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Concatenated Order of Hoo-Hoo

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Hoo-Hoo marker in Gurdon

Concatenated Order of Hoo-Hoo

One of Clark County's most distinctive organizations is the Concatenated Order of Hoo-Hoo, founded in Gurdon in 1892. Established for lumbermen, it is among the oldest world-wide industrial fraternal organizations in existence today. At the height of its popularity at the turn of the twentieth century, the group had thousands and thousands of members.

Back in 1892, a forced layover in Gurdon gave the society's founders plenty of leisure time with little to do but come up with some very creative plans for a new organization. Most of that handful of men were returning from a meeting of the Arkansas Yellow Pine Manufacturers Association at Camden. At the time, there was no national federation for those in the timber industry. Hoo-Hoo founders included Bolling Arthur Johnson, a Chicago journalist; George K. Smith of the Southern Lumber Manufacturers Association; William Starr Mitchell, business manager of the Arkansas Democrat; Ludolph O.E.A. Strauss of the Malvern Lumber Company in Gurdon; and George Swartz of the Vandalia Railroad, St. Louis.

The term "Hoo-Hoo" is believed to have been coined by Johnson at a previous lumber meeting. The organization's emblem and its officers' titles are as unusual as the name of the society itself. For example, the Hoo-Hoo's officers include the Snark of the Universe, who is assisted by others, such as the Scrivenoter, Bojum, Jabberwock, Custocation, Arcanoper, and, of course, the Gurdon. The black cat, with its tail curled into the figure "9" was chosen as the group's logo. The cat's "nine lives" supposedly assured the organization's long existence, and the number played a significant role for the members. Original plans included nine officers, plus, clubs were to meet at nine minutes after nine on the ninth day of the ninth month. Initiation fees were \$9.99, and annual dues were set at 99 cents per year.

The Hoo-Hoo Museum and International Headquarters were established in Gurdon, its place of origin. For decades, the organization has published a magazine distributed to its members, called "Log and Tally." A bronze plaque set in a granite stone stands in Gurdon today to commemorate the Hoo-Hoo's existence. The marker was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1999.