

HISTORIAN REPORT TO THE GRAND LODGE

2022 ISMA Grand Lodge Convention (Revised Version)

The Historian Committee has produced a spread sheet listing all the Grand Lodge elected and appointed officers on a year-by-year basis throughout the history of the ISMA. The list includes all the officers from Grand President to Grand Sentinel. The spread sheet is currently located on the Detroit Lodge 7 web site (detroitlodge7.org). In future, a link to the spread sheet should be added to the Grand Lodge website. There are a few officer names missing in the very early years of the Association. Research will continue to try and find those missing names. The spread sheet also contains historical information about the ISMA. The columns on the spread sheet are as follows:

Column 1 - Year

Column 2 - Convention City

Column 3 - Convention hotel and date of convention, if known

Columns 4 thru 12 – names and lodges of Grand Lodge elected and appointed officers

Column 13 - number of active lodges at the time of the annual convention

Column 14 - estimated number of members in the Association

Column 15 - noting the years when lodges were organized, reorganized, dissolved, etc.

The annual lodge membership totals require additional study and are not definitive. The totals listed on the spread sheet were found by counting the number of names in the annual Shipmaster Directories (last edition published in 1967), viewing the membership reports in the existing Convention Proceedings and looking at membership studies conducted in the past. These counts and reports often don't agree and parameters of the membership categories varied from year to year. So the membership numbers are in many cases an approximation. If a year is underlined on the spread sheet, click on that year and additional historical data or photographs will appear. If an officer's name is underlined, click on that name and biographical information will appear. The spread sheet was designed by committee co-chairman John Sarns. Researching missing data in the early years of the ISMA was done by George Haynes. The committee recommends that George be officially added to the committee.

The committee receive one historical inquiry during the past year. Sean O'Donoghue of Georgian Bay-Huron Lodge No. 15 asked for background on the ISMA membership pennant. He possesses a 1909 and a 1952 ISMA Directory. The 1909 Directory stated that the membership pennant shall be red in color. The 1952 ISMA Directory stated that the membership pennant shall be blue. He asked for information on when and why the change in color took place. The 1935 Directory showed the membership pennant and Grand President flag as red in color. The 1936 Directory showed them as blue in color. So it would appear that the color change took place at the 1936 Grand Lodge Convention. The reason for the change was that the red membership pennant was being mistaken for the fueling flag. In the interest of safety and clarity the color of the membership pennant was changed to blue.

Back in the mid-1980s, the Grand Lodge authorized the production of an historical marker or plaque celebrating the centennial of the ISMA (1886-1986). A committee headed by Ted Cogswell, PGP Bill Hoey and PGP Jim Daleski was appointed to design the historical marker. The Grand Lodge ordered three plaques with the plaques to be installed at the Soo Locks, the Welland Canal and the Port of Buffalo. Buffalo was the site of the first lodge organized in 1886. Several lodges ordered markers as well. Here are the locations of known ISMA markers around the Great Lakes:

1. Buffalo, NY – marker is located on the south side of the Buffalo River along the gated U.S. Coast Guard walkway; the gate for the walkway is at the northern terminus of Fuhrmann Boulevard, 1 Fuhrmann Boulevard, Buffalo, NY
2. Alpena, MI – marker is on Alpena’s Bi-Path along the east side of the Thunder Bay River behind the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center, 500 West Fletcher Street, Alpena, MI
3. Rogers City, MI – marker is within the Presque Isle County Lighthouse Park beside the S.S. Calcite pilot house exhibit, County Park Road north of US-23
4. Detroit, MI – marker is in the entrance vestibule of Mariners’ Church attached to the door leading to the church’s columbarium; 170 E. Jefferson Avenue, Detroit, MI
5. Toledo, OH – marker is in the pilot house of the Col. James M. Schoonmaker Museum Ship, 1701 Front Street, Toledo, OH
6. St. Catharines, Ontario – marker is affixed to the St. Catharines Museum and Welland Canal Center, 1932 Welland Canal Parkway, St. Catharines, Ontario
7. Sault Ste. Marie, MI – marker is affixed to fencing directly beneath the Soo Locks Observation Platform, 384-398 W. Portage Avenue, Sault Ste. Marie, MI

Images of several of these markers, all identical, can be found using The Historical Marker Data Base (HMDB) on the internet: HMdb.org.

When the Grand Lodge Archive was established back in the 1980s, Grand Lodge officers were instructed to turn over copies of correspondence to the Grand Lodge for inclusion in the Archives. The archives are stored in the Bowling Green State University Library, Bowling Green, OH. It is hoped that this policy will be continued with coordination through the Grand Lodge Secretary-Treasurer.

Paul M. Jagenow
Grand Lodge Historian, Chairman

John A. Sarns
Committee Co-Chairman

Attachment: image of the ISMA Centennial Plaque



INTERNATIONAL SHIPMASTERS' ASSOCIATION

THE MARITIME PROFESSIONALS WHO SAIL THE SHIPS ON THE GREAT LAKES ARE CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR FRATERNAL ORGANIZATION, THE I.S.M.A. WHOSE PURPOSE IS STATED IN THE ASSOCIATION'S CONSTITUTION, "THE PURPOSE OF THIS ASSOCIATION SHALL BE TO UNITE ALL SHIPMASTERS AND LICENSED MERCHANT MARINE OFFICERS OF THE GREAT LAKES AND TRIBUTARY WATERS OF GOOD MORAL CHARACTER, TO ELEVATE THE CHARACTER OF ITS MEMBERS AND THEIR PROFESSION, AND TO UTILIZE THEIR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE TO PROMOTE THE SAFETY OF THE GREAT LAKES SAILING PROFESSION."

THE I.S.M.A. TRACES ITS ORIGIN TO THE PORT OF BUFFALO, NEW YORK WHERE, IN THE WINTER OF 1886, THE DEATH OF THE FIRST MATE ON THE STEAMER "BOSTON" BROUGHT CONCERN FOR HIS WIDOW. THE LOCAL MASTERS AND MATES UPON LEARNING OF THE SITUATION TOOK UP A COLLECTION AND THE EXCELSIOR MARINE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION WAS CREATED. THIS ASSOCIATION WAS SET UP TO ESTABLISH AN ENDOWMENT FUND TO FINANCIALLY ASSIST THE SURVIVORS OF THE MARINERS WHO PASSED ON.

WORD OF THE ASSOCIATION'S GOOD WORKS SPREAD ACROSS THE LAKES. LODGES WERE FORMED IN A NUMBER OF PORTS. THE FIRST CONVENTION OF ALL THE LODGES OF THE ASSOCIATION WAS HELD IN BUFFALO, NEW YORK IN JANUARY 1891. AT THE THIRD CONVENTION HELD IN PORT HURON, MICHIGAN IN 1893 THE NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION WAS CHANGED TO THE SHIPMASTERS' ASSOCIATION. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE TITLE INTERNATIONAL WAS ADDED AS IT REPRESENTS BOTH THE AMERICAN AND THE CANADIAN SEAFARER.



IN COMMEMORATION OF THE I.S.M.A. CENTENNIAL 1886 - 1986