

The Life of Frank S. Land

Reprinted from the International DeMolay Cordon for November, 1965

"Fascinating and inspirational" are the two best adjectives that describe the life and work of Frank S. Land, founder of the Order of DeMolay.

Frank Land was born in 1880 in Kansas City, Missouri. When he was two years old, his father moved the family to St. Louis.

Sunday School provided the means for his first mark of achievement and distinction. He was presented with a Bible for having ten years perfect attendance at Sunday School at the Fountain Park Congregational Church in St. Louis.

Later, the Bible had a significant role in the founding of the great international youth movement, for the original DeMolay members took their obligations on this very same Bible.

Frank Land's interest and enthusiasm for Sunday School was great even at the grade school age. He launched an afternoon class in the basement of his home.

The class was so interesting and popular that it attracted youngsters from beyond the immediate neighborhood, and it won for him the title of "The Boy Minister of St. Louis."

His parents were amazed to see their basement jammed with three hundred youngsters and even a few adults every Sunday afternoon. At the dramatic moment their ten-year-old son would emerge from the coal bin, and imitating the mannerisms of his own church minister, he would preach a sermon with clarity, logic and complete confidence.

All this was from a boy too timid to recite in class at school.



III. FRANK S. LAND

The afternoon Sunday school soon drew support from several quarters. A wholesale drug firm owner donated an organ. A neighborhood woman played it. Regular Sunday school teachers assisted the "Boy Minister," thereby reaching many young people not attending morning classes.

Frank Land was preaching the thing he most desired—the principles of a good life, a philosophy his mother had instilled in him. Although he didn't realize it, this vision of his mission in life would one day grow into a marching army of youth, adhering to the ideals of being better sons, better citizens and better leaders.

Turn to page 11

And man, taught wisdom from the past,
In friendship joined their hands;
Hung the sword in the hall, the spear on the wall,
And plowed the willing lands.
And sang: "Hurrah for Tubal Cain!
Our staunch good friend is he;
And for the ploughshare and the plow
To him our praises shall be;
But while oppression lifts its head,
Or a tyrant would be lord,
Though we may thank him for the plow,
We'll not forget the sword."

Our thanks to WB A.S. Villanueva for sending us this poem. He found it while browsing in Christ the King College Literary in Gunn-go-gg City.

FRANK S. LAND . . . (from page 5)

The afternoon Sunday School sessions came to an end when the Lands moved back to Kansas City when Frank was twelve.

In Kansas City he completed his schooling and took an active part in church and civic activities. By the time he was nineteen he had become a successful restaurant operator, and as an amateur artist he was the moving spirit in an organization to beautify the city.

At the age of twenty-one, Frank Land became the president of the Municipal League of Kansas City. He became very active in Masonry and at twenty-five became the director of the Scottish Rite Social Service Bureau.

Three years later, the seed for the Youth Movement was sown, and the organization grew by leaps and bounds.

Frank Land grew in stature right along with DeMolay and was named "Citizen Extraordinary" in a message from former U. S. President Eisenhower in 1958.

He was coroneted a 33^o Mason at the almost unprecedented age of 35. In 1954 he was elected Imperial Potentate of the Imperial Council of the Shrine, and in 1955 he was awarded the first International Gold "Royal Arch" medal by the General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons.

Frank Land was a director, trustee and member of innumerable boards

and councils. He held two honorary doctorates and was president of the Kansas City School Board at the time of his death on November 8, 1959.

He was affectionately known as "Dad Land" to every one of the nearly three million DeMolays, whether he was a chapter member or a successful government or business leader.

His death was sudden and a shock to the entire world since Dad Land was a person who had been recognized as "a leader among leaders." He had entered the hospital after a cold aggravated a prior arthritic condition that had been bothering him for several months. Five days later, he passed away as result of pulmonary edema.

More than 1,000 persons attended the funeral service. In an outstanding eulogy, Reverend Herbert E. Duncan described Dad Land as "a friend of the of the world" and "a quiet personality who was capable of bringing out the best in every life his life touched."

He gave to the world a tangible source in the Order of DeMolay of creating brotherhood among men during their formative years of manhood. Thus Dad Land molded his own perpetual and ever-growing monument when he founded DeMolay back in 1919. What better tribute could stand for a great man than nearly 3 million DeMolays who still practice daily the principles they learned at their chapter's altar. △