

# Ezra Millard Canton, Patriarchs Militant



In Line from Left to Right—Lieutenant G. L. Edwards, D. Hartson, F. E. Stewart, Harry Walsh, Charles A. Patterson, W. D. Hamilton, William Lyons, E. C. Burkett, R. Howe, B. F. Burger, C. M. Coffin, Charles Peterson, Louis Heimrod, Ensign A. E. Cooper, Captain Jacob Marks (in front).  
LINEUP OF THE DRILL SQUAD OF CANTON EZRA MILLARD, PATRIARCHS MILITANT.—Photo by a Staff Artist.



ON June 25, 1884, a uniformed degree camp known as Ezra Millard degree camp, with fifteen members, was organized. This organization remained as a degree camp until March 11, 1886, when Canton Ezra Millard No. 1, Patriarchs Militant, was mustered in under the laws of the Sovereign Grand Lodge, Independent Order of Odd Fellows. This organization was named in honor of Ezra Millard, a prominent Odd Fellow, and at that time president of the Commercial National bank of Omaha. The first officers of the canton were: John W. Nichols, captain; N. B. Heim, lieutenant; G. A. Bennett, ensign; Frank B. Bryant, clerk; J. F. Sheeley, accountant.

At present Canton Ezra Millard is in better condition numerically and financially than ever before, and under the efficient leadership of its present captain, Jacob Marks, who has been an untiring worker, the canton stands today as the banner canton of the state. Captain Marks has been ably assisted by Lieutenant George L. Edward and Ensign A. E. Cooper. During the last session of the Grand Lodge of Odd Fellows, held at Lincoln, Neb., October 20-23 inclusive, the committee on entertainments arranged for a competitive drill by the cantons of the state, and here Ezra Millard No. 1 demonstrated its efficiency by carrying off the first prize, making ninety-four and one sixteenth points. Canton Ford No. 2 of Lincoln carried off second prize, making eighty-four points. The judges were Captains F. James Cosgrave and J. P. Ringer of Lincoln. The same were selected on account of their ability, as both are army captains, Captain Ringer holding the position as instructor at the state university at Lincoln.

The Patriarchs Militant is the military rank in connection with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. Something like twenty-five years ago some members of the order felt the necessity of instituting a rank or degree that would be attractive to young men, as the order itself is of the graver nature and not designed for parade or display purposes. It was felt that if a military rank could be added, one in which a drill and a handsome uniform would be features, that the younger members would take more interest in the order, and more young men would join. Before any definite action had been taken on the matter an order under the designation of Patriarchal Circle sprang up in Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota. It was not a part of Odd Fellowship, but its promoters hoped to gain official recognition, and for this reason made membership in the Odd Fellows a condition precedent to membership in the Patriarchal Circle. When the subject was brought before the sovereign grand lodge for action an unexpected opposition was developed and eventually adverse action was taken. The matter was kept pending in the sovereign grand lodge for two sessions, but finally Sovereign Grand Sire Erle J. Leach pronounced his edict against the Patriarchal Circle, and all who were members in it were given their opportunity of choosing between the two orders. Many elected to stand by the circle, and in the fall of 1885 quite a number of Odd Fellows left the order to retain their membership in the Patriarchal Circle. In the meantime the Patriarchs Militant had been instituted, and regularly established as the military branch of Odd Fellowship. Its growth has been rather slow, but steady, and during the last few years it has attained to a most respectable standing. The Independent Order of Odd Fellows is one of the oldest and strongest of the secret societies and has always been noted for the conservative nature of its membership. It has never been much for display, but since the adoption of the military rank has come somewhat more before the public eye. Its younger members take great interest in the drill and in this way have proved the wisdom of the projectors



ANOTHER VIEW OF THE DRILL SQUAD OF CANTON EZRA MILLARD.—Photo by a Staff Artist.



EZRA MILLARD, FOR WHOM THE CANTON WAS NAMED.

of the scheme for adding the rank to the order.

Ezra Millard, for whom the local canton of the Patriarchs Militant is named, was a pioneer of Omaha, coming here in 1856. He was engaged in various mercantile enterprises, but chiefly in banking, being a member of the firm of Millard, Caldwell & Co., one of the first banking firms to do business west of the Missouri river, and later one of the organizers and president of the Omaha National bank, and later an organizer and president of the Commercial National bank. His connection with the Odd Fellows was such as to endear him to the members, and his memory is still revered by them. Mr. Millard died at Saratoga, N. Y., in August, 1886. When the first canton was mustered in in Omaha no dispute as to its name was ever heard. It was simply called Ezra Millard canton, and everybody was pleased, thinking thus to perpetuate the name of a worthy Odd Fellow in a way that would not be displeasing to him if he knew of it.



Lieutenant G. L. Edwards, Captain Jacob Marks, Ensign A. E. Cooper.  
OFFICERS OF CANTON EZRA MILLARD.—Photo by a Staff Artist.