

INDIANA'S FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

Historic Preservation Month 2023

Before the Civil War, the only fraternal organizations in the United States were the Masons and the Odd Fellows. After the war, the founding of additional organizations increased dramatically. The "golden age" of fraternal organizations occurred from the 1870s–1920s. Regardless of the uniting element of membership (veterans, occupation, politics, religion, ethnicity, etc.), at their core, the organizations' primary purposes were social and charitable. Groups like the Elks, Eagles, Moose, Shriners, and Knights of Pythias offered the pageantry and comradery of meetings and events.

They also helped financially support their members/families who were struggling. Typically, membership was limited to white men, although many organizations later included auxiliary groups for women. Additionally, those of other ethnicities either started their own organizations (e.g., Ancient Order of Hibernians) or founded associated fraternal organizations based on the rituals and purpose of the larger fraternal group but focused on the needs and interests of their specific ethnic group (e.g., Prince Hall Masons, Chinese Lodge of Masons of America).

Membership dwindled with the growth of government social services that helped those in need and as commercial insurance became available. A resurgence in popularity of fraternal organizations happened after World War II, but their numbers are shrinking once again.

To learn more about some of Indiana's existing fraternal buildings, follow the DHPA's Facebook page during May 2023.



MURAT TEMPLE • INDIANAPOLIS



INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS • DUNFEE



MASONIC LODGE • BLUFFTON



AMERICAN LEGION • CONNERSVILLE



FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES THEATRE • WABASH



MASONIC TEMPLE • TERRE HAUTE



MASONIC TEMPLE • PRINCETON

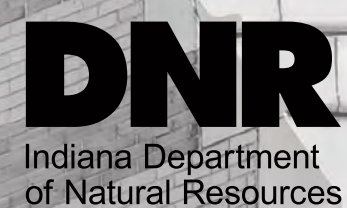


BENEVOLENT & PROTECTIVE ORDER OF ELKS LODGE • PERU



INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS • CANNELTON

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