

HEARD UNDER THE OAK TREE

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The August 1951 issue of *"The California Druid" Magazine* contained the article which follows. The article was entitled *"Present Day Druids."* World War II had ended a few short years earlier in 1945. And, the Korean War had begun in 1950. When considering our current events this article could have been written yesterday. In any event, I felt compelled to share this article with the present membership of our Order. As you read the article consider the events of the time, while relating the text to today.

"Today in the United States of America there is a nationwide campaign to make every American conscious of the fact that his precious freedoms are not to be taken for granted, and to help stamp out subversive forces which menace these freedoms. These freedoms are a priceless heritage to each and every one of us and to our children and our families. This campaign, if you please, is a challenge to each and every one of us to determine whether we, as a free and independent people, shall endure.

"It seems to me that the history of the Druidic Order is so interwoven with the history of America that one is not complete without the other. Our Order is rich in romantic history and legend. We all know that the United States is also rich in the romance of its founding and in its legends. There were many heroic Druids, men who performed noble deeds; those who conceived and perfected the Druidic organization, and who were only able to reach the state of perfection by arduous labors, unselfishness, sacrifices and undaunted devotion to true principles and virtues.

"Our antiquity or our ancestry we trace to some six thousand years before the birth of Christ. However, our American birth took place in the year 1830. At that time there were very few fraternal organizations existing in the United States. We too know that we were organized in California in 1859 (note: since changed to 1860), being the third oldest fraternal order in the State of California. Today the men of the respective Groves and the women of the respective Circles are not only enjoying the cultured association of fraternity and fellowship, but it is their high privilege as well to preserve all of the ideals of the institutions of our Nation, and in doing so there will also be preserved the most treasured heritage, the American way of life. Our precepts and our examples and our rituals reveal the purposes for which we exist. We know that the purpose is to cultivate the intellect and by doing so we are making our contribution in the preservation of our American heritage in the generations to follow. By our intelligent leadership we are insuring the youth of tomorrow who must take up where we leave off and perpetuate the ideals of our Country and of our Order.

"The only salvation that we have to assure to us our freedom is the brotherhood of man. We must meet our fellowman on a common ground and we must strive to be an inspiration and comfort to him. We must revitalize our faith with a devout heart in the conscientious beliefs and feelings of those with whom we share companionship. We should be humble with humility, and with aspirations for worthiness we should unite with other men in order that a wholesome way of life, which is the heritage of all Americans, shall survive. We must respect men of good faith and we should have compassion for the weak, sympathy for the suffering and understanding and tolerance for those with whom we differ. Our Founding Fathers gave us as part of our foundation a fundamental law that we might prosper spiritually and morally in all generations.

"Therefore, I say to you, Brotherhood means that we should be tolerant of one another and respectful of the faiths and positions of each other. We must be loyal to our ideals and to our institutions, and we must have affection for our fellow man. That will keep us free and give us dignity. Let us Druids fulfill our patriotic and spiritual obligations to our fellow man and to our Nation by teaching all of our people, and especially our young people, to love their homeland and to have pride in its history, and faith in its destiny and to learn, practice and preach perhaps the greatest philosophy known to mankind, the Seven Precepts of Merlin. Also to stress in that teaching that brotherhood is a symbol of love, affection and kindness, and that we as Druids lift our face to the high heavens and learn to be proud that we are Americans first, last and always."