers, was not only a beautiful animal, but it seemed to symbolize the ideas and values this group most wanted to stand for and perpetuate.

ELKDOM: DAY ONE

When the group of 15 again met in regular session on Sunday, February 16, 1868, the committee returned a majority report recommending that the group be called "The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks." And the name of Elks was adopted on this day, recognized as the birthday of our organization.

Thus, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, a society that was to enjoy a long and glorious history in America, was born out of humble beginnings. With the name "Elk" decided for all time, the Lodge agreed upon a committee for its constitution and by-laws, which was to report back in March.

When the committee on constitution and by-laws reported on March 1, the Elks Constitution as adopted contained 15 articles and 21 rules or regulations. Some changes in these basic laws were made as Elkdom grew from a Lodge of 15 members meeting over a saloon to a nationally recognized organization of nearly a million Americans. But this constitution is still recognizable as the basis of all Elks law and jurisprudence. The rules and regulations set dues and initiation fees, and contained the usual and essential directions any order needed to run its business.

Vivian's long tour in New York City ended on March 2, 1868, when he was booked for performances in Philadelphia. His preferences for the new Order of Elks were shown by his organizing another Lodge of the Jolly Corks while working there.

Vivian closed at Fox's Theater, Philadelphia, on April 11, returned briefly to New York, then opened in Pittsburgh from May 11 through June 1, 1868. Meanwhile, the Ritual for the Second Degree was reported on and adopted May 17, 1868, under the chairmanship of George W. Thompson, who largely wrote it. Thompson was a theatrical agent who was close to McDonald.

The First Degree, pretty much put together by Vivian, closely followed the rituals of the R.A.O.B. in England, but still contained many features

that remained with Elksdom for decades. In essence, it was several acts of horseplay that initiated members temporarily into the first or social level before they are judged as fit for full membership rights and status. The Second Degree, however, was to provide a framework that was more lasting. It should be noted that the titles of the officers of the Second Degree differed from those of the First, (such as Vivian's RIGHT HONORABLE PRIMO), and are the ones now used for most of Elksdom's existence.

Accounts differ as to whether the election of officers for the higher Second Degree was held on May 17 or May 24; but in either case, Vivian, who if he had been present would have been a heavy contender for presiding officer, was still in Pittsburgh. In this election for the higher degree the Thompson-McDonald theatrical forces carried the day:

George W. Thompson: *Exalted Ruler*
 James Glenn: *Esteemed Leading Knight*
 William L. Bowron: *Esteemed Loyal Knight*
 George F. McDonald: *Esteemed Lecturing Knight*
 Henry Vandemark: *Treasurer*
 William Sheppard: *Secretary*
 Albert Hall: *Tiler*

By May 24, 1868, Exalted Ruler Thompson had conferred the ritualistic work of the Second Degree on the Elks who had not been members of the original Ritualistic Committee. These included Steirly, Kent, Vandemark, Platt and most of Vivian's friends. Vivian, being absent, did not receive the Second Degree. In fact, he was never to receive it.

PARTING OF THE WAY

Meanwhile, the Elks of New York had already held their first ball, which was given at Ferraro's Assembly Rooms on April 16. Vivian, between stands at Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, had attended this and made a short speech. Then (as now) balls and benefits were one of the principal ways a benevolent order could raise money, and the fledgling Elks' treasury was hardly bursting. Another larger, advertised blowout was scheduled for June 8, 1868, this one to be held at the Academy of Music. Between June 2 and 8 a series of ads appeared in the *New York Herald*:

ACADEMY OF MUSIC

Monday Afternoon, June 8th

THE ENTERTAINMENT OF THE AGE!

COLOSSAL MUSIC FESTIVAL!

FIRST ANNUAL BENEFIT

of the

PERFORMERS' BENEVOLENT AND PROTECTIVE ORDER OF ELKS

The deliberate use of the term "Performers' Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks"—which was not the legal name of the Order—showed clearly that a revolt between the actors and the less prestigious performing artists was gathering in the wings. And there was

something else more noticeable—Vivian's name, although he was R. H. Primo of the First Degree, was left entirely off the programs and posters printed for the occasion.

Upon his return, Vivian found a drastically mature organization which had grown from his fun-loving brainchild, under the guiding hand of George F. McDonald, the legitimate actor.

Vivian returned to New York expressly for this benefit. When he found he had been ignored in this way and, even worse for a performer whose publicity is his meal-ticket, left out of the entertainment program, he became quite angry. Most of his friends felt the same way. A storm was brewing.

The events of the next regular Lodge session, on June 14, perhaps should be described only in the words of Past Grand Exalted Ruler Detweiler: "There was an 'unseemly altercation.' A motion was made to expel Charles Vivian from the meeting. There were violent objections, and the session broke up with no definite action of any kind. Vivian, however, unquestionably was deeply hurt when he left that night. According to the record, he never again sought entry into an Elks Lodge.

Charles Vivian certainly founded the American Branch of the Jolly Corks, and he was certainly its guiding spirit. He put a stamp upon the Corks, and upon the organization that grew out of them, which was vital and would remain. Vivian was, in real terms, the founder of the Elks as well, because he was the spark that lit the flame. But, while Vivian's boyish charm enlivened any gathering, his amicable indifference toward taking life seriously handicapped him at the critical juncture where prudent and dedicated leadership was needed.

In all truth, happy-go-lucky as they were, the Cork coterie was something of "fly-by-nights"—solitary individuals living in boardinghouses, working on the fringes of the American theater, eking out a living as best they could. They were footloose and moved about rapidly due to their profession. They had no real cohesion, no glue beyond Vivian's personality, to hold them together. In fact, many of them were perfectly happy to continue the Jolly Cork organization as it had been founded.

Just as the character of Charles Vivian—so charming, fun-loving and careless of tomorrow—was important to Elksdom, the nature of George F. McDonald needs at least a brief examination, because both were influential in forming the Order.

McDonald was described as a person of fine character, deep sentiment and having considerable literary skill. This last resulted in his appointment to both the Rules and Regulations and the Ritualistic Committees. He had a very large part in writing the final drafts of all the early work on constitution and rituals.

McDonald was the leader of those who foresaw a more glorious future for the Elks. He wanted to move rapidly from the Jolly Cork fun-and-games stage and turn the Elks into a genuine benevolent institution. He was burning with the conviction that there was a tremendous

future in America for such an organization, devoted to the practice of charity and camaraderie. He even mentioned, on one occasion, that within 50 years the Order would have a million members. And, filled with this zeal and enthusiasm as he was, it must be said that George McDonald, and the performers on the legitimate stage around him, felt that Vivian and those similarly wedded to the Jolly Corks forever would not bring the full commitment and, more importantly, the organizational skills that would be needed to move the Order into a larger, sturdier and nobler phase.

While some of the things that were done were unfortunate, the motives of those who did them should always be regarded as sincere and, based on our growth for more than a century and a quarter, emphatically valid.

Charles Vivian went on his carefree way as a stage singer. He toured the U.S., making friends wherever he traveled. Then tragically, at the age of 34, he died in Leadville, Colorado, of pneumonia. Leadville was a mining boomtown then, and Vivian's funeral was a great event. The whole population turned out, with marching mourners and a band. But then Leadville, and Vivian's memory, faded. Within a few years his grave was marked only by a wood plank, engraved with a nail point.

But an Elk is never forsaken or forgotten. After heartbreak, there was a certain resurrected glory.

In 1889, the Chairman of the Board of Grand Trustees of the B.P.O.E. informed Boston Lodge (No. 10) of the neglected state of Vivian's grave. There was an instant reaction. With Denver and Omaha Lodges cooperating, a few weeks later Charles Vivian's mortal remains were reinterred in the beautiful Elks Rest at Mt. Hope Cemetery in Boston. Here they were commemorated with a magnificent monument and assured perpetual care. Of perhaps greater significance to the Order, which began as an entertainers' benevolent and protective association, is Elkdom's taking upon itself the support and care of Vivian's penniless widow until her death in 1931.

The place and memory of Charles Vivian in Elkdom was secure. More important, the Order he had done so much to start was moving ahead, out of bitterness to bigger and better things.

MEMORIAL RITUAL BORN

The first death in the Elks was that of Albert Hall, Tiler, who passed away in early 1869. Hall's death does not seem to have been ritually commemorated. However, when George Farmer died in early 1870, the social session was modified to include a memorial exercise and eulogies. The third Elk, James Glenn, passed away soon afterward in February 1870. Member George J. Green now proposed that a "Lodge of Sorrow" be held for these departed members.

A beautiful service was held in Clarendon Hall on 13th Street, with music conspicuously featured. This first Lodge of Sorrow was held on March 20, 1870, and from this time forward the passing of every Elk

was formally commemorated. Memorial services became not only a feature of the Order but one of the customs most impressive to outsiders. Also in March 1870, the Lodge gave a brilliant benefit performance at Hooley's Theater in Brooklyn for Brother Glenn's widow, who was in need. The services of Elk performers were given unstintingly, without pay, and more than \$1,000 — then a very respectable sum — was turned over to the bereaved family.

LADIES NIGHT

Another significant event was the proposal of Brother Tony Pastor "that the Lodge set apart an evening for the purpose of inviting our mothers, wives, sisters and female friends to our social session." In that day and age it was an almost unprecedented move. The men's Lodge club or society was regarded as sacrosanct, where no female was permitted. But this, as nothing else, brought the families of Elks into an awareness and approval of the B.P.O.E. and its works.

A steady increase of membership forced the Lodge to move to larger quarters. Negotiations were opened to acquire Clarendon Hall on 13th Street. While this building was being renovated, the Elks met for a time at 720 Broadway. When the move to Clarendon Hall was finally made, initiation fees were raised to \$20.

This was, in the era of penny sodas and nickel beer (with free lunch included), a very considerable fee. But in this, and in accepting relatively heavy dues and fees, the Elks were obviously thinking of future progress. A benevolent society had to have or raise a reasonable amount of money, the great tool and lubricant for good in American life. Certainly the leaders of Elkdom were concerned with their emerging image. Elkdom was now leaving its Bohemian roots behind and becoming a reputable organization of kind, solid citizens, who were both concerned with and effective in their community.

This last feeling led the Lodge to petition the New York legislature for a state charter. This was not granted, because of opposition of some state officials. The argument against the charter was that the B.P.O.E. Lodge was merely a subterfuge to evade the "Blue Laws" of the city and to run an "open saloon" on Sundays. Elks would hear that argument again in other times and places. Blocked in the legislature, however, the Lodge tried again, by appealing to the state Supreme Court. This body approved a charter allowing Elks to hold up to \$50,000 worth of property, and the New York Lodge was so incorporated.

BIRTH OF THE GRAND LODGE

Meanwhile, an event of great importance was brewing. When Charles Vivian had gone to Philadelphia in March 1868, he had quickly organized a coterie of Jolly Corks in that city. The Corks of Philadelphia continued and grew, much fertilized by frequent visits from members of the New York organization. When Gotham's Jolly Corks flowered into the New York Lodge, B.P.O. Elks, it convinced the theatrical professionals based in Philadelphia that they should become Elks, too. In the last half of

1870, a delegation of three Philadelphia Corks went to New York and petitioned for their group to enter into the Order of Elkdom. They were told to "go ahead," as the minutes read.

However, the birth of a truly national order was not so easy as all that. For one thing, the Elks technically were not yet an order, but merely a single Lodge chartered under the laws of New York. Their charter did not give them the right to charter or commission Local or sister Lodges, although the term "Grand Lodge" was already frequently in use, and even indicated in the heading of the first Elk Constitution on 1868. To bring the Philadelphia Lodge into the Order required some changes.

On December 4, 1870, Elk Tony Pastor moved that measures be taken immediately to establish an "Exalted Grand Lodge." This Grand Lodge would be organized to approve, charter and regulate any and all future Local Lodges of the B.P.O.E. This meant that New York Lodge could no longer consider itself as the "Grand Lodge" but must form two separate organizations, one of local scope, the other of national concern.

The committee formed to solve the problem reported on January 1, 1871: "**Resolved**, That the first Grand Lodge of the B.P.O.E. consist of the following: the original founders of the Order, together with all past and present officers who are now in good standing in the Order, and that the above take effect immediately."

There seems to have been no real opposition. Any and all rights claimed by the whole New York Lodge to be a governing body were thus surrendered, and the legislature was petitioned for "an act of incorporation securing requisite powers."

Pending approval, a rump meeting of the proposed Grand Lodge was held January 22 at 512 Broadway. George Green presided, and 13 other qualified Elks attended. However, business was suspended until all Elks could be notified of final ratification of the resolution.

Some of the Elks who had friends or influence in Albany, especially Gus Phillips and several others involved in newspaper publishing, lobbied to get quick action from the state. On March 10, 1871, the New York legislature passed a special act of incorporation for the Grand Lodge of the B.P.O.E., which was rushed to the governor, who signed it willingly. Thus the Grand Lodge became a New York corporation, with powers to issue charters to Local Lodges throughout the United States.

A charter dated March 10, 1871, was immediately issued to those Elks who had already petitioned the now-legal ruling body to be known as "New York Lodge No. 1, B.P.O.E." For obvious seniority reasons, the charter issued to Philadelphia was delayed two days and issued effective March 12. Philadelphia became No. 2.

George J. Green now vacated the chairs of New York Lodge No. 1 and became, as he was first called, Exalted Ruler of the Order. Henry P. O'Neil was given the main task of writing a constitution and by-laws for the new super-Lodge. To help the Grand Lodge get started, a per capita tax of \$77 was paid to it by New York, whose treasury fortunately held more than \$500.

The last session of the Elks in New York as a single body was held on March 19, 1871. Thereafter, Grand Lodge and New York Lodge No. 1 met separately, at different times or in different rooms, though there continued to be a certain amount of cross-fertilization, and even confusion, among the officers of each group. Grand Lodge, during 1871, held nine regular sessions, and had three communications. It was in business. The Elks were "national," and firmly organized for future expansion.

A number of Elks held a "session" in Chicago in January 1871; however, these were members of New York Lodge No. 1 who happened to be working on the stage in that city. In the fall, New York gave a big benefit in the Academy of Music, to aid victims of the great Chicago fire — the first known instance of Elks responding to a disaster.

THE EXPANSION WEST

By now, several things about the Order were firmly set — but many others were in constant change. The Elks were not and could not be a static society, any more than the United States of America was a static, unchanging nation. In the 1870s, the country was being rapidly spanned by rails; pioneers were pushing deep into the Great Plains regions; and from coast to coast many small communities were beginning to swell into thriving cities. The enormous, unbelievably productive industrial complex that was to characterize 20th-century America was already past its foundation stage. The industrial and financial capital of the United States was taking shape in New York City, where it would remain for many decades. New York was also the main American gateway to Europe and the Old World. Here also was centered the new nation's artistic and theatrical world. This literary and acting community traveled the interior and even the Far West continually, but its heart was in New York.

This theatrical connection seems to have both helped and hindered the infant B.P.O.E. Whatever other personal traits they might have had, theater people tended to be sentimental, warm-hearted and generous, their jealousies confined pretty much to the stage itself. Logically, they were often flamboyant, with a strong sense of the dramatic, necessary in their profession. They had wit, poise and presence, and this gave them popularity and caused other people to enjoy associating with them. All these were of vital importance to a new organization that intended to be benevolent, in which ritual played an important part, and which desired to expand.

Further, the world of show business consisted of the most tolerant and broad-minded people of the last century. Their own associations were nonsectarian, and the Elks could emerge no other way. The names on the early rolls are British, Irish, Italian, Scandinavian and Central European, representing virtually every immigrant group that inhabited New York at that time and almost every denomination.

Finally, the theatrical trade of the 1870s was very much concerned with road trips. Tours and troops went everywhere the rails or the

stagecoaches ran. Everywhere these charming, clever and attractive people went, they collected other citizens about them in the saloons, hotels and chop houses. This free movement of Elk members quickly spread the fame of the Order across the country, from north to south and coast to coast. People heard about the Elks.

But although there were almost 300 Elks in New York Lodge No. 1 at the start of 1871, from this point on the Order's growth slowed very visibly for a number of years. By now, the fact that the Elks were mainly a literary and theatrical group began working against them.

For one thing, there was a limited number of such people in the country. The determination of the dominant Elks in 1868 to keep the Order "professional" severely limited the potential membership. For another, the "theatricals" were so footloose and on the road so much that it was difficult for them to stay active in Lodge business. On June 11, 1871, Exalted Grand Ruler Green reported, "The reason that so large a number of dispensations (permission to omit meetings) had been asked for in [Lodge] No. 2 was from a recognition of the necessity of having a sufficient number of Devout Elders (Second Degree holders) for the transaction of business during the absence of the professional brethren of the Lodge in the traveling season." If the Elks had gone on limiting themselves mainly to the theatrical world, or, for that matter, any particular profession, they would never have become a great national body embracing the mainstream of America.

It must be emphasized that the B.P.O.E. was not a professional society. Persons were introduced and initiated into the Order because members desired their companionship, not because they wanted to get in or because they happened to be performers. There was no automatic eligibility. An early account of the Order states that for several decades there was no formal restriction or regulation on membership other than that prospective members must be 21, and this is true so far as it goes. But people bring in their own sort of people, and there was from the first a process of selection.

EXIT STAGE LEFT

Fortunately, membership had never been tightly restricted to theatricals. It was always understood to be extended to people sympathetic with the acting or literary professions. Consequently, there soon began a steady infusion of people who made a living in law, medicine, brokerage, sales and even clergy. These "outsiders" were attracted by the flair of the professionals, the ideals behind the Order, the impressive rituals of the sessions and — to be truthful — that Elks had a reputation of being a jolly group who threw fine parties. In the last half of the century, American family life was quite different from what it would be later. There was no real notion of "togetherness." Children were expected to be seen, period. Alcoholic beverages were not served in respectable middle-class homes, and men and women enjoyed somewhat separate social lives. Neither the cocktail hour nor the backyard barbecue had yet been invented.

The family and social life of the era gave a strong push into the fast-growing cities to orders like the Elks. They offered members companionship, after a 10-to-12-hour day, and a chance to relax with people they liked that could be had nowhere else. They also gave a certain sense of belonging and cohesion to society, that a rapidly moving, expanding and changing American scene required. In cities that now had thousands of citizens, the fact that one was an Elk fostered a strong sense of belonging to something worthwhile and good to replace the anonymity of the masses.

With the Elks, the theatricals had begun something other people recognized as enjoyable and fine. The sense that Elks "cared" — by 1871 Elks were already not only assisting less fortunate members now and then but helping the bereaved families and providing monuments for the deceased — was impressive and attractive. In a great, hardworking, growing, building — but sometimes harsh — America, it was important to belong to a group that cared.

Two things were happening by the mid-1870s, both probably inevitable. People outside the theater were joining in increasing numbers. They recommended their friends, who further diluted the stage predominance. And these newcomers, especially the doctors, lawyers and other professional people, who stayed in one place and attended every session like the solid citizens they were, gradually began to be elected to the high offices of the Order. It was inconvenient to have a Tiler who next Sunday might be in Poughkeepsie or an Exalted Ruler about to spend the summer in San Francisco or touring on the road.

And if the theatrical element had given the Order its ritual flair and deep sense of sentiment, these latter business people-chairholders did much to give order to the Elks themselves. They brought skills into the Lodge that no available amount of money could have hired. They were to be of tremendous importance later, not only to the Order of Elks, but to the nation.

GROWTH YEARS

Because of all these factors, the third Lodge was not installed until April 11, 1876, in San Francisco. But No. 3 was quickly followed by No. 4, Chicago, and Cincinnati, No. 5. Ten years after the beginning, there were 10 Lodges. While the total membership was still less than 1,000, the stage was set for solid expansion, from sea to shining sea.

The most striking thing about the Elks between 1880 and 1890 was its tremendous surge of growth. The Order went from 10 Lodges in major metropolitan centers, and 1,000 members, to 158 Lodges, with a "herd" of 13,000.

This expansion took place outside the original major cities of the theater circuit, such as New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and Boston. Charters were issued to smaller outlying towns, such as Peoria (No. 20), Utica (No. 33) and Logansport, Indiana (No. 66). The center Elklodm swung sharply westward from the Atlantic coast. Lodges dotted western Pennsylvania and the entire Middle West. The pioneers of our Order

were hard at work planning Lodges from the Mississippi to the Pacific coast. Elklodm would soon fill in the wide open spaces and forge a stronger tie with the isolated handful of California Lodges. We were indeed becoming known as the truly American Order . . . except for one small thing.

Whether it was residual respect for Vivian and the half-dozen English-born Jolly Corks who were the midwives for Elklodm's birth, or a case of simply not bothering to state the obvious, the Order, which at its very beginning had stressed its strong bonds with America, had not yet put into B.P.O.E. laws that every member must be an American citizen. Several cases of non-citizens being taken into Lodges caused such a clamor throughout the Order that Lodge representatives gathered in 1890 at Cleveland, Ohio, and quickly closed this perplexing gap in our regulations.

The question of Elklodm being an American Order was settled forever when shortly afterward, Grand Lodge sought to secure a Congressional charter. This proved difficult to get at the time, but it was found that incorporation by the District of Columbia served the same purpose. The "Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America" was thus incorporated in 1895. It belonged not to any single state but to the entire nation.

BEST PEOPLE ON EARTH

The very first Elks clearly were an unusually decent group of Americans. But why exactly? This did not come about by accident or purely through Providence.

On the Lodge level, there was always some sort of control or screening of new members. Later, as the Elks became a national body, certain national standards were adopted. This set a pattern. The striking characteristic of the Elks was that Lodges enjoyed local government and freedom within broad limits — but the Grand Lodge leadership was never afraid to act or legislate for the good of the Order. This combination of local sovereignty and decentralization, together with national standards, was rather peculiar to the Elks and, at the same time, brilliantly successful. Few other groups enjoyed the Elks' flexibility to change and responsiveness to ideas or wishes from within.

Lodges developed in their own way and reflected the ethnic and religious make-up of their locality in an America where there was already a growing pluralism. While Lodges varied in family names and church denominations across America, Elks were all members of one great American middle and upper-middle class. This was inevitable for obvious reasons: The Elks were founded as a charitable organization, and charitable societies could only be supported by a reasonably well-off membership.

Almost from the very start, the concept of a mutual-benefit society, which some "theatricals" had in mind, broadened into the grander idea of charity for all. The first recorded instance of a nationwide Elks effort

was the assistance provided to the unfortunate people hurt or damaged by the Johnstown flood. This action, in which Lodges everywhere joined, was a far cry from raising funds to bury an Elk or to aid his widow or orphans. Raising disaster relief on a national scale, when the Elks were still small, was of national significance and showed clearly that the Order was thinking not just of Elks, but of Americans. From the start, no conditions, other than genuine need, were given Elks' help. The Elks were perhaps the first fraternal group to do this on a national scale. From 1889 onward, Elks assisted in virtually every national natural disaster and in dozens of small localized disasters, such as fires or tornadoes, where fellow citizens suffered. In 1906, the Grand Exalted Ruler directed both money and volunteer labor on the site of the terrible San Francisco earthquake and fire. Elks contributed a total of \$109,140.60 to the inhabitants of San Francisco. According to the Governor of California, the Elks were the first organization of any kind to render help at San Francisco. Elks were arranging shelter for refugees within 12 hours. Elks' food wagons were first to arrive in the stricken city, preceding the Red Cross and all other organizations, private or public.

This was significant, because it showed that Elklodm was already not only benevolent nationally but well-organized to carry out its operations. In fact, this smooth mechanism continued to impress governmental and other observers almost as much as the charitable deeds and spirit it delivered.

Growth brought some headaches in the form of trouble with a few hastily organized and "rowdy" Lodges. The Grand Lodge finally required that no Lodge could be created without the backing of at least 25 persons of known reputation and good character in the community. This was especially important when charters began to be granted to Lodges in towns of 5,000 or more inhabitants. The procedure was that the nearest Elks Lodge tried to investigate the situation before a charter was issued. Judging from the continued growth of the Order and its maintenance of remarkably high standards, this stipulation was well-conceived. The Elk image was preserved and, before 1900, it was already a very good one.

The growth in these years — to 1,264 Lodges and 428,479 members in 1914 — required a certain administrative supervision and standardization, though this was deliberately kept to a minimum. "Elks cards" or "Traveling cards," which showed paid-up status in Lodges, were issued. Finally, a standardized system of dimits (transfer procedures) was instituted. Elks, like all Americans, tended to move around. Elklodm was a rapidly growing and increasingly powerful body. It was beginning to have nationwide significance. The Order was still deeply committed to its own members, but now responded to national disasters like the Johnstown flood, the Galveston tidal wave, and the San Francisco fire and earthquake. It was pouring funds and other assistance from all over the country, showing clearly a *national* conscience.

FLAG DAY

The development of the Elks as an active patriotic organization was inevitable because of the solid citizens who had come into the Order. They had roots in their communities and a strong affection for their country.

In 1898, shortly after adoption of the flag on the altar, the Spanish-American War broke out. This same year, a resolution to be forwarded to the President of the United States was proposed at the Grand Lodge Session in New Orleans by Past Grand Exalted Ruler Ned Hay:

"Whereas, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, being an American institution, and the country today is unhappily engaged in war with a foreign power, be it

"Resolved: That the Grand Lodge...tenders to the President of the United States its sympathy in these trying moments and its hearty interest in his every act pertaining to the welfare of the country, assuring him of loyalty and devotion to the flag and all it symbolizes..."

Brother Hay's resolution was carried by a rousing vote.

Eulogies to the flag became a part of Elks ritual, and the national symbol and the country for which it stood became entwined with the Elks' mystique. In 1907, Grand Exalted Ruler Henry A. Melvin recommended to the Grand Lodge Session at Philadelphia that Flag Day, June 14, be commemorated by the Elks. The Committee on Ritual was instructed to study this and to make recommendations at the following annual session.

This committee, composed of James L. King, Topeka Lodge No. 204, Charles B. Lahan, Chicago Lodge No. 4, and William M. Hargest, Harrisburg Lodge No. 12, presented a Flag Day Ritual to the Grand Lodge Session at Dallas in 1908. The session adopted it unanimously. But not until three years later, at the session at Atlantic City, were observance of Flag Day and the use of the official ritual required of all Local Lodges.

The Elks were the first and only Order in the United States to make the observance of Flag Day mandatory. The Flag Day Service was and is colorful, instructive and inspiring. Elks began to hold it publicly throughout the nation. Many outside authorities feel that no other group has done more to promote a proper knowledge and respect for the flag. Elks' influence, in fact, was powerful in getting attention for Flag Day, both in the Congress and across the country.

WORLD WAR I

Elkdom was on record as a patriotic organization. But actions always speak louder than words. War tensions were already rising in Europe in this decade, ending a long era of peace and progress. In August 1914, the powers of Europe went to war. The conflict quickly became global, and in April 1917, after repeated provocations by the Central Powers, President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to declare war.

The United States was poorly prepared to fight the war. The Army had no hospitals to care for mass casualties.

Like their namesake animal, Elks were not belligerent, but they defended and looked after their own. They also avoided spectacular programs. Elks for years had grown accustomed to doing their charitable works quietly, almost behind the scenes. The Elks gave first consideration to the sick and wounded on European battlefields.

As the 1917 Boston session opened, Member James McGovern, Bridgeport Lodge No. 36, proposed a resolution pledging to the nation "the best that we have to offer in service at the front and in resource and fealty at home, today and always." This was carried unanimously.

Then, on the motion of R.E. Umbel, Uniontown, Pennsylvania, Lodge No. 370, the following resolution was adopted by a rising vote:

"RESOLVED: That the sum of one millions dollars be appropriated by the Grand Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America, to be known as "The War Relief Fund," such fund to be contributed by our Subordinate Lodges."

As soon as it was voted, members of Grand Lodge sang "America."

The Order first arranged to finance and equip two base hospitals in France for the Army. Base Hospital No. 41 was organized from the faculty and alumni of the University of Virginia, while No. 46 was organized at the University of Oregon. The Elks bought the equipment and paid for these hospitals. They were the first American hospitals of their kind to arrive behind the trenches. Each saved countless American lives.

Now, the drums were beating everywhere, and thousands of Elks joined the colors they loved so well. More than 70,000 Elks donned uniforms — a remarkable number, considering that many of the 475,000 members were past military age. More than 1,000 Elks died in this war.

The great battles on the Western Front in 1918 sent an unending stream of maimed and wounded soldiers flowing back to the United States. The existing hospitals were soon filled. The Elks offered to construct and equip a 700-bed Reconstruction Hospital for the government. The offer was gratefully accepted, and this hospital began operation in Boston in 1918. This was the first hospital of its kind in the country. For three years, it was filled to capacity. During 1918, Elks also erected a Community House at Camp Sherman, Ohio, to shelter families of service personnel stationed there.

Meanwhile, one of the most effective service organizations helping soldiers overseas was the Salvation Army. But the task the Salvation Army had taken on was beyond its financial capabilities. The Elks, long familiar with the Salvation Army's good work, asked Local Lodges across the nation to assist the Army in its drives for funds. They also gave the Army \$60,000 for postwar operations at Christmas 1918.

Grand Lodge directed and proposed these activities, but the 1,350 Lodges throughout America responded to them. In more than 700 cities, Elks turned over their club houses, and sometimes their homes, to be used as headquarters for local war relief. Thousands of Elks assisted in these operations. In many areas, local Lodges assumed the entire administrative costs of raising money for war relief. Their work did not draw national attention in most cases, but was the most effective kind of work there was.

At the July 1918 Grand Lodge session in Atlantic City, a second \$1,000,000 was appropriated. This sum, like the first million, represented immensely more money from each Elk than it would have seemed today. These were the days when the \$5 daily wage was still a rarity.

THE FIRST G.I. LOAN

In June 1918, Congress established the Federal Board for Vocational Education to provide retraining for disabled veterans. Unfortunately, the law did not cover many thousands of deserving cases. The Elks stepped in to fill the void and to publicize the plight of handicapped veterans everywhere.

The sentiment of the Order was that in such cases, since the purpose was to put veterans back on their feet, loans would be preferable to outright charity. When a disabled veteran repaid the loan while undergoing training, this money was loaned again from a revolving fund. The program was spectacularly successful. Forty thousand loans were made to America's defenders. Except in a few cases, where death intervened, every dollar was repaid.

The Elks vocational training program was so successful that the government created a similar revolving fund. But greater, perhaps, than giving dollars, supporting hospitals at home and in France, and rehabilitating disabled patriots, was the Elks' spirit of sympathy and American unity. And while no recompense was ever sought for our efforts, one pleasant dividend soon became evident. Tens of thousands within the armed services and those working alongside the Elks on their behalf were introduced to our philosophy of service and fraternity. They carried this new awareness back to their home towns. New Lodges sprang up and new members joined our ranks.

In this way, Lodges continued to develop according to the background of their region of America, with much religious and ethnic diversity. There was no single national "Elk image," because Elks embraced the immense diversity of America. A Lodge in Montana would have different kinds of people than a Lodge in Massachusetts. But both were united by decency, patriotism, friendship and benevolence. And because the increasingly mobile population of America, there was constant fertilization between Lodges. Elks got around and were welcome everywhere. An Elk who left Massachusetts for Montana arrived with a circle of friends in the new home. The value of this sense of belonging is hard to exaggerate. It was something that rarely could be put into words, but was deeply felt.

STATE ASSOCIATIONS

To keep the Order, like its ritual, uncomplicated and pure, the Constitution forbade "branches, adjuncts or auxiliaries." Even so, there was considerable agitation for various kinds of auxiliaries, from the 1890s onwards. One of the most controversial questions revolved around state associations.

The original movement to found state associations was to create 48 or 50 state Grand Lodges, which would legislate under the remote direction of a Supreme Lodge. Immensely more unwieldy than one Grand Lodge, they were bound to pass conflicting laws and divide the Order.

However, another kind of state organization or association began to spring up. These were not official but simply associations of Lodges within a state to coordinate and better carry out various Elks projects or programs each Lodge was supporting individually. The Ohio Elks had an association by 1898, and neighboring West Virginia had formed one by 1908. There were others, formed quietly and unofficially.

In 1907, the statutes were amended to allow state "reunions" so long as they made no effort to assume any powers of Elks government. By 1914, 23 states had formed associations, and Grand Lodge took the matter up again.

The 1915 Los Angeles session formally recognized state associations. From 1917, state associations enjoyed phenomenal growth. Every state formed one (Delaware and Maryland combined with the District of Columbia) and activities broadened. Each association chose a particular field of endeavor, from Alaska's youth activities and scholarships to Wisconsin's help for crippled children. Help for young people, hospitals and scholarships remain the most common programs. Associations immensely increased Elksdom's efficiency in charitable, humanitarian and community welfare work.

ELKS & KIDS

Meanwhile, Elks Lodges everywhere had become active in helping American youth to broaden their opportunities. In 1911, it was proposed in Grand Lodge at Atlantic City that some national direction be given to a youth campaign. In 1913, Past Exalted Ruler John F. Reilly presented the so-called Hammond plan (from Hammond, Indiana, Lodge No. 485), for throwing Elks' support behind the "Big Brother" movement.

The Big Brother movement was aimed at helping boys who got into trouble with the law. Responsible people, through personal contacts and assistance of various kinds, tried to rehabilitate these youths, and to help them grow up as decent, valuable citizens. Individual Elks worked closely with the juvenile courts in their communities, and eliminated the use of probation officers. In many cases, Elks business leaders could be more effective than court officers in influencing these boys. By 1917, more than 400,000 Elks from 1,100-plus Lodges were looking after more than 30,000 little brothers. Realizing that the worth of this program far outweighed the prestige of keeping it strictly as an Elks program, we helped establish it as a separate national organization, open to all who wished to participate.

One shining moment in the Order's care for young people occurred 1920-1945. Edward Chapman of Great Bend, Kansas Lodge No. 1127 (later to hold many high positions) organized "Junior Elks Lodge No. 1" in 1917 from the sons of that Lodge's members. The Junior Elks held meetings and activities similar to the adult version. Both groups helped build good character in these 15- to 20-year olds, as well as strengthen the parent-child bond. Hearing of this innovative idea, C. Fenton Nichols of San Francisco Lodge No. 3 started one in his own Lodge in February 1922, under the name of "Antlers." Under his influence, these still un-official Boys Elks Lodges began springing up in many California Lodges. Since the concept had already proven itself, Grand Lodge had no difficulty in adopting the Antlers officially into the BPOE Constitution in 1927. With the creation of formal rules, procedures and rituals shortly thereafter, a growth spurt began in earnest all across the nation. By 1929, there were 34 Antlers Lodges, with 24 of these being in California, which even convened a State Antlers Convention that year. By 1933, the number of Antlers Lodges grew to 45, eventually reaching 72 with a combined 4,500 "junior" Elks. The start of World War II, however, was the beginning of the end for the Antlers movement. Those 18- to 20-year-olds, who were the solid leaders of Antlers Lodges, joined the armed services. Left with only younger and less experienced officers, the Antlers Lodges began closing. By 1946, only seven were left functioning. While few currently exist, many senior Elks still have fond memories of colorful dramatic ceremonies held on Patriots' Day in every Antlers Lodge or of "graduating" up to being a full-fledged Elk upon reaching age 21.

UNDER THE SPREADING ANTLERS

In the 20 years after 1900, the Order was already established nationally, but becoming more importantly a vast, diversified service organization. Elksdom was not just dishing out money to worthwhile projects — but actively helping build America in hundreds of small communities and in dozens of mostly unnoticed ways.

In 1919, the Social and Community Welfare Committee organized by Grand Lodge did not mark the start of new programs, but the efficient coordination and reporting of the old. One immediate result was that Elksdom began to get a clearer picture of what the Local Lodges were achieving, each in its own way.

Significantly, in 1921, the Social and Community Welfare Committee stated a fact that was not, perhaps, then completely known: that the essence of Elks' charitable work — volunteerism and spontaneous translation of care into action — had long ceased to be confined to the Order, but was finding its way into all parts and all conditions of American society.

Christmas baskets, gifts of food, fuel and clothing, donations to established relief funds and subscriptions to other charitable institutions were the most common practices.

Lodges now were also interesting themselves in fields hitherto ignored, such as public health, child welfare, city playgrounds, public recreation, education and art, better housing and slum clearance, and law enforcement. In cities where Lodges were active, Elks did not create a new super-body to take over any of these programs, but they supported the Red Cross, the Salvation Army and Community Chest programs already in progress. In many cases, Elk support was instrumental in putting these programs over.

B.P.O.E. HEADQUARTERS

The growth and diffusion of Elksdom throughout America meanwhile required some administrative improvements. In 1920, the Grand Secretary and support staff worked from cramped quarters on the seventh floor of an office building in Dubuque, Iowa. Above all, they were not fire-resistant. Thousands of irreplaceable Elks records were not sufficiently protected, although the Secretary's office was in the best quarters available in that city. The Grand Exalted Ruler and other officers believed the "Order had reached a stage in its history when it should have a permanent place for the offices of the Grand Secretary and National Headquarters." Strong sentiment also existed at this time to commemorate the valor and sacrifices of Elks during the Great War. Thought turned to erecting a stately Elk Memorial Building with administrative offices that would not detract from its message.

In 1921, the Grand Lodge session in Los Angeles adopted resolutions approving this recommendation and appropriating \$2.5 million. The site chosen for the new building was the intersection of Lakeview Avenue and Diversey Parkway in Chicago, fronting Lincoln Park and Lake Michigan. Here, Elksdom erected one of the most impressive structures in the United States. It was dedicated in 1926.

Great bronze elks flank the entrance to the rotunda. These figures are considered the most artistic representations of the noble animal ever made. The marbles of the Memorial rotunda, both imported and domestic, are of museum-quality throughout. The great frieze, which extends around the rotunda, depicts scenes of war and peace. It is one of the finest examples of sculpture in the world. The Memorial quickly became one of the showplaces of Chicago, and no Elk or any of the millions of other visitors who enter the great bronze doors can ever completely forget the experience of standing in the muted light of the immense round hall.

In side wings off the rotunda, national offices and the archives of the Order are located. Thus Elksdom had a central National Headquarters as well as an inspiring national symbol.