

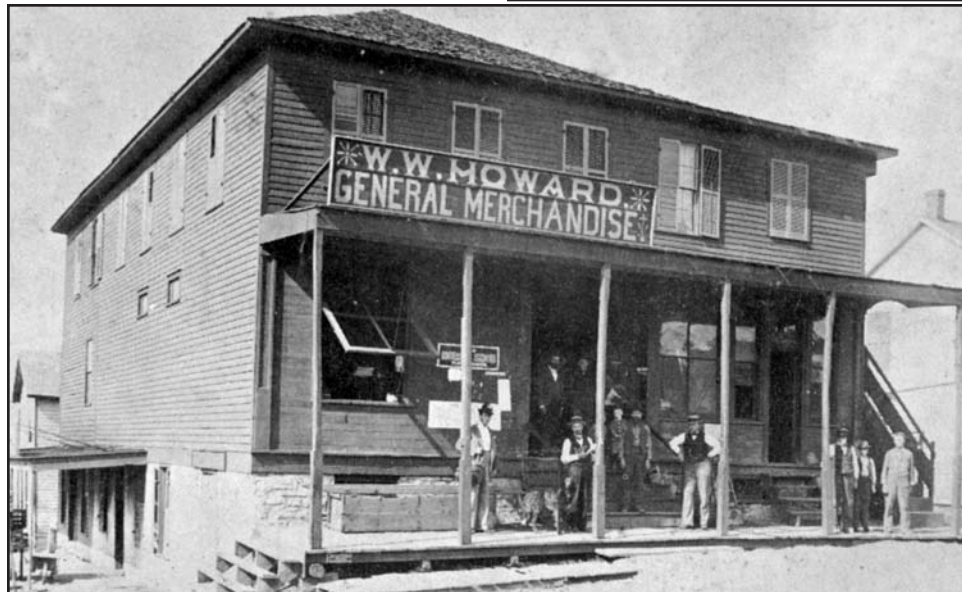
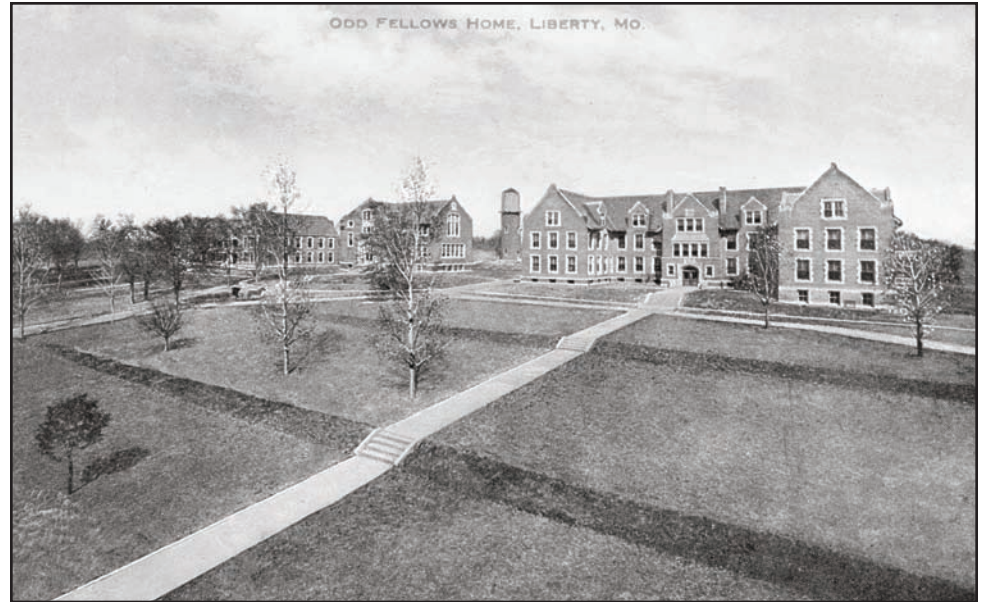
## What Did They Do?

Have you wondered what people in the first decade of the twentieth century did with their leisure time? It is true they worked hard, the days were usually long, and the work week had six days for many people. How did they spend those long winter evenings without theaters and television? Why, radio hadn't been invented yet. Part of the answer was to belong to several church, social, and fraternal organizations. The citizens in the north central Ozarks had quite a few to pick from.

Fraternal organizations experienced quite a bit of growth in Pulaski and neighboring counties during the first decade of the twentieth century. New lodge buildings were built and their activities were widely reported. The Independent Order of the Odd Fellows seemed to be particularly robust with lodges in Waynesville, Big Piney, Bloodland, Crocker, Plato, Dixon, and Richland. Several of the towns had a Daughters of Rebekah lodge, which is the female auxiliary. Richland had a Royal Neighbors chapter, whose focus was (and is) on the well-being of women. Masonic Lodges were present in most of the towns. The Modern Woodmen of America had a presence

in most of the towns in Pulaski County, including Swedeborg but as yet not mentioned in Waynesville. All of these national fraternal organizations were committed to civic progress, service, and education. Some citizens belonged to more than one

Beyond the chartered lodges, most communities, town and rural, had literary and debating clubs. A topic might be serious, such as "Resolved that fire is more destructive than water" or more whimsical, as "Resolved that the old bachelors should be taxed to support the old maids." Each town had at least one dramatic club and a source of pride was the community band.



**Left** Not all fraternal organizations had their own buildings. In Dixon, the I.O.O.F. and the Modern Woodmen of America lodges met in the upstairs hall of the W. W. Howard General Merchandise store. The store and picture figure in another feature.

**Above** Most, if not all, of the national fraternal organizations offered insurance to their members. The Odd Fellows purchased an old hotel as a home for widows and orphans of its members in Liberty, MO. When the hotel burned in 1900, the order built this new complex, including a 50-bed hospital. Courtesy of Jan and Terry Primas.

Citizens Mortgage

Mark C. Prugh  
Attorney



**Upper left** - The new fraternal hall built by the Knights of Pythias in Rolla, noted in the 1909 news feature. Courtesy of John Bradbury.

**Above** - The dedication of the Odd Fellows Hall in Dixon in 1908. Courtesy of the Jessie McCullie Library, Dixon.

**Right** - As a member of the Modern Woodmen of America and its insurance program, you were entitled to a Woodmen grave monument. There are several of these unusual markers scattered around cemeteries in Old Pulaski. This one is located at Idumea Cemetery in Laquey. Photo by Terry Primas.

**Left** - Members of the Knights of Pythias of Dixon in full club regalia. They are: (seated) Tom Murphy, (l-r) C. F. Christeson, Charles Murphy, Joe Shanks, Ashley V., Bill Branson, Charles Sease, Unknown. Courtesy of Western Historical Manuscript Collection.



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