

# Woodmen of the World and/or Assured Life Association

The Head Camp, Pacific Jurisdiction, Woodmen of the World (later named Woodmen of the World and finally Woodmen of the World and/or Assured Life Association) was founded in 1890 and incorporated under the laws of the State of Colorado in January of 1891 as a fraternal benefit society. Since those early years of a founding father sharing his dream to abolish destitution and distress through the essential elements of fraternity and life insurance, Woodmen continues to focus on a two-pronged mission: To promote the ideals of fraternalism by creating and supporting programs and projects which help meet the needs of members, employees, their families and the communities in which they live; and to provide financial security to members and their families through quality products and exemplary service.

## HISTORY

Woodmen of the World and/or Assured Life Association's early beginnings can be traced to the same founder of Modern Woodmen of America and Woodmen of the World/Omaha Woodmen Life Insurance Society, **JOSEPH CULLEN ROOT**. Root, and our official founder and first Head Consul (President), **FRED A. FALKENBERG**, first met at the Windsor Hotel in Denver, Colorado in April of 1890 to plan the formation of Woodmen of the World. In June of that same year, Mr. Falkenberg and Root met with others in the Paxton Hotel in Omaha, Nebraska for the purpose of officially formalizing the Fraternal Benefit Society, initially under the name of Sovereign Camp of the Woodmen of the World. Woodmen has been, and continues to be, a non-profit, nonpolitical, nonsectarian organization.



It is believed that the inspiration for the name, Woodmen, came from a church sermon, which touted the "trees" as being "God's first temple." From that first ideal, the concept of giving honor to the pioneers who had cleared with axe and wedge a pathway for civilization as it moved west was born. In our present ceremonies and rituals we continue to recognize the spirit of brotherhood, mutual aid and patriotism which bound the early settlers together to protect their homes and loved ones and which serve as a foundation of our great fraternal.

Initially called the Head Camp, Pacific Jurisdiction, Woodmen of the World, our fraternity originally consisted of the states and territories of California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. The Denver Society was connected with the Omaha Woodmen, even though it always set its own rates and collected its own assessments. The use of the ceremonial ritual was the only thing held in common with the Omaha group, and for use of such, the Pacific Jurisdiction paid a fee to the Omaha Woodmen. In July of 1916, at the 12<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of the Head Camp Session (National Convention), the Articles of Incorporation of the Denver Woodmen were amended and the words "Pacific Jurisdiction" were deleted from its name. From that time on, until expanding into states east of its original nine state region prompted the use of the synonym **Assured Life Association**, Woodmen of the World was used as the official name of the Society. Also, at this meeting, resolutions were adopted canceling all the contractual relations with the Omaha Woodmen and the Denver group formulated its own rituals.

Over the years, Woodmen of the World and/or Assured Life Association witnessed panics, disasters, World Wars I and II, the Great Depression, the Korean Conflict and the Vietnam War. The Society today is a stronger organization due to those who guided it through these formative years. Now, as in the past, members are grouped into local lodges that pitch in when disaster strikes to relieve suffering and distress. In addition, they meet regularly, elect their own officers and carry on their own business, social, fraternal and charitable activities.

In the years following our founding, there have been drastic changes in our way of life, family needs and in the way those needs are met. As a result, Woodmen of the World and/or Assured Life Association is challenged to continue performing a vital role for our members and pledges to seek solutions to these changing needs through the democratic self-help process which is our personal, fraternal and national heritage.