

Was Your Ancestor a Member of a Lodge, Club, or Secret Society?

Why is this important? - 20% of men in 1900 belonged to a lodge or club; their membership was often cited in Obituaries. Knowing of their membership in a society helps complete their family “story” and possibly understand them better. Here are some examples of the more well known, with links to more information about them.

- **[B'nai B'rith](#)**: a Jewish service organization.
- **[Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks](#)**: A fraternal order focused on charity, justice, brotherly love and fidelity with an emphasis on patriotism and belief in God.
- **[Colonial Dames of America](#)**: an American organization composed of women who are descended from an ancestor who lived in British America from 1607–1775.
- **[Daughters of Norway](#)**: A sisterhood aimed at preserving Nordic heritage.
- **[Daughters of the American Revolution](#)** (DAR): a lineage-based membership service organization for women who are directly descended from a person involved in the United States’ efforts towards independence.
- **[Fraternal Order of Eagles](#)**: “People Helping People” in the spirit of liberty, truth, justice, and equality. Local units are called “Aeries.”
- **[Freemasons](#)**: The Masonic Fraternity claims to be the oldest Fraternity in the world and seeks men (Masons) wishing to become better men through service and self-improvement.
- **[Grange](#)**: A community-based, fraternal organization with an interest in representing rural residents and the agriculture community.
- **[Independent Order of Odd Fellows](#)**: To improve and elevate the character of mankind by promoting the principles of friendship, love, truth, faith, hope, charity, and universal justice.
- **[International Concatenated Order of Hoo-Hoo, Incorporated](#)** is a fraternal and service organization whose members are involved in the forests products industry. {My personal favorite name!}
- **[Job's Daughters International](#)**: a Masonic affiliated youth organization for girls and young women aged 10 to 20.
- **[Kiwanis](#)**: an international service club founded in 1915 in Detroit, Michigan.
- **[Knight of Pythias](#)**: a fraternal organization and secret society founded in Washington, D.C., on 19 February 1864
- **[Knights of Columbus](#)**: A Catholic fraternal benefit society.
- **[Lions Club](#)**: an international non-political service organization established originally in 1917 in Chicago, Illinois.
- **[Loyal Order of Moose](#)**: a fraternal and service organization founded in 1888 and headquartered in Mooseheart, Illinois.
- **[Optimist International](#)**: an international service club organization with almost 3,000 clubs and over 80,000 members in more than 20 countries. The international headquarters is located in St. Louis, Missouri
- **[Order of the Eastern Star](#)**: The members of the Order of the Eastern Star are dedicated women and men who sincerely reflect the spirit of fraternal love and the desire to work together for good.
- **[Rebekaahs](#)**: This is the female organization of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows
- **[Rotary International](#)**: an international service organization whose stated purpose is to bring together business and professional leaders to provide humanitarian service and to advance goodwill and peace around the world.
- **[Shriners](#)**: Fraternity based on fun, fellowship and the Masonic principles of brotherly love, relief, and truth.
- **[Sons of Italy](#)**: A fraternal group focused on preserving Italian heritage.
- **[Sons of Norway](#)**: A fraternal group focused on preserving Norwegian heritage. Founded in 1895.
- **[Soroptimist International](#)** (SI): a worldwide volunteer service organization for women who work for peace, and in particular to improve the lives of women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world.
- **[The American Legion](#)**: commonly known as the Legion, is a nonprofit organization of U.S. war veterans.

