





TO Bro. W. J. Smedley P.G.M.
from

The Committee of Management
G.U.O.O.F.

IN RECOGNITION OF HIS SERVICES
IN COMPILING THIS HISTORY

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GRAND UNITED ORDER OF ODDFELLOWS

NEW SOUTH WALES

AUSTRALIA

HISTORY OF

THE ORDER IN NEW SOUTH WALES

FROM 1848 TO 1948

AS COMPILED BY

W. J. SMEDLEY, P.G.M., G.D.

FROM OFFICIAL RECORDS

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CHAPTER 1.

EARLY DAYS OF THE FRIENDLY SOCIETY.

It may perhaps be a good idea, before starting on the opening of the first Lodge, and the inauguration of the Grand United Order of Oddfellows in New South Wales Australia, to as near as possible quote statements in reference to the origin of Oddfellowship in so far as the Grand United is concerned. Clubs or local associations of persons for mutual assistance in times of sickness and distress, in one form or another have without doubt existed from time immemorial. It may also be said with equal certainty, that the spirit which animated those early associations - the desire of the many to help the individual more effectually, than the individual could possibly help himself - is the self same spirit, which animates the whole Friendly Society world at the present day.

How, and by what machinery those early associations were formed and carried on, whether by a system of regular subscription or, more probably by the simple methods of sending round the hat, as individual cases of necessity arose, is now of little concern. It is sufficient for the present purpose to say, that by a process very slow and gradual, but ever in operation, from those small and apparently insignificant bodies, working on no settled or scientific plan, whose objects scarcely extended beyond relieving the temporary needs of their members, has been evolved a mighty system for the uplifting of mankind, of which their founders scarcely dared to have dreamed.

As regards the date of the Organisation of the Grand United Order in England, there was definitely no record as the Grand Secretary of England writing from Manchester on October 27th, 1893 to the Grand Secretary of America stated that the early history of the Grand United Order in England is a dead teller with respect to any reliable data, but the contention of our old members is, the Independent Order of Oddfellows, Manchester Unity was the

first split from the Grand United Order in the year 1813 whilst the National Independent Order was a split from the Manchester Unity, and the other secession numbered thirty four different Oddfellow Societies. Up to 1837 our own Society was managed by the Grand Lodge, which elected their own Officers, and filled all vacancies of members in the said Grand Lodge, and at the breaking up of the Grand Lodge and introduction of our present system of General Meetings, electing all Officers and Committee of Management, report says the books containing the early and chequered history of the Society were destroyed, and I cannot say the date of the Australian first Dispensation for the same reason.

In Brother John Thoonley's History of the Grand United Order of Oddfellows there are many references and some documents that were considered to be as near as it was possible to judge, of the early years of our Society in England, and an old document was turned up from the innermost archives of this Order, giving clearly its origin and going far enough back for the most fastidious Brother.

Then follows the full text of the account, but as it goes back to the first century of the Christian era, and introduces Nero, Titus, Caesar and other ancient worthies, interesting as that part of it undoubtedly is - it does not seem to have any immediate connection with either the Ancient Noble Order or the Grand United Order it may be passed by. Later it is related how the Ancient Noble Order was formed of a number of Lodges, hitherto belonging to the Grand United Order, and which seceded from it. From a part of it coming more nearly to our own times, and more intimately connected with them the following is extracted:-

"And whereas from various causes this order became defunct in this realm of England for a considerable time, it was afterwards established in England in the City of London, in the memorials of which Grand Lodge of England, the following Memorial was recorded, in the Book of the Constitutions and Journal of the Grand Lodge of England.

Be it known to all unto whom these presents shall come that Sir John de Nouville, Knight; Sir Alfred Slaiter, Knight; Sir R. Murdock, and Sir Rupert Harwood and others being moved by Christian Charity, did on the 23rd day of April in the year

of grace one thousand four hundred and fifty two, institute and begin a Grand Lodge of an order of Fraternity, after the manner of those beyond the seas, known by the name and title of Odd Fellows at the Boulogne-sur-Mere or Bull and Mouth, in the City of London and County of Middlesex, under the name and title of the Grand Lodge of Honour and the said Sir John de Nouville and the seven Knights forming the same, did bind themselves in strict Amity and Friendship to maintain the same."

and whereas it is further recorded that a Dispensation was granted to certain Brothers in Sheffield in the County of York on the 23rd day of April, 1793, forming a Grand Federation of Amity between the two Grand Lodges of which the following record was preserved in the Book of the Constitutions and Journal of Grand Lodge:-

"Be it remembered, that in consequence of the widespread authority of this Grand Lodge in various parts of the United Kingdom, the Grand Masters in Council assembled did agree to give and grant to seven Past Grand Masters of the Order in Sheffield a Dispensation under the title of the Grand United Order of Oddfellows to be held at Sheffield in the County of York, who by these presents are lawfully and duly authorised, according to the ancient laws and constitutions, to elect Officers, raise and pass Masters, grant Dispensations, and open Lodges in various parts of the United Kingdom, and confer Degrees of the said Order according to the Ancient usages and customs thereof. And so, the Officers of the said Grand Lodge, do bind ourselves in strict amity and friendship, with the said duly constituted Grand Lodge of Sheffield, known by the name of the Saint George's Grand Lodge of Honour of the Grand Union, so long as the laws of the Order are well observed and truly kept, with the rites, customs, usages and ceremonies appertaining thereto. Given under our hands and seal this twenty second day of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety two.

John Jones Grand Master
Samuel Hope Deputy Grand Master
Charles Frost Grand Secretary."

The following is a copy of the document previously mentioned:-

"Grand Lodge - Bohemia Tavern,
Wych Street Strand, Middlesex.
Saturday, January 6th, 1798.

In the book of the Constitutions and Journal of proceedings of the above Lodge, held this day, is found as follows; on the motion of the Grand Master, and by the consent of the Provincial Lodge of this Order held at the Bull and Mouth Inn, Sheffield, in the County of York; it is ordered that the Lodge of Oddfellows lately opened, and now held at the George Inn in the Market Place, Sheffield, as aforesaid be received into the Union and enrolled among the Provincial United Lodges, and that a bond of union be granted to such Lodge accordingly.

Now therefore, be it remembered that I, the undersigned the Grand Master of the Order, do hereby certify and

declare the said new Lodge to be a lawful United Lodge in this Order, and the Union do hereby bind themselves and the said new Lodge in Strong Friendship and Amity, hereby assures them of the protection of the Grand Lodge as long as the laws of the Order shall be observed. Given under my hand the day and year written above.

Richard Corner Grand Master
T. Smith Grand Secretary."

"I the Most Noble Grand of the Provincial Lodge of Odd Fellows held at the Bull and Mouth Inn, Sheffield, do testify the consent of my Lodge to the granting of the Bond of Union.

Thomas Cockburn."

"October 30th, 1837. I, James Sutherland the present Grand Secretary in the Grand United Order of Oddfellows, do declare the above to be a true copy of the Dispensation."

Whether the Grand Lodge of London in 1792 was the lineal descendant of the Grand Lodge established or, as it would seem, re-established in London by Sir John de Nouville in 1452, is not very material; but what is of consequence is that in 1792 London Grand Lodge of United Oddfellows was the recognised head of an Order with Lodges in many parts of the Kingdom and that it had become necessary to create a Provincial Grand Lodge to take a share of the work of granting Dispensations and opening Lodges. For this purpose Sheffield was selected.

From 1792 to 1798 there was no information as to the transactions, if any, of the Sheffield Grand Lodge and it is doubtful whether a single Dispensation was granted or a single Lodge opened.

What became of the London Grand Lodge was never stated, and within a few years after its formation, the Sheffield Grand Lodge assumed and exercised full authority over all Lodges opened by it. It is also beyond question that from the beginning of the nineteenth century the progress of the Order under its control, not only in Sheffield and the neighbourhood, but throughout Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, North Derbyshire, and elsewhere, was very rapid and Lodges were opened in quick succession.

A Dispensation was granted to Brother Peter Ogden to open the

first Lodge in the United States of America, and on March 1st, 1843 the Philomathean Lodge No. 646 was opened and on February 21st, 1844 the Sub Committee of Management of America was given a warrant and the first Grand Lodge Officers were elected.

Brother James Reid, the first Grand Master. This brings the history in New South Wales to the first Lodge of the Society to our notice, and on October 5th, 1843, BROTHER JAMES REID, who had four other members assisting him, opened the Travellers Lodge No. 733 in the Star Hotel, George Street, Sydney, which was situated on portion of the land where David Jones, George Street, stands to-day.

There is no mention of the issue of the Sub Committee of Management in the history of the Society, but the latter which followed in 1841. The action of the Annual Conference 1848, which was the first for setting up the authority was not approved by the delegates, but the whole thing was not intended to be a new organization, but the whole thing was intended to be a new organization, but the whole thing was intended to be a new organization.

It is to be noted that BROTHER JAMES REID, who opened the first Lodge in New South Wales, was also the first Grand Master of the Australian Lodges. The history of the Society in Australia is quoted as follows: "The first Lodge was opened in Sydney on 1st March 1843, and was named the Travellers Lodge No. 733. It was opened by BROTHER JAMES REID, who was also the first Grand Master of the Australian Lodges. The history of the Society in Australia is quoted as follows: "The first Lodge was opened in Sydney on 1st March 1843, and was named the Travellers Lodge No. 733. It was opened by BROTHER JAMES REID, who was also the first Grand Master of the Australian Lodges."

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