

APPENDIX T

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES OF THE DRUIDS OF CALIFORNIA

Compiled by Bill DeWitt
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“SAN FRANCISCO IS PROUD OF ITS DRUIDS’ TEMPLE”

The following article appeared on the front cover of the California Druid Magazine dated May 1925. C. A. Guglielmoni wrote the article. A photograph of the Druids’ Temple also appeared on the front page.



There are 22,000 Druids in California with Capitalization
of more than \$1,00,000.00

*“The Druids’ Hall Society
Its History”*

“The original Druid’s Hall was situated on Bush street near Kearny; it was there that the Grand Grove of California was instituted in 1865. A few years later, a corporation was formed with a capital stock of \$50,000, known as the Druids’ Hall Society of the City and County of San Francisco.

“The corporation bought a lot at 413 Sutter Street and built thereon a hall which contained two large lodge rooms and two small ones; also, the office of the grand secretary and a reading room. The basement was used as a banquet room as well as a dance hall. That hall on Sutter street in its palmy days saw many, many Druidic activities. It was there that the founders of the Druidic Order in this state gathered to discuss ways and means to improve its conditions. It was there that many public men of San Francisco were made Druids, and it was there that the pioneers of the state and of the order regularly met in social intercourse.

“The building was once badly damaged by fire. It was rebuilt and from the very start it was a very profitable investment for the stockholders. Finally in 1906, the great fire left but an empty lot. Those who had shares in the corporation were getting old and the great fire had taken all the courage out of them. They were determined to sell the lot, divide the money and quit business. Here is where a lot of persuasion had to be employed. The writer of these notes, though not a stockholder at the time, but who was a grand officer, went to the meeting of the directors and begged them to do something for the thirty-one groves of San Francisco, which were holding meetings in cellars and in parlors. On such visits he found other men of determination hard at work endeavoring to persuade those who wanted to disband not to do so. Those men are responsible for what was done afterwards. They were: Judge David Lauderback, the president of the society, Ed L. Wagner, Leo M. Fabry, and our indomitable Henry Hufschmidt, who really succeeded in changing the opinion of many of those who were opposed to the idea of rebuilding.

“The lot on Sutter street was finally sold for \$70,000; \$50,000 of the proceeds was divided among the stockholders, and \$20,000 retained in the treasury of the society. With that and the fire insurance collected, together with a little gain made at the temporary Druids’ hall, leased after the fire, at 611 Laguna Street, there was sufficient to pay cash for the present site at 44 Page Street.

“In the year 1912 the Society re-incorporated for \$100,000 and the stock at \$5.00 per share, was placed on the market to be sold to Druids only (the old estates of original stockholders excepted.) I might add right here that through the efforts of Henry Hufschmidt many of those estates bought additional stock, showing that they had confidence in the Druids’ in the Druids’ Hall Society. In the meantime Judge David Lauderback became physically incapacitated and E. L. Wagner was elected in his place as president.

“Shortly after, another change had to be made owing to the death of its secretary, L. G. Schord. Thus C. A. Guglielmoni took his place as secretary and upon the resignation of John Fies, he was elected as a director.

“During the re-incorporation period, awarding of the contract and subsequent building of the Temple, the board was composed of the following directors: E. L. Wagner, Henry Hufschmidt, C. D. Dorn, August Mainzer, M. Sommerfield, Leo Fabry, E. A. Goetze, James Hagan, Johann Schmidt, Geo. Felix, John Fies, Adalbert Pauba, A. M. Wallen Richard McKee, Benjamin Oympie and C. A. Guglielmoni. These are the directors who signed the act of incorporation. Director Klenck had to resign as he was awarded the contract for the building. Wm. S. King of Old Friends grove acted as superintendent of construction and was also a member of the board of directors vice Klenk resigned.

“Those were the men who faced the responsibility of building the new Druidic Temple and through the help of some of them we were able to navigate in the roughest kind of water. Yes, they deserve to be mentioned. When we were in desperate circumstances, Hufschmidt, Fabry, Lester and Schmidt came to our rescue with large sums of money, with no other security than some stock of vacillating value. Those were the days when the war and other elements militated against the society, making it impossible to sell the balance of stock. During those hard times E. L. Wagner retired and Henry Hufschmidt was chosen as president. He remained in that position until two years ago when he chose Los Angeles as his future home.

“As E. L. Wagner was representing Perseverance grove, upon his retiring the grove elected Martin Kupfer in his place. He was initiated into the directorate by being asked point blank if he would loan the Society the sum of \$500. This complement nearly took him off his feet, but he was game. He loaned the money with a feeling that he was kissing the \$500 a last farewell, but as he gradually became acquainted with the directors and with the financial conditions of the society, his confidence became stabilized and later he willingly loaned more money to the society. So much for Martin Kupfer.

“During the days just mentioned, there was another man who cannot be overlooked. That man was C. D. Dorn. He was the first man to invest in new stock – enough to make him the largest individual stockholder. That was confidence! In addition to that, when it became necessary to convert the store on the ground floor into a lodge room, Dorn offered to do it providing the society would agree to pay him back on the installment plan. This was accepted. Director Dorn has taken much interest in the affairs of the society and he is still its treasurer. There have been members of the order who have often criticized him, but let it be said that Dorn is a keen business man and has been a valuable asset to the society in the crucial moments when many of us felt the ground slipping from under.

“There was another element aiding the society and that was the complete harmony among its directors. Never at any time have we had to register any feeling of discord or disagreement. That good fellowship is still prevailing among its present directors.

“Economy was the watch-word and though now out of danger, it is yet the mainstay of the society. All these things, combined with the able supervision of our present superintendent, Charles Ludwigsen, are responsible for the fact that the Druids’ Hall Society is prospering. Two years ago the sale of stock was stopped, as the income of the building is sufficient to wipe out the last part of the mortgage.

“In summing up the situation, we find that when we opened the doors of the Temple in the fall of 1913, the Society had a \$50,000 mortgage on the building plus \$21,000 in notes, making a total of \$71,000 liability. Today all that remains to be paid is \$30,000 on the property, which may be conservatively valued at \$250,000.

“The Building is of Class A construction. It contains eight lodge rooms, three banquet halls, each with its kitchenette attached, a splendid club room, a parlor, the office of the ‘[California Druid,’ the officers of the grand grove of the Druids of California, the office of the superintendent and also several committee rooms. Last but not the least there is a large and beautiful ballroom which because always conducted in an orderly manner, has gained the reputation of being one of the most respectable dancing places of San Francisco.

“The present officers and directors are: August Mainzer, president; A. H. Williams, vice president; C. A. Guglielmoni, secretary; C. D. Dorn, treasurer; Henry Hufschmidt, Morris Sommerfield, John Icardo, Thomas Maino, Martin Kupfer, G. B. Schiaffino, Peter Magendie, A. L. Pierce, Carl E. Doell, F. O. Sjogren, Joseph Schnetz and E. C. Luchessa, directors.

“In conclusion, we must acknowledge the kindness of Templar, Hesperian and Monteverde groves; for in addition to being heavy stockholders, they loaned to the society large sums of money when money was required. All are paid now with interest, but the help given when help was needed constitutes a moral obligation, which can never be repaid.

C. A. GUGLIELMONI”