

Smaller Fraternals

by
Mike Prero

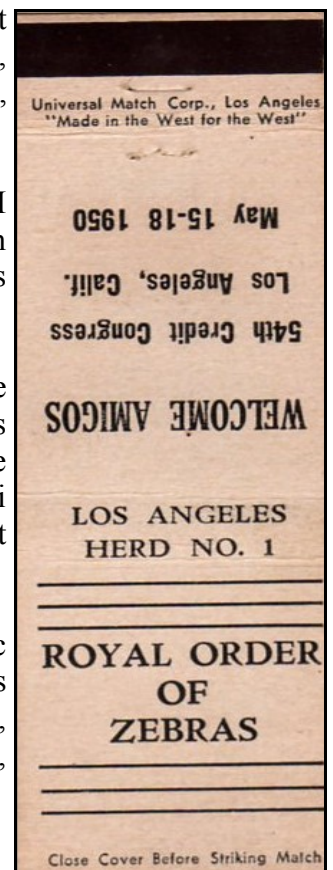
These are miniscule organizations compared to the likes of Elks, Moose, and the other big boys in the Fraternal category, but they're just as interesting—lots you've never heard of before, many with tantalizing

twists and turns in their histories, and many with smiles. Just look at the nomenclature for local grouping: lodges, posts, aeries, herds, nests, orients, grottos, societies, pup tents, councils, and more.

As a History teacher and a person who just loves history, I can't help being attracted to Small Fraternals. Some of them grew out of World War II (which is already almost 70 years ago!), but some much older...and I mean *much* older!

The granddaddy of them all, as near as I can tell, is the Knights of Malta. They go back to 1023! The Freemasons arguably trace their beginnings back to the 1300's. The Oddfellows organization goes back to 1452? The Illuminati goes back to 1776 (no covers here; they're a secret organization!)

What brings these people together? For some, it's ethnic background; for others it's common goals; for still others, it's war-time experiences. But, whatever it happens to be, fraternal organizations have a lot of pluses going for them, and for the communities that they call home.



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