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To Lift Up A Child

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James John Davies led an extraordinary life. He arrived in America from Wales at eight years old. Poor, but with the youthful enthusiasm that would lead him out of the mills of Western Pennsylvania and across a turbulent landscape of a struggling labor movement. Pulling himself up to levels of power in the Union and into politics with studied determination and an inner drive not witnessed fully until it was unleashed on a failing fraternal organization known as the Loyal Order of Moose.

Davis, it was Americanized at immigration, was the 247th member of the Order when he joined on his birthday in 1906. He quickly struck a deal with the fraternity's leadership to incorporate his recruitment ideas to reorganize the Order. He was successful. He built the Moose Fraternity into a massive international structure.

His greatest achievement was the establishment of a Child City, Mooseheart. A children's school where the children of deceased or incapacitated Moose members would have a home with good and plentiful food, warm and dry living quarters, a sound education which included training in a trade or two, and, finally, the opportunity to grow and enjoy childhood. This was his dream and it was realized under the auspices of the Loyal Order of Moose. Later, with the strength of the organization behind him, Moosehaven, the City of Contentment was established for senior Moose members.

For most men this would have been plenty to be proud of, but, not Jim Davis. He went on to work on the President's Wartime Commission during World War One. Showing a knack for organizational prowess, he was appointed Secretary of Labor for three consecutive Presidents. He then ran for and was elected Senator from Pennsylvania for three terms during which he co-sponsored the Davis-Bacon Act requiring prevailing wage to be paid on government contracts.

During all his service for the legislature, he never forgot, in fact he made it a point to promote his beloved Fraternity to one and all. In 1947, Jim Davis was exhorting his fraternal brothers to greater efforts when he collapsed on stage, never to appeal to the Moose membership again.

Join me for a fictional trip through these times as we explore some of the possible influences contributing to the life and times of James J. Davis.

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