

Some Fraternal Leaders of Lancaster County

BY JAMES I. PYLE

This paper deals with fraternal leaders of Lancaster County who attained to the highest office in the state organization of their respective bodies. It presents a representative group of leaders in eight of the many fraternal lodges in the county.

ANCIENT AND ILLUSTRIOUS ORDER KNIGHTS OF MALTA

This Protestant and Fraternal Order claims to have been established as the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem in the year 1048, hence counting from that year this is its Anno Ordinis 906.

The first lodge of this organization established in Lancaster, Meridian Sun Commandery No. 99, was instituted October 21, 1891. In passing it is worth noting that this Commandery was active in the founding and establishing of the Lancaster General Hospital.

The purpose of the following brief sketches is to record the names of the members who have attained the highest office in the state of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, from lodges in Lancaster County.

FREDERICK ARNOLD, Past Grand Commander

Frederick Arnold, a native of Lancaster City, was a well and widely known expert carpenter, who died about noon December 13, 1904, from the effect of a brain tumor, aged fifty years. Interment was in Woodward Hill Cemetery.

At one time Mr. Arnold was the efficient head of the Lancaster Fire Department. He was a member of Zion's Lutheran Church.

Fraternally Mr. Arnold was affiliated with Lancaster Assemb-

ly, Artisans Order of Mutual Protection; Herschel Lodge No. 123, Independent Order of Odd Fellows; Lancaster Council No. 912, Jr. Order United American Mechanics and the Knights of Malta.

Companion Arnold became a member of Meridian Sun Commandery No. 99, October 21, 1891, as a charter member.

Representative to the Grand Commandery,	1895-1896
Deputy Grand Commander	1898
Grand Standard Bearer	1899
Grand Junior Warden	1900
Grand Captain General	1901
Grand Generalissimo	1902
Grand Commander	1903

HARRY R. STONER, *Past Supreme Commander*

Harry R. Stoner, a native Lancastrian, died in Trenton, New Jersey on January 17, 1923, where he had been residing for the previous eight years. For a number of years he had been a foreman at the Hamilton Watch Factory. Interment was made in Riverview Cemetery, Trenton, Saturday afternoon, January 20, 1923. The funeral services were attended by a large number of his friends who were officers and members of the Maltas. He was survived by three daughters, Mrs. Elizabeth Springer, Mrs. Margaret Hutchinson, and Louise; and his wife who was Miss Lillian Garvin.

Fraternally Mr. Stoner was affiliated with Herschel Lodge No. 123, Independent Order of Odd Fellows; Independent Order of Americans; Knights of Pythias and the Knights of Malta.

Companion Stoner became a member of Meridian Sun Commandery No. 99, October 4, 1893, and attained the office of a Past Commander of the local lodge in 1897.

Representative to Grand Commandery,	1899-1900-1901-1902-1903-1904
Grand Senior Warden,	1906
Grand Captain General,	1907
Grand Generalissimo,	1908

In July 1908 the Grand Commander resigned and Companion Stoner was advanced to Grand Commander, and in May 1909 succeeded to the honors of Past Grand Commander. Also at this time he was a Supreme Representative.

Elected Supreme Commander General,	1914
Elected Supreme Generalissimo,	1915
Elected Supreme Commander,	1916

BENJAMIN H. HELLER, *Past Commander*

Benjamin H. Heller, aged 49, died suddenly Saturday night, August 27, 1927, near midnight of cerebral hemorrhage in Montgomery Hospital, Norristown. He was stricken soon after 8 p.m. in his room in a Norristown hotel. He had gone to Norristown with a Malta Degree Team from Lancaster for the purpose of instituting Mormont Commandery No. 652, Knights of Malta.

Mr. Heller was a son of Benjamin H. and Anna E. Hess Heller. He was secretary of the Clergymen's Co-Operative and Teacher's Protective Association. A member and active worker in St. Paul's Reformed Church and Sunday School.

Survived by the following brothers and sisters: Harvey E., East Lampeter; Jacob H., Lancaster; John H., Eden; Laura H., wife of Christian H. Fager, East Lampeter; Rev. Parke H. Heller, Hunlock Creek, Luzerne County.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, August 31, 1927, at Mellinger's Mennonite Church with burial in the adjoining cemetery. The church was filled with friends, and state and national officers of the Knights of Malta. Many members of the four city Commanderies met at Malta Temple at 1:15 p.m., and marched to the church for the funeral service.

Companion Heller became a member of White Cross Commandery No. 159 in 1915.

Elected Representative to Grand Commandery,	1920
Representative to Grand Commandery,	1922-1923-1924-1925
Elected Grand Captain General,	1926
Elected Grand Generalissimo,	1927

ELIAS J. STERNER, *Past Supreme Commander*

Companion Elias J. Sterner became a member of White Cross Commandery No. 159, March 3, 1903, and became Past Commander of his lodge, February 28, 1906.

Representative to Grand Commandery,	1909-1910-1911-1913-1914
Grand Sentinel,	1915
Grand Warden,	1916
Grand Junior Warden,	1917
Grand Senior Warden,	1918
Grand Captain General,	1919
Grand Generalissimo,	1920
Grand Commander,	1921

Installed Grand Recorder of Pennsylvania 1925, and continued in this office until the present.

Supreme Representative,	1922 to 1927
Supreme Captain General,	1927
Supreme Generalissimo,	1928
Supreme Commander,	1929

Chosen Supreme Instructor 1930 and still serving that office.

Elected Supreme Recorder 1934 and holding same to date.

Elected Recording Secretary of the Board of Governors of the Malta Home Association 1933 and still holding that office.

Elected Grand Master of the College of the Ancients in October 1945 and continuing to this time.

Elias J. Sterner was born in Maytown and lived there for nineteen years graduating from its high school, afterwards graduating from Weidler's Business College, Lancaster. He was employed as a salesman for twenty years by the M. S. Miller & Co., wholesale grocers.

WILLIAM H. FOX, *Past Grand Commander*

Companion William H. Fox became a member of Meridian Sun Commandery No. 99, January 15, 1913.

Representative to Grand Commandery,	1923 to 1941
Elected Grand Captain General,	1941
Elected Grand Generalissimo	1942-1943
Elected Grand Commander,	1944

Died in office February 5, 1945, aged 57, after a year's illness.

Commander of the Uniform Rank in Lancaster.

Treasurer of Commandery No. 99 for many years until his death.

Fraternally he was a member of the Patriotic Order Sons of America, Knights of the Mystic Chain, and the Knights of Malta.

He was a son of B. Frank and Sarah Fox and was survived by his wife, the former Bertha M. Bruner and three sons, Lt. Harold S., U. S. Navy; Bruner W. of this city, and Kenneth R., Washington, D. C.

Interment was in the Conestoga Reformed Cemetery, Conestoga Center, Pa.

PATRIOTIC ORDER SONS OF AMERICA

The Patriotic Order Sons of America was organized December 10, 1847, in Philadelphia, Pa., by Dr. Reynell Coates, a Quaker, whose ancestors came to America in 1684. Dr. Coates was a surgeon, scientist, naturalist, teacher, poet, lecturer, essayist and politician. Dr. Coates was a member and R. H. Degree Master of the

United Sons of America which delegated him to establish the Junior Sons of America which later was changed to Patriotic Order Sons of America, as a matriculating school for American youth of 16 to 21 years, who upon reaching the age of 21 would be eligible for membership in the parent order. Dr. Coates wrote the Ritual, Constitution and By-Laws of the Junior Sons. Fifty-four persons signed the first charter.

The P.O.S. of A. is a patriotic fraternal organization devoted to the perpetuation of our public schools free from all sectarian or religious influence, the continuing of our republican form of government, limited immigration and as a school for training of our youth in American patriotism. All Camps of the Order are named Washington Camp.

In passing we note that every Camp Fire of the young fraternity was extinguished by the departure of so many members to the armed forces of the Union except Washington Camp No. 61 of Reading, Pa., most of whom were rejected for military service and thereby kept the fraternity alive through the Civil War years.

Previous to the Civil War three Camps were instituted in Lancaster County.

Camp No. 13, Lancaster, June 16, 1854.

Camp No. 27, Columbia, April 20, 1855.

Camp No. 40, Elizabethtown, September 21, 1855.

Washington Camp No. 13 was organized on June 16, 1854, and instituted August 15, 1854, with the following members:

C. E. Wise	William Leshner
Henry White	William Lightner
J. E. Reitzell	Jacob Sener
Jackson Weidler	George Keller
William Rose	Richard Scherr
Peter Poyst	Thomas Wilfong

Edward Edgerly

Edward Edgerly was the first conductor at the organization of the Camp.

Other early members were, Aaron K. Dunkle, Henry O. Gurley, John A. Gurley, Nicholas Hartley, Henry Hartley, Benjamin Z. Shreiner, (recording secretary), Matthew Brooks, John Brooks, Daniel Stoner, William Kauffman, George M. Bauman, William H. Gorrecht, Lewis C. Cox, Christian G. Herr, John A. Overdeer,

Benjamin O. Conn, William Knauer, Robert Clair, David Springer, Albert M. Zahm, Samuel Musselman, Charles Long, John H. Druckemiller.

Aaron K. Dunkle designed the first badge (a solid shield) of the Order, adopted by the State Convention in Philadelphia in 1857.

The fourth State Convention was held in Lancaster, August 5, 1858, and others in 1874 (10,000 members), 1903 (70,000 members) and 1921 (132,000 members).

Dr. Reynell Coates of Philadelphia, founder of the Order was a frequent visitor to the meetings of Camp 13, which met in the Red Men's room of the Odd Fellows building on South Queen Street, east side below Vine, located on the site of the earlier Quaker church and now where the Haldy Marble Yard is operating. This Camp entertained the delegates from Norristown to the State Camp on their return from the Altoona Convention of 1856.

The following members of Camp 13 saw service in the Civil War.

John H. Druckemiller, Sergeant Co. F, 1st Pa. Volunteers 3 mos. 79th Regt. 3 yrs., 2nd Lieut., 1st Lieut. Captain Co. B.

Edward Edgerly, Capt. Co. K. 79th Regt.

David Springer, Lieut. Co. K. 122nd Regt.

John A. Keller, Co. B. 79th Regt., killed in battle.

Frederick Sener, Co. B. 79th Regt., killed in battle.

Eli Cramer, Co. B. 79th Regt., killed in battle.

John McCracken, killed in battle.

C. E. Druckemiller 1st Pa. Vol. Died in service.

William H. Hartman 79th Regt. Pa. Vol. Died in service.

Aaron K. Dunkle, 116 Regt. P.V.

Benjamin O. Conn, 77th Regt. P. V.

George M. Bauman

William Kranen

Christian G. Herr

John A. Overdeer

B. Z. Shreiner

Lewis C. Cox

Nicholas Hartley

Horace Overdeer

Henry O. Gurley

John A. Gurley

Charles D. Gurley

Matthew Brooks

William Kauffman

A. M. Lohr

JOHN H. DRUCKEMILLER, *Past State President*

John H. Druckemiller joined Camp 13, December 20, 1855, was an active member serving in the various offices of the Camp. He was delegate to Altoona in 1856 with Aaron K. Dunkle and to nearly all the state conventions following until the outbreak of the war.

His paternal ancestor came to America in 1710 and his maternal side in 1715. Mr. Druckemiller was born in 1839, educated in private institutions in Philadelphia up to his thirteenth year when he entered the Lancaster High School. He continued his studies until his second collegiate year when the Civil War came on.

Being a member of the Lancaster Fencibles he was accepted by the government and enlisted April 15, 1861, being made 2nd Sergeant; mustered out July 26, 1861, at Harrisburg and re-entered the service on August 8, 1861, for three years. He assisted in recruiting the 79th Regiment P. V. I., was appointed 2nd Lieutenant, serving in all the battles of the West, attached to the 14th Corps, Army of the Cumberland. Promoted to First Lieutenant for services in the field and made Captain at the close of one of the hardest fought battles in which his regiment was engaged, the loss being sixty per cent. He was mustered out at Alexandria, Va., with his regiment.

He served nine years on the Board of Education, and was an Alderman. He served twice as postmaster at Vesta, near Marietta.

He was President of his Regimental Association in the Grand Army of the Republic and a Past Senior Vice-Department Commander.

Mr. Druckemiller, who furnished most of these notes relating to the P. O. S. of A. in Lancaster, was elected State Vice-President in 1867, and the thirteenth State President in 1878 at the sessions held in Gettysburg. His term was marked by the expulsion of three Camps, Nos. 5, 10 and 24 from the Order for refusal to pay an assessment for the purchase of a State Camp Headquarters building in Philadelphia. During his term 544 initiations were held in the 135 Camps, making a total state membership of 5,187. No new Camps were established in Lancaster County during his term.

In 1921 at the State Camp session in Lancaster the members in this County presented a fine gold-headed cane, appropriately inscribed as their token of love and appreciation to this beloved leader. At this session Brother Druckemiller was commissioned to complete the History of the P. O. S. of A. as begun by Past State President Henry J. Stager deceased. The history in two volumes of over a thousand pages was published in 1924. (These volumes can be found in the library of the Lancaster County Historical Society.)



John H. Druckemiller

Mr. Druckemiller, in feeble health, attended the Diamond Jubilee of the Order in August 1923 at Philadelphia. The entire convention rose to its feet as he was brought into the room on a wheel chair. He died January 9, 1924, at his home in Sayre, Pa., and after services in Lancaster city was laid to rest with military honors in the Marietta, Lancaster County, cemetery where the Order has erected a suitable monument.

JAMES I. PYLE, *Past State President*

James Irwin Pyle, son of James G. and Katherine E. Reel Pyle, was born May 26, 1883 in Lancaster City. He is a descendant of Robert Pyle 1660-1730 of Horton, Wiltshire, England who immigrated to America in 1682, settling in Bethel Township, Chester (now Delaware) County. Educated in the Public Schools, graduated from the Lancaster High School Class of 1901. Took a commercial course in the Pennsylvania Business College 1902.

Fraternally Mr. Pyle is a member of the Knights of Malta; Jr. Order of American Mechanics, Thomas H. Burrowes Council No. 784 of which he is a Past Councilor, and a Trustee for many years past; Patriotic Order Sons of America, Washington Camp No. 192, and Rough Riders of America, Roundup No. 1.

Brother Pyle was initiated into Camp No. 557 on October 2, 1903, traveling the Initiatory Degree. He became a charter member of Camp No. 700 on March 30, 1905. He became President of the Camp in 1911, and has also served the following offices: Assistant Recording Secretary, 1912; treasurer, 1913-1922; member Degree Team, 1913-1919; District President, 1916-1917; Financial Secretary Past Presidents Association, 1916-1918; Member State Camp War Board, 1917-1919; State Camp Auditing Committee 1918; State Camp Appropriation Committee 1919; Chaplain County Convention 1919-1920; Delegate to State Camp, 1912-1918-1919. Elected State Inspector 1919; State Conductor 1920; State Master of Forms 1921; State Vice-President 1922 and State President 1923 at the Diamond Jubilee State Convention in Philadelphia. He presided at the State Camp held in Allentown in 1924 which was attended by 993 officers and delegates.

During the term just closed, nine new Camps were organized in the state, three of them, Camp 552 at Christiana, Camp 565 at Quarryville and Camp 728 at Mountville in Lancaster County. The

state membership June 30, 1924, was 125,473 an increase of 2,018 for the year. Number of active Camps 822. Lancaster County was divided into four districts with 22 Camps having a membership of 3,314 a gain of 419 for the year.

On January 7, 1924, Past State President John H. Druckemiller, oldest member of the Order in point of years and service, died.

During the term just closed the Executive Committee engaged Rev. Christian H. Shirk, our State Chaplain, to give the History of the Order its final editing preparatory to its publication.

At the opening session of the Convention, Camp 700, of which the State President was a member, through District President A. H. Shenk, presented State President Pyle with a handsome gavel, made from cherry wood secured from the home of President James Buchanan at Wheatland.

WILLIAM H. FOX, *Past State President*

While not a charter member of Washington Camp 557, William H. Fox became a member soon after its organization in 1900. He served the subordinate offices of the Camp and became its president in 1924.

- 1921 Marshall of the 4th Division of the State Camp parade in Lancaster.
- 1923 Marshall of the Lancaster County Division of the Diamond Jubilee parade in Philadelphia.
- 1923 Degree Master Camp 557.
- 1924 Marshall Lancaster County Division of the Allentown parade.
- 1925 Member Lancaster Sesqui Centennial Committee.
- 1926 Was high man with 25 candidates in Camp 557's membership drive.
- 1925 Member of Camp 557's 25th anniversary committee.
- 1926 Elected State Guard.
- 1927 Elected State Inspector.
- 1927 Member State Camp Committee to arrange for celebration of 150th anniversary of the adoption of the American Flag.
- 1927 Attended Dedication of State Camp Building in Philadelphia.
- 1928 Elected State Conductor.
- 1929 Elected State Master of Forms.
- 1929 Captain of Camp 557's Degree Team.
- 1930 Elected State Vice-President.
- 1931 Elected State President.

A member of the Order's 100th Anniversary Committee.

In 1923 was a Charter member and First Commander of Thaddeus Stevens Commandery No. 17, Uniform Rank, Lancaster.



William H. Fox

Brother Fox was a member of Faith Reformed Church, and served in its Vestry. He was a good citizen, a faithful husband, a proud father of his three sons, and a sincere friend.

JUNIOR ORDER UNITED AMERICAN MECHANICS

The Junior Order United American Mechanics was organized in Lancaster by the Institution of Conestoga Council No. 22, October 3, 1867. This organization was deeply interested in the welfare of our public schools.

This organization was the offspring of the Order of United American Mechanics.

JOHN C. FIERO, *Past State Councilor*

John C. Fiero, born 1856, son of Christian and Sarah Fiero, of New York State, died December 12, 1939, aged 83, after an illness of five days. He was survived by his wife, Mrs. Fannie A. Fiero and two daughters, Mrs. Myrtle Hunt, Lambertville, N. J., and Miss Edith Fiero, Camden, N. J., also a brother William Maxwell Fiero, Middletown, N. Y., and a sister, Mrs. Lillie Belle McClure, Saugerties, N. Y.

For years Cap. Fiero was truant officer for the City School District. He was appointed Deputy Prothonotary for Lancaster County, which office he held at the time of his death. He was a director of the Conestoga Building and Loan Association. He also was active in Republican politics. He was of a jolly disposition and delighted in being Santa Claus each Christmas at the Children's Home. He was a member of the First Methodist Church, Lancaster.

Fraternally he was a member of the Knights of Malta and the Junior Order United American Mechanics. At one time he differed with the policies being pursued by the State Council of the Jr. Mechanics and enjoyed prestige enough to be able to take Thaddeus Stevens Council No. 784 out of the Mechanics and affiliated it with the State Council of the Fraternal Patriotic American Fraternity.

During his membership in the Fraternal Patriotic Americans he became its State Councilor. In 1924 he brought Stevens Council No. 784 back into the Jr. Order and was permitted to retain his honor as State Councilor. He was a regular attendant at State Council Sessions and was well known to many of the officers and delegates.

INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS

The Standard Dictionary of Facts (Henry W. Ruoff), published by The Frontier Press Co., Buffalo, N. Y., 1911, says:

"Oddfellows. A large and extensively ramified friendly society. It was originally an association of a convivial kind modeled on freemasonry and still retains watchwords and secret signs. It assumed its present form at a convention in Manchester, England, 1813, and has spread widely in Britain and elsewhere.

"The unparalleled prosperity of the Order of Odd Fellows in the United States has excited the wonder of the leading men in all fraternal organizations.

"The first lodge (American) was organized in Baltimore, Maryland, April 26, 1819. In 1825 the Grand Lodge of the United States was formed" (page 849).

JOHN LEVERGOOD, *Past Grand Master*

Dr. John Levergood was born February 13, 1826, in Lower Windsor Township, York County. Educated in the local schools and later attended the Strasburg Academy under Dr. McCarter.



DR. JOHN LEVERGOOD.

Studied under Dr. Washington L. Atlee with whose family he lived. On Dr. Atlee's removal to Philadelphia in 1845, Dr. Levergood went along and continued in the Atlee office until he graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. Upon graduation Dr. Levergood entered upon practice in Wrightsville, York County. In 1858 he moved to Lancaster residing here until his death.

On the outbreak of the Civil War he was mustered into service as surgeon in General Hartranft's regiment, the 51st Pa. Volunteers, and later in the 101st Regt. He was appointed Surgeon of the Chesapeake General Hospital at Fortress Monroe. After serving nine months he resigned and subsequently served at Camp Stoneman and the Emory Hospital at Washington, D. C., later being transferred to the Harewood Hospital in Washington. After the close of the war he visited Europe and on returning home resumed practice in Lancaster.

Dr. Levergood was a prominent Odd Fellow, and perhaps that order never had a more enthusiastic member. He joined Chihuahua Lodge at Wrightsville in 1848. After coming to Lancaster he joined Lancaster Lodge No. 67, being punctual and regular in his attendance.

In 1875 he became Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. In 1887 he became Grand Patriarch of the Grand Encampment of the State. From 1870-1873 he was District Deputy Grand Master of Lancaster County. During these various services he went into every part of the state, and no member of the Order was better known. His term of services was characterized by great energy and activity, advancing materially the cause of Odd Fellowship. His enthusiasm in the cause was boundless.

He was a member of Common Council from the Sixth Ward, becoming its president. He was a member of the Lancaster City School Board for twenty-eight years, serving as its president for a number of years.

Dr. Levergood was a member of the Democratic party.

Shortly after graduation he married Louisa, daughter of Judge Emanuel Sheaffer.

Dr. Levergood died July 5, 1891, at 11:45 P.M. having been stricken May 21 with embolism in his 66th year. At the time of his death his mother survived in Wrightsville at the advanced age of 88.



E. J. Erisman

He was survived by two brothers, Jacob and William, also four sisters, Mrs. Wilson of Baltimore; Mrs. C. B. Wallace, of York; Mrs. Maxwell, wife of Prof. Maxwell of Coatesville, and Mrs. Polk, wife of Dr. Polk of Philadelphia.

Funeral was held Wednesday July 8, at 2 P.M. from his late home, 27 East James Street, with interment in Woodward Hill Cemetery. Services were conducted by the Rev. L. S. Cooper of St. Louis, Mo., who was then filling the pulpit of the First Presbyterian Church, and the Rev. C. Elvin Haupt of Grace Lutheran Church.

Lodge No. 67 conducted services at the grave. Pall bearers were Grand Patriarch R. H. Graham of Philadelphia, Past Grand Master G. C. Boyer, Sunbury; Harry Rill of Monterey Lodge, Martin Eckman of Herschel Lodge, George Gundaker and W. C. F. Sheer of Lancaster Lodge. W. F. Hambright of Lodge 67 was Marshall of the services.

EMANUEL J. ERISMAN, *Grand Patriarch*

Emanuel J. Erisman, father of George F. K. Erisman, was born in Lancaster, November 8, 1835, son of Michael Erisman. He died from a fracture of the skull, as a result of a fall in the Anderson Building, 42 East King Street, May 7, 1895. He was a carpenter of some skill, as his work in the local courthouse indicates. He was at one time principal of the North Mulberry Street school.

Fraternally, he was one of the most prominent Odd Fellows in the state. Locally, he was a member of Monterey Lodge, No. 242, for thirty years; Ridgely Encampment, No. 217; Canton Lancaster, No. 25, Patriarchs Militant; Theresa Degree Lodge, and the Daughters of Rebekah.

He was a representative of the Monterey Lodge to the Grand Lodge. At the time of his death he was Grand Patriarch of the Grand Encampment of Pennsylvania. He had the Decoration of Chivalry conferred on him by the Grand Officers of the Patriarchs Militant. He was an honorary member of Lancaster Council, No. 912, Jr. O. U. A. M., and Washington Camp, No. 27, P. O. S. of A.

He was buried May 9, 1895 at Woodward Hill Cemetery.

CHARLES HERBERT OBREITER, *Past Grand Master*

Charles Herbert Obreiter, son of John and Lizzie Obreiter, was born September 22, 1867, in Lancaster City. Educated in the public schools, he was graduated from the Boys High School in the Class of 1882; graduated from Franklin and Marshall College 1886.

He read Law with Congressman Marriott Brosius and was admitted to the Lancaster Bar in 1891, and to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania in 1894. His office for many years was at 48 North Duke Street.

He was a member of the Lancaster County School Directors Association and was its president in 1904. He was an expert rifleman and a member of the Lancaster Rifle Club.

Fraternally he was a member of the B.P.O. Elks being an honorary life member of the Lancaster Lodge No. 134, a Past Exalted Ruler and its Secretary for twenty-seven years and was a Past District Deputy.

Mr. Obreiter was a member of the Independent Order of Odd

Fellows, Emmanuel Lodge No. 1104; Ridgeley Encampment No. 217; Canton Lancaster No. 25 P. M., and Rose of Sharon Rebekah Lodge No. 99. He was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania 1927-28. For many years he served on the Board of Directors of the Middletown Home for aged Odd Fellows.

Mr. Obreiter was an active member of the First Methodist Episcopal Church. He died April 26, 1949, after being a patient in the Lancaster General Hospital since August 1948. Funeral services were held at the Robinson Parlors, with interment in Greenwood Cemetery.

Mr. Obreiter was unmarried and was survived by distant cousins.

Bequests of \$3,231 each were left to the First M. E. Church and the Odd Fellows Home at Middletown, Pa.

KNIGHTS OF THE GOLDEN EAGLE

FRANK HALL SKEEN, *Past Grand Chief*

Benjamin Franklin Skeen, a native of Pennsylvania, founded in 1879 the Empire Bending Works, manufacturers of rims, bows and all kinds of wood for wagons, carriages and automobiles.

Samuel M. Skeen, born May 17, 1852, was admitted to partnership in 1901, and on the death of his father became the sole owner of the business.

Frank Hall Skeen, son of Samuel M. and Mary S. Hall Skeen was born March 16, 1879, being admitted to partnership January 1, 1923.

Mr. Skeen was a Past Chancellor of the Knights of Pythias and Grand Chief of the Knights of the Golden Eagles.

He was a member of the Manufacturers Association and Travelers Protective Association. He was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church and in politics a Republican.

September 27, 1900 he was married to Catherine Sophia Myer and the union was blessed with three children, Benjamin Franklin, Mary Catherine and Helen May.

Mr. Skeen was active in the local lodge of the Golden Eagles serving all the offices of the lodge.

JOHN B. GRAYBILL, *Past Grand Chief*

John Bassler Graybill, son of Herman and Frances Bassler Graybill, was born June 24, 1876, in East Petersburg, Pa. He

was a graduate of Franklin & Marshall College Class of 1900 and studied Law under the late Judge John M. Groff. Admitted to the Lancaster Bar Association in 1902 he was one of the few members with more than a half century of practice.

In politics Attorney Graybill was a Republican.

Mr. Graybill was a Past Exalted Ruler of Lancaster Lodge No. 134, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks and a former Grand Chief of the Knights of the Golden Eagle, and past master Manheim Lodge No. 587 F. & A.M.

Mr. Graybill was a member of St. James' Episcopal Church, Lancaster.

His death came suddenly in his home at 11:45 a.m. April 28, 1953. Surviving are his wife, the former Mary E. Leyden; four children, Helen, wife of Walter Gyngell, Rome, N. Y.; John B. Jr., Lancaster R1; Mary C., wife of J. Edward Smith 3rd, Lancaster; and Richard L., Lancaster, and seven grandchildren. Also surviving are a brother, Daniel B., East Petersburg, and two sisters, Mrs. John M. Groff, Frederick, Maryland, and Miss Kathryn Graybill, East Petersburg.

ROUGH RIDERS OF AMERICA

The Rough Riders of America is a Patriotic, Social and Fun-loving organization. Its first meeting was held in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, August 23, 1921, at eleven o'clock P. M. in the Colonial Theatre, when its degree work was shown. This meeting was attended by 506 persons, 88 of them being from Lancaster County.

Lancaster Roundup No. 1, was organized in Lancaster City, December 9, 1921, and instituted December 27, by Robert G. Thomson, General Grand Recorder.

Its first convention or General Grand Roundup was held in Philadelphia, June 16, 1922, with delegates present from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland, and with other Roundups located in Delaware, Florida and Tennessee.

Besides the Annual General Grand Roundups, some of the important gatherings that have been held and attended by many of the members (Nice Men), and most of the Lancaster County Past Grand Americans, have been

1931 Member-At-Large meeting at Stroudsburg.

1932 Memorial Service at Rough Rider Plot in Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia.



Fred C. Kimmich



James I. Pyle

- 1932 Victory Banquet in membership drive to Lancaster Roundup, given by Sweet 16 Roundup (the losers) at Reading.
- 1933 Pilgrimage to Oyster Bay, N. Y., to visit the home and hold a Memorial Service at the grave of Rough Rider Theodore Roosevelt.
- 1934 Lancaster Degree Team journey to Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, to conduct a class of Tenderfeet through the Valley of the Scented Skull.
- 1935 Anniversary Banquet at Reading.

At the time of this writing, five Rough Riders from the Lancaster Roundup have been honored by the organization with the office of General Grand American, 1935 Fred C. Kimmich, 1937 William H. Fox, 1940 Harry W. Herr, 1948 Earl Lefever, and 1952 Wesley Hammon.

FRED C. KIMMICH, *Past General Grand American*

Fred C. Kimmich, son of George Kimmich, born August 14, 1837, in Wurtenberg, Germany, and Christina Herman Kimmich, born November 18, 1846, in Bach, Germany, was born March 28, 1883 in West Hempfield Township near Mountville.

Mr. Kimmich is a carpenter and builder, who moved to Lancaster shortly before the First World War.

- 1922 Elected Grand American Roundup No. 1.
- 1923 Became High American.
- 1924 Appointed District American.
- 1927 Elected Inside Watch Dog.
- 1929 Elected Recorder of Sociability, R. U. No. 1 (1929-1954).
- 1931 Elected General Grand Watch Dog. Attended Member at Large meeting.
- 1932 Member of the delegation to Rough Rider plot at Arlington Cemetery, where the organization held a Memorial Service.
Guest at the Membership Banquet given by Reading to the winning Lancaster Roundup, September 24. Elected General Cheerful Guide.
- 1933 Elected General Grand Welcome Shake.
- 1934 Elected General Vice Grand American.
- 1935 Elected General Grand American.

WILLIAM H. FOX, *Past General Grand American*

Nice Man Fox was a charter member, one of the original 506 persons, initiated into the Degree in the Colonial Theatre, Lancaster, on August 23, 1921, at eleven P.M.

- 1923 Elected Cheerful Guide of Roundup No. 1.
- 1924 Appointed District American.

- 1925 Elected Vice Grand American.
 1926 Elected Grand American.
 1927 Became High American.
 1932 Delegate to Martinsburg, West Virginia.
 Following this convention he was a member of the group which journeyed to the Rough Rider plot in Arlington National Cemetery to hold a Memorial Service.
 1933 Delegate to Mt. Vernon, N. Y.
 After this convention he was one of the group which journeyed to the grave of Theodore Roosevelt in Young's Cemetery and held a Memorial Service and then going out to visit the Roosevelt home at Oyster Bay.
 1936 Delegate to Baltimore, Md.
 Elected General Vice Grand American.
 Chairman Lancaster Roundup Committee to entertain the General Grand Roundup in 1937.
 1937 Elected General Grand American at Lancaster.

HARRY W. HERR, *Past General Grand American*

Harry W. Herr, son of Christian B. and Anna Keen Herr, was born March 8, 1878, and baptized on his first birthday in Zion Reformed Church, New Providence, Lancaster County. Throughout his life he was a member of that church and now rests in its ancient churchyard.

Fraternally he was a member of the American Mechanics, Masons, Patriotic Order Sons of America and the Rough Riders. At different times he served his Camp No. 565 as Financial Secretary and Treasurer. He was a delegate to various sessions of the County Convention and the State Camp. He was elected County Guard 1940, and was serving as County Inspector when he died December 4, 1941.

Nice man Herr loved the Rough Riders and was active in its work as the record will attest. He was a grand man, a fine patriot, a good neighbor, a great friend and a Christian gentleman.

- 1930 Elected a member of Roundup No. 1, November 22.
 1932 Elected Welcome Shake.
 Delegate to Martinsburg, W. Va.
 Member of the delegation that went to Arlington, Va.
 Attended victors banquet in Reading. Appointed District American.
 1933 Elected Vice Grand American R. U. No. 1.
 Delegate to Mt. Vernon, N. Y.
 1934 Elected Grand American R. U. No. 1.
 1939 Elected General Vice Grand American.
 1940 Elected General Grand American.

EARL LEFEVER, *Past General Grand American*

Earl Lefever was born May 29, 1891, in Quarryville, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the son of Harry A. and Ida B. Lefever; was educated in our public schools and Millersville State Normal School. He taught school for nine years in East Drumore, Akron, Landisville and Rohrerstown. He became a Rural Mail Carrier 1918 and still is delivering mail. Aside from this steady employment he has served as Trainer of civilian classes in air raid work. Was Fire Chief for a number of years in Quarryville. Served as President of the Lancaster County Fireman's Association; has been Instructor Fire Service Training Club, Public Service Instruction, Department of Public Education 1918-1954; instructor Red Cross First Aid Classes; charter member of the Lions Club of Quarryville, serving all the chairs, and was zone chairman and Deputy District Governor.

Brother Lefever was a charter member of Camp 565, Patriotic Order Sons of America, serving as its Recording Secretary from organization until the present. He has served as District President from 1929 to date. He also has been active in the county work serving as County Vice-President 1937, County President 1938, and County Treasurer 1939 until 1944.

Nice Man Lefever became a member of Lancaster Roundup No. 1 of the Rough Riders of America November 22, 1930.

1940 Elected General Harmony Guard at Cumberland, Md.

1941 Elected General Harmony Guard at Reading, Pa.

1942 Elected Inside Watch Dog R. U. No. 1.

1942-43-44-45 No General Roundups held.

1946 Delegate to Reading.

Elected General Grand Welcome Shake.

1947 Elected General Vice Grand American.

1948 Elected General Grand American.

WESLEY HAMMON, *Past General Grand American*

Born June 11, 1896. Educated in the public schools.

Fraternally he is a member of Camp 556, Patriotic Order Sons of America, becoming its President in 1931; Odd Fellows, and Mason 33rd Degree Scottish Rite; Old Guard State Fencibles of Philadelphia, and is President of the Ancient Order Of Croaking Frogs, and Rough Riders.

Nice Man Hammon was elected to membership in Roundup No. 1, November 22, 1930.

- 1936 Delegate to Baltimore, Maryland Convention.
- 1950 Delegate to Easton.
Elected General Grand Welcome Shake.
- 1951 Elected General Vice Grand American.
- 1952 Elected General Grand American.
- 1952 Presided at Camden.

BENEVOLENT AND PROTECTIVE ORDER OF ELKS

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks is a strictly American Order. The foundation of Elkdom is the Golden Rule. Its cornerstones are Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity. Patriotism and helpfulness to all mankind are cardinal principles of Elkdom. Lancaster Lodge No. 134 was instituted September 29, 1889, with twenty-four members.

KENELM L. SHIRK, Past State President

Kenelm L. Shirk, son of Martin H. and Anna C. Landis Shirk, was born August 11, 1894; was educated in the public schools, graduating from the Ephrata High School and the Washington and Lee University. Mr. Shirk was admitted to the Lancaster Bar, July 1916.

During his career as a lawyer he has served as Assistant District Attorney; District Attorney; United States Commissioner and at this time is serving as one of the City Commissioners of Lancaster. Besides the various offices he has held in the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Lodge No. 134 he was elected State President of the order in 1942.

ARTISANS ORDER OF MUTUAL PROTECTION

JOHN M. AMMON, Past Most Excellent Master

John M. Ammon, son of Peter G. and Frances Breneman Ammon, was born in Lititz, Pa.; graduated from the Lancaster Boys High School Class of 1896, and attended the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Early in life Mr. Ammon was interested in music being a trombone player. He was a member of the Iroquois Band of Lancaster and the Lulu Temple Band of Philadelphia.

While attending law school he met and became a warm friend of Connie Mack and before the First World War made several trips with the Athletic Ball Team around the American League

circuit. Another friend, a fellow-student and musician, (Judge) Owen Roberts, visited Ammon's home, and on the following Sunday both played in the trombone choir of the Lititz Moravian Church.

Upon the death of his father he took over the management of the Franklin House on North Queen Street, operating it until it was converted to the present Hotel Pennsylvania.

In later years he devoted much time to the work of the Artisans Lodge. He was a member of the Conestoga Assembly, of which he was a Past Master and was its Recording Secretary for about twelve years.

In 1927 he became Most Excellent Master of the Artisans, and in that office was head of the organization throughout the United States. He was a member of Lamberton Lodge No. 476, F. and A. Masons, Knights Templar, and the Lancaster Shrine Club.

He died in St. Joseph's Hospital, March 31, 1948, after an illness of twelve weeks. He is survived by his wife, Cora M. Fox Ammon. Interment was in the Lititz Moravian Cemetery. Mr. Ammon was the last of his immediate family.

The compiler of these sketches desires to express his sincere appreciation to Earl Bleacher, M. Luther Heisey and Ephraim S. Eshleman for their assistance in this effort.