

The Earliest Known Bylaws

During the early 1950's, Society members made repeated attempts to locate the early records of the group. No records from its founding in 1888 through 1914 could be located. Unable to find any bylaws governing the organization, Society President Mrs. Gus Schmitt in November 1952 appointed Mrs. Dewey Waltemath, Mrs. Dennis Strathman and Mrs. A.E. Katterjohn to a committee to draw up bylaws. The Committee submitted the proposed bylaws at the March 6, 1953, meeting of the Society. The bylaws were read, approved and ordered to be printed in booklet form.

The 3 and ½ by 4 and ½, 4-page booklet was printed by Rev. Katterjohn who operated a small printing shop in a building behind the Evangelical Church (now Immanuel United Church of Christ). The bylaws consisted of nine sections and officially set the name of the organization as the Memorial Society of Wright City, Missouri, with the object of the group "to beautify the Wright City Cemetery". Any person interested in this objective was eligible for membership upon payment of annual membership dues of 50 cents.

The bylaws set the group's meeting time at 2 p.m. on the first Friday of each month and stipulated the "Society shall be entertained by its members in alphabetical order". This requirement demonstrates the belief that a time for social conversation and refreshments following the business meeting was necessary to maintain a vital society.

Other sections set forth the officers and their duties. Among the specific duties listed for each officer was a requirement that the treasurer maintain "a reserve fund of \$200.00".

These bylaws remained in effect until 2018 when Society members adopted new governing rules. In next week's post, we will take a look at how the bylaws were changed and updated.