

Elk's Grand Lodge Reunion Badges

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special help from Leo Stambaugh and Tony Moon



Fig. 1 Grand Lodge Reunion,
Denver 1906 Cripple Creek, CO.,
Lodge 316

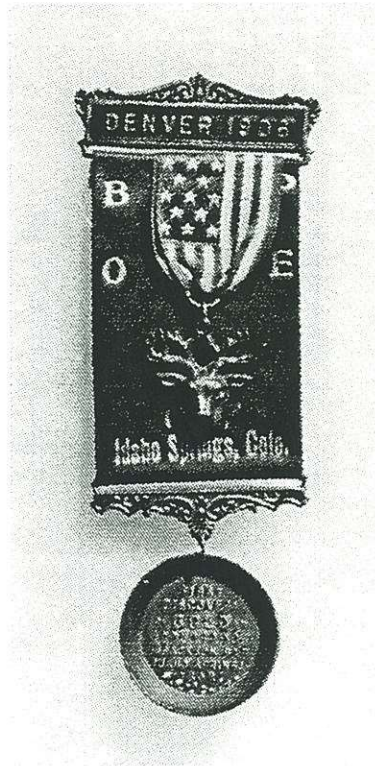


Fig. 2 Grand Lodge Reunion,
Denver, 1906 Idaho Springs,
CO., Lodge 607



Fig. 3 Grand Lodge Reunion, Denver,
1906 Central City, CO., Lodge 557

Badges represent another interesting aspect of mine artifact collecting. "All work and no play" would have made Cousin Jack a dull boy, but fraternal organizations and lodges provided an opportunity for socialization and were quite popular among miners. A number of insignia (badges, medals, fobs, and ribbons) showing mining scenes, tools, symbols and emblems from these organizations have surfaced.

When I first thought about this subject as an article I didn't realize how many badges there might be. Both Leo Stambaugh and Tony Moon allowed me to use photographs of their badges to make this article possible. It seems as if the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks (B.P.O.E.) produced the largest number of insignia. Because of the number of ELKS emblems found, I thought that the ELKS must have provided some kind of benefit to miners in the form of insurance or the like,

but according to Mr. Mike Kelley, the historian at ELKS headquarters in Chicago, this was not the case. The ELKS lodges existed as a social gathering point. The ELKS have provided humanitarian help at several mine disasters over the years and was one of the first organizations to send assistance after the great San Francisco quake and fire.

Annual Grand Lodge reunions have been held since the date of the organization of the B.P.O.E. in 1871. These reunions were held in New York City 1871 - 1890, except for the 1877 meeting which was held in Philadelphia. According to Mr. Mike Kelley, early reunions were held in cities with good railroad connections since this was the predominant method of transportation (Table 1). These early reunions drew as many as 10,000 ELKS members parading in their purple coats, straw boaters, and white spats . . . must have been quite a sight! Con-

tests were often held at these parades for the group with the best costumes relating to their home area as well as for the best marchers, etc.

All of the badges described in this article come from ELKS Grand Lodge Reunions and show some kind of mining symbol or product. Until 1905 each lodge designed its' own medal or badge, but beginning in 1906 the Grand Lodge contracted to have the reunion badges made by one company. Many of the lodges took advantage of this service as it was considerably cheaper, but fortunately for us collectors, a number of lodges continued to design their own badges and these examples form the body of this article. We have collected (Leo, Tony, and I) four badges from the Grand Lodge Reunion of 1906 held in Denver. As you might expect, the mining towns of Colorado were well represented at this Grand Lodge Reunion.

Cripple Creek with the elk in an ore bucket is quite unique (figure 1). Idaho Springs and Central City arrived with a gold pan (figure 2) and a winze (figure 3) on their badges. The host lodge in Denver had shovels and

crossed pick and hammer emblems (figure 4). Note that each of these badges has the lodge number prominently displayed. There was also a "generic" badge made for this reunion (figure 5). This shows an elk in a gold pan engraved "mile high" on the rim, and displays a miner with a pick on his shoulder, and delineates the landmarks of Balancing Rock on the bottom part of the badge and Mount of the Holy Cross on the top portion. These types of badges were sold, given to visitors, or used for trading.

Three other Grand Lodge Reunion badges are shown in figures 6, 7, and 8. The Trinidad, Colorado ELKS came to Detroit in 1910 honoring their coal mining tradition with a badge showing a miners' soft hat and an oilwick lamp (figure 6). Ore samples decorate both badges that were worn at the 1912 reunion in Portland, Oregon. The Wallace, Idaho lodge designed their badge to show two miners in a stope using a compressed air drill (figure 7). The ore sample from Idaho is supposed to be silver, the one from Baker, Oregon, gold (figure 8). But the "gold" is really a mixture of iron pyrite and maybe some silver, according to Tony.



Fig. 4 Grand Lodge Reunion, Denver, 1906 Denver, CO., Lodge 17



Fig. 5 Grand Lodge Reunion, Denver, 1906 Convention Badge



Fig. 6 Grand Lodge Reunion, Detroit, 1910 Trinidad, CO., Lodge 181

Denver again hosted the Grand Lodge Reunion in 1914. This Reunion is billed as a Golden Jubilee, but it was the city of Denver's Golden Jubilee, not the ELKS. Again, a "generic" badge announces the reunion and exhibits a gold pan and mining tools. Mt Evans is the landmark seen on the top portion of the badge (figure 9). Central City's badge (figure 10) shows the products of the region as well as a miner with his mule and tools. Idaho Springs touted its radium water (figure 11) and Cripple Creek displayed a large ingot of GOLD (figure 12). Park City, Utah was not to be outdone, with its badge showing a miners' candlestick (figure 13).

I am sure there are other badges that are in other collections, or others that will surface as a result of increased vigilance. I would welcome a call from anyone who might have one or more of these badges. I am planning a follow-up article after I visit ELKS headquarters in Chicago, as Mr. Kelley has told me of six more badges with mining inscriptions on display there, and would make them available to photograph. There are other ELKS badges besides the Grand Lodge Reunion badges, and badges of other fraternal organizations that will be the subject of yet another article in progress.

I want to thank Leo and Tony for their advice on preparation of this manuscript and their sharing of their treasures. I would also like to thank Mr. Mike Kelley, Director of Publicity and Grand Lodge Historian at B.P.O.E. Grand Lodge Headquarters, Chicago, Illinois for his assistance.

Badge Credits

Bob: figures 5, 7, 9

Leo: figures 1, 2, 4, 6, 11

Tony: figures 3, 8, 9, 12, 13

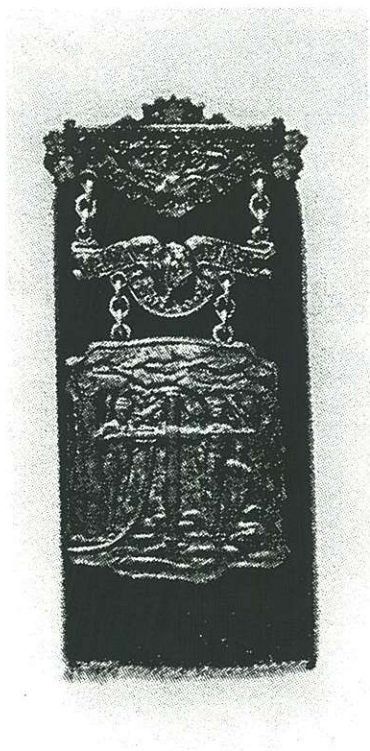


Fig. 7 Grand Lodge Reunion, Portland, 1912 Wallace, ID., Lodge 331



Fig. 8 Grand Lodge Reunion, Portland, 1912 Baker, OR., Lodge 338



Fig. 9 Grand Lodge Reunion, Denver, 1914 Convention Badge



Fig. 10 Grand Lodge Reunion, Denver, 1914 Central City, CO., Lodge 557



Fig. 11 Grand Lodge Reunion, Denver, 1914 Idaho Springs, CO., Lodge 607



Fig. 12 Grand Lodge Reunion, Denver, 1914 Cripple Creek, CO., Lodge 316



Fig. 13 Grand Lodge Reunion, Denver, 1914 Park City, UT., Lodge 734

GRAND LODGE SESSIONS With the exception of the session of 1877, which was held in Philadelphia, the Grand Lodge, from the date of its organization in 1871, met in New York City until about 1889, after which date it was held in these cities:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1890 Cleveland, OH | 1916 Baltimore, MD | 1942 Omaha, NE | 1968 New York, NY |
| 1891 Louisville, KY | 1917 Boston, MA | 1943 Boston, MA | 1969 Dallas, TX |
| 1892 Buffalo, NY | 1918 Atlantic City, NJ | 1944 Chicago, IL | 1970 San Francisco, CA |
| 1893 Detroit, MI | 1919 Atlantic City, NJ | 1945 New York, NY | 1971 New Orleans, LA |
| 1894 Atlantic City, NJ | 1920 Chicago, IL | 1946 New York, NY | 1972 Atlantic City, NJ |
| 1895 Atlantic City, NJ | 1921 Los Angeles, CA | 1947 Portland, OR | 1973 Chicago, IL |
| 1896 Cincinnati, OH | 1922 Atlantic City, NJ | 1948 Philadelphia, PA | 1974 Miami Beach, FL |
| 1897 Minneapolis, MN | 1923 Atlanta, GA | 1949 Cleveland, OH | 1975 Dallas, TX |
| 1898 New Orleans, LA | 1924 Boston, MA | 1950 Miami, FL | 1976 Chicago, IL |
| 1899 St. Louis, MO | 1925 Portland, OR | 1951 Chicago, IL | 1977 New Orleans, LA |
| 1900 Atlantic City, NJ | 1926 Chicago, IL | 1952 New York, NY | 1978 San Diego, CA |
| 1901 Milwaukee, WI | 1927 Cincinnati, OH | 1953 St. Louis, MO | 1979 Dallas, TX |
| 1902 Salt Lake City, UT | 1928 Miami, FL | 1954 Los Angeles, CA | 1980 New Orleans, LA |
| 1903 Baltimore, MD | 1929 Los Angeles, CA | 1955 Philadelphia, PA | 1981 Las Vegas, NV |
| 1904 Cincinnati, OH | 1930 Atlantic City, NJ | 1956 Chicago, IL | 1982 Chicago, IL |
| 1905 Buffalo, NY | 1931 Seattle, WA | 1957 San Francisco, CA | 1983 Honolulu, HI |
| 1906 Denver, CO | 1932 Birmingham, AL | 1958 New York, NY | 1984 Houston, TX |
| 1907 Philadelphia, PA | 1933 Milwaukee, WI | 1959 Chicago, IL | 1985 Seattle, WA |
| 1908 Dallas, TX | 1934 Kansas City, MO | 1960 Dallas, TX | 1986 Denver, CO |
| 1909 Los Angeles, CA | 1935 Columbus, OH | 1961 Miami Beach, FL | 1987 Atlanta, GA |
| 1910 Detroit, MI | 1936 Los Angeles, CA | 1962 Chicago, IL | 1988 Las Vegas, NV |
| 1911 Atlantic City, NJ | 1937 Denver, CO | 1963 San Francisco, CA | 1989 New Orleans, LA |
| 1912 Portland, OR | 1938 Atlantic City, NJ | 1964 New York, NY | 1990 Las Vegas, NV |
| 1913 Rochester, NY | 1939 St. Louis, MO | 1965 Miami Beach, FL | 1991 St. Louis, MO |
| 1914 Denver, CO | 1940 Houston, TX | 1966 Dallas, TX | 1992 Dallas, TX |
| 1915 Los Angeles, CA | 1941 Philadelphia, PA | 1967 San Francisco, CA | 1993 Portland, OR |
| | | | 1994 Chicago, IL |
| | | | 1995 New Orleans, LA |