

# NEW RICHMOND RATHBONES Disband

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**Source:** New Richmond Record (established by Edgar Watts July 16, 1896 - through part of 1924. Sorry, I can't give ya' a specific time frame but this is as good as I can do. *(Thanks to the Oppy Family for this neat, lengthy and interesting article) -- kbz*

**It was a matter of great surprise that those on the outside heard early last Friday morning that our Ashland Temple of Rathbone Sisters of New Richmond had become seriously disrupted and had disbanded at a special call meeting held in the K of P Hall on Thursday night. Because of the persistence of certain of the Knights of Pythias to become members of the subordinate order of the wives of the Knights, and because of the ladies' honest and wilful determination to bar the men from initiation into the secrets and from attending the sessions of the local temple are the sole reasons for the fatal disruption.**

**A call session was held on Thursday evening at which both the Grand Chief and the Grand Inspector of the Rathbone Sisters of Indiana were present, the purpose of this meeting being to decide this matter of whether the men should be admitted or no. These ladies, representing the grand lodge, came with explicit instructions to initiate such men of the Knights as sought admission into the Temple or to arrest the charter. Long discussions proved futile however it seemed and upon a vote of 74 to 6, the charter was unconditionally surrendered rather than have the men "nosin' around."**

**Now, all that is left to hand down a somewhat bedimed history of the once prosperous Ashland Temple is the now empty frame, which proudly enclosed the charter which still hangs in the accustomed place in the K of P Hall, bedecked in crepe and bears a simple card instead of the charter and reads thus: WE HAVE LOST OUR CHARTER BUT NOT OUR CHARACTER!**

**Many months ago a company of five gentlemen, members of the local order of Knights of Pythias intending a little surprise perhaps upon their wives, but with no intent surely toward the local society of Rathbone Sisters, went to Crawfordsville where they were duly**

initiated into the mysterious ways of how the women ride the goat. Several gentlemen had thought to become members of the Sisters Temple of New Richmond but they were told by the ladies in polite but strong language that they were not wanted and the voete of the society was almost unanimous against admitting them. Being made full members of the Rathbone order these five men then sought admission and recognition in Ashland Temple and for the hopeless persistence of one of them at least Ashland Temple is now a thing of the past.

Ashland Temple of Rathbone Sisters, No 160 of New Richmond was organized in 1895 and under flattering prospects. The organization of this band of ladies was for the development of self interest, for their advancement in a social and friendly way and for doing good generally. And the order has not fallen beneath its aim. Since its organization Ashland Temple has grown in numbers more than any other temple in Indiana according to population of the town. Ashland Temple too has the distinction of having sent more money to the Knights of Pythias Orphans Home fund than any other temple in the state of Indiana. With such a record of renown and when at its very height of progression it is lamentable that the order must be so suddenly and so ruthlessly disrupted, so hopelessly disbanded. Sympathy is with the ladies who are happily contented in having done no wrong and are mutually commended by a general public for having demanded and enforced a right that was theirs. The Record has probably not been able to get "next" to all the deplorable truths of the jar and wrangle, but it is enough to say that the feeling that has been engendered is nothing short of an ineffable and undesirable hatred, the furrows of which time will never have fully filled.

At the time of organization of the New Richmond temple it was neither compulsory nor necessary to admit gentlemen to the order of Rathbone Sisters. A year or more ago when some of the men hinted for admission the ladies were rightfully plain spoken in that "we organized without the men and intend to continue so," and some of them were heard to say that before they'd have the men in the temple they would surrender their charter ... and they did!

The ladies contend that their visitors, the Grand Chief and the Grand Inspector, could not arrest their charter, and indeed it could not have been. Ashland Temple has always been self-sustaining,

had never received a penny of funds from the grand temple but on the other hand had provided liberally to the grand temple and its several funds. The order of Rathbone Sisters pays no benefits, being only a social order. The lady members of Ashland Temple had done no wrong, had not disobeyed nor disregarded any law or order, and their charter rights were not to be questioned nor censured. But the culmination of these troubles on the appearance of the grand temple representatives had been preconcerted, and Ashland Temple mutually agreed to surrender her charter rather than be further persecuted.

In 1901 the Supreme Lodge of the World passed a resolution to not allow any new temples to organize without admitting the men, but it is locally contended that there was no resolution placed on the records repealing the right of previously organized temples to bar them from admission. The new resolution which so favored the men however makes them only honorary members, they having no voice nor vote.

The little dots of from 3 to a dozen men on our streets on Saturday, a rainy day, gave this subject its full quota of attention and it was thoroughly canvassed and discussed and it was easy to hear and see the trend of thought. A bit of an inkling of this wrangle was first given to the public several months ago; but when small gatherings of women were to be seen after Temple on Thursday afternoon on the streets in all attention, low-toned and animated conversation, it told the climax was near at hand. Thursday nights extra session proved the end.