

MEMBERSHIP MINUTE  
SEGMENT 1  
(3 MINUTES)

In 1917, across the country, businessmen were finding something missing in their business clubs. Many concluded that what was missing was purpose.

Let's take a quick look at what was going on in their world in 1917:

- The U.S. population was 100 million--with 14 million of them foreign born.
- There were 4.8 million motor vehicles in the U.S.-- while there were 3/4 of a million in the rest of the world.
- The cost of cars ranged from \$325 for a Ford Runabout-- to \$1250 for a Willys Touring Car.
- Women got the vote.
- Indiana/Purdue University Fort Wayne was established.
- For 25 cents one could attend "a Sparkling Bubble of a musical comedy" titled "Little Miss Innocence."
- The cost of basic groceries included \$1.50 for 1/8 bushel of wheat flour, \$2.40 for 25 pounds of sugar, 40 cents for a dozen eggs, and milk by the can for 6 cents or 12 cents.
- There was no Indianapolis 500 because of the threat of war.

- And Woodrow Wilson had just been re-elected because he had kept the U.S. out of the European war. However, the Germans sank American ships, Congress declared war, and one million conscripted U.S. soldiers were sent to Europe.
- The Federal Reserve doubled the money supply to finance WWI.
- Soon President Wilson presented the 14-Point Plan, which was accepted in 1918.
- Later, President Wilson won the Nobel Peace Prize, but, his idea for the League of Nations was rejected by the U.S. Congress in 1920.

In Chicago in June 1917, a young insurance agent thought his business club lacked purpose. Others around the country were thinking the same about their business clubs. So, Melvin Jones set out to lead several clubs from various areas to join together into one strong, influential club with added Purpose -- to help the community in which they lived AND to serve mankind.

That October, twenty-three clubs from nine States held an organizational convention in Dallas, Texas. States participating were Illinois, Texas, Oklahoma, California, Minnesota, Colorado, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Iowa. No club from Indiana sent a delegation, so W.P. Woods attended on his own.

During the convention, the delegates took the name of Lions and selected colors to symbolize the ideas on which

the club would be based. They listed the Goals and Objectives to which we all aspire. They framed the Code of Ethics we all revere. They started work on the Constitution. And, W.P. Woods of Evansville, Indiana, the one man with no delegation, was chosen as the first President with Melvin Jones of Chicago as Secretary.

The Association of Lions Clubs was definitely on its way.



