

ORIGINS OF OUR REGALIA by W.A.O. HATHAM III RHF

Since there is nothing to be found in any R.A.O.B. Or G.L.E. source, to specify exactly what is or is not official Buffalo regalia, we are forced to look further afield for a satisfactory description and details of its origin.

It is a generally accepted custom and practice within the Order that our regalia consists of an apron, a sash (worn right shoulder to left side) a pair of cuffion cuffs and sometimes ornate chain collar.

This same regalia is also used by many other fraternal societies, including the Odd Fellows, Orangemen, Masons, Buffs, Druids, Foresters and Knights of the Golden Horn, to name but a few.

The apron originates from masonry - not the Order of Freemason's, but to that trade or profession where men earn their living cutting and working with stone. The apron being nothing more than a piece of animal skin, placed at the front of the body to protect one's body or clothing and is fastened around the body with two tapes and tied in a bow at the front. Since this bow would often become unfastened as the fellow worked, a piece from the top of the apron would be folded over the bow to protect it as the mason worked.

The two ribbons fitted with seven tassels in Buffalo terms represents the two degrees that used to comprise the Order - namely the first and second.

Seven tassels to represent the number of member needed to open a lodge.

In the Order of the Freemasons they represent two pillars at the entrance to a holy temple, and again the tassels represent how many to form a Lodge.

The sash has a military origin since men at arms would have a broad cloth, or leather belt worn over the right shoulder for a sword to be carried at the left side, enabling the wearer to draw the sword quickly in order to defend oneself. As time passed these belts or sashes would carry badges of rank or regiment.

The chivalry Orders of the State used sashes of differing colours to distinguish which order is which. Of course on "undress" occasions the sword would be kept at home or in the armoury.

The cuffs take their rise from the days when gloves were more like gauntlets with a hardened part to cover the wrist to protect it from the blow of a sword, or similar weapon. On dress occasions they would be embroidered to show rank or some other distinction. The cost of replacing gauntlets rose to such a level that the glove part became a separate item of clothing. Even today the cuffs can cost anything up to £75 a pair and certainly would not stand laundering with the glove.

The collar is just a way of showing off an Office, Position or Rank, with the brooch as we know it being used for the same purpose on less formal occasions.

The R.A.O.B. has no official regalia as such and therefore the manufacturers have "borrowed" or copied the designs from other Orders and adapted them to the R.A.O.B. members' requirements with the view of

Justifying it on the natural vanity of man. It is for this reason that one supplier's products may be more or less elaborate than another, which is always reflected in the price.

One day, perhaps, Convention will lay down a sealed pattern in rule for egalita, as other Order's do and thus allow the less affluent member to be as equally dressed as the plutocrats in this Order.