

Friendship, Love and Truth

by Lynne Belluscio

With the restoration of the old Odd Fellows building on Main Street, several people have asked about the three links and the F L T on the top. The initials stand for Friendship, Love and Truth. They are the three tenets of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. The origins of the Odd



Fellows in America are traced to Baltimore in 1819 and it was similar to the Masonic Lodge.

The LeRoy Lodge No. 731 was organized on April 19, 1895 under the leadership of Henry Duguid, although another source states that they were founded on March 5, 1907. The LeRoy Odd Fellows were pictured in the 1940 Book, but I'm not sure how long they were active.

We have had at the LeRoy House for many years, a large wooden podium with the three links on the front, although I am not sure when it came here. Several years ago, I was asked to

go to Bergen to the Odd Fellows Lodge on Lake Street. It was filled with costumes and stage props from their degree work. The things were going to be thrown away if the local historical societies weren't interested, so we took a representative of the collection: heavy velvet robes and shields and masks and the most unusual thing, a coffin with a paper mache skeleton. I used the coffin for our exhibit on mourning. I'm not sure what I will ever do with it, but it certainly needs to be in a museum.

The Odd Fellows met at the Lamson Block on the north side

of Main Street until February 1914, when fire destroyed the building. The Lodge met at the rooms of the Macabees. New Lodge rooms were ready by October 23, 1914. (That may be when they built the building on the south side which is being renovated now?)

The Rebekahs were the women's branch of the Odd Fellows (my grandfather was a member of the Odd Fellows and my grandmother was a Rebekah.) The Rebekahs organized the LeRoy Lodge 371 on March 5, 1907. Their purpose was "to give support to the old and the orphans

in their time of need." Their motto was to "Be just, merciful, honorable, and brave."

A newspaper photograph that we have in the files, (undated) show eleven women from the District 2 installation and apparently it was the custom to have dresses all of the same style and

material for the installation. Our files state that the Pavilion Rebekah Lodge consolidated with the LeRoy Lodge in 1940 and the Bergen Lodge consolidated with LeRoy in 1962 and the Majestic Lodge of Batavia consolidated with LeRoy in 1972. In 1979, the LeRoy Lodge of Rebekahs consolidated with the White Rose Lodge of Stafford and by 1980 there were only three Rebekah Lodges in Genesee County in Alabama, Corfu and Stafford. The records of the Rebekahs were given to the Historical Society.



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