

The Moose was founded by Dr. John Henry Wilson and a group of his friends in 1888 in Louisville, Kentucky, as a social and drinking club to rival the Elks. While it remains essentially an American club, it changed its name to Moose International in 1991.

The basic unit is the Lodge, which follows the pattern established by Masons. The Moose confer an initiatory degree, and after six months membership, the member becomes eligible for the second degree, Moose Legion. A third degree or Fellowship Degree is awarded for service to the fraternity. The fourth and highest degree, that of Pilgrim, is honorific and is awarded to few Moose.

Why the Moose? That's a question that really consists of two parts: First, why was this particular animal chosen to represent a humanitarian fraternal order, and secondly, why would a person or a family seek to become a member of it. The first answer is fairly straightforward. The Moose is a large, powerful animal, but one which is a protector not a predator. We think it was perhaps said best in our former enrollment ceremony:

"He takes only what he needs, nothing more... yet for his great size and strength he lives in peace with other creatures. The moose uses his size and power not to dominate but to protect, not to spoil but to preserve. He is a fierce protector, a loyal companion, and a generous provider who brings comfort and security to those within his defending circle."

It is these characteristics of the moose in the wild - the protective instinct for its young, and for the old and infirm in its herd - that the human members of the Moose fraternity have, for decades, modeled, in the establishment and operation of Mooseheart, the organization's community and school for children and teens in need; and Moosehaven, the retirement community for Moose men and women; as well as in service to its communities.

For information on how to join or become a member, please call the office at 209-823-8824.