

Frank S. Land

by Herb Phares

Frank S. Land was born on June 21, 1890 to William Sherman Land and Elizabeth Sampson., in Kansas City, Missouri. His mother was granddaughter of the Pioneer Daniel Boone. His sister Etta Glen known as Sissy was born in 1895. At the age of 10 in the family home in St. Louis Dad Land became known as "The Little Minister" by teaching a Sunday school class for the children in the neighborhood. Even though this timid 10 year old boy who was often afraid to recite lessons in his classroom was able to speak with complete confidence to the children from the neighborhood. He began by saying "Friends are very important, we must have friends. We must share with them. We must help each other." He went on to tell a story from the Old Testament about two friends David and Jonathan.

In 1902, his family life changed. Due to misunderstandings and difficulties due to finances and personality conflicts his parents separated. His dad stayed in St. Louis, while he and his mother and sister moved to Kansas City to live with his grandmother. It was especially difficult for Dad Land. He felt the loss of his father and the lack of a masculine personality. He was in a new home a new city and he had a new life. Because of all of this he became increasingly shy. He was so shy in fact that many times he walked all the way around the block to avoid the girls in his classroom. He was enrolled in the Longfellow School, which had an enrollment of just over 300. He graduated in 1905 and enrolled at Manual High School. His classes challenged him and he gradually gained self-confidence. He joined school activities and lost his shyness. Boys of his own age and older found him to be wise beyond his years and often came to him for advice. They came to him with problems and questions regarding life and told him of their ambitions.

In the late spring of 1907, near the end of Dad Land's sophomore year of high school, his grandmother was concerned about his future. She wanted him to be able to attend college, but finances would not enable him to attend. Because the family had experience in the restaurant business, she suggested that they invest in the restaurant business with his aunt. In the beginning his mother and grandmother did all of the cooking at home and then they carried it a few blocks to the restaurant. Dad Land was take charge. With other business's moving to the neighborhood the restaurant became an immediate success. Dad Land served his customers and had to do everything himself. When school started in the fall he enrolled in only 2 subjects English and Business Arithmetic. Because he had to work everyday usually until 1:00 am it became increasing difficult to remain awake during the school day. He finally had to withdraw near the close of the semester.

He always like to draw, and from the urging of his family in 1908 he enrolled in the newly formed Kansas City Art Institute. The classes were flexible and he was able to work them around his work schedule. It was there that met and fell in love with his future wife Nell. They eventually were married on September 15, 1913. By being so busy with growing family restaurant and his budding romance with Nell, he had taken little notice of his mother's romance with Leslie James. They were married on June 19, 1909. Years later they had a daughter Elizabeth Irene, who became known as "Princess Irene". With his mother now married he decided to remain at home with his grandmother. With his mother now married this made the restaurant ownership complicated. His dream had become to be the sole owner. His mother gave him her share of the business and his grandmother and his aunt finally agreed to sell him their interest in the business. Purchasing the business took all of his resources, and he had to ask his aunt for \$10 to use in the cash register on his first day as the sole owner of the restaurant. Success came very slowly, but because of his power of organization the small restaurant became a gracious center of dining. He eventually remodeled hired a CQ9k. dishwasher and a waitress. Because of the need for continuous supervision he turned the small office of the restaurant into a apartment where he could live close to his business.

Many years later when addressing a national group of youth advisors, Dad Land would say "Look to the quiet lad for leadership. I have watched so many grow into the ability to inspire and to lead others. The boy who is too aggressive, too prone to force his way, often burns himself out before reaching his peak. Watch the quiet, sensitive,

and conscientious young man who shies from a place of prominence at first then when the challenge comes --- watch him. He will have the ability to lead. He will mature into a successful man. You will be proud of him" Dad Land would have denied it, but he was a perfect example of his own statement. He had been so shy, so drawn within himself, had given so much to achieve a self-inspired education during these early years that now with the years of manhood just before him he accepted the inherent challenge and began a life of leadership. A life dedicated to the service of people.

On June 21, 1911, his 21 st birthday, the entire family came to the restaurant singing "Happy Birthday". However, there was no visible gift from Grandmother Sampson. Her comment was "Frank, you are now 21 years old. I am proud of you and what you have done." She handed him an envelope and said " Your grandfather was a Mason. I would be happy if you joined the Fraternity he loved. In his memory and as a gift from me, you will find in this envelope the money necessary for you to present a petition for the degree of Masonry. Do as your heart directs, but it would please me so much to have you do this." At 21 years of age with \$50 to go with a petition he waited for someone to ask him to join. When no one extended an invitation, his eagerness led him to ask two of his regular customers what he had to do to have his name presented for membership. His petition was received on April 25, 1912 in Ivanhoe Lodge 446, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, signed by Charles Homer Talbot and Clarence J Trigg. He was initiated an Entered Apprentice on May 25th 1912, passed to the degree of Fellowcraft on June 17, 1912, and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason on June 29th 1912. Masonry turned out to be his passion and in the next few months he joined Kansas City Chapter No 28 Royal Arch Masons, receiving the Mark Master Degree July 23, 1912, Past Master and Most Excellent Master Degrees on October 18, 1912, and the Royal Arch Degree on October 25, 1912. The Commandery Orders were conferred by Kansas City Commandery No 10, Knights Templar with the Order of the Red cross, November 21, 1912, Order of the Temple on December 19, 1912, and the Order of Knights of Malta, January 2, 1913. He became a 32nd Degree member of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States of America in the November Class of 1912 at Kansas City, Missouri. He immediately started to work in the various degrees and committees in Scottish Rite Masonry. He was appointed to the officers line of DeMolai Council of Kadosh, becoming the presiding officer of that body as Commander for 1919-1920. On November 15, 1912 he was created a Noble of the Ancient Arabic Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, in Ararat Temple. He served as Potentate in 1931 and was Imperial Potentate of the Imperial Council for North America in 1954.

In 1914, he came home from work and told his wife Nell, "I have an opportunity to sell the restaurant, lock, stock and barrel for a profit of \$8,000. She told him to sell and asked him what will you do after you sell the restaurant? He had been serving as the secretary of the Scottish Rite Employment Bureau, giving as much time as possible: He was asked to give his full time to the position of Administrator and Secretary of the Mason's Relief Committee with an office in the Scottish Rite Temple. This Charity would come to help hundreds and hundreds of families. By accepting this position, it slowly evolved into the formation of the Order of DeMolay.

In March, 1919, Dad Land met with young man named Louis Lower. His father had died, leaving him without a father figure in his life. Dad Land took the time to listen to Louis, learn about his dreams, and to help him. He also learned that others like Louis sought companionship, leadership, inspiration and competition. He asked Louis to invite some of his friends to attend a meeting. The original group of nine DeMolays: Louis G Lower, Ivan M Bentley, Edmund Marshall, Gorman A McBride, Jerome Jacobson, William W Steinhilber, Elmer Dorsey, Clyde C Stream, and Ralph Sewell. At the second meeting, there were a total of 31 young men present. They were excited about their new club.

The group needed its own identity and its own name. After Dad Land related the story of Jacques DeMolay, the group decided to name itself for this historical figure connected with masonry.

Dad Land as he came to be called, provided the philosophy and principles to be embodied. As interest in DeMolay spread, Dad Land answered many questions for information and authority to start new chapters. Initiations and ceremonies took place in all locations. By fall of 1920, Mother Chapter had developed activities for its members as well. These included an outstanding baseball team, a DeMolay marching unit, and even 100 piece band.

By the end of 1921, Dad Land realized he had to devote full time to this new organization and become a full time employee. As DeMolay chapters grew in numbers and strength, the organization as a whole grew in prestige. With this greater prestige interest developed in the Masonic fraternity. Official recognition and approval by Masonic groups began giving their seal of approval to foster DeMolay in their states. Many distinguished organizations endorsed DeMolay including the General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, Grand Lodges, and Knights Templar.

A devoted champion of Freemasonry and of its teachings, Dad Land would become a figure of international prominence within Masonry. He counted among his friends U.S. Congressmen, state governors, movie and radio stars, military leaders, leaders of industry, Presidents of the U.S. and a veritable legion of young men in their teens.

Dad Land worked tirelessly for the Order of DeMolay until his death on November 8, 1959. Hundreds of other devoted workers aided in the creation and extension of the Order of DeMolay, but looked to one man for guidance. Frank S. Land was the charismatic leader of the Order. He Was truly a great man, a proud American, and a person who came to be know by millions simply as "Dad". His life touched, and continues to impact generation after generation of young people, young men looking to better themselves by emulating the lessons and examples by which he himself lived.