

Centennial Celebration Moments #51 (June 21, 2019)

The Best Lesson of All- part 1

The value of the whole DeMolay program can be summed up in one word: RELATIONSHIPS. It is the relationships that young men have built with their peers, their mentors, their advisors and their families that are the lasting legacy of the Order of DeMolay. And those relationships are best illustrated by this previously untold episode in the lives of Louis Lower and Frank S. Land, the spark and the flame that lit the way for millions of relationships developed by young men who followed their example.

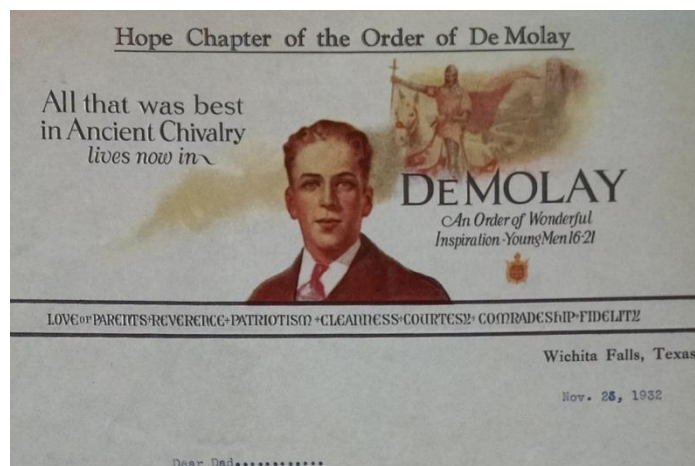
We who have read “Hi Dad!,”—A History of “Dad” Frank S. Land and the Order of DeMolay by the Rev. Herbert E. Duncan, think of Dad” Land and Louis Lower as inseparable friends, the perfect mentorship, the ideal surrogate father/son relationship.

But our sense of reality suggests that the ideal seldom exists, and never lasts. Our final Centennial Celebration Moments will share some previously unpublished letters between “Dad” Land, and Louis Lower, and through them, you will gain a better understanding of the true power of the Order of DeMolay.

We know that after Louis Lower got his first job with Frank S. Land at the Scottish Rite Social Services Bureau. He continued to work with Land through the formation of the Grand Council and its professional staff. As the first DeMolay, Louis was often on the road speaking and promoting the Order. He became the first President of the International DeMolay Alumni Chapter and was tasked with making it successful. By 1927, at age 25, he had taken over the Field Department from an ailing Roy Dickerson and was working for the Grand Council in new Chapter development.

We know from this short letter that in 1932 Louis was in Wichita Falls, Texas working with Hope Chapter.

He was part of the advance team to make sure the boys were ready to perform ritual for the visiting Founder of the Order. That tells us



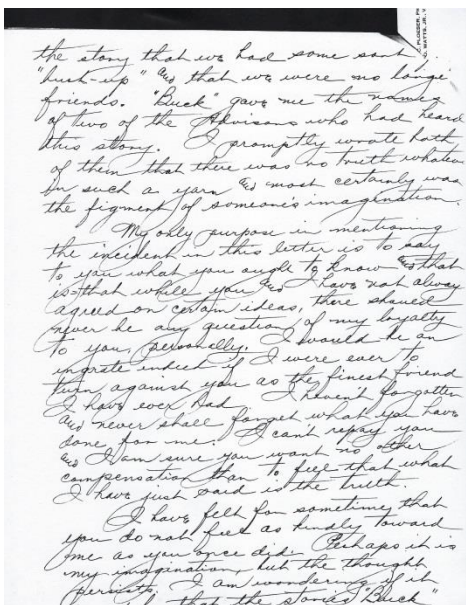
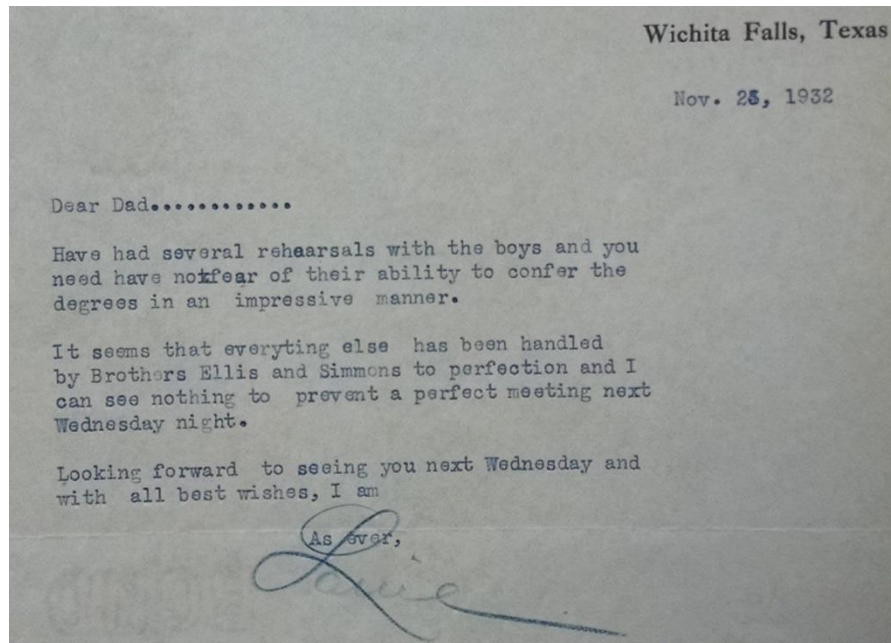
something about Dad Land's expectations, and the Chapters' desires to perform well for him.

In 1933, as a result of the Great Depression, Dad Land had to lay off 18 of the 22 employees of the Grand Council. Only Land, Stratton Brooks, Charlie Boyce and Louis Lower remained on staff, and probably at reduced wages.

All this goes to show that Louis was one of Dad Land's most

trusted and valued friends. There were only 12 years difference between them, but Louis knew that Frank Land was more than just an advisor, more than just a father figure—he was, perhaps, his closest friend and greatest champion.

The next piece of correspondence we have is a three page letter written in March of 1936, in long-hand, from Louis to Dad Land, which reads, in part:

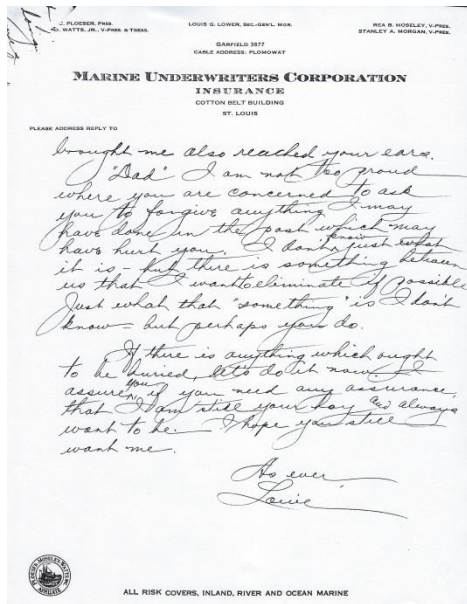


*"It seems that someone is spreading the story that we had some sort of 'bust-up' and that we were no longer friends. Buck gave me the names of two of the Advisors who had heard the story. I promptly wrote both of them that there was no truth whatsoever in such a yarn, and most certainly was the figment of someone's imagination.*

*"My only purpose in mentioning the incident in this letter is to say to you what you ought to know, and that is, that while you and I have not always agreed on certain ideas, there should never be any question of my loyalty to you, personally. I would be an ingrate indeed if I were ever to turn against*

*you as the finest friend I have ever had. I haven't forgotten, and never will forget what you have done for me. I can't repay you and I am sure you want no other compensation than to feel that what I have just said is the truth.*

*"I have felt for some time that you do not feel as kindly toward me as you once did. Perhaps it is my imagination, but the thought persists. I am wondering if it is possible that the stories Buck brought me, also reached your ears.*



*"Dad, I am not too proud where you are concerned to ask you to forgive anything I may have done in the past which may have hurt you. I don't know just what it is—but there is something between us that I want to eliminate, if possible. Just what that 'something' is, I don't know—but perhaps you do.*

*"If there is anything which ought to be buried, let's do it now. I assure you, if you need any assurance, that I am still your boy and always want to be. I hope you still want me.*

*"As ever, Louie"*



You can feel the hurt in Louis' words. You can imagine how much courage it took to write them to his mentor and benefactor. Remember, this was not a teenager writing, but a grown man, with all the ego and pride and independence that was the goal of every young man of his era. Sometimes, calling out an elder can create an irreparable rift. But Louis knew in his heart that something was wrong. He had to reach out.

We'll learn about "Dad" Land's response in Centennial Celebration Moment #51. Use the following questions to discuss this situation with your Chapter members:

1. Did you ever think that Dad Land and Louis Lower could have let their friendship break down?
2. What did Louis Lower do to try to repair this apparent rift between them?
3. How do you think “Dad” Land reacted when he read this letter?
4. Have you ever lost a friend that you desperately wanted to keep?
5. How did you attempt to repair the relationship? Were you successful?