

DR. WILLIAM P. WOODS
5050 Lincoln Ave.
Evansville, Indiana

October 15, 1962

Aug 1915 *from for*
new name

Mr. Thomas Whiteside
Moberly, Missouri

Dear Friend:

As I promised you some time ago I would write you concerning the starting of "Lions International" formerly incorporated "International Association of Lions Clubs".

In August, 1915 I used my office Secretary and a good friend by the name of Carmi Hicks who was operating an Insurance agency in Evansville, Indiana to incorporate the "International Association of Lions Clubs". I secured another man by name of E. A. Hicks, no relation to Carmi Hicks, to organize clubs.

Mr. E. A. Hicks wanted to go to Texas on other matters but said he would give it a try. He was successful and he obtained another man by name of Cunningham and by January, 1917 they had 33 clubs organized.

During 1915, 1916 and 1917 I became very busy, as I was making a specialty of female diseases and surgery. Was just so busy I could not find time to do justice to both my practice and to the Organization! So I wrote to Mr. Hicks and explained to him my decision.

Mr. Hicks went to Dallas, Texas and made arrangements at the Adolphus Hotel for a convention to last 3 days - 8, 9 and 10 of October.

Thereupon I wrote each and every club to send one or two delegates to the convention stating my decision to turn the organization over to the delegates assembled.

In the meantime before the convention took place, I believe in July, a man by the name of Melvin Jones from Chicago, having heard about the organization, came to Evansville to see me. We had quite a visit together. Mr. Jones was secretary of a small club of some 35 members in Chicago called "The Business Circle". He said that they would like to unite with some national organization.

I requested him to make arrangements with his club, take out a charter for two delegates to attend the convention. This done, Melvin Jones and a man by name of - Trienan? (Do not remember first name or spelling) were elected to go to Dallas, Texas.

Both of these gentlemen came to Evansville, stayed all night at the McCurdy Hotel and went with me via train to Dallas. On the way between St. Louis and Dallas Mr. Jones contacted me and put this question to me, "Do you think there would be a chance for me to be elected Secretary of the organization when you turn it over to the Delegates?" I asked him, "Do you really want to be elected?" He said, "Yes, I think I would. I have an insurance office and I could operate from that until the organization becomes larger and could afford an office." I then told him, "I believe I can handle the matter, I'll do this - I'll contact the two organizers. They know all of the delegates and I'll get them to boost you for Secretary. You get out among the delegates, make yourself acquainted and I'm sure it can be put over." This was done and Jones was elected Secretary and I was put in as the first International President.

Enclosed is a copy of an exact letterhead which was used during my term as President.

Mr. Jones proved to be a good Secretary, Mr. Hicks and Cunningham worked hard in organizing and the Lions kept growing.

After my term as President, I was very busy doing surgery and was not in close touch with the Lions for several years.

About the third or fourth year, Jones had ceased to write me and I began to receive letters from some of the members who were delegates to the convention complaining like, "Jones is putting out propoganda that he was the founder of the organization which I knew was not true."

Even Mr. E. A. Hicks wrote me to that effect. I wrote to Mr. Hicks and found he was sick and almost bedfast with T. B. Later I fixed up a statement for him to sign, but got a letter from his wife (in Arizona, I believe), stating Mr. Hicks had just died. So I never got the statement signed. Well, as stated before I was very busy and I ignored other complaints. Jones, however, never did stop his propoganda that he was the founder.

One other thing, I believe it was around 5 or 6 years after he became Secretary and the organization had grown, he sent an attorney to Evansville and offered me \$3500.00 to sign a release of any and all claims pertaining to the Lions Organization. This I refused and he has been mad at me ever since.

Could write a lot more but this is enough to let you know how the Lions got started.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM P. WOODS, M. D.